

# Blonde Ambition

Written by

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*"And she's known in the darkest clubs  
For pushing ahead of the dames  
If she says she can do it  
Then she can do it  
She don't make false claims."*

- David Bowie, "Queen Bitch"

*"Some people think little girls should be seen and not heard  
But I think "oh bondage, up yours!"*

-X-Ray Spex, "Oh Bondage, Up Yours"

We hear a familiar crackle over black as a TELEVISION SCREEN turns on. The screen is filled with black & white NEWS FOOTAGE of a ROCKET blasting off into space when - *BLAM!* The MTV LOGO flashes on screen as guitars shred. The MOON MAN plants his flag, waving in totally awesome neon graphics.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

You're watching MTV Music  
Television. All day, all night, all  
video music.

VAN HALEN'S music video "JUMP" plays, but we flip to MICHAEL JACKSON'S Pepsi ad, then JANE FONDA'S thigh workout, and on and on 'til we land on:

INT. AMERICAN BANDSTAND - FOOTAGE

DICK CLARK standing next to a fresh-faced BLONDE 24 year-old MADONNA. She smiles, out of breath, beaming after performance we can only imagine was as cool as her. Attitude oozes from her torn belly shirt, golden bangles, and wild peroxide hair.

The crowd cheers feverishly as Dick tries to get a word in.

DICK CLARK

Madonna, it's a real treat to  
finally have you on our show.

More cheering erupts, Madonna blows kisses to her fans.

DICK CLARK (CONT'D)

I was led to believe you're from  
New York, or did you just go to  
college here?

MADONNA

No, no, I was born in Detroit, and  
I'm a famed high school dropout.

She throws a cheeky wink to the crowd. Dick smiles awkwardly.

DICK CLARK

We're only a few weeks into the new  
year, but what are your goals for  
1984 and the rest of your career?

And without hesitation Madonna responds:

MADONNA

To rule the world.

She smiles beatifically and as the sound of CITY LIFE and CAR HORNS rise up and take over the soundtrack, we CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - HEART OF WINTER - DAY

Crowds of Yuppies, Punks, Wall Street Suits, all hustle against graffiti and trash lined streets. Cabs honk, boom boxes blaring, steam hissing from the subway grates below - it's the rhythm and soul of 1980's NEW YORK.

CHRYON: 1983, 1 YEAR EARLIER

We track through these crowded streets on the back of a WOMAN, her short shaggy BROWN HAIR tied up in an elaborate bow. Her athletic body cuts through the crowds with determination and loose hip swagger. We get a sense of the woman's face from the expressions on the men passing her by - a mixture of intrigue, fear, and lust.

Tapping her fingers on her Walkman, she blocks it all out.

On the back of her oversized LEATHER JACKET, we see the words BOY TOY scribbled in the center. A warning or badge of honor.

INT. RESTAURANT KITCHEN - DAY

The Woman opens her locker door, obscuring her face. She throws her jacket over the locker door, quickly followed by her white lacy top. Some of the kitchen workers can't help but stare as she changes so unabashedly in front of them.

THE WOMAN  
(sarcastic)  
Get a good look fellas.

Off her locker door SLAMMING-

INT. THE RUSSIAN TEA ROOM - NIGHT

SWOOSH! Gilded doors swing open as we follow her into the gaudy dining hall of the RUSSIAN TEA ROOM, filled with ornate flower bouquets, old New York money, and tourists.

At the corner table, a gaggle of BITCHY BALLERINAS from NYC Ballet wait impatiently for their server.

THE WOMAN (O.S.)  
What can I get you started with?

As the Bitchy Ballerinas lower their menus, we finally reveal our mysterious brunette to be...

BITCHY BALLERINA #1  
No way... Madonna?

MADONNA 23, immediately averts her green eyes, hiding her tired face behind a gruff pout, boyish haircut, and order pad. Swimming in an ill fitting uniform, we can still appreciate her unconventional beauty. But one thing is for sure, she couldn't be further from the vestiges of "fuck-me pop stardom" we associate with her today.

MADONNA

What, am I supposed to know you?

The Bitchy Ballerinas exchange looks, then:

BITCHY BALLERINA #2

(to Ballerina #1)

Wait, *the* Madonna who Alvin threw out of the company?

BITCHY BALLERINA #1

(To Ballerina #2)

Oh no, she quit, remember? To be a "dancer" in Prague or was it Paris?

BITCHY BALLERINA #3

(to Madonna)

I heard it was Paris - Burlesque, right?

The girls laugh amongst themselves while DEMITRI, her sleazy shift manager, watches her like a hawk. She needs this job. She's forced to swallow her pride. But while depositing the breadbasket she "accidentally" nudges a glass of water all over Bitchy Ballerina #1.

BITCHY BALLERINA #1

You bitch, you did that on purpose!

Madonna dabs at the spill, saying quietly...

MADONNA

I wanted to see if you'd melt.

BITCHY BALLERINA #1

What did you say?

Demitri notices the commotion and darts over. Fuck.

DEMITRI

Ladies, I'm sorry for the mess. Let me get you some of our famous St. Petersburg's tea. Least we can do for the New York Ballet's finest.

Madonna forces a smile for Demitri and the table.

MADONNA

I'll be back with your tea.

DEMITRI

Grab a floral arrangement from the back. Table 7 is missing one.

(to Ballerinas)

Good help is so hard to find.

Madonna walks into the kitchen, a volcano ready to erupt.

INT. THE RUSSIAN TEA ROOM - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

As the doors swing closed behind her, Madonna fires two hard middle fingers up in the air like a jackhammer gone wild: *FUCK YOU FUCK YOU FUCK YOU*. And of course, that's when Demitri walks back in...

INT. THE RUSSIAN TEA ROOM - COAT CHECK - NIGHT

Now exiled to coat check, Madonna cradles a phone against her ear, tapping her pencil to the hold music, glancing around to make sure Demitri isn't nearby.

GLORIA (OVER PHONE)

Sire Records, Nick Walkers's office.

MADONNA

Gloria, it's Madonna. Don't tell me he's in a meeting.

Gloria's voice changes, deeply annoyed.

GLORIA (OVER PHONE)

Like I told you 20 minutes ago, I don't have him. He'll return-

MADONNA

Did you get my flowers?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. SIRE RECORDS OFFICES - GLORIA'S DESK - NIGHT

At GLORIA's desk we see a floral bouquet. It's the bouquet missing from table 7. Gloria touches them delicately.

GLORIA

They're from you? There wasn't a card.

MADONNA

It's the least I could do to show  
you how much I appreciate all your  
hard work, Gloria. Woman to woman.

Gloria looks at the extravagant bouquet in front of her. A  
long pause. Madonna twirls the phone cord anxiously.

GLORIA

Alright alright, one moment.

Madonna smiles. One small victory in her shitty day.

INT. SIRE RECORDS - NICK WALKER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Gloria walks in, where she finds NICK WALKER snorting a bump  
of coke. No surprise, Nick's your typical slick '80s A&R guy.  
Vapid, young, and not nearly as smart as he thinks.

NICK

(fuck off)  
...yes?

GLORIA

It's Madonna. Line 1.

NICK

Fuck, again? Tell her I've left for  
the evening.

Gloria gives him a look, patches in Madonna on SPEAKERPHONE.  
Nick is caught off guard. He could murder Gloria.

NICK (CONT'D)

Babycakes how are you!

MADONNA

If I didn't know any better, I'd  
think you were avoiding my calls.

NICK

Babe, you know after the holidays  
it's just back to back meetings.  
Did you have a relaxing break?

MADONNA

You know I don't take breaks Nick.  
Have you gotten the label to  
reconsider releasing our album?

Gloria flashes a post-it: SHOW TONIGHT 11 PM.

NICK

I'll be at your show tonight, why don't we talk then?

MADONNA

That's why I called. I need you to do something for me.

NICK

Of course, anything.

He mimes a gun to his head. What could she possibly want now?

MADONNA

Bring the head honcho with you. Seymour needs to see us live. It's the only way-

NICK

Look, I'll try, but once Seymour Stein's made his mind up on an act, there's little anyone can-

Suddenly the line cuts out.

INT. THE RUSSIAN TEA ROOM - COAT CHECK - CONTINUOUS

MADONNA

Nick, you there?

Madonna turns to see Demitri with his thick fingers on the phone cradle.

DEMITRI

What'd I say about personal calls?

Demitri closes the coat check door behind him. He walks over to Madonna, placing his hands on her shoulders.

DEMITRI (CONT'D)

You know I'm hard on you because I think of you like a daughter.

Madonna cringes.

DEMITRI (CONT'D)

You're so tense, pushkin. Relax.

As Demitri slides his hands further down her shirt, Madonna slides out of his grasp, gestures at the clock.

MADONNA

Note taken. Shift's up anyway.

And she's OUT THE DOOR, before Demitri can even form words...

INT. LE PETIT BAR - NIGHT

Dark and romantic, Madonna is clearly out of place amongst the swanky clientele. At the table with her is LUKE WELLINGTON, annoyingly handsome in his Gordon Gekko power suit. He studies her from behind his wine glass, intrigued.

MADONNA

(shuffling papers)

So the Emmys, as you know, we're signed with Sire for our first album, but we're not happy with the speed at which things are moving.

Luke leans in, sliding closer. Madonna continues to pitch.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

With the material we have, and the direction the market is going, you and EMI will make back the pickup in a matter of months.

LUKE

You've got great eyes. I see why you're the front woman.

Madonna side eyes him. Not sure if she's reading him right.

MADONNA

Thanks. They make seeing easier.

Luke laughs again. He's trying really hard.

LUKE

They've got a great wine list here. Rare stuff. I'll order us a bottle.

Madonna flashes a smile, hiding her frustration.

MADONNA

Luke, I've got several ideas how we can re-vamp the mix. I like several producers on your roster -

Luke places his hand on Madonna's, stopping her.

LUKE

Slow down babe. You don't have to worry about the business side of things. That's what I'm here for.

(MORE)

LUKE (CONT'D)

Let's, just, ya know, make this more casual. Get to know each other a little. Artist to Patron.

MADONNA

I don't follow.

LUKE

At EMI, we like to know our artists on a *personal level*. Makes for better music don't you think?

MADONNA

Right...

Madonna slides her hand back, takes a sip of her water. *Fuck.*

MADONNA (CONT'D)

Excuse me for a sec?

Madonna grabs her backpack and heads for the bathroom. Out of Luke's eye-line, she continues walking PAST IT and OUT through the kitchen, grabbing a roll on her way out...

EXT. EAST VILLAGE - THE DANCETERIA NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Madonna, late, pushes through a line of MTV cool kids, punks, and yuppies, all making their case to JIMMY, the bouncer manning the velvet rope. The brick-walled venue doesn't look like much from the outside, but the crowd suggests otherwise.

This is DANCETERIA.

Madonna pushes her way to front, goes to unhook the rope.

MADONNA

Hey have the rest of the boys arrived?

He holds up a clipboard.

JIMMY

Name?

MADONNA

Funny. Come on Jimmy, I'm late.

Madonna tries again to walk past Jimmy.

JIMMY

I'm not "Jimmy". Name?

MADONNA

I perform here. Regularly. Are you serious?

He's serious.

NOT JIMMY

There's a lot of people "with" the bands tonight.

MADONNA

No you don't get it, I'm in one of the bands. The Emmys.

He waits for her name.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

(Begrudgingly)

Madonna Ciccone.

DRUNK YUPPIES at the front of the line start to grow impatient as Not Jimmy scans the list.

DRUNK YUPPIE #1

Why don't you do what every groupie does, and flash your tits!

Madonna turns to fight when -

NOT JIMMY

No Madonna.

She spins around.

MADONNA

What? Are you serious -

BAM! Madonna is suddenly pushed back by BIANCA STONEWELL, New York's "Club It-Girl," whose looks and street-cred warrant a freeze-frame-glitter-in-slow-motion close up. Shit, if we didn't know any better, we'd think Bianca was Madonna - with her blonde hair, vintage clothes, and cut off gloves.

Reality sets back in as Bianca and her entourage cut the line and Not Jimmy unhooks the velvet rope.

NOT JIMMY

Bianca, ladies, this way. Your table is ready.

BIANCA

Thanks Billy. Good to see you.

Madonna picks herself up, as people yell at her to move.

MADONNA  
I'm in the fucking band!

INT. DANCETERIA - THE MAIN STAGE - SIDE WINGS - NIGHT

Psyching themselves up with booze, we see Madonna's BANDMATES like trading cards with statistics:

On guitar, DAN GILROY - a lanky dirty blonde, wearing Buddy Holly glasses that give him an edgy intellectual look. A fun drunk, the guy with all the party plans. Madonna's BOYFRIEND.

On bass, his brother ED GILROY - a studly brunette, in his signature white collar shirt and checkered suspenders. Self-appointed road manager and stoner, a bad combination.

Twirling his drum sticks between his fingers - STEPHEN BRAY, black, new wave, and the only guy in the band who's known Madonna since her Detroit roots and doesn't take her shit.

Together, they are THE EMMYS. Finally, Madonna arrives.

STEPHEN  
M, you're late. Again.

MADONNA  
Stephen don't. The fucking bouncers here always think I'm a groupie.  
(to Dan)  
Dan, I thought you were going to talk to them about that?

Dan swoops in with a BIG KISS and a bottle of Jameson.

DAN  
I did. Told 'em to look out for my girl, give her the star treatment.

But Dan's affection is lost on Madonna, who's got bigger things to worry about. Actually, they all do.

MADONNA  
You guys see if Nicks's here? He's bringing Seymour Stein.

The rest of the band shrugs in between sips of Dan's Jameson. Their nonchalant attitudes rub Madonna the wrong way.

MADONNA (CONT'D)  
SEYMOUR-STEIN-IS-COMING. Head of Sire Records. So we can impress him into actually, you know, releasing our fucking album?

ED

We get it, M. That's why we gotta stay chill. Do our thing.

DAN

You really should have a drink. Get the creative juices flowing.

Stephen passes her the bottle, but she brushes it off.

STEPHEN

That guy from EMI coming tonight?

Madonna looks away, brushing it off. Embarrassed.

MADONNA

No... They don't share our vision.

Ed smirks.

ED

AKA he just took the meeting to try and fuck you.

Madonna ignores him. She hates that he's right.

DAN

Well, tonight I think we should still try something new, really wow the crowd. Like ending with a big guitar solo or -

Madonna can't even began to list the reasons that's a terrible idea. A STAGE HAND comes out.

STAGE HAND

You're on in five.

MADONNA

(flustered)

I gotta change. We're doing the songs like we always do. Stick to the plan. Got it!?

Madonna hurries off to change. Dan takes another big swig of whiskey. He turns to the guys with his guitar.

DAN

Just follow my lead. Trust me, she'll be cool with it.

Stephen and Ed exchange looks. This can't be good.

INT. DANCETERIA - MAIN STAGE - NIGHT

Finally we see a Madonna we *almost* recognize. Dramatic eyebrows and devilish smile. Great stage presence. Still, there's something about her that's more punk than pop-star. Madonna and Dan chant the last lyrics to *Everybody*:

MADONNA/DAN

*Everybody, come on, you can do your thing.*

Things are going accordingly to plan, and even GOOD til... Dan suddenly LURCHES forward into a crazy guitar solo, throwing everyone off beat. Dan swings his guitar around wildly as Madonna tries to dance, but his poor timing KNOCKS HER BACK. The song ends to limping cheers. It was a mess.

The house lights go up. Madonna scans the crowd for Nick. Nothing. Maybe it's better he's a no-show. Then as the curtain's close, she spots him by the bar. Shit.

INT. DANCETERIA - GREEN ROOM - NIGHT

Thrift store couches, cigarette smoke, and everyone who is anyone fill the unspoken "VIP" area. We see an MTV Camera crew wrapping up an interview with Bianca and her friends.

BIANCA

If you really want to be in the know, you have to hit the clubs on a Tuesday or Wednesday. Wednesdays are the new Fridays for sure.

Madonna tries to make her way to the camera's direction.

MADONNA (O.S.)

That's when anyone who matters plays, like the Emmys.

But the reporter and cameraman cut their lights.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

(to the Reporter)

Want an exclusive with the band?

The Reporter looks over to the guys, oblivious to the free press, struggling to tap the keg. Dan kicks the keg hard, fucking up his foot in the process. Ed and Stephen laugh.

REPORTER

(to his cameraman)

Let's go get B-Roll outside.

Bianca and her friends smirk, pleased with themselves.

BIANCA

Guess they got what they needed.

Ed & Stephen walk over with a beer for Bianca and her friends, trying to impress them. By Madonna's expression, we can tell these are unwanted fake bitches on her turf.

BIANCA (CONT'D)

Thanks for the VIP treatment guys.  
You guys always take such good care  
of me and my girls.

BIANCA'S FRIENDS

Thanks guys / so sweet

ED

It's no big deal. Really.

STEPHEN

(re camera crew)

So, ah, what was that all about?

BIANCA'S FRIENDS

That was MTV. Duh.

BIANCA

They're getting test footage for a  
new segment on night clubs. I might  
host it. No big deal.

Stephen and Ed ad-lib, impressed. Madonna rolls her eyes. It feels like Madonna is the only one who knows they're being used by Bianca. Dan walks over to the group, just as naive.

BIANCA (CONT'D)

Nice ending tonight, Dan. I thought  
your girl was going to go crowd  
surfing for a second.

DAN

Ha, I'd pay to see that.

MADONNA

I'm not as big a fan of strangers  
running their hands all over me as  
you are, Bianca.

Madonna grabs Dan before he sits down.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

What was that shit?

DAN  
Relax, it was a joke.

MADONNA  
No, the guitar solo -

DAN  
Yea, I was just trying to give the  
song new energy for Nick and  
Seymour. Surprise them.

MADONNA  
Yea that's the problem.  
(exhausted)  
We had a plan. You can't pull that  
shit. Not with Nick and Seymour  
here. Not ever.

DAN  
You're not the only one with good  
ideas. I'm allowed to experiment. I  
know you think you're the authority  
on all music or whatever, but  
sometimes you're wrong babe.

With a kiss, Dan turns back to the couch with the guys.  
Madonna left alone, turns to look for Nick.

MADONNA  
(to herself)  
I'm never wrong.

INT. DANCETERIA - DANCE FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Madonna wanders out from the green room onto the dance floor,  
looking for Seymour and Nick. *Maybe it wasn't him.* Madonna  
turns to head back when Nick emerges from the bathroom, a  
random girl discreetly exiting after. It's showtime.

MADONNA  
Nick! Over here!

NICK  
(lying)  
M, hey! Great show tonight. You  
guys really, mixed things up. Wild.

Madonna escorts Nick backstage to the green room.

INT. DANCETERIA - GREEN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MADONNA

Yea, so wild! Let's sit down with the guys. Can I get you and Seymour something to drink on the house? Where is the big guy, anyway?

NICK

You know I love you guys. But I couldn't drag him out, doll.

Madonna processes that.

MADONNA

Okay, well we've got another show tomorrow night. Bring him around 11, I'll get you guys a VIP table.

Nick runs his hands through his hair, distracted.

NICK

I don't think it's gonna happen.

MADONNA

I don't understand. You're my A&R guy, right? Don't you want what's best for the band? For me?

Nick hesitates. It's not good news. He bullshits.

NICK

Of course I do, but my hands are tied. Seymour didn't like the final mix. I think the best thing is to table the album for now, revisit it with him next quarter. We'll talk strategy later. Good seeing you-

Nick spots his bathroom girl and turns to leave, but Madonna stops him. She's tired of being yanked around.

MADONNA

Nick, I know the mixing is shit. That's why I wanted Seymour here to convince him that we're better than what's on that mix. That was your one job.

Nick can suddenly feel everyone staring at them. Bianca and her friends watch from behind their beers, smirking.

Dan, Ed, and Stephen share a concerned look.

NICK

Jesus Dan, she on her period or something? Come get your woman under control -

DAN

Babe come sit down -

MADONNA

No! I'm not going to let a junior executive derail everything I've done the last year because he's too scared to talk to his boss.

She turns her fire back to Nick:

MADONNA (CONT'D)

You're going to bring Seymour down here tomorrow night and I'm going to fix this if you can't. I hope I don't have to remind you what's at stake here - billboard conferences, summer bookings, air play?!

Nick rolls his eyes - he's heard this all before.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

Not to mention all the time we've spent at showcases promoting a record no one can buy!

Madonna knows her stuff, but she's underestimated Nick's threshold tonight. He's had enough of her shit.

NICK

Let's get some things clear, Madonna. This is a business. We're here to make money. Girls like you are a dime a dozen in the village. Don't think we can't just replace you in a fucking second.

MADONNA

You're out of-

NICK

(cutting her off)

And Seymour isn't here because he doesn't want to spend any more time on another "Blondie" rip-off. His words, not mine. So the chances of him reconsidering The Emmys at this point are zip. Bottom line.

The news hits her like a punch to the gut. Down on the ropes, tears bubble beneath the surface.

DAN

Why is this the first time we're hearing about this, Nick?

NICK

I like you Dan. Maybe I could have pushed Seymour to reconsider if she hadn't been such a difficult bitch.

And with that, Nick leaves. Madonna watches him go, her eyes burning a hole through the back of his head, her fist curled tighter and tighter. Her mind racing -

LED ZEPPLIN (PRE-LAP)

(Screaming)

Ahhhhhhayaahhhhhh!

INT. LOFT AFTER PARTY - NIGHT

Party-goers dance as Led Zeppelin's *Immigrant Song* plays in the background. A full drunken celebration swirls around Madonna as her bandmates smoke up, oblivious. Her expression is unchanged, replaying everything over and over again.

ERIKA, black, stylish, and sharp tongued, has her arm around Madonna. There's a bond between these two - they get each other easily and immediately.

STEPHEN

We don't need Nick. Fuck him. We've got a finished product. Now we just gotta sling it. Old school.

ERIKA

What do suits know about real music anyway?

ED

Yea, they only understand spreadsheets and cookie cutter formulas. We'll be okay.

DAN

Look, our album isn't perfect, but it isn't *bad*.

Madonna can't listen to this nonsense anymore. She reaches into her backpack, pulls out a cassette.

MADONNA

Oh really Dan? It isn't that bad?

She leans over, slides it into the sound system. *Everybody* starts to play over the speakers.

It starts off promising like the live version we just heard, but the layering of weird horns, bells, and saxophones makes everyone cringe in the room. It's very 80's in the worst way. A PARTY GIRL walks over to the speakers and turns it off.

PARTY GIRL

Ugh, who put this garbage on?

The guys share a look. *Fuck*. Panic sets in.

ED

Shit, I already spent my advance.

STEPHEN

We all did.

MADONNA

We're fucked. We're so fucked.

Madonna folds over like an accordion.

DAN

This might be crazy, but I know this licensing dude we could sell some of our songs too. We could make some quick cash if a commercial uses it.

STEPHEN

I mean, if the album's never coming out...

The guys seem to like this idea. Madonna jumps up from the couch, she's going to be sick.

INT. LOFT PARTY - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Madonna shoves her way in, ignoring the line. SLAMS the door shut. The girls she cut off BEAT their anger on the door.

Fuck them. She needs a moment.

Panic setting in, she closes her eyes, fighting back the tears. She tilts her head back, a *deep breath*. She braces herself against the sink, refusing to break. *Deep breaths*.

MADONNA

*If not you, then who. If not now,  
then when.*

*Release.* Wiping away her smeared eyeliner, she rummages through the medicine cabinet. Landing on a RED LIPSTICK, she puts it on, and pockets it. *That's better.* Game face intact, she takes one more deep breath and turns OFF the light.

INT. LOFT PARTY - NIGHT

Madonna exits the bathroom quietly. She moves through the party, recalibrating, when she notices everyone is dancing. Feeling it. Loving it. We know the song as David Bowie's *Modern Love*. Madonna watches, tapping along. *What is this?*

She grabs the album, an idea forming as she heads back to the couch. The guys don't even notice her return, too busy trying to brainstorm their own half-baked solutions.

STEPHEN

- If we hustle the tracks we don't sell, I know some cool college radio DJs who'll play it.

Stephen passes the joint to Dan.

DAN

Yea that could work. Fake it 'til you make it. It's good enough.

MADONNA (O.S.)

Good enough is not good enough.

They all turn, high and surprised by her sudden return.

ED

Okay, so what do you suggest we do?

Madonna tosses him David Bowie's LET'S DANCE album.

MADONNA

What if we got him?

ED

Bowie?

MADONNA

(pointing to the sleeve)  
No, idiot. Nile Rodgers. The guy who produced it.

STEPHEN

As in the Nile Rodgers? Of Chic?

MADONNA

Yeah, why not? He's perfect.

The band doesn't follow. She spells it out.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

We need someone undeniable attached to the re-mix for Sire to give it a second listen. If they won't listen to me, they'll listen to him.

The band trades looks. This girl is out of her mind.

DAN

Nick could never get him for us.

ED

(to himself)

Especially not after tonight.

MADONNA

Who said anything about Nick?

INT. NILES RODGERS' OFFICES - DAY

The sleek offices of Nile Rodgers. Gold and platinum records line the walls: Sister Sledge's "We Are Family," Chic's "Good Times," Diana Ross' "I'm Coming Out." Classics.

At the front, a posh RECEPTIONIST answers the phone while opening mail. Unsolicited cassette tapes in envelope after envelope. And every single one goes right in the trash.

RECEPTIONIST

No, Nile doesn't have any availability 'til next year, that's right. Yes, I know it's February.

The receptionist looks up to see Madonna walking in. Madonna throws down her leather jacket on the receptionist's desk.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

Can I help you?

MADONNA

I'm here to see Nile.

RECEPTIONIST

Do you have an appointment?

Madonna leans over the desk checking out the receptionist's schedule, touching her pencils.

MADONNA  
He's expecting me.

The receptionist forces a smile, moving her schedule book and pencils away from Madonna.

RECEPTIONIST  
Name?

MADONNA  
Just tell him Madonna's here.

The receptionist stares back blankly.

MADONNA (CONT'D)  
As in from *The Emmys*.

Madonna grabs her jacket and heads for the door leading back into Nile's offices, but the door BUZZES and LOCKS. Madonna pulls on the doors, but they don't budge.

The receptionist holds down a button at her desk.

RECEPTIONIST  
Right. I don't have a "Madonna" on the schedule. You'll have to come back when you have an appointment.

Madonna runs her hands through her hair, hiding her frustration, debating her next move.

MADONNA  
This is about a very important album-

RECEPTIONIST  
Then have your reps mail in your submission. I'll make sure it gets taken very seriously.

Madonna looks at the trash bin filled to the brim. Great.

INT. JIMMY'S DINER - UPPER EAST SIDE - DAY

Madonna flips through the New York Post, nursing the same cup of coffee from the last three hours. Stephen arrives, sulking into the booth across from her.

STEPHEN

Can you tell me what the hell I'm  
doing above 34th street? Had to  
switch trains twice.

Madonna folds down her paper and flips it around to Stephen.

MADONNA

Look at Page Six.

STEPHEN

Yeah, so?

MADONNA

He'll be at Hubert's off Park  
Avenue tonight.

STEPHEN

Who?

MADONNA

Nile.

Stephen looks at Madonna, putting it together.

STEPHEN

No... Seriously?

EXT. HUBERT'S - PARK AVENUE - NIGHT

Madonna and Stephen wait outside the very exclusive French  
bistro amongst a sea of FANS and PAPARAZZI.

STEPHEN

I guess other people read Page Six.

MADONNA

Shut up and focus.

A town car pulls up to the curb, and a couple of EXECUTIVES  
exit, shortly followed by CHER and NILE RODGERS.

STEPHEN

Shit, is that Cher?

Madonna has Stephen push forward through the crowd. Stephen  
holds their CASSETTE TAPE in his hand and extends it out  
toward Nile, when Cher reaches out to sign it instead.

CHER

The Emmys?

Madonna pulls the tape out of Cher's hands. Cher shoots her a dirty look. Madonna grabs Nile's arm.

MADONNA

Nile, we've got a deal with Sire Records to put out our album. We've got the best raw songs you've ever heard, we just need a killer producer like you to re-mix it.

NILE

Thanks honey. I'll take a listen.

Nile passes it off to his ASSISTANT. Cher turns back:

CHER

Might want to rethink the name.

Nile, Cher, enter the restaurant. Just as Madonna and Stephen think they've accomplished their mission, Madonna sees Nile's Assistant THROWING THEIR DEMO IN THE TRASH. She grabs him.

MADONNA

What do you think you're doing?

NILE'S ASSISTANT

Isn't it clear enough? Fuck off.

EXT. RUSSIAN TEA ROOM - KITCHEN - DAY

SLAM! Madonna, lays a tray down of half eaten food. She turns to see if any of her co-workers are nearby, then furiously DEVOURS the left-overs. TIFFANY enters, throwing a perfectly good STEAK SANDWICH in the trash.

INT. ERIKA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Madonna, in uniform, paces around eating the STEAK SANDWICH. Erika nurses a cup of coffee and a hangover, splitting her attention between MTV and her friend's latest meltdown.

MADONNA

Amateurs. I'm working with idiots. I should just get rid of them all.

ERIKA

Firing your boyfriend doesn't sound like the best plan.

MADONNA

I'm doing all the work Erika! If it wasn't for me, Dan and his stupid brother would still be playing in pool halls in Queens and squatting in that artist commune.

ERIKA

Didn't you get them kicked out of there anyway?

MADONNA

(deflecting)

It was the kick in the ass they needed to get serious -

ERIKA

Holy shit! Check it out!

Madonna turns, sees Erika totally transfixed by NEW ORDER's music video for *Confusion*. A bearded courier walks the band's latest song (on cutting edge reel-to-reel tape) through a packed NYC club to the DJ booth.

ERIKA (CONT'D)

I've been there! Shit, maybe I'm in the video...

MADONNA

Wait, what? What club?

ERIKA

I forget, it's new. It's, um, funsomething. Can you grab me some aspirin?

Madonna watches the screen, a plan forming.

MADONNA

Funwhat?

ERIKA

There might be a flyer on the table. Aspirin pronto.

Madonna walks over to Erika's drafting table, shuffles through some sketches and finds the flyer - a creepy clown logo smiling up at her, FUN HOUSE written in bubbly type.

MADONNA

Fun House?

Madonna tosses her the bottle, eyes locked on the screen as the pale English band hangs out in the Fun House DJ booth with the attractive, young DJ.

ERIKA

Yeah that's the one. DJ was incredible. That's him up there, with the band. Guess that dude is blowing up. Kinda cute, huh?

MADONNA

You remember his name?

Erika throws back the aspirin, searches her fragmented brain.

ERIKA

(finally)

Jellybean... Jellybean Benitez.

And we MATCH-CUT from the CREEPY CLOWN FLYER...

INT. BENITEZ APARTMENT - SOUTH BRONX - DAY

...To that same eerily smiling CLOWN LOGO on a record crate. Scribbled on it, the words J.B. We pull out and we're in a bedroom filled with music equipment, records, baseball memorabilia, and the Puerto Rican flag hanging over a bare mattress on the floor. He's a minimalist.

We follow the sound of an ANSWERING MACHINE ...

INT. BENITEZ APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

... Where we find FUN HOUSE DJ JOHN "JELLYBEAN" BENITEZ. A stocky build, but boyishly handsome. He tucks his silky black hair behind his well trained ears.

BEEP - a message from EMI Records about re-mixing another Latin-Funk album? *Delete*. BEEP - A ditsy girl's voice rattles on about his set last night. *Delete*.

Jellybean listens sleepily, surrounded by family photos, crucifixes, and dainty floral furniture. Not what you would expect to see in a cool DJ's apartment.

INT. BENITEZ APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Jellybean rummages for food in the fridge, knocking over a container of orange juice in the process. *Shit*.

MAMA BENITEZ (O.S.)  
John, that you?

JELLYBEAN  
Ya Ma, just making breakfast.

Mama Benitez, enters, looks her son up and down. Not impressed. DEBBIE, his older sister in her nursing scrubs, pushes Jellybean out of the way for milk, late for work.

DEBBIE  
You just get home little bro? You smell like sweat and smoke.

Jellybean shoots her a look. *Thanks for blowing my cover!*

MAMA BENITEZ  
John, I don't like you out all night. Why can't you have a real job like Debbie? Go back to school-

She swats him affectionately with a newspaper. Family.

JELLYBEAN  
*Ah pues bien!* All right, I just got home. You caught me. I don't need to go back to school Ma, I have a career. Besides, I'm paying all the bills, right? Helping Debbie with her nursing loans...

His mother kisses her rosary, a prayer under her breath.

DEBBIE  
(trying to help)  
He was even on MTV just last week -

Mama Benitez scoffs at that. She rolls her eyes.

MAMA BENITEZ  
You just love breaking my heart with your disco music?

Jellybean's turn to roll his eyes.

JELLYBEAN  
Disco's dead Ma. Everyone knows that. Love you.

And with a kiss he dashes off to his room to avoid the rest of what might follow.

## INT. SUBWAY CAR - NIGHT

Jellybean rides the subway to his gig, combing through his crates, checking his list, surrounded by graffiti and garbage. Looks like a scene out of 'The Warriors'.

A homeless guy lays passed out a couple seats over. A panhandler walks by asking for change with a monkey. Even a COUPLE CUTE GIRLS eyeing him on the other side of the car. But nothing can distract Jellybean before his set...

## EXT. THE FUN HOUSE DANCE CLUB - NIGHT

Jellybean moves past a long line of goths, costumed dancers, and trendy college students looking for a wild night. All of them eager to enter the circus-themed dance club - FUN HOUSE. We see the line's attention shift to Jellybean. He's what they're here for. Already a legend in the making.

FUN HOUSE BOUNCER

'Sup, JB. Back's open for you.

Jellybean gives him a nod, without even looking up. Focused. We follow Jellybean as he turns into an alleyway, slipping into the club through the back door.

## INT. FUN HOUSE - BAR/DANCE FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Jellybean moves through the dark and intoxicating dance floor, surrounded by neon signs and neon hair. It's like looking at a Keith Haring painting on acid.

Jellybean preps his set at the DJ booth as the other DJ gets ready to transition out. They work in a plexiglass sanctuary on stage surrounded by VIP booths. Jellybean fumbles with his massive crates and tape-reels, just as Madonna and Erika walk in. Madonna clocks Jellybean. Sizing him up.

MADONNA

(unimpressed)

That's him?

ERIKA

When you're still dancing at 4 AM,  
remember you said that.

Madonna and Erika lean against the bar as Jellybean finally takes the mic.

JELLYBEAN

Fun House, looking live?

CROWD  
Jellybean! Jellybean!

Madonna rolls her eyes at Erika. But the crowd is already stirred into a frenzy and bum rushes the dance floor.

JELLYBEAN  
What's that, Fun House? I can't hear you!

The beat starts to swell. Madonna's starting to come around to it, but isn't sold 'til...

CROWD  
JEEEELLLLLYYYBEEEAAN ROCKS THE HOUSE!  
HOUSE! JELLYBEAN ROCKS THE HOUSE!

...THE BEAT DROPS. His remix hits the floor like a rush of cocaine. Madonna takes in the crowd, the music. She's liking what she's hearing.

MADONNA  
We're getting on that stage.

INT. FUN HOUSE - VIP SECTION/STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Madonna pushes her way through the crowd up to the stage where she finds Jellybean immersed in his set, surrounded by a SECOND LEVEL VIP section. It's littered with artists, young record execs, and of course Bianca. MTV news cameras filming her and her friends again.

MADONNA  
(disgusted)  
Bianca.

Madonna approaches the SUITED GUY manning the rope. Tosses her hair, bites her lip. He leans in, whispers sensually:

SUIT GUY  
*I'm gay.*

Madonna's face falls. Madonna scans the room, looking for another angle...

ERIKA  
So now what?

...When she locks onto a dance-off forming in front of the stage - BINGO!

MADONNA  
Just follow my lead.

INT. FUN HOUSE - DANCE FLOOR

Madonna pushes through the crowd to the edges of the dance off, pulling Erika behind her.

We watch as tough street dudes BREAK DANCE. Madonna studies the competition. It's like trying to find the right time to jump into an intense game of double dutch.

ERIKA

M, I don't know about this. These dudes aren't playing around.

MADONNA

Neither am I.

Madonna, without looking back PULLS on the shirt of a MALE DANCER about to step into the circle, cutting him off as she JUMPS INTO THE CENTER. The guys watch her, skeptical, but things turn as Madonna busts out her classical training. It's like Flash-Dance on hip-hop steroids.

A GUY jumps into the circle with her, trying to grind, but she rejects him hard with fancy foot work, crushing him like a used cigarette butt under her heel.

CROWD

Dayum / Oooo / Booya!

ERIKA

Get it M!

This is her moment. Madonna, now commanding the whole dance floor, gets the attention of MTV reporters on stage.

MTV REPORTER

(to Camera Man)

Let's get footage of this.

Bianca and her friends stand to watch. Even Jellybean can't help but notice the new queen of the dance floor.

Madonna makes her final strike and JUMPS on stage in front of a shocked Bianca. The room cheers Madonna on...

INT. FUN HOUSE - STAGE

Just as she's made it, Madonna clocks a BOUNCER about to throw her off stage, but she's come too far to let it end here. With the whole room watching, camera rolling, Bianca and Madonna square off in a game of chicken.

Madonna pulls the cherry out of Bianca's rum and coke.

MADONNA

Wednesday is for taste makers, am I right?

She puts the Cherry in her mouth. Winks to the reporter filming. The Bouncer approaches, palming the camera down with his hand. The reporter signals to cut the lights.

BOUNCER

You can't be up here.

The Bouncer looks to Bianca, who's aware all eyes are on her:

BIANCA

(reluctantly)

Rick it's cool. She's with me.

The Bouncer backs off. The camera turns back on.

BIANCA (CONT'D)

(to the reporter)

Give us a minute.

Bianca pulls Madonna aside, dropping the friendly act.

BIANCA (CONT'D)

I don't know what you want -

Madonna, fully aware the camera is still on, KISSES BIANCA ON THE LIPS. Her friends gasp.

MADONNA

Nothing you got, but thanks.

Madonna moves off, smirking, as Bianca pulls a KNOTTED CHERRY STEM out of her mouth, horrified.

INT. DJ BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Madonna steps into Jellybean's plexiglass work station. She flips through his records. He's busy putting on the next song. As it starts to play -

MADONNA

You've got some good shit here.  
Who's your source?

Jellybean doesn't look over.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

Hey, buddy. I'm talking to you.

Jellybean still ignores her. Bianca and her friends watch from their table, snickering.

Irked, Madonna SNAPS Jellybean's headphones.

JELLYBEAN

Aye, hot discs here, you can't just come up and-

Jellybean finally looks at the wild stallion in front of him:

MADONNA

Don't you know who I am?

JELLYBEAN

Crazy?

MADONNA

I'm the next big thing.

Madonna pulls out her cassette tape from her bra.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

It's the only thing your set is missing. They love us at Danceteria.

JELLYBEAN

Do you push your way on stage at Danceteria too?

MADONNA

No. People push their way to see me. Play it.

He smirks. He kinda likes her.

JELLYBEAN

One, I don't play cassette tapes in my sets, and two, I never play a song 'til I've had a chance to listen to it. *Alone*.

Jellybean reaches to put her tape in his crate, but Madonna grabs his arm. She can't afford another tape in the trash.

MADONNA

If you're not gonna listen to it just give it back.

He pulls his arm back, pulling Madonna in close to him. An unexpected cool move on his part.

JELLYBEAN  
Do I look like a liar?

Madonna lets go of him, unsure of her next move, then—  
She turns and pulls out a silver sharpie from her back pocket, extending the SLEEVE OF HER LEATHER JACKET.

MADONNA  
Sign it.

He hesitates.

MADONNA (CONT'D)  
By the looks of it, you have one minute before the song ends, so sign it.

JELLYBEAN  
Why?

MADONNA  
Collateral.

Jellybean laughs. He signs her sleeve, JOHN BENITEZ.

JELLYBEAN  
Nice doing business with you?

What's her name?

MADONNA  
The pleasure was all yours.

The SONG ENDS as predicted. Jellybean turns and races to flip on the next track as Madonna exits the booth. She exhales. *This might actually work.* Jellybean spins around, but she's gone. He exits the booth scanning the crowd for her when he senses Bianca and her friends staring at him.

JELLYBEAN  
You know that girl?

BIANCA  
No, not at all.

BIANCA'S FRIENDS  
She's not with us.

JELLYBEAN  
Too bad.

Off Bianca and her friends' disbelief...

INT. THE MUSIC BUILDING - EMMYS' REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

The Emmys' rehearsal space does double-duty as Madonna and Dan's apartment. Dan's passed out behind Stephen's drum set from another night of rigorous "practice". Madonna, dressed and ready for the day, grabs her Walkman, backpack, and a HIGH POWER STAPLE GUN. She dips her hand into a glass jar labeled "FOOD \$\$\$", and sighs. It's basically empty.

EXT. EAST VILLAGE - COPY & MAILING SHOP - DAY

Madonna flirts with a NERDY CLERK, examining paper stock.

MADONNA

I was thinking of something a little *thicker*.

NERDY CLERK

Yeah sure, let me see what we have in the back.

With the coast clear, Madonna puts on her sunglasses, opens a Xerox machine, and starts scanning her face. Cool black and white images of her face start spitting out of the copier.

INT. BENITEZ APARTMENT - DAY

Just like when we first met him, Jellybean's still up from his night DJing. Breakfast scattered around him, he searches through his latest vinyl finds and record company submissions for something to put on. His version of weekend read.

Jellybean puts on a funk album, listening for a verse or two. Not great. He turns it off, tossing it into the "reject" pile, which already has a number of records and tapes.

He opens up an envelope from A&M records. A tape from a new signing. He sticks it in and sappy sweet pop fills the air.

JELLYBEAN

And no...

That one goes to the reject pile. Jellybean finally reaches for the Emmys' tape. Studies the cheesy ransom note style lettering. He unfolds an insert, a black and white photo of the band. Madonna, despite her short brown boyish hair and terrible outfit, still has something about her.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)

All right, let's see what you got.

He puts the tape on. The first track comes on, *Everybody*. And just like at the party, it doesn't go over well.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)

Nope. You got one more chance.

Jellybean fast-forwards to the next song. *Lucky Star* starts to play. This track, unlike *Everybody* sounds pretty cool.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)

Okay, good, solid beat.

But just as Jellybean starts getting into it, overproduced horns and synthesizers kick in, alongside cheesy guitars.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)

Oh come on, trumpets?

Jellybean stops the song and pulls out his YAMAHA DX-7 KEYBOARD. Rewinds and starts the song over.

Jams over the song with an airy twinkle effect. Looping it, he moves over to his DRUM PAD. He pads along, emphasizing the catchy beat.

The cleaner beat and piano riffs transform the song into something we can really dance to. Even Jellybean can't help dancing along. Just throw in the harmony with Madonna's vocal...

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)

*Star Light, Star Bright-*

DEBBIE (O.S.)

That's catchy, JB. Cute moves.

Debbie watches from his doorway.

JELLYBEAN

Hey Debbie. Ma back too?

DEBBIE

Nah. But she's praying for you.  
Who's the girl you listening to?

Jellybean tosses her the cassette.

JELLYBEAN

I have no idea. But I like her.

He rolls over, reaches for the PHONE.

INT. THE MUSIC BUILDING - THE EMMYS' REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

RING RING - Dan stirs, waiting for the phone to stop ringing. When it doesn't, Dan gets up, knocks over a cymbal. Pissed, he rips the phone from the wall. Now it's silent.

DAN  
That's better.

As Dan goes back to his slumbering, we cut to:

INT. JELLYBEAN'S APARTMENT - SAME

Jellybean listening as the line goes dead. Calls the number on the tape again and now it just rings and rings. *WTF?*

EXT. EAST VILLAGE - DAY

Madonna walks past several marquees, passing CBGB and STUDIO 54, tapping along to the music in her Walkman. She stares at the billings for the upcoming shows: Talking Heads, Patti Smith, Duran Duran, *ugh*, *Blondie*.

STAMP - Madonna staples the black and white copies of her face over Blondie's music billings.

Actually, she's papered the whole neighborhood with flyers. On the flyer we read: THE EMMYS - DANCETERIA. SATURDAY NIGHT!

INT. DANCETERIA - MAIN STAGE - NIGHT

Madonna and the band finish singing *Lucky Star* to a full house. The crowd cheers, and as the lights go down, Madonna sees Jellybean at the bar in back. *What's he doing here?*

He sees her looking, holds up a flyer with her face on it. She turns away, hiding her smile. Dan leans into the mic.

DAN  
Hey everyone, we're the Emmys.  
Thanks for coming out, we're going  
to do one last song-

And just like that one of Dan's guitar strings SNAPS.

DAN (CONT'D)  
Fuck.

Madonna grabs the mic from Dan. It's showtime.

MADONNA  
 (Pointing to Stephen)  
 Alright, EVERYBODY!

Dan tries to re-string up as fast as he can, while the rest of the band starts playing *Everybody*.

But this time, Madonna's the one going rogue.

MADONNA (CONT'D)  
*I know you've been waiting, yeah*  
*I've been watching you, yeah*

Madonna spontaneously JUMPS off stage, grabbing people from the audience, getting the whole room to dance with her.

MADONNA (CONT'D)  
*Everybody, come on, dance and sing*  
*Everybody, get up and do your thing*

Jellybean is mesmerized by how she works the room. The song comes to a dramatic end and the crowd claps wildly. Dan, Ed and Stephen soak in the applause.

STEPHEN  
 (to Ed and Dan)  
 Woo! That was sick!

Ed throws his arm around his brother, stoked.

ED  
 Now that's how you end a set!

Dan smiles back with shy agreement. He watches Madonna work the room with envious admiration.

INT. DANCETERIA - BAR - LATER

Madonna approaches Jellybean at the bar, while the band pack up their instruments... Dan keeping a jealous eye on her.

MADONNA  
 You never called. I was starting to think I was going to have come over and collect.

JELLYBEAN  
 I've never seen someone have such stage presence.

MADONNA  
 What can I say, I'm a natural. So what'd you think of our tape?

Madonna doesn't waste time, but neither does Jellybean.

JELLYBEAN

The mix is a mess. You're ska on one track, overly poppy on another. Lucky Star almost worked, but that's about it...

MADONNA

Well, the label loves us. They're super excited about our potential.

JELLYBEAN

You guys are better live, I'll admit. Wasn't expecting that.

That stings, but she keeps her cool.

MADONNA

Yeah, well I guess we haven't found anyone who can capture our genius. Anyway, thanks for stopping by man.

Madonna turns to leave. Jellybean processes.

JELLYBEAN (O.S.)

It's saveable though. Have you thought about doing a remix?

She's got him.

MADONNA

No, why-

Dan swoops in, throwing his arm around his girl. He looks Jellybean up and down, not sure what to make of him yet.

DAN

Hey man, I'm Dan.

Jellybean doesn't want trouble. They shake hands.

JELLYBEAN

John. Great set.

MADONNA

We're just talking about the tape-

DAN

What about it?

JELLYBEAN

I was just saying your album needs to capture the energy of you guys live. Maybe a couple more up-tempo songs to dance to, strip down the vocals-

DAN

What's wrong with the vocals?

JELLYBEAN

It's a bit crowded with you both singing. Have you thought of just her singing?

Jellybean hits an unknown sore spot for Dan. Madonna braces.

DAN

M, can I talk to you in private?

JELLYBEAN

M? That short for Emmy?

MADONNA

Madonna - Don't leave.

Jellybean smiles behind his beer. That can't be her real name? Before he can do more damage, Madonna drags Dan into...

INT. DANCETERIA - PHOTOBOOTH - CONTINUOUS

She throws the curtain closed.

MADONNA

I need you to just hear me out for a second. Do you know who that is?

DAN

No.

MADONNA

He's the hottest DJ out there right now, and believe it or not, he liked our set.

DAN

So? What do we need him for? I'm handling everything.

(off her look)

I will.

Dan gently moves Madonna's hair. She's not convinced.

MADONNA

John just might be the only guy with the right name and sound to save our album. He's got a real vision -

DAN

Oh, the "vision" that involves dropping my vocals? No way.

MADONNA

Dan, without me, there wouldn't even be an album to fight over. So let's just hear him out -

DAN

Fuck, you ever think that maybe we're in this mess because of you?

MADONNA

I'm doing this for all of us -

DAN

Forget it, just do whatever you want. You always do.

Dan storms out. Madonna inhales deeply, puts a smile on...

INT. DANCETERIA - BAR - CONTINUOUS

...And emerges to find Jellybean watching Dan go.

JELLYBEAN

Do you need to go after him?

Madonna considers it, then:

MADONNA

Are you afraid of heights?

INT. THE MUSIC BUILDING - THE EMMYS' REHEARSAL SPACE - NIGHT

We hear the sound of several padlocks opening over black as Madonna curses and stumbles in the dark recording space.

MADONNA

Just gotta grab something quick.

As Madonna starts digging through piles of clothes and boxes, Jellybean walks delicately through the studio, trying to avoid the food containers and music gear.

JELLYBEAN

I didn't know you could live in a rehearsal space.

MADONNA

I live and breath music. Makes sense to be close to the studio when inspiration strikes.

JELLYBEAN

But it can't be legal, right?

Madonna hands him a BRICK and a beer.

MADONNA

Do I look like I follow the rules?

Jellybean looks down at the brick. About to ask, but Madonna is already out the door. What has he gotten himself into?

JELLYBEAN

Shit.

EXT. THE MUSIC BUILDING - ROOF TOP - NIGHT

Madonna waves Jellybean up, grabs the brick out of his hand.

MADONNA

Learnt the hard way you need that.

She props the rooftop door open with a brick. The place is deserted, with a great view of the city.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

So John, Jellybean, *Mr. Jellybean*?

JELLYBEAN

Just call me Jellybean. Everyone does, anyway.

Jellybean steers clear of the edge. Madonna leans against it. Sizing him up, she moves closer to him.

MADONNA

(re: her jacket)

You see this name here? On my shoulder?

JELLYBEAN

(reading)

Pearl Lang?

MADONNA

Creative director for the Modern Dance Theater. I dropped out of Michigan to dance for her company, gave up a full ride. Then I show up and it turns out they didn't need an understudy after all.

JELLYBEAN

You just showed up without a plan?

MADONNA

My *plan* was to dance in New York. So I came. I don't wait for opportunities. I make them.

Moving closer...

MADONNA (CONT'D)

Every day I'd wait outside of her studio, telling her she had to hire me, and every day she'd say no.

JELLYBEAN

But she finally caved and let you audition, right?

MADONNA

No. But fuck her. I'm still here, and doing something better.

Madonna turns, looking out on the city. She looks beautiful. Jellybean looks away. *Keep it professional.*

JELLYBEAN

So all these signatures - what are they? A hit list?

MADONNA

More or less.

Madonna jumps up onto the ledge, walking along it. Jellybean blanches, grabs her when she leans over a bit too far.

JELLYBEAN

Jesus!

MADONNA

(with a grin)  
I thought you weren't scared of heights?

JELLYBEAN

Well I am. More or less.

A charged moment, as he helps her down and they disentangle. Jellybean grabs for another beer, trying to keep a distance.

MADONNA

I'm going to get straight to the point. I did my research on you. You're not just great at spinning records. Everybody's hounding you for mixes - A&M, EMI, Sire, all the big boys. You're one hit mix away from being a full on producer.

JELLYBEAN

Then you should know I just don't work with anyone.

Madonna smiles at that one.

MADONNA

You wouldn't be here if I wasn't something special.

Jellybean drinks more of his beer. Thinking.

JELLYBEAN

Maybe you've got something. You're great live, but on tape... not so hot. How do I know that even with my help, you can deliver the goods? I've got a rep to think of.

A challenge. Madonna likes it.

MADONNA

So do I. But I'm going take a risk on you and make you a deal.

JELLYBEAN

(Laughing)  
I'm the risk?

MADONNA

If you re-mix my current album, and Sire likes it, I promise you can be the sole producer on my next album. But the deal expires in 10, 9, 8...

She extends her hand. He doesn't.

JELLYBEAN

And why would I wanna do that for someone who doesn't even have a playable single?

Last chance. She goes ALL IN.

MADONNA

Because you're the first Latin DJ to break out of genre in a heavily white industry, and I'm a driven woman in all boys club. We're both outsiders, but I'm willing to work the system from within. Are you?

Jellybean smiles. Can you believe this girl? Can't help but shake her hand. Deal.

INT/EXT. DUNKIN' DONUTS - STREET - MORNING

Madonna grabs two coffees from the counter. Jellybean reaches to pay, but Madonna stops him.

MADONNA

We're good. I used to work here. It's on the house, right Eddy?

She pulls a flyer out of her backpack and hands it to EDDY, who reluctantly takes it. A favor she's starting to abuse.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

You're the best, hang this up will you?

She links arms with Jellybean and pulls him outside.

JELLYBEAN

Thanks for the coffee.

MADONNA

Anything for my new partner.

JELLYBEAN

Look, I have some final conditions before I fully agree to our deal.

MADONNA

Hit me.

JELLYBEAN

One: I only work with real musicians. If it's my name on the mix, everything has to be tight. Everyone at their best. Sober.

MADONNA

Got it.

JELLYBEAN

Two: You've got to trust me completely. We're going to be on a tight schedule between my other gigs. It's not always going to be a two-way street. Egos and personal drama will slow us down.

MADONNA

Done. Best behavior.

JELLYBEAN

Three: We need to be in a real studio with my team. Your budget setup isn't going to cut it. I'll drop my fee down, but I gotta eat and pay my engineer. Three grand should cover us for a two week session.

Madonna almost chokes on her coffee. *Three thousand dollars?* She knows she doesn't have the money and the label won't pay.

She stops him and stares him straight in the eye.

MADONNA

Three grand and you deliver me something the label will one-hundred percent release?

JELLYBEAN

You live up to your end of the deal, I'll mix you a hit.

She smiles, liking this plan. She suddenly GRABS HIM - pulling him into a NEARBY ALLEYWAY.

MADONNA

C'mon...

Pulling out a RED SPRAY CAN from her bag, she sprays something on a wall off-screen. Tosses Jellybean the can.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

(off his look)

It's not official unless it's in writing.

Jellybean laughs, shakes the spray can.

JELLYBEAN

Nice tag.

As Jellybean sprays, we see Madonna's tag name - BOY TOY - as Jellybean signs his own tag next to it.

EXT/INT. CANAL BAR - NIGHT

Crowded and hip. Madonna paces outside, hesitating to go in. She jumps up and down, psyching herself up while Nick and a MODEL BIMBO sip fancy cocktails at a table near the back.

NICK

With your voice, you'll be just as amazing a singer as you're a model.

Just then Nick spots MADONNA at the front door.

NICK (CONT'D)

Oh for fuck's sake.

Nick tries to hide from Madonna, but she's already got him locked in. She struts over to Nick's table.

MADONNA

Gloria said you'd be here.

The Bimbo smiles, unsure what to make of the situation. Madonna takes the olive out of his drink, chews on it. The Bimbo chimes in, annoyed.

BIMBO

And you are?

MADONNA

This your girlfriend? She's taller than I remember.

It isn't. Nick shifts in his seat.

NICK

We're kind of talking business right now, M.

MADONNA

Perfect.

Madonna pulls up a chair, sits on it backwards.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

'Cause I've got a great guy to re-mix the record.

NICK

Did I not make it clear -

MADONNA

You hear of John "Jellybean"  
Benitez?

Nick's face changes. He's clearly heard of this guy.

NICK

From Fun House? Yeah, The Post did  
a piece on him. But he only does  
passion projects. We tried to get  
him before and he wouldn't bite.

MADONNA

Then you'd be happy to know he dug  
the Emmys and is worth every penny  
of the three grand he's asked for.

Nick chokes on his drink.

NICK

Danielle, excuse us.

Nick gets up, pulls Madonna over to the bar across the room.

NICK (CONT'D)

I don't know how you got Jellybean  
to agree to work with you, if you  
fucked him or what, but your  
funding is gone. Zero. Zilch.

(off her look)

Even if I wanted to give it to you.

Madonna swallows her pride, smiles, playing to his ego.

MADONNA

Nick, are you really going to let  
our little fight hold a hit record  
hostage? You could be the guy to  
bring Jellybean into Sire. Succeed  
where others tried and failed.

Nick runs his hair through his hair anxiously. Thinking.

NICK

Alright. I guess I can get you  
studio time at Sire during off  
hours, but that's it. You'll need  
your own engineer.

MADONNA

What about the three grand?

Patting her on the back...

NICK

You'll figure something out, babe.

Nick returns to his date, leaving Madonna at the bar, fuming. She sucks it up and flags down a BARTENDER.

MADONNA

Bottle of champagne. Whatever's most expensive.

She waves over to Danielle and Nick. Danielle waves back. Nick raises his glass, grinning through his teeth. Idiots.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

Put it on that guy's tab.

INT. THE MUSIC BUILDING - EMMYS' REHEARSAL SPACE - NIGHT

POP! Madonna bursts into the recording space, champagne bottle in hand. She sprays champagne all over the guys.

DAN

Watch the equipment, M!

MADONNA

Forget this outdated shit - we're back in Sire's studio in one month.

ED

I thought we were blacklisted?

STEPHEN

Something tells me she found a loophole.

MADONNA

Better. I found him.

Madonna throws a New York Post article onto the console. The cover shows Jellybean at Fun House, dead center. The headline: "The Hottest DJs in New York."

DAN

You've got to be kidding me. This guy? "Mr. Vision?"

Madonna pours champagne in various mugs and glasses and passes to the guys for a cheers.

MADONNA

To our way out and to me for being a genius.

The guys grumble, but hey, it's champagne. And maybe she did find a way. Hope begins to spring anew. Smiles cracking.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

Now we just have to find the three grand to pay him.

And that champagne just started tasting sour, as the band looks at her incredulously...

INT. THE RUSSIAN TEA ROOM - KITCHEN - DAY

Madonna sings a familiar song, exhausted but happy. She holds up trays full of dirty dishes, dumping them into the sink.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

*You must be my lucky star  
'Cause you shine on me wherever you  
are...*

INT. RUSSIAN TEA ROOM - KITCHEN / LOCKERS - DAY

Madonna, still humming *Lucky Star*, counts her tips as she packs up to leave. TIFFANY and MARY, two of the most uptight waitresses in the joint, stop and gawk at her street clothes.

MARY

God, does that girl own anything without holes in it?

Madonna ignores their snickering. It's only when she sees the SHIFT BOARD that she gets upset: Her name SCRATCHED OUT and replaced with Tiffany and Mary for all the dinner shifts.

INT. THE RUSSIAN TEA ROOM - BACK OFFICE - DAY

Madonna storms up to Demitri, who's lounging in his office.

MADONNA

The fuck, Demitri?!? Why do Tiffany and Mary have all my dinner shifts?

Demitri places his hands on Madonna's shoulders. Madonna keeps her game face on.

DEMITIRI

Night shifts are for our top waiters. Mary and Tiffany earned it-

MADONNA

I've been here a year. You know I can't live without the night tips.

DEMITIRI

Should've thought of that before you cut out early last week.

MADONNA

Are you kidding me? I was already pulling a double shift because you gave Tiffany the weekend off.

DEMITIRI

Well, maybe we can come up with some kind of arrangement...

Demitri slides his hands down Madonna's dress. She PUSHES him into a rack of uniforms, pulling it down on top of him.

MADONNA

Dream on, you fuckin' pig.

Seeing Demitri on the ground, Madonna can't help herself, heaving a file cabinet onto him. It slams down, files spilling everywhere.

That done, Madonna struts out, as Demitri SCREAMS after her:

DEMITRI

You're fired, you bitch! You're fucking fired!

EXT. THE RUSSIAN TEA ROOM / STREETS - DAY

Madonna gets enough distance between her and the restaurant to be out of view. She kicks a trash can hard and SCREAMS. Trash flies everywhere. But it's New York, so no one cares.

Again, as before, she sucks it up. Recalibrates.

MADONNA

(under her breath)

If not you, then who. If not now, then when.

She straightens up. Clocks a flashing sign for a pawn store down the street - BUY, TRADE, SELL. Makes a decision.

CUT TO:

**HUSTLE MONTAGE:**

- At the studio, Dan and Ed come back to find half of Dan's guitar collection GONE with a note from Madonna. *"You can buy them back when we're rich. - XOXO M"*
- Madonna at a pawnshop with Dan's gear. She counts the cash.
- Madonna attempts to bartend with Erika at a dive bar. We watch as male customers line up for drinks from Madonna, who struggles. She smiles and flirts as the unsuspecting customers tip graciously, only to spit their drinks out.
- Madonna's thrown out of the bar. Erika looks back, *"Sorry"*
- Madonna, in only a bathrobe, steps into a room full of pretentious ART STUDENTS. She turns to the INSTRUCTOR:

MADONNA

I need to be paid in advance. Cash.

The teacher passes it over. Cash in hand, Madonna steps atop a pedestal. She winks at a bashful male student, who blushes:

MADONNA (CONT'D)

Better make me look good, kid.

As her robe drops, PRE-LAP a funky bass and vocals...

INT. SPIN RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

...Where Jellybean mans the mixing board for a FUNK BAND. Suddenly the session is interrupted by a loud CLUNK as a bag full of cash, and even some coins, lands on Jellybean.

MADONNA

See you tomorrow for phase two.

Madonna exits before Jellybean can even process what just happened. He stares at the strange bag and turns to watch Madonna go, thrown, but impressed.

FUNK BAND SINGER

Dayum, who was that?

Two voices rise on our soundtrack, singing a familiar song:

MADONNA / DAN (PRE-LAP)

*Borderline, feels like I'm going to lose my mind...*

INT. SIRE RECORDS - RECORDING STUDIOS - DAY

Madonna and Dan sing *Borderline* together in Sire's deluxe studio. Jellybean mans the board with his engineer, as Nick spreads out on the couch next to Ed and Stephen.

MADONNA / DAN  
*You just keep on pushing my love  
 over the borderline -*

Madonna stops abruptly, signalling to CUT the track.

MADONNA  
 John you're right. It's not working  
 as a duet. It's a love song.

Stephen and Ed exchange looks. Uh-oh. But Jellybean nods.

JELLYBEAN  
 Dan, she needs to sing it to you  
 not with you. It's about yearning.

DAN  
 I mean I get it, but-

JELLYBEAN  
 Let's try a take with just Madonna.

Dan takes off his headphones angrily. Madonna turns to him and mouths "*the rules.*" Dan begrudgingly tries to relax.

DAN  
 (faux calm)  
 Sure. No problem.

Madonna shoots Jellybean a smile - it's all good! Jellybean starts the backing track up again, counting her in. Dan grumbles his way back into the control room, slumping next to his bandmates, who give him "*be cool*" looks.

JELLYBEAN  
 Okay, I'm gonna punch up the bass a  
 little more and let's go from the  
 top of the chorus.

The track starts up again. Madonna really starts to feel the music. The room's energy changes as she starts to perform.

MADONNA  
*Borderline, feels like I'm going to  
 lose my mind*

She sings it with intensity, directing the lyrics at Dan. But the way she sings it, we're not sure if it's a love song...

MADONNA (CONT'D)  
*You just keep on pushing my love  
 over the borderline*

Nick sits up. This, this he can sell.

NICK  
 What did you do? How did you do  
 that? And why the fuck didn't it  
 sound like that before?

Jellybean just smiles. A magician never reveals his secrets.  
 Madonna comes out of the booth, sweating, excited.

MADONNA  
 Play it back.

JELLYBEAN  
 Hold on.  
 (adjusting)  
 The levels are moveable, but this  
 is the sound I want for the album.

CLICK - the tape rolls and instantly we notice Madonna's  
 energy is finally matched by the music - the song is  
 transformed. It's the beginning of the Madonna we know.

Madonna closes her eyes and listens intensely, tapping along  
 to the beat.

MADONNA  
 Okay. Good. I'm gonna go again and-

NICK  
 I don't know, maybe let's not mess  
 with success? That was stellar!

MADONNA  
 It's better, but I can make the  
 next take POP. Let's GO!

Madonna jumps back in the booth. The rest of the guys get up  
 and stretch, preparing themselves for a long night.

STEPHEN  
 (to Nick)  
 If you have anywhere to be, better  
 cancel it now.

DAN  
 Let's get grub before we're up.

NICK  
 Are you sure you should leave?

DAN  
She won't even notice.

In the booth we see Madonna is laser focused on the goal ahead of her. She cues Jellybean.

MADONNA  
From the top.

A lonely electric piano intro rings out, the familiar opening of *Borderline*. The drums and bass kick in. As it plays, Jellybean turns to a whiteboard where he's listed every track of the album. He crosses off *Borderline*.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. SIRE RECORDS - RECORDING STUDIOS / HALLWAY

We're on the same whiteboard. But now nearly every song is crossed out except for *Lucky Star*.

We pull back to where Dan and Stephen sit nearby. They watch as Madonna and Jellybean work at the mixing board together on the new version of *Lucky Star*. Dan, anxious, pulls Stephen out into the hall. They look like they've been there for days

DAN  
Should we be worried, man?

STEPHEN  
Why? This sounds great.

DAN  
But everything's different. She won't listen to anyone but him!

Stephen can tell this isn't *just* about the album.

STEPHEN  
She's got tunnel vision. Don't let it mean more than it means.

DAN  
You don't feel like we're being replaced? He cut all my vocals!

Dan's unraveling. Stephen weighs what he's about to say...

STEPHEN  
Look man, this might be hard to admit, but she has always been more ambitious than us.  
(MORE)

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

She's had plans to go all the way since our Detroit days. With or without us.

Dan won't, *no can't* accept that.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

She loves you, but everything will be easier if you accept that.

He gives Stephen a look and brusquely pushes past him.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Dude, where you going?

DAN

I've got to take care of something.

EXT. NYC STREETS - PAYPHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

Dan sticks a quarter into the PAYPHONE, dials. Nervous, but clearly feeling like he's been left no choice.

DAN

(into phone)

Camille? Hey, it's Dan...

INT. SIRE RECORDS - RECORDING STUDIO - NEXT NIGHT

Jellybean finishes playing back the completed *Lucky Star for the band*. They turn to Madonna for her reaction. It's silent.

JELLYBEAN

It's good right?

MADONNA

No.

The guys groan in defeat, then:

MADONNA (CONT'D)

It's fucking EPIC!

The room takes a collective exhale. Dan pulls Madonna onto his lap for a big celebratory kiss.

DAN

See babe, it all worked out. Just like I said it would. Time to fuckin' celebrate!!!

The guys cheer, grabbing their jackets. Grateful to finally enjoy themselves. Dan gives Madonna another tight squeeze, marking his territory. Jellybean pretends not to notice.

ED

Finally.

Madonna wiggles off Dan's lap and touches Jellybean's shoulder. A connection between the two.

MADONNA

(distracted)

I'll catch up with you guys later.  
I still wanna comb over the tracks  
before we play it for Seymour.  
Everything-

DAN

Needs to be perfect. I know. It is.  
There's nothing else you can do to  
it. Come on babe, let's get  
something to eat. Just me and you.

Dan looks at her with those puppy dog eyes, desperate.

JELLYBEAN

(to Madonna)

It's fine, get out of here. I've  
got it.

Madonna, torn, hesitates. Then...

MADONNA

I'm just gonna finish up. You go  
with the guys. I'll see you at  
home, okay?

She tries to sell it with a smile, but Dan turns, cold:

DAN

Your loss.

Dan clocks Madonna and Jellybean, alone together. Stephen gives him a look - see? As the guys leave, we PRE-LAP *the tinny strains of an electric keyboard...*

EXT. RECORDING STUDIO - FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

...Where it's coming from a PORTABLE KEYBOARD. Jellybean's playing an early version of what we'll come to know as *Sidewalk Talk*. Madonna huddled into Jellybean... for warmth.

JELLYBEAN  
 (air drumming to beat)  
*Watch where you walk, 'cause the  
 sidewalks talks...*

He shyly looks to Madonna, nervous for her reaction. But she hits him. HARD.

MADONNA  
 Don't stop, I love it! It's got  
 this amazing Afro-Cuban flavor.

JELLYBEAN  
 Maybe it could be your next single.

MADONNA  
 Totally! I'm not really feeling  
 your first verse or the hook, but-  
 (Jellybean laughs)  
 What?

JELLYBEAN  
 You've got an opinion on  
*everything.*

Madonna's excitement turns to frustration.

MADONNA  
 (sarcastic)  
 Yeah, but with no training to back  
 it up, right? What do I know, huh?

JELLYBEAN  
 I didn't mean-

MADONNA  
 When I walk into Sire, I know It's  
 a boys club. No one takes me  
 seriously. Anytime I say something  
 they immediately right me off as a  
 bitch or difficult to work with.

JELLYBEAN  
 Look, I get it. Whenever I meet  
 people, they expect me to play Tito  
 Puente or Menudo or whatever.  
 'Cause I'm the *Latin DJ*, right?

She laughs, letting her guard down a little. Connecting.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)  
 After this album, everyone is going  
 to take you seriously. They'll have  
 to.

(MORE)

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)

You've got sharp instincts, all I'm saying. School or no school. Dick or no dick.

MADONNA

I wish Dan got it like you do. He just thinks I'm paranoid.

Madonna squeeze his hand. Jellybean is not sure how to read the situation. He lights up a cigarette.

JELLYBEAN

You and Dan okay?

MADONNA

Yea...No, I don't know...

Madonna tries to find the words to explain herself.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

This might sound crazy, but when I first got to New York I wanted to believe the best in everyone. I'm a girl from the suburbs, ya know?

Jellybean listens. Madonna's voice changes, struggling.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

Of course, it wasn't too long before someone took advantage of that. Took advantage of me...

Madonna looks away. She feels guilty and ashamed. Jellybean looks at her, slowly grasping what she might mean.

JELLYBEAN

Wait... Do you mean-

MADONNA

I don't want to get into it. I just keep my guard up now. There's so few people I really trust. I just don't know if I'm pushing Dan away or we're just growing apart.

Jellybean listens, wanting to make her feel better, but not sure how.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

He won't admit it, but I think Dan never expected me to keep playing in *his* band. Probably thought it would be a hobby while I figured out my shit...

Jellybean tries to lighten the mood.

JELLYBEAN

Something tells me you were going to make music one way or another, with or without Dan. With a name like Madonna, I mean come on. What choice did you have?

She laughs, in an honest, playful way we haven't heard before

MADONNA

I always knew I was either going to be a nun or a star. Spending six months in a convent cured me of that first one...

JELLYBEAN

How do you know you didn't make the wrong choice? Give up too soon?

They hold each other's gaze. A charged moment between them. What now? Then...

Madonna grabs the keyboard playfully from Jellybean's lap.

MADONNA

I'll show you.

She starts playing, something new and catchy. Then... the batteries die.

JELLYBEAN

Not a good sign.

Madonna jumps up and kicks down the fire escape stairs.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)

That's just for emergencies.

MADONNA

This is one!  
(off his look)  
Batteries! And pizza... I'm goddamned starving.

Madonna climbs down, leaving him nervous with his growing feelings. He follows her despite his better instincts.

EXT. PIZZA JOINT / STREET - NIGHT

We see a giant hot slice of CHEESE PIZZA dripping into the cardboard box as Madonna takes a huge bite. Jellybean's about to sit down when Madonna grabs him.

MADONNA

Come on, I'll teach you to walk, talk, and eat pizza all at the same time. Old Italian trick. There's gotta be another drug store we can try a couple more blocks down.

She goes to take another bite, spilling pizza sauce and grease all over herself.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

Shit.

JELLYBEAN

Still mastering it, I see.

He helps wipe the tomato sauce off, but her shirt is stained. Jellybean and Madonna catch themselves in another tense moment. He tries to keep it light.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)

So you're Italian? I thought Madonna was just a stage name.

Madonna's energy suddenly changes, less playful.

MADONNA

It was my mother's name as well.

Jellybean notices, tries to keep it upbeat.

JELLYBEAN

She must be proud of you, debuting an album for the big wigs at Sire in a couple days...

MADONNA

(matter of fact)

I'd like to think my Mom would be proud, but she died when I was six. My dad, he hasn't cared about anyone else since then. So I'm not really seeking anyone's approval but my own.

JELLYBEAN

Oh, I'm sorry I, I didn't know-

MADONNA

Don't be. That's the past.

Madonna spots a 24 HOUR DRUGSTORE across the street.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

I'll be right back, wait here.

She chucks the rest of her soda and disappears into the 24HR Drugstore. Jellybean stands outside with his pizza. He feels like an idiot. He can't wait, tosses it, goes in after her.

INT. 24HR DRUGSTORE - AISLES - CONTINUOUS

Jellybean finds Madonna by a rack of touristy T-shirts. She changes out of her stained shirt into one. Jellybean catches a glimpse of her petite body, but quickly looks away.

She rolls up the sleeves, and rips the neck line to hang off her shoulder. Jellybean can only smirk. He still can't believe this chick.

He watches as she heads down the aisle, stashing a toothbrush and some toothpaste in her backpack. And, oh yeah, moves to grab some batteries in the next aisle over.

JELLYBEAN

Hey, hey... I can spot you.

She slides the batteries into Jellybean's jacket pocket.

MADONNA

Where's the fun in that?

As soon as she moves on, Jellybean puts the batteries back on the shelf.

JELLYBEAN

(to himself)

Shit.

He grabs the batteries and tucks them in his jacket. He lingers back, nervous about being caught. Madonna studies the faces on the hair-dye boxes. They're so tragically 80's.

MADONNA

Boring. Horrendous. Creepy.

She picks up a bottle of hair spray and sprays it on her hair, crunching it into a chic mess. Then she spots the holy grail - BRIGHT BLONDE BLEACH.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

Bingo.

Madonna studies the box when a VOICE catches her off guard.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

You know you have to pay for that  
before you use it.

MADONNA

It was already ope-  
(reacting)  
-Camille.

CAMILLE BARBONE (40s) stands authoritatively in her pink power suit. Madonna shrinks in her presence.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

How are you?

CAMILLE

Great as always. Just finished  
seeing a new act.

(beat)

You look the same. A tourist at  
heart. Still using your favorite  
five finger discount?

Camille touches Madonna's hair. Madonna freezes. Camille puts the bottle back on the shelf.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

Going blonde is too risky.

Madonna grabs the bottle back.

MADONNA

I take more risks now.

Jellybean, afraid Madonna's been caught, rushes over to her.

JELLYBEAN

Everything all right?

Camille turns her attention to Jellybean.

CAMILLE

Well, you're John Benitez.  
(to Madonna)  
You two working together now?  
That's a big score for you.

Madonna looks down at the ground, caught in an uncomfortable situation. Jellybean looks to Madonna for context, confused.

JELLYBEAN

And you are?

Camille hands him her card.

CAMILLE

Madonna's still working on her manners I see. Camille Barbone, Gotham Records, Madonna's manager-

MADONNA

Ex-Manager. Let's go.

Camille places her hands on Madonna's shoulder delicately, brushing her hair. Madonna visibly flinches at her touch.

CAMILLE

Dan said things were tense. By the looks of it, you're not doing so well either. I'm just glad I could help him with a couple of meetings.

JELLYBEAN

What meetings?

CAMILE

Totally as a precaution. I'm sure things will work out on the album. He's just hedging his bets.

Madonna's face goes white, betrayed.

CAMILE (CONT'D)

Don't act so surprised. Of course he came to me. Think of all our history, darling. I saved you from that Paris contract, or did you forget that too?

(to Jellybean)

You should have seen her when I found her. A Michigan girl lost in the big city. If it wasn't for me, she'd probably have gone back home-

Madonna finally snaps. Gets in Camille's face.

MADONNA

You were the one who clung to me. Taking credit for everything! Trying to box me into your shitty girl bands. Well, guess what, I'm conquering the fucking world and you've got NOTHING to do with it.

Madonna pushes past Camille with Jellybean in hand, rushing out the door, knocking over a display of SUN-IN.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

I'm gonna be fuckin' transcendent!

ALARMS go off signaling a RENT-A-COP's attention. As he chases after them, they book it...

EXT. STREET/ ALLEY WAY - NIGHT

...Sprinting off, then darting down an alleyway. Madonna and Jellybean crouch behind a dumpster as the Rent-A-Cop passes.

MADONNA

Shit. Feel my heart. It's racing.

She grabs Jellybean's hand and places it on her chest. He lingers for a moment, then snaps out of it. He pulls away:

JELLYBEAN

Anything you want to tell me?

Her energy shifts, her tone sharp and defensive.

MADONNA

What? I didn't know about Dan-

JELLYBEAN

We'll get to Dan. First you tell me you're a college drop out, a dancer, but was that before or after singing in Paris and playing in girl-bands for Gotham? I mean, how many deals do you have floating around out there?

MADONNA

You taking notes or something?

JELLYBEAN

I'm just trying to protect myself. Our work. I can't do that if you aren't honest with me. I won't be -

Madonna grabs him and KISSES HIM! Jellybean is stunned, but Madonna is in the moment, holding him tight, he pulls away.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)

Madonna...

Madonna stands up, embarrassed. Rejected.

MADONNA

Right. This was a mistake.

Madonna spots A TAXI nearby. She makes a run for it, hiding she's hurt. Jellybean, confused, lingers in the alleyway.

JELLYBEAN

What are you doing?

She shoots him a mischievous smile, covering, as she opens the cab door.

MADONNA

Making sure no one mistakes me for that shy Michigan girl ever again.

And we PRE-LAP *Burning Up* over:

INT. ERIKA'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

A trail of clothes, safety-pins, and HAIR-DYE bottles litter the bathroom floor. Madonna's silhouette is obscured in the foggy mirror. The sink is stained with dye. Her HAND aggressively wipes away at the mirror revealing Madonna's hair wrapped in a towel.

ERIKA (O.S.)

Come on M. Let's have a look.

With a deep exhale she reaches to unravel the towel...

EXT. NYC STREETS - EARLY SPRING - DAY

We trudge through the sludge of freshly melted snow with determination, on the heels of familiar combat boots, black torn leggings, and a leather jacket...

Crawling all the way up to reveal the most WILD PEROXIDE BLONDE HAIR you've ever seen and Madonna's steel-cool face.

Transformed into a POP-STAR WE RECOGNIZE, adorned in vintage jewels and fierce confidence, we move with her through the big glass doors of Sire Records.

INT. SIRE RECORDS - BOARD ROOM - DAY

The meeting already deep in session, Nick and the executive team finish listening to *Burning Up*. Jellybean and the band are met with praise all around.

NICK

This is gold, JB. I can smell the money. Can you smell it, guys?

EXEC #1

Producers are going to be lining up to work with you guys.

JELLYBEAN

I'm producing the next album.

Dan shoots a look to Ed and Stephen. *What the fuck?*

NICK

That's music to my ears. You know John, I'd love to get you with more artists on our roster as soon as possible. We love this sound.

JELLYBEAN

That would be great, I already have some ideas-

But the whole room turns to see the newly blonde bombshell in front of them. Transformed, it takes them all a second to even realize it's Madonna.

DAN

You're late.

MADONNA

The music speaks for itself.

Madonna slides into the seat at the head of the table. Jellybean and Madonna share a look. He's got a million questions...

JELLYBEAN

I like your hair.

...But he knows better than to ask.

NICK

Madonna, I was just telling the band that the album is amazing.

EXEC #1

Dan, Shine A Light is so catchy. It's perfect for the first single.

Dan sits up with praise as more EXECs chime-in in agreement.

NICK

(to Madonna)

John's informed us that he's producing the next album. That true? Cause he's the type of producer Seymour can get behind.

Madonna looks to her partner, dropping her poker face with a telling smile. Dan catches the exchange.

DAN

I think that's a discussion for another time-

MADONNA

No. I wouldn't have it any other way. Seymour likes it. I like it.

Dan's about to lose his shit.

NICK

Great! It's settled. After the paperwork closes, we can talk about next steps.

EXEC #2

Have you finalized the album name?

Dan goes to speak up, but Madonna cuts him off, again.

MADONNA

Madonna.

Dan, Ed, and Stephen exchange uncomfortable looks.

STEPHEN

Sounds a little Catholic, M.

DAN

And that makes it sound like you're a solo artist.

JELLYBEAN

I think it's clean. Marketable.

DAN

I didn't ask your opinion.

Nick tries to defuse the tension.

NICK

Well I think it's simple. Edgy -

DAN

Excuse me? She can't just rename the fucking album. We're a band!

MADONNA

Should I have called Camille and checked with her first? I didn't think you would care since you're taking meetings all over town.

Dan is stunned. Ed slides down in his seat. Stephen looks at them just as pissed as Madonna. *Not cool guys.*

MADONNA (CONT'D)

And it's in the contract, so I kinda can.

Madonna slides him their contract. He flips through, scared.

DAN

(to the execs, pleading)  
I wrote two of the singles you're all raving about, and you're telling me I can't name my album for the band I started!?

Dan looks to Nick for help. Nothing. Dan storms out with Ed. No one sure what to do. Madonna doesn't bat an eye.

MADONNA

They'll get over it.

STEPHEN

Shit. Name or no name, I just wanna get paid.

Nick and the other Execs laugh awkwardly.

MADONNA

Well let's lock it up. Where's Seymour?

The Execs look to Nick to deliver the news.

NICK

Seymour is recovering in the hospital from open heart surgery. Nothing major.

MADONNA

And?

NICK

Well we can't move forward 'til  
Seymour signs off. What do you  
wanna do?

(jokingly)

Negotiate in the hospital?

And with that...

INT. HOSPITAL - SEYMOUR STEIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM

We hear the end of *Burning Up* over small speakers. Madonna stands in front of SEYMOUR STEIN, who lays in his hospital gown finishing his obligatory hospital Jello.

SEYMOUR STEIN

You know, you've got some nerve  
coming down here.

Jellybean and Nick stand in the doorway. Nick looks anxious, like he's standing in front of the great and powerful OZ.

NICK

Seymour, I told her-

MADONNA

And you've got balls making me wait  
another minute to release my album  
when I can take it to EMI, or any  
other competitor, considering your  
weakened condition.

Seymour and Madonna hold a tense look. Seymour laughs.

SEYMOUR STEIN

*Weakened condition!* Well I'll be  
damned.

Nick awkwardly laughs too.

SEYMOUR STEIN (CONT'D)

(to Madonna)

You're lucky you have a good sound  
to back up your crazy, kiddo. That  
Benitez is the real thing.

MADONNA

He's not the only one.

Madonna sits down on the side of his bed.

SEYMOUR STEIN

Well then, let's not waste anymore  
time-

He snaps his fingers and Nick comes running over with a pen  
and paperwork.

SEYMOUR STEIN (CONT'D)

-and make it official.

INT. STUDIO 54 - DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT

Madonna stands at the DJ booth as JELLYBEAN'S VERSION of  
*Everybody* plays. She sprays the unsuspecting crowd with  
champagne, pissing them off. Fuck if she cares. All her hard  
work has finally paid off. Madonna jumps off stage and joins  
Erika, Stephen, and Jellybean in a celebratory toast.

Just then, Ed and Dan enter. Ed hovers by the door as Dan  
scans the room for Madonna.

STEPHEN

Over here idiots.

ERIKA

(to Madonna)

I'm surprised he's here.

MADONNA

I knew he'd come to his senses.

Madonna climbs out of the booth and runs over to Dan as SHINE  
A LIGHT PLAYS, A song no one is familiar with. Jellybean  
watches them talk, concerned.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

Babe you hear that, you wrote that!

We did it. Fucking crazy!

(off Dan's cold  
expression)

We got paid, loosen up! Let's  
celebrate! I forgive you.

Madonna goes to kiss Dan, but he stops her. He's fidgety,  
moving fast. He's on something.

DAN

Psh, you forgive me. Unreal.

MADONNA

Oh come on, like you wouldn't have  
done in my situation?

DAN

No, see you did want *you* wanted to do. It's what *you* always do. But I'm going to do what I want to do for once... I QUIT! I fucking QUIT!

MADONNA

Dan -

DAN

I'm taking *Shine a Light* and *Love Express* with me. Ed and I are shopping them to commercial houses and cutting our losses.

Madonna immediately switches into business mode. Forget that she's being dumped, all she can focus on is her album.

MADONNA

What are you talking about? We're supposed to be celebrating! John got us into Studio 54 and-  
(beat)  
You're coked out of your mind.  
Aren't you?

Dan has no response.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

You listen to me, Dan Gilroy.  
You're not selling any songs off the album.  
(to Ed)  
This your idea?

Ed hovers by the door, letting Dan do all the talking.

DAN

It's already done. Camille's sent paperwork to Sire. There's nothing left to discuss. We're through.

MADONNA

I made us better. I got us a record deal. You should be grateful! I'm the fucking talent carrying us-

Dan grabs her hard.

DAN

Your only real talent, Madonna, is screwing over, no, just screwing the right men at the right time.  
(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)

Fucking blind ambition. You did it to me, to Stephen-

MADONNA

Get the fuck off me.

Madonna pushes him. Jellybean and Stephen get up to stop the brewing fight.

JELLYBEAN

Dan, let her go-

DAN

Stay the fuck out of this, this is between me and her.

STEPHEN

Come on man, let's go outside-

JELLYBEAN

(to himself)

Fucking coked up hacks.

Dan SUCKER PUNCHES Jellybean hard. Jellybean reaches to fight back, but Stephen stands in between them. Dan and Ed race out of the club, Madonna chasing after them.

EXT. STUDIO 54 - STREET - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Dan and Ed make their way up the block. Stephen holds Madonna back as she screams after them, calling out their bluff.

MADONNA

You think you're such hot shit. Let's see you try to get another show in this town without me! You're nothing. I made this whole thing happen, I made you!

STEPHEN

Come on, let's go inside, M.

MADONNA

You hear me? And I've got a motherfucking great album with or without your garbage songs!

NICK (PRE-LAP)

OF COURSE WE FUCKING NEED THOSE SONGS!

INT. NICK'S OFFICE - DAY

Losing his shit behind his desk, Nick screams at Madonna, who remains calm and confident behind her sunglasses.

NICK (CONT'D)

Otherwise we don't have an album!  
We have to present this to the  
board with Seymour in a fucking  
week. 7 Days and counting.

MADONNA

Those songs were weak. I was going  
to suggest we cut them anyway, and  
I'll write a new single to replace  
Shine a Light. I can produce-

NICK

You can't produce shit! You don't  
get it. I got Seymour to approve  
the album as it was - *with all the*  
*songs*. What do you expect me to go  
back and tell him? The band broke  
up, too bad, sorry?

MADONNA

No, that he has the hottest solo  
act in town.

Madonna rises to leave, but Nick gets in her face.

NICK

Look you little twat, you fuck this  
up, I swear to god I'll make sure  
you'll never fucking work another  
day again-

Madonna doesn't take threats lightly, she leans over the desk  
and pulls on Nick's lapels hard. Nick is genuinely scared.

MADONNA

If I say you'll have a hit song to  
play for Seymour in a week, you'll  
have a hit song to play for Seymour  
in a week. But if you ever speak to  
me like this again, it will be the  
last thing you'll ever do.

Madonna throws his office door open. Gloria leans in, amused.

INT. JELLYBEAN'S APT - KITCHEN - DAY

Jellybean sits with an ice pack on his face, Debbie at his side, Dan's punch still fresh on his face.

DEBBIE

Let's take a look at it.

She removes the ice pack. He winces in pain.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Was she worth it?

JELLYBEAN

What are you talking about?

DEBBIE

You only get a black eye over a girl or money, and you aren't a gambling man.

JELLYBEAN

I was sucker punched by a coke head.

Jellybean checks the answering machine. No messages.

DEBBIE

You've checked that thing ten times today. You waiting on life or death news or something?

Jellybean ignores her till... KNOCK KNOCK.

Jellybean groans, goes to the door to find Madonna standing in the doorway.

DEBBIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Tell them we aren't buying what they're selling.

MADONNA

Hey...

Off Madonna's pleading face...

INT. JELLYBEANS APT - BEDROOM

Jellybean fumbles through paperwork. Madonna waits anxiously.

JELLYBEAN

He's right - Dan owns his songs  
outright. Camille screwed you.

Madonna paces the room like a cornered animal.

MADONNA

FUCK! Maybe I deserve this. I don't  
know what I was thinking, there's  
no way can I write a song in a week

Madonna throws her bag across the room, fighting back tears,  
hyperventilating. Jellybean has never seen her so fragile.

JELLYBEAN

Hey calm down. You're not on your  
own. You have me in your corner...

She's not processing what he's saying, drowning in panic.

MADONNA

I didn't think Dan was cruel enough  
to do this. Sire's never giving me  
another shot after this. If you  
want to cut your losses now, I  
wouldn't blame you. I'm just  
dragging you down.

He grabs her. A charged moment.

JELLYBEAN

You aren't dragging me down. Look  
at me, do you trust me?

Madonna's now holding Jellybean's intense gaze.

MADONNA

I want to...

JELLYBEAN

Trust me when I say I'm in your  
corner. I think you're the most  
driven, smart, and talented artist  
I've worked with in a long time.  
You've got vision and grit.

Madonna laughs.

MADONNA

Really? Grit?

JELLYBEAN

Sure you drive me crazy, get me  
into bar fights, and almost  
arrested -

MADONNA

Thanks...

He goes for it.

JELLYBEAN

But despite all my rules... I'm  
tired of pretending that I wasn't  
waiting for you to call, or that I  
don't think about you constantly,  
or that our kiss was a  
mistake...because it wasn't.

Silence. Did he fuck it all up? She touches his face sweetly,  
studying him.

MADONNA

It's okay.

JELLYBEAN

It is?

MADONNA

Yeah. I never liked following your  
rules anyway.

Jellybean pulls Madonna in for a KISS, falling onto the bed.

INT. JELLYBEANS APT - BEDROOM - LATER

Jellybean thumbs through a box of song submissions, in bed  
with a very relaxed Madonna.

MADONNA

What are those?

JELLYBEAN

What if I told you we don't have to  
write a hit single in a week, you  
just have to sing it?

INT. BRONX YMCA - INDOOR POOL - DAY

We see a flyer on a door leading to the indoor swimming pool.  
It reads: SONGWRITER AUDITIONS.

A rotating door of MEDIOCRE TO BAD MUSICIANS perform by the pool for Madonna and Jellybean. Reggae, Ska, Blues, Pop, R&B - all wrong for Madonna.

Madonna listens intently behind her sunglasses, cutting each song one by one, 'til she can't take it anymore.

MADONNA

These are all terrible. None of these match the vibe of the album.

She tosses the song sheets into the pool. Jellybean folds over into his arms on the table. He's just as frustrated.

JELLYBEAN

My cousin said we could stay 'til closing, so let's just power through a couple more.

MADONNA

Fine... NEXT!

Through the double doors, PURE ENERGY, a black disco band comprised of vocalist LISA STEVENS and Bassist RICHARD CURTIS, set up to play.

Jellybean gets up to greet Richard, his friend.

JELLYBEAN

Richard, thanks for coming down. I know you don't like to part with any of your original stuff.

RICHARD

Our label isn't budging on releasing this song, so maybe it can find a home with you at Sire.

Richard and Lisa set up their keys and bass.

LISA

(to Richard)  
The girl's white?

RICHARD

(to Lisa)  
If Jellybean's excited about her, we're excited about her. He was on the cover of Billboard, okay?

Madonna's frustrated with their whispering.

MADONNA

Is there a problem?

RICHARD

No.

LISA

We're in a pool, for starters.

MADONNA

Yeah, good acoustics.

Richard shoots Lisa a look - shut up and play.

LISA

The song is about love and unity.

Lisa starts the piano riff, followed by Richard's smooth bass line, a riff we soon recognize as...

LISA (CONT'D)

*Holiday .... Celebrate*

*Holiday .... Celebrate*

Madonna lowers her sunglasses for the first time. Jellybean sits up. Could this be their song?

MADONNA

Stop!

Everyone comes to a standstill.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

That bass riff, can we cut it? It's running against the melody.

Richard and Lisa share the look of surprise with Jellybean. No one questions their riffs, especially not a no-name singer for hire. Tensions are tight until:

RICHARD

(laughing)

Honey, I appreciate your note, but trust me, you're gonna want to keep the riff. It's driving, like you.

And the bass riff drives us forward in a race against time...

INT. MUSIC BUILDING - MADONNA'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

With no more money and Dan's equipment gone, Jellybean and Madonna work hard to transform her apartment into a workable recording space.

SPED UP - we watch as recording boards, mics, reels, and instruments come rolling in from Madonna's "friends" in the building. With Jellybean at the helm, Lisa and Richard's suspicions fade as they give into Madonna's unusual drive.

Over this process we listen as *Holiday* builds layer by layer, 'til Lisa's temp vocals are replaced with Madonna's own.

INT. FUN HOUSE - DJ BOOTH - NIGHT

Jellybean and Madonna stand at the DJ booth. Neither of them look like they've slept for 48 hours.

MADONNA

Final test.

Jellybean loads the reel. The push PLAY together. Madonna watches, holding her breath as the beat starts to build...

MADONNA (CONT'D)

*Holiday... Celebrate*

*Holiday... Celebrate*

*If we took a holiday*

*Took some time to celebrate*

AND THE CROWD GOES WILD!

The whole floor lights up, dancing and grooving to the beat. Madonna and Jellybean share a look. They've got a hit! The song carries us over into:

INT. SIRE RECORDS - BOARD ROOM - DAY

Seymour sits with the Board members, listening to Nick's presentation on their newest artist, Madonna. *Holiday* plays over the P.A system and is met with visible approval from the room. Seymour listens with a poker face, Gloria taking notes.

SEYMOUR STEIN

Wasn't this a band before?

NICK

She's a solo act now.

Nick holds his breath as Seymour thinks it over until:

SEYMOUR STEIN

Great. Lead with this track and Lucky Star as a double sided single, and add it to the final album. Make sure the new album cover is... sexier.

NICK  
My thoughts exactly.

Gloria rolls her eyes. Men.

INT. RECORD PRESSING FACTORY - DAY

We see records coming down an assembly line being packed and shipped. Madonna and Jellybean's names at the center under *HOLIDAY* and *LUCKY STAR*...

INT. DANCETERIA - DJ BOOTH/BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

We track Madonna's freshly pressed single out of a box, into the hands of the DJ.

Backstage, Ed, Dan, and Stephen are hanging with their crew, when the DJ on the dance floor drops a familiar name:

DJ (O.S.)  
We've got a new one for you guys by a Danceteria regular. You might know her as the power front woman of the Emmys, but this rebel has gone solo for her album debut. Get used to hearing her name and catchy tunes - this is Madonna's *Holiday*.

The DJ drops the track as Ed and Dan choke on their beers.

DAN  
Did he say what I think he said?

The catchy beats pull the boys out to the dance floor. They can't believe their eyes. EVERYONE is dancing.

ED  
(to Stephen)  
What song is this?

STEPHEN  
Don't look at me.

Off Dan's pissed expression...

INT. DUNKIN DONUTS - DAY

Erika and Madonna share a cup of coffee, when *Holiday* comes on over the radio. Madonna reaches over and turns it up. They both start dancing, much to the irritation of everybody else.

INT. FUN HOUSE - VIP SECTION/DJ BOOTH

We see Madonna and Jellybean in the VIP section, their clothes a little nicer. Madonna still totes her leather jacket, Jellybean's signature fresh on her arm.

An MTV REPORTER approaches them to discuss the success of their debut single. Jellybean is visibly uncomfortable in front of the cameras still. Madonna on the other hand, is a natural. It's the attention she's been waiting for.

REPORTER

Rumors speculate that you two are more than just professional collaborators.

MADONNA

I don't kiss and tell.

EXT. FUN HOUSE - ALLEYWAY - NIGHT - LATER

Madonna and Jellybean exit the club, finally alone. Madonna spots SOMEONE lurking around the corner, Jellybean doesn't.

JELLYBEAN

I appreciate you keeping our personal life private.

Madonna smiles and pulls him in for a kiss when...

LIGHT BULBS FLASH! Jellybean holds up his coat to hide, but they've been caught on camera... to Madonna's delight.

EXT. NEWS STAND - DAY

Madonna grabs several copies of the NEW YORK POST. The clerk watches her in confusion, 'til she flashes him her mug in the paper. We see Madonna and Jellybean's photo in the 'Talk of the Town' section:

"Madonna & DJ Jellybean Benitez": Music's New 'It' Couple"

MADONNA

I'll take 'em all.

EXT. DANCETERIA - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

A poster reads MADONNA LIVE TONIGHT with a SOLD OUT banner pasted over it.

Madonna walks past the bouncer ("Not Jimmy") that hassled her in the opening. He eyes her, then the poster, as she enters the club with her entourage, ignoring him.

NOT JIMMY

Goddamnit.

INT. BILLBOARD MUSIC AWARDS - AFTER PARTY - NIGHT

We see Nick introducing Jellybean and Madonna to one famous artist after the next - MICHAEL JACKSON, TALKING HEADS, WHITNEY HOUSTON. Jellybean holds his TOP 40 AWARD as Madonna mingles, the attention draining him.

Seymour and Nick pull Jellybean aside, posing for photos with their newest award winning in-house producer.

NICK

We're very excited to get you in with our other artists, get new dance remixes in the works.

JELLYBEAN

Yeah, I've got some really progressive ideas lined up for Madonna's next album.

SEYMOUR STEIN

You just keep delivering me that *same* sound, and we'll be golden.

That statement rubs Jellybean the wrong way, but he covers with a polite smile.

INT. PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO - DAY

Madonna poses in her leather jacket, flashing BOY TOY on her back with a wild orange scarf in her hair, bright red lips, and crosses hanging from her ears.

She pulls Jellybean in for some of the photos. They pose together. They look cool, happy, in love.

FLASH!

Heavy metal chains wrap around Madonna's neck like a choker. Her blonde hair pulled back into a chic mess, caressed by her jewel adorned hands, exposing her sultry face. Her eyes stare intently at the camera, inviting us in...

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. NYC STREETS - NIGHT

That same image of Madonna's face, now on a poster advertising her FULL ALBUM, as Bianca and her friends, in full club regalia, pass by it on the street.

They turn a corner to see TEENAGE MADONNA FANS, dressed just like Bianca, but because of Madonna. Clutching Madonna's latest single, the teens clock Bianca and her friends:

GIRLS DRESSED AS MADONNA  
You Madonna fans too?!

Off Bianca's utter horror, we CUT TO:

EXT. RECORD STORE - DAY - VIDEO FOOTAGE

SCREAMING FANS wait in line to get their album signed. We see the MTV NEWS CRAWL at the bottom of the screen as we Pre-Lap THE VOICE of NINA BLACKWOOD, reporting from the scene:

NINA BLACKWOOD (V.O.)  
In what can only be described as  
Madonna Madness, the young pop-star  
is making waves.

The report intercuts with Madonna's *BORDERLINE* and *LUCKY STAR* MUSIC VIDEOS, which play as Nina continues to narrate.

NINA BLACKWOOD (V.O.)  
With her videos for her hit singles  
HOLIDAY, LUCKY STAR, and  
BORDERLINE, Madonna has become an  
instant MTV Video darling. But all  
her success hasn't been met without  
controversy...

EXT. TIME SQUARE - INTERVIEW FOOTAGE

Nina interviews people out in Time Square, a GIRL dressed like Madonna with her FRIEND dressed like CYNDI LAUPER.

MADONNA FAN  
Madonna's got the best style!

CYNDI LAUPER FAN  
Madonna's a fad. Cyndi Lauper is  
the real female voice of our  
generation.

EXT. RED CARPET - NIGHT - FOOTAGE

We watch a red carpet interview with Cher.

REPORTER

What do you think of new artists  
like Madonna?

CHER

I think Madonna's vulgar and tacky.  
She's not a real musician. She's a  
flash in the pan at best.

As Cher walks away and the MTV reporter turns to camera...

JELLYBEAN (O.S.)

You really shouldn't watch that  
stuff.

INT. SOHO LOFT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

On the couch, Jellybean, his hair much shorter, changes the  
channel to a YANKEES GAME, glancing back at Madonna. But  
she's not hurt, she's beaming.

MADONNA

Are you kidding me? That was great.  
Cher knows my name!

Jellybean makes a face. *That's what you took away from it?*  
But she's off in her own world, flipping through song  
submissions on their avant-garde chaise longue.

We get a look at where - and how - they're now living. This  
loft is a world away from the dingy recording studio.  
Expensive art hangs alongside framed HOLIDAY and LUCKY STAR  
records and a BILLBOARD TOP 100 PLAQUE.

JELLYBEAN

They send us anything good for the  
next album?

MADONNA

I love this one.

She tosses him the lyrics, the sheets flying across the room.  
He scans it, shaking his head.

JELLYBEAN

This reads like nonsense. Pass.

MADONNA

I think it's catchy. Besides,  
didn't we agree for this to be a  
two-way street? You didn't even-

Jellybean starts to hum the melody in a falsetto voice.

JELLYBEAN

This is too high for you. You can't  
hit this high C.

She pulls the song back from him.

MADONNA

Yes I can.

JELLYBEAN

You should be finishing Sidewalk  
Talk like we talked about.

Madonna studies the lyrics, she's pissed. He moves in close  
to her, tossing aside the lyrics.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)

The plan is for us to build our  
careers together, right?

Madonna holds firm, pouting. Jellybean cradles her, trying to  
crack a smile.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)

You don't want to be *just* a dance  
artist as much as I don't want to  
be *just* a dance re-mixer.

MADONNA

(softening)

I know. You've done so much  
already.

JELLYBEAN

That's why it's so important you  
listen to me. I'm going to validate  
us both. You as an artist, me as a  
real producer. I just need you to  
get back into the studio.

MADONNA

You don't have to re-pitch it to  
me. I get it.

He senses she's annoyed, snuggles close to disarm her.

JELLYBEAN

Remember you love me because I push  
you. I know your real potential,  
and Sidewalk Talk is the right  
single to showcase it.

(off the lyrics)

Besides, no one is gonna believe  
you're a virgin.

MADONNA

It only says *like* a virgin.

Jellybean smiles at this, gobbles her up in his arms, and she  
melts. The rest of the song sheets fall to the floor...

And we PRE-LAP: *The SOUND of Madonna singing over really dope  
old school funk beats...*

INT. ANOTHER FANCY RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

... BOOMING over studio speakers. This is Jellybean's song  
SIDEWALK TALK.

Jellybean sits at the mixing board, the track comes to an  
end. Madonna eyes the clock. Takes off her headphones.

JELLYBEAN

I think we got the chorus. I'll set  
up playback for you.

Madonna gathers her stuff, ready to head out the door.

MADONNA

That's great babe, but actually I  
gotta run to a lunch meeting.

JELLYBEAN

What are you talking about? We  
still have to lay down the opening  
rap verse.

The recording musicians watch the awkward exchange.

MADONNA

Babe, Sire set this meeting up way  
in advance, I can't move it. I'll  
be back after lunch.

JELLYBEAN

What's it for? Shouldn't I be  
there?

His suspicions rise.

MADONNA

No, it's about touring. I'm meeting potential road managers. You're not needed.

(catching herself)

Boring stuff.

JELLYBEAN

But we're behind schedule. Nick wants a progress report next week, and I want this done before then.

MADONNA

Oh that's plenty of time. We've done more with less. Relax.

She kisses him and leaves. Maybe it's nothing?

INT. HUBERT'S - PARK AVENUE - DAY

Madonna sits at private table in the fancy establishment, reading off a HUBERT'S menu. A man approaches out of frame, she stands.

MADONNA

Mr. Rodgers, it's such a pleasure to finally meet.

We reveal her lunch guest is *the* NILE RODGERS.

NILE RODGERS

Please call me Nile, darling. Sorry to have kept you waiting.

MADONNA

It's fine. Just don't make a habit of it.

DICK CLARK (PRE-LAP)

*We're only a couple of weeks into the new year...*

INT. AMERICAN BANDSTAND - GREEN ROOM / LIVE TAPING - DAY

AND... we're back to our "American Bandstand" interview from the opening. But this time, we're off-stage, with Jellybean as he watches Madonna on the monitors, INTERCUTTING him with what's going on LIVE ONSTAGE:

DICK CLARK (CONT'D)

... but what are your goals for 1984 and for the rest of your career?

MADONNA  
To rule the world.

Cheering erupts. Madonna tosses her hair.

DICK CLARK  
Well I hope that includes another  
album in the works?

Jellybean perks up - now's the time to mention *Sidewalk Talk*.

MADONNA  
Domination comes in many forms,  
Dick. I'm shooting music videos,  
got a tour in the works, and of  
course an amazing new album.

Dick Clark waits for more, but there isn't any.

DICK CLARK  
Well there you have it, folks.  
Let's give another round of  
applause for Madonna.

She winks toward the camera as Jellybean stares at the  
monitor in frustration.

INT. GREEN ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Madonna bursts into the green room sweaty and drained. She  
collapses on the couch. Jellybean tries to hide his  
annoyance, cradling her in his arms.

JELLYBEAN  
You okay? We can push the sneak  
preview tomorrow for Nick, the song  
could use a bit more time-

MADONNA  
No, that's stupid. It's ready.  
(she catches herself)  
Sorry, I've just got a splitting  
headache.

Madonna rests her head on his lap. Jellybean feels torn. He  
shouldn't talk about business, but he can't help himself...

JELLYBEAN  
Why didn't you mention working with  
me or *Sidewalk Talk*?

MADONNA  
What do you mean, I did.

JELLYBEAN

No, not really. You just said you were working on an new album.

MADONNA

Yeah so? I've got a lot going on.

Madonna gets up for a water bottle. He's not used to seeing her like this. Not with him. He's starting to boil.

JELLYBEAN

You know I don't care about publicity when it comes to me, but it feels like you're avoiding mentioning our single completely. That's bad for the music, our plans-

MADONNA

Well, the label hasn't really signed off on the song. So why advertise what I can't sell?

Jellybean is thrown.

JELLYBEAN

What are you talking about? We made a deal that I was producing your next album. Nick knows that. Seymour knows that. And since when do you ever wait for permission to do anything?

MADONNA

I just want to do what's best for the album. Calm the fuck down.

JELLYBEAN

And I don't?! I'm the fucking producer. It's my name on the line!

He kicks the green room coffee table, almost hitting Madonna. She throws a bottle at him, giving it back just as good.

MADONNA

Go ahead, throw a tantrum. You're a real adult, John. Mr. Big Producer wants attention, no one's looking at me-

JELLYBEAN

Only you care about the attention!  
I CARE ABOUT THE FUCKING MUSIC!

SLAM! He exits.

Madonna, alone and furious, tries to collect herself. She sits down at the vanity and takes a deep rage filled breath.

Then... *STINGING PAIN* - Madonna clenches her stomach. She leans against the wall, suddenly very dizzy. She reaches for a waste basket and *VOMITS*. She sits back up, trying to settle her stomach. Freaked out. What the fuck is going on?

*NICK (PRE-LAP)*

*Shit happens, she's a star now.*

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Jellybean cradles the studio phone, as it rings and rings. Session musicians linger in the booth as Nick and another executive shove a fruit plate down. Madonna's a no-show.

JELLYBEAN

She knows how important this is.  
Just give her another 10 minutes.

Nick and the other executive gather their stuff. Weirdly, they aren't that concerned.

NICK

Well, I think we all got a pretty good idea about the direction you're taking this.

EXECUTIVE

Very *interesting* stuff, John.

JELLYBEAN

I really wanted you to hear her sing the verse. It pulls it all together. We can schedule another time-

Nick and the executives are distracted, already half out the door, and on to other business.

NICK

No, I think we heard what we needed to hear. We'll leave the rest for the Seymour meeting.

The suits gone, Jellybean's quietly snaps a pencil, boiling.

INT. SOHO LOFT BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

We hear a familiar melody echoing into the hallway, from inside their loft. Jellybean approaches, trying to place the song, but can't. We might recognize it as *Like a Virgin*.

INT. SOHO LOFT - CONTINUOUS

As Jellybean opens the door and walks in, he catches Madonna motioning for Erika to shut it off immediately.

MADONNA

You're home early babe.

JELLYBEAN

Yeah I let the guys finish up for Monday, so I could see you sooner.

Jellybean can feel the weird tension. He sits on the couch next to Erika, tired and suspicious.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)

What were you just listening to?

MADONNA

Just the radio. Want a beer?

She shoots Erika a look as she moves to the kitchen.

JELLYBEAN

That's be great.

ERIKA

You coming to the party tonight?

JELLYBEAN

Another big party where I don't know anyone? Pass. I'm going into the studio tomorrow anyway.

ERIKA

Come on man, you gave everyone else the weekend off. Take a break.

INTER-CUT:

INT. SOHO LOFT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Madonna calls out from the kitchen as she grabs a beer.

MADONNA

The mix is perfect, John.  
Catherine's temp vocals turned out  
great!

JELLYBEAN

(to Erika)

It should be her vocals, but  
whatever. Madonna does whatever she  
wants when she wants right?

Madonna clenches onto the fridge at his dig. She takes a deep  
breath and gathers herself. She doesn't want to fight.

INT. SOHO LOFT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She returns to the living room with the beer, all smiles.

MADONNA

We deserve to have some fun.  
(off his hesitance)  
Together.

She grabs his hand. She wants to make this work. So does he.

JELLYBEAN

Alright, so where's this party?

INT. WARHOL'S FACTORY PARTY - DOORWAY - NIGHT

Warhol's work is everywhere, intermingled with drugs,  
dancing, white leather couches, and shag rugs. We move  
through the billows of cigarette smoke into the crowd,  
picking up bits of conversations between famous party guests.

We pass ANDY WARHOL in a full Mink Coat talking to BASQUIAT.

BASQUIAT

When I'm mad at a woman, I'm driven  
to paint her, rather than argue.

WARHOL

Aw, the fantasy love is always  
better than the reality of love.

Jellybean and Erika stand at the doorway taking in the party.  
Madonna, of course, is unimpressed.

JELLYBEAN

Shit.

MADONNA

Eh, give it time. It'll get better.

Madonna charges into the glamorous mayhem.

INT. WARHOL'S FACTORY PARTY - NIGHT

Madonna, Jellybean, and Erika bounce around the party. We see Madonna throughout the night secretly pouring out her drinks into planters, or switching it with water.

JELLYBEAN

You don't have to hold a glass at every party we go to. People won't suddenly stop listening to your music if you don't drink.

Madonna just gives him a look - *You don't get it.*

INT. WARHOL'S FACTORY PARTY - DANCE FLOOR - LATER

We see Madonna and Jellybean dancing, laughing, actually having a good time. Things seem good between them, 'til:

PRINCE arrives with his entourage and bodyguard.

ERIKA

Ohmygod it's Prince! How do I look?

Madonna and Jellybean turn from their loving embrace on the dance floor. Madonna's attention shifts to Prince, intrigued.

MADONNA

Hot. But drunk.

ERIKA

That works for me. Introduce us. You kinda know him through that Chic guy right?

JELLYBEAN

(suspiciously)

Who, Nile Rodgers? Why would she know him?

ERIKA

'Cause he's the guy-

Madonna stops her before she drunkenly blurts out her secret.

MADONNA  
 (to Jellybean)  
 Whose assistant threw away my tape.  
 Unlike you, babe. She's drunk...

She plants a kiss on him, distracting him. Things are good.

ERIKA  
 But Prince-

MADONNA  
 Doesn't matter. Let's dance, girl!

Madonna grabs Erika, pulling weirdly hard. Jellybean thinks nothing of it. From the dance floor, Madonna plots her exit.

INT. WARHOL'S FACTORY PARTY - LATER

The party still in full swing, Jellybean emerges from the bathroom, looking for Madonna on the dance floor, when:

He finds Madonna and Erika sitting with Prince and his entourage. He does a double take. He walks over to her when he's suddenly stopped by Prince's BODYGUARD.

JELLYBEAN  
 It's cool, that's my girlfriend.

The Bodyguard isn't having it.

BODYGUARD  
 You need to step back.

JELLYBEAN  
 Seriously man?  
 (to Madonna)  
 Madonna!

He tries to move past the bodyguard. Madonna, fully engrossed in a conversation with Prince, doesn't see him. *Or does she?*

BODYGUARD  
 I said step back!

Just as Jellybean is about to get into it with the Bodyguard:

MADONNA (O.S.)  
 It's cool, he's with me!

The Bodyguard steps aside, letting Jellybean through.

PRINCE'S FRIENDS  
 Who's that? / I don't know...

Jellybean runs his hands through his hair, trying to stay calm. Madonna grabs his hand. She knows he's embarrassed.

MADONNA  
(whispering to Jellybean)  
I've got you. Always.

We see Prince extending a bottle of red wine, ready to pour. Madonna smiles, extending her glass happily.

PRE-LAP:

FEMALE VOCALS (O.S.)  
*Little white lies make the sidewalk  
cry / And you can betray with the  
things you say/Watch where you walk*

INT. SIRE RECORDS - BOARD ROOM - DAY

*Sidewalk Talk* plays for a stoic Seymour Stein. Jellybean grooves along to it, but his enthusiasm is not met by Nick or the other execs in the room. Madonna keeps on a poker face, holding her cards close to the chest. The music stops.

SEYMOUR STEIN  
I don't get it.

JELLYBEAN  
It's about secrets and-

SEYMOUR STEIN  
No, I know what the song's about.  
This sounds completely different  
from her last album.

JELLYBEAN  
It's an evolution. As an artist-

SEYMOUR STEIN  
No kid, she's a brand. A new brand.  
You don't change the brand just as  
people are starting to love it.

NICK  
This single is just too urban,  
John. People are going to turn on  
the radio and not know it's her.

Jellybean turns to Madonna for backup.

JELLYBEAN  
Madonna, tell them what we talked  
about.

Madonna takes a deep breath...

MADONNA

I agree with Seymour. I like the song, but maybe you release it under your own name as an artist?

NICK

That's not a bad idea, actually.

Jellybean scrambles to save face.

JELLYBEAN

Sure. That's an idea. But we've got more tracks, this doesn't have to be the single we lead with for her.

Madonna looks to Nick.

NICK

Right, we've got another single in contention from Nile Rodgers.

SEYMOUR STEIN

Great, well let's hear it.

Jellybean turns to Madonna. *What?!* She looks away.

EXT. SIRE RECORDS OFFICES - STREET - DAY - LATER

Jellybean pushes out the doors onto the street, furious. Madonna follows close behind, very aware they're in public.

JELLYBEAN

LIKE A VIRGIN? And you said you didn't know Nile! Now he's fucking producing your whole album?!

MADONNA

It's the song I wanted, and Nile agreed I should do it. I gave you the first option to produce it. You just didn't listen to me.

JELLYBEAN

No, you don't get to make yourself the victim. You fucking lied to me. Lied to my face for weeks.

MADONNA

Can we please go somewhere else and talk about this?

JELLYBEAN

I was sitting in there wondering why you didn't have my back, but it's because you already stabbed me in it.

MADONNA

You can't really think it's my fault Sire didn't like your direction for my album?

Jellybean doesn't respond. He does blame her. Madonna starts to walk away, but she has more to say:

MADONNA (CONT'D)

You know no one listened to me the first time around. I wasn't going to let that happen again. You weren't taking my ideas so I had a contingency plan. That's just smart business, John. One flop and I'm done. There's no second chances for an artist like me. Not for a woman-

JELLYBEAN

Not everyone is out to get you!! Just admit you wanted a bigger name and that you're... you're a manipulative bitch!!

Madonna SLAPS him. Tears in her eyes, she turns to leave, and maybe for good. She refuses to let him see her cry.

MADONNA

Fuck you. I don't need this shit. Not from you.

He just stands there. Angry at her, but angrier at himself. He punches a wall and immediately regrets it.

EXT. STREET / ALLEY WAY - CONTINUOUS

Madonna turns the corner. Out of sight she shakes with anger. She tries to calm herself, as we've seen her do before:

MADONNA

If not you...

But then, she starts to lose her balance, her head throbbing. As she holds onto the wall for life, she VOMITS.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Madonna sits in an examination room as a NURSE takes her vitals.

NURSE  
Any headaches or dizziness?

MADONNA  
A little. Mostly nausea.

The nurse marks her chart. She frowns at it. Judging.

NURSE  
(under her breath)  
Twice and you're only 24.

Madonna doesn't respond. The Nurse forces a polite smile.

NURSE (CONT'D)  
The doctor will be in shortly.

INT. DIVE BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Jellybean nurses a glass of whiskey with his bandaged hand. He finishes his drink just as the open mic night starts - a familiar voice stepping out onto the stage.

DAN (O.S.)  
Hey, I'm gonna play some original songs tonight.

Jellybean turns and locks eyes with Dan.

EXT. DIVE BAR - ALLEY WAY - LATER

Dan and Jellybean smoke a cigarette.

DAN  
What you doing all the way in Queens?

JELLYBEAN  
Needed to get out of the city.

DAN  
(off Jellybean's hand)  
Woman troubles?

JELLYBEAN  
I don't really feel comfortable talking about her with you. Sorry.

DAN

Sure, sure.

Dan takes a drag of his cigarette.

DAN (CONT'D)

But let me guess. Something about being promised producer credit, but suddenly she's distant, and then she's replaced you with a bigger name? Something like that?

Jellybean can't believe what he's hearing.

JELLYBEAN

You psychic?

DAN

No, I just read the trades.

(beat)

And the fact that she did the same thing to me.

They stand quiet. Jellybean doesn't know what to say.

JELLYBEAN

I didn't know that, man. I thought she talked to you and the whole band before I came on board.

DAN

Does that sound like her?

It's quiet again. They both wait for the other to speak.

JELLYBEAN

How'd you deal with it?

DAN

It was hard. Getting clean helped, but once I really accepted Madonna's number one cause is Madonna, I took it less personal.

Jellybean's done with the conversation. *What was he thinking?*

JELLYBEAN

Well, I gotta get going...

DAN

Listen man. No matter how much she says she's never loved anyone like she's loved you, she always loves herself more. She's a survivor.

JELLYBEAN

I think I'm smart enough to know  
when someone is using me. What we  
had was real.

Dan clocks the past-tense. He heads back into the bar, then -

DAN

You know what her power is, John?  
*She makes you want to be used by  
her.* She sucks you into her world,  
and takes you along for a ride, but  
by the time you realize you were  
even on her crazy train, she's  
already kicked you off.

(beat)

It's not a matter of *if* you get off  
man, it just a matter of *when*.

JELLYBEAN

So, when did you get off?

DAN

When you got on.

EXT. NYC STREETS/SUBWAY STOP - NIGHT

Jellybean walks solemnly home, a heavy decision to make. He's  
not a religious man, but he could use a sign. He passes the  
the alleyway where Madonna and he started it all. He turns  
the corner... to find their tags are painted over. Gone.

INT. MADONNA & JELLYBEAN'S SOHO LOFT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Madonna, alone, rests against the tub. Trembling.

MADONNA

If not you, then who. If not now,  
then when, if not you, then who...

She doesn't even hear the front door open, too deep in panic.

INT. MADONNA & JELLYBEAN'S SOHO LOFT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jellybean enters ready for whatever crazy Madonna might throw  
at him. He knows he deserves it.

JELLYBEAN

Madonna?

She doesn't respond. He moves about the apartment, looking for her. He's about to give up, when he sees the master bathroom light spilling out from under the door in the dark.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)  
Madonna, are you in there?

Silence. He toggles the door handle.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry. I should have never... I felt cornered. I wish you had talked to me first.

He waits for her to say something. But again, nothing.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)  
I don't want to talk to you through the door. Come out. Please?

Her silence is starting to worry him.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)  
Please just open the door. You're scaring me.

Silence. Madonna, still lost in thought...

Jellybean starts throwing himself against the door. Harder and harder till HE BURSTS THROUGH THE DOOR where he finds... Madonna on the floor in a trance. The color drained from her face. He kneels down to her. Gentle.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)  
Look at me. You okay?

MADONNA  
You broke the door down...

JELLYBEAN  
Baby... come on. What's going on?

Madonna looks up at him, the broken door.

MADONNA  
I'm pregnant.

INT. MADONNA & JELLYBEAN'S SOHO LOFT - BEDROOM - LATER

Madonna rests in bed, as Jellybean paces... Then, a decision:

JELLYBEAN  
I think this is a sign.

MADONNA

A sign? What about your career, my career? I have to fly to Italy at the end of the week for my music video-

JELLYBEAN

Stop. I love you, M. I know a lot has happened, but I think we're meant to have this baby.

Madonna listens. For once, she doesn't know what she wants.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)

Listen. You've talked about wanting to have a real family, and now you can. I refuse to disappear like my father, and I know you'll be an even more amazing mother.

His passion stirs something in Madonna. She grabs his hand.

MADONNA

You think I'd make a good mom?

JELLYBEAN

I don't think, I know. We can have it all. Our careers, a family. We're meant to do this. You were brought into my life for so much more than just making music.

(beat)

You trust me right?

So loved and yet so lost, she kisses him.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)

Is that a yes?

She nods. Jellybean grabs her. They both shed tears of joy. He moves her hair from her face, holding her gently.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)

We can do anything as long as we're together.

Off Madonna, hearing this and wanting to believe it...

EXT. BENITEZ FAMILY HOME - BLOCK PARTY - DAY

A gathering of neighborhood kids, artists, and musicians. Madonna and Erika mingle with Jellybean's family and friends. For the first time in a while, Madonna is a civilian again.

Here in the Bronx, Jellybean is the big star. She watches lovingly, as he signs autographs and hangs with his friends.

ERIKA

I'm surprised Jellybean is going with you to Venice after the *news*.

MADONNA

We're fine. He's been recording his own stuff. I think that's been helping us with the work tension.

(beat)

I decided I'm keeping the baby.

Erika chokes back on her drink, surprised.

ERIKA

You are? Really?

(catching herself)

That's great! I get to be an aunt.

Madonna can sense Erika's hesitation.

MADONNA

You don't think I can do it.

ERIKA

No! Of course you can. I'm just surprised after what we talked about.

MADONNA

Well, everything happens for a reason. If my career has to take a break, then maybe it's a sign.

ERIKA

Damn. I've known you a long time, but you can still surprise even me!

(off Madonna's reaction)

You're the most calculated and driven person I know. Now look at you being Zen!

Erika's words weigh heavy on Madonna. She watches Jellybean and his family playing with the neighborhood kids, when... SPLOOSH! Fire hydrant BURSTS behind her, breaking her train of thought. She watches kids run through the water as a familiar piano tune rises over the scene...

EXT. LIKE A VIRGIN MUSIC VIDEO SET - DAY

You know the video - the one where Madonna dances around the Grand Canal in Venice in a black crop top, gyrating on gondolas, rolling around in a white dress, roaming Lions...

MADONNA

*Like a virgin, hey!  
Touched for the very first time  
Like a virgin / With your heart  
beat / Next to mine*

We watch as Jellybean lovingly tends to her on set. Looking out for her. Supporting her. The song continues to play over: BEHIND THE SCENES SUPER 8 FOOTAGE of them on set, walking around the canals, very much in love.

Playback CUTS, and we're back in real time as Madonna wraps.

1ST A.D.

That's a wrap for Madonna,  
everyone.

Everyone claps as Jellybean brings her a robe. They kiss.

1ST A.D. (CONT'D)

Let's get ready to bring in the  
lion. Clear set!

EXT. VENICE, ITALY - STREETS - NIGHT

Jellybean and Madonna walk the streets, taking in the sights.

MADONNA

It's so beautiful here.

JELLYBEAN

Wish we had time to see where your  
mother's family is from.

MADONNA

Next time.

She leans on him lovingly. Happy.

JELLYBEAN

We could come back for a honeymoon,  
leave the baby with my mom.

She doesn't like where this is going, changes the subject.

MADONNA

You know with your album wrapping up, we should start looking at press agents. Line up a video director for your single.

Jellybean makes a face.

JELLYBEAN

I'm not going to do any videos. MTV isn't really my thing.

MADONNA

That's ridiculous. MTV is the future.

JELLYBEAN

I resent the fact that kids grew up listening to the radio, dreaming about playing music, and now they have to be an actor too. Pass.

MADONNA

When you're up on stage, that's a performance right? So if someone puts a camera on you, what's the difference?

JELLYBEAN

I'm musician. My fans will find it on their own, the way all great music was discovered before MTV.

MADONNA

Oh, so because I'm on MTV, I'm not a real musician?

JELLYBEAN

That's not what I'm saying. We just make different stuff, babe. It's like comparing apples to oranges.

MADONNA

Uh huh...

She speeds up, pissed, but he pulls her back lovingly.

JELLYBEAN

I'm sorry. I'm just proud of my music. You were right about doing my own album. Can't I pretend to have a little control over how it's released?

She smiles. She shakes her head 'no', playfully.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)

My music is going support us. So  
don't worry, okay?

He touches her stomach. Madonna doesn't like the implication, but before she can process fully, they find themselves surrounded by PAPARAZZI.

PAPARAZZI

Madonna! Madonna!

Madonna poses for the press, as Jellybean grimaces.

JELLYBEAN

This is stupid. Let's go.

But Madonna keeps up the smiles, playing to the cameras.

PAPARAZZI

Just Madonna alone now!

Madonna gives Jellybean a look, and he begrudgingly steps aside. The paparazzi start pushing up against him, almost knocking him over. He hits his limit. Barrels through the scum, grabbing Madonna's arm, pulling her towards the hotel.

MADONNA

What the fuck, John!

Her skirt RIPS in the process. FLASH!

INT. VENICE - HOTEL BEDROOM / BALCONY - DAY

Jellybean asleep in bed, Madonna eats her breakfast out on the balcony. Surrounded by several papers she picks up a local Italian paper. We see photos of her *Like a Virgin* shoot next to the embarrassing scuffle outside the hotel. She studies the paper, then looks back at Jellybean, conflicted.

CUT TO:

A PROMO for The first annual Video Music Awards. A montage of music videos of the various performers for the show play, including Madonna's *Like A Virgin*. We pull out to reveal the promo's playing on a TV in:

INT. SIRE RECORDS - LOBBY - DAY

Jellybean watches the TV idly, Gloria's at her desk nearby.

GLORIA

God she looks great. Can't pay for that type of publicity.

Jellybean doesn't match Gloria's enthusiasm.

JELLYBEAN

If you care about that type of thing.

INT. SIRE RECORDS - BOARDROOM - DAY

Gloria leads Jellybean into the board room where Nick and Seymour wait with other executives.

SEYMOUR STEIN

We've got a great group of new artists we'd love you to meet.

NICK

Lot's of great dance re-mix possibilities.

JELLYBEAN

Remixes? I'm not really interested in re-mixing songs anymore.

(to Nick)

I thought this meeting was about my own album?

The smaller executives share a look.

NICK

Look, we're going to have to table it. Just for now. It's confusing your brand with our other artists. They want to work with the guy behind Madonna.

JELLYBEAN

Nick, I'm not just the guy behind Madonna. I have more sounds than just *Holiday* and *Lucky Star*.

SEYMOUR STEIN

John, we appreciated what you've done for Madonna, and we have other artists on our roster we'd love you work to with, but-

JELLYBEAN

But my own music isn't as good as that *Holiday* crap?

SEYMOUR STEIN

Look kid, Holiday is what put you  
in that seat you're in, so I'd  
watch your tone.

NICK

John, I think you're missing the  
point. We want to keep working with  
you despite tabling the release of  
What-Up-Son.

JELLYBEAN

(defensive)  
It's WOTUPSKI.

Nick slides a folder down to Jellybean.

SEYMOUR STEIN

John, you have a gift for  
collaborating with other artists.  
They trust you.

NICK

Take a look at the people lining up  
to work with you: Whitney Houston,  
Talking Heads... Don't let your ego  
get in the way of good money.

Jellybean studies the folder. He's furious.

JELLYBEAN

No fucking way. I'm doing my own  
music. I was somebody before  
Madonna and I still am.

Jellybean stands up, pissed, throwing his folder at Nick.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)

True genius, true art like mine,  
clearly has no place here.

SEYMOUR STEIN

Genius? Get him the fuck out of  
here.

NICK

John, let's just calm down.

Jellybean storms out of the room, past a surprised Gloria.  
Nick goes to follow after him, but Seymour waves it off.

SEYMOUR STEIN

Let the schmuck go. There's a hundred guys dying to take his place. He's just a nobody fucking a somebody.

EXT. THE VILLAGE - VARIOUS STORES / BROWNSTONES - DAY

Jellybean passes a HAPPY FAMILY exiting a brownstone. A young couple, happy children. He wants that with Madonna. Passes a jewelry store, keeps walking, and then... circles back.

INT. MADONNA & JELLYBEAN'S SOHO LOFT - FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

Jellybean, nursing a whiskey, sits outside listening to jazz. Madonna's leather jacket hangs on a chair near him. He moves inside to change over the record and sees his signature still on her sleeve. He touches it fondly, as Madonna enters.

MADONNA

I'm beat. I need a shower. That choreographer is just this-

JELLYBEAN

Babe, come out here.

MADONNA

John, I'm tired.

JELLYBEAN

Just sit down with me.

Madonna reluctantly gives in. He wraps his arms around her.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)

You know you're the most important thing in my life, right?

For once, she's nervous. Where is this going?

MADONNA

...Yes.

He nervously pulls out a ring box, and gets down on one knee. Madonna's face drops. This can't be happening now.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

John, what are you-

He opens the ring box, revealing an engagement ring.

JELLYBEAN

Madonna, I vow to take care of you and our child for the rest of our lives. I love you more than anyone I've ever loved. You know we have a connection that's been undeniable since the moment we met. And I know that if you're all that I have in this world, then I have it all.

(beat)

Will you marry me?

Guilt and anxiety drip from Madonna's flustered face.

MADONNA

John I love, but we can't get married right now. I can't...

Madonna moves back inside. He follows, anxious, desperate.

INT. SOHO LOFT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

JELLYBEAN

We can elope. It doesn't have to be a big thing. We can say it's a vacation.

Madonna sees the desperation in his eyes.

MADONNA

That's just it. I can't take a vacation right now. What about your album? Your plans?

JELLYBEAN

Forget Sire. Forget fucking labels, I'm through with them all.

MADONNA

What? What happened today?

JELLYBEAN

Can you just stop thinking about work for one second!

(beat)

You love me, right?

MADONNA

I do, but that's not the point. I have a career, I'm planning a tour, releasing a new album, I have obligations-

JELLYBEAN

So do I! But everything else can wait. I told you I'd take care of us. You won't have to work anymore.

Madonna is thrown. She can't believe he said that out loud.

MADONNA

Everything else is my career John. I've worked hard to get where I am. I can't just "fuck off" all the labels like you and be okay. If I stop releasing music, pushing myself, I'll be replaced. I have to play the game.

He's getting defensive. Hurt.

JELLYBEAN

For fuck's sake, it's only pop music!

He lets out a loud guttural SCREAM outside the window. Madonna is startled. She thinks to leave, but waits.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)

I LOVE THIS WOMAN. I LOVE OUR BABY!

Madonna pulls him inside. Jellybean stifles back tears.

MADONNA

John-

JELLYBEAN

I don't care if everyone knows about us, our baby. I want them to know! I want the whole world to know we're in this together. We're in this together right?

She hates seeing him like this... SHE PUTS ON THE RING.

MADONNA

We're in this together.

She pulls him in close. Her face full of worry.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

What's going on, John?

JELLYBEAN

Sire isn't releasing my album.

She holds him, her mind racing. Jellybean has a plan.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)

We should start our own label,  
release our own music. We don't  
need Sire or MTV dictating our art.  
I'll go to all the clubs, sling my  
own stuff. My name means something  
to real musicians. I know it does.

Madonna doesn't know what to say.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I should have waited  
'til after the VMA's, but I just  
want to start our lives together.

MADONNA

It's okay.

JELLYBEAN

I promise you I'm going to make  
everything better. You trust me  
right?

Smiling, tears in her eyes. She wants to trust him...

MADONNA

I trust you.

They hold each other, but when Jellybean finally looks at  
peace, Madonna's face betrays the deep struggle going on  
inside. We MOVE IN ON her leather jacket and all those  
signatures: Camille, Dan, Jellybean...

EXT. MTV MUSIC VIDEO AWARDS - RED CARPET - NIGHT

We watch the star-studded red carpet: Blondie, David Bowie,  
Eddie Murphy, Cyndi Lauper - if you're a big act in the  
80s's, then you're at this show.

INT. VMAS - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Jellybean walks backstage, flowers in hand. It's chaos as the  
award show preps to go live. He finds his way to Madonna's  
dressing room and opens it to find Madonna in her costume: a  
WEDDING DRESS, veil, and a gold belt with a BOY TOY buckle.

JELLYBEAN (O.S.)

You're beautiful.

Madonna turns around, surprised. She checks herself, as if  
she's being watched.

MADONNA

What are you doing back here?

JELLYBEAN

I know what you said, but I  
couldn't wait till after the show.

(he kisses her)

I got you these for good luck.

She laughs politely. She's surrounded by flowers.

JELLYBEAN (CONT'D)

I guess I wasn't the only one.

She takes the flowers, his ring still on her hand. He smiles.

CHER (O.S.)

It's break a leg.

Jellybean turns to see CHER, nursing a bottle of champagne.

CHER (CONT'D)

You never wish someone good luck  
before a show.

JELLYBEAN

Right. Break a leg.

MADONNA

I gotta focus now. Talk after.

Madonna guides Jellybean out of the room with a quick kiss.  
No time to acknowledge the fact that Cher is suddenly her new  
friend. Something feels weird, but he shakes it off.

As Jellybean walks through the gallows of backstage...

*BETTE MIDLER (PRE-LAP)*

*I'm thrilled to introduce a woman  
whose name has been on everyone's  
lips for the last six months-*

INT. RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL - VMA STAGE - NIGHT

We see BETTE MIDLER on stage introducing the next act.

BETTE MIDLER

A woman who pulled herself up by  
her bra straps, and who has been  
known to let them down  
occasionally.

BEHIND THE CURTAINS, Madonna braces herself atop of a GIANT THREE TIER WEDDING CAKE next to a FAKE GROOM. Deep breaths:

MADONNA

*If not now, then when.*

Back on stage:

BETTE MIDLER

She's great, she's hot, she's a lot like a virgin, she's MADONNA!

The curtains pull back, the lights drop. Madonna stares out, the star-studded audience stares back at her. In this moment, she know she's finally arrived. *Like a Virgin* starts to play:

MADONNA

*I made it through the wilderness  
Somehow I made it through  
Didn't know how lost I was  
Until I found you...*

Jellybean and Erika sit behind the Sire executives and Nile Rodgers in the audience. All of them are simultaneously taken aback by Madonna's sheer star power. Her presence.

Madonna makes her way down the fake wedding cake, and just as she's about to step off the last tier, she trips on her veil, loses her footing, a heel goes flying and FALLS. Hard.

Jellybean sits up in his seat, expecting the worst. All he can think about is his baby. The cameras lose her. The screens are filled with BLACK, searching for her on stage.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The DIRECTOR screams into the microphone, as the camera team scrambles to figure out what to do. The monitors still black.

DIRECTOR

This is live people! Someone get eyes on her! Now! Now! Now!

INT. RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL - VMA STAGE - CONTINUOUS

A flash of panic sets across Madonna's face. Frozen. The backing track still playing, her vocals coming up in 3..2..1

She kicks off her other high heel and rolls with it. Literally. She stays on the floor, rolling around lifting up her dress sensually. THE AUDIENCE LOVES IT.

The cameras finally find her and she plays to them perfectly, as if to a lover. They follow her as she gyrates and humps the stage, rolling around like a kitten in heat.

MADONNA

*Like a virgin/ Feels so good inside  
When you hold me/ And your heart  
beats/ And you love me / Oh oh whoa*

Madonna smiles to roaring applause. She really takes in the moment. The love, the adoration. She tosses her fears out with her bouquet into the crowd. It's all her. It's all now.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Everyone exhales. The Director lights up a cigarette.

DIRECTOR

I'm going to have the FCC all over my ass tomorrow for that one.

INT. VMAS - BACKSTAGE - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Jellybean rushes his way over to Madonna's dressing room, where he finds her alone, for once. She sits at the vanity.

JELLYBEAN

We should get you to the hospital.

MADONNA

No, I'm okay.

JELLYBEAN

You fell really hard on stage. We should take you to the ER, make sure the baby is okay.

MADONNA

It's fine. Don't worry about it.  
(off his look)  
I took care of it already.

JELLYBEAN

What do you mean you took care of it?

Madonna continues to apply lipstick in the mirror. Coldly:

MADONNA

I won't have to choose between my career and a family now.  
(MORE)

MADONNA (CONT'D)

And that's how I want it. It was my decision, and mine alone.

She slides him the ring box.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

I didn't want to have to do this here. But you've forced my hand.

The words echo like a bomb in Jellybean's head. He tries to process. The room spins. Madonna moves to change.

JELLYBEAN

Do you really need the whole world to love you? Was I never enough?

MADONNA

(lying)  
No. You never were.

JELLYBEAN

Why are you being like this? This isn't you.

MADONNA

No, trying to be what you wanted, a mother, a wife. That wasn't me. You just weren't willing to accept it.

Jellybean crumbles, the wind knocked out of him.

JELLYBEAN

You're a leech, a cut-throat opportunistic hack-

MADONNA

Because I decided to take charge of my career? Tell me John, tell me who's my example? Who's the female version of me I should model myself after? How should I have behaved?

JELLYBEAN

This is more than just about your stupid career. This was about us, our lives...

MADONNA

That's what I've been trying to tell you. My career is my life. You knew that, deep down. I was never going to be a Ronette to your Phil Spector.

(MORE)

MADONNA (CONT'D)

Because the truth is, John, you were never okay with me outshining you.

JELLYBEAN

I MADE YOU!

He swipes flower vases off the table. It's what she's been waiting to hear. What she needed to hear.

MADONNA

Michael Jackson, Prince, they make albums and are declared geniuses. I come out and people assume I'm a fucking puppet controlled by a better, more talented man. Well, I'm not going to be anyone's mouthpiece.

She leans in towards him, making sure every word lands.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

Not Nile's, not Seymour's, not yours! I'm calling the shots. And I can't wait for you to figure that out anymore. I'm too busy creating a fucking lane!

Madonna pushes past Jellybean, throws open the door for him to leave. Now. Masking her feelings behind hurtful words:

MADONNA (CONT'D)

Twenty years from now John, the only thing you'll be remembered for is being my ex.

He stares at her. More sad than angry.

JELLYBEAN

And even with all your fans and fame, you'll always be alone.

INT. VMAS - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Jellybean walks out, pushing through WELL-WISHERS and FANS waiting for Madonna. He moves through them, around them, past them. Finds the nearest exit he can, getting out of there.

INT. VMAS - BACKSTAGE - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Alone, the door closed, Madonna sits in front of her vanity. She exhales.

Tries to fix her eye make up, erase any sign of Jellybean, of her feelings. Goes to drink a glass of water. Her hands suddenly shaking, unable to drink. Her breath quickens. She can't hold it all back anymore. Overwhelmed.

She lets it all out. Stops being Madonna the icon. Allows herself to cry, to let her guard down, her wall crumbling. The mask falls as the emotion spills out of her. The pain, the sadness, the constant pressure and anxiety. If only for a moment, we see Madonna the person.

And then there's a KNOCK at the door.

Madonna pulls herself back together, puts back on her armor.

MADONNA

WHAT?

Her assistant, SHERYL, peers meekly in from the door.

SHERYL

Nick and Seymour are waiting with the car to take you to the after party, there's some press... But I can tell them you aren't doing any -

MADONNA

NO.

SHERYL

Do you want me to stall?

MADONNA

No.

Madonna looks to the mirror one last time, and stands confidently as she moves to the door.

MADONNA (CONT'D)

I'm ready now.

As she exits, we hold on the back of her chair, her leather jacket hangs heavy with weight. The signatures in memoriam to Jellybean and all the rest of her past.

But just as we think she's gone, HER HAND DARTS BACK INTO FRAME, reaching for what she knows. She puts the jacket on. It's a reminder, she tells herself, a reminder of where she's been and where she's about to go.

END