

TOO OLD FOR ROCK 'N' ROLL

A musical

By

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

HARRY, an aging rock 'n' roll legend

GLENDA, Harry's much younger wife

DJ FUNK-HOUSE, Harry's hip-hop recording studio tech

EMMA, Harry's physical therapist

ANA, Harry's ancient, elderly muse

BRODIE, Harry's long-time powerhouse manager

SETTINGS

Harry and Glenda's exotic bedroom

Harry's professional home recording studio

Harry's state-of-the art home gym

Ana's nursing home

Major concert arenas

Brodie's impressive management office

ACT I

SCENE 1

EXOTIC MASTER BEDROOM. PRESENT DAY.

An aging overweight man, HARRY, bolts up in bed gasping for air, waking his younger wife, GLENDA.

GLENDA

What!

HARRY

I - can't - breathe -

GLENDA

Again?

Instead of lecturing him, she calmly places a soothing hand on his back.

HARRY

I -

GLENDA

Don't try to talk. Remember what Dr. Polinka said. Yours is a mild sleep apnea. Calm down. Relax. Soon your breathing will return to normal.

Harry does his best to calm down. He takes slow, deliberate breaths and soon is breathing fine.

HARRY

I -

GLENDA

Thought you were dying. You said that last night and look-see, back to your charming, chipper self.

Disgruntled, Harry begins to climb out of bed, but he's racked with back pain.

HARRY

Ohhh!

GLENDA

Your sciatica.

HARRY

Don't -

GLEENDA

I'm not making light of it. I saw the MRI.
Dr. Polinka explained it perfectly.
"Degenerative disc disease."

HARRY

Extreme degenerative disc disease. Ohhh!

GLEENDA

Honey put your head on the pillow and go back
to sleep.

HARRY

I can't. I'm in too much pain. I'll be in the
studio.

GLEENDA

But -

Glenda starts to argue, but
surrenders via years of marriage.
She goes back to sleep despite her
husband's howling as he painfully
gets out of bed and heads for the
bedroom door.

HARRY

Owww!

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 2

HALLWAY. HARRY'S WALLS OF FAME.

Doddering HARRY ambles down the
corridor. The walls are crammed
with treasures from his past,
posters of a young, virile rock
star, platinum records, posters,
photos of sold-out arenas. Due to
his painful disc disease, Harry
stumbles into walls.

HARRY

Ohhh!

He agonizes to straighten whatever
he's knocked askew.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Owww!

He opens a door marked "Studio A,"
and tumbles inside.

SCENE 3

STUDIO A

HARRY'S home studio is elaborately filled with every known recording device, microphones, sound baffles, headphones, guitars, pianos, drum kits, and a mixing board behind which perches the young, omni-present tech assistant DJ FUNK-HOUSE.

DJ
Morning boss.

HARRY
Did you finish mixing?

DJ
Three a.m.

HARRY
How's it sound?

DJ
Like I predicted. Shit.

HARRY
For you that's a compliment.

DJ
Dog shit. Cow shit. Putrid diarrhea.

HARRY
Now I'm believing I have a hit.

DJ
Proof that dropping acid causes permanent brain damage.

HARRY
Let me hear it.

DJ
Glutton for punishment.

HARRY
I said playback.

DJ
You asked for it.

DJ hits a button. Out from the speakers comes a god-awful cacophony that even HARRY blanches at.

DJ (CONT'D)

Face it, man.

(hip-hop)

YOU ARE TOO OLD FOR ROCK 'N' ROLL
YOU'RE JUST NOT WHERE IT'S AT
SORRY TO BE SO FRANK SO COLD
YOU'RE WAY TOO SQUARE WAY TOO FAT

YES YOU WERE ONCE COOL AND GROOVY
FAR, FAR WAY BACK WHEN
NOW YOU'RE A BLACK AND WHITE OLD MOVIE
RERUN AND RERUN AND RERUN AGAIN

I HATE LIKE HELL TO BREAK THE NEWS
YOU'RE STUCK IN THE LAND OF OLDIES
IT'S OFFICIAL, MAN, DON'T LOOK CONFUSED
YOU'VE SUNK FROM GOLDIE TO MOLDY

YES YOU WERE ONCE COOL AND GROOVY
FAR, FAR WAY BACK WHEN
NOW YOU'RE A BLACK AND WHITE OLD MOVIE
RERUN AND RERUN AND RERUN AGAIN

RERUN AND RERUN AND RERUN AGAIN

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 4

KITCHEN

GLEENDA is pouring coffee, as she hears sounds of her husband stumbling down the hallway.

HARRY

(off stage)

Ohhh! Owwww!

GLEENDA

Fifth wife to a rock star. What did I expect? Studio 54 with Mick and Bianca? By the time Harry and I met, half of them were dead. John Lennon, gone. Janice Joplin, gone. Hendrix, Morrison, Keith Moon, gone, gone, gone. Sure, I have YouTube videos of Harry playing with all of them. Woodstock. The Concert for Bangladesh. Live Aid. But what did I get? Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve. And not the young, hip Dick Clark. The sad, slurring Dick Clark.

(She hears HARRY approaching)

HARRY
(off stage)

Owww!

GLEENDA
(sings)

I WISH I'D BEEN THERE
WISH I'D BEEN EVERYWHERE
WE MARRIED TOO LATE
I MISSED EVERYTHING GREAT

HE WAS MY TEENAGE DREAM
I JUMPED I SCREAMED
HIS POSTER ON MY WALL
A ROCK-GOD, AFTER ALL

THERE WAS NOBODY WAS LIKE
THAT SUPERSTAR WITH A MIC
IDOL OF THE BAND
DAMN, I MARRIED A MAN

I KNOW I SOUND TERRIBLE
SIMPLY UNBEARABLE
HORRIBLE, HATEFUL
SELFISH, UNGRATEFUL

HARRY
Where did it go? Does anyone know? The swag,
the song?

GLEENDA
I WISH HE'D HIT PLAYBACK
MAKE A COMEBACK
WISH HE'D START NEW
HONEY, IS IT IN YOU?

I KNOW I SOUND TERRIBLE
SIMPLY UNBEARABLE
HORRIBLE, HATEFUL
SELFISH, UNGRATEFUL

HARRY
Maybe I'll lose twenty years, forty pounds.
Maybe my muse will help me find my sound.

GLEENDA beseeches HARRY.

GLEENDA
Why don't you go see her?

HARRY
Who?

GLEENDA
Ana.

HARRY

Ana?

GLENDA

She always brought you good luck.

HARRY

You're my muse now.

GLENDA

And look what I brought you. Your two biggest flop albums.

HARRY

You always hated Ana.

GLENDA

I was young, jealous, protective of my turf.

HARRY

But Ana and I never -

GLENDA

Go see her. Please. For me.

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 5

GOLDEN HAWK NURSING HOME

A frail, elderly woman, ANA, is staring out the window. She barely budges when HARRY enters.

ANA

Hi sweetie.

HARRY

Love of my life.

ANA

Your flattery didn't get me in the sack way back when, it certainly won't do the trick now.

HARRY

Not even a blowjob?

ANA

Take my teeth out for a tub of lard like you?

HARRY

You wouldn't even when I was buff.

ANA

I gave you a choice years ago. A hit song or a fuck.

HARRY

Thanks to you I ended up with three hit albums.

ANA

And no fuck.

HARRY

The only one in my band you never slept with.

ANA

Including your backup singer, what's her name.

HARRY

Nina Maidstone.

ANA

Bitch dumped me for a bass player. A bass player!

HARRY

I could use your help now.

ANA

Surprise, surprise.

HARRY

All I need is a few hit songs.

ANA

(sings)

THAT'S WHAT THEY ALL SAY
JUST ONE MORE HIT SONG
THEY STRUGGLE ON THEIR OWN
BUT SOMETHING'S GOING WRONG

THEY CAN'T DREAM UP THEIR LYRICS
THEIR TUNES ARE NOTHING NEW
THEY THANK ME FOR THEIR OLD HITS
MY MUSE, I CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU

I'M THE MUSE OF ROCK 'N' ROLL
I HELPED THEM ALL, EVERYONE
I LISTEN TO THEIR PLEAS
PLEASE DON'T SAY I'M DONE

THE MUSE OF ROCK 'N' ROLL
HELP ME, LOVE, THEY SCREAM
I JUST CAN'T FIND IT ANY MORE
I'M RUNNING OUT OF STEAM

SORRY TO SAY I CAN'T HELP YOU
MY MUSING DAYS LONG GONE

YOU AND YOUR ROCKSTAR CRONIES
YOU'RE ALL NOW ON YOUR OWN

I'M THE MUSE OF ROCK 'N' ROLL
BEEN THERE FROM DAY ONE
I LISTEN TO THEIR PLEAS
PLEASE DON'T SAY I'M DONE

THE MUSE OF ROCK 'N' ROLL
HELP ME, LOVE, THEY SCREAM
THEY NEVER THOUGHT THEY'D GROW OLD
OR END THEIR ROCK 'N' ROLL DREAM

SORRY TO SAY I CAN'T HELP YOU
MY MUSING DAYS LONG GONE
YOU AND YOUR ROCKSTAR CRONIES
YOU'RE ALL NOW ON YOUR OWN

GOOD LUCK NOW ON YOUR OWN

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 6

STUDIO A

A frustrated HARRY is at the piano struggling to write a new rock song, somewhat good, somewhat stale.

HARRY
(sings)

OVER AND OVER AND OVER
ROUND AND ROUND AND ROUND
A SPINNING WHIRLWIND
LOST AND NEVER FOUND

He stops playing and looks to DJ for feedback.

DJ

Not bad. But it was better when you wrote it the first time. 1979. B-side "Nob Hill." I guess if you're going to steal from someone it might as well be yourself. I'll be in the kitchen drinking coffee with Glenda. If you get struck by a lightning bolt of originality, call me.

HARRY is glad when DJ leaves, but not glad when he continues to struggle at the piano. He tweaks the lyrics but the song sounds no better.

HARRY
(sings)
ROUND AND ROUND AND ROUND
A NIGHTMARE HANGOVER
LOST BUT REALLY DROWNED -

HARRY is disgusted that he can't find a groove. He stops, collects himself, and begins playing extremely well a BEETHOVEN SONATA. Harry's spirits lift as he continues to play.

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 7

HARRY'S HOME GYM

The gym is decked out with enough equipment to challenge a major training facility. HARRY enters with his new trainer, EMMA, young, fit, professional, a bit overwhelmed by the impressive array.

EMMA
I once trained for the Junior Olympics. We didn't have half this stuff.

HARRY
When I built this house, I was a total wellness fanatic.

There's a pregnant pause as EMMA eyes her pathetically out of shape client. Diplomatically, she forges ahead.

EMMA
Dr. Polinka filled me in on your situation. He showed me your MRIs and CAT scans. Extreme degenerative disc disease. Multi-level spondylosis at T12-L1. Broad disc bulge and early facet arthropathy with borderline stenosis. At L2-L3 there's a broad disc bulge. At L4-L5 a central to right paracentral disc herniation. At L5-S1 lateralizing disc osteophyte and borderline abutment on the adjacent nerve roots.

HARRY
Am I going to end up in a wheelchair?

EMMA

Hardly. Disc disease is like a common cold for people your age. By the way, when I told my grandmother I'd be treating you, she went nuts. She said she saw you at -

(she removes a note from her pocket and reads)

The Altamont Speedway Free Festival. My grandmother said you were, wait, I want to get her exact words -

(reads again from her notes)

Awright and outta sight.

(back to business)

Dr. Polinka said he explained to you the major inconvenience of disc disease. Pain. In your case pain in the lower spine with occasional episodes of sciatica, pain that travels along the path of the sciatic nerve, traveling from the lower back through the hips and buttocks and down each leg. There's no known cure for disc disease, however, there are ways to ease the pain. Dr. Polinka told me that you chose the old-fashioned way, physical therapy. Proper stretching exercises, which we will begin today, can bring pain relief. Hydrotherapy is often effective, however, we will need to travel to a health club with a swimming pool.

HARRY

I have a swimming pool. Actually, two. One indoor, one outdoor.

EMMA

Whoa. My grandmother will be impressed by that.

(back to business)

Of course, there's always prescription pain medication. Codeine. Fentanyl. Hydrocodone. Tramadol. Oxycodone. Dr. Polinka told me that he offered all of these to you, but you declined. Which is very unusual. Today, most people would jump at the chance of taking legally prescribed narcotics. In my experience, the only people that decline these potentially addictive medications are drug addicts trying to kick the habit. What about you, Harry? Are you a drug addict?

HARRY

Now?

EMMA

Ever?

Dodging, Harry looks at his watch.

HARRY

Christ. I'm due in the studio in an hour. We better get started.

EMMA

Understood. For our first exercise I need you to lie down on the table face up. Do you need help?

HARRY

No. I'm fine. Owww!

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 8

KITCHEN.

GLEENDA and DJ FUNK-HOUSE are drinking coffee.

GLEENDA

Do you think he has a chance?

DJ

Harry's a talented man.

GLEENDA

Enough for a comeback?

DJ

Every now and then an old-timer comes out of mothballs and lives to see another day. Tony Bennett was ninety when he teamed up with Lady Gaga. Billy Joel, very, very old Billy Joel, sold out Madison Square Garden. Hell, George Thorogood rocked like a madman into his seventies.

GLEENDA

But Harry. You're in the studio with him. What do you see?

DJ

Hmm.

GLEENDA

No hedging.

DJ

Let me put it this way. He's not Springsteen. Yet.

GLEENDA

Yet?

DJ

A push here. A shove there. Time will tell.

GLENDA

I don't have much time left.

DJ

Are you sick?

GLENDA

Sick of waiting. I signed up to be the wife of a rock star, not a nursemaid.

DJ

That's hard.

GLENDA

Hard but honest. Look, don't get me wrong. I love Harry to pieces. He's kind. Sweet. He's funny when he's not moaning and groaning. Don't think I haven't had golden opportunities to leave him. I was twenty-three years old when we got married. Twenty-three and hot. Maybe I'm approaching cougar territory but I'm still -

DJ

(raps)

WHEW, YOU GOT IT BABY, SIZZLE
NO DRIZZLE, NO FIZZLE
I'M TALKING MAJOR GRIZZLE
TWO WORDS, BABY, CRAZY SWIZZLE

OUCH, YOU ARE RED HOT
FLAMES ROARING FROM EVERY SPOT
MEDIUM RARE YOU ARE NOT
YOU'RE DANGEROUS, SSSS, RED, RED HOT

LET ME MAKE THIS OFFICIAL
MAYBE SOUND A BIT UNCIVIL
NOTHING ABOUT YOU SUPERFICIAL
YOU'RE A FOX-BOMB BALLISTIC MISSLE

WHEW, YOU GOT IT BABY, SIZZLE
NO DRIZZLE, NO FIZZLE
I'M TALKING MAJOR GRIZZLE
TWO WORDS, BABY, CRAZY SWIZZLE

LET ME MAKE THIS OFFICIAL
MAYBE SOUND A BIT UNCIVIL
NOTHING ABOUT YOU SUPERFICIAL
YOU'RE A FOX-BOMB BALLISTIC MISSLE

FOX-BOMB
BALLISTIC MISSLE

GLEENDA is duly impressed by DJ's singing and dancing.

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 9

HARRY'S HOME GYM

HARRY, on a floor mat, is in pain as he does some stretching exercises.

HARRY

Owww!

He stops when the door opens and GLEENDA enters.

GLEENDA

I've been searching the house for an hour. This is the last place I'd expect to find you.

HARRY

Had my first session with the trainer lady.

GLEENDA

And I see your pain level has plummeted from ninety to eighty-nine.

HARRY

A miracle worker that girl.

GLEENDA

Is she young? Cute? Firm?

HARRY

I couldn't see her over my fat belly.

GLEENDA

Was she goo-goo-eyed at meeting a rock 'n' roll legend?

HARRY

She wouldn't know me from Adam if not for granny.

GLEENDA

Granny?

HARRY

Her grandmother saw me at Altamont.

GLEENDA

Yet another famous event I witnessed only on YouTube.

HARRY

Trust me. You missed nothing. Especially the part when I got whacked in the head by a Hell's Angel.

GLEENDA

I'd've whacked him right bsck.

HARRY

I bet you would have.

GLEENDA

Why couldn't we have met sooner?

HARRY

Because you were in kindergarten.

GLEENDA

I missed out on all the glory, the glitz, the glamour.

HARRY

Like the four days I spent in a Madrid jail cell.

GLEENDA

Your weekend with Iman and David Bowie.

HARRY

My month in a rehab straitjacket.

GLEENDA

The Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame.

HARRY

Getting pried out of my smashed Lamborghini Countach.

GLEENDA

Occupational hazard of a rock star.

HARRY

Thank god you didn't go through that insanity.

GLEENDA

I could have handled it.

HARRY

Believe me. My past was totally pathetic. These are the best years of my life. You have me during my glory days.

HARRY goes to kiss GLENDA but his sciatica stabs him in agony.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Owww!

GLENDA comforts HARRY, kisses him gently, then heads for the door.

GLENDA

I'll go fix you a hot bath.

HARRY

Epsom salts?

GLENDA

Extra Epsom.

HARRY

Bubbles?

GLENDA

Double bubbles.

HARRY

My angel.

GLENDA

Your love.

GLENDA blows him a kiss and exits.
HARRY laments.

HARRY

Poor kid. I give her everything I have except the one thing she needs. My youth.

(sings)

SORRY I LIED TO YOU
SORRY I CHEATED
NOT WITH MALICE
NOT WITH ANOTHER WOMAN

NO, MY ROCK 'N' ROLL DAYS
WERE NOT HORRIBLE
THAT IS MY LIE TO YOU
TRUTH THEY WERE AMAZING

SOLD OUT STADIUMS
MOBBED BY FANS
LIMOUSINES
PRIVATE JETS

WHO'S WHO FRIENDSHIPS
MAGAZINE COVERS
PAPARAZZI
POLICE ESCORTS

JOURNALISTS SPREADING RUMORS
TRUE OR NOT
THINGS I READ ABOUT
NIGHTS I CAN'T REMEMBER

HANGING WITH RINGO
KEEF'S PRIVATE ISLAND
PARTIES WITH IGGY
MEETING ELVIS

YES, I CHEATED YOU
NOT ON YOU
YOU WERE CHEATED
OUT OF THE FUN

I LIED HOPING
YOU'D BELIEVE ME
YOU MISSED NOTHING GOOD
LIE, LIE, MY LIE

YOU, YOUNG, BEAUTIFUL
DEDICATING YOUR PRIME
TO AN OLD MAN
TO A MEMORY

YOU, DEDICATED
SELFLESS, LOVING
CAREGIVER TO A GHOST
ROCKSTAR MYTH

BUT
NOW
I
PROMISE

I
PLEDGE
TO
YOU

TRUMPETS BLARE
CYMBALS CRASH
DRUMS ROLL
GRAND ANNOUNCEMENT

YOU, MY LOVE
MY PRECIOUS WIFE
WILL FINALLY LIVE THAT
ROCK 'N' ROLL LIFE

NEW SONGS
BODY BACK
BEST BAND
ALL YOURS

OUT OF YOUR CAGE
END OF YOUR RAGE
RETURN TO TEENAGE
WITH ME ON STAGE

THE FUN
I CHEATED YOU OF
WILL NOW BE YOURS
I PLEDGE I PROMISE

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 10

A MEGA-IMPRESSIVE ROCK MANAGER'S OFFICE

The office is teeming with floor to ceiling rock 'n' roll memorabilia. BRODIE, powerhouse manager, speaks into his desk intercom.

BRODIE
Bring him right in.

The door opens and in walks HARRY.
The two men embrace.

HARRY
I can't believe you haven't retired yet.

BRODIE
I just signed two of the hottest hip-hop groups. Dump trucks of cash. Write me a rap song and I'll get it in the right hands.

HARRY
(raps)
ZIP ZAP RAP IS CRAP

BRODIE
Not bad. Bitter. But not bad.

HARRY
You used to sign only top talent.

BRODIE
I still do. You'd be shocked at how good these kids are. The new James Brown. The new Aretha. The new Eminem.

HARRY
With nothing intelligent to say.

BRODIE

Lest I remind you. Your first hit song? "Glue Me Up, Baby."

HARRY

(sings)

I'M UNSTUCK
JUST MY LUCK
PLEASE, PLEASE BABY
GLUE ME UP

BRODIE

A far cry from twenty years later.

HARRY

Don't rub it in.

BRODIE

"Harry Goes Beethoven."

HARRY

I was spreading my wings.

BRODIE

And I still have forty crates of unsold Harry Beethoven albums in storage.

HARRY

Bad marketing.

BRODIE

Bad idea. Harry, nobody stood in your corner like I did. When I told your record label that you were taking a hiatus from rock 'n' roll, do you have any idea what they called me?

HARRY

A genius.

BRODIE

A fucking asshole. And they called me even worse with your follow-up album, "Harry Goes Debussy." I still have sixty unsold crates of that brainstorm.

HARRY

I never said you weren't a dedicated manager.

BRODIE

I never said you weren't a gifted musician.

HARRY

A few reviews agreed with you.

BRODIE

Too few. The others circled the wagons. "How dare a rock 'n' roll interloper pretend he's a classical musician."

HARRY

When I was a kid, I studied Mozart, not Elvis. I was accepted to Juilliard.

BRODIE

Our publicity department beat that story into the ground. Instead of helping us it backfired. "A serious classical musician would never crawl into the gutter."

HARRY

Once a sell-out always a sell-out.

BRODIE

You're hardly alone. Before they moved me into music management, I started out in the book division. A few best-selling authors, a bunch of nickel-dimers. Then I read the manuscript of a first-time novelist. Knocked my socks off. Bold. Daring. Though there were only pennies representing an unknown, I bashed down doors for him. I forced that book into every major publisher. Random House. Simon & Schuster. Knopf. The reactions were stunning. "Wholly original." "Chilling." "Powerful." However, all agreed that on the business side, the subject matter was too unsettling to publish in a down financial market. The young writer, divorced now, broke, disheartened, moved to Hollywood and became a television scriptwriter. One day he created a blockbuster show for a major network. A sitcom. Number one ratings for four years. Burned out after being locked in a studio day after day, he left Hollywood, holed up in his country home, and wrote his second novel. I was surprised to hear from him after all those years. I explained to him that I was out of the book business but agreed nonetheless to read his manuscript. Breathtaking. Overwhelming. Heartbreaking. I immediately renewed my relationships in the publishing world. All agreed to read the book. The rejection letters? Utterly cruel. Utterly unfair. "Another sitcom writer tries to prove he's better than all that." "Yuk, yuk, lowly sitcom jokes." "He should never have left Hollywood." Also, not alone. Every time my rock stars try to spread their wings, they get it right between their eyes. "The American Songbook?"

(MORE)

BRODIE (CONT'D)

The American Disgrace." "Broadway. You mean
Shitway." That from the New York Times.

HARRY digests this, then responds.

HARRY

I forgot to mention. I'm ready to make a
comeback.

BRODIE

Brahms? Shostakovich?

HARRY

Rock 'n' roll.

BRODIE

Write me some fucking hit songs and we'll talk.

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 11

STUDIO A

HARRY is at the piano hitting dead
ends on songwriting. DJ FUNK-
HOUSE is at the recording console
trying hard not to react.

HARRY

(sings)

YOU ARE NOTHING TO ME NOW

He stops, rewrites.

YOU ARE EVERYTHING TO ME NOW

He stops, rewrites.

EVERYTHING, NOTHING, SOMETHING

He stops, rewrites.

SOMETHING FROM ME NOW

Disgusted, HARRY rips up the
lyrics then snaps at DJ.

HARRY (CONT'D)

You weren't recording were you.

DJ

Why waste energy.

HARRY
Hit playback.

DJ
You don't trust me?

HARRY
I don't want this showing up on a bootleg tape.

DJ
You flatter yourself.

To humor HARRY, DJ hits playback.
Nothing's on it.

HARRY
Sorry. I'm just frustrated.

DJ
No problem, boss.

Settling down, HARRY picks up his
guitar and starts playing a very
respectable riff, until DJ
observes.

DJ (CONT'D)
Pitch perfect "2120 South Michigan Avenue."

HARRY
The Stones?

DJ
You'd make Keith Richards proud.

HARRY searches.

HARRY
Remember "Heaven's Hell?"

DJ
Great album.

HARRY
I wrote six songs in eight hours.

DJ
Whew.

HARRY
Now I'm working a month-and-a-half and I don't
have one fucking lyric, one fucking guitar
lick, one fucking title.

HARRY buries his head in his hands. There's a silence that DJ finally breaks.

DJ
Mind if I make a suggestion.

HARRY
Not now.

HARRY returns to his silence, then, curious.

HARRY (CONT'D)
What?

DJ
What what?

HARRY
What's your suggestion?

DJ
Well, no offense, boss, but maybe your head is stuck in rock 'n' roll mud. Maybe times have changed. Maybe you should tune in to music today.

HARRY
I see. Today's music.
(raps)
BIG, BIG BOOTY
ROOTY-TOOT-TOOTY

DJ
Man, you're not hearing me. Today's music has a lot to say. Listen.
(raps)
CRACK MOM CRACK DAD
SURE I COME OUT BAD
THE THINGS I SEE
WHAT THEY XPECT FROM ME

DJ looks to HARRY for his reaction.

HARRY
Tech person.

DJ
Yes.

HARRY
Go back to the console and hit some buttons.

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 12

MASTER BEDROOM

HARRY is in bed, GLENDA is at her vanity removing makeup. She's heard enough complaining from her husband.

GLENDA
Maybe the kid has a point.

HARRY
DJ Funk-House?

GLENDA
His real name is Malcolm.

HARRY
Malcolm Funk-House.

GLENDA
C'mon, ease up on him. He's only twenty-two years old.

HARRY
By the time I was twenty-two I'd done three world tours. Won four Grammys. Plus, Song of the Year.

GLENDA
You also got help along the way. Signed by a big-shot manager. A big-shot record label. A big-shot PR firm.

HARRY
And we delivered the goods. Made millions for everyone.

GLENDA
Look, I'm not saying Malcolm's the next Michael Jackson. But the other day in the kitchen he sang a song to me. He was good. Real good. And he had some very nasty dance moves. Granted I'm not in the music business, but my hunch is that with the right break, Malcolm could -

GLENDA looks over to see that HARRY is sound asleep.

GLENDA (CONT'D)
(sings)

THE RIGHT BREAK

GIVE HIM A BREAK
GIVE US A BREAK
GIVE ME A BREAK
GIVE ME A BREAK
GIVE ME A BREAK

GLEENDA doesn't realize that HARRY is not asleep but listening carefully. He waits.

HARRY

Whenever you and I talk about my rock 'n' roll days I always try to convince you how horrible they were. The arrests. The car crashes. The straitjackets. I do that because I don't want you to think you missed out on anything. By the time you and I met I was deep into my rockstar exile. No Chuck Berry. No Jimi Hendrix. Only Beethoven, only Brahms. My musical dream. My fantasy. Having you with me made my life pure magic. Eden. Xanadu. It never crossed my mind that you'd want something more.

GLEENDA

And you're telling me all this, why? To make me feel better?

HARRY

No. I'm telling you this as an introduction. You are about to experience the life you were cheated out of. I've had several meetings with Brodie, I'm in the process of writing new songs, I'm working my body back into shape. Here's my gift to you, treasured wife. Coming soon to an arena near you. The Glenda and Harry Comeback Extravaganza. You and I are hitting the road. Rock 'n' Roll, baby. Brace yourself for the most incredible ride of your life.

(sings)

PACK YOUR PARTY SHOES
FISHNET STOCKINGS
BLACK LEATHER JACKET
ROCK 'N' ROLL IS KNOCKING

LEAVE THE BLAZERS HOME
THE LOAFERS TOO
YOU'RE HEADING SOMEWHERE
FEW PEOPLE DO

THE LAND OF MADNESS
NOT FAINT OF HEART
IF YOU NEED SANITY
DON'T EVEN START

HERE'S YOUR
ROCK TOUR MANUAL
HOW TO RUN FOR LIMOS
MIX HANGOVER CURES

HOW TO BITE
HEADS OFF BATS
TOSS TVS OUT WINDOWS
SMASH GUITARS, WHACK SMACK JACK

IT'S WILD ON THE PLANE
WILDER ON THE BUS
HOPE OUR DRUMMER DON'T
OVERDOSE ON US

HERE'S YOUR MANUAL
FOR ROCK 'N' ROLL TOURS
HOW TO RUN FOR LIMOS
MIX HANGOVER CURES

HOW TO BITE
HEADS OFF BATS
TOSS TVS OUT WINDOWS
SMASH GUITARS, WHACK SMACK JACK

WHACK SMACK JACK
WHACK SMACK JACK
GLENDA GO PACK
GLENDA GO PACK

They dance. GLENDA is in heaven.

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 13

THE NURSING HOME

ANA listens to HARRY'S woes.

HARRY (CONT'D)

I hope I know what I'm doing. In the old days
I'd put myself under the gun with deadlines.
I'd wait until the last second to write
material for a new album. I can still hear the
record executives screaming bloody murder,
"Harry! The release date is in five weeks! We
haven't heard one new song!" Sure enough, the
adrenalin would kick in and I'd write day and
night. Never failed. Never missed a release
date. Maybe that's why I told Brodie to start
booking venues. That's certainly why I told
Glenda to start packing her bags. I wanted to
put myself under the gun.

(MORE)

HARRY (CONT'D)

Now the tour is set, now there's no backing out, now I'm waiting for the trusty adrenalin to kick in. Waiting. Waiting. Waiting.

ANA

And what exactly do you expect from me? The right lyric? The right tune? The right riffs? Show you some tricks? Or maybe just suck your dick.

HARRY

All I want is this. I'm asking permission to write my new songs here. In your depressing nursing home. With you in your rocking chair. Darning shawls. Gumming your false teeth. You were once my greatest muse. Maybe you will be again. I'll either be a big hit with rock 'n' rollers. Or I'll do a worldwide tour of decrepit old age homes.

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 14

STUDIO A

DJ is at the console recording
HARRY's new ballad.

HARRY (CONT'D)

(sings)

THE LOCAL COFFEE SHOP
FILLED WITH MEN
REGALING STORIES
WHO WE WERE THEN

CEO, MAYOR
LAWYER, PERFORMER
NOW THE SAME TITLE
DISTINGUISHED FORMER

HARVEY YAWNS
DAILY CLICHÉ
TIME FOR MY
FIRST NAP OF THE DAY

DJ

Nice. Where did that come from?

HARRY

I'm working with an old friend.

DJ

Music director?

HARRY

A world-renowned groupie. Lying in bed with rock legends, she inspired hit song after hit song.

DJ

I hate to admit it, but your last few demos, one better than the next.

HARRY

That's Ana.

DJ

What the hell did she say to turn you around?

HARRY

Just a few simple words. For over a month Ana listened to me getting nowhere. No new tunes. No new lyrics. With the tour coming up fast I began to panic. One day I burst at the seams, "Ana, the tour's around the corner. Can I write a dozen new songs in three weeks?" Ana smiled and stated calmly, "Of course you can. You simply have to be willing to write terrible, horrible, rotten songs." There it was. The roadblock that was holding me back. Fear of writing terrible songs. I was petrified about not creating masterpieces. Me. Grammy winner. Me. Song of the Year. Me. Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. I had a lot to live up to. I had to be Harry the great. I had to push new musical boundaries. But Ana held the key. Write a terrible song? I can do that. Write a horrible song? Piece of cake. Write rotten songs? Hand me my guitar. I can write the rottenest songs ever written.

DJ

But your new songs aren't rotten.

HARRY

They'd be better if I used the word "booty."

DJ starts to box up the demo tapes.

DJ

When the tour starts, will you comp me a house seat?

HARRY

No can do.

DJ

Employee discount price?

HARRY

Your money's no good in this joint.

DJ

So, this is goodbye for me.

HARRY

Not quite yet.

DJ

Until the tour starts.

HARRY

Correct.

DJ

Then I'm gone.

HARRY

Unless you want to come with me.

DJ

On tour?

HARRY

I have a special job for you.

DJ

The mixing board.

HARRY

Sorry, kid, you're way too inexperienced for that tech level.

DJ

Lighting?

HARRY

You're not qualified to change a lightbulb.

DJ

Your personal assistant.

HARRY

That's a 24/7 job. I couldn't stand being around you that long.

DJ

Then what?

HARRY

What what?

DJ

What's my job on tour?

HARRY

My opening act.

DJ goes speechless.

HARRY (CONT'D)

I've heard you perform bits and pieces. Rap. Hip hop. Pretty good. Glenda has heard you perform entire songs. She thinks you're pretty great. Glenda says that if you just caught a break, you could be a star. Well, kid, here's your break. I'm not sure how many times you've performed in front of twenty-thousand people, but if you haven't, I strongly suggest you stay late and sharpen your chops. Twenty-thousand fans can be brutal, especially when they didn't pay to see you. They paid to see me. And if you fuck up, well, you've seen warm-up acts bomb. A fate worse than death. So, DJ Funk-House, or should I say Malcolm Funk-House, do you accept my job offer? Will you be my opening act?

DJ, still too overwhelmed to speak, melts in HARRY'S arms.

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 15

HARRY'S HOME GYM

EMMA is stretching out HARRY, still in a bit of pain but far less than before.

EMMA

Tell me if I push too hard.

HARRY

So far so good.

EMMA

How's this?

HARRY

Ow.

EMMA

Improvement. Two months ago, you'd have hit the roof.

HARRY

Think I'm ready?

EMMA

Depends on how crazy you go on stage.

HARRY

No more than usual.

EMMA

Leaping off a piano? Stage diving?

HARRY

Theatrical stunts. Easy to do. Perfectly safe.

EMMA

Like the time you fell off the stage and cracked your skull.

HARRY

Eighteen stitches and I was rarin' to go.

EMMA

Dr. Polinka and I agree. Tone down your act and you'll be okay.

HARRY

You mean stand nicely at the microphone and sing my songs.

EMMA

That'll work.

HARRY

For Jackson Brown and James Taylor.

EMMA

You'll kill yourself.

HARRY

Not with you on tour with me.

EMMA

I said I'll go, but I'm not a miracle worker.

HARRY

Here's proof you are.
(sings wildly)

I'M A ROCKER
I'M A ROLLER
HERE'S A SHOCKER
I GOT OLDER

HARRY finishes by falling on his knees and sliding across the floor.

EMMA

I hope they put an ambulance into your contract.

HARRY

Don't be a square.

EMMA

Here's the bottom line. Dr. Polinka is adamant. If you insist on performing the way you did when you were younger, you better be willing to take pain killers.

HARRY

Deal breaker.

EMMA

You've been off drugs and alcohol for eighteen years. Dr. Polinka feels it's risky either way. One, take your pain medication as prescribed, with me in charge of administering them responsibly. Or, two, leap off pianos and end up in a wheelchair for the rest of your life. Your choice.

HARRY considers then reminisces.

HARRY

We were playing a concert in London. We flew in the night before. I started drinking on the plane. When I reached our hotel, mounds of cocaine were spread out on the coffee table. By midnight I was deep into opium. I have no idea how I ended up driving one of the hotel's limousines. I sped past Buckingham Palace and decided to visit the Queen. Trust me, those fruity-looking palace guards with their fluffy hats sure know how to beat the shit out of a whacked-out rock star. We were shooting a music video in Paris. I showed up on the set still bombed from the night before. The costume designer needed a special needle to fix the hem of a space suit. She asked for a volunteer to sit in her car while she double-parked outside a sewing shop. She was cute, so I hopped in, downing a handful of uppers to level myself off. When we arrived at the sewing shop, she got out and ran inside, warning me not to move the car no matter how loud people honked their horns. Alone, I slid into the driver's seat, put the car in drive, and proceeded to smash into a truck three feet in front of me. All hell broke loose. People screaming at me. The truck driver throwing a conniption. Gendarmes arrived and pulled me from the car. They demanded to see my papers.

(MORE)

HARRY (CONT'D)

No driver's license. No passport. They held me for hours until someone, somewhere, pulled strings to get me released. I scrambled back to the video set and danced in front of the cameras, reenergizing by snorting whatever they put in front of me. I remembered nothing about the video shoot until I saw it on MTV. A month later I met a girl in a bar in Los Angeles. By the next day we were in a hotel in Taxco, Mexico. It took three days for my drunken haze to lift before I could check my answering machine. There were countless furious messages from Brodie, "Harry, you fuck! Where the hell are you? You missed the concert in San Francisco! I had to refund more money than you're worth! You fuck!" After downing a bottle of Pernod, I called Brodie. He screamed at me like never before. Then, drunk as a skunk, I uttered the perfectly logical explanation for missing the San Francisco concert. "Brodie," I exuded, glancing at the girl I met in the bar, asleep on the floor in a pool of vomit, "I'm in love." A week later I was in a van heading to a rehab facility in Palm Springs, California, restrained in a straitjacket.

HARRY gestures to EMMA,
emphatically.

HARRY (CONT'D)

No pain meds. Or no tour.

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 16

BRODIE'S OFFICE

BRODIE is addressing GLENDA, DJ,
EMMA and HARRY

BRODIE

Welcome everyone. Our incredible, indispensable core group, soon to be joined on our world tour by a gargantuan road crew of audio technicians, lighting wizards, stage designers, construction hardhats, logistic experts, security details, guitar techs, drum techs, hair stylists, makeup and wardrobe artists, structural engineers, accountants, lawyers, and a back-up band of master musicians.

(MORE)

BRODIE (CONT'D)

This is a far cry from how Harry and I started out when we were growing up in New Jersey. I was in my bedroom strumming a guitar when my kid brother Nick barged in without knocking. He wanted me to meet his new friend Harold, a skinny, goofy-looking kid carrying a three-dollar plastic Roy Rogers toy guitar. Nick wanted me to hear Harold play. Big brother that I was, I kicked them out of my room. Ten minutes later I heard music coming from my brother's bedroom that I couldn't believe. Did Chuck Berry sneak in through an open window? Curious, I went to my brother's room. There was the skinny, goofy kid, Harold, pounding that plastic Roy Rogers guitar and somehow making it sound like it was coming from a radio. Quickly, I ran into my bedroom, grabbed my guitar, ran back and joined in, motioning Nick to flip over a wastebasket and start playing drums. Within a week we had fourteen songs down pat and a name for our band, Roy and Trigger, in honor of the famous cowboy and his trusty horse. Within months Roy and Trigger won the school's talent contest and were asked to play at the senior prom. In gratitude, the head of the music department gifted us a used acoustic guitar for Harold, an old stand-up bass for me, and a rusty drum kit for Nick. Imagine, a trio of New Jersey nobodies with legitimate musical instruments. Not realizing that I was laying the groundwork for what would become my life's work, I began knocking on doors, bashing on them if necessary. Soon Roy and Trigger were playing at the local Rotary Club, bowling alleys, birthday parties. Roy and Trigger was now the hottest band in Hackensack. However, that was nowhere near enough for my greedy teenage ambition. I read an article in the Star Ledger that the Beach Boys, a hot new California surfer group, was coming to play a concert at The Mosque Theatre in Newark. The last paragraph noted that their warm-up act had the flu, and they were scouting for a replacement. I spent the next four days and nights on the telephone, calling, getting hung up on, calling again, and again, and again, until the booking agent was so worn down he told us to come in for an audition. Three songs into it, we had our first contract, and soon our first poster: THE BEACH BOYS in gigantic letters and, in teeny, tiny print, Roy and Trigger. Little did we know that sitting in the audience was the President of a major record label. He met us backstage, signed us on the spot, fired me as bass player, but kept Nick as the drummer.

(MORE)

BRODIE (CONT'D)

Then there was the problem with our name, Roy and Trigger. The President axed that immediately and replaced it with just plain "Harold," then grimaced and pronounced "Harry." That was it, the name. No debate. Harry. Then the President of the record company turned and pointed to me, "You. What's-your-name. A know-nothing kid from New Jersey with the brainpower and guts-power to put this whole shindig together. You. What's-your-name. You are now Harry's manager. You. What's-your-name. Don't just sit there. Go out and make Harry a star." Which is precisely what I did. Harry the star. Harry the superstar. Harry the megastar. Truth be told, without me, our Harry would be back in Hackensack, sitting alone in the basement, plucking his plastic Roy Roger's toy guitar. Hey, Harry, step up here and tell these rookies what lies ahead for them. You've been rehearsing your ass off. We're on our way to the greatest Harry World Tour ever.

HARRY steps forward, thinks about what he wants to say, then bursts into song that turns into a major production number featuring the entire ensemble.

HARRY

(sings)

FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELTS
BUCKLE UP WE BLASTOFF SOON
HOLD ON FOR DEAR LIFE
OUR ROCKET SHIP TO THE MOON

GLENDA

(sings)

HE PROMISED ME HEAVEN
MY HUSBAND MY IDOL
HE DELIVERED THE GOODS
I FEEL LIKE A NEW BRIDAL

DJ

(sings)

I'M AN OPENING ACT
IN GOOD COMPANY
HENDRIX, PRINCE
THE BEATLES AND ME

EMMA

(sings)

WHAT AM I DOING HERE
A MUSICAL KLUTZ
I'M A THERAPIST
THIS IS NUTS

BRODIE
(sings)
MY UMPTEENTH ROAD SHOW
EIGHT HUNDRED I'M TOLD
MY BIRTHDAY SAYS I AGED
BUT THIS NEVER GROWS OLD

HARRY
(sings)
FASTEN YOUR SEATBELTS
BUCKLE UP WE BLASTOFF SOON
HOLD ON FOR DEAR --

HARRY falls, grabs his back, cries out in pain. Alarmed, the others lunge to help. Harry times it perfectly, jumping high up into the air.

Kidding!
HARRY (CONT'D)

The ENSEMBLE recovers, then picks up where they left off.

ENSEMBLE
(sings)
HALLELUJAH HOORAY
IT'S TIME NOW TO PLAY
LET'S PRAY NO DELAY
WE BLAST OFF TODAY

BRODIE
Tomorrow.

DJ
Tomorrow?

EMMA
Technically, he's correct

GLENDA
The tour starts tomorrow.

HARRY
Fine, let's go again.

ENSEMBLE
(sings)
HALLELUJAH HOORAY
IT'S TIME NOW TO PLAY
LET'S PRAY, NO DELAY
WE BLAST OFF TOMORROW

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 17

MASTER BEDROOM

HARRY is conked out, but GLENDA is too euphoric to sleep.

GLENDA
(sings)

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT
I REALLY CAN'T
BELIEVE IT CAN'T
BELIEVE IT I
REALLY, REALLY
REALLY CAN'T
REALLY, REALLY
REALLY, REALLY
CAN'T BELIEVE -

Her singing and euphoria come to an abrupt halt when HARRY bolts up in bed, gasping for air.

HARRY

I -

GLENDA

Harry.

HARRY

Help -

GLENDA

Try to relax. Breath slowly. Calmly.

HARRY tries to relax, but his body convulses, and he sounds as if he's choking to death. Alarmed, Glenda goes for the telephone.

GLENDA (CONT'D)

I'm calling 9-1-1.

As she dials, HARRY stops her. He's breathing a bit better.

HARRY

I'm starting to -

GLENDA

Easy.

HARRY

Breathe again.

GLEENDA

Slowly.

HARRY

I think I'm okay now.

GLEENDA

This is the worst it's ever been.

HARRY

Tomorrow we go - world tour - anxiety attack.

GLEENDA

I hope that's all it is.

HARRY

I haven't been on stage in while.

GLEENDA

If it's going to kill you, call it off.

HARRY

No way.

GLEENDA

How do you feel now?

HARRY

Better. Much better.

They sit in bed and rest quietly.
HARRY'S breathing grows more and
more normal.

HARRY (CONT'D)

I'll go into the studio and practice a bit.

GLEENDA

You sure?

HARRY

I always did this before a new gig.

GLEENDA

If that's what you want.

HARRY slides out of bed and grabs
his back.

HARRY

Ow.

TRANSITION TO:

STUDIO A

HARRY enters and sits down. He's a nervous wreck. He doesn't notice that GLENDA has entered quietly, concerned, checking on her husband. HARRY tries playing his guitar but is all thumbs. He tries some dance moves but is extremely awkward.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Face it, man.

He sings, but his voice cracks.

HARRY (CONT'D)

(sings)

I'M TOO OLD FOR ROCK 'N' ROLL
I'M JUST NOT WHERE IT'S AT
SORRY TO BE SO FRANK SO COLD
I'M WAY TO SQUARE WAY TOO FAT

YES I WAS ONCE COOL AND GROOVY
FAR, FAR, WAY BACK WHEN
NOW I'M A BLACK AND WHITE OLD MOVIE
RERUN AND RERUN AND RERUN AGAIN

I HATE LIKE HELL TO BREAK THE NEWS
I'M STUCK IN THE LAND OF OLDIES
IT'S OFFICIAL, MAN, DON'T LOOK CONFUSED
I'VE SUNK FROM GOLDIE TO MOLDY

YES I WAS ONCE COOL AND GROOVY
FAR, FAR, WAY BACK WHEN
NOW I'M A BLACK AND WHITE OLD MOVIE
RERUN AND RERUN AND RERUN AGAIN

RERUN AND RERUN AND RERUN AGAIN

HARRY is surprised to hear GLENDA singing at the doorway.

GLENDA

(sings)

I HEAR LOUD AND CLEAR WHAT YOU'RE SAYING
THOSE VOICES KNOCKING YOU SPLAT
NOW GRAB YOUR GUITAR AND START PLAYING
AND TELL THOSE DOUBTS, FUCK THAT!

HARRY applauds her effort. She repeats it, even stronger.

GLEENDA (CONT'D)

(sings)

NOW GRAB YOUR GUITAR AND START PLAYING
AND TELL THOSE DOUBTS, FUCK THAT!

HARRY'S confidence seems to grow.

HARRY

Fuck that.

GLEENDA

(belts it out)

NOW GRAB YOUR GUITAR AND START PLAYING
AND TELL THOSE DOUBTS, FUCK THAT!

HARRY'S now a monster. He screams
at his doubts.

HARRY

Fuck that you fucking motherfuckers!

Harry grabs his guitar and starts playing. He's a bit restrained at first, but gets looser and looser, stronger and stronger, until the theatre audience is witnessing a blistering guitar solo, the best ever played, a reminder of how good Harry was in the past, and a glimpse into how spectacular he'll be in the future.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE 1

CONCERT STAGE

If anyone in the theatre audience has never seen a wild, all-out rock 'n' roll show, they're seeing one now. HARRY is blowing the roof off, backed by a scorching band. The stage is decked out with a gigantic "Harry" neon sign, smoke effects, strobe lights, pyrotechnics. HARRY is pulling out all stops, knee slides, climbing on then jumping off pianos. He's enjoying every minute of being back in the spotlight. He shows no signs of physical pain at even his most raucous theatrical antics.

HARRY (CONT'D)
(sings)

OKAY, SO MAYBE I AM A BIT OF A DREDGE
NO DOUBT I AM ROUGH AROUND THE EDGE
SURE I TALK ROCKY AND GRITTY
BUT I'M THE ONE THAT GOT MISS PRETTY

HER FRIENDS SURE CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY
I'M THE ONE SHE CALLS HER GUY
THEY FIX HER UP WITH A PERFECT CATCH
SHE ALWAYS TELLS THEM I'M HER MATCH

WHO KNOWS WHY SHE GOES FOR ME
I'M NOTHING SPECIAL FAR AS I CAN SEE
JUST ANOTHER LUMP ON THE LOG
BUT SOME GIRLS GO FOR A JERSEY DOG

ONE DAY WE BUMPED INTO HER EX
NICE GUY I SAID AFTER HE LEFT
HANDSOME, RICH, MASTER'S DEGREE
SHE JUST YAWNED THEN KISSED ME

WHO KNOWS WHY SHE GOES FOR ME
I'M NOTHING SPECIAL FAR AS I CAN SEE
JUST ANOTHER LUMP ON THE LOG
BUT SOME GIRLS GO FOR A JERSEY DOG

SOME GIRLS GO FOR A JERSEY DOG

THAT'S WHAT I AM

A

JERSEY

DOG

The song ends with a flurry, the crowd goes wild, then HARRY grabs the mic.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Hello, New Jersey. My home state. I was and always be -- a Jersey Dog.

There's a deafening roar that takes a while to die down.

HARRY (CONT'D)

And, no, this isn't an oldie show. Here's a new one.

The band breaks into another hard-driving rock song.

HARRY (CONT'D)

(sings)

I'M WORKIN'
HARDER AND HARDER
EVERY DAY
NINE TEN HOURS
NOW SATURDAYS
PRICES SOAR
HEAT GAS TIMES TEN
WEDNESDAY COMES
I'M BROKE AGAIN

I'M FLIPPIN' OUT
MY NERVES ARE SHOT
PEACE OF MIND
I SURE DON'T GOT
CAN'T RELAX
CAN'T EAT CAN'T SLEEP
DOWN AND DOWN
I'M SINKIN' DEEP

EMOTIONAL COMMOTION
KILLIN' MY BRAIN
THIS THAT THAT THIS
DRIVIN' ME INSANE
TURMOIL CRAZY
SO MUCH IT'S A CRIME
NOW YOU KNOW WHY
I'M BAKED ALL THE TIME

EMOTIONAL COMMOTION
MORNING NOON NIGHT
BUGGIN' WIGGIN'

TOTALLY UPTIGHT
FREAKIN' OUT
NO REASON NO RHYME
NOW YOU KNOW WHY
I'M FRIED ALL THE TIME

I TRY TO TAKE
MY MIND OFF THINGS
TV, TWITTER
ZING AFTER ZING
WAR HERE RIOTS THERE
NOTHIN' BUT TROUBLE
EVERYWHERE

EMOTIONAL COMMOTION
KILLIN' MY BRAIN
THIS THAT THAT THIS
DRIVIN' ME INSANE
TURMOIL CRAZY
SO MUCH IT'S A CRIME
NOW YOU KNOW WHY
I'M BAKED ALL THE TIME

EMOTIONAL COMMOTION
MORNING NOON NIGHT
BUGGIN' WIGGIN'
TOTALLY UPTIGHT
FREAKIN' OUT
NO REASON NO RHYME
NOW YOU KNOW WHY
I'M FRIED ALL THE TIME

NOW YOU KNOW WHY
I'M CROCKED ALL THE TIME

NOW YOU KNOW WHY
I'M BUZZED ALL THE TIME

NOW YOU KNOW WHY

The audience roars again as HARRY
does a stage dive.

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 2

BACKSTAGE GREEN ROOM

BRODIE, EMMA, and DJ FUNK-HOUSE
pile in ecstatic. Off stage are
the sounds of thundering
applause, and demands for more,
more, more. HARRY sticks his head
into the green room.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Third encore. Can't disappoint the fans. Did that once in Detroit and they nearly destroyed the joint. Right Brodie?

HARRY doesn't wait for an answer.
He darts back to the stage.

BRODIE

Harry's not lying. They tore up three rows of seats and lit the curtains on fire. Our insurance company went ballistic. Tripled our premiums. Property Damage and Bodily Injury.

GLENDA

Oh, this is a dream come true.

DJ

Nobody threw rotten tomatoes at me.

EMMA

I hope Harry doesn't end up in emergency.

BRODIE

Packed house like the old days.

GLENDA

The poster I hung on my wall now alive.

DJ

I think they liked "Crack Mom Crack Dad."

EMMA

I cheered when he jumped off the piano.

BRODIE

It was like watching twenty-year-old Harry.

GLENDA

I screamed like a teeny-bopper.

DJ

I'm not sure about "Ghetto Needle Jabber."

EMMA

I'm a health professional and I went wild.

BRODIE

The superstar of superstars.

The door opens and HARRY enters
for good.

HARRY

I played a nine-bar guitar solo and begged them to go home.

He's mobbed by the others.

GLEENDA

You were spectacular.

BRODIE

Better than ever.

DJ

Did I do okay?

EMMA

Anything hurt?

BRODIE

Announcement time. I don't have to tell you how sensational tonight's show went. You were front and center. You saw the audience go absolutely berserk. What you didn't see were things happening behind the scenes. Several rock journalists texted me advanced reviews. "Harry Returns and Kills." "The Old Is Newer Than New." "Harry! Harry! Harry!" Three record companies approached me with deals. A top HBO executive pitched me a live Harry performance special. They're borrowing a page from the Elvis comeback playbook, "Aloha from Hawaii." Seen by one point five billion people in thirty-six countries. Ladies and gentlemen, what you saw tonight is just a teeny drop in the ocean. The Harry Ocean.

The group cheers and hugs. BRODIE pours four glasses of champagne and one club soda. He hands them out.

BRODIE (CONT'D)

Let's drink to Harry's smashing opening night.

GLEENDA

My true rock god.

DJ

An honor to open for you.

EMMA

A toast to Harry, still in one piece.

They toast and drink their champagne. Harry watches.

HARRY

Twenty years ago I would have cooked your champagne, added yeast, baking powder and a dash of battery acid. Here's to today.

Happily, HARRY downs his club
soda.

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 3

HOTEL SUITE BEDROOM

GLEENDA is deciding what to wear
for the after-party. HARRY flops
to the bed and grabs his back in
pain.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Ow.

GLEENDA

Did you take aspirin?

HARRY

A handful.

GLEENDA

Too many and you'll upset your stomach.

HARRY

Call Emma.

GLEENDA

She's on her way.

HARRY

The adrenalin has worn off.

GLEENDA rubs his back.

GLEENDA

You were unbelievable tonight.

HARRY

I aim to please.

GLEENDA

It was like watching you on YouTube.

HARRY

Now in the flesh.

GLEENDA

I never thought I'd see the day.

HARRY

You deserve every ouch of it.

The doorbell rings. BRENDA opens it. EMMA enters dressed in an ultra-hip outfit, stark contrast to her usual drab gym clothes.

EMMA

Ta-da. Health-worker to the stars.

GLENDA

You look amazing.

EMMA

Copied this outfit from Mojo Magazine.

GLENDA

I'm still deciding what to wear.

EMMA

You look stunning in your bathrobe.

GLENDA

Come on, help me pick something out.

EMMA

I forgot you're an after-party virgin, too.

GLENDA

I'm thinking all black.

EMMA

Maybe with red heels.

HARRY, vying for attention, lets out a mighty groan.

HARRY

Owwwww!

EMMA hurries to the bed.

EMMA

Turn over onto your back.

HARRY

Ouch.

EMMA

It was that fourth piano jump that did you in.

HARRY

I saw you in the front row, "wooo-wooo."

EMMA

Hey, I'm only human.

HARRY

What about my aching sciatica?

EMMA

Hold your arms above your head.

HARRY does, EMMA grabs his hands
and stretches mightily.

HARRY

That feels good.

EMMA

Roll to the side, bend your knees.

HARRY does, EMMA presses his legs
far down.

HARRY

Ahhh.

EMMA

Now. Take a hot bath. Then hit the hay.

HARRY

No more TLC?

EMMA

Sorry. Your wife and I are going *par-tay*.

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 4

HOTEL SUITE

The lights are out. It's late.
The doorbell rings, then rings
again, then again. Groggy, HARRY
stumbles out of bed and opens the
door.

HARRY

What the hell?

It's DJ FUNK-HOUSE.

DJ

Hi boss.

HARRY

What the fuck time is it?

DJ

Two.

HARRY

In the morning?

DJ

Brodie told me that after a show you'd stay awake until noon the next day.

HARRY

Yeah, back when I snorted four grams of cocaine an hour.

DJ

Want me to leave?

HARRY

I want you never to come in the first place.

DJ

Sorry.

DJ heads for the door but HARRY stops him.

HARRY

Damage done. I'm wide awake.

DJ

You weren't at the after-party I got worried.

HARRY

You. Worried. About me.

DJ

Everyone was expecting the star of the show.

HARRY

I'm sure they got over it very quickly.

DJ

Kind of.

HARRY

As soon as they opened the buffet.

DJ

Now that you mentioned it.

HARRY

Typical rock 'n' roll after-party.

DJ

It was my first and it was a gas.

HARRY

Did you see Glenda?

DJ

We danced four dances together.

HARRY

My wife has some moves.

DJ

When I left she was shuffling with Brodie.

HARRY

Beauty and the Beast.

DJ

Your manager is, hmm, a total clod.

HARRY

The oaf of Roy and Trigger.

DJ

Who?

HARRY

The pride of Hackensack.

DJ

That's near Englewood, no?

HARRY

Is this why you came here?

DJ

Huh?

HARRY

To play New Jersey trivia?

DJ

Not exactly.

HARRY

Exactly.

DJ

I wanted to ask you something.

HARRY

Ah.

DJ

What did you think of my opening act?

HARRY

Sorry to say I didn't see it.

DJ

You were standing in the wings.

HARRY

With the costume designer, hair, makeup, lighting director, and an entertainment reporter from The Times-Picayune. She wanted an inside scoop on our upcoming show in New Orleans.

DJ

So you didn't see me at all.

HARRY

I could hear the crowd applaud. Politely.

DJ

That's what bugs me.

HARRY

You were expecting a standing ovation.

DJ

Kind of.

HARRY

So did Roy and Trigger. We were stunned that the audience was actually more interested in seeing The Beach Boys.

DJ

At least you came away with a recording deal.

HARRY

Different times. Back then, record companies sent out A&R guys to scout for new talent. Today, if you want to get signed, go on social media and collect a hundred million thumbs up.

DJ

Been there done that. Tons of likes, no bites.

HARRY

Let me see what you did tonight.

DJ

Here?

HARRY

Try not to wake up the hotel manager.

DJ

Can I push this table out of the way.

HARRY

Just don't throw it out the window.

DJ clears away some furniture and sets himself.

DJ

I start with some boom-boom-a-boom-boom.

HARRY

Boom-boom away.

DJ

(raps)

BOOM-BOOM-A-BOOM-BOOM
CHECK IT OUT, MY SISTA
HERE'S YOUR NEW MISTA

DJ stops singing and explains.

DJ (CONT'D)

This is where I usually start dancing.

HARRY

Go ahead, bust a move.

DJ

Bust a move?

HARRY

They don't say that any more?

DJ

Not for twenty years.

HARRY

Next you'll tell me the Frug is dead.

DJ

Man, you are a dinosaur.

DJ goes back to rapping and dancing.

DJ (CONT'D)

(raps)

BOOM-BOOM-A-BOOM-BOOM
CHECK IT OUT, MY SISTA
HERE'S YOUR NEW MISTA

BOOM-BOOM-A-BOOM-BOOM

NO FUNK, NO LIES
I SEE US IN YOUR EYES

BOOM-BOOM-A-BOOM-BOOM

SAY CIAO TO THAT SAP
YOU SITTING ON HIS LAP

BOOM-BOOM-A-BOOM-BOOM

MOVE STRAIGHT OVER HERE
YOU AND ME, SO DAMN CLEAR

BOOM-BOOM-A-BOOM-BOOM

CHECK IT OUT, MY SISTA
HERE'S YOUR NEW MISTA

Song over, DJ looks to HARRY,
who's been listening with keen
interest.

DJ (CONT'D)

Well?

HARRY

I won't comment on the lyrics. Lyrics are the
songwriter's heart, soul, story. So I'll make
a few notes about your performance. Good
dancing. Sometimes very good. But overall,
derivative. I've seen most of those moves by
others. Snoop. Biggie. Kendrick Lamar. Yes,
I watch. I listen.

DJ

You never copied others.

HARRY

Sure I did. James Brown.

HARRY dances "The James Brown."

HARRY (CONT'D)

Michael Jackson.

HARRY dances "The Moon Walk."

HARRY (CONT'D)

But I settled on the Nicholas Brothers.

DJ

The Nicholas what?

HARRY

A dance team from the nineteen thirties. They
were pure magic on stage. Perpetual motion.
They jumped up on pianos. Jumped off. Slid on
their knees. Sound familiar? Tonight,
everyone in the audience thought they were
seeing Harry's signature moves. In reality,
they were watching the Nicholas Brothers. DJ
Funk-House, do some homework.

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 4

CONCERT STAGE - NEW ORLEANS, ATLANTA, SAN ANTONIO

In a whirl of different locations, HARRY performs with break-neck abandon. He starts out in a New Orleans arena, leaping, sliding, holding back nothing.

HARRY (CONT'D)

(sings)

HEY, DRIVER, WHY'D YOU STOP
HIT THE GAS PEDAL CHOP-CHOP
DON'T BE DRIVING LIKE A SLUG
SPEED IT UP, PULL THE PLUG

HARRY'S now knocking them dead in Atlanta, but is showing signs of pain.

HARRY (CONT'D)

(sings)

GET THIS CRATE MOVING, HIGHEST SPEED
ONE HUNDRED MPH IS WHAT I NEED
IF YOU INSIST ON DRIVING SLOW
FORGET IT, PAL, MY MIND WILL BLOW

HARRY'S body is very uncomfortable in San Antonio.

HARRY (CONT'D)

(sings)

STUCK IN TRAFFIC, DON'T BE CHICKEN
SWING LEFT, DRIVER, UP THE SIDEWALK
BLAST YOUR HORN THEY'LL RUN AWAY
THEN FLOOR IT, FRIEND, YOU'LL -

HARRY jumps off a piano and clutches his back in pain, but recovers enough to go on with the show.

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 5

HOTEL BEDROOM

A hurting HARRY is in bed. BRODIE is on his cell phone. EMMA is at the bedside, trying to help. GLENDA is at the door saying goodbye to someone.

GLEENDA

Thank you, Doctor. We'll keep him still.

HARRY

Fuck no.

EMMA

Calm down, Harry.

HARRY

We're due in Phoenix tomorrow.

BRODIE

I already cancelled Phoenix.

HARRY

What the fuck!

HARRY bolts up but screams in pain.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Owwwww!

EMMA

Lie back down.

GLEENDA

Easy.

BRODIE

I haven't canceled Denver. Yet.

Resigned, HARRY painfully lies back down.

HARRY

When's Denver?

BRODIE

Three days from now.

HARRY

Emma, can you get me in shape?

EMMA

Let's give it a go. Roll over on your stomach.

HARRY tries, but the pain is excruciating. He can't turn over.

HARRY

Give me a minute.

HARRY takes some deep, determined breaths then goes to roll over, but his body won't budge.

GLEENDA

Honey, maybe we should cancel Denver.

BRODIE

A simple phone call and it's a done deal.

HARRY

This from Mr. Forty-bucks-for-a-tee-shirt.

BRODIE

If you're not healthy, we have nothing.

GLEENDA

It's just not worth it.

BRODIE

Your mind's twenty but your body's ninety.

EMMA

Dr. Polinka warned me you'd end up like this. We urged you to tone down your performance. We urged you not to go crazy on stage.

HARRY

What are my options now?

EMMA

Do you want to continue with the tour?

HARRY

The entire schedule.

EMMA

Pain medication or toning down your act.

GLEENDA

And if he chooses meds?

EMMA

For starters?

GLEENDA

Yes.

EMMA

He'll be able to roll over in bed.

BRODIE

What about his stage act?

EMMA

He'll get through.

GLEENDA turns to HARRY.

GLEENDA

What do you think about taking pain meds?

HARRY

Hmm.

EMMA

You're not sure.

GLEENDA

It's been eighteen years.

BRODIE

I don't want to pay for a trashed hotel suite.

EMMA

I'll keep all pills under lock and key. You'll take one in the morning, one at night. Strictly as prescribed. Addiction proof.

HARRY contemplates what he's heard.

HARRY

Brodie?

BRODIE

Yes, old friend.

HARRY

Don't cancel Denver.

BRODIE

You'll take the meds.

HARRY

No. Plan B. I'll tone down my act.

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 6

CONCERT STAGE

HARRY is looking healthier but more subdued. He speaks into the microphone.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Hello, Denver. It's great to be back. The last time I was here, as some of you remember, I got a little wild, fell off the piano, and cracked my skull.

(MORE)

HARRY (CONT'D)

Three songs into the evening and the show was over. Tonight, to avoid a repeat of that sad event, I'll be slowing down the pace a bit. Harry unplugged. Here's a ballad I wrote years ago while breaking up with wife number three.

HARRY grabs an acoustic guitar, sits on a stool, and sings a mellow ballad.

HARRY (CONT'D)

(sings)

THERE'S ALWAYS A STORY
WHEN THE TIME COMES TO PART
IT ENDS WITH I'M SORRY
AND BROKEN HEARTS

THERE'S ALWAYS A REASON
LOVE STARTS TO WANE
LIKE THE CHANGING OF SEASONS
JOY TURNS TO PAIN

ALL LOVE ENDS THE SAME
NO MATTER WHY OR WHO'S TO BLAME
NO MATTER WHAT BROKE THE CHAIN
ALL LOVE ENDS THE SAME
ALL LOVE ENDS THE SAME

THERE'S ALWAYS AN EXUSE
WHY THINGS AREN'T AS THEY'D BEEN
YOU SMILE BUT IT'S NO USE
WE'RE ALONE AGAIN

THERE'S ALWAYS AN ANSWER
TO ALL QUESTIONS ASKED
LIKE A STAGE-ACTING DANCER
IN A TRAGIC MASK

ALL LOVE ENDS THE SAME
NO MATTER WHY OR WHO'S THE BLAME
NO MATTER WHAT BROKE THE CHAIN
ALL LOVE ENDS THE SAME

The song ends to enthusiastic applause, but far more restrained than when Harry went wild on stage.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Thank goodness this song is dead wrong.
Because I finally found love that never ended.

HARRY points to the wings.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Glenda come on out and wave hello to these fine people. Don't be shy. Everyone, say hello to my lovely wife Glenda.

Surprised, GLENDA steps out onto the stage and waves to the audience. There are nice cheers, and HARRY blows Glenda a kiss as she hurries back into the wings.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Some of you might remember gossip columnists writing about my ill-fated fourth wife, the Contessa. What a mess. The Contessa was actually that, a real Contessa. Wealthy, sophisticated, certainly no match for a lowly Jersey boy like me. But, hey, I was young and impressionable and thought I'd really enjoy life among the European jet set. What an idiot.

(sings)

I CAUGHT YOU STARING AT THE WALL
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN
HAVE YOU LOST INTEREST IN ME
THIS ROOM IS FILLED WITH CHILLY WINDS OF FALL
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN
YOUR MIND'S A CLUELESS MYSTERY

WE SIT ACROSS TOGETHER
IN OUR SEPARATE CHAIRS
THE END IS EVERYWHERE
I SIT AND WATCH YOUR SILENT DISTANT STARES
I SEE YOU HERE BUT YOU'RE NOT THERE
YOU'RE HERE BUT YOU'RE NOT THERE

YOUR EYES ARE PEELED
ON A SPECK OF PEELING PAINT
WHAT DO THEY SEE
ARE YOU LONGING TO BE FREE
YOUR SPIRIT BRIMS WITH FINALITY
WHAT DO YOU NEED
SHOULD I SIT HERE SILENTLY

I ACHE TO SPEAK
BUT I FEAR TO EVEN DARE
I FEAR TO HEAR THAT YOU DON'T CARE
THIS ENDLESS SILENCE, SO DAMN UNFAIR
I SEE YOU HERE BUT YOUR'RE NOT THERE
YOU'RE HERE BUT YOU'RE NOT THERE

I CAUGHT YOU STARING AT THE WALL
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

The audience is enjoying this new, calm HARRY, however, there are a few dissenters.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 1

(off stage)

Enough of the sad stuff.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 2

(off stage)

Let's hear "Glue Me Up, Baby."

HARRY ignores them and begins a familiar ballad that the audience applauds.

TRANSITION TO:

ACT 7

CONCERT STAGE

It's early in the afternoon, pre-show. The theatre is empty, save for DJ, rehearsing some new, improved dance moves. GLENDA is sitting on an amp watching.

DJ

What do you think?

GLENDA

Nice.

DJ

Your husband helped me a lot.

GLENDA

Pays to listen to an old pro.

DJ takes a break.

DJ

You're really loving all of this.

GLENDA

More than I ever imagined.

DJ

Even with the tour on the skids?

GLENDA

I still love it.

DJ
Half-filled arenas.

GLEENDA
It's the time of my life.

DJ
Harry should never have gone acoustic.

GLEENDA
He had no choice.

DJ
Now I get more applause than he does.

GLEENDA
Because your act is terrific.

DJ
I'm working on it.

GLEENDA
Harry was right for choosing you.

DJ
Harry?

GLEENDA
He had faith in you from the beginning.

DJ
Glenda.

GLEENDA
What?

DJ
Your husband had nothing to do with this.

GLEENDA
Why would you say that?

DJ
He told me, "My wife thinks you're great."

GLEENDA
Nonsense.

DJ
Harry picked me to make you happy.

GLEENDA discontinues the
conversation.

GLEENDA
Go ahead, hot shot. Dance.

DJ

Only if you dance with me.

DJ switches on some slow music, dances over to GLENDA, takes her by the hand, and guides her into a beautiful, sensual pas de deux. When it ends their faces are a breath apart.

DJ (CONT'D)

You passed the audition.

GLENDA

One of your go-go dancers.

DJ

Not that kind of audition.

DJ goes to kiss her, BRENDA pulls away.

GLENDA

Whoa.

DJ

Hey, road tour, drugs, sex, rock 'n' roll.

GLENDA sets him straight.

GLENDA

When I was a teenager I had two posters taped to my ceiling. One, Harry. The other Nick Fales, voted sexiest rock star four straight years. I didn't know much about sex yet, but between the two of them, Harry and Nick on my ceiling, I wet myself to sleep night after night. Years later, when Harry was in exile recording his Beethoven album, who stopped by for the weekend? His old friend Nick Fales. Be still my heart. Nick Fales had just broken up with his second wife and needed advice from a true master. My husband Harry, four strikeouts to his name, had become an expert on all things divorce. In between their private chats, while Harry was locked away in his studio, Nick and I would talk for hours. It didn't take long for him to sense that part of me was a sad, disillusioned young wife. Gorgeous Nick Fales was well versed in dealing with women in need of escape. Gently, convincingly, he explained what I needed. A long weekend at his beachfront estate in Barbados. Nick then leaned over to kiss me. My lips met his and suddenly I pulled away. What on earth was I doing?

(MORE)

GLEENDA (CONT'D)

Yes, I was frustrated with my life with Harry. Yes, I bristled every time my husband asked me to listen to Beethoven Number Nine. But I would never betray Harry. Despite his exile from rock 'n' roll, despite the fact that he was growing fat and gimpy, Harry was mine and always would be. The moral of the story? DJ, even though you're incredibly sexy, and even though you're bound to become a huge recording star, if I turned down Nick Fales, the sexiest man alive, you don't stand a chance in hell. Now be a good kid and go back to your rehearsal.

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 8

CONCERT STAGE - THE WINGS

BRODIE and GLEENDA are watching HARRY perform, sitting on a stool and playing a beautiful, gentle acoustic guitar solo. The audience is rapt.

BRODIE

That's how talented your husband is. Operating at forty percent, he's still better than any performer out there.

GLEENDA

And every night I get to hear him practice at the foot of our bed.

BRODIE

Even at sixteen years old, when Harold played, everyone listened.

GLEENDA

Harold, such a cute name. I think I'll start calling him that.

BRODIE

He has and always will be sensational.

GLEENDA

The audience is mesmerized.

BRODIE

Mind you. They were half asleep during the opening act.

GLEENDA

Malcolm?

BRODIE

He's got a long way to go.

GLENDA

I think he's terrific.

BRODIE

I'm not saying he doesn't have talent.

GLENDA

Loads of talent.

BRODIE

Undeveloped.

GLENDA

But he's working so hard.

BRODIE

Opening acts have a history of starting out badly. A young performer bombed so horribly as an opener, he was told not to quit his day job. That opening act? Elvis Presley.

GLENDA

But then Elvis was signed by Colonel Tom Parker and the world changed.

BRODIE

A true, indisputable fact.

GLENDA

Why don't you become Malcolm's Colonel Parker?

BRODIE

One simple reason. I don't take on newcomers any more. I spent the first fifteen years of my career signing nobodies. Worked night and day getting them gigs in coffee houses. Loading their amps onto vans. Pestering A&R people to listen to their demos. Now I have the luxury of working with only established stars. Last week I signed the number one selling recording group. They came to my office with vengeance in their hearts. I told them I wanted to sign them and they jammed in the knife. "Five years ago," they said, "We pleaded with you to sign us. You looked at us and said, 'You're not ready for me.'" The group, satisfied with exacting their revenge, headed to the door until I responded unapologetically, "Well, now you are." They signed my contract and the next day I renegotiated their appearance fee from \$750,000 to -

BRODIE and GLENDA are thunderstruck when HARRY launches into an acoustic version of "Glue Me Up, Baby," complete with a knee slide that goes horribly wrong. Harry clutches his back and cries out in agony, then crumbles to the floor.

GLENDA

Harry!

BRODIE

Call an ambulance!

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 9

HARRY AND GLENDA MASTER BEDROOM

GLENDA is alone watching television.

TV ANCHOR

In other entertainment news, last night a painful injury brought the Harry comeback tour to a temporary halt. Harry, midway through a patented knee slide, clutched his back and writhed in agony before a team of paramedics rushed onto the stage and carried him away on a stretcher. The rock legend is now recovering in a hospital, where he underwent surgery for a ruptured spinal disk. The future of Harry's comeback tour is still unknown.

GLENDA turns off the TV.

GLENDA

(sings)

WHAT THE HELL DID I DO?
I ALMOST KILLED HIM, HOW'S THAT
MY SELFISH LACK OF GRATITUDE
WHINING LIKE A SPOILED BRAT

Attention moves to the GYM, where EMMA is watching television.

TV ANCHOR

Anonymous sources from inside Harry's entourage report that this was not an isolated injury. Coming out of retirement, Harry insisted on performing his signature breakneck theatrics that thrilled crowds when he was a young man.

(MORE)

TV ANCHOR (CONT'D)

Concert promoters observed Harry's intense pain, prompting the decision to slow things down to an unplugged format. Many of the crew members welcomed the slower pace, having previously worked for the likes of Michael Jackson, Prince, Tom Petty. All of these superstars chose alternate methods of pain relief, Codeine, Oxycodone, Fentanyl, highly addictive narcotics that led to the performers' early and untimely deaths --

EMMA, hearing enough, turns off the TV.

EMMA

(sings)

WHAT THE HELL DID I DO?
I ALMOST KILLED HIM, HOW'S THAT
MY NAIVE FAITH IN PAIN KILLERS
I COULD HAVE LAID HARRY FLAT

Attention moves to BRODIE watching TV in his OFFICE.

TV ANCHOR

Things looked brighter two days prior to the incident when we spoke with Brodie Grant, Harry's long-time powerhouse manager. Brodie was outright excited about his client's upcoming performance at the renowned Greek Theater in Los Angeles. Here's what Brodie Grant had to say, "Yes, our legendary Harry experienced a few physical discomforts early in the tour. That's why we turned down the volume and went unplugged. However, Harry is feeling completely healthy now and is ready to return to his dynamic stage spectacle. Vintage knee drops, piano leaps. In fact, if you're driving down Sunset Boulevard you'll see our new billboards. HARRY! LIVE! PLUGGED!"

BRODIE turns off the TV.

BRODIE

(sings)

WHAT THE HELL DID I DO?
I ALMOST KILLED HIM, HOW'S THAT
HARRY GOING PLUGGED, HUH?
WHEN DID I TURN INTO SUCH A RAT

The attention shifts from each to the other, GLENDA in her bedroom, EMMA in the gym, BRODIE in his office.

GLEENDA

(sings)

HERE'S WHEN I FELL IN LOVE WITH HARRY
IT WASN'T DATING THE MAN OF MY DREAMS
ONE DAY I SHOWED HIM SOME PHOTOS I TOOK
HE PULLED OVER AND RAN INTO WALGREENS

EMMA

(sings)

MY AUNT BETTY BROKE HER NECK
DOCTORS PRESCRIBED MEDS FOR PAIN
ONCE SHE HEALED, HER NECK OKAY
SHE NEVER TOOK PAIN KILLERS AGAIN

BRODIE

(sings)

I'VE KNOWN HARRY SINCE WE WERE KIDS
WATCHED HIM GROW FROM BOY TO MAN
MARVELED WHENEVER HE TOOK THE STAGE
DOING HIM HARM, NOT PART OF THE PLAN

GLEENDA

(sings)

A ROCK STAR WITH UNLIMITED MEANS
ASSISTANTS READY AT HIS BECKON CALL
BUT FOR ME HARRY DID EVERYTHING HIMSELF
NOTHING WAS TOO BIG, NOTHING TOO SMALL

EMMA

(sings)

I CHECKED ON AUNT BETTY IN SECRET
BOTTOM OF HER BOTTLE, SIX PAIN PILLS
FOUR YEARS LATER I SNUCK A PEEK
THE SAME SIX PILLS WERE IN THERE STILL

BRODIE

(sings)

HAROLD AND I WOULD LAUGH AT NOTHING
NEVER IMAGINED BECOMING OLD MEN
JAMMED IN A JUNK CAR DRIVING TO DQ
HOW I WISH WE COULD BE BACK THEN

GLEENDA

(sings)

HARRY RETURNED WITH A WALGREEN'S BAG
I OPENED IT AND LOOKED INSIDE
OUR FIRST PHOTO ALBUM HE SAID WITH JOY
HIS LOVE FOR ME HE COULDN'T HIDE

EMMA

(sings)

I'M NO SHILL FOR THE DRUG INDUSTRY
PAIN MEDICATION WORKS BEST BY FAR
RECOMMENDED FOR RESPONSIBLE ADULTS
CERTAINLY NOT FOR ROCK 'N' ROLL STARS

BRODIE

(sings)

I NEED TO CORRECT THIS BAD SITUATION
NO DELAY, TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT
AS HARRY'S TRUSTED MANAGER, BROTHER
I'M OFF TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT

The THREE move forward and
converge in a HOSPITAL ROOM.
HARRY, post-op, is in bed, weary,
but pleased for the visit.

GLENDIA, EMMA, BRODIE

(sing)

WHAT THE HELL DID WE DO?
WE ALMOST KILLED YOU, HOW'S THAT
NEVER THOUGHT WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU
ONLY CARED TO BE WHERE IT'S AT

NOW WE'VE COME TO OUR SENSES
OUR EYES WIDE OPEN CLEARLY SEE
LET'S PULL THE PLUG ON YOUR COMEBACK TOUR
GIVE US THUMBS UP IF YOU AGREE

HARRY flashes an enthusiastic but
painful two thumbs up. However,
he disagrees about who did what.

HARRY

(sings)

WHAT THE HELL DID I DO?
I ALMOST KILLED MYSELF, HOW'S THAT
NO WAY YOU GUYS ARE TO BLAME
THE FAULT IS MINE, MISTER COOL CAT

HARRY points to each.

I AIN'T LAID FLAT
YOU AREN'T A BRAT
AND YOU'RE NO RAT

HOW'S THAT
HOW'S THAT
HOW'S THAT
HOW'S THAT

TRANSITION TO

SCENE 12

THE LIVING ROOM

EMMA and DJ are finishing hanging
decorations, a "Welcome Home"
banner and steamers.

The front door opens and in comes HARRY in a wheelchair pushed by GLENDA. DJ and EMMA toss confetti.

DJ

Surprise!

EMMA

Welcome Home!

HARRY

You guys.

GLENDA

Best kept secret of all time.

They group hug.

DJ

How'd you do in there?

EMMA

Back surgery's no bargain.

HARRY

I was a model inmate. First time in stir I didn't end up in a straitjacket.

GLENDA

Doctors say Harry will be on his feet in no time.

EMMA

And I'll help if he gives me a second chance.

HARRY

Sorry I never took your pain poison.

EMMA

What can I say. This was my first time working with a pathetic hopeless full-blown junkie.

DJ

I'm not even sure how you can spot one.

HARRY

I am. Emma, while we were on tour, you had a glass of champagne at the opening party and I never saw you with another one again. Definitely not an alky.

EMMA

I never cared for alcohol. Makes me dizzy.

HARRY

Glenda drinks every night. A glass of wine or two. But I never once got a call from the police station telling me I have to come bail out my wife. Definitely not a wino.

GLEENDA

I'm too much of a control freak.

DJ

I have a bong at home.

HARRY

Proof positive that you're not an addict. If you were, that bong would be hidden inside the drum kit. Definitely not a junkie.

EMMA

Just curious. What do you think would have happened?

HARRY

If I took pain meds?

EMMA

Under my supervision.

HARRY

You mean "take as directed."

EMMA

Exactly as the doctor prescribed.

HARRY

I'd have worked around it.

EMMA

How?

HARRY takes a moment.

HARRY

We were doing a concert in Singapore. Back then, Singapore had the harshest drug laws. If police officers caught you with even a small amount of drugs, they'd assume you were selling them. If you were convicted of selling drugs, you would be sentenced to death. Brodie educated our entourage of these consequences. To make sure there was no trouble, Brodie kept everyone's luggage on the tour bus, and had everyone change into their costumes before entering the arena. As a final measure, our security staff frisked every one of us, especially me. They didn't find even a Tylenol.

(MORE)

HARRY (CONT'D)

A half hour before showtime Brodie found me alone in my dressing room. Completely zonked. Dilated eyes. Slurred speech. They had no idea what I was on or how I got it. Like I said, I'd work around it.

Exhausted from the homecoming celebration, HARRY yawns. GLENDA begins to wheel him away.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Sorry to be a party pooper. I just can't keep up with you rowdy rock 'n' rollers.

DJ stops them.

DJ

Harry, I want to thank you for everything you've done for me. Opening act. Paying my salary while you were in the hospital. Keeping me on here with nothing to do. I just want you to know that I am looking for work. No luck yet. This morning I auditioned for a barista job at Starbucks. I did fine with the cappuccino but I flunked foam.

HARRY

I'm glad it didn't work out. I'm putting you on permanent payroll.

DJ

Doing what?

HARRY

Studio A.

DJ

Are you planning another comeback?

HARRY

Not a chance. But Studio A is a state of the art recording facility. I just might rent it out to record labels. And you, DJ, will be the manager. It's your job to keep the equipment in top working order. I know it's not as exciting as performing at Madison Square Garden, but, hey, at least you had a taste of the big time.

(turns to EMMA)

And you, young lady. You are now my full-time physical therapist. In your own words, "Health-worker to the stars." Check that. Former star.

(MORE)

HARRY (CONT'D)

Dr. Polinka gave me a laundry list of fun in store for me, orthopaedics, clinical electrophysiology, and, yes, at my age, geriatrics. But remember, while you're working your voodoo, even if I scream out in agony -

They cut him off.

EMMA
(sings)

NO.

DJ
(sings)

NO. NO.

GLENDA
(sings)

ABSOLUTELY. POSITIVELY. NO. NO. NO.

TOGETHER
(sings)

NO PAIN MEDICATION!!!

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 13

MASTER BEDROOM

GLENDA is helping HARRY out of his wheelchair and putting him into their bed.

HARRY
You should leave me.

GLENDA
What?

HARRY
You're too young to be nursemaid to an invalid.

GLENDA
You forget I'm experienced.

HARRY
With who?

GLENDA
You.

HARRY
See, you should run away.

GLEENDA

But I love you more than ever.

HARRY

How could you?

GLEENDA

Because you gave me the greatest two months of my life.

HARRY

The tour.

GLEENDA

It was everything I dreamed of and more.

HARRY

But we never got to London or Paris.

GLEENDA

Who cares, we got to Akron, Peoria.

HARRY

Not even the Greek Theatre.

GLEENDA

I saw you perform at the Greek.

HARRY

When?

GLEENDA

YouTube.

HARRY

1983.

GLEENDA

I saw it from my crib. You were so hot I peed my diapers.

BRENDA joins HARRY in bed, and gives him a loving kiss.

GLEENDA (CONT'D)

Actually, the person I feel bad about is DJ.

HARRY

He did get a tough break.

GLEENDA

I really thought he'd soar and soar.

HARRY

His act was improving each show.

GLEENDA

By Madison Square Garden he'd be a star.

HARRY

It could have happened.

GLEENDA

It's sad. Sometimes I go to Studio A to bring him a snack. When I get to the door I can hear him inside rehearsing. Then, when, I open the door he scrambles to a trumpet and pretends to be polishing it. Poor kid doesn't want to give up on his dream.

HARRY

I guess I could talk to Brodie.

GLEENDA

I already tried that.

HARRY

And?

GLEENDA

He only deals with major stars now.

HARRY

Brodie sure paid his dues all right.

GLEENDA

Lugging amps into vans.

HARRY

Booking unknowns into dives.

GLEENDA

Hustling demos.

HARRY

We should invite him over for dinner.

GLEENDA

DJ?

HARRY

Brodie.

GLEENDA

He's working two hundred hours a day.

HARRY

I'm pretty sure I can throw him some bait.

GLEENDA

Who?

HARRY

Somebody he won't want to miss.

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 13

LIVING ROOM

HARRY, GLENDA, and DJ are sitting with BRODIE, who's very uncomfortable.

BRODIE

So where's this mystery guest?

HARRY

Fashionably late.

GLENDA

Nobody wants to be first to arrive.

DJ

Anyone want another cheese ball?

The doorbell rings.

HARRY

Brodie, why don't you answer it.

BRODIE

It's your freaking house.

HARRY

You're closest to the door.

BRODIE goes to the door and opens it. He's astounded.

BRODIE

Ana.

ANA

My have you grown into an ugly old powerhouse.

The two lock into a long embrace, then ANA spots DJ.

ANA (CONT'D)

You must be the young genius I've heard so much about.

DJ

Hello.

ANA

And cute, too.

DJ

Thank you.

ANA

Forty years ago I'd have already gone down on you.

BRODIE

Good old Ana.

HARRY

DJ, without Ana the world would still be listening to "How Much Is That Doggie In The Window."

ANA

And you, DJ Funk-House, could be the next superstar.

BRODIE senses something he doesn't like.

BRODIE

Am I smelling a rat?

HARRY

What on earth do you mean?

BRODIE

I was invited over so you can gang up on me. You want me to manage DJ. You invited Ana to see if he's got what it takes to become a star.

ANA

The kid's a winner.

HARRY

There it is.

GLENDA

Praise from the muse.

ANA

Brodie, you'd be a fool to pass this up.

BRODIE takes a moment to collect himself.

BRODIE

Glenda's been pestering me about this kid for months. "Brodie, DJ's great." "Brodie, DJ's going to be a star." "Brodie, DJ's going to be a megastar." Now I have an announcement to make. In the same words somebody spoke to me long ago. DJ, you're heretofore signed to my management company.

(everyone cheers)

First, I'm axing your name. No more DJ Funk-House. No Malcolm Funk-House. From now on you're just plain "Malcolm." No debate. Malcolm. Next.

BRODIE points to GLENDA.

BRODIE (CONT'D)

You. What's-your-name. A know-nothing kid from nowhere with the brainpower and guts-power to put this whole shindig together. You are now Malcolm's manager. You. What's-your-name. Don't just sit there. Go out and make Malcolm a star.

GLENDA is stunned.

GLENDA

I - I can't -

HARRY

Why not?

GLENDA

Who's going to take care of you?

HARRY

I'll manage.

GLENDA

But I'd be on the road for weeks at a time.

HARRY

I can cook a mean frozen pizza.

GLENDA

You'll get so lonely by yourself.

HARRY

I'll call you a hundred times a day.

GLENDA

Ana, will you stop by and keep Harry company?

ANA

As long as he doesn't come on to me.

HARRY

I make no promises.

GLENDA

Seriously, Harry, what do you think?

HARRY

About you managing DJ Funk-House?

GLENDA

And going on the road.

HARRY

I can't wait for you to come home.

GLENDA

I don't know. I - I -

ANA takes GLENDA gently by her hand.

ANA

Honey, it's your turn to shine.

GLENDA

Are you my muse?

ANA

No. Only a woman. And your friend.

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 14

STUDIO A

HARRY is on the telephone.

HARRY

(into phone)

Of course you should do the interview. Glenda, you're the manager of a rising star. No, it won't swell your head. Here's something a wise man once told me when I started becoming famous. "Harry," he said, "Breathe it in, but don't forget to exhale." I love you, too. Tonight? Ana's coming over. We'll watch each other fall asleep on the couch. Good luck tonight. Give New York my best.

HARRY hangs up. No wheel chair in sight, Harry walks over to his piano, sits, and begins to play. It's a BEETHOVEN SONATA.

Harry's playing is excellent, and he's very content, savoring the kind of music he most enjoys. Without him noticing, ANA enters the room and sits quietly in the back. For whatever powers the muse possesses, Harry's playing becomes even better.

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 15

NEW YORK MUSIC VENUE BACK STAGE

MALCOLM, nervous, is looking out as the audience enters and fills the seats. Malcolm's manager, GLENDA, does a good job calming him down.

MALCOLM

I haven't headlined a place this big yet.

GLENDA

If I didn't think you were ready I wouldn't have booked it.

MALCOLM

How many does it seat?

GLENDA

Eighteen hundred.

MALCOLM

Fuck.

GLENDA

Twenty of those seats will be filled with record company executives.

MALCOLM

How'd you do that?

GLENDA

Knocked on door after door. And when they threw me out I climbed in through the side window.

MALCOLM

I just wish I -

EMCEE

(off stage)

Good evening, music fans.

(MORE)

EMCEE (CONT'D)

Tonight you're in for a real treat. A young man that's been creating quite a buzz around the country. We're so lucky that his travels brought him here tonight. Music fans, meet Malcolm!

TRANSITION TO:

SCENE 16

THE STAGE

As the crowd applauds and the band plays, MALCOLM dances out with spellbinding moves, and the applause turns to cheers.

MALCOLM
(raps and sings)

OLD
OUT
NEW
IN
THAT'S
HOW
IT'S
ALWAYS
BEEN

DON'T BLINK

THE STORY OF ROCK 'N' ROLL
RAP, METAL, PUNK, SOUL
THE GORY STORY OF ROCK 'N' ROLL
IN WITH THE NEW OUT WITH THE OLD

DON'T BLINK

YESTERDAY OO-OO-OO
NEXT WA-WA-WA
AND LET'S NOT FORGET
CHA-CHA-CHA

DON'T BLINK

BERRY DUCK WALK
ELVIS PELVIS
MICK ROOSTER STRUT
MADONNA VOGUE

COOL THEN
BLAH NOW

DON'T BLINK

OLD

OUT
NEW
IN
THAT'S
HOW
IT'S
ALWAYS
BEEN

DON'T BLINK

FUNKY CHICKEN
RUNNING MAN
BREAK DANCE
HARLEM SHAKE

HAD THEIR DAY
DONE AND GONE

DON'T BLINK

HERE'S THE LATEST
IT'S THE GREATEST
NOW THE MYSTERY
TOMORROW HISTORY

DON'T BLINK

THE STORY OF ROCK 'N' ROLL
RAP, METAL, PUNK, SOUL
THE GORY STORY OF ROCK 'N' ROLL
IN WITH THE NEW OUT WITH THE OLD

DON'T BLINK
DON'T BLINK
DON'T BLINK

Malcolm's singing and dancing, the lighting and choreography, are riveting. The audience response rises from cheers to exhilaration. Don't blink. Malcolm is on his way to phenomenal success.

END OF THE MUSICAL