

Troubadour

A MOTION PICTURE SERIES

Episode Four
45 Minute Movie

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An original screenplay by
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Writers Guild of America, East

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TITLE SEQUENCE ROLLS

Theme song "Troubadour" plays

EXT. SMALL TOWN, MIDWAY KENTUCKY, IN AUTUMN - AFTERNOON

OPEN Credits roll

The MUSIC plays as the CAMERA travels through a small Kentucky town.

We see the colorful leaves of autumn, quaint Americana storefronts, a classic old time Antique shop, a wood carved sign that reads "*Welcome To Historic Midway.*"

We see a music store with guitars, mandolins and banjos displayed through a window that reads "*Midway Pickin' Parlor & Fret Haus*".

We pass a cafe filled with people in conversation and see townspeople walking the sidewalk. Another man stands outside a Wine Shop as if waiting for someone. A teenage store clerk shows a colorful, handmade quilt to a young couple across the counter.

At exactly the same instant both heads turn. The CAMERA follows their gaze to a WRY OLD MAN, his hands rough with work and age, sitting on a park bench outside a barber shop carving on a piece of wood.

CUT TO:

INT/MORNING - MAYORS WAITING ROOM

Nikki waits in the outer office of the Mayor of Midway. A street sign that says "*Copperhead Road*" a guitar and mandolin hang on the walls above the waiting couch.

SECRETARY

The Mayor will see you now.

CUT TO:

INT/LATE MORNING - MAYORS OFFICE

The mayor, played by songwriter STEVE EARLE, welcomes Nikki. He wears jeans and a denim shirt, very casual.

MAYOR

Nikki, good to see you

NIKKI

Mr. Mayor

MAYOR

Call me Steve, all my creditors do.

NIKKI

I need a favor

MAYOR

Talk to me

NIKKI

It's about WoodSongs

MAYOR

(slaps the desktop)
Best damn thing that ever happened to this town. People are pouring in from all over the country, the theatre is full every week, the businesses downtown are happy, and my daughter has decided to learn the fiddle

NIKKI

Amazing. Well, we need to create a special WoodSongs Day and give BUCK an award. Maybe a Star on the Sidewalk in front of the Theatre.

MAYOR

An award for what?

NIKKI

Well, how about everything you just listed for starters ...

CUT TO:

INT/MORNING - BED & BREAKFAST

BUCK is inside the bed and breakfast, waiting to talk to his mother-in-law and pick up his son. He looks at the pictures of his family hanging on the wall, a framed poster advertising "WoodSongs" on Saturday nights.

MRS. SMITH

I'm sorry dear, Running late! We needed to change the baby and freshen up before daddy came.

She hands Little BUCK off to his dad who gives him a big, almost intense hug.

BUCK

Do you know when Robynn is coming back?

MRS. SMITH

Not really, she just rushed out.

BUCK

Has she ... Does she have any new friends ... And stuff.

MRS. SMITH

No one that she's mentioned. Why?

CUT TO:

INT/MORNING - WOODSONGS OFFICE

Little BUCK is teething on a mini-rubber guitar, sitting up in front of his dad's desk. NIKKI is running a volunteer crew meeting. The band is present. BUCK listens to the meeting while holding a small family picture of his wife and child from his desk.

NIKKI

Now, tomorrow's show is important. We are adding four new affiliate stations plus we have a potential sponsor coming to visit.

KC

Who's that.

NIKKI

A coffee company in Virginia.

BOB

Folk music, coffeehouses ...
WoodSongs and coffee. It works.

BRYAN

Will we get free coffee?

DARTH

Next we'll need a donut sponsor.

Laughter

KC

I hear through the grapevine that
Weldon dropped the WoodSongs
tickets.

BEN

First they can our records, then
the tickets. What gives out there?
I know it's all volunteer and all,
but no money ... no protection.

HARSHA

Is the show safe?

NIKKI

Everything is fine. Remember this
is not a local show. It's on
hundreds of stations with a huge
audience. Our hometown station
either is on board or not. It won't
change our world.

BRYAN

Most of the theatre crowd is coming
in from out of town now anyway.

BOB

Yeah, but it just smacks of
something out of sync. It hurts.

BUCK

Patience, folks. Let's be patient
and do the best we can. Patience
can seem very painful and expensive
at times, but always worth it.

(MORE)

BUCK (cont'd)

Keep good artists and good music as the most important thing ... Not the local radio station.

NIKKI

Just remember, Weldon's the hometown affiliate, not the owner. It's NOT their show. We give them the show and promotion for free. Trust me, it's a goldmine for them. Anything else?

DARTH

Yeah, more good news. Two speakers have blown cones.

NIKKI

Goody. How much.

DARTH

About Fifteen hundred bucks

BUCK

Wow ... That's how much a Rainbow Vacuum cleaner would cost.

DARTH

Whatever. But the audience can't hear through a vacuum cleaner. What the heck?

BUCK

I know. Never mind. Let's check eBay, I bet it's cheaper.

CUT TO:

INT/AFTERNOON/SAME DAY - ROBYNN IN FARMHOUSE

Robynn is on the couch, phone on her ear and pad and pen in hand while the baby crawls across the cushions.

ROBYNN

Yes Operator, I'm looking for a number, I'm not sure of the first name. Last name is Abernathy ... With an A. Abernathy. Really? That many? OK, give me the first two then ...

CUT TO:

INT/AFTERNOON/SAME DAY - DOC'S OFFICE

buck walks into the doc's office. Betsy gets up from her office desk.

BETSY

BUCK, Doc's been waiting on you for two days.

BUCK

Sorry, is Rome burning down and I don't know about it?

BETSY

I'll get Doc

Doc comes out of her examination room

DOC

Son, I don't have as much time as I like. I never ask a man for more than he can give and I can't explain right now. I'm sending somebody to the theatre tomorrow. Put him on the show if you can, anywhere.

BUCK

Well, the show is already booked

DOC

Trust me and do this.

BUCK

... alright. Do I get a hint?

DOC

I got a patient waiting.

CUT TO:

INT/EVENING - BUCK & ROBYNN'S FARMHOUSE

Little BUCK is playing in his crib as Robynn finishes up the supper dishes. BUCK is working on the fireplace, getting a warm cozy glow. Robynn enters the living room.

ROBYNN
Is now a good time

BUCK
Sure. Of course.

They sit on the couch

ROBYNN
I know we've been kind of distant
with each other lately.

BUCK
Babe, I'm sorry. It's me, I know.
I'm all caught up with work and
making things right. I just feel
everything coming together, getting
closer and closer but I haven't
focused on you and the baby like I
should. I need to spend more time
at home ...

ROBYNN
Will you ... Please, hush for a
minute. No. It's not you. It's me.

She takes a deep breath

ROBYNN (cont'd)
I have something to say and I need
you to listen

CUT TO:

INT/SAME EVENING - BED AND BREAKFAST/BARRY

Barry is alone in his room. Sitting on the bed, he reaches for a bottle of whiskey, holds it for a second and then lays it back down.

He picks it back up, corks it and then tosses it in the trash. He lays back on the bed.

He gets up and walks to the banjo Doc gave him standing in a corner of the room. We watch him gently touch the fretboard and the gleaming tuning gears and strings.

He reaches into his duffle bag. In the back is a pocket. He unzips it and pulls out a thumbpick and fingerpicks. We watch him put them on.

He inhales and then lets out a long sigh ...

CUT TO:

INT/NOON NEXT DAY - MIDWAY CAFE

We are close to a customer's face, who lets out a delicious sigh. The whole table lets out a sigh.

The worlds most scrumptious hamburger is on a plate in front of him. It is on a large, homebaked lightly toasted bun, a thick piece of fire-grilled burger, the largest slices of the ripest and reddest tomatoes, the greenest lettuce and soft melted cheese cascading over the side.

CUSTOMER

These hamburgers are splendiferous!

ANOTHER CUSTOMER

I think they're resplendent!

THIRD CUSTOMER

*(holding up a cup for a coffee
refill)*

Do you make steaks this good?

TERASITA

Is not on the menu. Only hamburgers, deli sandwich and de Hot Brown. Coffee and bagel in the morning. You take de cream?

A husband rushes into the cafe

HUSBAND

Honey, I got them. The last two tickets, a fellow sold them to me on the sidewalk.

WIFE

I can't believe tickets for a national broadcast are only \$5

CUT TO:

INT/AFTERNOON - KENTUCKY THEATRE

The crew is hustling with last minute setups before sound check. Nikki is spending time with folks from the COFFEE COMPANY, showing them around and courting their sponsorship.

BUCK is going over the script with Darth and the TV Director.

DARTH

You want me to fly him in with no sound check

BUCK

I think that's what I'm saying. Look, Doc never asks for anything but she virtually begged for this.

DARTH

She realizes this is a national production, right? I mean, this isn't some local cable show.

BUCK

I know. But that's how good you are. You're the big dog. An audio monster. Darth Fader, Just set up the mic and be ready. Guess your way through it.

DARTH

I know I'm totally awesome. But you're OK with this?

BUCK

Yeah ...

He sees Robynn and BUCK come in from the back of the theatre
I'm wonderful with it.

CUT TO:

INT/INSIDE THE KENTUCKY THEATRE / EVENING

We see the audience filing into the Theatre. WoodSongs Crew
in black shirts help them find their seats.

We see the Coffee Sponsors with Nikki handing out free cups
of coffee in the lobby with fans and lobby musicians milling
around talking and laughing.

CUT TO:

INT/BACKSTAGE MIDWAY THEATRE / SAME EVENING

The crew is making last minute changes. The show guests are
tuning and nervously chatting. The backstage TV monitor shows
the audience filling the theatre.

We see the TV/Webcast director at his post with his panel of
screens, speaking directions into his headset.

AUDIENCE MEMBER

Does this theatre fill up like this
every week?

CREW MEMBER

Every single week.

AUDIENCE MEMBER

This is a folk show, Why is Vivaldi
the walk-in music?

CREW MEMBER

This is a hay-bale free broadcast

CUT TO:

INT/INSIDE THE MIDWAY THEATRE / EVENING

As the audience fills up the Theatre, we see Robynn and BUCK taking their seats toward the back of the hall.

CREW MEMBER

Aren't you going to sit up front?

ROBYNN

This is fine, thanks

CREW MEMBER

Good to see you again

Robynn looks around the hall. We see MYRA, MRS. SMITH and Nikki's husband Chester, TERASITA files in with her grown son. NIKKI welcomes her husband, kisses him on the cheek as he takes his seat.

CUT TO:

INT/BACKSTAGE MIDWAY THEATRE / SAME EVENING

BUCK and Darth get ready, they shake hands

DARTH

Don't suck.

BUCK

Don't suck.

The commotion of backstage suddenly quiets down. Attention turns to the backstage door as a dark, imposing figure fills the passageway. BUCK turns to see BARRY, holding the banjo Doc gave him.

BUCK (cont'd)
I heard you might come

BARRY
I heard you might let me

BUCK
looking at Barry's hand

How do you ... ?

pointing to a tuning room
Go get your 440 on and let's go
then. D minor. You know the song.

pauses
Have we met?

The sound of applause fills the screen, Barry doesn't respond.

CUT TO:

INT/INSIDE THE MIDWAY THEATRE / EVENING

The audience roars as BUCK and the band take the stage. Barry walks up to his mic as the opening WOODSONGS intro rolls into the audience speakers.

Robynn, from her seat turns and sees DOC enter the theatre doors followed by an unknown woman, dark hair in her 50s. Robynn and the woman make eye contact. Doc tips his hat toward Robynn.

The band powers into a hard driving bluegrass/mountain song, SHADY GROVE. Barry takes the instrumental leads with huge banjo riffs, played in REAL TIME to the camera, CLOSE on his injured hand. His skills and talent will be hypnotic if filmed right because Barry (*in real life he is incredible*) is in fact a brilliant banjo player.

After the song the audience rattles the theatre with its applause and cheering

CUT TO:

INT/SAME NIGHT - INSIDE THE WMID OFFICE

The AUDIO applause dissolves into the steady typing of Weldman's keyboard. He is behind a computer in a dark office, just the barest features of his face lit, creepy looking and mysterious.

A cigar burns on his desk making the atmosphere even more sinister.

He stares into the computer for a second and we watch him press the ENTER key of his keyboard

WELDMAN

Boom.

CUT TO:

INT/THE MIDWAY THEATRE STAGE

BUCK is ending the show. As he speaks we see Barry, His wife, Robynn, Doc and others from Midway close up.

BUCK

(to the audience)
Remember that music should be part of your life. It's OK if it's not your livelihood. You are like Vikings on a huge ocean of grassroots music. We are on a journey together, exploring, searching, uncovering the treasures that each facet of this brilliant diamond has to offer.

That's what we do here every week. That's what the WoodSongs stage is for. To encourage us to realize that the most important spotlight does not shine in some arena, but in your own home and on your own living room couch.

I'm BUCK SEEGER ... I'm a folksinger, and I'm a treehugger and we'll see you next week on

and the audience joins in

The WOODSONGS OLD-TIME RADIO HOUR

As the audience cheers as we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT/SAME NIGHT - INSIDE THE WMID OFFICE

The applause dissolves into the sound of Weldon's printer. As the paper document comes out of the roller Weldon picks it up and reads it in the starkly lit room.

As the Camera gets close, Weldon begins a quiet, under-his-breath laugh as he draws on his cigar.

The CAMERA moves from his laughter out of the office window to the MIDWAY THEATRE marquee.