

MUPPETS LIVE ANOTHER DAY

"Pilot"

Written by

Josh Gad & Edward Kitsis & Adam Horowitz

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MUPPETS LIVE ANOTHER DAY
#101
"Pilot"

INT. ATTIC - DUSK

WE OPEN ON -- an ANCIENT **MUPPET SHOW SIGN**. Then slowly pull back and through a collection of **DUSTY OLD RELICS** that are piled up, one on top of another. TAP SHOES, PROPS, and AWARDS.

An **ORANGE** hand pops into frame. DUSTS off the iconic items. We pull back to reveal **WALTER (the MUPPET)**.

He wipes the dust off of a frame and sees the Muppet gang posing together on stage from "Manhattan Melodies." Smiles.

KERMIT (O.S.)
Everything okay up there?

WALTER
Yep. Still trying to find it!

Walter looks around and spots what he's been searching for... Kermit's old **BANJO** sitting beneath a heap of other objects. He tugs on it, trying not to disturb the other items.

He manages to yank it out from underneath the pile without affecting anything else. But as he turns around, the banjo HITS the pile and it all comes crashing down on him.

Walter makes his way out of the rubble and starts sifting through the wreckage. As he places the items back, he spots a **DUSTY OLD BOOK**. He picks it up to place it back where he found it. Much to his surprise, it's not a real book at all, but a **HOLLOWED OUT SHELL** with an **OLD VHS TAPE** in it.

WALTER (CONT'D)
A VHS? I haven't seen one of these
in years.

He removes the hidden tape to reveal a **HANDWRITTEN TITLE**:

"Muppets: The Lost Chapter"

Walter looks at it curiously.

INT. STAIRWELL - KERMIT'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Walter works his way down the stairs, banjo in hand. He hands Kermit the **BANJO**. Kermit tunes it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KERMIT
Hello old friend.

He strums a familiar chord or two.

KERMIT (CONT'D)
I can't wait to surprise the gang
with this for the big show.

Kermit turns around to leave.

WALTER
Kermit... what's "Muppets, the lost
chapter?"

Kermit stops in his tracks. Does not turn around.

KERMIT
What did you say?

WALTER
"Muppets the lost chapter..."

Now Kermit turns around and looks at Walter.

KERMIT
I know that you mean well Walter,
but please forget what you saw.

WALTER
Why?

KERMIT
Because... some stories are better
left untold.

Kermit turns back around and heads out.

HOLD ON WALTER as that lands. He then opens his jacket and
takes out the VHS.

INT. ATTIC - A LITTLE LATER

Walter places the tape back onto the pile, but sees an old TV
with a VHS PLAYER attached to it. Conflicted, he plugs the
TV in and tentatively loads the tape inside of it.

WALTER
I have to know.

He hits play. STATIC-Y SNOW is soon replaced by A BOLD
WARNING.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARE YOU SURE YOU ARE READY FOR THIS?

Walter nods.

KERMIT JUST TOLD YOU EMPHATICALLY NOT TO DO THIS... YOU STILL IN?

Walter hesitates, but nods again.

OK, DON'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN YOU. HEY WALTER, CAN YOU GET ME A DIET COKE?

Walter pauses for a second, not sure what to do.

I'M JUST KIDDING. I'M A VCR, WALTER. I DON'T HAVE THE ABILITY TO DRINK DIET COKE.

NOW THE IMAGE ON THE TV switches to one of an OLD THEATER. We hear **MUSIC**.

As Walter watches, we float over his shoulder and INTO the ACTUAL TV. The grainy VHS footage fills the screen, and then resolves into a pristine image as we, and Walter, begin to watch this lost Muppet movie...

INT. GILDED OLD MANHATTAN THEATER - NIGHT

The camera makes its way over a **RAPT AUDIENCE** laughing and applauding at whatever it is they are watching, up to the **BALCONY** where **WALDORF** and **STATLER** are trying to stay awake, down to the **ORCHESTRA PIT** filled with **PENGUINS** and onto a:

TITLE CARD:

1984 OR 10 YEARS BEFORE THE BIRTH OF JUSTIN BIEBER

Off of a large glittering SIGN that reads MANHATTAN MELODIES, we pan down to see our Muppet gang back where we left them during "MUPPETS TAKE MANHATTAN."

SONG -- TBD TITLE

DURING THE COURSE OF THIS SONG (WHICH WE WILL LEARN IS THEIR FINAL BROADWAY PERFORMANCE), WE WILL CELEBRATE A MUPPET TEAM THAT HAS SPENT TEN CONSECUTIVE YEARS (FROM "THE MUPPET SHOW" TO "MUPPETS TAKE MANHATTAN") SHARING THEIR JOY WITH THE WORLD. A TRIUMPHANT BLAZE OF MUPPET MUSICAL SINGING, DANCING, AND THE FUN BRAND OF UTTER MUPPET CHAOS. WHILE THE SONG IS A PART OF THE ACTUAL "MANHATTAN MELODIES" SHOW, IT IS A META COMMENTARY ON EVERYTHING THE TEAM HAS ACCOMPLISHED WITH A FOCUS ON WHAT'S TO COME. OUR NUMBER REALLY WANTS TO SAY, "WE MADE IT, WE SUCCEEDED, AND BEST OF ALL, WE'RE STILL US."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUCCESS DIDN'T CHANGE US. I STILL LOVE YOU AND YOU STILL LOVE ME. I'M STILL CRAZY! YOU STILL BLOW THINGS UP! YOU'RE STILL A CHICKEN! I STILL TELL FUNNY JOKES! AND KERMIT, YOU'RE STILL THE BEST FROG AND BEST FRIEND WE'LL EVER HAVE."

As the song ends, the Muppets take a bow and the CURTAIN CLOSES on a rapturous AUDIENCE. The Muppets holler and celebrate. "We did it!" "I can't believe it's over!" etc.

They all gather around KERMIT.

SCOOTER

So what are we doing next Kermit!?!?

KERMIT

Um... I thought maybe we could get a quick bite?

SCOOTER

Funny. I mean, how are we following up the show?

KERMIT

Well. We did just finish a Broadway run and I thought maybe...

RIZZO

Vegas. You're right. That's a great idea.

ROBIN

You *do* have an idea, don't you Uncle Kermit?

FLOYD

I hope so dude. Stars shine bright for only so long before they burn out and explode leaving nothing but a trail of dust and radiation...you know, metaphorically.

Kermit swallows hard.

GONZO

I've already started working on my new and improved Gonz-O-ver-easy maneuver.

KERMIT

What is a Gonz-O-ver-easy maneuver?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GONZO

It's like eggs over easy but with my body. I would do it for you, but there's a chance I wouldn't make it back. Just try to include it in whatever you're working on. I'll figure out the rest.

KERMIT

But...

PIGGY

Oh Kermie! I'm so happy because I know in my heart that whatever dream you're dreaming up next will open and close on a closeup of moi.

She ~~Bear~~ pig-hugs him. It is apparent by the look on his face that he is beyond overwhelmed.

FOZZIE

If I know Kermit, whatever he has up his sleeve will be the greatest thing any of us have ever done... Isn't that right, Kermit?

The Muppets all turn to him.

KERMIT

(beat)

Trust me guys, have I ever let you down? Whatever comes next is going to be the biggest, greatest, Muppetiest thing we've ever done!

They all cheer. Kermit turns around straight into his MANAGER, a sleazy STEREOTYPICAL HOLLYWOOD TYPE who only wears SUNGLASSES indoors and will no doubt be played by BILL HADER (pending his quote). He pulls Kermit aside off stage.

INT. BACKSTAGE - THEATER - CONTINUOUS

MANAGER

Congrats on the...what do you call this?

KERMIT

A Show.

MANAGER

Right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He hands him a picture of FLOWERS. Kermit gives him a quizzical look.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

It's a gift card for flowers.

KERMIT

Thanks?

MANAGER

You know why I love you? You're the color of money. I'm kidding, or am I? So, two things. One, I finally got you that interview on "60 Minutes." Gonna be huge. Two, I set up a meeting with a hot new German music video director and he's going to pitch you something that is going to blow your socks off, assuming you have a pair. It's edgy, envelope pushing and perfect for the Muppets' next chapter.

KERMIT

None of those words describe what we do...

MANAGER

Yet. Trust me. You're going to love it.

SMASH CUT TO:

A MUSIC VIDEO. A **SYNTH** cover of RAINBOW CONNECTION. In the place of the MUPPETS are SMALL ROBOT-LIKE versions of each of the characters with a **NEON GREEN KERMIT** front and center.

The video is a fantasia of terrible 80's tropes including KEYBOARDS, BALLOONS, RAIN and an unnecessary amount of CROSS FADES. The video ends with ROBO-KERMIT slamming his ELECTRIC BANJO into the SPEAKERS in *not quite* slow motion. The screen goes black and we PULL OUT to --

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Kermit, slackjawed (or not moving, since, well, that's the Muppet equivalent of slackjawed) stares at the screen. An ECCENTRIC GERMAN DIRECTOR with a HEAVY SCARF around his neck stands next to Kermit and his manager.

DIRECTOR

Das ich ist goot, yah?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KERMIT

Um...I just don't think that's us.

DIRECTOR

No. Is not you. Ven we shoot, I dress you all up in robot costumes. Those were stand-in robots.

KERMIT

No, I mean that's not who we are.

DIRECTOR

So? I'm not cold. But I wear a scarf around my neck. We all make sacrifices for art.

MANAGER

Kermit, can I talk to you for a second?

He pulls Kermit aside as the German director does HATHA YOGA to calm down.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

Look, I know it's not what you guys are used to but maybe it's time for change.

KERMIT

But the Muppets are about love, joy, friendship and good old-fashioned singing and dancing.

MANAGER

This has singing and dancing--

KERMIT

By robots desperately trying not to short circuit in an indoor rainstorm.

MANAGER

Times are changing Kermit and if you don't change with them, your old-fashioned song and dance routine will soon become an out-of-fashion song and dance routine.

KERMIT

You're wrong. People love what we do.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KERMIT (CONT'D)

And that's why we're going to keep
doing it our way and if you can't
understand that, then maybe it's
better we go our separate ways.

As Kermit walks away, the Manager screams after him.

MANAGER

Your shtick is going to grow old.
You'll see!

DIRECTOR

(suddenly with no accent)
Um...Someone needs to pay me back
for the video.

Kermit wipes frame as he leaves, taking us to a MONTAGE --

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Kermit sits in front of a NOTEPAD feverishly writing.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Kermit sits in front of his notepad, cup of COFFEE in his
hand. Reading back what he's been working on.

INT. GYM - DAY

Kermit does a JAZZERCISE CLASS as he takes intermittent
breaks to write his next opus.

INT. STUDIO -

Kermit puts the finishing touches on his new script and
celebrates.

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

Kermit sits, notepad in one hand, banjo in the other. A
1980's clad teenager approaches Kermit on the train.

TEEN

Can I get a picture with you?

KERMIT

Sure.

The teen takes a SELFIE with a POLAROID CAMERA.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TEEN

Thanks. My dad's dad loves you.
(pointing to banjo)
What's that?

KERMIT

A banjo.

TEEN

Oh cool. Is that like a small bass?

KERMIT

No. It's like a banjo.

TEEN

What are you working on?

KERMIT

Our next big Muppet adventure.

TEEN

Huh. What's it going to be about?

KERMIT

I actually think I finally landed
on something I'm really excited
about. A big period musical mystery
involving all of the Muppets. Would
you like to hear some of it?

TEEN

Uh, no thanks. To be honest, the
Muppets aren't really my thing.
It's just a little...old fashioned
for my tastes.

Kermit is stunned by the teen's frankness. The train stops.

TEEN (CONT'D)

Well, this is my stop. Good luck
Gonzo.

As Kermit looks out into the METRO STATION, the POSTERS on
the WALLS (MTV, MAX HEDROOM, TRON) are everything he is not.
He looks down at the notepad, suddenly uncertain. As we HOLD
ON KERMIT --

LESLEY STAHL (PRELAP)

Welcome, Kermit.

INT. 60 MINUTES STUDIO - DAY

LESLEY STAHL sits opposite Kermit, the interview in progress.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KERMIT

Thank you for having me.

LESLEY STAHL

I see you brought some friends with you.

KERMIT

Yes. Just a few.

ANGLE ON -- OFFSTAGE

Somewhere in the vicinity of 100 Muppets all stand on top of each other, waving to Kermit and the camera.

BACK ON KERMIT AND LESLEY

Kermit, who sheepishly grins.

LESLEY

You're such a loyal friend. Is it ever hard to be accountable for so many peop...animals?

GONZO (O.S.)

I'm a whatever!

KERMIT

Well...um...sure...sometimes...but, it's my job.

The camera starts to pan in closer onto Kermit.

LESLEY

Do you have any fears Kermit?

KERMIT

Fears?

LESLEY

Yes. Anything you're afraid of.

KERMIT

Letting down my friends I guess.

GONZO (O.S.)

I'm a whatever!

LESLEY

So, what keeps you going?

KERMIT

Well...The dream --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LESLEY
And what exactly is the dream?

Kermit looks around, suddenly unsure of everything.

KERMIT
To bring people...joy.

LESLEY
Well, Kermit, you have certainly
done just that.
(a long beat)
So, now what?

We freeze on Kermit. This question cuts him to his core. He looks back at his friends, who all eagerly await his response.

Kermit takes a deep breath.

KERMIT
Now what...

MANAGER (V.O.)
Your shtick is going to grow
old...You'll see.

Kermit looks out at the camera. Into the empty void.

LESLEY
Yes, Kermit? What's next? We hear
you have a big announcement to
make.

KERMIT
Well, yes. The Muppets...we...

TEEN (V.O.)
It's just a little...old fashioned
for my tastes.

He looks over again and catches Fozzie, Piggy, Gonzo and all of his friends staring back at him.

ON THE MUPPETS

MUPPETS
Here it comes. / Get ready! / I'm a
whatever!

BACK ON KERMIT

He turns back to the camera.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

KERMIT

We...

FLOYD (V.O.)

Stars shine bright for only so long
before they burn out.

LESLEY

Yes?

He looks over once again to Piggy and then back to the camera.

KERMIT

The Muppets will be taking an
indefinite break.

BACKSTAGE

CHAOS erupts. The group is in tatters. Screaming. Throwing.
Running in circles.

We hold on MISS PIGGY who looks heartbroken.

MISS PIGGY

No, Kermie. No.

LESLEY

Wow. That is indeed news.

ON PIGGY.

She looks at Kermit. Shakes her head in despair. Then runs
out the door.

BACK ON KERMIT

We hold on him, amid the chaos unfolding around him for a
beat and then --

PULL OUT and BACK THROUGH THE TV to find ourselves --

INT. ATTIC - PRESENT DAT

ON WALTER. He's shocked and wide-eyed as, behind him, a
crackle of THUNDER and LIGHTNING rocks the attic.

SLAM TO BLACK.

And now the TITLE CARD for our series:

MUPPETS LIVE ANOTHER DAY

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Over the **CREDITS** we see NEWSPAPER and MAGAZINE CLIPPINGS with the Muppets and Kermit on the cover. Headlines like:

- "Muppets Take Break"
- "Kermit the Frog Calls It Quits"
- "Have We Reached Peak Muppets?"
- "Is This the End?"

MUSIC CUE: "**WE BUILT THIS CITY**" by Starship

SUPER: ONE YEAR LATER

TIGHT ON: ROLLER SKATES

As the camera pans up we see a pair of BROWN FURRY LEGS speeding down a street. Fast. Graceful. The legs spin around and the roller skater continues gliding backwards. Finally, the legs do a pivot and we pan up to see it's ROWLF THE DOG holding a CLASSIC WALKMAN.

EXT. NYC STREET - DAY

As Rowlf skates down the street, a parade of 1980s CLAD DANCERS skate alongside him; dancing on construction beams, inside windows, and on the sidewalk. Girls in MINI SKIRTS, LEG WARMERS, HOOP EARRINGS. GUYS in PARACHUTE PANTS, MEMBERS ONLY JACKETS and FINGERLESS GLOVES. It is an 80s fantasma.

Abruptly, the music STOPS -- and then, so do all the dancers. Rowlf stops skating, opens his walkman, flips the CASSETTE onto the B side, hits play, and the music starts up --

And the dancing resumes.

EXT. HIGHRISE - CONTINUOUS

As the song finishes, Rowlf pulls up to a large HIGHRISE. He pulls off his headphones and heads in.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

CLOSE ON -- BROWN FURRY HANDS tickling the ivories.

REVEAL -- Rowlf sitting at a piano, playing a cover of the "Miami Vice Theme." He is accompanied by a BANJO.

Behind the banjo sits STEVE MARTIN wearing a younger looking GREY WIG. The duo crescendo out of the song and high five.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STEVE MARTIN

Thank you, Rowlf. I just wanted to practice it once before my Grandmother's funeral.

ROWLF

Of course.

Steve hangs his banjo on his wall alongside 50 other banjos.

STEVE MARTIN

Can I offer you a drink?

ROWLF

I'll have some milk if you don't mind.

Martin walks into his kitchen.

STEVE MARTIN (O.S.)

So. Have you spoken to the gang lately?

ROWLF

No. Not since the "break." I was supposed to see Scooter this week, but I can't reach him.

Rowlf peruses all of Steve Martin's PICTURES. Each one is of him in a grey wig, even as a baby.

STEVE MARTIN

Huh. Well, I'm sure it'll all work out.

Martin walks out and puts a dog bowl filled with milk on the floor. Rowlf is perplexed.

STEVE MARTIN (CONT'D)

Oh. Sorry.

He drops an ice cube in it.

STEVE MARTIN (CONT'D)

I hope you land on your paws soon buddy.

ROWLF

Well, aren't we gearing up for the movie?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STEVE MARTIN

Yeah, about that. See, the studio thinks instead of the *Four Amigos*, we might be better served doing the *Three Amigos*.

Beat.

ROWLF

Who's going to tell Martin Short?

STEVE MARTIN

Sadly, my little canine piano virtuoso, you're the odd dog out.

ROWLF

(stunned)

But why?

STEVE MARTIN

Well, it's just that market research is showing that people aren't as interested in the Muppets since you all went your separate ways. There was something fresh and exciting about seeing a pig, a frog, and a dog together. But apart, you're just... a pig, a frog, and a dog. Maybe instead of playing the piano, you can play...fetch?

(off Rowlf's face)

The world just wants the next big thing Rowlf. People have moved on from the Muppets. Try not to take it personally.

ROWLF

No. Of course. Why would I?

STEVE MARTIN

And if you need anything at all...please don't hesitate to reach out through fan mail.

ROWLF

Umm...

STEVE MARTIN

Good to see you.

Steve shows him out the door. Turns around to reveal MARTIN SHORT, dressed as an AMIGO and seated across from him:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MARTIN SHORT

Well...I thought that went well.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Rowlf stands on the street, lost in thought, absorbing everything that's happened. He lowers his head and sees a PUDDLE on the ground, his reflection staring back at him. And then he notices, beside his face in the shimmering water, none other than KERMIT.

Excited, Rowlf spins around to see -- a tattered and worn POSTER of "Manhattan Melodies" with Kermit's frozen, smiling face staring down at him.

Rowlf hangs his head in disappointment. And then --

-- a BALL rolls into frame. A DOG comes running up to the ball and picks it up in his mouth, locking eyes with Rowlf. After a beat, the dog's OWNER walks up and pets the dog, rewarding it for playing fetch.

As the dog and owner walk off into the night, we HOLD ON ROWLF, wondering if that's all he is... a dog.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Rowlf is putting on his roller skates. Some NOISE by a GARBAGE CAN catches his attention. He walks over. Nothing. He turns around again at the sound of scurrying, but again, nothing there.

As he places his roller skates on, we see a SHADOW cross behind him, inching closer and closer.

ANGLE FROM DOWN THE STREET

At a distance, we see the dark alley and hear a HOWL. And then silence. A door SLAMS. After a beat, a LARGE YELLOW VAN peels out of the alley. And we SMASH TO --

ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT OPENING CREDITS

That famous music and then that even more famous voice --

MARY HART (O.S.)

Are Muppets going the way of the 8-track?

INT. ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT SET - NIGHT

MARY HART speaks right into CAMERA from the E.T. set.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY HART

Last year they took Manhattan, this year they can't hold a job. Rowlf the Dog has just unceremoniously been dropped from Paramount's *Three Amigos* and now is nowhere to be seen. Having missed his portion of the recording session for *We Are The World*, Quincy Jones was forced to turn to Dan Aykroyd to fill in and now the world wonders, are the Muppets' fifteen minutes up?

Over Mary Hart's special report we cut to the following:

EXT. JAMAICAN RESORT - SAME

CLOSE on a CANNON which launches a BLUE BLUR into a LARGE SWIMMING POOL BAR.

GONZO pops his head out of the water to join CAMILLA who is drinking a VIRGIN DAIQUIRI at a poolside bar. A BARTENDER hands her a PLATE OF JERK CHICKEN. She wails. Gonzo hands the plate back to the Bartender.

GONZO

Please take this away. They used to dance together.

As Camilla shakes her head in despair, Gonzo looks up to catch the Entertainment Tonight segment on the bar TV.

CUT TO:

INT. AD AGENCY - SAME

CLOSE on a TV SCREEN. The final moments of the famous "JUST SAY NO" CAMPAIGN play as we reveal SAM THE EAGLE wiping a tear from his eye, surrounded by MEN in CORPORATE ATTIRE.

SAM

This is my masterpiece.

The camera swings over to JON HAMM drowning his sorrows in a scotch.

JON HAMM

I've seen better.

The TV set turns to the Entertainment Tonight story, as Sam sits up in his chair, concerned.

CUT TO:

INT. LABORATORY - SAME

BEAKER and HONEYDEW are surrounded by ELECTRICAL CIRCUITS, TUBES, and WIRES. An ALARM goes off indicating another failed attempt at their experiment.

HONEYDEW

Hmm. Still not working. Perhaps if I connect the motherboard to the expansion slot interface? Beaker, hold this while I take a look.

Honeydew hands Beaker A SET of WIRES connected to a COMPUTER. As Honeydew goes behind the computer, an ELECTRICAL SURGE courses through Beaker's body, sending his hair on end and causing his eyes to POP out.

The computer screen flashes with the words, "WELCOME TO THE INTERNET."

Honeydew pops back and looks around, not paying notice to the plumes of smoke coming from Beaker's head.

HONEYDEW (CONT'D)

Hmm. Interesting.

BEAKER

Beep, beep.

HONEYDEW

No, not this. The story about Rowlf on the television set over in the corner.

Honeydew walks out of frame followed by Beaker. As they gather around the TV --

-- from the other side of the frame, we see a stealthy man dressed in all BLACK. He picks up the computer with the internet on it. As he turns to escape we see his face. It's AL GORE.

AL GORE

It's mine. It's all mine.

INT. IKEA - SAME

A BANNER hangs: "IKEA OPENING DAY"

PAN DOWN to find a MAKESHIFT WOODEN TABLE that a pair of HANDS finishes screwing into place. Out pops the SWEDISH CHEF, who looks down at the INSTRUCTION MANUAL, satisfied.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He moves to a STOVE and starts cooking his famous SWEDISH MEATBALLS as, in the background, the horribly built table starts collapsing piece by piece.

Swedish Chef mutters incoherently as he looks up to a store TV and sees the Rowlf story. And we CUT TO --

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - SAME

TIGHT ON CYNDI LAUPER, laying down her vocals for "TIME AFTER TIME."

REVEAL -- DR. TEETH and the ELECTRIC MAYHEM playing backup. Janice shakes her head. "How have we ended up here?"

ON ANIMAL. Watching Cyndi's RED HAIR which flies around, looking like a MUPPET similar to himself. He is transfixed.

FLOYD catches Animal's building rage out of the side of his eye. Concerned. He tries to get his attention.

But Animal is laser focused on Cyndi's hair, his drumming becoming more and more aggressive. Cyndi swings her hair, which Animal sees as a direct threat to his friends. He moves toward her. ZOOT tries to stop him --

But it's too late -- Animal jumps on Cyndi's head, attacks, and starts EATING her HAIR.

ANIMAL
(to her hair)
Bad animal!!

All hell breaks loose and the recording screeches to a halt as Cyndi shakes Animal off of her head.

CYNDI
Get out of here! All of you. You're
fired! Somebody get me some
wrestlers!

STUDIO HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The band, carrying their instruments, walks down the hall, heads hung low. Dr. Teeth pulls Animal aside.

DR. TEETH
Animal. You can't keep doing this.
You can't just keep eating things.
I know you think you're
helping...but you're not.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANICE (O.S.)
 Hey man, I think you may want to
 see this.

Dr. Teeth walks over to Janice and the group who are watching
 the E.T. segment on a WATCHMAN. Animal, though, stands off
 to the side, thinking about how he has let down his family.

ANIMAL
 Bad Animal. Bad Animal. Bad Animal.

CUT TO:

EXT. BLACK BOX THEATER MARQUEE - SAME

"MISS PIGGY is THE OTHER BETTE MIDLER"

PIGGY (PRELAP)
*Some say love, it is a river that
 drowns the tender reed--*

INT. STAGE - SAME

Miss Piggy dressed in BETTE MIDLER'S iconic look from "THE
 ROSE" emotes on stage, surrounded by portraits of herself in
 various Bette Midler looks and poses.

MISS PIGGY
*Some say love, it is a razor, that
 leaves your soul to bleed.*

IN THE VERY SPARSE AUDIENCE

A smattering of PATRONS watch on in admiration. All except
 for the real BETTE MIDLER, who shakes her head in disbelief.

BETTE
 She can't do this. It isn't legal.

AUDIENCE MEMBER
 Shh. She *is* Bette Middler.

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Piggy exits to sparse applause and ONE AND A HALF FLOWERS. A
 STAGEHAND, who also works as concession worker, ticket taker
 and fire marshal, gives her an ENVELOPE.

STAGEHAND
 He sent another letter.

Piggy reluctantly takes it. She walks into her --

INT. PIGGY'S DRESSING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Piggy places the letter on her VANITY which is covered by dozens of other UNOPENED LETTERS, all with the name KERMIT on them. She stares at the pile. Clearly in pain. But not yet ready to open them.

The Stagehand knocks on her door, pops his head in --

STAGEHAND

I think you should see this.

He turns on her TV to Mary Hart.

CUT TO:

INT. SET OF ALF - SAME

At the top of a STAIRCASE, a DOOR swings open to APPLAUSE. ALF, the lovable FURRY ALIEN walks out, waves and immediately falls down the large staircase onto a screaming CAT.

A BELL RINGS.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

CUT!

The ACTOR playing Alf takes off his head, revealing it's FOZZIE BEAR.

FOZZIE

Sorry. My bad. That was my bad.

DIRECTOR

The last twenty-three times have also been your bad Fozzie.

FOZZIE

(pointing at the mask)

I can't see inside this thing. Is there a way we can lose the mask and I can just wear a longer nose? We have the same skin tone.

The Director and Producer huddle to talk through their "dilemma" as Fozzie, out of the corner of his eye, catches the Mary Hart story on a TV.

MARY HART (ON TV)

But for now, the whereabouts of Rowlf remain a mystery. Now, onto our next story.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY HART (ON TV) (CONT'D)
 Steve Gutenberg is on fire and you
 can't put him out...

Off Fozzie's concerned look --

FOZZIE
 I have to find Kermit.

PRELAP - The OPENING CHORDS of THE RAINBOW CONNECTION

EXT. BAYOU - DAY

From behind we see the silhouette of Kermit sitting on a LILY PAD. He looks around to see where the music is coming from as an... AIRBOAT passes by filled with TOURISTS snapping pictures of him. The music blares from an on-board SPEAKER.

AIRBOAT GUIDE
 And over there we have the artist
 formerly known as Kermit the Frog.
 Maybe if we're quiet enough he'll
 sing for us.

Kermit just stares blankly back at the boat in silence as they all awkwardly study him.

AIRBOAT GUIDE (CONT'D)
 Seems like it's not our lucky day.
 No refunds by the way.

Kermit sighs and goes back to work on his TYPEWRITER. He puts the finishing touches on his DOCUMENT and pulls it out. Reads it back to himself. Clearly not happy, he crumples the paper and throws it onto a MASSIVE PILE of abandoned pages.

Kermit puts another BLANK PAGE into the typewriter and stares at it. And then he looks up and begins to SING "*Face The Rain*" by Bobby and Kristen Lopez -- **(Please listen to the included recording of the song now)**

KERMIT
*You start out as a dreamer
 You find out you're the clown.
 You climbed the highest mountain
 And now you're scared of falling
 down.*

*Inspiration is a feeling
 Your heart cannot contain
 And if you want another rainbow
 You're gonna have to face the rain.*

Rainbows aren't forever
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KERMIT (CONT'D)

*We were lucky for the one.
And part of me's been wonderin'
Is my rainbow chasing done?
Success was like a windstorm
N' I was just the weathervane.
And to find another rainbow
Do I have to chase the rain?*

*Oh, is the magic store all out of
inspirations?
'Cause I've been busy
Living up to expectations?*

*I thought I was the driver
But I was on a ride.
Now everyone's depending
On something I cannot provide.
Can I climb another mountain
Now that I know about the pain?
Can I find another rainbow
If I don't face the rain?*

As the song ends, it starts to RAIN -- big CROCODILE drops blurring the clear, mirrored surface of the pond.

Kermit pulls out an UMBRELLA, and as he opens it over his head it fills the frame. HOLD ON THIS IMAGE for a long beat, as the rain pelts Kermit until we hear --

FOZZIE (O.S.)

I didn't want to interrupt but that was beautiful. Although you could probably trim a few bars.

Kermit lowers the umbrella. The RAIN STOPS (it's only been raining over Kermit). And then he sees --

Fozzie sitting patiently in a CANOE. Kermit is ELATED --

KERMIT (CONT'D)

Fozzie! You're here!
(after a second; he
regroups)
Fozzie, why are you here?

Fozzie, momentarily distracted, picks up a piece of paper from the crumpled pile.

KERMIT (CONT'D)

No, don't read that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FOZZIE

Oooh. Is this what you've been working on? "Open on the Muppets struggling to figure out what comes next. The year is 1955." Wait, why 1955?

KERMIT

I don't know. I feel like nostalgia is in right now.

FOZZIE

But why look back when you can look forward? Do you think the casts of the hit shows "Full House" and "Murphy Brown" are going to be trying to recreate their hits 30 years from now? No, of course not!

Kermit pulls Fozzie aside.

KERMIT

(sotto)

Um Fozzie, those shows are not actually in our timeline.

FOZZY

Do you think Luke Skywalker, after thirty years is going to sit in solitude, surrounded by water, questioning his choices? I don't think so.

KERMIT

But--

FOZZY

Do you think thirty years from now some hot savvy media driven real estate tycoon constantly in the tabloids today is going to be President of the United States? Obviously not.

Fozzie looks over to the camera. Back to Kermit.

KERMIT

Fozzie, thank you for coming by but I have to get back to work.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FOZZIE

Wait! There's a reason I'm here.
It's Rowlf. I think something's
happened to him.

KERMIT

What?

FOZZIE

He's gone missing and nobody can
find him.

Kermit is genuinely concerned but stops himself.

KERMIT

Well...he's a grown dog. I'm sure
he's fine.

FOZZIE

But shouldn't we make sure?

KERMIT

Fozzie, I don't how to find Rowlf
and even if I did, after all this
time apart, I really don't think
the gang would want my help
anymore.

FOZZIE

But, if you don't help us Kermit...
who will?

INT. FBI OFFICE - SAME

CLOSE on a WOMAN. African-American. Early 30s. This is
AGENT DEA HENSON and she's sitting inside a small CUBICLE.

A work-a-holic, her desk is covered with FOLDERS. Right now,
she's focused on one item in particular. She looks down at
it. Back up to a large CORNER SUITE at the end of the OFFICE.
She takes a tentative breath and stands up. And we CUT TO --

INT. OFFICE - FBI HEAD AGENT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON a name plaque: SPECIAL AGENT CONNOR DO'HOOL O'KEIF
DUSHEY. WIDEN to AGENT DUSHEY holding a picture in front of
his face, studying it -- a large IRISH FLAG hangs behind him.

After a moment, Dushey slams the picture onto the table,
revealing (we hope) actor KEN WATANABE. Dushey points to the
black and white PICTURE of ROWLF.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUSHEY

Detective Henson, what exactly am I looking at right now?

HENSON

That, sir, is the last known picture of Rowlf the dog taken from a CCTV camera before his mysterious disappearance.

DUSHEY

Okay, so why are you giving it me? Do I look like the Humane society?

HENSON

All due respect sir, he's one of the Muppets.

DUSHEY

All due respect Dea, I don't care. I grew up in the small town of Killarney. My Pa used to say one thing and one thing only to me as he returned tired and worn from picking barley in the fields of North Kerry down by Kilkenny.

Beat.

HENSON

What did he say?

DUSHEY

Never trust a non-human who can talk...unless it's a parrot...or one of those dogs who can strangely scream MAMA.

HENSON

But sir, I have reason to believe that Rowlf's disappearance is due to foul play.

DUSHEY

Whether a chicken was involved or not is beside the point. The Muppets are old news. They're probably doing this just to get back into the spotlight.

Dushey pulls an IRISH STEW from his drawer and starts eating.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HENSON

But it's a pattern. Another Muppet named Scooter seems to have dropped off the map a few weeks ago.

DUSHEY

You have a job to do and I expect you to do it. And that job is to help *real* people who need it. Not some strange ex-showbiz group who look like they broke out of an abandoned farm.

HENSON

But isn't our job to help *everyone*? No matter who needs it?

DUSHEY

Drop it, Henson.

Henson desperately wants to stand up for herself, but can't.

HENSON

Yessir.

DUSHEY

Now get out there and get to work like your colleagues.

He pulls out a POT OF GOLD, takes out a GOLD COIN and throws it toward Henson.

DUSHEY (CONT'D)

And get yourself a soda, kid.

INT. AGENCY OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

A GROUP of MALE COLLEAGUES stand around the room dancing, playing ARCADE PAC-MAN, and doing LIMBO under a horizontal bar. Dea walks through the chaos back to her desk and reluctantly tosses the Missing Muppet report into the trash.

EXT. SWAMPLAND - DUSK

Kermit and Fozzie walk through the BRUSH. Fozzie unnecessarily uses a MACHETE to hack through the small BRANCHES.

KERMIT

I'm telling you Fozzie, this is a waste of time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FOZZIE

Trust me Kermit, they'll listen to you. You're you.

The two approach a PAYPHONE BOOTH in the middle of the marsh. They both walk into it.

KERMIT

Got a quarter?

FOZZIE

No, but I do have two-thirds. Wocka wocka wocka.

Kermit -- unresponsive -- stands there, waiting, as Fozzie reaches under his HAT and pulls out a quarter.

FOZZIE (CONT'D)

Oh, look at that, I do have one.

Kermit is about to call, but Fozzie stops him.

FOZZIE (CONT'D)

It just occurred to me that some people watching this may not know what a payphone is.

KERMIT

Yeah, you're probably right. Good point.

FOZZIE

Should we give them some exposition?

KERMIT

No, let's just do a quick song.

THIS IS A PAYPHONE

THIS SHOULD BE A QUICK DITTY TEACHING A NEW GENERATION WHAT A PAYPHONE WAS, WHAT IT'S PURPOSE WAS, AND HOW IT WORKED. IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT TOWARDS THE END OF THE SONG THAT PAYPHONES WILL EVENTUALLY ALL DISAPPEAR EXCEPT FOR IN ENGLAND WHERE THEY WILL BECOME KITSCH PLACES TO TAKE TOURIST PHOTOS.

Kermit finally puts the quarter into the payphone and we cut to a GRID OF BOXES, a la THE BRADY BUNCH opening. Each Box houses a different Muppet or group of Muppets:

- Gonzo
- Camilla

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

- Beaker and Honeydew
- Rizzo the Rat
- The Electric Mayhem with Animal ATTACHED TO HIS LEASH behind them, still beating himself up.
- Sam Eagle
- Lew Zealand
- Sweetums
- Miss Piggy

The middle box is Kermit and Fozzie.

KERMIT (CONT'D)
Um...hi guys.

Kermit tries to get everyone's attention but they are all talking over each other. During this, Camilla crawls up into Gonzo's "box" -- leaving her "box" empty.

KERMIT (CONT'D)
So...um...

The chaos continues.

KERMIT (CONT'D)
See, I wanted to...

More noise. Before Kermit can scream his iconic line --

FOZZIE
QUIEEEEETTTT!!!!!!

Silence. Except for Rizzo.

RIZZO
And I said, "tell me how the
Gremlins aren't the heroes of the
movie?"
(beat)
Oh. Sorry.

We are now out of the boxes and into cross cutting.

FOZZIE
Thank you all for getting on the
phone today.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FOZZIE (CONT'D)

I would like to now pass it over to our friend Kermit, who you may all remember from such things as the Muppet Show, the Muppet Movie, and some other films that were slightly less financially successful but still a blast to revisit on VHS. I would ask you all to show Kermit kindness and respect, even though he broke us up a year ago today and forced us to all take jobs that were below us in order to survive this cruel world. Thank you. Kermit

--

Fozzie passes the phone to a mortified Kermit.

KERMIT

Um...thanks, Foz. Hey guys. Long time, no speak. Hope everyone is well.

PIGGY

Oh...do you?

KERMIT

(gulps)

Making some headway on our new project, by the way.

PIGGY

Oh, good. We'll all make sure to drop whatever we're doing and show up at your beck and call.

RIZZO

(sotto)

Awkward --

KERMIT

So, um, anyway, the reason Fozzie...I mean the reason I wanted to get us on this call is to discuss the disappearance of our good friend, Rowlf.

SAM EAGLE

Wait. Has it been confirmed he's missing?

KERMIT

Well, no but --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

SAM EAGLE

Case closed.

LEW ZEALAND

A lot of people thought my fish had gone missing. But, look, my fish is here.

(he pulls the fish out)

He was hiding in my mouth.

KERMIT

Thank you for sharing that Lew. The point is, something smells fishy...

LEW ZEALAND

Sorry.

KERMIT

-- something *feels strange* about this.

HONEYDEW

Kermit is right. The odds of Rowlf simply not showing up or reaching out to any one of us, given the nature of a dog's need for attention, is twenty-eight thousand two-hundred and four to one.

BEAKER

Beep beep beep.

HONEYDEW

Give or take two.

JANICE

Yeah, man. Rowlf is a cool pup. He wouldn't just drop off like that. No way.

GONZO

Kermit is right! Let's go find Rowlf.

Gonzo disappears and immediately comes back in camouflage.

SAM EAGLE

It's the patriotic thing to do.

All of the Muppets start agreeing except for --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

MISS PIGGY

Well, well, well. Isn't this just convenient? The frog leaves us all high and dry, we all move on after dealing with the heartbreak and then viola! He pops back up just like that... after being alone in the swamp for a year with nothing to show for it.

KERMIT

No. That's not what this is about.

MISS PIGGY

Are you calling moi a liar?

KERMIT

No, but...

MISS PIGGY

Was it not you that shattered this otherwise strong Pig's heart into a thousand different pieces?

KERMIT

I was just trying to find the next thing...for you...for all of us.

MISS PIGGY

Well, news flash frog! Some of us can do it on our own. Maybe Rowlf just took your words to heart and found a path that doesn't involve you. Just like I did, after you abandoned me.

KERMIT

I was the one who kept sending you letter after letter.

MISS PIGGY

Oh, your poor typewriter must need new ink after all those empty words.

Gonzo clears his throat. Everyone else awkwardly still waiting on the call.

GONZO

Um...do you guys need a minute alone?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

PIGGY

No need. I've already spent the last 365 days alone.

RIZZO

Oooooooooooh. Anyone have any matches because that was *cold*.

KERMIT

I'm sorry, Piggy. I'm sorry to all of you. I know I could have handled everything better. I know a lot of you have trouble understanding why I did what I did. But it doesn't change the fact that our friend may be in trouble right now and we are the only ones who can help him. So, I say we put this little bump in the road aside, hold our heads up high, and do what Muppets do...lift each other up and help each other when we're down. So, tomorrow morning at dawn, Fozzie and I will be waiting at our meeting place and together we will find Rowlf!! Who's with me?!

The sound of a DIAL TONE. *"If you'd like to make a call, please hang up and try again."* Kermit quietly hangs up.

FOZZIE

Maybe they just ran out of change.

Kermit walks away, head down.

KERMIT

Yeah...maybe.

INT. ELECTRIC MAYHEM PHONE BOOTH - SAME

The BAND MEMBERS all stand huddled together having just hung up the phone. Floyd turns around and is struck by what he sees. Or rather what he DOESN'T SEE --

FLOYD

Um...guys, where's Animal?

They all turn to see Animal's LEASH dangling --

Animal is missing.

INT. PIGGY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Piggy enters her apartment, worked up.

PIGGY
I did it. No regrets. I finally
said what I needed to say.

She throws her purse on the counter and looks at a PICTURE FRAME laid down. She picks it up. It's of a smiling KERMIT and PIGGY riding bikes in Central Park.

PIGGY (CONT'D)
Oh, Kermie, why do you have to be
so confusing?!?

She lays the picture down and walks over to the FRIDGE to get some food. INSIDE THE FRIDGE -- is another PICTURE FRAME, turned backwards. She turns it around. It's a picture of Kermit and Piggy opening the fridge together.

PIGGY (CONT'D)
Why can't you just let others love
you unconditionally without pushing
us away, even when we are
smothering you with our affection?

She closes the fridge and walks to the -- WINDOWSILL.

She stands at the window where a BIRD flies outside, and picks up a FRAMED PICTURE of KERMIT standing at the same WINDOWSILL with the same BIRD while looking at a PICTURE of PIGGY (also standing at the window with the bird in that photo).

PIGGY (CONT'D)
Oh Kermie...

And as she wrestles with what to do --

-- a NOISE catches her attention from the other room. A record player turns on. "DO YOU HEAR WHAT I HEAR" plays.

Piggy perks up and cautiously approaches the door.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Piggy turns the record player off. Looks around. Nothing. She goes to the drawer and pulls out a KNIFE. She then places it back in the drawer and takes out a RUBBER KNIFE that says "For Stunt Use Only."

Another noise causes her to spin around.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PIGGY
Show yourself buster!

Once again, nothing. Then we hear --

VOICE (O.S.)
Hello, Miss Piggy.

Piggy turns around but it's too late. A SQUEAL takes us to BLACK. Then quiet. A long beat. And then --

OVER BLACK we hear the sounds of a STRUGGLE.

PIGGY (O.S.)
Get your filthy paws off of me.

EXT. APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Two DOORS open. REVEAL -- we're tight on the back of a VAN.

An unseen captor throws Piggy into the back. The door slams shut on her PINK FEATHER BOA.

INSIDE THE VAN

It's dark. Piggy stares at her trapped feather boa, enraged.

PIGGY
That's a custom made boa. You'll
pay for that!

Then, she hears movement in the darkened space. She turns around to see eyes GLOWING in the dark. Followed by a patch of RED FUR. Then, as her eyes adjust, she sees none other than ANIMAL huddled in a corner.

PIGGY (CONT'D)
Oh good. Just when I thought this
day couldn't get any worse.

The VAN rumbles to life and Piggy is jostled as we GO TO --

EXT. STREET - SAME

The same YELLOW VAN from earlier peels off. Piggy and Animal have been TAKEN.

EXT. BACKCOUNTRY ROAD - SAME

Fozzie and Kermit approach an old JEEP WAGONEER.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KERMIT

Do you think Piggy's right? Does anybody even need me?

FOZZIE

I quit my job and came to find you out in the middle of nowhere. What do you think?

KERMIT

You quit your job?

FOZZIE

After they fired me, but yes.

They hop into the Wagoneer --

INT. VAN - MOMENTS LATER

As the Wagoneer takes off, Kermit looks at Fozzie, who drives.

KERMIT

Fozzie, whose car is this?

FOZZIE

I have no idea.

INT. PIGGY'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - SAME

Bette Midler walks down the hall, mumbling to herself.

BETTE MIDLER

This town isn't big enough for two Bette Midlers.

She gets to the door; finds it slightly ajar. As she pushes it open, she notices that the room is in disarray as if there has been a struggle. OFF BETTE'S face, taking it in --

INT. FBI OFFICE - SAME

Henson makes her way through paperwork. Her PHONE rings.

HENSON

Hello?

BETTE MIDLER (O.S.)

Hi, I think something may have happened to the actress Miss Piggy.

HENSON

Where are you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BETTE MIDLER (O.S.)
 Inside her apartment.

HENSON
 And who am I speaking with?

INT. APARTMENT - INTERCUT

Bette holds the landline in her hand and thinks for a second.

BETTE MIDLER
 Barbara Streisand.

She throws the phone out the window and quickly walks out.

INT. HENSON'S OFFICE - SAME

Henson hangs up and looks out to the empty office bullpen.
 She sees Dushey's office at the other end, his light is on.

She approaches his door, but stops short. She can't do it.
 She can't face that push back again. Instead, she grabs the
 MUPPET FOLDER from the trash and heads the other direction.

PIGGY (PRELAP)
 Hiiii-ya!!!

INT. TRUCK - SAME

Piggy karate kicks the doors but no luck. There is a LOCK on
 them. She rubs her foot.

PIGGY
 He was right. This is all my fault.
 I should have trusted Kermit.

Animal is swaying back and forth, huddled in the corner.

ANIMAL
 (mumbling)
 Bad Animal. Bad Animal.

PIGGY
 Listen to me. We have to get out of
 here. Animal, you can get us out.
 All you have to do is eat through
 the lock.

ANIMAL
 Animal no eat. Bad Animal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PIGGY

Animal eat everything including my Louis Vuitton bag. But now, in the middle of being kidnapped, Animal showing discretion. EAT THE LOCK!

ANIMAL

No eat. Bad Animal.

Piggy stares back at the doors. An idea brewing.

INT. HENSON'S CAR - SAME

Henson, speeding toward Piggy's apartment, passes by the yellow van. In her REAR-VIEW MIRROR, she catches a glimpse of a PINK FEATHER BOA dangling out the back doors.

She looks down at her folder, takes out a PICTURE of PIGGY which shows her wearing the same feather boa.

She spins the car around and speeds towards the van.

INT. BACK OF THE VAN - SAME

PIGGY

It's a shame your band won't make their gig tonight. I'm sure a lot of people are going to be heartbroken.

ANIMAL

Gig? What gig?

PIGGY

Oh nothing. They were just supposed to open for another band. But without a drummer, they won't be able to play. No big deal I guess.

ANIMAL

What other band?

PIGGY

Something called...Van Halen.

Like a bat out of hell, a charge runs through Animal. He stands up and stares at the doors blocking him from his fate.

ANIMAL

ANIMAL NO MISS VAN HELEN!!!!!!

Piggy backs away as Animal runs at the doors and starts tearing the lock to bits.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The doors swing open -- Animal hanging attached, dangling in midair. Wind whips his fur as --

ON THE STREET

Henson's car tails them. She spots the door flinging open and hits the accelerator.

ON THE VAN

Piggy's boa flies away. From inside, Piggy stares in horror.

PIGGY

Not my boa!

Piggy jumps onto Animal --

OUTSIDE THE VAN

Piggy climbs down Animal's body and grabs her boa in the nick of time. But now -- Piggy perilously dangles off of his leg as they sway in the air.

PIGGY (CONT'D)

Stop moving so much!

As CONCRETE ROAD streaks by below them --

INT. VAN - FRONT SEAT - SAME

A face VEILED in a BLACK HOOD looks out his SIDE-VIEW MIRROR, catching sight of Henson's fast approaching car.

EXT. STREET MEDIAN - SAME

The van swerves over the MEDIAN into ONCOMING traffic, Piggy and Animal still barely hanging on. Another SMALL CAR swerves out of the way.

INT. SMALL CAR - SAME

A HUSBAND and WIFE look at each other.

HUSBAND

We have to get that on tape.

The wife pulls a MASSIVE RCA VHS CAMCORDER, loads a VHS tape.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WIFE

It's amazing how small and convenient these things have gotten.

EXT. STREET - SAME

Henson, avoiding oncoming traffic, swerves and dodges car after car. She drives Lethal Weapon-style, deftly and fearlessly, in pursuit.

ON THE VAN

Piggy climbs back up Animal's body, until she is hanging off of his face, completely obscuring his view.

INT. HENSON'S CAR - SAME

Henson rolls down her WINDOW as she nears the Van's rear.

HENSON

Throw the boa!

PIGGY

No! Get your own, lady!

BACK ON THE STREET

The van swerves again -- Piggy falls off of Animal, who grabs her boa at the last second. She is now RUNNING behind the van, desperately holding onto the boa.

CLOSE ON Piggy's high-heeled feet -- running so fast, SMOKE is coming off of them.

PIGGY (CONT'D)

I'm all into fitness, but this is ridiculous.

NEXT TO THE VAN

Henson pulls up alongside Piggy -- reaches for her hand. Piggy tosses her the loose part of the boa -- Henson grabs it, allowing Piggy to use it for leverage as she shimmies toward the car. Which is when --

-- a MOTORCYCLE drives in between them. The MOTORCYCLIST is CLOTHESLINED by the boa. Piggy swings (trapeze style) over the boa -- lands onto --

THE MOTORCYCLE.

Piggy revs it and drives until she's alongside --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE VAN

Piggy pulls up to the driver's side. Through the window, the DRIVER's identity is still obscured by the hood. The figure glances at Piggy. But as Piggy is about to get a good look --

-- Animal jumps from the roof of the van onto the DRIVER'S FACE sending the van spiraling out of control.

OUTSIDE ON THE STREET

The van, Piggy's motorcycle, and Henson fast approach a TUNNEL.

As Animal dangles out the window. We go TIGHT ON PIGGY --

PIGGY (CONT'D)

Jump!

EXT. TUNNEL ENTRANCE - SAME

The van careens toward it. ON THE VAN. Animal, still clinging to the hooded figure, looks out the window to see --

ANIMAL'S POV

They're inches away from contact with the side of the wall bordering the tunnel. As the wall fast approaches --

IN THE VAN

Animal jumps out the window at the last minute and onto --

PIGGY'S MOTORCYCLE

As he clings to her for life, the van and its mysterious driver disappear into the dark of the tunnel.

EXT. STREET - SAME

ON THE MOTORCYCLE. Spinning out of control toward the wall around the tunnel.

ANIMAL

WALL!!!! WALL!!!

TIGHT ON THE MOTORCYCLE. Piggy SLAMS the brakes.

As the motorcycle screeches to a halt, its momentum carries it toward an impending crash against the wall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PIGGY

Well, I guess there's only thing
left to do -- Get ready to die.

ON ANIMAL.

ANIMAL

Huh?

PIGGY

Sorry, I meant -- JUMP.

And then, just before impact --

Piggy and Animal leap into the air as --

-- the motorcycle CRASHES into the WALL in a ball of twisted
metal.

Piggy and Animal fly onto the hood of --

-- HENSON'S CAR. As it approaches the tunnel, they cling to
it desperately. SCREECH. Henson slams on the brakes.

EXT. STREET - SAME

Henson's car is now stopped, just short of the tunnel. Henson
gets out and makes sure they're both okay.

HENSON

(flashing her badge)
Dea Henson, FBI.

ANIMAL

Animal. Muppets.

HENSON

And Miss Piggy, I assume. How do
you know how to drive like that?

PIGGY

I once went on a date with Tom
Cruise.

ANIMAL

(To Piggy)
Van Halen.

PIGGY

We have to get to Kermie and warn
him that somebody is kidnapping the
Muppets.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANIMAL

Van Halen.

HENSON

The only place we're going is back to Headquarters. I need to get my superiors up to speed. Not to mention, I have to file all of this paperwork.

ANIMAL

VAN HALEN!

HENSON

Is he just a massive Van Halen fan?

Piggy spins to face Animal --

PIGGY

Oh, for crying out loud, there was no Van Halen concert, okay?! I said it so that you would eat through the locks and free us.

ANIMAL

No Van Halen?

PIGGY

(to Henson)

Kermie needs my help. You have to take us to our meeting place.

HENSON

I'm not your personal taxi service. And I already told you, I have to follow protocol.

ANIMAL

(not computing)

Van Halen was lie?

PIGGY

There's no time for protocol. Don't you trust your instincts? Can't you see we're in serious danger?

Henson looks up from her paper work.

PIGGY (CONT'D)

And isn't your job to help others? No matter who needs it? We're in DANGER.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Off Henson, Piggy's plea landing on her -- SMASH TO --

INT. HOUSE - SOMEWHERE - NIGHT

MUSIC: A CLASSICAL VIOLIN VERSION OF THE MUPPET SHOW OPENING

A small house. We MOVE THROUGH to a DESK in the corner. A figure, obscured by shadow, is hunched over it. A small LAMP illuminates just his hands, which hold a NEWSPAPER.

ON THE NEWSPAPER. An article about Rowlf's disappearance. The hands reach over and grab a PAIR OF SCISSORS -- cutting the article out of the paper. And through the CUT OUT, we SEE --

-- the FACE of DOCTOR SURGEON SENIOR JUNIOR (mid-30's), a Josh Gad type, in that he will be played by Josh Gad.

He takes the article, PINS it to a BOARD covered with similar CLIPPINGS related to the MUPPETS. Whatever's going on in his mind, he's not sharing it with us... yet. And we CUT TO --

BILLBOARD - FORMERLY HOPPER'S FROG LEGS

The CAMERA pans down to reveal the current name:

HOPPER'S SOY BASED FROG LEGS AND OTHER VEGAN OPTIONS

EXT. HOPPER'S - MIDDLE OF NOWHERE - DAWN

Fozzie and Kermit stand in the EMPTY PARKING LOT of Hopper's.

FOZZIE

Everyone's becoming so health conscious these days.

KERMIT

Fozzie?

FOZZIE

Yeah?

KERMIT

Do you ever find it slightly strange that we made *this* our meeting spot?

Fozzie studies Kermit's legs. Then looks up at the original sign and back to Kermit.

FOZZIE

Nah. Why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KERMIT

Never mind.

The two stand in silence. Kicking up dust and waiting.

KERMIT (CONT'D)

Do you think anyone will actually show up?

FOZZIE

Do you remember the first time we ever met? I was doing a killer set at El Sleazo Cafe.

KERMIT

They hated you. They physically tried to harm you.

FOZZIE

I know. That's why I'm calling it a killer set. Anyway, there you were -- a complete stranger -- and you saw me up on that stage and do you remember what you did?

KERMIT

I got up there with you and started dancing.

FOZZIE

Exactly. That's who you are Kermit. Not just to me. But to all of us. Trust me... they'll show up.

A beat. Silence.

FOZZIE (CONT'D)

But if they don't, try not to take it personally.

Then out of the DARK BLUE DAWN, we see the silhouettes of Gonzo and Camilla. Behind them is Rizzo. Kermit perks up.

GONZO

Hey gang! Want to catch up, but I've had to use the bathroom ever since the last act break. Be right back.

Camilla CLUCKS at Fozzie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FOZZIE

Tell me about it. That's why we
took State Road 85.

Kermit turns to Rizzo.

KERMIT

Thanks for coming, Rizzo.

RIZZO

Yeah. Yeah. Of Course.

Rizzo pulls Kermit in close, out of ear shot of the others.

RIZZO (CONT'D)

But if the others don't come...I
think the five of us should split
the money.

KERMIT

What money?

RIZZO

The ransom money.

KERMIT

There is no ransom money.

Rizzo gives Kermit the TWO FINGER De Niro "Meet the Parents"
sign.

RIZZO

Of course there isn't.

Kermit leans over to Fozzie.

KERMIT

Where's everybody else?

FOZZIE

Probably just running a little
late.

Fozzie puts his paws on Kermit's shoulders, understanding the
real meaning of his question.

FOZZIE (CONT'D)

She'll be here.

Kermit nods. Desperately hoping his friend is right.

HENSON (PRELAP)

I can't believe I'm doing this.

INT. HENSON'S CAR - DAWN

Henson, MAP in her hands, drives, Piggy by her side. Animal in the back.

PIGGY

For what it's worth, I find that people often can't resist my charm.

(beat)

Can't this thing go any faster?

HENSON

Not legally.

PIGGY

Legally shemgally. You're a cop. You can do what you want.

HENSON

First of all, I'm not a cop. I'm an FBI Agent. And secondly, I can't just do whatever I want. I'm already breaking about twenty rules.

PIGGY

So, what's another one? Twenty-one makes blackjack. Live a little.

Animal is seething in the back seat.

ANIMAL

Bad Pig.

PIGGY

Oh brother. Are you really going to stay angry at me because I got us rescued?

ANIMAL

Piggy lie. Bad Piggy.

PIGGY

Fine. Be mad. See if I care.

HENSON

Listen, I'll get you to your friends. But then you're on your own. I can't go any further.

Henson looks over at Piggy who has put her visor down and is applying LIPSTICK and PERFUME.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HENSON (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

PIGGY

Just freshening up. What?! You can't put lipstick on a pig?

EXT. HOPPER'S - LATER

Kermit, Fozzie, Camilla and Rizzo all stand around waiting, still no sign of anyone else. Gonzo comes RUNNING out of the restaurant.

GONZO

Um, guys, I think we should probably get going.

Right behind him walk TWO CLICHE REDNECKS.

REDNECK ONE

You folks don't look like you're from around here. We're very particular about who we serve.

REDNECK TWO

Yeah, ya'll don't look like vegans to me.

FOZZIE

I was raised Lutheran. But now I'm mostly non-denominational.

REDNECK ONE

They look like a bunch of big city burger lovers. I don't see a kale eater in the bunch.

KERMIT

We're not looking for trouble. We're just waiting for our friends.

REDNECK TWO

Are your friends like you folk?

GONZO

No. One's a pig. One's an eagle. And the other's an Animal with a capital 'A.' There's also a bunch of others that are fairly hard to describe.

FOZZIE

Yeah. What would you call Sweetums?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RIZZO

Lonely.

GONZO

He's kind of an ogre.

REDNECK ONE

A vegetarian ogre?

The Muppets all take a second to consider how to answer. They all nod yes except for:

GONZO

No. He definitely likes his meat.

The Rednecks start chasing the Muppets, who run to their CAR, A BROWN 1980 YUGO 45. The car takes off, kicking up dust.

REDNECKS

And don't come back!

INT. YUGO - SAME

RIZZO

And that's why I hate health nuts.

Kermit looks back, forlorn.

KERMIT

She never came.

Fozzie turns to comfort him, but doesn't have the answers.

EXT. FREEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

As Kermit and company pull onto the FREEWAY, Henson's CAR pulls OFF of it... two ships passing in the night.

EXT. HOPPER'S - CONTINUOUS

Henson's car pulls up and Kermit and company are nowhere to be found.

HENSON

I can't believe we got here so quickly. Isn't this the Deep South?

PIGGY

(to camera)

It's amazing what a time cut and a good editor can do.

(hops out of the car)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PIGGY (CONT'D)

Kermie! My little Frogsie wogsie.
I'm here my darling!

She looks everywhere, but there is no sign of him.

HENSON

I thought you said they would be
here.

PIGGY

I don't understand.

INT. YUGO - LATER

Fozzie drives as Kermit stares out the window. Gonzo,
Camilla, and Rizzo sit in the back.

RIZZO

So, is there a plan or are we just
going to drive endlessly and hope
Rowlf crosses in front of the car
and we stop in time?

KERMIT

I don't know. I haven't thought
that far ahead.

GONZO

You know me, Kermit, I trust you
more than my own mother -- who I've
never met -- but are we sure there
isn't an innocent explanation for
Rowlf's disappearance?

KERMIT

Gonzo, I'm not sure of anything. I
just had a hunch that something
isn't right...but maybe you guys
shouldn't follow my lead anymore.

Rizzo lifts up a MILK CARTON and drinks.

RIZZO

Well, I for one, just don't see
anything to be overly concerned
about.

ON THE CARTON: a picture of SCOOTER under the word "MISSING."

And then -- a NEWSPAPER hits the windshield.

On it -- ANOTHER article with THE SWEDISH CHEF under the word
VANISHED.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They then they drive by -- THREE BILLBOARDS. One after another saying...

HAVE YOU

SEEN

THIS MUPPET?

At the last Billboard, we see FRANCIS MCDORMAND adding a photo of a missing SWEETUMS.

IN THE CAR

Gonzo jumps up.

GONZO

Kermit! I can't believe it. I forgot something at Hoppers!

(beat)

Also, I think you may have been right. We may be in danger.

Gonzo grabs Camilla and puts her under the car seat. Fozzie slams on the BREAKS.

FOZZIE

Kermit, our friends didn't stand us up. They didn't show up because they're in trouble!

KERMIT

That means Piggy's in danger!

RIZZO

So...about that ransom money...

KERMIT

Don't you see what this means? Our friends are being picked off one by one and it's now up to us to figure out why and save them before it's too late.

FOZZIE

But what do we do?

KERMIT

We do what we always do when we're faced with a situation that seems insurmountable --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RIZZO

We find a loan shark, make an impossible bet, skip town, change our identities and move to Eastern Europe?

KERMIT

No, we sing an uptempo ballad.

SONG

DURING THIS NUMBER, WE INTERCUT BETWEEN OUR MAIN CHARACTERS ON THEIR SEPARATE, BUT RELATED MISSIONS. IT'S ANTHEMIC AND PLAYS LIKE A ROUSING ACT ONE CLOSER OF A BROADWAY SHOW A LA "ONE DAY MORE" FROM LES MIZ OR "TONIGHT" FROM WEST SIDE STORY. IT SHINES A SPOTLIGHT ON ALL OF OUR MAIN CHARACTERS' SPECIFIC DRIVES -- KERMIT SHOWS HIS DETERMINATION TO NOT ONLY RESCUE ROWLF, BUT TO PROTECT ALL HIS FRIENDS WHO HE SEES IN DANGER...ESPCIALY THE LOVE OF HIS LIFE. FOZZIE EXPRESSES HIS LOYALTY TO KERMIT AND, DESPITE HIS FEAR, HIS WILLINGNESS TO FOLLOW HIM ANYWHERE. PIGGY EXPRESSES HER DESIRE TO REUNITE WITH KERMIT, BOTH TO SAVE HIM -- BECAUSE OF COURSE WHO ELSE CAN SAVE HIM BUT HER -- AND ALSO TO HELP STOP WHATEVER THREAT IS OUT THERE. ANIMAL IS WRESTLING WITH HIS INNER DEMONS -- THAT HE MESSED UP THINGS FOR HIS BAND, AND NOW MUST FIND A WAY FORWARD. AND LASTLY, WE GET INTO HENSON'S MINDSET -- SHE'S DISOBEYED HER SUPERIOR FOR THE FIRST TIME, AND IN A MAJOR WAY. SHE'S TAKING A BIG LEAP BY TRUSTING HER INSTINCTS, BUT HER GUT TELLS HER SHE SHOULD TRUST AND HELP THE MUPPETS.

AS WE TOGGLE BETWEEN ALL OUR CHARACTERS, EMBOLDENED BY THE TASK AHEAD, THE SONG CRESCENDOS. THOUGH SEPARATED, THIS LOVABLE BAND OF PIGS, CHICKENS, FROGS, ANIMALS, AND UNDETERMINEDS ARE GOING TO FIND EACH OTHER AND FIGHT TO RESTORE THINGS TO HOW THEY SHOULD BE. WE WILL ALSO TEASE DR. SURGEON'S CHARACTER IN THE SONG BY BEING META ABOUT THE FACT THAT HE'S AN IMPORTANT CHARACTER WE ARE ABOUT TO MEET IF YOU BINGE THE SERIES IMMEDIATELY. WHEN THE SONG ENDS, WE --

CUT TO BLACK.

The screen is dark. We hear HEAVY, DISTRESSED BREATHING. A BLINDFOLD is lifted and we CUT TO --

EXT. ND ROOM - NIGHT

ON A SCARED ROWLF. He looks around and his fear is replaced with something surprising. Awe and amazement. We can't see what exactly he is looking at, but the room is immersed in almost OTHER-WORLDLY LIGHTS -- filled with bright and vivid colors.

ON ROWLF. He looks out beyond the camera...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROWLF

Where am I?

A BLACK HOOD and ROBE -- the same ones from earlier -- are dropped onto the floor, the figure holding them still out of frame.

VOICE (O.C.)

Home...

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END