

Crazy Heart

by  
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Based on the novel, Crazy Heart,  
by Thomas Cobb

Pink Revision Pages 8/07/08  
Blue Revision Pages 7/30/08

White Production Draft  
July 24, 2008

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1 EXT. THE SPARE ROOM BOWLING ALLEY - PUEBLO, COLORADO - DAY 1 \*

BAD BLAKE, fifty-seven years old, stands in the parking lot in front of his 1978 Chevrolet Suburban. \*

Above him a sign announces: WINTER LEAGUES NOW FORMING COUNTRY RECORD STAR / BAD BLAKE / HERE / FRIDAY, AUGUST 12.

Bad reaches for a Pall Mall. The pack is nearly empty, loose and slick with sweat. He lights one and looks to the sign.

BAD  
Jack, you bastard. A fucking bowling alley.

2 INT. THE SPARE ROOM BOWLING ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER 2 \*

The bowling alley is full of light and smells of wax. The air-conditioning hits hard and turns Bad's soaked shirt icy.

A single bowler works in the middle of thirty lanes. Bad hears the ball drop, the steady roll, and then the impact.

MANAGER  
(O.S.)  
Bad Blake! I'm proud to meet you, God. I used to listen to you when I was just a kid.

Bad manages a wheeze and smile and pumps the manager's hand. The MANAGER is overweight, early thirties, and all smiles.

MANAGER (CONT'D)  
Have a good trip?

BAD  
Long but good. Played Clovis, New Mexico last night. Saw some pretty country, but glad to be here.

MANAGER  
Down there's the bandstand.

The manager points to a make-shift stage: in the shadow lurks a drum kit and microphones.

MANAGER (CONT'D)  
I'll catch up to you later. Sure glad to have you, Bad. Makes my day.

Bad moves over to the BAR.

3 INT. THE SPARE ROOM BOWLING ALLEY - BAR - CONTINUOUS 3 \*

Behind the bar, enormous fish swim back and forth in a lighted aquarium. Bad calls to the BARMAID.

(CONTINUED)

BAD  
Darlin, bring me a J.D. up, beer  
back.

Bad smiles and points to the fish.

BAD (CONT'D)  
Buy one for the boys in the  
backroom there, too.

The BARMAID, young, sullen and early twenties, doesn't smile.

BARMAID  
Three twenty-five.

BAD  
(winks)  
On my tab, darlin.

BARMAID  
No tab.

BAD  
I'm Bad Blake, little darlin'. I'm  
the band.

She turns and walks away. The manager appears at Bad's side.

MANAGER  
Mr. Blake, we have a real nice room  
for you over in the Starlight Inn,  
and of course, your meals are taken  
care of, but I'm afraid we can't  
let you run a bar tab. It's in the  
contract. Mr. Greene of Greene and  
Gold put that in himself.

Bad reaches out. For a second he is ready to grab the gristly  
knob of the manager's Adam's apple and crush it. Instead, he  
touches the man's shoulder and gently squeezes.

BAD  
If you and Jack have an agreement,  
we'll have to stick by it. Don't  
worry yourself about it, old buddy.

BAD (CONT'D)  
(to the barmaid)  
How much?

BARMAID  
Three twenty-five.

Bad looks hard at the shot. He's sweating. The cigarette  
between his fingers is wavering. He digs four dollars from  
his pocket. The barmaid leaves his change on the bar. He  
keeps it.

(CONTINUED)

3 (CONT'D) (2)

3

MANAGER

Mr. Blake. Let me personally offer  
you all the free bowling you want.

Bad nearly chokes.

4 INT. STARLIGHT INN - LATER

4 \*

The room is standard fare: Queen bed, small TV, sparse light.  
Telephone in hand, Bad, shirt stripped off, runs his hands  
across his broad belly and groans.

On the TV, a man and woman embrace. Their lips move, but no  
sound. Bad talks to his manager, JACK GREENE, late sixties.

INTERCUT:

5 INT. OFFICE - LOS ANGELES - DAY

5 \*

Jack sits behind his desk, staring out at the smoggy haze of  
Los Angeles.

JACK

Bad, I didn't want to tell you  
until you came off this swing.  
C.M.I. cut out "So Sweet, So Bad".

\*

BAD

But that fucker was still selling.

JACK

It had slowed a lot, and the chains  
don't want it anymore. Plus,  
Tommy's got nine albums out there  
right now.

Bad sits up and looks out into the parking lot.

\*

BAD

What about Tommy's new album? I'll  
be off the road in a couple of  
weeks. We can get right to it.

JACK

Tommy wants to know if you've got  
new material.

Bad looks to the TV. The colors are streaked and blotchy.

BAD

You know I don't have new material.  
And there's nothing wrong with the  
old stuff.

JACK

Tommy thinks he's leaning too hard  
on the old stuff.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

5 (CONT'D)

JACK (CONT'D)  
He doesn't want people to think  
he's riding the gravy train.

BAD  
That son-of-a-bitch has a lifetime  
pass on the gravy train.

JACK  
Come on, Bad. Remember who's asking  
who to do a record here.

\*

Bad stands and moves to the window.

BAD  
Jack, you jerk-off. You get out  
here, in Clovis, goddamned, New  
Mexico and play in a piano bar or a  
bowling alley. Get up the next  
fucking morning at five and drive  
three hundred miles with  
hemorrhoids so bad it feels like  
you've got a nest of fire ants up  
your ass, and then you tell me  
about riding the goddamned gravy  
train. You and Mr. Country Star  
Tommy Sweet both try it sometime.

JACK  
Bad, calm down. Tommy says he wants  
new material. I'll keep talking,  
but he holds the cards. You know  
that, I know it, and Tommy Sweet  
sure as hell knows it.

BAD  
You tell Tommy for me that he  
wouldn't know country music if it  
came up and kicked him in his world-  
famous ass.

Jack keeps talking, and Bad puts the phone against his belly  
and looks back at the TV.

BAD  
Jack, I'm broke. I'm fifty-seven  
years old and I only have ten bucks  
to my name.

JACK  
I sent you money when you were  
still in Texas. Plenty. So spend it  
wisely, Bad.

BAD  
Did I ever tell you your mother  
used to bite when she gave head?

(CONTINUED)

5 (CONT'D) (2)

5

JACK  
I love you too, bye.

(CONTINUED)

5 (CONT'D) (3)

5

Jack hangs up. Bad falls heavily onto the mattress.

6 INT. LIQUOR STORE - LATER

6

\*

Bad stares at a fifth of JACK DANIEL'S for what seems like an eternity. As he stoops to a pint of HEAVEN HILL, his knees crack and he exhales. All accompanied by a deep sigh.

MAN

(o.s.)

Mr. Blake?

Bad turns and faces a man about the same age as himself.

MAN (CONT'D)

Hell fire. It is you. It really is  
Bad Blake right here in my store.

\*

The man reaches out his hand.

MAN (CONT'D)

I'm Bill Wilson. I'm a big fan.

Bad smiles and looks to the cheap bourbon.

BILL

Here. Here, Mr. Blake. Here's the  
Jack Daniel's.

Bill pulls a full liter of J.D. off the shelf.

BILL (CONT'D)

Being a big fan and all, I kind of  
keep track of what the stars drink.  
It's kind of a hobby, you know.  
Willie Nelson and his Lone Star  
beer, Tommy Sweet and his Southern  
Comfort, and Bad Blake and his Jack  
Daniel's. Of course, I never  
thought I'd actually have a star  
right here in my store.

Bad eyes the bottle in Bill's hand and wheezes with desire.

BILL (CONT'D)

My wife, Beverly, is one of your  
biggest fans. She'll flat die when  
she finds out you were here in the  
store. We're going to your show  
tonight. If you could sing 'I Don't  
Know' for her, it would sure mean  
the world to her.

\*

BAD

You got it, old buddy.

Bad can't take his eyes off that bottle of JACK.

(CONTINUED)



6 (CONT'D)

6

BAD (CONT'D)

'I Don't Know' for Beverly. You got it.

\*

BILL

(hands the J.D. to Bad)  
Here, take this. I want to be able to tell everyone that I bought Bad Blake a drink.

Bad looks to the heavens and smiles.

7 INT. STARLIGHT INN - LATER

7

\*

The bottle of J.D. is a quarter finished. Someone pounds on the door. Bad opens the door to find a young man, TONY, with long hair and a wispy beard.

TONY

Hi, I'm Tony.

Bad blinks in incomprehension.

TONY (CONT'D)

Tony. Tony and the Renegades. Your band.

BAD

Of course.

TONY

Me and the boys are over at the alley, setting up. We were wondering what time to start rehearsing.

BAD

Soon as you can and do it as often as you can. That's the secret.

Bad tries to shut the door, but Tony stops him.

TONY

What I mean is, what time are you coming to rehearsal?

Bad sighs and leads Tony by the arm out to his van.

8 EXT. STARLIGHT INN - SAME

8

\*

BAD

I got lead sheets if you all can read music, chord charts if you can't. Cd's and a play list. You go on. I'll be by later.

Bad turns for the bottle and the room. Tony follows.

(CONTINUED)

TONY

Mr. Blake, it would mean a lot to us if you would come on over early. I mean, we need to get the leads down and all that.

BAD

Leads? Son, are they paying you more than they're paying me?

TONY

But, I thought you could show us some things, teach us some of that old stuff Bad's Boys used to do. Is it true you taught Tommy Sweet how to play guitar?

Bad ignores the remark about Tommy.

BAD

All right. You all go listen to the cd's. Listen carefully and study the lead sheets. Give me an hour to get some dinner and I'll be on over.

9 INT. SUNNY SIDE UP CAFE - AFTERNOON

9 \*

Inside the drab roadhouse, Bad pokes at a chicken-fried steak. Pale gravy oozes from it and blends with mashed-potatoes and corn. A WAITRESS slides into the booth across the table from him. She exhales a long stream of cigarette smoke over his food.

WAITRESS

Everything, okay.?

BAD

(nods)

Fine. Just fine.

She winks at him. A small row of mascara sticks to her lower lash. She wears a red nylon blouse and a plastic name tag that says, "Howdy, I'm Jo Ann."

JO ANN

Mind if I smoke?

Bad waves his hand.

JO ANN (CONT'D)

You must like to eat early and avoid the crowds. Being able to eat in peace without a bunch of people asking for autographs and stuff...Mind if I ask a question?

(CONTINUED)

9 (CONT'D)

9

Shoot. BAD

She reaches over and taps his knuckle with a long red fingernail.

JO ANN

I always wondered if you had a good time singing those songs. Because, God, I had me a couple of real good times listening to them.

Her laugh is deep and a raspy from the cigarette smoke.

BAD

Anything you want to hear tonight?

She bites her tongue as she thinks. Her teeth are stained red from the lipstick.

JO ANN

You do anything from that album you do with Tommy Sweet?

BAD

A few. The standards.

JO ANN

Any of those. God, I just love that album, Memories: So Sweet, So Bad.

BAD

So does Tommy, darlin'.

She laughs that raspy laugh.

JO ANN

You two don't get along anymore?

BAD

(shrugs)

What the wives didn't get off that album, Tommy did.

She runs her finger up his forearm.

JO ANN

Why don't you tell me your real name?

BAD

You want to know that, you got to marry me. Otherwise, it's just Bad.

10 INT. THE SPARE ROOM BOWLING ALLEY - LATE AFTERNOON 10 \*

As Bad crosses to the stage carrying his guitar and tweed, vintage FENDER amp, a rockabilly version of Bad's "I Don't Know," as played by the Renegades, swells up and staggers him. Tony and the Renegades stop as they see him approach, though the drummer continues to pound for a few more beats. \*

(CONTINUED)

10 (CONT'D)

10

BAD

I hope to God that wasn't one of my songs you were playing.

Tony steps down from the stage.

TONY

Mr. Blake, these are the Renegades.

DRUMMER

That's it? That's your equipment?

\*

Bad unsnaps his case.

BAD

This is it. A '59 Gretsch with an action that would put a twenty year-old whore to shame.

\*

Bad looks to their heavy, stacked Marshall amps.

BAD (CONT'D)

If you're playing loud enough to drown out my amp, you're playing too fucking loud.

\*

At that, Tony turns to his band and strums a couple of chords. Bad digs through his case.

BAD

(moving toward Tony)

You might want to bring it up a half step.

TONY

I'm in tune. I got an electronic tuning meter.

BAD

I got a fifty-seven year old ear says you're off.

And so their rehearsal begins.

11

INT. THE SPARE ROOM BOWLING ALLEY - REHEARSAL - LATER

11

\*

Guitar in hand and now wearing dark sunglasses, Bad crosses to his amp and takes a seat. He begins a blues-tinted solo of "Somebody Else" that causes Tony to throw a look to his band.

TONY

That ain't country.

Bad looks up from his guitar.

(CONTINUED)

11 (CONT'D)

11

BAD  
Country's just the white man's  
blues.

Tony looks to the Renegades and then back to Bad.

TONY  
Do some of that Tommy Sweet stuff  
for us.

Bad looks to Tony and then begrudgingly obliges.

BAD  
It's just some of that cajun patois  
steel-bendin stuff...

\*

The boys look at one another as Bad starts in on one of his  
greatest hits, "I Don't Know". He runs through a break full  
of hammers and pulls, the style he taught Tommy and that has  
become Tommy's signature.

\*

TONY (CONT'D)  
I'm not sure. I think Tommy plays  
it more like this.

Tony begins the song again, throwing in double and triple  
pulls, trilling the high notes. The Renegades join in  
bombastically.

TONY (CONT'D)  
I think that's more the sort of  
thing he does now. That's the way  
we like to play it.

BAD  
Keep working on that because  
someday Tommy will be playing this  
very bowling alley. You'll all  
still be here and you can buy each  
other drinks, get drunk and be a  
couple of guitar-picking wonders.

Bad cases his Gretsch.

\*

11 A OMITTED

11 A

12 INT. STARLIGHT INN - LATER 12 \*

Two hours before the show. Bad watches a MEXICAN soap opera on TV, still without sound. He takes a long pull at his bottle of Jack Daniels. He's pretty lit. \*

13 EXT. THE SPARE ROOM BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT 13 \*

Bad struggles across the parking lot carrying his guitar in one hand and his amp in the other. He's an aging man dressed in his signature black boot-cut slacks, vest and white shirt.

At the back door, Tony and the Renegades are lounging, cooling off between sets. They watch Bad lurch across the parking lot. No one offers help.

Bad's wheezing hard. The air is sharp with marijuana as Bad watches a joint go from hand to hand.

TONY

We were afraid you weren't going to show.

The band members look at each other, smiling.

BAD

Son, I've played sick, drunk, divorced and on the run. Bad Blake has never pulled a no-show in his whole damned life. \*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



13 (CONT'D)

13

BAD (CONT'D)  
Not even in a fucking bowling alley  
backed by a bunch of hippies.

Bad takes the joint and takes a long drag. Bad looks at the joint and takes one more drag.

BAD  
You sure they ain't paying you more  
than they're paying me?

14 INT. THE SPARE ROOM BOWLING ALLEY - LATER

14

\*

The bar and stage area are dark. Bad adjusts his guitar and steps back off stage, nearly falling. He nods to Tony.

Tony steps on the light switch and illuminates the stage area. The band moves into an up-tempo version of "Somebody Else."

At the end of the first chorus, Tony moves to the microphone.

TONY  
Ladies and gentlemen, the Spare  
Room is proud to present country  
recording star 'The Wrangler of  
Love," Mr. Bad Blake.

Bad steps forward to where the light is supposed to be on, but misjudges. Only his guitar is in the light. He takes a step into the light and swings into his jazzy melody, simple, but quick and light, full of triplets that sound harder to play than they really are.

BAD  
(to the band)  
Go to C...Now to F.

\*  
\*  
\*

Bad steps to the mic and starts the song..

\*

BAD (CONT'D)  
I used to be somebody  
Now I'm sombebody else  
Who I'll be tomorrow  
Is anybody's guess...

\*

After another half minute of the song, we:

FADE TO:

15 OMITTED

15

15 A INT. BOWLING ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

15 A

Bad's shirt is sweat-stained. He's becoming more drunk by the moment. The whiskey starts to push back up in his throat.

(CONTINUED)

BAD

I can't tell you how good it is to be here in Pueblo...If I've learned anything over the years, it's give you folks what you want to hear...This song is for all of you who've been good to me for such a long spell. But I also want to send it out special to a couple of my dear friends, Bill and Beverly. God, I think the world of them.

\*

Bad begins a Waylon-esque version of "I Don't Know". The applause start again. The band comes in behind Bad and forms a pocket for him to fit in a melody. BILL (from the liquor store) and BEVERLY WILSON, in matching shirts, jeans, and boots, beam.

\*

\*

After half a minute, Bad unplugs his guitar, stumbles, and then lands on one knee on top of his amp. He looks up to see a red amplifier light, pulsing in the dark. He then steadies himself and crosses to a cracked alley door behind the stage.

16 OMITTED 16  
17 EXT. THE SPARE ROOM BOWLING ALLEY - SAME 17 \*

Bad's outside in the back alley, on his knees, holding the rim of a garbage can. He's cold and shivering. He wipes his face with a handkerchief, then checks to see if he's kept his outfit clean. It's soaked with sweat.

In the background, we hear Tony and his boys play their hearts out.

18 INT. THE SPARE ROOM BOWLING ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER 18 \*

Bad crosses to his amp and watches as Tony mightily overcooks a solo. He picks up his guitar, and just as Tony finishes to a round of warm applause, Bad starts in on the same solo. His musicianship is smoother, more efficient, and much more masterly. Tony meekly steps back downstage as Bad finishes the guitar lesson. The crowd roars their approval . \*

As the Renegades finish the jam, Bad unsteadily steps to the microphone.

BAD

It's been wonderful being with you tonight. I want to dedicate this show to Jo Ann, bless her pretty little heart.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

18 (CONT'D)

18

BAD (CONT'D)  
 You all drive safely now and Lord  
 willing, we'll get together again  
 real soon. Good night.

\*

Bad makes eye contact with JO ANN. She sits next to a tall, angular man with a high-crowned hat. Tony then steps to the microphone.

TONY  
 Ladies and gentlemen, the star of  
 the show. Let's hear it for the  
 great Bad Blake.

Large round of applause as Bad plays a quick riff and steps into the shadows.

19 INT. STARLIGHT INN - NEXT MORNING

19

\*

Light starts to come through the window next to the bed. Bad turns over next to JO ANN. Her makeup has worn off, and her hair is tangled around her hand. She looks older and drawn.

Bad dresses quietly and exits into another day.

20 EXT. ESTABLISHING - SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO - DAY

20

\*

The buildings are low and nestled into the hills. It's flat as hell. Bad, listening to FREDDIE FENDER'S "QUE", pulls his Suburban into the LAND OF ENCHANTMENT MOTEL.

\*

\*

21 EXT. LAND OF ENCHANTMENT MOTEL - LATER

21

\*

Bad exits the MOTEL OFFICE and walks toward his room. A DESK CLERK exits the office and calls out to Bad.

DESK CLERK  
 Mr. Blake? A Mr. Jack Greene sent  
 this.

The desk clerk hands Bad an envelope. He opens it to find two hundred dollars. He smiles at the desk clerk and pockets it.

22 INT. LAND OF ENCHANTMENT MOTEL - LATER

22

\*

Bad sits on the bed. His guitar unstrung, he meticulously polishes the fretboard with linseed oil. One has to wonder how many sets of strings Bad has worn out in his career.

\*

23 EXT. EVANGELO'S BAR - SANTA FE -LATER

23

\*

Just before Bad enters the bar, he stops to listen to his new band. Someone is playing PIANO, instrumental in the vein of Charlie Rich.

24 INT. EVANGELO'S BAR - SANTA FE - CONTINUOUS

24 \*

Bad stops inside the doorway as WESLEY BARNES, a large man, who's sweating profusely, plays the piano beautifully. Barnes stops playing and wipes his brow as he spots Bad.

(CONTINUED)

BAD

Sounds real good. Real good. Been a long time since I've played with a good piano player.

WESLEY BARNES

Thanks, Mr. Blake. Means the world to me. I'm Wesley Barnes.

Wesley wipes his hands on his trousers and moves to Bad.

BAD

Mighty fine, Wesley. You work before?

WESLEY BARNES

When I was kid. I just do this for fun. Just for fun and a couple of extra dollars.

BAD

Well, it's real nice to run into someone on the road who really is good. It's going to be a pleasure.

WESLEY BARNES

I appreciate it.

Bad looks around the bar. No one else is here.

WESLEY BARNES

The rest of the guys are running late. Day jobs.

BAD

As long as you're here, we'll be fine.

Wesley beams. Bad uncases his guitar and attaches the strap. After a beat, Wesley nervously approaches Bad. \*

WESLEY BARNES

Can I ask you a favor, Mr. Blake?

BAD

Bad, buddy, Bad. What can I do for you?

WESLEY BARNES

I hate to impose, especially since we just met. But you see, I have this niece, and she's a writer. She's trying to be a writer. She writes local here in Santa Fe.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

24 (CONT'D) (2)

24

WESLEY BARNES (CONT'D)  
I mean it's not the New York Times,  
anyway, she'd love to do an  
interview with you. An article  
about you for the paper.

(CONTINUED)

24 (CONT'D) (3)

24

BAD

Hell, I haven't done one for years,  
but you send your little niece  
around. I'll be glad to help her  
out.

25 INT. LAND OF ENCHANTMENT MOTEL - LATER

25 \*

Bad is fresh from a shower. He's wrapped in a towel. His room-service dinner steams on a nearby table.

There's a knock at the door. He opens it to find a woman who appears to be in her early thirties, with dark hair. She's wearing a fresh denim shirt and creased jeans. This is JEAN CRADDOCK, Wesley Barnes' niece.

JEAN

Mr. Blake? I've come at a bad time.

Bad's nearly naked.

BAD

Who the hell are you?

JEAN

Jean Craddock, The Sun Scene...  
Wesley Barnes' niece. I've come for  
the interview. This is a bad time.

BAD

No. Yes. Shit. I'm having dinner. I  
just got out of the shower.

JEAN

I'll come back. When's a good time?

BAD

Hell, just wait outside a minute.  
Let me get dressed.

Bad closes the door and grabs at his clothes. His hair is wet and combed back. He puts on denim jeans and a Western shirt.

He looks around the room. Sheet music and clothes strewn about. He straightens the bed and crosses to the door.

JEAN

I'm sorry. I should have called.

BAD

Come in.

He looks at her closely. She's a little older than first thought. Maybe late THIRTIES. She has a TAPE RECORDER in one hand and a CAMERA over her shoulder.

(CONTINUED)



25 (CONT'D)

25

BAD (CONT'D)  
No pictures. You want some steak?

(CONTINUED)

JEAN  
No. How about later?

BAD  
Which?

JEAN  
Pictures. Maybe on stage?

BAD  
Be all right. Mind if I eat?

She sits across the room and sets the TAPE RECORDER on the dresser. Bad cuts a piece of steak and bites into it.

JEAN  
Let's see. You always dress for dinner?

The chewed steak lodges in his throat.

JEAN (CONT'D)  
Sorry. Let me see. Where are you from?

BAD  
Born in Fort Worth. Live in Houston now.

\*  
\*

JEAN  
How'd you learn music?

BAD  
How? I don't know. My daddy bought himself a old Washburn, never played it, and I just started fooling with it.

JEAN  
Who'd you listen to?

BAD  
Oh, a bunch of people you've probably never heard of. Hank Williams, Waylon Jennings-

JEAN  
Lefty Frizzell?

He smiles, impressed, and reaches for his Jack Daniel's.

BAD  
Drink?

Jean shakes her head.

(CONTINUED)

25 (CONT'D) (3)

25

Mind if I do? BAD (CONT'D)

(CONTINUED)

JEAN  
Of course not.

He fills a plastic glass with ice, and then whisky.

JEAN (CONT'D)  
Would you agree that your music is  
also influenced by the blues?

BAD  
Oh, hell, yeah. Pinetop Perkins,  
Robert Johnson...We all owe our  
existence to them Delta boys.

Jean smiles and looks down at her notepad.

JEAN  
You ever want to do anything else?

BAD  
Play baseball. I was pretty good  
at it until I realized I couldn't  
hit the curve.

JEAN  
Lucky for us.

BAD  
Lucky for me. It ain't no picnic  
but I'm still doing it...You always  
want to be a writer?

JEAN  
I didn't know what I wanted for a  
long time.

Her sincerity stops him. He has a closer look.

BAD  
But you do now, don't you?

JEAN  
I know what I don't want to do  
again.

BAD  
(snorts)  
Amen.

She blushes. And he is intrigued again.

BAD (CONT'D)  
Married?

JEAN  
Was.

(CONTINUED)

BAD

Is that one of them things you  
don't want to do again?

JEAN

Not unless it's right.

BAD

How the hell will you know?

JEAN

You tell me. You were married five times.

BAD

Jesus Christ. Four.

She laughs and the room lights up. He is completely charmed. She looks at her notes.

JEAN

Are you going to do another album with Tommy Sweet?

BAD

Two things I don't want to talk about are multiple marriages and Tommy.

JEAN

(raising her eyebrows)  
Okay.. What's your real name?

BAD

Not for publication. I wasn't born Bad Blake, but when I die my stone will have my real name on it.

JEAN

That's a long time to wait for people to find out.

BAD

(smiles)  
Maybe, maybe not.

Bad looks to his watch. Jean looks through her notes.

JEAN

Do you have any children?

Bad just looks at her. Seems like an eternity.

BAD

Hell, I got to get ready, darlin'.

JEAN

Can you give me just another half hour after the show?

BAD

Let's see how it goes.

Bad walks Jean to the door. He's all smiles.

26 INT. EVANGELO'S BAR - SANTA FE - NIGHT 26 \*

The house is sparse and quiet. Jean keeps edging up to the tiny bandstand to flash a strobe light in his face. Uncle Wesley on the piano really fills the room.

In the middle of "Fallin' and Flyin'", Bad steps back, nods to Wesley and lets him go. Wesley doesn't hesitate. The sound is crisp and sure.

When they come back to the chorus, the song takes off, soaring as if it were something Bad hadn't heard in years.

27 INT. EVANGELO'S BAR - SANTA FE - LATER 27 \*

At the break, a blonde woman in a low-cut blue dress approaches Bad. This is ANN. Jean talks to her uncle Wesley near the bar.

ANN

You're wonderful. You haven't lost anything.

BAD

Why, thank you.

ANN

You may be even better than you were back then. I'm Ann.

BAD

Hi, Ann.

ANN

I've loved country music all of my life. I even know the B sides of your albums.

BAD

Better than me.

ANN

Here, I brought you a Jack Daniels. Your favorite.

Bad reaches for the J.D. Ann shakes her head to toss her blond hair back. Jean has moved to her table to write something in a thin notebook.

ANN (CONT'D)

If you aren't doing anything after the show, we could have a late dinner, or just a cup of coffee.

BAD

I would, but I've promised an interview to a reporter.

(CONTINUED)

27 (CONT'D)

27

ANN

That's all right. I know you're in town for another night.

BAD

Another time would be just fine. Thanks for the drink.

Bad gives Ann a kiss on the forehead. In return, she squeezes his forearm so hard her nails dig into the flesh through his shirt.

ANN

Could you play 'What Love Can Do' for me?

Other fans move in for autographs and handshakes.

28 INT. EVANGELO'S BAR - SANTA FE - LATER

28 \*

The size of the audience doesn't suit an encore. However:

BAD

Thank you, Santa Fe. Be here one more night. This is 'What Love Can Do', for Ann.

Healthy applause as Ann beams. Bad and the boys dig in.

29 INT. EVANGELO'S BAR - SANTA FE - LATER

29 \*

Bad's packing up. Jean approaches.

JEAN

Are you busy now?

She gives him a smile he can't quite read.

JEAN (CONT'D)

It looked like you were going to be busy.

BAD

No. I said I'd answer some more of your questions, and I will.

Bad grabs his guitar and amplifier.

JEAN

I can carry your amp.

BAD

Okay. Just don't drop it.



30 INT. LAND OF ENCHANTMENT MOTEL - LATER

30 \*

Bad moves over to the bed, pulls off his boots, unbuttons his shirt, and leans back against the headboard. He reaches for the whisky.

(CONTINUED)

BAD  
Drink?

JEAN  
(hesitates)  
A short one. It's getting late.

He coughs a shallow cough, that gets deeper, finally doubling him over. He lights a Pall Mall.

JEAN (CONT'D)  
How many of those do you smoke a day?

Bad doesn't respond.

BAD  
What else do you want to know?

JEAN  
Records. What's your favorite?

BAD  
I'd have to say "Fallin and Flyin'". Made me a hell of a lot of money. Turned my whole life around.

\*  
\*

JEAN  
Do you get tired of singing it?

BAD  
When I sing it twice, three times a night. But it's been too good to me. Can't turn my back on it.

JEAN  
In today's artificial world of country music, who's real country?

Bad thinks about this.

BAD  
Haggard's real country. Billie Joe Shaver. Loretta Lynn.

JEAN  
Is Tommy Sweet real country?

He gives her the "I said I didn't want to talk about him" look. Then..

BAD  
Hell..more than he'll admit to. I taught him country. He tries to cover it up, competing with Keith Urban and them, but yes, Tommy's real country.

(CONTINUED)

JEAN

How did you meet him?

BAD

Look, darlin', I don't want to be cantankerous, but I don't want to talk about him.

JEAN

Okay. Anything you would like to talk about? \*

Bad looks at her then around the room.

BAD

You have any idea how bad you make this room look? I never even noticed what a dump it was 'til you came in.

She blushes again and looks away.

BAD (CONT'D)

And I haven't seen anyone blush since I don't know when.

JEAN

I can't help it. My capillaries are close to the skin.

BAD

Where are you from, anyway?

JEAN

Enid, Oklahoma.

BAD

Of course you are.

(takes a drink)

Tell me the most important thing about you, Oklahoma.

JEAN

I have a son, Buddy. He's four. He's with a baby sitter and I've got to go rescue him.

(getting up)

You turned that woman in the bar down. I'm sorry. I really am. I didn't mean to spoil anything.

BAD

You're spoilin' me, right now, darlin'.

Jean gives him a look and nervously picks up her recorder.

(CONTINUED)

JEAN  
Thank you for talking with me.

30 (CONT'D) (4)

30

BAD

Did you get what you need?

JEAN

Could always use more.

BAD

Come to tomorrow night's show. We can continue after that if you're up for it. And if you ain't, then here, let me give you my address. Send me a copy of the article. I'm curious about how you write.

She gives him a look as he writes his address in her notebook. He hands it back to her and leans toward her. She leans away. It's a near miss that leaves her breathless. Jean looks at Bad for a long beat.

JEAN

I'll be there.

She smiles and exits quickly.

Bad stares at the door then pulls out a BUSINESS CARD. ANN from the bar. He looks to the clock: 3:45 a.m. and puts the card back in his pocket.

31 INT. LAND OF ENCHANTMENT MOTEL - NEXT MORNING

31 \*

Bad's crashed out. The phone rings. He rolls over and looks at the clock. It's eleven. He reaches for a Pall Mall and the phone.

JACK

Bad? I've got great news and I've busted my ass for this. Write it down. Cancel Benson, Arizona, on your itinerary. You're into Phoenix, Arizona's Sun Pavillion, eight o'clock sharp.

\*

\*

Bad fumbles for pen and paper.

INTERCUT:

32 INT. OFFICE - LOS ANGELES - MORNING

32 \*

Jack, seated behind his desk, stares out at the city's smoggy horizon.

JACK (CONT'D)

Well?

BAD

Well, what?

(CONTINUED)

JACK

For Christ's sake. I just called to  
tell you you're out of the Red  
Bison Lounge in Benson, Arizona,  
and into a pavillion.

\*  
\*  
\*

BAD

A pavillion?

\*

JACK

A goddamned pavillion, Bad. An  
outdoor arena. You're opening a  
major show in Phoenix.

\*  
\*

BAD

Opening? I don't open.

\*

JACK

Cut the crap. Twelve thousand  
seats, Bad. Where else are you  
going to play in front of that many  
people?

BAD

Opening for who?

JACK

This is the best part...Tommy  
Sweet.

BAD

No, way. No, sir

\*

JACK

Bad. Think about this. You want to  
do another album with Tommy. This  
is a step in the right direction.

Bad doesn't respond.

JACK (CONT'D)

Open for him, get together, talk  
with him. I haven't been able to  
convince him, but I got him to  
agree to this.

BAD

Damn it, Jack. I won't do it. I'll  
open for someone else, but not  
Tommy.

\*

JACK

Who are you going to open for?  
Willie Nelson, the Stones? How  
about Madonna? Should I try  
Madonna?

(CONTINUED)

BAD

The dream of every sideman is that someday the front man whose ass he's been staring at for years, is going to open for him. I don't owe that dream to Tommy Sweet. I don't owe him one fucking thing.

JACK

You and I both know that Tommy owes you. Well, he's making a payment here. Twelve thousand seats, Bad. You and I both know exactly how much it's worth.

Finally:

BAD

You cocksucking son-of-a-bitch. \*

JACK

You'll do it?

Another long beat.

BAD

Let me think about it.

JACK

No. Tell me now...Yes or no, Bad...  
Bad? Yes or no?

Long pause. Bad looks in the mirror. He ain't getting any younger.

BAD

Yes, damn it... Yes. \*

JACK

Excellent. You'll have a kick ass back up band...Oh, and Bad, don't mess this up.

BAD

One question: Will I get to go backstage and meet Tommy in person and everything?

JACK

Real funny. Gotta go, Bad.

Phone line goes dead.

Bad walks through the middle of town. The streets of Santa Fe are narrow and lined with Art Galleries.

(CONTINUED)

33 (CONT'D)

33

Out on the sidewalk, Indians display their jewelry, baskets and trinkets on blankets.

33 A EXT. ST. FRANCIS CATHEDRAL - SUNSET

33 A

\*

Bad looks up at the Romanesque Revival architecture as the sun bathes its round arches and Corinthian columns in a warm glow. The Cathedral dramatically contrasts to the surrounding adobe structures.

\*

\*

\*

\*

34 INT. EVANGELO'S BAR - SANTA FE - NIGHT

34

\*

The Friday night house is nearly full. Bad and the same local band, The Sureshots, stir in the back hallway just before showtime. Uncle Wesley, the piano player, leans into Bad.

\*

WESLEY BARNES

I want to thank you for helping Jean out. She's a real nice girl. I mean, she's not a girl anymore, but she's real nice.

BAD

She is real nice. You're right to be proud of her.

WESLEY BARNES

She hasn't had an easy time of it. Her divorce, the boy, and all. But she's solid as a rock. I think the world of her.

BAD

(smiles)

I'm starting to.

Wesley gives him a big smile, like he has just got something settled, something that was gnawing at him.

BAD (CONT'D)

And thank you for playing with me. You're real fine. Better than a lot of professionals I've played with. It's the most fun I've had in years.

Bad pats Wesley's shoulder. Wesley grins from ear to ear.

BAD (CONT'D)

Just keep having fun.

At that, they head out onto the stage. The bar rings with applause.

(CONTINUED)



34 (CONT'D)

34

BAD  
Thank you, Santa Fe. My God, what a  
beautiful place you got here. Just  
real special.

DISSOLVE TO:

35 INT. EVANGELO'S BAR - LATER

35 \*

Near the end of the set a sweaty Bad scans the bar. Jean's  
nowhere in sight.

(CONTINUED)

35 (CONT'D)

35

For the next 15 seconds, Bad and his boys finish "Somebody Else" to a large round of applause.

35 A INT. EVANGELO'S BAR - CONTINUOUS

35 A \*

A woman in tight jeans brings a BEER to the stage for him.

BAD (CONT'D)  
Darlin', that's real sweet, but I just can't drink that beer. I got to protect this fine figure I've worked so hard for.

Laughs from the bar.

BAD (CONT'D)  
What do you all think of the Sureshots?

\*  
\*

The audience breaks into applause.

BAD (CONT'D)  
Aren't they a fine bunch? I think so much of them.

Bad hasn't had this much fun in years. He turns to the band.

BAD (CONT'D)  
Okay, boys. Let's lose the playlist. (to the audience) What do y'all want to hear?

A cowboy shouts to the boys.

COWBOY  
I Don't Know.

BAD  
If you don't know, then I can't play it.

The cowboy grins and claps. The audience laughs.

BAD (CONT'D)  
Okay, boys, let's really wing it. 'I Don't Know', Tejano style.

The drummer gives him the tempo. He counts the beat back to the drummer, sped up by half.

In the break, he and Wesley just start to cut.

Wesley keeps pushing Bad, finding new phrasings of the melody that demand answers. They really have a ball. The crowd loves it. A lovely OLDER WOMAN approaches the stage and offers her hand for a dance.

(CONTINUED)

35 A (CONT'D)

35 A

Bad steps down, takes the hand of the woman and they do a quick, nearly graceful shuffle with lots of spins as the tempo of the song increases. Bad kisses her on the cheek.

(CONTINUED)

35 A (CONT'D) (2)

35 A

People stand and clap. Bad bows to his dance partner, his face burning from exertion.

BAD (CONT'D)

Thank you, good night, and God love you all.

Still no sign of Jean.

36 EXT. EVANGELO'S BAR - SIDE STREET - LATER

36 \*

Bad sits in his Suburban smoking, lighting them off the butts. The bar is closed and the street is empty. He turns the ignition to illuminate his Suburban's clock: 12:49 am.

\*  
\*  
\*

Finally, Jean's car pulls in behind him. Jean runs over to Bad's truck.

\*  
\*

JEAN

I'm sorry. I was waiting on the sitter for my son. You know how hard it is to find a sitter at one o'clock?

BAD

I get off work at one o'clock. I know how hard it is to find everything at one o'clock. I'm just glad you found me.

(a look)

Who's watching your boy?

JEAN

A friend. She just got there.

BAD

Want a drink?

She thinks about it.

JEAN

Yeah. Guess I could use one.

37 INT. LAND OF ENCHANTMENT MOTEL - LATER

37 \*

Bad pours a second drink for Jean. She points to her TAPE RECORDER as it rests on the table between them.

BAD

Jesus, more questions.

JEAN

Just a couple.

Bad sighs and settles into the sofa.

(CONTINUED)

37 (CONT'D)

37

JEAN (CONT'D)  
Are you religious?

(CONTINUED)

BAD

I believe there's a God. If that's religious, I'm that.

She shakes her head. Sees he's not giving much.

JEAN

Where do your songs come from?

Bad takes a drag off his Pall Mall.

BAD

Out of living, unfortunately.

JEAN

Like 'Lonesome Nights'.

BAD

That was Suzi, my fourth wife. The one that run off. She was twenty-three and I was forty-six. She started out thinking I was something pretty wonderful—a genuine star. Then she figured out that all she had was a broke-down singer and picker who wasn't ever going to take her to Hollywood.

Jean smiles. Not more, but fully.

JEAN

I've been to Hollywood. I couldn't get out fast enough.

BAD

(snorts)

Neither could Suzi.

With a drink in one hand, burning cigarette in the other, Bad moves toward her. She meets him halfway.

BAD

For some reason I can't explain, I feel obliged to apologize for this ugly room and for being less than you probably imagine me to be.

He leans slowly, not knowing if she'll pull away. Somehow, in all the years, this has never stopped being awkward. They kiss.

JEAN

Is this the famous country charm?

BAD

I've never been famous for charm.

(CONTINUED)

37 (CONT'D) (3)

37

JEAN  
It's not too late to start.

(CONTINUED)

37 (CONT'D) (4)

37

Bad kisses her again. They move over to the bed. After the urgency of snaps and buckles, hooks and zippers, comes the urgency of unfamiliar skin and contours.

Jean unsnaps his shirt and works it over his arms, tugs down his pants only to realize he is still wearing his boots.

BAD

Let me.

Bad gets one boot off, but struggles mightily with the other. Jean gracefully tugs at the boot and it comes off.

After the initial rush of passion, they slow and luxuriate, then grow shy. He smells her hair.

BAD (CONT'D)

You are a fresh bunch of roses,  
girl.

JEAN

Hush.

38 INT. LAND OF ENCHANTMENT MOTEL - NEXT MORNING

38

\*

Bad is sound asleep. Jean is lying across from him, wide awake. Her face is a reflecting pool of the jumbled thoughts running through her mind; tenderness, hope, what the hell am I doing? Bad opens his eyes and catches that look.

JEAN

No one can say Jean Craddock  
doesn't throw herself into her  
work.

BAD

Nobody's done anything they need to  
feel bad about. We're okay.

JEAN

You sure?

BAD

Come here..

As she moves toward him, he grabs the glass beside the bed that still has a splash of whiskey in it, takes a sip, sits the glass on his stomach and draws her closer. She rests her head on his chest and looks at the glass.

BAD (CONT'D)

I got something else you can use in  
your article.

JEAN

Let me get my recorder.

(CONTINUED)



BAD

(laughs)

I'm opening for Tommy Sweet in Phoenix in a couple of days. Bad Blake is back in the Big Time.

She hears the sarcasm and looks up at him.

JEAN

That's great. Right?

BAD

That's what my agent says.

JEAN

If it's not great, what is it?

BAD

I don't know. I taught the boy how to sing, play, got his teeth fixed, got him a deal.. and now he don't even return my phone calls half the time.

JEAN

But you did an album together.

BAD

Hell of an album. Platinum. 'Course he cashed most of the checks.. but it's not that..

JEAN

You just want him to call you back.

BAD

Yeah. On the other hand, maybe I taught him too well..

(beat)

Anyway, big day in Phoenix.

JEAN

I don't know what to say. Good luck, I guess.

BAD

Say you'll come with me. Sure would take the sting out of it.

JEAN

(pulls back/stares)

You're kidding..

BAD

This is my serious look... What do you say?

(CONTINUED)

JEAN  
Let's talk about this later.

38 (CONT'D) (3)

38

BAD

Okay..Then how bout I come over and  
make your boy some world-famous Bad  
Blake biscuits before I go then?

Jean sees that he means it and leans in and kisses him softly  
on the cheek. The glass starts to tip over but he catches it.

39 INT. JEAN'S HOUSE - MORNING

39 \*

Jean sits at the kitchen table eating a big fluffy biscuit  
and looking intently at BAD, holding his fingers up for goal  
posts. BUDDY, Jean's young son, is trying to hold a paper  
triangle with the tip of his finger so he can flick it with  
his other hand through the finger posts.

BAD

Ease it back a little. That's it.  
Wait wait wait, most important  
part..

Buddy looks up at Bad. Jean look at Bad.

BAD (CONT'D)

Bite the biscuit.

Buddy picks up a piece of buttered biscuit and crams it into  
his mouth. Jean snickers.

BAD (CONT'D)

Feel that butter and flour coursing  
through you? Is it giving you a  
power that you didn't know you had?  
(off Buddy's wide eyes)  
Is your shirt getting tight with  
muscle? Whole worlds have been  
tamed by men who ate biscuits. Now!

With crumbs falling from his lips, Buddy flicks the triangle.  
It sails high over Bad's head and out of sight!

BAD (CONT'D)

Score!!

Buddy raises his arms in triumph. Jean grins and does too.

BAD (CONT'D)

And that son, is how we get it  
done in Texas.

Bad swirls the whiskey in the glass beside his plate and  
empties it. Jean sees it but tries to wish it away.

40 EXT. JEAN'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

40 \*

Jean and Bad stand beside the van.

(CONTINUED)

BAD  
That's a real nice boy you got.

JEAN

Thank you. He's not around men  
much. I worry about that sometimes.

BAD

What about his daddy?

Jean looks away and shakes her head.

JEAN

I've made a lot of mistakes. I'm  
just trying not to make them twice.

A strange look passes across Bad's face like a dark cloud.  
She sees it. Buddy buzzes by them with a biscuit in his hand.

BAD

Good boy. Good mom.

JEAN

Good biscuits.

He leans in and kisses her. She tastes the whiskey on his  
lips, pulls back, and looks into him.

41 EXT. DRIVEWAY -LATER

41

\*

Jean stands in the driveway, watching the Suburban slip away  
down the street. She is in trouble and knows it.

\*

JEAN

God? This is Jean. Please don't let  
him call me.

42 INT. SUBURBAN - DAY

42

\*

Bad's fifty miles out of Phoenix. He's looking over at a '69  
Pontiac GTO that he's been following for four or five miles.

Two people in the front seat, a man and a woman, nuzzle.

Suddenly, her head disappears. Bad pushes down the  
accelerator. He looks over, but can only see the man. Bad  
signals and pulls into the right lane, where he can get a  
better look.

He's now a car length ahead of the Pontiac and sings along on  
the radio. The station plays Merle Haggard's "Hold On You".

\*

He has a better view now, but he can't tell if he's watching  
sex or nausea. The DJ announces they've been listening to  
"Merle Haggard's 'Hold on You' written by "the late Mr. Bad  
Blake, one of the great ones."

\*

The woman sits upright and the car passes Bad's Suburban. The  
driver gives Bad the O.K. sign, finger to thumb.

\*

43 OMITTED 43 \*

44 INT. SUBURBAN - PHOENIX - NEXT MORNING 44 \*

Bad pulls his Suburban through the open gates of the SUN PAVILLION. He stops to read the Marquee: August 29 / TOMMY SWEET/ Special Guest: BAD BLAKE. \*

BAD \*

Not bad for a dead man. \*

Bad eases his Suburban over to several TRACTOR TRAILERS and two sleekly designed MOTOR COACHES, the bus of the stars. \*

45 INT. SUN PAVILLION - MOMENTS LATER 45 \*

Bad follows RALPHIE, a little man in jeans and a red satin jacket, through the labyrinthine bowels of the coliseum. Ralphie's wearing a wireless headset. He moves at a swift pace.

RALPHIE

Damn good to meet you, Mr. Blake.  
I'm a big fan... Big show tonight.

Ralphie turns and sticks a cloth PATCH to the leg of Bad's jeans. It reads: Tommy Sweet, Lovin' you.

They climb up ten wooden stairs, onto the stage. Roadies in undershirts are busy taping wires to the stage.

(CONTINUED)

At both ends of the stage, amps are stacked ten high-Fenders and Marshalls. At the back of the stage is a Rogers drum kit and at the far end is a Baldwin grand piano. All around the stage are stacked blue Anvil crates on casters. Stenciled on the side: Tommy Sweet. It's a real country-star production.

Bad looks out across the arena. There are two tiers of seats, which run in a horseshoe from the stage to about a hundred yards back.

A huge, fat man in a sleeveless cowboy shirt moves across the stage toward them. This is BEAR, the stage manager.

RALPHIE (CONT'D)

Bear, this is Bad Blake.

BEAR

How you doin' man? What's your equipment like?

BAD

Fender Pro.

BEAR

That's it? A Fender Pro?

BAD

That's it, pal.

BEAR

Well, we'll run you through these amps. You got a preference? Marshall?

BAD

I like my Fender.

BEAR

Well, that's no sweat, either. I'll mike it through the PA. Where's your stuff?

BAD

'78 Suburban. Out back. \*

They head down the stairs.

RALPHIE

You go on at eight sharp. You get forty-five minutes. Stay on that. You can't run over more than three minutes. Tommy's on at nine-fifteen, off at eleven. We're torn down by one-thirty. There'll be a party at Tommy's hotel around two or so. \*

(CONTINUED)

45 (CONT'D) (2)

45

BAD  
Is he at the Holiday Inn, too?

(CONTINUED)



45 (CONT'D) (3)

45

Ralphie turns around and smiles.

RALPHIE

The Ritz.

\*

46 INT. SUN PAVILLION - DRESSING ROOM - SAME

46

\*

Ralphie leads Bad into a room that looks like a bus station john, white tile floor and wall. Four men sit on folding chairs, eating and drinking.

\*

RALPHIE

"Bum Steer", your backup.

\*

The band all stand to greet Bad.

BAD

This is the big-time, boys.

Bad looks over to a shelf with cold cuts, cheese, and bread, cans of beer, bottles of wine, soft drinks, glasses and ice. A case of JACK DANIEL'S sits with a note: "Save some for me. Tommy." Bad smiles.

47 EXT. SUN PAVILLION - STAGE - SOUNDCHECK - LATER

47

\*

Bad and the Bum Steer begin the intro to "Fallin and Flyin." Bad stops playing, waves off the band and steps to the microphone.

\*

BAD

Bear, I need kick, snare, and tone down the guitars. They'll drown out my lyrics.

BEAR

(o.s left)  
Mix is good.

\*

BAD

Set it the way I tell you, and leave it.

BEAR

Your mix is fine. Trust me.

BAD

Bear. I'm an old man. I get grumpy. Humor me.

Bad turns to his lead guitarist:

BAD (CONT'D)

The sound man's job is to fuck up the opening act. Makes the headliner sound that much better.

\*

\*

(CONTINUED)

47 (CONT'D)

47

BEAR  
You've got another half hour.

\*

(CONTINUED)

47 (CONT'D) (2)

47

BAD

We're going to be on this stage  
until the mix is where I want it.  
Give me my mix or we may rehearse  
right through Tommy's first set.

The band starts another number.

48 INT. LUCKY'S STEAKHOUSE - LATER

48 \*

Bad sits at a table in the back corner. A commotion causes him to look up from his MENU. TOMMY SWEET, handsome, mid-thirties, and looking every bit the country-star that he is, poses for a picture with adoring fans.

Tommy kisses an older woman on the cheek and then approaches Bad's table.

TOMMY

Heard you might be over here.

BAD

(smiles)

You son-of-a-bitch.

TOMMY

I always admired that in you, Bad.  
How the hell are you?

BAD

Worse.

TOMMY

That's about right, I reckon.

Tommy, holding a fancy bottle of WATER, plops down in a chair across from Bad. He rests his feet on another chair. His BOOTS are made of thin strips of leather, sewn together so they form a series of V's pointing down the toe.

Tommy's jeans are adorned with holes and ages to perfection and he wears a vintage Johnny Cash T-shirt. On his right hand he has a DIAMOND RING in the shape of TEXAS. Bad points to Tommy's bottle of SMART WATER.

BAD

Give up on Southern Comfort?

TOMMY

Still drink it onstage. It's good  
for the throat.

BAD

So they tell me. Damn stuff was  
always too sweet for me.

(CONTINUED)

48 (CONT'D)

48

TOMMY

Hell, I didn't like it either, but when you're one of Bad's boys, you got to be able to put away the whiskey.

Tommy slaps Bad on the shoulder and looks at him with admiration.

49 INT. LUCKY'S STEAKHOUSE - LATER

49 \*

Tommy and Bad hover over a couple of porterhouse steaks. Patrons still stare at Tommy. A YOUNG GUY of about twenty-one shyly crosses over to their table with a pen and paper.

YOUNG GUY

Hate to bother you, Tommy, but I sure would like to have your autograph. You're my favorite. I've got all of your records.

The young guy barely throws a glance at Bad. Tommy puts down his fork and knife, reaches for the pen and paper and looks to Bad.

TOMMY

(nods to Bad)

His is the autograph you need. Bad Blake. Taught me everything I know.

The young guy looks at Bad without a hint of recognition. Bad looks at his plate. Tommy signs his signature and hands it over to Bad. Bad waves him off.

YOUNG GUY

I'll be at your show tonight, and may even try to make San Diego.

TOMMY

Appreciate your support.

The young guy strolls off, beaming.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

I was thinking about our tours together. Those were good times weren't they?

Bad nods, takes a long drink and another bite of steak.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

It's good to see you again. I'm really glad you agreed to do this.

(CONTINUED)

BAD  
I need the money. If it wasn't this  
I'd be playing a saloon in Benson,  
Arizona.

Tommy laughs. He's really enjoying his time with Bad.

TOMMY

Remember that time we broke down in the middle of west Texas? Sat there all goddamned day waiting on the wrecker. Must of been a hundred and ten out there.

Bad nods and looks to Tommy's ring.

BAD

Is that why you wear the ring?

TOMMY

You ever try to buy a diamond ring in the shape of Kansas?

Bad laughs congenially as they ease back into their friendship.

50 EXT. LUCKY'S STEAKHOUSE - PHOENIX - LATE AFTERNOON

50 \*

Tommy and Bad exit the restaurant and walk toward the parking lot.

BAD

How's the tour going?

TOMMY

A grind. Fifty dates in two months. How about yours?

BAD

I'm out for a month. Six states.

TOMMY

Pickup bands?

BAD

Yeah.

TOMMY

That's a ball buster. Hell, we should have gotten together earlier. Done this whole tour.

BAD

We tried that once.

Tommy looks off into the distance.

TOMMY

Just too many things going on. That damn movie shoot down in Mexico and Jill was on my ass all the time. It would have been a hell of a tour.

(CONTINUED)

BAD

Yeah. A hell of a tour.

TOMMY

Oh, come on, Bad. I'm sorry. It just didn't work out. I was trying to keep my marriage together. Don't hold that against me.

BAD

I got a career, too. And a marriage or two I wanted to keep together.

TOMMY

I know.

Bad and Tommy make their way to Tommy's shiny black ESCALADE. It's parked next to Bad's road weary Suburban. Tommy's DRIVER exits the Escalade and opens Tommy's door. Tommy discreetly waves him off. The driver moves to the back of the vehicle.

Tommy smiles and points to Bad's Suburban.

TOMMY

Glad to see you still got old Bessie.

BAD

Runs like a top.

A beat. Then:

TOMMY

You gave me my start, Bad. Don't think I don't remember that. You taught me most of what I know that's worth knowing. But I have a life to live, too.

Tommy sits on his truck's hood. Resting a boot on the bumper.

BAD

Yeah. Well, those are the ugliest boots I ever saw in my life. Salesman threaten to shoot your dog?

Tommy laughs at this.

BAD (CONT'D)

So why the hell won't you do another album with me?

TOMMY

Hold up. I never said I wouldn't. C.M.I. doesn't think it's the right thing to do.

(CONTINUED)

BAD  
I think it is.

TOMMY  
You may be right, but they want a  
couple of more solos, then we can  
do a duet. You got first shot. I  
already told them.

BAD  
I don't have a lot more time,  
Tommy. I need some money now.



TOMMY

Even if I front the album, they won't release it. You won't make any money with it sitting in a vault.

BAD

Hell, Tommy. I'm fifty-seven years old. My career isn't going anywhere. I need something to get it moving again.

\*

Bad lights a PALL MALL.

BAD (CONT'D)

I can't get a solo album. I need this. I really do.

TOMMY

I swear I can't get them to budge on this one...But there is a way you can make money, though.

BAD

Which is?

TOMMY

Songs. I don't have any new material, and the stuff I'm hearing is crap. You give me five songs and I'll give you backend. I move two million albums every time I release one.

BAD

I haven't written a new song in three years.

TOMMY

Bullshit. You write some of the best material around, and I want some of it.

BAD

I used to. Not anymore.

TOMMY

I tell you what. You get me new songs, I guarantee we'll release one as a single.

BAD

I'm not a songwriter anymore. I haven't been in years.

Tommy sighs as Bad gets into his Suburban.

\*

(CONTINUED)

50 (CONT'D) (4)

50

TOMMY

Do it, Bad. You've got a couple of months.

BAD

We can do an album, but I can't write you any songs.

Bad looks at Tommy for a beat and pulls off. \*

51 INT./EXT. SUN PAVILLION - LATER

51

RALPHIE leads BAD and the BUM STEER through the belly of the Pavillion. \*

RALPHIE

Oh, Bad. Mr. Greene has sent you five boxes of product to sell here at the show.

BAD

Sell? What the hell are you talking about?

RALPHIE

He's sent five hundred units of "Memories" for you to sell.

BAD

I sing. I play. I don't sell my goddamned records at a concert. You tell him to get his ass to Phoenix and pick up his goddamn CD'S. \*

RALPHIE

I'm just delivering the message. Tommy said you can put them up with his concessionaires...Mr. Greene says you get to keep all proceeds.

They make the final turn toward the stage and can see that the Pavillion is nearly full. The noise of the crowd is like a low grinding. THE HOUSE LIGHTS GO DOWN. The crowd responds favorably. \*

Bad looks up to a spotlight that's trained on the stage. NICK, the bass player, says to no one in particular:

NICK

Holy shit.

BAD

Just breathe, amigo. You're fine.

Bad inhales hard and holds it.

(CONTINUED)

51 (CONT'D)

51

RALPHIE

Ninety seconds. Six steps, remember that.

The noise rolls over the band.

RALPHIE (CONT'D)

Go.

The band moves up the steps to the stage. Over the PA:

PA

Ladies and gentlemen, 'The Wrangler of Love', Mr. Bad Blake.

Bad looks out into the Pavillion: twelve thousand fans, standing room only. The boys make their way to their mics.

\*  
\*

DISSOLVE TO:

\*

51 A EXT. SUN PAVILLION - STAGE - LATER

51 A

\*

Bad removes his hat and rubs the sleeve of his shirt across his sweaty forehead.

BAD

Thank you, Phoenix, Arizona. It's been real good being here tonight. Of course, at my age, it's good to be anywhere.

\*  
\*

Applause and a little laughter.

BAD (CONT'D)

Hope to see you again real soon...This is a song I had a hit on a long time ago. It's called "Fallin' and Flyin'."

\*  
\*  
\*

The band is steady and dependable. They begin a very solid version of "Fallin' and Flyin'."

\*  
\*

BAD

I was goin' where I shouldn't go  
Seein' who I shouldn't see  
Doin' what I shouldn't do  
Bein' who I shouldn't be

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

The crowd begins to stomp and cheer. Bad looks to his bass player as though he's really struck a chord.

From the corner of his eye, Bad can see someone moving up toward him.

(CONTINUED)

51 A (CONT'D)

51 A

BAD

A little voice said it's all wrong  
Another voice said it's all right  
I use to thing that I was strong  
But lately I just lost the fight

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

As Bad moves into the chorus, TOMMY SWEET is up to the microphone with him, singing harmony.

\*

(CONTINUED)

51 A (CONT'D) (2)

51 A

BAD/TOMMY

Sometimes fallin' feels like flyin' \*  
 For a little while \*  
 Sometimes fallin' feels like flyin' \*  
 For a little while \*

At the next verse, Bad steps back and offers the stage to \*  
 Tommy. \*

TOMMY

I got tired of being good \*  
 Started missing that old feeling \*  
 free \*  
 Stopped acting like I thought I \*  
 should \*  
 Went on back to being me \*

Tommy gives Bad a grin and a nod, and Bad rejoins him at the \*  
 microphone. They harmonize the last chorus and bring the \*  
 house down.

BAD/TOMMY

Sometimes fallin' feels like flyin' \*  
 For a little while \*  
 Sometimes fallin' feels like flyin' \*  
 For a little while \*

Tommy points to Bad. \*

TOMMY

This is the man who taught me to \*  
 sing that and just about everything \*  
 else. I guess he can still teach, \*  
 huh? \*

The crowd begins to cheer and Tommy steps back and waits, \*  
 careful not to step on any of Bad's applause.

Tommy walks offstage to a response that even catches Bad by \*  
 surprise. It's utterly overwhelming fandom.

52 INT. SUN PAVILLION - LATER

52

As Bad and the Bum Steer walk off stage, Ralphie grabs Bad. \*

RALPHIE

Tommy would like you to join him in \*  
 his set for 'Please Release Me' and \*  
 'Memories'. I'll cue you.

BAD

I got records to sell.

53 EXT. SUN PAVILLION - CONCESSIONS

53

Bad signs copies of his CD's and posters. People pat his back \*  
 and shake his hand.

(CONTINUED)

CUSTOMER

Is Tommy going to come up and sign  
them, too?

BAD

No, I don't think Tommy's coming  
up.

The crowd reacts again to the houselights going down. People  
in line for Bad hurry to their seats.

(CONTINUED)

53 (CONT'D) (2)

53

Tommy's band starts up with the intro to one of Tommy's hit songs, "Gone, Gone, Gone." The sound is crisp: piano, horns, strings. All tight and methodical. There's no introduction. Bad hears the crowd go absolutely nuts. He moves to the stage area.

53 A EXT. STAGE - SAME

53 A \*

Tommy, now dressed in a custom, western-rock shirt, and adorned in edgy jewelry, joins the band in "Gone, Gone, Gone." It's as smooth as a baby's butt.

54 INT. SUN PAVILLION - DRESSING ROOM - LATER

54 \*

Bad has moved over to Tommy's dressing room. It's packed. Bad finds Tommy over in the corner, changing his shirt.

BAD

See you're still a part of the "No hat tour."

\*

TOMMY

You're pissed because I cut in on your set.

BAD

I'm not pissed at all. Thanks.

TOMMY

You were welcome in mine. I would have appreciated it.

BAD

I figured you had it covered.

TOMMY

Why are you busting my ass, Bad? What the hell do you want from me?

BAD

An album. Nothing more.

TOMMY

I told you, I can't do a thing about it. It's up to C.M.I.

\*

BAD

Then I don't want anything. Except to say thanks and good night.

TOMMY

I'm trying to be friends here. Tomorrow's a rest day. Get off your high horse and stick around and have some fun.

(CONTINUED)

BAD

I got a lady to see in Santa Fe.  
You take care of yourself, Tommy.

Bad offers his hand and Tommy takes it. They shake warmly.

(CONTINUED)



54 (CONT'D) (2)

54

TOMMY

You too, Bad. I'll be in touch on  
the album.

Bad starts to work his way through the jam of people. People  
slap him on the back and say, "Good show." Tommy's still  
behind, shirtless.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Bad. Write me a couple of songs.

Bad turns to Tommy.

BAD

Think you can walk through one  
without all those damn horns and  
strings?

TOMMY

I might manage.

BAD

I'll see what I can do.

55 EXT. NEW MEXICO HIGHWAY - NEXT DAY

55 \*

Bad stands in a PHONE BOOTH depositing a handful of change.

OPERATOR

(over phone)  
What city?

BAD

Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Bad takes down the number and dials. A small voice, BUDDY,  
answers.

INTERCUT:

56 INT. JEAN'S HOUSE

56 \*

Buddy runs throughout the house with the phone.

BUDDY

Hello?

BAD

Buddy? It's Bad, your old biscuit  
maker.

BUDDY

Hi!

BAD

What are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY  
Watching Big Bird.

BAD  
How is he?

BUDDY  
He talked to the policeman.

BAD  
That's good. Is your mom there?

The line goes dead. Eighteen-wheelers go blasting by. Bad puts in more coins and dials Jean again.

JEAN  
Hello?

BAD  
Jean? It's Bad.  
(pause)  
Hello?

JEAN  
Hi. How was Phoenix?

BAD  
Oh, you know.. How are you?

JEAN  
Where are you?

BAD  
I don't know. Out in it.

JEAN  
Why?..I mean, what are you doing?

BAD  
Thinking about you.

JEAN  
Stop it.

BAD  
You think any about me?

JEAN  
I'm finishing the article.

BAD  
That's not what I meant.

JEAN  
I know.

Bad rearranges himself in the tiny phone booth.

(CONTINUED)

BAD  
Listen. I have a couple of days  
before I've got to be back in  
Houston.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

56 (CONT'D) (4) 56

BAD (CONT'D)  
I'd like to stop off and see you.  
(long pause)  
Jean?

JEAN  
I'm here.

BAD  
You're not making this easy, girl.  
You want me to stop by or not?

JEAN  
(long pause)  
Yes...

Bad holds on to the phone after Jean's hung up.

57 INT. CHEVY SUBURBAN - LATER 57 \*

Bad cruises the lonely desert highways of New Mexico. The brush at the roadside grows coarse and dense.

The truck starts to KNOCK as he climbs in altitude. \*

BAD  
Shit.

Bad wearily looks out over the unforgiving landscape.

58 INT. SUBURBAN - NEW MEXICO HIGHWAY - LATE AFTERNOON 58 \*

Bad cruises along the highway, just outside of Santa Fe. The fading sun illuminates the aspens of the SANGRE de CRISTO MOUNTAINS. He starts to nod off to sleep, then closes his eyes for a SPLIT SECOND.

Bad hears the crunch of the TIRES on GRAVEL and then an easy THUMP. He sees grass and brush and a WIRE FENCE coming at him in slow motion.

Bad moves his foot to the brakes and turns the wheel. The truck bounces across the scrub brush, through the WIRE FENCE. \*

Bad's truck pulls scrub brush as it head for a TREE. He turns the wheel as hard as he can, but the IMPACT sends him across the wheel and into the WINDSHIELD. \*

59 INT. SUBURBAN - MOMENTS LATER 59 \*

Bad's head is cold and his hand hurts. He sees his hat on the floor next to him in a pile of sheet music and a Styrofoam hamburger box. Around him, everything is wet and sticky. Things spin and his world implodes.

60 INT. SUBURBAN - LATER

60 \*

Out cold, Bad lays against the steering wheel. A hand touches his shoulder. An older HISPANIC MAN leans into Bad's truck. \*

(CONTINUED)

HISPANIC MAN

You okay?

Bad leans his head back against the top of the seat and slowly nods his head. The man opens the door of the truck, holding onto Bad's shoulder with his other hand.

HISPANIC MAN

Can you get out?

BAD

Something's wrong with my leg.

HISPANIC MAN

Grab on to me.

The man is much smaller than Bad, grips Bad hard and lifts him from the seat. Bad reaches out, and puts his arm around the man's shoulder. They do a slow, intricate waltz out of the truck.

The man carries Bad to a pickup as it idles, its taillights flashing red.

61 INT. SANTA FE HOSPITAL - THE NEXT DAY

61

The vertical blinds, the bed rails, and curtains slowly come into focus. A BANDAGE is wrapped around Bad's forehead and a plaster CAST covers his left ankle.

BAD

Where am I?

A NURSE in her mid-forties stands over Bad.

NURSE

Mr. Blake, you're in Santa Fe. You have a broken ankle. You also have a concussion.

Bad winces in pain.

BAD

Can I leave?

NURSE

When you can leave is up to the doctor.

BAD

Today?

NURSE

Probably not.

(CONTINUED)

61 (CONT'D)

61

BAD  
Get me the doctor.



62 INT. SANTA FE HOSPITAL - LATER

62 \*

A kind looking DOCTOR in his late sixties sits on the edge of the bed. \*

DOCTOR

The problem isn't your ankle, Mr. Blake. It will heal cleanly..The problem is your general condition, or extreme lack of it...

Bad looks away to break the doctor's stare.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

The kinds of stuff we're talking about here--emphysema, heart failure, cancer, an extremely good chance of a stroke--are more debilitating than quickly and cleanly fatal. They'll kill you, there's no mistaking that, but they're going to do it slowly, painfully, and humiliatingly. You're going to end up helpless as a child, in all probability.

Bad still doesn't respond. The doctor now stands.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Mr. Blake, are you going to talk to me?

BAD

About what?

DOCTOR

Look. I have other patients to see.

The doctor heads for the door. Just as he's about to exit, he turns back to Bad.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Obviously, you don't want to hear this, and I understand it, but when I see a case like yours, I have to say something. You're a fifty-seven year old man who is rapidly starting to wear out. You get no exercise, you clearly eat anything at all, and let's not kid ourselves about this one: you're an alcoholic. I'll take care of your leg and give you something for your cholesterol, but you have to stop smoking, stop drinking, and lose twenty-five pounds.

(CONTINUED)

62 (CONT'D)

62

The doctor and nurse leave. Bad looks to the PATIENT in the bed next to him, who's mouth is agape.

(CONTINUED)

62 (CONT'D) (2)

62

BAD

I'd give up cholesterol and salt,  
and kiss his ass for a drink.

63 EXT. SANTA FE HOSPITAL - THE NEXT DAY

63 \*

JEAN wheels Bad out of the hospital in a WHEELCHAIR. She has that what the hell am I doing look on her face. Bad is dressed in the clothes he was wearing when he had the wreck. The left leg of his jeans is slit up to the knee. He has his guitar and left boot on his lap, is talking a blue streak, and feeling no pain..

BAD

It'll just be for a day or two. You don't need some old gimp hanging around. And if I'm half as good at being laid up as I think I'm going to be, I'd..

JEAN

You need to hush now. Seriously.

BAD

What? Am I rambling? Must be them little blue pills. Wonder if I could a get a prescription or two?

JEAN

Absolutely not.

64 INT. JEAN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

64 \*

Bad's flat on his back in Jean's bed. His foot is propped up on two pillows. On the table beside him are his cigarettes and a bottle of JACK DANIEL'S.

He can hear Jean move through the house. On the television that sits at the foot of the bed, two women talk. One fights back tears. Bad hops to the other side of the room, where his guitar is propped against the chair, grabs it and scoots back to the bed.

For a bit, Bad just plays. He moves from harmonic to melodic and back, responding to signals he's not conscious of. It's as though his fingers have taken charge and all he needs to do, must do, is listen to what they are doing.

BAD

Your heart's on the loose  
You rolled them sevens with  
nothing to lose...  
This ain't the place...for the  
weary kind...

Jean peaks her head in.

(CONTINUED)

BAD  
You called...all your shots  
Shootin eight balls...at  
The corner truck stop  
Somehow this don't feel like  
home anymore...

Jean lights up.

BAD (CONT'D)  
You know that song?

JEAN  
I think so but I can't remember who  
did it.

BAD  
That's the way it is. The good ones  
are the ones you're sure you've  
heard before.

JEAN  
You wrote that?

BAD  
Yes, Ma'am. Just now.

JEAN  
It's so unfair.

BAD  
What?

JEAN  
Some people would trade 10 years of  
their life to be able to do  
something like that. And it just  
pours out of you.  
(turning to go)  
I'm going to get Buddy.

BAD  
Wait a minute. Are you mad at me?

JEAN  
No.

BAD  
I can go to a hotel or..

JEAN  
You're a very dense person  
sometimes. I don't want you to go.

BAD  
Then what's wrong?

JEAN  
You're writing a song on my bed!

(CONTINUED)

64 (CONT'D) (3)

64

BAD

So?

JEAN

And now I'll have to keep it for  
 the rest of my life and every time  
 I lay down I'll hear that beautiful  
 song. And you'll be out there  
 running around, not even  
 remembering a day that I can't  
 forget.

\*

\*

Her tears flow. Bad takes a drink and holds out his hand.

BAD

If I could walk, I'd come to you.

She comes and plops down on the bed. He holds her hand helplessly then offers her a sip of whiskey. She takes it.

BAD (CONT'D)

In the hospital, I thought about  
 who to call, who I knew that really  
 gives a damn about me. Then I  
 thought, who do I really want to  
 see? I won't forget this day,  
 darlin', I promise.

He kisses her tears.

65 EXT. JEAN'S HOUSE - PORCH - LATER

65

\*

Bad sits on a porch swing talking on the phone to Jack Greene. His leg propped up on a table.

\*

BAD

No, Jack, I wasn't drinking. I just  
 fell asleep.

INTERCUT:

66 INT. OFFICE - LOS ANGELES

66

\*

Jack curls a small dumbbell as he talks on the phone.

JACK

What are you doing back in Santa  
 Fe?

66 A EXT. JEAN'S HOUSE - PORCH - CONTINUOUS

66 A

\*

Jean crosses to a table with two cups of coffee and places them next to a half-empty glass of whiskey. She takes it in and then sits next to Bad.

BAD

Visiting a friend.

(CONTINUED)

66 A (CONT'D)

66 A

Bad puts his arm around her.

(CONTINUED)

JACK  
Can you drive?

BAD  
Pretty soon.

JACK  
I want to get you back out there.

BAD  
Jack, if you found out your sister  
was turning five-dollar tricks,  
you'd over book her.

JACK  
Remind me to put you in a couple of  
comedy clubs...Just so you know, I  
have a contract here, offering you  
seventy-five thousand dollars  
advance for an album to be recorded  
at a future date. Plus another  
twenty thousand for first refusal  
rights to all songs written or co-  
written by you over the next two  
years.

BAD  
Holy shit.

JACK  
Ditto. This is now your best year  
in the last seven. And thank Tommy  
Sweet for it. So ease up on  
him...Talk to you in Houston, and  
don't marry your *friend!*

BAD  
I ain't getting married.

Bad hangs up.

JEAN  
You want me to call him and tell  
him I'm not about to marry you.

BAD  
You might have waited until I asked  
before you turned me down.

Jean kisses him on his forehead.

JEAN  
I'm going to get Buddy. I told him  
he could draw on your cast.

She looks into him.

(CONTINUED)



66 A (CONT'D) (3)

66 A

JEAN (CONT'D)

I'm going to sleep on the fold out.  
It'd be too confusing for him.

BAD

No, I'll sleep on it.

JEAN

You need to be in a bed.  
(off his protest)  
It's all right. I want to do it.  
Will you do something for me?

BAD

Name it.

She glances at the glass of whiskey on the table.

JEAN

Don't drink in front of him.

Bad stares into her for a moment then blinks.

BAD

No problem.

She kisses him and enters the house. He looks around, yawns,  
and empties the glass.

67 EXT. FIELD - LATE DAY

67 \*

Bad leans on his crutches and stares up at...a heater roaring  
FIRE into a huge orange and purple striped BALOON that is  
lifting off!

Jean and Buddy are on board. Buddy is nearly beside himself  
with excitement. Jean is a *lot* less happy. Buddy waves  
frantically at Bad.

Bad snorts and waves back just as frantically. Jean's heart  
catches in her throat as they go higher and higher.

As they lift away, Bad leans back against the car, stares up  
at the bottom of the basket, reaches into his jacket for a  
flask, and has a much needed drink. His hands are shaking. He  
looks down at Big Bird drawn on his cast and has another  
drink.

68 EXT. FIELD - LATER

68 \*

Bad watches as Jean and Buddy climb down the steps from the  
balloon. Buddy runs to him, talking so fast Bad can't even  
understand him. Jean is glowing clear through.

JEAN

You *have* to do it! It's another  
world up there!

(CONTINUED)

68 (CONT'D)

68

Bad just grins at them. He knows the feeling.

69 EXT. BISHOP'S LODGE RESTAURANT - EVENING

69 \*

The elegant restaurant is emptying out. Bad and Jean sit by an outdoor fireplace. Bad's Big Bird cast is up on a chair. There are two empty wine bottles on the table and a third is almost gone. Jean is still glowing and beautiful.

\*  
\*

JEAN

I would've never gone up in that thing on my own. Thank you. Buddy's probably jabbering about it in his sleep.

Bad pours the last of the wine.

BAD

This whole domestic thing is pretty intense. Is it always like that?

JEAN

What do you mean? You've been married a bunch.

BAD

Yeah but, I didn't uh..  
(darkens/looks outside)  
I've got a twenty-eight-year-old son, Jean. I haven't seen him since he was four.

JEAN

(look/long beat)  
Where is he?

BAD

I don't know. His mom, Marge, lives in Marfa, Texas. I don't know what he looks like, what he's doing. I didn't teach him how to ride his bike or drive a car.

JEAN

Why not?

BAD

Wasn't there.. even when I was there. Hell of a thing, be this old and not know anything about your own boy.

JEAN

I couldn't live if I lost Buddy.

For the first time, we see real emotion in Bad's face.

(CONTINUED)

BAD  
That's the damndest part. You do  
live.

70 INT. JEAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

70 \*

Jean, still quite drunk from dinner, checks on Buddy, kisses his hair, and comes out into the living room. The fold out couch is open. She looks at it, looks at her bedroom door which is half open. She crosses to the door, peeks in and sees Bad sitting on the edge of the bed in his clothes, drinking JD. She knocks lightly. He puts the glass down and looks over.

JEAN  
You need help getting undressed?

BAD  
Hell, yeah.

JEAN  
I don't believe you.

BAD  
Be a lot more satisfying if you did.

JEAN  
Maybe we can get away by ourselves this weekend.

BAD  
What's today?

JEAN  
Thursday.

BAD  
I can't make it 'til the weekend.

She blows him a kiss and begins to back out. Bad grabs at her hungrily. Bad brings Jean onto the bed and unbuttons her blouse. They kiss passionately, drunkenly. Just as Bad tries to lay Jean down she pulls away.

JEAN  
No...no, not now.

She kisses his hair and slides back on the bed. She can't escape his grasp.

71 INT. JEAN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

71 \*

Bad wakes up, grabs his constitutional drink, swings his legs out of the bed, and the cast clunks heavily on the floor. That hurts.

Bad's crutches lean against the wall, across the room. Slowly, he stands, weight on his right leg. Then he shifts to his left, but it's too painful.

(CONTINUED)

71 (CONT'D)

71

He gets down and crawls across the floor. When he reaches the dresser, he gets the crutches to move to a WICKER HAMPER where Jean's draped his pants.

He puts his weight on the hamper. Seems sturdy enough. He sits gingerly on the hamper and pulls his jeans on his left leg. As he tries the other leg, the top of the hamper GIVES IN and Bad falls in, ass first.

BAD

Ah, hell!

\*

Jean runs in, sees the empty bed, looks around and spots Bad in the hamper.

JEAN

Oh, my God!

He's on the floor, his left leg up, sticking out of the broken hamper, his right leg splayed out and resting on top of an aralia palm in a ceramic pot. His pants are caught around his knees.

JEAN (CONT'D)

Are you all right?

BAD

How the hell do I look?

JEAN

You really want to know?

BAD

I'm all right. Get me up.

JEAN

Give me a second..

BAD

Help me up, damn it!

\*

Bad tries to get out of the smashed hamper as Jean has a laughing fit. BUDDY walks in and goes over to Bad as Bad tries to wiggle his jeans up to his hips. Buddy pulls the palm plant off Bad's foot.

BUDDY

Want biscuits?

Jean walks out, laughing her heart out.

BAD

For such a sweet lady, your mother has a very deviant sense of humor.

A FLASH from a camera lights up the room..

72

INT. JEAN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

72

\*

Buddy helps mix the biscuit batter with Bad. Jean hurries in and out of the kitchen.

JEAN

I've got to go down to the paper.  
I'll drop Buddy off at the day-care  
center and-

BAD

Why don't you just leave him here  
with me?

She stops and stares at him.

JEAN

You don't want to baby-sit.  
Besides, Buddy will want to see his  
friends at-

BUDDY

I want to stay here.

BAD

There you go. We want to stay.

JEAN

And do what?

BAD

Man stuff.

BUDDY

Yeah. Man stuff.

Jean puts some dishes into the sink. She is obviously torn.

JEAN

With your ankle, it's probably not  
best.

BAD

Aw, Mom..

Bad hobbles over beside her and nudges her.

BAD (CONT'D)

Please. Be a good thing for all of  
us. We'll be fine, I promise.

She tries to cover her concern as he kisses her lightly on the nose.

73 INT. JEAN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

73 \*

Bad grabs his crutches and moves about pretty well. Buddy's right beside him.

(CONTINUED)



73 (CONT'D)

73

BAD  
 You play cards?  
 (off Buddy's puzzled look)  
 Then, maybe we ought to go out and  
 see what kind of trouble we can get  
 into.

BUDDY  
 Big trouble.

74 EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY - LATER

74 \*

Swings, teeter-totters, and slides abound. Bad pushes Buddy in the swing. Buddy's all smiles. Bad's enjoying himself, too. We get the sense he wished he'd done more of this in his life.

He's surprised when he looks down and sees his hands shaking badly. He starts to reach into his jacket for a drink then stops and tries to tough it out.

75 INT. JEAN'S HOUSE - DAY

75 \*

Jean comes in and anxiously calls. Nobody answers. It's suddenly hard to breathe. As she starts to search the house.. Buddy and Bad clamber through the door. They are both inexplicably dirty.

BAD  
 It was fun, nobody died, don't ask.

Buddy obviously had a great time. As he runs to Jean grinning, Bad slips into the bedroom and heads straight for the bottle. His hands are shaking so badly he can hardly get the cap off.

76 EXT. HOTEL BALCONY - TAOS, NEW MEXICO - MORNING

76 \*

A serene hotel in the woods with a magnificent view of Pueblo Peak. Drink in hand, Bad sits on a lounge chair in a white robe. He stares out at the golden-hued Aspens. Jean steps out onto the balcony.

BAD  
 Join me, darlin.

Jean slips onto a lounge beside him. She glances at his half-empty whiskey glass. Then, after a lengthy beat:

BAD  
 (holding up the glass)  
 I don't want you worrying about  
 this. I'm real good at it.

JEAN  
 I didn't say anything.

(CONTINUED)

BAD  
You didn't have to.

JEAN

I *am* worried...Though, I'm sure  
you've heard that before.

Bad sets the glass down. Then:

BAD

Jeannie, I can handle it.

JEAN

Can you?

Bad doesn't respond. Jean turns and looks into him.

JEAN

I want this to work, Bad. I do. I  
just don't know how it can if you  
continue like this. Day and  
night...It's like living with a  
rattlesnake..

BAD

Jesus.

JEAN

And I don't want Buddy around it.  
That much I know.

BAD

I heard you the first time. I won't  
drink around him... And trust me,  
I've been doing this a long time.  
It don't affect me like you might  
think. We got too good a thing for  
me to screw it up.

Jean starts to respond, but Bad puts his index finger up to  
her lips.

BAD

It'll be okay.

Bad grabs her hand and squeezes. He then pulls it up to his  
mouth and kisses it gingerly. All Jean can do is nod. Bad  
looks out over the vast expanse and decides to change gears.

BAD (CONT'D)

I've logged over a thousand miles  
around these mountains but I don't  
think I've ever seen them. Another  
thing I missed..

JEAN

You could find your son if you  
wanted to.

(CONTINUED)

BAD  
What would he say? What would I  
say?

JEAN

Whatever it was, it would be better  
than nothing, wouldn't it?

He looks into her.

BAD

What about you, what are you going  
to do?

JEAN

About what?

BAD

About anything.

JEAN

Write a book.

BAD

About me?

JEAN

You wish. I'm going to write about  
what I know.

BAD

I think I want to be in it then.

JEAN

We'll see.

BAD

I'm gonna need to get to Houston  
then get back to work.

JEAN

I know.

BAD

I'm gonna miss the hell out of you  
and that boy.

JEAN

(turns and look into him)  
Then we'll miss the hell out of  
you.

77 EXT. JEAN'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - MORNING

77 \*

Bad's Suburban looks better than it did, though traces of  
bondo still remain. Buddy sits forlornly on the bumper as  
Jean puts Bad's guitar into the back. Bad musses Buddy's  
hair, as he's having a hard time with this goodbye, too.  
Buddy gets up abruptly and runs into the house.

\*

(CONTINUED)

BAD

Ya'll come to Houston, okay? I'm booked there for the next four months. Nights only, so I'm off all day. We'll-

JEAN

I took some time off for our trip so I don't know if I can get away now.

BAD

Try. I'll take Buddy down to NASA. He'll love them rockets and things.

JEAN

We'll see.

BAD

That means no.

JEAN

No. It means we'll see.

BAD

Lot of things to write about in Houston. Me.. and other stuff.

JEAN

That's more than a visit.

BAD

Running off the road was one of the best things that's ever happened to me. Think about that.

Bad embraces Jean for a long beat. When they part, Jean puts his old bag into the Suburban and pulls out a near empty bottle of JACK DANIEL'S. \*

BAD

I don't want to hear it, darlin'.

She looks into him and her eyes fill.

JEAN

I lay awake at night asking myself why is it okay to care so deeply for you...

BAD

And?

She suddenly kisses him passionately and steps back.

(CONTINUED)

JEAN

And...I just want you to know that  
I'm not giving you a hard time.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

77 (CONT'D) (3) 77

JEAN (CONT'D)  
It just freaks me out, okay?..You  
be careful out there.

She turns and walks into the house.

78 INT. SUBURBAN - HOUSTON, TEXAS - SUNSET 78 \*

Nearing Houston, the landscape flattens. Downtown Houston is directly in front of him, all vertical light. The city is stunning.

79 EXT. BAD'S HOUSE - HOUSTON - DUSK 79 \*

Bad exits his Suburban and approaches his one-story, brick ranch house. The house has seen better days, but looks as though it was a source of neighborhood pride at one time. Bad unlocks the door.

80 INT. BAD'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 80 \*

On the coffee table, there are stacks of mail. Advertising fliers, a few letters, a couple of bills. One large BROWN ENVELOPE with the return address: IRS.

81 EXT. BAD'S HOUSE - BACK PORCH - NIGHT 81 \*

A few stars are faintly visible against the overcast and reflected lights of the city.

Bad sits on the porch with an acoustic guitar. He begins working his way up and down the fretboard until a note opens a door. He touches a melody he instantly likes. It then comes as easily to him as an old song recalled after years.

BAD  
Your body aches  
From playing your guitar and  
sweatin' out the hate...  
The days and nights all feel the  
same...

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Bad writes the chords on a yellow pad.

\*

82 INT. WAYNE'S BAR - HOUSTON - DAY 82 \*

Bad hobbles into this dark roadhouse. As he makes his way to the back of the bar, we see a stage off in the corner.

Bad makes his way past trash cans waiting to be emptied, and boxes of empty beer bottles. WAYNE KRAMER, stocking glasses, late sixties and all cowboy, greets Bad.

WAYNE  
Jesus, Bad. You look like shit.

BAD  
I know. It's all on account of the  
toilets I have to play in.

(CONTINUED)



WAYNE

Heard about the wreck. It's a damn shame...

Framed on the wall is a PICTURE of Bad.

BAD

Could have been worse. How's business?

WAYNE

Since you've been on the road, it's crap.

BAD

You ever cleaned this place, you might figure out how to run this business.

WAYNE

I clean this place, I might find out that we're both broke. How was the road?

BAD

Doesn't get any shorter. It makes coming back here look good.

Wayne takes a BOTTLE from the shelf and pours a drink for Bad and himself. They sit at the bar.

WAYNE

Something interesting must of happened.

BAD

Met a woman in Santa Fe.

WAYNE

Doesn't come as a real surprise.

BAD

A good one. A real good one.

WAYNE

Santa Fe's a hell of a way from here.

BAD

Eight hundred and seventy-nine miles.

WAYNE

Tough trip for a man who has to work Saturday nights.

(CONTINUED)

82 (CONT'D) (2)

82

Bad finishes his whiskey. Good to be in the company of an old friend.

83 INT. BAD'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY 83 \*

Bad sits on the sofa strumming his guitar. After a few chords, he begins to hum and write on his legal pad.

BAD

The whiskey has been...A thorn  
in your side that doesn't forgive  
The highway that calls for your  
heart inside...  
This ain't no place for the weary  
kind  
This ain't no place to lose your  
mind  
This ain't no place to fall behind  
Pick up your crazy heart and give  
it...one more try

\*

Bad plays the melody as though it were a second skin.

84 INT. BAD'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER 84 \*

Bad heads for the PHONE. Underneath the phone lies a stack of PHONE BOOKS. He pulls out a tattered copy of the MARFA, TEXAS, phone book. A book he's referred to on many occasions.

Bad thumbs through to a page he has dog-eared. His finger traces down the page and stops at a CIRCLED phone number. Bad picks up the phone and dials. It rings several times, then:

MAN

Hello?

BAD

Yeah, hello. Is this Steven Reynolds?

STEVEN

Yes. Who's calling?

BAD

Well, actually, buddy, I'm on a bit of a hunting trip here. I'm trying to find a Mary Jo Reynolds from Lima, Ohio, who lived in Nashville, Tennessee, from nineteen eighty to eighty-five. Are you related to her, by any chance?

\*

A moment of silence.

STEVEN

She was my mother.

Was? Bad's breath becomes constricted. His body goes cold. When he speaks, his voice is between a croak and a whisper.

(CONTINUED)

STEVEN (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry, I can't hear you. Who is  
this?

BAD  
(whispers)  
Your father.

A long beat.

STEVEN  
Who?

BAD  
Bad Blake in Houston. I'm your  
father.

Long beat.

STEVEN  
I know.

BAD  
How are you?

STEVEN  
What do you want?

BAD  
I just wanted to.. I don't know I'm  
shocked to hear your voice, I..  
(beat)  
You said "was". Mary Jo's dead? \*

STEVEN  
Two years ago in October.

BAD  
What happened?

STEVEN  
Everything.

BAD  
I'm sorry to hear..

STEVEN  
What do you want?

BAD  
I want to see you, Steven.

Long beat.

STEVEN  
I don't think so.

(CONTINUED)

84 (CONT'D) (2)

84

BAD

Well.

(beat)

Will you think about it?

STEVEN

I probably won't be able to help  
it.

BAD

Look, just take down my number.

STEVEN

It's on my Caller-I.D.

BAD

Okay. Sleep on it, think about it.  
I really would like to talk.

STEVEN

Imagine that.

Bad hangs up and stares out into space. Hardest call he ever had to make.

DISSOLVE TO:

85 INT. BAD'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER

85 \*

Bad can't sleep. His bedside clock reads three-thirty. He sits up in bed, lights off, with a bottle. He takes a long pull and stares at the ceiling fan. Sweat beads on his forehead.

Bad looks out to a street lamp that illuminates his room. Slowly his eyes close.

86 INT. BAD'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

86 \*

The sun's harsh rays penetrate his blinds. Bad's crashed out in bed. A nearly empty bottle of JACK rests on his bedside table. The PHONE rings. Bad, hung over, reaches for the phone.

BAD

Hello?

INTERCUT:

87 INT. JEAN'S HOUSE - SAME

87 \*

Buddy sits on the floor with a jigsaw puzzle strewn about.

(CONTINUED)

BUDDY

I made the cars go real fast. Real  
fast, then the jeep went around the  
corner and it went BOOM.

Buddy's voice hits the center of his head like a fist.

BAD  
(struggling)  
Buddy, you got the cars?

BUDDY  
I make them go faster than anybody  
and then they crash!

JEAN grabs the phone from Buddy.

JEAN  
He's trying to say thank you. But  
you've got to stop sending all  
these toys. He thinks you're Santa  
Claus now.

Bad rolls over in bed. He looks terrible.

BAD  
I just want him to know I'm  
thinking of him, darlin'. You  
thinking about me?

Bad tries to sit up but thinks better of it.

JEAN  
Yes, I am.

Bad takes a beat.

BAD  
I called him last night, Jeannie,  
my boy.

JEAN  
And?!

BAD  
Marge, his mom, is dead.

JEAN  
I'm so sorry.

BAD  
He didn't want to talk to me.

JEAN  
I'm sorry.

BAD  
No, it's.. I don't blame him, I..  
(nauseous)  
Jean.. I don't feel too good, can I  
call you back? I gotta..

Bad drops the phone. When his foot hits the floor, he  
realizes his knees can't carry him in a straight line.

(CONTINUED)

87 (CONT'D) (3)

87

He tries to walk and bangs into the dresser and then drops to the floor.

(CONTINUED)



87 (CONT'D) (4)

87

He crawls into the bathroom on hands and knees. He hangs onto the rim of the toilet. When he begins wrenching, the crying starts and he can't stop either of them.

Finally, Bad falls to the bathroom floor. He's out cold.

Still on the phone, Jean has heard it all.

88 INT. BAD'S BATHROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

88 \*

Wayne stands in the doorway. He turns on the light and looks to Bad, splayed out on the floor by the toilet.

WAYNE

We're goin' fishin'.

Bad lifts his head. He looks like death warmed over.

89 EXT. LAKE CONROE - HOUSTON - EARLY EVENING

89 \*

Wayne and Bad are seated in Wayne's boat near the bank. The moon is full and casts a beautiful glow across the lake.

BAD

Hand me one more of those barley pops and I believe I'll be settled for a while.

Bad opens the beer and takes a long swallow.

BAD (CONT'D)

I hate to admit it, but this was a damn good idea.

They drift at anchor, not worrying about their lines, drinking and smoking. Long beat.

BAD (CONT'D)

I just sent what might be my best song ever to Tommy.

WAYNE

To record?

BAD

Yep. It's one of those you hate to give up.

WAYNE

Why'd you do it?

BAD

Because he's paying me awful good. He's already in the studio recording it. Stopped off in L.A.

(CONTINUED)

89 (CONT'D)

89

WAYNE  
Hope he don't butcher it.

(CONTINUED)

BAD

He can't fuck it up. It's that good.

They both laugh, knowing it's the truth. Another beat.

WAYNE

So your boy didn't want to talk to you?

BAD

No, and I can't blame him. I was wrong. I had no right to call him.

WAYNE

You were wrong twenty years ago. And you've been wrong since, because you didn't call him. But you weren't wrong when you did. He was wrong, not you.

BAD

I went twenty years without trying to find him, Wayne. He's right. Too little, too late.

WAYNE

This time you did it. You were late in doing it, but you did it. It's over and you've changed it. So, don't give up now that you're on the right track. Keep after him.

BAD

He's the only thing I got.

At that, we begin a slow pullback from the boat. After a lengthy beat, Wayne softly hums and then begins to sing the Gospel hymn "Wings of a Dove." The moon's glow illuminates the lake as we FADE OUT.

Jean stands on her back porch looking out at the mountains.

BAD

(o.s.)  
Hello?

90 (CONT'D)

90

JEAN  
You all right?

INTERCUT:

91 INT. BAD'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - HOUSTON - CONTINUOUS

91 \*

Bad moves about the kitchen prepping his supper. Spices strewn about the counter-tops.

BAD  
(surprised)  
Hey. Yeah, I'm fine. Why?

JEAN  
You didn't sound fine the other day. You sounded like you were dying a slow death.

BAD  
You heard that? Hell, I'm sorry. Must have been something I ate.

It's clear that Jean doesn't buy this. Over the phone we hear the fish popping and crackling in the skillet.

JEAN  
I called to say that I've got four days off at the end of the month. And that we might come, but I'm not sure it would be such a good idea.

BAD  
Hell, it's a great idea. Why would you say that?

Jean doesn't initially respond. Then:

JEAN  
Are you sure you're okay, Bad? I'm very worried about you.

BAD  
Don't you waste a minute of your time worrying about me. There's nothing wrong that a little visit wouldn't cure. How's ol' Buddy boy?

JEAN  
Fine.

BAD  
So you're really coming?

A beat as she unconsciously twirls her hair. Then:

(CONTINUED)

91 (CONT'D)

91

JEAN  
If you want us to.

(CONTINUED)

91 (CONT'D) (2)

91

BAD  
God, yes!

JEAN  
...Okay... Bye.

As Jean makes her way into her house, it's clear that she's struggling with her decision.

91 A INT. BAD'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

91 A \*

Bad, all smiles, hangs up. The catfish is filleted, breaded and in the frying pan when the phone rings yet again.

BAD  
Just come, okay, I don't care about anything else.

STEVEN  
What?

BAD  
Who's this?

STEVEN  
Is this Bad Blake's residence?

BAD  
Yeah, who..

STEVEN  
It's Steven Reynolds.

A beat, then it jolts Bad as it registers.

BAD  
Steven!

STEVEN  
I've been thinking.  
(beat)  
I guess maybe I do want to talk to you.

BAD  
Sure. Hell, yes. When? Where?

STEVEN  
I could come to Houston one of these days or you could come here.

BAD  
What time is it?

STEVEN  
Ten ours. I guess, eleven yours.

(CONTINUED)

91 A (CONT'D)

91 A

BAD  
What are you doing now?

(CONTINUED)

91 A (CONT'D) (2)

91 A

STEVEN  
Watching football.

BAD  
I'll be there for the late game.

STEVEN  
This afternoon?

BAD  
Bet your sweet ass.

92 OMITTED 92 \*

93 EXT. STEVEN'S HOUSE - MARFA, TEXAS - DAY 93 \*

Bad hobbles out the door of a TAXI CAB. He's carrying an overnight bag on his shoulder. He looks around, unsure who exactly he is looking for, but sure he'll recognize him. \*

A YOUNG MAN with brown hair and an open-collared shirt walks down the sidewalk toward Bad. \*

STEVEN  
(nods at crutches)  
What happened? \*

Bad just stares at him. \*

STEVEN (CONT'D)  
It's Steven. \*

Tears well up in Bad's eyes as he looks at Steven and nods. \*

BAD  
I can sure see your mother in your eyes. \*

STEVEN  
(a look/then)  
I'll take your bag. \*

They shake hands awkwardly. Steven takes the bag and they walk back up the sidewalk. \*

STEVEN (CONT'D)  
So what's with the crutches? \*

BAD  
I thought if I got crippled up you might feel sorry for me. \*

Steven grabs his arm and leads him toward the steps of his modest ranch house. Awkward beat, then: \*

(CONTINUED)



STEVEN  
How long you been in Houston?

BAD

Comin' up on sixteen years.

STEVEN

Why not Nashville?

BAD

I play in a club and have some friends there. Nashville's over.

STEVEN

Is it hard not being in the big time anymore?

BAD

(a tense look)

I miss the money, but there's a whole world of people who don't like what I do for a living. I always did. I wouldn't mind one more go around with the money, but I don't know..

Another awkward silence as they reach the porch. \*

BAD (CONT'D)

What made you change your mind and call me?

STEVEN

My wife.

BAD

Oh. Wife? Jesus... I mean good.

94 INT. STEVEN'S HOUSE - MARFA - CONTINUOUS

94 \*

Steven leads Bad over to a sofa and gently helps him down. The house is sparsely furnished but tidy. Bad takes it in.

BAD

This is nice. Real nice.

STEVEN

It's a roof over our head.

Just then, MARISSA, a tall, thin blonde in a T-shirt and shorts crosses to Bad and reaches out her hand.

MARISSA

Mr. Blake. Don't get up. I'm Marissa.

BAD

I'm standing in my mind. Call me Bad, please.

(CONTINUED)

MARISSA

Can I get you some water, Coke,  
beer?

BAD

Anything stronger?

MARISSA

Sorry.

BAD

Beer's just right.

MARISSA

Excuse me. I'm just finishing  
dinner.

Steven turns on the game and follows Marissa into the kitchen, leaving Bad alone on the sofa.

95 INT. STEVEN'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - LATER

95

\*

As they finish supper, Marissa brings out boxes of pictures. Bad sorts through them. A picture of Mary Jo in front of a store.

\*

STEVEN

Mom was a clothing buyer.

Bad glances at a picture of Marge's wedding.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

She married Jeff, another buyer at  
the store.

He tosses the picture aside and picks up a picture of Bad playing guitar to Steven on a blue velvet sofa. The skinny kid, grinning, with a beer in his hand, is TOMMY SWEET.

Bad smiles as he comes across pictures of Steven from infant to man. School pictures, vacation pictures, boy scouts. Steven in football gear.

Bad comes across a picture of MARY JO and himself just after a show. Bad in a wide-lapeled western suit, Mary Jo in a dress that billowed around her body. She ages subtly, holding her looks through most of the other pictures.

\*

\*

Bad comes across one of Mary Jo in the hospital, near the end, where she looks like an old woman. Bad stares at it.

\*

STEVEN (CONT'D)

In case you're wondering, she died  
of lymphoma.

(off Bad's silence)

Took six months.

(CONTINUED)

BAD  
(staring at the picture)  
If you don't mind me asking, what  
did she tell you about me?

STEVEN  
She never said a bad word about  
you.

Bad jerks and looks at Steven. He finally lays the picture  
down. Steven looks at it.

STEVEN (CONT'D)  
When I was a kid I used to brag to  
my friends that you were my father.

BAD  
You did?!

STEVEN  
Then you started showing up on the  
news for.. things.

BAD  
Well. I don't remember much about  
some of those times.  
(beat)  
The road's killed a lot of people.  
Made a lot more crazy.

STEVEN  
So it was the road that did all  
those things?

BAD  
You don't know what it's like year  
in year out..

STEVEN  
I guess not. Same as you don't know  
what it was like back here.

BAD  
I know I.. missed things, Steven.

STEVEN  
You mean like my life?

BAD  
Yeah but, I..

Marissa rises from the table.

MARISSA  
Let me get you guys another beer.

(CONTINUED)

BAD  
I know I can't do anything about  
your mother.

STEVEN

What would you do if you could?

BAD

I don't know. Tell her.. tell her I  
always loved her in my way.

STEVEN

Just out of curiosity, what way is  
that?

Bad stares at him, then digs in his pocket for a sheaf of  
bills in a GOLD MONEY CLIP.

BAD

I bought this clip on your  
eighteenth birthday. I was going to  
send it to you, but I didn't know  
how... where ya'll were exactly.  
I've been carrying it ever since.

Bad holds it out. Steven looks at it, then takes it and holds  
it by its edges as if it were dangerous or delicate. It's  
battered and scratched. He flips it back to Bad. It lands in  
his lap.

STEVEN

You better keep it around your  
money.

BAD

But I bought it for you.

STEVEN

Thank you, but I gave up wanting  
anything from you a long time ago.

Bad looks at the money clip in his lap.

BAD

Why did you call me back then?

STEVEN

I told you. Marissa talked me into  
it.

BAD

You must have wanted to be talked  
into it or..

STEVEN

...or maybe I was just curious.

BAD

Well, I am too.

(CONTINUED)

STEVEN

C'mon. Do you realize you haven't asked a damn thing about me since you got here?

\*  
\*

Bad's face is white. He gets his crutches and works his way up.

BAD

Appreciate it if you'd call me a cab.

Bad starts to make his way to the door. He turns to Steven.

BAD (CONT'D)

You think it was easy, doing this?

STEVEN

You have got to be one of the most self-involved son-of-a-bitches on earth. You never even *called me*. Not once. Ever. How the hell is that even possible? Everything was all about you then and it's all about you now.

Steven crosses but Bad grabs him by the arm.

BAD

Let me tell you something: there may have been a day or two in that twenty years that I didn't think about you, but by God, I don't remember a one.

Steven pulls free of Bad's grasp.

STEVEN

I don't care what you thought, I care what you did! Do you really think you can explain away twenty years of doing nothing?

BAD

I'm not making excuses, I'm just saying..

STEVEN

Saying what? What the hell are you saying?

BAD

(shaken)

I'm saying that I'm here. That I'm trying to fix it..

(CONTINUED)

95 (CONT'D) (5)

95

STEVEN

Look, Mr. Blake. I had a good mother who loved and took care of me. I'm not broken.

Bad looks at Steven for a painful beat.

BAD

Guess it was a mistake.

STEVEN

Blame it on the road.

Steven crosses to the kitchen. Bad grabs his bag and crosses to the door. Marissa gives Bad a look then follows Steven back into the kitchen.

Bad exits into the dry Marfa air.

96 INT. BAD'S HOUSE - HOUSTON - LIVING ROOM - DAY 96 \*

The sofa, table and chairs are all in the center of the room covered with plastic. Bad, with his cast now off, paints the walls an eggshell white.

97 EXT. BAD'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON 97 \*

Bad pulls some weeds that grow alongside the front porch. His lawn is freshly mowed.

98 INT. BAD'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING 98 \*

Bad cleans his house in final preparation for Jean's visit. It looks better than it ever has. The DOORBELL rings.

Bad tosses a dust-rag into a laundry basket, takes a quick sip of whiskey, puts the glass in the sink, puts the bottle in the cupboard, and heads for the door.

He opens it to find JEAN and BUDDY. Jean wears a yellow dress and is radiant. Buddy holds a little car. They feel so good they all stand and smile at one other for a moment.

99 INT. BAD'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT 99 \*

Biscuits for supper! Buddy is so full and tired he is nodding off with a biscuit in his hand. Jean picks him up and takes him out. Bad goes to the cabinet for the bottle then leaves it and follows Jean.

100 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT 100 \*

Jean undresses Buddy who is half asleep, and tucks him in. Bad watches from the doorway, his heart full.



101 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

101 \*

Jean and Bad do the dishes together.

(CONTINUED)

BAD

I've been missing ya'll real bad.

JEAN

We missed you, too.

BAD

Your article blew me away. You even made the truth sound good.

JEAN

Thank you.

BAD

Listen, I know a bunch of people at the Post. All in music. I sent them your article. They'd love to talk about writing for them.

JEAN

The Post?!

BAD

They'd be lucky to get you. Hell, we all would.

Jean doesn't respond. Bad notices that it's not an easy decision for her.

BAD

Just think about it, see how it feels..

JEAN

Okay.

BAD

You know that song I wrote on your bed?

JEAN

Yeah.

BAD

Tommy recorded it. Gonna be his next single. You'll hear it every time you turn on the radio.

JEAN

So basically in terms of staying away from you, I'm screwed.

BAD

More or less.

(CONTINUED)

101 (CONT'D) (2)

101

Bad notices his hands are shaking and hides them quickly.  
Noticing that he's struggling, Jean grabs his hand and kisses  
it. He looks away.

102 INT. BAD'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING 102 \*

Bad wakes up on the fold out. Jean and Buddy were up early. Buddy has jelly on his mouth. They are both asleep beside him now. He looks at them and cannot remember the last time he woke up so completely happy.

103 INT. BATHROOM - LATER 103 \*

Bad gargles with a big gulp of JD and swallows it. He sets the bottle on the counter-top. After a beat, he quickly changes his mind and puts the bottle under the sink. He begins to brush his teeth.

104 INT. CHEVY SUBURBAN - AFTERNOON 104 \*

Bad drives while Jean and Buddy sit up front. They drive through downtown Houston. The skyline juts out of the flat landscape.

JEAN

My Lord.

BAD

Wait til you see it at night. It's a lot prettier. Look at this.

Bad turns down a side street.

BAD (CONT'D)

(pointing)

That building there, the one with the star on top. That's where Sam Houston and his boys beat Santa Anna and his Mexicans. Texas got its start right there. Yes sir, if it wasn't for that spot, we'd be speaking Mexican right now. You know any Mexican, buddy?

Buddy shakes his head, no.

105 INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - LATER 105 \*

Bad walks slowly through the center as they look at rockets, space ships, and all things NASA. Buddy's in heaven.

106 INT. BAD'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - LATER 106 \*

Bad's prepared beef tenderloin, shrimp, and vegetables. Buddy eats Mac 'n Cheese.

BAD

The Post wants you to come by around ten-thirty, okay?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

106 (CONT'D)

106

BAD (CONT'D)  
I'll drop you off and then pick you  
up and take you to a good Cajun  
joint for lunch.

(CONTINUED)

106 (CONT'D) (2)

106

JEAN

What about Buddy?

BAD

Buddy and I will go downtown and explore the tunnels.

JEAN/BUDDY

Tunnels?

BAD

(mysteriously)

There's a whole city underneath the city. He'll love it. At noon, we'll rise up out of the ground and take you to lunch.

BUDDY

Out of the ground? Like that guy on TV?

BAD

What guy?

BUDDY

(insists)

On TV.

Jean isn't sure but wants to be.

107	INT. HOUSTON AQUARIUM - MORNING	107	*
	Bad and Buddy stand in front of a large SHARK tank. Mako, Tiger, and Sand sharks swim about.		* *
107 A	EXT. HOUSTON TUNNELS - LATE MORNING	107 A	*
	Holding Buddy's hand, Bad and Buddy step onto an ESCALATOR and descend into the belly of the Tunnels.		* *
108	INT. HOUSTON TUNNELS - LATER	108	*
	Bad and Buddy walk the endless passageways of the Tunnels. Buddy's full of enthusiasm. Bad is tired and sore. He's also starting to sweat and shake. He looks to a CLOCK that hangs from the ceiling: eleven-thirty.		* *

BAD

(kneels down to Buddy)

Hey, sailor. What say we go into that place right there and wet our whistles before we rise up out the ground?

Buddy nods and they head into the WHIPPING POST SALOON.

109 INT. WHIPPING POST SALOON - CONTINUOUS

109 \*

The bar is dark and paneled, full of small tables and upholstered chairs on twisted brass legs. MUZAK fills the air. The boys take a seat at the bar.

(CONTINUED)

BAD

Double J.D. and a ginger ale-  
double. I want mine rocks, Bud, how  
'bout you?

BUDDY

Rocks.

BAD

(to the waiter)  
That music drive you crazy?

BARTENDER

If I heard it it would.

Bad hands Buddy a MARASCHINO CHERRY.

BUDDY

What am I supposed to do with it,  
Bud?

BAD

Eat it.

Buddy pops it in his mouth and chews vigorously. Buddy runs  
off to a nearby table and grabs some PRETZELS. He brings them  
back to Bad.

BAD (CONT'D)

You're finding all kinds of good  
stuff, Bud.

Buddy runs off for something else.

BARTENDER

Here you go, amigo. Ten-fifty.

Bad reaches for his wallet and winces.

BAD

Jesus, ten-fifty?

\*

The bartender laughs. Bad grabs the ginger ale and looks  
around for Buddy.

BAD (CONT'D)

Buddy, come on back.

Bad looks around the restaurant for Buddy. No sign of him.

BAD (CONT'D)

(standing)  
Buddy?

Buddy doesn't come back or answer. Bad looks around the bar.  
It's empty. Bad turns to the bartender.

(CONTINUED)



109 (CONT'D) (2)

109

BAD (CONT'D)  
Did you see the boy?

BARTENDER  
No. He's probably in the restroom.

Bad sits back down.

BAD  
You're probably right.

He takes a long sip of his drink. After several long beats,  
Bad stands back up. He finishes his drink.

BAD (CONT'D)  
Hell. I better go get him. His mom  
will have fits if we're late for  
lunch.

Bad charges through the MEN'S ROOM door.

110 INT. MEN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

110 \*

It's a tiny room with a single urinal and stall.

BAD  
(echoing)  
Bud? You okay, Bud?

No answer. Bad pushes open the stall. Empty.

111 BAR - CONTINUOUS

111 \*

BAD  
(to the bartender)  
Did he come back here?

BARTENDER  
No, I haven't seen him.

Bad starts to panic.

BAD  
Where the hell?

BARTENDER  
I thought you were watching him.  
Weren't you supposed to be watching  
him?

Bad exits back into the TUNNELS. He enters a PHARMACY across  
the hall.

112 INT. WOMEN'S CLOTHING SHOP - CONTINUOUS 112 \*

Bad swings up and down the aisles of clothing, asking the woman at the front counter if she's seen Buddy. \*

\*

113 INT. TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS 113 \*

Back out in the tunnel, he looks both ways. Then he has to stop and lean back against the wall. He takes off his hat and wipes his forehead with his handkerchief.

Bad moves away from the SALOON and WOMEN'S SHOP and heads for a TRAVEL AGENCY. \*

114 INT. TRAVEL AGENCY - TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS 114 \*

A TRAVEL AGENT behind a counter sits under a poster of a blond woman with "Cozumel" printed across her yellow bikini. Before bad can utter a word, the agent recognizes Bad.

TRAVEL AGENT

I used to see you at Larry's Torchroom back in the eighties. You were great. I knew you were going to be a star.

BAD

A little boy with brown hair. He's only about this tall. He just wandered away a couple of minutes ago. Did he come by here?

TRAVEL AGENT

No. Sorry. I haven't seen anyone. Good luck, though. Awful nice to actually meet you.

Bad steps back out into the TUNNELS. \*

114 A INT. TUNNELS PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS 114 A \*

Bad walks amid the rows of parked cars. No sign of Buddy. \*

115 INT. TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS 115 \*

They've become a series of intricate and complicated curves. He spins around not sure if he has come this way already or not.

Traffic in the tunnel is starting to pick up. People pass him from both directions.

BAD

(to passersby)

A little boy. I've lost my little boy.

Bad pushes forward. The CLOCK above him reads: eleven-fifty. Bad approaches a heavy, young SECURITY GUARD.

(CONTINUED)

115 (CONT'D)

115

BAD  
I lost my little boy. Brown hair,  
four years old...Name's Buddy.

SECURITY GUARD  
What was he wearing?

Bad thinks about it for a beat.

\*

(CONTINUED)

BAD  
I can't remember.

SECURITY GUARD  
Where did you last see him?

BAD  
In the bar?

SECURITY GUARD  
Which one?

Bad looks in both directions, unsure of which way he came.

BAD  
The bar. Hell, I don't know which one. A little bar, dark.

SECURITY GUARD  
(into his walkie-talkie)  
All stations. We have a lost boy, four years old, brown hair, named Buddy. Report back, please.

Bad stares down the tunnel.

BAD  
Thanks.

Bad starts off. The guard stops him.

SECURITY GUARD  
Sir, sir. You better stay with me.

BAD  
I have to find him. He's lost. He's from New Mexico. His mother is waiting for us.

SECURITY GUARD  
We'll find him. Just stay here. All of our guards are watching for him.

Bad starts to sweat profusely.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)  
How much did you have to drink, sir?

BAD  
I had a drink. What goddamned difference does it make?

SECURITY GUARD  
You lost him, sir.

(CONTINUED)

115 (CONT'D) (3)

115

BAD  
Yeah, I lost him and I'm going to  
find him.

\*

(CONTINUED)

115 (CONT'D) (4) 115

Bad hobbles off.

116 INT. TUNNELS - LATER 116 \*

Bad stops amid a DAY GLOW section of the Tunnels to consider the possibilities. There's a steady flow of traffic; hundreds of people moving down the sidewalks. \*

117 OMITTED 117 \*

118 EXT. TUNNELS - LATER 118 \*

Bad ascends the ESCALATOR. It's hot and humid. He starts off to his right, turns and looks left. Downtown Houston spins around him. After several beats of looking around, he descends back into the Tunnels. \*

119 INT. TUNNELS - CONTROL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER 119 \*

Bad sits in the SECURITY OFFICE. Static-filled RADIOS fill the room. A CLOCK reads: twelve forty-five. \*

SECURITY GUARDS and MEN IN SUITS walk in, get coffee, joke with the dispatcher and leave.

VOICE

(o.s.)

Where's Buddy? Bad, where's Buddy?

Bad turns to find JEAN, in a printed dress, white and shaking.

BAD

They're going to find him, hon. All these guys are looking for him. You don't need to worry.

JEAN

How the hell did you lose him?

BAD

Just stopped for a second, to get a.. turned around and he was gone. He just disappeared.

JEAN

You stopped to get a drink, didn't you? Didn't you?! He's just a little boy. A baby. My baby! Oh, God...

\*  
\*  
\*

(CONTINUED)

119 (CONT'D)

119

Bad moves to comfort her. She hits him so hard he stumbles back. \*

JEAN (CONT'D)

Don't you touch me! Goddamn you,  
Bad! \*

FADE TO:

120 INT. CONTROL ROOM - LATER

120

\*

Jean sits across the room from Bad. She's unable to express anything. The clock reads: one-fifteen.

Finally, a woman in a blue-dress comes in holding BUDDY by the hand. A a gray-haired SECURITY GUARD walks in behind them smiling.

Buddy's eyes are swollen and tearing. He takes one look at Jean and begins to scream and cry. Jean rushes to him, holding and trying to comfort him. She rocks him back and forth.

BAD

(leans into Buddy)  
It's going to be all right, old  
Bud. We just got our wires crossed.

JEAN

Shut up. Will you?

121 EXT. BAD'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - LATER

121

\*

A TAXI-CAB waits at the curb. Jean pulls their bags outside onto the porch. Bad stands by helplessly.

BAD

Jeannie, don't do this.

In a manic state to leave, Jean shoves her clothes into her luggage. She doesn't even look at Bad. Can't look at him.

BAD

You can't leave now for God's sake.  
You don't even have a ticket.

Jean grabs Buddy's clothes and toys and haphazardly shoves them into his ELMO travel bag.

JEAN

I knew it. Every bone in my body  
told me not to get on that plane. I  
should have trusted my  
instincts...I knew it!

Bad grabs at her arm. She yanks her arm back.

(CONTINUED)



121 (CONT'D)

121

BAD  
Everything will be okay. Give me-

(CONTINUED)

121 (CONT'D) (2)

121

She stops and looks right into Bad's eyes.

JEAN

Everything's not okay. He's four years old and scared half to death.

BAD

You know that I wouldn't do anything to hurt him. \*

JEAN

Well, you did. You and every man I've been with are nothing but self-absorbed assholes... Every fucking one of you.

BAD

Calm down, Jeannie.

JEAN

You calm down! And stop calling me Jeannie. \*

Jean grabs Buddy's hand.

JEAN

Come on, baby.

Together they step off the porch. Bad follows.

Jean's reached the waiting taxi. The taxi DRIVER has popped the trunk.

BAD

I can drive you to the airport. Let me at least do that.

Jean motions with her hands as if pushing something gently, but firmly down. As they get into the taxi, Buddy waves.

BUDDY

Bye.

Buddy starts crying again. Bad watches them pull away.

122 INT. BAD'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

122

\*

Bad walks in the bedroom carrying a near empty bottle of JD. He's drunk and looks pathetic. He falls onto the bed, the bottle crashing to the ground.

The WHIR of the ceiling fan is interrupted by his ringing TELEPHONE. It rings several more times. Finally, his ANSWERING MACHINE picks up.

(CONTINUED)

ANSWERING MACHINE

Bad? It's Tommy. Listen, man, Crazy  
Heart turned out great.

(MORE)

122 (CONT'D) (2) 122

ANSWERING MACHINE (CONT'D)

It's the best song I've recorded in years. Gonna be a monster. They say straight to number one. Anyway, you're going to love it, Bad. It's your song thru and thru. I can't thank you enough. Alright, then. Adios. \*

Tommy hangs up. Bad turns over on his stomach. \*

123 INT. BAD'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING 123 \*

Bad hasn't moved. He wakes and reaches for the phone. He dials and lays back down. \*

BAD

Wayne. I want to sober up. \*

124 INT. SUNSHINE DETOX CENTER - BEDROOM - HOUSTON - DAY 124 \*

Bad sits on his bed staring out a Magnolia tree. It's as quiet as a Mausoleum. Bad's luggage sits in a corner, unopened. The room consists of a dresser, a closet, a twin bed and two windows. Bad lies back on the bed and closes his eyes. \*

125 EXT. SUNSHINE DETOX CENTER - LAWN - LATER 125 \*

Chairs, filled with ten or so people, are placed in a semi-circle on a small lawn encased by tall pine trees. Bad stands and introduces himself. \*

BAD

I'm Bad and I'm an alcoholic.

THE GROUP

Hi, Bad.

BAD

A couple of days ago, I lost a little boy. I was drunk. I've been drunk most of my life and I've lost a hell of a lot.

126 EXT. SUNSHINE DETOX CENTER - GAZEBO - LATER 126 \*

Bad leans against a railing inside a Gazebo that overlooks a small stream. He drinks a cup of coffee and smokes a cigarette. A red-haired man named PAT crosses to the COFFEE MAKER next to Bad and offers his hand. \*

PAT

You're a musician, aren't you? \*

BAD

I am. \*

(CONTINUED)

PAT

I'm glad you're here. We all know what a hard step it is.

BAD

Hardest thing I ever done. It's a different role for me. That's for damn sure.

PAT

We're all actors in life, Bad, but sometimes we have to rethink our roles. You've got to know yourself before you can learn to like yourself.

Pat pours himself a cup of coffee, taps Bad on the shoulder and heads back over to the group. Bad stares off into space, thinking about that last comment.

127 INT. SUNSHINE DETOX CENTER - BEDROOM - MORNING 127 \*

Bad sits in a chair reading a Louis L'Amour novel. After a beat, he stares out the window at the Magnolia tree. \*

128 EXT. SUNSHINE DETOX CENTER - LAWN - AFTERNOON 128 \*

Deep in thought, Bad walks along a path that circles the Center. He doesn't walk fast, but he's moving all the same.

129 INT./EXT. SUNSHINE DETOX CENTER - LOBBY - MORNING 129 \*

Carrying his luggage, Bad heads for the exit. His limp is nearly gone. He looks fitter than we've ever seen him. WAYNE greets him at the door with a handshake and a smile.

WAYNE

You look like a new man.

BAD

(feeling his girth)

I feel good.

Wayne grabs Bad's bag as they head down the walkway toward Wayne's CHEVY TRUCK.

WAYNE

Take it from somebody who's been there. It don't last. It'll get rough and you'll feel worthless. But I'll help you with it...Don't worry about that, old buddy.

BAD

(winks)

I think I might just have this thing licked.

(CONTINUED)

129 (CONT'D)

129

Wayne tosses Bad's bag in the back of his truck. As much as to Bad as to himself:

WAYNE

One day at a time.

130 INT. BAD'S HOUSE - BACK PORCH - EVENING

130 \*

Bad plays the melody and lightly sings 'Crazy Heart'.

BAD

Your lovers warm kiss...  
Is too damn far from your  
fingertips  
You are the man...that ruined her  
world.

His complexion and body language is much better, healthier. The Houston skylights illuminate his back yard.

131 INT. KELLER'S STEAKHOUSE - NIGHT

131 \*

Bad sits at a table by himself. Patrons walk by and glance his way. Bad smiles when they do. A bottle of PERRIER sits next to his dinner. A FAN approaches.

FAN

Hey, Mr. Blake. Sure am a big fan.  
Mind if I take a picture of you?

BAD

Why not?

The FAN pulls out a DIGITAL CAMERA, leans in a little and takes a shot. He glances at Bad's bottled water.

FAN

I know you're a J.D. man. It'd be  
an honor if I could buy you a  
drink.

Bad raises his hand and smiles.

BAD

Not tonight, amigo. But thanks.

FAN

How about just a shot?

Bad holds up the bottle of Perrier.

BAD

This french stuff is doing me just  
right. No thanks.

The FAN smiles and moves on.

132 INT. WAYNE'S BAR - HOUSTON - NIGHT

132 \*

Bad sits on a bar stool in front of approximately 65 people. A cup of Club Soda sits next to him as he plays acoustically and by himself.

BAD

Well it rained last night  
And the stars shone bright  
And way off yonder  
We heard the whippoorwill

At the first light of dawn  
We heard the He was gone  
Our hearts was empty  
And our eyes was filled

Open the gates  
Welcome Him in  
There's a Brand New Angel  
A Brand New Angel  
With an old violin

He finishes up 'Brand New Angel' to a round of applause.

BAD

It's good to be back at home.  
Thanks for coming out.

He nods, grabs his soda and heads off. More applause as Bad makes his way over to the bar where WAYNE waits. Wayne's all smiles.

133 INT. WAYNE'S BAR - BAR - CONTINUOUS

133 \*

Wayne sticks his hand out. Bad takes it.

BAD

What'd you think?

WAYNE

Damn, son. As Hag said about Lefty,  
"he sounded good singing out of his  
asshole". Sounded good. Real good,  
pardner.

Wayne slaps Bad on the back.

BAD

Wayne, sometimes I think you'd say  
a fart sounded good.

WAYNE

I guess that depends on who's doing  
it, now, don't it?

(CONTINUED)

133 (CONT'D)

133

BAD  
(laughs)  
I felt stiff. A little rusty.

(CONTINUED)



133 (CONT'D) (2)

133

WAYNE

Hell, that'll work itself out. It was a good show.

BAD

It's my first show sober. Ever.

Wayne steps back and looks at Bad, then smiles.

WAYNE

You're on your way, buddy.

BAD

The road. Let's see how I do on the road.

They head off together. Bad swigging his Club Soda.

134 EXT. BAD'S HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - AFTERNOON 134 \*

Bad rides a JOHN DEERE riding mower. The sun pounds his back. Even though he's sitting, he works up quite a sweat.

135 INT. BAD'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER 135 \*

Bad crosses to the cabinet and takes out a glass. He then opens the freezer and pulls out several cubes of ice. Out of habit, he opens the Pantry. Staring him in the face is an unopened bottle of JACK DANIEL'S. He looks at it for a beat and then reaches beside it for a Coke. He pours it over the ice reaches for his medication. He downs them both.

After a beat, Bad re-opens the pantry, grabs the Jack Daniel's and drop it in the trash can.

136 INT. BAD'S HOUSE - BEDROOM 136 \*

Bad's sweeping up his room. It's as neat as we've seen it. The dresser's are clutter-free and all of his clothes have been stored away.

Bad sweeps under his bed with a SWIFFER when out comes a blue, children's T-SHIRT. Bad holds it up. It has a large SUPERMAN 'S' emblazoned on the front. Bad smiles and neatly folds it.

137 INT. BAD'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER 137 \*

Bad stands by the TELEPHONE debating whether to pick it up or not. Finally, he decides against making the call.

138 EXT. JEAN'S HOUSE - SANTA FE - DAYBREAK

138 \*

As the deep-blue dawn skies break open and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains awaken in the new light, BAD slowly approaches Jean's front door. His warm breath crystallizes in the cold morning air.

(CONTINUED)

He climbs the last step, stops, and shines his boots on the backs of his legs. Gathering himself, he faces that which he fears the most.

As he reaches for the DOORBELL, his hand shakes, almost uncontrollably. He makes a fist and brings it halfway to his chest and stares at it, willing it to stop. After a deep breath, he again moves to the doorbell. His hand still shakes, but less. He pushes the doorbell and steps back.

After a brief moment, Jean answers the door. She's in her robe. Surprise can't describe the look on her face.

JEAN

What are you doing here?

BAD

Please, just listen. I'm sorry.  
With all my heart. I'm sorry.  
I'm sober. Detox, Antabuse...the  
whole bit. It woke me up, Jean.

JEAN

I'm glad, Bad.

BAD

No, not Bad. I'm going back to  
Otis, my given name. I'm changing  
everything.

JEAN

Good.

She gives him nothing more.

BAD

How's Buddy?

JEAN

Sleeping, but he's fine.

BAD

Can you ever forgive me?

JEAN

(long beat)

Yeah. I can. Forgiving myself is  
the problem.

BAD

Why? You didn't do anything.

JEAN

I put my son in harm's way. I could  
have lost him forever.

(CONTINUED)

138 (CONT'D) (2)

138

BAD  
It wasn't your fault.

(CONTINUED)

JEAN

It's important not to lie to yourself, Bad. I knew what the risks were with you and I was almost willing to take them because.. I love you. But putting Buddy in your hands.. I don't know that I'll ever get over that.

BAD

I'm *different* now.

JEAN

I am, too.

BAD

(long beat)

Just let me show you. We'll start over, Christ..

Bad starts up the step toward Jean. She puts her hand out.

JEAN

You're not listening. I am truly happy for you. And I hope you make a really good life for yourself. But Buddy and I are not going to be part of it.

BAD

But I love both of you so much.

JEAN

If that's true, you'll leave us alone.

BAD

Don't say that, Jeannie..

At this, Jean steps back into her house and softly closes the door.

BAD

Jeannie?... Jean?

Bad stands on the porch hoping against hope that she'll again open the door. Realizing it's not to be, he turns to leave.

FADE TO:

A LADY (Donna) in her early forties sits next to Bad in this dimly-lit bar. Her skin is loose around her eyes and jaw, but her face is thin. Her makeup is pretty thick and a little sloppy around the edges of her mouth. Her tongue works the edges of her front teeth.

(CONTINUED)

139 (CONT'D)

139

LADY

As long as you're not a truck  
driver, I don't care what you do.

Bad lights another Pall Mall.

LADY (CONT'D)

My last old man, he was a truck  
driver, the worthless sack of shit.  
They're worse than sailors. Think  
they're cowboys-God's gift to  
women.

BAD

No. I'm a singer. Bad Blake. The  
song "I Don't Know."

LADY

The hell. He's dead.

BAD

Not yet I ain't, darlin.

LADY

It's Donna. That's okay, honey. Buy  
me another.

Bad signals toward the bar, holding up two fingers. The  
BARTENDER brings two more and sets them on the table. Bad  
hands him a twenty.

BAD

Just hold on to that. Start a tab.

DONNA picks up her glass and raises it to him.

DONNA

Bad Blake, no damned truck driver.

They both take long drinks of their whisky.

140 INT. CHEVY SUBURBAN - NEW MEXICO COUNTRYSIDE - LATER 140 \*

Bad awakens to the steady pulse of the red light on the  
dashboard. It flashes "OIL". \*

It's raining and the wipers are going. The Suburban is full  
of the sharp smell of hot oil. As he tries to turn over the  
engine, we hear the shrill whine of the bearings. \*

Donna wakes up.

DONNA

Where are we?

(CONTINUED)

140 (CONT'D)

140

BAD  
Hell, I don't know. Maybe Arkansas.

(CONTINUED)

140 (CONT'D) (2)

140

DONNA

Where are we going?

Bad tries the key again. The starter grinds once more before it jams. \*

BAD

Nowhere. The engine's seized up.

Bad gets out of the Suburban. The road is dirt. Bad looks for the highway; it's nowhere to be seen. \*

The road is softening to THICK MUD. Bad walks back to the Suburban. Donna's asleep again. He grabs the bottle of WHISKY and a FLASHLIGHT. The rain intensifies. It's a frog-strangler. \*

Bad nudges Donna.

BAD (CONT'D)

I'm going to walk for help. If someone comes along, I'm going that way.

Donna doesn't budge. Bad starts out through the rain and mud.

141 EXT. NEW MEXICO COUNTRYSIDE - MOMENTS LATER 141 \*

Bad can barely walk. He's drunk, his ankle is tender, and the road is inches deep in MUD.

Twice he falls and pulls himself up, crawling and stumbling to his feet. To either side are trees, and he can see nothing but the few feet of road ahead of him. He struggles onward.

The third time he falls, he can't get his feet back under him. He crawls to the side of the road. His hand slips through the wet mud and the rest of his body follows down the DITCHBANK.

He lands in COLD water and rights himself. He's lost the FLASHLIGHT, but still has the bottle.

Bad lays his head back on the ditchbank and takes a long pull, then lets the rain wash over his face.

BAD

Otis, goddamn.

As the rain continues to pelt Bad's face, we:

FADE TO:



142 INT./EXT. SANTA FE OPERA HOUSE - SUNSET 142 \*

The stars alight above the unparalleled majesty of Santa Fe. \*

The sweeping architecture of the open-air OPERA HOUSE is \*

filled with a standing-room only audience.

(CONTINUED)

A lone spotlight shines on TOMMY SWEET as he sits on stage, strumming his guitar. His band has vacated their posts, leaving Tommy alone to perform an encore, *THE WEARY KIND*, to his adoring fans. \*

TOMMY

Your heart's on the loose  
You rolled them sevens with nothin'  
to lose...This ain't no place  
for the weary kind...

As the audience roars their approval, we pull back to reveal:

BAD BLAKE, off-stage left, standing next to his manager, JACK GREENE.

Bad wears neatly pressed slacks, shiny Lucchese cowboy boots, and a crisp white shirt held together by a turquoise Bolo tie. His damp hair is swept back from his forehead. The truth is he has never looked better.

JACK

Helluva song.

As Tommy begins another verse, Jack pulls an ENVELOPE from his breast pocket and hands it to Bad.

JACK

They're getting bigger by the day.

Bad opens the envelope and pulls out a Royalty Check.

BAD

I'll say.

Bad stuffs the envelope in his pants pocket and begins to move down the backstage steps toward his van. Jack grabs Bad by the arm.

JACK

Great show. You're doing it, man.

BAD

(smiles)

There's a little gas left in the  
tank.

We follow Bad as he continues down the steps. Just as he reaches the parking lot, a VOICE calls out to him.

VOICE

Mr. Blake?

Bad turns to find JEAN moving toward him, smiling. She looks smashing in her tight jeans, white cinched shirt and weathered cowboy boots.

(CONTINUED)

JEAN  
You were in vintage form today.

\*  
\*

BAD  
(chuckles)  
Vintage is about right...Heard you  
might be here.

They shake hands a bit awkwardly.

JEAN  
Wanted another interview now that  
you're Mr. Big Time.

BAD  
Still with the SUN SCENE?

Jean shakes her head "no" and holds out her lanyard pass. Bad  
takes a look and smiles.

BAD  
Impressive. Reckon you can't hold  
back a good woman from Enid,  
Oklahoma. I'm happy for you.

As Jean puts down her hand, Bad notices an ENGAGEMENT RING on  
her left hand. Jean looks to her ring finger.

JEAN  
He's a good guy.

BAD  
You deserve one.

JEAN  
Would you like to see Buddy? He's  
here.

BAD  
I'd like nothing more. But it's  
probably not what's best for him.

Jean nods understandingly. Bad removes the ENVELOPE from his  
back pocket.

BAD  
Keep this for him until he's  
eighteen.

Jean takes the envelope.

JEAN  
What's this?

Jean opens the envelope and pulls out the check.

(CONTINUED)

142 (CONT'D) (3)

142

JEAN  
Oh, no. I can't do that.

(CONTINUED)

BAD

Yes, you can. It's yours anyway.  
That's not money.

\*  
\*

Jean stares into his eyes for an extended beat.

JEAN

That's awfully kind of you. Glad to  
hear things are going so well.

BAD

One day at a time.

JEAN

What about that interview?

BAD

(nods, then looks around)  
I'd say let's do it on the bus, but  
it's much prettier out here.

Jean pulls out her note-pad and follows Bad to a table that  
overlooks the majestic setting of the Westward landscape. It  
makes for a breathtaking scene. Over the echoes of Tommy  
Sweet's acoustic version of "The Weary Kind", we:

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

FADE TO BLACK.