

"Those Were the Days"

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BLACK SCREEN.

In the darkness, we hear the CLACKING of an electric typewriter. Then...

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING - SEPTEMBER, 1973

A pair of hands types on a Selectric typewriter. Beyond the hands is a console TV in the background, playing a poorly-tuned in *Dick Cavett Show*.

POV: TV

INT. TALK SHOW SET - CONTINUOUS

Three guests in captains' chairs chat with host DICK CAVETT, 30s. On the panel are: PEGGY HERLIHY, 20s, a pert, pixie-ish blonde actress in a white, flowing peasant's dress;

IZZY BAKER, late 40s, African-American entertainer, in a black turtleneck sweater adorned with a gold medallion. He smokes a cigarette.

And SPENCER FLANAGAN, TV actor, late 40s, dressed gamely, if awkwardly, in the young fashion of the day. A big presence.

DICK
(to Spencer)
Now, you grew up in Boston.

SPENCER
I did. South Boston.

DICK
I suspect you knew a lot of fellas
like your character, Jerry.

Spencer shifts into his famous character, JERRY MURPHY, working class, with a thick Boston accent.

SPENCER
(as Jerry)
What are yez saying? Are yez saying
Jerry Murphy ain't a one of a kind?

EVERYONE laughs, and the STUDIO AUDIENCE applauds. Spencer beams.

PEGGY
That is hilarious! I love Jerry.

Spencer continues on as Jerry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPENCER

(as Jerry)

You know what they say, Dick.
Imitation is the sincerest form of
flatulence.

Laughter. Izzy claps, laughing animatedly.

IZZY

That is dynamite stuff, baby! Just
dynamite...

DICK

So, Spencer, "Grease Men" is now in
its third season, and I think the
question on everyone's mind is,
here's the number one-rated show in
America-- how do you go up from
here? The pressure must be
extraordinary.

SPENCER

To an extent, sure. But I put my
faith in Aaron.

DICK

You're referring to Aaron Moore,
the creator and executive producer.

INT. BEDROOM - AARON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Watching the *Cavett* show from his bed is AARON MOORE, mid
30s, owner of the typing hands. Perpetually dishevelled in
boxer shorts and a Yankees T-shirt, Aaron is a man who
dresses out of his hamper. He balances the typewriter on his
lap.

On the nightstand, he pours Cutty Sark into a dixie cup and
takes a belt. Then he wads it up and tosses it on the floor,
landing in a pile of other cups and wadded up typewriter
paper.

His bedroom is large and spacious, but it's empty except for
the bed, the nightstand with a phone on it, and the TV. A
lone lava lamp swirls on the floor.

SPENCER (V.O.)

What can I say, Dick? The man's a
genius.

AARON

Christ. Get a shovel, Spencer.

INT. TALK SHOW SET - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

DICK

Is it true you never use a laugh track?

SPENCER

(as Jerry)

Bite yer tongue, there, Dick.

Laughter. Back as Spencer...

SPENCER (CONT'D)

No, absolutely not. It's as close to theater as you can get and still be on television.

DICK

I think what's so interesting about the show is that it's really a simple concept-- an auto garage in Boston, owned by Jerry, who's a-- how do we say it nicely? He's a bit of a bigot...

SPENCER

(as Jerry)

Hey, hey. We hire folks from all walks at the garage. We got us a spic-- *pahdon*-- Spaniard, a Hebrew, an Eye-talian--

DICK

Right, the young Tommy Romano, who plays Sal.

A WOMAN in the audience whoops.

DICK (CONT'D)

The ladies love him.

IZZY

(jumping in)

Don't forget the sister.

SPENCER

(slightly annoyed)

Right. Sandy Willis, who plays the Afro-American receptionist.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DICK

And from that auto garage in
Boston, you've managed to take on
an awful lot: racism, the war in
Vietnam, the generation gap,
feminism.

SPENCER

Well, Dick, this is real life,
isn't it? Why pretend those things
don't exist? I mean--

(as Jerry)

Yez can't go around with your head
in the sand trap, there.

Tepid laughter. Spencer's Jerry act is getting a little
stale. A beat, then, saving the day...

IZZY

Say, Spencer, that reminds me of
that crazy thing you and me did on
Broadway back in '63. You did that
Boston jive, and I gave 'em some of
the ol'...

Izzy jumps off the couch and sings and dances, singing a
chorus from "They Call the Wind Maria." The man is a born
performer.

The audience bursts into applause, as does Peggy. Spencer
smiles tightly.

DICK

Izzy Baker, everyone!

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - AARON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Aaron watches Izzy's performance intently for a beat. Then he
looks down at what he's typed, yanks it out, crumples it up,
and tosses it on the floor amid the pile.

The phone RINGS, and Aaron answers.

CALLIE (V.O.)

He keeps doing Jerry.

AARON

It's kind of all he's got.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CALLIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Thoroughly modern, with modular furniture, white shag carpet,
and expansive view.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALLIE CUTLER, mid 30s, watches the same show from her couch, drinking burgundy and smoking a Virginia Slim. She's charismatic and driven, slender with a fashionably short haircut.

CALLIE

We need to get someone else to do these interviews for awhile. Tommy, maybe.

AARON (V.O.)

People want Spencer. For some reason. (Then) Izzy Baker's something.

CALLIE

Sure, if you're into aging, fading hepcats.

INTERCUT: CALLIE'S HOUSE/AARON'S HOUSE AS NEEDED

AARON

My mother likes him.

CALLIE

Of course she does. She's 67 and she lives in Florida. It's required by law. (Then) How's our episode four looking?

Aaron glances down at his empty typewriter.

AARON

Going great.

CALLIE

No, you're struggling. I can hear it in your voice.

AARON

I'll have it tomorrow.

CALLIE

We were supposed to have the table read yesterday. Can I give you some advice?

AARON

As my producer, or as my ex-wife?

CALLIE

Strictly professional. Turn the TV off, take a walk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

AARON

It's after midnight in Bel Air.
I'll get mugged. (Then) Callie,
what are you doing right now?

CALLIE

Not tonight, Aaron.

AARON

Okay.

They hang up. The TV plays an ad for Chuck Wagon, with the dog who never catches the tiny wagon. Aaron reaches for his dixie cup, then remembers he killed the last one.

He opens the nightstand drawer revealing pens, pencils, a pair of old socks, and a stack of fresh cups. He takes one, pours himself a belt, knocks it back, wads up the cup and throws it on the floor.

Then he feeds another page into the typewriter and resumes his writing, alone in his empty, enormous home. We continue to pull out until all we can hear is the lonely CLACK OF THE TYPEWRITER.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. ENTRANCE - GREASE MEN PRODUCTION OFFICES - LATE MORNING

Brown panelling, fake potted palms, and the din of RINGING PHONES greet Aaron as he steps off the elevator. He's in his usual messy attire, looking as if he just came in from playing stick ball, complete with Yankees cap.

He receives various "good morning"s from STAFF as he walks past, and returns them with a barely perceptible nod.

Spencer spots Aaron and approaches.

SPENCER

There he is! The captain of the ship!

Aaron does not stop, and Spencer walks alongside.

AARON

You're early.

SPENCER

Did you watch last night?

AARON

Nope, didn't catch it. Heard it went great.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPENCER

It did. It certainly did. Except that goddamn Izzy Baker was on the panel, and he wouldn't shut up. Could barely get a word in. The man has this pathological need to be adored.

AARON

Is that right?

SPENCER

I did mention we have big stuff coming this season. You know, to build anticipation.

AARON

Very thoughtful of you.

They walk past a line of large promotional posters of the cast of the show. Spencer stops and puts his arm around Aaron. Aaron stands stiffly-- he doesn't like to be touched.

SPENCER

Say, pal, it's been a long time since you and I had ourselves a night on the town. What say we hit Musso & Frank's after the taping for a little boozing and floozing?

AARON

Ah, tonight's no good. I got this thing.

SPENCER

Then maybe next week?

AARON

Maybe. I don't really know my schedule. Why don't you talk to Celia?

Aaron pulls away and turns a corner, leaving Spencer alone, standing in front of his poster, in character as Jerry.

SPENCER

I'll do that. I will do that.

Spencer nudges the poster slightly to straighten it, as Aaron rounds the corner into--

INT. HALLWAY - GREASE MEN PRODUCTION OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

--and runs into TOMMY ROMANO, 20s, suave, handsome, none too bright.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AARON

The one and only Tommy Romano.

TOMMY

Hey. Uh, can I talk at you?

AARON

You are.

Tommy walks with Aaron.

TOMMY

It's about the show tonight. I mean, it's hysterical and all that. But, it's just, see, I only got three scenes.

AARON

Every week with this, Tommy?

TOMMY

No, no, no, it's not me. I don't got a problem; It's my manager, Sid. He's a pit-bull, you know. Always looking out for number one.

Tommy points to himself.

AARON

That means he's looking out for himself.

TOMMY

Huh?

AARON

Looking out for number... Never mind. Tell Sid I've got a whole episode for you for next week.

TOMMY

Really? That's great. That's dynamite. 'Cause I think a great episode would be one where I--

AARON

--That sounds great, Tommy. Would love to hear it. Set up a time with Celia.

Aaron walks away, toward the--

INT. KITCHEN - GREASE MEN PRODUCTION OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

He enters, goes to a cupboard, pulls out a package of pop-tarts, thinks about toasting them... then sticks one in his mouth.

As he's about to leave, he finds CHARLES LAMPLEY, 60s, Aaron's mentor, and the vice president of programming for the network, waiting for him. Charles is one of the good guys, a friendly face in a three-piece suit.

CHARLES
Breakfast of champions.

AARON
Hey, Charles.

CHARLES
Listen, kiddo, just wanted to give you a heads-up that there are going to be a couple suits at the table read Wednesday. No big deal, they just want to see what's cooking.

A beat.

AARON
Okay.

CHARLES
You are ready for the table read, yes?

AARON
You know how on the surface, Moby Dick is a book about a guy who can't catch a whale, but really it's about how Melville couldn't write a book about a guy who can't catch a whale?

CHARLES
You've been reading your own press. I advise against it.

AARON
Can't seem to avoid it. I think I have an ulcer. Is scotch good for an ulcer?

CHARLES
Why not work with your writers, Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum, or whatever the hell their names are?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Aaron says nothing.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Never mind, I'll see what I can do to scare the troops off, buy you a couple days. I'll claim artistic temperament and all that.

AARON

Thanks, Charles. I appreciate it.

CHARLES

But you call me when you've got something. Soon. Let's grab lunch tomorrow.

AARON

Sounds good. See you then.

Aaron walks toward--

INT. CELIA'S DESK - GREASE MEN PRODUCTION OFFICES -
CONTINUOUS

Aaron's secretary, CELIA, 20s, in round glasses, braided hair, and funky fashion, sits at a desk in front of Aaron's office.

She is a thoroughly modern girl, in dress and attitude, and is Aaron's gatekeeper. She stands and hands Aaron a cup of coffee.

AARON

Celia, for God's sake, I don't expect you to make me coffee. This isn't the 50s.

CELIA

I made some for myself. So you get some too. I'm a polite feminist.

AARON

Alright.

He sips the coffee and munches his pop tart as Celia sorts through a stack of phone memos.

CELIA

Liz Martin at TV Guide called about their cover story, the ACLU wants to see a draft of your luncheon speech. And also, Maude from Big Brothers called, said you haven't seen your kid in over a month.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AARON

Great. (Then) Thank you,
sweetheart.

Aaron takes the memos and walks into his office. Tommy emerges and approaches Celia.

TOMMY

What's happening, baby?

CELIA

(flatly)

No.

INT. AARON'S OFFICE - GREASE MEN PRODUCTION OFFICES -
CONTINUOUS

Aaron enters and tosses his briefcase on the floor. Much like his house, the place is spacious, mostly empty. The furniture it does contain is a mishmash of styles:

An Eames chair next to a kidney shaped coffee table and a mahogany clawfoot desk. A reel-to-reel tape player sits on a table, next to a World's Greatest Boss coffee mug. On one of the walls is a stuffed elk head.

Like his home, it's a mess-- books, newspapers, and magazines scattered everywhere, especially on his desk, where a Selectric typewriter sits on top of the clutter.

On the wall behind the desk is a shelf laden with awards, including two Emmys, and most impressive of all, a framed print of the *Time* magazine cover proclaiming Aaron its Man of the Year.

Aaron shoves a pile of papers off his chair and sits down. He goes into his briefcase and pulls out the pages he banged out the night before and thumbs through them.

After a beat, he tosses them in the trash. He's got nothing.

INT. NETWORK BOARDROOM - DAY

Seated at one end of a table are LAWRENCE PELTON, late 60s, general manager of the network, who smokes a cigarette; and KENNY WHARTON, late 20s, ruthless wunderkind and executive vice president of programming.

On the other end, in the hot seat, is Charles.

CHARLES

Two more days, gentlemen, and I
promise you shall have your
masterpiece.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAWRENCE

We all know Aaron is your golden boy, but we're hemorrhaging money with these delays. You have to do something.

KENNY

It's unacceptable, Charles. We should have had the first thirteen by now.

CHARLES

Aaron has an artistic temperament. You can't push that. He's coming up with material that is going to blow last season out of the water, and I think you'll agree, that's quite a feat.

KENNY

Last season was a travesty. Do you know how much hot water this network got into over that interracial kiss? People were deeply offended.

CHARLES

Oh, bullshit, Kenny. That show got the biggest ratings in the history of the network. Besides, it was nothing new; Kirk and Uhuru did it on Star Trek five years ago.

LAWRENCE

Ratings have dropped each week of this season, Charles. It's one thing to have your fag and spic jokes when the ratings are up, but when they slump like this, the advertisers get queasy and they jump ship.

KENNY

And when they go, so does your precious show.

Charles decides to ignore Kenny.

CHARLES

Lawrence, you know me, and you know this business.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Don't worry about advertisers,
they'll come and they'll pay
through the nose to advertise on
what will remain the number one
rated show on television.

LAWRENCE

I hope you're right. I surely do.

KENNY

You green-lit this show, Charles,
so you rise or fall with it. I
suggest you get your boy on track.

Charles glares at Kenny.

INT. HALLWAY - NETWORK

Charles exits the boardroom, shutting the door behind him. He composes himself for a moment. *Getting too old for this shit.* Then he walks away.

INT. GREASE MEN SET - SOUND STAGE - LATER

The iconic set of the Boston garage, with cars on hydraulic lifts and tools on the wall. To the left is a reception area with posters and neon signs advertising brake shoes and tires surrounding a large hand painted sign that reads "Jerry's Garage."

A CREW preps for the day's shoot, fussing over camera set-ups and lights. Spencer's personal assistant, PERRY, early 30s, walks through with a costume on a hanger, and some food. Perry is slender, well-groomed and very proper. He passes Callie.

CALLIE

Perry, tell Spencer his call time's
3:15.

PERRY

Yes, Miss Cutler.

CALLIE

It's Ms., Perry. *Ms.*

INT. SPENCER'S DRESSING ROOM - GREASE MEN PRODUCTION OFFICES -
CONTINUOUS

The walls are covered with posters of films Spencer has been in, mostly screwball comedies from the 50s and 60s. On a shelf, lit with special lighting, sits Spencer's very shiny Emmy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Spencer reclines on a couch, going over his script, as Perry enters and closes the door. Perry hangs up the clothes and approaches.

PERRY

Here you go. A Tab, and some yogurt with wheat germ.

SPENCER

Did anyone see you get the Tab?

PERRY

I said it was for me.

SPENCER

Good. (Then) Aaron's avoiding me. The bastard. After everything I give to this show.

Spencer takes a sip of the soda. Then he looks at the yogurt and wheat germ.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

What is that? I don't want that.

PERRY

You should be more open minded. It's a very youthful trait to be open to new things.

SPENCER

Is that what you think?
(off Perry's look)
Alright, fine. Bring it over.

Spencer takes a bite.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

Not bad. A little grainy.

PERRY

See? That wasn't so hard.

SPENCER

You're good to me. Come here.

He stares at Perry. Tenderly, he tousles his hair. Then he kisses him deeply on the lips.

INT. GREASE MEN SET - SOUND STAGE - LATER

Aaron stands on the set, warming up a packed studio audience.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AARON
Everybody ready to meet our cast?

The audience APPLAUDS.

AARON (CONT'D)
Let's bring out Sam Bachman as
Mort.

SAM, 30s, in makeup and costume as Mort Stein, the
bookkeeper, emerges from the wings to applause.

AARON (CONT'D)
Playing Jose, Mr. Juan Gutierrez.

JUAN, 20s, short, Hispanic. Applause continues.

AARON (CONT'D)
As Anita Sims, Sandy Willis.

SANDY, 20s, pretty, African-American with an afro, emerges as
the receptionist, Anita. More applause.

AARON (CONT'D)
As Sal, Tommy Romano.

Applause gets noticeably louder, with shrieks from some of
the ladies, as Tommy comes out, waving.

AARON (CONT'D)
And our very own Jerry Murphy, Mr.
Spencer Russell.

SLOW MOTION:

Spencer emerges from the wings as the applause becomes a
ROAR, with some people in the crowd coming to their feet.
He's the star, and he takes it all in.

INT. GREASE MEN SET - SOUND STAGE - LATER

Three video cameras tape a scene: an actor, 20s, plays a
HIPPIE with long hair stands talking to Sandy (as Anita) and
Spencer (as Jerry).

SPENCER
You're a veteran, huh? With *that*
hair?

HIPPIE
Third Marine division, Da Nang. How
about you? You serve your country?

SPENCER
I did.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HIPPIE
What branch?

SPENCER
I was in the... navy.

Sandy points to a photo of Spencer on the wall.

SANDY
Navy? Isn't that a picture of you
in the Coast Guard?

A huge LAUGH from the studio audience.

SPENCER
(to Sandy)
Shaddup you!

Spencer's line doesn't quite land; his timing is off, and the laugh is lukewarm.

INT. GREASE MEN SET - WINGS - SOUND STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The scene continues as Aaron stands with his director, PAUL, 40s. They exchange a look.

AARON
Was that funny?

PAUL
Supposed to be. Wanna stop?

AARON
(resigned)
No. We'll just pump the laugh in
the edit.

EXT. PARKING LOT - SOUND STAGE - EARLY EVENING

The sun sets over Hollywood as Tommy, Spencer, and Sandy stand among a throng of FANS, signing autographs. Aaron pulls his hat down low and sneaks past, avoiding the attention.

He spots Callie walking past toward her car. He quickens his pace and falls in step with her.

AARON
Heya, Cal.

CALLIE
Hey. Good show tonight.

AARON
Not bad. I'm going to DuPar's. You
want to grab a bite?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALLIE

For a number of reasons, Aaron, no.

She walks away, leaving him standing there.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - EVENING

Filled with modern kitsch, African sculptures, and books, prominently, "Our Bodies, Ourselves."

The lighting is intentionally soft, as Callie and her therapist, JEAN, 40s, in salt-and-pepper braids and giant glasses, sit across from each other on giant beanbags.

Jean sits comfortably; Callie feels out of place, longing for a real chair. She smokes as she talks.

CALLIE

I should be happy. And I am happy.
Mostly. I'm about 80% happy.

JEAN

What's the missing 20%?

CALLIE

I don't know. The career is good.
It's great. I'm making more money
than anyone in my family ever has.
Certainly more than any of the
women. I mean, I graduated college,
I live in a luxury apartment, I
drive a Mercedes. I'm a success,
but I don't feel connected to any
of it.

JEAN

It's not unheard of, in this day
and age, to feel disassociated with
our surroundings. We place so much
emphasis on what we have and do,
that we lose track of who we are.

CALLIE

If we're not what we have and what
we do, who are we?

JEAN

That is the question, isn't it?

CALLIE

Yeah, I guess.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEAN

We can come back to that. Have you given any more thought to dating, like we discussed last week?

CALLIE

No. No dates just yet.

JEAN

Okay. How about your boundaries with Aaron?

CALLIE

Yeah. He still calls me every night, though. I know it's him before I answer; I can tell by the ring. It sounds... neurotic.

JEAN

Why not just not answer? Ignore the call.

CALLIE

Because he needs me. The show needs me.

JEAN

What about your needs?

CALLIE

It doesn't matter. I can never get what I want.

JEAN

Why not?

CALLIE

Because I can't have it all. I'm a liberated woman. And as long as I just want the career and all the stuff the men have, fine. But if I *also* want the kids and the white picket fence and a husband I love, then I'm somehow betraying the women's movement.

JEAN

Are you still in love with him, Callie?

A beat.

CALLIE

I don't know. Maybe.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD - EVENING

Aaron, in his classic convertible 1959 Cadillac, drives down Sunset Boulevard, past the familiar landmarks, the Chateau Marmont, the Whiskey, the Marlboro Man.

The crowd on the sidewalk is a mixture of HIPPIES, TOURISTS, and BUTTON-DOWN SQUARES out for a night on the town.

He looks at his fuel gage. Nearly empty. He pulls up to a...

EXT. SERVICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

There's a long line to the pumps, due to the oil embargo. Aaron catches the eye of another MAN sitting in his car.

MAN

Goddamn Arabs. Bleeding us dry.

EXT. SERVICE STATION - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Aaron pumps his gas. As he does, he looks up to see a young AFRICAN AMERICAN MAN in a military fatigue jacket pull up to an adjacent pump in his van. He struggles to get out of the van with a pair of crutches.

As he does, Aaron notices he's missing a leg-- a recent Vietnam vet.

An ATTENDANT, 20s, approaches.

ATTENDANT

That'll be \$6.15 for the gas, sir.

Aaron pulls out a 20 dollar bill, hands it to the attendant, and indicates the Vet.

AARON

I'll pay for his gas, too.

INT. SPENCER'S HOME - LATER THAT NIGHT

Desperately trying to be a swingin', with-it bachelor pad, but coming up woefully short. There are bright, garish colors everywhere, with framed prints on the wall of artists Spencer's never heard of. A full wet bar lines the back wall, and there are televisions in every room.

Spencer and Perry on a couch, listening to "Dark Side of the Moon" by Pink Floyd. They share a joint.

SPENCER

The "shaddup you." I nailed that, right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PERRY
Absolutely. Hysterical.

SPENCER
Good, good. And the face I did with
the...

Does the face.

PERRY
Of course. You're a brilliant
comedic actor, darling. The best in
the business.

Perry snuggles up to Spencer. They listen to the music.

SPENCER
You know what? This is heavy. I dig
it.

PERRY
It sounds kind of paranoid.

SPENCER
No, no, no. (Then) You're sure this
is their latest record album?

PERRY
The man at the store assured me.

As Spencer takes a drag...

SPENCER
This is good reefer.

PERRY
Honey, no one calls it that.

SPENCER
Not true. I heard Tommy call it
that just the other day.

PERRY
Maybe he was being ironic.

INT. SCOTTY'S BAR - LATER

A dank, airless bar, Aaron's home away from home. He sits at
the bar, already fairly drunk, watching the TV.

POV B&W TV SCREEN:

NIXON
"That was and that is the simple
truth.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NIXON (CONT'D)

In all of the millions of words of testimony, there is not the slightest suggestion that I had any knowledge of the planning for the Watergate break-in."

BACK TO SCENE

An older, drunker PATRON, 40s, drinks next to Aaron. There are various other LUSHES sparsely situated throughout the establishment, most Aaron's age and older.

Behind the bar is MIKEY, 30s, stout and round-faced, salt of the earth.

AARON

(looking at the screen)
Look at that asshole. Lying his little asshole heart out. How come we keep electing this bastard? Do we have an inferiority complex? Do we not think we deserve better?

PATRON

Hey, can we switch this crap off, Mikey? Turn on the ball game, or something.

AARON

(to the Patron)
No, no, no. You should watch. Everyone should be watching.

PATRON

I watch TV to escape stuff like this.

AARON

That's a cop-out.

PATRON

Why? If I see a dog turd on the sidewalk, I don't want to lean over and smell it.

AARON

(pointing at the TV)
Buddy, that dog turd is running our country.

The PATRON gives a disgusted huff, throws a dollar down on the counter and leaves. MIKEY looks at Aaron.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MIKEY

You gotta run off all my customers,
Aaron?

AARON

Fuck 'em if they can't take a joke.

Aaron taps his empty glass and Mikey tops it off.

MIKEY

Maybe he don't like you calling the
President a turd.

AARON

He is a turd. The bastard
blacklisted my father.

MIKEY

Nixon knew your pop?

AARON

Only by name. He was an alderman in
the Bronx. A real powerful guy.
Everyone in town knew him. Always
Mr. Mandelbaum this, Mr. Mandelbaum
that. This nobody Jew from Krakow
comes to America, *serves* America--
he goes and fights the fascists in
Europe, he starts a family
business, pays his taxes, raises a
family. And then, in 1953...

(pointing at the TV)

...that son of a bitch ruins him.
Ruins his life, his reputation. My
dad died five years after that.

MIKEY

I'm real sorry, Aaron.

Aaron knocks back his drink.

AARON

Yeah.

MIKEY

Life ain't fair.

AARON

That's the thing. My dad always
taught me life is supposed to be
fair. Feature that. And I still
believe it, for some godforsaken
reason. I think things can be fair
and decent. Just maybe not right
now...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

AARON (CONT'D)
 (pointing at the TV)
 ...with these people.

He downs the last of his drink.

INT. SPENCER'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - LATER

The final track, "Eclipse," plays on "Dark Side of the Moon," as Spencer lies passed out on the couch. Perry tenderly pulls a blanket over him, kisses his head, and turns out the light.

INT. CALLIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Callie sits on her couch, all alone. As Neil Diamond's "Hot August Night" plays on the 8-track, she lights a Virginia Slim and pours herself a glass of Almaden white wine. She reaches for the phone, picks it up, and thinks of calling Aaron...

Then, angry with herself, she slams the phone down, catching a finger in the cradle. *Ow!* She sucks the injured finger.

INT. SCOTTY'S BAR - AFTER MIDNIGHT

Aaron, now quite drunk, leans over the jukebox, feeding quarters in. "Melancholy Baby" by Charlie Parker plays.

AARON
 Jesus, willya listen to that? You hear that, Mikey? That's real. This cat poured his blood and guts into that horn. He never lied a note. Smacked out of his gourd, a bleeding ulcer, and still he never lied. Pop loved Charlie Parker. My mother called him "That Schwartze," which pissed dad off. I think she said it to piss him off.
 (a drunken revelation)
 I think my mother lived her whole life to piss off my father.

Aaron looks up. The bar is empty.

AARON (CONT'D)
 Where the hell'd everybody go?

MIKEY
 Looks like you drove 'em off with your geezer music again.

AARON
 Screw 'em. They have no taste. This is the only place in town with a decent jukebox.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AARON (CONT'D)

(Then) Mikey, ever feel like you were born at the wrong time?

MIKEY

I dunno. I woulda liked to been around in the old west.

AARON

You'da been something at high noon.

MIKEY

What about you? Gay nineties?

AARON

Very funny. Nah, I should have been born ten years earlier. Roamed the country with Neal Cassidy and Jack Kerouac. Instead, here I am, 35 years old, in no man's land. Too old to be trusted, too young to conform.

He sways with drunkenness. Then...

EXT. PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Aaron stumbles out of the bar. He somehow fishes the keys out of his pocket and gets in his convertible. He pulls away unsteadily, as George Harrison's "Give Me Love" plays on his car radio.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. GREASE MEN PRODUCTION OFFICES - WRITER'S ROOM

The show's two nominal writers sit at a large writer's table. PHIL, 40s, outspoken and cynical; and CAREY, late 20s, sensitive and earnest, decked out in current fashion and sideburns.

With nothing to do, they're idle. Phil thumbs through "The Joy of Sex," ogling the illustrations. Carey writes in a notepad.

PHIL

Christ, will you look at all the hair on these two? I'd hate to have to clean their shower drain.

CAREY

You're a pervert, Phil.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHIL

Hey, the sexual act is a beautiful and natural thing, Carey. Plus, the chick's got incredible tits.

CAREY

That is a really sexist word.

PHIL

It's only sexist if you say it in front of a chick. (Then) Hey, Carey, you catch Brando's latest movie, "Last Tango in Paris?"

(imitating Brando)

"Go get the butter out of the icebox."

CAREY

Your Brando still needs work.

PHIL

Feh. (Then) What are you writing?

CAREY

Screenplay.

PHIL

I should do something like that. Jesus, the boredom is about killing me.

Callie enters, and the two sit up quickly. Phil hides his book, Cary turns over his notebook, and both try to look busy.

CALLIE

Cut the crap, boys. I know nothing goes on in here.

PHIL

Actually, we were just about to...

CALLIE

Save it. I'm going to need to get some ideas from the two of you. Pronto.

Phil reaches into a drawer and pulls out a legal pad.

PHIL

Here you go. This is from August. Carey and I mapped out the whole season.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CAREY

With Aaron's input.

Callie flips through the pages.

PHIL

Tommy's toothache episode, the recall from Detroit episode. It's all there.

CALLIE

Jesus. I had no idea.

CAREY

If you give us the go-ahead, we'll be happy to crank them out.

A beat as Callie looks at the ideas.

PHIL

So. Do you want us to start writing these?

CALLIE

No, I can't authorize that.

PHIL

But you can. You're the executive producer.

INT. GREASE MEN PRODUCTION OFFICES - AARON'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Aaron sits in his office, alone. The typewriter hums, idle. Aaron plays with his electric pencil sharpener, sharpening his pencils and lining them up along the edge of his desk. He flips one up, and it sticks in the ceiling.

A KNOCK. Callie enters, with the notebook in hand.

CALLIE

You had Phil and Carey map out the entire season.

AARON

That's garbage. Burn it.

CALLIE

(flipping through)

Come on, Moore.

(reading)

Jerry's sister shows up unexpectedly...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AARON

Too close to "Jerry's Night Out."

CALLIE

(reading)

Tommy bails his dad out of jail...

AARON

Did the same thing last year with Juan.

CALLIE

I'm just saying, you could just use a couple of these until you get past your... block.

AARON

(snapping)

I'm not fucking blocked! (Then)
Sorry.

Callie sets the notebook on his desk.

CALLIE

Okay. I'm just going to leave this here.

She backs toward the door. Then she stops. Aaron looks at her. A long beat.

CALLIE (CONT'D)

How do you feel about dating?

AARON

Didn't that lead to marriage? And then to divorce?

CALLIE

I meant other people.

AARON

Oh. Of course you did. Why? Are you dating someone?

CALLIE

Me? Who has time?

AARON

Yeah. Who has time...

CALLIE

Never mind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

AARON

Okay. I mean, if you want to, go ahead.

CALLIE

I don't know. It's a dumb idea anyway.

CALLIE (CONT'D)

Yeah.

She exits. Aaron looks at the notebook. Then he tears two pages out, crumples them up, and tosses them in the wastebasket.

He's about to do the same thing to the third page, when he stops and reads it more closely. *Maybe...*

CUT TO:

INT. COMMISSARY - STUDIO LOT - NOON

Charles and Aaron sit at a booth in the busy commissary, eating lunch from trays.

AARON

...the snot-nosed kid who used to run the Waltons? What the hell does he know about comedy?

CHARLES

Not a damn thing. And the little prick is now my boss, and he's breathing down my neck over this.

AARON

Jesus. Kenny Wharton is 28 years old. He should be out chasing tail and dropping acid, not running a network division and voting Republican. What the hell is wrong with kids today?

CHARLES

They could learn a thing or two from a couple old lefty Jews like ourselves. (Then) Listen, don't worry, kiddo. I'm sure you'll come up with something outrageous. You always have.

AARON

That's just it, Charles. I don't want to just be outrageous. I want to tell the truth.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AARON (CONT'D)

There's a criminal in the White House, the economy's in a tailspin, there are crosses being burned on lawns in Alabama. Kids, 19, 20 years old, are coming back in pieces from a war we never should have fought--

CHARLES

--Hate to break it to you, kiddo, but your little show, good as it is, ain't gonna change that.

AARON

Why not?

CHARLES

'Cause that stuff ain't funny.

AARON

It *used* to be funny. I used to be able to *make* it funny. I'm just afraid I can't do that anymore. Jesus, Charles, the world is so fucked up. I can't stand it, it keeps me up at night. I just feel like standing on a soapbox in the middle of town and screaming into a megaphone about it.

CHARLES

You could do that. But I sense you'd get laid a lot less.

AARON

Getting laid is overrated.

CHARLES

Bite your tongue. Speaking of which, how's your love life?

AARON

Not much of one to speak of. I mean, I have sex. But that's about all I can manage.

CHARLES

Haunted by old ghosts?

AARON

Something like that.

CHARLES

Buddy boy, you're focussing on the wrong things.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHARLES (CONT'D)

When I met you, you were a schmuck writer with nothing. Now look at you. You're on top of the goddamn world.

AARON

Yep. And that's what's killing me.

Unnoticed, Perry wanders by with a tray. He sits in the booth next to Charles and Aaron.

AARON (CONT'D)

What do you think about Izzy Baker?

CHARLES

Izzy Baker? I think the SOB shtupped my ex-wife. Why?

AARON

How would you feel about bringing him on?

CHARLES

On what? The show? What the hell could Izzy Baker do for Grease Men?

AARON

Bring a fresh perspective. Something we're not getting with Spencer.

Perry overhears this. His eyes widen.

AARON (CONT'D)

Besides, we only have one black character.

CHARLES

If you want another black, get someone more "now." Flip Wilson, maybe.

EXT. POOLSIDE - SPENCER'S HOME - AFTERNOON

Spencer is on the phone on a chaise lounge, aghast.

SPENCER

Izzy Baker? He wants to put Izzy fucking Baker on the show?! On *my* show? Mother of God. You will find out exactly what is happening, every minute of every day. Do you hear me?

INT. GREASE MEN PRODUCTION OFFICES - SPENCER'S DRESSING ROOM

PERRY

I'm on it. Are you okay?

INTERCUT: POOL AND DRESSING ROOM AS NEEDED

SPENCER

No. This whole thing is an absolute dragster.

PERRY

'Drag.'

SPENCER

Whatever.

PERRY

Don't worry; You're the star.

SPENCER

Again.

PERRY

You're the star.

SPENCER

Goddamn right.

INT. SINGLES BAR - EVENING

The place is filled with YOUNG PATRONS in their finery: moustaches, platform shoes and gold chains for the men; blue eye shadow and print rayon dresses for the ladies. "Let's Get It On" by Marvin Gaye thumps in the background.

Callie wanders in, wearing a tailored sport coat and high-necked blouse, clearly out of her element. She stands at the bar and looks around. *What am I doing here?* A BARTENDER approaches.

BARTENDER

What'll it be, darlin'?

CALLIE

Nothing, thanks.

BARTENDER

Two drink minimum, I'm afraid.

CALLIE

Uh. Chablis.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A handsome older man, GARY, 40s, looking and feeling just as out of place, stands at the end of the bar. He smiles shyly at Callie, and she smiles back. He approaches.

GARY

Would you be offended if I said you look as uncomfortable as I feel?

CALLIE

(laughing)

I have no idea what I'm doing here. I have never felt older in my entire life.

GARY

Same here. I was just about to leave, actually.

CALLIE

Me, too.

GARY

Well. I guess I'm glad I didn't.

Callie smiles as the Bartender brings over her drink.

INT. BEN FRANKS - CONTINUOUS

Aaron sits at a booth in the venerable Sunset Boulevard greasy spoon, finishing a slice of pie and drinking coffee. He reads a newspaper, with a prominent story about Henry Kissinger being appointed Secretary of State.

A young WAITRESS, early 20s, approaches with a check.

WAITRESS

Pie's on the house.

AARON

Oh. Thanks.

A beat.

WAITRESS

You do that show, "Grease Men," right? Aaron Moore.

AARON

That's me.

WAITRESS

Wow, I have to tell you, that is my absolute favorite show. I love it. It's so funny.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AARON
Is it just funny?

WAITRESS
I'm sorry?

AARON
You're saying it's just funny?

WAITRESS
(confused)
Well, yeah. Isn't it supposed to
be?

She doesn't get it.

AARON
Yeah. It is. It is supposed to be
funny.

WAITRESS
Well, anyway, I really like it. It
must be so groovy to work on a
television show...

The girl gives Aaron a longing smile. Aaron stares back.
Then...

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - AARON'S HOUSE - MUCH LATER

Aaron lies in his bed, next to the Waitress, who sleeps.
There is a nearly empty bottle of vodka next to the bed, with
two glasses next to it, one with lipstick on it.

Aaron can't sleep, and he stares up at the ceiling. He gets
out of bed in his boxer shorts, and quietly and goes into his--

INT. OFFICE - AARON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

--which is just as bare as the rest of the place. A single
desk with a typewriter sits facing the wall. With a fresh
drink, he sits at the desk and flips on the typewriter. Then,
he picks up the phone and dials.

INT. CALLIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The phone rings and rings, with no one there to answer it.

INT. AARON'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She's not home? Aaron puts the phone back in its cradle. Then
he finds the legal pad Callie left for him from the writers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He looks at the one salvageable idea, and with a sigh, he feeds a page into the typewriter and begins typing.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. GREASE MEN PRODUCTION OFFICES - HALLWAY - DAY

Callie strides purposefully, holding a stack of papers. Up from behind jogs Spencer, holding a script.

SPENCER
Callie, sweetheart?

CALLIE
Yes, Spencer?

SPENCER
This is the first draft of the new episode?

CALLIE
It is.

SPENCER
Why do I only have five scenes?

CALLIE
Clearly it's because we're trying to get rid of you.

SPENCER
Not funny, Callie. It's that goddamn Tommy, isn't it? He bitches and whines every time he doesn't get enough camera time.

CALLIE
Now who would do such a thing?

SPENCER
(imitating Tommy)
"Wah! I'm Tommy Romano! Youse never give me no scenes! Give me some of Spencer's scenes! All the girls want to shtup me! Blah, blah, blah."

CALLIE
(wryly)
That's a very good impression. We should work that into an episode.

SPENCER
See, now you're talking!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Callie ignores Spencer and disappears, leaving him alone.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - GREASE MEN PRODUCTION OFFICES - LATER

Seated around a table is the entire CAST: Sandy, Sam, Juan, Tommy, and Spencer. Callie, Carey, Phil, Charles, and a very morose Aaron listen intently to the table read.

SAM

(as Mort)

But, Jerry, I'm just watching your bottom line. Anita is lazy. All she does is file her nails and ignore the phones.

SANDY

(as Anita)

Mort, are you trying to pick a kike with me? Oops-- I mean, 'fight?'

SAM

(as Mort)

Oh! Did you hear that?!

JUAN

(as Jose)

Ay, yi, yi!! Dios mio!

SPENCER

(as Jerry)

Shaddup all of youse!!!

There is polite laughter as Aaron looks as if he wants to disappear. Callie and Charles look wanly at each other.

INT. AARON'S OFFICE - LATER

Aaron sits behind his desk, Callie standing.

AARON

It's utter garbage, Callie, and you know it.

CALLIE

It wasn't that bad. People were laughing.

AARON

Out of obligation. Which is worse than not laughing at all.

CALLIE

They don't all have to be Emmy winners, Aaron.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AARON
Yes, they do. I'm killing it.

CALLIE
We shoot in four days. Think about
it.

Callie turns to walk out.

AARON
Cal?

She turns around.

CALLIE
Yeah?

AARON
You wanna grab a drink?

CALLIE
Aaron, I... I have plans.

AARON
You do? With a guy?

CALLIE
Yes.

AARON
Well... That's great! Really, I
mean it.

CALLIE
Thank you.

AARON
I'd love to meet him.

CALLIE
It's just one date.

AARON
Of course.

A beat.

AARON (CONT'D)
Can I stop by?

CALLIE
What? No!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

AARON

I wouldn't be a bother. Just grab a quick drink, say hello.

CALLIE

Absolutely not.

AARON

Callie, you said we have to move on. So, are we moving on?

CALLIE

We are most definitely moving on.

AARON

Then it shouldn't be an issue, right? I'll stop by for five minutes. What's one drink going to hurt? I can't stay long anyway. I have this thing with Spencer.

Callie rolls her eyes and walks out.

INT. SPENCER'S HOME - BEDROOM - EVENING

As Spencer gets dressed and ready to go out, Perry sits on the bed nearby, reading "Fear of Flying" by Erica Jong.

SPENCER

For Christ's sake, I'm the star of the fucking show. They're not tuning in to see Sandy or Juan. They're tuning in to see *me*. And now he wants to bring in goddamn Izzy Baker? I'm going to nip this nonsense in the bud.

He dabs on some cologne. Perry SIGHS.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

I heard that.

PERRY

Which of your girls is it tonight? Sally? Delia?

Spencer sits on the bed next to Perry and gently takes Perry's face in his hands.

SPENCER

Hey, listen, Perry-bear. It's not like I want to go.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPENCER (CONT'D)

It's just that it took me forever to get on Aaron's calendar, and I need to keep up appearances. There's a lot at stake here.

PERRY

I know. I just wish we could...

SPENCER

(puts his hand over Perry's mouth)

Shh. You have my heart. That's all that counts.

He kisses Perry.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

Now, chin up. I'll be home before you know it, and then we'll smoke a doobie and watch Carol Burnett. Okay?

Perry nods and smiles.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

In a posh Hollywood restaurant, Callie and Gary stand at the bar having a drink as Aaron enters, sees the two, and approaches.

CALLIE

Aaron, this is Gary.

The two shake hands.

GARY

It's a real pleasure to meet you. I confess I'm quite fan of the show.

AARON

Ah. Thank you.

An unpleasant pause.

CALLIE

Aaron can't stay long.

AARON

Yeah, she's right. I almost never go out. Bit of a xenophobe. Like the man said: "Hell is other people."

GARY

Ah, yes. Sartre.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AARON

No, Albert Camus.

GARY

Actually, I believe it was Jean Paul Sartre.

AARON

Heh. No, I'm pretty damn certain it was Camus. After all, I was the one who mentioned it.

CALLIE

Oh, look! I think our table's ready. Good night, Aaron.

Callie grabs Gary by the arm and leads him away, glaring at Aaron.

GARY

Well, great meeting you, Aaron.

AARON

Yeah. You too, Barry.
(to himself)
Blow hard.

INT. SMOKEHOUSE RESTAURANT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Aaron enters the wood-paneled Burbank restaurant. He spots Spencer in a booth, awkwardly decked out in the day's fashion. Next to him is LIZZY, 20s, a gum-chewing bimbo.

Aaron approaches and sits.

SPENCER

Aaron, may I introduce the lovely Miss Lizzy Barton.

AARON

Hi.

SPENCER

Lizzy is a fine young actress.

AARON

That right?

LIZZY

I did acting at a theater. In Texas.

SPENCER

And now she's here to take Hollywood by storm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Spencer gooses her and she giggles. Aaron ignores them and scans the menu.

SPENCER (CONT'D)
The swordfish here is primo.

AARON
Callie and I used to come here together. Years ago.

SPENCER
Still carrying the torch, eh, pal?

AARON
Excuse me?

SPENCER
Listen, I know of many eligible young ladies who'd love to meet a man such as yourself.

AARON
Oh yeah?

SPENCER
Of course. They're my castoffs.

Spencer kisses Lizzy on the cheek.

SPENCER (CONT'D)
A man can only handle one woman at a time.

AARON
That hasn't been my experience.

LIZZY
I have to go potty.

Lizzy leaves.

SPENCER
Isn't she something?

AARON
Yep. You two make a quite a pair.

SPENCER
Lemme tell ya, she's murder in the sack. She could suck the hitch off a trailer.

AARON
Chrome off a trailer hitch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SPENCER

I'm sorry?

AARON

The expression is, chrome off a...
Never mind. Look, can we just cut
to the chase? What's your agenda?

SPENCER

(mock surprise)

Whoa, whoa! Agenda? Why can't it
just be a nice dinner with my
friend, Aaron Moore? My dear,
trustworthy friend, who would never
stab his friend Spencer in the
back.

AARON

Stab you in the back? What?

SPENCER

I know what you're planning. I have
ears. Listen to me, you don't know
him, Aaron. He's a snake. A
terrible, poisonous snake.

AARON

Wait. Are we talking about Izzy
Baker?

SPENCER

Who else?

AARON

Jesus, Spencer. What does he have
on you?

SPENCER

How dare you assume such a thing?
I'm just thinking of the show.

AARON

I'm sure you are.

SPENCER

Truth be told, I am a little hurt
that you didn't even bother to
consult me. After all, I am the
star of the show.

AARON

You're *one* of the stars. Of *my*
show.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SPENCER

Oh, horseshit. And screw that little Tommy Romano. You and I have a history, Aaron. We go back a long time. You must promise me you will not bring Izzy Baker on our show.

AARON

Spencer, you're worrying over nothing.

SPENCER

Am I?

A cute female FAN approaches the table.

FAN

Excuse me. You're Jerry Murphy, right?

SPENCER

Why, yes I am! Actually, I *play* Jerry Murphy. My name is Spencer Russell.

FAN

Um, I just really dig the show. It's so funny.

SPENCER

Well, in that case, you should meet the show's creator, Mr. Aaron Moore. Why don't you have a seat?

The Fan sits next to Aaron, and she smiles at him. Attention in the restaurant shifts away from Spencer to the entrance, as someone walks in to a storm of flashbulbs. Spencer looks over.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

Who's that?

AARON

I think it's David Bowie.

SPENCER

Please. Who cares about that skinny little homo?

Aaron gives Spencer a sideways glance.

INT. BEDROOM - AARON'S HOUSE - LATER

Once again, Aaron is at home, unable to sleep. The Fan from the Smokehouse sleeps next to him. In his boxers, he sneaks out of bed and heads into--

INT. OFFICE - AARON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

--and goes to his bookshelf. He finds a *Book of Quotations* and takes it down. He thumbs through and find what he's looking for:

AARON

Jean Paul Sartre. Son of a bitch!

BLACK.

INT. GREASE MEN SET - SOUND STAGE - DAY

Callie shows Gary around the set, and he looks around.

GARY

So this is it. Wow. It all looks much bigger on TV.

CALLIE

Welcome to the world of illusion.

Spencer approaches.

SPENCER

Cal, have you seen Perry?

CALLIE

Not for awhile. (Then) Spencer, this is Gary.

Gary shakes his hand.

GARY

My goodness. Spencer Russell, TV's Jerry Murphy. A real pleasure. I hope you don't mind my fawning.

SPENCER

Not at all. Fawn away.

GARY

I have to say, you are incredibly funny fellow.

SPENCER

Why, thank you.

Spencer loves getting this attention in front of Callie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARY

Just tremendous timing. The episode where you wind up at a gay bar by mistake is a classic. Must be very exciting doing such a ground-breaking show.

SPENCER

It most certainly is. I'll tell you, when we shot that episode, I had never been to a bar like that before, and...

Spencer trails off as, out of the corner of his eye, he spies Perry chatting with a male COSTUMER, 20s, an openly gay young man. The two giggle and flirt.

Gary calls Spencer back.

GARY

Would it be too much to ask you to do a line or two for me?

SPENCER

Huh? Oh, sure. Uh...
(as Jerry)
"Shaddap youse!"

Gary laughs appreciatively.

GARY

Terrific, terrific. Well, I won't take up any more of your time.
(to Callie)
I actually need to get back, myself. But I'll see you this evening, yes?

CALLIE

Absolutely.

Gary kisses Callie, then walks away. As he does, Callie sees that Aaron has been watching the whole time.

INT. CALLIE'S OFFICE - GREASE MEN PRODUCTION OFFICES -
MOMENTS LATER

The office is considerably smaller than Aaron's, with no windows. It's extremely efficient and neat, with bulletin boards on the walls that organize her days. Apart from a framed poster of the opera, "Aida," there's nothing else in the way of decoration.

Callie sits at her desk, readying herself for the coming confrontation. Then, as expected, Aaron barges in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AARON

What the hell was that?

CALLIE

Ever heard of knocking?

AARON

You bring him here? You had no right.

CALLIE

Excuse me. I work here.

AARON

So do I.

CALLIE

Not lately, you don't.

She lands a blow... Then attempts to backpedal.

CALLIE (CONT'D)

I don't get it, Aaron. First, you make a big stink about wanting to meet the guy, then when you show up, you're an arrogant ass. Now I catch you spying on me when I bring him here?

AARON

I wasn't spying.

CALLIE

Lurking, more like.

AARON

He's beneath you, Cal. He's a pseudo intellectual. With his turtlenecks and his glasses.

CALLIE

He's a professor of sociology at Occidental.

AARON

He didn't sound very professorial back there: "Do Jerry! Do Jerry!" You should be embarrassed.

CALLIE

I should? You're the one who's jealous and behaving like a child.

AARON

Am not. I'm not jealous.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CALLIE

You are, and you have no right to be. You told me you didn't care if I dated.

AARON

I did not tell you that.

CALLIE

You most certainly did! Though why I even bothered to ask permission from you in the first place is beyond me. You'll bang anything in a skirt!

AARON

That's not true!

CALLIE

Don't lie to me, Aaron. I have eyes. I see what goes on. You need someone to screw, and when I won't do it, you find some bimbo.

AARON

Jesus, Callie, relax. It's just sex.

CALLIE

Just sex?! God, you're a pig. You talk a good game with your women's lib B.S., but really, you're just a pig.

AARON

Callie...

CALLIE

Get this straight. You can't have me, Aaron. Not now, not ever again. Do you understand?

Aaron turns around and storms out, slamming the door.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - GREASE MEN PRODUCTION OFFICES - LATER

It's deadly quiet as once again, the cast and crew sit around the table, waiting for Aaron to appear with a script. This time, Charles sits alongside Lawrence and Kenny. Everyone is present, except for Aaron. Callie stews quietly.

You can hear a pin drop over a long, tense pause. Then, Charles stands and addresses Callie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES
A moment of your time?

The two walk outside...

INT. HALLWAY - GREASE MEN PRODUCTION OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

CHARLES
What's going on?

CALLIE
Honestly, I have no idea, Charles.
I'm not his keeper anymore. He said
he'd be here at three. I haven't
heard from him.

CHARLES
This is very nearly the end of the
line unless you do something.

CALLIE
What can I do?

CHARLES
We're all tied in together on this.
Which means we all go down
together.

A beat.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Let me be honest with you. There's
something you can do here, and you
know what it is.

CALLIE
What are you insinuating?

CHARLES
Don't make me say it, Callie. He's
been absolutely worthless since you
two separated.

CALLIE
Charles, he'll pull out of it.

CHARLES
No, my darling. I don't believe he
will.

INT. AARON'S OFFICE - GREASE MEN PRODUCTION OFFICES - EVENING

It's getting late, as the sun sets through the windows. Aaron
sits at his desk again, looking blankly at his typewriter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

An open bottle of Cutty Sark and full shot in a Dixie cup sit next to the typewriter.

A KNOCK on the door.

KENNY

Aaron? Catch you at a bad time?

AARON

Never worse.

Kenny steps into the office, uninvited.

AARON (CONT'D)

(dryly)

Sure, Kenny, come on in.

Kenny wanders through the office, trying his best to be a large, intimidating presence. He looks at Aaron's trophy case.

KENNY

Very impressive.

AARON

Thank you. Take one.

Kenny reads the inscription on an Emmy.

KENNY

1971. That was two whole years ago.

AARON

He can count.

KENNY

Well. Just wanted to drop by and give you some advice. And here it is: Either you have a completed script on my desk by nine AM tomorrow morning, or it's over. We're turning it over to your writers, and you're gone. End of story.

AARON

It's my show. So, good luck with that.

KENNY

Yes, but it's my money. And in the not too distant future, it's going to be my network. Lawrence Pelson is retiring.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KENNY (CONT'D)

So you can get on board now, or you
can find yourself out in the cold.
Are we clear?

Aaron looks away, saying nothing.

KENNY (CONT'D)

You have yourself a swell evening.
I'll let myself out.

Kenny exits, leaving Aaron seething, all alone.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CALLIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Callie, in her bathrobe, sits on her couch, smoking, lost in
thought. There's a KNOCK on the door. She looks at her watch.
She forgot.

CALLIE

(to herself)

Oh, shoot.

She hops up and answers it. It's Gary.

GARY

(seeing her in her
bathrobe)

Hi there. Am I early?

CALLIE

No, I... Gary, I hate to do this,
but can I get a rain check?

GARY

Oh. Well, I guess "Mean Streets"
will still be playing next week.

CALLIE

Thanks. You're very sweet for
understanding. I'll call you soon.

She closes the door. Then she sits back on her couch and
flips channels. She stumbles across an old movie from the
late 50's with Izzy Baker.

EXT. DRIVE-IN DINER - CONTINUOUS

Aaron sits at a drive-in in his convertible, as a GIRL in
roller skates pulls up to take his order.

AARON

Double cheeseburger, chocolate
shake.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GIRL

Got it. Hey, you're that guy,
aren't you?

Aaron looks up at her for the first time. With a short hairdo
and slender build, she's a dead ringer for Callie.

AARON

That's me.

GIRL

I love your show.

AARON

Yeah. It's really funny, right?

GIRL

Well, sure, it is. But there's so
much more to it than that. I mean,
it's subversive, it deals with
culture and society in a way
nothing else on TV does. It tells
the truth, you know?

He looks at the girl. *She gets it.* She gives him a big smile,
as "Brand New Key" by Melanie plays, and Aaron smiles back.

GIRL (CONT'D)

Did you want fries with that?

AARON

Yes. Absolutely.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SPENCER'S HOME - EVENING

Spencer and Perry sit on the couch. Perry smokes a joint, and
flips channels. Spencer looks pensive. Finally:

SPENCER

Do you love me?

PERRY

What? Of course I love you.

SPENCER

Good. Because you're everything to
me. You know that, right?

PERRY

Sure.

Perry smiles at him. Another beat. Perry flips channels and
then finds the film with Izzy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPENCER

That cocksucker. (Then) I'll quit the show. If Aaron brings him on, I'll quit the show. See if I don't.

INT. BEDROOM - AARON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Aaron's in bed. For a moment, we expect that the girl from the diner is next to him, but as we PULL BACK, we reveal Aaron is alone, thinking.

He pulls the typewriter onto his lap, flips it on, and feeds in a page. He sits for a full beat, not moving. Then, he picks up the phone and dials.

INT. CALLIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Her phone rings. She looks at it for a long beat. She knows that ring. Finally, on the fifth ring, she answers.

INT. AARON'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

AARON

You were right. I was an asshole.

CALLIE (V.O.)

You were.

INTERCUT CALLIE'S AND AARON'S HOUSE AS NEEDED.

AARON

I was arrogant.

CALLIE

I know.

AARON

I told you you could date.

CALLIE

You did.

AARON

You're not going to make this easy, are you?

CALLIE

Nope.

AARON

I'm lost. I don't know which end is up. I need you to tell me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALLIE

I can't do that anymore. You're a big boy, Aaron. You can take care of yourself.

AARON

Apparently not. Anyway, I'm sorry.

CALLIE

Do you even know what you're apologizing for?

AARON

Everything?

CALLIE

Fine. I'll take it.

Callie takes a sip of wine. Aaron pours a belt of scotch. Then...

AARON

Ever think sometimes that we should have just been producing partners and left it at that?

CALLIE

Actually, sometimes I think we should have just quit all this TV stuff and had an actual marriage.

AARON

With you as the bread-winning master of the house and me as the traditional housewife?

CALLIE

Something like that.

A beat.

AARON

What are you doing right now?

CALLIE

Aaron...

AARON

I don't like to ask, and I'm asking.

A long pause.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CALLIE
(with a resigned laugh)
You're a real bastard, Aaron Moore.

AARON
I know.

They hang up.

Aaron sits for a beat. Then, he switches the TV and flips channels. He stumbles on the movie with Izzy Baker and watches for a full beat.

Then he grabs his phone and dials.

AARON (CONT'D)
Celia? Sorry to call so late.
Listen, I need you to get Izzy
Baker's people for me first thing
tomorrow morning. Thanks.

He hangs up. Then he dives in writing with gusto, as we close in on his hands, just like in the opening, typing away.

END.