

JACKKNIFE JOE

A Screenplay

by

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BLACK SCREEN.

TEXT: "In 1977, NASA launched Voyagers 1 and 2 into interstellar space. Aboard them was a 'Golden Record,' containing magnificent pieces of music."

As an IMAGE of our SOLAR SYSTEM FADES IN, WE SEE the VOYAGER SPACE CRAFT speeding past Pluto.

The compositions' titles included on the "Golden Record" speed by, barely long enough to be read.

As these titles fly by, WE HEAR "Dark Was the Night," performed by Blind Willie Johnson.

TITLES, IN TEXT:

Bach, Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 in F. First Movement

Java, court gamelan, "Kinds of Flowers"

Senegal, percussion

Zaire, Pygmy girls' initiation song

Australia, Aborigine songs, "Morning Star" and "Devil Bird"

Mexico, "El Cascabel"

"Johnny B. Goode," written and performed by Chuck Berry

New Guinea, men's house song

Japan, shakuhachi, "Tsuru No Sugomori" ("Crane's Nest")

Bach, "Gavotte en rondeaux" from the Partita No. 3 in E major for Violin

Mozart, The Magic Flute, Queen of the Night aria, no.14

Georgian S.S.R., chorus, "Tchakrulo"

Peru, panpipes and drum

"Melancholy Blues," performed by Louis Armstrong and his Hot Seven

Azerbaijan S.S.R., bagpipes

Stravinsky, Rite of Spring, Sacrificial Dance

Bach, The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 2, Prelude and Fugue in C, No.1

Beethoven, Fifth Symphony, First Movement

Bulgaria, "Izlel je Delyo Hagdutin"

Navajo Indians, Night Chant

Holborne, Paueans, Galliards, Almains and Other Short Aeirs,
"The Fairie Round"

Solomon Islands, panpipes

Peru, wedding song

China, ch'in, "Flowing Streams"

India, raga, "Jaat Kahan Ho"

Beethoven, String Quartet No. 13 in B flat, Opus 130, Cavatina

(...until we arrive at the final composition):

"Dark Was the Night," written and performed by Blind Willie Johnson

WE HOLD on this final piece of text for a moment, before the next bit comes:

"NASA hoped that if another civilization intercepted Voyager, it would listen to these sonic samples.

"During the early 21st century on Earth, a civilization listened these discs.

"Then they replied."

"Dark Was the Night" fades out.

FADE IN:

EXT. GUAPALAINA, SIERRA MADRE OCCIDENTAL, NORTHERN MEXICO - NIGHT

INSERT: EASTER WEEK, GUAPALAINA, SIERRA MADRE OCCIDENTAL, NORTHERN MEXICO

WE SEE THREE TARAHUMARA INDIANS (violin, two guitars) playing a corrido as they walk the dusty Guapalaina streets. Other TARAHUMARA INDIANS, their bodies painted white with black stripes to look like skeletons, stroll the streets carrying assault rifles.

They arrive at the door of a CATHEDRAL.

A CROWD gathers. The Tarahumara spectators swill tesquino, their sacred corn beer, from plastic cups. Some of them pound on drums. Others whirl their rattles. Others pretend to sodomize each other as they laugh and crack jokes.

MONGREL DOGS trot here and there, seeking food, fighting.

OTHER TARAHUMARAS, not costumed, portraying "good Christians," wrestle with the "devils," who move the mock battle into the church.

INT. CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

As the "good Christians" wrestle with the "devils" inside the cathedral, ONE TARAHUMARA MAN stands apart: FAUSTO NAVAJA (50), a brujo, or shaman, with a face of weathered leather, from which a HAND ROLLED CIGARETTE dangles.

Fausto absentmindedly flicks an ANTIQUE SILVER EUROPEAN CIGARETTE LIGHTER as he watches the religious battle raging.

Fausto lights his cigarette and strolls outside.

EXT. GUAPALAINA - NIGHT

Fausto stands at the edge of town, smoking, admiring the star-studded heavens, where a METEOR SHOWER dazzles him.

One meteor hisses earthward.

Fausto walks, then jogs toward where he estimates the falling star will land.

In the distance, WE HEAR A THUMP.

EXT. THE SURROUNDING HIGH COUNTRY - NIGHT

A VEHICLE sits in a smoldering clearing.

A panel opens.

A FIGURE, COMPOSED OF SHIMMERING LIGHT WAVES, EMERGES.

The shimmering figure moves around a bit, testing the surroundings.

Fausto enters the clearing.

Fausto stops in his tracks. He and the shimmering being face each other.

The shimmering being assumes a recognizably human shape. First, a NATIVE AMERICAN, a COMANCHE. Then, an IROQUOIS. Then, as though running through a catalogue of indigenous peoples, an APACHE WARRIOR.

The alien settles on a 50-YEAR-OLD TARAHUMARA INDIAN.

Fausto addresses the Tarahumara in RARAMURI, the Tarahumara language. We will read his dialogue in English, which in the filmed version would be spoken in Raramuri, with English subtitles.

FAUSTO

Welcome, Shape Shifter. I am Fausto Navaja. I too practice magic.

ALIEN

(Struggling with the sounds)

Welcome, Shape Shifter. I am Fausto Navaja. I too practice magic.

The alien taps the side of his head, as though adjusting a setting of some kind.

FAUSTO

Who are you?

ALIEN

(Still tapping the side of his head)

I am...I come from...call me Jose Navaja. Father.

Jose Navaja sheds years off his visage, ending at a boy of eleven.

FAUSTO

I have no son.

JOSE

I heard the song.

FAUSTO

What song?

Young Jose pulls a GOLDEN DISC from under his serape. He offers it to Fausto.

CLOSE ON THE GOLDEN DISC: INCOMPREHENSIBLE DESIGNS AND INSTRUCTIONS: SOUND WAVES, A DIAGRAM OF OUR SOLAR SYSTEM.

JOSE

And I have a song for you.

CREDITS BEGIN.

SONG

Don't look at my face / See what I
have in my hand. / I hold the key /
To a different place / Where you'll
find the New Man / On the stairway
to the stars.

I come from beyond. / Gravity and
light they bent me. / See me now
before I am gone, / Back to those
who sent me / Down the stairway to
the stars.

We are carbon-based / Blessed with
unlimited minds, / Connected to where
we can't be traced. / A place no
mortal can find / But on the stairway
to the stars.

I was chosen for this task / By the
Elders who tested me. / They never
did ask. / Now I've come to set you
and me free / On the stairway to the
stars.

We are carbon-based / Blessed with
unlimited minds, / Connected to where
we can't be traced. / A place no
mortal can find / But on the stairway
to the stars.

Don't look at my face / See what I
have in my hand. / I hold the key /
To a different place / Where you'll
find the New Man / On the stairway
to the stars.

CREDITS END.

EXT. GUAPALAINA - DAY

A RENTED FORD, dodging dogs and chickens, bobs up and down
the rutted road.

The Ford stops in front of an old building, on which is
painted FARMACIA - CURANDERO - FAUSTO Y ANASTACIA, DUENOS.

INT. PHARMACY - DAY

Fausto Navaja sits behind the counter, playing checkers with his wife ANASTACIA (40) who sips a bottle of Negra Modelo beer.

The lovely sound of an Aztec harp floats from the back room.

The DRIVER of the Ford, ALBERT FREEMAN (50) enters the pharmacy, his eyes burrowed in a SPANISH-ENGLISH DICTIONARY.

Fausto rises as Anastacia jumps five of his checker pieces.

FAUSTO
 Señor? Puedo ayudarte?

ALBERT
 Uh...yo tiene...un...dolor en
 mi...calbeza.

FAUSTO
 Jose!

The music stops.

Teen-aged Jose Navaja appears.

JOSE
 (In Raramuri)
 Yes, Father?

FAUSTO
 (In Raramuri)
 Please help this man.

JOSE
 (Shaking Albert's
 hand)
 Good afternoon, sir. How may we
 help you?

Jose speaks English with a thick accent. As he hears Albert speak in a New York City accent, he taps his head.

ALBERT
 I have a headache.
 (Seeing Jose tapping
 his head, he smiles)
 I need some pills.

JOSE
 (Now perfectly
 emulating Albert's
 New York city accent)
 How's 'bout some herbal tea?

ALBERT
Sure. I got time.

JOSE
(To Anastacia, in
Raramuri)
Mother, please, some tea for his
headache.
(To Albert)
Please have a seat. It'll be ready
in the wink of an eye.

ALBERT
Your English is remarkable. You've
spent time in the Big Apple?
(Jose shakes his head)
Was that you playing that music?
(Jose nods)
Will you play for me?

Jose nods, and leads Albert into the back room.

INT. BACK ROOM OF PHARMACY - DAY

Jose's music room is packed with INDIGENOUS MEXICAN STRINGED
AND PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS.

Albert whistles at the collection as Jose sits at his harp.

Albert reclines on a hand-carved wooden chair as Jose plays.

Albert closes his eyes in rapture.

Anastacia enters with a cup of tea. She taps Albert on his
shoulder. Albert opens his eyes, thanks Anastacia, takes
the tea.

Albert, transfixed, sips the tea as Jose's notes fill the
room.

Jose finishes his piece.

ALBERT
My headache's gone! You oughtta be
playing at health resorts!

JOSE
Thanks. I am learning the blues.

ALBERT
Chicago or Mississippi Delta?

Jose shrugs.

ALBERT (CONT'D)

Sorry. I'm familiar with American music, is all.

JOSE

Do you know Blind Willie Johnson?

ALBERT

Not personally. He's long dead. I know his music a little.

JOSE

I like his "Dark Was the Night."

ALBERT

(Finishing his tea)

Pretty obscure. It's about Christ's crucifixion.

JOSE

Yes.

ALBERT

Not that I'm a Jesus freak or anything.

INT. IGUANA BAR, GUAHOCHI - NIGHT

INSERT: IGUANA BAR, GUAHOCHI, CHIHUAHUA

Albert sits at the bar, nursing a tequila. Looking around, he sees a few INDIANS at their tables, while FLASHILY DRESSED COUPLES start to enter.

The men wear special COWBOY BOOTS MADE OF EXOTIC LEATHERS, and GOLD AND SILVER BELT BUCKLES. Their women exude a well-kept hothouse aura.

As the tables fill, Jose Navaja enters the room, carrying two guitar cases. He goes to a corner, to a primitive sound system. He plugs in his GUT STRING GUITAR and turns on the system.

Jose's skin seems a bit whiter than it did when Albert met him.

A NARCOTRAFICANTE called THE ARMADILLO (mid-20s) rises from his table, sidles up to Jose.

THE ARMADILLO

(Slipping Jose a wad
of bills)

Jose!

JOSE

Armadillo!

THE ARMADILLO

Play "El Ejecutor"!

Jose nods, tunes his guitar, then plows into the narcocorrido.

JOSE

"Si se disgustan ya es trade / ya
les hice un cochinerero / asi es que
vayan le viendo / como salen del
enredo / se la tenian sentenciada /
yo no mas soy maldadero..."

Cheering narcotraffickers and their women snort cocaine.

Albert watches the whole scene, fascinated.

FADE OUT.

INT. IGUANA BAR, GUAHOCHI, CHIHUAHUA - NIGHT

FADE IN:

Hours later, as Jose plays another narcorrido, the crowd has thinned.

The last NARCOTRAFFICKER and his LADY stumble out, drunk.

Jose sees Albert, smiles. Albert nods.

Jose finishes the narcocorrido. He puts the gut string guitar aside and takes an ELECTRIC GUITAR out of his second guitar case.

Jose plugs the guitar in, fiddles with some controls, slips the sawed-off NECK OF A TEQUILA BOTTLE on his left ring finger, and plays exquisite slide guitar.

Jose begins humming and moaning as he plays "Dark Was the Night."

Jose expresses unearthly depths of pain and longing.

At the bar, Albert works to hold his feelings in.

Jose finishes. The bar is closing down.

As Jose packs up, Albert approaches him.

Albert hands Jose his business card.

JOSE
 (Reading the card)
 "Albert Freeman. Marquis Management."
 What is this?

ALBERT
 I represent musical artists.

JOSE
 You came all this way to see me?

ALBERT
 No. Nasty divorce, had to get away.
 Middle of nowhere seemed the best
 place.
 (Beat)
 Come with me to America.

EXT. CENTURY CITY TOWERS, CENTURY CITY, CALIFORNIA - DAY

ESTABLISHING SHOT: Two towers loom above the corner of Avenue
 of the Stars and West Pico Boulevard.

INT. ALBERT FREEMAN'S CONDO - DAY

The shared bachelor pad is barely furnished.

Jose sits in his bedroom, practicing scales on a guitar.

Albert makes coffee as he speaks into his cell phone.

ALBERT
 No, Phil. I don't represent him
 anymore. Lissen...lissen to
 me...Phil! Take a breath! Lissen...I
 got a kid, Jose Navaja...straight
 outta the Sierra Madre, steeped in
 the blues...think Jimi Hendrix with
 the Isley Brothers...
 (He fiddles with the
 coffeemaker while
 listening)
 C'mon, Phil, take a risk. Just let
 'im audition...Okay...I'll book the
 flight now...

Alberts disconnects, pours himself a cup of coffee, wanders
 to Jose's room.

ALBERT (CONT'D)
 Hey, kid. Pack up. Yer flyin' to
 Memphis.

INT. JET AIRLINER - NIGHT

Jose sits placidly in his seat, listening on earbuds to his ipod.

ALBERT

(VO)

Jimmy Cannon and the Blasters.
Jimmy's lost his guitarist. Here's
my ipod. I want these songs embedded
in your DNA before you walk in.

INT. REHEARSAL HALL, MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE - DAY

JIMMY CANNON (late 30s), drummer WADE BUMSTEAD (late 20s)
and bassist CREED TAYLOR (early 20s) sit around,
absentmindedly "watching" a muted TV.

MUSIC MAGAZINES are scattered on a coffee table. Prominent
is the MEMPHIS FLYER, on the cover of which is a photo of
Jimmy Cannon, and the headline: "Can The Blasters Survive?"

Wade, a jar of peanut butter between his legs, licks the
spoon clean, then tucks the spoon below his watchband on his
left wrist.

Creed smokes a cigarette, holding it in the Russian manner.

Jimmy sings snatches of Beatles songs in a Donald Duck voice.

WADE

I worship the Mighty Frog Lord!

CREED

Back to your peanut butter, tadpole.

JIMMY

Quiz: Which do you eat first? Burger
or fries?

CREED

Fries.

WADE

You're asking a vegan?

JIMMY

Point taken.

CREED

So where's the Treasure of the Sierra
Madre?

WADE

On Mexican time. Never knew a Mexican
to come on time.

CREED

Try the French whores, Wade.

A knock at the door.

JIMMY

Door's open!

Jose, carrying two guitar cases and an effects box, enters.
Jose is now an albino.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Hey, it's Johnny Winter.

Jose taps his head.

JOSE

(In a Southern accent)
Hey there, boys. Brought m' toys.

JIMMY

Jose Navaja, this here's drummer
Wade, and bassist Creed.

WADE AND CREED

Hey, Jose, how ya doin'?

JOSE

Rebelicious!

Jimmy, Wade and Creed look at each other.

Jose is already unpacking, setting up.

JIMMY

The boy knows our hit.

The musicians set up with their instruments.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

You know "Red House"?

Jose snaps off a brilliant Hendrixian run.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Fair 'nuff. Let's start easy, then
work our way up. Jose?

Jose nods, then wails into the introduction, followed by
Wade and Creed.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

There's a red house over yonder,
that's where my baby stays. / There's
a red house over yonder, that's where
my baby stays. / Well, I ain't been
home to see my baby in ninety-nine
and one half days...Take it, Jose!

Jose launches into a burning, spacey solo.

EXT. SIERRA MADRE MOUNTAINS - DAY

We HEAR Jose's guitar solo.

Fausto sits cross-legged on a cliff edge over Guapalaina,
staring into the canyon below, listening in the ether to
Jose's magnificent guitar solo as he chews something.

Fausto holds an open pouch full of peyote buds. He pops a
bud into his mouth.

INT. REHEARSAL HALL - DAY

JIMMY

'Cause if my baby don't love me no
more / I know her sister will.

The band crashes to the end of the song.

Creed and Wade look to Jimmy, who's strapping on his electric
guitar.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Not bad, for starters. Okay, let's
run through some Jimmy Cannon and
the Blasters material. Wade?
"Rebelicious."

Wade smashes out a tricky drum hook. Creed joins in, followed
by Jimmy, with Jose playing rhythm.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

I sweat all day, diggin' ditches. /
When I'm suspicious / She give me
kisses. / Runs her fingers / down my
britches. / Ain't no believer / but
she made me religious. /

JIMMY AND THE BLASTERS

Rebelicious!

EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD - DAY

Albert's tooling down the Strip in his old Mazda Miata
convertible, speaking into his bluetooth.

INT. MAZDA - DAY

ALBERT

Phil...Phil...You think I'd take advantage of a desperate man?...Ten grand for a ten day tour sounds right...Plus a fifty buck per diem...Hey, don't shit a cow... Okay...Five hundred a night...The kid killed it, didn't he?...Albino? He's an albino now? Jeeze...No, he's got some kind of skin condition, allows him to change color...He was raised by a shaman, y'know...Yeah, we took peyote together, part of the negotiation...

INT. GUY'S WORLD FAMOUS FRIED CHICKEN RESTAURANT, MEMPHIS - NIGHT

Jimmy, Wade, Creed and Jose finish ordering from the WAITRESS. She walks away, and Jimmy, mimicked by Jose, unwraps his napkin from the silverware.

JIMMY

I never unwrap the silverware till after the waitress takes my order. Never before.

WADE

And he never lets his portions touch each other on the plate.

CREED

So, Jose. How'd a guy in the Sierra Madre learn to play guitar like that?

JOSE

NASA sent a disc into space in 1977. I obtained a copy and went from there.

JIMMY

I read about that once. Wasn't "Johnny B. Goode" on there?

Jose fiddles with his silverware.

JOSE

Yes. Plus music from all over earth.

Jimmy nods at Jose's knife as he fingers it.

JIMMY

Hey. Doesn't Navaja mean "knife" in Spanish?

JOSE

Yes, sir.

JIMMY

Dang it, Jose! We're gonna call you
Jackknife Joe!

Jimmy raises his water glass in a toast. Jose and the others follow suit, clinking their glasses together.

THE GROUP

Jackknife Joe!

The waitress brings their food.

Jimmy separates his portions with a fork, then spins his plate so that the vegetables are directly in front of him.

The others dig into their food.

Jimmy's cell phone rings.

Jimmy checks the incoming call.

JIMMY

Hey, baby, how's it goin'?

(Beat)

Yeah, the tour's back on. Found a great new guitarist.

(He winks at Jose)

Ten concerts, two weeks...Yes, I care...Tell her you'll tape her recital and email it to me...Look, I gotta earn a livin', honeybunch...

Wade and Creed look at each other. They've heard variations of this conversation before.

Jimmy's growing more uncomfortable.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

The label's giving full support...
Yes!...Look, I'll be home day after tomorrow, we can deal with it then...Okay, love you too.

Jimmy disconnects, looks around the table.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Hey, she's a hands-on Mom, okay?

INT. BLUE MONKEY MUSIC CLUB, MEMPHIS - NIGHT

WAITRESSES carry pizzas and beers to CUSTOMERS.

WE HEAR Jimmy Cannon and the Blasters tuning up onstage.

The MASTER OF CEREMONIES climbs onstage.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

You guys ready?

(Jimmy nods)

Ladies and gentlemen, the Blue Monkey
is proud to present...straight outta
Charlottesville, Virginia...JIMMY
CANNON AND THE BLASTERS!

Jimmy launches into the opening slide notes of Elmore James' "Anna Lee," followed by the Blasters, with Jose playing harmonica fills.

JIMMY

Anna Lee / I want you for my only. /
Anna Lee / I want you for my only. /
Well, you gotta be mine / Now baby,
you just wait an' see.

FADE OUT.

INT. BLUE MONKEY MUSIC CLUB, MEMPHIS - NIGHT

FADE IN:

Jimmy and the Blasters end their first set with "Rebelicious."

They're in the final verse.

A YOUNG WOMAN, AIDA BLUE (early 20s) can't take her eyes off Jose.

JIMMY AND THE BLASTERS

She don' care 'bout Cajun riches. /
She finds diamonds repetitious. /
Rebelicious!

The crowd is up and dancing, cheering the Blasters' regional hit.

JIMMY

Thanks, y'all! We'll be back in 30!

Aida Blue is mesmerized.

EXT. BLUE MONKEY - NIGHT

Jose stands outside the club, looking up at the moon.

Jimmy appears through the musicians' entrance, CD in hand.

JIMMY

You're soundin' great, Joe. Lissen,
I wanna give you a showcase. Learn
this during the break. Have your
way with the guitar parts.

Jose takes the CD.

Jimmy's cell phone rings.

Jimmy checks caller ID.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Yeah?...We're on a break...Sure, put
'er on...High, sweetie pie! How'd
the recital go?

Jimmy wanders off, talking to his daughter.

Jose studies the full moon.

AIDA BLUE (O.S.)

Can you believe men walked on it?

Jose turns, sees Aida Blue, a trust fund baby eager for real
life.

JOSE

Really?

AIDA BLUE

1969. Western civilization's high
point. That and "Honky Tonk Women."

(Beat)

You like the Stones? They're kinda
their own cover band now. Wish I'd
seen 'em in their prime.

(Beat)

Hi. I'm Aida. Aida Blue. I saw
your first set. You're the new guy,
right?

JOSE

Yes.

AIDA

I read the Jimmy Cannon interview in
the Flyer. You're Jackknife Joe.

(Beat)

What's it like?

JOSE

Pardon me?

AIDA
Being an albino.

JOSE
I've only recently started.

Aida takes Jose's statements at face value.

AIDA
I'm kind of a connoisseur of
guitarists' hands. Mind if I--?
(Aida takes Jose's
hands in hers. Jose
watches)
Damn! You're as small as Joe
Satriani!

JOSE
I'm not familiar...

AIDA
Fast, clinical, kinda show-offy.
You blow him away.

JOSE
I can make 'em bigger.

AIDA
You don't sound like a Mexican.
Your dad really a shaman? I read it
in that Flyer article.

JOSE
He is a good man.

AIDA
Hey. Can I give you something?
(Searching through
her fringed shoulder
bag)
Here. For that beautiful hair.

Aida hands Jose a POCKET COMB.

AIDA (CONT'D)
It's an ACE. I'll explain later.
Put it in your back pocket.
(She takes the comb,
slowly slides it
into Jose's back
pocket)
Like this.

INT. BLUE MONKEY - NIGHT

The band, minus Jose, is ready to play.

Jose bursts onstage.

JIMMY
You're late!

JOSE
Sorry.

JIMMY
You learn the song?

JOSE
No.

JIMMY
(To the band, as he
stands behind his
keyboard)
"It Hurts Me Too." In E. One, two
three, and...

Jose opens with slide guitar. Jimmy tickles the piano.
Bass and drums follow...

JIMMY (CONT'D)
You said you were hurtin'. / Almost
lost your mind. / Now the man you
love, / He hurts you all the time. /
When things go wrong, / Go wrong
with you, / It hurts me too.

Jimmy nods to Jose, who skips into his solo.

In the front row, a swaying Aida Blue stares up at Jose.

EXT. HIGHWAY 64, WEST OF CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA - DAY

A MUD-STAINED WHITE CHEVY VAN rumbles eastward on Highway
64.

INT. VAN - DAY

Jimmy's at the wheel. Wade rides shotgun. Jose and Creed
ride behind, with the band's equipment far to the rear.

WADE
(To Jose and Creed)
So Phil says, "I will not use a
shopping cart when I shop. If I can't
carry the load I can't afford it is
my motto."

CREED

One day Phil says to me, "When I'm walking down the street, I mentally point out people who I think I can beat in video games."

WADE

And his girlfriend? So buck toothed she could eat corn-on-the-cob through a key hole.

CREED

Guy answers the phone in French. Says it discourages telemarketers.

JIMMY

That's enough, boys. Phil's a good man.

Jimmy's cell phone rings.

Jimmy checks the caller ID.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Hey...About a half hour out...Can it wait?...Call the plumber...It's on the refrigerator door...under the Winnie the Pooh magnet...

Jimmy flips the phone shut.

Jimmy checks his rearview mirror.

WE SEE a late model BMW, with a woman at the wheel.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

She's still followin' us. That chick from the Blue Monkey.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO JIMMY'S FARM, THOMAS JEFFERSON PARKWAY - DAY

The white Chevy van pulls up to the entrance road to Jimmy's farm. Stops at the gate.

Jimmy gets out to open the lock.

Jimmy looks behind, down the road, sees the BMW pull over and stop.

Jimmy trots to the BMW.

Aida Blue rolls down her window.

AIDA

Hey there.

JIMMY

What's the deal?

AIDA

Just a fan with time on her hands.

JIMMY

You're the one, front row, obsessed
with my guitar player.

AIDA

That against the law?
(She hands Jimmy a
folded note)
Tell 'im I'm at the Clifton Inn,
wouldja?

JIMMY

One condition. Don't come 'round
here no more. I got a family.

AIDA

Okey dokey.

EXT. GRAVEL DRIVEWAY, CANNON FARM - DAY

As the Chevy Van crunches toward the Cannon farmhouse, THREE
CHILDREN, KYLE (11), ABIGAIL (9) and BELINDA (5) run toward
it.

CHILDREN

Daddy!

The van pulls to a stop.

Jimmy climbs out, his kids engulf him.

JIMMY

Hey, Abigail! I saw your recital!

AMANDA CANNON (late 30s) steps out of the house, onto the
porch.

The three Blasters, stiff from the journey, climb out of the
van. They stretch.

Jimmy, his children draped all over him, walks toward his
home.

AMANDA

Hey, Jimmy.

(MORE)

AMANDA (CONT'D)

I see you can still support your kids.

(She sees Jose)

Well, butter my butt an' call me a biscuit.

JIMMY

Amanda, this is Jose Navaja.

JOSE

Good to meet you, Amanda.

AMANDA

Jose.

(To Jimmy)

We gotta talk.

Jimmy unloads his children.

JIMMY

I'm whipped. Wake me for dinner.

(To the Blasters)

Boys, Amanda'll show you to your quarters.

INT. BARN - DAY

Amanda leads the Blasters through a makeshift storage facility, full of RESTORED ANTIQUE AMERICAN CARS from the 40s and 50s.

Creed focuses on a BLACK 1940 FORD CONVERTIBLE ROADSTER.

CREED

Wow! Jimmy own this?

AMANDA

Not for much longer.

Amanda leads the trio through a door and down a hall. They stop at a series of doors.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Okay, boys. Private room for each of ya.

(Slipping a piece of paper to Jose)

Somebody gave this to Jimmy, who gave it to me, to give to you.

CLOSE ON PAPER: "AIDA - CLIFTON INN - (434) 555-1800"

INT. JIMMY-AMANDA BEDROOM - DAY

Jimmy snoozes.

Amanda lays gently by him.

Jimmy awakens, sees his wife, smiles, kisses her, drifts off.

AMANDA

Jimmy, honey. Jimmy, wake up. Jimmy.
We gotta talk.

JIMMY

Hmmm?

AMANDA

We're bein' foreclosed.

JIMMY

They comin' tonight? It can wait.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Jimmy, Amanda, their three children, Wade, Creed, and Jose sit around a table heaped high with Southern cooking.

AMANDA

Jimmy?

JIMMY

Honey, I'm feelin' awful far from
the Lord tonight.

AMANDA

Awright. Let's pray: "I know thy
works, thou art neither cold nor
hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.
So the because thou art lukewarm,
and neither cold nor hot, I would
spue thee out of my mouth."

THE GROUP

Amen.

As Jimmy passes the food around:

WADE

That was from the Book of Revelation,
Mrs. Cannon.

AMANDA

3: 15-16.

WADE

If'n you don't mind, ma'am. We're commencin' supper, and you're prayin' 'bout the end of the world.

AMANDA

Endings, beginnings, Wade. You're a drummer--pretty good 'un, I hear-- it's all a rhythm. Endings, beginnings.

JIMMY

I don't see the need, Honey.

AMANDA

I gave you first crack. Man of the house, an' all.

(To Jose)

What about you, Jose? I hear Mexicans have some interesting ideas about time.

JOSE

Time. The unique subjective.

(Taking a bite of
chicken)

Good.

The three Cannon children can't take their eyes off Jose.

EXT. CLIFTON INN GROUNDS - NIGHT

Jose and Aida stroll down a path away from the Clifton Inn's main buildings, through some woods.

AIDA

I dunno. I love the whole thing. The skinny guy with the guitar, calling down the Gods. When you play, I see the whole world.

JOSE

Hmmm.

AIDA

Jimmy thinks I'm gonna distract you.

Jose is confused.

JOSE

I am blessed with unbending--
impeccable--intent.

AIDA

I've seen it before. Band on the edge, hires a great new musician, and then the termites descend.

They break through the trees, to a short pier on Hurtt's Pond.

AIDA (CONT'D)

Shall we?

They proceed onto the pier.

JOSE

I never forget why I am here.

There's a breeze on the lake.

Jose's hair ruffles.

AIDA

Why you here, Jose?

JOSE

I am a musical expeditionary.

AIDA

With unkempt hair. You got that comb I gave ya?

Jose produces the comb.

Aida combs Jose's long straight hair.

AIDA (CONT'D)

My great-great-great-great-great-grandfather, Fritz Achelis, was the president of the American Hard Rubber Company. He patented the ACE comb in 1851. He later developed the chemical composition for bowling balls.

JOSE

Hmmm.

AIDA

I'm a rich girl. I can follow your band all over America if I choose.

JOSE

I would not stop you.

Aida hands Jose his comb.

As Aida sits, she takes Jose's hand and pulls him down next to her, on the edge of the pier, over the pond.

AIDA

I love Southern nights. Them and music's all that make life on this Earth worthwhile. I've always felt a stranger here.

JOSE

I am just passing through, myself.

EXT. THE CANNON FARM - NIGHT

Jose strolls past the main home, humming to himself.

Jose stops. Listens.

Jose taps his head.

We HEAR a WHISPERED CONVERSATION between Jimmy and Amanda.

AMANDA (V.O.)

It's over, Jimmy! Your rock and roll dream. Face reality.

INT. CANNON BEDROOM - NIGHT

JIMMY

I'll sell a car.

AMANDA

That'll buy us another six months.

JIMMY

The group's on the verge.

AMANDA

What's this new tour? Two weeks? Turn a profit. Or you'll come back to an empty farm.

EXT. THE CANNON FARM - NIGHT

Jose stands there, listening.

EXT. THE CANNON FARM - DAY

Jimmy, Amanda, the three children, and the Blasters are gathered in the driveway, their luggage and musical equipment neatly piled.

JIMMY

...and even better, we're getting tour support. A \$40 per diem. A modern bus, with a driver, station to station. (Checking his watch) Due here any minute...

In the distance, a HORN SOUNDS with the opening five notes of Dottie West's "Here Comes My Baby."

A FULL-SIZED TOUR BUS RUMBLES UP THE GRAVEL DRIVEWAY. On its side is the "Jimmy Cannon & The Blasters" logo.

A SHORT, STOCKY FIREPLUG OF A MAN, SID HILLMAN (mid-60s) climbs down and out the bus's door.

SID

Well, hey there, boys and girls!
Next stop, Natchatoches, Louisiana,
by way of Nashville, Tennessee!

(Beat)

Name's Sid. Sid Hillman. Personal
chauffeur to the late, great, always-
lamented, dearly-departed, country
legend Dottie West! Climb aboard
an' grab a bunk!

INT. BUS - DAY

Sid and Jose chat while Sid drives. Jose cradles his guitar and absentmindedly plays as Sid speaks.

SID

Yeah, I drove a rig all over the
Continental 48. Flipped an 18 wheel
tanker near Anchorage, moved on over
to tour busses.

Sid gestures toward his REARVIEW MIRROR.

There's an ENGRAVED PHOTO OF DOTTIE WEST IN THE MIRROR, ALONG WITH HER AUTOGRAPH.

SID (CONT'D)

This here's Dottie West. I drove
her and her band for 14 years.

(Looking in the
rearview mirror)

That Beemer's been trailin' us since
Charlottesville.

JOSE

She's a fan.

SID

Hell, I'd let 'er ride with us, but
for the liability.

(Beat)

Say, you write songs on that thing?

JOSE

Yes.

SID
Mind regalin' me?

JOSE
My songs are secret. For now.

In a rear seat, Jimmy's cell phone rings.

Jimmy wakes up, stabs for his phone. He finds it, answers.

JIMMY
Phil. What's up in the land o'
wheeler dealers?

CUT BETWEEN PHIL IN A MASSAGE PARLOR AND JIMMY ON THE BUS:

INT. MASSAGE PARLOR - DAY

PHIL COSTANZA (mid 40s), on his stomach, a towel over his buttocks, luxuriates under the magic fingers of his THAI MASSEUSE.

PHIL
You're on the road?

JIMMY
(Holding up his phone
in the air)
Can ya hear the tires singin'?

PHIL
Like your driver?

JIMMY
He's not a driver. He's a museum
curator.

PHIL
Yeah, the Dottie West thing...Look,
Jimmy...right there, doll. Yeah,
that's it...Jimmy, there's been a
change. You're gonna have to roll
with it.

JIMMY
Ch-ch-changes...

PHIL
We gotta cancel the per diem.
Salaries'll be unaffected.

JIMMY
I'll be faced with a full scale
revolt.

PHIL

Pay 'em outta your pocket?

JIMMY

I'm bein' squeezed as it is. Can you get an advance against my upcoming "best of" collection?

PHIL

No can do. Record labels aren't ATMs anymore. Gotta go. Break a leg, kid.

Phil clicks his phone shut.

INT. BUS - DAY

JIMMY

Band meeting!

Wade nudges Creed awake as Jose picks his way back to Jimmy.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Okay, boys. Bad news. Record company's canceled our per diems.

WADE

Great. Least we got a bus to starve in.

JIMMY

Anybody wants to quit, we'll drop you off at the next Wendy's.

CREED

Salary's unaffected?

JIMMY

Right.

WADE

Advance us the money outta your pocket, then deduct it from our wages.

CREED

Yeah, like that Northwest tour.

JIMMY

There'll be a bonus at the end.

WADE

Like after that Iowa college tour?

JIMMY
 Hey, that couldn't be helped. How'd
 I know we'd spend half our earnings
 on bail bonds?

Wade and Creed laugh at the memory as they move back to their seats.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
 Jose? A word?
 (Jose nods)
 I got a per diem for you if you want
 it.

JOSE
 No thanks.

JIMMY
 You sure?

JOSE
 I'm not special.

JIMMY
 Appreciate it. I'm turnin' in.

EXT. CRACKER BARREL OLD COUNTRY STORE, LEBANON, TENNESSEE -
 DAY

The tour bus pulls into the Cracker Barrel Old Country Store parking lot.

INT. BUS - DAY

Sid honks the horn. We hear the five Dottie West notes.

SID
 Okay, y'all! Rise an' shine!

The band members poke their heads out of their bunks.

SID (CONT'D)
 While y'all's makin' yerselves
 presentable, I'm gonna sweep the
 joint.

Sid departs the bus.

The band members climb down from their bunks.

WADE
 What's he mean, "sweep the joint"?

JIMMY
 Use your imagination.

Sid returns.

SID
Okay, joint's clean.

INT. CRACKER BARREL OLD COUNTRY STORE - DAY

Sid wipes gravy from his plate with a biscuit.

SID
Damn! Been comin' here since I's a toddler. Nothin' compares.

Sid looks across the restaurant, sees Jose and Aida at a window table.

SID (CONT'D)
Not much for band unity, is he?

Jimmy hands a credit card and the filled out receipt to the WAITRESS.

JIMMY
Long's Joe shows up on time and plays like a maniac, I don't care if he eats in the parking lot.

SID
Dottie West, it was one for all and all for none.

Jimmy's out of patience with Sid.

JIMMY
So, what's up with this "sweep the joint" bit?

SID
See any darkies here?

JIMMY
Are you aware what century this is, Sid?

SID
'Bout a century-and-a-half since the tyrant Abe Lincoln raped the South.

CREED
You gonna "sweep" every restaurant on this tour, Mr. Faubus?

SID
My bus. My rules.

The waitress returns with Jimmy's credit card and receipt.

The receipt is folded over.

Jimmy opens the receipt.

JIMMY

Uh, waitress?

The waitress comes over.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Nice try. I left a six dollar tip.
You altered the six to an eight.

Jimmy rips up the receipt.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Let's re-do the transaction, shall
we?

The shamed waitress leaves to re-do the credit card
transaction.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

(To Sid)

Next time, sweep the joint for
thievin' waitresses.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

As the band boards the bus, Aida and Jose hold hands by Aida's
BMW.

Sid stands at the door, watching Jose and Aida.

AIDA

Hot tip, Jose. Your first gig
tomorrow night? Northwest Louisiana
State U. In '96, they worked with
NASA on the Columbia mission.

JOSE

We'll make time to tour the
department. Today, Sid wants to
show us Twitty City.

AIDA

Omigawd. You don't know American
vulgarity till you've seen Twitty
City.

(Beat)

See ya there, four square.

Aida kisses Jose on his cheek, climbs in her BMW.

SID
C'mon, Jose! You're holdin' us up!

EXT. TWITTY CITY - DAY

MONTAGE: Sid leads Jimmy Cannon & The Blasters--and Aida, holding close to Jose--through Twitty City.

The brash and the vulgar.

Sid stops the group at a swimming pool.

SID
He was born Harold Jenkins. How'd he become Conway Twitty, owner of 40 Number One records in his lifetime?

AIDA
Harold Jenkins looked at a map one day, and saw Conway, Arkansas and Twitty, Texas.

No one's supposed to know the answer.

SID
(Regaining his composure)
Give a kewpie doll to the li'l lady!

EXT. TWITTY CITY PARKING LOT - DAY

Outside the Conway Twitty Country Store and Record Shop (Snack Bar - Souvenirs), Jose and Aida see a HUSBAND and WIFE street musician team, performing for tips. He's playing guitar, she's singing. Their repertoire of country standards comes through a combination boom-box/PA which obediently churns out rhythm tracks, a kind of mix-and-match karaoke.

Their names, BOB & BETTIE BUMFORD, are announced on a hand-lettered sign. She's a weathered, bleached blonde caricature with a halting dance and struggling, stilted delivery. Bob's clad in black leather vest and plastic boots. His angular beard and taut, bony face make him look like an Amish man who took a radical left turn.

Pedestrians pass by, not noticing.

Aida throws some bills into Bob's open guitar case.

INT. TOUR BUS - DAY

Jimmy Cannon & The Blasters, gathered at the front of the bus as Sid pilots it through Nashville.

SID

Okay, boys 'n' girls, we're gonna slow down for a moment at this freeway exit ramp.

(Beat)

Dottie West's father sexually abused her. Growing up, her family was so poor, they ate their meals off lard bucket lids instead of plates, and drank out of old tin cans.

Sid stops the bus, blocking traffic.

SID (CONT'D)

August 30, 1991: Dottie was late to a gig at the Grand Ol' Opry and I was unavailable. She hitched a ride with an 81-year-old fan.

Cars honk. Sid ignores them.

SID (CONT'D)

Twenty minutes afore Dottie was due onstage, the old man flips his 1982 Plymouth Reliant. Right here. Dottie's liver was sliced an' diced. Now she sings with the angels.

Sid bows his head. Cars honk, drivers scream.

Sid honks his bus horn, sounding the five Dottie West notes.

A convertible eases by the bus.

The DRIVER sees the JIMMY CANNON & THE BLASTERS logo.

DRIVER

Hey, Jimmy Cannon & The Blasters.
Fuck you!

JIMMY

Sid...we've shown our respects. Can we proceed? Please?

Sid's silent prayer concluded, he shifts the bus into gear.

SID

Servin' Dottie was a callin'. Drivin' you guys is a job.

INT. TOUR BUS - NIGHT

Jimmy is showing off his 1952 FENDER ESQUIRE guitar to Jose. Creed and Wade listen in.

JIMMY
Scotty Moore.

JOSE
Who?

JIMMY
Elvis Presley's guitarist. Scotty
played this here Fender Esquire during
Elvis's Golden Era.

JOSE
This is all new...

JIMMY
Jeeze, Joe. Where were you raised,
Mars?

CREED
(Taunting Jimmy))
Tell 'im how due to financial and
contractual obligations with the
Elvis Museum, you can never publicly
confirm your tale.

JIMMY
'S true.

Jimmy's cell phone rings.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Phil! 'Sup?

PHIL (O.S.)
I'm hearin' odd reports.

JIMMY
Concernin'?

PHIL (O.S.)
Don't rile up the driver.

JIMMY
You kiddin' me?

PHIL (O.S.)
Sid Hillman is a legend. You don't
mess with a legend. Lissen: If this
guy quits 'cause you're a prima donna,
the label's gonna exercise some
options. The ice is pretty thin
where you're skatin'.

JIMMY
These're bad omens all around, Phil.

PHIL (O.S.)

You want an omen? Try this: ROLLING STONE's gonna have a reporter at your first gig. Keep it upbeat, y'hear? It's make-or-break time, Jimmy.

Phil clicks off.

INT. TOUR BUS - NIGHT

Wade can't sleep. He's visiting with Sid.

WADE

I'd just buy a spool and make my own connections.

SID

I would too except I prefer to spend my time making money without much effort and sleeping with beautiful women.

(Beat)

Look, Wayne, I'm way over my ten hour limit. You mind takin' the wheel?

WADE

Whoa.

SID

Here. You slide on in whole I slide out. One smooth move.

As Sid slides out, Wade slides in.

SID (CONT'D)

Gimme four hours.

In Jose's private bunk, Jose stares at the ceiling.

Jose closes his eyes, taps the side of his head.

Jose carries his own inner google search engine.

As Jose taps the side of his head, we SEE COVERS of OLD MUSIC MAGAZINES flipping by.

STOP at an article: "SCOTTY MOORE'S LEGENDARY '52 FENDER ESQUIRE."

We SEE a PHOTO of SCOTTY MOORE, PLAYING THE GUITAR ONSTAGE WITH ELVIS PRESLEY.

We HEAR a cell phone.

Inside Jimmy's private bunk, Jimmy finds the phone, takes the call.

JIMMY
It's after midnight.

AMANDA (V.O.)
I sold the Ford. The 1940 roadster.

JIMMY
You hold out for my price?

AMANDA (V.O.)
More or less.

JIMMY
I toldja 75 grand.

AMANDA (V.O.)
I took 69 five.

JIMMY
I toldja 75 grand.

AMANDA (V.O.)
Tell ya what. Cut your make-or-break
tour short and sell the damn cars
for whatever you want. As it is, I
bought us six more months.

JIMMY
Whoever it was, took advantage of
you.

AMANDA (V.O.)
I'm a wife and mother, not a damn
used car salesman.

Amanda disconnects.

Jimmy pulls out a notepad, scribbles some song lyric ideas.

JIMMY
Hey there, Jesus, come back quick /
This ol' world has made me sick. /
No one told me when I got old / A
hot-blooded girl cold turn so cold.

EXT. NATCHATOCHES, LOUISIANA - DAY

As dawn breaks, the tour bus tools down the tree-lined streets of Natchatoches.

INT. TOUR BUS - DAY

Wade, still driving.

Sid wakes up in his seat behind Wade. Sid looks around.
Nobody's up yet.

SID
(Taps Wade on his
shoulder)
Hey. Thanks for filling in.

While Wade slides out from behind the wheel, Sid slides in.

SID (CONT'D)
Let's keep this between us, shall
we? I'll make it up to ya.

WADE
Sure thing.

Sid hits the horn.

SID
Okay, chilluns! Break-the-fast time!

The Blasters poke their heads out from their bunks.

SID (CONT'D)
Any suggestions?

CREED
Wendy's!

SID
Hamburgers are meant to be round,
not square!

JIMMY
How 'bout some soul food?

SID
We got a comedian on board!
(To Jose)
How 'bout you? Frijoles? C'mon,
let's stink up my bus, alien.

JIMMY
Hey, Sid. That's about enough.

SID
I don't need no third tier washed-up
rocker tellin' me how to run my bus!

JIMMY

Fine, Sid. Find some all-white diner.
Just look for the bedsheet by the
front door.

SID

That's a gracious plenty. I'll take
it in the best way. For your sake.

JIMMY

You're sorry as a two dollar watch.

SID

Least mine knows whose time's runnin'
out.

JOSE

Jimmy...I would like to tour the
university's Science Department with
Aida. Why don't I go now?

EXT. NORTHWEST LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY - DAY

Jose and Aida stroll the campus. They arrive at Kyser Hall,
the Science Building.

INT. KYSER HALL - DAY

Jose and Aida examine a DISPLAY recounting how the
university's students worked on the 1996 Columbia Space
Shuttle flight.

A FEMALE PROFESSOR stands at a nearby desk, waiting for an
ATTENDANT to retrieve a periodical.

Jose looks closely at a PHOTO of a PROFESSOR lecturing a
class in front of a blackboard filled with equations.

JOSE

Hmmmm...

AIDA

What?

JOSE

It is wrong.

Aida looks at the professor. She beckons the professor over.

PROFESSOR

Yes?

AIDA

Jose...please explain.

JOSE

(Scribbling on a piece
of scratch paper)

The force of gravity during re-
entry...That man in the picture...he's
wrong. By a factor of nine.

Jose finishes scribbling on the paper. Hands it to the
professor.

The professor looks at the paper, then at the photo.

PROFESSOR

This is...intriguing. I'll get it
to the professor.

(Beat)

Do you have a card?

Jose is mystified.

AIDA

We call him Jackknife Joe.

INT. STUDENT UNION, NLSU - NIGHT

Jimmy Cannon & The Blasters are tuning up onstage.

EMCEE

Ladies and Gentlemen, all three of
you...and fellow Northwest Louisiana
State U students...please welcome
Jimmy Cannon & The Blasters!

JIMMY

Hey, Natchatoches! We're gonna open
with a song anyone who's gone north
can relate to...WHITE TRASH IN YOUR
CITY!

The band kicks in with a furious, raw beat.

Jimmy screams a rebel yell.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

I'm white trash, pure white trash,
white trash in your city. / I see
you lookin' down on me from below
your hairless dome. / We got a word
for you back home! / Barnyard animals
are my friends. / That's where I
draw the line. / You folks do it
with boys and girls, / Then blame it
on the times. / I'm white trash,
pure white trash, white trash in
your city.

INT. CANNON FARM - NIGHT

Amanda hits Jimmy's phone number.

AMANDA

(Leaving a message)

Hey, James...the guy's check
bounced...but he already totaled the
car...What's our insurance company?...
or do I call the cops?...I told the
bank, asked 'em to hold off till
this is resolved...no dice...

Amanda tries to think of something else to say.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Well...see ya...

INT. STUDENT UNION, NLSU - NIGHT

Jimmy Cannon & The Blasters are leaving a chorus, headed for
the bridge.

JIMMY

We got a word for you back home. /
Lord, I miss my Mama's cookin', /
And the babes down at the swimmin'
hole. / Southern girls are so good
lookin', I could eat 'em whole.

The crowd goes wild.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Meanwhile, back in Smoggy Town, /
I'm tryin' to strike it rich. /
Lady Luck has got me down. /
This city is a bitch! / I'm white
trash, pure white trash, / white
trash in your city...

INT. ALBERT FREEMAN'S CONDO - NIGHT

Albert dials Jose's number.

ALBERT

Hey, Jose. Uncle Al. Been hearin'
great things about you. Listen...a
ROLLING STONE writer called me for
background on you. I got pretty
carried away. Just answer honestly.
As I know you will...

INT. STUDENT UNION, NLSU - NIGHT

Jimmy and the band are climaxing with WHITE TRASH IN YOUR CITY.

JIMMY & THE BLASTERS
We got a word for you...back home!

The rhythm section crashes. The crowd cheers.

Aida Blue stands in the front row, cheering wildly.

At a back table, on a raised platform, VIOLA RIDGEWAY (early 20s), with eyes like a hawk's and a temperament to match, scribbles notes.

Sid Hillman joins Viola at her table.

JIMMY
Hey, thank you! This next tune...I wrote it in New Orleans, girl watchin'. It's called I FALL IN LOVE A HUNDRED TIMES A DAY.

Jose smashes out some power chords, joined by the rhythm section.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
I walk these streets lookin left and right. / The women sway. It's a beautiful sight. / I see hair as red as a powder keg. / Is it the same between her legs? / And that one there in the miniskirt: / There's a heathen I'd like to convert. / I'd save her from moral decay.

The Blasters all lean into their microphones, in a harmonized chorus.

JIMMY & THE BLASTERS
I fall in love a hundred times a day.

INT. PHIL'S HOME STUDY - NIGHT

Phil calls Jimmy. Leaves a message.

PHIL
Jimmy...bad news...Sid Hillman's quit...I'll try to rent y'all a motor home or somethin'...Then we're gonna have to make some changes in your management contract...

INT. STUDENT UNION, NLSU - NIGHT

Jimmy and the band launch into the bridge, then the final verse and chorus.

JIMMY & THE BLASTERS
 Gotta scatter my seed. / It's a
 biological need. / Gotta scatter my
 seed. / It's a biological need. /
 What's a red-blooded boy to do When
 they all beg to be pursued? / This
 howling beast can't be subdued. /
 It's got x-ray eyes that strip 'em
 nude. / Just gotta let it have its
 way. / So serve 'em up on a silver
 tray, / Wrapped in ribbon with a
 rose bouquet. / I fall in love a
 hundred times a day. / I fall in
 love...One hundred times a day.

The crowd cheers. Aida pumps her fists.

In the back, Viola Ridgeway scribbles notes as Sid whispers in her ear.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. STUDENT UNION, NLSU - NIGHT

Jimmy Cannon & The Blasters sit at a table, drinking, cooling off.

Viola Ridgeway takes a chair opposite them. She drops a digital recorder on the table.

VIOLA
 You're all okay with this? On the
 record?

Everyone assents.

JIMMY
 Just a second.
 (He walks away, checks
 his phone messages)
 Oh, God.

VIOLA
 Bad news?

JIMMY
 Minor stuff.
 (MORE)

JIMMY (CONT'D)

We were told we'd be interviewed by
a ROLLING STONE reporter.

VIOLA

What, you were expecting Mikal
Gilmore? I'm an intern. I'm sure
you'll find me fully professional.
Viola Ridgeway. Shall we begin?

JIMMY

Fire away.

VIOLA

Jimmy Cannon...where does your career
stand right now?

JIMMY

What'd ya think of the show?

VIOLA

I'm conducting the interview.

JIMMY

My career...Well, I'm just one part
of the group. So that would be OUR
career. We're doin' fine, thanks.

VIOLA

Your last hit--seven years ago--was
regional. REBELICIOUS. You finished
with it tonight. Does it still thrill
you to perform it?

JIMMY

(Looking around)
Guys?

WADE

We always get behind a cool song.

CREED

Yeah.

VIOLA

You opened with two of your most
provocative tunes. WHITE TRASH IN
YOUR CITY and I FALL IN LOVE A HUNDRED
TIMES A DAY.

JIMMY

Provocative? Who in Louisiana can't
relate to WHITE TRASH IN YOUR CITY?

VIOLA

Haven't we moved past that? This is the New South.

JIMMY

A good song is always timely.

VIOLA

With its references to bestiality and pedophilia?

JIMMY

I was drawing a contrast between the cartoon view of Southerners and the urbane depravity of Northerners.

VIOLA

I FALL IN LOVE A HUNDRED TIMES A DAY. Do you make it a practice to objectify women?

JIMMY

Think of it as an anthem for teen-aged boys.

Aida slides into a seat at a nearby table, behind Viola Ridgeway.

VIOLA

Shouldn't you be educating teen-aged boys to respect women? Does this song not encourage violence against women?

CREED

Lady, are you at all familiar with the history of rock and roll?

VIOLA

I think society has evolved beyond the glorification of male lust.

(Beat)

I've heard rumors your record company's planning to drop you.

JIMMY

I heard a rumor we'd be interviewed by a knowledgeable music lover.

VIOLA

(Looking at Jose)

As a music lover, I'm curious-- enthralled, really--by your new addition.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Joe's great.

VIOLA

(Ignoring Jimmy)

Senor Navaja...I'm told your father
is a Tarahumara shaman. True?

JOSE

Yes.

VIOLA

Yet you're an albino. Was it hard
for you in your hometown of--

(consulting her notes)

--Guapalaina?

JOSE

I assumed this appearance after
arriving in America.

VIOLA

Surgery?

JOSE

No. I willed it.

VIOLA

So you're a proto-Nietzschian.

(Jose stares blankly)

Rumor has it the record company wants
you as a solo artist.

JOSE

I am grateful that Jimmy gave me a
chance. I am pleased to be one of
The Blasters.

VIOLA

Are you aware of your effect on women?

JOSE

I have a girlfriend.

VIOLA

That sound you hear is the massive
breaking of hearts all over America!

(Beat)

Musical influences?

JOSE

Blind Willie Johnson. DARK WAS THE
NIGHT. I want to meet him and thank
him.

VIOLA
Yes, Dylan journeyed to Brooklyn to
pay tribute to Woody Guthrie.

JOSE
Who?

VIOLA
Dylan or Guthrie?

Jose shrugs his shoulders.

VIOLA (CONT'D)
Jimmy, if I may...Why did legendary
tour driver Sid Hillman quit?

JIMMY
Sid Hillman is a racist pig. We
objected.
(Beat)
That's off the record.

VIOLA
(Picking up her digital
recorder)
Sorry. You knew what was what.

Viola clicks off the recorder, rises, walks away.

Aida approaches Viola.

AIDA
Miss Ridgeway?

VIOLA
And you are?

AIDA
Aida Blue. I'm their new driver.

VIOLA
You're Jackknife Joe's girlfriend,
yes?

AIDA
Right you are.

VIOLA
Care to comment on the rumor that
you affect this group like Yoko Ono
impacted The Beatles?

Viola departs.

Aida sits at the table with the shell shocked group.

AIDA

I got a proposal. I'm gonna bankroll this group. That includes providing a motor home--which I'll drive--a per diem, and a hotel room when necessary. Such as tonight. Any objections?

JIMMY

You shame me with your generosity.

AIDA

I'm a fan, Jimmy.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Jimmy's on his cell phone.

JIMMY

I can't fucking believe it! I specifically said get a cashier's check!

CUT BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN JIMMY AND AMANDA, IN THE CANNON BEDROOM:

AMANDA

Well, if you'd actually spent more than 24 hours AT HOME, you could've handled the fire sale yourself!

JIMMY

Call the cops. This is grand theft auto.

AMANDA

YOU CALL THE COPS! Be a fucking man and take care of business!

(Beat)

Oh...Phil called. Seems you fucked up with the driver.

JIMMY

Phil had no right.

AMANDA

Right, keep ol' wifey in the dark. That's always been your way. Well, lemme shine a light. We're about to lose our home, and when your little rock and roll dream tour is over, you'll come back and find us gone, too.

Amanda flips her phone shut.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Jimmy, at a desk, picks up his guitar, looks over some handwritten lyrics on hotel stationery sitting on the desk. Next to the lyrics, an ENVELOPE addressed "TO MY CHILDREN."

Jimmy clicks on his digital recorder, puts it next to the lyrics.

Jimmy sings the song, which he started writing back on the tour bus.

JIMMY

(Fighting back tears)

Hey there, Jesus, come back quick. /
 This old world has made me sick. /
 No one told me when I got old / A
 hot-blooded girl would turn so cold.
 / House of poison, where I beg / To
 feed on crumbs and drink the dregs.
 / Hey there, Jesus, come back quick.
 / This old world has made me sick. /
 The day the groom swears his oath /
 It's joy or slavery, / can't have
 both. / House of poison, house of
 pain. / I won't see daylight again.
 / Hey there, Jesus, come back quick.
 / This old world has made me sick. /
 I'm ready to die. I see my doom. /
 Take the world. Take it soon.

The recording finished, Jimmy clicks off the recorder.

Jimmy rips the bedsheets from the bed, ties them end-to-end into a longer length.

Jimmy goes into the bathroom. He ties one end of the sheets to the shower rod, steps atop the toilet, ties the other end of the sheets around his neck, then steps off into space.

The shower rod clatters down into the tub.

Jimmy unties the sheets from the shower rod, goes back into the main room.

Jimmy moves the bed to the wall, below the window.

Jimmy loops the end of the sheets around a bed stand leg.

Jimmy opens the window, climbs up to the ledge.

EXT. THE HOTEL - NIGHT

Jose and Aida walk the street below the hotel.

Aida's on her phone.

AIDA
 Yes, a credit line. I'm going to
 buy a motor home tomorrow. Yes,
 I'll wait.

Jose sees a figure balancing in an open window.

JOSE
 Look.

AIDA
 It's Jimmy!

Jimmy jumps. The tied-up sheets play out, then snap tight.
 Jimmy twitches, then dies.

AIDA (CONT'D)
 I'll call back!
 (She hangs up, then
 dials 9-1-1)
 Yes, I'd like to report a suicide.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jose and Aida arrive at the door of Jimmy's hotel room.

Aida tests the door, her sweater sleeve stretched, covering
 her hand. The door swings open.

INT. JIMMY'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Aida scans the room. She sees the lyrics, the digital
 recorder, and the envelope addressed to Jimmy's children.

Aida snatches the lyrics and the digital recorder. She pauses
 at the envelope, decides to leave it.

WE HEAR SIRENS APPROACHING.

AIDA
 Let's clear out before the cops
 arrive.

INT. WADE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Jose, Aida, Wade and Creed meet in Wade's room.

AIDA
 Look, I know I'm not a member. But
 I see a way out of this, and I wanna
 see how y'all feel about my plan.

CREED

I say we grab the bull by the tail
and face the situation.

AIDA

Jimmy Cannon & The Blasters are no
more. His wife and manager will
negotiate posthumous releases and
tributes. You guys under contract?

Wade and Creed and Jose shake their heads.

AIDA (CONT'D)

I suggest you plow forward as a trio.
Jose tells me he's been writing some
songs. How does "The Jackknife Joe
Connection" sound?

Wade and Creed look at Jose: Do they want to make the new
guy the leader?

WADE

(To Creed)

Hell, we can just go home.

CREED

Frankly, I was thinkin' of quittin'
the group before Jimmy offed himself.
But Jose here, if his songs match
his guitar playing, we could be
another Jimi Hendrix Experience.

AIDA

Y'all in?

WADE AND CREED

Yeah.

AIDA

Okay. I'll notify the tour stops,
get transportation lined up, call
Phil, and so on.

CREED

So, you're like, our manager now?

INT. MOTOR HOME - DAY

With Aida at the wheel, speaking into her blue tooth, Jose
runs through some songs with Wade and Creed.

JOSE

(Strumming a guitar)

From your memories of fields at dusk
/ To the little child's innocent
trust / From which he'll someday
have awoken, / Everything beautiful
must be broken.

WADE

I dig it. Like a tribute to Jimmy.

JOSE

Okay. Here's where you guys come
in. At the chorus: Everything
beautiful must be broken. / I hear
the Devil's hammer approachin'. /
Everything beautiful must be broken.

CREED

That's heavy, man.

WADE

Is that, like, Zen or something?

On Aida, speaking to Phil.

AIDA

Yeah, five per cent of the gate,
since you set the tour up.

(Beat)

Oh, Phil, and hey. The night he
died, Jimmy gave me his digital
recorder and some lyrics. Appears
he wrote a farewell song. Assigned
the publishing to me.

(Beat)

No. An oral agreement. My point?
You do a "Best Of" CD, this could be
a dynamite bonus track. I'll license
it to you.

INT. LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY, BATON ROUGE - NIGHT

The capacity-filled auditorium rumbles with expectation.

While Jose, Wade and Creed tune up, Aida steps up to the
mic.

AIDA

Good evening. Though Jimmy Cannon
is gone, we'll still feature his
songs. But this group of fine
musicians has decided on a new
direction. Ladies and gentlemen:
The Jackknife Joe Connection!

The crowd gives a jolly good welcome.

Jose strums his guitar with the opening chords.

JOSE

Buenas noches, Baton Rouge! We'd
like to open with a tribute to our
late friend Jimmy Cannon. It's called
EVERYTHING BEAUTIFUL MUST BE BROKEN.

Jose looks at Wade and Creed. They nod.

JOSE (CONT'D)

From your memories of fields at dusk
/ To the little child's innocent
trust / From which he'll someday
have awoken, / Everything beautiful
must be broken. / Everything beautiful
must be broken. / I hear the Devil's
hammer approachin'. / Everything
beautiful must be broken.

The crowd cheers. Lit lighters, raised.

JOSE (CONT'D)

From the Buddhas of Afghanistan / To
the piano player's lovely hands, /
There's an evil wind a-blowin'. /
Everything beautiful must be broken.
/ Everything beautiful must be broken.
/ Bombed-out monuments still smokin'.
Everything beautiful must be broken.

Jose gathers himself for the high energy bridge.

JOSE (CONT'D)

Seeds we sow survive the fire, /
When the rains begin. / We know what's
been born must die, / To be born
again.

The crowd sways as more lit lighters are raised.

JOSE (CONT'D)

Everything beautiful must be broken.
/ All that is hidden shall be opened.
/ Everything beautiful must be broken.

The song breaks up into chaos. Jose's guitar goes
stratospheric.

Then the song crashes into its climax.

CROWD

Jimmy! Jimmy! Jimmy!

JOSE

Thank you! Gracias! Thank you!

INT. MOTOR HOME - NIGHT

Parked in an RV campground, Jose, Aida, Creed and Wade sit in the kitchen nook, playing poker. Above them, a TV is turned on, with the sound very low.

Wade shuffles the cards.

WADE

Okay, one-eyed jacks are wild.
Everybody put in a quarter.

Creed looks up at the TV.

CREED

Well, lookee who's getting face time.

Viola Ridgewell sits in the TV newsroom, being interviewed by a NEWSMAN.

The caption below Viola reads: "Was Jimmy Cannon Murdered?"

Aida grabs the remote, turns up the volume.

VIOLA

A source within the Jackknife Joe camp tells me that Aida Blue, now managing the remaining members, stalked Jimmy Cannon & The Blasters in her late model BMW.

NEWSMAN

Can you identify the source?

VIOLA

I can only say--at this time--that he is an industry veteran.

WADE

The "legendary" Sid Hillman!

VIOLA

Ex-manager Phil Costanza told me that within 24 hours, Aida Blue had maneuvered herself into managing the group, changing its name to "The Jackknife Joe Connection."

(Beat)

Phil Costanza added that Aida Blue possesses a contraband bootleg of Jimmy's last song.

(MORE)

VIOLA (CONT'D)

She refuses to turn it over, claiming
Jimmy gave it to her before he died.

NEWSMAN

What are the police saying?

VIOLA

Nothing until the autopsy's completed.

NEWSMAN

Thank you, Viola. That's Viola
Ridgeway, with ROLLING STONE magazine.

VIOLA

Full disclosure? I was an intern at
ROLLING STONE. I've since been hired
by MEGAPHONE magazine.

Aida clicks off the TV.

CREED

Well, she's happy as a clam at high
tide.

AIDA

So'm I. Since everything she says is
false, we're in the clear, with a
boatload of publicity.

(Beat)

Hey. Y'all ready for Austin, Texas?

INT. JOSE'S BUNK - NIGHT

Aida's squeezed into Jose's bunk.

Jose's eyes are closed. He's tapping on the side of his
head.

AIDA

Baby...why do you do that?

JOSE

Research.

AIDA

You mean, like meditation?

JOSE

I can access all known things. Right
now, I am researching musical genres.
Have you heard of a group called...Led
Zeppelin?

AIDA
Obscure little English group. Yeah.
(Beat)
Keep those songs comin', darlin'.

EXT. HOTEL SAN JOSE, AUSTIN, TEXAS - DAY

The Hotel San Jose is a funky old place, dripping with atmosphere.

Aida parks the motor home in a parking lot.

EXT. HOTEL SAN JOSE POOL AREA - DAY

Wade and Creed frolic in the pool.

Aida and Jose, at a shaded table. Jose, showing Aida some song ideas.

Albert Grossman appears.

JOSE
Albert! Hi!

ALBERT
Hello, Jose. Staying out of the sun, I see.

AIDA
It's good to finally meet you, sir.
Here to see us at the Music Hall?

ALBERT
I'm here to protect my interests.
May I sit?

Aida gestures to a chair.

AIDA
Jose's stepped up. He's crankin' out great songs.

ALBERT
I hear you're managing the group.

AIDA
Somebody has to.

ALBERT
You're aware Jose's my client?

AIDA
I, uh...

ALBERT

Just so we're clear. You wanna be the group's booking manager-cum-driver? Fine. But Jose's mine.

AIDA

Jose?

JOSE

Albert speaks the truth.

ALBERT

Now, about this nasty spat with Phil Costanza. You claim you own Jimmy Cannon's last recording?

AIDA

He gave it to me the night he died.

ALBERT

Any witnesses?

AIDA

(Turning to Jose)

Jose?

JOSE

I only saw you take it from his room.

AIDA

(Recovering)

That's right. Right. After the interview, Jimmy came up to me to complain about the intern. That's when he offered me the song. Jimmy was clearly distraught.

(Beat)

A beautiful song. It'll break your heart, Albert.

ALBERT

The whole thing stinks. Okay...The Jackknife Joe Connection.

AIDA

I'm bankrollin' 'em. That oughtta count for somethin'.

ALBERT

I'll have my attorney draw up an investment contract.

AIDA
 (Handing Albert a
 business card)
 Have your shark send it to my shark.

ALBERT
 A word with my client?

AIDA
 Sure.

Aida takes off her robe, dives into the pool.

ALBERT
 The media don't like her.

JOSE
 She has been good to us.

ALBERT
 How good?

JOSE
 She loves me.

Pause.

ALBERT
 The Austin Music Hall. It's a major
 gig. You ready?

INT. AUSTIN MUSIC HALL - NIGHT

JADED MUSIC JOURNALISTS, GENERAL MUSIC FANS, and Jimmy Cannon
 & The Blasters DIEHARDS are already swept up, mid-performance,
 as a song climaxes.

JOSE
 Thank you. Thank you, Austin, Texas!

Jose taps an effects box with a toe.

A looping, insistent, throbbing musical figure fills the
 hall.

Jose has completely re-designed REBELICIOUS.

The crowd doesn't recognize Jimmy Cannon's hit song until
 the band approaches the hook.

JOSE (CONT'D)
 I sweat all day, Diggin' ditches. /
 When I get suspicious, She gives me
 kisses. / She runs her fingers down
 (MORE)

JOSE (CONT'D)
 my britches. / Ain't no believer,
 But she made me religious.

The audience recognizes the song and erupts.

JOSE AND BAND
 Rebelicious!

Albert Freeman, standing in the wings, breaks into a huge smile.

JOSE
 In the river, under bridges, / Dixie
 mermaid, with catfishes. / In the
 woods, / in my pick-up truck, / She
 gives the goods, She loves to...
 Rebelicious!

The crowd goes delirious as Jose and the band go into the bridge.

JOSE AND BAND
 She's delicious / As gravy an' grits.
 / Sugar lips, You move your hips! /
 Rebelicious!

Jose begins a towering guitar solo.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. HOTEL ROOM, HOTEL SAN JOSE - NIGHT

Aida and Jose, carrying a guitar case, enter.

Aida clicks on the TV, muted. An ENTERTAINMENT SHOW comes on.

Aida goes to the mini-bar, pulls out several little BOTTLES OF WHISKEY.

AIDA
 Want some?

JOSE
 No. No, thank you.

Aida belts down the mini-whiskeys.

Jose unpacks his guitar, starts noodling.

AIDA
I've had your back. Why didn't you
have mine?

JOSE
"Have your back"? You told me last
night I have your heart.

AIDA
The song, dammit.

JOSE
What song?

AIDA
Jimmy Cannon's farewell ditty. You
told Albert I took it from Jimmy's
room.

JOSE
Yes.

AIDA
WHY?!?

JOSE
That is what happened.

Aida sweeps the mini-bar for more bottles.

Now she's into the vodka.

Unseen by Aida and Jose, the entertainment show features an
interview by Viola Ridgeway of the widow Amanda Cannon.

AIDA
Lemme explain some things to you.
You listening?
(Jose nods)
Stop playing that fucking guitar!

Jose stops playing.

AIDA (CONT'D)
The music business is a cutthroat
enterprise. It killed Jimmy Cannon.

Under the head shot of Amanda Cannon, speaking into Viola's
microphone, we SEE the caption, unseen by Aida and Jose:
"Rumors of Murder Persist."

JOSE
I saw Jimmy kill himself.

AIDA
Oh, God. Where do I begin?

JOSE
You've been good to me. Albert is
good to me. Jimmy was good to me.

On the muted TV, Amanda dabs at her tears with a kleenex.
The caption reads: "Wrongful Death Suit To Come?"

AIDA
Where you come from. Is everybody
good to everybody?

JOSE
Yes.

AIDA
Fucking Mexico? Narcotraffickers
run Chihuahua!

On the muted TV, Viola Ridgeway speaks directly at the viewer.

JOSE
Oh. I thought you meant where I
come from.

Aida sweeps the mini-bar. Now it's brandy.

AIDA
Guapa-something, right?

JOSE
No. Much farther away than
Guapalaina.

The entertainment show cuts to a commercial for a just-
released SCIENCE FICTION FILM about an invasion from outer
space.

AIDA
Like Oaxaca?

JOSE
Myxthalia. A sonic approximation.

AIDA
Where the hell is Myxthalia?

JOSE
Your astronomers call it Epsilon
Eridani. Also, Proxima Eridani, GJ
144.

Aida's head is spinning.

JOSE (CONT'D)

Do you love me?

Pause. Aida picks up the TV remote control and turns off the TV.

AIDA

Yes. Yes, I do.

JOSE

Have I ever lied?

AIDA

You're truthful to a fault.

JOSE

I need a new look.

AIDA

Tell your manager. I'm sure there's a costume budget.

JOSE

A new look.

JOSE TRANSFORMS HIMSELF INTO AN OLIVE-SKINNED MESTIZO, WITH SHORT-CROPPED HAIR AND A GOATEE.

AIDA

It's the vodka, right?

Jose checks himself out in the mirror. He removes his shirt, revealing ORNATE TATTOOS, replicating the designs on the CDs contained in the NASA spacecraft that carried the diagrammed artifacts to distant civilizations.

JOSE

(Indicating his tattoos)

This how we found your planet. You seem afraid. Do not be afraid, Aida Blue.

AIDA

Back at the university. That thing you did with the re-entry computation...

JOSE

For us, it's the equivalent of two plus two.

AIDA

My God. I'm in love with Albert Einstein and Ziggy Stardust...

EXT. THE CANNON FARM - DAY

Press conference: Aida, Jose (wearing outrageous sunglasses), Wade, Creed, Phil Costanza, and Albert Freeman sit at a makeshift table, decked with microphones.

DOZENS OF JOURNALISTS, including Viola Ridgeway, stand ready to cover the event.

Amanda Cannon and her three children stride out of the house, down to the lawn, and over to the table, cheered by everyone.

AIDA

Jimmy Cannon was a musical trailblazer, husband and father. We knew Jimmy as a leader and as a man.

Applause. Amanda's children cling closer to her.

AIDA (CONT'D)

The entire world has heard of a mysterious last song by Jimmy Cannon.
(She holds up the digital recorder)
That song, THIS OLD WORLD, is inside Jimmy's digital recorder. Amanda, may I present this to you?

Aida rises. She and Amanda meet, standing, as cameras snap photos and videocameras tape them. The two women pose, smiling, as Aida hands the digital recorder to Amanda.

Aida produces an ENVELOPE.

AIDA (CONT'D)

We've established a Jimmy Cannon Memorial Fund for the three Cannon children. I'd like to make the first contribution.

(Handing the envelope to Amanda)

Amanda, this envelope contains a check for \$25,000.00.

Amanda, visibly moved, takes the envelope as everyone cheers.

Amanda steps up to a microphone.

AMANDA

Jimmy battled depression all his days. He said the demons that tortured him drove him to make music. Thank you, Ms. Blue.

VIOLA
Will you take questions?

AIDA
No.

AMANDA
No.

The press conference over, Phil Costanza and Albert Freeman huddle for shop talk.

PHOTOGRAPHERS demand that Jackknife Joe pose for them. He cooperates.

PHOTOGRAPHER
Let's have a shot without the shades.

Jose removes his glasses. The photographers snap shots.

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)
Great. Now look thoughtful. Suck on your glasses.

Jose is mystified.

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)
Suck on your glasses.

Jose holds out his sunglasses to the photographer.

JOSE
Would you like to suck on them?

Aida finds all of this hilarious.

AIDA
Okay, fellas. That's enough.

Aida, Jose, Wade and Creed walk off together, toward their rental car.

Viola follows them, her recorder camera at the ready.

VIOLA
Ms. Blue?
(Aida ignores her)
Ms. Blue, was this sudden largesse prompted by your fear of a wrongful death lawsuit?

CREED
Lady, you're as welcome as an outhouse breeze.

VIOLA

Welcome or not, the public has a right to know.

WADE

Lady, you're kickin' a fresh turd on a hot day.

Aida stops and faces Viola.

AIDA

I got a statement. That thing turned on? Okay: "You are a parasite in the musical body. God made parasites. But the devil made the journalist."

(Beat)

Let's go, boys.

VIOLA

Joe, about your new look...

CREED

Lady, you are busier'n a cat coverin' crap on a linoleum floor.

WADE

Getcher butt off yer shoulders...

Lady.

EXT. MILLER OUTDOOR THEATER, HOUSTON, TEXAS - NIGHT

INSERT: MILLER OUTDOOR THEATER, HOUSTON, TEXAS

Under the stars, COUPLES ON BLANKETS groove to the crashing climax of REBELICIOUS.

As the audience cools down:

JOSE

We're gonna slow it down now, on this warm night, under a full moon. All you lovers, cuddle up and enjoy a new thing called ALIVE IN THE KINGDOM OF INFINITE SPACE.

Jose taps his effects box with his foot, turning his guitar into a sitar.

As the sitar spreads its exotic peace over the crowd:

JOSE (CONT'D)

The sound of glasses clinking here and there, / The sound of chamber music in the air, / The tang of citrus flowers in the summer night, /

JOSE (CONT'D)

Your perfumed hair as I hold you
tight, / While we lean against the
old oak bookcase, / Alive in the
Kingdom of Infinite Space. / We'll
fly to the moon in Heaven's embrace,
/ Alive in the Kingdom of Infinite
Space.

INT. GEORGE BUSH INTERCONTINENTAL AIRPORT - NIGHT

Viola Ridgeway, dressed as an outback explorer, checks in
with the DESK ATTENDANT at the UNITED AIRLINES ticket counter.

VIOLA

Viola Ridgeway. Flight 4569 to
Chihuahua, Mexico.

EXT. MILLER OUTDOOR THEATER, HOUSTON, TEXAS - NIGHT

The mood spills into mass eroticism.

JOSE

The taste of cherries on a hot
afternoon, / The curve of your body
while you swoon. / The touch of my
hand on your black lace, / The sound
of the electrical storm across your
face. / I love to love you in infinite
ways, / Alive in the Kingdom of
Infinite Space. / We'll fly to the
moon in Heaven's embrace, / Alive in
the Kingdom of Infinite Space.

FEMALE CROWD MEMBER

Joe! I love you!

Many WOMEN cheer.

A BRASSIERE lands at Jose's feet.

JOSE

The sound of the river over the cliff,
/ I wipe off the mist with your
handkerchief. / Dry mountain air,
the smell of the trees, / The pine
tar stuck to the soles of your feet.
/ Your breathing is deep, your body
vibrates, / Alive in the Kingdom of
Infinite Space. / We'll fly to the
moon in Heaven's embrace, / Alive in
the Kingdom of Infinite Space.

A THONG flies through the air, hooking onto the end of the neck of Jose's guitar.

Jose smiles as he loops the thong around his neck.

Women scream.

Jose's sitar sound rises skyward, then circles, then comes back to earth as the song ends.

WOMEN IN CROWD

Joe! We love you! We love you!

Even the MEN cheer.

INT. HOTEL PROVINCIAL, FRENCH QUARTER, NEW ORLEANS, LA - DAY

The suite looks as though it was designed for the Sun King: canopied bed, love seat, flowers in antique vases everywhere.

Jose, his head and eyebrows now shaved, now a blonde blue-eyed Aryan, lolls on the loveseat, playing his guitar.

Aida's on her cell phone.

AIDA

Awesome, Albert. I'll tell him.
(Aida clicks the phone shut) Demand for tickets is so strong, we're out of the Blue Nile. Albert's booked us at the New Orleans Arena!

Aida throws herself onto the bed.

AIDA (CONT'D)

C'mere, Jackknife. Sharpen your blade.

Jose puts down his guitar, walks to the bed.

As Jose lays atop the welcoming Aida, he loses his new look and transforms into A FIGURE, COMPOSED OF SHIMMERING LIGHT WAVES, the same as when he first emerged from his space craft.

THE SHIMMERING LIGHT WAVES ENGULF AIDA, WHO FALLS INTO AN ECSTATIC TRANCE.

INT. NEW ORLEANS ARENA - NIGHT

INSERT: NEW ORLEANS ARENA

The concert's energy is high, then higher, as blue-eyed Jose, his head and eyebrows shaved, wearing camouflaged fatigues, announces the next song.

JOSE

Since coming here, I have observed
that the truth is often accompanied
by tears.

Jose opens with a bouncy guitar figure. Wade and Creed join in.

JOSE (CONT'D)

When I go ballistic, / Tears a river
to be dammed, / Don't want your damn
statistics./ Statistics all be damned.
/ The pain won't cease. / It's
bulletproof./ Ibelisse, gimme tear-
stained truth./ Ibelisse, Ibelisse,
Daughter of the honest priest. /
You give arms to amputees, Ibelisse.

Jose solos a bit, then launches into the second verse.

JOSE (CONT'D)

When I need direction, / Cast iron
truths rot with rust. / When I need
connection, Tear-stained truth is
all I trust. / My soul needs drink,
My soul needs food. / Ibelisse, gimme
tear-stained truth. / Ibelisse,
Ibelisse, / Hot tears runnin' down
your cheeks / Water all the wand'ring
sheep, Ibelisse.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD, MEXICAN SIERRA MADRE MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

As we HEAR the end of the second verse of TEAR-STAINED TRUTH and charge into the bridge, we SEE a FORD TAURUS navigating a narrow mountain highway in a rainstorm.

JOSE (V.O.)

Buckets of rain fall around me. /
Tear-filled buckets, they just drown
me.

INT. FORD TAURUS - NIGHT

Viola Ridgeway pilots her rented car down the twisting road, into a valley.

JOSE (V.O.)

Sometimes truth is all taboo. /
Tear-stained truth is all I use.

INT. NEW ORLEANS ARENA - NIGHT

JOSE

The Man-God came to find me /
Lost inside the looking glass, /
Demons all behind me, / Chewing on
my checkered past.

A MAN LEAPS ONTO THE STAGE.

JOSE (CONT'D)

Down at a river rendezvous, / Ibelisse
gave me tear-stained truth.

As the SECURITY GUARDS leap into action, the man reveals a
PISTOL.

JOSE (CONT'D)

Ibelisse, Ibelisse, taming all the
wayward beasts / While the haggard
angels weep. / Ibelisse. / Ibelisse.
/ O Ibelisse.

As the band's timing is thrown off and the song decomposes:

MAN

You want tear-stained truth? Here,
cry me a river!

The man raises his pistol at Jose.

As Jose glances his way, the man fires his pistol just before
he's tackled by the security guards.

Instantaneously, Jose shifts into shimmering light waves.

The bullet passes through the shimmering light waves. As
soon as the bullet passes through the shimmering light waves,
they re-form as clean-shaven blue-eyed Jose in the camouflage
outfit.

The bullet hits Wade's upraised cymbal just after he crashes
it, leaving a hole in it.

Pandemonium.

EXT. GUAPALAINA, SIERRA MADRE OCCIDENTAL, NORTHERN MEXICO -
NIGHT

Viola's Ford Taurus bounces to a stop outside Fausto Navaja's
pharmacy.

INT. FORD TAURUS - NIGHT

Viola grabs her Spanish language dictionary, her digital sound recorder and her camera.

INT. PHARMACY - NIGHT

Fausto and Anastacia play checkers while a TV broadcasts on a shelf, the volume low.

Viola enters.

VIOLA
Buenas noches.

FAUSTO
Buenas noches.

VIOLA
I am...escritor. Podemos hablar de tu hijo?

FAUSTO
Ah...Viola Ridgeway!

VIOLA
How do you...?

Fausto gestures toward the TV.

FAUSTO
Global feed.

Viola hesitates, then holds up her recorder and camera.

VIOLA
Puedo?

FAUSTO
Yes.

VIOLA
Your son. Jose. Tell me about him, please.

FAUSTO
Jose came from beyond. As do we all.

VIOLA
Was he always good at music?

FAUSTO
Music is why he came here.

Anastacia gasps, points to the TV.

Anastacia leaps at the TV, turns up the volume.

We SEE a REPLAY OF THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT.

TV NEWSMAN

Nobody was injured. Except for the
alleged assailant, identified as
Gomer Simpson.

Simpson, wild-eyed, unkempt and bruised, screams at the
camera, his profanities beeped out.

GOMER SIMPSON

Mother beep-beep, him and his beepin'
songs, my wife won't stop listenin'!
Beepin' posters everywhere, over our
beepin' bed, I'd had enough!

Simpson is led away by the POLICE.

FEMALE CORRESPONDENT

Jim, amateur tapes reveal something
fascinating.

A shaky video of the assassination attempt starts at Simpson's
approach. As Simpson raises his pistol, the video goes to
slow motion.

FEMALE CORRESPONDENT (CONT'D)

Watch closely, Jim. Just before
Simpson shoots, Jackknife Joe sees
him. As the bullet leaves the barrel,
here--freeze the frame--Jackknife
Joe changes shape. It's only a split
second, but very strange.

VIOLA

Shit! I shoulda been there!

Anastacia crosses herself as we SEE Jose change into the
shimmering light shape and back to camouflage-outfitted
Jackknife Joe.

VIOLA (CONT'D)

(Shifting back into
journalist mode)
Any reaction?

FAUSTO

I never worry about Jose.

VIOLA

Did you teach him these occult tricks?

FAUSTO

Jose taught me far more than I taught him.

(Beat)

Please excuse my wife and me. In all this excitement...

VIOLA

Of course. Of course. Is there a hotel nearby?

FAUSTO

You may sleep in Jose's room. In the back.

INT. BANQUET ROOM, HOTEL PROVINCIAL - NIGHT

Aida Blue holds an impromptu press conference.

AIDA

Fortunately, this was the last date of the Jimmy Cannon tour. The Jackknife Joe Connection's next gig will be in Munich, Germany.

REPORTER

Why Munich?

AIDA

I hitchhiked across Western Europe between high school and my freshman year in college. Munich was really great. It's the right place to launch our European tour.

REPORTER

You hitchhiked alone?

AIDA

Yes.

REPORTER

Were you not terrified? After all, a young woman, alone in a strange country...

AIDA

I always traveled smart.

INT. JOSE NAVAJA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Viola's settled in. She looks around.

VIOLA

(Into her recorder)

I'm here in Joe's childhood room.
His parents seem to've left it as
some kind of shrine. Stringed
instruments are everywhere.

Viola sees two photos on the wall: Bind Willie Johnson and
Jimi Hendrix. She snaps some shots.

VIOLA (CONT'D)

(Into her recorder)

Tomorrow, I'll set out for Guahochi
and The Iguana Bar, where Albert
Freeman's mind was first blown by
Jose Navaja.

Viola turns off the lights in the room. She lays down.

Viola stands. Ultra-silently, she slips out of the room,
outside.

EXT. PHARMACY, GUAPALAINA - NIGHT

Viola takes a breath, looking up at the multitude of stars.

Viola sees a stone storage building, or "bodega," in the
near distance.

Curious, Viola walks toward the bodega.

Viola tries the door. It's locked.

Viola goes around to a window. She feels that it's a bit
ajar. She slides her fingers under its edge and pulls at
the metal frame. It doesn't budge.

Viola snaps a flashlit photo through the window to see what's
inside.

Viola looks at the photo in the camera's back side.

We SEE a CANVAS-COVERED SHAPE inside the bodega. The image
is a bit compromised due to the glass's reflection.

Viola walks over to a rundown barbed-wire fence. She picks
up a metal rod that used to hold up the fence.

Viola walks back to the bodega, slides the metal rod's edge
under the window frame.

Viola levers the window open, wide enough for her to slide
through.

INT. BODEGA - NIGHT

Viola lifts the canvas cover, sees a SHINY SURFACE.

Viola lifts the canvas higher, snaps a flashlit photo.

Viola examines the photo. It's a metallic shape.

Viola slides the canvas entirely away from the shape.

Viola snaps a flashlit photo.

IT'S THE VEHICLE FROM WHICH JOSE EMERGED THE NIGHT FAUSTO
FIRST ENCOUNTERED HIM.

VIOLA

OMIGOD.

Viola slides the canvas back over the vehicle.

INT. PHARMACY - DAY

Viola, Fausto and Anastacia, finishing up their breakfast.

FAUSTO

And where do you go now?

VIOLA

Guahochi.

FAUSTO

Yes. Jose used to perform there. In
a bar.

VIOLA

The Blue Iguana.

FAUSTO

You are very well-informed.

VIOLA

Albert Freeman told me much.

FAUSTO

Alberto!

VIOLA

Uncle Albert just negotiated a huge
contract for Jose. He'll be world
famous soon.

Fausto waves the thought away.

FAUSTO

Join me for a game of checkers?

VIOLA
No, thank you.

FAUSTO
(Winking mischievously
at Viola)
While we play, my wife could enjoy
the photos in your camera.

Pause.

VIOLA
I have no time.

FAUSTO
Do you plan to drive unescorted to
Guahochi?

VIOLA
I can take care of myself.

FAUSTO
May I offer a pistol?

VIOLA
Thank you, sir. But foreigners cannot
carry firearms in Mexico.

FAUSTO
Do not go to Guahochi alone and
unarmed.

INT. FREIHEIZHALLE, MUNICH, GERMANY - DAY

INSERT: FREIHEIZHALLE, MUNICH, GERMANY

Jose, speaking perfect German, glances at BLUEPRINTS,
DRAWINGS, and SCALE MODELS OF AZTEC PYRAMIDS as he discusses
the CONCERT STAGING with the BUILDING CONTRACTOR.

TRADESMEN hammer away, and paint scenery.

A COSTUME DESIGNER presents some drawings to Jose for his
approval.

The VIDEO SHOOT DIRECTOR comes up, carrying a VIDEO CAMERA,
points to various places at an angle from the stage,
suggesting camera angles.

EXT. THE HIGHWAY TO GUAHOCHI - DAY

Viola's Ford Taurus pulls up to a FRUIT STAND at a highway
junction.

Viola exits her car, walks to the fruit display, picks out some fruit.

As she pays:

VIOLA
(Pointing down the
road)
Guahochi?

FRUIT VENDOR
Si.

INT. FORD TAURUS - DAY

Viola pulls up her pants leg, checking the FIVE ONE HUNDRED DOLLAR BILLS taped to her leg.

Viola consults her map.

Viola, confused by the map, starts the car and takes one of the forks in the road.

INT. FREIHEIZHALLE, MUNICH, GERMANY - DAY

GERMAN JOURNALISTS interview Wade and Creed.

JOURNALIST #1
Wade Bumstead: how close did the
bullet come to you?

WADE
Let's just say I felt the breeze.

At another table:

JOURNALIST #2
Creed Taylor: Jackknife Joe's songs
bend time and space. As a Southerner,
do you find that strange?

CREED
Not at all. I have a personal, secret
protocol to use if I ever go back in
time and meet myself. If anyone ever
greet me with this protocol, I'll
know that it's me, from the future.

Back to Wade:

WADE
I compulsively spell words with my
Cheerios.

Back to Creed:

CREED

I prefer earthquakes to tornadoes.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Viola's Ford Taurus, covered in dust, stops at a sign: SAN MIGUEL DE CRUCES.

Viola activates the windshield wipers in order to clear the dust and read the sign.

Driving ahead, Viola enters San Miguel de Cruces, once a mining town, then home to a lumber sawmill.

Dilapidated buildings, boarded-up stores.

Viola stops at a small store, leaves her car, enters the store.

INT. STORE - DAY

A TEEN-AGED GIRL watches a small black-and-white TV.

VIOLA

Hotel? Aqui?

The girls sighs, calls out to the back room.

An OLD WOMAN appears. She and the teen-aged girl speak.

The old woman leads Viola outside.

EXT. STORE - DAY

OLD WOMAN

(Pointing in the
direction from which
Viola just came)

Campamiento para turistas. Muy moderno!

VIOLA

I just came from there.

OLD WOMAN

Campamiento para turistas. Muy moderno!

Viola enters her car, starts it up, backs out, turns around, heads back down the dusty road.

Viola sees a BLUE SIGN, with DIAGRAMS of HORSES, CABINS and FISH: CENTRO TURISTICO.

Viola turns down the rutted dirt road.

The Ford Taurus surmounts a rise, before dropping down into a cluster of cabins next to a trout hatchery.

The afternoon shadows lengthen.

The Ford Taurus pulls up next to an OLD FORD TRUCK. TWO MEXICAN MEN in their mid-30s lean against it.

Viola parks and emerges from her car.

VIOLA

Puedo rentar una casita?

One Mexican, ABEL, is tall and thin, with missing front teeth.

The other Mexican, LUPE, is squat.

Both Mexican men have cocaine traces below their nostrils.

Dialogue between Viola, Lupe and Abel will be conducted in a blend of Spanish, English, and Spanglish.

ABEL

You are alone?

VIOLA

I am a writer. I am researching a musician named Jose Navaja.

LUPE

Oh, Spaceboy! You are his sweetheart?

VIOLA

I am writing his biography. He is very famous now.

ABEL

I went to America once. To your fucking Disneyland.

VIOLA

How much for a cabin?

LUPE

Two hundred dollars a night.

VIOLA

I cannot afford that. Who can afford that?

ABEL

Them.

Abel points to a GARISHLY DRESSED MAN and his BEAUTIFUL WOMAN stepping into a NEW PICK-UP TRUCK WITH STEER HORNS ON THE HOOD.

LUPE
Narcotraficantes.

ABEL
(Rolling a cigarette)
There is a campground two kilometers that way. You can spend the night there for free.

LUPE
You have a pistol?

VIOLA
No.

ABEL
Aren't you afraid someone will kill you?

VIOLA
Why would anyone want to kill me?

LUPE
To please the trigger finger.

ABEL
(Lighting his cigarette)
Pay us to guard you.

LUPE
We are excellent shots.

ABEL
We will prove our skill.

Abel trots over to a tree, wedges his cigarette into the bark.

Abel trots back, opens his truck's door, emerges with a PISTOL.

ABEL (CONT'D)
I will extinguish my cigarette. You will buy me a case of tesquino. If I fail, I will pay for your cabin.

Abel aims his pistol. He fires in the dusk.

The cigarette still smolders, two millimeters from a bullet hole.

ABEL (CONT'D)

Let me check.

Abel trots to the tree, looks at the cigarette, shoots it point blank.

LUPE

Sorry. No cabin for you. What do you say we get drunk together?

Abel trots back.

ABEL

I am sorry. We forgot to check your identity.

Viola shows them her passport.

LUPE

The gringa has a tourist permit?

ABEL

I lacked a tourist permit. La migra threw me out of your fucking Disneyland.

Viola shows them her tourist permit.

VIOLA

I would love to drink with you, but I must be going.

LUPE

With no one to protect you?

Viola, smiling, backs toward her car.

We HEAR Jose's version of DARK WAS THE NIGHT (the Blind Willie Johnson song he performed in Guahochi at the The Blue Iguana) fading in.

INT. FREIHEIZHALLE, MUNICH, GERMANY - NIGHT

The entire interior of the Freiheizhalle is decked out like an Aztec city before the arrival of Cortez: PYRAMIDS and FLOWERS, the ceiling covered with a SCRIM that shows THOUSANDS OF WHITE STARS.

An INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCE has packed the Freiheizhalle, and they are entranced by the decor.

Jose and his band are opening their concert with DARK WAS THE NIGHT, which we are already hearing.

Jose's new look: A 19TH CENTURY BRITISH SAILOR.

A HUGE IMAGE of BLIND WILLIE JOHNSON is projected above the stage.

The band fades out DARK WAS THE NIGHT, and fades into INVITATION, a brisk rocker with a spacey edge.

JOSE

Don't look at my face / See what I
have in my hand. / I hold the key /
To a different place / Where you'll
find the New Man / On the stairway
to the stars.

Jose points to the ceiling. The white stars change into a multitude of twinkling colors.

The crowd cheers.

JOSE (CONT'D)

I come from beyond. / Gravity and
light they bent me. / See me now
before I am gone, / Back to those
who sent me / Down the stairway to
the stars.

As video cameras swoop for new angles, Jose CHANGES HIS LOOK TO QUETZALCOATL, THE AZTEC PLUMED SERPENT.

Women gasp.

JOSE (CONT'D)

We are carbon-based / Blessed with
unlimited minds, / Connected to where
we can't be traced. / A place no
mortal can find / But on the stairway
to the stars. / I was chosen for
this task / By the Elders who tested
me. / They never did ask. / Now I've
come to set you and me free / On the
stairway to the stars.

AS SPOTLIGHTS TURN ON THEM, THREE BEAUTIFUL YOUNG "AZTEC MAIDENS" EMERGE FROM THREE OF THE AZTEC PYRAMIDS.

Each carries a FRESH, BLOODY HEART, held out before her.

JOSE (CONT'D)

We are carbon-based / Blessed with
unlimited minds, / Connected to where
we can't be traced. / A place no
mortal can find / But on the stairway
to the stars.

The three young Aztec maidens walk down the pyramid steps to flank Jose.

JOSE (CONT'D)

Don't look at my face / See what I
have in my hand. / I hold the key /
To a different place / Where you'll
find the New Man / On the stairway
to the stars.

As the band swells into the song's ending, the three Aztec maidens smear the hearts all over Jose's face and body.

The three Aztec maidens toss what remains of the hearts into the audience.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - NIGHT

Viola lays in her sleeping bag, staring into to a roaring fire, as she speaks into her digital recorder.

VIOLA

The barriers confronting the female
journalist are not insurmountable.
I will transcend them AND GET MY
STORY.

Viola sees a SCORPION crawling toward her. She gasps, turns off her recorder, leaps out of her sleeping bag, lifts the bag to the top of a nearby cement picnic table, then climbs into it, well off the ground.

We HEAR a truck approaching through the woods. Its high beams slice the trees.

Viola leaps out of her bag, stuffs it under the table and bolts for the woods.

From behind a tree, Viola sees Abel and Lupe stop their truck next to her fire.

ABEL

Donde esta la gringa?

Lupe slams the truck into first gear, and they set out through the forest, high beams seeking their prey.

Viola splashes across a creek and bounds up the hillside.

The pick-up truck gets stuck in the creekside mud.

Lupe and Abel leap out, flashlights trained on the night's shadows.

INT. FREIHEIZHALLE, MUNICH, GERMANY - NIGHT

As the applause fades, Jose touches his keyboard, and a synthesized string pad swirls out over the audience.

Jose strums his 12 string guitar, the chords chiming over the string pad.

The three Aztec maidens, in homage to German playwright Bertolt Brecht, draw a chalk circle on the floor around Jose.

JOSE

I never met Blind Willie Johnson.
That is one of my regrets. But
through Mister Johnson, I became
acquainted with the reason the night
was dark...

The three Aztec maidens rise, then take their place behind Jose, where they will add harmonies.

JOSE (CONT'D)

I'm calling you to pay back all I
owe. / The gods got mad at Jackknife
Joe. / I came to you from far away.
/ I did not know I'd have to pay. /

Jose mimes attempting to break free of the chalk circle. He can't escape its invisible walls.

JOSE (CONT'D)

This world will force you into lies.
/ Put out your eyes, / You'll survive
this world's infection. / Your vile
affections.

The lighting changes as the rhythm section joins in.

Jose trades his 12 string acoustic for an electric guitar.

JOSE (CONT'D)

You know what's right. You do wrong.
/ You know what's weak. You call it
strong. / Upside down is right side
up. / You see false gold, your eyes
light up. / Why drink the poison
that will kill? / Why betray your
soul for the thrill / Of false
connection / And vile affections?

Jose bashes out some power chords as Wade and Creed join him.

THE BAND

Vile affections. / Vile affections.

The song intensifies.

Jose breaks the chalk circle with his toe, and steps out of the circle. The crowd applauds.

JOSE

You are loved and you are judged /
 By the enemy who lives in your blood.
 / Tradition tells you how to think,
 what to do. / There's another way:
 Let God be true. / I look around,
 it's built on lies. / Open your eyes,
 you'll survive / The everyday
 deceptions / And vile affections.

Jose and his band summon the heavens now.

THE BAND

Vile affections. Vile affections.

The song fades.

As the crowd cheers, Jose cuts through the noise.

JOSE

Thank you. Gracias. Schönen Dank.
 (The Germans love
 this)
 Besten Dank.

Pause. A hard spotlight shines on Jose.

JOSE (CONT'D)

This is the last concert we'll ever
 do. You--all of you, every person
 on Earth--have been so wonderful.
 We'll meet again. Past the end of
 days!

The Germans buzz, as English speakers translate for their
 friends.

JOSE (CONT'D)

Down in the ravine, a snake lies
 coiled. / Leaning from the cliff, a
 bird so royal / Leaps into space. /
 Sundown silhouette, into the west, /
 Carrying the seeds the snake has
 blessed, / Falling from grace.

Creed Taylor, on bass, rips his vocal cords on the chorus:

CREED

When the sky spreads like a curtain,
 / you will know you will know for
 certain, / You will face the Astral
 Rays. / Meet me past the End of Days.

JOSE

Stars prick the black night. Bonfires
burn gold. / Survivors plan war as
hearts grow cold / Next to the blaze.

EXT. THE MEXICAN FOREST - NIGHT

While we HEAR the performance of MEET ME PAST THE END OF
DAYS, we SEE Viola hiding behind a boulder, peering over it
as two flashlight beams crisscross the dark forest.

JOSE (V.O.)

Children of the Mask / sharpen their
knives / On bloody whetstones covered
with flies / Crawling sideways.

CREED (V.O.)

When the sky spreads like a curtain,
/ you will know you will know for
certain, / You will face the Astral
Rays. / Meet me past the End of Days.

The flashlight beams recede.

Viola waits a moment, then treads carefully down the hillside.

JOSE (V.O.)

Your idea of the future is so very
old fashioned. / What is now proven
was once only imagined.

Viola sees the sky growing a bit light in the East, over a
mountain, as she tiptoes down the ravine. Day will break
soon.

JOSE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Red sky at morning signals the dead.
/ They fill the ravine, souls full
of dread, / While time decays.

Viola sees her campsite. Lupe and Abel are passed out by
the fire.

Viola drops down to her hands and knees, and crawls ever so
slowly toward her camp.

INT. FREIHEIZHALLE, MUNICH, GERMANY - NIGHT

Jose enters the last verse, his vocals accompanied by Creed,
Wade and the three Aztec maidens.

THE BAND

Sing me a proud song. Salute what's
gone. / Now dance for the sun,
Children of Dawn, / My proteges.

On the screen above the stage, we SEE a FILMED SCENE of an AZTEC WARRIOR climbing aboard a SPANISH GALLEON. He takes the steering mechanism and pilots the sailing ship into the sky.

CREED

When the sky spreads like a curtain,
/ you will know you will know for
certain, / You will face the Astral
Rays. / Meet me past the End of Days.
/ Meet me past the End of Days!

Jose and his band build to a climax, then crash to silence.

The Germans rise and cheer.

EXT. THE MEXICAN FOREST - NIGHT

Barely breathing, Viola silently reaches the cement picnic table.

As quietly as possible, Viola pulls her sleeping bag toward her.

Then Viola sprints to her Ford Taurus.

Viola swings the door open, throws her sleeping bag on the passenger seat, dives into the driver's seat, then fumbles for her keys.

Lupe wakes up, nudges Abel.

Viola slides her key into the ignition. She turns the key. The engine growls, then roars.

Viola slams the car into gear, sprays gravel, as Abel rises, sways drunkenly, pulls out his pistol, and aims.

INT. FREIHEIZHALLE, MUNICH, GERMANY - NIGHT

Wade slams his drums, making a gun shot sound.

JOSE

I want to pay tribute to Jimmy Cannon.
Ladies and gentlemen, REBELICIOUS!

On the screen above the stage, Jimmy Cannon's face appears, stolen from an old MTV video.

The tech crew has salvaged the master vocal from an old master recording.

As rehearsed, Jose and the band play the opening of the song. The tech crew cues Jimmy's vocal performance, synchronized with the live band.

JIMMY

I sweat all day, / Diggin' ditches.
/ When I get suspicious, / She gives
me kisses. / She runs her fingers /
Down my britches. / Ain't no believer,
/ But she made me religious.

JIMMY & THE BLASTERS

Rebelicious!

JIMMY

In the river, / Under bridges, /
Dixie mermaid, / With catfishes. In
the woods, / In my pick-up truck, /
She gives the goods, / She loves
to...

JIMMY & THE BLASTERS

(The crowd sings along)

Rebelicious!

JIMMY & THE BLASTERS (CONT'D)

She's delicious as gravy an' grits.
/ Sugar lips, you move your hips!
(The crowd sings along) Rebelicious!

Some AUDIENCE MEMBERS rush the stage. The SECURITY CREW
repels them.

JIMMY

My coon dog, / he was vicious /
Till he met / my Dixie mistress. /
She cleans my junk, no big deal. /
I get drunk, she takes the wheel!

JIMMY & THE BLASTERS

(With the crowd)

Rebelicious! / She don't care / about
Cajun riches. / She finds diamonds /
repetitious. / Rebelicious!

Jose changes himself to shimmering light waves.

The audience gasps.

Jose changes back to his original look when he first came to
Los Angeles.

JOSE

Thank you. Gracias. Schönen Dank!
Besten Dank! Love each other...or
perish.

Aida Blue runs out from the wings, embraces Jose.

Arm-in-arm, Jose and Aida run offstage.

As the cheers of the crowd fade behind them, Jose and Aida run through the music hall's catacombs and out to an alley, where a limousine awaits.

AIDA
To the airport!

EXT. HIGHWAY, MEXICAN SIERRA MADRE - DAY

Viola pulls her Ford Taurus over to the side of the road, at the edge of a spectacular canyon.

We SEE TWO BULLET HOLES: One in the car's rear window (where Abel's bullet entered the car), the other in the front window (where the bullet exited, after--clearly--having passed inches from Viola's head).

INT. FORD TAURUS - DAY

VIOLA
(Into her hand held
digital recorder)
Close escape. I'll recount it later,
after I photograph this SPECTACULAR
vista!

Viola clicks off her recorder.

Viola checks the glove compartment, then the between-the-seats storage space, then the door storage spaces, then--now frantic---under the front seats.

Viola cannot find her camera.

EXT. CHIHUAHUA AIRPORT - DAY

A 747 lands.

EXT. HIGHWAY, MEXICAN SIERRA MADRE - DAY

A LAND ROVER tools down the highway, along the spine of the Mexican Sierra Madre.

INT. LAND ROVER - DAY

Aida, at the wheel, activates the sunroof mechanism.

The roof slides back, leaving Aida and Jose, noodling on his guitar, in brilliant sun.

AIDA
Three hours to Guapalaina?

JOSE

Mas o menos.

EXT. GUAPALAINA - DAY

As dusk falls on the village, Viola's Ford Taurus pulls up to Fausto's pharmacy.

INT. PHARMACY - DAY

Fausto and Anastacia play checkers.

Viola enters.

FAUSTO

Senora Ridgeway! What brings you back?

VIOLA

Buenos dias, Senor Navaja. He perdido mi camera.

FAUSTO

I am so sorry to hear that. For a journalist, that must be an incalculable loss.

VIOLA

Would you possibly have it?

Fausto raises his hands, palms upward, and shrugs.

FAUSTO

Perhaps my son may be of service.

VIOLA

Your son?

FAUSTO

He telephoned earlier today. He's going home!

Viola processes this information.

FAUSTO (CONT'D)

Guahochi was hospitable?

VIOLA

I never arrived.

FAUSTO

But you are unharmed. That is what is important.

(Beat)

Game of checkers?

VIOLA

Of course.

Anastacia smiles, rises, surrenders her seat to Viola.

VIOLA (CONT'D)

I'm really better at chess.

Fausto smiles, realigns the pieces on the board.

EXT. GUAPALAINA - NIGHT

Aida's Land Rover pulls up next to Viola's Taurus.

Aida and Jose emerge from the Land Rover.

AIDA

(Looking at the dust-
covered Taurus's
bullet-holed windows)

Boy, somebody's had a close call.

Aida and Jose enter the pharmacy.

Anastacia springs out from behind the counter. Fausto rises from the checkerboard table.

ANASTACIA

Mijo! Mijo!

Anastacia smothers Jose in kisses and hugs.

Fausto embraces his son. They speak in Raramuri, with English subtitles.

JOSE

May I present my friend, Aida Blue?

Fausto and Anastacia shake Aida's hand.

FAUSTO

(In English)

Welcome, Aida. Our son appears to
be in good hands.

(To Jose, in Raramuri)

You appear to have conquered the
world!

JOSE

I think this world conquered me.

FAUSTO

You dodged a bullet. That is true.

JOSE
Speaking of bullets...
(He gestures out to
the street)

FAUSTO
She is in the lady's room.
(Gesturing to the
checkerboard)
Planning her next assassin's move!

Viola emerges from the rear of the pharmacy.

AIDA
What are you doing here?

VIOLA
Getting the story. Got a problem
with that?

JOSE
Hello, Ms. Ridgeway.

VIOLA
I hear Munich was a triumph.

AIDA
We'll provide a free DVD to legitimate
media people.

VIOLA
I look forward to receiving my copy.
You'll autograph it, I hope?

AIDA
Jose kicked ass. You appear to've
come out on the short end of an ass-
kicking yourself.

VIOLA
Aw, what's a bullet to an intrepid
journalist?

AIDA
We all await your truthful account.
MEGAPHONE magazine, yes?

VIOLA
I'll send you a gift subscription.

AIDA
Please excuse us. It's been a long
day.

FAUSTO

(To Viola)

You must accept my apologies. We do not have the sleeping space to offer you this time. You must leave now.

VIOLA

Thank you for your hospitality, Senor Navaja.

Viola leaves.

FAUSTO

(To Jose, in Raramuri)

The pilgrim stayed in your room one night only.

EXT. THE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Viola pulls off the highway, into a grove of trees.

Viola exits her car, climbs through a barbed wire fence, and trots off across a field.

INT. JOSE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jose and Aida, staring at the ceiling, are entwined on Jose's bed.

JOSE

It is time.

Jose and Aida rise.

INT. THE BODEGA - NIGHT

Jose unfurls the canvas covering from the spacecraft. Aida helps him fold it neatly in a corner.

Jose and Aida push the spacecraft out of the bodega.

EXT. A NEARBY GROVE OF TREES - NIGHT

Viola watches Jose and Aida from her hiding place.

EXT. NEAR THE BODEGA - NIGHT

Jose opens the vehicle's hatch.

AIDA

Please. Please.

JOSE

No. I have already explained. You could not survive the journey.

AIDA

I will die from your absence. Better
to perish by your side.

JOSE

No. I must depart, before the
alignment fades.

Aida lifts her miniature video camera. Points it at Jose,
its small light illuminating Jose's face.

AIDA

Final words?

JOSE

(Into the camera)
Love each other...or perish.

Aida sobs, sinks to her knees.

AIDA

Please let me come!

Jose kisses Aida, wipes a tear, places it on his tongue,
then changes to shimmering light as he climbs into the space
craft.

AIDA (CONT'D)

No!

The spacecraft hums, then glows, then shimmers.

The spacecraft rises in a blur and disappears.

Sobs wrack Aida's heaving body.

EXT. A NEARBY GROVE OF TREES - NIGHT

Viola, weeping, emerges from behind a tree.

Viola looks heavenward, starlight illuminating her tears.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

The CLOSING CREDITS will intercut with a live performance of
JACKKNIFE JOE, the title song.

The performers will include EVERY CHARACTER from the film,
EXCEPT JOSE. Jimmy Cannon will sing the lead, with Wade and
Creed accompanying him on drums and bass, and vocals.

The other characters will sing harmonies and back-up vocals.

JIMMY

He fell with the meteors / High up
on a stone plateau. / Raised by the
Tarahumara, / Down in Chihuahua,
Mejico.

THE CAST

Jackknife Joe!

JIMMY AND CAST

Sent here for reasons unclear. / For
those with ears to hear / Jackknife
Joe. / Music, L.A. to Munich, / Made
him homesick. / He had to go.

JIMMY

He burned up the concert halls / and
made his guitar glow. / As our sense
of time dissolved, / all we saw was
Jackknife Joe.

THE CAST

Jackknife Joe!

JIMMY AND CAST

Sent here for reasons unclear. / For
those with ears to hear, / Jackknife
Joe. / Music, L.A. to Munich, / Made
him homesick. / He had to go.

THE CAST

(Without Jimmy)

We hung from the balcony / to see
the alien / Changing his colors like
a chameleon. / Indian and galleon,
sailing on...

JIMMY

Fell in love with a human girl. /
Aida Blue was her name. / Paparazzi
tried to break their world. /
Jackknife Joe could not be tamed.

THE CAST

Jackknife Joe!

JIMMY AND CAST

Sent here for reasons unclear. / For
those with ears to hear, / Jackknife
Joe. / Music, L.A. to Munich, / Made
him homesick. / He had to go.

OUTRO, AND FADE.

THE END

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THE ORIGINAL SONGS:

1. "Invitation": Reinaldo Garcia
2. "Everything Beautiful Must Be Broken": Andrew Parker/Reinaldo Garcia
3. "Rebelicious": Reinaldo Garcia
4. "White Trash in Your City": Reinaldo Garcia
5. "I Fall in Love (A Hundred Times a Day)": Reinaldo Garcia
6. "This Old World": Reinaldo Garcia
7. "Alive in the Kingdom of Infinite Space": Reinaldo Garcia
8. "Tear-Stained Truth": Reinaldo Garcia
8. "Vile Affections": Reinaldo Garcia
9. "Meet Me Past the End of Days": Reinaldo Garcia
10. "Jackknife Joe": Reinaldo Garcia

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