

F O O T L O O S E

Original Screenplay
by
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A

THE ORIGINAL SONG SCORE IN "FOOTLOOSE"

The musical score that weaves in and out of "Footloose" works in a rather unique way.

Unlike the songs in a conventional musical -- i.e., songs that characters sing to each other on-screen -- the songs here will happen behind the action. Except for one song later in the script, no one sings to anyone else on-screen; the songs come at us from a variety of sources.

Despite the fact that the characters don't sing the songs, the songs do play an enormous part in creating the emotional impact of the picture and enhancing the characters and relationships; first, by creating a musical texture that is contemporary and infectious, and second, by echoing the emotional tone of the scenes in the lyrics of the songs.

The lyrics provide a subtext for the dramatic action, and each of the songs, rather than feeling like a "plot" song, has the self-contained integrity of a pop song. And various song melodies will be re-orchestrated and will be integrated as the musical score of the film.

The following music cues correlate to music cues numbered throughout the script and further describe the style of the songs.

PRIME SOUNDTRACK SONGS (11 Major Songs) **

MUSIC CUE #1

Page 1

Action: Car pulling into Bomont
Source: Visual/car radio
Notes: A current rock chartmaker; very raucous, upbeat; we hear this very briefly through the radio.

MUSIC CUE #2 **

Pages 9

Action: Edna's car/Chuck's truck race
Source: Visual/Chuck's truck tape deck
Notes: Very hip rock-n-roller with pounding rhythm; fills the screen and provides the background tempo for the entire truck race and Ariel's jump.

MUSIC CUE #3 **

Pages 14

Action: Kids at Rocket Drive-Inn
Source: Visual/jukebox speaker at Rocket Drive-Inn
Notes: Pop tune providing gentle backdrop to atmosphere at Drive-Inn; airiness, very Hall & Oates feel; heavy synthesizer.

B

MUSIC CUE #4

Pages 20-21

Action: Ren plays Bryan a song in his car
Source: Visual/Ren's car tape deck
Notes: Dance music, unmistakably melodic rock goes from source to fill the entire screen; magical, ethereal; heavy on synthesizers... strung-out hollow sound; haunting, exploding; like Kraftwerk with ELO feel and lyric type; same feel as Styx "Too Much Time On My Hands"; calculated, punching rhythm underneath.

MUSIC CUE #5

Pages 25-26

Action: Interior of Rev. Shaw Moore's house; dialogue between Ariel and her father
Source: Visual/stereo turntable in Shaw Moore's den
Notes: Haydn chamber piece or similar classically light piece; weaves in and out of conversation with Ariel and Shaw; elegant feel.

MUSIC CUE #6 **

Pages 37

Action: Tractor stand-off and race between Ren and Chuck
Source: Visual/portable 8-track tape deck
Notes: Song fills the screen and provides the constant driving force for entire tractor fight... pushes speed of the tractors and the tension of the onlookers; beat is verging on agitating, pounding the action faster, harder; big guitar extravaganza; rhythm contrasts the oil derricks pumping in the distance and the even slower, uneasy pace of the tractors; stops abruptly as Chuck's tractor flips over... Ren wins in austere silence.

MUSIC CUE #7 **

Pages 45-46

Action: Ren dances on basketball court.
Source: Visual/portable cassette deck
Notes: Same as Music Cue #4

MUSIC CUE #8

Pages 60-62

Action: Cars parked on "The Hill"; Ren attempting to solicit support
Source: Non-visual/background car radio
Notes: Very MOR type song faintly playing in background; mellow feeling, like an early Bob Seger ballad.

C

MUSIC CUE #9 **

Page 65-66

Action: Ren, Ariel and friends sneak off to Texas Beer Hall
Source: Assumed non-visual/Sound
Notes: This song has to sparkle with magic and fire... same feel as a C&W "Fame"; lyric could be loosely construed to be beckoning them in for a closer look... a welcome to the real world... in reality, the lyric is possibly of a love/romantic theme.

MUSIC CUE #10 **

Page 66-67

Action: Ren and Ariel dance at the end of the evening in the Texas beer hall.
Source: Same as Cue #9
Notes: This is a wind-down, end-of-the-evening kind of tune that segues easily out of Cue #9. It's not heavy-handed but should insinuate something about the Ren-Ariel love affair that's just starting to flourish.

MUSIC CUE #11 **

Page 79

Action: Montage of Bryan running hurdles; Ren campaigning for dance;
Source: Starts on Visual/turntable in Bryan's room and music fills entire screen and weaves in and out of montage
Notes: Must be very pop... rhythmically very up; Hall & Oates feel; can't overwhelm action... accentuate action and weave in and out under dialogue scenes fading out as Ariel enters her front door.

MUSIC CUE #12 **

Pages 90

Action: Ariel gives Ren music box in his car; she sings to him
Source: Visual/music box & live lyric from Ariel
Notes: Open to tiny tinkling of melody... very delicate ... Ariel begins to sing a sweet love song that may come back later on as underscoring for subsequent scenes; like "Still" (Lionel Ritchie) or "I Sing to You Now and Then" (Kenny Loggins).

D

MUSIC CUE #13 **

Page 115-116

Action: Montage; preparation for the dance
Source: Visual/radio in bedroom jumping immediately into
soundtrack filling entire screen underscoring
montage throughout
Notes: Gentle rocker, up-tempo gravitating to ballad
feel and back to driving up-tempo; exciting pace
throughout, even in ballad section; in one
section, students dance a mad conga line
silhouetted against a bonfire; feeling like
"MacArthur Park."

MUSIC CUE #14 **

Page 119

Action: First dance number in Beamis' barn; Shaw, Vi and
Andy in field outside barn; confrontation
between Chuck and Bryan in field on dirt road;
intercut back to barn
Source: Non-visual/sound system inside barn building to
fill screen
Notes: Rhythmic dance beat swelling in barn and then
blurring faintly from barn under scene with
Shaw, Vi and Andy; fading out to silence under
dirty road scene between Bryan and Chuck;
jolting back into barn and dance and then
faintly pulling back on page 141 in scenes
between Vi and Shaw and Chuck and Rusty; same
song full blast fills the screen as we cut back
into the barn on Ren and Ariel dancing alone on
the floor; as the other kids start to pour onto
the floor, the music explodes and jumps an
entire notch in intensity; music must portray an
exuberant feeling of freedom; song has to compel
kids onto the dance floor and must compel the
audience into the screen themselves;
instrumental only until Ren and Ariel start to
dance and then lyric enters; should feel like
"You Should Be Dancing" in Saturday Night Fever.

MUSIC CUE #15 **

Page 122-123

Action: Slow dance number in the barn; Shaw and Vi in
the field
Source: Non-visual sound system in barn building to fill
screen
Notes: As Cue #16 fades out at cut from barn to field
with Shaw and Vi, score/adaptation of our love
theme begins under this scene and fully hits us
as we cut back into barn for our big slow
dance... an intimate, tintillating ballad...
swelling at end breaking into an explosive
rhythmic dance number. Triumphant and
uplifting.

FOOTLOOSE--PRE-TITLE SEQUENCE

INT. MORSE HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

The screen is suffused in white light, a blur. We hear the intermittent sound of objects hitting the floor. The camera slowly focuses and we can make out a lone figure, silhouetted against an entire wall of windows shining with sunlight in the background. We move in closer to discover Ren McCormick standing in front of his locker, his release forms clamped between his teeth. He is digging books out of his locker and dropping them into an open gym bag on the floor. Way in the background, we can barely hear the faint sound of a radio, distorted with volume, pounding out a raucous urban tune. This is the quiet beginning to an eventual urban overture, a cacophony of sounds--MUSIC, VOICES, MACHINES--that will swell to a peak and then taper off over the span of these first five sequences.

EXT. MORSE HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Ren exits the building, a tall, institutional red-brick fortress, built sometime in the late 20's. Now its walls are covered with graffiti and the neighborhood ain't what it used to be. Four youths--two black, two of indeterminate race-- lounge on the huge bank of stairs, spread out with books, food, and a large stereo radio that plays a funky tune (which may or may not be the radio heard one scene earlier). A large convertible, radio blasting, drives by, spirited by a black dude who is practically wearing his woman on his right arm. For a moment, the two MUSIC sounds clash, then fade away. Ren jumps back, avoiding the barreling convertible, and then crosses to his own car, throws the gym bag in the back seat and gets in. When his door slams, a loud, tidal wave hiss swells up to fill the screen.

INT. LINEN PLANT - DUSK

A cloud of steam covers the screen. Through the fog we can see Ren, bending over large rolling bins of linen, hauling out huge white sacks of dirty linen and feeding them onto a conveyor belt or into monstrous washing machines. He is dressed in white uniform pants and a tank-top t-shirt that shows off his body to advantage. C.U. of his face as he sweats his way through the back-breaking slinging. NOTE: This scene should be filmed so as to parallel his eventual work on the Oklahoma farm. The similarities between his work actions here and those he goes through haying should be kept in mind. To his right, a co-worker, a stocky BLACK MAN, in his early thirties, accompanies himself at work by singing, very loudly, some r&b hit-- a cappella. But he supplies the rhythmic nuances by slinging the laundry bags to punctuate his lyrics.

CONTINUED:

INT. PLANT - NIGHT

End of the shift. Ren is dressed in his street clothes, his hair slightly stringy with sweat. He's carrying a few personal items -- the results of another locker cleaning: a spare pair of boots, some clothes hangers, a heavy coat. He's exiting through a loading dock area where he encounters a foreman. From the guard's office, where several guys laugh and lounge around, we can see the extended antenna of a portable tv and, though no one seems to be watching it, it drones on in the background--the Solid Gold dancers doing this week's countdown of the Top 10. The sound is buried under the MUSIC made by trucks coming and going, cartloads full of laundry scraping along the concrete and men shouting back and forth to each other. We can see Ren receive a paycheck -- his last -- and he shakes the hand of the foreman. Perhaps a word or a phrase of their exchange will stick out for a moment--"...gonna miss you...", "...take care of yourself...". He passes a few co-workers -- mostly blacks -- who slap him on the back or offer their hands in farewell. He awkwardly juggles the clothes he's carrying and gives them a 'blud' handshake, full of twists and turns of the wrist. One playfully throws a punch at Ren's shoulder, which he bobs to avoid; as he does so, he spins around and kicks his co-worker in the butt. It's a farewell without tears.

EXT. THE INFERNO DISCO - NIGHT

We are looking through the windshield of Ren's car as he slowly glides by and watches the regular crowd move in and out of the dance club. The MUSIC spills from this club and several others in the neighborhood; every time the door opens to the INFERNO, the noise level jumps appreciably. This stew of sounds is added to by every car that whisks by, or every dude who passes on the sidewalk swinging a super-charged ghetto blaster. His reverie is shattered by the distorted face of a BUDDY popping into frame, his tongue sticking out sideways in a clownish expression. The BUDDY is with an attractive GIRL -- They're both about 18 -- and they go through what we can assume to be a friendly goodbye. The BUDDY shakes Ren's hand through the window and the GIRL leans in, kisses and hugs him. He smiles shyly under all the attention and slowly pulls away as the BUDDY and GIRL wave and enter the club. The music fades as he drives off and he reaches down to snap on his car stereo, a last vestige of the days when his folks were 'comfortably off'. The tune is animated rock, an urban (black) sound, and provides a montage over the following short sequences.

FOOTLOOSE--PRE-TITLE SEQUENCE

CONTINUED:

EXT. ROW HOUSES - NIGHT

Ren pulls up and parks in front of a line of 1920's row houses...very Chicago east side. He exits the car and runs up the stairs in front of the house.

INT. MCCORMICK APT. - NIGHT

Ren swings the door open to reveal his mother Ethel carrying a large, heavy box to the door. He rushes to take the box from her; except for the pile of boxes at the front door, and a few mismatched pieces of luggage, the apartment is empty. No curtains, no furniture -- nada. He stacks the box and crosses to a small knick-knack shelf in the corner, where a family picture is standing alone. It's a photo of Ren, his mother and father, taken perhaps three years earlier. Ren's father has a party hat on and Ren is making rabbit ears behind his father's head. He takes the frame down, sticks it under his jacket, under his arm, and sets about carrying his suitcases out.

EXT. ROW HOUSES - NIGHT

The car trunk slams and we see Ren, bundled up against the late January Chicago winter. He squints around himself, taking one last look at his neighborhood. He moves to the passenger side of the car, which, we can now see, is piled up with boxes and clothes in the back seat. He gets into the car, slams the door, and slumps back against a coat, balled up into a makeshift pillow, as his mother, at the wheel, pulls away from the curb. The camera pulls up and away as the car taillights disappear.

"FOOTLOOSE"

OPENING CREDITS OVER:

1 EXT. OKLAHOMA COUNTRYSIDE - EARLY EVENING 1

MUSIC CUE #1 - Car pulling into Bomont.

The SCREEN FADES IN on a SHOT of Oklahoma terrain -- flat as far as the eye can see, with only scrub and an occasional rocky rise obstructing the horizon. Out of the distance comes a pair of headlights, solitary on the major freeway; the SOUND of a RADIO playing rock music swells with its approach. By the light of the headlights we read a large roadside sign that proclaims: "THE RISEN CHRIST IS KING. BOMONT FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, REV. SHAW MOORE, PASTOR."

2 INT. CHUCK'S CAR - EARLY EVENING 2

ARIEL MOORE is a feisty, good-looking redhead who can be alternately innocent and calculating. She is the daughter of the local minister, Rev. Shaw Moore. CHUCK CRANSTON is a 20-year-old with the heavy-lidded look of a school drop-out, but his lips telegraph the sensuality of a tiger.

They pass the town limits sign for Bomont, Oklahoma, and suddenly react. They've been cuddling but now CHUCK removes his arm from around ARIEL'S shoulders; she snaps off the radio, takes a tissue from her purse and wipes off all her makeup; and finally she pulls her dress down over her knees and slides over to the passengers side of the car. It's all done with the efficiency of a ritual. They assume poses of respectability.

3 EXT. CAR - EARLY EVENING 3

LONG SHOT of the car.

4 EXT. DOWNTOWN BOMONT - EARLY EVENING 4

VARIOUS SHOTS -- a deserted traffic intersection, empty sidewalks, a lonely town square, a small movie house (The Coronet) showing "On Gold n Pond" -- ESTABLISH this sleepy town. Buildings are shuttered, parking lots are deserted, neon signs flicker, half-working, half-not.

4 CONTINUED:

4

OVER THE MONTAGE we HEAR the swelling of voices -- ETHEL McCORMICK, a recently widowed, wholesomely attractive woman in her late thirties; her sister, LULU WARNICKER, a housewife in her mid-thirties; her husband, WES WARNICKER, an overweight, chain-smoking oil businessman; and SARAH and AMY WARNICKER, their daughters, ages 7 and 6. Clattering, OVERLY AMPLIFIED SOUNDS and distinctive phrases start to stick out.

LULU (V.O.)

Ethel, honey, eat. Are you sure Ren doesn't want to come down?

ETHEL (V.O.)

I don't know. I think we're both just tired from the move.

5 EXT. WARNICKER HOUSE -- EARLY EVENING

5

A modest, ranch-style home with a small front lawn and a one-car garage.

AMY

I think I'm gonna take him a potato.

6 INT. DINING ROOM OF WARNICKER HOUSE -- EARLY EVENING

6

The family is crowded around the dinner table, passing plates back and forth. Six-year-old Amy, with a baked potato in one hand, is exiting the room.

WES

Amy, sit down. I'm sure your cousin's fine.
(she does)

AMY

What if he's starving?

SARAH

Amy, you are so lame.

Amy turns on Sarah with a 'drop-dead' deadpan.

LULU

He's probably still tired from the church service.

ETHEL

Could be. Is the service always so...

SARAH

Long??

6 CONTINUED:

6

The adults laugh.

LULU

Well, it's the two hours in the morning and then tonight for another hour and a half...

WES

And Bible study on Wednesday night.

LULU

What amazes me is how Rev. Moore finds the strength, my Lord!!!

AMY

If you ask me, Ren is a total fox.

Lulu and Wes are startled.

7 INT. DINING ROOM, SHAW MOORE'S HOUSE - SAME EARLY EVENING 7

An unpretentious house. REV. SHAW MOORE, in his late forties with the salt-and-pepper hair, the good looks and the charisma of a Paul Newman, is sitting at the table, set with mismatched silver and juice glasses filled with iced-tea. Pictures of award-winning church sports teams cover the walls. Shaw is going over his sermon. Bustling around him is his wife, VI, a very attractive woman who has down-played her natural beauty. She's in her late thirties, and is in terrific shape; she is the woman behind this man, a constantly supportive, enthusiastic partner, whom he tends to take for granted.

VI

... and Louise Bryerson was sniffing all through your sermon and so she went digging through her purse and came up with a bottle of eyedrops, I couldn't believe it -- and she leaned back and put these eyedrops in her nose.

(she laughs;
no reaction from Shaw)

8 EXT. SHAW MOORE'S HOUSE -- SAME EARLY EVENING

8

Chuck pulls up across the street from the house; Ariel jumps out of the truck and slams the door. She has a winning style that saves her from being "bratty"; we always sense that she's genuinely enjoying herself.

CHUCK

Am I gonna see you after church?

8 CONTINUED:

8

ARIEL
(playful)
If you're there.

She runs across the street.

9 INT. DINING ROOM, SHAW MOORE'S HOUSE - SAME EARLY EVENING 9

VI
(continuing)
And so she was choking and coughing
and I was choking from trying to
stop laughing..
(pause)
I thought it was funny.
(then, in a deeper
voice, as if in
reply)
No, Vi, that was naughty and nasty.
(then, in her own
voice, apparently
chastised)
I'm sorry. I thought it was funny.
(pause; she continues
to set the table)

SHAW
(distracted, deadpan)
It's very funny.

Vi smiles at Shaw's feeble effort.

The front door SLAMS. Ariel enters, jauntily. Shaw
looks up for a moment before returning to his work.

ARIEL
I know. I'm late. A bunch of
us were doing economic homework.
Gag.
(she makes an
appropriate face)

Ariel passes the table and stops, staring down at a pan
of sweet potatoes covered with melted marshmallows.

ARIEL
Oh, yecch! Momma! What is that?
Daddy, did you see this?
(shaking a finger)
Momma, I keep telling you.
Marshmallows are not a legitimate
vegetable.

9 CONTINUED:

9

She kisses Vi and she's gone from the room. Vi smiles. Shaw does not look up. We HEAR the beginning of Shaw's sermon from the following scene as he HOLD on his reaction, amused.

SHAW (V.O.)

And I cannot forget it it. I don't think any of us can. It's eight years now. Eight years since the Crosby Bridge accident.

10 INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

10

A typical, unpretentious community church, full.

C.U. of Shaw at first. Then as he continues, the CAMERA PANS the congregation and we SEE all of the characters already introduced.

Chuck leans against the back wall of the church; his father, BURLINGTON CRANSTON, a great tub of a man, sits in the last pew, indicating that he should sit alongside him. Chuck ignores his father's invitation.

We also SEE ANDY BEAMIS, a farmer in his late fifties, with an almost aristocratic bearing. He sits alone, consciously setting himself apart from the community. The way he is shot assures us that he'll figure into the action later.

SHAW (O.S.)

(Continuing)

And it's still a powerful reminder of the devastating effects that drugs...and liquor...& the wrong kinds of music...and a twisted sense of values can have on our young folks.

11 ANGLE ON SHAW MOORE

11

striding back and forth across the alter. His delivery is mesmerizing -- alternately intimate and bombastic.

SHAW

(Continuing)

Those nine high school students -- those children -- who lost their lives in those two cars were our flesh and blood. Nine lives that could have been saved if we'd recognized the signals that our children were crying out to us.

12 ANGLE ON ARIEL

12

who is surreptitiously painting her nails, shielded on both sides by girlfriends.

SHAW

(continuing)

And they still are. Our children still need our undivided attention, still need our constant love. Cuz growing up is every bit as hard as being born. And no matter how old we get, let's not forget that we're all -- all of us -- still growing up in our Lord's eyes.

Various answers of "Amen!" and "Hallelujah!" C.U. Ariel. Without looking up from her nails she answers, "Ole!"

13 OMITTED

13

14 INT. CHURCH VESTIBULE - NIGHT

14

As Shaw moves through a crowd of parishioners nodding and greeting them as he goes, he is approached by Chuck Cranston, who is slightly self-conscious and careful throughout this exchange.

CHUCK

Evening, Reverend.

SHAW

(nodding, guarded)

Chuck. How's oil rigging?

CHUCK

(smiling, nodding)

Good. Getting better.

SHAW

Is your Dad here?

Chuck points over his shoulder, into the crowd; at this moment, Vi comes up behind Shaw and touches him on the elbow. He understands that this is a summons.

SHAW

Tell your Dad the town council's meeting Wednesday night this week at my place. Ask him not to miss this one?

CHUCK

Yeah, okay. I got it.

14 CONTINUED:

14

Shaw goes. Chuck takes a filter cigarette, breaks off the filter, and sticks the frayed end into his mouth. A newly manicured hand, Ariel's, reaches in from OUT OF FRAME and plucks it from his lips.

ARIEL

Now, that wasn't so hard, was it?

15 EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

15

Shaw and Vi are clustered with Ethel, Lulu and Wes on the gravel parking lot outside the church, under the glow of a yellow arc light. Other parishioners are milling around and the small children are running through the legs of adults.

SHAW

(to Ethel)

Well, Ethel, we're hoping that you're gonna enjoy yourself in Bomont.

ETHEL

I wanted you to meet my boy.

(over her shoulder)

Ren? This is my son, Ren.

She draws him into frame. He is 17, thin athletic and sexy. His shyness only makes him all the more attractive, and his laconic manner is almost seductive. The way this is filmed should guarantee Ren an "entrance".

SHAW

How d'you do. My wife, Vivian.

VI

(shaking hands)

Call me Vi.

REN

(awkward)

Hi.

SHAW

I guess you'll be starting over at the high school?

LULU

(jumping in)

Oh, we took care of all that.

SHAW

Good, good...

15 CONTINUED:

15

From behind Shaw, Ariel sticks her head into the group.

ARIEL

Daddy?

SHAW

Ariel! Ren, this is our daughter,
Ariel. This is Ren McCormick.
He's gonna be new at school
tomorrow...

They take one of those electric looks at each other;
then they shift into 'cool'. Ren nods.

ARIEL

Hi.

(going right on)

Daddy, me and Wendy Jo and Edna 'n
them are going for a soda over at
the Rocket; I'll be home in a half
hour.

(to Ren)

Bye.

She runs off.

SHAW

(shouting after her)

Ariel, remember it's a school
night.

C.U. Ren watching her go.

The voice of WENDY JO BARNES overlaps this shot.

WENDY JO (V.O.)

Well, he is excellent!!

16 INT. 1979 BUICK - NIGHT

16

EDNA HULL is driving down a stretch of country highway.
The moon shines overhead and the road glows white from
its brilliance.

In the car: Ariel; RUSTY CLARKE, Ariel's best friend --
short-cropped hair, anorexic good looks, sunken eyes and
an indomitable spirit; WENDY JO and EDNA, both with bad
skin, cigarette smokers; and STEPHANIE, short, plump,
braces.

ARIEL

What? The new kid? He's alright.

RUSTY

What are you? Blind? He's gorgeous.

16 CONTINUED:

16

General agreement.

STEPHANIE

Edna, doesn't this thing do over seven miles an hour?

EDNA

When it doesn't have to haul your weight around.

RUSTY

Should I cut my bangs?

WENDY JO

What bangs?

STEPHANIE

Ariel, I thought your father was never gonna shut up tonight.

Groans.

EDNA

Does he talk like that at home?

WENDY JO

Howcum he still lets you see Chuck?

ARIEL

Cuz he trusts me...

STEPHANIE

The fool.

ARIEL

...and if you guys weren't so ignorant, you'd realize that he's making some sense.

Replies of, "Oh! Sorry!"; "I guess I'm just ignorant!";
"Now, I'm scared."

EDNA

(checking her rear-view
mirror)

Ladies and gentlemen, moving up on
our left now, you'll notice the
famous Barf-mobile.

MUSIC CUE #2: CAR-TRUCK RACE

17 ANGLE ON CHUCK CRANSTON IN HIS TRUCK

17

tape deck going FULL BLAST as he bears down on the car full of girls, HONKING as he nudges them to go faster. The MUSIC fills the screen and provides the background for the rest of this scene.

STEPHANIE

Edna, he wants to race!!

EDNA

What is he on tonight?

WENDY JO

Oh, Edna, step on it!!

18 ANGLE ON CHUCK

18

as he pulls his truck alongside the girls, HONKING and laughing. He is driving in the opposing lane of traffic, but there's no other traffic coming.

19 EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT - NIGHT

19

ELEANOR and ROGER DUNBAR have interrupted the conversation that Ren, et al., are having with Rev. Moore. They are a pleasantly bland couple in their early fifties. He's all Polyester and Poli-dent. She's teased out in an Annette Funicello-do and is carrying a shoe box. They've appointed themselves morality cheerleaders in the Bomont community.

SHAW

(in the middle of
introductions)

This is Eleanor and Roger Dunbar.
Eleanor and Roger are very active
in the church.

Handshakes all around.

ELEANOR

(opening the shoe box)

Vi, I made you some of those Toll
House squares I promised? You
taste one of these, you'll burn
your recipe.

(turning to Shaw)

Reverend, we have a little
problem. We'd like to speak with
you. I heard that the English
teacher over at the school is
planning to teach that book --
what's that book, Roger?...

ROGER

Slaughterhouse Five...

19 CONTINUED:

19

ELEANOR
(to Shaw)
Isn't that an awful name?

REN
It's a great book.

All heads turn.

REN
(now defensive; quietly)
Slaughterhouse Five? Yeah. It's
a classic.

ROGER
(a forced smile)
Do you read much?

ELEANOR
(strained smile)
Maybe in another town it's a
classic.

REN
In any town.

ROGER
Tom Sawyer is a classic.

ELEANOR
Excuse us, Reverend, could we talk
to you?

SHAW
(to the group)
Excuse me.

Roger collars him and they walk away from the group; we
can faintly hear Roger talking.

ROGER
See, that's the kind of dangerous
thinking that we have got to
protect ourselves...

His voice fades. We may even hear the word 'troublemaker'
punctuate the conversation. Vi tries to smooth things
over.

VI
The Dunbars can get very... umm,
energetic... Cookie?
(offering)

20 EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

20

MUSIC CUE: TRUCK-CAR RACE

Chuck is still pacing Edna's car.

21 ANGLE ON THE INSIDE OF THE GIRLS' CAR

21

They're all commenting on Chuck's antics and SQUEALING like kids, things like "Oh, he's winning! Don't let him win!!" "Edna, move this thing!" "He's crazy! He's crazy!" Ariel, who is sitting behind the driver's seat, turns to Rusty and hands her a purse.

ARIEL

Hang on to this.

And then, to the shocked astonishment of the others, she leans out the window of the car, and reaches for the large rear-view mirror frame that extends from the right side of Chuck's cab. Edna sees what she is trying to do and freaks, but she doesn't dare slow down.

Chuck loves this. He negotiates the truck closer to allow Ariel easier access to the truck door. We SEE all this from:

22 VARIOUS ANGLES

22

Inside the truck, looking out; inside the car, watching Ariel disappear out the window; from behind the two racing vehicles as Ariel's body bridges the distance between them. The girls are all crazed with disbelief, except Rusty, who is quite amused by it all.

With Ariel still half-in and half-out of the car, we SEE, over Chuck's shoulder, the headlights of an approaching truck. Edna sees it too and she goes crazy, yelling at Ariel, turning around in her seat and making grabs for Ariel, screaming, "We're gonna die! We're gonna die!" and "You wanna end up like your brother," and pounding on her steering wheel. But Ariel is really incapable of retreat. Rusty yells to Edna that she can't slow down, and while Stephanie slides down in her seat to hide from the entire scene, Ariel, hanging onto the mirror frame, swings out of the car and hits the running board of the truck in time for Chuck to swerve in front of Edna's car and narrowly miss the HONKING six-axle truck that goes barreling past them.

Ariel pulls open the truck door, hurls herself into the cab, and falls full length across the seat onto Chuck, kissing him intensely and generally distracting him from his driving. Back inside the girls' car, all of them, except Edna, are again vigorously brushing their hair and chatting excitedly, drowned out by the MUSICAL TRACKS.

23 EXT. ROCKET DRIVE-INN - NIGHT

23

A squat brick building that sits behind a double row of drive-in stalls. There are a few speaker poles left standing with miniature jukeboxes that extend into the cars like the ones at drive-in movies. The place has obviously seen better days.

Ten cars, or so, are lined up under the harsh fluorescence and the KIDS are sitting on, leaning on or walking around between cars. It's a party atmosphere. Kids cluster around six or eight video games arranged along one wall which are bleeping and squawking.

Chuck Cranston pulls in and takes the first space nearest the kitchen, where a stereo speaker is still in working order on the pole next to his truck. Edna pulls in alongside him and the girls explode out of the car. Edna is furious.

EDNA

(to Ariel)

I could kill you!!

ARIEL

You almost did.

EDNA

Chuck Cranston, you're crazy!

RUSTY

That's what you get for sniffing spray starch.

STEPHANIE

After he graduated, they drained his brain.

Chuck is unblinking, smiling in a cocky way. The MUSIC STOPS when he turns off the ignition. A SERVING GIRL, dressed in a red jacket worn over ill-fitting blue jeans, comes to take orders.

CHUCK

What's free?

Serving girl doesn't react.

ARIEL

And I'm gonna have -- Edna, are you getting fries?

EDNA

If I do, you can't have any.

23 CONTINUED:

23

ARIEL

Good.

(to the girl)

Bring me her fries.

The girl rolls her eyes and moves on. Ariel reaches across Chuck, out the window of the truck, and pulls the juke-box speaker into the cab.

ARIEL

Put a quarter in, Chuck.

CHUCK

Why??

ARIEL

Cuz, otherwise, I can't control my fingers.

And she begins to tickle him. He howls and squirms. His elbow hits the horn. Kids turn to the source of the noise; the horn stops and immediately a pop tune fills the air.

MUSIC CUE #3: ROCKET DRIVE-INN

A few kids roll down their windows and listen, while others stand and BEAT in time on the hoods of cars.

One GIRL turns to another in one of the cars and says:

GIRL

They really shouldn't play that.

24 A SERIES OF SHOTS

24

Kids eating, clowning, pitching their balled up paper napkins into a trash barrel, and missing, standing at the video games and swaying in time.

The MUSIC lasts long enough to weave a spell over the kids.

And then it STOPS, abruptly.

Everyone turns to see what killed the music.

25 ANGLE ON SHAW MOORE

25

standing beside the cab of Chuck's truck, his hand on the control knob of the stereo speaker. The kids are immediately sobered by his presence; two girls hide

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

cigarettes they've been smoking; a guy near the trash cans bends down and deposits some of the garbage that never landed in the cans. It's the same kind of activity we saw in the first scene of the movie. They've been bad and they know it.

Shaw surveys the scene with a bewilderment that's both confused and concerned. He starts to say something, but he stops. Instead he reaches through the window of Chuck's truck and hands Ariel two dollars.

SHAW

Your mother didn't think you had any money with you.

He turns and goes quietly. Ariel crumples the money in her hand. Nobody else moves -- a stylized freeze.

One last LONG SHOT of the fluorescent-lit drive-inn.

A bell RINGS, harshly.

26 EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

26

Two long, low flat buildings. STUDENTS shuffle between classrooms and between buildings. They look as if they might be going to a rodeo -- blue jeans, t-shirts, bandanas, boots; the girls wear jewelry and no make-up. The boys have longish hair and more than a few sport a few-days' growth of beard.

The parking lot is gravel; Ren and his mother are exiting his car. He's wearing a long-sleeved shirt and tie to his first day of school and looks very ill-at-ease.

ETHEL

No, this is fine. I'll walk over to my job interviews and Lulu can come and pick me up later.

REN

I really hate this tie.

ETHEL

Ren, it's just for the first day. Think of it as a fresh start. In September, when you go off to college, you can dress like Willie Nelson.

REN

(forcing a smile)
Good luck.

26 CONTINUED:

26

She nods as if to say, "I'll need it." She goes; he turns and is confronted with a sea of faces all staring at him. He pulls off the tie and takes a deep breath.

A bell rings.

27 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

27

Students file by Ren, regarding him somewhat suspiciously, as he checks room numbers and refers to a schedule which he busily unfolds. A pimply-faced boy (JEFF BLUNT - see description, page 61) in a pack of 4 guys wearing Lettermen's jacket calls out as he passes Ren.

JEFF

Chicago?

REN

(looking up, instinctively)

Yeah.

Jeff and the gang cackle at this knee-jerk reaction.

JEFF

Your name Chicago?

(mutters)

Dick-brain!

And the pack moves on; Ren looks after them and his eyes smolder. He sets his jaw and turns to go, pushing his way through a swinging door on the left side of the hall. In doing so, he knocks down BRYAN HEWITT, a normally good-spirited jock. He's sent flying backwards onto the floor of this relatively deserted stretch of hallway.

BRYAN

Shit, mister, where're you going?

REN

Well, I...

BRYAN

Sunufabich don't you ever look...?

REN

(softly)

I'm sorry.

BRYAN

You're supposed to stay on the right. Christ, where'd you learn to drive? Hunh?

27 CONTINUED:

27

REN

(he's had it now)

Look, I said I'm sorry. How 'bout I
kill myself. How zat?

This stops Bryan. He looks up at Ren and bursts out
laughing. He extends his hand to shake and to be helped
up.

BRYAN

Welcome to Bomont. I'm Bryan
Hewitt.

Bell rings.

INT.--SCHOOL HALLWAY DAY

Ren and Bryan are talking, passing a barrage of
students -- a boy on crutches, a girl with a bouffante, a
pack of beefy boys. Ren is a subject of much scrutiny,
and several cold stares. He nods a 'hello' and smiles at
a few of the girls who pass by but nobody returns his
greeting until:

RUSTY

Hi, Bryan.

(stopping Ren)

That tie was not you. Trust me.

Ren is puzzled. He recognizes Ariel. She pauses, looks
him up and down and turns to go. He searches for
something to say.

REN

Ariel??...

(she turns)

...right?

ARIEL

(with a small smile)

Very good.

She goes. C.U. of Ren, intrigued.

28 EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

28

Ren exits the school, talking to Bryan. He's even taken
off his shirt, and, in a clean, white undershirt, he
looks right at home. His body looks great, and girls
passing by are not oblivious to this fact.

REN

No, Chicago's okay. My high
school was a sorta party school,
y'know? Lotta dances. The girls
in my school gave great crepe
paper.

28 CONTINUED:

28

They laugh.

BRYAN

Well, you're not gonna get any dancing done here.

REN

Howcum?

BRYAN

It's illegal.

REN

C'mon.

BRYAN

I swear. Has been for about eight or nine years now.

REN

Why?

BRYAN

It's a long story. It started with a buncha kids got killed in a car wreck. So everybody went crazy, blaming the liquor and music and everything. But by now they're just convinced that it's a sin.

REN

Who's convinced...?

Chuck Cranston in his truck skids across our line of sight. He's wearing a ten-gallon hat. Ariel is sitting opposite him and two other guys -- RICH CHRISTOPHER and WAYNE HODGES, both high school students -- are seated in the bed of the truck. The CAMERA MOVES UP AND OVER the back of the truck, and there, out of sight, Rich is rolling a joint on a pile of schoolbooks.

CHUCK

(to Ren)

You the new guy?

Ren nods, squinting into the sun.

CHUCK

Where'd the tie go?

Ren, smiling, points to a binder in his pile of books.

28 CONTINUED:

28

CHUCK

I heard your mother had to bring
you to school.

Ren doesn't react. Chuck is getting laughs from his
friends.

CHUCK

(continuing)

I thought only pansies wore
neckties.

REN

(not missing a beat)

And, see, I thought only assholes
use the word "pansy."

The guys in the back of the truck react to this with
hoots; Chuck doesn't flinch. He shifts into gear and
peels out, leaving Ren and Bryan in a swirling cloud of
dust. Bryan howls. Ren is pissed.

BRYAN

(laughing)

Boy, either you got balls the
size of grapefruits or you are
really stupid!!

29 INT. SHOPPING CENTER - DAY

29

A covered mall with a number of shops radiating from one
large supermarket. The mall is filled with mothers,
small children, and kids hanging around after school.
Bryan is standing, hands in his pockets, outside a video
game arcade, buzzing with activity. Ren comes up behind
Bryan, unwrapping a cellophane from a music cassette he's
just purchased.

BRYAN

(looking up)

You ready?

REN

Yeah.

BRYAN

(referring to the arcade)

The minister and the town want
to shut it down. They say it's
trouble. And you know what's
scary? They will.

30 EXT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY

30

Bryan and Ren walk to Ren's car.

BRYAN

But even the dancing--it's not just here;

(like a radio d.j.)

It's the latest craze.

(in his normal voice)

There're places you can't dance upstate, Places in Arkansas, Georgia, Kansas. Look at Time magazine this week. I have a cousin in Montana and it's against the law where she lives.

REN

So whaddya do at your senior prom--walk around the floor?

They're in the car by now.

31 INT. REN'S CAR - DAY

31

MUSIC CUE #4: REN PLAYS SONG ON CAR STEREO

Ren cues up a song and begins to PLAY it very loud with the car windows open. It's a buoyant, pop-py number with an engaging feel. Nothing raunchy or abrasive.

REN

(shouting over the music)

Have you heard this?

Bryan shakes his head "no." He seems uncomfortable with the volume. They listen.

BRYAN

(shouting)

You might want to turn it down.

REN

Why?

And suddenly, WHUP!, WHUP! Ren whips around to see what's hit his car, and finds that a police car has pulled across the back of his parking stall. One OFFICER has struck the side of Ren's car with a nightstick and lazily moves up to Ren's window. Bryan snaps off the cassette.

OFFICER 1/JIM

You wanna step out of your car, son?

31 CONTINUED:

31

REN
Hm... I'm sorry?

JIM
(polite)
Just step out, please...

BRYAN
(intense whisper)
Don't piss'em off.

OFFICER 2/HERB
(at the rear of the car)
Hey, Jim! The plates are Illinois
State.

REN
(gettin out)
Yeah... So?

JIM
So... you got a license?

Ren digs for his wallet as Jim leans into the car and
pulls the cassette out of the tape deck.

JIM
(tossing the tape)
Herb, catch!

REN
Hey, I just...

32 C.U. OF BRYAN

32

nervously waiting it out in the car.

33 BACK TO SCENE

33

JIM
Pretty loud, isn't it?

REN
(trying to placate)
Loud? Is there a law against...?

JIM
Hey, watch that attitude, boy...
This way, I won't have to take you
in.

REN
(incredulous)
For what?

33 CONTINUED:

33

JIM
Herb, what would you say?
Disturbing the peace?

HERB
Minimum.

REN
(moving)
Aw, man...!

Jim shoves him back against the car. Bryan jumps out of the car.

BRYAN
Hey, now look, he's new in town
and he doesn't...

JIM
(pointing to Bryan)
And you shut up!!

CHUCK (O.S.)
Book 'im, Jim.

And we see Chuck, alone now in his truck, has pulled up.

JIM
Hey, Chuck. We got a few
tempers here. Friends of yours?

C.U. of Chuck.

CHUCK
I wouldn't let 'em kiss my ass.

He laughs and peels out.

34 INT. WARNICKER HOUSE DINING ROOM - DUSK

34

Amy is sneaking up the stairs eating from a box of animal crackers as we overhear Wes and Lulu lecturing Ethel from the dining hall.

WES (O.S.)
Ethel, here he can't talk to these
cops like he talks to a big city
cop.

LULU (O.S.)
Honey, there was a buncha kids
last year snuck up to Tulsa to see
some rock 'n roll group and they
was stopped on their way back into
town by the police...

34 CONTINUED:

34

Their conversation continues to drone in the background as we follow Amy to Ren's bedroom door. She pushes it open. He's lying on his back, his hands under his head, staring at the ceiling. She blithely walks in.

AMY

Did they really make you pay
twenty-five dollars?

REN

Yep.

AMY

What did you do bad?

A pause.

REN

I dunno.

Amy's sitting at Ren's desk now, her legs dangling from the chair.

AMY

Reverend Shaw won't let us have a
lot of records, y'know...?

REN

I'm finding out.

From outside the door we hear Sarah's voice, softly.

SARAH (O.S.)

You didn't finish your beets.

AMY

(threatening with
a cookie)

Sarah, I have a lion here. Don't
make me use it.

34A INT. DINING ROOM - DUSK

34A

Ethel, Lulu, Wes at the dining table

LULU

Well, there's a few have their
differences, but most everybody
thinks like Reverend Moore.

ETHEL

Don't you ever get tired of being
told? Of all the do's and don'ts?

LULU

Well, I'll tell you. Sometimes you get the feeling that you might be missing something. You see things on T.V. and you kinda wonder. But then you see the news from outta New York, y'know, and you get awfully grateful to be living here. It's the lesser of two evils, considering.

Ethel opens her mouth to respond, thinks better of it and stops herself.

34B INT. REN'S BEDROOM - DUSK

34B

SARAH

Ren? Did you have a girlfriend in Chicago?

REN

Yeah.

SARAH

Was she pretty?

Ren nods.

SARAH

What was her name?

REN

Patricia.

SARAH

(giggling & covering her face)

Patricia!

AMY

Oh, Sarah, grow up.

Sarah makes a face.

AMY

Ren? Did you cry when your Daddy died?

SARAH

Amy, you're so stupid. Boys never cry.

REN

(still staring at ceiling)

That's not true.

(pause)

Sometimes they do.

35 INT. DEN - SHAW MOORE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

35

MUSIC CUE #5: HAYDN ON THE STEREO

A small hi-fi in Shaw's den PLAYS a Haydn chamber piece. Shaw is preparing a sermon; there's a gentle KNOCK at the door.

SHAW
(distracted, grunts)
Yes?

Ariel enters and closes the door gently behind her. Shaw sits back in his chair and studies her. She is very uncomfortable, but she displays a sharp-edged intelligence and tenacity.

ARIEL
I'm sorry about the other night --
at the drive-inn -- I mean, about
the music.

SHAW
I was... surprised.

ARIEL
Yeah.

The MUSIC fills in the awkward pauses in their conversation.

ARIEL
I don't know what came over me.

SHAW
I can't always be with you. To
watch out for you.

Ariel looks for an opportunity to change the subject.

ARIEL
Is that Haydn's fourth? The
Salomon Symphonies?

SHAW
Third. Very good.

ARIEL
And that kind of music's okay?

SHAW
It doesn't excite people -- it
doesn't confuse their minds and
bodies. It brings people closer
to God.

35 CONTINUED:

35

ARIEL

I don't...

(she stops herself)

I see.

Pause.

SHAW

Tell your mother to go on to bed.
I'm gonna be up late.

ARIEL

I will... Daddy?

He looks up.

ARIEL

(continuing)

G'night.

She goes. He sits for a moment after she's gone,
staring after her; then he rouses himself and goes back
to his writing.

36 INT. SCHOOL - DAY

36

Classes are changing and Students are filling the
halls. Ren, at his locker, is approached by RICH, one
of Chuck's cronies, who's very secretive.

RICH

Hey, asshole, you interested in
some really good shit?

REN

(shaking his head in
mock amazement)

Golly, Rich, a whole sentence!
You made a whole sentence.

RICH

Don't get smartass. Listen, I've
been watching you the last few
weeks. I know you're not stupid.
I got a friend who can help you
out from time to time.

He pulls a joint out of his pocket and waves it in front
of Ren's nose.

REN

I got my own sources, thanks.

(MORE)

36 CONTINUED:

36

REN (CONT'D)

(joking)

Anyway, lately I've been getting
real heavy into hog tranquilizers,
y'know.

RICH

(not amused)

Whaddya say we call this a sample
and you know where to get some
more?

And he slips the joint into Ren's shirt pocket. Ren
looks down mutters "shit!" and digs out the joint. But
Rich is gone and halfway down the hallway. Ren chases
him, right past the teacher's lounge.

REN

Rich! Rich!

(he catches up to him,
shoves the joint back
into his pocket)

I don't need your shit. I don't wanna owe you.

MR. GURNTZ (O.S.)

Well, then I'll take it.

MR. GURNTZ, football coach and shop instructor, looms
behind Ren.

Reaction shots from Ren and Rich.

MR. GURNTZ

(to Ren)

You're taking some real chances,
being new in this school.

REN

(suddenly jovial)

Oh, wait! Wait, Mr. Gurntz.

Reaction from Rich, nervous.

REN

(continuing)

This...

(taking back the joint)
it's full of tea. It's a joke.
I'll show ya.

Directly across the hall is the men's room. Before Mr.
Gurntz can object Ren marches in, followed by Mr. Gurntz
and Rich, walks into a stall and flushes the joint down
the toilet. Rich is aghast. Ren pulls this fast one in
one brilliantly executed sweep.

36 CONTINUED:

36

REN
I wouldn't do that with real
grass. Mr. Gurntz, do you know
what a lid is going for these
days??

37 INT. HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

37

Ren is sitting with Rusty -- Ariel's punk friend -- who has copies of "Mademoiselle," "Vogue," "Harper's Bazaar," and "People" mixed in with her school books. She sits flipping through the magazines, eating barbeque potato chips from a bag ripped open in front of her.

REN
Two weeks probation! For
'suspicious behavior', two weeks
probation.

RUSTY
You don't want to mess with any
of the drugs going down here.
You see anything go floating by,
you let it float.
(pointing to a fashion
layout)
Oooh, isn't that fantastic??

REN
Whaddya mean?

RUSTY
Chuck Cranston--you know,
Ariel's ol' man?--he's behind
it. He would take it real
personal if he knew you stepped
on one of his dealers--
(points to magazine)
oh, don't you love her hair?

REN
Is there a lot of that here?

RUSTY
She looks at him sideways, as if to say, "Are
you kidding?"

(pointing)
Those shoes stink, don't they?--

REN
You?

37 CONTINUED:

37

RUSTY

Oh, sure. But no more. Are you kidding? I have such a feeble grasp on reality as it is!

38 EXT. SCHOOL ATHLETIC FIELD

38

Team practice. Ren breaks through an imaginary tape and he and Bryan cool down by walking the field together.

REN

You're a hell of a hurdler.

BRYAN

And you're fast, y'know? Real fast.

REN

I used to play football. Coupla years. Then I went to work.

BRYAN

Well, you still move it.

Ren laughs, does a slick turn, bounces to the ground in a split, and back up again.

BRYAN

Hey, you gotta watch that. Ariel's gonna tell her Daddy and you gonna burn.

39 INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

39

Naked bodies criss-cross the scene as Bryan and Ren continue.

REN

What's her story? Is she really tough or what?

BRYAN

Naw; I think she's trying to make people forget that she's a preacher's kid.

REN

Is that why she hangs out with Chuck?

BRYAN

Could be. People think she's a hell-raiser.

39 CONTINUED:

39

REN

Is she?

BRYAN

Let's just say she's been kissed a lot.

40 EXT. TRAFFIC INTERSECTION - NIGHT

40

Ren has pulled up to a stop in the right hand lane of a three-lane intersection.

RICH (O.S.)

Hey, asshole...

Ren looks over and there, in the lane farthest left, Chuck Cranston's truck has pulled up. Rich sits in the bed of the truck and Ariel is in the passenger's side of the cab.

RICH

Asshole, you owe me a joint!

Angle on Ren.

REN

The hell I do! You owe me!

Chuck pushes past Ariel to stick his head out the right side of the cab.

CHUCK

You owe me 5 bucks, pussy!

REN

Well, bend over and I'll give it to you!

Chuck, infuriated and cursing, jumps back behind the wheel of the truck and turns sharply to cross the middle lane of traffic. As he does so, a police car pulls into the lane and Chuck crunches into the left side of the police.

JIM/POLICEMAN

Chuck, what the hell you doing?

Ren smiles, waves to Ariel and Chuck, and glides out of the intersection.

41 EXT. BEAMIS' FARMHOUSE - EARLY EVENING

41

A low, ranch style house that sits atop a small rise and surveys an enormous amount of land in all directions. ANDY BEAMIS is the distinguished-looking farmer we saw in church earlier. He and Ren are crossing the yard to a low machine shed. Andy's manner is curt and efficient.

ANDY

Can you drive a baler?

REN

Unh unh.

ANDY

You done any haying?

REN

Unh unh.

ANDY

You mucked out stalls?

REN

No.

ANDY

Where're you from?

REN

Chicago.

ANDY

D'ja learn anything there?

Ren reacts with an angry glance.

42 EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE YARD

42

Ren and Andy exit another building. They pass a few other farm workers.

ANDY

...but I don't get a full crew out here til June or July. I need a few hours a week from you. I pay \$6.50 an hour. I hope you're worth it?... What else?

(turns to him)

You're not stupid, are you?

Ren stops.

REN

Are you trying to piss me off?

42 CONTINUED:

42

Ren and Andy stare each other down until Andy cracks a smile; Ren lets down his guard a little.

ANDY

Boy, there's lots of folks gonna give you problems right off. You're an outsider. Like me. Might as well be Chinese. But don't let 'em break you. You won't be any use to me or to yourself. You know what you do?... go watch that Reverend Moore some Sunday. You listen to him once a week and you'll know which way the wind is gonna blow in this town for seven days to come. But always remember this is only one corner of the world.

Ren smiles.

REN

Start tomorrow?

43 OMITTED

43

44 INT. MARCIE'S BEAUTY SALON - DAY

44

The walls are covered with thumbtacked clippings from fashion magazines of hair-dos, reflecting a country/western approach to the art of hair styling. The edges of the mirrors are crammed with snapshots of Marcie and her happy customers.

MARCIE GIBSON is in her early thirties, a down-home girl who must have been a cheerleader in school. She wrinkles her nose, chews gum and enjoys a good laugh as much as she enjoys her work. She's dressed in a white beautician's smock and is bent over the sink, washing Vi's hair. Vi is tilted backwards in a reclining chair; we don't immediately know it's her.

The two women are alone in the shop and are laughing hysterically. The phone RINGS and Marcie crosses to answer it, speaking on her way.

MARCIE

Oh, you're awful! You're just awful!

(MORE)

44 CONTINUED:

44

MARCIE (CONT'D)

(picks up the
phone)

Gibson Salon of Beauty... oh, hi,
Reverend... she's under the tap,
but if you... okay... okay... I'll
tell her... and what? Oh...

(holding the phone
away from her ear)

Vi, where's Ariel?

VI

(on her back)

She's got choir I think. She'll
be home to make dinner.

MARCIE

(back to the phone)

You heard that? Sure, anytime,
Reverend. Bye.

(she moves back
to Vi)

He says that Stella Freeborn's in
bed with a twisted up ankle and
would you please drop over there
and cheer her up.

Marcie is now standing over Vi at the sink.

MARCIE

What do you say to a strawberry
blonde rinse, Vi? Kinda surprise
the Reverend?

VI

(looking up)

Marcie, Shaw is a wonderful man
and I love him dearly, but it's
twenty years we're married. If I
marched into the room backwards,
buck naked, wearing a gas mask and
a feather boa, he'd ask me to
please warm up his coffee.

Marcie shrieks at this, Vi joins in, sits up suddenly
and bangs her head on a shelf holding beauty supplies.
This only stops her for a moment and then the two women
find even that unbearably funny.

45 EXT. ONE OF BEAMIS' BARNs - SAME DAY

45

Ren, shirtless, is trying to get the hang of haying but every time he gets a forkful of hay, it all falls apart on him. He gives up trying to pitch the hay and finally bends down to scoop hay up in his arms. Then he heaves it into a stall -- but that proves pretty feeble. He scoops up some more, and turns around, still scrunched over, to find Ariel standing in the door of the barn. Startled, he drops the hay and tries to make all of his actions seem deliberate.

REN
(startled)
Oh... hi... Ariel...

ARIEL
Chuck Cranston wants to see you
over out the back of his daddy's
field. Tomorrow. Five thirty.

REN
I'm getting a little fed up being
dicked around by Chuck Cranston.

ARIEL
You got him real mad.

REN
So what happens tomorrow at 5:30?

ARIEL
You gonna have to show up to find
out.

REN
And if I don't?

ARIEL
People're gonna know you're scared
shit. And even then he'll come
find you. And you don't want
that.

She turns to go.

REN
Wait.
(she stops)
Howcum he sent you to tell me?

Pause.

ARIEL
I volunteered.

46 EXT. CRANSTON FIELD - DAY

46

NOTE: The appropriate vehicles will be decided on once the location is selected.

The VROOM! of a tractor slices the scene. There are fifteen or twenty KIDS gathered around two tractors that have been pulled up facing each other across a large field. It stretches flat as far as the eye can see, interrupted only by a row of telephone lines and a roadway in the distance. It's the magic hour--long shadows and a golden, late-afternoon light creates a dramatic and atmospheric backdrop.

47 ANGLE ON CHUCK, RICH, WAYNE, ARIEL & COHORTS

47

standing around or leaning on one of the tractors. Chuck and his buddies pass a joint.

RICH
(to Chuck)

... so if you can get me that stuff by Friday, I can unload it over the weekend.

Ariel looks over to the other tractor, Ren's camp.

ARIEL
Chuck, are you sure you're up to this?

He's lighting matches and tossing them to the ground.

CHUCK
Well, whose side are you on, honey?

ARIEL
You've had a lot to smoke.

Chuck flares suddenly, angry; he grabs Ariel by the back of her head.

CHUCK
Don't tell me when I've had enough! Don't tell me that!!

Ariel pulls away, shakes her hair out. She's pissed. Then, quietly:

ARIEL
I didn't say you had enough. I said you had a lot.

CHUCK
(dismissing her)
Go and tell sweetbuns what's up.

Ariel spins on her heels and crosses the field to Ren.

48 ANGLE ON REN

48

accompanied by Rusty, Bryan and several other kids including Woody, an eighteen year old gentle giant.

REN
(a badly concealed
lie)
How hard could it be?

WOODY
(reassuring him)
It's like a car. It's like
driving a sports car.

BRYAN
Remember, you gotta stay calm...

REN
I can't drive shift.

WOODY
(showing him quickly)
It's one, two, three, four,
reverse... And remember the
clutch.

RUSTY
And remember he's a chicken-shit.
Just hang in there...

BRYAN
And hope to God he pulls out.

REN
(a sudden explosion)
Shit, how'd I ever get into this?
(to Woody)
Has anybody ever died doing this?

WOODY
(still reassuring)
Just once.

Ariel approaches.

ARIEL
Anytime you're ready, sport.
Watch me.

She turns and starts away.

REN
Hey, Ariel.

She stops and turns -- she gives him her tough look.

48 CONTINUED:

48

REN
(continuing)
Is he crazy?

Ariel smiles a tough, teasing smile and moves off.

49 BACK TO SCENE

49

Ren is tight-lipped, fidgeting in his seat. Chuck sits high on the tractor, smoking the last of a joint; he picks up an eight-track cassette tape, slams it into the deck on the tractor, and the MUSIC jumps up, filling the screen and providing the backdrop for the rest of the scene.

MUSIC CUE #6: TRACTOR CHICKEN

Chuck guns his motor and exhales, rubs his eyes and takes a deep breath. Ren, meanwhile, is still getting coaching.

Ariel stands halfway between the two tractors, out of their way.

50 ANGLE ON ARIEL FROM THE BACK

50

She pulls her t-shirt over her head, to the enthusiastic response of HOOTS and HOWLS from Chuck's comrades. She spins the top over her head and drops it.

51 BACK TO SCENE

51

And they're off! Well, Chuck is.

He barrels toward Ren, who gets into gear a few seconds later, amidst much SCRAPING and GOUGING of gears, and with a whiplash effect, spins out into the path of the oncoming tractor.

Over Ren's shoulder we can SEE Chuck's tractor snorting like a mad bull across the field. We constantly return to this POV to reinforce the threat of impending collision.

52 ANGLE ON CHUCK'S CRONIES

52

who HOOT and CHEER as Chuck takes off, some of them running alongside the tractor for a short way.

53 ANGLE ON RUSTY, WOODY AND BRYAN

53

CHEERING, SHOUTING, pounding each other.

54 BACK TO SCENE

54

Ariel slips her shirt back on and watches, apparently more than a little interested in Ren's plight.

Chuck is at the wheel -- demonic, giddy, stoned. He stares over the top of his engine with an insane/Jack Nicholson-kind of stare, and then straightens up and roars:

CHUCK

C'mon, you pussy!! C'mon!!

POV over Ren's shoulder, looking down the tractor hood, as down the barrel of a shotgun. Then we SEE Ren, panicked, bouncing madly, looking back over his shoulder. He's shoving levers and pumping pedals that don't seem to do anything.

55 ANGLE ON THE CROWD'S REACTIONS

55

One of Chuck's men, RICK, chants:

RICK

Go, boy! Go, boy! Go, boy!

Chuck is racing along the lip of an irrigation ditch, holding his course tenaciously. In the distant background, small oil rigs bob rhythmically.

Ren is fighting down panic, but over his shoulder we can SEE that Chuck is moving up on him very quickly. He looks around frantically, apparently looking for a safe place to jump to.

56 ANGLE ON BRYAN, RUSTY AND WOODY

56

WOODY

(anxious)

I think he's gonna jump.

57 ANGLE ON REN

57

He rises slightly out of the seat, contemplating a dive off the snorting tractor, but a hook in the back of the seat catches his belt and he abruptly sits back down.

58 ANGLE ON RUSTY, ET AL.

58

RUSTY

Naw... he's cool.

59 ANGLE ON REN

59

Sensing there's no way out, he grips the steering wheel and grits his teeth. Then he closes his eyes.

60 BACK TO SCENE

60

Chuck is getting close to the irrigation ditch, trying to hold control as his wheels wobble, churning up great chunks of red earth. He is staring ahead, disbelieving, wild. He screams at Ren:

CHUCK

Sucker!! You crazy sucker!!
You're crazy!! Open your eyes!!

The two tractors, in a LONG-SHOT, are silhouetted against the Oklahoma sky. They are getting precariously close.

61 ANGLE ON ARIEL

61

whose expression suddenly becomes one of panic; she starts running toward the converging machines, her hair flying madly. It's not clear just whom her concern is for.

ARIEL

Turn out! Oh, God! Turn out!!!

The MUSIC is pounding and building as Chuck bumps over a ditch covering, and he swings his steering wheel wildly, veering out of Ren's path. His hands fly off the wheel and the tractor tips. He is thrown clear but the tractor flips over a few times before landing on its back in the ditch, its enormous tires spinning listlessly in a cloud of red dust. The MUSIC sputters and dies.

The only SOUND is the roar of Ren's tractor.

Rusty, Bryan and Woody whoop it up in their elation.

Ariel pauses for a moment to watch Ren sail on to victory. She's relieved; then she joins the others in running to Chuck's aid. He's unhurt and stupidly groggy.

Ren sneaks a petrified look and, seeing his way is clear, comes unglued; laughing like a madman, he pounds at the wheel of the tractor. He turns around to his friends and raises his arms in a victory "V"; he tries to stand up on the moving machine, but the same hook that kept him from jumping off in the first place abruptly pulls him back down again.

LONG SHOT of the single tractor, roaring on its solo path, trailed by Rusty, Woody, Bryan, running.

62 INT. WARNICKER KITCHEN - LATE NIGHT

62

Ren and Ethel sit at the kitchen table; the rest of the family has gone to bed. He's splitting Oreo cookies and eating the fillings; she's balancing her checkbook.

ETHEL

Should I congratulate ya?

(Ren looks up)

I mean, the drugs, the police, all the chases and races... Even in the 60's I never got into that stuff.

REN

(defensive)

Mom, I'm not doing any of it! I'm just standing still and all these people are coming at me.

ETHEL

That never happened in Chicago.

REN

Nothing ever happened in Chicago. Chicago was like growing up... on an assembly line... thousands of us coming out of the same mold. But nobody knows me here. It's like I'm somebody different all of a sudden.

ETHEL

(faintly amused)

Lulu and Wes don't know what to make of you. They asked me if you're always this... difficult.

Ren looks at her with a touching, defeated look.

REN

Try lonely.

ETHEL

(nodding)

Me too. And scared.

(Ren nods)

I'm watching the pennies and nickels come and go and it's hard enough to smile anymore.

REN

(suddenly rallying)

Aw, Mom, c'mon. There's me... There's me.

62 CONTINUED:

41.

62

She smiles.

REN

(Continuing)

Looks, I always kinda got by back home cuz nobody expected any more from me. But here, they don't know what I can do. Or can't. You wait.

(a wink)

Maybe here I could do great.

(pause)

If not, you can come visit me in prison.

She smiles.

63 INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

63

Shaw is giving his Wednesday night lesson. Pan of congregation. The teenagers, who are generally seated together, are nudging and whispering and indicating Ren, who's oblivious to his new celebrity. C.U. of Ariel who is quite distracted by Ren.

SHAW

I was up in Oklahoma City at a convention a while back and I'd have people ask me how could I live out here in such a small town-- away from all the hustle and bustle of the 20th Century. And I'd say right back to the, "You mean how can I live so far away from the temptations of modern life? Away from the attractions of Satan waiting around every corner? "I'd tell the,, "I feel closer to my Lord out there--and I feel closer and safer with my people out there, and they feel closer to me -- than I think we could anywhere else on earth. The Lord smiles on us there. And that's where I'm staying!!

Vocal reaction from the congregation.

64 EXT. ROCKET DRIVE INN - DAY

64

The camera moves past a small crew of workmen who are disconnecting and removing the video games, loading them onto a truck; the camera picks up Ariel, sitting in Rusty's car, watching this happen. Through the drive-in windows we can see Ren, Rusty, Bryan and several other kids table-hopping and talking.

64 CONTINUED:

64

Rusty exits the drive-inn, walks past the workmen in a horrified stupor and gets into her car. She wags a finger at Ariel.

RUSTY

Your father...

ARIEL

Yeah, and the rest of this town...

(long pause)

What did you learn?

The two girls continue to watch the crew as they talk.

RUSTY

He has track practice every day til four; on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday he works at the Beamis Farm til six, but you already know that. He hasn't dated since he's been in town, and late Friday night, by the light of the full moon, he breaks into churchyards and bites the heads off live chickens.

ARIEL

You... are a pal.

RUSTY

And you... are a real air head.

64A WARNICKER HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

64A

Dinnertime with the family.

WES

Seems one of Burlington Cranston's old rigs was stolen and crashed into a ditch out behind his property a few days back.

Ren looks to Ethel and back to Wes.

WES

(continuing)

Someone suggested to me today that there's been an upsurge of trouble over at the high school -- I think it was drugs -- in the last few weeks? Do you know anything about that?

REN

(under his breath)

No, sir.

64 CONTINUED:

64

WES

I can't hear. Whaddya say?

REN

(louder)

No, sir. I do not.

WES

Well, you know, Ren, whenever we used to call up to your folks there in Chicago I don't think there was any kind of trouble back there, was there?

He now looks to Ethel, who is silent.

WES

(continuing)

And I don't know what to make of it but a lot of folks are pointing a finger in your direction lately.

Barely containing his anger.

REN

And what're they saying?

Reaction from Amy and Sarah.

WES

What I been telling you. The drugs and the trouble and... you just -- you seem to be having trouble since you got here and I...

REN

And you figured where there's smoke, there's fire...

WES

Usually works like that... Now, look, Ren, I would never try to take the place of your father in cases like this...

REN

Well, there's no chance of that...

He leaves the room. Lulu calls to him, Wes looks to Ethel with anger. From the driveway we hear the sounds of the car backing out.

64 CONTINUED:

64

SARAH

Uh-oh. He's taking the car.

WES

(snapping)

You're gonna find your tongue between two pieces of toast, you don't watch out, young lady.

65 EXT. ANDY BEAMIS' HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

65

A low, ranch-style house that sits atop a small rise and surveys an enormous amount of land in all directions. Andy and Ren are finishing unloading sacks of gravel from the bed of Andy's pickup, talking as they work.

ANDY

Yeah, my wife died almost nine years ago but I keep forgetting that, y'know? Like, I'll come around the corner into the kitchen and expect to see her, and my heart will sorta--jump up, anticipating her, y'know?

Ren is full of restless energy. He paces and punches at the stacked bags of fertilizer.

REN

My Dad killed himself, y'know? When he did I felt like I was naked.

(punch)

Or invisible. I was afraid when people looked at me they weren't gonna see a whole person there.

(punch)

That still happens sometimes.

(punch)

ANDY

Oh, I know.

REN

And lately, now...

(punch)

...lately I get this feeling like my head's gonna blow... like I'm almost too big for my skin. D'ja ever see that movie "Alien," y'know...

And he makes appropriate body-exploding gestures and noises. Andy, bewildered, shakes his head no.

65 CONTINUED:

65

REN

But you know what I mean?

ANDY

Yup... In my days we called it
horny.

MUSIC CUE #7: BASKETBALL COURT DANCE

66 EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

66

And whump! We're suddenly hit with a wall of MUSIC as we MOVE IN on a basketball court in the middle of a recreation park on the outskirts of town. We MOVE PAST Ren's car, with both front doors open -- car speakers on the doors are booming out the MUSIC. And Ren is seen pacing the court like a caged animal, punching out time of the drum beat here and there, illustrating a guitar run with a run of his own, becoming part of the band, all the while building to a fluid outburst. He pulls off his t-shirt. Several of the overhead lamps have been shot out and he moves between areas of light and shadow.

And suddenly, POW! He becomes a human rocket... leaping and twirling and cringing and exploding, bouncing off the chain-like fence like he's doing all of 'West Side Story' single-handedly. He's a child of movie and TV choreography and some of his references are readily obvious (Travolta, Solid Gold, Fred Astaire.)

The scene is CUT between CLOSE-UPS and LONG SHOTS, through chain link fence and from overhead, all of it calculated to emphasize just how spooky it is that this kid is dancing his head off in the middle of nowhere in the middle of the night.' The music builds to a climax and so does Ren.

And then it all stops and all we HEAR is the sound of Ren's heavy breathing as he paces the court.

ARIEL (O.S.)

That was incredible!!

Ren, shocked, snaps around to see Ariel through the fence.

REN

Jesus Christ!! You could kill a
man!!

Throughout this scene, Ariel is nervous and she's alternately cocky and ingenuous.

ARIEL

I'm sorry.

66 CONTINUED:

66

REN

Where did you... what are you
doing here?

ARIEL

Watching.

REN

Is this where Chuck comes along
and removes my lungs with a spoon?

ARIEL

(walking around onto court)
He doesn't own me. He just acts
like he does.

REN

(slipping his shirt on)
Is your father gonna have my ass
for this?

ARIEL

Not if you don't tell him.

Pause.

ARIEL

You don't think much of me, do
you? You think I'm small town.

REN

I think Bomont's a small town.

ARIEL

Attitude! Great! I like that!

Ren doesn't take the bait.

ARIEL

(continuing)
I'm getting out. I'm going away.
I've applied to colleges that my
father doesn't even know I've
applied to. He's gonna be real
surprised.

REN

You're not gonna tell him?

ARIEL

I like to have secrets.
(she looks around the court)
And now I have one of yours.

66 CONTINUED:

66

REN

Well, you owe me.

Ariel smiles mysteriously.

67 EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - NIGHT

67

Ren and Ariel are picking their way around the outside fence of the switching box, a silver-painted cabinet about the size of three gas pumps side by side. A signal light above the box flashes red.

They work their way around to the rear of the box.

Ariel points to the silver surface in front of them and Ren gasps. There, hidden from view, the back wall of the switching box is covered with handwriting -- neat, orderly, normal-sized handwriting! Many different pens, different hands, different colored inks have all gone into an enormous mural of messages. Nothing is as large as graffiti scrawl -- it's diary-size handwriting. Ren is evidently awed.

ARIEL

We call it The Yearbook. I don't know when it started... four or five years ago, I guess. It's stuff we're not supposed to read.

REN

This is all out of books?

ARIEL

Most. Some's songs, some's magazines. Some's poems that get made up...

REN

(looking it over)

Lady Chatterly's Lover? Hmm, good stuff.

Ariel points to a spot on the wall.

REN

(continuing)

What's that?

(reading)

"I'll sing to you of silver swans
Of kingdoms and carillons..."

67 CONTINUED:

67

ARIEL
(overlapping him)
"... I'll sing of bodies intertwined
Underneath an innocent sky."

Ren looks at her, impressed. He points to her as if to ask "Yours?" She nods.

ARIEL
And that's not even one of my best.
(she freezes)
Wait!
(in a whisper)
Can you hear it?

REN
What?

ARIEL
The train. Can you hear it?

Ren listens.

ARIEL
(continuing)
Any minute. Sometimes after
football games we come out here, a
few of us, and we stand here...

She positions herself and Ren so they're sandwiched
between the switching box and the railroad tracks.

ARIEL
(continuing)
And then, when the train comes, we
make out like crazy. Are you ever
gonna kiss me?

REN
(startled)
Someday.

ARIEL
Someday?! What is this
'someday' shit?

REN
(carefully, quietly)
I get the feeling you've been
kissed a lot. I'm afraid how
I'd stack up.

Ariel is chastened. The train's in sight now, a single
headlight moving down on them. Ren is spellbound.

67 CONTINUED:

67

ARIEL

Most of the time we just stand
here and scream.

REN

Scream?

ARIEL

Yeah. I saw it in a movie once.
You know. Just let go.

As the train rushes down on them, Ariel lets out a shriek, looking to Ren for a reaction. He looks at her in mild disbelief. Failing to elicit a reaction from him, she bolts onto the track and stands directly in the path of the oncoming train. He watches, horrified, as the train bears down on her. He screams, "Ariel! Ariel!" and, when he doesn't get any response, he dives for her, tackling her and carrying her off the track in the opposite direction. The two of them hit the gravel bed, roll over once or twice, and the train thunders past them. Ariel rolls over on her back, laughing while Ren raises himself up on his elbow and looks at her in disbelief.

68 INT. LIVING ROOM - SHAW MOORE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

68

Shaw is sitting in a dressing gown. A single light is on, illuminating one forlorn corner of the room. Vi enters behind him. A Liszt rhapsody plays faintly in another room.

VI

You coming up?

SHAW

No. You go ahead.

Vi touches his shoulder over the back of the chair. As soon as she does, he sits forward, his elbows on his knees.

VI

It's late. Aren't you cold down
here?

SHAW

(distracted)

No... no, I'm fine. You go on.
Go on to bed.

69 EXT. SHAW MOORE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

69

Ariel is leaning on the driver's side of Ren's car.

ARIEL

Don't be mad. We do it all the time. You just gotta watch the signal box and jump when it changes.

Ren reacts, nonplussed.

ARIEL

(continuing)

Hey...

(he looks at her)

we may not be able to dance here but we find ways to make up for it.

REN

Your father is something else. Say there was rock 'n' roll music. Or say there's a dance. What's the worst thing that could happen?

ARIEL

Seven years of famine.

Behind them, the front door of the house opens; we SEE only darkness.

ARIEL

Oh, shit! What time is it? Is it after ten-thirty? Oh, shit, I'm late. I'm late! Pieces of my body will be found in trash cans all over Bomont tomorrow morning!

She jumps out and runs, stops, and runs back to the car.

ARIEL

(breathless, earnest)

I had a wonderful time.

And she's gone. Ren looks after her.

70 INT. LIVING ROOM - MOORE HOUSE - NIGHT

70

Ariel enters and quietly closes the front door behind her. From the semi-darkness, we HEAR Shaw.

SHAW

(quiet, controlled)

It's late.

ARIEL

Yeah.

SHAW

It's hard to impose a curfew on the young people of my congregation that I can't even enforce in my own home.

(pause)

Have you been drinking?

ARIEL

No.

SHAW

Smoking?

ARIEL

No.

(then, in a burst)

And I wasn't off dancing, or rioting, or stealing or even reading books that I'm not supposed to.

(pause)

I am late.

Silence. We HEAR her breathing.

SHAW

Who was that?

ARIEL

Ren McCormick.

SHAW

I don't want you to see him again.

ARIEL

What? Why??

SHAW

He's a troublemaker. He's got wild ideas and they're worried about him over at school.

ARIEL

Just cuz he hasn't lived in this town for twenty years...

SHAW

(rubbing his face with his hands, weary)

Ariel, I don't know what I'm going to do with you.

70 CONTINUED:

70

ARIEL

(furious)

Daddy, there ain't nothing to do.
You like it or not, this is it.
It doesn't get much better.

Seething, she turns and leaves the room. CLOSE UP Shaw,
tight-lipped.

As Ariel rounds the corner at the top of the stairs, Vi
is standing in the shadows. Ariel is startled for a
second; she embraces her mother and bursts into tears.

71 ANGLE ON SHAW

71

alone in the semi-darkness of the living room, a
confessional atmosphere.

72 INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

72

Ren slams his locker. He's unloaded all his belongings
into a pile on the bench behind him. Bryan rounds a
corner.

BRYAN

Going somewhere?

REN

(furious)

Somehow between last night and
this morning it gets back to Coach
that I was out last night. Late!
So I'm a troublemaker! But that's
not why I'm off the team, y'see.
Coach tells me that they just
don't have the funds for one more
track member this season but
thanks anyway. I'm busting my
balls trying to find someplace to
fit in here and every door's
getting slammed in my face.

BRYAN

That sucks. That really sucks.

Pause.

Two TEAM MEMBERS pass between the rows of lockers. They
notice Ren and one speaks as they pass by.

TEAM MEMBER #1

Hey, McCormick. Sorry to hear you got
caught.

72 CONTINUED:

72

And they keep right on going, stifling laughs. Ren is furious and frustrated.

REN

(a hiss)

Caught?! How does anyone live here? Is it just me? Am I crazy? Wait. You wait. If they want crazy from me, they can get crazy.

He turns and slams his fist into a locker door.

72A INT. REN'S CAR - DAY

72A

Ren drives; Bryan is chewing ice from the bottom of a soda cup.

REN

(furious)

I got a wha...?

BRYAN

Yeah. An attitude problem. I'm not the only one notices it. You gotta remember, it's not exactly the Middle Ages here. We got T.V. We got the Family Feud. We're not stuck back in 'Leave It To Beaver' land, y'know.

REN

Alright, alright, alright... but whaddya miss? What do you see going on out there that you wish you could do here... but you can't?

Bryan thinks and then answers with a mouthful of ice.

BRYAN

I'd like to send Rev. Shaw a strip-tease telegram.

This totally breaks them up.

REN

(pointing out the window)

And lookit --

(indicating the roadside dirt)

We could plant dope here and make a fortune.

72A CONTINUED:

72A

BRYAN
(still laughing)
We could open a discotheque in the
basement of the church!!

Ren suddenly stops laughing and screeches to a swerving
stop on the shoulder of the road. Bryan is astonished by
this sudden behavior.

REN
(quietly at first)
That's it. THAT'S IT!! Oh, boy,
that's it!!!!

He leaps out of the car, jumping and leaping. Bryan gets
out of the car as well.

BRYAN
WHAT'S IT!?!?

REN
(strutting like a pimp)
A dance!! Get it!!? A dance!!

Bryan looks bewildered.

REN
WE GONNA BOOGIE!!!

73 INT. OFFICES OF OIL REFINERY - DAY

73

In an office that looks out over a field of pumping
wells, Ethel is struggling with a calculator on her
first day of work. She wears a name tag that reads
E. McCormick.

MRS. WYNDHAM is a fifty-five-year-old woman whose hair
can't remember it's original color; she's teased out and
mascara-ed like a twenty-year-old waitress. She crosses
to Ethel, reads her name tag by peering over bifocals,
and smiles.

MRS. WYNDHAM
(friendly)
McCormick?

Ethel looks up, nods, smiles.

ETHEL
Yeah. Ethel.

73 CONTINUED:

73

MRS. WYNDHAM

Elsie Wyndham. First day?

(Ethel nods)

McCormick, hunh? Is that your boy
causing all the hoocha over at the
high school?

ETHEL

(cautious)

All the wha...?

MRS. WYNDHAM

Yeah... something...? He was on
drugs and he blew up a tractor?
Then, didn't he get kicked off the
track team a few days ago?
Liquor, was it?

74 REACTION SHOT OF ETHEL

74

75 BACK TO SCENE

75

MRS. WYNDHAM

(continuing)

Course, I don't believe a word
of it. And the way Shaw Moore
has this town tied down, I'm
sometimes surprised the kids
don't skip puberty altogether.

She looks to Ethel, winks. Ethel is amused.

ETHEL

Yeah... yeah... that was my boy.

MRS. WYNDHAM

And isn't he the one whipping up
the kids to get a dance over at
the school?

ETHEL

(surprised)

A dance?! Now, I didn't hear
'bout that one.

MRS. WYNDHAM

Ain't kids a joy?

76 INT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY

76

Ren is leaving a group of kids whom he's obviously been talking up. The group consists of one boy and two girls whom we might recognize from the school hallways. Ren is awkward with them.

REN

Well, alright, just think about
y'know... just think about it...

And as he turns around, he is suddenly seized and pinned to the wall by a thick, pimply hayseed--TRAVIS--who presses his arm across Ren's throat. A few shoppers--women with small children hanging on them---pass by and avoid the confrontation.

TRAVIS

(low, threatening whisper)
Now, I heard something that's
upset me real good. And I want
you to tell me it ain't so, Mr.
Chicago Big Shot.

Ren's eyes convey that he's choking, confused.

TRAVIS

(continuing)
I heard that you're gonna try to
throw a dance at school? A
senior dance? And I figured
only a crazy sumbitch Communist
would try that. Is that what
you're trying?

ARIEL (o.s.)

He sure as hell is!

Angle on Ariel, Edna and Wendy Jo, standing behind Travis, shopping packages in hand. Ariel is staring down Travis.

ARIEL

(continuing)
And you're more'n welcome to
come... if you can find someone
to bring you--on a leash.

The girls giggle behind Ariel, Travis releases his grip on Ren's neck, looks from Ren to the girls, and, his thunder stolen, he strides away, muttering "Faggot" under his breath. Ren rubs his neck, Ariel fixes him with an innocent smile.

From behind Ariel, Wendy Jo speaks.

76 CONTINUED:

76

WENDY JO

Is he gonna get us a dance?

ARIEL

He sure is.

(to Ren)

Aintcha?

She turns and walks and the other girls follow. Edna turns as they go.

EDNA

It's about time, McCormick!

76A INT. WARNICKER KITCHEN - NIGHT

76A

Lulu and Ethel are serving up dinner. Lulu is frozen, a spoonful of mashed potatoes poised over a pot.

LULU

He's doing what?

The mashed potatoes plop off the spoon.

ETHEL

Now, Lulu, don't go getting...

LULU

You gotta talk to him, hon. Wes is gonna hit the roof if he finds out...

ETHEL

I know. I know. Just between us, Lu...

Amy comes into the kitchen holding her stomach, eyeing the plates of food.

AMY

Mommy I'm having a Big Mac attack.

77 INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

77

Ren, carrying a lunch tray, approaches a table of students where one chair remains empty. JESSE, a blowzy blonde, sees Ren approaching, and nudges TORY, a skinny red-neck, who tilts the empty chair forward in a defiant gesture. Ren stops and stares at the kids, who fall silent.

JESSE

(to Ren)

I don't think he wants you here.

77 CONTINUED:

77

TORY

(without looking up)
Or your fucking fairy dance
neither.

(he turns)

Don't try to turn this place
into one of your big city slums.

Sniggers from all the students. Rusty comes to the rescue by breezing past, taking Ren by the arm, turning him away; at the same time she takes his dessert off his tray.

RUSTY

You don't want the tapioca here.
It'll put hair on your spoon.
(under her breath)
A dance?! Here?! Are you out
of what little mind you have?

Ren reacts, amused.

77A INT. BEAMIS' MACHINE SHED - DAY

77A

Bryan is sitting high in the seat of a tractor, talking down to Ren who slides in and out from under the tractor. Ren is covered with grease and is constantly rolling out to consult a very greasy manual about farm machinery.

BRYAN

I don't know why you're surprised.
There's always gonna be those
who're gonna put up a fight.

REN

And there's others--who tell me
they want it to happen. Lots.

BRYAN

(interrupting him)
Yeah, but they're not going to
march down Main Street about it.

REN

I'm just talking about getting
them thinking for themselves
'stead of being led around like
sheep.

BRYAN

Whoa, now! There's that attitude
I was telling you.
(MORE)

77A CONTINUED:

77A

BRYAN (CONT'D)

You can't play like some Moses
come to lead them out of this land
of repression. This is the only
life they know, y'know? They're
gonna fight real hard to keep
their heads in the sand.

REN

I can fight just as hard. Listen,
I'm getting pissed and I...

Bryan breaks him off with a stifled chuckle that grows as he
tries to fight it back.

REN

(continuing; sliding
out, chuckling)

What's so funny?

BRYAN

So let's say you get this thing
to happen. I can't even fuckin'
dance.

REN

Whaddya meen you can't? You
mean you 'can't' or you mean you
don't wanna?

BRYAN

Oh, I wanna. I just look like a
cow up^{on} his hind legs if I try.

REN

Look. It's not something you
gotta learn. You're born
dancing, you fool. You just
gotta remember sometimes.

78 EXT. POWER STATION - NIGHT

78

Chuck Cranston's truck is parked in the eerie green light of
the power station, secluded on the outskirts of town. Ariel's
t-shirt is suspended from the rear-view mirror and she is
lying with her back against the door, smoking a cigarette.
Chuck, shirt-less, is sitting on the other side of the cab,
lighting scraps of paper cups and napkins and tossing them,
still burning, to the ground outside the window.

ARIEL

You'd never guess your daddy was
the Fire Chief.

78 CONTINUED:

78

CHUCK
(a joint in his mouth)
You'd never guess your daddy was
the minister.

He laughs. He picks up one of Ariel's boots and holds
it up.

CHUCK
Red?

ARIEL
My daddy hates me wearing those
boots.

CHUCK
And you love that, doncha?

ARIEL
Whaddya gonna do when I go away to
college?

He grabs her foot and kisses it. She loves it.

CHUCK
Now, why you gonna do that?

ARIEL
Just cuz. I think I'm cut out for
more than this small town.

CHUCK
Honey, you're as small town as
they come.

He kisses her foot. She pulls away.

ARIEL
(quietly angry)
Take me home.

Chuck goes back to his butane lighter.

79 EXT. THE HILL - NIGHT

79

MUSIC CUE #8: KIDS ON THE HILL

The Hill is a gentle rise in the middle of what never
became a subdivision. It's a paved street that ends in
a traffic circle in the middle of fields. Off to one
side, we SEE the faint lights of town. About 15 cars
are parked along the side of the circle. Kids are
sitting in and sitting on their cars.

79 CONTINUED:

79

We recognize a number of faces from school, but don't see Ariel, Rusty, Woody, or Bryan.

Ren is politicking with a bunch of kids -- VIRGIL ANTONOWSKY, ELVIS BAILEY, LUANN HUNDSECKER, CINDY MERCHANT -- several of whom stand around drinking beer, while others move in and out of the discussion, running off and rejoining the group with a can of Coors beer in hand. Virgil and Elvis both wear lettermen's jackets.

A few kids sit off in the cleared field, smoking cigarettes. One car radio is PLAYING a Kenny Rogers-type song.

ELVIS

Well, shit, they got that "On Golden Pond" over at the Coronet for a year, it seems like. If you even wanna see an R-rated film, you gotta drive over to Ardmore; and that's a lot of gas.

LUANN

That's cuz they're not fit to be seen, Elvis.

Two boys, slightly high on beer, poke into the group. One is ALBERT STEPHENS, sixteen and surly; the other, carrying a can of Coors, is JEFF BLUNT, the kind of kid who'd get kicked off a football team -- for killing the coach.

ALBERT

Anybody got a cigarette that isn't menthol?

Virgil shakes out a Winston for him.

CINDY

My brother got stabbed at a dance up in Norman, y'know, but I still think it's a good idea...

JEFF

(obnoxious)

Oh, shit, are you talking about that dance shit again?

They look to Ren.

JEFF

(continuing)

Aw, man! That sucks! What kind of candy-ass idea is that?

79 CONTINUED:

79

He steps into the group, waving his hands over his head and drunkenly dancing. Some of the kids are amused. Ren is not.

Suddenly, a flash of headlights hits the group; all of the kids react as a local police car carrying two overweight OFFICERS glides up. Jeff hides his beer can behind his back.

OFFICER 1
(shining his
flashlight at Jeff)
Whaddya got there?

JEFF
(suddenly sober)
Where? What?

OFFICER 1
Your right hand, buster.

Ren, standing behind Jeff, reaches out and takes the beer from him, hiding it inside his jacket. Jeff shows his hand, empty.

OFFICER 1
(snapping off light)
Alright. Keep it clean.

They glide away. A look passes between Ren and Jeff. Jeff and Albert leave.

VIRGIL
(attempting to be cool
as the police leave)
So, I didn't know your brother was
stabbed, Cindy.

CINDY
I don't think he noticed.

Snickers and swallowed laughs.

80 INT. SHAW MOORE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

80

CLOSE-UP of Shaw Moore's sweating face; he is in his shirt sleeves, speaking on the phone while six other members of the church council are meeting in the background. Present are the Dunbars, SAUL WIDDOES, HARVEY HOLLAND, BERNIE MUELLER and VIRGINIA HUBERT -- all in their late 50's, early 60's.

Vi hovers in the background serving coffee and cake, but generally staying out of the way. Smoke fills the room as most of the church council members puff away on cigarettes.

The conversations happen simultaneously -- Shaw on the phone, Roger Dunbar holding up the cover of a record album on which is pictured a scantily-clad girl straddling the nose of a 747 jet.

SHAW

Well, no, I would seriously reconsider that, Adele. Just cuz it's on TV in the family hour doesn't mean it's something you should be watching.

(pause)

Well, I'll tell you, I read up on this thing in the TV Guide, you know, and...

(Vi offers him

pound cake but

he waves her away)

So you read that too? And?

(pause)

Well, no, I don't imagine your soul's in peril, Adele, but whaddya wanna go waste your time on a program about teenage pregnancy, hmmm?

(pause)

Well, you see what I mean?

(Ariel pecks Shaw a goodbye kiss on the cheek. He looks at her questioningly. She mouths, "I gotta study. At Rusty's." She turns quickly to leave. Shaw plunges back into his conversation)

ROGER

Have you ever seen anything more obscene?

ELEANOR

This one's on display over at the Music World down on the mall...

VIRGINIA

What really worries me down on the mall is that game arcade...

(Vi offers cake to Eleanor, who declines. Ariel enters, kisses Vi goodbye, and then they exchange a warm look.)

ROGER

Well, we're pulling all that out; here's the thing -- those arcades are cesspools of delinquency. They're banning them right now, down in Southern California and I think we might do well to consider some sort...

HARVEY

Now, whoa, one thing at a time. One moment we're talking rock and roll concerts and record albums and the next minute it's pinball.

ROGER

Harvey, it's all one and the same thing. It's sin!! staring us in the face!

80 CONTINUED:

80

SHAW
(continuing)
That's right, Adele.
(he listens)

ELEANOR
It's all garbage. There's
no other possible
explanation.

SHAW (CONT'D)
Well, that's alright, Adele. You
can call whenever--unh-hunh. God
bless you.

Shaw rejoins the group.

SHAW
Now, what did I miss?

81 INT. UTILITY ROOM AT BACK OF HOUSE - NIGHT

81

Ariel is tiptoeing out the back door, and we continue to
HEAR the murmur of the meeting in the living room.
Ariel stashes her schoolbooks and picks up a large, flat
garment bag that's been hanging behind the hall door.
She carefully exits.

82 EXT. PARKING LOT OF TEXAS BEER HALL - NIGHT

82

Stretching off for acres in each direction. The camera
moves up over the back of Ren's car and we find Rusty,
Bryan, Ariel and Ren sitting inside. Rusty checks out
the rear window.

RUSTY
I don't think we were followed.

REN
Everybody got I.D.?

ARIEL
I'm scared.

BRYAN
Howcum?

ARIEL
Well, I don't drive 'cross the border
into Texas every night of the week.

REN
You wanna go back?

ARIEL
To Bomont?? Never!!

They all laugh, get out of the car. As they walk:

82 CONTINUED:

82

RUSTY

Ren, you can't let Bryan fight.

BRYAN

I don't fight.

RUSTY

Right. And I don't breathe.

ARIEL

The last thing we wanna do here is attract any attention.

Medium shot as they check in at the door, are compared with their phony I.D.s and pass into the club.

83 INT. BEER HALL - NIGHT

83

MUSIC CUE #9: UPTempo TEXAS BEER HALL SONG

The four are hit by the loud juke box music and a sea of people who part to let them through; they're scrutinized as they go by.

RUSTY

(to Bryan)

You're outnumbered, kid.

They stand on the edge of the dance floor and watch the couples moving in patterns.

BRYAN

Anybody want a beer?

REN

Aren't you gonna dance?

BRYAN

I drink better than I dance.

REN

C'maaaaan.

BRYAN

(embarrassed)

I'll watch you guys... see if you can show me anything new.

He and Rusty disappear into the crowd. Ren turns to Ariel and holds up his hands in a dance pose.

ARIEL

Does the man always get to lead?

83 CONTINUED:

83

REN

On the dance floor.

She takes his hand and they dance off.

ANGLE on Rusty and Bryan settling into a table, laughing. People are wary of Rusty's look.

ANGLE on Ren and Ariel, dancing. She's enjoying herself, and is quite good. He narrows his eyes, questioning.

REN

You've done this before.

ARIEL

Am I gonna burn in hell for it?

REN

You tell me.

MUSIC CUE #10: END OF THE EVENING IN THE TEXAS BEER HALL

The music slows to a ballad.

C.U. of a table full of beer bottles pulls back into a view of Rusty and Bryan, still ringside. They're having a great time, slightly tipsy.

ANGLE on Ariel and Ren, still dancing. Ariel leans her head on Ren's shoulder.

ARIEL

My feet hurt.

REN

It happens.

A thirty-year-old COWBOY taps Ren on the shoulder; he's drunk and unsteady on his feet.

COWBOY

I'll take the little lady off your hands for you.

REN

I'm doing fine, thanks.

Ren goes back to his dancing. The cowboy pulls Ren and Ariel apart.

COWBOY

I don't think you understand me.

83 CONTINUED:

83

REN
Probably cuz you're not making any
sense.

The cowboy throws a drunken, awkward punch which Ren easily sidesteps; the drunk falls off balance and hits the floor. Ren grabs Ariel's hand and whisks her off the dance floor and they whiz by Rusty and Bryan, grabbing them on the way. Rusty and Bryan are half-crocked by now, giggling.

84 EXT. BEER HALL - NIGHT

84

The four come flying out of the club, racing for the car.

REN
We can't get caught here!!

ARIEL
That man tried to hit you, Ren!!

REN
No shit!!

RUSTY
You kiss your mother with that
mouth?

She and Bryan are hysterical from that remark. Behind them, the cowboy staggers out of the bar with a friend in tow, shouting.

COWBOY
I want that dance, you
sonafabitch!!

Bryan hangs back as the others pile into the car.

RUSTY
Bryan!! No fights!!!

BRYAN
No fights. No fights.

The two guys are getting close. Bryan confronts them alone.

REN & ARIEL
Bryan!!! Get in the car!!

RUSTY
Bryan, you don't even know these
guys!!

84 CONTINUED:

84

Just as the toughs rush Bryan, Ren backs out and the car door flies open; Rusty jumps out, grabs Bryan and drags him as they run alongside the car, jump in and Ren peels out.

85 INT. REN'S CAR - NIGHT

85

They're out on a long, dark stretch of highway by now, the wind whipping through the window.

ARIEL

Is your dance gonna be like...?

REN

Everything but the fight.

BRYAN

Well, then forget it!

RUSTY

Ariel, Bryan was gonna fight to protect your honor.

ARIEL

Too late!

They all laugh.

The car crosses a bridge spanning a railroad track. Bryan turns around in his seat to look back at the spot.

BRYAN

I get creeps going over that bridge.

Ariel looks back over her shoulder, not speaking.

REN

Wha happened?

An uncomfortable silence falls over the car.

ARIEL

Oh, you've heard this one... the infamous Crosby Bridge accident?

Ren shakes his head. Ariel tells the following story with a seemingly flip attitude; it barely hides the strong emotions that the story elicits for her.

ARIEL

(continuing)

Oh, you're missing out. Eight years ago, see, a buncha kids got crazy drunk, I guess, and they were playing highway tag and... somebody lost control; one car hit the other and they both went over the edge of the bridge back there. All dead. Nine of 'em.

Ren looks to Ariel, who's caught up in the retelling.

ARIEL

(continuing)

They were all seniors. Two of the guys were gonna be drafted. It's so funny. The whole town went into shock, everybody blaming everybody else, blaming themselves; passing laws against music and dancing and booze and on and on. My father had a field day.

REN

Howcum?

ARIEL (blankly)

My older brother was one who got killed.

Ariel delivers the line very matter-of-factly; Ren looks to her for any trace of emotion. Rusty leans forward.

RUSTY

You shoulda seen Bobby. Like Warren Beatty, but taller. Wasn't he?

Ariel lights a cigarette to disguise her nerves, to break the mood.

ARIEL

I dunno. I was nine.

(looking up)

My father went off the deep end. Decided we all needed saving. No matter what. And now he's determined

(MORE)

85 CONTINUED:

85

ARIEL (CONT'D)
 (she goes into a
 preacher rant)
 to single-handedly save this
 little town of Bomont, Okla-
 fuckin'-homa and personally
 deliver it up to paradise with his
 daughter sitting like a cherry on
 top of it.

BRYAN
 Hallelujah!

REN
 OMIGOD!!

RUSTY
 (open-mouthed)
 Lookit that!!

Rusty sits forward and her face takes on an orange glow;
 on the front windshield of the car we see reflected the
 orange cast of flames rising into the distance. Speeches
 overlap.

BRYAN
 That's Andy Beamis' place!

REN
 Andy's? Way out here? Well,
 what do we do??? Who do we
 tell???

RUSTY
 There's no phones out here. You
 know what, go by the fire house.
 Ol' Man Cranston's gonna have a
 cow at this hour but it's the
 fastest thing...

86 EXT. CAR - NIGHT

86

LONG SHOT on the car, screeching past the burning fields.
 The next two scenes move in a frenzied blur.

87 ANGLE OVER THE CAB OF CHUCK CRANSTON'S PICKUP TRUCK

87

He and two friends are drinking beer in the bed of his
 truck, parked across the highway from Beamis' field.
 Chuck watches the fire with the same little-boy
 fascination he displayed in the earlier scene with
 Ariel. We don't know if he set the fire; we do know
 that he enjoys it.

88 INT. CAR - NIGHT

88

Ren is tearing along, taking turn after turn according to Bryan's directions. Ariel slowly slides down in her seat until she can't be seen and Rusty leans forward to watch her descent.

RUSTY

Girl, where are you going?

ARIEL

Listen, Burlington Cranston and my father are like that.
(crosses two fingers)

RUSTY

Oooh, you're right.

She slides out of sight and Bryan watches her go.

RUSTY

(continuing)

I'm not here. You never saw me.

Ren pulls into the dusty front yard of the Cranston place, which looks less like a fire-station and more like an automobile graveyard.

Ren skids up and he and Bryan leap from the car; by the light of the headlamps they rush up to the kitchen door on the side of the darkened house and they start pounding.

BRYAN & REN

Hello!! Hello??!! Mr. Cranston??!!

Bryan backs up and looks to a second story window of the house, searching for a sign of activity. A woman in a white slip appears fleetingly at a window and Ren follows Bryan's gaze in time to see the woman move away from the curtains.

REN

(out of breath)

Is that Mrs. Cranston?

BRYAN

No, she upped and ran away years ago. That's Lucy Lee Semple.
Answers phones over at the water company.

Overlapping this a yellow light snaps on over the back porch and BURLINGTON CRANSTON, his enormous bulk filling the door, stands there in a bathrobe over bare legs and slippers feet.

88 CONTINUED:

88

BURLINGTON

(yelling)

What the hell is going on??

REN

There's a fire over at the Beamis place!!

BURLINGTON

The Beamis place?

BRYAN

'Bout a mile the other side of the new railroad tracks...

BURLINGTON

(with irritating calm)

The other side? Well, hell, that's Beamis' problem. That's not Bomont over in those parts. That's a job for the Amidon department.

REN

But it's gonna spread.

BURLINGTON

Oh, I'm sure the Amidon folks are gonna be there any minute if they ain't already.

REN

Well, aren't you gonna call 'em?

BURLINGTON

(lighting a cigarette)

You stop your yelling or I ain't gonna get anything done.

He picks up the receiver of a wall phone at his right, holds it up to Ren in a "See?" gesture. As he slowly, deliberately dials, Chuck and his crew screech into the side yard and send up a cloud of dust where they stop.

CHUCK

(getting out of the truck)

Hey, hey, whadda we got here... visitors...?

BURLINGTON

(stops dialing)

Chuck, you seen anything -- a fire -- over at the Beamis place? These fellows think they saw something.

88 CONTINUED:

88

REN

We did see something!!

BURLINGTON

Now, just keep your pants on.

CHUCK

(musing)

A fire?? Did I see a fire?

BRYAN

Beamis' fields are burning.

CHUCK

Oh, a fire! Yeah, I saw something glowing, you know, bright. Maybe that's your fire.

During this, a CLOSE-UP of Burlington listening to his son's B.S. As he continues to listen, with his hand on the phone, he depresses the buttons to break the connection.

BURLINGTON

(loudly)

Hello? Hello, Carl? Sorry to get you up, buddy. Listen, it seems we have a problem that you guys might wanna take care of...

89 ANGLE ON REN

89

glaring at Chuck, who smirks. Behind his back -- OUT OF FOCUS -- we can SEE Ariel and Rusty peeking just above the car windows.

Burlington continues his imaginary conversation in the background.

CHUCK

(to Bryan)

Well, goddamn, McCormick, looks like you finally got yourself somebody to dance with.

Ren and Bryan take the hint; they're on alien turf. They leave, slowly, with a backward glance at Burlington still on the phone. They look to Chuck and then glance at the second story from which Burlington's lady friend had looked down on them.

90 INT. WARNICKER HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

90

Ethel is curled up in an armchair, in curlers and a robe; Ren sits opposite her on the edge of the coffee table. He's exhausted and numb after the events of the evening. One solitary lamp shines amber.

REN

I don't understand this town. It's like something's choking everybody. Only they don't know they're choking.

ETHEL

It sounds like they're having as much trouble understanding you.

Pause.

ETHEL

Can I ask you something?

(Ren nods)

Why? Why this dance? In this town?

REN

It's not just about a dance. Not anymore. Mom, I got rights... we got rights. I thought we did.

ETHEL

Unh unh. That's not all of it. I watch you. I can see.

Pause.

REN

(a deep breath)

You're not gonna understand this... When Dad lost his job, I thought... well I didn't think; I just sorta felt... there's something I could do, y'know, and he'd... he'd come around. I didn't know what... but something...?

He pauses, collects his thoughts.

REN

(continuing)

But then he killed himself and I felt like everything I'd done hoping he'd stay -- everything I'd done didn't mean sh -- didn't matter. And I felt like, what difference does it make? What difference do I make?

90 CONTINUED:

90

Pause.

REN

But now I'm thinking, 'I could really do something. For me this time. I could really do something.' See, otherwise, I'm just gonna disappear.

C.U. of Ethel. She understands.

91 INT. SHAW MOORE'S KITCHEN - DAY

91

Vi is sitting at the kitchen table; Ariel is standing at the counter, eating frosted donuts from a box and reading a magazine. Shaw enters. Vi looks up, Ariel does not.

SHAW

(calmly dropping
the bomb)

I called over to Rusty's last night.

Ariel looks up. Caught. She looks to Vi, who has stopped eating.

SHAW

(continuing)

I don't understand why you find it necessary to lie to me.

ARIEL

I don't understand why you have to check up on me.

SHAW

(getting heated)

I'm concerned for your well-being. That is all.

ARIEL

(angry)

Well, howcum when I'm here -- at home -- you're never as interested in what I'm doing and what I'm thinking as you are when I walk out that door? Wham! Suddenly you want to know everything!

SHAW

(as angry as she is)

Ariel, I don't know what's provoked this outburst, but I don't like it. No more than I like not knowing where you were for six hours last night...

91 CONTINUED:

91

VI

Shaw, do you think we could...

SHAW

No, this doesn't wait! And I get so angry when you step in on her side. She's gonna have to start answering for herself.

ARIEL

I don't know what good that would do. You don't listen to me any more than you listen to her.

Shaw slaps Ariel across the face and pulls his hand back in horror. Stunned silence.

SHAW

(softly)

I don't want to hear insolence like that in this house.

Ariel places her napkin on the table end, calmly, stands up and leaves the room in a brash display of defiance. Shaw and Vi are left staring at each other across the table. Vi is stunned.

SHAW

(trembling)

I've never hit someone...

VI

(softly)

No.

SHAW

I've seen this coming... this last school year. We're losing her, Vi. Can't you see?

VI

I see you... chasing after her, and I see her running from you...

SHAW

(overlapping)

She's becoming willful and obstinate...

VI

Like her father? Shaw, the two of you were wonderful once. You had so much to talk about... I was almost jealous.

91 CONTINUED:

91

SHAW

It's not like we never talk.
People just... run out of things
to say.

Vi is stung by this remark. She stoically plunges ahead.

VI

Shaw, it's twenty-one years now
I've been a minister's wife.
Quiet. Supportive. Unobtrusive.
And after twenty-one years, I
still believe you're a wonderful,
wonderful preacher. You can still
lift a congregation up so high,
they have to look down to see
heaven.

(pause)

It's the one to one where you need
a little work.

She pushes away from the table and exits. He is taken
aback.

92 EXT. BEAMIS' FIELDS - DAY

92

Ren and Andy Beamis are picking their way over the
charred remains of a wheat field, both of them with
their hands in their pockets and with their heads down.
Interstate trucks criss-cross the highway behind them.

ANDY

He'd love to see me burn.
Burlington Cranston has hated me
ever since I bought up all this...
all his family's land in the late
40's.

Ren listens.

ANDY

Then in 1957... The county went
and redrew town lines and

(pointing)

that part of my land stayed Bomont
and this became part of Amidon
township, even though Amidon ain't
within thirty miles. And that's
what Burlington wanted. He
convinced more than a few folks in
Bomont that I had no rights as a
Bomont resident.

(MORE)

ANDY (CONT'D)

(pause)

'Nother thing. When my wife died
some years back, Melinda Cranston
was very kind to me.

(he looks at Ren)

Very kind woman.

Ren nods his understanding, amazed at Andy's candidness.

REN

So, whaddya gonna do now?

ANDY

Oh, I'll plow this all under, wait
for next season, take my chances.
Just so's I know I still can.

ANGLE on another part of the field. As they walk:

REN

I think the kids are coming
around. But it's hard to tell,
y'know. Nobody wants to speak up
or stand out.

ANDY

Well, it's not gonna happen by magic. Somebody's
gotta fight city hall.

REN

Hunh?

ANDY

There's a town council. Seven
members. Shaw Moore's one of 'em.
Burlington Cranston's another.
Meet every third Thursday of the
month. You wanna change a law in
the town of Bomont, you gotta go
talk to them.

REN

I'm not good with words.

ANDY

(a wink)

You could get your ass kicked.

REN

(a smile)

I'll kick back.

Andy smiles. WIDE SHOT as the CAMERA PULLS BACK and leaves
Ren and Andy, two tiny figures on the rise of a hill.

93 EXT. SCHOOL TRACK FIELD - DAY - MONTAGE

93

MUSIC CUE #11: BRYAN ON THE TRACK

Bryan carries a portable cassette tape deck out onto a deserted track; he turns it on and tries to find the beat of the rocking, rhythmic intro. Faking a few steps, snapping his fingers and finally laughing at his own feeble effort, he positions himself for a run at the hurdles. We see the concentration on his face, the speeding up of his breathing; and then, as he takes off, leaping the hurdles with consummate grace, we MOVE into a MONTAGE. No dialogue is heard and MUSIC rides over it all.

The MONTAGE touches on Ren's campaigning efforts in various locations -- e.g., on The Hill, in the school cafeteria, in front of the hardware store, at the shopping mall -- and shows Ren politicking -- sometimes alone, sometimes with Bryan -- with varying degrees of success. People ignore him, dismiss him, kids taunt him and his exasperation sometimes becomes evident. But we get the feeling that he's sending shock waves through the community.

94 INT. SHAW MOORE'S GARAGE - DAY

94

Ariel is reclining in the back seat of the family car, her homework, books, papers, food and purse contents are piled up around her. There's a tap at the window and the front door opens.

Vi slips into the passenger side of the car. She talks to Ariel over the back seat.

ARIEL
(softly)

Hi.

VI
I haven't seen much of you lately.

(pause)
You and your father are gonna have to talk sooner or later.

ARIEL
He talks, I listen. Now he wants to smell my breath when I get in at night. He goes crazy if I even think about the dance over at school. I should just go off to college and we'll never have to speak a word again.

Silence.

VI

You know, years ago... I was in college in St. Louis, before I met your father there. I was studying education while I tried to figure out what to do with my life. And, when I was a senior, I met a dancer -- Bernard. Did I ever tell you this?

ARIEL

(interested)

No.

VI

(she smiles)

And he must have been... the most beautiful man I think I'd ever seen. With the smoothest skin, Ariel. And he was consumed by his dancing. And I couldn't figure out how a person could be so dedicated. It just hypnotized me. And I'd go to a small walk-up studio in the late afternoon and watch him until all the light was gone, and it was dark. And we'd...

(she gets lost)

And I loved Bernard as much as he loved his dancing.

C.U. - Ariel is transfixed.

VI

(continuing)

And then I met Shaw. His life was baseball and faith. And everything in my life seemed so... unimportant compared to what he was dedicating himself to. He has that gift, you know -- to make his vision seem so grand and glorious that you want to walk through fire for him. And I couldn't believe my eyes, he was so handsome! And that was it! I was in love! And I never looked back.

(pause)

I don't think you remember too much 'bout how he was before your brother died.

(MORE)

VI (CONT'D)

That crash changed him -- it changed this town -- but I believe he's gonna come around. Ariel, he's a passionate man. Just now, maybe he's lost in that passion, and you happen to be part of it. I'm part of it.

ARIEL

But, Momma, he ignores you.

VI

(shaking her head)
I love him. And he loves me. I know that. There are some things you just... know.

95 INT. PARISH HOUSE - DAY

95

C.U. On the cover of Harold Robbins' The Carpetbaggers.

ROGER (O.S.)

This was found in one of the athletic lockers over at the school.

We're in Shaw's office, a wood-paneled cubicle with a bookshelf along one wall, a cluttered wooden desk and two vinyl-covered chairs.

Roger Dunbar is sitting with a briefcase on his lap opposite Shaw in shirtsleeves and a tie. Phones are ringing in an outer office.

Shaw picks up the paperback.

SHAW

What is this, Roger? I don't know this Robbins fellow.

ROGER

I would hope you wouldn't[

Mrs. Allyson, Shaw's secretary, sticks her head into the room. She's a neighborhood woman in her late 40's, plainly dressed, very nervous.

MRS. ALLYSON

Rev. Moore, there's people calling about that dance thing over at the school?

Roger surreptitiously removes a bookmark from the pages of the book.

SHAW

Mrs. Allyson. I'll have to call them back.

(to Roger)

You were saying...?

ROGER

I would hope you wouldn't know this book. It's smut, Reverend.

SHAW

Was somebody reading it?

ROGER

Not at the time it was apprehended. But I get the feeling that it was making the rounds of the locker room, if you know what I mean.

SHAW

I don't want to blow it up into something it isn't.

ROGER

Well, I think it's quite obvious what it is...

SHAW

But it's not so obvious how I should handle it.

ROGER

Reverend, if you'll excuse my saying so, when we got rid of that young English teacher over at the school, we didn't get any support from you.

SHAW

Because, Roger, I didn't feel we had any grounds for his dismissal.

ROGER

Well, Reverend, around here it caused a lot of folks some worry. They've begun to think that your particular attitudes might be better suited to a big city ministry.

SHAW

Because I'm not so quick to condemn, is that it?

95 CONTINUED:

95

ROGER

It doesn't take much time for
corruption to take root, Reverend.

SHAW

About as much time as it takes for
compassion to die, Roger. Just
that much.

96 INT. LIVING ROOM - WARNICKER HOUSE - NIGHT

96

Ethel is concentrating on Introduction to Accounting
while Amy and Sarah sit in front of a large color TV in
the corner. The opening scenes of "Dallas" or some other
such potboiler are being broadcast but the reception is
fuzzy and blurred. Lulu sweeps into the room and snaps
the set off.

LULU

That antenna's gone bad.

The girls react loudly.

AMY & SARAH

Oh, Mom, it's time for "Dallas"!

LULU

It's time for bed is what it's time
for. You know you can't watch that
stuff.

She starts to herd them out of the room.

AMY

Mom!! Debby Springer watches it.

LULU

(joking with them;
thick drawl)

Well, Lord, lightning's gonna
strike her dead, and ain't no
preacher gonna bury her.

Amy and Sarah giggle at this private joke.

From the hallway, we HEAR an argument that works its way
into the room. Lulu sends the girls upstairs and stays.

WES

(emphatic)

Look, Ren, at one time I let it
go. I figured it was just a silly
idea. Now you're riling folks.
It's not good for you. It's not
good for any of us.

96 CONTINUED:

96

They're both in the living room now.

REN

I'm out there calming people
down every day, and the kids are
finally starting to come around.
Once I bring it up at the
council meeting next Thursday...

WES

(overlapping)

Ren, you don't know.

(enumerating on his
fingers)

People are taking business away
from my office on account of this;
your Aunt Lulu's been getting some
very unpleasant phone calls,
people are leaving notes in the
mailbox, and today your mother
lost her job.

REN

What!!??

(to Ethel)

Is that true?

ETHEL

They were laying off anyway...

WES

Now, Ethel, that's not true...

REN

Well, how could they... can they
do that?

ETHEL

Mr. Collins called me in and told
me he's heard that my boy was
getting into a lot of trouble and
perhaps I ought to stay at home
and be a proper mother.

REN

And what did you say?

ETHEL

I told him to shove it.

Ren, Ethel and Lulu laugh; Wes doesn't.

REN

Did you really?

96 CONTINUED:

96

ETHEL

You're not the only one making a
new start in this town... I've
got offers. Other jobs.

WES

(to Ren)

You see how selfish you're
being?...

REN

Mom, I'm sorry... I never thought
this was gonna...

And they erupt at him.

ETHEL

WES

LULU

I'm not saying you're entirely to blame... You've got to stop thinking about only yourself... Now, Ren, I think you gotta admit we've been awfully patient with you.

Ren tries responding to each argument.

REN

I'm sorry... I'm not just
thinking about my... well, I
wasn't hoping for a handout.

WES

Are you gonna give this thing up?
Or am I gonna have to...

REN

(silencing them all)

NO! No, I won't.

(he collects himself)

No. Look, I've been catching hell
ever since I arrived in this town,
but the last place I ever expected
to catch it was here.

He turns to Wes.

REN

(continuing)

Uncle Wes, I swear to you, I'm
this close to pulling this thing
off and I'll be damned if I'm
gonna crawl away now.

(MORE)

96 CONTINUED:

96

REN (CONT'D)

And if I flop, and if I embarrass
you and I get my butt kicked--
sorry, Aunt Lu--I'll be the first
to admit it and the next bus
that's leaving Bomont, I'll be
under it.

97 INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

97

Shaw is giving his Sunday night sermon, passionately
booming.

SHAW

... and if the Lord wasn't
testing us, then how else could
you account for the obscene
proliferation of rock and roll
music, with its gospel of easy
sexuality and relaxed morality?
If he wasn't testing us, why, he
wouldn't hesitate to turn all
those pornographic albums and
books into one big fiery
cinder... like that!

He SMACKS the lectern and several people jump. We SEE
Roger and Eleanor Dunbar in a REACTION SHOT.

98 EXT. GAS REFINERY - NIGHT

98

A cigarette lighter flares in the dark cab of Chuck's
truck, illuminating Ariel's face as she lights a
cigarette.

Chuck and Ariel are parked beside a chain-link fence,
outside a natural gas refinery on the outskirts of town,
the scene is lit by the spooky blue-green glow from a
smokestack flame that's burning off excess gas.

Ariel sits with her arms folded, her head down, cowering;
Chuck is furious.

CHUCK

You don't have to tell me! I know
why you don't call me up and...

ARIEL

I wanted to tell you myself.

CHUCK

...I know why you don't want to see me anymore. I'm not stupid. I'm not blind!!

(he leans in to her)

It's McCormick, isn't it? You're dying to screw McCormick, aren't you?

ARIEL

Oh, you can be so stupid!!

CHUCK

I know you've been watching him like a bitch in heat. You'll wrap your legs around anybody, won't cha?

ARIEL

(slapping him)

You shut up!

Chuck belts her good and knocks her against the opposite door.

CHUCK

(a roar)

You don't talk to me like that, bitch! Not after the way I've treated you. Decent I treated you!

Ariel, seething and sobbing, her face bloodied, stumbles out in front of the truck.

CHUCK

I was about through with you anyway.

Ariel turns back to the truck. She's wearing her high-heeled red boots and she kicks at the right front headlamp, shattering it with her heel. Chuck lets loose a string of epithets and spins out, leaving her, shaking and sobbing.

98A INT. MARCIE'S BEAUTY SALON - NIGHT

98A

All the shades are drawn and Vi and Marcie are alone in the place. It looks like the end of a long day in the shop -- clutter and curlers everywhere.

(CONTINUED)

98A CONTINUED:

98A

Marcie, in her white uniform, is seated in one of the chairs and Vi stands behind her, teasing her hair and rolling it in curlers. Marcie's legs are resting up on the counter, shoes off; she's smoking a cigarette and drinking a Coors beer from a bottle.

MARCIE

No, no, no. Jerry's the truck driver. Oh, Lord I haven't seen him since they closed the interchange. No, this was Larry. He's in pre-stressed concrete. Well, not really in it!

They laugh at this.

VI

Marcie, when you gonna settle in with someone. For good?

MARCIE

You give me three good reasons.

VI

Hmmm... Constant affection...

MARCIE

You get that from Shaw?

(Vi is silent)

Honey, does he ever grab you -- and... hug you?

VI

Well... things change...

Marcie realizes she's touched a nerve.

MARCIE

Vi, get me another beer, would you? You want one?

VI

(on her way to the back of the store)

Oh, no, no, no...

MARCIE

Oh, go ahead. It's not like you have to perform brain surgery in the morning. Vi?

VI (O.S.)

Wellll --

99 EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS, SWITCHING BOX - NIGHT

99

Ren and Ariel have returned to the scene of their earlier screaming exchange. No train tonight, though. They sit on a low strut in front of the switching box; Ariel dabs at her face with a white handkerchief.

ARIEL

No. I'm sorry you had to see me like this. I'll be okay if I can just sneak in at home. Thanks for coming for me.

Ren shrugs off the gratitude.

She fishes through her purse and holds out a polished rosewood box to Ren.

REN

I don't understand.

ARIEL

There's nothing to understand. It's for taking on my father. I want you to get him on this dance thing.

REN

(shaking his head)

Oh, no. No. No way. I got no beef with him. This is my fight -- and it's with a town -- not one person. You don't get to turn this into some kind of 'screw you' to your old man.

He regards her for a moment; she is silent.

REN

It seems to me that somewhere between shutting people out or getting all beat up, there's gotta be a middle ground... where you might just talk. Then maybe you wouldn't have to work so hard to forget your brother or... try to make your father forget him.

Ariel has a faraway look. She hides her tears from Ren.

ARIEL

It's not that easy.

(changing the subject)

Are you gonna open the box?

99 CONTINUED:

99

MUSIC CUE #12: MUSIC BOX

He does. A fine tinkling of MUSIC rises from the box as he sits holding it. He smiles and looks up.

ARIEL

(continuing)

I found it in some boxes in the garage and I'd never heard the tune.

(pause)

I wrote a poem for it; you wanna hear?

Ren nods and Ariel begins to sing -- a sweet, melodic love theme that will come back later on as underscoring for subsequent scenes.

-- she dabs at her swollen lip with the handkerchief and, un-self-consciously, accompanies the music box in a small, lovely voice. This is not a production number. It's a short, awkward and charming moment.

When she finishes, she looks to Ren. The music box continues to PLAY and she smiles.

REN

That's real nice.

They sit for a moment. Ren doesn't know what to say.

ARIEL

Do you think you might ever kiss me?

He does. Softly, gently, one tender kiss as the music box winds down and the SOUNDS of the night move in on them.

99A INT. MARCIE'S SALON - NIGHT

99A

Same scene as earlier. Beer cans cover the counter top. Both Vi and Marcie are slightly tipsy. Vi has teased Marcie's hair until she looks like Elsa Lancaster in The Bride of Frankenstein; Marcie hasn't seen this yet.

VI

I wouldn't go to Paris. Not first. First I'd go to the ocean. You know, I've never seen an Ocean...

MARCIE

Water. Lots and lots of water.

VI

And sand... I gotta have sand.

99A CONTINUED:

99A

MARCIE

What're you gonna do in the sand?

VI

You write your name. You dig.
You make footprints...

And she spins away from Marcie's chair, holding her skirt up, swirling between the salon chairs, humming. She kicks and her shoe goes flying.

MARCIE

(laughing)

Oh, Vi, don't....stop! What are
you doing? Stop, Vi! You're too
old for that!

Vi stops suddenly, slightly out of breath, still laughing but slowing down.

Marcie regrets her last comment. She sits up.

MARCIE

No, now that's stupid. When are
you too old to dance?

VI

(recovering her shoe)

Oh, Honey, I gotta go.

Marcie sees herself in the mirror. She suppresses a shriek. Vi laughs. Marcie fights to keep a straight face, shaking her head.

MARCIE

Oh, Vi....I'm gonna have to shoot
my hair.

100 INT. SHAW MOORE'S HOUSE - HALLWAY OFF KITCHEN - NIGHT 100

Ariel enters the back door and tiptoes in. We FOLLOW her careful path as she passes near the living room. She drops the bloodied hankerchief on the way without noticing.

From out of the semi-darkness, we HEAR voices. Ariel is obviously relieved that there is someone else in the house to distract her father. She steals into the hallway and we PAN into the living room.

101 ANGLE ON LIVING ROOM

101

Shaw is finishing a meeting with members of the town council -- MR. FOGERTY, the high school principal, Burlington Cranston, Virginia Hubert, Harvey Holland and Saul Widdoes. We cut in on Shaw, mid-sentence.

SHAW

... And Harvey... tell Burlington I don't want him starting any arguments with these high school kids --

The front door opens as Vi lets herself in. She passes through the vestibule hurriedly, past the crowd in the living room, who all greet her.

VI

Good night everybody. Shaw.

She goes upstairs.

SHAW

Let's just kill this whole issue before it takes any more time. You're all with me?

OTHERS

Oh, yeah. Sure, no problem. Etc.

102 BACK TO SCENE

102

C.U. on Ariel's face as we HEAR sounds of goodnights in the background and the front door opening and closing. She shakes herself out of her trance and runs upstairs before Shaw passes down the hallway on his way to his office. As she disappears up the stairs, he appears and discovers the handkerchief on the floor. He looks to the stairway, realizing that he may have been overheard, trying to figure out what to do about the discovery; he finally pockets the handkerchief.

He turns out the lights and mounts the stairs.

103 INT. SHAW MOORE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

103

Vi is sitting in front of a dressing table brushing her hair when Shaw enters. She sees him in her mirror, and turns.

VI

(carefully)

So, whaddya gonna do about the dance?

SHAW

Its not gonna happen.

(pause)

One more thing Ariel will never forgive me for, but...

VI

That's not about the dance. Can't you step out of the way long enough to realize that she's doing all this for you?

SHAW

I don't see that. All I know is that when boys and girls dance, they become sexually irresponsible. I can't take that chance...

VI

Oh, stop it, Shaw. You talk like it's the only thing that gets them started. They look at each other and that happens. But you're not going to put their eyes out. And none of this -- none of it -- is gonna undo one stupid accident.

They both freeze at her words. Then:

SHAW

I'm responsible for the spiritual life of these people.

VI

There are people out there, dancing away quite happily, never aware that they're sinning.

SHAW

Which people? Where?

VI

All over. Most of this country.

SHAW

(intensely)

Vi! Don't you understand? We are a country apart here. What they do out there is their business. What we do here is mine.

103 CONTINUED:

103

VI

You can't babysit these people.
You can't.

Shaw crosses to the door of the bedroom.

SHAW

(continuing)

And I thought that you believed in
me.

He abruptly closes the door. Vi is left sitting alone in the near-darkness, a hair brush in one hand and the other lying in her lap. She stares straight ahead, and her eyes glisten.

VI

(softly)

Shaw. I've never stopped.

104 INT. WARNICKER GARAGE - NIGHT

104

Ren pulls in after dropping off Ariel.

ANGLE ON REN'S BACK as he gets out of the car and shuts the door. He is suddenly surprised from behind by someone -- several someones -- who incapacitate him by pulling his jacket up over his head. Then three pairs of hands set about beating him up. He cries out but his cries are muffled by the jacket over his head.

105 EXT. WARNICKER HOUSE - DAY

105

A long ladder leans against the side of the house. Vi comes around the corner, calling back over her shoulder.

VI

Thanks, Lulu. I'll find him.

(calling)

Ren! Ren!

Ren peeks over the edge of the roof, parts of the antenna in his hand. He's pretty badly cut up and swollen, but he's mobile and in good spirits.

REN

Yeah.

VI

(startled, good-natured)

I thought you'd be in a hospital
bed. That's howcum you're on my
list of sick visits.

105 CONTINUED:

105

Ren shrugs.

VI

They told me over at the school
that you've missed a few days?

REN

Would you go back to school
looking like this?

They both laugh, a little less uncomfortable now.

VI

The Reverend and I are awfully
sorry... 'bout what happened. It's
not typical of Bomont hospitality.

Pause.

REN

How's Ariel?

VI

Ariel is fine... fine...

REN

She hasn't come to visit.

Vi hesitates. She leans against the ladder.

VI

She's grounded... for a few
days... it's...

REN

Does it have anything to do with
me and the dance?

VI

Oh... no... there are other things...

REN

Is Rev. Moore gonna let us have our
dance?

VI

That's, ummm... you're gonna have
to ask him yourself.

REN

Oh, I'm gonna. Now I'm gonna.

Pause.

105 CONTINUED:

105

VI
(quietly)
I hope you do.

She turns to go.

REN
Mrs. Moore?

VI
(turning back)
Yes?

REN
Do you think we ought to have a
dance?

Vi stops for a moment. Then she laughs heartily and
shakes a finger at Ren.

VI
You're either a born politician or
a born preacher.

106 ANGLE ON REN

106

He smiles broadly.

107 EXT. SCHOOL BUILDING - DAY

107

It's overcast and moody.

Ariel and four other STUDENTS are handing out flyers.
Some accept the piece of paper, others ball it up and
throw it away; one boy yells, "Only fairies dance" as he
passes. The scene is frantic with shoves and crowds.

Edna, Rusty and Wendy Jo approach Ariel, books in hand.

WENDY JO
Hiya, Moore. How's the shiner?

Ariel displays a fading black eye.

ARIEL
(handing them flyers)
Getting there.

RUSTY
When're you off probation?

ARIEL
Since last night.

107 CONTINUED:

107

EDNA
(reading the
flyer)
When're you gonna give up on
this crap.

WENDY JO
Edna, you're bringing me down.

RUSTY
What's Mr. Walsh doing?

MR. WALSH, a lumpy American history teacher, is
collecting the fliers from the other students and walking
towards Ariel; she shouts at him:

ARIEL
What are you doing?

WALSH
Gimme the papers, Ariel.

ARIEL
No.

She's defiant, holding the papers over her head.

WALSH
It's not like anybody cares about
this thing.

ARIEL
Is that why you're all running
around, burying the evidence?

Suddenly a hand reaches over Ariel's head, plucks the
sheaf of papers from her hands. It's Mr. Gurntz, Ren's
nemesis earlier.

GURNTZ
I'm sure you have better things to
do this evening, Miss Moore.

Ariel is pissed. Rusty breaks the icy standoff.

RUSTY
I don't.

EDNA
Hunh unh. Me neither.

Ariel reacts to their support. They all turn and walk
away, muttering as they go.

107 CONTINUED:

107

WENDY JO

Well that makes three of us.

EDNA

Oh, more than three, much more.

RUSTY

Crowds, hordes. Like Super Bowl Sunday.

Ariel looks back over her shoulder, smiling at the two teachers.

108 INT. WARNICKER HOUSE - NIGHT

108

Ren's practicing a speech in front of his mirror, holding a sheaf of papers. He tries an awkward gesture but he realizes he looks stupid doing it. He grimaces, checks his hair, takes a deep breath, turns around. Amy and Sarah are standing in the doorway, having seen his impromptu rehearsal.

AMY

Nervous?

109 INT. CHURCH MEETING HALL - NIGHT

109

The place is packed!! The stairs and the hallway outside the meeting hall are clogged with observers, mostly high school kids, but there are a fair number of adults as well, including Ethel, teachers and Andy Beamis.

Ren enters the room and there's a BUZZ as the wall-to-wall crowd parts to let him through. He is clapped on the back by some, ignored by others.

He finds Ariel across the room and their eyes meet. She looks back and forth furtively and then opens the zippered sweatshirt that she's wearing to reveal a t-shirt underneath, stenciled with "DANCE YOUR ASS OFF." He laughs at the sight, and she zips up again. Ren locates Bryan who gives him a thumbs up signal.

The room is an unfurnished common room with a bulletin board and chalk boards off to one side. Across the front of the room is a table of seven aldermen, all of whom we have met before in Shaw Moore's living room, except for WALTER DOOLEY, the town's mayor and a part-time insurance salesman. The others are Mr. Fogerty, Burlington Cranston, Virginia Hubert, Harvey Holland, Saul Widdoes and Rev. Shaw Moore.

109 CONTINUED:

109

There's an aura of tension. Half the kids have come to see Ren succeed. The rest want to see him fall flat on his face.

Virginia Hubert is the secretary for the group.

VIRGINIA
(reading in a
flat voice)
... and so the price of a dog
license will go from three-fifty
to four-fifty. A licensed pet is
a happy one.
(looking up from
her notes)
And that takes care of old
business, Burlington.

BURLINGTON
Thank you, Virginia. Now we can
consider any new business, but
before we begin...

SLOW PAN of the meeting room as he talks.

BURLINGTON
(continuing)
I want to remind all of you
youngsters that we are conducting
an official meeting, talking
official town business... and that
no disturbance will be tolerated.

110 ANGLE ON BURLINGTON

110

BURLINGTON
(continuing)
The floor is now open for any new
business.

111 C.U. OF REN

111

He takes a deep breath.

112 ANGLE ON THE OTHER STUDENTS

112

looking to him to make a move. A pregnant pause.

113 BACK TO SCENE

113

Ren raises his hand.

BURLINGTON
Yes, young man.

113 CONTINUED:

113

REN

(standing, nervous)

Umm, my name is Ren McCormick and
uhm... I want to move, on behalf
of most of the senior class of
Bomont High School that the, unh,
law against public dancing within
the town limits of Bomont be
abolished.

There's a silence while the request sinks in. Ren
fidgets. Several of the anti-Ren students exchange
disgusted looks. The members of the town board and most
of those assembled look to Shaw for his reaction.

SHAW

Ren McCormick, isn't it?

REN

Yessir.

SHAW

(slowly)

Ren, even if it was not a law,
which it is, I would have a great
deal of difficulty endorsing an
enterprise that is fraught with as
much spiritual peril as this one is.

114 ANGLE ON ARIEL

114

She rolls her eyes.

115 BACK TO SCENE

115

SHAW

(continuing)

Besides the liquor and the drugs
and the lewd behavior that always
seem to accompany such an event,
the thing that distresses me even
more, Ren, is the spiritual
corruption. These dances... this
music distorts people's Christian
outlook on life.

He gets expansive, confident with the knowledge that
he's got all his votes lined up.

SHAW

(continuing)

They are distractions. They can
be destructive.

(MORE)

101.

115 CONTINUED:

115

SHAW (CONT'D)

They can be dangerous. That's been the experience of this and other communities in this state. But I will defer to my fellow council members and, if they find any way to work it out, I will reconsider my opinion.

116 ANGLE ON ARIEL

116

who understands her father's con.

117 BACK TO SCENE

117

Shaw sits back with a flourish. Ren sits sheepishly. The other board members look relieved and glance at Shaw.

Ren turns in time to see Ariel exiting through the crowd. Ren is agonized.

VIRGINIA

I believe that a vote is in order on the motion.

118 ANGLE ON BRYAN AND RUSTY

118

looking to Ren.

119 ANGLE ON OTHER STUDENTS

119

whispering.

120 CLOSE-UP OF REN

120

tortured.

121 BACK TO SCENE

121

BURLINGTON

Will all of those opposed to...

REN

(standing abruptly)

Beg your pardon, I'd like to say something, if I could?

Ariel stops her exit. Various council members leap up.

MEMBERS

Now just a second! Discussion is closed! You're out of order! (etc.)

121 CONTINUED:

121

ANGLE on Eleanor and Roger Dunbar. Behind them stands Vi Moore. Eleanor moves to add her voice to the chorus of objections, rising to her feet.

ELEANOR

It's outrageous if you think...

Vi claps her on the shoulder and fairly pushes her back into her chair, hissing:

VI

Siddown, Eleanor.

Eleanor is too stunned to fight back. All council members look to Shaw. He pauses, nods to Ren. And Ren begins.

REN

(nervous, halting)

I just wanted to say a few words about this motion so you won't think...

(clears his throat)

... that we're encouraging destruction or disorder with this idea.

(his eyes are

pained, searching)

You might think that because dance is so misunderstood in these parts. Its gotten a reputation that...

He looks at his sweating palm, it's scribbled over with notes, written in ballpoint ink.

BURLINGTON

Mr. McCormick, there's hardly a need to explain to us what dancing is all abo...

REN

(looking up,
cutting him off)

I'd like to finish, please?

Burlington is stung; he looks to Shaw, who, by his silence, also silences Burlington.

REN

You see, from the oldest times, people danced for a number of reasons -- they danced in prayer, or so their crops would be plentiful or so their hunt would be good.

122 ANGLE ON THE AUDIENCE OF CLASSMATES AND ADULTS

122

watching, puzzled, as Ren gets his motor going.

123 BACK TO SCENE

123

REN

(continuing)

They danced to stay physically fit, and to show their community spirit. And they danced to celebrate. And that's the dancing we're talking about.

He's really getting going and the effect is hypnotic.

REN

(continuing)

Dancing is celebration! It cleans out the body and the spirit, and energy that might turn destructive suddenly becomes an expression of joy and happiness. For what? For the fact that spring is here, hunh?

He looks around to his "congregation"; he notices that Ethel has joined the crowd at the back of the room and he takes renewed energy from that fact. His rhetorical question gets a few reflexive nods from the crowd.

REN

(continuing)

... or because we're graduating...
hunh?

More nods, even from the opposition forces now.

REN

(continuing)

Because we're happy to be together, and because we are grateful to be alive!!! And hasn't it always been like this? Hmm?

(checking his palm)

Aren't we told in Psalm 149 to "Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song. Let them praise his name in the dance"?

124 C.U. OF SHAW

124

for a reaction of Ren's strategy of turning his own style against him.

125 BACK TO SCENE

125

REN

(continuing)

And it was King David -- KING
DAVID!!! -- who we read about in
Samuel. And what did David do?
What did he do? "David danced
before the Lord with all his
might, leaping and dancing
before the Lord." "Leaping and
dancing."

A few of the kids mutter "Yeah" or "That's right"
automatically.

126 ANGLE ON BURLINGTON CRANSTON

126

who is looking to Shaw for a sign -- what should he do?
Shaw doesn't take his eyes off Ren, who is exhorting people
on all sides. He doesn't miss a beat. He plows

127 BACK TO SCENE

127

REN

(continuing)

And Ecclesiastes assures us that
"There is a time to every purpose
under heaven -- a time to weep and
laugh; there is a time to mourn
and there is a time to dance!"

(pause)

And there was a time for this law.
But not anymore. This is our time
to dance!!

A resounding "RIGHT!" from the crowd, all the kids now
totally supportive.

REN

(continuing)

That's our way of participating
in a rebirth. A new life.

(he's driving it
home now)

That's the way it was in the
beginning, the way that it's
always been and that's the way
that it should be now and
forever and ever...

The crowd joins in with a lusty, reflexive "AMEN!"
Spontaneous applause.

- 128 ANGLE ON BURLINGTON CRANSTON 128
pounding for order.
- 129 ANGLE ON REN 129
sweating and smiling.
- 130 ANGLE ON ETHEL 130
sitting proudly off to one side.
- 131 ANGLE ON ARIEL 131
smiling, applauding, fighting back tears.
- 132 ANGLE ON BRYAN 132
stunned.
- 133 ANGLE ON SHAW 133
stony in the face of such an outpouring of support.
- 134 INT. WARNICKER KITCHEN - NIGHT 134

Ren and Ethel are sitting at the kitchen table, cups of coffee in front of them and an electric coffee pot between them. Ren looks defeated. There's a somber pall over the room.

ETHEL

Well, I'll tell you... You had every one of those kids won over.

REN

Yeah, but they didn't vote. I just happened to push their buttons. They'll get heated up and they'll get crazy for a time. And then they'll grow up to be like their parents.

ETHEL

But I'll tell you... those people won't be able to hear a record or snap their fingers again without thinking of you. And one day... one day it'll make a difference. And that'll be just the beginning.

REN

(singing, ad lib)
That'll be the day.

134 CONTINUED:

134

He chuckles. Ethel reaches out and puts her hand over his. Silence.

There's a KNOCK at the back door and Ethel answers it. Standing at the bottom of the back stoop, in the shadows, is Andy Beamis in the soft glow of the yellow porch light.

ETHEL

Yes, can I help you?

ANDY

Ma'am, I'd like to speak to Ren if he's still awake.

Ren recognizes Andy's voice and comes to the door.

REN

Hi, Andy.

ANDY

I hope I'm not disturbing you.
I'm awful sorry what happened.
Could I take a minute?

REN

(pushing through
the screen door)

Sure, Andy.

(he stops)

Oh, Mom, this is Andy Beamis;
Andy, this is my mom.

They nod a warm hello to each other.

ETHEL

Ren, you go ahead. I'll wait
inside for you.

She pulls back inside and shuts the door, leaving them alone. They walk across the back lawn as they talk, lit by the amber porch light.

ANDY

You know you were railroaded,
doncha?

REN

Hunh?

134 CONTINUED:

134

ANDY

Boy, will you wake up and smell the coffee? Shaw Moore walked into that meeting with those votes in his pocket. You didn't have a prayer.

REN

Bad pun, Andy.

ANDY

So what happens now?

REN

It's over.

ANDY

What if it's not dead? What if you have your dance in Amidon?

REN

Naw. The whole point was to do something here, Amidon's what, thirty miles away?

ANDY

Not where it runs up to the back of my house it's not.

REN

Hunh?

ANDY

I figure if the Bomont fire trucks can't get to my land, then neither can the long arm of the law.

REN

But what about the long arm of Reverend Moore?

ANDY

You remember he said if you could find a way to convince him that it wasn't gonna be a "spiritual corruption", he said he'd think about it.

REN

So?

ANDY

So. Make him think about it.

135 ANGLE ON REN

135

who lets the possibility sink in.

136 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

136

Ren, in his car, is pacing Bryan, who runs along the side of road in sweats.

BRYAN

Well, now you've done it, turkey.

REN

Whazzat?

BRYAN

Well, you rattled their cages.
You've got 'em all hot to trot,
but they got no place to go to.

They're both silent for a moment.

BRYAN

(continuing)

What're you gonna do about it?

REN

Keep your knees up.

He speeds away.

BRYAN

(shouting after him)

Oh, yeah. Talk dirty to me.

137 INT. BOMONT CHURCH - DUSK

137

Rev. Moore is up at the front of the church, pacing the altar and gesturing broadly, rehearsing. Behind him is the stained glass window, softly lit by the last rays of the day's sun. The red light outlines him in a glow, an austere rainbow of brilliance.

From O.S. we HEAR Ariel's voice, which stops Shaw in his tracks.

ARIEL (O.S.)

When I was a little girl, I
remember...

138 ANGLE ON ARIEL

138

sitting in the corner of a pew, halfway back in the church.

138 CONTINUED:

138

ARIEL

(Continuing)

...I used to get such a kick out of watching you work up your sermon.

SHAW

(from the altar)

And now?

ARIEL

It's different... I see the stage and the costumes. It's show business, isn't it?

SHAW

It's the way I know to... to reach people's emotions.

(pause)

I haven't heard from you since... Wednesday?

ARIEL

I was angry. You were angry

SHAW

I was not.

Ariel moves down front. Shaw is disturbed by the confrontation.

ARIEL

You were. If you weren't you would've asked me what was wrong. But you knew.

SHAW

I can't allow this dance to happen.

ARIEL

Ren McCormick made a lot of people stop and think.

SHAW

Ariel, it has been denied by the town council.

ARIEL

But you made sure of that, didn't you? I figured that out. Daddy, you... could snap your fingers if you wanted to and...

SHAW

Ariel, if you will stop and think
about the church as a large house,
and all the bricks in that house
are the rules by which we live,
then how many bricks do you think
we could possibly remove before...

138 CONTINUED:

138

ARIEL

Daddy! Don't talk to me in stories. Talk to me. You're the one taught me honest y!

SHAW

Alright. Start at the bottom. For openers, I object to that kind of music, and I think you know why.

ARIEL

Because people fornicate to it?

SHAW

I never told you that!!

ARIEL

That's what you told the church board.

SHAW

That wasn't meant for your ears.

ARIEL

When do my ears get old enough? Daddy, when do you stop protecting me? I'm no saint, you know...

SHAW

It's my duty to...

ARIEL

(off-handed)

I'm not even a virgin.

SHAW

(stunned)

You don't talk like that in here.

ARIEL

Why not, Daddy? Isn't this where I confess my sins to my preacher? In church? And ask to be forgiven?... Am I?

Suddenly, MRS. ALLYSON, Shaw's secretary, bursts into the vestibule of the church and runs up the aisle toward Shaw, oblivious to the scene that's just been played out.

138 CONTINUED:

138

MRS. ALLYSON
 Reverend Moore! Oh, Reverend
 Moore, thank God you're here!
 People have been calling the
 office... the Dunbars are over
 at the library. They're burning
 library books and records on the
 lawn. I can't believe it!
 There's a crowd gathering!

Shaw glances at Ariel and then takes off. She is left
 standing in the half-light of the stained glass window.

139 EXT. LIBRARY BUILDING - DUSK

139

We PAN OVER a small circle of flame and find Roger and
 Eleanor Dunbar dropping books and record albums onto a
 small bonfire. Several parishioners have joined them
 and a few teenagers are adding records to the flames.

In the background, Rev. Moore pulls up to the curb.

Shaw dashes across the lawn to the bonfire.

SHAW
 (out of breath)
 Roger!! Eleanor!! What are you
 doing?!

ROGER
 (icily)
 Hello, Reverend. We've decided
 that these books and records are
 influences that our young folks...

ELEANOR
 (simultaneous
 with Roger)
 We checked these offensive
 materials out of the library and
 we...

SHAW
 Who's we? Who decided this??
 What authority are you acting on??

ROGER
 Well, Reverend, you yourself agree
 that this is garbage, and unfit
 for...

ELEANOR
 (at the same time)
 Oh, Reverend, it's so dangerous...

SHAW

Now wait!!

ROGER

We couldn't wait for you,
Reverend.

General murmurs of agreement from the assembled.

SHAW

(shaking his head
from side to side,
addressing the crowd)

My friends... my friends...

He can't find the words.

SHAW

(continuing)

When did you take it upon yourself
to pass judgment? I look at this
... this fire... and I'm reminded
of horrible, horrible scenes --
other times, in other countries
when books were burned -- only it
didn't stop with the books.

He lets that sink in.

SHAW

(continuing)

So where does this stop? So today
you decided to save the souls of
everyone in Bomont from the demon.

He stands, regarding the fire, turning his gaze on the
crowd. The early evening wind whips at his face and
makes the flames dance. From across the square in front
of the library we see Ariel running up. She stops at some
distance from the gathering, out of breath.

SHAW

(indicating the
blaze)

The demon isn't there. We...

(he points to his
chest)

It's in here. You cannot commit a
sin that you first don't imagine...
Please. Go home. Sit only in
judgement of yourselves.

ROGER

Reverend Moore, we feel we have a
perfect right to...

139 CONTINUED:

139

SHAW

ROGER!! Please. Go home

Eleanor nudges Roger from behind and the two of them move past Shaw, which is a cue for the rest of the group to disperse.

Shaw is left standing very alone, very shaken. He bends down and gathers the few books that are left unburned.

C.U. from across the square we see Ariel watching her father, with great compassion.

140 INT. ARIEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

140

Ariel wakes to the faint sound of voices floating up from downstairs; she turns and checks the clock to find that it's almost midnight. She throws back the sheets, wraps her robe around herself and exits.

140A INT. VESTIBULE OF SHAW MOORE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

140A

We follow Ariel down the stairs as she catches the tail end of a conversation between her father and Ren McCormick in the living room.

REN

But sometimes things don't make good sense. If you could explain about my father, maybe I could tell you about your son. But...
(he shrugs)
y'know. It doesn't make sense. I'm not sure it's supposed to.

SHAW (softly)

I'm not sure that we're even meant to understand.

Pause

REN

I'm gonna go. I know you're gonna do what you've gotta. Thanks for listening.

Ren gets up and moves toward the front door. From the darkness:

SHAW

Ren?

(he turns)

Thank you for umm... thank you.

Ren nods and exits.

Shaw closes his eyes and exhales deeply. He looks exhausted, defeated. Ariel crosses the vestibule, and watches from the shadows. He knows she's there--not because he sees her but because he senses her.

140A CONTINUED:

140A

SHAW

(eyes closed, softly)
Mighty gutsy. He came to ask
me if he could take you to a
senior prom.

Ariel is startled at being discovered. Long pause.

SHAW

I'm running out of answers, Ariel.

From the shadows, Ariel speaks

ARIEL

(very slowly)
Daddy, I know it's hard for you,
and I know I don't make it any
easier... It's just that I don't
know if I believe in all the
things that you believe in...
but, I believe in you.

SHAW

(his eyes still closed,
smiling, faintly)
I... I think I knew that.

141 INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

141

A SLOW PAN of the CONGREGATION as we HEAR the first part
of Shaw's speech O.S. There's an air of expectancy.

Shaw's speech is very simple, straightforward, missing
all his usual pyrotechnics.

SHAW

I'm standing in front of you this
evening with a very troubled
heart. You see, my friends, I've
always insisted on taking
responsibility for your lives.
But I'm really just like the
first-time parent... who makes
mistakes, learning from them as he
goes along. And, like that
parent, I find myself at that
moment when I have to decide -- do
I hold on? Do I hold on to you
all real tight and hope that you
never feel my grip? Or do I trust
you to yourselves; let go, and
hope that you've understood my
lessons? If we don't start
trusting our children, will they
ever be trustworthy?

115.

142 CLOSE-UP OF ARIEL

142

She's hanging on every word.

143 BACK TO SCENE

143

SHAW

(continuing)

There are some things I know I'm right about, things I will always believe -- I believe that Christ Jesus is my Savior.

"Amen" from a few voices.

SHAW

(continuing)

I believe that He can save me and I believe in the power of love -- His and mine. Beyond that, my friends, things get gray and murky and I'm feeling my way. Every day of my life. So... what am I going on about? I think it might be time to put a little of your responsibility for yourselves back into your hands.

(pause)

I'm told that the senior class of Bomont High School has secured the use of a barn in nearby Amidon for a senior dance... Please join me to pray that our Lord will guide them in their endeavors.

General subdued elation among the younger members of the community.

Ethel reaches over and squeezes Ren's hand.

Ariel turns around in her pew to catch Ren's eyes. Chuck Cranston looks disgusted.

MONTAGE: PREPARATION FOR THE DANCE

144 INT. GIRL'S BEDROOM - DAY

144

MUSIC CUE #13: DANCE MONTAGE MIXING BALLAD AND UP-TEMPO

In silence, we SEE a GIRL who is recognizable from Ren's senior homeroom -- braces or glasses might distinguish her -- as she takes a box down from a bedroom closet. NEAR SILENCE. On top of the box is a radio, wrapped in its cord. She unravels the cord, plugs in the radio and, lifting the edge of her skirt, dusts the top of the radio. She checks behind her -- the bedroom door is closed. She switches the radio on.

144 CONTINUED:

116.

144

Suddenly we're overwhelmed with SOUND -- powerful, exciting. It provides the background for the following scenes, as it shifts from a slow, ballad feel to up-tempo rhythm and back to the ballad section.

145 EXT. FIELDS - DAY

145

Bryan and Ren are in the dried-out bed of an irrigation canal. It's a twenty-foot-wide strip of concrete, sunken about eight feet below the level of the fields that surround it. Ren is wearing a Walkman (portable cassette player) strapped to his waist and both boys are wearing headphones connected to the machine; the earphone cords limit the distance either boy can move from the other.

When the MONTAGE switches to this setting, as it will several times, the MUSIC will always DROP OUT and be HEARD only faintly. If one boy removes his headphones the MUSIC volume will INCREASE a fraction.

Ren is showing Bryan a few dance steps. Bryan follows awkwardly, tied to Ren by the umbilicus of the earphone cord.

146 INT. A GIRL'S BEDROOM - DAY

146

Two school GIRLS are dancing with each other in front of a floor-length mirror, stepping on each other's toes and correcting each other's moves.

147 INT. A FAMILY'S GARAGE - DAY

147

One BOY, curly hair and freckles, is polishing a pair of boots that haven't been polished since the day they were bought.

147A EXT. FIELDS - DAY

147A

Ren and Bryan again. They shuffle and strut, and finally they try a spin. This tangles them hopelessly and Ren looks like he might give up. Bryan repositions the headphones, determinedly.

BRYAN

I'll get it. I'll get it.

148 INT. ANDY BEAMIS' BARN - DAY

148

Ren, at the tip-top of the barn's beams, gives a signal to another student on the floor -- Woody? -- who throws a switch and the loft of the barn is outlined in a sparkling display of runner lights; a dazzling effect because of the setting and because of its unexpectedness. Another shot reveals Chuck Cranston watching the preparations for the prom from a vantage point across the field.

149 EXT. FIELDS - DAY

149

Ren and Bryan for the last time. Bryan seems like he's onto... something. Ren stands back in amazement as Bryan executes a few choice moves, ending in a 'gimme five' slap with Ren. The moment is faintly reminiscent of the exchanges between Ren and his co-workers in the pre-title sequence.

150 EXT. FIELDS - NIGHT

150

A group of STUDENTS are silhouetted by a bonfire as they dance a mad conga line against the moonless sky. Montage ends.

151 EXT. SHAW MOORE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

151

Ariel is waiting on the front porch for Ren to pick her up, looking stunning in something very feminine and wearing those red boots. The door opens behind her and she starts. It's Vi, carrying something out onto the porch in the semi-darkness.

VI

I was afraid you'd be gone.

ARIEL

Naw. I figured I'd better just wait out here.

VI

Well, you can't very well have a prom without a corsage.

She unwraps a rosebud corsage, red, and pins it on Ariel.

ARIEL

(her eyes welling)

Oh, Momma... Momma, it's beautiful!
You didn't have to.

VI

I didn't.

They stop and stare at each other.

VI

(continuing)

But don't go on about it to him
because he'll only deny it.

Headlights sweep the front of the house and Ariel waves.
She turns to Vi.

151 CONTINUED:

151

ARIEL

Momma, I got a letter today. From
the University of Ohio... I left
it out for him to read.

VI

(nodding)

He read it.

Ariel is stunned. Her eyes well up. She looks to the
corsage. She picks out one rose.

ARIEL

When he's ready to hear it, tell
him thank you? And give him this?

Vi nods and Ariel runs off the porch to join Ren. Vi
watches her go.

152 INT. REN'S CAR - NIGHT

152

Ariel lets herself in and closes the door.

REN

I was gonna come and get you...

Ren looks her over and begins to laugh. And laugh.
Ariel is confused and irritated.

ARIEL

What's the matter with you?

REN

I'm sorry.
(he sobers up;
sincerely)
You're beautiful.

ARIEL

What?

REN

I mean it.
(shaking his head,
with real warmth)
You -- are -- beautiful.

She reaches out and touches his cheek.

153

INT. BEAMIS' BARN- NIGHT

153

A pan of the barn reveals that very few kids have shown up. Here and there are a few couples, huddling, talking softly. It's the awkward moment that comes before any dance gets underway, before a gym becomes a wonderland--except that only one-third of the senior class is present. A disheartening turnout.

Angle on Ren and Ariel behind the stereo equipment set-up at one end of the barn. He looks crestfallen.

ARIEL

Well, we gotta start. There's probably more coming.

Ren vacantly eyes the sad crowd. .

ARIEL

Well, somebody's gotta start!

And she pushes the play button on a cassette machine.

MUSIC CUE #14: FIRST DANCE IN THE BARN

And pow!! The music kicks in--a rhythmic dance beat. The few kids present look up, blinking as if they're looking into a bright light. They are embarrassed, unmoved.

154

EXT. BARN- NIGHT

154

From across the field, Shaw and Vi are watching. His arms are folded and in his fist he clutches a single red rose. Vi's hands are buried in the pockets of her wraparound sweater.

VI

Well, why don't we take a closer look?

SHAW

No...she'll think I'm checking up again.

ANDY (o.s.)

Now, you're the last folks I expected to see here.

Shaw and Vi whirl around to find Andy has come up behind them. They laugh nervously.

VI AND SHAW

Good evening, Andy.

ANDY

Evening, Reverend, Vi.

(pause)

Reverend, you did a nice thing here.
(indicates dance)

SHAW

I'm still not sure it was the right thing.

154 CONTINUED:

154

ANDY

Well, I think it comes close.

And he moves past them toward the barn.

156 EXT. BACK OF THE BARN - NIGHT

156

Bryan and Rusty are leaving their car when Chuck Cranston and four goons glide up in his truck. It's clear that these boys haven't come to dance.

RUSTY

Now, Bryan, you promised.

Chuck gets out of the truck, looking crazed.

BRYAN

What do you want, Chuck?

CHUCK

I got business with your friend McCormick.

Chuck moves toward the barn and Bryan blocks his path.

BRYAN

(conciliatory)

Hey, Chuck. Cool it. No fights, okay? I just promised Rusty here...

And wham! Chuck slams him across the face. Bryan staggers a bit, looking to Rusty. She bites on her lower lip. Chuck smashes Bryan one more time and the crunch is audible.

RUSTY

(to Bryan)

Kill the sonofabitch!!

And with that she runs from the group, Bryan hoots jubilantly and lunges at Chuck, connects with his chin, and the four goons surround him.

157 INT. BARN--NIGHT

157

Music continues as Rusty runs into the back of the barn and searches for Ren. She runs to him and, under the music, gesticulates wildly. He rushes out, followed by Ariel, all of this without any dialogue. The other students are left standing around, marking time. The music pounds on.

158 EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

158

SHAW

I think that's enough.

VI

(mesmerized)

Oh, no, just another minute.

But he's already walked off, his head down. Vi stands alone for a few seconds more, then turns to find that she's alone. She tries to follow him in the dark.

VI

(calling)

Shaw! Shaw!

(she stops)

Please, Shaw!

(plaintively)

I'm afraid of the dark.

He stops and turns back to her as she catches up to him, she senses that there is something wrong. His eyes are shiny with tears.

VI

Shaw, what is it?

SHAW

(stoic)

I've lost her.

Long pause. Vi reaches out and touches him on the arm.

VI

(gently)

Just the two of us, hunh? Again.

159 EXT. BARN - NIGHT

159

Music spills from the barn. Bryan is picking himself up when another fist connects and he's decked again. Five guys stand in a semi-circle around him as Ren runs up.

REN

CHUCK!

CONTINUED:

Chuck turns. WHAM! He gets it right in the kisser. He falls and looks up at Ren.

REN

You're a fuckin' hero when it's five on one.

CHUCK

(getting up)

Well, it's Mister Dance Fever.

NOTE: Throughout the following fight we are vaguely aware of headlights sweeping the scene and more bodies joining the crowd of onlookers. The spill of MUSIC from the barn provides a backdrop for the confrontation.

Chuck lunges at Ren in a tackle move. Ren brings his clasped fists and his knee up to connect with Chuck's chin and stomach. Chuck is wrenched upright, his eyes roll back in his head and he drops like a brick.

RUSTY

REN!!

He turns in time to see one of the goons moving in on him with a length of pipe. He handles himself as Bryan takes on two other guys. And, although it's now stacked 4 to 2, Ren pulls out all stops, fighting in a way that borrows heavily from king-fu--kick school of fighting, a talent he might have developed in the playgrounds of Chicago. Bryan is strictly fists--bar-room brawling at its best. Then one last guy scrambles to his feet and tries to run but Bryan, the high-jumper, with one flying leap, kicks him on the back of the head and levels him.

A cheer goes up from the sizable crowd that has assembled during all of this. Ren looks around, blinking in astonishment, groggy, to find himself surrounded by his senior classmates. They yell and applaud his performance. Ren picks himself up, helps Bryan up-- like he did the first time they met-- and the two congratulate each other.

Ariel and Rusty join in.

RUSTY

I was so scared you guys were gonna, like, really fight.

They all link arms and start back to the barn with the crowd following them. The MUSIC shifts--from the driving beat that has propelled this whole fight sequence--into a ballad.

MUSIC CUE #17--BALLAD IN THE BARN

160 EXT. FIELD -NIGHT

160

Shaw is now standing with his back against their car, Vi is leaning against his chest, holding onto him around the waist. His arms are behind him, braced against the car. The spill of MUSIC is heard.

VI

Didn't you know? Oh, I'm terrified of the dark-- all those years I've waited for you in the dark-- lying in bed and waiting for you to finish patching up someone else's lives, holding someone else's hand, and I'd be lying there, waiting for you to come to me. And then, when you're finally there, miles across the bed, I fear the dark and I fear the distance.

Shaw embraces her.

SHAW

Don't.

161 INT. BEAMIS' BARN - NIGHT

161

The ballad has created a whole new mood in the barn. The kids who have filled the place have to touch each other and dance close. There are quick cuts to guys on the sidelines, asking girls for the dance in their perfunctory way. The girls are clustered in groups, pointing and hiding their smiles.

Ren surveys the activity on the dance floor. Off to one side he sees Andy Beamis enter the barn, approach his mother, who's been chaperoning, and ask Ethel to dance. She demurely accepts.

162 EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

162

The MUSIC of the ballad is filtering out of the barn as Shaw and Vi stand against each other, pressed up against the car in the field.

Shaw's face relaxes and he lowers his lips to the top of her head and kisses her.

SHAW

(softly)

You always save me.

And because of the night, because of the moon hanging like a wafer over their heads, because of the music--for a lot of reasons--they begin to sway very, very gently. Almost imperceptibly. Holding onto each other.

VI

(in a whisper)

Shaw?

162 CONTINUED:

124.

Yeah.

SHAW

162

A beat.

VI

We're almost dancing.

The CAMERA PULLS BACK from the two of them lost in the field, with the barn in the background flashing and shimmering.

163 INT. BARN - NIGHT

163

Bryan and Rusty are dancing slowly, Rusty holding Bryan up as they tenderly move across the floor.

Ren holds up his hands to Ariel -- she fits neatly into his arms, and he sweeps her out onto the floor, burying his face in her red hair.

And the music, until now very ballad-like, suddenly accelerates into a hard driving, electric pulse. The kids fill the dance floor, careening and strutting, posing and spinning. They explode, they fly!!

C.U. of Ren and Ariel dancing, spinning. Ecstatic. The CAMERA MOVES IN on Ariel and, as she whips around, her hair flying out and FILLING THE SCREEN, we FREEZE. The song CONTINUES as CREDITS ROLL.

THE END