

RUST

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FADE IN:

INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

ROCK MUSIC off in the distance.

CLOSE ON: A homemade bird tattoo on a woman's hand. The bird is beautiful in its crudeness with its wings at its side. The hand is rocking a whiskey bottle.

WIDER ON: GRACIE RUST, 30, tattooed, punk rock singer. Her eyes are closed and she is moving to her own music. Ignoring the music bleed from outside.

In the distance the opening band finishes their set.

LOU, 45, drummer opens the dressing room door.

LOU

Last one. Get your ass in gear.

He disappears down the hall. Gracie opens her eyes, looks at herself in the mirror and takes a big swig of whiskey.

INT. MUSIC VENUE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The crowd can be heard CHEERING. Gracie makes her way to side stage. She hands the bottle to a GUITAR TECH who hangs her guitar over her shoulder. She adjusts the strap, takes back the bottle and takes another drink.

A pint glass hits the stage and smashes.

GRACIE

Goddamn kids.

INT. MUSIC VENUE - AUDIENCE - CONTINUOUS

It's a mostly a full house. Older punks mixed with 20-somethings dressed in new punk clothes. Half the crowd is female many dressed like Gracie.

FRANCIS, hard edged, all business, band manager moves through he crowd. The crowd is ready, vibrating with excitement. A DRUNK PUNK, pushing and flaying, is pissing off everyone around.

Francis nods to a BURLY SECURITY GUARD who hauls the drunk punk out.

Francis arrives at the sound board being worked by a female MUSIC ENGINEER.

He takes the microphone.

FRANCIS

Are you ready for the last night of
the suicide by lifestyle tour?

The crowd starts CHANTING.

INT. MUSIC VENUE - SIDE STAGE

Gracie has her head down listening to the audience. MARCH, greying, handsome lead guitar and AL, late 40's, transgender bass player approach Gracie.

MARCH

Sure you want to go through with
this?

GRACIE

We going to cancel the show?

March turns to get his guitar as AL steps in and places his forehead against Gracie's.

AL

Just do your best...

AL AND GRACIE

...yah bitch!

March and Al are at the edge of the stage. Gracie takes two last shots from the bottle.

FRANCIS (O.S.)

Give it up for The Blisters!

The stage lights come up. Lou is at the drums and leads in as March and Al hit the stage they begin to play DADDY ISSUES. Gracie waits for a moment, then begrudgingly hands the bottle to the guitar tech and walks on stage. The crowd goes wild.

EXT. DENNY'S RESTAURANT - MORNING

A beat-down tour bus is parked in the lot. Francis, talking on the phone, counts money out to the BUS DRIVER.

INT. DENNY'S RESTAURANT - MORNING

The restaurant is sparsely populated with families and teenagers.

A SERVER, loaded with breakfast plates, walks over to a semi circular booth.

LOU (O.S.)
So you're telling me Family Ties
was better than Full House?

The band looks like death warmed over - these aren't morning people. Gracie, humming to herself and tapping on the table, periodically writes in a spiral notebook.

MARCH
Hands down.

The band starts passing condiments automatically like a family. The server puts down pancakes in front of Gracie.

GRACIE
I didn't order these.

MARCH
Eat something.

LOU
Bob Saget, The Olsen twins and John
"Uncle Jessie" Stamos.

MARCH
Alex. P. Keaton. Micheal J Fox was
the shit. And Skippy.

GRACIE
I'm not hungry.

LOU
Yeah! His best friend was Skippy.

Gracie focuses on her writing. Al slides the syrup over.

AL
You're both wrong. Growing Pains.
Alan Thicke was everyone's dad and
Dicaprico joined the cast at the
end.

Lou leans over to three TEENAGE GIRLS in the next booth.

LOU
(to the girls)
Hey. Want some help working off
those pancakes?

The girls giggle awkwardly.

GRACIE
Lou. Eyes front.

LOU
What? I was just--

GRACIE
I know what you were doing.
(to the girls)
And you girls grow a pair.

While Gracie is distracted Lou, like a bratty brother, grabs her notebook.

LOU
What's this?

Gracie tries to grab it back from Lou.

LOU (CONT'D)
(reading)
Never thought we'd see you fly.
Silent bird in darkened sky.

GRACIE
Give it.

LOU
(reading)
Rigid trees that would not bough...
(Laughing)
Would not bough?

MARCH
Lou.

Lou gives it back.

LOU
Fine Dad. You guys are no fun.
Wait, which was Growing Pains?

Gracie tears out the page and crumples it up. Francis enters.

FRANCIS
Studio, engineer, 24/7 for three
weeks. Is that enough for you?

MARCH

More than we're used to.

LOU

Why are we recording in this suburban paradise, anyway?

FRANCIS

This is where you guys requested to record. Gracie said this--

LOU

You listened to Gracie? That's your first problem.

GRACIE

Shut up.

FRANCIS

I'll move us to Toronto? Detroit?

Francis grabs his phone.

GRACIE

No.

MARCH

It'll be fine. Plus there's good clubs we can play.

Lou turns to Gracie. She is the deciding factor.

LOU

Come on, I can guarantee you nothing worth anything ever came out of this town.

Gracie gets up and leaves.

LOU (CONT'D)

What did I say?

AL

This is Gracie's home town. She's hasn't been back since she left.

LOU

Shit, I didn't know.

MARCH

It's her father's funeral.

LOU

Ah, hell.

Everyone eats their breakfasts in silence.

EXT. DENNY'S RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Gracie steps outside and pulls her coat around her to fend off the cold. A family tries to exit but Gracie is in the way. She steps aside to let them go. Francis steps out.

FRANCIS

Hey.

GRACIE

Hey.

FRANCIS

If you need a few days...

GRACIE

I don't.

FRANCIS

Last night's was great. Great way to end the tour. Didn't play much from the first album, huh?

GRACIE

Yeah.

FRANCIS

Man, that stuff is great. It has a visceral aggression.

GRACIE

Kids sure love it.

FRANCIS

I hear yah. It'd be great, with this new album, to have some of that back.

GRACIE

Sure.

FRANCIS

The thing is the label is only back another tour if the new album really lands.

GRACIE

Okay.

FRANCIS

Okay.

Francis almost lets it go and then turns to try one more time.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

You can sing with any band or go solo. March is a hell of a player, better than he knows. All of them are solid musicians. But starting something new isn't easy... at their age.

Francis goes back inside. Gracie looks through the window at the tired, misfit band, her family. Only March is looking back.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Gracie paces at the bottom of the steps to a church. A baby-faced PASTOR, is standing at the top of the steps.

PASTOR

The N.A. meeting is around the side. Don't be shy, they're very nice.

GRACIE

Go to hell, padre.

PASTOR

Grace?

Gracie is shocked that he recognized her.

PASTOR (CONT'D)

You were two years ahead of me in school. I'm so sorry for your loss. Come to pay your respects.

GRACIE

I got no respect for that man.

The priest is confused by the response but Gracie turns away ending the conversation.

A black car pulls up. Gracie's mother GLADYS, 50, gets out.

When Gracie sees her mom she gets fidgety trying to build up the courage to approach.

Gladys stakes a moment to compose herself. Gracie takes a deep breath and straightens her hair.

Gladys is about to go inside. It's now or never. Gracie takes a step towards her mother and they make eye contact. A smiles flutters across Gracie's face.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Mom.

A moment while Gladys considers Gracie.

GLADYS

You could have at least put on a dress.

Gracie deflates, her hopes dashed.

Gladys walks up a few stairs then stops and turns back to Gracie. Gracie's spirits lift.

GLADYS (CONT'D)

It's good you came. Here.

Gladys holds out a tissue. Gracie takes it - renewed hope.

GLADYS (CONT'D)

For the eyeliner. You know your Father never thought that foolishness belonged in church.

Gladys goes into the church without looking back.

The CHURCH BELLS ring. Gracie drops the tissue and walks down the sidewalk.

EXT. CHURCH - AROUND THE CORNER - CONTINUOUS

A NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS SIGN points to a side door. A TWEAKER, woman, 40's, WAVES at Gracie to invite her in.

Gracie pauses. The CHURCH BELLS ring again. She turns away.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

In the distance The CHURCH BELLS stop.

CLOSE ON: some cocaine on the back of Gracie's hand over her bird tattoo.

WIDER ON: Gracie inhales deep, her body shutters.

WIDER STILL: A DRUG DEALER, 20's, cheap vintage 1980's leather jacket holds out a baggie of cocaine to Gracie. Gracie reaches for it but stops.

DRUG DEALER
Looks like you could handle
something harder.

Grace pockets the baggie and stumbles off down the alley.

INT. CLUB - STAGE - NIGHT

A crowd waits in front of a dark stage.

The lights come up on the band who start to play.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
For the first time performing back
in her home town, Gracie Rust.

Gracie rushes out but stumbles. Recovering she grabs the mic and sings more aggressive than the previous performance she is raw and energized but sloppy.

Lou, excited by Gracie's energy, gives March a rock sign with tongue between drum hits.

March, concerned and suspicious, tries to check in with Gracie but she avoids eye contact confirming his suspicions.

INT. CLUB - CONTINUOUS

PATTI, 15, carrying a backpack, dressed in a store bought rock style, enters. The DOOR GUY barely looks up and nods her inside.

Two OLDER PUNK GUYS look her up and down. Patti turns away from them bumping into a PUNK KID.

PATTI
Sorry--

The punk kid doesn't even notice her. Patti is lured by the music towards the dance floor and stage. Patti sees Gracie and freezes. Audience push past her but Patti doesn't respond, star struck.

INT. MUSIC STAGE - CONTINUOUS

On stage. March, still playing, gives Gracie a nod to see if she is okay. She ignores him. He taps her with his elbow. Gracie pushes March away and turns to the rest of the band.

GRACIE
Purity Ball!

AL
(to Gracie)
Oh, this. I need a sneaky snack.
Lets go find something salty.

Al pushes Gracie away. March and Lou still locked in a gazing contest.

Francis comes back stage with a couple of bottles of whiskey.

FRANCIS
We keep that edge up and the next
album will be mammoth.

Francis notices the guys staring at each other. He holds up the bottles trying to break the tension.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)
The venue loved it.

MARCH
(to Lou)
You know where that edge comes from
and you two are not the ones who
clean up.

March smashes out an EXIT DOOR.

FRANCIS
Uh... All I know is if Gracie keeps
that up the new album'll be a
chainsaw.

Lou grabs a bottle from Francis and takes a big drink.

INT. GREENROOM - NIGHT

Al walks Gracie in, cracks a bottle of water and hands it to Gracie. Gracie holds it without interest.

AL
So...

Long beat. Gracie leaves.

AL (CONT'D)
Good talk.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Gracie stumbles into the hall, grabs a bottle of Jack Daniels from a CREW GUY and spots the punk from the stage.

She backs the punk up against a wall and makes out with the punk for a few moments then, with the punk still pinned, takes a drink.

Patti is standing there, too close, either waiting or watching. The punk tries to pull away but Gracie holds him where he is.

GRACIE

Not looking for a third.

PATTI

No, it's-- I... Um... Are you Gracie Rust?

GRACIE

Don't really have a free hand for an autograph.

PATTI

No. I...

GRACIE

What?

Patti looks around trying to build up confidence. The punk tries to slide away but Gracie keeps him.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Is he your boyfriend or something?

PATTI

No. I... I'm your daughter.

Gracie looks at her and knows it's the truth. It's a punch in the gut. Gracie holding eye contact with Patti. She releases the punk who slips away.

Patti's eyes are Gracie's eyes. A tear starts to well up in Gracie. She clenches tight to stop it.

Patti, shifts nervously, unsure what to do.

GRACIE

Fuck.

INT. GREENROOM - NIGHT

Gracie is sitting in the green room with the same expression on her face. She has a death grip on the bottle of Jack Daniels.

Patti is in the middle of the couch. The whole band, stunned, are about as far from Patti as they can be while still in the room.

LOU

No way. No way. It's bullshit.

Gracie takes a big chug.

LOU (CONT'D)

(to Patti)

No offence, I'm sure you're super nice or a fraud or whatever but Gracie doesn't have a daughter.

MARCH

(to Patti)

What's your name, hun?

Patti, nervous, is trying to catch Gracie's gaze.

PATTI

Patti.

AL

Patti. Are you hungry?

Al looks to the tragically unhealthy rider table.

AL (CONT'D)

Never mind.

FRANCIS

Lets get our heads around this. Listen, I get that you're a fan but Gracie Rust has never had a kid.

PATTI

I found papers that said Grace Louise Rutherford was my bio-mom.

MARCH

Gracie?

GRACIE

It was before I joined the band.

Things freeze.

LOU

Ho-lee shit.

Lou takes a big drink. March shifts, splitting his attention between Patti and Gracie.

Gracie starts drinking harder.

LOU (CONT'D)
This is Gracie's daughter.

FRANCIS
You have a daughter?

GRACIE
Yes, I have a daughter!

PATTI
I'm right here.

LOU
Let's drink to Gracie's daughter!

Lou hands Patti a beer and cheers the bottom of her glass.
March takes the beer away from her.

LOU (CONT'D)
This is a celebration.

GRACIE
This isn't fucking funny.

LOU
No. It's a joyous celebration of
motherhood.

The word motherhood hits Gracie. She ventures a look at
Patti.

GRACIE
I... excuse me.

Gracie grabs a bottle and bolts out the door.

MARCH
(to Lou)
Real nice.

AL
I'll talk with her.
(to Patti)
You're all right dear, you know
what they say, "its easier to raise
strong women than repair a broken
punk" or whatever.

Al follows Gracie. March goes to follow then turns to Lou and
Francis.

MARCH

Out.

Lou and Francis get up and go into the hall.

MARCH (CONT'D)

It'll be... um... yeah.

March leaves.

Patti sits in the empty room.

EXT. LOADING DOCK - NIGHT

Gracie is pacing back and forth drinking. Al steps out watching her walk and lights a cigarette.

AL

So, what's new?

GRACIE

It's bad timing.

AL

Is there's a better time for a surprise daughter?

GRACIE

Never would be good.

AL

If you're going to be unreasonable we can end therapy right now.

GRACIE

It's not like I had much choice once my Dad found out. I haven't thought about her since I left.

Al lets Gracie settle down then delivers the next line as dry as he can smoking to punctuate the point.

AL

Sometimes, not often, I still miss my penis.

A pause then Gracie breaks, laughing.

GRACIE

She can't stay.

AL

That's what I said to my penis.

GRACIE

Seriously.

March comes out. Gracie goes to him.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Can you just please get rid of her?

MARCH

Do you want me to send her home or
just kick her to the curb?

GRACIE

You know what I mean.

March concedes.

MARCH

You can be a real shit sometimes.

Gracie relaxes knowing that March will take care of Patti.

MARCH (CONT'D)

Tomorrow.

Gracie is about to protest.

MARCH (CONT'D)

It's late. I'm a musician not an
asshole.

AL

There a difference?

GRACIE

Can't you just get her--

MARCH

Tomorrow. She can stay in my room.
I'll double up with Lou.

GRACIE

I... ah.

AL

And you need to talk to her.

GRACIE

I can't.

MARCH

This is not negotiable.

Gracie covers her face with her palms like she is trying to push her eyes into her head, teeth clenched.

GRACIE

What... what if I'm just like my folks?

MARCH

You aren't so don't be.

She drops her hands from her face.

GRACIE

What do I say?

MARCH

Hi, I'm Gracie. I have no idea what the hell I'm doing?

AL

Factually accurate.

GRACIE

I never wanted this.

AL

I can condone a lot but not even I can get behind cutting and running from this.

March breaks away from Gracie, fully agitated.

MARCH

Tell her you never wanted her. Tell her she should go away. Tell her the truth. But you have to tell her something.

GRACIE

What's gotten into you?

MARCH

You should have told me.

Al throws up her hands.

AL

That's me. Only one relationship crisis at a time.

Al takes the bottle from Gracie and goes back inside.

GRACIE

It was before-- I didn't think I'd ever see her again.

MARCH

It never crossed your mind to mention it in the past, say, 15 years?

GRACIE

It's not like it's a fond memory.

MARCH

We were together for four years. It never came up?

GRACIE

How do you tell your rock star boyfriend that you're a teenage, dead beat, single mom.

MARCH

That's weak and you know it.

Gracie turns to avoid this. March tries a softer approach.

MARCH (CONT'D)

I was with you through whatever. Still would be.

She turns back on the attack.

GRACIE

Fine. I got a kid. I ditched her to run away with a guitar player in a band. Happy?

March has had enough.

MARCH

I'll get her back to the motel. Choose to be better than your folks and you might wake up tomorrow liking yourself a little.

March goes back inside.

INT. MOTEL ROOM BATHROOM - DAY

Gracie in a tepid tub, she has been in there so long her hands have pruned.

GRACIE

(singing)

My high-flying bird has flown from
out my arms.
I thought myself her keeper.
She thought I meant her harm.
She thought I was the archer
A weather-man of words
But I could never...

A whiskey bottle sits on the edge of the tub and an acoustic guitar is balanced across the edges. Gracie's eyes follow the neck of the guitar down to the body where three lines of coke are drawn out beside the baggie containing the rest. She picks up a rolled bill, fiddles with it, then uses it to strum the strings.

Gracie wipes her face with the back of her hand smearing her eyeshadow. A black smudge obscures her bird tattoo. Instinctively she grabs some toilet paper and wipes her eyes.

The tissue, her hands and face now covered in black smears. She is a mess. She drops the tissue into the water.

Stepping out of the tub and stands naked staring herself in the mirror. Two black bird tattoos on her chest.

Almost formally she picks up the guitar and tips the cocaine into the toilet. She flushes.

She sits down on the toilet and starts to play.

INT. MOTEL - DAY

Patti is packing. Her door ajar. Al steps in.

AL

Look who is up already.

PATTI

March has me on the noon bus. Why are you up?

AL

Morning calisthenics.

Al holds up a coffee and a cigarette.

AL (CONT'D)

You don't keep a body like this lounging around. Has she talked to you yet?

PATTI

No.

AL

Your mom is, what we in punk call,
a real bitch. Stick around, let the
shock wear off.

PATTI

I got a ticket already.

AL

Let me see.

Patti hands her the ticket and Al rips it up. Patti is shocked.

AL (CONT'D)

Oops.

PATTI

What did you do that for?

AL

I'm an impulsive bitch.

PATTI

I don't know why I even came. I
guess I was hoping... ah it's
silly.

AL

You're trying to figure out who you
are. I didn't figure it out till
much later in life. I started in
this band with a cock.

Patti loosens at Al's quip.

AL (CONT'D)

She'll warm up to you. Or she'll
knock you out. You are her daughter
so she might pull her punch.

Patti laughs. Al takes Patti's bag and throws it on the bed.

PATTI

She doesn't wants me here.

AL

No buts about it. Unpack. It'll be
good for her.

She hesitates.

AL (CONT'D)
Fine I'll do it.

Al grabs her bag, pulls stuff out and throws it around the room. Patti, laughing, tries to stop Al and grab her stuff.

PATTI
Stop. Stop. Okay.

There are clothes everywhere. A MAN, 40's, with a rolly-case, is stopped at the open door, watching. Patti, with an arm load of clothes, and Al, holding a cute lacy bra, stop and look at him.

AL
This is a private panty party.

The man quickly leaves. Both bursts out laughing.

Al looks at the bra indifferently then holds it up against her body.

AL (CONT'D)
I'm keeping this.

PATTI
So... How do I...? I mean, what can I do?

AL
Let her come to you.

PATTI
What if I told her... I just want to get to know her, you know?

AL
Gracie is uniquely stubborn. It has to be her idea. Now clean this place up. There's shit everywhere.

Al leaves. Patti looks around the room then in a moment of happiness throws the stuff in her arms everywhere.

INT. GREENROOM - DAY

Patti is sitting in the green room drawing in her sketch book. Gracie enters, nervous, avoiding eye contact. A long awkward moment.

GRACIE
Hey.

PATTI

Hey.

GRACIE

You hungry?

PATTI

I ate. Thanks.

Gracie moves a sad looking cheese and cracker plate from the rider table to in front of Patti.

PATTI (CONT'D)

Thanks.

Gracie doesn't sit.

PATTI (CONT'D)

I have a few questions--

GRACIE

My dad was a hell-fire
fundamentalist so when I got
knocked up I was out the door. No
questions, no money, no job, no
place to live. The best thing for
you wasn't me.

PATTI

I was just wondering if I could
watch the show tonight?

GRACIE

Oh. Yeah. You like this type of
music?

PATTI

I like all kinds but my folks don't
let me go to concerts.

GRACIE

Your parents pretty strict?

PATTI

Yeah.

GRACIE

I hear yah. Me too. Was like living
in a gulag.

PATTI

Parents can be hard.

GRACIE

Yeah, well, I'm not what you would call a "mom" type.

PATTI

Geez, really? The lyrics to "Parents Eff You Up" made me think you were a natural care giver.

Gracie is amused at the sass.

PATTI (CONT'D)

Don't worry about me. I take care of myself. I've been on my own for a while.

GRACIE

You leave home?

PATTI

Yeah... home was not what you would call great. We did not have anything. Just poor. Dad yelled a lot. So I left.

GRACIE

My old man was a piece of work too.

Gracie really looks at Patti for the first time.

Gracie heads for the door, stops and stares at the door jam.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

For what it's worth I like that you found me.

Patti breaks a smile. Gracie sees it out the corner of her eye.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Tell the bartender you're with the band and they'll put whatever on our tab. Yeah.

Gracie nods and leaves.

INT. BAR - DAY

The same club. Patti comes out the back stage door and makes her way to the bar.

PATTI

Ginger ale... I'm with the band.

The older punks from the night before notice Patti has returned.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

On stage the band starts to play. Patti is in the crowd.

Gracie is trying not to not notice Patti but her attention is definitely on her.

One of the old punks stands next to Patti. Patti step away.

Gracie gets distracted by the man next to Patti.

Patti tries to move away and the old punk puts a hand around her waist and pulls her close. He starts groping her

Gracie throws down the mic, leaps off the stage, and shoves the old punk.

The crowd is energized by the encounter and start pushing each other around. Chaos ensues. Gracie pulls Patti through the crowd.

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

Gracie, fuming, pulls Patti down the hall and into the green room.

GRACIE

What the hell were you thinking?

PATTI

I was just -- he came up to me!

Gracie isn't listening or looking at Patti but is on her own rant.

GRACIE

You gotta watch out or shits like that will-- How the hell do you not know this?

Francis comes into the greenroom.

FRANCIS

It's a riot out there.

GRACIE

(to Francis)
And you.

Francis is taken a back by the attack, he thought he was the angry one.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
You're supposed to be watching out
for the band. What the hell?

PATTI
I uh--

Both of them are ignoring Patti.

FRANCIS
You have to get out there and calm
things down.

Patti, unsure, is like a kid in between two arguing parents -
can't leave but doesn't want to be too close.

GRACIE
Did you see what was happening or
was your head up your ass?

FRANCIS
We shouldn't have a runaway on tour
anyways. She's going home.

GRACIE
You don't tell me what to do.

FRANCIS
The label put me in charge and I
say she goes.

PATTI
I'll just head back to the--

GRACIE
(to Francis)
What?

Gracie steps into Francis' face.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
Patti's in the band, right?

PATTI
Okay. I --

Gracie gets closer.

FRANCIS
Yeah. Yeah.

A long moment of Gracie staring down Francis. The rest of the band enters. Lou is giggling happily and drops down on a couch.

LOU

So awesome.

MARCH

They're clearing the-- What's going on here?

GRACIE

Nothing. Patti's staying.

Francis, defeated, takes a moment then skulks off. Patti stifles a smile, trying not to explode in happiness.

AL

(to Patti)

Welcome to the cesspool.

INT. MOTEL - DAY

Patti is making sandwiches. She is struggling with the lack of equipment and space.

She finishes and looks around for something to transport them on. She sees the tray under the coffee maker.

She wipes the tray but it's still stained so she takes her scarf, a lovely silk, and lays it out on the tray then places the sandwiches on top. With pride she takes the tray and leaves.

INT. WAREHOUSE STUDIO - DAY

Patti arrives carrying the tray. The band is playing a track. It isn't going well.

Everyone is frustrated. Gracie stops and GROWLS.

LOU

This is shit.

GRACIE

Lets hear what you've written.

FRANCIS

Llets just try it again.

AL

Maybe we need a break.

FRANCIS

Can we just get one track down?

GRACIE

I don't need a break. I need to get this--

MARCH

(without looking up)

Patti, don't linger in the doorway.
Come on in.

GRACIE

How long have you been standing there?

Patti steps in.

PATTI

I made some food. You guys didn't seem to have much around so I thought--

FRANCIS

After this track--

Gracie grabs a sandwich. Francis backs down.

LOU

Oh shit, sandwiches! I'm starving.

The band starts devouring sandwiches.

LOU (CONT'D)

Ah. So good.

AL

Yum. Where did you learn to cook?

PATTI

I worked in a deli for a summer.

They all eat, enjoying the sandwiches. Patti is proud. March notices.

MARCH

(singing)

She used to work in a diner.

LOU

(Singing)

Never saw a woman look finer,

Lou dances with Patti in one hand and a sandwich in one hand.

LOU (CONT'D)

(singing)

I used to order just to watch her
float across the floor.

Gracie backs away to let Patti have the moment.

MARCH, AL, LOU

(singing)

Somewhere on a desert highway,
She rides a Harley Davidson,
Her long dark hair flyin' in the
wind,
She's been runnin' half her life,
The chrome and steel she rides,
Collidin' with the very air she
breathes.

Gracie has a moment of pride seeing her daughter amongst the
band.

INT. WAREHOUSE STUDIO - LATER

Only crumbs and Al's crusts remain on the sandwich tray. The
band is playing better now. Patti is sitting on a road case
listening. They finish a song.

AL

(to Patti)

So?

PATTI

It's great.

AL

Just like Gracie. Can't tell a lie
to save your life. What do you
really think?

PATTI

No, I think it's great.

GRACIE

Speak your mind.

PATTI

This is the first album since
Calamity Jane, right?

GRACIE

Yeah.

PATTI

Calamity Jane was good but Black and White was my favorite. Your vocals on that are amazing.

LOU

How the hell did you find Black and White?

PATTI

I got a copy off Ebay. Got most of your albums there but I found a vinyl of Church Bells at a rummage sale. Church Bells is my favorite song.

AL

Well you can't lie but you sure know how to evade a question.

GRACIE

Spill it.

PATTI

The music's there but not the heart. Your songs have depth. This just feels... thin.

Lou SCOFFS.

Patti is nervous that the rest of the band and Gracie aren't happy with her.

A moment as they consider.

GRACIE

She's right.

No one is upset.

MARCH

Your kid knows her music.

FRANCIS

Okay. We have sound check in an hour so lets get going.

The guys start packing up their gear. Gracie moves to Patti.

GRACIE

Never be afraid of speaking up. I want to hear when something ain't working. Better then spending time on crap.

PATTI

Okay.

Gracie winces with a stomach pain.

PATTI (CONT'D)

You okay?

GRACIE

Heartburn.

PATTI

From my sandwiches?

GRACIE

I get it from time to time. I'm just not used to eating before--

A bigger wince.

PATTI

That's not heartburn. Heartburn is a OHH not a AHH!

Gracie forces down the pain and laughs at Patti's impersonation.

GRACIE

Probably just getting sick. We'll play Church Bells tonight?

PATTI

Really?

GRACIE

Yeah, why not?

Patti gets excited. Gracie lets herself enjoy it. She forces a smile through the pain.

INT. WAREHOUSE STUDIO - DRUM KIT AREA - DAY

Lou is packing his snare and Francis walks up.

FRANCIS

A word?

LOU

Take three my friend.

FRANCIS

Lay off Gracie for a while?

LOU

Me calling her stuff shit, that's part of our thing.

FRANCIS

Yeah, of course. I want her to focus.

LOU

You worry too much.

FRANCIS

You're right. I think you guys are ready to break out.

LOU

Break out? What have we been doing up to now?

FRANCIS

It's the difference between twenty five hundred seaters and a football stadiums.

LOU

Come on.

FRANCIS

You guys are that good. You should have gone over the top already. Rapid Demise was a ground breaking album.

LOU

I know.

FRANCIS

Under produced. Badly managed. Not marketed to its potential. But if this album is like that... so for that we need Gracie to write some new songs.

LOU

She hasn't written anything near decent in years.

FRANCIS

I know. I think she just needs support.

Lou laughs.

LOU
That don't know how Gracie works.
With her kid around you'll get an
album with heart.

Lou nods to Gracie and Patti.

FRANCIS
Just-- lay of her for a bit.

LOU
A stadium tour?

Francis smiles and nods.

LOU (CONT'D)
Huh.

Lou exits. Francis watches Gracie wrap her arm around Patti and leave.

INT. MOTEL - WALKWAY - NIGHT

It's after the gig. Everyone but Patti is drunk. Lou leading, followed by Patti and the teenagers from the Denny's. Patti is having a blast. Gracie is in the back.

LOU
(screaming)
The party starts now!

The groupies giggle.

The group turns the corner. Patti walks into someone. Two MOTHERS, in housecoats, are standing in front of their doors totally unimpressed.

MOM #1
People are trying to sleep.

PATTI
Oh. Uh... I'm so sorry... I.. we..

The mom gets in Patti's face.

MOM #1
You people should really be more
respectful of--

Gracie gets between them. Spoiling for a fight.

A TEENAGED GIRL, 16, sticks her head out of a motel room door.

MOM #2
Back inside. Now.

Gracie laughs realizing what the women are doing.

GRACIE
You're on fire-watch for band camp.

MOM #2
Debate team.

LOU
Horny nerds!

GRACIE
So Mrs, don't try to play that we
were the ones that woke you up.
You're here to stop randy debaters
from boning.

Mom #1 is defeated and begrudgingly moves. Gracie leads the
group off.

PATTI
Damn, you're cool.

Gracie likes being called cool by Patti.

PATTI (CONT'D)
But boning? You sound like you're
50.

GRACIE
Shut up. What do you call it?

PATTI
I don't know. DTF.

GRACIE
DTF?

PATTI
Down to... uh.

GRACIE
Fuck?

Patti nods. Gracie laughs at the shyness.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
Don't shy away from words. They're
just words and "Fuck" is a great
word. Not as good as "shit" though.

Patti isn't convinced.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
Lets get you a drink.

Gracie wraps an arm around Patti's neck as they walk.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

A crazy band room party is in full swing. The band is mixed with groupies and some staff and patrons from the bar. Drinking, making out, and other debauchery is happening. Lou is making out with two girls, Francis has a groupie trapped in a corner talking to her. Al is gently kissing a well-dressed FEMALE GROUPIE, 25. It is classic, if not almost tragic, booze and debauchery.

Patti is staring at Al. March sits down beside her.

MARCH
She's a woman who was a man who
likes women. We just call her Al.

Gracie comes over with two shot glasses and a bottle. She hands a glass to Patti and fills it. March goes to protest. Gracie SHHHH's him.

GRACIE
Let me teach you how to shoot
whiskey.

Patti shoots the shot. Gracie and March are impressed.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
Alright then.

March, resigned, moves to a different part of the party.

Gracie pours Patti another shot. And they do it together. The second shot hits Patti.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
There it is.

Patti smiles and BURPS. Gracie laughs.

INT. MOTEL - LATER

The party has thinned out. March is in a corner, drinking, watching like a drunken mystic. Lou is up dancing with the groupies. Francis is drinking alone. Al is nuzzling his groupie.

Gracie is leaning up against a wall ranting at Patti. Patti is enamored by Gracie.

GRACIE

You see? "Shit" can be anything in English. I could say "this shit is shit but that shit is the shit" and you'd know exactly what I mean. Right? I pity the poor bastards trying to learn English. It must sound like the same word over and over. Shit, shit, shit, shit, shit.

Patti laughs, stops and thinks.

PATTI

I had to shit so I took a shit but the shit was shit so I feel like shit still I don't give a shit.

GRACIE

That's my girl.

Patti is proud of herself.

PATTI

Tell me about the bird?

Gracie retracts her hand.

Patti releases this is a sensitive topic and looks around for a different way to keep Gracie talking. Her eyes land on March.

PATTI (CONT'D)

(teasing)

March is cute.

Gracie lets down her guard, playful.

GRACIE

Don't start.

PATTI

What? He is.

GRACIE

Shut up.

Gracie gives Patti a good natured push. Patti makes a mocking face at Gracie then gets back to being a little more serious.

PATTI

Is March my Dad?

GRACIE
He wishes he was but no.

PATTI
Not Lou.

GRACIE
You don't have webbed feet do you?

Patti laughs.

PATTI
You did that bird yourself?

Gracie, little self conscious, realizes that Patti isn't going to let it go. She takes a breath.

GRACIE
My first act of rebellion. I guess
I wanted to fly away. I never
filled it in.

PATTI
Did it hurt?

GRACIE
I can't remember.

PATTI
Can you give me one?

Gracie is silent.

PATTI (CONT'D)
A friend in school put dots on her
knuckles with a pen and needle. I
think they're cool.

GRACIE
Life'll mark you up enough, just
give it time.

Patti shifts out to the party. Gracie fights to get her attention back.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
I get it. You want to control
something in your life.

Patti opens back towards Gracie.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Before you set something down you
can't change be really, really
sure. Some marks run deeper than
skin.

PATTI

So the bird is pretty deep for you
then?

Gracie is not ready to go there. She hands Patti her beer.

GRACIE

Watch this.
(to Lou)
Pants around the ankles.

LOU

Yeah!
(to the girls)
Pants around the ankles!!

The two groupie girls look confused. Gracie gives a devilish
smile to Patti and walks forward unbuckling her pants.

GRACIE

And you're all going to lose. Drop
'em girls.

Gracie's belt comes off in one easy motion.

EXT. MOTEL WALKWAY - MOMENTS LATER

SCREAMS and YELLS rip along the empty motel walkway.

Around the corner of the building Gracie, Lou and two of the
groupies race with their pants around their ankles.

Lou is in the lead and Gracie is just behind him. The
groupies are trying to keep up.

They group shuffles around another corner and Gracie knocks
Lou into the railing taking the lead.

Francis, Al and the well-dressed groupie lean out of the open
window of the party room. While Patti and March are in the
doorway as the group shuffles past.

PATTI

Go Gracie!

Gracie pours on the speed.

FRANCIS

Two more laps! Two more!

The racers shuffle into the second lap. Gracie still in the lead.

The groupies turn on the speed and try to catch Gracie and impress Lou.

Mom #1 and #2 stick their heads out of their doors.

MOM #2

What is going--

GRACIE

Move it or loose it ladies!

Gracie blasts by the Moms. The two groupies, giggling, follow. Lou is in last place, tripping on his pants.

The group makes the round again. Gracie still in the lead. Patti is JUMPING and CHEERING.

FRANCIS

Last lap. Loser gets the usual.

GRACIE

Don't say loser just say Llewellyn.

GROUPIE

Llewellyn!

The groupies giggle more at the sound of his full name. Lou gets angry and pours on the speed. He muscles the groupies out of the way.

GROUPIE (CONT'D)

Ow.

Gracie is way out in front. She approaches the Mom's doors.

MOM #2

This is highly inappropriate and--

Gracie races by without even acknowledging the moms. Lou racing with all his might. The Moms see Lou and SQUEAL as they duck inside.

Gracie and Lou hit the corner, neck and neck. Lou trips. He grabs Gracie's pants knocking her down and then climbs over her to get up. Gracie isn't giving up and she grabs him.

The band is out on the walkway with a roll of toilet paper hung out as a finish line.

The groupies catch up but are nervous to pass Lou and Gracie, fighting. One shifts passed and makes it to the door.

FRANCIS
We have a winner!

Francis puts his arm around the girl. The second groupie makes it by Gracie and Lou.

Lou pushes Gracie in the face and gets away. Shuffling to the end.

Gracie, angry, gets up and walks towards the group.

LOU
You know the rules. There are none.

Gracie is about to unleash on Lou.

PATTI
He cheated! That was your race.

Gracie's anger is derailed.

LOU
Time for the victory lap?

Francis and Lou start to chant.

LOU, FRANCIS, MARCH
Vic-tor-y! Vic-tor-y!

Gracie turns to run and is standing face to face with the moms. Their arms are crossed and they look indignant.

GRACIE
If you are going to race me ladies
you have to drop 'em.

The moms look shocked. The group laughs and Gracie pushes by and does her victory lap. Lou grabs the two pants-less groupies and heads inside. Everybody follows ignoring the moms. The moms stand there stunned.

PATTI
(to March)
Why does she do the victory lap if
she lost?

MARCH
It's punk. The only good ones are
the losers.

INT. MOTEL - LATER

The party has fizzled out and everyone but Patti and Gracie are gone. Patti is sitting by Gracie taking everything in. She sees an empty bottle wedged under Gracie.

Patti struggles to pull the bottle out. Gracie doesn't wake up.

Patti gets up, brings a glass of water, and sets it down on the table beside Gracie.

Patti grabs her sketch book. Gracie, facing away from Patti, half opens her eyes to look at the water.

INT. MOTEL - MORNING

The next morning Gracie wakes up and sits on the edge of the bed. She feels, and looks, like shit.

Patti has finally fallen asleep and is curled up in a ball on top the covers. Gracie stares at her for a while trying to figure her out.

Gracie gets up and paces a bit. Gracie sees Patti's sketchbook in her bag and flips through it.

Gracie finds several sketches of her sleeping in the bed from the night before. In the drawings, she looks sad. Then there are pictures of Gracie and the band. Patti has real talent.

She flips through a few more drawings. A series of blackbirds. Starting with realistic flying birds and as she goes back in the book the birds morph into Gracie's standing birds. Gracie flips another page to a drawing of Patti and a man and a woman. It's family portrait style - they look happy.

Gracie ventures a few more pages. More drawings of the couple, Patti, a house, a dog. This is obviously Patti's family and home. The drawings give the impression of a happy family.

Gracie tucks the sketchbook away and sits on the edge of the bed. She moves some hair off of Patti's face.

GRACIE

(singing)

My high-flying bird has flown from
out my arms.

I thought myself her keeper.
She thought I meant her harm.

Gracie gets up and moves to the arm chair.

INT. MOTEL - LATER

Hours later Gracie is still watching Patti sleep. Patti wakes up.

GRACIE
How'd you sleep?

PATTI
Really good, thanks. How bout you?

GRACIE
Maybe we should go for a walk. Get out.

PATTI
Yes. Yes, of course. Let's. Just give me a minute...

Patti grabs her backpack and rummages around for clothes. Everything is balled up.

Gracie gets up and opens a drawer full of folded clothes. She grabs jeans and a T-shirt and throws them to Patti.

GRACIE
Here. Wear these.

Patti smiles.

PATTI
You unpack?

GRACIE
First thing in every motel. Makes it feel like home.

PATTI
And where is home?

GRACIE
Today, this fine palace has that illustrious distinction.

Gracie waves her arms to show off the place, amused at her playfulness.

Gracie looks around the room and gets deflated.

Patti gets dressed and mother and daughter look strikingly alike.

EXT. OVERPASS - DAY

Gracie and Patti are walking over an overpass. They stop in the middle and look out over the busy freeway traffic.

GRACIE

Why the hell do you want to be here?

PATTI

I wanted to meet you. You know? I needed to know where I came from. Who I am.

GRACIE

Listen, I don't know how to do... this.

PATTI

What?

GRACIE

Maybe you'd be better off back at home.

PATTI

I can't stand it there. The yelling and the insults.

Gracie get uncomfortable. She goes to ask her what she saw in the sketchbook - but hesitates.

PATTI (CONT'D)

It just... I don't know, I guess I just wanted to hang out with you and stuff. You're amazing. You're strong and talented.

Gracie melts a little at the Patti's words. She tries to get back to the idea of asking Patti about the drawings.

GRACIE

I have to ask you...

PATTI

I get it if you don't want me around. I know I don't belong in your world.

That seals it. Gracie can't ask her.

GRACIE

Hey, Hey. I want you around. I do.

PATTI

Really?

GRACIE

I left before because I was a kid.
I was your age. But I think I was
wrong.

Patti hugs Gracie. Gracie wasn't expecting that. Gracie gives
a half hearted hug back.

Patti breaks away, youthful excitement, almost a bounce.

PATTI

So? What do musicians do during the
day when they are not recording?

GRACIE

I'm usually not up this early.

PATTI

It's almost noon.

GRACIE

Yeah, it's not even noon.

They both laugh.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Tell me about you. What do you do
during the day?

PATTI

When I'm not in school I hang out
with my friends.

GRACIE

So what, your last year of high
school?

PATTI

If I go back. It seems like after
school there is just more school.
Then Grad studies then a job my
parents picked for me - physical
therapy. Did you finish school?.

Gracie is awkward.

GRACIE

I was never much for it. Religious
school are pretty harsh.

PATTI

Why didn't you go back somewhere else after you left.

GRACIE

You don't need science on the road. And I was touring by then. I was... I didn't really...

Patti looks around to ease Gracie's awkwardness. She sees a few buildings off in the distance and gets an idea.

PATTI

Come on.

She grabs Gracie's hand and pulls her along.

INT. DAIRY QUEEN - DAY

Gracie and Patti enter a Dairy Queen. A MOTHER and two small KIDS are having parfaits. Gracie sits in a booth and watches the family. She is obviously uncomfortable and has probably never been in a Dairy queen before.

Patti brings over two sundaes.

Gracie nods approvingly, maybe even impressed.

GRACIE

I can't remember the last time I had ice cream.

PATTI

I go every week. My friends and I meet up for sundaes on Saturday and catch up about life. I mean I used to go.

GRACIE

Sundaes on Saturdays?

PATTI

Yeah, it's our little joke.

GRACIE

What do you have to catch up about at your age?

PATTI

We talk about school and boys and parents and boys and exams and boys.

GRACIE
So, you have a boyfriend?

PATTI
Not really. What else do you do
besides music?

The kids with the Mother laugh and giggle having a great
time. Gracie gets distracted.

GRACIE
You should know life on the road
isn't great. There aren't a lot of
sundaes.

Gracie plays with her ice cream. A long pause.

PATTI
I don't want to go home yet. It's
horrible there and I think you can
teach me a lot.

GRACIE
You don't want to learn what I've
learned.

PATTI
It's better than what my parents
have been forcing down my throat.

GRACIE
Fathers can be strict.

PATTI
It's not my...

Patti stops herself.

PATTI (CONT'D)
I guess.

GRACIE
He hit you?

Gracie looks up at Patti and Patti averts her gaze.

PATTI
No. But he is strict. This is the
third time I have run away. They
really do not care anymore.

GRACIE
That's hard.

PATTI

I just don't think I can be what
they want me to be.

Gracie gets mad and slaps her hands on the table. A drop of
ice cream shoots up on her face. The kids and the Mother
react. The Mother gestures for her kids to not stare.

Patti gets still, unsure of how to reaction to such an
emotional outburst.

GRACIE

Sorry. Sorry. Good for you, though,
for not taking that. You've got to
take control of your own life or...
or... yeah.

PATTI

Um... You've got a...

Patti gestures to Gracie and points to her face. Gracie tries
to wipe off the ice cream but gets the wrong side.

PATTI (CONT'D)

Let me.

Patti wipes Gracie's face. Both women take a spoonful of ice
cream.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Gracie is standing in the back of the church where several
PARISHIONERS are praying.

A parishioner passes Gracie giving her a sideways look.
Gracie pulls her coat to hide her SEX PISTOLS T-shirt. She
watches Gladys finish praying and walk towards the door.

GRACIE

Nice to know you're still a
creature of habit.

Gladys is confused.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

I was hoping we could talk.

GLADYS

That's all I've wanted.

GRACIE

Now that Dad is gone we don't need
to avoid each other any more.

Gladys shuts down at the mention of Dad.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
Maybe you want to meet your
granddaughter.

Gladys' interest is piqued.

GLADYS
You're in touch with her?

GRACIE
She's a strong young woman.

GLADYS
Like her mother.

GRACIE
I can't take any credit for that.

GLADYS
I'd like to meet her.

GRACIE
Really?

GLADYS
Of course.

Gladys takes Gracie's hand touching her for the first time in years. Gracie reacts.

GLADYS (CONT'D)
Come back.

GRACIE
I... I'd like that.

Two more parishioners pass Gladys and Gracie with disapproving looks.

GLADYS
Come back to the church--

Gracie tenses up.

GRACIE
Why can't we just be mother and
daughter?

GLADYS
You don't have to-- You could
pretend to believe

GRACIE

And you could pretend to be my
mother.

Gracie and Gladys stands there as the church bells RING.

INT. MOTEL - DAY

Gracie comes into her room full of energy. She gathers up bottles and cleans out the beer fridge of all the alcohol. With the arm load of bottles and cans she goes into the bathroom and dumps everything down the sink.

Throwing all of the empties into the trash she gathers up the bag and takes it outside.

EXT. MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

She goes out to the parking lot and finds a garbage can and stuffs the bag with the bottles inside. Satisfied she walks back to her room.

INT. WAREHOUSE STUDIO - DAY

The band is hanging out in the studio. Patti is talking to Al. Lou is napping. Francis is in the booth working with an AUDIO ENGINEER on a track.

Gracie and March are sitting in a corner and March is playing her a song. He finishes.

GRACIE

That's great.

MARCH

It's okay but the lyrics need work.
I'm shit with words.

GRACIE

You do all right.

MARCH

I'm not you.

Gracie gets modest for a moment, which is not something March expected. March LAUGHS and Gracie takes offence.

GRACIE

What?

MARCH
You used to do that.

GRACIE
What?

MARCH
That's the way you used to take a
compliment. I haven't seen it in a
while.

Gracie tries to stay tough but she likes what March is
saying.

MARCH (CONT'D)
I think having her around is real
good for you.

GRACIE
You think?

Gracie stares over at Patti and Al connecting. Then at Lou
sleeping. It is a very family scene.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
There's something that just feels
right.

MARCH
It's not a bad look on you.
Motherhood.

Gracie smiles to herself. Looks at Patti who catches her gaze
and waves.

MARCH (CONT'D)
Oh man.

GRACIE
What now?

MARCH
You're settling into the idea of
being a mom.

GRACIE
Well... I ain't her mom. Not
really. The woman who raised her is
her mom.

MARCH
Maybe you could still do some good
in her life.

GRACIE

I like the idea that I could be something. Punk Mater?

MARCH

Gracie Rust! Who the hell are you?

GRACIE

Yeah. Well. Your chorus sucks.

MARCH

I can't write like you.

GRACIE

No one can write good rebellious songs anymore. Everyone's getting too soft.

Gracie cups March's face.

MARCH

This is the Gracie I miss.

GRACIE

Shut up and play that riff again. I'll see what I can do.

March starts to play, Gracie listens then starts to sing along.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Patti is sitting on the bed talking to Gracie through the bathroom door. The main door is open to the motel room for air flow and, even still, Gracie is on the toilet.

GRACIE

I guess I learned on the road, you know. I couldn't play a note when I first started. Just a groupie really. Then I sang. It gave the dudes something to ogle while they moshed.

PATTI

But you did start to play?

Gracie flushes and comes out of the bathroom.

GRACIE

March taught me. That man can fucking -- sorry.

PATTI

Didn't you say fuck was a great
word?

GRACIE

Yeah.

PATTI

Fuck yeah.

GRACIE

March is the best guitar player
I've ever met.

PATTI

Can you play me that song you sang
when you thought I was sleeping?
The flying bird song.

GRACIE

You little shit.

PATTI

I've always been a light sleeper

GRACIE

Me too. Maybe later.

PATTI

Please. Come on.

Gracie relents. She she starts to play. As she sings Gracie
gets caught up in the song and forgets everything.

GRACIE

You wore a little cross of gold
around your neck,
I saw it as you flew between my
reason,
Like a raven in the night time when
you left,
I wear a chain upon my wrist that
bears no name,
You touched it and you wore it,
And you kept it in your pillow all
the same,

My high-flying bird has flown from
out my arms,
I thought myself her keeper,
She thought I meant her harm,
She thought I was the archer,
A weather man of words,
But I could never shoot down,
My high-flying bird,

CLAPPING from the doorway. Gracie suddenly stops. Lou is
standing in the motel room doorway.

LOU

You two have to get ready for the
Folk Fest circuit. I'll get you
some patchouli.

GRACIE

Eat shit.

LOU

Then close your door when you are
having a private moment.

Gracie throws a shoe at him and he leaves.

PATTI

That song is amazing. You should
play it at the bar.

GRACIE

Yeah right. Those shits would have
a field day. Not to mention the
band.

PATTI

It's a great song. How can they not
love it?

GRACIE

They want Gracie Rust on that stage. Something that keeps them buying beers. Here.

Gracie hands the guitar to Patti. Patti resists at first but Gracie persists.

PATTI

I've tried before. I'm no good.

Patti takes the guitar. Gracie corrects her grip.

GRACIE

Everybody's shit before they're the shit.

Gracie adjusts Patti's fingers on the strings.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

D.

Gracie strums and then makes Patti strum. She adjusts Patti to a new chord.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

G.

They strum.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

A.

Strum. Gracie sits back and just calls out chords and Patti plays them.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Again. D. G. A. Good. A. G. D.
Good.

PATTI

Ow.

Patti stops and shakes her fingers in pain.

GRACIE

Some things are worth the pain.
Again.

PATTI

Ow.

GRACIE

Come on don't be a baby.

Patti tries playing again. It is hurting.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
G.A.D. D.A.G. Good. Again. A.D.G

The strings bite Patti's fingers. There is blood.

PATTI
Ah.

Gracie is hit by guilt for pushing Patti. She grabs part of the bed sheet to tend to the cut.

GRACIE
Here let me--

PATTI
I'll get it. That'll stain.

Patti stands up and gets tissue from the bathroom. Patti doesn't seem to mind to much but Gracie is upset. She is at the door to the bathroom worried.

GRACIE
I can call down for some bandages.

PATTI
It's just a little cut. I'll be fine.

GRACIE
Okay. Okay.

Patti giggles at Gracie's concern as she washing out the cut.

PATTI
It's not my first serious injury.

Gracie goes and gets the guitar. Patti steps out and Gracie hands the guitar to Patti.

PATTI (CONT'D)
I can't right now.

Holding up the tissue and finger.

GRACIE
You bleed on it. It's yours now.
When your healed keep playing.
Calluses'll come.

Patti looks at the guitar for a moment and then hugs Gracie. Gracie hugs her back like a mom would.

Lou laughs. Francis broods.

FRANCIS

You don't think that she would really change styles do you?

LOU

Nah. She'd just leave the band. Hell, she has been threatening to do that for years. It's probably just the time. I guess we're going to have to find another hot, female, punk singer who can write and front a band.

Lou laughs at his own joke.

Francis turns and goes back into his room. Lou downs the soda, crumples the can, and BURPS.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Later. Patti is alone in her room with Gracie's guitar. She plucks at the strings, winces in pain and looks at the drop of blood forming on her fingertip. She sucks her finger.

INT. WAREHOUSE STUDIO - DAY

The band is waiting for Gracie to arrive. Lou is sitting at his drums

LOU

I'll bet you a hundred bucks she doesn't show today. Mar, what were you guys working on the other day?

MARCH

Lets wait for Gracie.

LOU

Meanwhile lets sit and stare at the walls?

FRANCIS

Something just to warm us up?

MARCH

Okay.

LOU

I liked it better when you did the writing anyway.

March doesn't take the compliment but starts playing a song.

INT. WAREHOUSE STUDIO - LATER

The band finishes up a song.

FRANCIS
Great. Great.

MARCH
Let's try...

March starts playing. Al and Lou listen and join in. The song, while musically great, sounds remarkably like the song they just finished.

Gracie and Patti enter at the back of the warehouse. Gracie holds Patti back from entering farther. She gestures to listen to March.

March plays a masterful solo. He finishes and Patti bursts into APPLAUSE.

PATTI
That was amazing.

MARCH
How long you been standing there?

GRACIE
Long enough. What do you call that?

MARCH
"Still needs lyrics".

GRACIE
(to March)
Play that riff again. I might have something for it now.

Gracie grabs a guitar.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

The band finishes a song.

GRACIE
(to the crowd)
Thank you.
(to the band)
We're going to try out the new one.

MARCH

We're what?

GRACIE

This is something new we're working
on so you yahoos get to be the
first to hear it.

The crowd cheers.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Its called "still needs lyrics".

March isn't happy. Gracie starts to play it.

INT. STAGE - LATER

March finishes playing the last few bars of the song we've
heard before. The crowd goes mild.

GRACIE

(to the crowd)

In the audience tonight is someone
I'd like you to meet, Patti, my
daughter.

Gracie points and the crowd focuses on Patti. Patti is not
comfortable with the attention.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Come on up on stage.

Gracie waves her up. Patti shakes her head. The audience
starts to encourage her. Patti moves to the stage and Gracie
helps her up.

Francis, side stage left, is angry that Gracie has brought
her up there.

FRANCIS

What the hell?

Patti is awkward on stage.

GRACIE

Come on, give it up for Patti.

Gracie pushes Patti forward to the crowd. Who APPLAUD and
CHEER.

The band is a little shocked at Gracie's behavior. Gracie
enjoys the moment as the crowd cheers for her daughter. Patti
is not having fun.

Patti, angry, steps off side stage right.

INT. SIDE STAGE

Gracie, excited, follows Patti off stage and hits Patti's anger.

PATTI
Don't do that to me again.

GRACIE
What?

PATTI
Pull me up on stage.

GRACIE
I thought it'd be fun.

PATTI
Maybe for you. I'm not a prop.

Gracie is confused. The rest of the band comes off stage. Al starts sorting her gear.

MARCH
(to Gracie)
Don't surprise that shit on us.

LOU
We looked like fucking amateurs out there.

Lou keeps walking right out the door.

GRACIE
We used to play new songs all the time. You guys are too precious.

MARCH
Don't do it again.

GRACIE
But--

March smashes the door as he leaves.

Francis comes in and makes a bee line for Gracie.

FRANCIS
You don't play a new song until its ready. That was crap. And what was that stunt with Patti?

Gracie deck Francis. Francis goes down. Patti, unaccustomed to violence, looks to Gracie with horror.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)
There's the real Gracie Rust.

GRACIE
Patti, I--

Patti recoils.

Gracie bolts for the door.

Patti goes to Francis to help him up. Francis shoos her off as he stands and leaves.

PATTI
Why did she have to pull me up on stage like that? I'm not here for her to parade around.

AL
I think with you it's the first time she's actually felt proud.

Patti drops her anger.

PATTI
Really?

AL
I could be wrong. I'm just a bass player.

PATTI
I shouldn't have yelled at her.

AL
No, you should have decked her.

That was too far. Patti start to tear up. Al hugs her.

AL (CONT'D)
It's not your fault, darling. We're all just trying to get through this.

EXT. MOTEL WALKWAY - NIGHT

Patti walks up to Gracie's door. She is balancing two sundaes.

She hears some MUSIC coming from inside the room. It is soft acoustic guitar.

PATTI

Hello? I wanted to bring an apology
for yesterday.

No response. She struggles to hold the sundaes in one hand and fishes out a key card from her pocket. She opens the door and just gets her foot in.

Gracie is sitting on the bed. A half drunk bottle of Jack Daniels is on the night stand beside her. Gracie is SINGING a beautiful folky song.

GRACIE

Swore I saw you there,
I heard the church bells moan,
morning clear to my midnight life,
your dignity was thrown.

Across the room,
He stood from me,
A pious light of stern degree,
this ain't no place for the truth,
this ain't no place for me and you,
there ain't a life to see us
through,

I'll fly away now,
No angel in your eye,
soot stained wings will soar,
so heaven shall not cry.
And I, and I, and I should...

Gracie takes a big drink.

PATTI

That was beautiful.

Gracie turns and does not look happy to be caught.

GRACIE

Were you listening?

PATTI

It about your parents, wasn't it?
And when you left home.

Gracie puts the guitar in the case. Patti enters the room not registering that Gracie is upset.

PATTI (CONT'D)

You should record that.

GRACIE

You shouldn't eavesdrop.

PATTI

I was just--

GRACIE

What?

PATTI

I'm sorry. But it's a great song.
You shouldn't be ashamed of it. The
rest of the band--

GRACIE

Just mind your own business.

Patti starts to tear up.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Yah, play the injured kid. Well, if
you want a mommy, she isn't here.
Do you hear me?

PATTI

I...

GRACIE

I can't be a Bandaid-wielding
caregiver ready to hug away the
sads when you're moody.

PATTI

I've done more to change my life
than you have.

GRACIE

You self-righteous suburban shit.
Why did you come here anyways? Did
you want to live out your rock and
roll fantasy? Well you've had it so
you can go.

PATTI

What I wanted is to find why
someone would abandon their
daughter. How they could walk away
so easy.

GRACIE

If you haven't figured it out I
ain't a mother. I don't know how to
be a mother. I don't want to be
your mother.

Gracie realizes what she has said. Patti shoves the sundaes into Gracie's hands.

PATTI

These are for you enjoy them.

Patti tries to get around Gracie to get out of the room. Gracie tries to stop her.

GRACIE

I'm sorry. I was out of line.
Sometimes I can be a dick.

Gracie and Patti do a little dance. Finally Patti can't get away and turns her back on Gracie. Patti is fuming.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

I'm shit. I'm just no good for
anyone.

Patti hears the tears in Gracie's voice. She turns and Gracie crying. They hug. Patti holds Gracie as she cries.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Just don't leave me. Just don't
leave. I'm sorry.

PATTI

Okay, okay.

They cry. Patti's tears dry up first. After a long moment, Gracie pulls away and wipes her eyes then starts laughing to shrug off the emotion.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Gracie descends the stairs to the soda machine and buys two sodas. She walks out back of the motel which opens to an empty field. Facing away from the motel all you can see is farm land.

March is sitting on the grass. She sits down and hands him a soda. March is surprised that she brought him one.

MARCH

How'd you know I was here?

GRACIE

Some things don't change.

March is confused.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

It's a meteor shower tonight. This is the only place you could get away from the glow of the KFC sign.

MARCH

You got me.

GRACIE

And I think you'd almost rather be out on the prairie than on tour. That track you wrote is really good.

MARCH

Thanks. Patti asleep?

GRACIE

Yeah. If she stays I'm gonna hurt that kid more than I already have.

MARCH

She has really gotten in your head, huh?

Gracie stares down at the ground while March stares at the sky.

MARCH (CONT'D)

Was that a shooting star?

GRACIE

Didn't see it. Do you ever think... I mean with you and I, do you...

March looks at her.

MARCH

Yeah. All the time. Have you been drinking?

GRACIE

Just Fresca. I need to get back on the wagon.

Gracie leans in and kisses him. It is a long sweet kiss. Gracie breaks away first.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

There are all sorts of adventures to live.

MARCH

You just have to choose one.

GRACIE

I don't think it's with the band
but I don't know if it can be with
her. I'm too far gone.

MARCH

If you think you are then you're
not too far gone.

She side hugs him.

MARCH (CONT'D)

(playful)

And what's with me not making the
list of choices? I'm an adventure.

GRACIE

Remember Sarnia?

MARCH

Shit. Yah.

She kisses him again. A quick, soft one.

MARCH (CONT'D)

What are you going to do about
Patti?

GRACIE

I don't know.

MARCH

Well you better figure it out quick
or will have another Sarnia on our
hands.

Gracie nods. They both look to the sky and a shooting star
zips past.

INT. WAREHOUSE STUDIO - DAY

The band is milling about getting ready. Gracie walks into
the control room. Francis is there with the audio engineer.

FRANCIS

You're mixing too hot. It sounds
like a cat fight on garbage night.
Give us some room.

GRACIE

(interrupting)

I'm done touring.

FRANCIS

Pardon me.
(to the engineer)
Bring everything down.
(to Gracie)
Say again.

GRACIE

After we're done recording, I'm out.

FRANCIS

You'll see. When this album comes together it's going to be big.

GRACIE

Sure but the road is no life for a kid. I'm done after the album is finished.

Gracie turns and walks over to Patti.

Francis watches Patti and Gracie. Gracie gives her a pick. The mother and daughter connection is obvious to everyone in the room. Francis' stare burns holes into Patti.

INT. MOTEL - DAY

Francis can be heard through the door.

FRANCIS (O.S.)

Yeah, yeah. Thanks. We need to get the pick up off Gracie's guitar. She left it in her kid's room.

The door is opened by a male HOUSEKEEPER, 20, with headphones in who isn't interested in Francis' story even though Francis is working hard to convince her.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

She forgot it and I'm the one who has to grab it. It's just in here. I'll be--

The housekeeper pushes his cart on.

Francis swings the door shut but it doesn't fully close.

He searches the room. He finds what he is looking for: Patti's wallet. He digs through looking at school IDs trying to find an address or phone number. He finds the adoption papers. The address is there.

Putting the wallet back he sees Patti's sketch book.
Flipping through Patti's sketchbook he finds drawings.
Lou sticks his head into the room

LOU
Patti? Are you still-- Francis?

FRANCIS
Shit. Shut up. Get in here.

Lou does.

LOU
What are you doing?

FRANCIS
Looking into our little princess.
Look at this.

He shows him the sketch book.

LOU
You can't be looking through her
stuff like this.

FRANCIS
Come on. Look. Some terrible home
life, huh? Just look.

He hands Lou the sketchbook. Lou flips through it.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)
This kid didn't run away from a
terrible life.

LOU
Yeah, so? The kid lied about her
family, so what?

FRANCIS
Gracie is going to leave the band.

LOU
She's said that a hundred times.

FRANCIS
This time it's for real. It's
because of her.

LOU
Good for her.

FRANCIS

Do you think the label is going to dump money into promoting a stadium tour for a band without the lead singer.

LOU

So we get another singer.

FRANCIS

You know how much we owe the label? There won't be album, no band, and you'll be looking for another gig.

LOU

Nah.

FRANCIS

How many bands do you think are looking for the next 45 year old drumming sensation?

Lou considers it.

LOU

What do we do?

FRANCIS

I'll fix it. Just have my back.

Francis pockets the papers.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Francis is driving slowly along looking for a house.

He stops in front of a lavish suburban house with a Molly Maid van in the drive away.

He pulls out the papers to check the address. This is Patti's house.

MAID (O.C.)

Can I help you?

Francis looks up to see a MAID, 40's, at the van window.

FRANCIS

Oh, I... I'm just here to give Patti a guitar lesson.

MAID

Ah. Patti is at soccer camp.

FRANCIS
Soccer camp?

MAID
Yes she won't be back for two more weeks.

FRANCIS
I must have the wrong date.

MAID
Could you...

The maid nods towards her van. Francis is blocking her.

FRANCIS
Sorry. Hey, this is my first time teaching with this family. How are they?

MAID
They are very nice. Maybe work too much but very nice.

FRANCIS
Good. I'm glad.

The maid smiles and leaves. Francis Snaps a photo of the house on his phone then drives away.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Back at the motel parking lot a few days later. Francis is hovering. Gracie and March are working on a song as they walk back from behind the building.

MARCH
(singing)
It's the smell of cruelty,
A costume of necessity...

GRACIE
(singing)
The only method of stern
aristocracy.

They are having fun playing with the lyrics.

Francis approaches.

FRANCIS
Can I talk to you?

GRACIE
Not changing my mind.

FRANCIS
Yeah. No. Of course not. Just a
word?

GRACIE
I'll catch up to you.

March walks on to his room. Gracie turns to Francis.

FRANCIS
I was doing some looking into
things and... Well... thing aren't
always what they seem on the
surface.

GRACIE
Out with it.

FRANCIS
Patti lied.

Gracie is shocked. She didn't expect Francis to talk about
Patti.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)
Her folks are a dream. Lots of
money, big house, maid, super nice.

GRACIE
Sure.

FRANCIS
I drove over to Mount Pleasant and
found her house and they're--

GRACIE
How did you find her place?

FRANCIS
Doesn't matter. She has a great
life and I think that-- You already
knew.

GRACIE
What?

FRANCIS
You already knew that her story was
B.S.

Gracie doesn't respond.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

How long did have you known for?
You know what it doesn't matter.
She has to go back. We have to call
her folks.

GRACIE

You think she is distracting us
from the album so you're trying to
get rid of her.

FRANCIS

Yeah. Patti is distracting us but
her family think she's at camp.

GRACIE

We don't know that.

FRANCIS

She's not a run away. She's
underage. They could charge us all
with kidnapping.

GRACIE

She said her folks weren't good
people. Why would she lie?

FRANCIS

This is her place. Look.

Francis shows her a picture of the house on his phone.

GRACIE

This is just a house. We don't know
what they are like as people.

Gracie is drawn into the photo.

FRANCIS

You think this place is what's best
for her? This motel? The shitty
food. Don't you think she'd be
better off with a family that can
give her everything?

Gracie doesn't know how to take it.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

We should at least let them know
she's safe.

Francis holds the adoption papers out to Gracie. Gracie holds
the papers between two fingers as if they are dirty. The
words "CONSENT TO ADOPT" jump off the page at her.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

We should do whatever's best for her. I can call them.

Francis goes to take the paper back.

GRACIE

No. I'll call.

Gracie folds up the paper.

FRANCIS

It's what's best for her.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Gracie in a cab on a suburban street.

GRACIE

Here.

The cab stops on the opposite side of the street from Patti's houses. Gracie hands the cabbie some cash and gets out.

She checks the paper and the house number to make sure it is right. Gracie takes a moment trying to build up the courage to walk up to the door.

Patti's parents, MEREDITH and JOHN, come out of the house. Gracie freezes.

The couple start walking down the street. Gracie follows on her side of the street.

Meredith and John walk towards a church at the end of the block. The BELLS rings for Sunday service. Gracie tenses up.

Meredith and John walk into the church. Gracie stops across the street and waits.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - LATER

Gracie has been pacing and smoking. Meredith and John come out of church and across the street.

The couple walk into a coffee shop. Gracie shadows them.

Gracie crosses the street and looks through the window at the couple ordering coffee and chatting. They seem ordinary, even nice, as they greet the COUNTER SERVER.

Gracie decides to go in and talk to them but before she can reach the door she is hit with the abdominal pain again and starts coughing.

She coughs for a bit.

MEREDITH
Are you all right?

Meredith and John are in front of Gracie with coffees and bottles of water, looking concerned.

GRACIE
Fine. I'm fine.

John offers Gracie his bottle of water.

JOHN
Here.

GRACIE
No. That's okay.

JOHN
Take it. We can share.

Gracie takes the water and takes a sip. The coughing subsides.

GRACIE
Thanks.

MEREDITH
God save the Queen

Gracie is confused. Meredith points to Gracie's Sex Pistols' T-shirt.

JOHN
Don't let that get away on you.
There's a pharmacy up the street.

GRACIE
Thanks. Thanks.

They walk off. Gracie watches them go and as they do they hold hands.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Motel room. Gracie is pacing back and forth. Her anger increases.

Gracie grabs a water glass and throws it at the wall. She grabs her jacket and leaves.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Morning. Gracie walks into a park carrying a bottle in a bag, drunk and exhausted from a night of drinking.

Two DRUG DEALERS spot Gracie. One dealer nods at Gracie and pats his pocket. Gracie pauses for a moment and then is distracted by the happy SQUEAL of kids echoing from the playground. Gracie looks over, smiles and wanders off away from the dealers.

Gracie sits on a park bench, the bottle held limp behind her legs. Gracie watches the kids in the park playing on the swings.

Her head bobs as she almost falls asleep. As she bobs back up there is a SERIOUS BOY, 6, right in front of her, watching her. Gracie straightens up trying to look more presentable now that she is being watched.

SERIOUS BOY

I can sing a song. Want to hear it?

GRACIE

I could use a lullaby right now.

SERIOUS BOY

(singing)

With your feet on the air and your
head on the ground,
Try this trick and spin it. Yeah!

Gracie starts to laugh and then joins in on the next line with Kim Deal's "OOHs" from the Pixies song.

SERIOUS BOY (CONT'D)

Your head will collapse,
But there's nothing in it,
And you'll ask yourself,
(selling the last lines)
Where is my mind?
Where is my mind?

The kid finishes still serious. Gracie was expecting a kid's lullaby and is shocked.

SERIOUS MOM, 30, grabs the kid and pulls him away.

SERIOUS BOY'S MOM
Nathaniel, quit bothering that...
woman.

The mom pulls the boy down the sidewalk. He looks back as his
mum drags him away.

SERIOUS BOY
Where is my mind?

Gracie takes a big drink, gets up and walks off.

EXT. PARK - LATER

CLOSE ON: a glass pipe. A lighter underneath it turns the
drugs into smoke and a tube inhales it.

WIDER ON: Gracie smoking with the dealers, behind a bush in
the park.

INT. MOTEL - DAY

The housekeeper is in Gracie's room vacuuming around the
mess. Patti steps to the door and talks over the housekeeping
CART.

PATTI
Is she here?

The housekeeper shakes his head.

PATTI (CONT'D)
She wasn't here when you got here?
She usually sleeps until at least
noon.

HOUSEKEEPER
Look at this place. There's glass
everywhere. She can't be doing
this...

Patti, worried, walks away.

EXT. MOTEL WALKWAY - DAY

Patti goes to March's door and KNOCKS. She waits a few
seconds and KNOCKS again.

MARCH (O.C.)
Yeah, coming.

March answers in just his jeans. He is angry until he sees Patti and then shifts to concern.

MARCH (CONT'D)

Patti?

PATTI

Have you seen Gracie? We were supposed to hang out this morning and she's not in her room and it's trashed.

March ushers her into the room. Lou is still sleeping. Patti just steps into the doorway. March tries Gracie's phone, no answer.

MARCH

She probably just forgot. We're recording this afternoon. You can give her shit there.

Patti, still concerned, walks back to her room. March waits then pulls on a shirt, grabs his keys and heads to the van.

INT. WAREHOUSE STUDIO - DAY

The band and Patti waiting in the studio. They have been waiting awhile. No Gracie. Francis is mad.

FRANCIS

Well we might as well lay down your guitar while we wait.

MARCH

(to Patti)

She'll be here.

March picks up his phone and checks it. He shakes his head at Patti.

INT. MOBILE HOME - DAY

A grey day. Gracie drinking and partying in an abandoned mobile home. STREET KIDS are smashing furniture with a BASEBALL BAT.

Gracie is beyond inebriated, on a couch, laughing at the destruction. The kids CHEER as they smash knick-knacks and a chair.

Gracie CHEERS along. The kids take it as encouragement. They start tearing into the BOOKSHELVES and an old SOFA. Gracie laughs.

One of the street kids finds a CHINA DOLL and the other kids get excited. Seeing the toy Gracie gets disturbed but doesn't say a word.

She gets up and moves towards the door. The kids set up the little girl doll on a stool and one of them hits it with the bat and it detonates.

A random piece flies past Gracie and CUTS her cheek.

GRACIE
Fuckin' kids.

She leaves, tearing the SCREEN DOOR accidentally off its hinges as she goes.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DAY

Outside, Gracie wanders through the trailer park. A few DRUNKEN MEN are sitting on lawn chairs. She walks on.

From inside a trailer, she hears SCREAMING.

SCREAMING WOMAN (O.C.)
Look at this? How am I supposed to
get the mark out of this?

There is the sound of a SLAP and then a child CRYING. Gracie walks on.

On a telephone pole, she sees a missing kids POSTER. She pulls it down and looks at the picture of the kid and the family.

The sound of SWEEPING brings Gracie attention up to an OLDER WOMAN who is sweeping off the landing at the front of her well kept mobile home.

Gracie is startled by a dog who BARKS at her out of nowhere behind the lady's make shift fence.

SHIRTLESS BOY (O.C.)
It don't bite.

Gracie turns to see a shirtless seven year old boy standing right beside her holding an old radio.

SHIRTLESS BOY (CONT'D)
But I do.

The boy gnashes in the air showing off his biting skills. The boy runs off.

INT. WAREHOUSE STUDIO - DAY

End of day. The Band is packing up. Still no Gracie. Patti is obviously agitated.

PATTI
We should go look for her.

LOU
She gets like this when we're cutting an album. She'll be gone for a bit and then shows back up.

PATTI
Fine. I'll look for her on my own.

AL
He's right, dear. Not out of character. Don't worry.

Al looks to March, worried. March pats Patti on the shoulder to comfort her.

MARCH
Al and I'll take the van and find her.

PATTI
I'll go with you.

MARCH
You head back to the motel and wait in case she shows up.

LOU
(to March)
Save yourself some time and check the drunk tank and the hospitals first.

MARCH
Hey.
(to Patti)
She'll be fine.

March heads to the van.

As soon as he is gone Francis steps out from the audio booth.

FRANCIS

Sorry about this, kid. It's been fun but this is Gracie. She's probably just bored with being a mom and gone on a bender.

PATTI

No.

FRANCIS

This is the life. This is her.

PATTI

You don't know.

FRANCIS

Maybe. But it's best that you head home for a bit. Your parents must be worried about you. I'll call you a cab.

Francis leaves and Patti sits down on a speaker and cries.

Lou comes back in. He is not comfortable with tears. He looks around for others to help but he is the only one there. He goes over and sits by Patti. Patti cries into his shoulder.

LOU

It'll be all right. I was just joking about the hospital.

PATTI

Gracie doesn't want me around.

LOU

Yeah, maybe.

Lou still uncomfortable. He gets an idea.

LOU (CONT'D)

You just don't know how things go. Here I got something.

He pulls out a baggie of pills. Patti leans away.

LOU (CONT'D)

They'll calm you down.

Lou takes her hand and shakes a pill into it. He pulls a box a of beers from the beer fridge he offers her one.

LOU (CONT'D)

Everything will be just fine.

He cheers her. She pops the pill and they drink.

LOU (CONT'D)
See that's better. She's probably
back at the motel partying without
us.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Gracie on the sidewalk at the front of the motel. Everything is quiet and it's late. She stands there for a few moments nervous and unsure what to do.

EXT. MOTEL - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Lou and Patti are sitting on the walkway dangling their legs over the side and drinking beers. Patti sees Gracie walk into the parking lot and stands up

PATTI
Where have you been?

GRACIE
You're going home.

PATTI
What, now?

Gracie comes up the stairs.

GRACIE
Get your things.

As she gets close she notices that Patti is drunk.

GRACIE (CONT'D)
Are you messed up?

Lou laughs as Patti wobbles.

LOU
The prodigal mother returns. The
party starts now.

Patti goes into her room and shuts the door.

Gracie turns away from Lou and starts to walk towards Patti's room.

LOU (CONT'D)
Hey, the drugs were her idea.

GRACIE

What?

LOU

Nothing. Nothing.

GRACIE

What did you do?

LOU

She needed something to calm herself down when you smokebombed. I didn't force her and if she says anything else it's a lie.

Gracie becomes enraged at the word lie.

GRACIE

She's just a kid.

She starts hitting him. Lou blocks with his arms as she attacks.

LOU

She can handle it. She's your kid.

Gracie pushes Lou down. He lands among half empty cans and beer bottles. He lands in a sticky mess. That makes Lou mad.

LOU (CONT'D)

You bitch.

He kicks her and she drops. The two fight.

GRACIE

You're supposed to take care of her.

LOU

Isn't that a mother's job?

Gracie kicks Lou and then marches away.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Patti is in her room packing. Grace comes flying in.

GRACIE

What did you take?

PATTI

Nothing. I don't know. He gave it to me. What do you care?

GRACIE

This isn't a game. How can you be so stupid.

PATTI

If you were worried then where were you?

GRACIE

What did you think this life was? Did you think it was a happy fun family? All playing music and then having sodas after?

PATTI

Oh shut up

GRACIE

You're stumbling and slurring?

PATTI

You're the one who taught me to drink.

GRACIE

You need to grow up. This world is shitty motels and shitty people.

PATTI

You mean you?

GRACIE

Go home.

Patti finishes packing, grabs the guitar Gracie gave her and heads for the door.

PATTI

You're selfish and childish. I'm more mature than you are. 4

GRACIE

Yeah? And your home life is terrible. You must be having a hard time here at soccer camp.

Patti stops dead.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

You're a liar.

PATTI

And I can see why you didn't want
to be a mother. You're terrible at
it.

Patti drops the guitar and hurries out. Gracie follows her
down to the parking lot.

March and Al steps out of the van and gets in between the
fleeing Patti and Gracie.

MARCH

What's going on here? Calm down.

AL

Patti, just wait a second.

GRACIE

(screaming after Patti)
Good run. You have a home. You're
better off there.

LOU

(yelling after Patti)
Now you've felt the bitch's bite,
kid. You know how the rest of us
feel.

Patti gets in the cab and it pulls away. Gracie turns her
attention back up to Lou.

GRACIE

Shut up. You got my daughter high,
you asshole.

MARCH

Did you give her something?

LOU

I was trying to help. This is going
to make one hell of a song.

Gracie pushes Lou and he falls back into a light fixture;
blood pours out of his head. Everyone is focused on Lou as he
drops to the ground.

Gracie steps back but in the confusion she starts to breathe
heavy, the world spinning. She winces in pain and steps back
a few feet. She falls.

Everyone's attention is on Lou so no one sees Gracie drop.

LOU (CONT'D)

That little bitch!

Lou is swearing and YELLING.

Everything is still for a second and then Lou sees what happened. March's eyes follow Lou.

Gracie is crumpled on the ground; white bile coming out of her mouth.

Patti tries to run to her but Al holds her back.

INT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT

Lights and sirens. Gracie in the back of an ambulance. March has his hand on Gracie's shoulder.

INT. PATTI'S HOUSE - DAY

Patti walks in the front door of her house. Meredith and John, surprised that she is home, step into the hallway to greet her.

They notice her clothes and are a little confused.

Patti drops her bag and starts crying.

Meredith takes her and holds her. John comes in to comfort her.

Patti looks up at her parents and begins explaining through the tears.

Her parents push through the shock of the story and comfort their daughter.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAYS LATER

The hospital. Gracie is lying in a bed, pretty banged up and shaking from withdrawal symptoms. A female DOCTOR, 60, stands beside the bed examining a chart. Gracie stares off into the distance.

DOCTOR

Your liver is almost gone. Luckily
there is enough left you don't need
a transplant...

No reaction from Gracie.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
That's if you stop doing everything
you're doing to try and kill
yourself.

Gracie is still staring.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
You're lucky to be alive.

Gracie ignores her.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
I want you to talk to someone about
rehabilitation and addiction
counseling.

The doctor waits for a response. Gracie realizes that the
doctor isn't going to leave until Gracie responds.

GRACIE
No.

DOCTOR
Because of the drug use you aren't
a candidate for transplant so if
you destroy what you have left then-
-

GRACIE
I don't care.

DOCTOR
You can go home in the morning.

GRACIE
I don't have a home.

DOCTOR
Anyone we can call?

GRACIE
No.

DOCTOR
Okay.

The doctor pulls up a chair and sits down close.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
I have sworn an oath to do no harm
but I'm going to let you in on a
little secret. I don't give a shit.

GRACIE

'scuse me?

DOCTOR

I'm not your mom or your priest or guardian angel. I ask these questions because the hospital requires me to.

GRACIE

What the hell do you think--

DOCTOR

If you're going to do drugs and drink yourself to death make sure you finish the job next time because I have other patients who have something to live for and you're wasting my time.

A male nurse, 27, enters, the doctor leans back and her demeanor changes.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Everything looks good.

She stands and hands the chart to the nurse.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

She can get back to her life first thing tomorrow.

The doctor leaves. The nurse makes a note.

NURSE

Do you need anything?

A long moment. The nurse finally turns to leave.

GRACIE

Can you bring me a pen and some paper?

The nurse nods and leaves.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Gracie is sitting up in her bed writing. A stack of paper is beside her. She has been writing for hours.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Next morning. Gracie is struggling to get her shirt on when March comes in.

MARCH

When the hospital called I thought
I was coming to collect a body.

GRACIE

Would you stop talking about my
body?

March tries to help her with her shirt.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

I can do it.

He leaves her and she struggles, obviously in pain.

MARCH

The more you struggle the more it's
going to hurt.

Gracie struggles more and SCREAMS in pain.

MARCH (CONT'D)

Quit trying to do everything on
your own.

He moves to help her again and she gives in. He helps her dress.

March helps her arm into a sleeve and she winces.

He starts buttoning up her shirt.

She reaches over and grabs the stack of papers then offers them to March.

GRACIE

What's this?

March takes them and looks at them. Shuffles a few pages.

MARCH

These are songs?

GRACIE

Lyrics. You have to do the music.
You're better at that than me
anyway.

MARCH

There's more than an album here.

GRACIE

Prepayment on the next one. I'll send you the rest when they're done.

MARCH

You'll send them?

GRACIE

I'm not going back.

MARCH

I understand. What can I do?

GRACIE

This is something I have to do on my own.

MARCH

Okay.

GRACIE

Will you help me?

March smiles and kisses her head.

INT. VAN - DAY

Driving in the van back to the motel, they pass through suburbia.

MARCH

This could be nice. A house, a couple of runts in the yard, an above-ground pool for the hot summers.

GRACIE

An above ground pool?

MARCH

The blue kind. About 15 foot across. You know.

GRACIE

I know. Who dreams of an above ground pool?

MARCH

When I was a kid we had one in the front yard. Me and my brothers spent all summer in that pool. Man that water was gross by August. What I'm saying is I could like this life.

Gracie snorts at the idea.

GRACIE

You're a guitar god. You belong on the road. Or on a horse riding the range.

MARCH

You're a surly alley cat.

GRACIE

I don't belong in anywhere.

MARCH

Isn't that what you've always wanted?

GRACIE

Maybe not anymore.

Gracie stares out the window at a FATHER mowing the lawn.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Where do you even start? How do you do all this?

MARCH

There's rental sites online.

Gracie giggles. March puts his hand on Gracie's arm. Gracie puts her hand on March's hand.

GRACIE

That's not what I meant.

MARCH

The internet is on the computer.

Gracie smiles and leans in to March and she turns on the radio.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Gracie packs her things from the drawers into her bags.

She sets aside a stack of band shirts to leave behind - packing everything else.

She shoulders her pack. Drops the pack and puts the band shirts careful inside.

Then heads out of the room giving it one last look before closing the door.

EXT. MOTEL WALK WAY - CONTINUOUS

Gracie knocks on Al's door. Al opens it. She gives her a hug.

Al hugs her again and starts to tear up.

AL

Oh you fucking bitch, look what you made me do.

Gracie laughs and hugs her again.

Al takes her scarf and wraps it around Gracie.

Al watches Gracie walk away and smiles through the tears.

Lou is coming up the stairs with a six pack of Fanta. He hesitates and sneers at her. She drops her pack and gives him a quick hug. Then pulls away and flicks his nose.

She steals a fanta, grabs her bag and doesn't look back.

INT. GLADYS' HOUSE - DAY

Gracie enters without knocking. Takes a moment as she remembers her old family home.

She walks into the living room. Gladys, still in mourning clothes, sets down her cup of tea.

GRACIE

Just listen. We didn't have the best relationship. Hell we don't. I was a little shit--

Gladys sits up straighter at the swear.

GRACIE (CONT'D)

Sorry. What I'm saying is I wasn't an easy kid. You did the best you could considering. I don't expect us to be mom and daughter or have Sunday dinner or anything.

(MORE)

GRACIE (CONT'D)

I just wanted to say thank you.
Thank you for me. I can't get
behind your religion it's
oppressive and wrong but I'm happy
you've something to help you
through his passing. The last thing
I said to him was I wouldn't piss
you to put out a fire. I don't want
the last thing I say to you to be
hard because if we can't have at
least some semblance of a
relationship then what can I expect
for my daughter. Like it or not
you're the mother daughter
relationship I know. So I need this
to be a better. For her. And I'll
work as hard as you did for my kid.
I love you mom.

Gracie hugs her and exits. Gladys doesn't move. She quietly weeps.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

March and Gracie pull up outside a small, rented house. They almost kiss but don't. They hold each other for a moment.

In the yard next door. A NEIGHBOR LADY, 34, is gardening while her KID, 9, plays in a kiddie pool nearby.

The neighbor lady stands up and waves at Gracie. She's wearing a worn out Ramones shirt.

GRACIE

Looks like there might be room for
a pool. Maybe. In time.

She gives him one small kiss then gets out with her bag and guitar and heads inside her new home.

INT. GRACIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Some time later. The place is sparse but there are a few signature things around: a few band posters, a guitar stand, and a bird statue. The house looks like the first place a college kid gets when they graduate.

INT. GRACIE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door bell RINGS. Gracie is getting dressed. She pulls a T-shirt out of her dresser. Everything in the dresser is folded away nicely. Gracie pulls on her shirt. The bell RINGS again.

INT. GRACIE'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Gracie answers the door. A MOM and a LOCAL KID with an electric guitar are at the door. Gracie ushers him in and the mom waves goodbye. Gracie gestures to the couch and she teaches him guitar.

At first she is trying to hold her frustration but the kid lands a chord and is overjoyed. Gracie gets drawn in by the enthusiasm.

INT. GRACIE'S HOUSE - DAY

An hour later the MOM picks her kid up. Gracie watches as they leave then sits down and plays a folk tune. She tries to write but it isn't coming. She tries again, nothing.

She throws the book on to the coffee table and as she does she brushes the wood and a deep splinter drives into her hand. She heads to the bathroom but she has nothing of use in the medicine cabinet. She pulls the splinter out with her teeth.

In the kitchen, she searches around and from the back of a cupboard pulling out a bottle of whiskey. She almost pours it on the wound but stops and looks at the bottle.

Standing at the counter she pours herself a shot. She stares at the shot. She dumps out the shot in the sink and walks out the front door.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Gracie walks up to the door of Patti's house and leaves her guitar on the step.

Meredith opens the door.

MEREDITH

Hello.

GRACIE

I was just leaving this.

MEREDITH

Gracie?

John steps out of the kitchen and approaches.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

I want to thank you for taking care of Patti on her "band camp adventure". We heard all about it.

GRACIE

I didn't... I should apologize. She is a good kid and I'm no mother.

MEREDITH

Who is at first? Don't get us wrong we were pissed. But things worked out.

JOHN

She's a teenager.

MEREDITH

Not happy about everything but she's back and she's alive. And happy she met you.

JOHN

We should talk more. Why don't you come in. She's upstairs...

John turns to call her and Gracie stops him.

GRACIE

Not yet. Not quite yet.

MEREDITH

Okay.

GRACIE

Maybe we could talk, the three of us, before that.

JOHN

Lets work towards that.

MEREDITH

Thank you.

GRACIE

For now can you give this to her?

Gracie hands Meredith the guitar.

MEREDITH

She'll probably need lesson from
someone.

GRACIE

I'll be around.

INT. WAREHOUSE STUDIO - DAY

March, Al and Lou are recording. March is sitting on a stool
with a music stand in front of him.

MARCH

Okay, this one is called Soot
Angel. Lets try something like...

He starts playing. Al and Lou join in.

MARCH (CONT'D)

Yeah, that's it.

He squints at the pages. Then flops out reading glasses and
resumes playing as he sings Gracie's lyrics. It is a rock
ballad and not as hard as their other songs.

The song plays out over the next two scenes.

MARCH (CONT'D)

(singing)

Swore I saw you standing there,
I heard the church bells moan,
morning clear to my midnight life,
your dignity was thrown.

Across the room,
A chance for me,
Haloed in clear clean light
no shadow for an absentee,

Francis is in the booth with the audio engineer. His head is
bobbing and he is loving the song.

MARCH (CONT'D)

(singing)

Fly away now,
While I'm an angel in your eye,
soot will stain my useless wings,
soon you'll know it's all a lie.

Fly away now,
While I'm an angel in your eye,
soot will stain useless wings,
cause I can only dream of things

(MORE)

MARCH (CONT'D)

like stolen moments or coffee
rings,
And I should say goodbye

this ain't no place for the true,
this ain't no place for me and you,
there ain't a life to see us
through...

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Gracie walks down the pathway away from the house. Meredith and John close the door.

Gracie stops on the walkway and looks back at the house.

Patti is in one of the upper windows watching her. They make eye contact.

A beat.

Patti holds up her hand. Gracie grins and waves back. Gracie drops her head and then looks back up and Patti is still there. Gracie's grin becomes a joyous, uninhibited smile.

Gracie waves again and, getting self-conscious, pops her hood over her head and walks away.

INT. PATTI'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Patti is curled up in a big chair drawing. Her mother puts a steaming cup of tea beside her.

In the sketch book Patti is outlining a black bird with her wings out stretched. She finishes the figure and takes a moment to admire it.

On the page facing the one with the bird outline is covered in a montage of near photo realistic black birds. The outline is crude but beautiful in opposition and simplicity.

Patti sets aside the sketch book and picks up Gracie's guitar. Her playing is the rough, basic playing of a beginner and Patti loves it.

INT. GRACIE'S HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE ON: Gracie's hand strumming a new guitar. Her homemade tattoo has been covered over by a tattoo of a bird in flight that is the same as the outline in Patti's sketch book.

WIDER ON: Gracie staring out the window to a suburban street.

A kid runs along the sidewalk rattling a stick along Gracie's fence.

GRACIE
Goddamn kids.

Gracie smiles and gets back to playing.

FADE OUT.