

FAME

"But Seriously, Folks..."

Prod. #2705

by

Parke Perine

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER:
William Blinn

PRODUCER:
Mel Swope

EXECUTIVE STORY CONSULTANT:
Hindi Brooks

FINAL DRAFT

November 23, 1981

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Revised 11/30/81 (Blue)
Revised 12/1/81 (Pink)

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CAST LIST

LYDIA GRANT
BRUNO MARTELLI
COCO HERNANDEZ
DANNY AMATULLO
ELIZABETH SHERWOOD
DORIS SCHWARTZ
MONTGOMERY MacNEILL
LEROY JOHNSON
JULIE MILLER

CRANDALL - Sc. 13
DIRECTOR - Sc. 16
ASSISTANT - Sc. 16
COMEDIAN - Sc. 18
OWNER - Sc. 19
MRS. AMATULLO (MOTHER) - Sc. 21
MR. AMATULLO - Sc. 22
FIORINO - Sc. 60
DOORMAN - Sc. 61
EMCEE - Sc. 61

ATMOSPHERE

STUDENTS
AUDIENCE
CATTLE CALL PEOPLE
CAMERA CREW
CADRE OF KNIGHTS

FAME

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SET LIST

INTERIORS:

SCHOOL OF THE ARTS
LOBBY
DANCE CLASS
ENGLISH CLASSROOM
CAFETERIA
DRAMA CLASSROOM
SOUNDPROOF MUSIC STUDY
ROOM
MAKEUP ROOM

COMMERCIAL SOUND STAGE

KOMEDY KLUB
BACKSTAGE
ON STAGE
TABLE IN AUDIENCE

AMATULLO HOME
KITCHEN
DANNY'S ROOM

KNIGHTS OF ST. ANTHONY LODGE

EXTERIORS:

KOMEDY KLUB

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MUSIC CUES

- MUSIC #1 - Sc. 3 "REHEARSAL VERSION - STEP UP TO THE MIKE - PART I"
P.B. #2705-1-V (:45 est.)
To be recorded live on the set?
- MUSIC #2 - Sc. 4 "REHEARSAL VERSION - STEP UP TO THE MIKE - PART II"
P.B. #2705-2-V (:25 est.)
- MUSIC #3 - Sc. 19 "COMEDIAN'S EXIT MUSIC"
P.B. #2705-3-NV (:20 est.)
Pre-recorded, to be post-scored
- MUSIC #4 - Sc. 24 "HANKBURGER JINGLE"
P.B. #2705-4-V (1:00 est.)
To be recorded live on the set
- MUSIC #5 - Sc. 29 "JULIE'S CELLO"
P.B. #2705-5-NV (:15 est.)
To be recorded live on the set
- MUSIC #6 - Sc. 47 "BALLETIC SQUARE DANCE"
P.B. #2705-6-NV (2:00 est.)
Pre-recorded, to be post-scored
- MUSIC #7 - Sc. 61 "FANFARE"
P.B. #2705-7-NV (:20 est.)
Pre-recorded, to be post-scored
- MUSIC #8 - Sc. 64D "STEP UP TO THE MIKE"
P.B. #2705-8-V (3:00 est.)
Pre-recorded

FAME

"But Seriously, Folks..."

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

1 INT. SCHOOL LOBBY - FULL SHOT - DAY 1

The lobby is empty and the first SOUND we HEAR is that of a CLASS BELL shrilling through the halls, followed by a number of DOORS CLOSING from various proximities. We START CREDITS as we ANGLE TOWARD the double doors at the entrance. A beat, then one of the doors bursts open and DANNY AMATULLO charges in, propelled by adrenalin and fear. He skids to a halt, registering the empty area. A small groan, and:

DANNY

They'll kill me.

He takes off down the hall once more, CREDITS CONTINUING as we PAN TO watch his flight.

DIRECT CUT TO:

2 INT. DANCE CLASS - TIGHT ON LYDIA - DAY 2

looking o.s. with that special fierceness that's uniquely hers.

LYDIA

Step up to the mike!

3 WIDER SHOT 3

MUSIC #1 - Rehearsal Version - "STEP UP TO THE MIKE" -
PART I P.B.#2705-1-V (:45 est) *

As the MUSIC STARTS and we see the dance class, sprinkled with a leavening of actor-dancers, such as DORIS, MONTGOMERY, LEROY, and JULIE, all respond to the OPENING BARS of "Step Up to the Mike". They're moving in lines, but there isn't one "step" they're doing in unison; it's a free form sort of activity. Lydia views this critically.

LYDIA

Loosen up!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

LYDIA (CONT'D)

This is the kind of number
you've got to go with! You've
got to make the audience a part
of it! It's not like a
performance -- it's an
invitation! You've got to be
saying 'Come on! Get on up
here, too!'

JULIE

(over the MUSIC)

It's kind of hard to do
that when there isn't any
audience...

*

LYDIA

Child, I know all sorts of
things, but the one thing I
never learned was how to do
'easy' dance numbers. Hard
is the only kind I know.

She pauses and watches her charges like a new mother
viewing green and purple spotted triplets. They're not
much to look at, but they're all hers. CREDITS END here.

4 WIDE ANGLE - INCLUDING DOOR

4

MUSIC #2 - Rehearsal Version - "STEP UP TO THE MIKE" -
PART II P.B.#2705-2-V (:25 est)

Danny enters, trying to slip into the group without
being noticed. In a room full of mirrors that's being
a tad over-optimistic. Lydia, seemingly unmindful of
the recent arrival, moves through the group, adjusting
positions.

LYDIA

...Higher. Lead with your
shoulder...bend!

Her trail through the group leads right to Danny, and as
the number ends, she is in a perfect position to pounce.

LYDIA

(continuing)

Hold it, class.

She turns slowly to Danny, "Gotcha!" written all over
her face.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

LYDIA
(continuing;
sweetly)
Well -- looky here. The Italian
stallion has honored us with his
presence.

DANNY
(immediately de-
fensive)
I overslept.

LYDIA
Save it. I do not like to have
to work my rehearsals around
someone because he's late.
Understood?

DANNY
But I'm not a singer or a
dancer. I'm a comedian.

LYDIA
Do you see me laughing, Amatullo?

DANNY
...No...

LYDIA
Then you better start singing
and dancing.

Laughter from the rest of the class.

LYDIA
(to the laughers)
And I don't want to hear anything
out of you but the sound of your
bodies straining to be good.
Now, let's pick it up from the
music change. Five...six, five,
six, seven, eight.

The MUSIC BEGINS. The class resumes the rehearsal, and
Danny does his best to contribute. He goofs one of the
steps and smiles apologetically over to Doris. He gets
a disapproving look in return. Glancing around, he
notices that he's getting a lot of disapproving looks.
A move in the dance brings him face-to-face with COCO.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: (2)

4

COCO

You want to be Woody Allen, do it on your own time, man, not ours.

5 ON DANNY

5

heaving a sigh. Some mornings it doesn't even pay to get up late.

DIRECT CUT TO:

6 INT. SHERWOOD'S CLASS - DAY

6

SHERWOOD stands next to the blackboard, underlining the word "Precision".

SHERWOOD

...a very important element of clear writing.

She turns to the class.

SHERWOOD

(continuing)

It is particularly true in the case of pronouns. Let me give you an illustration.

(reading from paper)

'When his brother came in he said he was tired of telling him he wasn't supposed to go there.'

There are some smiles and a few chuckles.

DORIS

Who wrote that?

SHERWOOD

As you can see, the excessive use of the pronoun 'he' makes it impossible to understand the sentence.

*

LEROY

I understood it. And if you read the book, you'd understand who he was.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

SHERWOOD

I have read the book, but that's
not the point. The point is...

Something catches her attention and she turns from
Leroy to:

7 ANGLE - FAVORING DANNY

7

slumped in his seat, chin on his chest, dozing.

8 RESUME PREVIOUS SHOT

8

Sherwood reacting.

SHERWOOD

(to the class)

Can someone give me another
example? Danny Amatullo.

Danny's head snaps up at the mention of his name. He
attempts a smile to cover the fact he hasn't the
slightest idea what Sherwood just said.

DANNY

You want another example?
Didn't you like the last one?

SHERWOOD

I did, but Leroy didn't. So,
if you will oblige us, please.

Danny looks around for help, notes the word "Precision"
up on the blackboard, smiles.

DANNY

Terry Bradshaw is noted for
his precision passing.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

A wave of derisive laughter greets Danny's effort. Not the kind that an aspiring comedian looks forward to. He reacts testily.

SHERWOOD

Not even close. Sorry I woke you up.

Again the laughter, which Sherwood quells with a look to the class. Danny turns to Doris and BRUNO, who are seated.

DANNY

(softly)

Wake me up? She was the one who put me to sleep.

SHERWOOD

I'm sorry. I missed that, Danny. Did you have another clear-cut example of 'precision'?

Danny, still smarting from the first exchange, locks eyes with Sherwood.

DANNY

(what's he got to lose?)

I was saying that if the course was a little more interesting, we wouldn't be nodding off so much.

9 CLOSE ON SHERWOOD

9

not taking that comment lightly, but biting back any impulse to engage in acrimonious debate with a student in front of the class.

SHERWOOD

We'll discuss this later. And you'll be back here at the end of classes today.

10 CLOSE ON DANNY

10

trying to put on a tough face, knowing he was the loser in that little skirmish.

DIRECT CUT TO:

11 OMITTED

11 *

12 INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

12

Busy, NOISY, filled with students. Coco and Julie walk down the center aisle checking out the tables, looking for an empty spot. At one of the tables Doris stands and waves.

DORIS

Table for two? Near the dance floor?

They slide in across from her and Montgomery.

DORIS

(continuing; indicating Montgomery)

Guess who's going up for a commercial.

COCO

(looking all around room)

Uhh...let's see.

JULIE

I thought we weren't allowed to work while we're in school.

DORIS

This isn't professional. It's a commercial.

JULIE

Oh, that makes a lot of sense.

COCO

(explaining)

Since commercials are only one day's work, the school doesn't get all that bent about sneaking one in. Not like working every night in a play or some night club.

Montgomery rises and picks up his tray.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

MONTGOMERY

You want to come along? It's
right after school.

JULIE

Who? Me?

MONTGOMERY

All of you. It's a cattle call.

COCO

Not me, baby. I'm rehearsing a
musical number with Bruno that
is so 'bad' it'll make your
brains fry.

JULIE

I've got a cello lesson.

DORIS

(beat; then)

I could use the experience.
Any experience.

She rises, picks up her tray and moves off with
Montgomery.

DORIS

(continuing)

They discovered Sandy Duncan in
a bank commercial. Who knows?

Montgomery and Doris leave. Julie absently unwraps her
sandwich as she watches them depart, a thoughtful expres-
sion on her face. We TIGHTEN IN as she becomes aware
that Coco is observing her.

COCO

Thinking about ditching the
cello lesson?

JULIE

No.

(beat; then)

Well, a little.

(finally nodding)

But I won't. Doris is right.
If you're going to make it as
a performer, you really have
to get out and hustle.

*

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: (2)

12

COCO

But --?

JULIE

I don't know whether I have the drive to do that. I feel a lot more pressure to succeed here than I felt back in Grand Rapids.

*

COCO

That's because there's more pressure to feel. Maybe it's the pace, maybe it's the place, or maybe it's a combination, but this city is devoted to winners. And only winners.

*

JULIE

That doesn't leave a whole lot of room for second best.

COCO

(nicely)

Julie -- When's the last time you saw a football player coming off the field shouting, 'We're number two! We're number two!'

They share a smile and some increased understanding, as we:

DIRECT CUT TO:

13 INT. DRAMA CLASS - DAY

13

The class is spread out in a loose semi-circle on either side of the drama teacher, CRANDALL. Danny and Montgomery are up on the platform playing a scene from a 50's drama, complete with undershirts and kitchen table. Danny is very hyper throughout the scene. Up there with the hummingbirds. He is also carrying a script.

DANNY

(as the father)

'You understand all that stuff in those books, but you don't know nothin' about life.'

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

MONTGOMERY

(as the kid)

'Pop, we been all through
this before.'

DANNY

'When your mother died, the
authorities, they wanted to put
you in a home. My son they
were gonna put in a home. Said
I wasn't fit to raise a kid.'

MONTGOMERY

(pleading)

'Pop...'

DANNY

'Looka me, Franco. Were they
right? Did I bring you up
wrong? Did I...?'

CRANDALL

Cut it, please.

(to Montgomery)

I'm sorry to break in the
middle like that.

(to Danny)

What're you doing, Amatullo?

DANNY

Judging from the tone of your
voice, I'm not doing too good.

CRANDALL

That's being kind. Where are
the gentle beats we talked
about last session? You're
supposed to be warm, loving,
especially toward Franco.

*

DANNY

(bantering)

I keep thinking, 'Franco',
but I keep seeing Montgomery.

CRANDALL

(ignoring)

This man is very physical. A
big hugger, a toucher. He's
Italian. You're Italian.
You should have no trouble
relating. What about using
your own family as a reference?
Is your dad alive?

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (2)

13

DANNY

Not according to my mom.

He gets a small laugh from some of the kids. Montgomery and Crandall are not among the laughers. Crandall regards Danny with caring thoughtfulness, not much affected by Danny's efforts at emotional camouflage.

CRANDALL

Danny...you okay?

DANNY

Sure. Why wouldn't I be okay?

DIRECT CUT TO:

14 INT. ENGLISH CLASSROOM - TIGHT ON SHERWOOD

14 *

looking o.s. with the same degree of insightful concern that Crandall exhibited.

SHERWOOD

Because you're having a problem in my class, and I get the impression that mine isn't the only one.

The ANGLE ADJUSTS TO REVEAL Danny standing opposite Sherwood's desk, his gaze downcast and evasive.

DANNY

(innocent)

Me? I ain't got a problem.

SHERWOOD

Wrong on both counts, Danny. It's 'haven't', not 'ain't', and you do have a problem. You've been nodding off. I want to know if the cause is physical or chemical.

DANNY

I'm not sure I follow.

SHERWOOD

(dead straight)

If it's fatigue -- get some sleep. If it's drugs -- get some help.

DANNY

Drugs? No way! It's just that I'm working nights.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

SHERWOOD

Working where and doing what?

DANNY

I got a job at an all night sandwich stand. My old man got laid off, so we're kinda tight for money. You know how it is.

*

Sherwood's brow furrows with a sense of something out of place, some truth unstated and unsettled.

SHERWOOD

Danny... do you know what I mean when I use the phrase 'body language?'

DANNY

Not sure.

SHERWOOD

It means that your words are saying one thing, but the way you're standing, the way you're not looking at me... they're all saying something else.

Danny consciously squares his shoulders, looks Sherwood directly in the eye.

DANNY

Yeah, well... what's the 'body language' saying now?

Sherwood leans back, glancing appraisingly at Danny, then:

SHERWOOD

It's saying: scared.

She nails Danny directly and the look falls away from challenging Sherwood.

*

DANNY

I gotta go.

He turns, moving for the door.

SHERWOOD

Mr. Amatullo --

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (2)

14

DANNY
 (not breaking
 stride)
 I told you I got a job and I'm
 late for work! G'bye!

And he's out the door, pulling it shut with some force. Sherwood looks at the door for a beat, exasperated and weary. Her smile indicates the lady's resilience.

SHERWOOD
 He's been taking Leroy-lessons.

DIRECT CUT TO:

15 INT. COMMERCIAL SOUND STAGE - FULL SHOT - DAY

15

A garish cartoony-looking set is up, supposedly to be the image of a 'Hank's Hamburger Heaven', a fast food emporium dedicated to making Fatburgers seem the epitome of restraint. Seated and idly walking about the set are ten or fifteen young people, the Riders of the Afterschool Cattle Call. The ANGLE CLOSES ON Doris and Montgomery, seated on the floor, waiting.

MONTGOMERY
 ...then he suggested we drop the scene. Like it was my fault. Something is clearly messed up with our friend, Danny.

DORIS
 (a pronouncement)
 Home life. Something is fouled up at home.

MONTGOMERY
 Is that a theory or do you know something?

DORIS
 Theory.

MONTGOMERY
 Well, you could be right. He hardly even talks about his family. Maybe there's --

Doris discreetly plants an elbow in Montgomery's spleen as she spots something O.S. that requires their attention more than musings about Amatullo.

As the DIRECTOR, trailed by his ASSISTANT, move into the area of the set. The Director is in his middle thirties and takes himself and his craft rather seriously. He smiles at those gathered, his gaze sweeping over them, though he'd term it a pan.

DIRECTOR

Okay, people...I just want to take a look at you...the look is what's important...we'll get the performance out of the way later... just looking for that look...

He starts to walk in amongst them, creating nervous throat clearings, uneasy smiles, hopeful glances, deep inhalations by the zaftig. He pauses near Montgomery, looking at him appraisingly.

ASSISTANT

You've already got a redhead.

DIRECTOR

Right. Thanks.

Montgomery shoots the Assistant a look that does not compute with an era of brotherhood between all people. The Director continues to pace in and out among them. Doris leans over to Montgomery after a beat.

DORIS

Why do I feel like I'm in a Caucasian version of 'Roots'?

Her whisper brings the Director's head around.

DIRECTOR

Who just spoke?

Doris's smile was most recently seen on David Stockman when entering the Oval Office. The Director closes the distance between himself and Doris. His look is intrigued. He stops directly in front of her.

DIRECTOR

(continuing)

I need someone who can look into my camera with eyes that say:
"I'll die if I don't have a
Hankburger with double cheese."

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

DORIS
 (beat, and:)
 Eyes... don't fail me now.

A second or two clicks off, then the Director smiles, genuinely amused.

DIRECTOR
 That's cute.
 (to Assistant)
 I like her.

And he turns and moves away, which is just as well, for if he saw the incredible flood of hope that his casual comment brought to Doris' expression, he might be tempted to take advantage. And he'd succeed.

DIRECT CUT TO:

17 EXT. KOMEDY KLUB - NIGHT

17

On one of the Village sidestreets. A sign in front announces "New York's Finest Kollection of Komics."

18 INT. KOMEDY KLUB - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

18

Danny sits in a very confined wing space between a small antique dimmer board and a scarred amplifier, monitoring the sound level on the house speaker system. PAST Danny and THROUGH a weathered velour drape we can SEE a part of the house: several semi-inebriated patrons seated at tiny tables, grinning up at a COMEDIAN working "in one."

COMEDIAN
 ... and the guy said, "I don't understand. If that was your mother-in-law, what happened to the donkey?"

19 ANOTHER ANGLE

19

The OWNER appears behind the light board and moves next to Danny. He watches the stage for a beat, then:

OWNER
 He's really cooking tonight.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

Part of Danny is out there with the comic, cooking also.

DANNY

Yeah.

OWNER

How long you been stage manager here, Danny?

Danny turns to face the Owner.

DANNY

Almost two months.

OWNER

You're doing a good job. You keep everything running nice and smooth.

DANNY

Thanks, Mr. Kerides.

OWNER

You heard Joey is leaving?

DANNY

(reverently)

Yeah. Vegas. Six weeks. The Sands! The main room.

OWNER

It's Reno. Four weeks. The Poker Palace. In the lounge.

DANNY

That's still a good break for Joey.

OWNER

For Joey, yeah. For me, I got a open slot starting next Thursday.

(long beat; then)

You interested?

DANNY

(jumping on it)

You kidding? Interested!!! I been here until two and three every morning, so I could... wow! I'm a real comic!

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: (2)

19

OWNER

(smiling at the
outburst)

You better be, because I'm
putting you down for the closing
spot on Thursday. Probably go
on about one, one-thirty in the
morning. Okay?

Danny extends a grateful hand.

DANNY

Okay!

The Owner takes the hand and seals the deal. They
stand for a beat till Danny suddenly becomes aware
that he has just heard a cue.

DANNY

(continuing)

Ohmygosh!

MUSIC #3 - "COMEDIAN'S EXIT MUSIC" - *
P.B.#2705-3-NV (:20 est)

Danny hits a switch on a portable tape recorder and
play-off MUSIC BLARES out of the speakers. We HEAR
SCATTERED APPLAUSE from the house as the Comedian
comes through the drape. Danny takes the lights down,
and, as he fades the MUSIC OUT, does a little dance
step in time to it. The Comedian walks over to the
light board, smiling.

COMEDIAN

Now, why do I get the feeling
the boss is giving you a shot
next Thursday?

DANNY

(euphoric)

Working a real audience. No
more telling jokes to mirrors.

Despite the euphoria, Danny lets go with a giant yawn.

COMEDIAN

You look beat, kid.

DANNY

I am. This whole thing has been
tough. Hard to do my school
stuff here, and -- well, it's
all catching up with me. *

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: (3)

19

COMEDIAN

Let me give you some advice...
(thinks a bit,
then:)

No. Let me give you an opening
night present.

The Comedian pulls a vial of pills out of his coat
pocket. He shakes out some and hands them to Danny.

DANNY

(declining)

That's okay...

COMEDIAN

You want to go out there next
Thursday feeling like a schlump?
Take them. You want to make
people feel good, you got to
feel good yourself.

*

20 CLOSE ON DANNY

20

looking at the pills in his hand.

DANNY

Don't want to be a schlump out
there. That's for sure.

What's not for sure is whether Danny is happy about all
those little pills resting in his tired hand. We HOLD
ON Danny for a long, thoughtful moment as his gaze
holds on the vial of pills, and then we:

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

21 INT. AMATULLO KITCHEN - NIGHT

21

As Danny comes into the kitchen, he finds his MOTHER standing at the stove stirring a large kettle of simmering soup. While thus engaged, she is also carrying on an animated conversation over the phone, managing to never miss a beat as she crams the instrument between her cheek and shoulder. Danny waves at her as he crosses to the refrigerator and opens the door, surveying what's available.

MOTHER

(into phone)

...what I'm saying is that the government doesn't really care one way or the other, and the only way to make them sit up and take notice of the UFO problem is for people like you to use the power you've got. Having a radio show is like having a figure -- you got to use it for it to do you any good.

DANNY

You calling that all night phone-in show again?

She nods "yes", but her concentration is on the phone call and the reply her comment has received.

MOTHER

Al -- I don't know if UFOs are real or not. Nobody knows -- that's the point. And nobody's trying very hard to find out. That's what I'm saying.

DANNY

(fondly)

My mother, the wacko...

He finds a plate of leftover pizza as his Mother abandons the phone and moves to his side, heading him off at the pasta.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

BACCI
→

MOTHER

That'll sit on your stomach
like a cannonball this time
of morning. There's soup on
the stove. Take some of that.

She replaces the plate of pizza into the fridge as
Danny looks on wonderingly, noting the phone still
on her shoulder.

DANNY

Thought you were talking to
All Night Al.

MOTHER

I'm on hold till the two
o'clock news is over. Sit.
I'll get a bowl.

22 DIFFERENT ANGLE

22

as Danny's father, AMATULLO, enters the room tucking
in his shirttail. Amatullo is very much the antithesis
of the standard Italian father. Quiet, withdrawn.
Even tentative.

AMATULLO

You just getting in?

DANNY

Yeah. Didn't mean to wake you.

AMATULLO

You didn't. I'm working the
three-to-eleven shift this
week.

MOTHER

I've got soup for your thermos.
Make the sandwiches in a sec.

She starts to busy herself with the luncheon prepar-
ations, periodically picking up the phone and listening
to make sure she's not yet back "on the air". Amatullo
pours himself a cup of coffee.

DANNY

I get to perform at the club
next Thursday.

AMATULLO

Friday some kind of holiday?

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

DANNY

No.

AMATULLO

Same hours you're working now? *

DANNY

At first.

(pause)

Pop, I have to go where I can perform.

MOTHER

You could always work Talent Night over at the Knights of St. Anthony.

AMATULLO

No.

MOTHER

Why? It'd be perfect. It's only one night a week -- Saturday. And it's earlier. A lot earlier.

AMATULLO

Not at my lodge.

She turns to face him.

MOTHER

Why not?

AMATULLO

It's bad enough he's got to go to that school, but I won't have my son playing the clown in front of my friends.

DANNY

I'm not a clown. I'm a comedian.

AMATULLO

There's a difference...?

DANNY

There is.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: (2)

22

AMATULLO

Well, that's 'words'. I'm not very good with words. You say there's a difference, then there's a difference. I just don't see what it is, that's all.

DANNY

When a person is just a clown, they'll do anything for --

AMATULLO

(interrupting quietly)

Let's not get into it, Danny. The only thing you get from beating a dead horse is a sore arm. When you get older, you'll see that life is real, life is earnest. Maybe you'll come to your senses. Get a job like mine, at the produce terminal. *

DANNY

You think this is all something I'm going to 'outgrow'?

AMATULLO

If we're lucky.
(to Mother)
Sandwiches ready?

Amatullo rises, moving to the counter and getting his lunch pail from his wife. He kisses her lightly on the cheek.

AMATULLO

(continuing)

I'll be home regular time. Going to stop at church, light a candle for Vinnie.

He nods a farewell to Danny as well and is out the door. Danny stares at the table, expression inward and somber. His Mother remains at the sink.

DANNY

Maw...how old was I when Vinnie died?

MOTHER

I was still carrying you inside. Six months, maybe.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: (3)

22

DANNY

Was Pop...then, like he is
now...?

MOTHER

Your father -- he's a closed
person, Danny. He's having
a rough time right now.

DANNY

Rough time about what?

MOTHER

Well, he doesn't like the
hours you're keeping, for one
thing.

DANNY

Why doesn't he say something,
then?

MOTHER

Oh, he's talked to me about it
a lot.

DANNY

Why doesn't he talk to me
about it?

Mrs. Amatullo obviously heard the question, but chooses not to deal with it. Instead, she dabs at a nonexistent speck on the counter, then:

MOTHER

School tomorrow. You get to
bed now.

And that's a kind of answer, though not a very satisfying one. Danny rises and moves heavily out of the room. Mrs. Amatullo stands at the sink, looking out the soot-smudged window. She picks up the phone and listens.

MOTHER

(continuing)

Yeah, Big Al...I'm still here.

23 INT. DANNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

23

A small room. A room in transit from boyhood to manhood.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

At the moment the motif is more sports than show business as evidenced by a large Miami Dolphins poster on one wall. Danny enters and sits on the edge of his bed. He pulls out the vial of pills given him by his "friend" the Comedian. He stares at it for a long moment, then places it on the dresser. He falls back heavily on the spread, eyes staring widely at the ceiling. Sleep does not appear to be too imminent.

DIRECT CUT TO:

24 INT. DANCE CLASSROOM - ON BRUNO - DAY

24

MUSIC #4 - "HANKBURGER JINGLE"

P.B.#2705-4-V (1:00 est)

Seated at the piano, POUNDING out a heartfelt version of the Hankburger jingle, selling it for all he's worth as the ANGLE WIDENS TO REVEAL Leroy, Doris, Coco, all dressed for dance class, along with eight or ten others, all of them ad libbing dance steps to the Hankburger jingle. The teasing is directed at Doris, but she's taking it with good spirited fun.

25 ANGLE TO DOORWAY

25

as Montgomery passes by, then retraces his steps and stands there, looking in curiously. He moves on into the room.

As the mini-number comes to a mocking, laughing halt, and Montgomery can be heard.

MONTGOMERY

What's going on?

LEROY

A star is born!

MONTGOMERY

What...

DORIS

I got a call-back. That cuckoo-bird who looks at you through his hands...

(demonstrates)

...wants me to come and read.

MONTGOMERY

(not bummed out)

Well -- better me than you -- but if not me -- why not you? Congratulations.

DORIS

So, what should I do?

MONTGOMERY

Why ask me?

DORIS

Because if you hadn't dragged me over there in the first place...

MONTGOMERY

(interrupting)

I didn't drag you...

Doris puts a restraining hand on Montgomery's arm.

DORIS

You going to stand there arguing or you going to help me?

Montgomery shrugs his acceptance of the inevitability that is Doris Schwartz.

(CONTINUED)

MONTGOMERY

The first thing you have to do is stop thinking of the director as a cuckoo-bird. No matter what, he is the director.

DORIS

And -- cuckoo.

Montgomery slows her with a look.

MONTGOMERY

Next: the product. You love it.

DORIS

(giggling)

Have you ever eaten a Hankburger? I don't know who "Hank" is, but his burgers are the pits.

MONTGOMERY

Wrong. From this moment on, they are great!

AD LIB reaction from the others, who are clearly in agreement with Doris.

DORIS

Montgomery!!!

MONTGOMERY

You want the job?

DORIS

(eyes ceiling-ward)

They're great. None better.

MONTGOMERY

Now, reading for the job...

The passing parade in the corridor coughs up Danny Amatullo, books under arm, smile in place.

DANNY

Sorry to interrupt -- which is a lie -- but I have to ask you all a question.

28 WIDER

28

as Danny moves into the room.

DORIS

Is it important? *

DANNY

(sarcastic) *

No. I want to ask you an unimportant question.

(inviting)

How would you like to come see one of the really fast-rising young comedians perform?

COCO

You got a gig?

DANNY

Not too loud. I don't want to get tossed out of school.

MONTGOMERY

When and where?

BRUNO

Why?

DANNY

Cute. Komedey Klub. Thursday.
(pause)

It's the late show. One o'clock in the morning.

The head-shakes are slow in coming, as they know how much this means to Danny, but they also know the reality involved.

BRUNO

No way, Danny...my Dad'll kill me.

COCO

Same here. Not on a school night.

The others concur, not happy about it, but the facts are the facts. Danny reacts with anger.

DANNY

Well, that's great! Just terrific! I bust my buns for three months trying to wedge my way in there and it finally all comes together, and --

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

28

BRUNO

I'd shut up real quick if I
were you.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

28

This last is produced by Lydia's entrance into the room and Bruno's desire to warn his friend before he reveals too much. Danny looks behind and registers Lydia, but it doesn't help his mood in the slightest. He throws an angry look back at his peers, then charges past Lydia out into the corridor. Lydia glances after him, then looks at the group assembled.

LYDIA

Mr. Martelli...what are you
doing here?

Bruno swiftly starts to gather up his books from atop the piano.

BRUNO

What I'm doing here...is leaving
here, as quickly as I can.

LYDIA

Good instincts, child. Good
instincts.

Bruno is moving for the hallway and longevity, as we --

DIRECT CUT TO:

29 INT. SOUNDPROOF MUSIC STUDY ROOM - ON CELLO

29

MUSIC #5 - "JULIE'S CELLO"
P.B. #2705-5-NV (:15 est)

*

being PLAYED, as we FIND ON WIDENING, by Julie. Her concentration on the MUSIC is intense and pleasing to watch as she produces the kind of somber, thoughtful TONES that speak of limitless, cool darkness. A beat, then she becomes aware of a TAPPING at the WINDOW of the room. She looks up to see:

30 REVERSE - ON DANNY

30

standing at the window, looking like an ad for Advent TV. With his index finger, he draws the outline of a question mark on the glass. INTERCUT WITH Danny at the window and Julie within the music practice cubicle. She picks up at once on the 'charade' aspect of her performance.

JULIE

Question...okay.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

30

Danny pantomimes sawing wood, stressing the object being sawed.

JULIE
(continuing)
Saw... wood...

On the nose, Danny indicates. Then he points to his eye.

JULIE
(continuing)
Eye. Would I...

On the nose again, from Danny. He pantomimes "wanting, desire".

JULIE
(continuing)
Need... love? Want?

On the nose.

JULIE
(continuing)
Would I want...

Two fingers from Danny.

JULIE
(continuing)
Would I want to...

He points to his eye, then outward.

JULIE
(continuing)
See...

Points to himself.

JULIE
(continuing)
Danny... you.
(recapping)
Would I want to see you...

He pantomimes a mike and laughter and responding to thunderous applause.

JULIE
(continuing)
Perform. Sure. When?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED: (2)

30

JULIE (CONT'D)

(points to her
watch)

When?

He pantomimes parched, desperate dry throat, then pouring down a glass of some liquid.

JULIE

(continuing)

Thirsty... Thursday.

(nodding)

Sure. Love to.

(the watch again)

What time? Time?

One finger reluctantly held up by Danny.

JULIE

(continuing)

One o'clock...

(pantomimes a
book)

School... what about school...?

(then, getting
the message)Or do you mean one o'clock in
the morning...?

Her question is punctuated by placing her hand on a pillow. Danny nods, expression hopeful, but not really optimistic. Julie shakes her head 'no', with real regret.

JULIE

(continuing)

I can't... I'm sorry.

31 ON DANNY

31

Expected it, really, but that's not to say it doesn't smart a little. He just nods anemically, then holds his nose and slowly 'sinks' from view on the other side of the window.

32 ON JULIE

32

appreciates his attempt at lightness, but isn't fooled at all. He's hurting, and she's empathetic. We HOLD ON HER a beat, and then we --

DIRECT CUT TO:

33 CONTINUED:

33

The Comedian walks away leaving Danny to reflect on his words. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out the small vial of pills, studying the container.

DANNY

Good evening, friends...

Danny strides over to a water cooler in the corner of the backstage area, fills a paper cup and pops some pills. He stands for a second and we TIGHTEN IN ON him as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

34 INT. KOMEDY KLUB - STAGE LIGHT - NIGHT

34

We are onstage, and we PULL BACK to SEE the Owner standing center stage, talking into the mike. *

OWNER

(bantering)

All right, you bums, listen up. I want you to give a great big hand and your undivided attention to a new kid on the block. A star of tomorrow: Danny Amatullo!

35 INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

35

Danny takes a giant breath, mutters a silent prayer to the patron saint of comics and steps out onstage.

36 RESUME - ANGLE TO THE STAGE

36

Danny comes boldly onstage and over to the mike, a smile of self-possession doing its best to mask a case of galloping butterflies. He takes the mike from the holder, looks out over the audience, as the polite applause fades.

DANNY

Thank you. Thank you very much. You know, I think I'd better warn you. I'm...

Something in the audience catches Danny's attention.

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

39 INT. DANNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

39

Danny is in a deep sleep. An unhealthy sleep. More akin to a coma. A combination of chemicals and exhaustion. The ALARM goes off and Danny barely reacts. A few seconds go by, then the door to the room is opened by Danny's father. He crosses slowly to the dresser toward the BUZZING ALARM. Scattered next to the alarm are Danny's wallet, change and watch. Also there is a nearly empty bottle of pills. Amatullo picks up the bottle, looks somberly at it for a long beat, places it back on the dresser, turns and leaves the room. The ALARM CONTINUES to BUZZ insistently. Danny comes up through several layers of fogginess, reaches out for the button and shuts it off. He does not sit up with electricity in every fibre of his being.

DIRECT CUT TO:

40 INT. SHERWOOD'S CLASS - ON CLOCK - DAY

40

Reading 11:57.

SHERWOOD (O.S.)

...Frost's work stresses
simple straightforward
imagery and a lack of
overt intellectualism.

41 ON DANNY

41

Studying the clock with prayerful dedication, willing the hands to move around the face with greater speed.

SHERWOOD (O.S.)

There is a direct connection
between this sort of simplicity
and the writings of William
Wordsworth -- one of the first
to put poetry into the language
of the common man.

*

42 WIDER ANGLE

42

REVEALING Sherwood at the front of the class, a book in hand, Bruno, Doris, Leroy, are in the class, too (the same students as the First Act class).

SHERWOOD

Wordsworth also used the Platonic doctrine of recollection. Mr. Martelli. What was it and give me an example in his writing.

BRUNO

When you're born you know everything, and learning is the adult remembering his childhood.

SHERWOOD

And an example...

BRUNO

"Ode on Intimations of Immortality." But please don't ask me to explain the title.

DORIS

It means: 'Mr. Wordsworth, that cough is more than just hay fever.'

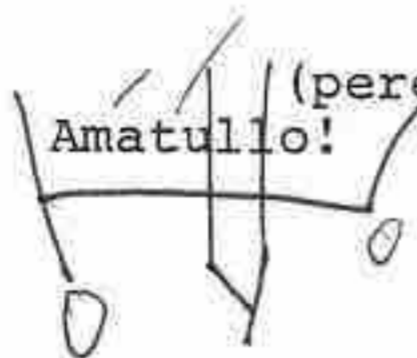
The others smile, some laugh. Not Danny. His eyes are welded to the clock.

The BELL RINGS, and there is a flurry of activity as the students get ready to leave. Danny makes a beeline for the door.

SHERWOOD

(peremptorily)

Amatullo!



43

ON DANNY

43

One step away from freedom.

SHERWOOD (O.S.)

You stay here. We need to talk.

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED:

43

DANNY

I got a class.

44 RESUME - WIDE

44

As Danny edges closer to the door.

SHERWOOD

You've been dodging me for the past several days. And you have lunch next period, so sit down and listen.

Danny moves away from the door, his nervousness due to the effects that the combination of uppers and downers is having on his system.

SHERWOOD

(continuing)

I'm surprised... I'm puzzled... Also, I'm angry, young man.

DANNY

Why? Because I bust one little rule...

She crosses to a chair and we TIGHTEN

SHERWOOD

I'm not talking about rules. If you want to get thrown out of school, suit yourself. But you conned me. All that nonsense about helping out the family...

DANNY

It's true. That's why I was working at that club.

SHERWOOD

(sarcastic)

I prefer my fairy tales to start off with 'once upon a time.'

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

What do you want from me? I'm trying to make a start for myself and nobody cares. All you care about is if I learn poems, or how to diagram sentences. Nobody cares what I'm going through.

SHERWOOD

(beat; then)

Just what is it you're going through, Danny?

The question brings him back a bit.

DANNY

Nothing. I was just...

Sherwood reaches out and touches Danny's cheek to turn him more directly to her.

SHERWOOD

Look at me, Danny.

DANNY

(reacting)

Hey, don't touch me! I don't like people to touch me.

Sherwood takes a long, hard look at Danny while he fidgets under her gaze.

SHERWOOD

You're on uppers, aren't you?

DANNY

Look, Miss Sherwood, if you're finished, I'd like to...

SHERWOOD

(an order)

Hold your hand out. Fingers up. Like this.

She demonstrates. Danny copies the gesture and Sherwood takes a sheet of paper from the desk and places it onto Danny's outstretched fingers. The paper quivers.

(CONTINUED)

SHERWOOD

(continuing)

The object is to hold it steady.

Danny suddenly crumples the paper into a ball, squeezing it tightly.

DANNY

Look, I'm just a little nervous about performing, that's all. I'm a little on edge and...

And suddenly Sherwood whirls and, with all the force she can bring to bear, she hurls her book against the blackboard with:

SHERWOOD

Dammit!!

By the time she looks back to Danny, he knows his best course of action is simply to shut up and listen. Sherwood's anger is queen-sized.

SHERWOOD

(continuing)

Now you listen to me, young man. There is a part of me... that would like to close my fist... and flatten you. But... because I'm a reasonable person... I know that's what they call misdirected anger. It's not you I'm mad at... it's the piece of breathing dirt that gave that poison to you.

DANNY

It's not poison, it...

SHERWOOD

(exploding)

It's poison and it destroys young people and I hate it!

Danny is awed by the depth of her anger. She turns away from him, regaining a degree of composure. Only a degree.

(CONTINUED)

SHERWOOD

(continuing)

Danny... I've lost students and friends... and people I cared about very deeply. And I don't intend to lose any more...

DANNY

Dead...?

SHERWOOD

In effect.

(beat, and:)

There is obviously someone on the outside telling you it's okay. Telling you that 'everybody does it.' I'm here to tell you... that person is a liar and a thief.

DANNY

He ain't a thief...

SHERWOOD

He's stealing your life, Danny... and he's getting you to act as accomplice.

Danny regards her evenly, a little frightened, not knowing what to say. O.S. a BELL SOUNDS. Sherwood moves to the desk, sits wearily. Danny isn't about to go without some sort of permission. She looks over at him.

SHERWOOD

(continuing)

It's lunch. Go.

Danny hesitates, then moves slowly to the door. He stops there, looking back at her.

DANNY

What are you going to do...?

SHERWOOD

I don't know. I'm going to have to give that some thought.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED: (3)

44

DANNY

But you are going to do
something...?

Sherwood looks over, expression veiled, enigmatic,
but not playing games.

SHERWOOD

You'll be late for lunch.

Danny nods, then moves on out of the classroom. Sherwood
remains at her desk. She raps a fist against the wood
to vent some frustration. A beat, then she looks at
her hand.

SHERWOOD

(continuing)

Ouch.

DIRECT CUT TO:

45 INT. CAFETERIA - TIGHT ON COCO - DAY

45

Speaking with earnest, well-meant intensity.

COCO

Imagery, Doris. That's what
it's all about.

46 WIDER ANGLE

46

REVEALING Doris seated across from Coco, plate of
cottage cheese in front of her. Her expression as
she looks to Coco is frankly baffled.

DORIS

Why are you doing this? I
thought you hated commercials.

COCO

I do.

DORIS

Well, then...

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

46

COCO

Just in case I don't make it right away and I need a job for money, I thought I'd get into coaching. It's what they call a fall-back position.

DORIS

Do you know how thrilling it is to be someone's 'fall-back position?'

COCO

It's just that when I heard you say how you really don't like Hankburgers...

DORIS

They're like poached hubcaps.

COCO

Well, that's what imagery is all about. What's your very favorite food of anything? The one thing you absolutely can't resist...?

DORIS

(no hesitation)

My grandmother's lentil soup. It's unreal.

COCO

Well, that's what you have to imagine when you look at those hamburgers. Your grandmother's lentil soup.

Doris, intrigued with the idea, lifts an imaginary hamburger, her eyes alight with eagerness.

DORIS

My grandmother's lentil soup...

(beat, and:)

This is really nice of you.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED: (2)

46

COCO

The thing you'll have to ask yourself is whether or not it will make you a better actress.

DORIS

It will make me a richer actress.

COCO

(charitably)

Okay...if that's what you're after...

DORIS

Coco...if Sir Laurence Olivier can sell cameras, if Orson Welles can refuse to drink wine before its time -- who is Doris Renee Schwartz to refuse to go on camera and pig out on a Hankburger double cheese? Tell me that.

DIRECT CUT TO:

47 INT. DANCE CLASS - DAY

47

MUSIC #6 - "BALLETTIC SQUARE DANCE"
P.B.#2705-6-NV (2:00 est)

*

A balletic square dance. Lydia calls out various positions and movements and, as the dancers flow from partner to partner, we follow along. The MUSIC is classical and stately.

As the dancers move, we CLOSE IN ON Leroy and Coco.

LEROY

I don't do drugs, but that's because I think of this body as a cathedral, and I don't want to do nothin' to mar its beauty.

COCO

You ever tell that to Amatullo?

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

47

LEROY

I ain't tellin' him nothin'.
As long as he takes the heat
from Sherwood and keeps her
off me, I'm happy. I'm due
for some time off.

LYDIA (O.S.)

Close fifth, finish and
change partners.

Leroy moves off and we HOLD ON Coco as Montgomery
becomes her partner.

LYDIA (O.S.)

(continuing)

...and pique arabesque...
promenade.

MONTGOMERY

If everybody's so worried
about Danny, how come
nobody went to see him?

COCO

Way I heard it, somebody did.
Sherwood.

LYDIA (O.S.)

...close fifth, finish and
change partners.

Montgomery moves to Julie and we FOLLOW along.

JULIE

I notice you didn't go.

MONTGOMERY

Hey, don't get on my case.
None of us went. We all let
him down.

LYDIA (O.S.)

...change partners...

Montgomery moves off, and Leroy steps in to partner
Julie. Coco, now partnered with Montgomery, is in
the near b.g.

*

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED: (2)

47

LYDIA (O.S.)
(continuing)
...pique arabesque...promenade...

JULIE
What I don't understand is
why he'd get into pills.

LEROY
He's from the South Bronx.

Julie looks at Leroy as if he answered her in Chinese.

JULIE
What does that mean?

LEROY
If you got to ask the question,
you ain't going to understand
the answer.

COCO
Julie...remember when we were
talking about this town and
how it loves winners...?

JULIE
Sure...

COCO
Well, being number one isn't
easy. You need help, support.
And if you're not getting it
from your family...which it
doesn't sound like Danny is...
and if you don't get it from
your friends...which he didn't
get, either...you start looking
someplace else.

And we PULL WIDE as:

LYDIA
Close fifth and finish.

DIRECT CUT TO:

47A INT. AMATULLO KITCHEN - FULL SHOT - NIGHT

47A

Mrs Amatullo is at the sink, scouring out a casserole
dish. Mr. Amatullo is seated at the kitchen table,
helping out by polishing some of the flatware.

(CONTINUED)

47A CONTINUED:

47A

It's not silver by any stretch of the imagination. There is a small Sony on the table in front of him, and the lion's share of his attention is directed toward that screen. The SOUND from the SET is that of a CHEERING SPORTS AUDIENCE. The ANGLE ADJUSTS as Danny moves into the room, just pulling on his coat.

DANNY

I'm on my way.

AMATULLO

You don't want to see the second half? Knicks are coming back.

DANNY

I don't have the time; I have to be down there by nine-thirty.

AMATULLO

They're really moving the ball, the Knicks. They looked flat last time. You said so yourself.

DANNY

I know...

AMATULLO

Figured you'd like to see them when they were playing good, that's all.

DANNY

I would, but --

AMATULLO

You don't have the time. You said that. Sorry. Don't mean to hold you up.

DANNY

I'll...read about it in the paper tomorrow morning.

AMATULLO

Fine. Just thought you'd be interested.

No Win situation. Amatullo turns to the TV, Danny holds awkwardly in the entryway. A beat, then:

(CONTINUED)

47A CONTINUED: (2)

47A

DANNY

Well -- I'm going.

MRS. AMATULLO

You got a clean handkerchief?

Danny smiles lamely and nods, pulling the clean handkerchief out for his mother to see. She nods, blows him a kiss. His smile has run out of its warranty period and he moves for the door, and we --

DIRECT CUT TO:

48 INT. KOMEDY KLUB - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

48

Standing off to one side of the light board, tucked in a corner, is a water cooler. Danny fills a paper cup with water from the cooler, then leans against the wall for a moment, staring into the cup, replaying the conversation from earlier in the evening. He sighs, pops some pills, crumples the cup and tosses into a nearby waste basket. We TRUCK WITH him as he crosses over to the light board and begins setting up for the night's work. The Owner comes over.

OWNER

We got a problem.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

You worried about Maxie's
exit? I'll get it right
tonight.

OWNER

No, I'm not, and no, you won't.

DANNY

One more time?

OWNER

Show me some ID, kid.

(off Danny's look)

I got a call about your
being underage. Now, I've
had my suspicions, but I
figure I ask no questions,
you tell me no lies and
we're both in the clear.
But if there's somebody
going to blow the whistle...
show me some ID, I said...

Danny slowly withdraws his wallet and pulls out the
asked-for item. The Owner looks at it briefly, turning
it over, then handing it back with:

OWNER

I don't see the number '18'
on there anywhere.

DANNY

This means I'm canned here...
(indicates
stage area)
...and out there.

OWNER

(nods, and:)
Say goodnight, Danny.

He moves off as the ANGLE CLOSES ON Danny. He looks
down with anguish at his ID and its attendant short-
comings.

*

*

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

49 INT. COMMERCIAL SET - DAY

49

Doris stands next to a table filled with Hankburgers. The Director, the only man in New York who will one day make a statement about the human condition using a commercial for underarm deodorant, stands next to Doris, "explaining".

DIRECTOR

...and when you look at that Hankburger, I want to see love in your eyes, I want to see passion on your face, I want to see adoration in your whole person. And most of all, I want to see...

(dramatically)

...double cheese in your look.

What the Director mostly sees is Doris fighting mightily not to crack up at all this silliness. She manages to suppress all but the slightest giggle.

DIRECTOR

(continuing)

Something funny?

DORIS

(controlling)

Funny? Uh uh. No, that's...
(grabbing at straws)
...happy. Joy. That's the double cheese.

DIRECTOR

Terrific. Just what we want.
Roll 'em.

He stations himself next to the camera as an Assistant shoves a set of clappers in front of Doris's face.

ASSISTANT

(flat)

Hankburger, double cheese take one.

He snaps the clapper down and moves away.

DIRECTOR

Action, Doris.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

49

Doris picks up one of the Hankburgers on the table, takes a bite, chews, then turns to the camera.

DORIS

When you're having a Hankburger, don't forget, it's: "Puleeze-- double cheese."

It is said like every other dippy commercial, and Doris smiles dazzlingly at the camera.

DIRECTOR

Cut! Not bad, Doris.

He walks over to her.

DIRECTOR

(continuing)

I want to do it again, and this time I need more on the, "puleeze!" More...more...

(cannot think of the word)

...more.

DORIS

(what the hell)

Okay.

The Director runs back to the camera.

DIRECTOR

Roll 'em!

ASSISTANT

(with the clapper)

Hankburger, double cheese, take two.

DIRECTOR

Action, Doris!

Doris picks up another Hankburger and repeats the action.

DORIS

When you're having a Hankburger, don't forget, it's: "PuLEEZE! Double Cheese!"

She holds the smile, waiting, waiting, waiting, the jaw muscles are beginning to go...

50 CONFERENCE ROOM - TIGHT ON CLAPPER

50

Number "4" is chalked on the slate.

ASSISTANT (O.S.)
Hankburger, double cheese,
take four.

The clapper LEAVES the SHOT and WE SEE Doris pick up another burger, bite and turn.

DORIS
When you're having a Hankburger,
don't forget, it's "Cheese,
double puleeze!"

Before she can even smile, we HEAR

DIRECTOR (O.S.)
Wrong!

51 SOUND STAGE - CLAPPER

51

The chalked number is up to seven.

ASSISTANT (O.S.)
Hankburger, double cheese,
take seven.

The clapper is whisked away and there's Doris again. Another burger, another bite, and the turn to the camera.

DORIS
When you're having a Hankburger,
don't...

A hunk of the burger goes down the wrong way, and Doris has a coughing fit.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)
Cut!

52 SOUND STAGE - CLAPPER

52

The number is up to two figures.

ASSISTANT (O.S.)
Hankburger, double cheese, take
ten.

(CONTINUED)

52

CONTINUED:

52

The clapper leaves and we see that Doris is beginning to show signs of wear and tear from the hours and the Hank-burgers.

DORIS

When you're having a Hankburger,
don't forget-

And she forgets. Is up. Higher than the Himalayas.
She looks at the Hankburger and out comes:

DORIS

(continuing)

My Grandmother's lentil soup.

DIRECTOR

Cut it!

Doris collapses inwardly as a whispered exchange takes place between the Director and his Assistant. The Director rises angrily and stalks off into the dark recesses of the soundstage. Doris watches him unhappily, knowing this does not bode well. The Assistant moves out into the performing area, turning to address the members of the crew.

ASSISTANT

Okay, everybody! Take an hour!

DORIS

An hour? An hour for what?

ASSISTANT

(blithely)

Lunch.

That word, possibly out of all the words in the English language, has more bad connotations and associations to it for Doris at this point in time. Her stomach starts doing an imitation of the space shuttle lifting off the pad and this causes her to go racing off in search of... starring Leonard Nimoy, as we HOLD on the bemused assistant, and then we:

DIRECT CUT TO:

53

INT. SCHOOL LOBBY AREA - FULL SHOT - DAY

53

As Sherwood comes in, garbed in a brand new manner:
jogging outfit, one for a seriously dedicated runner,
not for Sunday afternoon tete a tetes.

*

(CONTINUED)

53

CONTINUED:

53

She stops just inside the doorway, puffing, glances at her watch, checking her elapsed time. She nods, pleased with her progress, she starts toward the stairway, then stops, looking to:

54

POV - DANNY

54

seated on the steps near the first landing. His look to Sherwood is grim and unyielding.

55

WIDE SHOT

55

as Sherwood leans against the railing, her dead level honesty tinged with some self-deprecatory humor.

SHERWOOD

Danny...nobody sees me looking like this. And I mean -- nobody.

DANNY

Well, that's I qualify for -- Mr. Nobody. Thanks to you.

SHERWOOD

Why 'thanks to me'?

DANNY

You told me you were 'going' to do something, and you did -- you got me canned out of the KomedY Klub.

SHERWOOD

Danny... All I did was to write a note to myself to keep an eye on you and schedule a conference with your parents if I don't see some evidence you're straightening out. But I don't have the faintest idea of anything you're talking about in regard to the KomedY Club.

DANNY

(pugnaciously)

Then who got me canned? Tell me that.

(CONTINUED)

55

CONTINUED:

55

Sherwood looks at him thoughtfully, a quiet smile taking shape.

SHERWOOD

Probably...someone who cares about you.

On Danny's puzzled reaction, we:

DIRECT CUT TO:

56

INT. CAFETERIA - FULL SHOT - DAY

56

This is in the before-opening time of the school. The cafeteria is empty except for Sherwood and Danny, plus the food service workers seen in the b.g. as they prepare the steam tables, wrap the sandwiches, etc., Sherwood crosses to one of the tables with a cup of tea and glass of juice. Danny is already there with a cup of coffee. Sherwood has showered and changed into the schoolday garb one normally associates with her.

SHERWOOD

Why are you so sure it couldn't be your father?

DANNY

It's not his style. He doesn't ...get involved where I'm concerned.

SHERWOOD

Why not?

DANNY

On account of Vinnie...
(off Sherwood's look)

He was my older brother. I never knew him..., he died about three months before I was born. They never told me what of or how...just: he died. Cute kid. Four years old. I see his pictures in our scrapbook. Him and my old man. My old man ...he looks different in those pictures. Making faces at the camera, that kind of stuff.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED:

56

DANNY (CONT'D)

He doesn't do that in any of
the pictures after...after
Vinnie.

(beat)

All my life he's been walking
away from me. I must have
been ten before I realized he
had a face.

SHERWOOD

Danny, don't make jokes about
it...

DANNY

Why not? The whole thing's
a joke.

(bitterly)

Take my father, please. A
funny thing happened on the
way to my father. It seems
there were these two fathers...

SHERWOOD

Danny -- stop it.

He looks down at the cup of coffee. Sherwood watches and
wisely waits.

DANNY

Sometimes I think...he doesn't
think I'm any good.

SHERWOOD

(gently)

As a performer, you mean...?

DANNY

(shakes head, and:)

He's never seen me perform.

Sherwood reaches out, lifting Danny's look to her im-
ploring gaze.

SHERWOOD

Remember I told you how I'd
lost students and people I
cared about...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

Danny nods.

SHERWOOD

(continuing)

Well, when something like that happens...there's a temptation to stop getting involved, to build up a wall... And if I felt that way when something happened to one of my students... I can barely conceive of what it must be like for the parent who loses a child.

(beat, and:)

Maybe your father can't say it; maybe he doesn't know how to show it...but if he got you fired from that Club and what it was doing to you...he cares. He cares a whale of a lot.

57 ON DANNY

57

Looking to Sherwood and, like an eight year old at Christmas time, wanting very much to believe. We HOLD on him a beat, and then we--

DIRECT CUT TO:

58 INT. THE MAKEUP ROOM - FULL SHOT - DAY

58

Gathered in this meeting place of the elite are Doris, Montgomery, Leroy, Coco, Julie, and Bruno. There are some luncheon-type foods in evidence, but the main purpose of this gathering is to bear witness to Doris's exuberant reenactment of her commercial version of the Hindenburg.

DORIS

--and they're always combing your hair. Before every shot, this woman would come swooping out of the shadows with a brush and a mirror. But her hair looked like something you'd find under the couch!

The laughter this generates is stilled by the opening of the door and the entrance of Danny. His expression--set, restrained--is enough to switch off the ebullient mood of the room. He closes the door, leans back against it.

(CONTINUED)

58

CONTINUED:

58

DANNY

I got fired at the Komedý Klub.

BRUNO

We heard.

COCO

How're you handling that...?
You okay?

59

TIGHT ON DANNY

59

A semblance of a fighter's confidence appears in his look as he takes them in, and:

DANNY

I will be.

(beat, and:)

With a little help from my
friends.

(quietly)

If I got any left.

DIRECT CUT TO:

60

INT. KNIGHTS OF ST. ANTHONY LODGE - NIGHT

60

It's in the basement of an office building over near Grand Concourse. The "bar", over in one corner, consists of a keg of beer flanked by two large bowls of popcorn. Despite its lack of front page flash, the lodge is the kind of place where the card games continue, the political arguments never end, and the middle-aged men who comprise the cadre of Knights are very much at home with each other in these surroundings. Mr. Amatullo is at a table with his wife and a few other couples. They're all relaxed, drinking beer and munching on pretzels. One of the men at the table, FIORINO, holds forth.

FIORINO

...the trouble is, I don't know
if it's me or them. Is it
because I'm getting older, or
because they don't care? You
know what I mean?

Fiorino receives a bunch of nods around the table, which encourages him to go on. Amatullo's attention is captured by a wave from the man at the door who is talking to a group of youngsters from the shool, including Doris, Leroy and Bruno.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

60

FIORINO

(continuing)

On the other hand, maybe that's
just the way they act around us.

Amatullo rises.

AMATULLO

I'll be right back.

He crosses to the door.

61 ANGLE - LODGE DOORWAY

61

The DOORMAN stands with the kids, waiting for Amatullo.

LEROY

Do you guys really do all that
knight stuff?

DOORMAN

Knight stuff?

LEROY

You know. Knock each other off
horses and...

The doorman is spared further fuddling by the arrival of
Amatullo.

AMATULLO

What's up?

DOORMAN

These kids say they're your
guests.

AMATULLO

I never...

BRUNO

We meant his son, Danny.

DOORMAN

Ahhh! Dante. Of course!

(pointing)

Why don't you grab that table
over there.

(CONTINUED)

61

CONTINUED:

61

COCO

Thank you.

They start past the doorman.

AMATULLO

Wait a minute. How come Danny
is inviting people to my lodge?

Everyone waits for the other to reply, but they are all
saved by a three-piece band -- piano, bass, drums -- blasting
out a RAGGED Welk-like FANFARE.

MUSIC #7 - "FANFARE" - P.B. #3705-7-NV (:20 est.)

*

The kids move past Amatullo, as an EMCEE bounds up onto
the small make-shift stage.

EMCEE

Okay, everybody, it's the Talent
Night Show. But before I bring
on the dancing girls...

Hoots and laughter from the lodge members.

EMCEE

(continuing)

I got a couple of announcements.
Thursday we start the annual Bingo
tournament. All those who are
interested, sign up with Father
Szanowski. Next Saturday morning
the St. Anthony's bocce team plays
the Garibaldis over in Astoria.
Joe Buonacore says for you to come
out and cheer the team on.

During this: Amatullo has gone grumpily back to his seat,
only to notice that another contingent of Danny's school
friends, including Coco and Julie, enter the hall. The
newcomers are pointed in the direction of the first group,
and join them at the big table. Amatullo's grump goes
up a couple of notches.

EMCEE

(continuing)

Okay. Tonight, we got a special
surprise. A soon-to-be-professional
entertainer...this is the last chance
to get him at the reduced rate...an

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED: (2)

61

EMCEE

(continuing)

entertainer who also happens to be a pretty good wing man on the St. Anthony's soccer team--our very own: Danny Amatullo!

Danny runs out of a small back room where he's been hiding out, fighting the jitters. The applause of the crowd is warm and generous, obviously a group that wants to see one of their own do well. The contingent from the school is especially loud and supportive.

62 CLOSE ON AMATULLO'S TABLE

62

All applauding, especially Mrs. Amatullo. Her husband, because of the arrival of the kids, is not completely surprised. Just a little pissed.

63 ANGLE TO THE STAGE

63

Danny takes the mike and stands for a beat, gathering his forces.

DANNY

First of all, I want to thank the members of the lodge for allowing me to appear here tonight. You guys are always doing good things for the community. Like the Emcee mentioned the sports program. It wasn't always like that. When I first moved into the neighborhood, I was taught to play kick the can. The trouble was, it was my can...

It gets a good laugh.

DANNY

(continuing)

I played a lot of sports here-- football, baseball... Now I go to the School of the Arts, and we don't have any teams, but we put on a half-time show like you wouldn't believe.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED:

63

That one gets a better laugh, and Danny draws some encouragement from it.

64 AMATULLO TABLE

64

Amatullo looks about at the response wonderingly. Fiorino reaches over and clumps Amatullo on the shoulder.

Amatullo smiles slightly, ever so slightly, and looks almost as if he might even laugh.

DANNY

It's really an excellent school, but the kids are different. Like when I go into the men's room, there are people in there rehearsing, instead of shooting dice.

(pause)

And I really miss the extra money.

Another strong laugh. The audience is with Danny now, buoying him up and carrying him along on the laughter.

DANNY

(continuing)

But the more I think of it, the more I think we should have teams. For instance, the dancers are great athletes. Can't you see it...

(coach's voice)

Okay, team, it's third and four. I want a pirouette to the left on two. And I don't want to see any of you spiking your tutus!!

64A ANGLE TO MR. AMATULLO

64A

as he looks toward the stage, expression set with strain, lips tightly compressed. A beat, then he shoves his chair back and rises. His wife reaches out to stop him, but Amatullo is moving for the door at the rear of the room and isn't about to be headed off.

64B ON DANNY

64B

Seeing his father's move, his delivery trails off.

(CONTINUED)

64B CONTINUED:

64B

The vitality drains from his gaze like a sunset's last light.

DANNY

Well...I see that the bell ringers from St. Thomas are next...and I don't want to cut into their time...

64C ON AMATULLO

64C

near the back door. He turns, registering Danny's imminent departure from the spotlight. His look is confused, questioning.

64D BACK ON DANNY

64D

as he replaces the mike back into the stand, voice and energy fading in a predictable curve.

DANNY

...So I'll just say I hope you all have a good night...uh... what happened was I forgot to come up with a big finish for the act, and...uh...

MUSIC #8 - "STEP UP TO THE MIKE" - P.B. #2705-8-V (3:00 est)

He is interrupted by Doris's voice down in the audience, beginning an a capella version of the production number that was being rehearsed when Danny first arrived at school. He tries to wave her off, but Doris won't allow a fellow classmate to slink offstage with a whimper when a bang is available. Montgomery takes up the second line of the song and Danny answers waveringly, but on key; thereby setting the stage for Bruno's move to the piano, where he edges an Abby Greshler lookalike into the wings. Soon the PRODUCTION NUMBER is in full swing, Julie commandeering the bass, and Leroy and the others treating the members of the Knights of St. Anthony to the sort of show that most of them haven't seen since LaGuardia cleaned out Jersey City. But age is no impediment to appreciation, and by the time the final chord is echoing through the hall, Danny's father is fairly surrounded with well-wishers.

(CONTINUED)

64D CONTINUED:

64D

DOORMAN

That is sure some talented kid
you got there. You know that!
Some kid!

We HOLD ON this happy pandemonium, then:

DISSOLVE TO:

65 OMITTED

65

66 INT. AMATULLO KITCHEN - NIGHT

66

The room is dark. Danny enters quietly and crosses
directly to the refrigerator. He opens the door,
spilling light into the room.

DANNY

(to himself)

I just had a pizza orgy.
What'm I doing looking in
here?

Nonetheless, he stands for a beat looking inside.
Then, from the shadowy darkness:

AMATULLO (O.S.)

Dante.

67 ANGLE - ACROSS AMATULLO

67

He sits quietly and alone at the kitchen table. Danny
closes the refrigerator door, and moves closer to the
table.

DANNY

Yeah.

AMATULLO

People laughed a lot.

DANNY

Yeah.

AMATULLO

They always laugh like that?

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED:

67

DANNY

Sometimes, yeah. Sometimes,
no.

AMATULLO

Ask you a question...?

DANNY

Sure.

AMATULLO

You through with those funny
pills?

DANNY

Through. For sure.

(beat, and)

Ask you a question?

(off Amatullo's
nod)

How come you started to leave
the show when I was up there?

Amatullo looks away. Direct answers of this nature do
not come easily to such a man.

AMATULLO

I heard all those people laughin'
...people you were making happy...
and I started to puddle up,
y' know...? and I figured you
didn't want someone crying when
you're trying to make them all
laugh.

(to him)

It's good to make people happy,
Dante. You...you make me real
proud tonight.

Danny remains motionless for a beat, then walks around the
table. He kisses his father on the forehead as though he
feared the old man's skull was a soap bubble that would
disappear with the pressure of his lips.

DANNY

Goodnight, Papa.

(beat)

I love you.

(CONTINUED)

67

CONTINUED: (2)

67

Amatullo rises and embraces his son. It has been a long time; more than a dozen years since Danny Amatullo has felt the strength and warmth of his father's arms about his neck with that special fierceness that indicates unspoken awareness of how brief a day we share with one another.

And we HOLD ON this embrace with the happy feeling that the next one won't be that long in coming. Then:
FREEZE FRAME.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END