

WAYLON

Written By

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Based on the life of

WAYLON JENNINGS

WGA REG NO. 2272471

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Waylon - Chestnut Brown hair. Country music idol.

Weylon - Red hair and freckles. Otherwise, he looks identical to Waylon. Not a country music idol.

Publisher - Big city New York businessman.

Jessi - Small. Tough. Mother. Waylon's last wife.

Shooter - Five year old boy.

Stranger - Always obscured from view in some way.

Grandma Shipley - Round older woman.

Waylon's Daddy - Lean man of 40.

Strawberry - Young college boy. Gold glove boxer type.

Maxine - Troubled young bride. Waylon's first wife.

New Hire - Young. Desperate for work.

Slim - Country music drummer. Journeyman.

Buddy - Buddy Holly. Talented singer. Large square frame glasses.

Pharmacist - Older gentleman. Owns and operates pharmacy.

Dutch - Portly beat cop.

Maria - Buddy's Latin wife.

Aria - Inane drug dealer.

Lynne - Tall older woman. Waylon's middle wife.

Sue - Paranoid shut-in. Mother of one. Blonde hair. Too tan.

Barbara - Early 20s. Blonde hair. High energy.

Michael - Red hair and freckles. Same height and build as Weylon.

INT. TOWN HALL - 1997 - NIGHT

The Highway Men, WILLIE NELSON, KRIS KRISTOFFERSON, JOHNNY CASH, and WAYLON JENNINGS, all in their early sixties, perform for the hundred or so middle-aged fans that fill the four sets of park bleachers lining the walls.

WILLIE

*I was a highwayman,  
Along the coach roads I did ride,  
With sword and pistol by my side,  
Many a young maid lost her baubles to  
my trade,  
Many a soldier shed his lifeblood on  
my blade,  
The bastards hung me in the spring of  
'25,  
But I am still alive.*

KRIS

*I was a sailor,  
I was born upon the tide,  
With the sea I did abide,  
I sailed a schooner 'round the Horn  
to Mexico,  
I went aloft to furl the mainsail in  
a blow,  
And when the yards broke off they  
said that I got killed,  
But I am living still.*

WAYLON

*I was a damn builder...*

The crowd goes wild for Waylon. The light seems to hit him differently, he almost glows.

WAYLON (cont'd)

*Across a river deep and wide,  
Where steel and water did collide,  
A place called Boulder on the wild  
Colorado,  
I slipped and fell into the wet  
concrete below,  
They buried me in that great tomb  
that knows no sound  
But I am still around  
I'll always be*

ALL TOGETHER

*I'll always be around, and around and  
around,*

Waylon and his band mates look to each other with joy while the drums, bass, and guitar take over for a moment.

Willie steps back up to his mic and mouths "I'll always -," but no sound produces. He inspects his mic with confusion.

Johnny and Kris poke at their mics but they aren't working either. Waylon's beautiful singing voice draws their gaze.

WAYLON

*And around and around -*

CLOSE ON WAYLON'S FACE - eyes closed, he continues to sing his heart out with the power of four men.

WAYLON (cont'd)

*- and around and around...*

The crowd goes wild.

Willie, Kris, and Johnny all sit back on their stools, nodding with approved smirks about their faces.

INT. TOWN HALL - 1997 - NIGHT

Their guitars are down. LAWRENCE, the TV host, addresses the group.

LAWRENCE

What a performance, gentlemen.

Lawrence begins the applause and the crowd joins in. The Four Horsemen (Willie, Kris, Waylon, and Johnny) give compensatory smiles and waves.

LAWRENCE (cont'd)

Each icons of the world of country music independently, what made you all decide to come together as the Highway Men?

KRIS

Probably the money.

They all chuckle.

JOHNNY CASH

At this point, I figure we're just a few old men trying to stave off the boredom.

WILLIE

'Course the money don't hurt either.

AUDIENCE MEMBER

Help me! Help me!

They all pause to look out at the crowd.

Waylon squints out at the audience, but it's dark and the prankster seems to have quit.

LAWRENCE

I suppose my larger question is, that, generally when a reunion group forms, it is in response to the current state of music, the genre they left behind. What is your general feeling toward the country music of today?

WAYLON

That stuff you see on tv and hear on the radio is phonier than a wet three dollar bill.

LAWRENCE

You're suggesting a lack of authenticity is the issue?

WAYLON

If that's what you want to call it. Ours is honest music, Lawrence. I'm a highway man, authentic, through and through. Same as Johnny and Willie and Kris here. The Real McCoy's.

Waylon watches Johnny give an answer.

JOHNNY CASH

Your question seems to undermine the fact that we're still successful solo artists, Lawrence.

The focus stays on Waylon as the tic a' tack of driving on a highway comes in.

LAWRENCE

I'm sorry if I offended you, Mr. Cash. That wasn't / my intention.

The tic a' tack sound grows.

JOHNNY CASH

And if you suggest something like  
that again, Waylon here'll burn your  
house down.

A proud grin forms on Waylon's preoccupied face as he keeps  
staring forward, at peace with the tic a' tack sound.

LAWRENCE

(hurried)

The Four Horsemen of country music,  
ladies and gentlemen, Willie Nelson,  
Kris Kristofferson, Johnny Cash, and  
Waylon Jennings.

The tic a' tack sound takes over.

EXT. WEST TEXAS - 1997 - NIGHT

Dark highway ahead illuminated by headlights. The tic a'  
tack sound continues as the segments of white highway  
markings are consumed by our journey.

WAYLON (V.O.)

I've seen this unraveling dream many  
times before, endless flickering on a  
black top. Riding along...

INT. TOUR BUS - NIGHT

A windshield masks our former view.

WAYLON (V.O.)

It's like a screen, that big bus  
window, especially in the dark.

The view from the passenger window shows the passing desert.

WAYLON (V.O.)

You can watch any movie you want,  
mostly your own, as you roll past the  
side of the road.

Passing sign reads, "Brick City Diner 89 miles."

WAYLON (V.O.)

Must be somewhere outside Ocala,  
Florida. Could be anywhere. Maybe we  
should grab some breakfast when it  
gets light.

Waylon's reflection appears in the passenger window.

WAYLON (V.O.) (cont'd)  
There's a lot to sort out, put in  
perspective. I've been there, and  
here, and wherever I'll be tomorrow.  
Sometimes I feel like I've gone  
around twice over. You're talking to  
a guy who never went to sleep. I've  
lived a couple of lifelines. Maybe  
that's why I don't feel tired  
tonight. We can stay up late. Watch  
the road.

Waylon watches the road in peace.

PUBLISHER (V.O.)  
Count off the miles.

CUT TO:

INT. PUBLISHER'S OFFICE - 1998 - DAY

PUBLISHER, gelled hair, navy blue suit, sits across the desk  
and reads from a loose pile of pages with a skeptical look  
on his face.

PUBLISHER  
The storms boil up out of the west; a  
red-black cloud taking over the sky,  
streaming across the New Mexico  
Border -

Waylon, in his early sixties, watches in delight as  
Publisher continues reading.

PUBLISHER (cont'd)  
Al-alright, I think I've read enough.

WAYLON  
I told you reading it with an accent  
would help.

PUBLISHER  
I'm sorry, but who are you?

WAYLON  
I'm Waylon.

PUBLISHER  
Who?

WAYLON

I still hate my middle name, and for a while I didn't like Waylon. It sounded so corny and hillbilly, but it's been good to me, and I'm pretty well at peace with it now.

Publisher flips through his appointment book.

PUBLISHER

My calendar just says "country musician..."

(exhausted sigh)

Who's your agent?

WAYLON

Neil Reshen.

PUBLISHER

Neil? So you are a musician.

WAYLON

What do you mean? I'm Waylon. Outlaw, baby!

Publisher responds with a stale blink. Then another.

PUBLISHER

I understand that your name is Waylon. What I'm asking is, what you have accomplished that is worthy of an autobiographical work.

WAYLON

You must not be a fan of country music.

PUBLISHER

Admittedly, no.

WAYLON

Ah, hell. My music career spans four decades. Three time CMA entertainer of the year. I've played with some of the greatest country idols on earth, from Johnny Cash to Willie Nelson.

PUBLISHER

Do you have any proof?

WAYLON

I've got 32 pages of rare photos.



Waylon grabs up the manuscript by its spine and shakes out a few Polaroids onto the desk. Publisher picks one up to examine it.

PUBLISHER

This is just a picture of Willie Nelson, what, what is that supposed to prove?

Waylon points to the unidentifiable character in the over the shoulder shot of Willie.

WAYLON

Ah hell, that's me right there.

PUBLISHER

Is it?

WAYLON

Yes, right there.

PUBLISHER

I guess that could be you...

Waylon leans in and puts his hand on the Publisher's shoulder to point at the next photo.

WAYLON

And there I am with the original Waylors. Jerry Gropp, Richie Albright, and Paul Foster. Dig those matching guitar straps.

Publisher glares at the hand on his shoulder and then its oblivious owner.

PUBLISHER

I see...

Publisher types at his computer, but gets a pricked look on his face and stops to glare up at Waylon still standing there, watching along with the typing.

Publisher clears his throat and Waylon finally notices him gesturing to go sit back down. Confused offense crosses Waylon's face, but he obliges.

PUBLISHER (cont'd)

(reading)

Jerry Gropp: Born and raised in Seattle, Jerry Gropp began his working career as an electrician, but soon transitioned to dry wall.

WAYLON

Jerry ain't from no Seattle - he's a Texas boy.

Waylon leans back in his chair with a sorta cockeyed pride.

WAYLON (cont'd)

Why don't you give my name a google on that there computer. See just what comes up.

Publisher responds with an unimpressed stare.

WAYLON (cont'd)

Go on, give it a try.

Publisher lets out an exasperated sigh.

PUBLISHER

Waylon...

(reading to self)

Did you mean Wayland? No I did not.

WAYLON

They were gonna name me *Wayland* "land by the highway" but when a Baptist preacher stopped by to visit Momma, he said, "Oh, I see you've named your son after our wonderful Wayland College in Plainview," so she immediately changed the spelling to Way-lon.

PUBLISHER

Listen, I need you to leave.

WAYLON

Excuse me?

PUBLISHER

I've never heard of you. My assistant has clearly never heard of you. Do you have any proof that you're Waylon Jennings, or that Waylon Jennings even exists?

WAYLON

What, you wanna see my ID? That enough proof for ya?

Waylon flips open his wallet without even looking.

WAYLON (cont'd)  
Waylon A. Jennings. State of Texas  
approved.

He looks down at the empty wallet.

WAYLON (cont'd)  
What the hell?

PUBLISHER  
That's what I thought. Please tell  
Neil that this was a fantastically  
successful prank, but if you're  
finished, I've got a lot of work to  
get back to.

Publisher starts doing paperwork, ignoring Waylon.

WAYLON  
How'd you do that to my wallet?

Publisher, head down in paperwork, gestures to the door.

PUBLISHER  
The door is behind you, Mr. Jennings.

Waylon kicks over his chair and steps at Publisher.

WAYLON  
Don't matter if I am a double  
platinum three time CMA entertainer  
county music idol, or some no-talent  
nobody off the street. You need to  
treat me with some respect.

PUBLISHER  
I'm sorry if I offended you, but if  
you could just calm down, I'll...

BUZZ! Publisher hits the security button.

Two LARGE MEN in suits rush in.

WAYLON  
Now hang on just a minute. We can  
talk this over.

EXT. PUBLISHER'S OFFICE - DAY

Security throws Waylon out of the building. Clutching the  
loose pages of his manuscript against his chest, he heads  
for the phone booth on the other side of the crowded street.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Crossing the street toward the phone booth - Waylon jumps back, nearly struck by a CYCLIST.

WAYLON  
Hey, watch where you're going, will ya!

Waylon shakes it off.

WAYLON  
What the hell is wrong with everyone today?

He enters the phone booth.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Waylon sets his manuscript atop the phone and dials.

INT. JESSI COLTER'S KITCHEN - DAY

JESSI COLTER, in her early sixties, small, chases her five year old son, SHOOTER, around the island in this farm style kitchen. She catches him and he squirms as she lifts him.

JESSI  
It's the tickle monster!

The phone rings. Hefting Shooter up onto her hip, she answers it.

JESSI (cont'd)  
Hello?

INTERCUT BETWEEN PHONE BOOTH AND JESSI'S KITCHEN

WAYLON  
Jessi? God, it's good to hear your voice, honey. The strangest thing just happened to me, but, well I'll tell you all about it when I get back. I should be on the plane around three.

JESSI  
Who you calling *honey* there, friend?

WAYLON  
It's me, honey, Waylon.

JESSI  
Way-who?

Jessi sets Shooter down.

JESSI (cont'd)  
Go watch TV, baby.

He runs toward the living room.

WAYLON  
Is that Shooter? How's my boy doing?  
Let me talk to him.

JESSI  
What? God no. How did you get this  
number?

WAYLON  
What the hell you talking about,  
Jessi? It's me, Waylon, your husband?

JESSI  
Duane put you up to this?

WAYLON  
Duane?

JESSI  
Duane Eddy, my *actual* husband.

WAYLON  
You left Duane Eddy in 1968.

JESSI  
Oh that's rich. What're you, one of  
his friends from down at the  
dealership?

WAYLON  
I ain't one of your husband's god  
damn cronies. I mean, I am your  
husband. I mean... Come on, baby,  
you've seen me through hell and back,  
we're leather and lace for God's  
sake!

JESSI

Sounds more like unrequited pleasure  
and defensive use of mace - pepper  
spray, creep.

WAYLON

God damn, Jessi, that's the same  
kinda clever metaphoring that got you  
the Grammy nomination for "I'm Not  
Lisa."

JESSI

So you are a fan?

WAYLON

How can a man not be a fan of his  
betrothed?

JESSI

Alright, hanging up now.

WAYLON

Wait, no, Jessi, just wait a god damn  
minute and I'll prove I'm your  
husband.

JESSI

You got ten seconds.

WAYLON

Alright, alright, um, okay. You  
remember two Christmases ago when we  
were doing that benefit at the  
Belagio with Kris and someone keyed  
your Lexus and it kinda looked like a  
smiley face?

JESSI

D'you scratch my fucking car?

WAYLON

No, I didn't scratch it. I was the  
one who pointed out that it looked  
like a smiley face.

JESSI

Get a new fucking hobby!

Click. He dials again, but it goes to voicemail.

JESSI (O.C.)

Hi! You've reached Jessi, Duane, and  
Shooter!

(MORE)

JESSI (O.C.) (cont'd)  
 Please leave your name, number, and  
 your reason for calling, and we'll be  
 sure to get back to you as soon as  
 possible there, caballero.

Waylon holds the phone away from his head and grimaces at the voicemail as it plays out. He leaves it hanging there and grabs up his manuscript.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Waylon steps out of the phone booth and looks around at all the TOURISTS that fill the street. He shakes his head and grabs the prescription bottle from his pocket.

WAYLON  
 Just get you a level head and you'll  
 figure this out. Don't you worry,  
 everything's gonna be fine.

He rattles the pill bottle at his ear.

CLOSE ON WAYLON'S FACE - worry fills his eyes as the shaking produces no rattle.

He rushes over to use the trash can as a table for his manuscript. Emptying the pill bottle, there's nothing in it.

WAYLON (cont'd)  
 No, no, no, no, no. Why now? Not now.

Waylon invades all his pockets in search of pills, producing empty pill bottle after empty pill bottle.

TOURIST (O.S.)  
 Hey, is that who I think it is?

Waylon pauses his search and gives a hopeful yet sweaty showbiz grin to the approaching tourist. However, he is only able to watch as the man goes right past him.

TOURIST  
 Jimmy! There you are.

The tourists greet each other.

Sweat pours around Waylon's tight and incredulous eyes as his cheek twitches. He looks up at the sound of thunder.

The darkening sky clears the sidewalk of pedestrians.

Working against the ensuing rain, Waylon rifles through the remaining pockets. He finds another bottle in his chest pocket. It produces a weak rattle beside his sweaty temple.

WAYLON

Please, please, please.

A silica packet is all that empties into his shaking hand.

Crushing the packet and wiping his brow, he looks left then right, then makes out an "Rx" sign up the block. Grabbing up his manuscript again, he stumbles off toward the pharmacy.

A loose sheet from the manuscript "Waylon" slips from the stack and dances in the wind. Pirouette, pirouette, then smack! The page plasters to a telephone pole.

A STRANGER, in his mid sixties, almost visible square frames, pries the page from the pole. A single drop of rain, then many drops of rain, strike(s) the page as he holds it.

It reads "**WEST TEXAS RAIN** The storm boils up..."

TITLE CARD: WEST TEXAS RAIN

EXT. FARMHOUSE - 1949 - DAY

Storm clouds brew across the plain a few hundred miles West.

WAYLON (V.O.)

The storms boil up out of the west; a red-black cloud taking over the sky, streaming across the New Mexico Border into Texas. You can stand there and watch them coming at you, nothing to stop them on the high open plains.

12-year-old WAYLON watches the storm brew and then runs back toward the house.

WAYLON (V.O.) (cont'd)

Now my hair was red back then.

GRANDMA SHIPLEY, hefty with an apron, brings a live chicken over to the hatchet block.

WAYLON (V.O.) (cont'd)

And my brother's Tommy and James D. would not let me hear the end of it.



Waylon's brother's, TOMMY and JAMES D., 10 and 14 years old respectively, chase Waylon around to the side of the house.

Waylon makes it to the road, but, when he looks back over his shoulder, he sees Tommy and James D. stopped at the storm cellar entrance, whispering in each other's ears.

Waylon turns back to look at the road and catches the eye of the NEIGHBOR GIRL, 11 years old, dirty homemade dress.

The two squint at each other through the dusty wind.

She breaks a smile and rubs some of the dust out of her eyes before running back to her own family gathering.

Waylon blushes, turns back toward the house... Grandma Shipley is right there waving her bloody finger in his face.

GRANDMA SHIPLEY  
Nasty, nasty nasty!

INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Waylon wipes the dried specks of blood from his face with a greased up rag. Then climbs up the stool to join his dad at the wood stove, tossing peanuts into the frying pan.

WAYLON (V.O.)  
Did you ever parch peanuts? I would sit around an old potbellied stove with my dad, putting peanuts in a pan and roasting them a little bit. We'd eat those peanuts listening to the Grand Ole Opry.

Waylon observes his daddy tapping his happy foot along to the radio as it finishes with Hank Williams' "Lost Highway."

WAYLON (V.O.) (cont'd)  
I'd guess that's really where my journey into country music began. Those afternoons listening to the Ole Opry, daydreaming about being immortalized there next to the likes of Hank Williams, Bill Monroe, Minnie Pearl, Ernest Tubb, and so many others.

"Sweet Betsy from Pike," Bill Monroe, starts playing on the radio and WAYLON'S DADDY, late forties, wiry, gives his boy a smile to marinate in.

WAYLON (V.O.) (cont'd)  
 Bill Monroe was my Daddy's  
 favorite...

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Waylon's Daddy is bent down, chopping weeds next to his white picket fence.

WAYLON (V.O.)  
 He was a good man, and he didn't need the Church of Christ to tell him to do right. He was solid as a rock. He just tried to live the best he could, the way a Christian should, a center post that I could hang my hat on, be supported by, loved.

Waylon's Daddy gets up to take a sip of water and wipe sweat from his brow.

WAYLON (V.O.) (cont'd)  
 I always knew he would protect me.

WAYLON (O.C.)  
 Hey, let him down!

Waylon's Daddy looks over his back shoulder to see STRAWBERRY, a late teens gold glove boxer type, holding up Waylon's brother, Tommy, by the shirt collar.

Waylon punches up, but Strawberry shoves him down with just his off hand.

WAYLON'S DADDY  
 What're you doing with him?

Waylon looks up with hope in his eyes at his Daddy a few fences over.

Strawberry presents Tommy, who's crying and crying.

STRAWBERRY  
 I'm fixing to kick his little ass.

Waylon's Daddy drops his tool.

WAYLON'S DADDY  
 No you're not.

Waylon gets up and backs up in anticipation.

STRAWBERRY

Old man, stay out of this.

Waylon's Daddy goes on a beeline straight for Strawberry, hops over one fence.

WAYLON'S DADDY

You touch that boy and I'll break your back.

STRAWBERRY

You ain't breaking nothing.

Waylon's Daddy crosses a garden and hops a second fence.

WAYLON'S DADDY

You touch that boy and I'll break your back.

Waylon's Daddy hops a third fence and a fourth, increasing in speed.

STRAWBERRY

I fight guys twice your size for a living.

Waylon's Daddy throws the gate open and grabs a handful of dirt.

Waylon watches Strawberry start to lower Tommy, so Waylon picks up a handful of dirt as well, and widens his stance.

WAYLON'S DADDY

I'll break your back. I'll break your back. I'll break your back.

He rips off his shirt with his off hand and steps right up to Strawberry.

WAYLON'S DADDY (cont'd)

I'll break your back. I'll break your back.

STRAWBERRY

Aw, old man, you're crazy.

Strawberry lets Tommy down and turns tail.

Waylon's Daddy drops to one knee to inspect Tommy. Waylon looks up at him with pure admiration.

WAYLON (V.O.)

He was my hero, my center post, and ever since he died in '53, I haven't been able to feel like there hasn't been something missing in my life. Though, I like to think he'd be pretty proud looking down on me...

EXT. BRIGHT AND FLAT TEXAS ARTERIAL - 1955 - DAY

Looking down at the traffic, surrounding cars honk at a cement truck turning too sharp onto this busy road, fishtailing, nearly tipping over.

INT. CEMENT TRUCK - DAY

18-year-old WEYLON, who looks identical to Waylon, 'cept Weylon's got red hair and freckles, rips down the road.

RED LIGHT - Weylon slams on the brakes and the glove box falls open, dropping some envelopes and a pill bottle.

NEW HIRE, young, clean, picks up the bottle and examines it.

CLOSE ON - PILL BOTTLE: The label reads "Amphetamine Salts"

WEYLON

Don't worry about those,  
prescription - means they come from a  
doctor.

(winking)

Got me an eating disorder.

New Hire peers over at him.

WEYLON (cont'd)

All the guys on the crew take 'em,  
you'll see. They're good guys. Might  
take you a while to get our style of  
humor, but you'll fit in in no time.

NEW HIRE

I really need the work, so whatever  
it is, I'm up for it.

GREEN LIGHT - Weylon stomps on the accelerator, throwing New Hire back into his seat.

WEYLON

What'd you do before this?

NEW HIRE

Uhm, lu-lumber.

WEYLON

That's tough work.

Weylon swerves to keep from hitting a PEDESTRIAN. New Hire turns his head to continue watching the lucky pedestrian, who is shaking his fist at the unabated cement truck.

WEYLON (cont'd)

Yeah, I've had just about every job there is. Quit school when I was 16. Superintendent called me into his office. He was a big fat guy, with an overbearing attitude to match. He says "Are you going to play football" and I shook my head no. Then he said "Then why would you want to come back to school?" So I says "That's a pretty good question. Maybe you're right." And I quit. I was sixteen years old.

"Kaw-Liga" - Hank Williams, starts playing on the radio.

WEYLON (cont'd)

I love this song!

Weylon cranks the radio and speeds way up. New Hire sinks into his seat and grips the grab handle.

WEYLON (cont'd)

(yelling)

Bet they wish I was playing football right now. Probably would'a been quarterback.

New Hire watches as the truck speeds closer and closer to the car ahead. He looks to Weylon.

WEYLON (cont'd)

Music's my real passion. You like music?

Weylon beats the steering wheel without any natural rhythm.

New hire rides up higher and higher into his seat as the truck gets closer to the colliding with the car ahead.

WEYLON (cont'd)

(scratchy)

*Poor ol kaw-liga, he never got a kiss  
Poor ol kaw-liga, he don't know what  
he miss.*

Weylon swerves at the last moment. New Hire takes a sigh of relief, but his eyes bug as soon as he looks up.

The truck hops and crosses the grassy median onto the highway. After the other cars get out of its way, it settles.

WEYLON (cont'd)

Shame this baby'll only get up to about 55.

NEW HIRE

Oh, thank god.

New Hire releases his grip on the grab handle.

WEYLON

I'm a big fan of country myself. I drive them old farmers nuts trying to learn to play that guitar. Now, I know what you're thinking, "That ol' Bob Wills ain't nothing but an alky-holic," but let me tell you something, not everyone who plays the guitar is an alcoholic.

New Hire wipes sweat from his forehead and takes a drink from his water bottle.

WEYLON (cont'd)

You don't say much, do ya?

NEW HIRE

No, not much.

WEYLON

Just gotta get over them first day jitters.

NEW HIRE

(polite)

Do you mind keeping your eyes on the road?

WEYLON

You sound just like my wife. You married?

NEW HIRE  
Too broke for marriage.

WEYLON  
Ain't that the truth.

Weylon turns off the highway, reducing speed.

WEYLON (cont'd)  
Yeah I got hitched about a year ago.  
God she's up my ass night and day.  
"Weylon take the trash out. Weylon  
come spend time with your son. Weylon  
quit that god damn racket." Sometimes  
I think she just like the way my name  
sounds coming out of her mouth. Ain't  
the only thing coming out of her  
mouth if you know what I mean.

NEW HIRE  
I don't know that I do.

WEYLON  
Don't she know that I got these songs  
blaring in my head?

CLOSE ON WEYLON

WEYLON (cont'd)  
That I can't get them to shut off, or  
quiet down, or nothing. I ain't loved  
nothing like I love music.

Weylon's nose starts bleeding.

WEYLON (cont'd)  
Ah, hell. Hand me that pill bottle  
there, will ya?

New Hire, stretches for the pill bottle but before he can  
reach it,

WEYLON (cont'd)  
Oh shit, that's us.

Weylon makes a late left turn, far too sharply.

INT. CEMENT MIXER - CONTINUOUS

All the cement sloshes to one side of the tank, tipping it.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - CONTINUOUS

The truck crumples as it rolls completely over and then skids to a stop.

INT. CEMENT TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Weylon rolls around and picks himself up from the inverted ceiling of this crashed cement truck.

WEYLON

You better hurry and get down.

Weylon pushes past New Hire's obscured and suspended body to pry the vin plate off the dashboard and grab his pills.

WEYLON (cont'd)

Lucky thing I got such a strong constitution. Imagine if I were wearing a seat belt. Probably be walking away from this unscathed.

Weylon stalls at the feeling of blood dripping on his hand and looks up to see New Hire, unconscious and bloody.

WEYLON (cont'd)

I was never here.

He limps off, a crack formed in his ever-genial expression.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Weylon limps his way through the neighborhood.

WEYLON

It's alright. It's all gonna be alright. Maybe not if you were an ordinary man, but you're not.

He tucks in the shadows between two houses.

WEYLON (cont'd)

You're different. You're special, a singer.

Weylon holds around his knees and rocks back and forth. Police sirens approach. He rocks faster.

WEYLON (cont'd)

It's okay... It's okay...  
It's all gonna be okay...



NEIGHBORHOOD FOLK (O.C.)  
I think I saw him go over here.

WEYLON  
(sobbing)  
*Did you ever hear tell of Sweet Betsy  
from Pike,  
Who crossed the wide mountains with  
her lover Ike,  
Two yoke of cattle, a large yeller  
dog,*

Footsteps approach. Weylon chokes out the rest of the lyrics.

WEYLON (cont'd)  
*A tall Shanghai rooster, and a one  
spotted dog.*

INT. BACKSTAGE - 1950 - NIGHT

13-year old Waylon, chestnut brown hair, junior tuxedo watches as one of his RED-HEADED PEERS chokes and sings a tear-laden rendition of *Sweet Betsy from Pike*.

STAGEHAND talks through his clip board while addressing Waylon's MOMMA.

STAGEHAND  
We can't wait all night ma'am, is  
your boy gonna play or ain't he?

MOMMA  
Come on, Waylon, go on out there and  
make us proud.

Momma's eyes light up as he steps on stage and sings a great child's rendition of "Hey Joe."

WAYLON  
*Hey Joe, where'd you find that  
pearly-girly?  
Where'd you get that jolly-dolly?*

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Waylon and his 13-year-old girlfriend, MAXINE, sit shoulder-to-shoulder on the carpet in her dark living room, illuminated by Waylon's performance on Channel 3.

## TELEVISION

*How'd you rate that dish that I wish  
was mine?*

Waylon admires Maxine as she admires him singing on the tv.

## TELEVISION (cont'd)

*Hey Joe, shes' got skin that's  
creamy-dreamy  
Eyes that look so lovey-dovey  
Lips as red as cherry-berry wine...*

The song ends, but Maxine's entrancement doesn't. She finally turns away from the tv to look at Waylon.

## MAXINE

I think I might just love you, Waylon  
Jennings.

## WAYLON

I think I might just love you too,  
Maxine Carroll Lawrence.

The soft sound of wedding bells comes in as their silhouettes meet at the center for a kiss.

INT. CHURCH OF CHRIST, CLOVIS NEW MEXICO - 1953 - NIGHT

The wedding bells play out in this empty church.

16-year-old Waylon, chestnut brown hair, oversize suit, stands at the altar.

16-year-old Maxine and MAXINE'S MOMMA walk down the aisle. They step up to the altar and stand on the other side of the PASTOR from Waylon, Momma, and Tommy.

## PASTOR

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here  
tonight to bring this man and this  
woman together in holy matrimony. Now  
if you'll present the rings.

Tommy gets the ring out and hands it to Waylon.

Waylon faces Maxine. She's got the crowded teeth and overly ambitious makeup of a child, but she is beaming with joy. Waylon responds with a forced smile.

PASTOR (cont'd)  
By the power invested in me, I / now  
pronounce you man and wife. You may  
kiss the bride.

WAYLON (V.O.)  
Maxine and I shouldn't have never  
been married. I hardly knew her, and  
we were just kids. Pretty soon we  
started having them.

Maxine and Waylon turn toward the empty congregation seating  
for their photo.

CAMERA FLASH:

INT. WALMART PHOTO STUDIO - 1957 - DAY

INFANT BOY crawls while lights flash.

WAYLON (V.O.)  
There was Buddy...

CAMERA FLASH - 2-YEAR-OLD GIRL gladly poses on a stool.

WAYLON (V.O.) (cont'd)  
Julie Rae...

CAMERA FLASH - 4-YEAR-OLD BOY poses with tough posture on  
the same stool.

WAYLON (V.O.) (cont'd)  
And, uh...

4-year-old boy's tough guy posture melts.

WAYLON (V.O.) (cont'd)  
Uh, Terry, yeah that's it. Buddy,  
Julie Rae, and Terry.

CAMERA FLASH - All three children pose for a picture.

Maxine snaps her fingers for Buddy to look at the camera.

MAXINE  
Here, Buddy, look at the camera, look  
at the - no, don't go over there.

Maxine chases after the crawling Buddy. Terry hops down.

Meanwhile, Waylon stands at the intra-store photo studio  
entrance, spying some PASSING STRANGE in low cut denim.

MAXINE (O.C.)  
Waylon can you give me a hand here?

Waylon, gritting his teeth in rage, leans up and sneers over his shoulder in Maxine's direction.

WAYLON  
Sure thing, honey.

Waylon lingers, still watching women.

The children wrestle and nearly over take Maxine.

MAXINE (O.C.)  
Waylon!

Waylon lets out an exasperated sigh. He finally turns back, heading for Maxine and the kids.

TITLE CARD: BUDDY'S

EXT. COUNTRY ROADHOUSE - 1957 - NIGHT

Giant wooden building in the middle of a dirt parking lot. Large neon sign reads: THE COTTON CLUB. A single patron walks from his pickup toward the door.

WAYLON (V.O.)  
Now, working 12 hour days pouring cement to support a wife an' three kids didn't leave much time for me to do what I was really meant to be doing.

The patron reaches the door and opens it, releasing the sweet sound of country from within.

INT. COTTON CLUB - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: Waylon, 20 years old, chestnut brown hair, in his own world as he sings a beautiful rendition of Hank William's "Honky Tonkin." Eyes closed, he feels every note.

A beer bottle strikes the now-visible chicken wire protecting the stage, and, all of a sudden, the music sounds bad. The drums don't fit and Waylon's singing is mediocre.

PATRON ONE throws another bottle. The liquid gets in Waylon's eye and he ducks. SLIM, his drummer, catches him and gives him a kerchief to clean his eye with.

PATRON ONE  
Play Temptation!

PATRON TWO  
Why don't you sit down before I come  
up there and kick your ass?

PATRON ONE  
Oh yeah?

PATRON TWO and his buddy, PATRON THREE, both stand up. The  
Jeff Healey Band house music plays through the speakers.

PATRON TWO  
Yeah.

Patron One whips out a blade.

This catches Waylon and Slim's attention. They give each  
other a knowing look and then start packing up - fast.

PATRON ONE  
I'd like to see you try.

Patron One smacks his own SEATED WIFE, out of nowhere.

PATRON ONE (cont'd)  
Shut up, bitch.

Patron One turns back to face his enemy, but DALTON, the  
club's lean bouncer, has appeared in front of him instead.  
Patron One's eyes fill with fire.

Dalton dodges the first slash without even uncrossing his  
arms as Patron One's forward momentum sends him tumbling to  
the floor.

Dalton dodges Patron Two's right hook while sending an upper  
cut into his gut. From here, Dalton nails Patron Three with  
a rear horse kick to the face.

Patron Two holds Dalton's hands behind his back so Patron  
One can unload on Dalton's guts.

Dalton cocks his knee to his chest and delivers a front  
kick, while butting Patron Two with the back of his head,  
freeing his arms.

Patron Three cuts Dalton on the ribs and the two start  
circling each other.

JIMMY attempts to use a pool cue to pole vault over the three steps that separate the billiards area from the dance area, but he lands on his face, unconscious.

Waylon and Slim hug the wall as they sneak off stage and out the side door.

RICHIE VALENS steps up to the mic.

RICHIE VALENS  
ONE TWO THREE FOUR! Para bailar la  
bamba!

Latin dancing mixes in with the fighting, filling the floor.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Slim and Waylon enter. Slim locates and waves at a table full of people.

SLIM  
Waylon, I'd like you to meet Sonny  
Curtis, Weldon Myrick, and this here  
is Charles Holly.

Turning with the smoothness of a Lazy Susan, BUDDY HOLLY, with his signature square framed glasses faces Waylon.

BUDDY HOLLY  
Please, call me Buddy.

Buddy extends his hand.

Waylon stands in awe, for light seems to hit Buddy's face differently, in such a way that he almost glows. He stumbles over a chair on his way to shake hands.

WAYLON  
(entranced)  
Waylon, Waylon Jennings.

Sonny and Weldon snicker.

BUDDY HOLLY  
Nice to meet you, Waylon.

SLIM  
Buddy here just signed with Decca  
Records.

WAYLON  
No kidding? How'd you swing that?

SONNY

Buddy is a veritable star in the making, Waylon. Plays shows all the way from Sacramento to Syracuse.

BUDDY HOLLY

My manager Norman Petty set it up. He's been representing me the last year or so.

WAYLON

Where'd you find him? Your manager that is.

BUDDY HOLLY

Friend of a friend. Seems how that always goes. He's alright, just gets me in more tight situations than I care for.

SONNY

Can't be that bad, he got you Decca records after all.

BUDDY HOLLY

That's if he doesn't nickel and dime our way out of it. I think he means well, but he doesn't seem to understand the music.

WAYLON

Sounds like you don't know how good you got it, partner. Me and the next guy would kill for a real manager.

BUDDY HOLLY

That's not it. Norman's been good to me, and I am grateful for him, but, well, it's like he thinks I'm some version of Elvis, encourages me to be more like the king, but I've got my own sound I've got to be true to.

Waylon lifts his head as Buddy's words pull him from obstinance.

BUDDY HOLLY (cont'd)

Whether that is profitable or not shouldn't matter so long as I'm doing something new.

BUDDY HOLLY (cont'd)  
 Something true to who I am and what I  
 believe in.

WAYLON  
 I know exactly what you mean.

This comment draws the table's attention away from the  
 prophet on its other end.

WAYLON (cont'd)  
 I've got these songs that just keep  
 blaring in my head and I can't tell  
 what they are, but I gotta get 'em  
 out. Even if that means breaking all  
 the rules in the book.

Sonny and Weldon snicker. Waylon's face again reddens as  
 even Slim joins in on the guffawing. Buddy's beautiful voice  
 cuts through it like a knife.

BUDDY HOLLY  
 Where do you play, Waylon?

WAYLON  
 Over at the Cotton Club.

Buddy leans back, impressed.

BUDDY HOLLY  
 That's a rough joint.

SLIM  
 You can say that again.

WAYLON  
 And then I host Sunday Party over at  
 KDAV. I'm a DJ over there too.

BUDDY HOLLY  
 What's Sunday Party?

WAYLON  
 Oh it's this great thing over in  
 Lubbock where all the guys from local  
 talent contests and country music  
 shows get together on Sunday nights  
 and mix bands and just let loose over  
 the broadcast.



SLIM  
 (apologetic)  
 It's a really good time, Buddy. You  
 should come out.

Buddy looks right at Waylon.

BUDDY HOLLY  
 Maybe I will...

Buddy twists his cigarette butt between his fingers, almost as if plotting, as he watches Waylon the rube put his order in with the waitress.

INT. WAYLON AND MAXINE'S HOME - NIGHT

Waylon enters and turns the lights on. Maxine hangs from the kitchen light with a noose she has fashioned from a necktie. The bulb pops and she falls to the floor.

Waylon turns on a separate light.

WAYLON  
 Get up, Maxine. You're not fooling  
 anyone.

Waylon walks over to his seat in the living room to look at some mail. Maxine crawls in and starts rubbing his thighs.

MAXINE  
 How was your day today?

WAYLON  
 Fine, honey, fine.

Maxine undoes his belt.

MAXINE  
 Anything interesting happen?

WAYLON  
 Played at the Cotton Club. Met this  
 guy by the name of Buddy Holly who's  
 got a -  
 (annoyed)  
 Does any of this even make sense to  
 you?

MAXINE

It makes sense. You played your usual Saturday gig at the Cotton Club and then you made a new friend. Makes perfect sense.

WAYLON

Right...

Maxine tries to pull down Waylon's jeans, teetering them down an inch at a time.

MAXINE

I was just thinking that since tomorrow is Sunday, and I know you don't work on Sundays, that maybe we could take the kids up to my parents' house.

WAYLON

Will you cut that out? I got Sunday Party tomorrow. Buddy said he might even show up. That's a big deal, Maxine.

MAXINE

Right, I just, I know that Sunday Party doesn't start until six o'clock and it's only an hour drive over to my parents, so I just figured that maybe we could go in the morning and then you could still make your show.

WAYLON

I said no, Maxine.

Maxine leans upright and addresses Waylon from a more serious, albeit squatted, position.

MAXINE

But the kids ain't seen my parents in over a year, and they hardly see you anymore, with all your hobbies.

Waylon gets up, buttons his pants, and starts walking away.

WAYLON

I work 12 hours a day pouring cement to support this family, sorry if I don't want to waste all my free time hanging out with your fucking parents.

MAXINE  
You don't pour cement.

Waylon stops in his tracks.

WAYLON  
Excuse me?

MAXINE  
You don't pour cement 12 hours a day.

WAYLON  
Of course I do.

Maxine giggles.

MAXINE  
No! Waylon are you playing with me?

WAYLON  
What outfit am I with then?

Maxine gets up off the floor, giggling.

MAXINE  
Outfit? You ain't with no outfit, you work part time at Milton's creamery.

WAYLON  
The creamery... Right, I knew that.

She puts her hand on his shoulder.

MAXINE  
I swear, Waylon, you worry me sometimes, all them pills you take.

He pulls away, acknowledging her with just his peripheral vision.

WAYLON  
(enraged)  
It was one slip up, Maxine, I'm fine.

She grabs his jeans at the buttons. Up against him, she looks up into his eyes.

MAXINE  
Yeah you are...

He pulls away.

WAYLON  
I'm going to bed.

Waylon exits.

MAXINE  
Did I do something wrong?

No response. Maxine just watches him go, abandoned.

FADE OUT:

INT. PHARMACY - 1998 - DAY

Waylon, in his early sixties, soaked from the rainstorm and pale, jitters at the counter. The PHARMACIST comes back, examining the prescription bottle in his hand.

PHARMACIST  
I'm sorry, Mr. Jennings, but I can't fill this, uh... prescription? For 30 white crosses and 15 speckled birds.

WAYLON  
Why the hell not?

PHARMACIST  
That seems pretty obvious.

The prescription paper has been crudely crossed out and replaced with Waylon's own information and the previously mentioned street-name drugs.

WAYLON  
You need proof?

Waylon's grubby hands pull out several empty prescription bottles and line them up on the counter.

WAYLON (cont'd)  
I've got empties squirreled away in so many places I'll be finding them for years to come.

Pharmacist picks one of them and reads the wet label.

PHARMACIST  
Who is Sue Brewer?

WAYLON

Who, Sue? Only one of the sweetest ladies ever to grace Nashville with her presence, but don't let that fool you - she's got a wild side to her too. In fact, any fella that can sing her a tune holds the key to her front door.

PHARMACIST

That's uh, that's not really what I was asking about.

WAYLON

Come on, man, I need this. I've got a serious eating disorder.

PHARMACIST

I'm sure if you call Dr. Plank over in Nashville, he can send a fresh prescription right over.

WAYLON

He won't speak with me. Claims to not know who I am. As if! You go from being a god damn country music legend one minute to it being like you never even existed the next. Ten gold albums, seven platinum, highest grossing entertainer of the seventies, I turned Nashville on it's fucking head. And yet, my own wife says she's never even heard of me. Maybe she's lost her mind, or maybe I have, or maybe the whole world has, but I know exactly one way to feel normal, and that is my fucking pills.

PHARMACIST

I can't just give you pills.

WAYLON

Can you give Dr. Plank a call then? I ran outta change for the phone.

Pharmacist lets out an annoyed sigh.

PHARMACIST

Sure. I'll be right back.

Pharmacist heads to the phone in the back.

Waylon waits. He doesn't blink as sweat runs down his face. The incoming sound of the seconds hand on the clock beckon a rumbling sound in his stomach.

Tic.. tick.. Eyes widen. He grips his groaning stomach and vomits on the counter. Panic hits.

From the back of the pharmacy, Pharmacist hangs up the phone at the sight of Waylon covering up his mess with loose magazines.

WAYLON  
D'you get ahold of him?

PHARMACIST  
I need you to leave.

Pharmacist lifts the corner of the soiled magazines.

WAYLON  
That? Don't worry about that, I just need to get some food in me and I'll be right as rain.

PHARMACIST  
You want me to call the cops?

Waylon packs up his empties.

WAYLON  
(muttering)  
Call 'em. See what I care. They'll probably be on my side. I don't even give a shit.

Pharmacist watches him go and dials the cops.

EXT. PHARMACY - DAY

Bright and sunny day. DUTCH, a portly beat cop, watches Waylon exit the pharmacy.

Waylon clutches at his collar. Sweat pours from his face as he grits his teeth and stomps down the sidewalk.

Looking over his shoulder, Waylon catches Dutch's cruiser in his peripheral view.

WAYLON  
Shit.

He hobbles faster, turns a corner.

The police car chirps.

Waylon starts booking it.

Lighting up, the cruiser pursues.

The cruiser cuts him off and he starts running the other way. Dutch gets out.

DUTCH  
Hey, buddy, hold up.

Waylon turns into an alley, running at top speed, gripping at his aching chest. BAM! Dutch tackles him from the cross-alley on Waylon's left.

DUTCH (cont'd)  
When I say stop you stop. You hear me, boy?

Dutch puts him up against the wall. Waylon struggles - fights for air.

WAYLON  
I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Dutch cuffs him.

DUTCH  
Now, I'm not gonna find any drug or weapons am I?

WAYLON  
No, sir.

DUTCH  
I'm only gonna ask once, so I'd appreciate it if you were honest with me.

Dutch lifts Waylon's bound arms, causing extreme pain.

WAYLON  
I ain't got nothing on me, I swear!

Dutch pats him down.

DUTCH  
You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in... uh...

Turning him around, light seems to hit Waylon's face differently, in such a way that he almost glows. The same way that Buddy Holly glowed.

DUTCH (cont'd)  
 (entranced)  
 Uh, you have the right to remain...

But then the clouds reform and the bruises appear on Waylon's dark and greasy face.

DUTCH (cont'd)  
 You have the right to an - uh... I always forget how - anyhow. You get the idea.

Dutch goes back to patting Waylon down.

DUTCH (cont'd)  
 What business you got resisting arrest, huh?

WAYLON  
 I thought you was one of my fans.

DUTCH  
 Don't tell me. You're / a singer.

WAYLON  
 I'm a singer - country outlaw music.

DUTCH  
 I knew it! No use bothering with these then.

Dutch uncuffs him.

DUTCH (cont'd)  
 Sorry about your face there.

Waylon flinches at the pain of being touched.

DUTCH (cont'd)  
 Off you go.

WAYLON  
 That's it?

DUTCH  
 I suppose I should probably run your ID.



Waylon, pale as a ghost and wet with sweat, just looks at Dutch's open palm.

WAYLON

... My ID?

DUTCH

What? You ain't an escaped convict or something like that, are ya? Just come down from upstate?

Waylon gulps.

Dutch lets out a deep laugh and smacks Waylon on the back.

DUTCH (cont'd)

I'm only screwing with ya.

WAYLON

Oh, ha, you got me...

DUTCH

I do need to see ID though, protocol.

WAYLON

Sure thing, officer.

Waylon's hand trembles as he drags his wallet out and places it in Dutch's hand.

DUTCH

This'll just take a minute.

Waylon holds his breath as he walks on egg shells in the opposite direction of Dutch, who heads toward his cruiser, but stops after only a few steps.

DUTCH (O.C.)

Hang on just a second.

Halting, Waylon's bugging eyes look to the side, toward the threat standing behind him. Sweat running down his face, his eyes search. Then, he puffs up his chest and turns around.

WAYLON

What is it?

DUTCH

I was just -

WAYLON

You got anything better to do than to hassle people? You think I'm not busy?

DUTCH

No, that's not it.

WAYLON

What is it then? First you need to see my ID, then you don't, now you do.

DUTCH

(stammering)

I was just following...

WAYLON

Innit that convenient? Procedure this and standards that.

Waylon gets in Dutch's squishing face.

WAYLON (cont'd)

Well, what is it, huh? What? Spit it out, sergeant!

DUTCH

To hell with protocol!

Waylon steps off, temporarily stunned.

DUTCH (cont'd)

This might be inappropriate, but, uh, you see, I'm a bit of a singer myself, gospel music, but, uh, well, I'll just come out and ask it, do you got representation?

Waylon lets out and catches a sigh of relief.

WAYLON

(proud)

Sure do, Neil Reshen.

DUTCH

Do you think you could maybe give me his number?

WAYLON

I never can seem to say no to a gospel singer.

Dutch gets his notepad out and Waylon scratches down Neil's number for him.

Waylon hands back the notepad.

DUTCH

Always thought I'd freeze up talking to a singer, but you're not so intimidating up close. Just like one of us ordinary people.

WAYLON

(pissed)

We all have our off days.

Waylon tips his imaginary cap at Dutch.

WAYLON (cont'd)

Now, if you don't mind, officer.

Waylon takes his first step toward exit.

DUTCH

Wait, you forgot your wallet.

(suspicious)

A man shouldn't be going nowhere without his wallet...

Dutch leans in to read Waylon's eyes as he hands over the wallet.

WAYLON

Of course. Thank you, officer.

Waylon tugs at the wallet a few times, but Dutch ain't letting go.

A bead of sweat forms on Waylon's temple.

Dutch's eyes go to it.

Dutch releases the wallet.

DUTCH

Well, I'll be seeing you around.

WAYLON

(nervous)

I sure hope not.

Dutch chuckles to himself as he steps back to his cruiser.

Waylon lets out a sigh, deflating his confident posture. His stomach growls and his expression sours. He trots off.

INT. WAYLON AND MAXINE'S HOME 1957 - KITCHEN - DAY

Waylon has his back to us as he does the dishes.

WAYLON (V.O.)  
Maxine and I never should've gotten married.

Maxine feeds Julie Rae at the table.

MAXINE  
What did you just say?

WAYLON  
I say something?

MAXINE  
You just said Maxine and I never should've gotten married.

Waylon dries his hands, rough and quick.

WAYLON  
I didn't say that out loud.

MAXINE  
You think I can't hear you mumbling to yourself?

Waylon rattles a pill bottle at his ear, but it's empty.

WAYLON  
Quit making trouble, Maxine.

Waylon steps over to grab his jacket. Terry enters.

MAXINE  
Go with your dad. He wants you to go with him to work.

Terry grins as he looks to Waylon and then back to Maxine; waiting for the game's next instruction.

MAXINE (cont'd)  
If he don't take you, that means he don't love you.

WAYLON  
Stop, Maxine.

MAXINE

You don't love your son? He wants to go with you.

WAYLON

You know what you're doing, Maxine.

MAXINE

Am I doing something? I don't believe I'm doing nothing. Go on, Terry, get dressed, you're daddy wants you to go to work with him.

Waylon lets out a sigh and slams the door as he leaves.

Terry stays seated. Maxine wipes his face.

MAXINE (cont'd)

Don't you worry, Terry, he still loves us. Don't you worry.

Terry watches in confusion as his mother cleans up the breakfast table.

EXT. KDAV RADIO STATION - DAY

Dusk. A line of cars surround the radio station. The car doors open and Waylon singing *If You Ain't Lovin' You Ain't Livin'* plays from their stereos.

TEEN PASSENGERS rush to join the rest of the tailgate.

INT. KDAV RADIO STATION STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Waylon sings in the studio with SONNY CURTIS on guitar.

INT. KDAV RADIO STATION CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

HI POCKETS, a tall man always wearing a sport coat, sits at the DJ booth. Buddy enters and stands with his hands politely in front of him, watching Waylon's performance.

INT. KDAV RADIO STATION STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Waylon gets a look in the booth and sees Buddy checking his watch and looking at the door. Waylon's expression lifts all the same as he finishes out the song.

INT. KDAV RADIO STATION CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Waylon opens the door and offers his guitar to Buddy.

BUDDY HOLLY

Oh no, I just came to watch.

WAYLON

Aw come on, Buddy, it'll be fun.

BUDDY HOLLY

Alright... If you insist.

Buddy puts the guitar on and enters as Waylon exits.

INT. KDAV RADIO STATION CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Waylon watches Buddy set up and direct his ad hoc band mates.

Hi Pockets lets the ad record play out.

AD RECORD

... The proper supper for a growing family.

Hi Pockets removes the record and speaks into the mic.

HI POCKETS

Alright all you crazy teens out there. Next up we've got Buddy Holly, Sonny Curtis, and Jerry Allison, with "Midnight Shift." Hope you enjoy.

Buddy begins singing with his smooth voice, nearly glowing - this is a true talent.

Waylon looks on in awe. He and Hi Pockets give each other a knowing look. Then a level of shameful envy and concern almost cross Waylon's face as he looks down and away.

INT. WAYLON AND MAXINE'S HOME - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Buddy's singing of "Midnight Shift" plays over and in tandem with Maxine doing her hair, applying lipstick, and putting on a tight black sequin dress in the bathroom.

INT. WAYLON AND MAXINE'S HOME - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Inconspicuous, Terry watches from the stair case as Maxine struts from the bathroom and into the kitchen.

INT. WAYLON AND MAXINE'S HOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

She crawls into the loaded guillotine and takes the pull rope in her hand.

Terry continues watching from the staircase with childlike obliviousness.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Dusty old highway, we can barely make out the telephone poles and tumbleweeds in the moonlight. The headlights of Buddy Holly's 1955 Chevrolet Bel Air woosh by.

INT. BUDDY HOLLY'S CAR - NIGHT

Buddy eats a cheeseburger while driving.

BUDDY HOLLY

Don't ever limit yourself to just country, Waylon. It's a little unrefined, but with your voice you could do country, rock, or even pop.

WAYLON

Unrefined?

BUDDY HOLLY

Wild.

WAYLON

Oh... Suppose I appreciate the honesty.

Buddy Holly opens up another cheeseburger and starts eating. Then he looks over to see Waylon sulking.

BUDDY HOLLY

But there's real potential. Like I said, you've got the pipes to do country, rock, or even pop if you wanted to.

WAYLON

Thanks, Buddy. That means a lot, but I don't know, I got a lot of responsibilities at home.

BUDDY HOLLY

You're a singer, Waylon. That makes you special, superior, and it don't matter what you have to do, so long as you get the world that voice. It's your responsibility.

WAYLON

That's what I keep trying to tell Maxine, but she don't get it.

BUDDY HOLLY

You want me to talk to her? I can tell her that you can sing country, rock, or even pop if you wanted to.

WAYLON

Nah, that's alright, Buddy.

BUDDY HOLLY

That's what I've been trying to sing, but god damn if it isn't difficult to get these producers to let you do what you really want to do. And then I can't help but feel like I'm getting ripped off. Don't get me wrong, I needed Norman Petty, especially when I was starting out, but I think I might've messed up letting him get so tied up in my finances.

WAYLON

You oughtta cut ties with him. A talent like you has got to have his freedom.

BUDDY HOLLY

That's nice Waylon, but it isn't that easy.

WAYLON

Sure it is, just tell 'em your fed up. You ain't need nothing but your guitar and your voice. I was waiting to ask you this, but I thought that maybe you and I could strike up a band together.



Buddy chuckles at this.

BUDDY HOLLY

There's more to it than that, Waylon.  
Contracts are involved, big money.

WAYLON

Sometimes I worry I'll never get out.

Waylon sulks, looking out his passenger window into the moonlight. Buddy notices and it stalls him from starting into yet another cheeseburger.

BUDDY HOLLY

I'll tell you what, and don't tell anyone this.

WAYLON

Who am I gonna tell?

BUDDY HOLLY

I don't know, maybe one of your radio guys. Anyway, I'm thinking about starting a production company of my own.

WAYLON

That's really something, Buddy.

BUDDY HOLLY

I'm glad you think so, because I was hoping I could get Waylon Jennings as my first artist.

WAYLON

(elated)

No kidding?

BUDDY HOLLY

No kidding. I'm bringing King Curtis over to Clovis next week to play a couple of his songs. It'd be on Norman's label, technically, but do you think you could come in and sing with him in Cajun-French?

WAYLON

(eager)

How do I learn Cajun French?

BUDDY HOLLY

I got some old records you can learn off of. Easy as that.

WAYLON

Do I need to get an agent?

BUDDY HOLLY

Don't you worry about that, Waylon. I'll help you out. Just think of me like an older brother, or something, you can lean on.

WAYLON

Like a center post?

BUDDY HOLLY

Sure, that works. Say, you gonna finish that cheeseburger?

EXT. DRIVE-IN RESTAURANT - 1998 - DAY

A ringing sound blares as Waylon holds his temple and squeezes his face in pain. His nose bleeds.

A young WAITER approaches the table.

WAITER

Will there be anything else, sir?

Waylon checks his surroundings. Sees the people watching him in disgust, sees the remnants of fast food wrappers covering his table, then looks up at the waiter.

WAYLON

I'll take another 12 cheeseburgers.

WAITER

(astonished)

Another twelve?

Waylon looks around him at the people watching in disgust.

WAYLON

You got a problem with that?

WAITER

Not at all, sir. Coming right up.

Waylon goes back to drinking his coke and looking around. He sights a JUNKIE at the Cradles gas station across the street.

WAYLON

(hollering)

Make that order to go.

EXT. KLLL RADIO STATION - 1953 - DAY

Large metropolitan Texas building, 40 stories high.

WAYLON (V.O.)

K-triple-L, the station started up by the Corbins, hit that town like a truckload of geese. They bought it, and, thanks to Buddy's recommendation, they hired me. There I was, a shit-on-the-boot cowboy ready to take on the competition.

INT. KLLL RADIO STATION - 1953 - DAY

Slim enters with a bag of cheeseburgers. Waylon does a shushing motion and points at the spinning record.

They unwrap their burgers as the record finishes playing out Spade Cooley singing *Shame on You*.

Waylon lifts the needle, mouth full, he speaks into the mic.

WAYLON

Hi there, all you friends and neighbors out in radiolint.

Slim snickers.

WAYLON (cont'd)

That was Spade Cooley with *Shame on you*. Now for our ad sponsors.

(clears throat)

Today's show is brought to you by George's Fruit and Vegetables where you can't beat George's meat!

SLIM

(fighting back  
laughter)

Now this next one's a little number from our very own Waylon Jennings. Here's *Jole Blon*.

Slim drops the needle and Waylon singing in Cajun French plays. They both take off their headsets and the "ON AIR" light goes off.

SLIM (cont'd)

You can't beat George's meat? I'll bet the phones are gonna light up pretty bad after that one.

WAYLON

Let those cards and letters roll on  
in.

WAYLON (V.O.)

I had everything a man could want, my  
voice on the radio waves as well as  
etched in polyvinyl chloride, singing  
in Cajun-French and it was all thanks  
to the hard work I was doing with my  
friend, Charles - Buddy - Holly.

Buddy swings the door open and throws a bass guitar in  
Waylon's lap. Waylon sits up straight and gives Buddy his  
full attention.

BUDDY HOLLY

You have two weeks to learn to play  
that thing.

Waylon looks up at Buddy with pious attentiveness.

WAYLON

Yes, sir.

INT. WAYLON AND MAXINE'S HOME - DAY

Waylon struggles to practice the bass guitar.

INT. WAYLON AND MAXINE'S HOME - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Maxine throws herself down the stairs.

INT. WAYLON AND MAXINE'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Waylon just shakes his head at the sound and keeps on  
practicing.

WAYLON (V.O.)

Buddy had taken a three week tour  
starting in January 1959, because  
Norman had his money all tied up,  
close to a hundred thousand dollars.

INT. WAYLON AND MAXINE'S HOME - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Maxine opens one eye, she shushes Terry, pushes him toward  
the kitchen with her free hand, and closes her eye again.

WAYLON (V.O.)

I had never played the bass before. I hardly had a clue where to begin, but what I did know is that Buddy Holly had befriended me and taken me under his wing.

INT. WAYLON AND MAXINE'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Waylon struggles to play the bass guitar.

WAYLON (V.O.)

Our first stop was New York City.

INT. PLANE CABIN - NIGHT

Waylon grips his armrests tight. GOOSE and TOMMY, 50s musicians in their early 20s, grab their bags out from overhead.

GOOSE

Flying makes ya anxious, huh?

TOMMY

It's alright, you'll get over it.

Waylon looks through the window and sees Buddy waving to him from the tarmac. He returns the wave.

GOOSE

Hurry up, Waylon, or you'll end up on the next flight to Wisconsin.

Waylon gets up and grabs his things from overhead.

TOMMY (O.C.)

Dumb rube.

Pricked, Waylon turns his head at this comment, but Tommy and Goose have already chuckled their way down the aisle.

INT./EXT. BUDDY HOLLY'S CAR - NIGHT

Waylon watches, through the passenger side window, in awe as the tall buildings and city lights of New York City pass by.

WAYLON (V.O.)

It took my breath away. The sight of New York as we drove through Brooklyn along the East River was like nothing I'd ever glimpsed before. I couldn't believe that there was anything so big, or that there was so much of it.

They come to a stop outside a large hotel.

INT. BUDDY HOLLY'S CAR - NIGHT

Buddy turns to address Goose and Tommy in the back seat.

BUDDY HOLLY

Alright, boys, this is you.

Tommy and Goose get out. Waylon opens his door to get out, but Buddy grabs his arm.

BUDDY HOLLY (cont'd)

Where do you think you're going?

WAYLON

To check into the hotel?

BUDDY HOLLY

I don't think so. You're staying with me.

WAYLON

Really, you mean it?

BUDDY HOLLY

Of course. You've got to meet Maria after all. Now let's hurry before she burns the beans again.

INT. BUDDY HOLLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Smoke billows from the pot on the stove in this modest one bedroom New York City apartment.

The smoke alarm finally sounds and MARIA ELENA, 20s Latin, comes rushing in, fanning with a washcloth, moving the pot to the sink to drown it.

Buddy enters the front door to the left of the kitchen and sneaks up to hold Maria from behind at the sink.

BUDDY HOLLY  
Mmmmm, black beans.

MARIA  
Very funny, mister.

BUDDY HOLLY  
It's alright, honey, nothing a little  
ketchup can't fix.

MARIA  
You and your ketchup.

Maria turns around. Waylon is there.

MARIA (cont'd)  
Oh, and who is this?

WAYLON  
Waylon Jennings, ma'am, pleased to  
meet you.

MARIA  
Oh, Waylons! Buddy has told me all  
about you. Please, please sit. I'll  
have the food out in just a minute.

Buddy grips Waylon by the shoulder as he walks him over to  
the coat rack.

BUDDY HOLLY  
Don't say a word about the food, just  
eat it.

CLOSE ON - Plain burnt beans in a white dish.

Waylon looks up from the beans. Buddy eats with suggestive  
enthusiasm. Waylon lifts the beans to his mouth, but just  
before they reach,

MARIA  
Oh, let me play your record!

BUDDY HOLLY  
Oh no, honey, don't embarrass him.

WAYLON  
Embarrass?

MARIA  
There's nothing to be embarrassed  
about. It's good.

She sets down the needle and Waylon singing *Joel Blon* in Cajun French is produced.

MARIA (cont'd)

Well maybe *it's* not good, but he's good on it. You could be a pop singer, Waylons. I mean it. Every time I listen to you sing, it gives me goose bumps.

WAYLON

Thank you, ma'am.

BUDDY HOLLY

Better listen to her, Waylon. She knows the business. Reminds me every day about how I'm supposedly getting ripped off.

MARIA

You are getting ripped off!

Buddy leans over to Waylon.

BUDDY HOLLY

It's not that bad.

MARIA

Says the man who's forced to go on tour because his manager has all of his money tied up. Did he tell you about that, Waylons?

Waylon responds with a timid head shake "no."

BUDDY HOLLY

Now that's enough, Maria.

Waylon keeps his head down while they fight.

MARIA

Norman has a hundred thousand dollars of Buddy's money confused in a church trust.

Buddy slams his fists down on the table.

BUDDY HOLLY

I said that's enough!

MARIA

Ooh more goose bumps!



BUDDY HOLLY  
 (laughing)  
 Let me be mad...

Maria puts her hand in Buddy's

MARIA  
 Never.

They separate from a kiss, revealing Waylon watching them with studious envy.

WAYLON  
 You two seem really happy.

Maria gets up to take the dishes to the sink.

MARIA  
 No thanks to him.

Buddy gives Waylon a knowing wink.

INT. CONCERT HALL - DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Waylon watches Buddy fall in love with his own reflection as he combs his hair.

BUDDY HOLLY  
 Hand me a cigarette, Waylon, would ya?

Waylon searches his shirt pocket for a cigarette.

BUDDY HOLLY (cont'd)  
 There's no doubt you'll be a star.

WAYLON  
 How can you tell?

BUDDY HOLLY  
 Well, Waylon, because you can sing pop, you can sing rock, and you can sing country, and the only other person I know who can *really* do that...

Buddy turns to face Waylon.

BUDDY HOLLY (cont'd)  
 Is me...

Buddy pops a few pills straight from the bottle.

WAYLON

You sure take a lot of pills - even for me.

BUDDY HOLLY

Is that right? Jesus, you're worse than Maria. You got any cigarettes or not?

WAYLON

Why don't you carry your own cigarettes?

BUDDY HOLLY

Maria can't know I smoke. What the hell you think I got you for?

Waylon looks at him with the saddest puppy dog eyes.

BUDDY HOLLY (cont'd)

Ah hell, I'm just kidding. Come on with me, I'll show you something.

Buddy puts his arm around Waylon and walks him out.

EXT. CONCERT HALL - NIGHT

Buddy leads Waylon down the narrow space between the concert hall and the adjacent building.

WAYLON

Where are you taking me?

BUDDY HOLLY

Just hang on a minute and you'll see.

There's the buzz of a crowd and the fringes of a large light coming from the other end of the tunnel.

At the end, Waylon marvels at the line of people and the illuminated theater sign that reads "Buddy Holly and the Crickets, Richie Valens, the Big Bopper, and Frankie Sardo."

BUDDY HOLLY (cont'd)

I wish they'd take the Crickets off there. They ain't a part of this.

Buddy looks over and realizes, and then appreciates, how big a moment this is for Waylon, who is preoccupied in complete awe of the crowd lined up to see him.

EXT. CRADLES GAS STATION - 1998 - DAY

Waylon looks up at the dilapidated sign with great hope.

Dropping his view, he sees the JUNKIE head behind the Cradles station and tuck into an alley. Waylon follows him.

EXT. BRICK ALLEYWAY - DAY

Waylon ducks through this wet alley.

The junkie ahead is moving fast.

Waylon picks up the pace.

The junkie ducks into an abandoned building.

Waylon looks to his left, then his right, and enters.

INT. ABANDONED CONCERT HALL - DAY

Dark interior. The sole light source is the makeup mirror that ARIA, in her late 30s and streetwise, is perched at.

Waylon watches, hidden behind the backstage curtain, as the Junkie and Aria conduct business on stage.

JUNKIE  
(mumbling)  
Err, vernacular.

The junkie and Aria exchange bindle for drugs. Then he scampers off.

Waylon steps up.

WAYLON  
I need about 40 white crosses and 30 speckled birds.

ARIA  
That'll be 900 - Cash.

Waylon takes out his wallet, but before he opens it,

WAYLON  
What about if you're famous?

Aria takes one look at his bruised and beaten face, stilted by a 10-inch grin.

ARIA

What are you, a stunt man?

Aria feels his jacket between her fingers.

ARIA (cont'd)

Is this real vicuna?

Waylon stands up straight.

WAYLON

Indeed it is.

ARIA

You just became a whole lot more interesting.

WAYLON

You must not be a fan of country music?

ARIA

Can't say that I am.

WAYLON

Well let me tell you, I was the hottest thing in Nashville for the better part of the seventies and eighties. We redefined country. Said goodbye to the rules and did something new. Just like Elvis and so many other greats. You see I've had this music playing in my head since I was real young.

ARIA

Who's we?

WAYLON

I played with everyone; Buddy Holly, Johnny Cash, Kris Kristofferson, Willie Nelson. You name it.

ARIA

I know of all of them, yet I've never heard of you... No matter, price is still the same, famous or no.

Waylon holds his empty wallet open.

WAYLON

I'm a little short here.

ARIA  
Where are you not short?

WAYLON  
My hotel room.

Aria runs her finger down his chest.

ARIA  
I'm sure you aren't. Shall we?

WAYLON  
Really?

ARIA  
Let's just say I'm an aspiring fan of  
country music.

She turns away to grab her bag. Waylon grabs his growling stomach in pain.

Aria turns back around and Waylon straightens up, forcing a seductive smile.

She tucks herself under his arm as they walk up the aisle and out of the concert hall.

The Stranger, almost visible square frames, watches them walk out. He steps over to the jukebox and plays Hank Williams' "Be Careful of the Stones that You Throw."

FADE OUT:

INT. CONVERTED SCHOOL TOUR BUS - 1959 - NIGHT

At the end of the bus seating, everyone else sleeping, Buddy and Waylon teach DION "Be Careful of the Stones that You Throw."

DION  
*... Be careful of the stones that you  
throw*

Dion hits a wrong note. Buddy and Waylon wince.

BUDDY HOLLY  
Here, Dion, maybe let Waylon show you  
the whole song again and you'll get  
the feeling right.

Buddy pops a few pills.

WAYLON  
Can I have a few of those?

BUDDY HOLLY  
Sorry, fresh out.

While accepting the guitar from Dion, Waylon glares at Buddy tucking the pill bottle into his pocket.

Waylon starts 'a singing. He comes to the part Dion was struggling with.

WAYLON  
No, see you gotta match *throw* up with  
that C chord just right.

Waylon hits it just right for him.

WAYLON (cont'd)  
*Stones that you throw.*

BUDDY HOLLY  
No, it's an A chord.

WAYLON  
No, it's definitely a C.  
(slowed down)  
*Stones-that-you-throw.*

Buddy pops a few more pills.

BUDDY HOLLY  
Here, give me that.

Buddy rips the guitar, strap and all, out of Waylon's hands.

WAYLON  
Hey!

Buddy goes right into it, playing smoother and with greater feel. Waylon sit back and pouts while Buddy's playing on the first repeat of the chorus brings Dion to tears.

The scene is interrupted by the blinking of static.

INT. CRADLE'S GAS STATION - 1953 - NIGHT

Weylon, 16 years old, red-haired and freckled, mops this sterile late night truck stop and addresses the camera directly.

WEYLON

We may have had patched clothes and weren't invited to the right parties, but still, sitting around the potbellied stove listening to the Opry, we had a kinship with the performers. I felt chills all over me the first time I heard Hank Williams sing "Be Careful the Stones You Throw". I always wanted to be a singer, but he etched it in stone. I even had a premonition of him dying.

Weylon puts a nickel in the machine and it produces a scratchy version of Hank Williams' "I'll Never Get Out of This World Alive."

At the magazine shelf, suddenly daytime, illuminated by the morning sun, Weylon addresses us again, closing his eyes as he follows the song with his finger like a country maestro.

WEYLON (cont'd)

It's coming up. Don't you worry.

After the line "I'll never get out of this world alive" comes around, Weylon opens his eyes, addressing us.

WEYLON (cont'd)

And I said, "Wouldn't it be weird if he died?" And he did!

FADE OUT:

INT. CONVERTED SCHOOL TOUR BUS - DAY

Buddy shakes Weylon, red hair and freckles, awake.

BUDDY HOLLY

Do you want to go to England?

WEYLON

You look like you haven't slept a wink.

Buddy paces back and forth. Back and forth.

BUDDY HOLLY

(pacing)

Don't tell Tommy 'cause he's not going, and don't tell Goose, 'cause he won't be going neither.

Weylon continues paying attention as he pulls a fully-loaded breakfast tray out from under the seat in front of him.

BUDDY HOLLY (cont'd)

Don't say anything to either one of them. I'm going to ask J.I. and Joe B. We're all going to get back together.

Weylon tucks a napkin in his collar and digs into the three course breakfast.

WEYLON

If Joe B. comes back on bass, what're you gonna need me for?

BUDDY HOLLY

I'll still need ya.

WEYLON

They ain't got glorified roadies in Europe?

Buddy slows down and gives Weylon a deceptive smile.

BUDDY HOLLY

We'll have some fun. We'll go over there, and who knows, in Europe, maybe I'll have you open the shows.

Weylon looks up at Buddy's stale and twitchy face.

WEYLON

Alright, I guess.

BUDDY HOLLY

So you're in?

WEYLON

I'm in.

BUDDY HOLLY

Hot dog!

Buddy paces and jitters as he finishes putting the plan together in his head.

WEYLON (V.O.)

I've often wondered what Buddy saw in me.

Buddy gets a front row seat to watch Weylon finish his breakfast.



WEYLON (V.O.) (cont'd)  
I think maybe it was like he was  
looking in a mirror.

BUDDY HOLLY  
Don't ever let them tell you what to  
do. If people ask, say you're pop.  
That gives you room to move. Don't  
say rock 'n roll. Don't say country.

Weylon finishes chewing.

WEYLON  
Well you're gonna be the one  
producing me, so I shouldn't have to  
worry about that too much, right?

BUDDY HOLLY  
I ain't gonna be around forever, kid.

WEYLON  
Hell, you're only a year older than  
me, Buddy.

BUDDY HOLLY  
Is that all?

INT. CHEAP MOTEL ROOM - 1998 - NIGHT

Waylon, rushes in past filled ash trays, dirty laundry, and  
used scratch-off lotto tickets.

Aria takes more cautious steps as she follows behind.

ARIA  
(disappointed)  
Oh, okay...

Waylon tears laundry out of the closet, sweat pouring down  
his face.

Aria walks in a little further, grimacing at all the  
cheeseburger wrappers she passes, coming to the desk adorned  
with disassembled electronics equipment.

ARIA (cont'd)  
What are you doing with all these car  
stereos?

He pokes his head out.

WAYLON  
Don't touch that!

Waylon gets up and shoves the pile of electronics into the opposite corner of the desk.

WAYLON (cont'd)  
Spent a lot of hours rewiring them -  
countless. They're valuable.

Aria puts her hands up and backs away.

ARIA  
Alright, alright.

She sits on the bed and turns on the broken tv.

He lets out a sigh, eyelids growing heavy, he smacks himself in the head.

WAYLON  
Wake up, wake up!

He squats back down at the closet. His digging slows. Then stalls. Eyes closing, falling forward, unconscious, he wakes at the sound of his own snort.

He shakes it off, grits his teeth, wipes his brow and digs even harder, revealing the safe.

Waylon opens it - empty. He falls back, from his squatted position, holding his defeated head in his hands.

ARIA  
What's this?

Aria holds up the Jole Blon record.

WAYLON  
(stunned)  
Where did you get that?

Waylon struggles to get up, exhausted.

ARIA  
It was just laying here on the bed.  
What is it?

Waylon takes the record in his hands and glides down to a seat on the bed.

WAYLON

It's a Jole Blon record, with me singing in Cajun French.

ARIA

Is it valuable?

WAYLON

It's proof I exist. This solves everything. I can go back...

ARIA

How much is it worth?

WAYLON

Eh, not much. Maybe if it were an original copy, but...

Hit with a sudden wave of exhaustion, Waylon supports his face with his now-freckled hand.

WAYLON (cont'd)

What's happening? Did you slip me something?

ARIA

Certainly not.

He falls over onto his side, eyes closing.

WAYLON

What's the matter with me?

ARIA

It would appear that you're crashing, sweetheart. When's the last time you had a fix?

He slinks onto the carpet and goes limp.

WAYLON

Can I get a freebee? I'm good for it, I swear.

ARIA

(mock-whining)

But I need money...

WAYLON

(aggressive)

Just give me the pills and then I can pay you.

ARIA  
That's not how this works, hombre.

WAYLON  
Please...

Aria steps forward to tower over Waylon.

ARIA  
Sleep tight, little man.

Waylon's sleeping face winces at the insult.

Aria watches him for a minute, then kicks him. She steps over him to check the closet

Seeing that the safe is empty, she digs out his wallet.

She drops the empty wallet as soon as she opens it. Then she rolls him around in order to steal the jacket off his back.

Arms full with the vicuna jacket and car stereos, she kicks him. Then kicks him again.

She stops short and picks up the Jole Blon record and considers it.

ARIA (cont'd)  
Nah.

She tosses the record at Weylon's face and exits.

Weylon lays there unconscious. Then a man's hand slides in and takes the Jole Blon record, and Weylon's face scrunches up like he's having a bad dream.

Stranger examines the record, standing over the sleeping body. Stopping at the doorway, record in hand, Stranger looks right at the camera and turns the lights out.

TITLE CARD: BUSTED

EXT. THE SURF BALLROOM - 1959 - DAY

Buddy crosses the front of the stage where Richie Valens is doing a sound check and over to Weylon and Tommy who are tuning their guitars.

BUDDY HOLLY

Hey guys, tomorrow night's show is in Moorehead and that's like four hundred miles away.

TOMMY

So we gotta ride through the night again?

BUDDY HOLLY

Well that's what I wanted to ask you about. You guys want me to charter a flight? It wouldn't be glamorous or anything, but we could fly ahead of the troupe and hopefully catch a few winks and get some laundry done.

TOMMY

Sounds good to me.

WEYLON

Yeah, why not.

BUDDY HOLLY

You too good to fly with Tommy and me or something?

WEYLON

I said I'll go.

BUDDY HOLLY

Good, now don't go telling everyone. There's only three seats and I don't want the others getting jealous.

INT. BACK STAGE - NIGHT

Weylon is watching Dion perform, when the sick-as-a-dog BIG BOPPER comes up to him.

BIG BOPPER

(sniffling)

Buddy's chartered a plane for you?

WEYLON

Who told you that?

BIG BOPPER

Tommy.

Weylon looks over at Tommy chatting with Richie Valens.

BIG BOPPER (cont'd)

He says you don't even like flying, and, well, Waylon, would you mind letting me have your seat? I know you and Buddy like sitting next to each other and all, but / I'm real sick here.

WEYLON

No, that's - that's alright, Big. You'll have to talk with Buddy, but if it's okay with Buddy, it's okay with me.

Weylon watches Tommy lose a coin flip to Richie Valens down the hall.

Weylon watches Big head over to Buddy.

INT. GREEN ROOM - NIGHT

Weylon goes over to the hot dog bar, grabs more than a couple, and takes them to the back room where Buddy is leaning in a cane-bottomed chair.

BUDDY HOLLY

Just couldn't keep it to yourself, could you?

WEYLON

Tommy was the one who / squealed.

BUDDY HOLLY

Save it. Tommy already told me you were the one who let the cat out of the bag.

WEYLON

You gonna believe Tommy over me?

BUDDY HOLLY

If you really didn't want to fly, you should'a told me. Instead of chickenin' out like this.

WEYLON

The Big Bopper just wanted to go. I really don't mind the bus.

BUDDY HOLLY

Well, I hope your damned bus freezes up again.

WEYLON

Well, I hope your ol' plane crashes!

INSERT: Black and white frame of crashed single engine plane in a winter field.

WEYLON (V.O.)

It took me a lot of years to get over that.

INT. PUBLISHER'S OFFICE - 1998 - DAY

Weylon, in his early sixties, sits across from PUBLISHER, gelled hair, navy blue suit.

PUBLISHER

(incredulous)

Buddy Holly is not dead.

WEYLON

What?

PUBLISHER

Not dead. Very much alive.

WEYLON

That ain't funny.

PUBLISHER

Well that ain't a joke.

Publisher searches Buddy Holly on his computer.

Weylon leans in to have a look.

PUBLISHER (cont'd)

Here, look here. Buddy Holly born September seventh 1936. Age 62.

Weylon stands up in terror, looking up and down his freckle-ridden arms.

PUBLISHER (cont'd)

Look, here's a video of him playing at the white house last year.

Weylon finds his red-haired reflection in the cabinet window.

WEYLON

This ain't right. Something ain't right, I don't belong here.

PUBLISHER

Tell me about it. Listen, I appreciate you thinking of us, but we're not gonna be able to publish this, uh, autobiography of yours.

WEYLON

(desperate)

You know me.

Publisher's face twists as he shakes it "I don't think so."

WEYLON (cont'd)

You have to know me. I was here yesterday! Only... I looked different. I didn't have this red hair and these freckles. I'm the singer.

PUBLISHER

Anyone can claim to be a singer.

WEYLON

Proof, right. You wanted that yesterday too. Uhm, here - here, I'll sing you a song.

Publisher puts down his pen and gives Weylon his attention.

WEYLON (cont'd)

(squeaky)

*All my -*

Weylon's eyes rear back into their sockets, astonished by the disgusting sounds coming from his mouth. He clears his throat and resets.

WEYLON (cont'd)

(squeakier)

*All my exes live in Texas.*

Weylon's migraine throws his head against the wall. Publisher goes back to his paperwork.

PUBLISHER

That's what I thought.

Weylon wipes the blood from his nose and steps up to the Publisher's desk.

WEYLON

Yesterday, I was here yesterday pitching this same exact manuscript!



## PUBLISHER

Security!

Weylon grabs his shirt collar and pulls him close.

## WEYLON

You know me. For the love of god tell me you recognize who I am!

Publisher shakes his head "no." Weylon gags and then dives head first for the trash pail, vomiting. His head cresting over the trash bin.

TITLE CARD: PHOENIX ARIZE

EXT. GRANARY - 1950 - DAY

The polished round sun of a desert morning crests over the top edge of the grain silo, casting a long, cool, shadow over the surrounding out-buildings.

Scrawny and preteen, Waylon sits in the shadowed corner of the large building. He offers a drag of his cigarette to a child with his back to him.

Turning to accept it is... Weylon. His eyes are blank, curious at most, a little too much pupil.

Waylon watches Weylon touch the ember against a small piece of cotton that's stuck to the outer wall. It smolders and then ceases to smolder.

Waylon gives it a go and they watch it smolder again.

Waylon and Weylon walk away, the cotton still smoldering, beginning to smoke behind them.

INT. OLD CHRYSLER - 1960 - DAY

Weylon, in his mid twenties, red hair and freckles, leaves a cloud of dust as he drives through the desert.

## WEYLON (V.O.)

After I lost Buddy, my life was in shambles, no money and I had run out of local gigs, so I decided to head up to Salt Lake City to a place called the Esquire Lounge.

INT. ESQUIRE LOUNGE - 1960 - DAY

Weylon hangs out at the bar of the dormant Esquire Lounge. The bartender, LYNNE, mid-thirties, tall, comes around.

WEYLON

What's your name? What's your whole name?

LYNNE

Pussy.

Weylon attempts to pop some pills but the bottle is empty. He stalls anyway to watch Lynne's ass as she walks away.

WEYLON (V.O.)

Maxine and I never shouldn't have been married. I hardly knew her and we were just kids.

INT. LYNNE'S SALT LAKE CITY BEDROOM - DAY

Weylon and Lynne sit in bed, postcoitous.

WEYLON (V.O.)

I stayed in Salt Lake City for a few months.

WEYLON

Come to Scottsdale with me.

LYNNE

(skeptical)

Arizona?

WEYLON

All the biggest stars tour through there. That means RCA, Decca, Capitol, all the big labels are sure to follow, and I'll be there waiting, home turf, the local guy.

LYNNE

What am I supposed to do there?

WEYLON

It'll be perfect. Just think about it. It'd be you manning the bar and me greasing up the crowd every night, growing my following with my girl right by my side.

LYNNE

How do your wife and kids feel about that?

WEYLON

I've never met anyone like you, Lynne. You've got a spirit that I just can't see in Maxine. You like to mix it up with the boys, you're outgoing, you're almost a decade older than me.

LYNNE

Let's maybe leave that last part out.

WEYLON

Oh right, sorry, honey. I just-you just make me feel so much more confident, like I can take on the world, flip Nashville on its head.

Weylon cuddles up against her.

WEYLON (cont'd)

But you're also someone I can lean on. Someone who can give it to me straight and support my dreams - my center post.

LYNNE

I don't see why you can't just keep working up here.

WEYLON

This is a dead end, Lynne.

LYNNE

Pay's fine.

WEYLON

It's not about the money. It's about me getting this god damn sound out of my god damn head. Putting something out there that's me, through and through.

LYNNE

Alright, alright, I get it. Tortured soul. Say no more.

Weylon snuggles up.

WEYLON

Let me be mad...

Lynne grins as she holds him tighter.

WEYLON (V.O.)

In my mind, I thought that was love.  
Maybe it was.

INT. CHEAP MOTEL ROOM - 1998 - DAY

Weylon wakes up on the floor and stretches. He reaches up and feels for the record on the bed. His eyes harden.

WEYLON

No, no, no.

He gets up and tears all the bedding off.

WEYLON (cont'd)

Where is it?

He looks under the bed.

WEYLON (cont'd)

It's not even worth anything to her.

He gets up and checks the tables and drawers.

WEYLON (cont'd)

That fucking bitch!

He reaches in his pocket and pulls out, reflexively, an empty pill bottle. Rage fills his eyes as he grips the bottle so tight that his hand pulses.

He throws the pill against the wall and grabs his temple as the sounds of scraping metal blare in his head. Crashing against the wall he falls to the floor as the sounds quit.

Wiping the blood from his nose, he looks across the carpet at his pathetic reflection in the body mirror and grimaces.

WEYLON (cont'd)

I don't know who you are, but I can  
fix this. I'm not like ordinary men.

Picking the pill bottle back up, he reads Sue Brewer's name off of it.

WEYLON (cont'd)

I'm a singer, the Real McCoy.

INT. SCOTTSDALE HOME - 1960 - DAY

Maxine follows Weylon. He shakes an empty pill bottle at his ear while continuing his manic search.

WEYLON

Where'd you put my pills?

He searches from room to room: the bathroom, the kitchen cupboard, the towel closet.

MAXINE

I don't like it here, Weylon. I don't know anyone.

WEYLON

Go make some friends then.

MAXINE

Can we go back to Texas?

WEYLON

No, Maxine. Now where're my pills?

MAXINE

Please?

WEYLON

No, Maxine. I got a good gig here. Steady pay playing music for folks that want to hear it. There's even some rumors that Nashville is scouting me out. I gotta stick with this.

MAXINE

What about us?

WEYLON

What about you?

MAXINE

Ain't you gotta stick with us?

WEYLON

Why you always gotta try to use the kids against me?

MAXINE

I ain't trying to use them against you, I just / want you to acknowledge their existence.

WEYLON

You make me sick sometimes, you know that?

MAXINE

If you don't want to move back to Texas, that's fine. I'm taking the kids and I'm going!

WEYLON

Fine by me. I got a show at Wild Bill's. I'll see you later, baby.

Weylon kisses her on the forehead and exits. She cries.

EXT. BOAR'S NEST - 1998 - DAY

Weylon, pounds a couple of snickers while he walks up the stairs of this cheap second story apartment.

He knocks and the hatch slides open.

SUE

(terrified)

Who is it?

WEYLON

Hi there, doll. I was wondering if I could come in for some tea?

SUE

Oh, no... No, I don't think so. Do I know you?

WEYLON

Well sure you do, maybe not in my current state, but we have met.

SUE

I don't recall that.

WEYLON

No, of course you don't, but this *is* the Boar's Nest, ain't it?

SUE

What of it?

WEYLON

Well I was under the impression that anyone who could sing you a song held the key to this front door.

SUE

You're a singer? Come in! Come in! Oh my. Please, come in!

WEYLON

Thank you kindly, Sue.

SUE

Oh my, a gentleman! I'm sorry for keeping you waiting, but you can never be certain about strangers. You really should have mentioned that you were a singer earlier, or even opened with a song. I love it when folks do that!

WEYLON

Well, you know what they say, if you're good at something, never do it for free.

She closes the door behind him.

INT. BOAR'S NEST - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sue heads for the kitchen, leaving Weylon. He creeps over to look into the master bedroom.

INT. BOAR'S NEST - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Weylon looks at the medicine cabinet shining through the room, from the master bathroom.

SUE (O.S.)

(from kitchen)

Where is that cream? I swear I've got ghosts or maybe just invisible people.

Weylon moves for the medicine cabinet, but is stopped by the sound of a door opening behind him.

SUE (O.S.) (cont'd)

Something keeps moving shit around in here.

looking back, Weylon sees Sue's son MIKEY, 5 maybe 6 years old, spying on him from the partly open spare bedroom door.

Mikey close the door in response.

Weylon makes for the medicine cabinet, but Sue is on her way back over.

SUE (O.S.) (cont'd)  
Now, I make it a little strong.

INT. BOAR'S NEST - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

He hops back into the living room, like nothing happened.

SUE  
I hope you don't mind.

WEYLON  
Not at all. I see you're keeping your Grand Ole Opry wall of shame up to date.

SUE  
If this vagina could talk.

WEYLON  
It'd be in B flat.

SUE  
(impressed)  
That's exactly right... How did you say we know each other?

WEYLON  
Oh, we met a long time ago. Say, you got any sugar?

SUE  
Of course, of course! How rude of me. I'll bring it right over.

Weylon leans back to get another look at the medicine cabinet, through the hallway to the master bathroom.

INT. SCOTTSDALE HOME - 1960 - DAY

Maxine's momma follows Maxine as she rushes to the phone.

MAXINE'S MOMMA  
He'll know you've left when he comes home and you're not here.

MAXINE  
He deserves to know that I'm serious this time.



MAXINE'S MOMMA  
It's not gonna bring him back.

Phone in hand, Maxine shoots her a foul look. It rings.

Maxine's momma takes her place next to fully packed suitcases, the other children, and MAXINE'S DADDY.

INT. APARTMENT ABOVE WILD BILL'S - DAY

The phone rings and a half naked Lynne bounces onto the bed to answer it as Weylon continues undressing in the background.

LYNNE  
Hello?

INT. SCOTTSDALE HOME - DAY

Maxine looks to her momma in disbelief of what's she's hearing.

LYNNE  
Hello?

INTERCUT BETWEEN APARTMENT ABOVE WILD BILL'S AND SCOTTSDALE HOME

WEYLON  
Who is it?

Maxine listens to them through her end of the phone and tears well in her eyes.

LYNNE  
I don't know, there's no answer.

WEYLON  
Hang up and get that sweet ass over here then.

LYNNE  
Hello? Is there anyone there?

Tears flow from Maxine.

WEYLON  
We'll take twelve cheeseburgers please.

Click. Weylon hangs up the phone.

Maxine falls against the wall, inconsolable, but her parents still hold her.

WEYLON (V.O.)

I don't doubt Maxine cared about me in those days, but she could really turn on the tears when she wanted to. That used to be one of her things when her parents came by, to show them how Maxine could cry. I never knew for sure why. She could just stand there and look at you and start crying.

INT. WILD BILL'S - NIGHT

Weylon sways at the mic, his DRUMMER and BASSIST, on stage behind him, in this sold out dive bar. He's sweaty and unstable. The crowd is loud and cheering his every sentence.

WEYLON

Life's a lot like a box of homeless people,

He rips away from the mic.

The crowd all falls silent and look to each other in confusion.

WEYLON (cont'd)

You throw in a piece of meat and see what comes out.

He flicks his tongue outside his mouth in a purposefully crude gesture of cunnilingus.

The crowd stagnates.

The whole band jump starts "Time to Bum Again" - fast and loud.

The crowd wakes up and starts dancing along.

Lynne watches the performance from behind the bar. Her coworker comes up.

COWORKER

A box of homeless people?

LYNNE

I have no idea what he's talking about.

A couple of RODEO TYPES come over. Lynne forms a charming grin and leans on the bar in front of them.

LYNNE (cont'd)  
Ain't you a cute little thing. Bet  
you could take me away from all this  
and ride us off into the sunset.

The cowboy looks to his friends and then back to Lynne.

COWBOY  
Always was into older women.

Lynne stands up straight with a disgusted look on her face.

COWBOY (cont'd)  
What are you, like six three?

He and his friends all laugh at her.

INT. APARTMENT ABOVE WILD BILL'S - DAY

Weylon and Lynne lie in bed, postcoitous.

LYNNE  
How long do you think we can do this?

WEYLON  
About five minutes at a time.

LYNNE  
No, I mean *this*, working that shitty  
bar until 3:00 AM every night, living  
in this rundown apartment, screwing  
instead of talking. All so that you  
can play music that nobody  
understands.

WEYLON  
I'm gonna get my second break any day  
now, I can feel it.

LYNNE  
There isn't part of you that just  
wants to settle down, start a family,  
have a couple of little critters  
running around here?

WEYLON

I can call up Maxine and see if she wants to hand over Buddy and Julie Rae and - uh... Terry for a little bit?

LYNNE

God no. I don't want that bitch's kids in my house.

WEYLON

That's what I thought.

Weylon sits up, grabs the empty pill bottle from the side table, and rattles it by his ear. Lynne looks up at him.

LYNNE

I just-well, I was just saying that maybe everything you got cooking up isn't everything there is.

Weylon sits up and glares down at her.

WEYLON

Starting to sound like you don't believe in me, Lynne.

LYNNE

I was just thinking out loud is all.

Lynne cuddles up against his unresponsive body.

LYNNE (cont'd)

Forget I said anything.

Weylon glares down at the top of her head.

INT. WILD BILL'S - 1960 - DAY

Two kicks to the bass drum. Weylon does a sound check.

WEYLON

That's way too much.

WILD BILL

Weylon, talk to you in my office a minute?

WEYLON

I'll be right back, Timmy.

INT. WILD BILL'S - BACK OFFICE - DAY

Both men take a seat.

WILD BILL

What's with all these jokes you've been telling during the show?

WEYLON

I brought that along from back in my DJ-ing days.

WILD BILL

I really don't know that it's appropriate. Some of the stuff you're saying is pretty off putting.

WEYLON

I thought the crowd was responding to it great. Seems like the raunchier I get the more they like it.

WILD BILL

See that's the thing, *I* don't like it. And, you know this is a country bar, and we play country music.

WEYLON

I'm a country musician, Bill.

WILD BILL

It just really doesn't sound like it.

WEYLON

What are you saying, Bill?

Bill responds with an annoyed thousand yard stare.

WEYLON (cont'd)

Bill?

Bill shakes his head "no."

INT. APARTMENT ABOVE WILD BILL'S - DAY

Weylon slumps in and is attacked with hugs and kisses from an elated Lynne before he can even set his things down.

WEYLON

What is it?

LYNNE

I'm pregnant!

WEYLON

Oh my god, that's great! What's the bad news?

LYNNE

Bad news? I don't have any bad news.

WEYLON

Wild Bill fired me.

LYNNE

Oh... Well that's alright. I'm sure you'll find a new job.

She heads to the kitchen.

LYNNE (cont'd)

I was actually thinking that maybe it's finally time for you to think about leaving music behind and settling down with your family?

WEYLON

Leave music behind?

LYNNE

Well yeah. It's been fun, but I think that maybe it's time for you to start looking at something more realistic, like we talked about. You can't expect these honky tonks to want to hire that-guy-who-was-on-tour-with-Buddy-Holly-right-before-he-died forever.

WEYLON

So I'm just supposed to give up on the only dream I've ever had because I got some bar tramp knocked up?

LYNNE

Tramp? You know how easy it was to get you away from your wife?

(miming)

Oh, oh yeah, oh, tell me more about how you're gonna turn Nashville on its head. Oh. Wake up, RCA isn't gonna come a knocking anytime soon.

Weylon grips the counter real hard and starts to tear up. Lynne quits making dinner and comes over to hug him. He pulls back, but she gets him and hangs there.

LYNNE (cont'd)

It's alright, honey. There's no shame in giving up. It's just, sometimes things don't turn out the way you thought they would.

Weylon just stares forward, fuming.

FADE TO:

From the darkness, we hear the soft intro to Alannah Myles' "Black Velvet" - as it crescendos to the chorus -

ALANNAH MYLES

*The boy could sing, knew how to move,  
everything.  
Always wanting more, he'd leave you  
longing for...*

INT. BOAR'S NEST - MASTER BEDROOM - 1998 - DAY

CLOSE ON SUE'S VAGINA: Small, nearly invisible strings puppet Sue's vagina as though it is absolutely belting the lyrics.

VAGINA

*Black velvet and that little boy's  
smile  
Black velvet with that slow southern  
style  
A new religion that'll bring you to  
your knees  
Black velvet if you please...*

Sue lays bottomless on her bed in a supine position.

SUE

So what do you think?

WEYLON

Uh...

SUE

You hated it.

Weylon is leaning back to peer at the medicine cabinet in the master bathroom.

WEYLON (O.C.)  
 No, it's great. I think you really  
 got something there.

Sue starts getting dressed and Weylon takes the opportunity  
 to get into the master bathroom.

SUE  
 Really, you mean it?

INT. BOAR'S NEST - MASTER BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Weylon roots around in the medicine cabinet.

WEYLON  
 Definitely. You ever think about  
 doing it without the, you know, the  
 puppet, so to speak.

He moves his search to the small drawers on the counters.

INT. BOAR'S NEST - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sue sit-glides down onto the bed with a stunned expression  
 on her face.

SUE  
 What?

WEYLON (O.C.)  
 You know, just singing it.

SUE  
 But I can't sing...

WEYLON (O.C.)  
 What's that?

SUE  
 (disturbed)  
 You should know that.

INT. BOAR'S NEST - MASTER BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Weylon checks the cabinet beneath the sink. Nothing but  
 cleaning supplies.

WEYLON  
 (whispering)  
 Where in the world?



He stands and exits the bathroom.

INT. BOAR'S NEST - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Weylon steps out with pure confidence.

WEYLON  
Say, Sue, I hate to ask this, but you  
don't got any pills, do ya?

Sue has glued herself to the far-most corner in a defensive position.

SUE  
You're no singer!

WEYLON  
What's that?

She rummages through her bag and takes out the pepper spray.

WEYLON (cont'd)  
Now hang on just a second, Sue.

SUE  
OUT! GET OUT! GET OUT! Oh my, how  
could I have? GET OUT. HELP! HELP!

She sprays Weylon right in the eyes.

WEYLON  
What the hell's the matter with you!

Weylon bounces around, pawing at his eyes in pain, as Sue goes to her open window.

SUE  
HELP! HELP! THIEF! THERE'S A THIEF!  
HELP! SOMEONE HELP ME!

Weylon gathers himself enough to escape and does so.

EXT. BOAR'S NEST - CONTINUOUS

Sue's screams catch the attention of Dutch, the cop.

Weylon pops out from the side of the Boar's Nest and the two men are frozen by the sight of one another.

Weylon breaks first and the chase ensues!

EXT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

Hustling down the sidewalk, Weylon ducks into the building.

INT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

Weylon hides behind the shelves that line the windows and rubs his eyes until he can see.

He watches the silhouette of Dutch pass, cold on the trail. Then he looks up.

The PAWN SHOP OWNER, bearded and annoyed, takes cash from another patron and draws the curtain, letting him enter the store back.

Weylon takes another glance outside. He ducks his way over to the counter, away from the window.

Weylon stands up straight before stepping up to the counter with a desperate grin.

WEYLON

You wouldn't happen to be a free mason would you? See we was broke down back in the day, right after we got finished on tour, and you see my buddy was a free mason and the shop mechanic also happened to be a free mason, and so he gave us a discount.

Weylon's attention is grabbed by some distant twangin' from deep behind the curtain.

WEYLON (cont'd)

Where was I? Oh, right. Now, I ain't looking for no discount per sei, but I sure could use a source for some pharmaceuticals on account of this here / chemical dependency I happen to be experiencing to some prescription medicine I am no longer in possession of.

The twangin' distracts Weylon again.

WEYLON (cont'd)

What's that sound?

The owner draws back the curtain, revealing pure blackness.

TITLE CARD: WILL THE WOLF SURVIVE?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - 1961 - DAY

A noticeably more pregnant Lynne sits on the exam bed.

WEYLON

It's not RCA, but yeah, it's a real record company.

LYNNE

Right.

WEYLON

And I'm making over a thousand bucks a week playing over at JD's.

LYNNE

I get that, but I don't see why you getting a record deal means your kids gotta move in with us. Thought we decided that we were gonna start fresh.

WEYLON

(spiteful)

Sometimes things don't turn out the way you thought they would.

Lynne glares at him.

WEYLON (cont'd)

'sides, Maxine is having some financial trouble, needs me to take them for a bit.

LYNNE

Ain't that convenient. Do you want me to leave you?

Doctor enters and they perk right up.

WEYLON

How's everything looking there, doc?

DOCTOR

Lynne, I'm afraid there are some complications.

Doctor's lines fade out as Weylon's voice over comes in.

DOCTOR (cont'd)  
Nephritis, it's a kidney disease. If we don't abort, there's a serious chance that you could lose your life.

WEYLON (V.O.)  
It was our most tender moment together; I felt so bad for her. She wanted a baby more than anything.

Lynne balls into Weylon's shoulder. Nodding, Weylon's eyes search, cold and opportunistic, not matching his voice over.

EXT. SCOTTSDALE HOUSE - DAY

Weylon and Lynne smile as they bring baby TOMI LYNNE home.

WEYLON (V.O.)  
We brought Tomi Lynne home to our apartment when she was three days old. Through friends, Jo and Jan, we found a young girl who was going to have a baby.

They walk through the toy and children littered home. Deana is around two, Buddy must be four years old, Julie Rae is around seven or eight and Terry is eleven.

Weylon watches Lynne walk over to the couch in a trance-like state with Tomi Lynne in her hands.

Buddy pulls on Weylon's leg and gets his attention.

BUDDY  
I'm hungry.

WEYLON  
Why don't you go ask your new stepmother to make you something?

He pushes Buddy toward the seated Lynne and grins as he watches the scene play out.

JULIE RAE  
Daddy I got gum in my hair.

Weylon keeps his eyes peeled on Buddy the toddler approaching Lynne.

WEYLON  
Huh, yeah, just a minute.

Terry turns on the wrong burner and the washcloth ignites, throwing large flames.

TERRY

Weylon...

Weylon still doesn't look away from Buddy and Lynne.

WEYLON

It's in the lower cabinet.

The flames climb the wall directly behind Weylon.

Buddy reaches Lynne, but she doesn't notice him until he puts his tiny hand on her denimed thigh.

BUDDY

Wynne, do you wike me?

LYNNE

Sure. I like you. No go ahead and play over there.

Lynne goes back to being in her own world with Tomi Lynne. Weylon shakes his head in contempt.

WEYLON (V.O.)

Lynne would show all the love in the world to Tomi Lynne, and none to the other children. She hated that they were there.

TERRY

Weylon!

WEYLON

What!

He turns around to see the fire raging. Julie Rae starts crying.

WEYLON (cont'd)

What did you do!

Weylon hops the counter and takes the heavy fire extinguisher from Terry's struggling arms.

Julie keeps balling as Weylon fights to douse the flames.

Lynne just sits there playing with Tomi Lynne, not even looking up.

INT. SCOTTSDALE HOUSE - LATER - DAY

Weylon uses the phone in the kitchen.

WEYLON

Maxine, you gotta take the kids... I know, but this ain't healthy. Lynne ain't got no affection for them... I'm gonna take care of that, alright. I got you a brand new brick house... Don't worry about the payments... My records are selling good and my shows are making over a thousand bucks a week...

Lynne saunters over. Weylon finishes the call and hangs up.

LYNNE

Hon', don't be sad. Everything is going to be all right, we'll make it fine.

WEYLON

If you'd called me a rotten sonofabitch, or told me to fuck off or something like that, you might've been able to hold on to me. But you ain't got a chance now. I'll never live with you.

Weylon storms out.

WEYLON (V.O.)

And I left.

DIRECTOR (V.O.)

Oh, great, so you were free to stay with your kids and raise them then?

INT. STUDIO - PRESENT

White and sterile studio. Medium close on Waylon. This version is in his late sixties and pushing 350 pounds, he responds with a thousand yard stare.

DIRECTOR (V.O.)

Right? You were able to raise a family and have a successful career?

Waylon just keeps on staring.

INT. THE CROSS KEYS - 1962 - NIGHT

Fast drums. A greasy Weylon, mid twenties, jitters and screams unintelligible nonsense into the mic. He takes a breath and tries to stand up straight.

From his POV we start to center and focus on the sequined bottom of a well proportioned and tall woman, BARBARA.

WEYLON (V.O.)

I had met Barbara at the Cross Keys:  
long blond hair, pretty blue eyes,  
built like you wouldn't believe.

Waylon stands up and takes a deep breath as he and this mystery woman make knowing eye contact.

Waylon stumbles about the stage, matching Barbara's dance moves as he continues blubbering into the mic.

INT. PAWN SHOP - DUNGEON - 1998 - DAY

Weylon limps down the wet spiral staircase toward that sweet twangin' sound. He feels his way down using the cold brick wall. The sound grows as he descends.

He reaches the bottom and walks cautiously through the shallow puddles and cobwebs.

Moonlight at the end of the tunnel, he pushes on.

At the end of the tunnel, his jaw drops in awe.

Past the edge of the lake rimmed with human skulls, the LARGE GOOPY MASS, 20-foot high blob, with the many faces of long forgotten country music singers.

Horror fills in Weylon's eyes.

The sound emanates from the available mouths of Hank Williams, Bill Monroe, Minnie Pearl, and Ernest Tubb as they inhale and twist their tortured heads.

Weylon, in shock, feels for the wall as he backs out.

Dutch tackles him to the ground.

WEYLON

Please. Stop. No. My heart.

Dutch uses a lot of force.

DUTCH  
 Maybe you should've thought about  
 that before eating twelve  
 cheeseburgers a sitting, mother  
 fucker.

WEYLON  
 Please, I'm serious. I'm in pain!

DUTCH  
 Too fucking bad.

Dutch picks him up, skull like water dripping from his face,  
 puts him up against the cave wall, and cuffs him.

DUTCH (cont'd)  
 I called Neil Reshen and you know  
 what he said?

WEYLON  
 Oh no.

DUTCH  
 He's never heard of you! Some joke.

Dutch pulls him over to the large cedar desk out of place in  
 this wet cave.

WEYLON  
 What are you doing? We have to get  
 out of here.

Dutch steps around to the other side of the desk.

DUTCH  
 Let's get your information.

WEYLON  
 (incredulous)  
 Did you not see that giant blob of  
 immortalized Grand Ole Opry singers  
 that was just right there, right  
 behind me?

Weylon looks behind him, where the monster was, and  
 sheetrock has taken its place. In fact, an entire police  
 station has formed in its place.

INT. POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Weylon's anxiety is stalled when he turns back and sees  
 OTHER COPS buzzing about.



WEYLON

But we were just in a cave-like thing...

Dutch takes a seat and shuffles paperwork.

DUTCH

I understand the symptoms of your withdrawals can be quite severe, Mr. Jennings, but if we could get back to business.

WEYLON

Withdrawal symptoms?

DUTCH

Let's just start by seeing what you've got for priors.

Dutch types at his computer.

WEYLON

You're wasting your time looking for me on that thing. I don't seem to / exist in whatever this is.

DUTCH

Got it.

WEYLON

Got what?

DUTCH

Weylon Jennings of Littlefield Texas.

WEYLON

(stunned)

That's right.

He surrenders his perplexed attention to Dutch.

DUTCH

Born June 15, 1937? You don't look a day over forty.

WEYLON

Thanks...

DUTCH

Says here you did a stint in county jail for a hit and run in '55.

WEYLON

Hit and run?

DUTCH

Driving a cement truck? A man died.  
Seems you got off easy.

WEYLON

Was that me? I thought that was just  
something I dreamed up, something  
that would be good for a book.

DUTCH

Still a far cry from attempted murder  
and possession...

Dutch presents the confiscated bottle of white crosses.  
Weylon gets a look at the pills and wakes from his haze.

DUTCH (cont'd)

What happened between then and now?

Weylon's eyes widen at the wet cave wall that has taken over  
the former Sheetrock police station wall behind Dutch.

WEYLON

(frantic)

It's a long story. If you could just  
give me one of them pills, things'll  
be all better, I swear.

Weylon looks at the splashing sound his tappin' foot is  
making, the police station tile has transformed to wet cave  
rock as well.

DUTCH

You're really not helping your case  
here, Mr. Jennings.

A blob tentacle snatches Dutch out of his seat and he  
screams and screams as the creature consumes him with its  
giant beak.

Stalled by fear, Weylon backs away at first, but then  
notices and snags the bottle of white crosses from Dutch's  
desk and escapes.

INT. PAWN SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Weylon rushes from behind the black curtain, bumps the store  
owner and busts through the front door.

INT. RADIO DJ CONVENTION CENTER 1965 - CONTINUOUS

Weylon, age 62, falls in through the door. Picking himself up from the smooth carpet, Barbara, age 25, puts her arm in his and keeps him moving through the crowd.

WAYLON (V.O.)  
Sometimes, a woman like that'll make you feel like a god. For better, or worse.

Weylon turns his attention to the pill bottle in his hands, trying to get it open.

BARBARA  
What's wrong, Weylon?

Weylon looks up and sees that Barbara has taken on the appearance of a Weylon. He jerks away from her.

BARBARA (cont'd)  
Baby?

He looks at the crowd of attendees, all Weylons. He looks from face to face in the crowded hall, small Weylons, big Weylons, blonde Weylons, biker Weylons, Asian Weylons.

WEYLON  
Get me out of here!

He bolts toward the conference room at the end of the hall.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - TOWN HALL - 1997 - CONTINUOUS

Weylon, standing in the crowd, stops in his tracks as he sees the highwaymen answering questions on stage.

WEYLON  
Help me! Help me!

Waylon, on stage with the highwaymen squints out toward the audience, but can't make out anyone asking for help.

Lawrence, the moderator, addresses the Four Horsemen.

LAWRENCE.  
Money and boredom, noted. I suppose my larger question is, that, generally when a reunion group forms, it is in response to the current state of music the group left behind.  
(MORE)

LAWRENCE. (cont'd)  
 What is your general feeling toward  
 the country music of today?

Waylon watches in confusion as, next to him, the four  
 horsemen step backward, as though being played in reverse,  
 up to their mics.

Then Lawrence steps backward off stage in the same way.  
 Waylon joins them at their mics.

They all just stare at him. He hesitates to start, but does.  
 There is no background music.

WAYLON  
 (cautious)  
*Across a river deep and wide,  
 Where steel and water did collide,  
 A place called Boulder on the wild  
 Colorado,  
 I slipped and fell into the wet  
 concrete below,  
 They buried me in that great tomb  
 that knows no sound.*

ALL TOGETHER  
*But I am still around,*

Waylon lifts his head to see his band mates are three other  
 Waylons. They continue singing as he backs away.

WAYLON, WAYLON, WAYLON, WAYLON  
 I'll always be around, and around and  
 around,

Waylon backs away from his mic, he sees the audience of  
 Weylons. Then he looks down at his own freckled skin.

Lawrence the moderator Weylon nods at him.

Weylon rushes out of the silent room.

INT. HILTON - RADIO DJ CONVENTION CENTER - CONTINUOUS

The sound of the four Waylon's singing plays as Weylon runs  
 away through the conference center.

He makes it through the exit door at the end of the hall.

WAYLON (V.O.)  
 You see, folks, in life, you need a  
 center post.

INT. WAYLON AND MAXINE'S HOME - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Weylon runs in and shuts the door behind him. He hustles to find a chair to pin against the door, but is stalled by a presence on the other side of the room.

MAXINE

Shhhh, it's okay, Terry. Go to sleep.  
Your daddy loves you.

Weylon watches Maxine, her back to him, rock the baby in their rocking chair.

MAXINE (cont'd)

Waylon, that you?

WEYLON

It's me, Maxine.

She just keeps rocking the baby, her back to him.

MAXINE

I always wanted you to be home early.

WEYLON

Have you seen my pills, Maxine?

MAXINE

They're in your jacket, in the closet, where else would they be?

WEYLON

Thanks, Maxine...

Weylon opens the closet and his jacket is ablaze, the only item on fire.

CUT TO:

INT. BARN - 1970 - DAY

Fairly dark. Dirt-floored. Weylon, in his mid sixties, picks himself up and sways to the right of the post.

INT. WAYLON GOD DAMN JENNINGS STUDIO - 1982 - NIGHT

WERLIN, long greasy hair and beard - wizardlike - sits in the reclined dentist's chair with his blood-filled mouth held open by stainless steel retractor.

WERLIN  
(unintelligible)  
What am I doing here?

His concerned eyes look to his left at the model of Nashville on his desk. Dentist points the overhead light into his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. BARN - DAY

Waylon picks himself up and, aiming for center, sways to the left of the post.

CUT TO:

INT. PONTIAC FIREBIRD - NIGHT

Waylon looks to his passenger, Lynne, and smiles.

Driving at full speed, he turns the headlights off, kisses her, and then switches the lights back right as they slam into a tree.

CUT TO:

INT. TOUR BUS - NIGHT

Cigarette smoke in the air, Waylon and Buddy laugh, Buddy's arm around his shoulder, at this crowded card table.

CUT TO:

INT. SINGLE ENGINE PLANE - NIGHT

Waylon is up in his seat as the plane is going down at a 45 degree angle and the engines are screaming. The Big Bopper kisses his cross in seat to Waylon's right.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL BATHROOM - NIGHT

Water drips on Waylon's curled up naked body. He shakes and shakes.

Jessi wipes the sweat away from his brow and smiles at him.

He looks back up at her with hope.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARMHOUSE - 1949 - DAY

12-year-old Waylon and the girl across the road in a dirty dress make eye contact.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRANARY - 1950 - DAY

Preteen Weylon watches the building burn from the back of a cop car.

CUT TO:

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

Weylon sits across from a DARK FIGURE, accepts the pen, and signs the contract

CUT TO:

INT. WAYLON GOD DAMN JENNINGS STUDIO - 1982 - NIGHT

Bloody-mouthed, Werlin flips the Nashville model on its fucking head, slamming it again and again.

CUT TO:

EXT. GAS STATION REAR - DAY

Waylon, thin and dirty, counts the change in his hand. He turns at the sound of coins falling into his cup.

Looking up, blocking the sun with his hand, he sees Jessi smiling at him.

JESSI  
Hey there, stranger.

Waylon starts crying.

She helps him up.

WAYLON (V.O.)

I realized at that moment that my center post was Jessi. I was not complete when I wasn't around her.

FADE OUT:

INT. HOSPITAL - 1979 - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Dark screen. The light of his opening locker introduces MICHAEL, early sixties, red hair and freckles, resembles Weylon, puts on his janitor outfit, and takes a long, sad, look in the mirror on his locker. SURGEON passes by.

SURGEON

(genial)

Hey, if it isn't the best custodian we have.

Michael picks his chin up.

MICHAEL

Hey, Ed!

Michael pushes his mop out, following the gaggle of surgeons.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The surgeons enter the washroom and Michael stops to watch them as they discuss and laugh while washing their hands.

Solemn, Michael continues watching.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

They know. They see how hard I work, see me... See me not as what I am. Not as a cement truck driver or ex-con or some junkie. Not as what my mistakes made me, but what I could've been, with even a hint of luck. They're surgeons, they look inside people everyday. Hell, they know how hard I work! Maybe one day they'll ask me to come start working with them. They know that I'm not a janitor, not really, not deep down.

Michael pushes his mop, exiting frame, past a delivery room where Jessi is giving birth.



INT. HOSPITAL DELIVERY ROOM - DAY

Waylon, in his early sixties, having recovered his chestnut brown hair, stands at Jessi's side as she gives birth.

WAYLON (V.O.)  
I was finally able to see what was important in life, things like legacy.

Wilted, Waylon's original five children stand in the corner hanging their heads. Terry holds the flowers he brought down at his side in defeat.

WAYLON (V.O.) (cont'd)  
And family...

Waylon's five children all perk up with hope in their eyes.

WAYLON (V.O.) (cont'd)  
Our little Shooter. He was perfect, an extension of the best thing that ever happened to me.

The five children relapse to sadness.

Waylon lays with Jessi, in her hospital bed, holding their newborn, Shooter, and giving the boy all of the love and attention that he has.

WAYLON  
Waylon Albright was the joy of our lives, as you might expect. The symbol of our togetherness. From the moment we first saw him, I knew that all was right in the world.

Jessi smiles through the exhaustion of childbirth as she watches her husband holding their beautiful baby boy.

EXT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Waylon steps out to enjoy a cigarette.

WAYLON (V.O.)  
Ain't nothing left to say, but what a journey. If I'm being honest, I wasn't quite sure I'd survive these particular trials and tribulations.  
(MORE)

WAYLON (V.O.) (cont'd)  
Whether it's the tentacles of a 20  
foot tall plasmodic mass of  
immortalized country idols or your  
own wife not remembering your name,  
it's true what they say, you can't  
keep a good man down. But that's all  
in the past, I got Jessi, and I got  
Shooter, and I got my life back.  
Thank you Lord.

He looks up to the heavens in appreciation.

WAYLON  
I shall need for not.

STRANGER  
Waylon?

The Stranger approaches from the darkness.

WAYLON  
That's right.

STRANGER  
Three time CMA entertainer of the  
year, ten gold albums, seven  
platinum, highest grossing musician  
of the seventies, Waylon Jennings?

He puts his cigarette out.

WAYLON  
Exactly that. Who might you be?

STRANGER  
Only your biggest fan.

WAYLON  
That's great. Always glad meet a fan.  
Now, if you don't mind, I gotta get  
back to my wife and newborn son.

STRANGER  
Would you like to come with me?

WAYLON  
Sorry, friend. Strict policy against  
that.

STRANGER  
I'm holding.

The Stranger opens his palm to reveal a white cross. Two perfectly white bars crossing each other orthogonally in one integral piece.

Waylon all but drools at the sight of it.

STRANGER (cont'd)  
This what you're looking for?

He reaches for the drug, but the chirp of a police cruiser closes the stranger's hand.

Looking over Waylon's shoulder, toward the parking lot, they see the two idle squad cars chatting it up.

STRANGER (cont'd)  
We better get out of here. Follow me.

Waylon looks back at the dormant squad cars, then back toward the hospital holding his wife and baby, then looks down in consideration, and decides to follow the stranger.

INT. STRANGER'S BASEMENT - DAY

This is a veritable Waylon Jennings museum. Posters and framed concert t-shirts and records have been thoughtfully arranged.

Waylon comes in, following the stranger down the steps. He stops to pick up the Jole Blon record from the table.

WAYLON  
Would you look at that.

Stranger mixes drinks at the bar.

WAYLON (cont'd)  
You know, there was a time not so long ago that I was pretty desperate to get my hands on one of these.

STRANGER  
Huh? Oh yeah, that's a nice record.

WAYLON  
Oh shit, is that the couch from my '79 tour?

Waylon runs over and takes a seat.

WAYLON (cont'd)  
This thing was my favorite. Nothing  
sits quite like it.

STRANGER  
Get you a drink?

WAYLON  
Sure, sounds fine.

Stranger puts on the record. Waylon looks around at all the  
Waylon trinkets and memorabilia.

WAYLON (cont'd)  
You weren't kidding about this  
biggest fan stuff.

Waylon accepts the drink, takes a big gulp.

STRANGER  
That's right.

Stranger leans on the bar and watches Waylon drink up.  
Relaxing further, Waylon leans back and closes his eyes.

WAYLON  
I tell ya, this is nice, just laying  
up for a minute, chatting with a fan,  
having a few drinks. You would not  
believe the day I had, but it's all  
better now that I got my wife and my  
boy back.

STRANGER  
Oh they're not back.

Waylon's eyes flick open.

WAYLON  
What're you saying?

The Stranger holds up the manuscript "Waylon: An  
Autobiography."

STRANGER  
It's not like you're back either. Not  
really.

Waylon jerks like he's gonna get up, but is frozen in place.

Stranger brings over a mirror and puts it in front of  
Waylon's face.

Waylon sees the return of red hair and freckles.

WEYLON  
What did you do to me!

STRANGER  
You really don't recognize me, do you?

WEYLON  
I don't give a fuck who you are!

The stranger lifts his head from putting on his unmistakable square-framed glasses.

BUDDY HOLLY  
How about now?

WEYLON  
(shocked)  
Buddy?

BUDDY HOLLY  
The one and only.

WEYLON  
Buddy, what the hell is this, what did you do to me?

Buddy smirks and gets up, pacing around.

BUDDY HOLLY  
Do you know where the origin of that phrase you love so much, "the Real McCoys?"

Buddy pops a few pills and sets them on the table. Weylon focuses on the pills with desperation.

BUDDY HOLLY (cont'd)  
It was as originally coined by the Scots.

Weylon's eyes, very conscious, flick focus on the pills.

BUDDY HOLLY (cont'd)  
And let us sing 'Begone, dull care!  
Beneath my twa reel-yeukin' cluits  
There's what 'ill sharpen a' your wits.

Weylon struggles to slink closer toward the pills, moaning.

BUDDY HOLLY (cont'd)  
 Here in America, the name belonged to  
 a manufacturer, Elijah McCoy. He made  
 parts for the railroad, quality  
 parts. However, there were copycats,  
 rip-offs.

Weylon manages to wedge his feet against the table.

BUDDY HOLLY (cont'd)  
 But these rip-offs were often faulty.

Weylon grits teeth and, with great effort, taps the table.

BUDDY HOLLY (cont'd)  
 You see, only in their failure did  
 engineers know they were faulty, and  
 so, they started requesting the real  
 McCoy products by name.

With even greater effort, Weylon shoves the table.

The pill bottle rocks, but fails to tip over.

Buddy looks over at the sound and smiles at Weylon on the  
 floor, as though it's cute.

WEYLON  
 Pills...

BUDDY HOLLY  
 Here you go.

He puts them in Weylon's limp hand. Buddy stands.

WEYLON  
 Wait.

BUDDY HOLLY  
 Oh, sorry, how could I be so rude.

Buddy opens the bottle of pills for Weylon, but leaves them  
 in the man's useless hand. He smiles at Weylon's look of  
 pure desperation, gets up, and grabs a book.

BUDDY HOLLY (cont'd)  
 (reading)  
 "Suddenly, we didn't need Nashville.  
 They needed us. Our vision of country  
 music didn't have any shackles  
 attached to it.

(MORE)

BUDDY HOLLY (cont'd)

We never said that we couldn't do something because it would sound like a pop record, or it would be too rock and roll."

WEYLON

I'm sorry if I didn't give you enough credit in the biography, Buddy, but this / is serious.

BUDDY HOLLY

No, you shut up! You don't get to talk anymore. You don't get to parade on and on about how you're the rebel hero of country music and not just some fat loser, who, without me would just waste his life searching for cheesburgers and pills. No, you don't get to talk anymore. You don't get to do anything anymore! Those 15 vicodins in your drink oughtta make sure of that.

Opportunity and searching sublates Weylon's expression of hardened concern.

BUDDY HOLLY (cont'd)

This is just a correction, that's all. Making it like you died on that plane, not me. The way it should'a been.

Weylon looks down at his hand and, with great concentration, is able to move his fingers.

BUDDY HOLLY (cont'd)

But that'll all be in the past soon enough.

Turning back around, Buddy chuckles at Weylon, who is lying face down on the leather couch.

BUDDY HOLLY (cont'd)

A drappie o' the real M'Kay.

Heaving Weylon up, Buddy discovers the man's wide open eyes and lips pursed shut.

BUDDY HOLLY (cont'd)

What do you have in your mouth?

Weylon shakes his head from left to right. Buddy looks down at the spilled pills at Weylon's side.

BUDDY HOLLY (cont'd)  
Spit those out!

He digs at Weylon's pursed lips. Weylon twist and moans.

BUDDY HOLLY (cont'd)  
Spit them out!

Weylon swallows.

Buddy stands and backs away as Weylon's freckles disappear and his hair changes back to chestnut brown.

BUDDY HOLLY (cont'd)  
No... No!

Buddy Holly makes for the stairs, but melts into a puddle on the floor instead.

Waylon stands, his back to the puddle.

WAYLON  
You should'a used way more than 15  
vicodin! Woo-wee, Buddy.

He turns around, sees the unmistakable pair of square frame glasses atop the puddle.

WAYLON (cont'd)  
Buddy?!

Looking first left, then right, he sprints out of the house.

EXT. BUDDY HOLLY'S HOME - DAY

Waylon runs across the lawn and rushes over to Dutch, the rent-a-cop at his parked town car.

WAYLON  
You gotta help!

DUTCH  
Whoa, whoa, Waylon, you gotta calm  
down.

WAYLON  
Please, Buddy Holly just fucking  
melted in there.

DUTCH  
Calm down. Now, what are you talking  
about?



WAYLON

I'm talking about getting paramedics over here, Buddy Holly just died in there.

DUTCH

Man, you must be on some pretty serious shit. Listen, boss, Buddy Holly died in a plane crash February third 1953, everyone knows that.

WAYLON

What?

Waylon grabs Dutch by his shirt collars and implores him.

WAYLON (cont'd)

Do you know me? Do you know who I am? Who I really am?

Dutch gently removes Waylon's hands.

DUTCH

Sure I do, everyone does, three time entertainer of the year, outlaw country music legend, smoking hot wife.

Waylon just stares forward, looking disturbed.

DUTCH (cont'd)

You doing alright there, hoss? You want me to call Jessi to come talk you down?

WAYLON

Jessi?

DUTCH

Your wife.

WAYLON

Oh right, my wife... Leather and lace, right...

DUTCH

You better just wait here, get your bearings. I'll get ahold of Jessi for you.

Waylon leans against the squad car in a sort of haze. Dutch drapes a wool blanket over his shoulders.

INT. STUDIO - 2001 - DAY

Dark studio. Waylon, in his late sixties, 350 pounds, addresses us from his bar stool.

WAYLON

In the end, everything worked out. If I had lived the life that people think I did, I would be about 150 years old and weigh about 40 pounds.

In reality, I wound up catching a pretty rough case of diabetes,  
(denial)  
but Jessi's come to the rescue again, taking charge of my diet, and, with any luck, I won't have to lose this other foot.

Wider shot reveals that Waylon has had his leg amputated just below the knee, welled-up tears in his smiling face.

Sucking up, he turns to the other camera.

WAYLON (cont'd)

When people ask me who I admire most in the world, I always have the same answer: Muhammad Ali.

I thought he was too smart-ass for his own good when I first heard of him, but after I realized what he was doing, he left-hooked me quick. I guessed he had seen Gorgeous George, the wrestler, and how people loved to hate him as he paraded around the ring with his blonde curls and mincing (verbatim) walk, before he piledrived his opponent into the mat. Muhammad talked about himself with a grand sense of humor, but it helped that he was probably the most gracefully flamboyant boxer of our lifetime.

I enjoyed watching him fight, and respected him because he stood up for what he believed.

FADE OUT