

Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story

by
Judd Apatow & Jake Kasdan

First Draft
6/2/06

OVER BLACK, we HEAR the sound of a huge crowd applauding. As it BUILDS into a frenzy of cheering and stomping--

CARD - "VERY IMPORTANT FILMS PRESENTS"

A SECOND CARD APPEARS-- "WALK HARD-- THE DEWEY COX STORY"

INT. BACKSTAGE AREA - NIGHT

We reveal DEWEY COX, a tall hulking man in his late sixties. He is a combination of Johnny Cash, George Jones, and Waylon Jennings-- an aging badass who has seen it all.

Guitar over his shoulder, he leans against a wall in a tragic pose, as though reliving the pain from some awful memory.

THE STAGE MANAGER approaches--

STAGE MANAGER

Mr. Cox...?

SAM, Dewey's life-long drummer, stops the Stage Manager--

SAM

Give him a minute, son. Dewey Cox needs to think about his entire life before he plays.

TIGHT ON DEWEY-- thinking, remembering, reliving...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FARM COUNTRY - MID-1940'S - DUSK

Corn fields swaying in the gentle wind and the golden sun.

CARD-- "Springberry, Alabama-- 1944"

INT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

Nine year-old NATE sits at a piano, playing a concerto. The kid is amazing.

In the corner, six year-old DEWEY watches, waiting patiently.

Nate gets to the end of the piece.

DEWEY

Come on, Nate! Let's go play!

NATE

I can't Dewey. I have to practice.

PA COX appears in the doorway-- a very strict farmer type
(played by an actor in his late-sixties, who is right now
wearing a wig to portray the 30 year-old version of himself)--

PA COX

You can't practice all the time,
Nate. Go out and play with your
brother. Be careful.

NATE

Alright. Come on, Dewey, let's go
play.

DEWEY

Today is gonna be the best day
ever!

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Nate and Dewey both hold sticks as they walk and skip down
the road.

NATE

What do you want to be when you
grow up, Dewey?

DEWEY

I don't know. Never really thunk
about it before.

NATE

When I grow up, I'm gonna be a
concert pee-anist and a
professional baseball player. And
then I'm gonna be an astronaut and
I am gonna go to the moon.

DEWEY

Ain't nobody ever gonna step on no
moon.

NATE

I will. And afterwards, I am gonna
be the President of these United
States. There's nothing I won't do
in this long, long life of mine.

DEWEY

Maybe I'll learn me some pee-ana,
too. Then we can be pee-ana playin'
brothers.

NATE

That's what's great about being young. There's so much time to do great things.

DEWEY

We gonna be alive for sixty or seventy years, you and me!

NATE

Enough of this yappin'! Let's go jump across the river!

They run off.

EXT. STREAM - DAY

Nate and Dewey stand at the shore of a fast moving, scary-looking stream.

NATE

I bet I can grab that there vine and fly all the way over this here stream.

DEWEY

I dare you.

NATE

Alright then, since you dared me.

Nate takes a long run, GRABS the vine, and FLIES over the stream--

NATE

Ha-ha! I did it.

DEWEY

My turn! My turn!

INT. SHED - DAY

Nate and Dewey stand in front of a radial arm saw. Nate holds a piece of wood.

NATE

Hey, check out how good I am cutting up this wood.

DEWEY

Make me something real nice.

Nate takes the wood and puts it on the machine and starts cutting it. His shirt gets closer and closer to the blade-- *it seems he's about to get sucked into this machine.*

He cuts and shapes furiously, then holds up what he has made. It is a beautiful goose.

DEWEY

That is one fine goose! I'm gonna hang it in my room.

QUICK SHOTS OF THEM PLAYING--

*Nate runs from a bull and leaps over the fence at the last minute.

*Dewey drives a huge tractor, as fast as it will go, barely in control--- chasing Nate, who is galloping on a horse, all-out. Nate shows off-- "No hands!"

*Nate catches a rattlesnake by hand and tosses it at Dewey, who runs off--

DEWEY

Nate, you' one crazy fourth grader.

NATE

Let's go play "Machete Fight"!

EXT. SHED - DAY

Nate emerges from a shed, carrying two sheathed machetes. He tosses one to Dewey--

NATE

(weird British accent)
I challenge you to a duel, Sir!

DEWEY

Sssh!!! You know how mad Daddy gets when we play with his machetes. You don't quiet down, you'll get us both a whoopin'!

NATE

On guard!

Dewey can't resist-- they start to play sword fight with the enormous leather wrapped machetes, very theatrical. Nate backs Dewey to the ground--

NATE

Do you yeild, sir?

DEWEY

Never!

He "fights back", bumping machetes. Dewey backs Nate down--

DEWEY

Prepare to meet your maker!

He takes the machete back for the "death blow" and as he does, he fails to notice the sheath *slide off* entirely. He swings at Nate-- AND CUTS HIM IN HALF.

Nate's torso SLIDES directly off his legs-- a ridiculous effect-- and he stares up at Dewey as they both realize what's just happened--

DEWEY

Nate!

NATE

Dewey! I'm... I'm... I'm halved!

Dewey realizes--

DEWEY

We should'a listened to Pa.

NATE

Dewey, in case I don't make it, then... you're just gonna have to be doubly great, for the both of us.

DEWEY

That's a lot of pressure, Nate.

NATE

You can handle it, Dewey. Now, run!
Get Pa!

INT. COX HOUSE - NIGHT

The Cox family-- MA COX, PA COX, and the seven Cox SIBLINGS-- all pray together in the living room.

The DOCTOR emerges from a different room, very somber--

DOCTOR

He's gone.

They all SHRIEK in anguish--

PA COX

Doc, there must me something you
can do!

DOCTOR

I couldn't reattach the top half of
his body to the bottom half of his
body. Medicine just ain't gotten
modern enough for that yet. I'm
sorry, folks.

Everyone WAILS. PA COX yells at Dewey--

PA COX

This is all your fault, Dewey Cox!

Ma comes to his defense--

MA COX

Pa, you don't mean that! It's not
his fault!

PA COX

He cut him in half with a machete!
(to Dewey)

You were his brother! You were
supposed to look out for each
other! Nate was an angel! He was
gonna be President one day, and
many other things, as well! You--
you're not half the boy that Nate
was. You're not even half the boy
that the top half of Nate was,
after you cut him in half!

DEWEY

You sayin' I'm less than a quarter
of the boy Nate was?

PA COX

That's what I'm sayin!

PA pulls the table cloth off the table and drapes it over
Nate's piano--

PA COX

From now on, there will be no more
music in this house. And there will
be no joy or happiness. Or anything
good.

Pa storms out, still raging--

PA COX
The wrong kid died!

Ma approaches the devastated Dewey, puts an arm around him--

MA COX
Dewey Cox, run down to the country store. You pick us up some butter. And a candle. We gonna light us a candle tonight.

INT. COUNTRY STORE - DAY

Dewey enters the store and starts looking for the items his mom requested when he hears the sound of a guitar. He walks around a corner and sees a very, very OLD AFRICAN-AMERICAN MAN playing blues guitar. (This old man should actually be played by a one hundred year old actor.)

Dewey is hypnotized by the music. Slowly, he approaches the old man--

DEWEY
I ain't never heard no music like that, before. It's so... sad.

OLD MAN
That's why it's called "the blues", boy.

DEWEY
I think I'd like to play me some blues.

The old man chuckles--

OLD MAN
Ain't no six year old boy understands the true meaning of the blues.

DEWEY
(earnest)
I reckon I might.

OLD MAN
You play the guitar?

DEWEY
I never have before. But I'm a real fast learner.

OLD MAN

Well, go ahead...

He offers Dewey his guitar-- which is way too big for a six-year old. The old man places Dewey's fingers on the neck--

OLD MAN

Now hit the strings with your other hand. That's a G.

Dewey hits the chord-- it sounds bad. He hits it again-- this time it's perfect.

OLD MAN

There you go.

Dewey starts strumming. Then *ridiculously quickly* he starts playing a perfect 12-bar blues--

DEWEY

Like this?

The old man is spooked--

OLD MAN

Yeah. Like that...

Then young Dewey starts to sing-- *except he has the voice of a 70 year old black man (actually some old guy's voice)*. Preposterously soulful--

DEWEY

"I done a bad thing/ Done gone and cut my brother in half..."

The old man shakes his head, feeling it, adding "mm-hms" periodically. Dewey gets lost in it--

DEWEY

"Yeah, I done a bad, bad thing/
Done gone and cut my big brother in
half/ My mama gon' cry all night
long/ And somewhere the Devil, he's
havin' a laugh"

Dewey opens his eyes and spots--

-- Nate, standing on the other side of the room--- a vision. They lock eyes and nod at each other earnestly.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

The school talent show, in the gym/auditorium. Folding chairs face a stage at the end of the basketball court.

Dewey's parents find seats.

PA COX

I don't even know what we're doing here, at this high school talent show.

MA COX

We're here to see our boy, that's what we're doing here. Now you sit yourself down. I'll be right back...

INT. BACK STAGE - SAME

Ma wanders among the TEENAGERS preparing-- a GIRL practices her juggling, a BOY practices his violin-- then she spots--

MA COX

Dewey!

Dewey turn to her-- *already being played by the actor who will play him as an adult, except he's wearing a wig.* A big acoustic/electric guitar hangs from his shoulder.

DEWEY

Ma, you made it!

MA COX

There's my favorite 14 year old son!

She has to raise up on her tip toes to kiss his cheek, which embarrasses him--

DEWEY

Ma... Come on! There's people around...

MA COX

Howdy, boys.

Dewey's BAND (*who are actual teenagers*) snicker, reply--

BAND

Hi./Howdy, Mrs. Cox.

MA COX

I just wanted to say break a leg. I know you boys are gonna play a real good song.

DEWEY

Thanks, Ma. I'm so lucky to have at least one parent who loves me and supports my dream.

MA COX

You just go out there and sing your heart out now, ya' hear?

DEWEY

Yes, mama.

She walks away, Dewey turns back to the band--

DEWEY

Alright, let's just go over that bridge section one more time...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - MOMENTS LATER

Ma returns to her seat, where Pa is inexplicably fuming angry. As she makes her way down the row to their seats, she suddenly gets a little dizzy, seems she might pass out--

PA COX

Ma!

He grabs her and helps her to her seat. Those around her are concerned. She touches her head--

MAN

You alright, ma'am?

MA COX

I'm fine... It's just my vertigo acting up again.

MAN

"Vertigo"...?

PA COX

It's an inner-ear disorder that causes her to lose her balance.

MA COX

It's nothin' serious. Don't pay me no bother.

(MORE)

MA COX (cont'd)
 It's just a little dizziness. Ain't
 nothin' terrible ever came of no
 dizziness.

The lights go down. Ma claps, Pa fumes--

The MC-- a very square '50s school teacher-- takes the stage--

MC
 Welcome to the annual talent show,
 folks! We're so glad you could make
 it!

PA COX
 "Talent", my ass. Nate was the only
 Cox who had talent. We're farmers.
 We're real men...

MA COX
 Now, you hush.

PA COX
 The wrong kid died, goddammit...

MA COX
 Sshhhh!

MC
 Now, let's get the evening started
 with the juggling talents of Amber
 McGraw!

Amber juggles her way out on to the stage...

INT. BACK STAGE - LATER

The show is in progress.

Dewey and his band watch from the wings as a very mediocre
 TAP DANCER finishes her routine. The crowd goes crazy. Dewey
 is intimidated, turns to his DRUMMER--

DEWEY
 How are we supposed to follow *that*?

ON STAGE--

MC
 Let's have a big hand for Delilah
 Johnson!

The audience WHOOPS it up again.

MC

And now, sophomore Dewey Cox is going to sing us a song. Ladies and germs...

(laughs at own joke)

...please welcome, Dewey Cox and the Dewey Cox Four!

The band takes the stage. Dewey stands at the mic. He looks out at the crowd, who wait in judgemental silence. He scans the faces-- half stern-looking ADULTS, half high school KIDS. It's a scary moment for him. He summons his courage--

DEWEY

I'm Dewey Cox. Here's a little song I wrote. It's called "Take My Hand".

And they start the song. It's a very sweet, simple 4-4 early rock song-- in the vein of "That'll be the Day" or "Dream, Dream, Dream". About holding hands with a girl for the first time and walking in the park and looking at the moon... A little love song with a very gentle beat-- *really, really innocuous.*

At first, the audience stares at them-- a bunch of "what the hell is this?" cut-aways. They've never heard anything like this before. Shocked by the rocking.

In the front row, a girl catches Dewey's eye and they exchange smitten looks-- this is EDITH, and *we immediately get that she is going to be significant to Dewey.*

Then-- the KIDS start to stand up and DANCE.

Simultaneously, the adults start to BOO-- disgusted, offended.

The kids' dancing gets more intense-- they love this rock music and they are instantly doing The Twist.

Dewey bops away on stage, Buddy Holly-esque, dancing with only his bobbing head as he plays his guitar--

DEWEY

(singing)

"Take my hand and we'll walk through the park/ Don't worry, we'll be home by dark..."

The adults start to THROW THINGS at the stage.

Pa stands and leaves-- Ma tries to stop him, but then lets him go, proud of her boy.

A couple of KIDS segue into a really raunchy bump-and-grind, Josephine Baker kind of dance, basically dry-humping each other.

DEWEY

"We'll laugh at all the
funny things you say/
Take my hand, let me lead
the way..."

A PREACHER stands up--

PREACHER

It's the Devil's music!!!

A KID standing near him turns and PUNCHES him in the face.

Now all of the kids are DANCING and MAKING OUT.

And the adults are SCREAMING.

A parent THROWS UP.

FIGHTS are breaking out, all over...

And as Dewey wraps up the song, the scene devolves into a full-fledged RIOT...

EXT. FARM HOUSE - NIGHT

A CROWD has gathered on the front lawn of the Cox household. On one side, a group of angry PARENTS are gathered, holding signs, screaming, carrying TORCHES. The Preacher holds an ice pack to his face where he was punched--

PREACHER

We will not have the Devil's spawn
living amongst us!

PARENTS

Amen!

On the other side of the lawn, separated by COPS, are a bunch of TEENAGERS, looking like "greasers". In one song, Dewey has transformed these sweet preppy kids into rebels without causes. They CHANT--

TEENAGERS

Dew-ey! Dew-ey! Dew-ey!

In a window, Dewey appears from behind a curtain, waves at the kids, who all SCREAM when they see him--

INT. FARM HOUSE - SAME

--Dewey turns back to his assembled family, satisfied.
Dewey's 10 year-old SISTER chimes in--

SISTER

That there Rock n' Roll music
brings out some strong feelings in
folks.

DEWEY

I'm just playin' the music I hear
in my head, is all.

He moves to Edith-- the girl from the front row-- and puts his arm around her.

Pa enters--

PA COX

That's it! I want you out of this
house, boy!

MA COX

Pa!

PA COX

This boy done gone raised his'self
a ruckus! You heard the Preacher--
I ain't gonna have no Devil's spawn
in my home!

MA COX

Pa, you watch your mouth, now, ya
here?! 'Fore you go and say
somethin' you gon' regret for the
rest of your days...

DEWEY

It's okay, Mama! Settle down...

The room gets quiet.

DEWEY

Pa's right. Springberry ain't big
enough for me, no more. I reckon
it's time for Dewey Cox to move
along.

MA COX

But where's Dewey Cox gon' go?!

DEWEY

It's time for Dewey Cox to head for the Big City.

MA COX

But you're only 14! You ain't ready for the pressures of no Big City.

DEWEY

I may be just a tender 14... but I got big dreams. An' I reckon destiny's a'callin'.

MA COX

(tears up)

Where's it a'callin' you to, son?

DEWEY

To the Big City. I thought I said that already.

Edith starts to cry--

EDITH

Don't go, Dewey!

DEWEY

Come with me, Edith.

EDITH

Dewey, I... I...

DEWEY

I know we just met a half an hour ago. But I love you more than I've ever loved anyone. Come with me to the Big City. What do you say?

EDITH

I say, yes!

They hug--

EDITH

I will always support you, Dewey. Forever.

Ma approaches, looks him dead in the eyes--

MA COX

Don't matter what these people say.
You got a gift from the Lord, boy.
And don't you never forget it.

Off his stoic close-up, DISSOLVE TO--

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

An entirely black jazz/blues club, filled with PEOPLE dancing in an outrageously erotic way. It is way too choreographed and the people on the dance floor dance in a fashion that is so hot that it is hard to watch (in that slightly racist way that these movies so often depict African American nightlife).

Dewey, in dirty kitchen whites, holds a mop, as he watches from the kitchen--

--the HOUSE BAND playing on stage. Bobby Shad and the Bad Men. BOBBY SHAD, the lead singer and lead guitarist is quite cocky, but doesn't quite have the talent to back it up. The band finishes their number--

BOBBY SHAD

We gonna take a short break, then
we gonna come back and play until
the morning light!

The band exits the stage, walking past Dewey, who trails after them--

DEWEY

Wow, that was really great! Mr.
Shad, I'd love to one day get a
chance to play with you and your
band. I play a little guitar
myself, so if you ever need an
extra guitar player, maybe I
could...

Bobby Shad pauses in the doorway of the dressing room--

BOBBY SHAD

Come to think of it, Dewey, there
is something I need.

DEWEY

Yes, Mr. Shad. Anything.

BOBBY SHAD

The toilet backstage is overflowing. Can you get that thing cleaned up?

He closes the door in Dewey's face; Dewey is frustrated. The MANAGER has overheard this--

MANAGER

Dewey, you're here to wash the dishes, not to bother the band. The only instrument you' gonna play in here is that mop. Now, you go do your job or I'll find someone who will.

Dewey heads off, dejected.

INT. RATTY APARTMENT - DAY

Dewey is practicing his guitar in the living room. From the kitchen--

EDITH (O.S.)

Will you cut out that racket! I am trying to feed your child!

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Edith (who now looks like a square 1950s housewife) is feeding their BABY. The baby CRIES and has a ridiculous amount of food on her face and clothes.

Dewey enters, wearing his guitar over his shoulder and carrying his mop from work.

DEWEY

How am I gonna make it as a famous musician if I don't practice?

EDITH

Dewey Cox, you gotta get your head out of the clouds.

DEWEY

But it's my dream! I love music. It's all I hear in my head, day and night. Music that could change the world! I just want to play my music for folks. If only I could get the chance...

She stands up, very melodramatic--

EDITH

Stop talking about music!

(settles down)

Now, Daddy said, if we go home,
he'd give you a job at the
slaughter house. You could make an
honest living for yourself and your
family. Wouldn't have to walk
around in shame, carrying no mop.
Hanging your head, like some kind
of failure...

DEWEY

I think I'm doing okay for a 15
year old with a wife and a baby!

She moves to him, touching his face, pleading--

EDITH

After all, why would you want to
waste your time playing music when
you could be working at the
slaughterhouse for Daddy?

DEWEY

I want more than that.

She pulls away--

EDITH

You' saying that you're better than
my daddy?!

DEWEY

No, but I can't give up! Music is
my only shot at making a better
life for you and our child.

EDITH

The music don't pay for nothing!
It's dangerous, this dream of
yours. You're playing with our
lives, even thinking about "music"!
Every time you pick up that guitar
to practice, you're taking your
daughter's life in your hands!

Dewey is hurt.

EDITH

Give up your dream, Dewey. Dreams
don't come true.

DEWEY

I am gonna make this dream come true! Nobody ever said it was gonna be easy! It's hard. It's always hard! It's not easy to walk to the top of a mountain. It's a long, hard walk! Getting to the top is a hard walk, but I plan on walking... Hard. Right to the top. I will walk hard.

He hears himself say this... SUPER-PUSH on Dewey, as he has the greatest idea for a song that he has ever had--

DEWEY

Walk. Hard.

INT. APARTMENT - BASEMENT - LATER

Dewey is strumming a guitar, pen and pencil in front of him--

DEWEY

Walk Hard-- when they say it can't be done...

(writes it down)

Walk Hard-- when they say you're not the one...

(he tries to figure out a chord)

It's a long, long road/ It's a hard, hard walk/ So Walk Hard...

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Dewey is mopping the floor by the kitchen. There is a commotion by the stage in the empty club, Dewey gravitates that way--

MANAGER

I'm gonna have a full house tonight and if Bobby Shad can't play then I need to find someone who will.

BOBBY SHAD

(very hoarse)

I'm fine. I'll play through the pain.

He holds up his hands, which are bruised and enormous.

MANAGER

No, you won't. Maybe you should have thought about this before you punched your landlord, while you had the laryngitis.

The DRUMMER speaks up--

DRUMMER

Well, I don't know of any band leaders who can be here in the next fifteen minutes.

BASS PLAYER

Maybe there's just no music tonight, Boss.

MANAGER

Bullhickey! People come here to dance. I ain't got no music, I ain't got no nightclub!

A tense moment. Then--

DEWEY (O.S.)

'Scuse me...

They all turn to Dewey--

DEWEY

I play a little.

They all consider this-- there doesn't seem to be any other option...

INT. CLUB - LATER

The club is packed.

BACKSTAGE--

Dewey practices scales. The band watches, concerned, waiting to take the stage. The manager walks over--

MANAGER

I don't mean to put more pressure on the boy, but "the suits" from the record company are here.

ANGLE ON-- A table of HASIDIC JEWS.

MANAGER

Have a good show, boys.

The band looks nervous, then takes the stage. Dewey stands in front of the microphone and stumbles, adjusting it for way too long--

DEWEY

Good evening, ladies and gentleman. We are Bobby Shad and the Bad Men. Bobby Shad isn't here tonight because he broke eight fingers on his landlord's face and he has the laryngitis. So, I hope I'll do for tonight.

HECKLER

Get off the stage, white boy!

HECKLER #2

You ain't ready for the big time.

DEWEY

Let's find out.

They start into one of the band's songs-- Dewey is amazing. He sings like Slim Whitman and plays the guitar like Jango Reinhardt.

The Hasidic Jews watch, exchange looks-- this kid has something.

INT. CLUB - AFTER THE SHOW

The band is talking to the Hasidic Jews, who focus on Dewey. L'CHAI'M seems to be in charge--

L'CHAI'M

I like what you did out there tonight. Have you ever done any recording?

DEWEY

No, sir, Mr. L'chai'm...

Bobby Shad runs up in a huff--

BOBBY SHAD

He's not the one you want! It's me you came to see!

L'CHAI'M

(shrugs, indicates Dewey)

I think he's the one we want. He's got a nice thing.

(MORE)

L'CHAI'M (cont'd)
I think he might have what it takes
to make it in the big time.

HASIDIC 2
(skeptical)
This schmendrick? I'm not buying
this thing you're saying...

L'CHAI'M
What?! He's got a thing, I'm
saying...

DEWEY
Oh, Mr. L'chai'm... all I want is
to make a record, like Elvis. Just
gimme a chance to show you what I
got... in a big ol' professional
studio.

HASIDIC
Come see us. We'll see what you can
do.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

A Sun Records-type of recording studio. The PRODUCER (a Sam
Phillips type) and the Hasidic Jews watch from the booth as--

--Dewey and the Bad Men (*who are now his band*) play "Moon
River" or something like it-- but it's really slow and pretty
lame.

The Hasidic Jews are disappointed.

PRODUCER
Stop, stop, stop.

The band stops playing.

PRODUCER
Thank you. I've think we've heard
enough.

DEWEY
But... you didn't even let us get
to the bridge...

PRODUCER
I'm sorry, kid, but it's not wowing
me. And we need to be wowed, if
we're gonna make a record. We need
to be hearing somethin' we never
heard before. And this... we've
heard it.

(MORE)

PRODUCER (cont'd)
And worse than that-- it's not
really you. You're singing the
words, but I'm not believing them.
Where's the real Dewey Cox?!

Dewey is stung, quietly--

DEWEY
You want to hear the real Dewey
Cox?

PRODUCER
I'm not sure there is a real Dewey
Cox to hear.

DEWEY
Oh, there's a Dewey Cox, sir.
There's a Dewey Cox.

PRODUCER
You got any songs of your own?

DEWEY
I got a couple.

The producer looks to the Jews--

L'CHAI'M
We're here... What can it hurt?

The producer is skeptical--

PRODUCER
Okay... You can play one more song.
But I want you to sing like your
life depends on it. I want to feel
it in my knees and in my stomach
and everywhere in between. I want
to be quivering with emotion, just
from the raw power of your singin'.

DEWEY
(solemn)
I'll give it a shot.

Dewey starts to strum. The BASS PLAYER whispers--

BASS PLAYER
Dewey, we don't know this song...

DEWEY
Just follow me...

And he starts singing-- "Walk Hard". It is ridiculously emotional. He croons and wails.

The band picks it up *immediately*-- complete with backing "doo-wop" vocal harmonies.

Everyone exchanges looks, struck by the raw power of Dewey's performance.

Now he has tears streaming down his face. He could not mean it more. His band is crying.

And the Jews are crying.

The producer listens, concentrating... then suddenly, starts QUIVERING, spastically-- having a religious experience.

The Jews nod to each other, then to the producer, who nods back, still quivering...

BEGIN MONTAGE-- to the finished song.

INT. DJ'S BOOTH - DAY

INSERT-- a record placed on a turntable.

A very enthusiastic DJ, into his mic--

DJ

Hot off the presses, here's a brand new song from a youngster named Dewey Cox!

INT. DINER - DAY

As the song plays over the radio, a KID notices--

KID

Hey, turn it up, pops!

The COUNTER MAN turns up the radio. Immediately, all of the TEENAGERS stand and start dancing in the diner.

EXT. DEWEY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Dewey steps outside, mop in hand, on his way to work and is instantly SWARMED by TEENAGERS--

DEWEY

What the...

TEENAGER

They're playing your song for the first time!

INT. DJ'S BOOTH - DAY

A DIFFERENT DJ spins the record--

DJ 2

That's "Walk Hard" by Dewey Cox, soaring up the charts to number 7...

INSERT--

"The Chart"-- as "Walk Hard" climbs from 7 to 3...

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

The PRESS snap photos as the Jews hand Dewey the keys to his brand new Mustang. Dewey takes the keys and GRINS at the cameras-- then is immediately SWARMED again.

INSERT--

The chart-- "Walk Hard" reaches #1!

INT. DEWEY'S NEW HOUSE - DAY

The Jews show Dewey and a very pregnant Edith around their new enormous ranch house.

INT. FARM HOUSE - NIGHT

Back home, Dewey's parents listen to their radio. Ma is ecstatically excited, Pa is angry.

MA COX

That's my boy!

Ma gets up and starts DANCING along--

PA COX

You be careful, now... with your vertigo.

MA COX

Hush now, Pa! Ain't nothin' wrong with a little boogie...

As she says this, she loses her balance and FALLS OVER.

INT. DELIVERY ROOM - DAY

Edith is GIVING BIRTH. A DOCTOR pulls a newborn BABY from Edith's body, hands it to Dewey. Then-- the Doctor pulls another BABY out of Edith, and hands this one to DEWEY also--

DEWEY
Twins?! Thank you, Lord!

The Doctor pulls a third CHILD from--

DEWEY
Triplets!

Dewey tries to hold all three new babies, which is not easy. Then a bunch of NURSES run in--

NURSE
Dewey Cox?!

--and SWARM him.

INT. DEWEY'S NEW HOUSE - NIGHT

Edith and the several babies sit on the couch, covering their eyes. Dewey enters, carrying-- a *Chimpanzee*.

DEWEY
Okay!

Edith sees and gets really excited--

EDITH
A monkey!

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

At the dinner table-- Dewey, Edith, four babies and the chimp are all laughing together, having a great time. Life is good.

Then-- a *giraffe* sticks it's head through the open window. Dewey feeds it a grape off the diner table.

END MONTAGE.

INT. DEWEY'S BEDROOM - DAY

As Dewey packs his bag, Edith holds the triplets, upset--

DEWEY
...it'll just be for a few weeks.

EDITH

Who's gonna help me take care of these children?

DEWEY

Your mama said she'd help out and we can get baby sitters, if we need to.

EDITH

You gonna let some baby sitter be a father to your four infants?

DEWEY

This is my job now, baby! I'm playing music for people who want to hear me! This is all I've ever wanted!

She loses it--

EDITH

What about your family?! Look, what our life has become! I never see you, the kids never see you...

DEWEY

I've only been popular for two months!

EDITH

You missed their Christening!

DEWEY

I had a gig! I made us three hundred dollars that night. How else we gon' pay for all this?! Aren't you happy with your new house and your fancy clothes and your monkey and your giraffe?!

EDITH

They took the giraffe away! Said it was illegal to have in a private home or some such nonsense...

DEWEY

Then I'll get you a llama! Or... there's this certain kind of half-dog/ half-wolf that people say makes a good exotic pet...

EDITH

This ain't about no exotic pets!

She runs to the bathroom and SLAMS the door. The babies CRY.

DEWEY

Edith!

He POUNDS on the door--

DEWEY

Come on, baby! Come out of the bathroom...

INTERCUT:

INT. BATHROOM - SAME

Edith leans against the door, crying--

EDITH

Mama says there's a lot of evil out there, on the road. Temptations. Make a man do evil things.

DEWEY

(laughs)

Edith! That's ridiculous! There ain't no evil, out there. I'm just gon' be singing my songs for folks. That's all.

She considers this, but doesn't come out.

DEWEY

Edith, baby... you know how much I love you. I would never do nothin' that might hurt this perfect life we got. You and this here fast-growing family of ours is the only thing that matters to me. I mean, a life without you... would be no life at all.

Another light bulb moment--

DEWEY

"Life without you...
(he starts singing in falsetto)
...is no life... at aaaallllll!"

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

A lively CROWD twists along to-- Chuck Berry, who's on stage, playing "Johnny B Good".

INT. BACK STAGE - SAME

Dewey and the band watch from the wings, awed by Chuck's showmanship and guitar playing.

DEWEY

How we supposed to follow *that*?

MAN (OS)

Don't worry, Dewey...

He turns to-- BUDDY HOLLY (Frankie Munitz cameo).

BUDDY

...you'll do great.

DEWEY

Thanks, Buddy Holly.

BUDDY

And if you don't, me and the Crickets'll pick it right back up. You got nothing to worry about.

The STAGE MANAGER approaches--

STAGE MANAGER

Okay, boys-- change of plans. Elvis wants to get out of here early tonight. He's hungry. And his favorite steak house closes at nine. So here's the new order-- when Chuck finishes, Buddy'll go on next, then Elvis-- then you, Dewey.

DEWEY

(playing it cool)

Okay... So it's Buddy Holly, then Elvis... then me.

STAGE MANAGER

Just for tonight.

DEWEY

Okay. I'm just happy to be here.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Dewey is CRYING in the alley, terrified--

DEWEY

I ain't good enough to follow
Elvis...

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)

What you talking about, Dewey?

Dewey turns to the voice--

--it's "a vision" of his brother Nate.

DEWEY

I ain't ready, Nate.

NATE

I thought you was gonna be double
great, for the both of us.

DEWEY

I'm trying, Nate. But hell, ain't
nobody can follow Elvis...

NATE

You can.

DEWEY

You really think so?

NATE

I know so. This is our dream,
Dewey. I guess dreams come do true.

Dewey stands up straighter, gathering the strength--

DEWEY

Yes, they do.

NATE

You go out there and play-- and
I'll be there on stage with you.

Dewey nods, growing determined--

DEWEY

It might be better if you don't
actually go out on stage with me.

NATE

Huh?

DEWEY

Just... this freaks me out, a little.

NATE

Okay. Point taken.

STAGE MANAGER

Dewey!

Dewey turns to him--

STAGE MANAGER

The big guy's on his final encore.
You're on in five.

Dewey stares ahead, stoic...

INT. BACK STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Dewey heads for the stage, passes a sweaty ELVIS (another teen star cameo)--

ELVIS

I got 'em good and riled for you,
Dewey.

DEWEY

Thanks, Elvis Presley.

ELVIS

(to his band)

Come on, boys, let's go find us
some ladies and get us some meat!

Dewey watches them walk off--

DEWEY

I wonder how Mrs. Presley would
feel about that.

INT. STAGE - SAME

Dewey and his band (complete with three pretty BACK UP SINGERS) assume the stage. Dewey steps to the mic, stares out at the crowd who once again stare back, very judgemental--

DEWEY

Good evening. I'm Dewey Cox. Looks
like I got myself one skeptical
audience.

They stare back at him.

DEWEY

This is a song I wrote for a very special lady.

He starts into "A Life Without You Is No Life At All"-- an enormous, soaring Roy Orbison-esque love ballad. A heart-on-sleeve confessional about his deep love for his wife.

The audience is immediately transfixed. The WOMEN start to SWOON, visibly.

Dewey sings his heart out, then-- an impossibly large single tear runs down his face, glistening in the stage lights.

He gets to the chorus (which contains the title)-- women start spontaneously FAINTING.

He "makes eyes" with his pretty back-up singer BETH ANNE, who flirts back, smitten.

Girls in the audience start to STORM the stage, needing to touch Dewey as he wails his heart out-- women literally hanging from him, pulling his clothes off, pulling their own clothes off, in a Caligula-esque tableau, until he is eventually overcome and swallowed, drowned in a sea of women.

INT. BACK STAGE - LATER

Dewey confers with his band, face covered in lipstick, his clothes shredded, as though by animals.

BASS PLAYER

The fillies love ya, Dewey.

DEWEY

If I weren't a married man, with a good head on my shoulders... golly, I don't know what I'd do.

BASS PLAYER

You're a more righteous man than I, Dewey Cox.

DEWEY

What can I say? I walk the Lord's straight and narrow path. And I walk it hard.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Dewey approaches the men's room, opens the door, freezes--

--in a cloud of smoke, a small illicit GROUP has congregated in the bathroom. Drug use. Sam (Dewey's life-long drummer from the opening) gives him the paranoid eye.

DEWEY

Whacha guys doing in here?

SAM

Get out of here, Dewey!

DEWEY

What's that smell?

SAM

It's called reefer! And you don't want no part of this shit!

DEWEY

Really?

A slutty GROUPIE pipes up--

GROUPIE

Come on, Dewey! Join the party!

SAM

You don't want it! Get outta here...

DEWEY

I think I kind of want it.

Sam considers--

SAM

Okay... just this once. Now get in here and close that door. Quick!

Dewey enters. The Groupie gives him a salacious look--

DEWEY

Howdy, ma'am.

Sam hands him a joint--

DEWEY

I just breath it in, like so?

SAM

That's right...

Dewey takes a hit, immediately starts coughing...

GROUPIE

You gotta hold it in there...
 (she demonstrates)
 ...like this.

She semi-kisses him, blowing the smoke into his mouth.

Stunned by the sexiness of this, Dewey takes back the joint and takes another hit. And this time it works. A shock to the system... his eyelids flutter... he EXHALES... then-- he SMILES, a WILD LOOK in his eyes.

Begin MONTAGE-- to a song called "My Friend J" (a "Dewey hit" with a very thin pot metaphor)--

EXT. THEATER - NIGHT

A stoned Dewey saunters to the bus, carrying his guitar. A FLOCK of groupies SCREAMS-- he waves back, they ERUPT.

Dewey spots Beth Anne (the back-up singer who was flirting with him on stage) carrying too much stuff, she fumbles and drops her tambourine.

DEWEY

Can I get that for you?

They lock eyes-- very lusty. It seems they might jump each other, right here in the parking lot... then--

BETH ANNE

Thanks, Dewey.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The big tour bus drives through the night.

INT. TOUR BUS - NIGHT

Dewey and Beth Anne do something comically obscene, in the back of the bus.

Across the aisle-- Elvis is doing the same thing with SOMEONE.

They exchange thumbs up.

Chuck Berry and Buddy Holly play cards, in the front of the bus.

INT. BACK STAGE / ANOTHER THEATER - NIGHT

In a corner, Dewey takes a hit off a joint, likes the feeling, then heads directly out on stage, greeted by applause--

DEWEY
Hellooo there!

INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Dewey and five WOMEN cavort merrily.

EXT. THEATER ALLEY - NIGHT

Dewey is rushed by fans, as he leaves the theater. He smiles, very stoney, then starts making out with a random GIRL.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Dewey, stoned, gets off the bus-- out of which pours an impossible amount of smoke. He spots--

--his beautiful female FIDDLE PLAYER, struggling with her luggage.

Their eyes lock-- another loaded moment. Dewey approaches--

DEWEY
Can I get that for you?

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

PAN OVER-- a fiddle case with a bra hanging over it, PAST Dewey's guitar, to Dewey's boots-- up to the bed, where Dewey is having sex with the Fiddle player *while smoking weed*. He passes the joint to-- Beth Anne, who is also in bed with them.

CHILD'S VOICE
Dewey?

Nate is standing in the corner--

DEWEY
Can this wait 'til later, Nate?

NATE
What are you doin', Dewey?

The sex gets more intense--

DEWEY
Later, Nate! Later!

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

Dewey winds up the song, with an authoritative bit of power strumming.

END MONTAGE.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Dewey is in bed, on the phone--

DEWEY
The tour's going great, honey.
We're having a real nice time.

EDITH (ON PHONE)
The babies miss you, Dewey.

DEWEY
I miss them. I really do...

A pair of topless WOMEN pass by in the background.

INTERCUT:

INT. HOME - SAME

Edith holds two babies as she does the dishes; her MOTHER holds another--

EDITH
When you comin' home, Dewey?

DEWEY
Soon, baby. Real soon. We just gotta hit the major markets in the North East, then swing through Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland and Milwaukee. Then I'm home.

EDITH
You must be exhausted.

DEWEY
I am. I really am. But it's been a real good tour.

Chuck Berry and two more WOMEN pop up from behind the bed, where they've been "sleeping" on the floor, woken by Dewey's talking--

CHUCK BERRY
Quiet down, son!

Everyone SHOOSHES Chuck--

EDITH
Who's that?

DEWEY
(covering)
Um... that's just Chuck Berry. He's
looking for his... guitar pick.
Don't mind him.

EDITH
I feel like there's a distance
growing between us, Dewey. I don't
like it.

REVEAL that there are 20 people in Dewey's room, in various
states of undress--

DEWEY
That's crazy talk, honey. I'll call
you when I get to New Jersey.

EDITH
Okay.

She hangs up, starts to cry. Dewey is unphased. He hangs up,
gets out of bed. A KNOCK at the door, Dewey opens it--

--it's his father (who's very angry, as always).

DEWEY
Pa...

PA COX
Dewey.

A few girls cover up when they see Pa.

DEWEY
What... what are you doing here?

PA COX
It's your mother.

DEWEY
Ma? What about her? Is she okay?!

PA COX
She's dead.

Dewey is struck, devastated. Then he remembers that there are twenty half-dressed people in the room with them, gets self-conscious--

DEWEY

Maybe we should step out into the hall.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

Dewey pulls the door closed behind him--

DEWEY

What happened?

PA COX

I'll tell you what happened.

As he tells the story--

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. FARM HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Pa sits in bed, very angry. Ma sits next to him, knitting.

PA COX (V.O.)

We were readying for bed... when your song comes on the radio.

Ma jumps up, to turn up the radio, proud.

PA COX (V.O.)

And your mother starts dancing around-- like she took to doin', these days.

As described, she's dancing like crazy. A couple of kids enter, start dancing with her. Pa gets angrier as the dancing continues--

PA COX (V.O.)

I told her to sit down, mind her vertigo. But she wouldn't listen.

Ma and the kids dance out into the hallway near the top of the stairs, having fun.

PA COX (V.O.)

Last thing I heard her say was, "I'm so proud of our Dewey!"

She dances wildly, THEN-- she gets dizzy and falls head first over the railing, out of frame.

PA COX (V.O.)

Then she got dizzy and fell over the banister, to meet her maker.

BACK TO:

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

Dewey is stunned--

DEWEY

You're saying she plummeted to her untimely demise?

PA COX

The vertigo. It won, in the end.

Dewey is horrified, weakly--

DEWEY

While she was dancing to my music?

PA COX

(full of rage)

I thought you ought to know. You brought too much joy to her life. The Coxes ain't built for no joy and happiness. You made her happy and it killed her. Before all this insanity, she stayed sittin' down, like she belonged. Then... You.

Dewey is mortified.

PA COX

If Nate was alive, this never would have happened.

Pa turns and leaves, over his shoulder--

PA COX

The wrong kid died!

Dewey heads back into--

INT. HOTEL ROOM - SAME

--he's crying. He looks around at everyone looking back at him, then he moves to the bathroom--

--where Sam and a few other PEOPLE are all doing drugs.

SAM

Get out of here, Dewey!

DEWEY

What're y'all doing?

SAM

It's called cocaine! And you don't want no part of this shit!

DEWEY

Cocaine? What's it do?

SAM

It wakes you up! Makes you feel like you got a thousand horses chargin' through your brain. It takes all your bad feelings and turns 'em into good feelings!

DEWEY

(snorts back the tears)
I'm thinking maybe I'd like to try me some of that cocaine.

Sam considers...

INT. THEATER - DAY

Dewey and the band rehearse-- "Walk Hard" at triple tempo. It sounds like a Ramones cover of the song. *Dewey is wired--* and singing like Joey Ramone. The band finishes; Dewey considers--

DEWEY

One more time! Faster!

SAM

Dewey, this is crazy! Ain't nobody gon' wanna hear music like that. You standin' there, playing as fast as you can, singin' like some kind of... punk.

DEWEY

(dark)

I 'spose you're right, Sam. I don't know what I was thinkin'. I guess it was just the mood I was in. Sort of... nihilistic-like. Like nothing matters...

SAM
You in pain, Dewey.

Dewey nods back, solemnly.

WOMAN (O.S.)
Mr. Cox?

Dewey turns to-- DARLENE, an incredibly sultry woman in a mini-skirt.

DEWEY
That's me.

DARLENE
Your manager said you're looking for a new back-up singer. For your new duet.

Dewey approaches, lust in his eyes, offers his hand--

DEWEY
Dewey Cox.

DARLENE
Darlene Simmons.

They shake hands-- LONG SLOW PUSH-INS-- *a ridiculous amount of chemistry.*

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

Dewey and Darlene are performing their duet, entitled "Let's Duet" (a meta-duet about "dueting", except that "duet" is clearly a metaphor for sex). As they sing this slightly goofy Cash/Carter-style song, the chemistry is palpable-- they stare at each other lovingly, lustfully... Pyrotechnics...

DEWEY
(singing)
"And if we're gonna stand here, we might as well duet..."

DARLENE
(singing the chorus)
"Let's duet, in the mor-ning!"

DEWEY
"Let's duet, all night long..."

DARLENE
"Let's duet, out in a field, underneath the moon..."

DEWEY

"Let's practice our duet tonight,
in my hotel room..."

As the song continues, we see a quick MONTAGE of Dewey and Darlene getting to know each other--

-- they come off stage and Dewey immediately tries to kiss her. She's clearly tempted, but she stops him--

DARLENE

Mr. Cox, I'm not that kind of woman. I have to get to know a man, 'fore I get involved. See what he's made of.

He's very disappointed.

DARLENE

But that doesn't mean we can't be... friends.

DEWEY

Right. "Friends".

*Dewey and Darlene ride bikes together.

*Dewey and Darlene sing together, by a camp fire.

*Dewey and Darlene kayak down a river together.

*Dewey and Darlene look at paintings together, in a museum.

But they never touch-- "Just friends".

END MONTAGE

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY

Dewey and Darlene are ROCK CLIMBING up an impossibly treacherous surface, using just their hands (think Cruise in MI:2), approaching a plateau; Darlene is coaching Dewey--

DARLENE

There's a crevice to your right.
Dig in with your toes and use your right hand...

DEWEY

Okay... Here goes nothing...

He GRASPS for his handle, stumbles and loses his balance, dangling by two fingers--

DEWEY

Whoa!!!

DARLENE

Hang on, Dewey!

DEWEY

Oh, I'm a' hangin' on, woman!

He hears this, and even in the midst of this near-death experience, can't help but notice the lyrical potential--

DEWEY

(mumble-singing to himself)

"I'm a-hangin' on, woman... Hanging off this ledge... Don't leave me hanging on... Don't... keep me on the edge..."

Darlene gets into position, just beneath him, breaking his moment--

DARLENE

Use my shoulder!

DEWEY

You sure?!

DARLENE

Just do it, Dewey! I got a good grip...

She CLINGS to the mountain, Dewey steps on her shoulder and uses it to PUSH off, PULLING himself onto the top of the mountain. When he gets there, he reaches down to Darlene. She takes his hand and he PULLS her up with one arm.

They both catch their breath, against the backdrop of a beautiful sunset.

DEWEY

We make quite a team, don't we?

Darlene blushes.

DEWEY

How do you know so much about rock climbing?

DARLENE

I don't know. I been doin' it since I was a girl.

DEWEY

I swear, Darlene, these last three weeks have been so... full and wonderful.

DARLENE

I ain't never had a friend like you, Dewey.

They exchange meaningful looks, it seems they are about to kiss, but they don't-- *for a really, really long time--* then--

DEWEY

That's what we are. Good friends.

DARLENE

Yeah.

They are both frustrated.

DEWEY

I got a lot of pain in me, Darlene. You should know that.

DARLENE

Where does all that pain come from, Dewey?

DEWEY

I don't know. Maybe... Nevermind.

DARLENE

What?

DEWEY

It's nothin'...

DARLENE

Come on, Dewey. You can talk to me...

She looks in him in the eyes and he can't resist opening up--

DEWEY

I don't talk about this much... I had a brother, when I was growing up. Nate, was his name... He passed, when we were boys.

DARLENE

I'm sorry, Dewey. How'd it happen?

DEWEY
Freak accident. Not important.

DARLENE
Okay.

DEWEY
Anyway, I think that maybe... and I know this sounds crazy, but... I guess there's a part of me that always felt that... in some way... I was responsible.

DARLENE
Dewey, that's crazy talk! I don't know what happened, but I'm sure it wasn't your fault.

DEWEY
I cut him in half with a machete.

DARLENE
Well, did you mean to?

DEWEY
Of course not!

DARLENE
Well, there you go!

DEWEY
I know! Accidents happen! And that's what I been tellin' myself, ever since. But then, last week...

DARLENE
What?

DEWEY
Nevermind...

DARLENE
Dewey, you gotta be able to open up to somebody. You can't walk through life a big ball a' mysteries.

DEWEY
Last month, my mama died while she was dancing to my song. Her inner-ear disorder kicked in, while she was a'boogyn', I guess, and she lost her balance and took a deadly tumble.

DARLENE

Dewey, you can't control what happens to people when they hear your music.

DEWEY

I know, but... I'm starting to think maybe it's dangerous to get too close to Dewey Cox. Deadly, even. I feel alone in this world...

DARLENE

You ain't alone, Dewey.

They lock eyes and get very close to kissing again-- *again for a ridiculously long, tense beat, then--*

DARLENE

We best be getting back.

DEWEY

They'll be lookin' for us...

They prepare to descend the mountain, then--

DARLENE

Dewey, look...

She points him to--

--the most beautiful sunset in the world. There couldn't be a more romantic moment...

DEWEY

Oh, Darlene... before I met you, I was all darkness and misery. But now... the world is just more beautiful when you're around.

DARLENE

Kiss me, Cox.

He GRABS her and KISSES her passionately, the heat rising instantly, weeks of built up tension... HELICOPTER SHOT-- SWIRLING AROUND THEM, on top of this mountain...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Dewey and Darlene lie in bed together, post-coital, in love, feeding each other fruit--

DEWEY

Darlene, when I'm with you, I feel like I can be myself. Like you see past the rocks star and appreciate the whole man...

DARLENE

I really do.

The phone RINGS. Darlene answers--

DARLENE

Dewey Cox's room...

INTERCUT:

INT. HOME - DAY

On the other end of the phone-- Edith is stunned.

DARLENE

Hellloooo?

EDITH

Who's that?

DARLENE

This is Darlene.

Dewey realizes what's happening.

EDITH

Is Dewey there?

DARLENE

Who may I ask is calling?

EDITH

This is Edith. His wife.

Darlene is stunned-- she didn't know he was married. She starts to cry, ashamed--

DARLENE

Just a moment, ma'am...

She throws the receiver at him, angry, gets out of bed--

DEWEY

Now, wait a second... It's not what you think...

He picks up the phone--

DEWEY

Hello?

EDITH

"It's not what you think?!" Well,
what is it then?!

DEWEY

Now, Edith, darlin'...

Darlene hears this, starts to WAIL--

DARLENE

You're married??!!

EDITH

Don't you "darlin'" me! You got a
woman in your room!

DEWEY

It's not what you think!

EDITH

What do you mean? It's not what *I*
think or it's not what *she* thinks?
'Cause it's gotta be what *one of us*
thinks! We can't both be thinkin'
wrong!

DEWEY

She's just my duet partner...

Darlene is stung by this, dresses to leave---

DEWEY

Now, hold on!

EDITH

You tellin' me to "hold on"?!

DEWEY

No, not you, honey...
(to Darlene)
Baby!

EDITH

Don't you "baby" me...

DARLENE

You callin' me "baby"? When you got
yourself a wife at home? You should
be ashamed of yourself, Dewey Cox!

Darlene STORMS out of his room.

EDITH

Did she just say "you should be
ashamed yourself"?! I'm your wife!
I'm the one who should be sayin'
that you should be ashamed of
yourself!

Edith SLAMS down the phone.

Dewey is left by himself--

DEWEY

I've made a terrible mistake.

He springs out of bed--

DEWEY

I've made a terrible mistake!

EXT. DEWEY'S STREET - DAY

Back home, Dewey runs down the street (guitar over his
shoulder), toward his house--

--where Edith is loading a couple kids into the car. A CAMEL
wanders around in the front yard.

DEWEY

Edith! Honey! I've made a terrible
mistake!

EDITH

Leave me alone!

DEWEY

Darlin'! I'm so sorry! I been weak!
I don't know what came over me!

EDITH

Stop your talkin', Dewey! I'm
leaving you!

She runs back inside, he follows, but before he gets there--
she emerges with *two more children* that she loads into the
car--

DEWEY

Edith, don't go!

EDITH
I could never trust you again! I'm
leaving!

She runs back inside.

INT. DEWEY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Dewey rushes inside, where Edith is gathering *two more children--*

DEWEY
You're just leaving?! After all we
been through together?!

EDITH
I'm leaving!

EXT. DEWEY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Edith loads two more children into the car; Dewey follows--

DEWEY
What about the children?!

EDITH
Maybe you should have thought about
that before you went and sang your
duet!

INT. DEWEY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Edith is gathering *three more children--*

DEWEY
(defensive)
I got a lot of love in me! Is that
a crime?! You sit there and judge
me like some kind of... judge. Who
makes... judgements about...
situations...

EDITH
You're violatin' the sacred vows of
marriage!

DEWEY
There you go! Judging me again...
Well, if you're accusing me of
having too much love in my heart...
then... what can I say? Guilty as
charged.

He hears this-- *likes the sound of it...*

DEWEY
"Guilty as Charged"

He starts humming a melody, mumbling rough lyrics. Edith just watches him, working it out, for a very long beat...

EDITH
I'll be back on Tuesday, to pick up
the camel. Goodbye, Dewey Cox.

DEWEY
Give me another chance! Don't leave
me!

But she's gone. He RUNS into--

INT. BATHROOM - SAME

--and starts destroying the bathroom. (Over the opening chords of his new hit "*Guilty as Charged*"-- a very self-righteous song about how "if you're accusing me of having too much love, then I'm Guilty as Charged".)

Pulling the sink off the wall, busting pipes, FLOODING... He SLUMPS against the wall, distraught...

INTO A MONTAGE-- "*Guilty as Charged*"

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

Dewey, on stage, singing the song, but he's visibly changed-- a darker, more Rock 'n Roll Dewey-- mussed hair and stubble, sunglasses all the time, dressed in dark clothing, hurting.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Dewey stands in the street, yelling at sky--

DEWEY
Oh dear lord! Why hath thou
foresaken Dewey Cox!?

He drops to his knees-- King Lear.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

The same show-- the women RUSH the stage, as they do, but this time he GRABS one and starts making out with her-- eventually stopping the song entirely to make out with this girl. He starts to take off his shirt-- has to be restrained by Sam.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The tour bus rolls down a perfect Americana highway.

INT. TOUR BUS - SAME

The DRIVER drives. MOVE DOWN the aisle to find--

Dewey, staring at his reflection in the window, crying. After a moment, he puts on his sun glasses, and RISES, moves to the bathroom--

--where he discovers Sam and a bunch of PEOPLE doing drugs--

SAM

Get out of here, Dewey! You don't want no part of this shit!

DEWEY

(through tears)
What are you doing?

SAM

We're doin' "pills". Uppers and downers. They take you up and then they bring you down!

DEWEY

I want some of that shit.

EXT. THEATER - NIGHT

Another load out, Dewey can barely walk, he's so drugged. He spots--

--his male bass player, THEO, struggling to carry his amp.

DEWEY

Hey, Theo... can I get that for you?

Dewey and Theo lock eyes...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Dewey lies in bed, eyes wide open. DISCOVER-- Theo in bed with him. And a couple of women also. But still, pretty gay.

Sam enters, surveys the scene--

SAM

You've changed, Dewey.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - DAY

The Capital Records building.

INT. CAPITAL RECORDS - DAY

Dewey and his manager SCHWARTZBERG (played by David Krumholtz, who actually played the manager in RAY) walk down a hallway. Dewey can barely walk, he's so drugged--

SCHWARTZBERG

Now, Dewey-- as your manager, I believe we can get you a much better deal, here at Capital. Just let me do the talking.

DEWEY

Hhhmmm...?

INT. OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Dewey and Schwartzberg sit across the desk from three new Hasidic Jews; MAZELTOV is the main man--

MAZELTOV

Mr. Cox, Mr. Schwartzberg... we here at Capital are prepared to offer you 6 cents, per record.

SCHWARTZBERG

It'll never happen. If you want to get realistic, then we're all ears. Otherwise, we should thank you for your time.

Tense looks around the room. Dewey chimes in, stoned out of his mind--

DEWEY

Mr. Mazeltov... I'm just a country boy on qualudes, but... I think that what my manager is trying to say is... We're not mostly concerned about 6 cents on the record, ya' hear?

SCHWARTZBERG

(admonishing, under his breath)

Dewey...

MAZELTOV

And what are you concerned about?

DEWEY

What I'm interested in is more exclusions, to reduce my recoupable expenses against my advance. I want my over-seas mechanicals uncrossed with distribution costs, in all territories, including the UK and Australia. And we're thinking more in the neighborhood of 11 cents on the record, if you catch my drift.

Dewey flashes him a big stoney smile...

MAZELTOV

Mr. Cox, you drive a hard bargain... but you got yourself a deal.

Mazeltov reaches across the table to shake-- but Dewey has fallen asleep in his chair.

INT. BACK STAGE / ANOTHER THEATER - NIGHT

Dewey throws a couple of pills in his mouth, washes them down with bourbon, then steps out onto--

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

Dewey takes the stage, stumbling and wasted--

DEWEY

I'm Dewey Cox.

Then he COLLAPSES. Everyone RUSHES to him--

EVERYONE

Dewey!

Someone SMACKS him... He wakes up, then he rises, suddenly full of energy, steps to the mic--

DEWEY

1-2-3-4!

The band starts to play...

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Dewey and the band ride an escalator, then spot--

--the COPS, waiting for them at the bottom.

COP

Mr. Cox!

Dewey panics, turns and starts to RUN up the escalator. But it's not easy to do that, and for a while he makes *no progress at all--*

The cops give CHASE--

Dewey finally gets to the top, satisfied that he's eluded the police. He breathes a sigh of relief-- when suddenly he's violently TACKLED to the ground by a pair of COPS. Dewey STRUGGLES to get away, then gives in, with a cool smirk-- "Go ahead, arrest me."

INT. BACK ROOM - DAY

Dewey is being searched, staying cool--

DEWEY

Go ahead. Search me. You ain't gonna find nothin'.

A COP pulls a bag of weed from his pocket.

DEWEY

That belongs to somebody else.

ANOTHER pulls a prescription pill bottle from his other pocket--

DEWEY

That's for my allergies.

Then they pull a baggy out of his pants. Then they pull several more baggies out of his shoes.

DEWEY

(now nervous)

That's for my... sinuses.

Across the room, a cop pulls an enormous brick of cocaine out of Dewey's unstrung guitar.

DEWEY

Damn! I didn't think you'd find that!

He suddenly gets kind of vulnerable--

DEWEY

I have a very addictive personality.

COP
Mr. Cox, I'm placing you under
arrest. You have the right to
remain silent...

DEWEY
I have a problem!

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

PHOTOGRAPHERS FLASH away--

--as Dewey is hauled off, in handcuffs, looking cool. FREEZE
on a black and white photo of the moment...

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY

Dewey sits on a bunk, in prison clothes, depressed.

A GUARD appears, followed by-- Dewey's father.

GUARD
You have four minutes.

The guard leaves.

DEWEY
Pa... you came.

PA COX
Son...

DEWEY
Oh, Pa... I knew you'd be here for
me, when I needed you.

PA COX
Oh, I'm here, alright. I'm here to
tell you-- I told you so! I knew it
would lead to this.

DEWEY
But, Pa...

PA COX
You know why this happened? Because
of that music of yours. Music leads
to degradation, and then prison.
That's what music does...

DEWEY
Pa, I know I made some mistakes,
but...

PA COX

But nothing! You got nobody but yourself to blame.

DEWEY

I was just trying to make people happy, Pa.

PA COX

You were trying to make yourself happy. That's the only thing you ever cared about-- you. Dewey Cox.

Dewey is hurt.

PA COX

I could bail you out, right now. But I'm not going to. You know why?

DEWEY

Why?

PA COX

Because if I did, you'd just go right back to playin' that stupid, evil music of yours. And then, 'fore you know it, we'll be right back here, again.

DEWEY

That's not true! It's the drugs, not the music. But... I can change.

PA COX

People don't change, son.

DEWEY

This is about Nate, isn't it?

Pa gets quiet, then he leaves; over his shoulder--

PA COX

The wrong kid died!

As Pa heads down the hall, a gate SLAMS closed behind him with almost every step, one after another.

INT. PRISON VISITING ROOM - DAY

At a visiting table, Dewey sits across from MAZELTOV--

MAZELTOV

They want to lock you up, for twenty years. Which is not good. For you, for me... You're selling so many records...

DEWEY

Mr. Mazeltov, there's got to be somethin' you can do. I'm beggin' ya'! I'm 21 years old. I got my whole life ahead of me...

MAZELTOV

We think we can get you off. But you're gonna have to play ball.

DEWEY

What do I have to do? Name it.

MAZELTOV

You gotta go to rehab.

INT. REHAB - DAY

Dewey lies in a bed, flipping around, sweating... A beautiful NURSE tends to him--

HOT NURSE

Doctor!

A DOCTOR runs in, checks his pulse.

DEWEY

I'm so cold!

DOCTOR

We need more blankets!

A couple of NURSES run in, throw more blankets over him.

DOCTOR

Get the restraints!

A couple of ORDERLIES run in, hold Dewey down...

DISSOLVE TO:

Through his delirium, Dewey sees a vision of--

--his mother---

MA COX
It's gonna be okay, Dewey...

DISSOLVE TO:

Dewey sweating more--

DEWEY
I'm hot!

HOT NURSE
Doctor!

The Doctor rushes in--

HOT NURSE
I think he has too many blankets!

DOCTOR
Fewer blankets!

The nurses remove some of his blankets.

DOCTOR
I think it's time we use some of
that modern technology.

CUT TO:

Dewey sits in a tub, naked, covered with leaches and attached
to a bunch of electrodes. In the corner of the room, he sees--

-- Nate-- who this time is *just a severed torso, hovering in
the air, with some innards hanging out of him.*

Dewey SCREAMS--

DEWEY
Nate!

Dewey is SHOCKED by the electrodes--

DEWEY
Ouch!

DISSOLVE TO:

Dewey lying in bed, flipping around--

DEWEY
I'm both hot and cold, at the same
time!

HOT NURSE

We need more blankets and less
blankets!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DEWEY'S PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

Dewey, doing much better, sits in bed, strumming his guitar.
A KNOCK at the door. He looks up to see--

--Darlene, standing in the doorway--

DARLENE

You ready to go home, Dewey Cox?

He smiles at her-- moved. She's there for him.

DEWEY

Darlene, I thought... I heard you
was shackled up with Glen Campbell,
in Colorado.

DARLENE

Actually, I was living in New York,
with Kenny Rodgers. But that's over
now.

DEWEY

I knew when we was kayaking in the
Adirondacks... I knew then I'd
found the only person who ever
truly understood me.

DARLENE

I couldn't be with you while you
was married. That would have been
wrong. But now that your wife has
left you for cheating with me... I
feel okay about it.

DEWEY

Darlene... that's the best news I
ever heard. And I ain't never gonna
touch no drugs again. I'm a new
man. From here on out, I'm gonna
walk the straight and narrow.

DARLENE

I think you're ready to be the
Dewey Cox I always knew you could
be.

DEWEY

I'll tell you what-- I'm gonna give
it my best shot.

They embrace-- true love.

EXT. DEWEY'S NEW HOUSE (IN WOODSTOCK) - NIGHT

A large mountain cabin in the woods. HEAR-- a group singing
"Froggy Went a' Courtin'"...

INT. DEWEY'S NEW HOUSE - SAME

New Year's Eve party-- 1966.

Dewey, who now has very long hair and looks kind of "'60s",
strums an acoustic guitar, standing by the fire place, as
JERRY GARCIA (Danny Masterson cameo) plays a little blue
grass lead. The song ends, everyone CLAPS--

JERRY GARCIA

We should record somethin'
together, Dewey.

DEWEY

We really should, Jerry Garcia.

A GUY chimes in--

GUY

Hey, everybody! Five seconds 'til
1966! And 5...

Everyone counts off--

GROUP

4-3-2-1!

EVERYONE hoots and hollers... Couples KISS... Two COUPLES
switch partners, start to make-out passionately-- free love.

Dewey and Darlene (flower child model) KISS and grope-- madly
in love.

DEWEY

Happy New Years, Mrs. Cox.

DARLENE

Happy New Years, Mr. Cox.

They toast their tea mugs and drink--

DEWEY

This is such an exciting time! I feel like... there's something happening here. What it is ain't exactly... obvious, but... I think the times, they are a'... I don't know. I can't quite think of the right word, but... The times, they are a'... definitely different than they were before.

DARLENE

So true...

DEWEY

All I know is, the world is changing. And Dewey Cox is changing, right along with it... I'm 28 years old. And I finally realize-- my daddy was right! I been spending too much time thinking about Dewey Cox. I gotta think about the world! What, with women's rights and Negro rights... There's a whole lot of civil rights goin' on! And then there's this... quagmire we done got ourselves into in Vietnam...

DARLENE

You speak the truth, Dewey, my brother. My... husband brother. And our parents' generation... they just don't understand!

DEWEY

They don't! It's like... Hey, Mr. Old Guy, move over!

He hears *this*-- likes the sound of it...

BEGIN MONTAGE-- *In black and white*-- Dewey in the '60s, his most prolific period ever. This sequence plays against a medley of Dewey's sixties hits-- mostly Dylan-esque songs. *Also, this sequence uses a lot of historical footage.*

EXT. STREET - DAY

Historical footage of Bobby Kennedy, marching through Washington. INSERT Dewey into the scene, marching with Mohammed Ali.

DEWEY (V.O.)

(singing)

"Hey, Mr. Old Guy/ Your time has passed/ Time for a new generation to supplant you..."

EXT. RALLY STAGE - DAY

Dewey stands at the mic, strumming the song on an acoustic guitar, impassioned. Darlene sings back-up.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Dewey is writing a new song--

DEWEY

(singing)

"The purple moon is shining/ I can see it
The coyotes, they're a'cryin'/
Can't ya' hear it?
The anger, it's a risin'/ Why conceal it?
There's a change a' happenin'/ I can feel it..."

EXT. CAMPUS BONFIRE - NIGHT

Dewey and Darlene, with a bunch of chanting FEMINISTS. Dewey burns a bra, angry.

INSERT-- The Charts-- "There's a Change a' Happenin', I Can Feel It" soaring up to # 1!

EXT. WOODSTOCK - DAY

Using footage from the film--

Dewey is on stage, playing "There's a Change a'Happenin', I Can Feel It"...

MAMA KASS looks on, enamoured...

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Dewey is furiously writing a new song--

DEWEY

(singing)

"Mailboxes drip like lamp posts in the twisted birth canal of the Coliseum/

(MORE)

DEWEY (cont'd)
 Rim job fairy teapots mask the
 temper tantrum, Oh, say can you see
 'em?..."

INT. ED SULLIVAN SHOW - DAY

Dewey plays the song (looking exactly like Dylan in DON'T
 LOOK BACK-- harmonica in holder, etc...). ED watches from the
 backstage--

DEWEY
 "Stuffed cabbage is the darling of
 the laundry mat/
 And the sorority mascot sat with
 the aristocrat..."

In the audience, a guy leans over to his girlfriend--

GUY
 What's he talking about?

GIRLFRIEND
 I don't understand a word of it,
 but it's deep.

INT. DEWEY'S NEW HOUSE (WOODSTOCK) - DAY

Darlene lies screaming in a bath tub, as Dewey delivers their
 new baby, hands it to a MID-WIFE. Then--

DEWEY
 Twins!?

--and he catches another baby...

EXT. STREET - DAY

Dewey MARCHES with Martin Luther King, chanting for equal
 rights.

INSERT-- The Charts-- Dewey's song "Ballad of the Gypsy
 Racketeer" reaches #1!

EXT. STREET - DAY

Dewey marches with a bunch of DWARVES-- for "Dwarf Rights"--
 carrying a sign that says-- "I may be little but I ain't
 small". He CHANTS aggressively.

New song--

DEWEY (V.O.)
 (singing)
 "The little man with the golden
 hand/ Is driving his streetcar down
 the block..."

END MONTAGE.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Dewey and Darlene stand in front of a bunch of REPORTERS (a la The Beatles), answering questions, as flashbulbs strobe--

REPORTER 1
 Why you goin' to India, Dewey?

DEWEY
 India is the spiritual capital of
 the world. With all that's going on
 here at home, I think it's
 important to stay connected to the
 life force. Play a little music. Do
 a little meditati'n' with the
 Maharishi. Dewey Cox needs India,
 right now. And heck... I reckon
 India needs Dewey Cox, too.

EXT. INDIA - DAY

Dewey and Darlene sit in a circle with-- the MAHARISHI and
 the BEATLES. Meditating... A long "Om". Then silence. After a
 long beat--

MAHARISHI
 Only through meditation, can we
 begin to understand our role.

JOHN LENNON
 We are but grains of sand.

The Maharishi nods his approval.

DEWEY
 That was freakin' transcendental,
 John Lennon.

PAUL MCCARTNEY
 It really was, Dewey, my brother.

DEWEY
 It really was Paul McCartney, my
 brother.

RINGO STAR

I'm going to adjourn to my quarters
to try to... open my third eye.
Anyone care to join me?

The Beatles all jump up--

BEATLES

Yes!/ Lets!

RINGO STAR

Come on then, lads!

PAUL MACARTNEY

Let's go to the tipity-top of the
topity-tip!

They laugh, as they SKIP off, in a group--

JOHN LENNON

Come on, Dewey!

Dewey starts to follow, but Darlene stops him, worried--

DARLENE

Dewey, let's go to bed...

DEWEY

Oh, come on, honey. Let's just go
see what the Beatles are up to.

DARLENE

Dewey, you know what they're up to.
They're going to do some of that
LSD.

He obviously does know this.

DEWEY

Yeah. So...?

DARLENE

Dewey, you been living clean for
three years, now. And it's done you
a world of good, has it not? You
been more prolific than ever in
your life, both in terms of music
and number of children you've
sired. Any way you count it, it's
been a very productive period,
you've had here.

DEWEY

Yeah... I guess. But this is different! This isn't about getting wasted. LSD is about raising our consciousness!

DARLENE

What are you searching for, Dewey?!

DEWEY

(petulant)

I want to do LSD with the Beatles!

Suddenly, Nate appears--

NATE

You are *totally* doing LSD with the Beatles.

DEWEY

Nate...?

Darlene doesn't see Nate (because he is a vision)--

DARLENE

What about Nate?

NATE

Do it for me, Dewey!

DEWEY

Nate would want me to do LSD with the Beatles. I gotta do it. For him.

DARLENE

Listen to yourself! That's the craziest thing I ever heard.

DEWEY

Come on, baby... I know I've had some troubles with drugs in the past, but this is different. This could really help my song writing. Have you heard that Walrus song? It's really good.

She thinks about it--

DARLENE

You promise it'll just be this one time?

DEWEY

I promise.

DARLENE

Okay. This one time... let's go drop acid with the Beatles.

DEWEY

Great! I'm just gonna go to the bathroom, first...

He steps to some kind of hut, opens the door--

--Sam, the drummer, is sitting on the floor with the Beatles. He has something on his tongue, talks funny--

SAM

Get out of here, Dewey!

DEWEY

What are you doin'?

SAM

It's called LSD. And, come to think of it, I think you might want some of this shit.

BEGIN MONTAGE-- The LSD montage, to an organ-driven Doors-esque spoken poem song.

INT. SHACK - NIGHT

Dewey, Darlene, The Beatles and a bunch of hot Indian WOMEN are tripping, playing music. The Beatles are having a profound experience of "presentness".

Dewey is in his own world. He stands up and stumbles out of the room, suddenly slinking like Jim Morrison.

DEWEY (V.O.)

(reciting more than singing)

I awoke at dawn/ I put my talisman on...

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Dewey wanders under the night sky, staring at the stars.

DEWEY (V.O.)

I stepped into the scorched and
heartless desert/ And standing in
front of me/ With burning gills of
fire/ Was The Present...

He DROPS to his knees, touching the earth. The Beatles dance
around behind him, like snakes.

INT. CLUB - NIGHT

Dewey is on his knees, on stage, enacting the song in a
ridiculously theatrical way--

DEWEY

I took a mighty swing/ And I cut
the present in half!...

A card tells us that he is in-- "Europe".

We PAN over the audience, who all wear black turtlenecks
(since this *is* Europe). They watch, silent but dispassionate,
puffing on cigarettes.

On stage, Dewey crawls across the floor--

DEWEY

I turned around / And standing
behind me / Was Captain Scorpion!/
And I said, "Captain Scorpion!..."

WE REVOLVE AROUND DEWEY as he rises to his feet, facing down
an imaginary opponent--

DEWEY

You're going down, Captain
Scorpion!

The MUSIC RISES dramatically-- and Dewey heads into an almost
orgasmic Morrison-esque crescendo as the CAMERA SWIRLS AROUND
HIM--

DEWEY

You're going down! You're going
DOWN! YOU'RE GOING DOWN... on my
mother!"

He grabs a drum stick and starts WAILING on one of the
symbols on the drum set, POUNDING away in a hallucinogenic,
tribal fury, sweat flying-- as the CAMERA moves in VERY
CLOSE, very spooky...

CUT WIDE to the audience perspective-- of Dewey spastically beating this symbol. From their perspective, it looks and sounds ludicrous.

END MONTAGE

INT. STUDIO (LOS ANGELES) - DAY

Dewey's band is set up in front of-- a massive ORCHESTRA, a full CHOIR, a dozen ABORIGINES percussionists, a trio of sitar PLAYERS and a Didgery-doo PLAYER, who has just finished a take--

DIDGERY-DOO PLAYER

How was that? Dewey...?

INT. BOOTH - SAME

A tortured Dewey and four ENGINEERS sit at the console. Dewey presses the talk-back button--

DEWEY

I'm still not feeling it. I'm hearing it, but I'm not hearing it, you know what I'm saying?

The ENGINEERS all groan. Dewey holds his head in his hands---

DEWEY

Alright everybody, let's take five.

Everyone is clearly frustrated-- they've been here a long time. Over the speaker system--

DEWEY

The molecules in the room have gone ugly. I want everybody to step outside, look in the direction of Jupiter, breath in the sky and come back in five with some positive, pretty molecules.

As the room empties, Dewey takes a hit of opium off a hookah, then turns to his engineers and producers, frustrated--

ENGINEER 1

Dewey, we been working with the Didgery-doo for four days. Maybe we should move on to something else.

DEWEY

I got this sound in my head and it's trying to get out, but I can't find it on this here human plane of existence.

ENGINEER 1

Well, is there a didgery-doo in it?

DEWEY

I don't think so!

ENGINEER 1

Well, maybe we should work on the Aborigines drummers for a few days...

DEWEY

(tortured)

I don't know... I need a bounce.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Dewey is BOUNCING up and down on a trampoline, staring out at the ocean, somber, deep in thought...

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Darlene and her MOTHER are preparing dinner, as dozens of Cox children run wild through the kitchen.

DARLENE'S MOTHER

Darlene, why don't we just eat in the dining room, like normal?

DARLENE

Because, this year, we're having Thanksgiving out on the trampoline.

DARLENE'S MOTHER

But what kind of family eats Thanksgiving dinner on a trampoline?!

DARLENE

This family does, that's what kind. I told you, mama-- Dewey ain't comin' inside, 'til his record's finished.

Dewey's father enters, hears this--

PA COX

That's the stupidest thing I ever heard!

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

The family, complete with dozens of CHILDREN, sit in a circle on the trampoline, as Dewey carves the Turkey-- which is harder to do on a trampoline, because it keeps moving. Everyone waits, awkward. Then--

PA COX

Just cut the damn bird, boy!

DEWEY

Nothin' I do will ever please you, will it, Pa?

PA COX

Mr. Big Rock Star. You think you're so great? Well, what have you got to show for it? Several million dollars? A dozen gold records? Twenty eight to thirty two children? You've been all over the world and touched the lives of millions of people... but what do you really have, in the eyes of the Lord?

Dewey is stung.

PA COX

You sit there, all drugged up, talking about how you're a salamander... You ain't no salamander, boy! And you call yourself a Cox... You're the black sheep of this family. You're... the black Cox! And until you get right with Jesus, you'll never be nothin' but a big black Cox.

Dewey is devastated, stares at him meaningfully, for a long beat... Then--

DEWEY

I have a 127 musicians waiting on me... You'll have to excuse me.

And with that, he BOUNCES up and does an impressive BACK FLIP off the trampoline. The turkey goes FLYING... Dewey misses his landing and CRASHES to the ground-- very painful.

DARLENE

Dewey!

He struggles to pick himself up, very stoic--

DEWEY

That wasn't as bad as it looked.

He turns and LIMPS away.

INT. STUDIO - NIGHT

The band and the orchestra and the choir PLAY an enormous Beach Boys-esque "wall of sound" type song-- "Black Sheep".

A goat ROAMS the room, followed by a GUY with a mic, recording it's "baaahs"...

In an isolation booth, Dewey wears headphones and CROONS into the mic--

DEWEY

"Out into the pasture I wander/ But
I won't get no sleep/ I'll just
stand around and ponder/ My life--
The Black Sheep"

The orchestra crescendos HUGE-- the goat BAAHS perfectly. The song ends...

INTERCUT:

INT. BOOTH - SAME

The engineer presses the talk-back--

ENGINEER 1

That was beautiful, Dewey. Not an ugly molecule in the whole take. Even the goat was perfect...

Dewey thinks for a moment--

DEWEY

Yeah, it was good on the goat...
Were the strings tangy enough?

EVERYONE

Yes!/Definitely!/Very tangy!

Dewey considers... then--

DEWEY

One more time.

Everyone GROANS... then resets for the next take.

DEWEY

Strings-- lean into it. A little more tangy, this time... Fred, back off the goat, during the 2nd pre-chorus. I want to feel his heart, not his soul. Sam, go back to what you were doing yesterday for the bridge...

SAM

What was I doing?

DEWEY

The thing that sounded like velvet pancakes.

SAM

You got it, Dewey.

ENGINEER 1

(into the mic)

"Black Sheep". Take one hundred twelve...

Dewey counts it off--

DEWEY

One-y and a'two-y, and three-four-five!

The ORCHESTRA starts up, very grandiose...

Dewey's manager Schwartzberg approaches the engineer--

SCHWARTZBERG

What the fuck's a "velvet pancake"?

ENGINEER 1

It's the LSD. He's hearing his breakfast.

BEGIN MONTAGE-- Dewey recording his epic album--

-- Dewey does an interpretive dance, as a SAX PLAYER plays a solo.

-- Dewey, wears a strange robe as he plays a harp.

-- Dewey has grown a long beard, sits behind the console, speaks into the talk-back--

DEWEY

Again! Except this time, play it like you're in New Zealand!

-- Dewey holds a mic to a woman's breasts, recording her heart beat.

-- Dewey (who's beard has gotten really long) hangs suspended from the ceiling, singing into a mic that has also been suspended from the ceiling.

-- Dewey sits behind the console, speaks into the talk-back--

DEWEY

Again! Except this time, go-- boo-bop, boo-bop, boo-de-be-doo-bop de-bop boo-de-be-doo-bop de-bop boo-bop, boo-bop... Hold on a minute...

He turns to-- Darlene, who is GIVING BIRTH on a gurney that's been wheeled into the studio. She SCREAMS in pain--

DEWEY

Hang in there, sweetheart!
(to the engineer)
Why aren't we recording this?!
(back to Darlene)
Push, honey!

Someone puts a mic to her mouth as she PUSHES HARD, SCREAMS.

-- The tape machine turns. FOLLOW a long chord, which starts at the board, then keeps going, all the way across the room, to the door and OUTSIDE-- FOLLOW the chord a very long way, onto the beach... past several people who are staring at--

The trampoline-- where Dewey is bouncing up and down, in headphones, listening to his record. The song ends. Dewey stops bouncing. He stares out at the ocean--

DEWEY

It's perfect.

He abruptly PASSES OUT.

END MONTAGE

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Dewey is asleep in bed. Darlene stands over him, watching him sleep, worried. Dewey STIRS--

DEWEY

How long I been sleepin'?

DARLENE

Two weeks.

DEWEY

Wow, I guess I needed that...
(then worried)
I finished the record, right?

DARLENE

It's finished, Dewey. It's perfect.

DEWEY

It is, isn't it?

He reaches for the night stand, starts feeling around-- but he can't find what he's looking for. He starts searching through the drawers, becoming frantic--

DEWEY

Where's my stash? Where's my stash?!

DARLENE

It's gone, Dewey. I flushed it.

DEWEY

What?!

DARLENE

You promised-- when the record was finished, you'd quit, once and for all.

DEWEY

Darlene, honey... I know I did. And I will, it's just... my sinuses...
(near tears)
You flushed my stash?!

He springs up and RUNS into--

INT. BATHROOM - SAME

Dewey is trying to PULL the toilet off the floor-- and he's making progress...

he PULLS with all his strength-- and the TOILET comes loose, BUSTS a pipe-- the bathroom starts to FLOOD.

DARLENE

What in hell are you doin', Dewey?

DEWEY

I'm looking for my stash!

DARLENE

I flushed it, I said. I didn't just drop it into the toilet. I flushed it! It's gone!

DEWEY

I thought maybe it was still in there!

DARLENE

Look at you! You're a mess!

He collects himself--

DEWEY

(sweet talk mode)

Listen, baby... When I'm playing music... in the studio or out on the road... I need it! It keeps my creativity... It makes the engine run!

DARLENE

But you're not playin', right now. You just woke up and the first thing you think about is your drugs! Not me. Not your family. You know who you're married to? Your drugs!

DEWEY

I am not married to my drugs!

DARLENE

You're 32 years old and you ain't even left this house in four years! It's sad...

DEWEY

(angry mode)

Oh, so now I'm "sad"? I'm a pathetic drug addict? Is that it?!

DARLENE

I didn't say that!

DEWEY
Don't you judge me!

DARLENE
(calmly)
You give me no choice. I'm leaving,
Dewey.

She walks out--

DEWEY
Fine! Leave then!

He stares at the gushing pipe, then BREAKS a few more things.

DEWEY
Come back!... Darlene!... I have a
very addictive personality!

EXT. DEWEY'S HOUSE - DAY

On the PCH. Dewey emerges from his house in a bathrobe,
looking insane. He moves to the side of the road and sticks
his thumb out-- a cab SCREECHES to a stop.

CAB DRIVER
Aren't you Dewey Cox?!

DEWEY
Downtown! Step on it!

EXT. DOWNTOWN - DAY

Dewey emerges from the cab, wild-eyed-- on the prowl. He
steps into-- an alley where a bunch of over-the-top sixties
DRUG DEALERS are leaning against walls, looking dangerous.
Dewey approaches a DEALER, who wears a very over-the-top
"drug dealer" costume. There's something suspicious about
this guy...

DEWEY
You got stuff?

DEALER
Yeah, I got a little stuff.

DEWEY
Drugs, I'm talking about. You have
drugs?

DEALER
Yes, I have drugs.

DEWEY

Well, I need to buy me some drugs.

DEALER

You askin' me to sell you some drugs?

DEWEY

That's what I'm asking. I'm asking you to sell me some of the drugs you're dealing.

DEALER

Let me see your money.

Dewey pulls out a wad of cash--

DEWEY

Let me see your drugs.

The dealer pulls out a bag of something.

DEWEY

How much of my money do you want for your drugs?

DEALER

Fifty dollars.

DEWEY

Okay. Here's fifty dollars. Give me fifty dollars worth of drugs.

They make the exchange and are IMMEDIATELY surrounded by COPS, guns drawn--

COP

Freeze! Put your hands above your head!

DEWEY

I knew there was something suspicious about that...

The police RUN in and cuff Dewey. PHOTOGRAPHERS snap photos of this horrible moment-- Dewey sees the camera and smiles, trying to look cool... FREEZE on a black-and-white news photo of Dewey being led away in his bathrobe...

INSERT-- ...which turns into the cover of the next day's paper, under the headline-- "*Singer Nabbed in Drug Sting*".

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Dewey is being worked over by the same cops that nailed him the first time--

DEWEY

I'm innocent.

COP

We have you on tape saying, "Here's 50 dollars. Give me 50 dollars worth of drugs."

Dewey searches for a response--

DEWEY

I got a problem!

INT. REHAB - DAY

Dewey, in the same bed, tended by the same beautiful nurse--

DEWEY

I'm cold!

NURSE

More blankets!

DISSOLVE TO:

A vision of Darlene in India--

DARLENE

What are you searching for, Dewey?

DISSOLVE TO:

Dewey THRASHING around some more--

DEWEY

I'm hot!

NURSE

Fewer blankets!

DISSOLVE TO:

Later--

NATE

Hi, Dewey.

Nate has appeared in the corner-- *again, just his top half, with his intestines hanging out.* Dewey SCREAMS--

NATE

Dewey... what's become of you?

DEWEY

Nate! Where's your... where's your bottom half?

NATE

Oh... Sorry.

His legs APPEAR and now he's whole again.

DEWEY

That's fucked up, Nate.

NATE

Sorry.

DEWEY

It's alright, it's just when you appear as just a severed torso, it kind of feels like you're *haunting* me, more than *visiting* me.

NATE

Hm... I can see that.

DEWEY

Why are you here?

NATE

Like I said-- what's become of you, Dewey?

Dewey is forced to think about this, pained.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MALIBU CALIFORNIA - DAY

GRAPHIC UP- "1970's"

We see a fancy beach house.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - DAY

Dewey, now in his mid-thirties, with full muttonchops and a colorful 70's outfit, answers the door--

--it's Schwartzberg (his manager).

SCHWARTZBERG

Hey, stranger. Ready to get back to work?

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Schwartzberg and Dewey are seated in a very 70's looking living room.

DEWEY

I was thinking maybe now would be a good time to go on a world tour. Get the old band together and barnstorm across Europe, Asia... Hell, we could even go to Russia. I heard they let Mac Davis play there last year.

MANAGER

I am afraid there might not be the interest. You've been out of the spotlight for some time now.

DEWEY

Then I can record a new album. Get the heat going again with some rockin' new tunes.

MANAGER

I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but the label dropped you. Times are changing. Sean Cassidy and Leif Garrett-- that's what the kids are into, these days.

DEWEY

Seriously?!

Dewey paces around his living room like a caged animal with nowhere to go--

DEWEY

Then what should I do? Just give up? Pack it in?

MANAGER

Two little words-- T.V.

DEWEY

What are you talking about?

MANAGER

The Columbia Broadcasting Company would like you to host a television variety program. Every Thursday at eight o'clock. This could be big.

Off of Dewey's look--

CUT TO:

EXT. CBS STUDIOS - DAY

Establishing shot.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - TAPING

CLOSE UP ON A TV-- the animated opening of "The Dewey Cox Show" (in the style of the old "Carol Burnett Show" open).

PAN FROM THE AUDIENCE APPLAUDING TO THE SET--

--which looks much like the old Sonny and Cher Show set. We hear the theme music-- a cheesy, big band version of the song "Walk Hard".

Dewey takes the stage, as the crowd goes wild--

DEWEY

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the show. We have a lot of great guests for you tonight...

Sam walks out on stage. He is clearly the comic foil on the show. He's playing a drugged-out version of the old drunk character--

SAM

Hey, Dewey. What's up?

DEWEY

I am trying to start the show.

SAM

Oh. Whoops.

The crowd LAUGHS.

DEWEY

Why did you come out here?

SAM

Sometimes when the studio is empty
I like to come on this stage and
pretend that this is my show, and
that I'm Dewey Cox.

He starts singing a hobo-sounding version of "Walk Hard"--

DEWEY

That's terrible.

SAM

That's why I do it when nobody's
here. Hey, who is on the show
tonight?

DEWEY

Suzanne Sommers.

Sam licks his hand and pats down his mangled hair. He adjusts
his clothes, like he might ask out Suzanne Sommers--

DEWEY

You don't have a chance with
Suzanne Sommers.

SAM

Really? Because I thought maybe
four could be company, if you know
what I'm saying.

DEWEY

Get out of here!

Sam exits to APPLAUSE.

DEWEY

Ladies and gentlemen-- Suzanne
Sommers!

Suzanne Sommers walks out-- *played by the real Suzanne
Sommers*. The band strikes up and they begin singing "In
America" by The Charlie Daniels Band--

DEWEY/SUZANNE

"Well the eagle's been flying slow/
And the flag's been flying low/ And
a lot of people are saying that
America's fixing to fall/ But
speaking just for me and some
people from Tennessee/ We got a
thing or two to tell you all..."

Suddenly, they are surrounded by American flags.

DEWEY/ SUZANNE

"This lady may have stumbled but
she ain't never fell/ And if the
Russians don't believe that/ They
can all go straight to hell!"

MOMENTS LATER-- The song has just ended; the crowd APPLAUDS.
Dewey and Suzanne wave to the crowd, as they head back stage.
When they cut to commercial, Dewey PULLS her off into the
wings and KISSES her--

SUZANNE

Why, Mr. Cox!

DEWEY

I'm sorry. I couldn't help myself.
Have I upset you?

SUZANNE

Yes, I'm upset. I'm upset that you
didn't do that on the first day of
rehearsal.

She KISSES him hard, with lots of tongue.

INT. DEWEY'S MALIBU HOME - NIGHT

Dewey is having a huge party. In attendance are a bunch of
STARS from the seventies (*all played by the real people, only
now they are all in their fifties and sixties, but still
dressed as they did in the 70's*).

Dewey walks through his crowded house. People step in front
of him to say hello--

VOICE (O.S.)

Hey, Dewey!

Reveal JIMMY "J.J." WALKER--

JIMMY

Or should I say, hello Dewey "Dy-no-
mite."

DEWEY

Hey, Jimmy. Enjoying the party?

JIMMY

The only way I could enjoy it more would be if Sly from the Family Stone was cutting lines in your bedroom. Wait! He is! This party couldn't be hotter! Wanna do a line?

DEWEY

No thanks. I would but quittin' is a real drag.

Dewey keeps walking. PAMELA SUE ANDERSON stands in front of him--

PAMELA

Hey, Dewey.

DEWEY

Hey, Pamela. Finally a friendly face. How is your show 'Dallas' going?

PAMELA

Fantastic. Hey, want to smoke some hash with me and then make love? It's wild!

DEWEY

Oh, Pamela. Those days are behind me. Plus, Suzanne and I are gettin' pretty serious.

PAMELA

If only you booked me as the guest on your show last week instead of this week-- it could have been me.

DEWEY

Wait... "It Could Have Been Me"... Excuse me.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dewey sits on the bed with a guitar, trying to write a song--

DEWEY

(sings softly)

"It could have been me. It could have been me. What did I/// doopp de-dee. Could be..."

(gets annoyed)

Shit! That's not it...

(MORE)

DEWEY (cont'd)

(starts again)

When you walked away with that girl
I said it could have been me. But
you did, and I felt... low self-
esteem after that occurrence.
Dammitt!

He SMASHES the guitar on the end table, destroying it.

DEWEY

Why has the muse deserted me?!
This used to be so easy! Will I
ever get my gift back again?!

Suddenly, HENRY WINKLER enters with PENNY MARSHALL--

HENRY

Hey, Dewey.

DEWEY

Henry. Penny...

HENRY

Mind if we use your bed for the
next fifteen minutes?

PENNY

Don't worry. He'll be done in five.
Ha-ha!

DEWEY

Go ahead. Nothing important is
happenin' in here, anyway.

Dewey exits and Henry and Penny start MAKING OUT.

INT. MALIBU HOME - CONTINUOUS

Dewey walks through the party. Suzanne walks up to him and
puts her arm around him--

SUZANNE

Dewey, this party is going to be
talked about in Malibu for years.

DEWEY

Why is that? It's just some
creatively bankrupt, 38 year-old
has-been's futile attempt to seem
important.

SUZANNE

Don't say that, Dewey.

DEWEY

I can't write anymore. I've become irrelevant. I used to be one of the greats, like Dylan and Lennon and McCartney.

SUZANNE

People love you. Your ratings are through the roof.

DEWEY

(explodes)

I don't want ratings through the roof! Dewey Cox is not about ratings! Dewey Cox is about the MUSIC!!!

As he says "music", he GRABS a fire poker and SMASHES a gold record, hanging on the wall. Everyone SCREAMS.

DEWEY

Did that scare all of you?! Well get out! I don't need any of you! You don't love me for who I am! You love a cartoon! That goes double for you John Davidson!

We reveal JOHN DAVIDSON shaking his head--

JOHN

What happened to you Dewey?

DEWEY

I don't know what happened to me. But I do know what happened to you. John Davidson took a beating.

Dewey proceeds to BEAT the living hell out of John Davidson until the cast of "What's Happening" PULLS them apart. As Dewey walks away he sucker punches RAJ.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dewey and Suzanne lay in bed--

DEWEY

I'm sorry, Suzanne. That's never happened before.

SUZANNE

Maybe if you talked to your dad, things would be different.

DEWEY

You think if I talk to my dad, I'll be able to get an erection?

SUZANNE

No. I just think you and your poppy have some unresolved issues. Maybe if you and he had a real heart-to-heart, maybe you'd feel better. About everything.

DEWEY

Oh, Suzanne, now I know why America loves you. But they don't love you the way I do.

He KISSES her and gets on top of her. *We stay with them until a moment before this turns into a graphic sex scene...*

DEWEY

Man, I love the sexual revolution!

EXT. SAIL BOAT - DAY

Dewey and Pa are sailing together. Dewey drops anchor so they can have "the talk". Pa scowls at him, as always--

PA COX

What in god's name are we doing out here, boy?

DEWEY

We need to talk, Pa.

PA COX

Well, what the hell's so important that you gotta drag me all the way out here on a boat, to talk about it?

DEWEY

I wanted to be alone with you. So neither of us could run away. Like we always done before.

PA COX

(sneers, snickers cruelly)
That's the dumbest thing I ever heard. Alright. I'll bite. What do you want to talk about?

Dewey takes a deep breath, then dives in--

DEWEY

Dad... I think there's a problem in our relationship. It's hard to describe in words, but... It's as though... you don't like me much. Sure, I've made some mistakes. I know that. I've had my struggles with fame and-- let's be honest-- with drugs. And I guess, if you look at it a certain way, maybe... maybe... I was in some way responsible for what happened to Nate. And Mom, I guess... But whatever it is, it feels like I can never please you... I guess, if I had to sum it up in one phrase-- I feel as though you don't approve of me.

Pa looks at him for a long beat-- it seems as though years of rage and resentment are about to explode forth... Then, suddenly, *his face changes completely--*

PA COX

Is *that* what you thought?

DEWEY

Well... Yeah. It is.

PA COX

Dewey... Son... That's nuts!

DEWEY

It is?

PA COX

I couldn't be more proud of you! Hell, you're the pride and joy of my life.

Pa has suddenly transformed into the warmest father imaginable.

DEWEY

I am?

Pa pulls a small scrap book from his coat pocket--

PA COX

Look, here. I been carrying this around with me, everywhere I go, since the day you hit the big time...

He shows Dewey-- hundreds of clippings about Dewey.

DEWEY

It's all my clippings...

PA COX

That's right.

DEWEY

Wow... you do care.

PA COX

Of course, I do! Hell, son, why didn't you say something sooner? Gosh, I... I feel just awful about this... misunderstanding.

DEWEY

But... all those times you said "the wrong kid died"... That was awful harsh.

PA COX

That's just an expression! "The wrong kid died". It's a figure of speech! What, you thought I meant you?!

DEWEY

Kind of seemed like that's what you meant.

PA COX

No! I just meant-- Nate was one of my kids. So of course I felt like the wrong kid died. I meant-- someone else's kid should have been cut in half. Like maybe a neighbor or somethin'... I didn't mean you!

DEWEY

(choked up)

I can't believe it. All this time, I been going through my life thinkin' you had some kind of problem with me...

PA COX

Ah, Dewey... Come here...

They HUG, very meaningfully-- the hug Dewey has craved his entire life.

DEWEY

Well, I am so glad we talked about this!

PA COX

I love you, Dewey. Hell... you're my hero.

DEWEY

And you're mine, Pa. You always have been. I love you too.

PA COX

Now, what do you say we turn this boat around and go grab us some dinner? It's freezing out here.

They laugh, warmly, bonding.

DEWEY

Sounds good to me.

Dewey moves to the other side of the boat and unties the sail, which immediately WHIPS across the boat and HITS his father-- CUTTING HIM IN HALF in exactly the same way that Nate was cut in half.

DEWEY

Paaaaaaa! Noooooooooooo!

Dewey RUNS over to PA who is still conscious, his torso lying on the ground next to his legs.

PA COX

Now, don't you feel guilty about this, Dewey. It's just a very rare, very odd coincidence. Don't go beatin' yourself up because you've inadvertently killed three relatives. These things happen. I still love you. I just wish this particular thing didn't happen because... well, for obvious reasons. But I still love you.

Pa dies. Dewey CRIES to the heavens--

DEWEY

Whyyyyy???!!!

INT. MALIBU HOUSE - NIGHT

Dewey enters, distraught--

DEWEY
Suzanne! Suzanne!

He heads up stairs.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dewey enters--

DEWEY
Suzanne! My daddy's gone...

But he's stopped in his tracks by the sight of--

--Suzanne, in bed with BOB NEWHART.

DEWEY
What the hell's going... Is that
Bob Newhart?!

BOB NEWHART
Hello, Dewey.

DEWEY
Hello, Bob. What's going on here?

SUZANNE
Okay! I admit it!

Dewey still doesn't get it--

DEWEY
Admit what?

SUZANNE
I've been cheating, Dewey.

DEWEY
(shocked)
You have?!

SUZANNE
I have.

DEWEY
With who?!

SUZANNE
With Bob.

DEWEY
You saying the two of you are
sleepin' together?

BOB NEWHART

Isn't that kind of clear, Dewey?

DEWEY

But... but... why?

SUZANNE

I want to have fun, Dewey. And being with you, lately... It hasn't been a lot of fun. Frankly, I've been depressed. So I went to Bob to talk...

DEWEY

Why'd you go to him?

BOB NEWHART

I am a psychologist, Dewey. Or at least... I play one on TV.

SUZANNE

Bob just... has this wisdom about him...

BOB NEWHART

Okay Suzy Q, let's not add fuel to the fire...

DEWEY

He calls you "Suzy Q"?! Get out of my house! And you too, Bob Newhart!

He seems about to fly off the handle, runs into the bathroom. She runs after him--

SUZANNE

Dewey, don't destroy the plumbing!

--Dewey is trying to pull the sink off the wall, but he can't. After a moment, he gives up--

DEWEY

That's a damn sturdy sink!

And he RUNS from the house.

SUZANNE

Dewey!

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Dewey is dressed as Mozart, for a sketch. He rants around the set, clearly loaded on many substances. He starts yelling at a WRITER--

DEWEY

If I say the sketch isn't funny, it
isn't funny!

WRITER

But yesterday you said you loved
it! You said not to change a
word...

Dewey SLAPS the man hard across the face--

DEWEY

Don't you ever talk back to Dewey
Cox!

The man starts CRYING like a child. Dewey STORMS off.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - EVENING

Dewey STORMS into the room, heads straight for the bathroom,
opens the door--

--Sam is sitting on the floor, arm tied off, needle in hand,
having just shot up. Very sleepy--

SAM

Get... out... of here, Dewey...

DEWEY

What are you doin'?

SAM

It's called "heroin". You don't
want... no part of...

(dozing off, grinning
wide)

What were we talkin' about...?

Dewey gets that look in his eyes, considering...

INT. STUDIO - EVENING

The band is playing the intro to "Guilty As Charged."
Finally, Dewey walks out-- to big applause-- and begins
playing the song. He sings it in a very mellow, almost
passing out fashion.

INT. CONTROL BOOTH - SAME

The CREW are watching him on monitors--

DIRECTOR

What is that on his arm?

ON THE MONITOR-- See that Dewey has left the needle in his arm, *through his clothes*. The needle bops around as he plays rythm guitar.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Is that a... needle?

DIRECTOR

You telling me we're live and Dewey is playing with a hypodermic needle hanging out of his arm?!?!

INT. STUDIO

Dewey finishes the song, very proud, as they go to a commercial. He's in a much better mood, than before he shot up. Then, he sees the needle in his arm--

DEWEY

Whoops. I don't think the camera can pick up an object that small.

DRUMMER

No, Dewey. You're cool.

INT. TV NETWORK

A bank of phones RING off the hook.

CLOSE UP - MAGAZINE COVERS

VARIETY - "DEWEY COX SHOOTS UP CAREER"

HOLLYWOOD REPORTER - "DEWEY COX PUT ON THE ROCKS"

NY TIMES - "DEWEY COX FIRED FROM HIS NETWORK VARIETY SHOW, PARENTS OUTRAGED"

INT. MALIBU HOME - DAY

Dewey, now really high, is meeting with his manager.

DEWEY

What do you mean you don't want to represent me anymore? What, my money ain't good no more?

SCHWARTZBERG

There is no more money, Dewey. It's over. I'm afraid there's no coming back from this one.

Dewey takes a Gold record and BASHES it over Schwartzberg's head--

DEWEY

Get out! I am sick of your lies and distortions! America loves me. America loves Dewey Cox!

SCHWARTZBERG

Goodbye, Dewey.

He leaves. Dewey walks across the room, where a TV is on. He sees himself on the news, the anchor reads--

ANCHOR (ON TV)

One can only imagine how many of our children will start injecting heroin into their veins because Dewey Cox made it look fun.

Dewey pulls a revolver from his belt and SHOOTs the TV.

INT. MALIBU HOUSE - DAY

Dewey is taking a baseball bat to all of his gold records. It takes a while because he has so many of them. When it ends, he is exhausted. He falls to the ground where he sits in a pile of broken frames and glass. He begins to cry.

Suddenly, his ten year old son, DEWEY JR., walks into the room, holding two baseball mitts--

DEWEY JR.

Dad?

DEWEY

What is it, son?

DEWEY JR.

I was just wondering if you want to have a catch.

DEWEY

"A catch"?

DEWEY JR.

Yeah. A catch.

DEWEY

You want to have a catch with me?

DEWEY JR.

I just... I thought it might be fun, is all...

DEWEY

(dramatically)

There is nothing I would like to do more in this world than to have a catch with you...

(realizes he doesn't know the kid's name)

I know this may sound strange, but what's your name again? Are you Donald...or Danny....or Douglass...

DEWEY JR.

I'm Dewey Jr. But my friends call me Dew Drop.

DEWEY

Well, it is nice to formally meet you, Dew Drop.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE - DAY

On the beach, Dewey and Dewey Jr. are having a catch. Dewey is SOBBING the entire time--

DEWEY

So, this is what I was missing all those years out on the road.

Dewey Jr. keeps dropping the ball.

DEWEY

You are really terrible at this game.

DEWEY JR.

Well, you never played with me before. And I'm ten. How'm I supposed to learn? A boy needs a dad.

This resonates with Dewey--

DEWEY

Yes, he does. I reckon we've got some lost time to make up, don't we?

(MORE)

DEWEY (cont'd)
 With you and all your brothers and sisters. How many do you have now, anyway?

DEWEY JR.
 Twenty two brothers and sisters. And also 14 half-brothers and half-sisters. But they're all just brothers and sisters to me.

DEWEY
 So that's... 36, in all?

DEWEY JR.
 Yep.

DEWEY
 Holy shit. This may take a while. I guess I won't be playing much guitar in the future, if I am going to be... a good father.

BEGIN MONTAGE

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The familiar image of the bus plowing down the golden highway...

INT. TOUR BUS - SAME

...except, this time, Dewey's driving, and in the back are all of his many, many kids. He's never looked happier.

EXT. FARM - DAY

Dewey and his kids build a house. It looks like the barn raising scene from "Witness."

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Dewey is in the tub, bathing two of his small children.

EXT. FARM - DAY

Dewey and the kids are all building furniture for their new house.

DEWEY JR.
 Look, Pa!

Jr and a couple of the others have just finished a very impressive table and chairs set. Dewey is proud.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Dewey is still in the tub-- but now he bathes five children, who are all packed into the tub with him.

EXT. FARM - DAY

Dewey and his many children pick cotton. They are smiling and having a blast.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Dewey is now in the tub with 11 kids-- and a line has formed, ending with 21 year old DANIEL, who's not too into this.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dewey is tucking in all of his kids-- quite a process. He gets to a girl, DAPHNE--

DAPHNE

You seem lonely, daddy.

DEWEY

Me...? Naw... I got you kids. What more could I want?

DAPHNE

A mommy?

DEWEY

Aw, Delilah... you're such an old soul.

DAPHNE

I know you, papa. I know your heart.

He smiles back at this wise little daughter of his.

END MONTAGE

EXT. FIELD OF GRASS - DAY

Dewey is riding horses with six of his children, herding sheep-- *15 years have passed and Dewey is now in "middle-aged guy" make-up, but the kids remain the same age.* Then, he spots a woman riding a horse in the distance.

DEWEY

Hold up, boys. I think I know that woman.

DEWEY JR.

You do know her. That's my mom.

DEWEY

Well, then I should go over and say hello.

Dewey rides over to her.

DEWEY

Darlene? Is that you?

DARLENE

Dewey. It's been a long time.

DEWEY

What are you doing here?

DARLENE

I've got family in these parts.

DEWEY

You mean us?

DARLENE

No, Dewey. We haven't been family for a long time. I meant my cousins. How is Suzanne Sommers?

DEWEY

We broke up a long time ago. She is not what she appears to be on TV. And what about you? Married?

DARLENE

No. It's just me these days.

Instantly-- *the chemistry between them is back.*

DEWEY

Really?

DARLENE

Don't look at me like that.

DEWEY

Like what?

Darlene playfully RIDES OFF. Dewey FOLLOWS her. This begins a very sexy chase on horseback, complete with many shots of the horses breathing heavy and snorting as Dewey DARTS after her, and she avoids him. It is a sensual dance on horses.

Finally, she rides off towards a lake, and for no apparent reason, takes off all her clothes and jumps into the water.

Dewey rides his horse fast towards the lake, and when he reaches the water he lets the horse THROW him in, with all of his clothes on. He swims over to her and puts his arms around her.

DARLENE

What do you think you're doing?

DEWEY

I'm getting back the one thing I should have never let get away.

DARLENE

Who says I'm interested?

DEWEY

You're naked in a lake. That seemed to be a clue, or am I misreading the signs?

DARLENE

No Dewey, you are reading them just fine.

DEWEY

And let me say that you still have a spectacular body for a woman in her mid-fifties.

(The actress is still the same actress-- probably in her 20s or 30s-- but with very slight age make-up.)

DARLENE

(mock offended, splashes him)

For a woman in her mid-fifties?

DEWEY

For a woman any age.

Suddenly, Dewey's face fills with panic.

DEWEY

I can't do this.

DARLENE

Why?

DEWEY

Because I am wearing all my clothes
and my boots, and I am not a great
swimmer.

Dewey starts sinking fast from the weight of his boots.

UNDERWATER-- see him sink to the bottom. Darlene swims down
and removes his boots, then swims with him to the surface.

She PULLS him to shore and immediately gives him mouth to
mouth. Dewey finally CHOKES up some water, starts COUGHING--
then way too quickly, he KISSES her.

DEWEY

You were always there for me. Even
when you left me to hit bottom, I
knew you were there for me. You
just wanted me to learn how to be a
good man, and I have.

DARLENE

Oh Dewey, do you know how long I
have waited for you to say that?

DEWEY

I can love you now, because now I
know how to love myself.

DARLENE

I love you too.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dewey and Darlene have just made love.

DEWEY

Isn't sex way better now than it
was before when I was on drugs?

DARLENE

It's hard to compare. You were much
younger then. And I have to admit
that when you were on the drugs you
definitely had a lot of energy, and
stamina, and sometimes you attacked
me with the passion of a prisoner
on a work release program. Like the
drugs brought out the pure animal
in you.

DEWEY

But this was good too, right?

DARLENE

Real good, Dewey. So, what do we do now?

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Darlene is SCREAMING, delivering a baby. The DOCTOR hands the baby to Dewey, who is in tears.

DEWEY

This one I am gonna love and pay attention to. I swear. This one will be different.

DOCTOR

I have to tell you how extraordinary it is for a woman of Darlene's age to be able to conceive like that. Have you come up with a name yet?

Dewey thinks for a moment, then he looks to Darlene-- who has the idea--

DARLENE

How about... Dewey?

INT. DEWEY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

TIGHT ON-- Dewey giving the baby a bottle, talking to him--

DEWEY

And that was the day I realized that acid and waterskiing do not mix. So you remember that. I have many life lessons I am gonna teach you. I wasn't always a good father to my other children. I wasn't home enough, and when I was, I didn't take much of an interest in them. Rolling paper and a hand full of bennies were my children in those days. And I know it screwed them up. I've tried to make it up to them, but they still hunger for the love they never got and they show it by getting into trouble, like their daddy did. Other than one or two of 'em, there's no real hope for any of them.

We reveal that all of his kids are in the room, and look devastated to hear this news--

DEWEY

(to his mass of kids)

Who wants to hold this teeny tiny cute little baby? Is this baby gorgeous or what?! Who needs money or fame or a career when we all share so much love! I hungered for something my whole life when it was right in front of me-- my family!

INT. COUNTRY STORE - DAY

Even more time has passed-- Dewey now looks like an "old man", totally gray, etc... He carries a basket full of "staples"-- butter, milk, vegetable oil. He approaches the counter, addresses the very old SKEETER--

DEWEY

How's it hangin', Skeeter?

SKEETER

Down to the knees, Dewey. Say, you ever get that wheat to take hold?

DEWEY

Ehhh, just enough for winter, I suspect. Rough harvest, Skeeter...

SKEETER

Tell me about it. I done harvested eleven carrots, for the whole winter. And I'm countin' myself lucky.

A young HASIDM in a suit approaches (early-twenties but already speaks like Jackie Mason)--

HASIDM

Mr. Cox? Is that you?

Dewey turns to him, suspicious.

SKEETER

You're not from around here, are ya' boy?

HASIDM

It's so obvious?!? Are you Dewey Cox or no?

Dewey thinks about this, for a long dramatic beat--

DEWEY

I used to be.

HASIDM

Well, Mr. Cox, I don't know how to put it-- you are again. All over, I've been looking for you. Me, you don't know. But you worked with my father-- Kvetch L'Chai'm.

DEWEY

You're Mr. L'Chai'm's boy?

HASIDM

Dreidel L'Chai'm. That's me.

DEWEY

Pleased to meet ya', Dreidel L'Chai'm.

L'CHAI'M

The pleasure's all mine. Listen, Mr. Cox-- I got somethin' for ya'.

He pulls a check from his pocket, hands it to Dewey, who examines it, confused--

DEWEY

Does that say "seven million dollars"?

L'CHAI'M

It's yours, Mr. Cox. You've earned every penny of it.

Skeeter finishes ringing him up--

SKEETER

That'll be two hundred thousand dollars, Dewey.

INT. DEWEY'S HOUSE - DAY

Dewey, Darlene and many, many kids gather round L'Chai'm's laptop, which he's set up on the coffee table. Dewey has never seen a computer before--

DEWEY

A lap computer?!

L'CHAI'M

"Lap top". It's very popular thing,
this thing.

DEWEY

Well, I'll be. So, what are you
going to show me on this here "lap
top"?

L'CHAI'M

It's a music video. For a hip-hop
song.

DEWEY

"Hip-hop"...?

KID

It's rap music, daddy.

DEWEY

"Rap music"?

L'CHAI'M

Oy-vey! It's very popular, also,
this rap music. They talk instead
of sing, but it's with a rhythm and
a beat and it's nice.

DEWEY

Talkin' with a rhythm and a beat?!
Well, I'll be!

DARLENE

Mr. L'Chai'm, what's all this got
to do with my husband?

L'CHAI'M

Watch! You'll see!

(hesitates)

You may not want the children to be
hearing this thing.

DEWEY

If it's got to do with me, then
it's got to do with my family.

L'CHAI'M

Alright... I warned you.

He hits play--

ON THE SCREEN-- a very raunchy video for a song called "Tear Up That Ass"-- about hookers and blow and partying and cars, etc... Paris Hilton is in the video, doing a pole dance. And the hook sample-- "Walk Hard". The video uses historic black-and-white footage of a young Dewey performing the song, intercut with shots of greased thong-clad asses and bouncing women and low-riders. Something like--

RAPPER

Gonna tear up that ass!/
Put it in a box!/
Gonna tear up that ass!/
With my Dewey Cox!
Gonna tear up that ass!/
In the back of my car!/
Gonna tear up that ass!/
'Cause I'm walking hard!

The video ends. The Cox family sits in stunned silence.

DARLENE

(appalled)

Mr. L'chai'm... how could you allow them to do such a thing with my husband's music?

L'CHAI'M

Sampling, it's called. All the time, it's done. And the song's a big hit!

DARLENE

I don't care how big a hit it is or how much money you throw at us! This is my husband's legacy, we're talking about...

L'CHAI'M

Actually, it's been very good for the legacy, also. The back catalogue-- selling through the roof, it is.

KID

Daddy, how come that man talks like Yoda?

DEWEY

He's a Chosen Person, son. He controls the media. He speaks the secret language of the Jewish.

KID 2
What the hell's a "Jewish"?

DEWEY
We'll talk later, son.

DARLENE
You're telling me that people are buying Dewey's records again, just 'cause of that piece of hooey?!

L'CHAI'M
Through the roof, we're selling! "Nutzak"-- that's the rapper-- has introduced a whole new generation to the magic of Dewey Cox! And not only that-- they're gonna give Dewey the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Grammys, next month.

The family is excited; Dewey is humbled--

DEWEY
The Lifetime Achievement Award...

Darlene starts kissing Dewey--

DARLENE
Darlin'! What an honor!

DEWEY
I never thought I'd get no Lifetime Achievement Award.

DARLENE
Well, if anyone deserves it, it's you.

L'CHAI'M
You go on TV, they give you the award, you play a song-- it's a magical thing. We sell a million units, the next week!

Suddenly, Dewey is scared--

DEWEY
I can't go on TV and play.

L'CHAI'M
What?! Why not?!

KID
Why not, Daddy?

L'CHAI'M
The problem-- I don't see it!

DEWEY
I ain't played no music in years.
Hell, I'm 66 years old. I don't
even know if I can rock, no more,
it's been so long...

DARLENE
Of course you can rock, sweetheart!

DEWEY
I don't know if I can. And
besides...

DARLENE
What?

DEWEY
There's a reason I gave up that
life. I have trouble... I can't...
I'm afraid of all the temptations.

KID
Come on, Daddy!

DEWEY
I don't know...

KID 3
Do it for us!

KID 2
Do it for your family.

This hits Dewey hard.

L'CHAI'M
Money aside-- it's about time the
world had a chance to appreciate
Dewey Cox.

DARLENE
You can do it, Dewey. I know you
can. You can resist the temptations
and go out there and sing your
song. And I'll be standing right
behind you. Singing my back-ups,
just like the old days.

Dewey takes this in...

INT. STAPLES CENTER - NIGHT

An ENORMOUS (fake) crowd. SHANDLING hosts, finishes his monologue.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Dewey walks around, guitar over his shoulder, nervous. He passes--

--a small gaggle of contemporary GROUPIES-- pierced and tatooted, scary.

PIERCED EYE-BROW GIRL

Hi.

DEWEY

(tightly)

Howdy, ma'am.

PIERCED EYE-BROW GIRL

He's so cute!

PIERCED LIP GIRL

What are you doin' later, Dewey?

DEWEY

I'm returning to the hotel with my family.

He keeps walking, wipes his brow-- proud that he managed to avoid that temptation.

He approaches a bathroom, opens the door--

--inside, Sam is smoking crack.

DEWEY

Sam!

SAM

Get out of here, Dewey! You don't want no part of this shit!

DEWEY

What is it?

SAM

It's called "crack"! It's cocaine, except you smoke it!

DEWEY
Like free-basing?

SAM
Kind of. Except it's in rock form,
which makes it cheaper and more
addictive! You take one puff, and
the demon grabs hold a' you, and it
don't let go, until it ruins your
entire life!

DEWEY
(struggling)
Well, that *is* tempting... but you
know what, Sam? I don't think I do
want no part of that shit. I ain't
gonna succumb to the temptations.

He walks out, rounds a corner and comes face to face with--
--THE TEMPTATIONS, who practicing their perfect harmonies on
"My Girl".

Dewey stops in his tracks--

DEWEY
Oh, Lord! The Temptations!

He turns and RUNS. The Temptations are confused.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dewey stares at his reflection in the mirror--

DEWEY
Do I still have it? Am I still the
man I used to be? And... do I even
want to be?

After a moment, his reflection talks back--

DEWEY'S REFLECTION
You're still Dewey Cox. And you're
the only man who ever will be.

Dewey is not surprised by this--

DEWEY
But... is that enough?

NATE
It's more than enough.

Dewey turns to--

--Nate, who has appeared in the corner--

DEWEY

Nate...

NATE

Don't you see, Dewey? You've been through so much. You're a better man now than you've ever been.

DEWEY

You really think so, Nate? Have I made enough of my life? Have I fulfilled my promise to be double great, for the both of us?

NATE

Are you kidding?! You've made 44 gold records. You've traveled the world. Given money to charity. You been to jail four times. You been knighted by Queen Elizabeth. You've been addicted to and then kicked almost every drug known to man. You've slept with four hundred and eleven women and three men. You had your own variety show. Dewey, you have had an awesome life!

Dewey beams with pride--

DEWEY

I have, haven't I?

PA COX

You sure have.

He turns to-- a vision of his father, in the other corner--

DEWEY

Pa!

PA COX

Son, you learned the hard way-- you can't spend all your time thinking about Dewey Cox. You gotta think about the world and your family.

DEWEY

(serious)

I sure did learn that.

YOUNG DEWEY

But then, at the same time...

Dewey turns around again--

--a vision of his childhood SELF has joined them--

DEWEY

Is that my inner child?

YOUNG DEWEY

Yeah, Dewey. I'm you.

DEWEY'S REFLECTION

He's us.

DEWEY

Well, I'll be...

YOUNG DEWEY

Like I was saying, you've realized... you can't spend all your time thinking about other people. You gotta take care of Dewey Cox...

(very schmaltzy)

You learned to take care of me.

DEWEY

It's true...

PA COX

That's a little different than what I was sayin', but...

DEWEY

You're all right. Pa, Inner Child, Nate, my own reflection... I've learned that I can't spend all my time thinking about Dewey Cox and I've also learned that I have to love Dewey Cox. I can't spend all my time thinking about other people. I have to focus on myself. But also not focus on myself and instead focus on other people. It's all so clear now.

MA COX

It's not about yourself and other people...

He turns to-- a vision of his mother, who has joined them.

DEWEY

Ma!

MA COX

It's about the music. It's about
the millions of lives you've
touched, along the way.

This hits Dewey hard.

NATE

It's about the music, Dewey.

DEWEY'S REFLECTION

It always has been.

DEWEY

(realizing)

It always has been.

Dewey and all of his "visions" stand there for a very long
beat-- they've run out of pep talk.

DEWEY

Not to be needy, but you all agree
that probably I still have it?

VISIONS

Yes!/ Definitely!

PA COX

Now go out there and play some
music, boy.

Dewey takes a deep breath.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

On stage-- JACKSON BROWNE, BEYONCE and WYCLEF JEAN perform a
rousing version of "Guilty as Charged".

INT. BACKSTAGE - SAME

Dewey leans against the wall, looking tortured-- *the moment
from the opening.*

The STAGE HAND approaches--

STAGE HAND

Mr. Cox?

Sam stops him--

SAM

Give him a minute, son. Dewey Cox likes to think about his entire life before he plays.

Dewey straightens up--

DEWEY

It's okay, Sam. I'm ready.

INT. STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN gives the speech--

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

We listened to him sing about walking, and we learned a little something about how we wanted to walk. And when he walked, he walked hard. Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to introduce the original hard walker-- the Great Dewey Cox!

ACROSS THE STAGE--

Dewey COUNTS off the beat and the band STARTS PLAYING. And after a fleeting moment of hesitation-- Dewey ROCKS OUT.

Darlene sings her heart out, right behind him.

The crowd is invigorated, witnessing a little Cox magic. Women SWOON, just like the old days. And fights break out, just like the old days. The old man's still got it.

As the song continues, FADE TO BLACK--

CARD-- *"Dewey Cox remained hard for the next four years, playing to sold out houses around the world."*

CARD-- *"He never did another drug again."*

CARD-- *"Except for a little weed on special occasions."*

CARD-- *"Or on the weekend."*

CARD-- *"Other than that, he never did another drug again."*

CARD-- *"Dewey Cox died three weeks before the release of this film."*

The song ends dramatically.

CARD-- "The filmmakers are very, very sad."

CARD-- "But, we think you'll agree, it does give the film a very powerful ending."

CARD-- "And a real shot at an Academy Award."

CARD-- "Or at least a nomination for John C. Reilly."

As the credits start to roll, SEE grainy black and white footage of "the real Dewey Cox" performing, in the '50s. Russel Crowe or Crispin Glover or somebody, made up to look like the character, singing "Walk Hard".

THE END