

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

**ROCKETMAN**

**BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY**

WRITTEN BY  
**Lee Hall**

ROCKETMAN

Written by

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1 INT. CORRIDOR, HOSPITAL - DAY 1

ELTON JOHN in a sequined and feathered catsuit storms along, a halo of coloured feathers and enormous stained-glass spectacles. He is a man with a purpose but looks like shit.

2 INT. THERAPY ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY 2

Elton sits dramatically in the seat and stares confrontationally at the circle of addicts. He sweats profusely.

ELTON

How long is this going to take?

COUNSELOR

That's really up to you. You need to set your own pace.....

Everybody stares. Elton is clearly uncomfortable.

ELTON

Right then! I know how this goes.  
My name is Elton John.  
And I'm an alcoholic.  
And a cocaine addict.  
And a sex addict.  
And a bulimic! I'm also a  
shopaholic who has problems with  
weed, prescription drugs and anger  
management.

The group look at him incredulously. Elton blinks angrily behind his enormous glasses. An awkward silence.

COUNSELOR

Perhaps we should talk about your  
childhood?

ELTON

Perhaps we should talk about your  
hair!?

Some of the group are shocked and some laugh. The counselor smiles.

COUNSELOR

What are your earliest memories?

Cue: The frantic opening from 'THE BITCH IS BACK'. Elton gets up and walks to the middle of the room and sings.

ELTON

*I was justified when I was five  
Raisin' Cain, I spit in your eye  
Times are a changing now the poor  
get fat, But the fever's gonna  
catch you when the bitch gets back,  
oh, oh, oh.*

\*

The patients and counselor are dumbfounded as out of nowhere a child (REGGIE), 6 years old, rides in through the double doors on a bike with stabilizers and circles Elton. The young Reggie stops and stares at Elton and joins in the song.

ELTON/REGGIE

*I'm a bitch, I'm a bitch oh, the  
bitch is back, stone cold sober as  
a matter of fact, I can bitch, I  
can bitch cause I'm better than  
you, It's the way that I move, the  
things that I do oh.*

A shocked Elton tries to grab Reggie as he dumps his bike and runs out the door. A singing Elton chases after him, the therapy group and counselor follow behind.

3

EXT. STREET, PINNER - DAY

3

Young Reggie bursts through the doors and enters a 1950's London residential street. Reggie, walks down the middle of the street followed by Elton and the rehab group. The milkman, postman and lollipop lady all wave to him. A brass band come marching down the street and they all smile and wave. People stream out of the houses and join in the group dance. The rehab group, lead by Elton, follow and sing along.

ELTON/REGGIE

*Eat meat on a Friday, that's all  
right. Even like steak on a  
Saturday night. I can bitch the  
best at your social do's. I get  
high in the evening sniffing pots  
of glue, oh, oh oh.*

It becomes a dance number that Reggie conducts with the rehab group and the people in the street. Reggie turns into the driveway of a drab house, turns back to the rehab group looking over the fence.

REGGIE

*I'm a bitch, I'm a bitch oh, the  
bitch is back. Stone cold sober as  
a matter of fact.*

(MORE)

REGGIE (CONT'D)

*I can bitch, I can bitch cause I'm  
better than you. It's the way that  
I move, the things that I do oh..*

Elton looks troubled.

The music stops abruptly.

SHEILA, his mum, comes out holding a mechanical sweeper.

SHEILA

Reggie! You're late! I've thrown  
your dinner in the bin! Get inside.

Reggie tucks in his shirt and follows his mum into the house.

4

INT. BACK ROOM, REGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY

4

An archetypal suburban scene. IVY, grandma, in the kitchen works on a sewing machine. A depressed budgie lolls in its cage. Sheila attacks a carpet with the mechanical sweeper like she's trying to break it. Reggie follows her around.

REGGIE

Is he back?

SHEILA

What am I? Thin air? \*

REGGIE

Are you sure he's actually coming  
home?

SHEILA

I wouldn't get your hopes up. He's  
very unreliable and very selfish. \*

REGGIE

But will you send him to see me if  
I'm already in bed?

SHEILA

Reggie! Stop being a nuisance! I  
need to get this done before I go  
out.

She picks him up and puts him on the piano stool. The radio plays: The Skater's Waltz.

As dust hangs in the sunlight, Reggie sways to the music and looks at the piano keyboard. As it lilts on in the background Reggie tries a note - remarkably it is in tune.

Reggie plays the note again and then adds two more. Again they are exactly in tune. He looks around. No one pays attention:

Reggie tries again and this time plays a whole section of melody and ends with a low note with his left hand. Bong!! Suddenly the world seems to stop. The budgie stares frozen on its perch, boggle eyed. Ivy comes in from the Kitchen. Sheila turns around to see what all the fuss is about.

REGGIE

Did I do something wrong?

IVY

Bloody hell, Sheila. Maybe we should get him some lessons.

SHEILA

I'd love too, if it'd get him out from under my feet but we're not made of money.

5 INT. THERAPY ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY 5

Elton takes off his feathered head-dress.

ELTON

Mum always supported me. She knew I was very talented. Both my parents did.

6 INT. BACK ROOM, REGGIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 6

Sheila paints her nails and gets ready to go out. Ivy sits in front of the fire and reads a magazine. The doorbell rings. Ivy looks up, Sheila looks pissed off.

7 INT. LANDING, REGGIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 7

Reggie rushes out of his room and listens as Sheila goes to the door.

8 I/E. FRONT DOOR, REGGIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 8

The door opens to reveal STANLEY, Reggie's dad, dressed immaculately in his RAF uniform. He gives a faint rueful smile to Sheila and Ivy.

SHEILA

You've managed to drag yourself home then.

IVY

I see the milkman's back. Hello, Stanley.

STANLEY

How are you, Ivy?

SHEILA

Like you care. Well, come on then! You're letting in a draught.

He wipes his very shiny boots and steps inside.

STANLEY

You've put on weight.

SHEILA

And you look shorter. How long you back?

STANLEY

I've got couple of weeks leave.

IVY

Reggie's not long gone to bed.

SHEILA

Pop up, say hello.

\*  
\*

STANLEY

I'll see him tomorrow. Any dinner left?

Stanley walks off into the kitchen.

9 INT. LANDING, REGGIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 9

In the shadows Reggie is sad and disappointed.

10 EXT. PINNER STREET - DAY 10

Reggie runs down the street as fast as he can in his school uniform. He passes all the other local kids playing football.

KID

Oi four eyes! You're in goal.

Reggie ignores them and keeps running.

11 INT. BACK ROOM, REGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY

11

Reggie, enters home and stares in wonder at his father as he takes a jazz record out of it's sleeve, meticulously cleans it with a velvet pad, places it carefully on the turn table and it starts to play.

REGGIE

Dad, is it true you play the piano?  
I'm saving to get lessons.

STANLEY

If you want to sit in here you'll  
have to stay quiet. I'm listening  
to my music.

As Stanley listens to the record Reggie watches him for a moment then goes and gets a record from the shelf and proudly presents it to his Dad.

REGGIE

I like this one, Dad, will you play  
it for me?

He leaps up, snatching the record from Reggie.

STANLEY

Who said you could touch those?  
Never, ever, touch my collection  
without asking.

Stanley carefully puts the record back and turns to look at Reggie. Reggie looks at his father then goes in for a hug. Stanley doesn't respond but looks uncomfortable and pushes him off.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Don't be soft

Reggie runs out.

12 INT. THERAPY ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY

12

Elton talks to the counselor but is clearly agitated, angry and confrontational with her.

ELTON

He was always hugging me! It was  
fucking embarrassing. My dad was  
passionate about family and music.  
We'd talk for hours about jazz. I  
was lucky. I was actually a very  
happy child.

13 EXT. GARDEN, REGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY 13

Reggie throws a tantrum and smashes plant pots with a cricket bat at the bottom of the garden.

REGGIE

It's not fair. I hate him. I wish  
I'd never been born.

Shelia, all glammed up wanders down and watches Reggie. Reggie stops and looks at the destruction he's caused. He looks at Shelia. \*

SHELIA

What are you doing?

REGGIE

Nothing.

Shelia lights a cigarette and puffs thoughtfully. \*

14 INT. BACK ROOM, REGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY 14

Reggie seated at the piano. His legs dangle over the edge of the stool. A PIANO TEACHER is there and Shelia watches for a moment. She takes some slimming pills from her handbag, pops a couple and then goes. Reggie learns his scales. \*  
\*

15 INT. CORRIDOR, REGGIE'S HOUSE. NIGHT. 15

A slightly drunk Sheila, walks past Reggie's room. She sees a light on and stops. She opens the door and sees Reggie reading music. Reggie looks up, startled. \*

SHEILA

What are you still doing up?

REGGIE

Learning. I want to play a song for  
dad.

SHEILA

Your dad's gone back to his unit.  
Go to sleep.

Sheila turns off the light.

16 INT. REGGIE'S BEDROOM, REGGIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 16

The door closes. Reggie sits in the darkness. After a moment a torch comes on and Reggie slowly mimes playing the piano.

As he becomes more animated the sound of Tchaikovsky Piano concerto No.1 accompanies him.

He stands and points with his torch like a conductor to bring in a string section. The shafts of the light wave over the room and we catch glimpses of the orchestra.

We hear strings, brass and woodwind join - as Reggie, conducts. The whole orchestra plays. Suddenly the door opens and the light goes on. Reggie freezes and looks up, terrified. It's Ivy. She has 2 cakes.

IVY

Take no notice. These will make you  
feel better.

\*

She kisses him and goes out. Reggie takes a bite of the cake then raises his hands to start the orchestra again, as we cut to:

17 INT. BACK ROOM, REGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY 17

Reggie plays the Concerto effortlessly for real. As we pull out we see Reggie is now **12 years old**. He finishes the piece with a flourish. The piano teacher smiles.

18 INT. KITCHEN, REGGIE'S HOUSE - EVENING 18

Ivy irons Sheila's dress. Sheila, her hair in curlers and in her underwear, reads Vogue. Reggie is by the back door.

SHEILA

The Royal Academy of Music!?! (beat)  
Pass me those scissors.

\*

Reggie brings her the scissors. Sheila cuts out a pattern for a skirt.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

What d'ya think?

She shows him the picture.

REGGIE

The red's nicer.

SHEILA

Is it?

REGGIE

It's only on Saturday's.

SHEILA

Saturdays! I've things to do on the weekends. I can't just drop everything. You can go on your own.

Ivy smiles at Reggie.

IVY

I'll take you. Make sure you're settled in.

SHEILA

Thanks, Mum.

The immaculately dressed Stanley enters and takes in Sheila. There is tension and mistrust in the air.

STANLEY

Where are you off too?

SHEILA

Don't know. I haven't decided yet but wherever it is I'm going to have fun. Something you old RAF types don't do.

IVY

Reg's piano teacher thinks he's good enough to get a scholarship.

STANLEY

Really? Has he got that kind of talent?

SHEILA

Course he has. But you'd know that if you took the slightest bit of interest in me and this family.

Sheila goes.

19

I/E. ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC, FOYER - DAY

19

Ivy stands next to a nervous Reggie, dwarfed by the dusty surroundings. A bearded student pushes past them with a double bass in a case. The place swarms with duffle coated students. Reggie looks around, awed and bewildered as they walk up a grand staircase.

REGGIE

Can we go home?

IVY

Home? There's no going home! This is it now. This is your life. You have to get over this silly shyness.

REGGIE

But mum says we can't...

IVY

Life gives you very few chances, Reggie. This is one of yours. Show them you're as good as they are. Better! Be number one. Everyone's scared in the beginning. Play at being confident. You can do that can't you?

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

REGGIE

Yes. Easy.

IVY

Good. So go on then.

Ivy gives him some change.

IVY (CONT'D)

There's enough for a bag of chips and your bus fare home.

20

INT. CONCERT HALL, ROYAL ACADEMY - DAY

20

Reggie wanders into the room transfixed by the music. HELEN PIENA plays a piece by Mozart unaware that he is there. She sees him and stops.

HELEN PIENA

Reginald Dwight?

REGGIE

Yes.

HELEN PIENA

Did you bring something to play?

REGGIE

I didn't know I had to.

HELEN PIENA

Is there anything you could show me so I can get a sense of where you are up to?

He sits down, prepares, then plays the opening chord. One note is out. He blushes. He plays it again, this time correctly, then plays the Mozart piece note perfect, then stopping mid-phase exactly where she left off.

HELEN PIENA (CONT'D)

Why have you stopped?

REGGIE

That's as far as you got.

Helen looks impressed that Reggie has played it by ear. He beams a cheeky smile, but Helen does not smile back.

HELEN PIENA

You might have a good memory but you have an awful lot of work to do. Keep your wrists and back straight and start again.

His smile drops, he realises this is going to be hard work. Helen smiles, she knows she has a real talent on her hands.

21 INT. BACK ROOM, REGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY

21

Stanley, Sheila, Ivy and Reggie all sit at the table in formal silence. A roast chicken on the table.

Sheila, bored and distracted wants to be elsewhere. Reggie starts to tap out his piano scales and crunches on a stick of celery.

STANLEY

Hands off the table, Reginald. And stop making all that noise.

Sheila scoffs and looks at Reggie like 'I told you'. An unsure Reggie slowly withdraws his hands. Stanley proceeds to carve.

REGGIE

Did you know Mozart wrote his first piece of music at the age of 5?

Reggie is served last with a very small amount. They eat in silence. Sheila pushes her food around the plate. Reggie knows that his family doesn't work. Ivy sneaks Reggie a piece of chicken and winks at him. The intro music starts: 'I WANT LOVE'. Stanley gets up from the table and lights his pipe and looks out of the window.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

*I want love, but it's impossible.  
A man like him, so irresponsible. A  
man like him is dead in places.*

STANLEY

*Other men feel liberated. I can't  
love, shot full of holes. Don't  
feel nothing, I just feel cold.  
Don't feel nothing..*

SHEILA

*...just old scars. Toughening up  
around my heart. I want love on my  
own terms. After everything I've  
learned.*

IVY

*Me, I carry too much baggage. Oh  
god I've seen so much traffic. But  
I want love...*

SHEILA

*...just a different kind.*

REGGIE

*I want love..*

STANLEY

*..won't break me down.*

SHEILA

*Won't brick me up, won't fence me  
in.*

REGGIE

*I want a love, that'll mean  
something.*

ALL

*That's the love I want, I want  
love.*

22

INT. FRED'S CAR, STREET PINNER - DAY

22

Sheila fumbles in a car with FRED who wears a draped jacket and has a D.A. hair style. He tries to get her buttons undone. Suddenly he stops, shocked. Sheila looks round and sees Reggie by the car window looking at them.

REGGIE

Mum!?

She winds the window down.

SHEILA

Reggie, what are you doing here?  
Snooping around?

\*  
\*

Fred breaks the embarrassment and presents his hand to the stunned Reggie.

FRED

Pleased to meet you, son. I've  
heard a lot about you.

Reggie stares at him.

FRED (CONT'D)

My name's Fred. I'm a friend of  
your mum's.

Reggie looks at Sheila with tears in his eyes then turns and runs.

SHEILA

Reggie!

23

INT. REGGIE'S BEDROOM, REGGIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

23

Reggie sits on his bed. Stanley shouts at Sheila. He is furious and loud.

STANLEY (O.S)

Too bloody right I'll go! Good! I'm  
sick of the sight of you. I put a  
roof over your head. You've wanted  
for nothing. And this builder is  
what you want now, is he? Got money  
has he? You love a pound note.  
You'd drop your knickers for a  
quid. You self centered, vain,  
tramp.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

SHEILA

Shut up you pig! Get out, just go.

Reggie closes his eyes and puts his hands over his ears to drown out the shouting. He starts singing. 'La, la, la, la, la, la...' as in the start of CROCODILE ROCK.'

Heavy footsteps can be heard on the stairs and along the hallway. Reggie's door is ajar. He watches the shadow of his dad outside his room on the wall. Reggie hopes his Dad will come in. Stanley turns, hesitates. He's in two minds. Then he decides against it and goes down the stairs.

The front door slams. Close on Reggie's heartbreak and confusion. He goes to his bedroom window and watches his dad walk off down the street with his suitcase. He doesn't look back. Reggie sits on his bed and starts to cry. Ivy comes in and sits in a chair by the window.

REGGIE

He didn't give me a hug goodbye?

IVY

He's no good at showing affection.

REGGIE

I wish I was somebody else.

It's dark and she lights a cigarette.

IVY

I heard a song on the radio today I thought you'd like.

Quietly taps her nails on the chair and she starts to gently sing 'HEARTBREAK HOTEL'.

IVY (CONT'D)

*Since my baby left me. I've had a  
new place to dwell. It's down on  
the end of a lonely street.  
Heartbreak Hotel. My baby's so  
lonely my baby's lonely I could  
die.*

Reggie listens. Slowly he stops crying.

REGGIE

Who sings it?

She sings on.

24

INT. THERAPY ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY

24

Elton has now removed more of his costume and sits in his vest with just the bottom half of his feather suit on. The rest lies in a crumpled heap on the floor. He looks deflated and the anger is gone. His head and voice are low and he cries. His hands shake.

ELTON

How the fuck do you think I felt!?  
I was a kid. Heartbroken. People  
don't care though, do they?

(MORE)

ELTON (CONT'D)

Anyway, I'd discovered records and rock'n'roll. That was all I cared about.

TRACK INTO ELTON:

U.S TV PRESENTER (V.O.)

And now ladies and gentlemen a rising star of Rock and Roll, all the way from Memphis Tennessee, please welcome Elvis Presley.

\*

25

INT. BACK ROOM, REGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY

25

We cut into a T.V. Elvis' first appearance on an American T.V. Show. Reggie and Ivy sit on the sofa mesmerized by Elvis as he sings 'Blue Suede Shoes'. Reggie's eyes are lit up with excitement.

\*  
\*  
\*

Reggie takes out an exercise book. It is a diary with several columns of lists. There is a list of "Tunes Learnt" and now another one "Records to purchase" - He writes carefully in the 'Elvis Presley' column - 'Blue Suede Shoes'.

\*

Fred and Sheila come in from shopping. Sheila turns down the t.v.

SHEILA

I got you this while I was out. I know you like him.

Sheila pulls out Elvis album from a bag. Reggie can't believe it.

SHEILA (CONT'D)

He's quite a dish.

She holds up the cover of the record and they all gaze at the fantastic picture of Elvis in all his glory.

IVY

Ooo. I would.

SHEILA

Mum!

REGGIE

Thank you, Mum. It's fantastic.

Reggie slowly takes the record. Transfixed. It is obvious that it is in very safe hands with Reggie.

SHEILA  
Be careful with it.

FRED  
So - are you serious about wanting  
to be a rock'n'roller?

REGGIE  
Yeah. Course.

FRED  
Okay, we should get you the proper  
hair cut then.

REGGIE  
Can I get it cut like Elvis?

FRED  
Course you can.

SHEILA  
Enjoy it while it lasts. You're  
like my side of the family. You'll  
be bald as an egg by the time  
you're twenty. \*

Reggie looks shocked and dismayed. Ivy shakes her head.  
Sheila exits with the shopping. \*

IVY  
And a jacket. \*

FRED  
Eh? \*

IVY  
He'll need a proper jacket.

Ivy holds up the record with Elvis on the front.

FRED  
Right.

REGGIE  
And shoes.

Reggie is at orchestra rehearsals now dressed in his new shoes, jacket and hair cut. The rest of the kids are all dressed a lot more square. A happy Reggie sticks out like a sore thumb. A concerned Helen Piena looks at him.

27 EXT. PUB - NIGHT

27

A home-made sign in the window say: "Tonight: All meat raffle plus Reginald Dwight on piano"

28 INT. PUB - NIGHT

28

A run down hotel bar. A seedy BARMAN talks into the mic to a half empty pub. Sheila, Fred and Ivy are all there with a drink. An old upright piano is on the small stage. A man holds up a bag of meat above his head to a small cheer.

BARMAN

Congratulations to Dave, he wins four pork chops, half a pound of prime mince and a string of sausages. Right, now Sheila and Fred's boy is going to play us a couple of songs on the piano so give him a warm welcome cos he's only 12 and get's a bit shy. Reggie Dwight.

Reggie wears his quiff on full attention. He's decidedly nervous as he walks onto the little stage and sits at the piano. Ivy signals her encouragement. There is an instant feedback through the mic. This gets everybody's attention.

REGGIE

Hello.

Reggie starts to play 'STREETS OF LAREDO'. No one is impressed. A bloke puts a pint down on top of the piano and continues to talk loudly to his friend. Reggie is intimidated and stops. He looks at Ivy who winks at him and mouths.

IVY

Play that one I like.

REGGIE

Excuse me. You can't put that on there.

MAN

Why not?

REGGIE

It'll get knocked off.

Reggie hits the first chord of 'SATURDAY NIGHT'S ALRIGHT (FOR FIGHTING)'.  
'

REGGIE (CONT'D)

*"It's getting late have you seen my mates..."*

As somebody turns to watch Reggie they knock over a woman's beer and it spills down the front of a big bloke. He turns and pushes the wrong person which starts a small shoving match, and a fight breaks out. Someone bumps into Fred and he turns round and whacks them then turns back to Sheila and puts his arm around her as if nothing has happened. Reggie watches as he plays and gets excited by the atmosphere. As the fight builds so does his playing and energy. He grows into a solid and exciting performer and his singing starts to push the energy of the fight. People fly across the room, glasses are smashed, chairs are thrown. Reggie sings on.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

*"Ma tell me when the boys get back here. It's seven o'clock and I want to rock. Wanna get a belly full of beer"*

Reggie ducks as a chair flies over the piano. Sheila, Fred and Ivy are in the middle of the chaos with their gin and tonics and still smile encouragingly at Reggie.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

*"My old man's drunker than a barrel full of monkey's. And my old lady she don't care. My sister looks cute in her braces and her boots. A handful of grease in her hair"*

Two men, now on top of the piano, fight and Ivy hits them with her handbag. Reggie has to dive this way and that to avoid being hit but plays without missing a beat.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

*"So don't give us none of your aggravation. We've had it with yer discipline. Saturday night's alright for fighting. Get a little action in".*

Suddenly someone has a chair and is about to crash it down onto the piano when Reggie leaps out of the window.

Reggie emerges from the pub in the middle of an ally which he runs down. He come out in the street and jumps over the tops of cars - he boots someone who tries to attack him, whilst, of course, singing in perfect time.

REGGIE

*"Get about as oiled as a diesel train. Gonna set this dance alight. Cause Saturday night's alright for fightin'. Saturday night's alright, alright, alright"*.

Reggie escapes by climbing through a hole in a wooden fence.  
**REGGIE is now seventeen years old.**

30 EXT. FUN FAIR - NIGHT

30

Reggie comes out into a huge fun fair with big bright lights and fast moving action. The bumper cars are close by and different gangs hang out here. Teddy boys, rockers, mods, Beatniks, Jamaicans, Indians, mums and dads with their kids. All walks of British 60's life. Reggie runs and ducks through the legs of the bigger kids as they come together and carry on the fight and dance. The bumper cars are packed with people and Reggie laughs as he hangs on to one of the car.

REGGIE

*"We're packed pretty tight in here tonight. I'm looking for a dolly who'll see me right. I may use a little muscle to get what I need. I sink a little drink and shout she's with me.."*

Reggie jumps off and runs and ducks through another hole in the fence.

31 EXT. PUB/BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

31

Reggie runs along the street and a gang of mods on scooters come towards him. He turns and goes the other way as the mods sing:

MODS

*"A couple of sounds that we really like. Are the sound of a switchblade and a motorbike. We're a juvenile product of the working class. Who's best friend floats in the bottom of a glass"*.

Reggie flies out of the alley.

REGGIE

*"So don't give us none of your aggravation. We've had it with yer discipline"*.

Reggie sees the brightly lit pub and dives back in through the window.

32 INT. PUB - NIGHT

32

Reggie dives across the bar and lands on the piano stool and plays on. He has a band backing him called 'Bluesology' all dressed identically. Slim fitted, dark clothes and hush puppies. The pub is half full. Sheila, Fred and Ivy are there and politely clap.

REGGIE

*"Saturday night's alright for  
fightin'. Get a little action in.  
Saturday! Saturday! Saturday!  
Saturday! Saturday! Saturday  
night's alright."*

The number finishes with a flourish. Everyone cheers. Reggie beams back at them.

33 INT. PUB - NIGHT

33

Reggie and the band BOBBY, CYRIL and ELTON DEAN pack up. A tall thin man leans against a wall and smokes. DAVE GODIN.

GODIN

Good show tonight boys. You look like you know how to enjoy yourselves. How would you like to make two quid a week? Each!

Elton Dean whistles.

ELTON DEAN

Go on.

GODIN

Dave Godin, promoter of the soul music review. I've got 3 new American acts doing a tour of England and they all need back up.

BOBBY

We're not a backing band!

REGGIE

What's soul music?

GODIN

Music for people who feel it in their heart.

(MORE)

GODIN (CONT'D)

What I'm looking for is a band that have got music running through their souls. It's about pain and love and heartbreak.

BOBBY

You what?

GODIN

Forget all this Rock n Roll stuff. Wilson and the Twilights. The Bluebells. The sound of the future. Your future.

ELTON DEAN

Why don't they have their own band?

GODIN

Enough talk! You're obviously tough negotiators. Three pounds a week plus room and board.

Beat. Godin hands Reggie his card and smiles enigmatically.

GODIN (CONT'D)

Think about it. I'll need to know by tomorrow lunch time. It's six months. So if you're up for it swing by the office, pick up the records. You'll have a week to learn twenty songs.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Reggie takes the card but a worrying thought comes over Reggie.

34 INT. HALLWAY, ROYAL ACADEMY - DAY 34

Reggie walks along and looks unsure of himself. Other students come and go and some say hello. He nods back but is distracted. He stops outside a door, paces for a bit then enters.

35 INT. RECITAL HALL, ROYAL ACADEMY - DAY 35

Reggie sits next to Helen Piena at the piano.

HELEN PIENA

Why are you so distracted, Reg? The 'Puccini' recital is next week. Being an accompanist is very important and you're obviously not practicing.

\*  
\*

REGGIE

I'm not going to be able to do the recital. My bands been offered six months touring.

\*

HELEN PIENA

You're throwing away all your hard work to dedicate your time to playing rock and roll in dirty pubs? Do you think that's a good use of your talent?

REGGIE

I don't want to just play dead people's music.

\*

\*

HELEN PIENA

I beg your pardon?

\*

\*

REGGIE

Anyway, if Puccini were alive today, he'd be playing rock'n'roll.

\*

\*

HELEN PIENA

You've got a great future here. The Royal Philharmonic is a very real possibility for you.

\*

Helen Piena plays the intro Nessun Dorma.

REGGIE

I need to do this. I love rock'n'roll...

HELEN PIENA

Passion is important, Reggie but think it through. If you give up your place here you won't be able to just walk back in when things don't work out. Can you make any money playing this kind of music? There's no stability in it. I like rock'n'roll to but I wouldn't gamble my whole future on it. I can't allow it.

Helen plays 'Nessun Dorma' as Reggie gets up and walks out. She doesn't look back but knows he is gone.

\*

\*

35A INT. REGGIE'S BEDROOM, REGGIE'S HOUSE

35A

\*

Reggie enters with a stack of records and throws them on the bed and sits.

\*

\*

There is a shelf in the room that has a few records on. \*  
Reggie puts the new disks on the shelf. He takes one and \*  
reverentially puts it on his record player. \*

Intro music starts for 'BREAKING DOWN THE WALLS OF HEARTACHE'  
by THE BLUEBELLS. The song plays over.

36 EXT. PUB/BACK ALLEY - EVENING 36 \*

Reggie carries his electric keyboards, the rest of the band  
load equipment into a van. Godin smokes and the boys are  
excited as they get in the van.

- 37 INT. NORTHERN CLUB - NIGHT 37
- Montage - as 'BREAKING DOWN THE WALLS OF HEARTACHE' carries on:
- WILSON out front singing like a pro. Reggie plays some great organ and looks at Wilson doing his thing and the crowd lapping it up. He's a master at work. Reggie watches his every move, loving it and learning. Wilson is replaced by another great, DIANA and the BLUEBELLS all in beautiful tight fitting gold dresses. Again Reggie watches in awe from behind the keyboard.
- 38 INT. TRANSIT VAN - NIGHT 38
- Reggie and the rest of the band are crammed in at the back. They are happy and the energy is high. The laugh and smoke.
- 39 INT. HALL - NIGHT 39
- Reggie on stage with the band. The TWILIGHTS sing and dance. Reggie is at the back but he and the band all enjoy playing. One of the singers, RICHARD smiles and winks at Reggie and he smiles back.
- 40 INT. ANOTHER DIVE - NIGHT 40
- In the corridor leading to the stage, Reggie passes Wilson's dressing room and sees through the door. Wilson is being injected with heroin in his arm by his girlfriend. Wilson sees Reggie, smiles and nods at him.
- 41 INT. STAGE - NIGHT 41
- On stage Reggie plays while he watches Wilson sing. He works hard and sweat runs down his face and back. His shirt is soaked through.
- 42 INT. BACKSTAGE, DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 42
- Reggie packs away his organ as the other guys are surrounded by dolly birds. Richard takes off his shirt and Reggie stares at him. Richard catches him looking and holds Reggie's eye.
- 43 INT. TRANSIT VAN - DAY 43
- Reggie and the guys are all dressed differently and now have more shiny suits on.

They smoke and drink and are growing up fast. Bobby hands out some pills which they all take. \*

44 INT. ANOTHER CLUB - NIGHT 44

They are all in different costumes. The Bluebells sing.

45 INT. CLUB SIDE OF STAGE - NIGHT 45

Reggie waits to go on. Richard comes up to him and they watch The Bluebells perform for a bit. As the girls finish Richard turns to Reggie and suddenly kisses him on the lips on quite a sensual way.

RICHARD

Have a good show.

Reggie is in shock by the thrill he has just experienced.

REGGIE

Thank you.

Richard laughs and walks out on stage.

46 INT. REGGIE'S BEDROOM, REGGIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 46

Reggie puts some records on the shelves which are much fuller. He flops down on his bed and stares at the ceiling.

47 INT. CLUB - NIGHT 47

Reggie and Wilson sit next to each other nursing drinks. The other American acts, Godin and the rest of Bluesology drink and laugh with girls they've picked up.

WILSON

What's up, Reggie?

Reggie watches them and broods.

REGGIE

How does a fat boy with glasses from Pinner, called Reggie Dwight get to be a soul man?

WILSON

Write some songs.

REGGIE

Easier said than done.

WILSON

Of course it is. Every song I write  
is part of me. What's in your heart  
when you play?

REGGIE

Dunno - everything. It's where I  
feel I'm not alone.

WILSON

There you go. Real poetic, kid. Set  
that to music.

Wilson considers Reggie for a moment.

WILSON (CONT'D)

I'm a skinny, black, kid from  
Detroit who's real name is Rodney  
Jones. I played roadside joints for  
ten years before I realised what I  
had to do.

REGGIE

What? Change your name?

WILSON

Not just your name. You have to  
kill the person you're born to be  
in order become the person you want  
to be.

48 INT. CLUB - NIGHT 48

Wilson is doing his show. Reggie is once again at the back  
but watches closely. The backing singers spin round and as  
they do Richard makes eye contact. \*

49 EXT. MOTORWAY - NIGHT 49

The transit van drive down the motorway.

50 INT. TRANSIT VAN - NIGHT 50

As they bump along the motorway a dejected Reggie looks at  
the band and the cramped conditions. Cyril smokes and looks  
untroubled as he pisses into a milk bottle and Bobby drinks a  
beer. Reggie picks up the NME and looks at the back pages. He  
spots something then rips out an ad. Cyril's piss over flows  
and runs down the middle of the van getting on Reggie's  
brothel creepers.

REGGIE  
Aw fucking hell, Cyril.

Cyril laughs. Reggie broods and rereads the ad in his hand.

REGGIE (CONT'D)  
Oi, Elton.

Elton Dean looks up.

ELTON DEAN  
Yeah?

REGGIE  
I'm going to change my name. I'm thinking of calling myself Elton Dean.

ELTON DEAN  
But that's my name.

REGGIE  
I know. What d'ya think?

ELTON DEAN  
I think, fuck off!

The other two laugh at Reggie who goes back to his ad.

Dick James MUSIC PUBLISHING: Wants Talent. Artistes/ Composers/ singers/ Musicians. Call or write to RAY WILLIAMS. Denmark St. London. Tel. Mayfair 7362

\*

50A INT. PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY

50A

\*

Elton smiles to himself at the memory.

\*

ELTON  
To be honest, I couldn't stand being at the back any more. After just six weeks I was looking for my way out. You know what they say, "Hell is for other people". I wasn't cut out for sharing the back of an old van with people who didn't care about their futures.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

51 EXT. DENMARK STREET - DAY 51

Reggie, dressed more flamboyantly than usual, walks down Denmark Street - London's Tin Pan Alley - with it's music publishers and guitar shops. He stops at a doorway. DJ Music Publishing. He checks the address from an ad in the NME.

52 INT. DJ MUSIC OFFICE, RECEPTION - DAY 52

In reception a Mary Quant type receptionist, MARY is at the desk. Reg tries to look very cool and important.

MARY  
Can I help you?

REGGIE  
I've come to see Mr. Williams.  
About the 'Talent wanted' ad.

MARY  
Name?

REGGIE  
Reginald Dwight.

Mary girl laughs.

MARY  
Reginald!?

REGGIE  
Yeah! What?

MARY  
That's my grandad's name.

Reggie blushes as Mary smirks and picks up the phone.

53 INT. RAY WILLIAM'S OFFICE - DAY

53

Reggie stands and looks at the pictures of The Beatles. Gold records etc. Ray Williams a blonde Adonis of 21, has his feet on the desk.

REGGIE  
I've been gigging for years now.

RAY  
Piano players I've got. Ten a penny, mate.

REGGIE  
I sing too.

RAY  
What sort of stuff?

REGGIE  
Anything, rock, soul, country and western.

Reggie sits at the piano and plays the opening notes of 'Streets of Laredo'.

RAY  
Fucking hell! I'm going to shoot the next piano player who sings 'Streets of Laredo'.

Reggie's hands hover over the piano keys.

REGGIE

I've written songs too. I'm good at tunes but I just haven't figured out what to write about yet.

Reggie plays the opening chords to 'Candle In The Wind'.

RAY

That's good. What's that called?

REGGIE

It hasn't got a title. I just made it up.

RAY

What did you say your name was?

REGGIE

...Elton...

RAY

Elton what?

Reggie looks at a picture on the wall of The Beatles.

REGGIE

John?

\*From here on REGGIE will now be ELTON\*

RAY

Alright, Elton John the piano player. Leave your details with Mary at reception.

ELTON

Give me a chance Mr. Williams. I'll do anything.

Ray sees a pile of envelopes on his desk and grabs two or three but then throws one at random to Elton.

RAY

Tell you what. See if there's anything interesting in this and set it to music.

It sails through the air. Everything slows down, music plays and a light hits the envelope as it flies majestically to Elton's hands.

RAY (CONT'D)  
Now fuck off.

54 INT. LANCASTER GRILL, LONDON - DAY

54

Elton pours over the pile of handwritten lyrics: The year of the Teddy Bear, The Swan Queen of Laughing Lake, Tartan Coloured Lady and A Dandelion Dies in the Wind. He finds the covering letter. He sees the name and address: "Bernie Taupin, Matkin Farm, Owmbly-by-Spital, Lincolnshire".

Elton looks at his watch. He wears a Sixties t-shirt, a fur jacket, tight pants and his hair is long. He has a cup of tea and watches expectantly as the straight laced people come and go. A waitress comes and puts another tea in front of Elton.

WAITRESS  
We close soon.

\*

Then through the door comes a good looking young man who carries a copy of NME. From the way he's dressed it's obvious that he's a country boy. They look at each other.

ELTON  
Bernie Taupin?

BERNIE  
Yeah. You must be Elton?

\*

Bernie smiles and Elton is instantly smitten.

ELTON  
Yeah. Actually, that's my stage name.

A nervous Bernie is impressed by this cool Londoner.

BERNIE  
You can tell me your real name when we get to know each other better.

Elton and Bernie sit opposite each other. A beat.

\*

ELTON  
I was thinking...

BERNIE (CONT'D)  
Have you ever been...

\*

ELTON (CONT'D)  
Sorry.

\*

\*

BERNIE  
No, after you.

\*

\*

They both smile.

\*

ELTON

I like your lyrics.

BERNIE

Cheers. The tape you sent me is  
great. Do you write a lot?

ELTON

I'm on tour at the moment so I  
don't get as much time as I'd  
like..

Bernie sees that there is a page mixed in with the lyrics he  
sent and tries to take it back.

BERNIE

Oh, that shouldn't be in there. I  
sent that by mistake.

Elton pulls it back.

ELTON

No, that's really good. I wrote a  
tune to this one. It just flowed  
out when I read it.

BERNIE

Skyline Pigeon?

ELTON

Yeah, I could hear the whole tune  
in my head. Everything was there  
and I could see all the notes and I  
had to get it out. My fingers  
couldn't work fast enough to keep  
up with my brain...

Bernie smiles and Elton blushes.

ELTON (CONT'D)

Do you ever get that?

BERNIE

Not really, no. But I could write  
some more if you'd like and, you  
know send them to you.

ELTON

My real name is Reg Dwight.

BERNIE

Cool. Sounds like a cowboy's name.  
All I ever wanted to do was to be a  
cowboy. Do you like Country and  
Western, Reg? Have you ever heard  
'Streets of Laredo' by Marty  
Robbins?

Elton sings.

ELTON

*As I walked out on the streets of  
Laredo. As I walked out on Laredo  
one day.*

\*

BERNIE

*I spied a poor cowboy wrapped in  
white linen, wrapped in white linen  
as cold as the clay.*

ELTON/BERNIE

*"I can see by your outfit that you  
are a cowboy." These words he did  
say as I boldly walked by.*

BERNIE

*Come an' sit down beside me an'  
hear my sad story.*

## ELTON

*I'm shot in the breast an' I know I  
must die.*

They both smile and the song segways from 'Streets of Laredo' into 'Skyline Pigeon'.

Elton knows he's met a soul mate. Bernie and Elton talk more and more animatedly as the song carries on. Elton is clearly blown away by Bernie. They talk and drink cups of tea until they are thrown out when the cafe closes.

- |     |  |     |             |
|-----|--|-----|-------------|
| 55  | EXT. LONDON STREETS - EVENING  | 55  | *           |
|     | Elton and Bernie walk through London as the city goes to sleep and look at the window displays at all the things they don't have but plan to one day buy.  |     | *<br>*      |
| 56  | INT. LONDON STREETS - NIGHT  | 56  | *           |
|     | They sit on a bench under a street light and talk.   |     | *           |
| 57  | EXT. LONDON STREETS - NIGHT  | 57  | *           |
|     | They walk, talk and laugh more.  |     | *           |
| 57A | EXT. LANCASTER GRILL - DAWN  | 57A | *           |
|     | Elton and Bernie part ways. They shake hands and Elton goes in the cafe and Bernie walks off.  |     | *<br>*      |
| 57B | INT. BERNIE'S BEDROOM - DAY  | 57B | *           |
|     | At his desk Bernie writes on an envelope. It is addressed to 'Reg'. He pulls out some pages from his note book, folds them and puts them inside.   |     | *<br>*<br>* |
| 58  | INT. REGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY  | 58  | *           |
|     | Elton sits at the piano surrounded by scraps of paper, letters and notes. Fred comes in with some post and hands him Bernie's letter. He opens it and puts Bernie lyrics on the piano and starts to compose. |     |             |

59 INT. RAY WILLIAM'S OFFICE - DAY

59

DICK JAMES a large 60 year old bald man smokes a cigar and sits at Ray's desk with his feet up. He looks at Elton, Bernie and Ray. Elton at a piano finishes singing 'Skyline pigeon'.

ELTON

*Fly away, skyline pigeon fly  
Towards the dreams. You've left so  
very, so very far behind.*

DICK

Am I supposed to be impressed?

RAY

It's catchy, Dick. These guys are special. I've got an instinct for these things.

DICK

Alright, don't break your neck sucking your own cock.

Dick walks round to the front of the desk, sits on it and stares at them. Dick looks at Elton then at Bernie and sizes them up.

DICK (CONT'D)

Maybe we should put these two into a little beat combo. They write, they sing, blah, blah. He's the good looking one. Make him the singer.

Elton is hurt and embarrassed.

BERNIE

Hold on, I'm tone deaf. We write together but Elton sings the songs.

Dick looks at Ray and shakes his head.

DICK

No offense but he's not exactly the look kids are going crazy for. He's a back room boy.

RAY

They're writing a lot of good tunes, Dick.

DICK

Okay tiger. Are you flat mates?

BERNIE

We live with our mum's. I write the lyrics, send them to Elton and he adds the music.

RAY

Whoever heard of song writers not living and working together. Lennon and McCartney are inseparable.

Elton looks at Bernie who shrugs. Dick picks up the music to one of their songs and looks at it.

DICK  
How many songs have you got?

ELTON  
Loads. More than thirty!?

DICK  
Play one.

Elton plays and sings 'Daniel'

DICK (CONT'D)  
Depressing. Another one.

Elton tries again with 'Philadelphia Freedom'

DICK (CONT'D)  
What the fuck's that about!?

'That's Why They Call It The Blues'

DICK (CONT'D)  
Are you taking the piss?

Elton plays 'Sad Songs'.

DICK (CONT'D)  
Alright! I've heard enough. Sounds like 99% of them are shit. It's the 1% I'm interested in. Ray says you're an investment but he knows fuck all. You're both a couple of pricks as far as I can tell so quit that backing band nonsense, find a place to work together and write me tunes that gray haired old tramps will whistle in the street. You never know, one day you might have enough for an album. Do that and I'll put you on ten quid a week.

60 EXT. NOTTING HILL - DAY 60

A dirty, well used 1960's farm Land Rover with a canvas back drives down a residential street.

61 INT. LAND ROVER - DAY 61

Bernie drives and Elton looks worried.

BERNIE

Why is this suddenly a problem?  
It's rent free.

ELTON

So is my mum's. It's alright for  
you, it's me she fancies for some  
strange reason.

BERNIE

She was just being friendly. Anyway  
she's a good looking bird.

ELTON

You go out with her then! She kept  
stroking my hair. It made me feel  
uncomfortable.

BERNIE

Fucking hell, Elton! Not your hair  
again! Last week you were all up  
for moving in.

ELTON

That was before I met her.

BERNIE

We need to be closer to the center  
of town. Soho, not fucking Pinner.

Elton fumes in silence.

62

EXT. ALL SAINTS ROAD - DAY

62

The Land Rover has parked in front of a very run down  
terraced house. The street is lively with many people and  
kids about. Reggae music plays from a window somewhere. Elton  
and Bernie carry boxes of belongings up to the front door.  
ARABELLA with two small dogs on her lap sits on the steps  
next to CLINT, a rasta and ARTHUR a very small bloke, smoking  
a big joint. \*

ARABELLA \*

Ah, my wonderful new lodgers.  
They're struggling rock stars.

Arabella kisses Elton. \*

BERNIE (TO ARTHUR)

Hi, I'm Bernie.

ARTHUR

Whoever heard of a rock star  
called, Bernie?

ELTON

Watch it, mate.

Arthur stands up. As he's on the top step he comes eye to eye  
with Elton and they square up to each other.

ARTHUR

Yeah? You going to do something  
about it?

ELTON

I will if I have too.

Clint laughs.

CLINT

Calm yourself, Arthur.

Arabella gets up and leads Elton and Bernie inside. \*

ARABELLA \*

(To Elton) I was just telling Clint  
about the time I got arrested in  
Afghanistan for smoking pot outside  
of a Mosque. They were very  
understanding at the police station  
though. You two are going to love  
this place. I've got a real,  
Indian, Buddhist monk living next  
door, from Liverpool.

63

INT. ARABELLA'S FLAT HALLWAY, ALL SAINTS ROAD - DAY

63

\*

Arabella shows them around the flat. The walls are covered  
with her shit art work, easels, paints, and a potters wheel  
clutter the hallway. Think everything that was wrong about  
the 60's and this place should be full of it. Arabella shows  
them a room with just a single bed and a lot of junk art. \*

ARABELLA \*

This is your room. Some of my 2nd  
year course work is still in there  
and Clint's borrowed the other  
mattress but we'll get it sorted  
out soon enough.

ELTON

I can go on the sofa.

ARABELLA

Absolutely not. You can bunk in  
with me. I have a huge bed.

\*

Elton looks angry at Bernie who shrugs his shoulders.  
Arabella grabs Elton by the hand and leads them into the  
living room.

\*

ARABELLA (CONT'D)

It'll be like an ashram in India.  
Have you ever been to Goa? We  
should hitch hike there this  
summer.

\*

ELTON

I think I'd be happier on the sofa.

ARABELLA

Nonsense. Let's celebrate.

\*

64 INT. KITCHEN, ALL SAINTS ROAD - DAY

64

Arabella pops some champagne and pours it into mugs.

\*

ARABELLA

Here's to us.

\*

They drink.

BERNIE

Come on, let's get some music on.

ARABELLA

Oh god. You can't make loud noise  
in the flat. Livy has sensitive  
ears.

\*

Elton looks in horror at Bernie.

ELTON

Livy the dog? We have to be able to  
play music. That's why we moved in  
here.

ARABELLA

Oh, don't be a nuisance. Come on,  
time for you to see our room. You  
can show me your intricate finger  
work.

\*

Arabella smiles a lascivious smile. She grabs Elton by his  
collar and pulls him towards the bedroom.

\*

ELTON

But it's only six o'clock.

Elton looks back in horror as Bernie is left with the champagne. Livy licks Bernie's feet.

65

INT. A CLUB - NIGHT

65

Elton and Bernie are having a drink after the show. They are deep in conversation. Wilson, Richard, Godin and a few of the other Americans are at the next table. They are clearly talking about Elton and Bernie. They know each other well now and the friendship between them all is warm and good natured. Wilson looks over.

GODIN

Two weeks to go Reggie, you gonna miss us?

Elton smiles.

ELTON

Sure. I'll be writing to you every five days. And the name's Elton.

WILSON

What's your plans now, Elton?

ELTON

Not too sure. We've written a lot of songs. Enough for an album.

BERNIE

He's probably going to get married too.

All the guys laugh and give each other a knowing look.

WILSON

What?

ELTON

Arabella wants to get married.

\*

WILSON

What about rock and roll? What about hot chicks? And cocaine orgies? What about fame and fortune.

RICHARD

What about the fact you're a fag?

BERNIE

A what?

RICHARD

You're little friend is a  
homosexual.

A worried Elton looks at Bernie who is shocked and a bit  
confused.

ELTON

I've got a girlfriend.

Wilson smiles and shakes his head.

WILSON

When's that ever stopped anybody?

The penny drops for Bernie.

BERNIE

Are you?

Elton is scared. Caught.

ELTON

I don't know. Does it matter?

Bernie shrugs and laughs a little.

BERNIE

Not to me it doesn't.

Relieved Elton smiles at his friend.

BERNIE (CONT'D)

But it might do to Arabella.

\*

ELTON

Oh fuck.

They both drink.

66

EXT. ALL SAINTS ROAD - EARLY MORNING

66

Elton and Bernie are completely "shitfaced". They stagger to  
the door trying not to laugh too loud.

BERNIE

Sssssshhhhhh!

ELTON

Sssssshhhhhh!

Elton holds the key but falls over the bin. Bernie tries to help Elton up but Elton pulls him down. They are laughing till suddenly a wave of clarity comes over Elton.

ELTON (CONT'D)

What am I going to do, Bernie?

Bernie stops laughing and looks in Elton's eyes. Elton hiccups again and breaks the mood.

BERNIE

You're going to tell her.

ELTON

It'll break her heart.

BERNIE

I'm not sure she has one.

They burst into hysterics again. Suddenly the window opens. Arabella is in her nightdress. Both Bernie and Elton sit up like two schoolboys. \*

ARABELLA \*

Will you keep the noise down!  
You'll wake the whole bloody  
street.

Elton looks in despair at Bernie as Arabella slams the window shut. \*

67

EXT. ROOF, ALL SAINTS ROAD - SUNRISE

67

Elton and Bernie are on the roof that over looks the city with a bottle of champagne. Their little party not over. Elton dangles his feet over the edge. Bernie is up, drunk and animated.

BERNIE

What are you talking about!?  
There's so much we've got to do.  
Worlds to conquer. They're great  
fucking songs! People keep asking  
who's singing the demos. You have  
got an amazing voice, Reg. It's  
what I hear when I write. Something  
special happens when you sing our  
songs.

Bernie sits next to Elton.

ELTON

You've had too much to drink. You heard what Dick thinks. He said my hands are like midget boxers.

BERNIE

Fuck what Dick thinks. It's time for you to be out front.

ELTON

I'm not an artist.

BERNIE

Yes you are.

Elton looks at Bernie then puts a hand on his knee. In their drunken state there is a moment of tenderness and friendship between them. Bernie puts his hand on Elton's knee. Elton leans in for a kiss.

BERNIE (CONT'D)

Reg, I love you mate, but I'm sorry that's never gonna happen.

Elton takes his hand away.

68 INT. BERNIE'S ROOM, ALL SAINTS ROAD - MORNING 68

Bernie sits on his bed writing. After a moment he stops and sniffs the air.

69 INT. KITCHEN, ALL SAINTS ROAD - MORNING 69

Bernie's POV: Elton is lying on the floor with his head in the gas oven, on a pillow, with the gas on. The window is wide open.

BERNIE

What are you doing?

ELTON

Go away. I'm trying to kill myself.

BERNIE

(of the pillow)  
What's that?

ELTON

I didn't want to hurt my head.

BERNIE

But the window's open.

ELTON

I know, it absolutely stinks.

Bernie turns off the gas.

BERNIE

What about our joint publishing deal?

ELTON

It's alright, I've left everything to you.

Bernie picks up a will scribbled in biro as Livy runs in and starts licking Elton's face.

BERNIE

Even the Bob Dylan albums?

Arabella appears at the door

\*

ARABELLA

What are you doing

\*

BERNIE

He's going to kill himself.

ARABELLA

Oh for godsake, what about the wedding?

\*

Elton sits up bumping his head.

ELTON

It's all off. I'm never going to marry you. I can't.

ARABELLA

But I've sent the invitations to the printers. And I'm pregnant with your baby.

\*

ELTON

No, you're not. We've never even had sex properly.

ARABELLA

Haven't we? Yes we have!

\*

ELTON

We haven't got a proper relationship at all. I wouldn't marry you if you were the last person on earth.

CLOSE UP on the shocked and horrified Arabella. Then, like a dam bursting she lets out a scream of rage. The whole house seems to shake. Elton looks at Bernie. \*

BERNIE

Oh shit.

70

EXT. NOTTING HILL ALL SAINTS ROAD - DAY

70

Elton and Bernie are throwing bags in the back of the Land Rover as quick as they can. The boxes of records and suitcases are already loaded. Arabella can be heard screaming and shouting from the house. A few neighbors are hanging out and watching. Elton goes to run back in. \*

BERNIE

Come on. Where you going now?

ELTON

My keyboards are still in there!

Suddenly Elton's electric piano comes flying out the window and smashes on the road.

BERNIE

Not anymore.

ELTON

She's killed my piano.

70A

INT. LAND ROVER - DAY

70A

Elton and Bernie sit in the car parked at the side of the road. Bernie is trying to sort through the lyrics and papers that Arabella threw out. They are in the middle of a row. \*

ELTON

You can write anywhere but it was my keyboards that got destroyed! We're not that desperate! \*

BERNIE

Yes, we are! We don't have a choice. \*

ELTON

We can live in the car until we find something. \*

BERNIE

Are you mad? There's no fucking  
piano in the car! How are we  
supposed to work?

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

ELTON

I'm not doing it! She's a fucking  
nightmare. You're always going on  
about how we need space to create.  
She'll eat up your space in a  
fucking heart beat with her  
craziness. We'll get nothing done  
and go mad in the process. You can  
go live there but I'll be fucked if  
I am.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

71 EXT. REGGIE'S HOUSE - EVENING

71

Sheila opens the door to a bedraggled Elton and Bernie, they stand with their things.

SHEILA

I knew you'd be back. You'll have  
to pay rent. I'm not made of money.

72 INT. KITCHEN, REGGIE'S HOUSE - MORNING

72

Bernie, in his dressing gown, scribbles amongst the debris of a full English breakfast. Fred reads the paper. A listless Elton wanders in and sits. Sheila puts a fresh pot of tea on the table.

SHEILA

Get dressed, Reggie

ELTON

Elton.

SHEILA

Whatever you're calling yourself,  
I'll not have you moping around  
here all day.

\*

ELTON

We're song writing.

FRED

Looks like it's going well.

Bernie hands Elton a piece of paper which he starts to read.

ELTON

(to himself)

There's egg on this.

Bernie closely watches Elton read the lyrics as Sheila goes on.

SHEILA

I want you out of here looking for  
a proper job. Do you have any idea  
what it takes to feed and clothe  
three grown men who are all of  
working age. It's like a doss house  
around here and I'm the only one  
who does anything. You all just  
rely on me to take care of  
everything for you....

BERNIE

I'd better go take a shave.

\*

Elton in a bit of a trance gets up and goes.

\*

72A INT. BATHROOM, REGGIE'S HOUSE - MORNING

72A

\*

Bernie gets out his razor and foam and starts to shave. He  
hears Elton at the piano playing. It stops him from what he  
is doing and he wanders out and down to:

\*

\*

\*

73 INT. LIVING ROOM, REGGIE'S HOUSE - MORNING

73

Bernie comes and stands in the door way as Elton composes.  
Elton goes slowly but when he gets to the chorus he has  
gained a fluency of expression that just allows 'Your Song'  
to flow.

\*

\*

ELTON

*It's a little bit funny, this  
feeling inside.*

(MORE)

ELTON (CONT'D)

*I'm not one of those who can easily  
hide, I don't have much money but  
boy, if I did. I'd buy a big house  
where we both could live.*

By the time he's started the second verse, Bernie is in the doorway, listening. Elton now has the tune for the verse and sings it brilliantly - Bernie's lyrics are a platonic love song to Elton but Elton's emotional singing is directly to Bernie.

ELTON (CONT'D)

*If I was a sculptor but then again,  
no. Or a man who makes potions in a  
traveling show. Oh, I know it's not  
much but it's the best I can do. My  
gift is my song. And this one's for  
you.*

Bernie stands stunned and moved. A life changing moment when something's come together.

ELTON (CONT'D)

*And you can tell everybody this is  
your song. It may be quite simple  
but now that it's done. I hope you  
don't mind/ I hope you don't mind.  
That I put down in words. How  
wonderful life is while you're in  
the world.*

74 INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

74

Elton plays 'Your Song'. Engineers mesmerized and Ray is in tears as the song finishes.

ELTON

Was that alright?

RAY

It was beautiful.

75 INT. RAY WILLIAM'S OFFICE - DAY

75

Elton and Bernie sit on a large sofa. Dick James bursts in as Ray Williams opens a bottle of champagne.

DICK

*I love it! Best thing I've heard  
since 'Let it be'. Trans-fucking-  
Atlantic. I always knew you could  
do it.*

ELTON

Our record sales are not exactly golden.

DICK

No, they're shit but people don't know what they want until you tell them. Trust me. First off, I'm putting you on a three album deal!

ELTON

Three!?

DICK

A year. And I've got you a few nights at the Troubadour. Doug Weston is an old friend.

\*

ELTON

Hang on! The Troubadour?

RAY

It's a really cool folk club in L.A.

BERNIE

We know what it is!

ELTON

Let's not be too hasty. I'll need a backing band.

\*

\*

DICK

Ray, book some good session boys to play back up.

\*

\*

\*

RAY

Will do.

\*

\*

DICK

It's time to do something bold! I've invested a ton of money into you boys.

\*

BERNIE

Well, not really

DICK

The song is winner. At least it could be. Granted America's a gamble and if you fuck it up I'll kill you. Ray'll go too and keep and eye on you.

\*

(MORE)

DICK (CONT'D)

Get yourself some new clothes,  
something flashy, put on a great  
fucking show and don't kill  
yourself with drugs.

Elton looks worried but Bernie can hardly contain himself.

76 INT. MISS. DIRECTION SHOP - DAY 76 \*

Close on a winged platform boot that PETE the big, fat owner of the shop shows Elton and Bernie. \*

PETE \*

Is this the kind of thing you mean? \*

ELTON

I love them. I'll take good care of them. Thanks for all this, Tommy.

PETE \*

That's alright. You can pay me back when you're rich and famous.

Bernie takes the shoe.

BERNIE

Can you even play the piano in those?

PETE \*

These are extremely stylish boots of my own design. Very original.

BERNIE

You'll look like a tit.

ELTON

I need to make an impact, Bernie. It's America. It's all about being cool. It's going to be just me and a piano out there. It's easy for you. This whole thing is a bad idea. \*

BERNIE

Elton! You'll be okay.

ELTON

Fuck.

Beat.

PETE \*

Come with me. This is where I keep all the really cool stuff. This is a whole new world man.

Pete leads them to the back of the shop where all the wild, wonderful and whacky things hang. The rails close in around them. \*

77 I/E. LINCOLN CONTINENTAL - DAY 77

Close up of Elton and Bernie looking out the windows bemused. We pull out to see they are actually in Los Angeles. Ray also looks out at the palm trees and the beautiful girls and boys of L.A. \*

78 EXT. TROUBADOUR - DAY 78

Elton, Bernie and Ray get out of the Lincoln in front of a rundown old bar on Santa Monica Blvd. \*

79 INT. TROUBADOUR - DAY 79

Elton, Bernie, Ray and the band look at the club. It is small and dark. A group of young women and men hang around by the bar. DOUG WESTON the owner greets them and shows them around. He is larger than life, wears a cowboy hat and has a large Bowie knife on his belt.

DOUG

Monday nights are always crazy here. It's going to be packed later

ELTON

It's different from what I expected. A lot smaller.

DOUG

Size is everything my friend. Neil Young was here last week and there were people around the block. Fantastic. The best night ever.

Elton looks worried.

BERNIE

Cool hat.

DOUG

I won it in a bet with Dave Crosby. Take it!

BERNIE

Thanks...

Doug sticks his hat on Bernie's head.

DOUG

If you want anything to drink the girls will take care of you. Hey Joni!

Bernie looks over to the bar and a girl who looks a lot like JONI MITCHELL smiles.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Give the guys whatever they want. They just flew in from England! Their arms are really tired.

The girls all laugh at Doug's lame joke. Doug puts his arm round Elton's shoulder.

DOUG (CONT'D)

We're stoked you're here, man. Love the album - just love it. You're going to be great, man. Let me show you backstage.

80

INT. TROUBADOUR DRESSING ROOMS - NIGHT

80

Elton, Ray and the band all squashed into one tiny dressing room ready but excited. Elton is putting on the red jump suit, a sparkly bow tie and his first pair of platform shoes with wings on the heels.

BAND MEMBER

Bloody hell, Elton what are you wearing?

Elton turns round and in the mirror his name is written in sequins on the back of the red jumpsuit.

ELTON

My stage gear.

Bernie rushes in.

BERNIE

Reg! Neil Diamond's at the bar talking to Leon Russell and half the Beach Boys.

ELTON

Oh Jesus shit.

81

INT. TROUBADOUR BATHROOM - NIGHT

81

Bernie stands outside a cubicle door.

BERNIE

You're over reacting.

We hear Elton retch.

ELTON

They're the geniuses of American music. There is no way I'm going in front of that lot.

BERNIE

You can't back out now! They're all waiting.

ELTON

I don't give a shit.

Suddenly Ray bursts in and busts open the cubicle door dragging Elton out.

RAY

You've signed a contract and Dick has paid your fucking airfare - get out there and play you little bastard!

82

INT. TROUBADOUR - NIGHT

82

Close up of Elton in the half light at the side of the stage. He sweats, looks ill and terrified by the ordeal. The camera pushes in on him as we hear Doug.

DOUG (O.S.)

And now ladies and gentlemen a rising star of Rock and Roll, all the way. From, London, England. Please welcome Elton John.

Small applause. We follow Elton in slow motion as he goes on stage. He looks out at the audience they seem a vast blur. He sits at the piano but freezes. A few people at the front look at him but his eye moves to people who chat at the bar. He hears the glasses clink and the hot girls and boys who chat oblivious to him. He sits at the piano. The room goes quiet. We can hear him breathe and his heart pound. Suddenly he kicks the piano stool off the stage and launches into 'CROCODILE ROCK'...

ELTON

*I remember when I was young. Me and Suzie had so much fun. Holding hands and skipping stones.*

(MORE)

ELTON (CONT'D)

*Had an old gold Chevy and a place  
of my own. But the biggest kick I  
ever got. Was doing a thing called  
the Crocodile rock. While the other  
kids were rocking round the clock.  
We were hopping and bopping to the  
Crocodile Rock.*

Elton leaps about as he plays with electrifying abandon. The 'hot girls' look on in wonder - Bernie slides up to them. Elton gives the performance of a lifetime.

ELTON (CONT'D)

*Well Crocodile rocking is something  
shocking. When your feet just can't  
keep still. I never knew me a  
better time and I guess I never  
will. Oh Lawdy mama those Friday  
nights. When Suzie wore her dresses  
tight. And the Crocodile rocking  
was out of sight.*

Elton and the piano slowly rise off the ground. He is suspended in the air by two feet as he plays. The audience starts to rise up as well. Everyone joins in.

ELTON/EVERYONE

*La lalalala la lalalala la lalala*

The whole energy and power of the music and performance is lifting everyone up and everything into the air. People are suspended and enthralled at what they are witnessing and Elton plays on unaware of the affect his show is having. He is lost in the moment. He repeats a phrase again and again the whole club floats up as one. He encourages them to join in and drives the crowd to wilder and wilder appreciation. Finally, he ends on a huge note and they all hang suspended in time and mid air in silence. For a split second he looks out to the stunned air born crowd. He sees Bernie who has a huge grin on his face. The audience are elated and stunned and all smile at him.

ELTON

Good grief!

Elton smiles back then suddenly he remembers where he is and everyone drops back down to the ground and spontaneously burst into a huge cheer and applause.

83 INT. TROUBADOUR DRESSING ROOMS - NIGHT

83

The insanity back stage after the gig. People crowd in to talk to Elton. Bernie bursts in on an elated and excited Elton.

BERNIE

You did it, Reg! You were brilliant!

Elton hugs Bernie and sees he's with one of the hot girls, HEATHER. He is crestfallen as he knows what it means.

BERNIE (CONT'D)

Elton. This is Heather.

Heather grabs Bernie's arm.

HEATHER

You were amazing. Absolutely amazing. I love your boots.

ELTON

I'm not sure they'd suit you.

Bernie looks embarrassed for a moment until Ray bursts in with Doug.

DOUG

Okay, enough bullshit! Who wants to go to a party at Mama Cass's?

Ray holds up some keys.

RAY

This is brilliant. Doug's just lent me his car!

84 EXT. L.A. ROAD - NIGHT

84

The guys are all in an open top car together. Ray drives with a young girl on his lap. Elton, Bernie and Heather and are all excited and love it.

85 I/E. MAMA CASS' HOUSE - NIGHT

85

They pile out of the car. People mill about in the road and in the front garden.

COOL DUDE

Hey man! It's Elton-fuckin-John. Far out.

People give Elton a lot of attention. The cool Dude leads them into the old villa that has tepees and hammocks in the garden and an overgrown woodland feel. Guitars are played round camp fires. A bare footed and bare breasted wonderland of dope, hippies and musicians. Heather takes a joint and feeds it to Bernie as they walk in to the party. It is rock god heaven.

86 INT. MAMA CASS' HOUSE - NIGHT

86

Elton sits on a huge sofa between his heroes Leon Russell and Mama Cass who smokes a big joint which she passes to Elton. It's relaxed and cool. A stoned and merry Bernie comes up and whispers in his ear. \*

BERNIE

Hey Elton. How cool is this?

ELTON

Yeah, great. Apparently, Dylan is here somewhere.

BERNIE

Good, good. Look, I'm going to disappear with Heather for a bit.

Elton looks over at Heather as she gets some dope from the Cool Dude.

ELTON

Really? Right...Er, okay.

BERNIE

You'll be alright won't you?

Elton looks around the party. It's a cool scene that he's not really a part of.

ELTON

Yeah, course. We still going to Tower records?

A distracted Bernie is smiling at Heather.

BERNIE

She's talking about going to somewhere called Paradise Cove tomorrow. We'll go another time.

Elton looks over at Heather. She smiles and waves. Heartbroken, Elton can see that Bernie is smitten.

ELTON

Of course.

BERNIE

She's really cool. So beautiful.  
America, man. Wide open spaces.  
Beautiful girls. It's a dream come  
true. Let's stay forever.

Elton watches Bernie go to Heather as she kisses him and leads him off. Elton watches Bernie and Heather go into the garden.

ELTON

*Blue Jean baby. LA lady. Goddess  
to the band. Pretty eyes, pirate  
smile.*

87 EXT. MAMA CASS' HOUSE - NIGHT. 87

Heather and Bernie find a spot by the fire and she rolls a joint for them.

ELTON

*You'll marry a music man.  
Ballerina. You must have seen her  
dancing in the sand.*

88 INT. MAMA CASS' HOUSE - NIGHT 88

Elton walks through the party with a drink. People laugh and talk but he is alone.

89 EXT. MAMA CASS' HOUSE - NIGHT 89

Heather dances for Bernie by the fire.

ELTON

*And now she's in me. Always with  
me. Tiny Dancer in my hand.*

90 INT. MAMA CASS' HOUSE. NIGHT. 90

Elton watches people dance, drink and make out. A bearded weirdo spins around and shouts. People sit and watch him. It's a drugged out hippy scene.

ELTON

*Jesus freaks. Dance, jowl by check.  
Handing tickets out for God.*

91 EXT. MAMA CASS' HOUSE - NIGHT 91

Someone puts a tab of acid on Bernie and Heather' tongues and they kiss for the first time.

ELTON

*Turning back. She just laughs.*

92 I/E. MAMA CASS' HOUSE - NIGHT 92

Elton walks onto the balcony and looks out over L.A. lights.

ELTON

*Piano man. He makes his stand. In the auditorium.*

93 EXT. MAMA CASS' HOUSE - NIGHT 93

Heather takes Bernie's hand and leads him back into the house

ELTON

*Looking on. She sings his songs. The words she knows. The tunes she hums.*

94 EXT. MAMA CASS' HOUSE - NIGHT 94

Elton looks out over the city as all the guests come out on to the balcony and sing as a chorus.

CHORUS

*But oh how it feels so real lying there with no one near. Only you...*

95 INT. MAMA CASS' HOUSE - NIGHT 95

Bernie and Heather find an empty bed room and enter.

ELTON/CHORUS

*...and you can hear him. When he says softly. Slowly.*

Bernie whispers to her and she laughs and kisses him. Heather smiles and suddenly leaves the room. Bernie is confused. \*

\*

96 EXT. MAMA CASS' HOUSE - NIGHT 96

Elton looks out over L.A. Sings:

ELTON/CHORUS

*Hold me closer tiny dancer. Count  
the headlights on the highway.*

He sees the cars lights on Sunset Blvd below.

ELTON/CHORUS (CONT'D)

*Lay me down in sheets of linen. You  
had a busy day today.*

97 INT. MAMA CASS' BEDROOM - NIGHT 97

Heather returns with another girl and they undresses Bernie together and they make love. \*

ELTON

*Hold me closer Tiny Dancer. You had  
a busy day today.*

98 INT. MAMA CASS' HOUSE. NIGHT. 98

Elton wanders in from the balcony and sits on the sofa alone.

99 INT. MAMA CASS' HOUSE - NIGHT 99

Elton wakes on the sofa. His head spins and he feels hung over. A smartly dressed man, JOHN REID sits in an arm chair opposite him. He is calm and relaxed and has a knowing smile. He speaks in a soft Scottish accent. He hands Elton a glass of champagne. \*

REID

Dom Perignon. 63. A very good vintage.

ELTON

No thanks.

REID

It's always important to rely on the kindness of strangers.

Elton looks blank.

REID (CONT'D)

Never mind. John Reid.

He sits next to Elton.

REID (CONT'D)

I know it's all a bit overwhelming at first but something makes me think you'll get used to it.

ELTON

You're that good a judge of character are you?

REID

Of a great many things. In fact, I predict you could be the best selling artist in America if you desire.

ELTON

So you like the songs then?

REID

Not quite as much as the singer.

Reid stares at Elton. Elton stares back, amazed at this ultra-confident creature. Reid knocks back the champagne and twinkles a smile at Elton. He speaks in a low seductive tone. \*

REID (CONT'D)

You don't realise what happened at The Troubadour tonight, do you? There are moments in a rock stars life that define who he is and how people perceive him as he ascends into the heavens. You lit the blue touch paper and now we can all see you throwing light and colour and magic into the night sky. Where there was darkness, there is now - you. Elton John. You can do anything you want. You can be anyone you want. And it's going to be a wild ride.

Reid leans in and kisses Elton who mesmerized by this strange, dangerous and exciting creature doesn't resist.

ELTON

Fireworks?

Reid smiles.

100 INT. HOTEL BEDROOM - NIGHT/MORNING 100

Naked on the bed Elton and Reid kiss. The curtain blows in the wind as the bodies in the shadows, back lit by the neon from outside the window embrace and make love.

Overhead shot of Elton in bed. Elton looks over to reveal Reid next to him. Reid's hand rests on his side as he sleeps.

Elton gently puts his hand over Reid's, being careful not to disturb him. ELton settles back, stares upwards, amazed, excited and enthralled that this has happened to him.

101 EXT. TROUBADOUR - EVENING 101

Elton, Reid, arrive at the club and there is a huge crowd around the block. Some asks Elton to sign his album. Ray rushes out to meet them.

RAY

Where the fuck have you been?

Ray ushers them in.

102 INT. TROUBADOUR - EVENING 102 \*

Elton, Reid, and Ray walk through the club.

RAY

A review from the L.A. Times has been syndicated. Things are going crazy.

They are met by Doug at the dressing room door who reads from the paper. Bernie and Heather are there too.

DOUG

"Rejoice. Rock music has a new star. He's Elton John a 23 year old Englishman whose debut at the Troubadour was in every way magnificent." It's happening my friends.

Reid takes the paper and reads it.

REID

I knew it. I fucking knew it.

Bernie sees that Elton is captivated by Reid and that he looks different. Elton smiles at him.

RAY

Dick's extended our stay. We're in San Francisco tomorrow for three nights. After that we fly to NYC. Back here for two more shows. Then Dick wants us back in London to start the new album.

REID

This is it. You're off.

ELTON

Will I see you when I get back?

REID

Work takes me away a lot.

ELTON

But I want to see you again.

REID

Don't worry about me. Go, enjoy your moment. That's what's important.

ELTON

Come to London with me.

REID

I can't but next time I'm there I'll look you up. Promise.

DOUG

You're on kid. Don't keep your public waiting.

RIED

I'm going to watch out front.

Reid goes.

DOUG

Elton!

Doug points to the stage.

ELTON

Give me a moment.

Elton looks at the crowd through the curtain and tries to take it in. Bernie joins him.

BERNIE

You okay?

ELTON

We got to work twice as hard now,  
Bernie.

Bernie smiles.

BERNIE

We will.

ELTON

It's never gonna last.

BERNIE

So let's enjoy it while we can.

Elton smiles but actually looks closer to tears.

ELTON

I'm so fucking scared.

Bernie hugs his friend. Elton composes himself. We hear the crowd go wild and cheer.

'DON'T GO BREAKING MY HEART' starts to play.

103A	INT. DICK JAMES OFFICE - DAY	103A	*
	Close on a phone ringing. Mary, the secretary, grabs it.		*
	<p style="text-align: center;">MARY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dick James Publishing.</p>		* *
	Ray, hurriedly gets some papers together, obviously late. There are boxes of Fan letters on the floor and a pile of Elton's photos on his desk waiting to be signed. The reception looks like a bomb has gone off and it's in complete chaos.		* * * * *
	<p style="text-align: center;">RAY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(To himself)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Shit, shit, shit! Where is that fucking contract.</p>		* * * *
	<p style="text-align: center;">MARY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Hold on. Ray! It's Carl from Record Mirror.</p>		* * *
	<p style="text-align: center;">RAY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What? Was I suppose to call him?</p>		* *

MARY

I don't know. He's asking for the  
release date for Elton's new  
single.

RAY

Really!? I don't know.

MARY

(into the phone)  
He doesn't know.

RAY

Don't tell him that! Did you  
arrange the car to take Elton to  
the studio?

MARY

I didn't know I had too.

RAY

What!?

MARY

Can Carl get an advance copy of the  
album?

RAY

No! Send him some tickets for the  
European tour or something.

MARY

Next year? He tours Canada and  
North America before that.

RAY

Right! Whatever! Oh balls, I'm  
late. Just sort it out.

Another phone starts to ring. Mary answers.

MARY

Dick James Publishing  
(Beat)  
Ray, it's Lorrain from the Mail...

Ray grabs his bag and runs out the door.

Elton sings with KIKI DEE. She is full of energy and they are  
both having a great time with the song.

105 INT. CONTROL BOOTH - EVENING 105

Ray is in the control booth and Reid enters. He smiles at Elton and nods. Elton stops the recording and waves Reid in.

106 INT. STUDIO - EVENING 106

An excited Elton is with Reid.

ELTON

What are you doing here?

REID

Business and I promised if I was ever in town I'd look you up.

ELTON

How long are you staying?

REID

Not sure, that depends.

ELTON

I can beg if you like.

REID

For the last six months I've been hearing your songs everywhere. It makes it very hard to stop thinking about you.

ELTON

Really?

Ray comes in.

RAY

Come on Elton, what are you doing? Either let's go again or go to the pub....

Reid pushes Elton into a closet.

107 INT. CLOSET - EVENING

107

Reid gets up close and personal. The seduction is on.

REID

What do you want, Elton?

ELTON

Nothing.

REID

Wrong answer.

Reid kisses him.

ELTON

Dinner with you?

REID

You're so humble it's embarrassing. You're a millionaire rock star who lives at home with his mum! This is grown up time now. Things are serious. Be brave. Think big. What do you really want!?

They kiss. Reid smiles and opens the door. Bernie and Heather are there now dressed in top hat and tails and an evening gown and point at a huge theatrical curtain.

Intro: 'HONKEY CAT'

John Reid becomes Elton's manager and leads him on a 'dance journey' of discovery. Introducing him to all the finer things in life. At each stage they accumulate expensive possessions.

All executed in a Hollywood 1940,/50's Musical dance style.

They enter the ballroom, and join other dancers. Reid swings Elton into a tailors dressing room.

ELTON

*When I look back, boy, I must have  
been green. Bopping in the country,  
fishing in a stream. Looking for an  
answer, trying to find a sign  
Until I saw your city lights,  
honey, I was blind.*

A swarm of designers gather around him with colourful bolts of cloth, sequined jackets, crazy hats. They swirl around him and he eventually emerges from the colour, transformed in his new attire, Reid looks on approvingly.

REID

*They said, get back, honky cat  
Better get back to the woods  
Well, I quit those days and my  
redneck ways. And, oh, the change  
is gonna do me good.*

Then they dance over to a restaurant table. Waiters make a fuss, setting the table, napkins, champagne and caviar served.

ELTON

*You better get back, honky cat  
Living in the city ain't where it's  
at. It's like trying to find gold  
in a silver mine. It's like trying  
to drink whiskey from a bottle of  
wine*

A car horn sounds and a convertible Rolls Royce pulls up. As they jump in the back, back projection kicks in to reveal the French Riviera mountain roads. They stop at the top of a...

Staircase, as they walk / dance down the stairs , Jewelers surround them ( Like Monroe in Diamonds), they drape them in watches, rings, diamond necklaces etc.

ELTON (CONT'D)

*Well, I read some books, and I read some magazines. About those high-class ladies down in New Orleans. And all the folks back home, well, said I was a fool. They said, oh, believe in the Lord is the golden rule.*

At the bottom of the stairs a shop window full of adverts for Large Mansion houses, Reid appears with a house brochure, shows it to Elton, Reid opens his briefcase, takes out a gold pen and cheque book, with a flourish he writes and hands it to estate agent. Elton and Reid walk off happy.

An art house worker pushes a stage flat onto the stage with a collection of Francis Bacon's, Picasso's and Van Gogh's. Elton and Reid walk along making a selection.

ELTON/REID

*They said, get back, honky cat  
Better get back to the woods  
Well, I quit those days and my  
redneck ways. And, oh oh oh, oh,  
change is gonna do me good. They  
said, stay at home, boy, you gotta  
tend the farm. Living in the city,  
boy, is going to break your heart.  
But how can you stay when your  
heart says no? How can you stop  
when your feet say go?*

The Artwork is rolled away to reveal a Caribbean beach, with young men and woman drinking cocktails and playing beachball Reid and Elton strip down to their bathing suits and join in.

A Pair of plane steps appear they run up them and appear inside a beautifully furnished private plane with a piano and bar in the middle. They exit the plane and find them selves

In an Auction House, Furniture, sculptures are bid for, the auctioneers gavel coming down again and again and pointing to ELTON, SOLD.

They get up and walk through a big door into...

108

INT. REID'S OFFICE - DAY

108

Reid sits at his desk in his newly finished office. Gold disks on the walls etc. Dick James and Ray are there. It's clear Elton has a hectic year or two ahead.

Elton is dressed fantastically and plays pinball and drinks whiskey from a tumbler. Dick looks at Elton.

\*  
\*

REID

No one's being phased out, Dick.  
Elton just feels that things will run more smoothly if he has personal management.

Ray looks at the Francis Bacon on the wall a little confused.

RAY

Is this upside down?

DICK

Shut up Ray! There's never been a problem before.

\*

REID

And there isn't one now. There's lots of work and commitments. Tours etc and that's what I'll be doing. Personal management. Taking care of things.

DICK

Will you really? You do realise I have a contract with Elton.

REID

I've already had that looked into. He's quite within his rights to take on outside representation.

DICK

That's what you think, you fucking poofa.

Dick turns on Elton.

DICK (CONT'D)

And you're happy with this arrangement are you? After all these years.

REID

It's not personal, Dick.

Dick sizes Elton up then walks to the door.

DICK

Come on, Ray. I own a percentage of the next two albums.

(MORE)

DICK (CONT'D)

You'll be hearing from my lawyer  
you fucking rat bag.

Dick and Ray go.

ELTON

That was horrible.

REID

Don't worry, it's business. Dick's  
a big boy. He'll be fine.

A handsome young male P.A. BRYAN, comes in and delivers a bag \*  
of cocaine which Reid puts in a box on his desk. \*

BRYAN

Lord Grade's office have called  
about the Royal Variety  
performance. Apparently the Queen  
Mother is a big fan. I've booked  
the tickets for St. Tropez and the  
return flight to London the next  
morning.

REID

Put us both on that and get me the  
number for the BBC.

Bryan exits.

ELTON

Couldn't we have kept on Ray? He's  
a lovely guy.

Reid looks at Elton.

REID

'Lovely guy' is not a job. This is  
a crucial time, Elton. You and I  
are going to have to be more  
careful. The papers have been  
sniffing around. We can't give them  
anything to speculate on. I'm  
thinking of getting someone in as  
your girlfriend.

ELTON

Seems a bit excessive. \*

REID

No, this is your career and our  
business at stake. If our sleeping  
arrangements get out then all this  
is gone.

ELTON

Right.

REID

You'll need to talk to your  
parents. Make sure they know what  
to say. Those are the first doors  
reporters knock on.

109 EXT. STANLEY'S HOUSE - DAY

109

A limo stops in a drab suburban street. Elton gets out  
extravagantly dressed and looks completely out of place. Kids  
look in amazement. He walks down the path of a down at heel  
house. He rings the doorbell and waits. The door opens and  
Stanley looks at Elton in shock for a moment.

ELTON

Hello, Dad.

STANLEY

Hello, Reg. Come in.

110 INT. STANLEY'S HOUSE - DAY

110

Elton sits on a small armchair and looks around whilst  
Stanley sits on the sofa. It is still very awkward between  
them. More so than ever.

ELTON

Looks like things have worked out  
well second time round.

STANLEY

Yes. I suppose.

ELTON

Not everybody gets a second chance.

STANLEY

No. Why are you here, reg?

ELTON

I wanted to show you how well I'm  
doing.

Elton takes out a Rolex box and hands it to Stanley. Stanley  
opens the box and looks at the watch and is dumbfounded.

ELTON (CONT'D)

My Music is really taking off.

Stanley turns the watch over in his hands and looks at it. It really is a beautiful gift. Suddenly they hear the frontdoor open and Stanley quickly puts the watch away. A 12 year old boy similar to the young Reggie runs in and jumps onto the sofa next to his father. \*

GEOFF

Dad, there's a Rolls Royce outside!

Stanley hugs Geoff whilst a second boy runs and jumps on the sofa. \*

STANLEY

Geoff, Stephen. This is your brother, Reggie.

STEPHEN

Half-brother.

ELTON

I'm not called Reggie anymore.

There's an awkward silence.

ELTON (CONT'D)

I thought once I'm back off tour we could all get together. As a family.

\*  
\*

STANLEY

Maybe.

\*  
\*  
\*

Elton looks at Stanley and the boys - it's clear there's no real place or understanding for him here.

GEOFF

Are you really worth twenty-five million pound?

Elton tries his best to smile.

ELTON

I don't know. I hope so.

\*

STANLEY

They're really proud of you. We've even got some of your records.

\*  
\*

STEPHEN

My mums say's you're a poofta.

\*  
\*

GEOFF

What's a poofta?

\*  
\*

STANLEY

That's enough now boys.

\*  
\*  
\*

Elton is too uncomfortable - he stands up.

\*

ELTON

I'd better be off.

\*

STANLEY

Maybe you'd like to stay for tea?

STEPHEN

I thought you said we could go to  
the chippy.

ELTON

No really, I have to get goin.

STANLEY

Hang on.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Stanley leaves the room and the boys stare at Elton. No love lost here. It takes an age. Elton stands, deeply embarrassed by the whole thing. Stanley returns and hands Elton a pen and an album. \*

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Put 'To Arthur' - he's a bloke I work with. He's quite a big fan. \*

Slowly Elton signs. \*

GEOFF

That'll be worth a few bob now. \*

Elton looks at his father who is still unable to express any love for him. \*

STANLEY

Well, it was very nice of you to pop by, wasn't it. \*

GEOFF

Let me see. \*

STEPHEN

He smells of lavender. \*

Stanley holds out his hand and shakes Elton's. \*

ELTON

You still don't know when yo hug me do you. \*

Stanley looks at Elton. Elton's right- he still can't bring himself to show Elton any physical affection. \*

111 EXT. STANLEY'S HOUSE - DAY

111

On the door step Stanley holds out his hand and shakes Elton's in a friendly manner.

STANLEY

The boys loved meeting a real life pop star. \*

ELTON

Sure. Thanks, dad.

Stanley looks at Elton. He still can't bring himself to show Elton any physical affection.

112 INT. ROLLS ROYCE - DAY

112

Close on Elton as he looks at the house. The reality harsh and raw. The boys with their faces pressed up against the windows look back at him. Stanley comes and gets them away and gives a little wave. Tears start to run down Elton's cheeks.

\*

113 INT. THERAPY ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY 113

Close on Elton as he cries. He looks up and sees the group all looking at him. He picks up the chair and throws it across the room at the wall.

ELTON

What've you got to do get a fucking drink around here?!

The rest of the group and the counselor stare in shock at him.

114 INT. WOODSIDE MANSION BEDROOM. DAY. 114

Elton and Reid walk out through the hallway as staff clean and make things nice.

REID

I ask you to do one thing to protect our lives and you can't even do that!

ELTON

You really pick your moments, don't you? I've got a show. Can we do this another time.

REID

You're not the first closeted queer with a mummy complex.

115 I/E. WOODSIDE MANSION STAIRS. DAY. 115

REID

You've got to grow up. You're getting worse. Do you want me to tell her?

ELTON

Why would I want that?

REID

Because I do everything.

ELTON

No. She'll make it about herself and be all distressed and dramatic. It'll be horrible.

\*  
\*

REID

Would you rather some sleazy reporter talk to her and have her blab the wrong thing? The next day you'll be reading a headline saying 'Elton John - Queer.' Is that what you want? She needs to be clear on what to say. I've arranged for her to come over Sunday, talk to her then.

ELTON

What? You didn't think to ask me first? Do you care how much pressure I'm under?

REID

Not really.

They exit the house and there are few expensive cars on the driveway. They get into a limo.

116 INT. LIMO - DAY

116

Elton and Reid are in the back of a limo. Elton drinks whiskey as Reid fumes.

REID

For fucks sake, stop sulking. It has to be done wether you like it or not! Are you going to be scared of her your whole life?

\*  
\*

ELTON

Right! Stop the car!!

REID

Honestly, you're pathetic.

The car stops.

REID (CONT'D)

You're on stage in 15 minutes!

Elton gets out.

ELTON

You're the big shot manager. You make my excuses! Tell them I'm indisposed - breaking my mothers heart.

117 EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY 117

Reid shouts from the window of the car as Elton legs it down the street.

REID  
Elton! Elton!

118 INT. REGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY 118

Sheila and Fred settle down to watch the telly. 'Liberace at the Royal Albert Hall'. The phone rings. Sheila picks up.

SHEILA  
Pinner 9755.

ELTON (O.S.)  
Mum. It's me.

SHEILA  
I know who you are!

119 INT. PHONE BOX - DAY 119

Elton is half drunk, the bottle of whiskey in his hand.

ELTON  
I have something to tell you.

SHEILA  
Reggie, we're going to miss the bit of the show with you on.

ELTON  
Look, shut up, Mum! I'm not on telly yet. I'm talking to you.

SHEILA (O.S.)  
But it's already started and it's live....It's live!

ELTON  
I've got something important to say. For Christ sake. Tell Fred to turn the TV down. Mum. Me and John we're...The thing is...I'm homosexual. A poofa. A fairy. A queen.

Silence.

\*

ELTON (CONT'D)

Say something.

SHEILA

For godsake, I know that. I've known for years.

ELTON

No you haven't!

\*

SHEILA

Of course I have. You're my child.

\*

ELTON

Right. And you don't mind?

SHEILA

Frankly, I don't care. I'd rather you keep that sort of thing to yourself. I just hope you realise you're choosing a life of being alone forever. You'll never be loved properly.

Elton hangs up as Reid opens the door of the phone box.

ELTON

She said I'll never be loved.

Reid grabs Elton and gets in his face.

REID

Don't you ever put me in that fucking position again. You asshole. You're on in 5 minutes so get over yourself and do the fucking show. We're running a business, you fat shit!

\*

Elton pushes him away.

REID (CONT'D)

Don't you push me.

Reid slaps him in the face then storms off.

\*

120

INT. ROYAL ALBERT HALL, DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

120

Elton looks in the mirror at his bruised cheek. He applies some make up to cover it. He puts on an outrageous pair of glasses, then changes them for a more outrageous pair. Then he his hair - his comb is full of hairs.

\*

He looks carefully where he is going bald. He sniffs a line of coke off a mirror and then puts on a outrageous head-dress hat to cover his receding hairline.

121 INT. ROYAL ALBERT HALL, BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

121 \*

Elton come out of the dressing room. Bernie looks at him obviously unimpressed by the outlandish of his costume.

BERNIE

You ok?

Elton walks off down the corridor as Bernie rushes to keep up.

ELTON

I've got the number one album in America, again! I'm about to embark on the highest grossing tour in rock history. I'm personally responsible for 5% of all record sales on the entire planet and I have the highest platform heels known to man. Of course I'm OK.

BERNIE

It used to be only the two of us. Now there is bus loads of people just to do the music. Don't you ever want to go out and sing without all this paraphernalia? You know, be yourself?

As they come round the corner they both see Reid talking intimately with a young man.

ELTON

Why the fuck would I want to do that? If you were a real friend you wouldn't say that shit. People don't pay to see Reg Dwight. They pay to see Elton John! Don't ever tell me how to do my job.

Reid looks at Elton. The young man laughs out of embarrassment.

BERNIE

You don't have to put up with this, you know, Reg.

ELTON

Write the fucking lyrics, Bernie.  
Let me deal with the rest.

Elton takes a shot of Jack Daniels from a bottle behind the stage then turn to Bernie.

ELTON (CONT'D)

Sorry.

BERNIE

I know.

Elton walks out on stage.

122

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

122

Elton starts a wild piano with the PINBALL WIZARD riff. He screams wildly into the camera.

ELTON

*Ever since I was a young boy. I've played the silver ball. From Soho down to Brighton. I must have played them all. But I ain't seen nothing like him. In any amusement hall. That deaf dumb and blind kid. Sure plays a mean pinball!*

We enter Elton 'Pinball world'. A giant pinball machine of tours and making huge amounts of money. Reid plays Elton as the ball and Elton is blindly bounced and buffered from one concert to another. From another country to another spending spree. People rush and pull him. Elton is under the glass of the machine and keeps moving and being played. He goes down different holes and pops out at a new gig. Reid sings too as he plays, laughs and grins away.

REID

*He stands like a statue. Becomes part of the machine. Feeling all the bumpers. Always playing clean. He plays by intuition. The deaf dumb and blind kid. Sure plays a mean pinball!*

\*

GIRLS AND BOYS

*How do you he does it? I don't know! What makes him so good?*

The game gets faster and faster and more manic, Elton spins round faster and faster until Reid gives it one shove too many and Elton goes down the black hole marked L.A. We pan up and see the machines TILT light flash. \*

123 INT. CORRIDOR, ELTON'S HOUSE, L.A - DAY 123

Elton walks out of his room into the bright sunlight - an amazing looking transvestite maid cleans.

ELTON  
Where am I?

MAID  
At your house, Mr John. In L.A.

124 EXT. POOL AREA, ELTON'S HOUSE, L.A. - DAY 124

Elton walks out to the pool side. The 'maid' gives him an orange juice.

ELTON  
Put a couple of shots of vodka in there.

He sees Reid, slightly obscured by a pool side table.

REID  
Morning.

Elton sees a young man emerge and realises that Reid has had a BJ from him.

ELTON  
You're up early.

REID  
Just a bit of 'rock and roll'.

ELTON  
Rock and roll is not screwing the cleaning staff.

REID  
Rock and roll is getting you out of bed in the morning. Arranging 250 gigs a year and overseeing PRS audits in 176 different countries. It's employment contracts for 112 people in full or part-time employment.

(MORE)

REID (CONT'D)

It's insurance, copyright indemnity, renegotiating your previously insane contracts and wiping your arse. All you do is play the piano but in my case, Elton, rock and roll is a 87 million dollar a year industry and you begrudge me a little bit on the side. You really are a selfish prick.

ELTON

Get out.

REID

You're so predictable.

ELTON

This is my house. Get out of here. I want to be by myself. Not with people who don't give a shit about me and take the fucking piss.

Reid laughs at Elton. A voice calls out.

\*

SHEILA (O.S.)

Yohoo. Elton.

Elton turns and sees Sheila, Fred, Ivy and a bunch of Brits who have just arrived. They are not dressed for the sun and all have suitcases and bags with them.

ELTON

What the fuck is all this?

REID

You told me to hire a plane and fly your family over for the gig.

ELTON

I did?

Sheila joins with some other people.

SHEILA

You remember the Anderson's from next door, don't you?

Elton looks to see a middle aged couple he has no recollection of. 'The maid' comes and takes their bags and their eyes nearly pop out of their heads.

MR. ANDERSON

Your lovely Mum's been telling us all about the house you've bought her in Barnes.

MRS. ANDERSON

And what a shy little boy you were. Look at you now. Such a lovely big house.

Ivy comes joins.

IVY

I can't believe I'm actually in America. I've never been on a plane before.

She hugs him.

ELTON

How was it?

IVY

I didn't like the going up and coming down bits but the rest of it was nice.

She looks around at all the people laughing and invading his home and then takes Elton in. Ivy can see Elton is not at his best.

IVY (CONT'D)

Are we still going on that little trip you promised?

Elton looks puzzled at Reid who nods.

REID

Of course you are Ivy. It's all arranged.

SHEILA

Come on Elton, you can show us around.

Sheila takes Elton by the arm and leads him away with the Anderson's.

125

EXT. LAS VEGAS - NIGHT

125

The bright lights of the city. We hear the closing music of Elvis' show.

126

INT. ELVIS' DRESSING ROOM, LAS VEGAS CASINO - NIGHT

126

The door opens and SONNY is there with Elton and Ivy.

SONNY

Elton John. Pop star from England.

As he opens the door.

SONNY (CONT'D)

(To Elton)

Make it quick.

Members of the Memphis Mafia hang about and drink. ELVIS is sat in a throne at his dressing table in his very ornate and over blown dressing room. He is fat and sweaty. His breathing is labored. He is doped up to the eye balls and not all there. Streaks of black hair dye run down the side of his face which an obsequious hair dresser tries in vain to fix. No one takes any notice of Elton and Ivy. Close on Elton as he sees the sorry state his boyhood hero is in.

ELVIS

How did I sound tonight boys?

SONNY

Great boss. Really strong.

ELVIS

And the back?

MEMPHIS MAFIA

Good at the back. People were crying.

ELVIS

Hey Joe, find me another nice girl tonight. That one last night man, I tell ya! Best damned head I'd ever had.

All the mafia boys laugh and agree with Elvis. Ivy steps forward.

IVY

Elvis. It's lovely to meet you. My grandson, Elton and I are big fans.

ELVIS

That's real nice. Thank you ma'm. I heard of your son. Everybody has.

The mafia all nod but there's an awkward silence.

ELTON

I was hoping you'd sing Heartbreak Hotel tonight. It was my first record.

ELVIS

Another English boy come over to conquer the states and steal our money and women huh? That's real nice. What's your record called?

ELTON

'Candle in the wind'.

ELVIS

No, I think it was another one. I don't remember.

ELTON

You were a huge inspiration to me.

ELVIS

'Were'?

Elton doesn't know what to say and Elvis sees it in his eyes. Elvis takes a cheap nylon scarf from around his neck, dabs his forehead then gives it to Ivy.

ELVIS (CONT'D)

Here you go ma'm. Glad you'all enjoyed the show.

One of the Memphis Mafia starts to take off Elvis' boots as he cant reach them himself.

SONNY

Okay let's get you out of here. The King is tired.

Elton takes a last look at his hero before he exits. The crowd can be heard still screaming 'Elvis, Elvis'.

127

INT. BACKSTAGE, LAS VEGAS CASINO - NIGHT

127

A shell shocked Elton and Ivy follow Sonny.

IVY

Mark my words. Dead in six months.

Close on Elton 'FUNERAL FOR A FRIEND'.

128 INT. ELTON'S HOUSE L.A. - DAY

128

Bernie arrives in his cowboy gear with a couple of blonde girls in tow. The front door is open and they go inside. Old friends, and neighbors from Pinner cavort with record company people and enjoy the thrill of being in a rock star's home. Bernie looks into the library and sees Reid snog a young man. He then catches a glimpse of two or three men as they embrace. A GUY chatting up a GIRL stops Bernie.

BAND MEMBER

Hey Bernie, tell her how many people we're playing to at Dodger's tomorrow?

ELTON

Er, 50-60,000.

BAND MEMBER

See? Over two nights, that's more than a hundred thousand people.

GIRL

Yeah, I can do math you know.

Bernie wanders off with the girls.

128A INT. BEDROOM, ELTON'S HOUSE, L.A. - DAY

128A

Elton sits alone in the darkened room. Elton vaguely mumbles to himself and lines up a row of pills on the coffee table. There's a gentle knock and Bernie and the girls stick their heads in.

BERNIE

Elt. You okay? You're missing the all fun.

ELTON

Well as long as the fun isn't missing me then who gives a shit?

Bernie turns to the girls.

BERNIE

We'll chat to him later.

Bernie closes the door.

- 129 EXT. PARTY, ELTON'S HOUSE, L.A. - DAY 129
- Around the pool Sheila, Ivy and Fred are all in their swimming costumes and have the time of their lives.
- 130 INT. BEDROOM, ELTON'S HOUSE, L.A. - DAY 130 \*
- Elton necks a pile of pills and slurps Jack Daniels. He stands up but the room sways violently and staggers into the corridor. \*
- 131 INT. CORRIDOR, ELTON'S HOUSE, L.A. - DAY 131 \*
- Elton steadies himself and wanders through the party being the perfect host but in reality he falls into things. He knocks down a vase of flowers and falls over. The guests watch impassive.
- 132 EXT. POOL AREA, ELTON'S HOUSE, L.A. - DAY 132
- Outside everyone has a great time at the party. There is a crash as Elton throws open the doors. Everybody looks.

Elton walks along the side of the pool and climbs on to the diving board and holds out his arms. People laugh and clap.

ELTON

And for my next trick - I am going  
to drown myself.

He the falls face first in to the pool and hits the water with a massive splash.

133 INT. POOL, ELTON'S HOUSE, L.A - DAY

133

Elton sinks slowly to the bottom. The pool is unfeasibly deep. As he sinks, pills float out of his mouth like bubbles. He goes further and further to the bottom as the intro to Rocketman plays. Elton reaches the bottom of the pool and is curious to find a tiny figure dressed in an astronaut's spacesuit who plays the introduction on a tiny toy piano. The tiny figure is Young Reggie.

REGGIE

*She packed my bags last night pre-flight. Zero hour nine a.m.*

The song is muffled by the space helmet. But now we are inside the space helmet with Reggie and singing is fine.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

*And I'm gonna be high as a kite by then.*

Elton thrashes around, desperately and tries to get away from Reggie, who looks up sadly. People dive in above Elton and swim down to him.

ELTON

*I miss the earth so much. I miss my life. It's lonely out in space.*

Elton is hauled upwards by people.

ELTON (CONT'D)

*On such a timeless flight.*

He is hauled out of the pool. Everybody looks at him.

ELTON (CONT'D)

*And I think it's gonna be a long, long time. Till touch down brings me round again to find.*

He is rushed through the crowds on a trolley - Bernie mops his brow, Reid pushes people out of the way - to an ambulance.

ELTON (CONT'D)

*I'm not the man I think I am at  
all. Oh no no no, I'm a rocketman.  
Rocketman burning out his fuse up  
here alone -*

134 INT. AMBULANCE, L.A. - DAY 134

Elton in the ambulance wired to machinery. Elton looks at the Paramedic.

ELTON

*And all this science I don't  
understand. It's just my job five  
days a week. A rocket man, a rocket  
man.*

135 EXT. UNDERGROUND CAR PARK - DAY 135

Elton's ambulance pulls up. Paramedics run to the vehicle and open the doors. As they spring open and Elton climbs out being helped by the paramedics.

136 EXT. SERVICE CORRIDOR - DAY 136

What appeared to be the entrance to the hospital turns out to be the entrance to backstage. Reid and his acolytes swarm round Elton and start to put him back together. A line of coke as they put on his stage costume. A shot of whiskey as they put on his hat and glasses. Elton straightens up and is now dressed in his Dodger's Stadium attire with his bat.

ELTON

*And I think it's gonna be a long,  
long time. Till touch down brings  
me round again to find.*

137 EXT. DODGERS STADIUM STAGE, L.A. - NIGHT 137

Elton runs backstage but sings on. He runs on stage. The crowd goes wild. As he comes on someone from the crowd throws a ball. Elton swings his bat and hits it way into the crowd.

ELTON

*I'm not the man I think I am at  
all. Oh no no no, I'm a Rocket man.  
(MORE)*

ELTON (CONT'D)

*Rocket man burning out his fuse up  
here alone -*

Elton stares out at the vast crowd, the whole stadium is lit by lighters. The camera pans up, it is impossible to know where the lighters stop and the stars of the night sky start. We pan up to the stars in the night sky. A jet flies across the sky. Elton looks up at the plane and suddenly shoots up into the air like a rocket.

138 INT. STARSHIP ONE - NIGHT

138

Elton lands in a seat on the plane and Bernie sits opposite him. Reid, and all the cronies are either crashed out or drunk at the bar.

BERNIE

Elton? Elton!

ELTON

What were you saying?

Elton looks a bit unsure where he is.

BERNIE

I need a break.

ELTON

You need a break? What about me!?

BERNIE

Creatively speaking. I need to sort myself out.

ELTON

Jesus Bernie, for a straight man you can be really gay sometimes.

BERNIE

I've got nothing to say anymore. Every time I wake up all I see is clouds. One tour after another. I don't know who I am half the time. I'm going home for a while.

ELTON

That's nice for you

BERNIE

You're stronger than me. I'm not the writer I was.

ELTON

Is this the same speech you make  
when you want another divorce?

BERNIE

When did you get so cynical, Elton.  
It's doesn't suit you.

A beat while Elton looks at Bernie.

BERNIE (CONT'D)

Why don't we both just disappear  
for a bit together. Recharge. We  
can go to my ranch and hide away.  
Write like the old days. You in one  
room, me in another. There's plenty  
of space...

ELTON

No. There's other writers I want to  
work with. It'll do me good to  
collaborate with new people. We  
should take a break.

Bernie gets up and walks back to the bar. Elton watches him  
and all the others drink and party. A dark mood is over him.

138A INT. SIDE STAGE, AUSTRALIA - NIGHT

138A

Elton waits to go on. A MINION fusses with his huge wig.

ELTON

I can't fucking move. What's the  
point of the wig if I can't fucking  
move.

MINION

You have to let the glue dry.

ELTON

Well get it to hurry up. Where's my  
sushi?

SUSHI GIRL

Here.

ELTON

This is yellowtail.

SUSHI GIRL

Yes, we flew it in from Osaka.

ELTON  
I hate fucking yellowtail.

He throws the sushi.

ELTON (CONT'D)  
Everybody knows I hate yellowtail.

MINION  
Please stop moving.

ELTON  
How am I expected to play in front  
of 5000 people on nothing but  
yellowtail! Fuck this. Give me a  
bottle of whiskey for god's sake.

139 INT. THE STAGE, AUSTRALIA - NIGHT

139

Elton staggers onto the stage. The crowd start to applaud. He makes it to the piano and sits. He laughs to himself.

ELTON  
My loyal subjects!

Elton laughs again.

ELTON (CONT'D)  
Hello. Hello, Australia. Or New  
York. Or Swindon. Or where-ever-the-  
hell-we-are.

Silence. Someone coughs.

ELTON (CONT'D)  
The problem with you lot, the  
problem with you lot is you think  
"Oh here comes Elton he'll cheer us  
up. He'll sing us a song". But you  
know what? It's not that easy. Have  
you thought about what's going on?  
(MORE)

ELTON (CONT'D)

Have you asked yourself what you're doing here, listening to me all happy clappy. There are people starving in Africa. There are people dying, people without homes and here we are singing bloody songs about it.

He takes a drink of water and tries to pull himself together.

ELTON (CONT'D)

But anyway, I blame the Arabs and the Jews and the Christians and the Hindus and some of those Buddhists aren't so great either.

Elton laughs at himself. The rest of the band can't hide their embarrassment.

ELTON (CONT'D)

Anyway, this ones for all the atheists out there.

As the music kicks in. "BENNY AND THE JETS".

140 INT. STARSHIP ONE - NIGHT

140

Elton's usual after show party full of debauched hedonistic party people. Drag queen's, Muscle men/women, hangers on, groupies of both sex, roadies and all the weird and wonderful going strong. They cheer as Elton enters. The guests are all dressed in Elton's stage outfits from over the years.

DRAG QUEEN

*Hey kids, shake it loose together.  
The spotlight's hitting something.  
That's been known to change the  
weather. We'll kill the fatted calf  
tonight.*

The camera pulls out as someone drapes a huge mink coat over Elton's naked shoulders.

141 INT. PARTY WONDERLAND, UNDERGROUND CLUB NYC 80'S - NIGHT 141

Elton and all the people from the party dance in as Elton sings.

The party Elton's always wanted, where anything goes and all the bold and the beautiful are there doing their debauched best. Elton goes from room to room.

He wanders into a large hall/ party area where it all happens.

ELTON

*So stick around. You're gonna hear electric music. Solid walls of sound. Say, Candy and Ronnie, have you seen them yet. Uh but they're so spaced out.*

A high and drunk Elton kisses anyone who is near. He also hands out watches and gifts to everyone who smiles at him.

Next to Elton - a huge naked man wearing a chief's head dress appears next to him.

Now everyone dances in synchronization. Hands wander all over naked bodies.

Elton smiles to the camera and gets on his knees, turns to the guy - Elton finds he is perfectly positioned, at crotch height. The crowd close in. The crowd part to reveal Elton singing straight to camera.

Elton sits at a grand piano and plays. As he sings he is in a golden halo - Elton singing delightedly into the camera. The crowd close in on Elton singing like a door closing.

Elton appears with someone on his knees in front of him - a blonde young man. The young man stands, wipes his lips and Elton hands him a watch and strolls towards the bed.

A young muscle man spreads himself out and rolls around. He then takes Elton by the hand and they climb into bed together.

ELTON (CONT'D)

*B-B-B-Benie and the Jets. Oh but they're weird and they're wonderful. Oh Benie she's really keen. She's got electric boots a mohair suit. You know I read it in a magazine. B-B-B-Bennie and the Jets.*

There is a succession of men that Elton rolls in and out of bed with. He pulls the sheets over their heads and then a new man is in there with him. He rolls over and there is a different man in there. He kisses one guy and then there is a new man in there. It gets faster and faster and more bodies roll around.



ELTON  
What the hell are you scared of?

HUGH  
Dying. We've had a wild time but I  
can't be part of this. The drink  
and drugs are more important to you  
than people. You should look after  
yourself.

ELTON  
It's a bit late for that.

Elton takes an expensive watch and offers it to Hugh.

ELTON (CONT'D)  
Have something for your trouble.

HUGH  
Fuck you.

Hugh doesn't take the watch and leaves.

143 INT. STUDIO, CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

143

A paranoid and depressed Elton sits with RENATE the studio  
engineer at the mixing desk. There is also TWO GAY GUYS just  
hanging out.

RENATE  
Would you like a cup of tea?

Elton looks at Renate and she smiles.

ELTON  
Got anything stronger?

RENATE  
Would you like to hear it again?

Elton mumbles to himself.

ELTON  
Not really.

RENATE

You should be very proud. I've  
watched you play many times. Your  
music is always so personal, honest  
and open. It must be hard  
sometimes.

\*  
\*

144 INT. STUDIO, GREEN ROOM - NIGHT

144

Elton holds a cup of tea. It is warm in his hands but he  
looks at it like it's the strangest thing he's ever seen. The  
steam rises from the cup as Elton, Renate and the two gay  
guys watch a news report about Ryan White on the television.  
It shows how he has AIDS from a blood transfusion and how he  
is being vilified and persecuted at school through fear and  
ignorance. He is a thoughtful and decent young man as is his  
mother who is in the news report too. Renate watches too.

\*  
\*  
\*

RENATE

They say it's an epidemic in New  
York now. I have a friend who said  
they call it 'gay cancer' at the  
hospital. He's wasting away too. He  
has sores in his mouth and can  
hardly eat anymore. It's so  
distressing for his family.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

GAY GUY 1

My mother believes you can catch it  
from a toilet seat. She won't let  
me use the bathroom and I caught  
her throwing away a cup I drank  
from.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Elton looks at Guy 1 and notices that he is self conscious  
about a mark on his cheek.

\*  
\*

GAY GUY 2

Thugs ran through the gay district  
in Chicago and beat people with  
baseball bats.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

145 INT. ELTON'S HOUSE L.A. - MORNING

145

Elton in nothing more than a robe sits on the floor. The  
television is on. There is a huge pile of records spread out  
which he frantically goes through and alphabetizes. He stops  
and in frustration bends and twists up and breaks a vinyl  
record.

\*

ELTON

Fuck!!!

Reid is let in by the trans maid.

ELTON (CONT'D)

What do you want? I'm busy.

REID

Why don't you get back in the studio you're paying for?

Elton gets a copy of the Rolling Stone Magazine and starts manically going through it and waving it at Reid.

ELTON

What's all this about only getting to number eleven in Italy? What have you been doing?

REID

The song doesn't work. It's number one in Finland but who gives a fuck about that. The record is coked out, MOR, shit.

ELTON

You never understood me or what I go through. I should have sacked you when you left me.

REID

You use to be a genius - now you're just a fat fuck who plays the piano. I'm glad I left you. It means I can maintain some objectivity on your self-indulgent, myopic little world. Go in the studio and make some music, or don't. I don't care.

ELTON

You will do when the money runs out.

REID

You signed contracts with me long ago. Every bit of tuna you stuff down your bloated fucking throat, every limousine you ferry your entourage around in comes out of your end. I'll still be collecting my 20% long after you've killed yourself.

Reid exits and Elton throws the ashtray at the door.

146 INT. PRIVATE DOCTORS - DAY 146

Elton in large dark sunglasses looks sheepish and paranoid as the CLINIC NURSE takes his blood. She puts a label on his sample marked 'Mr Smith'. \*

CLINIC NURSE

The results take 6 to 8 weeks.  
We'll be in touch when we know.

147 INT. THERAPY ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL. DAY. 147

The group all stare at Elton. His fingers are intertwined and crushed.

PATIENT

So? What were the results? \*

ELTON

I got lucky. I don't know how. I shouldn't be. I've known so many people who didn't make it. \*

COUNSELOR

And how does that make you feel?

ELTON

Numb? I think I've gone so far from the shore that there's no turning back.

COUNSELOR

There's always another chance. We all make mistakes. You have to allow for that.

Elton starts to laugh to himself. \*

148 INT. STUDIO. NIGHT. 148

A slumped and lost Elton sits at the piano pressing one key. Renate is in the control room. Elton look through the glass at her and a strange glow is all around her. Renate smiles at him. \*

Elton sings a Capella: 'DON'T LET THE SUN GO DOWN ON ME'. \*

ELTON \*

*I can't light no more of my  
darkness. All my pictures seem to  
fade to black and white.* \*

(MORE) \*

ELTON (CONT'D)

*I'm growing tired and time stands  
still before me. Frozen here on the  
ladder of my life.*

\*

RENATE

*Too late to save yourself from  
falling. To take a chance and  
change your way of life.*

\*

\*

ELTON/RENATE

*But you misread my meaning when I  
met you. Closed the door and left  
me blinded by the light.*

The music plays on as a gospel choir take up the song..

149 EXT. WOODSIDE MANSION - DAY.

149

Elton and Renate stand under a flower covered alter in the gardens and kiss. There are screams and shouts and camera flashes. Elton smiles as the gospel choir sing behind them.

\*

GOSPEL CHOIR

*Don't let the sun go down on me.  
Although I searched myself, it's  
always someone else I see. I'd just  
allow a fragment of your life to  
wander free. But losing everything  
is like the sun going down on me.*

Reid, Sheila, Fred and Ivy are there but no one is as confused and troubled as Bernie.

150 INT. THERAPY ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY

150

Elton has tears running down his face.

ELTON

I've never said it before but  
Renate didn't deserve that. She's a  
good person. I dragged her into all  
that madness.

PATIENT

I remember when you got married.  
The papers were full of it.

COUNSELOR

Did being married make you happy?

\*

ELTON

Not really. I'm gay.

151 EXT. WOODSIDE MANSION - MORNING 151

Birds sing and the sun shines as one gardener waters the lawn and another rakes leaves.

152 INT. WOODSIDE MANSION, UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MORNING 152

The song ends as Elton exits from one room and Renate exits from another.

ELTON/RENATE

Morning.

153 INT. WOODSIDE MANSION, KITCHEN - MORNING 153

Elton sits at the table and pours himself a vodka and orange as Renate makes herself a coffee. She sits opposite him. The clock ticks. Elton sighs.

ELTON

Sorry.

RENATE

I know.

154 INT. FLASH RESTAURANT, LONDON - NIGHT 154

A pissed Elton comes into the restaurant. The Maitre de welcomes him and Elton whispers something then makes his way to a table. It's like the King has arrived - people rubber neck as diners greet him and shake his hand. The whole thing is a complete palaver but Elton keeps a beaming smile on his face then sits at the table with Sheila and Fred. Faced by his mother he is weak and child like.

SHEILA

That poor Renate. Such a lovely woman, divorce can be so painful. You're looking well!

\*  
\*  
\*

ELTON

I suppose, yes.

\*  
\*

SHEILA

Anyway darling, celebration is on  
order, we've found a lovely villa  
by the sea, it'd be good if you  
would talk to John today to get the  
money arranged. Can't risk losing  
it.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

FRED

It's in minorca. We love it there.

\*  
\*

ELTON

Minorca?! What do you want to go to go there for?

\*  
\*

SHEILA

Because you're driving me away.

ELTON

One little slip about the Jews and everyone gets hysterical.

SHEILA

It wasn't just them. You've insulted everybody and I'm the one who has to hear about it.

\*  
\*  
\*

FRED

Every time we pick up a paper there's something in it about the drink and drugs. You're breaking your mother's heart.

ELTON

I'll write her a cheque, she can buy a new one!

SHEILA

How dare you Reggie!

\*

ELTON

I'm not fucking, Reggie! I am Elton Hercules John. Who in their right mind calls their son Reginald Dwight!?

SHEILA

How could you say something like that to me when I've given up so much for you!?

\*  
\*  
\*

ELTON

What? What have you given up for me?

SHEILA

How about your father for a start!

\*

ELTON

You heartless monster! I don't live life in black and white. I don't want your fucked up frigid ideas about anything. I'm sick of running away from who I am. There's nothing wrong with success or pleasure.

(MORE)

ELTON (CONT'D)

Why am I apologizing for it? So I  
fucked everything that moves and  
took every drug known to man. I  
enjoyed every last minute of it.

SHEILA

You've never had to work hard for a  
bloody thing in your life. Ever  
since you first dangled your legs  
in front of a piano you've been  
lucky. It all just comes to you and  
we're the ones who to suffer. I  
should never of had children. Do  
you know how disappointing it is to  
be your mother?

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

ELTON

\*

*What have I got to do to make you  
love me? What have I got to do to  
make you care? What do I do when  
lightning strikes me? And I wake to  
find that you're not there?*

Elton gets up from the table and walks through the restaurant to the toilets.

155 INT. FLASH RESTAURANT, TOILETS - NIGHT

155

\*

Elton enters and splashes water on his face and sings into the mirror.

ELTON

*What have I got to do to make you  
want me? What have I got to do to  
be heard? What do I say when it's  
all over? And sorry seems to be the  
hardest word.*

156 INT. FLASH RESTAURANT, LONDON - NIGHT

156

\*

Elton comes out of the toilets and walks back to his table. As he does the restaurant punters sing although they don't look at Elton.

PUNTERS

*It's sad, so sad (so sad)  
It's a sad, sad situation  
And it's getting more and more  
absurd. It's sad, so sad (so sad)  
Why can't they talk it over?*

ELTON

*Oh it seems to me. That sorry seems  
to be the hardest word.*

Elton sits down. He turns to a waiter:

ELTON (CONT'D)

Bring two chocolate puddings, a raspberry fool and an apple pie.

WAITER

What kind of ice cream would you like?

ELTON

All of them.

Elton looks up and Bernie sits opposite him.

BERNIE

Where's Reid nowadays?

ELTON

Does it matter? He hates my guts.

BERNIE

Nobody hates you, Elton.

Elton pours himself a big drink and downs it.

BERNIE (CONT'D)

Nobody except you.

ELTON

What are you doing here, Bernie!? You fucked off when it suited. Now you come crawling back to lecture me. From the first moment we got somewhere, you decided to leave me and go fuck some tart. Some trollop was more important to you than me and all those legends who were welcoming us in. You left me at the most important time! I went to tower records on my own, Bernie because if I'd have waited for you, it would have been too late!

The waiter brings the desserts and ice cream and Elton eats.

BERNIE

When did you give up, Reg? When did you stop being in control? If you don't care about yourself how do you expect anyone else too?

ELTON

Whenever I've needed you most you weren't there. I worked my balls off to get us out of the shit.

(MORE)

ELTON (CONT'D)

Day in, day out, for years. And now I'm the one who can't walk the streets! I'm the one who doesn't have a life. I don't get to sit around and chew on a fucking pencil with my feet up on a desk.

BERNIE

"Write the lyrics Bernie and I'll take care of everything else".

ELTON

It was a test you selfish prick! You should have known that!

Elton eats and drinks more. Bernie stares at his old friend heartbroken. Elton eats and drinks more.

Cue: Intro to 'GOODBYE YELLOW BRICK ROAD'.

BERNIE

*When are you gonna come down. When are you going to land. I should have stayed on the farm. I should have listened to my old man.*

Bernie gets up and walks out of the restaurant. Elton starts to follow him.

ELTON

Where the fuck are you going?

157 EXT. PICCADILLY, LONDON - NIGHT

157

Bernie walks down the middle of the road. Elton follows him out.

BERNIE

*You know you can't hold me forever. I didn't sign up with you. I'm not a present for your friends to open. This boy's too young to be singing the blues.*

Bernie hails a taxi and gets in.

158 INT. TAXI, LONDON - NIGHT

158

Bernie sings in the back of the taxi.

BERNIE

*So goodbye yellow brick road. Where  
the dogs of society howl. You can't  
plant me in your penthouse. I'm  
going back to my plough. Back to  
the howling old owl in the woods.  
Hunting the horny back toad. Oh  
I've finally decided my future  
lies. Beyond the yellow brick road.*

159 EXT. STREET, LONDON - NIGHT 159

Elton stands in the street and watches Bernie go.

ELTON

Coward. The same as always. Leaving  
me when things get too real.

160 INT. WOODSIDE MANSION, KITCHEN - NIGHT 160

Elton enters and collapses. He crawls to the bottom of the  
stairs, curls up into a ball and cries.

ELTON

You idiot, you idiot, you fucking  
idiot. What the fuck are you doing?

Staff walk past but think it's best to leave him where he is.

161 INT. WOODSIDE MANSION, BATHROOM - NIGHT 161

Elton runs in and pukes in the toilet.

162 INT. WOODSIDE MANSION, MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 162

Elton slams the door. He takes the briefcase and hurries to  
his desk. He hastily cuts an enormous line and snorts it.

ELTON

I'll show them. I'll get well. I'll  
get clean and fucking show him.  
Bernie betrays me, everyone does.  
No one wants you when you lose. Ha!  
Fuck them. I'll get so clean  
they'll fucking shit...

He starts to shake. He staggers up from the desk. Shakes. He  
is having a fit.

ELTON (CONT'D)

Oh fuck. Oh fuck.

He staggers to the top of the stairs.

163 INT. WOODSIDE MANSION, STAIRCASE - NIGHT 163

Elton passes out and slides face first down the staircase. He comes to a stop at the bottom and can not move. Dribble and sputum run from his mouth and nose. His eyes roll back in his head.

164 INT. LIMO - NIGHT 164

Reid talks on the phone.

REID

I'm on my way to see him now. It's a chest infection, Mac. He's going to be fine. How are ticket sales? Great. Add five more nights. Let me worry about that. I always get him up and running. He'll be there.

165 INT. ELTON'S PRIVATE HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT 165

A nurse attends to Elton who is in bed looking grey wired up to lots of machines. Elton's eyes flicker open. \*

NURSE \*

How are you feeling? \*

ELTON \*

The heart attack after the cocaine seizure was a bit of a shock but otherwise fine. \*

NURSE \*

There are places you can go, you know, where they can help you with addiction. \*

ELTON \*

I don't need any help. \*

Reid opens the door and the nurse goes and keeps him from entering. \*

NURSE \*

He's not awake yet I'm afraid. \*

REID

When can he get out?

NURSE

You'll have to talk to Dr. Vaughn about that.

REID

Right. Make sure he isn't disturbed. He's not allowed any visitors.

NURSE

He hasn't had any. No one's been in to see him.

REID

Right. Good.

Reid goes and the nurse turns off the lights and leaves too. The sound of "ELTON, ELTON, ELTON" fades up.

165A INT. HOSPITAL RECEPTION - DAY

165A

Elton is at the counter while a NURSE gets together his prescriptions. As she talks him through what-does-what his attention is drawn by the TV. There is the Ted Coppal interview with Ryan white on.

NURSE (O.S.)

These are for your blood pressure. You'll need to take 3 a day. These are Oxycodone, you need to be careful with these, it's a pain reliever but they are very strong. Now, for the anxiety and tremors I'm going to give you Valium and Diazepam, please keep to the prescribed dose as they can cause a dependency. I've also booked you in with Dr. Vaughn next week to assess your irregular heartbeat.

As Elton watches the TV in horror. Hugh walks up.

HUGH

Wow! That was quick! How you feeling?

ELTON

The heart attack after the cocaine seizure was a bit of a shock.

Hugh smiles and shakes his head. \*

ELTON (CONT'D) \*

What are you doing here hugh? \*

HUGH \*

It's normal to come and see friends  
when they go into hospital. \*

ELTON \*

Well, you've seen me. I'm all  
better. \*

HUGH \*

Really? Cause you look like shit! \*

The TV coverage of Ryan White plays on and Elton Looks at it.  
Elton and Hugh Sit. \*

ELTON \*

This kid breaks my heart. \*

HUGH \*

He's not going down without a  
fight. \*

ELTON \*

Why doesn't he scream and shout  
about the shitty hand he's been  
dealt? \*

HUGH \*

What difference would it make? He  
obviously thinks there's something  
better he can do with the time he's  
got left. \*

ELTON \*

What are you saying? \*

HUGH \*

Nothing. Just an observation. \*

ELTON \*

When did you get so fucking  
philosophical? \*

HUGH \*

I'm in Rehab. It puts a different  
perspective on things. You should  
try it. \*

ELTON \*

What? \*

HUGH

You heard. It's time to stop the  
self pity and get on with it.

\*  
\*  
\*

ELTON

I don't need that kind of help.

\*  
\*

HUGH

Yes you do. You're an alcoholic,  
cocaine addict with sex issues.  
Where are you going now?

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

ELTON

I have shows in NYC. Rehab will  
have to wait because my fans won't.

\*  
\*  
\*

HUGH

They'll still buy your records if  
you take two weeks off.

\*  
\*  
\*

ELTON

You've no fucking idea what you're  
talking about. Stick to being a  
dancer or whatever it is you do.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Elton takes his big bag of prescription pills and goes.

\*

166 INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDENS, DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 166

Elton sits at his dressing table surrounded by good luck cards and flowers. He looks a bit better but not much. Three young guys all hang around drinking. They all have gold watches and look a little like past boyfriends. It looks very similar to Elvis' dressing room and entourage. Elton stares at them. One of them notices.

1ST HANGER-ON

Do you need a hand getting your boots on?

ELTON

What? Er, no. How many are in tonight?

He ignores Elton and carries on drinking and talking. Elton stares at himself in the mirror. He slowly gets up and goes into the bathroom.

167 INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDENS, BATHROOM - NIGHT 167

He goes to the sink and racks out a line. He takes a sniff and when he comes back up he sees, on the loo, trousers down, a cadaverous Elvis. Elton leaps back in horror. Elton looks at the dead eyed Elvis on the toilet.

Elton spins back to reality and looks at himself in the mirror. He's pale and has trouble breathing.

ELTON

Oh fuck.

168 INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDENS, DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 168

Elton steps back into the room but no one takes any notice of him. He sits again at the mirror. The chanting still goes on. He looks at the useless hangers on he has there and no friends.

'Goodbye Yellow Brick Road'.

ELTON

*So what do you think you'll do then? I bet that'll shoot down the plane. It'll take me a couple of vodka and tonics to set me on my feet again.*

Elton gets up as he sings and walks out of the dressing room. The guys all look confused.

YOUNG GUY

You're on in five minutes.

Elton carries on.

169 EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDENS, SIDE ALLEY - NIGHT 169

Elton exits through a fire door and one of the guys follows him out and watches Elton walk away as he sings.

ELTON

*Maybe you'll get a replacement  
There's plenty like me to be found  
Mongrels who ain't got a penny,  
sniffing for tidbits like you on  
the ground.*

Elton walks on and goes into the night leaving the hanger on behind.

170 EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDENS, - NIGHT 170

Elton walks out into the street and carries on walking away from the stadium. The neon light glows behind him.

ELTON

*So goodbye yellow brick road where  
the dogs of society howl  
You can't plant me in your  
penthouse. I'm going back to my  
plough. Back to the howling old owl  
in the woods. Hunting the horny  
back toad. Oh, I've finally decided  
my future lies. Beyond the yellow  
brick road.*

A yellow taxi pulls up besides him and Elton gets in.

171 INT. NYC TAXI - NIGHT 171

Elton sits in the middle of the back seat and sings directly to us.

ELTON

*So goodbye yellow brick road where  
the dogs of society howl  
You can't plant me in your  
penthouse. I'm going back to my  
plough. Back to the howling old owl  
in the woods.*

(MORE)

*ELTON (CONT'D)*

*Hunting the horny back toad. Oh,  
I've finally decided my future  
lies. I've finally decided my  
future lies  
I've finally decided my future lies  
Beyond the yellow brick road*

172 EXT. NYC STREETS - NIGHT 172

The taxi drives off as the music plays on.

173 EXT. AMERICAN COUNTRYSIDE - SUNRISE 173

The taxi drives on as the sunrises.

174 EXT. PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY 174

The taxi pulls up. Elton, still in his stage costume gets out at a leafy upstate, private hospital. People stare amazed.

175 INT. CORRIDOR, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY 175

Elton walks down the corridor.

176 INT. THERAPY ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY 176

Elton half in his mad costume has come full circle. Close up as tears roll down his face. He is back at the last time we saw him in rehab. He has told his story. He looks round at the faces of the other patients. He has got to the end. The first day of his recovery.

177 INT. BEDROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY 177

Elton stripped off looks at himself naked in a mirror. He puts on his regulation grey uniform. A counselor appears.

ELTON

I don't know if I can do this.

COUNSELOR

Nobody makes you stay. The choice is yours. Choose who you want to be.

The counselor hands him a pile of clothes.

COUNSELOR (CONT'D)

We all do chores here. The  
laundry's down the hall.

178 INT. LAUNDRY ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY

178

Elton comes in. An OLD LADY is there. He smiles as she changes a load of washing. Elton looks at the row of machines. He has never done washing in his life. He looks at the coin-op system, presses a few buttons, but is unable to get the door open.

ELTON

Is this broken?

The old lady presses the door release button and it springs open. Elton puts the washing in the machine. The old lady puts a quarter in for Elton and fills it with soap powder. The machine whirls into action and Elton sits down humiliated. The old lady sits down and reads her book. Elton stares at the machine. A radio plays an Elton John song. The old lady gets up and turns it off. Elton sits. His hands are shaky. The old lady sits next to Elton and they watch the washing spin round.

ELTON (CONT'D)

I think I'm going to like it here.

179 INT. ELTON'S ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY

179

Elton is alone. He now really suffers the effects of withdrawal. He starts to sweat and shake. He looks very ill. He catches sight of himself in the mirror and is horrified.

180 INT. THERAPY ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY

180

Elton faces the group. A long pause.

ELTON

There was always someone better  
than me. Better looking. More  
talented. Catchier songs, whiter  
teeth, bigger hair. For as long as  
I can remember I've hated myself.  
Believed I'd never be loved.

\*  
\*  
\*

COUNSELOR

There is a moment where we have to  
forgive ourselves.

\*  
\*

Elton looks serious.

\*

ELTON

I started acting like a cunt in '75  
and forgot to stop. I'm ashamed of  
myself. I've spent so long being  
resentful about things that don't  
matter

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

The group all nod in agreement and Elton smiles to himself.

ELTON (CONT'D)

I should have tried to be more  
ordinary.

IVY

You were never ordinary!

Elton swings round and sees Ivy who is sitting amongst the  
group as if nothing was out of the ordinary. They smile at  
each other.

\*  
\*

SHEILA

Look at you - in here! You really  
are a loser. Therapy's a waste of  
time.

\*  
\*  
\*

Elton swings round in the other direction to see that it's  
Sheila dressed in her 60's outfit.

ELTON

You only put up with me for my  
money. I was nothing but a burden  
to you before that.

\*  
\*

Suddenly 'Hugh' is there.

HUGH

I didn't realise how ready you were  
for all this.

\*  
\*  
\*

ELTON

I don't know if I am to be honest  
but when I think of Ryan, his  
death...I've watched friends and  
lovers all die horribly and he did  
so much and I've done nothing. It's  
time to stop the self pity and get  
on with it.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

In the reverse angle we see from behind the circle the real  
patients look at Elton. Now he scans the room and sees along  
with Ivy and Sheila are Fred, Bernie, Reid and Stanley.

REID

The problem is you're selfish.

\*

Elton walks up to Reid.

ELTON

My 'problem' was I believed you  
loved me. I gave you everything to  
try and keep what I never really  
had.

\*  
\*  
\*

FRED

I always thought you were an  
introverted extrovert with  
abandonment issues.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

SHEILA

You what?

\*  
\*  
\*

\*

IVY

He's shy. He's always been shy.

FRED

It's why he loves all that dressing  
up. \*  
\*

SHEILA

That's all his fathers fault. \*

STANLEY

Don't blame me. He would've been  
strange regardless. \*

SHEILA

Oh god. Not you.

ELTON

Mum. Shut up!! \*

SHEILA

You're going to miss me when I'm  
dead. \*  
\*  
\*

ELTON

I'm not going to allow you to talk  
to me like this anymore. It's going  
to stop. \*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Bernie steps forward \*

BERNIE

It's about time you said that. \*

Elton softens as he sees his true friend. \*

ELTON

Better late than never. Sorry  
bernie, I never.... \*  
\*  
\*

BERNIE

AH, AH, AH! I love you man. Always  
have, always will. \*  
\*  
\*

Bernie smiles. Ray williams steps forward out of the shadows  
and smiles. \*  
\*

RAY

You know, I still cry like a baby  
every time I hear 'Your song'.  
Can't help it. \*  
\*  
\*  
\*



REGGIE (O.S.)

I thought you were Reggie Dwight.

They all turn and stare at little Reggie who stands in the middle of the chairs. Elton walks to Reggie and kneels down. The boy holds out his hand and touches Elton's cheek, as if to see that he is real.

ELTON

I haven't been Reggie Dwight for years.

Behind Elton the group on chairs is made up of the real patients in therapy as they watch Elton cry. Reggie stands in front of them.

REGGIE

When are you going to hug me?

Slowly Elton puts his arms around the tiny figure and pulls him close.

181 INT. ELTON'S ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY

181

Elton by himself. He looks transformed. Clean, healthy, clear headed. He looks in the mirror. Elton puts on a boater hat and smiles at us. He sings slowly:

Intro : "I'M STILL STANDING"

ELTON

*You could never know what it's like. Your blood like winter freezes just like ice. And there's a cold lonely light that shines from you. You'll wind up like the wreck you hide behind that mask you use.*

182 INT. CORRIDOR, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY

182

Elton walks down the corridor, singing.

ELTON

*And did you think this fool could never win. Well look at me, I'm coming back again. I got a taste of life in a simple way. And if you need to know why I'm still standing you just fade away.*

183 INT. THERAPY ROOM, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY

183

Elton walks through in to the room. The group are all there with Bernie. Everyone looks bright and happy. The beautiful song picks up the tempo and a dance number breaks out.

ELTON

*Don't you know I'm still standing  
better than I ever did. Looking  
like a true survivor, feeling like  
a little kid. I'm still standing  
after all this time. Picking up the  
pieces of my life, my heart, my  
soul, my mind.*

BERNIE

*Once I never coulda hope to win.  
You started down the road leaving  
me no friend. The threats you made  
were meant to cut me down. And if  
love was just a circus you'd be a  
clown by now.*

Elton hugs Bernie and waves to the group and walks out.

184 INT. CORRIDOR, PARKLANDS HOSPITAL - DAY

184

Elton dances along the corridor with the group behind as he sings.

ELTON

*You know I'm still standing better  
than I ever did. Looking like a  
true survivor, feeling like a  
little kid. I'm still standing  
after all this time. Picking up the  
pieces of my life without you on my  
mind.*

He gets to large double doors, turns and smiles at us then he throws the doors open. Sunlight bursts in and Elton is silhouetted in the frame.

P.S. Scenes of the real E.J and the joys of his life since rehab.

\*  
\*

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