

**RIDING HOUSE STREET**

©

Edward Griffiths

Based on his novel of the same title.

Screenwriter/Author:

Edward Griffiths/Edward St.Boniface

Cellphone: (United Kingdom)

+44 (0) 7792 614636

Email:

edward\_st\_boniface@hotmail.com

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EXT. RIDING HOUSE STREET DAWN

TITLE: 2010

Riding House Street in central London, a long road with a walled and gated school, a pub and assorted shops all silent in the dawn of an early Sunday morning.

Al, about 45 but looking older, stands in a gloomy Sunday morning as Calliope Wix, beautiful and a youthful 40, turns and walks up the street, turning the corner.

Calliope waves sadly and briefly as she goes. His expression is one of smiling encouragement but we see it is forced.

As Calliope turns and waves there is a FREEZE FRAME and the scene alternates with an identical photograph and pose by Calliope in which she is much younger.

The two versions overlap each other before fading, reflecting a memory Al is suddenly and traumatically experiencing.

When Calliope disappears Al's expression abruptly changes to inconsolable shock and grief. In a split second he seems to age ten years.

Al turns around and slowly starts walking away, shuffling like an old man. He is clearly in shock.

Al continues down the street until he comes to a mews (BOURLET CLOSE) that opens up nearby. We see a sign spelling it out and the name of RIDING HOUSE STREET.

There are locked up building materials set out and scaffolding against one of the buildings. Some plastic chairs are set up around a makeshift table with stained Styrofoam cups and plastic spoons left on it.

Al enters BOURLET CLOSE. By now he is staggering.

AL (V.O.)

I just got the shock of my life.

EXT. BOURLET CLOSE EARLY MORNING

Al collapses into one of the chairs, shivering with an attack. His face becomes agonized. We hear snatches of pop music all mixed together, all of them tunes written by him, which become a screaming cacophony that cuts off suddenly.

His face goes slack, his eyes blank, he is remembering.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

The doctors told me the clock was ticking but I didn't think it would be this fast. So I guess this is my last chance to tell the story. Of me, Alderson Lupton. Just call me Al, though. Of Calliope Wix. Of our band. We called ourselves the Museonics. How we made millions from nothing more than some good tunes. My tunes. Her voice. How we had everything.

Al gasps with a spasm, his face contorts and he sags back. His head jerks up. He tries to shout but only gets a wheeze out. He clutches his chest.

The grey sky seems to descend and darken.

AL LUPTON

Not yet, not yet!

Darkness reaches out to Al. He fights, waving it off.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

How I threw it all away.

The darkness closes in around him.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

How I threw her away.

Al slowly falls over out of the chair and lies still.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

I wonder if there's a song in this.

We hear his heartbeat run down until it is the slow strumming beat of a compelling pop tune, which fades away.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

Yes, there is, but I never had time  
to release it.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO NIGHT

Introductory MUSIC to an evening arts programme.

A panel sit around a table with a TV Host. They are Rafe Clunes, a handsome record producer of about 40 looking shellshocked, Evel Tyler, about 45, a nasty looking tabloid journalist smirking at the camera in a loud Hawaiian style beach shirt. The third is Gene Beanland, also about 40, soberly dressed, a magazine editor. Evel smokes a pipe, blows smoke rings.

The background is a collage of enlarged stills of Al.

TV HOST

Good evening on a sad day. This morning the body of former pop star Alderson Lupton was found just off Riding House Street in central London. He was only 43 years of age. Lupton, who formed the band 'The Museonics' twenty years ago, was responsible with his partner Calliope Wix for some of the most memorable hits of the Nineties. Tonight we'll be looking back at his musical career. I'd like to start with Raphael Clunes. Rafe, you helped produce The Museonics' early albums. You knew Alderson Lupton personally. How has this tragic news affected you?

Rafe Clunes is clearly holding back tears.

RAFE CLUNES

Al was known to be an unhappy guy. The music business and the years hadn't been kind to him. We were recording a new album that was going to be his comeback.

TV HOST

I see. We'll return to that piece of news in a moment. Evel Tyler, you've been associated with Alderson Lupton since the beginning of his career as well. In fact, you were the very first music journalist to have interviewed him and have been a vociferous critic of his work both in *The Museonics* and afterwards. How do you feel about his demise?

EVEL TYLER

Ciao, ciao, poptasters. Yeah, frankly His Balderson was a miserable git. And the truth is he did it to himself.

TV HOST

I should add you're referring to the pun you made on his name circa 1996 when he changed his image by shaving his head. He grew his hair back after the band split in 1999, but you continued using it.

EVEL TYLER

It scanned, Slick. I knew Mister Oddfellow Alderson Lupton from the start and from the start I saw he'd crash. It was drugs and sick pervy stuff that did for him.

TV HOST

He always denied those rumours.

GENE BEANLAND

I have to interrupt here. I interviewed Alderson many times after the breakup of the band when Evel ignored and disparaged him.

TV HOST

Gene Beanland, editor of *'Vinyl Bandwidth'* magazine.

EVEL TYLER

I was there before you, Gene. And before pretty boy Rafe here too. I

know all the sad stories behind  
Balderson's sad story. You'd never  
believe what really went on.

GENE BEANLAND

You're right. I don't believe you.

EVEL TYLER

He can't slip you a few from beyond  
the grave, Genie Beanie. Face it. The  
Baldstar has finally fallen out of  
the firmament. Truth is he died  
creatively a long time ago.

(beat)

Gene points at Evel contemptuously.

GENE BEANLAND

Look: a weed smoking weed.

RAFE CLUNES

Jesus you two, squabbling at his wake  
no less?

EVEL TYLER

He dug his own grave, pretty boy.

GENE BEANLAND

I hope you find yours before long.

EVEL TYLER

Desolated; genie.

TV HOST (INTERRUPTING)

I'd like to start positively with The  
Museonics at the moment of their  
first major success. It was while  
they were performing in the United  
States during 1995. Media attention  
led to unscheduled national touring,  
triumphant finales at the Hollywood  
Bowl and Carnegie Hall no less,  
straight into popular music history.

EVEL TYLER

Blow me, Slick. They were lucky.

TV HOST

Please stop calling me 'Slick'.

EVEL TYLER

Okay, Fluffy. Ciao, ciao!

The tune Al was hearing as he lost consciousness starts up again. On a plasma screen behind the panel concert footage starts to play.

EXT. THE HOLLYWOOD BOWL, LOS ANGELES NIGHT

TITLE: '*TEMPLES ON FIRE*' CONCERT, HOLLYWOOD BOWL, 1995.

Calliope Wix, at 20, sings the tune we have just heard begin. She is at the peak of her beauty and talent, holding the enthusiastic and cheering audience spellbound. All lights are on her. It is the finale number, '*Mystery Girl*'.

Nearby onstage but in the shadows, Al at 25, plays the keyboards with a maestro's skill. Something is wrong about his eyes and expression.

His eyes are glazed, his face pale and expressionless. He sweats when we can see him as the light show shifts. He plays mechanically but spectacularly.

Offstage we see Al being carefully watched by Marshall, about 40, tough, bearded, dressed as a rock biker, the tour road manager. He looks worried as he pops a pill and checks his watch - a very expensive model.

Marshall gestures still looking at his watch and two heavysset road crew also dressed as bikers come up behind him.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

Us. As we were then, the beginning of all our fame. But it's only the public face of the real story.

Calliope finishes the finale number and there is a thunderous roar of applause. She bows repeatedly to the audience as more spotlights bathe her in angelic radiance.

CALLIOPE

We love you, Hollywood! We love you, America! God bless you all.

Calliope drinks in the adulation of the crowd. The light focussed on her throws the rest of the stage in shadow.

Marshall and the two road crew move quickly and hustle Al off the stage unseen. Calliope does not notice. She raises her arms, looking like an angel as Marshall props up Al.

Marshall carefully examines Al's eyes and takes his pulse like a doctor. There are fresh needle marks on Al's arm which Marshall examines. Al mumbles as though in a trance. Marshall nods to Road Crew 1 and 2.

MARSHALL

The Rangoon Swoon's wearing off. He needs to dry out. Take him to Dick Hardcore's place like I said, fast.

ROAD CREW 1

Look at him, he's hit nirvana.

ROAD CREW 2

I'd like to try some of that stuff.

MARSHALL

Not at ten thousand bucks a jar. Should've lasted another hour. Don't knock him around and make sure nobody sees. It'll be lousy with teenyboppers out there soon.

The road crew drag Al away, bumping his head against a fire extinguisher on the wall as they go around a corner, drawing blood. They look back worried but Marshall hasn't noticed. He lights a huge cigar and takes a heavy drag.

MARSHALL

Soon that junkie will be worth even more pound for pound than the drug. They'll pay big to get him back.

Marshall watches the triumphant close of the show, staring with greedy intensity at Calliope, undressing her with his eyes and blowing smoke rings.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

I guess that's our cue to really go behind the scenes.

Marshall stubs out his cigar quickly and hides the butt as Calliope comes backstage glowing, elated, gorgeous.

CALLIOPE

Marshall, where's Al? We have to celebrate the end of the tour!

Marshall takes her arm reassuringly.

MARSHALL

He's exhausted, Cally-ope.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

*Calliope.* Stupid American prat can't even pronounce it.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

I got him out through the back to miss the crowd. Don't worry, we're taking care of him at a friend's house. Time to meet the assembled press jackals and vultures.

Calliope groans humorously.

CALLIOPE

Another hour of being bloody perky and bubbly. No wonder Al wanted to lurk back here to make his getaway.

MARSHALL

We have happiness on demand.

Marshall shakes, opens and offers a bottle of colored pills. Calliope reaches for one but then changes her mind.

CALLIOPE

No, I'll call on my reserves of natural perkiness, thanks.

Marshall looks at her disappointed, snaps the bottle shut.

MARSHALL

Suit yourself. The monsters await.

He leads her offstage, making a rude gesture behind her back.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

Marshall, the well upholstered rock and roll apocalypse refugee trying to drug and date rape Calliope over there, was our tour manager. A not so nice combination of Hell's Angel, Timothy Leary and Daddy Warbucks. He knew all about monsters. I was just about to begin my education.

EXT. THE HOLLYWOOD BOWL NIGHT

The two road crew members come out of a stage exit dragging Al and look around the parking lot - it's deserted. They open up a van and roughly throw Al inside. He moans, head bloody.

ROAD CREW 1  
Whoops. Don't damage the product.

ROAD CREW 2  
You'd better not. I hear Marshall makes you dig your own grave first.

ROAD CREW 1  
Think old Daddy Hardcore will give us some (beat) hospitality?

ROAD CREW 2  
If you bend over at the wrong time.

Road Crew 2 laughs harshly. They look at each other with dislike then slam the van doors shut, climb in, drive off.

As the van screeches around a corner a man steps out of the shadows nearby smoking a pipe. It is Evel Tyler.

He looks after where the van has gone, writes 'Dick Hardcore: Beverly Hills(?)' in a notebook then runs for a car and drives off pursuing the van.

EVEL TYLER  
Early Christmas for me in the city of angels.

INT. AMERICAN CAR NIGHT

Evel Tyler drives alone on a Los Angeles expressway towards Beverly Hills following the van carrying Al.

As he drives he rapidly talks on his cellphone which we see is a top of the range expensive model.

Finishing his call, clearly having gotten something he wanted, Evel puts the cellphone on the dashboard and smiles as the streetlights flash past.

We see on the screen of the cellphone a pixelated ID image of the face of Dick Hardcore, with his name listed below.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

Meet my nemesis in the press, Evel, that's 'Evel' with an 'e', Tyler. He's completely evil, like his name. He follows me around like a sex disease. I wouldn't let him into the press group for the American tour, so he freelanced instead. One of my many mistakes.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION DAY

Al wakes up in a cavernous modernist bedroom, looks around disoriented, not knowing where he is.

Wincing when he moves he feels his forehead which has a big bandage over it. He groans when he touches it.

He gets up and sees a mobile drip feed apparatus near the bed with a tray of pills beside it. He wanders around the huge room, which is decorated with tasteless erotic art.

He pauses, staring at two statues of Apollo and Bacchus set side by side flanking the door to a bathroom almost as large as the bedroom. They both have an identical face.

INT. GUEST BATHROOM, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION DAY

The lavish bathroom has a massive bathtub and shower, a sauna. Kitsch music plays with a flavour of ancient Rome. It is all obsessively decorated with erotic art and fixtures.

Al looks at himself ruefully in the mirror: drawn and pale. The bandage makes him look like an accident victim. He looks under the bandage, sees an ugly ragged cut, is puzzled.

Al cleans himself up and puts on a fresh bandage from a supply he finds in the bathroom cabinet. He finds and puts on a robe monogrammed with a large 'Friend Of The Dick' logo.

He grimaces when he reads what it says, then smiles as if thinking 'this must all be a dream'.

INT. UPPER FLOOR, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION DAY

Al comes out of the bedroom into a large plushly carpeted corridor, looking around perplexed, sees no one. Duplicates of the Bacchus and Apollo statues stand here and there, all of them with the same identical face.

INT. UPPER FLOOR MAIN HALLWAY, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION DAY

Al comes into a long main hallway off which other halls and galleries open. He goes down one corridor marked with a red cross and an exclamation point and comes to a pharmacy.

INT. PHARMACY, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION DAY

Al looks around a completely stocked pharmacy and dispensary with every kind of usual brand medicine, notes jars full of colored pills marked 'Uppers', 'Downers', 'Tranquilizers' and 'Performance Enhancers'.

A sign with skull and crossbones on a huge locked safe reads: '*DANGER!! Tampering with this safe will release fatal gas*'.

Al walks out.

INT. UPPER FLOOR MAIN HALLWAY, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION DAY

Al continues, then goes down a connecting corridor near the pharmacy corridor seeing something glitter at the end of it.

INT. LAPIDARY GALLERY, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION DAY

A treasure trove of priceless Japanese crystal art. A man sized Buddha, a dancing celestial nymph, an elephant and other mythical creatures. The statues are under shifting lights and glitter magically.

Benches are set around the displays like in a museum.

Al walks around amazed at the contrast with the crudeness of the art in the rest of the mansion, goes out again.

INT. UPPER FLOOR MAIN HALLWAY, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION DAY

A large connecting corridor has a sign which reads '*To the workshops*' with a pointing finger. Intrigued, Al goes.

INT. PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION DAY

A complete photographer's studio and a door opening to a large darkroom. Pornographic prints are hung to dry and the walls are full of explicit pornographic shots which all seem to have been done in the same studio.

Al notices another door marked '*Film Studio*' and walks through.

INT. FILM STUDIO, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION DAY

A large studio space with vinyl roll-up gymnasium mats on the floor. Expensive 35mm camera setups are ranged around the mats pointing down and a large array of professional filming lights is attached to the ceiling. Numerous tacky props are stacked on shelves against one wall.

Another connecting room opens into a costume room which is full of equally tacky costumes.

Al goes through a door marked '*Editing Room*', hearing odd slurred moans.

INT. FILM EDITING ROOM, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION DAY

A large and lavishly equipped post production studio is set before a giant screen.

On the screen plays a lurid pornographic film of a girl (Laurie) simulating masturbation, set to a very slow speed with the sound low, which is responsible for the odd moaning. The film is tawdry, obviously shot in the studio next door.

Al leaves, shivering. He is increasingly frightened.

He finds an entrance to a service corridor, enters.

INT. SERVICE CORRIDOR, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION DAY

Al walks down the service corridor and comes to a large aperture in the wall with a red circle around it marked 'INCINERATOR - DANGER'. He passes on.

Al stops suddenly when he brushes against something which clinks metallically. He looks and sees it is a pair of locked bondage manacles hanging from a nail.

Now Al is really frightened and looks around but there seems no end to the maze around him.

INT. UPPER FLOOR STAIRCASE, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION DAY

Al comes out of the service corridor and continues looking for a way out. On the walls are even grosser erotic art.

He finds a wide sweeping staircase and descends.

INT. GROUND FLOOR, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION DAY

Al reaches the bottom of the staircase and goes through gallery after gallery filled with the same monotonously erotic art and statues.

No gallery has a window to the outside, all the windows look into other galleries.

A powerful sense of being trapped in a maze. Everything is brilliantly lit in an obsessive way, no shadows anywhere.

INT. MAIN FOYER, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION DAY

Al finally discovers the front door only to find it securely locked. He sees a security keypad panel that requires a code. He tries it a few time without success.

Giving up he continues wandering.

INT. KITCHEN, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION DAY

Al comes to a kitchen full of trays and counters of half-eaten food, with a door open to the outside.

He follows a trail of dropped snacks into a giant backyard full of phallic topiary art and sees an Olympic pool in the distance.

Al hears chattering and laughing voices around the pool, sees a beautiful girl do a clumsy dive from an elevated board and heads towards the pool.

EXT. BACK YARD POOLSIDE, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION DAY

Al comes up to the pool unnoticed. Dick Hardcore, about 50, heavysset, face and limbs and stomach methodically Botoxed, visibly preserved by repeated plastic surgery from face to feet, lounges in a deck chair in a too-small bathing suit.

This is the face on all the statues but older and as though fossilized. Dick wears only a pair of huge mirrored sunglasses otherwise. He smokes a huge cigar contentedly.

Ethereally beautiful youths male and female wander around listlessly and splash in the shallow end of the pool. We see them hungrily eating snacks, all unhealthy junk food.

We also see pills and drug paraphernalia, large amounts of it. The girl who clumsily dived climbs the diving tower again.

It is hard to tell the girls and boys apart. Among them are Terry (male) and Laurie (female), both of them about 19 or 20 and a little more alert than the rest.

When Al appears and comes up to Dick all the youths freeze, astonished, staring at him like he was a just-landed alien. Dick Hardcore turns unhurriedly.

Al sees his own face reflected and distorted in the sunglasses. Dick Hardcore regards him expressionlessly then smiles in an intimidating way, like a trap opening.

DICK HARDSTAR  
Helluva deal.

Dick blows some smoke rings.

AL LUPTON  
I'm sorry, but am I dead or something?  
Is this heaven?

Dick roars with laughter and suddenly snaps his fingers very loudly. The youths begin moving again as though switched back on, as if nothing had happened.

DICK HARDSTAR  
You English guys, what a hoot!

Dick laughs loudly and immediately all the youths laugh too, but hollowly like an echo. Dick bounds up, slaps Al heavily on the shoulder.

Al looks around at the yard and pool. He now sees high spiked walls decorated with numerous CCTV cameras in the distance.

AL LUPTON  
It's not Hell, is it?

Dick laughs too loud again, again echoed by the youths.

DICK HARDSTAR  
Nope.

AL LUPTON  
I guess Hell wouldn't need a chemist's and a lapidary gallery. Or not ones of the Buddha and a celestial nymph, anyway.

DICK HARDSTAR  
You know about all that stuff?

AL LUPTON  
I did a school project on it once.

DICK HARDSTAR  
Wow, you must have gone to that Oxford college or something.

AL LUPTON  
No, I'm an autodidact.

DICK HARDSTAR  
You're a car *what*?

AL LUPTON  
I just read a bit.

DICK HARDSTAR

What a dude! Marshall said you'd be out of it for awhile until you came down. You're in my own little corner of paradise, Al. The name's Dick Hardcore.

AL LUPTON  
Marshall had me brought here?

DICK HARDSTAR  
Yep. Hungry?

Al realizes he is very hungry, stumbles a little.

AL LUPTON  
Now that you mention it I feel like I haven't eaten for days.

Dick slaps his palms together very loudly making Al flinch and the youths all swiftly run into the house.

A muscular but vulnerable looking young man of about twenty, Terry, climbs out of the pool to follow. Dick menacingly snaps his fingers again and Terry freezes.

DICK HARDSTAR  
Terry, why are you leaving my stash out where the Feds can see it?

TERRY  
Sorry, daddy.

Terry clumsily scoops up all the drug paraphernalia and pills and waits nervously until Dick snaps his fingers again, rushes into the house.

DICK HARDSTAR  
Kids. Got to watch them every minute. Like the Feds watch me.

AL LUPTON  
Mr. Hardcore, just out of curiosity...

At that moment the youths including Terry all rush back laden with trays of unhealthy looking convenience food. Dick steers Al over to a lounge chair, shoves a tray into his lap.

DICK HARDSTAR

Don't stand on ceremony Al, you're a guest in the Big Dick House, so call me Dick. You have about four days of appetite to make up.

Al realizes he is hungrier than he thought and wolfs down the food however bad it looks to him. The youths bring more.

AL LUPTON

I've been out for four days?

DICK HARDSTAR

Five, but Marshall said to put you on a drip feed just in case on the first day. Wow, did you fly high.

Al pauses, haunted, trying to remember unsuccessfully.

AL LUPTON

I don't remember anything.

DICK HARDSTAR

You played live to seventy thousand at the Hollywood Bowl and about ten million watching on network TV.

AL LUPTON

I hope they were my songs?

Dick grins crookedly - he likes Al but has a hidden agenda.

DICK HARDSTAR

I reckon you dance with the devil on that stage, English Al.

Al has finished his food and Dick signals for Terry to bring more. Terry looks closely at Al as he loads Al's plate. Al eats with no sign of his hunger stopping.

A reflective look comes into his eyes - he is remembering.

AL LUPTON

I'm starting to remember being given a lot of something called 'Rangoon Swoon' before the concert.

DICK HARDSTAR

Ten thousand bucks worth. Comes direct from Burma in diplomatic bags

only. I never heard of Marshall letting anyone have that stuff, let alone free.

AL LUPTON

What is it?

DICK HARDSTAR

Purest of the pure opium. I've been trying to score some for years to put in my safe as an investment.

AL LUPTON

I wish I could tell you how good it was but my memory goes blank just after that point.

Dick roars with laughter and slaps Al's knees with each hand. Al winces. Dick signals again and Terry brings up a tray crowded with bottles of beer and spirits.

DICK HARDSTAR

We're going to get along, Al. If Marshall thinks you're that good an investment then my home is your home. You'll be safe here.

Al looks around at all the perfect sad looking young people and the luxurious garden - it feels intimidating to him.

AL LUPTON

Mr. Hardcore...

(beat)

AL LUPTON (CONT'D)

...Dick, I'm still on tour. Calliope and my other people will be wondering where I am. I should really get a taxi back to our hotel. So if you'll excuse me...

Al stands and tries to start walking but suddenly goes dizzy and nearly falls over.

Dick exchanges a quick knowing glance with Terry, who props up Al and seats him.

DICK HARDSTAR

Whoa, whoa, Al. Plenty of time for all that once you've got your strength back. Why don't we have a few beers and tell each other the story of our lives?

Al drinks a beer from the tray, suspicious of Dick but not certain, knowing he can't make it away on his own.

AL LUPTON

Okay. I'm not sure where to begin, though.

Terry and the other young people come close and sit down, surrounding Al and Dick like a cookout round a campfire.

DICK HARDSTAR

No problem. I'll kick us off. First, the proper introductions. You're looking at the king of the adult film industry right here, full frontal. I got rivals like Johnny Cocktoe and Rod Wang, both of them pencil dinks by the way, but I'm the biggest and best in all departments. I put out more than a hundred DVDs a year, all from here. *Dick...Hardcore!*

YOUNG PEOPLE

(imitating Dick)  
*Dick...Hardcore.*

Dick whistles '*Just A Gigolo*'.

AL LUPTON

I saw cameras, costumes, editing equipment and props upstairs.

DICK HARDSTAR

Pretty neat setup, huh?

AL LUPTON

Indescribable.

DICK HARDSTAR

Yup, the best money can buy. Not like some of the retard porn outfits in

this biz and I've been in a few, let me tell you.

AL LUPTON

They call it the glamor industry in England.

DICK HARDSTAR

Glamor it has, at the top end. I used to work for Heston Huner. You know, who publishes '*Sheik Magazine*'? This month's 'Harem Girl' centerfold has been the pinup of choice for thirty five years. I found girls for him and a few of them made it to centerfold too.

Dick whistles '*Centerfold*' by the J. Geils Band.

AL LUPTON

I used to shoplift '*Sheik Magazine*' back home when I was a teenager. I'd sell them at school when I was finished. In the end the articles and journalism thrilled me more than the pornography.

DICK HARDSTAR

You kill me, Al. 'Hes' is a partying man at the movie star level and he likes party girls at the movie starlet level. I used to find them for him and his friends then got smart and struck out on my own. Met some real characters on the way. You like Sammy Davis Junior over there?

AL LUPTON

I've never had the pleasure of meeting him.

DICK HARDSTAR

Great guy, best comic timing I ever heard. One time I was procuring for 'Hes' in Vegas, Sammy was playing the private lounge at the Necropolis hotel there.

AL LUPTON

I've played the Necropolis.

DICK HARDSTAR

I remember walking in there and thinking they probably raided a thousand boondock graveyards to get this stuff until I realized it was all plastic and Styrofoam. Anyway, 'Hes' wanted a show from Sammy D, but just for 'Hes' and his girls. So he sends me around with a bucket of cash to Sammy's suite. He's in the penthouse.

AL LUPTON

The one with the big black skull over the bed with the red light bulbs in the eye sockets?

DICK HARDSTAR

You get around, Al. What a freakout joint. He set them to blink. On and off and on and off and on and...

AL LUPTON

It has a laugh track on the audio options too.

DICK HARDSTAR

Straight out of '*Night of the Living Undead Cathouse*' or something. So Sammy's in the hot tub with about half the resident chick dancers and looks me up and down in this ice cool way when I make my offer. And you know what he says?

(beat)

AL LUPTON

He said yes?

DICK HARDSTAR

(badly imitating Sammy Davis Junior)  
He said a classic he did just on the spot for me, a nobody pimp right at that time. He looked down from a great heighty height and said: '*I am the*

*living link between Mo-ses and Je-sus and Las-Vegas, my pretty rough trade friend. Do you dig it? Of course I'll do an exclusive show for Hes.'* Then he just waves me away without looking like some emperor with his slave babes and I get the hell out of there. The man had grace. I didn't even have to give him the cash and blew it at the roulette tables downstairs on my way back. 'Hes' never knew a thing.

AL LUPTON

Mr. Davis Junior did a good show?

DICK HARDSTAR

To tell you the truth, in a full hour and a half not one line in it that had the kind of in-your-balls punchy one liner like the one he gave me for nothing. Because that punchline was from the heart, from the gut and really *him*, you know what I mean?

AL LUPTON

I dig it.

Dick laughs abruptly.

DICK HARDSTAR

I love you, Al. In the non pussy bitching way. I tell somebody if I like them or if they're a gimp on the way to the incinerator...

At this, Terry and Laurie raise their heads and exchange a significant look.

DICK HARDSTAR (CONT.)

...there's no horsing around with Hardcore.

AL LUPTON

You've got quite a fund of stories. They should be in a documentary.

DICK HARDSTAR

Funny, I got these documentary dudes calling me all the time. Even '*Sixty Minutes*' keeps sending this grizzled old geezer and his crew over but I never see him. They're all exposure hounds and I was thinking of bringing out my own. Expose myself as you might say but telling my own story instead of just non-stop action.

AL LUPTON

It would be fascinating.

DICK HARDSTAR

But I'd better not make it too good right, or the Feds will be all over me and I'll be the bitch man of Alcatraz! Okay Al, your turn now.

The young people all turn to stare at Al.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

So that's how I came to tell Dick Hardcore and his captive fan club how I'd come to this low point in my life, not sure whether I was a captive too and how I'd ever make it out of there if I was.

AL LUPTON

Okay...Dick. It all started the day I first arrived in London. I was just eighteen then, running away. I'd never even finished school...

INT. BRITISH RAIL TRAIN CARRIAGE MORNING

TITLE: 1986

Al at eighteen, looking vulnerable and scared, hears the train driver's voice announce Victoria Station and awkwardly picks up a backpack and small suitcase - all his possessions.

As the train pulls in and stops he debarks last, nervous of the expert suited commuters who shoulder past him.

INT. VICTORIA STATION MORNING

Al mingles with the surging rush hour morning crowds, intimidated. Not sure where to go he is gradually propelled out of the station with the crowds.

He watches other young people go by exotically dressed in late 1980s fashions and chatting animatedly about their interesting-sounding lives, self conscious of his shabby clothes.

On the way he notices how many tramps and beggars there also are, many of them his own age. Some of them stare openly at him, a few grin slyly as though recognizing his type -loser- and weighing him up. He shivers, keeps moving.

Coming to a news stand he buys a daily paper.

EXT. VICTORIA STATION MORNING

Al sees the bus station ahead of him and checks a piece of paper in his pocket against numbers on the fronts of the busses. We see it's a leaflet advertising a London hostel.

He climbs onto a bus and it pulls out of the station.

EXT. DINGY CENTRAL LONDON HOSTEL DAY

Al comes down a shabby central London street checking addresses and comes to a small sign advertising the same hostel as on his leaflet. He looks at it -decrepit- and goes inside reluctantly.

INT. FOYER OF DINGY CENTRAL LONDON HOSTEL DAY

Al checks in and hands over money counting it carefully. He looks around, depressed by the glum decor and seediness.

A jaded looking clerk leers at Al - he sees a loser. The clerk pushes a key at Al, gestures to the stairs nearby.

INT. DINGY HOSTEL SINGLE ROOM IN CENTRAL LONDON DAY

Al unlocks the door and stares at the room - grim and cramped and dark. He looks through the window - dirty brick walls and fire escapes, no sky or view. He sits down on the bed and tries the light on a tiny desk - it doesn't work.

Sighing he takes a newspaper out of a bag, carries it over to the window trying to read. He scans lists of rooms for rent.

CLOSE UP of long lists of advertised rooms in different parts of London. Al circles one in Kentish Town listed as 'affordable suite of rooms in pleasant family home, NW5'.

INT. DINGY HOSTEL SINGLE ROOM IN CENTRAL LONDON NIGHT

Al tries to sleep but hears constant loud noises in other rooms and the corridors, pipes groaning, toilets flushing. He gets up and opens the window but hears arguments and sounds of a fight, police sirens in the distance. He closes it again.

EXT. DINGY CENTRAL LONDON HOSTEL EARLY MORNING

Al exits tiredly into early morning commuter crowds carrying his bag and suitcase. He glares back at the hostel, his eyes red-rimmed with lack of sleep. He hasn't slept a wink.

EXT. A CENTRAL LONDON UNDERGROUND STATION EARLY MORNING

Jostled by irritable rushing commuters, Al goes awkwardly down the steps into the underground station.

INT. LONDON UNDERGROUND STATION PLATFORM MORNING

Al stands with his suitcase and bag in front of a large wall map of the London Underground tracing a route.

CLOSE-UP of Underground map.

Al's finger traces a series of underground line connections until it comes to Kentish Town station on the Northern Line.

A train rumbles into the tunnel and Al climbs onto it, battling the commuter crowds, just squeezing on as the doors close.

INT. LONDON UNDERGROUND TRAIN CARRIAGE MORNING

Al is packed in the center of the carriage with irritable commuters looking at him and his suitcase with open hostility. He manoeuvres awkwardly to get out of the way each time there is a station stop and a surge of people exiting.

EXT. KENTISH TOWN UNDERGROUND STATION MORNING

Al comes out of the station looking dazed from the journey. He looks around as he climbs some steps and rests on a bench - dingy and depressing. He consults a London 'A-Z' map book, checks a nearby street name sign then gets up again and heads around a corner.

EXT. VICTORIAN HOUSE IN KENTISH TOWN MORNING

Al, looking tired, comes up to the house carrying his newspaper and suitcase, checks the address and opens the gate which is corroded and squeaks loudly. The house is run down and dilapidated but he shrugs and rings the bell several times, listening for movement, but the house is silent.

Without warning the door jerks open and four faces peer suspiciously out at Al from the gloom inside - the Starr family, Arthur, Joy, Gillian and Tommy Starr. They are all hostile and cretinous and eerily identical like the same person copied in different costume, gender and hairstyles.

Al is intimidated but points to the newspaper ad and the Starrs grudgingly let him inside with the suitcase.

One of the Starrs closes the door behind Al with a decisive bang.

INT. AL'S BEDSIT DOUBLE ROOM IN STARR'S HOUSE DAY

Preceded by Arthur Starr and followed by the rest of the Starr family Al is shown into a grubby double room with a bed, kitchenette and mismatched Victorian and 1960s furniture - as un-homelike a home as you would never want to see.

Obviously disliking it Al has a resigned look and begins counting out money from his wallet as the Starrs look on eagerly and greedily. Arthur Starr counts out the money, makes a note in a rent book and shoves it into Al's hand.

The STARRS go out, banging the door loudly behind them.

Al goes into the bedroom, opens his suitcase and sits down. A wall shelf falls down across the room at the disturbance.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

And that was my welcome to London.

EXT. BACK YARD POOLSIDE, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION DAY

Al sits with his eyes clouded over by memories, his beer finished. Dick Hardcore signals and Terry puts another in front of Al, who takes and drinks from it without seeing.

DICK HARDSTAR  
Why did you go to London?

AL LUPTON  
I was looking for something.

EXT. LONDON STREETS NIGHT

Al wanders through silent London streets. He passes party goers, kissing couples and laughing groups of carousers but everything is happening at a distance from him.

INT. AL'S BEDSIT DOUBLE ROOM IN STARR'S HOUSE NIGHT

Al lies in bed and hears some party goer gaiety go by outside his window. He gets up and watches them forlornly.

EXT. LONDON STREET NIGHT

In Al's POV the party goers are young, beautiful, happy and rich-looking. A boy and girl kiss. They have instant cameras and take pictures of each other posing and laughing.

INT. AL'S BEDSIT DOUBLE ROOM IN STARR'S HOUSE NIGHT

Al goes back to bed and glumly listens to gaiety receding.

EXT. PIANO STORE IN LONDON STREET DAY

Al looks in a store window at pianos and upright keyboards displayed in the window. Prices far beyond him affording.

INT. SECONDHAND BOOKSTORE, LONDON DAY

Al sorts through a pile of sheet music, sets aside a few novels and books on subjects like philosophy and history.

He goes to the till and tries to pay but doesn't have enough for everything. Reluctantly he lets go some of the books.

INT. LIBRARY DAY

Al photocopies an enlarged page from a dictionary, then cuts out a section from it at a desk.

INT. AL'S BEDSIT DOUBLE ROOM IN STARR'S HOUSE NIGHT

Al comes in and adds books to a growing shelf of them. Just below the shelf he tapes up the section of the photocopy he made in the library.

It reads:

*'AUTODIDACT: A self educated person, usually by means of extensive reading'.*

INT. ST. JAMES CHURCH PICCADILLY, LONDON DAY

Al, with an overstuffed bag full of sheet music and books, sits in a chapel pew listening to a classical recital.

A beautiful young woman, Calliope Wix at about 16, steps up and does a haunting solo in a perfect soprano. Al is hypnotised by her, so stunned he does not applaud when she finishes and takes a modest bow.

He is caught by the departing crowd and misses Calliope.

Al stands alone in the chapel, remembering her voice.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)  
I was looking for someone.

INT. AL'S BEDSIT DOUBLE ROOM IN STARR'S HOUSE NIGHT

Sitting propped up in bed, Al reads a classic novel by the light of a small cheap table lamp. He has a large number of books on a nearby shelf, all of them dog-eared, second hand.

Reading on, Al nods off and falls asleep. He dreams of Calliope singing angelically. He smiles in his sleep.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

Not just her.

INT. LONDON SCHOOL CORRIDOR DAY

Al comes in past some departing school children with their parents and goes down a long corridor until he finds a notice board under a clock reading 4pm.

From a nearby classroom comes the sound of a piano, a lesson being taught. The voice of the teacher is an older male, the character Ned.

On the notice board Al reads the various announcements and finds a roughly scrawled advertisement on ruled paper for private piano lessons at the same school.

He makes a note of the phone number on the ad, then notices the piano music has stopped.

Al looks down the corridor. At the far end a child and an older man (Ned) are going through the doors. Al is alone.

INT. MUSIC ROOM IN LONDON SCHOOL DAY

Al comes into the empty music room and looks at the piano in the centre. A briefcase sits by the piano bench but Al doesn't notice it.

He looks around then sits down and begins to play a piece by Chopin making a few amateur mistakes.

He is so engrossed in the music he does not see Ned appear in the doorway.

INT. LONDON SCHOOL CORRIDOR DAY

Ned, about 50, jaded looking and dressed in a cheap suit, goes back out of view from Al at the piano and stands beside the doorway, listening.

He closes his eyes, smiles, his hands dancing in the air playing the same notes as if on the piano.

Ned winces at a couple of wrong notes as he accompanies.

Al is good, gifted. But clearly needs teaching. When the music stops Ned turns and walks back into the music room. Al looks up at him in surprise.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)  
I found both of them. I just didn't  
know it at first.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT DAY

The front room of Ned's cramped shabby apartment contains two full sized pianos, a grand and an upright against one wall.

In a corner is an old style Victrola turntable and a 1970s record player which has seen better days. There is an entire wall of shelves of vinyl records and boxed sheet music.

Al and Ned share the too-small bench at the upright as Al practices a classical piano piece. A metronome keeps time. Al is improving but still making a few mistakes on scales.

AL LUPTON  
I'm going to write music too.

NED  
What kind of music?

AL LUPTON  
Music as good as I can make it. Songs  
people will want to hear.

NED  
You're not going to write that beat  
music, are you?

AL LUPTON  
Beat music?

NED  
Beat music.

(beat)

AL LUPTON  
No.

NED  
Good.

Al continues practicing as Ned turns pages of music. Al smiles to himself. Ned catches the smile and irritably taps the side of the metronome.

NED

Keep better time there.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

Ned, my teacher at twelve pounds a lesson cash, didn't like what he called 'beat music'. For him, music died around the time of the Jazz Age and the Roaring Twenties.

Ned gets up and goes over to the Victrola while Al continues, cranks it up and puts on an old '78 record.

It is the same piece Al practices. Al gradually stops to listen to the brilliant performance. Ned looks at him.

NED

That's the way to play it. Like the maestros used to play it.

Al nods at Ned. Behind Ned is a wall telephone and a shelf beside it. In a corner of the shelf is a cigar box in which cash sticks out of the top. Al cannot help noticing it.

NED

I'll start you on theory next lesson.

EXT. PIANO STORE IN LONDON STREET DAY

Al, carrying more sheet music, looks in the window longingly at the keyboards on display.

Again, in his mind, he hears the classical piece play.

INT. AL'S BEDSIT DOUBLE ROOM IN STARR'S HOUSE DAY

There are more books in the rooms, more sheets of music, some covers and posters for alternative bands pinned on the wall.

Al sits at the table with a piece of sheet music propped up in front of him from the bag he was carrying outside the piano store. A different piece this time, a classic stage show tune from the 1940s or 1950s like '42nd Street'.

His eyes follow it closely note by note. He stretches out his hands and imagines a keyboard, playing it perfectly, becoming caught up completely in the music.

Suddenly there is a loud pounding at the door, shattering the spell. Al shrinks into himself but the pounding continues and he finally gets up and opens the door.

Gillian Starr stands there holding his mail, smiling at Al in a crooked way.

GILLIAN STARR

So what do you do up here all day?

AL LUPTON

I practice my music.

GILLIAN STARR

I don't hear nothing.

He takes his mail with difficulty when Gillian holds his hand too long - she repulses him and he struggles to hide it. She glares at him as he closes the door.

He sorts through his mail. One letter is a social security cheque. Elated he stuffs it in his pocket, grabs his jacket, listens at the door and opens it. Gillian is still there.

GILLIAN STARR

Auntie Alice says you're just another waster on the social.

He hustles past her awkwardly, pulling the door to. Gillian Starr shouts down the stairs after him as he goes.

GILLIAN STARR (O.S.)

Auntie Alice don't like layabouts!

INT. POST OFFICE DAY

Al watches his meager social security money counted out.

EXT. PIANO STORE IN LONDON STREET DAY

Al looks at the keyboards displayed in the window, checks out the money in his wallet against the prices on the keyboards - way out of his reach. He sighs and walks on.

EXT. SHABBY LONDON STREETS DAY

Al walks the streets which seem grim and threatening. He encounters a youth gang who look at him. He walks around them, they follow him for a short distance, intimidating.

Two of the gang run ahead and cut Al off. The gang surround him. Al is scared but controls himself.

YOUTH GANG LEADER

You're on our street, gimp.

AL LUPTON

Isn't this a school day?

YOUTH GANG LEADER

Yeah. Go home, poofter.

AL LUPTON

You don't know what you're missing.

GANG MEMBER

Ponce! Let's do him.

YOUTH GANG LEADER

Not worth it. Go help an old lady  
crawl across the road, gimpster.

The youth gang laugh, forget about Al, greet someone who comes up to hang out with them. He walks on relieved but the streets are all uniformly glum and depressing.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

And that's what I was at the time,  
just another layabout 'on the social'  
as Gill Starr put it, easy meat for  
any thug who wanted to give me a hard  
time for just being there. A gimp.  
Barely affording music lessons, an  
instrument was as far out of my league  
as putting a down payment on  
Buckingham Palace.

EXT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE DAY

Al watches a marching band in Scots Guards uniform go by, playing a jazz piece expertly. He is caught up in the music and builds it in his mind into an elaborate jazz symphony.

The marching band goes by and Al wanders into a nearby park.

EXT. ST. JAMES PARK LAKESIDE DAY

Al walks down the paved pathway beside the lake watching the birds being fed by passers by. The band is audible distantly.

As Al passes a cafe nearby he sees a group of students at one of the tables and freezes in his tracks when he hears Calliope singing the lyrics of the same jazz tune he just heard the marching band play.

Al recognises Calliope at once from the St. James Church concert. He sits at a nearby table and watches them secretly.

Calliope is radiant, laughing. She talks about music with the other students she's with, mentions they are all students at the Royal College of Music. They compliment her on her voice.

CALLIOPE

If I had somebody to write tunes for  
me I bet I could make it big.

ANOTHER STUDENT

Just you? We all sing for our supper.

Calliope perfectly imitates an angrily honking goose.

CALLIOPE

Throw me some bread, then.

They laugh. Al takes out a piece of paper and begins to write lyrics with the title '*Mystery Girl*':

*'Where are you going in eternity?  
...Will you take me?  
How many lives  
Will we live and see?  
Please come with me  
Please stay with me  
Please love me.'*

They all get up. Al is so absorbed he is late noticing, hurriedly gets up and follows but loses them in the traffic.

EXT. PIANO STORE IN LONDON STREET DAY

Al looks in the window, then makes a decision, goes in.

INT. PIANO STORE IN LONDON STREET DAY

Al buys packets of musical ruled paper, counts his change.

INT. AL'S BEDSIT DOUBLE ROOM IN STARR'S HOUSE DAY

Al, sitting at the table, reads a book on musical notation, then consults a book on composition. The lyrics he scrawled earlier for '*Mystery Girl*' are there and he consults them.

He imagines music - the pop tune '*Mystery Girl*', Calliope singing the lyrics of the tune to him.

He breaks open one of the packets of musical ruled paper and starts writing the notes of the song he's imagining. At first he's hesitant but then gains confidence, increases in speed.

INT. AL'S BEDSIT DOUBLE ROOM IN STARR'S HOUSE NIGHT

Al slumps over many completed music sheets, asleep.

EXT. SHABBY LONDON STREET DAY

Al comes down the street elated, goes to the front door of one of the shabby houses and rings the bell. Ned answers.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT DAY

Ned lets Al in and he notices a new lock on the door.

AL LUPTON

What happened?

NED

Local kids tried to break in last night so I got a new lock fitted. I don't want to leave but I've got a full day's teaching tomorrow. You been doing your scales?

As he comes in Al notices a new spare key for the new lock carelessly tossed on a side table by the door.

AL LUPTON

I couldn't get to the school to practice.

NED

You need to get an instrument. A portable keyboard or something.

AL LUPTON

I wish I could afford it. But I've got something else.

NED

Better get started then. What else?

Al hands Ned the sheets of music paper he's written, sits down at the piano and starts practicing. Ned is doubtful.

TIME passes. Al finishes practicing. Ned holds the music papers with a sarcastic smile. Al looks up.

AL LUPTON

What do you think?

NED

Well, the composition and arrangement aren't too bad.

(long beat)

AL LUPTON

What do you think of the tune?

NED

Is this beat music?

AL LUPTON

It's my music.

NED

It's beat music.

Ned throws the papers down. Al is shocked.

AL LUPTON

Hey! I worked a whole day and night on that.

NED

What do you want to write this muck  
for?

(long beat)

Al glares at Ned, picks up the papers.

AL LUPTON  
Sorry I asked.

Ned looks at Al, smiles with a hint of cruelty.

NED  
I'll make us some tea. You keep  
practicing. Then you'll get good.

Ned goes out towards the kitchen. Al takes his papers over to his briefcase by the door. He again notices the spare key, then glances over at the cigar box with Ned's money in it.

He looks and listens but cannot see Ned. Hesitating but finally giving in to temptation he pockets the spare key. Al resumes practicing. Ned comes back in with a full tea tray.

NED  
If you think I'm being hard on you  
you'll have to be a lot harder on  
yourself. Music is a life you lead,  
not just a hobby you take up. It takes  
everything you've got.

Ned sits down beside Al and starts playing an exquisite piano piece with almost virtuoso skill. Al is hypnotised, enthralled by the beauty of it.

NED  
And this is what it gives back.

INT. AL'S BEDSIT DOUBLE ROOM IN STARR'S HOUSE NIGHT

Al works through the night on songs, one after another, haunted by the image of Calliope singing. Finally he falls asleep, starts awake and sees it is early morning.

He hesitates, gets up, collects his jacket, rushes out.

EXT. SHABBY LONDON STREET DAWN

Al lounges furtively, hiding and watching Ned's house.

Ned comes out and heads up the road not seeing Al. Once Ned is out of sight Al goes to the door taking out the pass key.

INT. AL'S BEDSIT DOUBLE ROOM IN STARR'S HOUSE DAY

Al sits in his room counting out money. Several thousand pounds in tens and twenties which he's neatly stacked.

He puts the money into two socks, then pushes the socks into a pair of scuffed boots by the door beside his usual pair, checking carefully - the camouflage is perfect.

Al looks at himself in the mirror: gaunt, stressed, guilty, back at the hidden money. He turns away from the mirror.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

And that was how I got the money for  
my first keyboard.

EXT. BACK YARD POOLSIDE, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION DAY

Dick looks at Al admiringly. Al clutches an empty beer shivering, on the verge of tears. Terry watches closely.

DICK HARDSTAR

Hell of a deal.

Al looks up in surprise.

AL LUPTON

What?

DICK HARDSTAR

You did good. Made yourself strong,  
made yourself hardcore early. It's  
the only way to pull yourself up.

AL LUPTON

I robbed him. I betrayed someone who  
tried to be a friend to me.

DICK HARDSTAR

He gave you shit and you shit back.  
It's like I said in my first movie.

Dick gets up, poses theatrically and puts on an exaggerated Richard Pryor-like voice.

DICK HARDSTAR  
'Don't be a shit taker, be a shit  
giver!'

On cue, too fast and too loud, the teens around the pool laugh and clap. Dick signals Terry to give Al a new beer.

DICK HARDSTAR  
That was my debut line from '*Las Vegas  
Superdaddy Stud*'. I'm truck stop  
hitching in my birthday suit.

AL LUPTON  
Sorry, I must have missed that one.

DICK HARDSTAR  
No problem. I just had the new  
laserdisc release delivered, we'll  
watch it sometime. But I rudely  
interrupted your story.

Al makes to get up, holds unsteadily onto his chair.

AL LUPTON  
You know Dick, I think I've got a bit  
of strength back and maybe I should  
just collect my things...

DICK HARDSTAR  
Sure. Terry, you go help him.

Dick's tone says 'do nothing'. Terry doesn't move.

(beat)

Al staggers when he lets go of the chair. Terry catches him and settles him back in the chair. Dick smiles grimly.

AL LUPTON  
I don't know what's wrong with me.

DICK HARDSTAR  
Don't worry, it'll pass.

Terry leans close to Dick, whispering.

TERRY  
He needs help, daddy.

DICK HARDSTAR  
Don't talk out of turn, Terry.

Dick settles back watching Al closely.

DICK HARDSTAR  
You were telling me you finally did  
the right thing. What happened next?

Al looks at Dick, sure now something is wrong but not knowing  
how to get out of it and decides to play along.

AL LUPTON  
From that moment everything got  
better and better.

INT. SECONDHAND BOOKSTORE, LONDON DAY

Al buys books as he likes, not caring about price.

INT. CAMERA SHOP, LONDON DAY

Al buys himself a new Polaroid camera.

INT. LONDON HIGH STREET CLOTHES STORE DAY

Al buys himself some new clothes.

INT. LONDON SHOE STORE DAY

Wearing some of the new clothes Al buys himself a good new pair  
of shoes, some Doc Martens boots.

He twirls in front of a full length mirror - he looks good.

EXT. PIANO STORE IN LONDON STREET DAY

Al in his new clothes and Doc Martens goes in, whistling and  
full of confidence.

INT. PIANO STORE IN LONDON STREET DAY

Al buys himself a good quality portable keyboard, headphones, a tripod music stand and a couple of boxes of music paper.

EXT. PIANO STORE IN LONDON STREET DAY

Al walks out of the store with his purchases, loaded down but quick to get moving. As he is going up the street he sees Ned coming towards him and swiftly turns into a doorway.

Ned doesn't see Al. He looks haggard and broken, obviously he's discovered the theft. He shuffles like an older man.

Al watches Ned go out of sight, then takes a long breath.

There is a large mirror in the doorway and Al looks at himself in his new clothes and boots.

He looks cheap to himself, a small time petty thief spending his swag. He burns with shame.

He hustles off as a few people look after him suspiciously.

INT. AL'S BEDSIT DOUBLE ROOM IN STARR'S HOUSE DAY

Al practices avidly wearing headphones, first playing scales then starting into music he's written himself, reading from the tripod music stand. Behind him the door opens.

Lost in the music with his head turned away he doesn't see a woman has come into the room accompanied by Gillian and Arthur Starr. This is Auntie Alice, the landlady.

Auntie Alice, 50, has a lined frowning face and looks Al up and down with a sneer that says 'I've got your number'.

Al suddenly turns and notices them, freezes in shock, tears off the headphones angrily.

AL LUPTON

What's going on?

AUNTIE ALICE

For a waster on the social you must have a bob or two to afford all that.

Auntie Alice points at the keyboard, music tripod, camera and music writing supplies. Al starts guiltily.

His obviously new clothes are hung up in an open wardrobe, his new shoes and boots stand in their boxes and the rooms are dotted with a few new other objects.

Auntie Alice takes it all in at a glance - she has a pretty good idea where it all came from.

AL LUPTON  
I saved for them.

AUNTIE ALICE  
Been saving for me rent, waster?

AL LUPTON  
Excuse me? Just who are you?

AUNTIE ALICE  
I'm your landlady and this is an inspection. You're due on Friday.

Al stands up enraged but doesn't know what to do as Auntie Alice pokes around his rooms. Gillian and Arthur sneer.

AUNTIE ALICE  
Lot of other new stuff here.

AL LUPTON  
None of your business. Close the door on your way out, would you?

Auntie Alice stares coldly at Al, who is intimidated.

AUNTIE ALICE  
Cause any trouble and it'll be trouble for you. Watch this one.

GILLIAN AND ARTHUR STARR  
Yes, Auntie Alice.

AL LUPTON  
I am actually here, you know. Don't you ever trespass in here again or I'll have the police on all of you.

AUNTIE ALICE  
He's trouble.

They all glare at him and leave, banging the door.

Al sits down shaking with helpless rage, clenched fists.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)  
Money solved one problem but being  
seen with it was a much bigger one.

INT. FOYER OF ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC DAY

Al comes in and asks directions, goes into the college.

INT. COUNSELLORS OFFICE, ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC DAY

Al talks to a counsellor who points out courses in the college's prospectus and application forms to him.

INT. CORRIDOR IN ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC DAY

As Al heads for the exit Calliope Wix passes him, chatting and laughing with the fellow students he saw before. Amazed, he smiles and watches her for a minute before turning to go.

EXT. LONDON PARK DAY

Al sits on a bench reading the prospectus and making note of course fees. He closes his eyes, imagines Calliope singing.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)  
Even after buying the keyboard I had  
enough left to afford to formally  
study music. Ned had got me through  
all the piano grades I needed to make  
an application.

INT. AL'S BEDSIT DOUBLE ROOM IN STARR'S HOUSE NIGHT

Al finishes filling out the college application, seals it in a college envelope and sits back exhausted, smiles.

He goes over to the spare pair of boots where his money stash is concealed in the socks and starts counting it again.

INT. POST OFFICE DAY

With a calendar in the background, Al sends his college application by special delivery.

FADE TO INDICATE THE PASSAGE OF TIME

The calendar shows several months have passed. Al is in the post office signing for a special delivery return letter postmarked from the Royal College of Music.

He opens it and reads with excitement he has been offered a place on a music degree course subject to payment of course fees. He is elated and rushes out of the post office.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)  
Now I felt everything changing.

INT. AL'S BEDSIT DOUBLE ROOM IN STARR'S HOUSE DAY

Al comes in and pins his acceptance letter to the wall. He goes over to his spare pair of boots where his money stash is hidden and reaches into them.

A confused expression comes over his face. He checks the boots again. The socks are there but contain only two separate pieces of paper, two halves of the same sheet torn down the middle. The money is gone. Together the pieces read:

*'Rent due on Friday as usual'.*

Al crushes the paper as tears come into his eyes.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)  
I was so right.

Al breaks down and cries on the floor.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. BACK YARD POOLSIDE, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION DAY

Dick looks at Al impassively.

DICK HARDSTAR  
Bad scene.

AL LUPTON  
Got any more beer there?

Dick nods and Terry hands Al another. As Al drinks, Dick looks up as Laurie calls out from the house.

LAURIE  
Daddy, there's a...call for you?

Dick waves a hand that says 'shut up fast'. Al notices.

AL LUPTON  
If you need to take that...

DICK HARDSTAR  
I know who...what it is. Just how did you get from there to here?

AL LUPTON  
How did I get from two rooms in Kentish Town to...wherever this is, exactly? Good question.

Al swoons a little, chuckles. The beer is taking effect.

AL LUPTON  
I guess I skipped the boring parts.

EXT. VICTORIAN HOUSE IN KENTISH TOWN EARLY MORNING

Al moves boxes of his property out of the STARRS' house to a waiting taxi. All the Starr family are there and scowl. ALICE glares hatred at Al, smoking a cigarette.

AUNTIE ALICE  
I've got your number, you waster.  
You're no better than us. Trouble's always going to follow you around.

Al finishes loading boxes and gets into the taxi. As it drives off ALICE spits out the cigarette after it.

AUNTIE ALICE  
Get me a new waster for that room, you scum. We're losing money.

The STARRS look shocked at ALICE but go inside meekly.

INT. AL'S BEDSIT IN NEW HOUSE DAY

Boxes of property are piled haphazardly around Al.

Al looks at his course acceptance letter from the Royal College of Music, then closes his eyes and crumples it up, throws it in a waste bin.

He starts to unpack his stuff dejectedly.

INT. AL'S BEDSIT IN NEW HOUSE NIGHT

Al has all of his property unpacked and sits at a table surrounded by sheets of music paper writing tunes. He continues far into the night as a clock marks hours.

INT. ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC STUDENT CAFETERIA DAY

Al talks earnestly to Calliope over a cup of coffee. We see them at a distance, don't hear their dialogue. Al hands her a sheaf of music sheets he's written - the song '*Mystery Girl*'.

Calliope's expression goes from skeptical eventually to nodding approval. She agrees to something and they almost but don't quite shake hands. Al smiles happily and leaves.

Calliope looks after him bemused, looks back at the music sheets and reads again, shrugs.

EXT. ST. JAMES PARK LAKE DAY

Al walks by the lake and watches the birds swimming in the water and singing as he whistles '*Mystery Girl*'.

EXT. EXPENSIVE LONDON STREET EVENING

Calliope is walking home towards nightfall. As she passes a park she sees some birds singing in the trees.

She begins humming '*Mystery Girl*', catches herself, smiles.

INT. ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC PRACTICE ROOM DAY

Al sits at a keyboard accompanying Calliope as she practices the tune with an exquisite voice. She launches into it, looks at Al playfully and begins to improvise.

Al matches her improvisations until she is singing and he is playing almost note for note in perfect synchronization.

She finishes on a high note and they are both elated - they both know they have something.

CALLIOPE

You're good. Let's form that band.

INT. AL'S BEDSIT IN NEW HOUSE NIGHT

Al works far into the night writing tunes on growing piles of music paper. Finally he falls asleep writing as dawn breaks.

INT. DINGY LONDON PUB NIGHT

Calliope finishes singing a classic rock number, then pauses, closely watching the audience as Al plays keyboards.

The Pub Manager, 50, watches impassively, serving numerous drinks. The young crowd are indifferent, the tone bored.

Calliope signals Al, then launches into '*Mystery Girl*'.

Immediately the tone changes and the audience first take notice then start to get up and move towards Calliope. The pub manager sees the bar empty, is amazed.

Calliope holds the audience spellbound and there is thunderous applause when she finishes. The audience shouts for an encore and she obliges.

CALLIOPE

Thank you, we're the Museonics.  
Remember our name!

The audience cheer wildly, repeat the band name. Al launches into a wild improvised riff - the audience love it.

FADE TO INDICATE THE PASSAGE OF TIME

Later, the pub is closed, the audience gone. Al and Calliope pack up their equipment as the Pub Manager comes over.

PUB MANAGER

That was a great last number. You've both got real talent.

CALLIOPE

Thanks.

AL LUPTON

Thanks.

PUB MANAGER

I pay you to fill up my pub, not sing for yourselves. I lost money tonight when the punters stopped drinking to listen to you so I'm paying half what we agreed. Now piss off and don't come back.

The Pub Manager throws the money on the floor and walks away. Calliope and Al look at each other, crushed.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

Rule number one in the music business: keep your boss of the moment happy.

INT. LONDON GAY BAR NIGHT

A crowded, luridly decorated gay bar with a lot of fetish and bondage dressers dancing, very close, frantically.

Calliope finishes singing 'YMCA' by the Village People. The audience screams for her to sing it again, she looks embarrassed. She looks at Al who shrugs, they start again.

FADE TO INDICATE THE PASSAGE OF TIME

The clock shows after midnight, the club is winding down.

CALLIOPE

Right, you've been a great audience and for our last number tonight I thought I'd sing a little something my partner and I came up with...

She is interrupted by screams for 'YMCA' again. She and Al look at each other, shrug. He starts playing 'YMCA' again.

CALLIOPE

YMCA...YMCA...

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

Rule number two is: no standing  
still. You go up or you sink.

EXT. LONDON ROCK AND VILE CLUB NIGHT

The club is a big old cinema with a huge queue outside as Al and Calliope arrive in an old van. Calliope drives.

The marquee reads: 'LONDON'S PAN THE BANDS CONTEST TONIGHT'.

They drive down a side alley beside the club.

Evel Tyler appears and walks up to the doormen past the queue, is let in to angry shouts. He waves jauntily.

EVEL TYLER

This is *Loose Cuts* magazine here,  
peasants! I'm way more important than  
you. Ciao, ciao!

INT. TALENT ROOM, LONDON ROCK AND VILE CLUB NIGHT

Assorted bands including Al and Calliope wait eyeing each other up warily. A noisy and tense atmosphere of rivalry - this is a contest situation and the stakes are high.

All of them hold a leaflet announcing '*Pan the Bands - win money and maybe a record contract!*'

A sharp, alert looking man, Mike Prospect, about 35, comes in wearing a tuxedo and bow tie. The room quiets.

MIKE PROSPECT

I'm Mike Prospect of Prospective  
Records holding this contest and by  
the end of tonight I want to see an  
act worth signing, you hear me?

The assembled BANDS shout enthusiastically. Mike passes out numbers on cards to each band.

MIKE PROSPECT

Wait for your number to be called and  
don't waste time setting up. The more  
the audience cheers the better you  
score. Are you ready?

The BANDS all shout again and catcall at each other.

MIKE PROSPECT

No bitching at each other. We're here  
to entertain. Good luck.

Mike turns to go, catches sight of Calliope, takes her aside.

MIKE PROSPECT

I've seen your act around. Do that  
song of yours. It's good.

Mike nods at Al too, goes out. Al is going to talk to Calliope  
when an angry Girl Rock Singer, 17, interposes.

GIRL ROCK SINGER

And maybe you should open up wide,  
too. The audience of one decides.

The Girl Rock Singer flounces back to her band and glares at  
Calliope, who looks strained. Al tries to conciliate.

AL LUPTON

Hey, let's just keep it about the  
music. No hard feelings?

Everyone except Calliope laughs harshly.

INT. STAGE AT LONDON ROCK AND VILE CLUB NIGHT

Al and Calliope wait nervously as the band fronted by the angry  
Girl Rock Singer finishes their set. She belts out the music  
with feeling and is good, a very hard act to follow.

Al notices that the electrical lead for the Girl Rock Singer's  
microphone going by his foot is loose in the plug and pulls it  
the rest of the way out with his foot.

On stage the microphone cuts out and the Girl Rock Singer is  
confused then angry, starts shouting. Al plugs it back in.

The Girl Rock Singer is shouting as the microphone comes back  
on and it overloads, spoiling her vocal and deranging the song.  
The audience laughs and boos them off the stage.

Her band look at her, then each other, shake their heads.

The Girl Rock Singer goes, but is enraged, points at Al.

GIRL ROCK SINGER

He did something! It's not fair. I  
know he did something!

Mike Prospect sees the whole thing from the shadows. Al and Calliope come on quickly, set up and play '*Mystery Girl*'.

The audience is boisterous but gradually goes quiet, completely spellbound to the end of the song. The applause is thunderous. Mike Prospect looks at Al and Calliope thoughtfully as they take their bows and run offstage.

Evel Tyler in the audience is astonished by Calliope.

EVEL TYLER

My angel has landed.

INT. TALENT ROOM, LONDON ROCK AND VILE CLUB NIGHT

Al and Calliope talk to Mike Prospect alone in the room after the event. Mike has loosened his tie. Someone we can't see waits impatiently in the doorway.

MIKE PROSPECT

I've seen a lot of different audience reactions but not silence and then applause like that.

(beat)

MIKE PROSPECT (CONT'D)

I like both of you. I think you have something. If you can produce more tracks like, what was it?

AL LUPTON

Mystery Girl.

CALLIOPE

Girl of Mystery.

They look at each other, laugh. Mike smiles, hands Al and Calliope his business card.

MIKE PROSPECT

That's what I like to see, creative perspectives. Okay, bring me a demo of more stuff like that in a few weeks

and we'll see about getting you some studio time. Now there's someone who's waiting to meet you.

Mike gets up and goes as Al and Calliope smile, elated. Evel Tyler comes in, taking out a portable recorder.

EVEL TYLER  
Ciao, ciao, Mike. Well, if it isn't Beauty and the Beast. Or some approximation thereof.

Evel grins insinuatingly at Calliope, coldly at Al.

EVEL TYLER  
Evel Tyler, *Loose Cuts* magazine. This is your first music press interview, so make the most of it while I'm interested. Now, how does a gorgeous supermodel looking crooner like Cally hook up with a guy who looks and smells like a dead wet cat? Pray elucidate.

Calliope and Al look at each other, bemused. Al imitates shaking a tambourine and its noise.

AL LUPTON  
She needs me on tambourine.

EVEL TYLER  
We're not gonna get along, beast.

EXT. LONDON ROCK AND VILE CLUB NIGHT

Calliope drives the van as she and Al come back out of the alley beside the club.

As they pull onto the street they pass a bus stop. The Girl Rock Singer waits there alone with a guitar case, smoking, looking crushed and lonely - clearly abandoned by her band.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)  
I forgot to tell you rule number three. Sometimes to pull yourself up, you have to step on somebody else and push them back down.

INT. BACK YARD POOLSIDE, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION SUNSET

The sun is setting. Pool lights and lamps are now on everywhere. Dick watches Al tensely, impatiently waiting.

AL LUPTON

You step on people until one day you  
get stepped on right back.

Dick barks laughter but it sounds strained and Al looks at him with dislike. He's woozy, slurring his words.

AL LUPTON

And there's always worse to come.

DICK HARDSTAR

Al, like me you are one of God's own  
original shit givers. You gave back  
to that bitch fair and square.

AL LUPTON

No, that's sophistry.

DICK HARDSTAR

Eh?

AL LUPTON

It's ancient Greek for bamboozle.

Terry grins as Dick looks puzzled, hides it when Dick looks back at him, indicates Terry give Al another beer.

DICK HARDSTAR

Want another? It's getting late.  
We'll eat soon.

AL LUPTON

Sure. I'll tell you all about Evel  
Tyler next.

Dick looks at Al narrowly, suddenly very alert.

DICK HARDSTAR

Who's that, you say?

AL LUPTON

He's the best shit taker, the best  
shit giver I ever met. A paparazzi rat  
deluxe. You'd love him, Dick.

Al trails off and gradually slumps into unconsciousness. A dozen or so empty beer bottles sit on the table beside him.

All the beautiful young people look at Al impassively, then at Dick, who watches Al carefully until he is sure Al is asleep, then suddenly claps his hands very loud. All of them scamper into the house without a backward glance.

Dick signals Terry who picks up and puts Al gently over his shoulder. He is strong even for his build.

DICK HARDSTAR

Finally. Guy's got more drug resistance than that Rasputin dude. Stash him in his bedroom and prepare the hypo like I told you.

TERRY

Yes, daddy.

Terry carries Al towards the house as Dick takes out his cellphone, dials a number.

DICK HARDSTAR

I'll be up in a minute. Got deals to make. Take our guest with you when you see him.

Dick waits until Terry is gone with Al. He flinches as a helicopter passes overhead, then relaxes.

DICK HARDSTAR

Goddam Feds. A shit taker *and* a shit giver? That I gotta see.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

I wasn't exaggerating.

INT. 'LOOSE CUTS' MAGAZINE OFFICES DAY

TITLE: 1992

Al and Calliope sit in a cramped office being interviewed by Evel Tyler, who is smoking his pipe. The walls are filled with framed covers of 'LOOSE CUTS' showing pop stars.

A couple of framed posters hang on the wall behind Al and Calliope which show them. They are combined front and back album covers for the band 'The Museonics'.

Evel unwraps a new CD which also has Al and Calliope and 'The Museonics' logo on it, but is a different cover from the posters. A label on the plastic wrap says 'Promo copy only'.

Evel switches on a large early DAT recorder and sits back.

EVEL TYLER

Top of the range digital audio tape recorder there. They aren't even out in the industry yet. I called in a favour. It helps to know people who really can help you, know what I mean?

Evel grins at Al, who looks away.

EVEL TYLER

What is he, shy?

AL LUPTON

No, it's just all this literary sophistication intimidates me.

EVEL TYLER

You're a beast after my own heart. And you've got something to sell.

CALLIOPE

That's why we came to you first, Evel.

EVEL TYLER

Third album in two years. And they're selling, getting airplay. You've come a long way from Pan the Bands at the ROCK AND VILE Club.

AL LUPTON

We think we're ready to tour properly and do Europe, the United States. The full international.

EVEL TYLER

Let me guess. The Prospector has found a mystery millionaire to bankroll all this?

AL LUPTON  
Not exactly, but...

EVEL TYLER  
Shove it Al, I don't do wannabes.

AL LUPTON  
Now listen, you little hack...

Calliope puts her hand between Al and Evel.

CALLIOPE  
Beasts, beasts! There's a cavegirl  
present!

Her humorous tone makes them both laugh self consciously.

EVEL TYLER  
Okay, enthrall me.

CALLIOPE  
We haven't forgotten how your  
interview got us really started. Will  
*Loose Cuts* profile a tour?

Evel thinks, making them wait, smoking the pipe.

EVEL TYLER  
I can do better. I can write a major  
feature on The Museonics announcing  
the tour. A full photo promo cover.  
I can swing that.

Al and Calliope look at each other. Evel weighs them up.

EVEL TYLER  
But you'll have to sell it to Mike  
Prospect and get the cash. Can you  
swing if I swing?

CALLIOPE  
Absolutely.

AL LUPTON  
Why not.

EVEL TYLER  
So, what you can do for me?

Evel is looking at Calliope. He blows smoke rings at them.

INT. CLOUDESLEY RECORDING STUDIOS DAY

Al and Calliope are getting ready to record a song. In the sound engineer's booth is a young Rafe Clunes, 22 or so, very handsome like a male model. He looks at Calliope with strong attraction. Mike Prospect comes into the booth, sits down.

RAFE CLUNES

Calliope, Alderson, we're ready to go here when you are.

MIKE PROSPECT

Ready, you two?

CALLIOPE

From the top, Mike.

AL LUPTON

Right.

They both put on earphones, signal thumbs up and Rafe starts recording as they begin a haunting song.

INT. SOUND ENGINEER BOOTH, CLOUDESLEY STUDIOS DAY

Mike turns to Rafe as Al plays and Calliope sings.

MIKE PROSPECT

What do you think, Rafe?

RAFE CLUNES

They're a hot act Mike, no doubt about it. Give them time, I think they'll be a hit.

MIKE PROSPECT

I have to make some hard investment decisions and we're in the middle of a major recession.

RAFE CLUNES

Bands that last don't come out of nowhere. They're improving.

MIKE PROSPECT

Will this track be a hit?

(long beat)

RAFE CLUNES

They aren't ready yet. But if it was my money I'd bet it on Calliope and Al in there.

Mike nods and leaves the booth as Calliope and Al finish.

RAFE CLUNES

Calliope, Al, let's take a break for half an hour or so. I've got to do some work on the Dolby's.

EXT. RIDING HOUSE STREET DAY

Calliope and Al walk down Riding House Street. Al carries a bag and takes out his Polaroid camera.

AL LUPTON

How about some photos? We could use them for the album, maybe.

CALLIOPE

Where do you get the money for this stuff, Alderson?

AL LUPTON

Printing press in the basement.

Calliope laughs and poses humorously as Al takes pictures.

She goes around a corner and looks back, suddenly changing expression to serious as Al takes the picture.

FREEZE FRAME ON THE POLAROID PHOTO OF Calliope

The picture Al takes is the same one we see in the first scene as Calliope leaves him in 2010 and goes around the same corner.

Al shows Calliope the picture and she likes it.

CALLIOPE

Let's use it on an album one day.

Al smiles and puts the picture carefully in his pocket. He looks at the camera again and frowns.

In FLASHBACK he remembers he bought it with the money he stole from Ned.

INT. CLOUDESLEY RECORDING STUDIOS DAY

Al and Calliope sing another track. Rafe is loving it, beating his knuckles gently on the console in time and watching Calliope admiringly. They finish.

RAFE CLUNES

That was excellent guys. We're done today. Mike would like to see you.

INT. LOUNGE, CLOUDESLEY RECORDING STUDIOS DAY

Calliope and Al sit with Mike.

MIKE PROSPECT

Okay, the bad news first. You're not ready for America yet. I can't raise the sponsorship.

Al and Calliope's faces fall.

MIKE PROSPECT

But you're good enough for Europe.

Al and Calliope look up, surprised.

MIKE PROSPECT

I'm backing the European part of the tour you suggested, as long as Evel Tyler and *Loose Cuts* magazine come through with that publicity.

AL LUPTON

He will.

MIKE PROSPECT

You're sure?

AL LUPTON

If the right person asks.

They both look at Calliope. She grins impishly.

CALLIOPE  
Which brings us to his one small  
solitary condition...

(beat)

Mike raises an eyebrow in curiosity.

INT. MONTAGE OF CONCERTS NIGHT

Al and Calliope play in a succession of smaller concert venues and auditoriums with small but vocally enthusiastic European audiences.

Venue signs and posters in Irish Gaelic, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Greek, Polish, Russian, Swedish and Dutch.

INTERCUT are shots of roadies loading and unloading gear. Also surreptitious shots of them dealing drugs furtively to concert goers and staff at the venues.

In every single audience in the front row Evel Tyler stares up with undisguised bug-eyed lust at Calliope. He pops pills and smokes his pipe vigorously as he watches.

INT. AMSTERDAM CLUB NIGHT

An after concert party. Al walks through a Dutch club decorated with Museonics' posters, looking tired.

Calliope is enjoying herself being fawned on by a group of handsome fans, she waves at Al and he waves back, smiling.

His smile cuts out as he turns away - he's jealous.

Al comes to Evel Tyler at a table being given drug pills by one of the equipment roadies. Evel swallows a couple. A rich buffet of food and drink is set out in front of him, only picked at. Al looks irritated at the waste, sits down.

Evel grins and offers Al some of the pills but Al waves his hand to say no. Evel tosses a magazine to Al instead.

The magazine is a new edition of *Loose Cuts* with Al and Calliope on the cover with a headline: '*The Museonics: New sound of the Nineties!*'

EVEL TYLER

Congratulations to me. I hear of big interest from America now.

AL LUPTON

Mike's negotiating to get us over there. This tour's done us good.

EVEL TYLER

I've done you good. You owe me.

AL LUPTON

You're not my type.

Evel laughs sardonically, looks over at Calliope. She giggles delighted as one of the fans makes a witty joke.

EVEL TYLER

Neither is she, dreamer boy.

AL LUPTON

So go over and enthrall her yourself.

EVEL TYLER

When the time is right.

Their eyes meet.

AL LUPTON

If you'll excuse me I need to talk to the road manager. Some of us have to work around here.

Al gets up and starts walking away. Evel calls out.

EVEL TYLER

I just make it look easy, Alderson. It's called professionalism.

Al goes out the door as the party continues. Evel opens up the *Loose Cuts* magazine Al has left, turns the pages.

CLOSE-UP of magazine pages.

The magazine is full of items on The Museonics, promo and tour photos, a lengthy interview and a bulletin spot, all under Evel's byline. Evel smiles with satisfaction.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

I hated Evel Tyler the way you only hate someone you really need. If it wasn't for his coverage we'd never have broken into the big time. We had to take him on tour with us as a concession. The trouble was that everything he did came with too much of a sting in the tail.

Evel gets up, drugged, makes his way towards Calliope, only to see her going out the door with the male fans. His expression turns nasty.

EVEL TYLER

I'll make sure you can't get her either, gimp.

INT. UPPER FLOOR, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION NIGHT

Terry comes to the top of the wide staircase carrying Al and heads through the corridors towards Al's bedroom.

As he goes Al opens his eyes - he has been faking. He tries to look around, notes the corridor leading to the pharmacy.

As he watches Laurie comes out taking pills. Al listens intently to the conversation.

LAURIE

Hey Terry, want to party?

Terry looks around, afraid of being overheard.

TERRY

Maybe later, Laurie. Daddy said to put the English guy to bed.

LAURIE

Not to the incinerator then?

TERRY

Don't talk like that, girl.

LAURIE

That's what happened to Nicky. And probably Cheryl too, but *he* doesn't think I know that.

TERRY

This guy doesn't belong here and I'm going to look after him.

LAURIE

Isn't he famous? He's got some really cold creeps interested in him. Aside from Dick, I mean.

TERRY

We're supposed to call him daddy.

LAURIE

I'm daddy's girl all right. Let's, make a deal. I have money stashed. Help us get out of this freaky hell and I'll buy you a ticket home.

TERRY

I don't know the security code either. Besides, he'd find us.

LAURIE

Think about it. You'd better go now, one of those creeps is coming.

Laurie looks down the corridor at something Al can't see and walks off in the opposite direction as Terry moves on.

Al catches sight of someone following and carrying something bulky but can't catch a full glimpse. He closes his eyes as Terry reaches the door.

INT. LOS ANGELES HOTEL ROOM NIGHT

Calliope watches the cityscape, picks up the phone, dials.

FEMALE PHONE DISPATCHER

Hello, Los Angeles police department, can I help you?

(beat)

CALLIOPE

Sorry. I dialled a wrong number.

She puts down the phone, listens to sirens, helicopters.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION NIGHT

Terry comes in and lays Al gently down in the bed. He prepares a hypodermic needle from a tray set by the bed. Al tosses and turns, moaning, still faking it.

Someone comes into the room we don't see.

TERRY

Dick said to shoot him up again, but  
I think he needs help.

Terry looks around nervously at the invisible person.

AL LUPTON

Watch out for that evil, watch out for  
Evel Tyler...

TERRY

Who's Evel Tyler?

Evel Tyler comes into view with a flash camera, looks down at Al contemptuously and takes a succession of flash pictures.

A full camera bag lies on the floor nearby.

EVEL TYLER

Me.

Evel turns away, going over to adjust and reload the camera from supplies in the camera bag.

At the sound of his voice Al's eyes jerk open with recognition and he almost gasps, stops himself. Terry notices, makes a 'shush' sign.

TERRY

I thought you were going to...

(beat)

EVEL TYLER

Those were for me. The rest will be  
for the tabloids and the pornos.

Al groans and sinks back into the pillows.

AL LUPTON  
Jesus, not this.

EVEL TYLER  
What did he say?

TERRY  
He...he's just delirious.

EVEL TYLER  
Keep him that way.

Dick Hardcore appears in the doorway watching, grinning. Beside  
him is Laurie, looking with distaste at the scene.

DICK HARDSTAR  
Oh man, it's just like one of Heston  
Huner's parties at the Sheikdom  
mansion in the old days. Terry, hypo  
him and scoot.

TERRY  
Yes, daddy.

Terry bends over Al, concealing him as Dick and Evel start to  
talk in the doorway. In an undertone, Terry says,

TERRY  
It won't do anything. Just pretend to  
be spaced out, whatever happens.  
There's no escape and he'll kill you  
with his bare hands if you try  
anything and burn you up.

Al nods, mouths 'thank you' silently. Terry injects him with  
the hypo and leaves, exchanging a 'yes' glance with Laurie.

Laurie sits on the bed. Dick and Evel come over. Evel leers at  
Laurie, who looks away from him. Evel looks down at Al.

EVEL TYLER  
I've been waiting a long, long time  
for this opportunity, Alderson.

DICK HARDSTAR

Laurie will make it look good. Taught her everything she knows, but not everything *I* know.

EVEL TYLER

The night is young.

DICK HARDSTAR

Funny thing, he told me you were the best shit taker and shit giver in the paparazzi business.

(long beat)

EVEL TYLER

Yeah. If only the gimp knew how truly he spake. I'd give almost all the cash I'm going to make to see his face when he starts reading my anonymous and exclusive special illustrated feature.

LAURIE

Can I wear a mask?

Laurie holds up a glittery whiskered kitten mask. Dick and Evel laugh uproariously in approval.

DICK HARDSTAR

You bet, daughter. Party time.

Evel moves in to start taking pictures, licking his lips as Laurie puts on the kitten mask and starts to undress.

EVEL TYLER

I want some serious pervy stuff.

DICK HARDSTAR

Oh, yeah. She does that.

LAURIE

Oh, yeah. I do that, daddy.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

This wasn't quite what I was expecting from America.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY, AERIAL VIEW DAY

TITLE: Start of the '*Temples on Fire*' tour, 1995.

A British airliner makes an approach to JFK airport.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

We had done so well in Europe Mike got  
us sponsorship for the USA.

INT. AIRLINER, ECONOMY CLASS DAY

Al looks around him, enthralled by flying, clearly for the first time. The cabin is crowded and noisy, children cry and rush around. Calliope beside Al is bored and tired, flipping through a magazine. The intercom sounds.

AIRLINE PILOT

Ladies and gentlemen, we will be  
landing at John F Kennedy airport in  
approximately twenty minutes, thank  
you for flying America Air.

CALLIOPE

At last.

AL LUPTON

How long have we been flying?

CALLIOPE

Forever. Six or seven hours.

AL LUPTON

It's gone right by me.

CALLIOPE

When I was small flying felt  
glamorous, special. Nowadays it's  
like taking the tube.

AL LUPTON

I didn't grow up taking the tube  
either.

Calliope looks at Al surprised, smiles a bit.

INT. DINGY NEW YORK HOTEL SUITE DAY

Calliope looks around, not impressed. Musical equipment is being piled up in the small suite by a couple of roadies.

Al is looking out window, loving the view across a park.

CALLIOPE

Tompkins Park in Brooklyn?! I thought Mike said we were on tour. We should be staying in Manhattan.

AL LUPTON

We have our own bathrooms?

CALLIOPE

Of course.

AL LUPTON

I never lived in a place with my own bathroom or view. It's great.

Calliope softens, smiles.

CALLIOPE

Welcome to America. It's a whole different world here.

INT. LOS ANGELES HOTEL ROOM NIGHT

Calliope looks out at the spread of Los Angeles and turns away, worried. The phone rings and she grabs it.

CALLIOPE

Alderson, is that you? Oh, hi, Mike. No, no, I'm just waiting for him to call me back. Everything's fine. We're getting ready to fly back to New York for our final concert. Carnegie Hall confirmed.

(beat)

CALLIOPE

Yes, I'll tell him that. See you in London in about a fortnight.

Calliope puts down the phone, thinks, then turns as the door suddenly opens and Marshall comes in concealing worry.

MARSHALL

Cally, is there anything wrong?

Calliope is surprised, the beginning of suspicions.

CALLIOPE

Marshall, I want you to take me to where Alderson is.

MARSHALL

He needs his rest. A sudden visit might not be a good idea.

CALLIOPE

Then I want to meet this doctor you keep mentioning.

MARSHALL

I'll see if I can get in touch.

CALLIOPE

Our manager Mike just called from London and needs to talk to him. But I guess you already know.

MARSHALL

Who, me? I'll get a report on Al.

Suddenly Marshall's cellphone rings and he answers.

MARSHALL

Excuse me. Yes?

EVEL TYLER (ON PHONE)

If it isn't the doom baboon rock and roller luckless Lupton kidnapper hotel maggot himself!

(long beat)

EVEL TYLER (ON PHONE)

You out of your stupefied coma yet, Marshall? I haven't got all night.

MARSHALL

Who is this?

EVEL TYLER (ON PHONE)

I'm that guy from the FBI who watches all the amateur porn. In fact I've been making some myself tonight. I'm in just the right place for it too. At the Big Dick House. You know it well, right?

MARSHALL

I'm glad to hear he's doing well.

EVEL TYLER (ON PHONE)

That means you're with the delectable Calliope, whose name you're too stupid to even pronounce, you leather Yankee gorilla. By the way, she can smell date rape drugs, I've tried it.

MARSHALL

I can tell her he'll be back soon?

EVEL TYLER (ON PHONE)

Don't try to lead the conversation. Start taking cash out of whatever roadie slush fund you rob to pay me off or my porn pictures go public. You'll never work again outside of small time drug trafficking. The big Dick gave me your number and he's working with me now. Is that simple enough for your Neanderthal mind? Grunt once.

MARSHALL

Where and when?

EVEL TYLER (ON PHONE)

That was two grunts. If I know where you are now you monkey metalhead moron, it won't be hard to track you down later. Keep exercising that brain cell and it might divide one day. Ciao, ciao!

Marshall switches off his phone, very tense. Calliope stares hard at him, suspicions growing fast.

MARSHALL

24 hours or so.

CALLIOPE

Who was that exactly? The voice sounded awfully familiar. Especially that last part.

MARSHALL

Listen, I've got to go and do a few things...for the tour.

CALLIOPE

Just bring him back safe? Please?

Her tone is sincere. Their eyes meet, Marshall nods.

EXT. BACK YARD POOLSIDE, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION NIGHT

Evel Tyler switches his phone off, smiles maliciously and looks up at footsteps. Dick Hardcore approaches with Laurie behind carrying a tray of beers. She wears the kitten mask.

Evel picks up his camera and carefully unloads it, putting the undeveloped film in canisters as Dick sits down and Laurie hands them each a beer.

Dick toasts Evel and they clink their bottles together.

DICK HARDSTAR

Helluva deal. You pay better than Marshall and the work's more fun.

EVEL TYLER

I think you can expect him to be more reasonable in the future too.

DICK HARDSTAR

You're a natural shit giver at this stuff, evil guy. Just like Al said.

EVEL TYLER

Evel. With an 'e'.

DICK HARDSTAR

Sure. Hey, tell you what. I've got a complete darkroom up in the house. Let's go develop these suckers. I've got some other new shots of Laurie there I can show you too. Even more

hardcore. This is the house of  
hardcore.

Evel leers at Laurie who looks away.

EVEL TYLER

Great. Maybe I'll stay the night.

DICK HARDSTAR

I'll show you the film studio too.

Dick and Evel get up. Evel picks up his camera bag as Dick pauses,  
turns to Laurie.

DICK HARDSTAR

Laurie, you clean up here. And in  
future don't yap your pretty little  
mouth unless told to, you hear?

Dick whips off Laurie's mask, throws it into the pool and lightly  
slaps her face. She goes red with pain and rage.

DICK HARDSTAR

What do you say, bitch?

(long beat)

LAURIE

Thanks, daddy.

Evel grins at Laurie as he and Dick go up to the house.

EVEL TYLER

You sure know how to treat them.

DICK HARDSTAR

You should have met Cheryl.

Laurie waits until they go into the house. Her expression  
changes from one of fear to frightening hatred.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION NIGHT

Al listens intently, traumatized and struggling to control his  
breathing. He gets up, heads for the bathroom but doesn't switch  
on any lights.

INT. GUEST BATHROOM, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION NIGHT

Al looks at himself in the mirror, fists clenching.

He is sweating, pale and shivering. He takes a shower, standing under the nozzle for a long time, then looks at himself again - not much better.

AL LUPTON

Will somebody tell me where I went wrong?

INT. MONTAGE OF AMERICAN CONCERTS NIGHT

TITLE: The '*Temples on Fire*' tour, 1995

Al and Calliope play concerts to increasingly appreciative American audiences.

Rapidly changing Museonics' posters show concert appearances at American cities in every state, first at the bottom of bills for obscure venues and climbing gradually to the top until they are top of the bill at major venues.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

Nothing went wrong at first. We booked a few dates but seemed to catch the mood and kept getting more offers. Soon we were on TV, getting major airplay, headlining stadiums and concert halls everywhere we went. We even got ourselves an escort. But the pace and pressure were incredible.

EXT. AMERICAN CONCERT STADIUM NIGHT

A group of tough bikers led by Marshall including Road Crew 1 and 2 roar into the crowded parking lot of the stadium escorting a limousine out of which Al and Calliope step when Marshall dismounts and opens the door with a salute.

MARSHALL

Rock fans, these are the Museonics!

The crowd waiting roars and photographers take pictures. Al and Calliope are hustled into a stadium entrance.

INT. AMERICAN CONCERT STADIUM CORRIDOR NIGHT

Al and Calliope go through the corridor with their escort. Calliope is radiant but Al looks tired and drawn.

Marshall hangs back, beckons to Road Crew 1 & 2. He hands them bottles of pills, looking around.

MARSHALL

Pass these out to the staff after the show from me. Not before.

The nod and rush after Al and Calliope.

Marshall takes out a cigar, lights it and grins. He takes out a mobile phone, looks around again, dials.

MARSHALL

Hans, the diplomatic flight came in from Myanmar last night. You got my Rangoon Swoon off them yet?

Negative sounds from the phone.

MARSHALL

Make sure we have it for the Hollywood Bowl or I'll make you dig a grave for your wife first, too.

Marshall clicks off the phone and heads up the corridor, shouting at passing roadies as he stubs out his cigar.

MARSHALL

Handle that equipment like it was all bunny playmates, you retards!

INT. AMERICAN CONCERT STADIUM BACKSTAGE NIGHT

Al and Calliope are waiting to go on. Al is very nervous as Marshall comes in, notices, takes him aside.

MARSHALL

Feeling the pressure, Al?

AL LUPTON

I don't know if I can keep doing this.

Marshall produces a bottle of pills and shakes some out, concealing it from Calliope and the rest.

MARSHALL

We have happiness on demand.

AL LUPTON

Marshall, I'm not sure...

MARSHALL

Kid, either you lift off by yourself  
or you crash tonight.

Al looks around, swallows the pills and some water guiltily.

Al and Calliope go onstage to the appreciative roars of the audience. Marshall pops a pill, looks at Al greedily, grins.

As Al starts into the first number on his keyboard the drugs visibly start to work and he gains confidence and fluency.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

And that's where it started.

INT. AMERICAN CONCERT STADIUM CORRIDOR NIGHT

The roar of the audience is distantly audible as Marshall comes into the corridor and looks around carefully - empty.

Marshall dials a number on his mobile phone.

MARSHALL

Dick? Marshall your favourite  
merchandiser. I have some Rangoon  
Swoon coming in and a deal to propose  
involving...

(beat)

MARSHALL

Hospitality. I don't want to trust it  
to the phone so can I come to your  
place when we hit LA?

INT. LOS ANGELES HOTEL ROOM NIGHT

Marshall watches TV, which shows an interview with Al and Calliope for a Los Angeles entertainment programme.

The door opens, Al and Calliope come in. Al looks even more worn out but Calliope is full of energy. Marshall gets up.

MARSHALL

We're all set. Hollywood Bowl tomorrow. You're going to be live on national TV too. I've fixed it.

AL LUPTON

You fix everything.

Al's tone is sardonic. Marshall and Al lock eyes for a second but Calliope doesn't notice.

CALLIOPE

I can hardly wait. There was an incredible buzz with the studio audience we had tonight. Boys, I think we're going to do embarrassingly well tomorrow.

Calliope kisses them both.

AL LUPTON

I guess we'd better turn in.

CALLIOPE

I feel like I could go on forever, but yes, good night.

Calliope goes out. Al collapses on a couch, looks depressed. Marshall sits beside him and takes out a syringe kit and a small vial of clear liquid. Al looks at it nervously.

AL LUPTON

I've been taking way too much stuff and it feels like it's killing me when I'm down. I have to give up.

(long beat)

MARSHALL

Sure. Right now, the way you are, do you really think you can make it through the biggest concert of your short career?

AL LUPTON

I've done it before.

MARSHALL

Kid, you have millions riding on this now. You're on the brink of being a world class band, you know what that means? If you blow it tonight you'll never get back.

Marshall puts a hand on Al's arm. He shrugs it off, goes to stand by the window. Marshall follows, showing him the vial.

AL LUPTON

I don't know what it's like for you but my music doesn't come from a drug. I got here by believing in and following the music.

MARSHALL

This is the purest opium in the world. It's called Rangoon Swoon and costs more than ten thousand dollars for one full dose. Only kings, arms dealers and corporate bankers can afford it. I guarantee it will get you through and you'll play like an angel. I'll give it to you for free tomorrow on concert night if you want.

AL LUPTON

Why?

MARSHALL

I believe in you and your music.

Marshall goes out. Al looks over the cityscape.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

So I let myself believe him and look where it brought me to.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION NIGHT

Al sits on the bed in despair, his head in his hands. Slowly he straightens up and rises, his face turning resolute.

He dresses in his clothes from the concert which he finds hung up in a closet. He goes out the door.

INT. UPPER FLOOR MAIN HALLWAY, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION NIGHT

Al is headed for the corridor leading to the pharmacy. Suddenly he hears the voices of Dick and Evel Tyler coming towards him and hides behind a statue.

Dick and Evel go by popping pills.

EVEL TYLER

Those photos are ultra hot. We've spent too much time in the darkroom though, I can smell the chemicals.

DICK HARDSTAR

Doctor Dick has the cure.

EVEL TYLER

I've never tried Viagra before.

DICK HARDSTAR

Trust me, that stuff will keep you going all night and all morning and all next day if you want.

EVEL TYLER

Who do I get to try it on first?

DICK HARDSTAR

Laurie should be up here. I'll round up more. It's amazing what these gimps will let you do to them for free drugs and a crash pad.

Dick and Evel laugh harshly. As they go out of sight Al steps out from behind the statue, disgusted.

AL LUPTON

Gimps.

Al goes up the corridor to the pharmacy.

INT. PHARMACY, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION NIGHT

Opening the large jar marked 'Uppers', Al takes a massive overdose, swallowing pills until he can't take any more. He walks out of the pharmacy.

AL LUPTON  
Might as well see something beautiful  
before I go.

INT. LAPIDARY GALLERY, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION NIGHT

Al stumbles in and collapses on a bench, staring at the lapidary Buddha. He breaks down and cries, holds his head in his hands. Finally his head nods down as if in death.

FADE TO INDICATE THE PASSAGE OF TIME

Al raises his head curiously. The light in the gallery is more intense and scatters brilliantly as though time has speeded up. He looks at himself - the same as he was.

BUDDHA LAPIDARY  
Alderson.

Al looks around, sees nothing except the lapidaries.

AL LUPTON  
Who's there?

BUDDHA LAPIDARY  
Alderson.

Al looks at the lapidary Buddha, who raises his head and smiles benignly.

BUDDHA LAPIDARY  
Is this what you really want?

AL LUPTON  
Sorry, what is this?

BUDDHA LAPIDARY  
Have you come so far only to give in  
to despair at the last?

AL LUPTON  
There's no way out. Tyler and Dick  
have the photos and they'll ruin me.  
I don't even know where I am.

BUDDHA LAPIDARY

How selfish you are.

AL LUPTON

Excuse me?

BUDDHA LAPIDARY

Thinking only of your own trivial and transient inconvenience.

AL LUPTON

Those pictures will destroy everything I ever tried to create.

CELESTIAL NYMPH LAPIDARY

He's such a crybaby!

AL LUPTON

You too? Is this some kind of encounter group hallucination?

BUDDHA LAPIDARY

Here in this house are many young people kept as slaves by a man who has made himself dead inside.

AL LUPTON

So why do you think I'm here? I'm one of them. I can't get out.

CELESTIAL NYMPH LAPIDARY

He's so sure about what he can't do!

AL LUPTON

Shut up.

CELESTIAL NYMPH LAPIDARY

No!

BUDDHA LAPIDARY

A certain young woman also waits. You owe her better than this.

AL LUPTON

Calliope, Jesus. Alone with that leather ranch reject Marshall.

BUDDHA LAPIDARY

Do you care so little as to leave her  
alone and vulnerable?

ELEPHANT LAPIDARY

You gotta break out of here, guy.

AL LUPTON

Magic won't get anyone out of here,  
only the combination to that door.

BUDDHA LAPIDARY

In the developing studio near here  
are those photographs.

AL LUPTON

Doesn't do me much good if I can't  
scarper with them, will it?

Buddha Lapidary rises along with the other lapidary figures in  
the gallery. The Elephant and mythical creatures get up and grow  
to enormous size. The Celestial Nymph becomes the size of a young  
woman and pirouettes around Al.

BUDDHA LAPIDARY

You just leave that to us.

CELESTIAL NYMPH LAPIDARY

There's a way out of any cage.

ELEPHANT LAPIDARY

Let's blow this freakout joint.

AL LUPTON

That doesn't sound very classical?

ELEPHANT LAPIDARY

I'm transatlantic, dude. Made in  
America. Move it before we lose it.

AL LUPTON

Okay, I'll get the pictures if  
they're still there.

BUDDHA LAPIDARY

Terry needs you also.

INT. PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION NIGHT

Al comes in followed by the lapidary figures and sees the photos of him and Laurie hung up to dry. He finds the negatives and stuffs everything into Evel Tyler's camera bag which he finds on a table, takes it with him.

INT. UPPER FLOOR MAIN HALLWAY, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION NIGHT

With the lapidary figures guiding him Al walks down the corridor fearlessly. He stops when he hears snoring, looks into a room and sees Dick and Evel Tyler, both passed out from drugs.

Laurie comes out of the room, looks at Al carrying the camera bag with astonishment, understands what he's doing.

LAURIE

Are you out of your mind? If Dick wakes up...

AL LUPTON

Wake all the other young people here. We're leaving.

LAURIE

You know the door code?

AL LUPTON

My friends will help us.

Al indicates the lapidary figures around him, smiles.

Laurie'S POV

Laurie sees only Al on his own.

LAURIE

Okay, I just hope you're right.

Laurie scampers off as Al heads up the corridor.

EXT. BACK YARD POOLSIDE, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION NIGHT

Terry is in the pool, looking miserable with vomit floating in front of him, sobbing to himself.

Al comes up and stands by the pool, reaches out. Terry sees him, looks down at the water ashamed.

TERRY

I stole pills to end it all but  
couldn't even get that right. They  
came back up. What a loser, huh?

AL LUPTON

It's time to go home, Terry.

TERRY

How?

AL LUPTON

Come with me now.

Wonderingly, Terry takes Al's hand and is lifted out of the water  
as if by superhuman strength. Al turns and goes towards the  
house. Terry follows.

TERRY

You been pumping your astral muscles  
or something?

INT. MAIN FOYER, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION NIGHT

Dick's young people from around the pool are all nervously  
standing in the foyer, looking around with apprehension.

Al, carrying the camera bag, comes in with Terry.

AL LUPTON

Well, you've brought me this far.

LAURIE

What's he talking about?

AL LUPTON

I don't know how to do this. Help me  
out.

LAURIE

Terry, we don't have long before Dick  
and that other perv wake up. Let's get  
back while we can.

The others start edging towards the staircase.

AL LUPTON

Come on Buddha, what were you and your  
crystal cronies telling me?

ELEPHANT LAPIDARY  
Wait for the magic to work, dude.

BUDDHA LAPIDARY  
Patience, Alderson.

Al watches the Buddha Lapidary go to the door security code panel  
and key in a code.

The Celestial Nymph LAPIDARY goes to a hall phone, dials.

CELESTIAL NYMPH LAPIDARY  
I'll just call you a taxi, sweetie.

Terry and Laurie and YOUNG PEOPLE'S POV

They see Al go to the panel and key in the code, his fingers  
moving very rapidly. The door suddenly opens and they gasp.

LAURIE  
He did it.

TERRY  
Oh lord, thank you.

The young people rush out, Terry and Laurie last, with Al  
bringing up the rear.

EXT. DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION DAWN

Dawn is breaking outside as the young people rush up a long  
suburban road and vanish in the distance.

Terry and Laurie stay with Al, looking at him with awe.

Laurie takes out a few computer floppy disks and hands them to  
Al, kisses him.

LAURIE  
This is some tax and financial stuff  
of his I stole from the office, maybe  
it'll help. I'm sorry for what Dick  
made me do to you.

TERRY

Me too.

AL LUPTON

The only important thing is you're free now. Don't get mixed up with people like this again.

TERRY

You bet. I'm going straight back to Iowa. College, if I can get in.

AL LUPTON

You will. Laurie, do you have enough money?

Laurie holds up a thick wad of cash.

LAURIE

Yeah, Dick never figured I could hide it from him but he couldn't get into the ventilators.

AL LUPTON

Help Terry to get home too, and the others.

LAURIE

Every single one. What are you going to do now?

AL LUPTON

I have a tour to finish. They told me a taxi would be coming.

A car pulls up outside the house driven by Marshall. He winds down the window and calls out.

MARSHALL

Funny thing, I just got a cellphone call from some babe to pick you up?

AL LUPTON

That was the celestial nymph. Take me back to the hotel.

Terry and Laurie look at each other as Al climbs in.

They join hands and start walking away down the road.

LAURIE

I've always wanted to see Iowa.

TERRY

Well, I hope you like potatoes then,  
because I'm a stud from a spud farm.

They both laugh. The dawn is bright and rosy.

INT. AMERICAN CAR DAWN

Al looks back as they pull away from the mansion. The lapidary figures all wave to him, then slowly fade away.

MARSHALL

How do you feel? Cally-ope was asking  
after you.

AL LUPTON

Calliope. Take me to her now.

(beat)

AL LUPTON

By the way, you're fired.

Marshall grunts wry laughter.

MARSHALL

OK.

INT. LAPIDARY GALLERY, DICK HARDSTAR'S MANSION DAY

The lapidary figures sit in their displays as before.

Down the corridor the angry voices of Dick and Evel Tyler are furiously arguing.

EVEL TYLER (O.S.)

My freaking pictures are gone and so  
is everyone else here. You've ripped  
me off, Hardcore!

DICK HARDSTAR (O.S.)

Who let them out then, you slimy Limey  
scumbag?!

EVEL TYLER (O.S.)  
I'll expose you, perv!

DICK HARDSTAR (O.S.)  
And I'll wrap your neck around your  
ankles, cricket dick!

As the voices continue the lapidary Buddha raises his head,  
smiles at the others.

BUDDHA LAPIDARY  
That turned out rather well, didn't  
it?

ELEPHANT LAPIDARY  
Sure did, transcendent dude. Sounds  
like those creeps out there are gonna  
deep six each other.

CELESTIAL NYMPH LAPIDARY  
I wish Alderson had stayed a little  
longer. He was kind of cute.

BUDDHA LAPIDARY  
Behave yourself, celestial nymph. He  
will remember us.

Sounds of shoving and fighting come from down the hall.

EVEL TYLER (O.S.)  
Botox fossil!

DICK HARDSTAR (O.S.)  
Half-inch!

EVEL TYLER (O.S.)  
Get off me, Dino. I have a call to  
make.

INT. AMERICAN CAR DAWN

A cellphone on the dashboard suddenly rings urgently. Marshall  
looks at the number display then hands it to Al.

The display shows a number for Evel Tyler. Al takes the call  
and listens.

EVEL TYLER (ON PHONE)

Marshall, I got a job for you right now and I'll pay you twice what I was going to pay Dick Hardcore...

(long beat)

EVEL TYLER (ON PHONE)

Are you there, you rockabilly retard?!

AL LUPTON

This is Alderson Lupton. I have your camera bag, the prints and all the negatives, asshole.

EVEL TYLER (ON PHONE)

Lupton, I will destroy you for this. I'll vaporize you, I swear it. You won't even be able to get work as a stand in for yourself with a tribute band on Margate pier!

AL LUPTON

Margate doesn't have a pier anymore.

EVEL TYLER (ON PHONE)

Or the Winter gardens or the Theatre Royal or the Tom Thumb or anywhere else in the Planet Thanet!

AL LUPTON

I don't think so.

DICK HARDSTAR (ON PHONE)

Hey, you yakking to that other Limey geek? You'd better get your thieving butt out of town, Al. I know ghouls who'll grind you alive into hamburger helper for a couple of fixes! Gimme that, shrimp dong.

EVEL TYLER (ON PHONE)

Give it back, plastic spam!

Al switches off the cellphone. Marshall laughs admiringly.

MARSHALL

You just screwed him for us both.

AL LUPTON  
You're hired again.

MARSHALL  
OK.

AL LUPTON  
I'm also going to need my stomach  
pumped at the hotel. I have a  
potentially lethal dose of  
amphetamines inside me. Call ahead.

Al hands Marshall the cellphone. Marshall looks at Al in  
astonishment, starts dialling. They drive off.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)  
What I should have told Dick Hardcore  
was, actually there are *no* rules in  
the music business.

LONG FADE TO BLACK

INT. NEW YORK HOTEL LUXURY SUITE DAY

TITLES: ONE MONTH LATER

Outside it is early winter in New York. Al stands at the window  
looking over the city dressed smart casual in very new  
fashionable tailored clothes.

He looks strong, but a little worn out from his experiences and  
a little older and more confident in the way he carries himself.

There is a knock at the door and Gene Beanland at 25 is let in  
by a security guard, looks around nervously. Al smiles at him  
reassuringly, points to a couch where Gene sits.

GENE BEANLAND  
Gene Beanland from Vinyl Bandwidth  
magazine. Uh, thanks for seeing me.

AL LUPTON  
I've read your 'Blue Gene' column  
from the first one in 1992 when you  
joined. I think you get it right about  
new bands almost every time.

Gene relaxes, pleased at the compliment. He takes out a pad, every inch the bright ambitious journalist.

GENE BEANLAND

I got to the Necropolis hotel in Vegas just as you were finishing your fortnight's run there. Nobody in London realized how much you'd taken off until you and Calliope appeared on the '*Tonight Show*' and '*Good Morning America*'. Where is she by the way?

AL LUPTON

Flew back to London yesterday. We're both exhausted.

GENE BEANLAND

Six months ago unknown here, now you've taken America by storm.

AL LUPTON

Only six months ago. It seems like years, so much happened.

GENE BEANLAND

So what's the story? All kinds of rumours have been floating around. Evel Tyler's made some really strange allegations.

AL LUPTON

Evel Tyler was never part of the tour press group.

GENE BEANLAND

And is it true you've just signed a merchandising deal worth millions? How would you sum all of this up?

AL LUPTON

*'Forgive me Father, for I have sinned'*.

GENE BEANLAND

Excuse me?

(long beat)

AL LUPTON

I've been reflecting on the past too much. Let me give you an exclusive on where I plan to take The Museonics next. Then we'll go on the town and buy ourselves some albums on me. I'm going to visit some of the best record stores in New York. How does that sound?

GENE BEANLAND

Sounds good to me. Off the record.

AL LUPTON

Okay. First exclusive is that we'll release our new album before the end of this year in time for Christmas and it'll be even better than anything we've done so far. We'll go straight into the recording studio once I'm back.

Gene widens his eyes and writes as Al talks.

GENE BEANLAND

I'm in line for the editor chair. If we hitch our stars together I think we can go a long way.

AL LUPTON

Let's hit those record stores now.

INT. NEW YORK HOTEL LUXURY SUITE NIGHT

Classic comedy and rare rock vinyl albums are scattered on a couch. A stereo system is built into the wall.

Al looks at himself in his smart casual tailored clothes in a mirror and frowns. He opens a closet to find his concert clothes.

Al changes from his smart casual tailored clothes to his concert clothes, looks at himself again, smiles.

Al starts looking through the record albums. He puts one on and chuckles as a famous comedian starts a lively routine.

Going over to the window Al looks across the cityscape. He drifts into a memory.

INT. LOS ANGELES HOTEL ROOM NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Calliope stands looking at the LA cityscape, worried. The door opens and Al comes in looking drawn and pale. He joins her at the window and she looks him over.

CALLIOPE

Did the stomach pump hurt much?

AL LUPTON

Well, it's good to be almost alive.

CALLIOPE

I fired Marshall.

AL LUPTON

So did I, then I rehired him. He helped me get away. Thanks for sending him.

CALLIOPE

I've never been scared for someone like that before. I would have done anything.

They move closer to each other.

AL LUPTON

I wanted to die but some...people told me I had to care about more than just myself. They were right.

CALLIOPE

Let's look after each other, Alderson Lupton.

They touch and almost kiss but at the last minute don't.

Calliope turns and goes to the door.

AL LUPTON

Calliope...

(long beat)

CALLIOPE

Now you get some rest and recover. We're flying to New York for the last

concert in a few days. We got Carnegie Hall.

She goes, leaving Al dumbstruck.

INT. NEW YORK HOTEL LUXURY SUITE NIGHT

Al still looks over New York. The comedy album has finished and the stylus needle skips against the end of the record.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

We were a smash at our last concerts with TV audiences of twenty million plus, they told me. Like Gene Beanland asked, I signed merchandising deals worth millions. All of a sudden I was an international star without quite knowing how it all happened.

INT. AIRLINER, FIRST CLASS DAY

Al accepts a drink from a stewardess clearly awed by his fame. He's playing it cool but can't believe he's flying in such luxury.

AIRLINE PILOT (INTERCOM)

Ladies and gentlemen, we will be landing at London Heathrow in twenty minutes, thank you for flying British Air.

Al looks around surreptitiously at his fellow passengers. All of them are at ease with their wealth unlike him.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

How do you learn to be rich?

INT. BEDROOM, AL'S LUXURY FLAT IN BOURLET CLOSE DAWN

Al wakes up in a richly furnished and decorated 1990s ultramodern bedroom. A skylight shows dawn outside.

INT. AL'S LUXURY FLAT IN BOURLET CLOSE DAWN

Walking through the huge beautifully decorated flat, Al looks lost - he can't believe this is all his.

Here and there are a few boxes of unpacked property - he has clearly moved in only recently.

Picking up a remote control Al activates a wall-sized entertainment centre, a huge wall screen TV activates.

The TV morning programme playing has a promotional spot for a forthcoming new album by the Museonics.

Al presses more buttons on the remote. The kitchen lights up and a coffee percolator starts automatically working.

A grand piano swings on motorized runners out of the wall and Al smiles. He sits down and plays a rag on the piano before going into the kitchen.

As Al goes into the kitchen Evel Tyler comes onto the morning TV programme with critical remarks about the new Museonics album being speculated on. Al winces, switches it off.

INT. KITCHEN, AL'S LUXURY FLAT IN BOURLET CLOSE MORNING

Al eats breakfast in the ultramodern kitchen, stuffed with expensive appliances. A radio plays a Museonics tune - a new one from the forthcoming album, the presenter announces.

Evel Tyler's voice comes onto the radio, being interviewed as the song finishes. He is criticizing the hype surrounding the new album. Irritated, Al switches off the radio.

INT. AL'S LUXURY FLAT IN BOURLET CLOSE MORNING

Al comes to some boxes against a wall which haven't been unpacked. He starts sorting through them.

He picks up a camera and a portable keyboard and some items of clothes mixed up together.

In FLASHBACK he remembers he bought these with the money he stole from Ned and, shivering, drops them back in the box. He looks around the flat and its opulence, haunted.

INT. BATHROOM, AL'S LUXURY FLAT IN BOURLET CLOSE MORNING

Looking at himself hard in the mirror, Al is unhappy. He runs his hand through his hair.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

I have sinned.

EXT. ENTRANCE, AL'S LUXURY FLAT IN BOURLET CLOSE MORNING

Al lets himself out of the flat. It has an electronic pad for security. He walks across the close to a pair of gates and keys into another pad. The gates swing open.

EXT. RIDING HOUSE STREET MORNING

Al walks up the street, not noticing a parked motorcycle paparazzi. The courier notices him, takes out a mobile phone.

INT. EXPENSIVE HAIR SALON DAY

Al lies back in a chair with a towel around his head, which is resting in a cupped sink.

A young hairdresser comes out of the back, nervously stuffing a mobile phone back in her pocket. She goes over to Al.

She turns his chair to face the mirror and gently unwraps the towel. As she does she looks nervously towards the entrance. There is the sound of a door opening.

Not noticing, Al stares at himself in the mirror. He is entirely bald, but confident and stronger looking.

Al looks up sharply at a loud tapping noise. He sees Evel Tyler sitting in a chair beside the display window tapping a ring against it. An expensive camera sits beside him.

EVEL TYLER

Hey, crop top.

Evel winks, raises the camera and takes pictures of Al, who is astonished and helpless.

EVEL TYLER

Changing your look won't work. Be seeing you. Wouldn't want to be you, with *that* dome.

Evel gets up, unhurriedly exits, turns in the doorway.

EVEL TYLER

I told you I'd destroy you, Alderson.  
I'm your own personal spitting image.  
Ciao, ciao!

The door slams shut behind Evel.

The hairdresser giggles. Al stares at himself again, crushed and wretched. Now he looks like a convicted prisoner.

INT. AL'S LUXURY FLAT IN BOURLET CLOSE DAY

Now bald, Al stares brooding at the box containing the camera, keyboard and other things he bought with Ned's stolen money. He makes up his mind, picks the box up.

EXT. CHARITY SHOP DAY

Al goes into the shop with the box and donates it to a surprised elderly manager. He also hands over money.

EXT. PLATFORM AT CLAPHAM JUNCTION STATION DAY

Al sits on a bench wearing dark glasses and scruffy clothes, unrecognized. A train pulls in but he doesn't get on.

INT. CLAPHAM JUNCTION STATION DAY

Al wanders through the station from platform to platform, through tunnels and up and down stairs and lifts, watching people. Hours pass. He buys snacks from platform kiosks.

Commuter crowds surge around him then thin out. Finally, late at night he sits alone on a darkened platform, brooding.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

I thought being a superstar was meant  
to solve all your problems. Everyone  
I've seen go through this station  
today probably has heard my music  
sometime, even just going by a shop.  
But I don't want to be recognized or

loved by any of them. It's like I'm  
a leper, hiding.

A station attendant notices Al as a train approaches.

STATION ATTENDANT

Station's closing now, sir. The last  
train's coming.

AL LUPTON

Is there a leper colony anywhere on  
this line?

STATION ATTENDANT

No, just Queenstown Road and Vauxhall  
and Waterloo, last stop.

Al sighs.

INT. LONDON COMMUTER TRAIN NIGHT

Al steps up into an empty carriage and walks up the car.

A tabloid newspaper lying on a seat catches his eye - he is on  
the front page. The photo is of him with head newly shaved in  
the hairdressers' - one of the photos Evel Tyler took.

Headline reads: 'BALDERSON LUPTON - A WHOLE NEW UGLY LOOK TO  
BALDLY GO WHERE NO CROP-TOP GIMP HAS GONE BEFORE!'

Al winces, reads the story which is under Evel's byline.

He loses his temper, rips up and crumples the newspaper, throws  
the wadded pages around the car in a fury.

AL LUPTON

Dammit, dammit, dammit!

INT. AL'S LUXURY FLAT IN BOURLET CLOSE DAWN

Al sits tensely on a couch staring blankly, in pyjamas but  
clearly not having slept. He goes into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN, AL'S LUXURY FLAT IN BOURLET CLOSE MORNING

Al makes himself a substantial breakfast but then pushes it away, drinks only cup after cup of strong coffee, agitated.

He cleans everything up methodically, overdoing it.

INT. AL'S LUXURY FLAT IN BOURLET CLOSE MORNING

Al picks up the remote control, presses a button and the grand piano swings out. He begins to play a classical piano tune and his tense face softens.

In FLASHBACK he suddenly remembers this was a tune he once practiced with Ned and misses a note. He stops, gets up from the piano bench and the piano rotates back into the wall.

INT. BEDROOM, AL'S LUXURY FLAT IN BOURLET CLOSE MORNING

Al comes into the bedroom and sits on the bed. There are a couple of bottles of sleeping pills on the side table.

He stares at them intently but then buries his head under the covers.

The phone rings and he irritably answers it.

AL LUPTON

What?

MIKE PROSPECT

Sorry Evel's giving you a hard time, Alderson. Just reminding you we have the album premiere at the Marie Trique Boutique tonight.

AL LUPTON

I'll...I'll be there, Mike. Thanks.

MIKE PROSPECT

Don't let the jackal pack get you down.

Mike rings off and Al flops back.

AL LUPTON

Jesus...

EXT. MARIE TRIQUE BOUTIQUE NIGHT

A gala red carpet media launch event at a Knightsbridge boutique.

Calliope emerges from a limousine to hysterical cheers and the cameras follow her. No one notices Al as he comes out of the limo and follows, except Evel Tyler among the paparazzi.

Evel takes a single picture of Al as he goes inside.

EVEL TYLER

Somebody's got to do it.

INT. GROUND FLOOR, MARIE TRIQUE BOUTIQUE NIGHT

The reception party is happening on an upper floor of the smart, lavishly decorated boutique.

Al has a word with a suited alert security man, looking at Evel Tyler through the boutique picture window.

AL LUPTON

Under no circumstances is that guy allowed in, understood?

SUITED SECURITY MAN

Understood, sir.

As soon as Al turns away and climbs the stairs to the upper floor to join the party, the security man opens the door to let Evel in. A lot of money changes hands and the security man stuffs it into his suit pocket, looking furtive.

EVEL TYLER

Ciao ciao, goon guy.

SUITED SECURITY MAN

Thank you kindly, sir. The party's just up the stairs there.

INT. UPPER FLOOR, MARIE TRIQUE BOUTIQUE NIGHT

Mike Prospect, Rafe Clunes, Gene Beanland and staff from the recording studio are there with the assembled press and glitterati. A small stage has been set up with a microphone and keyboard, big amps. Mike takes the microphone.

MIKE PROSPECT

It's the dream of every nefarious producer to get himself a hit act. Sometimes they're a single, sometimes they last a few albums and quickly become nostalgia items in the ephemeral panoply of popular music. Translated, here today and gone later today. And most of them richly deserve it!

Laughter and photo-flashes. Al moves quietly to the keyboard and Calliope moves next to Mike.

MIKE PROSPECT

But not these two. In the last five years I've seen them work their way up from lounge act to international superstardom. They've caught the zeitgeist. They tickled America, an unpredictable beast. They've even kept their heads, more or less, although Al went a bit radical on that front recently. I'm proud to call them friends as well as proteges.

Laughter and applause. Mike looks over at Calliope.

MIKE PROSPECT

What do you say, Calliope?

Calliope takes the microphone and cues Al into a song.

CALLIOPE

I say you ain't seen nothing yet, Mr. and Mrs. and Baby Zeitgeist!

Calliope and Al launch into a spirited rendition of a new Museonics single and the crowd spontaneously begins dancing.

Evel Tyler comes up the stairs and catches Al's eye, winks beady-eyed. He vanishes into the seething crowd.

Al looks at Calliope. She is beautiful, at the top of her skill and talent, mesmerizing the audience effortlessly.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

That was when I knew.

Calliope turns and winks passionately at Al. It is like an electric wave between them.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)  
When we both knew.

INT. GROUND FLOOR, MARIE TRIQUE BOUTIQUE NIGHT

Al and Calliope are taking a break downstairs out of sight and look at each other intensely, sitting beside a stainless steel rack of very expensive designer clothes.

AL LUPTON  
I have a problem you'll never have.

CALLIOPE  
Then I doubt I can help.

They both laugh.

AL LUPTON  
I don't know how to be rich.

CALLIOPE  
And I take too much for granted?

Her tone is soft and sympathetic - she understands.

AL LUPTON  
I used to live for a year on what some of this junk costs. I found better stuff in charity shops.

Calliope looks at the rack of clothes and then over - the back of the boutique is empty and dark while the party goes on brilliantly and noisily upstairs.

CALLIOPE  
Why don't we make a donation?

Their eyes meet. Al and Calliope quietly gather up the rack of clothes and steal to the back of the boutique unseen.

INT. BACK ROOMS, MARIE TRIQUE BOUTIQUE NIGHT

Giggling and carrying the clothes, Al and Calliope find the back door. Al deactivates the alarm and they go out.

EXT. KNIGHTSBRIDGE ALLEY NIGHT

The alley behind the boutique is deserted. Al and Calliope walk around the corner. Al can't believe what he's doing.

AL LUPTON

If they catch us...

CALLIOPE

There's an Oxfam just here.

EXT. KNIGHTSBRIDGE CHARITY SHOP NIGHT

Al and Calliope stow the expensive designer clothes in a discarded cardboard box Al finds. They sink down laughing, sitting in the doorway with the box between them.

CALLIOPE

That'll surprise some volunteers.

AL LUPTON

Mike had all the CCTV cameras switched off. I'd love to see Marie Trique's reaction tomorrow.

CALLIOPE

Trique will *freak*.

Al and Calliope simultaneously put their hands on the box and their hands accidentally meet.

They cannot separate their hands and an electric look passes between them - yes, it's time.

CALLIOPE

I've had enough of that crowd.

AL LUPTON

Let's get a cab back.

They get up, still hand in hand and walk around a corner.

Evel Tyler appears, looking thoughtful. He has heard everything and takes quick pictures as Al and Calliope go out of sight.

INT. BEDROOM, AL'S LUXURY FLAT IN BOURLET CLOSE DAWN

Al wakes beside a sleeping Calliope and rubs his eyes looking at her - he cannot believe it's happened.

He gets up and goes out. Calliope stirs slightly.

EXT. AL'S LUXURY FLAT IN BOURLET CLOSE DAWN

Al lets himself out and breathes the morning air. The dawn is rosy, the sky clear.

EXT. RIDING HOUSE STREET DAWN

Al walks out into Riding House Street, elated and happy. Everything is bright and gilded.

He passes a motorcycle paparazzi in the same place as before but again doesn't notice. The courier watches him.

EXT. STREETS AROUND RIDING HOUSE STREET MORNING

Briskly and energetically, Al walks through the near-deserted morning streets of central London, humming his own tunes, finally coming back into Riding House Street.

EXT. RIDING HOUSE STREET MORNING

Passing the motorcycle paparazzi, Al heads back into Bourlet Close and his flat door. Surreptitiously the courier takes a series of photos, then starts his bike and rides off.

INT. KITCHEN, AL'S LUXURY FLAT IN BOURLET CLOSE MORNING

Al fastidiously makes a cafetière of coffee and puts it with milk, sugar and mugs on a tray, walks out with it.

INT. BEDROOM, AL'S LUXURY FLAT IN BOURLET CLOSE MORNING

Al comes empty-handed into the doorway. Calliope is awake and already smoking a second cigarette, radiant but grouchy.

CALLIOPE

Any chance of a coffee around here?

With a flourish Al picks up the tray, which is seen now to be sitting on a hall table just outside the bedroom door.

He brings it over and sets it down elegantly like a butler.

Calliope smiles and flicks some ash down onto the bedside table, missing the ashtray there as she pours the coffee. Al is a little shocked but admires every line of her.

CALLIOPE

Should we have done this?

Al is alarmed but hides it.

AL LUPTON

We could always call Evel Tyler and tell him he's got it wrong, wrong, *wrong*. All the papers will have to change their headlines.

Calliope laughs musically, mood improving.

CALLIOPE

You have a very good bedside manner.

AL LUPTON

Wait 'til you hear my music.

They smile at each other, sure they're in love now.

INT. AL'S LUXURY FLAT IN BOURLET CLOSE MORNING

Al plays the grand piano, a classic jazz tune, as Calliope comes out of the kitchen munching breakfast and smoking simultaneously. He misses a note when he sees her flick ash on the floor absently, but covers up his irritation.

Calliope closes her eyes and drinks in the music, then remote-switches on the TV to a morning entertainment programme.

Almost at once the coverage goes to speculation about them - pictures of them at the launch party in Knightsbridge including several outside the Oxfam.

Calliope'S jaw drops.

CALLIOPE

How did he...

CHRISSIE BLISS (TV)

Good morning, I'm Chrissie Bliss with 'Wake and Break'! And the big breaking news is dynamic duo The Museonics who really have gone duo now! Here we go to the man in the know, tabloid spymaster supreme, Evel Tyler!

Evel Tyler appears on the screen jaded and rumped, in the same clothes he was in at the launch party earlier.

CHRISSIE BLISS (TV)

What's the story, Evel?

EVEL TYLER (TV)

Ciao ciao, morning vultures. Simply put, Balderson Lupton has finally managed to grope the goddess Wix down to earth. They went to Al's little midtown lair after their launch party last night and haven't come out since. I guess she hasn't managed to escape yet.

CHRISSIE BLISS (TV)

And what do you think this will mean for their musical partnership?

EVEL TYLER (TV)

Well, once the drugs or whatever he used have worn off I wouldn't want to be looking in her mirror, but it may have some minor improvement on his arrangements, shall we say.

CHRISSIE BLISS (TV)

Thanks, Evel. This one rocks the rock world as we speak. Keep us informed!

EVEL TYLER (TV)

I'll try to get an interview direct from the bed of shame. Ciao, ciao!

Calliope switches off the TV, appalled. She lights another cigarette.

CALLIOPE

Well, he didn't waste any time.

Al runs a hand across his bald head wryly.

AL LUPTON

No, I have some experience of that.

Al plays a humorous minor-key dirge. Calliope smiles.

CALLIOPE

We'll have to get Mike to issue a  
press statement denying everything.

Al comes over and sits close beside Calliope, looking intensely into her eyes.

AL LUPTON

I'm not denying. Not one thing.

They look at each other and lightly kiss. Calliope's cigarette falls to the floor. Al notices despite their passionate embrace and deftly picks the cigarette up and dumps it in an ashtray.

INT. EXPENSIVE LONDON HOMEWARE BOUTIQUE DAY

Al browses stylish ashtrays and takes the entire shelf, bringing them to a bemused cashier at the counter.

INT. HARROD'S FOOD HALL, LONDON, DAY

Carrying the bag of ashtrays from the boutique, Al looks at the expensive foods all around him, bewildered what to buy.

EXT. HARROD'S DEPARTMENT STORE, LONDON, DAY

Weighed down with bags of expensive foods and the boutique bag of ashtrays, Al stumbles into a taxi which pulls off.

INT. LONDON TAXI DAY

Al calls Calliope on an expensive 1996-7 mobile phone.

AL LUPTON

Hi Calliope, just go straight to the  
studio. I'm caught up in traffic and  
I'll be right there.

INT. AL'S LUXURY FLAT IN BOURLET CLOSE DAY

Al comes in looking around furtively, realizes Calliope is not there. He takes ashtrays out of the boutique bag and starts placing them around the flat, going methodically from room to room.

INT. BATHROOM, AL'S LUXURY FLAT IN BOURLET CLOSE DAY

Al goes out of the bathroom. He has left no fewer than four ashtrays dotted around, including the shower and an alcove beside the bathtub.

INT. CLOUDESLEY RECORDING STUDIOS DAY

Al comes into the studio where Calliope and Rafe are talking. Mike is in the engineer's booth. They all stare at something in Al's hand. He looks down and goes pale.

Al is still carrying one of the boutique ashtrays.

INT. RADIO STUDIO MORNING

Evel Tyler is hosting a morning programme.

EVEL TYLER

And that was The Museonics with  
'*Rebuilding the Temples*'. Good  
morning London! As you know,  
wide-eyed listeners, I'm well  
acquainted with His Balderson and  
among other things broke the story on  
his inexplicable skinhead image  
change. It's all on my new website  
too, for those of you cool enough to  
be getting online and savvy enough to  
log on at this time of the morning  
before the day phone rates kick in.  
The Museonics keep going from  
strength to strength but ask yourself  
this question, when's that  
fairy-tale bubble going to bloat up  
and burst and blast? When will the  
louverly Beauty finally see the  
loathsome Beast? Here my plea  
Calliope, dump that rude crude dude

Balderson back in the gutter he close-shave crawled out of before it's too late. Come back where you belong, namely to me! Thus spake the Evel One, with an 'E'. Here's one for you and me...

Evel plays '*Back Where You Belong*' by .38 Special and swivels around in his chair singing to the music.

INT. KITCHEN, AL'S LUXURY FLAT IN BOURLET CLOSE MORNING

Al is sitting in a dressing gown listening to Evel Tyler's programme, grimacing. He switches it off and picks up a tabloid newspaper but it has another unflattering headline about him and photos of him under Evel's byline. He throws it in the bin with disgust.

Al looks down at the ashtray he carried into the studio before, now set prominently in the centre of the kitchen table. He walks out as Calliope enters with a lit cigarette.

CLOSE UP of ashtray.

The ashtray fills up and overflows with ashes and cigarette butts.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

I didn't know how to control anything in my life. So I decided to control everything.

INT. MIKE PROSPECT'S OFFICE DAY

In a smart suit and looking like a young executive, Al discusses business in a friendly way with Mike Prospect.

A lawyer comes in to witness and they sign some papers, shake hands. The lawyer picks up a camera and takes pictures of Mike and Al shaking hands over the contracts.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

I made myself a full management partner. I took control of the business. At last I was going to mind every last detail.

INT. MONTAGE OF CONCERTS AND TEMPORARY OFFICES DAY/NIGHT

TITLE: MUSEONICS WORLD TOUR: 1998-1999.

Al and Calliope are on world tour, fantastically successful at filling stadiums and selling out venues wherever they go. We hear new Museonics' songs belting out interspersed with the roaring approval of concert crowds.

PLANES marked 'MUSEONICS WORLD TOUR 98-99' take off and land at airports across the world.

Gig posters are seen for every major city across the continents - America, Europe, Asia and Africa. A marked concert plane goes to and fro, mobbed by fans at each airport it lands at.

Al and Calliope travel, Calliope frequently dozing in an airplane seat as Al organizes concerts.

Al also works indefatigably in a succession of temporary offices managing the tour as new gigs come and go, a picture of executive efficiency and fanatical attention to detail. When in offices he is in the suit he wore in Mike's office.

Enormous quantities of tickets are printed, sold to enthusiastic concert fans in the different locations and money of all kinds collected at a succession of box offices.

SOUNDS of coins jingling, tickets printing, paper bills being sorted, computerised calculations being made.

Evel Tyler is frequently seen, buying tickets and standing in audiences with a sour expression, following the tour as it progresses and writing under his byline and recording into a portable recorder. We see articles in various music magazines and primitive web pages in rapid succession with his copy.

In the onstage vignettes Al stares only at his keyboard and around him, the lights or at the audience, never at Calliope.

A few times Calliope looks in on his office work, smiling and hopeful, but engrossed in his work Al never notices her and her expression becomes increasingly sad and lonely.

Calliope smokes alone in corridors or backstage as Al prepares and practices and works nearby, blows smoke rings.

She looks intently at catalogues for very high priced fashion houses and bespoke tailors and boutiques, making notes.

Eventually Calliope and Al seem to be living almost separate parallel lives when offstage or not travelling.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

The one detail I did miss was the most important one.

In the last vignette of the montage Evel Tyler defaces a European concert poster in an alley by using a spray paint can to draw a jagged line between a photo of Al and Calliope.

Under the defaced picture he spray-paints:

'THE Evel ONE WILL JUDGE YOU'.

INT. MAIN HALL, CALLIOPE'S LONDON MANSION DAY

A beautiful pillared main hall with a wide marble staircase, full of activity as a recording studio is being constructed.

Al comes in the front door and stops staring at all the activity as Calliope shows an all female entourage of goggle-eyed and chattering journalists around a splendidly and tastefully decorated mansion.

He clearly wants to talk to her but can't and is visibly irritated.

Calliope is impeccably dressed and coiffed in a devastating combination of very expensive high fashion and looks like a combined supermodel, pop diva and sophisticated bohemian aristocrat - a goddess come into her own.

Al trails along and listens in with increasing irritation.

FASHION JOURNALIST ONE

Calliope Wix, Belgravia's newest and most famous resident, why have you suddenly decided to invest in this spectacular address?

CALLIOPE

Well Selina, we've been very successful in The Museonics for the last couple of years. I've always lived with my parents between tours or stayed with Al and I thought it would be good to finally have a home

of my own. I'm also having a recording studio installed as you can see.

Calliope has brought the journalists to an area being built into a recording studio. Carpentry goes on and state of the art mixing desks and an engineer's booth are all being installed.

FASHION JOURNALIST TWO  
Estimates for this place are running at over ten million pounds. Have you sunk everything you've got into this?

CALLIOPE  
Luckily, this was a manor which has a separate building for servants quarters and I sold that to a developer to defray some of the cost. But I'll certainly be counting my pennies from now on, girls!

All the journalists laugh delightedly. Al scowls.

He lurks near the journalists behind a pillar, making his voice echo.

AL LUPTON  
*'In Xanadu did Calliope Khan a stately pleasure dome decree.'*

FASHION JOURNALIST ONE  
Oh look, here's B...I mean Alderson Lupton. What was that you said?

AL LUPTON  
It's from *'Citizen Kane'*. The new millennium edition.

The journalists look nonplussed. Calliope re-takes control.

CALLIOPE  
As soon as the studio's finished Al and I are going straight in to start work on a new album.

FASHION JOURNALIST TWO  
Wow, an exclusive. Is this true, Al?

AL LUPTON  
Something has to pay for all this.

The journalists look at each other and make notes. Calliope keeps her tone bright.

CALLIOPE

We've been working on new songs for the last few months, enough for a couple of albums.

FASHION JOURNALIST ONE

The music press will be asking the question, how commercial are The Museonics going to go now that you've hit the big time?

AL LUPTON

Oh, we're going corporate. We'll out Brit-Pop those losers, what do they call them, '*English Spring*' and '*Smear*'. You'll see.

Calliope, becoming irritated, steers the journalists towards the kitchens, giving Al a warning look: 'don't follow'.

CALLIOPE

Let me show all of you the kitchen and the gardens now.

They go and Al is left alone, looking around with resentment at the opulence of the mansion.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

I'd learned how to be rich. I still hadn't learned how to stop resenting anyone richer.

EXT. GARDENS BEHIND CALLIOPE'S MANSION DAY

Calliope shows the journalists a huge classical garden with a maze constructed of sculpted hedges.

She leads them into and through the maze. They come to a clearing with something at the centre she shows off and the journalists admire, but is off camera.

Calliope tells the journalists something we cannot hear although we hear Al's name and they all smile, sharing a secret. They look back at the mansion significantly.

INT. MAIN HALL, CALLIOPE'S LONDON MANSION DAY

Al watches the carpenters and engineers installing the studio. He's bored and edgy, looks at his watch impatiently, makes up his mind and goes in the direction Calliope and the journalists went.

As Al goes out Rafe Clunes comes in, looking around but missing Al. He goes over to where the studio is being installed and starts talking to the engineers.

EXT. GARDENS BEHIND CALLIOPE'S MANSION DAY

Al comes out into the gardens, looks around and sees no one, then starts in surprise when someone calls his name.

Looking around again he sees the journalists going down the far side of the mansion and smiling at him mischievously before they go out of sight.

AL LUPTON

Calliope?

Al looks around but doesn't see her, then his attention is caught by an object draped over a hedge at the entrance to the sculpted maze.

It is the jacket Calliope was wearing in the mansion.

He goes over and picks it up then notices a glove in a hedge further into the maze.

EXT. GARDEN MAZE BEHIND CALLIOPE'S MANSION DAY

Al follows a trail of garments towards the centre, picking them up as he goes.

EXT. CENTRE OF GARDEN MAZE DAY

Al's arms are full of expensive clothes now. At the entrance to the centre he finds one of Calliope's shoes.

He sees a spacious centre decorated with elaborate floral displays, a fountain and a roofed folly structure.

At a large table set up within the folly a sumptuous buffet and champagne in a bucket are set out.

Calliope stands waiting dressed only in an elegant kimono, looking exotic and ethereally beautiful. The scene is dreamlike.

CALLIOPE

Won't you join the lady of the house,  
Mr. Lupton?

Al smiles, puts the clothes down carefully and sits at the table as Calliope delicately pours two champagne glasses.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO IN CALLIOPE'S MANSION DAY

Rafe Clunes helps to wire up a studio console and takes one of the engineers aside.

RAFE CLUNES

Calliope asked me to install a recording microphone upstairs in her suite that will pipe directly down here. Has the cable been run up there?

ENGINEER

Yes, and a playback switch on a separate channel. All it needs is the actual mike.

RAFE CLUNES

Okay, I'll go do that now. I'll be back to supervise finishing off.

Rafe goes upstairs carrying a toolbox and large microphone.

INT. CENTRE OF GARDEN MAZE DAY

Al sits eating silently with Calliope, who reaches out and puts her hand on his.

CALLIOPE

Why are you so unhappy?

AL LUPTON

I don't know how to live this way. I keep wondering when I'm really going to wake up.

CALLIOPE

Is it me? Is it this?

She sweeps her hand around the maze, the mansion nearby.

AL LUPTON

No, of course not. I guess I don't know how to be happy.

Al gets up and walks around the folly interior, hugging himself self consciously.

AL LUPTON

When I met you I'd been hiding for years. Now with all this success the threats just seem to get bigger and harder to escape. I still feel like prey hiding from the hungry monsters out there. Like Evel Tyler. Maybe I'm just paranoid.

Calliope comes over and softly lays a hand on his arm.

CALLIOPE

You had to make your way alone. I didn't and I can only imagine what it was like for you. But things are different now. You have everything. We have everything.

AL LUPTON

Everything but peace of mind.

CALLIOPE

Let it go. You're not trapped in a bad place anymore.

Calliope kisses Al and leads him back toward the mansion. Evening is coming on. Al's expression is troubled.

AL LUPTON (THINKING)

I *am* the bad place.

INT. KITCHEN IN CALLIOPE'S MANSION EVENING

Al and Calliope come in from the garden.

CALLIOPE

Brr, it's getting chilly, isn't it?  
I'll make us some coffee. Would you  
see if the engineers are still  
working on the studio out there?

Al nods and goes out into the main hall of the mansion.

INT. MAIN HALL, CALLIOPE'S LONDON MANSION EVENING

The hall is empty, the engineers gone for the day.

Suddenly Al hears loud footsteps coming down the curving staircase, and instinctively he hides behind a pillar.

It is Rafe, who doesn't notice Al or Calliope in the kitchen, out of sight. Al is about to call out but stops himself.

Rafe lets himself out by the front door. Al steps out and looks at the door, then back towards the kitchen.

Calliope makes coffee singing a Museonics song happily.

His expression becomes anguished, jealous and suspicious.

INT. UPPER FLOORS OF CALLIOPE'S MANSION NIGHT

Calliope in her kimono leads Al through the upper floors of the impeccably decorated mansion. He is seeing it all for the first time and is awed by it.

The atmosphere is dreamlike and magical. Al sees Calliope as a goddess leading him through another world as her consort.

They come to Calliope's bedroom door and go in after kissing.

INT. MAIN BEDROOM IN CALLIOPE'S MANSION NIGHT

Al lies in bed with Calliope. They are intimately curled together and something wakes Al.

He gently disentangles himself and gets up, watching her sleep with a loving expression. He can't believe his luck.

Suddenly Al freezes in shock and sees another indistinct male figure in bed with Calliope. He moves closer - an illusion.

He wanders out of the bedroom as if in a trance.

INT. UPPER FLOORS OF CALLIOPE'S MANSION NIGHT

Al wanders alone, looking around nervously as if expecting to be followed. The atmosphere has changed. Everything is in stark contrasts and threatening shadows.

Passing a large mirror at a junction of corridors Al stops. His reflection is not himself but that of Rafe Clunes in the same clothes.

He looks past the mirror. At the end of a long corridor he sees a silhouetted figure turn a corner that also looks like Rafe.

Al tries to pursue but it is an illusion. He passes an open room which is set up as a nursery and stops in surprise. He goes in.

INT. UPPER FLOOR NURSERY, CALLIOPE'S MANSION NIGHT

Al walks through the darkened nursery which is complete with a cradle and miniature furniture. There are stand up frames for photographs on tables, not yet with pictures in them.

For a moment Al sees a photo of Rafe and Calliope holding up a smiling infant in one of the frames. He blinks and it vanishes - an illusion.

Al goes out of the nursery, shivering.

INT. MAIN BEDROOM IN CALLIOPE'S MANSION NIGHT

Al comes back into the bedroom and lies down beside Calliope, who is still asleep. He looks at her for a long moment, then turns away from her.

There is a distinct space between them now on the bed.

Time passes, then Al gets up again and goes out.

EXT. MAIN ENTRANCE TO CALLIOPE'S MANSION NIGHT

Al lets himself out of Calliope's mansion and starts trudging up the deserted street, depressed.

EXT. LONDON STREETS NIGHT

Al wanders through silent London streets. He passes party goers, kissing couples and laughing groups of carousers but everything is happening at a distance from him.

EXT. RIDING HOUSE STREET DAWN

Al comes into the street dejected. The sky is lightening. He passes the motorcycle paparazzi we have seen before.

As Al goes into Bourlet Close towards his flat the courier takes some photos with a concealed camera. When Al goes out of sight the courier checks and reloads the camera.

Suddenly Al reappears concealing something behind his back and calls out to the courier who hasn't noticed him.

AL LUPTON

Hey.

The courier looks up in surprise. Al whips out a camera and takes a series of clear shots as the courier tries to hide his face, then stumbles and falls over his bike.

He drops his camera, cursing. Al laughs maliciously.

AL LUPTON

Prat.

INT. KITCHEN, AL'S LUXURY FLAT IN BOURLET CLOSE MORNING

The clock shows 6am. Al sits in the kitchen staring at his heavy designer ashtray from the boutique, full of ashes and discarded cigarette butts of Calliope's. The radio is on.

After the morning news a programme hosted by Evel Tyler comes on.

EVEL TYLER (ON RADIO)

Ciao ciao listeners, a big welcome in the morning to the front line news from the grisly rock and roll

frontier! And my first bushwhack of the morning is your favourite geek and mine, His Balderson of Lupton! In the continuing misadventures of the First Lord of the cue balls, or is that the eight ball, har, har, har, I hear he's been busy freaking out the babe brigade journies! Yes, there was some kind of obscure tirade over at the new mega mansion of his captive goddess the all-singing and all-shimmying Calliope Wix we know and groove for. She's currently a Mizz, but for how long listeners, how long? Word is the beast Lupton is working his evil hypnosis schtick on Beauty to do a heavy Svengali on her sweet little Trilby! I could tell you a few stories about Balderson's decadent days in LA...

Al becomes more and more angry at Evel's slurs. Finally he loses his temper and throws the ashtray at the radio.

The radio smashes and falls to the floor covered in ashes. Al looks in dismay at what he's done - it feels like a bad omen. He goes out of the kitchen trying to calm down.

INT. KITCHEN, AL'S LUXURY FLAT IN BOURLET CLOSE MORNING

Time passes. The clock now shows 7am. Melancholy piano music comes from the front room - a sadder, slower version of '*Mystery Girl*'. It stops when the phone in the kitchen rings.

Al comes back into the kitchen. He watches the phone ring until the automatic answering message activates and listens.

CALLIOPE (ON PHONE)

Hi Alderson, I missed you this morning. Just wanted to tell you we have the new studio installed now. Let's start putting down some new tracks as soon as you're ready.

RAFE CLUNES (ON PHONE)

Hey Calliope, wait 'til you hear what we can do with this!

Faintly Al hears a medley of strange and interesting noises on the phone and looks at it, not recognizing Rafe's voice at first. The message ends abruptly.

Feverishly Al rewinds and plays back the message repeatedly, then realizing the other voice was Rafe. He looks at the kitchen clock. Al's expression is bewildered and hurt.

AL LUPTON

What the hell is *he* doing there with you so early in the morning?!

Al storms out of the kitchen, then comes back in and throws the phone violently against the wall, exits again.

We hear the front door slam loudly.

EXT. RIDING HOUSE STREET MORNING

Al comes out of the entrance to Bourlet Close. The motorcycle paparazzi is still there and recoils as Al approaches. The courier mounts his bike to ride off.

He stops when Al spreads his hands out in a peace gesture.

AL LUPTON

Look, I want to apologize. You're just doing your job there. I'm willing to give you some exclusive photos inside the flat.

MOTORCYCLE PAPARAZZI

You mean it?

AL LUPTON

Sure, if you agree to stop hanging around afterwards.

MOTORCYCLE PAPARAZZI

You got it! I'll just get my gear.

The motorcycle paparazzi picks up a camera bag from a side pouch, dismounts and walks past Al, who walks to the motorcycle, mounts and guns the engine and speeds off.

MOTORCYCLE PAPARAZZI

Hey! What?!

AL LUPTON  
You double prat!

EXT. LONDON STREETS DAY

Al manoeuvres the motorcycle through London traffic with a little trouble but then increasing confidence, being honked at for not wearing a helmet a few times.

AL LUPTON (THINKING)  
Always wanted one of these.

He accelerates down the road that leads to Calliope's mansion.

EXT. MAIN ENTRANCE TO CALLIOPE'S MANSION NIGHT

Al pulls up smartly at the front entrance, dismounts and goes in.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO IN CALLIOPE'S MANSION DAY

Rafe is expertly demonstrating fantastic sounds on a massive studio console as Calliope and some engineers look on. Al comes in unnoticed.

On a studio keyboard Rafe creates a series of beautiful interlayered sounds. The engineers and Calliope applaud wildly.

Calliope impulsively kisses Rafe on the lips. He blushes and grins as everyone laughs.

CALLIOPE  
This is just what I need!

Al is appalled and quietly backs out of the studio and disappears. No one has seen him come in or go.

EXT. RIDING HOUSE STREET DAY

Al slowly rides up the street and parks where the motorcycle was before in front of Bourlet Close.

The motorcycle paparazzi is still there sitting on the curb and looks up in astonishment.

Al gets off the motorcycle slumped over with despair. He tosses the key to the paparazzi and heads into Bourlet Close.

Suddenly he turns and runs at the motorcycle. He lands a flying kick on the front, smashing the headlight and knocking it over into the road.

Al walks into Bourlet Close, stifling a sob. The paparazzi looks after him and scratches his head.

MOTORCYCLE PAPARAZZI

Well, somebody's having an unhappy love affair.

He takes out a mobile phone and dials a number.

MOTORCYCLE PAPARAZZI

Evel? I have my bike back. Got a very hot and big exclusive right here in my lap too. How much?

INT. BEDROOM, AL'S LUXURY FLAT IN BOURLET CLOSE NIGHT

Al cannot sleep and tosses and turns, tormented. Images of Calliope with Rafe haunt him.

INT. KITCHEN, AL'S LUXURY FLAT IN BOURLET CLOSE MORNING

Al, sleepless and hollow eyed, looks over at the smashed radio covered with cigarette ashes which he still hasn't cleaned up.

His face hardens and he picks up the phone.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

So I broke up the band.

A MONTAGE of tabloid newspaper and music magazine front pages and articles illustrate a somber Calliope and Al separately as the breakup of the band is covered. Much of the coverage is under the byline of Evel Tyler and mocking in tone.

Years pass in the dates on the articles and newspapers from 2000 to 2005. Calliope is illustrated going from strength to strength in a solo career.

She is pictured on the front of top fashion magazines and other quality glossies. She becomes an even bigger solo star than the height of her fame with The Museonics.

Articles about Al are fewer and show him unsuccessfully launching solo albums, a few soundtracks for movies that fail at the box office, a few articles towards the end under his own byline in specialist music magazines about avant garde music and composers.

Several articles mention Al has financially lost out by breaking up the band and been reduced to bankruptcy. The item about him is a brief court document describing his filing for bankrupt status.

Evel Tyler under his byline is merciless to Al and heaps scorn in print and headlines on every project he tries, clearly sabotaging any efforts he makes.

By the time of 2005 the articles trail off entirely for Al but Calliope is still going strong, the opposite trajectories of their careers obvious. Calliope is an established major star and Al has disappeared from public view.

CLOSE-UP of the text of one article by Evel Tyler:

'So what's my last word? Venus (Calliope Wix) is in the ascendant and The Baldstar (you know who!) is in permanent deserved eclipse. Ciao ciao, Al!'

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

It took one phone call for me to screw up years of success and cost me the one person I ever loved. I spent the next ten years thinking it over and hating myself until something unexpected happened.

TITLE: 2010

INT. AL'S SHABBY WESTMINSTER BASEMENT APARTMENT MORNING

Al is sitting in a dingy living room watching a classic movie on TV. He has aged and put on some weight. He is pale and there is an air of depression about him.

The TV is clearly second hand. All the furniture and fixtures in the basement apartment are seedy and shabby.

The mood here is grim with the peeling paint and plaster in some top corners and on the walls. The apartment is a depressing and neglected place going towards slummy with more than a hint of obsessiveness - a place where Al hides.

One complete wall is a collage of pictures of and tabloid and magazine articles about Calliope. They show the whole progression of her solo career and her successes since Al ended the band.

Another complete wall is a collage of tabloid and magazine articles by Evel Tyler, including printouts from websites, showing the passage of time. Some text has been circled with brightly colored marker pen ink. A full page tabloid page showing the unflattering photo Evel took of him just after having his head shaved in the barbershop. A photo of Evel at a celebrity party has a kitchen knife thrust into it.

On another wall, framed posters from Al's solo concerts and movie posters of feature films he has provided soundtracks for along with a few framed favorable reviews.

On another wall are several carefully framed magazine articles under Al's own byline. From assorted serious music magazines, they are about various musical subjects including electronic music and several about the history and current status of the Theremin.

The contrast of the collages and framed articles is stark and neglected. Al also looks neglected. Unshaven, his hair grown back fully and unkempt, he is only half dressed and is listless and tired. A box of half finished old pizza in front of him and other takeaway food containers.

He looks up as a buzzer near a staircase sounds, goes listlessly and answers it.

AL LUPTON

Yes?

MOTORCYCLE COURIER (INTERCOM)

Special delivery for Alderson  
Lupton. Is this him?

Al hesitates.

MOTORCYCLE COURIER (INTERCOM)

Is it? Come on man, I haven't got all day.

AL LUPTON

Yes, yes, I'm coming.

He puts on an old dressing gown and goes up the stairs.

EXT. UPPER TACHBROOK STREET, WESTMINSTER MORNING

Al cautiously opens his door. It is near a main road and the street is bohemian with a few imaginative shop fronts but as shabby as the apartment. Morning rush hour traffic thunders by and Al winces. He clearly doesn't go out much these days.

The Motorcycle Courier impatiently shoves a small special delivery packet at Al, then looks closely at him.

MOTORCYCLE COURIER

Sign here. Hey man, did you used to be famous?

AL LUPTON

No.

MOTORCYCLE COURIER

Lucky for you.

The Motorcycle Courier gets back on his bike and joins the traffic. Al looks at the special delivery in perplexity.

INT. AL'S SHABBY WESTMINSTER APARTMENT DAY

Coming down the stairs, Al turns the special delivery letter again and again in his hands. There is no indication of the sender. He walks into his adjoining studio.

INT. STUDIO, AL'S SHABBY WESTMINSTER APARTMENT DAY

Al comes in to his studio, where he spends a lot of time. In contrast to the shabby front room of the apartment the fully equipped studio is clean and well kept although the walls have damp and mould which threatens the equipment.

Several keyboards and a THEREMIN are carefully set up beside mixing consoles and a sampling desk. The equipment is all different makes and has clearly been assembled piece by piece, adapted to purpose skillfully.

All available surfaces are covered with ruled music paper. The walls are similarly decorated. We see a stack of master tapes: Al is writing music and working on an album of recordings.

Al sits down at a small work desk. On the desk are several letters from Mike Prospect giving details of approval for an album release of new material by Al in the near future. There is an old land line phone on the desk.

He opens the special delivery letter, reads from it. We hear the voice of Evel Tyler as the letter, but sounding stilted and artificial.

EVEL TYLER (V.O.)

Evel Tyler invites Alderson Lupton to a meeting at The Flywheel Club in Old Compton Street, Soho, on Wednesday morning, 10am prompt. All expenses including door cover charge to be paid by the invitor.

The letter is typed formally and signed on a monogrammed letterhead. Below the typed text is some handwriting Al peers at. Evel Tyler voices the handwritten message, this time in his normal tones.

EVEL TYLER (V.O.)

Balderson, I know you're not doing anything worth mentioning. If you show up and don't look and smell too much like a vagrant I might make it worth your while.

Al is amazed, then amused, then thoughtful. He looks at his watch. It is Wednesday, and just gone 8am.

He rubs his hand along his unshaven jaw, smiles wryly.

INT. BATHROOM, AL'S SHABBY WESTMINSTER APARTMENT MORNING

Al shaves wearing a towel, showered and washed thoroughly. When he opens the bathroom cabinet we see neatly stacked boxes of diabetic medication, repeat prescription forms.

He selects and takes a variety of pills, then takes out an insulin injector and expertly injects himself in the leg and stomach separately.

After shaving he combs his hair back and studies himself - more or less presentable.

INT. AL'S SHABBY WESTMINSTER APARTMENT DAY

Dressed smart-casual although a little threadbare and the clothes out of fashion for 2010, Al walks through the living room to the staircase.

He pauses and looks at the collage of Evel Tyler, remembers the battles they've had over the years and looks briefly worried. He goes up the stairs.

EXT. OLD COMPTON STREET, LONDON DAY

Al walks down a central London street, looking around a little nervously. It's clear he hasn't been out during daytime for awhile.

Searching for the address he eventually comes to a door with a small brass plate beside it reading 'The Flywheel Club' with a humorous flywheel motif. He rings the bell, goes in.

INT. THE FLYWHEEL CLUB, LONDON DAY

Al walks warily into a very stylish modern media club and is met at the door by a uniformed waiter who checks his name against a list, nods and points towards the back of the almost empty club which is shrouded in gloom.

As Al goes deeper in he sees a booth at the very back near the kitchen entrance under a red light where Evel Tyler waits, staring out at him balefully like a vulture.

Al slides into the booth opposite Evel. They stare at each other, too close in the too-narrow booth. Evel has aged even more than Al and looks jaded, vicious.

Without taking his eyes off Al, Evel signals to the waiter who brings over a tray of drinks. Al selects a mineral water, Evel swigs directly from a bottle of whisky.

Evel opens a small tin of colored pills and takes one, offering them to Al, but Al smiles and shakes his head. Evel snaps the tin shut smartly, irritated.

Nearby in the club an entourage headed by a young and beautiful exotically-dressed girl speaking in a loud distinctively American voice comes in and starts setting up for some kind of pop promo. The gaiety and excitement are a marked contrast to Al and Evel facing each other.

They stare at each other silently in the red light. Al is initially intimidated by the openly hostile expression of Evel.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

What is he waiting for?

EVEL TYLER (V.O.)

So what the hell are you waiting for, you pervy refugee? You're fatter and uglier than you were. Diabetes, if my sources are right.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

You're even scarier than you were. Like a skull on a living body. You seem to be waiting for me to make the first move, but I don't even know what the game is. I can wait.

EVEL TYLER (V.O.)

I can wait. You've been dead for ten years because I've kept you dead. And now I'm going to bury you. I know how to carve up and serve the meat the right way. I made an example of you to warn all the others off and you think you can stonewall me now? Less than zero chance, you geek gimpster. Welcome to Evel's evil abattoir of celebrity careers and former pop stars.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

Silence from you is the last thing I expected. What a withering sneer you've got. It's piercing. I admit it, you frighten me. You stare at me like a skull because you're dead inside, aren't you? You've used up all your hate and you're out of fuel. What are you going to threaten me with that you haven't already done? Maybe you'll tell me.

EVEL TYLER (V.O.)

Ask me, Alderson. Beg me. You know you have to. After all these years I hate you as much as the first day I saw you attached like some crust of pollution to that posh bitch queen Calliope, leeching off her like some disease. I hate your talent. I hate your refusal to give up and die. I hate everything you can do in your art that I can't do in mine so I wiped you out and now you want to make a comeback, don't you? It's your last chance. We're both getting old now but I can still kill it. You know this and that's why you came. Now *beg* me.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

I really don't know why I'm here. What does he really want? Why won't he say? Why is he even interested anymore after ten years? From what I've heard he's had his time anyhow and the youthful competition in the new media is biting into him pretty hard. It's a rat-eat-rat world. Probably neither of us have the energy to work all day and night anymore. Both of us are has-beens now. Maybe he just can't admit it. He really does stare like a vulture.

EVEL TYLER (V.O.)

What the hell are you gaping at, you twisted little ugly cretinous loser flyblown leper goon?! I've always had a gift to see the weakness in people.

And your weakness is idealism. Your hope for the future. But you've got no hope left and no future left. Because I control it, and I'm still stronger than the young jackal pack competition growing up against me. If you don't start knocking your ugly egghead on the floor pretty freaking quick and whimper for me like the whipped dog you are I will grind you down for the final time.

Al suddenly has an epiphany moment while looking into Evel's desperate, staring and hate-filled eyes. He knows that Evel is afraid and is desperate for him to speak first, to beg to be allowed to release his comeback album.

His face fills with an expression of realization, then understanding and calm amusement.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

He's afraid of me. I can't believe it. Behind the hate in that poison glare he's actually afraid I'm going to release the album without any fear of what he'll try to do.

EVEL TYLER (V.O.)

I hate myself for being afraid of you and your talent. I hate you for being able to create songs of quality that will last after our time. I hate Calliope Wix for loving you. I hate the world for giving you these things which I can never have, because I chose to succeed in parasitical paparazzi style hack journalism. But I have real power in my domain and I can still destroy your dream. I can vaporize that last album and final comeback and drown you in silence.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)

You can't really do anything, can you? Not if I ignore it. Not if I refuse to be afraid of you and your disappearing power of lies. If people still want to hear my music they'll

make up their own minds whatever you say. I've been through everything. I've nothing to lose now. You've taken a lot but you can't take my music away. You can't take away the millions of people that still love it and may want to hear something new. I've paid for my mistakes and I'm not interested in you or your world anymore.

Both of them look at each other, remembering their shared history. A series of FLASHBACKS of their early days and the incidents in Dick Hardcore's mansion, Al's escape, the collage of Evel's many printed and online attacks, footage of Evel laughing mockingly on pop TV programmes and pointing to posters of Al's solo albums and movie soundtracks.

Al smiles with a new calm and inner strength at Evel. An understanding passes between them that Al is no longer afraid. It infuriates and frightens Evel.

Al gets up.

EVEL TYLER (V.O.)

Balderson, you washed up,  
razzled-out retard, you will regret  
this!

AL LUPTON

Goodbye, Evel. I have an album to  
finish.

Al leaves Evel in the booth, crosses the floor of the club and deftly does a quick dance with the American pop star as he passes her and a film crew. She squeals with delight and laughs. The entourage and film crew applaud as Al goes out the door.

Evel bows his head, overcome with humiliated rage and wipes away a tear, angrily waving the approaching waiter away.

EVEL TYLER

Bastard.

EXT. OLD COMPTON STREET, LONDON DAY

Al walks out of the Flywheel Club entrance and looks at the busy street. He is no longer intimidated or nervous. He walks off confidently and turns a corner.

INT. THE FLYWHEEL CLUB, LONDON DAY

Evel sits in the booth alone, shaking with rage and anguish, fists clenching and unclenching. Around him the bottles from the drinks tray are smashed, trails of liquid running down nearby walls and broken glass is everywhere.

The waiter, American pop star and her film crew and entourage all stare at him openmouthed.

INT. STUDIO IN AL'S SHABBY WESTMINSTER APARTMENT DAY

Still in his smart casual clothes from the Flywheel Club, Al is practicing at a keyboard.

The pages of songs and music have all been sorted into neat piles and put in loose-leaf folders wound with rubber bands.

Al gets up from the keyboard, switches on and practices on the THEREMIN, an electrical instrument that makes eerie electronic sounds. He plays it expertly and goes through a series of scales and improvisations.

He looks every inch the pop star professional, infused with energy and inspiration in the music.

He goes to an old style land line phone set on the writing desk and dials a number.

AL LUPTON

Mike? It's Al.

MIKE PROSPECT (PHONE)

Hi, Alderson. Good to hear from you.  
What news on the album?

AL LUPTON

Mike, I've decided I'd like to release this year, in time for Christmas. I've written and done all the basic work here. I'd need a few days of studio time, maybe a week.

MIKE PROSPECT (PHONE)

You've got it, any time you need it. Rafe Clunes has asked to supervise the album. He runs his own studio now you know, but he said to tell you he'll clear his commitments to come on-board.

AL LUPTON

I'd like to work with Rafe again. Thanks, Mike.

MIKE PROSPECT (PHONE)

There was one other thing. I had a request from the programme director of something called 'Into the Ether' next month. It's a musical event celebrating the Theremin. You're known as a player now, aren't you? It's organizer, a guy called Ernie wants you to perform there. He says he's an old fan.

AL LUPTON

I haven't done a gig in public for more than five years, Mike.

MIKE PROSPECT

You're bringing out a new album. The Museonics are the past now. Maybe it's time to come back in out of the cold.

Al thinks hard, decides to take the chance.

AL LUPTON

I'll do it.

MIKE PROSPECT (PHONE)

Great, that's the spirit. I'll be in touch.

Al puts down the phone and walks out of the studio.

INT. AL'S SHABBY WESTMINSTER APARTMENT DAY

The living room is visibly cleaner. The pizza box and food containers are gone and trash picked up, the carpets methodically vacuumed. Furniture has been moved.

Al takes down the collage of Evel Tyler, ripping down everything to expose the plaster of the wall underneath.

He crumples up everything and stuffs it into plastic garbage sacks, seals then hauls them up the stairs.

EXT. UPPER TACHBROOK STREET, WESTMINSTER DAY

Al places the sacks on the sidewalk outside, watches as a municipal dustman picks them up, goes back inside.

INT. AL'S SHABBY WESTMINSTER APARTMENT DAY

Back in the apartment, Al looks intensely at the wall collage of Calliope. He moves forward as if to tear it down too, but stops at the last moment. He touches a photo of her fondly, then remembers something and goes back towards his studio.

INT. STUDIO IN AL'S SHABBY WESTMINSTER APARTMENT NIGHT

Al goes through boxes of old files looking for something. Finally he pulls out an old packet of photographs.

Searching through them he finds the photo he took of Calliope years before on Riding House Street. He looks at it a long time, remembering, then puts it carefully back in the packet.

He places the packet on top of his keyboard within easy reach.

Al writes music far into the night, finally falling asleep.

TITLE: ONE MONTH LATER

INT. ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL, LONDON MORNING

Al, dressed smartly but casually, comes in to the Royal Festival Hall in the company of a security guard - it is not yet open and passing a poster advertising the 'INTO THE ETHER' music event that day.

Around him preparations are going on for the festival and the instruments are being set up by technicians. Its organizer, Ernie, intense, 25 years old, cool and music-professorial, catches sight of Al and comes over enthusiastically.

ERNIE

Mr. Lupton? It's really you?

AL LUPTON

Al, please. I guess you're Ernie?

ERNIE

This is a big moment for me. I've been a fan of your music since I was twelve.

Their age difference hits Al hard. He looks a little lost.

AL LUPTON

Wow, no hope of my passing for thirty around here, then.

They laugh, relaxing. ERNIE'S eyes are full of respect.

ERNIE

Your soundtrack for '*STARMAKER*' back in 2004 and your articles on electronic music inspired me to research the Theremin and I made it my thesis when I did my masters degree in music. So really, it was you who inspired this show today.

Al is delighted, this is unexpected.

AL LUPTON

I thought almost nobody read them. The movie bombed, you know.

ERNIE

Not with me it didn't.

Al is touched by this. More musicians start to come through the main doors and Al stands back as Ernie goes to greet them.

Al looks around. He sees the instruments being set up and chairs set out - he is getting into the idea of playing for an audience again, and only now realizes how much he's missed it.

INT. ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL, LONDON AFTERNOON

It is later and the music festival is in full swing.

Al plays with amazing skill on the Theremin, segueing from tune to tune and creating incredible effects.

At the end of his set the crowd goes wild and roars for an encore. Al obliges. Unseen by him, Calliope, Mike Prospect, Rafe Clunes and others from Mike's recording studio quietly come in and go to the bar area, watching Al's performance.

Calliope is holding Rafe's hand when they come in briefly but they quickly move apart slightly when they see Al finish.

When Al emerges from the congratulatory crowd and heads for the bar he is astonished to see Calliope and the others and stops dead in his tracks.

Mike comes up and steers Al over to Calliope.

MIKE PROSPECT

Alderson, Calliope would like to sing  
on your new album.

CALLIOPE

If that's OK.

(long beat)

They look into each other's eyes. Al is close to tears, happy beyond words. One of the studio men brings a drink to Al.

AL LUPTON

If that OK?! Let's drink to it.

They all raise their glasses and clink them together. Al is too overcome to go on. Rafe Clunes smiles, steps in.

RAFE CLUNES

And it would be an honour for me to  
produce it. My studio's yours.

MIKE PROSPECT

No, my studio!

Everyone laughs - it is like the old days again suddenly.

AL LUPTON

Well, you've got all my preliminary tapes, Mike. Effectively I'm ready to go.

CALLIOPE

So why don't we start now?

AL LUPTON

You mean...right now?

CALLIOPE

Rafe and Mike have the studio all set up and ready. That's why we're here. We've got a car waiting.

Al is stunned, keyed up and inspired by performing again.

AL LUPTON

Yeah, okay. Let's go and make a record.

Calliope takes Al's hand and they exchange a look - all is forgiven and the years have dropped away. All of the group head towards the exit as the festival continues.

ERNIE watches them go and smiles.

EXT. CLOUDESLEY RECORDING STUDIOS DAY

INT. CLOUDESLEY RECORDING STUDIOS NIGHT

It is hours later. Al plays keyboard with dazzling skill and Calliope sings beautifully - it is as though they've never been apart. They've been playing all night but are still going strong.

Rafe and Mike sit in the engineering booth supervising. The atmosphere is relaxed and good. Mike and Rafe look at each other - the music is excellent and recording well.

Al and Calliope finish. Al does an impromptu flourish on the keyboard to finish. Rafe and Mike applaud.

RAFE CLUNES (INTERCOM)

Fantastic, both of you. That was the second last track. I'm amazed we got through almost all of it in one night.

Let's close up before we all fall  
apart. We'll finish the day after  
tomorrow, OK?

Al looks at the clock - they have been recording through the  
night and it is now very early in the morning. He is elated and  
could go on and finish the album but sees everyone else is too  
tired.

Calliope exchanges a quick glance with Rafe that Al doesn't see.

AL LUPTON

Okay Rafe, Mike. I can't thank you  
enough for this. It goes beyond  
words.

Mike and Rafe have already vanished from the engineer's booth.  
Al blinks uncertainly - he didn't see them go.

He turns and Calliope is watching him, smiling.

CALLIOPE

It's the best music you ever did,  
Alderson.

AL LUPTON

You know I wrote it for you.

CALLIOPE

I want to go on too but we've come to  
the end.

Al smiles and opens the door of the studio. Beyond everything  
is dark and he is confused for a moment, seeing no one.

AL LUPTON

They closed everything fast.

CALLIOPE

I'm staying with a friend around the  
corner. Let's go now.

Al shuts the door behind them. The lights switch off.

EXT. RIDING HOUSE STREET DAWN

Al and Calliope walk together towards the corner of Wells Street  
which intersects Riding House Street.

It is the same corner where Al took the photo of Calliope many years ago and he suddenly remembers, stopping in his tracks. Calliope turns.

AL LUPTON

Thank you for all this, Calliope. I never really thought we'd meet again.

CALLIOPE

I did try over the years, Alderson. But you never answered.

AL LUPTON

I got so messed up. I was never prepared for anything.

CALLIOPE

It could have been us, my love.

(beat)

AL LUPTON

Could it still be us?

Calliope starts to speak but bites her lip as Al goes on.

AL LUPTON (CONT'D)

I've learned. Maybe I needed that time to learn. We've both lived lives since then but could we start again?

(long beat)

Calliope touches Al'S hand with a sad expression.

CALLIOPE

Alderson, I'm going to marry Rafe Clunes in a few months. I'm carrying his child. I'm sorry.

Al is devastated but has an epiphany - he realizes he must redeem himself and give something back to Calliope.

The effort to pretend he is delighted at the news is visible on his face and it tortures him.

AL LUPTON

I'm so glad for both of you. Tell you what. When the little one's a bit

older I'll teach them piano. And the  
Theremin too, if I decide I really  
want to drive you both crazy.

Calliope searches Al's face and decides he is genuinely happy  
like he is pretending and she smiles with relief.

CALLIOPE  
You'll be okay?

AL LUPTON  
Not until we've finished the album  
together.

She smiles, waves and goes around the corner.

Al watches her go. In him something is fatally broken. When she  
goes out of his sight he turns and walks the opposite way towards  
Bourlet Close.

EXT. BOURLET CLOSE EARLY MORNING

Al lies in Bourlet Close having fallen out of the plastic chair.  
The life goes out of him and we hear his heart stop.

A group of children bouncing a ball have found him. They turn  
and rush away.

AL LUPTON (V.O.)  
I won't finish the album, but she and  
Rafe will. Calliope...

EXT. WELLS STREET EARLY MORNING

Calliope seems to hear Al call her name and stops to look around  
but the street is deserted.

She touches the bulge in her belly -a new life waiting- smiles  
and walks on. As she goes she begins to whistle '*Mystery Girl*'.

**THE END.**