

LOG #028

"THE FABULOUS BAKER BOYS"

An Original Screenplay

by

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WARNER BROS.INC.

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"THE FABULOUS BAKER BOYS"

FADE IN:

JACK BAKER

is standing before a dirty window, looking
out at a dirty city street. He is wearing a tuxedo.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hey.

WIDEN ANGLE

It's the GIRL from this afternoon.

JACK

Hey.

Jack looks at the Girl, sleepy and warm under the
bedcovers, then at the rest of the apartment.
Not good.

GIRL

Whatcha doin' over there?

JACK

Gotta go.

GIRL
How come?

JACK
Job.

The Girl glances at the bedside clock.

GIRL
Funny hours.

JACK
Funny job.

GIRL
Will I see you again?

Jack looks out at the dirty street again.

JACK
No.

The Girl doesn't appear terribly unnerved by this.

GIRL
(at the tux)
You weren't wearing that, were
you? Earlier.

Jack shakes his head, taps a brown paper bag on
the sill.

JACK
Brought it.

GIRL
Shit, thank God. You look like a creep.

JACK
Thanks.

GIRL
I mean, I'd hate to think I'd pick up someone
who wore that shit.

Jack smiles, grabs the paper bag, and moves to
the door.

GIRL
(continuing)
Hey.

(as he stops)
You got great hands.

EXT. STREET - JACK

Jack ain't exactly Cary Grant, but any guy wearing a tux on these streets doesn't exactly mesh with the milieu. Pausing for a flask of whiskey at an all-night liquor store, he breaks the seal before he hits the sidewalk and moves on, drinking as he goes. Finally, he comes to a nice downtown hotel. Slipping the bottle in his coat, he squints up at the glittering building as if sizing up an opponent.

DOORMAN
Hey, Jackie!

JACK
How goes it, Tommy?

TOMMY (DOORMAN)
(shrugging)
Ah, you know. Howsa pooch?

JACK
Losing his teeth.

TOMMY
No shit. It's the goddamn water. Kill an ox. I buy bottled for my Danny. You can't trust the taps.

JACK
Yeah.
(standing back)
Jesus, you look like fucking royalty, Tommy.

Tommy brushes at his new velvet coat.

TOMMY
Yeah. The big boys sent it down yesterday.

JACK
Another five years, huh?

TOMMY
Like clockwork. You got a good memory, Jackie.

JACK

It ain't always a blessing. My
brother here?

TOMMY

(nodding)
He's got blood in his eye.

Jack glances at his watch, waves to Tommy, and
moves into the hotel.

INT. HOTEL - ANGLE ON FRANK

Jack's older brother, FRANK, is pacing outside the
lounge when he sees Jack approaching.

FRANK

Great. Terrific. Glad you could
make it.

JACK

How we doing?

FRANK

How we ... ? What, are you kidding
me?

JACK

Am I late?

FRANK

That's not the point.

JACK

(taking out a cigarette)
What's the point?

FRANK

You cannot continue to walk in at
the last moment, Jack.

JACK

You want me to show up late a few
nights?

FRANK

Jack.

JACK

Frank.

FRANK

Jack.

JACK

Frank. I'm here. I always get here. Don't sweat it.

FRANK

Christ, will you look at your hair?

ANOTHER ANGLE

Jack turns to the wall, which is paneled in tiny tinted mirrors shot through with veins of gold.

JACK

What's wrong with it?

FRANK

You look like you just crawled out of bed.

JACK

No one's gonna be looking at my hair. Come on, we're on.

Frank just stands there, bottled up with exasperation.

JACK

(continuing)

Careful, Frank. When you get angry your tie starts to spin.

Jack steps into the lounge and Frank, shaking his head, follows. As they move away, a cardboard stand-up is revealed. On it are two 8 X 10 glossies of Frank and Jack, and below printed in bold letters, this: "Tonight! The Doubly Delightful Tones of the Fabulous Baker Boys!"

BAKER BROTHERS

as they make their way through the dimly-lit lounge and settle behind matching pianos, it becomes apparent that what the "Fabulous Baker Boys" are, in fact, is a poor man's version of Ferrante and Teicher.

WIDER ANGLE INCLUDING LOUNGE

As they begin to plink out their "theme song" tables of middle-aged couples sipping enormous banana daiquiries begin to tap their feet and bob their heads. After a few bars, the boys finish with a flourish and the couples applaud.

FRANK

(Mr. Smile)

Thank you. Thank you. Good evening and welcome to the Starfire lounge. My name is Frank Baker and eighty-eight keys across from me is my little brother, Jack.

Applause. Little brother Jack smiles, winks, and takes a draw on his cigarette.

FRANK

(continuing; could do this in his sleep)

You know, my brother and I have been playing together, gosh, I don't know. How long has it been, Jack?

JACK

Twenty-eight years, Frank.

Applause.

FRANK

That's a lot of water under the bridge, eh, Jack?

JACK

Lotta water.

FRANK

Of course, back then, things were a little different. I was eight, Jack was seven, just about the only song we knew was 'My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean', and the only one who would listen to us was the family cat, Cecil.

(to Jack)

We must have shaved three lives off that cat, eh, Jack?

Laughter. Jack smiles like he's got a mouth full of razor blades.

FRANK

(continuing)

But seriously. It's been fifteen years since Jack and I first stepped on the stage as professionals. Three states, sixty-eight cities, and more-grayhairs-then-we'd-like-to-admit later... well, believe me, we've seen our share of this crazy country of ours. But even though we've played some of the finest venues in the world ...

At this point, Jack begins to mimic his brother's words.

FRANK

(continuing)

... There's one place that's always been, for us, a very special place, and that place is... this place, the Starfire lounge.

Jack lays in a few soft bass chords.

FRANK

(continuing)

Why? Well, I guess you could just say it's the ...

(pregnant moment)

... people.

At which point Frank's hands descend onto the keyboard and give birth to the melody of -- what else? "People."

JACK AND FRANK - LATER

They exit the stage to applause.

FRANK

Thank you. Remember, room service is available till one A.M. for you late-nighters.

INT. HOTEL KITCHEN

Jack and Frank pass through the steamy hotel kitchen.

FRANK

Don't make trouble, all right?

JACK

Who's gonna make trouble?

(spotting someone)

Hey, amigo!

JACK'S POV - MAN

in an apron, cutting meat off a huge soup bone,
looks up.

BACK TO SCENE

MAN

Jack!

(lower)

Frank.

FRANK

(the feeling's mutual)

Yeah, hi, Hector.

HECTOR (MAN)

(re: the soup bone)

For Eddie. I wrap.

JACK

Gracias.

FRANK

(as they exit)

I mean it, Jack. Behave.

JACK

Like an angel.

INT. OFFICE

Frank stands across the desk from a YOUNG MAN who, despite his youth, has an irritatingly paternal attitude toward the two men in his office. Jack stays in the doorway, smoking a cigarette, as if to venture any further is to risk contracting some hideous disease.

LLOYD (YOUNG MAN)

(preparing a cash envelope)

Terrific, boys. Really. Terrific.

FRANK

Thanks, Lloyd.

LLOYD

Yes, sir. You're just what we needed on a night like this.

FRANK

Uh ... thanks.

Frank glances at Jack and realizes he should have left him in the kitchen with Hector and the soup bone.

LLOYD

Only, Jack, do me a favor, will ya, pal? If you wanna smoke, put on a pair of sunglasses and go play with the niggers on State Street. These blisters from the midwest don't wanna watch some guy dripping ash all over himself while he's playing 'The Sound of Music.'

ANGLE - JACK

Smoke curls out of Jack's nose. He is utterly still, like a pit bull eyeing a steak.

BACK TO SCENE

LLOYD

Okay, boys, that ought to buy you a few more lessons. By the way, Frankie, I'm declaring this.

Lloyd slaps a slender envelope onto the desk and, business closed, busies himself with other matters.

FRANK

Uh ... You don't know when you'll be wanting us back, do you, Lloyd?

LLOYD

I'll call you.

FRANK

Uh, well, you know, the way our schedule is, I thought maybe...

LLOYD

I'll call you.

Frank bites down and takes the envelope from the desk.

JACK

Count it.

FRANK

Huh?

JACK

Count it.

FRANK

Jack...

JACK

Count the fucking money, Frank.

Lloyd looks up. Jack is staring right into him.
Reluctantly, Frank opens the envelope.

FRANK

It's all here.

(pulling Jack out)

I'll be talking to you, Lloyd.

Lloyd doesn't answer. He just looks at Jack, smiling
with amusement.

EXT. STREET - JACK AND FRANK

Jack comes out onto the street holding the wrapped
soup bone, dogged by Frank, who's got the cardboard
stand-up under his arm.

FRANK

You mind telling me what that was about in there?

Was that planned?

Or were you just bored and decided
to get creative?

JACK

Fuck him.

FRANK

This isn't the Pine Tree Inn on
Route 81, Jack.

JACK

Fuck him.

FRANK

(to himself)

Fuck him. Great. Terrific. Fuck him.

The fabulous Bakers walk in silence until they come to
Frank's car. Frank opens the trunk and starts to put
the stand-up away.

JACK

So we on tomorrow night?

FRANK

(shaking his head)

Maybe Thursday. I hear the harpist at the Sheraton's got appendicitis.

Jack nods and starts to walk away.

FRANK

(continuing)

Hey.

Jack stops.

FRANK

(continuing)

Listen ... why don't you come out to the house this weekend. Say hello to the kids. They've grown.

JACK

I hate your kids, Frank.

FRANK

You're their uncle.

JACK

Only by relation. Besides, they hate me, too.

FRANK

They don't. They're always asking about you.

JACK

They tried to electrocute me, Frank.

FRANK

It was an accident.

JACK

It was no fucking accident, Frank. The little one ...

FRANK

Cindy.

JACK

She threw a goddamn radio into the bathtub. How do you explain that?

FRANK

She didn't know what she was doing.
You're too sensitive.

JACK
You got weird kids, Frank.

FRANK
Look, I just thought if you came out you might
see what you're missing.

Jack just stares at Frank.

FRANK
(continuing)
Just think about it, all right?
Consider it a standing offer.

Frank closes the trunk and moves to the driver's side.

FRANK
(continuing; like a litany)
You want a ride, Jack? No, Frank,
I'll walk. Okay, Jack, good night.
Good night, Frank.

Frank turns the ENGINE OVER and pulls away from the curb.
Jack watches the taillights burn into the distance,
then takes the whiskey bottle from his coat and heads
for home.

ANGLE - APARTMENT BUILDING

Jack crosses the street and waves up to his apartment
building, where a black labrador is studying him from
a second story window.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT

Jack's apartment is small, old, and comfortably
cluttered. The most striking item is a vintage phone
booth placed against the wall. As Jack lets himself in,
EDDIE, the dog from the window, walks over. He is not
an overly enthusiastic dog, but you can see from his
face that he has a great deal of affection for Jack.

JACK
Hi, pal. Thought you were gonna clean the
apartment.

Eddie nuzzles the soup bone. Jack unwraps the paper

and hands it over.

JACK

(continuing)

Take it easy, will ya? You're becoming a regular Johnny Appleseed the way you're dropping teeth around here.

Jack hangs his tie on the phone booth and walks over to an old phonograph stacked six deep with discs. He lifts the records back up the post and clicks ON the MACHINE. As Bill Evans' smoky "PEACE PIECE" fills the tiny apartment, Jack breaks the collar of his shirt and walks over to the old piano near the window. Settling back with the bottle of whiskey, Jack rests his elbows gently on the keys and stares out the open window, listening to the music.

INT. PIANO STORE

Jack and Frank work opposite sides of a large piano showroom, inspecting rentals of every style and color. WILLIE, the owner of the place, leans against a cheap upright, contemplating his shoes.

FRANK

What happened to the two Clays, Willie?

WILLIE

Out.

FRANK

When they coming in?

WILLIE

Wednesday next.

Frank looks across the room at Jack.

FRANK

What d'ya got?,

JACK

Bosen black.

(taps a key)

Flat.

FRANK

What d'you say, Willie? Tighten her up?

WILLIE

What's the gig?

FRANK

Two nights.

Willie just looks at his shoes and shakes his head.

Frank frowns and glances around.

Across the room, Jack pauses before another piano.

FRANK

(continuing)

What d'ya got?

JACK

(tapping)

Yamaha white. Nice.

Frank moves to another grand and alternates taps with his brother to see if the two pianos are in harmony.

FRANK

What do you think?

JACK

Try the black Knable.

Frank moves to another piano and repeats the process, watching Jack for a verdict.

After a moment, Jack nods.

FRANK

Tag 'em, Willie. The Regency downtown,
Thursday-Friday. Thanks.

WILLIE

My pleasure.

INT. DINER

The brothers sit at a window of a corner diner,
Jack nursing an ice coffee,
Frank playing with a plate of scrambled eggs.
The glass next to them is cluttered with photographs
of neighborhood luminaries,
including two of Jack and Frank in their tuxedos.

FRANK

You know, I think it's been five years since I
saw you eat anything. That's the God's truth.

JACK

Trust me, you're not missing anything.

FRANK

You look awful.

JACK

Thanks.

FRANK

Really. You sleeping?

JACK

Only on odd days.

FRANK

(a look)

Seeing anyone in particular?

JACK

Why the interest?

FRANK

Because I'm your brother. Because I care about you. Because sometimes it seems like the most significant relationship in your life is with that goddamn dog of yours.

Jack studies his brother's face.

JACK

I'm not seeing anyone. In particular.

FRANK

What about that waitress at the Ambassador?

JACK

Uh-uh. How about you? You seeing anyone?

FRANK

Funny.

(points at his wedding band)

Strike a bell?

JACK

It's only a ring. Not a collar.

FRANK

It's more than that.

Jack smiles and sips his coffee.

FRANK

(continuing)

By the way, we gotta go see Ma tomorrow.

JACK

No thanks.

FRANK

No, I mean it.

JACK

So do I.

FRANK

We gotta go, Jack.

JACK

No, you gotta go 'cause if you don't get up there every couple weeks you feel guilty. I won't feel guilty, so I don't gotta go.

FRANK

This time you gotta go.

JACK

I don't gotta go.

FRANK

You gotta go.

JACK

Says who?

FRANK

Your older brother.

JACK

You're thirteen months older than me, Frank. That might've meant something in the Apache clubhouse, but it don't cut too deep anymore.

FRANK

Christ, Jack, it's her birthday.

Jack glances up. Frank nods.

FRANK

(continuing)

So what do you say?

Think the city can spare you for an afternoon?

Jack squints out the window.

FRANK

(continuing)

Okay. And don't worry about a present.
I got her something from both of us.

EXT. STREET

Jack, cradling a pink bakery box in one hand,
gets out of Frank's car and surveys the street
on which he grew up.

FRANK

Make sure you lock.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Unless you count the elderly gentleman picking roses
three houses down, there would not appear to be a wealth
of potential car thieves in the immediate vicinity.
But it's not Jack's car, so he doesn't press the point.

BACK TO SCENE

FRANK

Place looks good, huh? I got a neighbor boy to
mow the lawn, pick up. Five bucks.
Times've changed, huh?

(pointing)

See the tree?

Remember the job Cecil did on it the day
Dad planted it?

You can still see the scars on the trunk. Really.

I was looking at it just the other day.

Jesus, I thought he was gonna kill that cat.

Frank smiles, recalling Cecil's near-demise,
then raps on the front door.

Jack studies the tree a moment,
then gestures to the tiny ribboned box in Frank's hand.

JACK

So what'd we get her?

FRANK

You'll see.

ANGLE - FRONT DOOR

At that moment, the door swings open and ELLIE BAKER is there, a vibrant woman in her sixties.

MRS. BAKER

Well, if it isn't the fabulous Baker Boys!

FRANK

How's the birthday girl?

MRS. BAKER

A little stiffer, but just as sturdy.

Mrs. Baker hugs Frank, then, a bit awkwardly, embraces Jack.

MRS. BAKER

(continuing)

John. It's good to see you.

JACK

(uncomfortable; balancing cake box)

Good to see you, Ma.

Jack looks over his mother's shoulder at Frank and mimics "John" with a knowing nod.

FRANK

Uh, Ma, you know, no one calls him that anymore. Jack. He goes by Jack.

MRS. BAKER

I thought maybe held gotten over that.

FRANK

Twenty years, Ma ...

MRS. BAKER

Yes, yes. It's just that John is so much nicer. Jack sounds so ... crude. When I was a little girl, we had a pig on the farm named Jack. I guess I just can't help making the association.

Jack's eyes slide over to Frank as if to suggest he holds his brother personally responsible for this.

FRANK

Uh ... yeah, well, you know, Ma, John Kennedy went by Jack.

MRS. BAKER

Catholics. What do you expect?

Oh, well, what's in a name, right?

Let's go inside and have a look at that cake.

As Mrs. Baker exits, Frank leans over to Jack.

FRANK

Keep her busy, will ya?

I have to set a few things up.

Frank disappears, leaving Jack alone on the porch with the bakery box. Jack shakes his head, wondering how he's going to make it through the afternoon, then enters the house.

INT. HOUSE

The front room is cluttered with his childhood. Most noticeable are the pianos: two tiny uprights, perfectly matched, their simulated ivory keys yellowed with age. Above them, pressed between glass and framed, are the music ribbons, faded by twenty years of sunlight. Finally, there is the sheet music, dusty and dog-eared, piled everywhere in drunken stacks. This and all else in the room Jack confronts slowly, warily, but with a noticeable dispassion, until his eyes fall upon a photograph. In it, he and Frank are standing alongside a tall man in baggy slacks, safe within the arc of his long arms.

Frank is staring straight into the camera, neat, clean, perfectly posed, but Jack, a year younger, his shirt too big, is caught in profile, looking up at the tall man with an almost worshipful gaze.

MRS. BAKER

(entering)

Well, now, where's everyone run off to?

Frank?

JACK

Downstairs.

MRS. BAKER

Oh.

All at once, Jack and his mother realize they are alone.

MRS. BAKER

Well, shall we cut that cake?

Jack nods and follows her into the kitchen.
He places the box on the table and stands off to the side while Mrs. Baker sets about preparing things.

MRS. BAKER

So. How are you?

JACK

Fine. You?

MRS. BAKER

Oh, fine.

Silence.

Jack watches his mother poise the knife over the cake.
Her fingers are trembling.

MRS. BAKER

(continuing)

Big piece or little?

JACK

Huh? Oh, no.

MRS. BAKER

None?

JACK

I'm not much for sweets.

Mrs. Baker nods.

MRS. BAKER

How's that dog of yours? What was his name?

JACK

Eddie.

MRS. BAKER

Yes. Right. Eddie. How is he?

JACK

He's losing his teeth.

Mrs. Baker stops and looks up into Jack's eyes.
Suddenly, a NOISE is heard in the other room.

MRS. BAKER

Sounds like your brothers back with us.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Frank comes stumbling up the basement stairs with an old movie projector and a roll-up screen.

MRS. BAKER
(entering)
What's all this?

Frank sets the projector down and hands his mother the tiny ribboned box.

FRANK
Go on.

Jack watches from the kitchen doorway as Mrs. Baker pulls the ribbon off the box. Inside is a tiny spool of film.

MRS. BAKER
Why, what's this?

INT. KITCHEN (LATER)

Blank screen, curtains drawn, the room dark. Frank clicks on the projector and picks up his cake. Mrs. Baker close on his elbow, sets her plate on her knees and watches the screen. Jack sits off to the side. A title card appears:
"For Mrs. Ellie Baker, who made it all possible."
Mrs. Baker gives Frank a puzzled look. He just smiles.

Suddenly, images spring to the screen, obviously footage several years old, showing Jack and Frank as children, sitting at the tiny pianos, wearing matching suits, smiling matching smiles as they play for the camera.

MRS. BAKER
Oh my God ...

FRANK
Recognize these two characters?

MRS. BAKER
I thought these were lost.

Where did you find ...

FRANK

In the attic. Behind some of Dad's stuff.

(pointing with his fork)

Look, Jack can hardly reach the pedals.

As Frank's laughter fills the dark room,
Jack stares with cold fascination at the screen.
Suddenly, a jagged cut springs the boys a year later,
in the same positions, smiling the same smiles.

MRS. BAKER

(laughing)

Oh no!

FRANK

I had a boy down at the camera shop cut them
all together. Boy, old man Henderson didn't
fool around when he gave a haircut, did he, Jack?

Jack says nothing.

MRS. BAKER

Oh, look at you two. So skinny.
And those tiny suits ...

FRANK

Wait. Watch. Here comes Dad.

Jack's eyes narrow as the film jumps another year
and a man enters the frame, obviously by accident.
He is so tall his face cannot be seen.
As he dances quickly out of sight,
he ruffles Jack's hair.

MRS. BAKER

That man.

As the film jumps again,
Jack glances at the photograph to his right.
The images on the screen flicker softly off
the glass of the picture frame.

MRS. BAKER (O.S.)

(continuing)

Oh, look how you're growing.
My little boys ...

Jack's eyes drift from the photograph to his mother
and brother, sitting close together in the love seat,

laughing. After a moment, their voices fade and Jack looks back to the children on the screen, like two tiny men, mirror images of one another. At first the changes are subtle. Little Jack's tie is askew, his shirt missing a button. But as the years flick by, the brothers resemble one another less and less, until finally, the little boy that was Jack is completely gone and in his place is a slouching, tousle-haired adolescent in rumpled coat and open collar, a cigarette hanging disdainfully from his lip. A woman's hand darts into the frame and plucks the offending cigarette away in a flash.

INT. CAR

Frank and Jack are parked in front of Jack's building. Whispers of steam snake from the mancovers in the street.

JACK

I made her nervous.

FRANK

What do you mean?

JACK

Her hands. Like that.

Jack holds out a trembling hand.

FRANK

Nah. Medication.

Jack looks over at Frank. He nods.

FRANK

(continuing)

Couple years, now.

(taps his heart)

Keeps the beat steady. Nothing serious.

Jack considers this a moment, then gets out of the car.

FRANK

She was glad to see you.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT

Jack lets himself into his apartment and stops.
Across the room, curled up on the couch, is a little girl.
Jack takes the girl gently in his arms and carries her to
the bedroom. As he folds a blanket under her chin,
he pauses. The girl's face is calm, peaceful.

EXT. STREET - DAWN

The next morning. Early.
The sun is peeking sleepily between the buildings and
beginning to drip out onto the street. Suddenly,
RINGING OUT over the rooftops, is "JINGLE BELLS"
-- not the entire song, just the first two bars,
over and over.

IHT. JACK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jack, on the couch, his arm draped over a slumbering
Eddie, opens his eyes. Across the room,
seated at the piano, is NINA, the little girl.
She stops playing and turns.

NINA

Morning. You want coffee? I made coffee.

Jack looks into the sleepy face of Eddie and sits up.
He nods to the coffee. Nina goes to the kitchen.

NINA

(continuing)

I did the dishes last night. You're missing a cup.

Jack rubs his head, then gets up and walks to the window.

NINA

(continuing)

Did you break a cup, Jack?

JACK

Eddie did.

Nina looks at Eddie, sleeping on the couch,
then brings Jack his coffee with both hands.

NINA

I practiced the piano last night. Two hours.
I think I'm ready for 'Jingle all the way.'

Jack nods. Suddenly, the sound of HEAVY FOOTSTEPS is heard. Jack and Nina glance up at the ceiling.

NINA
(continuing)
Guess they're up.

JACK
Sounds big. What's he do?

NINA
Process server.
Ma said it's like a lawyer only the hours are more regular. All I know's he came to take the TV one afternoon and ended up staying for dinner. And breakfast.

JACK
What happened to the donut king?

NINA
Married.

Upstairs, a DOOR SLAMS and HEAVY FEET ECHO in the stairwell. Nina peers out the window.

NINA
No breakfast. Maybe they had a fight.

TWO DEEP THUMPS sound on the ceiling.

NINA
(continuing)
Well, gotta go. Teach me later?

Jack nods.
Nina kisses him on the cheek and exits.
Jack walks over to the couch and gives Eddie a nudge.

JACK
Hey.

INT. LUAU LOUNGE

Though the plastic palms and grass-skirted waitresses of the Luau Lounge make the Fabulous Baker Boys' presence seem a bit incongruous, Jack and Frank hold nothing back, giving "McCarthur Park" the full treatment. Unfortunately, the audience in the Luau Lounge wouldn't fill a Hawaiian haystack and their applause

is less than volcanic.

FRANK

Uh, thank you. That concludes our show for this evening. Jack and I only hope you enjoyed yourselves as much as we did.

As the guests wander out, clutching their roomkeys, a freckle-faced BELLHOP comes up.

BELLHOP

Mr. Baker.

FRANK

(tired)

Yeah, Jimmy.

JIMMY (BELLHOP)

Mr. Simpson asked to see you.

FRANK

All right, tell him I'll be right there.

As Jimmy exits, Frank stands and points at Jack.

FRANK

(continuing)

Tomorrow we close with the 'Aquarius Suite.'

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR

Frank pauses before a door marked "HOTEL MANAGER." It's half-open. Inside, CHARLIE SIMPSON, a heavy man in a shiny suit, is throwing darts in the general direction of a dartboard. He's not very good. Frank knocks.

CHARLIE

Frankie.

FRANK

You wanted to see me, Charlie?

ANOTHER ANGLE

CHARLIE

Yeah, come on in.

FRANK

Little slow tonight.

CHARLIE

(waving it off)

Mondays.

Charlie takes an envelope from his desk and hands it to Frank.

FRANK

What's this?

CHARLIE

Your pay.

FRANK

Now? Why not tomorrow? After the show.

CHARLIE

Take it now.

FRANK

(confused)

What about tomorrow?

CHARLIE

We don't need you, Frankie.

For a moment, Frank just stands there.

FRANK

I've got the grands for two nights, Charlie. You can't just --

CHARLIE

It's all there. Both nights.

Frank looks at the envelope in his hands.

FRANK

What're you saying, Charlie?

CHARLIE

Look, Frankie. You and Jack been playing here, a long time.

FRANK

Twelve years.

CHARLIE

Right, twelve years. Couple times

a month.

FRANK

So?

CHARLIE

So maybe it's time we took a vacation from each other.

FRANK

Vacation? Christ, Charlie, it's a Monday night. You said so yourself.

CHARLIE

It wasn't half full out there tonight, Frankie. I got six waiters standing in back listening to baseball. I gotta move the liquor. To move the liquor, I gotta fill the tables. It's a matter of economics. Me, I love you. I love both you guys, you know that. You're class. But people today. They don't know class if it walks up and grabs 'em by the balls.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY

Jack rises as Frank passes through the lobby with the cardboard stand-up.

JACK

What's with Charlie?

FRANK

Nothing. Everything's great. Terrific.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE

With the stand-up under his arm, Frank enters and closes the door quietly. A light is glowing in the kitchen. The rest of the house is dark, quiet. In the kitchen, he checks the message pad by the phone. Nothing. On the table, a plate of cold chicken is waiting for him. Next to it is a stack of bills with a note attached: "Frank. Please." Frank sighs and leans the stand-up against the wall. The photo of Jack is peeling off the cardboard. Finding a stack of glossies in a drawer,

Frank removes the old Jack from the stand-up and replaces it with a new one. As he presses the photograph in place, his eyes drift to the one of himself. It was taken a long time ago.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT

Jack places a record on the turntable and sits at the piano by the window. As the needle hits the spinning disc, a sharp, snappy BASS LINE REVERBERATES throughout the apartment. Jack takes a drink, then joins in with the record, playing along. His concentration is intense, so much so that, a moment later, when the PHONE RINGS, he seems not to hear it. Finally, he picks it up.

JACK
Yeah?

FRANK (V.O.)
It's me.

JACK
Frank?

FRANK (V.O.)
Yeah. Listen ... come out to the house tomorrow, will ya?

JACK
I've had enough family for one month, Frank.

FRANK (V.O.)
It's not family. It's business.

JACK
So talk to me tomorrow. After the gig.

FRANK (V.O.)
We don't get a gig.

JACK
What're you talking about?

FRANK (V.O.)
Something came up. Don't worry, Charlie stayed true. Both nights. I'll give you your share tomorrow.

At the house.

Silence.

FRANK (V.O)

(continuing)

So you'll come out, right?

JACK

Yeah, okay.

Jack listens to the PHONE HISSING in the dark,
then the CONNECTION goes DEAD.

EXT. STREET

A taxi lets Jack off on a street of shabby tract houses.
In his rumpled city suit, Jack looks like a cheap
gangster amid the weedy lawns and overgrown junipers.
He walks up to the door of a small white house and
presses the doorbell.
When there is no response, he goes around to the back.

EXT. BACKYARD

The backyard is small, with a short chainlink fence
surrounding it. Two kids, a girl and a boy,
are splashing around in a build-it-yourself
above-ground pool.
When they see Jack, they stop splashing.
Only their heads are visible above the water.

JACK

Hey, kids. Dad home?

The two heads say nothing.

JACK

(continuing)

What d'ya say? Wanna run and get
him for me?

Still nothing. Jack frowns, takes out a cigarette,
and pats his pocket for a match.

JACK

(continuing)

Shit.

The kids' eyes widen at his profanity.

Jack, the unlit cigarette dangling from his lip,
ponders things for a moment,
then flicks the 'cigarette away and steps over the fence.
At which point,
the tinier of the two heads in the pool begins to scream.

JACK

(continuing)

Hey, kid. Take it easy.

No use. The kid's a world-class screamer.
Frank, wearing baggy shorts and looking alarmed,
comes racing out of the house.

FRANK

Cindy! What is it?

Cindy points. At Jack.

FRANK

(continuing)

Jack.

JACK

Your doorbell doesn't work.

FRANK

Honey, it's only Uncle Jack. You
remember Uncle Jack.

DONNA, Frank's wife, appears.

DONNA

What's the matter? Jack?

Jack waves.

FRANK

(lifting Cindy out of the pool)

Nothing's the matter. Is it, sweetheart?

DONNA

I'll take her inside. You too,
little Frank. Out of the pool.

Donna shepherds the kids toward the house.

FRANK

Feet!

The kids wipe their dripping feet on the outside mat

and disappear into the house. Frank turns to Jack.

FRANK

(continuing)

It's probably the excitement of seeing you again.

EXT. BACKYARD (LATER)

Donna comes out of the house with a tray of lemonade. The men are sitting by the pool in a pair of webbed aluminum chairs.

FRANK

Well, look at this.

DONNA

You bring trunks, Jack?

JACK

Trunks?

DONNA

Swimming trunks.

JACK

Oh. No. Strictly dryland.

DONNA

Too bad. You could use some sun. Really.

JACK

Maybe next time.

DONNA

We have some lotion.

JACK

Just the same.

DONNA

Suit yourself.

Donna returns to the house. Frank takes a sip of his lemonade and scans his surroundings complacently.

FRANK

Nice, huh?

JACK
What?

FRANK
The trees. The flowers. Nice.

JACK
Terrific.

FRANK
(expansively)
Yeah ... we're gonna paint in the spring.
After the rains. Look good as new.

JACK
You ask me out here to sell me
your house, Frank?

Frank shakes the ice in his glass.

JACK
(continuing)
Charlie paid you off last night,
didn't he?

FRANK
I don't know what you mean.

JACK
The hell you don't.

FRANK
I told you. Something came up.
Some political dinner or something.

JACK
Bullshit. Fifteen years, Frank.
No one paid us off.

FRANK
It wasn't like that.

JACK
No?

FRANK
No.

JACK
What was it like?

FRANK

Hey pal, I got a mortgage, all right?
I got two kids. I got a wife.
Besides, he made the deal.
There's no shame in it.

JACK

That how you see it?

FRANK

Yeah, that's how I see it.

Jack shakes his head in disgust.

FRANK

(continuing)

And don't go shaking your head, little brother.
I'm not the one who walks in every night smelling
like he's got a day job in a piss factory.

(pause)

It killed him, you know.

Jack glances up. Dangerous territory.

JACK

A gust of wind killed him.

FRANK

Yeah, and what put him up there?

JACK

Hey, you weren't there. Right?

Jack's look ends this. Frank sighs.

FRANK

Look, can we forget last night?
We gotta talk.

JACK

Talk.

FRANK

I been thinking maybe we should
make some changes.

(pause)

I been thinking maybe we should
take on a singer.

Silence.

JACK

Sure, why not.

FRANK

It's just an idea. I want your opinion.
I mean, we go halfway on everything, right?

JACK

It's more like 40-60, wouldn't
you say?

FRANK

We agreed that if I took care of the business;
I'd be entitled to the extra.
Isn't that what we agreed?

JACK

That's what we agreed.

FRANK

If you're unhappy with the
arrangement --

JACK

I'm not unhappy.

FRANK

If you'd like to assume more of the financial
responsibilities, I'd be glad --

JACK

Frank. Fuck it. Okay?

FRANK

I've tried to do well by you, Jack.
By both of us.

JACK

I'm grateful, Frank. How much?
For the singer.

FRANK

I thought maybe twenty percent.
Look, with the additional bookings we'll
come out ahead. The big hotels,
they want a pretty girl with a big voice.
We have to stay competitive, Jack.

Jack laughs coldly.

FRANK

What's that?

JACK

You, Frank. All these years you been telling me we're different. We got novelty, Jack. No one can touch us.

FRANK

Two pianos isn't enough anymore, Jack.

JACK

It never was.

YOUNG WOMAN

in pink sweater and a short black skirt stands in the center of a tiny room in the back of Willie's piano showroom, holding some sheet music. Sammy Davis Jr.'s face is on the sheet music. Frank is sitting against the opposite wall, a notepad in his hand. Jack is at the piano.

FRANK

Good morning, Miss...?

YOUNG WOMAN

Moran. Monica Moran.

FRANK

All right, Miss Moran

MONICA (YOUNG WOMAN)

Actually, that's my stage name.

FRANK

I'm sorry?

MONICA

Moran. Monica. The whole thing. It's my stage name. My real name's Blanche.

FRANK

Blanche.

MONICA

No romance, right? That's why I came up with Monica. It's what I prefer.

FRANK

Well, that's fine --

MONICA

But if you call my house and my mother answers, ask for Blanche. If you ask for Monica, she'll think you have the wrong number and hang up.

FRANK

Right.

MONICA

And if she asks what it's about, don't tell her. She's opposed to my career.

FRANK

Uh-huh. Well, Miss Moran, what is it you'd like to do for us?

MONICA

Candy Man.'

(worried)

Is that all right?

FRANK

It's one of Jack's favorites.

Monica turns and, seeing Jack at the piano, gives a little start.

MONICA

Oops. I almost forgot you were there. Here's the music.

Monica begins to hand Jack the sheet music.

FRANK

Uh... he knows it.

MONICA

Really? Isn't that a coincidence.

JACK

Small world.

Monica smiles. She likes Jack.

FRANK

Well, shall we?

Probably not, but Jack begins to play anyway, laconically picking out the cheery tune while Monica swings her arms and taps her foot. Despite all this, Monica still manages to come in between beats and Jack has to scramble over a chord to catch her, sort of like a fireman with a net.

MONICA

Who can take a sunrise
Sprinkle it with dew
Toss it in the air and
Make a groovy lemon pie
The Candy Man can
The Candy Man can....,

There would appear to be ample evidence as to why the mother of Monica nee Blanche opposes her daughter's career.

FRANK

Thank you, Miss Moran, that's enough.

Monica's eyes are closed now and she is fully caught up. Frank looks over at Jack. Jack shrugs and continues to play.

FRANK

(continuing)

Miss Moran ... Miss Moran ...
Blanche!

Monica's eyes pop open.

MONICA

Oh, sorry. I get so caught up in it sometimes. It's scary.

FRANK

Yes, it is.

MONICA

Well ... thanks.
(to Jack)
Bye.

JACK

Drive carefully.

As Monica exits, Jack and Frank glance at one another and thus begins a seemingly endless parade of aspiring singers who can't sing. As Frank sinks lower in his

chair and Jack's ashtray spills over with wounded cigarettes, singer after singer, in all shapes, sizes, and colors, come forth to offer their own unique interpretations of "Feelings," "I Gotta Be Me," "This Is My Song," and perhaps most appropriately, "What Kind of Fool Am I."

Finally, when it is all over, Jack and Frank are left alone in the tiny room, looking dazed, exhausted, and mildly homicidal.

TALL YOUNG WOMAN

As the sequence ends, a TALL YOUNG WOMAN in high heels walks into Willie's. She glances around, then spots Willie across the room, eating a corn beef on rye.

WOMAN

Hey. You one of the fabulous Baker Boys?

JACK AND FRANK

are putting on their coats, preparing to leave. Frank is staring at his notepad.

FRANK

Thirty-seven. Thirty-seven.

JACK

What?

FRANK

Thirty-seven girls.
And not one who can carry a tune.
That must be statistically impossible.

JACK

It was a somewhat extraordinary day.

FRANK

I just don't understand. You would think someone ... anyone ...

WOMAN (O.S.)

Damn!

The Woman in high heels stumbles into the doorway,

holding a shoe in her hand. It's broken.

WOMAN

(continuing)

Brand new Thursday. You believe it?

After today, Jack and Frank are prepared to believe anything.

WOMAN

(continuing)

This where the auditions are?

FRANK

This is where the auditions were.

WOMAN

What do you mean?

FRANK

We're finished.

WOMAN

What about me?

Frank looks at his watch.

FRANK

You're an hour and a half late.

WOMAN

My watch is broken, too.

FRANK

Punctuality. First rule of show business.

The Woman looks around her.

WOMAN

This is show business?

FRANK

(in no mood)

Look, miss. We're tired, you have gum on your lip, and we're going home.

WOMAN

(touching her lip)

Just like that, huh? You're not

even gonna give me a chance?

FRANK

Don't take it personally.

WOMAN

How should I take it?

FRANK

Impersonally.

Frank begins to leave.

WOMAN

I don't believe it. I come all the way down down here, break a heel, and you're not gonna give me a chance because I have gum on my lip and I'm a few minutes late.

FRANK

You're an hour and a half late.

WOMAN

So if I'm so 'late how come you're still here?

FRANK

We ran long.

WOMAN

So run a little longer.

FRANK

Miss --

WOMAN

You find a girl?

Jack and Frank glance at each other.

JACK

No.

WOMAN

So. I'm here, you're here, the piano's here. What d'ya say?

Before Frank can answer, Jack walks over to the piano.

FRANK

Terrific. Thirty-eight.

WOMAN

What's that mean? Thirty-eight.

JACK

Don't worry about it.

WOMAN

(to Frank)

You know, I'm feeling a lot of hostility from you.

FRANK

(appealing)

Jack.

JACK

Let's get it over with.

FRANK

All right. What's your name?

WOMAN

Susie. Susie Diamond.

FRANK

Catchy. You have any previous entertainment experience, Miss Diamond?

SUSIE (WOMAN)

Well ... for the last four years I've been on call to Triple A Escort service.

Jack and Frank exchange a glance.

SUSIE

(continuing)

Hey, it's legit. Strictly dinner and dance.

FRANK

Okay. I think that's all we need to know.

SUSIE

I sing now?

FRANK

That's the premise.

Susie gives Frank a dark look, then turns to Jack.

SUSIE

I Get Along Without You.' Slowly,
okay?

Jack nods and begins to play.
Frank slouches down in his chair,
preparing to be tortured again.

SUSIE

(continuing; singing)
I get along without you very well
Of course I do
Except when soft rains fall
And drip from leaves, then I recall
The thrill of being
Sheltered in your arms
Of course I do
But I get along without you very well.'

Susie stops. Frank just sits there.
Jack just sits there. She can sing.

SUSIE

(continuing)
So?

FRANK

(blinking)
Uh ... we'll let you know.

Jack looks over at Frank like he's insane.

SUSIE

When?

FRANK

When we know.

SUSIE

(smiling)
Don't leave a girl hanging.
Second rule of show business.

Frank's not amused.

SUSIE

(continuing)
Yeah, well, okay. 'Bye, Bakers.

Susie walks out barefoot.

JACK

What are you, crazy?

FRANK

I just thought we should talk about it. Between ourselves.

JACK

What's there to talk about? She can sing. That puts her at the head of the class. That makes her the only one in the class.

FRANK

I don't know ... She had gum on her lip, for Christ sake. I don't think she's right for the act.

JACK

(studying him)
You're getting cold feet about this.

FRANK

I was just thinking what Ma would think.

JACK

Ma? Ma? Was Ma there the last time we played the Ambassador? Oh, that's right, she was on bass. How could I forget.

Frank frowns and looks down at his hands.

JACK

(continuing)
How many other silent partners are there, Frank? Donna? Little Cindy? Hell, let's give Eddie a vote.

FRANK

Okay, okay. I'll call the girl.

Frank gets up wearily, then glances down at the notepad.

JACK

What's the matter?

FRANK

I didn't get her number.

EXT. STREET

Jack and Frank dash out of Willie's and glance up and down the street. Nothing.

FRANK

We can always look her up in the book.

JACK.

Right. Susie Diamond. She's probably listed right next to Monica Moran.

Jack shakes his head in disgust.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Does this mean I get the job?

ANOTHER ANGLE

Jack and Frank whirl around.

There, standing in the doorway, is Susie.

SUSIE

Intuition.

CITY SKYLINE

Gleaming beautifully at the start of a new day. Once again, "JINGLE BELLS" is heard, only this time carried a little further: "Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way..."

JACK, FRANK AND SUSIE

Ensconsed in the back room of Willie's, preparing for their first rehearsal ...

FRANK

Ready?

Jack nods.

FRANK

(continuing)

Ready?

Susie nods. Frank poises his hands over the piano, hesitates, then looks at Jack again.

FRANK

(continuing)

Ready?

Jack squints at Frank, then nods.
Frank turns to Susie.

FRANK

(continuing)

Ready?

SUSIE

(looking around)

What are we, an orchestra all of a sudden?

Frank glares at her.

SUSIE

(continuing)

Sorry.

Frank poises his hands over the piano again and begins to play the opening passage of "Just the Way You Are." A moment later, Jack joins in, and a moment after that, Susie. Unfortunately, Jack and Frank, accustomed to playing alone, are a tad overwhelming and the result sounds like a fifth grade recital. After a few bars, Susie holds up her hand.

SUSIE

Fellas, fellas ...

Jack and Frank stop.

FRANK

What's the problem?

SUSIE

The problem is I can't hear myself sing with all this...

(searching)

... music. You know what I'm saying?

Jack and Frank look at one another.

SUSIE

(continuing)

I mean, back there it may be hard to notice,
but up here I'm having a little trouble
getting a word in.

Jack and Frank just stare.

SUSIE

(continuing)

I mean, you're supposed to be
backing me up, right?

FRANK

(icily)

No. We are not supposed to be
backing you up.

SUSIE

What I mean is --

FRANK

We're a team. We work together.

SUSIE

So work with me, not against me.
Okay?

Frank stares at Susie for a long moment.

FRANK

I suppose we can bring it down a
little.

JACK

I'll drop the eighths.

FRANK

Okay?

Susie looks at the two brothers.

SUSIE

Okay.

WILLIE'S SHOWROOM - LATER

Frank is on Willie's telephone.
In the front of the store, just out of earshot,
Jack sits at a beat-up grand,

while Susie moves aimlessly from one piano to another.

FRANK

I'm telling you, Ray. She's got
a voice like an angel ... What?

Frank glances furtively across the room to where Susie,
making a very sexy silhouette against the front window,
is running her hand over a pearl-white piano.

FRANK

(continuing)
No, I wouldn't say she's got a
body like an angel.

As Frank continues to talk in the background,
Susie looks over at Jack.

SUSIE

Hey, he's not sore, is he?

JACK

He'll come around.

Susie nods, goes back to stroking the piano.

JACK

(continuing)
You never sang before?

SUSIE

Not for money. With my mother.

Jack nods slowly, but Susie sees he doesn't understand.

SUSIE

(continuing)
She used to waitress downtown, nights,
when I was a kid. On the way home, we'd sing.
You know how people whistle when they're nervous?
My mother sang. She always said you're never alone
with a song 'cause thousands of people know the
same song and even though you can't hear 'em,
they're singing with you. I don't know.
If they were, they were all singing safe inside
their apartments.

(shrugging)
But it worked. We always got home. Ever since,
I always wanted to sing.
I never took lessons or anything, though.
I guess you guys took a lot of lessons.

Jack looks down at the piano in front of him.

JACK

Yeah. We took a lot of lessons.

JACK AND NINA

Jack's tuxedo is hanging in the shower as he gets ready for the night's gig. Nina, standing next to him at the sink, watches as he works up a lather on a bar of shaving soap, then paints his face with the suds.

NINA

You shave like an old movie, Jack.

As Jack picks up a razor, Nina takes the brush and begins to soap her face in the mirror.

JACK

In the old days, every man had a shaving mug that he kept at the barber shop. Then, whenever he wanted a shave, held go down to the barber shop and there would be his mug, waiting for him.

NINA

Is that what you used to do?

JACK

My days are not the old days, genius.

NINA

What are they?

JACK

The recent past.

NINA

Oh.

(nodding to the ceiling)
Bigfoot gets his out of a can.

JACK

How do you know?

NINA

I saw his stuff in the bathroom.

JACK

Oh?

NINA

I guess it's getting serious.

JACK

Maybe he'll ask your ma to marry him.

NINA

I hope not. He's already busted the springs in two chairs. Hey, what's this?

Nina holds up the handle of the shaving brush.

JACK

Ivory.

NINA

Looks old.

JACK

Older than me.

NINA

Wow.

Jack gives Nina a look, then begins to splash his face. Nina picks up the razor.

JACK

Hey, what do you want to do? Grow a beard?

NINA

Why not?

JACK

Well, let's get your first prom under the belt, okay?

NINA

What's a prom?

JACK

Ever go to church?

Nina nods.

JACK

It's like that. Only you gotta

dance.

INT. HOTEL

As Jack enters the hotel, he passes by the cardboard stand-up, prominently displayed in the lobby. It is virtually unchanged, except for a small notation at the bottom: "With Guest Vocalist." On the other side of the lobby, Frank is pacing nervously.

FRANK

Where the hell is she?

JACK

It's early.

FRANK

I told everyone seven-fifteen.
Didn't I? Seven-fifteen.

JACK

She'll get here.

FRANK

Just like the day of the auditions,
right? Jesus. How's my hair?

JACK

Awe inspiring.

FRANK

Yeah, well, Your's isn't.
(taking out a comb)
Let me run a comb through it.

JACK

Get out of here.

FRANK

Come on, stand still.

JACK

Get out of here!

FRANK

It's not gonna hurt you.

JACK

I'll hit you, Frank. I swear.

Frank hesitates, like a basketball player trying to feint an opponent, then takes a flick at Jack's hair. Jack hits him.

FRANK

(holding his shoulder)
You hit me.

JACK

I told you I was gonna hit you.

He looks capable of hitting him again, too.

FRANK

All right, all right. I'm a little tense.

JACK

You're a fucking alarm clock.

FRANK

I just wish she'd get here, that's all.

JACK

She's here.

Susie, wearing a flamboyant orange dress, is standing across the lobby, staring at the stand-up.

FRANK

Christ, look at her. You'd think if she was gonna wear her street clothes she'd have enough sense to come in the back.

(walking over)
Good evening, Miss Diamond. You're late.

SUSIE

Where's my name?

FRANK

What-?

SUSIE

And how come you guys are the only ones with your pictures on the poster?

FRANK

We'll talk about it later. Right

now, you gotta get changed.

SUSIE
Changed?

FRANK
Where's your dress?

SUSIE
(to Jack)
What's he talking about?

FRANK
Is there a language problem here? Your dress.
For tonight. Where is it?

SUSIE
Do I look like I'm naked?

FRANK
That! You can't wear that!

SUSIE
What's wrong with it?

FRANK
It's orange!

SUSIE
(to Jack)
Am I missing something?

Before Jack can reply, Frank grabs Susie's hand and pulls her toward the door.

FRANK
Come on.

SUSIE
Hey!

FRANK
Come on. We don't have much time.

SUSIE
Time for what?

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE

Frank, Jack and Susie dash through a cavernous

downtown department store, the brothers turning a few heads with their tuxedos. As they reach the ladies' department, Frank begins to flip through the dress racks.

SUSIE

If you ask me, this is pretty stupid.

FRANK

Just look. What do you wear?
A nine?

SUSIE

(offended)
A seven.

FRANK

My wife wears a seven. You don't look like a seven to me.

SUSIE

I wear a seven.

FRANK

Okay, okay. Here, how about this?

SUSIE

(looking)
Save it for your wife.

FRANK

We're not exactly silly with time, you know. Jack, you find anything?

Jack, somewhat out of his element, is looking at belts.

JACK

No.

FRANK

Here, how's this?

Frank holds out an inky black dress. Susie gives it a long look.

FRANK

(continuing)
Close enough. Let's go.

Frank begins to drag Susie into the dressing room.

SUSIE

Hey, pal. I don't know about you, but where I come from there's a little girl's room and a little boy's room and the little boys don't go where the little girls go.

FRANK

All right, but make it quick.
(remembering)
Shoes! What size do you wear?

SUSIE

(from the dressing room)
Nine.

FRANK

Nine?

SUSIE

Nine!

FRANK

(to himself)
Big feet.

INT. SHOE DEPARTMENT

Frank and Jack work the shoe department, scouting the endless rows.

FRANK

See anything?

JACK

(holding one up)
How about these?

FRANK

Jack, for crying out loud. Your bachelorhood's showing.
(seeing something)
Ah, here we go.

Frank grabs a pretty blue pump and gestures to the SALESMAN, who's waiting on a woman.

FRANK

Hey! Do these come in black?

SALESMAN

I'll be with you in a minute, sir.

FRANK

I don't have a minute, pal. Yes
or no?

SALESMAN

(glowering)

Yes. They come in black.

FRANK

Okay. Give me a pair of nines.
Pronto.

The Salesman looks casually at Jack.

SALESMAN

Does he want a pair, too?

INT. DRESS DEPARTMENT

As Jack and Frank return to the dress department,
Frank jettisons the shoebox and tissue paper.

FRANK

All right, we got your shoes.

Just then, Susie steps out of the dressing room.
Even Frank stops at the sight of her.

SUSIE

What do you think?

FRANK

Uh... good.

SUSIE

(turning to Jack)

Zip me up?

The dress is open down to the small of her back.
It's a nice back.
Jack takes the zipper and closes the panels carefully.

SUSIE

(continuing)

Shoes?

FRANK

Right.

Frank puts the shoes down and Susie steps into them.

SUSIE
They're tight.

FRANK
They're nines.

SUSIE
Well, they're aspiring to be
sevens.

FRANK
You can buy new ones tomorrow.

SUSIE
Oh, thanks.

FRANK
Don't worry. We'll take it out
of your share.

SUSIE
You're a prince.

INT. HOTEL

As the trio rushes into the hotel service entrance,
RAY, the assistant manager, appears.

RAY
You better buy yourself a watch,
Frankie.

FRANK
We had a little emergency.

RAY
Yeah, well, I've got a little emergency.
You know what I'm saying?
(seeing Susie)
Who's this, Minnie Pearl?

All eyes turn to Susie's dress, which still has the
tags attached.

FRANK
(moving off)

Jesus.

RAY

I want seventy-five minutes, Frankie.
You hear me?

JACK

This is going well, isn't it?

INT. KITCHEN

The three rush into the kitchen.

FRANK

We need scissors over here!
Who's got scissors?
(turning to Susie)
Okay, remember. Jack and I go on first,
I do the set-up, then introduce you.
And you say ...

SUSIE

(deadpan)
Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.
I can't tell you how thrilled I am to be here.
It's like a dream come true.
And speaking of dreams ...

FRANK

Right.

SUSIE

Piece of cake.

A tiny MAN in an apron walks up with a meat cleaver.

FRANK

Carlos, that's, a cleaver. I need
scissors.

CARLOS (MAN)

No scissors.

FRANK

Jesus Christ. All right. Let's
go, Jack. Fix your tie.

Jack and Frank exit.

Susie stares a little warily at Carlos and his cleaver.

INT. LOUNGE

Jack and Frank slide quickly behind their pianos.
About half the tables in the room are filled.

FRANK

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.
Welcome to the Ambassador Lounge.
My name's Frank Baker and no, you're not
seeing double, it's just my
little brother, Jack.

Some laughter.

FRANK

(continuing)
I'm glad you're all in such a good mood tonight,
because we've got a very special
evening planned ...

INT. KITCHEN

Susie sits on a stool while Carlos positions the dress tags
on a cutting board. As a WAITRESS from the bar passes by,
Susie snares a drink from her tray.

WAITRESS

Hey!

SUSIE

Just a sip. To kill the
butterflies, okay?

WAITRESS

Okay. But no lipstick.

Susie takes a quick sip.

SUSIE

There. No one's the wiser.

WAITRESS

Nice dress.

As the Waitress exits, Carlos brings the cleaver down
with a sharp chop, severing the tags.

SUSIE

Appreciate it, Ace.

LOUNGE

The audience is laughing.

FRANK

But seriously, folks, as I sit here tonight, looking out on all your kind faces, I can't help but feel some of us have met before. We may not know each other's names, we might not recognize one another on the street, but we know each other just the same. And over the years we've shared something. A little music, a little drink, a little laughter, maybe even... a few tears. But I guess that's what friends are for, huh?

Applause. Jack puts out his cigarette.

JACK

Oh, brother.

FRANK

And it's especially nice to be among friends tonight, because, well, tonight's a very special night for my brother and I. This evening we've asked a young lady to join us, a lady Jack and I are sure will soon seem like just another old friend to you all. She's making her debut here this evening and, as far as I'm concerned, she couldn't be doing it in a better place. Because there's one place that's always been for us a very special place, and that place is this place, the Ambassador Lounge. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome a very special lady with a very special way of singing a song, Miss Susie Diamond.

Applause. Susie strides out of the kitchen, past the busing station, and up to the microphone stand, which, unfortunately, is not on.

FRANK

(continuing; whispering)

The switch. Hit the switch.

SUSIE

Switch?

(as she hits it)

What fucking switch?

Silence.

SUSIE

(continuing; very demure)

Pardon me.

Jack and Frank look at one another, then, before outrage can set in, plunge into the opening number. Susie takes the mike from the stand and smiles sweetly.

SUSIE

(continuing)

I can't tell you how thrilled I am to be here.

For the moment, the audience doesn't seem quite sure how thrilled they are to be here.

SUSIE

(continuing)

I'm all smiles, darling
Through and through...'

INT. LOBBY

A BELLBOY exits the elevator and, hearing Susie's voice coming from the lounge, stops. He looks to the CLERK behind the front desk.

BELLBOY

I thought the Bakers were on tonight.

CLERK

They are.

BELLBOY

Well, who's that?

The Clerk looks up from the register and listens.

CLERK

I don't know. Frank?

INT. LOUNGE

Judging from the faces, Susie's as big a hit in the lounge as she is in the lobby. Head thrown back, eyes closed, she sings with abandon, finishing on a long extended note, then swooping down in a dramatic, exhausted bow. There is a split second of silence,

then thunderous applause. Magic.

EXT. HOTEL

The new trio, fresh off their first gig,
come out of the service entrance into the night.

FRANK

Fucking. She says fucking in
front of an entire room of people.

SUSIE

I said I was sorry.

FRANK

(to Jack)
Did you hear it?

JACK

Fucking.

SUSIE

Look, they were all on their third Mai Tais
by the time I got out there anyway.

FRANK

(directly to her)
Fucking.

SUSIE

For Christ sake, I said it, I
didn't do it.

(pulling out some bills)
Besides, I don't think they were
too offended, do you?

FRANK

(grabbing the bills)
Give me that.

SUSIE

Hey!

FRANK

We are not a saloon act. We do
not take tips from dirty old men.

SUSIE

(innocent)
I was gonna split it with you guys.

FRANK

We do not take tips. I'll apply
this to the cost of the dress.

Frank puts the money in his pocket. Susie stares at
him, steaming.

SUSIE

Then I want my name on the poster.
And my picture!
(taking off her shoes)
And these shoes are too goddamn tight!

Susie hurls the shoes at Frank and stalks off barefoot.
Jack is leaning against the wall,
watching it all with amusement.

JACK

Nice girl.

ON Frank's expression we hear the OPENING NOTES of
"New York, New York" and we see:

SERIES OF SHOTS

Susie and the boys performing it in one lounge after
another, playing to increasingly enthusiastic audiences,
no empty tables now.

As the SONG ends, we CLOSE ON the cardboard stand-up,
newly done over with a picture of Susie and an
accompanying exclamation: "See the Sensational Susie
Diamond!" As the FINAL CHORD sounds we --

CUT TO:

INT. LLOYD'S OFFICE

Jack and Frank, once again in the office of the
supercilious Lloyd, waiting as he prepares their
cash envelope.

LLOYD

Yes, sir. That's quite a girl you boys latched
onto. She a local?

FRANK

Born and bred.

LLOYD

Lucky for you. Well, there you go, guys.
Don't spend it all in one place.
Oh ... you want to count it, Jack?

FRANK

We trust you, Lloyd. You know
that.

Frank takes the envelope and begins to leave.

LLOYD

Say, Frankie. Since I've got you here...
How's next week look for you guys?

Frank glances at Jack, giving it to him.
Jack's eyes go cold.

JACK

We'll call you.

As Lloyd's face drops, Jack and Frank step into the hallway and begin to walk slowly away, playing it cool, then glance at one another and begin to walk faster because they're about to burst out laughing.

FOLLOWING SHOT

By the time they reach the lobby, they are laughing, tripping across the carpet, out the front entrance and onto the sidewalk, where their voices explode in the night air and they begin to do a weird boyish waltz together, laughing giddily, until they see - standing under an awning, lighting a cigarette - Susie, watching them with raised eyebrows. Jack and Frank, frozen in a clumsy embrace, quickly disengage and begin clearing their throats and squaring their cuffs. Susie exhales a plume of smoke, studies them a moment, then smiles slightly.

SUSIE

Night, Bakers.

As she turns away, Jack glances up, watching her trim shadow disappear down the street.

EXT. CITY

Gray and cold. The streets swept with rain.
And once again the tentative piano:
"JINGLE BELLS, jingle bells, jingle all the way.
Oh what fun it is to ride ...
Oh what fun it is to ride ... Oh what fun..."

INT. VETERINARY CLINIC

Jack and Eddie are sitting in the waiting room:
small and dirty and packed with pet owners and
their animals.
After a moment, a WOMAN with a clipboard appears.

WOMAN
Barker.
(no takers)
Jock Barker?

JACK
(realizing it's him)
Baker. Jack Baker.

WOMAN
Right. Bring him back.

JACK
Come on, Ed.

Jack and Eddie follow the Woman down a corridor.

WOMAN
You should've brought a leash, Mr. Barker.
The doctor doesn't like to be bitten.

JACK
He doesn't bite.

WOMAN
They never do, Mr. Barker.

JACK
Baker.

WOMAN
Right. In there.

The Woman points Jack and Eddie into a small room.
There is an examining table, a sink, and on the wall,
a chart detailing the various breeds of dogs and cats.

Jack glances around the room, then comes back to Eddie, who's staring up at him.

JACK

You shoulda brushed, pal.

Just then, a MAN in a white coat breezes in.

DR. BEASLEY (MAN)

Ah, labradorus retrieverus. Good fellows. Quiet, but able to appreciate a good joke.

Dr. Beasley pats Eddie on the side, then turns to Jack.

DR. BEASLEY

Beasley.

JACK

Baker.

DR. BEASLEY

What's our friend's problem?

JACK

Teeth.

DR. BEASLEY

What's wrong with them?

JACK

They're falling out.

DR. BEASLEY

Uh-oh. That's not good. Let's get him up here.

Jack lifts Eddie up onto the table and Dr. Beasley opens Eddie's mouth for a look. It doesn't take long.

DR. BEASLEY

They gotta go.

JACK

(a take)
How many?

DR. BEASLEY

Five's my guess. Maybe more. Won't know till I get in there.
(consulting his clipboard)
Leave him now and you can pick

him up in the morning.

JACK

Isn't there something you can give him? A pill or something?

DR. BEASLEY

Decay unfortunately doesn't limit itself to the denture, Mr. Baker. It spreads into his chest. Then the heart goes. We wouldn't want that, would we?

JACK

How will he eat?

DR. BEASLEY

Start him out on cottage cheese. If you've got him on kibble, just soak it a few minutes. Go down like pudding through a hot pipe.

JACK

No bones?

DR. BEASLEY

No bones.

Jack looks at Eddie.

JACK

What do you do to him?

DR. BEASLEY

Don't worry, Mr. Baker. We'll knock him out. He won't feel a thing.

JACK

I think maybe I'll bring him back next week ...

DR. BEASLEY

The sooner we do this the better, Mr. Baker.

EXT. STREET

Jack steps out onto the rainy street alone. He glances back at the vet's with second thought, then moves slowly off.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT

Jack enters with a small grocery bag and opens the refrigerator. A carton of cream, a few eggs -- there's not much there. He takes a small container of cottage cheese from the grocery bag and places it on an empty shelf. As he closes the refrigerator door, he glances around the apartment. It is very still, very quiet. He looks up at the ceiling absently, then walks over to the window and looks out. There is a mug of coffee there on the sill. He takes it and holds it in both hands for a moment, then places it back on the sill. He sits at the piano and runs his fingers lightly over the ivory, not making a sound, then places his hands on the keys and begins to play. "Jingle Bells."

INT. CORNER DINER

In the front window, room has been made among the photographs for one of Susie. Inside, Jack, Frank and Susie sit at a table, surrounded by empty coffee cups and cigarettes. Frank has several slips of paper before him with names and dates.

FRANK

The twenty-third ... Yeah, here it is. We got the Carlton or the Plaza. Four day turns.
What do you think, Jack?

Jack is staring out the window.

FRANK

(continuing)
Jack, you with us?

SUSIE

The Carlton's a dump. No cover. No minimum.
And they water their drinks.
It's strictly for the Fuller brush crowd.

Susie, as she says this, is pouring sugar into her Coke.

FRANK

(watching)
I guess it's, the Plaza then.
That brings us to the twenty-seventh.
We got the Avedon for three or the Park
downtown for two.

SUSIE

We take the Avedon, right? Simple.

Frank rubs his chin and looks at Jack. Jack shakes his head.

SUSIE

(continuing)

The Park? It's only two nights.
Why throw away a night?

JACK

Because Blackie Carson books the Park and whenever we've needed a gig he's come through.

SUSIE

Oh.

(lifting her glass)
Well, for Blackie then.

FRANK

By the way, I got a message yesterday from some guy looking for New Year's action. Resort, upstate.

SUSIE

(likes "resort")
Hey.

JACK

Sounds like a booking agent looking to book an easy fee.

FRANK

That's what I figure. Probably have us in a bed-and-breakfast playing to the owls.

SUSIE

Maybe it's legit.

FRANK

Maybe. I'll call him.

JACK

Make it collect.

FRANK

(shuffling his slips)
That's it except for the first.
We got the Sheraton, the Ambassador, or the Holiday Inn on Sixtieth. All three-day turns.

Frank looks at Jack.

JACK

Draw.

Susie shrugs.

SUSIE

How'd you guys used to decide what gig to take?

Jack and Frank exchange a glance.

FRANK

Uh, well ... we flipped a coin.

SUSIE

So find a dime. Let's get out of here.

EXT. DINER

Jack and Frank step out-of the diner and turn their collars up against the chill.

Frank pulls on a pair of gloves.

FRANK

Jesus, it's gonna be mean this year. Where're your gloves?

Jack shrugs.

FRANK

(continuing)

Better take care of your fingers, little brother. Buy yourself a case of arthritis and you won't be able to play 'Chopsticks.'

JACK

I'll take my chances.

Frank pats his hands together and glances into the street.

FRANK

Something, huh? All those bids.

JACK

Yeah. Something.

FRANK

Yeah ... Well, I gotta go.

JACK

You wanna get a drink?

Frank stops, surprised.

FRANK

No, I... Little Frank's got strep. Donna's been up two nights making sure the rest of us don't get it.

Jack nods.

FRANK

(continuing)

You all right?

JACK

Yeah, fine.

FRANK

Okay I'll see you tomorrow night then.

JACK

Right.

As Frank leaves, he takes a glance at his brother, then disappears around the corner. A second later, Susie comes out of the diner.

SUSIE

Where's egghead?

JACK

His kid's sick.

SUSIE

(searching her purse)

I don't know. It's hard figuring you two as brothers. Seems like the hospital might've scrambled the babies somewhere.

JACK

He takes after our mother.

SUSIE

Yeah, well, all I know is mother nature must be one crazy dame. Shit.

Jack offers his pack of cigarettes.

SUSIE

Uh-uh. I never touch American cigarettes.

(still searching)
What's tomorrow again?

JACK

The Stratford.

SUSIE

Nice place. Fulla velvet. Even the bedspreads.

(shaking the purse)
Damn! Two-fifty a pack and I go through 'em like toothpicks. Twelve-and-a-half cents a piece, you believe that?

JACK

Huh?

SUSIE

Paris Opals. Twelve-and-a-half cents. I sat down with a pencil and added it one day. But I figure, if you're gonna be sticking something in your mouth, you might as well make it the best.

(finding one)
Ah, here's a lost soul.

Jack lights it. She takes a draw.

SUSIE

(continuing)
Mmm. Like kissing a rose. Well, au revoir.

JACK

Hey.
(as she stops)
You feel like a cup of coffee?

SUSIE

You kidding? We must've killed three pots in there. Anyway, I gotta get home. Rest the pipes.

JACK

You want me to walk you?

Susie looks at Jack a little funny.

SUSIE

No. Thanks.

She starts to move away, then stops and looks back.

SUSIE

(continuing)

Hey, listen. You're not going soft on me, are you? I mean, you're not gonna start dreaming about me and waking up all sweaty and looking at me like I'm some kinda princess when I burp.

JACK

Forget it.

SUSIE

I mean, that'd be too creepy.
With us working together and all.

JACK

Forget it.

SUSIE

Nothing personal --

Jack holds up his hand. Susie just stands there.

JACK

Better hurry. You're a nickel
down on your cigarette.

EXT. VETERINARY CLINIC

Jack paces outside the veterinary clinic, rubbing his arms against the night's chill. He glances up at the flickering sign over the building: "Twenty-Four Hour Emergency Care." Inside, a KID with deep-set eyes is bent over a magazine. Jack hesitates then enters.

INT. VETERINARY CLINIC

KID

Yeah?

Jack glances around, ill at ease.

KID

(continuing)

You want something, pal? If you're looking for a bathroom, try the Super Chief around the corner.

The Kid goes back to his magazine.

JACK

No, I, uh, left a dog here this morning. He needed some work on his mouth.

KID

Regular hours are eight to five.

JACK

Yeah, yeah, I know. I was just passing by. Thought I'd check in on him.

KID

You can check in on him tomorrow. Between eight and five.

JACK

Yeah, well, couldn't I take a look now?

The Kid looks up at Jack with mild contempt.

KID

You want to know if he's okay. Right?

JACK

(uncomfortable)
Yeah.

KID

All right. Hold on.

JACK

The name's Baker --

KID

Save it. What's he look like?

JACK

(puzzled)
Black. Labrador.

KID

All right. they lay the dead ones out in the cold room. I'll take a look.

The Kid disappears into the back. Jack stands frozen, watching the swinging door come to rest. He looks like a man who, unexpectedly, finds a razor pressed to his neck. He fumbles for a cigarette, but doesn't light it. He waits. A moment later, the door swings open.

KID

Nope. Just a couple poodles.

Jack nods, then, moving stiffly, leaves.

EXT. VETERINARY CLINIC

Outside, he reaches into his coat and takes the bottle.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT

On the floor, a long line of bowls, each containing a different concoction, all intended for the ailing Eddie. Eddie, lying a few feet away, shows no interest. In the kitchen, Jack is heating something up in a pan.

NINA

I tried Cheerios this morning.
He didn't even get up.
Maybe they took out the wrong teeth.

JACK

He's just feeling sorry for himself. This is it, pal. Hear me? Two bucks a can.

Jack dumps some brown slop into a bowl and places it next to the others. Nina and he wait. At first, nothing, then ... Eddie's eyes move. His nose twitches. His head lifts. Finally, he gets up and walks to the bowl. He eats.

JACK

(continuing)
Chili.

CITY

draped in winter. Dark skies, people lost in heavy coats, the city's battered Christmas decorations hung tenuously across traffic-clogged streets. Over it all we hear "JINGLE BELLS," PLAYED for the first time

completely through, hesitantly but without error.
As the SONG ENDS, we are:

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT

watching Nina strike the final chord triumphantly.
She turns to Jack, who's been listening from the couch.

JACK

(nodding to the ceiling)
You're gonna knock her dead, kid.

INT. LUAU LOUNGE

All done up in reds and greens for Christmas Eve.
Jack, Frank and Susie -- each decked out in their own
little Santa hats -- perform "Silver Bells" for the
happy crowd. Jack, smoking a cigarette, will not be
mistaken for Santa Claus, but Susie looks adorable.
Frank just looks happy. As they finish,
the crowd applauds.

INT. BATHROOM

Jack, now sans Santa hat, enters the bathroom off the
lobby and finds Santa Claus standing in front of the
mirror, fussing with his beard.

JACK

Hey, Frank.

FRANK

You recognized me.

JACK

Just a lucky guess.

FRANK

So what do you think?

JACK

Very realistic.

FRANK

(not buying it)
Yeah, well, what can I say? Dad must've had
forty pounds on me.

Jesus, you remember him being this big?

Jack looks in the mirror.

JACK
Yeah.

FRANK
Well, the line's growing weaker, little brother.
Lucky for us there aren't any dragons left to slay.

INT. LOBBY

Jack and Frank step out into the lobby, thus giving a few people, Susie among them, the curious privilege of seeing Santa Claus exit a men's room.

FRANK
You want to come out to the house tomorrow?
The way the bookings been piling up, Donna's decided to really lay it on. Turkey, stuffing, the whole bit. Kitchen's so full of food you can hardly move. We could use another appetite.

JACK
Thanks, but I've got plans.

FRANK
All right, but if you change your mind, let me know. I gotta go get Ma in the morning anyway.

SUSIE
(coming up)
Well, well. Ho, ho, ho. You moonlighting at Macy's, Frank?

FRANK
For the kids.
(moving off)
Merry Christmas, you two. Don't forget. We leave the twenty-sixth.

Frank pushes through the revolving door and steps out into the street in his Santa suit.

SUSIE
He do that every year?

JACK

Every year.

SUSIE

Aren't the kids asleep?

JACK

Every year.

SUSIE

So why's he do it?

JACK

I guess in case one year they're not.

Jack looks into Susie's eyes, then crosses to the door and exits. Susie watches him go, then turns to the desk clerk.

SUSIE

Call me a cab, will ya?

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT

As Jack enters his apartment, he senses a presence in the room and looks over to the old phone booth. Nina is sitting inside on the little stool, her head tilted against the glass. Jack studies her a moment, then takes the carton of eggnog he's carrying into the kitchen and grabs a pair of glasses. He pulls a chair over to the phone booth and sits down.

NINA

How'd the show go?

JACK

Okay. How'd yours go?

NINA

Not so good.

Jack looks at Nina's face, tender and young in the soft shadows of the booth. After a moment, her eyes shift to the carton in his hand.

NINA

Eggnog?

Jack nods.

NINA

(continuing)
From Hurley's?

JACK
Eighty proof. What d'ya say?
Think you can handle it?

Nina nods. Jack begins to fill the two glasses.

NINA
Jack.

JACK
Yeah?

NINA
Can I stay here tonight? Even if
she comes here?

Jack pauses a moment, then closes the carton and sets
it aside.

JACK
Sure.

He hands Nina her glass, then takes his own.

NINA
Merry Christmas, Jack.

JACK
Merry Christmas.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - NEXT MORNING

Jack and Nina are standing in the middle of the room,
looking down at something.

NINA
What do you think?

Eddie, outfitted in a brand new, spanking red dog
sweater, stares up at Jack and Nina, wondering why
he's the object of so much attention.

JACK
Very cool.

EXT. CEMETERY - JACK, NINA AND EDDIE

(sporting his new sweater)

make their way across an empty cemetery.
Nina is swinging a bottle of whiskey.

NINA

(looking around)

There were more flowers last year. Mr. Rinaldi
down at the drugstore says it's going to snow
by New Year's. Says he can feel it in his elbows.
I hope it snows. I want to make a snowman.
You ever make a snowman, Jack?

JACK

Sure.

NINA

That's what I want to do.
I want to make a snowman.

As they come to a plot of ground, they stop.
There are two matching headstones, one for Jack's father,
fully engraved, and another for Jack's mother, bearing
only her name. Jack studies the plot a moment, then
crouches before his father's marker: "ANDREW S. BAKER.
Adoring Husband of Eleanor, Loving Father of Franklin
and John." Jack brushes some dirt from the face of the
stone, then stands.

NINA

(continuing)

Now?

Jack nods. Nina uncaps the whiskey bottle and pours
it onto the dead man's grave.

NINA

(continuing)

Merry Christmas, Mr. Baker.

They stand another moment, just looking, then turn away.
As they begin to walk, Jack sees Eddie in his new
sweater sniffing at a gravestone.

JACK

Hey, Eddie. Have some respect,
will ya?

EXT. BUILDING

Jack is sitting on a suitcase in front of his building. A moment later, Frank pulls the car up to the curb and Jack gets in. Susie is sitting up front.

INT. CAR

Frank, burning with the afterglow of a holiday spent with family, cheerfully maneuvers the car through the city.

FRANK

So. How was everyone's Christmas?

Jack and Susie stare disconsolately out the window.

FRANK

(continuing)

Too early, huh? Well, there's coffee and donuts for whoever wants them.

How about a maple bar, Jack?

Jack shakes his head and takes out a cigarette.

FRANK

(continuing)

Uh, Jack ... if you don't mind.

Jack stares at the back of Frank's head, then puts the cigarette away. Susie takes a peek in the donut bag and looks a little sick.

FRANK

(continuing)

By the way, if anyone gets bored,

Donna packed some travel games.

They work wonders with the kids.

Frank reaches under the seat and hands Susie a sack full of magnetic games, puzzles, and plastic cubes.

FRANK

(continuing)

You two could play checkers.

SUSIE

Maybe we should just listen to the radio.

FRANK

Sorry. It only plays static.

Susie looks at the radio,
then at the games in her hands.

SUSIE

How long did you say it takes to
get to this place?

INT. CAR - FEW HOURS LATER

Jack is staring out the window at the winter landscape,
an unlit cigarette dangling from his lip.
Susie is gnawing on a donut, deeply obsessed with an
elaborate plastic puzzle.

FRANK

Any more coffee?

Susie snaps out of her trance and shakes the Thermos.

SUSIE

Uh-uh. Hey, what's this?

Susie notices an old, leather-bound ledger. Inside,
there are hundreds of tiny entries.

SUSIE

(continuing)

You play all these places?

FRANK

Baker's unabridged.

SUSIE

Jesus, you fellas've made a lot of
noise. What's with the stars?

FRANK

Virgins.

SUSIE

Virgins?

FRANK

First times. Hey, look at this.

A crepe-covered car surrounded by several other
HONKING VEHICLES passes by. Jack stares at the beaming
newlyweds as they glide past his window,
two kids starting life in a beat-up Eldorado
covered with toilet paper.

FRANK

(continuing)

When's the last time we played a wedding, Jack?

JACK

Two years ago. March.

SUSIE

(consulting the ledger)

He's right.

FRANK

He's always right. Go ahead. Pick a virgin.

Susie looks at Frank curiously.

FRANK

(continuing)

Go ahead.

SUSIE

(scanning the book)

Okay. The Fantasy Inn.

FRANK

Jack?

JACK

(staring out the window)

November. '71.

FRANK

First night?

JACK

Day. Wednesday.

FRANK

Last?

JACK

Sunday.

SUSIE

I don't believe it.

FRANK

I told you, he's got the gift. Same with music. Hears it once and he's got it.

Frank smiles into the rear view mirror.

FRANK

(continuing)

My brilliant little brother.

EXT. HOTEL

The hotel, done in a sort of King Arthur motif, is built right on the ocean. Frank guides the car down a simulated cobblestone drive and the three get out.

FRANK

Will you listen to that ocean?

It's LOUD. Frank takes a deep breath.

FRANK

(continuing)

And how about this air? I'm telling you, a few days in this place'll put five years on your life.

SUSIE

Smells like fish.

FRANK

Of course it smells like fish.

We're on the ocean.

What'd you expect, Chanel number five?

SUSIE

(to herself)

Smells like tuna number two to me.

FRANK

It's paradise. That's what it is.

Paradise.

As Susie and Jack follow Frank up the drive, Jack notices the beat-up Eldorado in the parking lot, its toilet paper streamers blowing gently in the ocean breeze.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY

The lobby is done in royal reds and blues and there are a lot of swords on the walls.

Franks steps up to the front desk.

FRANK

Hi, we're the Fabulous Baker Boys.

CLERK

Glad to meet you. I'm Terrific Tom.

FRANK

No. We're the entertainment.

TOM (CLERK)

Oh, right, gotcha. You got bags?

FRANK

Outside. Blue Chevy.

TOM

(ringing a bell)

Cyril. Chevy. Blue. Take 'em up to the Guinevere Suite.

A lanky boy in velvet jodhpurs and high stockings ambles out for the bags. Tom hands Frank the room keys.

TOM

(continuing)

Right on the ocean, Mr. Baker. You can practically dangle your toes in the water.

INT. SUITE

Tom wasn't kidding. The immediacy of the ocean beyond the window is almost scary.

FRANK

You believe this? I'm telling you, we're getting away with murder. Two shows a night and the rest of the time we live like kings. It's a crime.

Jack stares at the ocean, then at the two beds placed side by side. Suddenly Susie comes through the bathroom.

SUSIE

Hey, we're connected.

FRANK

Great.

SUSIE

Great?

FRANK

Yeah.

Susie shrugs and returns to her room through the bathroom.

JACK

I thought we had separate rooms.

FRANK

(opening drawers)

We do. She's got hers, we've got ours. Hey. Wash and Dries.

JACK

I thought we all had separate rooms.

FRANK

Come on, Jack. It's not like it's the first time we've bunked together. It'll be like when we were kids. Relax. Enjoy the view.

INT. DINING ROOM

Jack, Frank and Susie are in the dining room, which, like their rooms, looks out over the ocean. Dinner is over and they're well through a second bottle of wine.

SUSIE

You're kidding me.

FRANK

As Charlie Steinway is my witness.

SUSIE

Peggy Lee?

FRANK

Tell her.

JACK

She was staying at the Grand downtown ...

FRANK

It was April. April seventeenth.
That one I remember.

JACK

We were playing the lounge one
night and she came in.

FRANK

Pearls. White gown. Beautiful.

JACK

Frank asked if she'd sit in for a song, she said
yes, and we did a few bars.

FRANK

A few bars!

SUSIE

What'd she sing?

FRANK

People.' You think Streisand, right?
Hot that night. Chills.
Through the whole audience. I could hardly play.

SUSIE

Wow. You ever see her again?

FRANK

No. We got a picture, though.
One of the waitresses had a camera.

(to Jack)

God, we were just kids. That was
something, wasn't it?

Jack nods. Frank shakes his head, still lost in the
spring evening years before, then notices the newlyweds
sitting across the room.

FRANK

(continuing)

Hey, will you look at that?

SUSIE

They must've bought the same
map we did.

FRANK

What do you say we send a bottle
over?

SUSIE

I don't believe it. You're a romantic, Frank.

JACK

He's drunk.

FRANK

Not true. Besides, Jack's the romantic.

SUSIE

Oh yeah?

FRANK

He's just afraid to show it. Aren't you, little brother?

JACK

Have some more wine, Frank.

FRANK

Good idea.

(lifting his glass)

To Peggy Lee.

INT. BATHROOM

Frank, standing, dressed in pajamas.
Jack is staring out the window at the darkness.

FRANK

I'm putting my stuff on the right, okay?

JACK

Okay.

FRANK

I figure that way we won't get confused.

JACK

Right.

FRANK

Unless you want the right.

JACK

No, you take the right.

FRANK

We might as well do the towels the same way.

JACK

Okay.

FRANK

I just figure things'll go smoother, you know,
if we have it all worked out from the beginning.

JACK

Good idea.

FRANK

But if it doesn't work out, let
me know. I'm flexible.

JACK

Right.

Frank nods and moves to the bed.

JACK

(continuing; re: the bathroom light)
You leaving that on?

FRANK

Yeah.

JACK

All night?

FRANK

Yeah.

JACK

We're gonna be here a week?

FRANK

(puzzled)
Yeah.

JACK

So you're gonna leave it on.
Every night. For a week.

FRANK

Yeah. You mind?

JACK

Why would I mind?

FRANK

I don't know. I mean, I always did it as a kid.
I figured it was no big deal. Is it? A big deal?

Jack just stares at Frank.

FRANK

(continuing)

Oh. I didn't know. I mean, I always did it as a kid.
It was never a big deal then. Was it?

Jack just stares at Frank.

FRANK

(continuing)

Oh. Well. You want me to turn
it off?

Jack just stares at Frank.

FRANK

(continuing)

I'll turn it off.

Jack turns back to the window.

JACK

Forget it. It's no big deal.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

The next morning. Jack and Frank are standing
in a huge dining room, appraising two elegant grands.

FRANK

They're beauties, huh?

Jack steps up to one and runs his hand over the keys.

FRANK

(continuing)

Reminds me of those Steinways Willie used to have.

Frank taps a few notes on his piano, humming happily.
Jack begins to echo his brother's notes, listening.
After a moment, Frank notices.

FRANK

(continuing)

What?

INT. DINING ROOM

A short, stubby LITTLE MAN in a charcoal suit strides into the dining room, followed by Terrific Tom.

MR. DANIELS (LITTLE MAN)

Good morning, gentlemen. I'm Mr. Daniels, the manager. I believe I've spoken to one of you on the phone.

FRANK

(offering his hand)

That'd be me, sir. Frank Baker.
This is my brother Jack.

Jack, slouched against the piano, smoking, nods.

MR. DANIELS

Tom here tells me there's a problem with the pianos. We were assured they were in tune.

FRANK

Yes, well, they are.

MR. DANIELS

Then I'm afraid I don't understand.

FRANK

They are in tune. But not with each other.

MR. DANIELS

Is that important?

FRANK

Uh, well ...

JACK

Yes. It's important.

Frank glances nervously at Jack.

MR. DANIELS

Tom, who're we dealing with on these?

TOM

A Mr. Reynolds, sir. But he's gone on vacation. I called this morning.

MR. DANIELS

Well, gentlemen, I don't know what to say. Not being a musician myself I find it difficult to grasp the magnitude of this. I don't suppose there's any way you could just ... accommodate.

JACK

Accommodate? I don't think I know what you mean.

FRANK

I think what Mr. Daniels is trying to say, Jack, is --

JACK

Why don't we let Mr. Daniels tell us what he's trying to say.

MR. DANIELS

I assure you, Mr. Baker, no offense is intended. I simply mean, well, we're not a symphony, are we?

INT. HALLWAY

Frank dogs Jack down a hallway.

FRANK

Jack ... Jack ... You're acting like a kid.

JACK

No, that's your problem, Frank. You get around one of these assholes and you turn into a fucking three-year-old.

FRANK

What's the matter with you? So the piano's a little out of tune. So what?

JACK

(stopping)
Christ, can't you hear it?

FRANK

No! I never hear it!
(shaking his head)
Maybe. Sometimes. I don't know.
But I won't let it bother me.

JACK

Doesn't it matter to you?

FRANK

What matters to me is we've got the six easiest nights we've had in ten years.

So 'Tie a Yellow Ribbon' sounds a little flat.

So what? Nobody's gonna hear it, Jack. Nobody.

So why should you care?

JACK

Because I can hear it.

FRANK

Well, then stuff cotton in your ears, because come six o'clock we're gonna walk into that dining room with smiles on.

Understand, little brother?

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Frank is adjusting his tie in the bathroom mirror. Jack, sitting at the window, his foot up against the glass, drinks from a flask as the sky above the ocean goes dark. After a moment, Susie enters wearing a little tuxedo of her own and begins to brush her hair.

SUSIE

Hey, fellas. What's the word?

Nothing.

SUSIE

(continuing)

What's with you two?

FRANK

Jack woke up on the wrong side of the bottle.

Susie looks at Jack. Then Frank.

SUSIE

O-kay.

INT. LOUNGE

As Jack, Frank and Susie perform "Strangers in the Night," dozens of couples move slowly on the dance floor,

while others sit at candle-lit tables, sipping cocktails.
As the song ends, the couples applaud.

FRANK

Thank you, thank you.

(as applause dies)

You know, Susie and Jack and I only just arrived here yesterday, but already the people here at the King Corporation's Moorish Manor have made us feel, well, a part of the family. And it's their hope that, before you leave, everyone of you will feel a part of that family also. So, if during-the next few days, we should happen to pass one another in the hallway or in the lobby or wherever ... don't be a stranger. Stop. Say hello. Introduce yourself. Because here, there are no strangers, only friends. And family. Right, Jack?

JACK

Right. I love you, Frank.

FRANK

(stunned)

What?

JACK

I love you. I just wanted to say it.

Frank stares incredulously at Jack.

FRANK

Uh, well, I love you, too, Jack.

(moving quickly along)

So. Susie. How 'bout it.

SUSIE

Huh?

FRANK

Got another song for us?

SUSIE

Oh. Yeah. I gotta bunch of them.

FRANK

Well then ... shall we?

BACKSTAGE

Frank corners Jack as they exit the stage.

Susie looks around nervously to see if anyone's watching.

FRANK

(whispering)

What's the matter with you?

JACK

I'm sorry, Frank. All that talk about family.

I just got emotional.

FRANK

How dare you say you love me.

JACK

It won't happen again. Scout's honor.

SUSIE

What's with you guys?

FRANK

Someone needs to grow up. I won't take it, Jack.

JACK

Sure you will.

Jack pushes past Frank and leaves.

Frank watches him go, then turns to leave himself.

INT. BATHROOM

Middle of the night. Jack, fully clothed, is sitting on the rim of the tub, smoking. Susie enters.

SUSIE

Oh, sorry. With the light always on, it's hard to tell.

JACK

It's okay.

(the cigarette)

Last one.

SUSIE

Can't sleep?

JACK

In and out.

SUSIE

It's the waves. God's music, my mother used to say.
She was crazy for the ocean.

JACK

Yeah, well, I wish God would go
a little easy on the trumpets.

SUSIE

How's egghead?

JACK

Like a baby. You?

SUSIE

In and out.

Jack nods. Susie looks at him carefully.

SUSIE

(continuing)

If you want, I got a pack in the
room.

JACK

No thanks. I never touch French
cigarettes.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

The next morning. As Jack passes through the lobby,
he hears the plaintive PLINKING of a PIANO. Curious,
he goes to the dining room and peers in.
The tables have yet to be set for the evening and,
except for Frank, the room is empty.

JACK

What the hell are you doing?

FRANK

(not looking up)

What's it look like I'm doing?
I'm tuning a goddamn piano.

JACK

Really.

FRANK

Yes, really. I don't want you to be unhappy,

Jack. If you say it's out of tune,
it's out of tune.

Jack smiles to himself and crosses the room.

JACK
How's it coming?

FRANK
Fine.

JACK
How long you been at it?

FRANK
(shrugging)
Half-hour. Once I finish this octave I'm gonna
get breakfast. You see what's on the buffet?

JACK
They stopped serving two hours ago.

FRANK
Two hours ago!

JACK
Time flies, huh?

Frank looks despairingly at the pianos.

JACK
(continuing)
I could give you a hand. If
you want.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Jack and Frank are eating lunch. Frank has a tiny
stack of blue cards he's perusing.
He holds one out to Jack.

FRANK
What do you make that? Paruchi?

Jack nods. Frank continues to go through the cards
as he speaks.

FRANK
(continuing)
You haven't seen Susie, have you?

JACK

No. Why?

FRANK

Just wonder what she's up to.
I never see her. Makes me nervous.

JACK

She's a big girl.

FRANK

Yeah, well, she's our girl now. I think we better
keep an eye on her. There's trouble there.

(another card)

Hey, listen to this. Ethel and Bert Lane.
Married seventy-five years. You believe that?

JACK

What the hell are these?

FRANK

Dedications. I came up with the idea on the road.
See, every morning the maids drop one of these
cards in each room. The guest fills out the card,
leaves it at the front desk, and that night we play
it. Daniels went crazy for the idea.

(whispering)

And that's not all. Last night, after the nine
o'clock, he corners me, right, and starts asking
about our availability. Like he wants to line
something up.

I think he's got a hard-on for Susie.

WOMAN

Excuse me.

Frank jumps. A WOMAN in a bright flowered gift shop
dress pokes her head in.

WOMAN

I'm sorry to interrupt, but when I saw you sitting
here, I just had to come over. Florence Simmons.

FRANK

Uh ... Frank Baker. This is my
brother.

FLORENCE SIMMONS (WOMAN)

Oh, I know, I know. My husband and I saw you
play last night and it's the most remarkable thing.

FRANK

Oh. Well, thank you.

FLORENCE SIMMONS

No, I mean you.

(to Jack)

I have a brother-in-law who looks exactly like you. Exactly. You don't happen to have a Huckleberry in your family tree, do you?

JACK

Afraid not.

FLORENCE SIMMONS

Well, it's frightening. You could be his twin. Of course, he doesn't have your talent. Musically, I mean. He sharpens things for a living. Lawn mower blades, kitchen knives, anything with an edge. Can imagine?

Jack is having a hard time imagining Florence Simmons.

FLORENCE SIMMONS

(continuing)

Well, anyway, I just had to make sure there was no relation. You play wonderfully. Both of you.

Florence Simmons gives a little flutter of a wave and exits.

FRANK

Funny, huh?

JACK

What?

FRANK

Thinking there's someone who looks like you, walking around the street somewhere.

(smiling)

Wonder if I saw him I'd think it was you?

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

Jack is standing on the walkway that encircles the hotel, watching the waves tumble into one another. As he starts to take out a cigarette, he notices Florence Simmons standing a few yards away

with a camera.

FLORENCE SIMMONS

I just know my sister won't believe me. Do you mind?

Jack shakes his head and Florence starts to aim the camera.

FLORENCE SIMMONS

I really hate to impose. It's just that the resemblance is so extraordinary.

(focusing)

I wonder if you could turn this way so your face isn't in the shadows.

As Jack turns, he glances over Florence's swaying shoulder and sees Susie and a man standing at the other end of the walkway. They are leaning into the wind, her hair blowing free, brushing the man's face.

FLORENCE SIMMONS

Say cheese.

The camera clicks.

FLORENCE SIMMONS

(continuing)

Gotcha. Would you like a copy for yourself? The hotel develops.

Jack glances away from Susie and the man.

JACK

No.

ON Jack's expression APPLAUSE is heard and a moment later we --

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

That evening. The trio has just finished a song and those on the dance floor are clapping.

FRANK

Thank you. You know, before we came out here this evening, Susie and Jack and I were looking over your dedications and something struck us.

Susie and Jack look at Frank as if they have no idea what he's talking about.

FRANK

(continuing)

We realized that, well, we're really not so different from one another after all. Oh sure, we may be at different points in our journey, but we all travel pretty much the same road. And so, with that in mind, we'd like to introduce you to two very special couples. First, married for all of two days, please say hello to Helen and Bud Wilson. Helen. Bud.

Those standing on the dance floor applaud as the young couple from the beat-up Eldorado make their way to the front of the room.

FRANK

(continuing)

And now, our second couple. I'm talking about Ethel and Bert Lane, ladies and gentlemen. Now, Ethel and Bert would be upset with me if I told you they'd been married for fifty years. Why? Because, ladies and gentlemen, Ethel and Bert Lane have been married for seventy-five years!

The audience lets go with an audible "ooh" and applauds enthusiastically.

FRANK

(continuing)

Ethel, Bert. Get up here and show these kids how it's done.

A path is cleared and a tiny couple begins to make their way to the dance floor.

FRANK

(continuing)

Aren't they a sight?

They are indeed, and a sight slower getting to the dance floor than Frank anticipated.

He nods to Jack and they launch into "The Anniversary Waltz," but have to keep repeating the opening passage while they wait for Ethel and Bert. Finally, everyone on the dance floor steps back and, with some help from a few waiters, who slide a section of tables out of the

way, Ethel and Bert Lane begin to dance in the center of the room, slowly but wonderfully, while the younger couple whirls around them like a youthful satellite.

INT. BATHROOM

Jack is sitting in the bathroom again, smoking. He hears Susie's door open, then VOICES -- hers and a man's. He puts out his cigarette in the sink and leaves.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - DAY

The next morning. Frank, the early bird, is returning to the room with a newspaper under his arm. Whistling happily, he rounds the corner just in time to see a man exit Susie's room. Astonished, then outraged, he goes to Susie's door and knocks sharply.

SUSIE

(opening door)

Forget your tie, handsome ...
Frank!

FRANK

You want to tell me what the hell's going on?

SUSIE

Huh?

FRANK

I just saw a man walk out of your room.

SUSIE

Uh ...

FRANK

In case you've forgotten, we're being paid to be here. So it might be nice if you conducted yourself with a certain amount of decency.

SUSIE

Decency? Hey listen, pal ...

FRANK

No. You listen. I had my doubts about you from the beginning

JACK

Hey!

Frank and Susie turn. Jack is standing in the hallway.

JACK

(continuing)

What're you trying to do? Wake up the whole goddamn hotel?

FRANK

We were just having a little discussion about morality.

SUSIE

Some discussion.

FRANK

I just saw a man walk out of your room!

JACK

You saw wrong.

FRANK

Huh?

JACK

He's with the hotel. I called him.

FRANK

What are you talking about?

JACK

We had a leak in the bathroom. He fixed it.

FRANK

He was wearing a suit.

JACK

He had to come quickly. It was a big leak.

FRANK

How come I didn't hear anything?

JACK

You're a heavy sleeper, Frank. You've always-been a heavy sleeper.

(looking at Susie)
Unlike me.

Frank looks at Jack, then Susie.

FRANK
I guess I ... If I jumped to...

SUSIE
Forget it.

The three stand there awkwardly for a moment.

FRANK
Well...

Frank shrugs lamely and exits.

SUSIE
Boy, he comes on like a hurricane
in the morning, doesn't he?

Jack just stares at her.

SUSIE
(continuing)
Yeah, well, thanks for sticking
your head in.

JACK
Hey, business is business.

He turns to leave. Susie's eyes narrow.

SUSIE
It wasn't business. It was pleasure.

JACK
Just dinner and dance, right?

INT. DINING ROOM

Jack, Frank and Susie are sitting at a table in the smaller dining room. It is conspicuously quiet. The main course seems to be a conscious attempt to ignore each other. Finally, Susie looks at Frank. Then Jack. Then out the window.

SUSIE
Paradise.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Jack and Frank's room. It is New Year's Eve, just before show time, and Jack and Frank are in their tuxes. Frank is on the phone.

FRANK

(into phone)

Yes, Daddy promises. I'll bring you one of the little glasses, how's that? Just like Grandma has. It has a picture of the hotel on it and everything ... No, honey, they don't sell puppies here ... Who? ... Well, we'll see. Let me talk to Mommy, okay?... Okay, sweetheart. Happy New Year.

(waits)

Hi, honey. She says Angela Secoli got a puppy for Christmas. Explain to her why we can't ... I don't know, tell her you're allergic ... It's not lying. Well, okay, it is lying, but ... All right, then tell her I'll explain it ... He what? ... No kidding? Without the training wheels?

(affected by this)

Well, that's great. Tell him, tell him. I can't wait to see ... No, no new bike. Maybe for his birthday ... Okay. Listen, honey, I have to go. We're on in ten minutes ... Yeah, Happy New Year ... I love you ...

Frank sets the phone down and stares at it. Jack studies him a moment, then Frank suddenly claps his hands.

FRANK

(continuing)

Well, let's go. The public waits.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A mass of swarming, jubilant people. The voices are high and loud and there's not a hand without a champagne glass. Couples lean into one another intimately, dancing gaily between the tables, toasting strangers without hesitation.

FRANK

(yelling to be heard)

All right, everyone. This is it. Let's hear it. Ten. Nine ...

Gradually, the entire room joins the chant.

FRANK/EVERYONE

Eight. Seven. Six. Five.

Four. Three. Two! ONE!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

There is a blizzard of confetti as people scramble to find that certain someone to kiss in the new year. In this moment, Jack, Frank and Susie find themselves oddly removed from the frantic cheer below them, their presence suddenly unnecessary, forgotten. Finally, Susie walks over to Frank and gives him a kiss, then goes to Jack. They hesitate, then kiss lightly, pulling away and glancing awkwardly into each other's eyes. Frank sounds the first chord of "Auld Lang Syne" and Susie looks away from Jack and returns to her place on the stage. As she begins to sing, the others in the room, all intimate friends for one brief moment, begin to sing with her.

SUSIE/EVERYONE

Lest old acquaintances be forgot ...

As the voices slowly fade, they are joined by the sound of the OCEAN until the ocean is all we hear and we see:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Jack, lying on his bed in the dark. He opens his eyes, squinting against the light from the bathroom, then glances over to Frank's bed and detects the outline of a body in the darkness. Swinging his legs over the side, he sits up on the edge of the bed and rubs his eyes. Suddenly there is a rustle of blankets and the shadow in the next bed shifts, falling into the shaft of light cast from the bathroom. It is a little boy. Startled, Jack stares at the sleeping boy, then hears movement in the bathroom. Rising slowly, he walks to the bathroom and gently eases the door open a few inches. Inside, swimming murkily in the steamy mirror, is the reflection of a man. His back is to Jack, but Jack can see that the man is shaving. As Jack lets his gaze drop to the floor, he sees that water is dripping off the man's pant cuffs and gathering in pools on the bathroom floor ... Jack wakes up. He stares at the ceiling, listening to the waves, then lifts his head and looks to the bathroom. It is dark. Turning, he glances at Frank's bed. It's empty.

INT. DINING ROOM

Dark and soundless. Balloons, streamers and the other debris of revelry cover the tables and floor like snow. Frank is sitting at the window, drinking as he stares at the ocean. As Jack crosses the room, he looks up.

FRANK

Ah, well, if it isn't the lad with the golden ear. Happy New Year, little brother.

JACK

What're you doing down here?

FRANK

Celebrating. Join me?

JACK

The party's over.

FRANK

No, you're wrong. It's just beginning. Come on, have a drink. Show your big brother how it's done.

Frank pours him a glass. Jack notices the bottle.

JACK

Expensive hangover.

FRANK

A gift. Courtesy of our courteous hotel manager, Mr. Daniels.

(toasting Jack)

We, dear brother, are a fucking smash.

(nodding)

Yup. They want us back. Easter. It seems they have this egg hunt every year. Only not for kids. Adults. They stuff these plastic eggs with Timexes and little certificates for free Mai Tais and everyone has a grand time crawling around on the front lawn. Then afterwards, they have a dance. An egg dance. Everyone comes dressed in a different colored shell and at the end of the evening they crack themselves open. It's our job to separate the yolks from the whites. Slippery business.

Frank smiles as he takes a swallow of his drink, then

leans his head back, staring at the ceiling.

FRANK

(continuing)

You know, I've never kissed my wife on New Year's.
Not once in twelve years.

Jack studies Frank as he stares at the ceiling.

FRANK

The Holmby has a chandelier like that doesn't it?
With the blue glass.

Jack looks up at the chandelier.

JACK

The Royal.

FRANK

Right. The Royal. When's the
last time we were there?

JACK

Couple years.

FRANK

February?

JACK

April.

FRANK

Right. It's incredible how you
do that. Remember things.

JACK

A useless talent.

FRANK

Drove me crazy when we were kids.
The way you never looked at the music.
Miss Simpson would just play it and ...

Frank snaps his fingers.

JACK

They were simple songs.

FRANK

Not for me. I still have to look at the music
sometimes, you know that? Otherwise, I forget.

I just forget. But you. You never forget.
Ever.

(turning)
So how come you couldn't remember Ma's birthday?

JACK
I told you. It's a useless talent.

Frank studies Jack a moment, then stares out at the ocean.

FRANK
God, the old man would've loved
this view, wouldn't he?

JACK
Yeah.

FRANK
I always think of him on New Year's.
How he used to pour us each half a can of beer.
Remember?

JACK
You always threw up.

FRANK
Yeah, and you drank yours like it was orange juice.
He loved that about you.

JACK
He was just having fun.

FRANK
It was like you'd passed some test,
you know?

JACK
It was just a can of beer, Frank.

FRANK
Yeah, but he told you things. He never told me
anything. Even though I was the oldest.
It was always you two, running off, doing things
together.

JACK
You could've come.

FRANK
I could've. But he didn't want

me to.

JACK

You're making things up, Frank.

FRANK

Maybe so.

(pause)

You ever go back there? Where it happened.

Jack stares at the angry SEA, LOUD even through the thick glass.

JACK

No.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

The next morning. Jack is sitting outside the hotel, watching HELEN and BUD WILSON pack up the Eldorado. The streamers, by now turned to mush, cling like oatmeal to the car's exterior. After a moment, Frank exits with a little bag from the gift shop and pulls out a tiny souvenir shot glass.

FRANK

Want one?

Jack shakes his head.

FRANK

(continuing)

Ah well, the kids'll break a couple anyway.

Suddenly, across the parking lot, the voices of the newlyweds are heard.

BUD

Give me the keys.

HELEN

You're not going to drive.

BUD

Give me the keys!

HELEN

You're not going to drive!

BUD

It's my goddamn car!

HELEN

It's our goddamn car!

BUD

Give me the keys.

HELEN

No.

Bud hesitates, then makes a rush for his wife, but she's too quick and runs to the other side of the car. Frustrated, he begins to run around the car like a madman, trying to catch her. Finally, when he gets close, she darts off, sprinting across the parking lot.

FRANK

I think I'll warm up the car.

OVERVIEW - CITY

Cold, dark, dangerous, but somehow looking quite appealing after a week in paradise.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

The trio, looking road-weary, is parked in front of Jack's building. It is very late.

FRANK

That takes care of this week. The tenth we got the Sheraton, the sixteenth we're at the Capri.

JACK

The tenth's out.

FRANK

What?

JACK

I can't make the tenth.

FRANK

What do you mean?

JACK

I mean maybe you should check with us before you go off and book us a month in advance.

FRANK

Be reasonable, Jack.

JACK

I play two hundred nights a year with you, Frank. How much more reasonable you expect me to be?

Jack gets out of the car. Frank shakes his head in exasperation, then looks to Susie.

FRANK

How about you? Got a Bar Mitzvah this weekend?

SUSIE

(distracted)
Huh?

FRANK

Forget it.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT

Jack lets himself in and closes the door quietly. In the darkness he can make out Nina and Eddie, curled up on the couch, asleep. Above them, hung carefully on a string, are some paper letters: "WELCOME HOME."

INT. LOUNGE

In a lounge whose basic decor makes abundant use of several historical eras but which might best be described as Modern Pilgrim, Jack, Susie and Frank perform "Feelings," while waiters in huge Paul Revere hats pass in and out of view.

SUSIE

Feelings ... Wo wo wo ... Feelings
... Wo wo wo ... Feelings ...

KITCHEN

Jack, Frank and Susie exit the lounge to applause.

SUSIE

I can't sing it anymore.

FRANK

What?

SUSIE

That song. I can't sing it anymore.
I'm gonna get sick.

FRANK

What're you talking about? They
love it.

SUSIE

I'm gonna throw up, Frank. I mean it.
Let's drop it for the ten o'clock, okay?

FRANK

(as to a child)
Susie. It's one more show. One
more time. That's all.

SUSIE

And two more times tomorrow night, and two more
times the next night, and the next night and the
next night and the next night. Frank, I can't
sing that fucking song anymore!

She's yelling. The kitchen workers are glancing over.
Jack studies her as she tries to calm herself.

SUSIE

(continuing)
I need some air.

EXT. HOTEL

A few minutes later. Jack comes out of the hotel and
sees Susie pacing.
He sits down and watches her for a moment.

JACK

You're gonna wear down those
heels if you don't give it a rest.

She stops.

JACK

(continuing)
Relax. We'll drop the song.

SUSIE
Guess I got a little scattered.

JACK
It's a shitty song.

Susie nods and looks up at the glittering hotel.

SUSIE
How do you do it? Every night?

JACK
Practice.
(pause)
There are worse songs, you know.
Not many, but a few.

Susie nods. Jack studies her. Something's on her mind.

SUSIE
Listen...
(looks into his eyes)
Nothing.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - DUSK

A record is spinning on Jack's phonograph as the sun goes down outside his window. As we MOVE AWAY FROM the phonograph and PAST the window, we FIND Jack at the piano, playing along with the record, lost in concentration.

EXT. BUILDING - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Susie is working on a Paris Opal, pacing, occasionally glancing up at Jack's apartment, where the MUSIC can be heard FAINTLY. After a moment, she drops her cigarette on the sidewalk. There are half a dozen others already there.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT

The record finishes, but the needle doesn't pick up, bumping into the label. Jack glances at the clock next

to him and gets up. He puts on a jacket, then takes a pair of gloves and pulls them on carefully.

EXT. BUILDING

As Jack comes out of his building, Susie stops pacing, surprised. Jack, wearing the same look of concentration he had at the piano, doesn't see her and turns down the other end of the street. Susie starts to call after him, but stops.

EXT. JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT

The sun is gone now and the moon is in the sky. We see the hot neon exterior of a tiny jazz club.

INT. CLUB - NIGHT

Jack is sitting in the shadows near the stage, where a trio is playing. He has a drink in front of him, but it is untouched. After a moment, the trio finishes and the pianist, a huge black man named HENRY, nods to the applause.

HENRY

Thank you. As most of you know, we like to shake things up here every so often just to keep you people on your toes. So I'm gonna take a little rest, grab myself a drink, and let an old friend sit in. He drops by about once a year just to keep his hands clean. Ladies and gentlemen.
Jack Baker.

Jack rises to polite applause and shakes Henry's hand. As he settles behind the piano, he sits for a moment, not moving, then nods to the two men behind him. As they begin to play, we recognize the music from the record. Jack waits, then brings his hands to the keys. As he plays, his face is suddenly calm. Peaceful.

EXT. CLUB - NIGHT

Later. Jack comes out of the club and into the night, lighting a cigarette as he moves up the street.

SUSIE (O.S.)

You were good.

Jack stops. Susie.

JACK

I can keep the beat.

SUSIE

Better than that.

Jack's face goes a little cold, but he says nothing, beginning to walk again.

SUSIE

What's the matter?

JACK

Nothing.

SUSIE

What'd I say?

JACK

Nothing.

SUSIE

You're upset.

JACK

I'm not upset.

SUSIE

All I said was you were good.

JACK

(stops)

Look. You don't know good. All right?

SUSIE

What's that supposed to mean?

JACK

It means you wouldn't know good if it came up and fucked you.

SUSIE

You were good.

JACK

Let's make a deal. You shut up.

SUSIE

You were good.

JACK

(exasperated)

How do you know?

SUSIE

(yelling)

Because I saw the other people!

And they knew you were good!

You were good, goddamnit!

Jack studies Susie, then glances off. For a moment, they just stand on the corner, not talking.

SUSIE

(continuing)

So you wanna get a drink?

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT

JACK

Nina?

SUSIE

Who's Nina?

JACK

Friend.

SUSIE

Friend? What's she look like?

Maybe I can help you find her.

JACK

She's four feet tall. Ed?

SUSIE

Ed? How many people live here?

Eddie walks around the couch and looks curiously at Susie. Jack moves to the kitchen.

JACK

I have to make him some chili.

Okay?

SUSIE

(a look)

Sure.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - LATER

Light from a weak lamp, lots of shadows, as romantic as Jack's apartment will ever get. Outside the window, the city looks like a thousand jewels, gleaming.

Susie cradles a drink in her hand as she moves slowly about the room, slipping, in and out of the shadows as if they were veils.

SUSIE

(at window)

Like diamonds, huh? I never get over it. When I was a little girl, my mama'd stand me before the window and tell me to close my eyes and make a wish. Like I could reach out and grab all the lights of the city and string them into-a necklace for myself. She'd take my hand and when she closed her eyes, I don't know, it was like she really believed it.

JACK

How come you didn't close your eyes?

She looks surprised by the question.

SUSIE

I don't know. I guess I didn't trust the night like she did.

Susie finishes her drink and sets it down.

SUSIE

(continuing)

Let me have a cigarette, will you?
All of mine are down there on the sidewalk.

Jack looks at her curiously.

SUSIE

(continuing)

Long story.

Jack gives her an American cigarette and lights it.

SUSIE

(continuing)

You know, I saw you guys once.

You and Frank. At the Roosevelt.

JACK

Must've been a cheap date.

SUSIE

Soap convention.

JACK

Soap?

SUSIE

Yeah, they got a convention for everything. At least he was clean. Boy, the guys I met when I was with the service, you wouldn't believe. The older ones, they were okay. Nice. Polite. Pulled the chair out for you. But the younger ones ...

(shaking her head)

Mama used to say, dance with a man once, but if you can feel calluses on his fingers, don't dance with him again. She thought she had it all figured out. But she wasn't so smart. There are killers with palms like a baby.

Susie takes a long draw and blows the smoke out slowly.

SUSIE

(continuing)

It wasn't so bad, though. I'd get a nice piece of steak, flowers, sometimes even a gift. Usually whatever the guy was into. Got a socket set once. Believe it? The guy looked like he'd just given me four dozen roses.

(almost wistful)

But I stayed at the Hartford once. You should see the rooms. All satin and velvet. And the bed. Royal blue, trimmed in lace clean as snow. Hard to believe sleeping in a room like that don't change your life. But it don't. The bed may be magic, but the mirror isn't. You wake up the same old Susie.

(pause)

I didn't always, you know. If I liked the guy ...

Susie looks at Jack, but he just takes a drink. She looks out the window again.

SUSIE

(continuing)

Sometimes I wish the sun would never come up.

She stares at the lights another moment, then turns and

nods to the phone booth.

SUSIE

(continuing)

So what's this?

Jack frowns, takes another drink.

JACK

History.

SUSIE

Huh?

JACK

My father proposed to my mother
in there.

SUSIE

No kidding?

It's a small phone booth.

SUSIE

(continuing)

The both of them? In there?

JACK

He called her.

SUSIE

Oh. So what's it doing here?

JACK

Long story.

SUSIE

You sending me home?

Jack locks eyes with Susie, then glances away.

JACK

They'd been out dancing all night and he took
her to the train station -- she lived over in
Brookhaven. Usually held ride with her, but this
time he didn't. Anyway, he starts walking home,
only as he's walking he starts getting nervous.

SUSIE

Nervous?

JACK

By the time he gets to the corner newstand, he's got her meeting some rich guy on the train, the rich guy's asked her to marry him, and he's reading about it in the morning edition.

SUSIE

You're kidding.

JACK

He had a mind that escalated things.

SUSIE

So, what happened?

JACK

He calls her, asks her to marry him, she thinks he's crazy, he asks her again, she still thinks he's crazy but says yes anyway, and the next thing you know he's got his brothers down there and they're tearing the thing right off the curb.

Susie blinks.

JACK

(continuing)

I don't know. Maybe he thought some rich guy was gonna try and call her.

SUSIE

Wow. But I still don't see how ...

JACK

Ma didn't want it around. After.

SUSIE

Oh.

Jack glances out the window.

SUSIE

(continuing, carefully)

Frank said you saw him die.

Jack glances up quickly, surprised. He nods.

SUSIE

(continuing)

Frank said ---

JACK

Frank wasn't 'there.

Susie stops, looks down. Jack studies her for a moment, then decides.

JACK

He took me out to the docks one day. We did that a lot. There were other places, but he loved the ocean. He'd worked boats as a kid. Never got rid of it. It was always in him. He'd drink a little when we'd go. If he drank enough, he'd do this funny Irish jig. To make me laugh.

(pause)

He drank a lot that day.

Susie studies Jack as he stares into his glass.

JACK

(continuing)

There was a lot of wind. He was up on this cargo shelf, right over the ocean. And he started to do the jig. One minute he was there ...

(shrugs)

I thought it was a joke at first.

He did things like that. Games.

(pause)

I was laughing when it happened.

Jack stares at the glass in his hands, then glances up and catches Susie looking at him.

JACK

You got pretty eyes, you know that.

INT. JACK'S BEDROOM

Jack's bed. In the darkness, we see Susie's profile, her eyes looking up toward the ceiling. Jack's body falls slowly across her and he kisses her neck.

EXT. JACK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING

We see Eddie, wearing his Christmas sweater, sleeping on the fire escape.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Susie is dressed, sitting at the piano, staring out the

window as she absently hits a key. She is smoking one of Jack's cigarettes. Distracted. Jack comes to the doorway and watches her. Plink. Plink. Plink.

JACK

You gotta move 'em around if you want to play a song.

Susie starts, looks at her hand on the piano, pulls it away.

SUSIE

Oh. Hi. Sorry.

JACK

Coffee?

SUSIE

Yeah... No.

JACK

Look, if you want to leave...

SUSIE

Yeah, maybe ... No. God, I hate these cigarettes!

Susie throws the cigarette out the window, then looks down.

SUSIE

(continuing)

Shit. I think I started a fire.

JACK

If our feet get hot, you grab the piano.

Susie smiles weakly.

JACK

(continuing)

Why don't you go. I'll see you tomorrow night at the Ambassador.

Susie doesn't move.

SUSIE

I followed you last night. I mean, I was here. Outside. I was about to come up when you came out.

Jack waits.

SUSIE

(continuing)

The reason I came by ... I couldn't tell Frank...
I'm leaving. The act.

Susie stares up at Jack, but he says nothing.

SUSIE

(continuing)

It's a ... I met this guy at the resort. He liked
my voice. And, it's ... He thinks I can sell cat
food just by singing about it. Can you believe it?

Susie tries a laugh. Jack nods.

SUSIE

(continuing)

You can always get another girl.

JACK

(looks out window)

There's always another girl.

INT. LOUNGE

Jack and Frank stand in a lounge, talking to NICK, the
manager. Busboys move in and out, preparing the room
for the evening.

NICK

Sick? How sick?

FRANK

The flu.

NICK

So she's got a few sniffles.

FRANK

Doctor's orders.

Nick frowns, looking at the two pianos across the room.

NICK

You got no right springing this on me, Frankie.
It's unethical.

FRANK

Look, Nick. You want us to pack up, we'll pack up.

NICK

What am I gonna do? Put a record
player out there?

(exiting)

Bad, Frankie. Bad.

JACK

(to Frank)

What're you doing?

FRANK

Just until we find another girl.

JACK

Cancel, Frank.

FRANK

You want to know how much I got tied up in
deposits with Willie? We're in for three
weeks solid, Jack.

JACK

Better give her pneumonia.

INT. BACK ROOM

Jack and Frank find themselves in the back room of
Willie's again. They do not look happy.

GIRL (O.S.)

Remember me?

Jack and Frank look up. A girl in a yellow and black
dress is in the doorway. She looks like a bumblebee.

GIRL

Monica. Monica Moran. I came in the last time
you guys were looking for a singer.

(smiling)

Perseverance. First rule of show business.

Jack and Frank just stare at her.

MONICA (GIRL)

I bought a book. That's what it says.

EXT. WILLIE'S - LATER

Frank is looking at a list.

FRANK

We got the Roosevelt on Thursday, the Park in a couple of weeks. Larry Shelton said he'd let me know by Friday on the Ambassador. That's it.

Frank folds the paper carefully.

FRANK

(continuing)

I got some calls out. Things that might be good for us.

Frank looks over at Jack for the first time. He's leaning against the building, staring at his shoes.

FRANK

(continuing)

We'll try for a girl again next week.

Jack nods.

FRANK

(continuing)

Okay. Well, the Roosevelt then.

INT. ROOSEVELT HOTEL - LOUNGE

Once grand, now dark and dusty looking. A small crowd.

FRANK

You know, my brother and I have been playing together, gosh, I don't know. Jack?

JACK

Twenty-eight years.

No response. Bored, brutally indifferent faces.

FRANK

Of course, uh, back then it was, uh, a little different. We were just kids. Just about the only one who would listen to us was the family cat, Cecil. We must've shaved three lives off old Cecil, huh, Jack?

Frank laughs and his voice, eerily magnified by the

microphone, is the only sound in the room.

FRANK

(continuing; hanging tough)

Yeah, well, anyway. It's nice to be back here in the Roosevelt Room, because this has always been ...

Frank falters as he sees Mrs. Baker enter the lounge and seat herself at a table in the back of the room. Jack follows Frank's eyes and spots her.

FRANK

(continuing)

a very special place for Jack and I.

(recovering)

And tonight we'd like to open with a very special song. It's the song my mother and father danced to the night they were married. This is for them.

INT. LOBBY

Jack watches as Frank gives Mrs. Baker a hug.

FRANK

You should've told us you were coming, Ma. We would've come and got you.

MRS. BAKER

Spur of the moment.

FRANK

So what'd you think?

MRS. BAKER

Thrilling.

(glancing at Jack)

Both of you.

FRANK

The audience was a little off tonight.

MRS. BAKER

A few empty tables. It's cozier. Besides, Mel Torme couldn't fill this place on a Wednesday night.

FRANK

I guess you're, right. Well, what do you say we

get a little midnight snack?
Theo's should still be open.

MRS. BAKER
No, no. You boys are tired.

FRANK
No, we're not. Jack?

JACK
No.

MRS. BAKER
I'm tired. Really. I should get home.

FRANK
You sure?

MRS. BAKER
(nodding)
Just call me a cab.

FRANK
A cab? Ma, come on. My car's just a half block down. You wait here.

MRS. BAKER
(smiling)
All right.

Frank dashes out of the lobby. Jack and Mrs. Baker watch him go, then turn to each other. Mrs. Baker smiles awkwardly, then surveys the lobby.

MRS. BAKER
(continuing)
It's beautiful, isn't it?

The brocade on the walls has faded and the chairs - once covered with velvet, now with a cheap imitation - look old and dowdy, but the room still maintains an elegant dignity.

JACK
Yeah.

MRS. BAKER
This was quite a place once. After the war. On Friday nights they had dances in the ballroom

upstairs. It was beautiful. Crystal chandeliers. White tablecloths. Orchids floating in the punch bowls... It was a wonderful place to be young.

Jack watches his mother as her eyes pass over the room. After a moment, she nods toward the lounge.

MRS. BAKER
(continuing)
It went well tonight.

JACK
Frank works hard.

MRS. BAKER
And you don't?

JACK
He leads, I follow.

MRS. BAKER
Is that the way it is?

JACK
Pretty much.

MRS. BAKER
He mentioned you had a girl for a while. A singer.

JACK
For a while. She left.

MRS. BAKER
Yes, well, it's probably best.
No sense bringing someone else in.

JACK
I suppose.

Mrs. Baker glances into the lounge, at the two pianos.

MRS. BAKER
Funny. Watching tonight, I was remembering when you were young. How I used to stand in the kitchen, listening to the two of you practice while I did the dishes.
(smiling)
My two little radios. Sometimes I'd stop and go to the door and just watch. Sometimes your father would too.

(pause)
He liked to listen to you play.
Did you know that?

Jack shakes his head.

MRS. BAKER
(continuing)
You miss him, don't you?

JACK
It's been a long time, Ma.

MRS. BAKER
Yes.
(pause)
I supposed you still have that old phone booth.

Jack nods. Mrs. Baker smiles, then it fades.

MRS. BAKER
(continuing)
His love scared me, you know. The day he died he
left a flower on my pillow.

Jack looks puzzled. Suddenly his mother reaches out
and very gently touches her fingers to his face.

MRS. BAKER
(continuing)
You look so like him.

They stand like this for a moment, connected, then
Frank steps in from the street.

FRANK
Your limo's ready, Ma.

MRS. BAKER
All right.

Mrs. Baker takes her hand from Jack's face and turns
away. Just before she exits, she looks back.

MRS. BAKER
(continuing)
Good night, Jack.

EXT. STREET

Jack, walking home, turns a corner and suddenly stops. Across the street, talking to a man, is Susie. She says a few words to the man, then touches him lightly on the arm and begins to walk away. Jack watches her retreat, then follows, moving quicker as he draws close. As he reaches her, he gently touches her elbow and she turns. Not Susie. The woman stares at Jack, startled. For a moment, he doesn't move. Finally, he lets go of her elbow.

JACK
Sorry.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

A few nights later. Frank guides the car through wet city streets. It's two AM and raining hard.

JACK
We're not getting paid then.

FRANK
No.

JACK
Nothing. We get nothing.

FRANK
I told you, Jack. It's a telethon.
No one gets a cent.

JACK
(a pause)
What's it for?

FRANK
I don't know. Some disease.

JACK
What disease?

FRANK
I don't know.

JACK
You don't know?

FRANK
It's a disease, Jack. We're against it.
It's not a moral decision.

JACK

(another pause)
What channels it on?

FRANK

Seventy-one

JACK

Seventy-one? What's seventy-one?

FRANK

(defensive)
A channel.
It's just a little further down the dial, that's all.
Look, it's publicity. Publicity's publicity. Right?

Jack stares at Frank.

JACK

Right.

INT. HALLWAY

Jack and Frank make their way down a hallway.

FRANK

The guy said to find Studio E and
turn right. What's that say?

Suddenly, a rapid-fire THUMPING SOUND resounds through
the corridor. As Jack and Frank turn, they see a huge
YOUTH in a wheelchair dribbling a basketball toward them.

YOUTH

Fast break!

Jack and Frank step back and watch the kid one-wheel it
around the corner.

FRANK

I guess it's that way.

INT. STUDIO

Jerry Lewis need not fear. This is strictly a tin foil
and crepe paper operation. Along one wall is the "phone
bank," monitored by a few sleepy volunteers, and opposite,
in makeshift bleachers, is the audience. A huge tote board,

set on rolling astors, is next to the phones. The total, at 2:15 AM, is \$1125.38. As Jack and Frank enter, the kid in the wheelchair is doing basketball tricks before the camera.

FRANK

This must be it. I'll see when we're on.

Frank leaves. Jack glances around the studio like he's walked into a nightmare. At the phone bank, a heavysset MAN in a sweatshirt and a cap, looks over. Both the sweatshirt and the cap have "Earl" printed on them.

EARL (MAN)

You the magician?

JACK

No.

EARL

(disappointed)

Oh. What do you do?

Jack points to the pianos across the room.

JACK

Piano.

EARL

(hopeful)

Two at a time?

JACK

My brother and I. One each.

EARL

(disappointed again)

Oh.

JACK

(indicating the kid in the wheelchair)

What's wrong with the kid?

EARL

Knee. Tore it up against St. Anthony's. Right before the accident.

JACK

Accident?

EARL

The fire. The way we're going we'll be lucky to buy a carton of jockstraps, let alone a new gym.

As Jack registers this, Earl's PHONE RINGS. Frank returns and gestures to the kid in the wheelchair.

FRANK

We're on after Meadowlark.

(seeing Jack's face)

What's wrong?

JACK

Are you kidding me? Are you fucking kidding me?

FRANK

What?

JACK

We're playing for a goddamn gymnasium!

FRANK

(worried)

What?

Before Jack can further enlighten Frank, the kid in the wheelchair rolls off and a guy in a cheap rented tux strides in front of the camera. He's VINCE NANCY, the host.

VINCE

Let's hear it for our own Jimmy Marshall, shall we?

The audience applauds.

VINCE

(continuing)

As most of you know, young Jimmy put a nasty twist on that knee trying to win-one for good ol' Grant High this year. Luckily, the doctors tell us Jimmy'll be able to play next season. That is ... if there is a next season.

(Uncle Sam)

That's where you come in. Pick up that phone. Make a donation. Let's keep our kids off the streets and in the gym where they belong.

Applause.

VINCE

(continuing)

All right. Well, friends, what can I say about our next guest?

(consulting a card)

He, uh, they, uh, we are very pleased to have with us two of the most respected men in the musical entertainment field. I think you'll agree with me when I tell you we're in for a real treat when I say that we have with us ... the Fabulous Bunker Boys! Come on out here guys.

Vince gestures grandly to the left and Jack and Frank enter from the right.

VINCE

(continuing)

Whoops, there they are. Hey, nice suits, fellas.

(to camera)

Now I know a lot of you amateur musicians out there are going to want to rap with these guys and don't worry. Right after they finish up here, they're going to be manning the phones. Maybe we can even convince them to raffle off a few piano lessons if we're lucky. What do you think?

The audience applauds. Jack glares at Frank. He shrugs.

VINCE

(continuing)

Well, all right then. What are we waiting for? Take it away, guys.

Jack and Frank poise their hands over their pianos and begin to play. As the music rises, the studio becomes very quiet, almost still. Unfortunately, Jack and Frank are barely through the opening passage when a thunderously LOUD BELL begins to RING. Suddenly, Vince steps out again.

VINCE

(continuing)

Uh oh. We know what that means, don't we? It's time to turn the board over.

(to Jack, Frank)

I'm afraid you fellas'll just have to wait a minute. Let's bring out the board.

Two post-pubescent giants roll out the tote board right in front of Jack and Frank.
Jack looks positively homicidal.

FRANK

Jack ...

Jack kicks out the piano bench and starts to leave. Then, seeing the kid in the wheelchair, he grabs the basketball and fires it at Vince.

VINCE

What the --

JACK

(pointing)

You're a fucking creep, you know that. I oughta kick your ass.

FRANK

(whispering)

Jack, you're on television.

JACK

Shut up, Frank.

Earl of the sweatshirt and cap puts his hand on Jack's shoulder.

EARL

What do you say we go for a walk, pal.

JACK

Get your hand off me.

EARL

Come on, friend. I can smell it on you. Get yourself a cup of coffee. You'll forget what you're angry about.

JACK

Go fuck yourself.

EARL

(eyes go hard)

You're a real tough guy when the ladies are around, aren't you, Ace?

JACK

I don't see any ladies here.

Except maybe you.

That does it. Earl takes hold of Jack's collar and starts to-wrestle him roughly toward the door.

FRANK

Hey, leave him alone.

EARL

Do your brother a favor and have his mouth sewn up.

JACK

You're a lousy dancer, Earl. Don't you know the man's supposed to lead?

Earl shoves Jack into the hallway, hard. Jack stumbles back against the wall.

EARL

Who do you think you are, asshole?
Liberace?

EXT. STREET

Jack walks down the street, mindless of the rain. Frank follows a few yards behind.

FRANK

Jack. We just,passed the car. Jack. This is a tuxedo. Three hundred dollars.

(pause)

You gonna talk to me? Or is this Jack's famous silent act? Look, it was for publicity. Do you understand? Publicity.

Jack stops and stares at Frank incredulously.

JACK

What-are you? A fucking moron?
It's three o'clock in the morning,
Frank. Who's watching? Your wife?
Maybe you can get us a gig playing
Little Frank's birthday party.
What do you think?

FRANK

Look. I didn't know when we were going to be on until yesterday. What was I supposed to do? I had the pianos anyway.

JACK

Basketballs, Frank. You had us playing for basketballs.

FRANK

I'm sorry. I should've checked it out. I screwed up. But that doesn't mean you walk out in the middle of a gig.

JACK

(incredulous)
What?

FRANK

It wasn't professional, Jack. It was a stunt. A stupid-ass stunt.

Jack just stares at Frank, as if looking at a stranger.

JACK

What's happening to you, Frank? You been kissing ass so long you're starting to like it? You let that guy turn us into clowns tonight. We were always small time, but we were never clowns, Frank. What's happened to your dignity?

FRANK

Dignity? Who the hell are you to talk about dignity?

Frank suddenly steps forward and reaches into Jack's jacket, coming away with a bottle.

FRANK

(continuing)
This where you get your dignity, Jack?
This is where you get your courage?

Jack tries to grab the bottle but Frank holds it away.

FRANK

(continuing)
No, let's do it straight for once, shall we?

Frank tosses the BOTTLE into the street, where it SHATTERS.

FRANK

(continuing)
Let me explain something to you, little brother.

See, I've got people who depend on me. I've got a wife and two children who expect to wake up every morning with food on the table and heat in the house. I got a mortgage. I got car payments. I got Ma's medical bills. Oh yeah, and I got you. Yeah, you. Jack the shadow who's so cool and so hip and so fucking sure he's better than everyone else. Don't you think I'd like to walk up to one of these assholes and blow smoke in his face? Goddamn right I would. But I can't. Because I have to be responsible, little brother. I have to make sure the numbers balance out in my favor at the end of each month so everyone can go on living their lives. You don't win medals for it, but you can be damn sure you'd all take notice if I folded up shop. So don't talk to me about dignity, little brother. You're drawing on a weak hand.

Jack stares at Frank through the rain, then turns and begins to walk away.

FRANK

(continuing)

Great. Terrific. Walk away. You're good at that, Jack. Just don't forget to stop off for another bottle of courage on your way home.

(pause)

That's what he'd do.

Jack stops, his back to Frank.

FRANK

(continuing)

You've found the perfect solution to all the pain in the world, haven't you, little brother? Eight-fifty a bottle, available any time day or night at your friendly neighborhood liquor store. You're weak, Jack. Just like he was.

Jack turns, tough and dangerous in the darkness.

JACK

Stay off it.

FRANK

No, let's stay on it. I'm sick and tired of watching you make him up into some kinda god. For Christ sake, Jack, he died doing a stupid bullshit jig. He left a wife and two sons. He wasn't a hero. He was a fool.

JACK

(eerily cold)
You weren't there.

FRANK
That's right. I wasn't there. I don't have the luxury of being a witness to tragedy.

JACK
(coiled)
Fuck you.

FRANK
No, fuck you. And fuck him too.
Fuck the both-of you.

Jack suddenly bolts forward and grabs Frank by the lapels.

FRANK
(continuing)
Hey, what're you doing? Hey!

Jack flings Frank against the wall, pounding, pulling and slamming him in a fitful rage.

FRANK
(continuing; scared)
Jack! ... Jack! ...

Frank slides to the ground, afraid, trying to protect himself. Jack hovers over him.

JACK
How's it feel to have your little brother beat the shit out of you? Huh? Huh!

Jack comes down with a vicious fist at Frank's face. Frank holds up his hands, trying to shield himself, and catches a blow on his fingers.

FRANK
My hands! My hands!

Jack grabs one of Frank's hands.

JACK
(mocking)
Your hands. Your hands couldn't take the blue ribbon on amateur night.

Jack bends back Frank's fingers.

FRANK
(terrified)
Jack!

JACK
Who's weak now, big brother?

Jack pushes Frank's fingers until the knuckles crack.

FRANK
Jack! JACK!

Frank's voice echoes high above the sound of the rain. Suddenly Jack stops. Looking at Frank's hand, still clasped in his, he seems as shocked by his own behavior as Frank. Letting go, he steps back awkwardly and looks at his brother, beaten, to the ground, his tuxedo ripped and dirty. He stares at his own hands, the knuckles split and bleeding. He no longer looks dangerous. He looks hollow, frightened.

JACK
I'm through with it. I can't do
it anymore.

Frank, rubbing his fingers, glances up at Jack, but Jack just turns away, leaving Frank on the sidewalk, and disappears into the rain. MUSIC begins. A sad, plaintive solo piano. And we see:

SERIES OF SHOTS

Jack, crossing the street to his apartment, the rain over now.

Frank, driving home, his face swollen and bruised in the dim glow of the streetlights.

Jack, letting himself into his apartment and standing there. Alone.

Frank, easing the car into the driveway, turning off the engine.

Jack, taking a bottle from the kitchen, moving numbly.

Frank, much later, still sitting in the driveway as the sun begins to come up.

Jack, sitting in the phone booth, the bottle in his hand.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - DAY

The next morning. Jack is sitting on the windowsill, watching the RAIN DRUM the GLASS. He glances at the phone across the room, takes another look at the rain, then goes to the phone. He picks it up hesitantly, then dials. It rings. Again. Again.

CINDY (V.O.)

Hello?

Jack blinks. It's Cindy.

CINDY

Hello ... Hellooooo ...

(fainter)

Daddy. Daddy! Someone's on the phone and they won't talk.

Jack sets the phone back down on the cradle.

INT. BAR

Jack stands in a dark bar. It is early morning and the light from the street gives the room a ghostly atmosphere. A big, beefy MAN with a bar towel hooked in his belt is talking to Jack.

MAN

If they wanna talk about their wife, you listen.

If they wanna talk about their job, you listen.

If they wanna talk about their parakeet, you listen.

That's it, six nights a week, nine to one or until I send you home. Okay?

Jack nods and points to the piano in the corner.

JACK

That it?

MAN

How many you need?

Jack walks over to the piano and strikes a note.

JACK

It's out of tune.

MAN

Trust me, the way I fix a martini,
it'll be in tune.

The MUSIC RETURNS, sad and plaintive, and we see:

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE

Frank, attempting to give piano lessons to a brother and sister tandem who would be better served by an obedience school. While the little girl pounds incessantly on the piano, her brother runs circles around the room, destroying everything in sight.

MUSIC CONTINUES and we see:

EXT. STREET

Jack and Eddie, going for a walk, passing the diner where Jack and Frank's pictures are still displayed.

MUSIC CONTINUES and we see:

INT. BAR

Jack, in the bar, playing the music we've been hearing throughout the previous scenes. It is after midnight and the tables are empty. Only a few somber men remain at the bar. They do not appear to be music lovers. As Jack finishes, he takes a cloth and wipes the keys. There is a glass on the piano with money in it.

SUSIE (O.S.)

I thought the Bakers didn't take
tips.

Jack glances up, but he knows the voice.

JACK

I give it all to charity.

Susie nods.

SUSIE

Saw the sign outside. Got your
own sign, huh?

JACK

Yeah. Got my own sign.

SUSIE

So ... ?

JACK

We outgrew each other.

SUSIE

Yeah, well, like I said, it didn't figure. You two.

JACK

You don't pick your brother.

SUSIE

Yeah.

JACK

So how's the cat food business?

SUSIE

Terrific. I'm doing vegetables next week.

Jack nods.

JACK

What kind?

SUSIE

Huh?

JACK

Vegetables.

SUSIE

Oh. Carrots. And peas. None of the important ones.

Susie tries a smile. Takes a breath.

SUSIE

(continuing)

Listen... you want to get a drink? I got a new place. Or we could go to a bar ...

(looking around)

Well, maybe not a bar. But I know a place uptown, if you want --

JACK

I've given it up.

Susie stops.

SUSIE

No kidding? Well ... I guess you can't do a reunion over tomato juice, can you?

(pause)

Anyway, if you're ever in the neighborhood ... I wrote it down.

Susie takes a slip of paper from her purse and hands it to Jack. They lock eyes for a moment.

SUSIE

(continuing)

Tell egghead I said hi. If you see him.

JACK

If I see him.

Susie nods and walks toward the door.

JACK

(continuing)

Hey.

(as she stops)

You got pretty eyes.

Susie smiles. As she leaves, Jack studies the slip of paper in his hand, then drops it in the tip glass. He glances at the door, swinging slowly shut in Susie's wake, then reaches into his coat and takes out a bottle.

INT. FRANK'S DEN

Frank sits alone in the darkness of the den. The cardboard stand-up is there, along with several old photographs, including one showing two skinny kids in tuxes standing with a glamorous Peggy Lee. After a moment, Donna enters.

DONNA

Frank? It's late, honey.

Frank stays staring at the photograph of Peggy Lee.

DONNA

(continuing)

Mrs. Lerner called after dinner. Robbie can't make

his lesson tomorrow.

Donna waits for her husband to say something, then sees the photograph in his hand.

FRANK

You know how good he is? It's like breathing with him. I've always envied it. But tonight, looking at all this -- at his face -- I don't know. Maybe it's worse. For him.

(gesturing to the piano)

It's funny. When I sit here and play ... nothing. But when I was up there with him... It was like I had the gift, too.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NEXT DAY

Frank is standing in the hallway of his house, leaning against the bathroom door. It's locked.

FRANK

Come on, Jeremy. Open the door.

Somewhere in the house, the PHONE RINGS. Frank ignores it.

FRANK

(continuing)

Jeremy. You want me to call your father? He's not going to be very happy when he hears he's spending fifteen dollars an hour for you to sit on the toilet.

Donna, looking shaken, steps into the hallway.

DONNA

Honey ...

FRANK

You believe this? The kid won't come out. I'm playing 'Camptown Races' for him and the next thing I know he's locked himself in the bathroom. There's nothing sharp in there, is there?

DONNA

Honey ...

FRANK

Where are our kids?
Has he got one of them in there?

DONNA
Frank.

Frank finally looks at his wife. She's crying.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Jack rushes down a hospital corridor and heads for the nurses station. As he moves to the counter, Donna appears.

JACK
Donna. Where is she?

Donna just shakes her head.

DONNA
We tried the apartment, but after that we didn't know where to call.

Jack looks frozen.

DONNA
(continuing)
Frank'll be back in a moment.
He took Little Frank to the bathroom.

Jack begins to back away slowly.

DONNA
(continuing)
Jack ...

EXT. STREET

Jack moves aimlessly down the street, slipping in and out of shadows. Finally he stops inside a closed storefront, his back up against the window, and looks down at his hands. They're shaking.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY

Jack stands in an apartment hallway, waiting. After a moment, the door opens. It's Susie.

SUSIE
Jack.

JACK

Hi.

SUSIE

Well, this is some surprise.

(seeing his face)

Hey ... You don't look so good, pal.

Susie studies Jack as he glances around the hallway.

SUSIE

(continuing)

Jack?

Jack looks up.

SUSIE

(continuing)

You want to come in?

He nods. Susie steps back and Jack enters.

SUSIE

(continuing)

Let me get the light.

JACK

No.

He stares directly into her eyes.

JACK

(continuing)

Leave it dark.

INT. SUSIE'S BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

Jack is standing at the foot of the bed, looking down at Susie's naked back as she sleeps. He studies her face as if looking for something, then takes his coat and begins to leave.

SUSIE

I used to do that.

Jack turns. Susie is looking at him.

SUSIE

(continuing)

Sneak out in the morning. Before the guy could

wake up and ruin it. Never figured I'd be on the other end of it, though.

JACK

I didn't want to wake you.

SUSIE

(smiling slightly)
Yeah.

JACK

Thanks. For letting me in last night.

SUSIE

Funny how life repeats itself, huh? Over and over.
Like a song.

Jack looks at Susie for a long moment, then nods and turns for the door.

SUSIE

(continuing)
Hey.

Jack stops, his hand on the doorknob.

SUSIE

(continuing)
Am I gonna see you again?

Jack looks at her face, beautiful in the morning light.

JACK

Yeah. You're gonna see me again.

Susie smiles slightly.

SUSIE

Okay.

EXT. STREET

Jack is standing across the street from his mother's house, just looking. After a moment, he crosses the street. As he moves up the drive, he takes notice of the tree growing in the front yard and crosses to it, kneeling by the trunk and studying the scars there -- cat's claws -- running vertically up the tree, the damage smoothed and widened by time. He runs his fingers over the imperfection, then stands and walks

toward the house.

EXT. HOUSE

Through the screen door, Jack can hear a CLICKING sound and see partially into the front door. Half the room is cast in shadow, the other in blinding light. He opens the door and enters.

INT. HOUSE

Inside, the movie PROJECTOR is RUNNING, the tail of a completed FLIP SLAPPING like a whip against the carriage. Jack TURNS OFF the PROJECTOR and the room falls entirely into shadow. For a moment, the house is silent, full of ghosts, then, gradually, a NOISE is heard coming from the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN

As Jack comes into the kitchen, he finds Frank searching through a cabinet. He watches for a moment.

JACK

What're you looking for?

Frank turns quickly, surprised.

FRANK

I didn't hear you come in.

JACK

What're you doing?

FRANK

Oh ... I was just hoping for something to drink. But it seems the old lady was dry. Not even a bottle of cooking sherry.

Jack nods. Frank looks nervous.

FRANK

(continuing)

Uh, we already boxed some things. I figured you'd want to go through Dad's stuff. It's in there. If you want to get started.

JACK

Later.

Frank nods. Silence.

JACK

(continuing)

Is everything done? The arrangements, I mean.

FRANK

Oh. Yeah. It was all worked out before, you know. She and Dad had taken care of it.

JACK

Right.

FRANK

I set it for Wednesday. The ceremony. They're doing the stone today.

(pause)

It's okay? Wednesday?

JACK

Yeah, fine.

FRANK

There's not going to be a viewing. I figured with the kids and all ...

JACK

Sure.

Jack glances around the room. Pictures on the walls. Handmade curtains, lightly faded.

FRANK

It's funny. Before, whenever I came here, the house seemed small. But today ... I can't keep up with it. I keep losing my mind.

Frank smiles slightly and he and Jack lock eyes for a moment.

FRANK

(continuing; glancing away)

God, I could use a drink.

Jack hesitates, then pulls a bottle out of his coat.

FRANK

(continuing)

Oh. Well, great. I'll get a couple glasses.

Frank moves to a cabinet, but there's nothing there.

FRANK

(continuing)

Damn. Donna must've packed them up this morning.

Jack holds out the bottle.

JACK

Go ahead.

FRANK

No.

JACK

(showing the seal is unbroken)

Bought it on the way over. Clean as a nun.

FRANK

No, it's not that. I ... can't drink from the bottle. I ... gag.

JACK

Oh, yeah, right. I forgot.

Frank looks embarrassed.

FRANK

(remembering)

Oh, hey, I want to show you something. Come on.

Jack follows Frank back into the front room. Frank stands before one of the tiny matching pianos and gestures Jack to the other.

FRANK

(continuing)

Hit the C. Go ahead.

Jack steps over to the other piano and taps, then Frank does the same. Jack glances up in surprise.

FRANK

(continuing)

I'm right, aren't I? They're in tune.

Jack hits the note again and nods in amazement.

FRANK

(continuing)

All these years. She kept them in tune.

Can you imagine?

Now why would she do something like that?

Frank looks down at the keys and his smile fades. Suddenly he notices the collection of tiny souvenir shot glasses on top of the piano, each bearing the name of a different hotel.

FRANK

(continuing)

Hey, what do you know. Looks like we can have that drink after all.

(picking up a few glasses)

What's your pleasure? We got the downtown Ramada.

We got the Travelodge on Route 41.

And ... the Mallory.

JACK

I'll take the Mallory.

FRANK

Good choice.

Frank blows some dust off the glasses.

FRANK

(continuing)

Looks like these got a few years on them.

JACK

This'll kill 'em.

Jack pours and he and Frank settle on the tiny piano benches. As Frank swallows, he winces.

FRANK

Jesus.

It suddenly grows silent, each sitting in his old familiar place, staring into his glass.

JACK

How're your hands?

FRANK

(surprised)

Oh. Fine. It was nothing. Couple sore knuckles. Nothing.

JACK

You know, that night, I ... It just all came up.

FRANK

Yeah, I know. Me, too.

JACK

I mean, you can play. You're okay.

FRANK

(smiling)

I can keep the beat.

Jack smiles slightly, then both go back to their glasses.

FRANK

(continuing)

Charlie called.

JACK

Yeah?

FRANK

Yeah. Larry Shelton. Blackie. Couple others. Donna said even Lloyd called the other day. Nothing like a little absence to make the heart grow fonder, huh?

JACK

Yeah.

Jack and Frank lock eyes again. Frank's glance drops to Jack's glass.

FRANK

Jesus, when was the last time we played the Mallory?

JACK

Five years ago.

(thinking)

November.

FRANK

Right. It was someone's birthday. Halloran?

JACK

Daughter's. Sweet sixteen.

FRANK

Christ, that's right. How could I forget. What a nightmare.

JACK

She asked for it.

FRANK

I told Halloran we didn't do vocals, but he said:

JACK AND FRANK

(in unison)

What my Sissy-wants, my Sissy gets.

JACK

She got it all right.

Jack and Frank glance at one another, little boy mischief glowing in their faces. Suddenly they swivel on the pianos and begin to play "You're Sixteen."

JACK AND FRANK

(singing)

She comes on like a dream
Peaches and cream
Lips like strawberry wine
She's sixteen, she's beautiful and she's mine.
Ribbons and curls
Ooh, what a girl
Eyes that sparkle and shine
You're sixteen, you're beautiful, and you're mine.

As Jack and Frank finish, they're laughing. After a moment, their voices die and the house is quiet again. Full of ghosts. Each stares at the tiny keyboard before him, awkward with the intimacy of the moment. It is quiet for a very long time. Finally, Frank looks over.

FRANK

Well ... One more time?

Jack glances up and sees Frank has his empty glass held out. He hesitates, then picks up the bottle.

JACK

One more time.

