"TENDER MERCIES"

by

HORTON FOOTE
FADE IN:

1 INT. - MOTEL ROOM - 1977 - NIGHT

Two men are drinking. One, MAC SLEDGE, is very drunk and is shouting incoherently at the other.

2 EXT. - MOTEL - NIGHT

The owner of the motel, ROSA LEE, comes out of her house having heard the shouts of the man. Her son, 10, is with her. She and the boy stand listening, wondering what to do.

3 INT. - MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

MAC SLEDGE makes a lunge at the other man, misses and falls sprawling on the floor. His companion leaves him there, and MAC is too drunk to get up. His friend waits a moment and then reaches for MAC's coat lying beside him and takes money from his pockets.

4 EXT. - MOTEL - NIGHT

ROSA LEE and SONNY stand listening. It is quiet now in the men's cabin, and she and her son go back to their house.

5 INT. - MOTEL CABIN - DAY

It is dark in the room; the shades are all drawn, and a number of empty whiskey bottles are scattered around. MAC SLEDGE, still drunk, lies across the bed. There is a knock on the door, and a WOMAN'S voice calls. "Mister...Mister. Are you all right in there?"

OPENING TITLES - FADE IN

MAC turns over and mumbles something.

6 EXT. - MOTEL - DAY

A car is at the gas pump, and ROSA LEE is pumping gas. SONNY stands by watching her.

7 INT. - MOTEL ROOM - DAY

MAC is sitting on the edge of the bed. He goes to a basin and washes his face. He goes to the windows and opens the blinds.

   WOMAN (O.C.)
   It's gotten so high ain't it.
ROSA LEE (O.C.)
Yes.

WOMAN (O.C.)
We should have kept it to our- 
selves instead of shipping it 
to the yankees to squander.

EXT. - MOTEL - DAY

ROSA LEE is being paid by the motorist. She drives 
off. She and SONNY go into their house. MAC comes 
out of his cabin. He stands for a moment looking around 
and then crosses to ROSA LEE's house and knocks on 
the door. She and SONNY come outside.

ROSA LEE
Your friend said to tell you 
he had to move on.

MAC
How long have I been here?

ROSA LEE
Two days.

MAC
How far is it to the nearest 
town?

ROSA LEE
Four miles.

MAC
Did the fellow I was with pay 
for the room before he left?

ROSA LEE
No.

MAC
I guess I better pay you then.

He goes back inside his cabin.

INT. - MAC'S CABIN - DAY

He enters. He goes to a jacket lying on the floor. He 
searches the pockets of the jacket looking for money, 
but finds nothing. There is a half empty bottle of 
whiskey on the dresser, and he goes to it and takes a 
swig and then goes back outside. ROSA LEE is washing 
the windows of her house. SONNY is playing nearby in 
the yard. MAC goes over to her.
Lady?

MAC

ROSALEE

Yes?

MAC

I'm broke. I'll be glad to work out what I owe you.

ROSALEE

Are you still drinking?

MAC

Yes, ma'am.

ROSALEE

Well, cut it out while you're working here. Are you hungry?

MAC

I could eat something.

She goes into the house.

EXT. - DAY - MOTEL GROUNDS

A SERIES OF SHOTS as we poke around the motel and its grounds. We should be aware that the grounds and the cabins are in need of work.

(a) MAC working around the motel grounds cutting weeds with a scythe and a hoe.

(b) MAC picking up trash, bottles, cans, etc.

(c) ROSALEE changing linens in motel room.

(d) ROSALEE cleaning a motel room.

(e) ROSALEE goes to window of room she is working on. She observes MAC working diligently in yard.

INT. - ROSALEE'S HOUSE - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

She is there folding clothes. MAC comes up to the screen door and knocks. She sees him and goes to the door.

ROSALEE

Yes?

MAC

If you still need help the next couple of days, I'll work on.
All right. I can give you your room and meals and two dollars an hour.

Thank you.

The trailer is in back of ROSA LEE's house and is where the hired help always stay. MAC is here listening to country western music on the radio.

MAC is at the gas pump servicing a car.

ROSAL LEE, MAC and SONNY eating supper.

What's your name?

Mac.

They continue to eat in silence. When he has finished his supper, MAC gets up.

Would you mind paying me tonight for the days I've worked? I need to go into town and get some things.

ROSA LEE goes over to her purse and gets his money and gives it to him. He takes it and puts it in his pocket without counting it.

Thank you.

He goes out. ROSA LEE clears the table and then goes to the screen door and looks out. She can see MAC walking down the road.
ROSALIEE
That's the last we'll see of
him. His kind just work long
enough to buy the whiskey to
get on another good drunk.

EXT. - HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

ROSALIEE is there. MAC comes into the yard and into his
cabin without speaking.

INT. - ROSALIEE'S HOUSE - MORNING

SONNY is there. She enters.

ROSALIEE
He's back. Go ask him if he
wants breakfast.

SONNY
I thought you said he wasn't
coming back.

ROSALIEE
I was wrong.

SONNY goes outside.

EXT. - YARD - MORNING

MAC is there at work as SONNY comes out.

SONNY
Mama says do you want breakfast?

MAC
I hate in town. Thank you.

EXT. - CABIN - NIGHT

ROSALIEE and SONNY are sitting in front of their house.
The lights are on in MAC's cabin.

INT. - MAC'S CABIN - NIGHT

He is there with a guitar and begins to pick.

EXT. - YARD - NIGHT

ROSALIEE and SONNY listen to his picking on the guitar.
19  EXT. - YARD - DAY

MAC comes out of his cabin and crosses the yard to
ROSA LEE's house. She is cooking breakfast. He knocks
at the door.

ROSA LEE
(calling out)
Come on in, Mac.

20  INT. - ROSA LEE'S HOUSE - DAY

She has an apron over her dress.

ROSA LEE
Breakfast will be ready in a
minute. Sonny and I are going
to church this morning. If
you'd like to come with us, we'd
be glad to have you.

MAC
Thank you. I think I will go
with you.

ROSA LEE
I'll want to introduce you to
our preacher, but I don't know
your last name.

MAC
Sledge.

ROSA LEE
I've heard of you.

21  INT. - TRUCK - SUNDAY - DAY

ROSA LEE, SONNY and MAC are in the truck dressed for
church. ROSA LEE is driving.

22  EXT. - CHURCH - DAY

ROSA LEE parks the truck. They get out.

23  INT. - CHURCH - DAY

ROSA LEE is singing in the church choir. MAC sits beside
SONNY in the congregation, they are singing too. MAC
is familiar with the hymns, he sings without looking at
the hymnal.

24  EXT. - CHURCH - DAY

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

ROSA LEE
Reverend Hotchkiss, this is Mr. Sledge. He's working for me at the motel.

HOTCHKISS
How do you do, Mr. Sledge.

(They shake hands)
Sonny tells me he wants to be baptized. I know that makes you proud, Rosa Lee.

ROSA LEE
Yes, it does.

HOTCHKISS
You were baptized in this church weren't you?

ROSA LEE
Yes, sir.

HOTCHKISS
And where were you baptized, Mr. Sledge?

MAC
I haven't been baptized.

HOTCHKISS
(Laughs)
Well, we'll have to work on you then.

MAC
Yes, sir. I guess so.

EXT. - DRIVE-IN - NIGHT

Cars are parked watching a horror movie.

MAC, ROSA LEE and SONNY are in the truck watching the movie. SONNY falls asleep and puts his head in his mother's lap.

ROSA LEE
(Pointing to the boy)
He's played out.

(She shifts him around a bit to make him more comfortable)
MAC
I have a daughter.

ROSA LEE
Do you?

MAC
She's four or five years
older than your boy.

ROSA LEE
Where is she?

MAC
With her mama. Me and her mama
are divorced. We didn't get
along too well, and I reckon
my drinking didn't help any.

EXT. - MOTEL GROUNDS - DAY

SONNY is looking around the grounds trying to find
MAC. He goes to the cabin. He knocks on the door and
calls. He gets no answer, he opens the door.

INT. - MAC'S ROOM - DAY

MAC is not there. There is not much in the room
except a guitar. SONNY enters and goes over to the
guitar. He looks at it for a moment and then goes out.

EXT. - YARD - DAY

ROSA LEE is there. SONNY comes out of MAC's cabin.

ROSA LEE
He's gone again. I saw him
leave only this morning.

SONNY
He's coming back, though.

EXT. - ROAD - DAY

SONNY and ROSA LEE riding in the truck going toward
town.

INT. - STORE IN TOWN - DAY

SONNY and ROSA LEE buying groceries.
EXT. - STREET IN TOWN - DAY

SONNY and ROSA LEE come out with groceries. They start for the truck. Walking down the street, very drunk, is MAC. He doesn't see them, and they don't let him know they've seen him. They get in their truck and drive off.

EXT. - ROAD - EARLY NEXT DAY

MAC walks down the road. He is hungover and seems very tired.

EXT. - MOTEL YARD - DAY

MAC walks into the yard. He goes up to ROSA LEE's house and knocks. She comes to the door.

MAC
I'm back. Anything particular you want me to do today?

ROSA LEE
The screen door in the cabin over there is broken. I'd like it fixed, please.

MAC
All right.

He starts toward the cabin she has pointed to, but changes his mind and goes into his own cabin.

ROSA LEE watches him. He leaves the door open and through the screen door she sees him go to his bed and lie down.

INT. - MAC'S CABIN - NIGHT

MAC lies across the bed with his clothes on. SONNY comes to the door.

SONNY
Mama says supper is about ready.

MAC
Thank you, but I don't believe I'll have any supper tonight.

SONNY
Are you sick?

MAC
I don't feel too good.
SONNY goes. MAC closes his eyes. There is a knock on the door.

MAC
Come in.

ROSA LEE enters, standing just inside the door.

ROSA LEE
Sonny says you're sick. Do you need a doctor?

MAC
I'll wait until tomorrow. If I don't feel better, then I'll go see one.

ROSA LEE
Call me if you need anything.

MAC
Thank you.

She leaves. MAC picks up the guitar. He plays a few chords. He puts it down. He gets a page of paper and a pencil. He begins almost furtively doodling. He stops, goes to the window, looks out and then goes back to his bed, picks up the paper and pencil and begins writing again.

EXT. - MOTEL - EARLY NEXT MORNING

ROSA LEE comes out of her house. She sees MAC already at work.

ROSA LEE
You feeling better?

MAC
Yes, ma'am.

INT. - ROSA LEE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

MAC, ROSA LEE and SONNY watching television.

ROSA LEE
Turn off the television now, Sonny, and get to bed. You have school tomorrow...

SONNY
Can I talk with you all a little bit first?
ROSA LEE
No, sir. Now tell us good night.

SONNY
Good night.

MAC
Good night.

ROSA LEE
Good night, Sonny.

He goes.

ROSA LEE
He's getting so big. He'll be grown and gone before I know it.

MAC
Do you have any other family?

ROSA LEE
No. I was the only child my mama and daddy had. They had me late in life. I lost my daddy two years after my husband was killed, and Mama died a year and a half ago this spring.

MAC
My mama and daddy are dead, too. I have a brother out in California some place, but we've lost track of each other.

SONNY
(calling)
You all stop talking. I can't get to sleep.

37 EXT. - YARD - BACK OF HOUSE - DAY

ROSA LEE is there spading up a garden. MAC sees her and goes over to her and takes the spade from her, and begins turning up the earth for her.

MAC
I haven't had a drink in two months.

(a pause)
I think the drinking is behind me.
ROSA LEE
Do you? I'm glad. I don't think it gets you anywhere.

MAC
Did you ever think about marrying again?

ROSA LEE
Yes. Have you?

MAC
I've thought about it lately. I guess it's no secret how I feel about you. A blind man could see that. Would you think about marrying me?

ROSA LEE
Yes, I will.

38  INT. - LIVING ROOM IN PREACHER'S HOUSE

MAC and ROSA LEE are standing in front of the preacher being married. SONNY is watching.

39  INT. - MOTEL - NIGHT

ROSA LEE, MAC and SONNY are watching television. They are still dressed in the clothes they wore earlier at the wedding.

40  EXT. - YARD OF A CONSOLIDATED COUNTRY SCHOOL - DAY

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

ANGLE - SONNY

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

MEDIUM SHOT - SONNY AND LARUE

LARUE
Your daddy is dead.

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

SONNY
I know he's dead.
LARUE
He got killed in Vietnam.

SONNY
I know that.

LARUE
What was his name?

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

LARUE
How come everybody calls you Sonny?

SONNY
I don’t know. They just do.

LARUE
That man your mama is married to now ain’t your daddy.

SONNY
I know that, fool. I know what he is. He’s my stepdaddy.

LARUE
Is he still a drunk?

SONNY starts for LARUE and they begin to fight.

EXT. - MOTEL - DAY

The school bus stops. SONNY gets off the bus. ROSA LEE comes out of the house to greet him. MAC is working in the yard, and watches as SONNY greets his mother. He says something to her that we can’t hear, and then ROSA LEE crosses to MAC.

ROSA LEE
Sonny asked to go and see his daddy’s grave. He’s never asked that before.

EXT. - GRAVEYARD - DAY

The truck drives up. SONNY and ROSA LEE get out of the truck and walk into the graveyard. ROSA LEE turns and sees MAC still in the truck.
ROSA LEE
Come on with us, Mac.

MAC
All right.

He gets out of the truck and joins them.

43 EXT. - GRAVEYARD - DAY

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

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

SONNY
Was there a big crowd at his funeral?

ROSA LEE
Yes, there was.

SONNY
Did I go?

ROSA LEE
No.

SONNY
Why not?

ROSA LEE
Because you were too little.

SONNY
Did people cry at the funeral?

ROSA LEE
Yes, they did.

SONNY
Did you cry?

ROSA LEE
Yes, I did.
SONNY
Did I ever see my Grandpa
and Grandma Wadsworth?

ROSA LEE
Uh huh ...

SONNY
When?

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

EXT. - A RUNDOWN FARMHOUSE SURROUNDED BY HALF-
TENDED FIELDS - DAY

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

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

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

ETTA B.

Lord!
(She goes to greet
them)
I have to believe in signs, Lord.
I have to believe in signs. I
had a dream about you both last
night. It was a sad dream, I dreamt.
My boy was a prisoner of war in
Vietnam and they were torturing
him and you and Sonny and I were
on our way over there to beg for
his release. You look well. Both
of you. Don't they look fine,
Arthur?
WADSWORTH
I'll say they do.

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

ETTA B.
Oh, good. Come on inside.

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

MAC shakes their hands.

MAC
How do you do.

ETTA B.
How long have you been married?

ROSA LEE
A week.

WADSWORTH
You from around here, Mr. Sledge?

MAC
No, sir. East Texas.

ETTA B.
How did you all meet?

ROSA LEE
At the motel. He worked for me a year at the motel, before we married.

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

ROSA LEE
Oh, he's good to us.

ETTA B.
He better be. Else he's gonna hear...
WADSWORTH
(laughing)
Don't she sound fierce, Mr. Sledge?

MAC

MAC ...

WADSWORTH

Mac. Want a chew of tobacco?

MAC

No, thank you.

WADSWORTH

Don't you chew?

MAC

No, sir.

ETTA B.
Good for you! I wish he didn't. Filthy habit. Sonny, do you have a picture of your daddy?

SONNY

Yes, ma'm. I've got two. One in his uniform and one out.

ETTA B.
I came across one the other day when he was a boy. I want you to have it.

SONNY

Thank you.

She goes inside.

WADSWORTH

How is your tourist court?

ROSALEE

All right.

WADSWORTH

Making a living?

ROSALEE

We do that. Since they built the new highway, business isn't exactly booming out our way and we keep the expenses down by doing all the work ourselves.
WADSWORTH
You paid for it yet?

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

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

ETTA B. comes out.

ETTA B.

Here ...

She hands the picture to SONNY. He looks at it. WADSWORTH looks at it too.

WADSWORTH
How old are you now, Sonny?

SONNY
Ten.

ETTA B.
That was your daddy's age when that picture was taken.

EXT. - YARD OF THE SLEDGE HOUSE - DAY

MAC is working around the motel, he sees a car drive up to the gas pumps.

MAC walks across the yard to the car. A REPORTER is in the car.

REPORTER
Mr. Sledge?

MAC
Yes, sir.

REPORTER
You're Mac Sledge, the singer?

MAC
Yes. I was a singer, I mean. I am Mac Sledge.
REPORTER
Married to Dixie Scott?

There is a pause.

ANGLE - MAC

MAC
I've got nothing to say about that.

REPORTER
She's never married again?
(Mac says nothing)
You're married again?
(Again Mac says nothing)
That your boy?
(no answer)

ANGLE - REPORTER

REPORTER
(to Mac)
It took me awhile to track you down. I would appreciate an interview.

MAC
I got nothing to say to anybody.

REPORTER
You still do any singing?
(no answer from Mac)
Writing any music?
(no answer)

ANGLE - MAC

REPORTER
I hear your new wife sings in the Baptist Church.
(Mac says nothing)
Your daughter by your first wife must be eighteen by now. Do you ever see her?
(a pause)
Look. I'm going to do a story on you. You ought to talk to me to be sure I get it right. Will you talk to me?

MAC

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

MAC

Nope.

A pause.

REPORTER
Do people around here know who
you are?
(no answer from Mac)
Did you know your former wife
is singing tomorrow night over
in Austin?
(no answer)
Are you going to hear her?
Maybe your daughter will be
along and come over here to
see you. She knows where you
are. I told her. Dixie told
me a lot about you. Don't you
want to tell me a few things
about her? She said drink
licked you. Do you still
drink?

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

MAC

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

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

INT. - HOUSE - DAY

ROSA LEE is there. MAC enters.

ROSA LEE

Who was that?

MAC

A damn reporter.

He goes back outside.
47 EXT. - HOUSE - DAY

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

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

MAC
If you want to.

MAC continues on. SONNY follows after him at a distance.

48 INT. - REHEARSAL HALL - DAY

THREE YOUNG MEN, JAKE, BERTIE and HENRY are in the hall. They are tuning up their instruments. They are in their late twenties. They begin to play, JAKE singing a vocal. ROBERT, also in his late twenties, comes in with a newspaper and an album.

ROBERT
Guess who's living around here now?

JAKE
Who?

ROBERT
Mac Sledge. (He points to a picture on the album)

BERTIE
Oh, go on.

ROBERT
It's true. Look here. (He shows them the paper) He's pumping gas. (The boys look at the paper, and then at the album) Let's go look him up.

JAKE
What are you going to say to him?

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

He starts out. The others follow after him.
INT. - PICKUP TRUCK - DAY

ROBERT is driving. JAKE is beside him drinking a can of beer; reading the story about MAC in the paper. BERTIE and HENRY are in the back. ROBERT turns the radio on.

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

JAKE
No. They stink.

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

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

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

HENRY
Give me a beer.

He hands a can to HENRY.

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

JAKE
I'll settle for a tenth.

Another record is heard. They begin to sing it as they drive on.

EXT. - TRUCK - DAY

The truck is going along the road, the boys singing as they drive.

EXT. - MOTEL - DAY

The truck pulls up and the boys get out.

JAKE
Jesus, it's a real dump.

BERTIE
What are we gonna say to him?
ROBERT
I don't know. Just tell him how much we've always admired him.

JAKE
Oh, Jesus, that's so insincere.

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

JAKE
I did. I don't know about now.

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

ROBERT
Me, too.

51 He drives up to the gas pump. They look around. 51
No one is in sight, but after a beat, ROSA LEE comes out of the house and they turn off the radio.

ROBERT
Fill 'er up.

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

ROBERT
Excuse me. Is this where Mac Sledge stays?

ROSA LEE
Yes.

ROBERT
Is he here?

ROSA LEE
Yes.

ROBERT
Could we talk to him?

ROSA LEE
What about?
ROBERT
We just want to meet him.

HENRY
We're admirers of his.

ROBERT
I saw the story in the paper this morning. You see we have a band.

BERTIE
We're playing around this part of the country two or three nights a week.

HENRY
We didn't know what happened to him until we read this story and we certainly would like to say hello and pay our respects.

JAKE
We have all his records.

HENRY
We grew up on his records.

BERTIE
He inspires us.

The gas tank is filled.

ROSA LEE
That'll be eight dollars.

ROBERT
(Robert pays her)
Could we see him?

ROSA LEE
I'll ask him.

She goes inside. The boys look around curiously.

ROSA LEE comes out followed by MAC.

MAC
Hello, boys.

ROBERT
Hello, sir. I'm Robert Dennis and this is Bertie Gallagher, and this is Henry Steele and this is Jake Muhall.
MAC
Pleased to know you.

ROBERT
I was telling this lady...

MAC
This is my wife, Rosa Lee.

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

MAC
You four boys?

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

MAC
Who does your vocals?

ROBERT
We all take turns with that.

A pause.

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

MAC
That's most gratifying to hear.

JAKE
When are you gonna start singing again, Sir?

ANGLE - MAC

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

JAKE
Do you miss singing?
MAC
No. Oh, I miss some things. But I don't miss a lot of it. Anyway, wouldn't do any good to miss it. I lost it. Where you boys playing?

ANGLE - ROBERT

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

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

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

MAC
No, I don't really. Just sing it the way you feel it.

The boys get in the truck.

MAC
So long, boys.

BOYS
So long.

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

53  EXT. - MOTEL - DAY

ANGLE - MAC

MAC seems preoccupied.

ROSA LEE
They were nice boys.

MAC
Yes, they were.
ROSA LEE
They were certainly complimentary to you. Don't that make you feel good?

MAC
I appreciated what they said.

EXT. - RIVER - DAY
MAC is there fishing. ROSA LEE is watching him.

MAC
Rosa Lee.

ROSA LEE
Yes?

MAC
You got any plans for tonight?

ROSA LEE
No.
(a pause)
Why did you ask me?

MAC
That reporter that was here yesterday said Dixie was going to be singing in Austin.

ROSA LEE
I heard that on the radio. She's going to be there for three nights, beginning tonight.

MAC
Three nights?

ROSA LEE
Yes.

A pause.

MAC
Rosa Lee...

ROSA LEE
Yes?

MAC
Would you like to go hear her sing?
ANGLE - ROSA LEE

ROSA LEE
Dixie Scott?

MAC
Yes.

ROSA LEE
No! I never want to lay eyes on that woman!

MAC
Would you care if I went?

ROSA LEE
I don't care what you do, Mac, as long as I don't have to take a look at her or listen to her.

55 EXT. - ROAD TO AUSTIN - LATE AFTERNOON
MAC is in his truck on the way to Austin.

56 EXT. - AUDITORIUM - AUSTIN - NIGHT
PEOPLE are going into the concert. MAC parks the truck. He gets out of the truck.

57 INT. - AUDITORIUM - TICKET COUNTER - NIGHT
MAC goes to the window. He buys a ticket.

58 INT. - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT
It is crowded. DIXIE SCOTT, 35, is on stage singing a fast, brassy country western song. She is flashily dressed, an assured, experienced performer, but there is something over produced and lifeless about what she is doing.

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

59 ANGLE - MAC
As he listens. It is obvious it is not to his taste. He gets up.
MAC  
(to the person seated  
next to him)  
Excuse me.  

He makes his way to the aisle, saying "Excuse me," several  
times.  

60  
EXT. - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT  
MAC comes out. He stands for a second and then starts  
toward the rear of the building. He passes a bus with  
DIXIE SCOTT printed on it in big letters. MAC continues  
on.  

61  
EXT. - BACK OF AUDITORIUM  
MAC walks to the stage entrance.  

62  
EXT. - STAGE ENTRANCE  
A DOORMAN is there. MAC goes up to him.  

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

63  
The MAN goes. MAC reaches into the inner pocket  
of his coat and takes out an envelope. He gets a  
pen, and he writes on the envelope. HARRY SILVER,  
40, comes out.  

MAC  
Hello, Harry...  

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

MAC  
I live around here.  

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

MAC  
No, thanks.  

HARRY  
"*" are things going?
MAC
Pretty well.

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

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

He hands HARRY the envelope.

HARRY
All right.

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

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

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

HARRY
(interrupting)
Sure...I'll see she gets it.
(He starts away)
Are you working?

MAC
Yes.

HARRY
Where?

MAC
At a motel.

HARRY
Oh...Well, good luck.

MAC
Thanks.

HARRY goes.
MAC starts on. The DOORMAN comes back out. MAC pauses and then goes over to the DOORMAN.

MAX
Is Dixie Scott's daughter travelling with her?

DOORMAN
She's around someplace.

MAC
Would you tell her I'd like to see her please.

DOORMAN
All right. I'll see if I can find her.

He goes back inside the theater. After a moment MAC goes inside, too.

INT. - BACKSTAGE

A hallway leading to dressing rooms and the stage. He can hear the band and DIXIE singing from here. The music stops. We can hear the audience applaud. DIXIE SCOTT enters. There is a woman DRESSER following her holding a mirror and some makeup. DIXIE takes the mirror as she sees MAC.

DIXIE
(to dresser)
Ada, get Harry in here. Right away.

The WOMAN leaves.

DIXIE
What the hell do you want here, Mac?

MAC
I was hoping to say hello to Sue Anne.

DIXIE
You leave her alone!
(calling..)
Harry! Harry!
(to Mac)
You stay away from her, or I warn you, I'll have the law on you. All she remembers about you is a mean drunk trying to beat up her Mama. You're dead
(MORE)
DIXIE (contd)
as far as she is concerned, Mac.
She never thinks about you,
she's happy, so leave her alone.
   (Harry comes in)
Harry, get him out of here. I
don't want him around here.

MAC
Lady, you're not telling me what
to do. You never have and you
never will.

HARRY
Come on, Mac. Let's don't
start any trouble.

MAC
Who the hell does she think
she is? She walks out here and
starts yelling at me.

DIXIE
He's jealous of me. He hates
me, because I'm successful and
he's not.
   (Mac walks away. He
goes out the stage
door)
Harry, see that he leaves here!
I don't want him near Sue Anne.

HARRY starts out.

EXT. - STAGE DOOR
Harry comes out.

HARRY'S P.O.V.
He sees MAC walking towards the parking lot.

BACK TO HARRY AT STAGE DOOR
He goes inside.

EXT. - PARKING LOT - NIGHT
MAC comes into the lot and gets into the truck and
drives away.

INT. - DIXIE'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT
DIXIE is there. HARRY comes in.
DIXIE
Did he leave?

HARRY
Yes.

DIXIE
Are you sure?

HARRY
Yes.

DIXIE
Have you seen Sue Anne?

HARRY
She's around.

DIXIE
Get her in here.

He goes to the door and calls.

HARRY
(calling)
Sue Anne..Sue Anne..

The DRESSER comes in with costumes.

DRESSER
She's down talking to the musicians.

DIXIE
Harry, go tell her I said to get her tail up here.

INT. - A SMALL ROOM BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

A GROUP OF MUSICIANS from Dixie's orchestra are here resting. SUE ANNE, 18, is with them. ONE OF THE MEN, HARRIS MENEFEE, 30, has his arm around her. HARRY comes in.

HARRY
Sue Anne, your Mama wants you.

She starts out. HARRY follows.
INT. - DIXIE'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

She is changing her clothes. SUE ANNE AND HARRY come in.

DIXIE
(to Sue Anne)
I told you to wait up here in my
dressing room when you weren't
out front watching the show.

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

DIXIE
Then stay up here.

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

DIXIE
Then watch T.V.

SUE ANNE
I'm sick of that, too.

She starts out.

DIXIE
Where are you going?

SUE ANNE
I'm going back to the hotel.

DIXIE
Why?

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

DIXIE
Who with?

SUE ANNE
None of your business.

DIXIE
God damn it! What do you mean
it's none of my business?

HARRY
Now, come on, Honey. Don't get
excited. You still have the
rest of the show to do.
DIXIE
She's going on no date unless
I know who she's going with.

SUE ANNE
Try and stop me!

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

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

He runs out after her.

71
EXT. - AUDITORIUM PARKING LOT - NIGHT

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

72
EXT. - MOTEL - NIGHT

MAC drives up in his truck. There are lights on in the house. He gets out of the truck and goes into the house. He sees a car in front of a cabin, its lights are on.

73
INT. - SLDEGE HOUSE - NIGHT

ROSA LEE is there. MAC comes in.

ROSA LEE
You are home early.

MAC
Uh huh.

ROSA LEE
The concert couldn't have been very long.

MAC
It was the regular time. I left early.

ROSA LEE
Why?
MAC
I didn't care too much for it.

ROSA LEE
Why?

MAC
I just didn't. Sonny in bed?

ROSA LEE
Uh huh.

MAC
What have you been doin'?

ROSA LEE
Not much of anything.

MAC
Did you watch the T.V.?

ROSA LEE
No.

A pause. MAC looks at her.

MAC
Why are you so quiet?
    (She shrugs her shoulders)
Are you mad about something?
    (She doesn't answer)
Are you mad because I went to
hear Dixie sing?
    (a pause)
My God, woman, don't tell me
you are jealous of her. Rosa
Lee, are you jealous of Dixie
Scott?

ROSA LEE
Maybe I am.

MAC
Why?

ROSA LEE
Well, because...you know..

MAC
No, I don't know.

ROSA LEE
Well..She's rich and famous,
and you were married to her.
MAC
Well, My God, don't be jealous
of her. She's poison to me,
Rosa Lee. She is absolutely
poison to me.

ROSA LEE
Well, why did you want to go
watch her sing then?

MAC
Someday I'll tell you.

ROSA LEE
Why can't you tell me now?

MAC
Because I can't.

ROSA LEE
Why?

MAC
Because I can't.

ROSA LEE
Why can't you?

MAC
Because I can't, God damn it!
Don't you understand English?

ROSA LEE
I understand English, but you
don't have to yell at me.

MAC
I don't mean to yell. I'm
jumpy tonight.

ROSA LEE
Why?

MAC
I just am.

A pause.

ROSA LEE
Did you go hoping you could
see your daughter?

(a pause)

Mac, is that it?

(MORE)
ROSA LEE (contd)

(a pause)
If that's the reason I could understand that. You could just come right out and tell me.

MAC
I'd be lying to you if I told you that was the reason.

ROSA LEE
Why, didn't you want to see her?

MAC
Sure, I wanted to see her. Of course, I did. But I figured Dixie wouldn't let me, and I was right. While I was there I did try to see her and Dixie saw me and pitched a fit.

(a pause)
She says Sue Anne don't want to see me. She says I'm a dead man to her.

ROSA LEE
Do you believe that?

MAC
I don't know.

ROSA LEE
How long since you've seen her?

MAC
Since before the divorce. It must be six years.

---

EXT. - BACKYARD OF THE HOUSE - DAY - TWO DAYS LATER

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

MAC
Hello, Harry. Come on in.

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

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

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

MAC
I guess.

HARRY
If you want to though, I'll
take it on with me and show
it around. I might find some-
body who would like it.

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

HARRY
How are you doing?

MAC
I'm all right.

HARRY
You makin' a living here?

MAC
We get by.
(He looks over at
Rosa Lee)
Rosa Lee, this is an old friend
of mine, Harry Silvers.

HARRY
Pleased to know you.
ROSA LEE
Thank you. Pleased to know you.

HARRY
I'm sorry Dixie acted so ugly about you seeing Sue Anne. I wish you'd asked me about it first. Maybe I could have done something about it. I still think I can if you still want to see her after Dixie gets over being stubborn.

MAC
How is Sue Anne?

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

ROSA LEE
Thank you. Nice to meet you.

HARRY
So long, Mac. Good luck.

MAC
Good luck to you.

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

CLOSE SHOT - MAC AND ROSA LEE

ANGLE - MAC

MAC
I don't give a God damn about any of this no more. So what in hell is wrong with me. I guess it's just hearing about Sue Anne being grown up and all and being spoiled by Dixie.

ANGLE - ROSA LEE

ROSA LEE
Oh, sure. I know that's hard on you not being able to see her.
She goes to MAC. She takes his hand.

ANGLE - MAC

As he listens.

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

ANGLE - ROSA LEE

ROSA LEE (contd)
When his Daddy died and people said Oh, it's too bad you're left with this little boy to raise - too bad for who? I said - not for me! I consider it a privilege to have this blessed child to raise. And I did, too.

ANGLE - MAC AND ROSA LEE

ROSA LEE (contd)
And every night when I say my prayers and I thank the good Lord for all his many blessings and tender mercies to me, Sonny and you head the list.

(a pause)
Would you sing the song you wrote to me?

MAC
No, it's no good.

ROSA LEE
I sure would like to hear it.

He hands it to her.

MAC
You sing it.

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

MAC
Well I'll think about it.
Mac...

MAC

What?

ROSA LEE

Please sing it for me.

MAC

All right. But it's kind of corny.

ROSA LEE

I don't care.

They go inside.

INT. - HOUSE - DAY

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

He plays a few chords on the guitar and then stops.

MAC

I've got no voice left. Anyway, I don't like the song, and I never did. And I never will.

ROSA LEE

Mac.

MAC is angry now.

MAC

And don't feel sorry for me, Rosa Lee. I'm not dead, you know.

ROSA LEE

I'm not feeling sorry for you.

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

EXT. - HOUSE - DAY

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

MAC
I'm going uptown.

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

EXT. - HIGHWAY - DAY

MAC speeds down the highway in the pickup truck. He comes to a bar-restaurant. He pulls the truck into the parking lot, gets out and goes inside.

INT. - BAR - RESTAURANT

It is dark inside. There are TWO MEN at the bar drinking bottles of beer. MAC enters. He goes to a table. A WAITER, a man in his forties, comes up to him.

WAITER
What do you want?

MAC
I don't know yet.

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

MAC
I don't know what I want yet.

WAITER
Our specials today...

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

(The waiter walks away and goes over to the juke box with some coins)

Would you mind not playing that damn music?

WAITER
One of the other fellows asked
He puts the coins in the box. The music starts, it is one of DIXIE's records. MAC gets up and leaves.

MAN
(calling to waiter)
What's wrong with him?

WAITER
I don't know.

80

EXT. - RESTAURANT-BAR - DAY

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

MAC
(screaming)
Why the hell don't you watch what you're doing?

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

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

81

EXT. - HIGHWAY - LIQUOR STORE - DAY

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

82

EXT. - FILLING STATION - DAY

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

83

EXT. - HIGHWAY - LIQUOR STORE - DAY

MAC comes out of the store. He has a bottle of whiskey. He gets into the truck and drives off.
A pickup truck drives up. ROBERT and JAKE are in the truck.

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

ROBERT
Is Mr. Sledge around?

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

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

ROSA LEE
Sure.

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

ROBERT
Thanks.

He starts for the truck.

ROSA LEE
Do either of you read music?

ROBERT
Sure, I do.

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

ROBERT
Sure.
ROSA LEE
Let me get it.

She goes inside. They get out of the truck. She comes outside. She hands the music to Robert. He looks at it.

ROBERT
When did he write this?

ROSA LEE
Oh, a long time ago, I guess.

Robert has begun humming to himself trying to read the music. ROSA LEE doesn't finish her sentence. She watches him. JAKE looks over ROBERT's shoulder.

86 INT. - HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

SONNY and ROSA LEE are in the house. She is looking at the music, still trying to figure out the piece.

SONNY
I wonder where Mac is?

ROSA LEE
I don't know.

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

ROSA LEE
That's no secret, Sonny.

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

ROSA LEE
I would have told you if you had asked me.

SONNY
Was my Daddy older than you?

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

SONNY
How come he went to Vietnam?
ROSA LEE
He got drafted. He didn't know
I was going to have you until
after the Army got him.

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

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

SONNY
Do you think my Daddy took drugs?

ROSA LEE
No, I don't think so.

SONNY
Kids at school take drugs.

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

He looks at her.

SONNY
What are you so mad about?

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

(He starts out)
Where are you going?

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

ROSA LEE
I'm sorry, Sonny. Come here
to me. I didn't mean to get
so excited.

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

SONNY
What song is that?
ROSA LEE
That's a song Mac wrote.

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

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

She holds him and begins again to hum the song.

EXT. - HIGHWAY - MAC - NIGHT

He drives down the highway past the filling station. He can see the lights on in the house. He continues on. He turns around and goes back past the house, again continuing on.

INT. - HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT - ROSA LEE AND SONNY ARE WATCHING TELEVISION

SONNY
I'm going to bed.
(Sonny starts to walk away)
Where do you think Mac is?

ROSA LEE
I don't know.

SONNY
Wake me up when he gets here.

ROSA LEE
All right.

SONNY leaves.

SONNY
Good night.

ROSA LEE
Good night.

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

SONNY
(calling from other room)
Is he here?
ROSA LEE
No.

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

ROSA LEE
Because I'm sick of it.

SONNY
Are you going to bed?

ROSA LEE
Yes.

SONNY
When?

ROSA LEE
Soon. Now go on to sleep.

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

EXT. - YARD - ROSA LEE COMES OUT OF THE HOUSE - NIGHT

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

INT. - HOUSE - NIGHT - ROSA LEE ENTERS

She turns out the lights in the living room. She opens
the door to her son's room.

INT. - SONNY'S ROOM - NIGHT - SHE ENTERS

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

EXT. - HIGHWAY - MAC IN THE TRUCK

He again drives past the filling station and the house.
He continues on.
ROSA LEE enters the bedroom. She undresses and gets into bed. She closes her eyes and says quietly to herself.

ROSA LEE

"Show me thy way, Oh Lord, teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me for thou art the God of my salvation, on thee do I wait all the day. Remember, Oh Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving kindness. For thou has been ever of old."

She lies in bed listening; she hears a car. She gets out of bed and runs to the window. She hears it slow down and turn into the driveway. She hurries back into bed and lies in the dark listening. She hears the car stop. She closes her eyes and pretends to be asleep. She hears the car door open and then shut. She hears the front door open and someone come into the living room. Then there is silence, and she opens her eyes listening. She hears footsteps again and she closes her eyes. The door to the room opens and we see MAC enter the room. He stands inside the door. He comes into the room. He begins to undress. He goes over to his side of the bed and stands looking out the window. Then turns and looks over at her. She opens her eyes and looks up at him.

ROSA LEE

Mac? Is that you?

Yes.

MAC

What time is it?

MAC

Late.

(a pause)

I'm not drunk. I bought a bottle but I didn't get drunk. I poured it all out. I didn't have one drink.

ROSA LEE

Did you have anything to eat?

MAC

 Nope.

ROSA LEE

Are you hungry?
MAC
I guess so.

ROSA LEE gets out of bed.

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

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

INT. - KITCHEN - ROSA LEE ENTERS FOLLOWED BY MAC

ROSA LEE
How hungry are you?

MAC
I'm not very hungry.

ROSA LEE
Want some eggs?

MAC
No.

ROSA LEE
Some chili?

MAC
No. I little soup will do me.

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

ANGLE - MAC

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

ROSA LEE
No.

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

(a pause)
She takes the soup off the stove, puts it in a bowl.

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

MAC
Yes.

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

MAC
Yes.

ANGLE - ROSA LEE

ROSA LEE
Well, two of them came by here after you were gone and left off a poster.  
 (She points to it)  
I asked them if they could read music and one of them could and so I asked if they would teach me that song of yours as I thought I would try and surprise you by singing it for you when you got home.

ANGLE - MAC

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

MAC
(interrupting)  
It's no old song. I only wrote it last week. That's why I got so upset when Harry said he didn't like it.  
(MORE)
MAC (cont'd)
(He goes into the bedroom. He comes out with a small trunk)
I been writing them all along. I got even more in here.
(a pause)
Did you say the boy liked the song?

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

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

He opens the trunk, and we can see sheet music inside. She takes the music and looks at it.

MAC
Did you learn the song?

ROSA LEE
Not good enough to sing it.
(a pause)
I wish I could read music. How did you learn to read music?

ANGLE - MAC

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

He gets his guitar. He plays a little.

MAC
I've been missing my music. I may not be any good anymore, but that don't keep you from missing it.
SONNY
When did you get home?

ROSA LEE
He got here a little while ago.

SONNY
You said you were going to wake me.

ROSA LEE
I forgot.

MAC continues playing. We sense now he is enjoying it. SONNY listens for a beat.

SONNY
Good night.

ROSA LEE
Good night...

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

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

ROSA LEE
All right.

He continues picking at his guitar.

MAC
Come on try it with me.

He plays a few chords. She starts to sing. She sings a few phrases. ROSA LEE cries.

ROSA LEE
I'm sorry. I just got nervous tonight.

He puts his arm around her.

INT. - COUNTRY DANCE HALL - NIGHT

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

SUE ANNE AND HER MUSICIAN FRIEND, HARRIS drive up in her car. He is driving.

HARRIS
Well, I found it.

SUE ANNE
Have you heard them before?

HARRIS
No. I just met this guy, Jake, at a bar last night and he told me about his band and that they were playing tonight, and your father had given them a new song to play.

SUE ANNE
I don't want them to know who my father is or my mother.

HARRIS
Why?

SUE ANNE
I just don't. If I'm going to make it, I want to make it on my own.

He takes sheet music out of the car.

SUE ANNE
What are you taking the music in for?

HARRIS
So you can sing with the band. They may not have these songs.

SUE ANNE
I'm not sure I want to sing tonight.

HARRIS
Jesus, Sue Anne, what did we come out here for then? I told them I had this terrific young singer that I wanted them to hear. I thought you wanted experience as a singer.

SUE ANNE
I do.
HARRIS
Well, how in the hell are you
going to get experience if you
don't sing, Jesus!

SUE ANNE
Please, not tonight. I don't
feel like it tonight.

They get out of the car and go inside.

INT. - DANCE HALL - NIGHT

The band is taking a break. SUE ANNE AND HARRIS enter
and go to a table.

HARRIS
I'll get set ups.

He crosses over to the bar. JAKE sees him and goes to
him.

JAKE
Well, you found us.

HARRIS
Yes, no trouble, you gave me
good directions.

(Harris gets set ups
and they start back
to his table)

How late do you play?

JAKE
Until twelve. How was your
show tonight?

HARRIS
All right.

(They are at the table
now. Harris puts the
set ups on the table)

Sue Anne, this is Jake. He's
with the band. Sue Anne is the
singer I was telling you about.

JAKE
Are we going to hear her sing
tonight?

SUE ANNE
Not tonight.
HARRIS
Are you going to play that song of Mac Sledge's?

JAKE
We already have, but I'll get them to play it again if you want to hear it.

HARRIS
Thanks.

JAKE
He doesn't live far from here, you know. He and his wife own a motel. They don't have an easy time.

HARRIS
Do you like the song?

JAKE
It's O.K. He's written better.

EXT. - DIXIE'S HOTEL ROOM
She and HARRY are there.

HARRY
Come on, Honey. Time for bed.

DIXIE
No. I won't go to bed until my baby is home and safe. I know who she's with, you know. I'm gonna warn that musician to stay away from her or I'm gonna fire him.

(a pause)
Oh, it's always something.

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

DIXIE
I'm glad you did.

(a pause)
What was the name of that damn song Mac sent me?

HARRY
I forget.
DIXIE
Let me see it.

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

DIXIE
Wasn't any good, was it?

HARRY
I didn't think so. Not for
you, anyway..

DIXIE
What do you mean, not for me?
You think it's good for somebody?
(Sue Anne enters)
Were you out with that musician
again?

SUE ANNE
Yes.

DIXIE
I told you not to see him anymore.

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

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

SUE ANNE
I have a voice.

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

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

She goes into her room, slamming the door.
DIXIE
Harry, tell her I said to march herself back out here.

He goes to the door and tries to open it.

HARRY
It's locked.

DIXIE goes to it. She pounds on the door.

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

EXT. - STREET IN TRAVIS - A SMALL TEXAS TOWN - DAY

ROBERT AND HIS FRIENDS drive their car slowly down the street. They see MAC.

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

MAC looks up and sees them and waves back. ROBERT parks his truck. He and his friends get out and go over to MAC.

ROBERT
Remember us?

MAC
Sure. How are you?

ROBERT
Pretty good.

MAC starts into the supermarket. They follow him.

INT. - SUPERMARKET - DAY

MAC enters, followed by the BOYS. He takes a grocery list out of his pocket, gets a shopping cart and starts down the aisle. The BOYS are trailing after him talking all the while.

MAC looks for groceries on the list as he listens to them and talks.

ROBERT
We went out to the motel looking for you and your wife said you (MORE)
ROBERT (contd)
were in town. We've been playing
that song you wrote. I wish you
could come around some night and
hear us play.

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

ANGLE - ROBERT

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

MAC
I remember your saying so.

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

ANGLE - MAC

As he listens, he continues his search for groceries.

ROBERT
We were going to record a song
I wrote and a song Jake wrote,
but I was talking to some of
my friends at the radio stations,
telling them about this song you
let us play of yours and they
said we should try to talk you
into letting us record that one...

(a pause)
Of course, they thought the best
idea would be to try to get you
to give us another song, too,
and then my friends in the radio
station...

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

Thanks.

MAC starts down another aisle. The BOYS follow.

ANGLE - ROBERT

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

ANGLE - MAC

As he listens.

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

MAC
How many recordings have you made?

ROBERT
Three. But I haven't exactly told you the truth about that though. They broke even on our records but even so, they won't record us again with our songs. But like I said we heard last week they would record us if we recorded two of your songs.

MAC
You have my permission. I told you that.

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

MAC
Who does?

ROBERT
The record company.
MAC
What record company?

ROBERT
The Aztec.

MAC
Never heard of it.

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

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

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

MAC
Let me think about it.

ROBERT
It would sure mean a lot to us. You understand that. It would be a real incentive for us.

MAC
When do you rehearse?

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

ANGLE - MAC

As he looks again at his shopping list, checking the groceries in the cart and then he turns to the BOYS.

MAC
All right. I may give it a try with you just to see how it sounds to me. I ain't promising nothing, you understand, and if I don't like the way it sounds, we'll just back away from it. Give me a couple of days to think it over.
ROBERT

Yessir.

MAC starts through the check-out counter, the cashier looks at him.

CASHIER

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

MAC

Yes, Ma'm. I guess I was.

She starts checking the groceries.

SONNY comes out of the house. SUE ANNE, 18, is there in her car. SONNY goes to her.

SUE ANNE

Is this where Mac Sledge lives?

SONNY

Uh huh.

SUE ANNE

Is he here?

SONNY

No.

SUE ANNE

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

SONNY

I'll ask my Mama.

ROSA LEE is there. SONNY enters.

SONNY

You know who that is out in the car?

ROSA LEE

No.

SONNY

That's Mac's daughter.
ROSA LEE goes to the window and looks out. She goes outside.

EXT. - FILLING STATION - LATE AFTERNOON

ROSA LEE comes out of the house.

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

ANGLE - SUE ANNE

SUE ANNE
Who are you?

ROSA LEE
I'm his wife. Rosa Lee.

SUE ANNE
Was that his son?

ANGLE - ROSA LEE

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

EXT. - HIGHWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

MAC is in his truck driving home.

INT. - LIVING ROOM - ROSA LEE AND MAC'S HOUSE

ROSA LEE is there with SUE ANNE. MAC enters. He and SUE ANNE look at each other.

SUE ANNE
I recognize you. Do you recognize me?

MAC
Yes, I do.

SUE ANNE
How did you recognize me?

MAC
I just did.

ROSA LEE gets
ROSA LEE
You all excuse me. Come on, Sonny.

They leave.

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

MAC
Don't I? Well, God knows when the last picture of me was taken.

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

SUE ANNE
No.

MAC
Well, your Mama didn't have to give them to you. The courts gave her complete jurisdiction. And quite rightly, I guess, considering my state at the time.

(a pause)
Are you still going to school?

ANGLE - SUE ANNE

SUE ANNE
No, I've finished. I've been off at boarding school. Mama says I can travel with her as long as I want to, and I might do that. If we don't kill each other in the meantime. I told Mama I was coming here. She told me she would have me arrested if I did. But Harry reminded her that I was eighteen now and she had no jurisdiction over me any longer.

(a pause)
Mama said you tried to kill her once.
ANGLE - MAC

MAC

I did.

SUE ANNE

Why did you try to kill her?

MAC

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

ANGLE - SUE ANNE

SUE ANNE

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

ANGLE - MAC

MAC

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

ANGLE - SUE ANNE

SUE ANNE

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

(a pause)

Anything I've got has come from your music.

ANGLE - MAC

MAC

I'm happy for that.

(a pause)

Anyway it wasn't just my music.

(MORE)
MAC (contd)
It was your Mama singing it, too.
You mustn't forget that.
(a pause)
Will you have supper with us?

SUE ANNE
Thank you. No. I have a date
tonight. He's playing in Mama's
band. We have to sneak around,
because Mama don't like him.
Do you want to meet him? He
wants to meet you.

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

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

ANGLE - MAC

MAC
Well, all right then.

SUE ANNE
What about tomorrow afternoon?

MAC
That's fine.

SUE ANNE
What time?

MAC
Anytime. I'll be here.

SUE ANNE
Around two o'clock?

MAC
Sure.

SUE ANNE
You know you've never spoken my
name once since I've been here.
Don't you know my name?
MAC
Sure I know your name. I've just been kind of figuring out to myself what I ought to call you. When you were a little girl, I used to call you, Sister. I started to call you that this time when I saw you, but I didn't know if it would mean anything to you or not. Of if you'd remember my doing that.
(a pause)
How long are you going to be in Texas?

SUE ANNE
We leave after Mama plays Houston and Corpus.

MAC
Where do you go from there?

SUE ANNE
Shreveport.
(Sue Anne gets up.
She starts away.
A pause)
There was a song you used to sing to me, I think. Something about a dove. Mama said she never heard you sing it to me. I think it went: "The wings of a snow white dove—He sends his something, something love...."

MAC
I don't remember.

He follows her outside.

107(a) EXT. - HOUSE - DAY
SUE ANNE comes out, followed by MAC. He follows her to her car. She gets in and she starts the motor.

SUE ANNE
My boyfriend, Harris, thinks I ought to sing.

MAC
Do you want to?
SUE
I don't know. Maybe, if I'm any good. I might sing for you tomorrow so you can tell me what you think.

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

MAC enters and sits down, begins to sing "On the wings of a snow white dove, he sends his pure sweet love, a sign from above, on the wings of a dove."

ROSALIE and SONNY are there. In the distance they see MAC walking towards them. They go to meet him. There is a squawking of geese overhead.

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

MAC
Down on the coast.

ROSALIE
I bet you were surprised to see your daughter.

MAC
I was.

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

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

ROBERT, JAKE AND THE OTHERS setting up for the night's work.

INT. - OFFICE - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

HARRY is there. HARRIS MENEFREE comes in.

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

HARRIS
Why?

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

HARRIS
O.K. I'll leave her alone.

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

EXT. - FILLING STATION - DAY

MAC is replacing wood that has rotted on the side of one of the motels. He is in the process of ripping the rotted wood off, when HARRY drives up. ROSA LEE has a chair in the yard. She is shelling butter beans. HARRY gets out of his car and walks back toward MAC and ROSA LEE. MAC continues his work as HARRY talks to him.

HARRY
Did Sue Anne come here yesterday?

MAC
Yes.

HARRY
What time?

MAC
Around five...Five thirty.

ANGLE - HARRY

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

No.

HARRY
Have you heard from her today?

MAC
No. She was to be here at two, but she didn't show up.

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

ANGLE - MAC

As he listens, and continues working.

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

MAC
Yes, I guess I do.

ANGLE - HARRY

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

MAC
What is the boy like she's marrying?

HARRY
Boy? He's a man. He's been married three times.
ANGLE - MAC

As he listens, and continues working.

HARRY
If she does get in touch with you, tell her for God's sake to call her mother.

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

HARRY
Menefee. Harris. I'll leave our itinerary here with you.
(He hands it to Mac.
Mac takes it)
Call us collect. Oh, by the way, I felt bad that I spoke so tactlessly about your song the other day. It worried my conscience all the way back to Austin.

MAC
That's all right.

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

ANGLE - MAC

As he stops his work.

MAC
What's the five hundred dollars for?

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

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

HARRY
What?

MAC
I'm just thinking at present. Nothing definite.

ANGLE - HARRY

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

ANGLE - MAC

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

TWO SHOT - HARRY AND MAC

HARRY
Do you have others?

MAC
Yes.

HARRY
Can I see them?

MAC
Nope.

HARRY
Aw, come on, Mac.
MAC
No. Goddamn it, Harry. Don't you understand English? I told you I don't want to show them to you.

HARRY
Why?

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

HARRY
You can't get sore at me for asking.

MAC
Let's change the subject, Harry.

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

HARRY goes to his car and drives away. MAC goes back to his work. ROSA LEE goes into the house with the shelled beans. MAC takes out a slide rule and begins measuring some boards. ROSA LEE comes back out and crosses over to him. He stops working when he sees her and wipes the sweat off of his face.

114 EXT. - MOTEL - DAY

TWO SHOT - MAC AND ROSA LEE

MAC
You were sixteen when you got married?

ROSA LEE
Yes.

ANGLE - MAC

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

(MORE)
MAC (contd)
and I was seventeen when I married
the first time.

ROSA LEE
You never told me you were married
before Dixie.

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

ROSA LEE
You never told me that.

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

ANGLE - ROSA LEE
As she listens.

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

ANGLE - MAC

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

He goes over to her and kisses her.

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

ROSA LEE
Oh, go on...

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

ROSA LEE
Oh, sure you did.

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

115 EXT. - MOTEL - DAY

ANGLE WIDENS

As the school bus pulls up. SONNY gets off the bus.

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

He goes inside.

CLOSE SHOT - SONNY AND ROSA LEE

SONNY goes to the soft drink machine and gets a drink.
He opens it.
ROSA LEE
How was school?

SONNY
Pretty fair.

THE ANGLE WIDENS

As MAC comes out. He sits down beside them.

MAC
Want to play some catch, Sonny?

SONNY
Sure.

MAC
The last one in the house is a jackass.

He starts to run for the house, SONNY runs laughing, after him. They go in the front slamming the screen door after them.

INT. - HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

MAC runs into the house; SONNY right after him. They are both laughing. There are two gloves and a ball in the corner of the room. They each get a glove, and SONNY picks up the ball and starts tossing it up in the air.

SONNY
(laughing)
You cheated.

MAC
I did not.

SONNY
You did too. You gave yourself a headstart.

MAC
All right. This time I'll give you a headstart. One-two-three—Go..

SONNY takes off. MAC behind him. Again they are laughing as they run out into the yard.

EXT. - YARD - DAY

ROSA ------ they run out of the house to her.
SONNY
Now I beat you.

MAC
You sure did.

SONNY
Did you let me beat you?

MAC
I did not.

He goes running out into the field holding his glove up. SONNY throws him the ball. He throws it back. The phone rings... ROSA LEE goes inside. MAC and SONNY continue playing catch.

SONNY
I wish I could sing. How did you learn to sing, Mac?

MAC
I don't know.

SONNY
Did somebody teach you, or did you learn yourself?

MAC
I learned myself.

SONNY
Will you teach me to play the guitar someday?

MAC
Sure.

ROSA LEE comes out.

ROSA LEE
(calling)
That was Sue Anne...
(Mac stops playing.
He walks toward her)
She said to tell you she was married and on her way to Mexico for her honeymoon. She said she would bring her husband by to meet us when they returned.

MAC has come up to her.
MAC
Did she say when that would be?

ROSA LEE
No.

INT. - HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT
ROSA LEE, MAC and SONNY are there. MAC is teaching SONNY how to play the guitar.

INT. - DIXIE'S HOTEL BEDROOM - NIGHT
She is there. HARRY enters.

DIXIE
Did you find Mac?

HARRY
Yes.

DIXIE
Did he hear from her?

HARRY
No.

DIXIE
Do you think he's telling the truth?

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

DIXIE
Has anybody in the orchestra heard from them?

HARRY
No.

DIXIE
Do you know if he has any money?

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

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

HARRY
I don't know, Dixie.

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

HARRY
Not about that.

DIXIE
You know what has just come to me?

HARRY
What?

DIXIE
Mac is lying to you.

HARRY
Why would he lie to me?

DIXIE
To spite me. I bet he knows
where she is and just won't
tell us out of spite. He's
getting back at me because I
wouldn't sing his old no good
song. Do you have Mac's
telephone number?

HARRY
Yes.

DIXIE
Give it to me.

HARRY
What do you want it for?

DIXIE
I'm going to call him up and
tell him I'm no fool, and I
know what he's up to.

HARRY
Aw, come on, Dixie. Be reasonable.
DIXIE
Be reasonable. You be reasonable. He's heard about her trust fund. He's trying to get at it. I'm going to tell him in plain English, that there is no trust fund now that she's married, because I'm going to stop it. Give me the telephone number.

HARRY
I wish you wouldn't.

DIXIE
I said give it to me, Goddamn it. (He hands it to her, she dials)
Hello, Mac Sledge. This is Dixie, Dixie Scott. I know what you are up to.

120 INT. - MAC AND ROSA LEE'S HOUSE - NIGHT
MAC listening to DIXIE on the phone.

DIXIE (V.O.)
And I just want you to know as of now Sue Anne has no trust fund.

121 INT. - HOTEL BEDROOM - NIGHT
DIXIE is at the phone.

DIXIE
I'm stopping it. I gave it to her and I can take it away. She is not going to have a cent. (a pause) The Sonevabitch hung up on me.

122 INT. - SONNY'S BEDROOM - DAY
SONNY is there getting dressed in his best clothes. ROSA LEE is there helping him.

123 EXT. - MOTEL - DAY
MAC is there in the pickup truck. He is dressed in a suit. He blows the horn.

124 INT. - CHURCH - DAY
A group of people are seated in the front pews. SONNY
and MAC among them. The PREACHER is baptizing a WOMAN, when he finishes, it is SONNY's turn. When SONNY has been baptized, it is MAC's turn. ROSA LEE is in the choir watching, as the choir sings, "Jesus-Pilot of My soul."

EXT. - DANCE HALL - SAN MARCOS - NIGHT

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

INT. - DANCE HALL - NIGHT

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

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

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

ANGLE - ROBERT, BERTIE, JAKE, HENRY AND STEVE

As they rest beside their instruments. ROBERT sees MAC. ROBERT starts across the hall to MAC's table.

ROBERT

Welcome!

MAC

Thank you.

He goes to MAC and they shake hands.

ROBERT

You ready to go to work?

MAC

Yes, I am.
ROBERT
Do you mind if I say a few words first to introduce you?

MAC
No.
They get up. They start towards the bandstand.

ANGLE - MAC AND ROBERT
As they walk towards the bandstand.

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

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

ROBERT's introduction of MAC should be very informal and low-keyed.

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

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

ANGLE - SONNY AND ROSA LEE
As they listen to MAC.

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

ANGLE - MAC
As he sings.

ANGLE - BAND
As they play.

ANGLE - MAC
As he sings.
ANGLE - CROWD

As they listen.

ANGLE - SONNY
As he punches ROSA LEE and smiles.

ANGLE - MAC

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

ANGLE - ROBERT

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

ANGLE - MAC

As he walks towards ROSA LEE and SONNY.

Just before reaching the table ARABELLA, ANITA and CORRINE, the wives of JAKE, BERTIE and HENRY surround him.

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

MAC
Thank you.

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

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

ARABELLA
Heh.

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

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

CORRINE
Henry was about to give up the
whole thing.

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

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

ARABELLA
Oh, I just know it will.

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

ARABELLA
Well, it was certainly nice to
meet you folks.

MAC
Thank you.

CORRINE
It certainly was.

ANITA
A real privilege.

They smile at them again and start back to their
table. MAC joins ROSA LEE and SONNY. SONNY is
grinning with obvious pride.

ROSA LEE
That was just beautiful, Mac
MAC
Thank you. I was nervous.

ROSA LEE
Were you?

MAC
Oh, yes.

ROSA LEE
You certainly couldn't tell it, could you, Sonny?

SONNY
No, Ma'm.

MAC
That's good. And it sounded all right?

ROSA LEE
I thought it was wonderful.

SONNY
I liked it too.

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

MAC
Do you mind if your Mama and I dance?

SONNY
No, sir.

MAC and ROSA LEE get up and begin to dance.

ANGLE - SONNY
As he watches them dancing. The music changes back to a two step.

129 THE ANGLE WIDENS
As a BOY, Sonny's age, comes over to SONNY.

BOY
That your Daddy?

SONNY
No, my step-daddy.
BOY
My Mama says he was a famous singer.

SONNY
I guess so. Is that your Mama over there?

BOY
Yes.

SONNY
Is that your Daddy with her?

BOY
Nope. That's a friend of hers. My Mamma and Daddy are divorced. Were your Mother and Daddy divorced.

SONNY
No. He died. In Vietnam.

BOY
Did he get shot?

SONNY
I guess so.

BOY
Don't you know?

SONNY
No. I don't know how he died.

BOY
Didn't you ever ask?

SONNY
No.

The BOY'S MOTHER and HER FRIEND pass by the table on their way to the dance floor. They both have been drinking heavily and are unsteady on their feet as they try to dance.

ANGLE - SONNY AND THE BOY

As they watch the drunken couple.

BOY
I hope that guy is never my step-daddy.
SONNY
Why? Don't you like him?

BOY
No. Do you like your step-daddy?

SONNY
Yes, I do.

BOY
Better than your own Daddy?

SONNY
I never knew my own Daddy.

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

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

BACK TO SONNY AT HIS TABLE
He smiles and waves to them.

ANGLE - MAC AND ROSA LEE
As they continue dancing.

THE BAND starts a fast piece and ROSA LEE and MAC dance in tempo as SONNY watches admiringly.

INT. - ROSA LEE AND MAC'S HOUSE - DAY

ROSA LEE is there working. There is a knock on the door and she looks around to see SUE ANNE.

ROSA LEE
Come in.

SUE ANNE comes into the room.

SUE ANNE
Is my daddy here?

ROSA LEE
No, he's in town. He'll be back in a little.
SUE ANNE
I wonder if you could cash a check for me?

ROSA LEE
How much?

SUE ANNE
A hundred dollars.

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

SUE ANNE
The check is good.

ROSA LEE
I'm sure of that. I just don't have that much here in the cash drawer. (She goes to the cash register and opens it) All I have is twenty-five dollars.

SUE ANNE
That will help.

She writes a check and gives it to her.

ROSA LEE
How was Mexico?

SUE ANNE
It was all right.

ROSA LEE
Did you just get back?

SUE ANNE
No. We've been here a couple of days.

ROSA LEE
Will you stay around here?

SUE ANNE
We may stay. We may move on. My husband has to find work. My Mama stopped my trust fund out of spite. We met some musicians in Austin the other night that said my Daddy just mad
ROSA LEE

He did.

SUE ANNE

How did it go?

ROSA LEE

I think pretty well. He seemed pleased.

SUE ANNE

Are you a singer, too?

ROSA LEE

No.

SUE ANNE

That article in the paper on Daddy said you were.

ROSA LEE

Well, they got that wrong. All I do is sing in the choir at church.

SUE ANNE

I thought about being a singer. But I don't think I've got any voice, to tell you the truth. I just think I was going on about singing to devil Mama. Daddy's quit drinking they tell me.

ROSA LEE

Yes, he has.

SUE ANNE

How did he do it?

ROSA LEE

I know know. He just quit.

SUE ANNE

Did you ask him to quit?

ROSA LEE

No. He was working here and I told him he couldn't drink while he worked. At first he used to go off sometimes at night and load up, but he was always sober when it was time next morning to start work and then gradually he stopped even that.

(MORE)
ROSA LEE (cont'd)
Do you have a place to stay tonight?

SUE ANNE
Yes. We're staying at the Jeff Davis Hotel in Austin.

ROSA LEE
If you need a place to stay tomorrow night. You're welcome here.

SUE
Thank you.
(she goes)

131 EXT. - MOTEL - DAY

SUE ANNE comes out. HARRIS is asleep in the car, drunk. She gets in. She drives off. ROSA LEE comes outside. She watches the car drive away.

132 EXT. - JEFF DAVIS HOTEL - AUSTIN - DAY

MAC drives up in his truck.

133 INT. - LOBBY - JEFF DAVIS HOTEL - AUSTIN - DAY

MAC enters and goes to the CLERK.

MAC
Menefee.

THE CLERK goes to the register.

CLERK
First name?

MAC
Harris.

CLERK
Oh, they're gone.

MAC
Leave any forwarding address?

CLERK
No, sir. Do you know them?

MAC
Miss. Miss See is my daughter.
CLERK
They slipped out. They owe us a bill for a hundred dollars.

MAC
I'll play it.

The CLERK goes to get the bill.

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

A. MAC ENTERING LOBBY OF AUSTIN MOTEL

MAC
(to clerk)
Do you have a Menefee registered here?

CLERK
No, sir.

B. MAC ENTERING THE LOBBY OF ANOTHER AUSTIN MOTEL

C. MAC KNOCKING ON THE DOOR OF A SEEDY AUSTIN ROOMING HOUSE. A WOMAN OPENS THE DOOR.

MAC
I'm looking for a couple named Menefee.

The WOMAN shakes her head, "No," and closes the door.

D. INT. - AUSTIN BAR - MAC ENTERS AND GOES TO THE BARTENDER

MAC
I'm looking for a musician named Menefee. Harris Menefee. I hear he comes in here.

BARTENDER
He did. I haven't seen him in the last couple of days. He couldn't find work around here and he told me he was moving on.

135 Ext. - LOUISIANA HIGHWAY - NIGHT

SUE ANNE and HARRIS are in her car. HARRIS is driving. They are going very fast.

136 Ext. - HIGHWAY LEADING TO MOTEL - NIGHT

MAC is in his truck driving home.
137 EXT. - LOUISIANA HIGHWAY - NIGHT

SUE ANNE's car speeds down the highway.

138 EXT. - FILLING STATION - NEXT MORNING

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

ROBERT

Here it is.

(He hands it to MAC)

HENRY

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

BERTIE

They think it's going to do very well.

HENRY

Even Jake is pleased and not much pleases Jake.

MAC

Well, I'm glad you boys are pleased.

ROSA LEE

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

ROBERT

You don't have a record player?

ROSA LEE

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

ROBERT

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

MAC

All right.

ROSA LEE

I sure would like to hear it.

ROBERT and the others get in their truck. He turns the radio on.
ROBERT
Better start listening to the
radio, too. The company thinks
it should be getting some play
soon on the radio. See you later.

They drive on.

ROSA LEE
Are you excited, Mac?

MAC
Yes, I guess I am.

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

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

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

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

MAC and ROSA LEE are in the pick-up truck driving down
the highway.

MAC's plane has landed. We see him leaving the plane.

MAC in a taxi riding through the streets.

The taxi stops in front of the house. MAC gets out
with his suitcase. He pays the DRIVER. There are
several groups of friends in the yard of the house. They watch as MAC approaches. Some of them know him and go to greet him.

1ST MAN
You have my sympathy, Mac.

MAC
Thank you.

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

He takes MAC'S suitcase and starts for the house.

INT. - DIXIE'S HOUSE - DAY

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

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

MAC
Yes, it is.

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

MAC
What about Sue Anne's husband?

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

INT. - LIVING ROOM - DAY

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

(He looks at his watch)
We don't have a whole lot of
time. Come on. I'll take you
up to Sue Anne's room.

(He starts out. Mac
follows)

145 INT. - HALL DAY

HARRY enters. MAC following.

146 INT. - STAIRS - DAY

HARRY goes up the stairs, MAC following.

147 INT. - UPSTAIRS HALL - DAY

HARRY enters; MAC follows.
At the center of the hall is a closed door.

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

MAC
If she wants to see me.

HARRY
Let me go in and see how she's
feeling.
(He points to a door
at the end of the
hall)
That's Sue Anne's room in there.

He goes into DIXIE's room, closing the door behind him
after he enters. MAC continues down the hall toward
SUE ANNE's room.
She hasn't spent much time here, and there is nothing much in the room that belonged to her or had any meaning for her. MAC enters. He looks around the room. There are a few pictures on the wall of DIXIE, and one of DIXIE and HARRY. He sees a closet door. He opens it. There are a few of the girl's clothes here, mostly dresses she has outgrown. He closes the closet door. He goes to a bureau. There is a perfume atomizer, a silver brush and comb set, a jewelry box. It's empty. HARRY comes in.

HARRY
Dixie will see you. Is there anything here you want?
(Harry begins to open drawers. They are empty or half empty.
There is nothing personal in them)
There is not much here, is there?
I don't know what Dixie thought would be here. Sue Anne was never home. Maybe Christmas or Thanksgiving once in a while.
I can't even remember the last time she was here.

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

HARRY
Oh, I'll send you one.

They start out of the room.

INT. - DIXIE'S BEDROOM - THE SHADES DRAWN IN THE ROOM

DIXIE in a dressing gown is on the bed. A NURSE is seated at either side of the bed.
MAC and HARRY enter. HARRY goes over to the bed.

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

DIXIE
Where is he?

HARRY
Here he is.

(MORE)
HARRY (contd)
(He beckons Mac)
Mac, come say hello to Dixie.
She wants to see you.

MAC goes over to the bed.

ANGLE - DIXIE

DIXIE
Why has God done this to me, Mac?
Why has God done this to me? Oh, Jesus!

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

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

DIXIE
I'll tell you one thing. That Sonevabitch she married will not end up with her trust fund. I want you to call my lawyer about that, Harry. I don't want that Sonevabitch to have a nickel of that money.

(She falls back on the bed)
Oh, Jesus! Oh, Jesus! My little girl.

(She tries to get out of the bed)
Help me up. Somebody help me up. I want to see her. I brought her home to be with me one last time, and I want to see my little girl.

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

NURSE
Sh. Sh ... No, now.
DIXIE
Let go of me you Sonevabitch! Let
go of me!
(She jerks free and
tries to get out of
the bed, and then falls
back)
Oh, I can't go. I ain't strong
enough. I can't make it. Forgive
me. Forgive me for being weak.
Forgive me.
(She falls back on the
bed. She passes out)

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

They leave.

150 INT. - LIVING ROOM - DAY

There are a few friends in the room. MAC and HARRY
enter. Some of the people come over to MAC and shake
his hand. HARRY looks at his watch as the UNDERTAKER
and his ATTENDANTS come in.

HARRY
It's time to leave for the church.
(Mac and Harry step
aside as the undertaker
has the casket taken out
of the room)
You'll ride to the church with
me.

He and MAC start out of the room.

151 INT. - HARRY'S CAR - DAY

HARRY and MAC are alone in the car.

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

I guess so.

HARRY

Maybe this afternoon I can ride you around.

(a pause)

Did you bring any of your songs with you?

MAC

No.

HARRY

Did you make your recording?

Yes.

HARRY

How did it go?

MAC

All right.

HARRY

Has it been released?

MAC

Yes.

HARRY

What is the name of the company again?

MAC

Aztec.

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

152 INT. - CHURCH - DAY

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

153 EXT. - GRAVESITE - DAY

The coffin is here covered with floral arrangements. There are twenty friends at the graveside. A PREACHER holding a Bible, is near the casket
ANGLE - MAC

As he waits at the graveside.

ANGLE - HARRY

At the edge of the crowd whispering to a FRIEND.

ANGLE - MAC

As he waits. HARRY comes up to him.

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

ANGLE - PREACHER - WAITING

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

ANGLE - MAC

HARRY comes back to MAC.

HARRY
(whispering)
I thought he should know about the delay.
(Harry looks towards the entrance to the graveyard)
Excuse me.

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

MAC'S P.O.V.

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

ANGLE - DIXIE AND HARRY

As she sees MAC.

DIXIE
I saw Mac, Harry?
HARRY
Yes, Honey ...

DIXIE
Tell him to come here to me. I want him to know that I forgive him. In front of my baby's grave I want him to know I forgive him for everything he ever done to me.
(calling)
Mac ... I forgive you, because my little baby girl would want me to.

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

DIXIE
Where are we ... in church?

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

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

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

154 BACK TO MAC AT GRAVESIDE

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

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

The PREACHER nods to casket ATTENDANTS and they begin to lower the casket. DIXIE screams and faints. EVERYONE turns to her.
ANGLE - DIXIE - HARRY AND THE ATTENDANTS

FRIENDS surround them as they try to revive DIXIE.

ANGLE - MAC

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

EXT. - HOUSE AND FILLING STATION - DAY

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

ROBERT
I was very sorry to hear about your daughter.

MAC
I appreciate it.

MAC starts to fill up the car.

ROBERT
I can do that.
(He gets the gas pump and puts it in the tank of the car)
Did Rosa Lee tell you about our record?

MAC
No.

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

ANGLE - MAC

As he listens.

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

ROBERT
Have you heard it played on the
radio?

MAC
No.

ROBERT
They play it all the time.

He goes to the truck and turns the radio on.

THE ANGLE WIDENS

ROSA LEE comes around the side of the house. ROBERT
turns the radio dial until he finds a station playing
the song.

ROBERT
Here we are.
(He listens to the
song and is obviously
pleased and turns around
to see Mac's reaction.
He notices Rosa Lee then)

Hi, Rosa Lee.

ROSA LEE
Hi.

ROBERT
How does it sound to you, Mac?

MAC
O.K.

The song ends. Robert begins to turn the dial.

ROBERT
I bet I can find it again. I
heard it on three different
stations driving over here.
(Robert glances up at
Mac and then at Rosa
Lee)
I'm sorry. I shouldn't be talking
about things like this now. I
hope you'll forgive me, Mac.
It's just that I was anxious to
share our good news with you.
MAC
I appreciate it.

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

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

ROSA LEE
Thanks.

ROSA LEE takes the money.

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

ROBERT gets in the truck.

ROBERT
I'll call him when I get back.

He drives off. ROSA LEE goes around back to MAC. He goes to her.

MAC
I don't trust happiness. I think things are going all right, and then something like this happens and tears everything apart and breaks your heart.

In the distance we hear the school bus. She looks up and sees the school bus drive up the road and stop as SONNY gets off. She walks around the house to him.

SONNY
Where is Mac?

ROSA LEE
He's out back. He bought you a football. It's in your room.

SONNY goes into the house. She follows him in.

INT. - HOUSE - ROSA LEE ENTERS

She turns on a radio. The station plays MAC's record. She goes to a back window and looks out.
ROSA LEE'S P.O.V.

She can see MAC working in his garden.

BACK TO ROSA LEE AT THE WINDOW

She is about to call MAC to come and listen to the record but doesn't. She turns away from the window and turns the radio off, as SONNY comes out with his football.

ROSA LEE

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

He starts out of the room and then pauses.

TWO SHOT - SONNY AND ROSA LEE

ANGLE - SONNY

SONNY

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

ANGLE - ROSA LEE

ROSA LEE

I don't know, Honey.

SONNY

Was he killed in battle?

ROSA LEE

I don't know, Sonny.

ANGLE - SONNY

SONNY

Didn't you ever ask anybody?

ROSA LEE

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

(a pause)
He was only a boy.

ANGLE - SONNY

As he listens.

ROSA LEE (contd)
He was a good boy and I think
he was going to make a fine man
and you would have been proud of
him, and he would have been
proud of you.

157 EXT. - BACK YARD - GARDEN - DAY

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

SONNY
Thanks for the football, Mac.

MAC
That's all right.

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

ANGLE - MAC

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

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

MAC

Sonny ...

SONNY looks up at him.

MAC (contd)

Throw me a pass ...

SONNY does so. MAC runs for it, catching it.

MAC (contd)

Now, you run for this.

SONNY runs across the yard as MAC throws the football and SONNY catches it laughing with delight. ROSA LEE comes around the side of the house. She sees them and stands watching. SONNY passes the ball to MAC who kicks it then high in the air as SONNY runs for it. ROSA LEE watches.

ROSA LEE

(singing to herself)

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

MAC and SONNY continue playing football. ROSA LEE watches as overhead, high above, geese can be seen flying on their way to the gulf.

FADE OUT