

ROADIES

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ROADIES

ON BLACK

The sound of agonized moaning. A man gasping for breath, for life...

FADE IN:

INT. CAR -- DRIVING -- DESERT -- SUNRISE

He's got long straw-colored hair. He's in the midst of a complete emotional breakdown, driving through the desert in this beater of an American car. He's a weathered 25. He looks like he could be 35. He is Jeffo. He's crying big, loud tears. In his rear-view mirror, the already searing summer heat of Beaumont, Texas.

EXT. HIGHWAY 49 -- STILL DARK MORNING

The darkened highway, lined by mountains, fills with the rumble of three large tour buses.

INT. BUS -- STILL DARK MORNING

MIKE drives one of the three crew buses for the great American band, Staton-House.

(Welcome dear readers and fellow travelers... here is your dossier on the band you're currently on-tour with. The Staton-House Band has been together 18 years. The first three were slow-building. The last fifteen have been filled with hits, and ever-growing concert venues. Only recently has their rise slowed... just a bit. But fewer touring units have as faithful and loyal an audience as this band. Two main members front the five-man group -- TOM STATON, and CHRISTOPHER HOUSE. Staton is the front-man and main songwriter, House is the guitarist and fellow-vocalist, and obsessive architect of their vibe and presentation.)

The tour buses conceal the band's name or logo, but the true fans know. The big vehicles are red-and-blue, the band's two colors of choice. And right now, Mike is on his way into New Orleans. In the darkness:

MIKE

Who would have thought? Bob Dylan.  
He's amazing, he's like the  
greatest fucking DJ in the world.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

He did one hundred hours of this stuff, each show has a Theme, and it's --

KELLY ANN

Mid-twenties. A luminous and driven girl. She holds her morning cup of tea. It's in her favorite mug, a white mug with Lionel Ritchie's face on it, and the meme: "Is it Tea You're Looking For?"

KELLY ANN

-- amazing?

MIKE

Amazing! He did a whole hour on "Driving."

KELLY ANN

Betcha loved that one.

Mike does a great Bob Dylan imitation.

MIKE

"I once drove through the desert with her at the wheel of a Cadillac... I've never felt so secure... here's Joni Mitchell with 'California'.

KELLY ANN

I'm gonna miss you, Mike.

It's sunrise on Kelly-Ann's last day. He looks at her, mournfully.

MIKE

Then why are you leaving?

We start to hear The Equals' "Baby Come Back." It plays as we see the sun starting to peak over the hill and we INTERCUT between:

THE THREE STATON-HOUSE TOUR BUSES -- SUNRISE

1) Hands struggle for another mug. This one reading: World's Greatest Dad. Coffee poured into it. And then a splash of Irish Coffee. (BUS # 2)

2) MILO, still dressed in the attire of an attempted all-nighter, complete with leather jacket and stovepipe jeans, falls out of his bunk. He's 32. American/Anglophile. Came from Elvis Costello's crew, and still carries a slight British cadence. (BUS # 2)

3) Other hands flip through Tour Itinerary pages, landing on our current city -- New Orleans. (BUS # 3)

4) MEAUX, the tour accountant, black, not a small man, is already up at the back table, working the phone: (BUS # 3)

MEAUX

I can get to the units by 12:40 --

5) CARRIE, dark-haired, streaks of blue-and-red, with long sleep-shirt, steadies herself as she comes down the aisle. She sees Kelly Ann at the front. (BUS # 1)

CARRIE

If you leave, I'll never speak to you again.

KELLY ANN

(appreciative, sweet)  
Oh please.

She grabs a coffee from a mug of her own.

CARRIE

Who fucking number-twoed in the bathroom???

JOEL

UGHHH --

JOEL rolls out of his bunk. Yellow teeth, no life outside the band and his job as Guitar-Tech for Christopher House. He too goes for coffee. Even at this hour, his long hair is already crowned by his trademark -- a Fred Meyer baseball hat.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Not cool!!

MIKE

That's why I put the sign up.

ON THE BATHROOM DOOR SIGN

"No solids allowed."

EXT. NEW ORLEANS STADIUM -- MORNING

Ramp up music, blasting from the back of the big load-in trucks. The tour buses roll into the parking lot. The pageantry of a sold-out rock show is beginning.

Marquee: STATON-HOUSE 7 PM w/Fleet Foxes.

TITLE: New Orleans.

INT. STADIUM FLOOR -- MORNING

Kelly Ann holds the hands of the other crew members. They're in a big circle. It's their morning ritual. Camera moves past the faces of these committed music-lovers who live in each other's pockets... landing on the big man, PHIL ("Road Dawg"), the most famous of Road Managers, a man known by one-name from coast-to-coast and across the pond. We know his name is Phil because of his leather hat, each letter of his name is stitched and embroidered.

PHIL

Goddamnit it's good to be alive!  
Especially here in this crazy  
fucking city that refuses to die,  
filled with history, and truth and  
pity and ghosts and glory and  
history.

He takes out a piece of paper.

PHIL (CONT'D)

"I once saw Wilson Pickett play New Orleans. There was literally smoke coming offa him. After the show, somebody asked him what it was to play so hard and so tough that smoke literally rises from your skin. He said -- 'It's New Orleans. They don't settle for heat. They grew up with fire.'"

He stashes the piece of paper in his shirt.

PHIL (CONT'D)

We're in New Orleans, people. We don't settle for fire.

With a whoop, they release hands.

EXT. STADIUM PRODUCTION OFFICE -- DAY

Meet Tour Manager BILL THOMPSON, taut, tattooed sleeves. 35. In shape, with tired eyes. He perennially looks, in fact, like he's two good days of sleep away from being supremely handsome. (He's five years sober, still heartbroken by a high-school sweetheart who divorced him after seven years. "Lifestyle differences.")

Production Manager SHERRI ANDERSON arrives. She wears a holster filled with phones, like an all-format communication gunslinger. She's tall, long-limbed, and dresses against her almost cartoonishly voluptuous body. She's like a character from an R. Crumb comic. She is 37, and as if by miracle in this hard-working tour crew, she looks younger. She's the liaison between the band and the touring crew. She's forever mumbling into her headset, carrying on two conversations, one with you, and one with the assistants and band members back at the hotel. Sherri and Bill are "Road Husband and Wife." Platonic, of course, but rarely apart. They are the tour's nerve center. (Sherri's famously married to DC, who runs Elton John's tours. They see each other on holidays.)

BILL

What are we doing for Kelly Ann's last day?

SHERRI

Nothing. She's never going to leave.

Sherri mumbles a quick goodbye into her headset. Bill, instinctively:

BILL

What --

SHERRI

Rox quit. We need somebody new to nanny the Devil Child.

Shaking his head, Bill leaves.

SHERRI (CONT'D)

What --

As she follows him out, she yanks out one of her beeping phones and looks at Caller ID.

SHERRI (CONT'D)

Oh shit, Preston's calling me.

BILL

It's too early for management to be calling --

INT. ARENA HALLWAYS -- DAY

Bill is performing his ritual "Walk Through" of a new arena. This is where the non-touring party, the locals, learn the nuances of the band performing.

Bill tapes a diagram of the "passes" and their meaning on the hallway wall. A Runner follows, taping Arrow signs on the hallway walls.

BILL

These are the band rooms -- only green passes in this hallway -- nobody allowed in band rooms. Is this door the best pathway from the stage to the dressing rooms -- ?

LOCAL CREW # 1

-- that stairway, yes. That's the one Bono used.

BILL

By the way, all the members have family except Rick. Our bassist has girlfriends... many of them... in every city. They are all to be given Blue Passes. They go to the Blue Room...

Bill directs the Runner to paste an Arrow on the wall.

Joel the guitar tech passes.

JOEL

What are we doing for Kelly Ann?

BILL

(in denial)  
She's not leaving --

JOEL

Dude I think she is definitely leavi --

Bill continues, as the locals hustle to keep up with Bill's "Walking Tour."

BILL

This is Tom Staton's room.

They draw a little closer.

BILL (CONT'D)

Yes -- he is a "Man of the People."  
But if you see him, don't stop him.  
His mind is on the show. Lead-singers are like that.

(MORE)

BILL (CONT'D)

Don't tell him about how you saw him play a festival in Miami in 2002, or how your brother got married to his music, don't ask him for pictures. If he talks to you, great, but mostly -- leave him alone. He's thinking about the 17,000 people on the other side of the curtain. If you need something signed, I can get it done after the show.

They nod resolutely, and respectfully, as if Tom is standing in the room. Two roadies push carts past them.

ROADIE # 1

Coming through!

BILL

Okay, moving along, one other thing, and this is important... there is one thing my singer can't deal with, in any form. We do not tolerate --

Sherri takes Bill aside, and hijacks the "Walk Through" with private urgency.

SHERRI

You're going to want to hear this.

We hear music, Duke Spirit's "Don't Wait," the tinny sound bleeding out of Kelly's Ann's headphones as...

INT. ARENA -- MORNING

Kelly Ann skateboards down another hallway, expertly banking onto the audience floor, past Milo, who follows her with a yearning gaze. She turns a corner. Her music goes full stereo. Kelly Ann smoothly banks to the rigging station, hops off the board and stashes it at the bottom of the tower. She too has a holster, this one festooned with strange and exotic tools. With the ease of a master rock climber, she hikes up the tower to rig lighting at the top of the stage towers. It's a ritual nobody gets tired of watching... as she shuts off her music, and straps on a headset.

Immediately there's a beep, and she answers on headset.

KELLY ANN

Go for Kelly Ann --

INTERCUT:



INT. ARENA -- MORNING

Milo opens the drum cabinet, and begins setting up for the Staton-House drummer, DAVE. The cabinet is filled with cymbals and sticks, and the panels are alive with stickers and passes from some of the great gigs Milo has attended. Among them, Joe Strummer and the Mescaleros, Elvis Costello at Royal Albert Hall, and the prize one of all -- Neil Young and Crazy Horse, Pearl Jam, and Van Morrison at Slane Castle, Dublin.

MILO

Nobody believes you're leaving.

KELLY ANN

That's because nobody believes there's anything more important than this band.

MILO

Is there?

INT. ARENA -- DAY

Bill and Sherri continue privately, around the corner, by the ice machines.

BILL

I don't have time to find a new nanny for Tom Staton's kid.

SHERRI

It's not that. Preston said we have new "Financial Advisors." We're getting a visit from a guy from IMF, which apparently now oversees the crew. He's English.

BILL

When's Preston getting here?

She looks at him, shakes her head.

BILL (CONT'D)

He cancelled? He's not coming?

She shakes her head, no, as Meaux the Accountant approaches.

MEAUX

Hey I'm taking off to look at my storage units around noon. You know I have that business here --

BILL  
Yeah go ahead.

MEAUX  
Are we doing something for Kelly  
Ann?

SHERRI  
She's not leaving --

MEAUX  
(off them)  
You two are in denial. About a lot  
of stuff.

Meaux moves along with a chuckle.

SHERRI  
If Preston cancelled, that means  
there is going to be a  
confrontation. Management always  
avoids the confrontation cities.

BILL  
(instinctively)  
Somebody's going to get fired. Do  
you have the IMF guy's name?

SHERRI  
He's emailing it.

Ding. She rips the phone from her holster and reads it.

SHERRI (CONT'D)  
"Reg Whitehead."

BILL  
(on headset)  
Phil -- could you finish the "Walk  
Through" for me. I have to call  
Preston.

INT. OTHER PART OF ARENA/BACKSTAGE -- DAY

PHIL continues the Walk Through. The local crew are all eyes  
and ears.

PHIL  
... and that one thing is...  
firecrackers. You got me? I'm  
talking about anything that goes  
"boom" out there.

They nod, understanding the seriousness.

PHIL (CONT'D)  
If you see it, seize it.

LOCAL ELECTRICIAN # 1  
Why firecrackers?

PHIL  
Google Tom Staton, Firecrackers,  
Des Moines, rowdy crowd, 2008. Or  
you can just trust me, boys. I've  
seen a lot of meltdowns.

LOCAL SECURITY # 1  
Hey -- Phil -- if I can call you  
Phil --

PHIL  
That's my name. It ain't just  
letters on a hat.

LOCAL SECURITY # 1  
You worked with my favorite band.  
The original Lynyrd Skynyrd.

PHIL  
(emotions bubble)  
And not a day goes by that I don't  
think about 'em.

Phil pulls out a medallion necklace.

PHIL (CONT'D)  
This was given to me in 1976 by  
Ronnie Van Zant and I haven't taken  
it off since --

LOCAL ELECTRICIAN # 1  
Who's Ronnie Van Zant?

PHIL  
Do your homework, son. This is a  
privilege not a vacation. There's  
a tradition on this adventure, and  
you better bone up on whose  
shoulders you're standing on --

Meaux passes by.

MEAUX  
I'm going to check the storage  
units at noon.

Phil nods.

PHIL

Now let's recap. What have we learned to pay special attention to?

LOCAL CREW

(all)

Firecrackers.

PHIL

Wait here and Bill will take you to the stage --

Phil exits, leaving the locals to marvel over this avuncular Road Manager Legend.

LOCAL SECURITY # 1

You see that bulge under his vest? That guy, that friendly dude you just met --

LOCAL ELECTRICIAN # 1

-- killed someone?

Local Security # 1 holds up two fingers.

LOCAL ELECTRICIAN # 1 (CONT'D)

Dude!

INT. STAGE -- DAY

Joel the guitar tech begins his show-day ritual. He opens a cabinet filled with equipment and tools and photos from home. He takes two hits of strong weed and, stashes the stub in a steel tobacco can in the crate. He then carefully removes a small collection of rubber Gumbys. He assembles on top of the stage amps belonging to guitarist Christopher House. The vibe... must be... perfect.

INT. STAGE -- DAY

Bill is now on stage, this is the last phase of the local tutorial. He is surrounded by the Local Crew.

BILL

Do not put your cups or your fingerprints on the piano. I have a keyboard player who can't play if its not shiny -- he can feel a smudge...

(MORE)

BILL (CONT'D)  
he will stop a show, get up, and  
shine it himself. And if that  
happens?

LOCAL ELECTRICIAN # 1  
(overachieving student)  
It's as bad as firecrackers!

BILL  
Almost.

His phone buzzes.

BILL (CONT'D)  
Excuse me -- any more questions,  
find me or Phil...

He walks away, looking concerned.

EXT. PARKING LOT -- LATE MORNING

Fans have started to arrive, as the parking lot fills.

INT. STAGE -- DAY

Joel tests the mike.

JOEL  
(instead of "1-2-3")  
Sonia... Sonia... Sotomayor.

INT. RIGGING TOWER -- LATE MORNING

Kelly Ann does some complicated mechanical work. She is  
still on the headset with Milo.

KELLY ANN  
Jesus you're not the center of  
civilization with every pocket of  
humanity swirling around you.

INTERCUT

INT. STAGE -- LATE MORNING

Milo adjusts drums. He revels in his road-worthy, slightly  
scuzzy charm. He may or may not have showered in several  
days.

MILO

Yes I am.

KELLY ANN

I'm not leaving because of what happened in Tallahassee. I don't --

(weld)

-- even remember --

(weld)

-- Tallahassee.

MILO

Well you should.

KELLY ANN

Yeah? The good parts?

MILO

(pirate smile)

Only the good parts.

KELLY ANN

There were no good parts. Don't you understand, you make me uncomfortable.

MILO

I'm not asking to be your boyfriend.

KELLY ANN

If you follow me to New York, I'll kill you.

MILO

What if I kill myself first?

KELLY ANN

Don't joke about that shit. I don't do "emo."

MILO

You can't ban me from New York.

KELLY ANN

I have school in New York. I need to concentrate. Do you know how fucking hard it is to get into NYU?

MILO

The world has enough directors.

KELLY ANN

Unplugging you.

MILO

If you quit, I'll quit!

She unplugs him. Her phone now rings again. To Milo:

KELLY ANN

Go away! You old "panty dropper."

But all she hears is the sound of crying and moaning.

KELLY ANN (CONT'D)

Hello?

She listens to more moaning.

INTERCUT

INT. ENTERING LOUISIANA -- MORNING

Jeffo is still driving and crying.

KELLY ANN

Jeffo?

She throws a rope across another rigging grid.

KELLY ANN (CONT'D)

Man up and talk to me!

JEFFO

Pearl Jam fired me.

KELLY ANN

WHAT?

JEFFO

Mike took me to breakfast and did it himself.

KELLY ANN

Well, that's better than when Stone fired Dave Abruzzesse.

JEFFO

He said I reminded him too much of his pre-sobriety.

KELLY ANN

But you're sober too!

JEFFO

I know, but he looks at me and it reminds him of then.

(MORE)

JEFFO (CONT'D)

Me cleaning up his amps when he would pee on them. Me wiping his mouth when he barfed at my wedding. Some people blame that as the bad omen that created my divorce. And still I would fucking take a bullet for him. Still! I love Mike McCready!

KELLY ANN

Well, this is my last day too.

JEFFO

I know, I heard, I'm coming to say goodbye.

KELLY ANN

I'm still mad at you from Christmas. Nobody was there to take care of Mom.

JEFFO

Because you ran off! You always run off, and expect me to come in and bat clean-up.

WHAP. The car thumps over a dead animal.

KELLY ANN

What was that?

JEFFO

I think I just turboed over a dead antelope or something.

KELLY ANN

Yuck.

JEFFO

He was happier than me.

KELLY ANN

Jeffo -- don't come. I'm already trying to keep today from getting emotional.

JEFFO

I just want a night, and then I'll go home to my guitar-den and mourn.

He sniffles, and sighs. She offers a similar sigh. It's familial.



KELLY ANN

Do you know where we are?

JEFFO

Yeah -- the New Orleans Lakefront  
Arena. You sent me an itinerary.

KELLY ANN

Drive carefully. It's a weird day.

JEFFO

Why are you leaving?

KELLY ANN

Because I watched an old black-and-  
white movie one night, stretched  
out in my bunk, and I thought to  
myself, I feel more about this  
movie than I do about my job. It's  
the first time I felt that about  
anything other than music. So I  
applied to three film schools, and  
one asked for a sample of my work.  
And I made a short film. And they  
accepted me. And I said 'Yes.'  
And if you'd taken the time to call  
me, you'd would have known that.  
But you only call me when you're in  
trouble.

He cries.

EXT. PARKING LOT -- DAY

A very normal-looking girl, with a normal-looking hair style,  
gets out of her normal car. She has a leopard print shoulder-  
bag. She is SUPERFAN NATALIE SHIN. She walks casually  
towards the backstage ramp, now open in the early afternoon  
loading in of trucks. As she gets closer, we see a look in  
her eyes. Behind all that normal... is true crazy.

INT. PRODUCTION OFFICE -- DAY

Bill and Sherri have a heart-to-heart.

SHERRI

Let me guess. Preston said he's  
not coming because his son had a  
knee injury at soccer.

BILL

Arm injury.

SHERRI

Interesting. He's "excuse-working"  
his way through every one of his  
son's appendages.

BILL

Every time there's a crisis...

SHERRI

That kid's had more knee injuries  
than Greg Oden.

BILL

I was right, though. Somebody is  
getting whacked.

SHERRI

Did he tell you who?

INT. HALLWAY -- SAME TIME

Milo stops in the hallway, over-hearing their private tone.

SHERRI (O.S.)

(loud whisper)

Milo? It's Milo isn't it?! Milo  
is getting fired. Because of  
Tallahassee.

Bill goes to shut the door, rendering silence, and leaving  
Milo devastated.

INT. PRODUCTION OFFICE -- DAY

Bill and Sherri continue their conversation.

BILL

It's Phil.

SHERRI

No!

BILL

No more Phil. And worse -- no more  
Phil-isms.

SHERRI

It's a dark day in New Orleans. By  
the way, we better get the laundry  
going now.

INT. WASHER-DRYER ROOM -- DAY

The conversation continues as they load laundry.

BILL

Do you have any band laundry?

SHERRI

Yeah, I have Tom's pants. And Winston's stuff - shit, I still need to find a nanny.

BILL

Forget about the nanny, we don't know if we have a crew.

SHERRI

What about the English guy, the douchebag, Reg?

BILL

Reg the Douchebag actually comes from sports and real-estate. He's supposedly part of some English... family... or royalty or... some shit. But he's a genius with money. So you can bet whatever he's going to be doing, it will only start with Phil.

SHERRI

Phil has a gun.

BILL

Exactly.

SHERRI

I thought it would be Jade Ochoa. Or Meaux with his shady accountant side-projects.

BILL

No, it's definitely Phil. He's the one with the biggest retainer.

SHERRI

Fuck man. That's like killing Santa Claus. Half the crew will go with him.

BILL

Will he take you?

SHERRI

Maybe.

BILL

Wow.

SHERRI

What --

BILL

We just talked about splitting up.

SHERRI

But we're not a real couple.

BILL

I know. But splitting up just made it real -- I mean, not *really* but --

SHERRI

I have to go deal with the nanny crisis.

BILL

Well, "Reg" is arriving at 4. We have two hours to plan.

EXT. STAGE DOOR -- DAY

The door opens. In a flair of backlight, he arrives like a stoned John Wayne, his face still smeared with tears.

JEFFO

I'm looking for my sister.

Everybody knows Jeffo. They've already heard about his Pearl Jam debacle. Solemnly, they invite him in with back-slaps. He exits the frame, and into the empty space slips a master of sneakiness...

Superfan Natalie enters the building.

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

The hallway is empty, and Bill is burdened by the news about Phil.

Kelly Ann comes walking the other way.

BILL

Don't leave.

KELLY ANN

Have to.

BILL

Tell me one thing that makes me know you're not doing something foolish.

Kelly Ann considers this for a moment, then digs for a DVD, and hands it to him.

KELLY ANN

This is what got me accepted to NYU. You're the only one I'm giving this to.

He looks at the disc. It's called "Run."

BILL

"Run." Interesting.

KELLY ANN

I just don't hear the music in the same way. It doesn't feel like it's mine anymore.

BILL

I feel that way about my dog but I'm not giving her away.

INT. STAGE -- DAY

Jeffo reaches into his bag. He has a mix for everybody, as he hands out laptop-burned CDs. He sees Joel, who regards him mournfully, and adjusts his Fred Meyer hat.

JEFFO

Brought you AC/DC outtakes...

JOEL

Thanks Jeffo.

JEFFO

You seen Kelly Ann --

JOEL

She's not up there?

He points to the scaffolds. Empty.

EXT. SOUND BOARD -- DAY

Carrie, the blue-and-red haired Sound Tech, is behind the board. Similarly sympathetic:

CARRIE

Hi Jeffo.

JEFFO

Replacements. 1987. Final show  
with the original band.

She nods gratefully. He notices the new tattoo on her neck. (It's the logo of the off-tour side-band she fronts back in Portland, a baroque funk-punk band called Belmonda.)

JEFFO (CONT'D)

Nice new neck work.

CARRIE

Me and Laurie are gonna have a  
baby.

JEFFO

Love that.

CARRIE

Have you seen Kelly Ann?

JEFFO

Not yet.

CARRIE

Come back in ten. You'll like the  
"Song of the Day." Cover your ears  
first, I gotta ring out the sound.

He covers his ears, as she plays loud tones over the sound system.

INT. DRUM TECH STATION -- DAY

Milo is a shell of his usual gregarious English smelly self.

MILO

Hey mate.

JEFFO

I got let go.

MILO

I know.

JEFFO

Blonde on Blonde outtakes.

MILO

I got 'em.

JEFFO

Insane quality. Straight from the studio in Nashville.

MILO

First generation? Fuck me.

JEFFO

Now what's wrong?

MILO

What's wrong? I can't be around your sister anymore. She fucks my head up. She destroys my cool. All I got is my cool.

JEFFO

She's a freaky girl. I'd let her go.

MILO

I know. I know.

JEFFO

She's an escape artist. You know that. If you really want her, don't ever tell her.

MILO

Brother -- I learned that in Tallahasee.

Music.

INT. PRODUCTION OFFICE -- DAY

Jeffo pokes his head in. Bill regards Jeffo with love and sympathy.

BILL

Life, huh?

Jeffo nods. Hands him the disc.

JEFFO

Neil Young solo acoustic 1976.  
Opens with "The Old Laughing Lady."

BILL  
Is this the Atlanta show? The Judy  
Garland intro to "Too Far Gone?"

Jeffo nods.

JEFFO  
Better quality.

BILL  
You seen Kelly Ann?

JEFFO  
Not yet. I think she's hiding from  
me. Family. We're twins, you  
know.

BILL  
What! You look so much older.

JEFFO  
Easy --

BILL  
Surprised about what happened with  
PJ.

JEFFO  
(continuing)  
They were my band. My boys.

BILL  
Yeah.

JEFFO  
I heard your news. It's on the  
grapevine --

BILL  
Which news.

JEFFO  
The whacking.

BILL  
Can you believe it. Phil.

JEFFO  
I heard it was Milo.

BILL  
Shit. I just said too much. I  
never do that. Jeffo. I just  
fucked up. Don't tell anyone.

(MORE)



BILL (CONT'D)

Really, Jeffo. Nobody. It's Phil.  
They're firing Phil. Management is  
sending in a money-guy at 4.

JEFFO

Lips are sealed, baby. I'm just  
here to kill a day and work out my  
thoughts about...

He points three fingers downward -- an M.

JEFFO (CONT'D)

Manhood...

He turns the three fingers upward -- a W.

JEFFO (CONT'D)

... and Weather.

INT. ARENA -- DAY

Carrie the Sound Tech plays the "Song Of The Day."

The crew -- all music-lovers first and foremost -- gather for  
a three-minute music break.

It's My Morning Jacket's "I Will Be There When You Die."

The high-tech state-of-the-art Staton-House Band sound system  
fills the empty arena with sound. It's the greatest stereo  
in the world, and the music is all for them. The crew.

And somehow this song catches everybody's mood. Perfectly.

Jeffo sees his sister and they silently hug. Reunited.  
Listening to this music.

Milo shoves his hands in his pockets, and watches Kelly Ann  
and her brother.

Bill watches Phil, blustery and empowered. The big man has  
no idea of what's coming.

Joel sorts the dried laundry with Sherri.

INT. HALLWAYS -- DAY

Superfan Natalie, with everyone outside listening to the  
song... the rooms mostly empty... slips into the hallway,  
following the arrows to the band's dressing rooms.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. PARKING LOT -- 3:30 PM

The parking lot is filled with excited fans.

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

Bill watches Kelly Ann's film. The blue glow lights his face.

INT. BACKSTAGE -- AFTERNOON

The Fleet Foxes arrive with Band and Tour manager, and roadies of their own.

PHIL

Hello Fleet Foxes. Welcome to the family!

The opening act looks around, taking in the new faces and their new tour, and the camera moves among these fresh musicians, finding one man in particular...

He's tall, somewhat awkward, and carries a silver English carrying case. His posture is impeccable. He slips into the group of personalities, new and old, and misses nothing. He is, of course, REG WHITEHEAD, 38.

PHIL (CONT'D)

We'll clear the stage here, and let you boys do your magic. You got 20 minutes for sound-check.

Already we sense impatience in the Fleet Foxes.

Meaux passes by. Privately:

MEAUX

The storage units are filled with fucking gold...

Phil slaps him on the back.

INT. BACKSTAGE -- AFTERNOON

Phil catches Kelly Ann for a moment.

PHIL

Honey -- don't leave without  
hearing my patented "bon voyage"  
rap --

KELLY ANN

You got it, Phil --

PHIL

You didn't really want a surprise  
party or anything, right? Cake and  
stuff?

KELLY ANN

No it would make me too sad.

PHIL

Why you leaving?

KELLY ANN

I'm not feeling it the way I used  
to. I need to mix it up... "get  
messy, get real"... didn't you say  
that once?

PHIL

It comes and goes, darling. It's  
always a roller-coaster. But if  
you love the music -- and I know  
you do -- you might want to give it  
another chance.

KELLY ANN

I don't even know if the band is  
feeling it either. They haven't  
changed the set since last tour. I  
have to be a fan of something or  
I'm useless. I'm nothing. I'm  
just a worker bee on Bus # 1.

She shakes her head. It's not enough.

PHIL

Tell 'em. It's a family. Walk up  
to Tom or Christopher tonight.  
Tell him why you're leaving.

KELLY ANN

I don't talk to the band.

PHIL

They're musicians. They got a high  
pitched signal that goes off when  
they hear the truth.

KELLY ANN

I don't need them to know me.

PHIL

See, the thing is -- and this is why everybody is so fucking depressed today. We're all fans of you. What'll we do without you racing by us on your board... whoosh... you got a serious vibe, girl.

She is surprised at his words.

PHIL (CONT'D)

I don't think there's a person here that wouldn't throw themselves into a pile of razor blades and wave their arms around for you. And if you go to New York and it doesn't work out, don't waste a second coming back.

Beat.

PHIL (CONT'D)

But you're gonna kill 'em in NYC. So who am I kidding. I'll die with this band, I'll still be here. But I can see in you, you gotta move on. But don't ever think you can't come back and be a legend. And I say that, as a legend myself.

He grins. A PRETTY GIRL teeters by on high heels.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Who you looking for?

PRETTY GIRL

Rick.

PHIL

After show, honey.

He gives her the Blue Pass, and we hear her shoes clacking as she exits.

INT. BLUE ROOM -- AFTERNOON

The Pretty Girl finds herself with five other Pretty Girls. All wear Blue Passes. Nobody speaking with each other.

INT. HALLWAY -- AFTERNOON

Phil wraps a fatherly arm around Kelly Ann's shoulder.

KELLY ANN  
I'll find you later for the "bon voyage."

PHIL  
Honey. You just heard it.

KELLY ANN  
Pretty painless.

PHIL  
Darlin'. I'll miss ya every mili-second! But if you ask me, and everybody else...

He leans in close.

PHIL (CONT'D)  
I don't think you're going.

Phil exits as Sherri arrives in crisis mode, pinned to her blackberry, her hand on her phone holster.

SHERRI  
Will you be a nanny for Winston for one night --

KELLY ANN  
My plane is tonight --

SHERRI  
Ugh! Ugh! Ugh!

She exits.

INT. STAIRCASE -- AFTERNOON

Superfan Natalie sneaks up the staircase, and exits by the band dressing rooms. Suddenly, with iron-clad authority:

LOCAL SECURITY # 1  
Excuse me! Where is your pass?

NATALIE  
I lost my laminate. I'm Phil's cousin from Atlanta.

Local Security draws closer, skeptical.

LOCAL SECURITY # 1

Let me get Phil.

He reaches for his Walkie. She smiles a sweet, sunny smile.

NATALIE

Wait. Wait wait wait.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM -- AFTERNOON

Natalie, wearing only her skirt, is riding the completely nude Local Security guy on the changing table. She is absolutely nuts with her lovemaking sounds, growing like an animal and chirping like a bird. She dangles the straps of her Leopard Skin shoulder bag across the face of the Security guy, teasing him. His eyes are wide with fear and delight. He has never had sex like this in his life.

INT. HALLWAY -- AFTERNOON -- MINUTES LATER

Natalie is now fully dressed again, barely flushed, and wandering the hallway with a full-access laminate.

EXT. BACKSTAGE -- 4:02 PM

Bill is outside the door, searching for Reg Whitehead.

INT. ARENA -- 4:04 PM

The Fleet Foxes prepare for soundcheck. Bill finds Sherri. Both looking for Reg Whitehead. With "Front Page" speed:

BILL

Are we going to give Kelly Ann a cake?

SHERRI

Phil says she doesn't want one.

BILL

Somebody get a cupcake or something -- I don't know -- the girl doesn't eat. Besides --

SHERRI

I've got to find someone to nanny before the English douchebag gets here. I don't want Tom in a bad mood 'cause his Devil Child is roaming free.

BILL

This is why you and I can't risk having children together.

SHERRI

Besides that it's never going to happen anyway.

BILL

Because if a good guy like Tom Staton can spawn 'Winston'... anything can happen.

SHERRI

You know I can see you had a little crush on Kelly Ann.

BILL

She gave me her film --

SHERRI

Kelly Ann is not leaving.

BILL

It's really something. The Film.

SHERRI

Okay. Enough of this. Text Preston that the Douchebag is late. You might ask him if he's aware that Phil carries a loaded firearm.

BILL

I'm sure it's in the douchebag's dossier. These IMF guys are trained killers themselves.

SHERRI

Let's face it. Phil is a little like the statue in front of the museum.

BILL

It's not why anybody comes, but it sets the tone for the whole experience.

SHERRI

Exactly.

BILL

I'll go look for the English douchebag.

The Walkie crackles.

WALKIE VOICE

Go to 4.

Bill goes to Channel 4.

WALKIE VOICE (CONT'D)

The Fleet Foxes are getting  
impatient. They need direction.  
One of them already spat at Milo.

She starts to exit, Bill grabs her.

BILL

May I say something to you, my road  
wife of so many years?

SHERRI

Sure --

BILL

I always found you very attractive.

SHERRI

I "have" that, and thank you.

BILL

I'm serious.

SHERRI

How far does the fantasy go?

BILL

Actually, I think about making out  
with you on a beach in Fiji. Make  
that an atoll. And I find out if  
your breasts are as... vibrant as  
we all assume they are.

SHERRI

(shaking her head)  
You don't remember.

BILL

Of course I remember.

SHERRI

Suddenly this feels like the last  
day of school...

BILL

Elton John's people called about  
you going to work for them.



SHERRI

The word is out?

BILL

I made sure we'd get a little headstart. I told Jeffo.

SHERRI

Wow. Elton.

BILL

That would finally put you on the same tour as your husband.

SHERRI

It's kind of perfect.

BILL

I have a dreamhouse I've been trying to finish for 15 years.

SHERRI

Maybe now's the time to actually...

Kelly Ann arrives.

KELLY ANN

What's going on, you didn't answer the Walkie about the Fleet Foxes spitting at Milo.

BILL

We're discussing her timeless body.

KELLY ANN

Sherri? -- she rocks the brainy stripper-librarian look like nobody else.

SHERRI

You're both turning me on.

KELLY ANN

You should just have raging sex and be done with it --

SHERRI

That's what we were discussing.

BILL

Kelly, will you stay another night to nanny Winston?

KELLY ANN

I can't.

SHERRI

You have a boyfriend in New York.

KELLY ANN

(surprised)

He's just a guy I met online. From NYU.

BILL

We know. Everybody reads your Instagram. You have no secrets.

Kelly Ann blushes.

SHERRI

Alright I'm going --

Sherri takes off, leaving Bill and Kelly Ann.

BILL

I loved your film. It says a lot about you.

She nods, smiles... and runs.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S ROOM -- AFTERNOON

Joel waves sage scent in Christopher House's dressing room. He assembles the family photos, and adjusts the towel beneath the mirror.... perfectly.

INT. BACKSTAGE AREA -- AFTERNOON

Kelly Ann helps arrange the carts by the side of the stage. She notices Reg, who smiles at her. He nods. She nods.

KELLY ANN

Fleet Foxes. Great band of yours.

He smiles politely -- thanks.

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

Bill sees Jeffo.

JEFFO

The Fleet Foxes are looking for you!

BILL

My God, this is the neediest band since Paul Westerberg toured solo.

JEFFO

You want me to make you an espresso? You know I'm the best --

BILL

Yes, I'd love one of your famous espressos. And thank you for telling everybody about Phil.

JEFFO

I know. I fucked up.

BILL

No, it's fine, we just need this teabag doucheboy to show up on time or Phil will find out first.

JEFFO

I didn't tell Phil. Phil packs heat.

INT. BACKSTAGE -- DAY

Bill arrives and The Fleet Foxes are still waiting impatiently for soundcheck. Heated discussions are building between the two crews. Phil stands nearby, smiling. Bill ushers the Fleet Foxes onto the stage, and quickly returns to Sherri.

SHERRI

What do we do now --

BILL

Hard to do anything until the asshole from IMF shows up.

SHERRI

(to the Fleet Foxes)

Guys -- sorry for the delay. We'll be ready in a minute.

Reg Whitehead watches the chaotic moment, undetected. He's well blended into the small crowd of the Fleet Foxes.

BILL

I'm going to email Management. "Preston. Your new asshole is already late."

SHERRI

Tell him the English douche-bag  
can't even arrive on time.

Rattled, Bill taps out the text, speaking aloud:

BILL

"Where... is... your... English  
asshole?"

SHERRI

Douchebag asshole.

BILL

"Douchebag English asshole... "

Bill sends the text. Beat. Instant Panic.

BILL (CONT'D)

Oh shit, I copied the douchebag by  
mistake.

Immediately, another Ding. Close by.

All eyes turn to the silent tall unnoticed Englishman. He  
looks at his text.

Reg Whitehead holds up his phone. And smiles evenly.

REG

Hi.

SHERRI

(red-faced)

Reg?

Reg turns to Bill.

REG

Bill?

Beat.

BILL

(pleasant smile)

Reg?

REG

Pleasure.

BILL

Sorry about the "douche-bag" --

REG  
English douchebag.

SHERRI  
(peacemaker)  
Can we help you with anything --

Reg is a cool customer.

REG  
I'm quite fine, thanks. Happy to  
get acquainted.

BILL  
Well then, Reg. Should we... get  
acquainted?

An uncomfortable moment, as they prepare to walk back to the  
Production Office.

INT. BACKSTAGE -- NIGHT

Bill introduces Reg to Phil, the doomed road manager.

BILL  
Phil. This is Reg Whitehead from  
IMF. They're working with  
management now.

PHIL  
Well now that's a name from across  
the pond!

REG  
Preston brought me in to talk to  
everybody. Is there a moment  
before the show?

PHIL  
After is always better.

Phil looks at Bill. *Where's this going?*

Bill offers a strained smile. *Nowhere good.*

REG  
Are you busy in about twenty  
minutes?

Phil scoffs.

PHIL

Busy is when I'm asleep. Busy is for amateurs. I'm intensely occupied. I haven't been "busy" in twenty years.

REG

Well, let's try to wedge in a talk.

PHIL

(steely)

Alright. Let's talk.

REG

Preston asked me to talk with you first.

Sherri pulls out her Walkie and flips it to Channel 2. Into headset. Phil is now reading the tea leaves.

PHIL

And Preston stayed home?

Bill nods. Phil turns red and angry, as he now faces Reg.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Let me ask you this, Reg? Are you with us or agin' us?

REG

I'm just a fella from the financial concern.

ON JOEL

Who stands with Carrie. Watching.

CARRIE

Trouble?

JOEL

It's never serious until Phil takes off his hat.

Phil carefully fingers the brim of his hat...

CARRIE

We're going hatless.

With strange calm, Phil removes the hat with the leather-embroidered words: P\*H\*I\*L. Carrie looks at Joel.

JOEL

Duck if he shoots.

ON PHIL

PHIL

Mister, I'm not an egotistical guy.

Reg regards the egotistical hat, with a Jack Benny expression.

PHIL (CONT'D)

But when you look at me, you're looking at rock and roll in America. I can show you where BB King first picked up a guitar. Roger Waters is a houseguest of mine. Trent Reznor is my dear friend. Ronnie Van Zant was the Godfather of my first child. And if you fuck with my crew, I'll take you down faster than a headless rooster at a picnic of hungry... people.

The "Phil-ism" doesn't work and both know it. Reg wastes no further time.

REG

Management wishes to inform you that you and Harvey Meaux are under Federal investigation for the resale of items left in storage units by victims of Hurricane Katrina. You've already harmed this band's ability to travel overseas. You're both invited to leave the organization now.

Beat.

BILL

Okay, wait -- this is all news to me. I'm the Tour Manager and --

Phil pulls the famous gun from under his vest pocket. There is a sudden swarm of three Local Crew members, along with Bill. The gun is wrestled from Phil's hand.

INT. STAGE -- AFTERNOON

The Fleet Foxes finish a red-hot soundcheck. They have come to steal this show.

EXT. PARKING LOT -- LATE AFTERNOON

Sunset as the parking lot is full.

INT. STAGE -- LATE AFTERNOON

The crew is all standing on stage -- Bill, Sherri, Kelly Ann, Carrie, Milo, Joel, Jeffo. Reg addresses them with hands in pockets. Someone's walkie crackles: "Bill what time is the crew meal?" Nobody answers, nobody moves.

Reg takes a breath and begins his pitch.

REG

Three things I am. English.  
Cheap. Unsparing. I think most of  
the evil done in this world happens  
under the guise of "sweet." If you  
want sweetness with your truth, I'm  
sorry. Leave right now.

Carrie, and seven others immediately leave.

REG (CONT'D)

Wait. Wait wait wait. I may not  
have said that correctly.

His gaze falls to Kelly Ann.

REG (CONT'D)

What I mean to say is -- you can  
trust me to cut to the chase. Most  
of you will have to either take  
less, or leave with a small  
severance. This band, who you all  
love, spends too much money.

MILO

I quit.

He leaves. Reg starts to panic a bit.

REG

There's no middle anymore. You  
either make no money, or you make a  
lot of money. And if you make a  
lot of money, and you don't look  
after it... you meet someone like  
me.

JOEL

How many songs do you have on your  
iTunes?



REG

I have three on my iPhone. One day, there will be more.

JEFFO

What are the songs?

REG

(barreling forward)

Good songs, trust me. Queen. Munford and Sons. And one other. But I'm the first to admit, I come from the world of sports and real-estate.

Pointed looks are exchanged among the crew.

JOEL

What about Phil?

REG

Your man Phil. A legend, yes. But the trust is -- I've been asked to show you a different way. He got a very big salary for doing, or shall I say -- not doing -- anything that he could easily push off on Bill Thompson. You just saw it with the Fleet Foxes. He did nothing. Bill did the work. I know, Phil's a King. I know he's friends with Mr. Pink Floyd, or whoever. It's not easy to let a King go. But let's get on the same boat here, and sail. Bill here could easily do both his job, and Phil's. Phil was a ceremonial figure. As I see it. But I just got here.

Reg looks at Kelly Ann.

REG (CONT'D)

Phil was being paid a lot of money to hug a lot of people and make them feel good about the old way. But the old way is gone.

JEFFO

Can I just say something? I don't work here, so maybe I have a perspective here --

REG

Then why are you here --

JEFFO

-- I just want to say -- what the fuck -- I think you're fucking Satan and you're visiting from the Underworld and the flames of hell are lapping at your feet. That's all I got.

REG

And what do you do?

JEFFO

I came here to cry on as many fucking shoulders as I could find. Long story. I don't work with this band --

REG

Well you do now if you want to. What's your speciality --

JEFFO

Guitars, people and coffee.

REG

Well I hope you stay. What's your name?

JEFFO

My name? My name is Pig Fucker.

There is an uncomfortable shifting of weight among the crew. Stifled laughs. Reg stays sincere.

REG

Okay, Pig Fucker. Thank you. Who else?

KELLY ANN

His name is Jeffo. He's my twin brother.

REG

Hello Jeffo. You look much older than your sister.

JEFFO

Price of an education in the music business.

KELLY ANN

He's here because he loves music. Not sports or theme-parks or whatever --

REG

Real-estate. Yes. I know it's very different.

KELLY ANN

There's no difference. You live and you die and you spend the time in between doing the things that you love... or don't. You either love what you do, or you should get the fuck out. That's all I have.

REG

I see the family resemblance.

Beat. Reg leans on the piano, leaving a smudge with his palm. Joel shuts his eyes in pain.

He stares at Kelly Ann.

REG (CONT'D)

And didn't it feel good to tell the truth?

Kelly Ann gestures with her open palm, outstretched flatly.

KELLY ANN

No, because I haven't told the truth yet. You just removed the figurehead from this crew. You humiliated him.

REG

You're going to hate the word I'm about to use -- but I'm here to protect the "product." The Staton-House Band is the product we all want to protect here...

KELLY ANN

Excuse me. Qualifying the word doesn't change the fact that you just used the word -- "product."

Reg now knows it's time to close. He turns to camera, away from them, seen only by us... a small smile crosses his face. He turns back to the crew.

REG

My point is that even a "product" -- yes let's all hate the word -- is a living thing. It needs to be tended to, carefully, because it happens in an instant. Suddenly --

He takes a breath, and collapses on the floor. His tall frame lies crumpled on the ground.

The crew looks on in horror. Heart attack? Panic attack?

Reg smoothly gets up a moment later.

REG (CONT'D)  
 -- you're dead. Culture.  
 Assassination.

It's his big moment, and he expects a galvanized sense of awe. It's always worked before. But this crowd, and especially Kelly Ann, buys none of it. She is unimpressed and dismissive. It's humiliating to Reg. His big moment... passes without a comment.

KELLY ANN  
 You don't know the secret ingredient of the "product" you're trying to sell.

Everyone is looking at Kelly Ann, as she revs:

KELLY ANN (CONT'D)  
 Maybe the secret is that the product is not really a product. It's a feeling. In the short-term, Mister, you will be a great success. But in the long-term, you better collect a few souvenirs because one day that's all you will have. The first thing you did was lie to me, and the last thing you'll say to me will be a lie too. Because you'll say "good luck" and my goal is for you to hate me enough to not mean it. I want you to hate me because if you don't, I haven't communicated the fact that I live to destroy everything you stand for.

She exits. He turns to the others.

REG  
 Anybody else?

INT. CAR -- SUNSET -- A FEW MINUTES LATER

Reg is in his rental car. He's having a complete anxiety attack. He breathes hard, tries to drink some bottled water.

He's coming apart physically. He searches a contact list, and dials a long number. As we INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE -- DAY

An English Mansion. Birds chirp. A horse gallops by.

INT. LAVISH ENGLISH HOME -- DAY

An elegant Butler enters from the backyard, holding pruning shears. He picks up the ringing telephone.

EUGENE

Piperton House. This is Mr. Blodgett.

REG

Eugene. It's Reg.

Eugene is at first surprised, then smiles warmly.

EUGENE

Well, sir. How are you --

REG

I've missed our semi-regular chats, Eugene. I find myself thinking about my early days.

EUGENE

(still surprised)  
I do too, Sir. Often.

REG

Eugene, I've come to America on a... a "business whim" and I'm terribly confused. I've come to be a part of a touring group of musicians.

EUGENE

Well. How is it going?

REG

Very poorly. They loathe me.

EUGENE

Well don't show your weakness, Sir. I suspect they are in need of assurance. You mustn't be more insecure than them.

REG

I know.

EUGENE

They're show people?

REG

They're different than us. They're different, even, from sports people. They're... emotional and almost drippy with their feelings.

EUGENE

Oh how taxing.

REG

I kind of like it. It's not how I was brought up, as you know. Of course you know. You raised me.

EUGENE

Well give yourself a moment. You always were a quick study. Not to presume great knowledge of your deepest feelings.

REG

You were my only family. Day to day, I mean.

Beat. Eugene examines his shears, is not sure how to respond.

REG (CONT'D)

I was almost shot today. A large sweaty man with a loud leather hat pulled a gun on me.

EUGENE

Show people.

REG

I'm not sure if I'm excited or terrified.

EUGENE

Remember the family motto.

REG

I will.

EUGENE

Say it.

REG

"Anything that loosens the fist  
that holds the money -- "

EUGENE

No no -- not that one. The other  
one.

REG

"The road travels steeply, to the  
very top."

EUGENE

If I may, Reggie. Make a friend.  
Make one friend. Maintain a  
friendship, someone you could ask  
for help if you need it.

REG

I thought that's what I was doing  
right now.

EUGENE

Someone there.

REG

They hate me.

EUGENE

They can't all hate you. You're a  
great guy.

(a thought)

Unless they knew how rich you are.  
That tends to subvert people's  
sympathy, in this economy --

REG

I'll make a friend.

Beat.

REG (CONT'D)

Thank you for this personal  
conversation.

EUGENE

It's wonderful to hear from you.  
My new employer is rarely here.

REG

Dad's doing well.

EUGENE

I heard.

REG

Okay then!

An awkward silence.

EUGENE

I predict a grand adventure.

REG

Thank you, Eugene.

INT. HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Superfan Natalie sneaks into the Production Office, and grabs a tour itinerary, stashing it in her shoulder-bag. All the phone numbers, now hers.

INT. OUTER HALLWAY -- NIGHT

The remaining crew is talking on the floor of the arena. Emotions are raging.

SHERRI

You just rolled over and took it!

BILL

Your silence was pretty deafening too!

SHERRI

This is what bothers me about you, you -- you're a deflector, you never take the blame. You're worse than Preston and his kid's knees. You're just like Management.

BILL

I don't even know if I work here anymore!

SHERRI

So are you going to double-up on your job, and replace Phil and run yourself into the ground for less money?

BILL

Of course not.

SHERRI

Well, I'm going to work for Elton.



BILL

You should. Go be with your real husband.

SHERRI

You're so adept at avoiding getting splattered with any blood that you never do anything noble. Nothing truly noble enough.

BILL

The stuff you hold inside!

SHERRI

You were supposed to quit.

BILL

You were supposed to quit.

SHERRI

I did quit!

Bill looks down, shaking his head.

BILL

And here's why they get the best of us. Because the idea of not knowing how tomorrow will go is so fucking terrifying that we'd spend our whole lives doing anything they ask, at lower and lower salaries, because they give us the gift of knowing that we don't have to wake up tomorrow with the terror of going home to nothing.

Sherri's mobile rings.

SHERRI

This is Sherri. Yes, I'll hold for Preston.

Bill is looking at her.

BILL

This is the best talk we've ever had.

SHERRI

I'm terrified to tell Preston the truth. But I'm going to show you what noble is. I'm going to "Kelly Ann" him.

Beat. She takes the call, listening.

SHERRI (CONT'D)

Preston... yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.  
Okay. Yes. I'll find the nanny.  
Yes. I'm already on Roadie.net and  
Facebook. All over it. Yes.

She hangs up.

BILL

See what I mean?

SHERRI

Shit!

BILL

Are we going to quit or not?

SHERRI

I'm going to go work with my  
husband.

BILL

I'm going to build my dreamhouse.

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

Kelly Ann moves her cart. She's wearing a traveling jacket,  
and a bag slung around her shoulder. Bill catches her.

BILL

We didn't get you a cake because  
nobody thought you were leaving.

KELLY ANN

Hey, here's your mug back.

She digs in her bag. It's the "Hello Is It Tea You're  
Looking For?" Bill takes it gratefully.

BILL

You were a hero out there. Sadly,  
a lot of our bunch is going to take  
his deal.

KELLY ANN

The assholes win again. What about  
Phil?

BILL

He's already working for Elton.  
So's Sherri.

KELLY ANN

Sherri's leaving you for her real husband? Wow.

BILL

And I'm going back to my unfinished house.

KELLY ANN

Go Bill! I vote for the dreamhouse.

BILL

It's time to grow up. I'm not young. Soon I'll be eating off the Senior's menu. I'm out.

KELLY ANN

Well good for you and good for Phil.

BILL

The old crook...

KELLY ANN

Wasn't that part of the "Road Dawg's" appeal?

BILL

Alright, so goodbye.

Bill's radio crackles:

RADIO

"Go to 4. SNS is inside and traveling to Station Green."

BILL

Shit! Our "wonderful" stalker's in the building.

KELLY ANN

I'm so ready for this day to end.

BILL

Just help me find Superfan Natalie. You're the only one she listens to. The band's almost here, and I can't do it. Oh one more thing.

Joel and Carrie arrive.

BILL (CONT'D)

We did get you a pie.

He reaches behind him and mashes a pie in her face. The crew applauds, as she nods. You got me.

Music.

INT. HALLWAYS -- NIGHT

Kelly Ann, face washed of pie, rides her skateboard down the hallways, looking in the windows, looking for Superfan Natalie. She whooshes smoothly around Joel, who can't help but admire the iconography of Kelly Ann. Always keeping the arteries of this tour flowing. Music continues.

Kelly Ann turns a corner and almost runs over Reg.

REG

Hey! --

KELLY ANN

Yes --

REG

-- you left before I could actually meet you.

KELLY ANN

That was the idea.

REG

This is how it happens. The ground shakes... and then a new foundation develops. I'm sorry I deceived you for thirty seconds.

KELLY ANN

Deceived me?

REG

Yes, you thought I was with the other band.

KELLY ANN

I never thought you were with the other band.

REG

How did you know?

KELLY ANN

Your sneakers. Your bag. Your shirt. Where you stood listening, the worst place for sound in the whole venue....

REG  
Clever girl.

KELLY ANN  
It's just my world. Not yours.

REG  
(simply)  
They don't care about Phil. They  
care about you.

KELLY ANN  
Elton John has him now and will pay  
him twice as much.

REG  
Great. Phil stays a legend. He'll  
buy his way out of trouble. But as  
a man, and as a worker -- he's a  
slow walk in the park. Low hanging  
fruit. It was easy for me to take  
him out. With the exception of the  
gun.

KELLY ANN  
You should just listen to the  
music. Listen to the show. Know  
who you're representing.

REG  
Why are you leaving?

KELLY ANN  
Because of you. You were going to  
show up sooner or later.

REG  
What else --

KELLY ANN  
I have an interest in film.

REG  
I have an interest in Egypt, but  
I'm very happy where I am.

She laughs bitterly, turns.

REG (CONT'D)  
Help me.

She stops, shaking her head. This man bothers her like few  
ever have.

KELLY ANN

Here's the thing about music. You gotta listen. Be a fan. It might even improve your sad rich life.

REG

Please stay. I'll find some way to pay you, I just feel like I won't succeed unless I learn from you -- we could have meetings at my hotel every morning.

KELLY ANN

I don't cross the street. I don't go to the Four Seasons. Some of us like the Travelodge.

He regards her wisdom.

REG

And you're an electrician?

KELLY ANN

Adios.

REG

(blurts)  
Be my friend.

She turns, shocked. He's embarrassed.

INT. ARENA -- EVENING

The doors open. Fans run to their seats, whooping. The "Walk In" music is a special mix made by Christopher House.

INT. HALLWAY/DRESSING ROOM -- NIGHT

Kelly Ann looks through the chicken-wired panel viewing into Tom Staton's dressing room. There she is. Sitting in the middle of the room. Her hands reaching down below her dress.

KELLY ANN

Oh shit --

Kelly Ann pulls open the door. Natalie and Kelly Ann are old adversaries, like the Roadrunner and the Chicken.

KELLY ANN (CONT'D)

Hello Natalie --

Natalie turns. There is craziness in her eyes, and the thrill of being caught.

NATALIE

Hi. I shouldn't be here.

KELLY ANN

Not really.

NATALIE

Are you going to kick me out?

KELLY ANN

Oh yeah.

Kelly Ann approaches her, and suddenly Natalie is motor-mouthing like a shaky, scared, rabid dog.

NATALIE

I had to chillax for a few months, and stuff. And then I saw you were in New Orleans, I know the guys love playing New Orleans, I mean this is where Christopher had his honeymoon with Liz. Am I in some serious medium-trouble? Do you know that I have a tumor? I'm not crazy. Do I seem that way?

KELLY ANN

Only when you write twelve letters about masturbating with Tom's microphone in the presence of the Lord, in his dressing room. That kinda gets our attention.

As Kelly Ann leads her to the door, Natalie turns.

NATALIE

Can I see the show?

KELLY ANN

I'm sorry, Natalie. We had to place an restraining order on your visits...

NATALIE

I'm so sorry.

KELLY ANN

Plus, you don't want to wear out your welcome... you want people to miss you...

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

Natalie exits, and takes off running. Kelly Ann stands there, holding her skateboard. Thinking about throwing it down and chasing her. She doesn't. She sees a door marked... EXIT.

She walks through it.

INT. BACKSTAGE -- DAY

Sherri approaches Jeffo with purpose.

SHERRI

Jeffo --

He reads her mind.

JEFFO

I'll do it.

SHERRI

Do what --

JEFFO

Be a manny for Winston.

SHERRI

Oh God I love you Jeffo.

EXT. ARENA -- NIGHT

Kelly Ann has escaped backstage for good.

A Girl Busker stands nearby, playing a song.

Kelly Ann admires the pure simplicity of the song. It's a simple song about happiness... and it fills her with joy. Finally, she's free.

KELLY ANN

You wanna see the show?

BUSKER

Sure!

KELLY ANN

Your guitar will be on Bus # 1.  
Ask for Mike.

BUSKER

You have the best job in the world.



KELLY ANN

Hurry up. Can't hold the lights  
for you.

She gives her a ticket, and takes the guitar. She hands it  
off to Mike, the driver of Bus # 1.

KELLY ANN (CONT'D)

See ya!

Mike watches her go.

The Arena glitters in the distance as she walks on. We hear  
music an ancient-sounding folk song, "Great Dream Of Heaven."

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GATE

Headlights flash. Her cab. She waves.

ANOTHER ROW OF HEADLIGHTS

Now arrives importantly, moving quickly across her path.

The band is arriving.

The band vehicles pass her, splashing her with lights. Only  
the last car stops. It's guitarist CHRISTOPHER HOUSE, though  
we only see his arm.

CHRIS HOUSE

Kelly Ann!!! New set list!

KELLY ANN

That's... excellent...

CHRIS HOUSE

Sorry about Phil!

The window rolls up.

She takes the set list, and stands alone in the night.  
Behind her the arena. She reads the new song order, smiles  
and walks to the cab. With each step, her feelings flicker  
like the images of the movie that got her into Film School...

HER SHORT FILM -- "RUN"

It's made of scenes of characters from old movies. Running.  
First up, it's The Apartment. As Shirley MacLaine begins to  
run back to Jack Lemmon.

INTERCUT

Kelly Ann walking faster towards the cab.

HER FILM

A running scene from Raising Arizona.

ON KELLY ANN

She reaches the cab, and puts her hand on the door.

CAB DRIVER

We going to the airport?

A simple question, and...

She finds herself stunned by her inability to answer. She looks back at the Arena, and then at the cab driver. There's a curious expression on her face. The images, the echoed sounds of the crowd back in the venue, and then... the music overtakes her.

She turns to the Arena, and then back to the waiting cab.

HER FILM

North By Northwest. Cary Grant runs.

ON KELLY ANN

She pulls her hand from the door, and begins walking back to the Arena. At first slowly... and then faster.

CAB DRIVER (CONT'D)

Hey!

HER FILM

Newsies as joyous boys run through the streets.

ON KELLY ANN

Moving fast. Instinctively, she knows the show is about to begin.

HER FILM

Matthew Broderick runs in the streets of Chicago in Ferris Bueller's Day Off.

Run Lola Run. (Front angle -- Lola running)

ON KELLY ANN -- CLOSE-UP

At top speed. Running.

Back to her family. Back to the Arena.

INT. ARENA -- NIGHT

The arena is full.

INT. BACKSTAGE -- DAY

Sherri introduces Jeffo to Winston, the Devil Child. He's 9.

SHERRI

Shake hands. You two are going to spend some time together.

JEFFO

What are you into?

WINSTON

Weapons and sex...

JEFFO

(cheerful)

I'm your guy.

SHERRI

I just have to say, this is a great marriage.

She hugs them, and leaves them to look at each other, as she motor-mouths into her headset. The show is beginning.

JEFFO

Winston. I'm Jeffo.

EXT. ARENA BACK DOOR -- NIGHT

Kelly Ann arrives at the back door, breathing hard. She BANGS on the door, with the strength of ten roadies.

Thankfully, Bill answers.

BILL

You.

KELLY ANN

I want my job back.

BILL

This ain't a good time to un-quit.

Crowd is chanting for the show to start. He gestures to the stage.

KELLY ANN

I un-quit.

He sees her equipment exiting on a nearby cart heading for the next city. He grabs her tool-holster.

BILL

I thought you didn't feel it anymore.

He waves his flashlight in a circle, a signal to the stage crew. The band's coming. Showtime.

KELLY ANN

I think I was listening to the wrong song...

Bill gives her back the tool-belt holster.

Kelly Ann's return, heroic and in the end... completely unexpected... has sealed her legend.

BILL

Well, shit, if you're staying...

KELLY ANN

What about Milo?

BILL

He went to New York to follow you.

She shakes her head. Milo.

INT. NEW ORLEANS ARENA -- NIGHT

Lights go down. The audience noise is deafening.

INT. DARK -- NIGHT

Sherri finds Bill.

BILL

Sherri --

She can already hear it in his voice. She knows him that well.

SHERRI

(silhouettes)

Oh shit. You're staying.

BILL

Do you take this hand in the holy  
fraternity of our fake marriage?

SHERRI

Oh fuck...

She's staying too.

THE STAGE

Joel rushes in, and at the last minute, wipes the smudge off  
the piano top....

INT. ARENA -- NIGHT

The crowd roars in the darkness.

INT. BEHIND STAGE -- NIGHT

The band walks coolly towards the stage, as we follow behind.  
We see them only as shadows. Their stage and the entire  
evening is entirely pre-arranged by this loving and loyal  
crew.

They huddle together for a pre-show ritual of their own.

Reg Whitehead watches, flashlights criss-crossing his vision  
in the dark. This constant notion of family... it's  
everywhere, it's confusing. He'll learn as he goes. And as  
Kelly Ann rolls a case by, he realizes... she's staying.

Reg Whitehead's life suddenly begins.

The roar is now deafening, and the band takes the stage.

The first few moments of any concert -- always the best.

A VOICE

"Ladies and Gentlemen... "

Roar.

And then, the dreaded sound of...

Firecrackers.

To Black.

THE END