

Rocketman  
by  
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(Based on, the life of Elton John)

April 2014

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**INT. CORRIDOR, HOSPITAL. DAY.**

A voice disrupts the torpor of a few vacant patients in endless institutional corridor.

VOICE (ELTON)

Out of my fucking way!

It is ELTON JOHN in a sequinned cat suit, a halo of coloured feathers and enormous stained-glass spectacles looking like shit.

**INT. THERAPY ROOM. THE SAME.**

ELTON, sweating profusely, in a circle of addicts.

NURSE

OK, guys. Shall we begin?

The NURSE turns to ELTON. Everybody stares. ELTON is clearly uncomfortable at going first.

ELTON

My name is Elton John.  
And I am an alcoholic.  
And a cocaine addict.  
And a sex addict.  
And a bulimic.  
And I have problems with marijuana,  
hashish, anger management and  
shopping.

The group look at ELTON incredulously. ELTON blinks nervously behind his enormous glasses. An awkward silence. Then an OLD LADY speaks:

OLD LADY

Honey, what did you say your name  
was?

Cue: The frantic piano break from Pinball Wizard.

**EXT. STREET, PINNER. DAY.**

Endless uniform houses. A tiny child, Reggie, is pedalling down the middle of the street making the noises of a spacecraft taking off. He turns into the drive way of a drab house. His Mum shouts:

SHEILA (O.C.)

Reggie! Reggie!

**INT. BACK ROOM, REGGIE'S HOUSE. THE SAME.**

An archetypal suburban scene. GRANDMA is in the kitchen cooking. A depressed budgie lolls in its cage. A photo of Dad is on the top of the piano in RAF uniform. Mum is attacking the carpet with a mechanical sweeper. Reggie is following her around.

REGGIE

Mum. When is Dad coming home?

SHEILA

We don't know dear. It could be any day now.

REGGIE

Are you sure I've actually met him?

SHEILA

Of course you've met him. You were just too young to remember.

REGGIE

But you'll send him up if I'm in bed?

SHEILA

For godsake, Reggie, can't you give me five minutes peace and quiet.

She picks REGGIE up and pops him on the PIANO STOOL. REGGIE'S ears perk up as the radio plays : The Skater's Waltz. As REGGIE sways to the music he looks at the piano keyboard. As it lilts on in the background REGGIE tries a note - remarkably it is in tune. REGGIE plays the note again and adds two more. Again they are exactly in tune. He looks around. No one pays any attention:

REGGIE tries again and this time plays a whole section of melody and ends with a low note with his left hand. Bong!!! Suddenly the world seems to stop. The budgie stares frozen on its perch, boggle eyed. His Grandma, IVY rushes in from the kitchen.

IVY

Reggie!? Was that you?

MUM has not noticed. She turns round to see what all the fuss is about.

REGGIE

Did I do something wrong?

**INT. REGGIE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.**

REGGIE is in bed, humming the Skater's Waltz. We see a picture of his father in army uniform with a gleaming trumpet. IVY comes in, gives him a cake and kisses him.

GRANDMA  
Night, night, love.

**INT. BACK ROOM. NIGHT.**

Late night. Sheila sits knitting with GRANDMA in front of the fire. Suddenly, the doorbell rings.

**INT. LANDING. THE SAME.**

We see Elton rush out of his room and listen whilst Sheila opens the door.

**INT/EXT. FRONT DOOR. THE SAME.**

Sheila opens the door. There is STANLEY, Reggie's Dad, dressed immaculately in his RAF uniform.

STANLEY  
Do you want to buy an encyclopedia?

She kisses him. He comes in and puts his kit bag down.

STANLEY (CONT'D)  
You've put on a bit of weight love.

We see Sheila's disappointment.

SHEILA  
Come in. Reggie's just gone to bed.

She heads for the stairs.

STANLEY  
I'll see him in the morning. Put the kettle on, luv.  
I'm parched.

**INT. LANDING UPSTAIRS. THE SAME.**

In the shadows Reggie is standing in his pyjamas, sad and disappointed.

**INT. BACKROOM, REGGIE'S HOUSE. DAY.**

STANLEY, Sheila, GRANDAD, and REGGIE sit at the table expectantly. STANLEY looks very stiff and formal. GRANDMA puts a roast chicken on the table. REGGIE smiles with glee.

STANLEY  
Hands off the table.

This doesn't register with Reggie who is still overawed by the prospect of the chicken and a complete family.

STANLEY (CONT'D)  
I said: "Hand's off the table."

Reggie withdraws his hands - the smile wiped off his face.

STANLEY (CONT'D)  
And sit up whilst your having your meal, Reginald.

STANLEY proceeds to carve the bird, in silence. All the fun has been sucked out of the occasion. REGGIE is served last with a very small amount of chicken. They eat in silence. GRANDMA sneaks REGGIE a piece of her chicken and winks at him.

**INT. BACKROOM, REGGIE'S HOUSE. DAY.**

REGGIE watches in awe as STANLEY carefully puts on one of his jazz records. They listen in silence.

REGGIE  
Dad, is it true you can play the trumpet?

STANLEY  
Reginald. I am listening to my records.

As STANLEY listens to the record Reggie, unseen by STANLEY, REGGIE goes under the sideboard and gets the trumpet from its case and proudly presents it to his Dad.

REGGIE  
Please, Dad, will you play me a tune?

He leaps up snatching the trumpet from Reggie.

STANLEY  
Who said you could touch that?  
Never. Ever. Touch anything of mine without asking.

Stanley snatches back the trumpet and wipes clean REGGIE's finger prints then notices Reggie is looking up at him, tears in his eyes. They stare at each other. Stanley doesn't really know what to do.

REGGIE  
When you are going to hug me, Dad?

STANLEY stands frozen. Reggie turns and runs away.

**EXT. REGGIE'S HOUSE. DAY.**

REGGIE is crying. IVY arrives with a plate of fairy cakes. She sits down and lights a cigarette. REGGIE takes a cake.

REGGIE

Why does he hate me Grandma?

IVY

He doesn't hate you, he doesn't know how to love people properly. It's not something everybody knows how to do.

REGGIE

I wish I was somebody else.

IVY

How can you be somebody else? You haven't even learnt to be yourself yet.

REGGIE

What do you mean?

**EXT. PINNER HILL ROAD. DAY**

REGGIE and IVY march along past privet hedge after privet hedge. They stop at a nondescript house. GRANDMA takes a coin from her pocket, gives it to REGGIE and wink. Reggie walks up the garden path.

**INT. MUSIC TEACHER'S HOUSE. DAY.**

REGGIE seated at the piano. He is too small to reach the pedals and his legs dangle over the edge of the stool. A little girl of Reggie's age peeps through the doorway as the PIANO TEACHER sips a cup of tea.

PIANO TEACHER

Leave us alone, Susie.

**EXT. MUSIC TEACHER'S HOUSE. DAY.**

As Reggie is leaving he sees Susie in the garden.

SUSIE

Hi.

REGGIE

Hi.

**INT. REGGIE'S HOUSE, PINNER HILL ROAD. DAY.**

Reggie practising the melody line from the Warsaw Concerto. Bum note after bum note. STANLEY, trying to read his paper, gets more and more irritated by REGGIE's mistakes until he can take no more gets up and goes out to another room. REGGIE looks up as the door slams shut.

**INT. CORRIDOR, REGGIE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.**

STANLEY, in his pyjamas, walks past REGGIE's room. He hears a murmuring sound and stops in his tracks. He peers through the crack in the door, and sees REGGIE with an expression of extreme concentration moving his hands vigorously beneath his blanket as he moans ecstatically. Dad throws open the door.

STANLEY

What the hell are you doing in there?

REGGIE

Nothing, Dad.

STANLEY

Keep your hands outside the blanket. And get to sleep.

**INT. REGGIE'S BEDROOM. THE SAME.**

The door closes, leaving the frightened REG alone. After a moment, REGGIE carries on quietly, we pan down to see his hands, he is miming playing the piano as he hums the Warsaw Concerto. As he becomes more and more animated the sound of a real piano accompanies his miming.

Then REGGIE stands on the bed - literally rising to the theme he points like a conductor to bring in a string section. **Miraculously we hear a string section join in** - as REGGIE plays, like the Sorcerer's Apprentice he summons up more and more instruments to accompany him. Soon the sound of a whole orchestra is accompanying Reggie. Then Suddenly the door opens. REGGIE stops in his tracks, looking up, terrified that it is his father. But it is OK - it's GRANDMA. She has a cake.

GRANDMA

Just in case you get hungry, lover.

She kisses him and goes out as if nothing was out of the ordinary. AS SHE LEAVES WE SEE THE ROOM IS PACKED FULL WITH A REAL LIFE ORCHESTRA IMPLAUSIBLY SQUASHED TOGETHER. FLAUTISTS ON TOP OF THE WARDROBE, A DOUBLE BASSIST BEHIND THE DOOR. THEY WAIT IN SILENCE UNTIL SHE GOES. REGGIE TAKES A BITE OF THE CAKE then raises his hands to start the orchestra again, as we cut to:

**INT. PIANO TEACHER'S HOUSE. DAY.**

REGGIE playing the Warsaw Concerto effortlessly for real. He finishes the piece with a flourish. The little girl, Susie, is now somewhat bigger and applauds dotingly from the door. The piano teacher turns round to her.

PIANO TEACHER

You are supposed to be upstairs.

SUSIE smiles at REGGIE and then disappears. REGGIE looks up at the TEACHER.

PIANO TEACHER

(CONT'D)

I know this is going to sound a bit weird but I think there's something you should really consider....

**INT. KITCHEN, REGGIE'S HOUSE. DAY.**

Mum ironing.

MUM

The Royal Academy of Music!?

She burns a hole in a shirt with the shock of it all.

**INT. BACK ROOM. THE SAME.**

Dad listening to his records.

DAD

Is this your idea of a joke, Reginald?

REGGIE

It's only on a Saturday.

**INT. ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC. THE SAME.**

Little Reggie dwarfed by the dusty surroundings. Ivy stands next to him in the doorway. A bearded student pushes past them with a double bass in a case. The place is swarming with duffle coated students. REGGIE looks around, awed and bewildered.

GRANDMA

Listen to me. You go in there and become who you want to be. You don't want to be stuck in Pinner all your life..

REGGIE

What's wrong with Pinner?



GRANDMA

Trust me, Reggie. People will like you when they hear you play the piano.

GRANDMA gives him some change.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)

Bus fare home.

Reggie's ears prick up as he hears the sound of a piano starting a tune.

**INT. PRACTICE ROOM, ROYAL ACADEMY. THE SAME.**

Reggie wanders into the room transfixed by the music. HELEN PIENA is playing a piece by Mozart unaware that he is there. Suddenly she sees him and stops.

REGGIE

Sorry.

HELEN PIENA

Ah. You must be Reginald. Please, sit down. Did you bring something to play for me?

REGGIE

I didn't know I had to.

HELEN PIENA

Is there something you could play me so I can get a sense of where you are up to?

REGGIE

Well what about the one you were doing when I came in.

HELEN PIENA

Mozart's Fifth Piano Concerto in C?!

He sits down, prepares, then plays the opening chord. One note is out. He blushes. He plays it again, this time correctly, then plays the Mozart piece note perfect suddenly stopping mid-phrase exactly where she left off.

HELEN PIENA (CONT'D)

Go on.

REGGIE

I can't. That's as far as you got up to.

HELEN looks amazed that REGGIE has played it by ear. Then he beams a very cheeky smile, but HELEN does not smile back.

HELEN PIENA

You might have a very good memory, Reginald, but we have an awful lot of work to do. Sit up. Hands. Now start again.

His smile drops as he realises this is going to be hard work. Helen smiles as she realises she has a real talent on her hands.

**EXT. OXFORD STREET. THE SAME.**

REGGIE stands at a bus stop next to a TV store. He stares at the televisions, suddenly his eye is caught by a figure playing a guitar. A small crowd has gathered to watch the singer on the TV in the shop window. Reggie stands looking at Elvis shaking his hips. Reggie cannot believe his eyes. The song finishes. Reggie is open mouthed.

REGGIE

Who is that?

REGGIE looks up and a TEDDY BOY is standing next to him.

TEDDY BOY

Elvis Presley, innit.

REGGIE

He's amazing.

WOMAN

He should be banned.

The TEDDY BOY winks at REGGIE and saunters off down the street.

**INT. BACKROOM, REGGIE'S HOUSE. DAY.**

Same old scene: GRANDMA cooking in the kitchen, Sheila dusting. Reggie comes in. With great reverence he puts a record on the turntable. The record falls onto the turntable and the needle hits the groove: "Mystery Train" by Elvis Presley. The china on the shelves rattles. STANLEY and Sheila rush in to see what's going on.

SHEILA

What the hell is this?

REGGIE

(enthusiastically)  
It's rock and roll, Mum.

Dad gets up and takes it off the turntable.

STANLEY

Where did you get this?

REGGIE

I bought it. With my pocket money.

STANLEY

I'm not having this rubbish in my house.

REGGIE

Its not rubbish. It's musical.

STANLEY

George Shearing's musical. Glen Miller's musical. This is just bloody noise.

REGGIE

Give me it back, Dad.

REGGIE tries to grab the record but STANLEY smashes it into the bin and storms off followed by Sheila remonstrating with him. REGGIE gets the record out of the bin, it has broken in half.

IVY

Actually, I quite liked it.

She comes up to him, wipes the flour from her hands and dips into her apron. She pulls out a few coins.

GRANDMA

There you are, son. Get yourself a new one. But for godsake play it when he's out.

Cue: **CROCODILE ROCK...**

**EXT. PINNER HIGH STREET. DAY.**

Little Reggie walks up to a Barber's Shop with a red and white pole. He looks up and goes in. "La, la, la, la, la..."

CUT ¶

Reggie comes out with a D.A. Hairstyle. "La, la, la, la, la, la, la..." A group of kids look at him.

KID

Fatso.

**EXT. STREET IN PINNER. DAY.**

The intro to Crocodile Rock continues as Reggie and Susie walk to school.

SUSIE

Is it true when you grow up you're going to be a concert pianist?

REGGIE

I think I'd rather be a pop star adored by millions of people, actually.

SUSIE

Like Perry Como? My Mum says you were born to be a concert pianist.

REGGIE

But I don't want to be what I was born as. I'd rather be something else. What would you be if you had the chance?

SUSIE

Your girlfriend.  
I'll promise not to kiss you.

REGGIE

OK, then.

REGGIE turns to the camera and sings:

REGGIE (CONT'D)

I remember when rock was young/ Me and Suzie had so much fun...

**EXT. TOP OF A DOUBLE DECKER BUS. DAY.**

REGGIE and SUSIE holding hands as they look out of the bus - possibly at the Houses of Parliament:

REGGIE

Holding hands. And playing in the sun.

REGGIE drags SUSIE and they run down the stairs of the bus.

**EXT. TRAFALGAR SQUARE. THE SAME.**

REGGIE is playing a grand piano by the fountain.

REGGIE

We were hopping and boppin'/ till the day was done. But the biggest kick I ever got -  
Was doing the thing called the crocodile rock/ while the other kids were rocking round the clock/  
I was hopping and bopping to the Crocodile Rock..

**EXT. PRIMROSE HILL. THE SAME.**

REGGIE and SUSIE at the top of Primrose Hill. It's a sunny day. People are picnicking in the sun. REGGIE sings to camera:

REGGIE  
(singing)  
Well, crocodile rocking is  
something shocking and your feet  
just can't keep still...

Suddenly everyone jumps up to join in a massive choreographed dance. It's a technicolour 'Summer Holiday' London:

REGGIE (CONT'D)  
I never knew me a better time and I  
guess I never will. But oh lordy  
mama on Friday night when Susie  
wore her dresses tight/ Oh man, it  
was out of sight.

THE CROWD  
La..la..la..la..la...Laa...etc

As everyone dances and sings, REGGIE grabs SUSIE's hand and they run down the hill. REGGIE breaks away as he sings the "la,la,la" chorus SUSIE chases after him. Then suddenly REGGIE stops dead. The music stops with him. In front of him is a middle aged couple holding hands. Susie races up behind him, slowing down as she sees what he sees. It is Sheila and another man. Sheila turns round and sees Reggie staring.

SHEILA  
Reggie!

REGGIE  
Mum!?

SHEILA  
Oh Reggie.

The man (FRED) breaks the embarrassment by wiping his hand and presenting it to the stunned Reggie.

FRED  
Sorry. I'm Fred. Pleased to meet  
you, son. I've heard a lot about  
you.

**INT. REGGIE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.**

Crocodile Rock plays in ironic contrast to the traumatic dumbshow of Sheila and Stanley arguing. REGGIE is crouched terrified in the corner as we see Sheila delivering the bad news, STANLEY shouting. Sheila is weeping on the settee as STANLEY storms out of the room and goes upstairs.

Reggie is singing the "la la la" chorus to drown out the noise of the argument.

Stanley storms out of the house. Reggie runs after him.

**EXT. REGGIE'S HOUSE. THE SAME.**

The ambient noise of the street brings us back to reality. Stanley storms off. REGGIE runs after him:

REGGIE

Dad... wait...

Stanley stops and turns.

STANLEY

I wish you'd never been born.

Reggie stops dead, Dad carries on down the street. We see the hurt on REGGIE's face. **CROCODILE ROCK** COMES TO A CLOSE.

**INT. REGGIE'S HOUSE. THE SAME.**

Reggie is in his room, miserable. Fred comes in with two cups of tea and two of Ivy's cakes. He sits on the end of Reggie's bed.

FRED

So what's all this about you wanting to be a musician?

**INT. NORTHFIELD'S HOTEL. DAY.**

A run down hotel bar. It has seen better days. A seedy BARMAN coughs into a glass he is cleaning. FRED appears at the bar.

BARMAN

Can I help you?

FRED

Yes. I understand you have music on of a Friday.

BARMAN

Yes, very popular. Book the acts myself.

There's a poster for the Russ Goodbody Trio in the window.

FRED

Well, I wondered if you'd be interested in the greatest musical talent ever to come out of Pinner. Rock and Roll. Country and Western. You name it.

BARMAN

How much?

FRED

I dunno. A pound?

BARMAN

Ten shillings and the first pint's  
on the house.

FRED

But he doesn't drink. Do you, Reg?

Fred looks down at Reggie who has been obscured by the bar.  
The Barman looks down in horror.

BARMAN

Who? Billy Bunter?!

FRED

Alright, five shillings and a lemonade.

**EXT. NORTHFIELD'S HOTEL. NIGHT.**

A home-made sign in the window says: "tonite: Reginald Dwight  
and an all meat raffle."

**INT. NORTHFIELD'S HOTEL. THE SAME.**

It is a noisy, smoky Friday night in the local boozier.  
Sheila, IVY and FRED are done up. REGGIE is wearing a blazer  
and tie with his quiff slicked down, looking decidedly  
nervous. He walks onto the little stage and sits at the  
piano. The microphone is too high so he lowers it. IVY winks  
at Reggie and puts her thumb up encouragingly. There is  
instant feedback through the microphone. This gets  
everybody's attention.

REGGIE

Hello.

No one is impressed and they go back to their drinking.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

This first tune was made famous by  
an artist I have a great deal of  
respect for. Mr Marty Robbins.

No one takes any notice. REGGIE starts his intro underneath  
the clatter of beer glasses and chattering. REGGIE looks  
despondent. FRED signals his encouragement. But someone puts  
his pint down on top of the piano right and continues talking  
loudly to his friend. REGGIE stops.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Excuse me. You can't put that on there.

He takes the beer and hands it back to the man.

MAN

Why not?

REGGIE

Cos It'll get knocked over.

Suddenly REGGIE bangs out the first chords of Saturday Night's Alright (For Fighting).

REGGIE (CONT'D)

"It's getting late have you seen my mates..."

Suddenly REGGIE has got everybody's attention. As somebody turns to watch REGGIE they knock over a woman's beer. Push leads to shove. In a second a fight has broken out, people are flying across the room, glasses are smashed chairs are thrown. REGGIE keeps on singing.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

"Ma tell me when the boys get here/It's seven o'clock and I want to rock/ wanna get a belly full of beer/.."

Reggie ducks as a chair flies over the piano. Sheila and FRED are in the middle of the chaos with their gin and tonics still smiling encouragingly at REGGIE.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

"My old man's drunker than a barrel full of monkey's/And my old lady she don't care/My sister looks cute in her braces and her boots/ A handful of grease in her hair"

Someone bumps into FRED and he turns round and whacks them then turns back to Sheila and puts his arm around her as if nothing was happening. Two men are now on top of the piano fighting. Ivy hits someone with her handbag. Reggie has to dive this way and that to avoid being hit but keeps on playing without missing a beat.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

"So don't give us none of your aggravation/ We've had it with yer discipline/ Saturday night's alright for fightin'/ Get a little action in"

Suddenly someone has a chair and is about to crash it down onto the piano when Reggie leaps out of the window.



**EXT. STREET. NIGHT.**

As REGGIE emerges from the pub he is in the middle of a Quadrophenia-like pitched battle - all done in dance. He leaps onto the top of a car - he boots someone who tries to attack him, whilst, of course, singing in perfect time.

REGGIE

"Get about as oiled as a diesel  
train/ Gonna set this dance alright/  
Cause Saturday night's alright for  
fightin'/ Saturday night's alright,  
alright, alright.

As REGGIE leaps from the car he sees a gang of lads who start running towards him. He turns and runs still singing:

REGGIE (CONT'D)

"A couple of sounds that I really  
like/ Are the sound of a  
switchblade and a motorbike/I'm a  
juvenile product of the working  
class.."

He out runs the mob and rushes back into the pub.

**INT. PUB. NIGHT.**

REGGIE dives across the bar and lands on the piano stool and starts playing without missing a beat. But time has passed we are several years on and Reggie has magically grown up during the number. The whole pub are with him, bouncing along enthusiastically to his performance.

REGGIE

"So don't give us none of your  
aggravation/ We've had it with yer  
discipline/ Saturday night's  
alright for fightin'/ Get a little  
action in"

The number finishes with a flourish. Everyone cheers at Reggie who beams back at them. REGGIE comes off stage.

FRED

Brilliant. Well done, son!

For a second we feel Sheila's chagrin as Elton has stolen her pride of place in Fred's attentions. Elton looks to see what his Mum thinks.

SHEILA

The middle section could do with a  
bit more practice.

**INT. ROYAL ACADEMY. THE SAME.**

REGGIE walks up the corridor. Somehow now it seems stuffy and boring. The other students seem rather square. A fusty looking professor in a cardigan passes.

PROFESSOR

Morning, Reginald.

Reggie stops dead. The noise of students practising scales becomes a cacophony in his head.

**INT. PRINCIPAL'S ROOM, ROYAL ACADEMY. DAY.**

REGGIE sits looking sheepish at HELEN PIENA and the PRINCIPAL.

PRINCIPAL

Are you completely sure about this?  
You do realise you have a  
guaranteed place to study full  
time.

REGGIE

I just don't think it's for me.

HELEN PIENA

But Reginald, you will be throwing  
away an important musical career.

REGGIE

It's not that I don't love music.  
There's nothing wrong with Mozart  
and Bach. It's just if Beethoven  
was alive today, he'd be playing  
Rock and Roll. Wouldn't he?

PRINCIPAL

Aren't you a bit, er, "square" for  
Rock n Roll?

**INT. REGGIE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.**

Reggie looking completely depressed. Ivy is smoking a fag.

REGGIE

He's right. I'm fat. I'm half-  
blind. Who wants to see anyone  
called Reggie Dwight?

IVY

If you don't like your name - then  
change it. Life's too short to be  
someone you don't want to be.  
Anyway, that seems to be the point  
of all this Rock and Roll.

(MORE)

IVY (CONT'D)  
They're all pretending to be  
someone else, Reggie.

REGGIE  
What would I change it to?

IVY  
I don't know. I'm your fucking  
granny.

**INT. REGGIE'S BEDROOM. DAY.**

Reggie scours the back pages of NME. We see Bernie's ad.

**EXT. DENMARK STREET. DAY.**

He walks down Denmark Street - London's Tin Pan Alley, then  
as it is now - with its music publishers and guitar shops. He  
stops at a doorway. It says Dick James Music.

**INT. OFFICE RECEPTION. THE SAME.**

In the reception a very Mary Quant receptionist is at the  
desk and ignores Reg who stands looking at the pictures of  
The Beatles. Gold records etc. Reggie tries to look very cool  
and important.

MARY QUANT GIRL  
Can I help you?

REGGIE  
Reginald Dwight. I've, erm, come to  
see Mr Williams. About the ad in  
the NME.

MARY QUANT GIRL  
Sorry. What did you say your name  
was?

**INT. RAY WILLIAM'S OFFICE, MAYFAIR. DAY.**

Ray Williams a blonde Adonis of 21, has his feet on the desk.

RAY  
So you play the piano. And sing.

REGGIE  
I have a regular gig at the  
Northfield's hotel.

RAY  
What sort of stuff are we talking?

REGGIE

A bit of pop, standards, a bit of country and western.

RAY

Country and Western?

REGGIE

I'm a very big fan of Marty Robins.

RAY

Really.

REGGIE

I know all the verses to the Streets of Laredo. I could play it if you want.

RAY

No. Thank you. Well, it's very nice of you to pop in. What did you say your name was?

REGGIE

Re..

Suddenly Reggie stops himself. He looks at the photos on the wall. He sees one of Elton Dean, the sax player.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Elton.

RAY

Elton!?

Reggie has surprised himself he looks round the room and sees a photo of Ray shaking hands with John Lennon.

REGGIE

John. Elton John.

RAY

Cool name. Elton. It's been really good to meet you but...

REGGIE

You haven't asked me about songwriting.

RAY

You write songs?

REGGIE

Well, not exactly. But I'd like to. I'm very good at tunes. I just can't seem to get the words right.

RAY

If anything comes up we'll give you a call.

REGGIE

It said you wanted talent. Please give me a chance.

It's clear Elton is not going to give up, so thinking quickly Ray reaches for something to palm him off with.

RAY

Look, here's something we got sent from a kid in Lincoln. Why don't you practice by setting them to music.

Ray stuffs a bunch of papers into Elton's hand with a covering letter which says "I saw your ad in the NME.." and ushers Reggie out. Ray is clearly just getting rid of Elton.

ELTON

Really. I don't know how to thank you.

RAY

Don't worry. It's my pleasure. Goodbye.

**EXT. DENMARK STREET, LONDON. DAY.**

Reggie looks at the pile of handwritten lyrics: The Year of the Teddy Bear, The Swan Queen of Laughing Lake, Tartan Coloured Lady and A Dandelion Dies in the Wind. He finds the covering letter. He sees the name and address: "Bernie Taupin, Matkin Farm, Owmbly-by-Spital, Lincolnshire".

**INT. LANCASTER GRILL, LONDON. DAY.**

An inauspicious cafe off Tottenham Court Road. Elton is there early. He looks at his watch. He is wearing a Sixties t-shirt, a fur jacket, tight pants and his hair is long. He has the lyrics with him. He sits with a cup of tea. Elton watches the people coming in. Various young men walk by and he looks expectantly, but it is quickly evident that they are meeting other people.

WAITRESS

Anything else?

ELTON

I think I better have the bill, please.

Then through the door comes someone in exactly the same t-shirt and fur jacket and tight pants, carrying a copy of the NME. Someone who could almost be a mirror image of Elton. They look at each other.

BERNIE

Elton? Elton John.

Elton is instantly smitten.

ELTON

Actually - well my real name is Reginald Dwight but I'm trying this one out.

BERNIE

I think on balance I prefer Elton John.

Sorry I'm late, the train got stuck in Grantham.

Elton and Bernie sit in a booth seat opposite each other. Neither knows what to say but they have instantly connected.

BOTH

I, erm..

ELTON

Sorry..

BERNIE

No, go ahead..

ELTON

No you go ahead.

BOTH

I was just going to..

ELTON

Well, I like your lyrics.

BERNIE

I'm really glad you answered the ad.

ELTON

I really loved the lyrics.

BERNIE

I liked the tape. I think we could make a real go of this. I mean to be quite honest. All I ever wanted to do was to write lyrics. Well, and be a cowboy. I know it's a bit embarrassing but I'm a bit of a fan of Country and Western.

ELTON

Serious?

BERNIE

'Fraid so.

ELTON

Me too. I know all the words to Streets of Laredo. And you're serious about moving down here.

BERNIE

Yeah, I wouldn't exactly say I fitted in where I come from. But I always thought I'd find someone who understands me. That's what I like about your tape. Something just clicked. Anyway, fuck it, I'm not gonna get famous sitting on a farm.

ELTON

But where will you live?

BERNIE

I dunno. Perhaps we can get a place together. Somewhere we can write.

ELTON

Wow that would be fantastic.

BERNIE

Maybe we could write something this afternoon.

ELTON

I can't. I've got a gig. I make a bit of money doing gigs out of town. Tonight I'm playing for Long John Baldry. I suppose you could come if you want.

BERNIE

I'm in. Goodbye: cow sheds. Hello: the highlife, glamour, sophistication. Where you playing exactly?

ELTON

Leeds.

**EXT. DINGY STREET IN LEEDS. DAY.**

A dirty run down street in a dark Northern town. Elton and Bernie see a sign outside a very run down club. "Tonight, one night only, Long John Baldry".

**INT. HORRIBLE CLUB, LEEDS. THE SAME.**

Elton and Bernie look around.

BERNIE

What a fucking dump.

Suddenly a very tall man in an immaculate suit appears at his shoulder.

LONG JOHN BALDRY

"Squalor is the only true glamour".  
Baudelaire.

BERNIE

What?

LONG JOHN BALDRY

You must be Elton John. I hear  
you're very good with your organ.

BERNIE

No, he's Elton John. I'm a  
lyricist, actually.

LONG JOHN BALDRY

Well, we can't all be Liberace.  
Long John Baldry. And they do not  
call me that because I'm bald. I  
think you look like a Nancy.

BERNIE

I beg your pardon?

LONG JOHN BALDRY

Oh, you all get woman's names,  
dear. You're definitely a Nancy and  
he's a Phyllis. We're wasted on  
Leeds sugarbears. Drink anybody.

Long John brandishes a bottle of wine. He fills a glass for Elton then LONG JOHN BALDRY whispers to the lead guitarist.

LONG JOHN BALDRY

(CONT'D)

Stick him behind a speaker. We  
don't want to scare the horses.

CUT TO:

The club is now full. Elton is behind a speaker but manages to look out at Bernie who is eyeing up a very tall woman in a very short skirt. The rest of the band start to play "Let the Heartaches Begin" but we are on Elton peeking out at Bernie.



LONG JOHN BALDRY  
(SINGS) (CONT'D)

"I can hear the guitars start to play and very soon they say I was a fool to turn my love away and with each glass of wine I feel a glow and very soon I know I was a fool to let my baby go."

As Long John sings off camera Elton sees Bernie now chatting to the girl, she is laughing, he is smiling and being very charming. Elton is getting increasingly jealous. Elton tries to concentrate on his playing but is drawn back again and again to the dumbshow of Bernie and the girl. The song is like a running commentary on his heartbreak.

LONG JOHN BALDRY  
(CONT'D)

"So let the heartaches begin....."

CUT TO:

The end of the set. Elton comes off stage and goes over to Bernie who is now talking very intimately to the girl.

ELTON

Hi. Bernie.

BERNIE

Oh hi. This is Linda. Linda, this is Elton John.

LINDA

Wow. You're the one on the organ. I just loved your playing. I have a thing about keyboard players.

She has turned her entire attention from Bernie to Elton, much to Bernie's instant chagrin. She twists a finger in Elton's hair.

LINDA (CONT'D)

And you have such beautiful hair.

Elton is completely surprised anyone is interested in him.

ELTON

Thank you. Actually, I'm going a bit bald on top ...

Suddenly, a midget arrives.

MIDGET

Hey, Fats, you realise she's with me.

LINDA

Oh go away Arthur, we're talking about art.

Linda, once again turns her full attention to Elton.

LINDA (CONT'D)

And I think we're going to get  
along very, very well.

Elton looks terrified for his very life.

ELTON

But what about Arthur?

Linda knocks back her drink.

LINDA

Fuck him, Elton. Believe me,  
darling, it's definitely not true  
what they say...

**INT. TOILETS. THE SAME.**

Bernie and Elton argue as they both take a piss.

BERNIE

I saw her first.

ELTON

Look, it isn't my fault. I didn't  
have any choice in the matter.

BERNIE

But you didn't have to agree to  
move into a flat together.

ELTON

I thought it was a good idea. It's  
alright she said you can come too.  
How else are we going to afford it.

BERNIE

And she's really going to pay for  
it all?

ELTON

Apparently she's some sort of  
heiress.

Arthur appears in high dudgeon.

ARTHUR

Her Dad made a fortune in pickled  
onions, you fucking bastard.

Elton and Bernie turn round and see Arthur, completely drunk,  
standing with a broken bottle ready to cause trouble. Long  
John Baldy throws open the door knocking Arthur over.

LONG JOHN BALDRY  
Darling you were marvellous.

**EXT. FURLONG ROAD, ISLINGTON. DAY.**

Bernie and Elton with their suitcases, sleeping bags and boxes of records. They look at the run down street in Islington.

BERNIE  
Is this it?

ELTON  
Apparently, it's going to be the new Chelsea.

Linda pulls up in cab. She gets out in an elaborate outfit with two small dogs on leads. Elton and Bernie look in horror at the dogs.

ELTON (CONT'D)  
You never mentioned anything about dogs.

LINDA  
I don't go anywhere without Livia and Bertie.

**INT. FURLONG ROAD, ISLINGTON. NIGHT.**

They pour champagne into mugs.

LINDA  
Here's to us.

BERNIE  
And the dogs.

LINDA  
I had included them anyway. Chin, chin.

ELTON  
So this is it. The swinging sixties.

BERNIE  
Come on then, let's get our records out.

LINDA  
Oh, god. You can't play music in the flat. Livvy has sensitive ears.

Bernie looks in horror at Elton.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Anyway, I had some other activities in mind.

ELTON

But we have to be able to play our records.

LINDA

Elton! Come on my sweet-pea, time for beddie-byes. You can show me your intricate finger-work.

ELTON

But it's only nine thirty.

Linda smiles a lascivious smile. She grabs Elton by his collar and pulls him towards the bedroom. Elton looks back in horror as Bernie is left with the champagne. Livvy licks Bernie's face.

LINDA

(off)

Livvy. Bertie.

The dogs leave Bernie and run off to Elton's room.

**INT. FURLONG ROAD, ISLINGTON. DAY.**

Bernie and Elton. In the kitchen. Elton is setting his organ up.

BERNIE

So come on, what's she like?

ELTON

What's what like?

BERNIE

In the sack. Spill the beans.

ELTON

To be quite honest, I'm not exactly sure if I'm doing it properly.

BERNIE

What do you mean. Not doing it properly?

ELTON

Look, the important thing is we're together. Being here with the space to write without any distractions?

Just as Elton has spoken we hear Linda scream from down the corridor.

LINDA  
Livvy!!! Livvy!!!

Suddenly, Linda runs into the room dressed only in a towel, curlers in her hair.

LINDA (CONT'D)  
Oh my god.

She looks down at Livvy, Elton and Bernie do likewise. They stare at Livia who is taking a piss onto Elton's amplifier.

LINDA (CONT'D)  
What are you thinking? She could have been electrocuted.

Linda picks the dog up, kisses it and walks away in a huff. Bernie and Elton are left to survey the puddle of piss.

**INT. A CLUB. NIGHT.**

Close up of Bernie.

BERNIE  
Married!?

Close up of Long John Baldry.

LONG JOHN BALDRY  
Married!? You must be joking, Elton.

BERNIE  
You've got your whole life ahead of you. What about rock and roll? What about the hot chicks? And cocaine orgies? What about me and you, Elton?

ELTON  
Oh it's alright, she says you can stay for the time being.

LONG JOHN BALDRY  
You can't get married. You're a fat raving queen, sugarbear.

ELTON  
No, I'm not.

LONG JOHN BALDRY  
Of course you are.

ELTON  
How can I be I've got a girlfriend.

LONG JOHN BALDRY

Darling, that never stopped anybody.

ELTON

But I've promised now. It'll break her heart.

LONG JOHN BALDRY

A. I am not convinced she has one. And B. You will ruin both your lives if you go through with this.

ELTON

So what am I going to do? She'll bloody well kill me.

LONG JOHN BALDRY

My advice is to get completely and irredeemably shitfaced.

**EXT. FURLONG ROAD, ISLINGTON. NIGHT.**

Elton and Bernie completely "shitfaced". They are singing a tune remarkably similar to the start of Bennie and the Jets. Bernie says "Shhh" as they reach the house. Elton hiccups and they think this is the funniest thing ever to happen to humanity. They stagger to the door. Elton and Bernie have become Laurel and Hardy. Just as they are about to make a concerted attempt to put the key in the lock, Elton hiccups again. Bernie chastises Elton:

BERNIE

Sssssshhhhh!

ELTON

Shhhhhhhhhhh!

Elton holds the key in a stealthy manner approaches the lock and falls over the bin. Bernie tries to help him up but Elton pulls Bernie down, they both laugh hysterically. They cannot get up. They are laughing more and more till they both can't speak and tears are rolling down their cheeks. Suddenly a wave of clarity comes over ELTON.

ELTON (CONT'D)

I love you, Bernie.

BERNIE

I love you too, man.

Bernie stops laughing and looks in Elton's eyes. We are almost half expecting Elton to kiss Bernie. But Bernie goes into his pocket and hands Elton something. Elton looks. It is the lyrics to Your Song.

BERNIE (CONT'D)  
 Something I wrote you. You are going  
 to tell her. Aren't you?

Suddenly the door opens. Linda is in her nightdress she grabs  
 ELTON.

LINDA  
 Inside!

**INT. CORRIDOR, FURLONG ROAD. DAY.**

Bernie staggers along the corridor, passing the kitchen, and  
 into the bathroom. He takes a piss without closing the door,  
 we can hear a sharp hiss coming from the kitchen but Bernie  
 is too hungover to notice. He flushes the loo and heads back  
 up the corridor glancing into the kitchen then walks on, then  
 realises what he has just seen and does a double take.

**INT. KITCHEN. DAY.**

Bernie's POV: Elton is lying on the floor with his head in  
 the gas oven, on a pillow, with the gas on. The window is  
 wide open.

BERNIE  
 What are you doing?

ELTON  
 Go away. I'm trying to kill myself.

BERNIE  
 (of the pillow)  
 What's that?

ELTON  
 I didn't want to hurt my head.

BERNIE  
 But the window's open.

ELTON  
 I know, it absolutely stinks.

BERNIE (CONT'D)  
 You can't kill yourself. What about  
 our joint publishing deal.

ELTON  
 It's alright, I've left everything  
 to you.

Livvy runs in. Linda appears.

LINDA  
 What are you doing?

BERNIE  
He's going to kill himself.

LINDA  
What about the wedding?

Elton sits up bumping his head.

ELTON  
It's all off. I'm never going to marry you.

LINDA  
But I've sent the invitations to the printers. And I'm pregnant with your baby.

ELTON  
No, your not. We've never even had sex properly.

LINDA  
Haven't we?

ELTON  
We haven't got a proper relationship. I wouldn't marry you if you were the last person on earth.

CLOSE UP on the shocked and horrified Linda. Then, like a dam bursting she lets out a scream of rage. The whole house seems to shake.

BERNIE  
Oh shit.

**EXT. REGGIE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.**

Sheila opens the door to a rain bedraggled Elton and Bernie, they stand in the rain with their things.

**INT. KITCHEN, REGGIE'S HOUSE. DAY.**

Sheila making the breakfast.

**INT. BATHROOM. THE SAME.**

Bernie blearily brushing his teeth. Then he hears someone playing the piano. The opening chords to Your Song. It is tentative; broken. Elton sings a line, then repeats it and then starts playing it.



**INT. DINING ROOM. DAY.**

ELTON is composing Your Song. He goes slowly line by line, but when he gets to the chorus he has gained a fluency of expression than just allows the song to flow.

By the time he's started the second verse, Bernie is in the doorway half shaven, listening, stunned by what he is hearing. Elton now has the tune for the verse and sings it brilliantly, **we realise that BERNIE's lyrics are a platonic love song to ELTON but ELTON's emotional singing is directly to Bernie.**

BERNIE stands stunned. In this fragile state 'Your Song' is nakedly emotional. A direct expression of ELTON's loneliness and longing. Now he has the tune, ELTON sings the second chorus with real passion. He gets to the end and stops. He suddenly turns realising Sheila is watching from the door. ELTON looks at her embarrassed that she have witnessed such a personal moment.

SHEILA

Oh Reggie.

**INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT.**

Elton in pyjamas - sitting on his bed. A record is playing. He watches as Bernie takes his jeans off. He sits next to Elton on the bed. As they listen to the music Elton puts his hand on Bernie's knee. BERNIE puts his hand on ELTON's.

BERNIE

I love you, Elton. But I'm sorry,  
that's never gonna happen.

ELTON takes his hand away.

**INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT. LATER**

Both Elton and Bernie lie in their bunks. Awake, but silent. Bernie tries to find a way back for them:

BERNIE

Let's record it.

ELTON

What?

BERNIE

Your song. Our song.

ELTON

Ok. We'll ask Ray tomor...

BERNIE

No...

Bernie leans over the bunk to look down at Elton.

BERNIE (CONT'D)  
I mean lets record it now.

Elton looks back at Bernie. Smiles.

**INT. RECEPTION, DICK JAMES MUSIC. NIGHT.**

Elton and Bernie creep past a sleeping security guard and disappear into the shadows of a corridor. They crawl along the floor in order not to be spotted.

**INT. RECORDING STUDIO. NIGHT.**

Darkness. Suddenly a light turns on. Elton and Bernie are in the studio together.

ELTON  
Are you sure you know how to work  
it?

BERNIE  
Yeah. I had to give the engineer my  
Leon Russell album to get lessons.  
For godsake shut the door.

Bernie fiddles on at the desk, as Elton shuts the door.

ELTON  
Look. He's left this tape for us.  
Let's get this down before anybody  
comes.

CUT TO:

Elton in the studio. He sings the end of "Your Song". Then picks up a piece of paper and holds it up. It says: "Press Stop!". Bernie, in the booth, presses "stop".

ELTON (CONT'D)  
That's it. We've done it.

Elton dances around the room and kisses Bernie just as the door comes open. It is the Security Guard.

SECURITY GUARD  
What's going on here then?

**INT. OFFICE OF DICK JAMES. DAY.**

Dick James sits at his desk. Elton and Bernie stand like two errant school boys. Surrounding Dick are pictures of him with the Beatles, him with the Queen. Gold Records up the Wazoo.

DICK JAMES

Bloody brilliant. You've just written the best goddam song I've heard since Maxwell's Silver Hammer. So on behalf of Dick James Music Incorporated I hereby offer you an exclusive world wide deal for which you keep a full fifty percent of the publishing. Plus ten pounds a week advance.

ELTON

Ten pounds!

DICK JAMES

And Ray's organised a couple of gigs for you.

ELTON

Of our own.

RAY

Yes, your headlining the The Troubadour.

ELTON

The Troubadour?

RAY

Yeah. It's a really cool folk club.

ELTON

A folk club! I've played the Civic Hall, Bradford with Major Lance.

RAY

In LA.

ELTON

LA!

**INT. TROUBADOUR. DAY.**

Elton and Bernie look at the club.

BERNIE

It's a bit smaller than I expected.

It looks like a real dump. A bum is panhandling outside.

ELTON

What a fucking dump.  
I've played bigger places in Pinner.

RAY WILLIAMS

Calm down. It's all going to be cool.  
Let me show you guys backstage.

BERNIE

I'll join you later. I'm just going to grab a beer.

Elton et al go off. Bernie sidles up to the bar, he smiles at the chicks. The chicks smile back.

CHICK

You must be Elton John.

BERNIE

No, I'm the one who writes the lyrics.

CHICK

Oh.

Bernie's face drops with the brush off.

**INT. DRESSING ROOMS. THE SAME.**

Elton and the band all squash into one tiny dressing room.

ELTON

We fly six thousand miles to play some fleapit the size of a cake tin to play for six people and a dog. We shouldn't be here, I should be at home with Bernie, writing new material.

RAY WILLIAMS

Calm down, Elton, Neil Diamond and most of the Beach Boys are coming.

ELTON

Neil Diamond, my arse.

Bernie comes running in.

BERNIE

Jesus Christ, Elton. You won't believe it. Neil Diamond's at the bar.

ELTON

Are you sure?

BERNIE

He's talking to Leon Russell and half of the fucking Beach Boys. It's absolutely rammed, Elton. The whole of LA's out there.

ELTON

Oh Jesus shit.

**INT. STAGE. THE SAME.**

Bernie and Elton peer from backstage at the audience. It is absolutely jam packed. ELTON is completely terrified by stagefright.

ELTON

There is no way I'm going in front of that crowd.

BERNIE

But a minute ago you wanted to go home because there was nobody watching you.

ELTON

But these are the geniuses of American music. When they hear me they'll tie me to a chair and break my fucking fingers.

**INT. THE AUDITORIUM. THE SAME.**

It's packed. The crowd are growing restless.

**INT. BATHROOM. THE SAME.**

RAY WILLIAMS is standing outside a cubicle trying to coax ELTON out.

ELTON

I'm not coming out.

RAY WILLIAMS

Think of the money.

ELTON

A hundred fucking dollars!?

RAY WILLIAMS

Think of the embarrassment. I don't know. Think of England!

Elton pops his head out.

ELTON

I can't go out there - what if it doesn't work. What will my life have been for?

He quickly disappears behind the door. We hear him retch. Suddenly Ray loses it and busts open the cubicle door dragging ELTON out.

RAY

I paid your fucking airfare - now  
get out there and play you little  
arsehole.

**INT. AUDITORIUM. THE SAME.**

BERNIE smiles at the two 'hot' chicks. They don't react.

**INT. BACKSTAGE. THE SAME**

Close up of ELTON in the half light at the side of the stage.  
He is sweating, ill and terrified by the ordeal.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

(OOV)

And now the person you've all been  
waiting for. All the way from  
England..Elton John.

Huge applause. We follow ELTON in slow motion as he goes on stage. He looks out at the audience they seem a vast blur. He sits at the piano but freezes. A few people at the front are looking at him but his eye moves to people chatting at the bar - just like in Pinner. He hears the beer glasses and the two 'hot chicks' chattering oblivious to him. He kicks the piano stool off the stage and launches into a maniac piano riff. All his anxiety and anger is suddenly channelled into the number.

ELTON

It seems as though/ I've lived my  
life/ on the bad side of the moon/  
to stir your dregs in sickness  
still/ without the rustic spoon/  
common people live with me/ where  
the light has never shone/

Elton is leaping about, almost seems to be flying in mid air as he plays with electrifying abandon. The crowd are going wild, the 'hot chicks' look on in wonder - Bernie sidles up to them. Elton is giving a performance of a lifetime.

ELTON (CONT'D)

and the hermits flock like  
hummingbirds/ to speak in a foreign  
tongue/ I'm a light year away/ from  
the people who make me stay/  
sitting on the bad side of the  
moon.

Elton has raised the roof. He repeats a phrase again and again the whole club is bouncing as one. He encourages them to join in, driving the crowd to wilder and wilder appreciation. Finally, he ends on a huge note, then almost remembers himself again as he has been so engrossed in the number.

For a split second he looks out to the stunned crowd - we are back to slow motion again. Then suddenly they start to cheer.

ELTON (CONT'D)

Good grief!

The crowd go wild. Elton is simultaneously stunned and delighted at the reaction. Staring at the crowd - almost in shock at what he was capable of and the reaction it has caused.

**INT. BACKSTAGE. THE SAME**

The insanity back stage after the gig. ELTON is mobbed. Fans mob him as he passes. ELTON forces his way to into the dressing room.

**INT. DRESSING ROOM. THE SAME.**

Elton bursts in.

ELTON

We did it! We fucking did it!

Elton looks across at Bernie and sees he's with one of the 'hot chicks' drinking a beer.

BERNIE

Elton. I'd like you to meet Amy.

AMY

You were amazing. Absolutely amazing. And the words are so cool as well.

AMY grabs BERNIE's arm.

ELTON

Thank you.

ELTON is crestfallen that their private moment of triumph has been usurped by BERNIE picking up AMY.

RAY WILLIAMS

Enough of the bullshit. Now let's get this party started.

RAY opens the dressing room door and people team in engulfing ELTON.

**INT. MOTEL CORRIDOR. NIGHT.**

ELTON and BERNIE are wrecked. They stagger along the corridor and stop outside the doors to their rooms.

BERNIE

So I was thinking maybe tomorrow we could all drive out to the desert. You know, take a bit of time out.

ELTON

The desert!?! What the hell would we want to go there for?

BERNIE

It's what you do. It's space. It's America.

ELTON

I don't want space. I thought we were going to go to Tower records.

BERNIE hesitates.

BERNIE

Actually, I promised Amy. Ray and I have hired a car.

ELTON

'Ray' and you have hired a car!?! What about me?

BERNIE

That's what I'm saying. We want you to come along.

ELTON

To be the gooseberry?

BERNIE

It's not like that.

ELTON

I don't want to go to the desert with Ray and Amy. I thought we were a team. I thought we were going to hang out - together - like we do in London.

BERNIE

Come on, Elt. You know how it is.

ELTON

Yeah. You two fuck off and leave me as soon as you get a sniff.

BERNIE

Elton, don't be like this.

ELTON

It's alright. Go on go to the desert - see what it's like.

(MORE)



ELTON (CONT'D)  
 But I'll tell you this much. There's  
 nothing fucking there!

ELTON goes into his room and slams the door.

BERNIE  
 Elton. Elton.

BERNIE turns and goes into his room. The first chords of Tiny Dancer play.

**EXT. MOTEL. DAY.**

RAY and BERNIE meet AMY and her friend. They climb in the open topped car.

ELTON  
 Blue Jean baby /LA lady/Seamstress  
 for the band.

**INT. MOTEL ROOM. DAY.**

Elton in the half light of the room looking through the curtains as the car drives away. He sings, alone:

ELTON  
 Pretty eyed, pirate smile/

**EXT. DESERT. DAY.**

The car racing along a desert road.

ELTON  
 You'll marry a music man

**EXT. DESERT. DAY.**

The car parked in the desert. BERNIE and AMY running around in the sand laughing a dancing.

ELTON  
 Ballerina/ You must have seen her  
 dancing in the sand.

**EXT. TOWER RECORDS. DAY.**

Elton alone walking into Tower Records, aimless and lonely.

**EXT. DESERT. DAY.**

Bernie and AMY walk hand in hand away from Ray and the other girl.

ELTON  
 And now she's in me, always with  
 me, Tiny Dancer in my hand.

**EXT. TOWER RECORDS. NIGHT.**

Outside Tower Records hippie is shouting. ELTON walks past into the record shop alone.

ELTON  
 Jesus freaks/ Out in the street/  
 Handing tickets out for God/

**EXT. JOSHUA TREE. THE SAME.**

As the sun goes down BERNIE and AMY sit and watch the magnificent sunset. As in the song, AMY laughs and puts her head on BERNIE's shoulder.

ELTON  
 Turning back/ she just laughs.

**INT. TROUBADOUR. THE SAME.**

It is empty. ELTON walks onto the stage. He takes a piece of paper from his hand. It's the lyrics to Tiny Dancer. He starts playing. We realise he is writing the song we are hearing.

ELTON  
 Piano man/ He makes his stand/ in  
 the auditorium.

**EXT. DESERT. NIGHT.**

BERNIE looks at AMY singing by the light of a fire.

ELTON  
 Looking on/ She sings the songs/  
 the words she knows/ the tunes she  
 hums.

**INT. MOTEL ROOM. NIGHT.**

Looking down on ELTON alone in bed, he sings directly up to the camera above him.

ELTON  
 But oh how it feels so real lying  
 here with no one near/ only you ..

**EXT. DESERT. NIGHT.**

BERNIE and the AMY lying naked, wrapped in a blanket.

SONG

..and you can hear me, when I say  
softly, slowly.

BERNIE whispers to her.

**INT. MOTEL ROOM. NIGHT.**

Elton rolling uncomfortably on the bed unable to sleep. He sings:

ELTON

Hold me closer tiny dancer.

**EXT. DESERT ROAD. NIGHT.**

The open top car with the two couples passing other cars in the dark.

ELTON

Count the headlights on the highway.

**INT. MOTEL ROOM. NIGHT.**

ELTON singing alone in bed.

ELTON

Lay me down in sheets of linen

**INT. MOTEL ROOM. NIGHT.**

Bird's eye view of a bed. BERNIE and AMY upon it into endless sheets which seem to envelop them. It is a fantasy image, almost magically Elton rolls onto the space they have been and stares up at the ceiling.

ELTON

You had a busy day today / Hold me  
closer Tiny Dancer/ You had a busy  
day today.

The final image is of Elton alone, he curls into a foetal position.

**INT. CLUB, SAN FRANCISCO. NIGHT.**

ELTON comes on stage. The crowd go wild. Elton singing wildly but w only hear the end of Tiny Dancer. Elton's loneliness, disconnected from the frenzied world around him.

**INT. BACKSTAGE. THE SAME.**

Still in Elton's disconnected bubble we follow ELTON being mobbed by people. Suddenly the quiet of the fading music is exploded as the sound of people shouting at ELTON bursts in. ELTON makes his way along a corridor as people clamour.

**INT. DRESSING ROOM. THE SAME.**

Elton locks the door, breathes deeply relieved to be out of the mayhem. He looks at a man in a three piece suit.

JOHN REID

So, how does it feel to be this week's messiah?

Elton looks round startled to see a man standing in his dressing room. Wearing a three piece suit and carrying confidence in his looks, he speaks in a Glaswegian accent.

ELTON

Who the hell are you?

He uncorks a bottle of Dom Perignon.

JOHN REID

John Reid. Recently of Motown Records. Very pleased to meet you.

ELTON

What are you doing in my dressing room?

John hands Elton the glass of champagne.

JOHN REID

Dom Perignon. 63. Particularly good. But something tells me you're going to get used to it.

There is banging on the door. Bernie is calling "Elton! Elton!"

JOHN REID (CONT'D)

I predict within two years you'll be the best selling artist in America. You just need a little help in believing in yourself. That's where I come in. Up yer bum.

He raises his glass and knocks back the champers.

JOHN REID (CONT'D)

So to speak.

ELTON

So you like the material?

Now the banging on the door is out of control.

BERNIE

(off)

Elton. Open up. It's me.

JOHN REID

Not quite as much as the singer.  
Come on. Let's get out of here.

John turns throws open the window and steps out onto the fire escape.

JOHN REID (CONT'D)

Coming?

A beat as Elton looks from the banging on the door then back to John.

**EXT. ROOF TOP OF THE THEATRE. THE SAME.**

ELTON and JOHN drink champagne looking over the panorama of San Francisco Bay. A Neon Sign on the roof lights their faces as it flashes on and off.

ELTON

Do you really think I'm gonna be  
the best selling artist in America?

JOHN REID

You could be anything you want to  
be. Trust me.

ELTON

Why should I do that?

JOHN REID

Do you want to be the nice little  
boy from Pinner all your life?

They stare at each other. ELTON grabs JOHN REID and kisses him passionately.

**INT. HOTEL BEDROOM. MORNING.**

Overhead shot of ELTON in bed. Elton looks over to reveal JOHN REID next to him. John's hand rests on his side as he sleeps.

Elton gently puts his hand over John's, being careful not to disturb him. Elton settles back, staring upwards, amazed and enthralled that this has happened to him.

**EXT. PINNER. EVENING.**

A cab pulls up outside of his Mum's house. ELTON and BERNIE get out. It's raining.

**INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT.**

ELTON and BERNIE in their bunks.

BERNIE

Elton, who was that weird Scottish guy you were hanging out with in San Francisco?

ELTON

Nobody. Just some bloke who works for Motown.

BERNIE

Pity. I thought maybe you might have found somebody too. Didn't you make any plans to see him again?

ELTON

Well, no. He lives in America.

BERNIE

Don't worry, you'll find someone, Elton.

There is a noise at the window. ELTON gets out of bed a stone raps against the glass. He looks out of the window. There is JOHN REID

ELTON

What the hell are you doing here?

JOHN REID

Stop asking stupid fucking questions. Why do you think I'm here?

**EXT. PRIMROSE HILL. NIGHT.**

Elton and John share a glass of champagne as they look down over London.

ELTON

I don't understand. You've come to live in London?

JOHN REID

I've come to be with you, fucking idiot.

ELTON

To "be" with me?

JOHN REID

Be. Live - love - whatever you want to call it.

ELTON

Do you think it's, you know,  
"alright".

JOHN REID

Who should we ask? The Pope? Your  
Mum? Elton, have you any idea  
what's happening to you? You're  
going to be a millionaire before  
April 17th. You're gonna go  
platinum on two continents. You're  
Captain Fantastic. You can do  
whatever you fucking well like.

John points at the City lit up against the night.

JOHN REID (CONT'D)

Look, here's the whole of London.  
What do you want?

ELTON

I dunno.

JOHN REID

Anything.

ELTON

A flat off the Edgware Road.

JOHN REID

And...

ELTON

A Rolls Royce?

JOHN REID

And....

ELTON

Some modern art?

JOHN REID

And

ELTON

A football team.

JOHN REID

And...

ELTON

You.

JOHN REID

See. It's easy as pie.

ELTON  
And it won't, you know, affect my  
career.

JOHN REID  
It's 1971. Live life like you want  
to. Let me deal with the rest.

**INT. BACK OF A LIMO. DAY.**

Cue: Honky Cat: ELTON and JOHN REID in the back of a limo.  
Elton in a fantastic stage outfit.

**INT. PENTHOUSE FLAT. DAY.**

*Honky Cat intro plays over:* ELTON looking round a very posh  
flat with JOHN REID.

ELTON  
We'll take it.

ESTATE AGENT  
You do realise it is on the market  
for a hundred thousand pounds. Have  
you made arrangements for a  
mortgage for such a large amount?

ELTON  
No. We thought we'd pay cash.

JOHN REID puts his briefcase on the table. They open it. It  
is full of money. ELTON sings to camera:

*ELTON (CONT'D)*  
*When I look back, boy I must have*  
*been crazy...*

**EXT. THE PITCH, WATFORD CITY. DAY.**

ELTON sings as he shakes the hands of a long line introduced  
by manager Graham Taylor.

*ELTON*  
*boppin in the country fishin in the*  
*stream/looking for an answer trying*  
*to find a sign until I saw these*  
*city lights, honey I was blind*

ELTON lines up with the team and manager for the photo-op.

GRAHAM TAYLOR  
We are very proud to have Elton as  
chairman of the board. He's a  
really straight guy.



Elton winks into the camera.

**ELTON**

*Get back honky cat better get back  
to the wood.*

**INT. BATHS. THE SAME.**

ELTON is in the baths with the entire team. They are all drinking champagne. Elton leads the communal singing. The whole football team join in the chorus.

**WATFORD CITY FOOTBALL CLUB**

*You better get back Honky cat  
living in the city is where its at/  
its like trying to find gold in a  
silver mine it's like trying to  
drink whisky from a bottle of  
wine./*

**INT. CORK STREET GALLERY. DAY.**

Elton's head appears above a Connoisseur Magazine. He sings to us:

**ELTON**

Well I read some books and I read  
some magazines/

He looks up to see a Francis Bacon.

**ELTON (CONT'D)**

about those high class ladies down  
in New Orleans/ And all those folks  
back home said I was a fool/ listen  
leave him alone is the golden  
rule..

**INT. PENTHOUSE FLAT. DAY.**

The Francis Bacon is now on the wall of Elton's apartment. ELTON and JOHN REID are doing choerographed housework. ELTON hoovering in one of his 70s stage suits with a pinny over the top. JOHN REID in an immaculate three piece suit also with a pinny and feather duster.

**ELTON**

Get back honky cat better get back  
to the wood but I quit those days  
and those red neck ways mmmmmmm  
change is gonna do me good..

The door bell rings. The song stops, abruptly. ELTON whips off his pinny.

ELTON (CONT'D)  
I 'm not sure I can do this.

JOHN REID  
Just do exactly as we said.

ELTON  
You have no idea what she's like.

JOHN REID  
Elton, you're a grown man, you're an international superstar. Just put it on the table. What could she do to you?

The doorbell rings again.

**INT. DOOR TO PENTHOUSE. THE SAME.**

ELTON answers the door. Sheila and FRED are there with a bottle of wine.

SHEILA  
I thought we'd got the wrong flat for a second.

**INT. MAIN ROOM, PENTHOUSE, THE SAME.**

FRED looks at the flat in admiration.

FRED  
Wow!

Sheila is already in having a good look round.

SHEILA  
It's a bit smaller than I imagined.

ELTON joins Sheila who is looking around the flat.

SHEILA (CONT'D)  
I don't like that.

ELTON  
We had it imported, from Italy.

SHEILA  
It's very 'modern'.

She shakes her head in disapproval.

SHEILA (CONT'D)  
But if it makes you happy...

She is now sitting on the sofa lighting up a ciggie.

SHEILA (CONT'D)  
What's that monstrosity?

ELTON  
That's a Francis Bacon.

SHEILA  
It'd put me right off.

FRED is sitting in a suspended egg chair.

FRED  
I quite like it.

SHEILA  
Fred.

CUT ¶

Sheila, FRED and ELTON sat at the table. JOHN REID brings food.

JOHN REID  
Duck a l'orange.

SHEILA  
None for me. Thank you.

ELTON  
John cooked this himself.

SHEILA  
Foreign food doesn't agree with me.

ELTON  
Just try a bit.

JOHN REID  
It's not a problem. I'll rustle up an omlette or something.

SHEILA  
Oh really, don't got to any trouble.

JOHN REID  
Not a problem at all.

JOHN smiles. He indicates to ELTON to talk to his mother as he goes to the kitchen area.

SHEILA  
What a very nice young gentleman. Even if he is Scottish. Isn't a bit unusual sharing a house with your manager, Reggie?

ELTON

Elton. Actually, it's working out fine.

SHEILA

Has he got a girlfriend?

ELTON

No.

SHEILA

That's a surprise. He's very dishy.

JOHN REID behind Sheila indicating to ELTON to talk to her.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Very nice hair. You're really starting to go bald now aren't you.

JOHN REID to the rescue.

JOHN REID

More wine?

SHEILA

Ta, love. Very nice boy. Knows how the treat the ladies.

JOHN REID

Elton has something important he'd like to tell you.

SHEILA

Really!

ELTON

No I haven't.

SHEILA

Come on Elton, spill the beans.

ELTON

I don't know what he meant.

JOHN REID

Elton's supporting Liberace this evening and he thought it was a good opportunity to say something important.

ELTON

No. I'm, well, we're thinking of getting a dog.

**INT. LIMO. NIGHT.**

Elton and John Reid are in the back of a limo.

JOHN REID

Why didn't you fucking tell them.  
The whole point of the dinner was...

ELTON

I just couldn't do it. Not after the  
business with the duck.

JOHN REID

Jesus Christ. You fucking Mummy's  
boy.

ELTON

I don't see what the big deal is.  
What does it matter?

JOHN REID

It matters because you are living a  
lie. It matters because - did you  
ever think, maybe, just maybe, that  
it matters to me. But I don't  
fucking count in the wonderful,  
fucking zipless world of Elton John.

ELTON

Stop the car.

JOHN REID

Don't stop the car.

ELTON

Stop the car!

JOHN REID

Do not stop the car.

ELTON

STOP THE CAR.

JOHN REID

DO NOT STOP THE CAR!

ELTON

STOP THIS FUCKING CAR.

The car stops. Elton gets out.

**EXT. LONDON STREET. THE SAME.**

ELTON flags down a cab.

JOHN REID

You're due on stage in less than an  
hour.

ELTON marches across the road.

ELTON  
 You go and play to five thousand  
 people.

Before JOHN REID can stop it the cab drives off.

**INT. SHEILA'S HOUSE. THE SAME.**

The phone rings. She answers.

SHEILA  
 Hello?

**INT. ELTON'S FLAT. NIGHT.**

Elton is crouched on the floor with the phone, a half drunk  
 bottle of Jack Daniels in his hand. He takes a swing.

ELTON  
 Mum. It's me.

SHEILA  
 Reggie? I can't speak to you know.  
 You're about to be on the telly.

ELTON  
 Mum, listen to me.

SHEILA  
 You'll have to hurry up. It's  
 already started.

ELTON  
 Mum. I am ringing you.

SHEILA  
 We're going to miss your bit.

ELTON  
 You're not missing anything. How  
 can you be missing me, I'm talking  
 to you here, now. I'm not at the  
 Palladium.

SHEILA  
 Oh for christsake. Turn that down  
 Fred.

ELTON  
 Mum. I'm gay...

SHEILA  
 What did you say?

ELTON  
 I said I'm gay.

Silence.

ELTON (CONT'D)

Mum.....Mum?

Finally,

SHEILA

Is that it? For godsake, Elton, we worked that out years ago. For a minute I thought you'd got back together with that Pickled Onion girl. Thanks for the supper but I have to say, that duck's been rifting up on Fred something rotten.

ELTON hears the door.

JOHN REID

Elton?

ELTON

I have to go.

JOHN REID

Elton.

John Reid comes in.

ELTON

It's done. I told them.

John Reid grabs Elton and punches him in the face.

JOHN REID

Don't you ever do that to me again. You were a two bit nobody living with his fucking mother. You are about to do a 100 date world tour - thanks to me. You are a multi-millionaire - thanks to me. If I say fucking turn up. You fucking turn up. If I say bark. You fucking well bark. Got that, Reggie?

JOHN throws him away, turns and starts walks out.

ELTON

Where you going?

JOHN REID

To fuck somebody else. I'll see you later.

ELTON tries to stop him as he did his father.

ELTON

Wait...

JOHN REID leaves slamming the door. ELTON shocked and alone. He looks in the mirror, examining his swollen eye but notices his hairline. A hair comes out in his fingers.

**INT. DRESSING ROOM. DAY.**

Elton puts make up over his black eye. Then chooses some glasses. He puts some normal ones on. That is not enough. He swaps them for some really outrageous ones. He looks concerned at his hairline and decides to try a hat. He's not happy with it so tries a feather headpiece. Better.

**EXT. HOUSE, SUBURBIA. DAY.**

A stretch limo stops in a drab suburban street. ELTON gets out with a huge bunch of flowers. He looks completely out of place in his outlandish costume. The local kids playing on the street look at him in amazement.

KID

Hey, aren't you Elton John?

ELTON checks the address on a bit of paper and walks down the path of the down-at-heel suburban house. He rings the doorbell and waits.

The door opens and STANLEY looks at ELTON in shock. Elton waits for his father to say something but he just looks.

ELTON

Dad.

STANLEY

Jesus, Reggie. I suppose you better come in.

**INT. STANLEY'S HOUSE. THE SAME.**

ELTON sits in a small armchair whilst STANLEY sits on the sofa. We see ELTON over STANLEY's shoulder. He is clearly very uncomfortable.

ELTON

I'm about to go on my first World Tour and I just thought it was time to see you, you know, just to say - there are no hard feelings.

STANLEY

It's alright. You know things really worked out the second time round.



We see the scene from ELTON's angle and see that STANLEY is tucked up on the sofa with two young boys, GEOFF and STEPHEN. ELTON looks at the warm, idyllic picture of a father with his sons.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Well, now we've broken the ice once your back off this tour we can all get together. One big happy family. We've got nothing against queers or anything, Reginald.

ELTON

Actually, I'm not Reggie anymore. Didn't you ever think of contacting me? All those years?

STANLEY

Well, to be quite honest. I was a bit busy with the new job and everything. But we've got a few of your records, though. Don't we boys. Admittedly they're not my cup of tea. More of a jazz man, myself.

GEOFF

Are you really worth twenty-five million quid?

STANLEY

He's a cheeky little monkey, isn't he?

STANLEY roughs up GEOFF's hair and kisses him affectionately. We see ELTON is almost in tears.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Stephen's quite a footballer, aren't you, Stephen. And Geoff too, actually. We usually have a kick around on a Sunday. Don't we boys.

ELTON

(standing up)

Look, I think I better be off.

STANLEY

Please - please stay for tea.

STEPHEN

I thought you said we could go to the chippy.

ELTON

No I'm on my way to the airport. It was very nice to meet you - all.

STANLEY

Well, at least sign an album. Boys.

The boys runs into the next room to get an album.

ELTON

Why didn't you love me, Dad?

STANLEY is shocked. He has no answer. The two men look at each other. ELTON almost in tears, refuses to cry. The moment is broken as STEPHEN runs in.

STEPHEN

Found one.

Stanley hands it to Elton giving him a pen from his pocket.

STANLEY

Here. Put "to Arthur" - he's the bloke I work with. Quite a big fan.

Elton signs the album.

GEOFF

That'll be worth a few bob, now.

ELTON walks out of the room, he slips on his outrageous high heels but limps out determined not to reveal his heartbreak.

**INT. ELTON'S LIMO. THE SAME.**

Elton gets in the limo and bursts into tears. He finally pulls himself together. He looks round and sees the kids in the street looking in at him, stunned to see him undone.

**INT. STAGE. THE SAME.**

ELTON starts a wild piano solo with the PINBALL WIZARD riff. He screams wildly into the camera.

**PIANO SOLO MONTAGE: INT. VARIOUS THEATRES. DAY / NIGHT.**

Another theatre, another wild costume. The piano solo continues seamlessly. Now he is in a hotel bar standing at the piano. Now he is at a soundcheck in a huge empty hall. The solo gets more and more complicated and virtuosic. He is in the Pinball Wizard enormous platform heels. Playing like a demon, grinning madly. Now he is in a dressing room, naked - still playing the solo, then it gets more and more wild and surreal. He's playing a tiny toy piano in the middle of an empty ball room, he's on STARSHIP ONE - his plane full of white shag pile carpets and a big piano.

Now he is in a TV studio, on the back of a truck on an LA freeway, back in STARSHIP ONE - he starts to float, JOHN REID and the whole band start to float in zero gravity, bottles of Jack Daniels, globules of bourbon drift round the plane as ELTON bashes away at the piano mid-air. Finally, ELTON crashes down on the last few chords, again and again and again. Each time we cut to him at a different piano, in a different venue. It should feel like a groundhog day, a stuck, repeated record. After every beat he signs an autograph in a different city, fan after fan, the suddenly John Reid gets him to sign a contract, perhaps more than once. The one solo has taken us through a whole World Tour. He plays the final chord. In STARSHIP ONE the floating musicians fall out of shot. ELTON on stage bows to the audience. Then we jump cut to him, bowing again, and again. Finally he collapses.

**EXT. HOLIDAY INN SOMEWHERE IN INDIANA. NIGHT.**

A long anonymous corridor. ELTON staggers along on his own. Tired, exhausted, legless. He bounces off the walls. He tries to get the key in the door and staggers into his room.

**INT. BEDROOM. THE SAME.**

Elton falls onto a bed and is out cold.

**INT. BEDROOM, ELTON'S HOUSE. L.A. DAY.**

ELTON wakes with a start. He is sweating. Disorientated.

**INT. CORRIDOR, ELTON'S HOUSE, LA. THE SAME.**

ELTON walks out of his room - a maid is dusting.

ELTON

Excuse me. Where am I?

MAID

This is your house, Mr John. In LA.

**EXT. POOL AREA. DAY.**

Elton walks out into the bright sunlight. The maid gives him an orange juice.

ELTON

Will you put a shot of vodka in there.

He sees John Reid, slightly obscured by a pool side table..

JOHN REID

Morning.

Elton sees a young man emerge and realises that John Reid has been fucking him.

ELTON

Who's that?

JOHN REID

The pool guy. Just a bit of 'rock and roll'.

ELTON

Rock and Roll is playing fucking piano not screwing the cleaning staff.

JOHN REID

Rock and roll is getting you out of bed in the morning. It's arranging 250 gigs a year, it is overseeing PRS audits in 176 different countries, it's employment contracts for 112 people in full or part-time employment. It's insurance, copyright indemnity, renegotiating your previously insane contracts and wiping your arse. Yeah, all you do is play the piano but in my case, Elton, Rock and Roll is a 87 million dollar a year industry, and all I'm asking is for a little bit on the side.

ELTON

Get out.

JOHN REID

What?

ELTON

This is my house. Get out of here. I want to be by myself.

JOHN REID

But what about the plane?

ELTON

What plane?

JOHN REID

You do remember you hired a plane. To bring the people from England.

ELTON

Of course I do.  
Which people from England?

**EXT. ELTON'S HOUSE. THE SAME.**

Two coaches pull up. People stream off the bus led by Sheila and FRED in 'Elton at the Dodger's' T Shirts.

SHEILA

You remember the Andersons from next door, don't you.

Elton looks to see a middle aged couple he has no recollection of.

IVY

I can't believe I'm actually in America.

**INT. ELTON'S HOUSE. DAY.**

Intro to "I Think I'm Gonna Kill Myself". A Party. BERNIE arrives in his cowboy gear with a couple of blonde Californian girls in tow. The front door is open and he wanders inside. The huge party is in full swing. Everybody from the plane is there. Sheila, IVY and FRED are all by the pool in their swimming costumes, having the time of their lives. We follow BERNIE. He sees JOHN REID snogging a young man. Everyone is having the time of their lives. Old friends, and neighbours from Pinner are covorting with LA hispters and record company people. BERNIE walks through the party like a ghost. Some people are raiding the fridge. Every nook and cranny is filled with people enjoying the thrill of being in a rock star's home.

**INT. ELTON'S LIBRARY. THE SAME.**

In the dark recesses of the house. ELTON on his own. He is lined up a row of 20 pill bottles, he looks up to camera and sings:

ELTON

(singing)

"I'm getting bored/ being part of  
mankind/

He pours a beaker full of Jack Daniels.

**EXT. PARTY, ELTON'S HOUSE. THE SAME.**

People running round the pool having a great time.

ELTON (V.O.)

there's not a lot to do no more,  
this race is a waste of time /  
People rushing everywhere/

**INT. ELTON'S LIBRARY. THE SAME.**

Elton necks all the pills. Some spill out his mouth as he sings and slurps Jack Daniels to wash them down.

ELTON  
 swarming round like flies/ think  
 I'll buy a forty four/ give em all  
 a big surprise.

He stands up. But the room sways violently. Elton is hurled out of shot into the corridor.

**INT. CORRIDOR. THE SAME.**

Elton stands up and brushes himself down. He looks distinctly woozy. He tries to steady himself. As the chorus starts Elton begins to tap dance. He is absolutely brilliant.

The song becomes a number where we see ELTON in reality smashing up the room. But in fantasy doing a soft shoe dance number. During all of which he makes his suicide attempt. We cut in and out of the party.

ELTON  
 (singing, to camera )  
 Think I'm gonna kill myself/ Cause a  
 little suicide/ stick around for a  
 couple of days/ what a scandal if I  
 died.

He tap dances up the corridor towards the camera leaping onto a dresser kicking down a vase of flowers.

ELTON (CONT'D)  
 Yeah, I'm gonna kill myself/get a  
 little headline news/ I'd like to  
 see what the papers say about the  
 state of the teenage blues.

**Miraculously, he is able to dance up the walls just like Fred Astaire in "A Royal Wedding".** As he dances towards the camera he starts to dance on the ceiling singing all the while.

ELTON (CONT'D)  
 Think I'm going to kill myself/  
 cause a little suicide/ stick around  
 for a couple of days/ what a scandal  
 if I died.

**EXT. POOL. DAY.**

Outside the music continues over everyone having a great time at the party. Then suddenly there is a crash as Elton throws open the doors to a balcony. The music stops after just a verse and chorus. Everybody looks up to see ELTON.

ELTON

And for my next trick - I am going  
to fucking well drown myself.

He climbs onto the railings and does a magnificent swan dive into the pool. He hits the water with a massive splash and sinks like a stone.

**INT. POOL. THE SAME.**

ELTON in the pool, sinking slowly to the bottom. The pool is unfeasibly deep. As he sinks pills float out of his mouth like bubbles. He sinks further and further to the bottom of the pool as the intro to Rocketman plays. ELTON is now on the bottom of the pool. He is curious to find a tiny figure dressed in an astronaut's spacesuit playing the introduction on a tiny toy piano. The tiny figure looks up at ELTON, it is young REGGIE - the piano keys reflecting on his helmet like a huge smile.

REGGIE

She pack my bags last night pre-flight/  
zero hour nine a.m.

The singing is muffled by the space helmet. But now we are inside the space helmet with REGGIE and the singing is fine.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

And I'm gonna be high as a kite by then  
I miss the earth so much I miss my wife  
It's lonely out in space  
On such a timeless flight.

ELTON thrashes around, desperately trying to get away from REGGIE, who looks up sadly

REGGIE (CONT'D)

And I think it's gonna be a long  
long time/ till touch down brings  
me round again to find/ i'm not the  
man I think I am at all/ O no no  
no, I'm a Rocketman/ Rocketman  
burning out his fuse up here along -

Suddenly ELTON is hauled upwards and shoots out of the pool. He finds himself dangling over the pool, hooked to a crane. Everybody looking up at him.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Mars ain't the kind of place to  
raise your kids/ Infact it's cold  
as hell/ And there's no one there  
to raise them if you did/

He is rushed through the crowds on a trolley - BERNIE is mopping his brow, JOHN REID pushing people out of the way - to an ambulance.

REGGIE is desperately trying to get through to ELTON but he is getting bashed this way and that. He just jumps onto the ambulance as the doors are slammed shut and it pulls away.

**INT. AMBULANCE. THE SAME.**

ELTON in the ambulance wired to machinery.

REGGIE  
 And all this science I don't  
 understand  
 It's just my job five days a week  
 A rocket man, a rocketman

Reggie desperately clutching the hand of ELTON who is lying inert.

**EXT. WHAT SEEMS TO BE A HOSPITAL. THE SAME.**

ELTON's ambulance pulls up. Paramedics run to the vehicle and open the doors. As they spring open we see ELTON now fine dressed in his Dodger's Stadium attire. He leaps out of the ambulance with his bat and runs.

**EXT. STADIUM. THE SAME.**

What appeared to be the entrance to the hospital turns out to be the entrance to backstage.

ELTON/ REGGIE  
 And I think it's gonna be a long  
 long time/ till touch down brings  
 me round again to find/ i'm not the  
 man I think I am at all/ O no no  
 no, I'm a Rocketman/ Rocketman  
 burning out his fuse up here along -

ELTON runs backstage as his singing on the soundtrack sings over. He runs onstage. The crowd goes wild. As he comes on someone from the crowd throws a ball. Elton swings his bat and hits it way into the crowd.

As ELTON plaintively sings the play out to Rocketman the camera glides out over heads of the thousands and thousands of people in the crowd. Some people we pass are actually above camera level as they are sitting on each other's shoulders. There are people singing, people crying, people talking, people enraptured, people dancing, people stoned, even some Elton look alike. It is an endless sea of people. The camera surveys them all, flying inches above their heads, till the song dies out to silence.

We hear only the wind rush as we fly in silence towards the back of the crowd to see FRED, IVY and Sheila. Finally, we reach her. She is in tears.



We cut back to ELTON staring out at the enormous crowd. When we reverse the shot - it is night. ELTON is staring out at the vast crowd the whole stadium is lit by lighters. The camera pans up it is impossible to know where the lighters stop and the stars of the night sky start. We keep panning up to the stars in the night sky. Suddenly ELTON is floating lost in space.

As the camera pans we understand the image we are looking at. It is ELTON now at home floating in his pool in which the starlit night sky is reflected.

**INT. BED. DAY.**

A darkened room. We look down on ELTON who opens one bloodshot eye.

ELTON

Oh fuck.

We are with Elton in the slow, painful process of waking with the biggest hangover of all time. He staggers out of bed.

**EXT. AROUND THE POOL. THE SAME.**

Elton in his robe and enormous oversize sunglasses. Fred and Sheila look on concerned as Elton pours vodka into his orange juice.

SHELIA

I don't think you should be drinking.

ELTON

It's my house. I'll do what I want.

FRED

Are you alright, Elton. I mean. You seem really tired.

ELTON

I've just played to fifty thousand people of course I'm tired.

SHEILA

But did you really have to try to kill yourself in front of the Andersons.

ELTON

I wasn't trying to kill myself it was just pre-concert nerves.

SHEILA

No, that's just the kind of selfish thing you'd do.

(MORE)

SHEILA (CONT'D)

Did you think about me? Did you think about Bernie? No, you go an kill yourself. Just when we are getting used to a bit of security.

ELTON

Is that really all you've got to say?

SHEILA

Well, to be quite frank the seats weren't very good - we could barely see you.

ELTON

Get out.

SHEILA

I beg your pardon.

ELTON

I want you to leave.

JOHN REID

Calm down, Elton.

SHEILA

Where will we go?

ELTON

I don't fucking care.

SHEILA

You can't do that. You invited us here, Reggie.

ELTON

I AM NOT REGINALD DWIGHT!

He stands up and takes his sunglasses off.

ELTON (CONT'D)

I AM ELTON FUCKING JOHN. Who the hell would call their son Reginald Dwight? I'm a rock and roll superstar. I don't want to live my life in black and white. I don't want to hate myself. I don't accept your fucked up frigid fifties ideas about the world. There's nothing wrong with success or sex or pleasure. I want everything and I want it now. I'm gonna have my cake and eat it - on platform heels, in day-glo pink, in front of everybody.

(MORE)

ELTON (CONT'D)

I am gonna fuck everything that moves, I'm gonna take every drug known to man and I'm gonna enjoy every fucking minute of it.

We are in close up on ELTON. He puts some outrageous spectacles on and starts to sing:

ELTON (CONT'D)

I used to be a rolling stone, you know, if the cause was right..

**INT. SOUND STAGE. DAY.**

When we pull out we are on a MGM like sound stage. White background. Elton is singing dressed in his white Rhinestone studded cowboy gear. Chaps, small briefs, bare-chested. He is ripped, hot and really horny. There is a chorus of identical muscle boys, all blonde and blue eyed in swimming trunks. In a nod to Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend painted men pose as statues on the stage. The chorus of dancing boys swarm round Elton and he disappears beneath them only to emerge dressed in an even more outrageous costume. They lift him into the air and spin him around as he sings.

As the number progresses he dispenses rolex watches to the swooning boys as does Marilyn in her number. We realise Elton is in his own MGM fantasy but this being the Seventies has swapped the decorum of evening wear for the glamour of Studio 54. Elton has lost touch with reality and is in the fantastical world of Musical Film where anything is possible - and he revels doing his brilliant routine in the great tradition of Marilyn Monroe and Madonna. The clones of Hugh are just as sychophantic as the evening dressed flunkey's who tend to every whim of Marilyn and Madge.

Half way through the number the white backcloth falls and behind we see the Sergeant Pepper / biggest gay band in history set up. The chorus of Hugh clone disappear with their rolexes and Elton enters the Peter Blake world of gay icons. **Oscar Wilde** is singing backing vocals with **Long John Baldry**. **Michaelangelo** is next to **Liberace**. Some are cut outs, some are actors dressed up, some may play themselves - it is a carnival celebration of gay artists from all fields.

ELTON

Oh philadelphia freedom, shine on me, I love you/ Shine a light through the eyes of the ones left behind/

Projections flash above the assembled group: "**Philo= greek for love; delphia - a temple, a place of worship**". It's a sort of 'gay' LIVE AID - Close up as various historical figures sing a line each..

ELTON (CONT'D)  
 shine a light/ shine a light/ shine  
 a light won't you shine a light/  
 philadelphia freedom I love you/  
 yes, I do.

Then, for the last chorus, the stage opens up and ELTON rises on an enormous plinth which he is built into as The Statue of Liberty, his skin painted grey but with glasses which light up as he holds up the torch of liberty above his head. The projection behind him turns into a view of NYC as seen from Hudson Bay, so it's as if ELTON was actually the Statue of Liberty.

**INT. HOTEL ROOM. MORNING.**

Elton blinks open a bloodshot eye. He looks across to see a young blonde blue-eyed man is looking at him.

ELTON  
 Who the fuck are you?

MAN  
 I'm Hugh. I live with you.

ELTON  
 Well, get me a line of coke.

HUGH  
 What about some orange juice.

ELTON  
 I don't want orange juice.  
 I want a line of coke.

HUGH  
 But it's 9 o'clock in the morning.

ELTON  
 Look, if I want a line of coke. I  
 can have a line of coke. I'm a Rock  
 and Roll icon. What's that noise?

HUGH  
 What noise?

ELTON  
 How am I supposed to take coke with  
 that racket going on?

ELTON gets out of bed and wraps a towel around him and heads out to the corridor.

HUGH  
 Elton.

**INT. CORRIDOR. HOTEL.**

ELTON comes out into the corridor. In the distance is a cleaner hoovering the floor. ELTON races up to her.

ELTON  
What are you doing?

CLEANER  
Sorry?

Before the CLEANER has had a chance to understand what is going on ELTON has grabbed the hoover.

ELTON  
Excuse me.

ELTON picks up the hoover,

ELTON (CONT'D)  
How do you stop this thing?

He smashes it against the wall. It still goes on. This makes ELTON lose his rag. The cleaner watches as he annihilates the hoover, smashing it in to smithereens. Finally there is very little left but it is still going. The cleaner goes to the wall and switches off the plug. Finally it is silent.

ELTON (CONT'D)  
Thank you.

He politely hands the fragment of vaccum to the CLEANER and walks back into his room desperate to retain some dignity.

**INT. HOTEL ROOM. THE SAME.**

ELTON is stood stock still in the middle of the room.

ELTON  
It's still there. Can you hear it?

HUGH  
I think it's the wind.

ELTON throws open the curtains - they are in a highrise hotel. True - it is a windy day. ELTON immediately storms to the phone.

ELTON  
Hello, this is Room 701. Yes there is a problem. I can't get any peace and quiet. It's the wind. I don't care. It's your hotel. Stop the fucking wind.

He slams down the phone. He looks at HUGH.

HUGH

Morning.

**INT. HOTEL LOBBY, LONDON. DAY.**

Elton and Hugh sits opposite John Reid. Elton knocks back a martini in one.

ELTON

What do you mean it only got to number eleven in Italy. I thought Italy was one of our strongest markets.

JOHN REID

It just didn't work, Elton.

Without losing eye contact ELTON fills a wine glass with white wine which he does throughout the conversation so that he has drunk the entire bottle by the end of the scene.

ELTON

Well, what about France?

JOHN REID

Didn't even chart.

ELTON

It must have charted in France. I always chart in France. Well what about Australia?

JOHN REID

Bombed.

ELTON

What the fuck have you all been doing? Do you know how much I pay you?

JOHN REID

It's number one in Finland.

ELTON

Finland! But it's the best thing I've done in years.

JOHN REID

People just don't like the record, Elton.

ELTON

But I'm Elton fucking John! What have you been doing?

JOHN REID

The record is shit. It's coked out, MOR, braindead cack. You used to be a genius - Elton - now you're just a fat fuck who plays the piano.

ELTON

That's it. You're fired. I'm going on tour without you.

JOHN REID

Go on fucking tour - Elton. I don't care cos the legal costs and the booking fees and the seventeen fucking limosenes - all come out of your bit. Every bit of fucking tuna you stuff down your bloated throat comes out of *your* bit. So fire me. I'm perfectly happy to stay here and collect the royalties. Alternatively you could stay sober and write a decent fucking tune.

ELTON

That can't be right.

JOHN REID

Read your contract. You egocentric fuck.

John Reid leaves. Hugh smiles weakly at Elton trying to make the best out of a bad situation.

ELTON

Jesus fucking Christ.

Elton pours a half pint of wine into a beaker and drinks it in one.

**EXT. STAIRS, WATFORD CITY FOOTBALL CLUB. DAY.**

Elton staggering up stairs on ten inch heels. He's completely wrecked and can barely make it.

**EXT. STANDS, WATFORD CITY FOOTBALL CLUB. DAY.**

ELTON in his ridiculously inappropriate Rock gear stumbles his way along a row of suited football managers. The crowd notice ELTON and start to sing:

CROWD

He's bald, he's queer, he takes it up the rear, Elton John, Elton John...

Finally, ELTON reaches GRAHAM TAYLOR, the manager, who is with Bernie and Sheila and Fred.

ELTON  
Who are we playing?

ELTON looks at GRAHAM TAYLOR and disappears out of frame as his legs give way. Sheila turns to Bernie:

SHELIA  
What are they singing?

**INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE. DAY.**

Elton alone in Taylor's office. Taylor shuts the door and slams a bottle of brandy down in front of Elton.

GRAHAM TAYLOR  
Drink it.

Elton looks at Taylor.

GRAHAM TAYLOR (CONT'D)  
It's what you want. Drink it.

Elton looks at the bottle.

GRAHAM TAYLOR (CONT'D)  
If you want to act like a complete dickhead, that's the way to do it.

He pours a glass and smashes it down on the table.

ELTON  
What do you expect with everybody shouting?

GRAHAM TAYLOR  
Presumably you can't help being gay, but you can help being an asshole.

ELTON  
Before I came along we were in the fourth division. Don't tell me what to do. I am this bloody club.

GRAHAM TAYLOR  
You wouldn't turn up drunk for a gig at the Royal Albert Hall.

ELTON  
I might, actually.

GRAHAM TAYLOR  
Well, you don't bloody well do that here.



ELTON

Don't dare talk to me like that.  
I'm your fucking chairman,  
understood.

GRAHAM TAYLOR

Not anymore. You can sort your own  
bloody life out, cos I quit.

Graham Taylor leaves. Elton is left alone. ELTON downs the brandy Graham Taylor poured. He stares at the bottle. He tries to resist but finally cracks. He pours another, but instead grabs the bottle and starts to gulp it down. It spills down his face. He coughs, almost wretches, but carries on. He stops for breath, but gulps down some more. He finishes the entire bottle.

**INT. WHITE BOX. DAY.**

I WANT LOVE plays over the entire next scene. Close up of ELTON looking implacably into the camera - the song on the soundtrack starts: In one single fixed shot: Clothes are put on Elton. Hands come into frame putting on a ruffed shirt, a tie, white power, a beauty spot, a brocade jacket, then a wig. It is an iconic image - like a knight preparing for battle, solemn, ceremonial even as if he is receiving a sacrament. Then a wig is lowered on to his head. It is a Louis XIV powdered wig so big only a part of it is in frame.

**EXT. LOADING BAY. DAY.**

Single fixed shot. I WANT LOVE CONTINUES. A lorry. The doors open. Elton is sat on a chair in his Louis XIV costume. The hydraulic lift lowers him down. Assistants have poles to prop the wig up when he moves.

WALKY TALKY GUY

*Moving. Moving.*

HUGH

*Try not to move your head, Elton.*

ELTON

*It's too fucking high.*

Elton goes out of frame with his entourage. We stay on the lorry. Off screen we hear cries of "Elton, Elton". Then we here an altercation: Elton is saying - "**nobody told me that**". We hear people trying to calm him down. But we are still people milling round the back of the van. We hear Elton getting more and more annoyed. "**Fuck you, I'm not playing.**" Suddenly the assistants panic.

Minion

*He's coming back!*

Walky TALKY GUY  
Moving. Moving.

Elton re-appears and sits on the chair.

ELTON  
Arseholes.

Hugh  
Elton. Please go back. There are  
ten thousand people waiting.

ELTON  
Get me back in the lorry.

Walky TALKY GUY  
Can we get Elton back in the lorry?

ELTON  
I don't fucking believe it.

The hydraulic mechanism is employed to get ELTON back in the lorry. The doors close and the lorry drives off out of shot. Now everybody is milling around slightly shocked then suddenly the truck comes back round the corner and starts reversing back into position. The doors open again. There is Elton and Hugh.

ELTON (CONT'D)  
*Get me out of here.*

WALKY TALKY GUY  
*Can we get Elton out of the lorry.*

They start lowering Elton again. I WANT LOVE comes to a close.

**INT. THE STAGE. THE SAME.**

A mike in a blinding spotlight. Elton peers into utter darkness.

ELTON  
Hello, Swindon. Or New York.  
Or where-ever-the-fuck-we-are.  
Hello Gran. My Gran is in the  
audience tonight. Everybody give a  
big round of applause for my Gran.

The audience do not think this is funny.

ELTON (CONT'D)  
The problem with you lot, the  
problem with you lot is you think.  
Oh here comes Elton he'll cheer us  
up. He'll sing us a song.  
(MORE)

ELTON (CONT'D)

But have you asked, have you really asked what you're doing here, listening to me when there are people starving in Africa. There are people dying with AIDS, and here we are singing fucking pop songs.

He takes a drink of brandy.

ELTON (CONT'D)

Well, I blame the Jews and the Muslims and the Christians and the Hindus and those fucking Buddhists aren't so great either. Did I leave anyone out?

Deathly silence in the crowd. Then:

MAN IN CROWD

The hare krishnas.

ELTON

Thank you. And the Hare Krishnas. Fuck the lot of you. This ones for my Mum.

We see Bernie watching from the side of the stage.

**INT. BACKSTAGE. NIGHT.**

Bernie and a drunk Elton are mid-argument.

ELTON

A break? You're whole fucking life's a break. All you do is sit on your fat arse and write lyrics.

BERNIE

None of us can go on at this pace.

ELTON

We've only done one album in the last 18 months.

BERNIE

And it was fucking shit, Elton.

ELTON

It might be alright for you. You can sit and write your fucking lyrics whenever it suits. But what about me. I have to make music. This is what I do.

BERNIE

It's fucked up, Elton, you're not a machine.

ELTON

No, I'm someone who entertains millions of people. I'm someone who is beloved all over the world because I put the fucking hours in. I'll tell you what's fucked up - sitting on your fat English arse in the middle of fucking nowhere pretending to be a cowboy.

BERNIE

Yes, and you've got your blue eye bum boy and in six months he'll be like all the rest. Nine hundred thousand airmiles, a rolex watch and he'll hate your fucking guts cos he doesn't know who he is any more. I'm sorry Elton. You are on your own.

ELTON

What do you mean?

BERNIE

I'm finished, Elton. I really loved you. Why can't you show just a little bit of love for yourself?

ELTON

Piss off to the desert. See if I care.

BERNIE

Fuck you.

BERNIE throws his book of lyrics at ELTON. It smashes against Elton and loose pages fly everywhere. BERNIE is gone.

Elton slumps to the floor. He starts to cry like a baby. Then his attention is caught by a page of Bernie's lyrics. ELTON picks up a page and reads: Goodbye Yellow Brick Road.

**INT. WOODSIDE. DAY.**

Elton sits down at the piano. Puts the lyrics to Goodbye Yellow Brick Road up in front of him. He starts playing different chords, finding a hook that moves him.

He is absolutely at one with the music.

ELTON

When are you going to come down?  
When are you going to land?

(MORE)

ELTON (CONT'D)  
 Would have stayed on the farm.  
 Would have listened to my old  
 man....

Elton amazingly finds the perfect melody. He continues to pull together the song.

**INT. RESTAURANT, LONDON. NIGHT.**

Fred, Sheila and Ivy sit stoney faced with Elton and Hugh. Elton is in the mad stage outfit we saw him wear in the opening to the movie.

FRED  
 Hello. Who are you?

HUGH  
 Hi. I'm Hugh. You've met me before.

SHEILA  
 OK. I have something to say. We're going away, Reggie. We've decided to move to Minorca.

ELTON  
 Minorca. What do you want to go there for?

SHEILA  
 Because it's far enough away from you.

FRED  
 What you don't seem to realise is each time you hurt yourself Reggie, you're also hurting us.

ELTON  
 One little slip about the Jews -

FRED  
 Reggie. Everytime we pick up a paper there's something in it. Everytime we go out to the shops there's people waiting. Everytime we try to talk to you about the drugs you ignore us. Everytime we talk to you about this drinking you tell us you're in control.

ELTON  
 I am in control. It's a controlled nosedive.

SHEILA  
 You're breaking my heart, Reggie.

ELTON

Heart!?! You haven't got a heart.

SHEILA

Typical. I've given up everything for you....

ELTON

What? What have you given up?

SHEILA

...Maybe your father had the right idea.

A frozen beat. Sheila takes a bread roll. ELTON leaps across the table and starts to strangle her.

ELTON

You monster. You fucking heartless monster.

The whole table is in chaos. HUGH and FRED try to pull ELTON off Sheila. ELTON is really trying to strangle her. The other diners are in shock. Waiters join in. Sheila is going blue. ELTON really means to murder her there and then. The rugby scrum of people, with Elton and Sheila at the centre starts to move through the restaurant. They plough a course through the whole room. ELTON demonically trying to choke his mother. They end up on the pavement outside. Eventually ELTON is pulled away. Sheila gasps for breath.

ELTON (CONT'D)

Go to fucking Minorica. See if I care.

FRED and HUGH tend to Sheila. ELTON turns round and walks back into the restaurant, through the debris to his table. He sits down as if nothing was amiss. He turns to a stunned waiter:

ELTON (CONT'D)

Another bottle of the Chateaux Petrus, if you please.

He looks around and suddenly realises IVY's at the table.

IVY

I know you'll take no notice but I'm gonna tell you anyway. You're trying to fill a hole, Elton. You can't fill it with booze it just runs out the other end. You can't fill it with things.

ELTON

What the hell do you fill it with?

IVY

You fill it with love.

She leaves.

WAITER

Would you care for a sweet, sir?

ELTON

Yes, I would. I'd like a chocolate pudding. No, make that two chocolate puddings. A raspberry fool. The cheesecake.

WAITER

What kind of ice cream would you like with the chocolate puddings?

ELTON

Just bring me everything.

WAITER

Including the sorbets?

**INT. WOODSIDE. LATER.**

Hugh is packing his tiny suitcase. ELTON comes in looking the worse for wear.

ELTON

What are you doing?

HUGH

I'm done. Just like every other blue eyed Blonde you pick up. Six months in I've got a Rolex watch, 200,000 airmiles and I don't know who the hell I am anymore. I'm not sure you even know who you are either.

ELTON

I'm Elton John. So you're going to fuck off? Just cos I strangled my Mum?

HUGH

I'm so tired. Elton.

ELTON

Tired. You don't know the meaning of tired. When you've stayed up five nights, played a gig for seventy thousand people, flew to New York for the launch of an album and then have to start a 50 night tour. That is fucking tired. Life is for living. What the hell are you scared of?

HUGH  
Becoming like you.

Hugh takes off his Rolex watch and hands his Rolex to Elton.

ELTON  
I thought you said you loved me.

HUGH  
I do love you. But I don't want to  
wake up next to a dead body.

ELTON  
Where are you going?

HUGH  
To use my airmiles.

**INT. WOODSIDE. THE SAME**

Hugh stomps down the stairs. ELTON shouts from the balcony.

ELTON  
You can keep the Rolex. I don't care.

But Hugh is gone. ELTON is reeling. Now he shouts for his  
servants.

ELTON (CONT'D)  
Help. Is there anybody there?! Is  
there anybody there! Fucking staff.

ELTON starts to stagger through the rooms of Woodside. He is  
looking for something. He finally goes to a desk gets a key  
then goes to a safe. He is shaking. He opens the safe and  
takes out the most enormous bag of cocaine. He takes the  
cocaine out of the safe and hurries to a desk. He dumps the  
huge bag on the desk. He hastily cuts an enormous line with  
an envelope and snorts it. It's not enough. He buries his  
head in the cocaine. He starts to shake. He staggers up from  
the desk. Shaking. He is having a fit.

ELTON (CONT'D)  
Oh fuck. Oh fuck.

He staggers to the bathroom.

**INT. BATHROOM, WOODSIDE. THE SAME.**

He tries to find the chord to put the light on.

ELTON  
Oh fuck.



Finally he turns the lights on. On the loo, trousers down, is a cadaverous Elvis. Elton leaps back in horror - he recognises what he could become.

ELVIS

Hey, kid. Got any laxative?

Elton holds onto the sink, he looks at himself in the mirror, reflected into infinity. The reflections suddenly move all out of sync to reveal Elvis looking over his shoulder. The door behind him rattles.

ELVIS (CONT'D)

You, OK, chipmunk?

Elvis falls the ground. Elton is out cold. The door finally opens as REGGIE bursts in. He shakes ELTON. More and more desperate, Reggie hits Elton.

REGGIE

Please don't die. Please don't die.

Reggie can't wake Elton so he grabs his legs and starts to haul him out of the bathroom, smashing his head on the doorframe.

**INT. STAIRCASE, WOODSIDE. THE SAME.**

With enormous effort Reggie pulls Elton onto the stairs, then starts to pull him downstairs. Elton's head bangs again and again on the staircase. It's an almost impossible task for the young kid to move the body. He finally drags him all the way down the palatial staircase. Finally he gets Elton to the front door. Reggie is exhausted, terrified, in tears. Suddenly the door bursts open and paramedics run in.

CUE: Someone Saved My Life Tonight. Over the dumb show of the paramedics desperately trying to save Elton's life we hear the beautiful ballad. They try desperately to revive him but he's gone. Finally after some time a stretcher arrives and they put Elton on it and leave the house. Reggie is left cowering under the stairs as the song comes to a close.

**INT. HOSPITAL. THE SAME.**

ELTON attached to a life support system.

ELTON

Where am I?

HUGH

You are in hospital. You had a seizure, your heart stopped beating.

ELTON

You didn't leave?

HUGH

No, but it's over. I am going to rehab, Elton. You should think about it yourself.

ELTON

Why would I want to go to rehab?

HUGH

You're a cocaine addict, and a alcoholic, and a bulimic, and a control freak, you have issues with food, sex, relationships and just about every narcotic known to man. You have huge problems with self esteem, anger management and intimacy; you're also addicted to shopping, pornography and have no desire to change.

ELTON

Well, you're not so fucking perfect either.

HUGH

OK. Hit me with it.

Elton thinks.

ELTON

You never put my records back in their sleeves.

HUGH

Is that it?

Elton thinks about this. He gets up, pulling all wires off himself.

ELTON

Thank you.

He walks out. Nurses come running.

NURSE

Mr John!

**INT. CORRIDOR. PARKLANDS HOSPITAL. DAY.**

Elton walking down the corridor, as in the opening shot of the movie.

**INT. THERAPY ROOM. THE SAME.**

Elton in his mad costume sits down and looks at the people.

NURSE

OK, guys. Shall we begin?

Close up of Elton. He looks round at the faces of the other patients waiting eagerly to hear him. He seems lost for words.

**INT. BEDROOM. PARKLANDS. DAY. 1990.**

Elton strips off his mad clothes and throws them in the basket. He looks at himself naked in a mirror. He puts on his regulation grey uniform. He looks at himself. A nurse appears, watching him.

ELTON

I can't do this. I've got to go home.

NURSE

Nobody's making you stay.

The nurse hands him his pile of clothes.

NURSE (CONT'D)

The laundry's down the hall.

**INT. LAUNDRY ROOM. PARKLANDS. DAY.**

Elton goes in to the laundry room with his basket of clothes. The old lady is there. Elton looks at the row of machines. He has never done a load of washing in his life. He looks at the coin-op thing, presses a few buttons, but is unable to get the door to open.

ELTON

It must be broken.

The old lady presses the door release button and it springs open. She takes the washing out of his hands and puts it in the machine.

OLD LADY

You ain't never done this before.

The old lady puts a quarter into the machine for Elton. The machine whirs into action. Elton sits down humiliated. The old woman reads her book. Elton stares at the machine. The radio is playing. An Elton John song starts up. The Old Lady gets up, and changes the channel.

ELTON

So tell me, what's your story?

OLD LADY

Oh, the usual. My son died when he was twenty and I started drinking. Weren't a problem at first but then I began with valium when my husband left me for the secretary. Then I lost the house and ended up on the street for eight years, until my liver collapsed and I ended up in here. How about you?

ELTON

Well, I'm a multi-millionaire rock star who's adored all over the world.

OLD LADY

So you had some personal tragedy?

ELTON

No. I just started behaving like a cunt in 1975 and forgot to stop.

OLD LADY

What did you say your name was?

ELTON

Elton. Elton John.

OLD LADY

No. Never heard of you.

ELTON

You know, I think I'm starting to like it here.

**INT. ELTON'S ROOM. PARKLANDS HOSPITAL. DAY.**

Elton is alone. He is now really suffering the effects of withdrawal. He starts to sweat and shake. He looks very ill. He confronts himself in the mirror. He is naked. Finally he takes off his wig and confronts who he is unadorned.

**INT. THERAPY ROOM. PARKLANDS HOSPITAL.**

Elton faces the group. A long pause, then someone asks a question.

PATIENT

So what I don't understand is you have everything you want in the world, right, so how come you're so unhappy?

ELTON

I think somehow I was so used to striving after the things I wanted I forgot to enjoy them.

PATIENT

But you did get what you wanted.

ELTON

But it didn't make me happy.

PATIENT

Go figure.

ELTON

No, no. Yes, I had an extraordinary life, but all I really wanted was to be ordinary.

A VOICE (IVY)

Rubbish, you were never ordinary.

Elton swings round to see who's spoken and sees Ivy who is dressed in her 1950's outfit sitting amongst the group as if nothing was out of the ordinary.

ANOTHER VOICE (SHEILA)

It's true actually. You were always different. Really a bit of loser. Look at you - in here!

Elton swings round in the other direction to see that it's Sheila dressed in her 60's outfit. In the reverse angle we see from behind the circle the real patients looking at Elton. Now he scans the the room and see along with IVY and MUM are FRED, BERNIE, JOHN REID and STANLEY.

BERNIE

The basic problem with you is you're selfish.

JOHN REID

The problem with you is you are hiding. You spent so much time trying to be somebody else - I think you forgot to be yourself.

Elton's head is spinning from person to person.

ELTON

Wait a minute. I know exactly who I am.

JOHN REID

You haven't a clue. You forgot who you were years ago.

ELTON

Bullshit. I know perfectly well who I am. It's just complex that's all.

JOHN REID

Well, tell us.

ELTON

Well, technically, I am an introverted extrovert with abandonment issues.

STANLEY

You would have been fucked up regardless of what I did.

SHEILA

Yeah, come on Elton. So your father left. Big deal. He was an asshole. You had everything you ever wanted.

BERNIE

Anyway, aren't you a extroverted introvert?

FRED

I'm not even sure you are an introvert at all, actually.

SHEILA

See - you don't know who the hell you are.

ELTON

I'm Elton John.

Then a young voice breaks through the surreal chaos with real emotion.

REGGIE (OOV)

I thought you were Reggie Dwight.

Elton stops dead. He turns and stares at REGGIE who is standing in the middle of the chairs.

Elton walks to him. He stands over him in an exact replica of the moment where his Dad left him in the street. Elton falls to his knees. The boy holds out his hand and touches Elton's cheek, as if to see that he is real.

ELTON

(whispers)

I haven't been Reggie Dwight for years.

Behind Elton the group on chairs is made up of the real patients in therapy they watch Elton is crying. Reggie stands in front of them.

REGGIE

When are you going to hug me?

Slowly he puts his arms around the tiny figure and hugs him.

**INT. ELTON'S ROOM. DAY.**

Elton by himself. He puts on a smart white suit. He looks transformed. Clean, healthy, clear headed.

In front of him is an envelope. He opens it - it is lyrics from Bernie. He reads the title - 'This Train Don't Stop Here Anymore'. Looks back in the mirror.

ELTON

You may not believe it, but i dont  
believe in miracles anymore. And  
when i think about it, i don't  
believe i ever did for sure.

**INT. THERAPY ROOM. DAY.**

Elton walks through the room. A goodbye gathering has been organised in the therapy room, with a home made backing band.

ELTON

(singing:)  
riding on the story line/ furnace  
burning overtime/

The old lady is on a little drumkit behind him, the nurse is on bass.

ELTON (CONT'D)

(singing)  
but this train don't stop/ this  
train don't stop/ this train don't  
stop there any more/

**INT. CORRIDOR. PARKLANDS HOSPITAL. DAY.**

Elton walks down the corridor, still singing.

ELTON

You don't need to hear it but I'm  
dried up and sick to death of  
love.... read them as they say and  
weep/

**EXT. HOSPITAL. THE SAME.**

A car is waiting. Bernie at the wheel. Elton gets in still singing.

ELTON

I never felt enough to cry/I used to  
be the main express/ all steaming  
whistles heading west/ picking up my  
pain from door to door/

**INT. CAR. THE SAME.**

Elton and Bernie, driving.

ELTON / BERNIE

riding on the story line/ furnace  
burning overtime/ but this train  
don't stop/ this train don't stop/  
this train don't stop there any  
more./

**EXT. SOUTH OF FRANCE. DAY.**

The medley surges into the intro to I'm Still Standing. Elton gets out of the same limo but miraculously he is in the South of France. As he walks onto the set of a video shoot he is passed a straw boater as in the original video. Elton sings to camera surrounded by painted people.

ELTON

You can never know what it's like/  
your blood like winter freezes just  
like ice/ Lonely light that shines  
from you/ You'll end up like the  
wreck you hide behind the mask you  
use...

Now the song continues but it is choreographed to a far more elaborate dance. It is joyous, the sun is bright and very soon the boardwalk is full of hundreds of people all dancing with Elton.

ELTON (CONT'D)

(singing)

Don't you know that I'm still  
standing better than I ever did/  
lookin' like a true survivor/  
feelin' like a little kid/ I'm  
still standing after all this time/  
Picking up the pieces of my life  
without you on my mind/ I'm still  
standing, yeah, yeah, yeah./ I'm  
still standing, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Elton ends up being helicoptered over the beach still singing, below the crowds spell out the word ELTON and then THE END. The song finishes with Elton beaming into the camera. We freeze on his fantastic smile.



DIRECTOR'S VOICE  
And cut - perfect - just one more  
time.

ELTON  
(OOV)  
Fuck off.

THE END