

The Twilight Zones

by

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BLACK SCREEN:

We hear dark ELECTRIC GUITAR CHORDS, sounding less like music than a high tension transformer slowly bleeding voltage. Then -- deafening RAIL AND TRAIN PLATFORM SOUNDS --

EXT. COMMUTER RAILWAY PLATFORM - DAY

Clothes, cars and news-vendors' headlines say England. 1960. A YOUNG MAN, 17, tie and jacket, juggles LP records and school books. He spots a YOUNG MAN further down the platform holding an art student portfolio.

YOUNG MAN
(crosses)
Keith, how you been?

SECOND YOUNG MAN
Long time, eh? Wentworth School?

YOUNG MAN
Good old days.

They laugh sardonically. Second young man sees the LPs.

SECOND YOUNG MAN
You nick all them?

YOUNG MAN
Christ, no. Mail order.

SECOND YOUNG MAN
American R&B. Cracking.
(points to a track
listing)
I can play that Chuck Berry side.

YOUNG MAN
Wha', on the gramophone?

SECOND YOUNG MAN
(annoyed)
Fuck, Mike. Guitar. Got me an
Hofner, single pick-up.

YOUNG MAN
I been playing harmonica.

Commuter train ROARS in. They disappear into a train coach, conversing animatedly. The train pulls out, taking Mick and Keith on their path into history.

EXT. MUSIC STORE - HANCOCK - DAY

Clothes, cars, store signs say Hancock, New Jersey, 1962.
 Typical Main Street in small town America. It could be Iowa.

DOUGLAS ALBANO

16, studies a black Rogers drum set in the window. He has a "Chicago box" haircut (really just a crewcut but with waxed-up sides that hint at the inner renegade), madras shirt, chino pants. He has drumsticks and practice pad under his arm. WELLS LAMONT, painfully skinny, with wispy blond curlicue, comes to the window and also stares at the guitars and drums. He wears madras Bermuda shorts.

WELLS

Those Rogers are cooler than shit.

DOUGLAS

Swiv-O-Matic stands.

They fall silent. He sees Douglas' sticks.

WELLS

What kind you play?

DOUGLAS

Bought a used set off this colored guy in Newark. Gretch.

WELLS

Gretch are okay.

DOUGLAS

Gray pearl, hundred fifty bucks. Plus, set of Ziljians. Ad in the paper. My old man didn't even want to drive me down there, he's afraid we'll get stabbed or something.

WELLS

Ziljians, though, man, best cymbals in the world.

(beat)

What's your name, anyway?

DOUGLAS

Doug. Albano.

WELLS

Wells Lamont.

They don't shake. Wells points with his chin -- Gibson 335 guitar.

WELLS

Guy I know goes to Hancock Regional? He has a 335.

DOUGLAS

That's where I go!

WELLS

I go to fucking Delbarton.

DOUGLAS

Private school -- you get in trouble or something?

WELLS

Nah. Place blows, though. I'm transferring to Hancock in September.

DOUGLAS

Cool. What's your friend's name?

WELLS

Ronny Lewe.

DOUGLAS

I know him! He's really cool. He's like, one of my best friends this year.

WELLS

Him and me are in a band.

DOUGLAS

No shit! With Eddie Beasley?

WELLS

Yeah, Beasley drums, me and Ronny play guitar. It was him taught me key of E.

DOUGLAS

Beasley, man, I saw him do a solo last year at this kid's birthday party? He was like Buddy Rich, man. Fuckin fast.

WELLS

His bass drum foot.

Two GIRLS approach. Doug gets taciturn and uptight.

DOUGLAS

Hi.

They walk on by without answering. One smiles back at Wells.

GIRL

Hi, Wells.

Wells raises his chin in greeting. The girls go on.

DOUGLAS

They go to my school.

Silence.

DOUGLAS

Beasley on drums. Fuck, that is so cool.

In truth, he is jealous.

DOUGLAS

I guess I started taking lessons too late for Ronny to ask me to be drummer.

Wells nods but says nothing.

DOUGLAS

What stuff you and Ronny play? Everly Brothers, right? He fuckin' loves those guys.

WELLS

Yeah. That fuckin' high harmony's really hard, though. Actually neither one of us sings that good. Mostly we play instrumentals. Ventures, Johnny and The Hurricanes.

DOUGLAS

He is so cool, Ronny.

WELLS

He's like Lee Marvin.

They look at the instruments.

WELLS

I gotta go.

Douglas raises his chin, "see you around". When the boys exit FRAME, CAMERA RAISES above the roofs of Hancock. Manhattan reposes in the mist, only twenty miles away.

INT. HANCOCK REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - TALENT SHOW - NIGHT

Ronny Lewe's band doing Link Ray's "Rumble". RONNY LEWE plays rhythm guitar. Though he is no Lee Marvin we get a better look at why his contemporaries revere him: good looks, athletic build, cocky sneer. Most important, he can rock that Gibson 335.

SOMEBODY

Go, Ronny!

Wells, also good guitar player, plays lead on a Fender Telecaster. BEASLEY plays drums, overweight JIMMY "THE BLOAT" CONNOLLY honks on tenor sax. When Beasley takes a drum solo, it is full of thundering authority. This kid, of all of them, could play professionally.

AUDIENCE

Doug is blown away. The band is good enough that the audience starts clapping along. To his friend JOE PATUTO --

DOUGLAS

They're clapping on the on-beat,
the fags!

In this era many kids don't even know where the rock in rock & roll is. They clap on the 1 and 3.

JOE

Fags.

Douglas' attention has been drawn to pretty, elegant, GRACE DIETZ seated next to jock cliché, JIM BURKHARDT. Jim, his stooges and their girls clap on the on-beat but Grace only eyes the stage, not clapping. She'd be French-inhaling if smoking was permitted here. Douglas is rapt. Joe starts to clap on the backbeat, the 2 and 4.

Finally, drowned out, he gives up. Douglas watches Grace. Unable to stand the bad clapping and Burkhardt shouting in her ear, he leaves in disgust.

INT. DOUGLAS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Douglas plays a solo on his used grey-pearl drums. He's not Beasley but he is a heavy drummer.

INT. DOUGLAS ROOM - NIGHT

Douglas sleeps. He's awakened by a woman's moaning SCREAMS. But he doesn't get up. After awhile --

PAT'S VOICE

Quintina, wake up!

The SCREAMS stop. All is silent in the house. Douglas can't go back to sleep.

BLACK SCREEN:

INT. HANCOCK HIGH SCHOOL - AUDITORIUM - DAY

Douglas, Wells and Ronny whisper over the J.C. Whitney Automotive Catalog as male students sit through an Army recruiter's pitch. Navy and Marine recruiters wait their turn.

RONNY

Since I got my drivers license, I hardly play guitar no more.

DOUGLAS

Like my drums. Pedal broke.

WELLS

(points to catalog)

If I sold my Telecaster I could rake my old lady's Pontiac just like that.

RECRUITER

-- not only will you become proficient with firearms, joining the Army is a way to underwrite college --

Woman Teacher crosses the stage, speaks to Recruiters.

RECRUITER

My God.

(turns to students)

Gentlemen, the President of the United States has been shot.

VOICE

Holy shit.

WOMAN TEACHER

Who said that?

INT. DOUGLAS' HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Working class. Douglas enters in bathrobe. His mother QUINTINA, father PAT, and younger sister EVELYN are at the table. A knife scrapes an English muffin, news of Kennedy's funeral preparations plays on the radio. Pat reads the news.

DOUGLAS

How come you're not at work?

PAT

Tony and me are trying to decide whether to open the store or not.

EVELYN

Most businesses are closed.

QUINTINA

Good, I'm very happy for them, they're so rich.

Douglas puts a muffin in the toaster. This is a depressed home. Full of anger and unrealized dreams. Quintina, once pretty, has her hair in a net, circles under her eyes.

QUINTINA

Louise called. My mother's dropsy hasn't gotten any better.

PAT

That's a bear.

Angered at his rote concern, she sips coffee, stares straight ahead.

EVELYN

What's dropsy?

QUINTINA

It's a disease. The limbs get bloated with fluid.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

-- President Johnson greets Mrs. Kennedy and Senator Kennedy --

Quin decides to mist up over Kennedy. Radio murmurs on. Pat scratches a raw, almost bleeding, patch on his arm.

PAT

You had still another one of your nightmares last night, Quin. The hell were you yelling about?

QUINTINA

This colored boy was trying to come up the lawn to get me.

This doesn't seem abnormal to anyone. Everybody just eats.
MUSIC OVER --

SONG

'I can feel a new expression on my face/I can feel a strange sensation taking place/

INT. HIGH SCHOOL PARTY - NIGHT

SAME SONG, OVER: (Jackie De Shannon, 1963). A TV is on but none of the Hancock High party people are really watching file footage of JFK with Sinatra.

SONG

'Every time that you/walk in the room.'

Douglas, drunk, can't take his eyes off Grace who is on a couch being felt up by Burkhardt. Douglas kills off a beer.

INT. BATHROOM - PARTY HOUSE - NIGHT

Douglas weeps, punches the door. The JOCK whose house this is pushes in, starts yelling.

JOCK

You split the door panel, fuckin' asshole!

ACROSS THE ROOM

Ronny and Wells see the beef. [Note: Ronny wears a varsity football cardigan]. Another jock has joined in shoving Douglas around. Ronny and Wells cross -- a pushing match with the Jocks ensues -- but Ronny goes suddenly ape.

RONNY

I told you after the Chatham game,
Moran, I'm gonna kill your ass --

Ronny has to be hauled off the guy and hustled out by Wells
and Douglas.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Douglas, Ronny, Wells sit on Wells' Nash Metropolitan, all
drunk. Ronny has his arm around Douglas's shoulder.

RONNY

Look, man -- the reason me and
Wells never asked you to be the
drummer is Beasley, man -- he's
like fuckin Max Roach. What were we
supposed to do?

WELLS

You're just not all that good.

DOUGLAS

(sobbing)
I'm a shit athlete too!
(to Ronny)
You play varsity football!

WELLS

That much is true. Most girls, if
you're not an athlete you're lower
than dogshit .

DOUGLAS

At least you're an artist, man.
Some girls think that's cool.

RONNY

Albano you're too shy and retiring.
You don't stand up for yourself.

WELLS

Exactly.

Ronny looks off, starts smiling.

RONNY

Tell you though, man, you think
Grace Deitz is a piece? Her older
sister Claire? Goes to UNC? She's
home for Thanksgiving.

(MORE)

RONNY (cont'd)

I see her getting undressed through my window. Fuck, man, I have to beat off so much I'm sticking it in a fur lined glove so it doesn't get all chafed.

DOUGLAS

(in his face)

Don't you compare her to her sister!

RONNY

Always depressed-drunk.

DOUGLAS

I love her, man.

Starts punching the Metropolitan. Wells shoves him.

WELLS

Fuck you think you're doing, fag?

INT. AUNT MARY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Thanksgiving dinner jammed with Douglas' cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents. The aunts and Quintina are clearing emptied manicotti trays. The pterodactyl-sized turkey is brought to the table. The eating and noise are endless.

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

This house shows money. Having Thanksgiving dinner are Grace, ravishing older sister CLAIRE, younger siblings, KENNY and CATHLEEN, father JACK DEITZ and mother MARTY. The parents sip Old-Fashioneds with the meal. Claire is livid.

CLAIRE

Little kids in school in North Carolina stood up and cheered when they heard he got shot.

JACK

Don't believe everything you hear.

CLAIRE

No, let's believe The Heartbreak of Psoriasis and all those other ads you do -- Buick and those jerks.

JACK
(calm smile)
Actually, Tegrin is not our client.
Mommy, I think we've got a beatnik
in our midst.

Kenny is noisily sucking an ice cube.

GRACE
Stop it, you little fag!

JACK
(musing)
The man who invented the Buick
automobile is a jerk. Hmm.

GRACE
They cheered because President
Kennedy wanted to advance the
integration of colored people.

JACK
Very good, Grace. That's the
reason JFK garnered such animus
toward him down in Dixieland.

CLAIRE
Garnered what toward him?

Grace sees Claire is giving him the finger under the table.
The sisters smirk --

JACK
Look it up, Mrs. Kerouac.

CLAIRE
I'm transferring out of NC.

JACK
(snide; raises glass)
Congratulation, mommy. You've bred
two champions of the underdog.

ROD SERLING (V.O.)
We are all travelers. The trip
starts in a place called birth --

INT. DOUGLAS HOUSE - TV ROOM - NIGHT

ROD SERLING

-- and ends in that lonely town
called death...

Pat and Douglas are watching TV, Pat eating a bowl of ice
cream, belt undone. Douglas is flopped on the floor.

PAT

You can give this program back to
the Indians, far as I'm concerned.

DOUGLAS

It's so cool. It's like Edgar Allan
Poe. Nothing's ever what it seems.

PAT

Real life is too much like what it
seems.

DOUGLAS

(gets up to leave)

This Army recruiter who came to
school? He said they got a tank
coming out weighs sixty tons and
goes sixty miles an hour.

PAT

(laughs)

Madonn'.

DOUGLAS

Yeah, it can drive right through a
building. I want to go to a
college that has ROTC. I decided
to be a tank driver.

PAT

Keep your grades up. Achieving your
goals is ten percent inspiration,
ninety percent perspiration.

INT. DOUGLAS' ROOM - NIGHT

Douglas flops on the bed. He turns off the light. He stares
out the window. He falls asleep

INT. RONNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ronny is asleep, clutching his penis under the sheets.

INT. WELL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Wells is sleeping over current events homework. A newspaper headline near his slack pen hand reads: 3 WEEKS AFTER DEATH OF JFK, MANY AMERICANS FEEL "LOST". Suddenly -- a SOUND from the next room wakes Wells. It makes him go investigate --

INT. WELLS' BROTHER'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Brother JEFF, 19, is reading a college text. The SOUND is The Beatles: "I Want To Hold Your Hand", coming from the radio. Wells comes in the room --

WELLS

What's that?

INT. RONNY'S ROOM - DAY

"She Loves You" is heard through the wall. Ronny opens his closet, tosses football helmet, hockey stick aside. He hauls his guitar case out. Lays it on the bed, snaps the clasps, opens it. He stares at the Gibson.

INT. WELL'S ROOM - DAY

Phone receiver on the night-stand, Wells fingers his unplugged Fender in a "She Loves You" chord change.

WELLS

(speaks to phone receiver)
...it's G 7th not G natural.

RONNY (O.S.)

(plays chord)
You're right. I'm coming over.

INT. GRACE'S HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT

The Rolling Stones on black and white TV. Grace and some girlfriends watch. Some are turned off.

GIRL

Eew.

Grace smokes and watches silently, sexually accessed -- song is "I Just Want To Make Love To You". As intended, the bands' hair, song selection, facial expressions are more seditious and threatening than the Beatles. Song FINISHES.

DEAN MARTIN

There they are, la'es and gen'men,
the Rollin' Stones -- aren't they
great?

Rolls his eyes, middle-aged audience laughs.

INT. DOUGLAS' HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT

Pat is also watching "Hollywood Palace", ice cream bowl
bouncing on his stomach as he laughs.

INT. DOUGLAS' HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Douglas stands at the open fridge eating baloney. PHONE
RINGS.

DOUGLAS

Hello?

RONNY

You see Dean Martin last night?

DOUGLAS

I had to go to a wake. My mother's
godmother.

RONNY

You shoulda seen the Stones, man.

DOUGLAS

I know, goddamnit.

RONNY

But Dean Martin? He's a fuckin
jerk off.

DOUGLAS

Yeah.

RONNY

Look, me and Lamont are gonna start
a band. You want to play drums?

Douglas is stunned.

DOUGLAS

What about Beasley?

RONNY

He's doing so shitty at school, his old man's talking about having him join the Army. When we make our record he's got to be available to go on tour.

DOUGLAS

Yeah.

RONNY

Also, I need somebody to back me up on vocals. You got an okay voice.

DOUGLAS

What about Wells?

RONNY

He sucks man, he's got a terrible voice. Dave Smith is gonna play bass but he's too bent looking to be up front.

(beat)

Don't tell Wells I said that about his voice.

INT. DOUGLAS' HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

DOUGLAS

You had to go and sell my drums.

QUINTINA

(steam ironing)

You weren't playing them. You had to have that piece of junk car that blew up after a week. Your father works himself to death in that store. That drum money is in your bank account for college.

INT. DINER - DAY

The new band in a booth, smoking and drinking Cokes. DAVE SMITH is tall and lanky.

DAVE SMITH

So what's our first move?

INT. HANCOCK PHOTO STUDIO - DAY

Weddings and Holy Communions line the walls. The band do their best approximation of David Bailey's dark ground-breaking cover, "The Rolling Stones "England's Newest Hitmakers"" -- dressed Brit as they can, which means hair-slightly-over-ears, sport jackets, pointy-toed tie shoes. They stare sullenly down the barrel of the lens.

INT. DINER - DAY

They look at the proofs, which have none of the Stones/Bailey lighting or magic. But they like them.

WELLS

The Rat Traps.

DAVE SMITH

Huh?

DOUGLAS

What about the Mannish Boys?

RONNY

Like the Muddy Waters song...

Silence. They consider.

DAVE SMITH

I don't know, for some reason to me it's got like, a mo connotation.

Silence.

DAVE SMITH

What about The Runs?

They all laugh. Except --

WELLS

This is serious, man!

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Of a split-level home. The band shares rehearsal space with Dave Smith's father's 18' bass boat and 60 horse Evinrude. They have their instruments plugged in but nobody's playing. Mostly just cigarette smoking. Doug sits behind cardboard boxes for drums.

DAVE SMITH
(thinks)
The Gravity Knives.

WELLS
I just told you, man, there's a
band from Cedar Grove called the
Switchblades.

DAVE SMITH
That's why I said Gravity Knives.

EXT. PARK PLAYGROUND - MERRY-GO-ROUND - DAY

The band hangs, smoking, throwing rocks in the brook.

WELLS
Let me ask you a question: what
would you rather have in a knife
fight, a switchblade or a gravity
knife?

DAVE SMITH
What's that got to do with it?
I've never been in a knife fight. I
suppose you have?

WELLS
Yeah, as a matter of fact.

DAVE SMITH
Yeah, right. At Delbarton Prep.

WELLS
Fuck you, man.

DAVE SMITH
Fuck you, you faggot.

INT. GARAGE - ANOTHER DAY

They are actually playing. Ronny sings lead. No PA system,
vocals fed through his amp. Douglas drums on the cardboard
boxes. Dave Smith has HUGE bass amp.

RONNY
'/Goin' faster than a roller
coaster/(etc)

DAVE SMITH

Watch your cig on my old man's
mahogany trim!

Doug sings backup vocal to Ronny's lead, on the chorus. Buddy
Holly classic. --

RONNY AND DOUGLAS

'Every day seems a little
longer/every way loves a little
stronger/(etc)

EXT. 48TH STREET, MANHATTAN - MANNY'S MUSIC - DAY

Douglas, Ronny, Wells head for the famous mecca of New York
studio and stage musicians.

INT. MANNY'S MUSIC - MANHATTAN - DAY

They come in the doors.

WELLS

Bobby Capuano said Keith gets his
strings here.

The aisles are filled with young long-hairs.

WELLS

Holy Christ, look at all these
guys.

RONNY

We're one of millions.

They look at each other, worried. They see a guy trying out
an Ampeg, playing wicked guitar, an early pre-Clapton.
They're thrown.

RONNY

What's that, man?

A GUY

Called bottleneck. Slide.

WELLS

Reminds me we got to get a new bass
player. Dave Smith's quitting.

RONNY

How come?

WELLS

He wants to play only Beatles.

DOUGLAS

(worried)

Only Beatles? Really?

WELLS

Not just only Beatles, only Lennon.

RONNY

He starting a band?

Wells nods. Douglas is daunted.

DOUGLAS

Shit, only Lennon songs. That's a great idea.

They watch the guitar genius. Ronny points with his chin -- Slingerland drum set, high on a shelf. They see an ancient sales clerk.

RONNY

Excuse me, sir. How much are those Slingerland dru --

The guy ignores him, blows past. Ronny looks at Wells and Douglas.

RONNY

This is why I hate fuckin' New York!

DOUGLAS

Look, Ronaldo, they're obviously out of my price range.

RONNY

(after a beat)

I'll loan you part of the money.

Wells hears this, snakes away on the pretext of checking out a cello.

DOUGLAS

I don't know...

RONNY

(smiles)

This is our band, man.

INT. RONNY'S BASEMENT REC ROOM - DAY

New rehearsal space, all in knotty pine. Doug seats himself behind shiny new drums. Adjusts the stool. He sets up a heavy beat.

Ronny joins in on guitar, then Wells. The three play, no bass but drums.

[Note: from here on, whenever they play, it will be shown cinematically, the tactile feel of these instruments, and the power and pleasure these tom-toms, Whamo-bars, frets, fuzz boxes, RCA plugs, maracas, and humbuckings can produce in the hands of not spectacularly gifted people who are committed. Performance sequences, even in a basement rec room, will be crafted to depict the musical experience of the band members -- the surprise musical payoffs, the effort just to stay on beat, the failure, sometimes, to fully coalesce -- and sometimes, miracle of miracles, RIDING A GROOVE. The goal is to be in the musician's POV, not solely in the audience's POV of them.

The intro is LOUD. It ROCKS. (Chuck Berry's "Let It Rock").

RONNY

'In the heat of the day down in
Mobile, Alabama/Workin' on the
railroad with a steel drivin'
hammer/Got to get some money buy
some brand new shoes/got to find
somebody chase away these
blues(etc.)

They play -- with some mistakes -- the song through. They're totally shocked, elated.

RONNY

Christ. Let's do it again.

And they slam again into the Berry intro --

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB - GOLF COURSE - DAY

Douglas pushes a SCREAMING rotary mower along the steep grassy bank of a green. The mower spits stones and dust. Terrible work. LAUNDERS MOBLEY, 50, African-American, is pushing another mower. Deafening NOISE.

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB - NEAR CLUB HOUSE - DAY

Job done, Douglas and Launders push their mowers along.

LAUNDERS

We sat around two months waitin'
for that battle of Monte Casino.
Gonorrhea? My cock was runnin' like
a faucet.

They laugh.

LAUNDERS

When I got back stateside, I told
my mama. She give me a poultice.
(chuckles)
The lieutenant in Salerno he had
told us, said, 'Any you black
troopers tamper with these Italian
women, you be hung on the spot.'

Douglas looks at him in silent shock. Launders just chuckles
and keeps walking. MUSIC wafts in -- Stones' "Tell Me
(You're Comin' Back To Me)".

DOUGLAS AND LAUNDERS

are nearing the pool. The music comes from a radio. Capri-
panted Claire Deitz, watched by sun-bathing girlfriends, rich
boys, and asshole LIFEGUARDS, dances. Exquisite.

DOUGLAS

slows to a stop at the fence. Launders keeps on going. A
movement in the poolside crowd reveals Grace. Claire pulls
her up to dance. Grace has on a bikini. A pool towel sways
from her hips.

DOUGLAS - CLOSER

Done for. The girls are excellent dancers: sensual,
careless, each aware only of what's inside her own pretty
head.

SONG

'I wait as the days go by/I long
for the nights to go by/I hear the
knock on my door that never comes/I
hear the telephone that hasn't
rung/

Douglas stares. 12-string guitar solo plays and for one
instant Grace's eyes happen to fall on Douglas's eyes, on the
other side of the chain-link.

SONG

'You got to tell me/you're coming
back to me.'

Her eyes turn away, like she's seen nothing. Maybe.

INT. DOUGLAS' ROOM - NIGHT

Douglas has a tape recorder mike placed at a stereo speaker and is recording the haunting "Tell Me" guitar solo. Each time the solo ends, before the vocal resumes, he hits STOP, moves the needle back to the solo's beginning, hits RECORD and records the solo all over again.

INT. RONNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ronny and Douglas hang out, listening to the endless loop of guitar solo that Douglas has created.

RONNY

That's a twelve string, man.

DOUGLAS

No shit?

Douglas happens to see out the window --

POV

The house behind Ronny's -- Grace's house. Wells and Grace are in her driveway with tennis rackets, laughing.

RONNY

Ever feel like a total jerk-off?

DOUGLAS

(glued to window)

Hmm...?

RONNY

Gigi Ahrens went all the way last
night.

DOUGLAS

(trying to fake like he's
been laid)

Hunh. Yeah.

RONNY

Now her and you and everybody are going away to college and I'm headed to that malo prep school for senior year all over again.

Grace waves gaily as Wells backs the Nash out, going up on her parents' flower beds. This delights her no end.

GRACE

You're such a retarded driver!

Douglas looks heartsick. The "Tell Me" 12-string solo plays over and over and over...

BLACK SCREEN:

EXT. DOUGLAS' BACK YARD - DAY

LATE AUTUMN. Pat is furious.

PAT

This is what two grand a year to that goddamn college buys me?

Pat has a rake in his hand, a leaf fire burns. Douglas stands with a suitcase. There's been a major transformation - his hair is almost down his neck. He wears black boots, pipe-stem wide-wale corduroys, a flowered shirt, second-hand pea coat.

DOUGLAS

There's people with longer hair than me.

PAT

Fags!

Quintina, in bathrobe, hugs herself against the November cold. Evelyn spies on the fight from a window.

PAT

Look at that monkey's-ass of a coat! You look like you just came off Ellis Island!

DOUGLAS

(puzzled)
What?

Pat disgustedly stalks off. Evelyn ducks out of his sight.

QUINTINA

(welling up)

He kills himself at that store.
Fourteen hours a day with that
psoriasis to send you to college
and this is what you do?

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT

Circle of people -- including Wells, Douglas, Ronny -- as
Wells reveals a joint. Grace's friend MICHELLE looks at it.

MICHELLE

So that's marijuana. Do you get
real drunk?

RONNY

(smug smirk with Wells)
Drunk.

Wells lights up, tokes, passes to Douglas. We can tell it's
Douglas' first time. Beat. He takes it, hits --

LATER:

Douglas is laughing, red eyed. They're passing the joint. A
Girl is coughing painfully, her eyes streaming tears. Sudden
KNOCK. Everybody tenses.

GRACE (O.S.)

It's me.

Wells unlocks the door, Grace enters and Doug's first high
is over. His laughing shrivels up.

GRACE

Can I get some of that?

RONNY

(hands her joint)
Let 'er rip.

Everyone cracks up like this is the soul of wit. Douglas is
now self-conscious and paranoid.

JOE PATUTO

How many girls at Vassar smoke?

Grace hits, hands to a GIRL. The Girl declines. Hands it to
Doug. He stares at the moist end. This is Grace's saliva!
A SEEMING HOUR GOES BY --

WELLS

Fuck you doing, man?!

Douglas puts his lips where Grace's were, hits, sits back. Michelle goes next. The joint is short, Michelle burns her fingers.

WELLS

Need the roach clip.

JOE PATUTO

What's a roach clip?

RONNY

Fuck the roach clip. Watch how we do things at Wellfleet Academy.

He grabs the nearly spent toilet paper roll from its dispenser, spools off the remaining sheets --

DOUGLAS

(paranoia)

Let's just go.

RONNY

(annoyed)

What kind of way is that to behave at a pot party?

With the point of a key he makes a small hole near an end of the toilet paper tube. Sudden KNOCKING.

JOE PATUTO

(getting scared)

Flush it down the john. There's hardly any left anyway.

RONNY

Be cool, man.

Ronny places the roach sticking up in the small hole in the tube. He puts his lips around the far end of the tube. He lights the roach, sucks a lungfull of smoke through the tube - making the roach glow red.

GIRL

(nervous)

Let's just go, okay?

Ronny holds the smoke in his lungs. He offers the tube around. No takers. He puts the toilet paper tube back in his mouth.

VOICE OUTSIDE
We need to piss!

WELLS
Ron, fuck it, let's go --

RONNY
(wags his finger)
Waste not, want not.

He sucks hard on the tube. The red-hot roach accidentally slips from its hole, dropping in front of the open-ended tube as he is sucking in. The hot roach is vacuumed down the tube into his throat. His whole expression changes.

RONNY
Fuck --

He grab at his throat, starts writhing, kicking.

GIRL
Omigod!

He thrashes on the floor, gagging.

GRACE
Give him some water!

SECOND GIRL
No, it's someone's personal
bathroom cup!

WELLS
You all right, man?

He shakes his head, glugs water into his mouth. He vomits all over his pea coat. He crashes out of the room, hurtles down the stairs.

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - BASEMENT - LATER

Party. Beer. "House of The Rising Sun". Hostess KAREN is with Wells and Doug near the band's instrument set-up. A junior-high kid, ARTHUR, is packing up his Fender bass.

KAREN
(upset)
Lynn Koch and the popular girls
already left. They came to see the
band.

DOUGLAS
(shrugs)
Ronny's lead singer. He had an
asthma attack.

Burkhardt and the Jocks come over.

BURKHARDT

Hey, fag, what's the name of your group? The Hancock Beatles?

JOCK

(derisive laughter)
You look like fuckin girls.

DOUGLAS

If I grew a mustache I could get served with your mother's ID.

Tussle.

KAREN

Stop! Both of you!

WELLS

We're not ready to play without Ron.

KAREN

I should have listened to Dave Smith. He called me. He's got a band. They do all John Lennon songs.

MINUTES LATER:

The band is ready to play.

WELLS

Wait for my count 1-2-3-and, then you guys --

KAREN

(flashing lights on and off)
Ladies and gentlemen -- the HANCOCK BEATLES!

Wells and Douglas curse under their breath, then --

WELLS

1 and --

Douglas jumps the gun, plays a Bo Diddly tom-tom beat. Arthur nods to his junior-high pal GENE to start maracas -- guitar and bass stumble in.

DOUGLAS
 'Heey, Mona/whoa-oh-oh Mon --
 Wait --

They lost the beat, stop. They go though whole intro again.

DOUGLAS
 'Heeey, Mon--'

WELLS
 Wait --

Lost his place. Some boo. Douglas again re-starts the Diddy beat, Gene adds maracas, guitar and bass re-enter:

DOUGLAS
 'Hey, Mona/whoa-oh, Mona --

This time it lifts off. They play through to the end!

DOUGLAS
 '-- I said, 'Hey, hey-hey-hey
 Mona'.

He keeps the tom-toms going till the guitars tail off, then he ends it. Applause.

DRUNKS
 Encore, maestro!

JOCKS
 Boo! Fuck you!

Burkhardt throws an empty beer can that hits poor little Arthur. Karen strides up to the jocks.

GIRL
 You guys can just leave. I mean
 it!

A long Western movie silence. Then, the jocks leave. The drunks cheer.

DRUNKS
 Play some more!

SECOND GIRL
 Play Beatles.

GIRL
 Play "How Many Roads Must A
 Man Walk Down" by Bob Dylan.

GUY
 Play "Let's Lock The Door And
 Throw Away The Key" by Jay
 and the Americans. That song
 is so boss!

WELLS
 (peevied at the audience)
 No. It's all we planned to do for
 our debut is one number.

DRUNKS
 (chanting)
 Encore, encore!

Arthur is noodling the bass line. Doug gets into a groove
 with the bass. It's all bottom. Some girls' bodies start to
 move. Wells adds the tremolo guitar -- IT ROCKS --

DOUGLAS
 'Tell you Mona what I wanna
 do/build a house next door to you --

ANGLE - GRACE

silhouetted and leaning against a back wall, smoking. Her
 eyes are fixed on Douglas as he sings. She exhales smoke.

INT. DOUGLAS' HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Quintina irons, in curlers and robe. Pat reads the paper.
 Douglas, in jeans, no shirt, long hair bedraggled, eats
 boiled ham straight from the fridge. Pat follows his
 movements with deadly eyes -- goes back to his paper. Evelyn
 enters.

EVELYN
 Happy Thanksgiving, everybody!

QUINTINA
 Easy for you to say.

Pat's jaw tightens in anger at Quin. He keeps reading,
 scratches his psoriasis.

EVELYN
 Going to Aunt Mary's is nice but
 it'd be fun to have everybody over
 here some day.

QUINTINA
 I work.

Pat's anger at her boils inside him.

QUINTINA

My sisters are free as birds.

PAT

You think the Army's gonna let you
drive a tank dressed like that?

Douglas realizes it's him being addressed.

DOUGLAS

Army? I'm not going in the Army.

PAT

Why not!?

DOUGLAS

They bomb the Vietnamese!

PAT

Look at him. High heels.

DOUGLAS

They're Cuban heels.

PAT

(louder)

You want to wear Cuban heels, go
live in Cuba!

DOUGLAS

They have nothing to do with
Castro.

PAT

They're nigger shoes.

QUINTINA

Pasqual'...

PAT

Don't Pasqual me! He looks like he
just got off the boat.

DOUGLAS

(bored)

You already said that.

Pat whips a heel of Italian bread, hits him in the face. He
springs to his feet toward Douglas.

DOUGLAS
(holds his eye)
That hurt!

PAT
(close, menacing)
One day, my friend, you and me are
gonna tangle.

QUINTINA
Pat! Stop it! Both of you!

Pat stands before his son like he might hit him.

INT. AUNT MARY'S - DAY

Manicotti trays carried out/turkey carried in. Little KIDS at
a separate card table.

QUINTINA
-- apparently Lorraine has so much
trouble breathing with the
emphysema she can't even stand the
weight of a sheet on her chest.

PAT
Let's talk about something
else, huh.

COUSIN PAUL
Hear, hear.

COUSIN PAUL is 24, bearded, bohemian, a commercial
illustrator.

QUINTINA
Her fellow teachers came to see her
in the hospital.

UNCLE BEPPY
That's nice.

QUINTINA
They felt odd, though, you know,
with the gasping sounds.

Pat sighs to himself.

UNCLE PAUL
Our Barb's only a couple months now
from her teaching degree.

BARBARA, 21, shrugs and smiles.

UNCLE MURF

What about you over there, Douglas MacArthur? Still gonna be a racing car driver?

AUNT MARY

Who, Johnny Ringo?

DOUGLAS

I don't know, I don't think so.

PAT

He looks like he just got off the boat.

UNCLE PAUL

So what are you going do with you life?

DOUGLAS

I want to be a musician.

Pat grimly chews. AUNT JOSIE winks and does the twist.

AUNT JOSIE

Rock and roll, right, Dougie?

QUINTINA

(mocking his pretensions)
He's in a band!

COUSIN PAUL

(a *cognoscento*)
Have you heard the Fugs?

Douglas shakes his head, wishing he was miles away.

QUINTINA

He had to be a drummer. That Gene Krupa was a drug addict.

COUSIN PAUL

He smoked a little 'mary jane',
Aunt Quin.

UNCLE PAUL

Like that's nothing?!

COUSIN PAUL

It provides insights, dad.

UNCLE MURF

That be-bop may be fun, but you can't make a living at it.

COUSIN PAUL

Who says?

UNCLE PAUL

Paul, just shut up.

COUSIN BARBARA

You want to be Mick Jagger, cuz?

DOUGLAS

(reddens)

No.

COUSIN PAUL

He wants to lead the art life. We
grok each other.

DOUGLAS

It's like my English teacher in
high school said -- there's like,
poetic mysteries in the world.

UNCLE BEPPY

He's a poet/but he don't know it.

CARD TABLE GIRL

His feet show it/they're Long
fellows!'

General laughter. Douglas could box-cutter his little
cousin. As everyone continues eating --

DOUGLAS

There's more to existence on this
planet than manicotti and turkey.

PAT

You sure shoveled enough of it down
your mouth.

UNCLE MURF

(confused)

Poetry? We're talking about boogie-
woogie, aren't we?

COUSIN BARBARA

(sly smile)

-- he wants to be Mick.

AUNT MARY

Oof, madonn'.

UNCLE BEPPY

Well, that's not gonna happen, my friend. He's got the Jews behind him.

COUSIN PAUL

Brian Epstein is the Beatles manager, Uncle Bep.

AUNT MARY

They can all go jump in the lake.

JUMP CUT: CHRISTMAS.

Different decorations but -- manicotti out, turkey in.

UNCLE MURF

(notices Pat scratching)
Psoriasis still giving you the devil?

QUINTINA

He refuses to go see the doctor!

COUSIN PAUL

Have you tried Tegrin?

AUNT MARY

(chuckles)
Douglas, remember when you used to watch Ben Casey and you were gonna be a doctor?

QUINTINA

Please. That was a will of the wisp.

PAT

He can be a clown in the circus, but he's gonna finish college first.

QUINTINA

Don't let him think it's that simple!

UNCLE MURF

(to a Card Table Boy)
That's funny with the pitcher. Do it again, I'm coming over there, smash it over your head.

RONNY

I got screwed, man. That shit
sucks.

Most of the group leave. Some remain smoking cigarettes.

GRACE

(to Douglas)

You have a cigarette?

She could have asked anyone. Thrown, he wordlessly extends
pack. She takes one. He extends a Bic, she lights up.

GRACE

Thanks.

The others leave. It gets very quiet.

GRACE

He may be right about that grass.

DOUGLAS

You smoke a lot at school?

GRACE

This guy from Harvard I was dating,
he did.

Shrunk by Harvard, Doug disparages.

DOUGLAS

Does he like that place?

GRACE

I guess. He's a grad student.

He gets two inches shorter. Silence.

DOUGLAS

Your basement is cool.

GRACE

Oh...that, yeah.

DOUGLAS

(casual)

You're not going out with him any
more?

She shivers a little in the cold, takes a puff.

GRACE

How come you never talked to me in high school?

DOUGLAS

We talked. In Miss Vogel's class.

GRACE

(laughs)

Like twice you said something. Once was about the pencil sharpener. The other was, I dunno.

DOUGLAS

(beat)

I really liked you.

GRACE

Yeah, I know.

DOUGLAS

You knew that?

GRACE

Yeah, everybody did.

DOUGLAS

Fucking Wells.

GRACE

You guys all gossip. Worse than girls.

Silence.

DOUGLAS

You like Wells, don't you.

GRACE

(deflects)

Our parents belong to the club and all.

(beat)

Anyway, he likes the Falcone twins.

DOUGLAS

(prosecutorial)

But you like him, don't you?

She stares moodily out across the snow. Smokes.

GRACE

He's funny. He makes me laugh.

DOUGLAS

(dismissive smirk)

Yeah, I had kind of a minor crush
on you for a little while in high
school.

GRACE

You have a good voice.

DOUGLAS

Pardon?

GRACE

When you sang solo that time? The
band sounded better. Just my
opinion.

He is about to lose his shit. But his affect stays flat.

GRACE

How can you guys not have a name
for the band yet?

DOUGLAS

We only get to play on vacations.

She smokes. Inside, the Stones are off, the Kinks now
playing..

DOUGLAS

Wells' latest idea is he wants to
call us The Dark Ages.

Waits for her vote. Nothing.

DOUGLAS

And he's got a lot of say. Lead
guitar, he's like a musical genius.

(beat)

Anyway, yeah, we don't have a name.

She lets the cigarette drop in the snow -- tsss. She looks up
at him suddenly.

GRACE

Time is on your side.

She is looking directly at him.

DOUGLAS

Yeah, we'll -- probably figure it
out.

She goes back in the house. He watches her go.

INT. DEITZ HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALL - LATER

Douglas searches for Grace. Follows a VOICE. A COUPLE grind on the floor in front of a TV.

ROD SERLING

-- Mr. Robert Wilson has just been
discharged from a sanitarium --

Douglas continues along, sees light at the top of the attic stairs. He hesitates, then goes up.

TOP OF STAIRS:

Douglas looks in: candles flicker. Older sister Claire, a painter, is moving about. Robert Johnson's "32-20 Blues" plays. Claire sees him.

CLAIRE

Grace went to the Little Falls
diner with some people.

DOUGLAS

I was just looking for the
bathroom.

His lucky day --

CLAIRE

Can you help me with this?

He hops to, helps her move a table. Her bed is an unmade mess which he finds looking at impossible to resist. Claire's paintings flicker in the light. She squeezes a plastic ReaLemon into her Coke. Nervous, Doug picks an LP cover from the floor.

DOUGLAS

Robert Johnson...

CLAIRE

I love Chicago blues. That's all
we played at NC.

DOUGLAS

Delta blues. Chicago is electric.
(listens)
Reminds me of 'What A Shame'.

CLAIRE
What's that?

DOUGLAS
The Stones.

CLAIRE
Friends of mine who know told me those are actually old white studio musicians playing on the those records. Jagger and the others mime it for the performances.

DOUGLAS
(casual)
So did she say who she was going to the diner with?

No answer. She turns to her easel. He sifts through records -- Elmore James, Howlin' Wolf...

DOUGLAS
I don't get it. How come the English know all about the blues and not us? But it comes from here!

CLAIRE
Would you like to watch Grace eat?

DOUGLAS
(deflecting)
Huddie Ledbetter?! The crap from elementary school? 'Jump down, turn around, pick a bale of cotton'?

She drinks Coke, paints. It's a male portrait -- pre-goth, forbidding -- it's her father. Douglas studies the Leadbelly jacket

DOUGLAS
"Good Night Irene"? That song is so corny.

"32-20" ends. She cues up Leadbelly. Douglas is stealing glances at panties overflowing a cardboard carton.

CLAIRE
Leadbelly shot a guy in the stomach. Hence his name.

DOUGLAS
Good thing he didn't shoot him in the ass. Heh, heh.

CLAIRE

I'm moving. That's why there's all this stuff.

DOUGLAS

Back to North Carolina?

CLAIRE

East Village.

She is squeezing ReaLemon juice into oil paint on her palette. She starts to daub the mixture onto canvas. The painted face of Jack glares out.

CLAIRE

This is a series on Jack. This is his blood by way of vodka gimlets, his summer favorite.

Huh? Silence.

DOUGLAS

Yeah.

(realizes)

Holy shit, that's a twelve-string! They had that first?

BLACK SCREEN:

INT. FRAT HOUSE - NIGHT

Banner reads: WORK IT OUT WITH A PENCIL, STEVENS TECH CLASS OF '65! A bunch of engineering dorks and their dates are dancing as the "Lewe band" plays "Like a Rolling Stone". The band is a year older but Ronny's voice still strains in the upper registers.

RONNY

' -- you used to ride on a chrome horse with your diplomat/who carried on his shoulder a Siamese cat!'

INT. RONNY'S STATION WAGON - LATER

Ronny, Wells, Douglas ride along, instruments in back.

DOUGLAS

Can you believe that guy? The valedictorian, and he didn't understand 'Like a Rolling Stone'?

WELLS

That's why I say we shouldn't play
live. People like that sap your
energy.

"Satisfaction" comes on the radio. Ronny boots it.

DOUGLAS

Joe's sounding better though, don't
you think?

RONNY

(looking up)
Hey, look, man...

A vague cloud formation -- or something -- very bright in the
night sky. All are intrigued.

WELLS

What is it?

RONNY

Beats the fuckin' shit out of me.

WELLS

A UFO.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ronny wheels the car to the shoulder. They get out. A hot
summer evening. Crickets whine. They peer up. Clouds or
jet trail.

WELLS

It's not a flying saucer. It's not
moving, man.

DOUGLAS

(half kidding)
It's a sign from God.

WELLS

It's a 3.

They squint, size it up. Could be a 3.

RONNY

It's an S.

Could be an S.

WELLS

Yeah, it looks like an S.

RONNY

It's an S and a 3!

(realizes)

It means Success! For us 3!

DOUGLAS

Holy shit.

WELLS

Holy fuck.

They pound each other on the back, laughing and gazing up.

INT. RONNY'S BASEMENT REC ROOM - DAY

Instruments and mikes are set up but they're not playing, they're laying around. A constant 60 cycle HUM from some instrument.

RONNY

(reading teen mag)

Ray Davies and Dave Davies got in another fist fight on stage. The Kinks may be breaking up.

WELLS

(fanning)

It's really hot.

JOE PATUTO

I have to go home for dinner.

They all nod; he climbs the cellar stairs, goes out. The BUZZING continues unabated.

DOUGLAS

How about -- The Twilight Zones?

A silence. Wells and Ron look over.

DOUGLAS

I keep thinking about that weird thing that happened on the road last night.

RONNY

Whoa...yeah.

(nodding)

That's bad, man.

WELLS

That I will accept as the band name.

Beat.

RONNY

And listen, I know what everybody's thinking -- it took us a year and a half just to come up with a name for the band. Fuck those who wish us ill. The Stones were called Little Boy Blue and Blueboys.

INT. RONNY'S BASEMENT REC ROOM - NIGHT

Ronny and Douglas, just hanging, do the last of a joint. TV is on to "Shindig". Stones being interviewed.

SHINDIG HOST

So then, you fellas feel Howlin' Wolf is the blues singer you most would like American kids to --

BRIAN JONES

Yes, and now why don't you shut up so we can hear Howlin' Wolf?

Ronny and Douglas laugh. The Host would like to kill the little English shit, but --

SHINDIG HOST

Good idea, Brian. Folks, welcome Howlin' Wolf --

The giant comes on and goes into "How Many More Years?"

LATER:

Howlin' Wolf's performance ends. Douglas and Ronny sit, stoned.

DOUGLAS

I had an idea.

RONNY

Put a song on with the TV?

DOUGLAS

Yeah! How'd you know?

RONNY

We put a record on the record
player --

DOUGLAS

-- and then just randomly change
the TV channel and let the record
be the theme song for whatever is
on.

Ronny rummages through records --

RONNY

I'm not gonna tell you in advance
what it is.

Ronny puts the 45 on the turntable, cues it.

SONG

'Well they got a new dance and it
goes like this' --

Joey Dee "Peppermint Twist" -- a SCENE appears onscreen --
multiple lumbering threshing machines moving through a wheat
field, blades turning -- at the precise instant of --

REFRAIN

'-- bop-a-chupa, bop-bop-a-chupa'

They watch "Peppermint Twist" score industrial grain and
bread production -- they are screaming with laughter.

SONG

'-- well round and around/and up
and down/Come on Li'l Miss/the
peppermint twist.

Squads of bakery trucks leave a plant. They're laughing so
hard it hurts.

DOUGLAS

Hey -- the fuckin picture changed
exactly when the chord changed.

RONNY

Completely by chance -- look, it
just did it again!

True, the shots and the musical changes often sync up.

RONNY

(darkly)

That's what they call the music of
the spears. Freaks me out.

But Douglas is riveted. KNOCK at back door. Ronny goes,
opens it. Wells, Grace, Michelle, Joe Patuto and The Bloat
stand with six packs.

LATER:

The band plays a blues jam. As they finish, Ronny looks at
the Bloat --

RONNY

There's a studio in West Orange,
they have a four track? We're
gonna pool our money and make a
demo.

WELLS

I don't think we're ready.

MICHELLE

Grace, tell them about your sister.

GRACE

Claire was home the other night
from the city? And my little
sister Cathleen had a friend
sleeping over? Claire came in and
went through the girl's purse but
the girl woke up. Claire slapped
her in the face and left.

WELLS

(laughs)

Whoa.

They all laugh. Except Douglas.

EXT. RONNY'S BACK YARD - NIGHT

Douglas, The Bloat, Grace, Joe smoke cigarettes and spray
their legs with a hose to keep cool. In the kitchen window
behind, Ronny and some others are visible on the phone.

JOE PATUTO

They're getting a pizza?

Everyone runs inside. Grace pretends to look for her shoe -- a reason to lag.

GRACE

When you sing with Ronny? Harmony
I guess you call it? Those songs
sound more 'something' than when he
sings alone.

DOUGLAS

Why are you laughing about your
sister?

GRACE

She's so outrageous!

DOUGLAS

I know you look up to her and all.
But I don't think you think it's
going good.

She looks at him. Douglas clumsily, suddenly kisses her.
Her arms go around him.

INT. RONNY'S BASEMENT REC ROOM - NEXT DAY:

Band is rehearsing Jackie De Shannon's "When You Walk In The
Room". They finally trail off, light smokes.

JOE PATUTO

Well, if we're not ready for the
studio now, we never will be.

WELLS

(annoyed)

Why do people always say that?
Just because they're not ready at
any particular point in time has
nothing to do with whether they
ever will be. Maybe Van Gogh
wasn't ready to cut off his ear
when he first thought he was ready,
and he waited. Maybe he waited a
long time. 'til he was even
readier!

RONNY

All right, Jesus!

WELLS

Well, it's just useless chit-chat.

Douglas smokes. Pensive, apart.

RONNY

The point is we're going in the studio tomorrow, that's all he's trying to say.

DOUGLAS

I think I can sing that song better than you.

He's looking at Ronny. It gets real quiet. Then --

WELLS

(after a beat)

I agree with him.

Ronny stares at Douglas, then Wells.

WELLS

Look, man, this session is costing us two hundred bucks. We should get it as right as we can.

RONNY

All the sudden you care about the money? You don't even have to work. And you never bought one fucking thing for this band.

WELLS

We're talking about Albano singing lead, man, not familial wealth.

RONNY

Well...who'd play drums?

JOE PATUTO

It's four track. He can lay the drums down separately.

DOUGLAS

Just till we work on some more songs where your voice is better suited, Ronaldo.

RONNY

I don't know, it's...I don't really see the logic.

DOUGLAS

(backs off)

Okay.

A silence. They start to pack up.

WELLS

No, it's not okay. I don't want to do this demo tomorrow if it's just gonna be shit.

RONNY

You never think we're ready.

WELLS

It's not about we're not ready. The point is the vocal is piffy.

(beat)

I'm sorry, man.

JOE PATUTO

It's for the good of the band, man.

Silence.

INT. DOUGLAS' ROOM - NIGHT

Douglas is asleep. Door slams open.

PAT

There's some girl on the phone for you. One o'clock in the goddamn morning.

INT. DOUGLAS' HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Douglas comes down in his underpants to the phone.

DOUGLAS

Hello?

It's Grace, on her bed, smoking, shorts and a bra.

GRACE

Hi.

DOUGLAS

(surprised)

Oh...hey.

Long silence.

GRACE

Am I interrupting something?

DOUGLAS

No, not really.

Long silence.

GRACE

How's your cellar? You said it was flooded?

DOUGLAS

My old man brought home a new sump pump.

GRACE

Oh, well that's good.

DOUGLAS

Yeah. Windows are open. Dry it out.

Long silence. She has nothing else to say. Nor does he. He slides down into a chair. The silence continues. They're content just being connected.

INT. LEN-TONE STUDIOS - DAY

The band -- Douglas at the mike singing lead -- performs silently on the far side of the glass as VINCENT LENTO, 50, setting levels, flips a switch and the sound blasts through JBL's in the booth -- "When You Walk In The Room". Drums, bass, guitars have been laid down previously and the players are adding backing vocals, maracas. It sounds rich, big. The lead vocal is now good.

INT/EXT. WELLS' POOL HOUSE - NIGHT

A party to show off the record which is playing. Douglas, Grace and some other guy stand talking.

SOME GUY

I'd love to be able to say I could do something like that, man.

Grace looks at Douglas, grins. Wells is with the FALCONE twins, MO and MEL (females).

NEARBY

Ronny, so stoned his eyes are slits, is talking with ex-bassist, Dave Smith.

DAVE SMITH

I got to admit it, it's pretty good.

RONNY

You hear the A side where I sang lead on the Arthur Big Boy Crudup tune?

DAVE SMITH

Yeah, I didn't like that as much. Song kind of drags its ass.

RONNY

(covering)

I'm only bringing it up, man, because Wells did that great slide part. Sounded like Brian.

Dave Smith shrugs, his attention elsewhere.

RONNY

Vincent Lento who owns Len-Tone? He offered to manage us.

DAVE SMITH

Sure. Fuckin Douglas is a good singer.

(beat)

Hey, it's Beasley.

Ronny looks. Drum hero Beasley is greeted by friends. His head has been shaved, he's dressed in chinos, his body is muscled. Ronny goes over.

RONNY

Ed! The fuck, man! Hey!

Beasley and Ronny slap backs.

THE BLOAT

So where you stationed?

BEASLEY

Nam. Not allowed to say the base location.

A GUY

Somebody said you were in the actual Marine band in Washington.

BEASLEY

I was. I'm in Intelligence.

RONNY

You don't play drums anymore?

BEASLEY

No.

THE BLOAT

What do you do, man, hand out
Hershey bars and nylons?

BEASLEY

I'm a sniper.

The guys all "whoa" and wear plastic grins. But they're very unsettled.

EXT. WELLS' BROTHER'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Party sounds in b.g, Douglas and Grace are making out on Jeff's Dartmouth bedspread. Douglas reaches under her miniskirt, begins to pull down her panties. She stops him. Their eyes lock. He goes to remove his hand from under her skirt but she stays his wrist. They stare in each others' eyes.

DOUGLAS

My God, you're so beautiful.

GRACE

What else?

DOUGLAS

Pardon?

GRACE

You're thinking.

DOUGLAS

(after a beat)

Are you a virgin?

GRACE

I told you I dated that guy who was
a graduate student.

DOUGLAS

Oh.

Silence.

GRACE

Are you?

DOUGLAS

No.

(beat)

But it might not be very good -- I
pulled my back out. Sacks of Turf
Builder down at work.

She starts laughing, covers her mouth. He starts to move
away. But she takes off her panties. Put his hand back
between her legs.

LATER

Douglas and Grace make love.

INT. RONNY'S BASEMENT REC ROOM - DAY

Douglas is now singing lead, up front. His whole attitude is
different. Drummer PETE CULLUM on drums.

DOUGLAS

(a boss blues)

'Arrest me for murder, first
degree/Judge wife cried out "Let
the man go free".

He blows harp. Grace, Michelle, a few guys hang out, smoking
cigarettes, reading comics. The women, though, are watching
Douglas. Ronny clocks this fact.

LATER:

Rehearsal over.

PETE CULLUM

Before I agree to join -- Joe says
you guys been offered a recording
contract?

WELLS

Yeah. But we're going to turn that
down.

RONNY

The fuck is with you? Lento's
offering us free studio time.

WELLS

He's nobody, man. Piddly little
label in West Orange, does jingles
for the A&P?

JOE PATUTO

Well, what's our alternative?

WELLS

It's really simple. We bide our time till Albert Grossman hears about us and wants to sign us.

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB - GOLF COURSE - DAY

Douglas, LAUNDERS and other workers are bouncing and banging along in a flat-bed trailer towed by a tractor.

LAUNDERS

Watching Dr. King last night on the TV. About all these sorrows down in Selma. Hard to get up and come in to work today.

DOUGLAS

Had those bull frogs on your mind.

LAUNDERS

What?

DOUGLAS

'Woke up this morning had those bull frogs on my mind.'

LAUNDERS

I don't follow you.

DOUGLAS

Blind Willie McTell.

LAUNDERS

Willy tol' who?

DOUGLAS

Blind Willie McTell. I think it was. Maybe Muddy did it too.

LAUNDERS

(makes a face)
Muddy?

DOUGLAS

Muddy Waters.

LAUNDERS

Oh.

DOUGLAS

The blues. Lyric line often starts
'Woke up this mornin'. And life
just fucks you over, right?

For awhile Launders doesn't say anything.

LAUNDERS

You want to hear beautiful blues,
listen to Count Basie, Mel Torme.

Mel Torme?? Douglas is baffled.

LAUNDERS

That music you talkin' about got no
shoes on.

DOUGLAS

It's about the pain of
psychological depression

LAUNDERS

Umm.

DOUGLAS

Born out of the Great Depression.
And out of slavery.

Launders becomes cold, remote. Douglas looks at him in
confusion.

ANGLE

Tractor stops where Ronny and a group of workers dig a ditch.
Douglas, Launders, the others dismount. A golf ball WHIZZES
in, almost hits the workers.

DISTANT CLUB MEMBER

Fore!

RONNY

I got to take a leak.

As Launders and the rest dig, Douglas and Ronny move into the
rough and piss.

RONNY

(sullen)

Listen, enough with these potheads
hanging around my basement during
rehearsals.

DOUGLAS

Michelle McDevitt paid for the
pizza.

RONNY

We're trying to fuckin work!

He zips up, stomps off. Douglas watches after him.

EXT. SAINT ROSE OF LIMA CHURCH - FAIR - NIGHT

Rides and games behind the church. On a plywood stage, the band kicks ass on the Stones "The Last Time". Doug sings lead. They've pulled an audience of kids away from the game booths.

DOUGLAS

'This could be the last time/May be
the last time I don't know...'

Ronny and Wells trade guitar lines and the song ends. APPLAUSE and RAUCOUS CHEERING. Grace and friends smoke and eat cotton candy. The band is sweaty.

RONNY

Ronny plays a slow slide guitar blues, band falls in.

DOUGLAS

'Well, they're givin' me religion/
I'm gonna join the Baptist
church/Said they're givin' me
religion/I'm gonna join the Baptist
church/
(harmonica sting)
'I'm gonna be a Baptist preacher/so
I don't have to work/'

Ronny slide fill --

DOUGLAS

'One sister jumped up/and she begin
to --

The power suddenly cuts as FATHER JOYCE pulls the plug, waving and hollering.

FATHER JOYCE

GET OFF OF THERE! GO ON, GET OUT!

BAND

What? What happened? (etc.)

Some kids are booing Father. Some parishioners shout threats at the band. A powdered zeppola comes through the air, hits Father's forehead. Kids CHEER.

BLACK SCREEN:

INT. DOUGLAS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

WINTER. Gritty snow rips the yard. Pat stands beside the Christmas tree, watching thru the bay window as Grace's car pulls in the drive. Douglas gets out of the car with duffel. His hair is longer, dirtier. He wears psychedelic granny shades. When Grace kisses Douglas, Pat exits FRAME with smoldering fury.

EXT. DOUGLAS' HOUSE - DAY

DOUGLAS

Thanks for coming to the bus station. I love you.

GRACE

See you at Michelle's.

She drives off. A STUDENT has gotten off a Hancock High School bus, walking hunched against the cold.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

Zones, man. The best.

Douglas ponders this, then heads toward the house.

INT. DOUGLAS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Christmas morning. Presents. Evelyn unwraps leotards.

EVELYN

Capezios! Neat.

QUINTINA

They better stay neat or we're taking them back. I'm tired of your things all over your floor.

But then she smiles. Evelyn hugs her. Douglas hands Pat a present.

DOUGLAS

Here, dad. This is for you.

PAT

I told you I wasn't getting you
anything for Christmas, and I
didn't want anything from you.

(to Evelyn, Quin)

Next?

Painful silence. Douglas puts Pat's gift back under the
tree. Hands Quin a gift.

DOUGLAS

For the lady of the house

Quin, in a tough spot, unwraps a record album.

QUINTINA

Ray Charles? That man who screams?

DOUGLAS

(points)

He did "You Are My Sunshine". You
and dad's favorite song.

QUINTINA

(chokes up)

That's very nice. Remember, Pat?

Pat nods tersely.

INT. AUNT MARY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Manicotti out/turkey in.

AUNT MARY

And what did Santa bring you, Doug?

DOUGLAS

Nothin'.

The relatives laugh.

DOUGLAS

(shrugs)

I'm serious.

PAT

He's quitting college. I told him
I wasn't getting him anything and
that I didn't want anything from
him.

UNCLE PAUL
(reproachful)
Ho, Pasqual'.

PAT
(defensive)
That's what I told him. I'm going
to go back on my word?

The relatives don't approve but say nothing.

DOUGLAS
Christmas. Big deal.

CARD TABLE GIRL
(brown-nose; scolding)
It's Jesus' birthday.

AUNT JOSIE
(worried)
What are you going to do if you're
not in school, Dougie? With this
war and the draft on.

QUINTINA
He's gonna loaf with those
musicians.

DOUGLAS
(seething)
I told you -- I'm going to get a
job.

PAT
What? Ditch digger the rest of
your life?

DOUGLAS
Just till we make it.

PAT
Let me call the Red Skelton Show
right away, so they can get a
dressing room stocked with
delicacies.

DOUGLAS
If you're so worried about it, you
can hire me at the store.

PAT
Looking like that? You look like
you just got off the boat.

DOUGLAS

Jesus!!

Douglas hurls down his fork, walks out.

INT. AUNT MARY'S - LIVING ROOM - DAY

PAT (O.S.)

Don't worry about him finishing his
dinner! He's cannon fodder!

Douglas walks in circles, fists clenched. Grace's Chevy II
pulls up outside.

INT. GRACE'S CHEVY II - NIGHT

Parked in a wooded spot, snow piling on windshield. Douglas
and Grace exchange gifts. She unwraps a John Mayall
Bluesbreakers album.

GRACE

(faux enthusiasm)
The Beano album.

DOUGLAS

I know how you love it. You said
Claire got cream cheese all over
the one you bought.

GRACE

(kisses him)
Merry Christmas.

DOUGLAS

(they kiss)
Merry Christmas.

EXT. GRACE'S CHEVY II NOVA - LATER

The car is snow-covered. After awhile, the wipers clear a
small space in the snow. Grace peers out.

INT. GRACE'S CHEVY II NOVA - NIGHT

GRACE

Still coming down.

She's nude on top, wrapped in an army blanket. She turns off the wipers, leaves radio on. She lays down, their entwined legs cramped against the steering wheel. They smoke.

DOUGLAS

The Zones should be earning money through music. Play weddings and all.

GRACE

Right. So why don't you?

DOUGLAS

Wells. He says we should learn from the Beatles -- they could play Ed Sullivan every week but they make sure not to overexpose themselves.

EXT. HANCOCK - MAIN STREET - DAY

Douglas and Wells get out of the Nash. Some younger kids hang in a car across the street.

KID

(leans out)

You guys dress better than any of the bands!

Wells and Doug wave, then they look at apartment windows above Fiegelson's Sweete Shoppe.

INT. FIEGELSON APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dingy one-bedroom, water heater and bathtub are in the kitchen. Wells and Douglas are moving their stuff in.

WELLS

Since I'm gonna be paying for the phone, I think I should get the bedroom.

DOUGLAS

Okay -- anyway, Grace agrees with me that we should be working on getting a manager.

WELLS

It'll be Beasley's old man all over again. Asshole had all these crappy ideas and we had to listen to him.

DOUGLAS

You were sixteen. Mr. Beasley was a mattress salesman. I'm talking about a real music business manager.

WELLS

Albert Grossman.

DOUGLAS

(dispirited)
Right.

LATER:

an immersion heater cooks a bubbling can of Campbell's Pork & Beans. Wells is noodling on a Rickenbacker 12 string. Douglas takes the hot can of beans and a Coke to the front room.

DOUGLAS

So what if Lento is minor league? Free studio time, man, to learn studio technique.

WELLS

(playing guitar)
Listen to this change, man.

DOUGLAS

Cool -- Grace said her cousin's band plays at this tavern up at Greenwood Lake? Live bands on weekends. We might get a gig.

WELLS

Greenwood Lake is all greasers. Four Seasons people.

DOUGLAS

Grace says her family's handyman -- complete greaser -- he showed up at a wedding in a Nehru jacket. So changes are --

Wells abruptly puts the guitar aside.

WELLS

Listen, man, there's something I need to talk to you about.

DOUGLAS
(eats blob of fat)
They should put more than one of
these in each can.

WELLS
Yeah, that's definitely where it's
at with baked beans.

DOUGLAS
On the other hand, it's a treat to
wait for it. Because the beans
themselves are boring.

WELLS
We got to get this settled, now
that we're room-mates and all --

DOUGLAS
Part of the enjoyment is like
Crackerjacks, you never know when
you're going to hit the prize.

WELLS
Yeah, okay -- look, back in high
school... well, even a few times
after -- Grace Deitz blew me.

Douglas stops chewing. Stares at him.

WELLS
She used to blow Burkhart too. I
know this for a fact.

Douglas is ashen.

DOUGLAS
Did he fuck her?

WELLS
I don't think so. But, anyway, to
get back to me -- that's what
happened. But I thought you should
know, A -- since we're in a band
together and will face a lot of
stresses and strains on the road
and, B -- we're living together.

Douglas, sick, puts down the can of beans.

WELLS

It's better you hear it from the horse's mouth than if somebody else tells you and you're doubly pissed off.

DOUGLAS

(alarmed)

Who else knows?

WELLS

Depends who Burkhart told.

DOUGLAS

(sick at heart)

But you and her never even really went out.

WELLS

(probes beans with spoon)

There's a one more little piece of fat in here -- it probably fell off the main morsel.

He looks at Douglas.

DOUGLAS

Go ahead.

WELLS

(eats)

Look, the air is clear at least. Better now than after we make it. Look at the problems with Anita Pallenberg and Brian and Keith and all. That's the last thing we need.

INT. CLUB - GREENWICH VILLAGE - NIGHT

RICHIE HAVENS performs. Grace, Joe Patuto and ADRIENNE are attentive. Douglas is remote, belting down scotch.

EXT. WEST VILLAGE - NIGHT

The historic 60's Village weekend hipster circus. Sidewalks teem with bridge-and-tunnel Mods, local Trotskyite chess players, trad beatniks, newer rockers, teenage runaways, low-level Genovese. The strolling Hancock foursome pauses at the Night Owl Cafe.

JOE PATUTO
(points to sign)
Blues Magoos, man

ADRIENNE
They're out of sight.

Grace looks at Douglas.

DOUGLAS
(pissy)
I want to get a sausage sandwich.

GRACE
Nyehh. Jesus, I was only suggesting
it for your benefit. You might want
to play here some time.

He scowls, they continue on.

JOE PATUTO
Hey, cheer up man, it was only a
parking ticket.

EXT. VILLAGE - PIZZA/SAUSAGE WINDOW - NIGHT

Sausage sandwiches arrive. The guys pay up. As Doug watches
Grace bite into her sausage:

DOUGLAS
Christ.

GRACE
(mouth full of sausage,
angry)
Are you going to start again?

INT. VILLAGE PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Grace and Douglas stand near his car. Things have
deteriorated.

GRACE
It was a long time ago.

DOUGLAS
He's my best friend.

GRACE
Some best friend, he tells you
that.

DOUGLAS

Oh, so it is significant. Two minutes ago it was just part of the sexual revolution.

GRACE

Things have changed.

DOUGLAS

Yeah, I understand. I'm cool. Now, maybe -- summer of 1967. But you blew him in early '65. And nobody back then was rapping about any fucking sexual revolution, you know as well as I do.

Poor Joe and Adrienne are trapped in the back seat of the old car. They're trying smile and small-talk.

GRACE

Look, he's just trying to drive a wedge because I give you my opinions on the band.

DOUGLAS

He wasn't even your boyfriend.

GRACE

You could never understand our relationship.

DOUGLAS

Thank you.

GRACE

You know what, really? It's none of your business.

DOUGLAS

You blew Burkhardt too, didn't you?

GRACE

That is so insulting. I'm not even going to answer you.

DOUGLAS

Oh, I forget -- Burkhardt was boring but Wells made you laugh. Did you spew cum all over the place you were chuckling so heartily?

GRACE

Fuck you!

JOE PATUTO
(drifts in)
...don't these old garages remind
you of like, Charlie Chan?

DOUGLAS
It's just -- how am I supposed to
not think about it? Especially
when we're kissing?

GRACE
You had intercourse with my sister.
I could have freaked over that.
But we weren't together then.

DOUGLAS
(stunned)
I never had intercourse with your
sister.

GRACE
You are a liar. Why would she make
it up?

GARAGE OPERATOR
Chief, gonna have to get this car
out of here.

DOUGLAS
Why would she make it up? She's
insane!

GRACE
Don't call her insane! I believe
her.

DOUGLAS
You're both flipping out, man.

GRACE
You were up in her room. Is that
true? Drinking? You didn't go in
there to fuck her?

DOUGLAS
(beat)
You know what -- you're amazing.
In high school it was jocks you go
after. Then Wells 'cause he formed
the band. Now me because I'm the
lead singer.

GRACE
(stunned)
Is that what you think?

He looks at her. She wipes her eyes.

GRACE
You're a small person.

He's speechless.

GRACE
What was I thinking? I knew you
from high school.

DOUGLAS
You conceited bitch.

GRACE
I thought we were best friends.

DOUGLAS
Best *friends*?

She turns, walks off.

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB - MAIN CLUB HOUSE - DAY

Ronny and Douglas are on a scaffold painting trim on the elegant clapboard main club house.

RONNY
He did it for the good of the band.

DOUGLAS
There's shit we should be doing for
the good of the band that's more
important than that.

RONNY
I'm all for getting a manager, if
that's what you're driving at.
(kicks paint can)
Fuck. I can't believe it. Dave
Smith gets signed to Kama Sutra.

DOUGLAS
I'm so fuckin depressed about
everything it's unbelievable.

RONNY

Why would they want Lennon songs
not sung by Lennon?

DOUGLAS

Dave's writing original songs.

RONNY

Really?

DOUGLAS

(impatiently)

I keep telling you -- that was the
major move Andrew Oldham did with
Jagger and Richards -- get them to
write originals. You can't make it
doing covers.

RONNY

They had two hits -- Not Fade Away"
-- Buddy Holly, "It's All Over
Now", Bobby Womack.

DOUGLAS

Two hits? I need this to be my
career.

RONNY

Shame on you, man. 'Need' is like
peasants starving in Nam. Nobody
'needs' a career.

DOUGLAS

Maybe we should move to the
Village. It's where everything is
at.

RONNY

(alarmed)

New York? Patronize laundromats
and shit? Eat Nedicks dogs?

(beat)

I been thinking about this Dave
Smith shit. And what I think we
should do is wait till the schools
let out, put on a free show. I
think our fans would like it.

DOUGLAS

How does that get us a record deal?

RONNY

Our reputation grows like wildfire.
And listen, man, everything's not
just about us. Loyalty to our fans.
How important is that?

Club manager DOMINIC GIACULO comes around the side of the building.

DOMINIC

Fuck you two assholes doing?

RONNY

I see a red door and I want to
paint it black.

DOMINIC

Well, don't. You talk to me first.

Douglas and Ronny share a smirk. Dominic points to missed spots.

DOMINIC

Look, you got holidays there big
enough I could drive a fuckin truck
through.

Douglas and Ronny start to paint the missed spots.

INT. FIEGELSON APARTMENT - NIGHT

Beer, pot and "Sgt. Pepper Reprise" full volume. The Hancock underground is there. Wells is with the Falcone twins. They're hanging the first Humphrey Bogart poster in town.

MEL FALCONE

-- this stewardess chick, our
cousin Tina's roommate on the Upper
East Side? She parties in London --
she says there's conflicts and
stuff between Brian, and Mick and
Keith. Mick and Keith may ask
Brian to leave the band.

WELLS

finds this extremely interesting.

KITCHEN

Douglas getting hammered on port. Bloat and Joe come over.

BLOAT

McCartney, man. Best fuckin' bass player bar none. He must be flying on fuckin' windowpane, right?

JOE PATUTO

(when Douglas doesn't respond)

Don't get hung on Deitz, man.

DOUGLAS

I can't stop thinking about what might have been.

THE BLOAT

You ever read the Tibetan Book of The Dead, man?

DOUGLAS

She's banging some guy who's an art student. A proteggy of Willem De Kooning. Fuckin skag whore.

THE BLOAT

You don't mean that, man.

They leave Douglas alone. Wells puts on the Zones recording of "When You Walk In The Room". The Falcone twins gush, Wells preens. Douglas storms over --

DOUGLAS

We said we'd try to write a song. Get these people out of here.

WELLS

Now?

DOUGLAS

This bullshit past glory, man --

THE BLOAT

The cops are here!

Everyone freaks, hides nickel bags, booze, something is flushed down the toilet. A few people flee through a window. Hancock police enter. They saunter and pry.

COP

So this is Archie Warhol's factory, New Jersey branch. Heard so much about it.

EXT. FIEGELSON'S PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Michelle on the seat behind him, Ronny is about to pull in on a chopped Triumph 650 motorcycle when he sees the cop cars. He ROARS off.

INT. FIEGELSON APARTMENT - NIGHT

The cops search. Finally a cop crooks a finger at Douglas. Douglas follows him into the kitchen.

DOUGLAS

Yeah, man?

This enrages the cop. He grabs Douglas' whole face in a broad paw, bangs his head against a cupboard.

COP

If it wasn't for your old man I'd search till I found something, and believe me, I would find something.

The cop strolls into the main room. Smirks at Wells.

COP

Seriously, both you jibronies -- how old are you now? What are you still doing around this town?

He wearily shakes his head. He addresses the party-goers.

OFFICER HAYDU

Out. Let's go, night people.

Hipsters drag-ass out the door. When they're gone:

DOUGLAS

Even the cops know it! They should be our managers!

INT. FIEGELSON APARTMENT - DAWN

Wells plops down, Rickenbacker on lap. Stalls, lights a cigarette.

DOUGLAS

Go the fuck ahead, man.

WELLS

Okay. Here's a pattern I been fooling around with.

He plays, half-hums the beginning of a melody.

LATER:

Douglas writing in a school notebook, tears the page out, hands it to Wells who reads, re-plays the chords. Together they sing (feebly) the lyrics.

SONG

'Am I still pencilled in on your
calendar?/Am I still the late night
call when you got nothing to
say?/It's Christmas and you say you
love me/But who'll be the last
lover standing come St. Valentine's
day?'

INT. DOCTOR'S EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

Pat, alone, wears an open-backed johnny. His bare arms and legs show scaly raw patches. He waits --

EXT. ALBANO BACK YARD - DAY

Hands in pockets, Pat stares at zucchini blossoms opening up. Bees alight on them. Quintina comes out of the house. Beat.

PAT

I've got cancer.

She stares, says nothing.

PAT

I feel like I'm in that Twilight
Zone show. Like I'm in somebody's
back yard I never even met.

QUINTINA

What's going to happen?

PAT

Non-Hogkins lymphoma they call it.
Looks like psoriasis at first. But
then it moves to the lymph glands.
Could go ten years, he says, but
it'll get me in the end.

INT. RONNY'S BASEMENT REC ROOM - NIGHT

Douglas and Wells lead the band through audition of their song "St. Valentine's Day." Ronny's playing keeps dropping out as he steps off to adjust a rotating fan.

WELLS

(to Joe)

F sharp!

DOUGLAS

'I held the cards close to my chest
when the table got kicked over/It's
what you wanted and you thought
nothing/and said even less/And now
your carrier pigeons have been
picked off by the vultures -- '

Last chorus -- song ends. Silence.

PETE CULLUM

That was pretty good.

JOE PATUTO

Actually sounds like an actual
song.

WELLS

(waits for Ronny...)

What'd you think, Ron?

RONNY

(shrugs, lights cig)

It's okay, I guess.

WELLS

What about the first one? 'Sniper'?

DOUGLAS

It's about the war. How Beasley's
old man made him join.

RONNY

No, I got it.

PETE CULLUM

I could hear a really great drum
intro.

RONNY

So it's like a, protest song?

DOUGLAS

(annoyed)

Don't you need to adjust the fuckin fan again?

RONNY

What?

DOUGLAS

Forget it.

RONNY

It's not the heat, it's the humidity. I was in the Shop-Rite? Even over by the ice cream case it was like, roasting. A lady got all woozy.

(lights a joint)

Bobby Van Cowenberg? He had to help her to the water fountain. She was like, gonna ralph. They called the rescue squad.

DOUGLAS

What about the fuckin songs?!

RONNY

I don't know. We're not known for protest songs.

JOE PATUTO

(confused)

We're not known for anything.

WELLS

What about 'Valentine's Day'? That's not protest.

RONNY

(shrugs)

Okay. If you guys want to keep practicing them on your own. I mean, when you go to play 'em, I can always leave the stage, rest or something. Then come back after.

WELLS

Whoa, wait -- you saying you don't want any part of it?

RONNY

(shrugs)

Not my thing.

(MORE)

RONNY (cont'd)

But, y'know, more power to you.
This band is for everybody.

A rotten feeling all around. Wells is hurt.

RONNY

I got to leave soon, go see my
shrink. Want to play 'Let It
Rock'?

He plays the chugging riff.

EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - DAY

Poster on a fence: SUNDANCE SWIM CLUB -- 4TH OF JULY TEEN
NIGHT - JULY 3 -- FEATURING THE TWILIGHT ZONES.

Ronny is trying to drive the station wagon over railroad tracks which border the club. The wagon, loaded with equipment, has hung up. Douglas and Wells are in back of the wagon, pushing. Joe and Pete are unaccountably still sitting in back.

RONNY

Well, get the fuck out!

They get out and help push. Ronny gets out, checks clearance. Spies two unused railroad flares on the ground, picks them up. He hops in, guns motor. The others push.

EXT. SUNDANCE SWIM CLUB - NIGHT

Twilight Zones rock two hundred fifty, their biggest house to date -- Beatles' hard-driving "Any Time At All". Half the crowd dances, half watch the band.

DOUGLAS

singing, tambourine, some moves -- he knows girls are focused on him, wanting him. But he does not play to them.

RONNY

executes a hot guitar solo. But when the solo is over and Doug starts singing again --

A GIRL

runs onto the riser, jumps on Douglas. This is too much for Ron. Finally, the song ends. Pete lays down the beat for next number. But:

RONNY
 (into mike)
 The fireworks display is tomorrow
 night for the parents -- fuck that!

ADULT VOICE
 Watch your language! There's
 children present!

Ronny lights the railroad flares.

RONNY
 Why shouldn't we have a little
 taste of our own?

He starts waving the white hot flares. A few people cheer.

RONNY
 Dig it!

He juggles the hissing blinding flares around.

RONNY
 Hey, kids, watch this!

He tosses the flares repeatedly from hand to hand. A blob of molten phosphorus drops on his foot.

RONNY
 Aaaa, fuck!! My God! I've been
 horribly burned.

He runs off, screaming. Wells angrily unstraps. Yelling pool employees start running for hoses. Amps SCREAM DISTORTION. The band jumps off the riser. Wells breaks the neck of his guitar. Show over.

INT/EXT. SWIM CLUB - NIGHT

It's raining, the club is deserted. The band sits under the roof of the "Tiki Hut", with their stacked equipment.

WELLS
 He's got to go, man.

JOE PATUTO
 I can't believe we're saying this.

DOUGLAS
 He's out.

PETE CULLUM
 He's Ronny B. Lewe!

JOE PATUTO

No offense, Wells -- in lots of ways you're a better guitar player? Hammer-ons and pick playing? But he is a fuckin great slide player.

WELLS

Look, forget for a minute that creatively we don't see eye to eye. Forget also this horrible fucking embarrassment tonight. But he drives off in his car, leaves us here --

(builds to a scream)

-- with all our shit?

Car headlights.

PETE CULLUM

My sister.

Station wagon arrives. Pete starts lugging drum cases. They all help him load.

PETE CULLUM

The cat is rock and roll, man.

Joe loads his bass and amp. Doors SLAM. Wagon pulls away. Wells and Doug are alone.

DOUGLAS

What happened to him, man?

WELLS

(sadly)

I don't know.

A car full of teenage girls slows to a stop.

GIRL

Doug, do you need a ride?

DOUGLAS

Got one.

They drive off. Silence again.

WELLS

Smokes too much boo, for one thing.

DOUGLAS

I remember when I first met you. We talked about how cool he was.

WELLS

Lee Marvin.

They kind of snicker.

DOUGLAS

But just talking about firing him,
I feel like a traitor.

WELLS

How do you think I feel, man? We
slept over each others' house since
we were six years old.

(beat)

In ways, I love the guy, man...

DOUGLAS

Yeah.

WELLS

Fuck it. He's always hogged all
the attention.Headlights appear. The Falcone twins pull up in a Jaguar XKE
convertible.

MO

We were so pissed about the baby
shower but I guess we didn't miss
much, huh?Twins lower the rag top. Douglas and Wells strain to get all
the equipment in the small trunk and passenger compartment.

WELLS

I don't want to talk about it.
Shove over.Wells gets behind the wheel. Douglas clambers in back. The
three up front are stuffed in two bucket seats. With all the
equipment jammed in, Douglas is basically seated on the rear
deck. Wells pops the clutch, stalls. Douglas is almost
thrown from the car. Wells re-starts, they lurch out of the
gate.

MEL

(nervous cackle)
God, you are the worst!

INT. DEITZ HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Grace, in shorts, comes from the basement with clothes on a hanger. She sees Claire seated at the large bay window, suitcase beside her.

GRACE

I didn't know you were here.

Claire looks up. She has empty Realemon squeezers dangling as earrings, a necklace made of spent Realemons, and a hat made entirely of Realemons.

CLAIRE

I came out to get some things.

GRACE

You waiting for somebody?

CLAIRE

Dylan.

Grace looks at her.

CLAIRE

We're getting married.

GRACE

(beat)

Really? Wow.

Claire looks as a car approaches.

GRACE

Will I get to meet him?

CLAIRE

If you want.

GRACE

Yeah, you kidding?

Car passes. Grace heads out. Pauses, looks back.

INT. DEITZ HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALL - DAY

Grace walks to her room. Sees Jack in the master bedroom doorway. He beckons Grace.

INT. DEITZ HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Grace enters. Marty is twisting her rings. Jack shuts the door.

JACK

Could there be any truth to this?

GRACE

To what?

JACK

What do you mean, to what? This Dylan chap coming to elope!

GRACE

(troubled)

I don't know. He supposedly lives near her -- the Village. But people say he was in a horrible motorcycle accident.

MARTY

If it's true he's coming, why haven't her sisters been invited to the wedding?

JACK

Oh, for Christ's sake, Mart' -- they don't want us at the wedding, obviously. If.

MARTY

I said her sisters, Jack! She wouldn't want *them* there?

JACK

(mulls this)

Do you know him, Gracie?

GRACE

Who? Bob Dylan?!
(incredulous laugh)
No.

JACK

What is this malarkey with the plastic lemons?

GRACE

She's an artist.

MARTY

She's always been...I don't know
how to characterize it.

JACK

(springs it on Grace)
She's taken this LSD I suppose.

GRACE

(stonewalls)
No.

JACK

Have you?

GRACE

(breezily)
No.

JACK

Look -- if you can get past all
this bohemian solidarity with your
sister -- are you worried?

GRACE

(stonewalls)
No.
(beat)
Can I go?

Marty nods. Grace leaves.

INT. FIEGELSON APARTMENT - NIGHT

Douglas, high on a chemical, intently tries to focus Pat's old 8mm projector. Small yellow Kodak boxes are all about. The image, projected on a white wall is Pat and Quin 20 years ago: a young couple in love visiting the cherry blossoms in a Newark park. Douglas is about to drop the needle on a turning album when Wells and Mo, also dangerously psychedelized, emerge from the bedroom.

WELLS

his foot pulls the extension cord from the socket, killing the turntable. Douglas crawls over, plugs it back in. Film resumes. Mo floats toward the wall, watches the silent young couple in the cherry blossoms. It takes awhile, but --

MO

My God, is that Pasqual and
Quintina?

Wells comes over, the three watch the young couple from the days after WW II --the corny silent clowning for the camera, the forced kiss. Mo covers her mouth.

MO

Oh, my God...

DOUGLAS

Watch this.

He places the needle on the record. Son House's blues, "Death Letter" fills the air.

SONG

'Got a letter this mornin/how do
you think it read?/It said 'Hurry,
hurry, hurry, gal you love is
dead'.

Wells and Mo keep on chuckling occasionally but gradually the laughter banks off. The puppy-love antics on the wall are the same, but totally resonant.

SONG

'Look like there were 10,000 people
standin' round the burial
ground/You know I didn't know I
loved her, till they damn laid her
down.'

MO

Holy fuck.

Hard slide-guitar notes slice Young Quintina smelling a blossom. Mo's eyes fill with tears. Then the big white tail perms start assailing the image, the colors bleed, the roll ends. The wall is just hot white and the film leader repeatedly slaps the projector. Wells and Mo lie on the floor, eyes closed. But Douglas is still watching the bare wall as "Death Letter" CONTINUES. Though there's no film in the gate --

ON THE WALL

Grace appears, in the morning light of a window.

SONG

'Well, I folded my arms and I
slowly walked away/I said farewell
honey, I'll see you on Judgement
Day/

On Douglas. He starts to cry, laugh, cry.

EXT. DEITZ HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Marty SCREAMING, the dog BARKING as Claire runs barefoot across the lawn, white coated AMBULANCE ATTENDANTS behind. Jack tries to cut her off. She zags into Ronny's back yard where he is practicing juggling. His foot is bandaged.

JACK

Ronald, stop her, damn it!

Ronny hobbles after Claire, tackles her.

EXT. DEITZ HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Claire, strapped to a gurney, is placed in the ambulance.

CLAIRE

Cubans! Kidnapping! Castro! Call
the police!

Marty and the children are crying. Ronny watches the ambulance drive away.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - MANHATTAN - DAY

Jack and Marty are brought into a psychiatrist's office. Grace is left to wait.

LATER:

Claire tranquilized. Grace tries to hug her goodbye. Hardly a response. A sneer.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - DAY

Grace runs away in tears, out of the hospital.

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - EAST VILLAGE - DAWN

Key in lock. Grace enters. She sinks into a chair. There are cockroaches all over, and most of Claire's paintings have been painted over crudely by Claire.

Grace starts to collect her record albums from the mess. She just drops them on the bed, stands there holding her face.

EXT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - EARLY MORNING

Grace comes out the front door, is about to descend the steps, sees --

DOUGLAS

waiting below. She comes down. They look at each other. She musters a sneer. Then Grace crumbles against him crying. He holds her.

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Grace sleeps in Claire's bed. Douglas sprays roaches and watches over her.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - SOLARIUM - DAY

Grace and Douglas visit Claire.

CLAIRE

Citrus, in french, is 'agrume'.
Groom, in english, means, well --
groom. As in, 'you may kiss the
groom', i.e. kiss the lemon. Or
orange'.

Grace gives Claire a kiss on top of her head.

EXT. WAVERLY THEATER - MANHATTAN - DAY

Doug and Grace walk holding hands. They regard the one-sheet for "The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly".

DOUGLAS

What is this?

GRACE

Seems like its a Western but it's
made in Italy.

INT. WAVERLY THEATER - DAY

They watch the film.

DOUGLAS

(whispers)
This music is cool.

EXT. CAFE FIGARO - NIGHT

Douglas and Grace seen through the window, eating, talking, laughing.

INT. MOVIE THEATER -MANHATTAN - DAY

Douglas and Grace watch "Touch of Evil", Hank Quinlan (Welles) propelling his horrible bulk through the fever-dream of a town. That amazing soundtrack. That strange plinky MUSIC. That constant lurid bar-room laughter, like a another form of MUSIC. Douglas and Grace are lost in it.

EXT. ALBANO BACK YARD - EVENING

Pat grills sausage. Aunt Josie and Uncle Murf are visiting.

PAT

Who could have taken your TV?
There's no coons in Fairfield.

EVELYN

(angry)

You're not supposed to say coons
and all those words anymore, dad.
You never were, but now even more
so. You should call them African-
Americans.

UNCLE MURF

What's so different now?

EVELYN

Martin Luther King!

PAT

(shrugs, resigned)
Fine.

EVELYN

Fag too. You shouldn't call people
that anymore.

DOUGLAS

Why not?

EVELYN

It's rude to homosexuals, that's
why. The term now is gay.

UNCLE MURF

A rose by any other name.
(to Pat)
Pasqual', how's the boy?

Evelyn and Douglas trade looks.

QUINTINA

He's scheduled for two weeks of
treatment at the Leahy Clinic in
Boston, that's how he is.

PAT

Drop it, okay, on my daughter's
birthday? I'm fine.

Quin's eyes fill with tears. As she puts glasses on the
table, she BANGS each one.

AUNT JOSIE

Here we go.
(beat)
Douglas, how's your little group?
Music keeps you young, right?

DOUGLAS

Actually, I'm thinking of moving to
Los Angeles.

Both parents stop cold and gape at him. Beat.

QUINTINA

What did you just say?

DOUGLAS

Grace's probably going to transfer
to UCLA. Plus the music business is
shifting to there.

(beat)

I may take a film course.

PAT

Oh, back to college? Good!
(glares)
Film course! What do you take me
for, a sucker?

QUINTINA

With your father with cancer you go
on a jaunt?

PAT
(yells at her)
What'd I just say two minutes ago?

EVELYN
People? It's my birthday?

EXT. RONNY'S HOUSE - DAY

Douglas and Wells stand at the front door. Wells rings the bell. A beat. Suddenly --

WELLS
Listen, you got to tell him, man.
I can't do it.

DOUGLAS
What are you talking about?!

Wells is already cutting off across the lawn.

WELLS
This guy taught me guitar, man.

DOUGLAS
Wells!

WELLS
You'll be better at it.

And he's gone. Door opens. Ronny seems already in a bad mood. Roused from bed. Douglas enters.

INT. RONNY'S ROOM - DAY

They enter. Douglas lights a cig, stalls.

RONNY
So what's the poop on Claire Deitz?

DOUGLAS
In the bin.

RONNY
That I knew. This is becoming a
police state around here.

DOUGLAS
She's been diagnosed as schizoid.

RONNY

Acid?

DOUGLAS

They don't know.

RONNY

She was waiting for Leary though,
right?

DOUGLAS

Dylan. Listen --

RONNY

You're a stone fox, you can attach
yourself to whoever.

DOUGLAS

Yeah...

RONNY

Like you and Grace -- and she's
not even as foxy as Claire. Pimple
faced lead singer and the chick
voted best-looking in high school.
It's a cliche.

DOUGLAS

Listen, Wells and I been talking
and we think you should leave the
band.

RONNY

Fine.

Douglas wasn't expecting this. Beat.

DOUGLAS

I mean, we don't agree about the
direction of the band. Us two want
to write originals --

RONNY

I said fine.

DOUGLAS

Plus, like, man -- you embarrass
us.

Ronny looks at him, hurt. Then "smiles".

RONNY

(a la Serling)

Submitted for your approval. Mr. Douglas Albano -- a shy retiring sort. It turns out he, of all those involved, has what it takes for true success. He can plunge the knife in the back.

DOUGLAS

I come in, you disrespect my girlfriend before I even said one negative thing.

RONNY

Not only does he have the brass balls to make the play for lead singer --

DOUGLAS

Everybody agreed.

RONNY

(drops Serling, yells)

You used the night I accidentally swallowed the roach to up-surp me, you fuck, and you never stopped!

DOUGLAS

Bullshit.

RONNY

(as Serling again)

-- mild mannered Douglas also gladly does the hatchet job Wells Lamont is too good for.

DOUGLAS

If you weren't so fuckin jealous you'd have never burned your foot and ruined the show.

RONNY

My foot is fine, by the way, thank you for asking.

DOUGLAS

Good.

RONNY

And don't mention it -- the fact is
was me called and told you your
little cunt's sister got drove off
in an ambulance.

DOUGLAS

You better watch your mouth, man.

Ronny smirks, plays his ace.

RONNY

Corky Curto? Got kicked out of
Dave Smith for playing faster
triplets than Dave? Well, me and
him been talking about starting a
band --

DOUGLAS

Good.

RONNY

We jammed the other night and we
already got three Cream songs down
perfectly. Sounds exactly like
them.

DOUGLAS

You're a good guitar player.

RONNY

Go fuck yourself.

DOUGLAS

Go fuck yourself.

Ronny rushes him and they grapple, Douglas seized in a
headlock. They slam around the room, punching each other and
breaking shit. Ronny, stronger, gets Douglas on the floor,
punches him. Douglas flails back. Ronny bites his ear.
Douglas SCREAMS.

MR. LEWE

(rushes in)

What in hell -- ? Ronald!

Ronny punches him once more, gets off. Douglas rushes out,
nose bleeding.

RONNY

Cocksucker! The Zones are going
nowhere! You watch. Wells is
gonna keep you down.

INT. FIEGELSON APARTMENT - MORNING

Douglas and Grace in his bed, asleep. POUNDING, KNOCKING.
Douglas stumbles up, opens door. Old MR. FIEGELSON glares.

FIEGELSON

I'm a schmuck? Your pal keeps
promising he'll get a phone up
here. I want you both out of this
place!

INT. FIEGELSON'S CANDY STORE - DAY

Douglas picks up the dangling pay phone receiver.

DOUGLAS

Hello?

INT. LEN-TONE STUDIOS - DAY

Doug and Wells face Vincent Lento, his feet up on the
console.

LENTO

Night Owl, a one-off. You'd open
for the Strangers. Their regular
opening band has a court
appearance.

WELLS

How'd you arrange this?

LENTO

Good question. I'm Joe Jerkoff,
right?

WELLS

No, I...

LENTO

Here's the important thing -- I
played your demo for Jerry Ragovoy.
I have a promise from Jerry that
he'll try to be there to catch your
set. With an eye to signing you.

DOUGLAS

Holy shit. He wrote "Cry Baby"!
Garnet Mimms and the Enchanters.

WELLS

You have a "promise" he'll "try".
From the standpoint of logic that's
ipso facto no promise whatsoever.

LENTO

You're a little bit of an asshole,
aren't you kid?

PARTNER

(looks in, to Lento)
The fire department is here.
Where's the envelope?

LENTO

Be right back, boys.

He leaves. Douglas is jazzed.

DOUGLAS

A-fucking-mazing. Us playing New
York! Fuckin' Spoonful started at
the Night Owl!

WELLS

I don't know, man. I'm suspicious.

DOUGLAS

Of what?

WELLS

That maybe this is a set up.

DOUGLAS

A set up? For what?

WELLS

I'm not sure yet. I want to keep
him talking till he reveals
himself.

Silence. In fact, Wells is scared of the gig.

DOUGLAS

You know what? Fuck this. Next
you're gonna tell me we're not
ready.

WELLS

We're not. That's another thing.

DOUGLAS

Either we do this or I quit. I'm serious, Wells.

WELLS

Okay. Jesus.

INT/EXT. DETACHED GARAGE - RONNY'S HOUSE - DAY

Douglas and Wells stand like supplicants as Ronny tunes his carb, giving the bike gas.

WELLS

New tank looks good, man.

No response. He gasses it, listens to it.

DOUGLAS

(above roar)

So -- what do you think, Ron?
About the gig?

Ronny mounts the bike, drives it out of the garage, up the driveway, out onto the street.

WELLS

Christ.

They walk up the driveway to the street, look both ways.

DOUGLAS

Well, we're fucked. Is there anybody can fill in?

The bike is heard and Ronny comes back, turns into the drive narrowly missing them, heads down to the garage. They are forced to troop back down. He kills the motor, tinkers.

WELLS

Look at it this way -- even if you don't want to help us, Jerry Ragovoy will get a look at you too. For your solo career. Or whatever.

Douglas frantically tries to shut him up.

RONNY

So I'm really not being invited back into the band.

DOUGLAS

But you could be if you wanted.
Isn't that what you're trying to
say, Wells? All he'd have to do is
say that's what he wants.

Wells shrugs, not really enthused. Ronny gets on the bike,
comes down hard on the kick start, the bike ROARS.

RONNY

I'll do it this once.

He THUNDERS off. Wells and Douglas walk up the driveway.

WELLS

Did I tell you I been taking voice
lessons?

DOUGLAS

How come?

WELLS

So we don't find ourselves in this
position again.

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB - BACK FAIRWAY - DAY

Douglas is mowing the 17th tee. Horn BLARES. The Albano
Hardware truck pulls to the curb beyond the club fence.
Douglas shuts the mower off, crosses to the fence.

PAT

(cold)

Your mother and Evy are going down
the shore for a couple days, see
her sisters. I think you and me
should have dinner. Clam Broth
House. It's in Hoboken.

Douglas is surprised, wary. A golf ball WHIZZES in, slams
the fence.

PAT

We need to talk about what happens
if you're left as man of the
family.

DOUGLAS

(beat)

Okay.

PAT

Don't make a Federal case out of it. All fathers and sons should have this conversation. You're almost 21.

Douglas nods. Pat surveys him with disgust.

PAT

The way you present yourself. Aren't you concerned you look too joyful?

DOUGLAS

'Cause we got a blues band?

PAT

What the hell's that got to do with it?

DOUGLAS

Our family has never been joyful, that's for sure.

PAT

Damn right.

(beat)

Haircut's too much to ask, but you come to the restaurant without a coat and tie, you and me are gonna tangle, my friend.

He drives off. Douglas realizes -- shouts --

DOUGLAS

Gay? Is that what you're trying to say?

Truck is gone.

DOUGLAS

(mutters)

Fuckin' idiot.

INT. FIEGELSON APARTMENT - NIGHT

Douglas, Grace are naked under the covers. She's reading a Bogdanovich MOMA film pamphlet.

DOUGLAS

If it works out with Ragovoy tomorrow night, would we still move to L.A.?

GRACE

Try and not get hung up on that. You should go to sleep.

DOUGLAS

If we go out there you should become an actress.

GRACE

(considers)
I told you, I've thought about it...I don't know...

DOUGLAS

You could be the glamour-puss star and I could do the music.

GRACE

Is that all you value about me? My looks?

DOUGLAS

I was only kidding.

GRACE

No, you weren't.

DOUGLAS

Ronny said I'm the only one who's enough of a cocksucker to make it in music.

GRACE

(reading)
You're more focused, I guess...

DOUGLAS

Not cocksucker in the sense I'd actually suck somebody's cock to get ahead -- in the sense of hardhearted.

He gazes up at the ceiling.

GRACE

Listen to this -- Orson Welles --
(reads)
'A film is a ribbon of dreams.

(MORE)

GRACE (cont'd)

The camera is much more than a recording apparatus; it is a medium via which messages reach us from another world that is not ours --

He looks over, very interested.

GRACE

' -- and that brings us to heart of a great secret. Here magic begins.'

Douglas gazes at her, filled with love, loving the idea.

DOUGLAS

He must have learned all this from Rod Serling!

INT. NIGHT OWL CAFE - NEW YORK - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Kitchen-cum-backstage. Hippy waitresses ferry drinks and shove Twilight Zones aside as the Zones wait to go on. Extreme nerves. Joe Patuto peeks out into the smoke-filled pit.

JOE PATUTO

(fighting panic)

Man, I don't dig this club vibe.

WELLS

Farmer Joe from the Garden State.

RONNY

Shut the fuck up, leave him alone.

DOUGLAS

Stop bickering, you motherfuckers!

JOE PATUTO

There's no dance floor. They just sit there and watch?!

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

(bored)

Okay, let's hear it for the Twilight Zones...

PUNY APPLAUSE. The band troops out as if to the guillotine.

MAIN ROOM

Dark, dingy, cheaply psychedelic. The band strap on axes, steal nervous glances at --

THE AUDIENCE

Sparse house of jaded Hippest-of-the-Hip. Four Hells Angels, a few trannies, mean-spirited hippy chicks and angry jewfros. Worst: a nodding junkie front and center. In contrast, the Hancock underground, Grace, the Falcones, etc., look like extras from Hullabaloo. Grace beams, blows a kiss.

The band tunes up. Too long.

VOICES

Let's go!

They tune nervously -- pling, pyang, plong --

VOICE

Bring on Rod Serling.

Audience laughs. Finally Ronny kicks the guitar intro to "Let It Rock".

DOUGLAS

'In the heat of the day down in
Mobile, Alabama/ etc.

It's okay. But just okay. Some in the audience continue talking, now shouting because of the music.

LATER:

Song finishes. Hardly any applause except for the Hancock underground. Some customers leave. But a few enter.

WELLS

Where's fuckin Ragovoy? I don't
see any old guys out there.

Pete starts blues-rock beat -- "Walkin' Blues".

DOUGLAS

'Woke up this morning people/looked
round for my shoes/You know I had
those mean old/walkin' blues (etc.)

SCENE:

"Walkin' Blues" plays thru and ends. Song was too slow. The Hancock underground is flagging. There's more general chit-chat and restlessness in the house. Flop sweat on the band.

DOUGLAS
 (sotto voce)
 "Valentine's Day" with a break-down
 after the second verse.

WELLS
 (hisses)
 This crowd will shit all over that!

DOUGLAS
 Will you just do what the fuck I
 say? It's fast.

JOE PATUTO
 We're running out of songs we can
 play all the way through without
 mistakes.

WELLS
 (to Ronny)
 Tell him he's wrong. Anyway, you
 don't know the chords --

DOUGLAS
 It's just like (TBD).

Ronny turns his back on Wells. Looks at Pete.

RONNY
 One -two - one, two, three and --

Pete starts the heavy kick-ass drums. Then Joe adds bottom.
 After some bars, Ronny comes in. Wells has no choice but to
 play the lead. Douglas happens to catch --

GRACE

mouth slightly open, expression full of love and support.

DOUGLAS

focuses on music, sings

DOUGLAS
 'It's not that I can't trust you
 with my secrets/Your reputation for
 discretion is well known/And I
 appreciate the glimpse into your
 mystery/Tell me one more thing and
 then you're on your own.'

Pete is really on. The drums are driving everything.

DOUGLAS

'Am I still pencilled in on your
calendar/Am I still the late night
call when you got nothing to
say?/It's Thanksgiving night and
you say you love me/But who'll be
the last lover standing come St.
Valentine's day?'

Song continues. And sometimes things just click. Each of them
is playing with, and feeding off, the others. The more they
forget the audience, the more they're musicians.

Ronny and Wells particularly are cooking -- instrumentally
and in some other, deeper way --

DOUGLAS

'I know the trip was a little far
out even for you/ (etc.)

(CHORUS)

It's Christmas morning and you say
you love me/ (etc.)

Then, a simple but good bit of business. The break-down --
everything drops out but drums and tambourine. The naked
heavy beat.

These drips in the audience are bobbing their heads. Joe
brings the bass back in. Even better. The band rebuilds the
song, instrument by instrument till all players are back in
at maximum energy and -- the house moves. Nobody really
starts jumping around but they are engaged, and some girls by
the door start hip-shaking. A few waitress midriffs start to
undulate.

JUNKIE

Fuckin' A! Yeah!

DOUGLAS

'Now it's New Years Eve and you say
you love me/but who'll be the last
lover standing, come St.
Valentine's day?'

INT. SAN REMO TAVERN - NIGHT

The band, high on life, is in crowded in a booth with JERRY
RAGOVOY, 40: suit, tie, Sinatra pork-pie hat.

JERRY RAGOVOY

I took the liberty of writing some things down during the set.

WELLS

Where were you, Jerry? We didn't even see you.

JERRY RAGOVOY

You don't need to worry about that.

He puts a paper on the table. Joe almost pisses himself.

JOE PATUTO

Is that a contract?

They look at it -- a list.

DOUGLAS

'Green Onions'...

(reads)

'The Easter Parade'?

JERRY RAGOVOY

Seasonal novelty. You might get asked to play it if people are drinking enough. Those are two of twenty five --

RONNY

'Bad Boy'. Cool song.

JERRY RAGOVOY

-- right. I'll work up another twenty or so. I want you to learn them, I want you to play as many local bars as you can, five nights a week, two shows a night -- then come see me in six months.

WELLS

(beat)

I don't understand.

JERRY RAGOVOY

What don't you understand?

WELLS

What's with all these songs?

JERRY RAGOVOY
 You got talent. But you been
 together three years, you got
 thirteen tunes.

WELLS
 (looks at list)
 Forty songs. That's a lot of work.

JERRY RAGOVOY
 Of course it's a lot of work. It's
 called the music business.

WELLS
 It's an art form.

JERRY RAGOVOY
 (shrugs)
 Let's say for now it's an art form
 -- and by the way, I'm not sure I
 agree. But art? Paintings? The
 'Winged Victory of Samothrace'? The
 whole kreplach is ten percent
 inspiration, ninety percent
 perspiration.

Douglas wants to shoot himself, hearing his father's words.

DOUGLAS
 What did you think about our
 originals?

JERRY RAGOVOY
 Respectable efforts.

DOUGLAS
 Well, isn't that where we should be
 focusing?

JERRY RAGOVOY
 Keep writing.

WELLS
 But playing for drunks every night,
 learning this pop stuff...

JERRY RAGOVOY
 The Beatles spent two years in
 Hamburg dodging bratwursts. Your
 friend Mick and the boys, every
 fucking Sunday in the lounge of the
 train station. You know all this.

WELLS

Our friend Dave Smith didn't have
to do this and he's on Kama Sutra.

JERRY RAGOVOY

Never heard of Dave Smith. Perhaps
I'll never get the opportunity.

RONNY

(long beat)

If we do it, there's like, an album
at the end of six months?

JERRY RAGOVOY

From your mouth to God's ear.

They all nod deeply. Then shyly --

PETE CULLUM

I don't understand what that means.

JERRY RAGOVOY

What does that mean? 'Sure, why
not', 'We should be so lucky'.

He gets up. Some have to rise to let him squeeze out of the
booth. He turns to them.

JERRY RAGOVOY

You make sure you call me.

They nod. He leaves.

JOE PATUTO

Holy Christ, did you hear what he
said? Six months from now we could
be opening for The Turtles!

WELLS

He just blew us off!

JOE PATUTO

(angry)

You hear what you want to hear.

Wells sits back. Unusually quiet. He chews his lip.

INT. GREENWICH VILLAGE BAR - NIGHT

The Hancock underground is smoking, waiting. The Zones
enter. Cheer goes up. Grace and Douglas kiss deeply.

EXT. FALCONE HOUSE - NIGHT

Ronny's wagon rolls up, music BLASTING. In it are Ronny, Wells, Michelle, the Falcones. Everybody's had a fab time except Mel who has vomited on the passenger door.

MO

We better get her to bed. Sorry,
you guys.

INT. RONNY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ronny and Wells raid the fridge.

RONNY

Good solo on 'Let It Rock'.

WELLS

So what are you gonna do now?

RONNY

Regards to what?

WELLS

The band with Corky, or go solo or
what?

RONNY

We shouldn't get back together?

WELLS

(beat)

I don't think so, man.

RONNY

(fights tears)

How can you say that to somebody,
that I embarrass you? We had more
fuckin laughs and adventures than
anybody. Since we were six, man.

WELLS

You ever read 'The Tibetan Book of
the Dead'?

Ronny shakes his head.

WELLS

"Be here now". That's like, the
most important thing. There is no
past. Only now. No future either.

(MORE)

WELLS (cont'd)
So you shouldn't get hung up on
whether you're in the Twilight
Zones or something else.

RONNY
But you'll be in the Twilight
Zones.

WELLS
(opaquely)
That remains to be seen.

Wells stops eating. Ronny stares at the floor.

WELLS
I should get home.

INT/EXT. DETACHED GARAGE - RONNY'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

They walk to the station wagon, look at the vomit-covered
door.

RONNY
I oughta go get her, make her hose
this off.

Wells, not listening, is eyeing the Triumph 650.

WELLS
Bike's looking good, man.

RONNY
Re-chromed the pipes. You should
take it for a crank.

WELLS
Nah.

RONNY
Go 'head. It's got so much torque
right now with the shit I did.

WELLS
I'm wasted. Let's go.

Ronny gives him the jerk-off gesture.

WELLS
I gotta go man! I should go visit
my mother.

Ronny mounts the bike. He comes down hard on the kick start. Nothing. Again. The bike ROARS to life. He REVS it.

RONNY

Be my guest.

Ronny gets off, holds the throbbing bike for Wells to mount.

RONNY

Ride it up to your old lady's.
I'll get my sister to drive me up
later and get it.

He REVS it...it SNARLS. Wells gets on. Ronny demos the hand clutch.

RONNY

Clutch. Then foot all the way down
for first, then up for second,
third, ex-cetera.

Wells squeezes clutch, tromps into 1st with his boot. He cranks the gas, the ROAR makes him grin. He slowly releases clutch/gives it gas. The bike shudders -- almost stalls, but leaves the garage, fork wobbling.

RONNY

Gas!

He hurries after as the bike RUMBLES up the drive.

RONNY

Leave it in first till you're on
the street!

Wells gets to the street, turns onto it. Accelerates smoothly. He heads down the street like Peter Fonda, but over-revving.

RONNY

Shift!!

Wells squeezes clutch, shifts into second. He cruises. Then shifts into third. He over-revs somewhat.

RONNY

Shift, you fuckin' asshole --
you're wrecking my bike!

Wells tries shifting to fourth, at the same time distracted by a barking Animal Control truck.

The bike yaws right at 60 MPH --front tire strikes the curb -- Wells sails sixty feet through the air, the bike bouncing end over end. Wells is stopped mid-flight by a dogwood tree. Ronny runs toward him.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING AREA - DAY

Ronny, Joe, Pete, Mrs. Lamont, brother Jeff sit quietly. All are smoking.

Ronny eats a Danish. Douglas is looking at Ronny pensively. Ronny gradually becomes aware of it.

RONNY

What, man? I suppose this is my fault too? I coaxed him to do it?

Douglas just stares at him. A DOCTOR comes out, speaks with Mrs. Lamont.

DOCTOR

He has a fractured hip that will probably leave his left leg a half inch shorter -- fractured ulna, crushed vertebrae, but, thankfully, he has feeling in his lower body.

RONNY

His draft worries are over, man.

A few look at him.

MRS. LAMONT

How long till he recovers?

DOCTOR

At least six to seven months till he's fully functional.

JOE PATUTO

This puts the kibosh on Jerry Ragovoy's time table.

They all look at Joe.

INT. CLAM BROTH HOUSE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

"Est. 1903", carpet of peanut shells, working-men crowd. Pat, suit and tie, drinks scotch in a booth, watching other men watch his son enter. Doug wears jacket and tie.

But Carnaby dayglow. Pat endures. Douglas slides into the booth. Beat.

PAT
What are you drinking?

Waiter arrives -- Pat gives Douglas a subtle go-code. Douglas registers surprise --

DOUGLAS
Rum and coke, please.

LATER:

They drink their drinks, both demolishing platters of linguini lobster *fra diavolo*.

PAT
So this Grace Deitz, she's a lolla-palooza, huh?

DOUGLAS
(put off)
How do you know about that?

PAT
Jack Deitz comes in the store.

DOUGLAS
(disheartened)
You talk about us?

PAT
What else do fathers gab about but their kids?
(beat)
He'd rather talk about Grace than the other one, poor bastard. So I encourage it. You know.

Douglas sighs miserably. They eat. After awhile --

PAT
When I was your age I dated, this wild gal. She had a Cord Phaeton. That's a --

DOUGLAS
Yeah, yeah, I know -- like a Vette back then.

PAT

(after a beat)

Anyway, she was a pistol. You know what she'd do?

DOUGLAS

No.

PAT

She'd drive us -- at night? --
-- up to the cliffs overlooking the
Hudson River. She'd have her golf
clubs in the trunk and we'd drive
balls into the river!

Douglas chuckles politely.

PAT

Whack! One right after the other.
We could care less what anybody
thought. Wild.

(chuckles)

She wanted us to get married. But
it was the Depression, I wasn't
really sure about job security...

Douglas watches him, nods.

PAT

And anyway, I married your mother!

Pat chuckles to himself, sips scotch. Douglas chows-down.

PAT

How's that fra diavolo, good?

DOUGLAS

Real good.

PAT

(looks around)

I used to come here with that gal.
She could care less she was the
only woman in the joint.

DOUGLAS

Mom's not crazy about shellfish.
That I know.

PAT

(chuckles)

Yeah. She skeeves it, actually.
(imitates)

(MORE)

PAT (cont'd)
'Ooh, what is that? Ooh, I can't
stand to look at it.'

They both chuckle. Then it falls silent.

DOUGLAS
After the Depression, how come you
never got drafted in the War?

PAT
Well... actually I didn't wait to
get drafted. I tried to join up.
Sea-Bees. But the place where I
was working then, we were making
belt buckles, canvas fasteners, for
Uncle Sam. It was considered vital
to the war effort so I didn't get
to go. Lucky me, huh?

Pat stares off and for a while doesn't say anything.

PAT
My friend from when I was a kid,
Tom, with the crutches? You met
him. Whole leg amputated. Utah
beach. Didn't even get shot, just
tore his pants on some rusty barbed
wire.

He signals the waiter for another drink

PAT
How you fixed?

Douglas nods for another. Pat's plate is near empty. He
sees a BLACK PATRON.

PAT
Of course, back in the day, they
didn't allow American Africans in
here.

DOUGLAS
African-americans.

Pat nods. He studies Douglas as Douglas continues eating.

PAT
Those two weeks when I was at the
Leahy Clinic for those treatments,
I met another patient there. About
my age.

(beat)

(MORE)

PAT (cont'd)
 She has the same lymphoma as me.
 It's very rare, you know.

DOUGLAS
 I didn't actually.

PAT
 Sure, only about sixty cases in the
 whole United States.

DOUGLAS
 Wow.

PAT
 She's another cuckoo. Redhead.
 Name's Kate. We really hit it off.
 She's from California.

DOUGLAS
 Northern California or Southern?

PAT
 You could say I fell in love with
 her.

Silence. Douglas is thoroughly pole-axed.

PAT
 I was thinking seriously about
 leaving your mother.
 (off stillness)
 I shouldn't say seriously. It
 probably wasn't serious. Anyway,
 what would she do?

DOUGLAS
 You mean would she come out here or
 you go out there, or --?

PAT
 No, your mother. What would she
 do?

DOUGLAS
 I... I don't know. I'd -- you
 know, I'd look out for --

PAT
 (chuckles)
 Look at you with that crazy outfit.
 (wags a finger)
 Youth, my friend. It's wasted on
 the young.

Douglas looks at him. Pat looks at Douglas, no longer smiling. Then he chuckles, waves it all away. Douglas just stares in confusion. Pat reaches forward, pats his son's cheek.

PAT
For once, listen carefully to what
I'm telling you.

INT. HOSPITAL - PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

Douglas visits Wells who is in traction but sitting up and eating quite heartily.

WELLS
Well, I guess the band is finished,
man.

DOUGLAS
Yeah.

WELLS
(sips chocolate milk)
Fuckin' tragedy, man. On the brink
of success.

DOUGLAS
Listen -- the night of the
accident, did you say anything to
piss him off?

WELLS
(sad smile, slurps milk)
I don't remember anything before
the accident, man. That's what
happens.

DOUGLAS
Mmm.

WELLS
Assholes won't allow my singing
teacher in here. Even though it's
a private room. But soon as I'm
out, I'm going full steam.

DOUGLAS
Yeah.

WELLS
What are you up to?

DOUGLAS

Maybe try going to film school at
UCLA. Maybe.

WELLS

What for?

DOUGLAS

I like putting music with images.
Great shit can happen.

Wells looks at him, sips his chocolate milk.

WELLS

Okay, man, but frankly I don't
think you'll ever be much more than
the back-up singer in my band.

Douglas stares at him coldly, in shock. Then, slowly,
Douglas starts to laugh...

EXT. DOUGLAS' HOUSE - DAY

Grace's Chevy II, piled with Grace's belongings and Douglas'
belongings, is backing out of the Albano driveway, Grace at
the wheel. Douglas gives a military salute to to his dad. He
smiles. Pat, Quin, and Evelyn stand waving. Quin is crying.

EVELYN

Send me an autographed picture of
Anthony Newley!

QUINTINA

I've heard her family is Jewish.
They try to hide it.

PAT

They're going to see the Pope, for
crissake, about the other daughter!

QUINTINA

Wonderful. Our grandchildren will
have insanity in their genes.

She storms tearfully into the house. Pat sighs, smiles.
Watches the Chevy II disappear over the hill.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 Singer Paul McCartney today
 released a statement saying
 definitively he would no longer be
 making music with the Beatles, this
 ending almost a year of speculation
 and rumor concerning the band's
 future...

We HEAR the Stone's '69 American Tour crowds --

ROAD MANAGER (V.O.)
 Ladies and gentlemen, the greatest
 rock and roll band in the
 world -- the Rolling Stones -- !

Icy, unearthly "Monkey Man" PIANO/GUITAR INTRO --

SONG
 'I'm a flea-bit peanut monkey --'

Grace and Douglas happily drive into the sunset --

INT. HOSPITAL - PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

Ronny shows Wells a peace offering. A joint. "Monkey Man"
 CONTINUES PLAYING.

SONG (CONT'D)
 'All my friends are junkies/But
 that's not really true.'

They check door, light up. Because of Wells busted arm,
 Ronny helps him adjust his pillow -- suddenly they are
 kissing -- deep, intense -- they surprise themselves --

INT. OLD HOLLYWOOD APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

SONG (CONT'D)
 'I'm a cold Italian pizza --'

Student film shoot. Grace, femme-fatale with .45 pistol,
 Douglas directing. Her co-star, a black gangster pimp in big
 hat --

SONG (CONT'D)
 'I could use a lemon squeezer/'

Douglas harangues Grace till she bursts into tears and storms
 from the set --

EXT. WESTWOOD APARTMENT - DAY

SONG

'Well, I am just a monkey man -- '

Douglas, hang-dog, lugs all his clothes, crap, and a pillow to a junker car while Grace watches, sad but relieved, from an upper window --

EXT. UCLA CAMPUS -- DAY

Grace, walking to class, sees bulletin -- UC Veterinary Schools.

SONG (CONT'D)

'I'm glad you are a monkey woman
too'

-- she detours into the Sciences building.

INT. EDITING ROOM - UCLA FILM SCHOOL - DAY

Douglas works a Moviola -- screen shows Angel/Whore Grace making out with the black gangster pimp. The gangster pimp -- now out of costume -- watches too: he's a fellow student and apparently co-producer. "Monkey Man" is scoring their film too.

PAN across room to --

WINDOW

within its FRAME, the Santa Ana winds are blowing hard outside. Broken palm fronds and bits of ash whip along. A small panicked crowd is running from something. A riot? An LA fire? A 150 foot dinosaur? Charlie Watts' drums pour thunder down on the SCENE. Magic.

SONG (CONT'D)

'I'm a monkeey/Yeah!'

THE END