

TENDER MERCIES

A FEATURE FILM

RED
ORIGINAL

Property of:
ANTRON MEDIA, INC.
211 East 43rd Street
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President

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Producer - Philip S. Hobel

FADE IN: DAY--EARLY AUTUMN

A seldom travelled farm-to-market road in South East Texas. A car drives down the road through half-picked cotton fields, corn fields, and grazing fields dotted with cattle.

Every now and again a house can be seen. Up ahead we see an unpretentious motel sign. The car slows down as it approaches the motel, sees gas pumps in the yard and pulls off the road to the gas pumps. A man and a woman are in the car and they are strangers and look around to see if anyone is there to attend to them. The motel consists of four small guest cottages. Two are rented and two unoccupied, and a small house near the gas pumps. Out of the house comes MAC SLEDGE, 44, and he goes to the car.

MAC

Yes sir?

MAN

Fill 'er up.

MAC

Yes sir.

He gets the gas hose and puts it in the car's tank. His wife, ROSA LEE, 26, comes out of the house. She sits in a straight chair in the yard of the house watching her husband work. MAC takes the pump out of the gas tank and goes over to the man driving the car.

MAC

That will be twelve dollars.

The man takes his wallet out to get the money.

MAN

Would you know of a family around here named the Pendergrasts?

MAC

Pendergrasts?

MAN

H.L. Pendergrast. He has a brother who is a friend of mine over in Conroe. He said to me when he heard I was coming over this way be sure and look up H.L. and tell him Hello for me.

MAC

I tell you I don't think I know him, but let me ask my wife. She was born and raised here. She knows everybody.

(He calls.)

Rosa Lee... Did you ever hear of a Pendergrast around here?

MAN

H.L. Pendergrast

ROSA LEE

Sure I did.

MAC

Do you know where he lives?

ROSA LEE

Sure....

(She calls into the house.)

Sonny, get a move on. That school'bus is gonna be here any minute.

MAC

Can you tell the man how to get to his house?

ROSA LEE

Yes, I can. Go back that way and take a left turn at the first cross roads and go down there for about five miles until you get to the river. Cross the bridge and it's a big house on the right.

MAN

Thank you.

He drives away. In the distance the school bus is seen.

ROSA LEE (Calling louder)
 Sonny. That school bus is almost
 here. Hurry!

SONNY, 10, comes running out of the house carrying school books, slamming the door behind him.

SONNY
 See you later.

He runs down the road to the school bus. ROSA LEE AND MAC watch as he gets on the bus and it drives away. As the bus passes the house, ROSA LEE waves goodbye.

EXT. - BACKYARD - DAY

MAC walks around the station to the back. There is a small garden about two hundred yards from the house and he walks over to the garden plot, picks up a hoe lying on the ground and begins to chop weeds. It is a vegetable garden and it is well tended. As he works he sings a few bars of a song to himself... A country Western song. We don't hear enough of the song to know if it is familiar or what kind of a singer he is.

ROSA LEE comes around the house and joins him in the garden. She has a basket and begins to pick tomatoes and dig turnips. He stops singing as she approaches. They work along in silence for a beat and then she begins singing a hymn to herself.. "Count Your Blessings." She has a pleasant voice. After a few phrases he joins in singing with her. He has a stronger voice than hers, but we can still tell nothing of its quality. They continue singing as they work. They hear a car drive up. The driver honks for service and MAC puts the hoe down and goes toward the filling station to service the car. ROSA LEE continues her work.

EXT. - YARD OF A CONSOLIDATED COUNTRY SCHOOL - DAY

There are children, boys and girls, involved in games and sports.

ANGLE - SONNY

He is playing catch with a friend. LARUE, 14, comes up to him.

MEDIUM SHOT - SONNY AND LARUE

LARUE
 Your Daddy is dead.

SONNY has the ball and is about to throw it when he hears LARUE's statement, and holds on to the ball.

SONNY
I know he's dead.

LARUE
He got killed in Vietnam.

SONNY
I know that.

LARUE
What was his name?

SONNY
Whose?

LARUE
Your Daddy's.

SONNY
Carl Herbert Wadsworth. I was named for him. I am Carl Herbert Wadsworth, Junior.

LARUE
How come everybody calls you, Sonny?

SONNY
I don't know. They just do.

LARUE
That man your Mama is married to now ain't your Daddy.

SONNY
I know that, Fool. I know what he is. He's my Step-Daddy.

LARUE
Where did he come from?

SONNY
Texas.

LARUE
Not this part of Texas.

SONNY
I know that. I certainly
know that.

LARUE
Is he still a drunk?

SONNY looks at LARUE like he would like to punch him,
but decides to ignore him.

SONNY
Go to Hell! He ain't had a
drink in I don't know when.

INT. - SLEDGE HOUSE - NIGHT

The kitchen and the living room are open to each other.
They are small rooms simply furnished. MAC AND SONNY
are seated at a small kitchen table which has been set
for supper. ROSA LEE is standing at the stove dishing
up the supper.

SONNY
An old boy from town came up to
me at recess and he says your
Daddy is dead, and I says, I
know he's dead.

ROSA LEE brings the food to the table and sits down.
They bow their heads.

ROSA LEE
Lord make us thankful for these
and all our many blessings in
Christ's name. Amen.

Outside we see the lights of a car as it drives up to
the gas pumps.

MAC
Sonny, tell them we're closed
for the night.

SONNY goes outside.
MAC AND ROSA LEE begin to eat their supper.
SONNY comes back in.

SONNY
They don't have enough gas to
make it to the next station
they say. They would appreciate
your selling them some.

MAC gets up and goes outside.

EXT.- FILLING STATION - NIGHT

A country man and woman are in an old, beaten-up car.
MAC goes to them.

MAC

How much you want?

COUNTRY MAN

I think five gallons will
do it.

MAC goes to the pump and stands waiting for it to register
five gallons.

COUNTRY WOMAN

It's gotten so high, ain't it?

MAC

Yes.

COUNTRY WOMAN

We should have kept it to our-
selves instead of shipping it
up to the Yankees to squander.

MAC

That's five dollars.

The COUNTRY MAN reaches in his pocket and gets some dollar
bills and some change.

COUNTRY MAN

I'm forty cents short of making
it. You got forty cents in your
purse?

COUNTRY WOMAN

Let's see now.

She has to root around in her purse until she finds the
change needed. She gives it to the man and he hands it
to MAC.

MAC

Thank you.

They start the car and drive away as MAC goes back into the house.

INT.- HOUSE - NIGHT

ROSA LEE AND SONNY have eaten their supper and the table is cleared. SONNY has on television and is watching a program.
MAC enters.

ROSA LEE
I put your plate back in the oven to keep it warm.

He sits at the table and she gets his plate of food from the oven and puts it before him. He eats it and she goes over to the television and sits beside her son to watch. MAC finishes his supper and goes out to their bedroom.

INT. - BEDROOM - NIGHT

A small room with a bed, dresser, a table, a chair. MAC comes in. He shuts the door behind him. He seems tired. He lies on the bed for a moment, but he doesn't close his eyes. There is a guitar in the corner of the room. He gets it.

CLOSE SHOT - MAC

He sings a bit of the song we heard him singing earlier and it is obvious now the song has some meaning for him. He stops before he finishes the song and we sense that he is a complicated and deeply troubled man.

THE ANGLE WIDENS

As he puts the guitar away.

INT. - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sonny and ROSA LEE are watching television as he enters.

ROSA LEE
Come watch with us, Mac.

MAC
I will after awhile.

He goes outside the house.

EXT. YARD- NIGHT

MAC comes out. HE looks up at the sky. There are many stars.

CLOSE SHOT - MAC

as he looks at the sky.

THE ANGLE WIDENS

As ROSA LEE comes out and goes over to her husband.

ROSA LEE

Sonny went to bed. He asked to go and see his Daddy's grave. He never asked that before. I guess it was the talk at school. I said we'd take him.

MAC

Sure.

EXT. - COUNTRY ROAD - TWO DAYS LATER - DAY

MAC drives ROSA LEE AND SONNY in his pick-up truck toward the graveyard.

EXT. - GRAVEYARD - DAY

The truck drives up. SONNY AND ROSA LEE get out of the truck and walk into the graveyard. ROSA LEE turns and sees MAC still in the truck.

ROSA LEE

Come on with us, Mac.

MAC

All right.

HE gets out of the truck and joins them.

EXT. - GRAVEYARD - DAY

ROSA LEE walks among the graves followed by SONNY and MAC to her former husband's grave. It has just a small tombstone on it.

ROSA LEE

Here it is. (THEY stand looking at it.) I couldn't put down the day he died, because the army didn't know it.

SONNY

Was there a big crowd at his funeral?

ROSA LEE

Yes, there was.

SONNY

Did I go?

ROSA LEE

No.

SONNY

Why not?

ROSA LEE

Because you were too little.

SONNY

Did people cry at the funeral?

ROSA LEE

Yes, they did.

SONNY

Did you cry?

ROSA LEE

Yes, I did.

SONNY

Did I ever see my Grandpa and Grandma Wadsworth?

ROSA LEE

Uh. Huh..

SONNY
When?

ROSA LEE
When you were a little boy.
I used to take you over there
every once in awhile, but
they live so far out in the
country.

SONNY
Will you take me out there
again?

ROSA LEE
Sure.

SONNY
Today?

ROSA LEE
Yes, if Mac don't mind.

MAC
I don't mind.

EXT. - A rundown farm house - SURROUNDED BY HALF-TENDED
FIELDS - DAY

We can see a ramshackle barn and chicken house in the distance. A clump of chinaberry trees, a hackberry tree. There are a few cows in the field, and acre of corn and two acres of sorghum. MR. WADSWORTH, the grandfather, is on the porch watching as the pickup truck pulls into the yard. When MAC stops the truck, he starts off the porch toward them, not recognizing ROSA LEE and SONNY at first. When he does, he seems glad to see them.

WADSWORTH
Well, I'll be.
(He calls to his wife.)
Etta B. come on out here. You
got a surprise.

ROSA LEE AND SONNY get out of the truck. Then MAC gets out. ETTA B. comes out of the house.

ETTA B.
Lord! (She goes to greet them.)
I have to believe in signs, Lord.
I have to believe in signs. I had
a dream about you both last night.
It was a sad dream, I dreamt. My
boy was a prisoner of War in Vietnam
and they were torturing him and you

ETTA B. (Cont'd)
and Sonny and I were on our
way over there to beg for his
release. You look well. Both
of you. Don't they look fine,
Arthur?

WADSWORTH
I'll say they do.

ROSA LEE
Sonny wanted to see his Daddy's
grave, so we took him over this
morning and then we decided to
come and say hello to you.

ETTA B.
Oh, good. Come on inside.

ROSA LEE
We can't stay. Nobody is tending
to the station. I don't think you
all met my new husband. This is
Mac Sledge.

MAC shakes their hands.

MAC
How do you do.

ETTA B.
You be good to them. You hear
me. That's my boy's son. He's
our only grandchild.

ROSA LEE
Oh, he's good to us.

ETTA B.
He better be. Else he's gonna
hear from me.

WADSWORTH (Laughing)
Don't she sound fierce, Mr. Sledge?

MAC
Mac...

WADSWORTH
Mac. Want a chew of tobacco?

MAC
No, thank you.

WADSWORTH
Don't you chew?

MAC
No, sir.

ETTA B.
Good for you! I wish he didn't.
Filthy habit.

ROSA LEE
I wonder if you all have a
picture of Sonny's Daddy. I had
one but it's lost.

ETTA B.
I know we got one somewhere.
Let me see.

She goes into the house.

WADSWORTH
How is your filling station?

ROSA LEE
All right.

WADSWORTH
Making a living?

ROSA LEE
We do that.

WADSWORTH
Well, it's worked out for you.

ROSA LEE
Yes, it has.

WADSWORTH
After our boy was killed, she
came out to see me to ask my ad-
vice. She had the baby then, of
course, and she said she wanted to
use the insurance money left to her
to start some kind of business that
she could manage and take care of
her baby at the same time. I told
her I wasn't a businessman and couldn't

WADSWORTH (Cont'd)
advise her about that. You
paid for it yet?

ROSA LEE
Not yet. I'm getting the note
down little by little. One day,
we may own the whole thing.

WADSWORTH
I'm on old age now. I've
retired. We just raise enough
out here to feed us.

ETTA B. comes out.

ETTA B.
Here. (SHE gives Sonny a picture.)
You keep that.

ROSA LEE
I hope that's not your only
one.

ETTA B.
No, I have another one.

EXT. - BAPTIST CHURCH - SUNDAY

The pick-up truck drives up to the church and parks.
MAC, ROSA LEE AND SONNY get out of the truck. They are
dressed for church.

INT. - CHURCH - MAC AND SONNY

They are together in a pew singing a hymn with the
congregation. ROSA LEE is in the choir.

EXT. - CHURCH - DAY

The PREACHER is in front of the church shaking hands
with the congregation as they go past him.
ROSA LEE, MAC AND SONNY come out of the church and go
up to the PREACHER to shake hands.

PREACHER
Well, how are the Sledges this
morning?

ROSA LEE
Just fine. Thank you. And we
did enjoy your sermon so much.

PREACHER
Thank you, Sister, thank you.
(He turns to MAC)
And how are you, Brother Sledge?

MAC
I'm pretty well, thank you.

PREACHER
Sonny tells me he'd like to be
baptized. I know it makes you
both proud.

ROSA LEE
Yes, it does.

PREACHER

You were baptized in this church weren't you, Mrs. Sledge?

ROSA LEE

Yes sir.

PREACHER

And where were you baptized, Mr. Sledge?

MAC

I haven't been baptized.

PREACHER

(Laughs)

Well, we'll have to work on you then.

MAC

Yes sir. I guess so.

EXT. - YARD OF THE SLEDGE HOUSE - DAY

MAC and SONNY are playing catch. THEY see a car drive up to the gas pumps.
MAC walks across the yard to the car.

REPORTER

Mr. Sledge?

MAC.

Yes sir.

REPORTER

You're Mac Sledge, the singer?

MAC

Yes. I was a singer, I mean.
I am Mac Sledge.

REPORTER

Married to Dixie Scott?

There is a pause.

ANGLE - MAC

MAC

I've got nothing to say about
that.

REPORTER

She's never married again?

(MAC says nothing.)

You're married again?

(Again, MAC says nothing.)

That your boy?

(No answer.)

ANGLE - REPORTER

REPORTER (To MAC)

It took me awhile to track
you down. I would appreciate
an interview.

MAC

I got nothing to say to anybody.

REPORTER

You still do any singing?

(No answer from MAC.)

Writing any music?

(No answer.)

ANGLE - MAC

REPORTER

I hear your new wife sings in
the Baptist Church.

(MAC says nothing.)

Your daughter by your first
wife must be eighteen by now.

Do you ever see her?

(A pause.)

REPORTER (Cont'd)

Look. I'm going to do a story on you. You ought to talk to me to be sure I get it right. Will you talk to me?

MAC

Nope.

REPORTER

Will you read what I've written to be sure it's all right?

MAC

Nope. (A pause.)

REPORTER

Do people around here know who you are?

(No answer from MAC.)

Did you know your former wife is singing tomorrow night over in Austin?

(No answer.)

Are you going to hear her? Maybe your daughter will be along and come over here to see you. She knows where you are. I told her. Dixie told me a lot about you. Don't you want to tell me a few things about her? She said drink licked you. Do you still drink?

No answer from MAC. MAC looks up the road, back cut across the field into the house and then he looks directly at the REPORTER.

MAC

If you want gasoline, I'll sell it to you. If not, I have to go inside. I have work to do.

He goes into the house. The REPORTER makes a few last notes and drives off.

INT. - HOUSE - DAY - ROSA LEE IS THERE - MAC ENTERS.

ROSA LEE

Who was that?

MAC
A damn reporter.

He goes back outside.

EXT. - HOUSE - DAY

SONNY is there. MAC comes out. He watches the man's car drive down the road. Then he starts around the back of the house and across the fields.

SONNY
(Calling after him)
Can I go with you?

MAC
Come on.

SONNY
Shall I get some poles?

MAC
If you want to.

MAC continues on to the river. SONNY runs to the house to get poles.

EXT. - RIVER - DAY

MAC and SONNY are there. SONNY is fishing; MAC is not.

ANGLE - SONNY

SONNY
I asked my Mama if my Daddy
were a prisoner of War in Vietnam
and she said no he wasn't.
(A Pause.)
I wonder why my grandmother had
a dream like that? Maybe that's
the wrong fellow in that grave.
Do you think that could be true?

ANGLE - MAC

MAC

What did your Mama say?

SONNY

She said she didn't think so.

MAC

To tell you the truth, neither
do I, Sonny.

INT. - REHEARSAL HALL - DAY

Three young men, JAKE, BERTIE and HENRY are in the hall.
They are tuning up their instruments. They are in their
late twenties. ROBERT, ALSO IN HIS LATE twenties, comes
in with a newspaper.

ROBERT

Guess who's living around here
now?

JAKE

Who?

ROBERT

Mac Sledge.

BERTIE

Oh, go 'on.

ROBERT

It's true. Look here. (HE shows
them the paper.) He's pumping gas.

THE BOYS look at the paper.

Let's go look him up.

JAKE

What are you going to say to him?

ROBERT

I don't know. I'll just talk
to him. Come on.

HE starts out. THE OTHERS follow after him.

INT. PICK UP TRUCK _ ROBERT is driving. JAKE is beside him drinking a can of beer. BERTIE and HENRY are in the back. ROBERT turns the radio on.

ROBERT

This is the band I was telling you about. You like it?

JAKE

No. They stink.

ROBERT

You've got no taste. That's your trouble.

JAKE.

If we weren't any better than that, I'd quit tomorrow.

He finishes his beer and takes another from the six pack beside him.

HENRY:

Give me a beer.

He hands a can to Henry.

ROBERT

I just wish we were making half of what they're making.

JAKE

I'll settle for a tenth.

Another record is heard. They begin to sing it as they drive on. Up ahead they see the filling station and the motel cottages. ROBERT slows the car. THEY look around.

ROBERT

That must be where he works.

JAKE

Jesus, it's lonely out here.

BERTIE

What are we gonna say to him?

ROBERT

I don't know. Just tell him how much we've always admired him.

JAKE

Oh, Jesus, that's so insincere.

ROBERT

Why? You do admire him, don't you?

JAKE

I did. I don't know about now.

HENRY

I still admire him more than any singer I know of...

ROBERT

Me, too.

He drives up to the gas pump. They look around. No one is in sight, but after a beat, ROSA LEE comes out of the house and THEY turn off the radio.

ROBERT

Fill 'er up.

She does so as THE BOYS get out of the truck and look around. Henry has finished his beer. He tosses the can towards a trash can, but it misses and rolls into the yard. Jake holds the beer in his hand.

ROBERT

Excuse me. Is this where Mac Sledge stays?

ROSA LEE

Yes.

ROBERT

Is he here?

ROSA LEE

Yes.

ROBERT
Could we talk to him?

ROSA LEE
What about?

ROBERT
We just want to meet him. We're admirers of his. We saw the story in the paper this morning. You see we have a band. We're playing around this part of the country two or three nights a week, you know. And we didn't know what had happened to him until we read his story and we certainly would like to say hello and pay our respects.

JAKE
We have all his records.

HENRY
We grew up on his records.

BERTIE
He inspires us.

The gas tank is filled.

ROSA LEE
That'll be eight dollars.

ROBERT
(ROBERT pays her)
Could we see him?

ROSA LEE
I'll ask him.

She goes inside. The boys look around curiously.
ROSA LEE comes out followed by MAC.

MAC
Hello, boys.

ROBERT
Hello, sir. I'm Robert Dennis and this is Bertie Gallagher, and this is Henry Steele and this is Jake Muhall.

MAC
Pleased to know you.

ROBERT
I was telling this lady..

MAC
This is my wife, Rosa Lee.

ROBERT
Pleased to know you. We were
saying we have a band, you know.

MAC
You four boys?

ROBERT
Yessir. I'm the manager, and I
play the guitar and Jake the drums,
and Bertie the guitar and Henry
the fiddle.

MAC
Who does your vocals?

ROBERT
We all take turns with that. I
was telling your wife here we
read in the paper you
were living out here. We're over
in Austin so we hopped in the
truck the first thing and started
out to see if we could find you.

JAKE
You've been a real inspiration
to all of us.

MAC
That's most gratifying to hear.

ROBERT
When are you gonna start singing
again, Sir?

ANGLE - MAC

MAC
I'm not going to start singing
again, son. I've lost it. Those
days of mine are gone. I can't
sing any more. Not like I want
to any way.

ANGLE - ROSA LEE

ROSA LEE
I still think you sing
beautifully..

ANGLE - MAC

MAC (Interrupting)
I didn't see that article in
that paper, but what I could
tell them was if it hadn't been
for Rosa Lee I would have been
dead. She found me out here one
day drunk and she took me in.

I was so drunk. I didn't know
where I was or how I'd gotten
here.

ANGLE - ROSA LEE

ROSA LEE
That's not quite how it was, Mac.
You see, I had a sign here saying
I needed help...and he came in
and he asked me for a job and I
said you've been drinking and he
said, Yes, Ma'm, I'm not going to
lie to you. I have been and I said
you can have the job but if I ever
smell liquor on your breath again
while you're on these premises I'll
fire you.

ANGLE - MAC

MAC
And she meant it, too.

MAC (Cont'd)

And ever after that when I wanted to get on a drunk, I'd have to leave the place. Well, I'm not going to tell you not to drink, boys, because I know that won't be any use, but I do say be careful in how you use it.

JAKE

Do you miss singing ?

MAC

No. Oh, I miss some things. But I don't miss a lot of it. Any way, wouldn't do any good to miss it. I lost it. Where you boys playing?

ANGLE - ROBERT

ROBERT

We play over in San Marcos on the weekend and then we go to Waxahcie and then to Dripping Springs and then to Lockhart.

MAC

Well, you're busy. Maybe I'll come listen to you some night.

ROBERT

We'd sure like that. We wonder if you have any advice for us. Somebody just starting out the way we are.

MAC

No, I don't really. Just sing it the way you feel it.
(The boys get in the truck.)
So long, boys.

BOYS

So long..

They drive off. ROSA LEE sees the empty beer can that Henry has tossed into the yard and she goes to pick it up. MAC takes it from her and throws it into the trash can.

MAC

That reporter told me Dixie is singing in Austin tonight. Want to go and hear her?

ROSA LEE

No, I never want to lay eyes on that woman.

MAC

Would you care if I went?

ROSA LEE

I don't care what you do, Mac.

MAC

Will you ride over with me?

ROSA LEE

I'll ride over with you as long as I don't have to take a look at her or listen to her.

INT. TRUCK - DAY - ROBERT, JAKE, BERTIE and HENRY.

ROBERT

What did you think?

JAKE

He was friendly enough.

BERTIE

He didn't look at all like I expected. I don't think I would have recognized him if I had passed him on the street.

HENRY

Well, he wasn't drunk. That's for sure.

JAKE

No, he wasn't drunk. Kind of sad looking though, don't you think?

ROBERT

Oh, I don't know. He looked all right to me. I sure would like to hear him sing.

JAKE

He says he can't sing no more.

ROBERT

His wife says he can and I bet
he can.

JAKE

And I bet he can't.

HENRY

Why?

JAKE

Because he would be singing
and making money if he could.

EXT. - ROAD TO AUSTIN - LATE AFTERNOON - MAC, SONNY AND
ROSA LEE are in the pick-up truck.

EXT. - AUDITORIUM - AUSTIN - NIGHT

People are going into the concert. MAC parks the truck.
He turns to ROSA LEE.

MAC

Come on. Go with us.

ROSA LEE

No, thank you.

MAC AND SONNY get out of the truck.

INT. - AUDITORIUM - TICKET COUNTER - NIGHT

MAC AND SONNY go to the window. MAC buys tickets.

INT. - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

It is crowded. DIXIE SCOTT, 35, is on stage singing a
fast, brassy, country Western song. She is flashily dressed
and an assured, experienced performer, but there is some-
thing over-produced and lifeless about what she is doing.

ANGLE - DIXIE

As she finishes her song, waits for her applause, takes
her bows, and then signals to the band to begin another
song. This one slow and sentimental.

ANGLE - MAC AND SONNY

MAC
Come on.

SONNY (Whispering)
Where you going?

MAC
I don't want to stay.

SONNY
Aw, Mac...

MAC
You stay if you want to.
I'm getting out.

He leaves. SONNY stays on for a beat or two and then he leaves.

EXT. - AUDITORIUM

MAC is there. SONNY comes out.

SONNY
Why did you leave?

MAC
I don't know. I got the willies
staying in there.

They walk back toward their
truck. They pass a big van
with DIXIE SCOTT printed in
letters.

SONNY
Look a there. She travels all
around in that, don't she?

MAC
I guess so.

SONNY
Did you have one of them?

MAC
I did.

THEY walk on. HE stops.

MAC

You go on back to the truck. I'll meet you there.

SONNY

Where are you going?

MAC

Look up a fellow I used to know. I'll be right there.

HE heads for the stage entrance as SONNY goes to the truck.

EXT. - STAGE ENTRANCE. A DOORMAN is there. MAC goes up to him.

MAC

Will you get a message to Harry Silver? Tell him Mac Sledge is here to see him.

THE MAN goes. MAC reaches into the inner pocket of his coat and takes out an envelope. HE gets a pen and he writes on the envelope.

HARRY SILVER, 40, comes out.

MAC

Hello, Harry...

HARRY

How are you, Mac? What are you doing around here?

MAC

I live around here.

HARRY

Is that so? Do you want to see the show? It's started but come on an' I'll pass you in.

MAC

No, thanks.

HARRY

How are things going?

MAC

Pretty well.

HARRY

Glad to hear it. Well, nice to have seen you. (HE starts away.)

MAC

Harry, I have a song here. I thought you might give it to Dixie to look it over. If she likes it, maybe she'll record it.

HE hands HARRY the envelope.

HARRY

All right.

MAC

I put my address on it. I'm not too far away.

HARRY

All right. Well, this is a surprise. I thought you'd given up the business.

MAC

I have. I just wrote this song and I thought...

HARRY (Interrupting)

Sure. I'll see she gets it. Excuse me, I have to get back inside. (He starts away.) Are you working?

MAC

Yes.

HARRY

Where?

MAC

Filling station.

HARRY

Oh...Well, good luck.

MAC

Thanks. (HARRY goes.)

MAC starts on. THE DOORMAN comes back in. MAC pauses and then goes over to the DOORMAN.

MAC

Is Dixie Scott's daughter travelling with her?

DOORMAN

I wouldn't know anything about that.

THE DOORMAN goes back inside the theatre. MAC goes into the backstage.

INT. - BACKSTAGE - A HALLWAY leading to dressing rooms and the stage. HE can hear the band and DIXIE singing from here. A room is open near the entrance of the hallway. It is a room used by musicians and stagehands to relax in during intermission. A MAN is there reading a trade paper. MAC enters. THE MAN looks up as he comes in.

MAC

Do you know if Dixie Scott's daughter is around?

MAN

I haven't seen her tonight. She's usually in her mother's dressing room or out front watching the show.

MAC

Thank you. (HE leaves.)

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT. ROSA LEE and SONNY wait in the truck. MAC gets into the truck.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT - MAC, ROSA LEE AND SONNY.

ROSA LEE

Sonny said you didn't care for the show.

MAC

I didn't.

MAC starts the car and they drive away.

ROSA LEE

Why didn't you like it?

MAC

I don't know. I just didn't.

INT. - DIXIE'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT.
DIXIE is there resting. HARRY comes in with the envelope MAC
has given him. HE puts in on a table beside DIXIE.

DIXIE
What's that?

HARRY
Mac Sledge came back stage and
asked me to give this to you.

DIXIE
What the hell is it?

HARRY
A song he says he wrote.

DIXIE
Jesus! Was he drunk?

HARRY
I don't think so.

DIXIE
I don't want him bothering
Sue Anne. Where is she?

HARRY
Around some place.

DIXIE
Get her in here/

HE goes to the door and calls.

HARRY
Sue Anne. Sue Anne.

A DRESSER comes in with costumes.

DRESSER
She's down talking to the musicians.

DIXIE
Harry, go tell her I said to
get her tail up here. I don't
want her fooling with that damn
musician.

INT. - A SMALL ROOM BACKSTAGE. NIGHT
A GROUP OF MUSICIANS from Dixie's orchestra are here resting.
SUE ANNE, 18, is with them. One of the men has his arm around
her. HARRY comes in.

HARRY
Sue Anne, Your Mama wants you.

SHE starts out. HARRY follows.

INT. - DIXIE'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT.
SHE is changing her clothes. Sue Anne and HARRY come in.

DIXIE

I told you to wait up here with me when you weren't out front watching the show.

SUE ANNE

I'm sick of watching the show. I've seen it a hundred times.

DIXIE

Then stay up here.

SUE ANNE

I don't want to sit around here by myself.

DIXIE

Then watch T.V.

SUE ANNE

I'm sick of that, too.

SHE starts out.

DIXIE

Where are you going?

SUE ANNE

I'm going back to the hotel.

DIXIE

Why?

SUE ANNE

To change my clothes. I've got a date tonight.

DIXIE

Who with?

SUE ANNE

None of your business.

DIXIE

God damn it. What do you mean
it's none of my business.

HARRY

Now, come on, honey. Don't get
excited. You still have the rest
of the show to do.

DIXIE

She's going on no date unless
I know who she's going with.

SUE ANNE

Try and stop me.

DIXIE grabs her. SUE ANNE yanks her arm free and runs out.
DIXIE follows to the door.

DIXIE (Screaming)

Sue Anne. Sue Anne. Sue Anne.
(She turns to Harry.) Harry, go
after her. Tell her I said she'd
better get back here and get back
here fast.

HE runs out after her.

EXT. - AUDITORIUM PARKING LOT - NIGHT

SUE ANNE comes running out of the auditorium and into the
parking lot. SHE gets into her car and drives away.
HARRY comes running out. HE sees her car leaving. HE
runs to his car, gets in and follows after.

INT. - CAFE - MAC, ROSA LEE AND SONNY - NIGHT
They are seated at a counter.

MAC

Coffee.

ROSA LEE

Coffee.

SONNY

Coca-cola.

He goes over to the juke box. He looks
at the records. He comes back.

SONNY

Give me a quarter. They have one
of Mac's records there.

MAC

No. I don't want to hear it.
I'll give you a quarter but don't
play no record of mine.

SONNY

Mac, I want to hear you sing.

He starts towards the juke box.

MAC (hollering at him, obviously
angry)

I said NO, Sonny.

SONNY

Don't be sore at me.

MAC (Still angry)

I'm not sore at you.

ROSA LEE

You sounded that way, Mac. You were yelling.

MAC

That's because he wasn't listening to me.

ROSA LEE

Well, don't yell at me. I'm trying to listen to you.

MAC

I wasn't yelling at you.

ROSA LEE

Well, you're doing a pretty good imitation of it, I'd say.

MAC

I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

He puts his arm around her.

MAC

Sonny, come here to me.

Sonny comes over to him.

MAC

Forgive me for yelling.

SONNY

Sure, I forgive you.

THE WAITRESS serves the coffee and the coke. MAC pays her.

SONNY

The paper said you used to have a big farm in East Texas, Mac.

MAC

I did.

SONNY

How big?

MAC

A thousand acres. I didn't raise much of anything though. It was just a kind of show place. I wasn't there very much. Had some fancy cattle. You know, Black Angus. I was born in East Texas on a cotton farm. I picked cotton from the time I was that high. I got no people left there now though. They're all dead and gone.

ROSA LEE sees a poster advertising a dance. SHE points to it.

ROSA LEE

That's those four boys that came to see you. (MAC glances at it.)

MAC

I went backstage tonight to see if I could see my daughter. She wasn't around. She was six last time I saw her.

EXT. - BACK YARD OF THE HOUSE - DAY - TWO DAYS LATER

MAC is washing the truck. ROSA LEE is seated watching him. A car pulls up. HARRY is in the car. HE gets out and starts toward MAC. MAC walks over to HARRY.

MAC

Hello, Harry. Come
on in.

HARRY

(HE hands him the music)
Dixie insisted I bring this
back over here myself. She
says it's no good. But she
said to tell you even if it was
any good she wouldn't sing it.
She said she meant what she
said when she last saw you.
She wants nothing to do with
you ever again.

MAC

That's all right. (A
pause. HE takes the music.)
I didn't want anything to
do with her either. I just
kind of thought the song
was pretty good for her. I
guess I was wrong. Did
you look at it?

HARRY

Yep. I didn't like it either,
Mac. The business is all changed,
you know.

MAC

I guess.

HARRY

If you want to though I'll take
it on with me and show it around.
I might find somebody who would
like it.

MAC

That's all right, Thank you.
I'll keep it.

HARRY

How are you doing?

MAC

I'm all right.

HARRY

You makin' a living here?

MAC

We get by.

(He looks over at ROSA LEE)
Rosa Lee, this is an old friend
of mine, Harry Silvers.

HARRY

Pleased to know you.

ROSA LEE

Thank you. Pleased to know you.

MAC

How's my girl?

HARRY

She's grown up. Of course, Dixie
spoils the life out of her. But
you can't blame her. She's all she's
got, you know. Well, nice to meet
you, Mrs. Sledge.

ROSA LEE
Thank you. Nice to meet you.

HARRY
So long, Mac. Good luck.

MAC
Good luck to you.

HARRY drives off. They stand watching him go.
After a beat MAC starts to go into the house and then
he pauses, looks over at ROSA LEE and then goes to her.

CLOSE SHOT - MAC AND ROSA LEE
ANGLE - MAC

MAC
I just came across that old song
one day. I wrote it I don't know
how many years ago. I couldn't do
nothing with it then, so I don't
know why I figured I could do any-
thing with it now. Any way, I
figured if I could I might get us
a few dollars ahead so you wouldn't
have to work so hard.

ROSA LEE
I don't work all that hard.

MAC
Yes, you do, too.

ROSA LEE
You work hard, too.

MAC
Any way, I just thought I'd try Harry
since he was an old friend of mine.
He showed it to Dixie which I didn't
really want him to do, I really only
wanted his opinion. Any way, she said
it was no good and he agreed with her.
(He cries.) You know. I don't give
a God damn about any of this no more.
So what in the hell is wrong with me.
I guess it's just hearing about my
little girl being grown up and all and
being spoiled by Dixie.

ANGLE - ROSA LEE

ROSA LEE

Oh, sure. I know that's hard on you not being able to see her. (SHE goes to MAC. SHE takes his hand.)

ANGLE - MAC
as he listens.

I love you, you know, and I would hate for anything to ever come between us, but I swear if I ever had to give up Sonny I don't know what I'd do.

ANGLE - ROSA LEE

When his daddy died and people said oh, it's too bad you're left with this little boy to raise - too bad for who, I said - not for me! I consider it a privilege to have this blessed child to raise. And I did, too.

ANGLE - MAC AND ROSA LEE

And every night when I say my prayers and I thank the good Lord for all his many blessings and tender mercies to me, Sonny and you head the list. (A pause.) Would you sing the song you wrote to me?

MAC

No, it's no good.

ROSA LEE

I sure would like to hear it.

HE Hands it to her.

MAC

You sing it.

ROSA LEE

I can't read music. You know that. Somebody would have to teach it to me.

MAC

Well, I'll think about it.

ROSA LEE

Mac.

MAC

What?

ROSA LEE
Please sing it for me.

MAC
All right. But it's kind of
corny.

ROSA LEE
I don't care.

They go inside.
INT. - HOUSE - ROSA LEE AND MAC ENTER

He goes to the sink and gets a glass of water. She goes into their bedroom and comes out with the guitar. She gives him the guitar.

MAC
I lied to you when I said I hadn't wanted Harry to give the song to Dixie. I asked him to give it to her. I don't know why I lied about that, except I was ashamed of myself, I guess, for ever asking a favor of her again.

He sings part of the song.
It is the song we have heard earlier. The song is personal, yet direct and affecting in its simplicity as the best of Country Western songs can be. His manner of singing the song also is direct and uncomplicated and one senses whatever else he has a very personal style when he sings. He stops.

MAC
I've got no voice left.

ROSA LEE
Are you crazy, Mac?

MAC
Any way, I don't like the song
and I never did.

ROSA LEE
Mac.

MAC
And I never will.

ROSA LEE
Mac.

MAC (He is angry now.)
And don't feel sorry for me,
Rosa Lee. I'm not dead, you know.

ROSA LEE
I'm not feeling sorry for you.

He puts the guitar on the table.
He goes outside.

EXT. - HOUSE

MAC comes outside. He starts walking fast toward the garden. He sees a can and kicks it out of his way. He goes into the garden plot and starts weeding with his hands. He is angry and upset. She comes toward him. She watches him and is obviously anxious about him, but doesn't let him know her feelings. She starts to work beside him. After a beat she begins to sing a hymn, singing it to cover her concern for him. He works on in silence for a beat; he stands up and stretches.

MAC
I'm going uptown.

He goes toward the pick-up truck. She continues working watching him as he gets into the truck and drives away. She straightens up then, shakes the dirt off her hands.

EXT. = HIGHWAY - DAY -

MAC speeds down the highway in the pick up truck. HE comes to a BAR- RESTAURANT. HE pulls the car into the parking lot, gets out and goes inside.

INT. - BAR- RESTAURANT.

It is dark inside. There are TWO MEN at the bar drinking bottles of beer. MAC enters. HE goes to a table.

A WAITER, A MAN in his forties, comes up to HIM.

WAITER
What do you want?

MAC
I don't know yet.

WAITER
You want a beer or you want
food or do you want a set up?

MAC
I don't know what I want yet.

WAITER
Our specials today...

I don't want to hear what the specials are now. When I want to hear what they are I'll let you know.

THE WAITER walks away and goes over to the juke box with some coins.

MAC

Would you mind not playing that damn music?

WAITER

One of the other fellows asked for it.

HE puts the coins in the box. The music starts. MAC gets up and leaves.

MAN (Calling to WAITER)

What's wrong with him?

WAITER

I don't know.

EXT. - RESTAURANT - BAR - DAY

MAC comes out. HE gets into his car and goes speeding down the highway until he gets behind an old truck filled with lumber going very slowly. HE is forced to slow down, follows the truck for awhile and then suddenly backs his car up, turns around and speeds again down the highway in the opposite direction. A car backs out of a blind drive. MAC has to veer off the road and halfway into a ditch to avoid a collision. MAC jumps out of his truck and starts toward the car.

MAC (Screaming)

Why the hell don't you watch what you're doing?

MAN

You better watch what you're doing, Mister. You must be crazy driving as fast as you were going..

THE MAN drives off. MAC gets back into his truck and pulls out of the ditch onto the highway and resumes his speed. Up ahead he sees a school bus stopping every few yards to let a child off the bus. Again HE turns his truck around and speeds away in the opposite direction.

EXT. - HIGHWAY - LIQUOR STORE - DAY

MAC drives his truck up; parks it and gets out and goes into the store.

EXT. -- FILLING STATION - DAY

ROSA LEE walks to the edge of the road; she is looking up the road.

EXT. - HIGHWAY - LIQUOR STORE - DAY

MAC comes out of the store. HE has a bottle of whiskey. HE gets into the truck and drives off.

INT. - HOUSE - LATER - ROSA LEE GETTING SUPPER - LATE AFTERNOON

A pick-up truck drives up. ROBERT and JAKE are there. SHE looks outside.

ROBERT
(Calling to her)
Hello, Mrs. Sledge.

ROSA LEE
Hello.

ROBERT
You don't remember me?

ROSA LEE
No, I don't

ROBERT
I came by the other day to
meet your husband. I'm
with a band that plays
around here.

ROSA LEE
Oh, yes, now I remember
you. How have you been?

EXT. - HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

ROSA LEE comes out the door. ROBERT is out of the truck.

ROBERT
Pretty well. And yourself?

ROSA LEE
I've got no complaints

ROBERT
Is Mr. Sledge around?

ROSA LEE
No he's not. To tell you
the truth I don't know where
he is. And I don't know
just at the moment when he'll
be back. Can I give him a
message for you?

ROBERT
Oh, no. I just wanted to holler
at him. If he was here. We're
playing a dance near here this
Saturday and I wondered if we
could leave one of our posters
with you

ROSA LEE
Sure.

ROBERT gets a poster out of the truck and hands it to her.

ROBERT
Thanks.

HE starts for the truck.

ROSA LEE
Do either of you
read music?

ROBERT
Sure, I do.

ROSA LEE
I wonder if you have time to
do me a favor? My husband
found one of his old songs.
It's not much of one, you know,
but he showed it to me and I
kind of wanted to learn it and
surprise him by singing it for
him.

ROBERT
Sure. When?

ROSA LEE
Right now, I guess. Let me
get it.

SHE goes inside. They get out of the truck. SHE comes
outside.

ROSA LEE
I'd ask you in but I have to
keep an eye out for Mac. He'd
kill me if he knew I'd showed
this to anybody. It's just that
I wanted to learn it to surprise
him. You know...

ROBERT
Sure.

He looks at it.

When did he write this?

ROSA LEE
Oh, a long time ago. I don't know
how long ago. He never said. All
he said...

Robert has begun humming to
himself trying to read the music.
Rosa Lee doesn't finish her sen-
tence. She watches him. Jake
looks over Robert's shoulder.

INT. - HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT - SONNY AND ROSA LEE
are in the house. She is looking at the music, still
trying to figure out the piece.

SONNY
I wonder where Mac is?

ROSA LEE
I don't know.

SONNY
He's older than you are. He's
fifteen years older than you.

ROSA LEE
That's no secret, Sonny.

SONNY

I didn't know it until they told me at school.

ROSA LEE

I would have told you if you had asked me.

SONNY

Was my daddy older than you?

ROSA LEE

Two years. I was sixteen when we got married. Had you at seventeen. I was a widow at eighteen.

SONNY

How come he went to Vietnam?

ROSA LEE

He got drafted. He didn't know I was going to have you until after the army got him. He was too manly to try to get out then.

SONNY

Boy at school says his daddy told him all they learned in Vietnam was to take dope. Do you think that's right?

ROSA LEE

I don't know, Sonny. I hope not.

SONNY

Do you think my daddy took drugs?

ROSA LEE

No, I don't think so.

SONNY

Kids at school take drugs.

ROSA LEE

Don't you ever let me hear of you taking them. I'll have your hide if I do. You hear me?

(He looks at her.)

SONNY

What are you so mad about?

ROSA LEE

Never mind that. You just pay attention to me about them drugs.

(He starts out)

ROSA LEE

Where are you going?

SONNY

I don't know. I sure don't want to stay around you.

ROSA LEE

I'm sorry, Sonny. Come here to me. I didn't mean to get so excited. It's a terrible responsibility being a mother, you know.

He goes to her. She holds him. She hums a bit of a song as she holds him.

SONNY

What song is that?

ROSA LEE

That's a song Mac wrote.

SONNY

I wish he'd come on home. Where do you think he is?

ROSA LEE

I don't know Sonny. Your guess is as good
as mine.

She holds him and begins again to hum the song.

EXT. - HIGHWAY - NIGHT - MAC drives down the highway past the filling station. HE can see the lights on in the house. HE continues on. HE turns around and goes back past the house, again continuing on.

INT. - HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT - ROSA LEE and SONNY are watching television.

SONNY
I'm going to bed.

SONNY starts to walk away.

SONNY
Where do you think
Mac is?

ROSA LEE
I don't know.

SONNY
Wake me up when he
gets here.

ROSA LEE
All right.

SONNY leaves.

SONNY
Good night

ROSA LEE
Good night.

SHE continues watching the T.V. for a beat and then turns it off.

SONNY
(Calling from other room)
Is he here?

ROSA LEE
No.

SONNY
(Calling)
Why did you turn off
the T.V. then?

ROSA LEE
Because I'm sick
of it.

SONNY
Are you going to bed?

P.55

ROSA LEE
Yes.

SONNY
When?

ROSA LEE
Soon. Now go on to sleep.

She goes to the window and looks out. She hears a car in the distance. She stands watching as it gets closer and then speeds on by. She goes outside.

EXT. - YARD - ROSA LEE comes out of the house - NIGHT

It is a clear Texas night. She looks up at the sky and then she walks to the road and looks in both directions. A car comes round the station but soon whizzes past. She walks anxiously up and down the road. She starts down the road, thinking momentarily she might go looking for him then realizes the futility of it. She goes back into the house.

INT. - HOUSE - NIGHT - ROSA LEE enters. She turns out the lights in the living room. She opens the door to her son's room.

INT. - SONNY'S ROOM - NIGHT - She enters. He is sound asleep and snoring slightly. She goes quietly over to his bed and looks down at him and then goes over to the bureau and sees the picture of her first husband, his father. She takes it up and looks at it and then puts it back on the bureau and then goes out.

EXT. HIGHWAY - MAC in the truck. He again drives past the filling station and the house. HE continues on.

INT. - BEDROOM - NIGHT - ROSA LEE enters the bedroom. She kneels by the bed and says her prayers and then she undresses and gets into bed. She lies in bed listening; she hears a car. She gets out of bed and runs to the window. She hears it slow down and turn into the driveway. She hurries back into bed and lies in the dark listening. She hears the car stop. She closes her eyes and pretends to be asleep. She hears the car door open and then shut. She hears the front door open and someone come into the living room. Then there is silence, and she opens her eyes listening. She hears footsteps again and she closes her eyes. The door to the room opens and

we see Mac enter the room. He stands inside the door. He comes into the room. He begins to undress. He goes over to his side of the bed and stands looking out the window. Then turns and looks over at her. She opens her eyes and looks up at him.

ROSA LEE
Mac? Is that you?

MAC
Yes.

ROSA LEE
What time is it?

MAC
Late. (A pause.) I'm not drunk. I bought a bottle, but I didn't get drunk. I poured it all out. I didn't have one drink.

ROSA LEE
Did you have anything to eat?

MAC
Nope.

ROSA LEE
Are you hungry?

MAC
I guess so.

Rosa Lee gets out of bed.

ROSA LEE
Come on. I'll get you something to eat.

She puts a robe on and goes out to the kitchen. He follows.

INT. - KITCHEN - ROSA LEE enters followed by MAC.

ROSA LEE
How hungry are you?

MAC
I'm not very hungry.

ROSA LEE
Want some eggs?

MAC
No.

ROSA LEE
Some chili?

MAC
No. A little soup will do me.

She opens a can of soup. She
heats it at the stove.

ANGLE - MAC

MAC
I rode by here six or seven
times. I could see you all
sitting in here watching t.v.
Did you see me ride by?

ROSA LEE
No.

MAC
I rode all over town tonight.
Started twice for San Antonio,
turned around and came back.
Started for Austin, started for
Dallas. Then turned around and
came back.

She takes the soup off the oven,
puts it in a bowl.

ROSA LEE
You know that song you took over
to that man in Austin.

MAC
Yes.

ROSA LEE
You remember those four boys had
a band that came by to see you the
other day?

MAC

Yes.

ANGLE - ROSA LEE

ROSA LEE

Well, two of them came by here after you were gone and left off a poster. (She points to it.) I asked them if they could read music and one of them could and so I asked if they would teach me that song of yours as I thought I would surprise you by singing it for you when you got home. I told them you wrote it a long time ago and you didn't like it, but I thought the words were pretty and I wanted to hear what the music was like and so one of them sang it for me.

ANGLE - MAC

I think it's pretty song, Mac and so does he - and he was wondering if you would let him and his band play it. (A pause.) I said I couldn't answer that. He'd have to ask you. (A pause.) I said I would ask you. I said it was an old song and you might not....

MAC (Interrupting)

It's no old song. I only wrote it last week. That's why I got so upset when Harry said he didn't like it.

(He goes into the bedroom. He comes out with a small trunk.)

I been writing them all along. I got even more in here. (A pause.) Did you say the boy liked the song?

ROSA LEE

He said he did. I sure liked it. What are the names of the other songs?

MAC

One is called, "God Has Forgiven Me, Why Can't You", and one is called, "The Romance Is Over."

(He opens the trunk and we can see sheet music inside.)

There they are. You can look at them. But don't be showing them to anybody or telling them about them. I don't want them boys running me crazy. (A pause.) Did you learn the song?

ROSA LEE

Yes, I did.

MAC

Let me hear you sing it.

ANGLE - ROSA LEE

She sings it, sweetly and sincerely, but she is still not too sure of the words or the tune.

ROSA LEE

I think that's how it went.
Is that how it went?

MAC

It sure is.

ROSA LEE

I wish I could read music. How did you learn to read music?

ANGLE - MAC

MAC

I had an Auntie taught me. We had an old half busted piano and she sat me down at that piano all one summer when I came in from the fields and she taught me.

(He gets his guitar. He plays a little.)

I've been missing my music. I've been missing singing.

MAC (Con'td)

I may not be any good anymore, but that don't keep you from missing it.

He plays a little bit of the song she has learned as if trying to make up his mind about its value.
SONNY comes out.

SONNY

When did you get home?

ROSA LEE

He got here a little while ago.

SONNY

You said you were going to wake me.

ROSA LEE

I forgot.

Mac continues singing. We sense now he is enjoying it.
SONNY listens for a beat.

SONNY

Good night.

ROSA LEE

Good night.

SONNY goes on back to bed. MAC continues singing and playing. He pauses and looks up at ROSA LEE.

MAC'

I don't care if you give that song to those kids to play.

ROSA LEE

All right.

He continues playing, HE starts to sing the song. He pauses.

MAC

Sing it with me.

ROSA LEE

All right. (THEY start to sing together. THEY sing a few phrases.
ROSA LEE cries.

ROSA LEE

I'm sorry. I just got nervous tonight.

HE puts his arm around her. HE continues singing.

INT. - COUNTRY DANCE HALL- NIGHT
ROBERT AND THE BAND are playing. There are about TWENTY COU-
PLES dancing or at the tables.

EXT. - DANCE HALL
SUE ANNE and her musician friend, HARRIS MENEFEE, are in her
car. HE is drunk. HARRIS starts out
of the car.

SUE ANNE
I don't want to go in there. I
want to go back to the hotel.

HARRIS
Just one more drink.

SUE ANNE
Have the drink here in the car.

HARRIS
I don't want to drink in the car.
I want a drink in there.

HE goes out and starts for the DANCE HALL. SHE follows after
HIM.

SUE ANNE
All right, but you better not pass
out on me. If you do, I'm leaving
you out here and you can just get
back the best way you can.

INT. - DANCE HALL - NIGHT
SUE ANNE AND HARRIS enter. THEY go to a table.

HARRIS
I'm going to get some set ups. (HE
goes toward the bar.)

INT. - DIXIE'S HOTEL ROOM
SHE AND HARRY are there.

HARRY
Come on, honey. Time for bed.

DIXIE
No. I won't go to bed until my
baby is home and safe. I know who
she's with, you know. I'm gonna
warn that musician one more time

DIXIE (Cont'd)

P.62

to stay away from her or I'm gonna fire him. (A pause.) Oh, it's always something..

HARRY

I'm almost sorry I told you about them, but I thought you should know.

DIXIE

I'm glad you did. (A pause.) What was the name of that damn song Mac sent me?

HARRY

I forget.

DIXIE

Let me see it.

HARRY

I took it back to him like you told me to.

DIXIE

Wasn't any good, was it?

HARRY

I didn't think so. Not for you, any way..

DIXIE

What do you mean, not for me? You think it's good for somebody?

SUE ANNE enters.

Were you out with that musician again?

SUE ANNE

Yes.

DIXIE

I told you not to see him anymore.

SUE ANNE

I told you I was going to. I'm going to be a singer and he's going to help me.

DIXIE

How are you going to be a singer. You have to have a voice, you know, to be a singer.

SUE ANNE
I have a voice.

DIXIE
You do not. You have no voice
at all. None.

SUE ANNE
Of course, you don't think so.
You're jealous of me,
because I'm young and you're old.
But I'm going to show you I can
sing every bit as good as you can.

SHE goes into her room, slamming the door.

DIXIE
Harry, tell her I said to march
herself back out here. (HE goes
to the door and tries to open it.)

HARRY
It's locked.

DIXIE goes to it. SHE pounds on the door.

DIXIE (Screaming)
Sue Anne. Sue Anne. Open the
door. You hear me? Open the door...

EXT. STREET IN TRAVIS - A SMALL TEXAS TOWN.
ROBERT AND HIS FRIENDS drive their car slowly down the street.
THEY see MAC coming out of a grocery store with a package.

ROBERT
There he is. (HE calls and waves.)
Hey, Mr. Sledge...

MAC looks up and sees them and waves back. ROBERT parks his
truck. HE AND HIS FRIENDS get out and go over to MAC.

ROBERT
Remember us?

MAC
Sure. How are you?

ROBERT
Pretty good. We went out to the
filling station looking for you and
your wife said you were in town.

ROBERT
We've been playing that song
you wrote. I wish you could
come around some night and
hear us play.

MAC
Well, I might do that one of
these nights.

JAKE
Can we buy you a cup of coffee?

MAC
Sure.

THEY go towards the cafe.

INT. - CAFE - MAC and the four YOUNG MEN enter. THEY
go to a booth. A WAITRESS comes up to them.

WAITRESS
What'll it be?

JAKE
Give me a bottle of Pearl.

MAC
Coffee for me.

ROBERT
Coffee for me.

HENRY
Beer. (SHE goes.)

ANGLE - ROBERT

ROBERT
You know we record every now and
then. We sell enough to break
even, so the record company is
always willing to try us again.
I'm the business manager.

MAC
I remember your saying so.

ROBERT
I call on all the stations--talk
to the disc jockeys to see if
they will play our records. I've
been doing this now for four years
and I've gotten to know some of
these boys pretty well.

ANGLE - MAC as he listens.

ROBERT (Cont'd)

We were going to record a song I wrote and a song Jake wrote, but I was talking to some of my friends at the radio stations, telling them about this song you let us play of yours and they said we should try to talk you into letting us record that one...(A pause.) Of course, they thought the best idea would be to try to get you to give us another song, too, and then my friends in the radio station..

MAC

I do have another song that's free and clear. Come by the house and I'll give it to you.

ROBERT

Thanks.

THE WAITRESS brings the coffee and beer.

ROBERT, JAKE, HENRY AND BERTIE exchange glances.

ANGLE - ROBERT

ROBERT

Mr. Sledge...(He pauses.) We haven't told you the exact truth. You see we've been at this four years now. Everybody is married but me. Jake has a little boy, five, and we have to travel all over the state to get engagements. They all overbook, you know, and last Friday and Saturday we arrived over in South Texas and found they couldn't use us.

ANGLE - MAC

as he listens.

ROBERT (Cont'd)

We didn't clear but a hundred dollars apiece last week and that don't hardly pay for our gas any more.

MAC

Get out of it boys while you're still young. It is a no good business. It is a rotten business.

ROBERT

Well, sir. You see we made three recordings already, but I haven't exactly told you the truth about that either. They did break even, but even so, they won't record us again.

MAC

Well, that's all right. The world is not going to end. Maybe it is the best thing that can happen to you.

ROBERT

But like I said we heard last week they would record us if we recorded two of your songs.

MAC

You have my permission. I told you that.

ROBERT

Yessir. But it's just not your songs. They want you to sing them.

MAC

Who does?

ROBERT

The record company.

MAC

What record company?

ROBERT

The Aztec.

MAC

Never heard of it.

ROBERT

Yessir. It's just a small Houston outfit, but they do a pretty good job.

MAC

How do you make it on a hundred dollars a week?

ROBERT

We all have other jobs. Jake is in construction. I'm a substitute teacher.

MAC

How old are you?

ROBERT

I'm 27. Jake is 28. Henry is 29. Bertie is 27.

MAC

What do your wives feel about all this?

JAKE

They're behind us all the way.

BERTIE (Laughing)

Most of the time.

MAC'

Do they go around to the dances with you?

JAKE

No more. They used to, but they've gotten tired of it.

MAC

They work, too?

JAKE

Yessir.

MAC

My God. That's no life. This is a better life. I do a day's work. I eat my supper. I go to bed. I see my wife every day. (A pause.) That's no life travelling around all the night.

ROBERT
It's the life we want.

MAC
I guess so. Let me think
about it.

ROBERT
Yessir. (A pause.) It would
sure mean a lot to us. You
understand that. It would
be a real incentive for us.

MAC
Suppose my record don't sell
no better then your others.
What will you do then? Will
you quit then?

ROBERT
No, sir. We're not going
to quit.

MAC
What will make you quit?

ANGLE - ROBERT

ROBERT
I don't know, sir. I guess if
we can't get any more dates
to play and can't make any
kind of living at it, then
we'll quit.

ROBERT
We've had some success, you know.

JAKE
Oh sure, we've had some success.

BERTIE
We're the most popular band
in the San Marcos area. We
get dates in South Texas and
North Texas.

ROBERT
I've told him all that, Bertie.

MAC
When do you rehearse?

ROBERT
We don't have any definite time.
Whenever we can take off from
our day jobs.

A MAN and a WOMAN drive up. ROSA LEE comes out of the
house to wait on them.

ANGLE - MAC

MAC
Let me think it over. I may
give it a try with you just
to see how it sounds to me. I
ain't promising nothing, you
understand, and if I don't like
the way it sounds, we'll just
back away from it. If I
decide to give it a try, can
one of you come over here and
take me to where you're re-
hearsing? We only got the one
truck and I don't want to leave
Rosa Lee out here without a car.

MAC
Give me a couple of days to
think it over.

ROBERT
Yessir.

MAC starts out.

THE MAN and THE WOMAN whisper together and then THE WOMAN
calls out to MAC as HE passes.

WOMAN
Mister. (He comes over to her.)
Were you really Mac Sledge?

MAC
Yes, Ma'm. I guess I was.

HE exits.

EXT. - FILLING STATION. LATE AFTERNOON. SONNY comes out of the house. Sue Anne, 18, is there in a flashy new car. SONNY goes to her.

SUE ANNE
Is this where Mac Sledge lives?'

SONNY
Uh. Huh.

SUE ANNE
Is he here?

SONNY
No.

SUE ANNE
I'm his daughter. Could you tell me where he is?

SONNY
I'll ask my Mama .

INT. _ HOUSE - ROSA LEE is there. SONNY enters.

SONNY
You know who that is out in the car?

ROSA LEE
No.

SONNY
That's Mac's daughter.

ROSA LEE goes to the window and looks out. SHE goes outside.

EXT. FILLING STATION - LATE AFTERNOON - ROSA LEE comes out of house.

ROSA LEE
Hello. Mac is in town. He should be here in a little. Won't you come inside and wait for him?

ANGLE - SUE ANNE

SUE ANNE
Who are you?

ROSA LEE
I'm his wife. Rosa Lee.

SUE ANNE
Was that his son?

ANGLE - ROSA LEE

ROSA LEE
No, that is my son. I was married before, too.

EXT. HIGHWAY - MAC is in his truck driving home.

INT. LIVING ROOM - ROSA LEE AND MAC'S HOUSE. ROSA LEE is there with SUE ANNE. MAC enters. HE AND SUE ANNE look at each other.

SUE ANNE

I recognize you. Do you recognize me?

MAC

Yes, I do.

SUE ANNE

How did you recognize me?

MAC

I just did.

ROSA LEE gets up.

ROSA LEE

You all excuse me. Come on,
Sonny.

THEY leave.

SUE ANNE

You've changed. You don't look like your pictures any more.

MAC

Don't I? Well, God knows when the last picture of me was taken.
(A pause.)

It don't make a whole lot of difference about this, but I did try once in a while to get in touch with you. I wrote a few letters. Did you ever get them?

SUE ANNE

No.

MAC

Well, your Mama didn't have to give them to you. The courts gave her complete jurisdiction. And quite rightly, I guess, considering my state at the time. (A pause.)
Are you still going to school?

· ANGLE - SUE ANNE

SUE ANNE

No, I've finished. I've been off at boarding school. I'd like to stay home for awhile. If I had a home. No one is at the house in Nashville for more then two weeks at a time. Mama is always off touring.

ANGLE - MAC

MAC

You're welcome here. Any time you want to come.

ANGLE - SUE ANNE

SUE ANNE

Thank you. To tell you the truth I don't think I'd like it here too well.

SUE ANNE

All of my schools have been out in the country. I want to live in a city for awhile.

MAC

Sure.

SUE ANNE

Mama says I can travel with her as long as I want to, and I might do that. If we don't kill each other in the meantime. I told Mama I was coming here. She told me she would have me arrested if I did. But Harry reminded her that I was eighteen now and she had no jurisdiction over me any longer. (A pause.) Mama said you tried to kill her once.

ANGLE - MAC

MAC

I did.

SUE ANNE

Why did you try to kill her?

MAC

I don't know. She got me mad some way. I was drunk...

ANGLE - SUE ANNE

SUE ANNE

Some one told Mama the other night you were the best country and Western singer they ever heard. Mama threw a glass of whiskey in her face. She said they were just saying that to spite her. Margaret says you were.

MAC

Margaret?

SUE ANNE

Her secretary. Mama treats her like dirt and Margaret doesn't like her at all. She would tell me about you every

SUE ANNE (Cont'd)
chance she would get.

MAC
She never knew me.

SUE ANNE
No, but she knew about you.
She has all your records. Every-
time I went over to her apartment
she would want to play them for
me. She'd get mad when I'd tell
her I didn't want to hear them. I
just didn't like that kind of music.
You ought to be proud of him, she'd
say. He's your daddy. I can't help
that. I just don't like that kind
of music. I'm not a hillbilly.
I'm not a cowgirl. Neither am I,
she said, but it's my favorite music
in the whole world, and he's my fa-
vorite singer and if you ever see
him, tell him that for me. And I
promised her I would. So now I've
kept my word to her. I've told you.

MAC
Thank you.

SUE ANNE
And she said tell him I hope he'll
write songs and make records again
one day. She said to tell you that
a lot of people had not forgotten you.

MAC
That would be nice if it were true.

SUE ANNE
Do you think you ever will sing again?

ANGLE - MAC

MAC
I think about it once in awhile.
Sometimes I think I'd like to earn
a little money again to make things
a little easier around here, to help
out if you ever needed anything..

ANGLE - SUE ANNE

SUE ANNE

I don't need any money, Mama set up a trust fund for me out of all the royalties she ever earned singing the songs you wrote. I can buy myself anything I want.

(A pause)

Anything I've got has come from your music.

ANGLE - MAC

MAC

I'm happy for that. (A pause.) Any way it wasn't just my music. It was your Mama singing it, too. You mustn't forget that. (A pause.) Will you have supper with us?

ANGLE - SUE ANNE

SUE ANNE

Thank you. No. I have a date tonight. He's playing in Mama's band. We have to sneak around, because Mama don't like him.

MAC
You be careful.

SUE ANNE
Of what?

MAC
Well...

SUE ANNE
Do you want to meet him? He
wants to meet you.

MAC
Well, I don't think that's such
a good idea. I really wouldn't
want your Mama to think I was
ganging up on her behind her back.

SUE ANNE
I'll tell her I'm bringing him
out here.

ANGLE - MAC

MAC
I really don't think you better.
She would just think I was trying
to get back at her, and I really
don't mean her any harm now.

ANGLE - SUE ANNE

SUE ANNE
You know you've never spoken my
name once since I've been here.
Don't you know my name?

ANGLE - MAC

MAC
Sure I know your name. I've just
been kind of figuring out to myself
what I ought to call you. When you
were a little girl, I used to call
you Sister. I started to call you
that this time when I saw you, but
I didn't know if it would mean any-
thing to you or not. Or if you'd
remember my doing that. (A pause.)
How long are you going to be in Texas?

SUE ANNE
We leave after she plays
Houston and Corpus.

MAC
Where do you go from there?

SUE ANNE
Shreveport. (She gets up.)
I have an hour's ride ahead
of me. I'm glad to have seen
you.

ANGLE- MAC

MAC

I'm glad to have seen you. You're a fine looking girl.

SUE ANNE

Thank you.

MAC

Write to me sometimes.

ANGLE - SUE ANNE

SUE ANNE

I will. You write to me.

(She starts away. A pause.)

There was a song you used to sing to me, I think. Something about a dove. Mama said she never heard you sing it to me. I think it went; "The wings of a snow white dove -- He sends his something, something love"

MAC

Yes, I did sing it to you.

SUE ANNE

I thought so.

He follows her outside. EXT - House - Sue Anne comes out followed by Mac. He follows her to her car. She gets in and she starts the motor.

SUE ANNE

So long.

MAC

So long. Take care of yourself.

She drives on. He watches for a beat as the car goes on down the road.

EXT. - RIVER - LATE AFTERNOON - ROSA LEE AND SONNY are there.

SONNY

Mama, I'm getting hungry.

ROSA LEE

I know, Sonny.

SONNY

Why do we have to wait down here?

ROSA LEE

I just thought it would be the nice thing to do is all. Mac hasn't seen his daughter in a long time, and I think they should be alone.

SONNY

Don't you think she's pretty?

ROSA LEE

Yes, I do.

SONNY

Is she rich?

ROSA LEE

I don't know, honey.

SONNY

She looks rich. She don't look like Mac. Do you think she looks like Mac?

ROSA LEE

To tell you the truth I didn't look at her too good. I didn't want her to think I was staring at her.

MAC appears.

ANGLE - ROSA LEE as SHE sees him.

THEY start back to the house. There is a squaking of geese overhead.

SONNY

Look at the geese going South for
the winter. Where do they land?

MAC

Down on the coast.

ROSA LEE

I bet you were surprised to see
your daughter.

MAC

I was.

ROSA LEE

She seems like a very nice girl.

MAC

Yes, she does.

ROSA LEE

How long is she goin' to be around
these parts?

MAC

She leaves for the coast, too, with
her mother day after tomorrow.
(Singing half to himself.) "On
the wings of a snow, white dove
he sends his pure, sweet love..."

ROSA LEE

That's a pretty song. Did you
write it?

MAC

No, it's a song I used to sing some-
times. It just came to me again
as I was walking along.

INT. - ANOTHER AUDITORIUM. DIXIE SINGING

INT. - HOTEL ROOM - SUE ANNE lying on her bed looking up at the ceiling.

INT. - COUNTRY DANCE HALL- ROBERT, JAKE AND THE OTHERS setting up for the night's work.

INT. - OFFICE - BACKSTAGE - AUDITORIUM.

HARRY is there. HARRIS MENEFFEE comes in.

HARRY

I'm going to have to fire you,
Harris.

HARRIS

Why?

HARRY

Dixie wants you fired. We both
warned you to leave Sue Anne alone.

HARRIS

O.K. I'll leave her alone.

HARRY

It's too late now. Dixie don't
want you around now.

EXT. - FILLING STATION - DAY - ROSA LEE sits back in the chair. She begins shelling butter beans. MAC is fixing a tire. HARRY drives up. MAC sees him. HARRY gets out of his car.

HARRY

Did Sue Anne come here yesterday?

MAC

Yes.

HARRY

What time?

MAC

Around five. Five thirty.
(He turns and looks at ROSA LEE.) Wouldn't you say?

ROSA LEE

Yes.

HARRY

What time did she leave?

MAC

About six. Six thirty. (He looks at ROSA LEE.) Wouldn't you say?

ROSA LEE
I reckon.

She continues shelling the
beans.

ANGLE - HARRY

HARRY
When Sue Anne was here did she
discuss any plans with you?

MAC
No.

HARRY
Have you heard from her today?

MAC
No.

HARRY
She left a note for her Mama this
morning at the hotel saying she had
eloped. Dixie is wild.

ANGLE - MAC as he listens.

HARRY (Cont'd)
She is under heavy sedation. We
may have to cancel her show tonight.
She's spoiled her rotten you know.
I don't know what she expects. Any
way, It's not the end of the world.
She's eighteen. Lots of women are
married at eighteen. Have children,
too. Like I told Dixie, she was
married at eighteen. Of course, you
know all about that, don't you?

MAC
Yes, I guess I do.

ANGLE - HARRY

HARRY
I'm fond of the kid myself. She's
likeable, you know. But I can't
help feeling marriage might be the
best thing for her. It will give
her some sense of responsibility.
She never had to assume the least
bit, you know. Never.

MAC
What is the boy like she's married to?

HARRY

Boy? He's a man. He's
been married three times.

ANGLE - MAC as he listens.

HARRY

If she gets in touch with
you by any chance, tell her to
call her mother.

MAC

All right. What's the name
of the man she married?

HARRY

Menefee. Harris.
I'll leave our itinerary
here with you.

HE hands it to MAC. MAC takes it.

HARRY

Call us collect. Oh, by
the way, I felt bad that I
spoke so tactlessly about
your song the other day. It
worried my conscience all the
way back to Austin.

MAC

That's all right.

HARRY

You know, I can't promise anything really, but I brought a check by for five hundred dollars and I'll take the song back to Nashville with me and I'll get some of my friends to work out a good, slick arrangement and at least you can hear it done by good solid professionals.

ANGLE - MAC

MAC

What's the five hundred dollars for?

HARRY

It's just a gesture of good will. I'm likely not going to be able to do anything with the song but I thought because of our long association and our friendship over the years--that I owed it to you to try.

MAC

You don't owe me anything. I've other plans for the song right now.

HARRY

What?

MAC

I'm just thinking at present. Nothing definite.

ANGLE - HARRY

HARRY

I see. Just thinking?

MAC

Just thinking.

HARRY

Well, I'm glad you've got offers. Want to tell me about them? I know every angle of this business.

ANGLE - MAC

MAC

There's no offers. There's just some young boys starting out in the business and they heard the song. They like it and they played it and now they want me to make a record of it with me singing.

TWO SHOT - HARRY AND MAC

HARRY

What label?

MAC

Aztec.

HARRY

My God! What in the world is that? Never heard of it.

MAC

Neither did I. Anyway, if I do anything with the song, that's what I'm going to do.

ANGLE - HARRY

HARRY

Do you have others?

MAC

Yes.

HARRY

Can I see them?

MAC

Nope.

HARRY

Aw, come on, Mac.

MAC

No, goddamn it, Harry. Don't you understand English. I told you I don't want to show them to you.

HARRY

Why?

MAC

Because I don't want to. So stop bugging me.

HARRY

You can't get sore at me for asking.

MAC

Let's change the subject, Harry.

HARRY

Well, if you change your mind, you know where to get me.

HARRY drives away.

TWO SHOT - MAC AND ROSA LEE

MAC

You were only seventeen when you got married?

ROSA LEE

Yes.

ANGLE - MAC

MAC

Sue Anne has money, you know.
Dixie started a fund for her out of
the royalties she got singing the
songs I wrote. That makes me feel
better knowing she has some to do
on. And Dixie was only eighteen when I
married her. But I was only seventeen when
I married the first time.

ROSA LEE

You never told me you were married
before Dixie.

MAC

No? I thought I'd told you everything
about me.

ROSA LEE

You never told me that.

MAC

I got married at seventeen.
I was trying to get started in
the business. I was singing
in any honky tonk or bar that
would let me through the door.

ANGLE - ROSA LEE

As she listens.

MAC (Cont'd)

I wandered from town to town--
from city to city, looking for
places to sing, finding any kind
of work I could in the day to
keep alive so I could sing and
play at night. Finally, Lois,
that was my first wife's name,
couldn't stand it. She went home.

ANGLE - MAC

MAC (Cont'd)

I went back six months later
looking for her and I found her
and she was living with another
man and she said she wanted a
divorce so I gave it to her. I
swore I'd never marry again. Then
I met Dixie and I changed my
mind. 'I was making a few records
by then and she was singing when
I met her and she said she would
give it up as soon as she married,
but then she recorded a song of
mine and she done well with it and
she said she wanted to sing for
five years and get it out of her
system. That never happened.
(He sings.) "On the wings of a
snow, white dove--He sends his pure,
sweet love; A sign from above; On
the wings of a dove.")

(He goes over to her and
kisses her.)

I'm glad you married me. I would
have been nothing if you hadn't

MAC (Cont'd)
married me when you did.

ROSA LEE
Oh, go on..

MAC
I didn't have any fight left
in me.

ROSA LEE
Oh, sure you did.

MAC
No, I didn't, but I'm beginning
to breathe again now. I'm be-
ginning to breathe again.

THE ANGLE WIDENS
As the school bus pulls up. SONNY gets off the bus.

MAC
I'm going to call those boys and
tell them I'm going to make that
record with them.

HE goes inside.

CLOSE SHOT - SONNY AND ROSA LEE

SONNY goes to the soft drink machine and gets a drink.
HE opens it.

ROSA LEE
How was school?

SONNY
Pretty fair.

THE ANGLE WIDENS as MAC comes out. He sits down beside them.

ROSA LEE
Did you get the boys?

MAC
Yes, I did.

ROSA LEE
I bet they were happy to hear from you.

MAC
I guess so. I agreed to sing at a couple of places with them before we record, so we can have a chance to work together. I'll take you and Sonny with me.
(A pause.)
Sonny, is it this Sunday you get baptized?

SONNY
Yes.

MAC
Well, I've decided to get dipped along with you.

SONNY
You mean it?

MAC
Yes, I do.

INT. DIXIE'S HOTEL BEDROOM.
SHE is there. HARRY enters.

DIXIE
Did you find Mac?

HARRY
Yes.

DIXIE
Did he hear from her?

HARRY
No.

DIXIE
Do you think he's telling the
truth?

HARRY
I think so. He said he'd be in
touch with us if he heard anything.

DIXIE
Has anybody in the orchestra
heard from them?

HARRY
No.

DIXIE
Do you know if he has any money?

HARRY
I doubt it. He spent every cent
he made.

DIXIE
Thank God, I've got it fixed so
she can't touch her trust fund
without my permission. I give
the marriage a week. How long
do you give it?

HARRY
I don't know, Dixie.

DIXIE

Well, don't you at least have an opinion?

HARRY

Not about that.

DIXIE

You know what has just come to me?

HARRY

What?

DIXIE

Mac is lying to you.

HARRY

Why would he lie to me?

DIXIE

To spite me. I bet he knows where she is and just won't tell us out of spite. He's getting back at me because I wouldn't sing his old no good song. Does he look terrible?

HARRY

He looks all right. Kind of down and out.

DIXIE

Who is he married to?

HARRY

I forget her name.

DIXIE

Sue Anne says she's young. She said she was sweet looking. Did you find her sweet looking?

HARRY

To tell you the truth I didn't pay a whole lot of attention to her.

SAN MARCOS REHEARSAL HALL - DAY
ROBERT AND JAKE are there.

ROBERT
Are you nervous?

JAKE
A little. Are you?

ROBERT
Yes.

BERTIE AND HARRY enter with their instruments.

BERTIE
Good morning.

THEY take out their instruments.

HARRY
What are we gonna do?

ROBERT
What do you mean what are we
gonna do? We are going to re-
hearse just like we do every day.

BERTIE
Are we going to wait for him
until we start?

ROBERT
No. We're going to start re-
hearsing and when he gets here,
we'll stop and rehearse with him.

THEY begin to tune up their instruments.

EXT. - HIGHWAY - DAY
MAC in pick up truck.

INT. - REHEARSAL HALL SAN MARCOS - DAY
THE YOUNG MEN are rehearsing. MAC walks in. THEY see him and
stop playing. ROBERT goes over to him.

ROBERT
It's quite an honor to have you
here, sir.

MAC
Thank you.

THEY shake hands.

HE starts toward the OTHERS.

Good morning.

OTHERS
Good morning.

ROBERT
How would you like to rehearse, sir?

MAC
I tell you one thing. I want
you to cut out this "sir" busi-
ness. You make me feel like your
grand daddy.

ROBERT
Yes, sir. I mean..(He laughs)
Yes. (They all laugh.) What would
you like to do?

MAC
Just fool around a little bit.
Let me listen to you all first.

HE and the BOYS get their instruments.

Did you boys hear of a musician, name of Menefee
getting fired out of Dixie Scott's
band a couple of days ago.

ROBERT
No, sir.

MAC
If you hear about him, let me know.

ROBERT
Yes, sir. I mean, yes.

Again THEY laugh. MAC starts to look over their music as
THEY begin to play.

EXT. - RIVER - DAY

A small crowd of people at the river's edge. The PREACHER stands in front of them preaching. A hymn is sung and a woman steps forward and the PREACHER leads her into the water, submerging her in Baptism.

ANGLE - ROSA LEE, MAC AND SONNY

As they watch. When the PREACHER finishes with the WOMAN, SONNY steps forward, is led into the water and Baptized, followed by MAC.

ANGLE - ROSA LEE

As she watches SONNY being Baptized.

ANGLE - MAC BEING BAPTIZED

ANGLE - ROSA LEE

As she watches MAC being Baptized.

ANGLE - MAC AND SONNY

As they walk toward ROSA LEE, their clothes dripping wet.

When they reach her she embraces them both.

ANGLE -- PEOPLE

coming up to the two shaking their hands.

ANGLE - CONGREGATION SINGING A HYMN.

EXT. - DANCE HALL - SAN MARCOS - NIGHT

There are a number of cars and pick-up trucks parked outside. MAC, ROSA LEE AND SONNY drive up in their pick-up truck. We can hear dance music from inside the hall. MAC, ROSA LEE AND SONNY get out of the truck and start toward the hall. They are dressed in their Sunday clothes.

INT. - DANCE HALL - NIGHT

There are twenty couples dancing and as many more sitting around tables listening to music, watching the dancers, eating, drinking and talking.

The atmosphere is very genteel and middle-class, not at all honky-tonk. There are parties and couples here from nearby colleges, young men and women from town, wives and husbands with their children. They love listening and dancing to the music and they go to these dances often and are having a good time tonight.

ROSA LEE, SONNY AND MAC enter, MAC sees an empty table and he starts for it. ROSA LEE AND SONNY follow after him. The music stops and the couples leave the dance floor and go to their tables or to the bar for more drinks and food.

ANGLE - ROBERT, BERTIE, JAKE AND HENRY

As they rest beside their instruments. ROBERT sees MAC.

ROBERT starts across the hall to MAC'S TABLE.

ROBERT
Welcome!

MAC
Thank you.

HE goes to MAC and they shake hands.

ROBERT
You ready to go to work?

MAC
I sure am.

ROBERT
Do you mind if I say a few
words first to introduce you?

MAC
No.

THEY get up. THEY start towards the bandstand.

ANGLE - MAC AND ROBERT

As they walk towards the bandstand.

ANGLE - HENRY, JAKE AND BERTIE

As they watch them approach.
They go to greet MAC and they all shake hands. Then
the musicians go to their chairs and pick up their instru-
ments. ROBERT goes to the edge of the bandstand, taking
a microphone with him. MAC sits at the edge of the
bandstand.

ANGLE - ROBERT

ROBERT

Friends, we have a little surprise
for you tonight. Mac Sledge is here
with us and he has agreed to sing
two of his songs.

(ROBERT'S introduction of MAC
should be very informal and
low-keyed.)

ANGLE - BAND

As ROBERT walks over to his instrument, takes it up and
the band begins to play its introduction.

ANGLE - MAC

As he gets up and goes to the microphone. He begins to
sing.

ANGLE - SONNY AND ROSA LEE

As they listen to MAC.

ANGLE - SONNY

As he looks around at the other people listening to MAC sing.

ANGLE - MAC

As he sings.

ANGLE - BAND

As they play.

ANGLE - MAC

As he sings..

ANGLE - CROWD

As they listen.

ANGLE - SONNY

As he punches ROSA LEE and smiles.

ANGLE - MAC

As he comes to the finish of his song. There is applause. He takes a bow. ROBERT goes up to him. They shake hands. The applause continues. The applause is warm and friendly, but nothing out of the way. Some of the people are aware of MAC's past accomplishments, and they have spread the word so there is an air of curiosity about him now from everyone.

MAC gives a wave to the crowd and then starts across the hall to ROSA LEE AND SONNY.

ANGLE - ROBERT

As he goes back to his instrument and the band begins to play their regular program of music.

ANGLE - MAC as he walks towards ROSA LEE AND SONNY.

Just before reaching the table Arabella, Anita and Corrine, the wives of Jake, Bertie and Henry surround him.

ARABELLA

Oh, Mr. Sledge. Excuse us. We just had to
tell you how much we liked your singing.

MAC

Thank you.

ARABELLA

I'm Arabella Jackson.
I'm married to Jake. And this is
Henry's wife, Corrine and Bertie's
wife, Anita.

MAC

Pleased to know you. This is
my wife, Rosa Lee and my son,
Sonny.

ARABELLA

Heh. (Anita and Corrine smile and
nod greetings.)
We just want to personally thank
you for all you've done for the
boys.

ANITA

You've given them a new lease on
life. They were getting real
discouraged.

CORRINE

Henry was about to give up the
whole thing.

ARABELLA

We all know the record is going to
do so well. We just feel it's the
break they need, and we're all so
grateful to you for all you've done.

MAC

I haven't done much. I hope we
sell a few records...

ARABELLA

Oh, I just know it will.

ANITA

We're all counting on it. All my
friends say they will buy one.

CORRINE

I look forward to hearing your
next song, too. We enjoyed the
first so much.

ANITA

We certainly did.

ARABELLA

Well, it was certainly nice to meet you folks.

MAC

Thank you.

CORRINNE.

It certainly was.

ANITA

A real privilege.

THEY smile at them again and start back to their table.

MAC joins ROSA LEE and SONNY. SONNY is grinning with obvious pride.

ROSA LEE,

That was just beautiful, Mac.

MAC

Thank you. I was nervous.

ROSA LEE

Were you?

MAC

Oh, yes.

ROSA LEE

You certainly couldn't tell it,
Could you, Sonny?

SONNY

No ma'm.

MAC

That's good. And it sounded all right?

ROSA LEE

I thought it was wonderful.

SONNY

I liked it too.

MAC

Well, thank you, Sonny. That makes
me feel real good.

There was a time I swore I'd never sing
again, and I meant it too. But now, I
don't know. Part of me wants to stay
shut up in the country and part of
me ... (a pause.) I don't know ...

ROSA LEE

Could you live that way again? Singing
every night? Travelling around?

MAC

Oh, I don't know. I think
that's a young man's world.
(A pause.) Would you like to
live that way? A different
town every night?

ROSA LEE

Oh, I don't know. I just
never thought about it.

COUPLES are going to the floor to dance.
MAC watches them.

P.108

MAC

Do you mind if your Mama and I
dance?

SONNY

No, sir.

MAC AND ROSA LEE get up and begin to dance.

ANGLE

SONNY as he watches them dancing. The music changes back
to a two step.

THE ANGLE WIDENS as a BOY, SONNY'S age, comes over to
SONNY.

BOY

That your Daddy?

SONNY

No, my step-daddy.

BOY

My mama says he was a famous
singer.

SONNY

I guess so. Is that you mama
over there?

BOY

Yes.

SONNY

Is that you daddy with her?

BOY

Nope. That's a friend of hers. My
mamma and daddy are divorced. Were
your mother and daddy divorced.

SONNY

No. He died. In Vietnam.

BOY

Did he get shot?

SONNY

I guess so.

BOY

Don't you know?

SONNY

No. I don't know how he died.

BOY

Didn't you ever ask.

SONNY

No.

The boy's mother and her friend pass by the table on their
way to the dance floor. They both have been drinking heavily

and are unsteady on their feet as they try to dance.

ANGLE - SONNY AND THE BOY as they watch the drunken couple.

BOY

I hope that guy is never my
step-daddy.

SONNY

Why? Don't you like him?

BOY

No. Do you like your step-daddy?

SONNY

Yes, I do.

BOY

Better than your own daddy?

SONNY

I never knew my own daddy.

BOY

I know mine. He's not so much either.

SONNY'S POV as he watches ROSA LEE and MAC as they dance near
his table. They smile and wave to him.

Back to Sonny at his table. He smiles and waves to THEM.

ANGLE - MAC AND ROSA LEE as the band finishes playing and they
start back to their table. Several couples come up to them and
introduce themselves and tell MAC how much they liked his singing.

INT. - RECORDING STUDIO - DAY - MAC, ROBERT, HENRY, JAKE AND BERTIE are there recording.

ANGLE - MAC

As he sings.

MAC seems less nervous and more sure of himself now.

ANGLE - STUDIO TECHNICIANS

We see it is a small unpretentious studio.

INT. - ROSA LEE AND MAC'S HOUSE - DAY
ROSA LEE is there working. There is a knock on the door
and SHE looks around to see SUE ANNE.

ROSA LEE
Come in.

SUE ANNE comes into the room.

SUE ANNE
Is my Daddy here? .

ROSA LEE
No, he's in Houston. He'll be
back later this afternoon.

SUE ANNE
I wonder if you could cash a
check for me?

ROSA LEE
How much?

SUE ANNE
A hundred dollars.

ROSA LEE
Oh, I don't think I have that
much.

SUE ANNE
The check is good.

ROSA LEE
I'm sure of that. I just don't
have that much here in the cash
drawer.

SHE goes to the cash register and opens it.

All I have is twenty five dollars.

SUE ANNE
That will help.

SHE writes a check and gives it to her.

ROSA LEE

Your Mother sent word to us that
you were married.

SUE ANNE

Yes.

ROSA LEE

What's your married name -- Menefee?

SUE ANNE

Yes.

ROSA LEE

You gonna stay around here for
awhile?

SUE ANNE

I don't know what we're going
to do. We may and we may not.

ROSA LEE

If your Daddy wants to reach you,
where can he find you?

SUE ANNE

At the Jeff Davis Hotel in Austin.

INT.- LOBBY JEFF DAVIS HOTEL - AUSTIN - DAY
MAC comes into the hotel and goes to the clerk.

MAC

Menefee.

THE CLERK looks in the register.

CLERK

First name?

MAC

Harris.

CLERK

Oh, they've gone.

MAC

Leave any forwarding address?

CLERK

No, sir. Do you know them?

MAC

Mrs. Menefee is my daughter.

CLERK

They left owing us a bill for a hundred dollars.

MAC

I'll pay it.

CLERK

Thank you.

HE goes to get the bill.

EXT. FILLING STATION - NEXT DAY.

ROBERT, JAKE, HENRY AND BERTIE drive up in their truck. THEY get out of the truck as MAC and ROSA LEE come out of the house. ROBERT has a record in his hand.

ROBERT

Here it is. (HE hands it to MAC.)

HENRY

We just heard it and we're very pleased and so is the record company.

BERTIE

They think it's going to do very well.

HENRY

Even Jake is pleased and not much pleases Jake.

MAC

Well, I'm glad you boys are pleased.

ROSA LEE

We'll have to get us a record player so we can hear it.

ROBERT

You don't have a record player?

ROSA LEE

No. We just have the t.v.
and the radio.

ROBERT

Well, you all come over to
my place right now and I'll
play it for you.

MAC

All right.

ROSA LEE

I'm dying to hear it.

ROBERT AND THE OTHERS get in their truck. HE turns the radio on.

ROBERT

Better start listening to the radio,
too, The company thinks it should
be getting some play soon on the
radio. See you later.

THEY drive on.

ROSA LEE

Are you excited, Mac?

MAC

Yes, I guess I am.

ROSA LEE

I'm so excited. I can hardly stand it.

MAC

You get in the truck. I'll
close up.

SHE goes to the truck. HE starts for the house as the phone rings.
SHE turns the radio on in the truck and begins to turn the dial ob-
viously hoping she can find her husband's song. MAC comes out.
HE goes to the truck. HE turns the music off.

MAC

That was Harry Silver. He said they got a wire this morning that Sue Anne was killed last night in an automobile accident somewhere in Northern Louisiana. I couldn't catch the name of the town.

EXT. - HIGHWAY - SAME DAY - The road to DALLAS - FORT WORTH airport. MAC AND ROSA LEE are in the pick-up truck driving down the highway.

EXT. - NASHVILLE AIRPORT - MORNING
MAC's plane has landed. We see him leaving the plane.

EXT. - NASHVILLE - MORNING - MAC in a taxi riding through the streets.

EXT. - DIXIE SCOTT'S NASHVILLE HOUSE - DAY - The taxi stops in front of the house. MAC gets out with his suitcase. He pays the driver. There are several groups of friends in the yard of the house. They watch as MAC approaches. Some of them know him and go to greet him.

1ST MAN

You have my sympathy, Mac.

MAC

Thank you.

SECOND MAN

Mine, too, Mac. It is a terrible, terrible thing.

He takes Mac's suitcase and starts for the house.

INT. - DIXIE'S HOUSE - DAY - It is a mansion, furnished expensively but with no taste. MAC enters followed by the second man with his suitcase. They come into the foyer from which they can see the living room and music room. There are pictures of Dixie and her awards all around. HARRY SILVER is in the music room talking in hushed tones to a group of people.

HE sees MAC and goes to greet him.

HARRY
I'm glad you came. It's very sad.

MAC
Yes, it is.

HARRY
We're all worried about Dixie.
She's in bed. Heavily sedated.

MAC
What about Sue Anne's husband?

HARRY
He's going to live. He's in the
hospital. It was all his fault.
He was drunk.

INT. - LIVING ROOM - DAY - A closed casket surrounded by
flowers is in the living room. HARRY takes MAC into the
room and over to the casket.

HARRY
Dixie wanted a closed casket. I
thought it would be easier on her
and everybody if the body was left
in the funeral parlor, but she in-
sisted it be brought back home.
Dixie was glad when I told her you
were coming. The minute we heard
about Sue Anne's death, she asked me
to get word to you. She told me to
take you up to Sue Anne's room, so
you could pick out something that
belonged to her, to remember her by.

(He looks at his watch.)

We don't have a whole lot of time.
Come on. I'll take you up to Sue
Anne's room.

(He starts out. MAC follows.)

INT. - HALL - DAY - HARRY enters. MAC following.

INT. - STAIRS - DAY - HARRY goes up the stairs, MAC following.

INT. - UPSTAIRS HALL - DAY - HARRY enters, MAC follows. At the center of the hall is a closed door.

HARRY (Whispering)
Dixie is in there. Would you like to speak to her?

MAC
If she wants to see me.

HARRY
Let me go in and see how she's feeling.

(He points to a door at the end of the hall.)

That's Sue Anne's room in there.

(He goes into DIXIE'S room, closing the door behind him after he enters. MAC continues down the hall toward SUE ANNE'S room.)

INT. - SUE ANNE'S ROOM - DAY - SHE hasn't spent much time here, and there is nothing much in the room that belonged to her or had any meaning for her. MAC enters. HE looks around the room. There are a few pictures on the wall of Dixie, and one of Dixie and Harry. HE sees a closet door. HE opens it. There are a few of the girl's clothes here, mostly dresses she has outgrown. HE closes the closet door. HE goes to a bureau. There is a perfume atomizer, a silver brush and comb set, a jewelry box. It's empty. HARRY comes in.

HARRY
Dixie will see you. Is there anything here you want?

Harry begins to open drawers. They are empty or half empty. There is nothing personal in any of them.

There is not much here, is there? I don't know what Dixie thought would be here. Sue Anne was never home.

HARRY (Cont'd)
Maybe Christmas or Thanksgiving
once in a while. I can't even
remember the last time she was here.

MAC
I don't have any picture of Sue Anne.

HARRY
Oh, I'll send you one.

(They start out of the room.)

INT. - DIXIE'S BEDROOM - THE SHADES DRAWN IN THE ROOM.
DIXIE IN A DRESSING GOWN IS ON THE BED. A NURSE IS
SEATED AT EITHER SIDE OF THE BED. MAC AND HARRY ENTER.
HARRY GOES OVER TO THE BED.

HARRY
Dixie? (She looks up at him.)
Mac is here to say hello to you.

DIXIE
Where is he?

HARRY
Here he is. (He beckons MAC.)
Mac, come say hello to Dixie.
She wants to see you.

(MAC goes over to the bed.)

ANGLE - DIXIE

DIXIE
Why has God done this to me, Mac?
Why has God done this to me? Oh, Jesus.
(She's crying now.) Sweet Jesus. I
tried every way in the world I could
to stop her. I said Sue Anne listen to
your Mama about this. Harry can tell you.
I begged. I pleaded. Why did she treat
me this way, Mac? Why? Why? I gave her
everything in this world she ever wanted.
I had nothing when I was her age and she
had everything that money could buy.

HARRY
Sh, Sh. Now Dixie. It's not good for
you to get excited.

DIXIE
I'll tell you one thing. That
Sonevabitch she married will not
end up with her trust fund. I want
you to call my lawyer about that Harry.
I don't want that Sonevabitch to have
a nickel of that money. (She falls back
on the bed.) Oh, Jesus. Oh, Jesus.
My little girl. (She tries to get out
of the bed.) Help me up. Somebody help
me up. I want to see her. I brought
her home to be with me one last time,
and I want to see my little girl.

(One of the NURSES moves close
to her and takes her arm.)

NURSE
Sh. Sh. Now, now.

DIXIE
Let go om me you Sonevabitch. Let
go of me.

(She jerks free and tries to
get out of the bed, and then
falls back.)

Oh, I can't go. I ain't strong enough.
I can't make it. Forgive me. Forgive
me for being weak. Forgive me. (She
falls back on the bed. She passes out.)

HARRY (Turns to MAC.)
Come on. We'd better get downstairs.
She'll be all right.

(They leave.)

INT. - LIVING ROOM - DAY - There are a few friends in the
room. MAC AND HARRY enter. Some of the people come over
to MAC and shake his hand. HARRY looks at his watch as
the undertaker and his attendants come in.

HARRY
It's time to leave for the church.

MAC and HARRY step aside
as the undertaker has the
casket taken out of the room.

HARRY (Cont'd)
You'll ride to the church with me.

HE and MAC start out of the room.

INT. - HARRY'S CAR - DAY - HARRY AND MAC are alone in
the car.

HARRY
Dixie thought to the last she would
make it to the church service, but
the doctor won't permit it. She's
been under a terrible strain. I
guess Nashville has changed a lot
since you were here last?

MAC
I guess so.

HARRY
Maybe this afternoon I can ride
you around.

(A pause.)

Did you bring any of your songs with you?

MAC
No.

HARRY
Did you make your recording?

MAC
Yes.

HARRY
How did it go?

MAC
All right.

HARRY
Has it been released?

MAC
Yes.

HARRY

What is the name of the company again?

MAC

Aztec.

Harry takes out a pen and notepad and writes the information down.

INT. - CHURCH - DAY - The church is half filled with friends. The casket is at the altar surrounded by many expensive funeral arrangements. An organ plays hymns. HARRY AND MAC enter the church and an usher takes them down the aisle to seats saved for them.

EXT. - GRAVESITE - DAY - The coffin is here covered with floral arrangements. There are twenty friends at the graveside. A Preacher holding a Bible, is near the casket.

ANGLE - MAC

As he waits at the graveside.

ANGLE - HARRY

At the edge of the crowd whispering to a friend.

ANGLE - MAC

As he waits. HARRY comes up to him.

HARRY (Whispering)

We're going to have to wait for Dixie. She just sent me word that she insists on being at the burial.

ANGLE - PREACHER - WAITING

HARRY goes up to the PREACHER and whispers something inaudibly to him.

ANGLE - MAC

HARRY comes back to MAC.

HARRY (Whispering)
I thought he should know
about the delay.

(HARRY looks toward the
entrance to the graveyard.)

Excuse me.

He walks away from MAC toward the entrance. MAC turns
and watches as he walks away.

MAC'S P.O.V.:

He sees DIXIE, dressed in deep mourning, enter the
graveyard supported by TWO ATTENDANTS. He sees HARRY
go up to them and he watches as they walk slowly towards
the grave and casket.

ANGLE - DIXIE AND HARRY

As SHE sees MAC.

DIXIE
Is that Mac, Harry?

HARRY
Yes, Honey...

DIXIE
Tell him to come here to me.
I want him to know that I forgive
him. In front of my baby's grave
I want him to know I forgive him
for everything he ever done to me.

(Calling)

Mac...I forgive you, because my
little baby girl would want me to.

HARRY
All right, Honey...Now, sh..sh..

DIXIE
Where are we...in church?

HARRY
No, baby girl. We're at the
cemetary. Now, let's be quiet,
so we can listen to the Preacher.

DIXIE
I'm a miserable sinner, Harry...

HARRY
We all are, honey. Now, sh... sh...
Listen to the Preacher.

BACK TO MAC AT GRAVESIDE

The people near him make room for DIXIE, HARRY AND THE ATTENDANTS as they come to the graveside. When they have positioned themselves near the casket, HARRY nods discreetly to the PREACHER, who, opens his Bible and reads..

PREACHER (Reading)
"I am the resurrection and the
life and he that believeth in me
shall never see death but have
life everlasting."

The PREACHER nods to casket ATTENDANTS and they begin to lower the casket. DIXIE screams and faints. Everyone turns to her.

ANGLE - DIXIE - HARRY AND THE ATTENDANTS

FRIENDS surround them as they try to revive DIXIE.

ANGLE - MAC

He stands alone by the graveside, watching the lowering of the casket.

EXT. - HOUSE AND FILLING STATION -- DAY

ROBERT drives up in his pick-up truck.
MAC comes out of the house. ROBERT gets out of the truck.

ROBERT
I was very sorry to hear about
your daughter.

MAC
I appreciate it.

MAC starts to fill up the car.

ROBERT
I can do that.

(He gets the gas pump and puts
it in the tank of the car.)

Did Rosa Lee tell you about our record?

MAC
No.

ROBERT
It's doing pretty well. In
Texas that is.

ANGLE - MAC as he listens.

ROBERT (Cont'd)
The Texas stations are giving it a
big play, of course, nothing has
happened to it yet nationally but
I am very encouraged by it's popularity
here, and I think because of that there
will be a good chance of it's making
the National Charts in time. Don't you?

MAC
I guess so. I wouldn't know what
happens down there.

ROBERT
Have you heard it played on
the radio?

MAC
No.

ROBERT
They play it all the time.

He goes to the truck and turns the radio on.

THE ANGLE WIDENS - ROSA LEE comes around the side of
the house.

Robert turns the radio dial until he finds a station
playing the song.

ROBERT
Here we are.

He listens to the song and is
obviously pleased and turns
around to see Mac's reaction.
He notices Rosa Lee then.

ROBERT
Hi, Rosa Lee.

ROSA LEE
Hi.

ROBERT
How does it sound to you, Mac?

MAC
O.K.

The song ends.
Robert begins to turn the dial.

ROBERT
I bet I can find it again. I
heard it on three different stations
driving over here.

ROBERT glances up at MAC and then at ROSA LEE.

ROBERT
I'm sorry. I shouldn't be talking about things like this now. I hope you'll forgive me, Mac. It's just that I was anxious to share our good news with you.

MAC
I appreciate it.

MAC starts around the back. ROBERT stands self-consciously watching as he disappears. ROBERT turns to ROSA LEE.

ROBERT
Here's the money I owe you for my gas. It was seven gallons.

ROSA LEE
Thanks.

ROSA LEE takes the money.

ROBERT
Tell him I'll see him towards the end of the week. We have some dates to play in East Texas tomorrow and the next day.

ROBERT gets in the truck.

ROBERT
I'll call him when I get back.

HE drives off. ROSA LEE goes around back to MAC.

MAC

I was almost killed once in a car accident. I was drunk and I ran off the side of the road and turned over four times, and they took me out of that car for dead. But I lived. And I prayed last night to know why I lived and she died, but I got no answer to my prayers. I still don't know why she died and I lived. I don't know the answer to nothing. Not a blessed thing. I don't know why I wandered out to this part of Texas drunk and you took me in and pitied me and helped me to straighten out and marry me. Why? Why did that happen? Is there a reason that happened? And Sonny's daddy died in a war and my daughter killed in an automobile accident. Why? Why? Why?

MAC looks up at the sky. HE looks across the fields. ROSA LEE watches him anxiously. Then she goes to him and holds him. In the distance we hear the school bus. SHE looks up and sees the school bus drive up the road and stop as SONNY gets off. SHE walks around the house to him.

SONNY

Where is Mac?

ROSA LEE

He's out back. He brought you a football. It's in your room.

SONNY goes into the house. SHE follows him in.

INT. - HOUSE - ROSA LEE enters. SHE turns on a radio. The station plays MAC'S record. SHE goes to a back window and looks out.

ROSA LEE'S P.O.V. SHE can see MAC working in his garden. Back to ROSA LEE at the window. SHE is about to call MAC to come and listen to the record but doesn't. SHE turns away from the window and turns the radio off, as SONNY comes out with his football.

ROSA LEE

If you go out to see Mac,
don't dog him. He needs
to be quiet.

HE starts out of the room and then pauses.

TWO SHOT - SONNY and ROSA LEE

ANGLE - SONNY

SONNY

Mama, the other night when
we were over at that dance
place, a boy asked me how my
daddy died in Vietnam. And
I didn't know. I just knew
he was killed.

(A pause.)

SONNY (Cont'd)
How was he killed Mama?

ANGLE - ROSA LEE

ROSA LEE
I don't know, honey.

SONNY
Was he killed in battle?

ROSA LEE
I don't know, Sonny.

ANGLE - SONNY

SONNY
Didn't you ever ask anybody?

ANGLE - ROSA LEE

ROSA LEE
Yes. And no one could tell me anything except he was found dead. He was alone when they found him and they didn't know how long he had been there. And so they couldn't be sure he was killed in a battle, or if he was, what battle, since there had been three in that area that week, they said, and he could have been in any one of them. Or he could have just been out walking, they said, and a sniper got him. Where would he be walking to, I asked, and they said they had no more idea than I had.

(A pause.)

He was only a boy.

ANGLE - SONNY

As he listens.

ROSA LEE (Cont'd)
He was a good boy and I think he was going to make a fine man and

ROSA LEE (Cont'd)
you would have been proud of him,
and he would have been proud of you.

EXT. - BACK YARD - GARDEN

MAC is working in the garden.
SONNY comes out the back door of the house with the football.

SONNY
Thanks for the football, Mac.

MAC
That's all right.

SONNY kicks the football high in the air and then runs towards it, trying to catch it, before it falls back to the earth. He just misses it, but tries again, kicking it higher this time.

ANGLE - MAC

MAC (Singing quietly to himself.)
"On the wings of a snow white dove
He sends his pure, sweet love
A sign from above
On the wings of a dove.."

THE ANGLE WIDENS

As he looks over at SONNY as the boy continues to play ball by himself. MAC puts his hoe down. He walks toward the boy.

MAC
Sonny..

SONNY looks up at him.

MAC
Throw me a pass..

(SONNY does so. Mac runs
for it, catching it.)

Now, you run for this.

SONNY runs across the yard as MAC throws the football and SONNY catches it laughing with delight.
ROSA LEE comes around the side of the house. SHE sees them and stands watching.

SONNY passes the ball to MAC, who kicks it then high in the air as SONNY runs for it.

ROSA LEE watches.

ROSA LEE

(Singing to herself)

"On the wings of a snow white
dove He sends his pure sweet
love, A sign from above
On the wings of a dove."

MAC and SONNY continue playing football, ROSA LEE watching as overhead, high above, geese can be seen flying on their way to the Gulf, and along the road comes a car playing the song MAC wrote.

SONNY

That's your song Mac,
isn't it?

MAC

Yes.

HE throws a pass, SONNY runs for it and they and the music continue playing as the CAMERA PULLS BACK until MAC, ROSA LEE and SONNY are dots against the Texas landscape.

FADE OUT.