

" L A B A M B A ! "

The Ritchie Valens Story

A Screenplay

by

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NEW VISIONS
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Dre-e-eam, dream, dream
Whenever I want you all I have to do
Is dre-e-am.....

THE EVERLY BROTHERS, 1958

BLACK SCREEN

In the dark we HEAR THE SOUND OF TEENAGE LAUGHTER. Noisy but far away.

SLOWLY FADE IN:

EXT. PACOIMA JUNIOR HIGH - SOFT FOCUS - DAY

1

The day is bright. A Southern California winter day, sometime in the early 1950's. Mid-morning recess.

The CAMERA SLOWLY PUSHES ACROSS the Schoolyard, as Boys and Girls walk, run, skip and play - crossing our field of vision as in a DREAM.

A KID - 12 YEARS OLD

2

looks up from his game of marbles. A 1954 Beechcraft Bonanza is lifting into the blue sky from a small airport nearby. No big deal. The Kid goes back to his game.

IN THE SKY - THE BEEHCRAFT

3

slowly rises, hanging over the schoolyard as if suspended in time. Suddenly, another small plane appears coming from the opposite direction -- rapidly losing altitude.

ON THE GROUND - THE KID

4

leans forward, poised on one knee and fingertips, about to launch his prize steely from the hard knuckle of his trigger thumb.

IN THE SKY - THE TWO PLANES

5

blindly, irresistably, head toward each other.

THE KID

6

shoots -- and his deadly steely SLAMS into a marble, AS --

THE TWO AIRCRAFT COLLIDE HEAD ON IN MIDAIR!

7

The EXPLOSION ROCKS the school, and creates a fireball in the sky. Chunks of flaming steel and jagged metal rain to the earth.

Children below scream in terror, some frozen in fear, others running for their lives, as the burning hulks of the planes fall upon them!

THE KID IS KILLED INSTANTLY

8

still kneeling at his game with several other boys. From across the yard, Teachers come running -- in panic and horror. Blood and burnt flesh are everywhere. Children are screaming --

CUT TO:

CLOSEUP - RICHARD (RITCHIE) VALENZUELA, 16

9

as he sits up in bed with a JOLT! -- waking from his nightmare. He sucks in a breath, then strikes a match and lights a kerosene lamp.

INT. VALENZUELA TENT - NIGHT

10

An upended fruitbox serves as Ritchie's bedside table. An old alarm clock marks 3:30 A.M. Next to the clock sits an unframed photo, a posed shot of Steve Valenzuela -- Ritchie's Father -- as an American Doughboy in France, 1918.

Ritchie nervously runs his fingers through his healthy, dark, curly hair. At 16 years of age, the husky handsome young bull of a teenager looks 18 - but now he only looks shaken from the dream. He glances across the large, square-walled, olive drab army tent that houses his family. All is still. Only the clock is ticking.

CONNIE VALENZUELA, 42, Ritchie's mother, is still sleeping on her mattress on the dirt floor, cradling BABY MARIO, 1, in her arms. Next to them, Ritchie's little sisters -- IRMA, 5, and CONNIE, JR., 7 -- are breathing quietly, also fast asleep.

Ritchie pulls back the covers of his own mattress, and suddenly finds something missing beside him. In a mild panic, he quickly reaches into the blankets and finds what he is seeking: a green and white, hand-painted, rebuilt Harmony electric guitar. His pride and joy. And his security.

The CAMERA SLOWLY PULLS BACK as Ritchie, sitting up in bed, strums his silent guitar and closes his hazel green eyes, dreaming of his music...

CUT TO:

EXT. PACHECO PASS - PREDAWN TWILIGHT - SUMMER 1957

11

Rolling California hills. A lone oak stands in a grassy meadow, its branches loaded with sparrows. The roar of an engine approaches from the distance.

Down below on a two-lane highway, a speeding motorcycle thunders by.

THE BIRDS FLY

12

OPENING TITLES hit the screen, as the ROCKING BEAT of Ritchie Valens' COME ON, LET'S GO! sets the pace.

INDIAN CHIEF HEAD - ON THE SPEEDING BIKE

13

We FOLLOW the thundering 1947 Indian Chief motorcycle, checking out THE BIKER in a series of cuts as he rides: engineer boots, tight Levis, studded belt, pachuco D.A. -- greased and creased in the back, his front locks flying in the wind.

BOB. MORALES, 20, is a young Chicano wild and free with a muscular neck, square jaw, dark handsome Indian face. Behind his ski goggles, his black burning eyes seem to cut into the distance, already miles ahead locked on his destination.

MOVING BIKE

14

Bob speeds up and pulls around a Buick road hog, revealing a barreling SEMI-TRUCK hurtling straight at him.

Bob smiles suicidally, then surges ahead and cuts back in front of the Buick, coolly missing the semi, as the morning sun rises behind him. He disappears into a still shadowy turn in the road like a demon pursued by the light...

CUT TO:

FIFTY MILES AWAY - A PANORAMA - LATER THAT MORNING

15

A huge verdant fertile valley of small farms and thousands of fruit trees stretches before us. The Santa Clara Valley in Northern California, known as the valley of the heart's delight.

In V.O. we HEAR Ritchie Valens singing the lyrics of Come On, Let's Go! as MUSIC, TITLES, and images continue.

CUT TO:

FARM LABOR CAMP - DIRT ROAD ENTRANCE

16

as Bob rumbles his bike off the main road.

BOB'S POV - THE CAMP

17

As he slowly rides in it is like a scene straight out of The Grapes of Wrath. Long unpainted shacks on two-foot stilts line the rutted road leading into the squalor. Old ragged, olive-drab army tents (WWII surplus) have been pitched among the fruit trees.

Every shack or tent seems to have its own battered Ford or Chevy -- dusty worn-out relics from the 30's and 40's. The place is virtually empty, save for a few Mexican kids, barking dogs and old women. A pregnant woman sits on a fruit box, heavy with fecundity.

HEART OF THE ORCHARD - UP IN THE TREES

18

where swift calloused hands are stripping apricots off the branches and dumping them into buckets. The DIN of MEN'S VOICES echoes through the leaves -- a chorus of Spanish jokes, snide remarks and evocations to greater speed and macho effort. The air is warm, smelling of nature's bounty.

We CRANE DOWN under the branches to men on the ground, hauling their loads to the dumping boxes, their neck muscles straining with the weight.

The CAMERA CONTINUES TO DOLLY to Ritchie under the branches. His face trickling with sweat, he is loading boxes of fruit onto the open bed of a WWII Army truck with the cab cut off at hood level. Suddenly, all noise and activity freeze, as the GROWL of a MOTOR disrupts the working day.

RITCHIE'S POV - THROUGH THE TREES

19

Bob comes ripping across the orchard maneuvering his bike with a vengeance. Men jump aside, ladders topple, buckets spill. Bob plows on without resistance.

BACK TO SCENE

20

Ritchie stands frozen, as Bob comes hauling right up to him in a cloud of dust. Bob removes his goggles. For an instant they stare at each other with uneasy recognition. Then Ritchie steps forward, his face glowing, and they embrace like long lost brothers for a powerful moment...

CUT TO:

INT. ENORMOUS SHED - OPEN TO THE AIR

The shed is full of women. They are all deftly slicing 'cots in half, arranging the halves on long wooden trays on sawhorses.

We PAN OVER to Connie Sr., laughing and joking with the other three women in her crew.

CONNIE

... So then I told him --
sweetheart, I wear the pants in
my family. If you don't like it,
you can lamb it. So he lambed
it!

The cutters in Connie's crew giggle scandalously. Working next to Connie is ROSIE CABALLERO, 18 -- a slim, dark-eyed beauty restless and bored with her life, but enjoying the humor. As the women laugh, Ritchie ROARS up to the shed -- in the b.g. -- driving Bob's motorcycle, with Bob behind. Connie turns, drops her knife and wipes her juice-soaked hands on her apron, unable to believe her eyes.

CONNIE

Ritchie?

On the bike, Bob coolly dismounts from behind Ritchie. Connie shouts and rushes forward.

CONNIE

BOB!

Every pair of eyes in the cutting shed turns to look, as Connie rushes up to Bob and unabashedly throws her arms around him with deep maternal emotion.

Bob - in Connie's arms - laughs with slight embarrassment, as Connie clutches him to her, scolding him lovingly.

CONNIE

So! Mr. Big Shot -- you finally
decided to show up, eh?

BOB

Hey, I'm lucky I even found you.

Bob winks at Ritchie standing nearby -- smiling happily. Then behind Ritchie, Bob suddenly lays eyes on Rosie coming out to the edge of the shed. His eyes catch hers -- a look of recognition and instant sexual attraction. Ritchie looks over his shoulder at Rosie and smiles uneasily.

RITCHIE

Rosie, this is my brother Bob.

CONNIE

So why did you find us?

BOB

(mischievously)

You really wanna know?

He hoists her up impulsively.

CONNIE

Bob! Are you crazy? Put me down!

BOB

I'm taking you outa here!

Bob puts Connie on his motorcycle, laughing and protesting, and then DRIVES HER OFF! All the women rush out to look. We STAY ON Ritchie, chuckling at his brother's antics -- as Rosie comes up and stands next to him. Rosie gazes out at Bob with amused captivation.

IN THE DRYING YARD - EXTREME LONG SHOT

22

Bob hoots and hollers as he drives Connie around the vast glistening orange field of apricots drying in the sun.

Come On, Let's Go! FADES OUT SOFTLY as its beat blends with the beat of a MEXICAN SON. TITLES END.

CUT TO:

THE LABOR CAMP AT SUNDOWN

23

MEXICAN MUSIC from a RADIO fills the late afternoon air, as the camp springs back to life. Men are chopping wood, drinking beer and smoking. Women are cooking.

CAMP SHOWERS - OPEN TO THE AIR

24

FROM ABOVE Rosie is one of the girls taking showers in make-shift canvas stalls, as boys clamber up trees to sneak peeks at all the naked bodies. Rosie curses up at them.

ROSIE

Little pigs! I'm gonna tell your mothers -- wait and see!

The boys jump down and run. Showering in the next stall, Ritchie laughs and calls.

RITCHIE

You tell 'em, Rosie!

CUT TO:

EXT. VALENZUELA TENT

Bob secures his bike for the night. Seeing Rosie emerge from the showers in a modest but sexy kimono, Bob watches as she approaches him, heading for one of the long shacks beyond. Rosie notices him too, but averts her eyes as she passes, sensing his animal magnetism.

BOB

(softly)

Man, I sure love the smell of a
clean woman...

ROSIE

(stopping)

What?

BOB

(playfully)

... You're looking good, Rosie.
Anything else to do here at night,
besides take cold showers?

ROSIE

(smiling coyly)

You can light a fire and heat a
tub, like we do in the winter.

BOB

(ironically)

You live here -- all year long?

Rosie does not answer; she looks down at the motorcycle
instead with strange fascination.

ROSIE

Did you really come from L.A. on
that thing?

BOB

Sure. Ever been on one?

ROSIE

In this hole?

BOB

Wanna go for a ride -- a little
later?

ROSIE'S FATHER comes walking across camp.

ROSIE

(seeing him)

My Dad wouldn't like it.

FATHER

Rosa! Get into the house! Now!

ROSIE
 (with quiet
 bitterness)
 See what I mean?

BOB
 (cool)
 Meet me after dark. I'll be here,
 if you're still interested.

Rosie nods imperceptibly, then turns and walks off. Her
 Father stops a safe distance away from Bob.

FATHER
 (muttering furiously)
 Goddamn pachuco... I know your
 kind!

BOB
 (stepping forward)
 What kind is that?

The Father spins on his heels and abruptly walks off after
 Rosie. Bob turns back with a hard smile.

CUT TO:

INT. TENT KITCHEN - A PRIMITIVE STOVE

26

Connie is frying beans and cooking tortillas on an old
 upside-down washtub -- with a square hole cut into the side
 for wood and a stove pipe for ventilation. We PULL BACK TO
 REVEAL Connie Jr. and Irma setting the dinner table (an
 apricot tray on boxes). The crude kitchen -- open to the
 trees -- has been jerry-rigged by wiring other trays
 together to form walls and a ceiling over a dirt floor.

Bob comes around the tent, his face hardening as he studies
 the raw living conditions. He stares at Connie so fiercely
 that she turns to look at him.

CONNIE
 Hungry?

BOB
 (intensely)
 Mom, what the hell are you doing
 here?

CONNIE
 (steadily)
 We came to work.

She goes back to her cooking, casting a knowing glance at
 her son.

BOB
(angrily)
I came to take you out of this
dump!

CONNIE
(stubbornly)
Not before we make some money.

Bob pulls a wad of several hundred bucks from his pocket and tosses it on the make-shift table. The girl's eyes grow wide. Connie looks at the bills, stunned by the size of the roll, but not pleased.

CONNIE
I mean honest money.

BOB
(hurt but cocky)
Hey, I've been working -- okay?
Why can't you believe me for once?

The girls look at Bob, then up at Connie questioningly. Connie says nothing, but the look in her eyes gives him the benefit of the doubt. Bob picks up the wad, and puts it in her hands.

BOB
(forcefully)
We're getting out of this shit
hole tomorrow!

In the b.g. the Mexican SON gives way to a lively HUAPANGO.

CUT TO:

EXT. FAR END OF THE ORCHARD

27

LONG SHOT OF a small hill is still bathed in the rays of the setting sun. The HUAPANGO plays -- a rapid, driving beat. Bob and Ritchie go running up the side of the hill, racing at breakneck speed, competing as brothers will, in a footrace of life and death urgency.

ANGLE ON RITCHIE AND BOB - RAISING DUST

28

The brothers run neck to neck. Even carrying his electric guitar, Ritchie gives Bob a run for his money. He begins to pull ahead. Unwilling to lose, Bob laughs and lunges into him, spilling and rolling both of them into the dirt. Ritchie covers his guitar with his body as he rolls to a stop.

RITCHIE
Hey, watch it, Bob! My guitar...

Bob stops laughing, as Ritchie delicately checks his Harmony, more hurt than angry.

BOB
(half serious)
Sorry. I didn't know that piece of junk was so important.

RITCHIE
(ironically)
Are you kidding? I even sleep with it.

BOB
(quipping)
With no hole?

Bob looks at his bearish little brother looking down at his funky electric guitar, and feels a surge of brotherly affection. He gives Ritchie a playful punch on the shoulder then stands, pulling him to his feet in a jovial hammerlock. Ritchie pulls away, puts down his guitar, and fights back. Bob gleefully starts to slap Ritchie's head from side to side, as they laugh and shadowbox. Ritchie connects with a firm smack to Bob's head, sending him reeling. Bob stops laughing and recovers, rubbing his cheek.

RITCHIE
You okay?

BOB
You've grown, cabron. Got any hair on your balls yet?

Ritchie smiles -- cooler and wiser than his years.

RITCHIE
Man, I've got balls on my hairs. That's how long you been gone.

BOB
(tongue in cheek)
Miss me?

RITCHIE
(deadpan)
I did for three years. This last year -- shit.

The brothers look at each other and crack up laughing.

TOP OF RITCHIE'S HILL - PANORAMIC SHOT

29

The two brothers climb to the top, and they stand looking out at a breathtaking vista.

Far to the west, the sun is sinking over the Los Gatos Range, its last rays skimming over fifty square miles of trees.

RITCHIE

Why didn't you come home -- after you got out?

BOB

(ironic)

What home? We haven't had a home since Mom and Steve split up. Don't be such a dreamer, man.

Ritchie sits down on the hill; Bob looks out at the red sunset.

RITCHIE

My dreams are pure rock and roll...

Ritchie begins to strum his silent guitar. Bob sits down beside him, and the two brothers just sit then, side by side, watching the sun go down.

CUT TO:

APRICOT ORCHARD - NIGHT

30

A moment of heated passion. Bob has Rosie pinned up against a tree in a hot embrace. He kisses her deeply, pressing his body into hers. She responds, hungry for love and excitement, yet protesting hopelessly as Bob pulls her slowly to the ground and she gives in.

ROSIE

No, Bob -- don't...please...tell me you love me!

CUT TO:

INT. VALENZUELA TENT - LIT BY KEROSENE LAMP

31

Ritchie is on his bed, polishing his guitar with Johnson's Wax, as Connie puts the girls to sleep. Baby Mario is asleep.

CONNIE

Where's Bob?

RITCHIE

Checking his motorcycle, I guess.

CONNIE

No, his bike's gone.

Connie gives Ritchie a suspicious, knowing glance. Ritchie catches her suspicion.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ORCHARD - ANGLE ON THE GROUND - UNDER THE TREE

32

as Bob climaxes on top of Rosie. They just lay there -- their passion dissipated. Then Bob rolls back and sits up, leaning against the trunk. Rosie looks stunned. Bob glances at her, with some surprise.

BOB

Why didn't you tell me this was
your first time?

ROSIE

(staring back)

You didn't ask...

Suddenly struck by the enormity of her act, Rosie sits up, pulling down her skirt. Bob lights a cigarette, smiling with ironic satisfaction. Rosie stares into the dark.

ROSIE

It's funny. I don't feel
guilty...

EXT. LABOR CAMP - NIGHT

33

Ritchie walks outside his tent, and checks -- Bob's bike is missing. He looks toward Rosie's long shack, then glances into the dark orchard. Suddenly hearing the motorcycle, he turns to spot Bob and Rosie pulling into camp on the bike. Bob stops and allows Rosie to dismount behind him.

BOB

(gently)

Are you going to be alright?

ROSIE

(pause)

Yeah, I'll be alright.

They stare at each other tenderly, then Bob pulls her in, murmuring closely.

BOB

You're really something, you know
that?

They kiss passionately for one last time.

Ritchie's look of disappointment slowly dissolves into a sad smile of resignation. Rosie goes into her shack. Bob rides his bike up to the tent and parks -- surprised to see Ritchie standing in the dark.

BOB

Say, Ritchie, what's up, man?

RITCHIE

(blankly)

I should ask you.

Bob follows Ritchie's gaze toward Rosie's long shack.

BOB

(surprised)

Oh, hey, man -- wait a minute.
Did I horn in on something between
you and -- ? Sorry, dude.

RITCHIE

(smiling painfully)

Forget it... Rosie and I were just
friends.

Ritchie exits into the Valenzuela tent. Bob watches him go, feeling his brother's pain, then follows.

CUT TO:

EXT. LABOR CAMP - 6:30 A.M. - THE NEXT MORNING

34

Connie's old '49 Packard is packed to the gills and idling in camp. All the family's meager possessions are stuffed inside, and their two mattresses are tied on top. Connie Jr. and Irma are dangling out the back window, as Baby Mario -- secured in a fruit box with blankets -- cries in the back seat. Ritchie is sitting behind the steering wheel, itching to get underway. He HONKS impatiently.

RITCHIE

Come on, Bob!

On the passenger side, Connie is saying goodbye to Rosie, who is holding on tight. Bob comes up on his big bad bike REVVING UP the engine. He winks at Rosie, deliberately GUNNING the MOTOR for show.

CONNIE

(yelling over the din)

Oye, Bob! Let a body say goodbye,
hombre! Chihuahua!

Bob and Rosie exchange a meaningful glance, and Connie spots it. Bob lowers his engine.

ROSIE
(holding back tears)
I'm gonna miss all the jokes at
work.

CONNIE
(guardedly)
Come stay with us sometime, Rosie.
Bob got us a big house in Pacoima.
We can visit L.A.

Rosie's scowling Father comes out of his shack, and calls
to her in Spanish from a distance.

FATHER
Rosa! You'll be late for work!

Rosie timidly releases her hold on Connie's hand.

ROSIE
Gotta go.

Ritchie -- behind the wheel -- looks at Rosie with finality.

RITCHIE
(happy to leave)
Yeah. Come o-on, let's go!

ROSIE
Goodbye, Connie -- Ritchie!

Ritchie shoves the car in gear, and they lunge forward.

CONNIE
Adios, mija!

The Packard pulls out. Bob blows a kiss at Rosie, then
rumbles his bike out behind the sedan, bouncing out of camp
in a cloud of dust, with the girls waving from the back
windows.

THE GIRLS
Goodbye, Rosie! Goodbye!

The rollicking beat of Come On, Let's Go! SWELLS UP under
the action.

ANGLE ON ROSIE

35

as she runs out to the road, while her Father harumphs,
spits and heads for the orchard. At the camp entrance,
Rosie stands looking down the lonely road for a beat, then
turns to head back -- when she suddenly hears the ROAR of
the MOTORCYCLE coming back.

Bob pulls up, and with a look and subtle nod offers Rosie a place on his bike -- her last chance.

Rosie -- in a moment of purest daring -- hops on behind Bob, and they pull off down the road together to the last strains of Come On, Let's Go!

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY - A SMALL TOWN - BIRD'S EYE VIEW

36

A squat little town is nestled up against the brown foothills of the north valley. It is early morning.

A LEGEND ON THE SCREEN READS:

PACOIMA, CALIFORNIA
October, 1957

IN THE MEXICAN BARRIO - ON GAIN STREET

37

sits the "big house" Bob Morales secured for his family. It is a three-room clapboard shack sitting way back on a long lot with a scraggly lawn. A palm tree and a large eucalyptus with a tire swing do little to relieve the bleakness. A tiny round plywood trailer sags in the unpaved driveway mounted on oily rail ties.

We HOLD ON the house for a second. All is quiet.

Then the RAUCOUS, ELECTRIFYING SOUNDS of Little Richard singing Ooh, My Soul assault the new day, shaking the rafters of the tiny house!

REAR OF THE HOUSE - THE BACKYARD

38

Connie comes out the back door, as if shot from a cannon. She opens the slanted portal leading to the cellar, and ROCK AND ROLL bursts out from below -- drowning out her voice as she calls downstairs.

CONNIE
(calling)
Ritchie?

INT. BASEMENT ROOM

39

Down in his basement room, Ritchie is oblivious to the world, listening to the RADIO and chopping away on his Harmony trying to emulate Little Richard's style and lyrics.

Connie comes down a couple of concrete steps and knocks on the wall.

CONNIE
(yelling)
RITCHIE!
(Ritchie turns down
the radio)
YOUR BREAKFAST...your breakfast
is on the table. I'm off to work!

EXT. SHOT OF THE FRONT YARD - MEDIUM LONG

40

Rosie emerges from the trailer just as Connie comes hurrying by, heading for her Packard parked along the unpaved street. Connie calls without stopping.

CONNIE
The baby's with the girls, Rosie.
See you tonight!

INT. VALENZUELA KITCHEN - MORNING

41

Ritchie is polishing off a scrambled egg taco, as Rosie enters the tiny cramped kitchen, surveying the mess. Dirty dishes are piled high in the sink.

RITCHIE
(cheerfully)
Morning, Rosie.

Rosie merely nods; Ritchie notes her somber mood.

RITCHIE
Bob come in last night?

ROSIE
(shaking her head)
He doesn't spend much time at home, does he...? You do.

RITCHIE
(mildly ironic)
Yeah, well -- I'm me. Bob'll show up. He always does -- sooner or later.

Ritchie turns to Connie Jr. who is playing with Mario in his battered wooden high chair, and picks up his acoustical guitar.

RITCHIE
Let's go, Conchita. We're late for school, girl.

CONNIE JR.

(whining)

Don't call me conchita!

Ritchie laughs and goes out. Connie Jr. follows him.

ANGLE ON ROSIE

42

as Mario starts to cry. Irma opens the icebox and pulls out Mario's bottle. She stuffs it in his mouth. Rosie, with a look of dismay, turns to the dishes.

CUT TO:

EXT. TIJUANA, MEXICO - U.S. BORDER - THAT MORNING

43

Bob Morales comes roaring up to the international line on his Indian Chief bike, as we HEAR the classic Larry Williams version of Boney Maroni.

He pulls in beside a typical couple of American tourists in a '57 Oldsmobile in the next lane. Bob catches the middle-aged wife staring at him. He winks at her, leaving her a little startled. The Olds pulls forward. Then Bob comes to his entry point.-A beefy U.S. BORDER GUARD meets him, unsmilingly.

GUARD

Nationality, place of birth?

BOB

American. Sweet apple pie.

GUARD

(pause)

Born where?

BOB

(cool)

L.A. County Hospital.

The Border Guard examines Bob's bike suspiciously.

GUARD

Length of stay and purpose of visit to Mexico?

BOB

Three days -- visiting family.

The Guard lets him pass. Bob smiles and ROARS off on his Indian Chief.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHOT OF SAN FERNANDO HIGH - SAME MORNING

44

School is in session. The SOUNDS of BONEY MARONI echo across the empty campus and FADE, segueing into Ritchie singing his version of the song in the background.

INT. CLASSROOM - 8:00 A.M. BY THE CLOCK

45

A paper airplane glides through the air, as we PAN ACROSS the classroom to Ritchie, singing Boney Maroni in the corner, surrounded by his classmates: Blacks, whites, Chicanos and Asians.

They are bopping to Ritchie's GUITAR RHYTHMS, when MR. HOUSE, history teacher and coach, comes in, followed by DONNA LUDWIG, a beautiful 16-year-old blonde.

HOUSE

(booming)

Alright, Valenzuela, CAN the music! Class is in session.

The students howl and whine, but they head back to their desks. Ritchie puts his guitar in the corner and then settles down himself. House goes to his own desk and writes in a ledger. Then he turns to Donna, pointing at an empty desk.

HOUSE

Sit there, Miss Ludwig.

Donna passes Ritchie as she heads for her desk in the same row. Ritchie turns back to look at her.

HOUSE

Now -- turn your history books to chapter seven, and be prepared to discuss the Missouri Compromise and its effect on Negro slavery...

Students reach for their books. Ritchie subtly glances at Donna again, as his friend CHINO leans forward behind him.

CHINO

Who's the blonde?

RITCHIE

(with cool appreciation)

Don't know... but I think I'm in lo-ove.

CHINO

(playfully)

She's way above your class, High Tone.

Ritchie sits back with a confident smile.

CUT TO:

INT. DELL & JOHNNY'S RESTAURANT - ON HIGHWAY 99

46

Connie is working as a waitress, serving lunch to some truckers, as the place buzzes with the midday crowd.

CONNIE

(plates in her arms)

Roast beef! Who had the roast beef?

A TRUCKER raises a hand; she sets down his plate, and distributes the other plates to men at the same table.

TRUCKER

How about a beer, Connie?

CONNIE

(joking)

Not while I'm working, sweetheart.
But I'll get you one!

CUT TO:

EXT. MODEST DRIVEWAY IN SAN FERNANDO - DAY

47

Bob pulls in on his bike and hauls up the driveway to the backyard of an old house, where we FIND MEXICAN ED -- a huge, bearded biker with a butch haircut -- working on his motorcycle. Bob parks and dismounts. Ed greets him silently. Bob lifts his jersey with a big smile, exposing wax-paper packets of marijuana taped to his body.

BOB

Say, Ed -- wanna buy a kilo?

MEXICAN ED

(wide-eyed)

Orale! You did it?

BOB

(smiling cockily)

By the sweat of my balls...

Bob reaches into his pants and removes a hefty pack from his crotch. He tosses it to Ed, who cracks up laughing.

CUT TO:

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CUT TO:

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(joking)

Not while I'm working, sweetheart.
But I'll get you one!

CUT TO:

EXT. MODEST DRIVEWAY IN SAN FERNANDO - DAY

47

Bob pulls in on his bike and hauls up the driveway to the backyard of an old house, where we FIND MEXICAN ED -- a huge, bearded biker with a butch haircut -- working on his motorcycle. Bob parks and dismounts. Ed greets him silently. Bob lifts his jersey with a big smile, exposing wax-paper packets of marijuana taped to his body.

BOB

Say, Ed -- wanna buy a kilo?

MEXICAN ED

(wide-eyed)

Orale! You did it?

BOB

(smiling cockily)

By the sweat of my balls...

Bob reaches into his pants and removes a hefty pack from his crotch. He tosses it to Ed, who cracks up laughing.

CUT TO:

EXT. JOE LOUIS HOUSING TRACT - AFTERNOON

48

In the foreground a sign still announces EASY TERMS and NO DOWN PAYMENT FOR VETERANS on the ten-year-old, low-income housing project. We HEAR MUSIC.

INT. GARAGE - LOOKING TOWARD THE STREET

49

The garage door is open, and The Cavaliers, a small combo of young musicians, are rehearsing.

Ritchie comes strolling up the sidewalk, carrying his Harmony electric (without a guitar case) and a tiny, banged up \$30 amplifier. He walks up the driveway to the open door. Putting down his instruments, he waits for the set to finish, looking shy and ready.

Chino comes forward and shakes Ritchie's hand.

CHINO

(bringing him over)

Ritchie, this is Rudy -- leader
of The Cavaliers.

RUDY smugly eyes Ritchie over, then casts a doubtful glance at his funky amplifier.

RUDY

What's that?

RITCHIE

(unashamedly)

That's my amp.

RUDY

(smirking)

I was afraid of that. Looks like something somebody threw away.

RITCHIE

(with easy confidence)

Don't worry about it. It's mine now.

RUDY

(condescendingly)

Yeah, well look, uh, Valenzuela...
I wasn't really planning on having
a guitar in the band -- but Chino
here keeps saying you're a real
hot shot. So let's hear you.

Ritchie calmly plugs in his amp.

RITCHIE

Let's go.

Without a moment's hesitation, Ritchie launches into Little Richard's Long Tall Sally with a startling energy that leaves Rudy with his mouth open. Chino glances back at The Cavaliers with an I-told-you-so look, and kicks in with some drums.

Other musicians join in on tenor sax and bass. This kid can sing!

CUT TO:

EXT. VALENZUELA HOME - LONG SHOT - LATER THAT NIGHT

50

Bob's Indian Chief motorcycle is parked beside the plywood trailer, with a new Harley parked beside it. We HEAR crazy LAUGHTER inside.

INT. PLYWOOD TRAILER - CRAMPED KITCHEN TABLE

51

Bob is rolling joints in the smoke-filled trailer, stoned and drinking tequila with Mexican Ed and his wife VERA. Rosie is standing nearby doing a slow burn.

BOB

(laughing with tears)

No lie, dude! The dumb fuck was smoking weed -- milkweed!

Ed and Vera are also stoned. Bob has them in stitches. Vera passes a lit joint to Rosie, who quickly passes it to Bob.

BOB

Come on, Rosie -- take a hit! Put a little mota into our love life. I need action tonight!

Bob, Ed and Vera crack up again. This does it for Rosie! She turns without a word and disappears into the trailer's tiny sleeping compartment, slamming the door behind her. The laughter subsides.

BOB

(calling)

Rosie...? Say, Rosie, come on, babe. I was just joking.

No response.

VERA

(nudging Ed)

You know what -- ? Let's get going.

MEXICAN ED

Where to?

VERA

Home! Other people sleep, you know.

Vera stands, followed reluctantly by Mexican Ed.

BOB

(almost insulted)

Hey, Vera -- come on. You guys don't have to split, man.

VERA

(going)

Good night, Rosie...! Come on, Ed.

BOB

(starting to anger)

I'm serious. Stick around. Rosie'll be out in a second. HEY, ROSIE! Get out here!

MEXICAN ED

(smiling

sympathetically)

Hassle it out with your old lady, man. I know how it is. Catch you later.

Mexican Ed and Vera leave. Bob stewes in silence. He takes another shot of tequila. Then he tries to open the bedchamber but finds it locked from within.

BOB

(holding his temper)

Rosie...? Come on, Rosie, open the damn door.

Still no response. Bob begins to pound on the door.

BOB

I said open the door, goddammit!

ROSIE

(within)

Stop it, Bob! I'm trying to get some sleep!

BOB

OPEN THE GODDAMN DOOR!

ROSIE

NO! Now leave me alone! Drink yourself drunk for all I care!

BOB

Okay, babe -- you asked for it!

His rage enflamed by tequila, Bob rips the small door off its hinges and leaps into bed with Rosie.

Rosie, fighting and scratching, fights off Bob's advances. As he pins her body down with his own, pulling up her dress, Bob forcibly pulls off her panties, and she bursts out weeping with heavy sobs. She just lays there, sobbing quietly, as Bob removes his pants and slides on top of her. Suddenly, face to face with Rosie, he stops for a moment, then leans down and kisses her gently, deepening as he goes.

Caught unexpectedly, Rosie tries not to respond, but Bob's growing passion sweeps her into it. She moans and fully accepts him into her arms, as they make love.

EXT. THE STREET

52

Rudy's car is idling out front, as Ritchie steps off with his guitar and amplifier.

RUDY

(behind the wheel)

Our first gig's next Friday night.
Lemme see if you're ready by then,
okay? See ya.

RITCHIE

(smiling)

Right.

Rudy drives off, and Ritchie starts for the house, so pleased with himself he fails to notice Bob's bike. As he passes the trailer, he hears Rosie's love moans and stops in his tracks.

RITCHIE

(concerned)

Rosie -- you okay?

Rosie goes dead silent. It is then that Ritchie notices Bob's motorcycle parked by the trailer.

RITCHIE

(realizing)

Bob?

Bob answers hoarsely from within, interrupted in mid-coitus.

BOB

Yeah, Ritchie. Whatta ya want?

RITCHIE
 (embarrassed)
 Nothing. Sorry -- my mistake.

Ritchie hurries off toward the house.

INT. TRAILER BEDCHAMBER - ANGLE ON ROSIE

53

as she sits up and refuses Bob's further advances.

ROSIE
 No, Bob, it's no use. No more.

BOB
 (frustrated)
 Naw, hey, come on, baby...

Bob tries to coax her back. Rosie rolls out of bed.

ROSIE
 (starting to anger
 again)
 Don't you ever get enough! Is
 this all you want me for?

Rosie reaches for her nightgown and puts it on. Bob sits up tensely, game for an argument, if she wants it. Rosie starts to give vent to her anger and disillusionment.

ROSIE
 (furious)
 How can you just take off for
 three days and not tell me where
 you've been? I didn't come to
 Pacoima to be Connie's babysitter
 -- or your whore! Who the hell
 do you think you are?

INT. VALENZUELA HOME

54

Ritchie enters through the kitchen and proceeds to the small front living room, where Connie is asleep on a sofa chair. The screen on the family's battered 11" Motorola TV set is white and blank, flickering with NOISY STATIC. Ritchie turns off the set and wakes his mother gently. Connie jumps, her eyes full of sleep.

CONNIE
 (startled)
 What is it?

RITCHIE

(with quiet
excitement)

I made it, Mom. I'm in the
Cavaliers!

CONNIE

(sitting up)

Really, mijo? Oh, Ritchie, that's
wonderful. Wonderful...! Who's
the Cavaliers?

INT. TRAILER - THE KITCHEN

55

Bob zips up his Levis and drinks straight from the tequila
bottle. Rosie is railing on.

ROSIE

This isn't like I expected at all.
You're not like I expected! I
don't have a life here! You're
always gone. You think I like
being here alone?

Bob fiercely slams his hand down on the table, but manages
to control his temper.

BOB

Look, Rosie -- you're not my wife!
Stop being such a drag. What the
fuck's eating you anyway?

ROSIE

(hesitating)

I'm pregnant.

Bob stares at her blankly.

ROSIE

(vulnerably)

Aren't you going to say anything?

BOB

(truculent)

What's there to say? It's not my
first -- nor my last.

ROSIE

(exploding)

YOU SONAVUBITCH!

She throws a dish at him. Bob ducks and curses back, as
Rosie hurls a stream of cups, dishes, glasses and silverware
at him.

INT. LIVING ROOM WINDOW - CONNIE

56

looks out into the front yard, as the noisy fight in the trailer intensifies. The two dialogues are heard simultaneously.

CONNIE
Por dios! What's going
 on out there?

BOB (O.S.)
 Hey! Stop it, Rosie!
 Stop it, goddammit!

Ritchie looks out, too.

RITCHIE
 I'm gonna hit the sack.
 Night, Mom.

ROSIE (O.S.)
 Get out!

Connie nods, patting Ritchie's hand but continuing to look out the window.

BOB (O.S.)
 Okay, Bitch! Be a bitch! Is it my fault you got pregnant?

RITCHIE
 (going)
 You'd better get to bed, too.

ROSIE (O.S.)
 Who else?! Huh? Who else's?

CONNIE'S POV THROUGH THE WINDOW - LONG SHOT

57

Bob storms out of the trailer, as Rosie shatters a cup against the door.

BOB
 You're outa your head, Rosie!

ROSIE (O.S.)
 (inside trailer)
 I'm not your puta!

BOB
 Fuck it then!

Bob hops on his bike and rumbles off into the night.

POV - CONNIE

58

at the window as she closes the curtains, looking perturbed.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - THE PLAYGROUND - DAY

59

We HEAR the SOUND of TEENAGE LAUGHTER, as we SLOWLY PUSH ACROSS the yard.

Mid-morning recess. Boys and girls walk, run, skip and play. Then a Kid looks up and sees a Beechcraft lifting into the sky. Suddenly, from the opposite direction, another small plane appears. The two aircraft collide head on, exploding in mid-air!

CUT TO:

INT. RITCHIE'S BASEMENT ROOM

60

Ritchie sits up with a muffled scream, waking from the nightmare. Instantly, he senses someone in the room.

Turning to the slanted cellar door now laying open to the backyard, Ritchie sees a shadowy figure in the dark. He snaps on the light.

Bob is standing on the concrete steps.

BOB

(slurring his words)

You okay, carnal? I didn't mean to wake you up. I just need a place to crash.

Bob drunkenly comes down into the room, finds a corner on the concrete floor and sits down. He takes a swig on his tequila bottle and studies Ritchie with a playful smile.

BOB

Bad dreams?

RITCHIE

(trying to sound cool)

Naw. Here. Get some sleep.

Ritchie slides over on the mattress. Bob crawls over to the double bed.

BOB

(chuckling)

Better keep your ass to the wall. I'm so fucked up, I might take you for Rosie.

Bob slumps down on the bed beside Ritchie, banging his head on the concrete wall. Sitting up, he notices Steve Valenzuela's unframed photo on a bedstand. He picks it up.

BOB
Where'd this picture of Steve come from?

RITCHIE
Mom gave it to me -- after the funeral.

BOB
(with hidden feeling)
I wish I could've been there...
but he was your old man. Not mine.

Bob delicately puts back the photo.

RITCHIE
(rolling over)
Don't forget to turn out the light. Good night.

There is a pause. Bob drinks, chuckling to himself.

BOB
Say, Ritchie?

RITCHIE
(sleepily)
Yeah?

BOB
You been laid yet?

RITCHIE
(groaning)
Oh, man...

BOB
(laughing)
That's your problem -- sperm pressure! Hard-on's all the time. Wet dreams, nightmares...

Ritchie hits Bob with his pillow.

RITCHIE
Shut up and go to sleep, man!

He rolls over again.

BOB
(serious)
A kid your age needs an authority figure around. Believe me, I know.

Bob snaps off the lamp, but he remains sitting up in bed, leaning against the concrete bunker, drinking in the dark.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRIDAY NIGHT GARAGE PARTY - UNDER THE STARS

61

A crowd of racially mixed teenage guys and their chicks hang out in the cracked concrete driveway of a stucco house with a shaggy lawn, as The Cavaliers play from the garage. A mediocre trio of Teenage Vocalists is singing Silhouettes. Ritchie is in the extreme b.g., playing his guitar.

In the sidewalk shadows, Bob is sitting on his bike, watching and waiting.

Across the street Connie is sitting in her Packard with the girls -- looking toward the garage party.

CONNIE JR.

(restless)

Mama, when's Ritchie gonna sing?

CONNIE

Perty soon. Stop asking me!

She looks back at the dance.

DISSOLVE TO:

GARAGE PARTY - LATER IN THE EVENING

62

The crowd has thinned out. The dance band is playing its final number, We Belong Together, as Rudy says good night on the mike. Ritchie is still in the b.g., glumly playing his guitar.

RUDY

... And so speaking for myself,
Rudy Castro, our vocal trio, and
all the guys in the band -- I bid
you good night from The Cavaliers!

In the shadows, Bob does not look happy. He kick starts his bike and drives away down the sidewalk to the street.

INT. THE PACKARD

63

as Ritchie gets into the car, with his instruments.

CONNIE

(fuming)

What do they mean not letting you
sing? Who do they want -- Elvis?

RITCHIE

(irritated)

It's no big deal, Mom. I'll make 'em come around.

CONNIE

(aroused)

They don't know who the hell they're dealing with. My granddaddy was a full-blooded Yaqui!

Connie drives off with Ritchie and the girls.

FROM THE STREET - THE GARAGE

64

as The Cavaliers pack their instruments into Rudy's old station wagon. Bob returns on his bike, and pulls into the driveway, hauling right up to the garage. He parks and walks up to Rudy.

BOB

(belligerently)

You the leader of the group?

RUDY

(on his guard)

What if I am?

BOB

I'm Ritchie's brother.

RUDY

Bob, right? I've heard of you. What do you want, Valenzuela?

Bob grabs Rudy by the scruff of the neck.

BOB

In the first place, the last name is Morales -- Bob Morales! And in the second place, Ritchie's got more talent in his little finger than your whole fucking band put together. Dig what I'm saying, man?

RUDY

(trying to keep his dignity)

Who the hell do you think you are?

Bob shoves Rudy back against some instruments. Drums and a bass fall to the concrete driveway.

BOB
I told you, asshole. I'm
Ritchie's brother!

With that Bob stalks back to his bike, as the other band members steer out of his way. He drives off.

CUT TO:

INT. PROFILE BAR - LONG SHOT - DAY

65

We PAN AWAY from the walls which are lined with framed sketches -- profiles -- of regular customers. The place is virtually empty -- except for Connie. She is sitting at the far end of the bar, talking to HOWARD, the owner.

CONNIE
How about it, Howard?

HOWARD
(philosophically)
I can't do it, Connie -- sorry.
Ritchie's a minor.

Howard is standing in front of her, behind the bar, sketching with pencil on paper.

CONNIE
(stubbornly)
He'll be singing not drinking.

HOWARD
Yeah, but rock and roll. To a bunch of cowboys?

Connie nods toward a framed picture on the wall -- Steve Valenzuela in a cowboy hat.

CONNIE
My husband Steve almost drank himself to death in here, Howard.
Don't you owe his boy something?

Howard glances at Steve's picture. He finishes Connie's profile and hands it to her, with a look of bemused resignation.

EXT. PROFILE BAR - VAN NUYS BOULEVARD - DAY

66

Connie's '49 Packard is parked in front of the bar in downtown Pacoima. All alone.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PROFILE BAR - SAME SHOT - SATURDAY NIGHT

67

The neon profile sign jutting out above the entrance is aglow. Every parking slot in front of the bar is jammed with cars and pickup trucks. The ECHO of HANK WILLIAMS on the JUKEBOX spills out into the street.

EXT. REAR ENTRANCE TO THE BAR - NIGHT

68

Bob drives Ritchie up the alley on his bike and parks behind the bar. Ritchie gets off with subdued excitement, carrying his guitar and amp.

BOB

(sentimentally)

Steve's old watering hole... I wish he was here to see this. This is the big time, man. The Profile Bar!

RITCHIE

(nervously)

We should've brought Chino. I'm gonna need a drummer.

BOB

(gingerly)

Fuck the Cavaliers! I'll keep the beat for you. Come on, they got drums inside. Whatta ya gonna play?

RITCHIE

Boney Maroni.

BOB

(going in)

Boney Maroni? To these shit stompers?

CUT TO:

INT. ANGLE ON THE BAR

69

Connie spots Bob sneaking Ritchie in the back door, and she sighs with relief. She signals Howard with a nod. Howard goes over to Ritchie and Bob, and guides them to a tiny bandstand in the corner, behind some pool tables. Howard pulls a mike onstage and taps on it.

HOWARD

(live mike)

Testing, testing... Well, how y'all doin' tonight? Everybody having a good time?

Cheers and laughter from the noisy crowd.

HOWARD

(a little nervous)
Well, we got some live
entertainment for you tonight.
Something sorta special.

Ritchie nervously studies the crowd.

HOWARD

He's a local boy, so y'all give
him a big welcome. Here he is --
making his first professional
appearance -- RITCHIE "RICARDO"
VALENZUELA!

A mixture of laughter and applause greets Ritchie as he
steps up to the mike. He glances back at Bob, looking
suddenly unnerved at the drums, then back at the cowboy
crowd, which quiets down expectantly. Ritchie smiles with
sudden inspiration.

RITCHIE

Here's one out of Lubbock, Texas.

BOB

(thrown)
Lubbock, Texas?

RITCHIE

(over his shoulder)
Follow me.

And Ritchie starts to sing Buddy Holly's That'll Be The Day,
instantly driving the cowboys wild!

CUT TO:

INT. VALENZUELA KITCHEN - THE NEXT MORNING

70

Connie is at her stove, sizzling up some frijoles and eggs
and warming tortillas. Ritchie is sitting at the table
across from Bob -- drinking coffee.

BOB

Didn't I tell you? You don't need
no band. You play the bars with
a drummer -- me, for instance --
and we're talking about making
money!

Bob pops open a beer can with a church key and drinks.

RITCHIE
 (with ironic cool)
 I'm talking about making music --
 my music. That's all I want.

CONNIE
 (serving the food)
 What you need is exposure,
 Ritchie. A big place -- where you
 can sell tickets -- put up
 posters. Think big for a change.

RITCHIE
 (happy)
 Wanna be my manager, Mom?

CONNIE
 (in serious earnest)
 Sure, I can do it!

Bob cracks up scoffingly. Connie glares at him.

CONNIE
 (joking back)
 You don't believe me? Just for
 that, you can be my flunky!

RITCHIE
 (laughing)
 Whoa, Mom! Thanks but no thanks.
 Anybody but Bob.

BOB
 (losing his humor)
 What's that mean?

RITCHIE
 (cockily)
 You just take care of Rosie, stud.

BOB
 Rosie?

RITCHIE
 Try staying home for a change.

BOB
 (pissed)
 Listen, punk, what the hell -- ?

CONNIE
 (scolding them)
 Stop it, both of you! Don't be
 so high-ton', Ritchie.
 (MORE)

CONNIE (Cont'd)

And you, Bob -- you're your brother's keeper. You never heard of that? This is no way for family to behave!

Bob and Ritchie look at each other tensely for a moment.

RITCHIE

(smiling playfully)

I'm willing to kiss and make up.

Bob forces a smile, but he does not relax. Then Rosie enters the kitchen through the back door.

ROSIE

(ignoring Bob)

Morning, Connie... Ritchie.

RITCHIE

(noticing the snub)

Morning.

CONNIE

(thinking)

You missed a great show last night, Rosie. Ritchie was great!

ROSIE

Really? I'm not surprised.

BOB

(standing abruptly)

I'm gone. Catch you all later.

Bob leaves. Connie drinks her coffee, absorbed, then looks at her watch.

CONNIE

I'm late for work. Where's my purse?

(turns then stops)

I got it! RICHARD VALENZUELA AND HIS FLYING GUITAR!

Connie disappears into their tiny living room, looking for her purse. Ritchie laughs and looks at Rosie.

RITCHIE

Mom wants to be my manager. She oughta worry more about Bob.

Rosie glances at him with obvious hurt.

RITCHIE

(seriously)

Aren't you guys talking?

ROSIE

Not till he says he's sorry.

Rosie shows Ritchie a bad purple bruise above the elbow.

RITCHIE

(getting angry)

Bob did that?

Connie re-enters with her purse.

RITCHIE

Mom -- you seen what Bob did to
Rosie?

Connie checks out the bruise, and indignantly shakes her
head and sighs.

CONNIE

Oh, Rosie... Maybe it's time you
went back to San Jose?

ROSIE

(stoically)

Too late. I'm expecting Bob's
baby.

Connie is stunned by the news but not surprised. She pauses
a beat then glances at Ritchie.

CONNIE

(almost humorously)

That cabron Bob...!

Connie worriedly embraces Rosie, protectively, as if pulling
her into the family fold.

CUT TO:

SAN FERNANDO HIGH - EARLY MORNING

71

The halls are empty. The BELL RINGS. Doors SLAM open all
the way down the corridor. Fast Freight -- Ritchie's
jazz-rock instrumental -- plays, as a river of teenagers
pours out, going to their next classes.

The Blonde emerges from a classroom door. Ritchie is
waiting for her, leaning by the doorjamb with his guitar.

RITCHIE

(flashing a smile)

Hi! They call me High Tone --
you?

DONNA
(a little taken aback)
Donna.

RITCHIE
Mind if I walk with you, Donna?

DONNA
(excited)
Yes....I mean, no! I don't mind.

We FOLLOW them down the hall through the stream of students.

RITCHIE
(savoring the sound)
Donna...nice name. On second
thought, call me Ritchie...

Donna pauses before a doorway.

DONNA
This is my next class. Where's
yours?

RITCHIE
(cool)
In the gym. I got P.E.

The BELL RINGS.

DONNA
You're late.

A few last students scurry to their respective classes.
Ritchie smiles and starts to go.

DONNA
(intrigued)
Do you always carry a guitar?

RITCHIE
(backing away)
Yep!

He spins around and runs down the deserted hallway.

CUT TO:

EXT. AMERICAN LEGION HALL - SAN FERNANDO - DAY

72

ADJUTANT (V.O.)
Sorry, ma'am, we only rent to
veterans...

CONNIE (V.O.)
 Yeah? Well, my late husband
 fought in France -- in 1918?

INT. HALL - LONG SHOT

73

We PAN to Connie as she delivers her spiel to the Post
 Commander's ADJUTANT, brandishing Steve's WWI Doughboy
 photo.

CONNIE
 They hit him with so much mustard
 gas, he had sneezing fits the rest
 of his life. Blood would even
 come out from his nose! It was
 so horrible --

ADJUTANT
 (bluntly)
 Alright, alright -- the rent's 75
 bucks on weekend nights, and you
 have to pay for any damages. Can
 you afford that?

Connie ponders for a second, then shakes his hand.

CONNIE
 Mister, you got yourself a deal!

Fast Freight continues in the background as we

CUT TO:

INT. RITCHIE'S BASEMENT ROOM - EVENING

74

Bob and Ritchie come home to find Connie, Rosie and the
 girls painting crude posters announcing the AMERICAN LEGION
 HALL DANCE, starring RICHARD VALENZUELA & HIS FLYING GUITAR!

RITCHIE
 What's going on?

CONNIE
 (excitedly)
 Show business!

Bob looks down at the posters on the floor.

BOB
 These look like shit. A monkey
 paints better than this!

CONNIE
 Oh, yeah?

INT. RITCHIE'S BASEMENT ROOM - LATE NIGHT

75

Bob repaints the posters, as he drinks beer. He has a steady hand and an eye for design, but he is tired. He glances at the stack of posters he has already finished, then over at Ritchie -- sleeping in bed.

BOB

I should've kept my mouth shut.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEXICAN ED'S HOUSE - SAN FERNANDO - DAY

76

Bob distributes his posters to members of his bike club, THE GALLOPING GOOSEES, as they REV UP their bikes.

BOB

... every wall, every liquor store, every telephone pole in town -- hit 'em all! Now, tear buns!

The GALLOPING GOOSEES take off in a blur of black leather jackets, motorcycles and dust.

CUT TO:

PACOIMA STREETS - EVENING

77

Connie's brother LELO drives an old panel truck with a rented sound system through the neighborhood streets, while Connie does the announcing at his side, and kids skip alongside.

CONNIE

(repeating)

One week from tonight! American Legion Hall, San Fernando. RICHARD VALENZUELA & HIS FLYING GUITAR!

FAST FREIGHT montage ends, as we

CUT TO:

GRANADA HILLS - RESIDENTIAL STREET - AFTERNOON

78

Ritchie is walking Donna home from school, carrying some of her books in one hand, and his guitar slung over the shoulder with the other.

The neighborhood epitomizes middle-class Americana. Clean sidewalks, trim lawns, row upon row of tract homes.

RITCHIE

I'm playing at a dance this weekend. Wanna come?

DONNA

(pause)

I'm not as outgoing as you are, Ritchie. You're talented and popular, and I'm just -- well, me.

RITCHIE

(playfully)

Poor little rich girl.

DONNA

We're not rich...

They come walking up to the Ludwig residence.

DONNA

(pausing)

This is where I live.

Ritchie eyes the modest middle-class house with curious regard.

RITCHIE

This is the kind of place I want for my Mom. Nice house.

A station wagon pulls into the driveway. Donna's FATHER -- a beleaguered car salesman, gets out with his wrinkled double-breasted suit and a battered suitcase.

DONNA

(waving)

Hi, Daddy!

Donna takes her books from Ritchie, suddenly feeling self-conscious.

RITCHIE

What about the dance?

DONNA

(pause)

Okay...but I'll have to meet you there.

RITCHIE

(beaming)

Saturday night! American Legion Hall, San Fernando.

Ritchie waves and walks off, spinning around to look at Donna, then hurrying down the street slapping tree leaves. Donna walks up to her Father on the front steps.

MR. LUDWIG
(brusquely)
Who's that big kid?

DONNA
(innocently)
Just a friend.

Donna quickly goes into the house. Ludwig glances back at Ritchie, as he follows Donna.

MR. LUDWIG
What is he -- Italian?
He closes the front door behind him.

CUT TO:

INT. AMERICAN LEGION HALL - SATURDAY AFTERNOON

79

Before the big dance. Connie is giving orders in a swirl of work and excited activity. Her brother Lelo and his wife, ERNESTINE, are hanging crepe-paper streamers. Bob is moving chairs. Connie Jr. and Irma are fighting over a pushbroom, as Mario sits on a blanket in the corner, sucking on his bottle.

CONNIE
(barking orders)
Lelo, the crepe-paper is crooked!
Pull on it, Ernestine!

INT. DRESSING ROOM BESIDE THE STAGE

80

Rosie is adjusting Ritchie's tie, as we SEE Connie moving around in the hall through the open door.

ROSIE
You're looking real handsome, Ritchie... The girls are going to go crazy over you.

RITCHIE
There's only one girl I care about...

ROSIE
(softly)
Oh...? Who's that?

CONNIE
(in the b.g.)
Those chairs don't belong there, Bob!

CONNIE
(in the b.g.)
Muchachas! Stop fighting.

CONNIE
(in the b.g.)
Let your sister sweep, Irma! You take care of Mario.

Ritchie pauses, looking gently into Rosie's eyes.

RITCHIE

Nobody you'd know...

Ritchie checks his tie in a cracked mirror, as Connie comes into the dressing room from the hall.

CONNIE

(officiously)

Everything in order here?

RITCHIE

Perfect! Thanks, Rosie.

Rosie exits into the hall.

RITCHIE

(excitedly)

I think we're gonna pack the place tonight.

CONNIE

(unsmilingly)

I hope so. I paid for this place with our rent money.

Ritchie hugs Connie and kisses her on the forehead.

RITCHIE

(serious)

Mom, one of these days I'm gonna buy you the house of your dreams. That's a promise.

Connie turns -- her mind on other things.

CONNIE

Tell me about it... Where's Bob? He's gotta go for the cokes.

(spots him)

Bob!

CUT TO:

EXT. TILLY'S GROCERY STORE - LONG SHOT

81

as Bob drives up in Connie's Packard.

INT. STORE - ANGLE ON THE COUNTER

82

AUNT TILLY hoists up four cases of cokes from behind the counter, as Bob pulls out money.

BOB

Better make it ten cases, Tilly. I'll return what we don't sell.

Aunt Tilly eyes Bob cautiously.

TILLY

There's somebody here who wants
to see you. He just got in from
Arizona -- passing through.

Bob turns and sees a tall, dark middle-aged MEXICAN MAN in
a Stetson hat and brown suit standing in the shadows.

MORALES

(stepping forward)

I'm Luis Morales -- your father.

Bob's face perceptibly tightens, as he and MORALES stare
at each other without a word. A son's lifetime of
resentment for his absent father crystallizes into silent
icy contempt.

EXT. THE GROCERY STORE

83

The door SLAMS open! Bob stomps out -- so flustered and
enraged he has left the cokes behind. He makes his way
toward the Packard, with Morales after him.

MORALES

Roberto, wait... Esperate!

Bob stops cold and spins around.

BOB

What the fuck do you want? The
only Dad I ever knew was Steve
Valenzuela, and he's dead!

Morales looks at his son desperately.

MORALES

(with ironic pride)

You've got a lotta balls. That's
good. But I came to show you --
your real father is no scum. I'm
a mailman in Phoenix. And I have
a wife -- and other sons.

BOB

(mercilessly)

I don't give a fuck.

Bob hops into the Packard and tries to start it. It TURNS
OVER LAZILY, refusing to ignite. Bob curses and tries
again. Morales stands at his window -- talking fast.

MORALES

(remorseful)

When you were born, I'd just arrived from Mexico. I was just a hick! -- Younger than you but just as stupid...

BOB

(lashing back)

You don't know jackshit about me!

Bob storms out of the car. He pops the hood and adjusts the distributor cap. Morales responds bitingly.

MORALES

Four years in reform school...hanging around with marijuanos? I know enough. Get smart! Your whole life is already shit. Have the balls to change it. Make something of yourself!

BOB

(contemptuously)

Like you?

MORALES

(sternly)

I'm a man of God now. I believe in The Bible.

Bob slams the hood down furiously, seething with anger.

BOB

You know what? Fuck you!

Bob heads back to the driver's seat, with Morales trailing him.

MORALES

(preaching)

I know you have a woman! She's expecting your child -- for Christ's sake -- don't make my mistake. Be a macho! Be a father!

Bob kicks the Packard over, and starts the engine. He REVS it up, drowning out Morales' last words. Then without looking back, Bob ROARS the old sedan out of the unpaved parking lot, skidding and leaving his father in a cloud of dust.

CUT TO:

EXT. AMERICAN LEGION HALL - THAT NIGHT

84

The place, as Ritchie predicted, is packed. Scores of teenagers are outside the hall, laughing, talking, smoking and trying to get in.

INSIDE - THE PLACE IS JUMPING

85

Ritchie is commanding center stage, spontaneously creating a free-form early version of Ooh, My Head. Literally hundreds of teenagers are dancing and bopping to the beat of Ritchie's band (Chino and the guys).

Donna Ludwig is standing in the crowd, next to the lip of the stage, thrilled and fascinated by Ritchie's star charisma in performance. All around her teenage girls are going ape with hair-pulling mania, almost making Donna seem cool and sophisticated.

BACK OF THE HALL

86

Connie is tending the soft-drink concession, selling a coke to BOB KEENE, 35, a record promoter in a suit who looks strangely out of place. Keene pays his dime, then sips his coke, all eyes on Ritchie's performance. Impressed, he walks off into the crowd.

Connie watches him curiously then shrugs and counts her money, as Lelo brings another case of cokes.

CONNIE

(excited)

Ten cases! Counting the bar,
we've already made over 150 bucks.
That's two times my rent money.
We gotta do this again!

Lelo puts the cokes on ice, a placid fellow.

CONNIE

(a little worried)

Wonder where Bob is? Did they say
if he came to the store?

(Lelo shakes his head)

Did you ask?

(Lelo shakes his head)

What kind of an uncle are you?

LELO

You said get cokes. I got the
cokes.

Connie looks toward the stage and smiles -- in spite of herself.

CONNIE

(proudly)

Look at my Ritchie -- he's shining
like a star!

LELO

(nudging Connie)

Look at your Bob.

She turns.

THE FRONT DOOR - MEDIUM LONG

87

Bob is making his entrance -- eyelids heavy, face flushed,
hair dishevelled -- pushing his way through the crowd.

LELO

(laconically)

Stewed.

CONCESSION STAND

88

Sensing danger, Connie pursues Bob through the throbbing
crowd, while Ritchie continues to wail from the stage.

Bob -- colliding with dancing couples -- bullies his way
toward Ritchie -- smiling drunkenly, feeling mean and
hostile.

Connie catches up to him, and tries to pull him to one side.
Bob frees himself.

BOB

(whistling and
yelling)

Atta way to go, RITCHEEEEE!

RITCHIE'S POV

89

Bob is coming toward him. Suddenly, Bob pushes a young
Pachuco who is in no mood to be bullied. He pushes him
back, and Bob slugs him. A fight breaks out on the dance
floor.

A Black Security Guard comes running. He is swept into the
fray. Ritchie keeps singing, but the screams of the
teenyboppers become real as Dudes JUMP INTO THE BRAWL!

Donna, in shock, stands in the middle of it all, too stunned
to move, until a girlfriend pulls her to the nearest exit.

Bob Keene, on the sidelines, watches with amusement, as he
also turns to leave.

THE LEGION HALL - LONG SHOT

90

as blows are thrown and chairs are smashed! Connie is in the middle of it all trying to stop it, but rock 'n roll mayhem has turned the dance into a VIOLENT FREE-FOR-ALL!

CUT TO:

AMERICAN LEGION HALL - LATER THAT NIGHT

91

The quiet after the storm.

The place is a mess. Spilled coke, pieces of chair and ripped-up crepe paper litter the floor. The hall is empty, save for Connie and her immediate family. Lelo and his wife Ernestine are cleaning up. The band is packing its instruments.

Bob is sitting on the side benches, his head in his hands. Ritchie, Connie and Rosie are standing nearby.

RITCHIE

(low and angry)

Why, Bob? How could you do this to me?

BOB

(snorting bitterly)

To you? I did this to me!

ROSIE

(acidly)

That's Bob. Always thinking of others first.

BOB

Shut your goddamn mouth!

Bob gets up to slap Rosie. Ritchie steps in and stops him.

RITCHIE

Hey! HEY, man!

Bob starts to struggle with Ritchie, but gives it up.

RITCHIE

Don't take it out on Rosie.

BOB

(stands wobbily)

Ritchie... you don't understand, man. You don't understand a goddamn thing!

Bob stalks off. Halfway across the floor, he stops and turns -- to see Ritchie surrounded by the other members of his family.

BOB

(shouting)

What do you think, punk? The world revolves around you or what!

Bob goes out. Ritchie shakes his head -- totally exasperated by Bob yet feeling strangely sorry for him. He turns to Connie and Rosie, standing supportively at his sides.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. VALENZUELA HOUSE - DAY

92

A shiny, almost new '57 Ford Fairlane drives up and stops in front of the house. Bob Keene steps out. We FOLLOW him as he walks to the front door, noting the untamed look of the yard. He knocks and Connie opens.

CONNIE

Yes?

KEENE

(practicing his rusty Spanish)

Buenos días, Senora. Aquí vive
-- Richard Valenzuela?

CONNIE

(protectively)

Yeah, he lives here. Why?

THE BACKYARD

93

Connie leads Keene under an old trellis overgrown with vines. Keene checks out the rabbit hutches in the backyard. Ritchie's MUSIC is coming out from under the house.

INT. BASEMENT

94

Ritchie is playing The Paddywack Song to a bunch of kids. His little sisters, Connie Jr. and Irma, are sitting prominently at his knees, busting their buttons with pride. Connie KNOCKS on the slanted door and opens.

CONNIE

Ritchie? There's a man here to see you.

Bob Keene steps down into the basement room, surprised by the kids. Ritchie stands with his guitar, looking at Keene curiously as he stretches out his hand.

KEENE

(a little anxiously)

Hi, Ritchie -- may I call you Ritchie? I'm Bob Keene, President of Del-Fi Records in Hollywood. Podemos hablar?

RITCHIE

(without guile)

I don't speak Spanish. .

CONNIE

(matter of factly)

But we can talk business.

KEENE

I used to handle Sam Cooke. I understand they're calling you the Little Richard of the Valley.

The kids giggle. Connie notes Keene's annoyed smile.

CONNIE

(shooing them out)

Come on, kids, let's go -- afuera!

The children leave and she closes the door.

CONNIE

Okay -- let's talk.

KEENE

(turning to Ritchie)

Let me just say -- I really dig your music, man. I'd like to record it.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD - PANORAMIC SHOTS - SPRING 1958 - DAWN

95

The landmarks of the movie capital of the world are still asleep. Grauman's Chinese, The Brown Derby, Paramount Studios, Sunset Boulevard.

EXT. DISNEY STUDIOS - BURBANK - MORNING

96

A garbage truck pulls into the lot and SCREECHES to a stop. Bob Morales steps off the rear of the truck, and as a garbageman's assistant, waits for the metal teeth of the dumpster to open.

The garbage truck bears the name of THE DREAM DISPOSAL CO.

The garbageman starts to empty cans into the maw of the vehicle. Bob finds some phony paper mache rocks and begins to fool around acting like King Kong.

GARBAGEMAN

Get your ass in gear, Morales.
We still gotta stop at Warner
Bros.

BOB

Up yours!

Bob tosses the fake rocks into the truck. Rummaging around he begins to pull out discarded plastic animation cells from some cardboard boxes. He examines them with incongruous childish fascination.

BOB

Look at this...DONALD DUCK, MICKEY
MOUSE, GOOFY -- this is the real
shit. They make cartoons with
this!

GARBAGEMAN

(snorting)

Can it, jerk off. It's only
Disney's garbage.

BOB

(joking)

Eat it, fuckface.

Bob carefully stuffs the animation cells into his jacket.

ANOTHER ANGLE - MEDIUM LONG

97

as Bob and the Garbageman noisily dump the truck. Then Bob slams the side of the truck with his fist. The two men hop onto the rear.

BOB

(hanging on)

Ever hear of Tijuana Bibles? This
little runt I knew in school used
to make 'em -- Mickey screwing
Minnie, Dagwood blowing Blondie,
Jiggs and Maggie...

The garbage truck pulls out of the lot.

CUT TO:

INT. NEW '58 CHEVY IMPALA - DAY

Cruising down a San Fernando street, with Donna at the wheel and Ritchie uncomfortably at her side.

DONNA

(driving happily)

Well, what do you think?

RITCHIE

(ironic)

Not bad -- for a birthday present.
And you say you're not rich?

DONNA

(defensively)

My daddy sells cars! Is it my
fault he knows his business? He
just didn't want me walking home
anymore.

RITCHIE

(kiddingly)

Why? Because of me?

(more seriously)

How come you've been avoiding me?
Did the blowout at the dance scare
you off?

DONNA

Don't be silly.

RITCHIE

(with easy assurance)

Then go out with me.

DONNA

(puzzled)

Why me, Ritchie? Lots of other
girls in school are going ape over
you.

RITCHIE

(charmingly playful)

Hey, I'm particular. I prefer the
shy pretty ones... Don't worry,
kitten, I'll have my own wheels
soon. I'm auditioning at Del-Fi
Records tomorrow -- in Hollywood.

DONNA

(impressed)

Hollywood?

RITCHIE
 (bragging)
 With the big boys...

CUT TO:

INT. KEENE'S BASEMENT - ANGLE

99

on a red spiral staircase as Ritchie and Bob Keene come down.

KEENE
 (with ironic humor)
 Welcome to Del-Fi Records. I, uh,
 work out of my basement, too.

It is a small tight working space. An Ampex recorder is in the corner, next to some mikes and a couple of chairs. Ritchie looks at the place with undisguised disappointment.

RITCHIE
 This is your recording studio?

KEENE
 (laughs uneasily)
 The Ampex is good, the mikes are excellent. What more do you want? Relax -- this is just for starters. I thought we'd take it easy. Start with a few riffs, go on to some vocals. Nothing heavy. Just to see what we have to work with, okay? When you're ready, we'll tape a little.

RITCHIE
 (feeling awkward)
 You mean today? What about my band?

KEENE
 (cautiously)
 Frankly, Ritchie, I can't use any of them. Is that a problem?

RITCHIE
 (pausing)
 Yeah... They're my buddies.

Ritchie looks at Keene, waits a beat, then starts to leave. Keene speaks up quickly, stopping him.

KEENE
 Listen, man. I understand friendship, but I'm being honest.
 (MORE)

KEENE (Cont'd)
 Not everybody in this world gets
 a chance at the brass ring. You
 gotta ask yourself -- what's more
 important -- your friends or your
 music?

Ritchie stares at Keene without moving. Then he walks over
 to the mike and sits down, pulling up his guitar.

RITCHIE
 My family. Let's go!

CUT TO:

KEENE'S BASEMENT - LATER

100

Ritchie is singing That's My Suzie at his first session with
 Bob Keene.

MONTAGE OF SHORT SCENES - SET TO SUZIE

INT. PLYWOOD TRAILER - NIGHT

101

As Ritchie sings Suzie in the background, Bob opens the door
 and comes in, carrying a large grocery bag. He plops it on
 the tiny kitchen counter and begins to pull out cans of
 food, milk, coffee, sugar, cereal, meat, etc. -- filling
 the shelves as he goes.

Rosie stirs in the bedchamber and comes in, showing definite
 signs of pregnancy. She looks at Bob with surprise as he
 opens the icebox, putting in an icy package.

BOB
 (contrite)
 I bought some ice cream...

He closes the icebox and reaches into the grocery bag.

BOB
 (even affectionate)
 And a magazine -- Confidential.
 That's for you.

He hands her the magazine. Rosie takes it after a brief
 pause.

ROSIE
 (confused)
 What do you want, Bob?

BOB
(surprisingly gentle)
I want you...

He embraces Rosie tenderly, and she slowly allows herself to hug him back. They hold each other tightly.

INT. KEENE'S BASEMENT - TWO SHOT

102

Bob Keene is at the controls of his tiny mixing board as Ritchie shouts out Suzie in the b.g.

EXT. DRIVE-IN MOVIE - NIGHT

103

Donna's car sits on an embankment before the giant outdoor screen.

INT. DONNA'S CAR

104

Ritchie is behind the wheel making out with Donna, oblivious to the movie. Ritchie's hand wanders under her blouse. She pulls it down. They go on kissing, and Ritchie's hand comes up under her blouse again. Donna tenses up and sits up.

DONNA
Don't Ritchie...

Ritchie backs off, trying to remain cool, but with evident sexual tension.

DONNA
(gently)
I'm sorry. I told you I'm not too outgoing.

RITCHIE
(smiling)
That's okay, kitten. Let's just watch the flick.

He puts his arm around her, and they watch the movie. Donna glances at him appreciatively.

Ritchie's Suzie continues...

EXT. THE TRAILER

105

... Ritchie comes home from his date, whistling happily. He spots a light on in the trailer kitchen and peeks in at the screen door.

RITCHIE
That you, Bob?

BOB
(excited)
Heh! Ritchie, check this out,
man!

INT. TRAILER

106

Bob is at the kitchen table with sketches he has made of the Disney cells, beer bottles and Rosie's magazine.

RITCHIE
(impressed)
Did you copy this or what?

BOB
Copy hell! That's free hand.

Bob reaches over and picks up the magazine, opening to an ad.

BOB
Look at this! Think I oughta
enter this art contest? \$500 in
prizes.

RITCHIE
Go for broke!

INT. KEENE'S BASEMENT - EXTREME CLOSEUP - RITCHIE
his eyes closed, pouring his soul into singing Suzie.

107

RITCHIE'S RECURRING DREAM - SUZIE CONTINUES
Two planes collide in midair!

108

INT. RITCHIE'S BASEMENT - MONTAGE CONTINUES

109

Ritchie sits up in bed with a jolt -- and discovers it is morning.

CUT TO:

INT. DELL & JOHNNY'S RESTAURANT - MONTAGE CONT. - NIGHT

110

Ritchie and Donna are sitting in a booth having hamburgers and cokes. He seems strangely preoccupied.

RITCHIE

It's a strange dream... I wasn't present when it really happened but in my dream it's like I'm right there. My best friend was killed, you know -- crushed by one of the falling planes. I guess it would have killed me too. We played together every day right in that schoolyard. Pacoima Junior High. Six kids died.

DONNA

(softly)

Where were you that day?

RITCHIE

(with cryptic irony)

My grandfather's funeral. His death saved my life.

DONNA

(moved)

I remember reading about the accident. It was horrible...

Ritchie laughs, trying to cheer up the conversation.

RITCHIE

My mom says it means I was saved for something really special. You know what it is?

DONNA

(playfully)

Rock and roll.

RITCHIE

(affirming)

I'm gonna be a star. Cause stars don't fall out of the sky.

(a sudden doubt)

Do they?

Donna laughs and reaches for Ritchie's hand.

CUT TO:

EXT. VALENZUELA STREET MAILBOX - MORNING

111

Bob pulls a letter from the mailbox. He opens it nervously. Reading it quickly, he looks up -- excited -- and runs for the trailer.

BOB

Rosie!

INT. KEENE'S BASEMENT - CLOSEUP - RITCHIE

112

as he finishes singing his song. He's sweating and he's obviously given everything. He turns to Keene for a reaction.

KEENE

Fantastic!

Ritchie smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLYWOOD TRAILER - AFTERNOON

113

Bob and Rosie are inside, having another vicious argument. Their angry voices spill out into the front yard, as the trailer rocks on its moorings.

BOB (O.S.)

You're damn right I quit! You think I'm gonna dump garbage for the rest of my life?

ROSIE (O.S.)

And how are you going to support the baby? Drawing Donald Duck? You bum! I don't want that piece of junk in here!

BOB (O.S.)

Then to hell with you! You don't respect any shit I do!

Bob kicks the door open and comes out, lugging a large, thin square cardboard box and a bottle of tequila. Rosie is at his heels.

ROSIE

You bastard! Where's your respect for me?

BOB

(kicking the door shut)

Oh, fuck you!

CUT TO:

EXT. VALENZUELA BACKYARD - A RABBIT HUTCH

114

Two rabbits copulate behind chicken wire. We PULL BACK TO DISCOVER Bob, feeding the other rabbits some alfalfa, as he talks to Ritchie, who is still in his school clothes.

BOB

I almost have to rape her just to have sex. To her it's dirty... Remember how I taught you with the rabbits? It's natural.

RITCHIE

(carefully)

Maybe she just wants love -- not sex.

BOB

Not once...not once has she ever told me she loves me.

Bob grabs his tequila bottle from the top of the rabbit hutch, and drinks.

RITCHIE

(casual but serious)

Look, Bob -- it's cool if you move in with me, but what about when the baby comes? Shouldn't you be with Rosie?

BOB

(with bitter cynicism)

My old man wasn't around when I was born -- why should I be?

RITCHIE

(pointedly)

Figure it out.

Bob offers him the bottle; Ritchie waves it away. Connie comes around the house, wearing her work clothes.

CONNIE

Ritchie?

(spots him)

There you are! I've got some great news!

Connie comes over looking fit to be tied.

CONNIE

Bob Keene called me at the restaurant. You're recording at Gold Star Studios next Wednesday -- right in Hollywood!

Both Ritchie and Bob say nothing.

CONNIE

(amazed)

Didn't you hear me? It means he
wants to put you under contract
-- with Del-Fi!

Ritchie looks at Bob, smiles broadly and suddenly gives
Connie a powerful triumphant hug. Connie laughs happily.

CONNIE

This is just the beginning, mijo!

Ritchie notices Bob silently staring at them -- a dark study
in hidden emotions.

RITCHIE

(sensitively)

Bob has great news too, Mom. Tell
her, man.

BOB

(cockily)

That art contest -- I won it.
\$500 in prizes.

CONNIE

(eyes widening)

Bob, that's great! With the baby
coming the money will...

BOB

(stopping her)

In art lessons. They even gave
me a drafting table, see?

Bob points at the cardboard box sitting nearby; Connie turns
then and embraces both of her sons emotionally.

CONNIE

All our dreams are gonna come
true. I just know it!

CUT TO:

INT. GOLD STAR STUDIOS - RECORDING BOOTH

115

Keene show Ritchie and Bob the layout.

KEENE

Whatta ya think? A bit better
than my basement, huh?

IN THE STUDIO - A CLOCK MARKS 10 A.M.

116

Standing on the sidelines, Bob tries not to look hung over as Keene introduces Ritchie to the pro musicians who are backing him up.

KEENE

These guys and I have already laid down some tracks for you, Ritchie.-That's Earl on drums, Renee on the danelectro, and yours truly on upright bass. All we need now is your voice.

RITCHIE

I'm ready.

KEENE

Great! Then let's get with it. You'll be using this mike over here.

Bob looks around at the strange surroundings, as if trying to stake out the territory. Ritchie removes his jacket, as Keene turns to Bob.

KEENE

You can sit in the booth with me, Bob.

BOB

(his mind made up)
Naw, I'll just stay in here -- with Ritchie.

KEENE

(nonplussed)
Sure? Suit yourself.

Keene goes into the sound booth. Bob glances over at Ritchie who is just taking his place behind the microphone. The brothers exchange a look. Ritchie smiles -- a little nervous, and Bob gives him a thumbs-up signal.

POV - THE BOOTH

117

as Keene nods encouragingly to Ritchie through the window.

KEENE

(on the intercom)
Okay, Ritchie. Let's go for it.
Come On, Let's Go! Take one.

Bob folds his arms and leans against the wall, listening as Ritchie begins to sing.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE RECORDING STUDIO

118

Ritchie is singing a second take. This time the words are different. Keene stops him from the booth.

KEENE

(on the intercom)

Hold it, Ritchie. Cut! So much for take two. Let's start again.

RITCHIE

(puzzled)

What's wrong?

KEENE

(trying to joke)

Don't rewrite the song. Sing it the way you did the first time.

Bob squats in the corner, as he hunkers down for a long siege.

KEENE

(on the intercom)

Come On, Let's Go! Take three.

Ritchie begins to sing again.

DISSOLVE TO:

POV KEENE - BEHIND THE WINDOW

119

as Ritchie sings in the studio, reflected in the glass.

KEENE

(on the intercom)

Cut!

Ritchie stops, looking perturbed. Bob sags on his haunches, starting to look bored. The clock marks 1:30 P.M.

INSIDE THE BOOTH

120

Keene switches off the intercom, and turns to the SOUND ENGINEER.

KEENE

This is incredible. Twelve takes
and he still keeps changing the
friggin' words.

ENGINEER

(flatly)

Why don't you just write the words
down?

KEENE

(lighting a cigarette)

I tried that. Says it cramps his
style. I suspect the kid don't
read so good. But who needs a
degree to sing rock 'n roll?

ENGINEER

Maybe he oughta sing La Cucaracha?

Keene lets the racist remark slide.

CUT TO:

IN THE STUDIO

121

Ritchie argues with Keene, as Bob stands in the b.g.
looking annoyed.

RITCHIE

I don't see what's wrong with some
of those takes, man. That's the
way I sing!

KEENE

It's gotta be clean, Ritchie.
Each take has to be identical.

RITCHIE

Why?

KEENE

(controlling his
temper)

So we can edit later. Look, I've
lived in Mexico. I know that down
there the tradition of the son
allows for constant variations in
the lyrics. But this isn't
Mexico.

RITCHIE

(tensely)

Who said it was?

KEENE
(defensively)
I'm just saying --

RITCHIE
I've never even been to Mexico.
My music is my music.

BOB
(snorting)
You tell him, carnal.

RITCHIE
(pause)
How many more takes?

KEENE
(swallowing his anger)
As many as it takes, Ritchie.
That's for me to decide.

BOB
(muttering)
Pinche vato culero(uptight
asshole)...

CUT TO:

THE STUDIO - CLOSE TO MIDNIGHT

122

Ritchie is finishing his sixtieth take. Bob is asleep in the corner, squatting against the wall with his head on his knees. He wakes abruptly as the song comes to an end.

IN THE BOOTH

123

The Sound Engineer turns to Keene, looking worn out.

ENGINEER
Shall I get a new roll of tape?

Keene sighs and shakes his head, weary but finally satisfied.

KEENE
(almost to himself)
No, I think we've got him. The kid's rough, but that's good... I hope.

ENGINEER
(pulling down levels)
You're the boss.

KEENE
(on the intercom)
That's a wrap, guys.

IN THE RECORDING STUDIO

124

the musicians pack their instruments, as Keene comes out and congratulates Ritchie, trying to sound chipper.

KEENE
Nice work, Ritchie. How's the throat? Sixty takes, man. But I think we got it. All in all.

BOB
(grumbling)
Sixty takes? I couldn't hear the difference in any of them.

RITCHIE
(tired)
I'm ready to go home, man.

KEENE
Sure thing. Let me just discuss one thing with you -- over here.

Bob cocks an ear, refusing to be shut out, as Keene pulls Ritchie privately to one side.

RITCHIE
What is it?

Keene smiles secretively -- expecting Ritchie to be pleased.

KEENE
Your professional name. From now on it's Ritchie with a T. Got a new last name for you, too. VALENS with an S. RITCHIE VALENS -- how does that grab you?

RITCHIE
(emphatically)
I don't like it. I don't need a new last name.

KEENE
(patronizingly)
That's the music business, son. The shorter the better -- for the marquees.

Bob suddenly comes up, having heard enough.

BOB

That's for shit! Valenzuela was
our Dad's last name, man. You
can't just cut it in half.

KEENE

(ignoring Bob)

It's no big deal, Ritchie. People
change their names in this
business like they change
costumes. Even me -- my real
name's Kuhn... You're just going
to have to trust me.

Bob snorts cynically. Ritchie looks at Bob, then back at
Keene. He says nothing.

CONNIE'S PACKARD - PACOIMA STREETS - PAST MIDNIGHT

125

Bob is driving the car with a vengeance. Ritchie is sitting
slumped down on the passenger side, moodily smoking a
cigarette, with his knees propped up on the dashboard.

BOB

(spitefully)

Ritchie with a T! You know what
that dude's up to? He's looking
at your pretty green eyes and your
light skin, and he's seeing a meal
ticket. Ritchie Valens? With a
name like that, nobody'll even
suspect you're a Mexican!

RITCHIE

(irritated)

Change the record, will you?
Let's talk about something else.

BOB

(railing on)

It's an insult to Steve's memory.

RITCHIE

(sitting up angrily)

Aw, come on! Steve was so gung
ho on America, he'd be proud of
anything I do. So lay off. It's
my name.

BOB

(bitterly)

Yeah. Your name...

They ride on in silence.

CUT TO:

INT. KFWB STUDIOS - LOS ANGELES - MORNING RADIO SHOW

126

TED QUILLEN, a popular Los Angeles D.J., slaps Ritchie's demo 45 on a turntable. Bob Keene stands beside him. Quillen, a young man with classic Latin features but no accent whatsoever, goes ON THE AIR:

QUILLEN

(smoothly)

Good morning, L.A.! This is TED QUILLEN with The Morning Show, playing tomorrow's HITS today! Here's one hot off the skillet for all you KFWB rock fans. We predict it's gonna climb the charts. A new rocker on the Del-Fi label -- RITCHIE VALENS with COME ON, LET'S GO!

He plays the record, and turns to Keene with a jovial smile, as Ritchie's voice goes on the airwaves.

QUILLEN

(kidding)

Valens, huh? What is that -- French? What hat did you pull that name from?

KEENE

(friendly)

Same hat you got Ted Quillen, Don Guillen.

QUILLEN

(laughing)

Touche.

INT. HIGHWAY 99 - THAT MORNING

127

Connie is driving up to Dell & Johnny's, when RITCHIE'S VOICE COMES OVER THE RADIO for the first time. She parks and just sits there in her car -- listening to her son. It is an emotional moment for her.

EXT. SAN FERNANDO HIGH - STUDENT PARKING LOT

128

That morning a small crowd of teens is gathered around a sharp Drifters car, listening to Come On, Let's Go! ON THE RADIO. Ritchie walks up -- B.M.O.C. playing it cool -- with his arm around Donna and wearing flashy new clothes.

INT. GAIN STREET - THE PLYWOOD TRAILER

129

Rosie is listening to Ritchie ON THE RADIO -- alone and heavy with child.

INSIDE RITCHIE'S BASEMENT

130

Bob is sitting at his drafting table, drinking coffee and smoking. RITCHIE'S VOICE is coming out of a cheap plastic RADIO. Bob listens to the song, staring up at Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse - the Disney cells taped on the wall.

Suddenly, he looks down at his drawings on the drafting table with disgust, crinkles them in his fist, throws them on the floor, and stomps out.

EXT. PUBLIC PHONE BOOTH - DAY

131

Ritchie aggressively dials a number, tapping on the phone as the call goes through. He perks up as somebody answers.

RITCHIE

(on the phone)

Hello? Donna?

INTERCUT LUDWIG RESIDENCE

132

MRS. LUDWIG

(politely)

No, this is her mother -- Donna's not it. May I take a message?

DONNA

(already knowing)

Who is it?

PHONE BOOTH

133

RITCHIE

Tell her Ritchie called again.

Ritchie hangs up, looking deeply perturbed.

INT. DONNA'S LIVING ROOM - SUNDAY EVENING

134

Mrs. Ludwig looks at Donna, then glances at her husband, who is sitting on the sofa sternly watching the ED SULLIVAN SHOW on the family T.V. console.

MRS. LUDWIG

That boy Ritchie... persistent, isn't he? Just how serious is it?

DONNA
(her heart sinking)
We're good friends.

Mrs. Ludwig looks at her husband again. Still no support.

MRS. LUDWIG
Well, school's out in a week.
Your Dad and I would prefer if you
saw less of him. I'm sure you
understand why.

DONNA
(petulantly)
No, I don't.

Her father finally turns.

MR. LUDWIG
(commanding)
Just do as you're told.

DONNA
(arguing)
But Ritchie's nice! And fun to
be with. It's not like we're
going steady or anything.

MR. LUDWIG
(contemptuously)
He's a rock and roller. Plays
that goddamn jungle music! Need
I say more?

Ludwig walks over to the Sylvania console TV set, snaps off
the Ed Sullivan show -- which is headlining Buddy Holly and
The Crickets -- and stalks out of the living room. Mrs.
Ludwig comes up to Donna and puts her arms around her.

MRS. LUDWIG
(tenderly)
Come on, dear. You said yourself
it's not serious.

Donna looks at her mother with a pained expression.

DONNA
He's really a nice guy...

CUT TO:

INT. KFWB STUDIOS - WHITE DISK JOCKEY - ON THE AIR
as he reads from prepared copy:

D.J.

(lively)

Summertime, Pizza fans! And here's a contest to kick off summer vacation! The first ten callers to identify the B/W side of RITCHIE VALENS' new hit 45 will get a dozen hot pizzas --

We PULL BACK to find Ritchie and Ted Quillen talking just outside the closed booth, as the D.J. continues his spiel in the background.

RITCHIE

I don't know, man. The whole idea seems cheap to me. Pizza parties?

QUILLEN

You gotta hustle them tamales, kid. That's show biz, and you're --

D.J. (O.S.)

-- delivered to their home -- PLUS, get this! A personal appearance by the recording artist LIVE IN PERSON. So, come on, RITCHIE FANS, let's go!

RITCHIE

(laughing)

The tamale -- right?

We HEAR Ritchie singing Framed (by Lieber and Stoller) in the background, as the PHONES start RINGING.

INT. A HOUSE IN SHERMAN OAKS - PIZZA PARTY - NIGHT

136

Bob Keene drives up with Ritchie in his Ford Fairlane. A crowd of girls and boys rush out to greet them, and the crowd is notably upper Angle Middle Class. Ritchie gets out with a stack of pizza boxes. The boys take the pizzas, and the girls take Ritchie. Bob follows with Ritchie's instruments, smiling.

EXT. LUDWIG RESIDENCE - DAY

137

Ritchie comes up to the front door as the Framed fades away in the background. He hesitates, then knocks. Mrs. Ludwig answers. She stares at him for a moment.

RITCHIE

(determined)

I'd like to see Donna -- please?
I know she's here.

INT. THE VESTIBULE

138

Mrs. Ludwig quietly cautions her daughter before Donna opens the door.

MRS. LUDWIG

(firmly)

Don't invite him in, and leave the door open.

Mrs. Ludwig retreats into the living room, but stays within earshot. Donna takes a breath then opens the door. There is an anxious pause, as she and Ritchie stare at each other.

DONNA

(sad but glad)

Hi, Ritchie...

RITCHIE

(tensely)

Look, kitten. Let's not beat around the bush. Are you dating other guys now?

DONNA

(quietly)

I've been out a couple of times. What's wrong with that?

RITCHIE

(angrily)

You're my girl!

Donna glances toward the living room with frustration.

DONNA

(half-whispering)

And when am I supposed to see you? I can't just tag along on all your appearances. All those other girls --

RITCHIE

I don't care about other girls!

Donna looks at him -- her mind and emotions confused.

DONNA

What do you want me to do? You haven't got time for me right now.

RITCHIE

Do you want to break it off?

DONNA

That's not the point!

RITCHIE

(suffering)

If you don't want to see me anymore, just say so. I can take a hint.

DONNA
(pause, anguished)
I don't know what I want anymore.

RITCHIE
(clamming up)
Okay then, just forget it! See
you around sometime.

He walks off.

DONNA
(helplessly)
Ritchie!

Mrs. Ludwig gently pulls her in, and closes the door.

CUT TO:

RITCHIE'S BASEMENT ROOM - SILENCE - NIGHT

139

Ritchie is sitting with his guitar, composing with serious concentration. He strums a few chords; working out a new song with a haunting dew-wop beat. We PAN OVER to the bed, where Bob shifts restlessly under the covers -- unable to sleep -- and covers his head with a pillow.

EXT. PACOIMA STREETS - ANOTHER EVENING

140

We FOLLOW Bob as he goes riding down the street with some Galloping Gooses. They pass a public phone booth, and Bob spots Ritchie inside, strumming on his guitar and singing clumsily into the receiver. We STAY ON Bob as he rides on -- with a quizzical expression.

BOB
(slowing down)
You guys go ahead. I'll catch you
later.

The Gooses speed on. Bob turns around and heads back to the public phone booth. He parks across the street and sneaks across to the booth unnoticed by Ritchie, who is just clumsily finishing his song.

RITCHIE
(crooning)
Oooh, Don-naa, Ohhh, Donnnaaa...

The receiver falls and BANGS clumsily around. Ritchie awkwardly picks it up. He waits a beat then speaks.

RITCHIE
That's it. That's your song. I
thought you'd like to hear it.

INSERT - DONNA ON HER PHONE

141

nods with tears in her eyes.

DONNA
(deeply moved)
It's beautiful...

OUTSIDE THE PHONE BOOTH

142

Bob smirks and leans cockily against a parking meter, as Ritchie hangs up sadly and steps out -- surprised to find him there.

BOB
(shaking his head)
Carnal, I think I know what your
problem is, and it's time we did
something about it. Come on!

RITCHIE
Where to?

Bob grabs Ritchie and starts to drag him across the street, dodging a couple of passing cars.

BOB
(dragging him)
Don't ask. Let's just go! I
should have done this a long time
ago. Hop on!

Bob hops on his bike; Ritchie climbs on behind him.

RITCHIE
(puzzled)
Done what?

BOB
Gotten you some pussy!

REVVING up his Indian Chief, Bob hangs a U-turn and ROARS on down the street with Ritchie.

CUT TO:

TIJUANA, MEXICO - MIDNIGHT

143

Ritchie is wearing a gaudy sombrero with TIJUANA painted on the brim, posing for a street Photographer, on a cart behind a stuffed burro. Bob is sitting beside him -- his arm around Ritchie's shoulder -- revelling in this corniest of tourist rituals, as the Photographer's flash goes off.

We HEAR the OPENING STRAINS of Ritchie's Cry, Cry, Cry -- a hard-driving, anguished rocker about the pain of teenage love won and lost, which continues as we

CUT TO:

THE MAIN DRAG - AVENIDA REVOLUCION

144

We TRACK as Ritchie walks along with Bob, carrying his guitar, past the CANTINAS and funky strip joints as shills and hawkers try to lure them inside with promises of the HOTTEST FEMALE ACTS in town. Bob glances at Ritchie, checking his reactions. Ritchie seems both amused and embarrassed by it all.

CUT TO:

A BRIGHT NEON SIGN - LOS GRAN SUEÑOS DE AMOR

145

A nightclub in the red light district.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - A LARGE, SPANISH STYLE BALLROOM

146

We FOLLOW Bob as he leads Ritchie into the dark palace of love's dreams. MARIACHIS are playing Crei on a small stage before the dance floor. Against the walls small tables are tucked away in dark cubicles under arches, where a few male customers are drinking with some girls. The place is half empty.

ANGLE ON RITCHIE

147

as he looks across the dance floor and sees a long row of young pretty girls in pastel-colored party dresses and petticoats, sitting on chairs against one wall.

RITCHIE

(with ironic
amazement)

Looks like a high school prom!

Bob gives Ritchie a sly, condescending glance.

BOB

Yeah, except this prom puts out.
Pick out the one you like.

Suddenly, not watching where he is going, Ritchie runs into an Old Drunken Whore -- also in a party dress -- who rams into him like a nightmare.

CLOSEUP - THE WHORE

as she hangs in Ritchie's arms, just long enough for him to see her tragic, tortured face. Then she staggers away, about to throw up.

Ritchie, totally turned off, walks behind Bob as they pass in front of the long row of Senoritas.

Some of the girls make blunt invitations in Spanish. They especially like Ritchie's green eyes and call him guero (gringo). Bob comes to the end of the long row.

BOB

(turning eagerly)

Well?

Ritchie hesitates -- hiding his true feelings.

RITCHIE

I don't know, man. It's hard to choose.

BOB

Take two. It's on me.

The Mariachis in the b.g. strike up a number, featuring a lively Vera Cruz harp player. Ritchie turns, using the music as an excuse to get away.

RITCHIE

(walking away)

La Bamba!

BOB

(exasperated)

Come on, Ritchie. I brought you here to get laid, man!

RITCHIE

Later.

Ritchie wanders toward the Mariachis. He listens for a bit, then slowly -- irresistibly -- picks up his guitar and begins to strum along. LA BAMBA.

Bob rolls his eyes and sadly shakes his head. Snatching a beer from a passing waitress, he turns his attention to one of the senoritas, eyeing her over.

BOB

(in Spanish)

What's your name?

The 15-year-old "Prom Queen" smiles with worldly cynicism.

PROM QUEEN

Rosalinda...

CUT TO:

INT. THE PLYWOOD TRAILER - NIGHT

149

Rosie is sitting up starting to go into labor. She checks a clock. It is 1 A.M. Grimacing with painful spasms, she puts on her nightgown and leaves the trailer.

INT. VALENZUELA HOUSE - CONNIE'S BEDROOM

150

Connie is in bed asleep, when she awakens to a steady knock at the front door. She rises, wearing men's pajamas, and we FOLLOW her to the front door. Connie opens to find Rosie standing there, weakly clutching her pregnant stomach.

ROSIE

(sweating)

Connie? I need your help.

CONNIE

(realizing)

Oh, my God. It's the baby?

Rosie nods closing her eyes in sudden pain.

CONNIE

(opening the door)

Where's Bob, for Pete's sake?

Rosie shakes her head, as Connie helps her inside. She takes Rosie to the sofa.

CONNIE

Let me wake up Ritchie!

CUT TO:

INT. ADOBE SHACK - TIJUANA, MEXICO - THE NEXT MORNING

151

Hours after sunrise, Ritchie wakes up on the dirt floor of an adobe shack. His red eyes focus on the dried snake skins and bats hanging from the rafters. Nothing is familiar. Ritchie slowly sits up. Bob is nowhere to be seen. Feeling a sudden ache in his arm, Ritchie lifts his short sleeve shirt and examines the spot that hurts. It is a fresh TATTOO -- with his initials R.V. It is then he becomes aware of his pounding head -- he has a bad hangover.

EXT. SHOT OF THE ADOBE SHACK - BRIGHT SUNLIGHT

Walking outside, Ritchie realizes he is still in Mexico, somewhere in the poorest barrios, high up on the dry brown hills of Tijuana. Suddenly, he hears a growl and turns to face a scrawny, ferocious looking dog staring at him.

Ritchie looks back at the crude adobe shack and starts to back away in its direction. The dog comes toward him, slowly, stalking him, baring his fangs. Suddenly -- an OLD MAN appears around the corner -- an ancient wizened, leathery Curandero (healer) with deep wrinkles, white hair and piercing eyes.

He is carrying two dead rattlesnakes, and is accompanied by two other dogs.

OLD MAN

(a toothless smile)

Ah! Buenos días, muchacho. Como amanecio? Bien crudo? Si, no?

Ritchie's menacing beast suddenly becomes a docile mongrel.

RITCHIE

Uh, yo no speak-o espanol!

Just then, Bob -- on his bike -- comes ripping up the hill and ROARS up to the adobe. Quickly gauging Ritchie's confusion, Bob cracks up at his brother.

RITCHIE

(irritated)

What's the idea of leaving me with this old man, Bob?

Bob smiles, subtly touching his ribs.

BOB

I had some business in town...
Besides, you were sleeping it off.

RITCHIE

Did I get that drunk last night?

BOB

(laughing)

Screwed, blewed and tatooed!

(pause)

Well, tatooed anyway.

Ritchie looks at Bob with disbelief, rubbing his sore arm. Bob gets off his bike. The Old Man gestures to his hovel.

OLD MAN

Muchachos! Pasen a desayunar.

BOB

Ahi vamos, Tata... Come on, the
old man wants us to eat.

Bob starts to follow the Old Man in. Ritchie hesitates.

RITCHIE

Who is he?

BOB

(mysteriously)
Somebody pretty special. Catches
rattlesnakes for a living. Eats
the meat, sells the venom...
Relax. He's almost 100 years old.

INSIDE THE ADOBE

153

Ritchie chews carefully on a taco and swallows gingerly.

RITCHIE

(pleasantly surprised)
I never had snake before... Not
bad.

In the corner, the Old Man is stripping the freshly killed
rattlers, glancing at Ritchie with fire in his ancient eyes.

OLD MAN

Te gusta?

(entoning)

La vibora es la vida, una vibora
que siempre sale de su propio
pellejo viejo... como un sueno.

RITCHIE

(curiously)
What's he saying?

BOB

He says life is a snake. A snake
crawling out of its own dead skin
-- like a dream.

Ritchie looks puzzled.

BOB

(explaining)

He's a curandero. A healer and
wise man. Sort of my spiritual
father... I've been coming to him
for years.

The Old Man gazes at Ritchie, as if sensing his fate.
Looking straight into his eyes, he slowly removes a leather
thong around his neck, suspending a set of DRIED RATTLES.

He hands the pendant ceremoniously to Ritchie.

OLD MAN

Para ti, hijo... Vivir es dormir,
morir es despertar.

BOB

(translating)

To live is to sleep, to die -- to
awaken. He's giving you that.

Ritchie looks at Bob and takes the pendant, silently saying
gracias with a nod.

BOB

I told him about your nightmares.
That talisman will help -- if you
believe in it.

RITCHIE

(strangely moved)

What is all this?

BOB

(simply)

Mexico.

CUT TO:

INT. VALENZUELA HOUSE - THAT EVENING

154

Bob and Ritchie are standing guiltily in the kitchen, as
Connie serves dinner to her daughters. She looks harassed,
tired and angry.

CONNIE

(furiously)

Mexico! You went to Tijuana?
Without telling anybody? A fine
pair of sinverguenzas! I could
expect this from Bob, but not from
you, Ritchie! What did you do --
drink the night away?

BOB

(testily)

It's my fault, Mom. I took him.

RITCHIE

(remorsefully)

How's Rosie?

CONNIE

In the hospital, where else?

Connie slings a plate of food on the table, directing her ire and frustration at Bob.

CONNIE
Pobrecita! All alone in the trailer. I had to drive her to L.A. County General myself. She was in labor all day. None of us got any sleep!

CONNIE JR.
 (from the table)
 Rosie had a girl.

IRMA
 (yawning)
 She named her Brenda.

CONNIE
 (to Bob with disgust)
 You ought to be ashamed of yourself!

Incensed, Bob turns and splits -- slamming the back door of the kitchen.

CUT TO:

INT. GOLD STAR STUDIOS - WEEKS LATER IN AUGUST

155

Ritchie is in the recording studio again, laying down the vocal track of the love song that will make him famous. Wearing headphones, he stands at the studio mike -- without a guitar -- singing his finished version of Donna. He is wearing the rattlesnake talisman around his neck.

RITCHIE
 (singing)
 I had a gi-rl and Don-na was her
 na-ame, Since she left me-e, I've
 never been the sa-ame...

Ritchie sings the song in its entirety, his face and singing style capturing all the feeling he poured into the lyrics. It is a classical teenage lament.

IN THE SOUND BOOTH

156

Bob Keene stands as he listens -- genuinely impressed by "the cry" in Ritchie's voice. This take is most definitely the one.

As Ritchie finishes, Keene speaks over the intercom.

KEENE

That's beautiful, Ritchie --
That's the one. Whatta ya say we
break for lunch?

CUT TO:

INT. EXPENSIVE HOLLYWOOD RESTAURANT - A BOOTH

157

where Ritchie and Keene are seated, waiting to order lunch.
Ritchie looks at all the professional types and Keene
studies his notebook.

KEENE

Now coming right up in September,
we've got Pacific Ocean Park,
Santa Monica Civic Auditorium --

RITCHIE

High Tone place, huh?

KEENE

-- followed by a week's booking
in San Francisco. You listening?
We'll fly up for that.

Ritchie's face suddenly goes dark.

RITCHIE

(emphatically)

Fly? -- I'd rather drive.

KEENE

(starting to argue)

It's a long drive, Ritchie.

RITCHIE

(vehemently)

I don't care. I never fly, man!
I have my reasons.

Keene is wise enough not to pursue the obviously touchy
subject, but it concerns him.

KEENE

Okay. I'll see what I can
arrange.

The Waiter comes. Ritchie opens his fancy menu.

RITCHIE

I'll have a cheeseburger, fries
and a coke.

KEENE

(smiles)

Same for me.

(the Waiter leaves)

We still need another single to go with Donna. How about Suzie?

Ritchie holds a beat, then suddenly springs a new idea.

RITCHIE

How about La Bamba?

KEENE

(surprised)

That's not rock and roll.

RITCHIE

(brightly)

It is the way I play it.

Keene answers him carefully, realizing he is serious.

KEENE

(pause)

No dice, Ritchie. La Bamba is a traditional folk song -- the culture of your people. You don't want to offend anybody. Besides, it's in Spanish.

RITCHIE

That's how I want to sing it.

KEENE

(sardonic)

Rock and roll in Spanish? You gotta be kidding.

RITCHIE

(fervent)

It'll work, man. I know it will! Just lemme have a crack at it.

Keene sees the urgent expression in Ritchie's eyes.

KEENE

(pause)

It's crazy, you know that, don't you? Even assuming the other side of Donna is a throwaway, how are you going to handle the lyrics? You said yourself you don't speak the language.

RITCHIE

(humorously)

Hey, if Nat King Cole can sing in Spanish, so can I, right? Come on, Bob-O. What do you say?

KEENE

(pauses then laughs)

Bob-O?

Ritchie beams -- knowing he has him.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FERNANDO MISSION - SATURDAY AFTERNOON

158

Bob Morales drives by the chapel on his bike and stops. Parked out in front of the church are Connie's Packard, Uncle Lelo's '57 Chevy, and several other cars. Bob smiles cynically and pulls a bottle from his hip pocket. He drinks, stuffs it back in his pocket, and rides off.

INSIDE THE CHAPEL

159

Rosie's baby girl is being baptized. Connie and Ritchie are standing before a PRIEST at the Baptismal Font, about to become godparents. Rosie is next to them, with Aunts, Uncles and Cousins -- the rest of the extended family -- gathered round four deep.

The Priest, with the Infant Girl in his arms, applies sacramental oil to her forehead. He then pours holy water over her head, with all the appropriate blessings, and starts to hand the Baby to Ritchie -- when he notices the rattlesnake talisman.

The Priest whispers something to Rosie. Rosie whispers to Connie. Connie whispers to Ritchie. Ritchie looks down and reluctantly removes the talisman. He stuffs the rattles into his coat pocket, and extends his arms.

The self-satisfied Priest hands him the Baby.

CUT TO:

INT. VALENZUELA HOUSE - BAPTISM PARTY - LATE AFTERNOON

160

Loud MEXICAN MUSIC is rocking Connie's little house, jammed to the rafters with friends and family. Aunt Ernestine is going around filming with an 8mm camera.

POV OF ERNESTINE'S CAMERA

161

We SEE Connie and Lelo dancing to the MUSIC, amid other dancing couples jostling each other with beery familiarity. The HOME CAMERA MOVES ON.

Ritchie is standing in the living room doorway, looking subdued. He sees the CAMERA and shies away. The CAMERA FOLLOWS him. He walks into the kitchen, where Rosie is sitting breastfeeding her Baby. She looks up at the CAMERA and blushes, stuffing away her breast. Suddenly, Bob comes in from the outside, looking stewed to the gills.

He stops to look at the Baby, but Rosie quickly covers her up. Bob tries to uncover her. Rosie pushes him -- hard. Bob starts to lunge back at her, and the CAMERA SWINGS AROUND WILDLY -- as Ritchie stops Bob, and Rosie leaves the kitchen with the Baby.

When order is restored, and the CAMERA STRAIGHTENS OUT -- more or less -- Ritchie is showing Bob that he is being filmed. Bob smiles drunkenly and comes forward making faces and generally making a jackass of himself.

EXTREME CLOSEUP - BOB'S MOUTH

162

CUT TO BLACK.

THE CALIFORNIA COASTLINE - HIGHWAY 101 AROUND PISMO BEACH

163

BIRD'S EYE VIEW FROM ABOVE FOLLOWING a brand-new baby blue '58 Thunderbird.

The Thunderbird is cruising north between the golden California hills and the blue, blue Pacific.

RITCHIE (O.S.)

(way down below)

It drives like a dream, man!

INT. THUNDERBIRD - CRUISING

164

Ritchie is at the wheel, with Bob Keene beside him.

KEENE

(smiling with pride)

Some baby, huh? I picked it up just yesterday. Real class. Sure as hell beats the train.

RITCHIE

Just how much did this baby cost?

KEENE

Don't ask.

Ritchie glances over curiously -- with vague suspicion.
Keene senses his discomfiture.

KEENE

Let's just say that if all goes
well in Philly --
(he swallows)
-- the car is yours!

RITCHIE

Philly? We're going to
Philadelphia?

KEENE

In a few weeks.

ANGLE ON RITCHIE - MEDIUM CLOSE

165

as a silent question hangs above his head -- Are we going to fly? Keene looks at him questioningly.

KEENE

Okay?

Ritchie glances at Keene, as if making up his mind.

RITCHIE

(determined)

Come o-on, let's go!

Ritchie snaps on the RADIO and steps on the accelerator.
"Hello, Baby!" The VOICE of the BIG BOPPER singing
Chantilly Lace fills the car, as Ritchie joyfully puts the
pedal to the metal.

INSERT - THE SPEEDOMETER

166

70 mph...80...90...100!

ANGLE ON KEENE

167

shifting uneasily in his seat.

KEENE

(with irony)

I thought you didn't like to fly?

RITCHIE

(laughing)

I don't. But I loo-ve driving
fast!

The baby blue Thunderbird flies up the coast.

CUT TO:

EXT. VALENZUELA HOUSE - PAST MIDNIGHT

168

A drunken Bob Morales is POUNDING on the front door, which has been locked from inside, kicking and yelling and trying to get into the house.

BOB

Open the door, GODDAMMIT! I'm her father -- her goddamn father!

ROSIE

(yelling from inside)

You're a goddamn drunk!

INSIDE THE HOUSE

169

In the living room Rosie is clutching her Baby in her arms, excitedly rocking the infant girl to and fro. Bob curses back outside.

Connie is standing right up against the crack of the door, trying to communicate with Bob -- exasperated.

CONNIE

(forcefully)

Bob! Stop it, Bob! Que traes?
Have you gone crazy on me?

BOB (O.S.)

(growling)

I wanna see my daughter!

CONNIE

(barking back)

Not in your condition! Sober up,
then you can see her. Tomorrow!
You hear me?

BOB (O.S.)

(losing steam)

Tomorrow?

CONNIE

Manana! Now go downstairs and
pass out before you hurt yourself.
I got enough to worry about --
with Ritchie!

OUTSIDE THE DOOR - BOB

170

BOB

(his fury surfacing)

You always worry more about
 Ritchie! What about ME? I know
 you don't give a GODDAMN about
 me!! YOU TURNED ME IN, SENORA!
 HAD ME LOCKED UP! You think I'm
 ever gonna forgive that, huh?
 HUH?! THE FUCKING HELL WITH ALL
 OF YOU!

He SLAMS the worn-out screen door, and steps back. Cursing to himself, Bob turns, staggers, almost trips, straightens out and proceeds around the corner of the house into the dark.

INSIDE

171

Rosie turns to Connie with a look of utter bitter resolve. Fighting back tears of total disillusionment, Rosie has reached her emotional limit.

ROSIE

I've had it, Concha. That's it,
 man. I've finally had it! I'm
 going back to San Jose. With
 Brenda!

Rosie walks off. We PUSH IN to a TIGHT SHOT of Connie, as tears come to her eyes and she weeps silently.

IN THE BASEMENT

172

Bob snaps on a light bulb, then stands looking at his drafting table, his drawings. He looks up at Mickey and Donald on the wall, and stands there for a moment. Then something inside of him snaps!

Bob rips down the Disney characters and tears them apart! His fury extends to all the papers on the drafting table. He rips, he shreds, he scatters! Finally, his rage spills onto the table itself. He kicks it, knocks it down, then attacks it with his hands! HE RIPS IT APART.

CUT TO:

INT. UNION STATION - TICKET COUNTER - MEDIUM LONG SHOT

173

as Ritchie turns away with Rosie's train ticket. He picks up her luggage, and Rosie stays close to him, as they walk across the cavernous Waiting Room swarming with passengers. Connie follows behind them carrying the Baby.

RITCHIE

(walking)

Sorry you and Bob can't seem to make it. He only wants to know that you love him.

ROSIE

(with deep hurt)

Yeah! I have to tell him! He don't want a wife, he wants a love slave! One that he can kick around. Well, not me, man! I went pendeja for the motorcycle and the jacket, but not for long. It's been hell ever since. I'm going home!

They walk on toward the numbered gates. Connie lags even farther behind.

UNION STATION ENTRANCE

174

Bob comes through the door, among servicemen and tourists. He looks around, trying to spot his family, then he sees them -- moving away at the other end of the Waiting Room. He does not follow them.

CUT TO:

EXT. VALENZUELA HOUSE - BRIGHT SEPTEMBER MORNING

175

Ritchie comes out of the house, excitedly pulling Connie, who is still in her apron. Behind them come Connie Jr. and Irma -- giggling with excitement. As they pass the trailer, Bob peeks out -- unshaven and unkempt -- squinting up at the sun, looking like a confirmed, wasted alcoholic.

BOB

What's going on?

CONNIE JR.

Ritchie has a surprise for us!

IRMA

(chirping in)

He's taking us to see it.

RITCHIE

(happily)

Bob! You take the girls in the Packard. I'm driving Mom in the T-bird!

Ritchie loads Connie into the Thunderbird, honks twice, and speeds off.

CONNIE JR.

(squirming)

Come on, Bob! They're leaving us!

Bob looks down at the girls. He doesn't move.

INT. THE THUNDERBIRD

176

Ritchie is driving Connie down Haddon Street, and the neighborhood is already middle class.

RITCHIE

Cover your eyes, Mom.

CONNIE

Ay, Ritchie -- what for?

RITCHIE

Because it's a surprise. Come on!

EXT. REMINGTON STREET

177

CAMERA FOLLOWS the Thunderbird as Ritchie turns the corner and enters middle Anglo America. Paved streets, sidewalks, hedges, lawns, freshly painted tract homes.

The T-bird pulls up in front of a new beige-colored residence with blue trimming.

Ritchie comes around and takes Connie out of the car, with her hands over her eyes. He stands her before the house.

RITCHIE

Now! You can look.

Connie uncovers her eyes and sees -- not an ordinary tract home but the palace of her dreams.

RITCHIE

It's yours, Mom.

ANOTHER ANGLE - MEDIUM LONG

178

Bob comes up to the house on his bike, his little sisters holding on tightly behind him. He parks, and Connie Jr. and Irma jump off, just as Bob Keene comes out of the house with some papers. The Girls lead the way into their new home. Connie follows them, nervous with excitement. Then Ritchie, then Keene, then Bob -- looking miserable.

INT. HOUSE

179

The living room is naked of furniture, as they all come in.

CONNIE JR.

(wide-eyed)

W-O-W. This is where we're gonna live?

She rubs the hardwood floor with amazement.

RITCHIE

(laughing excitedly)

That's the kitchen, where Mom's gonna have her new stove and fridge. And over here -- !

He spins around and heads down a corridor.

RITCHIE

We have the three bedrooms, and -- get this -- two bathrooms! Can you dig it?

EXT. THE BACKYARD

180

as Ritchie happily leads the others out, indicating two small buildings at the rear of the long spacious lot.

RITCHIE

That's the guesthouse, the garage, and right here -- is where I think we'll put the pool!

CONNIE

(alarmed)

Pool? No, Ritchie! The girls can't swim. I don't want no pool.

RITCHIE

(shrugging gamely)

Okay. Let's make it an automatic dishwasher -- right, Bob-O?

KEENE

(barely smiling)

No problem. After we fly back East.

CONNIE

(with concern)

Back East?

Bob Keene nods, immediately sounding more enthused.

KEENE

Ten-day tour. Thirteen cities. Including a spot on national TV.

(MORE)

KEENE (Cont'd)
 So! Congratulations, Mrs. Valens,
 here's the papers to your new
 home.

Connie takes the documents, then looks at Ritchie and
 embraces him with infinite love.

CONNIE
 (joyfully)
 Gee! This is better than Queen
 For A Day.

Bob stares at Connie and Ritchie darkly -- looking envious
 and mean. He turns to walk back into the house.

Ritchie watches Bob walking away.

CUT TO:

EXT. PACOIMA JR. HIGH SCHOOL - LATE AFTERNOON

181

A small Beechcraft lifts over the Schoolyard... From the
 opposite direction -- nothing. We PAN DOWN to reveal
 Ritchie walking across the yard -- over the exact site of
 the Accident. Every detail in his dream has been remarkably
 accurate. This is the place.

He squats down and looks at the ground -- the very spot
 where the tragedy occurred. Ritchie gently wraps his fist
 around the rattlesnake talisman, as if to exorcise his fear
 of flying. We HEAR the SOUND OF AN AIRLINER TAKING OFF, as
 we

CUT TO:

EXT. TWA CONSTELLATION - IN THE AIR - HEADING EAST

182

flying over western deserts.

INT. TWA CABIN

183

Ritchie is in a coach window seat on the starboard side.
 Keene is next to him on the aisle, leafing through a Life
 Magazine with Eisenhower on the cover.

KEENE
 See anything?

RITCHIE
 (with awesome respect)
 I just saw the Grand Canyon. It's
 a lo-ong way down, boy!

Ritchie pauses, looking out pensively. Then suddenly -- abruptly -- he makes a casual confession.

RITCHIE

You know what, Bob-O? I've always believed I'm gonna die in a plane crash...

Keene looks at him incredulously. He tries to think of some funny rejoinder.

KEENE

Ritchie, that's a helluva thing to say -- while we're still in the air!

Ritchie laughs with self-mockery.

RITCHIE

It's do or die, man. American Bandstand. Philadelphia, P.A.!

CUT TO:

AN 11" BLACK & WHITE TV SCREEN

184

American Bandstand is on, with a preposterously youthful DICK CLARK on camera, oozing charm and hipness.

CLARK

Now here's a rock 'n roll artist out from the West Coast. We haven't had too many of those here in Philly, but here he is -- making his first national television appearance -- RITCHIE VALENS with DONNA!

Applause and whistling. Ritchie comes on the screen, and starts lip syncing to his own record. We PULL BACK TO REVEAL Connie's old battered 11" Motorola TV sitting in the living room of her new Remington Street home.

Connie and her Girls are sitting on her old sofa, watching with rapt attention -- entranced with Ritchie's video image -- unable to believe it.

CONNIE JR.

(enthralled)

Look at Ritchie... My brother's on TV!

INT. LUDWIG RESIDENCE - GRANADA HILLS

185

Donna is sitting in the living room alone, listening to her song. Her Mother passes by, stops and looks again. They both stay glued to the television screen.

INT. SAN FERNANDO BAR

186

Bob Morales sits watching Ritchie from stool. He is totally wasted, nodding out. The hefty BARTENDER snaps off the TV.

BOB

(snapping back up)

Hey! What the hell -- ? I'm watching that. Put it back on!

BARTENDER

(plainly)

You've had enough for one afternoon, buddy. That mooney kid music don't suit my tastes anyway.

BOB

(stewed to the gills)

Come on, man! Turn it on. That dude's my brother.

BARTENDER

Sure. I'm your Irish uncle.

Bob reaches up and turns on the television. The Bartender snaps it off. Bob stubbornly reaches up again. A billy club hits him in the stomach, wielded by the Bartender.

BARTENDER

You want trouble, mister? You got it!

EXT. BAR - THE BACK DOOR

187

as the Bartender throws Bob out of the joint. Bob gets up from the dirt, clutching his stomach. He tries to mount his bike, but he collapses to his knees beside it -- vomiting blood into his hands. He lifts his bloody fingers.

BOB

(frightened)

Motherfucker...

CUT TO:

EXT. REMINGTON STREET HOUSE - AFTERNOON - ONE WEEK LATER

188

Lelo's '57 Chevy pulls up in front of the house, HONKING loudly. Ritchie is home from his first national tour. Connie leads the crowd of friends and family out into the front yard, as they all swamp the car, reaching out for Ritchie -- cheering, applauding, calling out his name. Connie and Aunt Ernestine hug Ritchie repeatedly.

Ritchie smiles unassumingly, the shy conquering hero.

Bob comes out of the house and stands alone -- clean shaven, face sallow, cold turkey sober. He is sipping on a coke.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM

189

as Ritchie is noisily ushered in by Connie. Things have been set up for a party. A butcher-paper banner on the wall reads: "WELCOME HOME, RITCHIE VALENS!" Del-Fi posters proclaim: "DONNA AND LA BAMBA - NO. 1 ON THE WEST COAST! HEADING FOR NO. 1 IN THE NATION!" A buffet table is stacked with fried chicken, re-fried beans, guacamole, chips, etc.

Ritchie -- tired but in good spirits -- is besieged by idle questions about the flight, New York, Dick Clark, and being on TV. Taking charge, Connie calls a halt.

CONNIE

Wait a minute! Let Ritchie relax,
Chihuahua! Questions later.

The crowd backs off. Ritchie goes to the table and snaps up some guacamole, turning to Bob privately.

RITCHIE

Where's Mom's new dress?

BOB

(darkly)

What new dress?

RITCHIE

(surprised)

The new dress I asked you to buy
for her -- for this party.

BOB

(bitterly)

You're the asshole with all the
money. Buy it yourself!

Bob walks off. Ritchie is momentarily stunned by his hostility. Uncle Lelo comes up behind him and claps him on the shoulder.

LELO

Don't let him get you, Ritchie.
 Bob's been on the wagon for a week
 now. Impossible to live with, but
 he's meaner when he's drunk.

The party goes on, but Ritchie keeps an eye on Bob through the windows, as he walks out into the backyard. A solemn, heavy-spirited presence.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FERNANDO HIGH SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

190

School is out for the day, and students are pouring off campus. Donna comes out with some friends, and then takes off alone -- walking home. Ritchie pulls up alongside of her, driving the blue Thunderbird. He HONKS lightly. Donna stops and turns with surprise. He smiles gently.

RITCHIE

Hi, kitten. Going my way?

INT. THE THUNDERBIRD - CRUISING

191

Driving slowly, Ritchie swings his free arm around Donna. She snuggles up to him.

RITCHIE

Just like old times, huh?

DONNA

(poignantly)

I've really missed you.

Ritchie pauses, then goes on, making small talk.

RITCHIE

I've missed you, too. How's school?

DONNA

Same old grind. It's not as much fun without you. When are you coming back?

RITCHIE

(never)

Never. Bob-O's got me booked all Winter and Fall... My school days are over, kitten. I won't even be home for Christmas. I'll be in the Big Apple.

DONNA

(sincerely)

I'm so happy for you, Ritchie.
All your success and everything.
You really deserve it.

RITCHIE

(with double meaning)

I'm flying. I'm really flying.
Sometimes I think it's going by
too fast...

Donna looks at him, but says nothing. Instead she gently
leans her head on his shoulder.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK SUBWAY - THE EL - NIGHT

192

as a subway train CLATTERS out of a tunnel into Brooklyn.

EXT. PARAMOUNT THEATER IN BROOKLYN - NIGHT

193

The marquee is glowing with famous names. Bo Diddley, Eddie Cochran, The Everly Brothers, Jerry Lee Lewis, Dion and The Belmonts, and -- Ritchie Valens. A huge neon sign above the marquee proclaims: ALAN FREED'S 1958 CHRISTMAS ROCK 'N ROLL SHOW!

In the background we HEAR the SOUNDS of EDDIE COCHRAN
singing Summertime Blues.

THE STAGE - FROM THE WINGS

194

EDDIE COCHRAN is onstage -- giving a grinding performance of his hit song. Before him churn the masses of a new generation. Rock and roll fever is in the air. And the entire theater is ELECTRIC.

In the wings, Ritchie stands in the shadows, with Eddie's girl, SHARON SHEELEY, 22, stands next to him. Mesmerized by Cochran's performance, he is looking slightly insecure.

SHARON

(gently)

What's the matter, Ritchie?
Nervous?

RITCHIE

(laughing uneasily)

Hey, I'm just a kid from Pacoima.

EDDIE COCHRAN'S DRESSING ROOM

as Ritchie enters behind Cochran and Sharon. Ritchie watches with nothing less than sheer admiration, as Cochran takes a shot of something from a bottle, wipes his face with a towel Sharon hands him, and begins to take off his sweat-drenched shirt.

RITCHIE

You were great, Eddie. Really great, man.

Cochran smiles -- with 23-year-old aplomb -- and taps Ritchie playfully on the chin, like a big brother might.

COCHRAN

(bristling with energy)

It's the live New York audience, man. You learn to take 'em on in bigger and bigger numbers. Get hooked on it, in fact. Rock 'n Roll's an addiction.

SHARON

(big sisterly)

Don't worry, Ritchie. America's going to eat you up.

The door opens and ALAN FREED, 34 and at the height of his rock 'n roll power, looks in as he KNOCKS.

FREED

(jubilantly)

Ho! There you are, Ritchie. They told me you'd be here.

COCHRAN

(gripping)

Say, Freed! Where's all the eats you guys promised us, man! Sharon and me are starvin'!

FREED

(jovially)

Keep your shirt on, Cochran. The snacks will be at the hotel.

(turning)

I need you, Ritchie. One of the Belmonts got sick.

COCHRAN

(wisecracking)

It's probably malnutrition. You and your three-ring circus!

FREED
 (to Ritchie)
 I gotta move you up. You're going
 on right after the Everly
 Brothers. That's in about five
 minutes. Can you make it?

Ritchie takes a breath, glancing at Sharon.

RITCHIE
 (enthusiastically)
 Co-ome o-on, let's go!

BACKSTAGE

196

The CAMERA TRACKS Freed as he walks Ritchie quickly to his spot, through the hordes of performers and stagehands. Dismissing other matters as they come to him, Freed stays with Ritchie, giving him final instructions.

FREED
 Now, remember. Just one number
 and that's it. No matter how the
 crowd behaves. If they love ya,
 they'll wanna kill ya. If they
 don't -- well, same difference.
 One song, okay? Either of your
 two hits -- take your pick.

Freed stops in the wings, just inside the proscenium, and leaves Ritchie on his spot.

Ritchie looks out onto the stage, clutching his rattlesnake talisman.

RITCHIE'S POV

197

THE EVERLY BROTHERS are singing Dream.

QUICK CUT TO:

THE STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

198

as Alan Freed winds up Ritchie's introduction to the house.

FREED
 And here he is, America's newest
 ROCK 'N ROLL sensation! The
 California Kid, RITCHIE VALENS!

One megaton APPLAUSE -- with some restraint -- as Ritchie comes onstage and quickly plugs in. Then he faces his adversary -- A LIVE NEW YORK AUDIENCE -- and smiles shyly.

RITCHIE

Here's a bit of a rattlesnake.

Then he LAUNCHES into LA BAMBA!

THE HOUSE

199

The place goes BERSERK. He sings the rock number in its entirety.

BACKSTAGE

200

Freed is nodding happily -- his instincts confirmed. Sharon is watching with Cochran. BO DIDDLEY stops in his tracks and listens.

CLOSEUP - RITCHIE

201

as he finishes La Bamba to TWO MEGATON APPLAUSE. He bows modestly -- SMILING from ear to ear -- and starts to go off. The APPLAUSE climbs up to THREE MEGATONS. Ritchie pauses, looking over to Freed giving him the come on. FOUR MEGATONS.

Freed looks out at the House, then back at Ritchie, unable to believe his ears. Ritchie mistakes this for his go-ahead, and he returns to the mike with Come On, Let's Go! Freed looks on helplessly.

CUT TO:

INT. NEW VALENZUELA HOME

202

A white frosted Christmas tree sits in the corner, aglow with bright red ornaments. Presents are still under the tree. The living room is dark. ANGLE ON the front door. Suddenly, Connie opens the front door and admits Ritchie, as the lights go on.

FAMILY

(together)

SURPRISE!

Ritchie -- stunned -- looks around at his Sisters, Cousins, Aunts and Uncles. Bob is standing in the corner. Ritchie laughs, his eyes watering. And the Family comes forth, giving him hugs and kisses and slaps on the back.

They wish him a Happy New Year, Merry Christmas, Feliz Ano Nuevo! The whole litany. Then the kids tug on Connie.

CONNIE JR.

Can we open our presents now, Mom?
Huh, Mom? Ritchie's home!

CONNIE

(playfully stern)
Wait until after the tamales!

RITCHIE

(laughing)
Go ahead and let 'em, Mom.
Christmas was two weeks ago.
They've waited long enough.

CONNIE

(tenderly)
No -- Christmas is tonight.
(then gruffly)
But, okay, go ahead -- open some!

The Kids scream and dive for the presents. Connie laughs and steps through the sudden hurricane of excitement.

CONNIE

Just the muchachitos, eh? The
little kids!

Ritchie takes off his heavy winter coat -- not of the best quality, but adequate. Ernestine takes it to the back. Then Bob comes over with a mixed drink.

BOB

(steadily)
Seven and seven?

RITCHIE

(taking the drink)
What about you?

BOB

(dry and sardonic)
I'm still on the wagon... The
garbage wagon.

Ritchie notices something terribly restrained about Bob. He is too closely shaven, and his haircut is too short.

CONNIE

(across the room)
Ritchie, we've got another
surprise. For Bob, too. Look
who's here!

Ritchie turns to see Rosie coming into the room.

RITCHIE

Rosie!

Ritchie rushes forward, and they hug warmly. Bob looks totally caught off guard.

RITCHIE

Jesus, it's great to see you back.
Welcome home, sis.

ROSIE

(with a little awe)
Me? Welcome back, you! You've
gotten really famous, Ritchie.
The whole family's proud to death
of you.

BOB

(irritated)
So what do you want? His
autograph?

ROSIE

I'm not talking to you.

BOB

(bitterly)
Ritchie's home, for Pete's sake!
The carnal's tired. He wants a
break. He didn't come home to
hear about how big he's getting.
We know that already. He's among
his own goddamn people!

The crowded room is suddenly silent and watching.

CONNIE

(carrying a present)
Alright, alright. Don't start,
Bob. Rosie's just here to
celebrate Christmas. Don't spoil
it, eh?

Connie pulls Ritchie to the couch and hands him the present.

CONNIE

Merry Christmas, mijo.

Ritchie unwraps the large bright red box. He pulls out a brand new BLACK MOHAIR WINTER COAT -- to the oohs and aahs of the Family. Ritchie tries it on, and then gives Connie a powerful bear hug. The family applauds.

CONNIE

(joking)
Ay, hombre. I feel like I just
got mauled by KING KONG!

The Family laughs uproariously.

CONNIE
 (commanding joyfully)
 Okay, everybody, let's party!
 This is a celebration. MY
 RITCHIE'S HOME!

ANGLE ON Bob as Connie pulls Ritchie toward the food. The party resumes with exuberance. Bob goes over to the table and picks up a beer bottle. Looking Rosie straight in the eye, he pops it open. Then he drinks.

EXT. THE BACKYARD - LATER IN THE PARTY

203

Connie comes up to Ritchie, as he sits talking to Rosie and Ernestine. Ernestine is hanging on Ritchie's ear.

ERNESTINE
 (excitedly)
 Connie says you're going to be in
 a movie with Chuck Berry. Bob
 Keene told her.

RITCHIE
 (unassuming)
 Really? Boy, you guys know more
 about me than I do!

CONNIE
 Ritchie? Have you seen Bob?

RITCHIE
 He's over in the guest house.

Connie looks toward the guest house - hesitantly.

CONNIE
 (worried)
 Has he been drinking? He's an
 alcoholic, you know. He found
 out. He's got a hole in his gut
 that'll kill him if he starts
 boozing again!

INT. GUEST HOUSE

204

Ritchie opens the door slowly and comes in. The spare modest room is filled with Connie's discarded furniture. Bob is inside alone, sitting on Ritchie's old bed -- holding a beer bottle in one hand, and Steve Valenzuela's WWI Doughboy photo in the other.

RITCHIE
 You okay, Bob?

BOB
(darkly)
Sure, I'm okay.

RITCHIE
(simply)
Mom was asking for you.

BOB
(bitterly ironic)
Why? She afraid I'm drunk? I've
had one sip of beer tonight...and
I gotta admit -- it tastes like
piss to me. You want it?

RITCHIE
(pause)
Sure, I'll take it.

Bob hands it to him, studying Ritchie intensely.

RITCHIE
Good to have Rosie back, huh? I
hope you guys give it another try.
(drinks)
What's on your mind?

BOB
(fiercely)
I'm fucking pissed at you, man.

RITCHIE
(self-possessed)
Why?

Bob looks at Ritchie, then back down at the photo.

BOB
Old Steve, boy! He always said
you were gonna be somebody.

Bob pauses, aching with emotional pain, but he starts to let
it out -- with caustic bitterness.

BOB
And I bought it, too, man. If
that's the way Steve wanted it,
that's the way it was gonna be --
even after he told me he wasn't
my Dad!
(another pause)
Then when I knew the full score,
I understood, see? I realized why
he always treated you just a
little bit better than me.
(MORE)

BOB (Cont'd)
 Okay, that's cool I said. I'll
 just hang around and take the
leftovers -- like a dog... That's
 how much I loved him, man -- like
 a goddamn dog!

Bob wipes away an angry tear. We SLOWLY START TO PUSH IN to
 his face.

RITCHIE
 (quietly)
 Come on, Bob. We don't have to
 talk about this now.

Bob responds loudly -- his FURY momentarily flashing.

BOB
 No! FUCK NO! I wanna talk about
 this right now. And you're gonna
 listen to me, motherfucker!

RITCHIE
 (getting uptight)
 Don't call me that.

Bob goes on -- tunneling into his emotions.

BOB
 Don't worry, dude. I ain't
 insulting our jefa. You and me
 may have different fathers, but
 Mom's always been solid with me.
 Like when she and Steve split up.
 Who went with her? Me! Who
 stayed with Dad? Little Ritchie!
 You're the only one he wanted,
 man. His only son...

(with bilious
 contempt)

Little Ritchie -- with the light
 skin and bright green eyes. Old
 All-American Steve sure knew how
 to pick 'em. He didn't want no
 Indian like me around!

RITCHIE
 This is a crock of shit, man!

BOB
 (menacingly)
 He set you up for it, didn't he?
 Steve set you up to CONQUER THE
 WORLD -- and he didn't give me
 SHIT!

RITCHIE
(stands, tightening)
Stop it, Bob!

Bob starts to provoke Ritchie with little SHOVES.

BOB
(incensed)
And now you come in like you owned
the whole FUCKING COUNTRY --
expecting everybody to kiss your
ASS! Well, you're fulla SHIT,
RITCHIE! To me you'll always be
that little ASSHOLE who used to
follow me around IN THE STICKS!

RITCHIE
(calmly, not without
hurt)
Yeah, man. I followed you because
I thought you were somebody --
then.

BOB
I'm STILL SOMEBODY, motherfucker!
Don't you walk out on me!

Ritchie starts to go. In a rage, Bob grabs him and spins
him around.

RITCHIE
LAY OFF, BOB!

Bob rears back and SLUGS him. Ritchie SLUGS him back!

The Brothers FIGHT -- trading blows and body punches, as
they fall on the bed. Suddenly, Bob grabs hold and rips off
Ritchie's rattlesnake talisman. The dried rattles fly and
fall to the floor. They both stop. Ritchie looks down at
the rattles on the floor, then back at Bob. A bond is
broken. Ritchie gets up and slowly walks out.

CUT TO:

INT. RITCHIE'S THUNDERBIRD - DAY

205

CRUISING toward L.A. airport. Ritchie is driving, with
Donna at his side, his mood subdued.

DONNA
You okay?
(Ritchie nods)
He couldn't have meant it,
Ritchie. He's just hurt. Your
success can't be easy for him.

RITCHIE
(looking at her)
I love you, Donna... I'll always
love you.

DONNA
You sound so serious.

RITCHIE
(laughing again)
I am! I'm still gonna marry you,
you know... Will you wait for me?

DONNA
(kidding)
For how long -- forever?

RITCHIE
(kidding back)
Naw. Just 'til I'm twenty-five.
Then I'll have a big glass cabinet
to hold all my gold records.

DONNA
(with true love)
I love you too. I'm not going to
let anyone get in the way of my
feelings for you ever again.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SURF BALLROOM - CLEAR LAKE, IOWA - NIGHT

206

Heavy snow is falling outside the Midwest rock palace. The bright marquee announces: WINTER PARTY DANCE TOUR. BUDDY HOLLY & THE CRICKETS, THE BIG BOPPER, RITCHIE VALENS, DION & THE BELMONTs.

We PAN DOWN to the WINTER PARTY TOUR bus being hauled off by tow truck, as we HEAR BUDDY HOLLY in the background singing Peggy Sue.

INT. SURF BALLROOM - ONSTAGE

207

BUDDY is rocking the fans with his hit song.

BACKSTAGE

208

Ritchie is at a payphone talking urgently to Bob Keene long distance. Ritchie has a bad cold, coughing and sniffing at a runny nose.

RITCHIE

I'm serious, Bob-O. It's colder than a welldigger's ass in January out here. I barely sang tonight!

KEENE (V.O.)

(on the phone)

Didn't you get the coat? Your Mom asked me to send it to you. Genuine mohair. That oughta keep you warm.

RITCHIE

(half-whispering)

The heating system in the bus broke down, man. The whole bus is shot. You didn't tell me the tour was gonna be like this!

KEENE (V.O.)

(with concern)

I'm sorry, Ritchie. I'm really sorry, but I can't control the weather... Do you wanna come home?

RITCHIE

You mean quit?

KEENE (V.O.)

If you're sick, you're sick.

Ritchie thinks for a long moment.

RITCHIE

Naw. I'll stick it out. Just see what you can do about the bus.

Ritchie hangs up the pay phone, as J. P. RICHARDSON (THE BIG BOPPER), 29, comes up behind him.

BIG BOPPER

(in his low baritone)

HELLO, BA-BY! Can you dig this? Holly's lining up a plane to fly us on to Fargo -- tonight.

RITCHIE

All of us?

BIG BOPPER

(confiding
secretively)

Just the headliners, baby. So get with it. Or you'll be out in the cold. Catch my snow drift, man? The word's out.

Ritchie nods. The Bopper moves on. Ritchie digs into his pockets for more coins. He dials the Operator.

RITCHIE
(on the phone)
Operator? I wanna call a number
in Pacoima. Pacoima, California.

INT. VALENZUELA HOME

209

As the PHONE RINGS, Bob Morales is sitting playing with his little daughter BRENDA, dangling the rattlesnake talisman.

BOB
(answering the phone)
Hello?

RITCHIE (V.O.)
(on the phone)
Bob -- it's me, Ritchie.

BOB
What's wrong?

RITCHIE (V.O.)
What do you mean?

BOB
You sound funny.

RITCHIE (V.O.)
I've got a cold. Listen, is Mom
there?

BOB
No. No one's here. They all went
to church. Only me and my
daughter are here.

INTERCUT - BACKSTAGE AT CLEAR LAKE

210

CLOSEUP ON Ritchie on the pay phone.

RITCHIE
(longingly)
I sure wish I was there, man...
But I guess you can't have your
cake and eat it, too, huh?
(pause)
Listen, Bob, why don't you fly out
to Chicago and meet me there? We
can finish out the tour together,
man. I gotta have some family
around me.

BOB (V.O.)
 (on the phone)
 You really want me to come --
 after what happened? All the shit
 I said?

RITCHIE
 Hey, man...those were your real
 feelings. We're still brothers,
 aren't we?
 (silence on the other
 end)
 Bob? You still there?

VALENZUELA HOUSE

211

EXTREME CLOSEUP ON Bob as he smiles.

BOB
 Yeah, cabron, I'm still here...
 And I'm still your brother.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLEAR LAKE MUNICIPAL AIRPORT - LATE NIGHT

212

A light snow is falling. A single-engine, four-seat 1954 Beechcraft Bonanza is sitting on the tarmac, props spinning, ready to go. Four men come out of the Airport building, bracing themselves against the bitter cold. As they get to the plane, BUDDY HOLLY stops and turns to Ritchie. The other two men are The Big Bopper and TOMMY ALLSUP.

HOLLY
 (quickly)
 Okay, Ritchie -- here's the
 situation. I'd heard how you feel
 about flying, so I didn't know you
 were interested. Tommy here was
 going to go in your place. So
 it's between you two -- whoever
 wins the toss gets to fly out
 tonight. The loser -- back to the
 bus. Agreed?

Ritchie and Allsup nod.

HOLLY
 (flipping the coin)
 You call it, Ritchie.

RITCHIE
 Heads!

Holly catches the coin and looks at it.

HOLLY
 Heads it is! You're on, Ritchie.
 Allsup, back to the bus. See you
 in North Dakota tomorrow.

Holly gets into the plane, followed by The Big Bopper.

RITCHIE
 (smiling ironically)
 Sorry, Tommy. That's the first
 coin toss I've ever won.

HOLLY
 (calling from the
 cockpit)
 Come on, let's go!

INT. BEECHCRAFT

213

Ritchie climbs into his seat and straps in, beside The Bopper. Holly turns around, sitting beside the PILOT. Ritchie looks out nervously, as the plane starts to taxi.

HOLLY
 (confidently)
 Relax, Ritchie. The sky belongs
 to the stars...

EXT. AIRPORT RUNWAY

214

LONG SHOT of Tommy Allsup waving at the Beechcraft Bonanza as it speeds down the slick runway and lifts into the snowy darkness...

CUT TO:

EXT. OLD VALENZUELA HOUSE ON GAIN STREET - MORNING

215

The trailer is gone. In its place, Bob has parked Connie's old Packard on front blocks, and he is underneath working on the oil lines. ROCK MUSIC is playing softly on the CAR RADIO. Suddenly, the music stops and the URGENT VOICE of a NEWS ANNOUNCER comes on.

ANNOUNCER
 We interrupt this program to bring
 you this bulletin. Four persons,
 three identified as nationally
 famous rock 'n roll singers, died
 early today in a plane crash five
 miles north of Clear Lake, Iowa.
 (MORE)

ANNOUNCER (Cont'd)
 BUDDY HOLLY, 22, of Lubbock,
 Texas; RITCHIE VALENS, 17, of Los
 Angeles, California; and J. P.
 RICHARDSON, 29, of Louisiana --
 known professionally as "The Big
 Bopper."

Bob stops working and slides out from under.

BOB
 What the fuck?

The Announcer goes on, as Bob gets up and turns up the
 radio.

ANNOUNCER
 The entertainers had appeared at
 the Surf Ballroom on Monday night,
 and were scheduled to appear
 tonight at Fargo, North Dakota...

The Announcer goes on. Bob still cannot believe he heard it
 right, then Rosie comes running out of the house.

ROSIE
 (yelling)
 Bob! Did you hear? Did you hear
 what the radio said about Ritchie?

BOB
 (stunned, incredulous)
 Are you sure he said Ritchie?

ROSIE
 (stopping)
 Oh, my God... What about Connie?
 She's always listening to the
 radio, too!

Bob quickly hops into the Packard, and starts it up. He
 backs it off the front blocks IN A PANIC, and it stalls on
 him! Cold. Cursing, he runs out and adjusts the
 distributor cap again. He slams the hood, and starts the
 car again. HE TAKES OFF LIKE A MADMAN! Rosie is already in
 tears.

EXT. PACOIMA NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS - MOVING

216

The Packard comes SKIDDING around the corner onto Haddon
 Street, almost running into a passing car! Bob straightens
 the car and keeps going.

On the corner of Remington, the Packard suddenly goes dead
 again! Bob gets out and starts to lift the hood again, and
 drops it. He starts running.

CAMERA TIGHT ON Bob, running for his life along Remington -- past the trim lawns and mailboxes.

EXT. THE REMINGTON STREET HOUSE - BACKYARD

217

Connie is in the backyard, washing clothes on an old washing machine, pulling away in SHOCK -- with wet clothes still in her hands -- rejecting what she has just heard on the RADIO. Bob runs in, and she knows... She screams from the bottom of her soul, flinging the wet clothes.

CONNIE

(screaming)

No, NOOOOO! Not Ritchie! Por el
amor de Dios! NOT MY RITCHIE!
AYYYY! HIJO DE MI ALMAAAA!!

Connie falls fainting into Bob's arms.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FERNANDO HIGH

218

Donna is sitting on a school bench before first period, alone as usual since Ritchie went away.

She smiles as she sees a GIRLFRIEND approaching her. But her smile freezes when she sees tears streaming down the Girl's cheeks. Donna jumps up.

DONNA

(alarmed)

What is it? What's the matter?

The Girlfriend takes Donna's arm and leads her back to the bench, sobbing quietly.

GIRLFRIEND

You'd better sit down, Donna.

They both sit down, terror already growing in Donna's eyes.

DONNA

(breathless)

What is it?

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD PALLADIUM - THE PARKING LOT

219

where Bob Keene sits motionless behind the wheel of his blue Thunderbird. Ted Quillen is on the RADIO.

QUILLEN

... reports confirm their deaths
as instantaneous. And now, here's
a selection in honor of the dead.

INT. KFWB STUDIOS

220

Ted Quillen is ON THE AIR.

QUILLEN

(solemnly)

A song by the late great Ritchie
Valens...

He plays Ritchie's Stay Beside Me, which continues in the
background as we

CUT TO:

INT. REMINGTON STREET HOUSE - THE LIVING ROOM

221

Bob is bringing Connie into the living room, as Rosie
arrives with her Baby. Connie collapses on the couch,
raising a lifeless arm at Rosie. Rosie quickly sets her
Baby down, and sits beside Connie, taking her hand and
stroking her forehead. Neighbors come in.

CONNIE

(weakly, painfully)

Rosie...we lost Ritchie. We lost
my Ritchie!

Rosie embraces Connie, sobbing with her. She looks up at
Bob. Deathly stoical, without tears, Bob backs off and
walks out the front door.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SAN FERNANDO RIVER - LATE AFTERNOON

222

Bob walks along a levee, wrapped in thought and grief.
Still without tears. He walks a long distance, seemingly
without direction. A man lost in his loss. Finally, he
stops and sits down by the water -- watching the sun sink
low in the sky. He reaches into his pocket, and pulls out
the rattlesnake talisman. Suddenly, a cry wells up from
within, and he explodes into heaving SOBS.

BOB

Ritchieeee!

CUT TO:

EXT. REMINGTON STREET HOUSE - SUNDOWN

The street is full of cars, as a milling crowd of hundreds of well-wishers, mourners, fans, curiosity seekers and TV crews fill the front yard. A CBS NEWSMAN is standing out in front of the house, talking LIVE into a CAMERA.

NEWSMAN

... It's believed the body of Ritchie Valens was identified by a tatoo on his upper right arm with the initials R.V....

Rosie comes out of the house, and taps Uncle Lelo on the shoulder, her eyes red and swollen.

ROSIE

Lelo, have you seen Bob? Connie's asking for him.

LELO

(mournfully)

I guess maybe he's out getting drunk. I know that's what I feel like doing.

The CBS Newsman is rattling on in the background, as Donna comes walking up to the house. She pauses for a moment before she goes in.

NEWSMAN

... authorities are still searching the wreckage for clues as to the cause of the accident, but some are already attributing it to pilot error. Here, in Pacoima, friends and family of the deceased rock and roll hero are still in shock...

Rosie steps out to the sidewalk and looks desperately for Bob. She stands there, looking into the distance, and then suddenly sees him as he rounds the corner. Bob comes walking -- erect and composed -- and as he slowly comes up to her and stops, Rosie sees the strength in his face.

BOB

I love you, Rosie.

ROSIE

Oh, Bob...!

Bob takes her in his arms in a powerful embrace. Slowly, with their arms around each other, they walk into the house.
We PULL BACK.

Out in the front yard, the crowd continues to swirl, the cars continue to pass by bumper to bumper, and the CBS Newsman rattles on...

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FERNANDO STREETS - RITCHIE'S FUNERAL

224

on a cloudy day in the Valley, as we HEAR RITCHIE in the background SINGING In A Turkish Town.

The hearse leaves a church in San Fernando, followed by several car clubs in solemn procession. As the mystical, undulating tones of Turkish Town play on -- the Turks pass by, then the Drifters, then other clubs.

Thousands of mourners are in attendance.

The funeral cortege winds its way through the streets, as we HEAR TED QUILLEN (V.O.) describing the procession.

QUILLEN

Thousands of friends and rock fans are here today to pay their last respects to the young 17-year-old idol who stole a nation's heart in the eight brief months of his tragically short career... Ritchie Valens, the newest star in the rock and roll pantheon has fallen. Fallen with Buddy Holly and J. P. Richardson, the Big Bopper. Fallen just as his future was at its brightest, cut down at the very pinnacle of his ascendance... Yet, here in the San Fernando Valley, as perhaps throughout the entire nation, the name of RITCHIE VALENS will not so easily be forgotten...

Over a LONG TELESCOPIC SHOT of the funeral cortege, we HEAR the SOUND OF A JETLINER, and we

CUT TO:

A PSA JET - COMING IN OVER SAN JOSE - DAY

225

in the mid 1980's. We PAN DOWN from the jet to a highway cutting right through the heart of Silicon Valley. Down below, cruising past the Porsches and BMWs is a motorcycle, riding to the SOUND of BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN SINGING La Bamba!

THE CAMERA CLOSES ON Bob Morales, 48, as he is today: greying longish hair, mustache, a small earring in one ear, parachute pants, heavy boots. Mature but still hip. As we FOLLOW HIM, we HEAR HIM SPEAK in a calm, mellow steady VOICE in the background:

BOB (V.O.)

It's almost thirty years since you died, Ritchie -- and it's snowing in Silicon Valley...

EXT. SILICON VALLEY - MOVING

226

We TRACK Bob on his 80's bike -- as he cuts through the grid of COMPUTER PLANTS and MICROCHIP FACTORIES, eyeing them with perception and street-wise understanding.

BOB (V.O.)

The world has changed, and so have all of us that still live on it, struggling to survive. Mom is 72 now -- and still kicking...

EXT. SANTA CLARA VALLEY - MOVING

227

Bob rides up into the foothills, coming to an old road where he pulls into a decaying RELIC from the past -- the remains of ROSIE'S OLD LABOR CAMP -- the abandoned long shacks teetering in the breeze.

BOB (V.O.)

I've been a drug abuse counselor here since the 70's. No more apricots. Just plenty of smack and cocaine... Some blame it all on rock 'n roll. They don't know what they're talking about...

EXT. THE ORCHARD

228

Bob parks and goes walking through the remains of an orchard, looking for THE HILL. He finds it. It is still there -- 28 years later -- Ritchie's hill, where he dreamed of his music so long ago. He goes walking up slowly.

BOB (V.O.)

Your music still lives, carnal...

From the top of Ritchie's hill, Bob Morales looks out at a PANORAMIC SHOT of Silicon Valley at sundown -- once full of thousands of fruit trees, now filled with electronic plants and glass towers. Symbols of a changed world.

BOB (V.O.)

... You didn't just make yourself
a place in Rock 'n Roll history,
man --

He clutches the rattlesnake talisman around his neck.

BOB (V.O.)

-- like a bright star, you found
yourself a place in the heavens.

As the CAMERA SLOWLY PULLS BACK TO A LONG SHOT, Bob sits
down on the hill and watches poignantly, as the dying sun
goes down -- and the Evening Star rises.

FADE TO BLACK.

FINAL CREDITS ROLL -- to the SOUND of LOS LOBOS singing Come
On, Let's Go!. In 1985.

THE END