

ALL ABOUT THE MUSIC

Ep. 101 - "THESE DREAMS"

Written by

Steven Sallie

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Second Draft

EXT. FROG'S POND BAR & GRILL - NIGHT

A small brick building sitting alone on a street corner. All the neighboring buildings are closed down or just condemned.

Half a dozen cars or so out front.

A couple people moseying inside.

INT. FROG'S POND BAR & GRILL - NIGHT

The local dive. Sparsely populated. Mostly gathered around the bar, a few in the center of the room, dancing.

Or, at least, trying to.

GLENN, 40s, crew cut, the bar owner, stands behind the bar, watching a young band on stage:

BEN HARPER, 25, glasses, beard, the guitarist. He's got the swagger of Jimmy Page and the look of a hipster.

WILL SHAFFER, 25, blond, well built, the singer. He looks like the guy you'd see at the gym whenever he's free.

RYAN BROOKS, 24, mohawk, the bassist. The jolly, lovable type. Some day he'll be some kids favorite uncle.

CRAIG LARSON, 26, clean cut, the drummer. Lean, but strong. Powerful enough to bang the hell out of his drum kit.

Together they make up the band The Nomads. They're timing is spot on, their chemistry as a group unquestionable.

And they're playing to a crowd that couldn't care less.

The Band finishes their set and looks around. No one seems to care.

Glenn claps from behind the bar, trying to give them something.

BEN (PRE-LAP)
That was embarrassing...

INT. FROG'S POND BAR & GRILL - LATER

The place is empty now, save for the band and Glenn. All are gathered at the bar pounding down drinks. Lost and dejected.

GLENN
Everyone has an off night now and then. You'll get there, just be patient.

RYAN
Thanks, mom.

CRAIG
Why do we keep doing this
to ourselves?

WILL
Masochists.

BEN
I actually think someone was
falling asleep while we were
playing. I could've sworn I heard
somebody snoring.

Glenn pours everyone another drink. Trying to lift
their spirits.

GLENN
You guys are gonna make it.

BEN
And if we don't?

GLENN
Then you can always come back
here. I'm not going anywhere.

BEN
Thanks.

GLENN
Besides, I'm not letting you guys
go anywhere until you pay your
tab.

RYAN
We can do that. What's our tab,
fifteen, twenty bucks?

GLENN
Three hundred and fifty dollars.

RYAN
Shit.
(beat)
Do you accept sexual favors?

GLENN
I do not.

INT. BEN & JULIA'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A small, yet inviting place. Mismatched furniture. Record player and boxes of old records everywhere.

JULIA BROWN, 23, brunette, petite, sits on the couch. Reading.

Ben enters, carrying his guitar in one hand, his amp in the other. Looking utterly dejected.

Julia perks up. Puts her book down on the table.

JULIA
How'd it go?

Ben puts his guitar and amp down in the corner. Joins Julia on the couch.

BEN
How do you think it went? It went
just like all the others went.

Ben slumps back on the couch. Julia rests her head on his chest.

BEN
Everyone was fucking drunk before
we even got there. One lady kept
trying to sing a totally different
song out loud, and some old guy
pissed himself and had to be taken
out.

Julia kisses him.

JULIA
I'm sorry, baby. I wish I could've
been there, but I literally just
got back from work twenty minutes
ago.

BEN
Don't worry about it. It's not
like you missed anything.

JULIA
I still like seeing you on stage.

BEN
Why?

JULIA
Because I like being there
for you.

Ben smiles.

JULIA
Plus, you're sexy when you're
on stage.

Ben perks up at this.

BEN
Really?

JULIA
Oh yeah.

She starts kissing his neck. Then starts moving down his chest.

INT. CRAIG'S GARAGE - DAY

A small, two-car garage with all the band's equipment in it. Everything setup in the center of the room. Two old, worn couches sit on either side. A table and small fridge in the corner.

The garage door slides open as the band enters, chugging energy drinks.

WILL
How many of these do you think
Keith Richards could drink?

RYAN
He could probably take a six pack
through an IV and play a show the
same night.

CRAIG
I think he died twenty years ago
and no one bothered to tell him.

Ben hangs back as the others put down their drinks, fishing something out of his pocket: a folded, crumpled piece of notebook paper.

He unfolds it, holds it up for the band to see.

BEN
I've got something for us to work
on. I wrote it last night. I'm not
sure it's any good, but it's
something.

RYAN
Can't be worse than Will's
last song.

WILL
Fuck you! That song was genius and
you know it.

RYAN
'Lovin' in the Bus' is not a
genius song.

WILL
Someone, somewhere, would like it.

Everyone laughs.

RYAN
Yeah... and if I had wings, I
could fly. It still wouldn't make
anyone like your song.

Ryan grabs the paper from Ben, looks it over. Raises his
brow, impressed.

RYAN
This is good, man. Like, really
good. Insanely good.

Craig and Will move in, peering over Ryan's shoulder at
the paper.

They seem just as impressed.

BEN
You guys wanna try it?

CRAIG
Hell yeah. I gotta do something to
get over last night's disaster.

Craig takes a seat behind his drum kit as Ryan and Ben strap on
their instruments. Will looks over the paper, getting the
lyrics.

BEN
It's in E minor. Standard one,
four, five. Twelve bars. I'll stay
as close to the changes as I can,
but it moves a little bit, don't
worry about it.

RYAN
Sounds good.

WILL
(to Craig)
Count us in.

CRAIG
One, two, three, four!

The room ERUPTS as the band starts Ben's song. Even for a new song, they're perfectly in sync.

As they move through the arrangement, the band exchanges looks. Knowing they've got a good one.

EXT. CITY STREETS, DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - NIGHT

Very late. No one in sight. Everything is dead silent.

Ben and Ryan slowly make their way down the sidewalk, pulling their coats close against the cold. Their faces red.

BEN
That wasn't completely
terrible, right?

RYAN
Are you fucking crazy? That was
great, man.

BEN
You really think so or are you
just saying that?

RYAN
Dude, we've been friends since
first grade. I don't bullshit you.
That's how this whole friendship
thing works.

Ben looks pleased to hear this. A little spring in his step --

BEN
Maybe it'll be good enough to keep
people awake.

RYAN
It will. Then they'll see how
badass we are and we'll be rich
and famous and I can buy all the
cocaine and hookers I can afford.

Ben just stares at him. Shoots him an "are you fucking serious?" look.

RYAN
Or maybe we'll just celebrate at
Waffle House and I'll fuck my
girlfriend. This song could get us
there. It might be the push we
need to start things rolling.

Ben lets this sink in. He likes the sound of it.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE, DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - NIGHT

Ben and Ryan pace around the fountain. Still adrenaline filled
from their conversation.

Ryan sees something on a telephone pole: A *FLYER*.

He rushes forward. Grabs it.

RYAN
This has to be a sign. Someone out
there wants us to make it.

Ryan hands the flyer to Ben.

Ben looks at the headline:

FRANKENSTEIN'S BAR - OPEN MIC NIGHT!

INT. FRANKENSTEIN'S - NIGHT

The place where anyone who's anyone hangs out. An overcrowded,
overdecorated, neon nightmare.

Dozens and dozens of drunk TWENTY-SOMETHINGS drinking like it's
their last night on earth.

EXT. FRANKENSTEIN'S - NIGHT

The band stands in the alley behind the bar, bracing themselves
for whatever's coming. Good or bad.

They're accompanied by their girlfriends:

Julia, CAITLYN, 27, Ryan's girlfriend, AMANDA, 23, Craig's
girlfriend.

No girl for Will. The eternal bachelor.

The group watch more and more people file into the bar. Each
person, or group worse than the one before it.

INT. FRANKENSTEIN'S - NIGHT

BARRY, 40s, badly dressed, way too much energy, takes the stage. Grabs the mic. Ready to get everyone pumped --

BARRY

How's everybody doing tonight?

CHEERS and APPLAUSE from the crowd. Hands and drinks in the air.

BARRY

We've got a great show for you tonight. I hope everyone has a drink. If not, I suggest you equip yourself before the festivities kick off!

EXT. FRANKENSTEIN'S - NIGHT

The band, finished with their drinks, collects themselves and head inside the bar.

INT. FRANKENSTEIN'S - NIGHT

The band peeks out from the backstage area, watching Barry work the crowd into a frenzy.

BARRY

Are you guys ready to have some fun?

More SCREAMS and APPLAUSE.

BARRY

I said are you ready to have some fun?!

The room goes nuts. More JOY and LOUDNESS than seemingly possible. The energy is ELECTRIFYING. Like the place is about to explode.

BARRY

Then without further ado, put your hands together for the Nomads!

The band strolls onto the stage, ready to go. They give some LOOKS, NODS and WAVES at the crowd.

The crowd CHEERS. A few girls SCREAM.

Will takes the mic from Barry as the band grabs their instruments and checks their amp settings.

WILL
You guys like music?

More APPLAUSE.

WILL
Good. Hopefully you'll like
this then...

Without another word, Craig counts them in and the band RIPS
INTO THEIR SONG. LOUD, fast, precise. AMAZING.

The crowd LOVES THEM. Hanging on the performance. Feeding off
the symbiotic relationship between band and audience.

From the back of the room, a man in his 40s, takes particular
notice of them. Of how much the crowd loves them.

EXT. FRANKENSTEIN'S - NIGHT

The band loads their gear into Craig's van. Getting a fix off
the high from their show. They're jittery and excited.

PAUL DAVIDS, the man from the crowd, approaches them. A shit-
eating grin on his face. He's slightly effeminate and soft
spoken.

PAUL
Hello. I was wondering if I could
have a moment of your time?

The band turns. Surprised. Not sure if they should be cautious
or not.

RYAN
Sure.

Paul shakes their hands.

PAUL
Name's Paul Davids. I saw you
performing in there. You're really
good. You got a manager.

Everyone perks up at this. Trying not to show their excitement
too much --

BEN
No.

PAUL
You want one?

The band and their girlfriends share a look. Wondering if this is a really happening. Surely, they must be dreaming.

BEN
Yes!

PAUL
Great.

Paul digs around in his pocket. Pulls out a BUSINESS CARD. Hands it to Ben.

PAUL
Give me a call in the morning, and we'll work something out. I'd love to represent you guys.

CRAIG
We will do that.

PAUL
I'm looking forward to it.

Paul leaves.

The band makes sure he's out of earshot before BURSTING with joy.

CRAIG
Are you fucking serious?

Amanda throws her arms around Craig.

AMANDA
I think he was fucking serious!

Hugs, kisses and high fives all around.

BEN
We have to celebrate.

INT. BEN & JULIA'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Julia lies in bed, watching Ben pace back and forth in front of her. Like an animal locked in a cage. Ready to break free.

JULIA
Will you come to bed already?

BEN
I can't. Do you have any idea how incredible this is?
(MORE)

BEN (CONT'D)

I mean, someone in the world
actually wants to be our manager.
Someone out there gives a shit
about our music.

JULIA

Hey, I give a shit about
your music.

BEN

I know you do. I didn't mean it
that way. I'm just saying -- this
could be it. This could be our big
break...

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - MORNING

A small office complex situated in the back corner of the town square. While far from run down, it's not nearly as impressive and imposing and neighboring buildings.

INT. PAUL'S OFFICE, LOBBY - MORNING

A tightly congested space. Lots of framed "art" on the walls. The window has a perfect view of the building next door's backside.

HELEN, 30, Paul's secretary, sits behind the front desk, struggling through a SUDOKU PUZZLE.

The band sits. Waiting. They've gathered the best clothes they could find between them -- all in slacks and dress shirts. Will wears some bastardized version of a suit.

Craig makes eye contact with Helen, making her uncomfortable.

HELEN

He'll be with you in a moment.

CRAIG

Thanks.

He leans in to the rest of the band, who huddles around him.

CRAIG

(low)

I think he fucking scammed
us, dude.

RYAN

He's coming.

(MORE)

RYAN (CONT'D)
He's probably just busy
or something.

CRAIG
Or maybe he didn't plan on showing
up in the first place. Maybe he
gets off on finding young men,
promising them their dreams and
taking them away.

BEN
Craig, calm down. You're gonna
fucking blow a blood vessel or
something.
(beat)
Just calm down and breath.

CRAIG
I AM CALM!

The band shushes him. Looks over at Helen. She raises her
eyebrow at them.

The door to Paul's office opens. He steps out. Smiles at
the band.

PAUL
Good morning.

INT. PAUL'S OFFICE - MORNING

An even smaller space. Not even a window in here. Every inch of
the walls are covered in some kind of music memorabilia. Photos
of Paul with several low level bands.

PAUL
I'm not gonna beat around the
bush here...

The bands leans forward, simultaneously anticipating and
dreading what might come next.

PAUL
... You guys are fucking great. I
mean, fucking great. And I don't
say that to everyone.

The band RELAXES, situating more comfortably into their seats.

PAUL

I've been doing this for over ten years now, and in that time, I don't think I've seen so much potential in an amateur band.

BEN

Really? You mean that? You're not bullshitting us?

PAUL

Of course I do. I don't blow smoke up people's asses. That would be counter productive to what I'm trying to achieve here. My mission is to find young, fresh bands, polish them up, and present them to the world so we can all reap the rewards.

The band shares excited looks.

WILL

And you think you can get us there? Better shows than just local bars, right?

PAUL

Why stop there? I'm thinking bigger.

CRAIG

Bigger?

RYAN

Bigger?

BEN

Bigger?

PAUL

Bigger! I'm talking road gigs, fly gigs, streaming service, EPs, tours. The whole nine yards. I'm not going to stop until your pictures are on every teenager girl's walls.

The band looks at him for a minute, then nods to Ben. Like they've rehearsed this.

BEN

So how does this work, exactly?

PAUL

In a nutshell, I'll represent you in every way. I'll take care of booking the gigs, contacting the promoters, sorting out the finances, setting up social media presence. All you fine gentlemen have to do is play your songs.

WILL

That sounds great.
(to the band)
It's what we've always wanted, guys.

RYAN

This sounds too good to be true. There's gotta be some sort of catch? What's the catch?

PAUL

No catch. No fine print. That's not how I work. I like to be transparent. The basic gist of it is that when we get paid for the gig, I get fifteen percent. If you look around, you'll see that's a better deal than anyone else will give you.

(beat)

After a few dozen shows, you're starting to rack up a nice little bit of pocket money.

He stares them down for a moment. Indicating their appearance.

PAUL

Certainly enough to afford some decent suits.

The band tries their best to look calm and collected. But they look like children at Christmas.

PAUL

So... what do you say?

INT. FROG'S POND BAR & GRILL - NIGHT

After close. The main lights are off, just a few backup lights on.

The band CLINKS their glasses together. Ecstatic. Like they've just won the lottery.

They sit at the bar with Glenn, who's beyond happy for them.

CRAIG
I can't believe it. I still can't
fucking believe it. We have a
manager. WE HAVE A FUCKING
MANAGER!

Glenn raises his glass to them.

GLENN
Cheers. You earned it.

They all chug their drinks.

Glenn watches them. A proud parental figure watching his kids
leave the nest.

GLENN
I said you'd make it. You gotta
learn to trust me more. I'm right
most of the time.

He claps Ben on the back.

GLENN
I'm proud of you. You're making
your dreams come true. That's
something everybody wants, but
very few actually achieve.

RYAN
I still can't believe we have a
manager now.

WILL
I know. We could be the next
Beatles or Zeppelin.

GLENN
You sure you're that good?

WILL
They were all where we are now.
They made it, why not us?

Ben looks up from his drink.

BEN
Yeah... why not us...?

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Ben and Julia shop.

Julia tosses items in the shopping cart while Ben bounces around with the energy of a child.

BEN
I mean, seriously... why not us?
We can make it, right?

Julia grins at him.

This has to be the hundredth time she's heard this, but she loves how happy he is.

JULIA
Yes, sweetheart.

BEN
Really?

JULIA
Yes.

BEN
You're not just saying that,
are you?

JULIA
No.

BEN
You promise?

JULIA
Yes.

BEN
Do you swear?

INT. CRAIG'S GARAGE - DAY

Craig lies on the couch with Amanda. She's trying to read a magazine. Emphasis on TRYING.

Craig fidgets. Tapping his drum sticks on his legs.

CRAIG
He said he's going to get our
social media going. Paul says
bands can't succeed if that don't
have a social media presence.

AMANDA
I know. You told me five
times already.

CRAIG
And he says that this time next
month, we could performing ten or
fifteen gigs a month. Did I tell
you that?

AMANDA
Yes.

CRAIG
Did I tell you that he thinks we
have real potential?

AMANDA
Yes.

INT. WAFFLE HOUSE - DAY

Ryan and Caitlyn sit in the corner booth.

Caitlyn's plate is empty. Probably has been for some time.

Ryan has barely touched his. He's too busy talking --

RYAN
... and he says he'll only take
fifteen percent. Which, if you
look, is better than what most
music managers take. Most of them
take twenty to twenty-five
percent. If not more.
(off her look)
I looked it up.

CAITLYN
When's your first gig?

RYAN
We don't know yet. He hasn't
booked one. He's only been our
manager for a week. He's not a
genie -- he can't just snap his
finger and make shit happen.

INT. WILL'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - DAY

Will lies in bed with his latest bar skank, TINA.

Tina absentmindedly buffs her nails with a file as Will talks her ear off.

WILL
This is going to be so fucking awesome. Do you have any idea how awesome this is gonna be? Come on, you have to admit this is pretty fucking awesome...

TINA
Super awesome.

WILL
I know right?! He says we have more potential than any other band he's seen.

TINA
I know. You told me.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Ben and Julia are now in the frozen section.

Julia opens one of the fridges, looking through the pizzas.

BEN
He said we need to get working on an EP. So that people can actually pay to hear our songs.

JULIA
Won't everyone just download it for free?

BEN
Not everyone.

Julia stares at him.

BEN
Okay. Almost everyone will download it for free. At least we'll have something physical to hold in our hands. Something we made. Something real.

INT. CRAIG'S GARAGE - DAY

Craig gets up, heading for the attached bathroom.

CRAIG
We could be huge...

INT. WAFFLE HOUSE - DAY

Ryan is almost done with his plate.

Amanda shifts in her seat. Legs going numb.

RYAN
I can't wait to start doing some
out of state gigs. Maybe even some
fly gigs...

INT. WILL'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - DAY

Tina gets dressed.

Will sits on the edge of the bed.

WILL
Before long we could have our own
record deal.

TINA
I'm sure you will.

INT. BEN & JULIA'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - DAY

Bags of groceries all over the table and counters. Ben and
Julia put them away.

Ben is still going.

Julia just lets him.

BEN
Could you imagine if we made it? I
mean, like, really made it? We
could get a mansion... or a
pool... I've always wanted one of
those pools shaped like a guitar.
How fucking sweet would that be?

JULIA
It's everything I've ever wanted
and more.

Ben looks at her, realizing how lucky he is that she's listened
this long and not tuned him out or told him to shut up.

BEN
Am I driving you crazy yet?

JULIA
Not at all.

They laugh.

Ben's smile and enjoyment fades, giving way to a look of fear and nerves.

BEN
I'm kinda worried though?

Julia's smile fades as well. She crosses her arms, waiting for him to elaborate further.

BEN
What if we go through all this and we don't make it? What if we're shit and no one wants to listen to us.

JULIA
I understand that. Honestly, I do. But what's more important to you: Trying and failing, or not trying at all?

Ben sighs. Sits on the counter, putting his face in his hands.

BEN
I have to give it a shot. Right? I have to go for it... If I don't, I'll regret it forever.

Julia walks over to him, wraps her arms around his shoulders.

JULIA
Then there's your answer.

Ben smiles.

JULIA
But whatever happens, I'll be here for you, okay? No matter what, I'll always be here for you.
(then)
I love you.

BEN
I love you too. I don't deserve you.

Julia flips her hair.

JULIA
No. You don't.

INT. BEN & JULIA'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Julia is fast asleep.

Ben lies next to her, staring at the ceiling. Can't sleep. Too much on his mind.

Trying to be as quiet as possible, Ben gets out of bed.

INT. BEN & JULIA'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ben sits on the couch with his acoustic guitar. A shredded notebook open in front of him. A pen lays beside, ready to go.

Ben works out a gentle, finger-picked song. Something different than the stuff he usually does.

Different from what the band usually does.

INT. CRAIG'S GARAGE - DAY

The band is hard at it, rehearsing another song. There's a new kind of energy driving them. A sense of purpose they didn't have before.

Will finishes a verse. Points to Ben.

Ben plays a SOLO.

The band backs him. Elevating what he's playing.

Ben finishes his solo and the song crescendos. As their last note rings out, trailing into feedback, the group looks to one another.

CRAIG
Fucking beautiful!

BEN
Thanks. I thought it could be on our EP. Maybe like a single or something. What do you guys think?

The group nods in agreement.

WILL

Once those record suits get ahold
of what we got coming, they're
gonna shit themselves.

Ben takes off his guitar, puts it on the stand.

BEN

Let's take a break.

RYAN

Just what I was thinking.

Ryan takes off his bass, then heads for the fridge. He digs
around for something to drink.

EXT. CRAIG'S HOUSE - DAY

A gleaming SUV pulls into the driveway.

The engine shuts off. The door opens, and Paul climbs out. For
a moment, he just stands there, staring at the garage.

INT. CRAIG'S GARAGE - DAY

The band is lounging around on the couches. They hear a KNOCK
on the door.

Craig gets up, goes to the door. Opens it --

Paul stands there, removing his sunglasses.

PAUL

How's it going, boys? Working hard
I hope.

Paul laughs a little too hard at his own joke.

Everyone looks up as Paul enters.

BEN

We just went on break. We're
working on some new material.

PAUL

Wonderful. Wonderful. I've got
some good news. I figured I'd tell
you in person instead of over the
phone. I wanted to see your faces
when I tell you this...

Paul sits awkwardly on a beanbag chair.

PAUL

I just thought you'd all like to know that the Nomads have been booked solid for the next two weeks!

Ryan almost chokes on his soda.

RYAN

For real?

PAUL

I said I'd take care of you, didn't I? You'll be playing Friday, Saturday and Sunday for the next two weeks. Half the shows are here in Chicago, half are outside the city. One of the places you'll be playing is the Pit.

WILL

No way! That's the biggest club in Chicago. Everyone and their fucking grandma goes there.

PAUL

Good. Now everyone and their fucking grandma can see you play. I had to pull some serious connections, but the club owner owes me a favor so I figured this was just as good a time as any to cash in.

CRAIG

You're seriously amazing.

Paul puts on his best faux modesty, but it's clear he's loving the praise. Basking in it even.

PAUL

He didn't want to budge at first. After I showed him a clip from your last gig, he caved right away.

(beat)

Now that we've got that sorted out...

Paul takes out his phone, brings up an INSTAGRAM page. Shows it to the band:

A large banner reads *THE NOMADS*. Photos of the band playing. Audio clips of some of their songs.

PAUL

... we need to work on the social media aspect. Bands today don't make it far if they aren't flaunting themselves online. So, my advice: be the fucking peacock. Flaunt it. You're already up to over three hundred followers.

CRAIG

No shit?

PAUL

All it takes it one person to share it with their friend, then he shares it with his girlfriend, and on and on it goes.

Paul passes his phone around to the group, who all crowd around one another to scroll through the feed.

WILL

Check out this comment: "I'd fuck the shit out of that drummer."

Ryan LAUGHS. Points to the comment.

RYAN

Reads the username.

Will's face slacks.

WILL

Captin' Stabbin'...?

Ben pats Will reassuringly on the back. Trying like hell to not bust a gut laughing.

BEN

At least you've got a fan.

Will hands the phone back to Paul.

WILL

(to Ben)

Fuck off!

PAUL

We need more videos. People can't get enough of them. Then we need to focus on releasing an EP. It's something we can show to a label to say look what we've got.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

(thinking)

Our next move after that is to publish all your songs on a streaming service. Spotify, Soundcloud. Bandcamp. Doesn't matter. All that matters is that we get it uploaded where it can start pulling in views.

BEN

So we're gonna need songs.

PAUL

As many as you can churn out. If you think you've got too many, add two. You can never have too much material, even if we have to push it to a B side further down the road.

BEN

We can do that.

RYAN

We'll have two albums worth of material before you know it.

Paul clumsily gets to his feet.

PAUL

Fantastic.

Paul makes his way to the door.

The band sees him out.

PAUL

Get ready, boys. Things are about to get nuts...

EXT. THE PIT - NIGHT

The big daddy of all nightclubs. A line on the sidewalk stretching down the block. A BOUNCER behind the rope, checking IDs.

INT. THE PIT, BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

A small, but welcoming space. Cold drinks, snacks. Mini bar.

The band, their girlfriends and Paul crowd the room.

AMANDA
Holy shit, this is fancy.

Ryan scans over the min bar, finds a few small bottles of JACK DANIELS. Holds them up.

RYAN
We can just take these, right?

PAUL
Help yourself. This is for you to
relax before the show.

Ryan opens one of the bottles. Downs the whole thing in one gulp.

RYAN
I'm taking them.

Ben warms up on his guitar. Julia peeks out into the club from behind the stage. Sees:

A PACKED HOUSE. Elbow to elbow. No breathing room. Everyone drinking and having a great time. Dancing. Music. Glow sticks.

JULIA
There's got to be over two hundred
people out there.
(to Ben)
Are you nervous?

BEN
I wasn't...

JULIA
Sorry.

Paul walks up behind them. Looking at clubs dance floor.

PAUL
You'll do fine. Don't worry.
You've got this. You're gonna go
out there and fucking kill it.

A man enters the backstage area from the dance floor. This is ALEC, 30s, the club owner. Overly-expensive haircut and shirt.

ALEC
All right, you're on in five.
You ready?

RYAN
We're ready.

CRAIG
We're gonna blow them away.

ALEC
That's what I like to hear. I'll
leave you to it. Good luck.

Alec leaves.

The band takes a collective breath, preparing themselves.

PAUL
I'm gonna go find a place with a
good view. I want to make sure I
get video of this for Instagram.

Paul heads out onto the dance floor, maneuvering and squeezing his way through the crowd.

BEN
I'm really starting to
get nervous.

Ryan holds up one of the Jack Daniels bottles.

RYAN
Want one?

Ben takes it, unscrews the cap as fast as he can. CHUGS the bottle.

INT. THE PIT - NIGHT

The band PLAYS for the crowd, going through a set of NEW MATERIAL. The crowd is eating out of the palm of their hand, hanging on every note.

Ben catches a glimpse of Julia in the crowd. Winks at her.

Julia smiles at him, looking around at the room. She's never seen this many people watching her boyfriend play.

INT. THE PIT, BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Paul films the performance with his phone, making sure to get them from a good angle, as well as the crowd.

Alec approaches Paul, dollar signs in his eyes. He stands beside him for a minute. Silent. Watching him film the show.

As the band starts their next song, he leans in, talking above the noise --

ALEC
These kids really have
something special.

PAUL
I told you.

ALEC
Do you think they'd want to play
here again next week?

Paul grins. Everything falling into place perfectly.

PAUL
That depends.

ALEC
On what...?

PAUL
On how much you're willing to pay.
By the look of this crowd, I think
something in the ballpark of
double would work.

Alec looks like the wind has been knocked out of him. He stares
at Paul like he's crazy.

ALEC
Double? Are you fucking nuts?

PAUL
If you don't want to pay, that's
fine. It's your choice.

Paul looks around, feeding off the energy of the place. Turns
back to Alec, a vulture circling its prey.

PAUL
I'm gonna go out on a limb and say
that would probably be the worst
decision of your life.
(beat)
You ever heard of Dick Rowe?

Alec shakes his head.

PAUL
Dick Rowe was the head of
Decca records.
(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

After the Beatles auditioned for him in the early 60s, he told them guitar bands were on the way out and decided to sign Brian Poole and the Tremeloes instead. He went to his grave known as "the man who turned down the Beatles."

Paul looks at Alec, watching the wheels turn in his head.

PAUL

Just something to think about.

Alec lets out a sigh.

ALEC

You're a fucking shark, you know that right?

PAUL

Of course.

ALEC

Fine. I'll pay. But I want them here next Saturday as eleven.

Paul extends his hand.

PAUL

Pleasure doing business with you.

Alec shakes it. Walks away.

Paul turns back to the band. Caught up in the moment, he lets out a WAR CRY.

INT. THE PIT, ALEC'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Alec sits at his desk, begrudgingly counting out a stack of money.

Paul and the band stand across from him, staring at the cash like a starving person stares at a burger.

EXT. THE PIT - NIGHT

Very late now. A fog starting to roll in.

The band loads their gear into Craig's van. They're stumbling over each other, clearly intoxicated.

WILL
That was the best fucking show we
ever played. No contest.

CRAIG
No contest.

RYAN
I thought they were gonna storm
the stage and tear us apart.

WILL
And did you see all the gorgeous
women in there?

BEN
Yeah, but was Captin' Stabbin'
in there?

Will puts Ben in a Full Nelson.

WILL
Fuck off!

Will lets him go.

Paul loads Ben's amp into the back of the van, then turns to
address everyone --

PAUL
I'm glad you enjoyed yourselves.
Guess it'd be stupid to ask if
you'd like to play here again?

BEN
Are you fucking kidding? We'd play
here every night if they'd let us.

PAUL
I'm glad to hear to say that...

Paul puts on a stern face. Messing with them.

The band stares him down for a moment, not sure exactly what
to do.

PAUL
... because Alec wants you here
next Saturday night.

The group smiles, grinning from ear-to-ear.

PAUL
And he's agreed to pay *double*!

The band can't believe it. They look at Paul like they could kiss him at any moment.

INT. CRAIG'S VAN - NIGHT

Everyone files into the van, shutting the doors behind them.

Paul hangs back, looking at the van full of musicians.

PAUL
Strap yourself in, boys...

Paul gets into the van.

PAUL
... we're going all the way to
the top...

Paul SLIDES the van door shut --

SMASH TO BLACK:

THE END.