

Troubadour, episode one. Synopsis

We open on an autumn day in Midway, Kentucky. It's a quaint, rural town with storefronts on either side of its iconic train-track Main Street. Café, music store, barber shop—full of townspeople and almost deceptively serene. This is Buck Seeger's home, a 30-something struggling songwriter looking for a way to support his family and remain an artist. He has an unhappy wife, Robynn and a toddler son, Buck Jr.

Buck, has tried to outsmart the declining music business, so he created a live audience radio show and, much to his surprise, it is a hit but doesn't make any money.

We find Buck at the town VW mechanic shop, bickering with the man under his old van. The VW mechanic is played by folk singer **Arlo Guthrie**. (There are recurring cameos by folk, bluegrass, country, rock, and roots musicians, lending their famous faces to roles like the opinionated mayor (**Steve Earle**) and town doctor (**Emmylou Harris**) etc.

At the same time, beautiful and weary Robynn is just trying to get home from her day job. Her small Toyota can't seem to pass a silver tour bus, carrying one man headed to Midway. The camera looms over him inside the shadows of the bus but do not see his face.

Late afternoon, Buck is in his farmhouse writing a ballad about his wife, when she walks through the door, arms full of groceries. In a scene clearly played between them many times, Robynn struggles to yank Buck from his songwriting dreamland so he can assist. He doesn't repond until she's done, and this ends with a fumble of affection met with coldness. Their marriage of six years strains under the pressure of Buck's anxiety over what to do with his career and Robynn's concerns over their financial situation.

On the road, the silver tour bus blew a tire and rolled to a stop. Barry, the mysterious stranger (**played by Barry Abernathy of Mountainheart**), gets off and begins the fifteen-mile walk to town. We see his left hand. It's mangled, missing fingers and part of his thumb.

She leaves their house for a doctor's appointment while Buck's bandmates arrive at the farmhouse for rehearsal. As the men banter and play, Robynn discusses her disappointing marriage with Doc (**Emmylou Harris**.) Robynn has news ... another baby is on the way but she hasn't told Buck.

The next day, Buck visits **Tommy Emmanuel's** Real Old-Time Instruments music shoppe. He makes a payment on a gorgeous, custom mandolin, his secret ... balancing Robynn's secret now with one of his own. Barry spends the night in the woods, taking painkillers and getting ever closer to Midway.

The next morning, Robynn helps her mother, Mrs. Smith, with the morning bustle at the family's bed and breakfast.

Later, Buck steps into his WoodSongs office, we finally see the chaos that absorbs his time. Phone calls, messages, video edits, magazine interviews. Nikki, his African American manager, informs him that they've oversold tonight's show in their little theatre. Buck shrugs her off with characteristic laissez-faire.

Townspeople notice Barry walking down Main Street. He checks into the bed and breakfast. The local radio station welcomes the Mullett Sisters onto its afternoon show. They're a hammer dulcimer duo and tonight's WoodSongs guests. Malcom, the absent-minded DJ, stumbles through a disjointed interview.

Meanwhile, back at the farmhouse as he gets ready for the nights broadcast taping, an argument between Buck and Robynn regarding a new vacuum cleaner erupts, a symptom of their declining relationship. They have money problems, she wants him to get a "real" job. Tension grows.

Barry visits the Doc for medication, who recognizes him instantly.

Evening at the Midway Theatre. The show theme song, "Colista's Jam" sets the mood for the crowd as the show starts. Anticipation and energy backstage and on as we see the inner working of a live audience radio broadcast. Robynn sits at home with little Buck, turns on the radio and listens to her husband's show.

Onstage, Buck performs "Waterfall", the song written for her. Robynn listens with both appreciation and pain. But the spell is broken when **Sam Bush** calls, revealing Buck's plan to make another album which she finds upsetting. They can not afford this plus a another baby, which she still hasn't told Buck about.

The radio broadcast ends. Another success as the audience cheers.

Afterward, Buck gets home at the farmhouse and realizes Robynn learned his secret about working on the new album. The tension increases.

Back in his dark bed-and-breakfast room, Barry places a tortured, ambiguous phone call. He writhes in anguish on the bed, a gun in his good hand staring down a bottle of whiskey.

Doc requests both Barry's and the Seeger family's medical files as she searches to confirm her hunch about Barry.

Next day, at the radio station, a DJ plays a Buck Seeger tune on the air. The station owner, Mr. Weldon, is a self-serving man jealous of what Buck created, tells him to not waste any more air-time on WoodSongs.

Robynn carries her child, Buck Jr, into the Midway Train Depot, wishful to buy a ticket and run away. As she talks to the ticket clerk, her son spies a mouse. He follows it to the edge of the tracks. As the train approaches, Robynn screams. Out of nowhere, Barry snatches little Buck from edge of the tracks.

At the radio station office, Mr. Weldon reveals his plan to restle WoodSongs' away from Buck.

Barry sits with Robynn at the train station as she recovers. He had a son, too, he tells her, but hasn't seen him for a while. Then he leaves.

Meanwhile, Doc is trying to get hold of Buck.

On a late and stormy afternoon, Robynn puts little Buck to bed and weeps. Shortly after, Buck gets back home. He hears Robynn on the phone talking to someone he doesn't know. He can tell she's talking to a man. She insists they meet again. Heartbroken and angry, Buck leaves instead of confronting her.

That night, Doc meets with Barry at the bed and breakfast and, concerned about his drinking, trades Barry a banjo she brought for his whiskey. Doc implies she knows what is going on. Barry accepts the gift.

The next morning, Buck and Robynn make plans to talk later. The marriage is in trouble and they both know it.

That afternoon, Robynn meets Barry at the train station. They discuss Buck, Barry seems to know him and calls him "a good man."

Doc meets with Buck and asks him for a huge favor: put the strange man who just came into town on the next show. She does not say who he is, just that he is an excellent musician and makes Buck promise.

The next show, the staff learns about the mystery guest. No one is thrilled; Buck is nervous but he promised Doc. The theatre is full. Robyn sits in the back row.

The band begins. A driving Bluegrass song led by Barry, the mystery guest. He plays as if missing no fingers at all, shocking and exciting the entire audience.

At the same time, Mr. Weldon sits in his dark office, at his computer. He taps the Enter key and mutters, "Boom." On the office speakers he hears the show ending as the audience calls in tandem: "Woodsongs Old-Time Radio Hour!" Mr. Weldon reads over something he just printed. He begins to laugh under his breath.

Pan to the Midway Theatre marquee.

Freeze frame.

"To Be Continued" on screen.