

LITTLE CHARLES

By

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Little Charles: I Am My Fathers' Son
by
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FADE IN:

A BIBLICAL QUOTATION AGAINST A BLACK SCREEN:

"For we walk by faith, not by sight." (II Corinthians 5:7)

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

DANVILLE, GA 1949

In the distance, a country house (or shotgun house) sits in the field.

The sound of a woman screaming,...(beat), then a sound of an infant crying and we cut sharply to:

1 INT. SHOTGUN HOUSE - BACK ROOM - NIGHT 1

The room is dark with only a KEROSENE LAMP to illuminate it.

A distinctly SOUTHERN VOICE...

PASTOR'S VOICE:

In 1949, in Danville, Ga. Mary gave birth to a nine pound healthy baby boy...

MIDWIFE-AVERAGE BUILD, MID-30s, gives crying NEWBORN to an exhausted MARY-ATTRACTIVE, SLIM BUILD, 16 YEARS OLD.

A proud CHARLIE-HANDSOME, TALL, SLIM BUILD, 18 YEARS OLD, holds a wash bin and bloody towels.

He looks on in discontent.

PASTOR (V.O.)

They named him Charles; but unbeknown to them the midwife secretly wrote down on the birth certificate the name of her lover.

MIDWIFE secretly WRITES RONIE EUGENE SURREY ON BIRTH CERTIFICATE under a dim lit Kerosene lamp in the darkness.

PASTOR (V.O.)

She named him after Eugene R. William, the step son of Mr. William who owned most of the land surrounding Turkey Creek and Sand-bed road.

(CONTINUED)

Charlie playfully holds his new son while singing his version of an old spiritual hymn.

CHARLIE:
 (drawn-out southern
 singing)
 I've come to far to turn
 around and I can't turn
 around, Lord what I'm
 holding is God's grace!

PASTOR (V.O.)
 Charles and his father were
 born in Wilkinson County.
 But his mother had been
 born in the next county
 over, Twiggs County.

The camera leaves them in the BACK ROOM headed towards the front door passing a BARELY furnished KITCHEN, MIDDLE ROOM, and front ROOM.

2

EXT. SHOTGUN HOUSE - DAY

2

PASTOR (V.O.)
 Mother Mary told of the time, when
 Charles was almost a year old and
 how she put him on the sand pile,
 in the front yard, to soak up the
 early morning sun.

Freshly hung LAUNDRY HANGS from the clothes line outside.

A LIGHT BREEZE fills the air.

BABY CHARLES plays in a washing basket with a crocheted shawl draped over it like a BASSINET.

His tiny hand shakes a BABY RATTLE.

Mary walks towards the front door carrying a GLASS OF LEMONADE.

PASTOR (V.O.)
 As she was coming forth out of the
 house, onto the front porch, she
 saw a horrible sight;...

A RATTLE SNAKE comes from beneath the house and quickly slithers towards the baby.

A terrified Mary DROPS THE GLASS and runs off the front porch.

PASTOR (V.O.)
 There was nothing she could do
 seeing that the rattler was half
 way between herself and baby

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PASTOR (V.O.) (cont'd)
Charles, and it would reach him,
before she could.

Mary stumbles and FALLS to her knees in prayer.

PASTOR (V.O.)	MARY
Out of sheer desperation,	(screaming)
she threw herself on the	Somebody up there, please
mercy seat of heaven and	help my baby!
screamed to the top of her	
voice,...	

The camera goes from MARY'S VIEWPOINT to find a RED, YELLOW,
AND BLACK KING SNAKE coming out of the woods.

PASTOR (V.O.)
And then an extraordinary thing
happened,...

The KING SNAKE races towards the RATTLE SNAKE before it
could reach the baby.

PASTOR (V.O.)
...just as the rattle snake was
approaching the baby, the king
snake cut him off wrapping his body
around his body, from head to tail
and breaking every bone in his
body. When he knew the rattle snake
was dead, he politely slithers away
from the baby, into grassy fields
nearby.

Charles starts to cry and MARY races towards him.

CUT TO:

3

INT. SHOTGUN HOUSE - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

3

A frightened, small, and fragile baby Charles wakes up from
a nightmare screaming.

BABY CHARLES
(crying)
Mammy!!!!

Mary comes running into the back room to comfort him.

She holds a 1 YEAR OLD BABY GIRL in her arms.

(CONTINUED)

PASTOR (V.O.)

At the tender age of 3, Charles would have terrifying nightmares, the same re-occurring dream, night after night, week after week, month after month, and year after year, up until he was 12 years old.

By the look on MARY'S FACE you can see she's tired.

PASTOR (V.O.)

In the dream, details of the event took place on the old Sand-bed road, now renamed Surry Road.

She GRABS A BIBLE nearby, opens it to Psalm 23:1-6, and starts to read it.

MARY

(soft southern accent)

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake...

He immediately starts to calm down and falls back to sleep.

Mary finishes the prayer, puts the Bible down, and starts humming a spiritual song to her BABY GIRL.

PASTOR (V.O.)

Those visions in Charles' nightmares would begin with a wandering soul headed up sand-bed road, passing Mount Cillia Spring Baptist church before witnessing a legion of spirits coming out of the cemetery chasing after his soul...

The camera goes to the window.

A full moon is out and the SOUNDS OF CRICKETS fill the air.

DISSOLVE TO:

4 EXT. SAND-BED ROAD - DAY 4

TWO BOYS run down Sand-bed road headed towards Mount Cillia Spring Baptist church.

The last of the FAMILIES ENTER the church where the MIDDLE GEORGIA SINGERS are singing (JESUS WILL) inside.

5 INT. MOUNT CILLIA SPRING BAPTIST CHURCH - DAY 5

Charlie is at the pulpit ready to lead the devotional.

CHARLES-8 YEARS OLD, sits in the pew with his mother and THREE SIBLINGS...

SISTER JUANITA-6 YEARS OLD, SISTER THEODOSIA-4 YEARS OLD, AND BABY BROTHER JOE-2 YEARS OLD.

Mary holds baby brother Joe.

CHARLIE
(southern accent)
I want to share a testimony with
y'all before I go into prayer...

Charles IMAGINES HIMSELF in his father's role leading the devotional from the pulpit.

PASTOR (V.O.)
When Charles first learned
of his father's secret it
was in the summer of 1956.
Everyone in the small music
town of Bibb County knew
about her, but not everyone
could capture Miss Flute's
charm the way his father
did it.

CHARLES
(southern accent)
I barely made it off stage,
when I was nearly grabbed
by a mob of young gals
screaming Chuck, Chuck,
Chuck!

Charles SNATCHES the air with both his arms.

It's a hot, muggy day and from the SWEAT on his face you feel the intensity.

CHARLES
(sweating)
But just as they reached out to lay
hold on me a magical thing
happened, my soul took flight and I
was air borne!

Several voices off-camera respond.

(CONTINUED)

VOICES (O.S.)

Save him!...

Amen...

Yes, Lord!...

CHARLIE (V.O)

But the mere joy having' embraced
Miss Flute only lasted a few
moments.

The camera finds the FACES OF THE CONGREGATION.

They listen intently.

WOMEN are fanning themselves with HAND FANS to fight back
the heat.

CHARLES

(preaching)

What I soon experienced was
something more fascinating and
puzzling then before taking place
on stage. Something more
mysterious, terrifying, shocking,
and unexplainable to convey at the
time...

Charles watches from THE PEW hypnotized by his father's
mesmerizing voice and holding on to every word.

His mother Mary looks down the pew at him, nods her head,
then lifts her hand to the Lord.

MARY

(praising)

Thank you, Jesus!

CHARLIE (V.O.)

But later in life I
understood that I had been
given a rare privilege to
share my gift.

Charles stands at the pulpit holding his guitar in a Chuck
Berry like posture, then he slowly pulls the mike closer to
his mouth.

His eyes are closed as he still sits in the pew.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

(drawn-out southern singing)

A charge to keep I have,...Ohhhhh,
charge!

(CONTINUED)

Charles is finally SNAPPED out of his trance when he hears what sounds like his name being called.

CHARLES
(startled)
Yes, Sir!

The congregation erupts in laughter.

Charles puts his hands over his face as his sister giggles and teases him.

JUANITA
(mockingly singing)
Ohhhhh, Charles!

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

SUMMER 1957

6 EXT. UNIONVILLE NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT 6

It was in the summer of that year, a very hot night.

All the CHILDREN in the neighborhood were out ROLLING AROUND in the grass.

7 INT. CITY HOUSE - SAME NIGHT 7

Charles came in the house SHIRTLESS to find a suitable-wall to rub his itching-back up against...

When he happened to notice his father's singing group 'BLACK & WHITE SILVER-TONE GUITAR' lying across two wooden straight-back chairs HUMMING!

CHARLES' CONSCIOUS
(small inner voice is 6 year
old Juanita)
Go and pick it up!

Charles is somewhat reluctant to do so,...(FLASHBACK)

His antagonistic 6 year old little sister reminds him why.

JUANITA
Ooh, I'm telling daddy!

(CONTINUED)

PASTOR (V.O.)
There was an unwritten law in the
house, never touch daddy's guitar!

(BACK TO CHARLES)

Charles BRAVELY walks over to the guitar,...PICKS IT UP...
Studies it for a second...
Pulls the strap over his head...

PASTOR (V.O.)
There had never been a strong
desire to do it before, but this
time was different; it was as if
the hand of God had lifted the fear
away from him and Charles felt
comfort enough, in picking up the
instrument?

Then starts stroking the strings GENTLY!

PASTOR (V.O.)
The next thing was truly amazing...

His 6 year old little sister comes through the front DOOR.
She is SHOCKED by what she sees, and is left SPEECHLESS!

PASTOR (V.O.)
After fiddling about for 15 minutes
or so, Charles find himself playing
that old song "JESUS NEVER FAIL",
heaven and earth shall pass away.
No man taught it to him,...God
taught it to him!

His father and GROUP-MEMBERS are having a business meeting
in the next room.

They hear the music and COME RUNNING OUT.

PASTOR (V.O.)
Charles' father wanted to
be angry, but before he
could, one of the members
spoke up.

PAUL BEASLEY
(to Charlie)
Slim when did Little
Charles start playing the
guitar?

Charles' father stands there with a STYMIE LOOK on his face.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE
(baffled-voice)
Huh, to be truthful bout it, I
really don't know!

Charles continues to entertain his audience.

PASTOR (V.O.)
Charles knew right then and there
that he was safe and that he could
play and would learn to play the
guitar even better.

Oh by the way, that was the very
first time he was called by the
name of, **LITTLE CHARLES™**, herein on
out everyone connected in the
singing field would refer to him as
such.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

CHRISTMAS 1957

8 INT. CITY HOUSE - FRONT ROOM - CHRISTMAS DAY 8

Little Charles and his siblings race from the back room down
the hall into the front room to open Christmas presents
under the tree.

Immediately, Little Charles goes for the long box with his
name on it.

PASTOR (V.O.)
That Christmas his father brought
him a small eight-string ukulele
guitar.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

Early Spring 1958

9 EXT. WOODLAND STREET HILL - DAY 9

Little Charles plays for his NEIGHBORS up and down the street stopping at EACH HOUSE-A ROW OF SEVEN, SERENADING EACH FAMILY.

They sit comfortably on their front-yard porches enjoying HIS MUSIC!

CUT TO:

10 EXT. CITY HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - NEXT DAY 10

One day while Little Charles was sitting on the front porch with his guitar, an OLD ONE-LEGGED GENTLEMEN called him over into HIS YARD and gave him a LIGHT REBUKING!

ONE-LEGGED GENTLEMAN
(funny southern accent)
...so you think you can play the
guitar, you're not playing it
you're spanking it to death, if
you're going to play it, play it
right,...PICK IT!

Little Charles walks away a little hurt by the advice.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

11 EXT. UNIONVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - MID AFTERNOON 11

A STRAY CHICKEN crosses a road heading towards the elementary school.

Just as it gets across the road safely, a car zooms pass and scares it.

12 INT. CLASSROOM - MID AFTERNOON 12

Inside a 4th grade classroom, Little Charles sits near the window looking out at the stray chicken.

MS. JACKSON, a black teacher, mid-30s, sort of an old maid type, stands at the front writing the history lesson on the chalkboard.

The class is packed with BLACK STUDENTS quietly taking notes on MARK TWAIN and his Great American Novel.

(CONTINUED)

PASTOR (V.O.)

In the forth grade, Little Charles' body would sit in class, but his mind was always daydreaming about his future, his guitar, and the one-legged man's advice.

Suddenly, Little Charles is snapped back to reality when he hears Ms. Jackson's voice.

MS. JACKSON

(shouting)

Confounded Charles, are you paying attention or are you daydreaming again?

Immediately the other students start to laugh.

Little Charles has an embarrassed look on HIS FACE.

Ms. Jackson stops writing on the chalkboard and takes a seat at her desk.

She picks up the ADVENTURE OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN novel, then randomly calls on students to read it out loud.

PASTOR (V.O.)

Little Charles loved looking at history books with pictures, geography maps, and farm life scenery, but he was not so keen on reading written material.

Little Charles nervously watches the other STUDENTS READING.

When the first BELL RINGS at 2:50 p.m., he immediately gathers his books together.

He starts to anxiously watch the CLOCK ON THE WALL...

His fingers tap on the desk...

Then at exactly 3:00 p.m...BELL RINGS!

The class stands up as Little Charles eagerly leads them in the dismissal song...AULD LANG SYNE!

LITTLE CHARLES

(singing)

We had a lovely time today...But now our work is done...Good-bye to you Dear teacher...Until tomorrow come...Until tomorrow come...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LITTLE CHARLES (cont'd)
 Good-bye to you Dear teacher...
 Until tomorrow come....

Little Charles quickly leaves the classroom ahead of the OTHER STUDENTS.

CUT TO:

13 EXT. WOODLAND STREET HILL - MID AFTERNOON 13

Little Charles runs down the hill as fast as he can.

When he gets to the front of his house, he quickly hurdles the front porch stairs, then heads inside.

14 INT. CITY HOUSE - FRONT ROOM - MID AFTERNOON 14

As he comes through the front door, Little Charles dashes past the front room towards the back room.

The camera pans to a TABLE CLOCK sitting on the dresser...3:10 p.m.!

15 INT. CITY HOUSE - BACK ROOM - MID AFTERNOON 15

Little Charles immediately grabs his guitar sitting in a corner of the room.

He sits on his messy bed looking exhausted, panting and breathing heavily...

PASTOR (V.O.)

Little Charles knew his parents
 would scold him for not doing his
 chores and homework on time.
 Unwillingly, his life priorities
 had not been in tune since picking
 up the guitar.

CUT TO:

16 EXT. UNIONVILLE WOODS - THE BRANCH - DUSK 16

It's almost dusk, when the camera finds Little Charles sitting beneath a tree alone in the woods near the creek playing his guitar aggressively.

He stops playing briefly and looks at his swollen and blistered hands.

(CONTINUED)

A blister has burst open and blood is running from his finger.

LITTLE CHARLES
(in pain)
Ouch!

Little Charles gets up and walks over to the creek.

He dips his hand into the cold water and wipes it dry on his shirt, then he continues to play his guitar.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

Two Weeks Later

17

INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING

17

Back inside the classroom, Little Charles sits near the window looking out at the school playground...Daydreaming!

The CLOCK ON THE WALL reads 10:15 a.m. when he hears the recess BELL RINGS.

Little Charles quickly runs ahead of his classmates, and sneaks to a field just below the school playground.

PASTOR (V.O.)
One hot sunny day in May, Little Charles had brought his old hollow box guitar to school. Halfway there, he hid it in a field.

He finds his guitar and sits down on a huge rock in the field to play it.

Little Charles is caught up in the guitar playing of his favorite song...JOHNNY B. GOODE!

As he pauses from playing, he looks towards the school playground. The camera pans the empty grounds.

PASTOR (V.O.)
An awful feeling gripped Little Charles in the pit of his stomach and to make matters worst, he had to make water...Fast!

He immediately puts down his guitar, then desperately starts unzipping his pants to pee in the fields.

(CONTINUED)

Just as he finishes, his private gets caught in the zipper.
Little Charles screams in excruciating pain.

FADE TO BLACK:

15 Minutes Later

18

INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING

18

Little Charles gingerly walks into the classroom.

MS. JACKSON
(scolding)
Confounded Charles, what do you
mean coming in here late after the
bell has rung! Why are you late?

He starts to hew and haw, pacing back and forth, then tries
desperately to think of something to say.

MS. JACKSON
(interjects)
Well, we're waiting for you to tell
us...Why you're late!

LITTLE CHARLES
(blurts out)
I was in the bathroom!

MS. JACKSON
(with disdain)
It shouldn't have taken you that
long!

LITTLE CHARLES
(stuttering)
Yes, you're right!...but I got my
ding-a-ling caught in my zipper!

The students erupt in laughter. He is obviously humiliated.

MS. JACKSON
(infuriated)
Little Charles, your parents will
hear about your conduct today!

Ms. Jackson points him in the direction to his seat, then
tries desperately to restore order in the classroom.

Little Charles sits down and continues to look out the
window.

DISSOLVE TO:

19 INT. CITY HOUSE - BACK ROOM - DUSK

19

Little Charles quietly sits on his bed looking out the back room window.

He holds his guitar and the note to his parents that Ms. Jackson gave him.

PASTOR (V.O.)

Little Charles recalled being reprimanded by his parents when he told them what happened. They were proud of him because he learned to play the guitar on his own, but also wanted Charles to understand that life was more than just music and stardom.

His father walks into the back room and takes the guitar from his hands, then leaves the room without saying a word.

PASTOR (V.O.)

As a punishment, his father took his guitar for one week so he could learn how to do more chores and spend more time in his room doing more homework.

Instead, Little Charles tears up Ms. Jackson's note...

Walks over to the radio sitting on the dresser, then turns it on...

And there was CHUCK BERRY singing...JOHNNY B. GOODE!

CHUCK BERRY

(from the radio)

...His mama told him someday he would be a man,...And you will be the leader of a big old band...Many people coming from miles around...To hear you play your music when the sun go down...Maybe someday his name would be in lights...Saying Johnny B. Good tonight...Go Go Go Johnny Go...Go Go Go Johnny Go...Go Go Go Johnny Go...Go Johnny B. Good...

(CONTINUED)

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

Summer 1958

20 EXT. MACON STREET - DAY 20

A BLACK FORD F100 PICKUP TRUCK drives along the Macon streets.

Charlie is driving, Little Charles is sitting in the middle with his guitar, and PAUL BEASLEY is sitting next to him.

<p>CHARLIE Son, you're good enough now to play for us. How about joining' the group?</p>	<p>PASTOR (V.O.) Little Charles always wanted to play for his daddy's group, but up until now they never asked him to play.</p>
--	---

21 EXT. WIBB RADIO STATION - DAY 21

The pickup pulls up in front of the station.

Little Charles, his father, and Paul Beasley get out of the truck and enter the WIBB Radio Station.

PASTOR (V.O.)
At the age of eight, Little Charles was good enough to be asked to play for a quartet singing group called The Southern Harmonizers.

22 INT. WIBB RADIO STATION - ON-AIR BOOTH - DAY 22

The SOUTHERN HARMONIZERS are now in the booth ready to sing their first 15 minute spot ON THE AIR.

KING BEE - THE RADIO DJ
This is WIBB Radio's Sunday morning Gospel coming to you LIVE in Macon with The Southern Harmonizers...

Little Charles starts playing the guitar, then leads the quartet in singing...KNEELING AT THE ALTAR!

(CONTINUED)

LITTLE CHARLES

(singing)

Well...I was kneeling (Doo-Wop
chorus in background) at the
Altar...when the holy ghost fell on
me...It's the same spirit...God
sent Jesus from on high...Awww
Yeah...It picked me up and turned
me around...Placed my feet on solid
ground...He's a wonderful...A
marvelous...True God....Awww
(Awww)...

He picks his guitar with joy and it's his best performance
that particular Sunday morning.

PASTOR (V.O.)

By now Little Charles had earned a
reputation of being one of the best
basso-proof guitar players
around...Someone who didn't play in
Cross C!

OTIS REDDING and JOHNNY JENKINS of the WINGATE GOSPEL
SINGERS watch from outside the booth.

PASTOR (V.O.)

It was after those early Sunday
morning radio days where I first
came into contact with the
legendary rhythm and blues band
called The PINETOPPERS.

JOHNNY JENKINS

(to Otis)

Have you thought about
embracing the band?

OTIS REDDING

(gesturing)

With "These Arms of Mime"?

They BOTH CHUCKLE at the thought.

Back in the booth, the Southern Harmonizers are still
performing, "KNEELING AT THE ALTAR" when Little Charles
suddenly gets an ELECTRIC SHOCK of his life...

He gets too close to the RADIO MIC and a BLUE FLAME burns
his lip.

Little Charles SQUALLS from the pain and we sharply cut
to...

23 INT. AUNT TOBY'S HOME - DAY 23

His AUNT TOBY is listening to the radio at home.

When she hears Little Charles, she calls to her BOYS who are still asleep to come quickly.

AUNT TOBY
(excited)
Boys, wake up! Little Charles is on
the radio squalling!

24 INT. SOUTHERN HARMONIZERS' CAR - MIDDAY 24

The group members are driving Little Charles home in complete silence.

They notice him through the rear view mirror as he sits in the back seat with a tape bandage over his lip.

You can feel the tension ON THEIR FACES as they fight back the urge to laugh.

PASTOR (V.O.)
Before this day, Little Charles had never attempted to squall during his singing. The next week Hamp Swain, the Radio DJ liked it so much, he asked him to repeat it...(beat) Minus the shock.

One of the guys finally gives in and lets out a SQUALL!

They all chuckle!

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

A Year Later

25 INT. MACON CITY AUDITORIUM - NIGHT 25

By now, Little Charles had accepted an invitation to perform with the MIDDLE GEORGIA SINGERS as their guitar player.

The group, as all the quartet groups in Bibb County sung traditional gospel songs.

Little Charles had learned to play in Cross-C, which gave him a greater range to expand and perfect his guitar playing!

(CONTINUED)

His PERFORMANCE ON STAGE tonight shows it.

PASTOR (V.O.)

At age 10, Little Charles along with the Middle Georgia Singers, the Bells of Joy, the Silver Bells and the Cotton Brothers were the top local groups in the area and were asked many times to open up the programs held at the Macon City Auditorium for many outstanding professional famous groups.

SHOW MC

(in multiple scenes)

Put your hands together for...

The Gospel Airs,...

The Mighty Clouds of Joy,...

The Blind Boys,...

The Spirit of Memphis,...

The Swanee Quintet,...

The Dixie Hummingbirds,...

The Soul Stirred,...

The Highway QC,...

Sugar & the Hightower Brothers,...

The Nightingales,...

The Caravans,...

And Aretha Franklin...

A teenage ARETHA FRANKLIN performs "PRECIOUS LORD" on stage to a sold out auditorium.

PASTOR (V.O.)

But the most memorable night was when Little Charles and his group opened up for the young 16 year old Aretha Franklin who was making her debut as a gospel recording artist?

Little Charles watches Miss Franklin from slightly offstage.

(CONTINUED)

PASTOR (V.O.)

Over the next four years, Little Charles spent less time singing with the group and more time playing the steel-guitar for Elder Hazel's independent holiness church (Bible Way) in Macon. This went on for a while then he became restless and felt a strong desire, within him, to see the world.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

February 19, 1969 he went into the US Army.

The sound now of a C-130 air cargo plane roaring over us and we cut sharply to:

26 EXT. AIRSTRIP - BASE CAMP - VIETNAM - DAY 26

As the C-130 coasts to a stop, the hatch rotating down on a hot, dusty lifeless airstrip somewhere in Vietnam. Nothing seems to live or move in the midday sun.

CUT TO:

27 EXT. MILITARY COMPOUND - VIETNAM - NIGHT 27

The sounds of shells, mortar rounds and rockets busting the compound...BOOM!!

SOLDIERS run toward the bunker for cover.

28 INT. BASIC TRAINING CAMP - BARRACK - NIGHT 28

CHARLES (20 YEARS OLD) and the OTHER NEWBIES are in the barrack sleeping, when suddenly a SIREN goes off and the STAFF SERGEANT burst through the door.

STAFF SERGEANT

(yelling)

On your feet ladies, we're at war!

The men scramble out of bed to get into formation.

29 INT. GREYHOUND BUS - DAY 29

Charles and the other draftees sit on the bus quietly.

The newbies get a physical...

And a swearing-in...

Then have lunch...

At approximately 1:15 p.m...CLOCK ON WALL!

MILITARY OFFICER (O.S.)
Line up, your going to war camp!

30 EXT. BASIC TRAINING CAMP - DAY 30

Charles is exhausted from running the obstacle course.

The newbies do squat-thrusts, side-straddle hops, and push-ups, many of them.

And marching to cadence led by Charles...

Then have lunch in the mess hall...

At approximately 8 weeks...CALENDAR ON WALL!

MILITARY OFFICER (O.S.)
Line up, you have a fifteen days
furlough, before starting the
second eight weeks of Advance
Infantry Training.

31 INT. INFANTRY TRAINING CAMP - KITCHEN - DAY 31

Charles and a couple infantry field-cooks are in the kitchen, rapidly peeling several bags of potatoes...(FLASHBACK)

Six Years Earlier

32 INT. MACON HOLMES APT 21A - KITCHEN - DAY 32

An unhappy Little Charles is in his father's kitchen, rapidly peeling an entire twenty-five pound bag of potatoes.

His father's second family (YOUNGER WOMAN WITH NEWBORN CHILD) are standing in the kitchen watching him.

(CONTINUED)

PASTOR (V.O.)

Before being drafted and when he was much younger, Little Charles didn't enjoy being told to peel potatoes.

33 INT. MACON HOLMES APT 21A - BACK ROOM - DAY 33

In his bedroom, an unhappy Little Charles picks up his school book...OPENS IT...then THROWS IT against the wall!

PASTOR (V.O.)

He had dropped out of school so college was not an option. He had no money to go to Canada, so he went to Vietnam.

34 INT. MACON HOLMES APT 21A - BACK ROOM - NIGHT 34

Little Charles lay in the bed looking up at the ceiling. His little brother Joe is sleeping beside him.

PASTOR (V.O.)

There was no other recourse for him. His M.O.S specialty number was 94B20...Little Charles was now a trained infantry field-cook.

(BACK TO BARRACK)

35 INT. INFANTRY TRAINING CAMP - BARRACK - NIGHT 35

Charles is now laying on his bunk looking up at the ceiling.

He stands up on the bunk to retrieve his guitar, which had been hidden in the ceiling above him for over a week.

36 EXT. INFANTRY TRAINING CAMP - BARRACK - NIGHT 36

The camera pans the outside of the barrack as Charles starts to play his guitar for the other newbies.

PASTOR (V.O.)

Charles still had a great love for music and somehow found a way to sneak his guitar into the barrack undetected until...

37 INT. INFANTRY TRAINING CAMP - BARRACK - NIGHT 37

Suddenly, the Staff Sergeant burst through the door blowing a WHISTLE!

The newbies scramble into formation.

Staff Sergeant walks past the other men headed straight towards Little Charles.

STAFF SERGEANT
(yelling)
Newbie, who gave you permission, to
serenade the other ladies!

LITTLE CHARLES
(nervous)
No one, sir!

He's still holding his guitar while in formation.

The Staff Sergeant grabs it from his hand and studies it.

The barrack is completely quiet, you can hear the faint SOUND OF CRICKETS in the distance.

He brings it up to his body as the camera follows his fingers picking a few strings to "SAVIOR".

Little Charles can't see the Staff Sergeant, but the tune sounds familiar...(FLASHBACK)

38 INT. GALLERY RECORDING STUDIO - DAY 38

Little Charles is in a recording studio with the MIGHTY TRUMPETS OF JOY (a well-known New England gospel group).

They're singing "SAVIOR", a song he had wrote and recorded prior to going to Vietnam...STOMP!

(BACK TO SERGEANT)

Staff Sergeant's foot stomps on the floor.

STAFF SERGEANT
(in Charles' face)
You will play for every company
party held on base. You get that,
Little Charles!

(CONTINUED)

LITTLE CHARLES
 (shocked)
 Yes, sir!

Staff Sergeant hands him back his guitar...

Turns away from him...

Walks through the men in formation headed towards the door...

STAFF SERGEANT
 (to everyone)
 As you were!

The newbies scramble back to their bunks as LITTLE CHARLES continues to play his spiritual song "SAVIOR".

39 EXT. INFANTRY TRAINING CAMP - BARRACK - NIGHT 39

Staff Sergeant comes out the barrack...

Pulls out a PRINCE ALBERT cigarette...

Lights it with a lighter...

Then takes a whiff...

He stands quietly listening to Little Charles' music.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

40 INT. TELEVISION SET - NIGHT 40

A JOHN WAYNE MOVIE-THE GREEN BERET plays on a TV set.

PASTOR (V.O.)
 On July 1, 1969 Charles received his overseas marching orders from Washington, D.C. to spend a year tour of duty in South Vietnam.

41 INT. 57 MALIKOWSKI CIRCLE - BEDROOM - NIGHT 41

A beautiful, fair skin, 18 year old, young girl kneels by her bed in prayer.

Images of the flower children singing "All we are saying give peace a chance"...

(CONTINUED)

Students protesting on the universities campuses...

The Civil Right Movement explosion in full force...

And the war in Vietnam fill the screen.

PASTOR (V.O.)

He eventually on July 17, ended up
stationed at Vinh Long thirty-miles
from Can Tho and sixty miles south
of Saigon, now called Ho Chi Minh
City.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

Somewhere in Vietnam

The sound of tropical creatures coming from a rain forest
environment and we cut sharply to:

42 EXT. RAIN FOREST - VIETNAM - DAY 42

The camera finds Private Charles walking with HIS UNIT
through the rain forest.

PRIVATE CHARLES

(to himself)

God, I hate snakes!

The sounds of rockets busting the compound and we cut
sharply to:

43 EXT. MILITARY COMPOUND - VIETNAM - NIGHT 43

Private Charles runs toward the bunker for cover.

PASTOR (V.O)

The first six months there you're
scared to death! There nine months
you don't care about nothing! The
last three months you're nerve over
every thing!

44 EXT. MILITARY BARRACK - VIETNAM - NIGHT 44

One night while Private Charles and THE UNIT within his barrack were sleeping The Viet Cong (CHARLIE) came as far as the perimeter and executed those men on guard duty.

Charlie peaks inside the barrack, but never enters.

45 INT. MILITARY BARRACK - VIETNAM - NIGHT 45

PASTOR (V.O.)

They call this psychological warfare that gives a soldier a lot to think about, if it doesn't drive him mad first!

The camera pans across the sleeping soldiers to find Private Charles...SLEEPING WITH HIS BIBLE!

46 INT. MILITARY BARRACK - VIETNAM - DAY 46

Private Charles sits on his bunk singing "CALL ME" for the soldiers to entertain them and as a morale booster.

The unit in the barrack listen for comfort.

PRIVATE CHARLES

(singing loud)

I'll be there for you...I'll be there when you need me...I'll be there for you...I'll be there when you call me.

Don't ever think I love others more than you...Don't you believe it when they tell you, I don't care...

Listen to my words, pray to understand...Ever child of mine I reprimand...

I love you...I love you...I love you...I really, really, do...I love you...yes I do...I want you to love me, love me, too...

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

47 INT. COMPOUND SOCIAL CLUB - MIDDAY 47

Private Charles and his group are rehearsing the lyrics and melody to "Love Lifted Me" that he has written.

REV. AL KING, a civilian aircraft mechanic is sitting at a nearby table watching.

They take a break and Private Charles walks over to where Rev. Al is sitting. He takes a seat.

PRIVATE CHARLES
(tired)
Hey Rev., how the aircraft
business?

They shake hands.

REV. AL
(chuckles)
Private, you need an R&R.

PRIVATE CHARLES
(smiles)
Make that two?

REV. AL
(concerned)
Are you up for the show tonight.

PRIVATE CHARLES
(smiles)
Can a B-52 drop a bomb?

They BOTH CHUCKLE as the other two group members join them with soft drinks.

48 EXT. COMPOUND SOCIAL CLUB - NIGHT 48

A poster of the **THE GOSPEL SINGERS™** from Vinh Long featuring the trio PFC RONNIE SURREY, PFC NATHANIEL SIMMONS, SP4 LINWOOD JOYNER hangs on the wall near the entrance of the compound social club establishment.

49 INT. COMPOUND SOCIAL CLUB - NIGHT 49

On the inside, servicemen, artists, and other musicians in uniform watch the group perform onstage.

(CONTINUED)

PASTOR (V.O.)

He soon rose to the rank of PFC (Private First Class) and quickly introduced his music to the Army Service Club Program for the next year.

50 INT. MILITARY BARRACK - VIETNAM - DAY 50

Private Charles puts on his gear and heads out the barrack.

PASTOR (V.O.)

With the privilege to travel and compete in various talent shows and contest in and around South Vietnam, he was eager to explore.

He gets a RIDE to Can Tho...

51 EXT. TIKI HUT SERVICE CLUB - CAN THO - DAY 51

Private Charles stands outside the club looking up at the sign that reads, TIKI HUT SERVICE CLUB.

PASTOR (V.O.)

The Tiki Hut Service Club is where singers and musicians in uniform flooded the second floor to compete.

He walks towards the club.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

21 SEP 69

The sound of Latin music and cheering is coming from inside the club and we dissolve to:

52 EXT. TIKI HUT SERVICE CLUB - CAN THO - NIGHT 52

The streets are alive with uniformed servicemen going inside.

PASTOR (V.O.)

Contestants as far south as Soc Trang in Ba Xuyen Province to as far north as My Tho in Dinh Tuong

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PASTOR (V.O.) (cont'd)
 Provine, came to the Tiki Hut
 Service Club in Can Tho.

53 INT. TIKI HUT SERVICE CLUB - CAN THO - NIGHT 53

The LATIN GROUP the "Short-Timers" from the 29Th Evacuation Hospital at Binh Thuy are onstage performing.

The Gospel Singers are backstage warming up.

Private Charles stands slightly offstage watching the performance.

The CROWD cheers as they finish their show and walk offstage.

The camera pans the CHEERING audience.

SHOW MC
 That was the Short-Timers...

NAVY LIEUTENANT Stephen Morrison, tall, handsome, early 30's, a very smooth brother.

TWO VIETNAMESE LADIES are standing backstage. They smile and stare at the Lieutenant as he walks up and stands next to Private Charles.

PRIVATE CHARLES
 (to Lieutenant)
 Lieutenant!

NAVY LIEUTENANT
 (without looking at
 Private Charles)
 Private!

The rest of the Gospel Singers join Private Charles.

SHOW MC
 Put your hands together for The
 Gospel Singers...

The audience cheers as The Gospel Singers walk onstage and start to perform.

PASTOR (V.O.)
 All winners of this contest would
 be given the opportunity and a
 chance to compete in the National
 Contest held in Saigon.

(CONTINUED)

SHOW MC
And the winners are...

A SNAP SHOT of each group is shown as the crowd cheers their individual performance...

Navy Lieutenant Stephen Morrison picked up 1st place in the vocal soloist class;...

SP4 Rafael Morales of Can Tho Airfield was 2ND....

SP6 Andrew Weber was the best in instrumental soloist...

"Ronnie and the Buckskins" (SP4 Ronnie McCoy, SP4 Henry Muneich, SP4 William Quisenberry, SP4 Steven Papin) from Soc Trang was chosen the outstanding specialty group,...

The Latin group the "Short-Timers" (Captain Raul Pereiras, SFC Pedro Flores, SP5 Gus Hawkins, SP4 Harry Melendez, SP4 Geraldo Gesto, and SP4 Ramon Colon) from the 29Th Evacuation Hospital at Binh Thuy was first in instrumental groups...

"The Gospel Singers" from Vinh Long was tapped as number one in the vocal group order...

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

5 OCT 69 National Contest in Saigon

54

INT. NATIONAL CONTEST - SAIGON - NIGHT

54

The Gospel Singers are onstage at the National Contest in Saigon singing "SANCTION".

PASTOR (V.O.)
After the major tally event held in Saigon was in, the Vinh Long Gospel Singers came in third place. Over winning first prize, or second place they were happy, just to be making music and celebrating life with a few servicemen for a brief moment that took their minds off the war, which was the most important thing at that time.

55 INT. COMPOUND SOCIAL CLUB - MIDDAY

55

Upon returning back to Vinh Long, Little Charles and the group hang out in the compound social club chatting about the Saigon event.

PRIVATE CHARLES
(to the group)
Navy Lieutenant Morrison can sure sang.

CORPORAL LINWOOD
(grinning)
As cocky, as sin!

CORPORAL NATHANIEL
(to Linwood)
Let the brother be! He deserved 2ND place.

They all laugh.

The compound COMMANDING OFFICER-LELAND J. LINMAN walks into the social club.

They start to rise to attention...He stops them abruptly!

LELAND J. LINMAN
(to Everyone)
As you were! Good news gentlemen, you have each received a citation award from the United States Army Service Club Program.

He gives them each an envelop...

Salutes them...

Then turns away and walks off...

LELAND J. LINMAN
(to Everyone)
Enjoy!

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

Sydney, Australia

56 EXT. SYDNEY STREETS - DAY

56

The camera pans the busy streets of Sydney, Australia to find Private Charles in uniform with his guitar and Military duffel bag standing outside looking up at a club sign that reads, The DOWN UNDER.

PASTOR (V.O.)

Private Charles was granted two R&R (Rest and Relaxation). The first one he spent ten days, in Sydney, Australia where he song every night, at the club called the Down Under.

The sound of LIVE music comes from inside the club and we dissolve to:

57 EXT. DOWN UNDER CLUB - NIGHT

57

Private Charles is inside performing "Papa Was A Rolling Stone" with the house band. The club is packed with LOCALS who are enjoying the music.

PRIVATE CHARLES

(singing)

It was the third of September. That day I'll always remember, yes I will. 'Cause that was the day that my daddy died (Yeh). I never got a chance to see him. Never heard nothing but bad things about him. Mama, I'm depending on you, to tell me the truth.

And Mama just hung her head and said, "Son, Papa was a rolling stone (My Son). Wherever he laid his hat was his home. (And when he died) All he left us was ALONE." Now listen to me. "Papa was a rolling stone, my son. Wherever he laid his hat was his home. (And when he died) All he left us was ALONE."

Well, well.

They CHEER when he finishes his song. He heads to the bar for a drink. A FEMALE BARTENDER-ATTRACTIVE, EARLY 20s, SLIM BUILD, MULATTO, serves him.

(CONTINUED)

FEMALE BARTENDER
 (soft Australian accent)
 What can I do you for, soldier?

PRIVATE CHARLES
 (smiling)
 Two dead men walking?

She pours Private Charles a double shot of Bourbon.

FEMALE BARTENDER
 (smiling)
 You remind me of O.C. Smith.

PRIVATE CHARLES
 (pleasantly surprised)
 Huh, Little Green Apples...Ocie Lee
 Smith?

FEMALE BARTENDER
 (smiling)
 We got a surprise for you.

He downs the Bourbon.

PRIVATE CHARLES
 (shaking his head)
 No more surprises. You folks have
 spoiled me enough?

FEMALE BARTENDER
 (chuckles)
 You're greatly loved and
 appreciated. It's just a small way
 to show we don't want you to leave.

PRIVATE CHARLES
 (laughing)
 I didn't know you cared.

58

EXT. DOWN UNDER CLUB - DAY

58

The next day, the establishment honored him by putting up a
 TWENTY-FIVE FEET STAR-POSTER PHOTOGRAPH along with the house
 band.

Back inside, Private Charles sits at the club bar having a
 drink in deep thought...(FLASHBACK)

1963 Macon, GA

59 INT. 1956 FORD F100 PICKUP TRUCK (BLACK) - DAY 59

An unhappy Little Charles looks out the passenger side window of his father's BLACK FORD F100 PICKUP.

His father stops to pick up TWO MEN standing at the TRAIN STATION. He gets out to go inside the station, while Little Charles waits inside the truck.

The two men stand outside the truck having a conversation.

PASTOR (V.O.)

One day while working with his father laying bricks in East Macon he overheard two men his father had picked up as helpers standing around the train station...He called the buzzard loop...Men needing just enough money to buy wine.

MAN #1

(down on himself)
I use to have dreams, but I wasted them! I missed the boat...Threw away my opportunities!

MAN #2

(in agreement)
I feel you brother! Twenty years later this what I got to show for in life.

His father shows up and gets back in the truck.

The two men jump in the back of the pickup and it pulls off.

The camera pans over to a train leaving the station.

(BACK TO BAR)

60 INT. DOWN UNDER CLUB - NIGHT 60

Private Charles still sits at the bar. He downs another Bourbon.

The house band is playing and the BAND LEADER calls Private Charles to the stage.

BAND LEADER

Put your hands together for Little Charles...

The place is packed and the CROWD SCREAMS their approval.

He heads to the stage, picks up his guitar, and starts to sing his...BROTHERLY LOVE SONG!

(CONTINUED)

PRIVATE CHARLES

(singing)

The nights has been plenty dreams.
Of yesterday...How I long to see
those clay red hills...Again (Oh
Again) Where my folks use to travel
down (Yeh), that old muddy
road...And they would all sing a
song called Brotherly Love...

PASTOR (V.O.)

He spent the second ten days, in
Thailand, Taiwan Taipei and the
same thing happened there, but on a
smaller scale.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

7 Months Later

61 EXT. MILITARY COMPOUND - VIETNAM - DAY 61

Private Charles is tending to his daily duties of overseeing the food supply.

Staff Sergeant approaches him in the compound and they exchange salutes.

STAFF SERGEANT

(to Private Charles)

Private, report to Swamp Fox 199Th
AVN Headquarters!

PRIVATE CHARLES

(concerned)

Yes, Sir!

62 INT. SWAMP FOX 199TH AVN HEADQUARTERS - DAY 62

Private Charles sits across from the COMMANDING OFFICER in his office.

COMMANDING OFFICER

(to Private Charles)

We have been watching you and your
work here speaks for itself, we are
pleased to bestow upon you the rank
of SP4 (Corporal).

(CONTINUED)

The Commanding Officer hands Corporal Charles his new status papers and salutes him.

Corporal Charles returns the gesture, then stands there PROUDLY appreciating his new rank.

CUT TO:

63

EXT. MILITARY COMPOUND - VIETNAM - DAY

63

Corporal Charles hangs around the compound anxiously counting down the 34 days left to go home alive.

A VIETNAMESE FAMILY who works on the compound warns Corporal Charles to stay on the compound.

VIETNAMESE FAMILY
(to Corporal Charles)
The nearby towns are flooded with
Viet Cong! Don't go out today, not
safe!

Corporal Charles gives them several bags of food.

PASTOR (V.O.)
They would only warn the soldiers
who were good to them and treated
them well. Being in charge of the
food supply Corporal Charles was
always giving them things.

Staff-Sergeant approaches Corporal Charles. They exchange salutes.

STAFF SERGEANT
Corporal, we need our monthly
rations and fresh supplies. I need
you to go on a mission.

CORPORAL CHARLES
(worried)
Serge, ...I have 34 days left before
my discharge. Can I hang back and
let someone else go in my place?

STAFF SERGEANT
(irritated)
That's well in good, but there is
no one here I can send in your
place.

Staff-Sergeant holds out his hand to Corporal Charles.

(CONTINUED)

STAFF SERGEANT

(smiling)

I make you a deal Charles...You go this last time and you wont have to go again.

64 INT. MILITARY TRUCK - DAY

64

Corporal Charles agreed and took along a NEWBIE in the truck with him.

PASTOR (V.O.)

There is a rule in Vietnam you never fool with a newbie, until he has had some experience being in the war!

Corporal Charles kept turning over in his mind what was told to him.

65 EXT. NARROW GRAVEL ROAD - DAY

65

The military truck is driving down the fair lane narrow gravel road.

Inside, Corporal Charles barks orders to the NEWBIE over the noise of the truck.

CORPORAL CHARLES

(yelling)

Remove your weapon from back of seat, and keep it at hand!

NEWBIE

(nervous)

What, sir?!

CORPORAL CHARLES

(irritated)

"Don't address me as sir,...Keep it at hand, your weapon, we're going through enemy territory."

Suddenly, they encounter some snapper-firing from the treeline, but were able to out drive it!

They come to a POT-HOLE in the road and drive off to the edge to avoid it...

(CONTINUED)

PASTOR (V.O.)

Another psychological game the Viet Cong would play on the mind of the US soldier, if there is a pot-hole in the road he may plant the mine in the hole or he might place it on the side of the road. And what this means,...

The military truck explodes...BOOM!

PASTOR (V.O.)

It's fair to say, it's a good chance that he will be blown to smearing!

(BACK INSIDE TRUCK)

A frightened Newbie looks at Corporal Charles like he just saw death. They continue down the narrow gravel road.

66

INT. MILITARY TRUCK - SAME DAY

66

Just up ahead is over two hundred (Arvin) South Vietnamese Army trucks lined up to cross Mekong River near the Delta River.

The ferry only took six trucks over at a time.

CORPORAL CHARLES

(impatient)

Man, we going to be here all night.
Later for this!

Corporal Charles makes a desperate decision...

Just like a scene out of a John Wayne movie, he decides to drive around the other WAITING TRUCKS!

Kicking up dust and gravel everywhere.

It caught everybody waiting off guard, nobody knew what was happening, it were a mass of confusion and pandemonium.

Until, he got up to the second truck in line and when the dust had cleared, all Corporal Charles could see was a MK-47 pointed at him!

ARVIN

(threatening)

You go first...I kill...Then go home.

(CONTINUED)

The newbie stays FROZEN IN FEAR to the seat with no weapon in hand.

PASTOR (V.O.)

What was Corporal Charles to do? He only had 34 days left in Vietnam but now he has a mad man pointing a gun at his head.

Then a crazy spirit came over him...

CORPORAL CHARLES

(without fear)

Shoot me if you dare!

PASTOR (V.O.)

The Good Lord, knew that Corporal Charles had gone berserk and if he didn't do something quick that would have been the end of his story!

At that tense and crucial moment, from out of nowhere, a jeep drove up with a WHITE US ARMY CAPTAIN AND A VIETNAMESE INTERPRETER in it.

CAPTAIN

(unthreatening tone)

What seems to be the problem soldier?

CORPORAL CHARLES

(calmly)

Well sir, it like this, in obedience to my staff-sergeant we left the compound later than usual this morning...And it is a must that we get across the river, secure our supplies and get back to the compound before night,...And I could not explain this to this fellow.

The interpreter began to explain things to the Arvin soldier, a few minutes later the interpreter conveyed the soldier words to the Captain.

CAPTAIN

(to Corporal Charles)

The man was irritable having been in the sun all morning and his truck would be next to get onto the ferry.

(CONTINUED)

CORPORAL CHARLES
 (to the Captain)
 Fine, no problem, just as long as
 my truck gets across too!

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

67 EXT. MILITARY COMPOUND - VIETNAM - NIGHT 67

Once back on the compound, the Sergeant hands Corporal Charles a drink from his Army canteen.

STAFF SERGEANT
 (to Corporal Charles)
 Corporal, you're free to focus on
 going home in 34 days!

Corporal Charles takes a sip.

CORPORAL CHARLES
 (smiling)
 That's 33 days!

They have a good laugh about the trip.

PASTOR (V.O.)
 For the rest of his time Corporal
 Charles could do what he loved most
 of all...Write contemporary songs.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

68 INT. MILITARY BARRACK - VIETNAM - DAY 68

Corporal Charles sits on his bunk holding his guitar and a wedding picture of his new wife...(FLASHBACK)

69 INT. 157 MALIKOWSKI CIRCLE - BEDROOM - NIGHT 69

A beautiful, fair skin, 18 year old, young girl sits on the bed holding a draft letter.

Corporal Charles walks into frame and gets down on one knee to propose.

70 EXT. NEW BRITAIN CHURCH - DAY 70

The young NEWLYWEDS come out of the church to a rice tossing ceremony by FAMILY MEMBERS.

71 INT. MILITARY BARRACK - VIETNAM - DAY 71

Corporal Charles starts playing SAVIOR THE VIETNAM WAR on his guitar. A song he wrote and recorded before he left for the war.

72 INT. TOUR BUS - DAY 72

The MIGHTY TRUMPETS OF JOY are on the tour bus.

Corporal Charles's wife starts to sing the chorus to his guitar playing...

PASTOR (V.O.)

Contemporary gospel music was not big at all during the 60's and the early 70's. The only artist Charles knew who was doing it, and who was good at it, was Rance Allen. He should be called the father of Contemporary Gospel music.

(MUSIC CONTINUES TO PLAY)

73 EXT. MILITARY COMPOUND - VIETNAM - MIDDAY 73

Corporal Charles leaves the compound in a jeep headed to Bien Hoa Airport, at Hanoi.

74 EXT. B-52 PLANE - DUSK 74

July 14, 1970

B-52 heads down the airstrip, then flies off.

CUT TO:

75 INT. GREYHOUND BUS - NIGHT 75

Corporal Charles sits on the bus quietly...(FLASHBACK)

Back 1963 Macon, GA

76 EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - DAY 76

Little Charles walks along the train tracks listening to his transitional radio...LIFE'S NOT OVER PLAYS!

77 INT. MACON HOLMES APT 21A - BACK ROOM - NIGHT 77

In the room, Little Charles sits on the bed looking out the window holding a piece of paper with a name and Atlanta address on it.

78 EXT. GREYHOUND BUS - DARK RAINY DAY 78

On a dark, early Thursday raining morning, Little Charles boarded a Double-Decker Greyhound bus.

PASTOR (V.O.)

1963 marked a turning point in Little Charles' life. He sold the only possession he could call his own, his transitional radio to Rev. Moseley a holiness preacher, for \$5...

79 INT. GREYHOUND BUS - WINDOW SEAT - DARK RAINY DAY 79

PASTOR (V.O.)

And with his Guitar, an old borrowed suitcase, a few rages of clothing, and \$2.35 in his pocket, he left home.

The bus drives away headed North.

80 EXT. GEORGIA COUNTRY SCENERY - SUNNY DAY 80

Little Charles is on the Greyhound Bus watching the GEORGIA COUNTRY SCENERY out the window.

The bus passes a LEAVING MACON HIGHWAY SIGN.

CUT TO:

81 EXT. TIGER FLOWER DRIVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - ATLANTA - DAY 81

A CITY STREET BUS pulls up at a school entrance. A GROUP OF STUDENTS get off the bus followed by Little Charles.

They walk down the school corridor together until THE SCHOOL BELL RINGS.

82 INT. TIGER FLOWER CAFETERIA - DAY 82

Little Charles washes dishes in the cafeteria.

An OLDER WOMAN tells him he has to go to the principal's office.

OLDER WOMAN
(concerned)
Principal Brown wants to see you?

PRINCIPAL BROWN-SOUTHERN BLACK MAN, MID-40S, sits behind a desk.

PRINCIPAL BROWN
(concerned)
Son, what's your plans for the future?

LITTLE CHARLES
(embarrassed)
Huh, don't know, sir?

The Principal starts SOBBING, SHEDDING TEARS.

PRINCIPAL BROWN
(in a fatherly voice)
My son, whatever you decide to do in life, please go back to school and get an education.

(BACK TO CORPORAL CHARLES ON BUS)

83 INT. GREYHOUND BUS - NIGHT 83

Corporal Charles starts to WEEP on the Greyhound bus.

PASTOR (V.O.)
Little Charles heard about the Palace Theater Matinee talent contest held each Saturday in Atlanta. He had gone there to see Johnny Outlaw perform. He learned
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PASTOR (V.O.) (cont'd)
 later that Gladys Knight, her
 brother and cousins had spent a
 great deal of time there
 performing,...Before they were
 discovered.

Corporal Charles picks up his guitar sitting next to him and starts to play along.

PASTOR (V.O.)
 He asked the manager could he enter
 the contest and he was told to come
 next Saturday at twelve (noon) and
 he would be given a chance to show
 what he could do, but it was not to
 be...By that Friday Little Charles
 was on another Greyhound
 bus,...This time he was headed to
 New York City.

The bus passes a NEW YORK CITY SIGN...(FLASHBACK)

84 INT. BURGER JOINT - NIGHT 84

Little Charles and HAROLD are counting what little money they have to buy a meal.

The camera pans over to a sign advertising the cost for burgers. They don't have enough.

85 EXT. BRONX APARTMENT - NIGHT 85

A FAMILY is in the MAIN ROOM drinking alcohol and fussing over a card game.

GUY (O.S)
 Man, come on,...Please!

Harold sits on a couch with Little Charles next to him. They don't look feed.

(BACK TO CORPORAL CHARLES ON BUS)

86 EXT. GREYHOUND BUS - NIGHT 86

The bus passes a Connecticut highway sign...

Corporal Charles sits on the bus smiling...

(CONTINUED)

He now see himself (at 15 years old) reuniting with his mother and youngest sister...

Then he saw the girl he would marry five years later for the first time at the MIGHTY TRUMPETS OF JOY REHEARSAL.

87 EXT. 157 MALIKOWSKI CIRCLE - NIGHT 87

The camera moves towards the door and it opens to a dark hallway (like a tunnel) with a dim light at the end of the hall.

Corporal Charles walks in the darkness towards the light...LIGHTS COME ON!

88 INT. 157 MALIKOWSKI CIRCLE - FRONT ROOM - NIGHT 88

FAMILY
(yelling)
Surprise!!! Welcome home Corporal
Charles!!!

The FAMILY has all come together to celebrate their soldier coming home from the war.

A banner hangs in the main room that reads, "WELCOME HOME CORPORAL CHARLES - JEREMIAH 29:11".

Gifts for Corporal Charles and food are plentiful.

His little sister VAL JEAN and brother ALBERT LEE play his 45 "Savior" on the record player.

Tears of joy fill the room as the family embraces him with hugs and kisses.

The family starts to sing his song...

Corporal Charles sees his wife and gives her a long kiss...

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

Winter 1971

89

INT. 21 HURLBURT STREET - 3RD FLOOR - NIGHT

89

Charles and his MOTHER-IN-LAW are in the family room having a discussion about his plans for his family.

His wife VERSIE is in the back kitchen packing up things to take home with them.

CHARLES

(to mother-in-law)

The back yard was very icy when we came in earlier...I should go move the car from the back to the front.

MOTHER-IN-LAW

(to Charles)

I never thanked you for waiting to have kids until after Versie finished school...(yelling to the kitchen)...Versie, come on in here and sit down! I'll do that! You're always moving about!

VERSIE

(O.S.)

I got it Ma! Be there in a minute.

CHARLES

(reassuring)

Mother Tomberlin...You've thanked me plenty. It was important for the both of us to wait.

MOTHER-IN-LAW

(smiling)

Have you decided on a name?

CHARLES

(smiling)

Veronica if it's a girl or Charles if it's a boy.

Charles and his mother-in-law continue their discussion as the camera leaves them and goes to the back kitchen.

Versie has left the kitchen and is headed out the back door with her coat on. The camera follows her briefly...

Back in the family room, Charles is putting his coat on as he talks to his mother-in-law.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLES

(politely)

I should really go move the car
from the back to the front.

MOTHER-IN-LAW

(in agreement)

Oh, that's a good idea Charles!

(yelling to the kitchen)

Versie, come on in here while
Charles goes to get the
car...(beat)...Versie...Versie...

Suddenly, Versie walks into the family room with her coat
on. She's very cheerful and upbeat as usual.

VERSIE

(to Charles)

All set...(beat) We're ready?!

CHARLES

(concerned)

Are you okay?

VERSIE

(reassuring)

Of course, I'm okay!

She gives Charles a kiss then tells him to go get the car.

90 EXT. NEPTUNE HOTEL - NEW JERSEY - NIGHT 90

They arrive home and Charles gets out the GREEN 69' GTO to
escort his 4 month pregnant wife up the walkway through the
winter snow.

91 INT. NEPTUNE HOTEL - NEW JERSEY - NIGHT 91

Once inside, they get ready for bed. Charles is in the room
and his wife is in the bathroom.

CHARLES

(O.S.)

Babe, are you okay in there? I need
to brush my teeth.

Versie is bent over in tremendous pain not responding to
Charles. He gets up and walks to the bathroom.

The door is slightly cracked as he opens it, she is sitting
on the toilet bleeding pretty heavily.

(CONTINUED)

He quickly runs to her aid.

CHARLES
(scared)
Versie, are you okay!

VERSIE
(crying)
Charles, I'm sorry, I'm sorry...

CHARLES
(comforting)
Honey, it's okay, I'm here!

She frantically starts to recant what happened at her mother's house.

VERSIE
(sobbing)
I should have waited...Lord, knows
I should have waited...

Charles sits down on the edge of the bathtub beside her, still holding her hand to comfort her...(FLASHBACK)

VERSIE
(sobbing)
I heard you talking to mother about
going out to move the car...

92

EXT. 21 HURLBURT STREET - BACK YARD - NIGHT

92

She leaves the kitchen,...

VERSIE
(O.S.)
I left the kitchen...

Goes out the back door of her mother's house headed down the 3rd floor stairs.

The car is parked in the back yard and ice is everywhere, even along the stairs.

She cautiously tries to avoid the icy areas as she makes it down the first two flights...

But as she goes down the last portion, her FOOT SLIPS on a piece of ice...

Immediately, she loses her footing and falls hard down the stairs...THUMP, THUMP, THUMP, THUMP!

(CONTINUED)

Her body slides all the way down to the bottom, then her head hits the ground hard,...SMACK!

While getting up from the ground she grabs her stomach and grimaces in a lot of pain.

(BACK TO ROOM)

93 INT. NEPTUNE HOTEL - NEW JERSEY - NIGHT 93

They lay quietly in bed. Charles is looking up at the ceiling (in deep thought), while his wife is laying next to him in a fetal position...SOBBING QUIETLY!

94 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY 94

The camera pans the doctor's office to find Charles and his wife being told by their DOCTOR that she had suffered a miscarriage.

His wife breaks down in tears as Charles holds her in his arms to comfort her.

PASTOR (V.O.)

They were devastated and sadly disappointed because they had hopes for a daughter and their little girl would be given a part of her name and a part of his name and a part of her own name...VERONICA.

95 EXT. NEPTUNE HOTEL - NEW JERSEY - RAINY NIGHT 95

One raining night after Charles had got off duty leaving the Army base, he sit alone in his car in the front of the Neptune Hotel.

The fact hit him so hard that night. Charles was never going to see his little girl. He just broke down.

CHARLES

(sobbing)

God Why?...Why us?...Why now? What did I do to deserve this?

The camera pans out from the car to leave Charles alone to himself.

(CONTINUED)

PASTOR (V.O.)

On February 18, 1971 Charles received an honorable discharge from the Armed Forces of the United States of America, and for his outstanding contribution to the Army Service Club Program, he received the distinguished Bronze Service Star Medal for his heroism achievement and duty performed in South Vietnam...

But for that one night, he couldn't save his little girl...

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

96 INT. FOUNDRY OFFICE - AFTERNOON

96

Charles's wife (VERSIE) is working as a book keeper for two BLACK BUSINESSMEN who run a foundry together in Berlin Connecticut.

She sits at the front desk keeping herself busy.

JOHN JAMES AND BILL BOOKER are having a meeting in an office behind her.

JOHN

(on the phone)

I highly recommend him Mr. Greene!
He's a fine gentleman...(beat) and
received a distinguished Bronze
Service Star Medal in Nam.

BILL

(in agreement)

Would make a wonderful salesman!

JOHN

(still on the phone)

I'll let her know...Thanks Mr.
Greene!

He hangs up the phone just as Versie walks into the office with the books.

JOHN

(to Versie)

That salesperson job is Charles's
if he wants it!

(CONTINUED)

VERSIE
 (smiling)
 Of course, I'll let him know.
 Thanks John!

BILL
 (concerned)
 Versie, why don't you take a day
 off and spend it with your husband?

She hands Bill the books, then leaves the office to return to her desk.

VERSIE
 (O.S.)
 I can't got too much work to do!

She picks up the phone to call Charles...

97 INT. TELEVISION SET - DAY 97

A 1970's Afro-sheen commercial plays on the TV set.

In the room, Charles is putting on his best black suit and tie to go on an interview.

98 INT. GREENE & NELSON - OFFICE - DAY 98

Upon Charles's honorable discharge from the service and a strong recommendation, he went to his first salesman job interview.

A nervous Charles, sits waiting in the reception area of the GREENE & NELSON ENTERPRISES Hair Products company, dressed in his black suit and tie.

The SECRETARY calls out to him.

SECRETARY
 (O.S.)
 Mr. Greene will see you now.

Charles walks into Mr. Greene's office and the door closes behind him.

MR. GREENE
 (to Charles)
 I've been looking for a teachable
 young man I could train, shape, and
 mold. Someone who had it in himself
 to succeed in life!

(CONTINUED)

CHARLES

(confident)

Well, Mr. Greene I really don't have any experience working as a traveling salesman. Besides my military training and love for music, I was apart of the first ever Job Corps in Harper Ferry, West Virginia...Learned a lot about vocational skills training for life.

Mr. Greene leans back in his chair, CLAPS HIS HANDS AND TWIRLS THEM TOGETHER, puts his feet up on the desk, and loosens his tie.

PASTOR (V.O.)

Mr. Greene, was a small business owner with a vision. His beauty supply company, Greene & Nelson Enterprises Hair Products Company, was a pioneer in beauty supply distribution in the New England area...And he liked Charles immediately.

MR. GREENE

(impressed)

Really! Tell me your story...

Charles is a little taken back by what he sees, but he is more than comfortable sharing his stories. He loosens his tie...

99

EXT. GREENE & NELSON - WAREHOUSE - NEXT DAY

99

Mr. Greene gives Charles a short tour of the WAREHOUSE and introduces him to their most popular haircare product.

MR. GREENE

(quizzing)

Are you familiar with Afro-Sheen?

Charles sports a BIG AFRO and they BOTH LAUGH at the question.

MR. GREENE

(grinning)

This is the future of black hair. Trust me! A big money business if you have the right relationships and discipline...

(CONTINUED)

They stand at the back of the company van with a few boxes scattered around it.

Mr. Greene shows Charles how to fill the orders that come in from salons and barbershops.

The van doors are open and Charles puts the rest of the boxes in the van as Mr. Greene watches.

MR. GREENE

(teaching)

The key is getting them into the
First National Supermarket stores
and set up Afro-sheen racks...

Charles has finished loading the boxes and now they go on a delivery. He drives the van while Mr. Greene continues to teach.

MR. GREENE

(smiling)

...Serving those racks and sharing
half the profit with the store
owners....That's the secret!

CHARLES

(curious)

How many cities are we talking?

MR. GREENE

(smiling)

I'm glad you asked. From Boston to
certain parts of New York and
everywhere in between.

They pull up at a barbershop.

MR. GREENE

(to Charles)

So are you ready to sell Afro-sheen
products?

CHARLES

(smiling)

As ready as the Soul Train.

Mr. Greene laughs at the joke as they both get out the van to go into the barbershop.

100 INT. CURTIS STREET APT - BATHROOM - DAY 100

Today is Charles's first trip to Boston to try an secure stores for Afro-sheen racks.

He's eager to prove himself to Mr. Greene so he practices a creative sales pitch seen in an Afro-sheen commercial.

CHARLES

(in the bathroom mirror)

You know how I keep my hair so rich, so shiny, and together,...Why I use Afro-Sheen...(singing a melodic jingle) Beautiful people, use Afro-sheen.

Charles's speech needs improvement, but his singing is superb.

His wife walks in the bathroom and catches him in the act.

101 EXT. NEW ENGLAND HIGHWAY - DAY 101

Charles travels up the New England highway headed towards Boston. His COUSIN CAROLYN comes along for the ride.

They're listening to the radio when an OTIS REDDING favorite comes on...A CHANGE IS GONNA COME!

OTIS REDDING

(from the radio)

I was born by the river in a little tent...Oh and just like the river I've been running ever since...It's been a long, a long time coming...But I know a change gonna come, oh yes it will...

Charles is now in deep thought thinking back to his time at Job Corp...(FLASHBACK)

102 INT. JOB CORP - CAFETERIA - DAY 102

Little Charles is sweeping the floor in the cafeteria when the news of Otis Redding's death is broadcast nationally.

WALTER CRONKITE

It's a tragedy that I'm bringing this news to you today,...

The rhythm and blues artist, Otis Redding, his manager, the pilot,
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WALTER CRONKITE (cont'd)
 and four members of The Bar-Kays
 were killed two days ago...(sigh)
 When his Beechcraft 18 airplane
 crashed into Lake Monona in
 Madison, Wisconsin...

Searchers recovered his body
 earlier today...(beat) Only one
 person survived.

Little Charles starts to WEEP, SHEDDING TEARS.

PASTOR (V.O.)
 It was in the Job Corps where he
 heard of Otis Redding's death. It
 was painful and deeply affected
 him...

(BACK TO CAR)

103 EXT. NEW ENGLAND HIGHWAY - DAY

103

Charles and cousin Carolyn continue to travel up the New
 England highway still listening to Otis Redding's song.

PASTOR (V.O.)
 Shortly after, Little Charles
 copied his style of singing.

LITTLE CHARLES
 (singing)
 Oh there been times that I thought
 I couldn't last for long...But now
 I think I'm able to carry on...It's
 been a long, a long time
 coming...But I know a change gonna
 come,...oh yes it will

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

10 Months Later

104 INT. GREENE & NELSON - OFFICE - NIGHT

104

Mr. Greene and Charles had developed a genuine friendship.
 They sit in the office chatting about Charles's future.

(CONTINUED)

MR. GREENE

(excited)

I'm impressed by the contracts
you've secured...35 stores...That's
pretty good!

CHARLES

(grinning)

I was taught by the best!...You
know...I'm thinking about becoming
a Free Mason!

MR. GREENE

(happily surprised)

Charles, my lost long son!

CHARLES

(laughing)

I haven't said for sure...I'm just
thinking about it!

Mr. Greene leans forward in his chair, CLAPS HIS HANDS AND
TWIRLS THEM TOGETHER.

MR. GREENE

(teaching)

Son, know what you want out of life
and go after it, and don't quit
until you achieve it!

CHARLES

(sighing)

That's the thing...I know what I
want...(beat) A career in music.

MR. GREENE

(teaching)

Son, you wrote and recorded a
spiritual song called "Savior" with
the Mighty Trumpet of Joy before
you went to Vietnam...Right?

Charles nods his head and listens.

MR. GREENE

(firm)

You survived the war and lived to
write and sing again...What are you
going to do with it?

Charles stayed on with Mr. Greene for another 2 months.

105 INT. CURTIS STREET APT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

105

Charles and his wife (VERSIE) are silently eating dinner at the table. It's been a year since the lost of baby Veronica.

CHARLES

(breaking the silence)

I decided to leave Mr. Greene and pursue my career as a recording artist.

VERSIE

(concerned)

Charles, are you sure we can afford to take that risk right now?

CHARLES

(irritated)

There's no baby Veronica, so if not now...When?

Versie gets up from the table to take her plate to the sink.

CHARLES

(O.S.)

Life's too short and I need to fly high...

VERSIE

I guess I'm the silent partner in this decision...

CHARLES

(reassuring)

That's not what I'm saying...

She leaves the kitchen and heads to the bedroom.

VERSIE

(O.S.)

Try not to keep me up all night with the guitar playing and thumping of the foot...I have to work in the morning!

Charles sits alone in deep thought.

106 INSURANCE CITY RECORDS - OFFICE - DAY

106

Little Charles pulls up in front of an insurance company office. He gets out of his car and goes inside.

LEW HANSON, a Jamaican raised Englishman who started his own record company label, walks out from the back.

LEW HANSON
(Jamaican/Old English accent)
Little Charles...Lew Hanson is ma
name! Calypso entertainment and
insurance is ma game!

He shakes hands with Little Charles.

LITTLE CHARLES
(excited)
I'd like to talk with you about
joining the Insurance City Records
Label.

LEW HANSON
(jokingly)
Would ya be needing liability,
collision, and personal injury
protection with that?

Little Charles laughs at the joke as Lew motions for him to have a seat.

107 INT. GALLERY RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

107

Lew Hanson is playing back parts of their first single, LISTEN TO THE MUSIC, so Little Charles can hear it.

LISTEN TO THE MUSIC
(playback)
No more songs will I make,...No
more notes will I play,...

So come on and,...Listen to the
music!...Listen to the music...

LEW HANSON
(to Little Charles)
Little Charles, your singing and
playing is superb...But how you
speak and talk need some work.

(CONTINUED)

LITTLE CHARLES
 (embarrassed)
 What?...

LEW HANSON
 (grinning)
 Take a listen...

Lew Hanson FAST-FORWARDS through the song to the speaking verse for Little Charles to listen.

LISTEN TO THE MUSIC
 (chorus)
 Listen to the music!...Listen to the music!
 (speaking verse)
 I don't know how many times I've sung this melody...I keep singing this laudably with a feels sho' is real...Then I'll hang up my guitar...On the wall...Without any strings...No more song will I make...And no more notes will I play...

Lew Hanson STOPS the song.

LEW HANSON
 (to Little Charles)
 So, we have hired a speech therapist for you. She going to teach you how to be able to get through an interview, without falling on your face!

They BOTH LAUGH as Lew Hanson continues to take him through the rest of the song.

PASTOR (V.O.)
 Little Charles recorded his first single and got his first lesson in artist development.

108 INT. SPEECH THERAPIST'S HOME - DAY

108

Little Charles sits across from the SPEECH THERAPIST who takes him through a few BREATHING EXERCISES to get him to relax.

SPEECH THERAPIST
 (to Little Charles)
 Can you recite the alphabets for me?

(CONTINUED)

She sees the LOOK ON HIS FACE and reassures him that it's just a COACHING EXERCISE.

LITTLE CHARLES
(reluctantly)
A,B,C,...(singing in a
melody)...W,X,Y,and Z!

SPEECH THERAPIST
(to Little Charles)
Now Little Charles, I want you to
be able to say this real quick
without any hesitation,...

"Round and round the rugged rock,
the raggedy rascal ran."

LITTLE CHARLES
(confused)
Say what?! Who ran?...(beat) I know
you doesn't mean for me to say
that?

CUT TO:

109 INT. CURTIS STREET APT - NIGHT

109

For the next 6 weeks, Little Charles' wife coaches him every chance she gets to recite the tongue twister.

At the dinner table...

VERSIE
(in multiple scenes with
Little Charles)
Round and round the rugged rock,
the raggedy rascal ran.

In the morning when the alarm goes off...

As he does a set of push-ups...

In the bathroom just after he finishes brushing his teeth...

In the car while he drives...

While they watch TV...

And just before they go to bed...

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

6 Weeks Later

110 INT. CURTIS STREET APT - NIGHT 110

With the help of Little Charles' wife, he finally was able to say it!

LITTLE CHARLES
(to Everyone)
Round and round the rugged rock,
the raggedy rascal ran.

The camera pulls out from Little Charles to show them both celebrating their first singles release party...LISTEN TO THE MUSIC 45 PLAYS ON THE STEREO!

PASTOR (V.O.)
Even though they recorded 3 other songs, "I Don't Want To Hate Nobody", "Shame On Me" and "Put God Back In America"...The song "Listen To The Music" was the very beginning of Little Charles as a recording artist.

CUT TO:

111 INT. LOCAL RADIO STATION - NIGHT 111

Lew Hanson and Little Charles give a local RADIO DJ a 45 of "Listen To The Music" to play...

He holds out his hand expecting pay...

Little Charles gives him a FIVE HAND CLAP instead, then walks away...

He exits the Radio Station by himself,...

PASTOR (V.O.)
It was so popular in New England it played on the air all the time.

112 EXT. NEW BRITAIN DINER - NIGHT 112

Little Charles sits with his wife in the car, outside a local diner, listening to the song on the radio.

PASTOR (V.O.)
He was told once by a radio
expert...

113 INT. NEW BRITAIN DINER - THE JUKEBOX - NIGHT 113

Inside the diner, a MUSIC JUKEBOX sits in the corner.

Little Charles' wife walks over to it, puts a quarter in the jukebox, then selects "Listen To The Music" by Ron E. Surrey. The jukebox starts to play.

The camera finds Little Charles sitting at a booth. His wife joins him.

PASTOR (V.O.)
If that song had had the right
backing...(beat) A heavy
distribution behind it, it would
have made it!

114 INT. LAURIE RECORDS - NEW YORK CITY - DAY 114

Little Charles and Lew Hanson are having a meeting with two Jewish businessmen, ELLIOT GREENBERG AND ROBERT SCHWARTZ of Laurie Records.

Lew is playing a demo tape of a new song. He stops the cassette player...

LEW HANSON
(to Elliot and Robert)
Gentlemen, you sound like you got
the "Sweet City Blues"...cheer up
we're bout to record a hit!

Everyone laughs at Lew's sense of humor.

ELLIOT GREENBERG
(excited)
We agree to release the song under
our label, on one condition...

LEW HANSON
(jokingly)
Yes, you can have my wife...

(CONTINUED)

They all laugh.

ROBERT SCHWARTZ
(chuckles)
If the song hits it big, Little
Charles gets a contract with us.

Lew looks over at Little Charles for confirmation.

LITTLE CHARLES
(to Robert)
What songs have you done?

ROBERT SCHWARTZ
(smiling)
Have you ever heard the song
"Abraham, Martin, & John?"

Little Charles thinks about it for a second, then he remembers.

LITTLE CHARLES
(singing)
Has anybody here, seen my old
friend John...Can you tell me where
he's gone?...He freed a lot of
people, but it seems the good, they
die young...But I just looked
around and he's gone...

ELLIOT GREENBERG
(impressed)
One day an unknown Dion wandered in
off the street, to let us listen to
that composition song written by
Dick Holler...

ROBERT SCHWARTZ
(smiling)
The song was recorded on a small
audio cassette player with just the
vocal and piano. This song went on
to become a huge "hit" for the
record company.

They all look in unison at Lew holding the cassette player.

ELLIOT GREENBERG
(grinning)
These are the kinds of songs we are
looking for!

(CONTINUED)

LEW HANSON
 (excited)
 So does that mean we have a deal?

The men agree and shake hands.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

1972

115 EXT. CAPRICORN PRODUCTION - MANCHESTER, CT - MIDDAY 115

Little Charles (with his guitar) walks into the home of TROY DAVIS, a free-lance producer who runs his own production company.

Troy is sitting on the couch writing the bridge to one of Little Charles songs...SINGING MAN!

TROY DAVIS
 My Man!...Glad you can make it.

LITTLE CHARLES
 What's the word?

TROY DAVIS
 (smiling)
 I've been thinking...(beat) we really need to protect our work?

Little Charles sits down next to him on the couch.

LITTLE CHARLES
 (curious)
 From what?

TROY DAVIS
 (grinning)
 "Singing Man"... "I Get Lonely Too Fast"...and "Mrs. Stanley's Christmas" need to be published and you should be registered as a licensed songwriter with BMI!

LITTLE CHARLES
 (smiling)
 Broadcast Music Incorporation? Wow, that's great!...What's next?

(CONTINUED)

TROY DAVIS

(chuckles)

We'll go to BMI in New York City tomorrow before your rehearsal, then I have another surprise for you.

Troy picks up his pad and goes back to writing. Little Charles picks up his guitar and starts to play.

FADE TO:

116

INT. BAND REHEARSAL - MANCHESTER, CT - NEXT DAY

116

Little Charles and a band called FANTASY are at a rehearsal in Manchester, Connecticut. A tall, large, intelligent man comes walking in wearing a short, tan leather jacket.

VINCE MCMAHON

(to Everyone)

Hello everybody my name is Vince McMahon,...

He walks over to Little Charles and extends his hand.

VINCE MCMAHON

(to Little Charles)

If you're as good as I'm told...We're going to do great things together, business wise!

Vince McMahon sits off to the side as Little Charles auditions for him singing...I GET LONELY TOO FAST!

After they finish, he stands up to applaud (LOUDLY), then walks over to Little Charles.

VINCE MCMAHON

(boisterously)

Son, you got showmanship!...And I am delighted to be your manager!

This was the beginning of the first sweet smell of success for Little Charles and the band Fantasy.

VINCE MCMAHON

(to Everyone)

You guys like Jumpin' Jack Flash?

CUT TO:

117 EXT. JUMPIN' JACK FLASH - NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT 117

A black, shiny, stretch limousine pulls up in front of the costume wear-house in New York City.

One of the band members (MOSCOE) orders the driver to get out and open the door...

The LIMO DRIVER sprints around to open the door for his new bosses...

<p>LIMO DRIVER (with all 32 teeth) You got it boss! Whatever you say...(smiling) I needs this gig!</p>	<p>PASTOR (V.O.) The first thing on Mr. McMahon's agenda, he scheduled an all out shopping trip to Jumpin' Jack Flash costume wear-house in New York City.</p>
--	--

The sales associates shows them the run of the store...

Little Charles tries on very expensive garments, \$400 leather-suits, and \$200 high top shoes...

They leave the store without their bags and in a "STEP N' FETCH IT" sort of humor, Moscoe orders the limo driver to go get them...

LIMO DRIVER
(with all 32 teeth)
I'm going now boss! Whatever you
say...(smiling) I needs this gig!

CUT TO:

118 EXT. BANCO'S MUSIC STORE - ANSONIA, CT - SAME DAY 118

The black, shiny, stretch limousine pulls up in front of Banco's Music Store.

The limo driver sprints around to open the door for his new bosses...

LIMO DRIVER
(with all 32 teeth)
We here now boss! Whatever you
say...(smiling) I needs this gig!

They get out the limo and head inside the guitar store where the shopping spree continues...

(CONTINUED)

STORE MANAGER
 (cheerful)
 Welcome to Banco's Music Store,
 home of the best named brand
 musical-equipment in the world!

Little Charles heads right for the Finder and Cretchen guitars hanging from the ceiling...

119 EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT 119

The black, shiny, stretch limousine pulls up at MADISON SQUARE GARDEN VIP ENTRANCE.

The limo driver sprints around to open the door for his new bosses...

Little Charles and Fantasy step out the limo into the bright Garden lights...

They're dressed in new Jumpin' Jack Flash outfits and immediately they're caught up into the excitement, including the limo driver.

LIMO DRIVER
 (in awe)
 Wow!...(smiling) I sho thank y'all
 for this gig!

PASTOR (V.O.)
 The biggest attraction followed when Vince McMahon authorized a limo-service to chauffeur Little Charles and Fantasy to Madison Square Garden to view Sly and the Family Stones' concert, which included the Isley Brothers and Billy Preston.

The camera follows them briefly through the crowd of paparazzi and spectators headed inside the Garden.

Little Charles stops to look up at a marquee poster of SLY AND THE FAMILY STONES!

120 INT. AFTER SHOW PARTY - NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT 120

The camera finds Little Charles and Fantasy inside a special-invitation private party, after the show.

They're on the dance floor having a good time and rubbing-shoulders with other stars present.

(CONTINUED)

Little Charles walks up to BILLY PRESTON to introduce himself personally.

LITTLE CHARLES
(arrogantly)
I'm going to be hot on your tail,
gunning for you...(beat) Remember
the name Little Charles!

DISSOLVE TO:

121 INT. THE HILTON PENTHOUSE - NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT 121

The cameras moves towards a hotel room that reads...THE PENTHOUSE!

The door opens to a spacious penthouse view with all the exclusive amenities...

BELLBOY
(O.S.)
Gentlemen, here's your room!

Little Charles and Troy Davis are mesmerized by the size of the room, the elegant furniture, and the penthouse view as the camera pans the room from THEIR VIEWPOINT.

They're now standing on the balcony "caught between the Moon and NYC"...

LITTLE CHARLES
(to Troy)
How long did Vince say we can stay here!

TROY DAVIS
(in awe)
A full moon...

PASTOR (V.O.)
For a full week, they dined on caviar, drank champagne, and watched an old classic movie starring Lena Horne in Stormy Weather.

FADE TO:

122

INT. 98 MAIN STREET - MCMAHON OFFICE - DAY

122

Little Charles is sitting in Vince McMahon's office waiting to discuss business. Mr. McMahon walks in and sits behind his desk.

VINCE MCMAHON

(smiling)

How's rehearsals and the band getting along?

LITTLE CHARLES

(chuckles)

We're doing good!

He sits back in his chair and starts to share his personal dream and passion with Little Charles.

VINCE MCMAHON

(encouraging)

Remember, stay focused and keep doing what you love...You're talented!

LITTLE CHARLES

(smiling)

I appreciate the advice Vince.

Vince McMahon gets up and walks over to his office window.

VINCE MCMAHON

Do you watch wrestling?

LITTLE CHARLES

In the Job Corp, we use to take field trips up to Baltimore, Maryland to see wrestling matches!
(chuckles)

One of my favorite childhood wrestlers was Gorgeous George.

Vince McMahon turns his head back towards Little Charles and looks directly in his eyes.

VINCE MCMAHON

(passionately)

Little Charles, I'm out to promote the greatest wrestling entertainment-show in the world!

He turns his head back towards the window.

(CONTINUED)

VINCE MCMAHON

I have already secured the rights of owning over thirty-five circuit TV cameras,...(beat) within the United States and eventually around the world!

Little Charles watches him quietly.

PASTOR (V.O.)

Little Charles didn't know at the time that Mr. McMahon's vision for wrestling would become a reality...and that he, himself would become a huge success in life.

Vince McMahon walks back to his desk and sits down.

VINCE MCMAHON

(to Little Charles)

Mark my words...the name Vince McMahon will be a household name in the entertainment industry.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

A Month Later

123

EXT. 98 MAIN STREET - PARKING LOT - DAY

123

Little Charles, Troy Davis, and the band members (Fantasy) walk through a parking lot headed towards Vince McMahon's office.

GEORGE JUDGUSON, the owner of the construction company and partners with Mr. McMahon, pulls up in his shiny, yellow, convertible Cadillac.

His model-type, early 20s, tall, blond, blue-eyed, California gal is with him.

GEORGE JUDGUSON

(waving to the group)

Hey fellas, how's it going?

MOSCOE

(jokingly)

Mr. George...that's not the same girl you had with you last week?

They all laugh at Moscoe's joke, including Mr. George.

124 INT. 98 MAIN STREET - FRONT OFFICE - DAY 124

The SECRETARY sits at the desk in the front office. She greets the group as they walk in.

SECRETARY
(smiling)
Good morning gentlemen, today must
be Thursday!

Moscoe walks over to her desk in a "Youngblood Priest" like character.

MOSCOE
(jokingly)
Superfly missed you too last night
baby...now where's my money sugar?

The group laughs at Moscoe's antics...

SECRETARY
(not amused)
Mr. McMahon is in his office...

She picks up the phone and with the other free hand, holds up her thumb and index finger about an inch apart...

SECRETARY
(jokingly)
I'll let him know his little boy
band member is here!

They all laugh at the secretary's come back line towards Moscoe as she speaks to Vince McMahon on the phone.

The secretary hangs up, hands them each a paycheck, then sends them down to Vince McMahon's office...

125 INT. 98 MAIN STREET - MCMAHON OFFICE - DAY 125

The group is now sitting (or standing) around his office as he sits behind his desk.

VINCE MCMAHON
(excited)
If it isn't my favorite group!

Moscoe is holding a HUGE BOTTLE OF GIN he found in the corner of the office.

(CONTINUED)

VINCE MCMAHON
 (to Moscoe)
 Moscoe, you want that?

Moscoe looks at Vince McMahon with a huge GRIN ON HIS FACE.

VINCE MCMAHON
 (smiling)
 Go ahead take it...Does anyone else
 need anything?

The camera finds the SMILING FACES of the band members
 (Fantasy), Troy Davis, and Little Charles.

The room is quiet and no one says a word...

VINCE MCMAHON
 (breaking the silence)
 I'll see what I can do?

They all laugh and tease Moscoe as they leave the office.

The camera follows them down the hallway past the
 secretary,...

MOSCOE
 (O.S.)
 Be back next Thursday, for ya
 sugar!

then out the front door to the parking lot...

126

EXT. 98 MAIN STREET - PARKING LOT - SAME DAY

126

As they walk to their cars, they see Mr. George Judguson and
 his model girlfriend in the parking lot still sitting in his
 shiny, yellow, convertible Cadillac.

GEORGE JUDGUSON
 (waving to the group)
 Take care fellas!

MOSCOE
 (jokingly)
 Mr. George...can we swap
 girlfriends for a day?

They all laugh at Moscoe's joke, including Mr. George.

Troy Davis, Moscoe, and the band members (Fantasy) get to
 their car first.

(CONTINUED)

PASTOR (V.O.)

Vince McMahon had housed Troy and the band in a place in Manchester, so hanging out with the group was something Little Charles looked forward to, since he lived in his own place in New Britain.

Little Charles continues to walk to his car parked further down the lot.

127

INT. CURTIS STREET APT - FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

127

Little Charles spends the next couple of days writing new songs and preparing for his recording session.

He's in the front room playing his guitar, singing, and THUMPING HIS FOOT to...SINGING MAN!

LITTLE CHARLES

(singing)

Shouting out loud...To the band..Clap your hand...Ah for that man that sings...Gather around me...Keep the music warm and happy...Like a child that plays...When there's sadness go away...

I'm your singing man...I'm your singing man...I'm your sing, your sing...Singing man!

In the bedroom, his wife lay in bed with her eyes wide open looking up at the ceiling.

The sound of the guitar playing, his singing, and his foot thumping could be heard in the bedroom...LOUDLY!

LITTLE CHARLES

(singing)

I'm your singing man...Listen to the singing man...I'm your singing man,...now, now...I'm your singing...Your singing...singing man!...I'm your singing...singing man!

She kicks her legs and pounds her fists on the bed like a kid with a temper tantrum,...

Then she tries to muffle the sound by covering her head with a pillow...

(CONTINUED)

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

128 INT. BAND REHEARSAL - MANCHESTER, CT - MIDDAY 128

A few days later, Little Charles and the band members (Fantasy) are back at the Manchester house rehearsing.

Fantasy is up first playing a warm up rehearsal of their own song...MUSIC MAKER OR I'M THE MAN TO DO IT!

Little Charles is sitting with Troy Davis watching off to the side along with TWO YOUNG WOMEN.

PASTOR (V.O.)

Fantasy was extremely good and had its own unique sound...

JOHNNY STAR goes into a little solo act to end their rehearsal.

PASTOR (V.O.)

One band member in particular, Johnny Star, was a tremendous guitarist. He had played with many of the great performers,...Jackie Wilson, David Ruffins and Eddie Kendrell.

He walks over to Little Charles who's sitting next to the two young women (one Latina and the other Black) in their early 20s, slim build, and tall like models...

JOHNNY STAR

(to Little Charles)

Little Charles, you want us to sail with you into the mystic?

LITTLE CHARLES

(smiling)

Johnny, you just read my mind!

Little Charles grabs his guitar, then heads over to the mic for sound check...

LITTLE CHARLES

Testing 1,2,3...Testing 1,2,3...

The band members are all in place as he starts to play his guitar leading them...INTO THE MYSTIC!

(CONTINUED)

LITTLE CHARLES

(singing)

We were born before the wind...Also
younger than the sun...Everybody go
as one as we sailed into the
mystic...Hark, now dear the sailors
cry...Smell the sea and touch the
sky...Let your soul and spirit fly
as we sail into the mystic...

Every lyric and melody cuts through, you can feel the power
of his voice in the room.

The band members and young women are caught up in the music
as the camera pans around the room...

PASTOR (V.O.)

From that day on, Little Charles
was in a zone. It was as if Van
Morrison himself was standing in
the room watching for inspiration.

CUT TO:

129 INT. TROD NOSSEL STUDIO - WALLINGFORD, CT - NIGHT 129

Inside the recording studio, Little Charles is still playing
his guitar and singing "Into The Mystic"...

LITTLE CHARLES

(singing)

And when that fog horn blows...you
know I will be coming home...I want
to rock your gypsy soul...Just like
way back in the days of old...Then
magnificently we will float into
the mystic...

Troy Davis is watching from outside the booth recording
every note...

CUT TO:

130 INT. CURTIS STREET APT - FRONT ROOM - NIGHT 130

Back in his apartment, Little Charles continues to play his
guitar as he sings the last chorus of "Into The Mystic"...

LITTLE CHARLES

(singing)

I don't have to fear it...I want to
rock your gypsy soul...Just like
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LITTLE CHARLES (cont'd)
 way back in the days of old...And
 together we will float into the
 mystic...Come on girl...

As the lyrics come to an end...

Little Charles continues to play his guitar softly as the
 band members back at the rehearsal stop playing...

Troy Davis in the studio stops the record button...

And his wife is in bed sleeping peacefully,...

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

6 months Later

131 INT. TROD NOSSEL STUDIO - WALLINGFORD, CT - DAY 131

Little Charles and Troy Davis are in the studio listening to
 a playback recording of his song "I Get Lonely Too Fast".

TROY DAVIS
 (smiling)
 What do you think?

LITTLE CHARLES
 (not satisfied)
 What would Vince think is my
 concern! Should I play the rhythm
 guitar on this last recording?

TROY DAVIS
 (grinning)
 We've been here 24 hours...What's
 another hour!

Troy pushes the button on the intercom to alert Johnny in
 the recording booth who looks like he's high.

TROY DAVIS
 (on the intercom)
 Hey Johnny, take a break on this
 last recording. Little Charles will
 cover you.

Little Charles walks back into the booth, picks up his
 guitar, then starts to finish the last recording.

132

INT. BAND REHEARSAL - MANCHESTER, CT - MIDDAY

132

Johnny Star and the other band members are rehearsing Sly & The Family Stone's...THANK YOU (For Lettin' Me Be Myself Again)!

Little Charles walks in and heads over to where Troy Davis and Moscoe are sitting.

Two young EXOTIC TWINS are sitting off to the side, near the band, watching the rehearsal!

Suddenly, the band stops what they are playing and turn to Johnny Star.

He's completely gone off on a tantrum serenading both women watching the rehearsal.

FANTASY
(irritated)
Johnny! Are you with us?!

JOHNNY STAR
(cocky)
What's my last name?

The two women laugh at Johnny's comment. He continues to serenade them solo.

Little Charles watches quietly from the side...

PASTOR (V.O.)
Just when they were on their way to stardom the band start having internal-problems,...women, ego, drug use, that sort of thing...

FADE TO:

Vince McMahon Christmas Party

133

EXT. 34 HOBART STREET - SOUTHLINGTON, CT - NIGHT

133

Johnny Star and the other Fantasy band members are now onstage performing Sly & The Family Stone's song (Thank You) LIVE during a company Christmas party held by Vince McMahon.

The groups are showcasing their talent for Mr. McMahon's family, friends, and entertainment associates at the old Knight of Columbus building.

Little Charles is slightly offstage watching and waiting for his chance to perform his music...

(CONTINUED)

SHOW MC

(O.S.)

Coming to the stage, one of Vince
McMahon's young up and coming
stars...Little Charles...

The CROWD applauds as Little Charles (with his guitar) walks
onstage.

LITTLE CHARLES

(at the mic)

Thank you Vince!...Fantasy, lets
give them...(beat) I Get Lonely Too
Fast...

JOHNNY STAR

(O.S.)

TWO, ONE...

The band starts to play, then Little Charles joins in.

LITTLE CHARLES

(singing)

I get lonely too fast...I get
lonely too fast...Every time I fall
in love...My heart crumble to
dust...I tell myself over and
over...How many times can I take
this sober...Pleading and
pleading...Self-destruction...I
rather live alone now (now)...But
can't stand being alone...I get
lonely too fast...I get lonely too
fast...

Just when he gets through the first verse, a BRAWL BREAKS
OUT!

FADE TO BLACK:

1973

134

INT. TELEVISION SET - NIGHT

134

In the front room of his apartment, Little Charles sits
quietly watching a 1973 wrestling match on the TV set...

PASTOR (V.O.)

In retrospect, whenever Little
Charles looks back on that night
and re-live that event,...based
upon what he knows about Vince
McMahon...

(CONTINUED)

Little Charles starts to see Vincent McMahon in a series of candid FLASHBACK moments...

Introducing himself to Little Charles during his audition...

In his office sharing his personal vision for WWF/WWE with Little Charles...

On the scene at Trod Nossel Studio making sure the groups' recordings went accordingly...

At the Christmas party greeting his guests...

(BACK TO CHRISTMAS PARTY)

135 INT. 34 HOBART STREET - SOUTHLINGTON, CT - NIGHT 135

Little Charles and the band continue to sing while watching LARGE MEN dressed in black suits heavily engage in a bare-fist, knuckle, knock-down, drag-out fight...

LITTLE CHARLES

(singing)

I get lonely too fast...I get
lonely too fast...I'm the kind of
man that needs a lot of love...I'm
not the kind of man that need to be
alone...Come on and step in my
direction...Girl you can help me
with my situation...Cause I'm
getting lonely a little too
fast...Cause I'm a getting lonely,
a little too fast...

They start throwing chairs and tables at each other all over the place...

until eventually, this theatrics sent everybody running out the door, including Little Charles!

PASTOR (V.O.)

You can't help but wonder...Was
this the beginning of Mr. McMahon's
brain-child of psychology for
future entertainment-plots to
pro-wrestling?

136 INT. CURTIS STREET APT - FRONT ROOM - NIGHT 136

Back to the front room, the TV set is now showing static.

Little Charles is sleeping in the chair with his guitar.

PASTOR (V.O.)

For a struggling artist...(beat)
Little Charles can't help but
wonder...

The camera goes to the window as night turns to day...

It's winter in New England and the SOUND OF THE WIND BLOWING rattles the apartment window.

CUT TO:

137 EXT. NEW BRITAIN STREET - DAY 137

Little Charles and his wife are driving along the winter streets headed back home from the store.

The radio is playing "Knock On Wood" by Eddie Floyd and you can hear the car taking a beating from the harsh wind...

LITTLE CHARLES

(with his hand on the car dash
board)

Please don't have a heart attack on
me...We're almost home!

He looks at his wife and they both start to laugh.

The camera pulls out as the old beat up RED AND BLACK JALOPY drives up the neighborhood street...RADIO PLAYS!

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

Summer 1973

138 INT. HARTFORD STATE ARMORY - HARTFORD, CT - NIGHT 138

Little Charles, DONALD MITCHNER, and a couple SWAN BAND members are standing slightly offstage celebrating their opening performance with EDDIE FLOYD.

(CONTINUED)

LITTLE CHARLES
 (to Donald Mitchner)
 Thanks for getting me this
 gig?

DONALD MITCHNER
 (excited)
 You were great! Think you
 can do this again with
 The Swan Band as Millie
 Jackson's opening act?

They watch Eddie Floyd onstage performing KNOCK ON WOOD!

EDDIE FLOYD
 (singing)
 'Cause your love is better than any
 love I know. It's like thunder and
 lightning, the way you love me is
 frightening. You better knock,
 knock on wood, baby...

The ballroom in the armory is packed with fans of Eddie
 Floyd who are clapping as he sings his song.

The camera pans the CROWD CLAPPING...

As he continues to sing,...a FIGHT BREAKS OUT!

Little Charles watches from offstage as the ballroom crowd
 starts to run for the exits.

Eddie Floyd and band members immediately rush offstage past
 Little Charles and the other group members.

DONALD MITCHNER
 (to Everyone)
 I think it's time for us to
 go!

LITTLE CHARLES
 (laughing)
 You don't have to tell me
 twice!

They head for the exits...

CUT TO:

139

EXT. WEST INDIA CLUB - HARTFORD, CT - NIGHT

139

The sound of LIVE music comes from inside the club.

Little Charles is onstage with the Swan Band performing
 "Listen To The Music" as the opening act for MILLIE
 JACKSON.

LITTLE CHARLES
 (singing)
 No more songs will I make,...No
 more notes will I play,...

(CONTINUED)

So come on and,...Listen to the
music!...Listen to the music...

The club is packed with fans of Millie Jackson who are
enjoying his music.

They cheer when he finishes his song. The camera pans the
CHEERING audience...

Little Charles heads backstage where his wife (Versie) is
standing with Donald Mitchner.

He hands Little Charles an envelop with his pay.

DONALD MITCHNER

(smiling)

That's for another gig well done! I
put a little something extra in
there for you!

LITTLE CHARLES

(smiling)

Thanks! Just keep them comin'!

DONALD MITCHNER

Lets go get something to eat!

As they get ready to leave the backstage, Millie Jackson
walks comes out onstage to a CHEERING audience.

CLUB MC

(O.S.)

Ladies and gentlemen, put your
hands and hearts together for Mrs.
Millie Jackson...

She starts to sing...IF LOVING YOU IS WRONG!

MILLIE JACKSON

(at the mic)

If loving you is wrong...I don't
want to be right...If being right
means...Being without you...I'd
rather live a wrong life...

FADE TO:

1974

140 EXT. GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE - NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT 140

Millie Jackson's LIVE singing continues as Little Charles drives across the George Washington Bridge headed to New Jersey.

141 EXT. PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - NEW JERSEY - NIGHT 141

The old beat up red and black jalopy pulls into the circle driveway of the hotel.

Little Charles parks it just beyond the lobby entrance, then gets out the car with his overnight bag and guitar!

From his viewpoint, the camera LOOKS UP at the beautiful hi-rise Presidential Suite hotel.

He walks to the hotel entrance, then turns his head back towards his car before he enters...

The look on HIS FACE shows he's a little embarrassed.

142 INT. PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - NEW JERSEY - NIGHT 142

Inside the Presidential Suite, Little Charles heads down the hallway towards Raeford's suite.

PASTOR (V.O.)

In 1974, Little Charles met Joe Simon's producer Raeford Gerald. He taught him songwriting techniques, what to look for in writing a "hit", and how to expand upon a catchy jingle in writing songs.

He knocks on the door three times...KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK!

LITTLE CHARLES

(chuckles)

That's for you Eddie Floyd...

Raeford opens the door.

RAEFORD GERALD

(excited)

My main man, Little Charles!
Welcome to the Presidential Suites!

Little Charles walks into his suite which is spacious and elegantly decorated.

(CONTINUED)

RAEFORD GERALD
 (smiling)
 Make your self comfortable,...
 (grabbing his nose) While I take a
 trip across the bridge.

He puts his coat on as Little Charles takes a seat in the main room.

Raeford heads towards the door, opens it, then looks back at Little Charles just before he leaves...

RAEFORD GERALD
 (smiling)
 There's some food and beer in the frig, help yourself. We'll work on song writing techniques when I return.

LITTLE CHARLES
 Thanks Raeford! I appreciate it.

The door closes...

FADE OUT:

143 EXT. PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - NEW JERSEY - DAY 143

Little Charles walks down the hallway leaving Raeford's place. He's obviously tired after staying up all night writing songs.

As he exits the building to a BLINDING, bright early morning sun,...HIS CAR IS GONE!!

The camera pans the entire area from his viewpoint...

144 INT. PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - FRONT DESK - NEW JERSEY - DAY 144

He starts to panic as he rushes back inside the hotel headed towards HOTEL PERSONNEL at the front desk.

LITTLE CHARLES
 (to the Hotel Personnel)
 Somebody stole my car!...Somebody stole my car!

HOTEL PERSONNEL
 (concerned)
 What kind of car was it?

(CONTINUED)

LITTLE CHARLES

(worried)

It was a red and black Ford...Now
it's gone!

HOTEL PERSONNEL

(apologetic)

Sorry sir, but that car wasn't
stolen. We had it removed from the
premises! We thought it...

Before he could go into any further explanation Little
Charles abruptly walks off.

LITTLE CHARLES

(O.S.)

I'll get Raeford to deal with this!

The hotel personnel immediately picks up the phone to call
Raeford's suite.

HOTEL PERSONNEL

(apologetic)

Good morning Mr. Gerald
sir, there's been a bit of
a problem...

PASTOR (V.O.)

Apparently, the hotel
didn't know that the beat
up old car was the property
of Raeford Gerald's
guest...

FADE TO BLACK:

5 Minutes Later

Little Charles returns with Raeford and he lets the hotel
personnel have it.

RAEFORD GERALD

(calmly)

Let me get this straight, the hotel
personnel from last night thought a
drug-addict or some car thief had
left it there all night,...Giving
this hotel a bad name?...

HOTEL PERSONNEL

(apologetic)

That's correct sir!

RAEFORD GERALD

(calmly)

I have a suggestion, how bout I
give you 3 minutes to get that car
back here or I'll sue this uppity,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RAEFORD GERALD (cont'd)
pompous, white hotel and watch them
clean that up?

HOTEL PERSONNEL
(apologetic)
Please accept our apology Mr.
Gerald sir...The hotel will pay all
expenses of having the car returned
and for any other damages done to
it, during the towing!

FADE TO BLACK:

1 Hour Later

145 EXT. PRESIDENTIAL SUITE - NEW JERSEY - DAY 145

A tow truck pulls the old beat up red and black jalopy back
into the Presidential Suite driveway.

Little Charles and Raeford walk towards the tow truck as the
driver gets out and lets down the car.

RAEFORD GERALD
(apologetic)
Sorry this happened to you!

He hands Little Charles some money.

LITTLE CHARLES
(smiling)
Look at the bright side,...(beat)
at least they didn't cause any
further damages to the car.

They both look at the car and start to laugh. Little
Charles gets into his car and drives off.

146 EXT. I-95 NORTH - DAY 146

As Little Charles drives up I-95 North headed back to New
Britain, CT he's listening to the radio when "Mr Pitiful" by
Otis Redding comes on...

OTIS REDDING
(on the radio)
They call me Mr. Pitiful...Baby
that's my name now...They call me
Mr. Pitiful...that's how I got my
fame...

(CONTINUED)

Little Charles starts to sing along...
 But people just don't wanna
 understand...What make a man feel
 so blue...They call me Mr pitiful
 cause I lost someone just like you.

They call me Mr. Pitiful...This
 everybody know now...They call me
 Mr. Pitiful...Most everyplace I go.

But nobody seems to understand
 now,...How can a man sing such a
 sad song...When he lost everything
 ...When he lost everything that he
 had...

Suddenly, the RADIO SHUTS OFF and the CAR DIES...

He steers it off the main highway to the edge of the road,
 then lets the car coast to a complete stop.

Little Charles sits quietly with his head on the steering
 wheel...

LITTLE CHARLES
 (frustrated)
 Why, why, why...am I being
 punished?

He reaches down and pops the hood, then gets out of the car.

When he lifts the hood open, the camera pans the engine
 parts from his viewpoint.

He leaves the hood open and starts walking up the highway...

FADE TO BLACK:

2 Miles Later

Little Charles is on a pay phone at a gas station.

LITTLE CHARLES
 (to Roscoe Wooten)
 Roscoe, how's it going?...Not well,
 my car broke down on I-95 North
 coming from New Jersey...

He hangs up the phone, then goes inside the gas station to
 buy some snacks (Dr. Pepper, mixed peanuts, Snickers Bar),
 then heads back down the highway.

Back at the car, he sits and waits quietly eating the
 Snickers Bar.

(CONTINUED)

His watch on his waist belt reads 11:20 a.m.

LITTLE CHARLES
(talking to himself)
I have some time to kill, might as
well write a song...

Little Charles grabs paper from the visor in front of him,
then searches around the car for a pen...

LITTLE CHARLES
(talking to himself)
Where's a pen when you need one...

He reaches for the glove compartment box, opens it, then
finds a pen.

As he tries to close it back, it keeps falling.

On the third try it stays, then he sees the broken passenger
seat,...(FLASHBACK)

Charles is driving with his father (Charlie) who sits in the
broken seat with one hand holding on to the dashboard and
the other hand used to prop himself up.

CHARLES
(embarrassed)
Dad, I'm sorry about the seat!

CHARLIE
(reassuring)
It's nothing son! Remember, I'm the
same ole man who use to ride a bike
with one pedal as a kid. We can
handle a broken seat! Just keep
pedaling! You'll eventually get to
where you're going.

(BACK TO BROKEN DOWN CAR)

147 EXT. I-95 NORTH - EMERGENCY ROAD - DAY

147

Little Charles looks at the piece of paper and pen in his
hand...

As he sees his reflection in the rear-view mirror, it
changes to a reflection of Raeford speaking to him.

RAEFORD GERALD
(in the rear-view mirror)
The key to writing a hit begins
with a hook.

(CONTINUED)

Using the dashboard as a stable surface, he starts to WRITE LYRICS to the new song he was struggling to finish.

LITTLE CHARLES

(writes it on the paper, then
sings the chorus)

Open up your hand, help a
stranger...Open up your hand, help
a man if you can...

He looks around the car, then out the front window for inspiration,...TAPPING HIS PEN ON THE DASHBOARD!

(writes lyrics on paper)

See your brother in a ditch...don't
cost much to hand him a stick...

He goes back and forth between writing and singing lyrics until it feels right.

(writes lyrics on paper)

Cause it can easily be you, down in
that lonesome ditch...

When he has a couple verses written out,...

Little Charles grabs his guitar from the back seat,...

moves over to the broken seat,...

Then leans his back against the door with his legs stretched out...HE STARTS TO PLAY HIS GUITAR!

The camera follows his fingers picking the strings,...

Then follows his outstretched body...

To his foot tapping against the driver side door, then sings his new lyrics...

LITTLE CHARLES

(eyes closed)

Open up your hand, help a
stranger...Open up your hand, help
a man if you can...

See your brother in a ditch, don't
cost much to hand him a
stick...Cause it can easily be
you,...Down in the lonesome
ditch...

As the camera circles the outside of the car, you can hear Little Charles new lyrics over the soothing melody of the guitar playing.

(CONTINUED)

LITTLE CHARLES

(singing)

Now open up your hand...Help a
stranger, open up your hand, help a
friend if you can...Well now, you
didn't bring nothing in this
world...Sho' can't take it
away...Why you want to hold on to
something that you can lose in a
single day...

A car pulls up behind his and he can see ROSCOE WOOTEN and CHARLIE MOORE get out the car through the back window.

Roscoe walks along the driver side of the car and Moore walks along the passenger side headed to the front to look under the hood. Little Charles gets out of the car.

ROSCOE WOOTEN

(smiling)

We didn't take too long did we?

LITTLE CHARLES

(smiling)

Not at all my friend...It gave me
plenty of time to think!

They head to the front of the car where Moore has already reached his hand under the hood and lifted a small thin wire.

CHARLIE MOORE

(to Little Charles)

What this wire go to?

LITTLE CHARLES

(curious)

Since when do you know about cars?

ROSCOE WOOTEN

(laughing)

He doesn't...That wire seems to
have come loose from the
distributor cap!

He re-attaches the wire,...

ROSCOE WOOTEN

(to Little Charles)

Now go try and start it!

Little Charles gets back into the car and just like that, it started up!

(CONTINUED)

They all have a good laugh, then get back into their cars and drive off!

As Little Charles is driving up I-95 North headed towards New Britain, he sees the I-91 North highway sign for SPRINGFIELD, MA up ahead of him...(FLASHBACK)

148

EXT. NEW ENGLAND HIGHWAY - DAY

148

The MIGHTY TRUMPETS OF JOY drive along I-91 in a station wagon headed to Hartford from Springfield.

Little Charles plays the guitar as they sing...MOTHERLESS CHILD!

Just as the car approaches the bridge that separates Massachusetts from Connecticut, a tire blows out causing the car to veer out of control!

Inside the car, Roscoe FRANTICALLY tries to steer the car to safety across the bridge!

The camera follows the car from behind as it pulls to the side of the road and comes to a full stop...BREAK LIGHT!

BOOKIE

(O.S.)

I got to get out, I got to get out
now! Open the door quick!

The right-side back door flings open and DOUGLAS WOOTEN and BOOKIE jump out of the car. Bookie immediately heads down the embankment, at breakneck speed.

Little Charles, Roscoe, and the other members of Mighty Trumpets of Joy (DOUGLAS WOOTEN, GEORGE, ART) burst out in an uproar of laughter...

PASTOR (V.O.)

Roscoe Wooten was the manager of
The Joy Boys™ at the time. Til this
day, he has always proved to be
reliable...(beat) Willing to open
up a hand and help a friend...

(BACK TO LITTLE CHARLES' CAR)

Little Charles drives along I-95 North headed home...

FADE TO:

Summer 1974

149 INT. TELEVISION STORE - WATERBURY, CT - DAY 149

Inside a television store, COUSIN DAISY BLASH is buying a new TV set from a SALESMAN...

SALESMAN
(cheerfully)
This model here is one of my favorites...

As he points to the TV set, Little Charles comes on the local station (WTNH TV8) performing "California Dreamin'" by The Mamas and The Papas...

COUSIN DAISY
(pointing excitedly)
Look, look, look,...that's my cousin, that's my cousin!

CUT TO:

150 EXT. HARTFORD ROAD APT - NEW BRITAIN - DAY 150

Little Charles is sitting in the front room with his wife watching his performance.

The 2ND floor balcony doors are open and the sound of a car horn blowing could be heard...

WILLIE JENKINS pulls up in the parking lot in a new car...BLOWING HORN!

Little Charles walks out the apartment building, goes to the car, then gets in...

LITTLE CHARLES
(smiling)
Hey Willie, nice wheels!

WILLIE JENKINS
(smiling)
Thanks! The gig in London with the Drifters and Ben E. King is official now so I can live a little!

LITTLE CHARLES
When do you leave?

WILLIE JENKINS
(encouraging)
In a few weeks...(beat) Little Charles, I know I've said this to
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WILLIE JENKINS (cont'd)
 you a couple times before, but you
 really have to meet Clyde
 Otis,...I'm sure he can help you
 with your music career.

As Little Charles starts to get out of the car, Willie Jenkins puts some money in his hand...

WILLIE JENKINS
 (encouraging)
 I'm here for you my friend!

While leaning back into the car window, Little Charles extends his hand to give back the money...

LITTLE CHARLES
 (smiling)
 Arrange a meeting and I'll be
 there!

They shake hands, then Willie Jenkins pulls out of the driveway. Little Charles walks back into the apartment building.

FADE TO:

1 Week Later

151 EXT. EAST HILL SECTION - ENGLEWOOD, NJ - DAY 151

Willie Jenkins is driving with Little Charles down the prestigious East Hill section of Englewood, to the residence of CLYDE OTIS.

As they pull up into the right wing driveway entrance,...

the camera pans the sprawling custom Georgia marble and brick contemporary ranch home.

When they get out of the car, Little Charles goes to the trunk for his guitar.

LITTLE CHARLES
 (to Willie)
 Thanks again for getting me this
 audition.

WILLIE JENKINS
 (smiling)
 I just made a call...(beat) it's
 your show!

They walk to the front door and Willie Jenkins rings the doorbell...Ding Dong!

152 INT. CLYDE OTIS' HOME - ENGLEWOOD, NJ - DAY 152

Clyde Otis walks to the door to open it. He immediately greets his guest with a warm smile and friendly hand shake...

CLYDE OTIS
(excited)
Willie Jenkins!...Nice to see you again...(beat) Come on in gentlemen!...Welcome to my home!
(to little Charles)
You must be Little Charles?...

LITTLE CHARLES
(politely)
Yes sir, Mr. Otis!

CLYDE OTIS
(chuckles)
Just call me Clyde...

Clyde Otis looks Little Charles up and down...

CLYDE OTIS
(grinning)
Willie Jenkins...(beat) where did you find this country negro?

They all laugh at Clyde Otis' joke as he leads them by the sunken living room, down a spiral staircase past the pool table, into the lower level grand great room,...

CLYDE OTIS
Little Charles, where are you from?

LITTLE CHARLES
I live now in New Britain, but I'm originally from Macon, Georgia.

then out the double doors to the patio area.

153 INT. CLYDE OTIS' HOME - PATIO - DAY 153

He picks up a long pole with a net lying on the patio, then heads towards the pool.

(CONTINUED)

CLYDE OTIS

Please take a seat...Just need to finish cleaning these leaves out of the pool!

WILLIE JENKINS

(to Clyde Otis)

How's Brooke doing?

CLYDE OTIS

Benton...(beat) He's fine! He can use some more songs though...

Clyde Otis puts down the pole, then takes a seat near Little Charles and Willie Jenkins.

CLYDE OTIS

(smiling)

So Little Charles, you ready to knock my socks off?

Little Charles immediately picks up his guitar, then starts to play HIS SONGS!

PASTOR (V.O.)

Who would have thought that during those early childhood days in Georgia, Little Charles who listened to the radio and heard Brook Benton, Dinah Washington, Nat King Cole, and other greats; would someday hook up with the first black A&R Executive for a major label. Certainly not Little Charles. Clyde wrote and produced over 33 "hits" for Mercury Records Company.

He finishes his first song...

CLYDE OTIS

(impressed)

I like it! How many more songs do you have like this?

LITTLE CHARLES

(smiling)

How much time do you have?

Clyde Otis laughs, then sits back to relax as Little Charles continues to play more songs.

DISSOLVE TO:

154 EXT. NY TIMES BUILDING - NEW YORK CITY - DAY 154

Little Charles stands outside the New York Times building. From his viewpoint, the camera LOOKS UP at the hi-rise building.

PASTOR (V.O.)

Clyde Otis had Little Charles to submit a repertoire of songs to New York Times Music Incorporation for intent to sell.

155 INT. NY TIMES BUILDING - ELEVATOR - DAY 155

Inside the elevator, he presses the button for his floor.

Rides up the elevator...BING!

The doors opens, then he gets off...

When the doors close, we cut sharply to the interior of his apartment...

156 INT. HARTFORD ROAD APT - FRONT ROOM - DAY 156

Little Charles walks through the door and rushes to his wife sitting in the main room.

He shows her the CHECK IN HIS HAND for \$700, then pulls the bouquet of flowers from behind his back.

She gives him a hug and long kiss...

PASTOR (V.O.)

When the rent was badly due, Little Charles sold three songs..."Chained To Your Love", "Sweeter and Deeper", and "Try My Love"...This was confirmation that he was now a songwriter and had cleared \$700 for his efforts.

DISSOLVE TO:

1 Week Later

157

INT. CLYDE OTIS' HOME - OFFICE - MIDDAY

157

Little Charles is meeting with Clyde Otis at his home office to discuss working together.

As he waits, he looks at the tons of records in the shelves around the office and the "hit" records of various artists hanging on the wall.

He comes across one of Brooke Benton gold hits...

Clyde Otis walks into the office and they both sit down.

CLYDE OTIS

(smiling)

Glad to see things worked out at New York Times...3 out of 3 songs on your first sell is pretty darn good!

He sits back in his chair...

CLYDE OTIS

(smiling)

I have a track that I'd like you to lay vocals to...It's called "A Change Is Gonna Come"..write by Sam Cooke!...Are you interested?

LITTLE CHARLES

(shocked)

Yes...Of course!

Then he leans forward and places both arms on his desk.

CLYDE OTIS

(and pointing at Little Charles)

You know, you could become the next Otis Redding...

Little Charles just smiles and sits quietly listening to Clyde's story. He holds up Otis Redding's album cover.

PASTOR (V.O.)

What Clyde Otis didn't know about Little Charles is that he had Otis Redding's style of singing down pat. He had developed a soulful whine in his voice and could deliver a love Ballard with ease.

(CONTINUED)

CLYDE OTIS

When I first met Otis Redding, I
said...(beat) where did this
country pumpkin come from, talking
about some...

(mimics Otis' singing)

Got to, got to, got to...

He sits back in his chair,...

CLYDE OTIS

(chuckles)

And now it looks like I'm stuck
with another one!

They both laugh.

LITTLE CHARLES

(grinning)

Clyde, you know I use to know Otis
Redding during the early days when
I was a small boy in Macon.

Clyde Otis just smiles and sits quietly listening to Little
Charles' story...(FLASHBACK)

LITTLE CHARLES

It was during the time we both sung
gospel on WIBB Radio Station, in
Macon, Georgia...

DISSOLVE TO:

1958 WIBB Radio Station

158 INT. WIBB RADIO STATION - ON-AIR BOOTH - DAY 158

Coming out of the WIBB RADIO BOOTH with the Southern
Harmonizers after their session, Little Charles holds his
lip in pain, which is swollen and burnt!

Otis Redding and Johnny Jenkins watch in SHOCK as they enter
the booth...

LITTLE CHARLES (V.O.)

Back then I sung with the Southern
Harmonizers and the Middle Georgia
Singers. Otis sung with the Wingate
Gospel Singers and with one of the
greatest left-handed guitar players
in the city, the flamboyant Johnny
Jenkins.

(CONTINUED)

OTIS REDDING
 (to Johnny Jenkins)
 Johnny, did you hear that boy
 squall?

CUT TO:

159 INT. CLYDE OTIS' HOME - GRAND GREAT ROOM - SAME DAY 159

Back in Clyde Otis' home, Little Charles continues to share his story with Clyde (laughing hysterically) during a game of pool...

LITTLE CHARLES
 (laughing)
 Amazing, looking back in
 retrospect,...

DISSOLVE TO:

Christmas 1963

160 EXT. MACON HOLMES COMPLEX - CHRISTMAS DAY 160

The camera pans the Macon Holmes apartment complex until it finds a huge, blue box with a big red bow on it.

Behind the telephone pole, sits a big Christmas tree with lots of fruits underneath...

Suddenly, neighborhood kids start to run for the fruit under the tree...

Otis Redding's parents come out of their apartment because of the yelling and screaming coming from outside...

LITTLE CHARLES (V.O.)
 We were proud to be living next
 door to his parents in Macon
 Holmes. Otis' father was even a
 Minister! That year, Otis bought
 his mother and father' a brand new
 1963 Ford Fairlane, 4 door, blue...

CUT TO:

161 INT. CLYDE OTIS' HOME - PATIO - SAME DAY 161

Back in Clyde Otis' home, Little Charles continues to share his story with Clyde sitting on the patio near the pool.

They both have a drink in their hand.

LITTLE CHARLES
He himself drove a gold Eldorado.
One hot summer day,...

DISSOLVE TO:

Summer 1960

162 EXT. AUNT MAGGIE'S FRONT YARD - MACON, GA - DAY 162

While Little Charles plays in his Uncle Johnny and Aunt Maggie's front yard...

LITTLE CHARLES (V.O.)
Otis Redding drove by and called
out to me,...

OTIS REDDING
(from inside his car)
Hey, little Charles, is Johnny
home?

Before Little Charles could answer him, he turns and sees his AUNT MAGGIE standing in the steam door responding...

AUNT MAGGIE
(yelling to Uncle Johnny)
Johnny, wake up, Otis Redding is
out here asking for you!

The camera follows Little Charles' viewpoint as he turns back towards Otis Redding sitting in his car waiting for Uncle Johnny.

CUT TO:

163 INT. CLYDE OTIS' HOME - PATIO - SAME DAY 163

Back in Clyde Otis' home, Little Charles finishes his story.

LITTLE CHARLES
His eyes were bloodshot red like
he'd been drinking. I have an uncle
and a brother-in-law both name
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LITTLE CHARLES (cont'd)
 Johnny...(beat) they were drinking
 buddies with Otis Redding...

They both look at the drinks in their hand and start to
 laugh.

FADE TO:

1 Month Later

164

EXT. HUDSON PARKWAY - NEW YORK CITY - MIDDAY

164

Little Charles is with Clyde Otis in his Lincoln Town car
 driving down the Henry Hudson Parkway.

They're listening to "A Change Is Gonna Come" music track as
 Little Charles practices his Ad lib.

Clyde Otis turns the radio down...

CLYDE OTIS
 (smiling)
 I'm going to share one of my
 childhood memories with you...

Little Charles just listens quietly...

CLYDE OTIS
 The thing I remembered more than
 anything that gave me the most
 satisfaction out of life is when I
 lived in Mississippi and
 experienced my first car ride,...

CLYDE OTIS' FACE lights up with excitement and the sound of
 his voice fills the car...

CLYDE OTIS
 (elated)
 The thing that thrilled me the most
 when the car would top the hill
 and went down the other side...MAN!
 (he chuckles)
 There was no other feeling in the
 world greater than that! WOW!

The camera follows the car as it picks up speed and zooms
 down the Parkway...

(CONTINUED)

PASTOR (V.O.)

There was another side to Clyde revealed, he wasn't afraid to open up to you, if he felt you were honest toward him.

DISSOLVE TO:

165 INT. BELL SOUND STUDIOS - NEW YORK CITY - MIDDAY 165

Inside the top-notch recording studio, Little Charles is in the recording booth warming up to lay down vocals.

Clyde Otis and the sound engineer are adjusting the levels.

He pushes the button on the intercom to alert Little Charles in the recording booth...

CLYDE OTIS

Little Charles, ready when you are.
How do you feel?

LITTLE CHARLES

(confident)
Third time's the charm!

As the music starts to play through his head phones,...

Little Charles closes HIS EYES, then starts to sing his own version of "A Change Is Gonna Come" like no one before...

LITTLE CHARLES

(into the mic)
I was born by the river in a little tent...Oh and just like the river I've been running ever since...It's been a long, a long time coming...But I know a change gonna come, oh yes it will...

Clyde Otis watches him from behind the booth...

166 EXT. NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT 166

While driving down a NYC street after the recording, Clyde Otis sees a COUPLE HOMELESS GUYS standing on an opposite corner asking drivers for change to clean their windshields...

He pulls the car over, then gets out...

(CONTINUED)

Little Charles watch as he crosses the street and heads over to the guys on the corner to chat with them briefly, then give them a hand out (money).

Clyde Otis gets back in the car without saying a word and simply drives off...

167 INT. HARTFORD ROAD APT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

167

It's late when Little Charles walks through the front door and heads to the main room.

His wife is asleep in the bedroom as he stands in the main room watching her...

PASTOR (V.O.)

Having thought about what Clyde Otis had shared with him from his childhood story earlier that day...Little Charles took it to mean,...

(Clyde Otis Voice)

Little Charles, don't forget where you come from!

He chuckles to himself, then walks into the bedroom,...(FLASHBACK)

DISSOLVE TO:

Spring 1965

168 EXT. 1420 STANLEY STREET - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

168

A HAND knocks on the front door...KNOCK, KNOCK!

AUNT MATTIE CLAY opens the door and immediately greets DOUGLAS WOOTEN with a warm smile and friendly hug...

AUNT MATTIE

Hello Douglas, we've been expecting you, please come in!...(beat) How you've been?

DOUGLAS WOOTEN

(elated)

Hello Sister Mattie, I've been wonderful! How bout you?

They walk into the living room where Little Charles and his mother Mary are sitting.

(CONTINUED)

AUNT MATTIE

(smiling)

I couldn't be better...Please have
a sit!...(beat) You know my sister?

He takes a seat and immediately begins to speak with Aunt Mattie and Mother Mary about his group,...the Trumpets of Joy!

DOUGLAS WOOTEN

(to Mother Mary)

Hello Sister Mary, nice to see you
again!

Little Charles sits in the room listening...

DOUGLAS WOOTEN

(to Aunt Mattie)

My brother (Roscoe) purchased a
brand new guitar, but there is no
one to play it. We heard that your
nephew could play, so I've come
here to ask Little Charles,...

(looking at Little Charles)

If he'd consider coming to 21
Hurlburt Street, and trying out for
the group?

LITTLE CHARLES

(without hesitation)

I can't play!...I used to, but I've
forgotten how!

MOTHER MARY

(to Little Charles)

Son, don't lie you can play!

DOUGLAS WOOTEN

(elated)

The rehearsal is next Tuesday
night. Can we count on you to be
there?

With the aid of some persuasive FACIAL EXPRESSIONS from his Aunt and Mother, Little Charles reluctantly agreed to attend the Tuesday night rehearsal.

DISSOLVE TO:

The sound of LIVE music comes from behind a closed front door...

169

EXT. 21 HURLBURT STREET - 1ST FLOOR - NIGHT

169

The camera moves towards the front door as a 6 year old little girl's hand (SHARON) opens it wide and runs through the living room into the next room...

On the inside, the Trumpets of Joy members (CECIL TUCKER, BUCK KELLY, ENZER GREEN, DOUGLAS WOOTEN, ROSCOE WOOTEN) are singing...MOTHERLESS CHILD!

Little Charles is there playing Roscoe's brand new guitar.

The music can be heard throughout the entire six family units...

As they continue to rehearse, Little Charles hears footsteps coming down the stairs...BOOM,BOOM,BOOM,BOOM, then the front door opened wide, and into the living room walked ELEANOR-12 YEARS OLD!

Shortly after, he hears another person coming down the stairs...BOOM,BOOM,BOOM,BOOM, then in walked PAT-16 YEARS OLD!

a few minutes later, more footsteps...BOOM,BOOM,BOOM,BOOM!, then in walked HELEN-17 YEARS OLD!

Little Charles was playing his heart out, when his ears perked up, he hears yet another person...BOOM,BOOM,BOOM,BOOM!

This time the door opened wide and in walked his future wife,...VERSIE-14 YEARS OLD!

Immediately, when the rehearsal was over,...

DOUGLAS WOOTEN
(to Little Charles)
Could you come back next Tuesday
night, and in the meantime, would
you consider joining the group?

Little Charles clears his throat, looked at his feminine surrounding,...

LITTLE CHARLES
(shamefully)
Yes, alright, Okay, I'm
in!...(beat) Where are you singing
at Sunday?

They all laugh.

(CONTINUED)

PASTOR (V.O.)

It was at that rehearsal, which proved to be a deciding moment for Little Charles. He spent 17 months in the Job Corps before returning back to New Britain. He continued to play and sing with the Mighty Trumpets of Joy.

FADE TO:

Back To 1974

170 INT. CLYDE OTIS' HOME - SUNKEN LIVING ROOM - DAY 170

Back in Clyde Otis' home, Little Charles waits in the sunken living room area, he stands curiously looking at a painting on the wall.

Clyde Otis walks into the room...

CLYDE OTIS

(O.S.)

Here are the songwriter publisher agreement papers between Eden Music Corporation and The New York Times Music Corporation for the songs you wrote...

He hands Little Charles the papers...

CLYDE OTIS

(to Little Charles)

We're going back in the recording studio for 6 more songs with you...(beat) You already did "A Change Is Gonna Come"!

LITTLE CHARLES

(smiles)

Whatever you think best we should do, "C" is fine by me!

They both take a seat as Little Charles continues to stare and gaze up at the painting behind him.

CLYDE OTIS

Let me tell you the story about that painting...

Little Charles turns back to Clyde Otis to hear his story.

(CONTINUED)

CLYDE OTIS

(modestly)

A friend of mine wanted to clearly indicate my success in life.

The bottom of the painting represents New York City! The middle section represents smoke! The Smoke rising up, above the city represents me rising up from obscurity and poverty!

The camera LOOKS UP at the painting right above Little Charles's head.

DISSOLVE TO:

Weeks Later

The camera follows the beautiful landscape of New York City as cars drive across the GW Bridge into the city...

171 INT. BELL SOUND STUDIOS - NEW YORK CITY - NEXT DAY 171

At the studios, Little Charles is in the booth singing one of his recordings...

PASTOR (V.O.)

While working at the Bell Sound Studios, Clyde taught Little Charles two valuable lessons in recording and eating...(beat) The first lesson...

Clyde plays back parts of their first recording in the studio. Little Charles listens intently.

LITTLE CHARLES

(self-conscious)

Um, I think I want to remove that word! That wasn't suppose to be there!

CLYDE OTIS

(grinning)

We're gonna keep it in...(beat) this will remind you what not to do, the next time!

Clyde, Little Charles and the musicians finish laying down all the music tracks.

CUT TO:

172 EXT. EXCLUSIVE RESTAURANT - NEW YORK CITY - MIDDAY 172

They head out to an exclusive restaurant in the city.

Little Charles was so hungry behind all the work that was done in the studio, he tried to eat everything on the menu!

PASTOR (V.O.)

Clyde Otis never uttered a word,
until they got back to the studio
to start laying vocal to the music
tracks...(beat) Now the second
lesson...

173 INT. BELL SOUND STUDIOS - NEW YORK CITY - MIDDAY 173

Little Charles had ate too much, so when it came to vocalizing the lyrics to the song "Lay Your Love On Me" he could barely belch it out.

Clyde took a necktie and tied it around Little Charles' waist as tight as he could get it.

CLYDE OTIS

Now sing!...Next time, don't ever
try to sing a recording, on a full
stomach!

When they finish recording for the day, they head back to Englewood, New Jersey for the night.

174 EXT. HUDSON PARKWAY - NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT 174

While on the Henry Hudson driving to Clyde's home, he begin to share some deep things with Little Charles.

CLYDE OTIS

I have work with many people over
the years, some have continued on,
but many turn back,...

(turning his head to Little
Charles)

What are you going to do?

Somehow, Little Charles knew what he was driving at,...

CLYDE OTIS

(choosing his words carefully)
I never ask to be a half-back, I
was content just being a player on
the field, but since the ball has

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CLYDE OTIS (cont'd)
 fallen into my hands,...(beat) I'm
 going to run with it!

CLYDE OTIS
 (shouting)
 Well all right now!

Little Charles looks out the window in deep thought...

They past the 125TH STREET EXIT SIGN just off the Henry
 Hudson Parkway,...(FLASHBACK)

PASTOR (V.O.)
 A week ago, Little Charles had a
 dream and in the dream,...

175

EXT. APOLLO THEATER MARQUEE - HARLEM - NIGHT

175

Outside the famous APOLLO music hall,..."Where Stars Are
 Born and Legends Are Made", the Harlem 125th street is busy
 with people lined up to buy tickets...

Inside the theater, Little Charles and Clyde Otis are
 rehearsing "Lay Your Love On Me" for the night show,...

LITTLE CHARLES
 (singing)
 Lay it on me, lay your love on
 me...Lay it on me, put your love on
 me...

Little Charles takes a break and walks backstage when the
 BLACK PAY PHONE on the wall rings,...HE ANSWERS IT!

On the other end was the VOICE OF CLYDE MCPHATTER, whom he
 never met.

The voice simply said,...

CLYDE MCPHATTER VOICE
 Little Charles, are you preparing
 to go on stage tonight?

LITTLE CHARLES
 (puzzled)
 Yes, that's right!

CLYDE MCPHATTER VOICE
 Is Clyde Otis there?

(CONTINUED)

LITTLE CHARLES

Yes, would you care to speak with him?

CLYDE MCPHATTER VOICE

(hesitation in his voice)

No, but you Little Charles, watch yourself!

The phone went dead...DIAL TONE!

BACK TO CAR

Little Charles still looks out the window as they drive across the George Washington Bridge,...

PASTOR (V.O.)

Little Charles had never seen or met Clyde McPhatter prior to this dream...

176 EXT. EAST HILL SECTION - ENGLEWOOD, NJ - NIGHT 176

The camera follows them driving down the prestigious East Hill section of Englewood, to Clyde's residence.

They pull into the right wing driveway entrance,...

the camera pans the sprawling beautiful custom Georgia marble and brick contemporary ranch home illuminated with lights.

177 INT. CLYDE OTIS' HOME - LOWER LEVEL BAR - NIGHT 177

Inside the home, Little Charles sits at the bar in the lower level, while Clyde makes them drinks from behind the bar.

Little Charles thought about the dream he had a few weeks back...

LITTLE CHARLES

(curious)

Clyde, did you know Clyde McPhatter?

CLYDE'S FACE expression changed drastically, as if he had seen a ghost.

He leans both his elbows on the bar counter to speak directly to Little Charles...

(CONTINUED)

CLYDE OTIS
 (surprised)
 Yes, but what do you know about
 him?

LITTLE CHARLES
 (little uncomfortable)
 Nothing,...(beat) other than, he
 called me, in a dream.

CLYDE OTIS
 (without batting an eye)
 I want you to tell me word for word
 what he said to you!

LITTLE CHARLES
 (slowly)
 While, we were rehearsing at the
 Apollo Theater,...
 (in the dream, he called and
 asked me)
 Little Charles are you performing
 tonight and if Clyde Otis was
 there?

Clyde Otis stands up from the bar with a puzzled look on his
 face...

LITTLE CHARLES
 And I said, "Yes, would you care to
 speak with him?" He hesitated and
 said "No!"

PASTOR (V.O.)
 Little Charles thought it best not
 to tell him the latter part of the
 conversation, (concerning himself),
 so he left-off speaking it.

And when he thought the mystery was complete,...

CLYDE OTIS
 (regretfully)
 I have a confession to make to
 you...

He picks up his drink and motions for Little Charles to walk
 with him to the lower level living room area...

CLYDE OTIS
 (reflecting)
 I knew Clyde McPhatter very well; I
 was the one who helped launch his
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CLYDE OTIS (cont'd)
 career and when he made it big, he
 put me down, left the United States
 and went to love in Europe...

They take a seat and Little Charles listens quietly to his confession.

CLYDE OTIS
 But when he ran out of money he
 came back to the States and asked
 me if I would help him
 again...(beat) and I out right
 refused to help him a second
 time,...(beat)
 (a little down on himself)
 I told him, "No, no way!" And from
 that time on he wandered off and
 died mysteriously...

The camera leaves them and goes to the patio doors that overlooks the pool area.

A pleasant winter night transitions to a bright sunny morning...

178

INT. CLYDE OTIS' HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

178

Clyde is up bright and early with an apron on fixing breakfast in the kitchen.

He has the orange juice, the English muffins, and the bacon on the table.

Little Charles walks out of the room just in time to catch him in a Kodak moment,...

standing up with the frying pan in his hand, twirling around in the middle of the floor, trying to flip burnt eggs!

CLYDE OTIS
 (jokingly)
 Hell, eat man, they won't kill you!

They both laugh.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

179 EXT. RECORD PLAYER - NIGHT

179

The camera moves towards the top of a record player, then a PAIR OF HANDS puts Clyde McPhatter's 45 on the record player, then places the needle on it to play!

PASTOR (V.O.)

If there is one voice through which the glories of R&B ran their course in the 1950s," Wrote Nick Tosches, "It very well may be Clyde McPhatter's." At Mercury Records, he scored such hits as "Lover Please", "Little Bitty Pretty One", "Treasure of Love", and the Biggest hit of his solo career "A Lover's Question" on the chart it peak at #1 R&B AND #6 POP.

He was one of the first singers to cross over from the church to the pop and R&B charts.

180 INT. BELL SOUND STUDIOS - NEW YORK CITY - MIDDAY

180

Back in the studio, Clyde is at the recording station with the engineer as Little Charles lays down the final vocals for one of the recordings.

When Clyde has what he needs he presses the intercom button to alert Little Charles in the booth...

CLYDE OTIS

(satisfied)

We're good...That's a doozie!

As he walks out of the booth, Clyde claps his hands for his new young star...

CLYDE OTIS

(excited)

Little Charles, my friend...(beat)
I have no doubt you're headed for stardom and your hard work will be rewarded!

LITTLE CHARLES

(smiling)

Thanks Clyde! If you're satisfied, then I'm happy...I trust your direction!

(CONTINUED)

CLYDE OTIS
(smiling)
How are you going to celebrate?

LITTLE CHARLES
(grinning)
Hang out with my wife and family,
and have a beer or two...

CLYDE OTIS
(laughing)
Then don't let me take up anymore
of your time! Get out of here and
I'll reach out to you soon with
good news.

They shake hands, then Little Charles grabs his guitar and coat and heads out the door...

181 EXT. NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

181

Little Charles is driving up 125Th Street in Harlem in his white 1974 Chevy Chevelle with black interior.

He listens to one of his favorite songs by Sly and The Family Stone...THANK YOU!

LITTLE CHARLES
(singing)
Dance to the music...All night long
Everyday people...Sing a simple
song...Mama's so happy...Mama start
to cry...Papa still singin'...You
can make it if you try...
(singing louder)
I want to thank you, for lettin' me
be myself again...(Different
strokes for different folks,
yeah)...Thank you for lettin' me be
myself again...

As he slows down in front of the Apollo with the music blaring, two attractive BLACK GIRLS in their early 20's drive pass him going in the opposite direction.

They wave to Little Charles as they pass.

The streets are lined with people and the Apollo Marquee lights shine bright!

He smiles, then continues driving up 125Th Street headed back to Connecticut.

(CONTINUED)

DISSOLVE TO:

December 11, 1974

182 INT. HARTFORD ROAD APT - BEDROOM - DAY

182

It's a bright and early morning when Little Charles receives a letter from Clyde Otis.

He immediately opens it...

LITTLE CHARLES

(reading aloud)

Dear Little Charles, because you have obviously "place your trust in me" I have prepared these agreements with what I consider "very fair terms" I have done this a view toward the future,...(beat) hopefully, in a year or two we can tear these agreements up, (because we will be so successful) and draw new ones. Smile.

He smiles, then continues to read the letter to himself in silence.

Clyde's VO takes over...

CLYDE OTIS VOICE

(reading aloud)

I suppose we will be leaving sometime during the day on next Tuesday. Perhaps you should plan to visit your folks, in Macon, while you are so close to home. We have not booked a return flight yet. Which means you can return when you wish to. With all good luck, I am Sincerely, Clyde Otis.

Little Charles puts the letter down and sits on the bed quietly thinking...

The camera pans the bed room as the walls are replaced with images of his childhood in Macon...

A 4 year old Charles (Little Charles) goes to work with his father (Charlie) on the roof of an old lady's house,...

Inside the house, the OLD LADY feds him flapjacks made from an old fashion waffle-iron...

(CONTINUED)

She then takes him to a church where the floor was made of saw-dust; the pulpit looks like it could have been the back door to heaven, and the pews were filled with persons dressed in white apparels, from head to toe...

The unique sound of instruments being played fill the room...WASHBOARDS, TAMBOURINES, AND A BASS DRUM!

The people are shouting, dancing, and HUMMING to the music.

The camera STOPS panning the room and the images disappear...

Little Charles sits in the room with tears of joy coming down his face...

183 INT. CLYDE OTIS' HOME - OFFICE - NIGHT 183

Clyde Otis is in his office on the phone with AL BELL, out of Memphis, working on a record deal and a future recording contract for Little Charles.

CLYDE OTIS
(on the phone)
Hey Al, it's Clyde...

CUT TO:

184 INT. 230 ENFIELD STREET - HARTFORD, CT - NIGHT 184

Little Charles decides to celebrate the weekend of his success in the making with FAMILY AND FRIENDS at his mother and step father's home...

The camera follows everyone drinking and dancing to music coming from the radio...TELL ME SOMETHING GOOD by Rufus

Little Charles sits on the couch in the middle room with his brother-in-law JOHNNY (PETE HILL), who was Otis Reddings drinking buddy back in Macon.

They both have a beer in their hand...

JOHNNY (PETE HILL)
(excited)
Little Charles, you're on your way up! I use to tell Otis this all the time!...(beat) Unfortunately, he died too soon...But you're definitely on your way to stardom!

(CONTINUED)

His wife (Juanita) comes over and interrupts their conversation...

JUANITA
(excited)
Pete, come dance with me!
(dancing)
That's my song...

The radio is playing Steve Wonder's SIGNED, SEALED, DELIVERED (I'M YOURS)...

Before he could say anything, she grabs his arm and pulls him away from her brother...

The camera follows Johnny (Pete Hill) struggling to dance...

Little Charles sits in deep thought as he takes the bottle of beer and downs it.

He had way too many and you can see he's not quite himself...

LITTLE CHARLES
(mumbling to himself)
If I could walk away with the pot of gold,...(he keeps repeating this phrase)

He gets up, then stumbles back down...

LITTLE CHARLES
(arguing out loud with himself)
Where's my pot of gold!

The room goes quiet except for the music coming from the radio...

Family and friends stare at him as if he has just lost his mind. He stumbles through the crowd headed to the back kitchen area,...

LITTLE CHARLES
(O.S.)
I'll surrender when I get my pot of gold!

185 INT. CHEVY CHEVELLE - NIGHT 185

In his car, Little Charles recklessly drives along I-84 West headed home to New Britain.

As he fights to keep his eyes open, he rolls down the window to let the cold winter air in...

LITTLE CHARLES
(mumbling to himself)
Stay alert, stay alert...

As HIS FOOT accelerates on the pedal, the SPEEDOMETER rapidly climbs from 60 mph to over 85 mph...

The camera follows the car from behind picking up speed.

Back inside the car, HIS EYES struggle to keep the road in focus through the front window...BLACKOUT!

The I-84 West road and environment changes to the fair lane narrow gravel road in Vietnam...

186 INT. MILITARY TRUCK - NIGHT 186

Little Charles now thinks he's in the military truck driving fast down the fair lane narrow gravel road.

187 INT. CHEVY CHEVELLE - NIGHT 187

He's sweating furiously...

188 INT. MILITARY TRUCK - NIGHT 188

Suddenly, he thinks he encounters some snapper-firing from the treeline along the Interstate,...BANG, BANG, BANG, BANG!

189 INT. CHEVY CHEVELLE - NIGHT 189

His foot presses down on the pedal and the speedometer quickly climbs to 100 mph...

190 EXT. I-84 WEST HIGHWAY - EXIT 40 - NIGHT 190

The camera follows the car as it heads towards EXIT 40...

The car picks up speed on New Britain Road going through the first traffic light, then the second traffic light passing under the bridge...

Once the car gets to Hartford Road, it makes a dangerous sharp right turn and heads down the highway...

191 INT. MILITARY TRUCK - NIGHT 191

Back inside the car (truck), the headlights barely penetrate the thick fog coming from the woods...

HIS EARS think they hear more snapper-firing in the distance...BANG, BANG, BANG, BANG!

Suddenly, the fog quickly vanishes and a water buffalo is standing in the middle of the road like a deer caught in the headlights...

Little Charles frantically press the brake and the car comes to a long SCREECHING HALT!

192 EXT. HARTFORD ROAD - NIGHT 192

The camera pans the outside of the car sitting in the middle of the road...NO WATER BUFFALO!

A frightened Little Charles sits in the car breathing heavily with sweat pouring down his face...

The darkness of the night is reminiscent of his time in Vietnam...

As he looks through the rear-view mirror, he sees a heavy fog coming towards the back window, then a voice speaks to him...

SATAN'S VOICE

If you would turn loose God's hands completely and worship me, starting tomorrow you will never want for anything again in life! If you let go of HIM and embrace me...Turn GOD loose and worship me!

There was a chilly-cold dead silence in the air, then the fog on the back window quickly vanishes as a second voice speaks to him...

GOD'S VOICE

(with authority)
My Servant!

CUT TO:

193 INT. HARTFORD ROAD APT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

193

Little Charles managed to stumble into the apartment, then heads straight to the bedroom past his wife who sits in the front room.

VERSIE
(frightened)
Charles, are you okay?

He doesn't respond to her, but lay in bed weeping and shaking with fear. She watch him from the front room scared to death...

LITTLE CHARLES
(crying out to himself)
If God be for me who can be against me...I love HIM too much to sell my soul!

PASTOR (V.O.)
This was the worse night of Little Charles' entire life! And it was at this very moment he knew who his allegiance belong to!

DISSOLVE TO:

194 INT. HARTFORD ROAD APT - BEDROOM - DAY

194

The next morning, Little Charles is asleep in bed when the phone rings.

He answers and it's Clyde Otis on the other end...

LITTLE CHARLES
(half sleep)
Hello...

CLYDE OTIS VOICE
(disappointed)
I don't know what happened!...You would know?...Everything we worked hard on has failed!
(he sighs)
The bottom has dropped out!...I don't know what to tell you, but take care!

The phone goes dead...DIAL TONE!

Little Charles sits up in the bed with a gazed look on his face. He looks like he just took a trip to hell...

(CONTINUED)

PASTOR (V.O.)
 And that was the last conversation
 Little Charles ever had again with
 Clyde Otis.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

November 1975

195 INT. ALLEN STREET APT - FRONT ROOM - NIGHT 195

In the front room, Little Charles sits holding his guitar in a trance staring at the TV set!

PASTOR (V.O.)
 His battle with the spiritual world
 and his earthly desires continued
 for almost a year, before he
 realized he had to chose. He was
 given more chances to make good on
 his promise than many, but he took
 God's goodness for granted.

The images of all the times GOD had spared his life FLASH
 BEFORE HIS EYES on the TV screen...

Hiding underneath his grandmother's house eating stolen
 green-peaches...

PASTOR (V.O.)
 Like when his grandmother warned
 him to stay away from those green
 peaches...

Lying in the hospital bed with tubes coming out of his side
 and nose...

PASTOR (V.O.)
 Or surviving 7 days with a burst
 appendix before he got the right
 medical attention...

Back in Vietnam, he's in a US helicopter flying over enemy
 territory, and the blades stop turning, and the red danger
 light started flashing, and the pilot is in a panic...

PASTOR (V.O.)
 And even after he heard the pilot
 say, "We're going to
 crash!"...(beat) God was there...

(CONTINUED)

The camera finds Little Charles now standing in the room holding his guitar. He looks at it one last time, then places the guitar in its brief case before locking it securely.

He opens the closet door to place the brief case inside, then closes the door!

196 INT. HARTFORD ROAD APT - BEDROOM - NIGHT 196

Inside the bedroom, Little Charles kneels at the foot of his bed, on his knees, praying with his wife...

197 INT. HARTFORD ROAD APT - BATHROOM - DAY 197

The next morning, Little Charles stands in the bathroom before the mirror looking at his long straight hair.

He holds a pair of scissors in his hand...

Slowly he starts to snip, snip, snip away at his hair, mercilessly watching his old-glory fall to the floor!

PASTOR (V.O.)

On this particular day, the Spirit spoke to him and said, "Cut your hair!"...

After he finishes, he stares at the new man in the mirror, then turns to his wife who's been standing in the doorway all along.

LITTLE CHARLES

(unashamed)

How do I look?

VERSIE

(jokingly)

Like a red wet-headed chicken, lost on the barn yard!

They both start to laugh.

198 INT. CHEVY CHEVELLE - NIGHT 198

In his car, Ron drives along I-84 East headed to Hartford to his mother Mary's home.

As he sees his reflection in the rear-view mirror, it changes to a reflection of his father (Charlie) speaking to him...

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE
 (sadness in his eyes)
 Son, you can't serve two masters!

The reflection of his father fades back to his face...

CUT TO:

199

INT. 230 ENFIELD STREET - MIDDLE ROOM - NIGHT

199

Ron walks into his mother's home through the back door entrance.

He goes through the kitchen area, then into the middle room with his new life and his new hair cut!

His father (Charlie), step-father (JACK DAVIS), and mother Mary are sitting in the room talking....

RON
 (smiling)
 Hey folks...

Suddenly, Charlie raised himself up off the couch, as if he had seen a ghost!

CHARLIE
 (shocked)
 Little Charles...What has happened to my son?

He was glad to see his son, but he was also, shocked at his appearance.

RON
 (humbly)
 Little Charles has ceased to be. He cut his hair and submitted his Life to Christ...

Charlie slowly sits back down on the couch and the room is quiet...

PASTOR (V.O.)
 He tried to relate to his son, but Ron could tell that he was somewhat taken aback by his surprising revelation.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

February 11, 1976

200 INT. HARTFORD ROAD APT - BEDROOM - DAY 200

A few months later, while Ron is in the bedroom getting ready for work, the phone rings,...

He answers and it's a surgical doctor on the other end...

RON
(cheerful)
Hello...Yes this is Charles Surrey!

PASTOR (V.O.)
Ron had received a call that his father was in the hospital with a hemorrhage at the brain and had to undergo surgery...

He slowly sits down on the bed...

PASTOR (V.O.)
The doctor said it was a 50/50 chance either way, that Charlie would survive that extensive kind of surgery, and that he and the family should come to Syracuse ASAP and be prepared for the worse.

RON
(sadness in his eyes)
Thank you Doctor, I understand!

The phone goes dead...DIAL TONE!

201 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - SYRACUSE, NY - NEXT DAY 201

In the hospital room, Charlie is slightly sitting up in bed with heavy bandage around his head.

He's surrounded by all of his children, wife, in-laws and many friends...

CHARLIE
(to the family)
I'd like to talk with my son in private...Please!

Everyone starts to leave and Ron is left alone with his father...

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE
 (sadness in his eyes)
 I've made my peace with God!

RON
 (smiling)
 That's good dad, but you're not gone yet...I'm praying for you to make it through this so when you're well enough to travel...We can bring you back to New Britain to live with us!

CHARLIE
 (reassuring)
 I know Son, I'm gonna be alright!

Ron stares at his father, then he sees a BIBLE tucked under his massive hand...(FLASHBACK)

202 INT. 230 ENFIELD STREET - MIDDLE ROOM - NIGHT 202

Charlie is standing in the middle room looking at a picture of himself on a shelf that his ex-wife (Mother Mary) still had of him...

CHARLIE
 Son, I had been saved once, but I lost the flying power, and now I'm tormented night and day...

He turns to look back at Ron sitting on the couch...

CHARLIE
 (sadness in his eyes)
 My son, whatever you do don't lose your flying power!

(BACK TO THE HOSPITAL ROOM)

203 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - SYRACUSE, NY - NIGHT 203

Ron is taking his leave from the room, he looks back at Charlie,...

CHARLIE
 (waving)
 Good-bye, my son!

FADE OUT:

2 Days Later

204 INT. ALLEN STREET APT - BEDROOM - NEXT NIGHT 204

Once Ron returned home, and no sooner than 2 days had passed when he and his wife were getting ready for bed, the phone ring,...

He answers and it was the doctor on the other end...

RON
(nervous)
Hello...!

DOCTOR'S VOICE
(sympathetic)
I'm sorry Mr. Surrey, but we've done everything we could for him. Your father just passed away at 9:15 p.m.

RON
(sadness in his eyes)
Thank you Doctor, I understand!

The phone goes dead...DIAL TONE!

PASTOR (V.O.)
It was unusual for his father to say, "Goodbye..." But rather "So long..." Charlie believed Surreys didn't utter this unless they intended not to see you again....

Ron's eyes fills with tears as he slowly hangs up the phone...

The camera pans over to the clock on the wall...9:25 p.m.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

A Week Later

205 EXT. SAND-BED ROAD - DAY 205

A car drives up Surry road headed towards Mount Cillia Spring Baptist church.

The doors of the church where the funeral service is being held have just opened...

Inside, the camera pans the faces of family and friends sobbing with tears in their eyes.

They walk up to pay their last respect.

Ron sits near the front (with his wife) staring at his father's body lying in the coffin.

PASTOR (V.O.)

When Ron realized what had happened
it was too late, his father had
died. And they were having his
funeral service back home,...

Ron then SEES HIMSELF in his father's coffin watching his dead body from the pew...

He closes his eyes and begins to pray...(FLASHBACK)

PASTOR (V.O.)

In a dream, Little Charles had
begged God for forgiveness
saying,...Please God let me go
back!...I'll do better...I'll be a
better person...I'll live right,...
You can depend on me! I won't let
you down this time,...Please
God!...But God said nothing...

As the funeral services ended,...

The PALLBEARERS lift the casket (with Little Charles) out of the church,...

The tilting-sound of the coffin could be heard as the shoe-heel of men sunk into the churchyard's sand.

The pallbearers approach the lay-out as the camera looks inside the hole...

PASTOR (V.O.)

At the bottom of the hole, Ron's
spirit saw hell's fire below...

They start to lower him in,...down, down, down...BANG!

(BACK TO HIS FATHER'S COFFIN)

Little Charles opens his eyes to see the pallbearers with his father's coffin struggling to lift it.

He immediately runs over to aid them!

(CONTINUED)

Ron and the pallbearers carry the casket out of the church doors,...FALLEN MUSIC PLAYS UNDERNEATH!

TEXT OVER SCENE:

On February 21, 1976, Charlie Surrey was laid to rest,...

207 EXT. MOUNT CILLIA SPRING BAPTIST CHURCH - DAY 207

Outside, the camera leaves the family coming out of Mount Cillia Spring Baptist church, then heads down Sand-bed road to the Surry Road street sign...

FADE TO TEXT OVER BLACK:

Back on February 6, 1976, Little Charles surrendered his guitar and dedicated his life totally to Christ...

Accepting Jesus as his Lord and Savior.

Charles Surrey became a Preacher in 1978.

FADE IN:

31 Years Later

208 EXT. MOUNT OLIVE COGIC CHURCH - DAY 208

Inside his church, Charles Surrey and the lead actor (Little Charles) lead the choir in a new song called "FALLEN" he co-wrote, produced, and arranged with his Brother Joe Surrey...

ROLL CREDITS AND FILM OUTTAKES...THE END