

R E N T

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Based on the stage musical by

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RENT

- 1 CLOSE UP: The hands of a young man, keeping a steady drumbeat on the bottom of a plastic pickle barrel. CAMERA PULLS BACK. It's ANGEL DUMOTT SHUNARD. He's age 21, gay, Latino. Angel is dressed in a wool cap, jacket and jeans. He is slender, short and athletic, with kind eyes, and a sweet smile. The pickle tub is balanced between his knees. Angel sits on the porch of an expensive brownstone, on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. He is drumming for cash. 1
- Angel's drumbeat leads us into the opening chords of SEASONS OF LOVE. No vocals. Only piano.
- 2 We begin a MONTAGE. Various shots. The streets of MANHATTAN. Christmas Eve. Mid 1980's. 2
- ROCKEFELLER CENTER. People skate on the ice rink, take photos of the Christmas Tree.
- 3 SAKS FIFTH AVENUE store windows, filled with bright, colorful decorations. A HOMELESS WOMAN sleeps beneath a window, curled up on a bed of dirty blankets and cardboard. 3
- 4 SIXTH AVE. and 28TH ST. A CHRISTMAS TREE LOT. A YUPPIE COUPLE pay one hundred bucks for a six foot tree. 4
- 5 WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK. Drug deals are made, money is exchanged, only yards from a church nativity scene. 5
- 6 LITTLE ITALY. Steamy restaurant windows are filled with tourists, eating, celebrating. Outside, a HOMELESS MAN picks through trash. 6
- The chords of SEASONS OF LOVE fade into the crisp sound of an electric guitar being tuned.
- 7 EXT. INDUSTRIAL LOFT - 11TH STREET and AVENUE B - NIGHT 7
- A four story industrial LOFT. A small TENT-CITY has sprung up in the lot next door. The homeless warm their hands over a trash can fire. CAMERA MOVES to the third floor loft windows. The guitar tuning grows LOUDER, as the CAMERA goes inside the loft.
- 8 INT. LOFT - NIGHT 8

MARK COHEN, age 22, enters. He is dressed in glasses, tattered jeans, sweater and scarf. He holds a 16mm Bolex camera. Mark turns the camera on Roger. Their breath is fog.

MARK

Smile.

ROGER (annoyed)

Mark--

MARK

From here on in, I shoot without a script. See if anything comes of it-

ROGER (kicks a stack of screenplays)

Instead of your old shit.

Mark ignores the comment, puts the camera to his eye and focuses on Roger. Mark narrates as he films.

MARK

December 24th. 9:00 PM. Eastern standard time. First shot, Roger. Tuning the Fender Guitar.

ROGER

This won't tune-

MARK

So we hear. Roger's just coming back from a year of withdrawal.

ROGER

Are you talking to me?

MARK

Not at all. Are you ready? Tell the folks at home what you're doing, Roger?

ROGER (sings)

I'm writing one great--

The phone rings.

ROGER

Saved.

Mark PANS his CAMERA to the answering machine. He and Roger's VOICE echoes from the machine: *SPEAK!*

9 EXT. LOFT - PAY PHONE - NIGHT

9

TOM COLLINS, age 26, is at a pay phone, across the street from the loft. Collins is black, gay, with a kind, gentle face and warm eyes. A computer genius, teacher and vagabond anarchist.

TOM (sings)
"Chestnuts roasting..."

10 INT. LOFT - NIGHT

10

Mark excitedly picks up the phone.

MARK
Collins!

COLLINS
I'm outside. Throw down the key.

Mark hangs up the phone, pulls out a small leather pouch, hurries back to the window.

11 EXT. LOFT - NIGHT

11

Mark tosses the key to Collins, who catches it.

12 INT. LOFT - NIGHT

12

Mark turns from the window, to Roger.

MARK
A wild night is now preordained.

13 EXT. LOFT - NIGHT

13

Collins moves to cross the street, when TWO THUGS appear from the alley beside him. One is carrying a LOUISVILLE SLUGGER. Collins turns, sees the muggers, mutters under his breath.

COLLINS
I may be detained.

One of the thugs SWINGS, hits Collins in the ribs. Hard. Collins hits the ground, struggling for his breath.

14 INT. LOFT - NIGHT

14

The phone rings again. Mark answers.

15 INT. RANGE ROVER - NIGHT

15

BENJAMIN COFFIN III (aka BENNY) is driving his Range Rover through the streets of Manhattan. Benny is 23, African American, sleek, handsome, dressed in expensive clothes. He is speaking on a cell phone.

BENNY

Ho ho ho.

16 INT. LOFT - NIGHT (Cut between here and Benny's car)

16

MARK

Benny!

ROGER

Shit.

BENNY

Dudes, I'm on my way. I need the rent.

MARK

What rent?

Roger picks up a slip of paper on the table beside him: An EVICTION NOTICE. It reads: *RENT PAST DUE. 12 MONTHS.*

BENNY

This year's past rent, which I let slide.

MARK

Let slide? You said we were golden.

ROGER (speaks into phone)

When you bought the building.

MARK

When we were roommates. Remember? You lived here!

BENNY

How could I forget? You, me, Collins and Maureen. How is the drama queen?

MARK

She's getting ready for a performance--

BENNY

I know. Still her production manager?

MARK

I was bumped.

BENNY

Still dating her?

MARK

I was dumped.

ROGER
She's in love.

BENNY
She's got a new man?

MARK
Well - no.

BENNY
What's his name?

MARK/ROGER
Joanne.

BENNY (laughs)
Rent, my amigos, is due. Or I will
have to evict you.

Mark angrily hangs up. Roger defiantly picks out **MUSETTA'S THEME** from **PUCCINI'S LA BOHEME** on the electric guitar. The fuse blows on the amp. The lights go out.

MARK (incredulous)
They turned off our power? On
Christmas Eve?

The opening chords of **RENT** explode. (All song lyrics are in *italics*. All song titles are **BOLD**). Mark begins to sing.

MARK
*How do you document real life when
real life's getting more like fiction
each day?*

17 EXT. ALLEYWAY OUTSIDE OF LOFT - NIGHT

17

Tom Collins, punched and kicked by the two thugs.

MARK (V.O.)
Headlines, Breadlines, blow my mind--

18 INT. LOFT - NIGHT

18

Mark clutches the eviction notice, strikes a match.

MARK
*--and now this deadline, "Eviction or
pay! RENT!"*

Mark ignites the eviction notice. Roger throws down his guitar.

ROGER

*How do you write a song when the chords
sound wrong, though they once sounded right
and rare? When the notes are sour... where
is the power you once had to ignite the air?*

MARK

And we're hungry and frozen.

ROGER

Some life that we've chosen.

Mark tosses the burning eviction notice into the wood stove.

ROGER/MARK

*How we gonna' pay? How we gonna' pay?
How we gonna' pay? Last year's rent?*

Mark strikes another match. A candle glows.

MARK

We light candles.

Roger begins to tear his rock posters off the wall.

ROGER

*How do you start a fire, when there's
nothing to burn and it feels like
something's stuck in your flue?*

MARK

*How can you generate heat, when you
can't feel your feet?*

ROGER/MARK

And they're turning blue!

Mark grabs copies of his screenplays, ripping off pages, tossing them into the stove. Roger throws his posters into the fire.

MARK

You light up a mean blaze!

ROGER

With posters.

MARK

And screenplays.

ROGER/MARK

How we gonna' pay?

19 EXT. LOFT - NIGHT

19

Through the scattered loft windows, we see various tenants lighting candles. One woman, MIMI MARQUEZ, 19 years old, beautiful, with thick, long dark hair and brown eyes, lights a candle in her window. Her voice joins Roger and Mark.

MIMI

How we gonna' pay?

In another window, ANOTHER TENANT'S voice joins Roger, Mark's, Mimi's...

ANOTHER TENANT

How we gonna' pay?

20 INT. LOFT - NIGHT

20

We hear Mimi and the tenant's voice along with...

ROGER/MARK

Last year's rent!

21 EXT./INT. TENT CITY/ THEATER - NIGHT

21

CAMERA swoops over the occupants of the tent city parking lot, toward the remains of an abandoned movie theater that rests on the property. The theater windows are boarded up. The marquee is shattered. CAMERA GOES inside, past the empty lobby, into the theater.

The remaining seats are torn and broken. The floor is strewn with old coffee cups, candy wrappers and garbage. An occasional rodent scurries by. Years of dust and cobwebs have accumulated on the walls and remaining fixtures. The screen is stained, ripped. Standing on the battered wooden stage, is JOANNE JEFFERSON, an elegant black woman in her mid-twenties. She's Harvard educated, intelligent, tough and anal retentive. She's tinkering with a complicated sound system with one hand, a pay phone receiver is cradled under her chin.

JOANNE

Don't screen Maureen, it's me, Joanne, your substitute production manager, Hey, hey, hey! Did you eat? Don't change the subject, Maureen. But darling, you haven't eaten all day.

Joanna tries to adjust the amp's electrical cord. It sparks. She jumps back, still talking. Smoke begins to pour out of the amp.

JOANNE

You won't throw up. You won't throw up. The digital delay... didn't blow up (exactly). There may have been one teeny tiny spark...

BAM! A BLAST OF SPARKS shoots from the amplifiers. A fire starts, along the electrical cords. Joanne quickly stomps on the flames, trying to extinguish them.

JOANNE

You're not calling Mark!!!

22 EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

22

Collins struggles to his feet as the TWO THUGS rifle through his belongings. They've ripped off Collins' coat, minus one sleeve. The thugs open Collins' wallet. It's empty.

COLLINS

How do you stay on your feet when on every street it's "trick or treat", and tonight is "trick".

The other thug opens Collin's backpack, finds it filled with battered philosophy paperbacks, tosses them on the ground. The two thugs run off down the alley, leaving a battered, bleeding Tom Collins.

COLLINS

"Welcome back to town". I should lie down. Everything's brown and uh-oh, I feel sick.

23 EXT. LOFT - NIGHT

23

Mark peers through the loft window, looking outside.

MARK

Where is he?

24 EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

24

COLLINS (stumbles to his knees)

Getting dizzy.

Collins collapses.

25 EXT. LOFT - NIGHT

25

CAMERA RACES up the building. More angry TENANTS are in the windows. More candles are being lit, more fires are being started. CAMERA PANS by each window, each tenant is singing. Their voices are growing, becoming stronger, more emotional with each line.

TENANT

How we gonna' pay?

TWO TENANTS

How we gonna pay?

ANOTHER TENANT
How we gonna' pay?

CAMERA STOPS on Mark and Roger's window, their voices defiantly joining the others.

ROGER/MARK
Last year's rent!

26 EXT. EAST VILLAGE STREETS - NIGHT 26

Benny's Range Rover cuts through the streets and leads us through the charged carnival that was the East Village in the eighties. Cafes. Artists. Squatters. Addicts. Dealers. Mascara girls.

27 INT. RANGE ROVER - NIGHT 27

BENNY (on cell phone)
Alison, baby. You sound sad. I can't believe those two, after everything I've done. Ever since our wedding, I'm dirt. They'll see. I can help them all out in the long run.

A punk kid walks in front of Benny's Rover. He hits the horn. The kid flips him off.

BENNY
Forces are gathering. Forces are gathering. Can't turn away. Forces are gathering.

28 EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT 28

Collins attempts to stand, his hand on the wall for balance.

COLLINS
Ughhhh - Ughhhh - Uhhhh. I can't think.
Ughhhh - Ughhhh - Ughhh. I need a drink.

29 INT. LOFT - NIGHT 29

The loft blazes with candlelight and the wood stove's growing flames. Mark and Roger continue to ignite the fire by ripping out pages from Mark's screenplays.

MARK (reading from script page)
"The music ignites the night with
Passionate fire".

He tosses it into the flames.

30 INT. THEATER - NIGHT 30

Flames continue to erupt from the sound equipment.

JOANNE (on pay phone)
Maureen, I'm not a theater person.

31 INT. LOFT - NIGHT 31

ROGER (reading screenplay page)
"The narration crackles and pops with incendiary wit".

32 INT. THEATER - NIGHT 32

The fire grows. Joanne panics, stomping out flames.

JOANNE (on pay phone)
COULD NEVER BE A THEATER PERSON!!!

33 INT. LOFT - NIGHT 33

Mark films his script burning. The title page goes up in flames.
 It reads: *"DEDICATED TO MAUREEN"*.

MARK
Zoom in as they burn the past to the ground.

34 INT. THEATER - NIGHT 34

Joanne continues stomping out flames.

JOANNE (on pay phone)
Hello?

35 INT. LOFT - NIGHT 35

Roger and Mark warm themselves in front of the raging stove.

ROGER/MARK
And feel the heat of the future's glow.

36 INT. THEATER - NIGHT 36

JOANNE (on pay phone)
Hello?

37 INT. LOFT - NIGHT 37

MARK (answers phone)
Hello, Maureen? Your equipment won't work. Okay, tomorrow, I'll go!

Mark hangs up furiously. Roger looks down at an old picture frame. Inside, is a faded photo of Roger and his old girlfriend, APRIL.

ROGER/MARK

*How do you leave the past behind when it
keeps finding ways to get to your heart?*

Roger throws the photo out of the window.

38 EXT. LOFT - NIGHT

38

The picture frame HITS the ground, shatters. Mark and Roger climb out of their window, leap onto the fire escape. Mark is armed with his camera, Roger with his guitar.

ROGER/MARK

*It reaches down deep and tears you inside
out, 'til you're torn apart! RENT!*

OTHER TENANTS are exiting the surrounding buildings, pouring into the streets. They are joining forces, their voices uniting in song.

Roger and Mark LEAP to the ground, joining the other tenants.

ROGER/MARK/TENANTS

*How can you connect in an age where
strangers, landlords, lovers, your
own blood cells betray!*

The streets are filling with tenants. They sing with passion, marching together.

Benny's Range Rover SKIDS to a stop, in the middle of the street. Benny gets out, sees Roger, Mark and other tenants moving toward him from all directions.

TENANTS

*What binds the fabric together when the
raging, shifting winds of change keep
ripping away!*

The growing crowd closes in on Benny. He faces them.

BENNY

*Draw a line in the sand and then make
a stand!*

Roger turns to Mark, who is filming.

ROGER

Use your camera to spar!

MARK (to Roger)

Use your guitar!

The crowd of tenants and Benny stand off.

TENANTS

When they act tough, you call their bluff!

ROGER/MARK

We're not gonna' pay!

Tenants hanging from windows, perched on fire escapes, join in the song. Voices grow LOUDER.

ROGER/MARK/TENANTS

We're not gonna' pay!

Tenants on rooftops, on street corners, join in, SINGING.

ROGER/MARK/TENANTS

We're not gonna' pay!

Candlelight GLOWS from windows. Fires RAGE from garbage cans. Surrounding fires burn BRIGHTER, become stronger, rising with the tenant's unified VOICES.

ROGER/MARK/TENANTS

*Last year's rent! This year's rent!
Next year's rent! RENT. RENT. RENT.
RENT. RENT. RENT. We're not gonna'
pay rent!*

CAMERA SWOOPS upward, revealing the block, filled with singing tenants, illuminated by dancing flames. The power of the voices reaches its climax.

ROGER/MARK/TENANTS

'Cause everything is RENT!

The song ENDS. Silence.

The tenants, breathless, angry, cold, glare at Benny. Having taken a stand, having made themselves heard, the tenants slowly turn away. They walk back to their apartments, going back inside.

Before turning away, Mimi pauses, catches Roger's eye. They exchange a smile. Mimi turns and walks back inside the loft. Roger turns back to face Benny. Mark is right beside him. Benny notices something from the corner of his eye. A HOMELESS MAN leans on his Range Rover.

BENNY

Hey, you! Bum! Get your ass off that Range Rover!

MARK

That attitude toward the homeless is just what Maureen is protesting.

BENNY

Maureen is protesting losing her performance space. Not my attitude.

ROGER

Her performance space happens to be home to a lot of people.

Roger motions to the homeless gathered in tent city. Benny is unmoved, very cool, very business-like.

BENNY (business-like)

Look. My partner--

MARK

Your father-in-law.

BENNY (nods)

He owns that lot and these buildings. He has a right to do with them as he pleases---

MARK (sarcastic)

Happy birthday, Jesus.

BENNY

I know I promised you the place for free, but my investor--

MARK

Your Father-in-law.

BENNY (annoyed)

He's been letting you guys slide, because you're my friends.

ROGER

So what happened?

BENNY

He picked up the Village Voice, read about Maureen's show. Pissed him off. So he sent me here for the rent.

MARK

You're wasting your time.

ROGER

We're broke.

MARK (to Benny)

You broke your word.

A long pause. Benny's voice softens.

BENNY

Remember what we used to dream about?
A place to do our work and get paid?

(points to lot next door)

The future home of Cyberarts. A state
of the art digital, virtual interactive
studio. Now that the block is re-zoned,
our dream can become a reality. I'll
forego your rent and on paper guarantee,
that you can stay here for free.

(a pause)

If you do me one small favor.

Roger and Mark wait for an answer.

BENNY

Convince Maureen to cancel her protest
on Saturday night.

MARK

Why not just get an injunction and
call the cops?

BENNY

I did. They're on standby. But my
investors would rather I handle this
quietly.

ROGER

You can't wipe out an entire tent
City, then watch "It's A Wonderful
Life" on TV!

BENNY (passionate)

You want to produce films and write
songs? You need somewhere to do it.

(a pause)

Just stop Maureen's protest. And
you'll have it made. You'll see.

(threatening)

Or you'll pack.

Benny turns, gets into his car and drives off.

ROGER

What happened to Benny? What happened
to his heart? His ideals?

MARK

Sold. To the highest bidder.

Roger shrugs, turns, goes inside the loft. Mark turns to follow, pauses,
sees something on the ground. The photo of Roger and April. The glass is

shattered, the frame is cracked. The photo is slightly bruised, scratched. Mark picks up the frame, carries it inside.

CAMERA PANS TO:

39 EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF ALLEY - NIGHT

39

A HOMELESS MAN with a tattered green cap stands on the corner. A rusty coffee can sits at his feet. It contains a few coins, one crumpled dollar bill. People pass him. He's singing.

HOMELESS MAN

*Christmas bells are ringing, Christmas
bells are ringing, Christmas bells are
ringing.*

No one is throwing change into his can.

HOMELESS MAN

Somewhere else. Not here.

The homeless man picks up his coffee can, walks off. Sitting a few feet away, on a staircase, is ANGEL, who we met at the beginning of the film.

Angel gets a good drumbeat going on his plastic tub, interrupted by the sound of a person moaning in pain. Angel stands, follows the sound into the alley.

40 INT. ALLEY - NIGHT

40

Tom Collins is lying here, moaning in pain. He reaches up to touch his head. A bruise. There's blood. He hears a noise, footsteps. He looks up. COLLINS' POV: Blurry. A shape approaches.

Collins cowers, thinks his attackers are coming back. But the figure walks into FOCUS. It's Angel. He kneels in front of Collins, notices that Collins' knee is scraped, bleeding through his torn pants.

ANGEL

You okay, honey?

COLLINS (focuses)

Yeah... I think so.

ANGEL

They get any money?

COLLINS

None to get. But they stole my coat...

He peels off his one torn, remaining coat sleeve. He shouts out, angrily, to his long gone attackers.

COLLINS
HEY! YOU MISSED A SLEEVE!

Angel takes out a handkerchief, reaches out to clean the blood from his head. Collins backs off, but takes the handkerchief.

ANGEL (helps Collins to his feet)
We should get you to the hospital.

COLLINS (in pain)
No, I'm-- Uggghh. Yeah. Probably.

He turns, faces Angel, who extends a hand.

ANGEL
I'm Angel.

COLLINS
Angel...
(their eyes meet)
Indeed. An angel of the first degree.
Friends call me Collins. Tom Collins.

ANGEL
We need to hurry. I've got a "life support" meeting.

COLLINS
Life support?

ANGEL (nods)
This body provides a comfortable home,
for the Acquired Immune Deficiency
Syndrome.

Collins is impressed by Angel's direct confession that he has HIV/AIDS. Collins warms.

COLLINS
As does mine.

ANGEL
We'll get along fine.

They exchange a glance, there's a deep, intense attraction. Collins lifts the handkerchief, wipes the blood from his forehead. Angel takes the handkerchief from Tom's hand.

ANGEL
Let me.

Angel wipes the blood from Collins' head.

41 INT. LOFT - NIGHT

41

Roger is sitting on the table, picking at his guitar. Mark is putting on a coat to go out.

MARK

I'm gonna' check on Collins. Wanna' come? Maybe catch some dinner?

ROGER

Zoom in on my empty wallet.

MARK

Touche'.

(softly)

Take your AZT.

Roger nods, goes back to his guitar. Mark exits. Roger turns, sees the shattered photograph of himself and April, sitting on the windowsill. He's puzzled. How did that get back here? Roger goes back to playing, sings...

ROGER

I'm writing one great song before I...

He stands, frustrated, looks back to the photo of April. Angry, he grabs his guitar and dashes out of the room.

42 EXT. LOFT - ROOFTOP - NIGHT

42

The city lights sparkle. It's a beautifully clear, crisp New York night. Roger steps outside, walks to the far end of the rooftop, stands dangerously close to the edge. He sits down, begins to play. CAMERA MOVES TOWARD Roger, as he sings **ONE SONG GLORY**.

ROGER

*One song. Glory. One song. Before I
go. Glory. One song to leave behind.
Find one song. One last refrain. Glory.
From the pretty boy front man, who wasted
opportunity.*

(During the song, WE INTERCUT BETWEEN the PRESENT and the PAST: IMAGES of Roger singing on the rooftop and IMAGES from his relationship with his old girlfriend, April)

43 INT. CBGB'S - NIGHT (THE PAST)

43

Roger, onstage, performs with his band, in a smoky, packed rock club. Roger looks healthier, stronger, happier. Standing in the audience, is APRIL. Rail thin, a rocker girl with short red hair, freckles and a tough attitude.

ROGER (V.O.)

*One song. He had the world at his feet.
Glory. In the eyes of a young girl. A
young girl.*

Roger sees April from the stage, catches her eye. They connect, exchange an interested smile.

44 INT. CBGB - BAR - LATER - NIGHT (THE PAST) 44

Roger and April sit at the crowded bar, after his show. They are sharing drinks. Flirting. Drinking. Laughing.

ROGER (V.O.)

*Find glory. Beyond the cheap colored
lights. One song. Before the sun sets.*

45 INT. SUBWAY - LATER - NIGHT (THE PAST) 45

Roger and April continue their conversation on a moving subway train, later that night. They sit close, very attracted to each other.

ROGER (V.O.)

Glory. On another empty life.

46 EXT. LOWER MANHATTAN - SUNRISE (THE PAST) 46

Roger and April watch the sun rise over the Brooklyn Bridge. They share a small, tender kiss. They break apart for a moment, kiss again. Longer. More passionate.

ROGER

Time flies...

47 EXT. LOFT - ROOFTOP - NIGHT (THE PRESENT) 47

ROGER

...Time dies!

CAMERA spins 360 degrees around Roger as he sings passionately. The city lights sparkle and blur behind him.

ROGER

*Glory. One blaze of glory. One blaze
of glory. Glory.*

48 EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - SUMMERTIME - DAY (THE PAST) 48

April buys a packet of white powder from a dealer, THE MAN, a sinewy, greasy, sleazy dope dealer. Roger watches, waits, a few feet away. April pockets the drugs, runs up to Roger. They hurry off together, in each other's arms.

ROGER (V.O.)

*Find glory. In a song that rings true.
Truth like a blazing fire.*

49 INT. LOFT - BEDROOM - NIGHT (THE PAST) 49

Roger and April make love.

ROGER (V.O.)

An eternal flame.

50 INT. ALLEY - NIGHT (THE PAST) 50

A heavy rain. Roger and April shoot heroin beneath a fire escape.

ROGER (V.O.)

*Find one song. A song about love.
Glory.*

51 INT. CAFÉ- AUTUMN (THE PAST) 51

Roger sits alone at a table. Now a junkie poster boy. Gaunt, dark circles under his eyes. April enters the Café. Her eyes are red from crying. She sits down, passes Roger a slip of paper. She breaks down crying. Roger reads the paper: APRIL WILSON: HIV POSITIVE. ROGER DAVIS: HIV POSITIVE. Fear covers Roger's face.

ROGER (V.O.)

*From the soul of a young man. A
young man.*

52 EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT (THE PRESENT) 52

Roger continues to sing passionately. CAMERA PANS DOWN the side of the building, to the window below. Mimi sits here, listening.

ROGER

*Find the one song, before the virus
takes hold. Glory. Like a sunset.*

53 INT. LOFT - HALLWAY - NIGHT (THE PAST) 53

Roger walks down the hallway, toward a slightly ajar bathroom door. He slowly pushes it open. April's lifeless arm dangles over the side. A heavy stream of blood mingles with the bathwater, spilling over onto the floor. Roger backs away, falls against the side of the wall, slides to the floor, buries his head in his hands. Sobbing.

ROGER (V.O.)

*One song. To redeem this empty life.
Time flies.*

54 EXT. LOFT - ROOFTOP - NIGHT (THE PRESENT)

54

ROGER

*And then, no need to endure anymore.
Time dies.*

The song ends. Roger stands, walks back inside the building.

55 INT. LOFT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

55

Roger descends the stairs, passes the fourth floor loft, down another flight, to his loft. The fourth floor loft door opens. It's Mimi. She's holding a lit red candle. She watches Roger enter his apartment. Mimi blows out her candle and follows Roger.

56 INT. ROGER AND MARK'S LOFT - NIGHT

56

The candles have all gone out. The fire is dead in the stove. The loft is illuminated by the magical blue moonlight. Roger enters, alone, places his guitar on the table. There's a KNOCK at the door. Roger reaches out to answer it: **LIGHT MY CANDLE** begins.

ROGER

Mark?... What'd you forget?

Roger opens the door. Mimi stands there, holds up the candle. Her hands are thin and cold.

MIMI

Got a light?

ROGER

I know you. You're... You're shivering.

MIMI

*It's nothing. They turned off my heat.
And I'm just a little weak on my feet.
Would you light my candle?*

(a beat)

What are you staring at?

ROGER

*Nothing. Your hair in the moonlight.
You look familiar.*

Roger strikes a match, lights her candle. Mimi starts to leave, but stumbles, a bit weak.

ROGER

Can you make it?

MIMI

*Just haven't eaten much today. At least
the room stopped spinning. Anyway.*

) Roger is still staring.

MIMI

What?

ROGER

Nothing. Your smile reminded me of--

MIMI

I always remind people of-- Who is she?

ROGER

She died. Her name was April.

Roger looks away. Mimi discreetly blows out the candle.

MIMI

It's out again. Sorry about your friend.
Would you light my candle?

Roger lights the candle again. They linger, awkwardly.

ROGER

Well--

MIMI

Yeah. Ow!

ROGER

Oh. The wax. It's--

MIMI

Dripping! I like it between my--

ROGER

Fingers. I figured. Oh, well. Goodnight.

Mimi exits. Roger heads back toward his guitar on the table. There is another knock. Roger answers.

ROGER

It blew out again?

MIMI

No. I think that I dropped my stash.

ROGER

I know I've seen you out and about. When
I used to go out. Your candle's out.

MIMI

I'm illin'. I had it when I walked in the
door. It was pure. Is it on the floor?

Mimi gets down on all fours and starts searching on the floor for her stash. She looks back to Roger, who is staring at her again.

MIMI

They say I have the best ass below 14th Street. Is it true?

ROGER

What?

MIMI

You're staring again.

ROGER

Oh, no. I mean you do... Have a nice... I mean... You look familiar.

MIMI

Like your dead girlfriend.

ROGER

Only when you smile. But I'm sure I've seen you somewhere else...

MIMI

Do you go to the Cat Scratch Club? That's where I work. I dance. Help me look.

ROGER

Yes! They used to tie you up.

MIMI

It's a living.

Mimi douses the flame again.

ROGER

I didn't recognize you without the handcuffs.

MIMI

We could light the candle. Oh, won't you light the candle?

Roger lights it again.

ROGER

Why don't you forget that stuff? You look like you're sixteen.

MIMI

I'm nineteen. But I'm old for my age. I'm just born to be bad.

ROGER

I once was born to be bad. I used to shiver like that.

MIMI

I have no heat. I told you.

ROGER

I used to sweat.

MIMI

I got a cold.

ROGER

Uh-huh. I used to be a junkie.

MIMI

But now and then I like to---

ROGER

Uh-huh.

MIMI

Feel good.

ROGER

Oh, here it-- Um--

Roger finds a small bag of crack cocaine. Mimi's stash.

MIMI

What's that?

ROGER

Candy bar wrapper.

Roger puts the stash behind his back, into his pocket.

MIMI

We could light the candle.

Roger discreetly blows out the candle.

MIMI

What'd you do with my candle?

ROGER

That was my last match.

MIMI

Our eyes'll adjust. Thank God for the moon.

ROGER

Maybe it's not the moon at all. I hear
Spike Lee's shooting down the street.

MIMI

Bah humbug. Bah humbug.

Mimi places her hand under his, pretending to do it by mistake.

ROGER

Cold hands.

MIMI

Yours too. Big. Like my Father's.
You wanna' dance?

ROGER

With you?

MIMI

No. With my Father.

ROGER

I'm Roger.

MIMI

They call me. They call me... Mimi.

They come extremely close to a kiss. Mimi reaches into his pocket, nabs the stash and makes a sexy exit. Roger smiles to himself. He likes this girl. Then, reality sets in. His smile fades. His face turns hard, empty. He's resigned to his fate. He turns, walks back to the table and picks up his guitar. DISSOLVE TO:

57 EXT. NEW YORK CITY - THE LOWER EAST SIDE - THE NEXT MORNING - DAY

57

Establishing shot. A cold, crisp sunny day.

58 INT. LOFT - DAY

58

The loft is bathed in magical shafts of light from the tall, dirty windows. Roger staggers into the kitchen, still freezing. He gives a kick to the radiator. It still isn't working. Mark enters, rubs the sleep from his eyes. He opens the refrigerator. There's a light.

MARK

We got power.

ROGER

Merry Christmas.

Mark searches the cupboards, finds a coffee can. He tears off a page from a Village Voice, forms it into a filter for the rusted Mr. Coffee machine. He opens the coffee can, begins to pour the contents into the filter. Less than a teaspoon. Mark sighs, frustrated.

The phone rings. The answering machine picks up: *Speak!*

MARK'S MOM (V.O.)

Mark? Are you there? Are you screening your calls? It' Mom.

Mark grimaces. Roger turns, notices something outside. An envelope, on a string, is being lowered in front of the window.

MARK'S MOM (V.O.)

Just wanted to call and say we love you. We'll miss you today. Cindy and the kids are here, send their love. I hope you like the hot plate. Just don't leave it on when you leave the house.

Roger opens the window, takes the envelope. His name is handwritten on the front. He opens the envelope. Written on a slip of paper, is:

X-mas Brunch? Come on up. Mimi.

Roger is torn. He desperately wants to go...

MARK'S MOM (V.O.)

Oh, Mark, and we're sorry to hear that Maureen dumped you. I say C'est le vie. So let her be a *lesbian*. There are other fishies in the sea.

Beep! The red light blinks. Mark sighs, looks to Roger.

MARK

Every now and then, when we're really dirt broke, hungry and freezing, I ask myself what the hell am I doing here? Then, they call. And I remember.
(notices the envelope)
What's that?

ROGER

The girl upstairs. It's nothing.

Roger picks up a pencil, scrawls a response on the letter, puts it back into the envelope and places it back outside.

59 EXT. MIMI'S LOFT - MIMI'S WINDOW - DAY

59

Hopeful, Mimi pulls the envelope up to her window. She reads Roger's response: *Can't. Busy.* Mimi's face fills with disappointment.

60 INT. BOYS' LOFT - DAY

60

Roger closes the window. Mark is very intrigued about the note.

MARK

Girl upstairs? The dancer? From
the Cat Scratch Club?

The loft door opens. Tom Collins enters, a bandage on his head, a few bruises. Under one arm, he carries Angel's pickle tub, filled with provisions. The other arm holds a cord of firewood. The boys excitedly run to Collins, embrace him.

ROGER

Collins!

Collins gives Mark the small leather pouch.

COLLINS

Your key.

MARK

Fourteen hours later.

(notices bruises)

What happened to you? Are you alright?

COLLINS (grins)

Never been better.

Collins dumps out the contents of Angel's tub onto the table. Café Bustelo. Fresh bananas. Captain Crunch. Marlboros. Stoli. The boys pick up the goodies, ecstatic.

MARK

A Christmas feast!

Collins gives Roger the firewood, which immediately gets dumped into the illegal wood burning stove. Roger turns to Collins.

ROGER

You strike gold at M.I.T.?

COLLINS

No. They expelled me for my theory of actual reality, which I'll soon impart to the couch potatoes at New York University.

MARK

Then, where did you get this stuff?

Collins stands regal, makes an announcement. **TODAY 4 U** begins.

COLLINS

Gentlemen, our benefactor on this Christmas Day, whose charity is only matched by talent, I must say. A new member of the Alphabet City avant garde... Angel Dumott Schunard!

Angel sashays in, gorgeously done up in full Santa Claus drag, with a fan of twenty dollar bills in each hand.

ANGEL

Today for you, tomorrow for me. Today for you, tomorrow for me.

Angel hands each of the boys some cash.

COLLINS

And you should hear her beat!

MARK

You earned this on the street?

Angel begins to dance around the loft, telling her story.

ANGEL

It was my lucky day today on Avenue A, when a lady in a limousine drove my way. She said, "Dahling, be a dear. Haven't slept in a year. I need your help to make my neighbor's yappy dog disappear. This Akita, Evita, just won't shut up. I believe if you play non-stop that pup, will breathe its very last high strung breath. I'm certain that cur will bark itself to death."

Angel continues to wildly dance around the apartment. The boys are taken with her incredible energy.

ANGEL

Today for you, tomorrow for me. Today for you, tomorrow for me.

Angel beats on the pickle tub, then hands it to Mark, who continues drumming on the tub.

ANGEL

We agreed on a fee, a thousand dollar guarantee. Tax free. And a bonus if I trim her tree. Now who could foretell that it'd go so well, but sure as I am here, that dog is now in doggy hell. After an hour, Evita, in all of her glory on the window ledge of that 23rd story.

ANGEL (CONT'D)

*Like Thelma and Lousie did when they
got the blues, swan dove into the
courtyard of the Gracie Mews.*

The boys double over with laughter. Angel continues her performance.

ANGEL

*Today for you, tomorrow for me. Today
for you, tomorrow for me.*

Angel whips out a pair of drumsticks from her belt. She does a fabulous drum and dance solo, throughout the loft.

ANGEL (to Collins)

*Back on the street where I met my sweet,
where he was moaning and groaning on the
cold concrete. The nurse took him home
for some Mercurochrome, and I dressed his
wounds and got him back on his feet.*

The boys are now on their feet, joining in Angel's infectious, celebratory dance number.

ANGEL

*Sing it! Today for you, tomorrow for me.
Today for you, tomorrow for me! I said...
Today for you, tomorrow for me! Today for
you, tomorrow... whoa, oohhh... for me!*

The boys applaud. Angel holds her hands up in the air and bows. Roger and Mark walk up to her. Each takes a hand. And kisses.

The phone rings. *Speak!!!*

MAUREEN (V.O.)

Mark! I need you at the theater! The new equipment's just arrived--

Mark picks up the telephone. He's obviously still smitten with her.

MARK

Maureen. Hi. Yeah. I'm on my way.
See you there.

Mark hangs up, furious, turns to Roger and Collins.

MARK

Can you believe Maureen's nerve?!? She dumps me for some attorney named Joanne, then asks me to fix her sound equipment?!?

COLLINS

You could have said no.

MARK (mumbling)
Well, yeah. But---

ROGER (to Collins)
He's still in love with her.

MARK (phony laugh)
Yeah. Right. No way.

Roger and Collins just smile, staring knowingly at Mark.

MARK (defensive)
Hey. It's Christmas day. The girl
needs a little support.

COLLINS (to Angel)
Which reminds me, we have an appointment.
Anyone who wants can come along.

ROGER
Where?

ANGEL
Life support meeting.

ROGER
On Christmas?

ANGEL
Some people don't have anywhere
else to go today.

They look at each other knowingly. No shit. Angel extends her hand
to Roger.

ANGEL
Come on.

ROGER
I'll pass.

ANGEL
Life support's a group for people
coping with life. You don't have
to stay too long.

ROGER
I'm not much company.

COLLINS
Mark?

MARK (raises his camera)
Could I shoot some film?

Collins and Angel exchange a shrug, shouldn't be a problem.

MARK

Okay. Meet you there. First, I've got a protest to save.

Mark puts on his coat, exits. Collins and Roger exchange a smile.

61 INT. THEATER - DAY

61

Mark enters, walks to the stage, begins to work on the sound equipment. He hears footsteps, sees the SILHOUETTE of a woman.

MARK

Maureen?

But it's Joanne, who steps into the light.

MARK (stands)

Oh. Hi. Maureen called me to fix the equipment--

JOANNE (uncomfortable)

You're Mark?

MARK (nods, dawns on him)

Joanne?

She nods. There's an uncomfortable silence.

MARK

Maureen said she'd be here.

JOANNE

Don't hold your breath.

MARK

Typical.

JOANNE

I told her not to call you.

MARK (awkward)

Yeah. Well. Can I help? Since I'm here--

JOANNE

I hired an engineer.

MARK

Great. Well, nice to have met you.

Mark turns to leave. Joanne pauses, calls out.

JOANNE

He's three hours late.

Mark turns back. The opening chords of **TANGO: MAUREEN** begins. Mark walks back to the equipment, begins fiddling with the connections.

JOANNE

The samples won't delay. But the cable---

MARK

There's another way. Say something. Anything.

JOANNE (takes microphone)

Test. One, two three...

MARK

Anything but that.

JOANNE

This is weird.

MARK

It's weird.

JOANNE

Very weird.

MARK

Fuckin' weird.

JOANNE

I'm so mad that I don't know what to do. Fighting with microphones, freezing down to my bones. And to top it all off, I'm with you.

MARK

Feel like going insane? Got a fire in your brain? And you're thinking of drinking gasoline?

JOANNE

As a matter of fact---

MARK

Honey, I know this act. It's called the Tango Maureen.

(CAMERA CUTS BETWEEN MARK and JOANNE'S singing onstage and IMAGES from their relationship with Maureen.)

62 CLOSE-UP: MAUREEN JOHNSON.

62

Smiling, blowing kisses at the audience. She's whimsical, gorgeous, a self-obsessed diva, insane with her own freedom. CAMERA PULLS BACK. We see that Mark is filming Maureen, doing an interpretive dance in the Central Park band shell.

MARK (V.O.)

*The Tango Maureen! It's a dark, dizzy
merry-go-round. As she keeps you dangling.*

JOANNE (V.O.)

You're wrong.

MARK (V.O.)

You're heart she is mangling.

Mark puts down his camera, kisses Maureen.

63 INT. THEATER - DAY

63

JOANNE

It's different with me.

MARK

*And you toss and you turn 'cause your
cold eyes can burn, yet you yearn and
you churn and rebound.*

JOANNE

I think I know what you mean.

BOTH

The Tango Maureen!

MARK

*Has she ever pouted her lips and called
you...*

64 INT. MARK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

64

Maureen and Mark are making love. Maureen looks into Mark's eyes, she mouths the word...

MARK (V.O.)

"Pookie."

65 INT. THEATER - DAY

65

JOANNE (V.O.)

Never.

66 EXT. LOWER EAST SIDE - CAFÉ - DAY

66

Mark and Maureen sit at an outside table. They lean across the table and kiss. Mark's eyes are closed. Maureen's are not. CAMERA PANS to her POV. She's checking out a gorgeous girl, crossing the street.

MARK (V.O.)

Have you ever doubted a kiss or two?

CAMERA PANS back to the same table, only now Maureen is now kissing Joanne, who stops the kiss, to see what Maureen was looking at.

JOANNE (V.O.)

This is spooky.

67 INT. THEATER - DAY

67

JOANNE (worried)

Did you swoon when she walked through the door?

MARK

Every time. So be cautious.

68 INT. LIFE CAFÉ - NIGHT

68

Mark is at the bar, shell shocked, watching something from his barstool. CAMERA PANS to the dance floor. Maureen is just grinding as she dances with another guy.

JOANNE (V.O.)

Did she moon over other boys?

MARK (V.O.)

More than moon.

CAMERA PANS BACK to the barstool, but it's Joanne who sits here, watching Maureen with the other guy.

JOANNE (V.O.)

I'm getting nauseous.

69 INT. THEATER - DAY

69

Joanne and Mark begin a dignified tango, with Mark leading.

MARK

Where'd you learn to tango?

JOANNE

With the French Ambassador's daughter in her dorm room at Miss Porter's. And you?

MARK

With Nanette Himmelfarb, the rabbi's daughter, at the Scarsdale Jewish Community Center.

They switch and Joanne leads, dips Mark.

MARK

It's hard to do this backward.

JOANNE

You should try it in heels.

70 Joanne DROPS Mark to the floor. The entire room TRANSFORMS into an elegant BALLROOM. Mark is in a black tux and tails, Joanne in a silver evening gown. They are surrounded by several COUPLES, all dressed in BLACK and SILVER, doing the tango. MAUREEN enters, in a bright red evening gown. She dances from couple to couple, changing partners every few steps.

70

JOANNE

She cheated!

MARK

She cheated.

JOANNE

Maureen cheated.

MARK

Fuckin' cheated.

JOANNE

I'm defeated. I should give up right now.

MARK

Gotta' look on the bright side with all of your might.

At that point, Joanne steps in, dances with Maureen.

JOANNE

I'd fall for her still anyhow.

Maureen turns, dances with Mark, then back with Joanne, back with Mark, dancing back and forth between the two.

BOTH

When you're dancing her dance you don't stand a chance. Her grip on romance makes you fall.

MARK

So you think might as well...

JOANNE

...dance a tango to hell.

BOTH

At least I'll have tangoed at all.

Maureen leaves them both to join the other dancers, continuing to switch partners. Mark and Joanne shrug, go back to their own exuberant tango.

BOTH

*The Tango Maureen. Gotta' dance till your
diva is through. You pretend to believe
her 'cause in the end you can't leave her.*

Maureen moves to the exit, dancing her way through countless partners.

BOTH

*But the end it will come. Still, you
have to play dumb, til you're glum and
you bum and turn blue.*

Maureen dances toward the door, with two final partners, a HANDSOME MAN and a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.

MARK

Why do we love when she's mean?

Maureen shares a passionate kiss with the man, then turns, shares another with the woman, before exiting with them both.

JOANNE

And she can be so obscene...

71 BACK TO REALITY, inside the theater. Mark and Joanne are alone, back in street clothes. Mark fiddles with the PA system, gives the microphone to Joanne.

71

MARK

Try the mike.

JOANNE (digital delay)

My Maureen (een, een, een, een)

MARK

You're patched.

JOANNE

Thanks.

MARK

You know? I feel great now.

JOANNE

I feel lousy.

The pay phone rings. Joanne answers.

JOANNE

Hi, honey, we're... Pookie?!? You never called me Pookie. Forget it. We're patched.

She hangs up, looks at Mark.

BOTH

The Tango Maureen!

72 EXT. LOWER EAST SIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - LATER - DAY

72

We hear the opening notes of **LIFE SUPPORT**. Mark, carrying his Bolex camera, runs up to the building, reads a sign on the door: AIDS LIFE SUPPORT GROUP. MEETING TODAY. MUSIC ROOM. Mark hurriedly enters.

73 INT. MUSIC CLASSROOM - DAY

73

During the school year, this is a music classroom for children. Their drawings hang on the walls, kids' impressions of life in the city. A group of people are gathered here. They have nothing in common except HIV. Different ages. Genders. Races. A different person states their names as each takes his or her seat in a semi-circle.

STEVE

Steve.

GORDON

Gordon.

ALI

Ali.

PAM

Pam.

SUE

Sue.

ANGEL

Hi... I'm Angel.

COLLINS

Tom... Collins.

PAUL, the group leader, takes his place at the opening in the circle.

PAUL

I'm Paul. Let's begin.

Everyone begins to sing, a beautiful choral number.

LIFE SUPPORT GROUP
There's only us. There's only this...

The door bangs open. It's Mark, interrupting the song.

MARK
Sorry... Excuse me... oops.

PAUL
And you are?

MARK (nervously)
Oh, I'm not... I'm just here to... I
don't have... I'm here with, ummm...
Mark. Mark. I'm Mark! Well, this
is quite an operation.

Mark holds up his camera, here to film this. Paul nods.
Mark sets up his camera in the corner, and begins filming.

PAUL
Make yourself comfortable, Mark.
We'll continue the affirmation.

LIFE SUPPORT GROUP
Forget regret, or life is yours to miss.

GORDON, a man in his late twenties, stands.

GORDON
Excuse me, Paul. I'm having a problem
with this... this credo. My T-Cells
are low. I regret that news, okay?

PAUL
All right. But Gordon... How do you
feel today?

GORDON (shrugs)
Alright. Okay.

PAUL
Is that all?

GORDON
Best I've felt all year.

PAUL
Then why choose fear?

GORDON
I'm a New Yorker. Fear's my life.

Mark smiles. Gordon begins to sing a beautiful, sad melody.

GORDON

*Look, I find some of what you teach suspect,
because I'm used to relying on intellect.
But I try to open up to what I don't know.*

In Mark's POV, Gordon's face MORPHS into Roger for the next line.

ROGER/ GORDON

*Because reason said I should have died
three years ago.*

Roger's face fades back into Gordon. Everyone joins in.

LIFE SUPPORT GROUP

*No other road. No other way. No day
but today.*

Mark, visibly moved, exchanges a look with Collins.

74 INT. LOFT - LATER - NIGHT

74

Roger sits at his spot on the table, working on a song. The door bursts open. Mark enters, flanked by a determined Angel and Collins. They move toward Roger. Mark takes away Roger's guitar. Angel and Collins each grab one arm and pull Roger to the door.

ROGER

Hey. Wait a-- What're you doing?!?

COLLINS

Taking you to dinner.

ROGER (struggles)

Guys. No. I don't feel like---

MARK

You need to get out.

They drag him out the door.

75 EXT. CAT SCRATCH CLUB - THE EAST VILLAGE - NIGHT

75

Bright neon lights spell out the Club's name. Angel, Mark and Collins pull a reluctant Roger to the front door. Roger pauses, gives a puzzled look to the marquee.

ROGER

Since when do they serve food here?

No one responds, dragging Roger inside.

76 INT. CAT SCRATCH CLUB - NIGHT

76

A smoky room, crowded with a mostly male clientele, and girls, girls, girls. Handcuffs. Leather. Whips. The dancers are peppered throughout the crowd, conning desperate men into buying drinks. Collins, Roger, Mark and Angel take a seat at the front of the runway. A middle aged BUSINESSMAN, sitting near them, makes eyes at Angel, thinking Angel is a woman. Angel flirts right back.

From behind the stage, a curtain opens slightly. Mimi peers out from behind the curtain, dressed in a kimono and heavy make-up, about to go onstage. She catches Collins' eye. They exchange a nod. Collins whispers something to Angel, who excuses herself from the table. Roger hasn't seen any of this, but notices Angel leaving the table.

ROGER

What's going on?

COLLINS

A Christmas present. All for you.
Just sit back. And enjoy.

Roger is confused. The lights go out. The hard, raging GUITAR lick of **OUT TONIGHT** begins. The stage curtains OPEN. A huge scaffolding is set up onstage, resembling an abstract fire escape. Gorgeous metal and faux brick. A spotlight HITS the top of the scaffolding.

Mimi, dressed in a kimono, steps into the spotlight. The audience goes crazy. Roger gets up to leave. Collins and Mark stop him. Mimi whips off the kimono. She's dressed entirely in tight blue leather. She begins to sing, her body slinking in and out of the scaffolding.

MIMI

*What's the time? Well it's gotta' be
close to midnight. My body's talking to
me. It says, "It's time for danger".*

Mimi is tough, edgy and incredibly sexy. She rules this stage.

MIMI

*It says, "I wanna commit a crime.
Wanna be the cause of a fight. Wanna
put on a tight skirt and flirt with
a stranger.*

Mimi starts grooving down the stairs. She undoes her hair clip. Her brown hair falls. She shakes glitter out of it. It fills the smoky air of the club. Roger finds himself watching, reluctant.

MIMI (cont'd)

*I've had a knack from way back at
breaking the rules once I learned the
game. Get up - life's too quick.*

Mimi strides the cat walk. All legs. Silhouette.

MIMI

*I know someplace sick where this chick'll
dance in the flames.*

Mimi begins to walk forward. Several OTHER DANCERS appear on the scaffolding, dancing in synch with Mimi. She moves toward Roger, her eyes fixed on him.

MIMI

*We don't need any money. I always get in
for free. You can get in too if you get
in with me. Let's go...*

Mimi walks up to Roger. Sings and dances for him.

MIMI

*Out tonight! I have to go out tonight!
You wanna play? Let's run away. We won't
be back until after Christmas day. Take
me out tonight!*

She moves her face to within an inch of Roger's, brings her lips centimeters from his.

MIMI (sexy)

Meow.

Roger doesn't flinch. He's stone. All the men laugh and cheer. Mimi turns, moving back to the other dancers.

MIMI

*When I get a wink from a doorman, do you
know how lucky you'll be? That you're on
the line with the feline of Avenue B?*

Mimi joins the other dancers, moving together in unison. She never takes her eyes off of Roger.

MIMI

*Let's go out tonight! I have to go out
tonight. You wanna' prowl? Be my night
owl? Well take my hand. We're gonna' howl.
Out tonight!*

The lights go dark. Spotlight only on Mimi.

MIMI

*In the evening I've got to roam. Can't
sleep in this city of neon and chrome.
feels too damn much like home when the
Spanish babies cry!*

MIMI (CONT'D)

(angry, fearless)

*So, let's find a bar so dark we forget
who we are. And all the scars from the
nevers and maybes die!*

Bright stage lights. One of the dancers steps up, joins Mimi in the song. It's ANGEL, dressed in an identical leather outfit. They perform together, the other dancers behind them. Mimi sings and dances for Roger, Angel does the same for Collins.

MIMI/ANGEL

*Let's go out tonight! Have to go out
tonight. You're sweet, wanna' hit the
street? Wanna' wail at the moon like a
cat in heat? Just take me out tonight.*

The audience is on their feet, cheering. Roger storms off, beyond angry.

MIMI/ANGEL

Please take me out tonight!

Mimi and Angel grind dance. The crowd goes crazy.

MIMI/ANGEL

Don't forsake me! Out tonight!

Mimi and Angel throw off their leather. All bra and panties.

MIMI/ANGEL

I'll let you make me! Out tonight!

The Businessman is dying for Angel.

MIMI/ANGEL

Tonight! Tonight!

Mimi and Angel whip off their bras. We see them from behind. Two bare backed ladies.

MIMI/ANGEL

Tonight!

The song ends. The place erupts with thunderous cheers and applause. A few of the men stop applauding... they look at Angel. No chest. And a bulge in the panties. The businessman looks shocked. Angel winks at him. Mimi looks to the back of the club. Roger exits.

77 EXT. LOFT - LATER - NIGHT

77

Mimi, Angel, Collins and Mark arrive at the loft entrance. They look up to the third floor. We hear the distant sound of Roger's angry guitar. Mimi looks to the others.

MIMI

I'll go.

They agree, waiting out on the street. Mimi enters.

78 INT. LOFT - NIGHT

78

Roger angrily strums out a rock riff on his guitar. Mimi enters.

MIMI

Roger. Look---

Roger turns to her. He is upset, and vulnerable. He wants to tell her it's nothing personal, that he likes her. He wants to confess about his HIV and April. But it's too much. **ANOTHER DAY** begins.

ROGER

Who do you think you are? Barging in on me and my guitar? Little girl, hey... the door is that way. You better go, you know. The fire's out anyway. Take your powder. Take your candle. Your sweet whisper, I just can't handle. Well, take your hair in the moonlight. Your brown eyes. Goodbye, goodnight.

Roger points for her to walk the other way. It's rough. Mimi flinches, but doesn't back down. Roger turns away from her, wrestling with his desire to be honest with Mimi.

ROGER

I should tell you. I should tell you. I should tell you. I should... No!

He turns back, keeping his angry front.

ROGER

Another time. Another place. Our temperature would climb. There'd be a long embrace. We'd do another dance. It'd be another play. Looking for romance? Come back another day. Another day.

Mimi slowly steps toward him, singing gently, moving closer, closer...

MIMI

The heart may freeze, or it can burn. The pain will ease, if I can learn. There is no future. There is no past. I live this moment as my last. There's only us. There's only this. Forget regret, or life is yours to miss. No other road. No other way. No day but today.

Mimi tries to touch Roger. He recoils, pushes Mimi out the door.

79 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

79

Roger sings angrily, walking toward Mimi. She backs away from him, as they move down the stairs.

ROGER

*Excuse me if I'm off track, but if you're
so wise, then tell me why do you need
smack? Take your needle. Take your
fancy prayer. And don't forget... Get
the moonlight out of your hair. Long
ago, you might've lit up my heart. But
the fire's dead. Ain't never gonna start.*

They continue to descend the stairs, Roger walking toward Mimi.

ROGER

*Another time. Another place. The words
would only rhyme. We'd be in outer space.
It'd be another song. We'd sing another
way. You wanna prove me wrong? Come
back another day.*

They arrive at the bottom of the stairs. Roger pushes Mimi outside.

80 EXT. LOFT - NIGHT

80

Roger stands at the entrance, glaring at Mimi.

ROGER

Another day.

MIMI

*There's only us. Only tonight. We must
let go. To know what's right. No other
course. No other way. No day but today.*

Mimi turns, joins Collins, Angel and Mark across the street. Their melodies begin to trade off with Roger's, pushing each other.

MIMI/ANGEL/COLLINS/MARK

*I can't control
My destiny.*

ROGER

*Control your temper.
She doesn't see.*

Seeing that Angel, Collins and Mark have sided with Mimi, Roger's anger returns. He stares them all down. They sing at each other.

MIMI/ANGEL/COLLINS/MARK

I trust my soul.
 My only goal, is just to be.
 There's only now.
 There's only here.
 Give in to love.
 Or live in fear.
 No other path.
 No other way.

ROGER

Who says that there's a soul?
 Just let me be.
 Who do you think you are?
 Barging in on me and
 My guitar.
 Little girl, hey...
 The door is that way.

Mimi breaks off from the others, faces Roger.

MIMI

No day but today.

ROGER

The fire's out anyway.

The song is building, growing in power.

MIMI/ANGEL/COLLINS/MARK

No day but today.

ROGER

Take your powder. Take your candle.

MIMI/ANGEL/COLLINS/MARK

No day but today.

ROGER

Take your brown eyes, your pretty smile,
 your silhouette.

MIMI/ANGEL/COLLINS/MARK

No day but today.

ROGER

Another time. Another place. Another
 rhyme. A warm embrace.

MIMI/ANGEL/COLLINS/MARK

No day but today.

ROGER

Another dance. Another way. Another
 chance. Another day.

Roger turns from them. They reach out.

MIMI/ANGEL/COLLINS/MARK

No day but today.

The song climaxes, fades. Roger looks back to Mimi. He pauses, sighs, and turns away. He goes back inside the loft. Tears fill Mimi's eyes. She embraces Angel.

81 EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY

81

The day after Christmas. Establishing shot. Various shots of the East Village.

82 INT. LOFT - DAY

82

Roger is perched in the window, drinking a cup of coffee. In the background, Mark is putting on a coat and scarf.

The phone rings. The answering machine picks it up: *SPEAK!* Roger and Mark make no move to pick up the phone.

BENNY (V.O.)

Mark. Roger. You've still got a few hours to stop Maureen's protest. My offer expires after dark.

Benny hangs up. Mark shrugs, wraps the scarf around his neck, picks up his Bolex camera. He is about to leave, then turns back to Roger.

MARK

Look. About last night---

ROGER

I don't want to talk about it.

MARK

Mimi's an amazing girl, Roger. And you just pushed her away.

ROGER (pauses, softens)

I got mad. I had to get her out of my sight.

MARK

She'll be at Maureen's show tonight. You should come, too.

(tender)

I'd hate to see you pass up something that could be great for you... You'll only regret it.

ROGER (hardens)

I'll live.

MARK

But for how long?

They exchange a glance. Mark exits. Roger strikes a chord on his guitar, begins singing...

ROGER

I'm writing one great song, before I...

83 INT. MUSIC CLASSROOM - LATER - DAY

83

The Life Support Group meets again. Angel and Collins are here, along with the others from yesterday. Mark is filming. One of the members, STEVE, stands. *WILL I LOSE MY DIGNITY* begins. (THE SONG IS DONE IN ONE CONTINUOUS SHOT).

STEVE

*Will I lose my dignity? Will someone care?
Will I wake tomorrow from this nightmare?*

CAMERA PANS TO the window, travels outside, swoops down to:

84 EXT. THE PARK - DAY

84

RUNAWAYS and HOMELES FOLK are begging for change. The junkies cop dope from THE MAN. The support group's singing is heard.

ALL (V.O.)

*Will I lose my dignity? Will someone care?
Will I wake tomorrow from this nightmare?*

CAMERA PANS away, to the front of Roger and Mark's loft, swoops to the third floor window:

85 EXT./INT. LOFT - DAY

85

Roger takes his AZT. The Life Support Group can be heard in the background, voices growing stronger, harmonizing with each verse.

ROGER

*Will I lose my dignity? Will someone care?
Will I wake tomorrow from this nightmare?*

CAMERA PANS DOWN to the loft entrance, to:

86 EXT. LOFT/STREET - DAY

86

Mimi exits the loft, walks along the street, alone, singing.

MIMI

*Will I lose my dignity? Will someone care?
Will I wake tomorrow from this nightmare?*

Mimi exits, CAMERA PANS across the street, DOLLIES TO:

87 EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

87

One couple. A MAN helps his LOVER who is sick, thin, walking with a cane. The support group's singing plays over the image.

ALL (V.O.)

Will I lose my dignity? Will someone care?

Will I wake tomorrow from this nightmare?

CAMERA PANS away, across the street, toward the ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, dollies inside, back:

88 INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

88

The Life Support Group stand together, all singing. CAMERA PANS their faces. Gordon. Steve. Angel. Collins. Mark continues to film. The song builds into its finale, a gorgeous melting pot of voices.

ALL

Will I lose my dignity? Will someone care?

Will I lose my dignity? Will someone care?

The song ends. Mark, visibly moved, turns off the camera. Click.

89 EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - EAST VILLAGE STREET - DAY

89

A harsh wind blows. It's freezing. Mark, Angel and Collins exit the school, surprised to find Roger, standing here, waiting for them.

MARK

Roger?

ROGER (shrugs, tentative)

Wanted to get some air. Hang out.

Maybe catch Maureen's show later.

They exchange a smile, Collins hugs Roger, all happy to see that he's making progress, out of the house. A HOMELESS WOMAN, covered with blankets, sleeps on a nearby bench. TWO POLICE OFFICERS approach the woman, one POKES her with a nightstick. The homeless woman staggers to her feet. Mark raises his Bolex, begins to film the cops and the homeless woman.

MARK

Smile for Ted Koppel, Officers.

The cops turn and walk away. The homeless woman glares at Mark.

BLANKET WOMAN

Who the fuck do you think you are? I don't need no goddamn help from some bleeding heart cameraman! My life's not for you to make a name for yourself on!

ANGEL (steps in)
Easy, sugar. Easy. He was just trying to--

BLANKET WOMAN
Just trying to use me to kill his guilt.
(back to Mark, yells)
It's not that kind of movie, honey. This
place is filled with mother-fucking artists.
Hey, artist... You got a dollar?

Mark shakes his head, sadly.

BLANKET WOMAN
Didn't think so.

The blanket woman leaves with her kids. Roger turns to the others.

ROGER (ironic)
So this is what I've been missing.

They exchange a smile, walk off down the street.

90 EXT. SUBWAY ENTRANCE - DAY

90

Angel, Mark, Roger and Collins walk toward the subway entrance. The opening chords of SANTA FE are heard. Angel and Collins begin to sing.

ANGEL
New York City.

COLLINS
Uh-huh.

ANGEL
Center of the Universe.

COLLINS
Sing it girl.

They step over a JUNKIE, sleeping at the subway entrance.

ANGEL
Times are shitty. But I'm pretty sure
they can't get worse.

ROGER
I hear you.

They enter the subway, moving down the stairs.

91 INT. MOVING SUBWAY TRAIN - DAY

91

Drunks, whores, junkies, NYU kids, businessmen, stockbrokers, ride the cramped, dirty train, along with Angel, Collins, Mark and Roger.

The passengers are in that post-Christmas New York funk. Tired, pale and depressed, they ignore each other, keep to themselves, reading their newspapers, drinking their pints, sleeping off a buzz.

ANGEL

*It's a comfort to know when you're
singing the hit the road blues...
that anywhere else you could possibly
go after New York would be...*

The train hits a BUMP, lurches forward. A DRUNK spills half his pint of gin on Angel's skirt. She sighs, turns to Mark and Collins.

ANGEL

A pleasure cruise.

COLLINS

Now you're talking.

Collins stands, begins to pace through the train. Many of the passengers are listening. Angel pulls out his sticks, drums on the train seat, keeping the beat along with Collins' singing.

COLLINS

*Well, I'm thwarted by a metaphysic
puzzle. And I'm sick of writing papers,
that I know. And I'm shouting in my
sleep, I need a muzzle. All this
misery pays no salary, so...*

Collins walks to the subway window, peers out. Magically, the tenement buildings and dark, dingy subway tunnels TRANSFORM into the majestic LANDSCAPE of Santa Fe. The subway train is bathed in golden light. The passengers begin to notice the change, staring in awe at the glorious sights that pass by them. Collins turns to his friends.

COLLINS

*Let's open up a restaurant in Santa Fe.
Oh, sunny Santa Fe would be nice.
Let's open up a restaurant in Santa Fe.
And leave this to the roaches and mice.
Oh - oh...*

ALL

Oh--

Collins' voice finds a rich pocket as Angel, Mark, Roger and a few of the subway passengers begin to harmonize, dreaming of better days.

ANGEL

You teach.

COLLINS

*I teach. Computer age philosophy.
But my students would rather watch TV.*

ANGEL

America.

ALL

America!

Collins walks through the train, singing to everyone.

COLLINS

*You're a sensitive aesthete. Brush the
sauce onto the meat. You could make
the menu sparkle with rhyme. You could
drum a gentle drum. I could seat guests
as they come. Chatting not about Heidegger,
but wine.*

Everyone joins Collins, caught up in the spirit of the dream.

COLLINS

*Let's open up a restaurant in Santa Fe.
Our labors would reap financial gain.*

THREE STOCKBROKERS

Gain, gain, gain.

COLLINS

*We'll open up a restaurant in Santa Fe.
And save from devastation our brains.*

THREE JUNKIES

Save our brains.

Collins grabs Angel's hand, dances with him as the entire train now joins forces to sing. The landscape of Santa Fe fills the windows.

COLLINS/ALL

*We'll pack up all our junk and fly so
far away. Devote ourselves to projects
that sell. We'll open up a restaurant
in Santa Fe. Forget this cold Bohemian
hell. Oh, oh...*

As the song winds down, Collins walks up to the train conductor.

COLLINS

*Do you know the way to Santa Fe? You
know, tumbleweeds, prairie dogs... Yeah.*

Angel ends the song with a snap of the drumsticks.

The golden light FADES from the train, replaced by the cool, green fluorescent subway lighting. Outside, the landscape of Santa Fe has been replaced by the WASHINGTON SQUARE SUBWAY STATION. The passengers have returned to the reality of their tired, cold, dreary lives.

92 EXT. EAST VILLAGE - LATER - NIGHT

92

Angel, Collins, Mark and Roger exit the subway.

MARK (checks watch)

I'm late for Maureen's sound check.

(pulls Roger)

C'mon. You can help.

(to Angel and Collins)

See you there.

Mark and Roger run off. Angel and Collins are left alone, walking arm in arm through the New York streets. I'LL COVER YOU begins.

ANGEL

Live in my house, I'll be your shelter.

*Just pay me back, with one thousand
kisses. Be my lover. I'll cover you.*

COLLINS

Open your door, I'll be your tenant.

*Don't got much baggage, to lay at your
feet. But sweet kisses I've got to spare.
I'll be there. I'll cover you.*

BOTH

*I think they meant it, when they said
you can't buy love. Now I know you can
rent it. A new lease you are, my love,
on life. Be my life.*

They do a short dance.

BOTH

*Just slip me on, I'll be your blanket.
Wherever, whatever. I'll be your coat.*

ANGEL

*You'll be my king. And I'll be your
castle.*

COLLINS

*No, you'll be my queen. And I'll
be your moat.*

BOTH

*I think they meant it, when they said
you can't buy love. Now I know you can
rent it. A new lease you are, my love,
on life. All my life. I've longed to
discover, something as true as this is.*

COLLINS

*So with a thousand sweet kisses,
I'll cover you.*

*With a thousand sweet kisses,
I'll cover you.*

When you're worn out and tired.

When your heart has expired.

ANGEL

*If you're cold and you're
lonely.*

*You've got one nickel
only.*

*With a thousand sweet kisses.
I'll cover you.*

*With a thousand sweet kisses.
I'll cover you.*

BOTH

*Oh lover, I'll cover you! Oh, lover,
I'll cover you!*

The song ends. They share a kiss, run off down the street.

93 EXT. TENT CITY/THEATER - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

93

Hundreds of people gather for Maureen's show. Homeless. Tenants. College students. Protesters. Little kids. Dozens of police in riot gear. Fires burn in the trash cans, keeping the crowd warm, casting ribbons of smoke through the lot.

The theater doors and windows are wide open, making the performance accessible for those outside in the abandoned lot. Mark, onstage, does a last minute sound check. Joanne stands over him, checking her watch. Angel and Collins arrive, join Roger. Benny stands in the corner of the theater, with his investors and father-in-law, MR. GREY.

Roger turns, sees Mimi across the street, in the park. She is buying smack from her dealer, THE MAN. Roger walks up, pulls Mimi aside.

ROGER

Hey.

MIMI

Hey.

ROGER

Look, I just want to say... I'm sorry
for the way---

MIMI

Forget it.

ROGER

I was outta' line. Can I make it up to you?

MIMI

How?

ROGER

A dinner party. At the Life Café.
After Maureen's show.

MIMI

Sure. I'd like that.

They exchange a smile. The MAN walks up, shoves Roger.

THE MAN

Hey, lover-boy. You steal my client,
you die.

ROGER (angrily shoves back)

You didn't miss me. You won't miss
her. You'll never lack for customers.

The Man backs off, intimidated by Roger's anger. Roger takes Mimi's hand, pulls her across the street, back into the theater.

Maureen stands at the corner of the stage, ready to go on. She's trembling, nervous. Joanne massages her shoulders. Maureen takes a deep breath, steps onstage.

The audience sees Maureen. Their applause and cheers soars to a deafening level. Maureen raises her hand. The stage goes black. People look around in anticipation. Police speak on walkie talkies.

Suddenly, LIGHTS BLAST ON. The stage is bathed in a bright glow. A huge metal sculpture of a Christmas tree adorns the back of the stage. Mark excitedly begins to film. Maureen steps to the microphone.

MAUREEN

Last night, I had this dream. I found myself in a desert called Cyberland. It was hot. My canteen had sprung a leak, and I was thirsty. Out of the abyss walked a cow. Elsie. "I am forbidden to produce...

(grabs her breast)

...Milk," she said. "In Cyberland, we only drink...

Maureen moves to a special microphone, taped red.

MAUREEN

...Diet Coke".

The microphone throws the words in reverb. "Diet Coke, Diet Coke, Diet..." The audience cheers and applauds with tremendous enthusiasm. Benny exchanges a worried look with his investors and Father-in-Law, Mr. Grey, who is slowly fuming.

MAUREEN

She said, "The only thing to do is jump over the moon". They've closed everything real down. Barns, troughs and performance spaces! And replaced it all with lies and rules and virtual life.

Special microphone. The reverb: *Life, life, life, life...*

MAUREEN

And there's only one way out...

On the back of the stage, THREE BACKUP SINGERS appear.

THREE BACKUP SINGERS

Leap of faith. Leap of faith. Leap of faith. Leap of faith.

MAUREEN

*Only thing to do is jump over the moon.
Only thing to do is jump over the moon.
Only thing to do is jump over the moon.*

The crowd is with her, starting to sing along. Mimi, Angel and Collins are singing. Roger smiles. Mark continues to film.

Maureen goes to the next verse, looks to the back of the crowd. Her eyes meet Benny's.

MAUREEN

Then a little bulldog entered. His name (we have learned) was Benny. And although he once had principles, he abandoned them to live as a lapdog to a wealthy daughter of the revolution.

Mr. Grey shoots a cold, insulted look to Benny. Scared, Benny dashes over to a nearby RIOT COP. Benny whispers to the cop, giving the policeman very specific orders. The cop nods, moves to a group of Riot Policeman, repeating Benny's instructions.

A worried Roger sees what has transpired between Benny and the cops.

MAUREEN

Elsie the cow whispered to me, "A leap of faith. Still thirsty?" she asked. Parched. "Have some milk." I lowered myself beneath her swollen udder and sucked the sweetest milk I'd ever tasted.

Maureen makes a loud, slurping, sucking sound. The backup singers continue:

BACKUP SINGERS

Leap of faith, leap of faith, etc.

MAUREEN

Only thing to do is jump over the moon.

Over the moon. Over the---

(moos like a cow)

Moooooooo! Moooooooo! Moooooooo!

C'mon! Moo with me!

Maureen encourages the audience to Moo with her. Several audience members join her, beginning to Moo.

In the midst of this, one of the cops PUSHES a protestor. The protestor PUSHES BACK.

Others JOIN in. Angry protestors and police STAND OFF. Shoving. Shouting. A punch is thrown. A RIOT begins. At first it's the cops against the protestors. Then everyone begins to JOIN IN. Mark PANS his CAMERA AWAY from the stage, begins to FILM the riot.

Outside, Benny, Mr. Grey and the investors get into a nearby limousine and drive off.

Maureen stops her show, tries to stop the rioting.

MAUREEN (softly, scared)

People. Please. Let's be cool...

Joanne joins Maureen onstage, trying to pull her to the exit.

A cop shoves a protestor into the light board. The lights flash. Some go on. Some start to strobe, flashing.

A cop pushes one of the homeless into a flaming trash can. The trash can is knocked over. The Christmas tree goes up in flames.

Mark films all of it. The riot has spilled out onto the street, getting larger, more violent.

A cop tries to arrest Angel. He gives the cop a swift kick in the shins, followed by an elbow to the jaw. The cop drops to his knees. Angel grabs Collins, Roger and Mimi, leads them away, trying to escape through the crowd.

Absolute CHAOS. Bricks and bottles begin to fly. Approaching sirens are heard in the distance. Joanne watches in horror from the stage. Maureen, sees a cop beating on a homeless man. She LEAPS from the stage, into the crowd. Joanne follows.

Roger, Mimi, Angel and Collins have nearly made it to safety. A RIOT COP steps in front of them. It looks like they're done for until... The cop takes off his riot mask, reveals his face. It's STEVE, from the Life Support Group. They are shocked.

STEVE

It's gonna' get worse. Get out of here.

Steve ushers them to safety.

Maureen is punching, kicking at the cop. Joanne manages to pull her away, back onto the stage, where they escape through a rear exit.

Mark is in the middle of the madness, filming everything. He turns his camera to a group of cops who throw some homeless folks into the rear of the paddy wagon.

94 EXT. LIFE CAFÉ - LATER - NIGHT

94

A large, fairly upscale East Village café. A LIGHT SNOW has begun to fall. We hear the sounds of police and ambulance sirens, along with shouting and screaming, in the background.

Roger, Mimi, Angel and Collins arrive at the café entrance, joined by Maureen and Joanne, who tries to comfort her distraught lover.

JOANNE (tender)

Baby, please. Calm down. It's gonna' be okay. The audience loved you. They got your message.

MAUREEN

Before or after they got arrested?
I mean... It was supposed to be a peaceful protest. How did it get so out of control?

ROGER

Benny.

MAUREEN

Benny?

ROGER (nods)

He orchestrated the whole thing. I saw it all go down.

MAUREEN

That prick!

Mark dashes up to our group of Bohemians. Mark is dancing on air, excited, happy, sporting a few bruises and scratches from the riot. Maureen turns on him, furious.

MAUREEN

What are you so fucking happy about?

MARK

Guess who's headlining tonight's eleven o' clock news?

MAUREEN

Who?

MARK

You.

Maureen is confused, but intrigued.

MARK

They bought my riot footage.

The mood turns from grim to exuberance. Joanne looks at Maureen.

JOANNE

Everybody in New York City is gonna' see your show!

ANGEL

Honey, you're a star.

Maureen, eyes wet with tears, and a smile that could melt this cold night, turns to Mark. She moves close to him, appreciative, sexy.

MAUREEN

I don't know what to say... How can I repay you?...

Mark pauses, a slow smile. Joanne, jealous, steps between the two of them. Stern, she looks at Maureen.

JOANNE

Let the boy buy us dinner.

Everyone cheers, in unison cries out:

THE BOHEMIANS

WINE AND BEER!!!

They excitedly enter the café.

95 INT. LIFE CAFÉ - NIGHT

95

The restaurant MANAGER, a high strung man, panics upon seeing Mark, Roger and the group of Bohemians. He tries to shoo them out.

MANAGER

No. Please. No. Not tonight. Please,
leave. Can't have a scene.

Suddenly, the doors open. Benny enters, with his investors and Mr. Grey. When Mimi sees Benny, her face goes COLD. They exchange a glance, recognize each other. When the Manager spots Benny, he immediately ushers him through.

MANAGER

Oh, Hello, Mr. Coffin. Right this way.

Maureen leaps for Benny's throat, Joanne holds her back. Benny and his group are immediately seated. Roger looks back to the manager.

ROGER

What am I... Just a blur?

MANAGER

You sit all night. You never buy.

MARK

That's a lie. I had a tea, the other day.

MANAGER

You couldn't pay.

MARK

Oh, yeah.

Angel holds up a wad of cash.

ANGEL

Tonight we can.

The Manager sighs, can't turn down the business. He leads the Bohemians into the café. They pass Benny's table.

COLLINS

Benjamin Coffin III? Here?

MAUREEN

The enemy of Avenue A.

COLLINS

What brings the mogul in his own mind
to the Life Café?

The Bohemians take their place at a long table in the center of the room. It resembles the Last Supper. Several other Bohemians, part of their entourage, join our main cast at the table. Benny stands and raises his glass. Sarcastic.

BENNY

I would like to propose a toast to
Maureen's noble try. It went well.

MAUREEN

Go to hell.

BENNY

Was the yuppie scum stopped? Not
counting the homeless, how many tickets
were comp'ed?

ROGER

Why did Muffy--

BENNY

Alison.

ROGER

--miss the show?

Mr. Grey glares at Roger.

BENNY

There was a death in the family.

ANGEL

Who died?

BENNY

Our Akita.

Angel and the group realize it was Benny's family dog he killed.
Roger stifles a laugh.

BENNY, MARK, ANGEL, COLLINS

Evita!

Benny stands, hovers around Mimi. She's nervous, but Benny is keeping
whatever history they have quiet in front of his father-in-law. She's
keeping it quiet in front of Roger. **LA VIE BOHEME A** begins.

BENNY

*You make fun, yet I am the one attempting
to do some good. Do you really want a
neighborhood where people piss on your
stoop every night? Bohemia! Bohemia!
It's a fallacy in your head!*

Benny gets right into Roger's face. All sarcasm now betrayal and anger.

BENNY

This is Calcutta. Bohemia is dead.

Benny turns on Mark. It hangs in the air like a challenge. A beat. Mark stands and raises his glass. The Bohemians immediately enact a mock funeral. Mark delivers a "eulogy" to a rousing pipe organ.

MARK

*Dearly beloved, we gather here to say
our goodbyes.*

COLLINS AND ROGER

*Dies irae. Dies illa. Kyrie eleison.
Yitgadal V' Yitkadash, etc.*

MARK

*Here she lies. No one knew her worth.
The late great daughter of Mother Earth.
In this week when we celebrate the birth...
In that little town of Bethlehem, we raise
our glass, you bet your ass to...*

Maureen moons Benny's table. Benny doesn't blink, but his investors and step-father do. Mark raises his arms, sings passionately.

MARK

La Vie Boheme!

The dirge is over, a cool, fun groove sneaks up.

BOHEMIANS

*La Vie Boheme. La Vie Boheme. La Vie
Boheme. La Vie Boheme.*

MARK

*To days of inspiration, playing hookey,
making something out of nothing, the need
to express. To communicate. To going
against the grain, going insane, going mad.*

Mimi, Angel and Collins smile. Maureen is impressed.

MARK

*To loving tension, no pension. To more
than one dimension. To starving for
attention, hating convention, hating
pretension. Not to mention of course,
hating dear old Mom and dad.*

Everyone sings "La Vie Boheme" as backup.

MARK

*To riding your bike, midday, past the
three-piece suits. To fruits. To no
absolutes. To Absolut. To choice. To
The Village Voice. To any passing fad.
To being an us for once...*

Mark motions for Benny to join his friends, then points to Benny's investors.

MARK
...instead of a them!

The investors are upset at Benny. He calms them.

BOHEMIANS
La Vie Boheme. La Vie Boheme.

Maureen caps the line with a smack to Joanne's ass. Mr. Grey stares.

MR. GREY (disapproving)
Ahhemmm!

MAUREEN (hugs Joanne)
Hey, Mister. She's my sister.

The manager arrives, pad in hand.

MANAGER
So that's five miso soup, four seaweed salad, three soy burger dinner, two tofu dog platter. And one pasta with meatless balls.

ROGER
Ugggh.

COLLINS
It tastes the same.

MIMI
If you close your eyes.

MANAGER
And thirteen orders of fries. Is that it here?

BOHEMIANS
Wine and beer!

Mimi and Angel jump up on the table and begin dancing.

MIMI AND ANGEL
To hand crafted beers made in local breweries. To yoga. To yogurt. To rice and beans and cheese.

Angel lies face down on the table. Mimi mimics giving it to her from behind. The investors tap Benny.

MIMI AND ANGEL

*To leather, to dildos, to curry vindaloo.
To huevos rancheros and Maya Angelous.*

Mimi turns to smile at Roger, but he's distant. Collins and Maureen dance ballroom past him.

MAUREEN AND COLLINS

*Emotions, devotion, to causing a
commotion. Creation. Vacation.*

MARK

Mucho masturbation.

MAUREEN AND COLLINS

*Compassion, to fashion, to passion when
it's new.*

COLLINS

To Sontag.

ANGEL

To Sondheim.

FOUR BOHEMIANS

To anything taboo.

Roger taps Angel, and begins dancing with Collins. Mimi feels outright ignored by him now.

COLLINS AND ROGER

*Ginsberg, Dylan, Cunningham and Cage.
Lenny Bruce. Langston Hughes.*

MAUREEN

To the stage.

BOHEMIANS

To Uta. To Buddha. Pablo Neruda, too.

Mimi, fed up with Roger, grabs Mark. They dance.

MARK AND MIMI

*Why Dorothy and Toto went over the
rainbow, to blow off Auntie Em.*

BOHEMIANS

La Vie Boheme.

Joanne and Maureen kiss. Mr. Grey looks at them, suspicious.

MR. GREY

Sisters?!?

MAUREEN

We're close.

Angel jumps on top of Collins, who's on the table. They kiss.

ANGEL, COLLINS

Brothers!

Benny tries to calm Mr. Grey. Mark, Angel and Mimi are leading the dance.

MARK, ANGEL, MIMI

*Bisexuals, trisexuals, homo sapiens,
Carcinogens, hallucinogens, men, Pee-Wee
Herman. German wine, turpentine,
Gertrude Stein, Antonioni, Bertolucci,
Kurosawa, Carmina Burana.*

The other bohemians join them, now all dancing on the table.

BOHEMIANS

*To apathy, to entropy, to empathy, ecstasy,
Vaclav Havel, the Sex Pistols, BBC. To
no shame. Never playing the fame game.*

COLLINS

To marijuana.

BOHEMIANS

*To sodomy. It's between God and me.
To S and M!*

Mr. Grey and the investors get up from the table, start to walk out of the restaurant. Benny runs to grab the manager.

BENNY

Waiter, waiter, waiter!

BOHEMIANS

La Vie Boheme!

COLLINS

*In honor of the death of Bohemia, an
impromptu salon will commence immediately
following dinner. Mimi Marquez, clad
only in bubble wrap, will perform her
famous lawn-chair-handcuff dance to the
sounds of iced tea being stirred.*

ROGER

*Mark Cohen will preview his new documentary
about his inability to hold an erection
on the high holy days.*

Roger picks up an electric guitar and starts to tune it.

MARK

And Maureen Johnson, back from her spectacular one-night engagement at the 11th Street lot, will sing Native American tribal chants backward through her vocoder, while accompanying herself on the electric cello, which she has never studied.

Joanne sees Maureen playfully kiss Mark. Benny, looking for a waiter, runs into Mimi. He pulls her aside, careful that no one is watching.

BENNY

Your new boyfriend doesn't know about us?

MIMI

There's nothing to know. It was three months ago.

BENNY

Don't you think we could discuss--

MIMI

There's nothing left to say. I made a mistake. You lied.

BENNY

I needed more time---

MIMI

You said it was over between you and Alison, that you were separated.

BENNY

I was planning to. I still am.

MIMI

I've moved on.

BENNY

Roger? He doesn't even act like he's with you.

MIMI

We're taking it slow.

BENNY (cruel)

Good thing. He can barely get out of the house these days.

(soft, smooth)

Come on, Mimi. Give us another chance. We had something real nice. We were good together.

She glares at Benny, turns and hurries back to the celebration.
Benny turns, exits, calling OFFSCREEN.

BENNY

Waiter!

Back to the Bohemian celebration...

MARK

*Roger will attempt to write a bittersweet,
evocative song.*

Roger picks out Musetta's theme on the guitar.

MARK

*That doesn't remind us of "Musetta's
Waltz".*

COLLINS

*Angel Dumott Schunard will model the
latest fall fashions from Paris while
accompanying herself on the ten gallon
plastic pickle-tub!*

ANGEL

*And Collins will recount his exploits
as an anarchist, including the tale of
his successful programming of the MIT
virtual-reality equipment to self destruct
as it broadcast the words:*

BOHEMIANS

ACTUAL REALITY! ACT UP! FIGHT AIDS!

Mimi, upset, confused, steps in front of Roger.

MIMI

*Excuse me, did I do something wrong? I
get invited, then ignored all night long.*

ROGER

*I've been trying. I'm not lying. No
one's perfect. I've got baggage.*

MIMI

*Life's too short, babe. Time is flying.
I'm looking for baggage that goes with
mine.*

ROGER (softens)

I should tell you.

MIMI

I've got baggage, too.

ROGER
I should tell you.

ROGER AND MIMI
Baggage.

BOHEMIANS
Wine and beer!

Several BEEPERS go off, reminding people with AIDS to take their meds. Collins and Angel turn theirs off, take their pills. Roger turns his beeper off. Mimi turns off her beeper. She looks at Roger.

MIMI
AZT break.

ROGER (shocked)
You?

MIMI
Me. You?

Roger takes her hand.

ROGER
Mimi.

The music slows into the lovely ballad **I SHOULD TELL YOU**. Roger leads Mimi through the back hallway, into the...

96 EXT. LIFE CAFÉ - OUTDOOR COURTYARD - NIGHT

96

A summer courtyard, deserted in the winter. Tables and chairs are covered with several inches of snow. The glorious snow continues to fall. It's a magical, romantic night. Roger and Mimi enter, holding hands, alone. They look into each others' eyes, singing their love.

ROGER
I should tell you, I'm disaster. I forget
how to begin it.

MIMI
Let's just make this part go faster. I
have yet to be in it. I should tell you.

ROGER
I should tell you.

MIMI
I should tell you.

ROGER
I should tell you.

MIMI

I should tell I blew the candle out just to get back in.

ROGER

I'd forgotten how to smile until your candle burned my skin.

MIMI

I should tell you.

ROGER

I should tell you.

MIMI

I should tell you.

ROGER AND MIMI

I should tell. Well, here we go. Now, we...

MIMI

Oh, no.

ROGER

I know. This something is... Here's goes.

MIMI

Here goes.

ROGER

Guess so. It's starting to... Who knows?

MIMI

Who knows?

The song starts to build. CAMERA CRANES UPWARD. They become two small figures, alone, huddled together amidst the buildings and falling snow.

ROGER AND MIMI

Who knows where? Who goes there? Who knows? Here goes?

They finally surrender to each other, beginning to slow dance in the courtyard. Mimi puts her head on Roger's shoulder.

ROGER AND MIMI

*Trusting desire. Starting to learn.
Walking through fire, without a burn.
Clinging. A shoulder. A leap begins.
Stinging and older. Asleep on pins.
So here we go. Now, we...*

Roger takes Mimi's hand, leads her back inside.

ROGER

Oh, no.

MIMI

I know.

ROGER

Oh, no.

ROGER AND MIMI

*Who knows where? Who goes there?
Here goes. Here goes. Here goes.*

97 INT. LIFE CAFÉ - NIGHT

97

Roger and Mimi enter, holding hands, gazing into each others' eyes.

ROGER AND MIMI

Here goes. Here goes. Here goes.

They kiss.

It is long, passionate. Perfect. Everything a first kiss should be.

The BOHEMIANS, seeing Roger and Mimi kissing, break into loud CHEERS and APPLAUSE.

BOHEMIANS

Yeahhh!!!

Mimi and Roger run back to their friends, jump up on the table and join the Bohemians.

BOHEMIANS

To dance!

MIMI

*No way to make a living. Masochism, pain,
perfection, muscle spasms, chiropractors,
short careers, eating disorders!*

Everyone is dancing, celebrating.

BOHEMIANS

Film!

MARK

*Adventure, tedium, no family, boring
locations, darkrooms, perfect faces,
egos, money, Hollywood and sleaze!*

BOHEMIANS

Music!

ANGEL

*Food of love, emotion, mathematics,
isolation, rhythm, feeling, power,
harmony, and heavy competition!*

BOHEMIANS

Anarchy!

COLLINS AND MAUREEN

*Revolution, justice, screaming for
solutions, forcing changes, risk and
danger, making noise and making pleas!*

PANDEMONIUM ERUPTS in the restaurant. Everyone is dancing on tables, chairs, on the bar.

BOHEMIANS

*To faggots, lezzies, dykes, cross-
-dressers, too!*

MAUREEN

To me!

MARK

To me!

COLLINS AND ANGEL

To me!

BOHEMIANS

*To you, and you and you, you and you!
to people living with, living with,
living with, not dying with disease!
Let he among us without sin, be the
first to condemn... La Vie Boheme!
La Vie Boheme! La Vie Boheme!*

MARK

*Anyone out of the mainstream?
Is anyone in the mainstream?*

BOHEMIANS

*La Vie Boheme!
La Vie Boheme!*

Anyone alive with a sex drive?

La Vie Boheme!

*Tear down the wall!
Aren't we all?!?*

Everyone comes together, dancing, singing, celebrating. Mark leaps to the front of the crowd.

MARK

*The opposite of war isn't peace!
It's creation!*

BOHEMIANS
La Vie Boheme!

A final cheer. Everyone raises their fists high in the air. Defiant.

BOHEMIANS
 VIVA LA VIE BOHEME!

SMASH CUT TO BLACK.

Piano. Over a black screen. The opening chords of SEASONS OF LOVE.

98 EXT. NEW YORK CITY - SUNRISE - DAY

98

SEASONS OF LOVE continues, as the sun rises over Manhattan.

Last night's perfect snowfall has melted into scattered sections of dirty, grayish black slush. Taxi cabs, trucks, pedestrians wade through the slushy streets, turning the snow darker.

99 EXT. THE LIFE CAFÉ - DAY

99

The café doors open. Our Bohemians exit, bleary eyed, tired, following a night of partying. They walk out into the morning light. (Their VOICES are heard OVER the soundtrack. They don't sing the first part of the song ONSCREEN).

BOHEMIANS (V.O.)
*Five hundred twenty five thousand six
 hundred minutes. Five hundred twenty five
 thousand moments so dear. Five hundred
 twenty five thousand six hundred minutes.
 How do you measure, measure a year?*

They say their goodbyes, embrace, parting.

BOHEMIANS (V.O.)
*In daylights. In sunsets. In midnights.
 In cups of coffee. In inches. In miles.
 In laughter. In strife. In five hundred
 twenty five thousand six hundred minutes.
 How do you measure, a year in the life?*

The couples go their separate ways. Maureen and Joanne, arm in arm, hop into a taxi, drive off. Angel and Collins descend the stairs into the subway. Roger's arm is around Mimi, her hand in his back pocket. They walk off down the street, toward the loft.

Mark stands alone on the street, Bolex camera under his arm. He watches Roger and Mimi, a small smile appears on his face, truly happy for his friend. But his expression offers a subtle sense of melancholy, of loneliness. Mark responds by doing what he does best. He raises his camera, points at Roger and Mimi, and films.

(SEASONS OF LOVE continues, illustrated with footage shot by Mark, in 16MM and SUPER 8. The footage is grainy, home movie-like, shaky.)

100 EXT. LOFT - (SUPER 8/16MM) - DAY

100

Roger and Mimi kiss. Mimi pauses, turns, looks at the camera, grins, puts her hand over the lens.

BOHEMIANS (V.O.)

How about love?

101 INT. MOVING SUBWAY TRAIN - (SUPER 8/16MM) - DAY

101

Collins' arms are wrapped around Angel, who sleeps on Tom's shoulder.

BOHEMIANS (V.O.)

How about love?

102 EXT. CIRCLE LINE - (SUPER 8/16MM) - DAY

102

Joanne and Maureen ride the Circle Line boat, taking in the view of Manhattan. They laugh and grin for Mark's camera, he PANS to the Statue Of Liberty, back to them. Maureen grabs the camera, points it at a shy, grinning Mark.

BOHEMIANS (V.O.)

How about love? Measure in love.

103 CLOSE-UPS: SEVEN BOHEMIANS (SUPER 8/16MM) - DAY/ NIGHT

103

FAST, MONTAGE CUTS of the Bohemians' faces. Smiling, mugging, laughing for the camera.

BOHEMIANS (V.O.)

Seasons of love. Seasons of love.

104 EXT. EAST VILLAGE - (SUPER 8/16MM) - DAY

104

Roger and Mimi sit on a brownstone staircase. They are sharing a slice of pizza with a plastic fork.

JOANNE (V.O.)

Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes. Five hundred twenty-five thousand journeys to plan.

Roger removes a small box from his pocket, gives it to Mimi. She opens it. Inside, is an ANTIQUE WRISTWATCH. Tears fill Mimi's eyes.

JOANNE (V.O.)

Five hundred twenty five thousand six hundred minutes. How do you measure the life of a woman or a man?

Roger fastens the watch onto Mimi's wrist. They kiss.

105 EXT. ST. MARK'S PLACE - THRIFT SHOP - (SUPER 8/16MM) - DAY

105

Tom Collins waits outside of this funky, second hand clothing store. Angel exits the store, carrying a shopping bag. Angel gives the bag to Tom. He opens it. Inside, is a worn, faded brown leather coat. Angel helps Tom put on the coat. He checks his reflection in the store window. He likes it, looks good, models it for Mark's CAMERA.

COLLINS (V.O.)

*In truth that she learned, or in times
that he cried.*

Tom looks into Angel's eyes, appreciative. His expression says it all: "I don't deserve you, Angel." He gives Angel a tender kiss on the cheek.

COLLINS (V.O.)

*In bridges he burned, or the way that
she died.*

106 EXT. TIMES SQUARE - STREET - NEW YEAR'S EVE - NIGHT

106

(RETURN to 35MM). Our seven Bohemians are walking down the street, now SINGING SEASONS OF LOVE. They are dressed for tonight's New Year's Eve celebration. Collins wears shades and an old tuxedo jacket over his baggy trousers and T-shirt. Angel is dressed as a Bond girl. Maureen wears a skintight "cat suit". They sing passionately, clapping along with the music.

BOHEMIANS

*It's time now, to sing out, tho' the
story never ends. Let's celebrate,
remember a year in the life of friends.
Remember the love. Remember the love.
Remember the love. Measure in love.*

JOANNE

*Measure, measure your life in love.
Seasons of love, seasons of love.*

The group finishes the song with pure exuberance and joy. At this moment, they are stronger than ever. A family. SMASH CUT TO:

107 THE LIGHTED GLOBE

107

dropping in Times' Square, as the crowd chants "4... 3... 2... 1..." HAPPY NEW YEAR! The crowd CHEERS, blowing horns, ringing bells and noisemakers. CAMERA PULLS BACK. The image is playing live on countless TV SETS, Inside a CRAZY EDDIE store display window.

Our seven bohemians stand at the window, cheering along with other street people, celebrating the New Year, popping bottles of cheap champagne.

108 EXT. EAST VILLAGE - LATER - NIGHT

108

The streets are scattered with East Village partiers, all ringing in the New Year. The Bohemians are splitting a few bottles of cheap champagne between them. They are happy, filled with hope, and the promise of a New Year. CAMERA STARTS on Roger and Mimi, walking ahead of the others, having a conversation.

MIMI

I'm giving up my vices. I'm going back to school. I think maybe it's gonna' be a Happy New Year.

ROGER (into her eyes)

Last week I just wanted to disappear. My life was dust. Now... Yeah. It just might be a Happy New Year.

CAMERA PANS BACK to Maureen, Collins and Angel.

MAUREEN

Who are you two supposed to be?

COLLINS

Bond. James Bond.

ANGEL

And Pussy Galore.

CAMERA PANS BACK to Mark, walking with Joanne.

MARK

She left a message. Her name's Alexi Darling. She's a producer on that sleazy news show, *Buzzline*. They want me to come in for a meeting.

Maureen overhears, joins Mark and Joanne.

MAUREEN (to Mark)

We'll need an agent.

MARK

We?

MAUREEN

The only reason you got on TV in the first place was because of me.

(scheming)

We can plan another protest. This time you can shoot my entire show.

MARK

Sorry. Not interested.

MAUREEN

What? Why not?

MARK

Working for a show like *Buzzline*?
It's selling out.

MAUREEN (pause, shrugs)

Yeah. But it's nice to dream.

They arrive at the lot that was once the Tent City. It's scorched and fenced off with barbed wire. The homeless and runaways are gone.

Seeing the lot, the Bohemians share a concerned look. Mark exchanges a worried glance with Roger. Mark runs to the building, ahead of the others. They follow him. Mark enters the loft.

109 INT. LOFT - STAIRCASE/HALLWAY - NIGHT

109

Mark runs up the stairs, stops at the loft door. It's secured with a heavy chain and padlock. Roger and the others arrive.

ROGER

Benny.

They look at each other, helpless, locked out of their home. Angel, walks to the end of the hallway and picks up a fire extinguisher. Angel lifts the metal canister, brings the bottom down hard, on the padlock. Two more hits and Angel manages to break the lock.

COLLINS

That's my girl.

110 INT. LOFT - LATER - NIGHT

110

They enter, turn on the lights.

MARK

At least we still got power.

ROGER

That's all we got.

CAMERA PANS to Roger's POV. It's completely BARE. Benny took everything. The fridge. The appliances. Only Roger's guitar and amp remain, resting against the wall, in the corner.

ROGER

He left my guitar.

MAUREEN (bitter)

What a fucking sweetheart.

MARK

Now what do we do?

JOANNE (pauses, thinking)

Technically, now that you're inside, you're squatters. They can't arrest you, and Benny can't just throw you out on the street. It'll give you and Roger time to get some money together.

Mark exchanges a worried look with Roger.

111 EXT. LOFT - LATER - NIGHT

111

Maureen and Joanne exit. Mark runs out, calls to Joanne.

MARK

Joanne--

Joanne and Maureen turn back. Mark walks up to Joanne, takes a deep breath, swallows. This is hard for him.

MARK

I think I might need a lawyer.

112 EXT. UPPER EAST SIDE - 57th STREET - A FEW DAYS LATER - DAY

112

Joanne, Mark and Maureen enter a modern high rise. Mark is wearing jeans, flannel shirt, mismatched tie and a worn, corduroy blazer. Before going inside, Joanne straightens Mark's tie. Maureen watches, a flicker of jealousy on her face.

113 INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - OFFICES - LATER - DAY

113

Mark, Maureen and Joanne sit in the waiting room, looking very out of place in these slick offices. An attractive, blonde RECEPTIONIST, in her mid-twenties, sitting at a desk, answers the ringing phone buzzer. The receptionist looks up at Mark, Joanne and Maureen.

RECEPTIONIST

Alexi will see you.

Joanne and Mark stand. Maureen follows. Joanne turns, stops her.

JOANNE

You should wait out here.

MAUREEN

But---

JOANNE

We don't want to come on too strong.

MAUREEN (hurt, but tough)
Okay. Yeah. Sure. Whatever.

Joanne and Mark enter. Maureen is left in the waiting room. She turns, eyes the receptionist.

114 INT. ALEXI DARLING'S OFFICE - LATER - DAY

114

ALEXI DARLING is 34, Asian, very slick, too thin, wearing a designer business suit. She paces in front of her window, which has a killer view of the East Side. Maureen and Mark are seated in front of her.

The door to Alexi's office is open. The waiting room is directly in Joanne's eye-line. She has a clear view of Maureen, who is blatantly FLIRTING with the blonde receptionist. Joanne tries to concentrate on the business at hand. Alexi addresses Mark.

ALEXI

Your footage reminded me of my Berkley days. Fighting the good fight. And looking good while doing it. Who ever thought activism could be sexy again? Kudos.

MARK

Thank you. I, uh... Well, I also have a documentary I'm working on, about the homeless, people living with HIV---

ALEXI

Good. Edgy. Fresh. That's what Buzzline is all about.

JOANNE

It is?

Alexi smiles at Joanne, who smiles back. But Joanne is having trouble focusing on the meeting. She glances to the waiting room, sees Maureen move closer to the receptionist, shamelessly flirting.

ALEXI

Okay. We might dip a little on the tabloid side. But we are a News show. And your client has a fresh eye to bring real stories to an audience. We get real programming. He gets network exposure. Not a bad way to start a career.

Joanne is distracted by Maureen, who appears to be writing down her phone number for the receptionist. Alexi is waiting for Joanne's response to her last statement.

ALEXI (to Joanne)

Well?

JOANNE (back to business)
Oh. Yes-- What about salary?

ALEXI
On commission. An escalating rate
per segment.

Long pause. Joanne turns to Mark. Well? He's nervous, torn.
He hates the idea of selling out.

115 EXT. 57th STREET - LATER - DAY

115

Mark, Joanne and Maureen exit the offices, walking down the street.
Joanne is ecstatic. Mark is depressed.

MARK
I sold my soul.

JOANNE
For three grand a segment.

MAUREEN
You would have got nothing without my
protest.

JOANNE
Does everything have to be about you?

MARK
Uh-oh.

MAUREEN
Me?!? You're the one helping my ex-boyfriend.

JOANNE
He needed a lawyer. I figured I could
help out since you got them evicted.

This is getting heated, nasty. Mark backs away, the girls face off.

MAUREEN
Why don't you two just get an accountant's
ledger, a bottle of champagne and go at it?

JOANNE
Invite the girl you just flirted with to
join us and I will!

MAUREEN
That's what your upset about?!? C'mon,
Pookie. I was just being friendly.

Joanne rolls her eyes. She's heard this one before. Maureen gets down
on one knee, looks up at Joanne.

MAUREEN (theatrical)

How can I make it up to you? Let me be your slave. I'll kiss your Doc Martins. I'll obey your every wish. Just tell me what you want.

Joanne pauses, speaks softly, honestly. From the heart.

JOANNE

Commitment.

MAUREEN (sweet smile)

That's all? Why didn't you say so in the first place?

JOANNE

What?

MAUREEN

All you have to do is ask. And I'm yours.

A beat. They look into each other's eyes. Mark is nauseous. Can this day get any worse for him? He stops at his bicycle, unlocks it.

MARK

Look, guys. I'd better be going--

But Joanne and Maureen ignore Mark. They step closer, hold hands, look into each other's eyes.

JOANNE

Will you commit to me? To be with only me? For the rest of our lives?

MAUREEN

I do. I will.

They kiss. Mark groans.

MARK

Oh Christ.

MAUREEN (giggles)

Does that mean we're like engaged or something? Can we do that?

JOANNE

I don't know.

MAUREEN

Let's go to Hawaii. Like Rock Hudson and Gomer Pyle. We'll get married on a volcano.

JOANNE

Same sex marriage isn't legal in this country.

(pauses, an idea)

But it is... in Denmark.

MAUREEN

I've always wanted to go to Denmark.

Arm in arm, they walk off together. Mark watches, in horror.

MARK

This can't be happening.

116 INT. CAT SCRATCH CLUB - DAY

116

The afternoon crowd. Mimi is standing on the runway as a middle aged tourist puts a twenty into her stocking. She looks up, sees... Benny, sitting at a table, in the rear of the club. He gives a small wave. Mimi moves over to him.

BENNY

How much for a table dance?

She glares at him, sits down.

BENNY

I got your message. You wanted to see me?

MIMI

I wanted to talk... about what happened the other night.

BENNY

You guys practically ruined me. My investors are thinking of pulling out. My father-in-law won't speak to me.

MIMI

You got your wife.

BENNY (melancholy)

Yeah.

MIMI

Good luck finding another girl to lie to her about.

BENNY

I gave you a place to live.

MIMI

If you'd worn your wedding ring when we met, I wouldn't have taken it.

There is a pause, a deep tension between them, compounded by the fact that Benny is still deeply attracted to her.

BENNY

Look, why did you want to see me?

MIMI

Ease up on Roger and Mark. I understand that business is business. But you guys were best friends. Mark still loves you. He's real upset about this whole thing. So is Collins. And Roger.

BENNY (incredulous)

I can't believe you're with him.

MIMI

This isn't about Roger.

BENNY

You think you know him? I've been friends with Roger for five years.

MIMI

Look---

BENNY

He's weak. Can't commit to anything. Maybe his music. But even that's not the same since April died. The guy's a walking ghost. And you're not gonna' be the one to change him.

Mimi doesn't want to hear this.

MIMI

I gotta' get back to work.

They both stand.

BENNY

God help you if you're actually falling in love with him.

Mimi pauses, considers this for a second. Benny turns, exits.

At the back of the club, standing in the shadows, is THE MAN. Mimi, feeling weak and vulnerable, walks up to him. She removes the twenty from her stocking, pays him. The Man holds out a small plastic bag of white powder. Mimi takes it.

117 EXT. CONNETICUTT MANSION - FEBRUARY - DAY

117

Establishing shot. A three story, well appointed country home, situated on several lush acres. Rows of luxury cars and limousines pull into the driveway, parked by a team of valets. Well dressed guests enter the mansion.

118 INT. MANSION - DAY

118

It's an engagement party for Joanne and Maureen. The place is decorated for Valentine's Day. The party is packed with guests. There is a clear distinction between the two groups of families: Joanne's family and friends are racially integrated, sophisticated, well educated and liberal. Maureen's family is very suburban, middle class, racist and narrow minded. A tense, difficult mix of people.

Roger, Mark, Mimi, Angel and Collins are here, looking very out of place, but happy to indulge in the free food and drink. Angel looks pale, thinner. His health appears to be declining. Maureen and Joanne stand with their friends.

Joanne's parents, MR. AND MRS. JEFFERSON, are a distinguished, well dressed, black couple. They stand at the top of the stairs. Mr. Jefferson clinks his champagne glass, clears his throat.

MR. JEFFERSON

I'd like to welcome everyone to our home, and congratulate my daughter, Joanne, on her wonderful choice of a life partner, Maureen Johnson.

Everyone applauds. Maureen and Joanne smile, beaming for the crowd.

MRS. JEFFERSON

My husband and I would also like to welcome Maureen's parents, Eddie and Nancy Johnson, into our family.

Maureen's Mother, MRS. JOHNSON, is very suburban, with beauty shop hair and big glasses. She is sobbing, bawling her eyes out. Maureen's Dad, MR. JOHNSON is a brusque, overweight Irishman with a crew-cut. Red faced, angry, he comforts his wife. Not only is their daughter a lesbian, but she's in love with a black woman.

With the toasts complete, everyone goes back to partying. Joanne glances beside her. Maureen is gone. Joanne looks around, spots Maureen across the room. She stands at the bar, flirting with the FEMALE BARTENDER. Furious, Joanne marches up to her, grabs Maureen by the arm.

JOANNE

What the hell are you doing!?

MAUREEN

We were just talking---

JOANNE (sarcastic)

Right.

MAUREEN (angry)

You know, Miss Ivy League... I can't take much more of your obsessive, compulsive, control freak paranoia!

JOANNE

My what?!?

MAUREEN

I didn't pierce my nipples because it grossed you out! I didn't stay at the Clit Club last night because you wanted to go home!...

JOANNE

You were flirting with the woman in rubber!

MAUREEN

There will always be women in rubber flirting with me! Give me a break!

Silence falls over the crowd. The guests are all looking at Joanne and Maureen. We hear the chords of **TAKE ME OR LEAVE ME**. Maureen begins to sing, facing off against Joanne.

MAUREEN

*Every single day, I walk down the street.
I hear people say, "Baby's so sweet".
Ever since puberty, everybody stares at
me. Boys, girls. I can't help it, baby.*

Maureen starts moving around the room. Joanne is mortified. The partygoers watch. Some are entertained, some are in shock.

MAUREEN

*So be kind. Don't lose your mind. Just
remember that I'm your baby. Take me
for what am! Who I was meant to be! And
if you give a damn. Take me baby, or
leave me. Take me baby or leave me.*

Maureen kisses Joanne and jumps up on the bar.

MAUREEN

*A tiger in a cage, can never see the
sun. This Diva needs her stage. Baby,
let's have fun.*

Maureen jumps down. Joanne's seething is starting to turn into an angry rage.

MAUREEN

*You are the one I choose. Folks'd kill
to fill your shoes. You love the limelight
too, baby!*

Maureen starts to pull up her shirt.

MAUREEN

*So be mine, but don't waste my time,
cryin' "Honeybear, are you still my
baby?"*

Maureen is about to remove her shirt.

JOANNE

Don't. You. Dare.

Maureen stops right under her chest.

MAUREEN

*Take me for what I am. Who I was meant
to be. And if you give a damn. Take me
baby or leave me.*

Maureen dances around the room, flirting with the guests, always looking at Joanne.

MAUREEN

*No way can I be what I'm not! But hey,
don't you want your girl hot? Don't fight!
Don't lose your head! 'Cause every night,
who's in your bed?*

Maureen moves closer to Joanne.

MAUREEN

*Who's in your bed, baby?
(inches from Joanne)
Kiss, Pookie?*

JOANNE

It won't work.

Joanne moves toward Maureen, starts singing.

JOANNE

*I look before I leap. I love margins and
discipline. I make lists in my sleep.
Baby, what's my sin?*

Joanne gets right in Maureen's face and chest. Is this a fight or a mating ritual? The guests can't take their eyes away. Our Bohemians are loving it, save for Mark, who is embarrassed.

JOANNE

*Never quit, I follow through. I hate
mess. But I love you. What to do with my
impromptu baby! So be wise 'cause this
girl satisfies. You've got a prize, but
don't compromise. You're one lucky baby.
Take me for what I am!*

MAUREEN (to the crowd)

A control freak.

JOANNE

Who I was meant to be!

MAUREEN

A snob. Yet, over-attentive.

JOANNE

And if you give a damn!

MAUREEN

A lovable, droll geek.

JOANNE

Take me baby, or leave me!

MAUREEN

And anal retentive.

They square off. The guests are transfixed.

BOTH

That's it!

JOANNE

The straw that breaks my back!

BOTH

I quit!

JOANNE

Unless you take it back!

BOTH

Women.

MAUREEN

What is it about them?

They sing to each other. A battle of passion and soul.

BOTH

*Can't live with them or without them!
Take me for what I am! Who I was meant
To be! And if you give a damn! Take me
baby! Or leave me. Take me baby or
leave me. Guess I'm leavin'. I'm GONE!*

Maureen turns, marches out of the room, slamming the huge wooden doors behind her. The entire place falls silent. The party's over.

Only Maureen's Mother, Mrs. Johnson, applauds. She is now beaming, ecstatic that her daughter is out of this relationship. She turns to Mark, excitedly whispers.

MRS. JOHNSON

Maybe you two can get back together.

Mark just stares at her for a moment, turns and walks away.

119 INT. LOFT - LATER - NIGHT

119

Roger, Mimi, Mark, Collins and Angel enter. The loft has been restored, back to normal. All furniture and appliances have been returned. The door has been repaired. Benny stands inside the loft, waiting. The others are surprised to see him.

MARK

Benny? What's going on?

BENNY

I'm here to end this war.

ROGER

What changed your mind?

BENNY

Mimi.

Roger turns, puzzled.

BENNY

She called my office. She wanted to see me. We met last week. She was very convincing.

Roger looks at Mimi, he isn't sure how to deal with this.

BENNY

Anyway, I couldn't stop thinking about the whole mess. And I...

(to Mark)

You might want this on film.

Mark picks up his camera, about to shoot.

BENNY (formally)
I regret the unlucky circumstances of
the past several weeks.

ROGER
Circumstance? You padlocked our door!

BENNY
And it's with great pleasure, on behalf
of Cyberarts, that I hand you this key.

Benny hands Roger the key. Mark looks at his camera, concerned.

MARK
My battery's out.

BENNY
Re-shoot.

ROGER
I get it. This is a photo opportunity.

COLLINS
The benevolent God ushers the poor
artists back to their loft, supported
by your friendly neighborhood Cyberarts.
See the whole story on tonight's *Buzzline!*

BENNY
It's not like that.

MARK
We don't need your charity.

Mark removes a folded check from his jacket pocket. He gives the check
to Benny, who is taken aback by the amount.

MARK
That should cover us. For a while.

BENNY
Where'd you get this?

MARK
My first advance.

BENNY (bitter)
Congratulations.

Benny pockets the check, looks around at the faces of his old friends,
sad, realizing that he'll never fit in again. His gaze stops on Mimi, who
is nestled beside Roger. Bitter, Benny looks at Roger.

BENNY

How's that new song coming along?

Roger glares at Benny, who turns to Mimi.

BENNY

Maybe you can persuade him not to be so counter-productive.

(cruel)

Since your ways are so seductive...

MIMI

Liar. You came on to me.

BENNY

Does Roger know who your last boyfriend was?

ROGER

I don't care.

But he does. Benny's words sting. Angel steps between them.

ANGEL

People. Please. Stop fighting. We're all a little tense after Maureen and Joanne's argument. And Benny's probably still upset about his cat---

BENNY

My dog.

ANGEL

My cat had a fall. And I went through hell.

BENNY

It's like losing a---

(curious)

How did you know that she fell?

Silence. The Bohemians all look to the floor, the ceiling, the floor... anywhere to avoid Benny's glare. Benny sighs, turns and exits the loft.

120 INT. ROGER'S BEDROOM - LATER - NIGHT

120

Roger sits on the edge of his bed, tuning his guitar. Mimi steps out of the bathroom, stands in the doorway, behind Roger.

MIMI

Look. About me and Benny--

ROGER (cool)

Doesn't matter.

MIMI
You should know--

ROGER
Forget it.

Roger doesn't look at her, focused on his guitar. He begins to play the opening chords of **WITHOUT YOU**. Mimi, watching from the doorway, begins to sing.

MIMI
*Without you, the ground thaws. The
rain falls. The grass grows.*

121 EXT. THE PARK - DAY

121

The park is no longer snow covered, but budding green, scattered with flowers. It's Springtime. Mimi has an envelope in her hand. She sees the pusher, The Man, in the distance. She holds the envelope tighter and walks toward him.

MIMI (V.O.)
*Without you, the seeds root. The
flowers bloom. The children play.*

122 INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

122

Collins and Angel, looking very weak and tired, introduce a very reluctant Roger and Mimi, to the Life Support Group. Steve shakes Roger's hand. Mark is there, filming in his usual corner.

MIMI (V.O.)
The stars gleam. The poets dream.

123 INT. BENNY'S APARTMENT - DAY

123

A huge, tastefully decorated East Side apartment, with stunning views. Benny's wife, ALISON, stands in the doorway. Her eyes are red from crying. She is carrying a suitcase. Benny stands across the room from Alison. His expression is sad, lonely, lost. Alison turns, exits, leaves Benny. He is alone, looks small in this vast space.

MIMI (V.O.)
The eagles fly... Without you.

124 INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - DAY

124

Angel is coughing like hell, shaking with fever. Collins holds him.

MIMI (V.O.)
*The Earth turns. The sun burns.
But I die... Without you.*

125 INT. LOFT - DAY

125

Roger finds the packet of used white powder on the table. He turns, starts to fight with Mimi. They argue.

MIMI (V.O.)

Without you, the breeze warms. The girl smiles. The cloud moves.

Roger, frustrated, turns away. Mimi walks up to him, puts her arms around Roger, holds on for dear life.

126 INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

126

Everyone is here, including Mark and Mimi. Mark films.

MIMI (V.O.)

Without you, the tides change. The boys run, the oceans crash.

CAMERA PANS the faces of the Life Support Members. As the CAMERA PASSES, some of their faces begin to FADE, DISSOLVE and eventually DISAPPEAR. When the CAMERA PULLS BACK WIDE, only a few of the members are still here.

127 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

127

Angel has been admitted to the hospital. She is in bed, weak, pale. All of the Bohemians fill the room. Mimi gives Angel a present. It's pink lingerie teddy. Everyone laughs. Mark films. Joanne and Maureen, standing on opposite sides of the room, exchange a glance.

MIMI (V.O.)

The crowds roar. The days soar. The babies cry. Without you.

128 INT. LOFT - BEDROOM/HALLWAY/BATHROOM/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

128

Summertime. A window fan spins. Roger sits up in bed. He looks to the space in bed beside him. Mimi is gone. Roger leaps out of bed. He runs into the hallway. The bathroom door is open. A crack.

Roger's face pales, bringing back awful memories of April's death. He races to the bathroom, opens the door. Mimi lies on the floor, wasted on crack. Roger picks her up, carries her into the living room.

MIMI (V.O.)

The moon glows. The river flows. But I die. Without you.

Roger carries Mimi to the sofa. He cradles her head in his hands. She wakes, eyes heavy, a sleepy smile. Roger sings to her.

ROGER

The world revives.

MIMI
Colors renew.

MIMI AND ROGER
But I know blue. Only blue. Lonely
blue. Within me, blue.

MIMI
Without you.

129 INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

129

There are very few members left. Collins and Angel are gone. Roger and Mimi are here. Mimi stands, sings, looking to Angel's empty chair.

MIMI
Without you. The hand gropes.

130 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

130

Mimi is sitting with Angel. Collins sleeps in the corner. Mimi holds Angel, comforting him.

MIMI
The ear hears. The pulse beats.

131 EXT. PARK - NIGHT

131

Mimi buys smack from The Man. She turns. Roger is facing her. He's just seen the whole thing. He grabs the bag of white powder, clutches it. Mimi and Roger fight, singing to each other.

ROGER
Without you, the eyes gaze. The
legs walk. The lungs breathe.

Roger tosses the bag of powder at her, turns and walks away. Mimi takes off the antique watch that Roger gave her, delicately lets it drop onto the ground. She sings to Roger as he walks away.

ROGER
The mind churns.

MIMI
The mind churns.

ROGER
The heart yearns.

MIMI
The heart yearns.

ROGER AND MIMI
The tears dry. Without you.

Mimi turns away. He and Roger are now walking their separate ways, continuing to sing.

ROGER AND MIMI

*Life goes on. But I'm gone.
'Cause I die. Without you.*

132 CAT SCRATCH CLUB - MIMI'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

132

While the girls scramble for their costumes, Mimi waits to go onstage. She looks terribly sad, almost in a trance. Lost.

MIMI

Without you.

133 INT. LOFT - NIGHT

133

Roger, eyes filled with tears, stares out the window.

ROGER

Without you.

CLOSE-UP. Roger and Mimi's faces, still in their separate place, sing the final line, together ONSCREEN.

ROGER AND MIMI

Without you.

134 INT. CAT SCRATCH CLUB - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

134

The song ends. Mimi is now alone, trying to apply makeup, trying to hold herself together, but the tears are brimming. A KNOCK on the door. Mimi wipes her eyes, collects herself.

MIMI

Come in.

The door opens to reveal Benny. His expression is warm, sympathetic.

BENNY

I heard about you and Roger.
(tender)
Are you alright?

Mimi starts to cry in earnest. Benny holds her.

135 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

135

CAMERA PANS from the morphine drip and heart monitor, to Angel, looking very weak and feverish. Collins wipes off Angel's forehead.

ANGEL

Collins.

COLLINS

Yeah?

ANGEL

I want you to take something with you, okay?

Collins nods, holding back emotion.

ANGEL

I'm 22 years old and I haven't had a lot of blessings. But I have known you. and let me tell you something... I wouldn't trade you for fifty years.

COLLINS

You wouldn't?

ANGEL

Why? You know someone?

Collins laughs. Angel is very serious now.

ANGEL

Make sure Roger writes his song. And Mark finishes his documentary. And get Mimi off that pipe, get her shit together. All of them. Alright?

COLLINS

Sure.

ANGEL

Because they're good people, and Half of them don't know it.

COLLINS

What about the other half?

ANGEL

They're just fucked up.

Collins laughs and wipes Angel's eyes. Angel smiles. Fading. The kind of peace that real pain can release.

ANGEL

And I owe them.

COLLINS

How do you owe them?

ANGEL

Until I met you... until you all came into my life... Well, I just figured I was going to be alone.

Collins tries to be strong, embraces Angel. DISSOLVE TO:

136 CLOSE-UP: The image of the HIV virus ravaging and finally destroying the T-cell. A beat. 136

137 INT. CHURCH - DAY 137

A Puerto Rican church. A funeral Mass. A coffin rests at the front of the church, adorned with a small framed photo of Angel. The congregation is made up of the people we've seen through the course of the film, at Angel's family and friends. The congregation is silent, straining to hold back sobs. Paul, their leader of LIFE SUPPORT, plays **SEASONS OF LOVE** on the piano, as some of Angel's friends give their testimonials.

MIMI

It's right that today's Halloween. It was Angel's favorite holiday. I knew we'd hit it off the moment we met. This skinhead was harassing her and Angel just walked right up to him and said "I'm more of a man than you'll ever be and more of a woman than you'll ever get."

The congregation laughs. Mimi returns to her pew, walks past Roger, doesn't look at him. Mimi sits beside Benny. Mark steps forward.

MARK

And then there was this time Angel walked up to this group of tourists, and they were petrified because, A: they were obviously lost and B: had probably never spoken to a drag queen before in their lives, and he... she... just offered to escort them out of Alphabet City. And then she let them take a picture with her. And then she said she'd help 'em find the Circle Line.

Mark steps down. Maureen steps forward.

MAUREEN

You were so much more original than any of us. You'd find an old tablecloth on the street and make a dress. And next year, sure enough, they'd be mass producing them at the Gap. You always said how lucky you were that we were all friends. But it was us, baby, who were the lucky ones.

The congregation lowers its head. Maureen walks back to her seat, exchanges a glance with Joanne as she passes her. Collins steps forward. The mourners are silent. Collins is clutching the leather coat Angel bought for him.

Collins tries to speak, but can't. He looks over at Paul, who nods and begins to play the opening of *I'LL COVER YOU (REPRISE)*. Collins starts to sing. Softly.

COLLINS

*Live in my house. I'll be your shelter.
Just pay me back with one thousand kisses.
Be my lover. And I'll cover you.*

Mimi looks at Roger, who refuses to make eye contact with her. The grief on her face is deafening.

COLLINS

*Open your door, I'll be your tenant.
Don't got much baggage to lay at your
feet. But sweet kisses I've got to
spare. I'll be there. I'll cover you.*

Mark, his face rigid, looks at Maureen sitting apart from Joanne.

COLLINS

*I think they meant it, when they said you
can't buy love. Now, I know you can rent
it, a new lease you were, my love, on life.*

Maureen looks over at Joanne.

COLLINS

*All my life, I've longed to discover
Something as true as this is.*

Slowly, the congregation begins to rise, one by one, and joins in singing.

CONGREGATION

*So with a thousand sweet
kisses, I'll cover you.*

COLLINS

*If you're cold and you're
lonely.*

More people stand, joining in.

CONGREGATION

*With a thousand sweet kisses.
I'll cover you.*

COLLINS

You've got one nickel only.

Mimi stands and starts singing.

CONGREGATION

*With a thousand sweet kisses.
I'll cover you.*

COLLINS

*When you're worn out and
tired.*

Maureen and Joanne both join in. As does Benny.

CONGREGATION
*With a thousand sweet kisses.
 I'll cover you.*

COLLINS
*When your heart has
 expired.*

The entire congregation has joined in. Roger is the last to join.

COLLINS AND CONGREGATION
*Oh, lover. I'll cover you. Oh, lover.
 I'll cover you. 525,600 minutes. 525,000
 seasons of love.*

The song peaks and ends with Collins final line, an intensely passionate statement of enduring love and soulful commitment.

COLLINS
I will cover you.

138 EXT. CEMETERY - AFTERNOON

138

An overcast Autumn day. Scattered leaves blow in the wind, fluttering across the cemetery. Carnation after carnation is left on Angel's casket. Mark is comforting Collins.

Maureen looks at Joanne. A beat. Maureen breaks down crying. Joanne comforts her. They hold each other. The funeral ends. Mimi moves away from Benny, walks up to Roger.

MIMI
 I heard you sold your guitar and
 got a car.

ROGER
 Yeah. I'm going to Santa Fe.
 (looks to Benny)
 It's true? You're with that yuppie
 scum?

MIMI
 Benny's helping me put the pieces
 together after somebody left.

ROGER
 I left because somebody couldn't
 get straight.

They glare at each other. Benny walks up. Roger turns on him.

ROGER
 You don't belong here.

BENNY
 I'm here for Collins and Mimi.

ROGER

Now you're gonna' be our friend?
Where's your wife?

BENNY

We're separated.

ROGER

So you ran back to Mimi. What? You
paying for her dope now? That how
you get people to hang out with you?

Collins interrupts.

COLLINS (upset)

You all said you'd be cool today. So
please, stop. For my sake, for Angel...
Angel helped us believe in love.

Collins looks to the grave, back to the others, to Roger.

COLLINS (softly)

I can't believe you're going. I can't
believe this family must die. I can't
believe this is goodbye.

Roger embraces Collins, turns and leaves. Joanne and Maureen hug Collins,
walk off together. Mark stays with Benny, Collins and Mimi.
The Priest walks up to them.

PRIEST

Excuse me. There's the matter of--

BENNY (understands, interrupts)

I'll take care of it.

Benny writes a check for the priest.

MARK

Must be nice to have money.

MIMI AND COLLINS

No shit.

Benny joins them. Collins smiles.

COLLINS

I think it's only fair to tell you.
You just paid for the funeral of the
person who killed your dog.

BENNY (shrugs)

I always hated that dog.

They exchange a smile. Maybe Benny does have a heart, after all.

BENNY

C'mon. Let's go get drunk.

MARK

No. I shouldn't. I---

Collins and Roger won't take no for an answer. They drag Mark off.

139 INT. LOFT - NIGHT

139

Mark enters, finds Roger packing his belongings into a duffel bag.

MARK

Hey.

Roger nods his "hello". It's tense. Mark breaks the ice.

MARK

I hear there are great restaurants in Santa Fe.

ROGER

Yeah.

Long pause. Mark finally brings it up.

MARK

How could you let her go?

ROGER

What? I should put up with her like you put up with Maureen?

MARK

Maureen never loved me.

ROGER

That's the most honest thing you've said all year.

MARK

You want honest? Okay. Tell me this. Are you running away because you're jealous of Benny and tired of Mimi using?... Or are you just afraid that Mimi's getting weak?

ROGER (rage)

Don't you dare--

MARK

Mimi's running out of time. You're running out the door.

(a beat)

If April hadn't killed herself, would you have run away from her, too?

ROGER

Who are you to talk about running away? All you do is work. You hide behind your work. You don't face your failures, your loneliness, the fact that you live a lie. You pretend to create and observe, when all you do is detach from being alive.

MARK

Maybe that's because I'm the one of us to survive.

ROGER

Poor baby.

Mark didn't mean to say that. But the damage is done. And it hits Mark. All of his friends are dying and there's nothing he can do about it. Roger zips his bag, turns and walks to the door.

MARK

Roger...

He looks back.

MARK

If you leave now, Angel's death is in vain.

Roger pauses, turns and opens the door to discover... Mimi. She is gravely upset.

ROGER

You heard.

MIMI

Every word.

Roger walks by her, heads down the stairs. Mimi sings to him, GOODBYE LOVE, as he walks down the stairs.

MIMI

You don't want baggage without lifetime guarantees. You don't want to watch me die. I just came to say, Goodbye, love. Goodbye, love. Came to say, goodbye, love.

CAMERA FOLLOWS Roger as he walks down the stairs, cutting back to Mimi as she's singing.

MIMI
Just came to say,
Goodbye love.
Goodbye love.
Goodbye love.
Goodbye.

ROGER
Glory.
One blaze of
Glory.
I have to find

140 EXT. LOFT - NIGHT

140

Roger walks outside, gets into a battered, rusted blue Mustang and drives off.

141 INT. LOFT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

141

Mimi stands at the top of the stairs, shattered, crying. Benny appears behind her, puts his hand on her shoulder.

MIMI
Please don't touch me. Understand.

She goes into the loft. Benny follows.

142 INT. LOFT - NIGHT

142

Mimi walks to the window.

MIMI
I'm scared. I need to go away.

MARK
I know a place. A clinic.

BENNY
Rehab? I'll pay.

Grateful, Mimi nods, gives Benny what's left of her smile. She walks to the window, looks out.

143 MIMI'S POV

143

Roger's car drives off on the streets, disappearing into the night.

144 INT. LOFT - NIGHT

144

Mimi stares out the window, singing.

MIMI
Goodbye love. Goodbye love. Came to
say goodbye, love. Goodbye. Just came
to say goodbye, love. Goodbye, love.
Goodbye, love.
(softly)
Hello-disease.

The OPENING CHORDS of **WHAT YOU OWN** fill the soundtrack.

145 EXT. HIGHWAY 80 WEST - PENNSYLVANIA - DAY

145

Roger's Mustang is gliding down the highway.

146 INT. MUSTANG - DAY

146

The window is down. Roger breathes in the country air.

CLOSE-ON: Shaky, documentary footage, a brief collage of our seven bohemians, in happier days. There are snippets of Maureen's performance, Life Support group, La Vie Boheme, Angel's dance, etc.

CAMERA PULLS BACK. Mark is seated at his editing bay, watching the footage, satisfied, happy. He shoves the reels into his backpack.

147 EXT. STREETS OF MANAHTTAN - DAY

147

Mark, wearing his backpack, rides a bicycle along the streets.

MARK

Don't breathe too deep. Don't think all day. Dive into work. Drive the other way.

148 INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

148

Alexi Darling watches Mark's footage in her office. She hates it. She shakes her head. No way. Mark turns, storms out of the office, walks down the hallway.

MARK

That drip of hurt. That pint of shame, goes away. Just play the game.

149 EXT. SANTA FE - A MOTEL - DUSK

149

Roger's car pulls into the Motel parking lot. He gets out, breathing in the air. We hear Mark's VOICE, singing.

MARK (V.O.)

You're living in America, at the end of the millennium. You're living in America, leave your conscience at the tone.

150 EXT. BROADWAY - DAY

150

Mark pedals fast into Times Square. Traffic everywhere. Nobody stops for him. And he doesn't stop for anybody.

MARK

And when you're living in America, at the end of the Millenium, you're what you own.

151 EXT. USED CARS - DAY

151

Roger sells his car, gets a wad of cash. Not much.

ROGER

The filmmaker cannot see.

152 INT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

152

Roger buys a beaten Fender guitar with his cash.

MARK (V.O.)

And the songwriter cannot hear.

153 EXT. SANTA FE STREETS - DAY

153

Roger sits on a street corner, playing his guitar for loose change. Roger looks up, for a moment, sees MIMI in the crowd.

ROGER

Yet I see Mimi everywhere.

When he looks again, Mimi is gone. His imagination.

154 CLOSE-ON: Angel's face, smiling, moving in slow motion. CAMERA PULLS BACK. We are inside Mark's editing bay. Angel is ONSCREEN.

154

MARK

Angel's voice is in my ear.

155 INT. DINER - DAY

155

Roger sits at the counter, scrawls song lyrics on a napkin. We can make out the words *Your Eyes*.

ROGER

Just tighten those shoulders.

156 INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

156

Mark works a camera, filming a boring sit down interview. Alexi Darling stands over his shoulder.

MARK

Just clench your jaw till you frown.

157 INT. ROCK CLUB - NIGHT

157

Roger performs. The crowd doesn't listen. Bored. Roger sings, frustrated.

ROGER

Just don't let go, or you may drown.

Again, he sees Mimi's face in the crowd. It's fleeting, then she disappears.

158 EXT. SANTA FE - LANDSCAPE/EXT. LOFT - ROOFTOP

158

Roger stands in the gorgeous Santa Fe landscape, the sun rising. He sings his part of the song. Mark is on the loft rooftop, in bright daylight. They each share HALF of the screen, singing the next verse.

ROGER AND MARK

*You're living in America at the end of
the millennium. You're living in America
where it's like the Twilight Zone. And
when you're living in America, at the end
of the millennium, you're what you own!*

159 EXT. BUS STOP - SANTA FE - NIGHT

159

Roger waits for the bus, excitedly boards.

ROGER AND MARK

*So, I own not a notion. I escape and am
content. I don't own emotion. I rent!*

160 EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - DAY

160

Mark rides his bike, faster, faster.

MARK

What was it about that night?

161 INT. GREYHOUND BUS - DAY

161

Roger is feverishly writing song lyrics on a yellow pad, takes a beat to glance out the window as America is rushing by.

ROGER

What was it about that night?

162 EXT. STREETS - DAY

162

Mark rides faster on his bicycle. The world rushes by behind him.

MARK AND ROGER

*Connection in an isolating age? For
once the shadows gave way to light.*

163 EXT. GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE - DAY

163

Begin tight on Roger, looking out the bus window.

ROGER

For once the shadows gave way to light.

CAMERA CRANES BACK to a helicopter shot as the Greyhound bus and hundreds of cars pour across the bridge.

ROGER AND MARK
For once I didn't disengage.

164 INT. EDITING ROOM - DAY

164

Mark rushes through countless hanging strips of celluloid and out the door.

MARK
Angel, I hear you. I hear it. I see it. I see it. My film.

165 INT. PORT AUTHORITY BUS TERMINAL - DAY

165

Roger is rushing past couples, crazies, kids off the bus.

ROGER
Mimi, I see you. I see it. I hear it. I hear it. My song!

166 EXT. EAST VILLAGE STREET - LOFT - DAY

166

Mark runs up to a pay phone, pops in a dime and dials. Roger is running along the opposite side of the street, guitar slung on his back. They don't see each other. Yet.

MARK
Alexi, Mark. Call me a Hypocrite. I need to finish My own film. I quit.

ROGER
One song. Glory! Mimi... your eyes.

Roger runs up to Mark. They exchange a smile, embrace, glad to see each other.

ROGER AND MARK
Dying in America, at the end of the millennium. We're dying in America to come into our own.

167 EXT. LOFTY - ROOFTOP - DAY

167

Roger and Mark scream to the city. People stop and look up. Homeless, punks, artists. Everyone.

ROGER AND MARK
And when you're dying in America, at the end of the millennium, you're not alone. I'm not alone.

The boys turn to each other as the song ends in a flourish.

ROGER AND MARK
I'M NOT ALONE!

The song ends. DISSOLVE TO:

168 INT. BOYS' LOFT - DAY

168

CAMERA DOLLIES ACROSS the empty loft. The telephone RINGS. The answering machine picks up. This is VOICE MAIL #5.

ROGER AND MARK (V.O.)

Speak!

ANSWERING MACHINE

Roger. This is your Mother. Roger, Honey, I don't get these postcards. "Moving to Santa Fe." "Back in New York, starting a rock band." Roger Where are you? Roger, where are you?

169 INT. MIMI'S LOFT - DAY

169

Roger enters. All of the furniture is gone, empty baggies everywhere. Roger is upset. Speechless. Mimi's phone rings. Mimi's Mother's VOICE is heard.

MIMI'S MOTHER (V.O.)

Mimi, chica... donde esta? Tu mama esta yamando. Donde estas, Mimi?

Roger turns, exits, frustrated.

170 EXT. EAST VILLAGE STREET - DUSK

170

The echoes of "Roger, where are you?" and "Donde estas Mimi?" continue as another concerned parent's VOICE, JOANNE'S FATHER, joins the call.

JOANNE'S FATHER (V.O.)

Joanne, where are you?

Joanne and Maureen are showing pictures of Mimi to passersby.

JOANNE'S FATHER (V.O.)

Joanne, where are you?

The three questions melt into lovely harmony as we add the final VOICE of concern, Mark's Mother.

171 EXT. PARK - DAY

171

It's a cold winter day. Mark is putting Mimi's photograph on telephone poles.

MRS. COHEN (V.O.)

Mark are you there? Are you there? I don't know if he's there. We're all wishing you were here, too. Where are you, Mark?

172 EXT. PARK - DAY

172

Roger is running through the park, searching for Mimi. Up ahead, he sees The Man. Roger runs up to him.

MRS. COHEN (V.O.)

Are you there? You... Where are you? Mark, are you there? Are you there?

Roger asks The Man if he's seen Mimi. The Man shakes his head "No".

MRS. COHEN (V.O.)

I don't know if... Please.

173 EXT. EAST SIDE STREET - DAY

173

Roger sprints down the street. The four VOICES end their harmony with...

ALL FOUR PARENTS (V.O.)

Call! Your Mother!

Roger dashes inside Benny's Apartment building as the song ends.

174 INT. BENNY'S APARTMENT - DAY

174

Benny is talking with some new investors. There's a knock at the door. Benny answers. It's Roger. There's no sense of anger between these two. Only a sense of loss. Benny immediately knows why Roger is here. He steps into the hallway.

BENNY

I haven't seen her in weeks.

(sadly)

*She was doing okay for a while...
stayed in Rehab for a few weeks...
but then... She started using again,
lost her job...*

Roger nods, feeling helpless, lost.

175 EXT. LOFT - NIGHT

175

CHRISTMAS EVE. It is bitterly cold. Winter. We hear the opening chords of CHRISTMAS BELLS. A group of homeless people stand on the street corner in front of the loft, begging for handouts from the passersby.

HOMELESS GROUP

Christmas Bells are ringing. Christmas Bells are ringing. Christmas bells are ringing. How time flies when compassion dies.

People pass, ignoring the homeless.

HOMELESS GROUP

No stockings. No candy canes. No gingerbread. No safety net. No loose change. No change, no.

ONE HOMELESS MAN

Santy Claus is coming.

HOMELESS GROUP

'Cause Santy Claus ain't coming. No room at the Holiday Inn. Again. Well, maybe next year or when.

CAMERA CRANES UPWARD, rising high along the exterior loft wall, toward the boys' third floor window. CAMERA GOES INSIDE the loft.

176 INT. BOYS' LOFT - NIGHT

176

Inside, Roger sits at his familiar place, on the table, tuning his guitar. Mark positions a 16mm projector onto a milk crate, which is on a dolly. The telephone rings.

MARK AND ROGER (V.O.)

Speak!

Collins' VOICE appears on the answering machine.

COLLINS (V.O.)

I'm outside. Throw down the key.

177 EXT. LOFT - NIGHT

177

Collins' catches the small leather purse, thrown from the third floor window. He opens the loft door, lets himself in.

178 INT. LOFT - NIGHT

178

Collins enters, hugs Mark, shakes hands with Roger.

COLLINS

Merry Christmas.

MARK

I can't believe a year went by so fast.

Roger gives a melancholy smile, plucks out a few notes on the guitar.

ROGER
I found my song.

MARK (to Collins)
If he could only find Mimi.

ROGER (soft, defeated)
I tried. You know I tried.

Collins notices the projector, looks to Mark.

COLLINS
You finished your film?

Mark nods. He flips on the projector. A rough title card is projected on the wall: TODAY 4 U: PROOF POSITIVE. A MARK COHEN FILM. This is followed by images of our seven bohemians. Just as the footage starts to get interesting, the projector BLOWS A FUSE. BLACKOUT.

Collins notices that the projector is connected to an extension cord that snakes out of the window. Collins looks to the boys.

COLLINS
Still can't afford the electric bill?

MARK (shrugs)
We could use a little cash flow.

COLLINS
I had a hunch.

Collins produces a wad of twenty dollar bills. He counts out several, gives them to the grateful boys.

ROGER
Tutoring again?

COLLINS
Nope.

MARK
Back at NYU?

COLLINS
Negative.

MARK (looks at cash)
Then how---

COLLINS
I rewired the ATM at the Food Emporium.
(a beat)
All you need is *the code*.

MARK

The code?

COLLINS

A-N-G-E-L.

The boys exchange a smile.

Suddenly, they are interrupted by the sound of MAUREEN, screaming from outside the window.

MAUREEN (panic)

Mark! Roger! Anyone! Help!

They run to the window.

179 EXT. LOFT - NIGHT

179

Roger, Mark and Collins open the window, look out. Below, Maureen and Joanne are carrying a semi-conscious, very pale, very sick... MIMI.

Roger is stunned.

ROGER

Mimi.

MAUREEN

I can't get her up the stairs.

Roger, Mark and Collins hurry downstairs.

Roger is the first to arrive, taking a near unconscious Mimi in his arms. The others offer their support, assist in carrying Mimi inside the building. Joanne explains to Roger.

JOANNE

She was huddled in the park. Freezing.
She begged to come here.

180 INT. LOFT - NIGHT

180

The group enter, carrying Mimi. They lay her down carefully on the table. Mimi looks up at Roger.

MIMI

Got a light?... I know you...

ROGER (soft)

Mimi. It's Roger. I'm back.

JOANNE

She's been living on the street.

MIMI
It's so cold in here...

ROGER (to Mark)
We need some heat.

MARK (desperate)
I'll go buy some wood... something
to eat...

Collins stops Mark.

COLLINS (solemn)
She needs more than heat.
(hurries to phone)
I'll call for a Doctor.

MIMI
Don't waste your money on me.

COLLINS (into phone)
Hello 911? Yes...

MIMI (shivering)
Cold... cold...
(brittle, to Roger)
Would you light my candle?

ROGER (fighting tears)
Yes, we'll, oh God. Find a candle.

Mark hurries to find a candle. Roger cradles Mimi in his arms,
tears pouring down his face. They begin to sing *FINALE A*.

MIMI
I should tell you. I should tell you.

ROGER
I should tell you. I should tell you.

MIMI
I should tell you. Benny wasn't any---

ROGER
*Shhh. I know. I should tell you why
I left. It wasn't 'cause I didn't...*

MIMI
I know. I should tell you---

ROGER
I should tell you.

MIMI

I should tell you.
 (whispering)
 I love you.

Mimi fades.

ROGER

Who do you think you are? Leaving me
 alone with my guitar. Hold on there's
 something you should hear. It isn't
 much but it took all year.

Mimi stirs. Roger holds Mimi close. He gently sings the song he wrote,
YOUR EYES.

ROGER

Your eyes, as we said our goodbyes.
 Can't get them out of my mind. And
 I find I can't hide from your eyes.
 The ones that took me by surprise.
 The night you came into my life.
 Where there's moonlight. I see
 your eyes.

Roger sings with all of his heart, hoping to pour life back into Mimi.

ROGER

How'd I let you slip away? When I'm
 longing so to hold you? Now I'd die
 for one more day, 'cause there's something
 I should have told you. Yes there's
 something I should have told you. When
 I looked into your eyes. Why does distance
 make us wise? You were the song all
 along. And before the song dies, I
 should tell you, I should tell you.
 I have always loved you. You can see
 it in my eyes.

We hear **MUSETTA'S THEME**, played correctly and passionately. Mimi's head
 falls to the side, her arm drops limply off the edge of the table. Roger
 calls out the final line of the song, with the passion of a man who has
 lost everything.

ROGER

Mimi!

Roger embraces Mimi, holds her tight, sobbing.

The others lower their heads.

Joanne buries her head in Maureen's shoulder.

Another death.

It's too soon.

It's too much for them to bear.

CAMERA PANS to Mimi's hand.

It is motionless.

Still.

Suddenly, her hand twitches.

Incredibly, Mimi is still alive.

She sits up. Roger supports her.

ROGER

Mimi!

Everyone exchanges a hopeful look, they move closer to Mimi, surrounding her. She looks at everyone.

MIMI

I was in a tunnel, heading for this warm, white light... And I swear... Angel was there. And she looked GOOOOOD!

Everyone laughs.

MIMI

And she said, "Turn around girlfriend and listen to that boy's song."

Roger feels Mimi's forehead. He smiles.

ROGER

She's drenched.

MAUREEN

Her fever's breaking.

Mark looks to the others. Gently, quietly, he begins to sing the beginning of **FINALE B**.

MARK

There is no future. There is no past.

ROGER

Thank God this moment's not the last.

A FAST CUT:

181 EXT. THE LOFT BUILDING - SEVERAL DAYS LATER - NIGHT

181

Mark flips on a projector, connected to a long extension cord. Mark's film, in its grainy glory, is projected onto the front of the loft building.

CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal the entire street.

Roger and Mimi hold each other. She looks well enough for a few more months.

Collins is with Maureen and Joanne. The homeless are there. Along with the tenants, the punk kids, the protestors and the Life Support Group.

Everyone holds a candle. Tonight is a celebration.

ROGER AND MIMI

*There's only us. There's only this.
Forget regret or life is yours to miss.*

Mark's film is celebratory, images of all the people we have come to know and love. Face after face after face.

Soon, other voices begin to JOIN in the song, as it grows fuller, more powerful.

ALL

*No other road. No other way. No day
but today.*

More and more people join in the song, harmonizing.

WOMEN

*I can't control
My destiny.
I trust my soul.
My only goal
Is just to be.*

MEN

*Will I lose my dignity?
Will someone care?
Will I wake tomorrow?
From this nightmare?*

Mark flips on another projector. He runs, then flips on another projector. And another. And another.

Projected images are flooding every building front. A rapid fire succession of faces appear, as the song builds in power.

WOMEN

Without you
 The hand gropes.
 The ear hears.
 The pulse beats.
 Life goes on.
 But I'm gone.
 'Cause I die

Without you
 I die without you.
 I die without you.
 I die without you.
 I die without you.
 I die without you.

MEN

There's only now.
 There's only here.
 Give in to love.
 Or live in fear.
 No other path.
 No other way.

No day but today.
 No day but today.
 No day but today.
 No day but today.
 No day but today.

The celebration grows in power and intensity.

The images on the buildings are a collection of memories from the film, linking our main characters with the homeless, the Life Support group, along with our favorite moments: La Vie Boheme, Today 4 U, Rent, Santa Fe, Maureen's protest, New Year's Eve.

The past interfaces with the present, as the documentary images mingle with the living characters on the street, singing together, harmonizing.

Bursting with energy. Filled with joy.

The piano hits a break and all voices meld into one last powerful declaration.

ALL

NO DAY BUT TODAY!

The buildings display a final rapid fire collage of our characters.

A final glimpse of our Bohemians.

Benny.

Joanne.

Maureen.

Collins.

Mark.

Roger.

Mimi.

And finally...

On every building.

) One last, frozen image appears.

The face of Angel.

Warm.

Smiling.

Very much alive.

At peace.

THE END