

DANNY COLLINS

by

Dan Fogelman

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Blue Draft - 06/07/13
Pink Pages - 06/18/13
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OVER BLACK we hear the sounds of a TURNTABLE turning on. We hear a NEEDLE drop. The record plays a SONG.

The SONG is pure, innocent, and simple... the kind of thing great singer-songwriters are made of.

TEXT:

"The following is kind-of based on a true story a little bit."

The words are lifted away in a haze of CIGARETTE SMOKE.

1 INT. CHIME IN MAGAZINE OFFICES - DAY (1971)

1

We listen to the song as we pick up snapshots from an office of an early 70's music magazine:

- Cigarettes are smoked indoors, everywhere. Smoke wafts over cubicles, everywhere.

- Women wear mini-skirts. Really "mini" mini-skirts.

- Music POSTERS and SIGNAGE line cubicle walls. Hendrix. Dylan. Simon and a Jew-fro'd Garfunkel.

- A poster of a young RICHARD NIXON. Someone has drawn a MUSTACHE on Nixon's face as well as a "SPEECH BUBBLE" which reads "I'm an asshole."

- We hone in on a SINGLE CIGARETTE. A hand places it in an ASHTRAY. The now-empty hand removes the needle from the record player (stopping the song).

VOICE (O.S.)

Well, it's a hell of an album,
Kid. People are gonna freak.

The album goes into a SLEEVE and gets placed on a table. The album's cover bears only a simple title: **Danny Collins.**

The cigarette gets picked back up, and the "voice" takes his place behind a desk. His other hand picks up a DICTAPHONE.

VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(re: recording)
This cool?

SECOND VOICE (O.S.)

Sure.

He hits RECORD. A PACK OF CIGARETTES are held forward.

(CONTINUED)

VOICE (O.S.)

Smoke?

SECOND VOICE (O.S.)

No thanks.

The pack is pulled back REVEALING for the first time:

OUR INTERVIEWER, GUY DELOACH (36). His style is of the day and his manner that of a hippie who thinks he knows everything about anything worth knowing.

DeLoach leans back in his seat. He takes a long drag on his cigarette as he studies the YOUNG MAN opposite him.

ON THIS YOUNG MAN

Throughout, we see him only in FACELESS SNAPSHOTS.

- Long hair, very much of the era.
- Open collared shirt. A hairless chest.
- A single gold cross on the hairless chest.
- Those few facial features we can make out are boyish, untouched by... well, anything.

DELOACH

Jesus H, you're a baby. What are you, sixteen?

YOUNG MAN

Twenty-one.

DELOACH

Jesus H.
(beat, then)
Well the album's gonna be massive, Kid. Who got you there?

YOUNG MAN

I'm sorry?

DELOACH

Your influences. Who do you dig?
Who makes you hard?

YOUNG MAN

(uncomfortable)
Oh, well, I--

DELOACH

Hold on.

DeLoach picks up the recorder, speaks into it.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (2)

1

DELOACH (CONT'D)

June 30th, 1971, Guy DeLoach with
Danny Collins for Chime Mag.

(then)

More than anything it's your
writing. You write like fucking
Lennon, man.

DANNY

Oh, well, that's... thank you.

DELOACH

He's clearly an influence here,
no?

DANNY

Yeah, I mean... I guess he's the
one who makes me the hardest?

A beat. DeLoach LAUGHS, shakes his head.

DELOACH

Jesus H. Well, you're going to be
huge, Kid. I know the real thing
when I hear it and you're it.

Danny doesn't say anything. DeLoach raises a brow.

DELOACH (CONT'D)

Kid, look at me. I've been a star-
maker and a star-fucker for a very
long time, and I'm telling you:
You. Are. Going. To. Be.
Huge. Richer than richer, famous
as shit, more women than you know
what to do with. And I'm telling
you this, and I've got to ask: why
are you sitting there, staring at
me, looking like that information
scares the living shit out of you?

Danny leans forward, full-frame for the first time.

DANNY

Because it does.

CUE TITLE CARD:

DANNY COLLINS

CHYRON: 42 YEARS LATER

2 OMITTED

2

3 EXT. THE GREEK - EVENING 3

The large marquee outside the famous theatre bears only four words:

Danny Collins. Sold Out.

4 OMITTED 4

5 INT. BACKSTAGE - MEANWHILE 5

A sign on the dressing room door reads: **HEADLINER.** In the distance we hear a dull, thumping ROAR. THUMP. THUMP. THUMP. A distant crowd awaits their star.

6 INT. DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 6

A HAND fingers a CROSS.

The cross dangles from a chain, half buried in a patch of gray chest hair. The cross is removed, placed on a table.

The cross OPENS, like a coffin, and dumps a line of COCAINE on a table.

A NOSE comes into frame, snorts some.

AT THE MIRROR

Preparation for show time:

- GRAY HAIR STRANDS are darkened with HAIR COLORER.

- A GIRDLE is strapped over an undershirt.

- PLATFORM SHOES are stepped into, providing an extra five inches of height.

7 INT. TUNNEL - MOMENTS LATER 7

From behind, we TRACK our hero as he marches through the bowels of the arena in his platform shoes - his steps are wobbly, not exactly in a straight line.

He passes some GIGGLING GIRLS, nods at them. He passes a few "backstage" types, including a familiar ROADIE.

ROADIE

Break a leg, Danny.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

DANNY
 (from behind)
 Just tell me whose.

The Roadie LAUGHS as Danny moves on. The CHANTING CROWD grows closer.

AT THE STAGE CURTAIN/DOOR

From behind, we watch as he pauses. One deep breath. One crack of the neck, each way. Then:

He gives a THUMBS UP to someone off to the side. The curtain/door opens as he steps out onto the stage in front of 20,000 adoring fans.

Needless to say, they go completely bat-shit.

8 ON STAGE

8

We stay behind Danny as he strolls forward, takes the mic, and greets his fans.

DANNY
 Thanks for coming, Los Angeles.
 It's good to be home.

The crowd ROARS approval.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 I think you might know this one.

Danny turns to his BAND, NODS, and...

LIGHTS BLAST ON!!! Everywhere. The crowd ERUPTS.

Our CAMERA SWEEPS over the crowd revealing, in full, DANNY COLLINS for the first time since he was twenty-one. He's still a striking man, but the years have definitely left their mark.

He wears an impeccably tailored but boldly colored outfit. And those platform shoes. Equal parts Rod Stewart and Neil Diamond.

There are instruments everywhere... but Danny's not playing any of them.

This is over-the-top spectacle... but not caricature. The music, the act, it's cheesy without being cartoony, campy without being completely void of melody.

It's pretty clear that the stadium isn't the only thing that has sold out.

(CONTINUED)

Danny has clearly led off with his biggest hit, akin to *Sweet Caroline* (equally catchy, almost as good). *Sweet Caroline* is a good reference actually, mainly because from the first note (and especially the chorus), the audience is SINGING ALONG in a call and response fashion (TWO VIDEO SCREENS even cue the audience to sing their part with bouncing-ball karaoke-esque prompts).

The CROWD (older) eats it all up. A WOMAN sings his chorus "Hey, Baby Doll" while also wearing a "Hey, Baby Doll" T-shirt. ANOTHER WOMAN holds up a sign that reads "This Granny Loves Danny."

ON DANNY

During the song he mingles with women in the front row - he kisses one woman's hand, blows a kiss to another. He makes a show out of giving one woman his SCARF.

Danny takes in...

THE CROWD

AN OLDER COUPLE, arm and arm, SING the response part of the song back at him. They're singing way too hard.

THREE OLDER WOMEN sit quietly in their front row seats, eating RED VINES and mouthing words along, lifeless.

A GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE sings along with energy... but they're LAUGHING. They're not laughing *with* Danny.

ON DANNY

He's seen it all a thousand times. It no longer fazes him.

He pivots with a little shimmy, keeps performing.

Danny SLUMPS in a chair, his dressing room has transformed into the site of an after-party. Danny fingers an expensive scotch (and his cross) as he does his best to stay awake.

TIM, a thirty-something, comes into view through Danny's scotch glass.

TIM

Mr. Collins, do you think I could bother you for a quick picture?

(before Danny can answer)

Just real quick, my mom will die--

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

OFF TO THE SIDE

A MAN in an expensive suit drinks a BOTTLE OF WATER,
watches. This is FRANK GRUBMAN (60's).

(CONTINUED)

TIM (CONT'D)
 (picture accomplished)
 Awesome, I'll tweet this to you.

DANNY
 Awesome.

Tim, the cell-phone-photo-seeker, takes his leave. Frank shakes his head, walks over to Danny.

FRANK
 It was a good show, Kid.

DANNY
 Inspired.

Frank tilts his head, takes Danny in.

FRANK
 Hey, Sylvia Plath? You okay?

DANNY
 Yeah, I'm fine. Birthday blues or some shit I guess.

That's all Frank needs to hear. He stands.

FRANK
 Alright everyone, sorry but my guy needs a little rest.

No one really listens.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 LISTEN UP YOU LEECHES, IT'S TIME
 TO GET THE FUCK OUT OF HERE!

DANNY
 Frank, let 'em be--

FRANK
 No, Danny, I can name three people
 in this room and that's about
 three more than you can.

(to room)
 DID I STAMMER, I SAID GET THE FUCK
 OUT!

The mumbling crowd begins dispersing. Once they're gone, Danny and Frank sit in silence for a moment. Then:

FRANK (CONT'D)
 Birthday's not till tomorrow, Kid.
 Got a few hours till the state
 mandated depression has to set in.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

You see the Golden Girls sitting
in the front row? Eating
liquorice the entire time?

FRANK

Can't choose your fans, Danny.

DANNY

Three of them. Each of them older
than the next. Made one pack of
liquorice last the entire show.
Just sat there gumming it for two
hours.

This hangs there. Frank tries cheering him up.

FRANK

New billboard went up on Sunset
for the album. You should check
it out on the way home.

Danny nods, staring off into space. Frank STANDS.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Alright, enough of this crap.
It's your birthday tomorrow,
that's your big problem? Pregnant
women in Africa, feeding half
their village from their
titties... those ladies have
problems. Not you.

Danny smiles weakly.

DANNY

No, I know. You're right.

FRANK

'Course I'm right, I'm always
right. So go home to your
stunning half-your-age fiancé
who's throwing you the massive
surprise party tomorrow that I
didn't just tell you about. Then
come tell me and the sore tittied
African ladies about all your
problems.

DANNY

Okay.

He stands, goes to exit. Frank's voice stops him.

FRANK

It was a good show, Kid. Really.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: (4)

9

Danny turns, about to say something, then thinks better of it. He simply replies:

DANNY

Yeah.

CUE SONG: *Working Class Hero* (TBD) by John Lennon.

10 I/E. DANNY'S MERCEDES - LATER

10

It's a preposterous car for anyone... let alone a man in his sixties. Silver on the outside, leather everywhere on the inside, it's a spaceship on wheels.

Inside: Danny, exhausted, does everything he can to keep his eyes from closing as he navigates Los Angeles traffic.

11 INT. DANNY'S MERCEDES - LATER

11

Danny eases the car up to the GATE of a MANSION. He tries using his "clicker." It doesn't work. He SIGHS, TOOTS the horn.

In the booth of the guardhouse stands a DOORMAN, currently talking on a HOUSE PHONE. This is MARTY (40's). Marty holds up a finger ("Be with you in a second").

Danny parks, waits. After a beat, Marty hangs up and approaches. Danny SIGHS, lowers the window.

MARTY

We gotta get that fixed for you,
Mr. Collins. Good show tonight?

DANNY

It was, thanks.

MARTY

Calling it early? No after-party?

DANNY

Little tired. Just looking to hit
the sack so...

He motions at the gate. Marty doesn't take the hint.

MARTY

What'd you open with tonight?

DANNY

Same as always.
(then)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

DANNY (CONT'D)

I really gotta hit the sheets,
Kid.

Marty nods.

MARTY

Have a good night, Mr. Collins.

Marty walks toward the gate, hits a BUTTON. It opens, revealing SHANGRI-LA. Is this a home or a "Four Seasons"? Danny literally has to cross a "bridge" to get to his home.

12 INT. MANSION FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

12

Danny ENTERS the house.

DANNY

I'm home!

No response. Danny heads toward the tall staircase, looks at it, SIGHS - then turns around and gets in...

An ELEVATOR, which carries him upwards.

13 OMITTED

13

14 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

14

A bed fit for a king. Fireplace. Huge flat-screen.

DANNY

Babe!?

VOICE (O.S.)

I'm in the shower!

Danny walks into...

15 INT. MASTER BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

15

A female figure (masked by steam) showers. The shower is roughly the size of Rhode Island. Danny walks past the shower.

SHOWERING WOMAN

Hey! Sorry I missed the show.

DANNY

You've seen it before.

(CONTINUED)

Danny heads into his ADJACENT WALK-IN CLOSET (filled to the brim with high-end men's clothing in bold patterns) and begins hanging his jacket. He calls back.

DANNY (CONT'D)

What'd you do tonight?

SHOWERING WOMAN

Just busywork around here.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

Always doing busywork.

SHOWERING WOMAN

It's a big house. Running it
keeps a girl busy.

(then)

I'll be out in a minute. I'm just
finishing shaving.

DANNY

Okay.

(then, realizing)

Oh, Hon?

Danny turns back toward the shower. The door to the
shower opens, revealing:

SOPHIE (31). She's Danny's fiancé. She's very young,
very hot, and very naked.

And she's currently shaving her pubic hair with a
disposable pink razor (shaving cream covers the region).

DANNY (CONT'D)

Jesus, Sophie.

SOPHIE

What?

He shakes his head, thrown by the sight, and turns to go.
Then he stops, remembering:

DANNY

Oh, yeah: the kid out front, can
you do something about him? I
don't need a half hour of chitchat
every time I pull into my house.

SOPHIE

He's just trying to impress you.

DANNY

Yeah, well, he's failing.

(then)

Okay, I'm gonna go write.

SOPHIE

Okay, Baby.

(then, realizing)

Wait, write who?

DANNY

Just... Sophie, please watch what
you're doing, you're going to maim
yourself.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: (3)

15

DANNY (CONT'D)

(then)

Don't wait up, alright?

He EXITS the bathroom. She calls after him.

SOPHIE

Seriously, Baby! Who are you
writing?

No reply. Sophie SHRUGS, continues her grooming.

16 INT. DANNY'S HOME STUDIO - LATER

16

It's a great space. A PIANO sits dead center. It's obvious, however, that the room is not used often.

ON THE WALLS:

Covered in PLATINUM ALBUMS and framed copies of Danny's records. The cover art on the albums tells a story - from that first SIMPLE ALBUM to the "look" he's developed over the past decade or two (same typeface, posing, etc.).

Danny ENTERS the room, looks around, and spots what he's looking for: a BOX OF EMBOSSED STATIONARY PAPER. He carefully opens the box. Grabs a sheet. It's blank. They're all blank.

He looks until he finds... a fancy MONTBLANC-esque pen. He takes it out, looks at it, sits at the piano and takes his time perfectly setting the pen and paper into "writing position."

Danny begins playing a simple melody. A few chords. The beginning of something simple, melodic, and gentle.

He pauses, puts on his glasses. Thinks for a beat, then... smiles. He grabs his pen and, just then...

Catches sight of himself in the studio mirror:

ON HIS REFLECTION

An old man in a silly suit, wearing platform shoes and reading glasses, trying to write something original after what's clearly been a long hiatus from just that.

ON DANNY

Realizing. He stops, unwilling to go further. You can see it in his eyes. What's the point? He puts down the pen, leans back, and closes his eyes.

He falls asleep sitting up.

17 INT. DANNY'S MERCEDES (IN FRONT OF MANSION) - NEXT DAY 17

Danny pulls up to the house. Sophie holds leftovers in her lap; she's dressed in something super revealing. Danny wears something that makes him look like a mid-60's pimp.

You can imagine the looks they got at the restaurant.

SOPHIE
Good birthday brunch, Baby?

DANNY
(nodding)
Good birthday brunch.

She kisses his cheek. He smiles at her.

DANNY (CONT'D)
So how many people are inside?

SOPHIE
Dammit! Fucking Frank!

Danny SIGHS.

DANNY
Honey: you can't surprise a man my age. You want to give me a heart attack or something?

She motions at her ring finger.

SOPHIE
Not until it's legal.

DANNY
Funny.

SOPHIE
Uch, I'm so pissed at him!

Sophie reaches into her purse, pours a line of coke on the dash, bends forward and does some.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
You want?

Danny SIGHS.

DANNY
You are trying to kill me.

He accepts some, does it quickly, moves for the car door.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

DANNY (CONT'D)

Sweetheart?

SOPHIE

Yeah?

DANNY

Fix your dress.

Her right breast is hanging out of the low-cut dress.
 Danny EXITS the car.

FROM OUTSIDE THE CAR

Danny heads toward the house. We hold there a beat, then
 Sophie exits the car and scampers after him (attempting
 to fix her dress as she scampers).

18 INT. MANSION - MOMENTS LATER

18

They ENTER the house to a huge:

CROWD

Surprise!

The main living area is full of GUESTS. Danny feigns
 shock, looks to Frank, front and center. Frank motions
 to him: "act surprised."

DANNY

No way! Are you kidding me!?

(to Sophie)

You did this?

But Sophie's already hopped up, barely listening, rubbing
 her nose and sniffing. Danny covers her behavior by
 hugging her. The CROWD AWWWWES.

DANNY (CONT'D)

(putting on a show)

Don't you all know you don't
 surprise a man my age? You could
 have given me a heart attack!

Everyone LAUGHS. Someone CUES Danny's MOST FAMOUS SONG
 (the one we saw him open the concert with).

DANNY (CONT'D)

I think I know this one!

LAUGHTER. Danny couldn't be more miserable, but he's had
 decades of experience performing. And boy, can he
 perform. As WELL-WISHERS descend on Danny we launch:

19 INT. MANSION - LATER

19

A PARTY MONTAGE (**CUE SONG** TBD: John Lennon's "Whatever Gets You Through The Night").

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

As Danny goes through the motions in snapshots.

- He watches OLDER MEN ogle YOUNGER WOMEN frolicking in his pool.

- He and Frank watch as TWO YOUNG GUESTS ransack his wine cellar.

- He OPENS gifts, relishes in receiving a bottle of SCOTCH with a ribbon around it.

- He DOES COKE in the bathroom, alone.

- He watches two IDIOTS pour vodka/white wine in his Koi pond.

- At one point, he spots Sophie chatting with Marty outside (the doorman). He watches as she hands him some CASH.

- He receives the gift of a SCARF from a FAMOUS FRIEND. He places it in a pile of identical boxes (everyone has gotten him scarves).

- By the time evening descends on the party, we pull away from the festivities, ending on Danny's familiar shoes. But this time, the shoes are empty.

20 EXT. MANSION - NIGHT

20

The party has pretty much cleared out, day has turned into night. Danny (socks, no shoes) and Frank (his manager, we met him before) sit on Danny's luxurious roof deck. Danny holds his recently gifted bottle of scotch (still with ribbon, now half empty).

Opposite them, Sophie is passed out on a love seat. As usual, she's hanging out everywhere.

FRANK

She's like a young Jackie O.

Danny CHUCKLES, shakes his head.

DANNY

I look absurd with her.

FRANK

Yes, you do.

A beat. She begins to snore, drunkenly.

DANNY

We have to make her sign a prenup, don't we?

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

FRANK

Yes, we do.

Another beat.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

I'm way too old to be putting this much shit up my nose.

FRANK

Yes, you are.

DANNY

Jesus, don't give me all the good stuff at once, Frank. You're really earning that ten percent tonight, Pal.

FRANK

What do you want me to say? No, Danny, you look totally normal standing next to a coked up teenager who can't keep her nipples covered for more than five minutes. Prenup? Who needs a prenup? I mean sure, you've been through three wives already, but this one really seems like the real deal. Oh look, I can see her vagina again!

Danny smiles.

DANNY

Cute.

FRANK

Thank you, I try.

Frank STANDS.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Okay, so... I got you a birthday present and it cost me a fortune so do me a favor and upside down the frown for five minutes, huh?

Frank smiles, bends, and picks up a wrapped GIFT. Danny starts unwrapping. Frank explains, excitedly:

FRANK (CONT'D)

I know how fanatical you are about Lennon, so I started futzing around on the internet. Ebay, Lennon memorabilia, that kind of stuff.

Wrapping paper is off. Danny starts removing ribbons.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK (CONT'D)

I get in touch with this one guy,
a collector, say I'm looking to
get you something special.

Frank takes a deep breath.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Holy shit, I've been holding this
in for three months now!

(then)

Danny, wait, hold on.

Danny stops opening the gift.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You remember doing an interview,
when you were a kid? Something
called Chime Magazine? Fella
named DeLoach?

DANNY

(confused)

Yeah. Maybe.

FRANK

I don't know what you'd said to
the guy - you mentioned Lennon,
doesn't matter. Point is: Lennon
read it! And he wrote you a
letter!

Danny lowers the box, confused.

DANNY

What? Frank, what the hell are
you talking about?

FRANK

John Lennon wrote you a letter,
Pal! In 1971. He sent it to you
at the magazine, care of this
DeLoach guy. DeLoach smells money
- handwritten letter from John
Lennon and all - so he holds onto
it, never tells you. DeLoach
died, he's not the point. The
point is he sold the letter to a
collector. Can you believe this
shit?

DANNY

I'm not following this, Frank.

FRANK

Open the box, just open it.

(CONTINUED)

Danny does, slowly. Frank has had the letter framed and matted, beautifully.

ON THE LETTER

It's small, handwritten. Very personalized.

FRANK (CONT'D)

A handwritten letter to you from John Lennon, written in 1971. Can you fucking believe it? Read it!

Danny is still processing. He reads, out loud, slowly:

DANNY

Dear Danny Collins. Yoko and I read your interview. Being rich and famous doesn't change the way you think. It doesn't corrupt your art. Only you can do that. So what do you think about that, Danny Collins? Stay true to your music. Stay true to yourself. The rest will follow. My phone number is below. Call me, we can discuss this. We can help. Love, John.

FRANK

Crazy, right!? I've been sitting on this thing for months...

As Frank continues rambling excitedly, we PUSH in...

ON DANNY

He's just staring at the letter. Reading it, over and over. His world has clearly just rotated on its axis.

A letter from your hero, meant to be delivered to you when you were twenty-one. Warning you of all the things you wound up doing and now regret. Forty years too late.

Can you imagine?

CUE SONG: *Imagine* (TBD) written by John Lennon.

Everything SLOWS as Danny looks around the deck. The imagery conflicts with the beautiful song: his fiancé, belching and half-conscious. The hangers-on passed out everywhere. His preposterously lavish mansion.

Sad, horrific, irony.

The song carries into...

21 INT. DANNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 21

Danny lies there holding the letter, still staring at it. It's 5:45 AM and he hasn't slept. He's slowly unraveling. He gets up, whispers to Sophie:

DANNY
I'll be back late.

She waves a hung-over arm at him.

22 INT. DANNY'S MERCEDES - EARLY MORNING 22

Danny drives through Los Angeles. The Sunset Strip, home to the Roxy, the Whisky. Have you ever driven down Sunset when there's not a soul in sight? It's surreal.

The whole time the letter sits next to Danny, on the passenger seat. Haunting him.

Danny pulls the car over. EXITS.

23 EXT. SUNSET STRIP - CONTINUOUS 23

Danny walks to the curb. Looks up. Just stares. We cut WIDE, revealing what he's staring at:

HIS GIANT BILLBOARD. Danny stands in front of it, miniscule in comparison, taking in the ridiculous picture of himself winking at/pointing at camera - the oversized portrait a symbol of every bad decision he's ever made. And that does it...

Slowly... ever so slowly: a smile creeps over his face. He cracks his neck, coming to terms with a decision, and:

He gets back in the car and races off. Full speed now.

24 EXT. MANSION GATE - MOMENTS LATER 24

The Mercedes turns toward the gate. But then... the car keeps going.

A25 EXT. MANSION - MOMENTS LATER A25

Danny pops out from behind the "bridge." He's entered his own property, unseen. He scampers across the bridge.

25 INT. MANSION FOYER - CONTINUOUS 25

Danny strides into the house.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

DANNY

I'm home!

We hear frantic FOOTSTEPS in the distance. Danny smiles, marches toward the bedroom.

26 INT. DANNY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

26

Sophie lies in bed, confused and a little frazzled. Danny strides past her.

SOPHIE

I thought you were coming home late.

DANNY

Change of plans.

Danny heads through the bathroom into the walk-in closet. He takes out a SUITCASE, begins packing. Sophie ENTERS.

SOPHIE

What are you doing?

DANNY

Packing.

SOPHIE

Where are we going?

DANNY

Oh, I'm going away.

(then)

Where is he?

SOPHIE

Who?

DANNY

Whoever you were just in bed with, where is he hiding?

(then)

You know what, I'll just ship everything.

He grabs A SMALL BAG, exits the closet. Begins looking around the bathroom, grabbing toiletries.

SOPHIE

Danny--

DANNY

Honey, I didn't pull in, so the guy outside couldn't call you and stall me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DANNY (CONT'D)

I'm not mad, I promise, I just don't want to open a closet and have a strange man jump out and scare the shit out of me. He's not in the closet, is he?

SOPHIE

(relenting)

No.

DANNY

Good.

Danny RE-ENTERS the BEDROOM, calls out:

DANNY (CONT'D)

You can come out! I promise I'm not mad!

SOPHIE

Jesus.

(loudly)

Just come out. It's okay.

A YOUNG HANDSOME MAN in TIGHTY-WHITIES comes out from under the bed. Danny smiles, continues throwing crap in his small bag.

DANNY

(to the guy)

You must be busywork.

YOUNG MAN

Judd.

DANNY

I'll call you busywork. She's always doing busywork. Now I understand.

SOPHIE

(apologetic)

Danny.

DANNY

Sweetie, I could not be less mad. I had fun, did you have fun?

SOPHIE

Yeah.

DANNY

Good. I'm glad. You stay. Keep the house for a while. You and Busywork here.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED: (2)

26

DANNY (CONT'D)

Be young, have fun, I need my
address book, there's an address I
need in my address book. Ah, here
it is.

Danny leans in toward Sophie, kisses her cheek.

DANNY (CONT'D)

I would have made you sign a
prenup anyway. You're not missing
out on any big money if that makes
you feel better.

SOPHIE

I guess it does a little.

DANNY

I'm glad.

Danny holds his hand out toward Judd. They shake.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Busywork, take care of her.

JUDD

My parents had their first dance
to one of your songs, Sir.

DANNY

Well that's fucked up in all kinds
of ways now, isn't it?

(then)

Okay, adios Kids.

He grabs his BAG and EXITS.

27 EXT. MANSION - MINUTES LATER

27

Danny EXITS the house, a skip in his step. He heads
across his bridge as he talks on his CELL PHONE.

DANNY

(into phone)

Hey, have the plane ready. To New
Jersey.

(then)

Yes, New Jersey.

(then)

Car, too. You know what I like.
But how 'bout a red one?

(then)

Yes, red. I'm changing shit up.

Danny gets in his car and takes off. We can hear his
LAUGHTER all the way down the street.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

CUE SONG: *Hold On* (TBD) written by John Lennon.

28 EXT. NJ PRIVATE AIRPORT (I.E., TETERBORO) - LATER

28

Danny steps off the PRIVATE JET and heads down a set of stairs as a...

RED MERCEDES (identical car, different color) pulls up next to the bottom of the stairs.

29 EXT. WOODCLIFF LAKE HILTON - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

29

The Mercedes pulls up in front of this ordinary Hilton. The rest of the lot is littered with Toyotas and Fords.

ON A VALET KID (22)

Standing there, bored. He sees the Mercedes approach.

VALET KID

(re: car)

Holy shit.

The car pulls to a stop. Danny steps out of the car.

VALET KID (CONT'D)

(re: Danny Collins)

Holy shit!

The kid runs forward.

VALET KID (CONT'D)

Welcome to the Hilton, Danny Collins... Mr. Collins...

(trying again)

Welcome to the Hilton, Sir.

DANNY

It's good to be at the Hilton, young man. And call me Danny. What should I call you?

VALET KID

Nicky Ernst.

DANNY

Nicky Ernst, it's an absolute pleasure. You have a wonderful face. Here, have a hundred dollars.

He hands Nicky a HUNDRED. Nicky masks his excitement.

(CONTINUED)

NICKY

So. Mr... Danny... will you be staying with us, or just joining us for lunch today?

DANNY

Nicky: I'm going to be staying with you, I'm going to be joining you for lunch, I'm going to be taking advantage of all the amenities the Woodcliff Lake Hilton has to offer... Nicky, I can't help but notice that you're drooling on my car.

NICKY

Sorry. It's just so... awesome.

DANNY

You're welcome to use it whenever you want, take your girl out for a spin. You have a girl?

NICKY

No.

DANNY

You will if you take her out for a spin in this car.

NICKY

Wait, seriously?

Danny is already walking away.

DANNY

(calling back)

Bag goes to my room, Nicky. Car goes in a garage.

30 INT. WOODCLIFF LAKE HILTON - CONTINUOUS

30

Danny walks in. It could be any hotel, in any city. A LOBBY. A lobby RESTAURANT. A lobby BAR. That's it.

A SIGN reads: "WELCOME GREATER NJ DENTAL ASSOCIATION." There's a DISPLAY front and center, full of "dental" swag.

Danny walks to the front desk. A PRETTY YOUNG GIRL (23) works on the computer.

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG GIRL
(not looking, bored)
Welcome to the Hilton, do you have
a reservation?

DANNY

I do not have a reservation, but I'm hoping that won't be a deal-breaker because I am rapidly falling in love with this Hilton.

She SIGHS, looks up.

YOUNG GIRL

Holy shit!

DANNY

I get that a lot. What is your name?

YOUNG GIRL

Jamie.

DANNY

Jamie, I'm Danny.

JAMIE

I know who you are.

DANNY

What about Nicky out front? Do you know who he is?

JAMIE

The valet guy?

DANNY

Nicky Ernst. Ask him to take you for a ride in my car, you'll fall in love.

(then)

Look at you! Another fantastic young face. What an amazing place this Woodcliff Lake Hilton is. Why are your faces so fantastic and young?

JAMIE

We're all college kids I guess, off for summer or just graduated.

DANNY

Ah. That must be it.

JAMIE

How long will you be staying with us, Mr. Collins?

Danny pulls out his ADDRESS BOOK from his suit pocket.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

Jamie, my GPS tells me that we're not far from a Hillsdale, New Jersey. Now tell me: is my GPS lying to me or giving me the straight shit?

JAMIE

(smiling)
Straight shit. You're five minutes away.

DANNY

Well, then I will be staying indefinitely.

Jamie smiles, a little confused.

JAMIE

Okay. I'll give you the Honeymoon Suite, it's our nicest room... only I don't know how to do an indefinite reservation.

DANNY

Don't need a honeymoon suite. Just a regular, everyday room.

Jamie turns toward the back, yells out.

JAMIE

(calling out)
Mary?

DANNY

If someone else with a wonderful face comes out, I don't know if I'll be able to handle it.

MARY SINCLAIR emerges from the BACK OFFICE. She's amazing looking, great smile... classically beautiful without trying.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Okay, I officially can't handle it.

Jamie darts over towards Mary, WHISPERS loudly.

JAMIE

Look who it is!

MARY

(calmly)
I see.

(CONTINUED)

JAMIE

(rapid-fire whisper)
He wants to stay indefinitely. I
was going to give him the
Honeymoon Suite but--

DANNY

(loudly)
He didn't want the Honeymoon
Suite.

Mary and Jamie turn toward him, synchronized.

DANNY (CONT'D)

It's not my honeymoon and I'm not
very sweet. Regular room will do
just fine.

Mary approaches.

DANNY (CONT'D)

And what college do you go to
young lady?

MARY

Ha.

DANNY

Ha.

A beat.

MARY

You're staying indefinitely?
Here?

DANNY

Huge fan of this Hilton.
(then)
Are you married, Mary?

MARY

I'm sorry?

DANNY

Are you currently betrothed?

MARY

No.

DANNY

Good. Dinner?

MARY

You're asking me to dinner?

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

I think so. Jamie, I asked her to dinner, didn't I?

JAMIE

(excited)
You did.

MARY

I'm sorry, are you on drugs?

DANNY

Currently or in general?

MARY

Currently.

DANNY

No.
(then)
Dinner?

MARY

I'm sorry, I'm going to have to decline.

DANNY

Not a fan of mine?

MARY

Currently or in general?

DANNY

In general.

MARY

No.

DANNY

God, we have a great patter, don't we!? Jamie, can you follow any of this?

JAMIE

(giggling, excited)
No!

Mary smiles, shakes her head.

MARY

I'll check you in.

DANNY

While you check me in, I'll check you out.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED: (6)

30

MARY

Oh my God.

Mary goes back to the computer. Despite herself: she can't help but smile, just a little.

31 INT. DANNY'S HOTEL ROOM - LATER

31

It could be any hotel room in the world. A bed, a small desk, a love seat. That's it. Danny takes it in, thinks.

32 INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - LATER

32

Danny oversees as FOUR LARGE MEN try to figure out how to move a BABY GRAND PIANO through the door to his room.

33 INT. DANNY'S HOTEL ROOM - LATER

33

Everything has been moved to make room for the massive piano, which dwarfs everything else.

ON DANNY

Taking it in. He may as well be taking in the Sistine Chapel. He digs into his bag, and pulls out the framed LENNON LETTER. Sets it up on his nightstand.

He takes in his strange new home and smiles:

DANNY

Perfect.

34 INT. HOTEL BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

34

PATRONS talk, whisper, point at...

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM

Where Danny sits at the bar. He's wearing a customary over-the-top suit and is drinking scotch. He's writing furiously. It's important to note that he's finally able to write using hotel stationary and an ordinary hotel pen, as opposed to his Montblanc and embossed stationary.

ON THE PAD: the beginnings of a lyric. Stuff about the seasons - "spring" and "fall." Just a start.

FRANK (O.S.)

Danny?

Danny turns. Frank stands there.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

Frank!

Danny stands, envelopes Frank in a surprising BEAR HUG.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Sit, sit. Thanks for coming.

FRANK

Got on the first flight out.

DANNY

Thanks. Have you been here before?

FRANK

The bar at the Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey Hilton?

(then, obviously)

No.

Frank sits. He's obviously concerned.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I spoke to Sophie. She said you--

DANNY

I did.

(then, calling out)

Barkeep? An ice water for this handsome young man, por favor?

Danny turns toward Frank, serious.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Frank, I've decided to make some big changes in my life. Some of them may come as a bit of a shock, some of them may even affect you financially.

Frank puts his hand on Danny's knee.

FRANK

I'm here as your friend, Danny. Not as your manager.

DANNY

Actually, I need you to be here as my manager for a moment.

(then)

I want you to cancel the rest of my tour.

FRANK

I'm sorry?

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

Don't be sorry, I'm not sorry.
I'm done, Frank.

(then)

Oh, I'll also need you to call
Bill, tell him to sell all my
stock, all the houses. I want no
debt, no risk. So help me God I
will never be forced to sing those
songs again. Oh, wait, tell Bill
not to sell the LA house yet. I'm
going to let Sophie and the kid
she was cheating on me with stay
there--

FRANK

Danny, stop! You're spiraling.
Are you on something? What did
you take?

DANNY

Nothing, I promise. Actually, I'm
done with that shit too. No more
drinking, no more drugs--

FRANK

You're drinking right now, Danny.

DANNY

True. Okay, forget what I said
about the drinking. I'm not
running for Pope, right?

FRANK

This is because of Sophie?

DANNY

Sophie? No! Jesus, Frank, give
me a little credit.

Danny puts down his drink. Changes tone.

DANNY (CONT'D)

What if I had gotten the letter
when I was supposed to, Frank? He
was my hero. I would have called
him.

(then)

Maybe my life would have turned
out different.

FRANK

You're too hard on yourself, Kid.
Always have been.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

I haven't written a song in thirty years, Frank. I'm a fucking joke. I'm a court jester with a microphone.

(then)

I was the real thing once, Frank. One album. My songs didn't sell so they handed me theirs and I sang them. I gave up, Frank.

Frank leans forward, concerned. Gently:

FRANK

You're having a breakdown, Danny.

DANNY

Hate to tell you, Buddy, but I've been breaking down for forty years. I'm broken. Ain't nothing left to break.

(beat, then)

I'm sixty-four, Frank. I've been abusing my body for the better parts of four decades. If I'm gonna find any kind of redemption, I can't waste anymore time.

A beat, then:

FRANK

Why New Jersey?

DANNY

One shock at a time, Frank.

Frank nods, sips his water.

FRANK

A sixty-something man starts canceling tours, people start wondering. I'm talking to you as your manager, Danny.

DANNY

Actually, I need you to be my friend again now.

Frank nods, sits there for a beat, then:

FRANK

I'll cancel the tour.

Danny nods back, clinks his scotch against Frank's water. They turn back toward the bar in unison.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: (4)

34

After a beat, from behind, Frank puts his hand on Danny's shoulder. There's nothing left to say.

35 INT. WOODCLIFF LAKE HILTON LOBBY - NEXT MORNING

35

Danny walks through the lobby, a spring in his step. His outfit/suit is typically bold.

He stops at the front desk. Jamie and Mary are there.

DANNY

Jamie, have you talked to Nicky Ernst about taking that ride yet?

JAMIE

Not yet, Mr. Collins.

He turns to Mary.

DANNY

Dinner at seven? I'll meet you...

He points five feet away.

DANNY (CONT'D)

There?

MARY

Still gonna have to pass.

DANNY

Mary, you keep passing, I'll keep making passes, we'll see who gives up first, sound good?

MARY

Have a nice day, Mr. Collins.

DANNY

Big day for me. Meeting someone for the first time. How do I look?

MARY

Honestly?

DANNY

If this relationship is going to go the distance, Mary, I think we should always be honest with one another.

MARY

You look ridiculous.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

35

DANNY

Nah, I look sharp. See you at seven.

MARY

No you won't.

DANNY

And round and round we go.

(turning)

Jamie, don't forget about Nicky Ernst. Wonderful young man.

36 EXT. WOODCLIFF LAKE HILTON - CONTINUOUS

36

Danny steps outside, Nicky waits with his car.

DANNY

Nicky my boy!

NICKY

She's ready for you, Sir.

DANNY

The girl at the front desk, she won't stop talking about you, Nicky. You should ask her out.

NICKY

(stunned)

Jamie?

DANNY

That's the one. Don't go after Mary, Mary's mine.

Danny gets in the car, rips out of the parking lot.

37 EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE (HILLSDALE, NJ) - TEN MINUTES LATER

37

A very modest HOUSE, in a very modest NEIGHBORHOOD. This is "real world" central. TOYS are scattered around the lawn. It could not be more ordinary.

And up to this house pulls a gleaming, red Mercedes. Driven by Danny Collins. National superstar. Wearing, what can best be described, as a zoot suit.

As he strides across the lawn, stepping over a tricycle, a SUBURBAN DAD raking leaves does a double take.

38 EXT. FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

38

Danny RINGS the bell. No sound. He rings again.
Nothing. He RAPS on it. He holds a BROWN BAG.
Footsteps from inside. Danny braces himself. The door
OPENS, revealing:

(CONTINUED)

Nobody.

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)

Hello.

Danny looks downward at: A LITTLE GIRL (7). This is HOPE, Danny's granddaughter. Needless to say, Hope is pretty fucking cute.

DANNY

Hello.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Hope, you are not to open that door for strangers!

HOPE

He's not a stranger. We saw him on TV. Mom, come here, it's the guy we saw on TV. Mom, Mom--

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

What?

Hope's mother arrives. This is SAMANTHA (30's). Samantha is pretty and pregnant. She's a study in contrasts: tough but emotional, sexy but a little tomboyish, and - at the moment - calm but completely thrown by the sight of Danny Collins on her front doorstep.

SAMANTHA

Whoa.

HOPE

Told you. I told you. You didn't listen but I tried to tell you.

DANNY

Hi, I'm Danny.

SAMANTHA

We know who you are.

HOPE

(imitating)
Yeah! We know who you are!

SAMANTHA

(to Hope)
Settle, Baby. Inside voices, okay?

Samantha and Hope look back up at Danny.

HOPE

I don't really know who you are.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: (2)

38

Danny bends down, takes in Hope for the first time. He touches her face, gentle.

Up above them, Samantha doesn't move, unsure what to do.

Danny stands back up, offers forth his BROWN BAG.

DANNY

I was unsure of what was appropriate to bring...

SAMANTHA

He's at work.

DANNY

So I brought bagels.

SAMANTHA

Wow. Okay. This is weird. I guess... come in?

Danny follows them into the house.

39 INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

39

We see FAMILY PICTURES on the fridge. Child drawings. A dirty pan in the sink. There are no granite tops here. It's warm, but tight.

Danny, Sam, and Hope sit in the small kitchen.

SAMANTHA

How did you--

DANNY

I hired someone to track him down years ago. Never got up the nerve until now.

Danny puts the bagels on the table.

HOPE

I want a bagel, can I have a bagel Mommy!?

As Samantha starts cream-cheesing a bagel for Hope, she looks at Danny.

SAMANTHA

Wow. I mean... wow on so many levels.

HOPE

Too much cream cheese Mommy--

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

Samantha realizes what she's doing.

SAMANTHA

Sorry, Baby.

DANNY

How far along are you?

SAMANTHA

Six months.

DANNY

Boy or girl, do you know?

SAMANTHA

Boy.

DANNY

A boy. Wow.

SAMANTHA

On so many levels.

(beat, then)

I have to call him.

DANNY

Of course.

She walks over to the counter, keeping an eye on Danny.

DANNY (CONT'D)

So... Hope, what grade are you in?

HOPE

I just finished the first grade.
My teacher is named Mrs. Williams.
Her aunt died last week so we had
a substitute. He had a mustache.
Why are you on TV?

DANNY

Because I'm a singer.

HOPE

Are you a good singer?

DANNY

No, not really.

HOPE

I didn't think so.

SAMANTHA

Hope!

DANNY

(smiling)

Why didn't you think so?

(CONTINUED)

HOPE

Because when you were on the TV,
Daddy said "Shut it off,
Samantha," and Mommy turned it off
really fast, and then Mommy said,
"Tom?" and Daddy said, "No" and
that was that.

Samantha starts to say something, but then starts talking
into the phone (he's gotten on the line). As she talks,
she steps out of the room.

SAMANTHA

Hey, so... your fa... Danny
Collins just showed up at the
house.

(long beat)

Uh-huh. I know. Having bagels in
the kitchen with Hope.

(beat)

What was I supposed...

(beat)

Yes. Okay.

She hangs up, returns into the kitchen, puts on a big
fake smile, and announces:

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

He's coming home.

HOPE

Yay!

Danny looks at Samantha. She SHRUGS.

Hope is watching television, completely absorbed.

Danny and Samantha sit awkwardly on the couch behind her,
watching her watch the television.

SAMANTHA

I have so many questions.

DANNY

Ask away.

SAMANTHA

I can't think of any of them now.

Hope SCREAMS at the TV.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Hope? Calm, okay?

(CONTINUED)

Danny looks at Hope... currently running around in small circles, dancing. It's partially adorable, partially manic.

DANNY

She seems... energetic.

SAMANTHA

Severely hyperactive. Learning issues, behavioral stuff, we do the best we can but it's a battle-- why are you here?

The question's delivery catches Danny by surprise.

DANNY

I'm making some changes.

SAMANTHA

It's a little late for that, isn't it?

DANNY

Maybe. I hope not.

Samantha leans back, thinks for a moment. Then:

SAMANTHA

My husband is the best man I've ever met. Solid. Kind. Funny. We've had one fight. Twelve years, one serious fight. Two years ago, I got backstage passes to one of your shows, thought it was time he should... at least meet you.

(then)

He disagreed. He disagreed strongly.

DANNY

So this isn't going to be pretty?

SAMANTHA

No. I wouldn't imagine it will be.

DANNY

Well, if you could help grease the wheels at all--

SAMANTHA

Mr. Collins, my parents are dead. His mom is too. I'd like my daughter to know her one remaining grandparent, I would.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

I'd like my husband to know his father. And I'll admit to being a little star-struck by you. But in a minute, my husband is going to walk through that door. And when he does, I'm confident that this will be the last time I ever see you. And despite your celebrity, and despite what I want for my family, I will not try and stop that. You did this to yourself. Shame on you.

Danny NODS, understanding.

DANNY

That was good.

SAMANTHA

(emotional)

I've been practicing it in my head since you gave me the bagels.

Danny smiles.

DANNY

He married well.

SAMANTHA

Yeah, I'm pretty great. You see? You really missed out.

And just then: the FRONT DOOR opens. There stands TOM (40). Handsome. He wears boots, work clothes, clearly fresh off a construction job. He could not be dressed less like the man currently sitting on his couch.

HOPE

Daddy! Daddy!

Tom's eyes remain fixed on Danny as he hugs Hope (who is becoming overwhelmed by all the excitement).

HOPE (CONT'D)

(hyper)

Look who it is! It's the man from TV! It's the man from the TV that we saw singing, and Mommy said "whoa" and he brought bagels--

TOM

Hope, easy.

HOPE

He brought bagels and Mommy called you and now you're home early and--

(CONTINUED)

TOM
 (calmly)
 Hope?

She looks up at him. Tom begins an adorable father-daughter calming ritual; the whole time never breaking his "if looks could kill" stare at Danny.

TOM (CONT'D)
 Your favorite flower is a--

HOPE
 Rose!

TOM
 To smell it you breathe through
 your...

She takes a deep breath through her nose. It's all a bit surreal: watching a man settle his daughter with a nursery rhyme while staring daggers at his long-lost father.

TOM (CONT'D)
 (rhyming/glaring)
 Keep it in, long as you can go,
 then let it out, in one... big...
 blow.

Hope lets out her breath, a bit settled.

TOM (CONT'D)
 (to Samantha)
 Hi Honey.

SAMANTHA
 Hi Baby.

TOM
 (to Danny)
 Could I speak to you outside for a
 second?

DANNY
 Of course.

Danny stands, offers his hand to Samantha.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 If I have, then I am truly very
 sorry to have missed out on you.

SAMANTHA
 (formal)
 Thank you for the bagels.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED: (4)

40

DANNY
 (smiling)
 Okay.

Tom guides his daughter towards Danny.

TOM
 Hope, say goodbye to Mr. Collins.

HOPE
 Goodbye to Mr. Collins.

TOM
 Mr. Collins, say goodbye to Hope.

Danny kneels down, takes a knowing last look at his granddaughter.

DANNY
 (sad smile)
 Goodbye to Hope.

He stands, follows Tom out the door.

41 EXT. TOM AND SAMANTHA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

41

Tom closes the door behind them. They stare at each other for a long beat. A really long beat. Finally:

DANNY
 You're so tall.

TOM
 (calmly)
 I'm sorry. What exactly do you want?

DANNY
 I just--

TOM
 Are you sick? Is that why you're here? Are you dying?

DANNY
 No. I'm not sick.

Danny takes a deep breath, contemplating. Then:

DANNY (CONT'D)
 You have every right to be angry--

(CONTINUED)

TOM

I'm not angry, I'm really not.
I'm a little confused, and
strangely not interested. So if
you have anything to ask me, go
ahead, because this will be the
last time we see each other.

Danny NODS.

DANNY

What do you do for a liv--

TOM

I work construction. Local
residential. Not my dream job but
it's steady and Princeton wasn't
exactly in the cards. What else?

DANNY

Your mom--

TOM

Died of cancer ten years ago.
Never married, never spoke about
you except to say it was a wild
thing she did when she was twenty-
three and got drunk backstage
after a concert. I use her last
name. Anything else?

DANNY

You're clearly very angry.

TOM

I'm not angry, I don't care enough
to be angry. I'm thinking about
what I'm going to tell my daughter
about you, and I'm thinking that I
have to be back at work in twenty
minutes. Are we done?

DANNY

I've sent you checks.

TOM

Ripped them up. Okay? Nice to
meet you, have a good life.

Tom heads back inside. One last question stops him.

DANNY

Are you happy?

TOM

Am I happy?

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: (2)

41

DANNY

Do you have a happy life?

Tom turns around. He finally slows down a little.

TOM

I hate my boss. Mets break my heart every year. But I have the best wife in the history of wives. An amazing little girl. I wish I could do more for her. I'd do anything for that. But yes. If it makes you sleep better, I'm happy. Oh, and fuck you, you selfish prick. I am angry.

Tom ENTERS the house, slams the door behind him. Danny stands there for a moment, then trudges back to his car.

CUE SONG: *Beautiful Boy* (TBD) written by John Lennon.

42 EXT. WOODCLIFF LAKE HILTON - LATER

42

Danny drives the car up toward the valet. Nicky waits:

NICKY

You were right! Jamie talked to me today. She's never talked to me before!

DANNY

That's good, Kid. That's real good.

He trudges away, inside the hotel.

43 INT. WOODCLIFF LAKE HILTON LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

43

Danny walks in, passing Jamie at the counter.

JAMIE

Hey, Mr. Collins!

DANNY

Jamie, how ya doing?

Jamie is about to respond, but Danny doesn't wait for a reply. Jamie watches him go, surprised.

44 INT. HOTEL BAR - LATER

44

Danny rests his head on the hotel bar, cheek to bar. He's been here a while. His eyes are closed.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

44

Mary steps into frame.

MARY

Mr. Collins, how we doing tonight?

Danny doesn't move, doesn't open his eyes.

DANNY

Peachy, thanks for asking.

MARY

That's good. Real glad to hear that.

Neither of them moves. Danny just lies there. Mary just stands there. After a beat:

MARY (CONT'D)

Mr. Collins?

DANNY

(head still down)

Yes?

MARY

Wonder if you could help me with something? When a famous musician starts getting fall-down drunk at a hotel bar, and you're the manager of that hotel, is there a protocol on how to handle the situation? We've had a shortage of famous fall-down drunk musicians here lately and I'm a bit out of my depth.

Danny finally opens his eyes, looks up.

DANNY

I had a bad day.

MARY

Okay.

He points at his glass.

DANNY

That's just water.

MARY

Yes, but that's because the ice melted.

Danny nods. He suddenly looks very vulnerable.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

Please don't be mean to me. I really did have a bad day.

She nods, SIGHS.

MARY

Yeah, well, I had a bad day, too.

She sits down next to Danny, three seats away. Danny looks over at her. She's staring into space.

DANNY

Can I buy you a drink?

Mary looks at Danny, blankly. Danny presses on.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Wine spritzer? Bay Breeze?
Something froz--

Mary WHISTLES.

MARY

Josh? Tequila, rocks, something añejo. Splash of soda.

BARTENDER

Right away, Boss.

Danny looks at Mary, surprised.

MARY

You're not the only rock star in this hotel.

DANNY

Apparently not.

Danny takes in Mary. She's back looking off into space. These are two very lost souls.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Why'd you have a bad day?

MARY

Oh, because I work with a bunch of well-meaning but remarkably dim twenty-somethings who are just passing time until they go back to school. And one of them screwed up the computer system and it took me half the day to reprogram every reservation manually.

Her drink is delivered, she takes a sip.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED: (3)

44

MARY (CONT'D)

You?

Danny takes a sip, bracing himself. Then:

DANNY

I tracked down my grown son who I'd never met before. Met him, his wife, my granddaughter. Then he told me, quite emphatically, to fuck off and die.

She processes this, then:

MARY

EVERY reservation, each one had to be reprogrammed manually. I hope I made that clear.

Danny LAUGHS. Mary leans forward, serious.

MARY (CONT'D)

Can I ask you a question?

DANNY

Not if it's about why I've never met my son until today.

MARY

Shit. That was my question.

They sit there for a long beat, then, turn back to the bar, and sip their drinks in silence.

45 INT. HOTEL BAR - LATER

45

They're still just sitting there, sipping. Finally:

DANNY

We've lost our patter.

Mary NODS, sips. After a long beat...

MARY

I saw you in concert once. About five years ago.

DANNY

Yeah?

MARY

My husb--
(correcting)
My ex was a fan. He loved it.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

And you?

MARY

I appreciated your... zeal.

DANNY

("ouch")
Shit.

MARY

"Zeal's" not awful.

DANNY

"Zeal's" not great.

A beat. Then Danny LAUGHS.

DANNY (CONT'D)

"Zeal's not awful, zeal's not great." I'm telling you, Mary, this is some kind of patter we have! We should take this on the road, we could be the new Nichols and May.

She shrugs, takes a sip. A long beat of silence, then:

MARY

May and Nichols.

Danny looks up.

MARY (CONT'D)

I'd want top billing.

Danny smiles.

CUT TO:

We pick them up, many minutes (and many drinks) later. Danny now stands near Mary, who sits facing him (back to bar).

DANNY

... and then he writes, "What do you think about that, Danny Collins?"

MARY

(repeating, laughing)
John Lennon writes, "What do you think about that, Danny Collins!?"

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

46

DANNY

Yes.

(as if answering)

I don't know, John. I think you should have sent the letter to my house so I could have avoided living a bullshit life for the past forty years, that's what I think.

Mary explodes in laughter.

DISSOLVE TO:

47 LATER THAT NIGHT

47

As Mary reveals herself a little in front of a fireplace inside the bar:

MARY

She's eighteen now. Rick and I split last year. Yeah, most parents try and wait till the kids leave for college but we tried to do it at the time when it would screw her up most.

DANNY

Did it work?

MARY

Oh, yeah. She's a complete mess. Hates both of us. But guess what?

DANNY

What?

Mary leans in, whispers conspiratorially:

MARY

She hates him more.

DANNY

Perfect!

Mary suddenly becomes emotional and vulnerable:

MARY

Okay I don't like joking about this anymore. I'm a good mother, I swear.

DANNY

(whoa)
No, I know.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

47

MARY

I was just trying to be funny.

DANNY

I know!

MARY

(completely gone)

We did split up at the worst time possible but I don't think she hates me. Oh, maybe she does. I don't want any more tequila!

She's crying now, but also laughing. It's incredibly appealing.

48 LATER THAT NIGHT

48

A quieter moment:

MARY

I went on Match.com last week.

DANNY

How was that?

MARY

I started filling out a profile. Divorced. Grown daughter. Hotel manager. I started crying. I started crying from my own profile.

(then)

Rick will find some fun young thing. My daughter will go off to college next year.

(then)

I'm going to be alone for the rest of my life.

DANNY

Not if you marry me.

MARY

Yes, well, I'll keep that in my hip pocket, thank you.

DANNY

Hey, I'm great at being married. Done it three times.

(then)

My second wife was actually one of the stars of *Gilligan's Island*.

Mary looks up.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

48

MARY

Ginger?

He shakes his head "no." Suddenly, Mary gets it.
SCREAMS!

MARY (CONT'D)

Mary Ann!

He smiles.

MARY (CONT'D)

Holy shit! You were married to
Mary Ann!? That's insane!

49 INT. DANNY'S HOTEL ROOM - LATER

49

Danny sits at the piano, looks at his hotel stationary
pad. Mary, meanwhile, is looking at the LETTER FROM
LENNON.

MARY

You better have something to play
me. Because if this was just a
lame attempt to get me to your
room--

DANNY

I have something to play you.

MARY

(re: letter)
This is truly unreal.

She shakes her head, puts the letter down. Danny
settles. He's nervous.

DANNY

Okay, so, I haven't written
anything in a long time and--

MARY

Why?

DANNY

Nothing to write about, I guess.
And I wasn't a great pianist to
begin with so--

MARY

Enough stalling, Collins. Play
it.

Danny cracks his neck, then:

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

49

He starts playing. He's playing the same MELODY he started back in the fancy studio of his mansion, before he'd received Lennon's letter.

But now it has words.

(CONTINUED)

Danny starts to sing... the music is simple, the melody and lyrics wrenching.

DANNY

It's spring in my mind/But the
autumn leaves they fall/As I'm
walking by/I collect them all...

Danny stops, looks up.

MARY

Keep going, keep going!

DANNY

That's as far as I got.

Mary looks confused.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Honestly, this kind of *was* just a
lame attempt to get you to my
room.

MARY

Jesus Christ.

Mary shakes her head, stands.

DANNY

Come on! Stay! I'm an old man
with ten scotches in him. The
odds of anything risqué happening
here are very, very slim.

MARY

(with a smile)
Goodnight, Danny.

DANNY

(giving up)
Goodnight, Mary.

She stops at the door.

MARY

The song's beautiful, Danny. A
little short, but it's going to be
beautiful.

DANNY

Thank you.

She EXITS the room, stops in the HALLWAY.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

And hey, about what we talked
about? You shouldn't give up.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED: (4)

49

DANNY

I agree.

(then, immediately)

Mary, will you have dinner with me
tomorrow?

MARY

Not that. Your son.

Danny smiles.

DANNY

I know.

MARY

Okay.

(then)

But don't give up on dinner
either.

DANNY

(immediately)

Mary, will you have dinner with--

But the door closes before he can finish.

ON DANNY

Completely smitten... and maybe even a little inspired.

CUT TO:

50 INT. WOODCLIFF LAKE HILTON - NEXT MORNING

50

HOTEL GUESTS (and a lot of DENTISTS) are crammed around
the GLASS DOOR, looking inside...

51 INT. WOODCLIFF LAKE HILTON BUSINESS CENTER - CONTINUOUS

51

Where national icon Danny Collins sits at a COMPUTER
wearing only a HOTEL ROBE and SLIPPERS. He has PAPERS
scattered around him, everywhere.

- He takes notes.

- He sends faxes.

- He makes calls.

- In between he behaves as if he's Eloise at the Plaza: A
LINE COOK brings in a plate from the BREAKFAST BUFFET. A
NEWSPAPER is delivered. COFFEE refills are served. A
TAILOR measures him for a new suit jacket.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED:

51

- We hear and see bits and pieces of everything: Danny explaining who he is over the phone. Danny giving a credit card number. Danny asking how quickly whatever he's planning can happen.

OUTSIDE THE BUSINESS CENTER

Spectators watch. Jamie approaches Nicky from behind (he doesn't see her).

JAMIE

What's he doing?

NICKY

He's bitch slappin' the business center is what he's--

(then, seeing her)

Oh, hey.

Mary pushes through the spectators to see what's going on. She sees Danny pacing around inside, a man possessed.

She smiles, doesn't interrupt.

52 EXT. TOM AND SAMANTHA'S HOUSE - NEXT DAY

52

A quiet morning in the neighborhood.

THE SAME SUBURBAN DAD now waters his lawn next door.

DANNY'S GIANT TOUR BUS pulls up to the curb, catching the dad's attention. It dwarfs the entire street, takes out branches as it comes to a stop. And out steps Danny Collins, wearing one of his finest get-ups.

Danny walks towards his son's front door. As he passes, he NODS to the neighbor.

DANNY

Mornin'.

SUBURBAN DAD

(stunned)

Hi.

Danny RINGS the bell (he forgot it doesn't work), then knocks per usual. The door opens. It's Samantha:

SAMANTHA

(re: Danny)

Oh fuck me.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED:

54A.

52

DANNY
Language, Dear.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: (2)

52

Hope runs to the door, sees Danny.

HOPE
WE DON'T WANT YOUR MUSIC!

Danny bends down, confused.

DANNY
You don't want my music?

Samantha explains, pointedly:

SAMANTHA
Tom explained to Hope the other day how you're a musician and how some musicians go door to door to sell their music.

DANNY
Ohhh. Okay.

SAMANTHA
(still explaining)
But we weren't interested in buying any music. Much the same way some people aren't interested in buying Girl Scout cookies. Doesn't mean we're rude, just that we weren't interested in buying any music.

DANNY
No, I get it. Possibly more complicated an explanation than required for a seven year old, but okay.

Hope spots the bus.

HOPE
Mommy look, Mommy look, do you see this?

SAMANTHA
(to Danny)
Just out running some errands?

Hope runs for it.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
Hope!

DANNY
(calling out)
Jimmy.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: (3)

52

A DRIVER (Jimmy) gets out. He opens a door for Hope, lets her in.

DANNY (CONT'D)

She's fine, he's got her.

Tom arrives at the door, sees Danny.

TOM

(re: Danny's
presence)

Are you fucking kidding me?

DANNY

Oh good, we're all here.

TOM

You have a hell of a nerve--

DANNY

Have you heard of the New Compass School, in Manhattan?

Tom stops.

TOM

What?

DANNY

It's one of the most progressive private schools in the country. It uses... hold on:

He pulls a piece of paper out of his pocket, reads:

DANNY (CONT'D)

"A multimodal approach toward treating children with learning issues, particularly ADHD."

(then)

I pulled some strings. You have an interview in two hours.

Hope pops out of the bus.

HOPE

It has a SHOWER!!!

And she's back inside. Tom turns back toward Danny.

TOM

Do you really think that we haven't looked into every school--

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

Well you haven't looked into this
one.

TOM

And how exactly do you know that?

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

(quietly)

Because you can't afford it.

Tom steps forward, he's had enough.

TOM

You know what--

SAMANTHA

(sharply)

Tom.

Tom goes quiet, then:

TOM

Stephen, would you mind your
fucking business please.

Behind them, their nosy LANDSCAPING NEIGHBOR slips out of
frame.

Samantha motions towards Danny to continue. Danny takes
the opportunity.

DANNY

People wait two years to get an
interview. You have one in two
hours.

Samantha looks at Tom. Tom says nothing.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Just give me one day to do
something good for you. Then I'm
gone forever. You'll still go to
heaven 'cause you're so damn
tolerant, and I'll still go to
hell because you can't buy
redemption. Everyone wins.

Tom looks at Samantha. She clearly wants this. He
shakes his head. There's no stopping this train.

DANNY (CONT'D)

If you guys want to bring any
friends, there's room.

The THREE ADULTS awkwardly sit in the enormous bus as
Hope runs around like a maniac.

53 EXT. NEW COMPASS SCHOOL - TWO HOURS LATER

53

Like many top private schools in Manhattan, it's a mansion converted into a school. It looks like a place superheroes in an X-Men prequel should attend.

The TOUR BUS sits outside.

54 INT. NEW COMPASS SCHOOL - LATER

54

The family stands in the middle of the school, staring. It's awe-inspiring.

HOPE

This is a school?

SAMANTHA

I'm not sure, Baby.

A MAN (40's) ENTERS in workout clothes. This is the HEADMASTER, RYAN KURTZ. He's reading from a CLIPBOARD.

KURTZ

Sorry to keep you waiting. And sorry I'm dressed like Jack LaLanne, I'm elastic-only on the weekends. I'm Dr. Kurtz, the headmaster here--

TOM

Tom Donn--

KURTZ

(re: Danny)

Holy cow, you really are Danny Collins!

Kurtz beelines for Danny. Tom continues introducing himself, even though Kurtz is no longer listening.

TOM

(to no one)

--Tom Donnelly, my wife, Samantha, our daughter, Hope, my balls are in my wife's purse, if you're lucky you can meet them later.

Samantha smiles, smacks him. Danny shakes Kurtz's hand.

KURTZ

Wow, seeing you in person is way different than talking to you on the phone.

DANNY

Good to meet you, Doc.

Kurtz turns to Tom.

KURTZ

And you must be Hope.

(CONTINUED)

TOM
(not that amused)

Tom.

Kurtz feigns confusion, turns toward Samantha.

KURTZ
Then... you must be Hope.

SAMANTHA
Samantha.

KURTZ
Then who's Hope?

Hope, of course, finds this routine hysterical.

HOPE
I'm Hope! I'm Hope! Over here,
that's me, I'm Hope--

SAMANTHA
Easy, Baby.

Kurtz smiles.

KURTZ
Let me show you guys around.
We're only half speed during our
summer camp programs but you can
still get a sense of the place.

They follow him off. Danny holds still, unsure what to do.

KURTZ (CONT'D)
C'mon, you. You started all this.

Danny hesitates, looks toward Tom. Tom, exasperated, throws up his hands in defeat.

Kurtz leads them through the unbelievable facilities... technology-filled classrooms and a college level gymnasium catch the eye.

Hope runs ahead, excited.

TOM
Hope!

KURTZ
She's fine.

(CONTINUED)

Samantha keeps her eye on Hope as she talks to Kurtz (who reads Hope's paperwork as he walks).

SAMANTHA

When first grade started, she really started having trouble.

TOM

We've had her working with a private tutor once a week and I do exercises with her every night. She has a really hard time focusing, retaining information--

DANNY

(interrupting)

It's been a real struggle.

Tom looks at Danny, shocked by his chutzpah. Kurtz lowers the clipboard, looks at Samantha and Tom.

KURTZ

Most schools try to train children like Hope to fit into their systems. We prefer to tailor a program to fit *the child's* needs.

(to Danny)

We call that our IEP.

TOM

And that's--?

DANNY

Individualized Educational Program, right? IEP?

They all look over at Danny, glasses on, studiously reading notes from his stationary pad.

KURTZ

You've done your homework, Mr. Collins.

Kurtz leads Samantha into the next room. We hang on Danny who smiles, proud of himself.

TOM

You having fun?

DANNY

Little bit of fun, yes. I'm very excited.

Danny walks past Tom. Tom SIGHS, follows after...

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: (2)

55

A56 INT. NEW COMPASS SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER

A56

We PAN off a line of children's SHOES until we land on a final pair: those belonging to Hope. She is mesmerized watching a ROOMFUL of ballet students, dancing in unison.

He parents are watching her.

SAMANTHA

And so this whole place is just an elementary school?

KURTZ

(confused)

Elementary and middle. We'd carry Hope until 8th grade, then we'd place her in--

TOM

I'm sorry, I'm sorry. We live over an hour outside the city. How would she even--

DANNY

She'll have a driver. Every day, to and from school. Everything will be taken care of, through college. It will be in writing.

KURTZ

A more formal interview is required, obviously. But considering Mr. Collins' generous donation and what I see in Hope's records... I suspect the interview will go well.

(then)

I don't usually come in on a Saturday, if you catch my drift.

He smiles at Danny, turns back to Tom and Samantha.

KURTZ (CONT'D)

You have a lot to discuss. But trust me: you want this. This can change the course of Hope's life.

(then)

You've got a good grandpa here.

If things could possibly get more complicated, they just did.

(CONTINUED)

A56 CONTINUED:

A56

KURTZ (CONT'D)

I'll give you all a minute.

He EXITS. The family is left alone. A beat, then Danny
CLAPS.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

Okay, so that concludes the educational portion of the day, now for the fun stuff--

TOM

Whoa, whoa, what are you talking abo--

DANNY

I asked for a day, Tom--

TOM

But--

DANNY

--and you agreed to give me a day. Samantha, he did agree to give me a day, didn't he?

SAMANTHA

I don't know if "agreed" is the right word--

DANNY

Samantha.

SAMANTHA

He agreed to give you a day.

Danny smiles.

DANNY

Well last I checked - day ain't over yet.

Tom and Samantha share a look.

56	OMITTED	56
57	OMITTED	57
58	OMITTED	58
59	OMITTED	59
60	OMITTED	60
61	OMITTED	61

62 EXT. TOM AND SAMANTHA'S HOUSE - LATER 62

The TOUR BUS pulls to a stop in front.

63 INT. TOUR BUS - CONTINUOUS 63

We PAN through the back of the bus, now FILLED TO THE BRIM with bags from Toys R Us.

On the van's couch, Hope is asleep on Tom's lap. She clutches MULTIPLE TOYS in her arms, as well as the remnants of something that was formerly ice cream. She's clearly had the day of her life.

Samantha opens the door to the bus, steps out.

SAMANTHA

Here, I'll take her.

TOM

You sure?

SAMANTHA

I'm carrying one of your kids already, what's another?

Tom smiles. She takes Hope, turns to Danny.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Um, so...

Her eyes well up.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

I want to say something but I'm afraid I'm going to be too nice.

Danny smiles, takes her off the hook.

DANNY

Goodnight, Samantha.

SAMANTHA

Just... thank you. I think. Yes, definitely. Thank you.

She awkwardly EXITS, carrying Hope (and some toys) with her.

ON DANNY AND TOM

Alone. Father and son, facing off. No one speaks. It's a Mexican standoff. Finally - surprisingly - it is Tom that makes the first move.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

(serious)

You are a ridiculous man.

Silence. This hangs there.

TOM (CONT'D)

I have spent my entire life trying to become the kind of man you aren't. I am exhausted. You have no idea how exhausting that has been.

Danny thinks, explains:

DANNY

When I met your mother... I was strung out, on God knows what. When I found out, I tried to send her money. She refused it. Over the years, I always wanted to find you, but...

He pauses.

DANNY (CONT'D)

My life was extreme. The drugs. Women. Travel. I didn't think much of myself. I thought you were better off with a *normal* life. And then, by the time I realized... I don't know. I don't know how I allowed it to go this long.

Silence. Tom finally leans forward.

TOM

What you did today - your slate is clean with me. But that's as far as this goes.

DANNY

I want to be a part of your life.

TOM

No. I can't handle that right now.

DANNY

I can't just walk away from this.

TOM

Well, you're going to have to because it's just not a good time--

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

Not a good time, what does that mean, not a good time--

TOM

I'm sick.

It comes out quickly, strongly, and unintentionally. The car goes silent.

TOM (CONT'D)

Shit.

Danny is lost.

DANNY

What the hell are you talking about? What do you mean you're sick?

Tom shakes his head. He doesn't want to do this. Finally, he gives in.

TOM

It's what Mom died...

(beat, then)

It's in the blood. It's pretty bad.

Danny looks stunned. A long, silent beat as he processes. Then:

DANNY

Are you fucking kidding me!?

Tom looks up, surprised.

DANNY (CONT'D)

I just met you! I mean, you've got to be fucking kidding me!

This hangs there, awkwardly. Danny takes a breath, regroups.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Okay, obviously that was not a great reaction. I'm sorry.

TOM

No, don't be silly! I'm the one who should be sorry. After all: you're Danny Collins! What business do I have getting in the way of your happy ending?

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

Tom--

TOM

Tell me: how did this all go in the little movie you have playing in your head? You show up out of nowhere, fix my kid's life, and we hold hands and cry as the music swells? Was that it?

DANNY

(reaching for him)

I didn't mean to--

TOM

Don't you fucking touch me. You want a taste of the real world? You want "normal"? Well here it is, Superstar: I've got a two hundred thousand dollar mortgage, a pregnant wife, and oh yeah, a rare form of Leukemia that's probably gonna kill me. Welcome home, *Daddy*, see what you've missed?

Danny's head is spinning.

DANNY

I don't know what to say.

TOM

I don't need you to say anything, I need you to leave. I have to go inside before Sam asks me what we were talking about--

DANNY

Wait, wait, wait, hold on... she doesn't know?

Tom says nothing.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Are you insane?

TOM

I got a great doc in the city. Three weeks of this targeted therapy thing. It's like a chemo but I don't lose my hair or anything. They can tell within a month if I've responded at all. If I do, maybe I have a chance. If not, it happens quick.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (4)

63

Danny shakes his head, trying to process this.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

Samantha--

TOM

Is six months into a rough pregnancy. After the baby, then I tell her.

He stops, retaining his calm.

TOM (CONT'D)

I'm going to work a job in Delaware for three weeks. That's all she knows.

Silence.

DANNY

You'll need help. Have you told anyone? A friend?

TOM

She's my friend.

(then)

You're actually the only person who knows.

DANNY

Jesus.

TOM

You're telling me.

They sit there with that for a moment.

DANNY

Okay. Well, I'll be there then.

TOM

Be where?

DANNY

There. Wherever you need me.

TOM

I don't need you.

DANNY

Well you need someone, Tom and if you think you don't you have your head up your ass. And, however it happened, it appears I'm what you've got at the moment. So I'm going to help you with this, and it's not open for discussion.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

But--

63 CONTINUED: (7)

63

DANNY

It's not open for discussion, Tom.

It's authoritative. Fatherly. Tom stares at Danny blankly, suddenly confused by all the dynamics at play.

A64 EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

A64

Tom stands outside the bus (surrounded by bags of toys). For the first time since we've met him, he looks like a lost little boy.

Tom watches the bus drive away. It takes out two tree branches.

64 BACK INSIDE THE BUS

64

Now in the clear, Danny drops the performance. He slumps against his seat, overwhelmed.

65 INT. WOODCLIFF LAKE HILTON - LATER

65

Danny walks into the lobby. Mary sees him, smiles.

MARY

How'd it go?

Danny doesn't even break stride.

DANNY

Yeah... it was just... yeah.
Yeah.

Mary dovetails in behind him as he walks.

MARY

Hey, c'mon! Family can be messy sometimes.

DANNY

That is true. That is definitely true in this case.

He pushes a button on the elevator door.

MARY

Danny! You're meeting your grown son for the first time. You didn't think it was going to be easy, did you?

Danny LAUGHS a little.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

I thought it was gonna be fucking
easier than this.

The elevator door opens, Danny gets in. He's almost
dazed.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Every part of me wants to just get
completely soused with you right
now. But I think I'm going to
just go upstairs instead. That's
good, right?

Mary NODS.

MARY

Write.

She pulls a Hilton pen out of her jacket pocket, hands it
to him. Danny looks at her. Smiles a little.

The elevator door closes.

66 INT. DANNY'S HOTEL ROOM - LATER (NIGHT) 66

Danny sits at the piano, looking at the LETTER FROM LENNON.

Next to him he has his cheap pad and pen. We can see that he's written down LYRICS. A lot of lyrics.

He begins to play the song we've heard him start twice. But this time, he plays it all the way through.

The SONG covers a...

MONTAGE - OVER THE NEXT MONTH

DANNY

(singing)

It's Spring in my Mind/But the
Autumn leaves, they fall...

We PAN to the lyric sheet and read (as we hear):

DANNY (O.S) (CONT'D)

(singing)

As I'm walking by/I collect them
all...

On "collect them all" we head to...

67 EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY 67

Tom leaves his site, signing off for the day.

Danny sits out front, in his car. Tom spots the Mercedes immediately (hard not to spot at the construction site). Danny waves him toward the car.

Tom shakes his head, puts down his TOOLS, and gets in the car without a word.

We hang on the toolkit before heading to...

68 INT. ONCOLOGY OFFICE - DAY 68

A different type of toolkit - medical gear. A DOCTOR gives Tom an IV. Danny stands by his side. We see that Danny's Hilton "lyric" pad has become a pad filled with medical terms: words like "Cladribine" and "Lymphocytic" and "run down" and "prone to infection" now mingle with lyrics about "spring" and "fall."

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED:

68

DOCTOR SILVERMAN

Okay, Mr. Donnelly, the next few weeks aren't going to be pleasant. You ready for this?

Tom NODS. Danny watches, concerned. As the nurses go to work on Tom, we RISE UP...

69 EXT. THE LEX HOTEL - AFTERNOON

69

STILL RISING, ON A NYC STREET... revealing a boutique hotel. Expensive looking.

We watch from across the street as our familiar PIANO MOVERS (and Van) once more try to navigate a piano into a (new) hotel.

70 INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER (DAY) 70

ON THAT PIANO as Danny orchestrates the move of the instrument into a hotel room (a bigger room, of course, but needless to say - still a challenge).

Tom lies in a bed in the sleeping area of the suite.

DANNY

I got the adjoining room but the piano won't fit. This okay?

Tom shakes his head and waves it in, giving up. Danny walks past camera and...

71 EXT. TOM AND SAMANTHA'S HOUSE - MORNING 71

Across a familiar lawn. He avoids the broken doorbell and just KNOCKS. Samantha OPENS the door. She's surprised to see him and, clearly, unsure what to do.

Danny holds up his recurrent peace offering: A BAG OF BAGELS. Samantha hesitates, then... lets him inside.

72 INT. DANNY'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT 72

We go back to Danny in his room, now playing the CHORUS OF HIS SONG.

PULL BACK to reveal that Mary now sits in the room with him, listening

PULL BACK FURTHER to reveal:

Danny's CELL PHONE, VIBRATING on the nightstand next to the Lennon letter. It's "FRANK." It goes to VOICE-MAIL.

A73 INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - NIGHT A73

Frank hangs up the phone, concerned. Looks at a photo of he and Danny on his desk. From the photo of Danny to...

73 EXT. WOODCLIFF LAKE HILTON - AFTERNOON 73

REAL-LIFE DANNY, as he tentatively hands NICKY ERNST the keys to his MERCEDES and watches JAMIE hop in the front seat.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED:

73

Nicky gives Danny a thumbs up, and TAKES OFF. Way too fast.

Danny steps back. Mary stands there. She looks at him, smiles, and MOUTHS the words:

MARY

You're fucking crazy.

74 INT. TOM'S HOTEL ROOM - EARLY EVENING

74

Tom rests on a couch, recuperating. Danny sits adjacent. They watch JEOPARDY together, in silence.

Danny looks at Tom, notices something. He gets up, brings him some water, feels his forehead. Tom does what he can to resist, but Danny is determined and wins out.

Danny motions to some SOUP (uneaten) on the table.

DANNY

I got you chicken noodle soup.

TOM

I don't like chicken noodle soup.

Silence. From one "table" we head to...

75 INT. TOM AND SAMANTHA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

75

Another. Danny sits at the kitchen table with Hope, DRAWING PICTURES with her. One of her pictures is a drawing of HER FAMILY. She's included "Gran Pa."

Samantha cooks in the background, watching. She smiles.

We PUSH IN on the "Daddy" in Hope's picture while it leads us to...

76 OMITTED

76

(CONTINUED)

76	CONTINUED:	73.	76
77	OMITTED		77

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED:

77

78 INT. ONCOLOGY OFFICE - MORNING

78

Tom. Treatment completed, he gets final instructions from Doctor Silverman.

As the Doctor talks, Danny writes everything down on his STATIONARY PAD.

DOCTOR SILVERMAN

Okay, Tom, so three weeks from today, we'll look at results together, hope for the best.

They SHAKE, say their GOODBYES.

79 INT. DANNY'S HOTEL ROOM - EVENING

79

Where Danny finishes the FINAL VERSE of the song, the lyric sheet now completely COVERED by lyrics and cancer terminology. Danny looks across the room at Mary, nervously.

Mary CLAPS, steps forward.

END MONTAGE.

A80 INT. TOM'S HOTEL ROOM - EVENING

A80

Tom and Danny sit in front of the TV in silence. The uneaten soup sits in front of Tom. Danny stares at it. Finally, he can take it no more.

DANNY

You just don't like chicken noodle soup? Just unilaterally don't like it?

TOM

No.

Silence.

DANNY

How the fuck can you not like chicken noodle soup?

TOM

I don't like noodles, okay!? They get soggy and it makes me think of worms.

(then, admitting)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

A80 CONTINUED:

A80

TOM (CONT'D)

My uncle took me fishing once and freaked me out about worms.

DANNY

How did he--

TOM

He ripped one in half with his hands and then ate half the worm to fuck with me. And now when I see noodles I think of my big fat slob of an uncle eating half of a bloody fucking worm, okay?

(then, meekly)

I like tomato soup.

A beat.

DANNY

So you just never eat chicken noodle soup?

TOM

(exasperated)

Would you get the hell out of my room please?

Danny storms out.

DANNY

(enraged)

Doesn't like chicken noodle soup. What kind of person doesn't like--

The door SLAMS. Tom shakes his head.

B80 INT. TOM'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

B80

Tom lies in bed, reading. He's finally got some peace, quiet, and alone time. His eyes lock on...

Danny's piano. Sitting in the corner of the room. Tom stands, goes over to it.

Touches a key. Then another. He slowly begins figuring out the basic chords of Danny's recent song. It takes him a moment to self-correct but soon... he's playing it. Quietly humming the melody. He smiles, slowly becoming comfortable with the song. And just then...

DANNY (O.S.)

I got you tomato soup.

Tom jolts. Stops. Stands. Danny stands at the door, with TAKEOUT FOOD, watching.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY (CONT'D)

Have you always been able to play
by ear?

Silence.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Started for me around eight years
old. My mother would sing, I
could play the chords. You?

It's a strange thing to not be able to admit, but clearly
this is difficult for Tom.

TOM

I can just do it, you know? It's
not like I'm Mozart or anything
but--

DANNY

You were born with it. Got your
mother's looks, but you got that
from me, I guess.

Danny walks over to the piano.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Sit down.

TOM

I don't want to--

DANNY

Oh for Christ sake, Tom, sit down.
There are no movies left to rent
and you're two keys off.

Tom SIGHS, sits. Danny puts the food down, sits next to
him.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Here. On the bridge you should be
at E, not C.

TOM

(standing)

I don't know what any of that
means.

Danny catches his arm, stopping him.

DANNY

Well then let me teach you, you
petulant little fucker.

(CONTINUED)

B80 CONTINUED: (2)

B80

And as Danny begins to teach his son to play piano we
continue the song through...

C80 INT. DANNY'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

C80

Danny sits at the piano, writing feverishly. There's a KNOCK at the door.

DANNY

Come in! It's un-bolt-y-thing'd.

The door opens, it's Mary. She holds up a piece of PAPER.

MARY

Got your note.

DANNY

Talk to me. What'd you think?
Because I'm thinking of changing
the whole verse. Just a complete
overhaul, lyrically.

Mary reads from the paper.

MARY

Pictures from my life/As I'm
walking down the hall/As I am
walking by/I collect them all.

Danny claps.

DANNY

So!? What do you think?

MARY

You're aware I have no basis in
musical knowledge or theory?

DANNY

I am.

MARY

But you still want my opinion?

DANNY

I do.

MARY

As someone with no basis in
musical knowledge or theory... I
kind of liked it better how it
was. With the leaves.

Danny looks up.

DANNY

Yeah?

(CONTINUED)

MARY

Yeah.

Danny throws down his pen, changes tone.

DANNY

Yeah, me too, honestly Mary: I was really just trying to get you to my room again.

(then)

So can I take you to dinner now?

MARY

Play it in concert, then you can take me to dinner.

DANNY

You are such a dinner tease.

There's a KNOCK at the door. Danny goes to answer.

MARY

I am not a dinner tease.

DANNY

You are a huge dinner tease.

Danny answers the door. Frank stands there. He does not look happy.

FRANK

I've been calling.

DANNY

Frank!

FRANK

This is my second time in New Jersey in two months. I'm not happy about it, Danny.

DANNY

Sorry, sorry, I owed you a call, you know how I get when I'm writing.

He taps Frank's cheek.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Look at this face! Is this a face I love or what? Great to see you, Frank! Sorry again, busy few weeks.

Frank looks inside, sees Mary.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK

Apparently.
(then)
May I?

Danny motions for Frank to come in. Danny makes introductions.

DANNY

Mary, my manager and best friend,
Frank Grubman. Frank, this is
Mary. She is my new girlfriend.

FRANK

(surprised)
Really?

Mary shakes her head no.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

Well, I'm hopeful. At some point, obviously, she'll have dinner with me.

(to Frank)

Huge dinner tease.

MARY

I am not.

DANNY

She keeps moving the goalposts for dinner.

Mary LAUGHS. Frank watches, perplexed. What's with all the cutesy? Where the hell has his pal Danny gone?

FRANK

Mary, would you mind if I had a word with Danny in private?

MARY

No, of course.

Mary takes her leave.

DANNY

Dinner tonight?

MARY

You're ridiculous.

GIGGLING, Mary closes the door. Danny looks at Frank, smiles.

DANNY

Right?

FRANK

(admitting)

She's lovely.

DANNY

And age appropriate.

FRANK

Not really.

DANNY

Baby steps.

Frank smiles, sits. Danny sits next to him.

FRANK

We need to talk.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

We do. I have a lot to tell you about, Pal--

FRANK

Danny, unfortunately I've got the manager hat back on right now.

Danny nods. Something's clearly wrong. He changes tone, serious.

DANNY

What's up?

Frank thinks. How to say this?

FRANK

Do you remember a few years ago we were watching that thing on ESPN about Mike Tyson? And they were saying how even though he'd made like twenty million a fight, he'd blown it all, and now he could barely afford to feed the pigeons on his roof?

Danny processes this. Then, childlike, asks:

DANNY

I'm Mike Tyson?

FRANK

Well, not quite, but... I've been going over things with Bill and you're not quite where you think you are.

Danny nods, staying calm.

DANNY

Okay. Where am I?

FRANK

You're a little bit ahead, once we sell properties. But just a little.

Danny lets this sink in.

DANNY

I don't understand. How?

FRANK

Lot of things. We shouldn't have sold your publishing rights so early.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

FRANK (CONT'D)

All the properties, the housing markets have collapsed. The private planes, your lifestyle, the Madoff thing absolutely killed you, as you know. You're not bankrupt or anything, but you need to understand how serious this is.

DANNY

Okay, I understand.

(then)

What do I do?

FRANK

One of two things: you start living like a normal human - buy a Prius, fly Continental, that kind of shit... or you go back on tour. This last tour was my retirement plan for you. We had a big piece: merchandise, concessions--

DANNY

No, I know.

They sit in silence for a long beat.

DANNY (CONT'D)

I've been writing, Frank.

FRANK

Danny--

DANNY

It's good. I'm telling you, Mary thinks it's really good.

FRANK

The Woodcliff Lake Hotel manager? Oh, okay. Well now I feel better.

DANNY

Careful.

Frank eases up.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Just book me a gig.

FRANK

A "gig?"

DANNY

Something local. Not an arena. Like what Springsteen would do if he was just popping in somewhere.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK

"Like what Springsteen would do?"
Danny, do you even hear yourself.

DANNY

I'm telling you: the new stuff
will play. *Then* we tour. And the
bonus is that I won't have to feel
like killing myself every night.

Frank SIGHS, shakes his head. Stands.

FRANK

Okay.

Frank stops at the door, turns.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Just don't buy any pigeons.

Frank EXITS.

Danny thinks for a beat, then he sits back at his PIANO
and continues working... a man possessed.

PRE-LAP: a spoon clinks on glass, signaling a toast.

DANNY (O.S.)

If I could have your attention
please?

80 EXT. TOM AND SAMANTHA'S HOUSE - MORNING (DAYS LATER)

80

Tom, Samantha, Hope, and Danny sit on lawn chairs at a
makeshift inflatable pool. Samantha is even more
pregnant now... she's huge.

Danny has allowed Hope (in pool) to tap a spoon on his
COFFEE MUG. He has an announcement.

DANNY

So I'm playing a gig at a bar
Friday night.

TOM

(amused)
A "gig"?

HOPE

What's a gig?

DANNY

It's where I sing in front of
people, Hon.

(CONTINUED)

HOPE

I want to hear you sing.

DANNY

And I want *you* to hear me sing.
More than anything. But only if
it's okay with your parents.

SAMANTHA

(concerned)

It's at a bar?

DANNY

Upscale bar. Cover charges,
cocktail menus, a real "gig" type
gig, you know?

TOM

(amused)

You're playing somewhere with a
"cover charge"? Are times that
tough? Hold on: will you have
enough room to prance?

DANNY

Ha.

Sam smiles. Hope giggles, not getting the joke but
enjoying that her parents are.

DANNY (CONT'D)

It's really more of a small music
venue, like a theater.

(off their looks)

Seriously! There will be a
sectioned-off table for you and
everything.

Tom and Samantha share a look, still hesitant.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Show starts at 7:30. Done by
9:00. Late but not too late.

TOM

Can your fans even stay conscious
till 9:00? Someone better warn
the bar that they could have a
room full of snoring old women.
Honey?

SAMANTHA

(with a smile)

I'll call them, give them a heads
up.

But Danny is serious, ignores the teasing.

DANNY

It's a big one for me.

(pleading)

It would help if I could see these
cheeks.

(CONTINUED)

He squeezes Hope's CHEEKS. She GIGGLES. Tom SHRUGS at Samantha. It's her call.

SAMANTHA

Okay.

Hope and Danny share a HIGH FIVE.

HOPE

These cheeks will be there.

Everyone LAUGHS, but laughing makes Tom COUGH, loudly. Samantha goes to get him water.

SAMANTHA

(to Danny)

Do you hear this?

(then, to Tom)

Would you get yourself to the doctor already, Tom?

Danny looks at Tom. Tom quickly looks away.

TOM

It's just a little bug.

SAMANTHA

Little bug, it's been ever since you got back. Hope, is your daddy the most stubborn man on the planet?

HOPE

Don't be so stubborn, Daddy.

TOM

I'm fine, really.

Samantha feels his head.

SAMANTHA

He insists on walking around like the living dead instead of getting antibiotics. Stubborn man.

HOPE

Stubborn man.

Samantha smiles, kisses Hope's head. Tom and Danny share a look but say nothing.

Over the top of their silence we:

CUE SOUND: THUMP. THUMP. THUMP.

81 OMITTED 81

82 INT. DRESSING ROOM - MEANWHILE 82

The ritual:

Danny's hand comes into frame, touches...

THE GOLD CROSS, which drops down into his chest.

But instead of opening the cross in search of drugs, now the hand lowers, touching:

THE LETTER FROM LENNON. Sitting on a nearby table. A source of inspiration.

We PULL BACK, revealing:

DANNY

For the first time since we've known him, Danny isn't dressed like a borderline Vegas pimp.

He's wearing casual clothes. Slacks. He looks...

FRANK (O.S.)

Jesus, you look like Lee Trevino.

Danny looks up, Frank stands there. Danny smiles.

DANNY

Samantha took me shopping. You ever heard of this place, "Banana Republic?" Amazing place.

Frank CHUCKLES, ENTERS.

FRANK

Okay: house is packed. The band's out there and ready. Phil can step in on piano if you need him on your new one.

He looks at Danny. Danny smiles, shakes his head "no." Frank nods, continues.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Your family's up front. I saved a spot for Mary with them.

Danny nods, deep breath. Then, notices:

(CONTINUED)

DANNY
Speak of the devil.

Frank turns, following Danny's gaze. MARY stands at the door. Frank smiles, takes his leave.

FRANK
Break a leg, Kid.

DANNY
Just tell me whose.

The old joke. Frank winks and EXITS. We hold on Danny in the mirror as we hear...

FRANK (O.S.)
Yeah, just go on in. He'll be thrilled to see you.

Danny looks up. Mary walks into frame (in the mirror).

MARY
Just came to wish you luck.
(beat)
You nervous?

DANNY
Mary, I have done this a zillion times and I've never been nervous. Hand to God, not once.
(then)
I'm nervous as hell.

She nods, understanding. He snaps out of it, feigning calm.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Looks like you're finally going to have to let me buy you dinner.

MARY
Let's see how you do first.

Danny smiles.

DANNY
(playful)
Okay, okay. Put a little more pressure on me tonight, I see what you're doing.

She LAUGHS, walks to the door, stops.

MARY

It's a weird thing to say, I know,
considering I haven't known you
very long. But I'm very proud of
you, Danny Collins.

She EXITS. Danny takes a deep breath, stands.

83 OMITTED

83

A84 INT. LOU'S BAR (LOUNGE) - MEANWHILE

A84

Mary sits with Tom, Samantha, and Hope.

TOM

So, how long have you known my
father?

MARY

Roughly about the same amount of
time as you have?

Tom NODS.

OVER ON FRANK

Who sits with Nicky and Jamie. They are holding hands.

NICKY

You look really nice.

JAMIE

You look nice, too.

FRANK grimaces at the cutesy.

FRANK

Oh for Christ's sake.

B84 INT. BACKSTAGE - MEANWHILE

B84

FROM BEHIND, we watch Danny make his way toward the
BACKSTAGE CURTAIN. We're once again tracking him from
behind (just as at his first concert).

But now, instead of a mysterious figure in a white suit,
he's just a grandpa in a golf shirt and slacks.

ON HIS FEET

No more platform shoes. Brown loafers have taken their
place.

AT THE CURTAIN

He pauses, stops. He cracks his head each way, then:

DANNY

Yep.

(CONTINUED)

B84 CONTINUED:

B84

He EXITS onto the stage. From behind the curtain, we hear the small crowd go APESHIT.

84 INT. STAGE - CONTINUOUS

84

Danny takes the stage, looks out. It's a packed house.

RIGHT UP FRONT

Sits his family at a table. Mary is with them. So is Frank. He smiles at them.

Hope SCREAMS through the crowd, bursting with excitement.

ON DANNY

He looks toward the back of the stage:

His BAND is ready, unsure what they're supposed to do.

Danny simply nods at them and heads towards:

HIS PIANO

Simple and unadorned. Center stage. Danny sits.

He leans into the microphone.

DANNY

Thanks for coming.

Danny starts playing the opening of his NEW SONG. We recognize the melody instantly. As he plays...

DANNY'S POV OF THE CROWD

A WOMAN SCREAMS for Danny to play his MOST POPULAR SONG:

WOMAN

Hey, Baby Doll!!!

AN OLDER COUPLE CLAP THEIR HANDS in unison, anticipating.

In fact...

EVERYONE is clapping. In UNISON. These are Danny Collins fans. They know what happens first.

Everything SLOWS DOWN.

ANOTHER FAN screams for Danny's most popular song. AND ANOTHER.

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED:

84

AT HER TABLE, Hope looks around, thrilled. She's CLAPPING with everyone. Tom and Samantha LAUGH, clap with her. Frank, too.

BACK TO DANNY

(CONTINUED)

Suddenly frozen. He just sits there, playing the same melody over and over again, watching the CHANTING CROWD. His adoring granddaughter. His son. He knows what they want from him.

We watch it happen, just like that - in an instant: all progress lost. There's too many people. He's too old. He can't just change it up suddenly. He knows what they want and he has to give it to them. He's been doing it for too many years to stop now.

Slowly, he stops playing. His eyes are glossy.

He turns to his band, NODS. They quickly pick up their instruments.

DANNY

Phil?

Danny stands, as PHIL quickly scurries over behind the piano.

Danny grabs his microphone and forces a smile:

DANNY (CONT'D)

Gotta stand up for this puppy.

He announces, sadly:

DANNY (CONT'D)

I think you know this one--

The band launches into Danny's MOST FAMOUS SONG. The crowd goes ballistic.

As Danny goes through the motions, we push in CLOSER AND CLOSER on his face. He's singing. He's performing.

He's breaking his own heart.

86 INT. BACKSTAGE - LATER

86

We're on a black curtain. Above it there's a BLINKING RED LIGHT. We hear the CROWD GOING NUTS. We watch as the blinking light goes off.

DANNY (O.S.)

Thanks for coming everyone. Means a lot. Thank you, thank you.

Danny ENTERS FRAME, safely out of sight from his adoring masses. As soon as he's behind the curtain, he sinks. He's a broken man.

And then, to our surprise...

SOPHIE (O.S.)

Danny!?

Sophie and Judd (Busywork) run over.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

We heard about the gig and we came to support our Sugar Daddy. I used your credit card for the flights, hope that's okay.

JUDD

When do you go on!?

Sophie SNIFFLES, rubs her nose. Danny stares at her blankly, then:

DANNY

What do you have on you?

SOPHIE

What do you mean?

DANNY

You know what I mean.

Sophie smiles.

SOPHIE

I got it all, Baby.

87 INT. DRESSING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

87

Danny chugs from a bottle of SCOTCH, numbing himself as quickly as possible. Judd SMOKES in the corner. Sophie pours some COKE OUT onto A TRAY, hands it to Danny.

SOPHIE

Here you go, Danny.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED:

87

But it's not a tray... she's poured a line on the FRAMED LETTER FROM LENNON.

Sad, horrific, irony.

Danny shakes his head, hesitates, then bends down to do it. Just then:

HOPE (O.S.)

Grandpa!

Danny looks up and drops the letter to the ground, as coke goes flying.

AT THE DOOR

Tom, Samantha, and Hope stand there.

HOPE (CONT'D)

(confused)

Grandpa?

Samantha quickly pulls Hope back. Tom looks on, shocked.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

Nice.
(pointedly)
Real nice, Grandpa.

DANNY

I'm sorry, I didn't--

TOM

Don't. Don't even bother.

He turns away, then turns back, furious. He moves at Danny quickly. Grabs him. He could hit him, but he catches himself. He looks at Danny, a beaten man.

TOM (CONT'D)

Jesus.

He turns to go. Danny calls out:

DANNY

Yes, keep judging me, Tom, you're great at that. When you finish - you know, being so perfect and honorable - maybe you should talk to your wife about what you did in "Delaware."

As soon as he says it he regrets it. Tom freezes. Samantha (pushing Hope out the door) stops, confused.

SAMANTHA

Huh?

Tom glares at Danny. Samantha looks at Tom, it's too weird not to comment on.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

What's he talking about?

Tom turns to her. She looks at him, expectant. He knows it's over.

TOM

We'll talk at home, okay?

He leads his family out the door, but not before turning back towards Danny.

TOM (CONT'D)

If you ever come near my family again...

He trails off. The message is clear. Nothing left to say. And with that...

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED: (3)

87

He EXITS.

ON DANNY

Completely undone. He bends down, picks up the LENNON LETTER off of the ground.

ON THE LETTER

It's cracked, smattered with cocaine. Symbolic.

BACK TO DANNY

Who turns towards Sophie and Judd.

DANNY

Let's get the fuck out of here.

CUE SONG: *Cold Turkey* (TBD) written by John Lennon.

88 INT. DANNY'S HOTEL ROOM - NEXT MORNING

88

We hear a KEY go into a door. The door opens.

UNSEEN ENTRANT'S POV:

Walking through the small hotel room:

The room is trashed. Bottles and cans everywhere. The LENNON LETTER lies on the floor, cracked.

There's an overturned ROOM SERVICE TABLE in the center of the room.

And on the bed, Danny is sprawled out, unconscious. His shirt half unbuttoned. A BOTTLE OF BOOZE on his chest.

THE CAMERA TURNS AROUND

Revealing Mary, the source of our POV. Taking in the train wreck. Just then...

SOPHIE stumbles out of the bathroom.

SOPHIE

(wasted)

Who are you?

MARY

I... um... I work for the hotel.

SOPHIE

Oh, good. We need more towels, can you do that? And some beer.

(CONTINUED)

88 CONTINUED:

88

MARY

Yes. More towels. And some beer.

The conversation causes Danny to STIR. He opens his eyes, sees...

DANNY

Mary.

Mary turns, walks out of the room.

89 INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

89

Mary heads for the elevator. Half stumbling, half dressed, Danny runs after her.

DANNY

Mary! Mary, wait!

Mary turns.

DANNY (CONT'D)

She's not... it's not what it looks like.

MARY

What the hell happened last night, Danny?

Danny looks down.

DANNY

It just wasn't right. It wasn't the right time.

MARY

What are you talking about!?! You've been working so hard. Your whole family was there--

DANNY

I couldn't. I just... lost my nerve.

She takes him in. He's barely making eye contact.

MARY

Yeah, well, you lost your dinner, too.

DANNY

Mary--

The elevator door opens.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

You should have played the song,
Danny. You should have at least
played the one fucking song.

Mary GETS IN THE ELEVATOR, leaving Danny alone in the
hallway.

90 INT. DANNY'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS 90

Danny RE-ENTERS his room. He picks up the LENNON LETTER from the floor, looks at it.

DANNY
(to letter)
Fuck you, John.

91 INT. HOTEL ELEVATOR - MORNING 91

Danny rolls his SUITCASE into the elevator. He's leaving.

As the elevator descends, it plays THE MUZAK of Danny's most famous song. Danny NODS, knowingly.

One last final body blow before he goes.

92 INT. WOODCLIFF LAKE HILTON LOBBY - CONTINUOUS 92

Danny rolls his SUITCASE through the lobby. Jamie works behind the front desk. Danny sees her.

DANNY
You take care of yourself, Jamie.

JAMIE
You too, Mr. Collins.

DANNY
And be good to Nicky. He's a good boy. Wonderful face.

JAMIE
Yours isn't so bad either, Mr. Collins.

DANNY
Well look at that: now we're getting patter.

Danny looks behind Jamie, toward the OFFICE that hides beyond the front desk. Jamie shakes her head "no." Mary doesn't want to see him.

Danny nods, steps up to the desk, and yells out:

DANNY (CONT'D)
FOR THE RECORD: MARY ANN'S REAL NAME WAS DAWN WELLS AND SHE WAS MISS NEVADA BEFORE SHE GOT FAMOUS AND SHE COULDN'T HOLD A FUCKING CANDLE TO YOU.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED:

92

DANNY (CONT'D)
 ALSO FOR THE RECORD: YOU RUN THE
 BEST GODDAMN HILTON I'VE EVER
 STAYED IN AND I STOLE LIKE FIFTY
 OF THOSE LITTLE SOAP BAR THINGS
 BECAUSE THEY MAKE ME SMELL NICE
 BUT NOT GIRLY. GOODBYE!

Danny turns and EXITS the hotel.

93 EXT. WOODCLIFF LAKE HILTON - CONTINUOUS

93

Nicky pulls up the Mercedes, loads in the SUITCASE.

DANNY
 Nicky, it's been a pleasure.

NICKY
 The pleasure has definitely been
 mine, Danny.

Danny reaches into his pocket to TIP Nicky. But he's got
 no cash.

DANNY
 Shit.
 (then)
 You know what?

Danny goes to his trunk, removes the suitcase, and
 WHISTLES for a cab (in line at the nearby stand).

He hands NICKY the KEYS to the Mercedes.

NICKY
 You're kidding me.

Danny smiles.

DANNY
 The second you stop appreciating
 it, you give it to someone else.
 Deal?

NICKY
 Deal.

DANNY
 Good. Now get the hell out of
 here.

Nicky doesn't know what to do with himself. He BEAR HUGS
 Danny, gets in the car, and ZOOMS off.

MARY (O.S.)
 Wait!

(CONTINUED)

Mary runs out, catches up to him. They stand there.

MARY (CONT'D)

I don't want the last thing I ever said to you to be mean. But I don't want to say anything nice. So...

(then)

Mr. Collins: on behalf of the Woodcliff Lake Hilton, we hope you enjoyed your stay and hope you will choose to make Hilton home, wherever your travels take you.

They stand there in awkward silence.

DANNY

I'm grabbing a cab.

MARY

I see that.

DANNY

I gave Nicky my Mercedes.

MARY

You're fucking crazy.

DANNY

It's been said, yes.

Danny turns to her.

DANNY (CONT'D)

I called Frank this morning. I'm going back on tour.

MARY

Good. Good, right?

DANNY

I need the money. I have a family now. They hate my guts, but I'm told that's just what families do.

MARY

I've taught you well.

He smiles.

DANNY

I'm gonna play my new songs. At least some of them. We'll see what happens.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

I know what will happen.

DANNY

They'll throw tomatoes?

MARY

Onions.

DANNY

Better.

Danny loads his suitcase into the TAXI.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Tour comes to The Garden in a few months. Maybe I could take you to dinner after the show?

MARY

(with a smile)

You're relentless.

Danny gets in the taxi, lowers the window.

DANNY

I left you something in the room.

MARY

You probably left me a big mess is what you left me.

DANNY

Hey, you know us rock stars.

Danny takes her in one last time, smiles.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Another life, huh?

MARY

You never know.

Danny smiles, winks, and taps the window. He came to the Woodcliff Lake Hilton in a red Mercedes. He leaves in a yellow taxi.

94 INT. DANNY'S HOTEL ROOM - LATER 94

Mary ENTERS the room with TWO CLEANING LADIES. But the room...

Is immaculate. Danny has cleaned it himself.

On the bed, sits the LENNON LETTER. Next to it, a SECOND NOTE, from Danny:

It reads: "What do you think about that, Mary Sinclair?"

MARY

Well I'll be damned. He made a clean exit.

She chuckles to herself, stands, and kicks Busywork (sprawled on the floor).

MARY (CONT'D)

Be out of the room by noon.

And with that, Mary Sinclair EXITS.

CUE SONG: *Jealous Guy* (TBD) written by John Lennon.

95 OMITTED 95

A96 INT. PRIVATE JET - DAY A96

Danny sits in his seat, waiting for liftoff. He talks on his cell.

DANNY

Yeah, I'll meet you guys in Pittsburgh. Frank's setting up the other dates. Okay, talk soon.

A STEWARDESS approaches.

STEWARDESS

We're ready for takeoff, Mr. Collins. Say goodbye to New Jersey.

He looks out his window, speaks to himself.

DANNY

Goodbye to New Jersey.

96 EXT. TOM AND SAMANTHA'S HOUSE - DAY

96

A pair of feet makes the familiar trek past Tom's front yard. A finger rings the familiar doorbell. Rings again. Still broken. The hand knocks.

The door opens. It's Tom. Standing opposite him is... Frank.

TOM

Oh Jesus. What now? Did he send you to check on me?

FRANK

The hotel didn't know what to do with the damn piano. I thought you might want it.

(CONTINUED)

Frank motions to a MOVING TRUCK out front manned by FOUR LARGE MEN. Tom shakes his head.

TOM

I don't want his piano.

FRANK

Well, it took six hours to move it out of the Hilton and I don't know anyone else in New Jersey, so tough shit.

(then)

It's a thirty thousand dollar instrument, Tom. Sell it for all I care.

A beat, then Tom nods, exhausted. Frank motions at the movers, they start opening the truck.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Your health?

TOM

(shrug)

Find out in a few days.

Frank nods, takes a sip from his ubiquitous water bottle.

FRANK

When I was in my thirties, I started drinking. Heavily. Don't remember how it started. Everyone was always drinking before his shows. After his shows. Long line of drunks in my family, all the usual bullshit excuses.

Out of nowhere, Frank yells at the movers behind him:

FRANK (CONT'D)

Careful, gentlemen, that's a Steinway. It's worth more than you are.

He turns back to Tom, SHRUGS, continues.

FRANK (CONT'D)

We were on tour in the Bay Area and I fell asleep at the wheel. Almost killed myself, a few others. Got arrested. Your fa--

(then)

Danny bailed me out. Five in the morning he showed up at the San Jose police station high as a fucking kite.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

FRANK (CONT'D)

Drives me six hours straight to this Hollywood rehab joint... probably drove us there drunker than I'd been the night before, the dumb shit. Paid for the whole thing. Visited me every Saturday till I was dry. And once a week, for the last thirty years, I get four cases of bottled water sent to me, wherever I am in the world. Always with the same note: "Drink as many as you want on me, Danny."

Frank taps his water bottle.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Best friend I ever had your father. The man saved my life, got me stone-cold sober, and he was three sheets to the wind himself the entire time he was doing it.

TOM

I'm not seeing the point here.

FRANK

The point, my boy, is that he's always been better to others than he has been to himself. What you do with that, is up to you. My waters will keep coming no matter what.

Frank tips an imaginary hat, turns back to the movers.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Alright, boys, let's move that puppy so I can get the fuck out of New Jersey.

Tom stands at the door, watching Frank go.

Tom holds Hope on his lap as she BANGS away on the piano (which is wildly out of place and oversized for the cramped living room).

He picks Hope up, places her on the bench by herself, and kisses her forehead. Sam watches adoringly (and WILDLY pregnant) from the couch (where she lies).

Tom moves to her.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED:

97

He takes her hand, kisses it. He goes to pull away but she won't let him go. She has tears in her eyes.

He nods at her: a solid, steadying look. He kisses her again, kisses her belly, then EXITS.

A98 EXT. FRONT LAWN - DAY

A98

We're used to watching Danny walk toward the house. This time, we watch his son walking away from it... toward the unknown.

98 OMITTED

98

99 EXT. ONCOLOGY OFFICE - LATER

99

A medical office building in NYC.

A100 INT. ONCOLOGY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A100

Tom makes the long trek down the building's hallway, stops at a door, opens it, and...

100 INT. ONCOLOGY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

100

ENTERS the waiting room, turning a corner only to see...

Danny. Sitting there. Alone. Waiting.

Tom shakes his head, SIGHS. He checks in with a NURSE.

TOM

Tom Donnelly. Here for Dr. Silverman.

NURSE

Just have a seat, Mr. Donnelly.

Tom sits two seats away from Danny. They sit in silence for a long beat. Finally:

DANNY

Was she pissed?

TOM

No, she was thrilled. It's been a great few weeks, thanks.

DANNY

It's no excuse but it was a horrible night for me.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

Yeah, well, it was a worse one for
me, I assure you.

Silence. Long beat.

DANNY

Why isn't she...

100 CONTINUED: (2)

100

TOM

She can barely even move. Plus, whatever the news is, I want her to hear it from me. Not some doctor.

A beat, then...

DANNY

Tom, I--

VOICE (O.S.)

Mr. Donnelly?

The NURSE beckons. Tom STANDS. Danny STANDS with him. Tom SIGHS.

101 INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

101

Tom and Danny wait, on an EXAM TABLE, side by side.

Danny looks at Tom's foot. It's TAPPING, relentlessly. They sit there for a while like this. Finally:

TOM

If the news is bad...

Tom stops, gathering himself.

DANNY

Tom, c'mon--

TOM

No, listen to me. If this goes bad, Samantha, and Hope, and the baby--

DANNY

Will be taken care of. You don't need to worry about that.

Tom nods. He's starting to cry but doing the best he can to hold it back.

TOM

Okay. Good. Thank you.

A beat. Tom speaks, almost to himself:

TOM (CONT'D)

I am not ready to leave them. I am not ready.

Danny puts his hand on Tom's knee, steadying his shaky leg. Danny takes a deep breath himself.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

You know... this doctor, whenever he comes in here, he either calls you Mr. Donnelly or Tom? Ever notice that? Always one or the other. When he calls you Mr. Donnelly, it's never good news. Next thing you know he's shooting you with something that makes you throw up, or telling you he doesn't like your levels. I'm serious, I've taken notes, he literally does it every time.

(then)

But when he calls you Tom, it's always good news. Like that time he liked your white cell count, remember that? He called you Tom. So that's what we want right now. We want him to open that door, come in here, and call you "Tom." That's all we want. Let's focus on that, okay?

Tom nods, takes a deep breath.

TOM

Okay.

DANNY

It's going to be alright, Son. Everything will be alright.

TOM

(choking up)

You promise?

Danny looks at his son.

DANNY

Have I ever let you down before?

Tom CRACKS UP through his tears. Crying now...

TOM

You're a ridiculous man, you know that?

DANNY

I've been told, yes.

Tom considers the man sitting next to him, then, giving in to it... he puts his hand on top of his father's.

(CONTINUED)

The camera swings behind them, slowly, till it lands on their backs (facing the door). As it swings around, Danny continues talking, soothing.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Yep, he's just gonna open that door and call you Tom. It will all be alright. Everything will be alright.

We're behind them now, father and son, touching hands in silence. And just then...

The door OPENS. Their heads jolt up and we...

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END

But not before we hear, over black:

DOCTOR SILVERMAN (O.S.)

Okay, Tom, so here's where we are...

A NOTE TO THE READER:

In 1971, John Lennon read an interview in a small music magazine. The subject of the interview was a twenty-one year old musician named Steve Tilston. In the interview, Tilston admitted wondering if future wealth and fame might one day hinder his ability to write powerful songs.

And so... John Lennon wrote Steve Tilston a letter.

In the letter, Lennon offered Tilston advice and friendship, as well as his home phone number.

Steve Tilston did not receive the letter until 2005. He was nearly sixty years old at the time.