

*Just Around the  
Corner to the*

**LIGHT  
OF DAY**

# "LIGHT OF DAY"

JUST AROUND THE CORNER TO  
THE LIGHT OF DAY

(aka "Born In The U.S.A.")

by

Paul Schrader

November 20, 1985

"Here's to ya, Cleveland, home of  
the music the Midwest needs!"

--Kid Leo, disc jockey,  
WMMS-FM

CREDITS

1 INT. CAR NIGHT

Joe Rasnick, Patti Rasnick and Bu Montgomery sit in front of a 1975 Nova. Child seat in back.

Their car is parked on a deserted residential street in Cleveland Heights, a middle class neighborhood. The summer night echoes with cicada wings, Midwest white noise. A dog barks from a nearby street.

JOE RASNICK, 22, at the wheel, wears a faded "Barbusters" T-shirt, single silver earring. He writes lyrics, plays backup guitar/keyboards. An easy-going manner.

PATTI RASNICK, 25, Joe's sister, sits in the middle. She wears an old motorcycle jacket over a white "Bundeswehr" tank top. Lead guitar and vocals. The jacket's hardly necessary; in fact, she's sweating. Patti's mood is edgy, tense, as if uncomfortable in her own skin.

BU MONTGOMERY, 34, sitting shotgun, wears a plaid shirt and Cleveland Browns cap. Plays bass guitar. He's sided part-time, full-time, anytime for a dozen local bands. His offbeat humor sees him through good times and bad.

They watch as a THIRTIESH COUPLE, dressed to go out, argue on their front porch down the block:

JOE

They were supposed to be out.

PATTI

Her office social. They're a half hour late.

JOE

So?

PATTI

So? So they're having a fight.

JOE

So? Why can't they fight in the car like everybody else? That's what cars are for.

BU

This is really dumb.

CONTINUED

1 CONT'D.

PATTI

I never knew you had a problem with dumb.

BU

That's normal dumb. This is really dumb.

JOE

It'll take five minutes. The cellar door is always open. Pick up the tools. Patti's arranged to swap them for the Peavey 16-track.

BU

Do it alone.

JOE

Somebody has to stand watch.

BU

(to Joe)

You. "Honk twice." Why am I here?

PATTI

You said you wanted to come.

BU

I thought you were goin' for burgers or something. Not rip off a house.

The Thirties Couple raise their voices after a respite.  
Bu groans:

BU

There they go again. I love ya, Patti, but I'm gone. Tomorrow. Gotta put in some time at home anyway.

JOE

How...?

BU

I'll hitch. Cover the dome light.

Patti cups the dome light as Bu slips out. He's soon out of sight. Pause.

JOE

He's got a point.

CONTINUED

1 CONT'D.

PATTI

This was your idea too.

JOE

Can't I change my mind?

PATTI

I don't know how you decide anything. "Man Freaks Out During Pepsi Challenge, Injures Two."

JOE

It was a good idea before, now I got a better one.

PATTI

We gotta get outta here.

JOE

I know.

PATTI

Outta this town. Outta Cleveland. That's why we need a better sound. You've been talking about this Kelsey for weeks.

JOE

(acquiesces)

Okay.

PATTI

Okay.

The house goes dark. The Thirties Couple close the front door, walk down the steps.

JOE

There they go.

The Couple abruptly resume their argument. The woman turns, stalks inside; her husband follows. A house light goes on.

PATTI

Damn.

JOE

(a beat)

Sis, I'm splitting.

PATTI

Wait.

CONTINUED

1 CONT'D.

JOE

They're inside. They're not leaving. Are you coming?

PATTI

Wait a little longer.

JOE

I'm splitting.  
(hits horn twice)

PATTI

Very funny.

JOE

See you later.

Joe exits. His footsteps echo down the blacktop. Patti keeps her eyes on the house. She knows that tool theft is out of the question, but doesn't budge. It's a point of honor.

PATTI

(to herself)  
We gotta get outta here.

END CREDITS

CUT TO:

2 CLEVELAND MONTAGE

Steady drum beats pound as the credits fade. Patti's voice attacks the opening lines of the title song, a working class anthem. Three guitars join in.

Early morning: we glide across the steel grey expanse of Lake Erie, across the harbor, across the Cleveland Flats--an awesome stretch of heavy industry along the Cuyahoga River.

Five miles of factories and foundries, smokestacks and tank farms. Beneath us the black engines of industry exhale white streams of smoke into the fluorescent sky.

1955, CLEVELAND, whore of Detroit, supplier of rubber and steel, tinted glass windows and chrome ashtrays.

1965, CLEVELAND, eager whore, polluting her rivers and lakes, fouling her skies with greed.

1975, CLEVELAND, abandoned whore, destitute, having sold her birthright for broken promises.

CONTINUED

2

CONT'D.

1985, CLEVELAND, repentant whore, rebuilding, reclaiming her pride.

The Barbusters are revealed in their daytime roles:

--Joe and Bu work at Midwest Rubber Reclaiming.

--Patti and her son BENJI, 4, return cans and bottles at the Pick-n-Save.

--GENE BODINE, 20, roadie and sound engineer, works the cash register at a card and novelty store in Randall Park Mall. Gene, a blond hunk in cut-offs, wears his Barbusters T-shirt. His right arm's in a wrist cast.

--BILLY TETTORE, 18, drums, carves a swastika on his desktop. His classmates are fellow remedial types. Feather earring. Good looking in a superficial fashion and knows it.

A buzzer sounds. Gene checks his watch. Patti straps Benji in the child seat. Joe and Bu shut their lockers. Billy hits the sidewalk.

CUT TO:

3

EXT.

EUCLID TAVERN

AFTERNOON

On Euclid Ave., downtown side of Cleveland Heights--an area already "marginal."

CUT TO:

4

INT.

EUCLID TAVERN

AFTERNOON

The Barbusters are rehearsing. Patti, in white T-shirt and jeans, sings the last lines as Joe and Bu disconnect their guitars. Patti arcs her back into the mike, hits the last syllable. She loves to sing.

The Euclid is a bar, not a club. People don't come here to hear rock and roll, they come here to hear rock and roll while they drink.

Across the room, a couple of unemployed youngbloods sit at the bar. A group of factory workers, fresh from their shift, enter laughing as they call to OOGIE, 39, the bartender.

Joe and Bu pack their guitars. Patti sings to Billy's lone accompaniment. A charred guitar hangs above the makeshift stage. Two girls shoot pool.

CONTINUED



4 CONT'D.

PATTI  
(looks around)  
Hey, what's wrong?

BILLY  
I'm here.

BU  
Promised I'd meet Cindy at the  
mall. I'm late already. Can you  
read my lips?  
(blows him a kiss)

BILLY  
That's what I love about rock 'n  
roll--committment.

BU  
Go home and play in front of  
the mirror.

One of the youngbloods drops a quarter into the jukebox,  
plays Motley Crue. Patti turns to Bu--he's already rehearsed  
past his deadline.

PATTI  
Sorry. Thanks, Bu.

BU  
You weren't bad yourself.

PATTI  
How about you, Joe?

JOE  
(closes guitar case)  
Tomorrow.

Patti calls to the bartender:

PATTI  
Oog? Who you got coming in  
tonight?

OOGIE  
Yogurt Moon.

PATTI  
Yogurt Moon?

OOGIE  
They used to be the Clones.

CONTINUED

4

CONT'D.

GENE

From Shaker Heights. Daddy bought  
'em uniforms so they went psychedelic.

JOE

I know them. They worked for free  
at Cheers.

BU

Fuck. No wonder we could only get  
a hundred.

JOE

And we pitched a bitch there.

BU

We're paid up front this weekend?  
Visa won't let me slide anymore.

PATTI

Damn straight, Oog?  
(Oogie laughs)  
'Cause we know the magic words:

ALL TOGETHER

"Rock and Roll!"  
(they cheer)  
"Party!"  
(cheer again)  
"Cleveland!"

They all laugh.

PATTI

Never fails.

CUT TO

5

INT.

JOE AND PATTI'S HOUSE NIGHT

Joe sits on the couch, watching MTV, reading Penthouse.  
Benji bangs on a plastic toy guitar.

The living room is decorated undergraduate chic: footlocker  
coffee table, frayed sofa, ULC-15 poster and a Barbuster  
flyer on the otherwise bare wall. Joe turns to Benji:

JOE

Be careful. Bongo-boy. You'll  
break it.

Patti enters from the kitchen, wipes her hands on her  
jeans. She caresses Benji's head.

CONTINUED

5 CONT'D.

PATTI  
Is this the Tears for Fears  
video?

JOE  
(glancing up)  
Looks like it.

PATTI  
What happened? Bored with  
"Love Connection"?

MTV video jock Mark Goodman comes on:

PATTI  
Ugh. When they gonna get  
rid of him?  
(notices Penthouse)  
You agreed not to read that  
around Benji.

JOE  
What?

PATTI  
(sings)  
P-E-N-T-H-O--

JOE  
I'm not looking at the pictures.  
Honest.

PATTI  
It makes an impression anyway.

Joe tucks the mag under a cushion. Benji smacks a chord.  
imitates:

BENJI  
"P-E-N--"

JOE  
Cut that out.

Benji, more defiant than hurt, throws his toy guitar to the  
floor. Patti reassures him as she returns the guitar.

CONTINUED

5 CONT'D.

JOE  
Don't pick on me, Patti. I got anxiety. I don't know if I can relate to 14 year-olds anymore.

PATTI  
You can relate to them, they just can't relate to you.

JOE  
Sweet.

Patti picks up Benji, signals Joe with her eyes. He turns off the television.

JOE  
Benji, the TV's off. You know what that means, don't you?  
(a beat)  
It means it's bedtime.  
(Benji protests)  
Don't give your mother a hard time. I know for a fact that she has something special to read to you. And if you're good, she may even sing something.

Patti turns to take Benji upstairs.

PATTI  
Let's go, little man..  
(to Joe)  
You going out?

JOE  
You kidding? I barely dragged my ass through today. I'm shitfaced tired.

PATTI  
I may.

JOE  
We gotta get a present for mother's birthday. Any suggestions?

Patti shoots him a cold stare.

JOE  
Okay, okay, sorry I mentioned it.

Patti heads upstairs, says to Benji:

PATTI  
Blow a kiss to Uncle Joe.

5 CONT'D.

Benji does; Joe reciprocates with a smile. Patti and Benji disappear upstairs. Joe fishes Penthouse out of the sofa.

CUT TO:

6 INT. UPSTAIRS NIGHT

Later that night. Joe tiptoes to Benji's room in his underwear.

Joe sticks his head in Benji's room. Benji rolls about, snuggles up to his stuffed animals. Joe watches silently, then closes the door.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. THE RASCAL HOUSE NIGHT

A video arcade on Coventry. Local teenagers hang out around parked motorcycles. Video noises echo from inside.

CUT TO:

8 INT. THE RASCAL HOUSE NIGHT

A wall of synthetic sound: all video pings, pongs and buzzes. Not even the heavy metal muzak can compete.

Schoolkids squeeze between rows of flashing video games. The air hangs thick with teen sex; even the names of the machines reflect this: "Scorcher," "Gorgar," "Vulgus."

Patti, in her leather jacket, sits alone at an "Infraspace" machine. Quarters are stacked on the control panel. Her face is blank as she manipulates the buttons and joystick. She's in the zero zone.

CUT TO:

9 MONTAGE: "CLEVELAND ROCKS!"

6:00 a.m. Cobalt light spreads across the Cuyahoga Valley. Joe pulls in front of a brick apartment house in the Coventry district. A black Kawasaki in front. Bu, lunch bucket in hand, walks to the Chevy.

--Joe and Bu punch in at Midwest Rubber. There's no music, only the conversational drone of shuffling sleepy men. A hand-lettered sign reads: "Performance Is A Reflection Of Attitude."

CONTINUED

9

CONT'D.

--Joe takes his place at the retread sorting line. He pulls a pair of headphones from his pocket, puts them on. Bam! The factory noises are 100% replaced by the aggressive chant of Ian Hunter's 1978 rock anthem, "Cleveland Rocks!"

--Gene opens his lunch bag in the stock room of the card store. Inside, two yuppie wives discuss scented candles. Gene unwraps a sandwich as he punches the boom box beside him: "CLEVELAND ROCKS!"

--Billy, in Health and Safety class, listens to a lecture on "sexual responsibility." He slips his transistor earplug into his ear as the teacher writes on the board. He watches, smiling: "CLEVELAND ROCKS! CLEVELAND ROCKS!"

CUT TO:

10

EXT.

JOE AND PATTI'S HOUSE DAY

A white tract house in Cleveland Heights. Joe's Chevy stands in the drive. A bent basketball hoop is mounted on the garage; the garage door is open.

CUT TO:

11

EXT.

BACKYARD

DAY

Saturday afternoon. The Barbusters gather at Patti and Joe's for weekly equipment repair.

Gene, Billy and Bu sit on the back lawn uncoiling and rewinding the "snake"--cable. Benji, wearing an "It's OK. I'm with the Band" T-shirt, watches. A Cocker Spaniel drifts in and out, oblivious to Benji's attention.

Next door, neighborhood kids play on swings.

CUT TO:

12

INT.

GARAGE

DAY

Joe and Patti labor over stacks of equipment: four Marshall speakers, a BGW 750 power amp, a Crown 150. The garage serves as a workshop/storeroom for the band: used and defunct equipment fills the room. A bag of rusting golf clubs rests atop broken toys and appliances.

Patti holds a light as Joe solders a crossover connection on the amp rack.

CONTINUED

12 CONT'D.

JOE

...just go down to Randall Park Mall, I said. Look at all the people, all dressed in different clothes, all thinking different things--yet all trying to be happy. Just think about it. All over the world, billions of people, every one of them trying to be happy. And she said, "Wow, I didn't know rock and roll players were so deep."

PATTI

(laughs)

This is Sue Pisarcik's friend?  
What is she, 16?

JOE

She's older than that. She's 17.

PATTI

Sue's 17. This girl's a year younger.

JOE

Don't look it. Have you seen this girl? So beautiful...

PATTI

...so dumb.

JOE

...bright like a nightlight...

PATTI

...no cheek bones. In ten years:  
Edsel-face.

JOE

(working)

I swear God must be perverse. He just sits around dreaming up these beautiful women, sends them down here to make us feel like shit, then gives 'em zip for brains so they run off with the first dealer they meet. It's the angels. They drive Him buggy.

PATTI

She'll break your heart.

CONTINUED

12 CONT'D.

JOE  
(clutches chest)  
Please.

PATTI  
Get Sue to set you up.

JOE  
You kidding? You born yesterday?

PATTI  
(catty)  
Yeah. "Patti: Day 2."

JOE  
I'm serious. She hates me.

PATTI  
(extends hand)  
I'm Patti:

JOE  
(shakes)  
Hi.

PATTI  
I'll set you up. I know her  
sister. Besides, she doesn't  
hate you. Nobody hates you.

A soddered connection breaks.

JOE  
Damn.

PATTI  
If we had the Kelsey, we wouldn't  
need this.

JOE  
(dismissive)  
Non-subject.  
(gestures)  
Hold this.

PATTI  
What's with the Jack Webb?  
You've done your share of  
"creative appropriation."

JOE  
It's just you gotta be more careful.  
At first it's fun, then each time it's  
something more...

CONTINUED



12 CONT'D.

PATTI

Do I have to hear this? What's next?  
The part about little brother's paycheck  
and how you support the band?

JOE

I thought we were talking about  
Sue Pisarcik's friend?

PATTI

Twelve track music, one-track mind.

Joe looks up, relieved to see someone coming:

JOE

Here comes Cindy.

CUT TO:

13

EXT.

BACKYARD

DAY

CINDY MONTGOMERY, 28, Bu's wife, wearing her nurse's uniform,  
enters carrying a large bag of Kentucky Fried Chicken. She  
waves to Patti and Joe!

Bu stands, gives her a big hug.

BU

Grub's up!

Benji scrambles in his tiny sneakers, calling:

BENJI

Mom! Uncle Joe!

Cindy caresses Benji as Patti and Joe emerge from the garage.  
Benji goes to his mother's side.

They sit on the lawn; Cindy and Bu distribute chicken parts.

BILLY

Beer?

JOE

In the fridge.

BILLY

(jumps up)

I'll get it. Generic?

PATTI

(nods)

My money, my brand. You only  
go 'round once.

CONTINUED

13

CONT'D.

Billy jogs inside as Gene wraps his torn tennis shoe in duct tape.

GENE

Speaking of which, what'd we settle for tonight?

PATTI

\$125 against 100% of the door.

GENE

In other words, \$125?

PATTI

Plus free drinks and red hots.

BU

Oh, yeah, it's gonna be a hot time in Bum Fuck, Egypt.

The Spaniel tries to slurp mashed potatoes from Benji's styrofoam cup. Patti sends the mutt running with a slap.

JOE

Watch your food.

PATTI

(to Cindy)

You gonna babysit here tonight or your place?

CINDY

Here's easier.

BU

That way at least one of you has to come home when I do.

JOE

I noticed that. Can we help if it takes so long to wind down?

CINDY

Bu used to say that...

BU

(overlapping)

...I still do...

CINDY

...till I got my own wind down...

CONTINUED

13 CONT'D.

JOE  
 Don't get X-rated on me, Cindy...  
 (calls)  
 Billy, where's that beer? This  
 ain't Michael Jackoff out here!

CUT TO:

14 INT. JOE AND PATTI'S KITCHEN DAY

Billy dials the wall phone beside the refrigerator as he tucks a six-pack under his arm.

CUT TO:

15 EXT. BACKYARD DAY

PATTI  
 How can you wind down?

BU  
 How do you spell that?

JOE  
 M-i-c--what's he doing in there?  
 (calls)  
 Billy!

GENE  
 He's calling "Dial-a-Metal-Riff."

BU  
 Twenty-four hours a day.

JOE  
 (yells)  
 That's a toll call!

CUT TO:

16 INT. KITCHEN DAY

Billy listens as the phone connects: a short buzz and beep, followed by a blast of Judas Priest.

Billy beats imaginary drums to the guitar riff. Smiles.

CUT TO:

