

HIGHSTON

Written and Created
by
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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. PSYCHIATRIC TREATMENT CENTER - DR. CONWAY'S OFFICE - DAY

A folder marked "HIGHSTON LIGGETTS CASE" drops to reveal the concerned face of DR. BEN CONWAY. He looks up at the eager family across the desk: Parents WILBUR and JEAN LIGGETTS, both 48, brother BUD, 17 (dullard), UNCLE BILLY, 50 (loon.)

DR. CONWAY

So... your son imagines that celebrities are his friends.

JEAN

That's right.

DR. CONWAY

And do you feel this delusion has been harmful to him?

JEAN

We're not sure. It just doesn't seem normal.

WILBUR

Some of them have actually helped him, I think.

JEAN

That's true. You wouldn't think it since she's so slutty-like but Madonna had some very good advice.

DR. CONWAY

Madonna? The pop singer?

JEAN

I believe she also acts. She told Highston to stay in school and always wear a condom.

WILBUR

Well, not always, Jean, just when he's having sex.

JEAN

I assumed that was implied.

WILBUR

You know who gave him appalling advice was that Kevin Costner.

JEAN

That's true, I can't watch a film of his anymore after what he told our boy. What a wacko.

WILBUR

Although I did catch "Waterworld" the other day and it's not bad.

JEAN

I thought there was too much water.

Dr. Conway looks confused.

DR. CONWAY

Now, you're talking about an imaginary Kevin Costner and not the real one, correct?

JEAN

Oh yes, he's never met the real Kevin Costner, just the one that's not real.

Dr. Conway glances over at Uncle Billy, who winks. He turns to Bud, who stares back stupidly. He checks the folder.

DR. CONWAY

Highston -- that's an unusual name.

WILBUR

He's named after my grandpa Highston who was a hero in Europe in World War II. He even earned a medal.

DR. CONWAY

What was he awarded for?

WILBUR

Uh, he was, um, tortured.

DR. CONWAY

Well, those Nazis could be cruel.

JEAN

Actually it was "Friendly Torture."

DR. CONWAY

I'm sorry?

WILBUR

It was his own troops who tortured him.

DR. CONWAY

My god, how awful. They mistook him for the enemy?

JEAN

Oh no, they knew who he was alright.

WILBUR

In fact while they tortured him they yelled "Take this Highston you god damn son of a bitch."

JEAN

He was not well liked.

Dr. Conway gives them all a look, stopping on Uncle Billy.

DR. CONWAY

And you're Highston's Uncle Billy?

UNCLE BILLY

I wasn't present at the conception so I just have to take their word for it.

DR. CONWAY

Okay... I understand you live with the family. Do you feel Highston should be in a psychiatric institution?

UNCLE BILLY

I believe that if Highston should be in a psychiatric institution then we should all be in a psychiatric institution, so I would have to say yes.

DR. CONWAY

I see. And what do you think causes Highston's delusions?

Uncle Billy points at Mom and Dad.

UNCLE BILLY

I blame it on those two and of course, the Mormons.

DR. CONWAY

Uh huh. Okay.

Dr. Conway looks back at the parents.

DR. CONWAY (CONT'D)

Do you think Highston will agree to treatment?

JEAN

It depends on who his friend is today. If it's someone nice like Meryl Streep then she'll probably be able to talk him into it.

WILBUR

But if it's an asshole like Mel Gibson it might be tough.

Dr. Conway gets up and walks to the door. He peers through the small window, and we see through it --

INT. WAITING AREA - CONTINUOUS

HIGHSTON LIGGETTS, 19, a face as friendly and down to earth as Jimmy Stewart's, staring straight ahead, looking like the last truly sane person left on Earth.

DR. CONWAY (O.C.)

He's not talking to anyone.

JEAN (O.C.)

Oh no, you won't actually see him talking to them. It's all in his head.

Highston turns as the camera pulls out to reveal TOM PETTY seated next to him. Highston smiles.

HIGHSTON

Hi Tom Petty.

TOM PETTY

Hello Highston Liggetts.

HIGHSTON

I'm a big fan. I love your music.

TOM PETTY

Hey, I'm a fan of yours, that's why I'm here to help.

HIGHSTON

"American Girl" was great.

Tom winces, sighs.

TOM PETTY
I've written a ton of songs since
then and you're going to go with
"American Girl" still.

Highston thinks.

HIGHSTON
"I Won't Back Down" was good.

TOM PETTY
Again, that was over twenty-five
years ago.

Highston thinks some more. Tom Petty looks hurt.

TOM PETTY (CONT'D)
Just forget it.

HIGHSTON
No, I'm just remembering all of my
favorites.

He thinks again.

HIGHSTON (CONT'D)
Oh, "Saving Grace" was lovely. You
were old when you wrote that,
right?

Tom brightens.

TOM PETTY
Well thanks, Highston, that really
touches me. It's --

HIGHSTON
You know the one I never got was
"Rhino Skin" --

TOM PETTY
It was an allegory!

They stare straight ahead for an awkward moment.

HIGHSTON
An allegory for what?

Tom stomps to a chair across the room, slumps down and sulks.
Highston looks chagrined.

HIGHSTON (CONT'D)

I'm sorry Mr. Petty. I'm a little distracted right now, but I do love your work.

Tom looks up.

TOM PETTY

Really?

HIGHSTON

Absolutely. You're a true artist who doesn't cut his cloth to fit the fashions. You've honored your unique talents and kept your music pure by turning down corporate sponsorships of your tours and not allowing your songs in commercials. I mean, think of how much money you could have made by just selling "Built to Last" to Chevy trucks.

Tom has one fleeting moment of thinking about it before realizing he made the right choice.

TOM PETTY

Thank you Highston.

HIGHSTON

Thank you for not whoring yourself out for commercial gain. It's a rare and beautiful thing these days to not be a whore.

Tom is gobsmacked. He comes back and sits by Highston.

TOM PETTY

That's great, man, that you get that. It's really cool because that is my whole deal right there.

They exchange smiles.

TOM PETTY (CONT'D)

So what's on your mind, Highston?

HIGHSTON

Well there was something that I've been wrestling with today.

TOM PETTY

Your parents wanting to institutionalize you?

HIGHSTON

Oh no, I figure they must have their reasons.

TOM PETTY

Then what is it?

HIGHSTON

I was wondering where all matter comes from.

TOM PETTY

All matter.

HIGHSTON

Yeah.

TOM PETTY

Hmm. That's a tough one. Let me think.

Tom looks off in the distance a few beats, shakes his head.

TOM PETTY (CONT'D)

Nope, I've got nothing.

HIGHSTON

Sometimes when I have a really tough question I call the Seattle Library Quick Information desk. I even have them on speed dial.

TOM PETTY

Well hell, give them a try.

HIGHSTON

I'd feel silly asking them that.

TOM PETTY

Highston, we're all silly. Only some of us are brave enough to admit it.

Highston nods, pulls out his phone and hits a button.

HIGHSTON

You're right, Mr. Petty.

TOM PETTY

Call me Tom.

HIGHSTON
 (into phone)
 Yes, I was wondering if you could
 tell me where all matter comes
 from... Matter... Yes, all of it.
 Uh huh... Yes, I can hold.

He looks at Tom, they nod at each other and wait.

HIGHSTON (CONT'D)
 Hey, the hold music is you.

TOM PETTY
 Really?

HIGHSTON
 I'm just kidding. It's Cracker.

Tom shoots him a look.

HIGHSTON (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 Yes? Uh huh. I see. Thank you.

He hangs up.

TOM PETTY
 What did they say?

HIGHSTON
 They don't know either.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC TREATMENT CENTER - DR. CONWAY'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Conway peers through the door window.

DR. CONWAY
 He's still just sitting there. I
 think it's time to bring him in.

He opens the door.

DR. CONWAY (CONT'D)
 Highston would you join us, please?

Tom looks suspiciously at the doctor. Highston nods and
 comes in, sits by his folks, Dr. Conway opposite them.

DR. CONWAY (CONT'D)
 So, Highston, how are you feeling?

HIGHSTON
 I feel great, thank you for asking.

DR. CONWAY
Is there anyone with you today?

Tom sits down behind Highston. Highston turns to look at him, back at the doctor.

HIGHSTON
Yes, Tom Petty.

His parents nod, impressed, but Dr. Conway seems unsure.

DR. CONWAY
Who is that?

Tom glares at him.

JEAN
Oh I know, he sang that song about not backing up.

BUD
Not backing down, Mom.

DR. CONWAY
Oh sure, "I Won't Back Down," great song.

Tom sighs, puts his head in his hands.

DR. CONWAY (CONT'D)
I never really cared for the rest of his music.

Highston looks back to see Tom flip Dr. Conway off, turns and whispers to the doctor.

HIGHSTON
Tom Petty can hear you.

DR. CONWAY
Tell Mr. Petty I'm sorry.

TOM PETTY
Fuck you you pompous brain diddling asshole.

Highston smiles.

DR. CONWAY
Did Mr. Petty say something?

HIGHSTON
He said "Apology accepted."

UNCLE BILLY

Tom Petty is a musical genius and anyone who doesn't recognize that can kiss my ass. "Zombie Zoo" always makes me cry.

Everyone looks at him. Tom smiles.

DR. CONWAY

Okay then. So --

UNCLE BILLY

"Hey little freak, with the lunch pail purse, Underneath the paint you're just a little girl, Dancin' at the Zombie Zoo."

Billy sniffs, gets misty eyed, shakes his head.

UNCLE BILLY (CONT'D)

Fucking great song.

Dr. Conway stares at Billy, looks back at the others.

DR. CONWAY

Anyway, Highston, I would like to invite you to stay with us for a while.

Highston turns to Tom again.

TOM PETTY

It's your call, buddy. I'm here for you either way.

HIGHSTON

I would prefer to stay home.

DR. CONWAY

How about stopping by to take some tests and meet with a counselor?

TOM PETTY

Follow your gut. And brain. And heart. But don't follow your sphincter. I learned that the hard way.

HIGHSTON

Could I have a few days to talk it over with Tom Petty? And maybe Stephen Hawking.

He turns back to Tom, apologetic.

HIGHSTON (CONT'D)
He's really smart.

TOM PETTY
I understand.

INT. LIGGETTS FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE-UP ON TV: Abraham Lincoln is on his death bed, surrounded by his wife, the doctor, assorted others. The doctor takes Lincoln's pulse, turns to the gathered.

THE DOCTOR
I'm afraid that President Lincoln
has passed away.

The room is shocked, silent. A man next to Mrs. Lincoln grins, fails to suppress a giggle. He turns to Mrs. Lincoln.

GRINNING MAN
Other than that, Mrs. Lincoln, how
did you enjoy the play?

Mrs. Lincoln glares, the others gasp. The man looks around.

GRINNING MAN (CONT'D)
What, too soon?

The title "THE STUNTED SHOW" fills the screen.

BACK TO THE ROOM: Highston sits between brother Bud and Uncle Billy. They're all smiling.

UNCLE BILLY
I love "The Stunted Show." I used
to write for television, you know.

HIGHSTON
I didn't know that, Uncle Billy.
What shows?

UNCLE BILLY
Not for that television.
(pointing to his head)
The one up here.

Bud makes a face as he changes the channel to horse racing.

UNCLE BILLY (CONT'D)
I always wanted to write a novel,
but I never had enough paper.

HIGHSTON
I can get you some.

UNCLE BILLY
Nah, it's too late.

Uncle Billy points at the TV.

UNCLE BILLY (CONT'D)
I don't care for horse racing.
Cruelty to animals.

BUD
Hey, you don't think they'd ride us
if they could?

UNCLE BILLY
That's the stupidest thing I've
ever heard. Where's a horse going
to get a human saddle? Come on,
think!

BUD
I'm just saying animals are
assholes. If you think horses
wouldn't have us breeding in
unheated sheds and racing in the
mud if they could then you're god
damn kidding yourself.

UNCLE BILLY
I've never cared for mud but I
wouldn't mind breeding in a shed.

Highston turns to Uncle Billy.

HIGHSTON
So, Uncle Billy, what do you think
I should do?

UNCLE BILLY
I think you're fine.

BUD
Billy, he sees ghosts.

HIGHSTON
They're not ghosts, they're my
friends.

BUD
Bono is your friend. Chris Rock is
your friend. Bill Gates is your
friend.

HIGHSTON
We hang out. Talk about girls.

BUD
For crying out loud.

UNCLE BILLY
What is Bill Gates like?

HIGHSTON
He's very intelligent.

UNCLE BILLY
I knew it!

HIGHSTON
He eats more than I would have
thought.

UNCLE BILLY
Sure, thinking makes you hungry.
That's what I've always found.

HIGHSTON
I have to go to my room. Tom's
giving me a guitar lesson.

UNCLE BILLY
Ask Mr. Petty if you should commit
yourself.

HIGHSTON
I did. He says I should make that
decision myself.

UNCLE BILLY
Well there you go. Always trust a
rock guitarist, I say.

INT. HIGHSTON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Highston's room is meticulous and austere, full of books but
no computer. He and Tom sit with guitars facing each other.

TOM PETTY
Okay, now slide your hand down,
that's it, strum up...

Highston stops and looks sincerely at Tom.

HIGHSTON
Tom -- is there something wrong
with me? Am I a freak?

Tom puts his guitar down and leans in toward Highston.

TOM PETTY

Listen buddy, I'm not a doctor, I'm just a traveling troubadour, but I've seen some troubled human wreckage in my time, and you're not one of them. In fact, you're the sanest person I've ever met, except for maybe Iggy Pop.

He puts his hand on Highston's shoulder.

TOM PETTY (CONT'D)

Let me tell you a story. I was about your age, just starting out, got asked to play at this bar. So I start playing and this woman comes up and starts taking her clothes off. I yelled at her to get off the stage, then a couple of guys came up and just beat the shit out of me. Then I realized I was playing in a stripper bar.

Highston waits expectantly as Tom stares at him for an long moment. Tom finally shrugs.

TOM PETTY (CONT'D)

You see what I'm getting at?

HIGHSTON

Uh, not really.

TOM PETTY

Not at all?

HIGHSTON

Not even close, but thank you.

TOM PETTY

Hmm. Maybe I told it wrong.

Highston's parents knock and step in, followed by Bud and quiet sister PAM, 8. Wilbur carries a twenty year old Macintosh computer and Jean has an old computer book. They set the items on Highston's desk.

WILBUR

Highston, we think it's time for you to find yourself and figure out what you want to do with your life.

JEAN

We know it's not easy to study having to share the family computer, so we went to Value Village and got you a Macintosh II.

HIGHSTON

Thank you.

TOM PETTY

Are you sure your parents are for real, Highston? Maybe you're imagining them.

JEAN

And this book says you can learn something called Windows Version 3.0 in one week.

TOM PETTY

Too bad that week was in 1987.

WILBUR

And there was a man there who was missing a finger who said you'd need these disks.

He hands Highston some old floppy disks.

TOM PETTY

Where's the god damn keyboard?

HIGHSTON

Oh, isn't there supposed to be a god damn keyboard?

JEAN

Highston!

HIGHSTON

I'm sorry. Isn't there supposed to be a keyboard?

WILBUR

No, I don't think so. Anyway son, the thing is, your mom and I have been talking and we think that you need to start setting goals.

TOM PETTY

Like getting dial-up internet service and AOL, apparently.

HIGHSTON

(to parents)

If I were you I would agree completely.

WILBUR

Now, you can still live here, but we would like for you to either get a job, go to school, or commit yourself for psychological testing.

TOM PETTY

Fucking fascists.

HIGHSTON

That sounds fair. But it will take a while to get into school.

JEAN

Then perhaps in the meantime you should work. It might help you be more normal. Not that you're not normal now, but really, you're not.

WILBUR

That's not just our opinion, son, it's society's. Hell, I almost wish you were gay instead. Are you gay?

TOM PETTY

Tell 'em yes.

JEAN

Honey, you can be honest. Are you gay?

HIGHSTON

Not yet.

WILBUR

That's good. I was a worried when Alex Rodriguez was sleeping over.

HIGHSTON

He's not gay.

JEAN

Did Alex Rodriguez touch you, Highston? You can tell us.

HIGHSTON

Nobody has ever touched me. And he's not gay.

WILBUR

Sure he's not, sure he's not.
Here's the thing, son. If you
don't have a job within a week, we
want you to enter the treatment
center for your sickness.

JEAN

You're ill, Highston. It's not
your fault, and it's nothing to be
ashamed of, but you should hide it
and if anyone asks about it you
should lie and run away.

HIGHSTON

I feel fine. I'm very happy.

WILBUR

See right there, that's crazy talk.

JEAN

Nobody's really happy, Highston.

TOM PETTY

I'm happy.

HIGHSTON

Tom Petty says he's happy.

BUD

I'd be happy too if I were still
getting royalties for writing
something as stupid as "Zero From
Outer Space."

Tom holds the guitar in front of Bud's face with his middle
finger across the fret and bangs the strings.

TOM PETTY

I just made another ten thousand
dollars while you were saying that.

JEAN

Well, that's enough for now. We'll
leave you and your little friend.

WILBUR

It's time to grow up, son.

Pam emerges between her parents and hugs Highston.

PAM

I don't want you to leave Highston.

HIGHSTON

Don't worry, Pam. It'll be okay.

Wilbur pats Highston on the shoulder and they all leave.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Wilbur and Jean hug, distressed from dispensing tough love.

WILBUR

You know what my problem is?

JEAN

A complete inability to experience
real joy?

WILBUR

No, not that. I just can't bare to
be tough on that boy.

JEAN

Me neither, but it's for his own
good, Wilbur.

WILBUR

I know.

They look sadly at Highston's door.

WILBUR (CONT'D)

Gee, I hope we didn't offend Mr.
Petty. You know how sensitive
those singer-songwriters are.

INT. HIGHSTON'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Highston and Tom look at each other.

TOM PETTY

Maybe we should find you a job.
What would you like to do?

HIGHSTON

I wouldn't mind being Zoey
Deschanel's driver.

TOM PETTY

And what if that's already taken?

HIGHSTON

Anything, as long as there's no
blood.

TOM PETTY
Don't limit yourself, buddy.

EXT. KENT SIDEWALK - DAY

Highston and Tom Petty walk along the downtown business district in this old suburban town, looking around.

TOM PETTY
Let's see, you could sell
antiques... Or antiques... Oh
here's something -- no, that's
antiques.

They stop in front of an unmarked office with a "Help Wanted" sign.

TOM PETTY (CONT'D)
Hey, look at that.

HIGHSTON
That seems good.

INT. COLLECTION AGENCY - DAY

Tom looks around suspiciously at the threadbare offices and MS. PARKER, 35, sizing Highston up from across a metal desk.

MS. PARKER
Mr. Liggetts, tell me, why do you
want to be a debt collector?

Highston thinks.

TOM PETTY
This place gives me the creeps.
Reminds me of Dennis Hopper's pad
in the 70s.

HIGHSTON
Uh, well, ever since I was a kid I
always dreamed of working in
collections.

TOM PETTY
Great answer, man. You nailed it.

HIGHSTON
My friends and I would play
telephone collection agents on the
playground. It was a lot of fun.

TOM PETTY

What a wonderful childhood that must have been.

MS. PARKER

Well, I'll tell you what.

She hands Highston a folder and turns the phone towards him.

MS. PARKER (CONT'D)

I want to see how you work. This man owes \$5000 on a truck. Call him and demand the money.

Highston cautiously opens the file and stares at the paperwork.

TOM PETTY

Highston, maybe we should keep looking. This doesn't feel right.

Highston picks up the phone and pauses.

TOM PETTY (CONT'D)

I thought I was here to give you advice.

HIGHSTON

And I appreciate that. But my parents are right. It's time for me to grow up and do something.

MS. PARKER

Are you okay?

Highston nods, dials the number. Tom leans toward Ms. Parker.

TOM PETTY

She smells like camels. Not the cigarettes.

HIGHSTON

(into phone)

Yes, Mr. Sanders? This is Highston Liggetts --

TOM PETTY

Don't tell them your real name --

MS. PARKER

No! Use an alias!

HIGHSTON (CONT'D)

This is Tom Petty --

TOM PETTY
Don't use my name!

MS. PARKER
Tom Petty?!

HIGHSTON (CONT'D)
This is... just a guy from Kent
Collections and I'm calling to ask
that you pay the \$5000 you owe for
the truck please.

TOM PETTY
This isn't you, man.

HIGHSTON
I see. How long have you been out
of work? Wow, that's a long time.
Okay then, just pay it when you
can.

TOM PETTY
Great job! Let's go home then!

MS. PARKER
Never say that! Tell him he has to
pay or else!

HIGHSTON
I'm sorry, can you hold please?

He covers the phone and looks at Ms. Parker.

HIGHSTON (CONT'D)
What was that?

TOM PETTY
She said to run away.

MS. PARKER
Tell him to pay! No excuses!

Highston nods and talks into the phone.

HIGHSTON
Yes, I'm sorry, but can you pay us
anyway? Uh huh. How long has your
wife been sick?

MS. PARKER
Don't fall for that!

HIGHSTON
What does she have? Oh, that's too
bad. Is there blood? Oh wow. I
don't like blood. That has got to
be hard on both of you.

TOM PETTY

Good job, you've got him right
where you want him.

MS. PARKER

What are you doing!?

HIGHSTON

I know, my mom was sick for a long
time and all I could think of is
how sad I would be if I lost her.

MS. PARKER

Are you kidding me?

TOM PETTY

Shut up lady, I want to hear this.

HIGHSTON

Uh huh. The other thing is you've
got to make time for yourself, too.
You can't give all day. Get out
and see a movie or meet some
friends for pool or something...

MS. PARKER

Why don't you tell him to take a
drive in his truck?

HIGHSTON

Oh yeah, or just take a drive in
your truck.

Ms. Parker rolls her eyes.

TOM PETTY

Or buy an album or go to a concert.

MS. PARKER

Get him to pay something at least!

Highston looks up at her and nods.

HIGHSTON

Yeah... So, do you think that you
could pay us \$100 for now? No? No
problem, that's okay.

MS. PARKER

That does it. Hang up!

HIGHSTON

Oh, I'm sorry, I have to go. You know what I could do, I've saved up a little bit of money, would it offend you if I sent you \$100?

MS. PARKER

What are you doing?!

TOM PETTY

That's the sweetest thing I ever heard.

HIGHSTON

No, I've got your name and address right here. You're welcome. Take care. Kiss your wife for me.

MS. PARKER

Kiss your wife for me?!

TOM PETTY

That was kind of weird, man.

Highston hangs up the phone, satisfied. He looks across the desk at Ms. Parker, beet red.

TOM PETTY (CONT'D)

I think it's time to run, Highston!

Highston bolts from the chair, stops and runs back, grabs the folder and races through the door. Tom gets up and puts a middle finger in Ms. Parker's face.

EXT. TOWN SIDEWALK - DAY

Highston waits down the sidewalk as Tom comes out the door and catches up with him.

TOM PETTY

I am so proud of you, buddy.

Highston smiles, but slowly turns concerned.

HIGHSTON

Now what am I going to do?

Tom doesn't have an answer.

EXT. PSYCHIATRIC TREATMENT CENTER - DAY

Highston and all of his family stand outside the building.
His mother hugs him.

JEAN

This is for the best, son.

WILBUR

Damn, that's what I was going to
say.

BUD

Can I have your Mac?

PAM

I love you Highston, just the way
you are. I hope they don't make
you better and you stay sick
forever.

Highston bends down to her.

HIGHSTON

Thanks, Pam. I love you, too. You
be good, okay?

She nods. Uncle Billy stands in front of Highston, puts a
hand on his shoulder.

UNCLE BILLY

I don't know if this helps, but if
I could give milk I would gladly
let the cows drink it.

Highston nods.

HIGHSTON

Yes, Uncle Billy, that helps a lot.

BUD

Uncle Billy, you want me to see if
they've got room for one more?

Uncle Billy leans in and whispers.

UNCLE BILLY

Live your life without regrets.

HIGHSTON

Do you have any regrets?

UNCLE BILLY

Just one. All those hours I wasted
watching people play poker on TV.

HIGHSTON

I understand.

UNCLE BILLY

I should have gone to watch them
play in person instead.

HIGHSTON

Thank you for that wisdom.

Uncle Billy smiles. Highston turns and Tom Petty is beside
him. Highston looks at the door with dread.

TOM PETTY

It's going to be okay, man. I'll
be right here beside you.

HIGHSTON

Not if they fix me.

TOM PETTY

That's true. That would be a
bummer.

Highston and Tom start slowly towards the door.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC TREATMENT CENTER HALLWAY - DAY

Highston and Tom glumly walk behind a female AIDE.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC TREATMENT CENTER TEST ROOM - DAY

Highston and Tom are seated at a table. The aide hands
Highston a folder.

AIDE

Mr. Liggetts, this is a psychiatric
evaluation test. There are no
right or wrong answers.

TOM PETTY

That's a lie.

HIGHSTON

Thank you very much.

AIDE

I'll be back in twenty minutes.

She leaves the room. Highston looks at the first question.

HIGHSTON

"Can you give an example of something you think is immoral?"

He stares at Tom.

TOM PETTY

Most recording contracts.

Highston starts writing Tom's answer down.

TOM PETTY (CONT'D)

And don't get me started on concert riders. Everything favors the promoter. Bunch of god damn psychos and sycophants stealing from the people who actually create ...

Highston holds a hand up as he writes furiously.

HIGHSTON

Whoa, slow down...

INT. PSYCHIATRIC TREATMENT CENTER - HALLWAY - DAY

The aide opens a door for Highston.

AIDE

Go ahead and take a seat and Dr. Gabler will be in shortly.

HIGHSTON

Thank you so much.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC TREATMENT CENTER - MEETING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Six chairs are in a circle. DANNY ST. CLAIR, 18, is in one, reading "WALDEN." Across from him MOLLY MEEKER, 17, sits sullenly. They glance at Highston as he sits between them but nobody speaks for awhile. Highston points at the book.

HIGHSTON

I like Thoreau.

DANNY

Have you read "Walden?" He was fucking on fire in this one.

HIGHSTON
All men lead lives of quiet
desperation.

DANNY
Fucking A they do.

Molly finally looks at them.

MOLLY
All men? What about women?

DANNY
No, he said they're fine.

Molly scowls. Danny smiles at her.

DANNY (CONT'D)
You know, you're pretty enough to
be a singer.

Molly glares at him.

MOLLY
And you're stupid enough to say
something like that.

DANNY
Speaking of, do you know Chrissie?
She was in my last group. She
looks like one of those girls who
are never smart.

Tom Petty is beside Highston.

TOM PETTY
What a moron. I'm starting to get
a bad vibe here.

The door opens and DR. GABLER, 40, enters. She sits down and
smiles benevolently at the three.

DR. GABLER
Welcome, I'm Dr. Gabler. Let's go
around, introduce yourselves, and
tell us why you believe you're
here. Molly.

Molly shifts in her chair.

MOLLY
I'm Molly Meeker and I'm here
because I don't play well with
others.

Dr. Gabler smiles, turns to Danny.

DANNY

I'm Danny St. Clair, and I'm an alcoholic. No, just kidding. I'm here because my search for truth and understanding has led me to total three of my parents' cars.

DR. GABLER

Good. And Highston.

DANNY

Highston?!

Highston nods and smiles as Danny laughs.

HIGHSTON

I'm here because I love my family and want them to feel better even though they're wrong.

TOM PETTY

Excellent answer.

DR. GABLER

Very good, Highston, very good.

TOM PETTY

It's like she's talking to a dog.

DR. GABLER

And Highston, what is your biggest fear?

TOM PETTY

Hold on, you don't even know these people yet.

HIGHSTON

My biggest fear?

TOM PETTY

This is bullshit. Don't answer that.

DR. GABLER

Yes.

TOM PETTY

Just because the lady has a note pad doesn't mean she can ask you your most private thoughts.

HIGHSTON

Well, I would have to say...

TOM PETTY

Let's get out of here, Highston.

HIGHSTON

My biggest fear...

TOM PETTY

Listen. I was twenty-two. A record producer said I like your songs but not your voice. We'll get somebody else in to sing. I said fuck that noise, chief, if I can't sing my own songs then nobody can. And I never looked back. So Highston, don't let anyone make these life decisions for you. Sing your own song. Does that help?

HIGHSTON

Yeah, that's much better than the stripper bar story. This one is actually pertinent.

TOM PETTY

If I hadn't followed that course do you think I would have been in the Traveling Wilburys, singing along with George Harrison, Bob Dylan...

DR. GABLER

Highston?...

Highston realizes they're all staring at him.

HIGHSTON

Excuse me, Tom.

TOM PETTY

Shit, "Handle With Care" really resonates right here... "Sent to meetings, hypnotized, overexposed --

Highston nods toward the group.

HIGHSTON

I'm sorry, I should really --

TOM PETTY

Oh yeah, sure. Just remember, there is nothing wrong with you...

DR. GABLER
We're all friends here Highston...

HIGHSTON
Okay. My biggest fear is...

TOM PETTY
We'll find a way to make your
family happy, trust me. But for
now, run!

HIGHSTON
My biggest fear -- is this.

DR. GABLER
I'm sorry?

HIGHSTON
My biggest fear is to sit in a
group and tell people that I don't
know what my biggest fear is.

TOM PETTY
Yes! Brilliant!

Highston runs for the door and is gone. Tom walks in front
of Dr. Gabler and flips her off with both hands.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC TREATMENT CENTER HALLWAY - DAY

Highston runs wildly through the corridors, looking for the
way out. He opens up a door and ALARMS SOUND. He runs back
down the hallway as ATTENDANTS come running after him.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC TREATMENT CENTER ATRIUM - DAY

Highston sprints around the corner, confused, looking every
which way. The attendants are joined by more staff. Tom
approaches from a side hallway.

TOM PETTY
Highston, you're a voluntary day
patient! You don't have to run! I
was using the term loosely.

Highston is too panicked to listen, jumps onto the reception
desk to avoid capture.

TOM PETTY (CONT'D)
But if you insist on running, the
front door is that way!

Highston smiles at Tom, leaps over the attendants, sprints out the door as Tom celebrates.

TOM PETTY (CONT'D)
Run, Highston, run like the wind!
Hey, that's a good song title. I
wonder if I've already used that.

EXT. PSYCHIATRIC TREATMENT CENTER - KENT STREET - DAY

Highston bursts out the door and down the sidewalk. The attendants come out, stop, watch him disappear. Tom walks out, flips them off, runs after Highston.

EXT. KENT SIDEWALK - DAY

Tom is close to Highston but slowing down, huffing.

TOM PETTY
Highston, wait up.

Highston stops.

TOM PETTY (CONT'D)
I am so proud of you, buddy.

HIGHSTON
Now I'm in trouble.

TOM PETTY
Don't worry, we'll figure it out.
You've got a long, full, marvelous
life in front of you, Highston.
But why not wait until tomorrow to
start it?

He puts his arm around Highston's shoulder and they walk.

TOM PETTY (CONT'D)
So, do you like girls?

HIGHSTON
I believe I do, yes.

TOM PETTY
What did you think of Molly?

HIGHSTON
She seemed kind of scary and
scarred by the vagaries of life. I
liked her.

TOM PETTY

Ah, it's going to be a wonderful
journey for you, my friend.

As they walk off, "Free Fallin'" plays them down the street.

TOM PETTY SINGING

And I'm free... free fallin'...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO