

THE LONG PLAY

"Pilot"

Written by
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A SERIES OF SHOTS: New York City, circa 1977. Through the window of a moving Cadillac Limousine, we see graffiti-covered buildings; HOMELESS PEOPLE in cardboard boxes; a JUNKIE shooting up in a doorway as GANG MEMBERS pass by.

RICKY (V.O.)
(reading aloud)
Hello from the gutters of New York,
filled with manure, vomit, stale
wine, urine, and blood.

Moving through Times Square, HOOKERS prowl the filthy streets under the watchful eyes of their PIMPS; theater marquees advertise nothing but porn and kung-fu movies.

RICKY (V.O.)
(reading aloud)
Hello from the sewers which swallow
up these delicacies when they are
washed away by the sweeper trucks.

EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

The limo turns down West 33rd Street, pulls into the open gates of a loading dock beside a tractor trailer.

RICKY (V.O.)
(reading aloud)
Hello from the cracks in the
sidewalks, filled with the blood
of the dead.

INT. RICKY'S LIMO - NIGHT

CLOSE ON -- The New York Daily News, whose headline reads:

"BRESLIN TO .44 KILLER: GIVE UP! IT'S THE ONLY WAY OUT."

The newspaper is lowered, revealing the reader, A&R man RICKY FINESTRA, 34, handsome yet world-weary.

RICKY
I solved it. Son of Sam is a
writer for Conde Naste Traveler.

His raspy-voiced driver, LESTER, African-American, mid-40s, chuckles as he looks at him in the rear-view mirror.
(Note: We never see Lester fully.)

LESTER (O.C.)
Certainly got a feel for the place.

(CONTINUED)

RICKY
I'll be twenty minutes.

And as Ricky emerges from the limo...

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

Over the rhythmic chanting of 20,000 PEOPLE, the flames from thousands of cigarette lighters illuminate the darkened arena like a starry sky...

CROWD
Led Zep! Led Zep! Led Zep!

And as the chanting grows louder, on screen appears:

Madison Square Garden

June 8th, 1977

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Backstage chaos. With the chanting of the Crowd bleeding in from out front, ROADIES hustle equipment as JOURNALISTS, GROUPIES and other HANGERS-ON hover around the members of LED ZEPPELIN, dripping with sweat, post performance. As ROBERT PLANT, 29, laughs with JOHN BONHAM, the camera finds

RICKY

approaching in an Armani jacket over T-shirt, jeans and snakeskin boots.

RICKY
Rob.

Plant looks up at him; his smile fades. He pats his pockets as if looking for money.

ROBERT PLANT
Ricky, hey. You come for the rest?

RICKY
Fuck you talking about?

ROBERT PLANT
The distribution deal.

RICKY
"G" and I came to an agreement.

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT PLANT
At thirty percent. Then your
Scott Levitt offered twenty.

RICKY
Are you fucking kidding me?

The chanting from the arena grows LOUDER. The STAGE MANAGER
approaches, taps Plant on the shoulder.

RICKY (CONT'D)
Let me make some calls, I'll--

JOHN BONHAM
(cutting him off)
We have a fucking encore to do!

RICKY
Let's talk later!

Plant juts his chin toward a few GROUPIES.

ROBERT PLANT
No good. I'll be in my room doing
to those birds what your record
company's trying to do to me!

And with that, Plant is hustled off into the wings with the
rest of the band. The camera pushes in on

RICKY,

who stands there, fuming. After a few beats, a ROAR erupts
from the arena as Led Zeppelin re-takes the stage. And over
John Bonham's pounding drum intro for *Rock n' Roll*...

INT. ST. REGIS HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

The song continues as the CAMERA PANS the pristine room,
elegantly appointed with antique furniture, paintings, rugs
and gilded mirrors. As it comes to rest on a giant fruit
basket with a card reading "Welcome Robert Plant"--

ROBERT PLANT
(singing)
*It's been a long time since I
rock-and-rolled--*

CLOSE ON -- a pair of hands lifts the fruit basket, then
hurls it to the floor with a crash.

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT PLANT (CONT'D)
*It's been a long time since I did
the stroll--*

CLOSE ON -- a bottle of Dom Perignon is snatched from an ice bucket, then flung across the room, where it shatters a giant gilded mirror into hundreds of pieces.

ROBERT PLANT (CONT'D)
*Ooh, let me get it back, let me
get it back, let me get it back...
mm-baby, where I come from--*

CLOSE ON -- a giant Art Deco chifferobe crashes to the floor.

ROBERT PLANT (CONT'D)
*It's been a long time, been a long
time, been a long lonely, lonely,
lonely, lonely, lonely time, yes
it has--*

A SERIES OF CUTS: vases are smashed; paintings defaced; tables overturned; bound books are flung from shelves.

ROBERT PLANT (CONT'D)
*It's been a long time since the
book of love/ I can't count the
tears of a life with no love--*

CLOSE ON -- a giant color TV, on which Robert Blake as Baretta has a Thug in an arm lock.

ROBERT PLANT (CONT'D)
*Carry me back, carry me back, carry
me back mm-baby, where I come from--*

And as the TV topples with a CRASH, the door of the suite flings open, revealing a stunned

ROBERT PLANT

standing there with two teenaged GROUPIES.

ROBERT PLANT (CONT'D)
The fuck are you doing?!!

A REVERSE ANGLE reveals that Plant is addressing Ricky, who is wild-eyed and clearly coked-up as he stands amid the rubble holding a small antique table.

RICKY
I'm done. I'm leaving American
Century.

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT PLANT
Are you mad?

RICKY
Nobody fucks with my artists!

Ricky hurls the table, which crashes near the Groupies.

ROBERT PLANT
Easy, mate!

RICKY
We made a deal, I gave you my word.
Now this shitbag, this fucking
suit -- wants to renege? Fuck
this room, fuck Scott Levitt and
fuck this fucking label!

He grabs a wine bottle off a shelf.

ROBERT PLANT
Ricky--

RICKY
E.L.O. got thirty percent! Roxy
Music! John fucking Denver!!

He smashes the bottle against a white wall; red wine drips
down it like blood.

RICKY (CONT'D)
You're a star, baby, you're
Michelangelo, with God's gift
wired into your fucking brain!
These pikers, these fucking bean
counters, they don't get it!

Plant looks at him. He's eating it up. A few beats, then:

ROBERT PLANT
Don't quit, mate.

RICKY
I can't work with these people.
I don't need this shit.

ROBERT PLANT
We'll figure something out.

RICKY
Go back to Ahmet. Warners. CBS.

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT PLANT
Fucking Yetnikoff?

Ricky shrugs. A few beats, then:

ROBERT PLANT (CONT'D)
I need you in my corner, Ricky.

Ricky sighs, looks at him. A long time, then he "caves":

RICKY
I'd only do this for you, you
realize that, right?

ROBERT PLANT
Thank you, mate.

They hug, then Plant looks around at the devastation.

ROBERT PLANT (CONT'D)
My bleedin' room.

RICKY
I'll have them move you to the
Presidential suite.

As Ricky exits, we PRE-LAP the sound of a ringing phone...

INT. RICKY'S LIMO - NIGHT

Ricky sits in back of his limo, giant 1970s-era car phone to his ear. After a few beats, an answering machine picks up.

SCOTT LEVITT (V.O.)
Hello. This is Scott Levitt and
you have reached my automated
telephone answering device.
Please wait for the sound of the
beep tone and leave your message.

We hear a prolonged BEEP, then:

RICKY
Scott, it's me.
(a few beats; then)
Scott. Take the cock out of your
mouth and pick up the phone.

We hear someone pick up, then, over the phone:

(CONTINUED)

SCOTT LEVITT (V.O.)
(annoyed)
What, Ricky.

RICKY
You're an imbecile, that's what.

SCOTT LEVITT (V.O.)
What are you talking about?

RICKY
Zeppelin. Plant. Remember them?

SCOTT LEVITT (V.O.)
I sent you a memo.

RICKY
I must have used it to wipe my ass.

SCOTT LEVITT (V.O.)
You sure you want to talk to me
like that?

RICKY
You're not VP yet, Scott. And
until you are, let me give you some
advice. You ever fuck up a deal of
mine again, I'll splatter your
corpse all over 57th Street.

Click. Ricky hangs up as the limo comes to a stop. He looks
out the window at a marquee on Broadway -- Beatlemania --
then tosses back a few pills, which he washes down with
vodka. His eyes meet Lester's in the rear-view mirror.

LESTER
Max's?

RICKY
Who's there?

LESTER
(a beat; then reading)
Blondie?

RICKY
Take me home.

LESTER (O.C.)
The apartment?

RICKY
Scarsdale.

(CONTINUED)

On the radio we hear...

ALISON STEELE (V.O.)
(over radio)
...this is Alison Steele, the
Night Bird, on WNEW FM.

And as Lynyrd Skynyrd begin to play, Ricky turns off the radio, leans his head back. Lester drives in silence...

EXT. CROSS-BRONX EXPRESSWAY - NIGHT

Through the limo's windshield, we HEAR horns honking and see that cars are backed up for miles. Over the radio, we hear:

ED KOCH (V.O.)
(over radio)
--and the people of New York
deserve better. I'm Ed Koch and
I'm running for Mayor.

Ricky awakens from his slumber, looks up.

RICKY
What's going on?

LESTER (O.C.)
Water main break.

Ricky glances at his watch, then sighs - almost 2:30 a.m.

RICKY
I'll stay in the city.

And as Lester pulls off at an exit...

EXT. SOUTH BRONX STREET - NIGHT

A dicey neighborhood. The limo makes its way down a dark street, whose tenement buildings are covered with graffiti. Up ahead, a dozen PEOPLE, all African-American, mill outside a club, from which we hear a thumping bass line accompanying:

GRANDMASTER FLASH
*Well a hip hop the hippie the
hippie, to the hip hip hop, you
don't stop the rock it to the bang
bang boogie say up jumped the
boogie to the rhythm of the boogie,
the beat--*

(CONTINUED)

RICKY

Pull over.

LESTER (O.C.)

Highway's just up ahead.

RICKY

Just do it.

Lester pulls the limo over. A man in pimp regalia whom we'll come to know as TOPCAT, 30, nods to two HOOKERS, who approach Ricky's lowered window.

HOOKER #1

Hey baby. Wanna party?

RICKY

No thanks.

HOOKER #2

I'll suck your dick real nice.

Ricky nods to Topcat; the Hookers move off as he approaches.

TOPCAT

Blow. Reefer. Ludes.

RICKY

What is this place? This music.

Topcat pulls his leather trench coat aside, revealing a .38 pistol stuck in his waistband.

TOPCAT

Pot, pussy or pills, motherfucker.

Ricky looks at Topcat and smiles.

RICKY

Just lookin' for the way home.

And with that, Lester pulls out.

Ricky turns in his seat, looks out the rear window to see Topcat fade into the distance.

INT. AMERICAN CENTURY MUSIC - RECEPTION AREA - DAY (DAY 2)

Fleetwood Mac plays from the speakers as a few MUSICIANS mill about, sitting on the chrome furniture. A young punk rocker named KIP, 23, handsome and painfully thin, stands before the gorgeous young RECEPTIONIST as she answers calls.

(CONTINUED)

RECEPTIONIST
(into phone)
American Century, good morning.
(transfers call; then)
American Century, how may I direct
your call?

As she transfers the call, the elevator DINGS. Junior A&R
exec EMMY CAPORALE, hip, mid-20s, emerges.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
(to Kip)
Can I help you?

KIP
(holds up envelope)
I need to leave this for Ricky
Finestra.

EMMY (V.O.)
That a tape?

Kip looks up to see Emmy standing there.

KIP
My band.

EMMY
I'll take it.
(sensing his trepidation)
I work with Ricky.

Kip hands her the envelope. She offers her hand.

EMMY (CONT'D)
Emmy Caporale, A&R.

KIP
Kip Stevens.

EMMY
(makes a face)
Little like Cat Stevens, no?
(looks at envelope)
Spicy Bits. You have a manager?

KIP
No, but we're at CBGB tonight.
Check us out if you can.

Emmy smiles, holds up the package.

(CONTINUED)

EMMY

I'll see Ricky gets it.

Kip nods. Emmy and the Receptionist watch as he disappears on to the elevator.

EMMY (CONT'D)

I would kill to be that skinny.

And as Emmy exits into the offices with the tape, we PRE-LAP:

RICKY (V.O.)

--because it was late and I didn't want to wake you.

INT. RICKY'S APARTMENT - NEW YORK CITY - LIVING ROOM - DAY

An Upper East Side hi-rise with amazing views but sparse furniture, its centerpiece a giant Pioneer stereo system with massive speakers stacked with cassette tapes. Wearing only a towel, Ricky smokes, the phone cradled to his ear.

LYNNE (V.O.)

I'm up every two hours anyway feeding the baby. If you were home some time, you'd know that.

INT. RICKY'S HOUSE - SCARSDALE - KITCHEN - DAY

Ricky's wife LYNNE, an ex-model in her early 30s, stands at the counter on the phone as their two children, RONNIE, 11, and BETH, 9, eat breakfast at the table.

RICKY (V.O.)

Have the nanny do it.

INTERCUT RICKY AND LYNNE AS NEEDED

LYNNE

I'm breast-feeding, Ricky!

RICKY

(sighs; then)

I can't win, can I?

LYNNE

Win what? This isn't a game.

RICKY

Put Ronnie on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lynne hands the phone to Ronnie as Beth spills juice.

LYNNE

Your father.

BETH

I got juice on my pants.

Lynne exits with Beth as Ronnie takes the phone.

RONNIE

Hello?

RICKY

Hey pal, how you doin'?

RONNIE

I have a canker sore.

RICKY

Wow. That stinks.
(silence; then)
Your sister there?

RONNIE

She went with mom to change her
pants.

RICKY

Okay. Tell her I'll see her later.

RONNIE

All right.

Ricky hangs up, stares out the window. After a few beats,
a gorgeous BRUNETTE, maybe 19, emerges from the bedroom,
hair wet, completely naked and holding a bottle of shampoo.

BRUNETTE

(re: shampoo)
This is Prell.
(off his look)
I asked for Herbal Essence.

And on Ricky's look...

INT. AMERICAN CENTURY - BULLPEN AREA - DAY

Bustling with activity; decorated with tour posters, industry
awards and album covers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

(Note: All support staff are very attractive WOMEN, late teens to early 20s.) As Ricky approaches his office, he is met by his assistant CECE, African-American, gorgeous, 22.

RICKY

Who and what?

CECE

Shep Gordon. Mr. Cooper lands at three.

RICKY

"Mr. Cooper."

(glances at watch)

What else?

CECE

Alik wants to see you. He's in with Scott.

RICKY

I'll take some espresso.

CECE

On your desk.

INT. AMERICAN CENTURY - RICKY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Ricky enters, closes the door. As he crosses the room we PAN the walls, covered with GOLD RECORDS and FRAMED PHOTOS.

CLOSE ON PHOTOS -- a young Ricky with Roy Orbison; Chuck Berry; John Lennon.

Ricky sits at the desk, where underneath an espresso cup is a foil packet of COCAINE. He opens it.

CLOSE ON PHOTOS -- Ricky with Jimi Hendrix; Bob Dylan; Elton John.

Ricky does a bump of coke, shudders as it hits. As he wipes his nose, he looks across the room and we PUSH IN on a

PHOTO

of him, smiling, circa 1962, his arm around a young black singer we'll come to know as LITTLE JIMMY LITTLE.

INT. AMERICAN CENTURY - EMMY'S OFFICE - DAY

Small, cramped, tapes piled everywhere. Feet up on the windowsill, Emmy sits back in her chair smoking, coffee in hand as she listens to The Spicy Bits tape. After a while:

MARK (O.C.)

What's that?

Emmy turns to see junior A&R exec MARK PHILIPS, 25, hip and good looking, standing in her doorway.

EMMY

(lowering the music)

Nothing.

MARK

The Stilettos? I already passed on them.

EMMY

(calling out)

Rebecca, will you order me a pair of headphones please?!

(then)

What do you want, Mark?

MARK

Well I was gonna ask for a hand job, but it seems like the moment passed.

EMMY

About three years ago.

Mark looks at her.

MARK

You got anything?

EMMY

A couple ludes, I dunno.

MARK

For the meeting.

EMMY

Why, do you?

MARK

Van Halen got away.

(CONTINUED)

EMMY

The guys from Pasadena?
(off his nod)
Does Ricky know?

MARK

I'm still working here, so
probably not.

EMMY

What happened?

MARK

Mo Ostin.
(then)
We're in New York. I can't be in
two places at once.

Just then, Ricky pokes his head in:

RICKY

Fifteen minutes. My office.

Ricky heads off. A few beats, then:

EMMY

(to Mark)
This should be a fun meeting.

INT. ALIK SAKHAROV'S OFFICE - DAY

American Century CEO ALIK SAKHAROV, 46, a bearded, gold-chain-wearing bear of a man, sits on a couch across from head of legal SCOTT LEVITT, 36. As Ricky enters, crosses to the bar:

SCOTT LEVITT

Thirty six thousand dollars.

RICKY

Excuse me?

SCOTT LEVITT

The St. Regis. You broke a
Biedermeier side table, Ricky.

RICKY

(pours a vodka rocks)
Jesus, come out of the closet
already.
(to Alik)
A Biedermeier side table?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Alik chuckles.

SCOTT LEVITT

Nice. He wears his ignorance like
a crown and you encourage it.

Ricky joins them in the seating area.

RICKY

Fuck the table, Scott. You almost
broke a relationship I took twelve
years to build.

SCOTT LEVITT

A distribution arrangement with a
gaggle of dinosaurs.

RICKY

Six nights at the Garden, not a
fucking seat available.

SCOTT LEVITT

Which is great for this year.
How about next. We need new Ricky,
not old.

ALIK SAKHAROV

That much is true.

RICKY

I'll tell you what. I'll stop
fucking up every deal we have if
you stop trying to do my job.

SCOTT LEVITT

(to Alik)

And what is it he does again?

ALIK SAKHAROV

Give us a minute, will you?

Scott exits. Ricky turns to Alik.

RICKY

If it ain't me, that's fine.
But promise me I won't have to
report to him.

ALIK SAKHAROV

You know it's not up to me.

Ricky sighs, holds up the vodka.

(CONTINUED)

RICKY

Did you want one of these?

ALIK SAKHAROV

It's eleven thirty.

RICKY

I thought the Nips weren't coming
till Friday.

ALIK SAKHAROV

(a beat; then)

A screwdriver.

As Ricky starts making it:

ALIK SAKHAROV (CONT'D)

Buck Rogers. Elegy Broadcasting.

RICKY

He's a radio guy. I know who he
is.

ALIK SAKHAROV

He controls fifty eight stations
across every major market.

RICKY

What's the problem?

SCOTT LEVITT

Peter Frampton stiffed him on some
promotional thing, he's threatening
to not play the new album.

RICKY

I'll go see him.

ALIK SAKHAROV

You need a buffer. Someone from
outside the company.

RICKY

He's that pissed?

ALIK SAKHAROV

He's talking a label-wide boycott.
(beat)
How would you feel about using
Joe Caldo?

Ricky hands him the drink.

(CONTINUED)

RICKY

We're bleeding money and you want
to hire a promotion man?

ALIK SAKHAROV

Your pal Nate Feldstein claims
he's very effective.

RICKY

Let me kick it around.

ALIK SAKHAROV

We'll kick it fast. We can't afford
that album dying on the vine.

Ricky downs his vodka, leaves the glass on the table.

RICKY

You're coming Saturday, right?

ALIK SAKHAROV

(smiles)

Wait'll you see what I got you.

INT. AMERICAN CENTURY - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The A&R team is assembled for a meeting, deli sandwiches
and Cokes all around. At a conference table are Emmy; Mark
Philips; JULIE SILVER, mid-40s; CASPER, an Albino, early 20s;
and KENNY, 22, Asian, who reads from the newspaper.

KENNY

(reading aloud)

"--as the Sex Pistols attempted
to interrupt her majesty's Silver
Jubilee by playing "*God Save the
Queen*" from a boat on the River
Thames."

MARK

It's "Tems", moron.

KENNY

I'm from Staten Island, Mark.

(reading aloud)

"Several arrests were made,
including the band's manager
Malcolm McLaren."

JULIE

Which was entirely the point.

(CONTINUED)

KENNY

What?

EMMY

Cheap publicity.

JULIE

The Stones pissing on a gas
station wall.

CASPER

It worked, didn't it?

Ricky enters, sits. Emmy nods to a wrapped sandwich.

EMMY

Turkey and provolone.

He ignores her, turns to Mark:

RICKY

Where are we with Van Halen?

Mark looks at him, mouth full, chewing. He holds up a
finger - "One sec". Ricky looks at him. A few beats, then:

RICKY (CONT'D)

Eventually you're gonna swallow
that and when you do, I better
hear some good news.

Mark swallows.

MARK

They went with Warners.

RICKY

And you're sitting here eating?!

JULIE

He should starve himself?

RICKY

He should be out finding the
next Van fucking Halen like
I'm paying him to!

MARK

It's twelve o'clock in the
afternoon.

RICKY

So go listen to tapes!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ricky glares at him; a few beats, then Mark starts to get up.

RICKY (CONT'D)
Eat your fucking liverwurst.

Mark sits back down. Ricky looks around the table.

RICKY (CONT'D)
Anybody? Anything?
(off the silence)
Jesus Christ, people, come on!

CASPER
I've been all over the city.

RICKY
Then get out of the city. Ahmet
Ertegun walked through a swamp
to sign--

CASPER
(cutting him off)
Professor Longhair, I know.

RICKY
You're gonna be a smart-ass now?

CASPER
No, I just... I hear you.

RICKY
Bars. Discos. Talent shows.
Wherever people sing.

JULIE
Public restrooms. The echo.

KENNY
(to Mark)
The men's toilet at Penn Station.
You'll be the belle of the ball.

RICKY
If that's what it takes, then
fucking do it! Find new artists,
bond with them, get high, whatever.

JULIE
Nine months I sat in the dark
to sign Jose Feliciano.
(off their looks)
The man's got no lamps.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ricky looks at him and sighs. A long time, then:

EMMY

I have something. Punk band, Spicy Bits. I have a tape if you want.

RICKY

I don't have time.

EMMY

They're at CBGG tonight, I'm gonna check them out.

RICKY

Where'd you find them?

EMMY

Saw their singer on the subway, I liked his look.

Ricky nods, turns to the others.

RICKY

This is what I'm talking about.

MARK

Gold star for Emmy.

RICKY

That's right. And since you're such an adult, you can babysit.

MARK

What do you mean?

RICKY

Alice Cooper lands at JFK in two hours -- Shep Gordon couldn't make it. You will meet Alice and stay with him.

JULIE

He's booked at Electric Lady to redo three tracks.

MARK

I was supposed to go to the Hamptons.

RICKY

No. You were supposed to sign Van Halen.

INT. JFK AIRPORT - PAN AM ARRIVALS TERMINAL - DAY

A loudspeaker blares arrival info as Mark Philips stands amid LIMO DRIVERS waiting for their arriving passengers. After a while, several TRAVELERS emerge through a doorway, including

ALICE COOPER,

29, conservatively dressed in jeans and windbreaker, his long hair in a ponytail under a golf hat. Mark approaches.

MARK

Alice, hey. Mark Philips with American Century.

ALICE COOPER

(as they shake hands)

Hey man, how you doing?

MARK

Great. Cool. Ricky sent me.

They start walking. A few PEOPLE point and stare.

MARK (CONT'D)

(re: carry on)

Can I take that?

ALICE COOPER

I got it. So how is the great Finestra?

MARK

Good, you know. Out there making it happen. How was your flight?

ALICE COOPER

A disaster. Six hours with "*Bugsy Malone*" as the movie and only Michelob to drink.

Mark nods, not sure if that's a joke. They exit the terminal, stop at the curb.

MARK

We have a car waiting to take us to the hotel.

ALICE COOPER

I hope there's Budweiser.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

If not, we'll have room service
send out for some.

ALICE COOPER

In the car.

Mark nods. Alice looks at him.

ALICE COOPER (CONT'D)

How long you been with the company?

MARK

Almost four months.

ALICE COOPER

Then let me give you the ABCs of
Alice Cooper. I don't need pot,
I don't need pills. What I need
is Budweiser.

INT. RAO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The East Harlem mainstay. At a table, promotion man
JOE CALDO, 40, Italian-American, sits in mid-conversation,
smoking across from NATE FELDSTEIN, 45, thick-necked and
barrel-chested. After a few beats, Ricky approaches.

NATE FELDSTEIN

There he is.

RICKY

Nate.

Nate hugs Ricky, feigns grabbing his balls. Ricky laughs.

NATE FELDSTEIN

Say hello to Joe Caldo.

RICKY

(as they shake hands)

Hey.

JOE CALDO

Heard a lot about you.

NATE FELDSTEIN

(as they sit)

You heard nothing.

(smiling; re: Ricky)

You shook his hand? Make sure you
still got all your fingers.

(CONTINUED)

RICKY

Fifteen years and you're still
fucking crying?

Nate smiles, turns to Caldo to explain.

NATE FELDSTEIN

'63, I'm on top of the world, got
a roster'll knock your socks off.

RICKY

A roster full of shit.

NATE FELDSTEIN

'Cept I don't know that at the time
cause doo-wop's still hot. Anyhow,
I get jammed up, the fuckin'
ponies, I'm into Carmine Zicari
for 300 grand.

JOE CALDO

That could be unhealthy.

NATE FELDSTEIN

Tell me about it.

(re: Ricky)

So this one, my young partner --
decides to do me a favor. Sells
Zicari his equity share for peanuts
to get me off the hook.

JOE CALDO

So what's the problem?

NATE FELDSTEIN

The fuckin' Beatles, that's the
problem. He cashes out, the
British faggots invade and
suddenly my company's worth shit.

RICKY

(smiling)

The writing was on the wall.

NATE FELDSTEIN

I got the Drifters, the Monotones,
your fuckin' friend there, Little
Jimmy somethin'. All worthless.

RICKY

Little Jimmy Little.

(CONTINUED)

JOE CALDO
"I Cried When You Lied", right?

Ricky nods.

NATE FELDSTEIN
How's he doin', anyway?

RICKY
He's all right. I'll tell him you
said hello.

NATE FELDSTEIN
(to Caldo)
He's a shine, fucked Zicari's
daughter. Had his singin'
career cut short.

Nate runs a finger across his throat. Ricky gets quiet.

RICKY
We should order, no?

Ricky flags a WAITER, who signals "One sec."

JOE CALDO
So this radio guy, Flash Gordon.

RICKY
Buck Rogers.

JOE CALDO
Whatever.

NATE FELDSTEIN
(taps his nose)
Likes his candy, I heard.

JOE CALDO
We'll meet, we'll party. Make it
all better.

RICKY
You seem confident.

Caldo shrugs. Nate turns to Ricky.

NATE FELDSTEIN
'74? Jethro Tull was dead in LA,
fuckin' Chrysalis had a beef with
the broadcaster's local. I'm
talkin' zero airplay, nothing.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NATE FELDSTEIN (CONT'D)
Who you think straightened that
one out?

Nate nods to Caldo, who smiles. And as the Waiter approaches...

INT. CBGB - NIGHT

Packed with PUNKS and filthy, walls covered with graffiti, blood and other unidentifiable substances. In the crowd we find Emmy, beer in hand, in a leather jacket and T-shirt being jostled by the Crowd as they slam-dance to

THE SPICY BITS,

a quartet led by Kip Stevens on guitar and lead vocals.

KIP
*Got blood in my sno-cone!/ Home is
a war zone!/ Coney Island Murder so
come down see the freak show!*

As the song continues, Emmy observes the Crowd, who are really into the band. She looks up, makes eye contact with Kip, who continues to stare at her as he sings...

KIP (CONT'D)
*Bring your mom, bring your dad/
Bring your girl, bring your lad/
Coney Island Murder's the best
time you ever had!*

INT. RICKY'S HOUSE - SCARSDALE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Beautifully decorated with modern furniture. Ricky enters to find Lynne sitting in an arm chair, breast-feeding their infant daughter ALLY. He crosses, gives them both a peck.

RICKY
There's my girls.

Lynne smiles.

RICKY (CONT'D)
And where are the other fruits
of our lovemaking?

LYNNE
School night, they're in bed.
(off his look)
Vacation's not for another week.

(CONTINUED)

Ricky nods. They sit in silence for a while, then:

LYNNE (CONT'D)
Your eyes are bloodshot.

RICKY
I had a dinner. Nate, some
promotion guy.

LYNNE
So I assume you got stuck with
the check.

RICKY
Nate Feldstein wouldn't pay a
compliment.

She smiles. A long time, then:

RICKY (CONT'D)
I'm sorry I've been M.I.A. This
whole year, the Elton John debacle,
now this bullshit with Zepellin...

Ricky trails off.

LYNNE
Any word on the promotion?

RICKY
I've got a dog and pony show with
Yamata tomorrow. Man made a
billion selling radios, knows
nothing about the record business.

LYNNE
I'm sure it's just a formality.
(off his look)
The meeting.

RICKY
I guess so.
(a few beats, then)
A promotion's good, right? More
money, stock options. The key to
the executive washroom.

Lynne smiles. A few beats, then she finishes with the baby.

LYNNE
You want to burp her?

(CONTINUED)

RICKY

Sure.

Ricky lays a burp cloth over his shoulder, then hoists the baby, gently patting her back.

LYNNE

I'll be upstairs.

Ricky nods. Lynne exits. And as he sits there rocking the baby, the picture of domestic bliss, we PRE-LAP:

EMMY (V.O.)

Omigod! Fuck me. Yes!!

INT. KIP'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

A railroad flat in a tenement in the East Village. On a mattress on the floor, Kip and Emmy are naked, fucking like wild. After a while, it comes to a crescendo, then he rolls off of her. After a few beats...

EMMY

(catching her breath)

Holy shit.

KIP

(catching his breath)

I know, right?

Emmy rolls over, lights a cigarette. A few beats, then:

EMMY

I want you to know I've never
done this before.

KIP

(smiles)

You were a virgin?

EMMY

(makes a face; then)

Fuck an artist.

KIP

So you're interested.

EMMY

In the band, yes.

(a few beats; then)

You need to work on a persona.

(CONTINUED)

KIP

What do you mean?

EMMY

The music, it's good, but what's it about? The Ramones, right? I get that. Four goofballs in leather jackets. Cartoon characters.

KIP

We're actually real people.

EMMY

Who--?

KIP

What?

EMMY

Finish the sentence.

KIP

Don't give a shit?

EMMY

About what?

KIP

Anything.

EMMY

Great. That's a good start.

She gets up, starts getting dressed.

KIP

Where you going?

EMMY

Home. I need to sleep.

KIP

Pretty dark out there.

EMMY

I'll be fine, I carry mace.

KIP

This neighborhood you should carry a fuckin' bazooka.

She looks at him and smiles. A few beats, then:

(CONTINUED)

EMMY
Kip Van Winkle.

KIP
What?

EMMY
Your new name.

A few beats, then he smiles:

KIP
I like it.

She exits.

EXT. WESTCHESTER COUNTRY CLUB - GOLF COURSE - DAY (**DAY 3**)

Dawn; the morning mist still shrouding the near-empty golf course. We hear the SOUND of a flip-tab being opened on a can of beer, then on the green we find Mark Philips, standing with Alice Cooper, who chugs a Budweiser. Alice finishes the beer, lets out a huge belch.

ALICE COOPER
Nothing like the first beer of
the day.

He takes a fifth of Seagram's V.O. from the golf cart.

ALICE COOPER (CONT'D)
Except the first whiskey of the
day.
(takes a swig; then)
Now we can golf.

MARK
"We?"

ALICE COOPER
Sure, why not?

MARK
I've never really done it before.

ALICE COOPER
Piece of cake.
(beat)
You know who loves golf? Groucho
Marx. He's my neighbor in L.A.
And talk about pussy?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE COOPER (CONT'D)
Don't let that mustache fool you,
Groucho fucked 'em all. Open me
another beer, will you? And take
one for yourself.

Mark opens two beers, hands one to Alice.

ALICE COOPER (CONT'D)
(nods to golf bag)
The driver, my good man.

Mark rifles through Alice's golf bag looking for a club.

ALICE COOPER (CONT'D)
The big one.

Mark finds it, hands it to him.

ALICE COOPER (CONT'D)
Watch and learn, m'boy.

Alice tees up the ball, loosens up his shoulders, then
THWOCK!! He slams a two-hundred yard drive down the fairway.

MARK
Wow.

ALICE COOPER
Jack Nicklaus taught me that.

Mark smiles.

ALICE COOPER (CONT'D)
You like the record business, Mark?

MARK
Sure.

ALICE COOPER
Cause I fucking hate it. I read a
poll this week? KISS was voted
most popular band in America. They
wear makeup, have an elaborate
stage show, flirt with androgyny...
Remind you of anyone you know?

MARK
Alice Cooper times four.

ALICE COOPER
Yet my last album couldn't break
the top forty.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

"You and Me" was a hit.

ALICE COOPER

Who buys singles anymore? It's
the album, my friend.

Alice tees up a ball, hands the driver to Mark.

ALICE COOPER (CONT'D)

You're up.

Alice takes a swig of V.O., watches as Mark hits a dribbler.

ALICE COOPER (CONT'D)

Your problem is obvious.

He hands him the V.O.

ALICE COOPER (CONT'D)

You're not drunk yet.

And as Mark takes a swig...

INT. ALIK SAKHAROV'S OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE ON Ricky, who addresses an unseen audience.

RICKY

Last year American Century made
\$29 million in profit, yet ninety
percent of the records we released
failed to break the top 30. So how
do we do it? Several ways.

A REVERSE ANGLE reveals he's sitting with Alik across from
HIRO YAMATA, 74, and his translator/associate FUYU ARITA, 30.

RICKY (CONT'D)

First, we find brilliant artists,
then hang on to them for dear life.
That's where the money is. The
average career span of a performer
is maybe five years -- maybe. For
every Elvis or Rolling Stones
you've got a hundred B.J. Thomases
or Billy Swan's. We just entered
into a co-distribution deal with
Led Zeppelin.

Arita speaks to Yamata in Japanese, then:

(CONTINUED)

FUYU ARITA
He's heard of them.

RICKY
Great. Well these guys are a
license to print money. Their
catalog alone will generate enough
revenue to keep the lights on here
for the next 30 years. Then
there's our record contracts, which
are heavily weighted in our favor.

Arita translates. Yamata asks a question. Arita translates.

FUYU ARITA
How do you get away with that?

RICKY
Well on one side there's us, the
record execs, who'd frankly charge
an artist for air if we could.

INT. AMERICAN CENTURY - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

WE SEE Ricky at a table talking to a long-haired MUSICIAN.

RICKY (V.O.)
On the other side's the artist's
lawyers, who all want to be record
execs, so they don't want piss us
off by being too good at their job.

WE NOW see the Musician's LAWYER, a guy in a 3-piece suit.

RICKY (V.O.)
Next you have the contract itself.

Ricky points to a contract on the table.

RICKY (V.O.)
Assume an artist gets a dollar for
every record sold, less recoupable
expenses. Sell a million records,
that's a million bucks. Not bad,
right?

WE SEE the aforementioned Musician holding a gold record,
smiling as his picture is taken.

(CONTINUED)

RICKY (V.O.)
But there's that word, recoupable.
And that means no matter how much a
record makes, the cost of producing
that record comes out of the
artist's end.

Over the following, we see slices of a GOLD RECORD
disappearing like pieces of pie...

RICKY (V.O.)
Physically manufacturing the
record, studio time, marketing,
touring costs, packaging. If an
artist drinks a bottle of Pepsi
while recording an album, believe
me he's paying for it at a 700%
mark-up.

WE SEE that the gold record has been reduced to a sliver.

INT. ALIK SAKHAROV'S OFFICE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Ricky finishes up.

RICKY
So at the end of the day, we have
virtually no down-side. We break
even on the flops and cash in big
on the hits.

Arita translates again. After a while, Yamata nods.

FUYU ARITA
Mr. Yamata is very impressed. He
thanks you for enlightening him.

RICKY
It was absolutely my pleasure.

They all stand and bow to each other.

ALIK SAKHAROV
I trust you'll take in some of our
sights?

Arita translates; Yamata responds.

FUYU ARITA
Mr. Yamata wants to return to
Tokyo. He's afraid of your Son
of Sam.

INT. ELECTRIC LADY STUDIOS - LOUNGE AREA - NIGHT

Julie Silver talk on the phone, picking at a tray of cold cuts as a small group SESSION MUSICIANS bullshit.

JULIE

I left word at the hotel. Nothing.

INT. RICKY'S LIMO - NIGHT

Ricky sits in back talking on the phone as Lester drives through the mean streets of New York's Upper West Side.

RICKY

Did they check the room to make sure he's not dead?

INTERCUT JULIE AND RICKY AS NEEDED

JULIE

He left at four in the morning.

RICKY

And no word from Mark?

JULIE

You don't think I would have told you?

RICKY

Call Shep Gordon, let him know.

JULIE

And these session guys? They're on overtime the last three hours.

RICKY

Send 'em home.

A few beats, then:

JULIE

This kid, huh? This fuckin' Mark? The Van Heflin thing and now this.

RICKY

Van Halen.

JULIE

What?

(CONTINUED)

RICKY

Nothing.

Outside Ricky's window, a HOMELESS guy starts screaming.

JULIE

Fuck was that?

RICKY

Just some bum. I'm on the Upper
West Side.

JULIE

Mau-mau land at this hour?

RICKY

I've got a business meeting.

INT. PLATO'S RETREAT - LOBBY - NIGHT

Disco music blares as Ricky enters, squeezing past coupled-off SWINGERS. A lingerie-clad HOSTESS approaches.

HOSTESS

Mr. Finestra, welcome to Plato's
Retreat. Your guests are already
inside.

And as Ricky disappears into the club...

INT. BLARNEY STONE BAR - DAY

A dive bar on 8th Avenue, blue collar WORKERS drinking dollar beers. Still in his golf clothes, Alice Cooper sits at a table in mid-conversation with Mark amid several empty bottles of Budweiser and a half dozen empty shot glasses. (Though drinking constantly, Alice seems stone cold sober while Mark is pretty trashed, slurring slightly.)

MARK

Yale, you believe it? Top third of
my class. Business administration.

ALICE COOPER

I barely finished high school.

MARK

But you're Alice Cooper.

(beat)

I had this job on Wall Street, my
uncle lined it up, E.F. Hutton?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK (CONT'D)

Day of my interview, I realize I
don't know how to tie a necktie.

ALICE COOPER

A clip-on, that's the ticket.

MARK

See? I shoulda thought of that.

ALICE COOPER

So what'd you do?

MARK

Never showed up. A month later I'm
sorting envelopes in the mailroom
at American Century.

ALICE COOPER

Ridin' high in April, shot down
in May.

MARK

(not getting it)
Thanksgiving actually.

Alice nods.

ALICE COOPER

Well it seems like it all worked
out.

MARK

Sure. Till now.

ALICE COOPER

Things change, man. Ups and downs.
I mean no offense, but three years
ago? Hell, two even? Ricky
Finestra woulda been sitting
here himself.

MARK

And instead he sends his lackey.

A WAITRESS, 19, approaches. Alice points to the beer.

ALICE COOPER

Do this again, will you please?

She nods, starts to head off, then stops, turns back. Mark
watches as she looks at Alice, tries to place him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WAITRESS

Not to be flirty but... You're
somebody, aren't you?

ALICE COOPER

Everybody's somebody. And as Dino
says, everybody loves somebody some
time.

WAITRESS

Who's Dino?

ALICE COOPER

He's a dinosaur like me.

WAITRESS

(smiles)

The Flintstones, right. I used to
love that show.

ALICE COOPER

Me too.

MARK

(blurting it out)

You know who this is?

ALICE COOPER

Don't.

MARK

This is Alice fucking Cooper!

WAITRESS

No it isn't.

MARK

It is!

(to Alice)

Tell her.

ALICE COOPER

You'll have to excuse my father,
he's drunk.

MARK

I am drunk, but he's still Alice
Cooper.

The Waitress smiles.

(CONTINUED)

WAITRESS

You know how I know he's not?
Because Alice Cooper's a star.
(leaning in)
And a star wouldn't be caught
dead in this shithole.

And on Alice's look, we PRE-LAP the Andrea True Connection's
disco hit "*More, More More*"...

ANDREA TRUE

(singing)
*Ooh, how do you like your love/
Ooh, how do you like your love--*

INT. PLATO'S RETREAT - LOUNGE AREA - NIGHT

The song continues as we PAN the packed room, Couples and
Threesomes (clothed, but some having sex) seated on velour
couches lining the walls, while in the center, a naked orgy
is in progress. In a corner, we find radio magnate

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS,

late 40s, bearded, loud, fat and slovenly, balancing a plate
of ribs on his lap, flanked by two HOOKERS. Next to him are
Ricky and Joe Caldo, each with HOOKERS of their own.

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS

My sales department arranged it
months in advance, a private dinner
for two dozen of my top mid-west
advertisers. And this Frampton
asshole--

HOOKER #1

Peter Frampton, the singer?

HOOKER #2

He's cute.

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS

He's a little prick is what he is!
Now shut up and play with my balls.

She does. Rogers turns back to the guys.

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS (CONT'D)

The big night comes, I close down
Phillipe's, best restaurant in
Minneapolis.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS (CONT'D)

The advertisers are all excited,
some even brought their daughters
to meet this asshole, take
pictures. An hour goes by, then
two. I get word Frampton's in the
hospital.

RICKY

I know for a fact he's got asthma.

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS

This was no fuckin' asthma! Next
day in the gossip columns, they got
a picture of him in some titty bar
in Detroit and I look like the
world's biggest jackass.

JOE CALDO

These musicians, Buck, they're like
fuckin' children.

RICKY

Bigger they get, the worse it is.

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS

I don't give a shit how big he is,
there's always somebody bigger and
that, my friend, is the money man.

HOOKER #1

That's you, right daddy?

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS

You better believe it, sugar.

Ricky trades looks with Caldo as Buck sticks his tongue in
the Hooker's mouth. He finishes, goes back to his ribs as
she unzips his pants.

JOE CALDO

Let's move forward, Buck. Put this
shit behind us.

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS

How you suggest we do that?

Caldo takes out a plastic baggie full of cocaine.

JOE CALDO

There is cocaine for managers.
There is cocaine for rock stars.
(holds up baggie)
This, my friend, is cocaine for us.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And as Rogers smiles, Hooker #2 bends down and starts blowing him. And as he starts snorting spoonfuls of coke, we slowly PUSH IN on Ricky watching...

ANDREA TRUE

(singing)

*More, more, more/ How do you like
it, how do you like it...*

EXT. RICKY'S HOUSE - SCARSDALE - DAY (DAY 4)

Beautifully manicured with an in-ground pool. As a relative shoots Super-8 film, Ricky (in a party hat) sits among dozens of wrapped gifts, surrounded by Lynne, the Kids and two dozen other FAMILY MEMBERS and FRIENDS. He opens a guitar case to "Oohs" and "Ahhs".

ALIK SAKHAROV

For your summertime blues.

(off Ricky's look)

That's a '58 Gretsch owned by Eddie Cochran.

As Ricky takes out the guitar...

RICKY

Jesus. Alik, this is amazing.

ALIK SAKHAROV

I always knew you were a frustrated musician. Now you got no excuse.

And as Ricky starts strumming, a MAID approaches with a lighted birthday cake. The group all starts singing...

LYNNE / OTHERS

*Happy birthday to you!/ Happy
birthday to you!...*

EXT. RICKY'S HOUSE - SCARSDALE - YARD - LATER

With the other Guests in the distance, Alik and Ricky stand off alone near the pool, smoking cigars.

ALIK SAKHAROV

So our sushi-eating master was quite taken with you.

RICKY

Nice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Alik looks at him. A few beats, then:

ALIK SAKHAROV

Nice? That's it? This is a huge promotion.

(beat)

Assuming you get it.

Ricky nods, looks at him. A few beats, then:

RICKY

You know I haven't been to a club in months?

ALIK SAKHAROV

What?

RICKY

Max's, CBGBs.

ALIK SAKHAROV

We've got kids for that. You're a suit now.

RICKY

Am I?

Alik smiles. A long time, then:

RICKY (CONT'D)

The other night, the St. Regis?
I gotta be honest, it felt good trashing that room.

ALIK SAKHAROV

He's James Dean now.

RICKY

It's stupid, I know, I just...
I dunno, I felt... something for a change.

ALIK SAKHAROV

Whatever floats your boat.

RICKY

(a few beats; then)

The guitar's great, thank you again.

(smiles)

Eddie Cochran. I used to listen to that song, stand in front of the mirror with a hairbrush.

(CONTINUED)

ALIK SAKHAROV

For me it was Big Joe Turner.

(beat)

They don't make 'em like that any
more.

Ricky smiles. The Spanish-accented Maid approaches.

MAID

Mr. Finest'? The telephone.

INT. RICKY'S HOUSE - SCARSDALE - KITCHEN - DAY

As the Kids run by screaming, Ricky stands at the counter,
phone to his ear.

RICKY

Hello?

JOE CALDO (V.O.)

It's me. Caldo.

RICKY

Joe, hey, what's up?

INT. BUCK ROGERS' MANSION - GREENWICH, CONNECTICUT - DAY

Eyes blood-shot, wired on coke, Joe Caldo talks on the phone.
(In the background, Buck Rogers is snorting lines.)

JOE CALDO

We are.

INTERCUT RICKY AND CALDO AS NEEDED

RICKY

What do you mean?

JOE CALDO

We're at his house in Greenwich.
We're still goin'.

RICKY

Since last night?

JOE CALDO

Come on over.

RICKY

I'm in the middle of a thing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOE CALDO

This is important, kid. He wants
to talk.

RICKY

It's my birthday, I got a house
full of relatives.

JOE CALDO

I thought this was important.

And as Ricky looks out the window at Alik talking to Lynne...

EXT. BUCK ROGERS' MANSION - GREENWICH, CONNECTICUT - NIGHT

A cab pulls up before the massive home. After a beat, Ricky
emerges, heads for the door. And as the cab pulls away...

INT. BUCK ROGERS' MANSION - ENTERTAINMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Decorated with various certificates and radio industry
awards. With Foreigner's "*Feels Like the First Time*"
on the radio functioning as a soundtrack, James Whale's
"Frankenstein" is projected on a giant screen. On a couch,
Buck Rogers (still in his clothes from the night before)
snorts lines of cocaine as Ricky stands with Joe Caldo.

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS

(incredulous)

You took a cab? What happened to
your nigger?

RICKY

Excuse me?

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS

Your driver. Fella from last
night.

RICKY

He's off on weekends.

Rogers nods, does another line of coke.

RICKY (CONT'D)

Joe said you wanted to talk.

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS

(wiping his nose)

What?

(CONTINUED)

JOE CALDO
Before. You said to call him.

Rogers looks at him blankly.

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS
I'm fuckin' hungry.

Rogers gets up, crosses to a pizza box, takes the last slice.
Ricky gives Caldo a look -- "What the fuck?" Caldo motions
for him to sit. He does. A few beats, then:

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS (CONT'D)
You really ran out of there last
night.

RICKY
I thought we were done.

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS
The night ain't done till the big
man says it's done.

RICKY
I had a family commitment.

Rogers nods, sits next to him.

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS
You ever see this movie?

RICKY
(incredulous)
Frankenstein?

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS
Scared the shit outta me as a kid.
But you gotta face your fears.

JOE CALDO
Very true.

Rogers nods. A few beats, then:

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS
Fuckin' hot in here.

RICKY
Middle of June. You got air
conditioning?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS
It's not healthy. Take your shirt
off if you're hot.

RICKY
(slightly annoyed)
You said you were hot.
(beat)
So what'd you want to talk about?

The song on the radio changes to the Bay City Rollers'
"Saturday Night"...

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS
Relax, son.

RICKY
I left my family to come over here,
Buck.

Rogers stands up, starts swaying.

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS
Let's dance.

RICKY
What?

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS
This song. C'mon, dance.

Ricky looks at Caldo, stands up.

RICKY
I gotta go.

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS
Where you goin'?

RICKY
Home.

Rogers grabs him by the shoulder.

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS
Did I say you could leave?

RICKY
Get your hand off me.

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS
What?

(CONTINUED)

RICKY

Get your fucking hand off me.

Suddenly, Rogers leans in -- to kiss him? -- WHAM!
Instinctively, Ricky punches him in the face.

FRANK "BUCK" ROGERS

Motherfucker!!

Rogers tackles Ricky backward into a trophy cabinet, its glass front shattering. As they wrestle on the floor, fists flying, Rogers gets his hands around Ricky's throat. Ricky punches Rogers repeatedly in the head, to no avail. In his coked-up state, he's like a monster. Suddenly...

WHAMMM!!

Joe Caldo slams a heavy glass trophy against Rogers' head, opening up a deep gash, knocking him to the floor. Rogers looks at him, tries to get up. Caldo hits him repeatedly as Ricky struggles to his feet. Finally Rogers stops moving.

RICKY

(catching his breath)

The fuck did you do?!

JOE CALDO

You're the one fuckin' hit him!

Ricky kneels, takes Rogers' pulse.

RICKY

I wasn't trying to kill him!

JOE CALDO

Just relax.

RICKY

He's fucking dead!

JOE CALDO

Stop saying that.

RICKY

And what? He'll be less dead?!

JOE CALDO

Let me think for a second.

The doorbell RINGS.

RICKY

Who the fuck's that?

(CONTINUED)

JOE CALDO
Nobody. He ordered a pizza.

RICKY
Another fucking pizza?

JOE CALDO
Just pay the kid, will you?

Ricky exits. Caldo takes a roll of paper towels, starts wrapping some around Rogers' head to stop the bleeding. After a while, Ricky re-enters with a pizza box.

RICKY
What are we gonna do?

JOE CALDO
We'll get rid of him. There's no one here but us, it'll be okay.

RICKY
They're gonna check this house, Joe.

JOE CALDO
Relax, will you? We're gonna clean up first.

And as they start cleaning up...

INT. EMMY'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hair teased, wearing makeup, a spandex dress and heels, Emmy sits on the edge of her 6-year-old daughter LIZZY'S bed. (Emmy's bed is across the room.)

EMMY
What was your favorite part of the day?

LIZZY
Watching *The Bionic Woman*.

EMMY
It was a good one, huh?

Lizzy nods. Emmy strokes her hair.

LIZZY
You look pretty. Not like last night.

(CONTINUED)

EMMY

(smiles)

You don't like my leather jacket?

LIZZY

Your pants were ripped.

EMMY

Those were mommy's work clothes.

LIZZY

Are these your work clothes too?

EMMY

They are, but tonight I'm going to a disco.

LIZZY

What's that?

EMMY

It's a place where people dance and listen to music.

LIZZY

Is that your job?

EMMY

Yeah, remember? Mommy looks for new bands so people can buy their records.

LIZZY

Is it fun?

EMMY

Sometimes it is.

(beat)

What do you want to do when you grow up?

LIZZY

I don't know.

EMMY

You know you can be anything you want, right? What do we say? All you have to do is...?

LIZZY

Believe in yourself.

(CONTINUED)

EMMY

And?

LIZZY

Don't give up.

EMMY

And?

LIZZY / EMMY

Find your passion!

EMMY

(smiles)

That's right. I'll see you in the morning.

Emmy gives her a kiss. And as she exits into the hallway...

INT. EMMY'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Emmy's mother RITA, 50s, stands in the hall in a nightgown.

RITA

Where are you off to tonight?

EMMY

The city.

(off her look)

You said you'd give me six months.

RITA

It's been six months.

EMMY

I'm so close, ma. Please.

RITA

Close to what?

EMMY

To signing a band. All I need is one.

Rita looks at her.

RITA

You've got four more weeks. And then you're getting a real job.

EMMY

Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Emmy gives her a peck and exits.

EXT. DESERTED STREET - BEDFORD STUYVESANT, BROOKLYN - NIGHT

Burnt-out buildings, not a soul in sight except for the rats. Radio on, Joe Caldo eases his Cadillac Eldorado down the street, Ricky next to him in the passenger seat.

INT. CALDO'S ELDORADO - CONTINUOUS

JOE CALDO

We dump him, they find him, cops'll think it's a drug deal gone bad.

RICKY

Then what?

JOE CALDO

Nothing. Life goes on.

RICKY

And if the cops come around?

JOE CALDO

You don't know nothin'. This fuckin' city, the crime rate's through the roof. Believe me, the last thing any cop wants is another murder to investigate, especially a prick like this.

A new song comes on the radio as Caldo pulls into an alley.

JOE CALDO (CONT'D)

Here, this is good.

He puts the car in park, then:

JOE CALDO (CONT'D)

(re: radio)

Wait. That's Frampton, right?

It is. On the radio is Peter Frampton's "*I'm In You*". Caldo starts to laugh, calls out toward the trunk:

JOE CALDO (CONT'D)

You hear that, you prick?!

And with that, he pops the trunk. And as he and Ricky start removing Buck Rogers' body...

INT. AMERICAN CENTURY - RICKY'S OFFICE - DAY (DAY 5)

CLOSE ON Ricky, who sits at his desk wearing a thousand yard stare.

EMMY (O.C.)
They're raw, they're interesting,
they've already got a following...
The tape's rough, but the live show
is killer. They're playing tonight
if you wanna come with.

A REVERSE ANGLE reveals Emmy sitting across from him. A few beats, then:

EMMY (CONT'D)
You wanna do that?

RICKY
(snapping out of it)
I'm sorry. What?

EMMY
The band. Spicy Bits.

RICKY
Yeah, no. I'm a little busy.

Just then, Cece knocks and enters. Ricky looks up:

CECE
Alik needs to see you.

RICKY
What about?

CECE
I don't know. But he says it's an
emergency.

Ricky nods, turns back to Emmy.

RICKY
We'll talk later, okay?

Emmy nods, leaves with Cece. Ricky puts his head in his hands, takes a deep breath...

EXT. ALIK SAKHAROV'S OFFICE - DAY

Ricky approaches the office, opens the door to--

(CONTINUED)

GROUP
Congratulations!!

INT. ALIK SAKHAROV'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Packed with American Century EMPLOYEES, including the support Staff, A&R team, Emmy, Cece, Alik and Scott Levitt.

ALIK SAKHAROV
Mr. Vice President.

RICKY
What?

ALIK SAKHAROV
Not that I completely understood them, but Japan has spoken -- from what I gather, you've been promoted.

SCOTT LEVITT
(smiles)
Congratulations, asshole.

RICKY
I...
(looking around)
Jesus, I don't know what to say.

ALIK SAKHAROV
Did someone get that on tape, because I've never heard him utter those words before.

Laughter throughout the room. Ricky stands there looking pale.

SCOTT LEVITT
Well how does it feel?

RICKY
Good, just... I think I'm sick.

ALIK SAKHAROV
You want a drink? A Bromo or something?

RICKY
No, I just...
(to Cece)
Call Lester, I need him to take me home.

INT. ST. VINCENT'S HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

An attendant pushes a PATIENT in a wheelchair past Julie Silver, who stands in the hall talking to a NURSE.

JULIE

How is he?

NURSE

We pumped his stomach, he's on I.V. fluids. It's alcohol poisoning.

ALICE COOPER (O.C.)

Julie. I'm so sorry.

Julie looks up to see Alice Cooper, who follows him into...

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mark lays asleep in bed, I.V. tube in his arm.

JULIE

Fuck you do to this kid?

ALICE COOPER

Nothing, we were hanging out.

Julie leans over, pats Marks cheek.

JULIE

Mark. Mark, wake up.

Mark stirs, looks at him weakly.

MARK

Hey.

His head lolls toward Alice. He groans.

ALICE COOPER

I'm sorry, man. You seemed okay.

MARK

I will. Never. Drink. Again.

ALICE COOPER

That's a good idea, maybe even for the both of us.

Julie looks at Alice, who checks that Mark isn't looking, then shakes his head -- "Not really."

(CONTINUED)

JULIE

So the studio. You planning to
record or not?

ALICE COOPER

Of course I am. I just need a
drink.

And as they exit...

INT. RICKY'S HOUSE - SCARSDALE - DEN - NIGHT

Late, lights dimmed, the house quiet. TV on, scotch at
his side, Ricky sits on the couch clearly high, the Gretsch
guitar on his lap. He absentmindedly strums it as he watches
the news...

ON TV -- we see graphic crime-scene IMAGES, the various
victims of the .44 Killer...

NEWSCASTER #1 (V.O.)

...a city gripped in terror with
the .44 Killer still on the loose.

Click. He uses the remote to switch channels.

ON TV -- we see images of economically-ravaged New York City.
The Homeless; abandoned buildings; rats crawling on garbage.

NEWSCASTER #2 (V.O.)

--with the White House turning a
blind eye as New York City nears
bankruptcy--

Click. Another channel. Ricky strums the guitar.

ON TV -- a REPORTER stands outside a high school, several
STUDENTS flashing gang signs behind him.

REPORTER

--students rioting, the 34-year-
old English teacher being stabbed
in the leg--

Ricky smiles, strums the guitar. Click. Another channel.

ON TV -- we see The Sex Pistols on stage, Audience members
spitting all over them.

(CONTINUED)

JOHNNY ROTTEN
(singing)
*I am an anti-christ/ I am an
anarchist--*

Ricky starts chuckling. Click. Another channel.

ON TV -- we see ATTENDANTS from the Coroner's office wheeling
a corpse in a body bag on a gurney...

NEWSCASTER #3
--the body of an unidentified man
found in an alley in Bedford
Stuyvesant...

Now Ricky starts laughing. He strums the guitar, his
laughter building with each change of the channel. Click.

TALK SHOW GUEST
--with drug abuse soaring--

Click.

NEWSCASTER #4
--four alarm fire in a clear act of
arson--

Click.

JOHNNY ROTTEN
(singing)
I wanna be... anarchy!

Click.

NEWSCASTER #5
--mayhem at Riker's Island--

Click. On TV, we SEE the MAHARISHI MAHESH YOGI talking to
MERV GRIFFIN, who pretends to listen intently...

MAHARISHI MAHESH YOGI
--the ability to compete comes by
establishing the level of awareness
which is perfect orderliness--

Still laughing, Ricky stands up holding the guitar by the
neck. Letting out an unearthly HOWL, he begins smashing
it to pieces against the TV screen, knocking over vases and
lamps like a wild man. After a few beats, a horrified Lynne
appears in the doorway.

LYNNE

What the hell is going on?!

Ricky stops. He looks at her, strangely calm. A few beats, then:

RICKY

I want a divorce.

And on Lynne's look...

INT. AMERICAN CENTURY - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Calm, in control, looking better than we've seen him thus far, Ricky sits at the head of the conference table. Alik and Scott Levitt look on as he addresses the entire A&R Team, including Mark Philips.

RICKY

As you all know, our parent company Yamata Corporation recently bestowed upon me an incredible honor, namely the vice presidency of American Century Music. I have decided to turn this offer down to remain exclusively as head of A&R.

Murmurs and a few gasps throughout the room.

RICKY (CONT'D)

Assuming this position in my place is the very capable Scott Levitt, formerly head of Business and Legal Affairs.

A few ad-libbed "Congratulations", "Good Luck", etc. Scott nods his thanks.

RICKY (CONT'D)

After a great deal of soul-searching and a brief discussion with my wife, I realized my heart belongs in rock 'n roll. It's my world -- it's the world we all live in, whether we know it or not.

Ricky looks at their faces and smiles.

(CONTINUED)

RICKY (CONT'D)

And now a few brief announcements.
Congratulations to Emmy Caporale,
who has signed her first artists to
our label, the Spicy Bits.

The A&R Team applauds, ad-libs congratulations.

RICKY (CONT'D)

I'm also adding a new member to our
team -- Lester Willis.

MARK

Your driver?

RICKY

Yes, and as a matter of fact, he'll
be working very closely with you.

Ricky looks at Cece.

RICKY (CONT'D)

Send Lester in please.

Cece nods, motions outside the room. As LESTER enters, we
SEE him fully for the first time, recognizing him from the
photo in Ricky's office. Lester is Little Jimmy Little.

RICKY (CONT'D)

As some of you may know, Lester has
had a long and varied career in our
business, and brings to the job a
unique perspective that I'm sure
will be helpful in your dealings
with artists. Now if there are no
questions, let's get on with our
day.

No questions. As the meeting breaks up, Cece approaches
Ricky with a business card.

CECE

He said not to interrupt, but some
detective stopped by, wants you to
call him.

She hands Ricky the card, on which is written:

Detective Edward Voehl

Homicide Division - NYPD

(CONTINUED)

Ricky smiles, slips the card in his pocket.

RICKY

Thanks.

And as he exits the conference room...

EXT. SOUTH BRONX STREET - NIGHT

The same place from the opening, with very old school HIP-HOP blaring from the club. Lester and Mark Philips emerge from a chauffeured Lincoln Town Car, head to the front door, where Topcat, the pimp we met earlier, stands guard.

TOPCAT

Fuck you two goin'?

LESTER

Inside. And he's with me.

A brief stare-down, then Topcat steps aside.

INT. HIP HOP CLUB - NIGHT

Lester and Mark enter, stop in their tracks -- the club is packed with PEOPLE dancing. Up front before two turntables, scratching records over a MASSIVE set of speakers, is

GRANDMASTER FLASH,

19, rocking the mic and working the vinyl with magic fingers.

GRANDMASTER FLASH

*I used to be a criminal/ It was
subliminal/ A product of economics,
political criminalized/ With the
guy vandalized then I highlight the
prize? For being street-wise--*

INT. RICKY'S LIMO - NIGHT

Grandmaster Flash continues as Ricky, now with a new DRIVER, sits in back, using a business card to cut lines of cocaine on the album cover of Richard Hell and the Voidoids' "*Blank Generation*"...

GRANDMASTER FLASH (V.O.)

*A young buck, I'm pressing my luck/
What the fuck, the whole world
sucks, nigga I'm a Mack truck--*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And as the camera PUSHES IN, we SEE the business card is Detective Voehl's. And as Ricky uses a rolled-up \$100 bill to start snorting lines, the music changes and we PRE-LAP the guitar intro from "*Blank Generation*"...

INT. MAX'S KANSAS CITY - NIGHT

The club is packed with PUNKS, slamming to RICHARD HELL and the VOIDOIDS, who are on stage.

RICHARD HELL

(singing)

*I was sayin' let me out of here
before I was even born -- it's
such a gamble when you get a face--*

The camera PANS the crowd, going wild...

RICHARD HELL (CONT'D)

*It's fascination to observe what
the mirror does/ But when I dine
it's for the wall that I set a
place--*

The camera lands, finding

RICKY,

eyes closed in the crowd, soaking up the music in the midst of the insanity.

RICHARD HELL (CONT'D)

*I belong to the blank generation
and I can take it or leave it each
time/ Triangles were fallin' at the
window as the doctor cursed/ He was
a cartoon long forsaken by the
public eye/ The nurse adjusted her
garters as I breathed my first/
The doctor grabbed my throat and
yelled, "God's consolation prize!"/
I belong to the blank generation...*

And as Ricky slam-dances amid the sea of Punk Rockers, content at last, we...

FADE OUT.

THE END