

Velvet Goldmine

screenplay by Todd Haynes * story by Todd Haynes & James Lyons

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*

CARD:

For Oscar Wilde, posing as a sodomite

The sound of distant waves rise up.

Other sounds emerge in succession: gunfire, explosions, rinky-tink piano, children at play, bar-room singing, opera... each enveloping the other like the sound of time passing.

WE HEAR

FEMALE NARRATOR [British]
Histories, like ancient ruins,
are the fictions of empires.
While everything forgotten
hangs in dark dreams of the past,
ever threatening to return...

Sad mists of MUSIC rise (Mahler Symphony 6)

FADE UP TO:

A GALAXY OF STARS

We DESCEND, MUSIC building.

A falling star soars across the sky and explodes in lavender sparks. Purple mists clear to reveal the rooftops of a storybook Dublin.

OLD DUBLIN - NIGHT

A luminous green spaceship is just making its ascent, leaving a trail of pink smoke.

In one grand synthetic WHOOSH the spacecraft disappears into the sky.

In the distance, a baby starts to cry.

EXT. WILDE RESIDENCE - NIGHT (1854)

We DESCEND upon a lamplit street of Georgian townhouses. The cries grow louder. A light appears in the lower part of one building. Its door opens and a HOUSEMAID steps out. She discovers a small bundle at her feet. It's a BABY.

HOUSEMAID

Lord'n heaven -

She lifts it into her arms and looks up to the sky.

The last green traces of the spacecraft's eerie glow can be seen through the clouds.

HOUSEMAID

Madame Wilde! Richard! Come
quickly!

A MALE SERVANT appears with a lantern, followed by MRS. WILDE, a lean, middle-aged woman in a robe. They surround the housemaid and her miraculous find.

CLOSE on the baby. Mrs. Wilde opens the blanket and reveals a luminous emerald pin, ornate and antique, clasped to the infant's pinafore. MUSIC rises as we

DISSOLVE TO

INT. CLASSROOM/IRISH BOY'S SCHOOL - DAY (1862)

TRACK past the ruddy-cheeked faces of 8-year-old SCHOOLCHILDREN standing and stating their future ambitions.

SCHOOLCHILDREN

Banker, Constable, Barrister,
Circus-master, Farrier, etc.

SETTLE on the last child in the row, a solemn tow-haired boy whose seriousness is betrayed only by the cherry-redness of his lips. A hand-made name card propped at his desk reads: "Oscar F. U. Wilde." He stands.

EIGHT YEAR OLD OSCAR

I want to be a pop idol.

He wears the emerald pin on his lavender cravat. It sparkles.

FAST CUT TO

EXT. ENGLISH SCHOOLYARD - DAY (1955)

CAMERA SOARS over SCHOOLBOYS fighting in a crowd. It isn't immediately apparent that a century has passed, and the child being beaten is not the young Oscar Wilde but a designated ancestor.

7-year-old dandy JACK FAIRY is being bashed to smithereens by fellow classmates, as others circle the massacre, throwing in kicks for good measure. A SCHOOLTEACHER finally calls out and the young ruffians scurry off, leaving the boy face down in the yard.

In CLOSE-UP Jack lifts his head and looks around. He examines his skinned knuckles and notices something shiny between two

flagstones. He digs between them and loosens the small object. Rubbing off the dirt, he reveals Oscar's pin.

CUT TO

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - SUNSET

CRANE over little Jack walking home over artificial cobblestones and a setting sun. MUSIC swells and a new voice is heard, one we will later know as ARTHUR STUART.

MALE V-O [British]
Childhood, adults always say, is
the happiest time in life. But as
long as he could remember, Jack
Fairy knew better.

INT. JACK'S PARENTS BEDROOM - DUSK

Young Jack approaches his mother's vanity, clasping the emerald pin to his shirt. He regards himself in the mirror.

His lip still bleeds. He touches it.

FEMALE V-O (CONT.)
One day, Jack was certain, things
would be different. One day

He rubs the blood over his lips like lipstick. There is MUSIC and tiny sparkles in the air.

MALE V-O
the whole stinking world would be his.

Jubilant guitars: "Needles In The Camel's Eye"/Brian Eno

SWISH PAN/CUT TO

STREETS OF LONDON (1974) - TWILIGHT (OVEREXPOSED SUPER-8)

OPENING CREDITS

The BOYS & GIRLS of Glitter Rock rush excitedly through twilight London, outrageously dressed, teetering on mountainous footwear, and moving in glittery packs across the Waterloo bridge - all to see their favorite glam star perform at the Lyceum Theater.

A cluster of painted faces cram for space in front of a chrome bank building, doing last-minute make-up and hair. PAN UP to where someone has scrawled in lipstick: LAST MIRROR BEFORE MAXWELL!

Five skinny specimens scurry along, passing other platform-heeled

skinnies as they go: ARTHUR STUART - a gangly 17-year-old - and his colorful companions, GUY, RAY, PEARL and X of London trash-band, THE FLAMING CREATURES. SETTLE on the lean face of a man watching. He turns away. This is JACK FAIRY, age 30: gaunt, but striking, with old rouge hollowing his face.

SONG continues as we

CUT TO

'NEWSREEL FOOTAGE' (HANDHELD 16MM):

EXT. LYCEUM THEATER - TWILIGHT

Outside the Theater we LOOM PAST a long line of GLITTER BOYS AND GIRLS: super-foxes and she-bitches, ziggies, iggies, shags, queens, straight kids dressed up queer, all anxiously awaiting the first glimpse of glam icon Brian Slade.

But looking closer, there is something dark and bruised beneath the flash. Some kids look into camera as we TRACK UP, past their faces, to the name on the Marquee.

WE HEAR

BBC (O-S)

Tonight the sparkley boys and girls of glam have come to pay tribute to their patron saint Brian Slade and his space-age extravaganza, Maxwell Demon and The Venus In Furs.

CUT TO

TV MONITOR: BBC REPORTER stands outside the Lyceum Theater.

INT. DRESSING ROOM (LYCEUM THEATER) - NIGHT

CLOSE ON BRIAN SLADE (age 28), dressed as 'Maxwell Demon': his hair a bright magenta shock, his face an eerily effeminate mask. He stares at the TV screen through the mirror (quiet MUSIC beginning).

BBC (CONT.)

A palpable whirl of anticipation can be felt outside London's Lyceum Theater as fans await the final show of Slade's smash World Tour.

A young woman with a Maxwell Demon haircut, SHANNON, is shaking a can of hairspray. Brian closes his eyes as she sprays.

BBC

Security around the performer has tightened following a recent BBC interview in which the singer

admitted to a premonition of being
assassinated onstage.

Shannon's spraying stops. Brian glances up to her in the mirror.

BRIAN

Shut it off.

Shannon flips off the set. There's a loud knock at the door.

Brian's hand tightens around a small rosary.

A MAN's head pops in the door, the sound of the P.A. pouring in.

MAN

Brian? Time.

CUT TO

INT. LYCEUM THEATER - ONSTAGE

A HANDHELD shot follows Brian as he is whisked to stage in a robe. Another ASSISTANT with a Maxwell Demon haircut hands him a lit cigarette and glass of red wine on the way. The P.A. bellows thunderously throughout the hall.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and Gentlemen... The Lyceum
Theater in cooperation with Bijou
Music is proud to present...

Onstage large fans are turned on, as STAGEHANDS begin blowing white feathers into the air. The roar of the audience builds.

A crowd swarms in front of the stage. Arthur is carried away from his friends in the surge. He looks back anxiously, catching sight of someone in the aisle.

Jack Fairy is slipping through the chaos of USHERS and FANS toward the stage.

ANNOUNCER

straight back from their
fantastically successful European
Tour... MAXWELL DEMON & THE VENUS
IN FURS!

MUSIC peaks over

BRIEF SHOTS IN SLO-MOTION:

-ONSTAGE

Curtains whip open as lights electrocute the stage: Brian leaps into song through a storm of feathers.

-AUDITORIUM

Arthur catches sight of

A shiny object being pulled out of someone's coat and aimed at the stage. It's a gun.

Arthur's eyes bulge.

It fires.

Brian is catapulted into the air, his chest exploding in blood. He slowly sails back to the stage.

TRACK INTO Arthur looking back to the gunman.

A dark figure vanishes amid the sudden panic as a CHORUS OF SIGHS takes over all sounds.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

CLOSE - Brian's eyes flash open. He gasps and vomits black blood.

AERIAL VIEW of the room: a DOCTOR glides across the checkerboard floor, followed by two nuns in white.

VERY CLOSE - Brian's hand relaxes, and Oscar's pin slips out.

SLO-MO CLOSE UP of the emerald pin hitting the floor.

FAST CUT TO

NEWSPAPER HEADLINE:

SINGER BRIAN SLADE SHOT ONSTAGE

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. LONDON STREET - MORNING

Arthur stands at the door of his flat reading the headline. He looks up to the grey skies overhead. CHORUS continues as we

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

Very CLOSE on a young CREW CUT BOY, gazing up to the clouds with tears in his eyes. WE HEAR his internal whisper:

CREW CUT BOY V-O
 Put out the torches!
 Hide the moon!
 Hide the stars!

DISSOLVE TO

THE ROOFTOPS OF LONDON

beneath a heavy sky as the INTRO to "All The Young Dudes" begins.

DISSOLVE THROUGH

A MONTAGE OF FACES:

-Arthur's face, looking up at the clouds.

-TRACK past THREE YOUNG PUNKS, singing up to the skies with open mouths.

-New York City DRAG QUEENS, squinting into the sun.

-Two TEENAGE GIRLS in London, eyes closed, singing.

As WE HEAR

MALE V-O

For once there was an unknown land,
 full of strange flowers and
 subtle perfumes, a land of which it
 is joy of all joys to dream, a land
 where all things are perfect and
 poisonous...

DISSOLVE TO

A soft rain of glitter, sparkling through stage-lights, as the song's INTRO comes to an end and we DESCEND, landing on

-INT. LONDON CONCERT HALL - ONSTAGE (1972)

A glistening CLOSE-UP of Brian, electric in skin-tight space-suit and magenta shag, as he starts to sing:

BRIAN SINGS

Billy rapped all night about his suicide
 How he would kick it in the head
 When he was 25/Speed jive
 Don't wanna stay alive when you're 25

We are watching a Brian Slade PROMO-FILM (1974). CLOSE SHOTS of Brian singing are SUPERIMPOSED with glimpses of his theatrical stage show, the Legend of Maxwell Demon and The Venus In Furs.

Brian portrays Maxwell Demon, the tragic space-hero, while TREVOR, his sexy lead-guitarist ablaze in silk and leopard-skin, fronts the cosmic back-up band. The combination of camp theatricality, melodic melancholy and searing guitar creates a strange mix: erotic and violent but elegantly detached at the same time.

BRIAN SINGS

And Wendy's stealin' clothes from
Mark's and Sparks
And Freddie's got spots from
Rippin' off the stars from his face
Funky little Boat Race

SONG continues as

THE SCREEN SUDDENLY FLARES WHITE

WE PAN from the eye of a projector to a dark face looking up at a screen.

-INT. (FANTASY) PORN THEATER

Arthur sits in the dark theater with the Promo Film reflected in his glasses.

BRIAN SINGS (CONT.)

The television man is crazy
Saying we're juvenile delinquent wrecks
Oh man I need TV/When I got T-Rex

CLOSE on a hand sliding onto Arthur's crotch. SWISH UP to Arthur, who sees

A sleazy OLD MAN leaning over, smiling faintly.

BRIAN SINGS

Oh brother you guessed/I'm a dude now

[BACK TO THE PROMO-FILM]:

-EXT. LONDON STREETS - DAY (1972)

HANDHELD TRACK past the painted faces of young GLITTER KIDS along Carnaby Street, Sloane Street, Kings Road, etc.

BRIAN SINGS (CONT.)

All the young dudes/Carry the news
Boogaloo dudes/Carry the news
All the young dudes (repeat)

(Lyrics to the chorus appear with a BOUNCING BALL.)

-LONDON HUSTLER STREET - NIGHT

TRACK with Brian, dressed like a space-tart, sashaying down a street full of HUSTLERS and DRAG-QUEENS.

BRIAN SINGS (CONT.)

Lucy looks sweet
Cause he dresses like a queen
But he can kick like a mule
It's a real mean team

Brian walks directly into the arms of a SAILOR in white and kisses him firmly on the mouth.

BRIAN SINGS

But we can love, Oh yea we can love

-INT. ARTHUR'S ROOM - DAY (SUBURBAN MANCHESTER, 1972)

TRACK ALONG a wall covered in glam posters and clippings, sketches and keepsakes. Arthur, dressed in a green trench-coat, is just leaving.

-INT. STUART LIVING ROOM

He slips out of his room and down the stairs of his house.

BRIAN SINGS (CONT.)

And my brother's back at home
With his Beatles and his Stones
We never got it off on that
Revolution stuff

His parents, MR. and MRS. STUART, sit frozen in front of the TV. They turn in unison as

Arthur slips out the door.

-EXT. STUART'S HOUSE - DAY

Arthur stashes his trenchcoat in the bushes and takes off down the road.

BRIAN SINGS (CONT.)

What a drag/Too many snags

-EXT. MANCHESTER STREETS - DAY

Arthur has a "cool day", walking through Downtown Manchester in his skin-tight lightning-bolt shirt and cherry-red sunglasses.

A small group of brightly clad GLITTER KIDS stand around a bench, smoking and ignoring everyone around them.

BRIAN SINGS (CONT.)

Now I drunk a lot of wine
and I'm feeling fine
Gonna race some cat to bed
Is there concrete all around
Or is it my head?

The one boy in the group glances over, checking Arthur out.

CLOSE on Arthur.

BRIAN SINGS

Yea/I'm a dude now

The CHORUS resumes under a slightly hokey NARRATOR, as we return to the PROMO FILM with a crude-but-hip MONTAGE OF 70'S LONDON [ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE].

NARRATOR

...It appears today's youngsters have fashioned a whole new bent on the so-called sexual liberation of the flower-power set. The long-hair and love-beads have given way to glitter make-up and platform-shoes and a whole new taste for glamour, nostalgia and just plain outrageousness!

CROSS FADE with the following 'on-the-street' INTERVIEWS:

-EXT. LONDON STREETS - DAY

A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN and MAN stand in front of a church.

REPORTER

Is London not shocked?

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN

London's - improving.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

Well I think it's a disgrace,
parading around all poofed up like
a pack of bleeding woofers. Ruddy
hell, what'll they think of next?

-Now, a teenage glitter couple. The YOUNG GUY talks as his GIRLFRIEND nods in agreement.

YOUNG GUY

I like boys but I fancy girls too -
they're smashing. They're as good
as blokes. It's as simple as that.

-Trevor, Brian's lead guitarist, is being interviewed in front of a small crowd of screaming fans. He wears heavy mascara and a fringe boa.

TREVOR

Hey, rock music has always been a reaction against accepted standards. And homosexuality has been going on for centuries. At the moment, having a "gay" image is the "in" thing, just like a few years ago it was trendy to wear a long grey coat with a Led Zeppelin record under your arm.

-Curt is interviewed in New York.

CURT

Everyone's into this scene because it's supposedly the thing to do right now. But you just can't fake being gay. If they claim they're gay they're going to have to make love in gay style, and most of these kids... they just won't be able to make it. That line, "Everybody's bisexual". That's a very popular thing to say right now. I think it's meaningless.

-A decorative, bright-colored CARD reads:

"Meaning is not in things but in between them
-Norman Brown"

The CHORUS continues over a final, rapid-fire

-COLLAGE OF IMAGES

depicting the ancestry of camp, fag-pop and glitter rock: Oscar Wilde, Noel Coward, Liberace, Little Richard, Valentino, Ray Davies, Mick Jagger, Syd Barrett, Lou Reed, Iggy Pop, Alice Cooper, Marc Bolan, David Bowie, Bryan Ferry, Eno & Roxy, the New York Dolls, Brian Slade as Maxwell Demon, Curt Wild, Jack Fairy, Suzi Small, The Flaming Creatures (a mesh of fact and fiction).

RETURN TO

-INT. LONDON CONCERT HALL - AUDITORIUM

TIGHT PAN across the rapt expressions of kids in the audience, staring up at the stage.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO

-INT. (FANTASY) PORN THEATER

TIGHT PAN across a row of blank OLD MEN staring at the screen. END on Arthur Stuart, all grown up. This is (ADULT) ARTHUR, age 28, still gangly, and now wearing glasses.

-INT. LONDON CONCERT HALL - ONSTAGE

Brian completes the final chorus of the song, ending in crescendo. But just as the house explodes in cheer - SOUND AND IMAGE FREEZE.

A beat of silence, before

-A NEWSPAPER hurdles into frame with a blast of MUSIC. It reads:

"SLADE SHOOTING A HOAX!!"

CUT TO

-ECU of Brian (LONDON CONCERT HALL) confiding to camera.

BRIAN

(a thunderous whisper)

I knew I should create a sensation,
gasped the Rocket, and he went out.

CUT TO

BLACK SCREEN

MALE VOICE

And did he ever.

The IMAGE suddenly turns to newsreel TAIL LEADER as a silhouetted figure stands up into frame. The (Fantasy) Porn Theater seen before has turned into

INT. SCREENING ROOM (NEW YORK HERALD) - DAY (1984)

MALE VOICE

Alright Lionel. You can turn it off now.

We hear other voices in the room, one or two of whom also stand.

FEMALE VOICE

I don't get it.

MALE VOICE 2

What don't you get? It was a stunt.
The guy faked his own murder.

FEMALE VOICE

Yea, but why.

MALE VOICE 2

Publicity!

MARY, a young black journalist, steps into the light.

MARY

Well, I never heard of him before -

MURRAY, a journalist in his early 30'S, also black, is revealed as well.

MURRAY

Me neither.

A small, Jewish man in his 70's, steps into frame. LOU is the world-weary editor of the Herald, a once-prominent New York newspaper.

LOU

Arthur?

SWISH PAN TO (Adult) Arthur, a journalist for the Herald. He looks up.

LOU

Any recollection?

ARTHUR

Of what?

LOU

This - Brian Slade fellow?

ARTHUR

(frowning)

Vaguely.

LOU

(victory)

Vaguely! There you go!

Lou and the others all look at him.

ARTHUR

(grumpy with the attention)

What? - Early seventies... glam rock singer - ?

MARY

What rock?

LOU

Glam. As in "glamour". Also known
as glitter rock -
(turns to Arthur): Yes?

Arthur shrugs faintly as

Lou continues, walking to the window, faint MUSIC hovering.

LOU

A brief, largely British trend.
Known for its flamboyance. People
like Brian Slade, Jack Fairy -
uhhhhhhh -

Lou looks to Arthur, searching for a name, MUSIC tensing.

LOU

... Curt Wild?

Arthur, CLOSE, flinches softly.

CLOSE on Lou, who seems to notice. He continues

LOU

But shortlived. Following the
shooting stunt, disillusioned fans
lost interest -

ARTHUR

(still sullen)

Lost interest - They burned his
bloody records in the streets.

MARY

They what? They burned them?

MURRAY

What'd I tell you? I knew you
could count on good old Arthur!

ARTHUR

(turning to Lou)

Count on me for what?
(to Lou): I thought I was on the
Reynolds trip.

LOU

You are. But the President isn't
due 'til the 8th and we need a
piece for the Weekender now.

ARTHUR

(quiet, sarcastic)

Oh. Great.

MARY

Hey - I got it last time!

LOU

Look. Next week is the tenth year anniversary of the whole fake shooting incident. Find out what happened. Where he is today. Who knew him. You know - 'What Ever Happened To Brian Slade'. The Rise and Fall. Got it? Four thousand words.

Arthur looks away, shaking his head.

ARTHUR

And you want me because I'm the resident Brit, right?

LOU

No.

Arthur turns.

LOU

I want you because you remember.

A dramatic BOOM on

CUT TO

EXT. NEW YORK PANORAMA (MINIATURE) - TWILIGHT

The burnt-out remains of New York City and the SUBTITLE:

NEW YORK CITY, 1984

1984 New York is a decadent, 70's vision of an apocalyptic future: a bombed-out, expressionistic city from which most people, wealthy or white, have already fled.

Melancholy MUSIC ("The Pride & The Pain"/Roxy Music)

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - TWILIGHT [SET]

Arthur walks home through a blue-gel twilight. PULLING-OUT, we reveal a line of trash-can bonfires burning orange in the distance.

ARTHUR V-O

Because I remember... Suddenly
I was being paid to remember
all the things that money and future
and a serious life made so certain
I forget.

We HEAR the rumble of a crowd and the sound of a man's voice
(American accent) being broadcast over loudspeaker, massive with
echo.

MALE VOICE

Thank you Transelectric and CRA,
MicroAtlanta and Dupree for their
generous support.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. COURTHOUSE - LATER

TRACK OVER the heads of a CROWD of mostly kids, gathered around
an enormous screen. TOMMY STONE, a bleach-blond corporate
superstar, is being simulcast from a distant stadium filled with
bleach-blond FANS.

MUSIC continues under

TOMMY STONE (ON TV-CONT.)

Thanks to President Reynolds'
Committee For Cultural Renewal for
making this broadcast possible and
thanks to you, the three billion
viewers tuning in right now on
global satellite...

CLOSE on Arthur as the booming telecast fades and he descends the
subway stairs.

INT. SUBWAY STAIRS

A dark figure whisks by.

There is a sudden chill of MUSIC as Arthur turns.

The man passing, (CURT WILD), flashes a cool glance at Arthur
before rushing out of sight.

VERY CLOSE on Arthur, struck, as the roar of an oncoming train
rises with the MUSIC

DISSOLVE TO

INT. SUBWAY (SET)

A packed subway car, gnarled with damage and black with graffiti,

flickers in and out of darkness. People are tossed against each other but everyone is so deep in thought no one seems to notice.

WE HEAR

CHILD'S VOICE

"Yesterday upon the stair
I saw a man that wasn't there

A small BLACK CHILD in a Tommy Stone mask, is reading to his mother from a book.

BLACK CHILD (CONT.)

"He wasn't there again today
How I wish he'd go away."

CLOSE on Arthur, listening. He turns and looks out his window.

Arthur's reflection through flickering glimpses into passing trains: sad faces looking out.

ARTHUR V-O

Ten years. Ten years and the world
had changed so completely that the
life I led in England seemed like
someone else's life. Someone else's
story. Anyone's. But mine.

Out of the melancholy of the score, a SONG from the past begins
to rise ("Rock And Roll"/Velvet Underground)

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. DAY - PASSING STREETS OF SUBURBAN MANCHESTER

MALE VOICE (TEACHER O-S)

"There were times when it appeared
to Dorian Gray that the whole of
history was merely a record of his
own life,

EXT. SCHOOLYARD (MANCHESTER SUBURBS) - DAY (1973)

Three KIDS in glitter-rock gear are running late to class,
laughing and tripping on their flashy footwear. One of them is
the Glitter Boy seen earlier.

TEACHER O-S

not as he had lived it in act and
circumstance, but as his
imagination had created it for him,
as it had been in his brain and in
his passions.

Teenage Arthur watches the kids through his classroom window. He returns his attention to

his meticulous rendering of Brian Slade as Maxwell Demon, being executed on an exercise book.

INT. CLASSROOM- DAY

The offscreen voice of a TEACHER continues with the MUSIC.

TEACHER

"He felt that he had known them all,
those strange terrible figures that had
passed along the stage of life, and made
sin so marvelous and evil so full of
subtlety.

Suddenly Arthur looks up. MUSIC stops.

His Teacher is looking right at him.

"Coz I Luv You"/Slade begins.

TEACHER

"It seemed that in some mysterious
way, their lives had been his
own..."

MUSIC rises in volume with

CUT TO

INT. RECORD STORE - DAY

We TRACK past the display of recent releases: Spinners, Gilbert O'Sullivan, The Carpenters, etc.

Teenage Arthur searches pensively for a certain release. Then he spots it.

CLOSE on the Brian Slade album, "Demon Hype". He gingerly reaches for a copy.

Arthur turns solemnly and begins approaching

His BROTHER, standing with two FRIENDS by the cash register, arguing over boy bands.

FRIEND 1 (O-S)

... That's dead rubbish - Blind
Faith takes the piss out of Derreck
and the Dominoes -

BROTHER (O-S)
That's bollocks!

FRIEND 2 (O-S)
Hey, the Yardbirds blow the both of
them out of the water -

He approaches his brother who stands with one long-haired friend
chatting to another behind the counter.

FRIEND 1 (O-S)
You and Nigel, man - It's like the
fuckin' Yardbirds were the only
fuckin' band that ever existed -

FRIEND 2 (O-S)
And we'd be fuckin' right then!

FRIEND 1 (O-S)
Paul, you're thick as pig shit you are -

Arthur stands opposite his brother.

ARTHUR
Nigel. Can you lend us two quid? I
got money at home.

BROTHER
You must be mental.

ARTHUR
Pleeease. Pleeeeeease.

BROTHER
Oh piss-off - What for then?

ARTHUR
Nothing.

BROTHER
Give us it here. Let's have a look.

Arthur's brother grabs the album out of his hands.

BROTHER
Bloody Nora!

MUSIC rises as Arthur's brother shows the record to his friends.

CLOSE on Arthur, purple with shame.

BROTHER

Our kid's one of them pansy rockers!

FRIEND 1

Fuckin' hell!

FRIEND 2

That's naff, mate.

BROTHER

You're disgustin' - you know that?

Arthur's POV of Brother and Friends laughing to camera. Swirling MUSIC rises.

CUT TO

EXT. STUART HOUSE - AFTERNOON

We SWOOP over teenage Arthur running home, record under his arm. He opens the front door, scoops up the mail, and finding what he was looking for, hollers for joy, slamming the door behind him.

INT. ARTHUR'S ROOM

CLOSE SHOTS:

Arthur shuts the door and jams it with a chair.

Album cellophane is peeled and crumpled.

A shiny new record is slid out of its virgin sleeve and placed onto a turn-table.

The needle drops and glides into its groove, filling the room with a glorious, anticipatory hiss.

A SONG begins.

Arthur places a brown-paper wrapped magazine on the floor and lies down before it. He carefully unwraps it, unveiling a copy of Circus magazine. He opens it up.

CLOSE on the glossy pages: Arthur turns to a fold-out spread on Brian Slade's stage persona Maxwell Demon.

He stares endlessly at the skin-tight androgyny in each juicy still.

He turns the page, revealing a large black and white blow-up of Brian Slade and Curt Wild kissing hotly on the mouth.

CLOSE on Arthur's face, flushed.

FAST CUT TO

Adult Arthur staring out a subway car, stopped at a station.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - DUSK (NEW YORK 1984)

Arthur looks out onto the station platform. The doors begin to close.

Suddenly Arthur realizes what stop it is and scrambles for the door.

INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM

Arthur's overcoat is stuck in the door and the train begins to move. We ASCEND. Arthur struggles along with the train before finally ripping it out and stumbling to his knees. Arthur looks up to the sound of LAUGHTER.

A large black HOOKER leans against a post, laughing at him broadly.

MUSIC rises ("The Fat Lady of Limbourg"/Eno) with the sound of a 70's NEWS BROADCAST:

NEWSCAST

...Today in London officials confirmed that the February 5th shooting of singer Brian Slade at London's Lyceum Theater was a publicity stunt, mounted by the singer's company, Bijou Music L.T.D.

CUT TO

NEWSPAPER ON MICROFILM

A 1974 headline reads:

"BRIAN SLADE SHOOTING DECLARED A HOAX!"

TRACK IN to story below, subtitled:

"ANGRY FANS FEEL BETRAYED"

INT. NEWSROOM LIBRARY - NIGHT

Slow TRACK INTO Arthur reading the story, colorless in the negative light.

NEWSCAST (CONT.)

Manager Tony Devine announced today that his company meant "no harm" in

their "escapades", that it was intended solely as "entertainment"...

The sound of the NEWSCAST cross-fades with that of TONY DEVINE, Brian's manager.

DEVINE O-S

Maxwell Demon was terrifically successful for Brian, but eventually he began to feel trapped by it all.

'NEWSREEL FOOTAGE' (HANDHELD 16MM): EXT. BIJOU OFFICES - DAY (LONDON, 1974)

Devine is being interviewed outside his office building in Chelsea. An OFFICES FOR RENT sign can be seen behind him.

DEVINE

Certainly we made mistakes but I think it's terribly sad and unfortunate that, in this day and age, an artist's quest for creative freedom should end up costing him his career.

BACK TO

INT. NEWSROOM LIBRARY

MUSIC continues as Arthur scans through another roll of microfilm.

DISSOLVE THROUGH

A SERIES OF HEADLINES:

"BRIAN SLADE SALES PLUMMET"

"BRIAN SLADE UK TOUR CANCELLED"

"SINGER BRIAN SLADE CHARGED WITH COCAINE POSSESSION"

"SINGER BRIAN SLADE SCHEDULED TO HOST ANNUAL POPSWOP AWARDS"

DISSOLVE TO

ECU REFERENCE BOOK

We FOLLOW Arthur's finger as he scrolls down a periodicals listing for Brian Slade. After 1974, references are scarce. Arthur's finger stops at the last date: September, 1977.

He looks up, pensive. MUSIC is suspicious.

WE HEAR

MALE VOICE O-S
Brian Slade? Oh yes.

BRIEFLY

SILENT SUPER-8

Fleeting, splicey images of two men having sex in a bedroom - one of them is Brian (1969).

FAST CUT TO

CLOSE on the unshaven face of a 53-year-old CECIL DRAKE, Brian's first manager, remembering.

INT. CITY HOSPITAL - DAY (1984)

CECIL (CONT.)
Quite well. Quite well.

Arthur stands opposite with a note-pad.-

CECIL
Once upon a time.

With that, Cecil pivots around in his wheel-chairs and leads Arthur down the busy hallway of a decrepid city hospital.

ARTHUR
So - What was he like?

CECIL
Who - Brian?

ARTHUR
Yea.

Cecil makes a quick turn off to a large window near the elevators. He abruptly stops, staring out at an overcast sky.

CECIL
(more to himself)
Like nothing I'd ever seen, I can tell you that.

Cecil turns to Arthur.

CECIL
And in the end... like nothing he appeared.

A quiet draw of MUSIC pulls Arthur onto a seat opposite.

SLOW TRACK into Cecil, in a trance.

CECIL

He was elegance, walking arm in arm
with a lie.

MUSIC blooms

DISSOLVE TO

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM - DAY (BIRMINGHAM 1954)

Slow TRACK past the face of an angelic, 7-year-old boy, combing his hair in the mirror with steely concentration. BRIAN SLADE, immaculately dressed, puts down the comb and stares at his beautiful reflection.

CECIL V-O

He was born Thomas Brian Patrick Slade, and his father owned a small tiling business in suburban Birmingham. But Brian never cared much for the suburbs, and as a young boy, had the unique opportunity of spending a summer in London with his Aunt -

CUT TO

INT. VAUDEVILLE HALL - NIGHT (LONDON)

TRACK along the floorboards of a last-legs music hall, where a smokey vaudeville act is glimpsed through fringed curtains and footlights.

Brian is creeping along the rim of the orchestra pit, observing show and backstage antics alike.

CECIL V-O (CONT.)

a figure of some ill repute in the Slade family, who married a questionable cockney in the 'entertainment field' and moved to East London.

Backstage, Brian spots his fat, mustached UNCLE, the director, ordering people around in a sweaty huff.

Brian settles into a sliver of light and watches the rest of the performance with intensity.

The wiggly, over-painted SINGER, stuffed into a boustier, is belting out a saucy number. Behind her, three girls in stripes make up the SWIM-SUIT CHORUS.

CUT TO

BACKSTAGE - LATER

A comedian with zany sound-effects is heard in the distance as Brian tip-toes up a dark stairway.

At the top of the stairs he spots a dressing room door, partly open. From inside, he hears the sound of woman in distress.

Cautiously, he approaches. He peers in through the crack.

All we can see is a woman's red-nailed hand pushing against a large man.

Brian inches the door open for a better view.

INT. DRESSING ROOM

His fat Uncle, in CLOSE-UP, spots him and winks. QUICK ZOOM-OUT, revealing him seated on a dressing table, pants open, with the Singer's head between his legs in the throes of fellatio.

Brian stares in shock.

CECIL V-O (CONT.)

Brian's tender introduction to the theatrical underworld would leave a dramatic impression.

His Uncle blows the boy a little kiss.

Brian's eyes bulge. WE HEAR a high-pitched, Little Richard squeal.

WILD SWISH PAN TO

A SPOTLIT STAGE

With a MUSICAL BANG, Brian (age 7) slides into frame, dressed - in black pompadour wig and make-up - as Little Richard. He performs "Tutti Frutti" in his own piercing falsetto, singing the song with its "original" lyrics, and playing up each sexual innuendo with broad, Little Richard gestures.

BRIAN AGE 7 SINGS

Tutti frutti/Good booty
If it don't fit/Don't force it
You can grease it/Make it easy...

Little Brian finishes with a saucy bang.

FAST CUT TO

INT. STONE LIVING ROOM - EVENING (BIRMINGHAM 1956)

BRIAN'S PARENTS, GRANDMUM and BROTHER sit watching dumbstruck, as "Do You Wanna Touch Me (Oh Yeah)"/Gary Glitter begins.

CUT TO

EXT. BIRMINGHAM STREET - DAY (1964)

BRIAN SLADE (age 16), the perfect mod, is in the midst of deep-mouth kissing his perfect MOD GIRLFRIEND. He wears a short jacket, tight trousers, and a puffed bouffant, dyed blond and lacquered.

As they finish, she asks:

MOD GIRLFRIEND

So what are you, a mod or a rocker?

BRIAN

(leaning in)

Confidentially? (whispers): In between.

He pecks her on the cheek and we PULL OUT. The Mod Girlfriend gets on her bicycle and rides off. Brian waves goodbye and turns, checking his face in a pocket mirror as he joins two other MOD BOYS, leaning against a wall, posing with fags.

A pack of uniformed SCHOOLBOYS are passing.

CECIL V-O

Following Little Richard, the original London mods - short for Modernists - were the first to wear mascara and lacquer their hair, the first true dandies of pop -

One PRETTY BOY, busily winding a bright gold watch, lags behind the rest.

Brian notices him pass.

CECIL V-O

...and known to just about any indiscretion where a good suit was involved.

The tow-haired Boy stops and looks over his shoulder at Brian.

CUT TO

INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

CLOSE PAN UP Brian, slipping the gold watch into his pocket and removing his tie. His eyes are fixed on something below him.

FULL SHOT: Brian stands opposite the Boy, spread out on his bed, face down and bare-bottomed.

CECIL V-O

Style always wins out in the end.

Brian's tie drops to the floor.

Petulia Clark ("Don't Sleep In The Subway")

CUT TO

INT. SOMBRERO CLUB - NIGHT (LONDON, 1971)

A DRAG SINGER lip-syncs with Pet, on a small club stage draped in silver spangles.

CECIL V-O (CONT.)

For Brian, the mods were a glamorous call to arms - or at least, to London, where three years later, at The Sombrero Club in Kensington,

Cecil sits with friends at a table: ADRIAN, a middle-aged gay man and MICKEY, a stuck-up dancer. They are noticeably conservative amid the flamboyance of their surroundings.

CECIL V-O

I would hear him sing for the very first time.

The Singer finishes and the club cheers. Packed to the gills, the streaming club swarms with the finest of London trash and glamour.

CECIL V-O

Everything, it seemed, started at the Sombrero. At that time there was no club in London with more notorious sway.

A lanky woman leaps to the stage, dressed in a white-velvet one-piece. This is Euro-American MANDY TAYLOR, 23, the Sally Bowles of London. She provokes a round of familiar hoots from the gallery.

MANDY

Thank you, Mimosa darling for that devastating Pet! Isn't she outrageous? Heaven on earth, darling. Take it from the Man. And now, boys and girls, it's my supreme pleasure to introduce to

all you lovelies tonight, The
Sombrero's prettiest star - and my
most shimmering hubby! - Brian
Slade!

The club erupts into cheers as Brian appears, swathed in satin and pearl like a pantomime damsel. His hair at this point is long and straight and parted on the side like Lauren Bacall. He and Mandy kiss and raise their joined hands, the perfectly androgynous, bisexual couple of the 70's.

Cheers from the house.

Brian's small back-up BAND kicks into gear and suddenly he's at the mike, singing a speedy "Summertime Blues" (a la T-Rex).

Cecil stares in quiet, amorous shock while his companions make the customary cracks.

MICKEY

Ooo, varda Mistress Bona!

(SUBTITLE reads: "Say, have a look at 'Miss Beautiful'!")

ADRIAN

Varda the omie palomie!

(SUBTITLE: "Have a look at the homosexual!")

MICKEY

A tart, my dears, a tart in gildy
clobber!

(SUBTITLE: "A slut, mates, a slut in fancy clothes!")

Cecil is captivated.

CECIL

Who is he?

Mickey is suddenly at one ear.

MICKEY

A scrubber, my dear, I assure you.

Adrian, at the other.

ADRIAN

Though not too scruffy as I recall.

Cecil tosses a smirk at both of them and stands. He straightens his blazer and heads off toward the stage for a better view.

Adrian and Mickey watch him go, incredulous.

Brian continues his song as

Cecil finds a place behind a throng of dancers. Slow ZOOM IN as WE HEAR

CECIL V-O

So I introduced myself. Told him I was developing my own management company, and on the look-out for new talent. I remember he asked me what sign I was, introduced me to his wife, and before the week was out - we were signing contracts.

Brian catches sight of Cecil and gives him a little smile.

MUSIC rises over

CUT TO

MONTAGE [ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE]: LONDON HIPPIES

We see footage of late sixties hippie culture.

CECIL V-O

You see Brian believed in the future. He believed his music spoke not to the peace and love generation but to its outcasts. His revolution, he used to say, would be a sexual one.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. OUTDOOR CONCERT - LATE DAY (SOUTHWEST ENGLAND)

We TRACK OVER a mass of grungy hippies, gathered for an all-day concert, staring at the stage with perplexed expressions (slight SLO-MO).

CECIL V-O (CONT.)

But in 1971, rock audiences bred on Credence Clearwater and the Beatles were not entirely sure what to make of this particular brand of revolt.

ONSTAGE

Under a large yellow canopy, Brian performs a song ("Lady Stardust"/Bowie) on piano in scarf and white-face, wearing a long velvet dress and boots. He sings with greater affectation and a more fay manner than before.

BRIAN SINGS

... Femme fatales emerged from shadows
to watch this creature fair
Boys stood upon their chairs
To make their point of view
I smiled sadly for a love I could
not obey/And Lady Stardust sang her
songs of darkness and dismay

Cecil and Mandy watch from the audience. In front of them, a
HIPPIE is joined by his HIPPIE FRIEND.

HIPPIE FRIEND

Who's the geezer, mate?

HIPPIE

Some shirt-bender from Birmingham.

CUT TO

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY (NEW YORK, 1984)

CECIL

Somehow he got it into his head
that he had to perform in a dress -
Don't ask me why. I mean I thought
it was a bit naughty, a bit of a
giggle, but...

RETURN TO

EXT. OUTDOOR CONCERT - LATE DAY

Hisses from the audience, followed by a few shouts.

AUDIENCE

Get-the-fuck off! Cut the shite!
Bugger off, woofah!

Brian struggles to finish, glancing over to

Cecil in the audience.

CECIL V-O

Let's just say Brian had not quite
set the world on fire just yet.

CUT TO

BACKSTAGE - LATER

Mandy is a gush of enthusiasm as she and Cecil trail Brian, who
quickly collects his belongings. Hard rock on the PA billows from
the stage.

MANDY

Darling it was smashing, every bit!
I was beaming, like someone's mum,
truly, and they adored you, the
whole lot - transported!

BRIAN

(to Ken)

They were unconscious! They weren't
even shocked!

CECIL

Brian, I think it's simply a matter
of presentation. And that with proper
back-up - simple guitar-bass-and -

BRIAN

Back up! What happened to Judy
Garland! What happened to the
bloody lost torch song - ?

CECIL

In a cabaret, yes! But in the
context of a rock show, I can see
it's a bit more dodgy. Listen -
the act is there. All it needs -

Blaring from the stage, the ANNOUNCER'S voice on the PA:

ANNOUNCER O-S

Next up, all the way from New York
City -

BRIAN

Let's blow -

ANNOUNCER O-S

...lead singer and founder of the
greatest garage band known to
mankind... on his own for the very
first time - Curt Wild!

CUT TO

EXT. OUTDOOR CONCERT - NIGHT

Brian, Mandy and Cecil are walking out as a deep, brooding GUITAR
begins.

Brian can't help but look.

ONSTAGE, a dark figure appears. TRACK IN, MUSIC rising.

BRIEFLY

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY (NEW YORK, 1984)

Arthur looks up at

Cecil, CLOSE

CECIL
(to camera)

Curt Wild -

EXT. OUTDOOR CONCERT - STAGE

FAST RETURN

LIGHTS and a bolt of guitars ignite the stage. ("Loose"/Stooges)
CURT WILD, age 25, wearing a twisted rag around his waist, lifts
a can of oil into the air and starts covering himself with its
threads.

Brian has stopped, stricken by what he sees. Slow TRACK IN.

Curt throws the oil away and begins rubbing his glistening body
and groin along to the words.

CECIL V-O
Curt Wild, the original American
punk, founder of the influential
New York garage band, The Rats,

DISSOLVE TO

Dark HAND-HELD glimpses of animals, moving in pack, close to
camera.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

CECIL V-O (CONT.)
came from the aluminum trailer
parks of Detroit - though rock
folklore still claims far more
primitive origins.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - NIGHT (MICHIGAN 1947)

Long shot of luminous silver trailer home.

A pack of black wolves leave a bundle at the door and saunter
off, looking back as they go. We hear a BABY'S CRIES and the door
opens.

A handsome WHITE TRASH FAMILY peer out.

FAST BACK TO

EXT. OUTDOOR CONCERT (STAGE) - NIGHT (1971)

CLOSE on Curt as he lifts a huge jar of gold glitter into the air and begins to slowly shower himself, top to bottom, with the sparkling substance.

CURT SINGS (CONT.)
 And I stick it deep inside
 Stick it deep inside
 Stick it deep inside
 'Cause I'm loose!

INTERCUT between Curt's glitter rain and the following shots, each in slight SLO-MO:

-Brian, his attention rapt - RACK TO Cecil, behind him, noticing.

-TRACKING OVER the audience, tightening in waves. They turn restless and noisy, fighting amongst themselves, throwing things.

-Curt responds by camping it up and blowing kisses at his perpetrators.

CECIL V-O
 According to legend, when Curt was 13, he was discovered servicing his older brother and promptly shipped off for three years of electric shock therapy.

Curt turns around, drops his pants and moons the audience, who ROAR in horror.

FAST CUT TO

INT. WAYNE COUNTY SANITARIUM - DAY (1959)

Doors swing open to the psych ward and we whisk through.

RECORDED VOICE
 You are now entering Wayne County.

Curt (age 13), strapped down to the traveling gurney, hooked up with electrodes, comes to a halt. He looks up at

His family (MA, PA, BROTHER and SIS), all looking down at him in bed. Ma clutches the bible.

CECIL V-O (CONT.)
 The doctors guaranteed it would shock the fairy right out of him. But all it really did was make him bonkers -

The Brother gives Curt a wink.

The doctor flips the switch.

FAST RETURN TO

Curt leaps into the air in a contorted frenzy.

EXT. OUTDOOR CONCERT - STAGE

CECIL V-O (CONT.)
every time he heard electric guitar.

The audience roars in delirium.

Someone throws a paper torch onto the stage and all the oil goes up.

Surrounded in flames, Curt shrieks victoriously. Suddenly he goes running off the edge of the stage and into the pit of swarming spectators.

SUDDEN CUT TO

Quiet. Brian looks out at the dawn.

EXT. PARK HILLSIDE - SUNRISE

He sits with Mandy on a grassy hill, near the concert grounds.

BRIAN
(quietly)
They despised him.

Cecil's eyes open from half-sleep, leaning against a nearby tree.

MANDY
(also quietly)
Yea. But when you're abused like
that... you know you've touched the
stars.

CLOSE on Brian against nectarine skies.

BRIAN
I know. I just -

Mandy looks at him.

BRIAN
(softly, as if to himself)
... wish it'd been me. (silence)
Wish I'd thought of it.

Quiet waves of MUSIC: Mandy is touched by his confession.

MANDY
(tenderly)
You will luv. You will.

ZOOM-IN as Brian turns. He looks at her as a wistful glam SONG begins (composed for film).

CUT TO

A white-gloved hand picks a pink rose. Fast ZOOM-OUT:

-INT. WHITE SET

Brian, dressed as a pink-and-blue harlequin, performs against a white seamless.

He sings to the pink rose-bud in his lapel. It blooms into a full-bodied flower.

He peers into a white Victorian doll-house on a table beside him.

-INT. DOLL HOUSE

Brian, dressed as a green amphibious alien, prowls through the all-white interiors, slithering across black and white check floors.

He surprises a model FASHION COUPLE in bed upstairs, humans impersonating a 70's Barbie and Ken. Brian the alien slithers between the bed-sheets.

HI-SPEED sex as Brian rapes the 'Barbie' and then the 'Ken'.

-INT. WHITE DRAWING ROOM

The life-size Brian lights a cigarette and tosses the match onto the doll house. It goes up in smoke.

-INT. DOLL HOUSE

Through the flames, Brian the alien is grinning, jamming on his guitar.

FAST CUT TO

INT. RECORD OFFICES (SET)

MUSIC holds on a row of faceless EXECS (seen previously in the 'PORN THEATER') facing camera in smokey darkness. We hear the sound of one person clapping. Everyone looks over

SWISH PAN TO TONY DEVINE (mid-thirties), seated alone with a

cigar. He wears an Italian 'fro, fat mutton-chops, and a large triangular nose (that will subtly grow throughout the course of the film).

DEVINE

(extending his hand)

Nice stuff.

Brian's gloved hand shakes it.

BRIAN

Thanks.

DEVINE

Devine. Tony Devine. Personal management. Interested.

BRIAN

Oh, well - thank you - but I'm afraid I already have management. He's -

Cecil smiles and waves from his seat.

DEVINE

Not in my opinion.

Cecil's eyes bulge. 'Movie MUSIC' continues beneath:

DEVINE

The truth is you have talent. That's plain. But it doesn't really matter what a man does in his life. What really and truly matters you see is the legend that grows up around him. Today you're a talented singer. That's fine. But I could make you a star.

CECIL

(standing, angrily)

And just how do you propose to do that?

DEVINE

I will tell you, sir...

Devine pushes up a shirt sleeve and places his elbow on the table before him, his other hand joustingly on his hip.

DEVINE

When you pin me.

Murmurs from the crowd as Cecil bolts up from his chair.

CECIL

Well I have never in all my life -

Cecil looks around helplessly for defense.

Everyone just stares at him, evil MUSIC rising softly.

DEVINE

(poised)

May the best man win?

An upbeat glam SONG ("Velvet Goldmine"/Bowie) punches in.

CUT TO

TV IMAGE

Brian performs the SONG on Top of The Pops, his entire band dressed in gold lame.

BBC

Earlier tonight on the popular chart show Top of the Pops, newcomer Brian Slade performed his hit single "Velvet Goldmine"

PULL OUT to REVEAL

INT. LONDON PUB - EVENING

BBC (CONT.)

dressed in gold lame and wearing glitter eye-makeup. A spokesman for the show, known for showcasing pop's brightest stars, says they've been flooded with calls all evening.

Cecil sits over a cocktail, looking up at the television.

CECIL (PRE-LAP)

The next day every schoolgirl in London was wearing glitter eye-makeup. And I was out of a bleeding job.

CUT TO

INT. CITY HOSPITAL - DAY (NEW YORK, 1984)

Cecil shakes his head with a distant smile.

CECIL

And that, as they say, was that. I

never heard another word from Brian
- or any of them for that matter -
ever again. To this day, I don't
really know why we split up.

ARTHUR

Do you have any idea what ultimately
happened to him? Where he is today?

Cecil just shrugs.

CECIL

Last I heard he'd returned to
Birmingham, but this was - three
years ago? Four? No, I'm afraid I
can't help you there. In which case
it may be unavoidable.

ARTHUR

What's that.

CECIL

The ex-Mrs. Slade, I'm afraid. But
then every story needs a contrary
opinion, and with Mandy you're
guaranteed excesses of both.

FAST CUT TO

INT. DIVE CLUB - LATE DAY

A bolt of MUSIC strikes a dirty marquee: "APPEARING NITELY - THE
DIVINE MISS MANDY SLADE"

INT. DIVE CLUB - LATE DAY

The bar's front door opens and WE ENTER the crumbling night-club,
APPROACHING a lone figure bent over a table, the only person in
sight. Suddenly a large BARTENDER, Latino, steps into frame,
blocking our way.

BARTENDER

Hey - fellah, we're not open - Hey!

ARTHUR

I'm from the Herald?

BARTENDER

I don't care if you're from Planet
X - We still don't open till 7 -

ARTHUR

Mandy Slade told me to meet her

here at 4. I'm a little late, I'm
sorry -

BARTENDER
(softly)

Mandy did?

The MUSIC suddenly softens.

ARTHUR

Yes.

He slowly turns, looking back over his shoulder: and there she
sits.

BARTENDER

Man?...

We resume our APPROACH past the Bartender.

Arthur nears her, feeling a pang of ill-ease.

ARTHUR

Miss Slade?

Mandy slowly lifts her head and squints up at him.

MANDY

Yea?

ARTHUR

I'm Arthur Stuart - From the
Herald? We spoke on the phone?

She looks at him blankly.

ARTHUR

I'm sorry I'm a bit late. I really
just have a few questions I wanted
to ask. It shouldn't take long.

Nothing.

ARTHUR

Do you mind if I - sit down?

MANDY

It's a free country. Sorta.

Arthur sits.

The Bartender stands staring at Arthur as Mandy sits staring into

her drink.

ARTHUR
What're you having?

She looks up at him.

MANDY
You, looks like.

Arthur smiles.

MANDY
(quietly)
Scotch. Rocks.

ARTHUR
(to Bartender)
Make that two.

The Bartender drags off, mumbling.

MANDY
Gee. You must be after some damn
exclusive copy.

ARTHUR
It's a piece on Brian Slade?

MANDY
No kidding. What - sort of a memory
jog kind of thing?

ARTHUR
Well. It's just that it's been ten
years since the whole fake shooting
incident, and we're -

MANDY
Ah yes, and what a fake it was!
Tricking us all in the end with
such an authentic demise.

ARTHUR
His career, you mean?

CLOSE on Mandy, looking up from her drink. She can't suppress a
smirk, which spreads to a snicker.

ARTHUR
I mean do you have any idea what
happened to him, where he is today?

MANDY

Can't you just, you know, run him through the files? Punch in the name?

ARTHUR

Not exactly.

Mandy starts opening up a fresh pack of cigarettes.

MANDY

Because, honestly darling, I haven't spoken to Brian Slade in - seven years, at least.

ARTHUR

Seven years. Wow.

MANDY

At least - Smoke?

ARTHUR

No. Thanks.

MANDY

No, right after everything crashed we - we split... And Brian, he just - (She lights a cigarette and takes a drag) - became someone else.

She turns to Arthur and exhales.

MANDY

(a distant smile)

But then he always was.

MUSIC ("Arnold Layne"/Pink Floyd) on

CUT TO

EXT. LONDON HUSTLER STREET - NIGHT (NEW YEARS EVE, 1969)

Brian, age 21, looking very every inch the London hippie with a mass of blond curls, walks along the cruising street seen earlier.

He passes the assembly of HUSTLERS and TRANSVESTITES.

HUSTLER 1

Hello stranger.

Brian passes Hustler 1 and spots someone up ahead.

A strange, willowy figure, dressed in a gauzy pant-suit, leans against a fence, smoking. JACK FAIRY, age 25, his hair a neat waterfall amid an avalanche of black feathers, is adjusting an elaborate earring when he looks up and sees Brian.

Brian notices the emerald pin hanging from Jack's ear. It sparkles.

They exchange glances before Brian turns and walks off.

EXT. SOMBRERO CLUB - NIGHT

Moments later, Brian approaches the club. MUSIC pounds from within. He slips inside.

INT. SOMBRERO CLUB

WE FOLLOW as Brian descends the club's curving staircase and is engulfed in its rich flamboyance. ("Ballroom Blitz"/The Sweet pounds.)

A DRAG-QUEEN is leading the count-down from the club's make-shift stage, spot-lit beside an enormous clock. Behind her a bright banner reads: "WELCOME TO THE SEVENTIES!"

Brian sucks in his rich new surroundings with steely intensity.

MANDY V-O

No. That curly-haired boy I first
laid eyes on way back when,

He catches sight of someone through the crowds.

Mandi stands laughing and smoking with friends, glowing in a bright green unisex one-piece.

MANDY V-O

was Brians and Brians away
from the one I left behind.

She catches sight of

Brian's stare.

Onstage, the final seconds are being counted.

EVERYONE

Five... Four... Three... Two...
One: HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

Hysterical celebration and MUSIC. In the back, glowing in colored lights, a light-up dance-floor is pumping with dance.

MANDY V-O

It was New Years Eve 1970: the
start of a new decade,

Brian watches Mandy amid a flood of hugs and kisses.

MANDY V-O

and everywhere you turned there was
a feeling in the air of imminent,
infinite possibility.

A sudden CRASH of symbols and dimming of lights directs
everyone's attention to the club's entrance upstairs.

A spot-light is spun around, followed by a luxurious SWISH PAN TO

The top of the curving staircase. There, aglow in shimmering
pastels, Jack Fairy, the Sombrero's reigning star, is making his
entrance. He nods regally and begins to descend, flanked by an
equally studded entourage: MICKI, a pretty boy in perfect Marilyn
drag, ANGEL, a buxom brunette in feathers, and FREDDI, the group
stylist, in satin knickers and stockings.

But there is an undertow: the eerie INTRO to "Ladytron"/Roxy
Music, rising under:

MANDY V-O

You see, Jack Fairy had also come
to London in the swinging sixties.

DISSOLVE TO

A black silk scarf falling to the floor (MUSIC continuing).

INT. POSH HOTEL LOBBY - EVENING (1967)

A delicate hand with nails of black-enamel and a menagerie of
rings reaches for the scarf. We FOLLOW it up past the lithe,
velvety figure of Jack Fairy, who wraps the scarf elegantly
around his neck and fastens it with the emerald pin.

MANDY V-O (CONT.)

And on winding roads, in crowded clubs,
in posh hotel bars - this shipwreck
of the streets stirred the daydreams of
London trash and glamour,

Suddenly Jack glances up.

Everyone in the lavishly decorated 19th century hotel lobby is
frozen staring.

MANDY V-O

his cigarette tracing a ladder to
the stars.

Brief TRACK PAST THREE WAITERS, each whispering a word in turn:

WAITERS

Maricon, epicene, sexe douteux...

Jack throws a sly glance to camera.

FAST RETURN DISSOLVE

INT. SOMBRERO - NIGHT

CLOSE on Brian, staring at Jack's entrance.

Jack, soft and slightly SLO-MO, descends to the foot of the stairs where he is instantly engulfed. COOPER, the teenage doorboy, presents him with a long-stemmed rose and a sexy HUSTLER, dressed as a 1930's sailor, kisses his hand.

MANDY V-O

I needn't mention how essential
dreaming is to the character of the
rock star.

Brian, very CLOSE.

Real sounds return as Mandy throws her arms around Jack and frenches him.

MANDY V-O

Jack read palms at a soul food
restaurant on Fulham Road - and for
a brief time - we were lovers.

Brian watches them kiss.

Mandy throws an arm around Jack and leads him into the club. On her way she spots

Brian - FAST ZOOM-IN - still staring through the crowds.

Jack looks over as well, catching sight of Brian.

Brian, CLOSE, as WE HEAR

MANDY V-O

But everything changed the night
Brian Slade stepped into our lives.

MUSIC builds as we

DISSOLVE TO

DANCE-FLOOR - LATER

SLOW TRACK over Sombrero club dancers (slight SLO-MO).

MANDY V-O (CONT.)

You see Brian was the kind of
person who could enter a room and
tell you orange was green and you'd
believe it was true.

SHOT settles on Mandy, dancing with Jack.

MANDY V-O

He could explain to you exactly why
orange was green, and you'd walk away
not quite remembering how it was so but
knowing absolutely that it was.

Mandy suddenly looks off:

Brian stares, walking through the crowds in her direction as
WE HEAR

BRIAN SINGS (O-S)

You've got me girl on the runaround,
runaround/Got me all around town
You've got me girl on the runaround
And it's getting me down, getting me down

As he approaches, the lights and set dramatically change: the
dancing slows and everything but Mandy and Brian dim and recede.

CLOSE on Brian's hand taking hers. Furious ZOOM-OUT reveals

EXT. SEASHORE - DUSK (SET)

Brian sings to Mandy, windswept against English cliffs and a
cobalt sky (magnificently rear projected). Slow TRACK IN.

BRIAN SINGS

Lady/If you want to find a lover
Then you look no further
For I'm gonna be your only
Searching/At the start of the season
And my only reason/Is that I'll get you

CUT TO

INT. SOMBRERO CLUB

Mandy turns from the teaming dance-floor to Brian, standing
opposite (lights and action having returned to normal).

BRIAN
(shouting over the music)
DO YOU JIVE?

Mandy nods, smiling, and they start to dance.

FAST DISSOLVE TO

[WILD SEX MONTAGE]

INT. MANDY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

MUSIC continues through a brief 60's-style MONTAGE (much double exposure, focus racking, etc.) Mandy and Brian make love like two amphibious creatures, indistinguishable in Mandy's candle-lit room.

The erotic tone turns sinister as other-worldly projections fall across their bodies, indistinguishable in the flickering light.

For a moment Brian appears to be turning amphibious.

Mandy closes her eyes.

EXT. FORREST - NIGHT (SET)

WE DESCEND through a snarl of black branches to a cool moonlit forrest where Brian resumes his tender serenade.

BRIAN SINGS
I'll find some way of connection
Hiding my intention
Then I'll move up close to you

TRACK continues into Brian's face, shimmery with sweat.

BRIAN SINGS
I'll use you and I'll confuse you
And then I'll lose you
But still you won't suspect me

He kisses her.

MANDY
So I married him.

FAST CUT TO

The flutter of an eyelash (Jack's) thick with mascara.

INT. SOMBRERO CLUB MEN'S LAVATORY

We hear a door open, sounds pouring in. Jack's eyes flash over.

Fast RACK to Brian, standing near the door, reflected in the mirror. Quiet MUSIC begins ("Lady Grinning Soul"/Bowie) over

A series of CLOSE, DISSOLVING SHOTS:

Jack resumes touching up his face in the mirror as Brian slowly approaches.

Jack's eyes meet Brian's in the mirror.

Brian stops at the mirror, turning from Jack's reflection to Jack. He kisses him hotly on the mouth and withdraws.

Jack stares into Brian's eyes. He returns the kiss. Brian presses into him.

Suddenly - the door opens.

Jack turns.

Brian is gone.

WE HEAR

MANDY V-O

(softly)

Times, places, people. They're all speeding up.

FAST CUT TO

INT. MANDY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

SLOW CIRCLE around Mandy and Brian as she finishes painting his face: the lids of his eyes metallic green, his cheeks a silver-pink blush, his lips a frosty magenta, matching the color of his newly-cropped hair.

MANDY (CONT.)

So to cope with this evolutionary paranoia strange people are chosen who through their art can move progress more quickly.

Brian looks up.

Mandy holds his glance.

MANDY V-O

It was the most stimulating and reflective period of our marriage.

He turns and looks at himself in the mirror

RACK/DISSOLVE TO

INT. SOMBRERO MEN'S ROOM

Jack in the mirror realizes the emerald pin is gone.

Through rising MUSIC WE HEAR

BBC (PRE-LAP)

Thank you and welcome pop pickers
to Pick Of The Pops. I'm Davy
Rocket and we have a very special
show for you today, dedicated to
one of pop's blazing new talents,
who's been holding a virtual reign
over the British charts for a
startling 18-month-span. Ladies and
Gentlemen, I give you the incomparable
Brian Slade - or should I say,
Maxwell Demon?

Cheers spill over

FAST CUT TO

An explosion of flash-bulbs over a sweep of MUSIC.

INT. GALA RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT (1972 LONDON)

Brian appears through the shimmer, ablaze in white light. He
wears the emerald pin on a red-velvet choker. Below, a small
ocean of press (REPORTERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS) are shouting "Brian!
Brian!".

REPORTER 1

Brian! Why the make-up?

BRIAN

Why? Because rock and roll's a
prostitute! It should be tarted up!
Performed! The music is the mask,
whereas I, in my chiffon and taff - well
(quite camp): varda the message!

INT. STUART LIVING ROOM - EVENING (SUBURBAN MANCHESTER)

Teenage Arthur sits on the floor glued to the telly.

His Mother and Father sit behind him (exactly as we last saw
them), watching without expression.

REPORTER 2 (ON TV)

What about your fans? Aren't they
likely to - get the wrong impression?

BRIAN (ON TV)
And which wrong impression is that?

REPORTER 2 (ON TV)
That you're a blinking fruitcake!

ONSCREEN there is uneasy laughter and a SHAKY PAN to the press gallery.

VERY CLOSE on Arthur, breathing in the electronic waves.

BRIAN (ON TV)
Well thank you, sir, and no. It
doesn't concern me in the
slightest.

Arthur tries to peek at his parents without moving his head.

Their faces are stony.

BRIAN (ON TV)-
I should think that if people were
to get that impression of me, the
impression to which you so
eloquently refer -

SLOW TRACK INTO MONITOR (Brian):

BRIAN
...it would not be a wrong impression
in the slightest.

Suddenly Arthur leaps in front of the set, shrieking at the top
of his lungs like a lunatic.

ARTHUR
THAT IS ME! THAT IS ME! THAT THAT
THAT THAT THAT IS ME!

CLOSE ON TV

BRIAN (ON TV)
I mean everyone knows most people
are bisexual.

Arthur's Mother and Father are blank-faced, frozen solid.

Arthur looks at them from in front of the TV set, where he has
remained.

REPORTER O-S
I was -

BACK TO

INT. GALA RECEPTION HALL

Shaky PAN to another REPORTER.

REPORTER O-S

- I was under the impression that
you were married and living with
your wife in North London -

Mandy looks around, anxiously.

Brian continues in the glare of lights.

BRIAN

I am married, quite happily, in fact.
I just happen to like boys as much as
I like girls. And since my wife feels
pretty much the same about such things-

Lights and TV cameras flash to Mandy, who wiggles her tongue at
Brian.

BRIAN

...I should think we've been able
to make a fairly decent go of it up
to now.

The audience, frozen in utter perplexity.

Mandy looks up at Brian, as the distant piano opening to
"Virginia Plain"/Roxy Music is heard.

[NOTE: THE NEXT 6-1/2 PAGES DESCRIBE A MONTAGE MEANT TO COVER A
2-1/2 MINUTE SONG, WHICH SUGGESTS THE SPEED WITH WHICH IT SHOULD
BE PLAYED]

MANDY V-O

For the first time in Brian's life,
he was simply telling it like it
was. Did he realize what he'd done?
How could he have. I mean today,
there'd be fighting in the streets.
But in 1972...

Brian winks at Mandy before - complete pandemonium.

MANDY V-O

it was more like dancing.

VERY CLOSE on Brian as we

DISSOLVE TO

[FAME MONTAGE]:

-INT. (SET) - NEWSPAPERS (IN B&W)

Dropped into frame, their headlines read:

A STAR IS BORN - AND HE TWINKLES!

GAY STUNT AT SLADE SHOW

ALL THAT GLITTERS - IS GAY!

-INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Camera SPEEDS PAST a Busbee Berkley row of offered contracts and lands on the final one - the most elegantly drawn.

(Bryan Ferry sings):

SONG

Make me a deal and make it straight
All signed and sealed - I'll take it
To Robert E. Lee I'll show it
I hope and pray you don't blow it 'cause

-INT. BOXING ARENA (SET)

SWOOP OUT from Tony Devine and Cecil Drake arm-wrestling, ending as Devine wins and stands, the champion. CROWDS CHEER. He's thrown a huge bouquet.

Brief PHOTO-FLASH: Brian, nude in Devine's arms, covered in roses.

SONG (CONT.)

We've been around a long time
Just try to - try to - tryin' to
Make the big time

-EXT. HIGHWAY - ENGLAND - DAY

Brian and his flashy entourage soar along the countryside in two convertible limousines, scarves sailing in the wind.

SONG (CONT.)

Take me on a roller coaster
Take me for an airplane ride
Take me for a 6-day wonder but don't you-

-EXT. AIRPORT RUNWAY - DAY

Brian and company scramble onto the stairway of a chartered

plane.

SONG (CONT.)

Don't you throw my pride aside
Besides: what's real and make believe?
Baby Jane's in Acapulco
We are flying down to Rio

The plane takes off.

-EXT. BEACH - SUNSET (SET)

Brian and Mandy sit on rocks overlooking a projected sunset.

WE HEAR

DEVINE O-S

That man out there with the magenta
hair is the biggest thing to come
out of England since the Beatles.
But outside Britain, Brian Slade is
a virtual unknown.

FAST ZOOM-OUT reveals Devine in the foreground, addressing his
newly formed staff.

DEVINE (CONT.)

It's up to us to convince the world
that Brian Slade is a star. Nothing
fantastic about it. Why? Because
the secret of becoming a star is
knowing how to behave as one.

TRACK PAST faces we've seen before - Jack Fairy's old entourage -
Angel, Micki, Freddi, and the old doorboy, Cooper.

DEVINE

Now each of you are actors, and
Brian Slade, international
superstar, is your performance.

COOPER

(a distorted Mickey Rooney)
Hey kids, let's put on a show!

Disturbingly CLOSE on Devine:

DEVINE

Precisely.

-EXT. ENGLISH GARDEN - DAY

CLOSE - Jack Fairy in white-face, gazing to camera. Rapid ZOOM-

OUT reveals him posing as a statue of St. Sebastian.

-TRACK OUT from CLOSE-UP of Brian being aggressively made-up, sprayed and varnished by Freddi and company. Brian is dressed in a white satin three-piece, posing for photos with his band in the 18th century statue garden. The sequence has the feel of a silent-screen comedy, with Devine as director in jodhpurs and boots, commanding the company of PHOTOGRAPHERS and CREW. Equipment and dress is strictly 1920's.

When Devine shouts "action", the klatch of Photographers explode into shots, their cameras flashing like machine-guns.

Brian is riddled with tiny wounds.

Devine yells "Cut!" furiously.

In a series of FAST-CUTTING shots, Brian continues to be 'shot' in various poses and costumes, each time trying to conceal the pain and blood-stains.

SONG (CONT.)

Throw me a line I'm sinking fast
Clutching at straws - Can't make it
Havana sound we're trying
Hard edge the hipster jiving - Oh!
Last Picture Show's down the drive-in
You're so sheer, you're so chic
Teenage rebel of the week

End on a final, classic shot. Fast ZOOM OUT reveals the photo hanging on a wall in the brand-new Bijou Music offices:

-INT. BIJOU OFFICES - DAY

CAMERA continues through the Bijou offices as the newly assembled staff perform their respective roles with musical-comedy flair (SONG continuing throughout).

WE SAIL past Micki, the glamorous receptionist, rehearsing various company greetings.

MICKI

Bijou Music & Associates, good
afternoon... Bijou, may I help
you?... Bijou, hello?...

We PASS Angel, presse attache, dressed in large black and white checks and a matching pillbox hat. Her walls are covered with glamour magazines from the 30's and 40's and everything on her desk is cherry-red: phone, typewriter, telexes, etc.

ANGEL

Slade... Brian Slade... Well,
darling, only the biggest thing to
hit rock since the pilgrims!...

Freddi suddenly pops out, addressing camera.

FREDDI

Yes?

SWISH 360-degrees to SHANNON HAZELBOURNE, a dowdy teenager, who
responds automatically.

SHANNON

I'm Shannon Hazelbourne.

FREDDI

Who?

SHANNON

I rang up about the position?

FREDDI

The what?

SHANNON

The position.
(holds up a clipping)
Assistant Clerical Aid?

FREDDI

Oh right! The position! Brilliant!
Follow me.

Shannon tries to keep up with Freddi who whizzes along, passing
Devine's elevated office on the way.

-DEVINE'S OFFICE

Manager Tony Devine, is perched behind his desk in wide lapels
and clashing patterns, operatic on the phone.

DEVINE

I know it's unprecedented, I know
it's unorthodox, but sir, if you
want Brian Slade, those are the
terms, take them or leave them -

-WARDROBE

Brian's (all-hetero) band - Trevor, REG and HARLEY - stand frozen
in the mirror.

MANDY O-S

Crash! Zounds!

FAST ZOOM-OUT reveals them in their new, wildly effeminate stage-costumes. Mandy beams as Freddi whizzes by.

MANDY

Freddi!

FREDDI

Fuckin' Ada - you're gorgeous -

MANDY

Aren't they?

Freddi rushes off as Harley looks mournfully at Trevor. Trevor puts his arm around him tenderly.

WE HEAR

FREDDI O-S -

Now, Shannon - I realize, of course, your expertise is in the clerical arts, but I was wondering if by any chance you've ever worked in wardrobe?

SWISH TO Shannon, standing dumbstruck.

FREDDI

... either professionally or -?

SHANNON

No, never.

FREDDI

Fantastic. I think that's everything. (extends his hand)

SHANNON

(shaking it, absently)

But I - I said didn't -

FREDDI

(announcing to the room)

Everybody?

Everyone looks over.

FREDDI

I'd like to introduce you to our lovely new Wardrobe Mistress -
umm...

SHANNON

Shannon.

FREDDI

Shannon!

Everyone smiles, claps or says: "hello Shannon".

Mandy suddenly looks over toward Devine's office.

WE HEAR

DEVINE (O-S)

Excellent! Yes, Mr. Weinberg! Thank
you very much indeed. Cheers!

MIGHTY SWISH TO

-DEVINE'S OFFICE

Devine slams down phone. FAST PAN UP to his face, standing
victoriously.

DEVINE

Victory!

Everyone turns.

MANDY

What? Tony - what?

DEVINE

Tell me Brian...

TRACK IN to the back of a large chair from which Brian reveals
himself, turning to Devine.

DEVINE

Who is it you most fancy meeting -
in America?

Everyone bursts into cheers. TRACK OUT as Mandy and Cooper escort
Devine from his desk, revealing the Bijou office to be a network
of adjoining offices, art deco style. Brian remains alone.

MICKI

Yipes!

COOPER

(with a broad American accent)
Amerrrica?

ANGEL

Bravo, Tony!

MANDY
Garbo, Brian - pleeeeeease!

ANGEL
Brando for me!

MICKI
Einstein!

COOPER
Sorry chickee, he's dead.

MICKI
Tony said anyone!

Brian turns to the group. Mandy spots him.

MANDY
Brian - who?

BRIAN
Tony?

Devine turns to him.

DEVINE
Yes Brian?

SONG
(finishes)
What's her name? Virginia Plain.

Silence on Brian.

BRIAN
(quietly)
Curt Wild.

DEVINE
What?

BRIAN
(awkward - first time yet)
Curt Wild. I want to meet Curt Wild.

CLOSE on Mandy, looking at him.

Slam into GUITAR INTRO ("I Wanna Be Your Man"/Suzi Quatro)

MANDY V-O
And meet Curt Wild we did.

CUT TO

INT. MAX'S KANSAS CITY - NIGHT (NEW YORK, 1973)

Brian and Mandy are walking into the dark, narrow club, followed by Devine, Angel, Freddi and Trevor.

ONSTAGE, SUZI SMALL, a tough girl-singer in a black leather jumpsuit, belts out a gendy-bendy Beatles cover. She's backed by members of the later-to-be Flaming Creatures.

SUZI

I wanna be your lover baby
I wanna be your man (repeat)
Tell me that you love me baby
Tell me that you understand
Tell me that you love me baby
I wanna be your - man

RODNEY, a British rep for the label, leads them to a table in the back.

The black-clad HIPSTER CROWD eyes the colorful Brits as they pass.

Rodney stops for a moment and looks around the room.

Brian looks around as well, expectant and anxious, taking it all in. Mandy leans over, pointing someone out.

ANDY WARHOL stands in the back in the midst of a small entourage. SWISH TO: JAMES DEAN, standing in another corner. SWISH TO: MARILYN MONROE, seated at the bar.

RODNEY O-S

There he is.

Brian looks over to Rodney who points, MUSIC shimmering.

Dark figures clear frame as we TRACK IN to the darkest corner of the club. Reveal a shadowy figure slumped over a table.

CLOSE on Brian, following Rodney, arriving.

Somewhere behind the MUSIC WE HEAR

RODNEY (O-S)

Mr. Wild... Mr. Wild?

Curt lifts up his head, squinting up at Rodney. He sits between a beautiful pair of boy and girl TEENAGE TWINS.

CURT

Yea?

RODNEY

I'm Rodney - from Electra? - I have
Brian Slade here from England who
just wanted to pop over, say hello -

BRIAN

I just wanted to say... I think
your music is tops - smashing,
really - best of the lot.

Curt looks up at him in a junkie blur.

CURT

Smashing, tit-tat, jolly old -

Curt's eyes roll up into his head and he passes out on the table.

Brian in diffused CLOSE UP as "Slaughter On 10th Avenue"/Mick
Ronson plays.

He has fallen in love.

CUT TO

INT. HOTEL MEZZANINE - AFTERNOON

PAN over guests seated for tea at a posh New York hotel.

MANDY V-O

Now at that time, Curt Wild was
between management, and Brian knew
this, of course, and urged Devine
to pursue the situation.

We settle on a corner table where Brian and Devine sit with Curt,
a black smudge against the crimson and gold interior.

DEVINE

And so if, in that probability, an
interest arose in which Brian would
serve in some capacity on a future
project - possibly, though not
exclusively, as producer of that
project, how might that scenario -
hypothetically, of course - strike you?

Brief silence as Curt looks back at them with the innocence of a
drowned baby rat.

CURT

Cool.

DEVINE

Very good.

BRIAN

But how can we help you. You must tell us. What do you need?

Under the table, Devine kicks Brian in the shin.

Curt thinks for a moment, then smiles:

CURT

Everything. (to Brian, softly):
You can be my mainman.

CLOSE on Brian through diffusion and HARPSTRINGS, staring lovingly at Curt. There are tiny hearts in his eyes.

MANDY V-O

It was pretty clear what-was happening. It happens every day. But for the world to think it was happening, well...

PAN to Devine, in foreground, tiny dollar signs in his.

MANDY V-O

That was Tony's particular genius.

"Satellite of Love"/Lou Reed begins:

SONG

Satellite's gone up to the skies

CUT TO

MONTAGE OF NEWSREEL-STYLE FOOTAGE

HAND-HELD TELEPHOTO shots into Brian's backyard garden: Brian and Curt strolling with champagne eventually catch sight of the camera.

MANDY V-O

Right away he started promoting the two of them like a pair of 40's starlets on the sloop - Tracy and Hepburn for the 70's.

The SONG continues.

CUT TO

EXT. CARNIVAL - DUSK

Curt and Brian ride in neighboring rockets on the Space Spinner

ride, reeling over the candy-colored lights of a travelling carnival. TRACK-IN as Curt lip-syncs to the song and Brian sings the backing arpeggios, his rocket passing Curt's.

CURT SINGS

Satellite of love, satellite of love
Satellite of love, sa-tel-lite-of...

Behind them, the lights of the carnival recede. They are flying away. PAN UP to the starry sky as the MUSIC tenders ("Diamond Meadow"/T-Rex)

DREAMY DISSOLVE TO

INT. LITTLE GIRL'S ROOM - NIGHT

PAN PAST a 45 spinning on a plastic turn-table, and come to REST on the soft, lamp-lit CLOSE-UP of a Brian Slade doll.

Opposite, a Curt Wild doll stands against a Deluxe Pop-Show Backdrop. A gentle love scene is being played out by the hands and off-screen voices of two young ENGLISH GIRLS. The scene is shot romantically, with soft lighting and heavy diffusion.

CURT DOLL

My career was on the skids, mate.
And you fished me out o' the muck.
You got me back on my feet, you
did.

BRIAN DOLL

It was nothing, chum. I wanted to
help you make more of that far out
sound. I love your music, my son,
and I love -

The Brian doll turns away. The Curt doll walks up to him from behind.

CURT DOLL

(softly)

You don't have to say it mate.

The dolls turn toward each other and embrace. They slowly, tenderly go down to the floor.

CUT TO

INT. ST. FRANCIS HOTEL - LATE AFTERNOON (NEW YORK)

THIRTIES-STYLE SINGER crooning to camera, pink-cheeked with patent-leather hair ("Bitters End"/Roxy Music):

THIRTIES-STYLE SINGER

At last the crimson cord cascades
To shower dry cordials within
Too late to leap the chocolate gate

Three pencil-mustached back-ups, the CHAMPAGNE CHORUS, lean in:

CHAMPAGNE CHORUS

Pale fountains fizzing forth pink gin

TRACK OUT to reveal the singers amid an elegantly poised entourage, all dressed for a Masked Ball, and gathered for Bijou's deliriously posh "Press Soiree".

Behind a white-feather mask, the princely Brian holds court on a gold settee, supported by a den of BEAUTIFUL BISEXUALS. We see Curt Wild, Tony Devine, Micki, Angel, Cooper, Freddi, Shannon, Trevor - and Mandy playing hostess. Everyone is dressed in creme and gold velvet and satin, some of the men in knickers and white stockings. A touch of Louis XIV permeates the room. REPORTERS, on the other hand, are a dark cluster of suits.

The SONG continues as each 'actor' answers questions in quoted texts, punctuated by slightly bruising CAMERA FLASHES.

TREVOR

What is true about music is true
about life: that beauty reveals
everything because it expresses
nothing.

Freddi, dressed like a leopard-skin Mozart, wears an enormous boa-constrictor around his neck.

FREDDI

Every great century that produces
art is, so far, an artificial
century, and the work that seems
the most natural and simple of its
time is always the result of the
most self-conscious effort.

Micki, dressed like Marie Antoinette as Marilyn Monroe, brushes Angel's long gold fall.

MICKI

(doing his best Marilyn)
I am not really myself except in
the midst of elegant crowds, at the
heart of rich districts, or amid
the sumptuous ornamentation of
palace-hotels, an army of servants

and a plush carpet underfoot...

A sudden FANFARE and dimming of lights reveals the projected backdrop of a stylized Big Top. A spotlight flashes on Brian, who catches a whip and top hat thrown to him from the wings. Fast ZOOM-OUT reveals REPORTER 1 in the foreground, reading from a large placard on a stand.

REPORTER 1

(theatrically)

The Aesthete Gives Characteristically
Cynical Evidence, Replete With Pointed
Epigram and Startling Paradox, while
Explaining His Views on Morality in Art

Curt's head leads into foreground, unmask itself, and turns to camera:

CURT

(the classic aside)

Englsher and englsher!

SWISH PAN to the klatch of Reporters, now perched in the rafters, shouting out their questions to Brian. He answers in the style of a circus MC.

REPORTER 1

Brian! What's behind your character
of Maxwell Demon? Are you Maxwell
Demon?

BRIAN

Man is least himself when he talks
in his own person! Give him a mask
and he'll tell you the truth!

We see Shannon holding cue-cards for Brian. SWISH PAN to Reporter 2, shouting out:

REPORTER 2

Is it your belief that all dandies
are homosexuals?

TILT DOWN to Cooper, holding up cue-cards for the press.

BRIAN

Nothing makes one so vain as being
told one is a sinner!

The stadium roars with LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE.

CURT (O-S)

Coming through! Coming through!

A spotlight spins around, illuminating

Curt, squeezing through a throng of fans, balancing two glasses of champagne on a tray. There is Clown MUSIC as he stumbles.

REPORTER 3

Tell us, Brian! Are the rumors true that you and Curt Wild have some plans up your sleeve?

BRIAN

Oh, yes. Quite soon actually we plan to take over the world!

Hilarious laughter from the crowds - LOW ANGLE.

CLOSE on Brian: he wasn't joking. But to the rescue

Curt arrives, miraculously unspilled.

CURT

Excuse me fellas while I raise my glass to the loveliest man in Europe!

The crowd "Ahhhs" as Curt and Brian, smiling broadly, link arms for a toast, cameras flashing.

BRIAN

And they tell us it's not natural!

Violent laughter from the crowds quickly darkens and distorts. Lights dim as a shimmer of MUSIC rises

FAST DISSOLVE TO

Curt and Brian, eyelash CLOSE.

CURT

(a whisper)

The world is changed because you are made of ivory and gold. The curves of your lips rewrite history.

Curt kisses Brian hotly on the mouth.

Camera flashes explode.

CUT TO

The first slams of "Moonage Daydream"/Bowie over

B&W PHOTO - Curt kissing Brian, fading in from negative.

CUT TO

INT. CONCERT HALL (LONDON) - ONSTAGE

Brian sings, glistening in sweat and a skin-tight strip-tunic,
CLOSE.

BRIAN SINGS

I'm an alligator!
I'm a mama-papa comin' for you
I'm a space invader!
I'll be a rock and rollin' bitch for you

Curt plays guitar. We see his fingers pressing the strings.

MUSIC continues through BRIEF MONTAGE:

-INT. MAGAZINE PRESS - DAY

WE see editions of the "kiss photo" being printed, cut and bound on machines. We see magazines boxed and loaded into trucks.

-EXT. NEWSSTAND - DAY

Boxes are opened by VENDORS and put on display. Money is handed to vendors and magazines are handed back in exchange.

FAST DISSOLVE TO

ARTHUR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (SUBURBAN MANCHESTER, 1973)

TRACK OUT from the "kiss photo" in Teenage Arthur's Circus Magazine.

CLOSE on Arthur, lips moist, entranced.

VERY CLOSE on his open hand, circling slowly over stretching underwear.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT (NEW YORK, 1973)

A man's hand takes that of a woman's, leading her past flowing curtains to a moonlit room. TRACK OUT to reveal Shannon being led by Devine. She stops.

The dark, richly decorated suite is filled with bodies.

Devine smiles faintly, persuading her in and stumbling as he goes.

CUT BACK TO

INT. ARTHUR'S ROOM

Arthur turns the page.

FAST CUT TO

INT. CONCERT HALL (LONDON) - ONSTAGE

Curt pours over a particularly wrenching guitar solo. He half-smiles when he sees

Brian, slinking down on his haunches, approaching. When he arrives, he drops to his knees and 'goes down' on Curt's guitar, grabbing onto his ass while he plays the instrument with his teeth.

The audience goes wild.

TRACK IN to camera-flashes igniting the front rows.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. ARTHUR'S BEDROOM

Arthur's face breath CLOSE, staring at a photo of the preceding, softly grinding.

INT. STUART LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mr. Stuart looks up angrily from the TV toward the pounding MUSIC from Arthur's room. He glares at Mrs. Stuart sitting beside him.

He throws down the newspaper and starts up the stairs.

CUT TO

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Two BLOND GIRLS are leading Curt to a corner couch, bringing us to Trevor and Harley, who stand opposite each another shirtless. Angel is going down on Trevor while a BOY and GIRL GROUPIE caress Harley. The two men stare at one another, stone drunk.

Mandy is lying in a throng of SKINNY BOYS, her tongue down Cooper's throat. A NUDE WOMAN with large breasts pulls her away.

MANDY

A woman - Thank heaven!

PASSING OVER a large red-velvet sofa we discover a beautiful ASIAN WOMAN in bright-blue feathers undressing a man. She is accompanied by a nude BLACK BOY who kisses the man while pulling off his tie. The TRACK ENDS on a CLOSE-UP of the man. It's Brian.

All of a sudden he glances up.

Curt stands near a window, his eyes on Brian. He has broken away from his captors.

Brian stares back, frozen. The Asian Woman tries to kiss him.

Curt just turns, disappearing down the hall.

Brian stares after.

Shannon observes the exchange, standing against a wall with Devine's head in her breasts.

BRIEFLY

INT. STUART LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mrs. Stuart stands as Mr. Stuart pounds on Arthur's door off-screen.

MR. STUART (O-S)

Arthur! Arthur, open this door!

We hear him stalking off down the hall and the sound of distant doors banging open. Mrs. Stuart starts off toward the stairs.

MR. STUART O-S

(from inside Arthur's room)

WOULD YOU KINDLY TURN DOWN THAT BLAST?

Suddenly there's a CRASH, followed by the screech of a phonograph needle. Mrs. Stuart jolts. She hurries

UPSTAIRS

We FOLLOW as she hurries down the hall and into the shadowy dark of

ARTHUR'S BATHROOM

From inside Arthur's adjoining room, Mr. Stuart growls in low, threatening tones.

MR. STUART O-S

You bring shame to this house. You
bring shame to your mother and me.
It's a shameful, filthy thing you're
doing - (suddenly at the top of his lungs):
DO YOU HEAR ME?

Mrs. Stuart jumps.

MR. STUART O-S

Stand up!

She takes a step closer and stops.

INT. ARTHUR'S ROOM

Arthur slowly stands into frame. His nose is bleeding.

Mr. Stuart stands behind him. RACK FOCUS to Arthur, in his dresser mirror. Pictures of his idols flank his own reflection.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. HOTEL SUITE

VERY CLOSE on Brian's hand disengaging from his partners, their eyes opening, their faces looking up. PAN UP to Brian, standing, his eyes fixed on the hallway.

CLOSE on Mandy, her eyes opening, sensing something. She spots Brian. Her companions start looking up as well.

Shannon continues staring as Devine looks up and over.

MANDY V-O

It's funny how beautiful people look

Brian, slightly SLO-MO, approaching the hall. He glances back a beat before slipping into shadows.

MANDY V-O

when they're walking out the door.

FAST CUT TO

BRIEF SILENT SHOTS:

(INT. BUS - DAY)

Arthur boards the bus to London with a single suitcase.

He sits in the back as the bus takes off.

Through the window he sees his mother running out and stopping, diminishing as we pass. Finally, she raises a hand goodbye.

MANDY V-O

Now: Just because someone sees,
you know -

FAST RETURN TO

Arthur, jolted back to the present.

INT. DIVE BAR - DAY (NEW YORK, 1984)

MANDY

(facetious)

two naked people asleep in bed
together... it doesn't necessarily
prove sex was involved.

FAST CUT TO

Brian and Curt in bed, tangled and naked, dead asleep.

INT. BEDROOM SUITE - (NEW YORK, 1973)

Shannon looks through a crack in the door.

MANDY V-O

It does, however, make a very strong case.

Shannon closes the door and Brian's eyes open.

CUT TO

INT. HOTEL SUITE - AFTERNOON

In a corner of the room Mandy consoles Shannon who is weeping.

MANDY

Really, luv, it shouldn't upset you so. Brian is a grown man and fully capable of shagging whatever he fancies and rather partial to the practice. You know what he says, 'I'm a bisexual chauvinist pig'! He's quite proud of it! But you're a sweet, sensitive darling to be so

broken up about it. Brian would be -

Shannon suddenly grabs Mandy's arm, glaring.

SHANNON

Don't you ever tell Brian -

MANDY

Ow! Hey - (she yanks free)

SHANNON

Swear to me you'll never breathe a word of this - ever!

MANDY

I swear. Jesus.

Mandy gets up, rubbing her wrist, and walks off, not a little spooked.

EXT. BEDROOM SUITE

Mandy stops outside Brian's door. She takes a breath before quietly turning the knob.

INT. BEDROOM SUITE

CLOSE on Mandy peeking in. FAST ZOOM-OUT: the room is empty. Mandy sees a note left on the pillow with her name on it. She opens it.

MANDY V-O

'Sudden change in plans. Brief holiday, much needed. Back by Hammersmith. B'

FAST CUT TO

Mandy's face, thoughtful.

INT. DIVE CLUB - LATE DAY (NEW YORK, 1984)

MANDY

And with that, my time with Brian, for all practical purposes, was up.

Two more drinks are set down by the Bartender.

MANDY

I mean we were still married - Thanks Ricky - But it was clear I had no part in his life.

Mandy holds up her glass.

MANDY

Cheers.

ARTHUR

Cheers.

They drink, as the sound of waves emerge in the distance.

MANDY

I'm sorry. I wish I could help you more. You seem like a nice guy. I just - (she looks at him a beat) don't think I have what you're looking for.

Arthur smiles, looking down.

ARTHUR

See... I think you do actually.

MANDY

(a sly smile)

Oh and what makes you think so?

ARTHUR
That smile, for one thing.

Her smile stays.

MANDY
Well. Smiles lie.

ARTHUR
Exactly.

Mandy sighs. A faint melody rises with the waves.

MANDY
Listen. Once - of course! - there
was a gorgeous gorgeous time...
and we were living our dreams,
indifferent to all life that was not
social life. But you see all that
changed - (quietly): with Curt.

MUSIC builds to "Sea Breezes"/Roxy Music, as slow ZOOMS begin on
each of them.

MANDY
And not even the real Curt! It was
the idea of Curt more than anything,
this idea - that no one of course
could ever possibly live up to -
(she stops)
I think in the end it's what killed
them both. But when it all came
crashing down...

DISSOLVE TO

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - NIGHT (LONDON, 1974)

TRACK PAST hands adjusting levels on a 16-track mixer, and on
past the faces of visitors seated in the back: Trevor &
GIRLFRIEND, Devine and Mandy.

MANDY O-S (CONT.)
I watched from the side-lines
just like everybody else.

TRACK OUT from Curt at the mike in the sound-proof booth. He
starts to sing, eyes closed, a rough, wrenching version of the
song.

CURT SINGS
I've been thinking now for a long time

How to go my own separate way
It's a shame to think about yesterday
It's a shame

In the foreground, Brian is revealed watching through the glass, his back to camera. When Curt doesn't come in on the next verse, Brian twitches angrily.

BRIAN

Shit!

MIXER O-S

Should I stop it?

Brian turns around, facing the MIXER who sits behind him at the board.

Curt starts singing the verse.

CURT SINGS -

We've been running round in our present state
Hoping help will come from above -

MIXER

Should I cut?

Brian watches, biting his thumb.

MIXER

He's gonna hit the bridge a half-verse
early.

BRIAN

Alright. Cut it.

The MUSIC stops.

Behind Brian, Curt looks up. He starts hollering through the glass but we can't hear him. Brian is frozen, his back to the booth. The Mixer switches Curt on.

CURT (ON INTERCOM)

- Answer me!

Brian turns around to face him.

Curt glares at him through the glass, awaiting an answer.

INSIDE BOOTH

From Curt's POV we see Brian. We see him say "What?".

CURT
Why'd you cut? WHY?!

Brian's quiet response is monitored for Curt but barely heard.
Through the glass we can read his lips.

BRIAN (ON INTERCOM)
Because you missed your cue.
(looks down, quieter): Again.

CURT
WHAT? WHAT?

CONTROL ROOM

Brian turns, walking around the mixing board, responding to Curt as he goes.

BRIAN
(louder and formal)
We only ask that when you decide to
make a change you merely inform us
in advance so Eton is properly
prepared, otherwise -

Curt turns violently, thrusting his arm as he curses.

CURT (ON INTERCOM)
Fucking motherfucker - I did NOT
change any FUCKING cue!

BRIAN
Eton - please.

The Mixer switches Curt off. We watch him continue to rave in
silence as Brian politely addresses the others in the room.

BRIAN
Perhaps it's time for another
little break. What do you say, fellas?
(a wan smile): Give us a stretch?

Mandy lingers as everyone files out.

Curt has begun throwing chairs around the booth.

Brian turns away, black in shadow.

Everyone has gone but Mandy, who watches Brian from the shadows.

For a split second his sadness shows. Then his eyes flash up and
he sees her.

She turns and leaves the room. We FOLLOW, as the door shuts behind her and the sound of Curt's shouts resume in the distance. A tender instrumental of the SONG rises as Mandy passes through shadows and into moonlight.

EXT. RECORDING STUDIO - NIGHT

Mandy looks up.

The sky is full of perfect stars. Suddenly there's a crash of doors.

In a massive LONG SHOT Mandy watches Curt come tearing out of a rear door. The third story window bangs open and Brian's head sticks out, shouting after him.

BRIAN

Piss off, then! Go on!

Yards away, the technicians stare blankly at the spectacle.

BRIAN

Back to your wolves! Your junkie
twerps! Your bloody shock
treatment! And fuck you too!

Mandy watches

Brian watching

Curt vanish.

WE HEAR Brian's voice singing his own, slower version of the song.

BRIAN SINGS

I've been thinking now for a long time
How to go my own separate way

CUT TO

-EXT. CHELSEA STREET - LATE DAY

CLOSE on Brian, in sunglasses and hat, walking home.

BRIAN SINGS

It's a shame to think about yesterday
It's a shame

He notices a black cab idling in front of his house.

CUT TO

-INT. TOWNHOUSE ENTRY

Brian is climbing the stairs when he sees
Curt coming down with two suitcases.

CLOSE on Brian, as Curt passes him in profile. He doesn't look back.

BRIAN SINGS
We've been running round
In our present state
Hoping help will come from above

Curt does.

CUT TO

-INT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM - LATE DAY

A curtain parts, revealing Curt's cab as he slams the door and zooms off.

BRIAN SINGS -
But even angels there
made the same mistakes

A phone receiver is lifted up. CLOSE on Brian's finger dialing a number.

BRIAN SINGS
In love

CUT TO

The streets of London passing from a car.

INT. CAB - MOMENTS LATER

Curt looks out. He squints from the sun.

BRIAN SINGS
In love, in love, in love

Signs for Gatwick Airport approach.

CUT TO

CLOSE on Brian's tight mouth against a phone receiver. [SONG continues without vocals for some time]

BRIAN
Out. O-U-T.

CUT TO

-INT. BIJOU OFFICES - DEVINE'S OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE on Devine's nose, the phone against his face. Speedy ZOOM-OUT.

DEVINE

Of course you do. It's a perfectly natural reaction to have. And as soon as the tour's up, as far as I'm concerned, so's Maxwell - What?

Mandy stands at the door of his office holding a stack of papers.

CLOSE on Devine.

DEVINE

Brian -

BRIAN O-S

(faintly through receiver)
- Tony, it's taking over my life!
I'm not going to be able to make it -

DEVINE

(looking at Mandy)

Brian - Try to relax.

Mandy slowly turns to go.

DEVINE

Let's see if we can't discuss this calmly, shall we?

-EXT. PICCADILLY CIRCUS - DUSK

CUT TO

Arthur walks through seedy, sparkley Piccadilly carrying his suitcase.

Shots of the people: men in trenchcoats, teenagers sitting on the stairs of Piccadilly fountain, Japanese tourists.

Arthur sees a group of GLAM GIRLS stumble into a dark club. He follows.

CUT TO

-INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

MUSIC roughens and vocals resume over a slow PAN through the shiny interior of a Porsche. REVEAL Brian, sitting alone in the empty lot, frozen in thought.

BRIAN SINGS

Now that we are lonely life seems
to get hard/Alone - what a word lonely
Alone - it makes me cry

CUT TO

-INT. LAST RESORT (CLUB) - NIGHT

In a cramped London club, The Flaming Creatures (Guy, Ray, Pearl and X) - a cross between Roxy Music and The New York Dolls - perform the current section of "Sea Breezes" with raucous intensity.

CREATURES SING
Thought, train set in motion
Wheels in and around/Express our emotion
Tracks up then it cracks down

Arthur watches. He likes what he hears.

Ray spots him and blows him a trampy kiss.

Arthur blushes.

CUT TO

-EXT. STREETS OF KREUZBERG - NIGHT

Curt walks through an industrial neighborhood in West Berlin. He lights a cigarette as an elevated train passes in the distance, blinking red and green.

TRANVESTITE HUSTLERS saunter past, checking Curt out as they go.

Suddenly he looks up, spotting something on the street.

CUT TO

INT. LAST RESORT - LATER

TRACK THROUGH the slowed-down remains of the club, most of the clientele subdued with drink. Offscreen, the Flaming Creature's late-night banter is heard:

GUY
I don't believe there is much of a
future to speak of -

PEARL
I suppose we're in a bit of a
decadence spiral, aren't we?

We PASS one half-undressed WEIMAR WOMAN, emulating 30's Berlin, spread across the tables.

X
Sinking fast.

RAY
Big Brother, baby. All the way.

REVEAL Arthur and the Creatures, sprawled around a table teaming with empty pints.

Quick SINGLES on each of them:

GUY

Which is why we prefer impressions
to ideas -

PEARL

Brief flights to sustained ones -

RAY

Exceptions to types -

X

Situations to subjects -

PEARL

And yourself?

Arthur looks at them a moment.

ARTHUR

Well I'm - really just looking for
a room at the moment.

DISSOLVE TO

-EXT. KREUZBERG - NIGHT

Curt is walking to the intersection staring at something on the street.

Passing figures clear, revealing a large Mercedes pulled over on the street. The DRIVER, whose face is unclear, watches Curt as he walks past.

Curt tries to make out the driver's face as he passes, but it's too dark.

Then the car begins to slowly follow.

Curt looks over his shoulder. He quickens his pace.

The car does the same.

BRIAN SINGS (CONT.)

Now that we are lonely
Life seems to get hard

Up ahead the light changes, and Curt makes a run for the intersection.

The car speeds up after him but stops at the red light.

As Curt crosses the street, passing the front of the car, he slows, trying to get a look at the driver.

BRIAN SINGS
Alone - what a word lonely
Alone - it makes me cry

Suddenly he stops, spooked.

The Mercedes flashes on its hi-beams.

MATCH CUT TO

-INT. PARKING GARAGE

Brian takes off at full speed, racing through the empty garage.

MATCH RETURN

-EXT. KREUZBERG

SPEED-ZOOM into Curt, white with fear and headlights.

MATCH BACK

-INT. PARKING GARAGE

Brian crashes into the wall.

For a moment he is still.

Then he puts the car in reverse, drives backwards through the barren garage, and stops.

BRIAN SINGS
I'll cry, I'll cry, I'll cry...

The MUSIC comes to a momentary silence.

Brian puts the car into drive.

His foot slams onto the accelerator.

SPEED CUT TO

-INT. RECORDING STUDIO - LATER THAT NIGHT

Brian records his version of the song alone in the darkened studio. He returns to its tender refrain with eyes closed, heart clenched.

BRIAN SINGS (CONT.)
We've been running round
In our present state

Hoping help will come from above

HALLWAY

Mandy moves through shadows toward the studio, drawn by the MUSIC.

INSIDE

A CLOSE TRACK curls around Brian, revealing a thick tear glittering on his cheek.

BRIAN SINGS

But even angels there
Made the same mistakes in love

Mandi is stunned by his tenderness.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO

VIDEO NEWSREELS (BRIAN SLADE PROTESTS - LONDON, 1974)

CLOSE on grainy shot of a Brian Slade poster in flames over the SONG's tender finish.

We see albums being burned and thrown into a charred pile. Others burn songbooks, magazines, 45's.

WE HEAR

MANDY V-O

Then one day I get this call.
Someone telling me how sorry they
were, that they just heard the
news.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO

Brian's face, staring at the monitor, a ghost of his former self.

INT. BIJOU OFFICES - DAY

CLOSE on his hand rewinding the tape.

MANDY V-O

So for a whole day I actually
thought he'd been shot. That it was
real.

MONITOR

The Tape REWINDS to the burning poster section, STOPS and then begins to PLAY again.

CUT TO

EXT. CHELSEA STREET - DAY (LONDON, 1975)

BACKTRACK with Mandy, walking solemnly down the street.

MANDY V-O (CONT.)

But eventually Tony rang and filled me in on everything. Instructing me on what to say - you know... Should the press ring up.

She stops in front of a four-story building with a FOR SALE sign.

MANDY V-O

I mean I knew it was over.

CUT TO

INT. BIJOU OFFICE HALLWAY - DAY

We FOLLOW Mandy up the unlit stairway leading to the old offices.

MANDY V-O (CONT.)

It just took a bit longer - to make it stop.

At the top of the stairs the door is slightly ajar. Mandy pushes it open and enters.

INT. BIJOU OFFICES - DAY

Inside, the office's musical comedy ambience has turned film noir: shadows engulf the strewn cavern where desks are piled with boxes, chairs stacked or overturned.

She walks through the deserted cubicles, passing shady remnants of the past.

Against a far wall, the TV MONITOR is playing more silent footage from the Slade protests.

There is a sudden BANG and Mandy jolts, turning to

The french doors, hitting the wall with the wind. White curtains blow into the room.

Mandy looks down.

There, in the far corner of the room on a large mattress sits Brian. Shirtless, he is snorting lines of cocaine off the ass of a nude black girl (COCO), who is dead asleep. On a lone coffee table - the only other furniture in sight - a mountain of cocaine has spilled over paraphernalia and hundred-dollar bills.

BRIAN
(weak)

Mandy.

MANDY

Hello Brian.

Brian just stares for a few dumbfounded seconds before offering her the straw.

MANDY

(barely maintaining)

No thanks.

Mandy stares at him, almost smiling, before she turns to get something out of her bag. Slow TRACK IN begins as she shuffles through her belongings.

Brian punches a remote control and a song begins to play in the background, a song from the past ("Bitter's End"/Roxy).

BRIAN

Y'remember this one?

Mandy produces a folder and holds it out to him.

MATCH TRACK-IN on Brian, who stares at the folder, then back up at Mandy.

She remains frozen, arm outstretched.

MANDY

These are the papers. I believe they're in order. All you need to do is sign.

Brian watches as she turns and walks across the room to the coffee table.

Mandy sticks the folder into the pile of coke.

MANDY

So you won't forget.

Brian blinks in confusion.

She sticks a ball-point pen in as well and looks back at him.

Brian stares, his face suddenly open like a child's.

BRIAN

I already have.

Coco squirms in her sleep, tightening her grip around Brian.

MANDY

Evidently.

With that, Mandy turns and starts out the door. Then all at once she stops and turns to face him.

MANDY

(suddenly angry)

Jesus Brian! Did you ever - for a second - want something more?

Brief pause.

BRIAN

(suddenly all lucidity)

No.

Mandy looks at him, her eyes filling with a sad smile.

MANDY

(softly)

Your problem is "you get what you want and do what you will."

BRIAN

(matching her in a sudden game of quotation)

"Worlds, Mandy, are built out of suffering. There is suffering at the birth of a child as at the birth of a star."

CLOSE on Mandy, her eyes moist.

MANDY

(more to herself)

"I lost my girlhood, true. But it was for you."

The SONG ends and Coco opens her eyes and lifts her head.

COCO

Who's she?

Suddenly a rear door bangs open and Shannon stands at the doorway, glaring at Mandy. Now Brian's personal secretary, Shannon's force has grown considerably.

SHANNON

(professionally irate)

What in God's name is going on here? How did you get up here?! Brian, I swear to you I had no idea! What do you mean, barging

into his private quarters like -?

BRIAN

That's alright Shay. Mandy was just leaving.

SHANNON

Mandy, if you would please be so kind as to follow me directly to the front door -

Shannon takes Mandy firmly in hand and Mandy recoils, furiously.

MANDY

Let go of me. I'm perfectly capable of -

SHANNON

I really don't want to have to call anyone -

MANDY

Call anyone? Who the hell do you think you are? I'm his wife, for fuck's sake!

Brian and Coco start giggling.

Mandy's eyes fill with tears. Enraged, she turns and sweeps the pile of cocaine into the air.

MANDY

FUCK the lot of you!

BRIEFLY - SLO-MO Brian, laughing through the white cloud.

CUT TO

EXT. CHELSEA STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

HIGH AERIAL VIEW of Mandy streaming from the building and across the street, her long shadow stretching the length of the road.

Quiet MUSIC holds under

MANDY V-O

And I ran like hell and didn't look back.

CUT TO

INT. DIVE BAR - LATE DAY (NEW YORK, 1984)

CLOSE on the back of Mandy's head, looking out onto hazy New

York.

ARTHUR (O-S)

Was that the last time you saw him?

Mandy turns to look at him.

Arthur sits at the table, a few yards away.

MANDY

No. But it was the last time - we actually spoke.

A distant trace of MUSIC begins as Arthur looks up from his notes. A slow TRACK IN begins.

MANDY

I saw him again - very briefly -

Mandy stands, passing Arthur on her way to the bar.

MANDY

a few weeks later. At a concert.

ARTHUR

He was performing?

TRACK IN behind Mandy at the cigarette machine.

MANDY

No - Curt was actually performing. Brian was just there - for a second. I don't think anyone even saw him.

MUSIC and TRACK converge as Mandy pushes the button. Her cigarettes drop.

CLOSE on Arthur

ARTHUR

What - what concert?

Mandy turns to him.

SUDDEN CUT TO

INT. RAINBOW THEATER - NIGHT (LONDON, 1975)

An ominous crash of ORGAN announces the majesty of the old hall: red velvet curtains curling up beneath its opulent proscenium, framing the stage like a golden crown.

Cheers and MUSIC spill

INTO

INT. CREATURE'S FLAT - NIGHT

(Teenage) Arthur, CLOSE in the mirror, is making himself up as Maxwell Demon.

The table is strewn with a mess of make-up and magic mushrooms.

Arthur pauses to regard his feminine self as the sound of applause turns to unrest.

WE HEAR

MALE V-O
(an amplified whisper)
Maxwell Demon! Star of my eyes!

Violent booing and shouting

RETURNS TO

INT. RAINBOW THEATER - ONSTAGE

The face of Brian Slade as Maxwell Demon is projected across the stage and the audience protests.

Arthur stands with the Creatures in the audience. The crowd around him is not exactly taken with his costume. One guy shoves him and Ray and X immediately intercept.

MALE V-O
(resuming over the outburst)
Curt Wild, Suzi Small, Roxy, Dolls
and Fairy's all

With each name more faces are projected, and the shouts give way to cheers.

ONSTAGE

The silhouette of a looming coffin is revealed against deep purple lights, its lid slowly opening. From backstage, a caped figure emerges, walking into a pool of opal light. It's Jack Fairy, looking tall and radiant as ever, resuming his narration over rousing applause.

JACK
To save your wild, wild lives
To ne'er your fans embitter

SWOOPING IN on Arthur, his face amid the sea of spectators. There's a panic in his eyes.

JACK
To cease your sad demise tonight

We toast the Death of Glitter!

FAST CUT TO

INT. DIVE CLUB - LATE DAY (NEW YORK, 1984)

TIGHT on Mandy.

MANDY

It was a - tribute, sort of a farewell concert. I think they even called it -

FAST RETURN

INT. RAINBOW THEATER - ONSTAGE

MUSIC peaks as an enormous banner unfurls like a flame. Its gilded script reads:

THE DEATH OF GLITTER SHOW!

A rockin' Flaming Creatures SONG ("20th-Century Boy"/T-Rex) begins.

CUT TO

WINGS - LATER

Fast ZOOM-OUT from Arthur, dancing wildly in the wings as
ONSTAGE

The Creatures perform to a spirited audience.

CREATURES SING

Friends say it's fine, friends say
it's good/Everybody says it's just
like rock and roll
I move like a cat, talk like a rat
Sting like a bee/Babe I wanna be your man
And it's plain to see you were meant for me
I'm your toy, your twentieth century boy

WINGS

A ROADIE puts his hand on Arthur's shoulder to settle him down.

Arthur turns, embarrassed. He catches sight of

Three people approaching from backstage: a MUSICIAN, a HIP WOMAN with a clipboard - and Curt Wild.

Arthur stares in disbelief.

WE HEAR

(ADULT) ARTHUR V-O
I'm trying to reach Curt Wild. I'm
a journalist from the Herald.

Swirling MUSIC over

CUT TO

EXT. HELLS KITCHEN - LATE DAY (NEW YORK, 1984)

CRANE over Arthur, walking down a desiccated city block against a lavender sky. He is checking addresses as he goes.

ARTHUR V-O (CONT.)
Stuart, that's right... He said
what?... At four? Where?... 636?
Great. Thank you very much.

Arthur stops in front of

a run-down gym. The address reads 636.

CUT TO

INT. GYM OFFICE - LATE DAY

A frosted receptionist window slides open, revealing a large, black BALD MAN, chewing on a wad of tobacco.

BALD MAN

Yea?

ARTHUR

Hi. I'm - looking for Curt Wild? He
said I might find him here?

BALD MAN

You might.

ARTHUR

Is he - around?

BALD MAN

Who are you?

ARTHUR

A journalist. From the Herald. We
spoke on the phone.

The Bald Man spits out his tobacco.

CUT TO

INT. GYM

Arthur follows the Bald Man though the narrow, blue-carpeted gym.

It is sparsely equipped and lightly attended by middle-aged black men, who stare at him as he passes.

At the far end of the room, Curt Wild, age 38, sits in the wood-paneled gym office, his back to camera. The Bald Man calls out as he and Arthur approach.

BALD MAN

Hey, boss!

CURT

(not turning)

Get lost, Sally, would ya?

BALD MAN

Sorry Highness. I got this white boy here from the Tribune says you're expecting him -

Curt darts a glance at the two of them before bolting out of his chair and into the bathroom.

CURT

Get him out of here, Sal. Get him out of my office! Get him out!

Curt slams the door behind him as the Bald Man grabs Arthur by the shirt and drags him to the rear exit.

ARTHUR

Hey, hey, hey -

BALD MAN

Okay buster. Out you go!

EXT. ALLEY - DUSK

Arthur is tossed out the back door of the gym. He falls into the alley in a heap.

Through a small window, Curt peers out.

Arthur stands, brushing himself off. He looks up at the building.

The shade is pulled down.

Arthur shakes his head as cheerless MUSIC begins ("Gimme Danger"/Iggy & The Stooges). He turns and sets off down the street and we FOLLOW. He wipes his head. There's a little blood.

The setting sun reddens, the MUSIC builds. Suddenly Arthur finds

himself fighting back tears.

DISSOLVE TO

Dark, golden glimpses of a sinewy body, moving to the MUSIC.

INT. RAINBOW THEATER - ONSTAGE (LONDON 1975)

Curt performs his last song to Brian, a mournful plea for submission. He is dressed in thigh-high go-go boots and red panties and throughout the song he cowers and crawls.

CLOSE TRACK IN to Arthur, watching from the wings, surrounded by the Creatures.

Curt sings with tender, ominous restraint, letting loose only at the end.

CURT SINGS

Gimme danger, little stranger
And I'll feel your abuse.
Gimme danger little stranger
And I'll feel your disease.
There's nothing in my dreams
Just some ugly memories
Kiss me like the ocean breeze...

WINGS

Arthur turns and sees

Mandy, slowly walking toward the stage.

ONSTAGE

Curt sings with seething intensity.

CURT SINGS

Now if you will be my lover
I will shiver and sing
But if you can me my master
I will do anything/There's nothing
left alive but a pair of glassy eyes
Blaze my fears one more time, etc.

When the song finally erupts into a swarm of guitars, Curt breaks into desperate thrashes across the stage.

WINGS

Arthur sneaks another glance of

Mandy, watching Curt with a furrowed brow. Suddenly she turns and

looks out to the rear of the auditorium.

Arthur follows her gaze.

From the back of the house a figure steps into view, silhouetted against the light of an exit-door.

Arthur squints to make it out.

CLOSER, we see that it's Brian.

ONSTAGE

Curt's thrashing continues. He has cut himself and blood can be seen on his neck and chest. It reaches a peak as the deep blue lights slowly fade to black. There is a split second of silence before the crowd explodes.

CLOSE on Brian, who slips away.

BACKSTAGE

In relative darkness, The Roadie is clearing a path for the band to exit the stage, cornering Arthur. Dark, wet bodies crash past.

As Curt comes darting by, Mandy suddenly bolts past the Roadie and grabs him.

CLOSE on Arthur, cornered by their hug. He hears:

MANDY

Really.

CURT

Thanks.

Houselights come up and Mandy and Curt disengage, speaking quietly to one another.

Arthur looks down, trying to listen inconspicuously.

CURT

(quietly)

Did he come? Do you know?

MANDY

(also quietly)

I didn't see him.

Then she turns, catching sight of Arthur.

Curt looks up as well.

Arthur stands caught, a doe-eyed Maxwell Demon.

For a moment, Curt is taken aback by Arthur's youthful homage.

"Dead Finks Don't Talk"/Brian Eno begins.

CUT TO

COMPUTER SCREEN: WORDS FLASHING BY

NAME CHANGE SEARCH: SLADE, BRIAN

INT. ARTHUR'S APT. - LATE AFTERNOON (NEW YORK, 1984)

Arthur's face as he searches, blue in the glow of his computer.

His apartment is a crooked, looming container, twice as tall as it is wide. Its few bunker-style windows are strangely high.

The TV blares in the background.

TV NEWS

Sponsored by President Reynold's Redeem America Committee, the campaign fundraiser headlined pop superstar Tommy Stone, and raised over a million dollars for the Committee to Prosper. Also performing on the bill, Pat Boone, Chuck Damon and Martha Gale.

COMPUTER SCREEN

Brian Slade's real name and birthplace appear on the screen:

BRIAN SLADE, born: Thomas Brian Stoningham Slade, 2 January, 1948 in Birmingham Great Britain.

Name change: 16 March, 1971 [Brian Slade], 23 October, 1979 [WITHHELD]

WE HEAR

TV NEWS

Meanwhile, talk of another airlift for the South Florida famine is being discussed in Los Angeles. While in business news today, the Ticketron corporation announced record sales for the Tommy Stone World Tour, which kicks off here in New York later this month.

Arthur glances up from his computer.

ON TV

Shay (Shannon), brittle for her age, speaks into a mike. Beside her sits Tommy Stone.

SHAY (ON TV)

...Due to the overwhelming demand, additional shows are being added whenever and wherever possible.

TRACK IN to Arthur who is stuck, watching.

TV NEWS O-S

According to a spokesman for the tour, the six additional Alhambra shows sold out in a record 15 minutes.

Suddenly he races back to his computer.

COMPUTER SCREEN

CLOSE PAN ACROSS Brian Slade's birth-name:

Thomas Brian Patrick Stoningham Slade

TRACK INTO the names "Thomas... Stoningham"

Arthur stares at the screen.

He looks back at the TV set. FAST PAN/ZOOM INTO

TV SCREEN

CLOSE on Tommy Stone on TV as Shay continues:

SHAY (ON TV)

Regrettably, Mr. Stone only has time for a few questions this morning, as he has a plane to catch to Zurich -

REPORTERS (ON TV)

Tommy! Tommy! Tommy!

TRACK IN to screen, MUSIC rising. Tommy Stone bears a marked resemblance to Brian Slade.

CUT TO

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - SUNSET

MUSIC continues as Arthur runs through the rush hour crowds of

New York.

INT. NEWS OFFICE - LATER

Arthur runs out of the elevator, past everyone leaving for the day.

MURRAY

What's chasin' you, my son?

ARTHUR

Is Lou still here?

MURRAY

Might be. He had a late appointment.
That one.

He gestures to a well-dressed woman marching out of the building.

Arthur recognizes her as Shay.

ARTHUR

Thanks Murray.

Arthur runs into the building.

INT. NEWSROOM CORRIDOR

Arthur races down the shadowy hallway to Lou's office. He knocks.

ARTHUR

Lou? Lou?

He opens the door. It's dark inside. He hears a sound and looks back to the elevators.

The doors are opening and Lou is getting in.

ARTHUR

Lou!

Arthur goes running down the hall as a slow build of MUSIC begins ("Sweet Thing"/Bowie)

ARTHUR

Lou! LOU!

LOU

I'm sorry Arthur. I'm late.

ARTHUR

Lou - please! I think I just

stumbled onto something. Something quite big.

Lou presses a button and the doors open.

LOU

What.

ARTHUR

I think I know who Brian Slade is.

LOU

The story's been dropped.

ARTHUR

What? Why?

The elevator doors are closing.

LOU

I need you on the Stone show.

ARTHUR

But that's -

LOU

I'm sorry Arthur.

The doors close.

ARTHUR

What did she tell you! Lou!

MUSIC expands on

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - DUSK

Arthur walks home, heavy in thought. It has begun to rain.

He passes an endless BREAD-LINE.

In an alley he spots the Hooker from the subway, wrapped around a CUSTOMER. A line of MEN wait their turn.

A MAN in a cape struggles to hold back a MAD DOG from attacking two small CHILDREN, as their MOTHER comes tearing down the street, shedding groceries.

CLOSE on Arthur, watching sadly. MUSIC continues rising as WE HEAR

ARTHUR V-O

It's only now, looking back, that I
see

DISSOLVE TO

INT. RAINBOW THEATER - LOBBY (LONDON 1975)

SLO-MO TRACK INTO Curt, surrounded by colorful figures and painted faces. Everyone is laughing, drinking and grabbing one another, but the colors have faded, the glitter worn, and a dark, Berlin-style decadence has set in. TRACK ends as Curt looks up, spotting someone from across the room.

MATCH TRACK-IN to Arthur, squeezed into the corner of the lobby, trapped by Curt's glance.

ARTHUR V-O (CONT.)

how you patched through my walls
and entered my life... in waves.

Arthur looks down shyly and back up again.

Curt's eyes are fixed.

WE HEAR

SONG

It's safe in the city
To love in a doorway
To strangle some screams from the dawn

FAST DISSOLVE TO

EXT. RAINBOW THEATER ROOF - 4AM

CLOSE BACK-TRACK with Arthur as he walks across the dark rooftop. Shadows pass over his face like ghosts.

The MUSIC yields to Curt's deep, internal whisper:

CURT V-O

(slow, thoughtful)

Come closer. Don't be frightened.
What's your name? Your favorite
color? Song. Movie. Don't be
nervous. Are you high?

Arthur whispers his response aloud, half to himself:

ARTHUR

I'm on a button.

FAST DISSOLVE TO

LATER

Curt busts up laughing, opening a can of beer that sprays all over himself. He sits with Arthur at the far corner of the roof, shirtless.

Close on Arthur's face, speckled with beer.

Curt looks up.

CURT

Hey - !

Arthur follows, just catching sight of

A falling star.

CURT O-S

Make a wish.

FAST DISSOLVE TO

EARLIER

Wide TRACK-IN on Curt, who sits at the far end of the roof watching our approach (Arthur's POV during his previous walk). Song's CHORUS takes over:

SONG

Boys/Boys, it's a sweet thing
Boys/Boys, it's a sweet thing
Sweet thing

A voice returns but it's Adult Arthur we hear.

(ADULT) ARTHUR V-O

He was waiting for me. I had
followed his signals and slipped
away and now - suddenly

CUT TO

LATER

CLOSE on Curt, a cigarette hanging from his lip. Arthur stands closer now, looking down on the city.

The SONG narrates:

SONG (CONT.)

I'm glad that you're older than me
Makes me feel important and free
Does that make you smile?
Isn't that me?

Arthur, CLOSER, looks over at Curt.

FAST DISSOLVE

LATER

MUSIC continues as we FOLLOW Curt's hand as it travels to Arthur and lands tenderly on his cheek.

Arthur is pulling off his shirt, standing over Curt who is also shirtless.

FAST DISSOLVE

LATER

ECU of Curt's hand on Arthur's bare back, his cool white skin filling the screen. We follow it down.

FAST CUT TO

BRIEFLY:

EXT. ROOF - MORNING

Curt laughs hysterically over a SLAM OF GUITARS (an excerpt from Bowie's "Let's Spend The Night Together")

BOWIE

You said we were too young! That
our kind of love was no fun!

FAST RETURN TO

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

In sweaty CLOSE UP, Curt sees something in the sky.

BOWIE

But our love comes from above - DO IT!

CURT

Hey -

Arthur's eye darts up. He sees

A luminous spacecraft, like the one that passed over Old Dublin. It swirls over London with a thunderous BOOM -

BOWIE

Let's make love - DO IT! WHOOOH!

- and vanishes.

All that remains is a skyful of glitterdust.

CLOSE on Curt's lips, whispering through the cascade:

CURT V-O

Make a wish -

A WIDE SHOT of the roof, now awash in stardust, as the white bodies of Curt and Arthur are seen through the sparkles, Curt behind Arthur, gently fucking. A long, slow CRANE OUT begins, as MUSIC and voices peak.

CURT V-O

And see yourself, onstage, inside-out!
A tangle of garlands in your hair.
Of course you are pleasantly surprised.

(TEEN) ARTHUR V-O

Softly, he said...

ALL 3 VOICES

(whispering)

I will mangle your mind.

WE WITHDRAW as the bodies of Curt and Arthur are engulfed and the artificiality of the set intensifies, warping perspective in the style of Caligari.

WE MOVE THROUGH a stylized window, into an expressionistic bedroom, and reveal a BOY CASTRATO, singing into the mirror of a transparent vanity. His mouth is bleeding.

Gently, the Boy Castrato paints his lips with the blood.

WE HEAR

BRIAN SINGS O-S

Boys/Boys, it's a sweet thing
Boys/Boys, it's a sweet thing
Sweet thing

Last to be revealed is Brian, in trenchcoat and fedora, who steps into the foreground, microphone in hand, and sings to camera.

BRIAN SINGS

Is it nice in your snowstorm
Freezing your brain?
Do you think that your face
Looks the same?

A blue snowstorm consumes the Boy Castrato.

Brian walks across a bridge as city walls collapse below.

BRIAN SINGS

Then let it be/It's all I ever wanted

It's a street with a deal
It's got taste, it's got pause
It's got me it's got... it's got you

He stops to light a cigarette, gazing down over the metropolis.
Lights fade, leaving him silhouetted against the sky.

Cheers.

INT. STADIUM SHOW - (NEW YORK 1984)

Arthur sits in the audience, applauding, coming out of his reverie.

BRIEFLY: ONSTAGE

we see the actual show: Tommy Stone in glitzy-white garb, arms open, receiving applause and bouquets of flowers.

CUT TO

EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

Arthur walks out of the theater to "10538 Overture"/ELO. FANS are rushing past. Up ahead, a small crowd has gathered around the stage door.

A huge spotlight is turned onto the door.

There are cheers as Tommy Stone appears.

Arthur stops and watches.

REPORTERS

Tommy! Tommy! Where did you get the idea for such a brilliantly theatrical stadium show?

TOMMY

Tell you the truth - it's a bloody pain in the ass! The whole thing takes six full-size rigs or three chartered planes to transport. What can I say? I think big!

Arthur approaches the crowd.

REPORTERS

Tommy! What's your opinion of the work President Reynolds has been doing -

TOMMY

Excellent. Excellent. I think he's doing brilliant work. He's a - tremendous leader, tremendous spokesperson for the needs of the nation today -

Suddenly Arthur yells out over the others:

ARTHUR

Tommy! What is your response to the recent allegations connecting you to bisexual pop singer Brian Slade, who staged his own assassination ten years ago this week in London?

Tommy is white.

BRIEFLY

SILENT IMAGE - SLO-MO BRIAN SLADE BEING SHOT ONSTAGE

BACK TO

EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

REPORTERS swarm as Arthur watches

Tommy, devoured by SECURITY MEN, whisked away.

Shay is suddenly at the mike.

SHAY

I'm sorry, Ladies and Gentlemen, that's all the questions Mr. Stone has time for this evening - Thank you very much -

CUT TO

INT. DRESSING ROOM

MUSIC as we FOLLOW Shay and various ASSISTANTS escorting Tommy back to his dressing room.

In the background TV News is heard:

TV

Tonight, the Tri-State Area pulls all the stops in welcoming pop superstar Tommy Stone to Madison Square Garden. Stone is promoting his Grammy-winning release, Ermine Girl, to sold-out arenas worldwide...

INT. TOMMY'S DRESSING ROOM

Tommy is silent in the midst of a cool panic.

SHAY

OUT! NOW! Shut the door!

CLOSE on Shay, eyes shut, as people clear. When the door closes, WE HEAR a squeal like Little Richard's coming from the TV.

Tommy looks over.

TRACKING IN ON THE SCREEN - We see a Michael Jackson-type performer singing to camera. It's Maxwell Demon, transformed, taunting Tommy through the airwaves.

MATCH TRACK into Tommy, looking like he's seen a ghost.

Rising MUSIC suddenly ends

CUT TO

INT. MIDTOWN BAR - NIGHT

The door shuts behind Arthur in a dark midtown bar.

Everyone looks up. There is a strange, between-songs silence.

Arthur proceeds, self-consciously.

A Tommy Stone song begins on the juke-box, but people in the bar continue staring at Arthur.

He approaches the bar.

ARTHUR

Beer, please. Bud.

Arthur notices

a group of mostly black TEENAGERS, decked out in Tommy Stone gear. They whisper to each other. One TEENAGE GIRL starts walking over.

The BARTENDER hands Arthur his beer, staring all the while at Arthur's jacket.

Arthur realizes he's still wearing his press pass and starts taking it off.

TEENAGE GIRL

Excuse me sir. Are you from the Tommy Stone Tour?

ARTHUR

No - sorry, I'm just a journalist.
But perhaps you'd like to keep my
press-pass, as a souvenir?

Her eyes widen. Arthur hands her the badge.

TEENAGE GIRL

Thank you, sir.

She runs back to show her friends as Arthur turns and walks deeper into the long, narrow bar.

He passes the juke-box, and discovers a second bar in the back: smaller and moodier. A man in a leather jacket is drinking alone.

Arthur stops. He can't believe his eyes.

It's Curt Wild, folding a Tommy Stone guest pass into aurigami.

Arthur smiles and starts advancing before even deciding to.

Curt looks up.

ARTHUR

Hi.

Curt just glares.

ARTHUR

You're Curt Wild, right?

CURT

(irritable)

Yea. Who the hell are you?

Brief silence.

ARTHUR

I'm a journalist. With the Herald.
You were at the concert?

Curt just stares at him.

ARTHUR

It's just funny - 'cause I was just
trying to contact you actually...
for a story I was doing.

Curt takes a long swig of beer.

ARTHUR

About a - old friend of yours -
Brian Slade?

Curt looks up for a moment, hiding his interest.

ARTHUR

I was trying to find out - what
actually happened to him.

CURT

Look -

ARTHUR

I mean before he became -

Curt stops.

TIGHT on Arthur, peeking up at him.

ARTHUR

...such a mystery.

Curt snorts out a sudden guffaw.

CURT

Look, man, I don't know who you've
been talking to or what you're
after here, but... (trails off)

ARTHUR

What? What?

CURT

Look - A real artist creates
beautiful things... and puts
nothing of his own life into them.
Okay?

ARTHUR

Is that what you did?

CURT

No. (brief silence)
No, we failed. We set out to
change the world and ended up
...just changing ourselves.

ARTHUR

What's wrong with that?

CURT

Nothing! (silence) If you don't
look at the world.

Quiet MUSIC under slow PAN past kids gathered at the juke-box,
cliques of Tommy Stone fans, conservative, bored. One gay LATINO
BOY sits braiding a girl's hair. End on a huge Tommy Stone
poster.

CURT (O-S)

I guess in the end he got what he
wanted.

Curt stands in thought another beat before slipping on his jacket
and downing his beer.

CLOSE on Arthur looking up at him with a distant smile.

ARTHUR

That's quite a - pin you got there.

CLOSE ON Curt's jacket: the antique emerald pin sparkles green.

CURT

Oh yea.

ARTHUR

Is it old?

CURT

(examining it)

Possibly. It was Oscar Wilde's.
Or so I was told by the person who
gave it to me.

ECU on pin with a soft shimmer of MUSIC.

CURT

This friend of mine who kinda...
disappeared - some years back.

Arthur's eyes flash up. The shimmer swells.

Extreme CLOSE UP Curt.

CURT

(very far-away)

We were on a trip someplace and -
out of the blue he says, 'Curt'-

FLASH TO

A BLEACHED-OUT IMAGE of Brian and Curt on some beach.

(EXT. BEACH - DAY, 1973)

From a great distance, Brian is pinning something to Curt's shirt.

CURT V-O

'A man's life is his image.'

CUT TO

BRIEF, SILENT SHOTS:

EXT. RAINBOW THEATER ROOFTOP (LONDON 1975) - MORNING

Urine streaming in a puddle.

(Teenage) Arthur, lying on an old mattress, mouths Curt's name.

Curt, standing peeing, turns.

BACK TO

The emerald pin, rolling loose in the palm of Curt's hand.

INT. MIDTOWN BAR (NEW YORK, 1984) - NIGHT

CURT

Here. Why don't you hang onto it.

FLASH UP to Arthur's face.

ARTHUR

Me?

CURT

Why not? I've had it too long anyway.
Go ahead.

Curt puts it in Arthur's hand. Arthur looks down at it, speechless.

CURT

(tenderly)

For your image.

Curt stands up, getting ready to go.

Arthur looks up at him, shaking his head.

BRIEFLY - Coins are pushed through slots, jukebox buttons pressed.

ARTHUR

Really. I couldn't. But thanks.

Arthur returns the pin with a polite smile.

BRIEFLY - A jukebox 45 drops into place.

Curt takes the pin, pockets it.

CURT

Whatever.

The introduction to "All The Young Dudes" begins on the juke-box.

RACK to Arthur, CLOSE, who turns toward the jukebox.

The gay Latino Boy Teen recognizes the song.

LATINO BOY

Oh God, I love this song. Do you
know this song?

GIRL

I don't think so.

Arthur turns back to Curt.

CURT

Anyway.

ARTHUR

Yea.

CURT

I'll see ya around.

ARTHUR

Cheers.

Curt nods and turns.

Arthur watches him go. He reaches for his beer and finishes it
off - and nearly gags. He spits something out in his hand.

CLOSE on the palm of his hand: the emerald pin lies covered in
beer spittle.

Arthur smiles, looking up in Curt's direction.

The front door is just swinging shut.

ECU Arthur.

ARTHUR V-O

He called it a freedom.

BRIEFLY

SILENT SHOTS:

[EXT. RAINBOW THEATER ROOFTOP (LONDON 1975) - MORNING]

Curt, turning to camera while taking a piss (as before)

Arthur, stretched out on the mattress, just looks at him.

RETURN TO

INT. MIDTOWN BAR - NIGHT

ECU Arthur, remembering.

ARTHUR V-O (CONT.)

A freedom you can allow yourself.

He glances once more at the people in the bar.

ARTHUR V-O -

Or not.

The first verse begins (sung by Jack Fairy), as Arthur closes the pin in his hand.

JACK SINGS O-S

Billy rapped all night about his suicide

DISSOLVE TO

INT. RAINBOW THEATER (LONDON 1975)

Jack Fairy performs the glam-rock anthem with regal pathos, at the Death Of Glitter Show.

JACK SINGS (CONT.)

How he would kick it in the head

When he was 25/Speed jive

Don't wanna stay alive when you're 25

Jack kneels at the edge of the stage under a single spot.

JACK SINGS

And Wendy's stealin' clothes from

Mark's and Sparks

And Freddie's got spots from

Rippin' off the stars from his face

Funky little Boat Race

Arthur stands crushed in a corner, swaying to the MUSIC with Ray, Pearl and X.

Slow TRACK IN on Mandy, watching from the wings.

JACK SINGS

The television man is crazy
 Saying we're juvenile delinquent wrecks
 Oh man/I need TV/When I got T-Rex
 Oh brother you guessed
 I'm a dude now

ONSTAGE the lights shimmer gold as a mirror ball turns, conjuring a galaxy. Curt stands in the gleam with Suzi Small, Guy and Trevor, all singing along behind Jack.

JACK & COMPANY SING

All the young dudes/Carry the news
 Boogaloo dudes/Carry the news
 All the young dudes (repeat)

We ASCEND, rising up from the stage, as a mist of glitter begins to fall. We pass the faces of glitter legends, projected onstage: Maxwell, Brian, Curt, Jack, Suzi. We continue, rising into darkness.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. RAINBOW THEATER ROOF - DAWN

We PASS THROUGH to the roof where it is dawn and snowing. Curt and Arthur are there, hanging out after sex. They turn in our direction but we continue our ASCENT.

DISSOLVE THROUGH

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

-LONDON ROOFTOPS gliding by.

-EXT. LONDON STREETS - DAY

Shots of busy Londoners on their way to work.

-INT. ENGLISH FACTORY - DAY

FEMALE WORKERS turn up the SONG on the radio, nodding their heads with the chorus.

-INT. CHILDREN'S CLASSROOM - DAY

The TEACHER turns it up for the CHILDREN during playtime.

-INT. LONDON PUB - NIGHT

The SONG's chorus continues through a small transistor radio from which we TRACK, revealing a candle-lit pub during the '74 miners strikes.

TRACK past the warm, flickering faces of PATRONS, pints in hand, gazing solemnly toward the music.

DISSOLVE THROUGH

MONTAGE OF FACES (from before):

-The Three Young Punks, singing along to the chorus.

-Two London Girls, arm in arm, singing.

-Boy With Crew Cut, eyes closed, sings a held note to the skies.

-The faces of New York Street Kids, looking up, some sadly, some angrily.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO

The locked mouths of two handsome DOCKERS, kissing.

EXT. LONDON DOCKS - AFTERNOON

We begin a slow TRACK OUT as the dockers gently disengage. They look around, coolly, gradually drifting back to work. We begin ASCENDING as well, as the SONG begins to fade. Gradually, the sweet strains of the MUSIC are replaced by the sounds of real life.

In our ASCENT the small barge is revealed, surrounded by black, sparkling water. Finally the SONG has faded away (we hear ocean, birds) and the men have returned to their duties.

HARD CUT TO BLACK

"Make Me Smile"/Steve Harley Cockney Rebel plays over

A MONTAGE OF IMAGES from the period.

CLOSING CREDITS

End