

Late Bloomer
by
Paul Reynolds

Paul Reynolds
Toronto, Ontario
613-779-9617

LATE BLOOMER

FADE IN:

INT. AIRPORT HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

The Holiday Guest Inn at Cincinnati, Ohio is much like any other airport hotel. It has a mom and pop restaurant, basic, clean rooms and a bar that showcases local talent Friday and Saturday nights.

EXT. HOTEL SIGN - NIGHT

Fri - Sun - The Jack Stevens Band

INT. AIRPORT HOTEL BAR

Seated behind a piano is BUCK "88 Keys" LIVINGSTON, he is a tall slender man in his forties.

At the drums is PHIL "Sticks" REMO, a stocky man with a ripped "Metallica" T-shirt.

On lead guitar and lead vocals is JACK STEVENS, founder of the band, writer of most of the songs and also the youngest member of the group, he is in his late thirties.

Finally on bass guitar is SAM "NO VOICE" JOHNSON. He is a balding man in his fifties, heavy but not obese. He is dressed a little nicer than most of the other band members in khakis and a button down shirt.

The band plays one of Jack's original songs. The audience comprises of a couple who make out in a booth, 2 salesmen who drink together at the bar, a bartender and a waitress.

When the song finishes a smattering of applause is issued.

JACK
(to audience)
With that folks we're gonna' take a
little break.

The band breaks into a little group off to the side of the stage.

STICKS
Tough crowd tonight, I thought you
said it would be fuller tonight
than last week Jack?

JACK
The manager told me he had heard a
good vibe this week about our act.

BUCK
I don't know, I thought they were
diggin' my keyboards.

All the men look at him strangely.

SAM
You always think that.

The group of 4 laugh.

JACK
Hey why don't we turn it up a notch
or two during the next set?

STICKS
Sounds good to me.

All the men agree. After a little more chatter they go back
to their instruments and get ready for the next set.

JACK
(Aside to Sam)
Just make sure to keep your back up
vocals nice and low No Voice, I
don't want the crowd turning ugly.

Sam scrunches his face and gives Jack the finger.

BUCK
Yeah, sometimes I think my ears are
going to start to bleed if you get
too loud.

STICKS
At least I've got my drums to drown
you out.

SAM
Is it really that bad, can you guys
just cut me a little slack.

The 3 other men all laugh out loud.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF A HOUSE - NIGHT

There are 3 people assembled around a television set, each in
a various position of repose.

A forties aged woman, slightly plump but attractive, is stretched out on a chaise. This is SUZANNE JOHNSON, Sam's wife.

An early twenties woman sits stretched out on a couch. She wears track pants and a t-shirt, with her hair done up in a bun. This is TRACY JOHNSON, Sam's daughter.

A mid teens boy lies upside down on a recliner. He is slender and wears jeans and a hooded sweatshirt with "NY Jets" logo on it. This is NASH JOHNSON, Sam's son.

SUZANNE

Why can't you sit on a piece of furniture the way it's meant to be used for young man.

Suzanne brushes Nash's feet with her hand, Tracy laughs.

NASH

Oh mom, you really do worry too much, don't you think the people tha built this thing put it through all kinds of tests or something. Hey didn't I even see a commercial on T.V where they showed a group of orangutangs playing on a set of these things to prove how strong they were.

TRACY

You don't have enough attention span to watch a whole commercial.

NASH

Eat shit.

TRACY

Suck it, tadpole!

SUZANNE

Hey stop it, you know you only have 1 brother or sister, you're dad and I aren't going to be around forever and someday it'll just be the two of you.

TRACY

Couldn't I have been an only child.

SUZANNE

Just try and get along, will you.

Nash throws a cushion at his sister, the object just brushes her hair.

TRACY

Hah, missed.

SUZANNE

Why aren't you two this rambunctious when your father is home with us.

NASH

Oh, we're afraid of him.

TRACY

Mom, why does daddy need to go do this band thing anyhow. He's around music all day long at school, doesn't he get sick of it?

SUZANNE

That's different sweetie, he teaches music all day, this allows him to play his music, the stuff he has fun with. It's just a hobby, something he enjoys.

Her brother puts his two cents in.

NASH

And besides, that band with his buddies, it's not even really that good, am I right.

TRACY

Because it's not rap, that's the only thing you know anyways.

Suzanne starts to laugh.

SUZANNE

No, I think your brother has a point, but it makes your father feel good and reminds him of his youthful dreams.

TRACY

They don't let daddy actually sing though, do they?

NASH

They're old, they're not deaf. Even with hearing aids turned off I'm sure they'd realize if dad were trying to sing.

SUZANNE

I think they just let him sing some Oohs and Ahhs, a little back up maybe.

TRACY

They probably have his microphone turned down really low.

SUZANNE

They probably just turn it off.

The 3 family members look at each other for a second and then start to really laugh.

INT. AIRPORT HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

The band plays a real rocking tune. Vocals are tight when Sam decides to jump in.

SAM

(SINGING)

OOH yeah, baby, baby .. Baby I like your ways.

The audience is stunned. The band members look stupidly at each other.

Jack reacts quickly, yells into his microphone.

JACK

Good night Cincinatti, we love you.

The audience is still shocked but then a small round of applause starts as the band shuts things down.

STICKS

I thought you unplugged his microphone Jack.

JACK

I must have forgotten before we started our last set.. But at least there was no real harm done.

BUCK
(rubbing his ear)
Yeah, I'm sure bleeding from the
ears is normal.

Sam is in a corner of the stage, he jumps around like a rock
star.

STICKS
What the hell is he so happy about.

BUCK
I think he thinks they liked him.

Sam bounces over to the other musicians.

SAM
Man that rocked, I really think I
brought the house down with that
last little solo. Sorry if I stole
any of your thunder guys.

JACK
More like broke our mirrors and any
glasses in the room.

Sam is oblivious, in his own mind he still rocks.

SAM
Huh, what's that, you say something
Jack?

JACK
No, nothing, never mind. Listen,
good gig tonight guys.

The men shake hands, share fist bumps and hugs.

STICKS
So we back at it again next week.

JACK
Same bat time, same bat channel.

BUCK
I loved that show.

The men all nod in agreement.

STICKS

Yeah, now that was Batman. None of these tricks and fake stunts and chiseled costumes like today's version.

SAM

Come on guys, we can't always live in the past. My son says this new set of Batman movies is totally rad.

STICKS

Only thing I know about rads is they take antifreeze.

JACK

We really are getting old.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Sam gets out of his car, music is cranked loudly and it can be heard as the door opens.

Sam plays a little air guitar and reaches in to get his keys.

NEIGHBOUR (O.S.)

Turn down that racket, people are trying to sleep here.

SAM

Sorry Mr. McGillis

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sam tries to sneak into the bedroom, he glances at the clock radio beside the bed.

CU: Clock radio that reads 1:30.

Sam undresses carefully and slips into bed.

SUZANNE

Did you really think I was asleep?

SAM

Sorry hon, I didn't mean to be out so late. The guys and I stayed for a drink after the show. You know I get such a rush it's hard to come right down.

Suzanne chuckles.

SUZANNE

That's OK, I'm just glad I know how much you love your music or else I might be worried you had another girl on the side.

Sam gives her a peck on the cheek.

SAM

You know you're safe honey, music is my only mistress.. And she's a muse at best.

Suzanne reciprocates the kiss.

SUZANNE

I know dear, have a good sleep.

SAM

No need to get up early tomorrow right, it is Saturday after all.

SUZANNE

No dear, I'll let you sleep in, I promise.

SAM

You're too good to me.

SUZANNE

I know I am, good night Sam.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Sam lies diagonally across the bed, sheets partially cover his body.

The sun gently shines in the window, birds gently chirp.

Then... An ungodly sound, noisy enough to wake up the dead.

SAM

What the hell!!

He jumps out of bed, goes over to the window, closes it down hard.

The sound still permeates the room.

Sam looks outside the window, he can't see anything... Then a cloud of smoke indicates where the unearthly noise comes from.

SAM
Nelson, god damn it.

Sam glances over to the clock radio, notices it reads 7:45. He throws open the window and yells at the top of his lungs.

SAM
Nelson, Nelson!!

Sam shakes his fist at the man with the ear mufflers on down in the yard. The man notices him and gives him a neighborly wave. Sam gives him the finger.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Sam enters the kitchen, still half asleep.

SUZANNE
Oh good morning dear, I thought you were going to sleep in today.

The sound of the lawn mower from hell makes it's way into the kitchen.

SUZANNE
Oh I see.. Well he's got to cut his lawn sometime.

SAM
There should be a law, you know a noise protection law, no annoying noises before 10 am on the weekend.

The couple hear a knock on the door that leads to the kitchen.

Another knock and then the door opens and into the house comes BLAKE NELSON, a man in his early forties, very slender, in good shape. He has dark wavy hair and perfect teeth.

BLAKE
Howdy neighbours, nice to see you up enjoying the day this early.

He acknowledges Sam.

BLAKE

And that was awful nice of you to wave at me first thing in the morning like that, but I couldn't quite make out the gesture, was that like a royal wave or something.

SAM

Something like that.

SUZANNE

Can I get you a coffee Blake, maybe a muffin?

Blake pats his stomach.

BLAKE

No thanks Suzanne, already had my protein shake, now I'm off for my 5 mile run.

Sam is infuriated.

SAM

You couldn't have gone for your run before you cut your lawn?

BLAKE

Heck no neighbour, the run helps get all the allergens from the grass cleared out of my lungs.

Sam is dejected.

SAM

Oh I see.

Blake perks up.

BLAKE

Hey Sam, since you're already up... Which is kinda' weird, don't you usually like to try and sleep in on Saturdays... Huh, well anyways, like I said, since you're up do you want to join me.

Nash bounces into the kitchen, he has overheard part of the question.

NASH

Did you just ask my dad to go out for a run with you Mr. N. That's awesome, I don't know if Dad even knows what exercise is anymore.

BLAKE

Oh hey Nash, never too late to get back into the saddle.

Blake addresses Sam again.

BLAKE

So what do you say Sammy, come on, I'll take it easy on you, we can go at whatever pace you want to.

NASH

Cool, kinda' like that story about the turtle and the rabbit.

SAM

You mean hare.

Nash looks at his dad incredulously.

NASH

Nah dad I'm sure the rabbit wasn't bald.

Sam now looks at his son with the same curiosity.

SAM

Never mind.

Suzanne interjects as she passes Sam a steaming mug of coffee.

SUZANNE

That's a very nice offer Blake and I'm sure Sam would take you up on it, but fact is, I've got a rather large honey do list for him to take care of today.

Blake puts his hands up.

BLAKE

Whoa there then, sorry Suzanne, didn't know.

He punches Sam playfully on the arm.

BLAKE
Wouldn't want to be the cause of
any domestic disharmony for the
family, maybe next time Sam.

Sam mouths a thank you to his wife.

SAM
Yeah next time.

Blake takes his exit.

NASH
I like Mr N, he's like what, 20
years younger than you guys.

Sam just looks at his wife and shrugs his shoulders.

SAM
Try five.

NASH
Awesome, I hope I can keep it
together like he does when I become
a geezer.

Nash grabs a couple of muffins from a basket on the table as
he heads for the door. He grabs a skateboard beside the door
as he takes his leave.

NASH
Later parental units.

Sam again looks at his wife.

SAM
Am I really that old?

SUZANNE
Now now dear, you're only as old as
you feel.

SAM
That really doesn't make me feel
much better.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Sam's car, an old 67 Mustang Convertible is driving on the
road.

He approaches a red light.

INT. SAM'S CAR - DAY

Sam is behind the wheel, listening to an oldies station when a song that he really likes comes on while he's at the red light.

He turns it up loud and starts to rock out to the song.

EXT. CITY STREET - SAME TIME

Another car pulls up alongside Sam's. It is a newer car with 4 teenagers in it.

INT. TEEN'S CAR - DAY

TEEN #1

Hey look at that guy, he's rocking it.

TEEN #2

Hey roll down the windows so we can hear what he's listening to.

The driver automatically rolls down all the windows at the same time.

It takes a second to distinguish but the audibles from Sam's car waft into the youngsters' vehicle.

TEEN #1

What's that ungodly sound.

TEEN #2

Hey man did you hit a cat!?

The screeching sound still continues.

DRIVER

Hey it's not my car, what is that sound?

TEEN #4

It sounds like someone breaking styrofoam apart.

The teenagers all look around, they see nothing.

TEEN #1

Hey everyone, just everyone be quiet.

TEEN #1(cont'd)

If we're all just still maybe we
can figure out where it's coming
from.

The foursome just sits there for a second, no one makes a
sound.

The sound comes from outside, for sure. All four them, as a
group, turn to look at Sam.

SAM

(singing)

And there goes my babyyyyy, yeah,
yeah, there goes my ba,buh, ba
buh,babyyyy.. Aaaagh

Sam looks over to the adjoining car, notices the teens as
they stare at him, he gives them a little wave.

The teens all look at him as if in shock.

Sam drives away.

INT. TEEN'S CAR - DAY

TEEN #1

OMG, I think I'm deaf.

EXT. STRIP PLAZA - DAY

Sam pulls into the parking lot, he still sings as he pulls
into a spot.

Numerous people notice a strange sound but no one seems to be
able to make it out.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Sam looks at some items he needs as he peruses his honey dew
list.

Another customer bumps their shopping cart into his.

Sam is startled as he's focused on the item in his hand.

YOUNG MAN

Hey Mr. J, whatcha' doin'

Sam immediately recognizes one of his students.

It's JAKE SAMPSON, one of his best students. Tall, lanky, kind of a geek.

SAM

Oh hey Jake, just picking up some things to do a project or two around the house. You know my wife wouldn't let me have any time off for good behavior.

Jake doesn't really pay any attention.

JAKE

Yeah, that's cool. Hey did you check out the new axe on display at Richardson's... Man it's cool. They say there were only 25 ever made.

Sam's interest is piqued.

SAM

25 what?

JAKE

Didn't you hear me, I said it's one of the top electricians ever made, you know, at Richardson's, didn't you check it out?

Sam tries to be patient.

SAM

Listen Jake I know you may not have to take the Ritalin on the weekend but can you just try and stay on point and complete a full sentence.

JAKE

Ha, that's funny Mr. J, no wonder every one thinks you're hilarious. Anyways, where was I, what did you want?

Sam becomes frustrated.

SAM

Jake you stopped me, you were saying something about Richardson's, you mean the music store?

Jake is confused.

JAKE

Yeah, man, haven't you listened to anything I just said?

SAM

Sorry I forgot my interpreter, I don't speak teen.

JAKE

There you go again, hilarious. Anyhow, where was I... Oh yeah, Richardson's has this new guitar on display, it's the talk of the town. They say it was once played by Jimi Hendrix. It's so cool, even for someone young. Imagine what it's like for someone like you.

SAM

Like me?

JAKE

You know.. Old.

Sam ends the conversation.

SAM

I think I'll check it out.

JAKE

That's what I'm sayin'.

INT. MUSIC STORE - DAY

Richardson's is the oldest music store in Cincinnati. It has all kinds of memorabilia, some signed some not. It all hangs over the walls. It is clearly a throwback to the 60's with it's time's slogans and graffiti on the walls as well.

There is a large section for vinyl, as well as the current CD's and DVDs. It also has an impressive collection of instruments and a room used for the discerning artist to check out the sound of a particular instrument before making a purchase.

The place is littered with an eclectic collection of old and young music fans and artists.

There is a real buzz around a guitar placed in the centre of the room. It is encased in a locked clear plastic bubble, so no one can touch it at will.

Sam makes a beeline for the instrument.

SAM

WOW!!

Sam is approached from behind by an elderly man with a grey ponytail who wears ripped jeans and sandals. This is STEVIE RICHARDSON, Sam's first music teacher and proprietor of the store.

STEVIE

Brings a tear to your eye, doesn't it.

Sam recognizes the voice immediately, he doesn't turn around, but rather stares intently at the pristine guitar in front of him.

SAM

How did you ever get your hands on this beauty, Doc?

STEVIE

Trade secret my old friend, trade secret. Gorgeous, isn't she?

Sam drinks in the beauty of the piece. He lets out a low whistle.

SAM

That's an understatement, I heard Jimi even played it.

STEVIE

Well to let you in on one little trade secret, that small nugget may not be quite fully the truth.

SAM

You mean he didn't?

Stevie chuckles.

STEVIE

Well lets just say that I thought a little white lie wouldn't hurt anybody and that it might create a little more interest in the item.

SAM

Stevie, you sly old devil.

Stevie smirks, he knows what will make Sam happy.

STEVIE
So would you like to?

SAM
Would I like to what?

Sam nods towards the guitar.

STEVIE
Take it out for a little spin?

Sam's jaw drops, he stares incredulously at his mentor.

SAM
Are you serious right now?

STEVIE
Hey listen, you're one of my
dearest friends.. And you're by far
the best student I ever had. If I
can't trust you with it, who can I
trust.
Besides, it would do good for the
people to see it in action, even
for just a little bit.

Stevie takes some keys out of his pocket, unlocks the case,
and gently removes the prized possession from it's
encasement.

SAM
Careful, careful.

STEVIE
You're tellin' me, do you know how
much this thing cost me?

Stevie gently places it in Sam's hands, he cradles it as
tenderly as he caresses his wife, runs his hands up and down
the cradle of the unit.

SAM
Oh man, this feels like butter.

Stevie reaches into his pocket, pulls out a pick and hands it
to Sam.

STEVIE
Here give this a try.

Sam takes the pick and looks around, he needs something to
sit on to play.

Stevie notices and grabs a nearby chair.

SAM

Thanks.

He takes the chair from Stevie, sits it down and then sits down himself, gently holds the instrument far outstretched in his hands.

STEVIE

Ok, you're set, give it a whirl.

Sam gently strums a couple of strings, he does some minor adjustments. He then repositions himself in the chair.

A few people have noticed the case empty and a small crowd gathers around Sam.

STEVIE

Ok, you've got an audience chief,
let's have them hear something.

SAM

Alright, here we go.

He starts out slowly, getting the feel of the instrument, and then gradually builds up a little bit of a rythm as he gets more comfortable.

The music is sweet but slow.

CROWD MEMBER

Play something stronger, faster.

Sam nods in agreement.

SAM

Ok, let's see what this things
really got.

He builds up a stronger crescendo and then really starts to cut loose.

The crowd eats this up, people clap, some cheer.

A big smile crosses Stevie's face.

SAM

This is awesome.

He plays for another minute or two, stands up a few times and even imitates Pete Townshends's famous windmill move.

He finishes big to a loud roar from the crowd.

Stevie approaches Sam, pats him on the back.

STEVIE

Hey man thanks, that's gonna' put them into a frenzy. I'm sure some youngster out there is going to run home and ask his parents for a big loan so he can purchase this thing now that he's heard it.

Sam chuckles.

SAM

Or some old timer like me is gonna' reminisce about the old days and realize he just has to have it.

Now Stevie chuckles.

STEVIE

Interested?

Sam thinks about it for a moment.

SAM

How much?

STEVIE

5 Grr

Sam looks dejectedly at the instrument.

SAM

Not on my salary, besides Suzanne tells me she thinks Nash is going to need braces.

Stevie starts to put the instrument back into it's clear case.

STEVIE

Suit yourself.

As Sam watches Stevie place the guitar away he gets an idea.

SAM

Hey old friend, I did you a favour, now how about doing one for me.

Sam nods towards the instrument.

STEVIE

I just let you play it, what else could you want?

SAM

You let me play it sure, but I couldn't really hear the pure sound, not with the crowd noise and all.

STEVIE

Yeah, but didn't that make you feel like Jimmy Paige.

SAM

Oh sure there was a rush, but I think every good musician at some time or other just wants to be alone with the music, keeping it safe and to himself, like his own personal muse.

Stevie nods in agreement.

STEVIE

Yeah, I hear stories about how Clapton sometimes sits in his studio alone for hours, just him and a collection of guitars.

SAM

That's what I'm sayin'.

STEVIE

But what's that got to do with anything.

Sam motions to the other side of the store.

SAM

How 'bout in there for just 5 minutes.

Stevie looks across the room and sees the studio.

STEVIE

Geez, I don't know man, I mean I appreciate you playin' for the vibe and everything, but.. I don't know.

SAM

Oh come on it will be fine, it's not like I'm gonna' break it or anything like that.

STEVIE

I know you'll try to be careful but sometimes you just, well.. you know how you get, you get singing and.. and

SAM

Not you too, you've been listening to the guys in the band again talking about my singing. It never bothered you when you were teaching me.

STEVIE

Oh I know but that was a long long time ago, your voice hadn't even changed yet. And no child can really carry a tune anyhow, you didn't sound that much worse than any other student at the time.

SAM

But now the guys tell you my voice isn't very good at all, is that it?

Stevie stares at the floor awkwardly.

STEVIE

Yeah, yeah. I guess. Something like that.

Sam gently reaches for the instrument from Stevie's hands.

He gingerly pries it from Stevie's fingers.

SAM

Listen Doc, if it really bothers you, remember I'm in a soundproof room. If I get carried away it'll just be me who can hear it.. And contrary to what Sticks and Buck may be telling you I think I sound pretty damn good.

STEVIE

Well... I guess a few minutes couldn't hurt... But just be careful will ya'?

Sam smiles.

SAM
I'll treat it like a newborn, I
promise.

Stevie escorts Sam to the private booth. It is well constructed, sound proof, with acoustic enhancing plexiglass that surrounds all sides so that the purest sound of any musical instrument will shine through to even the most discerning ear.

STEVIE
Now just a few minutes is all I
promised, deal?

Sam nods wholeheartedly.

SAM
Deal!!

Stevie reaches into his pocket, producing a key ring.
He fumbles with the keys for a second.

STEVIE
Now which one is it again...

SAM
C'mon Doc, what's the hold up?

STEVIE
Patience old friend, patience.

Stevie finds the right key and opens the door to the sanctuary.

Sam steps inside.

SAM
I know I've told you this before,
but this is awesome.

Stevie smiles.

STEVIE
Just have fun for a couple minutes,
Ok? And remember be careful, this
thing's worth a lot of De naro.

SAM
Just close the door please.

Stevie does as instructed and walks away.

He flashes a big number 5 with his hand to Sam.

STEVIE
(to himself)
Just be careful.

Now alone inside the booth Sam takes a second to familiarize himself with all the tools at his disposal.

He starts to fiddle around with some knobs and gauges.

SAM
Equalizer, check
Treble, check
Bass booster, check.

A group of people have noticed Sam inside the booth and are watching him go through a few gentle gyrations as he plays the instrument. From outside with no sound it seems like someone playing air guitar.

Inside the booth Sam starts to play the guitar like silk, puts it through all kinds of paces.

A person in the crowd is quite interested in the goings on.

ANOYMOUS PERSON
I wonder what that sounds like?

An associate from the store overhears the comment as he walks by.

ASSOCIATE
Would you like to hear it, we now
have the ability to let it play
throughout the store if you'd like.

ANOYMOUS PERSON
That would be cool, but won't that
bother the person inside the booth?

The associate shakes their head.

ASSOCIATE
No, not at all, they can only hear
the music inside the studio,
nothing from outside at all.

ANOYMOUS PERSON
Cool.

The associate makes his way over to the studio.

At the same time Stevie makes his way back over to the studio as well.

At the same time Sam really starts to let go.

ASSOCIATE

This will just take a second, if I can remember which switch turns over the speakers.

Stevie overhears this and makes a valiant effort to jump through onto the platform and keep the associate from doing the unspeakable.

He falls short just as the associate figures out what switch to toggle and just as ...

Sam starts to sing.

STEVIE

Oh no, what have you done!?

The sound system kicks in and the entire store is enveloped for a few seconds with the ultra cool sound of the guitar being played perfectly.

And then that beautiful sound is drowned out by what sounds like metal fingernails being scratched across an old chalk board.

People in the store start to scream, some just look around in astonishment, some cover their ears to stop the pain, some look at the booth in sheer shock.

ASSOCIATE

Oh my God, I'm so sorry!

Inside the booth Sam is happy as a pig in mud, completely lost in the song.

SAM

Oooh,, ma, ma.. Oooh loving you so long... Ooooh, ma, ma..

Sam notices the crowd outside in the store now, they all look at him through the glass, they point in amazement.

He realizes he must look foolish to them and turns red in mild embarrassment as he stops playing.

A totally relieved Stevie arrives at the door to the studio.

SAM
Quite a crowd, I must have looked
pretty foolish, huh.

Stevie looks at his old friend, Sam is totally unaware of the
commotion he caused.

Stevie just smiles.

STEVIE
I just think they were jealous.

INT. DENTIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Sam waits patiently with Suzanne.

SAM
And if he does need braces, how
much are they gonna' cost again?

SUZANNE
Dr. Phelps says about 12-15
thousand, but your benefits will
pay half.

Sam shrinks in his chair.

SAM
That's still 7500 out of our
pocket.

Suzanne gently grabs her husbands arm.

SUZANNE
Well, we do have some money in our
rainy day account. And your making
pretty good money with the band
these days. Besides we don't really
have anything else to spend it on
right now do we?

Sam smiles wistfully as he looks at his wife.

SAM
I guess not.

Nash enters the waiting room.

SUZANNE
How was it dear, what did Dr.
Phelps say.

NASH

He said he'll go over it with you
after Dad's appointment.

Suzanne puts her fingers to her mouth to shush her son but
it's too late.

She glances at her husband, he is white as a ghost.

SUZANNE

Now Sam, come on, it's not that
bad.

Sam is in shock.

Nash stares at his dad.

NASH

Oh man, I mean, I know you told me
he didn't like the dentist but I
thought you were just yanking my
chain. He looks more scared than
when I have to bring my report card
home for you guys to sign.

SUZANNE

Now Nash, stop it. This is a very
serious thing for your father. When
he was a kid, they didn't have the
kind of medical or dentistry
advances that they have today.

NASH

You mean operating by lantern,
using pliers to take out your
teeth, that kind of thing.

Nancy raises her voice to her son.

SUZANNE

Nash, that's enough, now go wait in
the car until I come to get you.

NASH

Oh, man.

Nash exits and Suzanne turns her attention to her husband.

By now the dentist has heard the commotion and is at
Suzanne's side.

He addresses Sam.

DR. PHELPS

Now Mr. Johnson your wife told me you might be a little apprehensive but it's important to look after your teeth. You only have one set to last you a lifetime after all.

Sam still shivers from fear.

Dr. Phelps notices other people in the waiting room, including a couple of kids, they start to get a little apprehensive as well.

DR. PHELPS

Why don't we just get you into one of the exam rooms and we can talk a little more privately there. Mrs. Johnson you could join us if you'd like.

INT. EXAM ROOM - DAY

Sam is positioned in a dentist's chair. He has a dentist's bib over his chest and grips the arms of the chair very tightly.

DR. PHELPS

Now I want to assure you Mr. Johnson that I will be very gentle with you, your wife has told me about some of your bad experiences you had with the dentist as a child.

SAM

And you're sure this isn't going to hurt, not even a little?

The dentist smiles.

DR. PHELPS

Today is just an examination Mr. Johnson.

SAM

Sam.

DR. PHELPS

Pardon me.

SAM

You can call me Sam.

DR. PHELPS

Well that's a great start Sam, I appreciate you being polite to me.

SAM

Hey I'll be nice to you as long as you'll promise to be nice to me.

Suzanne smiles from a chair in the corner.

SUZANNE

I really do thank you for doing this for us Dr., it's just that I don't think Sam has had a check up in about 3 years.

Sam mumbles something while the dentist's hands are in his mouth.

SAM

Mo.. IK.. FO..

The dentist removes his hands.

DR. PHELPS

I'm sorry Sam, was I hurting you.

SAM

No, nothing like that, I said it's been more like four years since I had my last appointment, you know Suz, when we were with that other butcher.. Oh what was his name... Jersonaut, Jersovan.

Suzanne blushes.

SUZANNE

Jurusovich, but that's not important now dear.

The dentist smiles awkwardly.

DR. PHELPS

That's alright Mrs. Johnson. If your husband had a poor opinion of his last dentist that's no business of mine.

SAM

He was a butcher. Look right here
(reaches into his mouth)

SAM(cont'd)

See right here, butcher took a whole tooth out without even telling me it was bad. See.. See.

The dentist goes in for a closer look.

DR. PHELPS

Well, I'm trying.

Dr. Phelps looks for a second and then leans back in his chair.

SAM

Did you see it, did you?

DR. PHELPS

Yes Sam, but there's something else I want to take a look at if you don't mind. Just another second.

Sam is apprehensive.

SAM

Is it going to hurt much?

DR. PHELPS

Actually it won't hurt at all, I'm not even going to use any instruments, OK?

SAM

I guess so.

DR. PHELPS

That's the spirit.

The dentist goes to go in for one more look, he leans in closer to Sam.

DR. PHELPS

Now just open your mouth wide for me will you Sam.

Sam fidgets in his chair.

DR. PHELPS

As I said, I promise it won't hurt, not even a little. I just want to check one thing that seemed strange.
Now, just a little wider, that's it, you're doing fine.

The dentist then gently opens Sam's mouth open ever a tinge wider with his fingers.

Then in an instant he is done, he leans back again in his chair.

DR. PHELPS

Sam, do you mind if I ask you something?

SAM

No, not at all, something wrong in there?

The dentist smiles.

DR. PHELPS

Actually your teeth seem quite fine, it's something a little deeper I need to ask you about.

SAM

Deeper, deeper. You mean my gums, Oh man, I don't have gum disease do I, I mean.. Oh man.

The dentist raises his hands gently to assuage Sam's concerns.

DR. PHELPS

No Sam, not your gums either, it just looks like your tonsils are quite enlarged for a normal person.

Sam calms down.

SAM

My tonsils, I don't know what you mean, what do they have to do with my teeth.

DR. PHELPS

Well Sam, not a lot really but the mouth works on many different fronts and even though your teeth aren't bothered by them, your tonsils may have other worrisome traits. Listen Sam, do you get many earaches or sore throats?

Sam thinks for a second.

SAM

No, I don't think so, probably no more than anyone else.

The dentist looks to Suzanne, she shakes her head.

SUZANNE

Well actually dear, when you think about it, you do come down with sore throats as often as the kids.

SAM

That's nothing, it's just a virus that works it's way through the family.

SUZANNE

But I never get them... And remember last year, when you couldn't go on with the band for a couple of weeks because of your earache.

Sam looks at his wife quizzically.

SAM

I think that was an inner ear infection.

The dentist interrupts.

DR. PHELPS

How about when you were a child Sam, do you remember anything from when you were small.

SAM

I remember staying home from school sick some times, but I remember when my mom got me checked the doctor said it may be tonsillitis a couple of times.

DR. PHELPS

But he didn't want to remove them.

Sam chuckles.

SAM

Hey Dr. Phelps I can't remember that far back really, but I can remember that my dad really didn't have anything in the way of health insurance. He barely made enough to put food on the table.

DR. PHELPS

Oh that's fine Sam, I'm not judging. I just think it's strange, that's all.

SAM

So is it anything to worry about now?

The dentist poses in pensive thought.

DR. PHELPS

Well it's probably not a big deal, but just the same would you mind if I sent you to an ear, nose and throat friend of mine.

SAM

Good to know your friends all stay above the waistline, you don't know any proctologists do you.

Suzanne gives her husband a slap on the arm.

SUZANNE

Oh Sam, stop it. The doctor is just trying to be helpful.

The dentist scribbles down a name on his note pad and hands it to Sam.

DR. PHELPS

Now this is the name and address of my friend, just call his office and say I referred you.

Sam gets up from the dentist's chair and shakes Dr. Phelps' hand.

SUZANNE

Thank you for doing this, Dr. And we got so busy with Sam I completely forgot to ask you about Nash.

DR. PHELPS
Oh, he'll need braces for sure, but
not for at least 6 months to a
year.

SAM
Just great.

DR. PHELPS
But look on the bright side Sam.

SAM
Bright side?

The dentist chuckles again.

DR. PHELPS
You've got a dental plan.

Sam smiles as he and his wife leave the exam room.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Sam is seated at the table, talks on the phone with his Mom
in Florida.

SAM
And so the tonsils were never taken
out.

SAM'S MOM (V.O.)
No they wanted to, but you know
your father.

SAM
(into the phone)
I know, just leave 'em in there. If
the big man upstairs wanted me to
pay to take something out, he would
have given me a better job to pay
for it.

SAM'S MOM (V.O.)
Something like that, but don't pick
on your father Sammy, he was a good
man.

Sam doesn't want to upset his Mother over the phone.

SAM
I know Mom, I just wanted to know
if it was serious when I was a kid.

SAM'S MOM (V.O.)

Well the doctor said it wasn't major, but it could affect a few minor things, like how you have to chew better than most people, and that you may have to put up with a few more sick days than most people.
But it's nothing serious now, right Sammy?

Sam talks calmly to reassure her.

SAM

I think they just want to be careful and check things out Mom, that's all.

SAM'S MOM (V.O.)

Do you want me to come up there, if it's serious I should be there.

Sam smiles to himself.

SAM

I'm sure it's nothing mom, and besides if they do take them out I'm sure Suzanne can feed me Ice Cream and popsicles just fine.

SAM'S MOM (V.O.)

Alright Sammy, if you're sure.

SAM

I'm fine.

SAM'S MOM (V.O.)

Alright son, bye for now.

Sam hangs up the phone and looks across the table at his wife.

SAM

I love her but she worries too much.

SUZANNE

Well she only has one son dear.

SAM

Yeah, and five daughters.

SUZANNE
That's what I'm saying, you're
special.

Sam sticks his tongue out at his wife.

INT. DOCTOR'S WAITING ROOM - DAY

Sam is seated next to his wife in one of the nondescript,
uncomfortable chairs.

He looks at his watch.

SAM
How much longer is this going to
take, it's already an hour past my
appointment.

Suzanne admonishes him.

SUZANNE
Now dear, don't get too excited,
it's not like we're on the clock.
I'm sure the doctor is busy, that's
all.

SAM
I'll give it another half hour, but
that's it.

His wife just shoots him a blank stare.

SAM
(Under his breath)
I'm just sayin', that's all.

A nurse's voice emanates from across the room.

NURSE (O.S.)
Johnson, Samuel Johnson.

Sam rises from his chair.

SAM
Must've heard me.

Suzanne stands up as well.

SUZANNE
You want me to come in with you
dear?

Sam smiles.

SAM
No thanks, I can handle it, it's
not like it's the dentist.

Suzanne sits down.

SUZANNE
Suit yourself.

She grabs a magazine and positions herself back in her chair.

INT. EXAM ROOM

Sam is seated on a metal gurney with hospital paper on it.

The door opens and in walks in DR. GARY JONES. He is a man in his mid fifties with a goatee. He wears a white lab coat and has what looks like a stethoscope around his neck.

Sam gets up from the gurney to shake the doctor's hand.

SAM
Hello Dr. Jones, I'm Sam Johnson.

The doctor takes his eyes off the chart, reciprocates the handshake.

DR. JONES
Yes, hello Mr. Johnson. May I call
you Sam.

SAM
Please do.

The doctor motions for Sam to take a seat on the gurney again.

He then reaches into a glass jar for a tongue depressor.

DR. JONES
And I just want to take a look
inside your throat for a second if
that's okay Sam.

The doctor leans in to Sam.

DR. JONES
Now just relax and open wide for me
please and say Ahhh.

Sam does as directed.

SAM

Ahhhh.

The doctor leans back out from Sam.

DR. JONES

Interesting.

He pulls the item from around his neck and turns on a light at the tip of it.

He leans in to Sam again.

DR. JONES

Now just once again, please.
Say ahhhh.

Once again Sam obliges.

The doctor shines his light into Sam's throat, holding it longer than the depressor.

He pulls back and walks over to a desk, produces a note pad from a drawer. He then takes a pen from his pocket and scribbles down a note.

SAM

Everything alright, Dr. Jones.

The doctor seems preoccupied, ignores the question.

Sam tries again.

SAM

Dr. Jones, everything alright.

This time the doctor hears Sam's question.

DR. JONES

What, Oh I'm sorry Sam, just making
some notes. I'm sure everything is
fine.
Do you mind if I ask you some
questions though?

Sam is ready, this time he rhymes off the answers.

SAM

Yes, I get more sore throats than most people, yes I checked with my mom and she said they wanted to take them out when I was young. Does that cover it, did I miss anything?

DR. JONES

It sounds like you've answered these questions before, thank you Sam. But I still have another question.

SAM

You do.

DR. JONES

How do you think you'd feel about getting your tonsils removed now.

Sam is aghast, he turns white as a sheet.

SAM

Now, you mean right now, I thought you had to get put out for something like that. I mean.. I mean I wasn't prepared for something like that. I mean can't I even THINK about it for a little while?

The doctor tries to stifle a laugh and calm down his patient at the same time.

DR. JONES

No, not right now Sam. You do have time to think about it. I'd just like to send you home with a pamphlet so you can see for yourself the pros and cons of such an elective surgery.

SAM

Surgery, like major surgery?

DR. JONES

No no, it's a simple procedure, only about a half hour. We would need to keep you in the hospital for overnight observation though, just in case.

Sam perks up.

SAM

Just in case, just in case what..
Can something go wrong with the
surgery, could it have
repercussions.

Again the doctor chuckles.

DR. JONES

Listen Sam, I haven't lost anyone
yet from a simple tonsillectomy and
I doubt you'll be the first. Just
in case means in case a stitch
comes loose or your in more pain
than we'd think. Really... It's
just a precaution.

Sam gets up from the gurney and the Dr. hands him a pamphlet
to read on his own.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sam is perched up against pillows on the bed. He reads the
pamphlet.

Suzanne passes by the bed on her way to the bathroom. She
wears her bathrobe.

SUZANNE

Are you still reading that thing, I
think you'd have it committed to
memory by now.

Sam glances up at her.

SAM

I just want to make sure I've got
all the information to make a smart
decision.

Suzanne enters the ensuite.

SUZANNE

Whatever.

A couple seconds pass as Sam continues to read.

SAM

Hey did you know that if I don't get this done I could be more than 50% likelier to get throat cancer than most people.

SUZANNE (O.S.)

That's nice dear.

Sam just shoots a look towards the ensuite, he hears the taps turn off.

SAM

(a little louder)

And if I do get it done, my wife will let me have a one time affair with any of my nineteen year old students, no questions asked.

SUZANNE (O.S.)

Whatever you'd like dear.

After a second Suzanne enters the room and takes off her bath robe, she reveals a skimpy nightie.

She takes the pamphlet out of Sam's hands and gives him a sly grin.

He reciprocates.

Suzanne leans in to kiss her husband, brushes his neck and whispers in his ear.

SUZANNE

And if you ever nailed one of your 19 year old students it wouldn't be your tonsils you'd have to worry about getting cut off.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

It is a modest, unpretentious house in a slightly upper middle class neighborhood. This is Jack Steven's house.

Sam rings the doorbell. After a second or two Jack's wife, CYNTHIA, opens the door.

She is in her late twenties, slim, gorgeous and blonde. She is dressed in short shorts and a "VAN HALEN" t-shirt, her hair is done up in a pony tail and Sam just stares at her.

CYNTHIA

Oh hey Sam, what brings you by?

Sam just kind of stares at her, drinks all of her in.

CYNTHIA

Sam, what is it.. Are you here to see Jack?

Sam fidgets for a second, he turns red.

CYNTHIA

Are you OK?

SAM

I'm sorry, it's just.. Umm, I'm, Umm

Cynthia now turns red as she realizes it's cold outside and her nipples show through her skimpy T-shirt.

CYNTHIA

Oh, I'm sorry you caught me looking like this Sam, it's laundry day and I just threw anything I had laying around on.

Sam blushes.

SAM

That's OK, no harm, no foul.

CYNTHIA

Well come on in from outside, it's freezing out there.

Cynthia escorts Sam into the foyer.

SAM

Listen, is Jack around?

CYNTHIA

He'll be back in a minute or so, he just had to go to the music store to pick up some sheet music paper. Please make yourself comfortable while you wait.

Cynthia leads him to the living room.

As he walks behind her Sam stares at the lovely shape of her bottom pushed tightly into those shorts.

SAM

What a beautiful place you have here Cynthia.

CYNTHIA

Please call me Cindy, all my friends do, and can I get you something to drink while you wait for Jack?

SAM

No, I'm fine thanks.

CYNTHIA

Suit yourself.

She starts to walk away and again Sam finds himself starting to stare.

At that moment Jack walks in the front door, he notices the two.

JACK

Hey there you two, there's not something going on behind my back now is there?

Sam turns red again.

Cynthia throws a cushion at her husband.

CYNTHIA

Oh you, you know I'm all yours you big stud. And besides I think Sam here is a little outside my age range, don't you... Uh, no offence Sam.

Sam sighs.

SAM

No offence taken.

JACK

Hey Cindy, put some real clothes on will ya'. A man Sam's age, you might give him a heart attack.

Cynthia blows her husband a kiss as she exits, leaves the two men to themselves.

JACK
So what brings you over Sam,
everything all right?

SAM
Oh sure, I just had to go over
something with you if I could.

JACK
Sure buddy, anything. What's up?

SAM
Well it's just that I'm looking
into getting some surgery done.

JACK
Surgery, nothing major I hope.

SAM
No, no, nothing like that. It's
just some minor surgery, elective
really.
It's just that I might not be able
to be with the band for a couple of
weeks or so.

JACK
Probably carpo tunnel, right? Keep
you from playing the bass, huh.

SAM
No that's not it, it's my tonsils.

Jack smiles at his friend.

JACK
Your tonsils, you mean like a kid?

Cynthia walks back into the room, she has now put on some
track pants and a baggy shirt.

She has brought drinks for them.

CYNTHIA
Did you say tonsils?

JACK
Yeah, Sam here needs to get his
out.

CYNTHIA

My doctor told me that most people soon aren't even going to have tonsils.. Or wisdom teeth, or appendix. Something about evolution or something like that.

SAM

Now I really feel old.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Sam is in a gown, lies on a stretcher and is hooked up to an IV.

Suzanne is at his side.

SAM

You know you didn't have to come today, I could have handled it myself, I am a big boy now.

SUZANNE

I know you are my darling, but I just couldn't resist taking a day off work while I had the chance.

She smiles softly at him.

SAM

It is sweet though.

Suzanne sticks out her tongue at her husband.

An orderly of about 30 years old, African American, approaches the stretcher and checks the chart at the end of the rolling bed.

ORDERLY

Yep this is him.

He turns his attention to Sam.

ORDERLY

And how are we feeling today Mr. Johnson. All set for a few days of popsicles and ice cream I see.

Sam just smiles nervously.

ORDERLY

Oh don't you worry about nothin'
man. I see people come in and out
of this operating room every day.
No worries my friend.

Suzanne takes hold of Sam's hand as they start to roll him
away. She gently gives his hand a squeeze.

ORDERLY

He'll be fine Missus, just a short
time before he's in recovery.

Suzanne looks lovingly at her husband.

SUZANNE

I'll see you soon.

She gives him a kiss on the forehead before the orderly
whisks him away.

Sam raises his hand to give his wife a little wave.

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

Sam's children have now joined Suzanne in the waiting room
while Sam is in surgery.

TRACY

How much longer do you think it
will be?

SUZANNE

I'm sure not much longer sweetie,
It's just minor surgery.

Nash shakes his head.

NASH

I don't know, Dad's pretty old, you
never know what else they could
find wrong once they get in there.

TRACY

You're a jackass!

SUZANNE

Oh now you two stop it, you're
brother didn't mean anything did
you dear?

NASH

No Mom.

SUZANNE

Tell your sister you're sorry.

Nash looks at his feet.

NASH

Do I have to?

SUZANNE

Yes you do, and say it like you at least partially mean it too.

NASH

Sorry Tracy.

SUZANNE

And what do you say Tracy.

TRACY

Do I have to.

SUZANNE

Yes you do.

Tracy shuffles her feet.

TRACY

Apology accepted.

Doctor Jones enters the room, he seeks out Suzanne.

DR. JONES

Mrs. Johnson.

SUZANNE

Yes Dr., How is he, did everything go alright.

DR. JONES

Oh yes, just fine. He did just fine.

SUZANNE

Can we see him?

DR. JONES

Let's just give him another half hour or so in recovery before we let you in, OK. And then just for a few minutes.

DR. JONES(cont'd)

I would like to keep him overnight though as we discussed, just to make sure.

Nash excitedly asks the doctor a question.

NASH

In case what, can he spit up blood, something cool like that?

The doctor gives Suzanne a strange look.

SUZANNN

Teenagers.. They're dissecting frogs in his biology class.

DR. JONES

Riiight. No... No, nothing like that at all. I just want to make sure there is no excessive swelling or any other small issues.

Nash slumps dejectedly in his chair.

NASH

Oh man.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

The family is assembled around Sam's bed, staring at him.

Sam opens his eyes a little, then closes them. Still groggy he gently opens them again to see all his loved one's smiling faces.

SAM

Oh hey everyone... Why is everyone staring at me like that.. Is everything alright, did the operation go OK?

Suzanne leans down and kisses her husband on the forehead.

She gently lifts his head and fluffs his pillow.

SAM

Now I am worried.

NASH

Nah dad, everything's good. Doc says no bleeding or anything cool like that at all.

NASH(cont'd)

Just a couple of stitches that you don't even have to come back out to get yanked, they're going to dissolve or something.

Tracy interjects by kissing her dad on the cheek.

TRACY

I'm glad everything went well for you Daddy.

Sam smiles.

SAM

Me too honey.

There is a knock at the door, but without asking permission, Jack and Cindy enter the room.

Cindy is dressed in the tightest mini dress known to man.

Nash just stares at her and starts to drool a little bit.

JACK

Hey there old man, just thought we'd drop in to brighten your day.

Sam notices Nash drooling.

SAM

Well I don't know about me, but it looks like Cindy sure lifted Nash's spirits.

Nash blushes with embarrassment.

NASH

Geez dad.

Suzanne also stares at Cindy, she has only met her one other time.

SUZANNE

A little cool for something like that isn't it young lady?

Cindy blushes with embarrassment.

CINDY

I .. I don't know... I, I ..

Jack interjects.

JACK

r

Suzanne changes focus.

SUZANNE

Well he's doing fine, just a little groggy still from the anaesthesia I think.

Jack leans over Sam and whispers something in his ear.

Sam starts to laugh out loud.

JACK

Seems fine to me.

SUZANNE

Oh Jack.

NASH

Hey is it cool if Tracy and I go down to the caf to grab a bite?

SUZANNE

Alright, but don't be long. Your father is going to need his rest and we can't stay long.

NASH

Cool beans, c'mon Trace.

CINDY

Mind if I come along, I don't really do well in hospitals, they're icky.

Nash lights up.

NASH

Alright!!, I mean sure, if it's OK with Mr.

JACK

It's alright with me, and call me Jack.

NASH

Ok, Jack.

The three young people start to leave the room.

JACK
Oh and young Mr. Nash.

NASH
Yeah Jack, what is it?

JACK
Don't be getting any ideas now,
she's too old for you.

Nash turns crimson.

SAM
Well it was awfully nice of you and
Cindy to come and check in on me,
but you didn't have to do that.

JACK
Just making sure you were OK old
man, and don't worry about a thing,
the new guy can't sing either, your
spot is secure.

SAM
I wasn't worried.

JACK
Oh and Sticks and 88 wanted me to
say hey.

SAM
Tell them hey back, how are they
doing with the new guy.

JACK
Oh you know those guys, stuck in
their ways, don't really like
anything new. If they weren't such
good players I'd probably kick them
out of the band.

SAM
Good thing I can still play too
then, huh.

Suzanne interjects.

SUZANNE
That band, I swear that's all you
two ever talk about. One day you'd
think you'd grow up and put your
dreams away.

SAM

I think at our age hon it's pretty safe to assume we know what our limits as a band are.

All three start to laugh.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Suzanne walks into the room and opens up the curtains.

CU: The clock reads 10am.

SUZANNE

Wake up sleepy head.

SAM

Really, I thought I'd be able to milk this whole surgery thing a little bit longer.

Suzanne shakes her head at her husband.

SUZANNE

Nope sorry no more pity, it's been 3 days of living like a king, time to start living with the peasants again.

SAM

Oh man!!

SUZANNE

Now you sound like Nash.

SAM

Does it ever work for him?

SUZANNE

Never.

Sam tries to pull the covers up over his head but Suzanne holds them at the bottom.

SUZANNE

I'm not kidding around Sam, you really have to get up and get moving around.

SUZANNE (cont'd)

Remember you go back to work tomorrow and I'm sure you'd like to have at least one day to reacclimate yourself to the real world.

Sam lets out a low grunt.

SUZANNE

C'mon, I've got some nice freshly made cinnamon buns and coffee waiting for you downstairs.

Sam perks up.

SAM

Cinnamon buns with sprinkles?

SUZANNE

Now you sound like Tracy.

SAM

Where do you think she got it from.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Sam is seated at the kitchen table and just about to take a sip of his coffee when the side door to the kitchen opens up.

It's the neighbor.

BLAKE

I'm sorry Suzanne, but I just couldn't resist seeing what that heavenly aroma was.

He notices Sam.

BLAKE

Oh hey Sam, I haven't seen you in so long I thought maybe Suzanne had finally wisened up and threw you out.

SAM

Funny guy Blake.

Blake now notices the cinnamon rolls, he reaches out to grab one.

Sam quickly raps his knuckles.

BLAKE
Ouch that hurts.

SAM
Did no one teach you any manners.

BLAKE
Oh yeah.. Sorry about that, but since you've been waylaid I've just kind of been able to help myself to your portions of food.

Sam smiles.

SAM
Well not any longer, I've been away from solid food for so long I can't remember what it tastes like.

Sam proceeds to take a large bite out of a cinnamon roll, so big it doesn't fit into his mouth.

A couple of pieces fall to the table.

SAM
(mouth full)
You're welcome to those portions.

Suzanne enters the room as Sam is speaking.

SUZANNE
Now Sam Johnson, you stop that. Since you've been cooped up in that room Blake here has been very generous with helping us with all kinds of errands. He really stepped up when we asked for anything.

Suzanne goes to the oven and checks on the next batch of cinnamon rolls.

SUZANNE
They're almost ready.. Now Sam why don't you be a good neighbor and offer Blake a roll while I get him a fresh cup of coffee.

SAM

Yes Dear.
 Blake would you like a cinnamon
 roll my wife lovingly made for me,
 her husband, who has been
 convalescing in solitary
 confinement for the past four days.

Blake reaches out and takes the largest roll from a plate on
 the table.

BLAKE

Don't mind if I do, thanks
 neighbor.

Blake then fits the entire pastry into his mouth in one bite.

SAM

I hope those other ones are ready
 real soon.

Blake chuckles.

BLAKE

So how was it, I mean the surgery,
 any pain.

SAM

Just a little bit of a sore throat,
 nothing much at all.

BLAKE

That's good, I was reading a story
 online about a guy who got his
 tonsils out after age 40 and his
 throat swelled up so bad he
 couldn't eat for a week, had to
 feed him intravenously..

Suzanne brings over a hot plate of baked goods.

SUZANNE

I don't think that's going to be a
 problem for Sam, he's been eating
 fine for the past few days.

SAM

Yeah, Ice cream, yogurt, popsicles,
 fruit juice and green tea. Living
 in the lap of luxury. I haven't had
 a solid bowel movement in a week.

Tracy walks into the room and overhears.

TRACY

Oooh Dad, nice breakfast conversation. Gross or what.

SAM

Hey what are you still doing home, it's after 10, shouldn't you be in school.

TRACY

First class spare.

SAM

Oh.

Tracy turns her attention to Blake.

TRACY

Oh hey Mr. Are you cool to give me a ride to school this morning.

BLAKE

Sure kiddo, just let me have one more of these marvellous creations your mother made and we're out of here.

SAM

I thought I always drove you to school.

BLAKE

I don't mind, been doing it the past few days.

Sam simply sighs. He goes back to the tray of pastries laid out in front of him and grabs 2 of the cinnamon buns.

SAM

Can I have some more coffee, it looks like I'm not needed around here anymore so I'll have the time to enjoy it.

Suzanne comes to her husband, takes the coffee cup out of his hands.

She moves over to the sink and pours out the remaining liquid before she then moves to the coffee maker to dispense more.

SUZANNE
Now don't take it so hard dear,
it's not like he's going to replace
you with the kids.

Sam chuckles.

SAM
At least I have tenure.

Nash rushes into the kitchen.

NASH
Is Mr. here yet, I need to get a
ride with him.

SUZANNE
You just missed him, he's already
taken Tracy to school.

NASH
Oh man!!

Sam gets up from the table and spills his coffee.

SUZANNE
Careful clumsy.

Sam addresses his son.

SAM
I could take you, I need something
to do anyways. How 'bout you give
me a minute to get changed.

Nash is obviously dejected and shrugs his shoulders

SUZANNE
What do you say to your father?

NASH
Thanks Dad.

Sam goes to his wife and gives her a peck on the cheek.

SAM
Like I said, tenure.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

A sunbeam breaks the darkness of the room.

Suzanne stirs, she looks at the alarm clock.

SUZANNE

Hey hon, it's almost 6:30. Time to get up.

She nudges her husband beside her.

SUZANNE

C'mon dear, you don't want to be late for your first day back.

Sam blinks open an eye.

SAM

I know, I know. Besides I was beginning to get cabin fever anyway.

SUZANNE

Now that doesn't sound too nice to your loving wife who you have just spent the past few days with.

Sam opens both eyes, fully awake now.

SAM

Oh sorry dear, must have been still half asleep.

Suzanne gets out of bed and slams her pillow playfully into his head.

SUZANNE

Oh sorry dear, must have been half asleep.
I'm going to go put some coffee on, why don't you get showered and it'll be ready when you come down.

INT. SHOWER - DAY

Sam lathers up with some body wash.

He starts to hum.

SAM

Hmmm, hmmm.. HMMMMMM

He reaches to his throat, massages it a little.

He tries a few lyrical words.

SAM
Doo wah diddy, diddy dum diddy doo.

Once again he reaches to his throat, gives it a little rub.
He smiles gently and starts to sing.

SAM
Here she comes, just a walking down
the street, singing Doo wah diddy,
diddy dum diddy doo.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Tracy enters the kitchen and surprises her mother.

SUZANNE
Oh, morning dear, you startled me.

TRACY
Sorry mom, where's dad?
I thought he'd be down here eating
breakfast.

SUZANNE
Oh he's probably just taking a
little longer to get back in the
groove this morning. I think he'll
be down any minute.

TRACY
K, cause I thought you guys left
your radio on in your room, I heard
singing.

SUZANNE
Probably just your father you
heard.

TRACY
No I heard someone really singing,
you know, carrying a tune.

Both women look at each other and chuckle.

SUZANNE
Just don't ever hear your father
hear you saying something like
that.

Nash now enters the room.

NASH
Something like what, can I be in on
it too. I promise I won't tell dad.

SUZANNE
Nothing for you to worry about
young man.
Now what can I make you two for
breakfast?

NASH
Bacon and eggs for me.

Tracy turns up her nose.

TRACY
Keep that up you'll be a walking
heart attack by the time you're
only 30.

SUZANNE
And for you young lady?

TRACY
Just some yogurt and fresh berries
please.

Nash mocks his sister.

NASH
"Just some yogurt and fresh berries
please"

SUZANNE
Now you two stop it, I'd like to
have a nice peaceful morning for
your father's first day back at
work.

NASH
He's not already gone?

SUZANNE
He's just probabl.. Oh never mind

Suzanne cracks 2 eggs into a frying pan.

NASH
But I thought he was gone and left
the radio on in you guys' room.

TRACY
Did you hear singing as well.

NASH

Yeah.

Tracy directs her attention to her mother.

TRACY

Told you.

INT. SCHOOLROOM - DAY

Sam moves about the classroom.

STUDENT 1

Nice to have you back Mr. J

SAM

Thank you, nice to be back.

A student grabs at Sam's sleeve.

STUDENT 2

Did it hurt?

Sam smiles.

SAM

No, not really.

STUDENT 2

I thought tonsillitis was something
only kids got.

A piece of paper hits the student in the head from across the
room.

ANONYMOUS

Your a doofus.

The classroom erupts in laughter.

SAM

Now can one of you tell me what you
covered in class the past few days
I missed.

STUDENT 1

We covered the great singer
songwriters of the 70's.

SAM

Good, that's what I left in my
lesson planner for your substitute.

SAM(cont'd)

Does anyone have any questions
before we move on to the 80's.

STUDENT 1

Yes, are any of those musicians
from the 70's still alive.

Sam smiles wistfully.

SAM

Some are, but remember, music lives
on forever.

The class moans.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Jack pours over some papers.

Sam knocks on his door as he enters.

SAM

Hey Jack, got a second.

Jack smiles at the sight of his old friend.

JACK

Oh.. Hey old man, how was the first
day back, did the kids forget you?

SAM

Funny guy, no I think they were
actually happy to have me back, at
least that's what I tell myself.

JACK

So what brings you by my friend?

SAM

Just wondering if there's still a
place for me in the band.

Jack smirks.

JACK

No Wally Pipp, I'm afraid Mr.
Gehrig has installed himself quite
well.

SAM
Smart ass, but seriously, do I
still have my spot?

JACK
Sam, old man, you're still one of
the best guitarists I've ever seen.
You know you'll always have a spot
in the band.

Sam sighs with relief.

SAM
Well that's good to know. How was
he anyhow?

JACK
Who's that?

SAM
The fill in, what was his name..
Steve?

JACK
Tony actually, yeah you know it
turned out he was pretty good. Well
maybe not quite the greatest
guitarist, but he was able to carry
a tune after all, good back up
vocals.

SAM
What's that mean?

Jack shuffles his feet.

JACK
It's just...

SAM
What, what is it? Spit it out will
ya'

JACK
It's just that the other guys and I
were thinking.

SAM
That's never a good thing.

JACK

Whatever.. Anyways like I was saying, the other guys and I were thinking that.. Well maybe that we could always have 5 members in the band. I mean it's not like we're the Jack Stevens quartet or anything.

Sam thinks for a minute, studies his friends face.

Sam puts a hand on Jack's shoulder.

SAM

Listen as long as I'm not being replaced you can bring in all the members of Earth, Wind and Fire for all I care.

JACK

Well that went better than I thought, I figured you'd be really pissed.

Both men laugh.

SAM

Just remember to unplug my microphone not his.

JACK

Deal.

INT. SAM'S CAR - DAY

The car sits at a light with its windows down, Sam plays with the radio, he searches for a song he likes.

He listens to a tune or two for a second before he turns off the radio in disgust.

SAM

Nothing ever on anymore.

Sam starts to tap the steering wheel, then hum.

He breaks into song.

SAM

The long and winding road, that the rain washed away...

SAM(cont'd)

Has left me standing here, crying
for the day...

A convertible driven by a beautiful woman in her thirties
pulls up beside Sam's car.

The woman overhears the beautiful song. She listens for a
second and then waves to Sam.

He notices her.

She points to her ears.

WOMAN

Great song.

SAM

Yeah.

WOMAN

What station is it on?

Sam looks puzzled.

SAM

Station?

WOMAN

Yeah, I can never find the Beatles
anymore, except in my husband's car
with the satellite radio.

SAM

Oh the song, yeah that was me
singing.

WOMAN

Yeah right, and you just happen to
sound just as good as McCartney.
Listen, if you don't want to tell
me the station, fine. Just don't
need to be a Jack Ass about it.

The traffic light turns green and the convertible strips a
line of rubber as it peels away.

SAM

What the hell?

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

RYAN JAMIESON, a twenty something dressed in khakis and a
polo shirt talks on his cell phone while he lies on the bed.

RYAN

Yes Mr. Joseph, I understand.
 Yes I know we need more contestants
 in order to fill up all the
 audition slots.
 Yes Mr. Joseph I know that the kid
 from Cleveland is a sure fire thing
 but I am beat tired and I'm just
 gonna' stay in Cincinatti for the
 night and get a nice early start
 tomorrow.

Ryan hangs up the phone and runs his hands through his hair.

He holds the phone up to his face to talk to it.

RYAN

Yes Mr. Joseph, I know you're a
 douche.
 Yes Mr. Joseph I know you're a
 small minded man.
 Yes Mr. Joseph I know you're penis
 is only 3 inches long.

The cell phone rings.

RYAN

Hello, oh yes hello Mr. Joseph...
 Yes I know I'm not allowed more
 than 30 dollars per diem and no
 alcohol.
 Yes Mr. Joseph, yes, you too sir.
 Have a good day.

Ryan throws the phone down on the bed and scrunches up his
 face.

RYAN

Bite me, Mr. Joseph.

INT. HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

Sticks looks into Sam's mouth while the others get ready for
 the gig.

STICKS

Nope, I don't see no difference at
 all.

JACK

I didn't know you made a habit of looking at Sam's mouth. How would you know if there was a difference.

Sticks throws a drumstick at Jack.

SAM

It's Ok, I'm sure he's just curious.

STICKS

Hey do you think it'll help you sing better.

Awkward silence for a few seconds.

STICKS

I mean, uh, I mean...

SAM

That's Ok Sticks, no harm no foul.

JACK

I'm sure Sam will be singing his back up vocals in his usual fashion.

88 KEYS

Couldn't be any worse.

All the men laugh, Sam turns red with embarrassment.

TONY SILLS, the replacement for Sam while he was off sick, enters the room. He is a good looking man, much younger than the rest.

TONY

Hey guys, what's so funny?

88 KEYS

Oh nothing, just having a little fun here with Sam you know... Oh I guess that's right you don't know, you two have never met, right?

Sam approaches Tony, hand outstretched.

SAM

Hey Tony, I'm Sam.

Tony shakes Sam's hand.

TONY

Hi, nice to meet you. I hope I did you justice while I filled in, the boys say you stroke a mean axe.

Sam chuckles.

SAM

I'm sure you did fine, besides the boys tell me you can really belt them out.

TONY

Oh, I guess I do alright.

STICKS

Alright, alright? You keep going and you're gonna' be angling for ole Jack's job as lead singer.

Jack throws the drumstick back at Sticks.

SAM

Maybe we should just warm up, you know, see what it sounds like with all five of us?

JACK

Sounds good to me.
Everyone fire it up.

The men all get their instruments in position and start to jam.

They start off with the set list but then begin to riff a little.

KEYS

Yeah, that's the stuff.

The band continues to riff and then Sam does a solo, really gets into it.

The other men stop to listen and watch.

JACK

Well, you certainly haven't lost your touch.

SAM

Thanks Boss, feels great.

TONY

Man that was awesome. You're gonna'
have to teach me to play like that.

Sam just SMILES.

SAM

You don't have to suck up too early
youngster. Let's see what your
voice is like and maybe we can help
each other.

All five men share a laugh.

INT. HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

A good crowd is there. The band plays hot.

Sam has an ear to ear smile as he looks over to Jack.

The band finishes a song to a loud roar from the crowd.

JACK

Thank you, thank you very much. Now
we'd like to bring it down a little
bit and try to hit some harmonies.

A regular patron shouts out.

PATRON

Not including Sam right?

Some of the audience laugh shyly.

JACK

Well he's back from minor throat
surgery and tells me he feels
great.
So lets just see where it goes
shall we?

The band starts to play an Eagles song and there is some nice
harmonizing between Jack and Tony.

Suddenly Tony starts to cough uncontrollably in the middle of
a verse.

The band stops and the crowd murmurs while Jack pulls Tony
aside.

JACK
Hey kid, you Ok, what happened
there?

Tony still coughs intermittently.

TONY
I'll be Ok, I just need some water
and a little break.

Sam ambles over to the two men.

SAM
Hey guys, everything Ok.. Jack?

JACK
Yeah, it's Ok Sam, kid here just
needs a short break.
Might be good for the whole band to
take five.

SAM
But the crowd's really hopping, I
haven't heard them this loud
forever.

Tony speaks up.

TONY
It's Ok, I can keep go..
(starts to cough)
I can kee..
(another cough)

Jack pats Tony on the back.

JACK
It's Ok kid, we'll just take a
short break, it'll be fine.

SAM
I can do it.

JACK
Do what?

Sam stands up with confidence.

SAM
I can sing Tony's part.

Jack shakes his head.

JACK

I don't think so Sam, I know you said you're voice is fine but c'mon, you remember the last time we trid this.

Sam looks at his friend dejectedly.

SAM

Yeah, alright Jack. Whatever you say.

Tony sees the disappointment in Sam's eyes and speaks up.

TONY

Hey Jack, why don't you give him a try?

SAM

It's Ok kid. Jack's just doing what he thinks is right.

Tony addresses Jack once more.

TONY

How bad can it be, I mean anyone who can play like him must be able to carry a tune .. Right... I mean am I right?

JACK

But kid, honestly, you've never heard him sing before, it's kind of a deal breaker.

SAM

I understand, listen Jack, it's Ok.. Really it is.

Jack looks back and forth between the two men for what seems like an eternity.

He makes a decision.

JACK

Alright kid, but just this one time, and only because you've never heard Sam sing for real. And I'm sure you never will want to again when this is over.

Sam stiffens.

SAM
I can do this!!

Tony pats Sam on the back.

TONY
Break a leg.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

Jack and Sam go back on stage and plug in their microphones.

Sticks and Keys give each other a strange look.

Tony sits off to the side of the stage as Jack addresses the audience.

JACK
Sorry about that folks... Just a
little technical difficulty.

Sticks plays a drum roll on his kit to lighten the mood.

JACK
But now we'd like to do a little 2
part harmonizing with myself and
our returning band member Sam.

The regulars in the crowd start to laugh.

CROWD MEMBER
Give us a chance to get our
earplugs.

More laughter from the crowd.

INT. AIRPORT HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

Ryan makes his way into the middle of the crowd.

He hears laughter and addresses a patron.

RYAN
What's going on.

The patron interrupts his laughter long enough to answer.

PATRON
There gonna' let this one guy in
the band sing.. Big mistake.

Ryan has a confused look on his face.

RYAN
Isn't that what bands do?

PATRON
You'll see, just wait.

INT. STAGE - SAME TIME

Sam gets his guitar strapped on and gives Jack a thumbs up.

Jack starts to sing.

JACK
"There are stars in the southern
sky"

He stops and throws it over to Sam... Jack gulps deeply

SAM
"Southward as you go"

The crowd stops its laughter, it sounds good.

Jack and Sam continue.

JACK/SAM
"There are fields, sweet as the
honey/ Down the seven bridges road"

INT. CROWD - SAME TIME

Ryan looks at the patron... The patron has a blank look on his face.

RYAN
I thought you said he couldn't
sing?

PATRON
He can't.

RYAN
Sounds pretty good to me... Pretty
damn good for sure.

Jack and Sam finish their song and the crowd erupts in applause.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

Tony comes over to Sam and gives him a high five.

TONY
That was awesome.

Soon Sticks and Keys are over to congratulate Sam as well.

STICKS
Where the hell did that come from?

SAM
What are you talking about, it sounds the same to me as it always does. Was it really different to you guys?

Jack looks at Sam with astonishment.

JACK
Is that from your tonsils?

Sam smiles big.

SAM
I guess.

The crowd starts to chant.

CROWD MEMBER
ENCORE, ENCORE.

The band mates look at each other, they shrug and go back to their instruments, Tony included.

Jack asks Sam a question.

JACK
Are you up for a lead?

Sam has a blank look on his face.

SAM
Are you sure?

JACK
Listen to them, that's for you.

SAM
Alright, let's do it.

Jack and Sam approach the microphones, Jack raises his hands to quiet down the crowd.

JACK

Alright folks, I'm as surprised as any of you regulars out there where this came from... But it's here so why not go with it. Ladies and Gentlemen... Here he is... Sam Johnson.

The crowd voices it's approval.

SAM

Alright everyone... Here we go.

Sam launches into a rock ballad and the strength of his voice is almost overpowering.

INT. CROWD - SAME TIME

Ryan dials a number into his cell phone and places the phone to his ear, he tries to hear the other end.

RYAN

Hello, Mr. Joseph.. It's Ryan...
Yeah, Ryan. Listen Mr. Joseph.. Mr. Joseph can you hear me?
Listen, Mr. Joseph.. I don't think I need to go to Cleveland now...
What's that, why not.. Here...
Listen.

Ryan holds the phone high above his head to try and let the listener hear the music and sound above the crowd.

He puts the phone back to his ear.

RYAN

Did you hear that?.. yeah I know it's noisy.. What's that?... Yes sir, that is cheering.. How's that?.. Yes sir I agree... Thank you sir.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

The crowd is long gone and the musicians pack up their gear.

Ryan enters the room and approaches the group.

RYAN

Hello?

Sticks notices the man.

STICKS

Hi Kid, no autographs please.
Aren't you a little old to be
chasing autographs anyway?

RYAN

What..huh..No. I mean.. Hi my name
is Ryan Jamieson and I'm from the
T.V Show "Hidden Talent".

The 4 elder group members look at each other. None have any
idea of the show.

TONY

Really.. "Hidden Talent" .. I love
that show.

Tony extends his hand to Ryan.

STICKS

So what brings you here to Cinci
young fella?

RYAN

Well actually I was on my way to
Cleveland to look at this sure fire
talent when I got too tired and
decided to stop in Cincinatti for
the night.

STICKS

You thought you'd actually find
talent in Cleveland?

All the men in the group laugh.

RYAN

Huh.. Yeah.. I guess so.. I mean,
there was this guy there.. But
anyway.. to get back on track.
I don't think I need to go to
Cleveland anymore, I'd say I found
enough talent right here. That is,
if you're interested.

The men all look at each other with smiles.

Jack steps up.

JACK
Where do we sign?

RYAN
Huh,, what.. No it's not that kind of show, we discover people and then they get a record contract if they win. And it's not actually for all of you anyhow, it's just for one of you.

STICKS
One of us? I mean we're a group you know. And you didn't even hear enough of Tony singing to get a real feel, I mean what with him getting a cough and all.

RYAN
Who's Tony?

Tony raises his hand.

RYAN
Oh, hey man, yeah I didn't even hear you sing at all.

KEYS
Then who are you talking about?

Ryan points to Sam.

RYAN
You.

Sam looks around at the other guys, quickly realizes Ryan motions to him.

SAM
Me?

The others speak as a group.

ALL
Him?

RYAN
Yeah, you really had the place rocking, they were eating out of the palm of your hands.

Jack interrupts.

JACK
Listen.. Uh, uh.

RYAN
Ryan.

JACK
Right, Ryan. Listen Ryan you need to know that this was the first time we've ever let Sam sing lead on anything, hell half the time we don't even let him sing at all.

Jack nods to Sam.

JACK
No offense Sam.

SAM
None taken Jack.

Ryan raises his hand, it has an envelope in it.

RYAN
Listen, I don't really know or care anything about your little band here. All I know is I have an invitation for one singer to have an audition for the show in L.A and I'm offering it to this guy.

Ryan offers the envelope to Sam.

Sam reluctantly accepts it.

RYAN
And if you don't want it just let me know 'cause I'm sure I can find 100 other people who will.

SAM
I don't know what to say.

RYAN
You don't have to say anything. Listen, all the info you need is included in the envelope, including open travel reservations for you and 3 other people to join you for the audition.

STICKS

So let me get this straight, the band doesn't get to go, just Sam here.

RYAN

Now you're starting to catch on, hey people in the Midwest really maybe aren't as slow as we think in L.A.

Sticks glares at Ryan in a menacing fashion.

STICKS

And what the hell is that supposed to mean, you weed smoking, west coast whipper snapper?

RYAN

Not a thing. Hey I don't have time to hang around here, I've got to get back, the auditions start in a week.

Ryan addresses Sam.

RYAN

I hope to hear from you soon, like I said all the stuff you need is in the envelope, including my phone number. Please let me know within 48 hours if you'd like to take us up on the offer.

Ryan shakes Sam's hand and exits.

The group all look to Sam, Jack comes over to him first.

JACK

Hey Sam, congrats man, I mean it.

Sam is taken aback, he looks at the envelope.

SAM

What this? I think it's crazy. Even if it was for real we're a band, you guys are my brothers. I couldn't do anything without you, besides like you said you don't even really ever let me sing at all.

The men all laugh.

TONY

I don't know about whatever happened before man, I mean I never heard the band before... But I do know what I saw out there tonight and it was the same thing that guy from L.A. did, I mean you were really ripping it up, you had the crowd in your hands.

SAM

Yeah but that's just some fluke thing in a little airport bar in Cincinnati, I've never even dreamed about playing in L.A., let alone on T.V.

Sticks interjects.

STICKS

Hey Sam, I don't know if you really can sing now or not, maybe it's just a lucky cosmic freak accident or something, but if even one of us has a chance to make it... Well then I say go for it.

Sam goes to rip up the envelope.

SAM

I don't think so.

Sticks throws a drumstick at Sam.

STICKS

If you rip that thing up I'll shove the other one so far up your ass you'll be shitting splinters the rest of your life.

Jack snatches the envelope from Sam.

JACK

Maybe I'll just hold onto this until you come to your senses.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Sam is seated at the table with the rest of the family.

SAM

And then the guy said if I was interested that he would fly me and 3 other support people out to L.A.

NASH

Los Angeles, way cool.

SUZANNE

Not so fast young man, even if your father goes you can't miss a week of school.

A dejected look comes across Nash's face.

NASH

Aw man!!

Tracy gives her brother the finger.

TRACY

Niener, niener, neiner.

SUZANNE

And if your brother doesn't go, neither can you young lady, it wouldn't be fair.

Now Nash reciprocates the gesture to his sister.

SUZANNE

And you mean this is for you to sing alone.. I mean the audition... Just you, not the band, right?

SAM

That's right.

TRACY

And he ACTUALLY heard you sing, right?

Sam laughs.

SAM

Yes that's right sweetie, geez is it really that hard to believe?

All 3 other family members look at each other, they don't know what to say.

SUZANNE

Hey I've got a thought, why don't you sing something for us right now.

SAM

Now?

NASH

Yeah Dad, I'll get your guitar.

Nash springs from the table.

SAM

Are you sure, I mean I'm not prepared or anything.

TRACY

C'mon Dad, if you can't get ready to sing in front of a few of us, how can you possibly think of going on in front of a live audience and millions on T.V.

SAM

Millions?

Sam takes a huge gulp.

TRACY

Sure, Hidden Talent is one of the most popular shows on T.V. right now.

SAM

That's what Tony said too.

Nash reenters the room, he hands Sam a guitar.

TRACY

Ok Dad, just relax, remember it's just us. No matter what happens or how bad you sound.. I mean, uh, no matter what happe.. I mean .. go Dad.

SAM

Thanks... I think.

Sam takes a second and tunes the guitar.

SAM

Are you guys sure?

SUZANNE

Let's go hon, it'll be good.

SAM

Ok, here goes.

Sam breaks into a gentle ballad. It is clear to the other family members in an instant that this is not the same voice they have heard for years.

Each family member looks at each other in shock.

A tear forms in Suzanne's eyes. Tracy just closes her eyes and goes with the song.

Sam ends the song after a verse and a chorus.

SAM

Well, what did you think?

NASH

WTF Dad.

SUZANNE

You call that young man, I'll start to pack.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Sam is assembled in the gate area with Suzanne, Jack and Tony.

They wait for their flight.

SAM

I just want to thank you guys for coming.

JACK

Hey what are friends for?

TONY

And I'm just glad that Sticks and Keys are afraid to fly.

SAM

You'd think at their age that they'd have been on an airplane before.

Jack chuckles.

JACK

That's Ok, there only would have been room for one of them anyhow and the other would have sulked for years.

Sam turns his attention to his wife.

SAM

You sure we should go, you sure the kids'll be Ok?

SUZANNE

My God Sam, how old do you think they are? Besides I've got Blake keeping a close eye on things for us anyway, you know, just in case.

JACK

You've got a good one here old man.

SUZANNE

And how will Cindy fend for herself while you're gone Jack.

Jack turns red.

JACK

I didn't think I could leave her alone for a week so I sent her to stay with her mother.

Sam and Suzanne look at each other and chuckle.

EXT. SOUND STAGE - DAY

This is the building where Hidden Talent is shot.

Many people are already in line when the quartet arrive.

JACK

Geez Louise, would you look at all these people, I knew there'd be more a few but wow, I wasn't expecting this.

SAM

Lets just get in line.

Sam and the others join the crowd.

A young man, obviously an artist, notices the group and addresses Tony.

YOUNG MAN
Pretty cool, huh. I wish my parents
could've come with me too.

TONY
What, oh yeah, but we're not here
for me.

The young man addresses Jack next.

YOUNG MAN
Oh sorry bro, my bad. I just
thought you were a little old to be
here for the audition. No hard
feelings man, Ok?

JACK
No hard feelings at all, we're not
here for me either.

The young man looks at Suzanne, she just shakes her head and points to Sam.

The young man turns red and turns around, he speaks to one of his entourage.

YOUNG MAN
Well there's one I don't have to
worry about.

INT. WAITING AREA - DAY

JONATHON MARTIN, the host of Hidden Talent, a man in his mid thirties and dressed in super cool clothes, wanders around the crowd, he chats with different people as he goes.

A cameraman, lighting man and producer follow him and set up for an interview each time he stops.

The host approaches Sam and his group.

TONY
Holy Shit, that's Jonathon Martin,
he's coming towards us.

SAM
Jonathon who?

Tony flashes Sam an incredulous look.

TONY
Jonathon Martin, the host, you know
him.

SAM
No, no I really don't.

TONY
Really?.. got his start as a
Mouseketeer, tons of Kid's movies,
got into trouble in his twenties,
went to rehab a bunch of times.

SAM
Nope, still nothing.

The host stops at the group, the producer rifles through a
bunch of cards and hands one to Jonathon.

Jonathon quickly purveys the card, looks up and down at Sam.

JONATHON
So it says here you're a high
school music teacher?

SAM
That's right.

Jonathon looks at the card again.

JONATHON
But you also play in a band?

SAM
Yeah, local gigs, you know.

JONATHON
Not really, and you thought you'd
come here to get that one last
chance at the brass ring, that kind
of thing?

SAM
Well.. Sure.. I mean, I guess.. I
..

JONATHON
Mmm, hmmm, that's nice.

Jonathon turns his back on Sam as he talks.

The entourage follows quickly and they can be overheard by
Sam's group.

JONATHON

No need to put a camera on that
guy, he won't even make first cut.

INT. SOUND STAGE - DAY

The stage is large and there is a huge audience assembled.

Sam is led to the stage and a huge circular curtain envelops
him.

Jonathon is facing the audience and the 3 judges when the
cameras and lights go on.

JONATHON

And welcome back to Hidden Talent,
the show where your local gardener
or gas station attendant might just
be the next musical superstar.
Up next is a high school teacher
from Cincinnati who our talent co-
ordinators tell me you just have to
hear to believe. So please give a
warm welcome to Sam Johnson.

The music to the song Sam chose, a rock ballad, starts to
play and a single camera shines on Sam.

The audience and none of the judges can see him, just the
television audience at home.

SAM

And the wind in the trees sings
your song to me.

With the first line of the song two of the judges immediately
hit their buttons that indicate they want to coach Sam.

A television screen located in their chairs comes on so the
judges can now see Sam.

The audience cheers wildly and by the end of the 1 minute he
is allotted to sing Sam has all the judges buttons lit and
the crowd in a frenzy.

The curtain lifts and the cameras swing to acknowledge
Jonathon.

JONATHON

Wow!! I must say that I was literally amazed by that voice and it is obvious that our judges and audience feel the same way. Let's ask our first judge, country singer HANK BELLOWS what he thought.

HANK BELLOWS, a lean country singer in his thirties, dressed in a smooth suit, looks directly into the camera.

HANK

Whooh hee, Johnny boy, I got just one word to say... DANG!!

JONATHON

Eloquently put as always, Hank. And now let's hear from our female judge, lead singer of the rock group SIRENS, HELENA KNOX.

HELENA KNOX is in her late twenties, a complete knockout and is dressed in a sexy black chiffon dress.

HELENA

I don't know about the other 2 judges but I just have to have you on my team, I haven't heard such a pure voice like that since Steven Tyler.

JONATHON

I must say as always you just look stunning my dear... And such high praise as well.

Helena stands up and curtsies.

HELENA

Thank you Jonathon, my darling.

She blows him a kiss, he pretends to catch it in his hands.

JONATHON

And finally let's hear now from our final judge who also pushed his light, from the rock group LEAD STEEL, Mr. TOMMY GASLER

Camera goes to the 3rd judge, TOMMY GASLER, he is dressed in a camouflage jacket with a ripped t-shirt and a torn pair of jeans.

The crowd goes wild and he motions them to settle down.

Tommy then addresses the crowd.

TOMMY

Hey guys, thanks very much, but
with a voice like that he's the one
you should be whooping it up for.

Tommy points to Sam and the audience again goes nuts.

TOMMY

So what's your scene man, I mean,
how old ARE you.

SAM

I'm 50.

The crowd goes nuts.

TOMMY

50 years old and you've still got a
set of pipes like that?

SAM

Well it's actually just fairly
recent, I mean it's actually a
pretty good sto..

Jonathon cuts Sam off.

TOMMY

Ok, Sammy, let's save something for
the next show shall we... Besides,
you've now got to make a choice of
which of these 3 esteemed judges
will get the chance to work with
you in the next round.

The crowd starts to cheer and yell out names of each of the
judges.

Each judge is seated at their chair and motions in their own
way for Sam to pick them.

SAM

Uh, well, .. I don't know.. I mean
I thought I'd just be up here and
then gone... I never thought I'd
have a chan..

JONATHON

C'mon Sam, it's only an hour long show, and we've still got other contestants to audition.

Sam sizes up the judges one more time.

SAM

Well I, ... Uhh... Ok, I guess if I need to make a decision.

The crowd ramps up their cheers.

SAM

I guess I've gotta' stick with my roots and go... Tommy!

Tommy leaps to his feet, runs up to the stage and gives Sam a big hug.

TOMMY

Hey man, you won't regret this. I've got a great feeling about you.

Sam breaks the hug and starts to walk offstage, slapping hands with the audience as he departs.

As he's leaving the soundstage he encounters the young man he talked with in line on the first day.

SAM

Maybe you shouldn't judge a book by it's cover.

The young musician turns crimson.

SAM

Break a leg.

INT. STAGE - SAME TIME

Jonathon walks offstage where he runs into Ryan, the coordinator who found Sam.

JONATHON

Oh, hey Ryan.

RYAN

Hey Jonathon, guess you should have maybe got some tape on that guy after all huh.

JONATHON
Screw you Ryan.

Ryan just smiles.

Montage of scenes showing Sam as he makes it through the next 2 rounds of the competition.

One scene shows him singing a hard rock song and the next a big band song with a rock and roll flavour.

INT. PRACTICE STUDIO - DAY

Sam is flanked by Tommy, a guitarist and Tommy's musical advisor STEVE RANDALL, lead singer for the group STAINED PURPLE. Steve is in his late thirties to early forties and dressed very casually.

SAM
I can't believe I'm still in this thing.

TOMMY
With a voice like yours I wouldn't believe it if you weren't.

STEVE
I've got to say that when Tommy told me about you I was a little bit skeptical but after that song you performed last time, well let's just say you've got another band member in your corner.

Sam is star struck.

SAM
Man this is surreal, I know all your songs by heart, the guys in the band and I cover them whenever we get a chance.

STEVE
Thanks man, but I'd say you've moved up a notch from an airport band in .. Uh, where is it you're from again?

SAM
Cincinatti.

STEVE

Right, well like I was saying you've come a long way from some pick up band playing airport hotel lounges in Cleveland to playing solo in front of millions of people.

Tommy chimes in.

TOMMY

Steve's right, you're going to have to face it Sam, that is your old life and this show is putting you on the path to stardom and sold out shows of your own on the road in all the big venues and stadiums. That's what you want.. That's why you're here.. Right?

The news has hit Sam like a prize fighters punch.

SAM

Huh, I guess... What.. I mean I hadn't quite thought of it like that.

Sam gives his head a shake to concentrate.

TOMMY

You alright man? You need a break?

Sam snaps to attention.

SAM

No, no I'm fine, let's get going with this thing.

STEVE

Ok then, so what's your song choice gonna' be for this episode. Something big and loud I hope.

TOMMY

I was hoping you might go something a little slower, like a rock ballad.

SAM

I was thinking acoustic.

The two other front men look at each other.

TOMMY/STEVE
Acoustic?

INT. SOUND STAGE - NIGHT

Jonathon is dressed in a sharp tuxedo as he addresses the crowd.

JONATHON
And now just before the final performance.. after which America will vote for one of these final 3 performers to take home the coveted title of America's Hidden Talent and a contract with a major recording studio... let's look at the other 2 performances from this evening.

Montage of 2 different performances.

1. A teenage country singer who is crooning an old standard.
2. A slutty looking glam rocker who is wailing out a rock song.

JONATHON
And for our final performance of this live evening of music.. Here he is.. the middle aged high school music teacher with the voice of a rock god.. Sam Johnson.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

Sam is on stage, he sits on a stool and there is another guitarist to his right.

The lights come up softly and slowly as Sam and the other guitarist start to play.

Sam sings a classic love song, very softly and very sweetly.

The camera pans the audience, people are enthralled.

The camera pans the judges and Helena Knox is in tears.

When Sam finishes the whole auditorium erupts, all 3 judges give a standing ovation.

Jonathon comes up to Sam, hand extended.

JONATHON

My man, THAT is the way to end an evening.
And that's our show for today folks, remember America voting starts now for the final time. And tune in tomorrow evening where again we will be LIVE across the country and see who will be our big winner.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Sam lays on the couch while all around him Suzanne, Tony and Jack fuss about.

JACK

Hey old man, aren't you nervous?

Sam sits up.

SAM

No, not especially.

TONY

This isn't even about me and I'm nervous as hell.

Suzanne rubs Sam's neck.

SUZANNE

He's not kidding guys, I can't even feel even one little knot in his neck.

The phone rings, Sam answers.

SAM

Hello.

On the other end are Sam's 2 children.

TRACY (V.O.)

Hey dad, just wanted to wish you luck.

NASH (V.O.)

Yeah me too, and if you win can we really move to L.A.?
I mean that would be wicked.

SAM

Now kids, let's not get ahead of ourselves, there are 2 really great performers out there against me you know.

Jack interjects.

JACK

Ah, that schoolgirl has plenty of time, she's all of what..13?

Suzanne corrects him.

SUZANNE

17... And I think she's a sweetheart.

Now Tony's turn.

TONY

And that glam rocker chick.. I mean sure she's ultra hot.. but she can't sing like our boy here.

Sam smiles, he addresses his children on the phone.

SAM

Now listen, I want you two not to make a big deal out of this thing, win, lose or draw. It was a great experience either way.

Suzanne looks at her husband.

SUZANNE

Very modest and humble of you husband of mine.

The children's voices on the phone can be heard loudly.

TRACY/NASH

Go get 'em dad.

Sam hangs up the phone.

SAM

Well there's at least 2 votes for me.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM

As Tracy and Nash hang up the phone there is a very loud cheer.

We see the gym is filled with at least a thousand people.

Tracy and Nash stand and raise their arms.

INT. SOUND STAGE - NIGHT

Jonathon is once again in a tux.

He stands in front of the 3 contestants.

JONATHON

And so here we are on this final
results show, elimination time for
all but one of these three gallant
performers.

And who will America have chosen...

Camera zooms in on SUZIE CHARLTON, the teenage country singer.

JONATHON

Suzie Charlton, the pride of
Tennessee.

The audience cheers loudly.

Camera now zooms in on GRACIE COWLING, the glam rocker.

JONATHON

Or will it be Gracie Cowling, San
Francisco's golden child.

The audience cheers again.

Finally the camera closes in on Sam.

JONATHON

And lastly will it be the darkest
of horses when this competition
began but with a voice that could
light up the night... Sam Johnson.

The audience erupts, this lasts for about a minute before Jonathon motions for them to calm down.

JONATHON

And I have here in my hands the name of the 3rd place contestant, the person whose name I read out loud, is asked to take a minute to congratulate the other 2 contestants, acknowledge the crowd and have their coach escort them off stage.

The lights in the auditorium go down.

JONATHON

And the 3rd place contestant is ...

About 30 seconds go by and the camera scans all 3 of the contestants faces.

JONATHON (O.S.)

Gracie Cowling!

Gracie starts to cry but quickly regains her composure and hugs both Suzie and Sam. She then waves to the audience.

Gracie's coach, Helena Knox, makes her way onto the stage and consoles Gracie before she escorts her off stage.

JONATHON

And that leaves just two contestants standing.. Who will it be... Suzie or Sam?

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - SAME TIME

The crowd is hollers loudly, it claps as one.

CROWD

Sam, Sam, Sam.

INT. SOUND STAGE - SAME TIME

JONATHON

And so I am about to let you know America who you have chosen as your next singing superstar, again with the prize awaiting them of a major recording contract with a studio here in Los Angeles and a rent free apartment for a year til they hit it big.

The crowd goes wild.

JONATHON

When I read out the next name it will be that of the person that you, America, voted as this year's Hidden Talent.

When I announce the name I would ask both coaches to come on stage with your contestants, one to console and one to congratulate.

The crowd is worked up into a frenzy.

JONATHON

And the winner of this year's Hidden Talent is....

The two contestants hold hands, the camera pans both their faces.

Sam whispers something into Suzie's ear.

She turns white and stares at him.

JONATHON

SAM JOHNSON!!!

Confetti and balloons drop from the ceiling onto the stage, the crowd cheers, both coaches come onto the stage.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - SAME TIME

Tracy and Nash hug each other, their neighbor Blake emerges from the crowd and hugs them as well.

The assemblage goes wild.

INT. SOUND STAGE - SAME TIME

As the melee ensues, Sam tells his coach something, Tommy looks at him in astonishment.

Sam motions to his coach to approach Jonathon.

Tommy pulls on Jonathon's sleeve to get his attention, he then yells something into Jonathon's ear. Jonathon shakes his head, turns his attention to Sam, who nods in agreement.

JONATHON

Ladies and Gentlemen, if I can have your attention please.

The crowd pays no attention, they continue to cheer.

Jonathon points to the lighting guy, the lights in the room go dark.

JONATHON

Ladies and Gentlemen, I require your attention please.

As the room quiets down Jonathon continues.

JONATHON

Ladies and Gentlemen, in an unprecedented move... I have an announcement... For the first time in the show's four year history we have a change.

Murmurs run through the crowd.

JONATHON

I have just been informed by Tommy Gasler, Sam Johnson's manager, that Sam has elected to recant his prize and offer it to Suzie the runner up.

The crowd goes silent.

JONATHON

Sam, Sam.. Is that true?

Camera closes in on Sam.

SAM

It's true.

JONATHON

Can I get you to address the crowd and tell them your reasons.

Sam slowly makes his way to the host. He takes the microphone offered to him.

SAM

Well firstly, I'd like to say thank you to all those people in America who voted for me.

The crowd cheers, someone yells out.

CROWD MEMBER
We love you Sam.

SAM
I love you too.

The crowd cheers again, Sam raises his arms to quell them.

SAM
And I'd like to thank my coach, the
incomparable Tommy Gasler.

The crowd screams.

SAM
And I'd like to thank my family and
friends who stood by me on this
journey.

Sam looks out into the audience for his party.

SAM
Suzanne, Jack, Tony... come on up
here, you guys are a big part of
this too.

Sam's three confidantes make their way on stage.

Suzanne gives Sam a hug and he gives her a big kiss.

The crowd goes wild.

SAM
And finally I have to say thank you
to the producers of Hidden Talent
who gave me a chance to show the
gift I've been given, albeit
somewhat later in life.
But as I've said all along I was
sure I would just be here for the
first day and then head on back
home where I play music with the
best guys on earth... Sticks,
Keys.. If you guys are watching you
know I love you.

INT. APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Sticks and Keys are watching the broadcast together. They
give each other a high five.

STICKS

You go Sammy.

INT. SOUND STAGE - SAME TIME

SAM

Oh and I almost forgot.. to my two wonderful children, who are probably watching this together in our living room with maybe a couple of friends...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM

Nash and Tracy are glued to the big screen broadcast, as are the thousand other people in the room.

INT. SOUND STAGE - SAME TIME

SAM

I just want you to know that you are the biggest gift I've ever been given and no amount of fame or success could ever top the joy you bring into my life every single day.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - SAME TIME

Tracy starts to bawl, Nash has tears form in his eyes, there isn't a dry eye in the house.

INT. SOUND STAGE - SAME TIME

SAM

Now I'd better stop soon or I'm going to well up. Anyhow, like I said I am honored to have been chosen to be the winner but you see I've already won so much in my life.

Jonathon comes over to Sam, he gives him a hug and takes the microphone back.

JONATHON

And you're sure about this decision?

Sam nods in the affirmative.

JONATHON

Well then, with that being your right to do so... I would like to introduce you America to your newest Hidden Talent.. Sam why don't you help me out with this.

Sam leans into the microphone with Jonathon.

JONATHON/SAM

Suzie Charlton.

Suzie joins the two men, she gives Sam a huge kiss and hug and then gives Jonathon a big hug as well.

The crowd comes to it's collective feet.

INT. AIRPORT HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

The crowd is packed into the bar like sardines, standing room only.

Sam and his group get their instruments tuned up.

JACK

Another full house, this is like the 30th night in a row.

TONY

See I told you that show was popular.

Sticks throws a drumstick at the kid, Tony looks at Sam with a sideways glance.

Sam puts his hands up in the air, shrugs his shoulders.

SAM

Better you than me kid.

Sticks throws another drum stick at Sam, it hits him in the side of the head.

TONY

Hey don't hurt the golden goose.

STICKS

He's still just Sam to me.

All five men laugh as they line up on stage and get set to start their gig.

With the first strum of Sam's guitar the crowd goes nuts.

Sam leans in to Jack and says something in his ear.

SAM
Now this is my idea of success.

The two men high five.

EXT. HOTEL SIGN - NIGHT

The sign reads: Now Playing

America's Real Hidden Talent

The Sam Johnson Five

FADE OUT.

