

LET THE BOY SING

Written by

GUNNAR E GARRETT JR.

Based on Actual Events

4541 Ellenwood Rd.  
Oakdale, CA 95361  
Ranchhandfilms@gmail.com  
(209)715-2495

FADE IN:

INT. BILLY BOB'S - FT. WORTH, TX - NIGHT

JOHN DENNIS SMITH (29) a good-looking young fella with a cowboy hat, bolo tie, and vest over his long sleeve button up shirt, rocks the stage.

Guitar in hand, John's incredible voice draws the crowd as he STRUMS and SINGS.

The crowd CLAPS their hands and SINGS along with John.

It's clear that John Dennis Presley is the star that everyone's come to see.

The song plays on.

He finishes his song and the crowd ERUPTS into CHEERS and APPLAUSE.

John lifts the hat from his head and waves it at the crowd.

Those in the crowd not already on their feet, rise. The APPLAUSE and whistles continue.

JOHN

Thank you, thank you! I'm gonna  
take a quick break, grab a drink,  
so grab yourself one, too, and  
Ladies and Gentlemen we'll get back  
after it in about five minutes.

The OVATION carries on while John makes his way to the edge of the stage.

John grabs a glass filled with ice and whiskey from a small table near the stage's edge. He takes a sip.

A couple friends and fans alike give John a pat on the back and shake his hand.

A SERVER (25) holding a tray with a few drinks on it approaches John.

SERVER

Mr. Smith, you have a call behind  
the bar.

JOHN

Not to be rude, but this ain't  
exactly the best time.

SERVER

They said it's urgent.

John considers taking the call, but only for a moment.

JOHN

Grab a name and number, then go on ahead and let 'em know I'm in the middle of a set and I'll call 'em back as soon as we wrap up here. If it's that important it'll still be just as important when we're done.

SERVER

(with a smile)

I'll let 'em know.

The server turns to walk away.

With his drink in one hand, John quickly reaches over the server and grabs another from the tray.

John raises the glass and his brows to the Server. She gives a subtle smirk and head shake, then makes her way back through the crowd.

INT. BILLY BOB'S - FT. WORTH, TX - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

John and his band play another one of his hit songs.

The crowd is lost in John's voice and all around performance.

With the last note played, John once again tips his hat to the crowd.

JOHN

(into the mic)

Thank you all again for comin' out.  
We appreciate you!

John vacates the stage with the rest of his band to CHEERS and ROARS from the crowd.

John and the rest of the band all congratulate each other on another great set.

The server approaches again, but waits patiently so as not to interrupt John and his band.

John shakes a few more hands and gives a few hugs.

With a small moment where John isn't being mobbed, the server steps in and hands John a bar napkin with some writing on it.

SERVER

I know you said it can wait, but they've called back a few more times.

John takes the napkin and glances down at it. The name Angie and a phone number are on it.

SERVER

It seemed pretty important.

JOHN

Thank you.

The server starts off, but is stopped by John.

JOHN

Y'all got a phone somewhere a bit more private.

SERVER

This way.

The server pushes forward through the crowd, directing John to follow after.

INT. BILLY BOB'S - FT. WORTH, TX - OFFICE - NIGHT

The server opens the door and allows John to step in.

SERVER

Phone's on the desk.

JOHN

Thank you.

The server closes the door and John makes his way to the desk and takes a seat.

He picks up the phone, dials the number on the napkin and waits.

INTERCUT - PHONE CALL

ANGIE (52) lifts the phone to her ear.

ANGIE

Hello.

JOHN

Angie, it's John.

ANGIE  
John, it's Ross. I'm so sorry.

JOHN  
Sorry for what? Don't matter,  
whatever it is you and your  
daughter are up to, I want no part  
of it, and you need to keep Ross  
out of it.

Angie tears.

ANGIE  
He's gone, John.

JOHN  
What do you mean, gone? Gone where?

ANGIE  
They was out celebratin' with a few  
friends and...

JOHN  
And what, Angie?

Angie falls silent.

JOHN  
And what?

ANGIE  
Ross was in the car and they were  
hit by a drunk driver, John. He  
didn't make it.

JOHN  
No, no, no.

The realization begins to sink in. John's hands tremble, and his heart is about to burst from his chest.

JOHN  
Angie, tell me it ain't--

ANGIE  
John, I'm so sorry.

John falls silent and tears fall from his face.

Angie holds silent for a moment, allowing John to process.

ANGIE

I have the name and number of the officer handling the case if you have a pen and paper near by.

John's eyes scroll across the desk. He grabs a pen and the first piece of paper he can find.

ANGIE

John?

END INTERCUT

John readies the pen over the piece of paper.

JOHN

Go ahead.

Phone still to his ear, John rapidly scribbles a name and number onto the paper, then instantly drops the phone back onto the receiver, hanging it up.

John places his elbows on the desk and allows his head to fall into his hands.

He gathers himself, though barely, then picks up the phone and dials the number on the paper. It RINGS.

INTERCUT - PHONE CALL

OFFICER GAMBLE (35) lifts a phone to his ear.

OFFICER GAMBLE

Officer Gamble.

JOHN

(clears his throat)

Evening, Sir. I was given your number and told you might have some information about my son Ross.

OFFICER GAMBLE

Yes, sir. Unfortunately I'm unable to release any names over the phone, however, I can verify that a three-year-old male was pronounced dead at the scene as the result of a head on collision by an alleged driver under the influence of alcohol.

John can't find the words. His lip quivers and tears continue to roll from his face.

OFFICER GAMBLE  
Sir, I'm sorry for your loss.

John tries to compose himself, but fails miserably.

JOHN  
Is there anything else I should  
know... Or that you can tell me?

OFFICER GAMBLE  
Unfortunately with the  
investigation still pending, that's  
all the information I can disclose  
at the moment.

John slowly lowers the phone from his ear. The look on his  
face screams heartbreak.

Gently, John lowers the phone onto the receiver and ends the  
call, but he leaves his hand on the receiver.

John's eyes shift rapidly and begin to tear.

WHAM! WHAM! WHAM! John explodes and slams the phone back onto  
the receiver repetitively out of anger and frustration.

Officer Gamble pulls the phone from his ear and swallows  
hard. A look of sadness and shame cover his face.

He hangs the phone up, then looks to his side at Angie.

They hold for a moment and stare at on another with a look of  
understanding that there's no going back from what they've  
just done.

OFFICER GAMBLE  
(to Angie)  
From this point forward, don't you  
ever ask me to do another thing for  
you or your family.

Officer Gamble stands uneasy, eyes locked with Angie.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: July 3rd 1961

E (26) in heavily starched, dark blue jeans, rolled at the  
bottom, and a white t-shirt, sits nervously in his chair.

He brushes his jet black hair to the side, then wipes a touch  
of sweat from his brow while rapidly tapping his blue suede  
shoe on the floor.

SONNY (22) E's best friend and now bodyguard, is the only other man in the room. He sits directly across from E and stares at him with an all too familiar debonair smile.

SONNY

I think this may be the first time  
I seen you this way, E.

E glances up for a quick peek at Sonny.

SONNY

Okay, maybe the second. You gonna  
be okay?

E

This is crazy. I know I've been  
here before...

(flustered)

Not here, here, but having a kid, I  
just wasn't there, hell, I couldn't  
have been even if--

Sonny lifts himself from his seat, then moves to E and plants himself into the seat next to him.

SONNY

Relax.

Sonny gives him a pat on the back.

SONNY

Enjoy the moment, you may not get  
another one... Then again, knowing  
you...

With a side eye at Sonny, E gives a little huff and smirk.

SONNY

Jokes aside, I'm happy for you. You  
got a name picked out?

E

I want a good bible name. Something  
strong. I was thinking John.

SONNY

What makes you think it's gonna be  
a boy this time?

A NURSE (26) hustles in and makes her way straight to E and Sonny. Her hands tremble at the sight of E.



NURSE  
(voice cracking)  
Sir, if you'd like to come with me.

E springs to his feet. Sonny rises next to him.

E  
Is everything okay? Baby and momma?

NURSE  
Everyone's fine. It's time to come  
meet your son.

E's head whips to Sonny with an overly excited sideways smirk.

With the smile and joy returned, Sonny gestures for E to follow after the nurse.

The nurse leads the way and E follows after. Sonny right behind him, grabs him by the shoulders and gives him a playfully excited shake, followed by another few pats.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The nurse leads E and Sonny down a mostly deserted hallway.

Staff members stop in their tracks as E and Sonny pass, unable to pass up the opportunity to get a glimpse at this American Icon.

Quietly and nervously, the staff goes about their business after he passes, but checking with each other to confirm the marvel before them.

At the far end of the hall, the nurse opens a door and allows E and Sonny to enter.

INT. HOSPITAL - RECOVERY ROOM - NIGHT

E and Sonny curiously enter. Behind them, the nurse quietly closes the door.

On the bed, ZONA (20) a glowing young woman, still covered in sweat from the stresses of giving birth, lies with a newborn on her chest.

In awe, E gazes across the room at his newborn son. He shifts his eyes, only momentarily, and they meet with Zona's.

ZONA  
Would you like to hold him?

E  
Would it be okay?

With a soft smile, Zona gives a subtle nod of the head.

A DELIVERY NURSE (29) lifts the baby from Zona's chest, then carefully transfers the baby into E's arms.

NURSE  
Congratulations, dad.

For a moment the world disappears, leaving only E and his son.

E  
(to Zona)  
He's so small.

ZONA  
He's perfect.

E lifts his head and peers over at Zona.

ELVIS  
How are you, Zona. Are you okay?

ZONA  
(softly)  
I'm fine.

E  
(to the Delivery Nurse)  
If there's anything this woman  
needs, you make sure she gets it...  
Please.

DELIVERY NURSE  
Will do.

ZONA  
(laughing softly)  
Everything's good, E. They're  
taking great care of me.

E gazes down at the baby in his arms. There's nothing but love in his eyes.

E  
(lifting his head to Zona)  
His name?

ZONA  
Say hi to your son... John.

An enormous smile and overwhelming sense of pride fills E.

ELVIS

I brought him something.

Elvis looks back to Sonny and gives a nod. Sonny pulls a small baby blanket from a bag.

E

(to Zona)

May I?

Unable to keep the smile from her face, Zona once again gives E the nod of approval.

Sonny hands the baby blanket to E who struggles, but happily wraps John in it.

The Delivery nurse steps in and helps E wrap John tight in the blanket.

E can barely take his eyes off his newborn son.

SONNY

I hate to be the bearer of bad news, Dad, but we really should have been on the road about two hours ago.

The sense of reality sinks into E and Zona alike.

DELIVERY NURSE

I can take him for you.

The delivery nurse reaches for baby John. E hesitates, but regretfully hands John over.

The delivery nurse takes John and places him in a small padded bed on top of a wheeled cart and adjusts the blankets around him.

E steps in close to Zona and places a kiss on her forehead.

Zona grabs his hand and holds it tight.

E

(softly whispers)

You understand why it has to be this way, don't you?

ZONA

E... We both knew it would be this way.

Zona and E peer into one another's eyes. They're filled with regret, but understanding.

SONNY

E.

E reluctantly rises and backs away from Zona. Their grip on each other's hand, holds until the last moment.

With the release of their hands, E turns and heads out the door without a glance back.

Sonny glances to Zona once more, then with a quick wave, he exits the room behind E.

Zona allows her head to fall back onto the pillow. She stares up at the ceiling, fighting back her tears.

Her head rolls to the side and her eyes find John, snuggled tight and asleep in his bed. A tear falls from her eye.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

E and Sonny make their way down the corridor and stop at the nurses station.

An RN (28) waits at the counter, as if anticipating their approach.

E pulls his wallet from his pocket, the removes a folded piece of paper from it. He places it on the counter and slides it to the nurse.

The RN watches E's hand lingers on the paper, unsure if he wants to release the form.

RN

Are you sure this is what you want?

E glances up at the nurse, then to Sonny who shoots him a glare. E's hand pulls way from the paper.

RN

I need you to sign on this one here.

The RN points to a line on a sheet of paper on the counter in front of E.

E signs the paper and drops the pen back onto the counter.

The nurse takes the papers, and disappears into a back room.

Sonny steps to E and gives him a pat on the back to console him.

SONNY

You're doing the right thing... For  
all of us.

The RN returns to E and Sonny with his paper and a copy. She hands E his paper back and he refolds it and slips it back into his wallet, then his pocket.

Sonny, with his hand on E's shoulder, guides him down the hallway.

The RN watches as the two exit out a side door and out of sight.

A newborn baby's CRY is heard down the hall.

INT. JUDGE'S PRIVATE CHAMBER - DAY

SUPER: 18 Months Later

IRA DEE (45) and ETTA (42) sit anxiously in their chairs across from JUDGE STAGGS (55) who's leaned forward in his chair, nothing less than serious written across his face.

JUDGE STAGGS

I need you to understand, that even though the record's gonna be sealed, once I'm no longer on this bench, there's no tellin' who may be able to gain access to the true birth certificate.

IRA DEE

The truth always comes out, Your Honor, but this just ain't the time for it to do so, is all.

JUDGE STAGGS

All right then.

Judge Staggs signs a document on his desk, then slides it across to Ira and Etta.

They both sign.

ELVIS

You have the other two as well?

Judge Staggs flips through a few of the loose papers on his desk, then pulls two more sheets of paper from beneath a folder. He signs them.

JUDGE STAGGS

Y'all sure is courageous, takin' on  
the other two with him.

ETTA

We wouldn't have it any other way,  
Your Honor

Judge Staggs slides the two forms across the desk to Ira and Etta and watches as they sign.

With the papers signed, Judge Staggs rises to his feet.

Ira and Etta rise along with him.

JUDGE STAGGS

I'll make sure everything is taken  
care of on my end and y'all can  
just keep doing whatchu been doin'  
on yours.

Judge Staggs reaches across his desk and shakes hands with both Ira and Etta.

IRA DEE

Thank you, Sir... Apologies... Your  
Honor.

JUDGE STAGGS

No need to thank me. Y'all have  
some very influential friends, and  
they done thanked me plenty.

Ira gives a knowing nod of the head and makes his way to the door. He holds it open for Etta and allows her to exit.

INT. WAITING OFFICE - DAY

Ira follows Etta out of the Judge's private chambers. He leaves the door opened behind him.

A SHARP DRESSED MAN (40) rises to his feet with an envelope in hand.

Judge Staggs steps into the doorway from his chamber and looks on.

SHARP DRESSED MAN

I trust everything went well.

ETTA

It was fine, thank you.

The sharp dressed man glances over Ira and Etta's shoulder to Judge Staggs.

Judge staggs gives a nod of approval.

SHARP DRESSED MAN

Mr. And Mrs. Smith, congratulations  
on the adoption of your three  
children.

Etta glares at the sharp dressed man, with a less than impressed stare and no response.

Ira notices the tension and cuts in.

IRA DEE

Thank you.

The sharp dressed man hands the envelope to Ira, but Etta snatches it from him before Ira can take hold.

Etta opens the envelope to reveal a stack of cash. She quickly flips through it, then peers up at the sharp dressed man. Without another word, she walks past and straight out the door.

The sharp dressed man extends his hand to Ira who does the same. They shake, but the sharp dressed man doesn't release.

SHARP DRESSED MAN

Now, you do understand the  
consequences that could come as a  
result if anyone were to find out  
about this.

IRA DEE

Mister, I'm well aware of the  
situation at hand, and believe you  
me when I tell you there ain't no  
one who understands the  
consequences better. Family comes  
first. Now I know ya'll are doing  
this for E, but the discretion is  
just as important for John's  
safety.

Ira allows a stern glare at the sharp dressed man to linger until the awkwardness is intolerable.

SHARP DRESSED MAN

Well then... I guess I'll leave you  
to it.

With one last glance back at Judge Staggs, Ira makes for the door.

SHARP DRESSED MAN

Hey, Ira.

Ira holds, in the threshold of the doorway.

SHARP DRESSED MAN

Congratulations on your new family  
once again.

Ira takes a quick peek back, then exits.

The sharp dressed man turns to Judge Staggs with a look of concern, then approaches him. He pulls another envelope from his jacket and SLAPS it into Judge Staggs' hand.

JUDGE STAGGS

Do y'all really think you can hide  
this forever.

SHARP DRESSED MAN

We ain't lookin' for forever. Just  
long enough that it don't effect  
the prestige of the most desired  
man in the world.

INT. IRA & ETTA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Etta carries a basket full of laundry across the living room.

A guitar can be heard being played from another room.

HATTIE (65) African American makes her way through the room and stops at Etta.

HATTIE

Go on and let me get that for you.

ETTA

Hattie, I don't know what we'd do  
without you.

HATTIE

Probably just go on about your day  
like most folks.



ETTA  
You under value yourself.

HATTIE  
Y'all would do just fine.

ETTA  
Hattie, we both know that ain't  
true.

The guitar playing gets louder.

ETTA  
(calls out)  
Ira, it's a little early don't you  
think?

Ira casually steps into the room.

IRA DEE  
What was that?

Etta and Hattie turn to each other and share a look.

HATTIE  
Don't you worry about it, I'll go  
on and get him.

Hattie exits with the basket of clothes and Ira approaches  
Etta.

ETTA  
What ever are we gonna do about  
that boy? Already eight years old  
and still strugglin' to keep up in  
school. Poor kid cain't nearly  
peddle a bicycle more than ten  
feet.

IRA DEE  
School ain't for everyone.

ETTA  
Is that so?

Ira shrugs.

ETTA  
And what is it you suggest we do  
then?

IRA DEE  
Let the boy sing.

ETTA

Ira Dee, you know good and well if that boy's anything like his daddy, we ain't gonna be able to keep him from the world, and once that happens it's gonna be awful hard to deny he's his father's son and you know it.

Ira weighs his options.

IRA DEE

Would it be the worst thing that could happen to him?

Etta's look shows a clear lack of approval.

ETTA

It sure ain't the best thing that could happen to him. Look at how much pressure his daddy's under all the time, runnin' all about the world, never able to slow down, relax... Raise a family. That what you want for him?

IRA DEE

You know it ain't, but sometimes I think we maybe we ain't right hidin' things from him like this.

ETTA

I can't disagree with you there, but you also made a promise to E and I know you're a man of your word. Besides, think about the world's view on E. What's that gonna look like if people find out he's had a child hidden from the public for lord knows how many years and one out of wedlock to boot.

Ira and Etta hold for a moment and curiously look at one another.

IRA DEE

You hear that?

The sounds of the guitar have ceased.

ETTA

I sure hope that boy's mindin' his manners, cuz we both know Hattie ain't havin' none of it.

A slight smile grows upon Ira's face.

IRA DEE

Maybe we ought to send her to school with him too. Might help his learnin' too.

ETTA

(chuckles)

Well, we sure ain't gotta look far to see where he gets that sass from.

Etta gives Ira a quick kiss on the cheek and moves on past.

ETTA

Why don't you go on and check in on him see what's takin' so long. I'ma see what's holdin' up the girls.

(as she walks off)

Y'all shoulda been out the door fa school bout ten minutes ago.

INT. IRA &N ETTA'S HOUSE - JOHN'S ROOM - DAY

YOUNG JOHN (8) stands in his room, shirtless, at the foot of his bed with Hattie at his side, hands on her hips.

Three sets of clothes and a guitar lie on the bed in front of them.

HATTIE

How you gonna go an tell me, you ain't know what to wear when I went and put out three sets of clothes for ya to pick from?

YOUNG JOHN

(semi-sarcastic)

Miss Hattie, I cain't know which one I'm supposed to be wearin' if there's three out here.

HATTIE

You ain't seem to got no problem  
puttin' that guitar strap across  
your chest, so you best grab you  
one a dem shirts, fo I tell Mr. Ira  
Dee and he puts that belt strap  
across yo back side.

With a bit of sass, Hattie raises her eyes brows waiting to see if Young John's attitude changes at the threat of a whoopin.

YOUNG JOHN

Miss Hattie, we both know Dad ain't  
puttin nothin', nowhere.

IRA DEE (O.C.)

What am I not doin'?

Ira steps in and catches Young John and Hattie off guard. They both whip their heads to him.

IRA DEE

Hattie, why don't you head on out  
and help Etta with the girls.

Young John shoots a little smirk at Hattie.

HATTIE

(to Ira)

Of course Mr. Ira Dee.

(to Young John)

Keep on sassin' and see if that  
whoopin' don't come.

Hattie makes her way past Ira and towards the door.

HATTIE

(to Ira Dee)

That boy gets any more like his  
daddy, he gonna put me in my grave.

IRA DEE

Well, we sure don't want that. You  
go on and I'll take care a him.

Hattie shoots one last look at Young John, pointing her finger at him as a warning, then exits.

Ira steps further in the room, closer to Young John.

IRA DEE

Any reason in particular you ain't  
dressed?

YOUNG JOHN  
No, sir. I just got caught up in  
some pickin' is all.

Young John lowers his head in anticipation of his punishment.

IRA DEE  
Put a shirt on.

YOUNG JOHN  
Yes, sir.

Young John reaches down and grabs the shirt closest to him  
and throws it over his head, then pulls it down.

IRA DEE  
Now go on and let me hear you play.

Young John's eyes lift to Ira and his face lights.

Excitement overwhelms Young John and he can't get to the  
guitar fast enough.

He throws the strap over his shoulder and plops down on the  
edge of the bed.

IRA DEE  
This one you been learnin'?

YOUNG JOHN  
No, Sir! I done made this one up  
all on my own.

Young John's eyes fall to guitar and a sense of belonging  
over comes him. Pick in hand, he readies himself to play.

INT. IRA & ETTA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

BECKY (13) and EMMA (10) dressed for school, make their way  
through the room towards with door with Etta right behind  
them.

BECKY  
Momma, we're gonna be late again on  
account a John.

ETTA  
We ain't gonna be late. We still  
got plenty of time.

EMMA  
That's what you said yesterday.

ETTA  
Well today's a new day.

EMMA  
You said that yesterday, too.

Hattie enters the room.

ETTA  
Hattie, that boy near ready yet?

HATTIE  
Mr. Ire Dee up there now--

The room falls silent except for the sound of a GUITAR'S STRUM from another room.

Everyones looks towards the sound of the guitar, then turns to one another.

Becky and Emma instantly turn towards the couch and drop their bags onto the floor, then themselves onto the couch.

BECKY  
Told you we were gonna be late again.

Etta's shoulders slump.

ETTA  
(to Hattie)  
I'll be right back.

With a look of defeat, Etta makes her way out of the room.

INT. IRA & ETTA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Etta marches her way down the hall towards the SOUND OF MUSIC and approaches the door to Young John's room.

ETTA  
John Dennis Smith. why in the world are you still pickin' that--

INT. IRA & ETTA'S HOUSE - JOHN'S ROOM - DAY

Etta turns into the room.

ETTA  
Why in the world are you still pickin' that--

Etta comes to a screeching halt.

Ira sits on the bed, guitar in hand, and Young John stands next to him instructing the chords.

They whip their heads to Etta and stare in silence.

ETTA

If the both of y'all don't find  
your way out of this room in the  
next--

Ira and Young John both scramble to get out the door. With her eyes straight ahead, Etta CLEARS HER THROAT, then points to her cheek.

Young John, the first out the door, extends onto his tiptoes and kisses Etta on the cheek, the hustles out the door.

Ira tries to sneak past right behind John, but Etta CLEARS HER THROAT once more.

Ira backpedals, then leans in and gives Etta a kiss on the cheek.

ETTA

How come you keep on encouraging  
that boy so much?

IRA DEE

Would you take paint brushes away  
from Picasso?

In thought about the question, Etta understands the reality of what they face.

ETTA

Point taken... However, Picasso's  
daddy wasn't Michelangelo neither.

Etta follows Ira out the door.

INT. IRA & ETTA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Young John passes through the room headed straight for the front door.

Becky and Emma rise from the couch and follow after Young John.

BECKY

It's about time.





ETTA

Ira, you wanna go on and drop them  
off so I can get a moment with  
Zona.

With a nod, Ira moves to Emma and places a hand on her  
shoulder, then escorts her towards the door.

IRA DEE

(to Emma)

How come you ain't try for the  
front seat.

EMMA

It wouldn't do no good, no how.

IRA DEE

Is that right?

Emma gives a nod.

IRA DEE

We'll see if we cain't change that.  
(calls out the door)  
Emma's sittin' in the front!

Young John and Becky both GROAN from out side, drawing a  
smile from Emma as she and Ira exit.

The door closes and Etta turns to Zona.

IRA DEE

You want some coffee?

ZONA

Sure.

IRA DEE

Hattie, you wanna bring a couple  
cups of coffee out for Zona and  
myself?

HATTIE (O.S.)

Yes, Mrs. Etta.

Etta gestures for Zona to take a seat on the couch with her.

ETTA

What brings you out this way?

ZONA

I was going through a few old boxes  
and came across some thing I ain't  
seen in a while and it had me  
missing...

Zona slows her speech and saddens a bit, but keeps it  
controlled.

ZONA

...It gets hard sometimes.

Etta scoots herself next to Zona and places a hand on her  
knee.

ETTA

It should lend a bit of comfort  
knowin' they're in a good place...  
And together.

Zona purses her lips and gives a nod of agreement.

ZONA

I can't thank y'all enough for the  
great job y'all are doin' raisin'  
them the way you are.

ETTA

It ain't always easy, but we do our  
best.

Hattie enters with two cups of coffee in hand.

ETTA

And it sure don't hurt that we  
Hattie here to help look after  
'em... John especially.

HATTIE

Ain't that the truth?

Hattie hands a cup to Etta, then extends the other to Zona.

Zona places the picture she brought on the couch beside her  
and takes the cup of coffee.

ZONA

(to Hattie)

Thank you.

Zona takes a sip of her coffee.

The picture catches Hattie's eye.

HATTIE

Lord, all mighty. I ain't seen that  
in quite some time.

Zona places the coffee cup on the end table and lifts the  
picture.

ZONA

I didn't know you were familiar.

HATTIE

Yes, Ma'am. If you turn it to the  
back side, that's my writing right  
there.

Zona flips the picture to the back side.

The writing on the back side reads: When you have a son, name  
him a strong biblical name. Name him John. If there's any  
question about where he comes from, you tell them to let the  
boy sing.

HATTIE

Bein' as E's momma couldn't read  
and write none, she had me pen that  
right there on the back for her.

ZONA

To think I've had it all this time  
and never questioned it.

HATTIE

Well, there ya have it. The  
coffee's fine, or are y'all needin'  
anything else.

ETTA

I think we're fine, thank you.

Hattie gives a nod of the head and makes her way back out of  
the room.

ZONA

As much as I was hopin' to spend a  
little time while the kids were  
here, I actually brought this  
thinking maybe it's best left with  
you.

ETTA

(soft hearted)

Zona.

ZONA

Please.

Zona hands the picture over to Etta.

ZONA

E's momma gave it to me when she found out I was pregnant with John, but seein' as you're the one raisin' him it should be here with you.

Etta takes a moment to read the scripture about mothers. The warmth in her heart is visible.

With a loving look in her eyes, Etta peers up at Zona, then leans in and gives her a hug.

ETTA

Thank you.

Etta and Zona release from one another.

ZONA

I really should be thanking you and Ira. Not too many people would have been willing to take on a newborn, much less another two with him.

ETTA

We wouldn't have had it any other way. Ain't nothing more important than family.

Zona fights back tears.

ZONA

You sure do know how to tug at them tears every time I come by.

Etta and Zona smile with a light chuckle.

ZONA

So, tell me. How are they gettin' along in school these days?

ETTA

Becky seems to be very popular at school, with the boys especially. A who's who if you will.

ZONA

She always did have way about her.

ETTA

That she does. Emma's still getting all A's and is first in her class. Her teacher even mentioned the possibility of moving her up a grade.

ZONA

Is that so?

ETTA

It is, but after a bit of pillow talk with Ira, we thinks maybe it's best to leave her where she's at with all her friends. Plus, it ain't always best to try and fix what ain't broke.

ZONA

It truly is incredible what you and Ira are doing with children. What about John?

Etta's face changes directions as she ponders her response.

ETTA

Well... Let's just say school isn't exactly a strength of John's.

ZONA

How so?

ETTA

It's not that he ain't a smart kid, because he is, but he sometimes struggles with his reading, and that then causes problems in a lot of the other subjects.

ZONA

Have you talked to a doctor or anyone about it?

ETTA

We have. Doctors are saying, he's just a little slower at readin' on account of the words sometimes lookin' backwards to him.

Zona thinks on the statement.

ETTA

Being completely honest, I ain't sure the doctor's right.

(MORE)

ETTA (CONT'D)

As bright as that boy is, my guess is that readin' is just plain boring to him. It ain't something interesting enough to keep his attention and his mind wanders off elsewhere. You set a guitar on the boy's lap and he'll sit there for hours, pickin'.

ZONA

Sounds just like his daddy if you ask me.

ETTA

That's what we're afraid of.

ZONA

From where I'm sitting he's with a family who loves him, he's well taken care of, and you can't really ask for much more than that.

Zona and Etta CHUCKLE.

ETTA

You got that right.

Hattie steps into the room with a rag and bottle of spray cleaner.

ZONA

What about his attitude? Is he well behaved...

Hattie hears the question and instantly spins around and exits.

ETTA

That's a uh, complex question.

ZONA

Complex?

ETTA

His attitude is great... But, at times he tends to get a little...  
(beat)  
Animated.

INT. IRA & ETTA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

SUPER: 8 YEARS LATER

TEEN JOHN (15) good lookin', well dressed, and easily excitable, blasts through the front door, smiling ear to ear, waving his brand new driver's license.

TEEN JOHN  
Momma!

ETTA (O.S.)  
I'm in here.

Teen John hurries into the next room.

INT. IRA & ETTA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Etta washes dishes at the sink.

Teen John dances and WHISTLES his way into the kitchen.

ETTA  
I'm gonna guess it's safe to say  
you passed?

TEEN JOHN  
You bet your ass--, butt, you bet  
your butt I did, Momma.

Etta stops washing dishes and throws a hand up on her hip.

ETTA  
Keep usin' language like that and  
you'll be whistling a different  
tune, I promise.

TEEN JOHN  
Sorry, Momma.

Teen John scurries to Etta and gives her a quick kiss on the cheek.

TEEN JOHN  
Look at that right there, Momma.

Teen John leans in and shows Etta his picture on the driver's license.

TEEN JOHN  
(smirking)  
Ain't that the best lookin' kid you  
ever seen?

Etta rolls her eyes and returns to the dishes.

Ira steps into the kitchen.

ETTA

(to Ira)

Glad to see y'all made it home  
alive.

IRA DEE

We did anyhow. Can't speak for  
everyone else out on the road.

TEEN JOHN

Don't listen to him, Momma. He's  
just foolin'. Anyhow, I was  
thinkin'... Seein' as I have my  
license now, and you hate drivin'  
so much, how bout you make me up a  
list I can run on down to the A&P  
for ya?

ETTA

I appreciate you bein' so helpful,  
but I got everything I need at the  
moment... Well, everything except  
that cute new cashier they got down  
there. But that wouldn't have  
anything to do with you wantin' to  
help out now, would it?

TEEN JOHN

No, Ma'am. You just work so hard  
around here all the time, and I'd  
hate to have this brand new license  
going to waste, so I was just  
thinking, gee whiz, where can I  
help out around here.

Etta, dish towel in hand, stops and turns back to Teen John  
and Ira. She glares at both for a moment.

ETTA

I suppose I can never have too much  
corn starch.

Teen John clenches his fist in a subtle celebration.

ETTA

Ira Dee, go on and give him the  
keys. Seems we're needin' some corn  
starch and he's needin' a reason to  
go see some cute girl.

Ira closes in on Etta with a smirk.



IRA DEE

Not sure why he needs to go to the store for that when we have us a cute young girl right here.

With a lackluster glare, Etta leans past Ira to get a good look at Teen John.

ETTA

John Dennis, while you're out go on and grab yourself a pair of new boots...

Teen John seems a bit caught of guard.

ETTA

Seein' as how deep it's gettin' in here.

(to Ira)

I swear I don't know which one of you is worse. Ever since them girls went off to college it ain't been nothin' but hoaxin' and hen-a-mess.

TEEN JOHN

(sotto)

Ain't gotta look far to see where I got it.

Teen John quickly ducks a dish towel.

Ira pulls the keys from his pocket and extends them to Teen John.

Teen John approaches and reaches for the keys, but before he can grab them, Ira pulls them away.

IRA DEE

Don't do anything stupid!

TEEN JOHN

No, Sir. Absolutely not. You know me.

Teen John grabs ahold of the keys, but Ira doesn't loosen his grip.

IRA DEE

That's why I said don't do anything stupid.

With a slight side smirk, Teen John gives a nod and Ira releases his grip on the keys.

Teen John excitedly makes his way to the door.

IRA DEE  
John Dennis.

Teen John turns back to Ira. Ira takes a moment, then glances at Etta before addressing John.

IRA DEE  
If you can manage to do as you're  
asked here without no trouble, I  
may have another chore for you.

TEEN JOHN  
Lucky me.

IRA DEE  
Less of a chore and more of an  
adventure.

With the realization of what Ira's about to say, Etta rolls to him with concern.

ETTA  
Ain't it a bit early to be sending  
him all that way, seein' as he just  
got his license.

Teen John is all ears.

IRA DEE  
It ain't like I ain't already had  
the boy drivin' me--

Etta's brows raise.

Ira slows his speech with the realization it's become a confession.

IRA DEE  
All I'm saying is the boy'll be  
fine.

TEEN JOHN  
So!?

IRA DEE  
Your aunts Bessit and Mattie May  
are needin' a ride to the Colosseum  
in Shreveport this weekend to go  
see Lawrence Welk.

TEEN JOHN

That the old guy who ain't even got  
a fiddle in his band?

IRA DEE

You mean violin... And yes, that's  
the one.

TEEN JOHN

Ain't all that excited to see none  
of that, but I sure ain't got no  
problem gettin a chance to drive to  
the city. Yes, Sir. I'll do it.

IRA DEE

All that's fine and dandy, but you  
still ain't made it to the store  
and back yet.

JOHN

Don't you worry about me none, Sir.  
That car ain't barely fast enough  
to do no speedin', and you already  
showed me the best roads to take  
that ain't got no law on 'em.

Etta slow turns to Ira, scowling in his direction.

ETTA

John, why don't you go on ahead and  
get to the store. I think your  
father and I may need to have a few  
words.

JOHN

Yes, Ma'am. You ain't gotta tell me  
twice.

Teen John, keys in hand, hustles out of the kitchen.

Etta slaps Ira on the arm and he cringes.

ETTA

What on the world are you teachin'  
that boy?

JOHN

I ain't teachin' him nothing he  
ain't need to know.

Etta settles into the moment and her tenderness for her son  
shows.

ETTA

You think he's gonna be alright  
drivin' into the city so young?

Ira Dee steps in and hugs Etta tight.

IRA DEE

He's gonna have both his aunts with  
him to supervise. Besides... What's  
the worst that could happen?

Etta pulls away and looks up at Ira with a bit of concern.

INT. HIRSCH MEMORIAL COLOSIVIUM - NIGHT

A stage is set up at one end of the arena, with chairs lined  
up in front of it.

LAWRENCE WELK (74) in a suit with a microphone in hand,  
stands off to the side and claps along with a band that plays  
on stage.

BESSIT (62) and MATTIE MAY (60) one on either side of Teen  
John, clap with the rhythm of the band.

The entire crowd, all except for Teen John are loving it.

BESSIT

(above the crowd to Teen  
John)

How come you ain't enjoying  
yourself.

TEEN JOHN

It ain't that, Auntie Bess. I just  
heard better singers is all.

MATTIE MAY

(to Bessit)

What did he just say?

BESSIT

He said he's heard better singers  
than this.

MATTIE MAY

Is that so?

The singer on stage now becomes surrounded by female dancers.

TEEN JOHN

Of course I may enjoy it a bit more  
if I was standin' in his shoes.

MATTIE MAY

Boy if you don't get the thought of  
women outta your head, it's bound  
to be the end of ya.

TEEN JOHN

That's fine and all, Auntie, but I  
was talkin' about singin'.

BESSIT

(to Mattie May)

That may just be the end of the  
boy, too.

Bessit and Mattie May share a smirk and LAUGH.

The song ends and the crowd all CHEERS.

TEEN JOHN

Auntie, Bess, I'm gonna use the  
restroom right quick.

BESSIT

Go on and hurry yourself. He's  
about to finish up and you sure  
don't wanna miss that.

TEEN JOHN

I'm sure I'll be fine if I don't  
see another run-of-the-mill band.

Bessit turns to Teen John with a glare.

BESSIT

Well I ain't missin' it on account  
of you jawin' on. They're about to  
let audience members take the  
stage.

Teen John plasters a faux smile on his face.

TEEN JOHN

And I sure wouldn't want you  
missin' it, Auntie Bess.

Teen John turns away and heads towards the restrooms. The  
smile is instantly wiped from his face and his eyes roll as  
he puts distance between him and his aunts.

INT. HIRSCH MEMORIAL COLOSIVIUM - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Teen John makes his way through the crowd, near the stage.

Lost, Teen John spins back and forth in search of a clear path back to his aunts.

Just ahead Teen John spots a break in the crowd and pushes forward.

A new song starts and the crowd CHEERS.

Finally to the front at the crowd, Teen John makes his way towards the side of the stage where there's an open path that allows a view.

A SECURITY GUARD (35) in a suit grabs ahold of Teen John to prevent him from moving around the back side of the stage.

SECURITY GUARD  
Wrong way, Champ.

TEEN JOHN  
I just need to get through--

SECURITY GUARD  
I know, I know. You need to get through.

TEEN JOHN  
Yes, Sir. I just need to--

The security guard continues to pull Teen John towards the front of the stage.

SECURITY GUARD  
Quickest way to get there is by followin' me.

Teen John is a bit surprised, but willingly takes to escort.

INT. HIRSCH MEMORIAL COLOSIIUM - STAGE - NIGHT

Lawrence Welk stands on the edge of the stage and stares down at a few audience members.

Bessit and Mattie May now stand near the front of the stage.

LAWRENCE WELK  
(pointing)  
How about, you there?

An audience member beside Bessit and Mattie May, excitedly shakes her head.

LAWRENCE WELK  
 (waves)  
 Come on up.

The audience member takes the stage and dances along with a few others while the band plays.

The security guard leads the way for Teen John as they approach the stage.

Teen John spots his aunts and becomes excited.

TEEN JOHN  
 (to the security guard)  
 Right there, Sir.

The security guard stops, still a few feet away from Bessit and Mattie May, but directly in front of the stage.

SECURITY GUARD  
 (to Teen John)  
 Now didn't I tell you I'd get you taken care of?

TEEN JOHN  
 Yes, Sir you did.

The security guard turns to the stage and lifts an arm to get Lawrence Welk's attention.

Lawrence Welk makes his way to the security guard and Teen John. He looks down from the stage at Teen John.

LAWRENCE WELK  
 Come on up here you.

Slightly confused, Teen John is unsure what to do. He glances past the security guard and catches eyes with both Bessit and Mattie May who both wave him onto the stage.

With a look that says "here we go" Teen John hops up onto the stage and finds himself face to face with Lawrence Welk.

LAWRENCE WELK  
 Tell me young man, what is your name?

TEEN JOHN  
 John Dennis Smith.

LAWRENCE WELK  
 Alright, John Dennis Smith, welcome to the show.

(MORE)

LAWRENCE WELK (CONT'D)

Take a look on the stage here. Who would you like to dance with?

TEEN JOHN

I appreciate the offer, Sir, but I don't dance.

LAWRENCE WELK

You don't dance?

TEEN JOHN

No, Sir, I don't, but I can sing.

LAWRENCE WELK

Is that so?

TEEN JOHN

Yes, Sir.

LAWRENCE WELK

You can sing?

Teen John is taken by surprise once more.

TEEN JOHN

Well, thank you, Sir. That's might nice of you.

Teen John rips the microphone from Lawrence, mistaking the question for a statement.

Teen John CLEARS HIS THROAT into the microphone and the band, dancers, and audience as a whole come to a screeching halt. The arena falls silent.

TEEN JOHN

Good evening everyone, My name is John Dennis Smith, and I'll be singing Green Green Grass of Home in the key of G.

John turns back to the band.

TEEN JOHN

(to the band)  
Y'all ready?

The band all looks to one another, shrugs and decides to go with it. They give him a nod.

TEEN JOHN

(to the band)  
Hit it!



The band strikes up and John does one of the most memorable renditions of Green, Green, Grass of Home.

The audience rises to their feet and applauds uncontrollably.

Lawerence Welk even seems surprised by the talent Teen John possesses.

INT. HIRSCH MEMORIAL COLOSUIUM - STAGE - NIGHT - LATER

Teen John and the band wrap up the song.

The crowd loves every minute of Teen John and his persona.

Teen John hands the mic back to the stunned Lawrence Welk and climbs down off the stage to handshakes and pats on the back from audience members.

Bessit and Mattie May beam with joy and couldn't be more proud.

Just as Teen John reaches Bessit and Mattie May, two STATE TROOPERS approach Teen John.

TROOPER #1

Young Man, may we have a word?

TEEN JOHN

Yes, Sir, but I'll have you know, Mr. Welk up there was the one who went and said I can sing. Besides, everyone else here seems pretty happy if you're askin' me.

TROOPER #2

Well we ain't askin' you... But relax, Son. Mr. Welk would like a word with you.

JOHN

Are you sure I ain't in trouble?

TROOPER #1

You ain't in trouble. We'll bring you right back when we're done.

BRSSIT

You best bring him back. He's our driver.

MATTIE MAY

And Nephew.

(leans into Trooper #1)

(MORE)

MATTIE MAY (CONT'D)

He's a pretty good singer, ain't he.

TROOPER #1

He's a fine singer, Ma'am, but Mr. Welk is waiting. We'll be back shortly.

Bessie And Mattie May, still swooning over the attention watch as Teen John is escorted through the crowd and back behind the stage.

INT. HIRSCH MEMORIAL COLOSSEUM - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

The troopers escort Teen John around the back of the stage where Lawrence Welk waits.

Lawrence's face lights and a smile emerges upon his face at the sight of Teen John.

LAWRENCE WELK

Young man, that was quite a performance.

TEEN JOHN

Thank you, Sir.

LAWRENCE WELK

Do you do this all the time?

TEEN JOHN

No, Sir. I ain't never just walked onto a stage for a show on television before.

LAWRENCE WELK

I meant sing.

TEEN JOHN

Yes, Sir. I do love to sing on stage. I even won the Louisiana Hayride, just like Elvis Presley himself.

LAWRENCE WELK

Is that so?

TEEN JOHN

Yes, sir. Won plenty of contests.

LAWRENCE WELK

How old are you?

JOHN

I'm almost sixteen years old.

LAWRENCE WELK

Well I am absolutely in heaven right now. You may have the best voice I have ever heard, especially in such a young man.

JOHN

Thank you, Sir. That's very kind of you. You have a very nice band.

LAWRENCE WELK

Yes I do. Tell me Son, what do you want to do?

JOHN

I want to be bigger than Elvis.

LAWRENCE WELK

Don't we all.

Teen John and Lawrence Welk share a smile.

LAWRENCE WELK

How would you like a job?

JOHN

You mean like a singing job?

LAWRENCE WELK

That's correct. I'd hire you to sing with my show in California. I'd need to speak to your parents to work out the details of course. After all, you are only sixteen.

JOHN

Almost... But I'm sure they'd be plenty happy to talk to you. They're really big fans of yours.

INT. IRA & ETTA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ira and Etta sit in on the couch with a look of concern on their face with Teen John between them.

Lawrence Welk sits across from them.

IRA DEE  
It's definitely a great opportunity  
Mr. Welk, we can't rightly deny  
that.

Ira looks to Etta who seems unsure what to do.

IRA DEE  
You mind if I excuse myself for a  
moment?

LAWRENCE WELK  
Take a moment. I understand it's a  
big decision.

Ira gives a nod, then exits the room.

INT. IRA & ETTA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Ira picks up the phone and dials, then places it to his ear.

INT. MUSIC STUDIO - OFFICE - DAY

WILLIAM HARRISON TYNER (40) full beard and boots picks up his  
phone and leans back in his chair.

INTERCUT - PHONE CALL

HT  
This is HT.

IRA DEE  
Morning.

HT  
Morning to you, how can I help you.

IRA DEE  
It's Ira.

Harrison Quickly sits up in his chair.

HT  
Ira Dee, tell me everything's okay.

Ira takes a moment thinking of where to begin.

HT  
Ira?

IRA DEE

Yeah, sorry. Look, I'm gonna cut straight to it... The boy found himself on stage at the Lawrence Welk show and now I have Lawrence in my living room wanting to sign the kid to a contract.

Harrison leans back into his chair.

HT

Well, I guess we all saw this coming.

IRA DEE

No way to stop it really.

HT

You've done a bang up job with the kid for sure.

IRA DEE

(chuckling)

Did what I could, but for the most part I just tried to stay outta his way. That boy'd run me over if I was between him and a microphone.

HT

Too much like his daddy, if you ask me.

Ira and Harrison give a little CHUCKLE.

IRA DEE

Whatcha gonna do?

HT

Same as you made promises to E, I reckon it's time I deliver on mine.

IRA DEE

Promises to do what?

HT

Maybe it's best we have this conversation in person.

IRA DEE

What do I do about Mr. Welk?

HT

Let the boy sing.

A glowing smile raises upon Ira's face.

IRA DEE  
I couldn't agree with you more.

HT  
Let's meet out in Memphis next week.

IRA DEE  
Sounds good, HT, we'll see you in a week.

Ira hangs up the phone and makes his way out of the kitchen.

Harrison hangs up the phone and lets his hands press into his temples to relieve some pain.

Harrison lowers his hands and peers around his office. His eyes stop on a picture of him and E together.

HT  
Well, shit.

Harrison gives his desk a little slap, then rises and exits.

INT. IRA & ETTA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Etta listens to Teen John relive the moment from the night before. Lawrence listens in.

TEEN JOHN  
Then I told him I wasn't gonna. I was gonna sing. Green, Green Grass of Home in G. And, Momma, I really put on a show.

LAWRENCE WELK  
That you did.

Ira enters the room and all eyes turn to him. On pins and needles, they await his answer.

IRA DEE  
Mr. Welk, it looks like you have yourself a deal.

Teen John jumps to his feet and rushes to hug Ira.

TEEN JOHN  
You ain't gonna regret this none. I promise. I'm gonna make both you and momma proud.

IRA DEE  
You already have, Son.

Lawrence and Etta both rise to their feet.

Ira shakes hands with Mr. Welk and Teen John hugs Etta.

EXT. IRA & ETTA'S HOUSE - LAWN - DAY

Ira and Teen John dry the dripping wet car. A few buckets of soapy water are nearby on the lawn.

Teen John WHISTLES a tune while he dries, but stops and looks up at Ira.

TEEN JOHN  
I sure wish you could a been there.

IRA DEE  
You and I both. You made nearly every paper in three counties.

TEEN JOHN  
And I think you bought nearly every paper in three counties. Momma was kicking up a fuss about 'em being on the kitchen table this mornin'.  
(beat)  
Of course if I was to autograph 'em for you, then maybe they'd be worth somethin' seeing as I'm a star now.

Ira slows his towel on the car and stands tall.

IRA DEE  
Yeah, well you best be careful, because stars... They sometimes fall.

TEEN JOHN  
Only after billions of years of shinnin' bright.

IRA DEE  
One of these days, you're gonna put me in my grave.

Teen John and Ira share a smile.

With a proud glare, Ira ponders a thought.

IRA DEE

I was thinkin'... After what happened at Lawrence Welk, there was an awful lot a people wishin' they was there. Maybe you can do one last show here before you go.

TEEN JOHN

Like at the coliseum?

Ira LAUGHS.

IRA DEE

I know you think you're a star, but you ain't that big.

TEEN JOHN

(winks)

Yet.

IRA DEE

I was thinkin' that since we have friends at the Hayride, maybe you can do a goodbye show. We'll promote it and make sure all them folks who ain't got to see you sing get a chance for you get too big for your britches.

TEEN JOHN

That's a great idea. I could sing "Teeth of Gold", and "Face all Hairy".

Ira shakes his head and LAUGHS once more.

IRA DEE

John Dennis... If people only knew what was goin' on in that head of yours.

Teen John looks at is father in all seriousness.

TEEN JOHN

Dad, can I ask you something?

IRA DEE

Shoot.

TEEN JOHN

You and momma had a good life when y'all was younger. How come you went and adopted the three of us?



IRA DEE

We had some family that was in need of help and three kids that deserved a good life. We we're in a place where we could help so we did. Besides, between you and your sisters, y'all kept me young... And old all at the same time of course.

TEEN JOHN

You ever wish you hadn't taken us in.

IRA DEE

Not even for a second.

TEEN JOHN

I know I mess around a lot and I'm not sure I've told you in some time, but I love you.

IRA DEE

I love you too, Son.

Teen John and Ira pull in for a quick hug.

IRA DEE

Why don't you finish up out here, and I'll see if I can't get on the phone with the guys over at Hayride and get this worked out.

TEEN JOHN

Yes, Sir.

With a smile, Teen John continues to dry the car, while Ira makes his way back into the house.

EXT. SHREVEPORT MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM - REAR - DAY

Harrison exits the driver's seat, Ira the passenger seat, and Teen John the rear of a beautiful 1963 Lincoln Continental.

The trio make their way into the auditorium through a back door guarded by a security officer.

INT. SHREVEPORT MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM - DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Harrison sits in a chair across from Ira.

Teen John wanders the room and explores the decor and treats that have been left for him.

HT

Like I said, we wanna help, but we need to do it in a way that...

Harrison glances over at Teen John, then leans in a little closer to Ira.

HT

(quietly)

We need to do in a way that protects both him and his daddy's legacy. Part of that is us choosing how much and where he sings. Hell, he grew up in the country, let him sing country.

IRA DEE

There ain't no denying he's got a voice for it.

HT

Let me manage his singing, recording, and shows. That gives you the opportunity to keep being that father figure the boy needs. I figure between the two of us, we might could keep up with the boy.

IRA DEE

Maybe.

Ira and Harrison both share a LAUGH.

HT

E had me prepare a management agreement under my label.

IRA DEE

That's probably for the best seein' as RCA's been callin' about him, and I could see that getting awkward and raisin' some flags if he's with the same label as his daddy.

Harrison takes a second to put his thoughts together.

HT

I want you to know we're all really grateful for everything you've done. I don't know that there's anyone else out there that could have done for that boy what you have.

IRA DEE

We both know Etta's just as big a part of his upbringing as myself, if not more.

Harrison LAUGHS.

HT

You know what they say... Behind every good man, there's a great woman.

IRA DEE

Why don't we bring him over.  
(to Teen John)  
John, why don't you come over here for a second.

Teen John tosses a snack in his hand back onto the table with the rest and makes his way to Ira and Harrison.

TEEN JOHN

Yes, Sir?

IRA DEE

Bill Tyner and I have a few things we'd like to talk with you about.

TEEN JOHN

I hope y'all ain't thinking about backing me out of Mr. Welk's show. You already went and signed the papers and everything.

IRA DEE

It ain't nothin' like that at all, Son. We were actually talkin' about you going to Nashville with Mr. Tyner here once your contract is done with Mr. Welk.

Teen John takes a good look at Harrison, then back at Ira.

TEEN JOHN

(to Ira)

You think I'm good enough to make it out there? I heard about an awful lot a fellas goin' out that way, then havin' to go back home with their tails tucked.

HT

I'll be the first to tell ya, you're plenty good enough...

(MORE)

HT (CONT'D)

And as far as them other fellas,  
what you'll have that they don't is  
me.

TEEN JOHN

Ain't tryin' to be rude, Mr. Tyner,  
but why is it exactly you're  
wantin' to help me?

Harrison and Ira share a look as they ponder the question.

HT

I've been a friend of your folks  
and others in the family for quite  
some time, and the way I see it,  
that makes us family, so I'm gonna  
help out anyway I can.

Teen John shifts his attention to Ira.

TEEN JOHN

Dad?

IRA DEE

A levee can only hold back strong  
waters for so long before that  
little bit that's leaked out  
becomes a full blown flood, Son.

A grin creeps onto Teen John's face and develops into a full  
blown smile.

TEEN JOHN

I promise to make you proud.

IRA DEE

You should know by now you already  
have.

Teen John continues to smile and gives Ira a subtle nod.

TEEN JOHN

(to Harrison)

Mr. Tyner, you got yourself a deal.

Teen John reaches over to Harrison and shakes his hand.

HT

As great as that is, we do still  
have one other thing we need to  
address.

TEEN JOHN

And what exactly would that be?

HT

Well, ever since your little Lawrence Welk stunt, you're all everyone's been talkin' about. Their sayin' the crowd you're drawin' and been this big since Elvis himself played this auditorium.

JOHN

It sure is something.

HT

Yes it is, but we do have ourselves a problem.

JOHN

What, I don't have an autograph booth?

IRA DEE

No, Son, that ain't it at all...

Teen John shrugs and lifts his palms waiting for to hear the real issue at hand.

IRA DEE

Most of your family come down here to see and hear you sing, but so many others showed up early and filled the auditorium and there just ain't no room left for no one else.

TEEN JOHN

Ain't they got somewhere special for family that came all that way?

HT

Unfortunately not.

TEEN JOHN

Well that ain't right.

Teen John ponders a bit.

TEEN JOHN

Ain't even no V-I-P tickets left.

IRA DEE

Shows been sold out.

HT

Being honest, Fellas, this ain't  
exactly the worst problem to have.

Teen John's face shows he's clearly proud of a thought he's  
just had.

TEEN JOHN

I have an idea.

IRA DEE

I've seen that look before.

TEEN JOHN

If all these people came here to  
see me. That's exactly what they're  
gonna get... John Dennis Smith!

Ira looks to Harrison with a look that says, "Here we go."

IRA DEE

(to Harrison)

I hope you're ready to see a  
glimpse of what you went and asked  
for.

EXT. SHREVEPORT MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Teen John walks out onto the front steps of the auditorium  
with his acoustic guitar.

Ira follows Teen John with a microphone and small amp in  
hand.

A crowd has formed, all waiting for the chance to see Teen  
John and the possibility of extra seats becoming available.

Some notice Teen John and the crowd begins to shift in his  
direction.

Ira runs an extension cord to a nearby outlet and plugs it  
in. He looks to Teen John and gives a thumbs up.

Teen John, leans down and turns the amp on and adjusts it.

The entire crowd shifts to get a better look at Teen John.

TEEN JOHN

Good evening, and welcome y'all to  
the Louisiana Hayride Pre Show!

The crowd CHEERS.

TEEN JOHN

It's come to my attention that  
there's quiet a few of y'all that  
have traveled quite some way to get  
a listen, but ain't gonna get the  
chance.

A low ROAR and BOOS fill the crowd.

JOHN

Now I don't I personally don't  
think it's right seein' as y'all  
came all this way, so we're gonna  
do our own show before the show  
right here on these steps if that's  
okay with y'all?

The crowd erupts in CHEERS and WHISTLES.

Teen John readies himself for the first song.

The HAYRIDE PRESIDENT shoves his way through the crowd and  
makes himself to the front.

HAYRIDE PRESIDENT

(to Teen John)

Boy, you need to get yourself down  
off a them steps right this minute.

TEEN JOHN

And if I don't?

HAYRIDE PRESIDENT

I promise you, you ain't never  
gonna sing here again.

Teen John looks to Ira for his approval.

IRA DEE

It's your show, Son.

From behind Ira, just off to the side, Harrison looks on,  
arms crossed, waiting to see Teen John's decision.

Teen John catches sight of Harrison in the near distance.

Harrison shoots Teen John a wink. It's all he needed.

A smile engulfs Teen John's face and he turns back to the  
microphone.

TEEN JOHN

Ladies and Gentlemen, according to the Hayride President here, this just may be the last show I'm allowed to do here.

The crowd once again fills with BOOS.

TEEN JOHN

Seein' as that's the case, we may as well make this the best show we can. What do y'all say to that?!

The crowd explodes with CHEERS once more.

HAYRIDE PRESIDENT

If you strike that guitar you can kiss The Hayride goodbye.

Teen John turns to the Hayride president and with a side smirk, eyes locked with his, he hits the first chord for his song "The Hardest Thing I Never Did."

The Hayride President marches forward towards Teen John and reaches down for the amplifier.

Ira Dee steps in front of the Hayride President and places a hand on his chest.

IRA DEE

Now you just hold on one damn second. That boy ain't done nothin' but look after his fans and I'm telling you right now, if you so much as lay a finger on that boy's amp, we'll take him down the road to the damn park if we have to, to play for these fans. So, unless you're wantin' to explain why your star for the evenin' ain't here I suggest you take a step back and just enjoy the show like everyone else.

The Hayride President glares at Ira, then with a look of defeat, he turns and disappears into the crowd.

Ira turns back to Teen John who's willing and ready to go.

IRA DEE

Go on and show 'em what you got, Son.



With a grin, Teen John hits the next chord and begins his song. He continues to sing "The Hardest Thing I Never Did," and the crowd enjoys every second.

MATCH CUT

INT. HONKY TONK - NASHVILLE - NIGHT - 4 YEARS LATER

SUPER: NASHVILLE, TENNESEE

TEEN JOHN (19) finishes the last couple of lines of his song "The Hardest Thing I Never Did."

In the crowd, DEBORAH (20) an urban cowgirl, dances and longingly stares up at Teen John on the stage.

Teen John continues to sing, but finds himself not singing to the crowd, but directly to Deborah.

The tension between the two is palpable.

Teen John and his band finish up the song and the crowd in the honky tonk CHEER and APPLAUD.

TEEN JOHN  
 Thank you, all, thank you very  
 much. Enjoy the rest of your night.  
 (looks directly at  
 Deborah)  
 We hope to see more of ya!

INT. SMALL APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Teen John lies asleep in bed, shirtless.

Clothes on and jacket in hand, Deborah quietly gathers her things. She picks up her boots and makes her way to the door.

In attempt to open the door with her hands full, Deborah drops a boot to the floor. It makes a THUD.

Teen John shudders, then slowly wakes.

Deborah quickly grabs her boot, then turns to take a peek at Teen John.

Teen John's eyes open and he peers across the room at Deborah at the door. He leans up.

TEEN JOHN  
 I'll just see you around then?

DEBORAH

If you keep playin' like you  
pickin' we'll be seein' plenty of  
one another, darlin'.

TEEN JOHN

Baby, last night was just a warm  
up.

DEBORAH

I guess you'll have to prove it  
tonight, then.

Deborah shoots Teen John a wink, then turns and makes her way  
out the door and closes it behind her.

Teen John falls back onto the bed and stares at the ceiling  
for a moment.

With a bit of tenacity, Teen John flips the covers from his  
bed and flings himself out of it.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Teen John sits in the studio and plays his acoustic. He plays  
the song "I Can Dream".

Harrison enters the studio and listens intently.

Teen John doesn't see him enter. He finishes the song.

Harrison CLAPS and catches Teen John off guard.

HT

You workin' on a new song?

TEEN JOHN

An old one. That's actually the  
first song I ever wrote. Hell, I  
think I was maybe nine at the time.

HT

It's got a great melody and it's  
catchy as hell. You may wanna  
consider recording it as a single.

TEEN JOHN

I was actually wonderin' about  
that. How exactly do I go about  
cutting an album?

HT

You just record the songs, then produce, master 'em, and there ya have it... An album.

TEEN JOHN

And we can do all that right here?

HT

You're damn right we can, Young Man.

TEEN JOHN

So... Can I make an album?

HT

Absolutely... As soon as you give me fifty grand.

Teen John's in shock.

TEEN JOHN

For what?

HT

After recording fees, marketing, pressing records, electricity, distribution... That's the price of making an album.

TEEN JOHN

But I have a recording contract.

HT

Yes you do, but this ain't Louisiana, this is Nashville. We're all here to have a good time, but at the end of the day, we're here to make a living.

TEEN JOHN

If I'm paying for everything, then what do I need you for?

HT

Do you have a recording studio?

TEEN JOHN

No.

Harrison lifts his hands and shrugs.

TEEN JOHN

What if ain't got that kinda money?

HT

Then you can go out there just like everyone else and raise it.

TEEN JOHN

Then that's just what I'm gonna do.

Teen John rises and places his guitar in his case and with a look of determination, marches out of the studio.

HT

(sotto)

Poor kid's got no idea what he's gettin' himself into.

INT. SMALL APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Teen John enters and places his guitar on the counter, then shuffles his way to the couch and flops down on it. He stares at the ceiling for a bit and rubs his temples.

With a SIGH, Teen John reaches over and grabs a phone and dials.

INT. IRA &amp; ETTA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

The phone RINGS. Ira enters the room and answers the phone.

IRA DEE

Hello.

INTERCUT - PHONE CALL

TEEN JOHN

(into phone)

Hey, Dad.

IRA DEE

John Dennis, I ain't heard from you in a few weeks, is everything okay?

TEEN JOHN

Yes, sir.

IRA DEE

Ya sound a little down. Are you sure everything okay?

TEEN JOHN

I ain't gonna lie, it's hard out here.

(MORE)

TEEN JOHN (CONT'D)

Everyone's out here trying to make a name, and let me tell you... they're all good... Real good.

IRA DEE

So are you, John.

TEEN JOHN

Yeah, but it's different. It ain't like back home where everyone's laughing and havin' a good ol'e time. They're all just worried about that next dollar.

IRA DEE

Life is what you make it, Son.

Teen John falls silent for a moment, knowing his father is right.

IRA DEE

Maybe you go find yourself a place where you can sit and think why it is you're out there. I can't rightly see you doin' anything else and I don't think you can either, but if you ain't lovin' what you're doin', then maybe it's time to think about makin' a change.

Teen John falls silent once again, racking his brain.

TEEN JOHN

Is momma around?

IRA DEE

She's already gone and went to bed. She ain't been feelin' the best lately.

TEEN JOHN

Tell I miss her and give her a kiss for me.

IRA DEE

Will do, Son.

TEEN JOHN

Talk soon.

IRA DEE

As always... I'm proud of you.

TEEN JOHN  
Thanks, Dad.

Teen John hangs up the phone. After a moment of reflection, he springs to his feet and heads for the door.

He grabs a notepad and pencil on his way out.

INT. WAFFLE HOUSE - NIGHT

Teen John sits at a booth with a large coffee, chef salad, writing pad, and pen. He writes on the pad.

Besides the employees and one other man at the counter, John is the only other person in the restaurant.

KENNY RODGERS (40) waits at the counter for his order. He spots Teen John alone in his booth and meanders that way.

KENNY RODGERS  
It's awful late to be out, Son.

Teen John looks up from his note pad, barely acknowledging him.

Kenny Rodgers slides himself into a chair at Teen John's table.

KENNY RODGERS  
What are you working on?

JOHN  
Puttin' together a new song and I needed some privacy.

Kenny Rodgers glances around.

KENNY RODGERS  
Looks like you're gonna get it here, at least this time of night anyhow.

Teen John lifts his eyes back to Kenny Rodgers, slightly irked that's he's ignored the privacy remark. He lowers his head back to his notepad.

KENNY ROGERS  
Are you a musician?

JOHN  
(eyes on his work)  
I sing and write. Play a little guitar, too.

KENNY ROGERS

I'm guessin' that's what brought  
you out to Nashville seein' as your  
accent isn't Tennessee.

JOHN

(short)  
No, Sir, it isn't.

KENNY RODGERS

Where you comin' from?

With a sigh, Teen John lowers his pen.

TEEN JOHN

Shreveport, Louisiana, by way of  
California.

KENNY ROGERS

Are you recording, or cutting  
songs?

JOHN

Yeah, I'm over at Adonda Records  
with HT. Sorry, Bill Tyner.

KENNY ROGERS

Really??

Teen John notices the surprise on Kenny Rodgers' face.

KENNY RODGERS

You got a band or any musicians  
you're working with?

JOHN

We got a bunch of pickers and  
Harold Bradley is leadin' 'em.  
David Briggs is on keys, and a few  
others.

KENNY ROGERS

Son, I'm not sure who you are, or  
how exactly you pulled that off,  
but you just mentioned a couple of  
the biggest names in this town.

TEEN JOHN

Is that right?

Kenny Rodgers give a nod.

KENNY RODGERS

Well I tell you what, Son. I don't want to get in the way of your art or your salad so I'll let you be.

Kenny Rodgers rises from his chair.

KENNY RODGERS

Best of luck to ya.

JOHN

That's mighty kind of you, Sir.

Kenny Rogers makes his way back to the counter and Teen John returns to his work.

At the counter, Kenny Rodgers pays his bill and takes his food and coffee, then makes his way out the door.

A WAITRESS (29) all starry eyed approaches the table.

WAITRESS

Excuse me, I just wanted to let you know that Mr. Rodgers went ahead and paid your tab for you.

The waitress slides the bill onto the table in front of Teen John. There's some writing on it.

TEEN JOHN

I'm sorry, who?

WAITRESS

Mr. Rodgers.

Clueless, Teen John shrugs.

WAITRESS

That was Kenny Rodgers.

Teen John's eyes are about to pop from his head.

TEEN JOHN

The Gambler, Kenny Rodgers?

WAITRESS

That would be the one.

Teen John's eyes and head whip to the door to see if he can get one last glimpse of Kenny Rodgers, but he's gone.

He glances down at the ticket for the meal to find a note from Kenny Rodgers. It reads: If you end up writin' a good song, you stop on by, Kenny Rodgers.



INT. MUSIC STUDIO - DAY

Harrison enters to find a few band members warming up.

HT

How we doin' today fellas?

The band members throw up a hand a wave, all with a bit of a smirk or smile.

The band members return to their instruments, though a few carefully peek over at Harrison.

The phone RINGS and Harrison steps to it and answers.

HT

This is Bill.

INT. UNKNOWN - DAY

CU: Filled with excitement, Teen John holds a phone to his ear.

INTERCUT - PHONE CALL

TEEN JOHN

HT, it's John.

HT

Ain't you supposed to be here at the studio?

TEEN JOHN

Yeah, but that ain't what's happenin' right now.

HT

(frustration growing)  
Well it sure as hell better be real quick. I've got a room full of musicians warmin' up and waitin' on you. Where are you right now?

The band members glance to Harrison, then one another, a few of them raising a brow.

TEEN JOHN

At a restaurant with a friend of mine named Reggie. I told him I was needen' money to cut a record like you told me and he cut me a check for seventeen grand on the spot.

(MORE)

TEEN JOHN (CONT'D)

You think that's enough to get us started?

HT

It's definitely enough to get things rollin'. Why don't you head on back here since these guys are waitin'?

TEEN JOHN

He said to just let him know when I need the rest and he'll cut me another check.

HT

(growing impatient)

That's great, John, now why don't you head on over so we can get everything written up and start on that record.

TEEN JOHN

(rambling)

Hell, I didn't know it was gonna be this easy to raise money. I'm thinking maybe I just cash this check now and ask him for some more tomorrow.

HT

(raising his voice)

John, don't you dare cash that check. You put that check in your pocket and bring yourself back to the studio right now.

Harrison catches the glare of the band member, now all staring at him.

TEEN JOHN

I was thinkin', if I cash the check and head on down to the casino, I can probably double up this, then whatever I win I can use to get a new guitar. This is crazy, HT. Hey, Imma call you back once I leave the casino.

HT

John, don't you dare--

CLICK! Harrison pulls the phone away from his ear and shoots it a look, then places it back to his ear.

HT  
 John, you better not have hung up  
 on me... John?  
 (sotto)  
 That Son-Of-A-Bitch hung up.

Harrison hangs up the phone. He turns to find all the band members staring.

RING! RING!

Harrison quickly snatches the phone from the receiver.

HT  
 John!?

TEEN JOHN  
 HT, I was headin' out and was  
 thinkin', maybe I just ask him for  
 more right now.

HT  
 John, you listen to me right now...

Harrison notices all eyes are still on him.

HT  
 John, hold on one second. I'm gonna  
 go grab the phone in my office.

Harrison waits for a reply, but the line is silent.

HT  
 John?

TEEN JOHN  
 I'm waitin'.

With slight relief, Harrison places the phone down and hustles towards his office.

The band members all lean to the side to get a look at Harrison.

INT. MUSIC STUDIO - OFFICE - DAY

Harrison bursts through the door and into his office.

His face goes stale, then his shoulders slump with a sense of relief.

In the chair behind the desk, Teen John smirks. He waves the check at Harrison.

TEEN JOHN

You should a seen the look on your face.

INT. MUSIC STUDIO - DAY

Harrison glances back at the band members who now LAUGH.

HT

You all knew this idiot was in here the whole time?

INT. MUSIC STUDIO - OFFICE - DAY

Teen John rises from the chair and makes his way to Harrison and hands him the check.

TEEN JOHN

In case you already forgot, this idiot, just went and got you a check for seventeen grand.

HT

Yes, Sir, you did.

TEEN JOHN

You wanna make a record?

Teen John and Harrison both share a smile, then Harrison steps out of the door way, allowing Teen John to pass.

HT

After you.

BEGIN MONTAGE

- Teen John and his band play songs in the studio, while Harrison oversees the mixing board.
- In a local Honky Tonk, Teen John and his band play on a stage. The crowd loves every second of it, including Deborah who's front and center.
- Teen John stands next to Harrison while a few photographers take pictures of them holding up a framed record and album cover.
- Teen John in a tux and Deborah in a wedding gown run down the steps of a church between a row of friends and family who throw rice. They climb into the back of the beautiful 1963 Lincoln Continental. Just Married is written in the back window.

- The country music charts scroll from 150 up and stop on number 39 on the charts. It reads: Please Let Me Love You... John Dennis Smith.
- In a hospital room, Teen John rocks a baby in his arms while Deborah looks on lovingly. The room is filled with flowers and balloons that read: It's a boy!
- Teen John sings to a crowd of fans at another local bar.
- In the living room of a small home, Teen John plays with TODDLER ROSS (3) on the floor.
- In a bedroom of the small house, Teen John trudges into the dark room, exhausted. He kicks off his shoes, peels his shirt, then crawls his way into bed next to Deborah.

END MONTAGE

INT. SMALL HOME - DINING ROOM - DAY

Deborah places breakfast on a plate and brings it to Teen John at the table. ROSS (3) sits in a chair next to him.

DEBORAH  
Anything special for today?

TEEN JOHN  
We're just gonna be in the studio working on a few songs, but I did have something I've been writing that I think I may have a good home for.

Teen John eats from his plate.

DEBORAH  
Sounds exciting. You think it'll be a long night?

TEEN JOHN  
Shouldn't be too late.

DEBORAH  
Will you back for dinner?

TEEN JOHN  
I should be.

DEBORAH  
Well if you're runnin' late call me.

(MORE)

DEBORAH (CONT'D)

I'd hate to go through all the trouble of makin' you dinner just for it to be cold when you get home.

Teen John rises and grabs a piece of toast from his plate, then kisses Deborah on her forehead.

TEEN JOHN

Well then I better get to it.

Teen John ruffles Ross's hair.

ROSS

Bye, Bye.

TEEN JOHN

You behave for Momma, Buddy.

Smile on her face, Deborah watches as Teen John makes his way out the door. Slowly but surely the smile fades.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - OFFICE - DAY

Harrison sits at his desk and fills out paperwork. His attention is grabbed when Teen John pokes his head in.

TEEN JOHN

HT, you got a sec?

HT

John, if you're about to ask me about the Opry again, I'm gonna tell you like I told you the last fourteen times... It ain't up to me... It's up to management and the current members.

TEEN JOHN

That ain't it, but while we're on the subject, what's up their ass anyway?

HT

Probably that attitude. What do you need, John?

TEEN JOHN

I'm trying to find Kenny Rodgers.

HT

I have no idea where you're going with this, but walk out of my office, and out that front door--

TEEN JOHN

You ain't got to be a smart ass.

HT

John, you're plenty smart ass for the both of us, now shut your mouth and listen.

Teen John zips his lips, but glares at Harrison as he speaks.

HT

Walkout out the front door and straight across the street. Kenny just set up an office right across from us.

TEEN JOHN

No shit?

HT

(straight faced)  
No shit.

TEEN JOHN

You could of just started with that.

HT

Anything else, John.

TEEN JOHN

Yeah. You can call them assholes over at the Opry and tell 'em to let me play there.

With a smirk and a little giddy up in his step, Teen John shoots Harrison a wink and exits as fast as he entered.

HT

(calls out)  
Keep callin' 'em assholes and they ain't never gonna let you play there!

EXT. STREET - NASHVILLE - DAY

John walks across the street with a cassette tape in hand.

INT. KENNY'S OFFICE - DAY

A RECEPTIONIST (30) sits behind the counter and smiles as Teen John approaches.

JOHN  
Afternoon, Ma'am.

RECEPTIONIST  
May I help you?

JOHN  
Yes you may. I am trying to find  
Kenny Rogers.

RECEPTIONIST  
And you have an appointment with  
Mr. Rogers?

JOHN  
I ain't got an appointment, but he  
said I should come by and see him  
when I got a song for him.

RECEPTIONIST  
So, you are here to give him a  
song?

JOHN  
Yes, Ma'am. I have it on this  
cassette right here.

Teen John pulls the ticket out of his pocket and unfolds it,  
then hands it over to the receptionist.

TEEN JOHN  
The waitress at the pancake house  
says it was Kenny Rogers, but I  
don't know. She could a just been  
foolin'. Sure did look like him  
though.

The receptionist takes a look at the ticket with doubt, but  
slowly her face becomes sincere.

RECEPTIONIST  
Can you have a seat over there for  
just a moment.

The receptionist lifts the phone to her ear and dials.

TEEN JOHN  
You mind if I use the restroom  
first?



RECEPTIONIST

Down the hall, second door on the left.

INT. KENNY'S OFFICE - HALLWAY - DAY

WHISTLING, Teen John makes his way down the hall and turns into the men's room.

INT. KENNY'S OFFICE - RESTROOM - DAY

Teen John enters to find one other person at a urinal.

TEEN JOHN

So this is where all the dicks hang out.

At the urinal, Kenny Rodgers turns to look over his shoulder at Teen John.

KENNY RODGERS

What was that?

TEEN JOHN

(blown away)  
Mr. Rodgers.

Teen John reaches out to Kenny Rodgers to shake his hand.

KENNY RODGERS

(chuckles)  
Maybe you let me shake this first.

TEEN JOHN

You ain't gonna believe this, but I was just comin' here to see you.

Kenny Rodgers shakes himself off and makes his way to the sink to wash his hands.

KENNY RODGERS

In the restroom?

Kenny Rodgers washes his hands.

TEEN JOHN

No, Sir. Your office. This was just by chance. You asked me to bring you a song when I had a good one, and let me tell you, this is a good one.

Kenny Rodgers holds and looks at Teen John in the mirror, then turns back to him.

KENNY RODGERS  
Pancake house.

Teen John allows a smile to develop at the recognition.

TEEN JOHN  
Yes, sir!

Teen John extends a cassette tape to Kenny Rodgers, but hands dripping wet he just stares at it.

Kenny Rodgers gestures to the paper towel dispenser.

KENNY RODGERS  
May I?

TEEN JOHN  
(awkward)  
Sorry, I get a little excited at times.

KENNY RODGERS  
I can see that. If that song's got half the energy you do, I'm sure it'll be great.

Kenny Rodgers, hands dried, takes the cassette from Teen John and gestures for him to follow.

KENNY RODGERS  
Let's go give it a listen.

Kenny Rodgers and Teen John exit the restroom.

EXT. STREET - NASHVILLE - DAY

With a grin plastered all over his face, Teen John hop skips his way across the street, filled with pride.

INT. MUSIC STUDIO - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Teen John struts his way though the door to find himself face to face with Harrison, arms crossed and glare plastered all over his face.

TEEN JOHN  
What's up, HT.

HT

Is there something wrong with you?

TEEN JOHN

(chuckles)

Probably.

HT

John, sometimes I just don't know how the hell you even make it out of the house in the morning.

TEEN JOHN

What'd I do now?

HT

Apparently you went and found yourself on the B side of Kenny Rodgers new single, The Old Man in Our Town.

TEEN JOHN

How did--

HT

Kenny called me.

(beat)

You know, Elvis is the only other person I've worked with that has had whatever the hell it is that you have that makes people fall in love with you.

TEEN JOHN

(laughing)

Well hell, maybe someday we'll find out he's my real daddy.

Harrison's tries to hold a faux smile, but slips, and it fades.

HT

Wouldn't that be somethin'.

TEEN JOHN

Relax... I'm way better than Elvis ever was.

HT

You're more confident than him, I tell you what.

Teen John points a finger at Harrison with a brow raise to let him know that he should know that.

EXT. SMALL HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A car is parked in the driveway when Teen John pulls up to his house in his truck and parks on the street.

He exits the truck and makes his way to the front door, taking a good look at the car in the driveway.

INT. SMALL HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Teen John opens the front door and steps in to find Deborah scrambling to throw a blanket over herself.

Clothes are scattered across the floor.

TEEN JOHN

What the fu--

CARL (26) in his whitie tighties, attempt to rise from a recliner.

CARL

(stammering)

I'm sorry, Man.

Teen John pops Carl straight in the nose and drops him back down into the chair.

TEEN JOHN

(to Carl)

Get up again and I'll kill you!

DEBORAH

John, please don't hurt him. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

TEEN JOHN

Sorry?

DEBORAH

Nothing happened, I swear.

TEEN JOHN

Oh, I'm sorry, did I interrupt you?  
Here, let me leave so you can  
finish up.

Teen John start off towards the door, but veers off towards another room.

Deborah moves towards John and tries to calm him, but he pushes her off.

TEEN JOHN

Don't you ever touch me again. Not  
after you touched that asshole!

Teen John looks at Carl with a squinted eye.

TEEN JOHN

Do I know you.

Carl fearfully sits in silence and shakes his head.

DEBORAH

John, I need you to calm down.

TEEN JOHN

Oh I'm calm. I'm nothing but cool  
as a cucumber over here. Go on.  
Finish up.

Teen John exits the room, leaving Deborah and Carl.

Deborah frantically gestures for Carl to gather his clothes  
and get out the door.

Carl scrambles to gather his clothes.

CLACK! CLACK!

Teen John reenters the room with a military issue M1911 9mm  
pistol in hand.

Panic fills the room as Teen John charges Carl and pushes him  
right back into the recliner with the pistol leading the way.

DEBORAH

John, stop!

Teen John climbs over Carl and places the gun right against  
his forehead.

DEBORAH

John, please. He didn't do  
anything!

Teen John holds momentarily, pistol pressed against Carl's  
head.

TEEN JOHN

I know you.

Carl slightly and rapidly shakes his head no.

CARL  
(stuttering)  
I, don't think so.

TEEN JOHN  
Yes I do. You piece of shit, you  
played bass for me last year at...

Teen John turns back to Deborah.

TEEN JOHN  
A year... I've been out bustin' my  
ass to provide for you and our son,  
and for the last year you've been--

Carl makes a quick attempt to wrestle his way free, but Teen John quickly cracks Carl in the forehead with the butt of the pistol.

Carl's hands cover his head. A gash opens up and blood seeps through his fingers.

John presses the pistol tight to Carl's head.

TEEN JOHN  
(to Carl)  
The way I see it, you just took my  
life from me.

DEBORAH  
John, please don't!

TEEN JOHN  
(soft and deliberate)  
A life for a life.

John's finger slowly squeezes the trigger.

ROSS  
Daddy.

John whips his head around to find Ross in the room with a teddy bear in hand.

John slowly removes the pistol from Carl and rises.

Deborah, with the blanket still wrapped around her, runs to Ross, and holds him tight, but looks up at John.

DEBORAH  
Look at what you're doing to you  
son!

JOHN  
 What I'm doing to him? The only  
 thing I did was come home early.  
 You know what? Forget it. I quit.

John places the pistol in his waistband behind his back.

JOHN  
 (to Carl)  
 She's all yours.

CARL  
 Hey, Man--

John explodes and stomps Carl square in the balls.

JOHN  
 What'd I say about talking to me?!

Carl crumples in pain.

JOHN  
 (to Deborah)  
 Enjoy.

John flips Deborah the bird and storms his way back out of the house.

Deborah runs to Carl to comfort him.

Ross, with only his teddy bear, watches as the door closes and his father exits the house.

INT. CACTUS JACK'S SALOON - NIGHT

John sits at a bar top with DAVID BRIGGS (30) and RUDY GATLIN of the Gatlin Brothers. They all drink.

RUDY  
 I'm sorry.

JOHN  
 Don't be... Unless you were  
 screwin' her too.

The trio LAUGH.

DAVID  
 I don't know that I'd be able to  
 crack jokes if I was in your  
 position.

JOHN

You know me. If I ain't smokin' I'm  
jokin'.

Rudy lifts a pack of cigarettes and gives it a tap sending a  
single cigarette protruding from the pack. He extends it to  
John.

JOHN

You know I don't smoke.

With a smirk, Rudy drops the pack back onto the bar top.

RUDY

Now what?

JOHN

I don't know. Write a nasty song  
about her and hope it goes to  
number one, then say the song's not  
about her.

John takes a drink.

RUDY

You're so vain.

John nearly spits the beer from his mouth. He, Rudy, and  
David all share a LAUGH.

DAVID

What are planning on doing next? On  
the music side I mean.

JOHN

I don't know. It's been hard  
lately. The western album didn't  
take like I thought it would, and  
Kenny didn't even give me a writing  
credit for "You Decorated My Life."

DAVID

That's your own damn fault. You  
just handed off a cassette with no  
damn contract or paperwork.

JOHN

I guess you gotta know when to hold  
'em.

Rudy does a spit take this time. He and John both LAUGH.

David shakes his head at the immaturity of John and Rudy.



A waitress drops off three shots in front of David, John, and Rudy.

JOHN  
Thank ya, Ma'am.

John and Rudy lift their shots and look to David.

DAVID  
I'm gonna pass.

JOHN  
Suit yourself.

John and Rudy CHEERS, then take their shots.

RUDY  
If you ask me I think there's some things that need to change around this town to stop shit like that from happening.

DAVID  
If you ask me, No one's asking you. I've been working in this town for twenty years with out a complaint, and I 'm still gettin' gig after gig.

RUDY  
That's exactly what I'm talkin' about. You've been here twenty years and your still doin' the same shit you started off doin'.

JOHN  
Hell, I think I'd have to put this gun in my mouth and blow my brains out if I was still here in twenty years.

John begins to remove the pistol from his waist band, but Rudy and David quickly stop him.

DAVID  
What the hell is wrong with you?

RUDY  
Relax, David. You act like he just pulled a gun out in a bar.

John and Rudy LAUGH hysterically.

RUDY  
(holds a finger up to the  
waitress)  
One more!

David grabs his beer and rises from the bar top.

DAVID  
Maybe the two of you have a little  
respect for what we do and where we  
do it. This ain't Texas. This is  
Music Row.

JOHN  
No shit this ain't Texas. If we  
were in Texas your dumbass piano  
would have been thrown in the river  
before you hit year two.

DAVID  
Grow up.

With a head shake and some disgust, David steps away from the  
bar top and joins another party at a table.

JOHN  
What a prick.

RUDY  
He's just mad he's been here twenty  
years and ain't done shit.

The waitress steps to John and Rudy and places another two  
shots on the bar top.

John and Rudy grab the shots from the bar.

JOHN  
(lifts his glass)  
To not wasting twenty years in this  
town... Or on a marriage!

John and Rudy CHEERS, then slam the shots.

RUDY  
You know they say the best way to  
get over your dog dying is to go  
out and get a new puppy. You wanna  
take this party downtown and see if  
we cain't find you a new puppy.

JOHN  
You're damn right I do.

EXT. CACTUS JACK'S SALOON - NIGHT

John and Rudy exit and make their way through the parking lot towards their car.

JOHN  
Y'all got any new songs in the works?

RUDY  
We got a few. How about you?

John slows to a stop, no longer focused on the question.

JOHN  
I've got something, but it ain't got nothin' to do with singin'.

John points to a pristine 1971 Lincoln Continental.

JOHN  
Hey Rudy, ain't that Briggs's dumbass Lincoln?

RUDY  
Yeah it is. I can't stand that ugly ass old car nearly as much as I can't stand him.

John stares across the parking lot at the car with a smirk.

RUDY  
I've seen that look outta you before. What are you up to?

John marches towards David Brigg's car.

RUDY  
You ain't planning on stealing that land yacht are you?

JOHN  
No, but I'm gonna let him know exactly what I think of him and his stupid car.

RUDY  
How's that?

JOHN  
I'm writing my name right in the damn side of that thing.

With a big ass grin, Rudy's right there with John.

RUDY  
Oh hell yeah. I'm in!

EXT. HARRISON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Rudy's car pulls up and slams into the curb, then rolls back off. It comes to a stop and the door opens.

John stumbles his way out of Rudy's car.

Rudy leans down in the driver's seat to peek out at John.

RUDY  
Remember what I told you.

John pokes his head back into the car.

JOHN  
As good as that sounds, I ain't  
====Whatever ridiculous comment  
here.====

RUDY  
Not that. I just want you to  
remember that you're still one of  
the most talented singer,  
songwriters I know, and no matter  
what happens, she ain't never gonna  
be able to take that from you.

John purses his lips together, then without another word, gives a nod and closes the door to Rudy's car.

Rudy places his car in drive and takes off down the street with a little swerve in his steering.

John staggers his way up onto the porch and to the door.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

JOHN  
HT open up!

BANG! BANG! BANG!

JOHN  
HT! It's John, open up!

BANG! BANG! The door flings open before John's fist can slam into it once more.

Harrison fills the doorway filled both with concern and a bit of anger.

HT  
John, it had better be an  
emergency.

JOHN  
I walked in on Deborah.

Harrison's demeanor shifts to sorrow.

HT  
I'm sorry, John. Come on in.

Harrison steps out of the way and lets John through the door,  
then closes it behind him.

INT. HARRISON'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

John makes his way to the couch and has a seat.

Harrison lowers himself into a recliner next to John.

HT  
I'd offer you a drink, but it  
looks, and smells, like you've had  
plenty.

JOHN  
That obvious?

HT  
Yeah, but totally understandable.  
How about a coffee.

JOHN  
I'm good.

HT  
Are you though?

JOHN  
Hell no I ain't.  
(beat)  
You know, I couldn't tell you if  
the worst of it was findin' out  
she's been doin' it for damn near a  
year, or the fact that she's been  
doin' it with my son in the house.

HT  
Shit, John. I don't know what to  
say.

JOHN

Ain't too much to say I reckon'. I damn near lost it. Shit, if Ross hadn't walked in, I don't know that I would have let my finger off the trigger. Speaking of...

John removes the pistol from his waistband behind his back and places it on the coffee table in front of him.

John and Harrison sit in silence for a moment, both reflecting on the gravity of the situation.

JOHN

Hey, I'm sorry I brought this shit to your doorstep. It really isn't your problem, I just didn't know where else to go.

HT

Don't be sorry. You just went through some bullshit. I know I'm technically your manager, but I'd like to think that after all these years, I'm also a friend.

John gives a subtle smile and head nod.

JOHN

Try not to let it go to your head too much.

HT

(chuckling)

I'll try. Why don't you crash on the couch here tonight and we'll talk more in the morning. Ain't nothin' gettin' fixed right this second, and we can both use the rest.

JOHN

Yeah, you look like shit.

HT

I'm glad to see you haven't lost your wonderful sense of humor.

Harrison rises from his chair.

HT

I'll see you in the morning.

JOHN

Hey, HT.

Harrison holds, and John looks back up at him with a serious disposition.

JOHN

Thanks for being there.

HT

It ain't fate that's brought us together, but at times it sure feels like it.

John shoots a slightly confused, but intrigued look at Harrison.

JOHN

You wanna explain?

HT

Good night, John.

Harrison exits the room and leaves John to himself.

INT. HARRISON'S HOUSE - DAY

John lies asleep on the couch.

Harrison storms his way through the living room straight to John. He yanks the pillow out from beneath his head.

HT

Wake your ass up!

In a fog, and still hung over, John slowly rises to a seated position.

JOHN

That ain't exactly the wake up call I was expecting.

HT

Yeah, well the phone call I got about the shit you pulled last night wasn't exactly the wake up call I was wantin'.

JOHN

The shit I pulled? She was the one who cheated on me. Maybe I over reacted with stompin' his junk, but at least I didn't pull the trigger.

HT

I don't give a shit what you did to that guy, and whatever it was, was deserved. I'm talking about the pissed off keyboard player who called me this morning about his car being keyed.

John's shoulders slump and he cringes.

HT

The best part of the whole thing is the fact that the dip shit who keyed his car was stupid enough to scratch his own name on it.

Regret covers John's face.

JOHN

That one's on me. I was drinkin' pretty heavy after the whole thing with Deborah, and David was being a dick... I'm sorry, Man.

HT

Sorry ain't gonna fix this one. That car used to belong to Jim Reeves.

John shrinks back into himself with regret.

HT

Yeah. That Jim Reeves. The one who's damn near royalty around here. And in case you're wondering how some dumb keyboardist got a car from Jim Reeves, he didn't. I did. Jim's widow, Mary knew how much Jim appreciated what I did for him, that she gave me that car. I love the car and the gesture, but I didn't need the car so I gave it to David.

John leans back onto the couch and interlocks his fingers behind his head as he processes the information.



HT

To add insult to injury, this dumbass piano player who you suggested he throw his keyboard in the river is in this town and has been here for twenty years not just because he's as talented as he is, but also because he did such an amazing job playing for a dear friend of mine, Elvis, until his untimely passing that people were crying for him to come to Nashville. Now I have to explain to this nice woman how my shining young star thought it was hilarious to sketch his name into her dead husband's car, that she trusted me to take care of.

John sits in silence and takes his lashings, while Harrison takes a moment to breath.

HT

If I recall correctly, that's the same damn car I drove your ass to the Hayride show in when you were nineteen.

JOHN

(sotto)

Shit.

HT

Yeah... Shit.

Harrison slows and does his best to settle himself.

HT

John, you're an amazing talent, but that's only gonna get you so far in this industry. Learning to be humble and appreciative of the people you get to work with is the other half of what you have to do. Every time you're a dick to someone, even if it's just because you think you're being funny, another door closes.

JOHN

I'm truly sorry, HT. It was an dumb thing to do and I wish I could take it back.

HT

You and me both.

Harrison allows a SIGH to escape him while he ponders his options.

HT

Maybe it's best if you head back to Louisiana for a bit. It'll give all this a chance to blow over, and it probably won't hurt for you to be around family considering what's happened with Deborah.

JOHN

What about, Ross?

HT

I'm not saying it's ever right for anyone to leave a child behind, but considering the circumstances, I can't imagine you and Deborah being cordial with each other. Maybe it's best if there was some space between y'all until the initial shock of everything has time to settle.

JOHN

I guess a couple weeks won't do no harm.

HT

When you get back home, I really want you to sit down and think about whether or not this is what you wanna spend your life doing. If it is, I need you take it serious. There's a lot of guys out there that are talented, that'll never get the opportunities you're getting. I'm telling you right now, with the right attitude, and the advantages you have... This industry is yours for the taking. You just have to want it.

John lets the lecture sink in.

JOHN

You keep talkin' about these advantages I have that others don't. Is there something you know, that I don't?

HT  
Enjoy your trip, John.

John and Harrison gaze at each other for a moment.

HT  
Come on. Bring it in.

Harrison extends his arms and gestures for John to come to him.

John rises to his feet. He and Harrison share a quick hug and pat on the back.

INT. TRUCK - COUNTRY SIDE - DAY

The wind blows through John's hair as he cruises through the serene countryside of Tennessee, Arkansas, then Texas.

With the window down and arm out the window, John's song plays on the radio and he SINGS along.

He looks out at signs of the states he passes by on the drive.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Isolated from the rest of the world, at a rundown gas station, John holds a phone to his ear and drops coins into a pay phone. It RINGS. He waits.

INT. SMALL HOUSE - NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Carl grabs the phone and places it to his ear.

CARL  
Hello?

INTERCUT - PHONE CALL

JOHN  
Who's this?

CARL  
Carl, who's this.

JOHN  
The owner of the house you're in  
you piece of shit. Now put my son  
on the phone.

The line goes silent and John waits.

DEBORAH

Hey, John.

JOHN

Don't, Hey John, me. It's been what, three days, and you have some asshole living in my house already?

DEBORAH

He doesn't live here, John.

JOHN

You know what? I don't really give a shit if he does. Put my son on the phone.

DEBORAH

Ross is asleep.

JOHN

When will he be up?

DEBORAH

John, I heard you're headed back to Texas. Is that true.

JOHN

For a couple weeks. Why the hell do you care?

DEBORAH

I was just thinking, that maybe for Ross's sake, you sign over your rights.

JOHN

I was thinking, maybe you can go fuck yourself. Oh wait, that's what you have Carl for.

DEBORAH

Real mature, John.

With his frustration boiling over, John grits his teeth and slams the phone down on the receiver. His eyes scan the surroundings and his isolation.

He spins back and marches his way into the gas station.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

John exits the gas station with a bottle of alcohol.

INT. TRUCK - COUNTRY SIDE - DAY

John continues to drive and drink.

He passes several familiar locations while continuing to sing.

His SONGS continue to PLAY.

On the side of the road ahead, a police cruiser catches John's eye after he takes a swig from his bottle of alcohol.

Quickly, John lowers the bottle. He keeps his head forward, but clocks the officer with his eyes.

After he passes he feels a slight sense of relief. His eyes shift to get one last glance of the police cruiser.

BWOOP! BWOOP!

The lights of the cop car flash on and the SIREN SOUNDS.

John cringes and instantly goes into panic mode. He quickly screws the cap back onto the bottle of alcohol and shoves it under his seat.

In the rearview mirror, John watches as the police cruiser closes in.

John cups his hand and places it over his mouth to smell his breath.

Heart ready to beat from his chest, John slows his truck and moves it to the side of the road.

WEDO! WEDO! WEDO!

The police cruiser swerves into the other lane and flies past John's truck.

John stares ahead at the cruiser as it drives into the distance. His head falls back onto the driver's seat and smile slides onto his face. A slight CHUCKLE escapes him.

Completely relieved, John reaches back beneath the seat for the bottle of alcohol, unscrews the cap and takes a swig.

John grips the steering wheel and turns, pulling his truck back towards the road.

WHAAAAAAAA! WHAAAAAAAA!

A semi-truck nearly sideswipes John's truck, but the accident is avoided. John's heart is once again about to explode. His breaths are heavy.

John glances both back and forward several times. There's not another car in sight.

Given a chance to settle and lower his now rising blood pressure, John pulls his truck back onto the road safely and drives off into the distance.

EXT. IRA & ETTA'S HOUSE - DAY

John's truck pulls up in front of the house.

Ira exits the house and makes his way towards John, who exits the drivers side of his truck.

IRA DEE  
Long drive?

JOHN  
Wasn't too bad.

Ira and John lean in and give each other a quick hug.

IRA DEE  
I missed you, Son.

JOHN  
I missed you too, Dad.

After the embrace, Ira pulls back with a little smile.

IRA DEE  
Stop off for a few did ya?

JOHN  
Yeah... It's been a pretty long week.

HT  
That's what Harrison was saying.

John cringes.

JOHN  
He called you, did he?

HT

He did. Said you were eager to get home for a little rest.

JOHN

Is that what he said?

HT

That and a few others things.

Embarrassed, John gives a slight wince and scratches the back of his head.

IRA DEE

We're all human, John and mistakes are gonna happen. All we can do is move forward and try to learn from 'em.

JOHN

Does Mom know?

IRA DEE

I didn't think it was all that important she know.

JOHN

Thank you.

With a small nod, John and Ira share a moment.

JOHN

Speaking of... Where is she?

IRA DEE

The second she found out you were on your way home she started cookin'.

JOHN

Thank the Lord. I am starvin' and they sure don't make it like Momma out there.

IRA DEE

Let's go eat, Son.

Ira throws a shoulder around John and escorts him into the house.

INT. IRA & ETTA'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Ira, and Etta sit at the table and eat with John. They're all smiles.

John shovels food into his mouth.

ETTA

Harrison was tellin' your Daddy  
that he ain't never seen so much  
talent in someone so young before.  
Says you have a gift.

John chews his food.

JOHN

Really? He ain't never said nothin'  
like that to me.

ETTA

Says you're a natural like no  
other.

JOHN

No kiddin'? That's sayin' a lot.  
Did y'all know he used to work with  
Elvis?

Etta and Ira fall silent and share a quick look with one another.

IRA DEE

He's mentioned it.

JOHN

I've actually met quite a few  
people in Nashville that worked  
with Elvis.

Ira and Etta begin to appear a little uneasy.

IRA DEE

Is that right?

John continues to shove food into his mouth.

JOHN

Yes, Sir. Most of 'em even say I  
sing like him.

IRA DEE

They ain't wrong.



ETTA

You've always had such a beautiful voice John.

JOHN

Thanks, Momma.

ETTA

You know I bought your album? Listened to it nearly a hundred times. It's nice to be able to hear your voice whenever I want.

Continuing to eat, John lifts his head to Etta and smiles.

ETTA

Of course it ain't the same as havin' ya here or seein' ya sing live.

JOHN

What if while I'm back for these couple weeks, I do a small show up here.

Ira looks to Etta and shrugs.

JOHN

Keep it small, maybe just a little bar or honky tonk nearby. What do y'all think?

ETTA

It would be nice to see you sing again. Ira?

IRA DEE

I don't see why not. Might even be good for ya to remember where you came from.

A smile explodes upon John's face.

JOHN

Alright then. Let's set it up.

John, Ira, and Etta all smile and continue to eat. They make small talk and enjoy each other's company.

INT. BILLY BOB'S - FT. WORTH, TX - NIGHT

John in his cowboy hat, bolo tie, and vest over his long sleeve button up shirt, rocks the stage.

The crowd CLAPS their hands and SINGS along with John.

He finishes his song and the crowd ERUPTS into CHEERS and APPLAUSE.

John lifts the hat from his head and waves it at the crowd.

Those in the crowd not already on their feet, rise. The APPLAUSE and whistles continue.

JOHN

Thank you, thank you! I'm gonna  
take a quick break, grab a drink,  
so grab yourself one, too, and  
Ladies and Gentlemen we'll get back  
after it in about five minutes.

The OVATION carries on while John makes his way to the edge of the stage.

John grabs a glass filled with ice and whiskey from a small table near the stage's edge. He takes a sip.

A couple friends and fans alike give John a pat on the back and shakes his hand.

A SERVER (25) holding a tray with a few drinks on it approaches John.

SERVER

Mr. Smith, you have a call behind  
the bar.

JOHN

Not to be rude, but this ain't  
exactly the best time.

SERVER

They said it's urgent.

John considers taking the call, but only for a moment.

JOHN

Grab a name and number, then go on  
ahead and let 'em know I'm in the  
middle of a set and I'll call 'em  
back as soon as we wrap up here. If  
it's that important it'll still be  
just as important when we're done.

SERVER

(with a smile)  
I'll let 'em know.

The server turns to walk away.

With his drink in one hand, John quickly reaches over the server and grabs another from the tray.

John raises the glass and his brows to the Server. She gives a subtle smirk and head shake, then makes her way back through the crowd.

INT. BILLY BOB'S - FT. WORTH, TX - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

John and his band play another one of his hit songs.

The crowd is lost in John's voice and all around performance.

With the last note played, John once again tips his hat to the crowd.

JOHN  
(into the mic)  
Thank you all again for comin' out.  
We appreciate you!

John vacates the stage with the rest of his band to CHEERS and ROARS from the crowd.

John and the rest of the band all congratulate each other on another great set.

The server approaches again, but waits patiently so as not to interrupt John and his band.

With a small moment where John isn't being mobbed, the server steps in and hands John a bar napkin with some writing on it.

SERVER  
I know you said it can wait, but  
they've called back a few more  
times.

John takes the napkin and glances down at it. The name Angie and a phone number are on it.

INT. BILLY BOB'S - FT. WORTH, TX - OFFICE - NIGHT

OFFICER GAMBLE (35) lifts a phone to his ear.

OFFICER GAMBLE  
Officer Gamble.

JOHN

(clears his throat)

Evening, Sir. I was given your number and told you might have some information about my son Ross.

OFFICER GAMBLE

Yes, sir. Unfortunately I'm unable to release any names over the phone, however, I can verify that a three-year-old male was pronounced dead at the scene as the result of a head on collision by an alleged driver under the influence of alcohol.

John can't find the words. His lip quivers and tears continue to roll from his face.

OFFICER GAMBLE

Sir, I'm sorry for your loss.

John tries to compose himself, but fails miserably.

JOHN

Is there anything else I should know... Or that you can tell me?

OFFICER GAMBLE

Unfortunately with the investigation still pending, that's all the information I can disclose at the moment.

John slowly lowers the phone from his ear. The look on his face screams heartbreak.

Gently, John lowers the phone onto the receiver and ends the call, but he leaves his hand on the receiver.

John's eyes shift rapidly and begin to tear.

WHAM! WHAM! WHAM! John explodes and slams the phone back onto the receiver repetitively out of anger and frustration.

Officer Gamble pulls the phone from his ear and swallows hard. A look of sadness and shame cover his face.

He hangs the phone up, then looks to his side at Angie.

They hold for a moment and stare at on another with a look of understanding that there's no going back from what they've just done.

OFFICER GAMBLE

(to Angie)

From this point forward, don't you ever ask me to do another thing for you or your family.

Officer Gamble stands uneasy, eyes locked with Angie.

END INTERCUT

INT. BILLY BOB'S - FT. WORTH, TX - OFFICE - NIGHT

John sits in the chair with his elbows on the desk and head sunk into his hands.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

Ira cracks the door open and pokes his head in.

IRA DEE

Crowd's askin' for an encore? You up for it?

John lifts his head and reveals his tear-filled eyes.

Ira peers across the room at John and the severity of the situation becomes apparent.

EXT. IRA & ETTA'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Ira sits in a rocking chair with an alcoholic drink in a glass with ice in hand.

John exits the house with a beer and takes a seat in the rocking chair next to Ira.

For a moment the two sit in silence and enjoy the serenity.

JOHN

I forgot how still it is here.

IRA DEE

Ain't no place like home.

(beat)

How are you, John?

John takes a swig of his beer and SIGHS.

JOHN

Honestly, Dad. I'm confused, scared, pissed off.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

With everything that happened with Deborah, and now Ross.

John holds for a moment to keep from breaking down once more.

JOHN

I feel like I'm about to lose it. I know I screwed up, but there's nothing I can do about it other than hope it blows over and push forward with being the best version of me. But losing...

(tears, wipes his eyes.)

Losing Ross. How do I go back to somewhere surrounded by nothing but memories.

IRA DEE

I'm sure the good memories outweigh the bad. You just have to focus on those... Or you can always try doing something else.

JOHN

I don't know that I could even if I wanted to. I love what I do and I'm gonna keep doin' it as long as I can. There's just a lot of pressure out there.

IRA DEE

Maybe you try and find a better way to balance things.

Both John and Ira take a drink and sit in thought.

JOHN

I know I wasn't always the easiest kid growing up, and I'm probably still not, but I want you to know I really appreciate you and Mom bringing us in the way you did.

IRA DEE

We loved every second of it and wouldn't have changed a thing.

JOHN

Not even that time I set the back yard on fire when tryin' to burn ants with a magnifying glass?

IRA DEE

Okay maybe we change that.

John and Ira share a LAUGH and the mood lightens.

JOHN

You know HT was telling me that you wasn't the one that named me, John. Said it was my real dad--, My biological father that named me that.

IRA DEE

It was.

John becomes a touch more serious and turns to Ira in his chair.

JOHN

Dad, I wanna ask you something, but I want you to know when I do, it's really out of curiosity and has nothing to do with you or Momma, and the way we was raised.

IRA DEE

What's on your mind, John?

Ira places his glass to his lips and drinks.

JOHN

I've been thinking about it quite a bit lately and was wonderin' if you'd be upset if I maybe wanted to meet my birth mother and father.

Ira slowly lowers the glass and stares down at the ice. He swirls the ice and drinks while in thought.

A concerned look is plastered all over his face.

IRA DEE

Your momma and I knew there'd come a day you'd ask.

JOHN

You ain't upset are you?

IRA DEE

No, Son. I just want you to make sure it's really what you're wantin', seein' as once you open that door there ain't no closin' it.

John sits on the thought for a moment.

JOHN

I still think I'd like to meet 'em.  
It might do me some good to know  
where I come from.

(lightening a bit)

Might explain some of my quirks.  
And who knows, maybe I find out I  
got this amazing voice from her.

IRA DEE

Maybe... Maybe.

With a half smirk at the thought, Ira takes a deep breath,  
knowing they may be opening Pandora's box.

JOHN

You have any idea how I can find  
'em?

IRA DEE

Your momma and I lost contact with  
Zona a while back, but I think we  
got a number for her ex, Buddy at  
the time.

John stares at Ira astonished.

IRA DEE

I don't know the number still  
works, but it's a start.

JOHN

Did you just say Zona?

Ira lets another SIGH escape him.

IRA DEE

She didn't want us sayin' nothin'  
to you on account a her not bein'  
in the best place in life when you  
was younger.

John's mind races.

IRA DEE

I'll tell you, she did love you...  
Very much. That's why she was  
comin' around when you was younger.

JOHN

Why'd she stop?



IRA DEE

I think it just got hard for her to see you grow and not be able to say nothin'. She knew you were in a good place here and didn't wanna do nothin' to mess with that.

John's eyes wander the stars of the Louisiana night.

JOHN

I reckon we all got reasons we do what we do.

John looks back to Ira and the two share a look of understanding and love for one another.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. IRA & ETTA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

John sits on the couch with the phone on the coffee table in front of him. A pen and pad of paper sits next to it.

He reaches for the phone, then picks it up, but just as fast as he does, he places it back down.

With his leg bouncing, John continues to stare at the phone.

John musters some courage and snatches the phone from the receiver and places it to his ear. He dials.

The phone RINGS.

BUDDY (52) answers.

BUDDY (O.S.)

Hello?

JOHN

Is this, Buddy?

BUDDY (O.S.)

It is. May I ask who this is?

JOHN

This is John. John Dennis Smith.

BUDDY (O.S.)

Okay John Dennis Smith, how can I help you?

John falls silent for a moment, unsure how to respond.

BUDDY (O.S.)

Hello?

JOHN

Yeah, sorry. I was wonderin' if you knew how to get ahold of Zona Marie?

Buddy gives a light CHUCKLE on his end of the phone.

BUDDY (O.S.)

How much money she take you for?

JOHN

Oh, no nothin' like that, Sir. She's just an old friend of the family and we ain't heard from her in quite some time.

BUDDY (O.S.)

I got a number for her, but I can't promise you it works.

JOHN

I guess I'll take what I can get. Go on ahead whenever you're ready.

With the phone to his ear, John writes down Zona's phone number.

JOHN

Got it.

BUDDY (O.S.)

Anything else I can do for ya, John Dennis Smith?

JOHN

Actually I don't...

John holds for a moment and his courage fades.

JOHN

No, I don't reckon there is. Thank you again for the number.

John hangs up the phone. His slight disappointment is clearly visible.

Eyes locked on the phone number for Zona, John grits his teeth, then picks up the phone once more and dials.

The phone RINGS.

ZONA (O.S.)  
Hello?

JOHN  
Hello, Zona?

The line falls silent for a beat.

JOHN  
Zona Marie?

ZONA (O.S.)  
John Dennis, is that you?

John now falls silent.

ZONA (O.S.)  
Sweet Jesus, it is.

JOHN  
Sorry, I just... I thought maybe...

John struggles to find the words.

ZONA (O.S.)  
It's okay, Dennis. I know it's a lot.

JOHN  
Would you be okay with meeting me somewhere?

ZONA (O.S.)  
I'd love to.

JOHN  
If you're still in Shreveport, maybe we can meet over at Pat's Diner for lunch.

ZONA (O.S.)  
I'm not in Shreveport anymore...

John's heart sinks.

ZONA (O.S.)  
But, I'm not far out. I should be able to make it for lunch.

John lights with both excitement and overwhelming anxiety.

JOHN  
I'll see you then.

John hangs up the phone, completely overwhelmed.

INT. CAR - PAT'S DINER - DAY

John sits nervously in his car and stares at the Diner. He checks his watch.

Impatiently, John waits a bit longer.

A car pulls up to the restaurant with a female in the driver's seat.

John rises in his seat and watches close.

The driver exits, but it's not Zona.

John sinks back into his seat. Once more he checks his watch, then quickly springs up in his seat, and exits the car.

EXT. PAT'S DINER - DAY

John closes his car door and makes his way into the diner.

INT. PAT'S DINER - DAY

John enters the diner and a HOSTESS (24) greets him.

HOSTESS  
Table for one?

JOHN  
Two. I'm just a bit early is all.

ZONA  
John Dennis?

John looks to his side to find Zona at a booth, only a few feet away.

JOHN  
Mom? Zona... Sorry.

Zona rises from the booth.

ZONA  
Either's fine.

Zona and John share a hug, though it's slightly awkward.

The hostess places two menus on the table.

John and Zona lower themselves into the booth and stare across from one another, unsure where to begin.

JOHN

I must have missed you when you came in.

ZONA

I've actually been here for the last hour. I was a little nervous about meeting you.

John SNICKERS.

JOHN

Same. I've been in the parking lot for the last half hour.

HOSTESS

Can I get y'all a drink?

JOHN

I don't know about you, but I could definitely use one.

ZONA

I don't normally drink, but I think I'm gonna need one.

JOHN

Let's get two old fashioned.

The hostess writes down the drink order, then exits.

QUICK SHOTS

John and Zona smile, LAUGH, and talk about their lives.

The Hostess places drinks in front of John and Zona. They CHEERS, and drink.

John and Zona banter back and forth, all smiles, some of which is filled with the look of surprise and disbelief.

END QUICK SHOTS

INT. PAT'S DINER - DAY - LATER

John and Zona smile at one another, each taking a sip from their drinks.

ZONA

If you don't mind me asking, why  
look me up now?

John's smile fades.

JOHN

I've had a few things happen over  
the last few weeks that's had me  
thinking.

ZONA

You must a done some leg work  
trying to find me.

JOHN

Actually it wasn't too bad.

ZONA

You know I've been to a few of your  
shows when you in the area?

JOHN

Really?

ZONA

(nodding)

I know you didn't know it, but I  
really did try to see you as much  
as I could without letting on. You  
had an amazing home, and I didn't  
want to do anything to take that  
from you.

John and Zona fall back into an awkward silence.

ZONA

You have a beautiful voice.

JOHN

Thank you.

ZONA

It's pretty obvious you got that  
from your Daddy.

JOHN

I didn't know Buddy was a singer.

ZONA

Buddy? He ain't... Oh John Dennis,  
you don't know.

JOHN  
Know what?

ZONA  
Buddy ain't your father.

JOHN  
I thought y'all were together. He's  
even the one who gave me your  
number.

ZONA  
John Dennis, I stopped dating Buddy  
long before you came around.

John leans on every word, waiting for the other shoe to drop.

ZONA  
People just kind of assumed he was,  
so I let 'em since it was easier  
than the truth.

JOHN  
And the truth is.

Zona hesitates, and stammers through her response.

ZONA  
Son... Elvis is your Daddy.

John CHUCKLES for a moment, then settles as the look on  
Zona's face shows she's as serious as a heart attack.

JOHN  
Elvis? Elvis Presley? Hound Dog,  
Blue Suede Shoes, Elvis?

Zona can do nothing but nod.

JOHN  
Wait, are you serious?

Zona nods once again.

JOHN  
Wow... Okay. Who else knows about  
this?

ZONA  
Obviously Ira and Etta, seein' as  
they was the ones that brought you  
in.

JOHN

They knew the entire time and said nothing?

ZONA

John, it wasn't an easy thing for any of us. We made promises to help protect him... And you.

JOHN

This explains a lot of different conversations over the years that never made too much sense. What about, HT?

Zona nods.

JOHN

Sherrill? David Briggs?

Zona nods.

ZONA

I want you to know he was always concerned for you and did everything he could to help care for you along the way, and I know it's not easy since he did it at a distance, but I promise you he had you in mind when he decided to step away... Me included.

JOHN

This is... This is a lot to take in. You know, it's funny because I remember meeting him a bunch a times when I was little, you too, but I didn't think too much about it... Other than kinda wondered why he was always sendin' presents to some kid he barely knew. Of course I didn't mind at the time.

ZONA

I want you to know that I'm sorry for whatever you had to go through. I can't tell you how embarrassed I was to bring you in the way we did.

JOHN

Don't be. Ira and Etta gave me an amazing life.

John and Zona sit in silence while John reflects.



JOHN

This honestly explains a lot. As crazy as it is, it makes sense.

Zona reaches her hand across to John, taking his hand in hers.

John looks up to her and smiles, squeezing her hand with his.

ZONA

Take the gift you've been given and make something of it. It is a gift. A gift that very few others have.

JOHN

Feels like a curse at times.

ZONA

He felt the same way, but you have something he never did.

JOHN

What's that?

ZONA

People who care about you, and are willing to make sacrifices to help protect you.

John ponders the statement, conflicted by the ideals of those protecting him versus how it may also have hindered his success.

INT. CAR - LOUISIANA - DAY

John drives down a back country road.

Deep in thought, with the window down, John lets his hand float as the wind pushes past.

A sign on the side of the road catches John's attention.

Slowly he rises in his seat and brings his hand back to the steering wheel.

His head follows the sign until it's past.

The sign reads: Visit Las Vegas, Where the Fun Never Sets.

John continues to drive ahead, mind clearly still on the sign.

Just ahead a small gas station appears in sight. John's eyes follow it as he passes.

EXT. LOUISIANA - DAY

A few feet past the gas station John's car comes to a screeching halt.

INT. CAR - LOUISIANA - DAY

John cranks the wheel and spins the car back in the other direction.

EXT. LOUISIANA - GAS STATION - DAY

John's car flies into the parking lot.

John hops out of the car, and with a look of determination, marches his way to a pay phone.

He picks it up, drops a few coins into the phone and dials.

Impatiently, John waits with the phone to his ear.

INT. MUSIC STUDIO - OFFICE - DAY

The phone RINGS.

In his chair, Harrison reaches across the desk and answers the phone.

HT  
This's Bill.

INTERCUT - PHONE CALL

JOHN  
HT, it's John.

HT  
John, everything okay?

JOHN  
Yes and no.

Harrison squints unsure how to respond.

JOHN  
Doesn't matter, have I got a story for you.

HT

What've you got up your sleeve this time.

JOHN

An ace for sure, and that's why we're going to Vegas.

HT

As always, you've caught my attention.

JOHN

I was thinkin' while we're waiting for things to blow over in Nashville,  
(apologetic)  
Seein' as I was actin' like a drunken' dipshit...

HT

I can't disagree there.

JOHN

I say we go play Vegas.

Harrison CHUCKLES.

HT

It actually ain't a half bad idea, but I got to ask... Why?

A smile creeps onto John's face.

JOHN

While I was back, I got to meet with my mother... My birth mother... Zona.

The relaxed posture of Harrison fades and he sits upright in his chair, now hanging on every word.

HT

Zona?  
(gets silent)  
What was that like?

JOHN

It was good. A little uncomfortable at times, but good. Funny thing, she kept telling me how much I remind her of my daddy.

Harrison chooses his words carefully.

HT  
Buddy, right?

JOHN  
That's funny, because she said you actually knew my daddy well.

HT  
Can't say I recall havin' had the pleasure of meeting him.

JOHN  
We both know Buddy ain't my daddy, and you know exactly who I'm talkin' about, Bill.

Harrison sinks back into his chair, trying to think of a way to escape this conversation.

HT  
It's Bill now, is it?

JOHN  
Until you stop beatin' around the bush, it's Bill.

HT  
We ain't spoke in more than two weeks and this is where you wanna start back up?

JOHN  
Bill, I want you to know that I appreciate everything you done for me, but if you cain't be honest with me, maybe it's time for me to go with another label.  
(beat)  
See you around, Bill.

Panic sets in on Harrison's face and he springs forward in his chair.

HT  
John, wait.

John listens with the phone to his ear and a smile plastered across his face.

HT  
John are you there?  
(beat)  
Shit.

Phone still to his ear, Harrison's shoulders slump.

JOHN

You ready to talk now?

Harrison springs back to life.

HT

Why do you have to be such a little  
shit all the time.

JOHN

It's why you love me. Now, are you  
ready to talk?

HT

Maybe it's best we have this  
conversation in person.

JOHN

How about you find me a venue in  
Vegas and we talk there.

HT

Done.

JOHN

And I know you can pull some  
strings, so why don't we find us  
one where my daddy played.

With a warm smile, Harrison can't help but feel the  
excitement build.

HT

You got it, John.

JOHN

And one more thing, HT... I ain't  
all that sure my truck'll make it,  
so I'm gonna fly in and I'm gonna  
need a car. You still got that old  
Lincoln?

HT

Go to hell, Dennis.

JOHN

You know you love me, HT.

HT

(uncontrollable smile)  
We'll see you in Vegas, John Boy.

John hangs up the phone and hustles back to his car. He climbs in and closes the door behind him.

The tires on John's truck spin and kick dust, dirt, and debris into the air.

John's truck speeds off into the distance.

INT. SAHARA CASINO - THEATRE - NIGHT

The room is empty except for John, two band members who prep their equipment on stage and one woman who watches from the front row.

Harrison enters from a far corner of the theatre and gradually moves forward towards the stage. He allows the moment to sink in, running his hands across the chairs as he passes.

On the stage, John does a small test on his guitar.

Harrison watches in awe. It brings him back to another life.

John finishes his small test.

Harrison CLAPS loudly and it echoes through the empty theatre.

From the stage, the CLAPPING catches John's attention.

With an all too familiar grin, John lowers his guitar and hops down from the stage and makes his way to Harrison.

JOHN

About time you showed up.

John and Harrison give each other a quick hug and pat on the back.

HT

It's hard to believe I'm standin' in this room again watchin' you on the same stage as I watched Elvis play.

JOHN

You mean my real Daddy?

HT

(laughter)  
You can't help but get right to it, can you?

JOHN  
 Would you love me if I was anyone  
 else?

HT  
 Probably.

John and Harrison share a LAUGH.

JOHN  
 Hey, I've got someone I want you to  
 meet.

John escorts Harrison towards the front of the stage near the  
 woman in the front row.

JOHN  
 Hey, mom.

Zona turns back and makes eye contact with Harrison and rises  
 to her feet. The two are in total shock.

HT  
 Zona Marie.

ZONA  
 Bill.

John's head whips back and forth between Harrison and Zona.

Harrison and Zona meet in a long embrace.

ZONA  
 How long's it been, Bill?

HT  
 Quite some time. How've ya been?

JOHN  
 You two know each other?

Zona and Harrison stare across at one another, then allow  
 their eyes to shift back to John.

JOHN  
 Why the hell do I feel like I'm the  
 only one who didn't have a clue  
 where I came from?

ZONA  
 Why don't we have a seat?

John, Harrison, and Zona take a seat in a booth.

JOHN

(defeated)

Would one of you please explain to me how the hell y'all know each other and why everyone else seems to know more about my life than me?

Zona and Harrison look to one another, deciding who will go first.

ZONA

John, there's no easy way to say this... We made him a promise.

JOHN

Who made who a promise?

ZONA

All of us made promises to your father to keep you safe. Ira, Etta, myself, Bill.

JOHN

Keep me safe or sheltered.

HT

I know it's hard for you to understand, but we all got to see firsthand what the pressure they put your father through did and how it cut his life short.

John, for maybe the first time in his life, falls silent.

ZONA

The last few years for him were miserable. He was exhausted, beat down, and honestly it seemed like his life wasn't even his own anymore.

HT

I know it's been a long difficult journey for you not knowing, but your father made me promise to look after you and make sure you didn't have to go through what he did. As difficult as it was for you, it wasn't no different for the rest of us.

JOHN

Except that you knew who your biological parents were.



Harrison and Zona look to one another and hang their heads.

JOHN

Mom, don't take this the wrong way,  
but I had my doubts.

ZONA

It's understandable. It ain't  
everyday you're told your real  
father's probably the most famous  
person alive.

JOHN

Sittin' here with the two of y'all,  
tell me... This is real? Elvis  
really is my daddy.

Speechless in the moment, both Harrison and Zona nod.

HT

When you're on stage it's like I'm  
lookin' at his ghost. It seems like  
a dream at times when I see how  
much you're like him.

JOHN

So, who else knows?

HT

David Briggs, The Jordanaires.

JOHN

The Lincoln lover?

HT

Good to see you haven't lost that  
wonderful sense of humor through  
all of this.

Harrison and John LAUAGH.

ZONA

Am I missin' something?

HT

John here found himself in a  
disagreement with a Lincoln  
Continental.

ZONA

How exactly did you find  
yourself... You know what... Maybe  
it's best I don't know.

FEEDBACK from a microphone grabs the attention of John, HT, and Zona.

On the stage, with the microphone in hand, one of John's band members raises a hand apologetically.

JOHN

I probably better get to sound check. I've been rehearsin' these boys till their fingers hurt and here I am sittin' and jawin'.

John rises to his feet, followed by HT and Zona.

JOHN

(to HT)

Thanks for makin' this possible.

John reaches out and shakes Harrison's hand.

HT

All I did was make a few calls, John. Just like your father, you were the one that made this possible for the rest of us.

With a smile of appreciation, HT and John share a moment.

John turns to Zona with that same smile and leans in and gives her a hug.

JOHN

Enjoy the show, Mom.

With a heartfelt smile, Zona watches John take the stage.

Harrison takes a step to Zona and places himself at her side.

HT

It's unbelievable how much he's like his father.

ZONA

That it is.

John slings his guitar strap over his shoulder and gives it a quick STRUM.

He looks back to his band members, now in position, gives a nod, then plays.

Zona and Harrison enjoy the music as John PLAYS and SINGS.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SAHARA CASINO - THEATRE - NIGHT - LATER

John PLAYS and SINGS his songs on stage.

The theatre is filled with spectators and fans alike.

Harrison and Zona sit front row and enjoy the show.

John finishes the last song to a crowd filled with CHEERS.

With a wave of his hand, John steps to the mic with a half-cocked smile like his father.

JOHN

Thank you. Thank you very much!

The crowd ERUPTS!

FADE OUT.