

Rockinitis

Jack Kolkmeyer

ROCKINITIS

FADE IN

BLACK SCREEN

The infectious groove of "ROCKINITIS" by Billy Boy Arnold slithers in. Images emerge. Suede shoes. Slag heaps, glowing in the night. Rivers converging. Hands gesticulating. Sweat. Muscle. A skirt swirls. Another flurry of suede. Black leather. Lips...talking and kissing. Hair. Tight jeans. Hips moving. A black face smiles. A tear cuts a rivulet down a sooty cheek. A barge floats by. A train full of slag chugs along the river. A poor, white woman hangs clothes on a line just in front of the dark spew belching from a gritty steel mill. A molten sun sets.

INT. RADIO STATION KWLF/SANTA FE - NIGHT - JANUARY 1, 2000

KWLF, The Wolf, is a typical, small, contemporary, FM radio station. Hundreds of eclectic CDs, awards and posters of music groups adorn the walls. "ROCKINITIS" PLAYS as the local DJ, DR. FEELGOOD, in his 50s, pony-tailed and baseball cap on backwards, talks on the phone. Several phone lights blink.

His young, blonde, female ASSISTANT busily sorts CDs, records and tapes. A sign above the studio board reads: **Brave New World with Dr. Feelgood**. It has a palm tree growing out of 45 rpm record.

DR. FEELGOOD

Funky, huh? It's called
"Rockinitis" by Billy Boy Arnold.
Thanks. Later.

He hangs up, checks the time and chuckles.

DR. FEELGOOD

Can you believe this? We're playing the most obscure music we can find, and the phone is ringing off the hook. So much for Top 40 boy bands!

His assistant laughs, intently studying a reel of tape.

ASSISTANT

Check this out. "Dear, Dr. Feelgood. Sometime ago you mentioned that you were from Pittsburgh. I got this tape at a yard sale in a box full of records and tapes. Thought you might enjoy it. It's pretty cool. Says 1959. Right up your alley."

DR. FEELGOOD

Alright! Cue it up. What the hell.
Pittsburgh. 1959. I was a senior in
high school.

She cues up the tape. He checks the time and goes on the air.

DR. FEELGOOD

98.1 KWLF The Wolf in Santa Fe.
Always on the prowl for new tracks.
This is Dr. Feelgood, your Digital
Daddy, playin' groove music for the
Saturday night tribe. That was
another gem from our Cellar of
Stellar Hits!

Hey, there! Happy New Year! Happy
New Millennium! And Happy Y2K.
January 1st, 2000. We made it.
And we're celebrating tonight with
a four hour tribute to tunes you
never heard in the last millennium.
And we're playin' from everything!
Tapes, 8 tracks, LPs, 45s, 78s,
CDs. All the music technology of
the past hundred years. The
ultimate "best of" New Year's show.

He chuckles.

DR. FEELGOOD

Don't go anywhere. We got more groove
music right around the corner. Here's
somethin' we haven't even listened to,
on old reel to reel...says Pittsburgh,
1959. We can dig that! Right here on Brave
New World.

He PLAYS the song that has been cued up. From the opening
note, a look of absolute astonishment crosses his face. He
frantically whips off his headphones.

DR. FEELGOOD

Oh, my god! Oh, my god! Give me
that envelope! Who sent this?

His abrupt change in personality surprises the assistant. She
glances curiously at the letter and hands it to him with the
envelope.

ASSISTANT

There's no name. What is it? What's
the matter?

He frantically searches the envelope, hops up and examines the tape. He reads the letter. He intently looks for some other piece of information that apparently is not there.

DR. FEELGOOD

Is there a phone number or anything?
Oh, my god! You're not going to believe this! I know that song! It's called "The Spin"...

He puts his hands to his head. He looks very sad.

ASSISTANT

You know more songs than anyone I know. What's the matter? You look like you're about ready to cry.

He plops back down in his chair, checking the time.

DR. FEELGOOD

It's a love story...a doo wop love story.

Music FADES.

EXT. PITTSBURGH DANCE HALL - EARLY SUMMER EVENING/1959

ANGELO ROSETTI and his friend, SAL RATIGLIANO, both going on 18, share a quart of beer, leaning on Angelo's shiny, black, 1950 Ford. Two cool cats. Angelo, duck-tailed and sleek, checks himself in the side mirror. Sal a dark, stocky, little meatball, bounces around nervously.

"SEXY WAYS" by Hank Ballard and The Midnighters PLAYS from inside the dance hall. LOTS OF WHITE KIDS stroll inside. Angelo gestures toward Sal with the beer in the brown bag.

ANGELO

Summer. Summer. Summer.
Here's to three months of cool moves and groovy twists of fate.

Sal breaks up in hysterics, suddenly jumping around.

SAL

You said it! You said you'd never say it and you fuckin'-a said it!

Angelo rubs his chin, glaring at Sal.

ANGELO

Said what? What'd I say?

SAL
Groovy. You said groovy.

ANGELO
Yeah?
But I said it to mean something.
"Groovy twists of fate."
You say it just to fuckin' say it.

A GROUP OF KIDS huddles by a tree looking at a poster.

ANGELO
What are they all lookin' at?
What's that poster say?

He tosses Sal the beer and struts over to the tree. Sal, trying not to spill any, stashes it and follows him. TWO YOUNG GIRLS pass by.

YOUNG GIRL
Hi, Fabian.

Angelo sneers at her, then preens sweetly.

ANGELO
Don't call me that! I hate Fabian.
My name's Angelo. But you, little
Queenie, you can call me Angel.

She gives him the finger. He puts down some fancy footwork.

YOUNG GIRL
Fabian!

Angelo rips the poster off the tree. It's an announcement for an up-coming rock and roll show. He reads it.

ANGELO
Damn! The Students at the State
Theater in Clairton! Tomorrow
night! Swingin'. We're there!

His interest is piqued.

ANGELO
And check this out. KATS Radio and
Sonny Boy Davis present an Acapella
Showdown...on the Fourth of July.
Acapella. That's the ride, man.
That's the sound. Sweet.

Sal grabs the poster and examines it.

SAL

We don't do acapella, Angelo.
We're a band, remember.
You sing...with a band. Sounds like
a colored thing.

Angelo grabs the poster back and stuffs it in his pocket.

ANGELO

Maybe that's our problem. Maybe you
need to sing more. Group harmony,
baby. We're gonna enter...and win.

He struts back to the car, glancing over his shoulder.

ANGELO

Then maybe they'll stop callin' me
Fabian. I hate that.
C'mon, let's rip it up.

He gulps one last swig of beer, turns the bottle over to
drain the foam, then flips it quickly to Sal. He bobbles it.
Beer foam sprays all over his jacket. He's pissed. Angelo
belches.

SAL

God damn it, Angelo. Holy Mother
of God. I hate when you do shit
like that.
What? What are we gonna enter?

Angelo puts his arm around his friend's shoulder.

ANGELO

Who's spinnin' tonight?

SAL

Sonny Boy.

Angelo gives Sal a hug.

ANGELO

Swingin', man. We'll talk to him
about this acapella thing. That's
what we're gonna enter. The
acapella thing.

He looks around suddenly.

ANGELO

Say, you seen Doreen?

SAL

No. She's probably inside. Speaking of summer...you gonna do it with her this summer?

Angelo gives Sal his big warm smile.

ANGELO

Maybe I'm already doin' it with her. And Sal...I love you, man. You're havin' a ball with me, ain't you? Huh? We're gonna make a record, a real record. And that's a promise, an Italian promise...a Calabrian promise.

Sal pauses screwing up his face in thought.

SAL

You're Sicilian.

ANGELO

I know that. You're Calabrian, ass wipe.

Sal scrunches up his face in confusion. Angelo does another stellar dance move, struts into the dance hall. Music FADES.

EXT. PITTSBURGH STEEL COMPANY - SAME EVENING

The cracking sound of a base hit. A Pittsburgh Pirates baseball game PLAYS on the radio. VITO ROSETTI, a plant foreman in his 30's, maneuvers his 1959 powder blue, Ford Victoria through STRIKING WORKERS but they block the way.

A tomato splatters on the windshield. MELVIN ROBERTS, a tall, thin African-American, nervously rolling his thin cigar, watches the car approach. VIKTOR YABLONSKI, hard hat askew, runs toward it yelling.

VIKTOR

Tell us whose side you're on!

VITO

I'm on both sides, Yablonski!

Viktor trots alongside the car, holding on to the door.

VIKTOR

No, Rosetti. One side or the other.

Vito looks at him obligingly, searching Viktor's face.

VITO

I'm on our side, Viktor! We're on the same side. Just like in football.

VIKTOR

Maybe we was then but the times has changed. Now you gotta choose for real, Rosetti. Grab them balls! Be a man!

VITO

I'm tryin' to help here, Yablonski! I'll do whatever I can. I promise, an Italian promise.

VIKTOR

Italian ain't no use to me. I'm Polish.

The car breaks through the crowd and Viktor has to let go. Vito looks back at Viktor, who stabs his fist in the air. The strikers cheer Viktor on. An egg smashes against Vito's car.

VIKTOR

You'ns guys see that? You can't be on two sides at once! The fuckin' dago's stupid! One side or the other!

Tomatoes rain on Vito's car as dusk settles over the factory.

INT. DANCE HALL - SAME EVENING

A mirrored ball splashes fractured light on VERY SERIOUS DANCERS working out on the circular dance floor to the hard-core groove of "BILA" by The Versatones. The teenage tribe surrounds them, captivated by the polyrhythmic music, clapping in appreciation of the fancy footwork. SONNY BOY DAVIS, a young, white DJ in his 20s, dressed in his signature Hawaiian shirt, spins the tunes, rockin' himself as he does so. Even the needle on the disc rocks.

Sal and Angelo roam the floor. Angelo checks the scene, then cautiously approaches Sonny Boy on stage. Sal follows him.

ANGELO

Hey, Sonny. Angelo Rosetti. My friends call me Angel. This is Sal.

SONNY BOY

Say, guys. Yeah. Actually I remember you from a hop somewhere.

ANGELO

Right. Lebanon Lodge. We're The Apollos.

SONNY BOY

What's doin'? You got a platter for me? Always on the prowl for new tunes.

ANGELO

No. That's kinda the problem.

SONNY BOY

You got tunes? Original songs?

Angelo is embarrassed. Sonny Boy looks intently through his 45s, all of which are in green record sleeves.

ANGELO

We're workin' on some.

Sonny Boy cues up a record, then gives Angelo the once over.

SONNY BOY

You guys need to enter The Acapella Showdown. You win...you make a record. Solves your problem.

SAL

We don't do...

Angelo steps in front of Sal, interrupting him.

ANGELO

We'll do that. We'll win, too.

Sonny Boy hands them a poster, studying him.

SONNY BOY

Crazy. Look, I'm doing this show in Clairton tomorrow night. Got The Altairs, The Students, and a girl named Deserie. Make the scene. Check it out. The girl's lookin' to record, too.

ANGELO

Thanks, man. We'll be there. Later.

SONNY BOY

Later, babies.

Sal glares at Angelo, who ignores him and heads off the stage, staring impishly back at Sal.

ANGELO

Hmmmm...a colored girl, huh?

They join their friends, DINO and JOHNNY, with their GIRLS, and DOREEN O'BRIEN, Angelo's would-be girlfriend, a pretty, soft-skinned, Irish-American, wearing slacks and a very tight sweater. Angelo hugs Doreen.

DOREEN

Hi, Angel.

ANGELO

Hi, Doreen. Hey, guys. What gives?

Doreen sniffs the air.

DOREEN

Drinkin' again?

ANGELO

A quart low.

DOREEN

I thought you were going to call me!

Angelo twists the curl of hair hanging down his forehead, then puts his arm around her waist.

ANGELO

I called you once. There was no answer.

DOREEN

You called me once? Swell! Angelo, is it you and me this summer or not?

ANGELO

I don't know, Doreen. Let's jump. I can think better when I'm dancin'.

(to Dino and Johnny)

Hey, I gotta talk with you guys later. I gotta idea. A cool idea.

He points to his head. They laugh.

DINO

We can hardly wait.

Angelo glides Doreen on to the shimmering dance floor. They jitterbug sensuously, pressing tightly together. Angelo moves to show his prowess but also to cop a few feels, which he does surreptitiously. She encourages him. The song FADES as light splashes on their faces.

EXT. DRIVEWAY OF THE ROSETTI HOUSE - NEXT AFTERNOON

"SINCE I DON'T HAVE YOU" by The Skyliners PLAYS from a radio.
Angelo and Vito clean egg and tomato off Vito's car.

ANGELO

Damn tomato ruined your paint job.

VITO

Damn Pollacks!

ANGELO

How you know it was Polish guys?

VITO

I saw them throwin' 'em.

Angelo examines his dad's face, working on a red spot.

ANGELO

Why is everybody on strike anyway?
What's it mean? To be on strike?

VITO

It means...they won't work 'til they
get more money...better conditions...
more of everything...for less work.

ANGELO

So give 'em somethin'.

Vito stops rubbing, almost upset, but pausing.

VITO

I don't have anything to give them.
I'm stuck in the middle. I'm just a
foreman, stuck between the bosses and
the workers...between a rock and
a real hard place.

Angelo leans back on his haunches, studying his dad.

ANGELO

What'cha gonna do?

Vito plops back on the grass, exasperated.

VITO

Wait it out. That's my only choice.
Yablonski thinks I'm the enemy!

ANGELO

Yablonski's an idiot...so's his kid.

VITO
They're just being Pollacks.

Angelo laughs.

ANGELO
And we're just bein' dagos.

VITO
I guess so. Crazy, mixed up world,
huh?

GINA, Angelo's mother, comes out of the house with a pitcher of lemonade. Her bleached, blonde hair glistens in the sun.

GINA
Hey, boys. Thought you might like
a cold drink. Sal called, Angel.
Said to pick him up at 2 o'clock.

VITO
Where you guys going?

ANGELO
Clairton. There's a rock and roll show.

GINA
This rock and roll seems to have
become your entire life?

Angelo feels his forehead.

ANGELO
Yeah. Got a bad case of rockinitis.

His parents chuckle in amusement.

GINA
When your father and I were young,
we used to rumba and mambo. Now
it's rock and roll.

VITO
It's all jungle music to me.
Put the ball game on before you go.

Angelo changes the radio and leaves. The summer ball game
FADES.

EXT. THE STATE THEATER - SAME AFTERNOON

The marquee reads KATS RADIO MATINEE! THE STUDENTS, THE
STEREOS AND THE ALTAIRS with DJ SONNY BOY DAVIS. MEOW. MEOW.
KIDS go in and out.

We pause on a sandwich board sign announcing: SPECIAL GUEST DESERIE ROBERTS. We are momentarily pulled into her dark, young eyes, then inside the theater.

INT. THE STATE THEATER - SAME AFTERNOON

Loud, evocative teenagers jam the theater, rocking in their seats and in the aisles dancing. A BAND PLAYS. WHITE KIDS are on one side, BLACK KIDS on the other. Angelo and Sal drape themselves along the wall, watching wide-eyed.

ANGELO

These cats are for real. That guitar player wails, man.

SAL

And check the shoes. Red suede! Now that's divine, Angel. Heavenly, heavenly, heavenly.

Sal kisses the cross hanging around his neck. Angelo breaks into a little dance, exhibiting some fancy moves in his black, suede shoes.

ANGELO

Footwork makes the shoes, champ.

The band takes their bows. Sonny Boy trots in applauding.

SONNY BOY

Alright, Clairton! A big hand for The Altairs! Hey guys and dolls. It's me your governor of groove. Your wizard of wax. Your pride and joy... Mr. Sonny Boy. On K..A..T..S. And you know what that spells.

The crowd ROARS, MEOWS, and then ROARS again.

SONNY BOY

And now, movers and groovers...it's time for one of our special guests. A young angel destined for a great big future from right here in Clairton. Let's hear it for Miss Deserie Roberts.

The CROWD goes wild. DESERIE ROBERTS, enters from the side dressed in a slinky, low-cut, tight fitting dress, quite different than the poodle skirts most girl singers wear. She breaks into a very sexy version of the rhythm and blues classic 'GOT MY MOJO WORKIN' by Ann Cole. The sax player, the same Melvin Roberts, from the mill, wails along with her.

Deserie SINGS emotionally, putting down some seriously sultry moves and working herself into a sweat. Angelo is quite taken by her performance, clapping appreciatively. He nudges Sal.

ANGELO

C'mon. Let's go maneuverate. Talk with Sonny Boy. check out that girl. I think heaven just sent Angel an angel.

SAL

What are you talkin' about?

ANGELO

We sing with her, man, we win.

SAL

But, uh...Angelo...she's...colored.

ANGELO

Good, Sal. Very good, Sal. You can tell. How's that a problem?

Sal is dumfounded.

SAL

Sometimes I'm amazed at how stupid you are for such a wise guy. You're Italian. That's white. And that's (pointing towards the girl) the problem.

Angelo ignores him and heads toward the stage. Deserie sweats.

INT. "IN THE GROOVE" RECORD STORE - LATE THAT AFTERNOON

JACOB COHEN, the store owner, a little Jewish guy in his late 30's, dressed very conservatively, turns the "CLOSED" sign on the front door around to face the street. Yiddish vaudeville music follows his gaze around the room. He smiles at the words of the song. As he goes to lock the door, a dapper LOUIS ROSALLINI and his SIDEKICK, appear at the door, although he cannot immediately see who they are.

MR. COHEN

Sorry. I'm closing.

LOUIS

No, you're not. Open the door.

Jacob peers at them very carefully, recognizing Louis, and opens the door. The men enter, locking the door behind them.

MR. COHEN

Mr. Rosallini. Sorry. I didn't recognize you right away.

LOUIS

Hello, Jacob. It's the shades.
How's business?

Louis removes his sunglasses. Jacob goes back to the counter. He walks with a slight limp.

MR. COHEN

Not so good with the strike. How's your father?

Louis thumbs through some receipts on the counter.

LOUIS

Good. The restaurant's doing well. But he's upset that you haven't paid your rent.

The other man noses around the store, looking at records.

MR. COHEN

I'll have it for you next week.

LOUIS

Jacob. Jacob. That's late, Jacob. My father will want interest...at least! Maybe even close you down.

MR. COHEN

I'll have it for you on Monday.

LOUIS

No later. How's the studio?

MR. COHEN

It's ok. Just a small place for the kids. Something good for the neighborhood.

Louis opens the back door and looks in.

LOUIS

This neighborhood ain't worth a shit.

His sidekick stuffs a couple of records down his pants. Louis gets in Mr. Cohen's face.

LOUIS

My father also asked me to remind you, just in case you forgot, that we are the music business, Jacob. We own all the jukeboxes... especially the colored ones.

MR. COHEN

I'm aware of that, Louis.

LOUIS

Consider it.

MR. COHEN

I will, Louis.

LOUIS

Carefully. We don't rent you our building for you to be in competition with us. That wouldn't be kosher now would it, Jacob?

Louis chortles. Mr. Cohen stands frozen. Louis picks up a record, takes it out of its green sleeve, admires it, then smashes it. He laughs again, flicking a fragment from the counter to the floor. He pushes the record player arm, sliding, screeching the song to a halt. The needle sticks on a Yiddish note.

LOUIS

Still not unbreakable yet. I'll come by for the rent on Monday. Call me if you need anything, Jacob.

MR. COHEN

I'll do that, Louis.

The two men swagger to the door. Louis unlocks it and they leave. Mr. Cohen locks it quickly behind them. He turns and puts his back to the door, momentarily closing his eyes. The phone rings. He answers it.

MR. COHEN

Record store.
Saul. Hello. What's wrong?

He pauses, listening. He begins to look nervous and perplexed.

MR. COHEN

That's a lot, Saul. More than I have right now.

He pauses again. His head droops down.

MR. COHEN

I'll send what I can. But it's difficult here, too. I got everything in this business. And I only have a contract for three more months. They take pleasure in torturing me. Good bye.

He hangs up. He stands motionless for a moment. He unrolls the left hand sleeve of his shirt, revealing a tattooed number on his arm. He tries instinctively to rub it off. He stares into space then turns abruptly and walks back into the new studio area. The needle-sticking Yiddish note FADES.

INT. STATE THEATER - SAME LATE AFTERNOON

Angelo and Sal sneak into the wings. Sonny Boy talks with CASSIE ROBERTS, Deserie's mother, a beautiful, African-American woman in her early 30s. Three other young African-American kids are with them: LYDIA, ISAAC and TYRONE ROBERTS. Sonny Boy spots Angelo and Sal and motions them over.

SONNY BOY

Hey, guys. She's somethin', huh? Like you to meet her mother. That's her uncle playin' sax.

They all shake hands.

CASSIE

You boys sing?

ANGELO

Yes, mam. We're The Apollos.

She ponders his response.

CASSIE

Isn't that Greek? How come you're not The Eye-Talians or The Romans.

Angelo gives her the once over, smiling at her knowledge.

ANGELO

Someone's already got that name. We thought about The Mafia...but...

They all laugh.

SONNY BOY

They're lookin' to do a record, too.

(MORE)

SONNY BOY (cont'd)

I was telling Cassie here that my friend who owns a record store downtown, is opening a recording studio. He's lookin' for talent.

Deserie finishes her song to a very warm reception.

SONNY BOY

Stick around. I'll be right back.

He goes on stage, applauding wildly. Deserie bows sensuously, then slinks into the wings. Her mother and friends greet her warmly. Sonny Boy takes the microphone, talking excitedly and with exuberant animation.

SONNY BOY

Miss Deserie Roberts!! We hope to see her on the 4th of July at the Acapella Showdown at the Syria Mosque. Definitely gonna be some vocal pyromaniacs down there...be there or be square! Get in the groove or move! Miss Deserie Roberts! Now foxes and phillies, guys and dolls...kings and queens of love. The show goes on with...the stars of this afternoon's rock and roll groove extravaganza...one of our favorite groups of all times...from Cincinnati, Ohio...The Students!

THE STUDENTS bounce on stage. They wear green, sharkskin suits and carry school books. Once on stage, they throw the books into the audience. The CROWD goes berserk, grabbing the books. They SING "EVERYDAY OF THE WEEK".

Angelo fixates on Deserie. She still sweats from an exuberant performance. He extends his hand, pulls it back quickly, rubbing them together. He's momentarily struck. He offers her his handkerchief. She looks at it, looks at him, then takes it, wipes her forehead and gives it back, making eye contact with him. He rubs his hands with the handkerchief then puts it in his pocket.

ANGELO

Angelo Rosetti. My friends call me Angel. Cool song.

DESERIE

Deserie. Thanks.
Such a thing as an Italian angel?

Angelo, twisting the curl hanging down on his forehead, looks over at Cassie and smiles. Cassie tilts her head suspiciously.

ANGELO

Yeah. Can't you tell by the crooked halo? Devil or angel.

Deserie looks at him haltingly, then smiles at his remark.

DESERIE

This is my mom, my cousin Tyrone, Isaac and my best friend Lydia. They sing, too. We're starting a group.

ANGELO

This is Sal. He plays bass.

Sal notices Tyrone's green, suede shoes.

SAL

Cool kicks. Where'd you get 'em?

TYRONE

Downtown on 5th Avenue. Forbes Shoes.

ANGELO

That's close to the record store Sonny was talkin' about.

TYRONE

That's the joint, man.

Sonny Boy joins them, putting his arm around Cassie.

SONNY BOY

OK, look. Cassie, you call me next week. We gotta talk. I think maybe we can work something out. You were great, Deserie.

Melvin puts his sax into a case, noticing Angelo.

CASSIE

OK, Sonny, I'll do that. Thanks for letting Deserie sing. I told you she was good. C'mon, kids, let's go. Melvin's got a gig at Pearl's.

Cassie and Sonny Boy hug. Angelo moves closer to Deserie.

ANGELO

You got pipes. From Clairton, right?

She studies his face.

DESERIE

Yeah. Clairton High. And you?

ANGELO

South Hills High. Good luck. Maybe
I'll see you around.

DESERIE

Maybe. If you're lucky.

She smiles at him. Lydia pulls at her arm. Isaac gives Angelo a hard look. Angelo stares at her, completely taken by her flippancy. Sonny Boy is all hyped up, fidgeting and moving around nervously. Sal offers him a stick of gum.

SONNY BOY

Cool, now here's the scene, man.
Mr. Cohen actually wants to start
a new label. He's lookin' for new
acts. Asked me to help him. That's
why I'm doin' the Acapella
Showdown.

Sonny Boy chews furiously on his gum. He lights up a smoke.

SONNY BOY

Maybe I can help you guys.

ANGELO

Lay it on down.

SONNY BOY

Why don't you bring your group down
to the Homestead Community Hall
next week-end. Do what you do and
throw in an acapella tune for me.
Kind of like an audition.

ANGELO

Swingin'. Sure, man. Thanks. We'd
love to.

SONNY BOY

And go by Cohen's place and check
it out. Oh, and, guys, one sayin'-
somethin' acapella song. Consider
this your chance.

Sal steps forward forcefully.

SAL

But we do mostly instrumentals and solo vocals.

Angelo glares at him.

SONNY BOY

Gotta be a group harmony thing, man. That's what we want on the label. Gotta go. See ya in Homestead.

Sonny Boy rushes on stage as The Students finish.

SAL

Now you got us in a real fix.

ANGELO

Now, we got a chance, Sal. Not some bullshit dream. And we're gonna jump on it. Like he says, group harmony. A tribal thing, man.

Sal works furiously on his gum, shaking his head. Music FADES on The Students' sweaty faces.

INT. THE ROSETTI LIVING ROOM - THAT NIGHT

Gina, Vito and MARIA, Angelo's younger sister, watch HIT PARADE on TV. Gina irons. A news bulletin comes on. A tinted picture of Grandpa Carlo smiles from the mantle.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

The president of the United Steelworkers of America, Mr. David McDonald, announced this morning that steel workers throughout the country will remain on strike, which is now entering its second month.

The scene on the TV switches to Little Rock, Arkansas. A crowd of angry, white people confront a group of African-Americans, yelling at them and calling them names. Pushing and shoving erupts into a melee.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Meanwhile, the tension continues to build in front of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, where two, teenage Negroes, on the last day of school, walked through the doors of a previously segregated public school.

(MORE)

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (cont'd)

Riot police were called to the scene but there were no reported incidents.

Arkansas Governor, Orval Faubus, announced that the struggle to segregate public schools will continue.

Vito, seemingly agitated, gets up and turns off the TV.

GINA

What's the matter, honey?

VITO

Feels like the whole damn world is upside down. Everything seemed so...right...just a few weeks ago.

Maria is confused.

MARIA

I don't get it. Why would those colored kids even want to go to that school? Won't they be better off in their own school?

VITO

Maybe. But that's not the point. It's about choice, sweetie. It's good to be with other kinds of people. That's why I like the steel mill.

MARIA

How come we moved out of the Italian neighborhood?

Vito doesn't answer her. He goes to the stereo, thumbs through a stack of albums, takes out a rumba record and PLAYS a version of "THE PEANUT VENDOR". He rubs his hands and goes over to Gina and unplugs the iron.

VITO

Let's dance.

Gina smiles lovingly at him. They dance. Maria leaves the room embarrassed. The music FADES.

EXT. A DARK BACK ROAD - LATE THAT NIGHT

Angelo speeds along a dirt road, sliding around a curve.

INT. ANGELO'S CAR

Angelo drives ferociously, intent on something other than driving. "MAMA LOOCHIE" by Lee Diamond PLAYS on the radio.

ANGELO

All them Philly cats got is looks,
Sal. I keep tellin' ya that. They
ain't got groove. They got a beat
but they ain't got a groove. You
followin' me?

Sal clings to the door handle, petrified.

SAL

The only thing I wish you was
followin' was the road. God damn
it, Angelo, slow down! Now!

Angelo grins mischievously at him and goes even faster, slurring his words.

ANGELO

You're such a pussy. You scared?
And you ain't diggin' me, are you?
OK, look. James Brown is groove,
man. All rhythm. It's all in the
rhythm...the groove. We gotta find
the groove. Like "The Slop"...
that's a groove.

Sal is white with fear. He yells at Angelo.

SAL

Stop the fuckin' car, Angelo. Now!
Stop the fuckin' car and let me out!

Angelo slams on the brakes. They come sliding to a stop. Dust swirls around. Sal jumps out of the car.

SAL

Why do you do this?

Angelo stays behind the wheel, grinning.

ANGELO

Cause I'm thinkin'.

SAL

You're thinkin'? You ain't thinkin'
that you might kill us...but you're
thinkin'? You ain't thinkin', Angel.

Angelo pulls out a little pint of whiskey and takes a nip. Sal paces outside of the car.

ANGELO

Yeah...I was thinkin'. Now I'm done thinkin'. Don't know why I didn't think of it before.

SAL

Think of what, Angelo? My life?

ANGELO

A new dance. That's the ticket. We invent a new dance. We win the acapella contest. Get a record deal and we're in. We're stars. Pittsburgh dago stars!

Sal stares at him in complete disbelief. Angelo offers him the whiskey. Sal refuses. Angelo takes another swig.

SAL

Move over. I'm drivin'.

Angelo moves over to the shotgun side and closes the door. Sal hurries around and jumps in the driver's side. He starts the car then pauses for a moment, turning off the radio. Angelo is a bit woozy.

SAL

What kind of new dance?

Angelo taps the medallion of St. Cecelia hanging from the rear view mirror.

ANGELO

Don't know yet but we'll figure it out. This lady here'll help us. Give her a spin.

Angelo spins the medallion and motions for Sal to go ahead. Sal drives off, very slowly. Angelo closes his eyes and softly sings "THE WIND" by Nolan Strong and The Diablos. Music FADES as the medallion swings back and forth.

EXT. A PARK IN CLAIRTON - THE NEXT WEEK - DAY

A basketball swishes through a net. The poignant "I'M SO YOUNG" by The Students PLAYS from a radio sitting on the ledge of an open window in a nearby apartment.

Deserie and Lydia jump rope with two other girls while watching A GROUP OF BOYS, including Tyrone and Isaac, play ball. Isaac and another boy tussle.

Deserie jumps to a very intricate, rhythmic clapping and singing pattern. She jumps faster and faster until she finally messes up. The girls all clap and applaud. They are all sweating.

Lydia and Deserie sit down on a park bench....out of breath but happy.

LYDIA

Can you believe this is it? one more year of high school! Sure went by.

DESERIE

Yeah. Now the \$64,000 question is...how are two, cool, colored girls gonna get the hell outta Dodge?

LYDIA

My daddy says by bein' a teacher.

Deserie gives her the once over. Lydia is very sexy.

DESERIE

You think you're the teacher type?

LYDIA

A teacher's a good job, ain't it? You get paid for bein' with boys, right?

She tightens her halter. They giggle. Deserie watches the boys.

LYDIA

Penny for your thoughts? You been thinkin' hard on somethin' lately.

Deserie smiles, acknowledging Lydia's comment.

DESERIE

Yeah. It's Isaac. He can't sing. If we do this acapella show...he won't cut it. He only wants to sing cause I do.

The basketball bounces over to the girls. Lydia stops it with her foot, picks it up and throws it back to Isaac. He catches it and twirls it on the end of his finger.

DESERIE

You know what I'd do if I could do anything I wanted?

LYDIA

Hard to tell with you, child.

DESERIE

I'd have my own record company.
Desire Records...with a flaming
heart on the label.

LYDIA

A big old, bleedin' heart.
Like try the impossible.

DESERIE

Girl, everything's possible.

Isaac fakes the guy guarding him and goes in for a lay-up.
Frustrated, his opponent kicks the ball away. Isaac, much
larger, stares him down until he picks the ball up.

LYDIA

I ain't sure I'm getting' what
you're sayin'...or ain't sayin'.

DESERIE

Somehow, we gotta make us a record.
Music is our way up and out. And
we're good! Otherwise...
you're a teacher and I'm a nurse.
Which one you want?

Lydia reflects for a moment, shaking her head in agreement.

LYDIA

How many colored girls got records
in Pittsburgh?

DESERIE

It don't matter. It's the song. If we
get the right song...we're there.

LYDIA

We gonna be a group? Maybe all you
need is a band. You oughta go sing
with your mom down at Pearl's.

DESERIE

She won't let me.

LYDIA

She knows you'll jazz them jazz cats.

They giggle. Isaac puts on a dribbling exhibition.

LYDIA

What'cha gonna do 'bout him?

DESERIE

Nothin'. I ain't his girl.

LYDIA

He sure as hell thinks you are.

DESERIE

Then I'll have to put a new twist
in his little-boy-world. This
summer is gonna be very different.
What are we doin' this week-end?

LYDIA

There's a dance over in Homestead.
My daddy'll take us. Bunch of
groups singin'.

The basketball rolls over again. Isaac chases it. Deserie stops jumping, beats him to it, picks it up, dribbles toward the basket, stops, shoots a set shot and swishes it. Isaac falls to the ground in male anguish, throwing his doo rag into the air. It floats to the ground. Deserie runs over to Lydia, grabs her by the hand. The girls trot off, grinding their hips. Music FADES.

EXT. DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH - AFTERNOON THAT WEEK

SHOPPERS bustle about. A trolley CLANGS down the street. It screeches to a halt. Angelo and Sal hop off and walk over to the sidewalk in front of IN THE GROOVE RECORD SHOP. Angelo points down the street.

ANGELO

There. Forbes Shoes. That's it.

SAL

Shit, man. What a way to start the
summer! Green suede shoes! Very groovy!

Abruptly, Angelo turns on him.

ANGELO

If you say that word one more time,
you're out of the group! Period!

SAL

What group is that?

Angelo cracks his knuckles, turns and walks in the record store. Sal gives him the finger and mimes "groovy, groovy" behind his back, following him into the store. Sparks jump from the trolley wires overhead.

INT. IN THE GROOVE RECORD STORE - SAME AFTERNOON

"SWEETPEA'S IN LOVE" by The Stereos PLAYS as Angelo and Sal stroll into the store, crammed from floor to ceiling with oldies records, all in green sleeves. Jacob Cohen carefully opens boxes of records. Pictures of mostly black singers adorn the walls. As we survey the room, we also see sections marked "Yiddish Records", "Armenian Records", "Jazz", "Blues" and "Gospel Music".

ANGELO

Hey, Mr. Cohen. How's it goin'?
Angelo Rosetti. My friends call me
Angel. This is my buddy Sal.

Angelo spins around, dancing to the music.

MR. COHEN

Swell. We got a strike and I'm
selling more records than ever. Go
figure. What can I do for you boys?

Mr. Cohen fusses with his 45s. The boys fidget. Angelo steps up to the counter, twisting a curl of hair.

ANGELO

We're contemplatin' makin' a
record. Sonny Boy told us you got a
new recording studio. So we come by
to take a peek.

MR. COHEN

Contemplating? Teenagers can
contemplate?

He chuckles. Angelo rolls his eyes.

MR. COHEN

In that back room. Should be ready
by Labor Day. You boys got songs?
You need good songs.

ANGELO

How about a new dance, Mr. Cohen?
We're workin' on a new dance.

Sal darts him a suspicious glance.

MR. COHEN

Now that's a good idea. Everybody
likes to dance.

ANGELO

Somethin' catchy...you know.

He thumbs through the Yiddish records.

ANGELO

Surely there must be some kinda
groovy, Yiddish thing, Mr. Cohen.

MR. COHEN

Very funny. I'll think on it.

ANGELO

And no polkas! No more polkas!

Sal opens his mouth in mock amazement, then laughs gleefully.

SAL

Damn! You said it again!

Angelo looks puzzled.

ANGELO

Said what?

SAL

Groovy. You said groovy. You're
outta the band.

Angelo punches him in the arm.

ANGELO

You're one fucked up cat.

MR. COHEN

Boys, boys! Listen to me. You know
that new song, The Twist?

ANGELO

Sure.

MR. COHEN

That's the kind of dance we need.
It's easy to do... and it's fun.

SAL

Only the colored kids are doin' that.

MR. COHEN

Then think of something all the
kids can do. That me and the Mrs.
can do. Then you have a big hit.

He does his version of The Twist. The boys laugh.

ANGELO

You got somethin' there, Mr. Cohen.

MR. COHEN

The studio will be in the back there.
Go on in. Don't have all the equipment
yet, but you'll get the feeling.

The music FADES as they go into the room.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO AREA - SAME AFTERNOON

They pass through a storage area and then into a room under construction. A tape recorder, some microphones and a piano sit off to one side. Angelo looks around with intense fascination, walks into the middle of the room, stops and spins around in a circle.

ANGELO

Sweet. Musical history in here, man.

Angelo hits a note and holds it. Sal harmonizes another. They turn the notes into a flourish. Angelo breaks into the opening verse of "ISLAND OF LOVE". Sal harmonizes with him. He and Sal sing very well together.

ANGELO AND SAL

"I have heard of an island
Where young lovers often go
They say it's wonderful
Woe...oh...so marvelous
I wanna go...go...go
Because I've read about it
Heard about it
Talked so very much about it
That's where we belong."

They laugh admiringly. Suddenly, Sal turns pensive.

SAL

You think Dino and Johnny can get
all the way through the tune?

ANGELO

Sal, don't sweat the minor details,
man. Besides, it don't matter. If they
can't, we just keep singin'. We got
the muse on our side.

Angelo repeats a few dance steps, then jumps up landing in a split. Sal applauds. Angelo slides back up into a standing position.

SAL

That's a move, not a dance.

Sal wiggles his hips. Angelo shakes his head in disgust and heads back into the record store.

INT. THE RECORD STORE - SAME AFTERNOON

"LOUIE LOUIE" by Richard Berry and The Pharaohs PLAYS as the boys reenter. They fall into unison dance steps, singing the words and jiving around for a moment. Mr. Cohen applauds.

MR. COHEN

Well, you got moves. Now you need grooves.

Angelo preens with his reflection in a glass case.

ANGELO

You say Labor Day, huh?

MR. COHEN

God willing.

Angelo muses for a moment, thinking deeply.

ANGELO

So how much does a record cost? What do we need to do? You know, just in case we don't win this acapella contest?

MR. COHEN

First, like I say, you need songs. It's best to have a producer. Cost maybe five...six hundred dollars.

The boys wince.

ANGELO

We're gonna audition for Sonny Boy tomorrow night over in Homestead.

MR. COHEN

Good. Maybe he'll produce your record. He'd like to be a producer, you know. Let me know how it goes. You need any records?

ANGELO

Yeah. "Deserie" by The Charts.

Sal snaps an anguished grimace at Angelo. Mr. Cohen, walking with a slight limp, goes to a bin, takes out the record, walks back to the counter and puts it in a bag.

MR. COHEN

That's 89 cents. And I'll throw in a poster of The Flamingos.

Angelo hands some money to him.

ANGELO

Thanks, Mr. Cohen. Say, that shoe store still open down the street?

MR. COHEN

The one where the colored boys go?

ANGELO

Yeah, that one. Forbes Shoes.

MR. COHEN

It's still open. What kind of shoes an Italian boy gonna find there?

ANGELO

Colored ones, Mr. Cohen. Cool colored ones.

Mr. Cohen shakes his head laughing. He follows them to the door. They shake his hand and leave, sauntering across the street.

MR. COHEN

Oy, kids these days. May wisdom and regret not come to them at the same time.

He walks back to the counter. Music FADES.

EXT. ROSALLINI'S ITALIAN RESTAURANT - THAT EVENING

The beautiful, old, brick restaurant overlooks the three rivers like a grand patriarch. A cable car comes up the incline. Evening lights illuminate the Pittsburgh skyline. A red inferno glows from the mills and slag dumps up-river. A trolley CLANGS in the distance.

INT. ROSALLINI'S RESTAURANT - SAME EVENING

Rosallini's is a classic Italian, middle-class restaurant with red and white checkered table cloths and candles in Chianti bottles. WAITERS bustle about. It is a busy evening. Angelo and Doreen sit in a corner booth eating spaghetti. Doreen is having difficulty twirling the pasta into a spoon. "EH CUMPARI" PLAYS.

DOREEN

I don't know how you do this.

ANGELO

It's in the blood. Here watch.

He demonstrates the art of pasta twirling.

DOREEN

You must be really excited about your audition tomorrow.

ANGELO

Sort of.

He pauses, reflecting.

ANGELO

Rehearsal didn't go too swell. Dino and Johnny ain't the best singers. In fact, they ain't singers.

She puts her hand on his.

DOREEN

Well, don't be disappointed if it doesn't work out the way you thought.

He drops his fork angrily.

ANGELO

Look, Doreen. I don't know what you have against me doing music. It's always "don't be disappointed...why not think about this...why not do that". What's wrong with me singing my way through life?

Doreen is suddenly on the defensive.

DOREEN

I just don't want you to get hurt. You're good at so many things. I love you, Angelo. That's why.

She starts crying.

ANGELO

I ain't gonna get hurt. I know I can do it. I'm behind the wheel. Don't start cryin'.

He pats her hand. Louis Rosallini appears in the kitchen doorway. He sees Angelo and swaggers over to the table.

LOUIS

Hey, Angelo. How's my favorite cousin?

ANGELO

Hello, Louis. Great, man. This is my friend Doreen. My cousin Louis. How's Uncle Pete? He here? I need to ask him about a job.

LOUIS

He's fine. He'll be here in a bit. I'm sure he'd love to help you. Say...I thought I saw you downtown today.

ANGELO

I was in a record store on 5th Avenue. Talkin' to a guy about makin' a record.

Louis looks surprised.

LOUIS

Cohen's place? In The Groove? You know we own that place? You can't trust him.

ANGELO

Yeah? How come you can't trust him?

Louis surveys Doreen, smiling ingratiatingly at her.

LOUIS

He's a Jew, Angelo. We hear he's trying to cut into our juke box business in Philly with his brother. We're Italians. We do juke boxes. You watch yourself. Jew...Italian. Italian...Jew. You dig what I'm saying?

He takes Doreen's hand and kisses it.

LOUIS

Gotta go back in the kitchen. Don't leave till Uncle Pete gets here. Nice to meet you, Sweetie.

Louis walks back to the kitchen. Doreen looks at her hand and wipes it off with a napkin.

DOREEN

Nice guy. Sweetie? Really.

ANGELO

They're the other side of the family.

DOREEN

At least they're good cooks.

ANGELO

That they are and, hopefully, my
uncle will give me a job. Say,
you and the girls gonna make it
over to Homestead tomorrow night?

DOREEN

No. My mom won't let me. Says
there's too many colored kids.

Angelo lowers his head and twirls his spaghetti.

ANGELO

Too bad. It's gonna be a gas. I
just hope Dino and Johnny can get
through the tune. C'mon let's twirl.

They twirl their spaghetti. Music FADES.

EXT. PITTSBURGH STEEL - THE NEXT DAY/AFTERNOON

STRIKERS, led by Viktor, walk around with picket signs.
"RUMBLE" by Link Wray PLAYS on a radio. Vito comes out a side
door of the factory, looks over at the strikers, and walks
quickly toward the parking lot. As he nears the exit, Viktor
spots him, trots over and stops him.

VIKTOR

Rosetti. I gotta talk to ya.

VITO

Sure, Viktor.

Viktor looks around cautiously. He puts his hands in his
pockets and motions with his head for Vito to walk along with
him. TWO hulking, BRUISERS in the background watch them
closely.

VITO

How you doin', Yablonski?

VIKTOR

Not good. When's this gonna end?

VITO

I have no idea, Viktor. I'm just
a little guy like you.

Viktor stops abruptly and goes chest to chest with Vito.

VIKTOR

No, you ain't! You get a paycheck.

VITO

I told you I'd do everything I could. You're my friend. How can I help you?

Vito reaches into his pocket and pulls out a couple of bills. He hands Viktor a twenty. Viktor takes it, looks at it, wads it up and throws it back at Vito. It bounces off Vito's chest. Vito catches it and looks at it.

VITO

It's money, Yablonski!

VIKTOR

It's not my money, Rosetti. I want my job back. I want my own money.

Viktor storms away. The two bruisers rejoin him. Vito raises his arms toward the factory, then to the sky, yelling at Viktor.

VITO

What in the hell am I supposed to do? Tell me, Viktor!

Music FADES.

INT. THE HOMESTEAD COMMUNITY HALL - THAT NIGHT

It is a balmy, muggy Pittsburgh summer night. Neighbors in a predominantly white neighborhood are busy outdoors and lounging on the stoops.

Just across some railroad tracks, we cross into a black neighborhood. The air is, also, one of summer and hanging out but the vibe is different, more watchful and suspicious.

We move into another dimly-lit dance hall jammed with racially mixed teenagers dancing, clapping and listening to Angelo and The Apollos PLAY. The crowd, though, is half black. Sonny Boy watches with a big smile.

Deserie, Lydia, Tyrone and Isaac are in the crowd dancing. Deserie watches Angelo furtively as Isaac puts the moves on her. Lydia and Tyrone are awesome dancers. The whole crowd swings outrageously. The SONG ENDS. Everyone claps appreciatively, with cat meows and dog barks thrown in. Angelo confidently takes the microphone.

ANGELO

You got it, Homestead! Thanks, a lot. Now we're gonna sing somethin' very special...an acapella version of "Island of Love".

They gather around the microphone. Angelo snaps off the beat and starts singing. Dino and Johnny are visibly nervous. The crowd watches intently.

When they reach the harmony part, Dino and Johnny go off key and stop singing. Angelo and Sal keep going. Dino and Johnny back off. A couple of kids snicker.

Deserie sees what has happened. She elbows Lydia, jumps up on stage and starts singing with Angelo and Sal.

Their harmony is gorgeous. Lydia joins them. Tyrone jumps up on stage. They really get into the groove of the song. Couples start dancing close and making out. Isaac is visibly pissed, folding his arms across his chest. Sonny Boy is completely enthralled. Cassie and Melvin have also come in and are standing at the back of the hall watching in amazement. The song is mesmerizing.

When the kids finish the song, the crowd goes wild with appreciation. Sonny Boy takes the microphone.

SONNY BOY

Well, well, well...how about that, movers and groovers! Let's hear it for Angelo and Deserie! This is just a taste of what you're gonna hear on the 4th of July Acapella Showdown at Syria Mosque. You be there...or you be a big square! Now don't you leave the dance floor!

He Plays "MOMENTS LIKE THIS" by The Baltineers, then rushes over to Angelo and Deserie.

SONNY BOY

Wow! Kids! That was sayin' somethin'. I think we got ourselves a group.

ANGELO

Thanks, man. Thanks for givin' us a shot. Sorry about my guys.

SONNY BOY

Hey...sometimes the muse moves in mysterious ways.

Dino and Johnny hang their heads.

JOHNNY
Sorry, Angel. We tried.

Angelo puts his arm around Johnny.

ANGELO
Johnny, you're a great drummer.
It's ok.

Deserie hangs her head. Cassie and Melvin join them.

DESERIE
I'm sorry...but I already got a group.
I just jumped up to save the song.

ANGELO
I think you did more than that.

They are locked on to each other's eyes. Cassie chimes in.

CASSIE
You sing good...for an Eye-talian.

Everyone laughs.

SONNY BOY
Well...I strongly suggest you all
work on something for the 4th of July.

CASSIE
We'll see.

Angelo suddenly beams, turning to Deserie.

ANGELO
Will you dance with me?

Deserie looks around at everyone. There is stone silence.

DESERIE
Sure. It's my favorite song.

They stand stiff. Neither one is quite sure what to do. Angelo extends his hand. She looks at it, takes it, squeezes it. Angelo starts to the dance floor. Sal grabs him, whispering in his ear.

SAL
Angelo, are you fuckin' crazy?
You're gonna get our asses kicked.

ANGELO
Sal, we already got our asses kicked.

Angelo and Deserie dance. They are awkward at first, dancing slightly apart. Angelo pulls her close and whispers something in her ear. She whispers back. She rests her head on his shoulder. They dance closely, much to everyone's amazement. Isaac fumes. Sal walks out. They are in love. Music FADES.

INT. ROBERTS' APARTMENT - A FEW DAYS LATER/AFTERNOON

Cassie stands in front of a mirror in her nurse's uniform, fixing her cap. "RENDEZVOUS WITH YOU" by The Desires PLAYS on the radio. Deserie and Lydia watch from the kitchen doorway.

CASSIE

Zip me up, baby.

Deserie gives the zipper a tug but the dress is a bit too tight. She pauses. Lydia giggles. Cassie sucks it in.

CASSIE

Gotta lay off them hospital
desserts.

They giggle. Deserie yanks the zipper up.

CASSIE

I'm singing at the club tonight
after work. I can trust you two
here alone?

DESERIE

Of course, Mama.

Cassie puts her hands on Deserie's shoulders, studying them.

CASSIE

I'm savin' every penny I can to get
you kids into a studio before the
end of the year. God willing, we
got a record in us, girls.

You can do something I never did.

DESERIE

We need a jumpin' song. I wish my
daddy was here. He knew all them
great Jamaican songs.

Cassie ices over.

CASSIE

Don't you dare go wishin' him back
on me. Besides, you got his rhythm.
At least he gave you a gift.
Later.

She leaves.

LYDIA

I'll run get the boys.

DESERIE

No, you won't. We're goin' down to the ice cream parlor. But first you're gonna sing with me. I got a surprise.

Lydia puts a hand on her hip. Deserie turns off the radio and walks to the piano. Beat. Lydia follows reluctantly.

INT. RECORD STORE - AFTERNOON/THE FOLLOWING WEEK

A 45 rpm spins on a turntable. "COME GO WITH ME" by The Del Vikings PLAYS. Mr. Cohen stacks records. Sonny Boy paces.

SONNY BOY

You should've heard 'em, Jacob... like a choir of angels! The colored girl can sing! The Italian boy's like a matinee idol. The boy's got a group but they're not singers. So we got a group. When's the studio gonna be ready?

MR. COHEN

Labor Day week-end. He came by here. That Italian kid. Nice boy. Funny.

SONNY BOY

We need to get square with Cassie, the girl's mother. Without her, it won't happen. She said she'd stop by today.

Sonny Boy pulls out an album by The Del Vikings. He studies it very carefully, especially the picture on the front. They are a black and white group.

MR. COHEN

What about the Rosallini's? I hear they're going to start recording, too. They own this building. I don't trust them, especially Louis.

SONNY BOY

They're not ready. Besides, they got all the juke boxes. They giving you trouble?

Mr. Cohen drops a record on the floor.

MR. COHEN

I'm just a little behind on the rent. And...well, you know Louis.

Sonny Boy nods. Mr. Cohen turns pensive. Sonny Boy turns the album of The Del Vikings over and studies the back.

SONNY BOY

You know, Jacob, we get a white kid and a colored kid singin' together. Maybe we got somethin'.

MR. COHEN

Maybe...we aren't ready for it.

Sonny Boy holds up the album of The Del Vikings.

SONNY BOY

Everyone loved these guys. Top ten. Hey, Jacob...you get it recorded, I'll get it played. I got air time. I can play whatever I want. Mr. Katz don't care and I don't have to pay nobody.

MR. COHEN

You just might have something. Combine two separate markets and we sell lots of records.

SONNY BOY

Lots more, Jacob. Now you got it. Even if it's two separate markets buyin' the same record. That works, too. Gotta be the right sound though. Put 'em on every one of Rosallini's damn juke boxes.

Mr. Cohen chortles.

SONNY BOY

You got a hip name for the label?

MR. COHEN

Yes. Meshugenuh Records.

SONNY BOY

Who's Miss Sugarnow, your girlfriend?

MR. COHEN

No one. Nothing. It's a joke. Flame. Flame Records. Here look at this.

He holds up a model of the label. Flames shoot out of the center hole. Sonny Boy rushes over grabs it.

SONNY BOY

Flame Records! This is hot, Jacob.

He tosses the record up like a hot potato.

MR. COHEN

The right song. Like the Italian boy was saying, a new dance.

SONNY BOY

How 'bout "The Frog"?

MR. COHEN

What kind of dance is "The Frog"?

SONNY BOY

Jumpy. Anybody can jump around.

Sonny Boy jumps around imitating a frog. Suddenly, the door opens and Cassie enters wearing her nurse's uniform. She bursts out laughing. Sonny Boy stops abruptly, enormously embarrassed.

SONNY BOY

Hey...it's "The Frog"...a million seller. Helluva better name than "The Slop".

MR. COHEN

You got a point there.

CASSIE

Sonny never could dance. Put on somethin' swingin', Mr. Cohen.

Mr. Cohen puts on "WHEN YOU DANCE" by The Turbans. Cassie gives Sonny Boy a hug and takes off her jacket and cap.

CASSIE

Let me show you how to do it.

She does a very sensuous dance.

INT. THE LICKIN' STICK ICE CREAM PARLOR - SAME AFTERNOON

"WHEN YOU DANCE" continues, spinning inside a beautiful Wurlitzer juke box. A label on the juke box reads: Rosallini Music Distribution. Deserie punches in a song, then goes back to a booth and sits down with Lydia.

Sunlight and colorful signs brighten the ambiance. Several BLACK KIDS sit at the counter drinking sodas. An older, black COUNTER MAN dressed in white, washes dishes.

DESERIE

What time is it?

LYDIA

What's with you anyway? What's up?
First you wanna sing then you don't
wanna sing. You keep lookin' out
the window. Who's comin'?

DESERIE

It's a surprise.

LYDIA

You're full of surprises. That song
was sure a surprise. Never heard you
sing a slow song like that before.

DESERIE

My daddy used to sing that. Said it
was an old funeral song...all the
way up to heaven. I put in the love
part.

Music FADES.

EXT. THE ICE CREAM PARLOR - SAME AFTERNOON

Angelo pulls into downtown Clairton, his radio blaring "SLOP AROUND" by Buddy Guy. There are mostly white people around until he crosses the railroad tracks; there the town turns black. He's suddenly in a different world. He pulls up in front of the ice cream parlor and looks around apprehensively. He stops the medallion swinging from his rear view mirror, then spins it, watching its movement. He stops it again, takes it off, puts it in his pocket, turns off the radio and gets out of the car.

INT. ICE CREAM PARLOR - SAME AFTERNOON

Deserie sees Angelo get out of the car and walk toward the store. She takes a deep breath. A COUPLE OF KIDS jitterbug to "GERALDINE" by The El Venos.

LYDIA

What is it?

DESERIE

Don't move. Don't look around. Don't
get up. Just sit there and shut up.

Angelo enters the parlor, closes the door behind him and cautiously surveys the scene. Everyone stops what they are doing and stares at him. He nonchalantly points at Deserie. She points back.

LYDIA
(whispering)
Who the hell is it?

DESERIE
Just sit still. Don't move.

Angelo strolls over to their booth. Lydia freezes.

ANGELO
Hey there, girls.

DESERIE
Hi, Angelo.

Lydia jolts around, almost knocking over her drink. Angelo jumps back. To add a flourish to his quick reaction, he spins.

ANGELO
Yes! Faster than a speeding soda.

This breaks the silence in the parlor. Kids applaud.

LYDIA
Angelo. The Italian crooner? Oh, my god!

Angelo smiles at her, motioning for her to move over.

ANGELO
Scoot over, Lydia. So...I'm here...
like I said.

He extends his hand across the table. She takes it gives it a squeeze then quickly retracts her hands. Lydia shakes her head in disbelief. Deserie smiles at him. Angelo looks around. The music stops. He spots the juke box.

ANGELO
'Scuse me a minute.

He goes over to the juke box, looks over the tunes, puts in a coin and punches in a couple of numbers. "SPEEDO" by The Cadillacs PLAYS. He saunters over to the counter.

ANGELO
Let me have a cherry coke.

The counter man pours his drink. Angelo tries to make eye contact with the kids sitting at the counter but they ignore him. The man gives him his drink.

ANGELO

Thanks, man.

He dances back to the booth. Everyone watches him.

DESERIE

I'm glad you made it. I didn't know if you really would. So talk it.

Lydia looks back and forth at them. Angelo touches Lydia on the shoulder. She jumps in her seat.

ANGELO

Relax, girl. I ain't gonna bite.

Lydia cringes with embarrassment. She goes back to her soda. Angelo surveys the two of them.

ANGELO

OK, here goes. That was some tight harmony we did, with no practice.

He pauses, looking around again. Lydia crosses her arms.

LYDIA

Yeah. So? There's lots of good singers in Pittsburgh.

ANGELO

That's right. We got all these great groups. And we got all these DJs playin' the music on the radio. We're lucky. (he pauses a beat) Some of the groups are black. Some are white. But except for The Del Vikings awhile back...ain't none of them black and white. You see what I'm saying?

Angelo drinks his soda thoughtfully, waiting for a response. Deserie studies his face.

DESERIE

Yeah. Sort of. Maybe that's because we go to different schools. Because we're separated from each other by rivers and hills.

Stirring his coke, Angelo considers this. Suddenly, Lydia grabs his hand.

LYDIA
You bite your nails!

Deserie glares at her incredulously. Angelo looks at his nails and laughs.

ANGELO
I'm a nervous cat. That's why I sing.

DESERIE
My mama says people that bite their nails are rebellious...like James Dean.

ANGELO
May be. Exceptin' that I'm a rebel with a cause.

LYDIA
What cause might that be?

ANGELO
Singing.

A "wow" moment. They drink their sodas.

ANGELO
Like I was saying. When you watch American Bandstand or Hit Parade, it's either black or white. So I'm thinking, if somehow we could do a song together, you and me, or a group. Maybe we'd have something no one else has. Because if you really think about it, the airwaves, they ain't segregated. Sonny Boy can play whatever he wants.

LYDIA
Sounds like a heapful of trouble.

ANGELO
Why you say that?

Deserie interjects.

DESERIE
OK. Suppose we make a record. You really think a colored girl and white boy could go places and sing together? People would throw shit at us. There'd be some places they would even let me in!

LYDIA

And there'd some places you'd wish
you was never in to begin with!

ANGELO

I don't scare easily.

DESERIE

Just trying to be honest. You see
what's going on in Little Rock.
Colored and white ain't mixin' too
well in some places.

They drink again, listening to the music...thinking about
what they just said.

DESERIE

You got your own songs?

ANGELO

A couple. And you?

DESERIE

We got a few. And my mama got some.

Angelo squirms. He suddenly feels very awkward.

ANGELO

OK, so look. Can we get together
and sing? Hear how it sounds? Start
with that.

DESERIE

Sure. Why don't you think about
what you'd like to sing, then
call me. We'll talk again. Maybe
work something out.

Deserie winks at Lydia. Lydia scrunches up her nose. Deserie
takes a pencil from her purse, writes her phone number on a
napkin and hands it to Angelo.

ANGELO

Thanks. This could be the start of
something very crazy.

There's a sudden murmur at the counter. Deserie raises her
eyebrows. Everybody looks toward the door. Isaac and a couple
of his friends stroll in. Angelo gets up.

ANGELO

Looks like it's time for me to hit
the road. I'll call you. Bye, Lydia.

He turns to leave but comes face to face with Isaac, who is about three inches taller than him.

ANGELO

Say, Isaac. How you doin', man?
I was just leaving.

ISAAC

Yeah? Well, what was you doin'
here in the first place? Didn't
you see the sign?

Angelo looks around.

ANGELO

What sign?

ISAAC

The one on the door that says
"No White People".

Everyone laughs. The counter man senses trouble.

COUNTER MAN

Hey, Isaac! Leave the kid alone.
He ain't causin' no trouble.

Angelo seizes the moment to slip around Isaac and position himself to get out the door. Deserie gets up from the booth.

ANGELO

I just came by to talk about singing.

ISAAC

Oh yeah? You sing, huh?

Isaac moves threateningly toward Angelo.

ISAAC

Hit a tune then, dago!

Angelo glares at him. There is stone silence except for the song "DESERIE" by The Charts that has come on the juke box. Angelo sings along with the opening lines of the song and adds a couple of fluid, graceful dance moves.

ANGELO

Oh...Deserie
You make my heart
Feel so free
Oh, my darling...Deserie

Abruptly, he turns and leaves. The kids applaud. Isaac takes a menacing step after him. Deserie grabs Isaac by the arm. Isaac yells at Angelo.

ISAAC

Get outta here, wop. She's my girl.
And this is our neighborhood!

Deserie pushes him angrily.

DESERIE

Isaac, stop it! You're makin' a
fool outta yourself! And I ain't
your girl!

Music FADES.

EXT. ICE CREAM PARLOR - SAME AFTERNOON

Angelo hustles to his car and gets in. As he gets out his keys, he also pulls out the medallion. He starts the car and squeals out just as Isaac comes out of the shop. Angelo sees him as he puts the medallion on the mirror. He turns on the radio. Sonny Boy is on the air.

CUT TO: RADIO STATION

SONNY BOY

Hey there, movers and groovers,
just a reminder that we have only
three weeks until the 4th of July
Acapella Showdown. So you call me,
you hear, slide on down here to the
Cellar of Stellar Hits and sing for
me, so we can put you and your
group in the spotlight at Syria
Mosque.

We got a big surprise for you right
now...one swingin' group from the
Hill gonna do an acapella number
for you...right now...right here in
Sonny Boy's Inner Sanctum...and if
we're bringin' a smile to your
dial, honk your horn!

He PLAYS the beautiful, acapella tune "THE WAY LOVE SHOULD
BE" by the Nutmegs.

CUT BACK TO:
ANGELO'S CAR

INT. ANGELO'S CAR - DAY

The song on the radio CONTINUES. Angelo honks his horn. He turns his radio up. Everybody around him honks and waves to each other. Angelo reaches the railroad tracks and stops, looking back in his rear view mirror. He sighs deeply, spins the medallion and drives off singing along to the song.

He drives through Clairton and out into the countryside in love and full of exuberant song. Music FADES.

EXT. PITTSBURGH STEEL - THAT NIGHT

STRIKERS picket, talking among themselves. FACTORY SOUNDS punctuate the thick night air and the full moon that has risen over the factory. Vito comes out of a side door. The two bruisers who had been watching before, follow him as he leaves through a gate and walks toward the parking lot.

Vito gets to his car and takes out his keys to open the door. As he does so, the two guys come up behind him. Vito hears them and casually turns around. One of the men quickly pulls Vito's jacket up over his head. Vito struggles but he is no match for the two of them. They punch him in the head, knocking him to the ground, kicking him numerous times before running away.

Vito lays on the ground moaning. He pulls the coat from around his head. His nose bleeds and his eye is cut. He groans and holds his side, rolling over on his back. A distant siren WAILS. He struggles to get up, then falls back to the ground. A train whistle BLOWS. Two strong hands help him up. Vito looks up to see Melvin Roberts. Melvin wipes the blood from his nose.

EXT. A STREET CORNER IN CLAIRTON - THAT NIGHT

An amber gas light hisses. Isaac, Tyrone and TWO FRIENDS hang out on a cobblestone, street corner.

TYRONE

You either got to forget about her
or deal with her in her own way.
But, Isaac, forget about the dago.

Isaac punches his fist into his hand.

ISAAC

I don't get what her way is, man. I
should just kick his meatball ass.
Slash the dumb, ofie mutha fucka!

Tyrone hands him a little, brown bag with a small bottle of whiskey in it. Isaac takes a slug.

TYRONE

No, man. Forget that shit. You gotta out-sing his ass. In the end he's gonna sound like that Bobby Darin cat. Listen, I got a new one for you.

ISAAC

Lay it on me.

TYRONE

Your mutha's so stupid, she thought a dago was yesterday.

They crack up laughing.

ISAAC

C'mon, man. Let's sing.

TYRONE

So what's the name of our group?
We gotta have name.

Isaac studies the street corner ambiance, nodding approvingly.

ISAAC

There's four of us, right?

TYRONE

Yep. For now anyway.

They all chuckle their approval.

ISAAC

We're on the street corner, right?

TYRONE

Looks like it.

Isaac basks momentarily in his brilliance.

ISAAC

Then we're The Four Corners.

They all break up.

They SING the original "STAR CROSSED LOVERS" amidst a chorus of Friday night street corner SOUNDS and a group of neighbors who gather to listen. Music FADES.

EXT. A DESERTED STRIP MINE - THAT SAME NIGHT

A brilliant, full moon rises over a glowing, incandescent slag dump. Smoke from a bonfire meanders through the thick, summer air. The boys, including The Apollos, have gathered to drink beer. Their cars are parked around them in a circle; an eerie, teenage Stonehenge.

Two guys toss a football. Sal plays bongo drums around the fire. He, Dino and Johnny sing the breezy "SHIMMY SHIMMY KO KO WOP" by The El Capris. Other guys join in.

Angelo sits on a log by the fire next to MILAN YABLONSKI, Viktor's son. Angelo smokes a cigarette. Milan busily chews gum and drinks a quart of beer. They are all tipsy. The classic drinking song "WPLJ" by The Four Deuces PLAYS from a car radio.

MILAN

You still piss me off.

ANGELO

How so? Cause I quit football? I want a bunch of Pollacks poundin' on me?

MILAN

We coulda won the conference.

ANGELO

You know why you won't win the conference, Yablonski? 'Cause you're a bunch of pussies.

Angelo blows smoke at Milan. He flicks his cigarette into the fire and slowly stands up.

MILAN

Yeah? Well I might be a pussy but there's one thing I ain't.

ANGELO

What's that, Yablonski?

MILAN

I ain't a nigger lover.

Angelo clenches his jaw, visibly upset. He paces in front of Milan, staring at him eye to eye. The party scene stops dead, the crackling fire accentuating the silence although music still PLAYS. Angelo freezes in front of Milan, who stands up, spitting out his gum.

ANGELO

What'd you say, Yablonski?

MILAN

You know fuckin' well what I said.

They stare at each other through bloodshot eyes.

ANGELO

You're a stupid Pollack. You sound
just like your old man.

Milan steps toward Angelo and suddenly with both hands,
pushes him to the ground. Angelo lies there for a moment,
then gets up slowly. He turns and walks away. Milan moves
toward him again but stops, yelling at him.

MILAN

You're the fuckin' pussy. And
your old man's a pussy, too.
You think you're cool, Rosetti.
But you know what? You're
gonna end up in the mill just
like the rest of us!

Angelo walks into the darkness. A somber silence FADES into
the fire. Music FADES.

INT. ANGELO'S ROOM - THE FOLLOWING DAY

Angelo puts a 45 on his record player. "WHAT'D I SAY" by Ray
Charles PLAYS. He practices dance steps in front of a mirror.
He takes out the folded napkin that Deserie gave him and
dials her number.

DESERIE (V.O.)

Hello.

ANGELO

I want to sing "The Wind".

There is pause on the other end.

ANGELO

It's me. Angelo. You said to call
you when I knew what song I wanted
to sing. I want to sing The Wind.

DESERIE (V.O)

That's a hard song.

ANGELO

We can do it. How 'bout we get together. Just you and me. Tomorrow.

DESERIE (V.O.)

You sure got some nerve.

ANGELO

Actually, I ain't got any nerve at all...I'm just a fool.

Deserie laughs on the other end.

DESERIE (V.O.)

I'm in church in the morning. Then we have a family lunch.

ANGELO

Us, too. How about 2:00? On the corner by the ice cream place.

DESERIE (V.O.)

I'll be there. You sure you wanna do this?

ANGELO

See you tomorrow.

They hang up. Angelo stares in the mirror. Music FADES.

EXT. PITTSBURGH STEEL - SAME AFTERNOON

STRIKERS yell at each other. They are divided, black against white. Viktor yells angrily at Melvin.

VIKTOR

You tell 'em not to cross the line.
(to the crowd)
I told you we couldn't trust a bunch of damn niggers.

Melvin restrains himself.

MELVIN

Watch your mouth, Yablonski.
We're all in this together.

VIKTOR

No, we ain't. We're gonna keep our jobs. No matter what. Ain't some scab niggers gonna take 'em. We all know whose side you're on.

MELVIN

I ain't on nobody's side. We just tryin' to keep our jobs, too.

VIKTOR

Then get them scabs outta here before somebody gets hurt.

The crowd grows threatening. Suddenly a head of cabbage hits Viktor in the chest. He lunges at Melvin. Anger erupts into a violent brawl.

INT. ROSALLINI'S RESTAURANT - LATER THAT DAY

PETE ROSALLINI, the restaurant patriarch, looks over some receipts. Piles of money are stacked up on the table. Louis paces around nervously, trying to light a cigar.

PETE

Let me get this straight, Louis. Cohen is still in business and not only that he has a recording studio in my building!

Louis tries to avoid his father's glare.

LOUIS

I thought we had him. We even put the squeeze on his brother in Philly. Somehow he came up with the dough.

Pete snatches the cigar out of Louis' mouth, bites the end off and spits in into a waste basket. He strikes a match across the table and lights the cigar, taking a long puff. He blows smoke in Louis' face, handing him the cigar.

Pete puts out his hand, as if to shake. Louis takes it and Pete squeezes, hard. He has a vice-like grip. Louis grimaces, falling down on to his knee.

PETE

Like that, Louis. You squeeze him like that. You end that operation. Whatever it takes.

The cigar drops to the floor, smoke swirling into Pete's face.

INT. THE RECORD STORE - SAME DAY

"GOOD GOOD LOVIN'" by James Brown PLAYS. Mr. Cohen sits behind the counter with his chin in his hand. A COUPLE OF KIDS look through the record bins. Sonny Boy paces in front of the counter.

SONNY BOY

What are you telling me? That I'm
gonna have to call off the
Showdown? Can the whole deal?

He's very agitated.

SONNY BOY

Call off the recording session?
This is everything we been talking
about.

MR. COHEN

I had to lend my brother some money.
What I have left goes to the Rosallinis.

SONNY BOY

But we're almost there! You can't
do this to me! I need this record.

The two boys approach the counter with some records, staring
at Sonny Boy's red face. Sonny Boy paces.

MR. COHEN

That's two bucks.

He makes the business transaction and bags the records. The
boys leave. Sonny Boys gets in Mr. Cohen's face.

SONNY BOY

How much more money we talkin'?

MR. COHEN

Five hundred dollars.

SONNY BOY

Five hundred bucks!! Shit!

Mr. Cohen confirms the numbers with a reluctant nod. Sonny
Boy throws up his arms in despair.

SONNY BOY

You said everything was covered.

MR. COHEN

It was. Until my brother ran into
a little trouble with the deli.

SONNY BOY

A little trouble. It's all the
Rosallini's doin', ain't it?

MR. COHEN

If I don't give them the money,
they close me down.

SONNY BOY

Damn this town. Somebody's always
fuckin' with you. I'll get the
money. Fuck the Rosallinis! Labor
Day week-end. We're gonna do this.

Sonny Boy bolts out of the store in a huff, slamming the door
behind him. Mr. Cohen puts his head in his hands. Music FADES.

INT. CLAIRTON ABYSSINIAN BAPTIST CHURCH - THE NEXT MORNING

The morning sun shines through a beautiful, stained glass
window. The church choir, led by Deserie and Cassie, SING a
moving and emotional rendition of the gospel song, "WHEREEVER
THERE'S A WILL". Melvin, Tyrone, Lydia and Isaac sing with
abandon. Music slowly FADES.

INT. THE ROSETTI DINING ROOM - NEXT DAY

Gina and Maria put steaming bowls of pasta on the dinner
table. Angelo helps his GRANDMA into her seat. GRANDPA opens
a bottle of wine. Vito's face is cut and swollen and his eye
is black and blue. He surveys the pride. Everyone sits down.

VITO

Say grace, Nanno.

They all make the sign of the cross.

GRANDPA

Bless us, Oh, Lord, and these Thy
gifts, which we are about to receive
from Thy bounty...and God help our
children in these times...through
Christ, Our Lord.

EVERYONE

Amen.

They cross themselves again, then begin passing the food
around. Angelo takes very little.

ANGELO

How long is this strike gonna last?

VITO

Hard to say. One more day's too long.

He grimaces, placing a huge amount of pasta on his plate.

MARIA

Still the workers against you guys,
the owners, right?

VITO

I'm not an owner, Maria. I'm just
a different kind of worker.

ANGELO

Yablonski don't see it that way.

Vito gives him a harsh look, piling a huge amount of bread on
his already loaded plate. The family watches him pile up the food.

VITO

Some guys are running out of money.
They want to work but they can't.

MARIA

Are we running out of money?

ANGELO

Dad's still workin' and I start at
Uncle Pete's next week.

MARIA

How can he be workin' when the
other guys aren't? How's that fair?

VITO

Look The workers want to go back
but they can't. The union won't
let them.

ANGELO

How come the union tells them what
to do? Why can't they go to work on
their own? Ain't this the land of
the free?

Vito is very upset. He yells at Angelo.

VITO

Because they can't, that's why!

He reaches for the wine. Everyone has stopped eating. Grandma
joins in to change the subject.

GRANDMA

How's that sweet little Irish girl?
You haven't brought her around lately.

ANGELO

Doreen O'Brien? She's around. It's just that I been busy with my music.

GRANDPA

You oughta find yourself a nice Italian girl, like your mother.

That breaks the tension. Angelo smiles at his mother. Maria takes a sudden interest.

MARIA

Angelo has a new girl. And from what I hear, she's lots more colorful than Doreen.

Angelo drops his fork. Everyone stares at him.

GINA

I knew something was on your mind.

MARIA

He danced with a colored girl over in Homestead. The whole neighborhood's talking.

Vito looks at Gina. She shrugs. Angelo stares at Maria.

ANGELO

I danced one dance with this girl. My guys blew the song. She jumped up on stage and helped me finish. She's a great singer.

GINA

You danced with a colored girl?

Everyone stops eating, staring at Angelo. Completely in control, but desperately wanting to remove himself from the situation, Angelo gets up.

ANGELO

Look. It was nuthin'. She did me a big favor. I asked her to dance. What's the big deal?

Vito intercedes.

VITO

You danced with a colored girl? That's all you did, right?

ANGELO

That's all I did. Excuse me. I'm not feeling good.

As Angelo moves to leave, Vito stands up.

VITO

No colored girls, Angelo. Maybe an Irish girl but no colored girls, okay? You're Italian.

GINA

No Jewish girls either.

Angelo leave the room. There is stunned silence. Gina starts to cry. Vito goes over and puts his hands on her shoulders.

VITO

It's nothing. He says it's nothing. Just a bad mix of Italian puberty and jungle music. Now let's eat.

They eat in silence.

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE ROSETTI HOUSE - SAME AFTERNOON

Angelo gets in his convertible and starts it up, revving the engine. He puts the top down, checks himself in the mirror, rubs the medallion hanging from the mirror, closes his eyes, sighs, and starts to back up.

Doreen suddenly pulls up behind him. He puts his head on the steering wheel. She blocks him in the driveway, bolts out of her car and walks up to him.

DOREEN

Hi, Angelo. Where you going?

ANGELO

Gotta go to Clairton to pick up something for my dad.

DOREEN

Can I ride along?

Angelo plays nervously with the medallion.

ANGELO

Sorry, Doreen. I gotta make a couple other stops. Don't know when I'll be back.

DOREEN

I know where you're going and I think you're a crazy fool. You're gonna ruin everything. Especially your life!

ANGELO

I'm a big boy, Doreen. I can handle it.

Doreen leans in closer and unbuttons her blouse. She exposes her breasts.

DOREEN

Can you handle these? Are you big enough to handle these? You can have it all, Angelo. Tonight. Call me.

She buttons her blouse and turns abruptly away. She jumps in her car and squeals out; dust and rocks hit Angelo's car. He backs out and drives away.

INT. ANGELO'S CAR - SAME AFTERNOON

Angelo turns on the radio. "BUICK 59" by The Medallions PLAYS.

He turns it up, steering with his knees while he claps in time to the tune. Everything is all right. He's cruising. The medallion dances in the sunlight. Sonny Boy comes on.

CUT TO: RADIO STATION

INT. RADIO STATION - DAY

SONNY BOY

Hey there, movers and groovers.
You're in Sonny's inner sanctum.
We're getting closer and closer.
4th of July. Nothin' but voices...
Nothin' but acapella choices...
You dig, me? If you're diggin'
the Boy Wonder, don't ponder, honk
your horn!

He PLAYS another song.

CUT BACK TO: ANGELO'S CAR

Every teenager within miles honks their horn. They laugh and wave at each other. Adults look at them derisively. The music FADES amidst a cacophony of horn honking. Angelo drives on.

EXT. DOWNTOWN CLAIRTON - THAT AFTERNOON

Deserie walks toward the ice cream store. PEOPLE stroll around. Angelo drives around the corner. He spots her and pulls up to the curb. She admires his car.

DESERIE

Nice ride.

ANGELO

You Like it?

DESERIE

Yes, indeed.

ANGELO

Let's motor.

She gets in and they cruise off. A peering neighborhood eye quickly disappears behind closing blinds. Isaac appears from around a corner and watches them drive off. The radio PLAYS the classic, hormonal, "THE WAY LOVE SHOULD BE" by The Nutmegs. They leave downtown.

INT. ANGELO'S CAR - SAME AFTERNOON

They cruise down the road. Deserie relaxes into the comfortable seats and the warm summer breeze.

ANGELO

Where to?

DESERIE

I know a nice spot down by the river. Take the next right.

He turns on to a dirt road.

DESERIE

Why you and me?

Angelo extends his hand. She puts her hand in his. It is a nice fit. He squeezes her hand.

ANGELO

Three reasons. One, we both want to make a record. Two, we both want a change. And three, whether we like it or not....we like each other.

She raises her eyebrows and smiles.

DESERIE

That's good. But I wasn't exactly thinkin' about this kinda change.

ANGELO

The black and white thing?

DESERIE

Of course. It's different. We're...different. I'm not sure how to act.

ANGELO

Don't act. Be yourself. Besides ain't we all sorta colored?

She studies his face. She ponders deeply.

DESERIE

No. This is America. I'm colored. You're not. Dark, olive complexion included.

She runs a finger across his cheek. He nods in recognition. The rolling, murky Monongahela River appears. They arrive at a particularly beautiful spot, a small bluff overlooking the river. It is a resplendent summer afternoon. Sonny Boy continues to PLAY summer love music. Angelo stops the car. The river groans by. Birds sing.

ANGELO

This is sweet.

DESERIE

My dad first brought me here. He would come here to think. Actually though, he'd come here to sing.

He puts his hand lightly on her shoulder. She puts her hand on his. He takes her by the waist, looks at her and gently hugs her. She hugs back. He gets out of the car.

ANGELO

How'd you get your name?

DESERIE

It was my grandma's name. Deserie Breaux. She was a Jamaican lady. Lived in New Orleans. My daddy's mother.

ANGELO

Where'd they meet? Your father and mother?

DESERIE

He was a singer and drummer. My mom met him during Mardi Gras. Instant love. Lasted a year.

ANGELO

Long enough for you to come along.

DESERIE

Yeah. C'mon, let's go down to the river.

She gets out. Angelo puts the top up.

EXT. DOWN BY THE RIVER - THAT AFTERNOON

Angelo gets a blanket out of the trunk. Deserie leans against the car watching the river. She turns on a transistor radio. "UNITED" by The Love Notes PLAYS.

DESERIE

How did I let you talk me into this?

ANGELO

The music talked you into it.

DESERIE

Okay. Let's talk.

She takes his hand and leads him toward the river. His heart races. She likes him. For the first time, he really knows that.

ANGELO

This is the way I hear it. All this rock and roll going on and most of what you hear on the radio isn't very cool. What I got in mind is something totally Pittsburgh.

She cocks her head, musing at his words.

DESERIE

Pittsburgh?

ANGELO

Think about it. What makes Pittsburgh music so different?

They come to the river. She picks up a rock and throws it out as far as she can.

DESERIE

Group harmonies for sure. Most of those pop stars are individuals. We still got groups that sing tight.

He picks up a rock and skips it over the circles she has created on the water.

ANGELO

That's the roots.

DESERIE

Then it's cool words.

ANGELO

Right. "Come Go With Me". "Shimmy Shimmy Ko Ko Wop". "Since I Don't Have You". Fantastic words.

They come to a very serene spot under a large tree. Angelo puts down the blanket. She sits down, captivated by the river.

ANGELO

So we need good singing, good words, together as a new dance. Some kinda catchy move. Something with hip in it.

She jumps up, circling to the sway of an imaginary hula hoop.

DESERIE

Like the hula hoop! How 'bout The Hula Hip?

He shakes his head.

ANGELO

That's just a fad. No...something that'll last beyond us. I don't know what. Future blues.

She smiles at the thought. He goes over to her and puts his arms around her waist. He is uncharacteristically hesitant. He pulls her to him and kisses her. The first kiss. They kiss for a long passionate moment. She pulls away, searching his face inquisitively. They are in love.

DESERIE

I can't believe I just kissed a white boy.

ANGELO

How was it?

DESERIE

I give it a six outta ten.

He laughs. His hormones rage. She sits back down. Angelo has difficulty imagining himself in this situation. He mutters to himself.

ANGELO

Six? I'm at least a seven.

Music FADES.

He walks to the murky river. She watches him carefully. He stands there for a moment, then suddenly spins around.

ANGELO

We get a hit record, we can do whatever we want. Go wherever we want. New York. Hawaii.

He goes back to her.

DESERIE

You think so? It'll be the same no matter where we go.

ANGELO

You saying you don't wanna try?

DESERIE

No. I didn't say that.

He kneels down on the blanket.

ANGELO

What do we have to lose?

DESERIE

Besides our lives? Nothing.

He sits back on his heels. He rubs his hands together nervously.

ANGELO

Look. I know you're black. I'm not trying to be black or asking you to be white. But I'm Italian. And when an Italian says they will do something, they will. I will make this work. Are you in?

She puts her hands around his neck and pulls him toward her.

DESERIE

I'm in.

They kiss passionately, then lie next to each other quietly. Suddenly, it strikes her. She bolts up.

DESERIE

Do that again!

He goes to kiss her.

DESERIE

No, not that. Go stand by the river where you were standing before.

She's totally jazzed. Totally puzzled, he walks back and faces the river.

DESERIE

Now spin around like you did.

He spins around a half-spin. Then a complete spin.

DESERIE

That's it! Holy Mother of Moses!
Now that's smooth! That's the most!

ANGELO

What are you talking about?

He's befuddled. She's beside herself with excitement. She runs over to him.

DESERIE

Watch.

She closes her eyes and spins all the way around.

DESERIE

Now dance with me. Pretend we're dancing to a jump tune.

He takes her around the waist and they jitterbug.

DESERIE

Now push me out but let go of my hand.

She spins all the way around. He takes her hand and brings her back into him. He stops suddenly, smiling.

DESERIE

The Spin.

ANGELO

Just like the world we're in.
It's brilliant. You're brilliant.

DESERIE

It's just reality. You put my world
in a spin.

He picks her up in his arms and spins her around again. He picks her up off the ground and spins her around until he is dizzy. They fall to the ground laughing. She lies on top of him, smiling.

DESERIE

Now what?

ANGELO

The Acapella Showdown, 4th of July.
We sing "The Wind"...we win. We
record "The Spin".

She kisses him.

ANGELO

I love you.

She takes the medallion hanging from his neck.

DESERIE

Some kinda Catholic voodoo?

ANGELO

St. Cecelia, the patron saint
of musicians.

DESERIE

Can she help a colored girl and a
white boy? Does she spin?

She spins the medallion. They kiss. He starts singing "The Wind". The song FADES on a dead tree floating down the river.

EXT. BIG BOY DRIVE IN RESTAURANT - EARLY EVENING

Angelo revs into the Big Boy Drive In. The radio PLAYS "I'VE HAD IT" by The Bell Notes. Lots of cool cars. KIDS hang out, jiving and laughing. He spots Dino's car. Dino, Johnny and Sal munch burgers and flirt with the girls in the next car. Angelo pulls up alongside the guys. They know he is there but they ignore him.

INT. ANGELO'S CAR

Angelo pushes the order button.

FEMALE (V.O)
May I take your order?

ANGELO
A Big Boy and a coke.

FEMALE (V.O.)
We thought you already were a big boy.

ANGELO
Very funny. Just give me my burger.
Stick some fries on there, too.

He looks over at his friends' car. They still ignore him. He leans over and yells out the window.

ANGELO
Hey, guys. What's doin'? Hey, Sal.
C'mere. I need to talk to you.

DINO
Hey, Angelo.

He motions to Sal to join him. Sal gets out and walks around to the side window of Angelo's car.

ANGELO
Get in. I got some news for you.

Sal looks back at his buddies then gets in Angelo's car.

ANGELO
Why's everybody acting this way?
You'd think I killed somebody.

SAL
'Cause nobody understands why
you're doing this. She's a nigger
chick. That don't make no sense.

ANGELO
She ain't a chick; she's a girl.
She's part of the tribe. And don't
say nigger. We're gonna win. You in
or not?

SAL
I ain't in.

He takes the medallion off from around his neck and puts it back on the mirror.

ANGELO
We got a song...and a dance.

SAL

Oh yeah?

Angelo spins the medallion.

ANGELO

Yeah. The Spin.

SAL

Groovy. I still ain't in. You're
fucking crazy. This time you gone
too far.

He moves to get out of the car. Angelo grabs his arm.

ANGELO

I thought you was my friend!

SAL

I was.

He bolts out of the car. Angelo grimaces, pissed. He starts
the car. A Big Boy girl brings his order to the car. He
knocks the tray out of her hand and roars out of the Big Boy
lot. His friends stare in amazement and bewilderment.

Music FADES.

INT. ROSALLINI'S RESTAURANT - EVENING

WAITERS, including Angelo, set tables. "MEMORIES ARE MADE OF
THIS" by Dean Martin PLAYS. The restaurant is not yet open.
Pete and Louis sit at a corner table drinking wine. Vito
enters, waves to Angelo and joins Pete and Louis.

PETE

Hello, Vito.

VITO

Hello, Uncle Pietro. Hey, Lou.
How's it going?

He kisses his uncle on the cheek.

PETE

Fine. How 'bout some chianti?

VITO

Sure.

PETE

How's my favorite nephew? That's
some shiner.

VITO

Yeah. How's my boy doing?

PETE

He's a good worker. Good kid, too.
Polite. Handsome and dark like you.

VITO

You wanted to see me?

Pete pours him a glass of wine. They clink glasses.

PETE

This strike might be a very long
one. A very difficult one. If you
need help, you ask me. You hear?

VITO

I don't want to work for you, Uncle
Pete. I told you that before.

PETE

I didn't say work for me. I said if
you need help, ask.

VITO

Thanks, Uncle Pete. I'll remember that.

Vito takes a big drink of his wine.

PETE

Do. And when you get tired of
getting' beat up in the steel
business, then you come see me. OK?

VITO

OK, Uncle Pete. I will.

Vito drinks the rest of his wine and gets up to leave.

PETE

Vito...before you go. We hear that
Angelo is in to some music
thing with that DJ Sonny Boy Davis
and Jacob Cohen who owns a record
store in my building.

VITO

How you know that?

PETE

We're the music business. You tell
Angelo to be careful.

VITO
Careful of what?

ANGELO
That Sonny Boy has a mind of his own. We think he and that Jew are trying to get into the record business. In our building.

VITO
What's wrong with that? You lease it to him. Kick his ass out.

PETE
We're the record business. The Jew can sell 'em, but we don't want him making the records.

Vito moves to leave. Louis takes him by the arm.

LOUIS
Angelo wants to do a record, he should do it with us. We could make him a star.

PETE
You take care. Put some good Italian beefsteak on that eye.

LOUIS
And don't mingle with the enemy. It's not good for your health.

VITO
I won't, Louis. If I could just figure out who's the enemy and who isn't.

He leaves the table and goes over to Angelo.

VITO
Hi, Angelo. How's it going?

ANGELO
Great. Staying for dinner?

VITO
No. Come right home after work.

Angelo stops setting the table.

ANGELO
I was planning to. What's up?

Vito fidgets.

VITO
How come you don't want to do
a record with Uncle Pete?

ANGELO
He never asked me. Besides...I owe
Sonny Boy. It's a matter of allegiance.

Vito puts his arm around Angelo and hugs him.

VITO
It's about this girl, too. Isn't it?

ANGELO
What girl?

VITO
That colored girl.

Angelo sighs deeply and resumes setting tables.

ANGELO
I just need her to help me with
the music. Nobody seems to get
that. It's just about the music.

VITO
That's what I thought. Just
remember: some things don't work.
Ciao.

He points to his black eye and leaves.

INT. ROBERTS' LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Deserie and her three friends finish rehearsing the song she
has been working on called "ALL THE WAY UP TO HEAVEN". They
all dig the tune.

DESERIE
Now don't forget. Tomorrow
afternoon we're doin' a rehearsal
for the Showdown. With Angelo and
his friend Sal.

Isaac shakes his head and sits down at the piano.

TYRONE
You really think he'll show up?
What time?

DESERIE

3 o'clock. He'll be here.

TYRONE

"The Spin", right?

DESERIE

Right. Spin, spin, spin, turn around. But we gonna save that for the record. We're gonna do "The Wind" for the Showdown.

TYRONE

Cool. I can dig "The Spin". But "The Wind" is hard. Later.

They spin their way out the door except for Isaac who fools around at the piano.

ISAAC

I need to talk with you about the dago. I hear the two of you went out.

DESERIE

For a ride.

ISAAC

You like him?

DESERIE

Yeah, I like him.

Isaac jumps up from the piano and paces around, agitated.

ISAAC

How can you like some white trash?
A dago on top of that!

She's perplexed, looking out the window, then back.

DESERIE

It's an opportunity, Isaac.
To try something different. It's
like he was sent here.

ISAAC

He's a dago...a wop...tryin' to
sing like we do. Why don't he go
sing "Volare" or somethin'. He
ain't part of our music.

DESERIE

Nobody owns music, Isaac. You and
I've known each other since we was
(MORE)

DESERIE (cont'd)
 little kids. All our lives we only
 been around other colored kids, right?

He stops pacing.

ISAAC
 Yeah. So? What's wrong with that?

DESERIE
 This is the first time I ever had
 anything to do with a white kid...
 boy or girl. It's...an adventure.

ISAAC
 Some adventures turn bad. What's
 he got that I ain't?

DESERIE
 It's not about you and him. It's
 just the way he likes music. His
 drive. To do the same thing that
 I want to do...make a record.

Isaac is not happy. He snarls at her.

ISAAC
 You ain't like doin' it with him?

DESERIE
 It? The big it? No, Isaac. I'm not
 doin' it with him. Or with anybody.
 And that includes you.

Isaac tries to put his arms around her. She pushes him away.

DESERIE
 And there's something else, Isaac.

ISAAC
 Yeah. What's that?

DESERIE
 We can't all do the Showdown.

ISAAC
 You sayin' I'm out?

DESERIE
 Not out of our group. Just a
 different arrangement for the gig.

Isaac can hardly control his anger.

ISAAC

You're a backstabber, girl. You're too ambitious for your own good. Just like your mother. You gonna end up sounding like them Andrew Sisters! Much later for you, baby!

He turns away abruptly and storms out, slamming the door behind him. A difficult resounding fills the room for a moment. She goes over to the piano and PLAYS the introductory notes to "GOD ONLY KNOWS" by The Capris.

INT. ANGELO'S ROOM - SAME AFTERNOON

Pictures of Little Richard, Buddy Holly and James Brown adorn the wall. Angelo busily writes, stops and thinks, then writes some more. "HEEBIE JEEBIES" by Little Richard PLAYS on his record player. There's a KNOCK at the door.

MARIA

It's me. Can I come in?

ANGELO

Sure, kid. Come on in.

Maria enters sheepishly, closing the door behind her.

MARIA

I'm sorry about the other night at dinner. I didn't mean to get you in trouble.

He puts down his pencil and smiles at her.

ANGELO

It's OK. I know you didn't mean anything bad. And you didn't get me in any trouble, cause I didn't do nuthin' wrong.

She's wrought with anxiety.

MARIA

But what if it is wrong?

ANGELO

What if what is wrong?

She blurts out what's on her mind.

MARIA

Maybe it isn't right for an Italian to be with a colored person. Maybe it's a mortal sin!

ANGELO

A mortal sin! What kinda mortal sin!

MARIA

I don't know. Some kind. You do things...just to do things. Everybody's calling you a nigger lover. One day you're gonna get in trouble way over your head.

He gets up from his desk, TURNS OFF THE RADIO, crosses over to her and puts his hands on her shoulders. He hugs her, then holds her at arms length.

ANGELO

She's the best singer I ever heard. If I can make a record with her, it could really be something. I like her for that reason.

Maria has a big tear in her eye. She kisses him on the cheek, opens the door and leaves, making the sign of the cross as she exits. Angelo goes back to his song writing, singing the lines he has been working on.

ANGELO

"The way that I love you is truly a sin... you put my world in a spin"... Nah....that's not quite right.

He ponders a moment.

ANGELO

"The way that I love you Just can't be a sin You put my world in a spin"

He smiles.

INT. ROBERTS' APARTMENT - THAT EVENING

The sincerity of "MY VOW TO YOU" by The Students wafts through the kitchen as Deserie puts away dishes. A KNOCK ON THE DOOR prompts her to check her hair. She wears a print blouse with red and white roses on it. She answers the door. Angelo leans in the door frame holding a white rose.

ANGELO

Hey. Check it out. A match.

DESERIE

Hi. That's cute. C'mon in.

He touches her on the heart with the rose, kisses her on the cheek and enters the apartment. She smells the rose.

ANGELO

Sal couldn't make it. Fact is, he ain't in. Nice place.

They kiss.

DESERIE

I'm glad you came. The others will be here around three. Make yourself at home.

He strolls into the living room, looks around, whistles at the two love birds in a cage, then sits down at the piano. He plays a few notes from a song. She sits down next to him, kissing him softly on the cheek. He gets up, pulls her up and without hesitation leads her to the sofa. She pushes him down. They make love. "MY VOW TO YOU" FADES.

EXT. COUNTY GENERAL HOSPITAL - SAME EVENING

Sonny Boy paces around nervously in front of the hospital. Cassie, dressed in her nurse's uniform, approaches him. They embrace.

CASSIE

What's going on, Sonny?
What's the matter?
I ain't going out with you.
I'm tired. I'm going home.

SONNY BOY

We got a problem with the studio.

She puts a hand on her hip in defiance of his comment.

CASSIE

What kinda problem?

SONNY BOY

Money.

CASSIE

How much money problems we got?

SONNY BOY

Five hundred.

CASSIE

Five hundred dollars! When did this happen? I thought you had everything worked out.

SONNY BOY

Jacob had some kinda problem with his brother and the Rosallinis. I should of told you sooner, but I couldn't. I got three.

Cassie is very upset.

CASSIE

You better not be jivin' me. I got a hundred but we'll have to talk with Melvin. See if we can pay him later. That's another hundred.

SONNY BOY

That'll do it. I do love you.

He kisses her on the cheek.

CASSIE

That makes us the producers. You got that? We're the producers!

SONNY BOY

Got it. One drink. Come on.

She smiles at him and shakes her head.

CASSIE

No. I'm goin' home.

She walks away.

INT. ROBERTS' APARTMENT - SAME EVENING

"THE WIND" by Nolan Strong and The Diablos PLAYS. A KNOCK ON THE DOOR jolts Angelo and Deserie from their love tangle. Deserie fixes her clothes and hair and goes to the door.

DESERIE

Who is it?

LYDIA

It's the Fuller Brush lady.

Deserie opens the door. Angelo struggles to look presentable.

LYDIA

Thought I'd drop over a little early. Talk some trash.

She sees Angelo and freezes.

ANGELO

Hey, Lydia.

Lydia is embarrassed. Angelo is, after all, a white boy.

LYDIA

Lord, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to...

DESERIE

It's OK. We were just talking.

LYDIA

Kinda hot in here for just talkin'.

She laughs. Another KNOCK on the door.

LYDIA

Must be Tyrone. Just saw him.

She goes to the door and lets Tyrone in.

TYRONE

Hey, everybody. I got so excited
I just couldn't wait. Isaac here?

DESERIE

Isaac's not gonna sing with us.

There's a difficult silence.

TYRONE

How come?

DESERIE

Sonny Boy wants five. You, me,
Lydia, Angelo and his friend Sal.

Tyrone looks pensively at Angelo. They shake hands.

ANGELO

How you doin', man. Actually...Sal
isn't gonna sing with us, either.
I guess we're four.

DESERIE

How come Sal don't wanna sing with us?

ANGELO

It's a long story.

TYRONE

That's cool. We're a quartet. Let's
hear how we sound.

Deserie turns off the radio, takes some sheets of paper and puts them at the piano.

DESERIE

OK...we're gonna sing "The Wind" for the Showdown, but let's get right into our new dance tune. It's fun.

ANGELO

Yeah. And if "The Wind" don't feel right, we'll do this. Here's the idea. The dance step is a simple spin.

LYDIA

Do it.

ANGELO

Hit it, Deserie.

DESERIE

First everyone gotta clap. Like this.

She claps out a rhythm then plays the rhythm on the piano. It's perfect...real r&b. Angelo takes Lydia's hand, takes her around the waist and begins dancing a jitterbug step with her. They dance close for a few beats and then he spins her out. He spins around at the same time and then they come back together. She giggles.

LYDIA

That's it?

ANGELO

Righ...except you gotta juice it.

Deserie laughs. Lydia puts a hand on her hip.

LYDIA

What is this boy talkin' about?

Angelo spins around like a dervish. They all stare at him in amazement. Deserie plays faster. Suddenly he stops.

ANGELO

OK. Now here's the lyrics. Keep playing, Deserie. Let's the three of us do the group part.

He takes a sheet of paper from his pocket and gathers them around him. The four of them SING the song.

INT. ROSETTI LIVING ROOM - SAME EVENING

Vito and Maria watch THE ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET.
Gina enters with a bowl full of popcorn.

GINA
Have you seen Angelo?

ANGELO
No. Not all day. Did he leave a note?

GINA
No. He's been acting very strange.

MARIA
I think we all know where he is.

There is silence. Ozzie talks about family values.

VITO
I wish he'd get back together with
little Doreen. She's so cute.

GINA
Well, I hope things change for his
sake. He's become very moody.
You've got to do something.

VITO
He's just being 17. What can I do?

A special news bulletin comes on the TV. Gina turns the
volume up. They watch intently.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
David McDonald, the president of
the United Steelworkers of America,
will be forced to order his union
members back to the mills.

The Supreme Court ruled this
afternoon to halt the 116-day steel
strike. More at 10.

Vito throws the entire bowl of popcorn up in the air.

EXT. ROBERTS' APARTMENT BUILDING - THAT NIGHT

Angelo leaves the building, walks down a block and turns the
corner to where his car is parked. He stops suddenly, then
runs up to his car.

ANGELO
Aw, no, man! Shit!

His convertible top is slashed and the back tail light broken. As he inspects the damage, two figures appear out of the dark. One of them is Isaac. Angelo whirls around.

ISAAC
Got car problems?

ANGELO
You son of a bitch.

ISAAC
We don't want you in our neighborhood.
We don't want you messin' with our girls.

ANGELO
She ain't your girl.

They jump him, hitting him in the face and knocking him to the ground. They kick him in the face and stomach, then run away down the street. Angelo lies on the ground moaning.

A bus stops at the corner. Cassie gets off. She sees Angelo lying on the sidewalk. She runs down the street.

EXT. SYRIA MOSQUE - DAY/FOURTH OF JULY

Marquee reads KATS ACAPELLA SHOWDOWN WITH SONNY BOY. A big display sign on the sidewalk shows fireworks with the words: Vocal Fireworks!

INT. SYRIA MOSQUE - DAY/FOURTH OF JULY

The large, ornate Syria Mosque buzzes with KIDS. Two groups stand on stage. Angelo, black and blue, but sporting his green suede shoes, Deserie, Lydia and Tyrone are at the microphone SINGING "The Wind" full bore. Their harmonies are beautiful and everyone in the audience sways. Isaac, Sal, Dino and Johnny watch with guarded admiration. The group finishes to a thunderous applause and steps back with the two other groups.

Sonny Boy enters from the wings and takes the microphone to loving applause, cat calls and dog barks.

SONNY BOY
Alright, movers and groovers, boys
and girls. How's that for some
Fourth of July fireworks? Reelin'
with the feelin'! Bop doo wop from
the vocal shop! Get up and get back
down. Are you ready to crown the
acapella champs for 1959?

Huge applause.

SONNY BOY

Alrighty dighty! Let's hear it for
The Veltones from the Hill! And
their version of "Speedo". There's
a thrill up on the hill!

The Veltones step forward. There is moderate applause.

SONNY BOY

Next up we had Olivia and The Zooms
from Mt. Oliver doin' "Zoom Zoom Zoom".

They step forward to strong applause.

SONNY BOY

And finally, from Clairton, you got
The Fabulous Spins with "The Wind".

The house comes undone. Deserie and Angelo hug. Tyrone jumps
up in the air spinning around. Lydia cries. Sal, Dino and
Johnny leave. Isaac stares in disbelief. Sonny Boy motions
for the group to join him at the microphone.

SONNY BOY

Alright, kids. You did it! And that
means you're doin' a record!
That's it for our First Annual
Fourth of July Acapella Showdown,
Jacks and Jills. Go out and enjoy
the fireworks.

They exit into the wings. A jump tune PLAYS.

INT. THE WINGS/SYRIA MOSQUE - SAME AFTERNOON

The kids are elated. Cassie greets them excitedly. She and
Sonny Boy hug.

CASSIE

That was monstrous! What a song!

Sonny Boy paces nervously. The kids jump with delight.

SONNY BOY

OK. Listen. We're gonna go right
into the studio. Next week-end.
You hear? Can we get the musicians?

CASSIE

You know Melvin plays. We'll have
to ask him. Tomorrow night.

SONNY BOY

OK. Angelo, I need you to go with me to Pearl's tomorrow night. Meet me at the station. Nine o'clock.

ANGELO

You got it.

Music FADES.

INT. KITCHEN OF ROSALLINI'S RESTAURANT - THAT NIGHT

Steam meanders through the kitchen clutter. A sweaty dishwasher is in a sudsy frenzy amidst large stacks of dirty dishes. "TAKE FIVE" by Dave Brubeck PLAYS from a transistor radio above the sink. Angelo enters through the swinging doors. He takes off his bow tie and apron. He takes some money out of his pocket and starts to count it. Louis enters and goes over to Angelo.

LOUIS

How'd you do, kid? Helluva shiner.

ANGELO

Ran into a door. Twenty bucks.

A dish breaks. Louis turns angrily to the dishwasher.

LOUIS

Luigi, Luigi!
That's money you breakin'!

He turns back to Angelo, fixing his shirt collar.

LOUIS

I'm glad you like it here. You're part of the family. But, listen, Angelo...I gotta tell you that Uncle Pete ain't too happy to hear that you're gonna do a record with Sonny Boy and that Jew...and a colored girl! Who's idea was that?

ANGELO

What's wrong with that? She's good.

Louis lights a cigarette.

LOUIS

You're part of a family. We're gonna have a recording studio...and jukeboxes. You should do your business with your family.

Angelo twists his hair.

ANGELO

I won this singing contest with Sonny.
If it weren't for him and the girl,
and the Jew, I wouldn't have won. Now I
gotta keep my word. I do what I say.

LOUIS

Well...it's like I told you before.
Sonny Boy's only looking to make
some quick bread and Cohen's a Jew.
Is that too hard for you? Just make
sure we get the record. Sometime.
Or your uncle will be upset. Very upset.

Louis walks away. Angelo looks at his money and shoves it in his pocket. He walks over to the dishwasher and moves him aside.

ANGELO

Here...let me help you.

He rolls up his sleeves and plunges into the dishes.

LUIGI

Ain't nobody ever talked to him
that way. You got some balls, kid.

ANGELO

I hope so, Luigi. I hope I got some
real big, matzo, meat balls.

Music FADES on Angelo's sweaty face.

INT. THE ROSETTI HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Angelo watches AMERICAN BANDSTAND. The Fleetwoods are singing "COME SOFTLY TO ME". The phone rings. Gina comes in from the kitchen to answer it.

ANGELO

I got it, mom. Hello.

It's Deserie. He motions to Gina that it's for him. She hesitates in the doorway.

ANGELO

Hey. What's up?

DESERIE (V.O.)

I need to talk to you. Can you come
to Clairton?

ANGELO
Sure. Be there in a half hour.

DESERIE (V.O.)
Meet me at the church.

ANGELO
Which one?

DESERIE (V.O.)
The Baptist Church down the street
from the theater.

ANGELO
You ok?

DESERIE (V.O.)
Sort of. Hurry.

ANGELO
They up and call me Speedo. I'm on
my way.

He hangs up. Gina reappears in the door

GINA
Who was that, Angel?

ANGELO
Dino. He needs to talk to me. I'll
be back in a bit.

Dick Clark smiles. Angelo turns off the television and leaves.

EXT. CLAIRTON ABYSSINIAN BAPTIST CHURCH - DAY

Angelo pulls into the parking lot and stops. He looks around cautiously. He spins the medallion, makes the sign of the cross and gets out of the car. Deserie opens the door of the church from the inside and motions for him to come in. He walks slowly to the door.

INT. THE CHURCH - SAME DAY

He enters and pauses, looking around intently. He doesn't quite know what to do. It is a beautifully simplistic church with beautiful woodwork and stain-glassed windows. Deserie smiles at him. He walks over and hugs her.

DESERIE
Thanks. Let's go sit in the choir.

ANGELO

This is very strange. This is the first time I ever been in a church that ain't Catholic. It's so plain and simple. In my church you gotta splash on holy water and genuflect and check in with your patron saint.

She laughs.

DESERIE

You're a very funny guy. I think that's why I like you so much.

ANGELO

Aha!

DESERIE

Didn't say loved. Said liked.

They sit down in the choir area.

ANGELO

Bet there's some heavenly singing in here.

DESERIE

Got that right.

He thumbs through a prayer book.

ANGELO

So?

She fidgets with her fingers.

DESERIE

I gotta say it straight. I been thinking a lot about bein' with you.

ANGELO

And?

DESERIE

And it, number one, ain't right. And, number two, it ain't gonna work.

ANGELO

You talking about the love part or the music part?

DESERIE

Both. There's a line between love and fascination. You can't possibly love me 'cause you don't know me, so it's got to be that you just fascinated by me...a colored girl...and race music.

He gets up and goes to the pulpit, looking up at the wooden cross beautifully lit up by the afternoon sun.

ANGELO

Yeah?

DESERIE

So, I wanna stop now. Before you get hurt any more. Before I get hurt. I can't be in love with you. It ain't right.

ANGELO

Says who?

DESERIE

My heart. God!

He's agitated, in a soul-searching, almost preacher-like, manner.

ANGELO

Look, Deserie. I ain't doin' it without you. It ain't like I'm the only one pushing. It's all happened for a purpose. Maybe it's love or maybe it's fascination but it's got a purpose. God gave it a purpose. How can you deny that?

DESERIE

I'm scared, that's why. I'm so scared to be in love with you it makes my gut all twisted up.

He walks over to her and puts his arms around her, holding her tightly.

ANGELO

I know how you feel. But I want you to remember one thing.

DESERIE

What's that?

He looks deeply and emotionally at her.

ANGELO

I love you.

He turns and walks out the door. She makes the sign of the cross, backwards, and SINGS.

EXT. PEARL'S 5TH AVENUE GRILL - THE NEXT NIGHT

LOTS OF BLACK PEOPLE hang out laughing, smoking and drinking. Cars honk by. Angelo and Sonny Boy pull into the parking lot in Sonny's 1957 Cadillac. All eyes focus on them. A YOUNG COUPLE recognizes Sonny Boy and goes over to shake his hand. Angelo is nervous. Muffled, JAZZY MUSIC laces through the sounds of the Hill District night. A bottle BREAKS.

SONNY BOY

(to a COUPLE OF YOUNG BLACK KIDS)

Make sure nobody steals my hub caps.

The kids roll their eyes. Sonny puts his arm around Angelo.

SONNY BOY

Now remember you're under age so nothing but Coca Cola. All I need at this point is to get busted for contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

ANGELO

My parents think you're already doing that with your music.

SONNY BOY

Thanks a lot. And be cool.
We need this guy and his band.

Angelo twists his hair with a curious twirl, studying the foreign country that surrounds him.

ANGELO

I'm always cool.

They go inside.

INT. PEARL'S GRILL - SAME NIGHT

THE BLACK PATRONS turn to stare at Angelo and Sonny Boy as they enter. People greet them. Cassie is there. She strolls over, gives Sonny Boy a kiss and stares at Angelo. She looks him up and down, then extends her hand. They shake.

She leads them to a table in the corner by the band. It is another world, impressionistically smoky and dimly lit.

Melvin's saxophonic sounds wrap around the muted colors.
People dance close together.

After the jazz tune, Melvin goes into the dressing room. The band PLAYS "HONKY TONK". Cassie, Sonny Boy and Angelo follow Melvin into the side room.

INT. DRESSING ROOM/PEARL'S GRILL - SAME NIGHT

Beer cases and whisky boxes line the walls. A large table occupies the center of the room. A tattered picture of Duke Ellington clings to a window. Various pieces of clothing lie around, including a red, satin dress. Melvin smokes a thin cigar. Cassie sits down at the table.

MELVIN

Hey, Sonny.

SONNY BOY

Hey, Melvin. You remember Angelo?

MELVIN

Yeah. Rosetti. I remember Rosetti.
You Vito's boy, right?

ANGELO

Right. That's some smooth music,
man. I'm glad the strike's over.

MELVIN

Me, too. Made for some bad blood.
But your old man's alright.

They shake. Melvin notices Angelo's green suede shoes.

MELVIN

Nice tires. You diggin' the music, Sonny?

SONNY BOY

Yeah. It's swingin', Melvin. Very
hip. So, listen. Can you and your
boys do a recording gig with these
kids next week-end? We need bass,
drums, piano, sax and guitar.

Melvin studies Angelo.

MELVIN

I hear you're good. Sing an E flat.

ANGELO

An E flat?

Melvin raises his eyebrows as if it were the easiest request in the world. Angelo looks around at the others.

MELVIN

Yeah, an E flat, man.

ANGELO

Well...I...uh...don't know how to sing...like by notes...except for C. I know C.

Melvin picks up his sax and blows an E flat.

MELVIN

That's an E flat. That's a note from the soul. You dig?

Angelo sings an E flat. Melvin nods and plays a lick in E flat. Angelo scats in harmony with him. They take it out for a couple of measures. Melvin smiles.

MELVIN

I can make it and my piano man can make it but the rest of the boys got another gig. And what about the money?

Sonny Boy shakes his head.

SONNY BOY

I can come up with some but we need a whole group.

Melvin ponders the situation. Angelo suddenly lights up.

ANGELO

Hey, listen. I got a band. My guys play bass, drums and guitar. They'd love to play with you.

Sonny and Cassie look at each other.

SONNY BOY

I thought you guys were on the outs.

ANGELO

We are. But I know they'll do it.

MELVIN

Sounds alright to me. But, Sonny, somewhere down the pike I need some bread, man.

SONNY BOY

You'll get it, Melvin. I promise.

MELVIN

OK. Me and Piano Red'll do it.
I gotta have a little sip and say
hi to some folks. Stick around.
Cassie's singin' tonight. She's
a pigeon.

Melvin leaves. Cassie gets up.

CASSIE

(to Sonny)

You mind if I talk with the boy
for a minute? Alone.

SONNY BOY

You got it. Catch you outside.

He gives her a hug and leaves. Cassie closes the door. The
band PLAYS "BONGO BLUES" by the Dee Williams Sextet. Cassie
paces.

CASSIE

Sit down for a minute would you?

ANGELO

Sure.

He goes to the table, pulls out a chair and sits down.

ANGELO

Look, I know what you're gonna say.
Save your breath. I like her,
that's all. I just want to sing
with her.

She puts a hand on her hip and stares a hole through him.

CASSIE

You got no idea what I'm gonna say.

She lights a cigarette. A difficult pause punctuates the
moment. She picks up the dress lying on the table and goes
over to a mirror wedged behind several stacks of beer cases.

CASSIE

'Scuse me. Gotta change. I know
you like Deserie. She likes you.

She faces the mirror and takes off the black dress she wears.
Her slender figure is accentuated by her red panties. She's
not wearing a bra. He can see a very muted image of her in
another mirror across the room.

CASSIE

In my heart, I think it's great.
In my soul, I grieve.

He sees her breasts in the mirror and is speechless.

ANGELO

What's that mean?

He is thrown off. She steps out from behind the boxes, looking very elegant. She goes to the table and sits down next to him, taking a long drag on her cigarette and blowing smoke out slowly, up into the ceiling fan. He is visibly nervous, unable to look directly at her.

CASSIE

You seem like a good kid. Handsome.
Polite. Dark, even for an Italian.
I'm happy you and Deserie have a
chance to make a record.

She doesn't have him figured yet. He avoids her.

CASSIE

You're scared.

He pauses, then looks directly into her eyes.

ANGELO

Yeah.

CASSIE

Of what?

He drums his fingers on the table, then gets up and paces.

ANGELO

Everything, really. This place.
You. Deserie. My old man. My
friends. The Rosallinis. Sometimes
I think everyone is out to get me.

She laughs warmly.

ANGELO

But most of all...I'm afraid of me.
Afraid I can't sing this music.
Afraid that I put myself in the
wrong place at the wrong time.
Maybe I oughta get an accordion and
sing Italian wedding songs.

She takes his hand to stop him from pacing.

CASSIE

You're a good singer. You just need to go deeper...deeper into your heart. Let me ask you something. What would your parents say if you started to date a Jewish girl?

ANGELO

Find a nice Italian girl.

She lets go of his hand and puts out her cigarette.

CASSIE

Right. You see, it's not really just black and white. It's also about the gray areas.

He sits down at the table, pondering this thought.

ANGELO

Like in between the colors?

He's really nervous now, tapping both hands on the table.

CASSIE

Sort of. It's like a rainbow. When you look at one, it's all the beautiful colors together. But if you look more closely, the pure colors are all separated. You got colored people in your neighborhood?

ANGELO

No, Mam. But what's wrong with that? As long as we get to hang out with each other. Still a rainbow. People feel secure with their own kind.

CASSIE

That's right. And when you start mixin' up the colors, people get nervous. You following me?

ANGELO

Sure. That's why this teenage music bothers grown-ups so much. It's a gray area.

CASSIE

It wasn't like this before.

ANGELO

Because it's mixing up the black
and white things.

CASSIE

It's mixin' up everything!
The church and the street.
It's a big gray area. Some would even
say evil! But I kinda like it.

He gets up, pacing even faster than before.

ANGELO

In other words...I'm a big gray
area. Even though I'm the one's
scared shitless!

She starts laughing, gets up from the table, walks over to
the mirror, looks at herself, fixes her hair and pushes up
the bodice of her red dress.

CASSIE

Yeah. Ain't that ironic.

She sits down on the edge of the table.

CASSIE

What do you want? Most of all?

He looks at her fondly, taking a big, deep breath.

ANGELO

I want to make this record with
Deserie. Get a song on the radio
that's got both colored kids and
white kids...together.
A song that absolutely burns with
love...fast or slow.
Whether she loves me or not.

She pushes herself off the table, walks over and stands right
in front of him.

CASSIE

That's serious business.
And what if it don't work?
What if the time ain't right?

ANGELO

I don't think about it not working.
If this ain't the right time, when is?

CASSIE

This is a dangerous time. May not seem like it to you, but it is. I'm gonna tell you two things. One, be careful. And two, when you see it can't work, then be man enough to walk away.

The music ends. The audience applauds.

ANGELO

I'm still a kid...not a man.

CASSIE

You gotta become a man some day. You know what separates a boy from a man?

ANGELO

What?

CASSIE

True love. And never...ever...be afraid to sing....never!

He looks at her with a different feeling than he had before. She hugs him.

CASSIE

I gotta go sing.

ANGELO

It's true I'm in love with her. Now she don't wanna sing with me.

CASSIE

She'll sing with you. Sing a great song together. See what happens.

ANGELO

Thanks. You're very cool.

CASSIE

That's because I'm a mom. Remember this: in a perfect world, anything is possible. But this world, for damn sure, ain't perfect. So just know when to walk away.

She kisses him on the cheek, holds his hand for moment, then leaves the room. Angelo sits quietly for a moment with his head in his hands.

He gets up and cracks his knuckles as he walks over to the picture of Duke Ellington. He examines it, rubbing his hand over Duke's face. He rubs his own face, rubs the medallion around his neck, then turns and walks back into the club.

INT. PEARL'S GRILL/THE CLUB

Cassie takes the stage to a very warm welcome. She stands with her back to the audience. Angelo sits down with Sonny Boy. She spins around slowly then breaks into a scorching rendition of "STEP IT UP AND GO" by Pearl Reeves. Music FADES on hot dancing.

EXT. SAL'S HOUSE - THE NEXT DAY

Angelo pulls up in front of the house and honks his horn. Sal looks out the window and sees Angelo, who turns up the radio. Sal comes out reluctantly.

SAL

Hey, Angelo. What's up?

ANGELO

Go for a ride with me.

SAL

Sorry, man. I'm busy.

ANGELO

You ain't never busy, you big ass loafer. Get in the fuckin' car.

SAL

Where we going?

ANGELO

Clairton.

SAL

I ain't goin' to Clairton.

Angelo turns the radio down and leans out the window.

ANGELO

Get in the mutha fuckin' car, or I'm gonna get outta the mutha fuckin' car and kick your mutha fuckin' ass.

Sal kicks the tire of the car and gets in.

ANGELO

We're gonna sing. That song you
came up with..."Our World". Hit it!
You're my friend, remember?

They drive off SINGING. Sal gives Angelo the finger.

EXT. THE LICKIN' STICK/CLAIRTON - SAME DAY

Angelo and Sal pull up in front of the store. Isaac and Tyrone hang out. When Isaac sees who it is, he stealthily pulls out a knife. Angelo and Sal pause for a moment then get out of the car.

ANGELO

Hey, guys. Isaac, can I talk to you?
I ain't lookin' for no trouble.

ISAAC

What you wanna talk about...
macaroni and cheese?

Angelo shakes his head.

ANGELO

No, man. I wanna talk about music.

ISAAC

Talk it.

Angelo sings a beautiful note. Sal harmonizes with him. They hold the note. Tyrone joins in. Finally, but reluctantly, Isaac harmonizes with them, then sends it off into a beautiful flourish. They hold their notes for a resounding moment of doo wop brilliance.

ANGELO

We're all gonna make this record.
Me, Sal, Dino, Johnny, Deserie,
Lydia, Tyrone and, you, Isaac.

Isaac stares at him with a steely intensity. He pulls the knife up, running his finger over the sharp blade.

ISAAC

You know she'll never be your girl.

ANGELO

I never said she would be. I just
want us to sing together. All of
us.

Angelo extends his hand. Isaac folds the knife and puts it in his pocket, pondering the situation. They shake hands. Tyrone breaks into "SPEEDO". They all sing joyfully.

EXT. FLAME RECORDS RECORDING STUDIO - EVENING

The back alley behind the record store is awash in the glow of lights shining through the outside window. A small, hand-lettered sign on the door reads: FLAME RECORDS. It is drizzling rain. Muted figures pass in front of the window. Muffled music drifts into the alley. Louis pulls up in his car.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - SAME EVENING

The studio is packed. The music rocks. A little hula dancer statue sways on top of the piano. Boxes and crates are stacked around. A newspaper lies open on a table, the headline reads: "CASTRO PRESIDENT OF CUBA", a smaller story line reads: "Blues Singer Billie Holiday Dies".

Angelo, Sal, Deserie, Tyrone and Lydia sing the last verse of "OUR WORLD". Isaac plays piano. Dino, Johnny, Melvin and A BASS PLAYER comprise the band. Angelo's face is still black and blue. Cassie and Sonny Boy snuggle in the control booth with Mr. Cohen.

The song ends. There is a beat of silence, then everyone screams with delight. Mr. Cohen limps into the studio. For the moment, he is the maestro. He studies everyone very carefully, then looks at his watch.

MR. COHEN

Beautiful. Beautiful.

MELVIN

Beautiful? That kicked some ass.

The kids laugh.

MR. COHEN

That's a take. We're hot.

SONNY BOY

You could say we're flaming!

MR. COHEN

Take a short break then we go right into the dance song. We need to put some juice into it.

Melvin holds up a pint of Thunderbird wine.

MELVIN

Here's a little juice.

Angelo takes a hit. They all laugh good naturedly.

ANGELO

Let's burn it, Uncle Melvin.

MELVIN

You got it. But, listen, everybody.
Don't end the song when you think it
sounds like it should end. You dig?

Sal looks puzzled.

SAL

Not exactly.

Melvin rubs his chin, studying the group. He takes a swig.

MELVIN

OK, listen. Rhythm and blues vocals
are like...um...smoke...rising up to
heaven. Don't exactly go up straight
but it goes up.

Keep adding beautiful little swirls onto
the song. Take it higher and lower, and
then, when you think you can't hold it no
longer...
give it one more, big, beautiful,
strong twirl.

They look at him with deep admiration, nodding in recognition.

DESERIE

That's how the great songs go.

Mr. Cohen bustles back into the room.

MR. COHEN

OK. Fantastic. Let's do the last
number. "The Spin". Places, everybody!

The kids nervously arrange themselves around the microphone.
Isaac joins the singers. Sal picks up the bass. The piano
player sits down and starts playing the riff to the song.
Angelo takes Deserie's hand.

ANGELO

Damn. I got the heebie jeebies.

She smiles warmly at him, squeezing his hand.

DESERIE

Only black people get the heebie
jeebies. You just plain scared.
Stay cool and sing with me.

MR. COHEN

Everybody ready? Here we go. "The
Spin" Take One.

Finally, the moment they have all been waiting for has arrived. They start to sing as they have worked on it. They spin individually as they sing. Cassie and Sonny Boy sit at the controls with Mr. Cohen. Sonny Boy has his arm around Cassie. Suddenly, Melvin stops the group and yells.

MELVIN

No...no...no! Hold it! Stop! That
ain't right. The beat ain't right.
It don't groove.

SONNY BOY

What's wrong, Melvin? It sounded great!

Mr. Cohen looks on exasperated. The kids are confused.

MELVIN

It's too fast. Too Little Richard.
Gotta slow it down just a bit and
more like...primitive.

ANGELO

How we gonna do that?

Suddenly it dawns on Deserie.

DESERIE

Easy. We clap...like this.
Like church. We clap the rhythm
like we did when we
practiced....just slower.

She starts a very laid back, sweet hand clapping groove.

MELVIN

That's it. Start with clapping just
like church. Then we add some sweet
jellyroll piano, some rockinitis
guitar, and a groovy bass line. I'm
gonna play the sax just like
another voice.

DESERIE

C'mon, Angel. Try it. I know how to
do it. Just follow me.

(MORE)

DESERIE (cont'd)
 We're gonna do it just like my
 daddy woulda sung it.

They all get into a syncopated, clapping rhythm, play it for a few moments and then stop, smiling.

ANGELO
 That's it. Let's hit it...just put
 the words right on in.

They arrange themselves around the microphone again.

MR. COHEN
 OK. Here we go. "The Spin",
 jungle style. Take Two.

They immediately hit a very cool, off-beat, funky groove Rudimentaryr&b. They have truly arrived at a musical moment ahead of its time.

Everyone totally gets into the song.

EXT. DOWN THE ALLEY - THAT NIGHT

Louis and his SIDE KICK sit in the car smoking. Louis looks at his watch.

LOUIS
 I'm gonna take a little snooze.
 Let me know when everybody's gone.

He pulls his hat over his eyes and sleeps.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - SAME NIGHT

They have completely ripped into the song. Mr. Cohen, Sonny Boy and Cassie rock back and forth. They are captivated. The kids and the band are sweating. When the song ends, they stand for a beat, totally in awe of what they have recorded.

MR. COHEN
 That's a take.

CASSIE
 That's a hit!

MR. COHEN
 Let's make sure we have it.

He rewinds the tape, doing "The Spin". He plays it back. It's really great. He takes a label and writes "The Spin" by The Fabulous Spins on it and attaches it to a tape can.

ANGELO

We did it. We actually did it.

Everyone's doing "The Spin".

ANGELO

How you feel now, Sal?

SAL

Groovy, man. Very groovy.

ANGELO

Sal you gotta find a new word.

SAL

I have. Frozen.

DESERIE

Frozen?

SAL

Yeah, frozen. You know, for cool.
Like very cool, very deep freeze.
And I got 'berg, too. You know,
like iceberg. He's 'berg, man. He's
Pittsburgh 'berg. He's 'burgh 'berg!

They laugh derisively. Everyone dances. Melvin lights up a thin, cigar. Angelo goes over to him, stops right in front of him, then gives him a big hug.

ANGELO

That was somethin' else, Melvin.

MELVIN

Yeah, and in E flat, too.

They smile warmly at each other.

MELVIN

I gotta split. Gotta do the graveyard
shift now the mill's reopened. Come
down to the club, Angelo.

He leaves. The rest of the group continues to party.
Music FADES.

INT. DOWN THE ALLEY INSIDE LOUIS' CAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Louis' sidekick nudges him. Louis bolts upright.

SIDEKICK

They're all gone. Cohen's locking
up the joint and leaving.

LOUIS
Okay. Let's go.

They get out of the car. Louis checks his pockets for something, then tests his flashlight. They walk toward the recording studio.

EXT. PITTSBURGH STEEL - SAME NIGHT

Smoke hangs heavy in the thick summer air. Melvin exits the parking lot and walks toward the factory down a dark alley. Suddenly, from out of nowhere, he is surrounded by A GROUP OF MEN wearing masks. He stops and puts down his lunch pail.

MASKED MAN #1
We warned you, nigger.

MELVIN
Warned me about what? The strike's over. Leave me alone. We all got what we wanted.

MASKED MAN #2
No we didn't. Seems you didn't learn your place.

They jump on him and start punching. Melvin fights back. One of the men brings a two-by-four from behind his back and strikes Melvin across the head. He hits him a second time. Melvin goes limp and falls to the ground. The man with the board hits him a third time.

MASKED MAN #1
You idiot! I said hurt him...not kill him.

MASKED MAN #2
The only good nigger's a dead nigger.

MASKED MAN #1
C'mon. Let's get the fuck outta here. He's dead.

EXT. THE ALLEY BEHIND THE RECORDING STUDIO - SAME NIGHT

Louis looks around. His buddy unscrews the light bulb in the back porch light. Louis fumbles with a ring of keys and opens the back door of the studio. They go in.

INT. THE RECORDING STUDIO - SAME NIGHT

Louis turns on his flashlight and looks around. He goes into the recording booth. The master tapes from the session are on the console. He examines them and tucks them under his arm.

His partner takes out a knife and bares an electrical wire to a lamp. Louis throws a bunch of newspapers around, then moves the lamp next to some draperies. Louis lights the papers under the drapes. The drapes catch fire. They leave, walking quickly down the alley to their car. The building burns.

The steel mills blaze through the night.

EXT. THE RECORD STORE/DOWNTOWN - THE NEXT DAY

The store shows visible signs of fire. Sonny Boy paces outside. He looks haggard and depressed. A sign in the front window reads: NO TRESPASSING/OUT OF BUSINESS. He stops and peers into the window. He knocks on the door, then looks at his watch. A trolley stops in front of the store. Angelo hops off and runs over.

SONNY BOY

Hey, Angelo.

ANGELO

Hey, Sonny. How long you been here?

SONNY BOY

About 20 minutes.

ANGELO

How's it look.

SONNY BOY

Not good. Pretty burned out. They got the alley blocked off. No sign of Jacob. No answer at his house either.

Angelo looks in the window.

ANGELO

Damn. The place is a mess. When did you talk to him last?

SONNY BOY

Yesterday. Right after the fire. He said he was goin' to Philly.

ANGELO

Where's the tapes, Sonny? Where's the damn tapes?

SONNY BOY

Jacob says he left 'em here. They must have been burned up.

Angelo paces with rage, cracking his knuckles.

ANGELO

You gotta get inside and look, Sonny. We gotta get the tapes. They killed Melvin. They burn the studio. What kinda fuckin' town is this?

SONNY BOY

Take it easy, Angelo. If they ain't destroyed, I'll find 'em.

ANGELO

You better, Sonny. Those songs mean everything to us now. Everything! You get 'em! You call me!

SONNY BOY

I will, Angelo. I promise. I'm sorry.

Angelo turns and walks dejectedly up the street.

INT. CLAIRTON ABYSSINIAN BAPTIST CHURCH - DAY

A large group of mourners pays homage to Melvin. Deserie, Lydia, Cassie, Tyrone, Isaac, Angelo and Sal sing "WHEREVER THERE'S A WILL". It is a very solemn moment. Vito and Viktor quietly in the congregation. They watch the kids with humble respect. A tear wells up in Vito's eye and runs down his cheek. Viktor looks over at him and hands him a handkerchief. Music FADES.

EXT. THE CAROUSEL/KENNYWOOD AMUSEMENT PARK - AFTERNOON

Angelo watches the beautiful carousel go around. KIDS ride eating cotton candy. Deserie approaches. He sees her and runs over to her. He wants to hug her but doesn't.

ANGELO

I'm glad you came. I was sure you wouldn't.

DESERIE

I'm sorry. I had a little trouble getting here. Then a little trouble gettin' in.

He takes her hand. People stare. He feels very awkward.

ANGELO

No tapes. No Cohen. No nothin'.

DESERIE

It's better that way. For
Melvin's sake, if nothin' else.

ANGELO

You know how sorry I am about Melvin.
But those are great songs. We did it.
We broke the sound barrier.
We could go to New York City.

Deserie watches the carousel go round. It stops.

ANGELO

C'mon, let's ride.

DESERIE

Will they let me on?

ANGELO

Heck, yeah. Tony's my cousin. He
let's everybody ride.

Angelo gives the attendant a ticket and they hop on. They share a brief Italian hug. Deserie mounts a beautifully sculpted white horse. Angelo drapes himself beside her. Carousel music chimes in. The beautiful fantasy animals come to life.

DESERIE

You're right. We did it.
You did it. You made it all happen.
We broke the sound barrier. But we
didn't break the color barrier.
They killed Melvin. They'll kill
us, too. Just for bein' together.
Maybe it's good the songs are gone.

He holds her hand.

ANGELO

Those songs'll never be gone.
Love songs last forever. You know
that.

He holds her hand next to his cheek.

ANGELO

We could run away...tonight.

DESERIE

We're already runnin' away.

She starts crying.

DESERIE
I never said I loved you.

Tears well up in Angelo's eyes. People stare at them, pointing and whispering.

ANGELO
(softly)
I know.

She looks at him like she never has before. It's a mixture of love and hate.

DESERIE
Don't you get it! Are you that fuckin' stupid?

His lip quivers. He wipes the tears from his eyes.

ANGELO
Get what? That I love you?
Why shouldn't I love you?

DESERIE
I'm a nigger and you're a dago!

He kisses her passionately, then reaches in his pocket and takes out the medallion of St. Cecelia. He puts it around her neck and kisses her again.

ANGELO
Now I know what she meant...
from boy to man. Just like that.

DESERIE
What are you talkin' about?

ANGELO
Your mother said it to me.
About true love.

She lifts the medallion hanging around her neck and spins it.

DESERIE
She still spins. You can't love me.

He takes both of her hands in his, looking at her with deep love and affection.

ANGELO
Wanna make a bet. The way that I
love you can't be a sin.

DESERIE

We put our world in a spin.

He jumps off the carousel and blows her a kiss. He stands there till she comes around again. He shouts out as loud as he can.

ANGELO

I love you! I'll love you forever!

He walks away, not looking back. His lip quivers, a deeply sad expression crosses his face. She cries. Carousel music FADES.

INT. LEBANON LODGE DANCE HALL - NIGHT

A colorful sign reads: "Welcome Back to School". Angelo, Doreen, Sal, Dino, Johnny and their GIRLFRIENDS dance to "DON'T YOU HEAR ME CALLING, BABY" by Ronnie Haig.

JOHNNY

I can't believe you're sportin' them stupid shoes, Angelo.

Angelo stops dancing and looks down at his brand new pair of tassel loafers.

ANGELO

Hey, man, they're swingin'. The new thing, you know. Gotta get prepped for college, Johnny.

JOHNNY

Well, they look goofy. How can you dance in 'em?

ANGELO

Hey, sport, I can dance in snowshoes!

Angelo dances up a storm. The song ends. They huddle.

JOHNNY

What a summer. Too bad how thing's turned out. I feel really bad about Melvin.

SAL

Yeah. We did a record, then ended up without a record. Figure that.

DINO

You did a hip thing, Angelo. You actually tried. We were stubborn.
(MORE)

DINO (cont'd)

Those kids were cool. Especially the girl.

ANGELO

Yeah. Thanks, guys. But you know what? It ain't over. We got a good group. We'll go to Pitt and play at them frat parties. They'll dig us. C'mon, let's do "The Spin".

The DJ PLAYS "DIDDLEY DADDY" by Bo Diddley. They head to the dance floor. Doreen takes Angelo by the arm, stopping him.

DOREEN

Angel, I'm sorry, too. I didn't believe in you either. And I was jealous. I'm sorry. I love you.

ANGELO

Thanks, Doreen. I guess I can handle some things now. You dig me?

She blushes but unbuttons her top blouse button. He spots Milan Yablonski across the floor. He yells out.

ANGELO

And I'm gonna play football, too. That's a promise. An Italian promise.

A deep look of sadness crosses his face. The same look he had when he walked away from the carousel. A tear wells up in his eye. His friends stare at him. He moves on to the dance floor. They do "The Spin". The song FADES into "THE SPIN".

INT. RADIO STATION KWLF/SANTA FE - NIGHT/JANUARY 1, 2000

Dr. Feelgood wipes a tear from his eye. He sighs deeply. His assistant has tears in her eyes. She straightens his baseball cap.

ASSISTANT

That's amazing! That was you! I didn't even know you could sing! So where is everyone now?

DR. FEELGOOD

I have no idea. I haven't seen any of those kids since we left Pittsburgh after my senior year. But, my God...the song is alive!! I got the song...and that means I got the girl!! After all these years, I got the girl!!

He lifts his hands to the sky.

DR. FEELGOOD

Wherever you are, Deserie Roberts,
I love you!! More than ever!

He checks the time and regains his composure.

DR. FEELGOOD

Ok. Let's do this. Wow. Holy Mother
of God. I got the song. What a way
to start a new millennium!

He opens the mic.

DR. FEELGOOD

Well there you have it..."The
Spin"...Pittsburgh, 1959...and
beyond...wonder where they all are
tonight on the first night of the
new millennium...

That's it for tonight, boys and
girls. Thanks for hangin' here with
us on the corner of Move and
Groove. Tune in again next week for
more groove music for the Saturday
night tribe. Until then...
remember...love your
neighbor...love the one you're
with. Why? 'Cause Dr. Feelgood says
so... that's why. Keep on swingin',
babies...Keep on swingin', Deserie
Roberts!

He closes the mic then shouts out.

DR. FEELGOOD

I love you, Deserie! I'll love you
forever!

His assistant smiles, tears welling up in her eyes.

"THE SPIN" PLAYS on.

FADE back to a sultry Pittsburgh night with the steel mills
glowing in the distance as credits scroll.

Slowly, almost imperceptibly, "THE SPIN" changes from a doo
wop/r&b song into a jazzy, sinuous, contemporary ambient
groove tune.

"Then and Now" pictures of Angelo's friends from back in the days roll by ending with Deserie Roberts as a high school principal.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END