

GLIMPSES

by

Lewis Shiner

Based on his novel

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FADE IN:

EXT. UNDERWATER--DAY

There is no sound. The water is so clear that it seems like we're floating above a rocky terrain--though it's actually a coral reef off Cozumel. Two SCUBA DIVERS slowly rise from the deep water below, moving at the same rate as the clouds of bubbles coming from their regulators. As they move toward the surface, it becomes increasingly obvious that something is wrong. TOM CRANE, the dive master, is towing the unconscious body of JACK SHACKLEFORD by his life vest.

What we're watching is a video being made by another diver. That diver has realized that there's trouble and is now swimming hard toward Tom and Jack. The CAMERA begins to wobble. As the three divers converge, the CAMERA swerves wildly, but for one moment we get a clear shot of Jack's face. He's unconscious, maybe dead. Then nothing but blue water.

Pull back to reveal:

INT. RAY'S LIVING ROOM--NIGHT

What we've been seeing is on videotape. RAY SHACKLEFORD, Jack's son, is slumped on the couch of his home in Austin, Texas. He has the remote loosely in one hand, watching intently, a couple of empty beer cans on the coffee table in front of him. Ray is in his forties, a few pounds overweight. He looks like he hasn't been sleeping well. The room is dark except for the glow of the TV. Ray points the remote at the screen and begins to rewind the tape.

RAY (v.o.)

Once upon a time there was going to be a Beatles album called Get Back. Paul had the idea he could turn things around, get back to the kind of material they'd played in the Kaiserkeller in Hamburg. Hamburg must have seemed like another century to them, looking back.

Ray stops the rewind and watches again. A young woman, LORI, is visible on the deck of a boat, along with Tom, Jack, and some others. She's around 40, slim and athletic, in a crop top T-shirt and shorts. Ray freezes the videotape on a frame where Lori is in the foreground.

INT. HALLWAY IN RAY'S HOUSE--NIGHT

Ray slowly climbs the stairs toward his upstairs workshop.

RAY (v.o.)

The Get Back sessions never worked out. Phil Spector overproduced the resulting tapes and turned them into the Let It Be album. Even when the original masters turned up years later, the magic was missing.

INT. RAY'S WORKSHOP--NIGHT

The workshop is the upstairs part of his house, with a workbench along one wall that holds various pieces of electronic equipment--oscilloscope, computer, soldering gun. There's a big poster of Jimi Hendrix pinned to the wall, along with various circuit diagrams and business cards. The stereo is PLAYING "Long and Winding Road" from Let It Be.

Ray is working on a stereo, soldering gun in hand.

RAY (v.o.)

I don't remember the first time I heard "Long and Winding Road," but I remember the time that stuck--I was driving back to Texas after dropping out of college, hoping for another chance with my ex-girlfriend.

Ray puts down the soldering gun, just listening to the music now.

RAY (v.o.)

The Beatles couldn't get it together for Get Back, and I didn't get back with my girlfriend.

CLOSE ON RAY.

RAY (v.o.)

But it didn't have to be that way.

Slowly, but very obviously, the music begins to change while we hold on Ray. It speeds up, the violins drop out, the guitar part becomes more complex. Ray is caught up in the music, his eyes close, and a dreamy smile starts to spread across his face.

A LONGER SHOT as Ray suddenly realizes what he's hearing. With a wrenching sound, the song goes back to the way it's always been.

Ray is completely drained by what he's just done. He starts to get up, staggers, grabs his workbench with one hand and his head with the other.

INT. HALLWAY IN RAY'S HOUSE--NIGHT

Ray carefully descends the stairs, gripping the bannister with white knuckles. He's shaking.

INT. RAY'S BEDROOM--NIGHT

Ray flops across his unmade bed, still completely dressed, and passes out.

EXT. RAY'S FRONT YARD--DAY

Ray, hair damp from the shower, in fresh clothes, picks the paper off the lawn. The sun is high in the sky--he's clearly slept in.

RAY (v.o.)

So my father is dead and my wife  
has moved out. My college  
girlfriend is married somewhere  
with two kids.

He looks up at the window of his workshop.

RAY (v.o.)

But there's this other lost thing,  
this Beatles song, and maybe I can  
have that back.

INT. RAY'S WORKSHOP--DAY

Ray sets out the things he needs like a surgical nurse: fresh cassette tape into the deck, fast forward a bit, then rewind to get the tension right; remote control sitting on the couch; phone unplugged. He sits, holding the remote loosely in his right hand, closes his eyes.

CLOSE ON RAY.

After a couple of seconds he slowly raises the remote and presses PLAY, starting the recorder.

We hear the CLICK of the recorder starting, the quiet hiss of the tape against the heads.

Then, after another few seconds, Paul McCartney's VOICE, counting off the song.

LATER

Ray is sprawled across the couch, passed out. Loud HISS from the stereo.

INT. RAY'S KITCHEN--DAY

It's late afternoon, now. Ray is washing dishes at the sink. He looks from the kitchen toward the stairs. Back to the dishes. Back to the stairs.

RAY (v.o.)  
It has occurred to me, of course,  
that I'm losing my mind.

INT. RAY'S WORKSHOP--DAY

He's coming up the stairs. He walks over to the stereo, rewinds the cassette. He still hasn't listened to it, doesn't know what's on there. It finishes rewinding. Pause. He braces himself for the possibility that there's nothing there.

RAY (v.o.)  
The thing is, if there's something  
wrong with me, I'm not sure I want  
it to get better.

He presses PLAY. McCartney's VOICE counts off the song again, followed by the first few bars of MUSIC. Ray slumps forward, his head touching the shelf, eyes closed in gratitude and relief.

INT. RAY'S LIVING ROOM--NIGHT

Ray is reading the Austin CHRONICLE, the local arts weekly. An ad catches his eye.

CLOSE on the ad: "Together again/The legendary Chevettes/Featuring Dave Middleton/Continental Club/1315 S. Congress Ave./Saturday Nov 17"

## INT. CONTINENTAL CLUB--NIGHT

The club is small and crowded, and a four-piece band is on the stage--two guitars, bass, and drums. All the members are in their forties, about the same age as Ray. We particularly notice the bass player, DAVE MIDDLETON. They are playing "In My Life" by the Beatles, fast and loud. It's a remarkable performance. These men have played together, off and on, for close to thirty years. Their voices and instruments blend seamlessly, and there is a joy and transcendence in their playing that the audience can clearly feel.

Ray is leaning against one wall, apart from the crowd, listening with a fierce intensity, listening the way a man dying of thirst would look at a glass of water just out of his reach.

The song finishes and the band says their thank yous. Ray approaches the stage, cupping his hands to be heard.

RAY

Dave!

Dave is packing up his bass, winding up his patch cords. He does a double-take at the sight of Ray.

DAVE

Ray? Ray Shackelford?

## EXT. CONTINENTAL CLUB--NIGHT

Ray and Dave sit outside the club, watching cars roar by on South Congress St. It's early winter and chilly. They're each drinking a beer, and the rest of the six pack sits between them.

RAY

I remember you guys playing the Senior Prom. I can't believe you're still together.

DAVE

Together again. I took a decade or two off so I could have my fifteen minutes of fame.

RAY

I'm the proud owner of both Dave Middleton albums. They were great.

DAVE

Thanks.

This is obviously a painful subject. Dave has to look away when he talks about it.

DAVE (cont'd)

It was the best time of my life. I had everything I ever wanted. And then one day the record company wasn't there any more and that was the end.

RAY

I thought you were still living in L.A., though.

DAVE

I am. I fly back a couple of times a year to play with these guys. I've got a small label out there, Carnival Dog Records?

RAY

I know. I've got some of those Glimpses compilations. They're great.

Dave shrugs. It's not the same as playing.

DAVE

So what about you? You used to play a little, didn't you?

RAY

Nothing ever came of it. I had some corporate jobs doing electronics stuff, then I started my own stereo repair business a few years ago.

Ray peels off another beer and takes a big slug. Dave eyes him curiously. Other than being a bit red about the eyes, Ray doesn't really show any effect from the alcohol.

DAVE

You okay?

RAY

It's been a bit of rough month. My wife and I split up and then my father died.

DAVE

Yow.

RAY

Yeah. Are you in town for a while?

DAVE

I've got a flight out tomorrow morning.

Ray takes a cassette out of his pocket.

RAY

When you get back home, I want you to listen to something.

DAVE

I thought you said you didn't play any more.

RAY

It's not me. It's...well, I'd rather you just listened to it.

DAVE

We're strictly a reissue label, we don't--

RAY

It's not like that. Just listen to it, and call me. Okay?

DAVE

(puzzled)  
Whatever you say.

EXT. LAX--DAY

A plane landing.

INT. RENTAL CAR COUNTER AT LAX--DAY

Ray is signing the papers for a rent car.

EXT. THE 10 FREEWAY, WESTBOUND--DAY

Ray is driving toward Santa Monica, marvelling at the weather, left arm hanging out the open window.



INT. AN OFFICE IN L.A.--DAY

Ray stands at a reception desk in a small waiting room. The RECEPTIONIST is speaking into the intercom.

RECEPTIONIST

Dave? There's a Ray Shackelford here for you.

DAVE (INTERCOM)

Send him back.

INT. DAVE'S OFFICE--DAY

Dave is sitting at his desk, marking up proofs of a CD booklet. Palm trees out the window, liquid sunshine. As Ray enters, Dave gets up and reaches across the desk to shake his hand.

DAVE

So what was it you couldn't tell me over the phone?

RAY

You first. Tell me what you heard on that tape.

DAVE

Something that can't possibly exist. A completely different version of "Long and Winding Road," performed by the Beatles, in the studio, with overdubs. With George Martin producing, even, if I recognized the voice at the end.

RAY

You did.

DAVE

Martin never worked on the Get Back sessions.

RAY

No.

DAVE

If that tape is a fake, it's the best I ever heard.

RAY  
It's not a fake.

DAVE  
Where in God's name did it come  
from?

RAY  
We'll get to that.

DAVE  
Is there more?

RAY  
There could be.

DAVE  
Where? How? Tell me.

RAY  
You do your remastering here,  
right?

DAVE  
Yeah.

RAY  
Then I'll show you.

INT. MIXING LAB--DAY

It's a small, dimly lit room, full of expensive audio equipment--turntable, reel-to-reel tape deck, mixing console, speakers, etc. The chair is patched with duct tape, the carpet is stained and threadbare, the equipment is sitting on carts from K-Mart. Ray sits in front of something that looks like an entire rack-mount stereo, an awestruck expression on his face as he gently runs a hand over it.

RAY  
It's a Sony 1630.

DAVE  
Yep. Stores digital audio on a  
three-quarter inch video tape  
cassette.  
(beat)  
So what's supposed to happen, here?

RAY  
Can you put a cassette in the  
machine for me?

Dave picks up a cassette, checks the label, shrugs, and inserts it.

DAVE

Now what?

RAY

Start recording.

Dave looks at him curiously, but does what Ray says.

Ray closes his eyes, takes a breath. He's laying everything out in his head. He nods, and Dave starts the machine. A second or two later the SONG begins coming out of the monitors.

Dave's expression shifts from total incredulity to something like rapture as the music fills the room.

INT. DAVE'S LIVING ROOM--NIGHT

The remains of takeout food clutter the coffee table, and a row of empty beer cans stands next to Ray. He's a little hammered from the beer, but mostly he's exhausted from what summoning up the song cost him.

DAVE

And it just, what? Happened?

RAY

Like I said, things have been rough for a while. I've been thinking about the past a lot. Maybe too much. About how things could have been different. Lots of things. The Beatles, for instance. If they'd gone back to Abbey Road studios to do the Get Back sessions, if they'd let George Martin produce. And there it was. Coming out of my speakers.

DAVE

If I hadn't seen you do it I never would have believed it.

RAY

When my father died, he was on a dive trip to Cozumel. He was out of air, and he just started swimming down.

(MORE)

RAY(cont'd)

The dive master caught him at a hundred feet and turned him around, but by the time they got him to the surface, he was dead.

DAVE

Jesus.

RAY

It's like, I can't have my marriage back. I can't have five minutes to talk to my father and find out if he really did commit suicide, find out what was in his head, find out if...if he was even thinking about me. There comes a point where there's just too much loss. Where you just can't take it any more. Where you need another chance.

Dave gets up and starts to pace.

DAVE

You know there's nothing we can legally do with that tape. EMI would bury us in lawsuits.

RAY

Nothing...legally.

DAVE

Right.

RAY

You're talking bootleg.

DAVE

I'm just talking. But if there was somebody who had the equipment and the expertise to put that together, it wouldn't be worth it for just one song.

RAY

You can see what that one song took out of me. A whole album...

DAVE

We could take it easy. One song at a time. You could stay here, rest up in between. From the way you were talking, it doesn't sound like you have much of a life happening in Austin right now.

Ray looks away, then shakes his head.

DAVE (cont'd)

The Beatles might not even be the place to start. Just think of the possibilities, the lost albums. The second Derek and the Dominoes, Bob Dylan and Johnny Cash, Buffalo Springfield's Stampede, the Doors' Celebration of the Lizard...

RAY

And you'd put it out on CD?

DAVE

Quietly, by word of mouth, to collectors. Get the original album art, if there was any, do it right. Everybody has CD recorders these days, so we couldn't charge a fortune--they'd just bootleg our bootleg.

RAY

I don't think this is about money.

DAVE

No. This is about--what did you say? Another chance. For music that could have changed things.

That phrase seems to have triggered something, and Dave gets lost in thought.

RAY

Dave?

DAVE

I've got it. I know what we have to do.

INT. DAVE'S CAR--DAY

It's the next morning. Ray looks a bit hung over as Dave drives them high up in Beverly Hills, to a cul-de-sac at the end of Laurel Way, looking out over the city.

RAY (v.o.)

Summer of 1966. Pet Sounds is just out.

(MORE)

RAY(cont'd)

It has the Beach Boys' name on it, but really it's a Brian Wilson solo album, with him writing all the music, producing, arranging, even singing most of the parts. It's big in England, and it's a cult item over here, but it doesn't go through the roof like the Beatles' Revolver. So Brian wants to create something so spectacular that even the Beatles can't top it.

Dave pulls up in front of Brian's former house.

EXT. BRIAN WILSON'S FORMER HOUSE--DAY

Dave and Ray get out of the car.

DAVE

This is where Brian was living. You've heard the stories. He had a piano in a sandbox so he could feel the sand between his toes while he wrote. He had a sultan's tent in the dining room. He was taking heroic quantities of hash and LSD.

CLOSE ON DAVE

DAVE (cont'd)

And he was making an album called Smile.

INT. DAVE'S CAR--DAY

A little later. Dave and Ray are on Sunset Blvd., heading west toward the ocean.

RAY

I don't know. The Beach Boys? "Be True to Your School" and concerts on the White House lawn?

DAVE

Let me make it really simple for you. Everything you hate about the Beach Boys is Mike Love. He runs the touring band and he's a Republican and he thinks songs should be about cars and surfing and girls.

(MORE)

DAVE(cont'd)

Brian stopped touring in 1964 and quit having anybody but studio musicians play the instruments on the records.

RAY

So everything I like about the Beach Boys...

DAVE

...like "Good Vibrations" and the falsetto part on "Don't Worry Baby"...

RAY

...you're saying that's all Brian.

DAVE

That's right. And Smile was going to be his masterpiece. There was all this stuff in his head, ideas and music and sounds, and every sound had intense emotions tied up in it.

RAY

Like the train and the barking dogs at the end of "Caroline No."

DAVE

Exactly. Smile was going to have sound effects and recurring themes and comic interludes. All harnessed to the single purpose of making people happy.

RAY

I saw something in the paper about it. Didn't Brian finally perform it live?

DAVE

I was there. It was amazing. Grown men wept. But it wasn't the real Smile. Without the sound effects and the intensity of emotion he had back then, it's only a shadow. The concerts made people more curious than ever to hear what the album could have been.

EXT. 119TH STREET IN HAWTHORNE--DAY

This is a bleak neighborhood near LAX, small bungalows from the 40s and 50s with plywood over the doors and windows, covered with graffiti, mostly abandoned. Dave's car rolls past.

INT. DAVE'S CAR--SAME

Dave, driving, points to the Century Freeway, which cuts through the neighborhood.

DAVE

The freeway goes right through the house where Brian grew up. Obviously the character of the neighborhood has changed a bit.

An SUV with tinted glass cruises by, playing rap--the beats sound like howitzers.

RAY

The character of the world has changed.

DAVE

Look in the console, will you? I've got a CD in there of one of the Smile bootlegs. This is all pirated from the acetates Brian used to make at the studio after each day's work. It's like the shadow of the tip of the iceberg.

Ray rummages around, comes up with the CD, pops it in the deck.

DAVE (cont'd)

Back in the early sixties, when Brian first started writing, there were still orange groves all over around here. In the spring the smell of the blossoms was overpowering. Disneyland was still new and there was this crazy place called Pacific Ocean Park just down the coast from the Santa Monica Pier.

Ray is eating up every word Dave says, and is reacting to it all a little too intensely.



RAY  
I wish I could have seen it.

Dave reaches over and turns up the car stereo.

DAVE  
Hey, relax. Smile.

EXT. A STREET IN WHITTIER--DAY

Dave and Ray get out of the car in front of a store with the words OUTASITE BOOKS painted over the windows in psychedelic letters. Ray looks at Dave dubiously.

INT. OUTASITE BOOKS--CONTINUOUS

Ray and Dave enter. Behind the counter is the owner, MIKE AUTREY, same age as Dave and Ray. He's wearing a tie-dyed T-shirt and ripped jeans, but his hair is neatly trimmed. The store is decorated in concert posters from the sixties; there are bookshelves down the middle of the store and record bins on the wall opposite the counter, filled with vinyl LPs only--no CDs here. Some obscure sixties album--Clear Light, for instance, or Crabby Appleton--is playing on the stereo.

DAVE  
Mike, this is my friend Ray. We're looking for anything you've got on the Beach Boys.

MIKE  
Sure, man, I got the David Leaf book, I got some fan magazines, I got a first pressing of Stack O' Tracks.

RAY  
(amazed)  
So everything in here is from the sixties, is that the deal?

MIKE  
That's right. It's like time travel, as soon as you step in the door.

In fact the place is very sad, in a funny, L.A. sort of way, and Mike seems like he's been shipwrecked here.

MIKE (cont'd)  
You working on something with Dave?

DAVE  
Very hush hush, Mike. I'll tell  
you when I can.

MIKE  
That's cool, man.

DAVE  
(to Ray)  
Mike's got a theory as to what  
happened to the sixties.

MIKE  
Time is just another dimension,  
right? So if you could just step  
back a little you could see it all  
laid out in front of you at once.

RAY  
Okay.

MIKE  
So it's like all through the 70s  
and 80s and 90s, everybody talked  
so much about it and made such a  
big deal about it and put, like,  
all these reverse expectations on  
it, until all the life got sucked  
right out of it.

RAY  
I don't get you.

MIKE  
It's like, if you're there in 1968,  
the future is sucking all your  
dreams and energy and power away.  
Next thing you know, instead of  
dropping acid and getting high,  
you're shooting up and getting  
down. (shrugs) Hey, it's just a  
theory.

EXT. OUTASITE BOOKS--DAY

Ray and Dave walk back to the car, Ray carrying a paper  
grocery bag from Safeway full of books and records.

DAVE  
I'm not sure what it is, exactly,  
but there's a lesson there.

INT. DAVE'S HOUSE--NIGHT

Ray has set himself up in Dave's den with the books they just bought. The STEREO IS PLAYING the song "Love and Mercy" from Brian Wilson's 1988 solo album. Ray is reading David Leaf's book on the Beach Boys. Dave, just home from work, taps on the door frame to get Ray's attention, and nods toward the stereo.

DAVE

Great song.

RAY

A little recent for our purposes, I know. But like Brian said, the child is father of the man.

This last comes out both bitter and sad, and Dave picks up on it.

DAVE

What's up?

RAY

I've been reading about Brian's father. I guess it's flipping me out a little bit.

DAVE

He used to knock Brian around or something, right?

RAY

That was part of it. He kept trying to control the band--and run Brian down. In the end he sold off the rights to all of Brian's music.

DAVE

I'm guessing this is striking a chord, so to speak.

RAY

Yeah. The last conversation I ever had with my father, he was trying to lecture me about electronics.

DAVE

And your mother stuck with him?

RAY

I used to write letters to Santa asking for my parents to get divorced. But she always took his side, and since he's been dead she's turned him into a saint. Makes it hard to be around her.

The song is over. Ray gets up to turn the stereo off.

RAY (cont'd)

Your folks had money, right?

DAVE

Oil money. Dad wanted me in the business. He went belly up a couple of years before I did. He kept on telling me I'd wasted my life, but it didn't quite have the authority it might have.

RAY

Brian never got out from under his old man. By the time he died, it was too late. Brian had given up on Smile and taken to bed.

DAVE

Maybe he just needed a father figure. Somebody like you.

RAY

Me? A father figure? The thought of having kids always terrified me.

DAVE

Look at your role model. But I remember your father from high school, and you're not like him.

RAY

I've spent my whole life in the pursuit of that. But sometimes I look in the mirror and see him and it makes me want to...

Ray runs one hand over his cheeks.

RAY (cont'd)

...acquire a few well-placed scars.

Dave looks at him. Ray obviously already has the scars, they're just not on his face.

INT. DAVE'S LIVING ROOM--NIGHT

Ray is alone in the living room, reading and listening to the Beach Boy's released version of "Heroes and Villains." This is the centerpiece of the Smile album--if he gets this the rest will follow.

He puts the book down, goes over to the stereo, and braces himself for another attempt to find the lost album.

We PULL BACK to reveal Dave standing silently in the hall, watching.

Ray grips the edges of the stereo cabinet and leans forward, closing his eyes.

Nothing changes.

Dave, worried, says nothing, just turns away and goes back to his bedroom.

EXT. A RESTAURANT IN MARINA DEL REY--DAY

Dave and Ray sit at an outdoor table, looking at the water, drinking beer.

RAY  
This is where Brian's brother  
drowned, isn't it?

DAVE  
Dennis? Yeah. Near here.

They sit in silence for a beat or two.

RAY  
I could do that Beatles song  
because I could visualize  
circumstances where it could have  
happened. And I'm just not getting  
there this time.

A WAITRESS, pretty, 20s, has come up on Ray's blind side and is standing by for a chance to take their order.

RAY (cont'd)  
It's like Smile was never meant to  
be.

WAITRESS

(smiling)

You sound like some giant insect movie from the fifties. "General, there are some things man was not meant to know."

Ray turns to her, initially startled, then relaxes and smiles back at her.

WAITRESS (cont'd)

You guys ready for another round?

DAVE

I'm okay, but my friend here is always thirsty. Actress?

WAITRESS

Musician. You look familiar, somehow.

DAVE

People always think that.

WAITRESS

You guys are talking about Smile, right? My guitar player is like, totally obsessed with that record.

RAY

I'm getting that way. It's like some kind of Elizabethan tragedy or something. The band is Brian's family and the band, in the person of Mike Love, hates the record. So Brian has to choose between his music and his family. And if he was the kind of guy who could blow off his family, he wouldn't be the guy that could make a record like Smile.

Ray chugs his beer and shakes his head.

RAY (cont'd)

Yeah, I guess I better have another one of these.

WAITRESS

Sure.

(beat)

Good luck with whatever it is you're doing.

RAY

Thanks.

The waitress leaves and Dave watches her go.

DAVE

I think she likes you.

RAY

Yeah, right.

(beat)

Maybe I should pack it in and go back to Texas.

DAVE

They say Brian kept working on Smile for years, even after everybody else gave up. So there must have been a part of him that wanted it for himself.

RAY

But he was the only one. Everybody else thought he was crazy.

DAVE

Not everybody.

RAY

What do you mean?

DAVE

There's you and me.

EXT. GRIFFITH PLANETARIUM--DAY

Ray stands outside, looking down on the city.

EXT. WHISKEY A GO GO--DAY

Ray cruises by slowly on Sunset Boulevard in his rent car, checking it out.

EXT. HUNTINGTON BEACH PIER--DAY

Ray stands out on the pier as the sun sets, drinking a beer, watching the surfers.

INT. DAVE'S HOUSE--NIGHT

It's very late, and Dave is already in bed. Ray sets aside a book he's been reading on Pacific Ocean Park and puts on the videotape of his father, which he's brought from Austin.

He fast forwards through the tape, stopping here and there. We see parts of the video that we haven't seen before, including more shots of his father on the deck of the dive boat with Tom and Lori.

He skips past that and we see the death scene, again--the two figures rising up from the depths in a cloud of bubbles.

EXT. DAVE'S HOUSE--DAWN

Ray quietly exits via the front door. He is obviously in bad shape--haunted, sleepless, obsessed. He's carrying an audio cassette tape in one hand. He gets in the rent car and starts it up.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS--DAY

He's playing Volume One of the Carnival Dog Glimpses series, and we're hearing the title tune, a weird, mostly instrumental piece by the Yardbirds as we see Ray driving aimlessly through Beverly Hills.

EXT. LAUREL WAY--DAY

Ray's car slowly pulls into the cul-de-sac at the top of Laurel way and slowly inches to the curb until he's parked across from Brian Wilson's old house.

The music is building to a climax. Ray gets out of the car in a sort of fugue state, the stereo blaring. He stumbles into the street, blind, hopelessly confused as to where, or even when he is. He begins to fall and...

CLOSE ON RAY

His face registers astonishment and, at the same time, recognition.



EXT. BRIAN'S HOUSE--NIGHT

It's the same neighborhood as before, but night, and things are subtly different. For one thing, the doors of Brian's garage are open, and we can see a Stingray, an XKE, and a Rolls, all 60s vintage. They have black license plates with orange letters--60s license plates.

Ray walks slowly up to the house. He's stunned at first, but by the time he gets to the door he's clearly decided to take this as far as it will go. He knocks on the door and DAVID ANDERLE, early 30s, handsome, dark hair, opens it.

DAVID

Yes?

RAY

(in wonder)

You're David Anderle, aren't you?

DAVID

Do I know you?

Ray offers his hand and David reflexively takes it.

RAY

Ray Shackelford, RCA records. I hear you talked Brian into doing "Good Vibrations" himself instead of selling it off.

DAVID

Where did you hear that?

RAY

It's my job to keep my ear to the ground. Is Brian here?

DAVID

I was just leaving, but...sure. He's out back in the pool.

EXT. BRIAN'S SWIMMING POOL--NIGHT

Ray and David emerge from the house. It's cool enough outside that steam is rising from the heated pool where BRIAN WILSON, still in his late twenties, just starting to really put on weight, is at play. Also in the pool are VAN DYKE PARKS, the young, almost elfin Smile lyricist, his wife DURRIE, and Brian's sister-in-law, DIANE ROVELL. Brian's wife MARILYN sits looking on from a lounge chair.

DAVID

This is Ray, from RCA. (pointing to each) Brian, Marilyn, Marilyn's sister Diane, Van Dyke and Durrie Parks.

BRIAN

Hey, Ray, from RCA. Why don't you put a suit on and play?

RAY

Thanks.

BRIAN

David, could you...?

DAVID

Yeah, but then I'm gone for sure. I don't want you guys talking business while I'm not here, promise?

BRIAN

I promise.

INT. BRIAN'S HOUSE--NIGHT

Just inside the sliding glass doors from the pool, David points to a changing room.

DAVID

There's suits and towels in there. Nice meeting you, Ray, but I have to go.

RAY

Okay. Thanks.

David hesitates.

DAVID

Brian is...

In 1966 it's just not possible for him to say that Brian is fragile and vulnerable. He gives up.

DAVID (cont'd)

Just be careful with him, okay?

A COUPLE OF MINUTES LATER

Ray emerges from the changing room, wearing a bathing suit. Alone in the house now, he stares at the chintz curtains and plaid furniture in wonder. He picks up a copy of Time.

RAY  
 (whispers)  
 I'm really here. It's December of  
 1966, and I am really here.

EXT. BRIAN'S SWIMMING POOL--NIGHT

As Ray comes back outside, Brian is clowning with an inflatable plastic horse, which he dwarfs. There is much SPLASHING and LAUGHTER. Ray climbs in the pool, clearly not wanting to make a big splash (literally or figuratively), but then, overwhelmed by the joy of the moment, bends over, lips just touching the surface of the water, and makes a sort of trumpeting, squealing NOISE.

BRIAN  
 Wow, man, how did you do that?

RAY  
 It's just something my old man used  
 to do.

BRIAN  
 Do it again!

Ray does, with Brian watching him intently, and then Brian repeats the SOUND.

BRIAN (cont'd)  
 (very serious)  
 Okay, Van Dyke, you do this.

Brian begins clapping his hands in rhythm, scooping a little water as he does it, so there's a SPLASH with the CLAP.

VAN DYKE  
 Please, Brian, not another  
 production.

BRIAN  
 You'll love it. Just try it.

Van Dyke reluctantly does as he's told. Brian begins to move his hands like a conductor.

BRIAN (cont'd)  
 Slower. Like waves slapping a  
 pier. Durrie--

Durrie gives him a look that tells him it's not a good idea  
 even to ask.

BRIAN (cont'd)  
 Never mind. Diane, just kind of  
 thump the wall of the pool with the  
 side of your fist every couple of  
 seconds.

DIANE  
 What, like this?

BRIAN  
 Perfect. Okay, Ray, do your thing.

Ray makes his NOISE again, and Brian comes in with a similar  
 NOISE, in a higher key.

RAY  
 Jesus Christ, that sounds like...

Ray suddenly realizes that Songs of the Humpback Whale is  
 years away.

RAY (cont'd)  
 Have you ever heard whales singing?

DURRIE  
 Singing whales?

BRIAN  
 Whales! That's it! It's perfect,  
 man, we can get whale noises for  
 the water thing in the "Elements."

VAN DYKE  
 Brian, you're crazy.

BRIAN  
 If everybody was crazy...

VAN DYKE, MARILYN, DIANE  
 (in unison, with gentle  
 irony)  
 ...then maybe we'd have world  
 peace.

VAN DYKE

It's three o'clock, Brian. I've got to get home.

BRIAN

Don't you want some more hash? Mare, go get some hash for these people.

MARILYN

Let them go, Brian.

(beat)

Let us all go.

BRIAN

What about you, Ray from RCA? Are you tired?

INT. BRIAN'S LIVING ROOM--NIGHT

Ray is sitting on the floor, wrapped in a towel, chilled but enchanted. Brian stands in front of an old-fashioned Wurlitzer jukebox, with the colored bubbles around the sides, oblivious to his wet swimsuit dripping on the carpet.

BRIAN

Listen to this.

He punches some buttons and a SONG from Smile plays. It's an acetate recording, a cheap demo disk cut at the end of a studio session. Brian SINGS along for a bit while he hunts up a pipe and a ball of hash wrapped in foil, then sits cross-legged across from Ray.

BRIAN

So, is RCA interested in Smile?

RAY

(uncomfortable)

David said we weren't supposed to talk business.

BRIAN

So we don't tell David.

Brian offers Ray the pipe, but Ray declines with a wave--just being there with Brian is better than any hash. But deceiving him is making Ray deeply ashamed.

RAY

Brian, I--

BRIAN  
(feeling the hash)  
What?

RAY  
I'm not from RCA. But I can help  
you just the same.

Brian fights to focus, feeling hurt and a little afraid.

BRIAN  
What are you saying, man?

RAY  
You don't know me, but I know you.  
I would never do anything to hurt  
you. You have to trust me.

BRIAN  
(paranoid)  
What do you mean you know me?

RAY  
Mike Love hasn't heard any of the  
new stuff, has he?

BRIAN  
No, the guys just got back from  
London.

RAY  
When he hears it he's going to  
freak.

BRIAN  
Yeah, probably. He hated Pet  
Sounds. He thought "Good  
Vibrations" was "avant garde crap."

RAY  
Every time you try something new,  
every time you hear a new sound in  
your head, everybody thinks you're  
crazy. Nothing against Van Dyke,  
but it happened in the swimming  
pool tonight. You're moving so  
fast now, nobody in the world can  
keep up. If you're not careful,  
they're going to drag you down.  
You've got, what, fifteen or twenty  
songs already started?

BRIAN  
Something like that.

RAY  
Pick a dozen and finish them.  
Before you let Mike and the others  
hear any of it.

BRIAN  
I can't do that, man. Carl has to  
sing "Wonderful." I need Dennis's  
harmonies. Besides, I can't go  
around Mike. He's family. They  
all are.

RAY  
If you wait for them, you're going  
to lose it.

BRIAN  
How do you know that?

RAY  
For the sake of argument, let's say  
I was from the future. Let's say I  
know everything that's going to  
happen to you.

Brian is very childlike, very willing to believe. He's also  
very stoned. Ray is scaring him, but he can't walk away.

BRIAN  
Tell me.

RAY  
You play the tapes for them. Mike  
hates it. He says, "You're blowing  
it, Brian. Don't fuck with the  
formula. Stick to cars and girls."  
He wants Van Dyke to explain his  
lyrics, and Van Dyke quits.  
Capitol hates it too. You start  
new songs and don't finish them.  
You think if you get everything  
perfect, everybody will have to  
like it. Suddenly it's June and  
there's a new Beatles album. It's  
called Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts  
Club Band.

BRIAN  
You're joking.

RAY

It's got songs that run together and recurring themes and sound effects. It's not as good as Smile, but it is really good, and it takes the world by storm. It's acknowledged as rock's first masterpiece. It takes the heart right out of you and you never finish Smile. Never.

BRIAN

This is too weird. You couldn't be making this up.

Brian starts wandering around the room.

BRIAN (cont'd)

Fucking hell. Sgt. what?

RAY

Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band.

Brian sits again, closes his eyes, and is quiet for a long time. Finally:

BRIAN

Are you hungry at all? I am, like, totally starved.

INT. KITCHEN IN BRIAN'S HOUSE--NIGHT

BRIAN and RAY sit at the kitchen table, Ray looking at an empty dish that's obviously had chocolate ice cream in it. Brian is finishing off the last of the carton. Brian speaks without looking up, instinctively sparing Ray's possible embarrassment at being homeless.

BRIAN

If you need a place to stay, we've got plenty of room here.

RAY

That would be great. Thanks.

Brian puts the dishes and the empty carton in the sink.

BRIAN

Let's take a look.



INT. GUEST BEDROOM IN BRIAN'S HOUSE--NIGHT

BRIAN turns on a light by the bed and pats the pillows.

BRIAN  
This okay? There's a bathroom in  
there, I think there's even a spare  
toothbrush.

RAY  
It's perfect. Thanks.

Brian starts to leave.

RAY (cont'd)  
Think about what I said, okay?  
About Smile? The world needs that  
record.

BRIAN  
Then we'd have world peace, right?  
I'll think about it. Night, Ray.

RAY  
Good night.

After Brian leaves, Ray stands at the window and looks out at  
the lights of L.A.

RAY  
Thank you. Whoever. Thank you for  
this.

INT. HALLWAY IN BRIAN'S HOUSE--DAY

It's the next morning. Ray comes down to breakfast and stops  
outside the kitchen when he hears voices.

MARILYN (O.S.)  
...fact is, no one knows anything  
about this guy. I called RCA this  
morning, and there is no Ray  
Shackleford that works there.

BRIAN (O.S.)  
I like him.

DAVID (O.S.)  
You can't just trust everyone that  
comes along and tells you what you  
want to hear.

BRIAN (O.S.)

I have a good feeling about him.  
Listen, you're about his size,  
could you maybe bring over some old  
clothes? I think he needs them and  
he's embarrassed to ask.

Ray goes back to the stairs and carefully makes a little  
noise to let them know he's coming.

INT. BRIAN'S KITCHEN--CONTINUOUS

Sitting around in various places in the kitchen are Marilyn,  
Diane, David, and Brian. There's an empty stool near Brian  
at the counter. On the counter is a box of Trix cereal and  
an open carton of milk. Brian is still eating breakfast,  
though everybody else is finished. Everybody is self-  
consciously quiet as Ray walks in.

BRIAN

Morning, Ray. Want some breakfast?  
Mare, why don't you make Ray some  
breakfast?

RAY

No, thanks, really, I'll just have  
some cereal.

Ray sits next to Brian and pours himself a bowl of cereal.  
Marilyn brings him a glass of orange juice. She has an  
amused look on her face that says she knows Ray is running  
some kind of scam.

BRIAN

So. What does anybody want to do  
today?

Nobody rises to the bait. Eventually Ray breaks the silence.

RAY

Do you feel like maybe going to the  
studio?

BRIAN

No, man, it's a gray day. I can't  
work on a gray day.

In an exaggerated, theatrical gesture, Brian holds up one  
finger.

BRIAN (cont'd)

Wait! I know! We could go to...

Everybody but Ray seems to cringe.

BRIAN (cont'd)  
...Pacific Ocean Park!

Silence. Everyone is staring at their coffee cups, at the floor, out the window.

BRIAN  
Maybe me and Ray'll go.

MARILYN  
Fine, Brian. You do that.

INT. BRIAN'S ROLLS-ROYCE--DAY

A CHAUFFEUR is driving and Brian and Ray are in the back. A top-40 radio station PLAYS quietly in the background. They are driving out Sunset toward the ocean. Even as late as 1966 there are still stretches of open country visible through the windows.

BRIAN  
If you're from the future, who's going to win the Super Bowl?

RAY  
Sorry. I was never that into sports.

BRIAN  
You're not convincing me, here. What about "Good Vibrations"? Does it ever make it to number one?

RAY  
December tenth. (beat) That was my wife's birthday.

BRIAN  
Was? What happened?

RAY  
I don't know. What ever happens? We lost the things that seemed important in the beginning. And the things that seemed important in the end weren't the things we did with each other.

BRIAN  
How long were you guys together?

RAY

Together eleven years, married for ten.

BRIAN

Wow. I've only known Marilyn four years, and it seems like forever sometimes. It's like...I can't say it. I really admire guys like Van Dyke, that are so articulate. It's like the years, they don't really mean anything. Only the emotions. Maybe there isn't anything else in the whole universe but emotions. Like what's real is how we feel about something, not the thing itself.

RAY

We don't have to do this. We could go to the studio and we could do some work.

BRIAN

It's too cloudy to work. Maybe tonight.

RAY

It's all so fragile. The smallest thing can just...

BRIAN

Relax. Smile.

This is what Dave said to him earlier. Ray struggles for a second trying to remember why the words sound familiar.

DJ (RADIO)

Here's something from last year by the Kinks.

The radio PLAYS "Something Better Beginning."

BRIAN

Just listen.

The song is about the singer dancing with a girl he just met and wondering what's ahead--heartache, or the start of something big.

BRIAN (cont'd)

It's the whole world, see? It's like we're just waking up.

(MORE)

BRIAN(cont'd)

New music, new ideas. It's going to be incredible. But you've seen it, right? You know where it's all headed.

RAY

It's going to be big. The next three or four years are going to be so intense, some people will never get over them.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO PACIFIC OCEAN PARK--DAY

It's a cheesy amusement park that used to occupy a pier in Santa Monica, very 1950s, with everything curved or triangular or kidney-shaped--the ticket booth is inside a sort of abstract starfish. The magic is somewhat diminished by the fact that the plastic is pitted and cloudy from the salt air and the stucco is starting to crack.

The Rolls is pulling away. Brian is already at the ticket window as Ray stands for a second, staring.

BRIAN

Come on!

EXT. THE MIDWAY AT P.O.P.--DAY

Brian leaves a concession stand with a hot dog and a coke and runs to catch up to Ray, who's wandering around as if in a dream. The park is almost deserted but Brian doesn't care. He's in heaven.

BRIAN

You've got to ride Mr. Dolphin with me.

EXT. MR. DOLPHIN--DAY

It's a 90-foot high tower with enclosed cars on the ends of rotating arms that spin out over the park. Ray and Brian flash by--Brian childishly happy, Ray looking sick.

EXT. THE MIDWAY--DAY

Ray is sitting on a bench, leaning forward, nauseated. Brian sits next to him, hands clasped between his legs, guilty and upset.

BRIAN

Why didn't you tell me?

RAY

I hadn't tried to do anything like that in years. I didn't think it would be that bad. I'm really sorry.

BRIAN

(kindly)

It's doesn't matter.

RAY

Yeah, it does. I've ruined your day.

BRIAN

That's not true. Your father used to yell at you for getting sick, I bet.

RAY

At least twice, when I was really little, I threw up down the back of his neck while he was driving. Just stood up on the back seat and up it came.

Brian is startled into laughter.

RAY (cont'd)

It's like I got all my revenge when I was too young to enjoy it.

Ray is deadpan, making Brian laugh even harder.

BRIAN

(wiping his eyes)

Do you guys get along okay now?

RAY

Sure. He's dead. That makes everything easier.

Brian is no longer sure whether he should laugh or not.

BRIAN

You shouldn't talk that way, man. He was your father.

RAY  
Come on, Brian. Everybody knows  
your father treats you like shit.

Ray's gone too far. Brian gets up abruptly and goes to stand looking out at the ocean. After a few seconds Ray stands next to him.

RAY (cont'd)  
Sorry.

BRIAN  
Marilyn and I want to have kids. I  
guess you already know whether we  
do or not, don't you?

He gives Ray a chance to answer, but Ray is impassive.

BRIAN (cont'd)  
I just don't know what kind of  
father I'd be. I feel like the  
cards are stacked against me.

RAY  
You don't have to be like your  
father.

Brian is suddenly ignoring Ray.

BRIAN  
Listen! Hear that?

Seagulls, flying near the pier, are SQUALLING.

BRIAN (cont'd)  
All the emotion in that sound. It  
sounds so lonely all by itself, you  
don't have to put any words to it.  
That's what I'm trying to do, don't  
you see?

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE MIDWAY--DAY

Brian and Ray are walking together.

BRIAN  
What about bumper cars? Could you  
handle bumper cars?

RAY  
Sure. As long as I'm driving, I'm  
okay.

They get in line, waiting for the ride in progress to end.

BRIAN  
(sheepish)  
David is pushing me really hard to  
play the tapes for the guys.

RAY  
When?

BRIAN  
Tonight.

Ray realizes he can't stop the inevitable.

RAY  
Then do it. It's got to happen  
sometime.

BRIAN  
(grateful)  
Really?

RAY  
Just don't expect too much, okay?

INT. LIVING ROOM IN BRIAN'S HOUSE--NIGHT

Everyone is gathered around a massive Spanish table, big enough to seat 20. From the Beach Boys there are MIKE LOVE, AL JARDINE, BRUCE JOHNSTON, and Brian's brother CARL; VAN DYKE and DURRIE PARKS are a bit to themselves at one end, with DAVID ANDERLE. There are headphone jacks built into the table, and each of the guests has his or her own headphones. RAY is sitting across the table from Mike Love, wearing clean clothes that David Anderle brought him.

Brian is standing at a smaller table nearby, with a reel-to-reel tape recorder, poised to play the quarter-inch studio masters. He keeps nervously touching the tape deck, or straightening the small pile of tape boxes next to it.

BRIAN  
Okay, well, I guess we should  
start...

Brian's brother DENNIS, longhaired, barefoot, unshaven, walks in like he owns the place.

DENNIS  
Hey, Bri. What's happening?



MIKE  
 What's the matter, Dennis, lose  
 your watch?

DENNIS  
 Fuck you, Mike. (to Brian) Is this  
 the new record?

He nods politely to Ray.

DENNIS (cont'd)  
 Hi.

He sits down and puts on his headphones, pointedly ignoring  
 the tension.

DENNIS (cont'd)  
 What are we waiting for? Let's  
 hear the goddamned thing.

Brian clears his throat and rolls the tape, then puts on his  
 own headphones and sits next to Ray. The SONG is "Surf's  
 Up," a slow, haunting melody. Dennis is clearly enjoying it,  
 but after only a few seconds Mike starts shaking his head and  
 writing on a napkin in front of him. Brian is watching him  
 anxiously, and when Mike makes a disgusted noise, Brian jumps  
 up and switches off the recorder.

MIKE  
 What is this shit? It's crazy.  
 Why can't you write songs like you  
 used to?

BRIAN  
 Cars and girls and surfing.

MIKE  
 What's wrong with that? It's what  
 people want to hear. You're going  
 to blow it, Brian. Don't fuck with  
 the formula.

BRIAN  
 I like these lyrics.

MIKE  
 "Colonnaded ruins domino"? Those  
 are the lyrics you like?

VAN DYKE  
 Columnated.

Mike turns on him.

MIKE

What the hell kind of word is "columnated"? Would you care to explain this song to me?

VAN DYKE

I don't know what the songs are about. They're about whatever you feel when you listen to them.

Brian nods agreement.

MIKE

What I feel is a headache. How am I supposed to sing this in front of an audience? This is gibberish, and it's going to destroy the group.

Van Dyke stands up.

VAN DYKE

I have no excuse, sir.

He looks at Brian, who is frozen in confusion and embarrassment and cannot meet his eyes. Ever polite, Van Dyke holds Durrie's chair for her as she gets up and they leave together.

DENNIS

I think it's fucking brilliant, Bri. No shit.

MIKE

Another species heard from. (to Brian) Have you played any of this garbage for Capitol? I guarantee they won't like it any better than I do. You're cooped up here all day with your dope and your weird ideas, while I'm out there, night after night, with the kids who actually buy our records. The kids who like to hear about cars and surfing and girls and good times. Haven't you got anything for them?

BRIAN

I guess not.

MIKE

You guess not.

DENNIS

Hey Mike? Fuck you, man.

Dennis gives Mike the finger with both hands. Mike comes out of his chair and Dennis charges to meet him. Al Jardine and Bruce Johnston grab Mike and pull him away just as Dennis throws a drunken punch at him that misses by a couple of feet. Mike shakes the others off, and stomps out; Al and Bruce follow. Dennis collapses into another chair and lights a joint. Carl, still seated, watches with wide, frightened eyes.

DAVID

Maybe we should try this another night.

EXT. BRIAN'S SWIMMING POOL--NIGHT

Ray and Brian are in the pool alone.

BRIAN

It was all just like you said. Like, word for word. I'm really scared now. You're from the future, right? In the future there is no Smile album, because of all the shit that went down tonight.

RAY

Basically, yes.

BRIAN

So what you want is for me to change the future, which has to mean that you don't like it the way it is. But if I change the future, then what happens? Anything could happen. Nuclear war. The end of the world.

RAY

You have to take that chance.

BRIAN

Even if it breaks up the band?

RAY

They can go on without you, use outside songwriters. Carl can produce.

BRIAN  
 IdontknowIdontknowIdontknowIdont  
 knowIdontknow...

Brian, clowning, falls face forward in the water and floats there, not moving.

RAY  
 Brian?

He's starting to freak. He grabs Brian's arm and shouts:

RAY (cont'd)  
 Brian!

Brian raises his head and shakes the water out of his hair.

BRIAN  
 Easy, man, I was just fooling.

RAY  
 It's...my father drowned. That's  
 how he died.

BRIAN  
 Hey, man, I'm really sorry.

RAY  
 Forget it. It's not your fault.  
 It's not anybody's fault.  
 (beat)  
 That's not true. It's our fathers'  
 faults. That whole scene upstairs  
 tonight was about your father, not  
 the Beach Boys.

Brian looks at him without comprehension.

RAY (cont'd)  
 Your father convinced you that  
 nothing you do will ever be good  
 enough. So when Mike tells you  
 Smile is no good, you believe him.  
 And you can't leave the band  
 because that would be like walking  
 out on your father. You have to  
 believe in your own talent.

BRIAN  
 What, that whole "Brian is a  
 genius" thing? You can't imagine  
 how hard that is to live up to.

(MORE)

BRIAN(cont'd)

You start asking yourself,  
everything that you do, is this up  
to snuff? Is this genius-level  
work here? I don't know if I can  
handle that.

RAY

(not believing he's saying  
it)

Cut the shit, Brian. Come on,  
let's get dressed. We can go for a  
ride while I tell you about the  
future.

INT. BRIAN'S XKE--NIGHT

They're on Mulholland Drive, up in the hills. Brian is driving. It's virtually undeveloped at this time, and the view of the city is spectacular--but it also seems very distant. Ray stares straight ahead, speaking without affect.

RAY

They'll close POP inside two years,  
but they won't have the money to  
knock it down. Winos and junkies  
will move in and the place will  
become a public eyesore.

In my time, everybody considers Pet  
Sounds your masterpiece, because  
after that the Beach Boys went to  
hell. They kept touring, and they  
had the occasional decent song, but  
no more masterpieces, not ever,  
because you gave up.

As for the rest of the world,  
there's this sort of sexually  
contagious cancer called AIDS.  
It's reached epidemic proportions  
in Southeast Asia and Africa, and  
it's 100 percent fatal. That was  
the last straw for free love. All  
the rest of the stuff that seemed  
like a good idea in the sixties,  
like feeding the world and loving  
your brothers and sisters, has gone  
out the window because it's too  
expensive.

Brian has been getting increasingly upset, and driving more and more slowly. Finally he pulls over to the side of the road and stops. Ray is still not looking at him.

RAY (cont'd)

There's a hole in the ozone layer that lets in ultraviolet radiation. You can't lie in the sun anymore without getting skin cancer. Tankers are spilling oil all over the world's beaches anyway, and nobody stops them because we don't want to give up our cars. Which create so much pollution that the carbon dioxide is holding in heat and turning the planet into a giant greenhouse. The polar ice caps are melting--

BRIAN

Stop it!

Ray finally looks at him. Brian is crying, for real, the tears running down his face.

BRIAN (cont'd)

Why are you doing this to me? What do you want?

RAY

The album, Brian. I want you to finish the album.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM IN BRIAN'S HOUSE--DAY

Ray sits up in bed. Someone is knocking insistently on the door.

RAY

Come in?

Brian opens the door. He's smiling, full of nervous energy, showing no signs that the night before ever happened.

BRIAN

Wake up, sleepyhead! Diane has the studio booked, the musicians are on the way.

RAY

Am I dreaming?

BRIAN

I don't know, Ray. Are you?

INT. WESTERN STUDIOS, SUNSET BLVD--DAY

The hall outside studio 3. Diane Rovell is waiting as Ray and Brian walk up.

DIANE  
Everybody's here.

She picks a loose thread off Brian's shirt, a wifely, almost motherly gesture, and opens the door for him.

INT. STUDIO 3, CONTINUOUS

The Wrecking Crew is set up in a windowless room that's too small for them: HAL BLAINE on drums, CAROL KAYE on bass, TOMMY TEDESCO on electric guitar, GLEN CAMPBELL on acoustic, LEON RUSSELL on piano, and two or three horn players.

BRIAN  
Afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

There's a CHORUS of "Hi, Brian"s from the group--they are all excited to be there, and they all love Brian and love the challenge of his music. Brian puts on a pair of reading glasses, though he's working completely from memory, with no score.

BRIAN  
Okay, let's get to work.

INT. STUDIO 3, LATER

The room is filling with cigarette smoke. People have their sleeves rolled up, are sweating a little, have shifted their folding chairs into more comfortable positions. Brian is standing at the piano, playing the parts for everyone. He is the opposite of the Brian we saw at the meeting with the Beach Boys: confident, in charge, enjoying himself.

BRIAN  
Tommy, listen again. It's like this.

Brian plays a figure on the piano.

TOMMY TEDESCO  
Brian, that sounds like shit.

BRIAN  
 (laughing)  
 Trust me. Okay, from the top.

Brian conducts and the band PLAYS a new Smile track. The musicians are focused and playing hard--it's complex, difficult music--all but Hal Blaine, who has a cigarette hanging out of his mouth, and though he plays with surgical precision, is making funny faces the whole time.

The take breaks down after a minute or so.

TOMMY  
 Did you hear that?

BRIAN  
 Perfect.

TOMMY  
 Brian, you're crazy.

BRIAN  
 Wait for the overdubs. Okay, once again...

INT. STUDIO 3, LATER STILL

Hal is packing up his drums, Glen Campbell is gone, a few of the others are sitting around, exhausted, drinking Cokes. Tommy is wiping the strings of his guitar. Brian signals to the engineer in the booth and we hear the PLAYBACK. The two guitar parts now make an inevitable whole. Brian SINGS a line or two along with the tape.

BRIAN  
 See? See?

Tommy throws up his hands, grinning. Meanwhile, across the room, Ray is shaking hands with Hal, a bit starstruck.

RAY  
 Can I give you a hand?

HAL  
 Certainly, young man. Applause and money always welcome.

He hands Ray a couple of drum cases.



EXT. SANTA MONICA--NIGHT

Brian and Ray are sprawled in the grass in a small patch of park along Ocean Avenue. The PLAYBACK from the session continues in the background. There are a few KIDS around-- the boys have short hair, and they're wearing button down shirts and jeans, but one or two might have on a vest or silly hat. One of the girls has long, blonde, ironed hair.

RAY

It's really going to happen, isn't it?

BRIAN

The album? Yeah. It was kind of floundering for a while there, but I'm back on track.

RAY

It's going to be a great album, Brian. Maybe it'll even...

BRIAN

...give us world peace?

Ray doesn't answer. He's in the grip of powerful emotions: hope, fear, regret.

BRIAN (cont'd)

Ray? You doing okay, man?

RAY

(choked up)

Sure.

BRIAN

I was thinking. Are you tired? Because maybe we could get a burger and go back to the studio, maybe do some vocals. I'm really in the mood to work.

INT. STUDIO 3--NIGHT

The PLAYBACK continues in the background as Brian, in a darkened studio, puts down the VOCAL track, which we now hear as part of the mix.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS YARD--NIGHT

As the PLAYBACK, now with multitracked vocals, continues, Ray holds a microphone, connected to a backpack field recorder, up to a gurgling fountain in the yard of some mansion. Ray turns to see two amused POLICEMEN who have come up behind him, obviously wanting an explanation.

INT. STUDIO 3--NIGHT? DAY? WHO KNOWS?

The PLAYBACK continues, adding horns and percussion. Ray and Brian and Hal Blaine sprawl in folding chairs in the studio, exhausted, laughing.

INT. BRIAN'S GARAGE--DAY

The PLAYBACK continues, adding sound effects. Ray, with his field recorder again, records a playing card rattling in the spokes of a bicycle, which we HEAR on the soundtrack.

INT. STUDIO 3--LATE NIGHT

The PLAYBACK slowly fades. Brian works at a mixing console while Ray sleeps on the studio floor.

INT. WESTERN STUDIOS--DAY

Ray, David Anderle, Diane Rovell, and Carl Wilson are sitting in the hall outside the studio, waiting for Brian to finish the final mix of Smile.

DAVID

I was starting to believe this day would never come. Now I have to figure out how I'm going to pitch this thing to Capitol.

RAY

Tell them this. Say, "You may not sell a million units of this today. But you will. And you'll still be selling it twenty, thirty, forty years from now."

The door to the studio opens and Brian sticks his head out.

BRIAN

It's done.

INT. STUDIO 3--DAY

There are four folding chairs in the middle of the room, facing the booth, and nothing else. Ray, David, Diane, and Carl sit down. Brian looks at Ray and points a finger at him, as if to tell him that he's the one that made this happen. Then he gives a thumbs-up and goes into the booth.

ANGLE ON RAY

The lights dim. We slowly close on RAY as the MUSIC begins. His initial pleasure turns to sadness as he realizes that he's done what he came to do, and there's nothing to hold him there any longer. The music begins to distort and echo as the image of Ray's face slowly fades into a long helicopter shot over clear, blue-green water.

INT. MAIN CABIN OF AIRPLANE--DAY

The water is what Ray is seeing out the window from his passenger seat. He looks very bad: deep circles under his eyes, pasty skin. He's lost a lot of weight, and though he's not skinny yet, he's substantially thinner than he was in the first scene.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (INTERCOM)  
We're making our final descent into Cozumel. Please make sure your seat belts are fastened and your seats and tray tables are in the locked and upright position.

Ray shivers, and reaches up to shut the AC valve over his head.

EXT. COZUMEL AIRPORT--DAY

Ray emerges from the airport in blinding sunlight and looks around. Tom, the divemaster, gets up from where he was sitting on the hood of a slightly battered car with a magnetic sign that says COZUMEL DIVE SURFARI on the side. Lori is several yards away, leaning against another car, arms folded, wearing sunglasses and a loose, short sleeved man's shirt, looking out toward the street. It's not obvious at first that she has anything to do with Tom.

TOM  
Ray Shackelford?

RAY  
(shaking his hand)  
Hey. You must be Tom.

TOM  
I want you to know how sorry I am  
about your father. I wish to hell  
there was something, anything, we  
could have done...

RAY  
I know all that. I'm not down here  
to make trouble.

Lori pushes off the car and confronts Ray.

LORI  
Then why the hell are you down  
here? If you don't mind my asking?

RAY  
Sorry?

TOM  
This is Lori. My...assistant.

LORI  
His partner.

Lori gives Tom an annoyed look and shakes Ray's hand stiffly.

TOM  
She's worried about lawsuits.

RAY  
I've got no complaint with you  
guys. I'll put it in writing if  
you like. I've got some personal  
stuff to work through, that's all.

Tom stows Ray's luggage in the trunk.

LORI  
I'll get in back.

As Lori climbs in, her shirt droops forward, giving Ray an unexpected glimpse of one bare breast. The contrast between her sexuality and her aggression clearly throws him off balance.

TOM  
You coming?

INT. TOM'S CAR--DAY

TOM  
Long flight?

RAY  
No, it was fine.

TOM  
You look a little tired.

RAY  
I just got out of the hospital.

TOM  
Nothing serious, I hope. Sorry.  
I'm being nosy.

RAY  
No, that's okay. I got really  
sick, out of nowhere. I was  
unconscious in a rent car by the  
side of the road for two days  
before somebody found me.

Lori has been ignoring Ray, but this last speech catches her attention.

TOM  
Jesus.

RAY  
I'm okay. Still a little  
dehydrated is all.

TOM  
You going to be able to dive?

RAY  
Maybe. Mostly I just needed to be  
here. Get it all in my head. You  
know?

Lori looks out the window again.

TOM  
Sure. Whatever you need.

## INT. RAY'S CABIN AT THE DIVE SHOP--DAY

It's a small, cinderblock room with a double bed, a closet, and a bathroom with a drain in the middle of the floor. Ray is finishing unpacking, setting a small stack of CDs next to his Diskman. One of them is homemade, with the word SMiLE written across the face with a black marker. Ray stands gripping the edge of the table as a wave of dizziness comes over him.

## EXT. THE DIVE SHOP--DAY

Ray exits his cabin. On the sand behind the dive shop are several weathered metal tables and folding chairs, as well as a hut outfitted as a bar.

He walks across the sand to where Tom and Lori are sitting with the other guests: DR. STEVE LANG, a psychiatrist in his fifties; ALLYSON, an overdeveloped teenage girl; PAM and RICHARD, Ken and Barbie-esque airline employees.

TOM

There he is. How about a beer?

RAY

Sure.

Tom gets up to fetch him one as Ray sits down. Ray looks at the colorful label on the bottle of mineral water that Lori's drinking.

RAY (cont'd)

On second thought, could I have one of those?

Tom shrugs and goes into the hut.

RAY (cont'd)

(to Lori)

That stuff any good?

LORI

I'm an alcoholic.

RAY

Oh.

LORI

I've been sober two years. It doesn't taste like much of anything.

An awkward silence. Tom comes back with the mineral water.

TOM

You must have a lot of questions.

RAY

Not really. That other guy...

TOM

Adkisson.

RAY

Yeah. He sent me a copy of the videotape. So I know the circumstances. I just don't know what they add up to.

TOM

I don't know what happened with your father. It was the end of a regular drift dive and we were out of air. All of a sudden he just starts swimming down. He didn't look panicked or confused. I caught him at ninety feet, and he turned around and gave me the okay sign. But he seemed to just give out on the way up. By the time we got to the surface he was dead.

LORI

His mask was full of vomit.

TOM

Lori, for Christ's sake.

LORI

When Tom gave him mouth-to-mouth, he got your father's vomit all over his face.

DR. STEVE

(to Lori)

Why do you have this compulsion for ugly truths? Is it a substitute for your addiction to alcohol?

TOM

Will you both just shut up?

DR. STEVE

(to Ray)

You and your father, were you close?

RAY

(impulsively)

No, I hated his guts, actually. I just never got to tell him that.

LORI

Hah! Sorry. I wasn't expecting that.

She takes her sunglasses off to rub the bridge of her nose. Ray's eyes lock with hers.

TOM

It's dinner time. Anybody want to eat?

Lori puts the glasses back on and the moment is over.

LORI

Why not?

EXT. THE DIVE BOAT, AT SEA--DAY

It's the next day. Tom, Ray, Dr. Steve, Allyson, Pam, and Richard are on the boat, with HECTOR, the young Mexican boat driver. Everybody is getting into their dive gear. Tom and Ray are at the stern of the boat, looking into the water.

TOM

This is about where we went in the day your father died. Are you sure you want to do this?

RAY

I need to do this.

EXT. UNDERWATER--DAY

Looking up at the knife-edge of the boat slicing the surface. Explosions of bubbles as the divers enter the water.

Ray's POV looking at the deep, blue water and the reef underneath it, the divers at different depths like skydivers.



RAY (v.o.)  
Dave was at the hospital when I  
woke up. It was the same world I'd  
left--there was no Smile in it.  
Not yet.

LATER

Tom is obviously keeping a very close watch on Ray. He taps him on the shoulder and points to a beautiful spotted ray as it swims past.

RAY (v.o.)  
But I had the whole thing in my  
head. I took two weeks to get my  
strength back, and then I put it on  
tape in five days.

LATER STILL

The divers in a long line, swimming over a stretch of dead coral.

RAY (v.o.)  
Dave offered to send me to the  
tropical beach of my choice to  
recuperate. That made me think of  
Cozumel.

EVEN LATER STILL

Tom beckons Ray to the edge of a drop-off. The wall of coral, nearly vertical, disappears into seemingly infinite depths. Tom points over the edge. Ray, somber, nods, and floats for a long moment, looking down.

RAY (v.o.)  
It was time to face my father.

EXT. THE DIVE BOAT--DAY

Everybody is back on board, stowing tanks, getting beer out of the ice chest. Ray stands looking over the side. Tom walks up to him, drying his hair with a towel.

TOM  
You okay?

RAY

I guess I was expecting some kind of epiphany or something.

TOM

I don't think you get those by going out looking for them.

RAY

You're probably right.

TOM

Listen, a bunch of us are going down to the local disco tonight. Pretty corny, but it's what passes for a good time around here.

RAY

I'm pretty beat. I better pass.

TOM

Okay.

He starts to walk away, then turns back, a sympathetic look on his face.

TOM (cont'd)

Nobody should ever have to go through losing a parent. But if we live long enough, it happens to us all.

EXT. A BEACH NEAR THE DIVE SHOP--DAY

A long shot of Ray, showered and changed, as he stands looking out to sea. The sun is just above the horizon. It's as beautiful as a postcard, but it also feels as lonely as the surface of the moon.

EXT. THE DIVE SHOP--DAY

The sunset is turning everything red. On his way back to his room, Ray sees Lori sitting on a lawn chair in front of the dive shop, reading a Harlequin romance and listening to COUNTRY MUSIC on a jam box--King's Record Shop by Rosanne Cash. They nod to each other. Ray walks past her, then stops.

RAY

Did I say something to piss you off?

(MORE)

RAY(cont'd)

I guess I should leave it alone,  
but I don't understand why you  
dislike me so much.

LORI

I don't dislike you at all.

RAY

I guess I have to believe you. You  
have this thing about the truth,  
right?

LORI

(sighs)

I think you're attractive and  
everything, but you're married.  
It's obvious you came down here  
looking for trouble. I just don't  
want to be the trouble you find.

Ray looks at his hand, sees the wedding ring still there. He  
takes it off and throws it as far as he can out to sea.

LORI (cont'd)

How are you going to explain that  
to your wife?

RAY

We're separated. I should have  
done that a long time ago. How  
come you're not in town with the  
others?

LORI

I got to see everybody drunk last  
night. Your friend Dave called  
here this afternoon, by the way.  
He wanted to make sure you were  
okay.

RAY

What did you tell him?

LORI

I said the jury was still out. You  
want a drink?

RAY

Yeah. But I guess I'll have some  
of that mineral water instead.

EXT. THE DIVE SHOP--NIGHT

The sun is just down, and Ray and Lori are sitting at one of the tables behind the dive shop. The jam box is still PLAYING.

RAY  
So is that Rosanne Cash?

LORI  
I'm impressed. I wouldn't have figured you for a country music fan.

RAY  
I'm not, particularly.

LORI  
I like country music. It's music for grownups. Having to get up and go in to a job you hate every day, or living with somebody who treats you like you don't matter, or watching your kids grow up and move away.

RAY  
You don't have any kids, though, do you?

Lori shakes her head.

RAY (cont'd)  
And as jobs go, yours doesn't seem too bad.

LORI  
(hastily)  
So what do you listen to?

Ray looks at her for a second to show that he knows she's derailing the conversation. Then he looks away for another second while he decides if he wants to do this.

RAY  
I'll show you.

A MINUTE LATER

Ray comes back from his room with the Smile CD. Lori's taken Rosanne off and Ray puts Smile on.

It starts with some SOUND EFFECTS, then PLAYS the long version of "Heroes and Villains."

LORI

Oh, the Beach Boys. I used to really like them.

RAY

How long have you and Tom been together?

LORI

I met him in Greece, nine years ago. I was between jobs, on a Eurail Pass, and he had a sailboat. It was like one of my novels--the sun-drenched islands, the photogenic couple, him teaching me to dive and sail.

RAY

I'm incredibly jealous.

LORI

Unfortunately nobody pays you to sail around and drink retsina all day. Tom heard about this dive shop for sale--I had some savings, he sold the boat, and here we are.

RAY

Listening to country music and reading romances.

LORI

I'm a victim of my culture. No matter how many degrees a woman has, she's nothing without a Grand Passion.

RAY

What if I told you I felt the same way?

LORI

Only not about your wife, right? Obviously not about your wife.

RAY

I thought I did. But it was like getting caught in an undertow. You're swimming as hard as you can and the shore just keeps getting farther away.

LORI  
But that doesn't mean it can't  
happen.

Ray sees something in her eyes.

RAY  
No. It doesn't mean that.

Suddenly Lori notices what's happening on the stereo.

LORI  
This is different. Isn't it?

Ray nods. Lori laughs at the strangeness of the music.

LORI (cont'd)  
What is it?

RAY  
It's kind of a long story. This is  
a side project of mine, finding  
master tapes, rescuing lost albums.

LORI  
Ah. We're perfect for each other,  
then, aren't we? You're a Rescuer  
and I'm a Victim.

EXT. THE DIVE SHOP--NIGHT

Much, much later. The boom box is now PLAYING John Hiatt's  
Slow Turning. Ray and Lori are laughing.

LORI  
My god, how late is it?

RAY  
Late.

They suddenly notice VOICES from the road. Lori abruptly  
turns the volume all the way off and stops the boom box as  
she gets to her feet.

LORI  
(cold)  
I have to go in. I don't want to,  
but there it is.

RAY  
That's twice.

LORI

What?

RAY

Twice you've said something about Tom. If you do it again I'll have to ask.

LORI

And if you ask, I'll have to tell you, right? Being compulsively honest as I am. So I should make up my mind whether I want to tell you, and you should decide if you really want to hear it.

RAY

I've got no place to go.

LORI

Do you mean it? No, I couldn't possibly...

RAY

What?

LORI

Ask you to wait. Tom'll be asleep in half an hour and I can come back.

RAY

I'll wait.

As he says this, he reaches out to touch Lori's hand, which is still resting on the table. She jerks it away.

LORI

Sorry. I was flirting, and I shouldn't have. If I come back, it's just to talk, okay?

RAY

You're thinking that you were right. That I am looking for trouble.

LORI

I never doubted it.

EXT. THE ROAD BEHIND THE DIVE SHOP--NIGHT

It's a few minutes later. Ray wanders around in the moonlight, stops to pick up a rock and throw it into the underbrush. He's smiling.

EXT. THE DIVE SHOP--NIGHT

Later. Ray is back in his chair, eyes closed, maybe asleep. He looks up and Lori is there. She's obviously washed her face, but there's something else different about her, a kind of distance.

LORI  
Where were we?

She sits down across from him again.

RAY  
You were going to tell me everything.

LORI  
I was going to think about it. And I think I'd rather not spoil this wonderful night.

RAY  
Then tell me about the first boy you ever kissed.

LORI  
You're flirting again.

RAY  
But I'm not touching. So I'm within the rules.

LORI  
(beat)  
Dougie Potter. Third grade.

INT. RAY'S ROOM--DAY

Ray is sleeping. There's a KNOCK at the door and Tom's voice.

TOM (O.S.)  
It's eight o'clock. You diving today?



RAY  
Uh...maybe this afternoon?

TOM (O.S.)  
It's an all-day trip. Take it or  
leave it.

RAY  
I'll pass, thanks.

TOM (O.S.)  
Later, guy.

Ray turns over and is instantly asleep again.

EXT. DOWNTOWN COZUMEL--DAY

Narrow streets, low, modern buildings, lots of tourists, lots of tourist shops with the same hammocks, onyx chess sets, and T-shirts. Ray is strolling down the sidewalk, taking it all in, when the Dive Surfari car rolls up next to him, Lori at the wheel.

LORI  
I wondered if I might run into you  
here.

Ray leans in the passenger window.

RAY  
Did you get any sleep at all?

LORI  
I'm not complaining. Got any plans  
for lunch?

RAY  
I'm going to live dangerously here  
and tell you I'm free without  
checking my calendar.

LORI  
The tropics seem to be loosening  
you right up. How about a picnic?

EXT. A BEACH--DAY

It's a deserted, rocky beach at the east end of the island. Lori and Ray are sitting cross-legged in the sand on opposite sides of a red checked table cloth holding a wicker hamper and the remains of a meal.

The ever-present jam box sits on a nearby rock, PLAYING "Could You Be Loved" by Bob Marley and the Wailers.

RAY  
I have no idea what we're doing here.

LORI  
Eating lunch.

RAY  
I want to touch you. I want to dance with you to Rosanne Cash.  
(beat)  
I want to make love to you.

LORI  
Ah, sex. Sex is more difficult.

RAY  
Sex is easy. Everybody does it.

Lori turns sideways, hugs her knees, breaking the comfortable mood.

RAY (cont'd)  
I'm sorry. That was tactless.

LORI  
It's not you, it's me. I don't have orgasms easily, that's part of it.

RAY  
I'm almost getting used to having conversations like this with you. Not easily, or not at all?

LORI  
I can come. With a lot of patience and tenderness.

RAY  
Which you don't get from Tom.

LORI  
Not in a long time. There's sex. Tom comes. Every 48 hours--you could set your watch. You're getting tired of this, right? The truth all the time?

RAY  
Is that what...last night...

LORI

Yes. I had to excuse myself to perform my duties.

Ray takes a couple of seconds to chew on that one.

RAY

You said that was only part of it.

LORI

Are you sure you want to hear the rest? My grandfather molested me, from the time I was three or four until I was eleven and old enough to keep away from him. My mother was a drunk and let it happen because it kept him off of her. Lots of us had tough childhoods. I decided I wasn't going to spend the rest of my life crying about it.

Lori opens up her posture a little, looks at Ray, not without sympathy.

LORI (cont'd)

I think maybe you're still crying about yours.

RAY

I can't compete. I just had parents that didn't give a damn about me.

LORI

And there's not ever enough love to make up for that, is there? Believe me, I know. But like my grandpa used to say, if you want something done right you have to do it yourself.

(beat)

Of course he may have gone a little far with it.

RAY

Jesus, Lori.

LORI

I warned you. I'm damaged goods, Ray. You should run away as fast as you can.

RAY

We're both damaged. If I told you how much, you wouldn't believe me.

LORI

Does this have anything to do with that Beach Boys CD you played me?

RAY

How did you know that?

LORI

I think it was that phony line about "side projects."

RAY

What I told you was the truth. I find lost albums. The thing is, I find them in my head. And once I can hear them in my head, I can make them come out of a stereo so other people can hear them too.

LORI

Don't show me. I'll take your word for it.

RAY

It gets weirder. I couldn't visualize Smile, and I ended up having this...episode. It felt like I was in 1966, with Brian Wilson, helping him finish Smile. I can't say it wasn't all a hallucination. But when I got out of the hospital, I had the whole album in my head.

LORI

So that's how you ended up in the rent car for two days.

RAY

It took a lot out of me.

LORI

Being a Rescuer usually does. It can kill you if you don't watch out.

RAY

You're taking this awfully calmly.

LORI  
If it felt real to you, it was  
real.

RAY  
You sound like Brian. Feelings are  
all that's real.

LORI  
He's right.

Lori lies back in the sand. The WAILERS PLAY on the stereo.

LORI (cont'd)  
I wonder sometimes why people can't  
just be happy. Not when your  
grandfather is molesting you or  
your father is knocking you around,  
but the rest of the time. Why  
can't you be like this?  
Just...happy?

INT. A RESTAURANT--NIGHT

Sitting around a table at a restaurant in downtown Cozumel  
are Tom, who is sitting close to Lori, Dr. Steve, Allyson,  
and Ray. Lori is basically looking at her plate, definitely  
not happy, and Ray is clearly uncomfortable.

ALLYSON  
I thought I would be so scared. I  
mean, like, sharks! You know? But  
they didn't give a shit for me at  
all. It was like watching a  
hurricane or a forest fire.

DR. STEVE  
Me, I'm afraid of hurricanes and  
forest fires.

TOM  
(to Ray)  
We're going to hit the south end  
tomorrow. I'd hate to think of you  
going back Stateside without  
getting in another dive.

It's two hints in one--quit hanging around the dive shop with  
my girlfriend, and start thinking about going home.

RAY  
Sure. Sounds good.

TOM  
 (to Lori)  
 If Ray's coming, we'll have a full house. I'll need you on the boat.

Lori nods without looking up. Ray is trying to meet her eyes without success.

DR. STEVE  
 (to Ray)  
 So, made any progress?

RAY  
 What?

DR. STEVE  
 On this father business. It's highly symbolic, you know, to lose your father to the Abyss. It's a potent symbol, like the crossroads-- where the physical and spiritual worlds cross. I think of Nietzsche's line about the Abyss staring back to you. Jung had something about it also, which I can't bring to mind.

ALLYSON  
 Oh my god. Nietzsche and Jung. I think the poor guy just needs to get laid.

EXT. THE DIVE SHOP--NIGHT

Ray sits where he was sitting the night before, but Lori isn't there. He looks at his watch, sighs, gets up and walks toward his room.

EXT. THE DIVE BOAT, AT SEA--DAY

Ray is sitting near the stern, Hector standing nearby. Ray is watching Lori as she helps sort through the dive gear with Allyson. Tom is driving the boat; Dr. Steve, Pam, and Richard are also on deck.

HECTOR  
 I seen where you looking, man. You shouldn't do that. Tom is a very jealous guy.

RAY

I'm not sure I care that much what happens to me right now.

HECTOR

You're not the one has to, como se dice, pick up the check, you know?

RAY

What are you saying?

Hector glances at Lori, then smacks his right fist into the cupped palm of his left hand.

HECTOR

It's very fucked up, man.

LATER

It's clouded up, though it doesn't look rainy. Ray is in his tank, mask, and fins at the stern of the boat. He steps over the side.

EXT. UNDERWATER--CONTINUOUS

Tom, Ray, Dr. Steve, Allyson, Pam, and Richard are in the water. Something is clearly wrong with Ray, however. He starts to shiver almost immediately, rubbing his arms like he's cold.

Tom begins to herd everyone into a widely spaced group, drifting along the reef in the strong current.

RAY (v.o.)

It was the one question that kept haunting me.

LATER

While the others are swimming around, pointing at fish or coral, Ray is turned inward, barely moving, depressed. Compared to the previous dive, the clouds make this one seem gray and ominous.

Tom can clearly tell that something is bugging Ray. He swims over and checks on him, somewhat insistently.

RAY (v.o.)  
What was he thinking when he went  
over the edge? What was in his  
head?

STILL LATER

It's the end of the dive. Everyone is hovering in the shallows. Dr. Steve shows Tom his air gauge. Tom nods and Dr. Steve and Allyson head for the surface.

RAY (v.o.)  
The answer turned out to be--

Richard pulls Tom away to look at something. Ray flips his reserve lever on his tank. He's supposed to immediately go to the surface now, but instead he slowly swims to the edge of the dropoff. Very slowly he goes over the edge. He begins to swim downward, picking up speed.

RAY (v.o.)  
--nothing at all.

As he goes deeper, the color leeches out of everything. The water becomes a deeper blue and the coral turns a dark, purplish brown. After a few seconds, he closes his eyes and stretches out his arms toward the abyss.

Suddenly a hand grabs one of his fins, stopping him short. He looks back, confused. Tom looms over him, grabs the straps of his tank and shakes him.

They swim up. Ray is out of air. He touches his mouthpiece with two fingers to indicate that his tank is empty. Tom stares at him, as if trying to make up his mind. Ray takes the mouthpiece out and shows Tom that no bubbles are coming out of it, then throws it over his shoulder. Tom grudgingly passes Ray his mouthpiece. Ray takes one breath, then gives it back, pushes Tom away, and swims for the surface.

EXT. THE DIVE BOAT--DAY

Ray comes up the ladder and walks over to an empty seat, shucking his tank as he walks. As Tom comes up the ladder onto the boat, Ray goes through the post-dive ritual of removing the regulator and blowing the connection dry with air from the tank--only there's no air left. His hands are shaking so badly that the regulator falls to the deck with a thump. Dr. Steve and Lori both turn at the sound, but Tom pointedly ignores him.



Lori, seeing something is wrong, walks over to hand him a towel.

LORI  
 (quietly)  
 What's wrong? What happened down there?

Ray doesn't answer. In the background Pam and Richard look at each other--everybody knows something's happened.

EXT. THE DIVE SHOP--DAY

The dock in front of the shop. The boat is tied up and everyone is walking off, still subdued and looking at each other for clues.

Ray hoses off his equipment and starts toward his room. Tom is following, almost on top of him, and as Ray opens the door of his room, Tom shoves him inside, hard.

INT. RAY'S ROOM--CONTINUOUS

Ray hits the wall and turns to face Tom, who crowds him.

TOM  
 (enraged)  
 Another ten feet and we'd both be dead. What the fuck were you thinking?

Ray can only shrug. Tom slaps the wall next to Ray's head, and Ray doesn't react, just stares back at him.

TOM (cont'd)  
 I don't put up with this shit on my tours. I want you out of here, on a plane, tomorrow morning.

RAY  
 (nodding)  
 Yeah, okay.

TOM  
 And when you get back to the States, find yourself some help. Because you are one screwed up son of a bitch.

Tom slams the door on his way out.

INT. RAY'S ROOM--NIGHT

Ray is lying in the dark, hands behind his head. He looks at the clock: almost midnight. He turns on the light, gets his suitcase out of the closet, starts to pack his things.

A KNOCK at the door. Ray opens it. It's Lori.

LORI  
Can I come in?

Ray still isn't speaking. He steps out of her way as she enters and closes the door.

LORI (cont'd)  
I had to wait for Tom to pass out before I could come see you...are you not going to tell me what happened today?

RAY  
I tried to kill myself.  
Apparently.

LORI  
You mean, like your father?

RAY  
That's what it looked like.

LORI  
You sound like you weren't even there.

RAY  
In a way, I wasn't. It doesn't matter. It's over. I'm leaving tomorrow morning.

LORI  
(softly)  
No...

RAY  
Come with me.

LORI  
If only it was that easy.

RAY  
It is that easy. You don't belong with him. You know that.

LORI  
I know. But if you make that  
decision for me, then I'm just  
trading Tom for you.

RAY  
Is that such a bad trade?

LORI  
It would mean I hadn't really  
changed. I have to do this myself,  
in my own time.

She opens the door, looks both ways.

LORI (cont'd)  
Come outside. Walk with me.

EXT. A BEACH--NIGHT

Lori and Ray have walked a good ways from the dive shop along  
a deserted beach. They're walking side by side, but not  
touching.

RAY  
I don't know how I'm going to get  
on that plane.

LORI  
The last two days have been sweet  
and romantic and wonderful. But  
don't try to make them into more  
than that.

RAY  
They were more than that, and you  
know it.

LORI  
We should turn back.

She turns and starts to walk back toward the dive shop. Ray  
stands, watching her, but doesn't follow. After a dozen  
steps, Lori looks back.

LORI (cont'd)  
Are you coming?

RAY  
You don't want me to go back to  
Texas any more than I do.

LORI

So?

RAY

So can't you at least admit it?

LORI

Why? So it can hurt even more? If you'd come along twenty years ago-- or a couple of years from now-- things could have been different. Your timing stinks, Ray.

Lori goes to him and puts one hand on his face. It's the first time they've actually touched, and it's electric. Very slowly Ray reaches for her and draws her into a kiss. It begins gently and heats up quickly. They begin to undress each other, but their eyes are locked on each other the entire time.

LATER

Ray and Lori lie in the sand, naked, holding each other for warmth.

RAY

Lori, I--

She puts her fingers on his mouth.

LORI

Don't. There are all these things we're about to say to each other and I can't bear it, I absolutely cannot stand it if it happens. In five hours you're going to be on an airplane, and nothing you say is going to change that.

INT. MAIN CABIN OF AIRPLANE--DAY

Ray, on the plane back to Texas, looks like a mental patient-- sleepless, bloodshot eyes, vacant stare.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Something to drink, sir?

Ray stares at her and thinks about it for a long time, then finally shakes his head and turns to look back out the window.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT  
Are you all right sir?

Ray ignores her--not out of rudeness, he just hasn't heard.

INT. RAY'S HOUSE--NIGHT

Ray lies on the couch, the video of his father's death reflected in the glass in his hand. There's a bottle of mineral water on the coffee table near him.

INT. RAY'S REFRIGERATOR--DAY

From the inside of Ray's refrigerator, looking out. In the immediate foreground are five cans of beer, with food visible on the other shelves. Ray is counting them, fighting the temptation to drink one of them.

RAY  
One, two, three...

INT. RAY'S WORKSHOP--NIGHT

Ray, trying to work, puts his soldering iron down in disgust, pushes back his chair, and heads downstairs.

INT. RAY'S REFRIGERATOR--NIGHT

From the inside of Ray's refrigerator, looking out. Still five cans of beer.

RAY  
Three, four, five.

INT. RAY'S KITCHEN--DAY

Ray is on the phone to Dave.

RAY  
Yeah, I tried a couple of times and got the machine. Which I guess is better than Tom answering.

DAVE (PHONE)  
Clearly you need something to take your mind off this woman. If I send you a plane ticket, will you just trust me and use it?

RAY  
A ticket to where?

DAVE (PHONE)  
Seattle.

EXT. GREENWOOD MEMORIAL PARK, SEATTLE--DAY

Ray stands at Jimi Hendrix's grave, a flat perpetual care stone. His head is slightly bowed and his mood is serious. Dave stands to one side, looking at Ray, hiding a faint smile.

EXT. EXPERIENCE MUSIC PROJECT--DAY

The distinctive shape of the museum is visible in the background as Dave and Ray pull up in a rent car.

RAY  
I'm beginning to sense a theme,  
here.

DAVE  
Just trust me, okay?

INT. EXPERIENCE MUSIC PROJECT--DAY

Ray and Dave stroll through the exhibits, talking. They're in an area devoted to Jimi Hendrix.

DAVE  
We are selling that Smile bootleg  
like crazy. In fact, I've got a  
royalty check for you.

He hands Ray a business-size check.

RAY  
I feel weird taking this. This  
money should go to Brian.

DAVE  
In this universe, Brian never  
finished the album.

Ray folds the check and puts it in his wallet.

DAVE (cont'd)

But that's not all. Last week I got a letter, by messenger, from a VP at Capitol. He said he knew it was me selling Smile, and he didn't care. That he was a shipping clerk in 1966 and he's been waiting most of his life for this.

RAY

(half heartedly)

That's pretty amazing.

DAVE

It's beyond amazing. For an industry VP to put something like that in writing? It means we were right. This album is actually changing people. We are changing the world.

RAY

That's what this is about, isn't it? You want me to do another album.

DAVE

This isn't like Smile. This would be easy. Hendrix would have finished it himself except for a stupid accident.

RAY

First Rays of the New Rising Sun.

DAVE

Talk about albums that could really change the world. The ultimate fusion album--rock, jazz, blues, R&B. Healing music, unifying music.

RAY

I can't do it, man. Smile almost killed me.

DAVE

It's not like you'd actually have to go back after it. It would be like the Beatles song, you could just sit around the studio and make it happen.

RAY  
 (very quiet)  
 It's not that I'd have to go back.  
 It's that I'd want to.

DAVE  
 Jesus Christ.

RAY  
 Yeah.

DAVE  
 Look, I'm sorry I said anything.  
 Just forget about it, will you?  
 I'm completely serious.

Dave turns away, but Ray is still looking at the exhibit,  
 which talks about Jimi's father.

DAVE  
 Ray?

INT. RAY'S HOUSE, AUSTIN--DAY

Ray stands at the telephone, maybe trying to talk himself out  
 of calling. He finally picks up the receiver and dials.

LORI (PHONE)  
 Hello?

Ray thought he was going to get the machine again, and he's  
 instantly galvanized.

RAY  
 It's Ray.

LORI (PHONE)  
 John, how are you? How're the  
 kids?

RAY  
 He's there, right? So you can't  
 talk?

LORI (PHONE)  
 (brightly)  
 Of course.

RAY  
 First I have to know if you're  
 okay. He didn't hurt you, did he?  
 (MORE)



RAY(cont'd)

Because of being out all night with me?

LORI (PHONE)

I'm fine. Really.

RAY

There's so much I need to say to you, and I can't do it with him there listening.

LORI (PHONE)

(artificially cheerful)

That's right!

RAY

I miss you.

LORI (PHONE)

Me too.

There's a long, painful silence. Ray's face shows his frustration and helplessness.

RAY

I guess I should go.

LORI (PHONE)

That would be a good idea.

RAY

You have my number, here, right?

LORI (PHONE)

Mmm hmmm.

RAY

I love you.

LORI (PHONE)

(after a silence)

Take care of yourself.

RAY

Yeah. You too.

EXT. GATWICK AIRPORT, LONDON--DAY

A jet lands.

EXT. HOTEL RUSSEL, LONDON--DAY

Ray gets out of a taxi with a single hanging bag and goes into the hotel.

EXT. WARDOUR STREET--DAY

Ray gets out of a cab in front of a row of upscale shops and restaurants.

RAY (v.o.)

The Marquee Club used to be right there. Where the Stones and the Yardbirds and countless other bands got their start. This whole block burned down a few years ago, so there's not even an original brick remaining.

EXT. 48 MARGARET STREET--DAY

Ray stands in front of a gray office block in central London.

RAY (v.o.)

The Speakeasy was downstairs. After the show at the Marquee, everyone would come here for spaghetti and a few rum and cokes. Hendrix would likely show up and jam until dawn.

Ray tries the double glass doors, which are locked, and peers through the glass.

RAY (v.o.)

Now the stairs go the wrong direction.

EXT. LANSDOWNE CRESCENT--DAY

Ray walks down a tree-lined suburban street in the Notting Hill neighborhood. The sycamores are in full green leaf and the sun is shining. He stops in front of a white two-story house; there's a black wrought-iron staircase that descends to a flat on the basement level.

RAY (v.o.)

Jimi died because he was careless with prescription drugs.

(MORE)

RAY(cont'd)

It happened in Monika Danneman's flat, downstairs. He could just as easily have woken up with a bad hangover. Or they could have sat him up in the ambulance. It would have taken so little.

INT. RAY'S HOTEL ROOM--NIGHT

Ray pulls on a V-neck sweater and examines himself in the mirror. He could pass for a citizen of any time from now to the 1950s. He is very thin, his tan is fading, and there is something too intense about his eyes. He sits on the edge of the bed and begins to set the scene, out loud:

RAY

It's Friday, September 18, 1970. Lansdowne Crescent. White columns and potted plants on the balconies. It's gray and cool and there may be rain later. An ambulance pulls up in front of the building...

EXT. LANSDOWNE CRESCENT--DAY

...and he's there. It's the same scene we just saw, but now the trees have changed color and it's chilly and overcast. The ambulance is parked at the head of the iron stairs and two MEDICS are taking out a stretcher. Ray stands for a beat, taking it in, then he pushes his way past the attendants and rushes down the stairs.

INT. MONIKA'S APARTMENT--DAY

JIMI HENDRIX is unconscious in the bedroom, his face stained with vomit, but he is twitching and clearly still alive. Jimi's girlfriend, MONIKA, blonde, German, 20s, stands near him, wringing her hands.

MONIKA

(heavy German accent)

Are you the doctor?

RAY

I'm a friend of Jimi's. Don't worry. The ambulance is upstairs.

On cue, the medics come in with the stretcher.

RAY  
 (to medics)  
 He's overdosed on Vesperax.

FIRST MEDIC  
 How many?

RAY  
 Six or seven, I think. Listen, you  
 have to keep him sitting up in the  
 ambulance. He could choke.

SECOND MEDIC  
 We know what we're about. Piss on  
 off out of the way, we've got to  
 bring a litter through that door.

As the medics wrestle Jimi onto the stretcher, Ray takes  
 Monika's arm.

RAY  
 You should get your car.

Monika, still panicking, responds to Ray's paternal  
 confidence and authority.

MONIKA  
 Yes, yes, you are right.

EXT. LANSLOWNE CRESCENT--DAY

The ambulance is pulling away as Monika squeals up to the  
 curb in her blue sports car. Ray gets in the passenger seat.

INT. MONIKA'S CONVERTIBLE--DAY

Monika practically rides the ambulances bumper as they rush  
 toward St. Mary Abbots Hospital in Kensington.

MONIKA  
 He would not wake up. I am very  
 frightened.

RAY  
 It's going to be okay. As long as  
 they keep him sitting up, he'll be  
 fine. I promise.

EXT. ST. MARY ABBOTS HOSPITAL--DAY

A crumbling, dirty brick building. Monika parks the car and runs for the emergency entrance.

INT. ST. MARY ABBOTS HOSPITAL--DAY

Ray is leaning across a desk, talking to a NURSE. Monika frets behind him.

RAY  
The ambulance just brought him in.  
His name is Jimi Hendrix.

NURSE  
The pop star?

RAY  
That's right.

NURSE  
It's not drugs, is it?

RAY  
Vesperax, actually.

NURSE  
Oh, dear. Have a seat over there,  
I'll find out what I can.

AN HOUR LATER

Ray and Monika are sitting in the waiting area. The nurse from the previous scene passes by.

RAY  
Is there any word yet? It's been  
almost an hour.

NURSE  
He's coming just now.

A DOCTOR enters with a bad news look on his face. The nurse points to Ray and Monika.

DOCTOR  
I'm sorry. There was nothing we  
could do.

RAY  
(stunned)  
What?

DOCTOR  
Mr. Hendrix was in a head  
restraint in the ambulance--  
standard procedure in these cases--  
and he was unable to move to clear  
his throat. To be blunt, I'm  
afraid he choked to death.

RAY  
That's not possible.

DOCTOR  
I'm sorry.

As the doctor makes a sort of apologetic bow and walks away,  
Ray staggers to his feet.

MONIKA  
Ray? What is happening?

Ray ignores her and stumbles down the hall to the men's  
toilet.

INT. HOSPITAL TOILET--DAY

Ray turns on the hot water and throws some on his face. As  
the steam rises he stares at himself in the mirror. The face  
that looks back at him is pale, frozen in shock and horror.  
The mirror steams over and...

INT. RAY'S HOTEL ROOM--NIGHT

Back in the present. Ray is sprawled out across the bed. He  
tries to sit up and can't make it, collapsing back on the bed  
with a GROAN.

EXT. RAY'S HOUSE IN AUSTIN--DAY

Ray is exhausted and rather frail-looking as he carries his  
suitcase up to the front door of his house.

INT. RAY'S HOUSE--DAY

The answering machine in the kitchen. In the background, Ray putters around the kitchen, putting things away, getting a glass of water.

DAVE (ON MACHINE)  
 ...to see how it went in London.  
 Give me a call.

The machine BEEPS.

MAN (ON MACHINE)  
 I'm calling about your ad in the  
 Chronicle? My CD player skips?  
 But only on Metalica's Kill 'Em  
 All? Maybe you could take a look?

Ray is in the living room as the machine BEEPS again, looking at the poster of Hendrix on the wall.

SAME MAN (ON MACHINE)  
 Oh yeah, my name is Seth and my  
 number is 458...458...I'll call you  
 back.

Another BEEP. Ray is crying.

MACHINE  
 That was your last message.

INT. RAY'S BEDROOM--NIGHT

Ray is tossing and turning in bed. Finally he sits up, gets dressed, and leaves the room.

INT. RAY'S WORKSHOP--NIGHT

Ray enters, turns on the light, puts on a vinyl album of Hendrix's Cry of Love, the first posthumous album salvaged from the First Rays sessions.

He sits down at the workbench, lifts a shop towel to expose a disassembled amplifier. But he doesn't actually start working, he just stares at it for a couple of long seconds.

He stands up slowly. This is not the impulse that took him over the cliff in Cozumel--this is deliberate. He walks over to the couch, sits, and closes his eyes.

EXT. MARGARET STREET, LONDON--DAY

Ray stands across from the Speakeasy, wearing the same jeans, T-shirt and sport coat he had on in Austin. Needless to say, this is not the current office block, but instead the Speakeasy of 1970. He looks disoriented for only a second, then goes to a kiosk and grabs a newspaper.

RAY

September 16. I've still got two days.

KIOSK ATTENDANT

Two days for what, mate?

RAY

(joking--sort of)  
To save the world.

INT. THE SPEAKEASY--DAY

Ray enters through the double doors at one end of the club. It's dark and moody, with a low ceiling and wallpaper with a heart-shaped pattern, deserted at this hour. On Ray's right as he comes in is a restaurant area, walled off, with windows looking out at the tiny stage. Ray sits in one of the booths along the far wall. In the booth next to his, though he can't see them at this point, are ERIKA HANOVER, late 30s, very sensual, and TONY SANCHEZ, sometime purveyor of drugs to the Rolling Stones. Erika is wearing jeans, T-shirt, and a jacket, none of them terribly fresh. Tony has black wavy hair and sunglasses, and dresses like a gangster.

A bored waitress wanders over.

WAITRESS

What's yours, then, love?

RAY

Lemonade, please.

As she leaves, the voices from the next booth get louder.

TONY

No, Erika. I'm not going to help you kill yourself.

ERIKA

It's my life. And it's not worth a damn to me at the moment.



Tony stands up.

TONY  
I've got to get Mick to Paris for  
the Olympia on Sunday.

He kisses the top of her head.

TONY (cont'd)  
Get some help, all right?

Ray watches him leave, then visibly screws up his courage and gets up to stand by her booth.

RAY  
Erika Hanover?

ERIKA  
Please go away.

RAY  
I really admire your work.

ERIKA  
You couldn't possibly know my work.

RAY  
My favorite is the photo of Mick  
Jagger at the Hyde Park memorial  
concert for Brian Jones. He's  
covered with dying butterflies.  
Then there's the one of John  
Lennon, with Yoko reflected in his  
round mirrored sunglasses, she's in  
black, he's in white.

ERIKA  
Most people never look to see who  
took the picture.

RAY  
If I like something, I want to know  
who's responsible. I'm Ray.

She takes his hand.

ERIKA  
All right, Ray, you've impressed  
me. You may sit down. You're not  
holding, by any chance?

Ray hasn't heard the expression in decades. He looks puzzled as he sits.

ERIKA (cont'd)  
Have you any drugs?

RAY  
Sorry, no. What was that about you  
killing yourself?

ERIKA  
I'm a junkie, Ray. I came here  
hoping to score from Tony, and  
failing that, hoping someone else I  
knew might happen by.

RAY  
I'm sorry.

ERIKA  
You mustn't be. It's very  
liberating, heroin. You're just  
one more junkie. No one cares if  
you're a pop star or a photographer  
or on the dole. So what did you  
come here hoping to find, Ray?

RAY  
Well, actually, I was hoping to  
find Jimi Hendrix.

ERIKA  
Ah. Do you know Jimi?

RAY  
I've never met him. But I feel  
like I know him.

ERIKA  
Yes, he rather has that effect on  
people. He's a wonderful man. A  
true gentleman in the old-fashioned  
sense of the word. And a fantastic  
fuck, of course. Why were you  
looking for him?

RAY  
He's in danger. I can't tell you  
how I know, but it's literally life  
and death.

ERIKA  
You understand that I have to be  
careful. Jimi is one of God's  
innocents.

(MORE)

ERIKA(cont'd)

He has no discrimination with people, and he's so vulnerable.

RAY

I only want to help him.

ERIKA

I believe you do.

RAY

He's going to be at Ronnie Scott's club tonight, jamming with Eric Burdon and War. All I need is an introduction, a chance to talk to him for five minutes.

ERIKA

Let me think about it. Perhaps I'll see you there. Right now I have urgent business.

She smiles, and touches Ray's cheek, then stands up.

ERIKA (cont'd)

You seem to care so much for others, Ray. Is there anything left for you?

INT. RONNIE SCOTT'S JAZZ CLUB--NIGHT

Ray stands at the bar, constantly looking around for Erika. On stage, ERIC BURDON and WAR have just finished a song and the audience--mostly jazz types in turtlenecks and sport coats and goatees--are CHEERING and APPLAUDING.

ERIC

(thick Newcastle accent)

We'd like to bring on a good friend of ours...Mr. Jimi Hendrix.

Jimi gets up on stage and puts on his guitar. The band begins to play "Tobacco Road."

As the MUSIC plays, Ray moves through the crowd, increasingly anxious, searching for Erika.

LATER

The house lights are up now, and the club is empty except for Hendrix and his entourage, including Monika, Devon Wilson, Eric, Eric's girlfriend Alvinia Bridges, and a few others sitting down front, guarded by a very large and protective BOUNCER.

Ray, who's been standing by the bar fidgeting, walks up to the bouncer.

RAY  
Listen, I just need to talk to  
Jimi, just for two minutes. It's  
desperately important.

BOUNCER  
Always is, innit, mate? How about  
you sod off very nicely.

STILL LATER

Ray sits at the bar, head in hands, in despair.

ERIKA (O.S.)  
Hello, Ray.

Ray turns to see Erika, now obviously high, but also cleaned up and dressed up, on the arm of a YOUNG MAN in facial hair and pony tail. She doesn't bother to introduce him.

ERIKA (cont'd)  
Had a chance to meet Jimi, then?

RAY  
No. No, I haven't.

ERIKA  
Come along, then. (to the young  
man) I'll be right back.

She takes Ray by the arm and together they stroll past the bouncer, who nods to Erika respectfully. They approach Jimi, who is wearing a big, floppy hat and has his back to them.

ERIKA  
Jimi?

Jimi turns in his chair. He's exhausted, but his face lights up at the sight of Erika.

JIMI

Erika, baby, it's so good to see you.

She leans over to kiss him on the lips.

ERIKA

This is my friend Ray, from America. Could you spare him a couple of minutes?

Jimi offers his huge, ring-laden right hand, and Ray shakes it.

JIMI

Hello, Ray. Where do you know Erika from?

RAY

Another life.

Erika laughs at that and Jimi, a little reluctantly, joins in.

JIMI

What did you want to talk about, Ray?

RAY

Could we, I don't know, maybe go downstairs for a minute?

Jimi looks to Erika who first shrugs, then nods her approval.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS BAR AT RONNIE SCOTT'S--NIGHT

There's no one else there. Jimi sits backwards in a chair, and Ray leans against the bar.

RAY

This is going to sound weird however I say it. So I'm just going to come out with it.

JIMI

Yeah, okay, whatever.

RAY

I know you're open to things that most people aren't. UFOs and magic and spiritual things.

(MORE)

RAY(cont'd)

So maybe you'll give me a chance to convince you that I'm from the future.

JIMI

Oh, man.

RAY

I know things I couldn't possibly know otherwise. I know you've got a court date on Friday about the UK end of the Capitol Records lawsuit, and I know you're thinking about going back to New York afterwards to get the tapes for First Rays, so you can work on them with Chas Chandler.

Jimi looks torn between curiosity and alarm.

JIMI

Did Mike Jeffery send you?

RAY

No, I swear I've got nothing to do with managers or record companies or anything like that. I want you to finish the record.

JIMI

Me too.

RAY

I know your rooms at the Cumberland are a cover and you're actually staying with Monika at 23 Lansdowne Crescent. I know you just sent Billy Cox home because of an acid freakout. I know you can't trust any of the people who are all over you because they all want something from you.

JIMI

Man, it's like, I don't know anymore, you understand? There's all these people and there's like this peace and love thing, and maybe these people really do love me, but...

RAY

And all I want is to save your life.

JIMI  
(alarmed)  
My life?

RAY  
Tomorrow night, Thursday night,  
you're not going to be able to  
sleep, and you're going to ask  
Monika for some sleeping pills.  
She's going to give you some  
Vesperax. It's much stronger than  
anything you're used to, but when  
it doesn't put you out right away  
you take some more. Only you take  
too much and it kills you.

JIMI  
You're really serious.

RAY  
I'm totally serious.

Monika and Devon Wilson appear on the stairs with the club's  
bouncer.

MONIKA  
That's him.

RAY  
(desperate)  
Just promise me. Promise you won't  
take more than two Vesperax. No  
matter what.

JIMI  
Yeah, okay, whatever, man. I  
really have to go.

RAY  
Promise.

Jimi sees something in Ray's face--kindness, perhaps, and  
slowly nods.

JIMI  
I promise.

Jimi gets up to go back upstairs.

RAY  
Can I come by Thursday night? Just  
to make sure?

JIMI

Sure, man, come over about twelve or something, all right? We can talk some more.

Everybody but Ray goes back upstairs, Jimi taking a last, concerned look over his shoulder. Ray slumps back against the wall of the bar and sits down.

EXT. LANSLOWNE CRESCENT--NIGHT

Thursday night, actually Friday morning, a little before three a.m. Monika and Jimi come home late and Monika sees Ray sitting on the iron steps leading down to the flat.

MONIKA

Jimi, that strange man is again coming around.

Ray, who's been nodding off, gets hurriedly to his feet. Jimi looks disappointed to see Ray. He just wants to sleep, and now here's somebody else who wants something from him.

JIMI

I'm really sorry. There was this thing at this rich cat's that I had to go to.

RAY

It doesn't matter. Do you remember what we talked about last night?

JIMI

Sleeping pills. You got some kind of a thing about sleeping pills. But if I don't sleep tonight I swear I'll go out of my mind.

RAY

After you take two, if you're still not sleepy, just give it another five minutes, okay? I promise, they'll knock you out. And you'll still be alive tomorrow.

MONIKA

Is this man making threats to you?

JIMI

No, baby, it's cool, he just wants to help me.



MONIKA

Everybody is wanting to help you.

RAY

I just want him to promise me again. That he won't take more than two of your Vesperax.

JIMI

Okay, all right, already, I promise. (laughs with no feeling)  
I promise.

RAY

That's all I wanted to hear. Go ahead and get some sleep.

Ray shakes Jimi's hand and moves past him and Monika to climb the stairs. Jimi suddenly seems afraid he might have hurt Ray's feelings.

JIMI

What'd you say your name was?

RAY

Ray.

JIMI

Ray. Like in First Rays.

RAY

That's right.

JIMI

You be good to yourself, Ray, all right?

RAY

You too, Jimi.

EXT. LANSLOWNE CRESCENT--DAY

We've been here before. It's Friday morning, September 18, 1970. Ray is stationed across the street as Monika comes out of the apartment and sees him. She freezes. Ray crosses the street to her.

MONIKA

You again.

RAY

Is Jimi okay?

MONIKA

I only gave him the two pills.  
Like you said.

RAY

Just check on him when you get  
back. Please.

MONIKA

I will check. Now please go.

A series of quick cuts: Ray squatting on the sidewalk; Ray standing with his hands in his pockets a few steps away; Ray leaning against a wrought iron fence.

Finally, Ray looks at his watch and sees that Hendrix is out of danger. He makes a small gesture of triumph--eyes closed, both fists clenched against his legs, then walks away, an exhausted smile on his face.

INT. THE SPEAKEASY--NIGHT

Back at the Speakeasy, but now it's nighttime and crowded. Matthews Southern Comfort are on the tiny stage and holding court down front are Jimi, Monika, Devon, SLY STONE, MITCH MITCHELL (Jimi's drummer), ERIC CLAPTON, and PATTIE BOYD. As Ray enters, Jimi spots him and waves him over.

JIMI

Ray, future man, come on over here.

Ray walks over to Jimi's table and shakes his hand.

JIMI (CONT'D)

Ray. Cat that knows his drugs. I was laying there last night, thinking I should get up and take some more of that shit of Monika's, and then, whoa, it just laid... me... out. You got to meet my people here. You know Monika and Devon, this is Mitch, and Sly, and Eric. Next to Eric there is the Queen of Sheba, yes, the Queen of Sheba, thank you very much.

Ray nods at everyone. The band finishes and everyone APPLAUDS. Ray is standing next to Pattie, who offers her hand.

RAY  
 (to Pattie)  
 Actually, it's Pattie Boyd, isn't  
 it?

PATTIE  
 Formerly. I expect Jimi's being  
 discreet, as I'm still married.

ERIC  
 Not to me, either. Bit of a sore  
 point, actually.

RAY  
 I can be discreet.

PATTIE  
 Then sit down, why don't you?

JIMI  
 Well, you know, like dig, brother,  
 me and Mitch and Eric and Sly are  
 going to get up and have a little  
 fun here, if that's all right with  
 everybody.

More APPLAUSE as the four of them join Ian Matthews and his  
 bass player on stage.

JIMI  
 I'm going to do something new here,  
 it's a little thing called "Blues  
 for Ray" and it's for my new friend  
 Ray here who saved my life last  
 night, take a little bow there Ray,  
 and it goes something like this  
 here, y'all just follow along in  
 the key of Z minor 15th.

Jimi starts a chord pattern and the others fall in. Ray is  
 thrilled, proud, and at the same time sad because he knows he  
 has only earned these few moments of belonging, and soon he  
 will have to go.

EXT. MARGARET STREET--NIGHT

Jimi and Ray exit the club together, Ray carrying Jimi's  
 guitar case. Eric and Pattie trail behind Monika and Devon.

MONIKA  
 I'll be getting the car.

JIMI  
 Yeah, okay, whatever.  
 (to Ray)  
 So, yeah, like I talked to Chas  
 this afternoon and we're going to  
 sit down with the tapes and maybe  
 do a thing with them.

There's a FAN, kind of scruffy, head down, lurking on the  
 sidewalk. He approaches Jimi nervously.

FAN  
 Excuse me, Mr. Hendrix, sir--

JIMI  
 (to Ray)  
 Just give me a minute.

Ray nods, carries the guitar case to where Eric, Pattie, and  
 Devon are standing.

ERIC  
 Christ, we'll never get a taxi.

PATTIE  
 Shall I go and ring for one?

Eric puts his arm around her.

ERIC  
 Give it a minute. Something will  
 turn up.

Ray looks back to Jimi, and then freezes. The fan has a gun.

RAY  
 Jimi! Look out!

Ray starts to run toward Hendrix.

Jimi is looking at the gun. Then, just as the fan FIRES,  
 Jimi turns to look at Ray. It is the look of someone already  
 dead.

The fan FIRES four more times, point blank, into Jimi's  
 chest.

INT. RAY'S WORKSHOP--DAY

Ray opens his eyes. He's on the floor of his upstairs  
 workshop, unshaven, gaunt, red-eyed.

He tries to stand up, using a chair, and takes the chair over with him when he falls.

INT. STAIRS LEADING TO WORKSHOP--CONTINUOUS

He tries to crawl downstairs to the main part of the house. He passes out halfway and slides down the stairs, landing in a heap at the bottom.

INT. RAY'S KITCHEN--CONTINUOUS

He crawls into the room, pulls himself up onto his knees using the handle of the refrigerator. He finds a carton of milk there and squints at it, trying to read the date. Can't see it. He drinks a little milk out of the carton and manages a weak smile. This isn't so bad. Then he throws the milk up all over himself and begins to shake with chills.

INT. RAY'S BATHROOM--CONTINUOUS

He crawls into the bathtub, fully dressed, and turns on the hot water. The air fills with steam.

INT. RAY'S BEDROOM--DAY

It's an hour or so later. Ray is wearing sweat pants and trying to put on a T-shirt while holding on to the edge of the dresser for dear life. He staggers over to the bed and falls across it, instantly asleep.

INT. RAY'S KITCHEN--NIGHT

Looking out from the back of the refrigerator again. The five beers are still there, but nothing else. Ray closes the refrigerator and grabs a take-out menu that a magnet is holding to the refrigerator door. He takes it and the phone into the living room and sits on the couch. He is looking at his giant Hendrix poster. The phone slides out of his hand and the menu flutters to the floor.

RAY

Jimi stops to play the slot machine on his way out of the club. By the time he gets upstairs, Monika is already there with the car. He pushes past the fan, doesn't really see him.

Ray's voice decays into little more than a croak. He picks up a glass of water from the coffee table and takes a drink.

RAY (cont'd)

He flies to New York to get the tapes. Once he's there, he decides to finish the album at Electric Lady.

He takes another drink, closes his eyes. The glass falls to the floor with a CLUNK.

RAY (cont'd)

New York. Lots of places to eat in New York.

Ray stays in the foreground, the background slowly lap dissolves to:

EXT. NEW YORK, LOWER FOURTH AVENUE--DAY

The entire feeling of the next sequence is strange, out of whack, surreal. The sun is just setting.

Ray is standing in front of the entrance to Electric Lady studios. Ray looks down at himself, a kind of dream version of himself that's not starved and dying, that's wearing jeans and a T-shirt and a sport coat. He sniffs the air, smiles with pleasure to be where he is.

Jimi and CHAS CHANDLER emerge from the underground entrance, followed by two of the studio's GUARDS, enormous black men in full motorcycle regalia. Jimi is wearing glasses (which in truth he needed, but rarely wore).

JIMI

Hey, Ray. I didn't know you were in New York.

RAY

I didn't know I was going to be here.

The guards stay by the steps, but Ray, Jimi, and Chas start to walk down Eighth Street, into the West Village.

CHAS

I best get back to the hotel. It feels like midnight to me already. I don't know how I used to manage this all the bloody time.

JIMI

Okay, well, later, Chas. So, Ray, you want to maybe get something to eat? We could maybe go up to Harlem, eat at the Palm Café, like I used to in the early days.

RAY

Do you think we could?

INT. SUBWAY CAR--DAY

They're on the "A" train. Ray's is the only white face on the train.

JIMI

So, you feel like you're getting anywhere?

RAY

What do you mean?

JIMI

You know. Trying to work out all this about your father dying and everything.

RAY

This isn't about my father. This is about First Rays of the New Rising Sun.

Jimi just looks away.

EXT. A HARLEM STREET--DAY

The sun is still just setting. Ray and Jimi stand in front of a plate glass window that says Palm Café. All around them it's 1970 in Harlem--big cars, people in leopard skin or gold lamé.

JIMI

This is where it all really started for me, you know. I lived up here in Harlem with a lady named Fayne Pridgeon and played down at the Café Wha? in the Village or on the road with Joey Dee or whatever.

RAY

I know that.

JIMI

Yeah, I guess you do. Listen, I don't really think I can eat just now. You go ahead if you like, tell 'em Jimi James said to take care of you.

RAY

No, that's okay. I guess I'm not hungry either.

JIMI

You got someplace you can go to, Ray?

RAY

I guess I hadn't really thought about it.

JIMI

Man, you better start. I got to let you go now, there's someplace I got to be.

A white panel truck without logos or identifying marks is barreling down the street toward them.

RAY

Okay. Listen, do you think I could come by the studio tomorrow, hear some of what you're doing?

JIMI

(sadly)

Just get on that A train, go back downtown, you'll be all right.

The truck is now very close. Ray realizes what's going to happen just a split second before Jimi steps off the curb into the path of the truck.

RAY

Jimi, no!

JIMI

Ray. I'm the one that's got to die when it's time for me to die.

Angle on Ray as the SCREAM of brakes drowns all other sound. Then Ray closes his eyes and steps off the curb as well.



EXT. A PARK--DAY.

Everything is very green. Tall grass waves in a gentle breeze. Ray straightens up from where he's been crouched on the side of a path. He looks ahead of him. There are trees there, and a bench. Jimi is sitting on the bench. Ray walks over and sits next to him.

RAY

Hey, Jimi.

JIMI

Hey, there, Ray.

RAY

Where are we? What is this place?

JIMI

We're dead, Ray.

RAY

Both of us?

JIMI

Afraid so, man.

RAY

Why?

JIMI

What?

RAY

Why are we dead? I tried to save you. Why wouldn't you let me?

JIMI

I had my thing, which was music, and maybe sometimes I could move people in a higher way or something. But it wasn't up to me to save the world, single-handed with just me and my guitar. Why did you think I could?

RAY

Because you're like me. That's what First Rays was all about. You did want to save the world. To heal all the broken places between men and women, black and white, fathers and sons.

JIMI

That is a very beautiful idea and everything, but that is what you wanted that record to be. Some things you can have, some you can't. You got to figure out which is which.

RAY

It's a little late now, isn't it?  
If I'm dead?

JIMI

Oh, you're dead, all right. But you're here, too, which means there must be some things you haven't let go of yet. You got this idea that somebody owes you justice or something. If you'd been born black in America, you'd have been over that a long time ago.

RAY

So what is it I can have?

JIMI

Your friend Brian's got that song, "Love and Mercy"? I'd say love and mercy was a better bet than justice, for most of us anyway.

Jimi gets up.

JIMI (cont'd)

Okay, well, I got to move along now, Ray. You understand.

RAY

No. I don't understand.

Jimi walks away, talking over his shoulder.

JIMI

Maybe give yourself some time. Get used to being dead.

Ray stands, looking after him as he walks away. Then his attention is captured by SWING MUSIC coming from the other direction: "Don't Be That Way" by Benny Goodman. He follows the music toward another clearing, then slows as he realizes what's ahead.

EXT. ANOTHER CLEARING--DAY

It's Ray's father, of course, Jack Shackelford. He looks about 50, not much older than Ray, who stands looking at him. Jack is in his bathrobe and slippers, and there's an old fashioned console hi-fi across the path from the park bench where he's sitting.

JACK  
What are you doing here?

RAY  
I'm dead, Pop. Just like you.

JACK  
Figures. What did you do, walk in front of a truck?

RAY  
Very funny.

JACK  
So, did you ever amount to anything? Or were you still farting around fixing record players?

RAY  
Fixing record players is not so bad.

Jack looks off into the distance, ignoring him.

RAY (cont'd)  
You have to talk to me.

JACK  
Have to?

RAY  
When you went over the edge. Were you thinking of me at all?

JACK  
Not really.

RAY  
Did you ever think of me?

Jack shrugs.

RAY (cont'd)  
There's things I always wanted to tell you. Like, before you had your heart attack, back when I was in high school, I used to have dreams about you dying.

This is ultimately hard for Ray, but he's working himself up to something.

RAY (cont'd)  
Usually you died in a car wreck. But you died over and over.  
(deep breath)  
The dreams made me happy. I felt guilty for it, but they made me happy. I liked the idea of you dying. I liked the idea because I hated you.  
(beat)  
I never got to say that to you.

JACK  
So what do you want, a medal?

RAY  
I just wanted a father. I wanted to be a kid when it was my time to be a kid. To make a mistake once in a while.

JACK  
Oh, grow up.

Ray grabs him by the lapels of his robe and shakes him, much the way Tom shook Ray underwater in Cozumel.

RAY  
I am grown up, damn you! I've been grown up since I was three!

JACK  
(terribly cold)  
Let go.

RAY  
I can't. I can't let go.

Ray falls to his knees, hands still in his father's robe. Jack shakes him loose and goes to the hi-fi to change the record.

The MUSIC becomes distorted as the grass begins to visibly grow around Ray. It accelerates and begins to grow up over him in super-fast motion. He's inside a tunnel of grass, falling.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM IN AUSTIN--DAY

RAY is in bed, gaunt, hooked to an IV and a cardiac monitor. He opens his eyes. He lies there for a very long time, then:

LORI (O.S.)

Ray? Ray, oh thank god.

RAY

Lori?

She sits on the edge of the bed, then carefully puts her arms around him, having to work around tubes and wires as well as take care with his fragile physical condition. Ray puts one hand on her hair, then lets the hand fall as she sits up.

LORI

You've been in a coma for a week. You had a heart attack in the ambulance that brought you here. Your heart stopped. You were dead for a minute and a half.

RAY

I remember dying. How did you--

LORI

I called Dave when I couldn't get you on the phone. He called the cops.

Ray is very weak. He nods and smiles and squeezes her hand, then his eyes close again, involuntarily.

INT. RAY'S HOSPITAL ROOM--NIGHT

Ray wakes again. It's dark except for a night light behind the bed. Lori is asleep in a chair next to him.

RAY

Lori?

LORI

I'm here.

RAY  
I was afraid I dreamed you.

LORI  
I'm real.

RAY  
But are you here to stay?

LORI  
Get stronger. We'll talk.

EXT. ST.DAVID'S HOSPITAL--DAY

Lori and Ray are walking around outside. He's wearing sweatpants, a hospital gown, and a sweater. He's weak, but has obviously come a long way from when he first woke up.

RAY  
So how long do you think you can  
keep putting it off?

LORI  
Putting what off?

Ray just looks at her, and eventually she gives up the pretence.

LORI (cont'd)  
Okay, all right. Ray, I love you,  
but we haven't resolved anything.  
I don't know whether I'm going to  
wake up in the middle of the night  
and find you in a coma because you  
got to thinking about your father  
and decided to go after another  
lost album.

RAY  
That's over.

LORI  
You say that but you don't know.  
And I've spent the last nine years  
of my life chasing somebody else's  
dream. I don't even know what I  
want for myself.

RAY  
You're not going back to Tom?

LORI

No. I want to travel. See some friends. I'm thinking I may go back to school, finish my Master's.

RAY

What'll you do for money?

LORI

Tom bought me out when I left.

RAY

If I tried hard enough, could I change your mind?

LORI

Probably. But I don't know what it would do to us in the long run.

RAY

Then I'll have to get by on that. Knowing I could have stopped you. And that you think there's going to be a long run. When are you leaving me?

LORI

The doctor said you'll be ready to go home Thursday. I thought you could drop me at the airport on your way.

RAY

Just say it again, will you? With no buts this time?

LORI

I love you, Ray.

INT. RAY'S HOUSE--DAY

The front door opens and Ray carefully steps inside. From the expression on his face it's obvious the place smells pretty rank. He's carrying a plant from the hospital gift shop and a plastic bag with some personal stuff in it. He sets them on the coffee table in the living room and opens a couple of windows, then looks at the mess--books, dirty clothes, plates with dried food on them.

RAY

Jesus.

He picks up some of the plates and carries them to the kitchen, tries to stack some of the Hendrix books into a pile, but the task is too daunting and he drops onto the couch, his head in his hands.

EXT. RAY'S NEIGHBORHOOD--DAY

Ray is out walking. He moves like an old man, carefully, as if something might snap at any minute.

INT. RAY'S WORKSHOP--DAY

Ray looks a little better. He's got a stereo spread out on the workbench. After a couple of seconds he has to stop and rest.

EXT. RAY'S FRONT YARD--DAY

Ray is mowing the yard, which has gone horribly to seed. He's clearly stronger and heavier than in the preceding shot. He's got his shirt off and he's getting a bit of tan back.

INT. RAY'S HOUSE--NIGHT

A DOORBELL sounds. Ray is on the phone in the kitchen.

RAY

Somebody's here, can you hang on?  
(beat) No, please, don't go, just  
let me see who it is.

Ray leaves the phone on the kitchen table and opens the front door. It's Dave, who looks sheepish. Ray, however, is really glad to see him, and shakes his hand.

RAY

Hey, man, come in. I'm on the  
phone, I'll just be a second.

DAVE

I should have let you know I was  
coming.

RAY

Don't be ridiculous.

He picks up the phone again.



RAY (cont'd)  
It's Dave. (pause) I will.  
(pause) How about if I call you  
back? (pause) You can't blame me  
for trying. (pause) I love you  
too.

He hangs up the phone. It's clear the conversation was not satisfying.

RAY (cont'd)  
Lori says hi. You want something  
to drink?

DAVE  
Sure. Where is she?

Ray fixes Dave a beer, himself a club soda, while Dave looks on.

RAY  
She won't tell me. But I got a  
letter a while ago with a Boston  
postmark.

DAVE  
No return address?

RAY  
She's not going to be that obvious.  
But Boston would make sense. She  
told me she's in grad school.

DAVE  
And there's no way you could track  
her down? Hire a private detective  
or something?

RAY  
Before I can do that, I have to be  
able to tell her that what happened  
with Brian and Jimi won't ever  
happen again.

INT. RAY'S LIVING ROOM--CONTINUOUS

They move back into the living room. Dave picks up an electric guitar that's leaning against the couch.

DAVE  
Yours?

RAY

They say it's never too late. In my case they could be wrong. Anyway, I guess I'm trying to cut out the middleman.

DAVE

Speaking of...that business with First Rays. That's why I'm here.

Ray nods, acknowledging that the mood has turned serious.

DAVE (cont'd)

I should never have pushed you into going after Hendrix. Christ, I almost killed you.

RAY

I wanted it as much as you did. More.

DAVE

I wanted to say...I'm sorry.

RAY

It doesn't matter. It's over.

DAVE

Is it?

EXT. RAY'S BACK PATIO--NIGHT

Ray is sitting in a lawn chair, holding a boom box that's playing the Beatles' original "Long and Winding Road." He turns off the CD and closes his eyes.

The quiet CHIRP of crickets.

Ray frowns, concentrating. The song doesn't change. Gradually his face relaxes. He opens his eyes and smiles, not without sadness.

INT. RAY'S KITCHEN--NIGHT

Ray stares at the telephone, picks it up, puts it down. He begins to dial a number, from memory, then hangs up after a few digits. He takes a deep breath, then starts again.

TOM (PHONE)

Hello?

RAY

Tom. It's Ray Shackleford.

TOM (PHONE)

You've got balls, I'll give you that. What do you want?

RAY

I need to find Lori.

TOM (PHONE)

You think I know where she is? You think I'd tell you if I did?

RAY

I'm trying to find a friend of hers, a close friend. Someone who lives in Boston. I need a name, an address if you've got one.

TOM (PHONE)

And the reason I should tell you this is...?

RAY

Because you can. Because you have the power.

TOM (PHONE)

I've got the power, all right.

CLICK as Tom hangs up on him. Ray stands, looking at the phone in his hand for a long second, then slowly puts it down.

INT. RAY'S BEDROOM--NIGHT

Ray is asleep. The phone begins to RING. Ray turns on the light, fumbles for the phone, still half asleep.

RAY

Hello?

TOM (PHONE)

There was an envelope in the drawer of the desk.

RAY

Tom?

TOM (PHONE)  
 I have no idea why I'm doing this.  
 Barbara Butler, 207 Fenwick Avenue,  
 Boston 07245.

Another CLICK as he hangs up again. Ray furiously digs for pen and paper in the drawer of his nightstand.

RAY  
 Barbara Butler, 207 Fenwick Ave.,  
 Boston 07245. Barbara Butler...

EXT. FENWICK AVE., BOSTON--DAY

One of a row of brick houses in a college neighborhood. Numbers on the wall next to the door say 207. Ray is knocking on the door, just a bit too eagerly. BARBARA answers. She's the same age as Lori and Ray, maybe a bit overweight and frowsy looking.

RAY  
 You don't know me, but--

BARBARA  
 You're Ray, aren't you? She's not here.

RAY  
 Not here as in not in your apartment, or...?

BARBARA  
 Not in Boston. I'm afraid you've come a long way for nothing.

Ray's shoulders sag with disappointment.

BARBARA (cont'd)  
 Come on in. You might as well have a cup of coffee before you get back on the plane.

INT. BARBARA'S APARTMENT--DAY

Ray sits at the kitchen table as Barbara gets two cups, fills them with coffee, puts cream in a small pitcher, etc.

RAY  
 So she, what? Sends you the letters and you mail them for her?

BARBARA

Yes.

RAY

Is she really in school?

BARBARA

Yes, she's really in school.

RAY

Is there some other man?

BARBARA

No. She's in love with you.

RAY

And I'm in love with her. Did she tell you that? Do you think I would have come all this way if I wasn't in love with her?

BARBARA

There could be a lot of other reasons. Hurt feelings, for one. If you thought it was unfair for her to be hiding from you, for instance.

Touché. Ray winces.

BARBARA (cont'd)

That was cheap. I apologize.

RAY

I came here thinking that if she wasn't here I would do whatever I had to in order to get her address from you.

BARBARA

And?

RAY

And I see now that I can't ask you to betray her. I thought I would feel desperate, but instead I just feel...impatient.

BARBARA

What do you mean?

RAY

We've spent so many years without each other.

Barbara drinks her coffee and looks at Ray, obviously liking what she sees. She comes to a decision.

BARBARA

I would never tell you where Lori is. But if I left the room, and you found a letter from her sitting over there on the buffet table, would that be my fault?

Hope has punched Ray in the chest, and he can't speak. Barbara smiles and pushes herself back from the table. Ray's eyes are already on the buffet.

BARBARA

Excuse me for just one second.

She leaves, and Ray pounces on the buffet. There are half a dozen letters there, standing on edge between decorative salt and pepper shakers. Ray's hands shake as he shuffles through them. Then his face shows that he's found it.

The return address is in Austin. She's been only a few miles away from him all this time.

EXT. AUSTIN STREET--DAY

Ray is parked at the curb across from an apartment complex in his pickup. A well-used Datsun pulls up and parks across the street from him. Lori gets out.

Ray gets out of the car, and Lori looks over and sees him. She looks like she's trying to decide whether she should run for it.

LORI

Oh god.

RAY

Wait.

Ray crosses the street toward her, but she backs away. They stand about ten feet apart, on the sidewalk.

LORI

I told you I'm not ready for this.

RAY

Then why did you come back here,  
right under my nose? Why did you  
leave a trail I could follow?

LORI

Because I thought you'd do what I  
asked, and give me time.

Ray stares at her for a couple of seconds, wanting visibly to touch her, but not willing to force himself on her. The hope goes out of his eyes.

LORI (cont'd)

I want to be with you, Ray. But we  
both have to be ready for this.

RAY

Then you'll have to let me know  
when you are. Because I'm there.

He walks back to his truck, gets in, and drives away, leaving Lori behind, her face filled with regret.

INT. RAY'S LIVING ROOM--NIGHT

Ray has assembled a new bookshelf in his living room and is stacking Hendrix books on it. He comes across a videotape and looks at it for a second, then takes it over to the VCR. It's the tape of his father's death. He freezes the frame on a shot of Lori standing on the deck of the boat and stares longingly at it for a minute. He starts the tape again and it moves on to the death scene. The two figures start to rise out of the depths, and...

Ray ejects the tape and throws it back in the box.

RAY (v.o.)

Take a broken stereo. Maybe only  
one channel is working, maybe the  
sound cuts in and out without  
warning.

INT. RAY'S WORKSHOP--NIGHT

Ray is working on a stereo. It's quiet except for the SQUEAK of his chair as he shifts his weight, the slight HISS of the flux core as the solder melts on a capacitor.

RAY (v.o.)  
 Sometimes it seems hopeless. Then  
 you figure out what you've taken  
 for granted that you shouldn't  
 have. And there's your answer.  
 You replace the part, or resolder  
 the joint, and suddenly...there's  
 music.

He lifts his head, startled. There's MUSIC playing  
 somewhere. It's Rosanne Cash singing "The Real Me."

INT. RAY'S LIVING ROOM--NIGHT

MUSIC is louder now. He crosses through the kitchen and  
 opens the sliding glass door.

EXT. RAY'S BACK PATIO--NIGHT

Lori is on the patio, sitting in the lawn chair, with the  
 same jam box she had in Cozumel sitting next to her.

Ray stands in the doorway looking at her, happy and relieved  
 to see her, but still smarting from their last conversation.

RAY  
 You have to tell me what this  
 means.

LORI  
 It means love is going to come  
 whenever it damn well pleases and I  
 was wrong to try and control that.  
 It means I missed you. So I  
 decided to have mercy on you.

RAY  
 (startled)  
 What?

LORI  
 Sorry. Just making a little joke.  
 I said--

RAY  
 Love and mercy.

LORI  
 Isn't that the title of one of your  
 friend Brian's songs?



RAY  
Yes, it is.

Ray is thinking of what Jimi told him, and he's smiling.

LORI  
So are you just going to stand  
there and look at me all night?

RAY  
Would you mind terribly?

LORI  
Take all the time you need.

He holds out one hand, and she takes it and stands up. She moves into his arms and they begin to dance. We slowly move upward and away, in a kind of reverse of the opening shot, until Ray and Lori disappear in the darkness.

FADE OUT