

BLACK SCREEN:

A GUITAR, strummed confidently. YOUNG JOHN GREY'S VOICE rings out.

YOUNG JOHN (V.O.)
(sings)
He likes to sleep in the
wilderness. Join with the others
in family bliss. These are the
days he'll soon dearly miss. When
she is grown...

FADE IN:

1 EXT. PRINCE EDWARD VIADUCT -- NIGHT

1

The bridge rises from a thick fog, as if spanning a cloud. A full moon burns on the horizon, partially hidden by the dense air.

The GUITAR continues...

YOUNG JOHN (V.O.)
(sings)
And the pain he hopes she'll never
know, is the heart of his plan to
go. Avoid facing his final foe.
The trip must end...

YOUNG JOHN GREY (25) stocky, a beard, earrings, leather pants, becomes VISIBLE through the fog.

YOUNG JOHN
(sings)
Some say no one deserves the right.
To let go life and avoid the fight.
She'll be the gift that he leaves
for all the world.

JOHN GREY (48), clean shaven, thinner than his younger self, walks onto the bridge, his lower body shrouded by the moisture.

He stops midway across, stares past Young John who continues to sing.

JOHN (V.O.)
They say everyone has thoughts of
suicide. It's normal. Never was
for me.
(MORE)

JOHN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Not until death barreled down on me
like a truck on a one lane bridge.

A vehicle zooms past, parting the fog like a snowplow.

YOUNG JOHN
(sings)
Along his route there's a prince's
bridge. Where people stand all
along the ridge. They jump away
from the pain to beat their fate.

John steps onto the apron, puts his hands on the vertical
steel rods that veil the bridge.

JOHN (V.O.)
Cancer's a painful way to go.
Sure, they'll shoot me full of
narcotics. But I been there, in my
rock star days. I'm not crossing
that bridge again.

He looks behind at Young John who sings softly, track marks
visible on his arms.

JOHN (V.O.)
Yeah, I know what it means to stick
a spike in my vein. Trust me,
there's no dignity in it. So why
not just end it my way?

He turns back to the steel rods, pulls, as if to stretch them
apart so he can squeeze through.

YOUNG JOHN
(sings)
A veil stands there to foil the
plan. But he knows now that he's a
man. Jumped alone from a massive
span. He'll leave this Earth.

JOHN (V.O.)
It's a better way to go, if you got
the guts. I'm not the type born
with courage. Maybe for death,
I'll find some.

The song builds to a crescendo. A FEMALE VOICE, young, makes
harmony with Young John.

YOUNG JOHN
(sings)
And the pain that makes you end it
all.
(MORE)

YOUNG JOHN (CONT'D)

(sings)

Is the reason you can't take the
fall. It stays alive in the ones
you love the most.

JOHN

There's just one problem.

Next to Young John, a FEMALE FIGURE appears, long hair,
jeans. She plays a guitar, sings along. This is SHERI GREY
(19).

YOUNG JOHN & SHERI

(singing, harmony)

It won't be easy to leave her side.
Lived his life just to be her
guide. What lesson's taught by a
selfish suicide?

John moves closer to Sheri. She keeps playing, looks through
him, as if he's not there.

The song ends.

JOHN (V.O.)

She won't understand. She can't
see through my eyes, and I'm
looking back now on a whole
lifetime. The important moments
don't fade. I remember every
minute of the day they told me.

2 EXT. CORONADO BRIDGE -- DAY

2

A bright, cloudless sky. The majestic roadway curves toward
it's zenith above the bay, sparkling in the morning sun.

A late model Toyota moves through the toll booth and onto the
bridge.

3 INT. JOHN'S CAR -- DAY

3

John drives past a SIGN that reads: SUICIDE COUNSELING with
a phone number.

He leans over, looks out the passenger window at a U.S. Navy
ship passing below the bridge. He smiles ear to ear. This is
an awesome drive to work.

- 4 EXT. CORONADO NEIGHBORHOOD -- DAY 4
- Upscale homes. The Toyota parks outside a house under construction.
- 5 INT. JOHN'S CAR -- DAY 5
- John sends a text: I'M HERE. He sips from a Starbucks cup.
- The phone BUZZES in his hand. A reply TEXT from: JEFF -- FIVE MINUTES.
- He picks up a stack of mail from the passenger seat, tosses a few letters to the floor. Then he holds up a pink, heart shaped, envelope.
- Curious, he pulls out an invitation. As it unfolds, a carved paper bridge pops-up. The words BUILD A BRIDGE WITH ME are spelled out in glitter, several lines of hand written TEXT beneath the paper structure.
- A small photograph falls into John's hand.
- INSERT PHOTO:
- Young John and YOUNG HANNAH FISCHER (22) stand on the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge. They hold guitars, dressed like rock stars, wild hair.
- John smiles at the memory, takes a sip, sends a TEXT: INSTALL A TOILET YET?
- 6 INT. HOUSE -- DAY 6
- No drywall. Copper plumbing lines and Romex visible. John, framed by wall studs, stands over a toilet, winces in pain. He looks down, and shock spreads across his face.
- The toilet water is BLOOD RED.
- 7 INT. DR. TURNER'S OFFICE -- DAY 7
- John sits in front of the doctor's desk, stares at diplomas hanging on the wall next to schematics of male and female urinary tract systems.
- He taps his foot. Takes a pamphlet from a dispenser on the desk, unfolds it.

INSERT PAMPHLET:

A steel cystoscope penetrates a penis like a meat thermometer. The pointy end has traveled the length of the urethra, chips away at a diseased prostate gland.

DR. TURNER (55) thin, serious demeanor, white coat, walks into the office holding a file.

DR. TURNER
Hello, John.

They shake hands.

JOHN
Hi, Doc.

Dr. Turner sits. Waits for eye contact.

DR. TURNER
I have the pathologist's report.
Unfortunately... It's an aggressive
cancer. I'm very sorry.

The doctor's words are suddenly drowned out by FEEDBACK from an electric guitar and a DRUM BEATING in time with John's pounding heart. It's a Hendrix concert. Every other word discernible.

DR. TURNER (CONT'D)
Report... Conclusive...
Metastasized... Treatment...
Limited... Cells... resistant to
castration...

The word castration causes John to look up as the "music" in his head STOPS.

JOHN
That... sounds like a good thing,
right? I mean, I... I think we
should avoid castration. That's
why I got divorced.

DR. TURNER
The term refers to a chemical
treatment that in your case is not
viable. There are chemotherapies
that may extend your life
expectancy. And that's my
recommendation. Of course, chemo
has significant side effects.

Dr. Turner pulls another pamphlet from a plastic holder on his desk.

DR. TURNER (CONT'D)
They're explained here. You should begin as soon as possible. I know it's a lot to process. Do you have any questions?

JOHN
How long have I got here, Doc?

DR. TURNER
That really depends on how you react to the treatment. It could extent your life by several years.

A long beat. Dr. Turner signs a form, hands it to John.

DR. TURNER (CONT'D)
Give this order to one of the nurses. They'll schedule you.

He continues writing on a small pad, hands John a prescription.

DR. TURNER (CONT'D)
This is for pain. Eventually, you'll need something stronger.

John reacts to that news, not happy about it. Then Dr. Turner hands him a business card.

DR. TURNER (CONT'D)
I'm also referring you to a counselor.

John stares at the outstretched card.

8

EXT. DR. TURNER'S OFFICE -- DAY

8

John wanders away from the building and into a crosswalk, staring at the card in his hand, pays no attention to traffic.

A car SCREECHES to a stop, its bumper inches from his leg. The DRIVER HONKS, and John stops, turns robot-like, doesn't look at the driver, just heads back to the curb he left.

The driver rolls down his window, leans over and shouts as he moves slowly past.

DRIVER
Moron! Got some kind a death wish?

9 EXT. STARBUCKS -- DAY 9

John's car pulls up, parks. He gets out.

10 INT. STARBUCKS -- DAY 10

John walks in, sees LOLA TAYLOR (60) in a leather chair, coffee in her hand. The skin on her neck is scarred from radiation. She wears a wig, smiles as John approaches.

LOLA
Hello, John.

Lola puts down her drink, about to stand, but as he shakes her hand, John presses on her shoulder, keeps her seated.

JOHN
Hi, Lola. Don't get up. Thanks for meeting me on such short notice.

LOLA
No problem. I'm not real booked-up these days.

He sits. She points to the register.

LOLA (CONT'D)
You going to get something?

JOHN
Oh... No, I'm cutting back on the Caffeine.

She laughs.

LOLA
I did too. And milk, meat, sugar. Then came the juice cleanses, essential oils, sound baths. It won't help.

JOHN
Can't hurt.

LOLA
I spent fifty grand on denial and desperation. You want my list of quacks?

JOHN
So your professional recommendation
is that I skip that stage in the
grief process?

LOLA
What do you think?

He wags a finger at her, scolding.

JOHN
You were Sheri's shrink, not mine.
Don't answer questions that way.

LOLA
How is Sheri?

JOHN
She's great. Took a gap year.
Taught music. Saved some money.

That makes Lola smile.

LOLA
Good for her.

JOHN
And she got a big scholarship.
University of Rochester. I take
her next week.

LOLA
That's a good school. That's
really great. Good for her. I
don't get many like Sheri.
Sometimes I felt like the patient.

JOHN
She doesn't deserve to lose her
father.

LOLA
Well... I'll tell you what I used
to say to Sheri, every session.

Lola leans forward, eye to eye, speaks with emphasis.

LOLA (CONT'D)
Why aren't we talking about you?

JOHN
Okay... I'm not sold on Chemo.
Think I should do it?

LOLA
It's different for everyone.

JOHN
How was it for you?

LOLA
(carefully)
My cancer's not the same. You
should listen to the medical
doctors.

JOHN
I'm not looking for statistics,
Lola. I want some perspective.

LOLA
I-C-D-Ten is a bad diagnosis.
Lymphoma is... Let's just say I won
the cancer lottery.

JOHN
And I lost?

She's feels bad about being so blunt. But nods her head.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Then... I shouldn't do it?

LOLA
I'm not saying that.

JOHN
What are you saying?

She pulls her wig off. Bald. A few PATRONS notice, try not
to stare.

LOLA
Chemo sucks. But you might get
lucky, only puke five or ten times
a day.

JOHN
I just lost the lottery, remember?
My luck's not running so good.

LOLA
The treatment might delay things.

JOHN
And it might kill me faster.
(beat)
(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

Lola, I can think of better things
to do with the time I got left than
lie in a hospital bed throwing up.

LOLA

Such as?

JOHN

Travel. Visit our great bridges.
Be with Sheri while I still can.
Maybe... maybe I can help her patch
things up with her mom.

LOLA

(stern)

Leave that up to her.

JOHN

She's going to need someone.

A long beat, eye locked.

LOLA

You can help your kid get something
she wants, John. But you can't
help her want it.

He frowns at that bit of wisdom.

LOLA (CONT'D)

(upbeat)

You two still making music
together?

JOHN

Are we moving on to small talk now?
I'm not sure I have the time. If
you know what I mean.

He gets up. Offers his hand to shake, again pressing on her
shoulder. But she uses his handshake to pull herself up.
She's frail, weak, very thin.

LOLA

You should see a grief counselor.

JOHN

Grief not in your wheelhouse, Lola?
That's right, you're a life coach.
And I need a death coach, don't I?

A lot of PATRONS stare. He gets emotional, fights tears.

She hugs him.

11 INT. JOHN'S CAR -- DAY 11

John starts the car, but doesn't put it in gear. He picks up the business card. Dials his phone.

JOHN

Hi, my name's John Grey. I'd like to make an appointment.... A new patient, yes.... As soon as possible... Okay.... Three weeks?! Nothing sooner?.... I understand, of course, we all need vacations.
(angry)
Wish I could take one.

He throws the phone into the passenger door, pounds the steering wheel.

JOHN (CONT'D)

What the hell did I do to deserve this?

He looks at the phone on the floor, eventually leans over, picks it up.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Hello... Are you still there? I'm sorry... I overreacted a bit.
Hello?... Shit.

John tosses the phone onto the passenger seat and the invitation pops open. He sees the photo of him and Hannah, picks it up, stares.

A lightbulb goes off!

John puts the car in reverse, turns and looks behind him, hits the gas.

12 EXT. RV DEALERSHIP -- DAY 12

A big lot. Banners fly. A tall, skinny clown rises and falls, points an air filled finger toward RV's of all sizes parked in neat rows.

John's car backs into a parking space. He gets out, walks the lot, checks out the price tags.

He circles a Winnebago, tries to peek inside a window, but sees only his own REFLECTION. The IMAGE of a SALESMAN (30), greased hair, APPEARS next to him, reflected in the glass. John's reflection speaks:

JOHN (O.S.)
Do you guys do lease deals... short
term?

13 EXT. JOHN'S HOUSE -- DAY 13

A Minnie Winnie is parked in the driveway, sticks out into the street.

A car with an UBER sign pulls up, and Sheri gets out, carries a guitar in a soft case.

SHERI
Bye, thank you.

The Uber pulls away, leaves Sheri to stare at the big RV. She walks along the length of the vehicle, not sure what to make of it, then heads across the lawn toward the front door.

A FOR SALE sign hammered into the grass catches her eye.

14 INT. JOHN'S HOUSE -- DAY 14

Pictures of bridges line the walls, framed. John sits at a beat-up desk. Topping the desk are two big monitors. One shows a map with several video push-pins labeling bridges along a cross country route.

On the other monitor, John studies a Wikipedia page detailing the Prince Edward Viaduct. He scrolls down to the words: MAGNET FOR SUICIDE.

The front door opens, and Sheri calls out.

SHERI (V.O.)
Honey, I'm home.

John hits the back button until an IMAGE of the Robert N. Steward bridge appears.

JOHN
Hi, Sheri. Where you been?

SHERI (V.O.)
House call. La Jolla.

John walks over to her as she removes shoes, stows the guitar.

JOHN
I thought those weren't worth the
cab fare.

SHERI

They are in that hood. Parents are swimming in it. Nice people, but they chain their kid to a piano, and he has no ear at all.

JOHN

(sarcastic)

Lucky him. Won't try to make a living at it.

She points toward the front door.

SHERI

Is cousin Jethro visiting from the confederacy?

JOHN

I don't follow.

SHERI

Someone parked a housing tract in our driveway.

JOHN

Oh, I traded in the car.

SHERI

What?

JOHN

I thought it'd be a fun way for us to get you to Rochester. A little cross country trip.

SHERI

You can't be serious.

JOHN

Why not?

SHERI

Because I'd rather fly for a few hours than imprison myself in a trailer for three thousand miles.... with my dad!

JOHN

Not a trailer. It's a motor home.

SHERI

So it's a trailer with wheels.

She heads into an open kitchen area. Pulls a water from the fridge. He follows, watches her drink from the bottle.

JOHN

You can bring all your stuff this way. No baggage fees.

SHERI

Dad, I'm moving into a college dorm. You bring a laptop and contraceptives, not a dining room set.

She rummages for food.

JOHN

I don't want to hear those sorts of details, thank you.

She pulls her head out.

SHERI

Sorry. I just don't get it. What's the point of turning a flight to Rochester into some big ordeal?

Her head goes back in.

JOHN

That point is we spend time together. You're flying the coop, little chicken. This is our last hoorah.

She pulls out a box of leftover pizza.

SHERI

Oh, gimme a break. I wasn't drafted. It's college. I'll be home all summer.

Sheri bites into a slice, points to the open box, offers him one. He's focused on her not the food.

JOHN

Next summer, that's like.... a lifetime from now.

SHERI

If you're nine months old.

John eyes a digital picture frame on the wall. It scrolls through childhood images of Sheri:

-- On stage at a school talent show.

-- On the beach in a bikini.

-- On skis.

SHERI (CONT'D)
Are we selling the house?

He's distracted by the photos.

JOHN
Ah... yeah.

SHERI
Why?

He touches the frame, freezes a picture of Sheri and John, both in suede vests, circular patches sewn all over. They're in a big group of dads and daughters, also in vests.

JOHN
Remember Indian Princess? That was so much fun. This trip will be just like that.

Sheri moves closer, chews, looks at the photo, then at him.

SHERI
I was ten, Dad. My idea of fun has evolved slightly. And you don't want to hear the details, right?

JOHN
Come over here. I want to show you something.

He heads to his desk, waves her closer. She follows, still eating. He points to the monitor.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Check out the route. We're going to cross some amazing bridges. And we'll go through Oregon, visit Tommy.

SHERI
You're talking to Tommy again?

JOHN
Well... we're going that way.

Sheri looks closer at the Robert N. Stewart bridge pictured on the other monitor.

SHERI
I thought Columbus was in Ohio.

JOHN
There's one in Indiana too. That
bridge is a must see.

SHERI
Dad, why are you selling the house?
The phone RINGS. Sheri picks up a cordless.

SHERI (CONT'D)
Hello.... What?...
(surprised)
The couch for sale on Craig's List?
He takes the phone from her.

JOHN
Hi, what can I tell you about the
couch?

SHERI
Dad, what is going on?
He covers his free ear, gets up, moves away.

JOHN
Yeah, it's in great shape...
Sheri sits, stares at the zigzag route from San Diego to
Vegas, Reno, Medford, Denver, Omaha, Columbus Indiana, and
finally Rochester, NY, various bridges labeled along the way.

SHERI
This is insane.
John returns, grinning, points to the couch.

JOHN
Don't sit on this. It's sold.
She gets up, confronts him, hands on her hips.

SHERI
(stern)
Dad, what is going on?
He hesitates. Looks everywhere but at Sheri.

JOHN
I... I have to tell you something.
Sit down.

He points to the couch.

SHERI
You just told me not to sit there.

JOHN
Oh, right. Sit back down here.

She sits back down in the desk chair. He paces.

JOHN (CONT'D)
I have.... I...
(beat)
I've retired. Kind of.

SHERI
Kind of retired? What does that mean, exactly?

JOHN
Technically, I'm on leave. No pay. Just insurance. Sheri, I'm an empty nester in a week. I want to travel for a while.

SHERI
Okay, well... fine, I guess, if you can afford it. But why sell everything?

JOHN
Got to lighten my load.

A long beat. She's concerned about something.

SHERI
What about all the instruments?

He hates to say this.

JOHN
What I can't sell, I figured I'd give to Pam. She'll take good care of it.

Sheri deflates. She walks to a music room off the kitchen.

15 INT. MUSIC ROOM -- DAY 15

Guitars, bass, amps, speakers, a drum set, bongos, upright piano. Framed pictures of Young John's band line the walls, all the PLAYERS in their twenties, long hair.

Sheri stares at a framed album cover: The Johnny Grey Band, "Bridge to the Blues." The entire band stands on the Rio Grande Gorge bridge.

SHERI

Dad, this bridge trip, it's great, totally metal, really. For you! Not me. I don't get off on bridges. I'm kind of funny that way.

JOHN

You're going to study history, right? Every bridge has a history.

SHERI

(pleading)

Dad...

JOHN

It's a week, Sheri. Maybe ten days. We have to stop each night. So, we'll camp near the bridges I want to see. C'mon. It'll be fun.

She hems and haws. Doesn't really want to go.

JOHN (CONT'D)

You know what? You've been teaching blues scales to brats for almost a year. You were supposed to save some money, so... you want to buy a plane ticket? Fine.

He points in the direction of the driveway.

JOHN (CONT'D)

That bus is headed to Rochester. You can hitch a ride for free.

She exhales, audibly. Looks back at the album cover, focused on a beautiful young WOMAN who fronts the band, YOUNG LINDA GREY.

SHERI

Why we going through Omaha?

She moves closer to the picture, stares.

JOHN

To walk the Bob Kerrey Bridge, which is spectacular, especially at night.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

And in the morning, we'll drive
across the Mormon Bridge, which--

SHERI

Does Mom know we'll be there?

JOHN

(hesitant)

It wouldn't hurt us to say hello.

SHERI

Dad, If you drag me to see her, I
swear to God I'll jump out of that
hillbilly monstrosity at the first
red light, and I'll hitch-hike to
Rochester.

Sheri stares hard, eye to eye. John looks from Sheri to the
Album cover and back.

JOHN

You don't have to see her. I
promise.

SHERI

Good.

(sarcastic)

I'll go pack for our Indian
Princess trip.

Sheri leaves.

John's left staring at Young Linda. He pulls the framed
image off the wall. Taped on the back is an envelope, the
name SHERI handwritten on it in RED ink.

He pulls the envelope off.

16 EXT. JOHN'S HOUSE -- DAY 16

John's beat-up old desk sits on the grass. It bears a sign:
FREE TO A LOVING HOME.

John carries a box past the FOR SALE sign now topped by the
words, IN ESCROW.

17 INT. RV -- DAY 17

Late model. Microwave. TV. Swivel captain's chairs.

John steps in, puts the box on the table, pulls out a few books and places them on a shelf behind a cross bar. The last item pulled from the box is a leather portfolio.

He unzips it. Inside are medical records, pamphlets on chemo, the signed form from Dr. Turner to schedule treatment. He zips it closed, sets it down on the table.

Sheri wheels a suitcase up to the door and climbs aboard carrying a guitar and backpack. She looks around, takes in the new digs.

SHERI

Like a college dorm in here, Dad.

JOHN

Life takes you in a big circle
sometimes.

SHERI

Just don't get born again.

JOHN

All my stuff's aboard. You can
bring yours now.

She points out the door to her big suitcase on the sidewalk.

SHERI

That is my stuff.

JOHN

Oh, you weren't kidding about
traveling light.

He hauls in the big suitcase.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I left the top drawer for you. Why
don't you unpack what you'll use on
the trip. Then I'll stow the
suitcase below. I'm going to take
a last look around inside.

He hesitates, looks at the leather portfolio, picks it up and takes it with him.

John goes from room to room, peeks his head in to see open space, empty drawers and closets.