

AMERICAN GRAFFITI

Written by

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RADIO

On a dark screen an immense amber light appears and an electric humming begins. The eerie light glows brighter and illuminates a single huge number--11. We hear static and a large vertical band of red floats mysteriously across the screen.

Pulling back slowly, we watch the glowing band traverse back and forth over the amber light and past more numbers appearing-- 90... 110... 130. And we begin to hear voices-- strange songs, fading conversations and snatches of music drifting with static.

Pulling back further, we realize it is a car radio filling the screen and radio stations we're hearing, until the indicator stops. There's a pause...and suddenly we are hit by a blasting-out-of-the-past, Rocking and Rolling, turn-up-the-volume, pounding Intro to a Vintage 1962 Golden Week-End Radio Show--back when things were simpler and the music was better.

And now a wolf howl shatters through time as the legendary Wolfman Jack hits the airwaves, his gravel voice shrieking and growling while the music pumps and grinds...

WOLFMAN

Awwrigght, baay-haay-baay! I got a oldie for ya--gonna knock ya right on de flowa--baay-haay-hee-baay!

The Wolfman howls like a soulful banshee as "Rock Around the Clock" blasts forth.

MEL'S DRIVE-IN--DUSK

A neon drive-in casts long shadows across a vast parking lot as the sun drops behind a distant hill. A large neon sign buzzes in the foreground... MEL'S DRIVE-IN, while in the background, "Rock Around The Clock" blares from the radio of a beautiful decked and channeled, white with red trim, tuck- and-rolled '58 Chevy Impala that glides into the drive-in. Main titles appear over action. Steve Bolander stops the elegant machine and gets out. He looks around, then walks to the front of the car and leans against the flame-covered hood.

(MORE)

MEL'S DRIVE-IN--DUSK (CONT'D)

Steve is eighteen, good-looking in a conservative, button-down, short-sleeved shirt. Most likely to succeed, president of his graduating class. He looks around the empty drive-in, then hears a funny little horn.

A Vespa scooter bumps into the lot. A young kid waves at him - and suddenly grabs the handlebars again as the scooter nearly topples. Terry Fields ("The Toad") maneuvers the scooter next to Steve's Chevy but misjudges and ricochets off the trash can before stopping. Terry grins sheepishly. He's seventeen, short but plenty loud, both vocally and sartorially in his pink and black shirt, levis, and white bucks. He looks slightly ridiculous but always thinks he's projecting an air of supercool.

Steve watches Terry smooth back his shiny ducktail and primp his waterfall to a perfect cascade over his forehead. He unbuttons his shirt one more button and lowers his pants to look tough.

Terry walks over and leans against the flamed car, imitating Steve who pays him no mind. In the background, we hear the Wolfman howling with the music. The record ends and a barrage of humor begins from Wolfman Jack. The Wolfman is an unseen companion to all the kids. Witty and knowledgeable about the trivia that counts, he's their best friend, confidant, and guardian angel.

Now, a grey, insect-like Citroen deux-chevaux putters into the parking lot and stops on the other side of the lot. Steve and Terry watch Curt Henderson get out.

Curt stands by his little car. He's seventeen, a curly bespectacled, scraggly kid with a summer-grown moustache and a paperback stuck in his bermuda shorts. Curt thinks of himself as the town cynic. In reality, he's a hopeless romantic. He starts over to his buddies.

TERRY

Hey, whadaya say? Curt? Last night in town, you guys gonna have a little bash before you leave?

STEVE

The Moose have been lookin' for you all day, man.

Steve reaches into his pocket and hands Curt an envelope without saying anything. Curt opens it slowly and pulls out a check.

CURT
 (sarcastic)
 Oh great...

TERRY
 Whadaya got, whadaya got? Wow--two
 thousand dollars. Two thousand doll-
 -

!!

Steve looks at Curt suspiciously; Curt seems somehow guilty.

STEVE
 Mr. Jennings couldn't find you, so
 he gave it to me to give to you. He
 said he's sorry it's so late, but
 it's the first scholarship the
 Moose Lodge has given out. Oh yeah,
 he says they're all very proud of
 you.

Curt hands the envelope back to Steve.

CURT
 Well... ah... why don't you hold
 onto it for a while?

STEVE
 What's with you? It's yours! Take
 it! I don't want it.

TERRY
 I'll take it.

CURT
 Steve... Ah, I think we'd better
 have a talk. I've gotten-

Suddenly a horn honks and they all turn. Laurie Henderson
 pulls into the drive-in and waves to them. She is driving
 the family's '58 Edsel.

STEVE
 Your sister calls. I'll talk to you
 later.

CURT
 Now, Steve! Let her wait.

STEVE
 Okay, make it short and sweet.

CURT

Yeah, well... Listen...
 (clearing his throat)
 I... I don't think I'm going
 tomorrow.

STEVE

What! Come on, what are you talking
 about?

CURT

I don't know. I was thinking I
 might wait for a year... go to city-

-

Laurie honks the horn a couple of times. Steve ignores her.
 There is a long moment and Curt looks uncomfortable.

STEVE

You chicken fink.

CURT

Wait, let me explain--

STEVE

You can't back out now! After all
 we went through to get accepted.
 We're finally getting out of this
 turkey town and now you want to
 crawl back into your cell--look, I
 gotta talk to Laurie.

(he hands the check back
 to Curt)

Now take it. We're leaving in the
 morning. Okay?

Suddenly, there's an ear-splitting roar and they all turn as
 a yellow '32 Ford deuce coupe--chopped, lowered and sporting
 a Hemi-V8--bumps into the lot. The low slung classic rumbles
 and parks at the rear of the drive in.

Big John Milner, twenty-two, sits in his Ford, tough and
 indifferent, puffing on a Camel. He wears a white T-shirt
 and a butch haircut molded on the sides into a ducktail. A
 cowboy in a deuce coupe--simple, sentimental and cocksure of
 himself.

STEVE (CONT'D)

You wanna end up like John? You
 can't stay seventeen forever.

CURT

I just want some time to think.
 What's the rush? I'll go next year.

STEVE
We'll talk later.

Steve walks off toward Laurie's Edsel. Laurie gets out. She's wearing a letterman's sweater with a large "Class of '62" emblazoned on the shoulder. Steve goes to her and they hug.

On the radio, the music ends, and the Wolfman's intro tune comes on.

RADIO
(singing)
"Here comes the Wolfman--Wolfman
Jack!"

WOLFMAN (V.O.)
Oh, We're gonna rock and roll
ourselves to death baby. You got
the Wolfman Jack Show!

MEL'S DRIVE-IN--NIGHT
As the radio blares "Sixteen
Candles," we see that with the
darkness Burger City has come
alive. A continual line of hot rods
pulls into the parking lot to check
out the parked cars, then returns
to the maindrag. Carhops glide by
on roller skates. Curt and John are
fooling around in front of the
deuce coupe. A horn honks and they
turn as a '60 Ford with three girls
in it slows by them. A girl leans
out the window and smiles.

GIRL
Hi John!

The girls in the car all screech and giggle as they zoom off.

JOHN
Not too good, huh?

CURT
Why is it every girl that comes
around here is ugly? Or has a
boyfriend? Where is the dazzling
beauty I've been searching for all
my life?

John watches the procession of gleaming cars traveling through the hot night.

JOHN

I know what you mean. The pickin's are really gettin' slim. The whole strip is shrinking. Ah, you know, I remember about five years ago, take you a couple of hours and a tank full of gas just to make one circuit. It was really somethin.'

Suddenly, in the distance, there's a blood-curdling scream from an incredible high-performance engine. The entire drive-in stops and listens.

CURT

Hey, John. Someone new in town.

JOHN

Ahhh.

CURT

You gonna go after him?

JOHN

Hey, listen, Professor, if he can't find me, then he ain't worth racin', right?

CURT

The big shot!

Across the swarming parking lot, Steve sits in the front seat of his chevy with Laurie. Budda Macrae, a car hop, leans down to attach a tray to Steve's window, showing off her tight blouse.

BUDDA

A cherry-vanilla coke and a chocolate mountain. Anything else you want, Steve?

(Steve shakes his head.)

If there is you let me know now. Just honk and I'm yours.

She tucks in her blouse a little tighter, gives him a hot look and goes to get the other tray. Budda takes the other tray around the car, almost shoves it in the window where Laurie is sitting.

BUDDA (CONT'D)

One fries--grab it before I drop it.

She gives Laurie an antagonistic look and goes off. Steve laughs. Laurie smiles.

She's seventeen, very pretty, with big doe-eyes, and a short bobbed hairdo. She pushes up the sleeves on Steve's letterman sweater, which is sizes too large for her. His class ring glints on a chain around her neck. Laurie is sweet, the image of vulnerability, but with a practical and self-preserving mind beneath.

STEVE

Where was I?

LAURIE

Um, how you thought high school romances were goofy and we started going together just because you thought I was kinda cute and funny, but then you suddenly realized you were in love with me, it was serious... and ah... oh, you were leadin' up to somethin' kinda big.

STEVE

You make it sound like I'm giving dictation. Well, seriously, what I meant was, that ah... since we do care for each other so much, and since we should really consider ourselves as adults. Now, I, ah... could I have a couple of those fries?

Through the windshield of the Chevy, they see Terry run by in front of them, chasing Budda Macrae who's outdistancing him on her roller skates.

TERRY:

Come on, Budda. Come on...

Steve watches them go by, then looks back at Laurie.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Ah, where was I?

LAURIE

..."consider ourselves adults"...

Laurie pretends to be interested in her french fries, but is obviously expecting something big.

STEVE

Right... right... anyway, I thought maybe, before I leave, we could ah... agree that...

(MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)
that seeing other people while I'm
away can't possibly hurt, you know?

Laurie hasn't looked up but her mood has changed like a mask.

LAURIE
You mean dating other people?

STEVE
I think it would strengthen our
relationship. Then we'd know for
sure that we're really in love. Not
that there's any doubt.

Steve smiles and then looks to her. He stops smiling. They listen to the radio for an awkward moment. Laurie struggles to hold back her tears. With obvious difficulty, she turns to him and smiles. He's expected something different and doesn't know what to do, so he smiles back.

LAURIE
I think you're right. I mean, we're
not kids anymore, and it's silly to
think that when we're three
thousand miles apart we shouldn't
be able to see other people and go
out.

Laurie takes his ring on the chain from around her neck and puts it in her purse.

STEVE
Laurie, now, listen, I didn't ask
for that back. I think that...

LAURIE
I know. I just sort of think it's
juvenile now. I'll keep it at home.
It's less conspicuous there.

STEVE
You don't want to wear it?

LAURIE
I didn't say that. I understand and
I'm not upset. I mean, I can't
expect you to be a monk or
something while you're away.

Steve just looks at her and nods. The Wolfman howls an intro to "Gee" by the Crows. Outside, skooting around the drive-in after Budda, Terry is pleading with the sexy car hop as she delivers a tray to a car.

TERRY

...and I have a really sharp record collection. I even have "Pledging My Love" by Johnny Ace. Anyway, how can you love Nelson when he's going out with Marilyn Gator. Since he dumped on you maybe we could--

BUDDA

He didn't dump on me, you little dip. Hi, Steve!

Her tone changes immediately. Terry looks sour and turns around to Steve who's getting out of the chevy. Budda leaves, wiggling her butt for Steve.

TERRY

She's a little conceited--just playing hard to get.

STEVE

Listen, I came over here to talk to you about--

TERRY

Any time, buddy. I'm your man. Nothing I like better than chewing the rug with a pal. You talk, I'll listen. I'm all ears. Shoot.

STEVE

Shut up.

TERRY

Sure.

STEVE

Terry, I'm going to let you take care of my car while we're away--at least until Christmas. I'm afraid if I leave it with my--

Steve notices Terry isn't with him any more and turns. Terry is standing frozen to a spot.

STEVE (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

Terry tries to talk, much like a shell-shocked war veteran. His mouth moves but only a gurgle comes out.

Curt is standing by the Chevy, talking with his sister Laurie. She's still upset by what Steve said to her.

CURT
Hey, sis--what's wrong?

LAURIE
Nothing.

Meanwhile, they watch Terry as Steve explains to him about the car.

STEVE
Now listen, only 30 weight Castrol-R. I've written the tire pressure and stuff on a pad in the glove compartment. Are you listening?

The others are watching now as Terry shakes his head mechanically.

CURT
What's wrong, he's crying!

There is indeed a tear rolling down Terry's cheek.

TERRY
I can't... believe... it.
(He starts toward the car and gently caresses its paint.)
I don't know what to say. I'll... love and protect this car until death do us part.
(He circles the car.)
This is a superfine machine. This may even be better than Daryl Starbird's superfleck moonbird. It is better than Daryl Starbird's.

Laurie watches Terry, realizing that like the car, she'll be left behind as a fond memory. She turns and looks at Steve, who's been watching her. There's a moment between them... Budda comes by with an empty tray. Terry sees her and wipes his eyes. He walks up to her, a strange look on his face.

TERRY (CONT'D)
Budda, how would you like to go to the drive-in movies with me?

The idea is so preposterous that even Budda is speechless. She looks around at others.

BUDDA
You've got to be kidding!

TERRY

Would I kid you about a thing like that? I want you to know that something has happened to me tonight that is going to change everything. I've got a new...

John walks up quietly and casually pulls down hard on the back pockets of Terry's low riding levis. There is general hysteria as Terry quickly pulls up his pants.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Car!! All right, who's the wise--
 (He turns and sees John
 and changes his tune.)
 Oh, John--verrry funny.
 (He tries to laugh with
 the others.)

JOHN

Hey, did she do that to you?

STEVE

Let's get going. It seems like we've spent most of our lives in this parking lot.

TERRY

Hey, Curt, let's bomb around, I wanna try out my new wheels!

CURT

I'd like to, Toad, but I'm going with Steve and Laurie to the hop. I'd just slow you down anyway.

TERRY

Yeah, tonight things are going to be different.

JOHN

Hey, wait a minute, you're goin' to the Hop? The Freshman Hop?

CURT

Yeah.

JOHN

Oh, come on, man. That place is for kids. You two just got your ass out of there. Don't go back now.

CURT

You ain't got no emotions?

TERRY

We're gonna remember all of the good times, is what we're gonna do.

JOHN

Yeah, well, go.

CURT

Why don't you come with us?

JOHN

Bullshit, man!

CURT

Come on. For old time's sake.

JOHN

Yeah, yeah... Well, listen. You go. Go ahead, Curtsy, baby. You go on over there and you remember all the good times you won't be having. I ain't goin' off to some goddamned fancy college. I'm stayin' right here. Havin' fun, as usual.

John walks angrily to his coupe, gets in and slams the door. Curt looks at the others and shrugs.

TERRY

Jesus, Milner, you're in a great mood tonight.

Curt goes over and stands by the window of the yellow coupe.

CURT

What's the matter John? Did I say somethin' wrong? I'm sorry.

JOHN

Ah, man, it's nothin'.

CURT

Well, we'll see you later, okay?

JOHN

Right.

CURT

We'll all do somethin' together. You know, before Steve leaves.

John looks at him suspiciously.

JOHN
 Okay, wait a minute. Now, you're
 not going?

CURT
 I don't know.

John shakes his head. On the radio, Wolfman is taking a call
 from a listener--

MAN (V.O.)
 Wolfman?

WOLFMAN (V.O.)
 Who is this?

MAN
 This is Joe... in Little Rock, way
 down in the Valley.

WOLFMAN
 You callin' from Little Rock,
 California?

MAN
 Long distance.

WOLFMAN
 My, my, my... listen, man, what
 kind of entertainment you got in
 that town?

MAN
 All we got is you.

John roars his engine and pulls the yellow deuce coupe into
 a screeching take-off out of the drive-in. Terry and Curt
 watch him go off.

MAIN STREET, MODESTO-NIGHT

During the day, G street is a line of used car lots, small
 shops, tacky department stores and greasy spoons. At night,
 it is transformed into an endless parade of kids in flamed,
 lowered and customized machines who rumble down the one way
 street, through the seemingly adultless, heat-drugged little
 town.

Police cars glide ominously with the flow of traffic. In
 parked cars, couples neck between flashing headlights. Guys
 looking cool in a '56 Chevy sit in the slouched position of
 the true Low Rider--and over it all the music and the
 Wolfman can be heard. Just now, it's "Runaway" by Del
 Shannon.

John travels with the flow of traffic, watching some dopey guys shooting squirt guns from a moving car. John drives the deuce coupe effortlessly. He looks over at a car pacing alongside of his own.

JOHN
Hey, Zudo.

A sweaty looking guy turns and nods from the window.

PAZUDO
Hey, Milner.

JOHN
Hey, man, what happened to your flathead?

PAZUDO
Huh?

JOHN
What happened to your flathead?

PAZUDO
Ah, your mother!

JOHN
What?

PAZUDO
Your mother. Hey, we been talkin' about you.

JOHN
Yeah?

PAZUDO
Yeah. There's a very wicked '55 Chevy lookin' for you.

JOHN
Yeah, I know.

PAZUDO
Watch out for the cop that's in Jerry's Cherry.

JOHN
Yeah. All right, thanks.

John nods and the two cars pull apart down the street.

TRAVELING G STREET-STEVE'S WHITE '58 CHEVY

The Rock and Roll blares as Terry the Toad cruises along the main drag, singing along with the music. Sitting low in his seat, he looks around, his face aglow, experiencing a new world from the inside of a really fine car. This is the greatest thing that has happened to Terry in seventeen long years of being a short loser.

Terry turns a corner and another car pulls alongside. A guy looks out the window.

GUY

Hey, Toad.

Terry looks over and smiles coolly, proud of his new wheels.

GUY (CONT'D)

(leaning out the window)

Is that you in that beautiful car?

(Terry nods modestly)

Geez, what a waste of machinery.

Terry's smile changes to a scowl as the car pulls away from him.. Terry accounts the slight to jealousy. Then he forgets it and enjoys driving the beautiful Chevy again. Another car pulls alongside of him as he cruises along slowly.

GIRL

Hey, kid.

Terry looks over at the car cruising next to him. In the back seat, a guy has dropped his trousers and is pushing his bare buttocks against the side window--a classic BA complete with pressed ham. Terry looks away, wondering why this is still happening to him, even in his new car.

TRAVELING G STREET-LAURIE'S '58 EDSEL

Curt is in the back seat gazing out the window at the dark main street of the small farm community. Steve and Laurie are talking quietly in the front seat. Laurie is sitting near the window and it sounds like Steve is convincing her to move over. Laurie finally does. His arm goes around her and her head rests on his shoulder.

Curt is laughing as the Wolfman harasses someone on the radio. The Wolfman is placing a call.

WOLFMAN (V.O.)

Here we go with another call out of the station. Can you dig it? Answer the phone, dummy.

MAN (V.O.)
Pinkie's Pizza

WOLFMAN
Ah, yeah, listen, you got any more
of those secret agent spy-scopes?

MAN
Hit parade on the stethoscope?

WOLFMAN
No. No, the secret agent spy-scope,
man. That pulls in the moon, the
sky and the planets... and the
satellites and the little bitty
space men.

MAN
You must have the wrong number,
partner.

WOLFMAN
'Bye.

Wolfman cuts into "Why Do Fools Fall in Love." Curt is laughing in the back of the car, as he listens to the ever-present D.J.

Steve slows the Edsel to a stop at the next light. Curt glances over at a classic white '56 Thunderbird and sits up. In the T-bird, a girl watches him. Blonde, beautiful, her hair, backlit by a used car lot, seems to glow, making her look almost ethereal. Curt doesn't move, as if afraid of scaring her away. She smiles faintly---then says something, so softly it's lost...

CURT
What?

Curt struggles to lower his window. She repeats it, but he can't hear. The light changes. She smiles once more and is gone.

CURT (CONT'D)
(shouting)
What? What?!!!

STEVE
We didn't say anything.

CURT
Quick! Hang a right!

STEVE

What? Why?

CURT

Cut over to G Street, I've just seen a vision! She was a goddess. You've got to catch her!

STEVE

I didn't see anything.

LAURIE

We're not going to spend the night chasing girls for you.

CURT

I'm telling you, this was the most perfect, dazzling creature I've ever seen.

STEVE

She's gone. Forget it.

CURT

She spoke to me. She spoke to me, right through the window. I think she said, "I love you."

Curt looks at his sister and Steve in the front seat. They are bored by his romantic visions.

CURT (CONT'D)

That means nothing to you people? You have no romance, no soul? She-- someone wants me. Someone roaming the streets wants me! Will you turn the corner?

Laurie looks around at him and seems to pity his flights of poetic fantasy. Curt sits back and shakes his head.

PARKING LOT

Big John sits in his deuce coupe, backed into the parking lot of the Acme Fall-out Shelter Co., the prime spot in town for girl watching. A guy in wrap-around dark glasses leans by the car next to John. They watch a group of laughing girls cruise by in a Studebaker.

JOHN

Oh, oh. Later.

GUY
Alligator.

John turns on his lights and swings the deuce coupe out into the flow of traffic, after the Studebaker. John accelerates and pulls alongside the Studebaker. The girl in the front seat rolls down her window. John grins and yells over at the carload of cuties.

JOHN
Hey, you're new around here.
Where're you from?

FIRST GIRL
Turlock.

JOHN
Turlock? You know a guy named Frank
Bartlett?

FIRST GIRL
No. Does he go to Turlock High?

JOHN
Well, he used to. He goes to J.C.
now.

FIRST GIRL
Do you go to J.C.?

JOHN
Yeah, sure.

FIRST GIRL
Oh, wow! Do you know Guy Phillips?

JOHN
Yeah, sure. I got him in a class.

FIRST GIRL
He's so boss.

JOHN
How would you like to ride around
with me for awhile?

FIRST GIRL
I'm sorry, I can't. I'm going
steady.

JOHN
Ah, come on!

FIRST GIRL

I just can't.

JOHN

You're just ridin' around with a bunch of girls. Hey, how about somebody else in there? Anybody else want to go for a ride?

The girls chatter and giggle among themselves. One of the girls dangles a bra out the back window, and they all break into hysterical laughter. The girls try to accelerate ahead, but John stays alongside their car.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Aw, come on... I got plenty of room. It's dangerous to have that many people in a car. Cops see ya, you're had. You got nothing to fear, I'm as harmless as a baby kitten.

A small voice rises above the chatter.

CAROL

I'll go. I'll go.

FIRST GIRL

Judy's sister wants to ride with you. Is that all right?

JOHN

(grinning)

Yeah, sure, Judy--her sister--her mother--anybody. I'll take 'em all. Listen, we'll go up and stop at that light. It'll turn red by the time we get there. All right?

The first girl grins and nods. John winks at her.

JOHN (CONT'D)

You ever get tired of going steady with somebody that ain't around-- I'm up for grabs.

The cars stop at the light. A girl rushes out from the Studey and runs around the back of John's coupe. She opens the door and climbs in fast as the light changes.

The Studebaker pulls off fast. John pushes through the gears and turns and smiles at his pick-up, as "That'll Be the Day" plays on the Wolfman Jack Show.

JOHN (CONT'D)
So, you're Judy's little sister.

Carol Morrison shakes her head. She is thirteen years old, very cute--wearing blue jeans, sneakers and a "Dewey Webber Surf Board" T-shirt which hangs to her knees. John seems slightly panicked.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Ah, shit,--how old are you?

CAROL
Old enough. How old are you?

JOHN
I'm too old for you.

CAROL
You can't be that old.

JOHN
Listen, listen. I think you better go back and sit with your sister. Hey, ah... where are they, anyway? They comin' back or somethin'? This is a joke, right? This better be a joke, 'cause I'm not drivin' you around.

CAROL
But you asked me. What's the matter? Am I too ugly?
(on the verge of tears)
Judy doesn't want me with her and now you don't want me with you. Nobody wants me... even my mother and father hate me. Everybody hates me.

JOHN
No they don't. I mean, I don't know, maybe they do. But I don't. It's just that you're a little young for me.

CAROL
I am not! If you throw me out I'll scream.

JOHN
OK, OK, just stay cool. There's no need to scream. We'll think of something.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)
 (He looks at her as she
 wipes her eyes.)
 It shouldn't take too long to find
 your sister again.

Suddenly, a car horn honks next to them. John looks over at
 the car.

VOICE (O.S.)
 Hey John--you gonna be there
 tonight?

JOHN
 Oh, shit! Hey, get down!

John grabs Carol by the neck and pushes her head down onto
 his lap so she can't be seen. John casually waves to the
 friend in the car cruising alongside.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 Hey, cool...

Carol's head is being held down on his lap. She looks up at
 him.

CAROL
 Hey, is this what they call copping
 a feel?

John jumps, and immediately lets go of her as if burned.

JOHN
 NO! Uh uh. N-O. Don't even say
 that. Jesus...

John is beginning to sweat now.

CAROL
 What's your name?

JOHN
 Mud, if anybody sees you.

CRUISING G STREET-STEVE'S '58 CHEVY

Terry continues to cruise the main drag, slouched low and
 looking cool in his newly acquired machine. He adjusts his
 waterfall curl as the Wolfman dedicates a list of songs. He
 passes a group of guys bullshitting around the raised hood
 of a souped-up parked car.

Terry cruises alongside two girls in a Ford. He revs the engine to get their attention and once he has it he motions to roll down their window. They flip him the bird instead and he lets them pass.

Terry pulls up to a stop light. The car next to him is a '56 Ford--a good opponent and besides, the kid driving looks younger than Terry.

TERRY

What you got in there, kid?

KID

More than you can handle.

Terry revs his engine. So does the Ford. The tension mounts. The green arrow for the left turn lane flashes on, the car on Terry's other side moves off, and before he can control his reflexes, Terry, too, has shot into the intersection while the light remains red! Terry quickly shifts and returns to the starting position. The other driver is grinning.

Terry is flustered and embarrassed. Terry revs the Chevy a couple more times, concentration intently this time on the right light.

Green!... The Ford bolts into the intersection. Terry likewise floors the gas pedal and goes crashing backwards into a large Buick. Terry is stunned for a moment, then realizes he forgot to shift into first. He fumbles to get the car into first gear.

A distinguished looking man comes up to his window after inspecting the damage. Terry tries to escape, but in his panic the engine dies. He struggles to start it.

OLDER MAN

Excuse me, but I think we've had an accident.

TERRY

Well, goddamnit, I won't report you this time, but next time just watch it, will ya?

Terry roars off in a cloud of indignant smoke, leaving the gentleman standing in the street looking dismayed. The cars behind him begin to honk their horns and shout crudities.

USED CAR LOT

Terry pulls up in front of a used car lot and jumps out to inspect the damage to Steve's Chevy.

He rubs a small scratch on the back fender, but it won't disappear. As he spits on it, a slick, baggy-suited car salesman ambles up.

SALESMAN

I'll give you \$525 for her on a practically new Corvette... and on top of this, I'm going to know 10% off the low price of this beautiful Vette. I'm talking about only \$98 down and \$98 a month. Now, how am I able to make you this incredible offer? I'll tell you! I'm forced to move all the sporty cars off the lot as quickly as I can. Boss's orders. He doesn't want 'em. I think it's a mistake, but what can I do?

Terry begins to get worried as the salesman begins to fondle his new Chevy. He becomes frightened as the salesman attempts to drag him over to one of the 'Vettes. Finally Terry breaks away and jumps back into his car and the salesman continues to rave on as Terry drives away.

HIGH SCHOOL GYM--"AT THE HOP"

Herbie and the Heartbeats, wearing their matching red blazers, rock into a raunchy rendition of their masterpiece--

HERBIE AND THE HEARTBEATS

One, two, three, four-- one, two
three, four-- BAH... BAH... BAH...

BAH... BAH... BAH... BAH... BAH...

BAH... BAH... BAH... BAH... BAH...

BAH... BAH... BAH... At the hop!!

Pulling back from the bandstand, we see the Dewey High School gym--the basketball nets swung back and draped with crepe, the lights half-low, the noise high, and the waxed floor being polished and pounded by stockinged feet as a seething mob of adolescents join in that ancient rite--The Hop.

A hundred of them are dancing and swaying while the band gyrates on a raised platform. Kids on wooden bleachers watch the whirling and spinning mass of ponytails and ducktails, button-down shirts and mid calf skirts, cardigan sweaters with little belts in the back.

THE GIRLS' LAVATORY

Laurie stands in front of a mirror in a line of other girls. She brushes her hair, staring rather despondently at herself in the mirror. The girl next to her is Peg Fuller, a cute cheerleader.

PEG

Hey, why are you so depressed?
You'll forget him in a week.
Listen, after you're elected senior
queen you'll have so many boys
after your bod--

LAURIE

I don't want to go out with anybody
else.

PEG

Laurie, I know it's a drag but you
can't--remember what happened to
Evelyn Chelnick? When Mike went to
the Marines? She had a nervous
breakdown and was acting so wacky
she got run over by a bus.

LAURIE

I just wish I could go with him or
something.

PEG

Laurie, jeez... Come on.

BOY'S LAVATORY

We move down a row of sinks at
which guys are working as intently
on their coiffures as the girls.
Ducktails being smoothed; glassy
waterfalls being primped; the
fronts of crew cuts being waxed to
stand stiff.

Steve stands looking at himself, then glances at Eddie
Quentin standing next to him, dabbing something on his face.

STEVE

What's that?

Eddie jerks his hand down and hides something.

EDDIE

What's what?

Steve turns and pulls Eddie's hand up.

STEVE
 Hey, zit make-up!
 (laughing)
 Wait till I tell--hey, everybody,
 Eddie--

EDDIE
 Come on, Steve--don't. Just cool
 it.

He takes his pimple cream back and Steve continues to laugh. He stops slowly and looks at himself again in the mirror. He finds something on his neck, looks around at Eddie.

STEVE
 (quietly)
 Let me see some of that stuff.

Eddie gives him the tube and Steve dabs it on his neck.

EDDIE
 You leave tomorrow?

Steve nods.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
 You and Laurie engaged yet?

STEVE
 No, but we got it worked out. We're
 still going together but we can
 date other people.

EDDIE
 And screw around--I hear college
 girls really give out.

Suddenly a voice shouts "One-two--" they turn to see a guy at every toilet hit the flusher on "Three," sending a torrent of water down the pipes. Suddenly, there's a rumbling noise as the pipes break and water gushes over the floor. Panic! Everybody crashes for the doors, laughing and shoving each other.

HIGH SCHOOL GYM

The guys tumble out the lavatory door and abruptly cool it as a dumb-looking paunchy teacher stops and looks them over, rocking on his heels. They escape quietly. Steve and Eddie meet Laurie coming out of the girls' lavatory with Peg. They're watching the dancers as Hervie and his band moan through a slow number--"She's So Fine."

STEVE

Come on.

LAURIE

Come on what?

STEVE

Let's dance.

LAURIE

No thanks.

STEVE

Laurie, I want to dance.

LAURIE

Who's stopping you?

Eddie and Peg are listening and watching. Steve smiles at them like everything's okay. He glares at Laurie.

STEVE

(under his breath)

Laurie, I thought since this was our last night together for 3 months, you might want to dance with me.

LAURIE

How sentimental. You'll be back at Christmas.

STEVE

I want to dance now, not at Christmas.

He takes her arm, which she pulls away.

LAURIE

Get your cooties off me--

Eddie and Peg are watching with great interest. Steve smiles at them again. Then he leans down and whispers something to Laurie.

LAURIE (CONT'D)

Go ahead, slug me, scar my face. I wouldn't dance with you if you were the last guy left in this gym.

EDDIE

Uh, Peg, I think we should dance.

PEG

No, this is getting good.

LAURIE

I'll dance with you, Eddie. You don't mind, do you, Peggy?

She takes Eddie by the hand and leaves Steve fuming with Peg.

PEG

Joe College strikes out.

Steve gives her a snide look, then watches Laurie and Eddie laughing, as they join in The Stroll. The whole gym is Strolling in unison, like some strange musical military formation.

HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY

The Stroll music floats from the gym down the empty hall. Curt walks along with his hands in his pockets. One last trip down the grey, locker-lined corridor. He slows and stops by locker 2127. He smiles a little, then flips the dial of the lock. Once to the right--back to the left--then to the right again. Curt hits the handle. It doesn't open. Changed already. He shrugs and goes off down the hallway.

HIGH SCHOOL GYM

Curt walks in the background, behind the line of kids clapping as one couple Strolls down between them. Then Curt hears somebody call him.

MR. WOLFE (O.S.)

Hey--Curtis!

Curt wanders over toward a young teacher, Mr. Wolfe, who is surrounded by a group of admiring (and grade-seeking) girls. Mr. Wolfe wears ivy league clothes and is about twenty-five, not much older than his students.

MR. WOLFE (CONT'D)

Curtis, come here. Help me, will you? I'm surrounded.

GIRL

You won't dance? Come on.

MR. WOLFE

No, really, I'd like to, but I can't.

(MORE)

MR. WOLFE (CONT'D)

I mean, if old Mr. Simpson came in here and saw me dancing with one of you sexy little--excuse me... one of you young ladies, he'd have my rear end.

GIRLS

Aahhh.

The all giggle. Mr. Wolfe shrugs at Curt and heads for a door. Curt follows him and they escape from the girls into the night.

OUTSIDE THE GYM

Curt and Mr. Wolfe come out of the gym. Mr. Wolfe sees a couple of guys skulking around in the shadows smoking cigarettes and laughing. The music has changed to "See You in September."

MR. WOLFE

Hey, Warren. Come on, gentlemen, back inside. Put 'em out. Let's go.

CURT

(grinning as he pulls out a pack of cigarettes)
Kids... Want one?

MR. WOLFE

(taking one from the pack)
All right. Hey, I thought you'd left.

CURT

No, not yet.
(looking for matches)
I have no matches.

Mr. Wolfe takes out a pack of matches and lights both their cigarettes. They walk down a chain-link fence, past dark, venetian-blinded classrooms.

MR. WOLFE

Brother, how do I get stuck with dance supervision? Will you tell me that?... You going back East? Boy, I remember the day I went off. Got drunk as hell the night before.
Just--

CURT

Blotto.

MR. WOLFE

Blotto. Exactly. Barfed on the train all the next day.

CURT

(grinning)

Cute. Very cute. Where'd you go again?

MR. WOLFE

Middlebury. Vermont. Got a scholarship.

CURT

And only stayed a semester.

MR. WOLFE

(smiling and nodding)

One semester. And after all that, I came back here.

CURT

Why?

MR. WOLFE

(shrugging)

Decided I wasn't the competitive type. I don't know... maybe I was scared.

CURT

Well, you know I might find I'm not the competitive type myself.

MR. WOLFE

What do you mean?

CURT

Well, I'm not really sure that I'm going.

MR. WOLFE

Hey, now--don't be stupid. Go. Experience life. Have some fun, Curtis.

Then a voice calls from the shadows.

JANE (O.S.)

Bill?

They turn and see a girl coming out of a doorway. Mr. Wolfe looks at Jane, one of his students, but doesn't say anything.

JANE (CONT'D)

I mean--Mr. Wolfe. Can I speak with you a minute.

(She smiles at Curt.)

Hi, Curt.

CURT

Jane...

He looks at Mr. Wolfe, who seems a little embarrassed. Then, Mr. Wolfe sticks out his hand.

MR. WOLFE

Anyway--good luck, Curtis.

Curt shakes his hand.

CURT

Yeah... I'll see you. Thanks a lot.

Curt walks back toward the gym. Looking around, he sees Mr. Wolfe standing in the shadows with the girl, talking intimately. Curt turns away and goes off. Before going back into the gym, Curt stops. He sees a white T-bird parked among a row of cars in the parking lot. He walks--then starts running toward the car. There's a blonde sitting in the front seat making out with some guy.

Curt leans down to the window and is about to say something to his dream girl. But she turns and he sees it's not her. Her boyfriend glares at him like he's some kind of peeping Tom. Curt backs away awkwardly, trying to smile. He leaves.

CRUISING MAIN STREET--'32 DEUCE COUPE

The yellow Ford coupe is gliding down the street--skimming around corners gracefully as the night lights glide up its lacquered hood. Inside the car, Carol glances at John and smiles. The Wolfman is howling on the radio.

WOLFMAN (V.O.)

A Wolfman exclusive for ya now. The Beach Boys, baby, a brand new group. I predict they gonna go a long way. This is called "Surfin' Safari."

Carol is continuing to jabber on, relating past adventures with her little friends. John is unimpressed.

CAROL

So the next night we found out where they parked and went out with ammunition.

JOHN

Don't you have homework or something to do?

CAROL

No sweat--my mother does it. Anyway, he thought he was had. He started the car and couldn't see through the windshield--and zoomed straight into the canal--it was a riot.

John smiles sarcastically.

CAROL (CONT'D)

I still got some, so don't try anything.

She takes a pressurized can of shaving cream and squirts his nose. He swipes the shaving cream on his nose--swerving--A car honks.

JOHN

Hey, watch it will ya! Jesus Christ, thanks a lot.

(looking at her angrily)

Hey, drivin' is a serious business. I ain't havin' no accidents because of you.

Carol sinks into her corner of the car. She sticks her tongue out for a quick moment.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(catching her look)

Come on, don't give me any grief. I'm warning ya.

CAROL

Spare me, killer.

He stares at her and she shuts up. "Surfin' Safari" is blaring on the radio and she starts twisting with the music. John turns the radio off.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Why'd you do that?

JOHN

I don't like that surfing shit. Rock 'n Roll's been going downhill ever since Buddy Holly died.

CAROL
Don't you think the Beach Boys are
boss!

JOHN
You would, you grungy little twerp.

CAROL
Grungy? You big weenie, if I had a
boyfriend he'd pound you.

JOHN
(looking in the rear-
view mirror)
Sure--ah, shit, Holstein!

She looks around, and sees a police car following them,
bubble lights aglow.

CAROL
Good, a cop--I'm going to tell him
you tried to rape me.

John pulls the car over and stops.

JOHN
Oh, no--No. Hey--

CAROL
It's past my curfew. I'm going to
tell him how old I am, my parents
don't know I'm out and you tried to
rape me. Boy, are you up a creek.

John looks at her.

JOHN
Hey--ah, really--don't say
anything.

She looks at him.

CAROL
If you say "I was a dirty bird.
Carol's not grungy, she's
bitchin'."

The cop is tapping at John's window. John wipes his face.

CAROL (CONT'D)
Say it--I'll tell him.

JOHN
 (quietly)
 I was a dirty bird, Carol's not
 grungy, she's bitchin.'

CAROL
 Okay--I'll think about it.

"The Great Imposter" can be heard on the passing car radios.
 John rolls down his window. He looks at the surly cop.

HOLSTEIN
 Where you going, Milner?

JOHN
 I'm going home--sir.

HOLSTEIN
 Where you been, Milner?

JOHN
 Ah--at the movies--sir.

HOLSTEIN
 Milner, you weren't around the 12th
 and G streets at about 8:30, were
 you?

JOHN
 No, I wa at the movies--like I said--
 - sir.

Holstein looks at him, then steps back, looks at the car.
 Holstein's only a couple years older than John, but the
 uniform separates them by light years.

HOLSTEIN
 Uh-huh. Milner, the reason I
 stopped you was because the light
 on your license plate is out.
 (opening his ticket book)
 I'm gonna have to cite you for
 that. And Milner, the front end of
 this... this... this thing you're
 driving looks a little low.

JOHN
 Oh, no sir. It's twelve and a half
 inches. Regulation size. Now, it's
 been checked several times. You can
 check it if you like, sir.

Holstein just glares at him and then leans in close through
 the window.

HOLSTEIN
Look, Milner.

JOHN
Yes, sir.

HOLSTEIN
You can't fool with the law.

JOHN
Yes, sir.

HOLSTEIN
We know that was you tonight. We have an excellent description of this car. I could run you in right now and I could make it stick. But I'm not gonna do that, Milner, you know why?

John shakes his head no.

HOLSTEIN (CONT'D)
Because I want to catch you in the act. And when I do, I'm gonna nail you, but good. Happy Birthday, Milner.

Holstein drops the ticket through the window onto John's lap. He starts back to his patrol car. When he's out of earshot John answers.

JOHN
Thank you--asshole.

CAROL
(looking over at him)
You're a regular J.D.

JOHN
Here, file that under C.S. over there.

Carol takes the ticket and opens the glove compartment.

CAROL
C.S.? What's that stand for?

JOHN
Chicken shit--that's what it is.

CAROL
Oh...

She looks amazed as she adds the new ticket to a mess of similar tickets crammed in the glove compartment. The police car pulls by them. John scowls, then roars his engine and pulls back into the stream of traffic.

CRUISING MAIN STREET--STEVE'S '58 CHEVY

Terry is looking and feeling like he's got it made. He downshifts and slows for a red light. A very mean-looking black '55 Chevy--blown, scooped and slicked--pulls up next to him. The driver, Bob Falfa, has a gum-chewing girlfriend sitting almost on top of him. Terry challenges the '55 Chevy by revving his engine.

Bob Falfa doesn't even look over. He revs his engine--which sounds like a cross between a Boeing 707 and a SuperChief. Terry can't believe it. He quits revving his engine--feeling deflated.

Terry looks over at the snotty grin on Falfa's girlfriends' face.

GIRLFRIEND

Ain't he neat?

Terry doesn't say anything and Bob Falfa glares over at him.

FALFA

Hey, you know a guy around here with a piss yellow deuce coupe--supposed to be hot stuff?

TERRY

You mean John Milner?

Falfa nods slowly.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Hey, nobody can beat him, man. He's got the fastest--

FALFA

I ain't nobody, dork. Right?

TERRY

Right...

FALFA

Hey, you see this Milner, you tell him I'm lookin' for him, huh? Tell him I aim to blow his ass right off the road.

GIRLFRIEND

(giving another snotty
smile)

Ain't he neat?

Terry doesn't say anything. There's another incredible scream as Falfa roars off, leaving Terry to stare through his smoke. Terry accelerates the '58 Chevy--at a prudent speed.

As the radio blares "Almost Grown," Terry glides past the lighted stores slowly, taking in everything with wide eyes from his beautiful new car.

Terry passes a steaming rear-end collision at an intersection where two guys and two girls are all yelling.

Then, suddenly, he spots a girl--walking--alone. His mouth drops open in amazement as he slows to a crawl. Debbie, nineteen, with blonde hair, wearing a blue and white spaghetti-strap dress, strolls along the sidewalk.

Terry rolls the powerful engine, but she ignores him. As he passes her, he speeds up.

TERRY

What a babe... what a bitchin'
babe... And Wolfman Baby, she's all
mine.

Terry tears around the corner and starts his approach once more. He quickly whips out his comb, touches up his hair and settles down into a comfortable slouch.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Okay, honey, here I come--James
Dean lives!

He hits the clutch, roars the engine a couple more times and then--disaster. Debbie passes behind some rough looking dudes on motorcycles, parked along the curb. One especially vicious biker turns and looks at Terry as he passes.

Terry roars off around the block.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Stay cool, honey--don't let those
creeps bug you. Wolfman, please
don't let those creeps bug her...
please.

As Debbie passes the bikers, they hoot, holler, and make barnyard noises.

From the cat calls, and Debbie's manner it seems obvious that Debbie is a girl a lot of boys have "known."

She has walked clear of the bikers as Terry screeches around the corner again. He pulls up alongside her and again slows to a crawl. They pass each other for awhile, but she doesn't look over.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Hi!

(lowering his voice)

Hello... buenos noches? Need a lift? Nice night for a walk? Do you know John Milner? Curt Henderson? Sure you wouldn't like a ride somewhere? Did anyone ever tell you that you look just like Connie Stevens?

This stops her and she turns--Terry hits the brakes and the car bounces.

TERRY (CONT'D)

You do! I mean it! Just like Connie Stevens. I met her once.

DEBBIE

For real?

TERRY

Yeah. At a Dick Clark road show.

Debbie starts slowly toward the car.

DEBBIE

You really think I look like her?

TERRY

No shit--excuse me, I mean I'm not just feeding you a line. You look like Connie Stevens. What's your name?

DEBBIE

Debbie. I always thought I looked like Sandra Dee.

TERRY

Oh yeah--well, you look a lot like her too.

DEBBIE

This your car?

TERRY

Yeah. I'm Terry the--they call me
Terry the Tiger.

DEBBIE

It's really tough looking.

TERRY

What school do you go to?

DEBBIE

Dewey--can it lay rubber?

TERRY

Oh yeah, it's got a 327 Chevy mill
with six Strombergs.

DEBBIE

Wow--bitchin' tuck and roll. I just
love the feel of tuck and roll
upholstery.

TERRY

You do?

DEBBIE

Yeah.

TERRY

Well, come on in--I'll let you feel
it. I mean, you can touch it if you
want--

(realizing it's coming
out wrong he gets
nervous)

I mean the upholstery, you know.

DEBBIE

Okay.

Terry is elated. He climbs out of the car and she slides in
the driver's side. Terry climbs back in next to her and
slams the door. She's sitting right next to him--like a real
date should. Terry gets a little nervous.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Peel out.

TERRY

What?

DEBBIE

Peel out. I love it when guys peel
out.

Terry nods, checks his clutch, revs the engine to a high-pitched whine and they're off--

The tires smoke, scream, the car shots off, fish-tailing, nearly hitting a parked car, straightening out... and disappears down Main Street.

HIGH SCHOOL GYM--THE HOP

On stage, the band is "taking five." They're looking tough for the girls while the Student Body Secretary is making announcements at the mike.

GIRL

--a great band and they came all the way from Stockton. Let's hear it.

There's applause as the girl continues.

GIRL (CONT'D)

And we want to thank Darby Langdon, who did all these neat decorations.

There's more applause. Standing among the crowd, Steve and Laurie both look angry.

LAURIE

I don't care if you leave this second.

GIRL

(into the mike)

Now the next dance is gonna be a snowball and leading it off is last year's class president Steven Bolander-- and this year's head cheerleader, Laurie Henderson.

There's applause, whistles and cheers from the crowd. A blue spotlight floats over the dance floor and then lands on Steve and Laurie, who are in the midst of their argument.

STEVE

What's wrong with you! You're acting like a snotty--

Laurie squints into the spotlight and realizes everybody's watching them.

LAURIE

Oh God, come on.

STEVE

Come on what?

LAURIE

(pulling him toward the
floor)

Oh, Steven--please, everybody's
watching. Smile or something.

Steve gives a sick smile as she drags him out onto the floor. A record needle scratches and "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" blares out as Steve and Laurie dance alone in the middle of the floor. The crowd quiets, getting a little misty about this soon-to-be separated teenage couple. For their part, Steve and Laurie are arguing, whispering in each other's ears.

LAURIE (CONT'D)

You think I care if you go off. You think I'm going to crack up or something. Are you conceited!

STEVE

Quit--quit pinching--I don't know why I ever started taking you out in the first place.

He takes her hand from the tucked-under-the-chin position and puts it around him, in a bear-hug.

LAURIE

You take me out? When we first met you didn't have enough sense to take the garbage out... I asked you out, remember?

STEVE

What do you mean, you asked me out!

LAURIE

Backwards Day--remember? If I had waited for you to ask me--even after that you didn't call me for two weeks.

STEVE

I was busy.

LAURIE

You were scared. Dave Oboler told me. Then when you did ask me out you didn't kiss me for three dates.

STEVE

Well--I was--

LAURIE

Scared--Jim Kaylor told me. I even asked my father why you hadn't kissed me.

STEVE

Your father--great!

LAURIE

He said he thought you were bright and you'd probably think of kissing me after a while.

He moans.

LAURIE (CONT'D)

You didn't, of course. I had to. Remember that picnic?

STEVE

Out at the canyon?

LAURIE

Oh boy! You can't remember anything-- the first one, up at the lake. That was the first time you kissed me--I practically had to throw myself at you.

STEVE

(quietly)
I remember.

They continue to dance slowly. Laurie starts to cry, hating herself for it. Steve loosens a minute and looks at her.

STEVE (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

LAURIE

Go to hell.

He holds her tighter and they circle the floor, all alone, the crowd watching quietly, the gym echoing with "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes."

THE GYM PARKING LOT

Curt is leaning against a car in the parking lot. He's looking up at the stars and listening to the music floating out from the gym.

WENDY

What are you doin', stealing hub caps?

A pretty, dark-haired girl, Wendy, slides up next to him and leans against the car. There's an awkward pause like that which happens often when two people who used to be close meet after things have changed.

CURT

Well--hey, Wendy.

WENDY

How've you been?

CURT

Fine. Great. How've you been?

A horn honks and Wendy turns to a VW that's idling nearby.

WENDY

I'm coming--wait a sec.
(turning back to Curt)
She's got her car. Hey, I thought you were going away to school.

CURT

Ah, maybe... maybe.

WENDY

Same old Curt. All the time we were going together you never knew what you were doing... well, anyway, I gotta go.

CURT

Hey, Wendy--where are you going?

WENDY

Nowhere.

CURT

(smiling at her)
Well, you mind if I come along?

WENDY

(affectionately)
Okay.

CURT

Okay.

They go off toward the VW and climb in.

BACK INSIDE THE
GYM

The hop is almost over and the lights have been lowered, conservatively. Steve and Laurie hold each other, hardly moving and he kisses her. Still kissing, they continue to circle slowly--until a short, totally bald teacher comes and pokes Steve in the side.

MR. KROOT

All right, Bolander, break it up.
You know the rules. You and your
panting girlfriend want to do that
you'll have to go someplace else.

He gives them a disgusted look and starts off.

STEVE

Hey, Kroot!

The teacher turns, surprised by the omission of "Mr."

STEVE (CONT'D)

Why don't you go kiss a duck.

Kroot's beady eyes widen and he comes back.

KROOT

What? What did you say?

STEVE

I said go kiss a duck, marblehead.

Kroot is stunned and people have stopped dancing to watch

MR. KROOT

Bolander--you're suspended. You're--
don't even come Monday. You are
out!

STEVE

(smiling broadly)

I graduated last semester.

Suddenly everything has changed. Mr. Kroot is furious, but unable to do anything. He finally storms off in a huff. Steve, Laurie and the people watching all laugh.

STEVE (CONT'D)

(to Laurie)

Get your shoes. Let's go before we
get thrown out.

THE GYM PARKING LOT

Steve and Laurie walk toward her Edsel. In the background Wolfman Jack is taking a phone call from someone.

MAN (V.O.)
Hello, Wolfman.

WOLFMAN (V.O.)
Who's this?

MAN
This is Weird Willard.

WOLFMAN
Hold on a minute, let me get my pants off... you understand?

Steve opens the door to the car and then turns Laurie and kisses her.

STEVE
Why don't we go to the canal?

LAURIE
(teasing)
What for?

STEVE
Listen, I can get tough with you too, you know.

LAURIE
Yeah, hard tough.

She kisses him and they get into the car. As they pull out, the Wolfman continues his conversation on the radio.

WOLFMAN (V.O.)
I got 'em down around my knees, man. Wear these tight pants. I can't get 'em... All right, I'm gonna do my little dance now, man.

And the Wolfman goes into an insane rain-dance rhythm as we hear "Little Darlin'"

CRUISING MAIN STREET--STEVE'S '58 CHEVY

Terry not only looks cool now, but is cool, singing with the radio, a girl beside him. Hot stuff.

Terry ever so slowly tries to put his arm around her, but by the time he manages it, he has to shift.

They drive by some kids having a car-to-car water pistol war.

TERRY

I go to Dewey too, ya know.

DEBBIE

I never seen ya.

TERRY

I bug out a lot. When I graduate, I'm going to join the Marines.

DEBBIE

They got the best uniforms. But what if there's a war?

TERRY

With the bomb, who's going to start it? We'd all blow up together. Anyway, I'd rather be at the front. I'm like that--rather be where the action is, you know. Once I got in a fight with--

DEBBIE

I love Eddie Burns.

Terry stops, trying to figure out where their conversation went.

TERRY

Eddie Burns--oh, yeah, Eddie Burns. I met him once, too.

DEBBIE

You really think I look like Connie Stevens? I like her--Tuesday Weld is too much of a beatnik, don't you think?

TERRY

Yeah, beatniks are losers.

DEBBIE

Who do you like? I mean, singers and stuff.

Terry slowly maneuvers his arm around her.

TERRY

Ah hell--I like most of the people you like.

DEBBIE
 (putting her head on his
 shoulder)
 That's nice--we got a lot in
 common.

Both of them start singing with the radio. Suddenly she puts
 her hand on his leg.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
 You know what I'd like more than
 anything in the world right now?

Terry almost does a comic strip "Gulp!"

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
 I'd love a double Chubby Chuck.
 Isn't that what you'd like more
 than anything right now?

TERRY
 (quietly)
 Sure...

MEL'S DRIVE-IN
 The endless chrome-flashing parade
 continues. Among the lines of fine
 cars, Terry is parked in the '58
 Chevy next to an order speaker on a
 metal pole. Terry leans out the car
 window and orders into the
 intercom.

TERRY
 A double Chubby Chuck, a Mexicali
 Chili Barb, two orders of French
 fries--

DEBBIE
 And cherry cokes.

The intercom clicks on and a garbled voice squawks back at
 him.

INTERCOM
 Ark, wark, dork.

TERRY
 (pushing the button)
 Now wait a minute. What? Huh?

INTERCOM
 Ark, wark, dork.

TERRY

Yeah, right. Cool.

As they wait for their order, several guys in various passing cars yell sleazy greetings to Debbie. Suddenly, a rough- looking face, belonging to Vic Lozier, pops in her window.

VIC

Hey, Deb. How's my soft baby?

DEBBIE

Beat it, Vic. I'm not your baby.

Terry nervously pretends not to hear.

VIC

Oh, come on, honey. So I never called you back. I've been, you know, busy...

DEBBIE

Three weeks... besides, it only took one night for me to realize that if brains were dynamite, you couldn't blow your nose.

VIC

Look who's talking. Who's the wimp you're hanging out with now? Einstein?

DEBBIE

Tiger happens to be very intelligent. Unlike you. I know every thing your dirty little mind is thinking...

(She looks out the window, down at Vic's pants)

...it shows...

TERRY

Hey, now--

(his voice cracks)

I mean, hey now, buddy, the lady obviously doesn't--

VIC

Look, creep, you want a knuckle sandwich?

TERRY

Ah, no thanks, I'm waiting for a double Chubby--Chuck...

VIC

Then shut your smart ass mouth!
I'll call ya, Deb, some night when I'm hard up.

DEBBIE

I won't be home.

Vic makes a kiss-off noise. She lights a match and flicks it at him. He finally leaves.

TERRY

You seem to, ah--know a lot of weird guys.

DEBBIE

That sex fiend is not a friend of mine; he's just horny. That's why I like you, you're different.

TERRY

I am? You really think I'm intelligent?

She moves very close to him and whispers in his ear.

DEBBIE

Yeah. And I'll bet you're smart enough to get us some brew.

TERRY

Brew?

DEBBIE

Yeah.

TERRY

Brew... oh--yeah... oh, sure...
(she kisses him)
Yes! Liquor! This place is too crowded anyway.

Terry backs out and drives off, leaving the approaching car hop standing in an empty parking space.

CAR HOP

What about your double Chubby Chuck, mexicali-chili-barb and
(looking at the tray)
--two cherry cokes, sir?

CRUISING MAIN STREET-'57 VOLKSWAGEN

We see the white T-bird ahead for just a moment, before it accelerates, passes a car and disappears, as we hear "Peppermint Twist" from the radio.

In the VW, Curt is in the back, shaking the driver's seat, yelling at Bobbie. Wendy is in front next to Bobbie.

CURT

There--don't you see it? Speed up,
you're losing her--

BOBBIE

Quit shouting in my ear!

CURT

Cut around him, cut around him.

The little VW swerves and cuts around an old dagoed Dodge, then speeds along the fast lane.

Ahead, we catch a glimpse of the T-bird as it turns a corner.

CURT (CONT'D)

There, hang a right--over there!

Bobbie turns, somebody honks, she hits the curb, shifting madly she mis-clutches; the beetle lugs forward; Curt falls back in the seat and Wendy looks at him.

CURT (CONT'D)

You lost her!

WENDY

What's wrong with you? You know
Bobbie gets nose bleeds when she's
upset.

BOBBIE

I do not! You shut up!

CURT

Lost her again. Ah, Wendy, my old
lover, come back here and console
me.

WENDY

Eat your heart out. Who was she
anyway?

CURT

I don't know, but I'm going to find out.

BOBBIE

I know her!

There are a few moments of silence as Bobbie lets Curt sweat it out. Finally, Curt breaks.

CURT

Okay, come on, who is she?

BOBBIE

You know Mr. Beeman? He owns Hepcat Jewelers.

CURT

Yeah.

BOBBIE

Well, she's his wife.

CURT

But she was young and beautiful, and cruising 10th Street. You're thinking of someone else.

WENDY

Mr. Beeman's not so old.

CURT

What cruel fate keeps me from my true love? How am I ever going to meet her?

WENDY

(to Bobbie)

Did you know that my ex is going to become a presidential aide? It's supposed to be a secret, but his big ambition in life is to shake hands with President Kennedy. How are you going to accomplish that at J.C.?

CURT

Maybe I've grown up. Maybe I've changed my mind.

WENDY

Maybe you don't think you can do it!

CURT
Maybe you should shut up!

WENDY
Maybe I will... and maybe I won't.

CURT
Why don't you move your bod into
aft chamber, where we might discuss
this in private.

BOBBIE
(seeing that Wendy is
considering it)
Thanks a lot.

CURT
Come on, Wendy? She doesn't say
anything. They pull up to a
stoplight. Wendy looks at the red
stoplight and then abruptly gets
out of the car and jumps in the
back.

WENDY
Well, slide over, I'm not sitting
on your lap.

She gets in and the car goes off.

In the back seat, Curt and Wendy are talking softly. He puts
his arm around her and she makes a face, but doesn't remove
it. Bobbie watches in the rear-view mirror, Curt sees her.

CURT
To the Opera, James.

BOBBIE
Drop dead.

CURT
Unless you want to go to Gallo Dam
and have an orgy.

WENDY
You wish.

Curt looks at her and turns her head. He kisses her and puts
his arm around her. They neck. The radio plays "Barbara
Ann."

The little VW flashes by in the stream of traffic. Bobbie drives, glancing in here rear-view mirror occasionally and also watching the station wagon ahead, in which two pairs of feet are dancing against the back window.

Wendy pulls away from Curt's lips and looks out the window.

WENDY (CONT'D)

I've been silly. I'm glad you're going to stay. Maybe we'll have some classes together.

CURT

Maybe.

BOBBIE

(from the front seat)

Look, there's Kip Pullman! He's so neat.

Wendy turns and leans forward, laughing. Curt watches her seriously, studying her.

BOBBIE (CONT'D)

Do you know Kip?

CURT

Huh? Yeah, I know him.

BOBBIE

Talk to him when we go by.

CURT

What do you want me to say?

BOBBIE

Anything... I just want to meet him.

They pull up next to Kip's car and Curt leans forward and yells out Bobbie's window.

CURT

Kip, baby, what's up?

KIP

Henderson, long time no see. Whadaya been doing?

CURT

Not much, just wanted to let you know that Bobbie here is hopelessly in love with you and trembles at the sight of your rippling biceps...

Bobbie swerves the car away and turns a corner. She stops on a dime at the curb.

BOBBIE

You creep, fink, son-of-a-bitch--

She turns and starts flailing at Curt with her purse.

CURT

Help, wait! Joke--Joke--Bobbie, remember your nose bleeds!

BOBBIE

Get out--get out of my car--I hate you!

CURT

Excuse me--ouch--Wendy--I got to go now.

Wendy is laughing and Curt climbs over her out of the small car. He gets out and closes the door. Wendy changes seats and looks at him seriously.

WENDY

Curt, I hope I see you at registration. Call me if you want. It was nice seeing you again.

CURT

See ya.

The car pulls off and Curt watches it. Suddenly, he sees something--the T-bird going the other way down the street.

CURT (CONT'D)

Oh shit--there!! Wait!

The VW's gone and Curt starts after the T-bird on foot. He runs down the middle of the street, oblivious to the horns honking and the cars swerving to miss him.

We move with Curt as he moves like a broken field runner through the traffic only to finally lose the girl and the Thunderbird and to slow and finally stop, standing on the white line. Cars slow down and kids rubberneck as they go by him.

CRUISING G STREET--'32 YELLOW DEUCE COUPE

John is driving and the Wolfman is howling on the radio while Carol is having the time of her life.

WOLFMAN (V.O.)

Went to a dance lookin' for
romance. Found Barbara Ann...
baby... Hey, this one is for all
you out there watchin' the
Submarine Races.

And the radio moans into "Who Wrote the Book of Love." Carol sits with her feet up against the dash. John knocks them off and she scowls at him.

CAROL

I'm so thirsty, I could die. Just a
little 10 cent coke to wet my
whistle. It won't take a minute, I
can drink it in the--

John suddenly hits the brakes and Carol almost hits the floor. John reaches over and opens the door.

JOHN

Why don't you just get out and get
one then! So long, goodbye, hasta
lumbago.

She stares at him, shaken, looking sweet and helpless. He turns and looks at her. A tear rolls down her cheek slowly. John can't take it.

JOHN (CONT'D)

All right, one coke and then home.

Carol is delighted. She slams the door. John takes off.

CAROL

Isn't it great, the way I can cry
whenever I want. A lot of people
can't do that, but Vicki showed me
how. I bet you can't cry.

JOHN

Don't count on it. I may surprise
you any minute now.

MEL'S DRIVE-IN

John cruises around the lot until
he finds a space among the rows of
dazzling cars.

(MORE)

MEL'S DRIVE-IN (CONT'D)
 He pulls in and leans out to hit
 the intercom button.

JOHN
 (into intercom)
 One ten cent coke. Is ice extra?
 All right, ice.

CAROL
 Thanks for nothing.

She looks around, sitting up so maybe some of her friends
 will see her in John's neat car.

CAROL (CONT'D)
 Oh rats, I thought some of my
 friends might be here.

JOHN
 Probably a couple of weeks past
 their bedtime.

CAROL
 Wait, there's Dee Dee. I hope she
 sees me.

JOHN
 Oh Shit, Dee Dee!

A long line of cars coast past. Occasionally, someone yells
 a greeting to John. The car hop brings the coke. Then a
 couple, Al and Linda, come over. They lean in the window
 smiling--John prays they don't see Carol.

AL
 Hiya, John. Say, do you think if I
 brought my Mopar by the shop Monday
 you could spot weld the bumper
 bracket?

JOHN
 Have to be before noon.

AL
 Sure. Hey, have you met Linda?

JOHN
 No. Hi--ahh, this is my, ahh,
 cousin, Carol. I'm kinda
 babysitting tonight.

CAROL
 Babysitting!!

She slugs John on the arm. John grabs her arm as she starts to swing again.

JOHN
 Jesus--watch it, will yuh?
 (smiling at Al)
 Been hittin' me all night. Kids
 will be kids, you know.

She struggles to hit him and spills her coke all over the car. He pushes her rather roughly against the door.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 Watch out--damn it! Look what--why
 don't you grow up!
 (looking at Al again)
 We don't get along too well. It's
 been like this--

CAROL
 You spastic creep!

She is about to really cry this time. She jumps out of the car and runs off down the street. John wipes his car out as Al and Linda watch in amazement.

JOHN
 We don't get along too well. You
 know what cousins are like.

AL
 Yeah... well, I'll see ya on Monday
 before noon.

John mutters profanities to himself, but his anger subsides after a few moments. He looks back in the direction Carol went. All he can see are two Hell's Angels on choppers rolling in the same direction. He looks a little concerned and starts the coupe.

CRUISING MAIN STREET--'32 YELLOW DEUCE COUPE

John roars along looking for her until he sees her walking angrily along the sidewalk--being followed by a Ford full of guys.

John passes Carol and the Ford and pulls over and stops just ahead of them. Carol stops when she sees John. The Ford also stops and the guys call out to her. She considers the situation a moment, then runs and gets in with John. He pulls off and she grins at him happily.

CAROL
 Hi cousin, how's your bod?

SCENIC LIQUOR STORE--STEVE'S '58 CHEVY

Terry pulls into the parking lot and stops. He looks up at the flashing liquor store sign and considers his battle plan. "Maybe Baby" by Buddy Holly is playing on the radio.

DEBBIE

Do you have an ID?

TERRY

No... hey, but no sweat. What'll it be? Beer, little wine?

DEBBIE

If you could get some Old Harper, I'd give you a French kiss.

TERRY

Old Harper, rrrright! He gives her an OK sign with his fingers and goes over to the store. He starts to enter, then stops and thinks. He sees a man in a business suit approaching, and smiles.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Excuse me, sir, while you're in there-- I mean, since you're going in anyway, I wonder if--

MAN

Yes, son?

TERRY

Could you--sir--could you give me the time?

MAN

(looking at his watch)
Why sure, it's a quarter to twelve.

TERRY

Great. Quarter to twelve. Thanks a lot.

The man regards him, Terry pretends to start off until the man goes in. Terry pulls himself together as another man approaches, or rather stumbles up, being older, scruffy and, essentially, a bum.

TERRY (CONT'D)
 Pardon me, sir, but I lost my I.D.
 in--in a flood and I'd like to get
 some Old Harper, hard stuff. Would
 you mind buying a bottle for me?

The bum is still trying to focus on Terry and smiles.

BUM
 Why certainly, I lost my wife, too--
 her name wasn't Idy, though, and it
 wasn't in a flood--but I know what
 ya--

TERRY
 Thanks, here's enough for a pint.

The old man takes the money and falls into the store. Terry watches and then waves to Debbie in the car that everything is cool.

As he waits for the bum to come back out, the first man in the suit exits. Terry smiles at him again.

TERRY (CONT'D)
 Hi. Still quarter to twelve.

MAN
 Right-o. Night.

TERRY
 Night.

The man gets into the car and backs out. Terry goes over to the window of the liquor store and looks to see how the wino's doing with his booze. Terry sees the liquor store owner setting four bottles of cheap wine on the counter.

TERRY (CONT'D)
 (gesturing through the
 window from outside)
 Hey, no. Not wine. Ssss--hey!

The owner turns and sees Terry waving. Terry ducks out of sight. When he looks back again, Terry sees the old bum is gone! Terry can't believe it. He finally enters the store.

INSIDE THE LIQUOR STORE

Terry tries to look very casual as he sidles up to the counter. Country-Western music hums over the liquor in hi-fi.

TERRY
 (smiling at the owner)
 Hi there--ah, say--was there an old
 man in here a minute ago?

OWNER
 Yeah. He went out the back.

Terry is destroyed.

OWNER (CONT'D)
 You want something?

Terry looks at the man and the endless rows of liquor behind
 him.

TERRY
 Yeah--ah--let me have a Three
 Musketeers, ah, and a ball point
 pen ther, a comp, a pint of Old
 Harper, couple of flashlight
 batteries and some of this beef
 jerky.

The owner puts everything into a bag and starts to ring it
 up.

OWNER
 Okay, got an I.D. for the liquor?

TERRY
 A what? Oh, sure--
 (feeling his pockets)
 Oh nuts, I left it--I left it in
 the car.

OWNER
 Sorry, you'll have to get it before--
 -

TERRY
 Well, I can't. I also ah, forgot
 the car.

The owner takes the liquor out of the bag and puts it back
 on the shelf. Terry stands there. The owner takes the money
 from him and gives him his change.

OUTSIDE THE LIQUOR STORE

Terry comes back to the Chevy with the bag full of junk.
 Debbie smiles at him excitedly and scoots over to the
 window.

DEBBIE

Hey, did ya get it? Ya get it, ya get it?

He hands her the bag.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

You got it. You got it!

She goes through the bag and finds a comb and the batteries.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

You didn't get it. Why didn't you get it?

TERRY

Ah, well, I needed some things and I thought as long as I was in there-- look, Debbie, can you loan me a dollar?

DEBBIE

What? Are you for real? Come on. Girls don't pay. Guys pay.

TERRY

Yeah, well, see--I've only got a fifty and he doesn't have change.

DEBBIE

Well, I can't believe this... I really cannot believe this. Here.

She takes the money from a squeeze-open plastic change purse and hands it to him. Terry smiles weakly and goes back to try his luck again at the liquor store.

He stops in front of the door as a young guy with numerous tattoos on his bulging arms approaches the liquor store.

TERRY

Hi--excuse me. I was wondering-- could you, ah--

GUY

Buy you a bottle of booze. Yeah, I know. You lost your I.D. What kind do you want?

TERRY

(amazed)

Gee, that's terrific. Ah, just some ah--Old Harper.

He takes Terry's money and enters the store. The clerk hands the man a bottle of Old Harper. Terry waves excitedly to Debbie, lowering his pants a bit. Suddenly, there's a gunshot! Terry whirls to see the young man stuffing cash from the register into his pockets, backing away with a smoking gun. He rushes out of the store, tossing the bottle to Terry and running off into the night. Suddenly, the owner emerges from behind the counter, shooting wildly. Terry ducks and heads for the car with his pint of Old Harper.

AUTO WRECKING YARD

John's '32 deuce coupe crunches to a gravelly stop in front of a dark auto-wrecking yard. John and Carol get out and climb over the fence. They walk through a valley of twisted, rusting piles of squashed, mashed and crushed automobiles. John sticks his hand into his pockets moodily and stops and looks at one of the burnt-out cars.

JOHN

That's Freddy Benson's Vette... he got his head on with some drunk. Never had a chance. Damn good driver, too. What a waste when somebody gets it and it ain't even their fault.

CAROL

Needs a paint job, that's for sure.

John doesn't hear her and walks on.

JOHN

That Vette over there. Walt Hawkins, a real ding-a-ling. Wrapped it around a fig tree out on Mesa Vista with five kids in it. Draggin' with five kids in the car, how dumb can you get? All the ding-a-lings get it sooner or later. Maybe that's why they invented cars. To get rid of the ding-a-lings. Tough when they take someone with them.

CAROL

You never had a wreck though--you told me.

JOHN

I come pretty close a couple of times. Almost rolled once. So far I've been quick enough to stay out of here. The quick and the dead.

CAROL

I bet you're the fastest.

JOHN

I've never been beaten--lot of punks have tried. See that '41 Ford there? Used to be the fastest wheels in the valley. I never got a chance to race old Earl. He got his in '55 in the hairiest crash ever happened around here. He was racing a '54 Chevy, bored and loaded, out on the old Oakdale Highway and every damn kid in town was out there. The Chevy lost its front wheel doing about 85. The idiot had torched the spindles to lower the front end and it snapped right off. He slammed bam into the Ford and then they both of them crashed into a row of cars and all those kids watchin! Jesus, eight kids killed including both drivers, looked like a battlefield. Board of Education was so impressed they filmed it. Show it now in Drivers Education, maybe you'll see it. Anyway, since then street racing's gone underground. No spectators, I mean. Too bad.

CAROL

I'd love to see you race.

Carol takes his hand and they walk a bit, until John realizes what he's doing, and drops her hand and pulls away.

JOHN

Come on! None of that.

CAROL

Whadaya mean? I'm the one who's supposed to say that. Whadaya afraid of? I'll keep it above the waist.

JOHN

Funny...

(he looks at her for a moment)

Who knows, in a few years--but not now, bunny rabbit.

CAROL
Bunny rabbit! Oh brother, you are
such a drip.

She stomps off and gets back into the coupe, quickly rolling up all the windows. John saunters up and finds the door locked.

JOHN
Come on, open the door.

CAROL
If you say "Carol's not a bunny,
she's a foxy little tail."

John grins and starts to pull his keys out of his pocket. He stops grinning: Carol grins and dangles his keys inside the car. John leans against the window, closes his eyes, a defeated man.

JOHN
(quietly)
Carol's not a rabbit, she's a foxy
little tail.

He hears the button click up and slowly opens the door.

CAROL
You say the cutest things.

John gets into the car.

WOLFMAN (V.O.)
Sneakin' around with the Wolfman,
Baby.

The Wolfman's gravelly voice whispers over the airwaves as John and Carol drive out of the shadowy car grave-yard.

WILSON'S APPLIANCE STORE

Curt is sitting on the hood of a parked De Soto watching a row of televisions in the window of an appliance store. Twelve silent images of Ricky Nelson on "Ozzie and Harriet" glow in the dark showroom. Music from passing cars rises and fades as they cruise behind Curt. The Wolfman can be heard.

WOLFMAN (V.O.)
Oh, this is gonna strike a raw
nerve, mama. Here's the Platters.

The Wolfman howls and the Platters wail into the "Great Pretender." Curt sings along, mouthing the words. Then somebody walks in front of Curt.

Curt pays no attention, then sense the presence of another guy. Soon he realizes that he is being surrounded by a group of three hoods. They slink up from all sides wearing car coats with the name "PHAROAHS" embroidered across the back.

Curt looks them over--they all watch the silent tv's. One of them, without turning, talks to Curt.

JOE
Whadaya doin', creep?

CURT
Me?

JOE
No, I'm talking to the other fifty creeps here. You know Gil Gonzales?

CURT
Gil Gonzales... no.

JOE
Don't know Gil... you oughta. You really should.

CURT
Yeah... why?

JOE
No reason... he's a friend of ours... and that's his car you're sitting on.

There's silence. Curt looks uneasy and slides quietly off the De Soto. Curt sticks his hands in his pockets and starts slowly down the sidewalk.

JOE (CONT'D)
Hey, where ya goin?

CURT
(turning)
No place. Not going any place.

JOE
Ya must be going someplace--I mean ya left here. Bring him over here, Ants, I want to show him something.

Ants (a tall, ghoulish-looking kid who probably got his name from the scar across his face which has recently been stitched to look like a party of ants marching across his cheek) brings Curt back gently.

Joe is bent over looking across the hood of the De Soto.

JOE (CONT'D)
Here--bend down, look here. See
that? Right across there--see?

CURT
I guess so--yeah.

Joe unbends and lightly punches Curt on the shoulder.

JOE
You scratched it, man. Where do you
get off sitting on Gil's car, huh,
man?

Joe gives him another charming punch on the shoulder. The others have left the tv's and are watching Curt now, looking puzzled and pained at the scratch on the car.

CURT
I'm sorry. It's not much of a
scratch. I don't think he'll even--

JOE
It ain't the size that's in
question here. It's the principle.
Jeez, this is tough... what should
we do with ya?

ANTS
Tie him to the car and drag him.

Curt turns and laughs at Ants' suggestion. He laughs and laughs until he realizes nobody else is; they are pondering the suggestion.

CURT
That's funny
(clearing his throat)
Hey, you guys know Toby Juarez?
He's a Pharoah, isn't he?

JOE
Toby Juarez. Yeah, sure we know
Toby.

CURT
He's a friend of mine.

They all grin and laugh with Curt who feels better.

JOE
 Sure, good old Toby. He's a friend
 of yours. That's cool... we all
 hate his guts.

Curt stops smiling again.

CURT
 Oh--well, I don't know him that
 much anyway.

JOE
 We killed him last night.

ANTS
 Tied him to a car and dragged him.

Curt looks at them both, praying they're kidding. Joe looks
 at him, shaking his head.

JOE
 This is going to take some
 thinking. You better come with us
 maybe.
 (putting his arm around
 Curt)
 Go riding with the Pharoahs...

CURT
 Well, I don't think I can--I gotta--

JOE
 I know just how ya feel.

Joe leads Curt gently but forcibly toward an incredible
 maroon '51 Merc that's been lowered and chopped so that the
 windows are like ominous slits and the whole machine has a
 submarine quality. Joe opens the door and Curt slides into
 the white fluffy interior. In the small back window, a metal
 plaque reads "PHAROAHS."

The third member of the gang is Carlos, a short little kid
 about fifteen years old. He appears tougher than the rest
 with a cigarette dangling from his mouth. Joe heads for the
 driver's side and Ants and Carlos both go for the front
 passenger door.

CARLOS
 Shotgun!

ANTS
 No, I called it!

CARLOS

When?

ANTS

Before we picked you up.

CARLOS

You can't call it for the whole night, man. I got it now. Get in the back.

Carlos gives Ants a hard look and Ants backs down and climbs in the back with Curt. The Pharoah's Mercury roars out from the curb.

CRUISING MAIN STREET--PHAROAHS' '51 MERCURY

The radio blares "Ain't that a Shame?" as Curt sits in the back seat of the car looking very nervous. He eyes the three hoods cautiously. They are sitting super low, their eyes just visible over the windows.

Then, Curt happens to look around. He does a double take. Through the narrow window he sees the Thunderbird passing in the opposite direction. Curt swivels and watches through the back window as the T-bird disappears around a corner. Then, he shakes his head. Of all the times to be trapped with the Pharoahs.

On the radio the Wolfman is giving a phone operator a bad time and the Pharoahs are chuckling.

As the Wolfman continues on the radio, the cars pass though the night like a metallic ballet. The Pharoahs' Mercury (with Curt aboard) passes Laurie's Edsel...

Inside the Edsel, Steve is driving. He puts his arm around Laurie and she leans her head on his shoulder.

As the Edsel cruises by in one direction, John Milner's '32 Ford coupe rumbles by on the other side of the street.

INSIDE THE DEUCE COUPE

Carol is laughing like mad as the Wolfman continues. Even John has to chuckle at the mad D.J.'s raspy patter.

WOLFMAN (V.O.)

Who is this on the Wolfman telephone?

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Hello, Collect...

WOLFMAN
 Pardon me. Your name is Colette?

OPERATOR
 Yes. Collect Call.

WOLFMAN
 Your name is Colette Call?

OPERATOR
 Sir, this is the Operator.

WOLFMAN
 Are you French, Operator?

OPERATOR
 This is a collect call for Wolfman Jack.

WOLFMAN
 I... I love you, Operator.

OPERATOR
 Is this Wolfman Jack?

WOLFMAN
 Is Floyd there?

OPERATOR
 It's for a Wolfman... Jack...

Carol looks over at John and shakes her head.

CAROL
 I just love listening to the Wolfman. My Mom won't let me at home. Because he's a Negro, I think... anyway, he's terrific. Do you know that he just broadcasts from a plane that flies around in circles all the time? Do you think that's true?

INSIDE STEVE'S '58 CHEVY

Terry drives on through the wonderful night--a blonde sitting next to him, he's feeling very bitchin'. He and Debbie are also mesmerized by the Wolfman.

WOLFMAN (V.O.)
 Floyd, I love you, Floyd. Is this you, Floyd? I cannot look on thee, love took my hand...

(MORE)

WOLFMAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
and smiling did reply, who made the
eyes but I. Floyd, reach out and
touch my soul.

INSIDE THE PHAROAHS' '51 MERCURY

Even Curt has to laugh at the Wolfman--despite his
situation. Little Carlos sits in the front seat and looks
over at Joe who's driving.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
Your party's ready, sir.

WOLFMAN
You mean Floyd? Hello, is this
Floyd?

VOICE (V.O.)
Hello, is this Matilda?

WOLFMAN
No, it ain't honey--bye!

CARLOS
You tell her, Wolfman. He's my man.
When I graduate, I'm gonna be a
Wolfman. Hey, you know he
broadcasts out of Mexico someplace?

JOE
No, he don't. I seen the station
right outside of town.

CARLOS
That's just a clearing station,
man. So he can fool the cops. He
blasts that thing all the way
around the world. It's against the
law, man.

In the back seat, Ants nods in agreement.

ANTS
Ah, man--they'll never catch the
Wolfman.

Then Ants' nose starts twitching and he looks over at Curt
suspiciously.

ANTS (CONT'D)
Hey, man, who cut the cheese?

Curt tries to smile but looks pretty guilty. Then Joe looks
around from the front seat.

JOE

He who smelt it, dealt it.
 (looking at Curt in the
 back)
 Hey, creep, scoot down. Sitting up
 like that, it wrecks the lines of
 the car, you know what I mean?

Curt scoots down to a level even with Ants. Ants is staring at him and grinning evilly. Then they hear an incredible roar, and they all turn to see Bob Falfa's black '55 Chevy pass by. Falfa has a new girl with him this time, a lovely redhead.

JOE (CONT'D)

There's that badass Chevy again.
 Look at he snatch he's got with
 him.

ANTS

Hey, man, he looks like a whimp.

Curt nods and tries to join in.

CURT

Probably is. Whimps get all the
 snatch.

Carlos and Ants look at him. Like nobody asked him to open his mouth.

CARLOS

Milner ain't gonna beat that. His
 time has come. He's getting old. He
 ain't as fast as he used to be.

INSIDE THE DEUCE COUPE

Milner may not be as fast a he used to be--and having a little teeny-bopper with him isn't helping matters. He looks over at Carol. She's moved closer to him.

JOHN

You got two seconds to get your ass
 over in the corner.

CAROL

Don't worry, I won't rape you.

Carol slides back to her side. But as they glide along, Carol watches John. She's moon-eyed and flipped over him. John deftly down-shifts as he approaches a light and then accelerates through the gears with a "race" expertise.

There's a honk and John and Carol look over to see a '60 Cadillac full of girls laughing at them.

GIRL
You got a bitchin' car.

John nods modestly.

GIRL (CONT'D)
In fact, we're gonna give you our special prize for having the neatest car around. You want me to give it to you?

JOHN
If the prize is you, honey, I'm a ready Teddy.

GIRL
Yeah, well get bent turkey.

The girl suddenly launches a water balloon, which John ducks deftly, the tumescent missile catching Carol full in the face. The girls roar off. John cracks up as Carol blinks away the water, not believing what's happened. She wipes her face.

CAROL
All right, very funny. What a chop.
Ha ha. Quit laughing!!

John tries to control himself, but can't.

CAROL (CONT'D)
Let's catch 'em at the light. Then you jump out and flatten their tires.

JOHN
Hey, wait a--

CAROL
Just do what I say!

JOHN
Yezz, bozz....

MAIN STREET INTERSECTION

Carol jumps out of the car as John stops the car in the right hand lane next to the Cadillac. As Chuck Berry wails "Johnny B. Goode," they go into action.

The girls in the Cadillac recognize John as one of their victims and quickly roll up all windows and lock their doors. John starts pulling the stems from the front tires, sinking the car. Carol starts around the car with the shaving cream, spraying all their windows with the foamy lather.

Carol is having a great time and John is laughing as they continue their guerrilla attack. They finish and jump back in the coupe. The light turns green and John takes off, leaving the Cadillac stranded at the intersection, covered with shaving cream. Traffic begins to back up... horns begin to honk.

CANAL BANK--STEVE'S '58 CHEVY

The crickets chirp under the full moon. We hear "I Only Have Eyes for You" playing as the Chevy slowly comes to a stop in an isolated spot along the irrigation canal.

Terry gets out of the car, pops the top off two cokes and pours half of them into the canal. He hums, refilling them with bourbon. He goes back to the car.

TERRY

Tootie fruiti all ruti... It's
Super Cola!

He hands her one of the bottles and takes a long drink out of the other. He grabs the steering wheel for support and his eyes begin to water.

TERRY (CONT'D)

It's a... a little... strong, I
think.

DEBBIE

(drinking)

It's the living end.

Terry takes a smaller sip this time...

TERRY

Yeaah, I guess it wasn't mixed.

DEBBIE

Wow, it's pretty tonight. It's a
perfect night to go horseback
riding-- I was going with a guy
once who had a horse.

Terry chokes.

TERRY

Oh yeah? I used to have a couple of horses myself.

DEBBIE

Really?

TERRY

I used them for hunting. I do a lot of hunting. Deer mostly, although I got a couple of bear last year. Yep, they were good ponies--hunting ponies. I had to train 'em special, you know.

DEBBIE

Do you still have 'em? We could go for a ride.

TERRY

No, I had to sell 'em. To get these wheels... and a jeep. I also have a jeep pick-up, with four-wheel drive. It's got a gun rack. And I use that for hunting mostly.

DEBBIE

Why do you kill little animals? I think that's terrible.

TERRY

Oh, well, yeah, I figure with bears, though, it's either me or them... You know, I think you're really neat.

He suddenly grabs at her, putting his arms around her. She's caught off-guard and tries to move away.

DEBBIE

Wait a second.

Terry immediately lets go of her.

TERRY

Oh, jeez, I'm sorry. I don't know what got into me--I didn't mean to--maybe it's the booze or something.

She puts her coke on the floor. She unfastens the chain holding her sweater together and takes it off.

DEBBIE

There--now.

Suddenly, she grabs him and pulls him down on top of herself. She kisses him madly. At first he's surprised, but then gets the hang of it. They begin to neck passionately, encountering many obstacles in the cramped front seat.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Ow--you pinched me.

TERRY

I'm sorry.

DEBBIE

Let me get my head over here--okay, now you get up--

TERRY

Ow--my leg, my leg. Ow, watch it!

DEBBIE

Ummm, I just love tuck 'n roll upholstery.

As they roll around, a couple of guys walk by the car laughing. Terry manages to sit up and watches them go off into the night.

TERRY

Geez, it's like Grand Central Station around here. Why don't we go someplace else.

Debbie pulls him back down on top of her.

DEBBIE

Nah, come on. They won't come back.

TERRY

Wait a minute. I got a blanket in the back. Why don't we go over into the field?

DEBBIE

All right. Okay.

They both get out of the car. Terry gets the blanket out of the trunk. They walk along a path next to the moonlit canal. Debbie carries their drinks for them. They left the radio on and Wolfman's voice can be heard as he takes another call.

WOLFMAN (V.O.)

Hello.

GIRL (V.O.)

Yeah!

WOLFMAN
How old are you?

GIRL
I'm thirteen, how old are you?

WOLFMAN
I'm only fourteen.

GIRL
Oh, boy, I love you, Wolfman.

SINGERS
(singing over)
"Wolfman Jack."

WOLFMAN
Oh, now we gonna do the weather for
all the valleys and the mountain
tops. Gonna be hot... about 200
degrees in Merced, 400 degrees out
in Fresno, and I know we're gonna
have about 500 degrees up around
the valley somewhere. You got the
Wolfman Jack Show.

MINIATURE GOLF COURSE AND ARCADE

As the Silhouettes yip-yip-yip-yip into "Get a Job," we see the mysterious white Thunderbirds cruise by and disappear. The Pharoahs' Mercury turns into the parking lot of a a miniature golf course. The doors open and the Pharoahs exit. There's a pause, then Ants reaches into the car and pulls Curt out also. The Pharoahs saunter into the miniature golf compound.

CURT
Hey, terrific, I love miniature
golf.

JOE
I hate it.

CURT
Well, I don't play that often
really. Ah--what're we doing here
then?

JOE
We're outta gas.

CURT
They don't sell gas here.

JOE

No... but we're outta money, too.
Come on, Carl.

CURT

Curt.

Joe gives Curt a gentle push and they go inside. The golf course is empty, except for a couple of ugly girls putting around in the far corner. Under a trellis, Curt and Joe enter as the Pharoahs fool around with the candy machine, pinball games, "Check Your Weight," and "Air Corps Gunner" games, pretending to play with them. Joe looks around, whistling again.

JOE

All right, men.

Quickly the Pharoahs go into action, jimmying locks, pounding coin returns, pulling out plugs, prying open change boxes and stuffing looses coins into their pockets.

Joe smiles at Curt, who looks sick again, involved now in a robbery. Ants is sitting in a "Rocket to the Moon" ride, pounding on it unsuccessfully when suddenly it starts. Ants starts bouncing up and down looking dumber than usual. He swears at Rocket to the Moon under his breath--suddenly a screen door slams. The Pharoahs turn. A man in an undershirt stands by the "Get Your Balls Here" booth, regarding them warily.

MR. GORDON

What're you punks doing?

The Pharoahs can't think of anything right away. Ants bounces noisily in the "Rocket to the Moon." The Pharoahs are all looking to Joe for guidance. Joe for his part is mumbling.

CURT

Hey, hi. Mr. Gordon, what's up?

The man looks at Curt, surprised.

MR. GORDON

Henderson--Curt Henderson? You with
these punks?

The Pharoahs don't know what's happening yet. Curt walks over to Mr. Gordon.

CURT

These are my friends. We were
just...

Mr. Gordon looks skeptical, then Curt smiles at him. Then Mr. Gordon smiles.

MR. GORDON
Jeez, you guys had me scared.

He laughs nervously. The Pharoahs laugh. Everybody's happy.

MR. GORDON (CONT'D)
Hey, you haven't left yet?

CURT
Oh ah--no--no, I'm not--

Mr. Gordon looks puzzled.

CURT (CONT'D)
I mean, I'm not leaving until tomorrow.

MR. GORDON
Tomorrow. Well, listen, Hank Anderson's inside. Come in and say goodbye. You know, Hank's the one that brought your name up on the floor of the Moose Hall. You got the check, didn't you?

He leads Curt toward the screen door. Curt looks around at the Pharoahs, who are slowly starting to work again pilfering the machines. Inside the small office, Curt shakes hands with Hank Anderson, who pats him on the shoulder.

HANK
We are all proud of you, Curt. The Moose Scholarship couldn't have gone to a better boy. And if there's anything we can do, let us know.

MR. GORDON
Yeah, you'll stay in touch by letter, won't you?

There's a knock at the screen and they turn to see Joe at the screen door.

JOE
Hey, we're all done out here.

MR. GORDON
All done? What--what's he mean?

CURT

Ah, he means, we're all done having loads of fun out here.

MR. GORDON

Oh, well...

HANK

Wonderful. You can have all the fun you want. This place is for fun.

CURT

Yes. Yes, it is. Thank you. Thank you both.

MR. GORDON

Good luck now.

HANK

Before I say goodbye, Curt, I want to tell you I hope you'll be taking along with you a little piece of this place.

CURT

I think I have.

HANK

Good. Don't forget us.

CURT

No, I won't forget you and you won't forget me.

MR. GORDON

Okay. 'Bye.

HANK

Good-bye and good luck.

CURT

'Bye.

JOE

It was nice to meet yuh.

CURT

Right. What he said goes for me, too.

Curt and Joe go out through the arcade toward the Mercury. They start walking faster, anxious to get away. Joe grins at Curt as they climb into the car.

JOE
Yeah, you just might make it as a
Pharoah yet, boy.

Back in the office, Hank and Mr. Gordon watch the car pull out.

HANK
Some day he'll make a fine Moose.

THE CANAL BANK

Steve's Chevy sits near the canal. The door is open and the radio blares, while Terry and Debbie are off somewhere in the weeds making out.

Suddenly, a beam from a flashlight plays across the trunk. Feet approach the car as the light beam moves across the interior and stops on the vacated shoes on the front seat.

The light beam continues past the empty bourbon bottle and starts in the direction of the field where Terry and Debbie are lost in the throes of passionate love. As we follow the light into the field we hear footsteps.

As the darkened figure approaches the couple, we see the light go out and catch a gleam of silver in the moonlight as a switchblade springs open!

Terry reacts to the sound.

DEBBIE
What's wrong?

TERRY
I thought I heard something.

She kisses him and he forgets about the noise. The figure retreats back to the Chevy, where another indistinct figure waits.

VOICE (O.S.)
They're porking in the weeds. No
sweat.

Terry and Debbie are resting in the field, listening to the radio in the distance. A car engine is heard starting up and disappearing down the canal bank.

The countryside is very quiet. Only crickets and frogs are heard as Terry begins to drop off asleep. He suddenly jumps with a start.

TERRY
Wait a minute!

DEBBIE
What?

TERRY
The radio is gone... That means--
the car is gone!

He scrambles to the spot where the Chevy once stood.

TERRY (CONT'D)
Oh no!!! OH NO!!!

Debbie comes up and watches Terry look heavenward.

TERRY (CONT'D)
Oh God--I'm sorry. But, why the
car? You could have struck us with
lightning or something--anything--
but not the car!

THE CANAL BANK--LAURIE'S '58 EDSEL

Cars are seen here and there in the moonlight along the irrigation canal outside of town. In the cars radios are playing "To the Aisle," laughter can be heard in some, whispering in others.

Laurie's Edsel is parked by the slow-moving water. In the front seat of the car, Steve and Laurie are making out. Laurie leans back against Steve, his arms around her, and they look out the window at the stars...

LAURIE
You know, it doesn't make sense to
leave home to look for a home, to
give up a life to find a new life,
to say goodbye to friends you love
just to find new friends.

STEVE
What? Say that again, I didn't--

LAURIE
That's what Curt said.

STEVE
Oh, figures.
(smiling)
You must've talked his ear off
trying to get him to stay.

LAURIE

That's not true. I didn't say anything. Curt just said at dinner tonight he realized there was no big hurry. He thought he should take it easy for a while, go to J.C. and try to figure out what he wants to do with his life.

STEVE

That sounds logical.

Laurie's expression changes.

LAURIE

You think so?

STEVE

Sure. I think Curt's probably right for Curt. Not for me though. Laurie, look at me. Now you know what I want out of life. And it's just not in this town.

LAURIE

I'm not going to the airport tomorrow.

She looks sullen and he smiles a little. He turns her around and gently kisses her. They begin to make out, Laurie seeming a little desperate. Steve pushes her slowly down on the seat. He moves on top of her and his hand begins to wander.

LAURIE (CONT'D)

Steve! Don't.

STEVE

(quietly)

It's our last night together for three months... come on.

LAURIE

We've been through this before.

STEVE

I'm going to miss you so much. I need something to remember you by. You don't want me to forget you.

She closes her eyes, trying not to cry.

LAURIE
 (softly)
 No...

He starts to move on top of her, kissing her neck. She struggles for a few moments, then goes limp, not responding. He pulls away angrily.

STEVE
 What's wrong? You're just lying there.

LAURIE
 Well go ahead, you want to.

STEVE
 Not like that.

LAURIE
 If you're not going to remember me for anything else, why don't you go ahead?

STEVE
 You want it and you know it. Don't be so damn self-righteous with me. After those things you told me about watching your brother--

LAURIE
 You're disgusting! Get out of my car! I told you never--

STEVE
 I'm sorry.

LAURIE
 Get out! It's not worth it. I don't care if you're leaving--now get out!

She reaches past him and pulls the door handle. The door swings open and she shoves Steve out. Then she starts the engine and drives away, leaving Steve standing there in the darkness. In the distance, he hears the laughter of other couples and the drifting music from their radios.

THE CANAL ROAD

Terry and Debbie walk slowly along the dark canal. Terry takes a large slug of his bourbon and coke.

DEBBIE
 Anyway, the Goat Killer--

TERRY

Let's talk about something else.

DEBBIE

--Whenever he strikes, he leaves a bloody goat's head near the victim. Isn't that creepy?

Terry thinks about it and indeed it is. He looks around into the darkness and then takes Debbie's hand.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

They thought he went up to Stockton, but two nights ago they found Carlie Johnson and Don White right here by the canal all hacked to pieces and--

TERRY

Who do you think'll take the regionals this--

DEBBIE

--not only were there bloody goats' heads, but he had switched all the parts of their bodies around. You know putting her arms on him and his legs on--

Terry is slowing and he stops her. He motions for her to shut up and they listen. The wind whines across the flat valley. Ahead there is only darkness, then footsteps!

TERRY

Wait a second. Did you hear...?

DEBBIE

You think it's the Goat Killer?

TERRY

(whispering)

No! I mean, no. Listen, I'll go for help, you stay here.

Terry has turned and is starting off when she grabs him by his shirt-tail.

DEBBIE

Come on, we'll hide in the field.

She takes Terry's hand and they go off behind some bushes, away from the black water.

Debbie looks through the bushes, squinting.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
 Maybe if it's the Goat Killer he'll
 get somebody and we'll see the
 whole thing.

Terry stands with his eyes closed.

TERRY
 I don't want to see the whole
 thing. Especially if it's us he--
 oh, why me? I'm going to look lousy
 with your legs and a goat's head
 and--

DEBBIE
 Shhh--he's stopped. I can't see him
 very--I think he's coming this way.

She edges off to get a better view.

TERRY
 Well, as long as he's not--Debbie!
 Debbie!

She's gone. Terry starts off, taking one step, turns, takes
 another, turns, takes another. Suddenly Terry hears
 something behind him. He turns very slowly and looks...

A figure is standing right behind him, silhouetted by the
 moon, its face obscured. Terry jumps about three feet and
 yells.

STEVE (O.S.)
 Terry!

TERRY
 Who, me? Why me?

Terry stops yelling, seeing that it's Steve.

STEVE
 Terry.

TERRY
 Steve!

Debbie comes back through the bushes and Terry looks at her
 nervously.

TERRY (CONT'D)
 Where'd you go, anyway?

DEBBIE
 Over there.

TERRY

Well, don't go off again. Come on,
let's get out of here.

Terry and Debbie start to walk with Steve back toward town.
Terry keeps taking pulls from the bottle of bourbon.

STEVE

What're you doing out here? Hey,
where's my rod?

TERRY

(choking)
Um, oh, did I introduce you? This
is Debbie. Debbie, this is Steve.

DEBBIE

Hello.

STEVE

Hi.

DEBBIE

Hi.

They continue to walk along the dark canal bank.

STEVE

Well, what about my car?

TERRY

Um... I'ts in the garage. I put it
in the garage for safe keeping. I
mean... I don't want to take any
chances with it.

STEVE

Oh, great.

DEBBIE

Yeah. Yeah. It's a good thing too.
'Cause somebody stole our car.

STEVE

Really? That's terrible. What kind
was it?

TERRY

Gee, ah, where's Laurie, anyway?

STEVE

I guess we broke up.

TERRY

You broke up? Bull!

Steve just shrugs. The three of them go off into the darkness.

CRUISING MAIN STREET-'32 YELLOW DEUCE COUPE

The coupe makes an eccentric swerve as it cruises along the main drag. Inside, Carol is looking at the gear-shift knob that she's taken off the shift arm as they listen to "Do You Want to Dance?"

CAROL

It doesn't look like a gear shift knob.

JOHN

Come on, will ya? Give it back to me.

CAROL

Well, go ahead, cream me. What's wrong, you're a tough guy. Break my arm, see if I care.

JOHN

Forget it.

He ignores her, and finally his silence makes her take a small round knob out of her pocket and put it back on the shifter where it belongs.

CAROL

I was just going to keep it for a little while. You're an ogre, just like my father. He won't let me play records, or stay out late, or anything.

JOHN

(worried)

He ah--doesn't like you to stay out late?

CAROL

No--he's terrible. Once I was at a party that didn't end till late and he called the cops. Can you imagine? It was only a little after midnight and he had the whole police force--

JOHN

Say, where do you live anyway?

CAROL

Over on Ramona, why?

(She suddenly smiles)

Oh no. Uh uh. You thought I'd tell you where--not me, not old Carol. The night is young and I'm not hitting the rack until I get a little action.

John sighs, wondering if he'll ever get rid of her. He looks back at something in the rear view mirror. He speeds up and checks the mirror again.

CAROL (CONT'D)

What do you keep lookin' at?

(she looks around behind them)

Who's that? You know him? He's following awful close.

JOHN

Grab onto something.

Carol looks scared and grabs onto the dash. John suddenly hits the brakes. The deuce coupe noses down and Bob Falfa's Chevy has to swerve abruptly to avoid a crash.

Falfa pulls the Chevy around and alongside the coupe. He has another new girl with him.

FALFA

(shouting over)

Sorry if I scared ya, man.

JOHN

(looking ahead)

Takes more than that to scare me.

FALFA

Where ya been hiding? Didn't anyone tell ya I been looking for ya?

JOHN

Hey, I can't keep tracka all the punks lookin' for me.

FALFA

They say you're the fastest thing in the Valley. But that can't be your car, man.

(MORE)

FALFA (CONT'D)

That must be your mama's car. Hell,
I feel embarrassed just getting
near ya.

JOHN

Ya should, man--you're driving a
field car.

FALFA

Field car? What's a Field Car?

JOHN

Field Cars drive through the
fields, dropping cow shit all over
the place to make the lettuce grow.

FALFA

(laughing)

That's pretty good. Hey, I like
that paint job you got. What they
call that--sorta a cross between
Piss Yellow and Puke Green, ain't
it?

JOHN

Yeah, well, you're car's so ugly
you must have to sneak up on the
pumps to get a tank of gas.

FALFA

Well, at least I don't have to move
over to let a funeral go by, man.

Through all the insults, Carol has been cracking up.

CAROL

(shouting)

Your car's uglier than I am.

John and Falfa both look at her and she sits back.

CAROL (CONT'D)

That didn't come out right...

They both stop at a light now. Falfa roars his engine.

FALFA

Come on, boy, prove it. Let's go.

JOHN

Look kid, why don't you go out and
win a few races, then come back and
see me.

CAROL

Oh, race him, you can beat him.

John gives Carol a very fierce look and she sinks back into her corner.

FALFA

Hey, that's a tough lookin' girl you got with you, man. What're you doin'? Trying to pick up a few extra bucks babysitting?

(grinning at Carol)

Hey, Doll. Why don't you come on and ride with me--in about ten years?

JOHN

Leave her out of this. This is just between you and me.

Falfa revs his engine again. John thinks a moment, then shifts down into first.

The light changes, and John and Falfa take off, tires screaming. The two cars perfectly in sync, rocket down the block toward the next red light. John starts to slow for the light. Falfa looks over, laughs, and runs the red light. John stops.

CAROL

Wow! He's really fast, isn't he?

JOHN

Yeah. But he's stupid.

CRUISING 10TH STREET-PHAROAH'S '51 MERCURY

Curt is still out riding with the Pharoahs. He seems a little easier with them now, after their successful heist at the miniature golf course. The radio is playing "Party Doll."

CURT

Hey--any of you guys know a blonde in a white T-Bird?

JOE

Yeah, I seen her, what about it?

CURT

I was just wondering who she is.

JOE

She's outta your price range, man.
My brother's been with her and he
clued me in.

CURT

Price range? You mean she's a--

JOE

Yeah, Thirty Dollar Sheri. Can you
believe that? Thirty dollars.

CURT

We must be thinking of different
blondes.

CARLOS

Hey man, don't tell Joe what he
thinks.

ANTS

Thirty dollars ain't much. I saw
ten thousand once. My old man had
it in a suitcase. They caught him
the next morning though.

CARLOS

Fuzz ahead, watch it.

JOE

Where?

CARLOS

Fuzz ahead, watch it.

JOE

Where?

CARLOS

At Jerrie's Cherries. You can just
barely see the fender.

ANTS

That's rotten, man. Hiding like
that.

CARLOS

That's shitty.

JOE

It's dishonest.

Ants gives him the evil eye. Joe watches the cop car in the
used car lot as they pass it.

JOE (CONT'D)

We oughta do something. I got an idea. I got a good idea.

MAIN STREET

Steve, Terry and Debbie have made it back into town from the canal. They walk past the closed stores and stop on a busy corner.

STEVE

I think I'm gonna go over to Burger City.

TERRY

Yeah. Yeah. Laurie's probably over there.

STEVE

You really think she's got me worried about where she is, don't you?

TERRY

Well...

STEVE

Let me tell you something. I couldn't care less. Want to come along?

DEBBIE

Yeah, I do. I do.

TERRY

No.

STEVE

Make up your minds.

TERRY

No, thanks. U'mm. You know we got to report the car missing.

STEVE

All right. See yuh.

TERRY

Yeah. See yuh.

Steve goes off and Debbie looks at Terry.

DEBBIE

Why can't we go to Burger City?

TERRY

Burger City? Burger City!!? How can you think of hamburgers when somebody stole my car.

She looks hurt and starts off.

ALLEY BEHIND JERRY'S CHERRIES USED-CAR LOT

Curt is getting out of the low-slung Merc and Joe saunters around from the driver's side. He smiles, friendly like--

JOE

Listen, ah--Carl, I--

CURT

Curt.

JOE

Curt.

He nods at Curt, looking cautiously around the dark lot.

JOE (CONT'D)

Despite you scratching Gil's car, I like you. And I know what you'd like more than anything right now. Like every guy in town, you got the same secret dream, right?

Curt nods.

JOE (CONT'D)

Ya want to join the Pharoahs. Huh? You can admit it--you'd like to-- but you never dreamed it could be possible, did you?

Curt shakes his head slowly.

JOE (CONT'D)

Well, tonight, I'm goin' to give you your chance.

Curt hasn't the slightest idea what Joe is talking about. Joe puts his arm around Curt's shoulders and leads him away, explaining what he has to do, while Ants and Carlos grin.

In the middle of the used car lot, a patrol car hides among the autos for sale. Inside the car, Holstein sits with another officer who's dozing. Across Holstein's dark glasses, reflections of the kids' cars cruising by can be seen, as Holstein waits to nab somebody.

Joe approaches the patrol car through the lot. He ducks, carrying a length of metal cable in his hand. Curt wanders behind him. Joe sees him and motions for him to get down.

JOE (CONT'D)

Get down!

Curt ducks down near Joe.

JOE (CONT'D)

Okay. Now you got it? I'm stayin' here. You're on your own.

CURT

Wait a minute, wait a minute, Joe. What if he hears me?

JOE

Shhh. Listen. Look at it this way: Now you got three choices. One, you chicken out. In that case, I let Ants tie you to the car and drag you around a little bit. And you don't want that, right?

CURT

No.

JOE

Two, you foul up and Holstein hears you and well, ah... you don't want that, right?

CURT

No, I don't.

JOE

Three, you are successful and you join the Pharoahs with a carcoat, and the blood initiation and all that, huh?

CURT

(seeing Joe walk away)

Wait--wait a minute. Wait a minute! What blood initiation?

WOLFMAN (V.O.)

Oh, here we go baby! Here's "Come Go With Me."

The policeman waits for a victim. In the background, we see Curt dodging from behind one car to another. Taking cover, Curt makes another break toward a car--and trips and falls.

In the cop car, Holstein thinks he hears something. He opens the door and gets out. Adjusting his billy club, he paces around the used car lot officiously, while Curt hides behind a Falcon and peeks out from behind a fender. He sees Holstein walking back toward the squad car. The cop opens the door again and climbs in. The echoing sound of the calls coming over the police radio blend with the Wolfman's howling as cars pass with their radios blaring.

Curt is inching forward with the cable, toward the squad car. In the background, a slow freight train can be heard starting to move across the valley. Curt ties the cable to a post and then, looking scared, crawls under the police car with the cable.

Underneath the car, Curt inches on his back and then reaches up and attaches the cable to the rear axle of the car.

MAIN STREET

Terry and Debbie are walking across the street, Terry looks miserable and disconsolate about the loss of the Chevy he possessed for three short hours. Debbie tries to be more positive about the situation.

DEBBIE

Hey, why don't we go get your jeep?

TERRY

What? What are you talking about?

DEBBIE

You know, your jeep. The one you sold the hunting ponies for. The one with the four-wheel drive.

Terry just stares at her morosely. He stops by a parking meter and sinks down on top of it.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Come on, Terry--Terry?

ALLEY BEHIND JERRY'S CHERRIES USED CAR LOT

Curt and Joe are on the run toward the Merc. Ants and Carlos jump in as they start their getaway.

JOE

Hey, you sure you got enough slack?

CURT

Yeah, yeah. No sweat. Let's get out of here.

MAIN STREET

Joe shifts into high gear and is flying down the main drag. Terry and Debbie look startled as they see the Pharoah's Mercury roaring by--and Curt leaning out the door, shouting insanely.

CURT

Stand by for Justice!

Terry and Debbie watch the Merc speed suicidally past Jerry's Cherries Used-Car Lot.

Holstein spots them and the driver starts up the engine of the squad car. THE red lights start flashing and the siren wails. The patrol car shifts into gear and leaps forward. Suddenly, there's a horrendous metallic screech, the patrol car hurtles up and out, airborne for a moment--then noses down and bounces along the pavement, sending out sparks as it slides to a stop.

The driver is stunned and frozen to the wheel. Holstein manages to remove his dark glasses and looks back. There, sitting quietly in the middle of the parking lot, is their trans-axle and two rear wheels. The patrol car sits on the ground at a twenty degree angle, while its engine whines impotently at top speed.

On the radio, the all-seeing Wolfman gives an evil laugh--

WOLFMAN (V.O.)

Oh, I can't believe it. Feels so good 'cause you're sweet sixteen.

And Johnny Burnette takes his cue and croons into "You're Sixteen."

A DARK ROAD OUTSIDE TOWN--DEUCE COUPE

John has glided off the main drag and into a residential area. Everything is dark and quiet as the adult population sleeps through the night. John pulls the coupe to the curb and turns off the engine. He turns out the lights.

Inside the car, there's silence. Only the clock ticking. Carol looks over at John a little nervously.

CAROL

Why are we stopping here?

John looks at her and his arm slides along the back of the seat above her. She notices his arm and the fact that he's moving slowly toward her.

JOHN
(in a husky voice)
Carol...

CAROL
What?

JOHN
I--I don't think that I can control
myself any longer.

CAROL
You can't?

JOHN
No... Carol, I've got to have you.

CAROL
Me?

He touches her hair and she slouches back into her corner
fearfully.

JOHN
All night you've been sitting there
and you've been so sexy and it's
been so hot--and I can't wait any
more...

CAROL
Well--well, a lot of that's an act,
you know. Like... like my crying.
It was just an act.

JOHN
Well, it's been building up inside
of me like a volcano, all night.
Maybe if I knew where you lived I
could fight it--I could take you
home--but since you won't tell me,
and since here we are--I've got to
have you. It's too late--

CAROL
It's not too late! It's never too
late! 231 Ramona--two three one--

JOHN
(smiling)
Two three one--

CAROL
I'll show you! It's easy to find.

John starts the car engine. Carol looks very relieved. The yellow deuce coupe roars off down the dark street.

MEL'S DRIVE-IN

Steve sits in the almost empty cafe section of Burger City. He stirs a coffee and mulls over the night's events in his mind. A door opens and Budda Macrae comes in. She watches him a moment, then takes off her little Bell Boy Cap and gets a cup of coffee for herself.

Steve looks up as she comes over on her roller skates.

BUDDA

Hi. You mind if I sit down?

STEVE

Hi Budda. No, have a seat.

BUDDA

I got five minutes outa the rat race, and I saw you all alone. For a change.

She drinks her coffee and he looks out the window thinking about something else.

BUDDA (CONT'D)

Where's Laurie?

STEVE

I don't know.

BUDDA

I thought the two of you'd be going strong, this being your last night and everything--

STEVE

We broke up.

Budda looks surprised.

STEVE (CONT'D)

No big deal.

BUDDA

Wow... what happened?

STEVE

Nothing. We were out at the canal and... we had a fight.

Budda smiles and he looks at her strangely.

STEVE (CONT'D)
What's so funny?

BUDDA
Nothing. Just thinking. A girl like Laurie--I mean, she goes to school and is cute and popular and all, but we're not so different. We know what we want. I've seen her after you for two years now.

STEVE
She's not like that.

BUDDA
Maybe not. She does have a different approach. Hers is "Never surrender," me I lay down my arms at the drop of a hat--

VOICE (O.S.)
Budda, you got an hour left, let's get on it.

BUDDA
(yelling back)
All right, relax... old fart. Listen, I'm off in an hour. If you wanta come over, my girlfriend's away for the weekend.

STEVE
I don't know...

Laurie walks up the drive-in and is about to enter when she stops and watches Steve and Budda. She thinks about going in, then hesitates, watching them.

BUDDA
Why don't you? I never got a chance to talk to you. You're leaving tomorrow. Listen, I gave up a long time ago, so it'd be just for fun. No problems.

She smiles at him and he smiles back a little. At the door, Laurie turns and leaves before Steven sees her.

BUDDA (CONT'D)
I'll see ya later then.

She gets up and goes back to the counter on her skates. Steve thinks a moment and gets up also.

STEVE

Budda, Budda wait.

She turns and he comes over to her as she puts back on her little cap.

STEVE (CONT'D)

I gotta get up early and--I just don't think it'd work out.

BUDDA

She's got you so brainwashed--well, hell. Some day I'm gonna win. Don't ya think?

STEVE

Sure.

She smiles briefly, then turns and leaves. Steve watches her go.

MEL'S DRIVE-IN

The drive-in remains a raucous roar: Cars coming in from the hop, from the movies, other cars going out to the canal or back out to cruise. Only the car hops, who have developed a late-hour, harried look, suggest it's nearly closing time.

The Pharoahs arrive. The Mercury swings imperiously into the lot. The radio can be heard as the rumbling engine dies. The Clovers are singing "Love Potion #9."

Curt jumps out of the Mercury elated. The Pharoahs all climb out and circle him, punching him playfully. Joe holds him while Carlos tickles him and they all laugh.

JOE

Oh mother, it's been a glorious night.

CARLOS

That was the bitchinest thing I ever seen in my whole life.

ANTS

I seen a little kid attacked by pigs once, but this was even better.

JOE

Oh boy, I'll tell you something,
that car must've jumped five feet
in the air!

Curt nods, feeling pretty good.

JOE (CONT'D)

You sure you got to go? The night's
young.

CURT

Yeah, there's some things I got to
do. I still want to find that
blonde.

JOE

I think she was an optical
delusion, man. Psychology-wise it
ain't good to dwell on it. You'll
alter your ego or something.
Anyway, catch ya tomorrow night?

CURT

Yeah, I guess so.

JOE

Guess so? Man, we don't admit a lot
of guys to the Pharoahs. You
understand we're going to have to
swipe your jacket and all--you
gotta make up your mind.

Curt nods, thinking about it. Then he shrugs. He looks at
the three Pharoahs as they climb back into their maroon
chariot.

CURT

Hey--I'll see you guys.

JOE

Sure--listen, remember, Rome wasn't
buried in a night.

Joe laughs and Curt nods. He watches the Mercury pull out
and then he wanders back across the drive-in toward his
little Citroen.

WOLFMAN (V.O.)

My, my, my. You only got five
minutes left, if you want to talk
to the Wolfman. Gonna make all your
dreams come true, baby.

Curt gets into the little car and sits listening to the radio. The neon

MEL'S DRIVE-IN is reflected across the windshield.

VOICE (V.O.)

Wolfman...

WOLFMAN

Yeah.

VOICE

Would you dedicate a record to keep me and my girlfriend together?

WOLFMAN

Are you separated?

VOICE

Well, see, we're havin' a little problem.

WOLFMAN

I'll bring you right together. Hold on a minute, man. Hi ya, hi ya, hi, hi, hi. Everything's gonna be all right now, man, you understand? Now, let me play the record for you.

As the Wolfman talks on, Curt glances toward the street. He sees the white Thunderbird gliding by. He sits up quickly and tries to start the Citroen--but the machine barely turns over. He keeps trying desperately, but the engine won't catch.

CRUISING G STREET--'58 EDSSEL

Laurie drives slowly, alone in the Edsel. On the radio, the Skyliners are lamenting the sad state of things--"Since I Don't Have You." Laurie wipes her eyes, crying with the music. A horn honks. She looks over to see Bob Falfa's car pacing her. He's alone now and grinning at her. Laurie ignores him. They drive along further. Falfa roars his engine, but she still doesn't give him any attention. He gives up and pulls off.

Laurie thinks a while, pouting. She pulls alongside Falfa at the next light. He isn't looking at her. She toots her horn and he turns. Laurie motions him to pull over.

Falfa looks surprised. The light changes, and he follows her to the curb. Laurie takes a deep breath, and with a determined look, gets out and walks back to his car.

She gets in and closes the door. They start off. He looks over and smiles.

FALFA

Hey Hey Hey, baby, what do you say?

LAURIE

Just don't say anything and we'll get along fine.

Falfa is puzzled by the frigidity in the air. He glances at her then back at the road, wondering about this strange chick.

RESIDENTIAL STREET--DEUCE COUPE

The coupe slows in front of a modest California ranch-style home. John stops the car and turns off the engine. He looks over at Carol, who seems lost in thought.

JOHN

This the first time you've been quiet all night.

CAROL

I had fun. Goodbye.

She sits for a moment, about to say something.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Do you like me?

JOHN

Yeah. I like you. You're all right.

CAROL

But I mean, do you like me?

JOHN

I, ah... I like you. Okay?

CAROL

Couldn't I have something to remember you by?

John gives in to her sweet gaze. He takes off the gearshift knob, gives it to her, and leans over and gives her a kiss.

JOHN

'Bye, kid.

CAROL

Gee, thanks. It's just like a ring or something.

JOHN

Yeah.

CAROL

It's like we were going steady.
Wait'll I tell Marcia.

JOHN

Wait a minute, now.

CAROL

Wait'll I tell everybody.

JOHN

Don't go overboard with this thing.

CAROL

Well, I'll see you around.

She jumps out of the car and runs up the walk to the house. He watches her stop at the screen door and turn. She gives him a little wave, then goes inside.

John looks over at the empty seat next to him and seems a little sad. He starts the engine and drives off slowly.

WOLFMAN (V.O.)

I haven't cried so much. And the
tears and everything, man... I
leaned down towards the microphone
and I almost shorted myself out.

OUTSIDE MEL'S DRIVE-IN

Curt has the front hood up on the beetle-like Citroen and is fooling with the recalcitrant engine. Steve is standing beside him.

CURT

Hold that up.

STEVE

(taking the hood from
him)

I've been thinking--maybe you're
right. Why should I leave home to
find a new home. Why should I leave
friends that I love to find new
friends?

CURT

Wait a minute, wait a minute. I've
heard this already.

(MORE)

CURT (CONT'D)
Aren't you the one who for eight weeks has been telling me you have to leave the nest sometime?

STEVE
I realize that. I realize--

CURT
No--no realizing. You've been telling me all summer that it's time to pull your head out of the sand and take a look at the big, beautiful world out there. Gimme this thing.

STEVE
(letting him close the hood)
I don't know--I--

CURT
(banging the Citroen hood shut)
I feel like a mid-wife.

STEVE
I guess I was wrong. I may have been wrong.

CURT
Wrong nothing. You've been talking about getting out of this town for eight weeks. And now--goddamnit!--you're just--you're just mentally playing with yourself. If you can just relax, we'll talk about it at the airport.

Curt walks around the side of the car and opens the door.

STEVE
Where are you going? It's awfully early in the morning.

CURT
I have a dental appointment.

STEVE
Come on, Curt...

CURT
Just relax, wil ya? I'll see you at the airport.

Curt gets into the car and starts the engine. Steve watches him pull out of the drive-in, then walks off.

ALLEY BEHIND THE "COME ON INN" BAR

A half dozen people are standing around in the parking lot behind the bar. Debbie is sitting on the hood of a car, swinging her legs and chewing gum. The people all seem to be watching something on the ground behind the car. Coughing is heard, then gagging, and the unmistakable sounds of someone being sick.

At the back door of the bar even the cooks are looking and pointing. We hear more coughing and vomiting. A guy slides up on the hood next to Debbie.

GUY

I never seen a guy lose so much. He mustn't have been used to drinking.

DEBBIE

Oh no, he really likes to drink. He told me.

An old man looks at his watch and then up at the stars.

OLD MAN

Gettin' late... I knew a man once who got this sick. Billy Webber. That was ten years ago. What do you think that was there, that he had for dinner?

More groaning and gagging is heard. An old woman moves close to the old man and he puts an arm around her sentimentally.

OLD WOMAN

Staying on his hands and knees like that...

(she grins)

He looks like a dog, doesn't he? Looks like old Ginger.

OLD MAN

Sicker than a dog, that's for sure.

The people drift off, leaving Debbie sitting alone on the car. Now, Terry slowly emerges, pulling himself up the hood of the car. His face is white. He lies across the hood trying to catch his breath.

TERRY
 Ohh rats, I feel like--
 (he notices a car nearby
 and pushes himself up)
 Wait a second... hey!

He staggers across the lot toward Steve's Chevy! Debbie slides off the car and follows him.

TERRY (CONT'D)
 It's--oh my god--it looks like
 Steve's car. Look, right here under
 our-- it's my car. My car. We found
 it. Look!

Terry staggers around and looks for the keys. He searches under the front seat and over the visor.

Must've taken the keys with them.

DEBBIE
 Maybe we oughta call the police.

TERRY
 Never get here in time. I got a
 better idea. We'll just steal it
 back. See if you can find some wire
 around. We only need a foot to hot-
 wire it... okay?

GAS STATION--DEUCE COUPE

John pulls the coupe out of the garage and wheels up to the pumps of the gas station. An attendant nods, looking at the roaring engine.

ATTENDANT
 Took the header plugs off.
 Expectin' some action?

John looks at him from inside the coupe and nods slowly.

JOHN
 Yeah. Think so. There's some punk
 lookin' for me.

ATTENDANT
 Why the hell do they bother? You've
 been number one as long as I can
 remember.

JOHN
 Yeah... it's been a long time,
 ain't it? I'll see ya. Thanks.

John drives the car out of the station and screeches down the street.

ALLEY BEHIND THE "COME ON INN" BAR--STEVE'S '58 CHEVY

Terry is fiddling around under the dashboard, trying to hot-wire the Chevy. As the wires connect, the radio comes to life and the Wolfman growls.

WOLFMAN (V.O.)
Who is this on the Wolfman
telephone?

There's the sound of a phone ringing, then the unmistakable voice of the Big Bopper answering.

BIG BOPPER (V.O.)
Hellooo, baaaby--

Just then, Terry looks up and sees one large badass looking at him. Terry gets up slowly and sees another big guy standing nearby. The first badass reaches in and grabs Terry by the shirt. He pulls him from the car. Terry is smiling weakly.

TERRY
Ah, hi--this is my car. What I mean
is, somebody stole my car--I mean I
lost my car and I want to thank you
two guys for--

The first badass shoves Terry toward the other badass.

TERRY (CONT'D)
--for returning--I mean finding it.
I mean, listen now, listen guys--
I've been sick recently, and this
kind of activity can really be hard
on a guy. Now, easy will you? Easy!

They throw him back and forth and start to rough him up seriously. Debbie is running around helplessly while they pummel Terry. Then, she sees the yellow deuce coupe passing.

John glances out his window and notices the fight behind the Come On Inn. He punches it and wheels into a fast U-turn.

The hoods have quit playing with Terry and are punching him. Terry's still on his feet, mostly because he's drunk and staggering away from a lot of the blows; also, Debbie is screaming and pelting the assailants with her purse.

DEBBIE
 Stop it, stop it, stop it! Help!
 Police! You creeps!

John jumps out of the coupe and runs into the parking lot. He grabs one of the punks and turns him--smashing him in the face. The punk lands on his ass. John starts circling the other.

TERRY
 Go, John!

DEBBIE
 Hit him!

A good fighter, John lands a couple of blows to the gut and lands him on his can. Both of them crawl off. Terry is lying nearby, drunk, sick and bloodied. Debbie holds his head in her lap. John goes over and kneels by them.

JOHN
 Hey, man, you all right?

TERRY
 Yeah. I'll die soon and it'll all be over.

DEBBIE
 (looking at John)
 Wow--you're just like the Lone Ranger.

JOHN
 (eyeing Debbie)
 Yeah. Listen, are you with the Toad, or were you with them?

Terry manages to raise his head.

TERRY
 You're talking to the woman I love...

His head falls back again.

JOHN
 What happened, man?

Terry opens his mouth to start to explain, but it's too hard. He can only moan.

MEL'S DRIVE-IN

The drive-in is emptying out finally as the midnight hour approaches and passes. The die-hards and the hard-ups are still wheeling through Mel's looking for remains of any action.

Steve sits inside in a booth. Two gossiping looking girls come in smiling and slide into the booth across from him.

STEVE

Hi, Karen, Judy.

JUDY

Hi, Steve. Have you seen Laurie lately?

Steve shakes his head no.

JUDY (CONT'D)

Well, we have.

STEVE

(already annoyed)
Oh yeah. So what?

JUDY

So nothing. She was just with a really cute guy in a boss car. We wondered who he was.

STEVE

I wouldn't know.

JUDY

We do. His name's Bob Falfa.

The name registers with Steve.

Terry and Debbie pull into the drive-in and park. Terry, his face swelling, groans as he leans toward the intercom.

TERRY

Help... I mean, I want two cherry cokes with lots of ice. Never mind, forget the cokes, just bring the ice, pronto.

The intercom repeats his order in a foreign language and suddenly Steve arrives and opens the door.

STEVE

Out! OUT!

TERRY

What??

STEVE

I need the car--now.

Terry gets out and Debbie gets out her side. Steve gets in.

TERRY

What's going on?

STEVE

I'm about to find out.

Steve roars out of the drive-in, leaving Terry and Debbie standing in an empty space.

DEBBIE

I don't believe it! You practically get killed trying to get your car back, then you let him have it.

Terry looks at her, his eye swollen, his lip ballooning, his glasses broken. Finally, he gives up--it's not worth the trouble any longer.

TERRY

It's not my car.

DEBBIE

What?

TERRY

What?

TERRY (CONT'D)

IT IS NOT MY CAR!

DEBBIE

Well, where is your car?

Terry is upset now.

TERRY

I DON'T HAVE A CAR!

DEBBIE

You don't--no car at all. What about your jeep?

Terry shakes his head.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

No car... well, how am I going to get home?

Just then the car hop approaches with the two cokes on two trays.

CAR HOP

Where's your car? I gotta hook 'em to your car.

Terry shrugs, standing in the empty stall, the carhop with the trays and Debbie watching. There's a low rumbling sound and the girls turn as John's deuce coupe glides into the stall next to them. Terry shuffles toward John's car, a defeated man.

Terry leans against John's car and John looks out the window at him.

JOHN

What's wrong, Toad? You lose the car again?

TERRY

(softly)

No... Steve took it.

WOLFMAN (V.O.)

It's a shame, Baby. I'll tell yuh... Got to take it easy when you're drivin' that car of yours. You got to cruise easy, baby. Don't be doin' any accidents or anything on me.

And the radio plays "Cryin' in the Chapel."

John smiles and gets out of the car. He goes and opens his hood, making a last-minute check on something. Terry sits down gently on a curb by John. Debbie has been talking with some other boys. Eventually she wanders up slowly and looks at Terry. He looks up at her, then away, disgraced and embarrassed. She sits down by him and they're silent.

DEBBIE

You know, I had a pretty good time tonight.

TERRY

Oh come on, you're just--

DEBBIE

No, no, really. I really had a good time. I mean, you picked me up and we got some hard stuff and saw a hold-up, and then we went to the Canal, you got your car stolen, and then I got to watch you gettin' sick, and then you got in this really bitchin' fight... I really had a good time.

Terry looks at her, starting to regain a little cool.

TERRY

You think so? Yeah--well I guess I have pretty much fun every night.

DEBBIE

Anyway if you're not doing anything tomorrow night, why don't you come over?

TERRY

Yeah--well, I might be busy, you know. But we could--well, I got a little Vespa I just play around with.

DEBBIE

Really? Why that's almost a motorcycle. And I just love motorcycles.

He feels his swollen lip and she touches it. Then she leans over and kisses him.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

I got to go.

TERRY

Ow.

DEBBIE

Goodnight.

TERRY

See ya.

She smiles, walks off, swinging her purse. She looks over her shoulder and smiles. He smiles back.

OUTSIDE RADIO STATION--CITROEN

The little Citroen bumps along a lonely dirt road, winding its way through dark peach orchards and wizened grape vineyards. Curt watches the deserted landscape when suddenly, the radio increases in volume and he turns it down. Then it begins to roar and distort eerily as the signal becomes more powerful. Then Curt sees it.

He stops the car and gets out. He stands looking at an isolated white frame house hitting in the moonlight. Curt looks up at a spidery radio antenna that rises toward the stars, its black wires humming in the stillness.

Curt starts up the gravel walk to the door. Under the glare of a naked spotlight, he sees a small intercom which plays soft Rock and Roll. He hesitates, then pushes a buzzer. He pushes it again and finally a voice comes over the intercom.

VOICE (V.O.)

Yeah, who is it?

CURT

It's--I want to talk to the Wolfman.

VOICE

The Wolfman ain't here.

CURT

I know, but I got to get in touch with him. I got something to give him before--

VOICE

We don't take no deliveries after eight. Come back tomorrow.

CURT

No, I can't. I want to ask him something that--

VOICE

Dedications by phone is Diamond 75044. Wolfman Top 40 is Box 13, Chula Vista. Wolfman Sweatshirts is Wolf Enterprises, Bakersfield. 'Bye.

CURT

Listen, I got a right to talk to him. I listened to him every night for as long--for twelve years almost.

(MORE)

CURT (CONT'D)
 I know him and it's personal and
 it'll only take a minute and I bet
 Wolfman would be upset if he knew a
 friend couldn't get in touch with--

A buzzer interrupts him and the door opens an inch. Curt pushes it open slowly--no one is there. A little scared, he goes inside and closes the door.

INSIDE RADIO STATION

Curt walks slowly down a dark eerie corridor, passing strangely lit rooms with electronic generators, humming dynamos and glassed-off booths filled with flashing electronic apparatus.

Curt goes through this other-worldly maze until he comes to a small, dimly lit control booth. A figure inside is barely visible through the reflections in the double glass windows. The figure turns and walks up to the window. Curt backs off a bit. A face stares at him--long hair greased in a ducktail, a short chinbeard. Then he speaks, his voice filtering strangely through a hidden speaker.

MANAGER
 What do you want?

Through the window, Curt can be seen but no sound is heard.

MANAGER (CONT'D)
 Pull the red switch.

CURT
 I'm looking for a girl.

MANAGER
 Aren't we all. She ain't here. Come
 on back to the booth.

Curt walks around through a few more glass doors and ends up in the booth with the manager.

The manager sits down and leans back, turning a fan to blow on his large chest. He's a large, friendly looking man; he wears a Hawaiian shirt. He sucks on a popsicle. Curt stands awkwardly.

MANAGER (CONT'D)
 Hey, have a popsicle. The ice box
 just broke down and they're meltin'
 all over the place. You want one?

CURT
 No. Thanks. Listen, ah...

MANAGER
Have a popsicle.

CURT
Are you the Wolfman?

MANAGER
No, man. I'm not the Wolfman.

The manager leans forward and picks up a spool of tape. He holds it up as a magician would for audience inspection, then puts it on a machine. A record is about to end. As it does the manager punches some buttons and the record segues into a Wolfman howl and then the distinctive Wolfman voice takes over. The manager adjusts the monitor volume down and sucks his popsicle.

WOLFMAN (V.O.)
Who is this on the Wolfman's
telephone?

DIANE (V.O.)
Diane.

WOLFMAN
How're you doin', Diane?

DIANE
All right.

The station manager smiles at Curt, who is watching the tape and blinking lights of the large console.

MANAGER
That's the Wolfman.

CURT
He's on tape. The man is on tape.

WOLFMAN (V.O.)
Do you love me? Say you love me,
Diane.

CURT
Well, ah--where does he work? I
mean, where is the Wolfman now?

MANAGER
The Wolfman is everywhere.

CURT
But I got to give him this note.

MANAGER

(taking it from Curt)
Here, let me see the note.
(he reads it)
Hell, that's just a dedication. All I gotta do is relay it. And it'll be on the air tomorrow, or Tuesday at the latest.

CURT

No, no. See, this is very important. I may be leaving town tomorrow, and it's very important that I--damn it, that I reach this girl right now.

MANAGER

You don't know whether you're gonna leave town or not?

CURT

Well, I'm supposed to go to college back East tomorrow. And I don't know if I'm gonna go.

MANAGER

Wait a minute. Have a popsicle.

CURT

No, thank you.

MANAGER

Sit down a minute.

Curt sits down, undecided about leaving and upset about not being able to get in touch with the lovely creature he saw earlier that night.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

Listen, it's early in the morning. Now, I can't really talk for the Wolfman. But I think if he was here he'd tell you to get your ass in gear. Now, no offense to your home town here, but this place ain't exactly the hub of the universe, if you know what I mean. And well-- I'll tell you this much--the Wolfman does come in here now and then, with tapes, to check up on me, you know, and when I hear the stories he got about the places he goes.

(MORE)

MANAGER (CONT'D)

Hell, here I sit while there's a big beautiful world out there, don't ya know. Wolfman comes in last time talking about some exotic jungle country, handing me cigars he says was rolled on the naked thighs of brown beauties. The Wolfman been everywhere and he seen everything. He got so many stories, so many memories. And here I sit sucking on popsicles.

Curt looks at him a moment.

CURT

Why don't you leave?

MANAGER

Well, I'm no kid anymore. I been here a long time. And the Wolfman-- well, the Wolfman gave me my start and he's sorta become my life. I can't leave him now. Gotta be loyal to the Wolfman, you understand.

Curt nods and stands. The manager swivels around and punches some buttons, putting on a commercial.

He turns back.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

I tell you what. If I can possibly do it tonight, I'll try to relay this dedication and get it on the air for you later on.

CURT

That'd be great. Thanks. Really.

He shakes the manager's hand, then wipes it on his pants.

MANAGER

Sorry, sticky little mothers ain't they? Bye.

CURT

'Bye.

Curt goes out the door. He starts back out through the maze of windows and electronic machines. Echoing throughout the rooms, the Wolfman's raucous voice follows Curt. The Wolfman howls and Curt turns.

Through the maze of glass, shifting like prisms, he sees the station manager sitting by the mike--howling! Then, he laughs and howls again, starting to sing a song called "Bluebirds on My Dingaling," pounding out the rhythm on the console.

CURT (CONT'D)

Wolfman...

He backs away, leaving the Wolfman, who's on his feet now, screaming out the end of the song, dancing by himself in the little glass room, from which his voice radiates out through the night and around the world...

MEL'S DRIVE-IN

John is working under the hood of the deuce coupe when Falfa's Chevy drives into the parking lot. The radio is now blasting "Heart and Soul." Terry moves over toward John's car. John doesn't look up, although he is quite aware of Falfa's entrance.

Falfa slows down in front of John's car and revs his engine again. John looks up--Laurie is in the car with Falfa. She looks determined not to seem as scared as she really is.

TERRY

Hey, John, let me go with you. Come on.

JOHN

Naw, man. I can't take you when I'm racin' somebody.

TERRY

Ah, come on. Just let me go. So I can watch. Or, I'll flag you, okay?

JOHN

All right. Go ahead.

Terry starts to climb into the car. John looks over at Falfa in the rumbling Chevy.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Paradise Road.

Falfa grins and gooses the Chevy, peeling out of Mel's Drive-in.

CRUISING MAIN STREET--FALFA'S '55 CHEVY

Falfa looks over at Laurie, who is watching the road nervously.

FALFA

All right now, where's this Paradise Road?

LAURIE

You just follow this street straight out of town... Listen, if you're gonna race John Milner, you can let me out right when we get there.

FALFA

Why don't you shut up, baby? You ain't said one word all night long. What a weird broad. But you're gonna appreciate me soon. You're gonna be hangin' on for mercy, when I get this sucker rollin'.

He accelerates the Chevy, shifting up deftly. Laurie looks scared now.

CRUISING 10TH STREET--STEVE'S '58 CHEVY

Steve is cruising along the almost deserted streets looking for Laurie. A T-Roadster pulls up alongside and a guy shouts at Steve.

DALE

You heading out to Paradise Road?

STEVE

Paradise Road, I'm not--

DALE

Some guy named Falfa going up against Milner.

STEVE

John's racing Falfa?

DALE

Yeah. Figured something was up, saw them going out of town real cautious and then--

But Steve is gone. Dale looks surprised as the Chevy roars off toward Paradise Road.

MEL'S DRIVE-IN--PRE-DAWN

Curt pulls into the parking lot just as the neon sign goes out. The last cars are leaving as the drive-in shuts up for the night. Curt stops next to the lighted phone booth and sits in his car, listening to the Wolfman.

WOLFMAN (V.O.)

I got a dedication here that's for a friend of the Wolfman--a special friend of the Wolfman who's leaving town tomorrow and wants me to play the next song for a blonde young lady in a Thunderbird. A white T-Bird, you understand? Now my friend's named Curt and he wants to talk to you out there, baby. So you meet him at Burger City, or phone Diamond Now he's a friend of mine, you hear, and, little girl, you better call him, or the Wolfman gonna get you.

The Wolfman howls and Curt smiles, leaning his chin on his hand, looking around the dark drive-in, wondering about tomorrow.

PARADISE ROAD--DAWN

John's '32 yellow deuce coupe and Falfa's black '55 Chevy are waiting side by side on a long, straight country road, their front wheels resting on a weather-beaten starting line. The sky is getting lighter as the radio plays "Green Onions."

There are about six to eight other cars parked off the road to watch the race. Everything is quiet now, only the crickets ignoring the solemnity of the scene, and still singing. Terry jumps out of John's car, John hands him the flashlight and he takes up a position in front of the two cars.

John looks over at Falfa, who's arguing with Laurie.

JOHN

Hey--Laurie, what in the hell are you doing in there? Is she gonna ride with you?

LAURIE

Mind your own business, John.

FALFA

Yeah, she's with me. You worry about yourself, man.

TERRY

Everybody ready?

John settles back in the driver's seat and positions his hand on the gear-shift, which we see is wrapped with rags because of the missing knob.

Both drivers start revvin' their engines; the tension builds. Terry looks nervous, the engines start to scream and Terry, his hands shaking on the flashlight, manages to flash it on.

Both cars roar off the starting line, tires smoking and screaming. Terry has his hands over his head and is coughing in a cloud of smoke as they pass. John beats Falfa off the line.

Out on the road, as they hit third gear, the cars are almost neck and neck. Inside Falfa's car, Laurie looks scared to death. Falfa looks insane as he tromps it.

John hits fourth at about eighty-five. Falfa does likewise-- but starts to fish-tail. Laurie closes her eyes, almost crying-- Falfa regains control nervously.

Falfa's engine is winding out incredibly and he begins to get the edge on John. The cars rocket through the dawn light along the flashing white line until suddenly Falfa's car blows a tire, his front wheel slips off and the car shoots off into a tomato field, hits an irrigation ditch and begins flipping over wildly in a horrifying cloud of dust and smoke--

John sees the Chevy leaving the road and screams to a halt, swimming through an unbelievable U-turn and high tailing it back to the crash site. He is out of the car like a bullet, running across the dirty cloddy field. The crash car is beginning to burn in the engine compartment and John is panicked.

Meanwhile, the spectators have arrived, including Steve, who jumps from his car and is running across the field.

Steve and John arrive at the fire at approximately the same time. They stop, the flames are getting higher, burning up into the trees now. Steve looks around wildly--he sees John and goes at him.

STEVE

You stupid sonofabitch, she was in that car! Why did you have--

He takes a couple of swings at John, who finally manages to tackle him around the waist. They both get up looking at the flaming wreckage. Then John moves around the side, crouching, trying to see past the flames--suddenly, he stands and motions to Steve to come over. They both circle the wreck.

Around behind the flaming car Falfa is standing in a state of shock watching the car go up in smoke, while Laurie is circling him, screaming and beating him with her purse.

LAURIE

I said I didn't--you lousy greasy jerk! You coulda killed me--what's wrong with you. You clubfoot...

She beats at him, crying hysterically. Steve runs over and grabs her, pulling her away. She fights at Steve, too, not knowing what's going on.

LAURIE (CONT'D)

No, no, no. Please, don't come near me. No, please. I think I'm gonna be sick. Oh, Steven.

STEVE

Laurie, please.

Standing in the early light, Steve holds her. She throws her arms around him as the crowd develops along the irrigation ditch to watch the flaming car.

LAURIE

Oh, Steven! Oh, Steven, please, don't leave me. Don't leave me, Steven.

STEVE

I won't.

LAURIE

I couldn't bear it.

STEVE

I won't.

LAURIE

Please.

STEVE

Believe me.

John looks at Falfa who's shaking his head, watching the car dissolve.

JOHN

Come on, before she blows.

He pulls him off by the neck of the shirt and when they're a few yards off, Falfa's '55 Chevy does blow--exploding like a small A-bomb, blowing it into Modesto history.

Back on the road, John is heading toward his car, its engine still running, its door open. Terry runs up, trotting alongside John like a puppy.

TERRY

Jeez, did you show him! He'll probably never even get in a car again.

JOHN

He was faster.

TERRY

It was beautiful, John. Just beautiful--
- what?

John stops by the open door of the deuce coupe. Terry stares at him and squints against the rising sun.

JOHN

I was losin', man.

TERRY

What?

JOHN

He had me, man. He was pullin' away from me just before he crashed.

TERRY

You're crazy.

JOHN

You saw it.

TERRY

No, you creamed him, from right off the line. The guy never had a chance.

JOHN

Shit, Toad. The man had me. He was beating me.

TERRY

John, I don't know what you're talking about. It was the most beautiful thing I've ever seen. That guy, he might as well get a wheelchair and roll himself home. Man, you got... you got the bitchinist car in the Valley. You'll always be number one, John. You're the greatest.

John nods, then looks up at Terry. His face is glowing, his glasses are smashed and his lip is swollen. John smiles.

JOHN

Look at your glasses, man.
(shaking his head)
Okay, Toad. We'll take 'em all.

TERRY

(grinning)
Right.

JOHN

We'll take em... let's get out of here.

John climbs in the car. Terry yawns and shakes his head.

TERRY

Jesus, what a night.

He climbs in too, and the deuce coupe drives off slowly as the sun rises over the ploughed fields and on the radio we hear "Only You."

MEL'S DRIVE-IN-DAWN-CITROEN

Curt sleeps in the little car as the sky grows lighter over the empty parking lot. The phone is ringing in the booth. It continues to ring. Finally Curt becomes aware of it and opens his eyes. It takes him a moment to remember. Then, panicked, he jumps from the car and rushes to the booth.

CURT

Hello, hello, hello!

A soft sexy female voice is on the other end of the line.

VOICE (V.O.)

Curt?

CURT

Yeah... this is Curt, who is this?

VOICE

Who were you expecting?

CURT

Do you drive a white T-Bird?

VOICE

A white '56. I saw you on Third Street.

CURT

You know me.

VOICE

Of course!

CURT

Who are you? How do you know me?

VOICE

It's not important.

CURT

(excitedly)

It's important to me. You're the most perfect, beautiful creature I've ever seen and I don't know anything about you. Could we meet someplace?

VOICE

I cruise Third Street every night. Maybe I'll see you again tonight.

CURT

No... I don't think so.

VOICE

Why?

CURT

I'm leaving... in a couple of hours. Where are you from?

VOICE

Curt...

CURT

What's your name? At least tell me your name?

VOICE

Goodbye, Curt.

CURT

Wait a second! Wait a second!

But there's a click as she hangs up. Curt looks at the phone a moment, then also hangs up. From the car radio, he hears the Wolfman making kissing noises.

WOLFMAN (V.O.)

Little kiss on your ear. Good night, sweetheart. I'll see you later.

And then the Spaniels duh-duh-duh-duh-duh into "Goodnight Sweetheart."

AIRPORT DAY

A DC-3 prop airliner is warming up its engines as it waits to take off from a small country airport. There aren't too many people around. Just Curt and his friends and family seeing him off. Curt stands with a kindly-looking couple in their fifties. He hugs his mother and shakes hands with his dad.

Then, Curt moves to his friends. He shakes Steve's hand.

STEVE

Good luck.

CURT

Yeah, same to you. And I better see you there next year.

STEVE

Oh yeah, I'll be there.

CURT

Sure.

Curt hugs his sister. Laurie holds on to him for a moment.

CURT (CONT'D)

See ya later.

LAURIE
'Bye 'bye, Curt.

Curt goes to Terry and John.

CURT
So long, guys.

TERRY
Well, stay cool, man.

CURT
Yeah.

TERRY
Ah--don't do anything I wouldn't
do.

Curt smiles at Terry, who has a bandage on his forehead. Curt looks at John and they don't seem to know what to say. Finally, John gives Curt a little slap on the cheek.

CURT
I'll see ya, buddy.

JOHN
I know, you probably think you're a
big shot, goin' off like this--but
you're still a punk.

CURT
Okay, John. So long.

He walks toward the plane and they all wave. He looks around as he goes up the steps carrying a small bag and a portable radio. The stewardess smiles as he passes her. Above the door of the plane it reads RADAR EQUIPPED. Curt looks back again, then goes inside. The plane takes off down the runway and then climbs up into the sky.

INSIDE THE PLANE

Curt listens to the radio as the plane takes off. It's playing "Goodnight Sweetheart." As the plane climbs and banks over the valley, the music fades and the station drifts between static and other stations...and then it's gone. Curt turns off the radio and looks out the window.

As the plane banks, through the window Curt sees the white Thunderbird crossing beneath on the small grey ribbon of highway. Curt watches it. Then the plane's shadow ripples over the car and it, too, is gone.

THE BLUE SKY

As the plane flies off against the blue sky we see cameos of Curt and his friends:

John Milner was killed by a drunk driver in December 1964. Terry Fields was reported missing in action near An Loc in December 1965. Steve Bolander is an insurance agent in Modesto, California.

Curt Henderson is a writer living in Canada.

THE END