

LAYLA
...AND OTHER ASSORTED LOVE SONGS

Written by
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Based on the lives and times of
Eric Clapton, George Harrison, and Pattie Boyd

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LAYLA MAJNUN is a tragic love story based on an Arabic poem that dates back to the 9th Century.

Its literal English translation is "possessed by madness for Layla."

The story is said to have nearly 60 different iterations in many languages.

No version exists where the lovers end up together.

OVER BLACK -- LONDON, 1970

CLICK, CLICK - tape reels are loaded into a reel to reel deck. CLANK - a metal canister knocks over onto a wooden floor. A MAN with a heavy Southern English accent speaks:

ERIC (O.S.)
Oh- Sorry. [beat] Here. Put these
on. [beat] Ready?

PATTIE (O.S.)
(soft English accent)
Did you write me a song or
something?

ERIC (O.S.)
No, I wrote you an album.

CLICK - a button is pressed. The reels roll, humming to life.

INT. KENSINGTON FLAT - EVENING

CLOSE ON: The angelic face of PATTIE BOYD (26), a heart-stopping beautiful blonde, with large headphones cradling her head. She nods. The room is silent save for the muffled yet audible *DEREK AND THE DOMINOS "LAYLA" RIFF*.

Pattie closes her eyes and sways her body as she starts to feel the music. After a moment, she opens her eyes.

ERIC (O.S.)
Well?

She closes her eyes again, holding back tears, but one single TEAR squeezes out and rolls down her smooth cheek.

OVER BLACK -- 8 MONTHS EARLIER

MUDDY WATERS' "MANNISH BOY" creeps in...

ERIC (V.O.)
"Dearest L... I am writing this note
to you, with the main purpose of
ascertaining your feelings toward a
subject well known to both of us.

EXT. FRONT YARD - HURTWOOD EDGE - DAWN

A curly-haired OLDER MAN (50s) with an eye-patch and slight hunchback lumbers toward the door with a bundle of firewood.

This is ONE-EYED DON, Hurtwood's caretaker, the Alfred to Eric Clapton's Bruce Wayne. And if you think Don looks like a vagrant, that's because he was one just a few months ago.

ERIC (V.O.)

As you have probably gathered, my own home affairs are a galloping force which is rapidly degenerating day by intolerable day...

One-Eyed Don passes by a brand new Lilac Ferrari 365 GTC - parked half off the driveway with grass and mud in the rims and a giant dent in the front bumper. Don shakes his head.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM - HURTWOOD EDGE - EARLY AFTERNOON

Face down on the bed, ERIC CLAPTON (25), tall and lanky with a thick-beard and long brown hair down to his shoulders, sleeps fully clothed. Despite his stylish psychedelic clothes, he looks disheveled - haggard even.

ERIC (V.O.)

It seems like an eternity since I last saw or spoke to you! [beat] However, all of this is not the point... What I wish to ask you, is if you still love your husband, or if you have another lover?

He comes to, taking a minute to grasp his bearings.

ERIC (V.O.) (CONT'D)

All these questions are very important I know, but if there is still a feeling in your heart for me... You must let me know!

He gulps the watered down remains of his brandy and spots his jacket on the floor. He darts toward it, fishes the pockets for SOMETHING. Like a madman on his hands and knees, he searches the floor and under the bed. He rips off blankets, but can't find whatever it is he's looking for.

He runs out the door.

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A fire crackles in the fireplace as Eric races through his disaster zone of a living room - a mess only a rock star could make.

Eric beelines out the front door, not even noticing that One-Eyed Don sitting on the couch across from a wide-eyed young MAN with wavy brown hair. This is BOBBY WHITLOCK (25) a *good ol' boy* from Memphis, Tennessee with a heart of gold.

Out the window, they watch Eric sprint to the open, empty post box. He slams it closed and bangs the top with his fist.

ERIC (V.O.)

In fact, you must let me know whatever your feelings are.. Don't telephone! Send a letter... That is much safer. [beat] Please do this. Whatever it may say, my mind will be at rest..... All my love. E."

Eric storms back inside and rips apart the room in search, still not noticing One-Eyed Don and Bobby.

ERIC (CONT'D)

(without looking up)

Don! Did the post go out already?

ONE-EYED DON

(Cockney accent)

Course it has. It's past one.

ERIC

Shiiiiit! Have you seen an envelope?

ONE-EYED DON

Eric, you've left Mr. Whitlock waiting all morning-

ERIC

(ignoring)

Have you seen it or not?

ONE-EYED DON

Eric!

ERIC

What?!

Don gestures to Bobby. Eric finally stops, acknowledges him.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Bobby! What're you doing here?

BOBBY

(with a Tennessee drawl)

You said to come on over, so... Here I am.

ERIC

I did, huh?

BOBBY

Ya don't remember? Shit, I can go-

ERIC

Nonsense, if I said it, I meant it.

Bobby's relieved. Don grabs his suitcase as Eric searches.

ONE-EYED DON

Let me show you to your room. How long you here for?

BOBBY

Til my money runs out, I guess. I took Eric's advice and finally quit the band.

ONE-EYED DON

What're you taking advice from him for? Eric quits every band.

Eric accidentally knocks over the record player, abruptly stopping *MUDDY WATERS*.

ERIC

Fuck!

ONE-EYED DON

I told you not to write that letter.

ERIC

Maybe I didn't send it.

ONE-EYED DON

You need to leave that poor girl alone. You really think Pattie's going to love you just because you begged her to?

BOBBY

Pattie? [incredulous] Oh. George's Pattie?

Eric lets out a heavy, guilty SIGH.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

I was love sick once. Was crazy about this girl back home... Beautiful.

Eric attempts to fix the record player but gets frustrated and throws a piece across the room.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

And by some strike of divine dumb luck, I managed to get her. Married her too. Things were peachy keen. But one day, out the blue fuckin' sky, she slaps me with a divorce paper and no explanation.

(MORE)

BOBBY (CONT'D)

That was it. She was done. But I wasn't.

Eric turns his back to Bobby and fixes himself a drink. Bobby looks to Don who gestures for him to keep trying.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

I was a damn train-wreck for months. Trying anything to win her back. Nothing worked. Not a goddamn thing. Until a friend of mine told me 'bout this story, Layla and Majnun. Like an... Eastern Romeo and Juliet. Made me see that my love was no love at all. It was obsession. It wasn't about her. I knew I was sick, man. Took reading that story to see it. And let me tell ya, there ain't no version of it that ends well. For anyone.

Eric downs his drink and silently heads back upstairs taking the bottle of Brandy with him.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Eric, you sure it's alright that I stay?

No response.

ONE-EYED DON

I think it's best that you do.

PRE-LAP: The RIOTOUS SURGE of an excited crowd.

OVER BLACK -- LONDON, DECEMBER 24TH 1964

EXT. ODEON HAMMERSMITH THEATRE - LONDON - NIGHT

SECURITY GUARDS struggle to wrangle the huge CROWD that eagerly waits in line. Police and paparazzi swarm the street. The marquee above reads:

**BRIAN EPSTEIN PRESENTS:
ANOTHER BEATLES CHRISTMAS SHOW
WITH SPECIAL GUEST
THE YARDBIRDS**

GIORGIO GOMELSKY (O.S.)

Has anyone seen him?

INT. THE YARDBIRD'S DRESSING ROOM - ODEON HAMMERSMITH THEATRE

GIORGIO GOMELSKY (30), a slick-suited, well-respected manager stands at the door looking in, waiting for a response...

GIORGIO GOMELSKY

Helloooo?

The energy is tense and quick as he addresses his band, THE YARDBIRDS (PAUL SAMWELL-SMITH, KEITH RELF, JIM MCCARTY, and CHRIS DREJA), who are all dressed in uniquely designed matching black and beige suits. They prepare themselves for their big night - everyone's a bit on edge, specifically lead singer, CHRIS DREJA, who seethes on the couch in silence.

PAUL SAMWELL-SMITH

Haven't seen him since sound check.

GIORGIO GOMELSKY

Well at least he was at sound check.

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

ERIC CLAPTON (at 19), in the same matching black and beige suit as the rest of the band, walks down the hall with his guitar case - he's lanky and baby-faced with a bad crew cut.

As he approaches *The Yardbird's* DRESSING ROOM, he hears his band-mates conversation (*intercut between band and Eric*).

JIM MCCARTY (O.S.)

He's probably too embarrassed to go on stage with that haircut.

KEITH RELF (O.S.)

(chuckles)

He's probably pouting in the bathroom trying to fix it.

Giorgio stifles a laugh, trying to remain serious-

CHRIS DREJA (O.S.)

Laugh all you want, Giorgio, but he hasn't been to a rehearsal in months. I can't deal with his fucking ego anymore!

JIM MCCARTY (O.S.)

He asked me last night if I thought he was a genius. Who the fuck asks that?

Eric turns and walks back the way he came.

KEITH RELF (O.S.)

If he goes off on another ten minute riff in the middle of "For Your Love", I'm gonna strangle him with my mic chord.

CHRIS DREJA (O.S.)
Honestly, he's just a miserable
little bastard!

Eric stops as the word *BASTARD* echoes after him.

PRE-LAP: MUDDY WATERS' "*MANNISH BOY*" creeps in and swells...

INT. LOBBY BAR - ODEON HAMMERSMITH THEATRE - MOMENTS LATER

"*MANNISH BOY*" continues into a blues solo. Eric, in his band uniform, sits at the bar with half a beer in front of him, vigorously playing his own variation of "*MANNISH BOY*" on his GIBSON ES-335 - he's in a trance...

BARTENDER (O.S.)
Usually the band plays on stage.

Eric wakes from his trance to find the older, stout BARTENDER staring at him. Eric downs the last of his brew.

ERIC
Can I get another?

BARTENDER
Aren't you playing soon?

ERIC
That depends on if I get another.

BARTENDER
Sharp suit. Never seen a cut like that.

ERIC
I designed it myself.

BARTENDER
Fancy boy.

Eric scowls and catches a glimpse of his own reflection in a glass cabinet door behind the bar. He turns his nose up at his crewcut and ruffles his hair to mess it up.

ERIC
I'll be back, gotta use the loo.

He hops off his stool and abruptly bumps into a beautiful BRUNETTE (20), knocking her and his guitar case to the floor. Flustered, Eric grabs his guitar before helping the girl up.

BRUNETTE
What the hell?

His demeanor changes, all confidence has disappeared.

ERIC
I'm terribly sorry. Truly.

He helps her to her feet. She notes his guitar and smiles.

BRUNETTE
Are you playing tonight?

At the end of the bar sits a clean-cut young man in a grey suit with angular features and a jet-black mop-top haircut - this is the one and only GEORGE HARRISON (21). Amused and cocksure, he watches this unfold as he sips his beer.

ERIC
Uh- Yes. I'm in one of the opening bands.

BRUNETTE
Which one?

ERIC
The Yardbirds.

BRUNETTE
(stepping closer)
Really?

Eric tries to sidestep her but she blocks him.

ERIC
Excuse me-

BRUNETTE
Aren't you going to buy me a drink?

Nervous, he avoids eye-contact and ruffles his hair again.

ERIC
Oh- Uh. I actually have to use the
loo, then get on stage- And uh-

BRUNETTE
How about you buy me one after you play?

Her eyes twinkle, waiting for him to make a move but Eric is oblivious, pulls out a few notes from his wallet, sincerely:

ERIC
You can, uh- get yourself a drink.

George, embarrassed for him, shakes his head in disbelief as GIORGIO, his manager, pops his head out from the venue door.

GIORGIO GOMELSKY
Eric! What the hell? We need you.

Eric fumbles with the money, it's half in her hand before he drops it on the floor. He half bends down to pick it up...

GIORGIO GOMELSKY (CONT'D)

NOW!

ERIC

(to the Brunette)

Sorry-

Eric leaves it and shuffles off with his guitar, leaving her rejected and beyond confused. She takes a seat at the bar as Giorgio hurries Eric out through the doors.

GIORGIO GOMELSKY

They're all waiting on you.

ERIC

(confident again)

They get on just fine without me.

The argument escalates as the doors close, drowning them out.

George Harrison, who has been watching the whole painful interaction, downs his beer, gets up from his stool, and casually takes the seat next to the Brunette.

GEORGE

(Liverpool accent)

Do you still want that drink, love?

She glances at him and does a double-take... Then SQUEALS and SCREAMS with excitement.

PRE-LAP: *THE YARDBIRDS' "FOR YOUR LOVE"* ROARS from stage over:

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) THE BEATLES' DRESSING ROOM - The Brunette's SCREAMS are now ones of ecstasy. With her dress hiked up, she straddles George who's now wearing only boxers and the puffy, furry jacket of an Antarctic Explorer costume.

B) STAGE - THE YARDBIRDS play "*FOR YOUR LOVE*" to a sold-out, wild crowd. Behind them a BANNER reads: "*ANOTHER BEATLES' CHRISTMAS SHOW*". Eric stands humbly at the edge of the stage in the shadows, apathetically playing his guitar.

C) THE BEATLES' DRESSING ROOM - The Brunette ravages George with kisses, trying to soak up every bit of him while she's got him. She struggles to remove his jacket.

GEORGE

I'm supposed to be putting the costume on, love.

BRUNETTE

I don't care what you're wearing while you fuck me, just fuck me.

He lifts her up, flips her onto the couch, and gets on top.

BRUNETTE (CONT'D)

You look ridiculous in that thing.

GEORGE

You should see Ringo.

An ELECTRIC BLUES GUITAR RIFF surges through the wall. George stops and listens intently.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Whoa.

WOMAN

I know!

He tosses her aside and gets to his feet, trying to listen.

BRUNETTE

Hey!

GEORGE

Shh-

D) BACK STAGE - The riff continues as George, now in the full Antarctic costume, rushes to the wing staring out in awe...

E) STAGE - CLOSE ON fingers moving unnaturally fast, up and down the fretboard of a Gibson ES-335... We slowly pull away from the dexterous fingers to find they belong to Eric, who plays in the shadows of the stage.

Eric, with his eyes closed in the darkness, effortlessly feels every note surge through his body as if channeling some otherworldly blues guitar-god.

We continue to pull away until we are behind George in the wing... Watching Eric solo out of control all alone on stage, in the dark - it's surreal and mesmerizing.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Brilliant.

George's eyes follow Eric's fingers, and if they were moving any faster, they'd start a fire.

KEITH RELF (O.S.)
 (furious)
 Ey!

Eric continues his frenetic riff as the crowd revs up.

KEITH RELF (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Eric!

Eric SNAPS a guitar string-- He stops playing. The crowd quiets for a moment as he leans off stage, grabs a pack of strings and proceeds to take his sweet ass time replacing it.

A single CLAP emanates from the audience... Then another, and another... Until the entire crowd, in unison, gives Eric the SLOW CLAP as they wait for him to continue playing...

We now see the full stage all lit up with Keith gripping the mic chord ready to kill Eric, Chris on rhythm guitar, Paul on bass, and Jim on drums... All of their eyes glaring at Eric who's off to the side of the rest of the band, still on stage but just short of the light - just how he prefers it.

CHRIS DREJA
 (to Keith)
 Fuckin' do something!

KEITH RELF
 'Ric! Can we get on with the fuckin' song now?

Eric finally looks up and realizes the crowd's eyes are glued to him as they continue the SLOW CLAP. Eric ignores his bandmates but transitions back into *The Yardbirds'* "FOR YOUR LOVE" as the crowd SCREAMS in a frenzy.

Eric's attention is drawn to the front row. Amongst the screaming girls all dressed in black, grey, and tie-dye stands quietly a beautiful, thoughtful BLONDE dressed in a chic white sleeveless dress.

This is PATTIE BOYD (20) - songs could be written about her... And they will be. Pattie catches him staring, Eric quickly drops his eyes. When he looks back up... She's gone.

INT. THE YARDBIRD'S DRESSING ROOM - ODEON THEATRE - LATER

Everyone's gone except for Eric, on the couch, focused intently on restringing his guitar. There's a KNOCK--

GEORGE (O.S.)
 You missed out, mate.

Eric does a double take - the George Harrison pushes the door open. He's back in his grey suit, holding the goofy *Antarctic explorer's costume*. Despite his youthful face, he emits a cool confidence of someone 10 years older.

ERIC

On what?

GEORGE

The beautiful woman practically throwing herself at you.

ERIC

She was not.

GEORGE

Well, don't worry, I had your fun for you.

ERIC

Just now?

GEORGE

And during most of your set.

ERIC

(laughs infectiously)
Must be nice being a Beatle.

GEORGE

It could be just as nice being you.
Just had to look her in the eyes.

ERIC

Oh, just that simple, yeah?

GEORGE

For us it is.
(re: Eric's guitar)
I saw you play that thing. It's like you sing through it. And that last solo man-

ERIC

That was just an old blues riff I retooled. [re-stringing] It's nothing really.

GEORGE

For you maybe. You make a deal with the devil or do you just have some sort of magical strings?

Eric gets a bit excited and grabs a new pack of strings.

ERIC

Just these light-gauge strings.
They break easy, as you can see,
but I swear by 'em. [beat] You want
a pack? I've got extra.

GEORGE

No, I'm alright, thanks. What was
that new song you guys have? I only
heard the tail end of it.

ERIC

(sour)
"For Your Love."

GEORGE

Sounded like a riot, man. Crowd
loved it.

ERIC

Of course they did. Sounds just
like the Stones.

GEORGE

What's wrong with the *Stones*?

ERIC

Nothing. Just like there's nothing
wrong with *The Beatles*. But we're
neither, we're *The Yardbirds*.

George is intrigued by this angry young man.

GEORGE

In any case that blues solo was the
best part of the song. Should sound
great on the album.

ERIC

It won't be on the album.
Apparently *The Yardbirds* aren't
making blues albums anymore.

GEORGE

And that's what you want to play?

ERIC

It's what I was put on this earth
to play.

GEORGE

So play the blues then. [beat]
I just gave my friend, Klaus, my
favorite guitar- this Gretsch,
mate, was amazing. My first real
American guitar, ya know? Bought it
off a cabbie when I was 18. It was
tough, but I had to part with it.

ERIC

Why?

GEORGE

It just felt right.

Eric nods, understanding his point. George's calm maturity is startling to Eric. He finally acknowledges the ridiculous costume in George's hand.

ERIC

You taking that with you?

GEORGE

I've got one from every Christmas
show. I have more of these silly
costumes than I have guitars.

ERIC

What's the point of those stupid
skits anyway?

GEORGE

Keeps the fans entertained.

ERIC

Isn't that what the music's
supposed to do?

George looks down at the costume with disdain.

GEORGE

Maybe I should take my own advice.

He turns to leave, but then-

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Actually, could I have those
strings you were talking about?
(with a charming smile)
Can't hurt, ya know?

Eric tosses them to his new friend, THE GEORGE HARRISON.

INT. GIORGIO GOMELSKY'S OFFICE - MORNING

Eric's guitar leans against the wall beneath a prominently framed photo of his manager Giorgio with *THE ROLLING STONES*. From the window, sunlight pierces Eric's hung-over eyes as he smokes a cigarette across the desk from Giorgio.

GIORGIO GOMELSKY

It's become increasingly obvious
you're not happy.

ERIC

What makes you say that?

GIORGIO GOMELSKY

No one's holding you back from
quitting if that's what you want.

Eric stares intensely at Giorgio for a long, uncomfortable moment... Giorgio shifts in his seat, waiting for Eric to explode. Eric puts his cigarette out, reaches for his guitar, and plucks the strings incredibly fast, not looking up.

ERIC

You firing me?

GIORGIO GOMELSKY

No. But you have to work with me.

Eric ignores and focuses on his playing as Giorgio lights up a cigarette, just about ready to give up on him.

GIORGIO GOMELSKY (CONT'D)

You're marketable. You're Slowhand.

ERIC

I don't want to be "marketable!" I
don't need a fuckin' nickname. I
want to play the blues in a blues
band with blues musicians.

GIORGIO GOMELSKY

Things evolve, Eric. Bands evolve.

ERIC

Pop is a de-evolution from blues.
And I can't contribute to that sort
of... Bastardization.

GIORGIO GOMELSKY

You don't even have a backup plan.
I mean, at least wait til we hit
the States. No one quits a hit
band, Eric. What're ya gonna do?

After a long drag, Giorgio exhales a thick cloud of SMOKE...

JOHN MAYALL AND THE BLUESBREAKERS' "LONELY YEARS" plays...

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - MORNING -- 1965

SMOKE and DUST settle, revealing lanky ERIC (at 20), in a hard-hat, jeans and dirty white T-shirt, awkwardly manning a JACKHAMMER. He looks out of place amongst the rest of the burly CREW - but he pulls his weight. His body vibrates, but his eyes are fixed on something across the street... A sidewalk newspaper KIOSK - the front page headline reads:

**"JEFF BECK REPLACES CLAPTON IN YARDBIRDS;
'FOR YOUR LOVE' HITS THE STATES AT NUMBER 6!"**

INT. SPEAKEASY - STAGE ROOM - MARGARET STREET

A dimly lit, smoky restaurant bar, with brick red booths adjacent to a large music room with a stage and dance-floor.

On stage, JOHN MAYALL AND THE BLUESBREAKERS (including JACK BRUCE on bass who we'll meet soon) play "LONELY YEARS."

AT THE BAR

With his back to the stage, ERIC drinks alone, his hard-hat on the stool next to him. A blaring BLUES HARMONICA rips through the room. Eric perks up and looks to the stage...

SWISH PAN TO:

INT. SPEAKEASY - ON STAGE -- 1966

"LONELY YEARS" continues with the blues harmonica but now Eric, dressed in a button-down with his hair grown out and sideburns, plays guitar with the band - seated on a stool off to the side of the stage, his back basically to the audience.

ERIC (at 21) and JOHN MAYALL (33), with shaggy hair and a faint goatee, close out the song with a dueling blues riff. John tries to keep up with Eric's impromptu yet natural changes but gives up and just watches Eric do his thing which silences the audience. JACK BRUCE (23), the baby-faced yet smug young bassist, is equally impressed and humbled.

In the far corner of the bar, a drunken, curly haired red-headed man, GINGER BAKER (26) wildly claps and hollers, embarrassing the GIRLS he's with. Ginger is gaunt and grizzly, a real live-wire - though that could be the coke.

Eric finally finishes and looks over his shoulder to John Mayall, who stares in awe, feeling slightly one-upped.

ERIC
 (dryly)
 What's next?

JOHN MAYALL
 Why don't you sing one?

ERIC
 You only hired me to play the
 guitar, mate.

John is dumbfounded that someone would turn down this offer.

INT. GINGER BAKER'S SEDAN - NIGHT -- WEEKS LATER

Ginger drives, mumbling gibberish in his heavy South London accent. In the back, Eric, dressed conservatively, makes out with his new girlfriend, CHARLOTTE MARTIN - a beautiful cat-eyed French blonde (one of the girls with Ginger earlier).

GINGER
 Well, whataya think?

Eric pulls away from Charlotte who composes herself.

ERIC
 I'm not too keen on starting a new band
 right now. I have a good gig going-

GINGER
 Jazz and blues, man. That's all I
 want to play.

Eric runs his hand down Charlotte's thigh, kissing her neck.

ERIC
 I've heard that before.

GINGER
 I'm fucking serious, mate. I'm not a
 cocky fuck but I can wail on the drums.
 I'm the cream of the fuckin' crop.

Eric pulls away from Charlotte.

ERIC
 Who else do you have in mind?

GINGER
 Well, if you join then... That'll
 be uh- You and me, wouldn't it?

Eric's not impressed. Charlotte runs her hand up his thigh.

GINGER (CONT'D)
We probably need a third, yeah?

ERIC
(snarky)
Probably yeah. [beat] How 'bout Jack Bruce? The guy's a genius.

GINGER
(swerving)
You fuckin' kidding me?

ERIC
Don't get us killed, mate-

GINGER
I hate that snob!

ERIC
I promised him if I started something new we'd do it together. So it's both of us, or neither.

GINGER
(slams the wheel)
If you find him strangled to death backstage, you can't say I didn't warn you.

INT. THE SPEAKEASY - NIGHT -- 1967

Blaring music and flashing lights -- In the midst of this crowded smoky room, ERIC and CHARLOTTE make out in a booth. Eric's style has done a complete 180 - now its full-on psychedelic rock-star with a frizzy 'fro, bell-bottom jeans, colorful half-buttoned shirt, suede vest, and a silk scarf.

They're interrupted by a huge fuss of SCREAMING that comes from the entrance. Eric cranes his neck to spot FOUR HEADS with the same HAIRCUT bobbing and weaving through the crowd.

CHARLOTTE
What is it?

ERIC
I think *The Beatles* just walked in.

Charlotte squeals with excitement, jumps to her feet and pulls Eric through the crowd.

Someone grabs Eric, spins him around. It's GEORGE HARRISON (now 24). He's different now - his eyes wild, maybe from drugs. His hair is longer, has some scruff, and wearing a flowy Indian tunic.

ERIC (CONT'D)

George!

They hug. George holds on a beat longer than Eric.

GEORGE

I really dig *Fresh Cream* mate.

ERIC

(unenthusiastic)

Thanks. It's alright I suppose.

George feels Eric's restlessness.

GEORGE

You won't find any answers in another band...

ERIC

Answers to what?

George leans closer and studies his eyes... It's strange. He places his palm over Eric's chest. Charlotte is in awe.

GEORGE

"Here in this body are the sacred rivers... Here are the sun and moon as well as all the pilgrimage places... I have not encountered another temple as blissful as my own body."

ERIC

(utterly confused)

You alright, George?

GEORGE

(with a goofy smile)

Might give the DJ some of our new music tonight. I hope you like it.

Charlotte excitedly nudges Eric.

ERIC

Sorry. George this is my girlfriend Charlotte Martin. Charlotte, this is George Harrison.

CHARLOTTE

(starry-eyed)

I know who you are-

George takes her hand and kisses it gently - she melts.

GEORGE

Pleasure to meet you. [beat] I have something for you both. Hold out your hands.

They do and George places a pill in each.

CHARLOTTE

What is this?

GEORGE

It's called STP. [off their confused looks] Basically it's really strong acid.

CHARLOTTE

(handing it back)
I shouldn't.

GEORGE

How about you, Eric?

Eric shows his hands... They're empty. George LAUGHS and leads them through the crowd toward the stage.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Great! By the way, that might last a few days, mate.

Eric's smile quickly changes to a panic.

EDGE OF STAGE

The Beatles' "WITHIN YOU WITHOUT YOU" plays as Eric and George lay on their backs with their legs dangling off the empty stage... Just a few feet from their heads, Charlotte dances like a gypsy with a few other girls.

Eric shifts his eyes from Charlotte to George, whose eyes are closed, lost in the music.

ERIC

I can't believe you had to fight them to get this on the album.

George never opens his eyes.

GEORGE

That's because the other Beatles weren't on it.

Eric sits up to survey the crowd. Eric locks eyes with a familiar face.

The same breathtakingly beautiful blonde goddess from earlier - PATTIE BOYD (23) - dressed once again in a chic white dress amongst a sea of tie-dye. And this time... She's walking right toward him.

He looks around dumbly and straightens himself up. She finally arrives bearing a blinding smile.

PATTIE

Hi...

Eric is astounded this woman is talking to him.

ERIC

H- hi... Hi.

Pattie leans over to see who is laying on their back...

PATTIE

Is that George?

ERIC

(deflated)

Oh-

Eric nudges George who sits up - he's tripping and loving it.

GEORGE

You made it!

With envy, Eric watches them kiss until MAUREEN STARR (21), Ringo's wife, comes up from behind and throws her arms around Pattie and George. George plants a loving kiss on her cheek.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

My other love!

Eric is deep down the rabbit-hole, his eyes fixated on Pattie. George grabs his hand and pulls him into the mix.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

This is my dear friend, Eric Clapton.
Eric, this is my wife, Pattie, and
Ringo's better half, Maureen.

ERIC

Hi.

From the stage, Charlotte leans over and wraps her arms around George's neck.

CHARLOTTE

How's my Eric doing?

GEORGE

He's on a journey, my lady.

Charlotte pulls George and Maureen to the stage to dance, leaving Eric and Pattie alone. He's way too shy and tripping too hard to start a conversation...

PATTIE

I do know who you are, ya know.

ERIC

You do?

PATTIE

Of course. I've seen you play before.

ERIC

Yes, I play...

She smirks, slowly nodding along as if he were a child.

ERIC (CONT'D)

The guitar. I play the guitar on stage.

PATTIE

Are you okay?

ERIC

Why wouldn't I be?

PATTIE

Did George give you something?

Eric nods. She LAUGHS, knowing he's a million miles away.

ERIC

You're unusually beautiful.

PATTIE

Is that a compliment?

ERIC

It is. There are a lot of colors around you.

PATTIE

George definitely gave you something.

ERIC

(to himself, but aloud)
Patricia.

PATTIE

People call me Pattie.

ERIC

My mum's name is Patricia, ya know.

PATTIE

It's a common name, I suppose.

Eric nods as "*WITHIN YOU WITHOUT YOU*" comes to an end and a "*HARE KRISHNA*" chant surges through the crowd. Everyone's focus, specifically Patties, turns to George who pulls her on stage and they dance.

Eric joins Charlotte on stage but his eyes remain glued to Pattie as she twirls around in slow-motion with rays of colorful light projecting from her every move...

EXT. STREET - THE SPEAKEASY - LATER

Wild-eyed Eric sucks down a cigarette with his eyes glued to the front door. Beside him, Charlotte finishes her cigarette.

CHARLOTTE

Can we go home?

Before he can answer, chaos explodes from the entrance... Policemen try to contain the crowd as *The Beatles* exit and walk across the street to their Rolls Royce. Before Lennon gets in, he throws up a rebellious "V-Sign."

ERIC

They're in another world from us.

One by one they file in... John/Cynthia, Ringo/Maureen, Paul/Linda, with George/Pattie last.

From afar, Eric watches Pattie disappear into the limo - he could swear she glances back at him before shutting the door.

He steps forward to go after the limo and the city around him dissolves to DARKNESS and everything is muffled save for the mellifluous voice of an indiscernible WOMAN.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Eric, are you with me?

He ignores her and takes a few more steps toward the limo as the haunting *INTRO* of *Cream's "WHITE ROOM"* swells.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

"No limits have been imposed on you
--you determine your nature by your
own free will, in the hands of
which I have placed you."

His pace picks up then he breaks into a full sprint.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

"I have made you neither celestial
nor terrestrial, neither mortal nor
immortal, so that, like a free and
able sculptor and painter of
yourself you may mold yourself
wholly in the form of your choice.

Oddly, the faster he runs, the further away the limo gets. As he gives up and slows down, the limo SCREECHES to a stop...

Before he can take another step forward, two impossibly giant SILVER HORSES thunder by Eric on either side nearly crushing him. He spins around, disoriented, but they've disappeared before he saw what hit him. "WHITE ROOM" is blaring now.

He looks to the limo. The back window rolls down less than half-way revealing a blinding WHITE LIGHT and the eyes of a beautiful woman staring back at him, then it rolls back up.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I have placed you at the world's
very center, that you may the
better behold from this point..."
Whatever is in the world."

Like a moth to a flame, Eric goes to the limo. He opens the door and the WHITE LIGHT engulfs him as he gets in.

FADE TO WHITE.

Silence. Then the faint sound of what could be the opening riff of the song "LAYLA"...

INT. JACK CLAPP'S SEDAN - DOCK - FLASHBACK -- 1954

ENTIRELY FROM ERIC'S POV IN THE BACKSEAT: We gaze out through the window into the thick white FOG that surrounds us. We're all alone. We look down to our unwieldy steel-string Hoyer GUITAR in our tiny 9-year-old hands. A piercing FOGHORN breaks the silence...

We look up, startled to find our mother, the glamorous dark-haired PATRICIA CLAPTON (27) tapping at our window, dressed in a fancy, flowy dress, a colorful scarf and big sunglasses that accentuate her sharp features. Looming high above the fog behind her is a BLACK VESSEL with an ornately carved female FIGUREHEAD adorning the ship's bow. The beautiful, long haired wooden SIREN stares down at us.

Patricia taps at our window again, motioning for us to roll it down, and we do. In a sharp and cold South English accent:

PATRICIA CLAPTON
 Didn't mean to startle you.
 (looks us up and down)
 Look at you. I remember when you
 could nearly fit in my hand.

We are frozen stiff except for our thumb gently sliding across the strings, not producing a sound. Patricia directs her attention to our guitar, struggling to connect.

PATRICIA CLAPTON (CONT'D)
 You know, Eric, my ex-
 (choosing words wisely)
 Your father-- Birth father, I mean. He
 was a musician too. [off our silence]
 I look forward to hearing you play-

ERIC (O.S.)
 (blurting)
 Can I call you mummy now?

Patricia looks back over her shoulder - a few feet behind, ROSE and JACK CLAPP (Eric's grandparents) are now eerily watching. Rose holds Patricia's infant daughter, CHERYL, and Jack holds her son, BRIAN (6). She looks back to us and leans in with tears in her eyes.

PATRICIA CLAPTON
 I think it's best, after all they've
 done for you, that you go on calling
 your grandparents Mum and Dad.

She steps back away from the window. Slowly, they are all engulfed in the white fog until they disappear completely.

INT. RETURN TO 1967 -- BEDROOM - ERIC'S FLAT

CLOSE ON: ERIC'S GLAZED EYES STARING VACANTLY AHEAD.

GEORGE (O.S.)
 He's catatonic.

George kneels at the side of the bed, his head cocked, staring directly into Eric's vacant eyes. Charlotte closes the book she was reading from: **ORATION ON THE DIGNITY OF MAN.**

CHARLOTTE
 It's been days. When will it wear off?

GEORGE
 Depends on the person... Does he
 have any tea, ya think?

CHARLOTTE
Oh, will that help?

GEORGE
No. I could use a cup.

He's on his feet heading for the kitchen. Charlotte follows him because, well, he's George Harrison.

BEDROOM - LATER

Eric rolls over and groggily opens his eyes to find a blurry blonde woman sitting at the edge of his bed...

ERIC
Who's there?

He struggles to reach out to her as if she's far away, but in reality, he's just poking her back. She stifles a laugh.

PATTIE
It's Pattie.

ERIC
My sister's name is Pattie.

PATTIE
I thought that was your mom's name.

ERIC
Yeah.

PATTIE
Which one is it, then?

ERIC
Good question.

Trying to hold himself together, he groggily gets to his feet and becomes extremely aware that he's wearing only underwear. Embarrassed, he grabs a blanket to cover up.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Could you pass me my jeans?

Pattie smiles and tosses them to him. He awkwardly tries to put them on while also covering himself up. Pattie smirks...

PATTIE
You're not the first rockstar I've seen in their underwear.

She leaves and Eric can breathe again. He struggles into his jeans, falling over in the process. He jumps to his feet.

ERIC
Never again.

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Eric stumbles out from the bedroom.

GEORGE (O.S.)
The prodigal son has returned from
his journey.

Eric focuses across the room to find George and Charlotte on
the couch - uncomfortably close.

CHARLOTTE
We were worried about you!

PATTIE (O.S.)
Eric, do you want something?

He turns, looking her straight in the eyes.

ERIC
Yes.

PATTIE
Okay, I'll fix you something.

LIVING ROOM - LATER

Eric sits on the floor scarfing down some stew, looking up at
George who's flanked by two beautiful women on the couch.

CHARLOTTE
Thank God I didn't do it. Who
would've taken care of poor Eric?

GEORGE
At least he knew he was doing it.
This wicked dentist tricked us into
taking acid our first time. Dropped
it straight in our tea.

PATTIE
It was coffee actually-

GEORGE
(annoyed)
Does it really matter? It was wild.
It made the little 2-bedroom flat
feel like we were sitting in the
middle of Albert Hall.

PATTIE
Frightening to say the least.

Eric watches her as she speaks softly.

PATTIE (CONT'D)
I never heard of it before. When it took effect, we were really keen to get away. So we piled into George's mini, which felt like it was shrinking- If that's even possible.

ERIC
Oh, it is.

CHARLOTTE
I don't think I ever want to try it.

ERIC
Your mind plays tricks on you.

GEORGE
She even tried to smash open one of the windows for air.

PATTIE
(laughing)
I don't know what I was thinking. But we finally got to a club and I was just beside myself. And all these people kept coming up to George... They looked like animals.

GEORGE
Some of them were animals. Anyway, we clung to each other all night. Suffice to say, we never spoke to the dentist again. Though, I do owe him for turning me onto it.

ERIC
The more we talk about it, the more I think I want to do it again.

GEORGE
You should try meditation-

PATTIE
(rolling her eyes)
Here we go-

GEORGE
What? It's more powerful than any one of these drugs.

PATTIE

He meditates for five hours a day.

George calmly ignores her jab.

GEORGE

And it's worth every second.

INT. THE SPEAKEASY - BAR ROOM - NIGHT -- 1968

CLOSE ON: Eric in a booth, strumming his guitar as he reads aloud quietly from a bar napkin:

ERIC

*"You thought the leaden winter
would bring you down forever/ But
you rode upon a steamer to the
violence of the sun/ And the colors
of the sea blind your eyes with
trembling mermaids [beat] "And you
touch the distant beaches with
tales of brave Ulysses."*

Eric strums a riff that sounds roughly like what will be CREAM'S epic "TALES OF THE BRAVE ULYSSES."

The front door flies open and MAUREEN STARR storms in like a bat out of hell. Trailing behind her elegantly is PATTIE BOYD. For Eric the world stops. Pattie sits at the bar as Maureen splits for the bathroom. Eric beelines for Pattie.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Pattie, good to see you.

PATTIE

You too Eric.

They are very sweet and at ease with each other.

ERIC

You look very pretty today.

She blushes, realizing he's smitten with her.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Did you- Uh- Did you change your hair or something?

PATTIE

You know you're always very sweet. Like a shy school boy.

ERIC

A school boy?

PATTIE

It's refreshing. Truly. I just had a different idea of how you'd be, ya know, from watching you on stage. That's all.

ERIC

Word of advice, never tell a man he's like a school boy.

PATTIE

(laughing/slightly drunk)
Unless he's acting like one.

ERIC

Is George coming?

PATTIE

(annoyed)
No, he's in a nasty mood.

ERIC

What happened?

PATTIE

Like he'd tell me. If I had to guess he got into a tiff with Paul or John. Probably Paul.

ERIC

Trouble in paradise?

PATTIE

George's paradise is all in his head. [gesturing to bartender] You should come over for dinner soon. You and Charlotte.

Charlotte exits the ladies room, and sees Eric at the bar - tasting Pattie's drink. Eric spots her, his big smile quickly fading as he gestures her over. She half-smiles and joins them, making a big show of hugging Pattie.

ERIC

Pattie just invited us to dinner.

CHARLOTTE

Lovely. I just ran into Maureen... Literally.

PATTIE

She's not herself right now. She had quite a few back at home.

CHARLOTTE

And you? How many have you had?

The light mood is tainted... Eric squirms.

PATTIE

A few less than her.

EXT. HARRISON'S ESHER ESTATE - AFTERNOON

Eric and Charlotte approach the front door. He holds a long GIFT-WRAPPED BOX and she holds a bottle of wine. Before Eric can ring the doorbell, an older Indian DOCTOR with greying hair opens the door and exits, bag in hand.

DOCTOR

(passing Eric)

Good day.

ERIC

Wait, is George here?

DOCTOR

Yes. He's inside with Ms. Pattie.

The doctor gets in his car. Eric peeks through the open door.

ERIC

George?

INT. FOYER - HARRISON'S ESHER ESTATE - MOMENTS LATER

Eric leaves Charlotte waiting in the foyer with their gifts.

ERIC

I'll see if I can find them.

HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Further down, Eric hears a faint whisper from down the hall and follows it. He can hear George chanting quietly:

GEORGE (O.S.)

*"Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna/ Krishna
Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama..."*

The master bedroom door is cracked open, Eric peeks inside. Pattie is sobbing, curled up in the fetal position on top of the bed covers. George spoons her, holding her in his arms - comforting her the best he can while he chants his mantra.

George spots Eric watching and holds his gaze while he continues to chant - it's unsettling. George nods subtly cueing Eric to retreat back to the foyer.

FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Eric casually returns to Charlotte.

ERIC
They'll be out in a minute. How
'bout a drink?

KITCHEN - LATER

Eric and Charlotte canoodle in the cushioned breakfast nook, sipping cocktails. George and Pattie enter. Pattie acts chipper but her glossy, puffy eyes betray her.

PATTIE
Terribly sorry, got a late start.

ERIC
We helped ourselves to your bar.

Eric and Charlotte stand, hugs and kisses all around.

GEORGE
What's in the box, mate?

Eric grabs the long GIFT BOX that leans against the wall.

ERIC
It's for you.

CHARLOTTE
(to Pattie)
And the wine's for you, dear.

GEORGE
What's the occasion?

ERIC
It's a proposal of sorts. Open it.

George rips off the wrapping paper.

GEORGE
A proposal?

ERIC
I think we'd make excellent *guitar-*
in-laws.

George's eyes widen as he opens a guitar case to find a shiny RED GIBSON LES PAUL. He examines it as Eric awaits approval from his older counterpart.

GEORGE

It's a funny looking guitar. Redder than red.

ERIC

Found her in a guitar shop in Manhattan. Used to belong to the guitarist from *The Lovin' Spoonful*.

GEORGE

She's beautiful. Why give her to me?

ERIC

It just feels right. Besides I neglect her.

PATTIE

Sounds familiar.

CHARLOTTE

That's not the only thing he neglects.

The girls *cheers*. The guys don't even catch the comments...

GEORGE

What's her name?

ERIC

I haven't even named her, ya see what I mean?

CHARLOTTE

(buzzed)

You should have seen him agonizing over it- "*Is he going to like it?*", "*You think he'll even play it?*" Back and forth, back and forth. He almost made me turn the car around tonight. Makes me wonder if he puts this much thought into my gifts.

ERIC

(embarrassed)

She's exaggerating- I was just-

PATTIE

That's really sweet, Eric.

CHARLOTTE

I'm teasing. Just take a joke.

PATTIE

George, you can play with your new toy after dinner.

GEORGE

She's not a toy, dear. Show some respect to Lucille. Lucille Ball.

PATTIE

Maybe we should set her a place at the table.

CHARLOTTE

Ever think he'd leave you for a redhead?

George winks and moves to kiss Pattie. She lets him kiss her.

ERIC

Give it a play. I tuned it before I came over.

CHARLOTTE

He tuned it four times.

He plays the familiar melody of "SOMETHING".

GEORGE

Somewhere in her smile she knows/I don't need no other lover/Something in her style that shows me"

Eric sees how his words affect Pattie, her eyes welling up. George mumble hums two bars, then:

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Something in the way she moves/ Something in the way she woos me/ Attracts me like a... [mumbles] Pomegranate.

CHARLOTTE

A pomegranate?

GEORGE

Yeah, I'm still working on it.

PATTIE

I think it's sweet.

GEORGE

Pattie was cutting up a pomegranate earlier... And it had the right syllables. It's a placeholder.

CHARLOTTE

Good.

GEORGE

I hate showing a work in progress-

CHARLOTTE
Did you just write that for your
new love, Lucy?

GEORGE
I wrote it for Pattie.

PATTIE
(blushing)
Truly?

GEORGE
Truly.

ERIC
(writhing with envy)
You're his muse.

PATTIE
No, that would be yoga.

Charlotte senses something off with Eric and slaps his arm.

CHARLOTTE
(half-joking)
Where's my song?

GEORGE
(wincing, guilty)
Sorry, mate.

ERIC
Every song was written for you-

CHARLOTTE
Yeah, that must include "*We're
Going Wrong.*"

ERIC
(laughing)
Actually Jack wrote that one.

CHARLOTTE
Piss off.

George urges the group toward the kitchen.

GEORGE
Let's eat, shall we?

EXT. ERIC'S FLAT - MORNING - DAYS LATER

George parks and HONKS the horn of his new RED MINI-COOPER -
colorful psychedelic graffiti adorning both sides.

INT. LIVING ROOM - ERIC'S FLAT - MORNING

Eric and Charlotte are in the throes of an escalating argument. Eric peeks out the window and sees George leaning against his parked Mini.

CHARLOTTE

You're really going to leave right now? In the middle of this?

ERIC

Yeah, he's here. He said we can't be late.

CHARLOTTE

Fuck you Eric. Why isn't this important to you? [beat] Rhetorical fucking question. It's because you only give a shit about yourself.

ERIC

That's not fair.

CHARLOTTE

Just go. Don't worry, I won't be here when you get back.

ERIC

(mocking)

Where are you going to go?

CHARLOTTE

I don't know. Maybe back to Paris.

ERIC

If that's what you want...

He casually puts his coat on. She SCREAMS as she chucks a stack of MAGAZINES at him.

CHARLOTTE

You're a bastard.

ERIC

(calmly)

I think you're right.

CHARLOTTE

That you're a bastard?

ERIC

It's probably best we take a break.

Tears streak her face as she grabs a glass to throw at him--

ERIC (CONT'D)
Ey- Easy! It's just I'm moving out
of this place and-

CHARLOTTE
What the hell's that have to do
with us?

ERIC
If I'm moving out, I think I need a
fresh start. I need to live alone.

CHARLOTTE
You're lying to me.

ERIC
No. What's there to lie about?

CHARLOTTE
(begging)
Your feelings. Just tell me how you feel.

ERIC
We've grown apart. That's all.

CHARLOTTE
No you have. You've shut me out.

George HONKS the horn again.

ERIC
Charlotte, I've loved you more than
I could possibly love anyone, but-

CHARLOTTE
You're in love with someone else...

He's caught off guard. Charlotte instantly knows she's right.
George HONKS twice more - Eric shakes his head, flustered-

ERIC
Alright, fuck!

CHARLOTTE
Does he know you're in love with
his wife?

She doesn't even let it settle before she grabs her purse.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
I'll move my stuff out tonight.

She SLAMS the door behind her, leaving Eric with his shame.

EXT. ERIC'S FLAT - MOMENTS LATER

George leans up against his car smoking a cigarette as Charlotte storms out. She walks right up to him and without hesitation gives him a long kiss. She pulls away, smirks devilishly, and without a word, struts off leaving George caught off-guard, but intrigued. A moment later Eric emerges.

GEORGE
Everything alright?

ERIC
Charlotte and I just ended it.

GEORGE
(understanding now)
Sorry to hear that.

ERIC
Never mind that. What's all this about? What was so urgent?

GEORGE
We're late. Gotta get to Abbey Road.

Eric's mood does a 180 as George gets in the car.

ERIC
Really? Fantastic!

EXT. PARKING LOT - ABBEY ROAD STUDIOS - SHORTLY AFTER

As they get out of the Mini and head toward the front door.

GEORGE
I have a favor to ask you.

ERIC
Name it.

GEORGE
I wrote this song for our new album, ya know, and I'd like you to play guitar on it.

ERIC
(dumbfounded)
You want me to play guitar, the instrument you play, on a Beatles album?

GEORGE
Just one song.

ERIC

Right. So you've kidnapped me to play on a Beatles record- George, no one ever plays on Beatles' records. Except for The Beatles.

GEORGE

You could be the first.

ERIC

That's a lot of pressure. They're not going to want me intruding.

GEORGE

Sure they will. They love your work.

ERIC

I don't know. Like you said, Paul has very particular tastes. We might not vibe, ya know?

GEORGE

You're Eric fucking Clapton. He'll let you play how you want to play.

ERIC

You're just saying that.

GEORGE

You really gonna make me beg mate?

ERIC

What about John?

GEORGE

John loves you. He talks about playing with you all the time.

ERIC

Really?

George looks at his watch.

GEORGE

Well what's it going to be?

ERIC

I didn't even bring my guitar.

GEORGE

(smiling)

You can borrow Lucy.

INT. STUDIO - ABBEY ROAD STUDIOS - LATER

Eric sits amongst THE BEATLES (PAUL, JOHN, RINGO, and GEORGE) like he belongs there as they all prepare to play. Pattie and Maureen, beers in hand, come into the studio.

RINGO

There she is. With beer no less.
What a woman!

Ringo kisses Maureen warmly. George is off to the side, too preoccupied talking with the ENGINEER to even acknowledge Pattie. Instead Eric does.

ERIC

I didn't know we were going to have
an audience.

PATTIE

Do we make you nervous?

PAUL

(claps his hands)
Alright, let's get to it.

Everyone takes their place, the girls sit on the floor.

GEORGE

So, Eric, I'll start it off and you
just come in when it feels right.

ERIC

Huh? You want me to wing it? I can't
just- This is a Beatles album.

Eric squirms as Paul and John stare at him.

GEORGE

You'll do fine, mate. Just play off
me, whatever comes naturally.

ERIC

George. I need a little more than that.

George begins strumming "*WHILE MY GUITAR GENTLY WEEPS*" as Eric's mind races, sweat beading up on his forehead.

GEORGE

Play from the heart.

Eric grips his guitar, glances around the room, all eyes on him. His attention falls onto Pattie, he takes a deep breath.

Eric strums his first chord and settles in, laying down the guitar expertly without ever taking his eyes off Pattie.

Paul barely keeps up on bass. John and Ringo can't take their eyes off his fingers as he closes with a beautiful CODA.

As he finishes, Eric glances over to George who's been watching him stare at Pattie the entire length of the song.

JOHN
That was fucking brilliant.

PAUL
It really was.

ERIC
I just played off George. He had the vision.

PAUL
Well, that sealed the track for me.

Paul gestures to the ENGINEER through the window.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Let's play it back.

The song plays. Eric cringes as he hears himself.

JOHN
What's wrong?

ERIC
It sounds like me.

RINGO
What's wrong with that?

ERIC
It sticks out like a sore thumb. It should sound more like a Beatles song, not a blues song.

JOHN
That's why George brought you.

Everyone relaxes, grabbing beers. George goes into the control room to tinker with the engineer. Maureen follows, which Eric notices. So does Pattie, who sidles up to Eric.

PATTIE
You fit right in, huh?

ERIC

Yeah, I was thinking of getting the signature haircut.

She LAUGHS as Eric's eyes shift to George and Maureen through the glass - their interaction is harmless but suspicious. John interrupts and throws his arm around Eric's shoulder.

JOHN

Eric, we need to play together. Beyond this obviously. I don't know when or where, but it will happen.

ERIC

I'd like that.

JOHN

I'm not joking. I know I can bring out something great, in fact greater, in you that has yet to be discovered in your music.

PAUL

Was that supposed to be a compliment, John?

PATTIE

He's already quite great, John.

RINGO

Yeah, godly great.

ERIC

(beyond embarrassed)
Please- I think I know what he means-

JOHN

Of course he's great. But just wait til we get together.

PAUL

Watch out Eric. I think John's trying to seduce you.

Eric looks to George through the glass - he's been listening to the whole thing.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

The studio is empty - George, headphones on, sits listening to playback - he rewinds and restarts with a smile across his face. Pattie sits next to him, half asleep, but stirs as Eric enters. George's eyes are closed as he sways to the music.

ERIC
Everyone's left and I just realized
George drove me here.

PATTIE
We'll take you home.

ERIC
Wait'll I tell my mum I played with
The Beatles.

PATTIE
Aw- You two must be close. You seem
like that type.

Eric shifts his weight and moves his attention to George.

ERIC
What does he think?

PATTIE
Looks like he likes it.

ERIC
He wrote a very moving song.

She looks at George, lost in his happiest place. Whispers:

PATTIE
He talks about you all the time.

ERIC
None of it's true.

PATTIE
He said after he met you he almost
quit playing the guitar. He said
you just have this feel. An
intuitive touch that he envies.

ERIC
He's got it too. He's got quite a
few things I envy actually.

Pattie blushes.

INT. LIVING ROOM - HARRISON'S ESHER ESTATE - WEEKS LATER

Eric plays guitar as George writes lyrics. They pass a joint.

ERIC
I think I just found my new place.
It's this ridiculous Italian Villa
in Surrey called Hurtwood Edge.

GEORGE

Cool name. Sounds Gothic.

ERIC

Thanks for helping me write this.
I'd never be able to get it done
before my session tonight.

GEORGE

Did you just forget about it?

ERIC

No, but given the choice between
accomplishing something and just
lying around, I'd rather lie
around, play the guitar.

GEORGE

If you're going to play the damn
thing, why not just write as well?

ERIC

Because then I have to think. I
play on autopilot. I blackout or
something, the world turns off.
There's nothing better, ya know?

GEORGE

No, mate, I think a lot when I play.
I have to. You're a freak of nature.

Eric LAUGHS.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Writing's my favorite part. I'd
write all day and night if it meant
I didn't have to play.

ERIC

Good thing you play in the most
famous band in the world.

GEORGE

Yeah, maybe one day I'll write for
them too-

George starts playing the beginning of Cream's "BADGE".

GEORGE (CONT'D)

The only time I enjoy playing these
days is when Pattie's watching.
Playing for her is like... I can't
explain it. She makes me feel like
George fucking Harrison, ya know?

ERIC

Yeah. I do.

George smirks.

INT. REHEARSAL SPACE - NIGHT

CREAM (Eric on guitar, Ginger on drums, and Jack on bass and vocals) play "BADGE".

JACK BRUCE

*"Talkin' bout a girl that looks
quite like you/ She didn't have the
time to wait in the queue/ She
cried away her life since she fell
off the cradle."*

ERIC

(stops playing)
Maybe, try singing it like...

Eric SINGS it slightly different but his voice is soft and unsure; Jack mimics almost exactly but with confidence-

ERIC (CONT'D)

Closer, but-

Eric SINGS it again, Jack is getting frustrated.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Ginger, what do you think? Which way do you like it best?

JACK BRUCE

You wrote the damn thing, Eric, why don't you just sing it.

ERIC

No, no, no. I couldn't. I'd never want to listen to it. Sorry just do it your way.

GINGER

Make up your fuckin' mind, mate!

Ginger starts wailing on the drums.

INT. HURTWOOD EDGE - FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

"MANNISH BOY" plays on vinyl. Eric, on the couch, is dressed in a dapper suit with his hair combed and beard neatly trimmed as he sips on a brandy and 7-Up. He wipes the wet from his mustache as he looks to the ticking CLOCK. After a moment, the phone RINGS, he jumps to his feet and grabs it.

ERIC (INTO PHONE)

Hello!

Eric goes quiet as his body softens and shrinks.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Oh. Of course [beat] No, no,
wouldn't want to burden you. [beat]
Next time then. Right.

Eric hangs up, sits down, and gulps down his drink. He reaches over to the phone, brings it to his lap, and dials.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Oh- Hi, Pattie. Is George- [beat]
I'm good. How are you? [beat] I'm
glad. Is George around? [beat] Of
course he is, the man never stops
working. [laughs] Was just looking
for a mate tonight- A drinkin' mate.

Eric goes silent. His eyes brighten.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Really? You want to be my drinkin'
mate tonight?

LATER

Eric, still in his sharp suit, opens the front door to find Pattie, heavenly in a casual white dress. Eric stares.

PATTIE

May I come in?

MOMENTS LATER

Eric nervously makes her a drink. Pattie notices his clothes.

PATTIE

You didn't get all dolled up like
that for me, did you?

Eric is caught off guard.

ERIC

Of course I did.

PATTIE

You're lying to me, Eric. Did you
have a date?

ERIC

No.

She jumps to her feet to console him.

PATTIE

Oh my god, you had a date. Eric,
what happened?

ERIC

It's nothing.

PATTIE

Who is she? Did she cancel on you?
I swear I'll find her and-

ERIC

I'm fine. But thank you.

Eric LAUGHS. Pattie studies his face.

PATTIE

Was it that little French girl?
(stern)
Eric, do not go crawling back to
her. She's poisonous.

ERIC

It wasn't Charlotte.

PATTIE

Good. I never liked her.

Eric LAUGHS and hands her the drink.

ERIC

Drink up so you can have another.
You have some catching up to do.

LATER

Eric, strumming his guitar, sits beside Pattie on the couch,
comfortable with one another now.

PATTIE

Can you play David Bowie?

ERIC

Anything you want.

Eric plays an impressive version of "*Space Oddity*."

PATTIE

(swaying to the music)
You have to sing it.

ERIC
Absolutely not.

PATTIE
Give me your best Bowie.

ERIC
How 'bout I play, and you give me
your best Bowie?

He takes a MICROPHONE from a stand and hands it to her.

PATTIE
You aren't any fun.

Eric strums harder, really into it. They sit Indian-style on the couch, face to face with knees touching.

ERIC
Go ahead.

Pattie clears her throat.

PATTIE
(doing her best Bowie)
*Ground Control to Major Tom/ Ground
Control to Major Tom/ Take your
protein pills and put your helmet
on/ Ground Control to Major Tom...*

ERIC
Ten, nine, eight, seven, six...

Pattie GIGGLES.

PATTIE
Commencing countdown, engines on...

ERIC
Five, four, three...

PATTIE
*Check ignition and may God's love
be with you...*

ERIC
Two, one, liftoff...

Pattie jumps to her feet on the couch, towering over Eric, who gazes up at her belting out the next verse with passion.

PATTIE

*This is Ground Control to Major/
You've really made the grade/ And
the papers wants to know whose
shirts you wear/ Now it's time to
leave the capsule if you dare...*

EXT. MARGARET STREET - LONDON, ENGLAND - LATER

DAVID BOWIE'S "SPACE ODDITY" continues softly. Eric and Pattie drunkenly walk arm-in-arm, in sync, but holding each other up. There's a lightness to their step.

ERIC

Now that man is an alien. I'm not kidding. You haven't seen him play. He's not even playing music. I don't know what's coming out of that guitar but it's sure as shit not from this world.

Pattie gazes up at Eric as he talks passionately.

ERIC (CONT'D)

My jaw was on the fuckin' floor when he came out to play "Killing Floor" with us. I couldn't keep up. And I've never not kept up.

PATTIE

He couldn't have been that good. You're a god, Eric. It's graffitied all over the fuckin' city.

ERIC

Don't remind me. It's disgusting.

PATTIE

No, it's beautiful. You're revered.

ERIC

People love to worship false idols.

PATTIE

You're absolutely mad.

ERIC

Jimi fucking Hendrix. He's a force to be reckoned with. He's the only one out there truly upholding the blues standard. It's me and him. And he's winning.

Pattie LAUGHS and squeezes Eric's arm tighter.

PATTIE
It's not a competition.

ERIC
Of course it is.

INT. STAGE ROOM - SPEAKEASY - LATER

Eric and Pattie sit across from each other, still drinking.

PATTIE
Please tell me who the lucky lady
was suppose to be tonight.

ERIC
It's not important.

PATTIE
It's very important. You deserve
someone who can reciprocate all this
love I know you have inside you.

Eric stares at her, falling in love.

PATTIE (CONT'D)
Let me set you up with one of my friends.

ERIC
(deflated)
I hate set-ups-

PATTIE
Don't be silly. I don't have many
girlfriends but the few I do are-

ERIC
Pattie, I don't have time for a girl.
I'm going to LA for the farewell tour-

PATTIE
I just want to see you happy.

ERIC
I'm happy right now.

PATTIE
Let me think who would be ideal for-

ERIC
(blurting)
It was my mother. [beat] My mother
stood me up. She's the one who
cancelled on me tonight.

Pattie's heart breaks.

PATTIE

Oh. Eric.

She gets up and slides in next to him, putting her arm around him. He's uncomfortable yet happy to be so close to Pattie.

ERIC

It's nothing.

PATTIE

Shut up.

ERIC

What?

PATTIE

You're hurting. It's okay.

She holds him, he's settles into her arms a little.

PATTIE (CONT'D)

Look at me.

He does like an obedient child.

PATTIE (CONT'D)

When's the last time you saw her?

Eric thinks for a long moment and grimaces at the memory.

ERIC

About 4 or 5 years ago. I visited her on a German Air Force Base where her husband was stationed. I had just started playing with The Yardbirds. Finally coming into my own, ya know? And you know what the prick does to me?

PATTIE

What?

ERIC

Gives me a crew cut. Says he wouldn't have me prancing around his base with women's hair. I didn't even know the guy. Had never met him before.

PATTIE

I like your hair.

ERIC
Can we talk about something else?

PATTIE
So that's the last time you saw
your mum?

ERIC
Her name's Pat. I don't call her
mum. She's not my mum. Not in the
true sense of the word anyway.

PATTIE
What does that mean?

Eric looks away from her. He SIGHS.

ERIC
My grandparents raised me. She's my
sister. I thought my mum was my
sister until I was 9. Everyone knew
except... [beat] They called me a
bastard. I thought it meant idiot.

Pattie has no words as Eric's face becomes increasingly red.

ERIC (CONT'D)
I'm a bastard and my mum wanted
nothing to do with me. She went off
and had a new family and new kids
and left me to figure the rest out.
Okay? You got the whole story now.

PATTIE
I had no idea.

ERIC
No one does.

PATTIE
Except for your guitar.

ERIC
I like it that way.

From across the room, a STAGE MANAGER calls out to Eric:

STAGE MANAGER
Eric! Our opening act cancelled on
us. You want to sing a few songs?

ERIC
We're in the middle of something here.

Approaching, the Stage Manager sees Eric's teary eyes.

STAGE MANAGER
I didn't mean to interrupt.

Before Eric can react, Pattie places her hand on his.

PATTIE
It's okay.

Eric looks at her hand on his, she slowly pulls away, realizing they've gotten too close. He wipes his face and swigs his drink.

ERIC
Sorry mate, ya didn't interrupt anything.

Pattie rubs his back.

PATTIE
Eric. You should sing. Everyone will love it.

ERIC
Pattie, please-

PATTIE
Do it for me.

Eric contemplates as he stares into Pattie's pleading eyes.

STAGE MANAGER
Well?

STAGE ROOM - SHORTLY AFTER

Eric sits on a stool on stage alone with his guitar facing a fairly large audience - Pattie sits front and center. Eric lowers his head slightly and with eyes focused on his guitar, plays a stripped down, understated "*SUNSHINE OF YOUR LOVE.*"

ERIC
*It's gettin' near dawn/ When lights
close their tired eyes...*

His voice trembles, noticeably... It's soft and barely emanates through the room - so the room adjusts and becomes DEAD SILENT - despite it's softness, his voice is beautiful.

ERIC (CONT'D)
*I'll soon be with you my love/ To
give you my dawn surprise/ I'll be
with you darling soon/ I'll be with
you when the stars start falling...*

Pattie is mesmerized. Eric has yet to look up from his guitar, afraid of how the audience is reacting to his voice.

ERIC (CONT'D)

*I've been waiting so long/ To be where
I'm going/ In the sunshine of your love.*

Eric belts out on the word "LOVE" and lets it linger. He finally looks up and immediately locks eyes with Pattie who's frozen with watery eyes.

ERIC (CONT'D)

*I'm with you my love/ The light's
shining through on you/ Yes, I'm
with you my love/ It's the morning
and just we two/ I'll stay with you
darling now/ I'll stay with you
till my seas are dried up...*

Eric doesn't take his eyes off her as he plays an elegant solo... She finally exhales the breath she's been holding since he started singing.

The DOOR at the back of the room swings open and in walks GEORGE, RINGO, and MAUREEN. They freeze as they recognize Eric on stage. Eric nearly chokes on his words as George gives him an amused little wave. Eric watches George come up behind Pattie, whisper in her ear, and pull her to his booth.

Eric finishes up his song and quickly packs up his guitar.

ERIC (CONT'D)

That's it for me. Thank you.

Eric ducks offstage and heads toward the exit as Pattie cozies up next to George, who shows her an unusual amount of affection. Eric stops as Pattie glances over to him. He musters a sad smile, mouths to her "good night" and turns to leave. Right as Eric reaches the door, a hand grabs his shoulder and spins him around.

GEORGE

Hey, where you going?

ERIC

Home. I'm tired.

GEORGE

Uh huh. Well, I just wanted to give you a preview of our new album. Swing by before you head to LA. I'd love to hear what you think.

ERIC
I'd love that.

George gives him a hug.

FADE TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK -- 1970

EXT. BACKYARD - HURTWOOD EDGE - AFTERNOON

Grizzly bearded ERIC (25), wearing a tattered robe, sits on the porch staring at the snow-covered hills with a bottle of brandy and the telephone by his side, its cord pulled taut from the house. He talks quietly to himself...

ERIC
"I know we haven't spoke in a while, but I'm just wondering if you got my letter." No-

He takes a swig of brandy. BOBBY steps out onto the porch.

ERIC (CONT'D)
"Hi Pattie. I'm calling to make sure that you got my letter-" Shit.
"Pattie. There's a strong chance I accidentally mailed you something-"

He downs his brandy and dials. Bobby lunges for the phone.

BOBBY
Hey, hey! You can't call her, man!

They wrestle over the phone until Bobby manages to hang it up. Eric pushes Bobby off the porch into the snow. They stare at one another, breathing heavily.

ERIC
I need to know.

BOBBY
If she read the letter, then her silence on the matter should give you your answer.

ERIC
And if she didn't read it, then-

BOBBY
Then that's fuckin' great because you shouldn't have written it in the first place!

ERIC
I need to know!

BOBBY
No, what you need is to focus on a
new band.

ERIC
Like me and you?

BOBBY
(nervously)
Maybe?

ERIC
Could be fun... Not an *Eric Clapton*
band though. Something different.

BOBBY
(smiles)
Whatever'll get your mind off it.

Eric looks at him, contemplating.

ERIC
Tomorrow we'll go see Stigwood and
we'll tell him that we are putting
together a band and we need a little
pocket money while we're doing it.

BOBBY
He'll pay us before we even tour?

The phone RINGS - the guys freeze for a long moment. On the
third RING they both lunge for the phone - Bobby grabs it.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
Hello?

Bobby's eyes go wide. Eric has a mini panic attack.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
Uh- Just a moment, I'll get him.

ERIC
It's her, isn't it?

BOBBY
(cupping the receiver)
It's George.

Eric nearly chokes on his heart. He takes the phone.

ERIC (INTO PHONE)
Hi George. Uh huh. Okay. What about? Oh- Sure, I'll meet you there tonight.

Bobby cringes as Eric hangs up the phone, terrified.

BOBBY
What'd he want?

ERIC
Didn't say. He just said, "We need to talk."

INT. BAR - LIVERPOOL EMPIRE HOTEL - NIGHT

The lively CROWD swarms around Eric who sits alone in a semi-circle booth nursing a drink. His eyes focus on another drink, presumably George's, condensating across from him. A beautiful, drunken WOMAN recognizes Eric and sits down.

WOMAN
What's got you so tight? Loosen up.
[pulling at his sleeve] Come dance.

ERIC
Not tonight-

George arrives at the table and puts two more drinks down.

GEORGE
Miss, I think you're in my seat.

She SQUEALS, Eric cringes. She throws her arms around George.

WOMAN
He's no fun.

GEORGE
And either am I. Excuse us.

Rejected, she stomps off as George sits down. He pushes one of the drinks toward Eric.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Thought we could use a few more.

ERIC
(apprehensive)
So, George, what are we doing here?

GEORGE
I haven't seen you in awhile. Feel like you've been avoiding me.

ERIC
No, just been busy with the solo album. You know how it is.

GEORGE
You finished that months ago.
(Eric shrugs as--)
I told you I started work on my own solo album, yeah?

ERIC
You may have mentioned something.

GEORGE
"This Too Shall Pass."

ERIC
Huh?

GEORGE
That's what I'm going to call it. It comes from a Sufi proverb meaning that everything is temporary. Material possessions, emotions, and just life in general.

ERIC
Does this mean you're finally signing the divorce papers?

GEORGE
I think we all know it's coming.

ERIC
All things, even The Beatles, have to die at some point.

GEORGE
Good riddance, I say.

Eric downs his drink and musters up some nerve...

ERIC
Out with it George.

GEORGE
Out with what?

ERIC
Whatever you wanted to talk to me about? It sounded pretty serious.

GEORGE
It is. We're talking about it right now.

ERIC

We are?

GEORGE

I want you to put together a backing band for my album. I won't take no for an answer.

ERIC

(relieved)

When you said, "we need to talk," George, I thought you wanted to kill me.

GEORGE

Why would I want to kill you?

ERIC

Wasn't sure.

GEORGE

Well, how about my new album?

ERIC

Absolutely. I'd be honored.

They cheers and down their drinks.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I'm actually one step ahead of you. I've started something with Bobby Whitlock. We're bringing in Carl Radle and probably Jim Keltner.

GEORGE

That's fuckin' fantastic. [beat] Let's get us a bottle. Pattie's on her way with her sister.

ERIC

Here?

GEORGE

Yeah. Pattie's got it in her head to set you two up.

Eric ruminates... *Did she read the letter?*

ERIC

Is that right?

LATER

Eric and George are about halfway through the bottle.

ERIC
 Shit- George, I really ought to
 talk to you-

Distracted, Eric's attention moves to the entrance as Pattie
 walks in.

ERIC (CONT'D)
 Pattie's here.

George follows his eye-line and spots her.

GEORGE
 No, that's her sister, Paula.

Eric squints and sees it's her younger and just as beautiful
 sister, PAULA BOYD (19). Pattie follows close behind, almost
 protective, as they maneuver through the crowd.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 She just moved back in town. She's
 a bit of a lush, a wild child.

Eric, intrigued, glances between the Boyd sisters who bear a
 remarkable resemblance in both facial features and hairstyle.

ERIC
 She looks a lot like Pattie...

GEORGE
 I think I'm gonna have a go at her.

Eric LAUGHS - *George can't be serious... Can he?*

ERIC
 It's her sister! Don't you think
 Pattie might have something to say
 about that?

GEORGE
 Not if Pattie is preoccupied with a
 fine gentleman such as yourself.

Eric bursts into an awkward laugh as the LADIES sit.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 (snarky)
 Fashionably late, as always-

PATTIE
 (snarkier)
 Well, we wanted to be sure you had
 ample time to talk business.

GEORGE

We were done about a bottle ago.

PAULA

Enough. The girls are here now, and we want to dance.

GEORGE

I'd love to dance Paula-

George takes her hand and whisks her to her feet.

PATTIE

Eric's got better moves anyway-

GEORGE

Good, maybe he could teach you a thing or two-

MOMENTS LATER

Eric and Pattie dance without a word, until...

ERIC

(blurting)

Did you read my letter?

She's visibly caught off guard.

PATTIE

I don't know what you're talking about.

ERIC

You never got a letter?

PATTIE

No, I didn't get any letter.

ERIC

Fuck- All this time. You don't think George opened it, do ya?

PATTIE

If he did, would he be upset?

Eric gives that a thought, looks to George and Paula dancing.

ERIC

I would be. [beat] You really didn't read it?

PATTIE

No. And from the sound of it, it's best I didn't.

Eric bites his tongue as George and Paula dance around them.

ERIC

Pattie-

PATTIE

I don't want to know what it said-

ERIC

I was just going to say you look wonderful tonight.

She studies his face, his eyes, and then softens.

PATTIE

That's very sweet.

A moment of silence...

ERIC

But I will say, I think you might enjoy reading it-

PATTIE

My sister keeps asking about you. Let's talk about that.

Eric eyes George as he dances with Paula.

ERIC

She seems fun.

PATTIE

Do you find her attractive?

ERIC

Of course. She looks like you.

PATTIE

She's much prettier. You'd be lucky to have her.

George and Paula sidle up to them. Pattie grabs George's hand and pulls him close; Eric now dances with Paula, his eyes never leaving Pattie.

PAULA

Hello again...

ERIC

I heard you fancy me-

He barely gets the words out before she plants a KISS on him.

LATER

In a booth, Pattie's falling asleep on George's shoulder - he bitterly watches Eric and Paula tear up the dance floor, kissing between moves. As Eric dips Paula, George interrupts.

GEORGE

We're going to call it a night.
Coming Paula?

PAULA

No. Eric and I are going to stay
out all night!

GEORGE

That's up to Eric.

ERIC

Of course. I'll get her home safe.

Paula hugs Pattie goodbye as George whispers to Eric.

GEORGE

You're lucky I changed my mind.

ERIC

I'm so grateful for your divine
grace.

Eric hugs George, then kisses Pattie and the couples part.

PATTIE

Have fun, kids.

INT. GEORGE'S CAR - NIGHT

George is stoic as he and Pattie drive home.

PATTIE

They're so cute together. I think
it'll be good for both of them.
Don't you think? [off his silence]
What's wrong with you?

GEORGE

Nothing.

PATTIE

It'll be healthy for Eric.

GEORGE

It's not Eric I'm worried about.

PATTIE
 (heart-warmed)
 She'll be fine, George. Lord, you're so protective of her. Like a big brother.

GEORGE
 No, I'm not.

PATTIE
 Yes you are. It's sweet, really.

EXT. BACKYARD - ROBERT STIGWOOD'S MANSION - AFTERNOON

A huge GO-KART TRACK surrounds a luxurious pool with beautiful PAULA floating on a raft in the center.

Bobby Whitlock zips around with two of his old Southern bandmates: CARL RADLE (28) balding with long hair, a handle bar mustache, and small round spectacles, and JIM GORDON (25) who's got a foul-mouth and a curly mop of hair.

INT. OFFICE - STIGWOOD'S MANSION - AFTERNOON

Eric sits across from his manager ROBERT STIGWOOD (35), tanned in a smart blue suit and a suave scarf - the man is immaculate. Eric throws a *ROLLING STONE* article down...

ERIC
 "Clapton is a master of the blues cliché."

ROBERT
 (Australian accent)
 What the fuck does John Landau know?

ERIC
 He's not fucking wrong, Robert.
Cream was nothing but a bunch of self-indulgent pricks soloing for thirty minutes a piece.

ROBERT
 Well those self-indulgent solos made us all a lot of fuckin' money. And if you had just stuck it out with *Blind Faith*, then-

ERIC
 Then what?

ROBERT
 My point is, what are you doing dickin' around with these guys?

Robert glances out the window as Jim rams Carl off the track flipping the go-kart, Bobby screeches to a halt. Eric LAUGHS.

ERIC

They're talented and they know the fuckin' blues.

ROBERT

They're nobodies, Eric. Tough sell.

ERIC

That's not my problem. They're exactly what I need.

ROBERT

What you need is another solo album-

ERIC

This is happening.

ROBERT

Fine. What about Ginger on drums?

ERIC

Absolutely not. We got Jim. And we're going to need some money to get started. They're all living with me.

Robert rolls his eyes.

ROBERT

Here we go- Do you have a name yet?

ERIC

I don't care what our name is as long as Clapton is nowhere near it.

ROBERT

You're killin' me, Ric.

Robert pulls out his checkbook and starts scribbling.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

I'm giving you this check on one condition. I heard Dave Mason is a free agent. Bring him on as 2nd guitar, give this thing some clout.

ERIC

Deal.

Paula, wrapped in a towel, comes in and sits on Eric's lap as Robert hands him the check. Eric waves it in front of her.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Let's go buy you a new dress.

They make out like teenagers as he picks her up and carries her toward the door.

ROBERT

Get to work, Eric!

INT. DRESSING ROOM - CLOTHING BOUTIQUE

Paula, half-naked with her long blonde hair covering her chest, straddles Eric, ravishing him with kisses as they alternate doing bumps of coke off of a SILVER SPOON hanging around Eric's neck. Hanging next to the mirror is a beautiful WHITE DRESS reminiscent of the one Pattie wore when we first met her. Paula starts unbuckling his pants but he pulls away.

ERIC

Wait-

PAULA

What?

ERIC

Put the dress on first.

PAULA

We'll ruin it.

ERIC

So what-

He offers another bump, she does it and kisses him, then proceeds to slip into the dress with her back facing him. Eric gazes at her face in the mirror as she struggles to zip up the back. From Eric's POV, it's Pattie's reflection, her face is half-obscured with hair, but definitely Pattie.

PAULA

Don't just stare, help me!

Eric gets up and gently moves her long blonde hair to one side to avoid the zipper. With Pattie in mind now, his demeanor has changed from aggressive to sensual. He zips her up slowly and kisses her neck. She shivers.

PAULA (CONT'D)

Oh Eric-

She spins around and pushes Eric back into the chair, ravaging him again.

INT. CORRIDOR - COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION STUDIOS - MORNING

The happy couple giggle as they rush down the hall searching for the right studio room - Eric holds a GARMENT BAG.

PAULA

You don't need to come in with me.

ERIC

I want to. I'm curious to see you in all your modeling glory.

They pause to do a bump of coke from Eric's necklace.

STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

They try to enter quietly but they're still giddy and can't keep their hands off one another.

Bright glamour lights illuminate the set, done up to look like a high end clothing boutique. The photographer, DAVID BAILEY (32), a handsome man wearing a white tank-top tucked into black slacks, directs a few beautiful MODELS. Eric spots Pattie rushing over to them with a CAMERA in hand.

ERIC

Hi Pattie-

PATTIE

Paula, what the hell is wrong with you? You're late-

ERIC

Sorry, it's my fault.

PATTIE

I vouched for you- This is extremely unprofessional.

PAULA

I'm sorry-

Pattie slaps Eric on the arm.

PATTIE

I'm so embarrassed.

PAULA

You're making a bigger fuss than it is.

ERIC

Where's George?

PATTIE
He never comes to my shoots.

ERIC
(genuinely interested)
Are you shooting and modeling?

PATTIE
Yes, as a matter of fact I am.
David Bailey's my mentor, sort of.
He lets me shoot.

ERIC
I had no idea.

PATTIE
Excuse us-

Pattie grabs Paula's hand and drags her toward David Bailey - scolding her further with indiscernible curses.

ERIC
Wait- The dress.

Eric gives her the garment bag as Pattie pulls her away.

ERIC (CONT'D)
I'll pick you up in an hour.

Eric lingers, a jealousy boils inside him as he watches Pattie put her endearing smile on to introduce Paula to David -- Pattie glows with admiration. Eric eavesdrops.

DAVID BAILEY
Pattie, why don't you show Paula her wardrobe?

Pattie takes Paula toward the dressing room.

PAULA
I love those jeans.

PATTIE
I know! They're bell-bottoms. I wish I could keep them. You can only get them in the States.

As Eric leaves, David greets him in an English accent.

DAVID BAILEY
I'm a huge fan.

ERIC
Thank you. Pattie speaks very
highly of you.

DAVID BAILEY
She's got a great eye. Fast
learner. And her sister, she's just
beautiful. She yours?

Eric hesitates for a moment and then with a confident smile:

ERIC
Yes. Yes she is.

DAVID BAILEY
You're a lucky man.

David returns to set leaving Eric quite pleased with himself.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - SHORTLY AFTER

Eric sits alone outside, smoking a cigarette. For the first
time in awhile, he seems at ease, happy even. He takes in the
London street, noticing a lovely COUPLE strolling hand-in-
hand, then ANOTHER COUPLE sharing a pastry a few tables away.

A cute WAITRESS greets him with a cup of tea and places a
NAPKIN down with her PHONE NUMBER written on it...

WAITRESS
I get off at 7, Mr. Clapton.

ERIC
(contemplating)
You're very cute, and sweet. But I
must decline.

WAITRESS
Oh. Do you not fancy me?

ERIC
I do. It's only because-
[confidently] I have a girlfriend.

The waitress melts at the thought of a faithful rockstar.

WAITRESS
She's a very lucky lady. Let me
know when it goes sour.

INT. STUDIO - COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION STUDIOS - LATER

Eric slips in quietly and spots Pattie talking to David
Bailey.

He walks toward them but is intercepted by a girl in a tie-dye dress with short cropped blonde hair (like Mia Farrow in *Rosemary's Baby*). She throws her arms around him and kisses him on the lips. He grabs her by the waist and takes a good look at her... It's Paula.

PAULA

What do you think?

ERIC

(genuinely pissed)
What the hell did you do?

PAULA

The stylist wanted to try something different. Don't you love it?

ERIC

It's so... Short. I didn't even recognize you.

PAULA

I know! I love it. And so does David. He said I look exotic.

He glances from Paula to Pattie - their similarities faded.

ERIC

(matter of fact)
I hate it.

PAULA

What?

ERIC

You don't look like...
(glances at Pattie)
You, anymore.

PAULA

(in tears)
Well, you're the only one then.

ERIC

I'm just being honest. I liked your long hair.

She SLAPS him and runs into the dressing room. Pattie glares at Eric mouthing "*WHAT DID YOU DO?*" as she goes to console Paula. Eric stands there like an asshole, all eyes on him.

EXT. BACKYARD PATIO - FRIAR PARK - AFTERNOON

Eric, detached and brooding, sits amongst the *All Things Must Pass* BAND. George leads a casual but lively jam session consisting of Eric (guitar), Carl (bass), Jim (drums), Bobby (keyboard), and guitarist DAVE MASON (24) with long straight hair. CHRISSY O'DELL scribbles notes as she rhythmically nods along to a rough version of George's anthemic "WAH WAH".

INT. KITCHEN - FRIAR PARK - SAME

"WAH WAH" seeps into the kitchen as Pattie prepares lunch for the band. Paula glumly looks over developed PHOTOGRAPHS:

Eric and George playing guitar; Eric and Paula kissing; George and John; George meditating shirtless; and Eric scowling in front of GRAFFITI that reads: "CLAPTON IS GOD".

PAULA

(re: the last one)

I think this is my favorite.

Pattie leans over and contemplates the photo of Eric.

PATTIE

Mine too.

PAULA

And people think us Boyd girls are only of use in front of the camera.

PATTIE

Who knew?

PAULA

It was nice of George to build you that little dark room.

PATTIE

He can be a sweetheart when he wants to.

From the other room, George's SINGING gets a bit louder.

PAULA

How do you deal with it when George is on the road?

PATTIE

What do you mean?

PAULA

Eric's about to go on the road. And he told me Stigwood has a "no girlfriends policy." But I think he made that up.

PATTIE

As stupid as that is, I've heard that before-

PAULA

That's exactly what it is. Stupid.

PATTIE

You can't own a musician when they're on the road. [beat] Just know that he'll be coming back to you in the end, okay?

PAULA

That's it? That's what you do?

PATTIE

Mmhmm. I know he loves me.

PAULA

That's the problem. I'm not so sure about Eric.

Pattie bites her tongue as she glances at Eric through the back window. He looks up from his guitar, feeling her eyes on him. She quickly looks away and grabs a platter of food.

PATTIE

(to Paula)

Give me a hand.

EXT. BACKYARD - SAME

The band finishes playing "WAH WAH". Eric retreats into his own mind as the band discuss.

CHRISSY O'DELL

Phil Spector called. We can start recording.

GEORGE

Thanks, Chris. Tell him I need one more day, and then we'll start.

BOBBY

You think Spector would record a single for us? Since we'll all be in the studio anyway-

Pattie and Paula step out onto the patio with platters of food, giggling as they whisper and organize the table for lunch. Eric watches uncomfortably.

CARL RADLE
Yeah, that'd be wild.

GEORGE
I don't see why not- I'll talk to him.

JIM GORDON
You think maybe we should come up
with a name first?

CARL RADLE
Probably a good idea.

From Eric's skewed POV, the Boyd sisters are perfect twins except for Paula's short haircut. Their chatter taunts him.

GEORGE
Yes, but not on my time. I want to
try something a little different
with "Let It Down", listen-

George strums the first chords. Eric rudely gets to his feet.

ERIC
I gotta go...

PAULA
Where?

ERIC
Home.

GEORGE
Ey, we're not done.

ERIC
I am.

George does not look happy. He and Pattie share an awkward glance while everyone else watches Eric leave. Paula follows.

PAULA
I'll come with you-

ERIC
No, I'm fine.

He leaves Paula embarrassed and hurt.

GEORGE

Can we go again, please?

PRE-LAP: FREDDIE KING'S "HAVE YOU EVER LOVED A WOMAN" blares.

INT. LIVING ROOM - HURTHWOOD EDGE - SHORTLY AFTER

The MUSIC continues as Eric blows through lines and lines of coke. With every snort a MEMORY FLASHES in his head...
SNORT/Pattie in her white dress amongst the concert crowd.
SNORT/Seeing himself in the dressing room mirror standing behind Paula as she morphs into Pattie. SNORT/His mother, Patricia, standing in the fog on the dock.

He SNORTS the last line of coke and realizes there's no more, the bag is empty. He manically searches the room, ripping through drawers and cabinets. He finds a tiny bottle of LIQUID LSD and quickly squeezes two DROPS onto his tongue.

He goes up to Bobby's room and rummages through his things. When he gets to the desk, he sees a tattered copy of the "LAYLA AND MAJNUN book. On the inside cover reads: "TO ERIC, FINALLY FOUND A COPY. HOPE THIS HELPS. YOUR FRIEND, BOBBY."

Amped up, Eric tries to focus on the colorful COVER ARTWORK.

ERIC'S POV: The IMAGE of the Persian lovers atop white horses blur and blend together creating a PSYCHEDELIC KALEIDOSCOPE OF COLORS as the "HAVE YOU EVER LOVED A WOMAN" guitar riff transitions into a more EASTERN INSPIRED instrumental (sitar) - with glimpses of the famous "LAYLA" guitar riff that Eric has yet to write. The kaleidoscope image readjusts into...

ERIC'S MINDSCREEN ANIMATION: Envision the psychedelic style of *Marcell Jankovics' Fehérlófia (Son of the White Mare)*.

MAJNUN (resembling Eric dressed in 12th century Persian garb) gallops through a forest on a majestic white STALLION. He stops at a river bank and hears the mellifluous sounds of a WOMAN'S SINGING. He spots LAYLA (resembling Pattie) further down the river, singing as she washes herself, naked.

Majnun sees a WATER SERPENT slithering toward her... He gallops into the river and scoops her up onto his horse.

She literally melts into his arms - they become one amorphous being of colors and then separate atop a mountain with the crescent moon set behind them as they make love...

The crescent moon turns and morphs into a BEARDED MAN'S HEAD (resembling George's long, bearded, narrow face) scowling down on them. Majnun and Layla are ripped from one another, flying off the mountain top in opposite directions, becoming two yellow specs of stardust in the black sky.

Disheveled, Majnun now has a beard as he sits on the snowy forest floor crying, scribbling in a notebook. He looks up at the two specs of stardust which become TWO EYES looking down at him - they are wild and crazy. They belong to a massive BLACK PANTHER which opens its mouth revealing bright white sharp teeth as it descends toward Majnun and eats him up...

Before a crowd of people, Layla, in a wedding gown, stands face to face with the BEARDED MAN... They kiss and converge into one, then separate again finding themselves swimming in the river. From the dark forest, the black panther prowls, inching closer and closer until it POUNCES onto the BEARDED MAN, mauling him into oblivion, literally dissipating.

The panther morphs back into Majnun as he takes Layla in his arms... From the forest, a MOB OF MEN emerge with torches and spikes. Majnun and Layla gallop through the forest on their white horse as the mob takes chase... They slide to halt at a cliff's edge... The mob closes in, surrounding them until they cannot be seen... After a moment, Majnun and Layla's BODIES shoot straight up to the sky, the mob of men around them explode into a frenzy of shapes and colors.

Majnun and Layla are lip-locked, spiraling through a heavenly kaleidoscope until they converge into one bright white fluorescent light that envelops everything-

EXT. BACKYARD - HURTWOOD EDGE - MORNING

Eric is passed out, face down in the snow, wrapped in a white sheet like a sheik. Footsteps come toward him but stop at the "LAYLA AND MAJNUN" book a few feet away. Bobby crouches down and picks up the book. He shakes Eric awake. He's shivering.

BOBBY

Let's get you inside.

ERIC

(grabbing the book)

I have to go.

BOBBY

You're not going anywhere. You need to help us move into the new flat!

Eric, in only boxers, gets to his feet and pushes past him.

EXT. FRIAR PARK - AFTERNOON

He rings the doorbell with a bottle of wine in one hand and the *Layla* book in the other. Pattie answers.

PATTIE

What are you doing here?

ERIC

I'm mad for you. Absolutely Majnun.

She looks at his wild eyes, his massive pupils.

PATTIE

What are you on?

ERIC

Everything's very clear to me now.
Very real.

He walks right past her. She rolls her eyes.

PATTIE

Eric, won't you please come in.

INT. LIVING ROOM ON THE COUCH - FRIAR PARK - LATER

They sit drinking wine. Pattie flips through the book.

ERIC

That's how I feel about you. It's
the only way I could explain it.

PATTIE

Why are you doing this?

ERIC

Because you're *Layla*, Pattie.

PATTIE

You said that already. Have you
told George?

ERIC

(sarcastically)
No, I was hoping you would.

PATTIE

You're an ass.

ERIC

I'm kidding. I'm going to talk to him.

PATTIE

I don't think there's anything to
talk about. George is your best
friend. And you're seeing my sister.

ERIC

Because she reminds me of you.

PATTIE

Eric!

ERIC

Really. I swear it.

Pattie reaches down, pulls a piece of paper from her purse.

PATTIE

I haven't gotten many love letters in my life but this was the most passionate and romantic one I have ever gotten.

ERIC

(heart dropping)

You did read it.

She nods subtly.

ERIC (CONT'D)

He doesn't make you happy.

PATTIE

You really are mad. And you don't know what you're talking about.

ERIC

I do know. I can see it in your face.

PATTIE

What exactly are you proposing anyway?

He lunges to try to kiss her, but she pulls away.

PATTIE (CONT'D)

Eric. You're very sweet but I really think you need help.

ERIC

I know you're not happy.

PATTIE

You don't know anything.

ERIC

I know everything. You're at the end of your rope and he is too. He's been checked out. And neither of you can give the other what they want.

PATTIE

What's that supposed to mean?

ERIC
Nothing. I'm just saying-

PATTIE
What has George told you about us?
[no response] What did he tell you?

ERIC
He told me you're... He said that...
[mumbling] You can't have children-

PATTIE
So, that's what you two fucking
talk about, huh?

ERIC
It's not like that. George loves
you, and he just needed someone to
confide in. It just sorta-

PATTIE
Why don't you two just run away together
and leave me out of the whole thing!

She shoves the book into his chest but he grabs her hand and plants a kiss on her lips. She tries to pull away but succumbs to his passion. He tries to put down his glass of wine but misses the table and it spills everywhere.

ERIC
I'm sorry- I didn't mean to do that.

PATTIE
You should be sorry, I'm a married woman.

ERIC
I'm sorry about the wine. I have no
regrets about the kiss.

PATTIE
I think you should go before you
make a bigger mess.

ERIC
Can't we spend the night together?

PATTIE
Of course not! You need to leave!

ERIC
Why- George?

PATTIE

I need to start getting ready. I'm going to see a play.

PRE-LAP: *THE BAND's melancholy "LONG BLACK VEIL"* fades in...

INT. KENSINGTON FLAT - AFTERNOON

"LONG BLACK VEIL" instrumental continues. Carl, Jim, and Bobby move a heavy dresser. Eric and Paula lay, drunk, on a futon cuddling and whispering. Paula musters some courage...

PAULA

I want to come on tour with you.

Eric SIGHS as Jim drops his side of the dresser dramatically.

JIM GORDON

Thanks for your help Eric, you've been tremendous.

PAULA

Hey, we set up the futon!

CARL RADLE

So you could fuck on it.

ERIC

I should help.

PAULA

No! I'm trying to have a real conversation with you. About something that's important to me. Okay?

ERIC

Okay.

Carl and Jim grumble under their breath as they leave again.

PAULA

Well?

ERIC

I don't know if there will even be a tour. We haven't finished any songs.

PAULA

You know you're going to tour.

ERIC

We don't even have a band name.

PAULA
I've never been. Just say "yes."

ERIC
We'll see.

PAULA
(fuming)
Do you remember when you were on
your last tour with Cream?

ERIC
Between the drugs and my repressed
memories of Ginger... No, not much.

PAULA
It was right after you broke up
with Charlotte?

ERIC
How do you know about Charlotte?

PAULA
Pattie told me all about Charlotte...

Eric's goes white. He already knows what she's going to say.

THE BAND'S LONG BLACK VEIL (V.O.)
*There were a few at the scene and
they all did agree/ That the man
who ran looked a lot like me...*

EXT. PLAYHOUSE - NIGHT

Eric pulls his Ferrari up to the VALET'S booth and hops out.

THE BAND (V.O.)
*The judge said "son, what is your
alibi?/If you were somewhere else
then you won't have to die"/I spoke
not a word although it meant my
life/I had been in the arms of my
best friend's wife... (continues)*

VALET
The doors are closed, sir.

An USHER steps outside for a cigarette, spots Eric.

USHER
You're Eric Clapton!

Ignoring them both, Eric rushes inside past the Usher.

INT. PLAYHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Eric slips in, pausing at the sight of full frontal nudity on stage. He scans the crowd spotting Pattie in the center. The LEAD ACTOR finishes belting out the last song of the act. The lights go up as the audience files out for intermission.

MOMENTS LATER

Eric finds Pattie's empty seat. There's a GENTLEMAN in the seat next to her.

ERIC

Sir, could I trade seats with you?

GENTLEMAN

It's the middle of the show, are you mad?

ERIC

Slightly. Take my ticket. It's up in that balcony.

GENTLEMAN

My seats much better, thank you.

ERIC

Sir, listen to me, you're sitting next to the love of my life and I need to talk to her-

GENTLEMAN

I think it can wait until after the second act, young man.

Eric pulls out a stack of 50 pound notes.

ERIC

No it can't.

LATER

Pattie and PETER BROWN return to their seats to find Eric waiting with a smile on his face.

ERIC

Hi Pattie-

She's surprised - more smiley than angry.

PATTIE

What in the hell are you doing here, Eric?

ERIC
I had to see you. Where's George?

PATTIE
I'm not here with George.

ERIC
Who the hell is this guy, then?

PATTIE
This is my friend, Peter Brown.

ERIC
Just a friend?

PATTIE
Yes, he's just a friend, Eric. Just like you. [realizing] Where'd the gentleman go that was sitting there?

Eric points up to the balcony where the man now sits.

PATTIE (CONT'D)
You've officially lost your mind.

The lights go down.

ERIC
Shush. It's about to start.

Pattie rolls her eyes, exasperated.

LATER

Eric leans over to Pattie. Peter rolls his eyes.

ERIC
How come you never told me George slept with Charlotte?

PATTIE
(embarrassed)
Eric! Shut up-

PETER
I think you'd better go.

ERIC
Are you sleeping with her?

PATTIE
Eric! Enough.

ERIC
What are you doing after this?

She SHUSHES him.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Can we ditch Peter and go
somewhere?

Peter SHUSHES him.

PATTIE
No, Peter's taking me to Stigwood's
party.

ERIC
Oh that's perfect. I was invited. I
wasn't going to go, but now that I know
you'll be there... It might be worth it.

A few other people SHUSH him. Pattie smirks just a little.

INT. ROBERT STIGWOOD'S MANSION - LATER THAT NIGHT

The party is wild with over a hundred people, drugs and
alcohol in abundance.

EXT. GARDEN - ROBERT STIGWOOD'S MANSION - ALMOST MORNING

Eric and Pattie talk quietly near the gazebo. The sun's just
rising and a light fog covers the entire garden.

ERIC
I don't think Peter thinks you two
are just friends.

PATTIE
Of course he does.

ERIC
You're oblivious, Pattie.

PATTIE
No, you are.

Eric tries to plant a kiss on her, she pulls away.

PATTIE (CONT'D)
Don't you think you should tell
George first?

ERIC
He didn't tell me about Charlotte.

PATTIE
You weren't married to Charlotte.

ERIC
But George is married to you. Why
are you defending him?

PATTIE
I don't have to defend him to you.

ERIC
This isn't about me. He cheated on you.

PATTIE
This is about you. It's always
about you, Eric.

ERIC
No, this is about us.

PATTIE
It will never work between us.

ERIC
Not if you keep saying that. I know
you're lonely. I see it in your
eyes. And when I kiss you, you-

PATTIE
I what?

Eric plants another kiss on her lips - this time she doesn't pull away and she melts into him a little as his years of unrequited passion are finally released and returned.

Their lips slowly unlock, revealing George at the back door.

GEORGE
(surprisingly playful)
What's going on?

Pattie covers her face and backs away as George approaches.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Pattie?

PATTIE
I'm sorry.

ERIC
It's not her fault, George.

Eric is drunk but understands the weight of the situation. He looks at Pattie, then back to George.

ERIC (CONT'D)
I have to tell you, man, that I'm
in love your wife.

George's eyes go dark and he nods his head.

GEORGE
Finally, Eric. You found the words.

ERIC
You knew...

GEORGE
Do you think I'm an imbecile?

ERIC
Not at all.

George stares at him dead in the eye but says nothing.

ERIC (CONT'D)
I understand if you never want to
speak to me again.

George remains calm... Unnerving Eric to his core.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Ya know what? Sock me. Right in the
face. Please. Hit me as hard as you
can. I beg you.

GEORGE
That's not necessary. We're all adults.

Eric's guilt takes over. A small crowd has gathered..

ERIC
I need you to hit me, George. Hard.

George ignores Eric and looks to Pattie.

GEORGE
Well, are you going with him or
coming with me?

PATTIE
(immediately)
With you, George. I'm coming home.

George walks off past a group of guests who witnessed the
entire ordeal. Pattie begins to cry as she follows George,
leaving Eric alone in the middle of the misty garden.

INT. GEORGE'S FERRARI - MOMENTS LATER

George is aloof. Pattie stares at the side of his face.

PATTIE
Please say something. [no response]
George. Please.

GEORGE
If you love him, you should be with him.

PATTIE
You don't mean that.

GEORGE
No sense in carrying on like this.

PATTIE
How could you be so cold?

He looks her dead in the eye.

GEORGE
How could you?

INT. LIVING ROOM - HURTWOOD EDGE - NIGHT

Paula alternates doing lines of coke with Eric who's more focused on strumming to the tune of what will be "LAYLA", still searching for the heart of the song.

Eric is wild-eyed - physically and mentally exhausted.

PAULA
Do you know your tour dates yet?

ERIC
(instinctively)
Shh-

PAULA
Did you just shush me?

ERIC
What?

PAULA
You just shushed me, Eric.

ERIC
I did not.

PAULA
Yeah, you did. I asked you if you
know your tour dates yet?

ERIC
(still strumming)
Why?

PAULA
Because I'm trying to plan for it.
I have a few shoots coming up.

ERIC
You shouldn't miss them.

PAULA
That's what I'm trying to avoid.

ERIC
It's really not a good idea for you to
come anyway. Plus, Stigwood's policy-

PAULA
Fuck that- It's your band.

ERIC
None of the guys bring girls. It's
a distraction.

A KNOCK at the door.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Come in.

A young BRITISH MAN enters.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Thanks for coming-

PAULA
Eric-

ERIC
I'm in the middle of something.

Paula storms out. The Man feels the tension, places one bag
of powder on the table then another, and takes the money.

MAN
Here, you look like you need
something a little stronger. I
won't charge you for that.

Eric looks at it, the second bag looks a little different.

ERIC
What's that one?

MAN
That's one gram of cocaine, and one
gram of heroin. Give you a nice
little balance.

ERIC
I hear that's a nasty little drug.

MAN
It'll be kind to you.

Eric stares at the bag as the man leaves. A car horn HONKS
and Paula comes back into the room with her coat and purse.

PAULA
That's Bobby and the guys, are you
ready to go?

ERIC
Go where?

PAULA
I told you, Jagger's party is tonight.

ERIC
Oh. Go on without me. I'm going to
keep writing for a little while.

PAULA
You've been a hermit all day, come
out with me.

Eric grabs his guitar and plays. Bobby comes in.

BOBBY
What's the hold up? You two coming?

PAULA
I am.

She smacks the back of Eric's head as she passes by and hooks
arms with Bobby, pulling him away.

BOBBY
You're not coming Eric?

PAULA
No. You're my date for the night.

BOBBY
Eric-

Paula pulls him out the door and slams it shut. Eric continues playing, his eyes shift from his lightning fast fingers to the baggy of heroin.

INT. ENTRANCE - ABBEY ROAD STUDIOS - MORNING

Eric groggily walks in as Bobby's coming out of the bathroom.

BOBBY
You're late.

ERIC
No shit.

Eric heads for the bathroom but Bobby grabs and steers him.

BOBBY
No time, lets get you in the studio.

STUDIO - ABBEY ROAD STUDIOS - SHORTLY AFTER

Eric and Bobby walk in uncomfortably late. Everyone's greets them silently as they take their places. Eric and George are on opposite sides of the room - in between them, Bobby, Jim, Carl, and Dave. Through the studio glass in the control room stands PHIL SPECTOR, Ringo, Maureen, Chrissy, and Pattie. All eyes are on Eric, including George's.

GEORGE
Everyone all set then?

Eric gives an awkward nod. George nods to the control room. The RED LIGHT goes on. George counts calmly to himself, then leans into the microphone slowly singing "LET IT DOWN."

GEORGE (CONT'D)
*Though you sit in another chair I
can feel you here/ Looking like I
don't care but I do, I do/ Hiding
it all behind anything I see/
Should someone be looking at me.*

Eric lifts his cowardly gaze from his sloppy fingers and up to George who's staring back at him.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
*While I occupy my mind, I can feel
you here/ Love to us is so well
times, and I do, I do/ Wasting away
these moments so heavenly/ Should
someone be looking at me.*

Bobby glances between George and Eric while Pattie watches George sing with his beautiful voice.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

*Let it down, let it all down/ Let
your hair hang all around me/ Let
it down, let it down/ Let your love
flow and astound me*

Eric looks to Pattie who won't return his gaze. She's swooning over George's singing.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

*While you look so sweetly and
divine, I can feel you here/ I see
your eyes are busy kissing mine,
and I do, I do/ Wondering what it
is they're expecting to see/ Should
someone be looking at me.*

George leans away from the microphone. A moment of uneasy silence is broken by the INTERCOM:

PHIL SPECTOR (O.S.)

That was great. Let's do "Wah-Wah"
again. Now that we have Eric.

MOMENTS LATER

They're all playing "WAH-WAH" which requires a lot of Eric's skills. He's sloppy and screws up a few times. Through the glass, Phil Spector cringes. Eric looks over to Pattie and plays faster, trying to outplay George, who notices.

Just as George finishes singing the second verse, Eric goes off on a jarring blues riff, throwing everyone off. Through the glass, Phil looks pissed.

CONTROL ROOM - SHORTLY AFTER

Everyone has dispersed. Phil fiddles with the controls as George listens with headphones... He removes them.

PHIL SPECTOR

It could use Bobby Keys on the sax.
[George nods] I like the warmth of
your voice, but it needs to be
strengthened. [George nods again]
It could use an answer vocal from
you on the "Let It Down" parts too.

GEORGE

Noted.

PHIL SPECTOR

Also... Eric-

GEORGE
What about him?

PHIL SPECTOR
He's fucking up left and right. I think we should find someone else.

GEORGE
No. [beat] Eric stays.

PHIL SPECTOR
I could be wrong, but I think he's a little strung out.

GEORGE
No, he's just had a rough few nights. He's the best there is.

INT. TEAROOM - ABBEY ROAD STUDIOS - LATER

Bobby comes to the door to find Eric playing a few chords of what will be "LAYLA", singing softly to himself.

ERIC
*What'll you do when you get
lonely?/ And nobody's waiting by
your side?*

BOBBY
That's a great line. What're you working on?

ERIC
(dryly)
A song I have to write.

BOBBY
You have a name for this masterpiece?

ERIC
Yeah, I was thinking "Layla."

Bobby gets his meaning and sits down next to Eric.

BOBBY
Speaking of Layla- I want to talk to you about her sister.

ERIC
She's fucking pissed at me.

Eric does a small bump of heroin off the table.

BOBBY

Yeah. This is really hard for me to say, but-

ERIC

You and Paula had sex. [off Bobby's silence] It's okay.

BOBBY

It is?

ERIC

Of all people, who am I to stop you?

Eric does another bump and melts into the couch.

ERIC (CONT'D)

She's all yours.

BOBBY

(realizing)

That's not coke is it?

INT. MAIN FOYER - FRIAR PARK - NIGHT

Pattie comes home and hear VOICES and MUSIC coming from George's home studio.

INT. GEORGE'S HOME STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Pattie KNOCKS and enters to find a few studio engineers and a few musicians, but no George.

PATTIE

Hey guys. Where's George?

Busy working, they all shrug which frustrates Pattie.

EXT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Pattie walks down the hall toward the master bedroom, but hears GEORGE'S VOICE from another room. It's locked. She BANGS on the door... No answer. She BANGS again.

PATTIE

George!

He finally comes to the door and slips out.

PATTIE (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

GEORGE
Just taking a break, how was your night?

PATTIE
Who's in there?

She tries to sidestep him but he grabs her.

GEORGE
It's just Maureen. She was tired.
She's just lying down.

PATTIE
So why the hell are you in there
with her, George?

She pushes past him and finds Maureen relaxing on the bed.
There's coke on the night stand.

PATTIE (CONT'D)
What the hell are you doing here?

GEORGE
Pattie, nothing is going on.

MAUREEN
I came to watch the recording session.

PATTIE
So watch the damn recording
session. You're the last person I
thought would do this!

MAUREEN
I'm not doing anything.

George pulls her out of room.

GEORGE
(calmly, smugly)
Nothing is going on.

PATTIE
Something must be. What else are you doing?

GEORGE
You're just being paranoid. I'm
going back to the studio-

PATTIE
Don't!

Pattie steps back into the room to confront Maureen.

PATTIE (CONT'D)
Have you thought about your
children? Huh? [off Maureen's
silence] Fine. I'm going to sleep.
You should go home to your husband.

She SLAMS the door behind her.

EXT. FRONT OF FRIAR PARK - NIGHT - LATER

Eric pulls up in his Ferrari, his headlights catch Pattie
waiting on the front porch. She approaches as he gets out.

ERIC
Everything okay? Sounded like you
were crying on the phone.

PATTIE
I'm okay now. I just needed a
drinking mate.

ERIC
Where'd you want to go?

PATTIE
Anywhere. A bar or- I don't know, I
just need to get away from here.

ERIC
We could go back to the Kensington
flat. The guys are all out.

PATTIE
Okay... I guess that would be fine.

Eric opens the car door for her.

ERIC
So what happened?

PATTIE
I found him with Maureen.

ERIC
Always knew he had a thing for her.

PATTIE
I didn't. She's my friend.

Eric gently puts his arms around her.

PATTIE (CONT'D)
He makes me think I'm the crazy
one.

ERIC

You're not. [she melts into him] This is why you should be with me.

She stiffens and pulls away.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Where is he anyway?

PATTIE

In the studio, where else?

ERIC

It's lovely how he's never around. I can come around anytime I want.

PATTIE

Could you just be my friend? Just for a fucking minute.

ERIC

No. I can't.

PATTIE

This was a mistake.

She heads back for the front door. He runs in front of her.

ERIC

Wait! Come back. I'll be your friend, just come back. Come back or I'll... I'll hit the deck.

PATTIE

What do you mean?

ERIC

If you don't come with me... If you don't leave that man in there, right this instant... I swear-

PATTIE

You swear what?

He pulls out a bag of heroin and dangles it in her face.

ERIC

I swear I'll do this entire bag right now.

She reaches for it, frantic and terrified.

PATTIE

Stop this, right now! Please!

ERIC

I'll do all of it. And if that
doesn't work, then I'll find more.
And I'll do all of that. And if it
kills me, then so be it!

Pattie tries to snatch the bag, but he runs away in a zigzag
like a madman. She chases after him, but slips in the wet
grass. He doesn't notice and runs to the door of his car.

PATTIE

Eric, please-

ERIC

Yes or no?

PATTIE

No. And no matter what happens with
George and I, I can never be with you.

ERIC

Why?

PATTIE

Because to George, I'm just his...
I don't know... His pomegranate.
But to you, I'm everything.

ERIC

Exactly!

PATTIE

No! You don't understand, Eric. You
love me too much... I'm sorry.

ERIC

Too much? What the fuck-

PATTIE

(ranting)

I'm not even sure it's love, Eric.
It's obsession. It's filling a
void. You're just a sad little boy
who's mother never paid him any
attention. And I can't fix that!

Eric's finally at a loss for words. Pattie regrets her words,
she's never been that venomous before. She steps toward him,
maybe to give consolation, but pulls back. He gets in his car
and SLAMS the door.

PATTIE (CONT'D)

Wait!

He speeds off.

PRE-LAP: *TALES OF THE BRAVE ULYSSES* plays over the following:

INT./EXT. ERIC'S FERRARI - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Eric whips around a bend, one hand on the steering wheel, the other bringing a bump of heroin to his nose...

He loses control of the car and skids off the road. He veers back on the road, but jerks the wheel too far and spins out of control until he hits a ditch which FLIPS the car. On its roof, the car skids to a dead stop on the side of the road...

FADE OUT/FADE IN:

INT. ERIC'S FERRARI - NIGHT - SHORTLY AFTER

A bloody-faced Eric comes to, dangling upside down, held in place by his seat belt. Thick white smoke seeps through the smashed windshield from under the hood. It surrounds him...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. JACK CLAPP'S SEDAN - DOCK - FLASHBACK -- 1954

ENTIRELY FROM ERIC'S POV IN THE BACKSEAT:

The thick white FOG surrounds us. We're all alone. We look down to our unwieldy steel-string Hoyer GUITAR in our tiny 9-year-old hands. A piercing FOGHORN breaks the silence... Through the fog, we catch a glimpse of our mother, PATRICIA CLAPTON, floating toward the large ominous BLACK VESSEL that looms above the dock. Her voice ECHOES as she disappears...

PATRICIA CLAPTON
It's too much... I'm sorry.

We open the car door and get out, immediately engulfed in white fog. Disoriented, we panic... Our hands searching for her. In the distance, we catch another glimpse of our elusive MOTHER. We run to her but she disappears again, like a ghost.

PRE-LAP: A HEART MONITOR BEEPS...

We look up at the BLACK VESSEL, focusing on the ornately carved FIGUREHEAD adorning the bow. The beautiful, long haired wooden SIREN stares down at us - she looks a lot like PATTIE BOYD. The BEEPS continue, joined now by STRUMMING.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LONDON - PRESENT DAY -- 1970

George plays guitar bedside next to Eric, who's sleeping, hooked up to numerous IVs and monitors. After a moment, Eric groggily comes to, wincing from his bruises and stitches.

GEORGE
How're you feeling, mate?

ERIC
Been better. It's good to see you.

GEORGE
Gave us all quite the scare.

ERIC
Sorry. For, ya know-

GEORGE
Paul released his solo album today.

ERIC
Huh?

GEORGE
Well, advance release. With a press release that says *The Beatles* broke up.

Eric, struggling with a head injury and loads of guilt, tries to keep up.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Can you believe him?

ERIC
So what? This is what you wanted. You're writing songs and recording them. Answering to no one.

George smirks, remembering why he likes Eric so much.

GEORGE
You going to be able to play?

ERIC
I'll be alright. Have a few days to rest before our first show here at the Lyceum. Then I'm off to Miami.

Pattie comes to the door but sees them bonding and ducks out.

GEORGE
Miami?

ERIC

Going to record our album with Tom Dowd at Criteria.

GEORGE

Lucky man.

ERIC

Why don't you join us? We need a second guitar. Dave Mason is moving on after we play at the Lyceum.

GEORGE

I don't think so. You know, I really hate airplanes.

ERIC

You're afraid to fly?

GEORGE

No, I just hate airplanes.

ERIC

Come on, I'll sedate you. Get one of the stewardess' to take advantage of ya, how bout that then?

GEORGE

Sorry mate, I'm mixing the album with Phil. It's not perfect yet.

ERIC

It's just a few weeks. I could really use you on second guitar.

GEORGE

Just layer them yourself. [beat] Besides if we're both not here, who will keep Pattie busy?

George takes dry humor to a new level.

EXT. LYCEUM - LONDON - NIGHT - DAYS LATER

Eric, Carl, Jim, Bobby, and Dave pile out of Eric's lilac Ferrari. Eric sees the MARQUEE: "ERIC CLAPTON AND FRIENDS"

ERIC

Oh fuck. That's got to change.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - LYCEUM - SHORTLY AFTER

Eric and the Band argue with Robert. George hangs with Pattie while Paula stands by Bobby - who's clearly uncomfortable.

ERIC

You have to change that fucking marquee outside-

ROBERT

And put what instead? Your name is how I got asses in the seats.

GEORGE

The whole "...and Friends" thing is shit, I agree.

JIM

Yeah, we're not Eric's backing band.

CARL

What about "The Dynamics?" Like y'all talked about?

DAVE

I thought we said "The Dynamos".

The STAGE MANAGER interrupts.

STAGE MANAGER

Tony has two more songs. Then you guys are up. [beat] You guys have a proper name, by the way?

ROBERT

"Eric and The Dynamics," yeah?

ERIC

I said no "Eric." I'm dead serious.

STAGE MANAGER

So just "The Dynamics" then?

JIM

It sounds like a doo-wop group.

BOBBY

I agree with Jim. Robert, maybe you can get us matching zoot-suits.

GEORGE

I like "dynamos" better. Derek and the Dynamos. How about that?

ERIC

Interesting... Completely anonymous. I like it.

ROBERT
Who the fuck is Derek?

BOBBY
Tony kept calling Eric - "Derek" -
when we were touring. Sorta stuck.

ROBERT
Eric, how am I suppose to sell this?

ERIC
Don't for all I care!

ON STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

TONY ASHTON and his BANDMATES finish their last song, then
Tony announces to the CROWD:

TONY ASHTON
I'm Tony Ashton and we're *Ashton, Gardner,
and Dyke*! Thank you all for coming out to
support Dr. Spock's cause! [off CHEERS] Up
next we have a very special surprise.
Please welcome...

Tony looks over to the Stage Manager, Eric, and everyone
else... The Stage Manager mouths "*DEREK AND THE DYNAMOS.*"
Tony's not sure what he's saying, so he wings it:

TONY ASHTON (CONT'D)
Derek and The Dominos!

The crowd goes silent...

AUDIENCE MEMBER
Who the fuck is that?!

Everyone backstage starts LAUGHING except for Stigwood.

ERIC
I guess we're the Dominos.

DEREK AND THE DOMINOS take the stage in silence and
immediately roll into Cream's "*SUNSHINE OF YOUR LOVE*".

AUDIENCE MEMBER
Is that Clapton?!

The crowd breaks into pandemonium.

INSERTS - MIAMI - THE NEXT DAY

The plane touches down. Beaches, bikinis, Ocean Avenue,
bright neon clubs and the cocaine that accompanies them.

INT. STUDIO - CRITERIA STUDIOS - DAYS LATER

DEREK AND THE DOMINOS fool around in between jamming - empty bags of coke lie about amongst numerous bottles of whiskey. The small space is crammed with an organ, a grand piano, drum set, and two amps - hopsack and egg cartons line the walls.

Their producer, TOM DOWD (45), straight hair and a greying goatee, struggles to comprehend a few pages of scribbled notes on sheet music... He turns some upside down.

TOM

Looks like we'll do "*I Looked Away*" first, being that it's the only song that's close to done. [off Eric's shrug] "*Bell Bottom Blues*" needs some work, and a name change.

ERIC

The name stays.

TOM

Okay. You got those two, a hook for something called "*Anyday*" and... Man, these are all depressing.

He looks over to Eric who's doing a line of coke.

TOM (CONT'D)

I know you said you had a few covers in mind, but got any other originals... Or ideas at least?

Tom looks around, no one is paying attention except Bobby.

BOBBY

Eric, what was that song you kept playing? Did you ever finish it?

ERIC

I'm close. It's all I've been working on.

TOM

What's it called?

ERIC

Layla. And it's going to be a brilliant fucking song.

TOM

I need an album, Eric, not a song.

INT. ERIC'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Eric plays a few chords of "LAYLA" and stops. Frustrated he tosses the guitar aside and does a few lines, washing it down with whiskey. He sits in a silence for a long moment then picks up the guitar again. He sings the "LAYLA" lyrics softly at first but slowly raises his voice as passion takes over. A KNOCK at the door stops Eric abruptly. He's embarrassed.

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)

There was a call for you. A Mr. Stigwood.
[Eric does another line] It's urgent.

ERIC

Take a message.

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)

I already did. He said, and I quote, "If you don't stop doing fucking drugs all day and get in the studio, then say goodbye to your allowance." End quote.

Eric straightens up.

STUDIO - LATER THAT DAY

Bobby watches Eric lay down a guitar track from "KEEP ON GROWING". He starts to layer in another using a different guitar... Tom comes in.

TOM

I just got a call. *The Allman Brothers* are in town for a show. Their guitarist asked if he could come by and sit in on a session.

ERIC

(perking up)
Wait, you mean the chap who played-

Eric plays the lick from Wilson Pickett's "HEY JUDE" cover.

TOM

That's him.

ERIC

He can come by anytime!

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Bobby plays a version of "TELL THE TRUTH" as Eric watches JIMI HENDRIX play "LITTLE WING" in concert on the TELEVISION.

Bobby watches Eric snort lines between swigs of whiskey.

BOBBY

Eric... Eric! [Eric turns with powder on his nose] Do you have a death wish or something?

ERIC

I'm on a journey into darkness. But I plan to see it through to the other side.

BOBBY

At the rate you're going, you'll be dead before we finish recording.

ERIC

Well if that's the case, please see to it that Pattie hears "*Layla*".

BOBBY

We're never going to even record "*Layla*" if you don't finish writing the damn thing!

Eric starts pacing the room - coked up, not even listening.

ERIC

Let me ask you something. You think she'll cry when she hears the record?

BOBBY

We don't have a record, Eric. That's the point.

ERIC

I don't necessarily want her to cry, ya know? But I want her to feel something. I want her to know that every line of every song was written for her.

Bobby watches as this madman snorts another line.

BOBBY

I know it's not my place to say...

ERIC

Then don't say it.

BOBBY

You need to stop worrying about what Pattie's going to think and just record some good music.

Bobby goes for the door-

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 Besides, based on what I've seen,
 Pattie's not leaving George for
 anyone. Not even Eric Clapton.

ERIC
 Fuck off. What do you know-

A KNOCK at the door interrupts them. Eric becomes paranoid and moves to hide the coke. Another KNOCK - Bobby looks through the peephole to find Paula, her hair longer now.

BOBBY
 Relax. It's just Paula.

He opens the door, PAULA walks in with a suitcase. They hug and kiss, and shares a brief awkward smile with Eric right before he does another line of coke. Paula rolls her eyes.

PAULA
 I see some things never change.

ERIC
 Want one?

She shrugs and joins him as Bobby watches, uncomfortable.

INT. STUDIO - LATE NIGHT

Eric sits alone in the studio working on "LAYLA". A KNOCK.

ERIC
 (without looking up)
 Come in.

The door eases open slowly and DUANE ALLMAN (24), tall, lanky with long reddish-blond hair, mutton chops and a handle bar mustache pops his head in. In a Southern drawl:

DUANE
 Eric fuckin' Clapton.

ERIC
 I've been waiting for you. [beat]
 Grab a guitar.

They strum along but quickly escalate into an intense yet respectful duel of synchronized guitarman-ship. Duane goes off on a tangent and Eric slows down just to listen to what Duane's doing. Duane realizes Eric's stopped playing.

DUANE
Why'd you stop?

ERIC
Let me play you something. It's
rough.

Eric plays what he has completed of "LAYLA," singing softly
as Duane closes his eyes and takes it in. Eric stops.

ERIC (CONT'D)
There's something missing, ya know?

DUANE
Let me hear it again.

Eric plays a few chords of "LAYLA" and meanders into a rough
version of the famous opening RIFF. Duane perks up.

DUANE (CONT'D)
That's familiar.

ERIC
What is?

Duane sings back what Eric just played on guitar.

DUANE
Sounds like, uh- What is it?-

Duane plays a similar RIFF on his guitar...

DUANE (CONT'D)
"As The Years Go Passing By." Albert King.

ERIC
You're right! Didn't even realize.

DUANE
Blues are in your DNA, man!

ERIC
It's slower though, on that line.
[plays it slower, does his best
King] *There is nothing I can do if
you leave me here to cry...*

DUANE
Exactly. But sped up-

Eric plays his original version, faster now.

ERIC

Yes! There's a desperation there. A war cry.

DUANE

A love cry!

ERIC

It could be like a hook-

DUANE

Right on! If ya rip into that from the get-go, that shit'll kick off the song with a fucking bang.

They play it simultaneously, louder now. Eric yells:

ERIC

It's perfect.

HALLWAY - SAME

Jim Gordon comes to the door and hears them in there.

JIM

(sotto)

Damn it.

ERIC (O.S.)

Let's call it a night. We can sleep on that. Flesh it out tomorrow.

DUANE (O.S.)

Sounds good to me, partner.

Jim hides as Eric and Duane leave then slips into the studio.

INT. STUDIO - NEXT DAY

The Dominos, including Duane Allman and Paula, listen to the playback of "LAYLA" but Eric still looks unsatisfied.

TOM

I love it. [to Duane] Gotta get you and Eric in a room together more often.

ERIC

The guitar is perfect, but-

DUANE

But what?

ERIC

It's still missing something. It's incomplete. It feels emotionless-

TOM

I have to disagree, Eric, it's incredibly emotional.

ERIC

(shakes his head)
Play it back.

TOM

Why don't we move onto "Little Wing"? Come back to it tomorrow.

The band resets. Brooding, Eric hums "LAYLA" to himself. Duane strums the first chords of "LITTLE WING" but is cut off as Eric rips into the "LAYLA" RIFF. Everyone stares at him.

JIM GORDON

Enough! We're moving on man!

Eric is cornered, everyone's eyes are on him. He looks manic.

ERIC

I'm not done yet. You guys can go.

Bobby and Paula share a look, then everyone looks to Tom.

ERIC (CONT'D)

That's fine. We'll call it a night, pick up with "Little Wing" tomorrow. [to Duane] Work for you?

DUANE

Don't make no difference to me.

Everyone clears out. Paula glances back before leaving.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

HOWARD ALBERT (20), the exhausted engineer, is teary-eyed as he watches through the window... Eric, all alone in the dark studio, singing his lungs out - his face is red.

ERIC

"Let's make the best of the situation/ Before I finally go insane/ Please don't say we'll never find a way/ And tell me all my love's in vain."

ENGINEER
That was amazing, Eric.

ERIC
Let me go again.

ENGINEER
(biting his tongue)
Sure thing, man.

ERIC
"What'll you do when you get lonely?"

INT. COCONUT GROVE CLOTHING BOUTIQUE - AFTERNOON

Eric walks in alone and peruses the blue jeans. He pulls a pair from the shelf and holds them up - Bell Bottoms.

EXT. POOL - HOTEL - NIGHT

Drunk, Eric stumbles by the pool with a shopping bag and spots PATTIE smoking a cigarette with her feet in the water.

ERIC
You came!

PAULA
(confused)
I've been here.

Eric realizes it's Paula, her hair long like Pattie's again.

PAULA (CONT'D)
Come sit with me.

ERIC
I might fall in.

PAULA
That's a risk I'm willing to take.

To Eric, Paula is Pattie now. He kisses her, she pulls away.

ERIC
Sorry.

PAULA
Don't be. Let's go to your room.

ERIC
Too risky. I know where we can go.

INT. HALLWAY - CRITERIA - SHORTLY AFTER

Eric pulls Paula along toward the studio. He hears a PIANO. The mellifluous KEYS PLAYING stops Eric dead in his tracks.

ERIC

What is that? [beat] Wait here.

STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Eric enters to find Jim Gordon playing a beautiful piece on the piano - his back to the door. As he finishes...

ERIC

That was beautiful.

Jim nearly jumps out of his skin.

JIM

Eric- Are you here to record?

ERIC

Uh- Yeah, I wanted to work on my vocals for Layla.

JIM

It's a little late, isn't it?

ERIC

I could say the same to you. What're you working on?

JIM

I'm just fooling around.

ERIC

That why the recording light is on?

Jim looks to the red light - he's caught red-handed.

JIM

I've been... Recording some solo stuff. I'm trying to put together an album. I'm sorry. But I couldn't afford to rent the studio for myself.

ERIC

You could get Stigwood in a lot of trouble, you know that?

JIM

Please don't tell him- I'll stop, I promise.

ERIC
What was that you were playing?

Jim plays a section of it.

ERIC (CONT'D)
It's emotional.

JIM
Really? It's not done.

ERIC
It's exactly what "*Layla*" is missing. It compliments the guitar perfectly. It's delicate. And emotional. It says everything that my lyrics can't. I need it.

JIM
I don't know-

ERIC
Let me use it and you can keep stealing studio time. I won't say a word.

JIM
(considering)
You like it that much?

ERIC
I think Pattie will be in tears by the end of that coda.

HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Eric opens the door to find Paula, crying.

PAULA
Pattie is Layla.

She slaps him, hard, and storms out, slamming the door behind her - she's gone. Jim and Eric share an awkward look.

EXT. CRITERIA - MORNING

The sun rises over the studio.

INT. HALLWAY - CRITERIA

Bobby enters the hall as Eric's about to go into the studio.

BOBBY
Eric! Have you seen Paula anywhere?

ERIC

Not today. [changing the subject]
 Hey- What was that song you played
 for me when you first came to stay
 at Hurtwood? I remember it was slow
 and something like... [beat] *And I
 hate to hurt your feelings/ But
 it's not the way it seems-*

BOBBY

'Cause I miss her. [beat] I can't
 believe you remember that song.

ERIC

I think we should close the record
 with that song. You'll sing it.

BOBBY

You screwing with me?

ERIC

Not at all. I mean it. We'll record
 it as soon as we finish "*Layla.*"

Bobby rolls his eyes as they duck into the studio.

STUDIO - LATER

Everyone listens as Jim plays the PIANO CODA for "*LAYLA*".

ERIC

What does everyone think?

TOM

I think it works. It's like a postcoital
 cigarette... Reflective and calm.

DUANE

Couldn't have put it better myself.

BOBBY

Eric, you really like it?

JIM

What's wrong with it?

BOBBY

Nothin' wrong with it. I just don't
 think it fits.

TOM

Bobby if you want to play it, you
 can give it a stab.

JIM

Yeah, if you don't want me to play your precious keys, then go ahead and play it for all I care.

BOBBY

It has nothing to do with who plays it, it doesn't belong in the song. It ruins the integrity of it all.

JIM

Integrity? You're just mad because you didn't write it.

BOBBY

You didn't write it either. Your girlfriend did.

JIM

We co-wrote it- Fuck you Bobby. I'm sorry Paula left you high and dry, but don't take your shit out on me.

BOBBY

How'd you know Paula left me?

Jim realizes he let the cat out of the bag, looks to Eric.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

What?

HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Eric pleads with Bobby.

ERIC

I was drunk, man. And all I did was kiss her.

BOBBY

What about Pattie, huh? That's what all this is for anyway!

ERIC

Honestly, I kissed her because she reminded me of Pattie. I swear.

(Bobby rolls his eyes)

She ran away from me. Not you. It'll be fine back in London.

BOBBY

So you only asked me to sing my song 'cause you felt bad.

ERIC
No, no. I loved that song. Truly.

STUDIO - LATER

A quiet tension in the room. Everyone's ready but Eric's missing. He finally enters with a brand new acoustic guitar.

TOM
We ready?

Eric plays a few chords on the guitar and hands it to Bobby.

ERIC
Here. This is for you. Use it for your song.

Bobby looks it over. He musters some forgiveness for Eric.

BOBBY
Thanks. Hey Duane, could you do me a favor and play it first?

DUANE
What for?

BOBBY
Hoping to harness some of your energy into it.

Duane smiles, plays the famous "LAYLA" riff, hands it back.

STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

All five guys are gathered around one microphone with Bobby in the center on a stool...

BOBBY
And if I never see her face again/ I never hold her hand... (continues)

INT. AIRPLANE - MORNING

We pan over everyone passed out in their seats, stopping on Eric as he reads "LAYLA & MAJNUN" - the shopping bag with the jeans beside him. He looks healthier, cleaner, and content.

BOBBY (V.O.)
And if she's in somebody's arms/ I know I'll understand but I'll miss that girl/ Lord I still miss that girl/ Maybe someday soon, somewhere.

EXT. KENSINGTON FLAT - EVENING

Eric smokes a cigarette outside under a light drizzle with a bag in his hand. Pattie arrives with an umbrella. They hug.

PATTIE
You look good. And tan.

ERIC
You too. Well not tan. Because you didn't come to Miami.

PATTIE
Don't start.

Eric hands Pattie the bag. She pulls out the BELL-BOTTOM JEANS and smiles.

PATTIE (CONT'D)
How did you know? [hugging him]
Thank you, Eric!

ERIC
So do you really like me then, or do you only see me because I'm famous and buy you nice things?

PATTIE
Oh that's strange, I thought you were seeing me because *I'm* famous.

ERIC
I'm just trying to get close to George.

She hits him playfully.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Don't lie, I know you've missed me.

PATTIE
Not at all.

ERIC
I have a surprise for you.

PATTIE
Another one?

INT. KENSINGTON FLAT - SHORTLY AFTER

Pattie watches as Eric sets up the tape reels for playback - he is jittery and hopeful.

He sits her down and grabs a set of headphones, knocking over the metal cannister in the process.

ERIC

Oh- Sorry. [beat] Here. Put these on. [puts them on for her] Ready?

PATTIE

Did you write me a song or something?

ERIC

No. I wrote you an album.

He hits play. The room is silent save for the barely audible "LAYLA" RIFF coming from the headphones. Eric doesn't take his eyes off Pattie as she moves her head to the music. Eric smiles. Her eyes close as she sways gently, starting to feel it. Eric glows with excitement. After a moment, she stops moving completely and opens her eyes. He freezes as she looks up at him bitterly... He tries to read her face. A single TEAR streams down her cheek, but she quickly wipes it away, composing herself.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Well?

She closes her eyes again, trying to hold back, but more TEARS come. Eric smirks, twistedly proud of himself. As she's about to remove her headphones... He stops her.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Wait, let me play it again.

PATTIE

Eric-

ERIC

No, listen again.

He rewinds and hits play. Eric watches her in dead silence as she listens for another long while. Her tears flow harder. Eric can't determine if they are tears of joy or sadness.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Do you like it?

She looks up at him and nods subtly. Eric SIGHS in relief.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Good. That's good.

After a moment, Pattie wipes the tears from her cheeks, sits up straight and finds her strength. She removes the headphones and hands them to him defiantly.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I wrote it for you.

PATTIE

I know Eric. I'm not stupid. The whole world will know you wrote it for me.

ERIC

So? Do you like it?

PATTIE

(getting to her feet)

Yes. Yes, I fucking love it. It's raw and beautiful. It feels like being stabbed with a knife. Piercing to the point of numbness. [off Eric's smile] You're very talented and passionate. You know it better than anyone else.

ERIC

I need you to hear the whole album. They're all for you, Pattie. Everything was always for you.

She studies his crazed eyes full of desperation. After a moment, she gathers her coat and purse.

PATTIE

I have to go, Eric.

ERIC

What do you mean? You just got here. Don't you want to hear the rest?

PATTIE

I'll hear them on the radio.

ERIC

Wait- This is it. You have to leave him now.

PATTIE

This is not it. This is emotional blackmail. Do you understand that? Did ever once think what you've been doing to me? To George? He's not stupid, ya know?

ERIC

He is. He is because he doesn't know what he has. And I do.

PATTIE

But you don't.

She kisses him on the cheek and leaves. He doesn't try to go after her. He collapses onto the chair, pulls the headphone jack out - the room swells with the sound of "LAYLA".

ERIC (V.O.)

Let's make the best of the situation/ Before I finally go insane/ Please don't say we'll never find a way/ And tell me all my love's in vain.

(beat)

*Layla, you've got me on my knees/
Layla, I'm begging, darling please/
Layla, darling won't you ease my
trouble worried mind.*

The haunting PIANO CODA trickles in. Eric stops the playback, rewinds and hits PLAY again. The opening guitar riff hits him hard... He stops it, rewinds and hits PLAY again. The riff swells as Eric watches the tape-reel spin round and round.

THE FOLLOWING TEXT SLOWLY FADES IN - ONE LINE AT A TIME:

Derek & the Dominos' "Layla and Other Assorted Love Songs" was a commercial failure at the time of its release...

Mainly due to the fact that no one knew "Derek" was Eric.

Eric fell into a self-imposed, heroin-induced exile for three years, rarely seen by the public or his friends.

In 1974, he kicked his habit. Shortly after, Eric finally won his "Layla" from his dear friend George.

Eric & Pattie were married in 1978...

George Harrison & his wife, Olivia, attended the wedding.

Eric & Pattie were divorced in 1988.

Eric & George remained friends until George passed in 2001.

FADE TO BLACK.