

'Classic Rock'

Treatment for a Novel
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An original story
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ACT I

1986. A junior high school talent contest. A 15 year old OWEN SUTHERLAND is on stage doing a "New Kids on Block" rip-off song. He's got dancers, a light show, the works. Backstage, CHRISTOPHER SUTHERLAND urges him on, the ultimate svengali-dad-manager. Off in the wings, another group of young guys are waiting for their turn. This is the band of 13 year old LUKE, Owen's younger brother. Walken is ignoring Luke, focusing on the more talented of the two brothers.

The crowd go wild as Owen finishes his song. It's a frenzy. Luke and his band struggle onto stage and get set up with their crazy friend/roadie helping them. The emcee forgets that they're still to go on and they have to remind him. They get introduced while they're doing their tuning up. Spending an inordinate amount of time tuning up, the band piss the audience off. Finally, they start their song and the lights go out on stage. They perform their song in complete darkness. It's a complete fiasco and they're booed off the stage.

In the backstage aftermath of the talent show, with Owen holding up the trophy, with record people swarming around him and Walken, and with lots of screaming teenage girls, Luke and his band are totally forgotten. Luke is able to push thru to the record people and hand them a promo package for his group, with a totally 80's picture of the band on the cover. There's a 45rpm record within it.

While Luke is being consoled by his girlfriend, Owen comes over to rub it in to his younger brother. And ends up taking Luke's girlfriend! Walken tells Luke to get another career, there's only room for one star in the family.

Present day. In the lobby of a huge record company, a massive banner is unfurled. It is a huge head shot of Owen Wilson, pouting. The camera pans and Luke is standing there, staring as the next of three photos of Owen are unrolled. He's wearing a courier uniform. He sighs and goes over to the reception desk. LAUREN is sitting behind it. They smile at each other and make small talk while Lauren signs for the

package. Out of nowhere, JACK – the flamboyant owner of the record company, and his entourage – storms up to the front desk and grabs the package the Luke just delivered pausing only to give Luke and Lauren shit for not getting the package to him fast enough. And then he's gone.

A huge suburban storage facility. As we weave thru miles of storage lockers, we can hear the sounds of the band tuning up. When we finally find them, they have their band gear set up in a garage size locker. Luke is totally depressed. [Luke's band is made up of STEVE CARVELL on drums, WILL HARRISON on lead vocal, VINCE KLAOWICH on bass, PAUL GOTTFRIED on keys and Luke on guitar] They start their practice, playing the same song that they've been playing for the past 20 years. The song that they tried to play all those years ago at that fateful talent contest. At least they have fun doing that. STEVE KAHN is still with them as their crazy friend/roadie.

The band's old promo package is found at the record company, deep in the basement. Jack grabs the 45 as it passes him on the way to the garbage. He wants to listen to it and freaks out about not having a record player in a record company.

Jack has finally got a turntable and is listening to the 45. When it finishes, he looks up. This is it, this is the next big thing. This band is the killer. But all the contact info on the band promo package has been destroyed. Whoever finds this band, has got themselves a promotion, immediately! Lauren realizes that finding the band would be her way off the front desk.

ACT 2

The band are spending a Saturday hiding out in Vince's garage, pretending to make kayaks and drink beer, not realizing that they're almost famous. The wives and girlfriends are laughing about the talent contest story. We realize that the guys are keeping their band from their partners. Except Luke, who's single, and who has a sullen teenaged daughter.

At the record company, during a delivery, Luke gets up the nerve and asks Lauren out. She says yes and he leaves his phone number, on the back of a card from the Storage Locker place. He leaves as Jack storms up. Jack knocks a coffee over onto Lauren's desk, ruining Luke's writing on the back of the card.

Luke and the band are trying to make their way thru a crowded Tower Records but they are trapped in a line up of women,

including a couple their wives, in their mid-30's and younger. They end up at the front of the line up and looking at Owen, relaxing behind a table, surrounded by posters of himself. He's promoting a new greatest hits boxed set. The band freaks out on Owen and tear apart the event, getting kicked out of the store.

Lauren gets up the nerve to phone Luke. She's being hassled by her roomie because she's finally met someone that she might actually like. Lauren agrees. Then she looks at the card and realizes that the number is ruined. Then she turns the card over.

Lauren arrives at the storage locker place looking for Luke. The crazy old couple that run the place know who she's talking about and aim her at the bands rehearsal space. She freaks out when she comes around and hears the song – the song! – coming from the storage locker. And she's even more amazed to see Luke fronting the band that's singing it. She's found the most wanted band in America!

They don't believe her when she tells them that they're the next big thing, and figure that she must be insane. But she insists and they dig out a pristine promo package from the back of the storage locker and let her take it.

Lauren takes the promo package, still with the old pic of the band, into work. She goes up to Jack and tells him that she found the band. He explodes and, as promised, makes her their AR rep, on the spot!

Jack calls in the packaging people. He wants to know if they have any more songs; do they have any videos; who is their manager; are they really that young? She keeps lying that they have all that, and they are really that young. Jack is thrilled, but they've got to be young or they're nothing in this industry now. Lauren realizes what she's said and done and still goes with it.

Lauren quickly gets overwhelmed with the list of all the stuff that's she's got to get from/for the band. It's a list a mile long. When she flinches, Jack puts the question to her, is she able to do this or not. She says yes, absolutely. But she has doubts.

ACT 3

The band are dreaming about being famous when Lauren shows up with her list. Together, they all freak out. How are they going to get everything that's needed? What are they going to do? Lauren is their AR rep, she's not their manager. They need a manager and they need one fast! Where could they go to find a manager? As one, they all turn to look at Luke. And he realizes why they're looking at him. No, no way, he says. He's not going to do that.

The guys wait in the minivan with Lauren while Luke goes in to see his dad. They tell her the messy back story about Owen firing Walken as his manager and being estranged from his entire family.

Walken loses it when Luke tells him that he's got a band. And that he needs help on getting a manager for his group. Walken is really angry and fights with Luke, but Luke stands up for himself for the first time.

Outside, the band is hassled by the cops. Not a good sign. Lauren is starting to wonder what she's got herself into.

Inside, Walken comes around to respect that Luke is going to do what it takes. He's going to find a manager no matter what. He's going to be famous because he's already got a record deal. Walken didn't realize that and leaves the room for a moment. He comes back with a huge contract, signed by the entire band. Luke can't even remember signing it. Flashback to the band, back in Grade 9, all signing the contract backstage before that fateful talent contest. Like it or not, Luke, and the band, already have a manager.

Luke comes out with Walken to find the rest of the band, plus Lauren, cuffed and lying down on the road by the cops. Walken calms the cops down as the rest of the band politely say hello to Luke's dad like a bunch of high school kids in trouble.

Around the pool, Walken is holding court. Grilling Lauren on what they have to do first. A new recording of the song. Lauren leaves them to get back to work. Walken assures her that the band are in good hands.

Walken opens the garage door to present his personal recording studio. The ancient studio where the band recorded their 45 all those years ago. Flashback to them recording the song. Cut forward. Recording session is in progress. Walken is producing the record while Zahn mans the mixing board. Cowbells are not allowed on the song.

Later, in the house, Walken has burned the 45 onto a CD. The printer spits out a new label and jewel case for it, using the old photo's. Walken resents the new CD. It looks just like the old 45. And it sounds exactly like the old 45. The band are thrilled. Lauren is a bit confused. Walken sends the band away, he's got some calls to make to set up the video.

Lauren at work, working on marketing craziness. Jack is really pushing that the band is young, young, young, like the picture. She brings in the CD and Jack and all his fawning sycophants love it. Owen is there and is brought in to be fawned over by everyone. He gets to meet Lauren and tries to charm her.

Meanwhile the band are at work, hating their menial jobs. Luke gets embarrassed in front of his teenaged daughter while making a delivery to the local mall.

Jack is bringing his ideas to the marketing meeting, and they're pretty crazy. Lauren is seeing the whole thing slide out of her control. Video, he needs a kick ass video of the band. He can't sell them without image. Lauren smiles and says that she's on it. A video is being readied. And a photo shoot with Jacks favourite photographer. Lauren continues to smile. Of course, a high fashion photo shoot.

The band are in the garage again at Walken's. It's time to shoot a video! Walken's got a director auteur and crew from the local film school. The band gets into their 80's outfits and lip sync the song in the garage for the first half of the video.

The rest of the video shoot is around the pool - the artistic section of the shoot. The dramatic shots that don't really make any sense at all but are certainly dramatic. Lots of pouting.

Afterwards, the band are totally fried out and need to relax. Luke bails on joining them. And won't give a reason.

The rest of the band head off to try out new equipment. Making complete asses out of themselves in a huge, professional musical equipment store. The kind of place that Eddie Van Halen would come to buy guitars at.

Lauren and Luke are having dinner. He's all excited about the video shoot and the chances for the band. He confesses that he never thought that he was going to have any success, and now he is! And then Lauren confesses the lie she's told about the

band being young. Luke is really upset and storms out of the restaurant. A few moments later, he storms back in, pays for the meal, demands to be at the next meeting with Jack to explain about the band's actual age, then storms back out again.

ACT 4

Presenting the video and the package to Jack. Luke is there, but Lauren has introduced him not as a band member but as a management representative.

The video plays. Jack loves it. He absolutely loves it. Especially since they can't see that the band is actually the age that they are. It's so artfully cut that we can't see the band at all. Luke chickens out after seeing how much Jack needs the band to be young and confirms that the band is made up of young eager kids. Now he's in on the lie with Lauren.

Lauren and Luke leave the building. He's upset at himself for going along with the lie and he's totally stressed out about what the rest of the band are going to say and do when he tells them. Lauren doesn't want him to tell them, but he's got to. They're friends. And what are they going to do about the photo shoot?

The guys show up at the photo shoot with Walken and it's a huge event. Lauren meets them outside the studio and shepherds them into makeup and wardrobe before anyone can see them. Inside, Luke, a couple makeup artists and a couple wardrobe people are standing by. They've got a lot of clothes and makeup sitting around. The band looks confused. The lie is told. Walken, although not happy, rationalizes for the rest of the band, trying to help. The band, instead of freaking out, all agree mildly. Luke and Lauren exchange confused glances.

The very expensive high fashion photographer and his entourage are getting impatient. Lauren works hard to calm him down. Then the band appear. They are totally done up, like Green Day crossed with Kiss, but in a totally hip new way. They're unrecognizable. The photographer swoons. He loves them, all of them. The band pout their way thru the photo shoot.

While they're taking off their makeup Lauren gets a call from Jack. He's got them a one song spot in a new band showcase that night! Lauren jumps for joy and tells the band. The girls start putting the makeup back on.

They pile into Vince's minivan and get their equipment from the Storage facility while still in makeup. The old caretakers are quite confused. They stop to get food. Luke's daughter and her friends are at the fast food joint that they stop at. The daughters friends come over and hit on the band members. Luke is horrified and gets the band out of there quick.

Backstage at the concert. The band before them comes off stage and they are some wise ass punk kids backing up Owen. Tension between Walken and his estranged son. Owen doesn't even recognize Luke. Vince clocks one of them for being an ass. Walken repeats his rules of performance to the band. Remember, this is their first live performance in 20 years.

The band come on, and do their extended tune up thing. Zahn is on the lights. He fires up a wall of back lights that blind the audience. They also blow out the lighting system. The stage is in complete darkness. Everyone is confused. Lauren yells at them to continue. And, because they've been playing the same song for 20 years, they can play it in the dark. And they do. And the crowd like it.

Zahn gets the lights to work, just as the band leave the stage. Back stage, Lauren is congratulating them on a great show. And she has to go and meet with Jack now.

Lauren is out sitting with Jack, Owen and a lot of PR and media people. Luke watches from back stage, after removing his makeup, as Owen charms Lauren, getting her to laugh. Luke is getting more jealous.

As the band wait, the backstage door opens and there is a pile of screaming girls outside. The guys, now without makeup, immediately figure that the groupies are for them. Grabbing Luke, they head out the door. The groupies scream and charge at them. In a frenzied moment, the groupies are past and into the club. The door slams behind them. They're alone in the alley. That didn't work out as they planned. And the door is locked behind them. They can't get back in.

Jack lies to the media people that he's with that he won't let anyone meet or interview this band, they're so good. That just builds the hype even more.

On the set of the hit TV show. Owen is doing a bit part. While waiting, he's reading a tabloid magazine that has a big spread on the band. They're getting lots of buzz. The producer

spots it and grabs it from Owen. This band is newer than new? He screams for some of his people to find that band.

Power schmoozing at some sort of major restaurant or club. The deal is done with the TV producer. Intense meeting with Walken, Lauren, Luke and Jack. It's Laurens introduction to the high powered meeting and she makes a bit of an ass out of herself.

The TV show airs and the song is an instant hit on the net. It goes huge, massive, overnight.

The band are watching the show with their families, girlfriends, and when they tell everyone that they are the band and that is their song, no one believes them. That sad and tragic band from junior high school? No way, they gave that up years ago. No matter what they say, they can't get anyone to believe that it's their song on the show. Sigh.

ACT 5

The band want to celebrate and go out and tell the world. Lauren slows them down and hands out their cover histories. She needs them to be memorized. They don't like that. It's their first resistance to her. And they're elaborate cover histories that she spent a lot of time on and the band don't like having to memorize them. And they can't quit their day jobs because they can't say who they really are. What kind of fun is that?

Luke goes into the record company with a delivery and banners of his band are being unfurled. Other band member are working away at their day jobs. Their song is on every radio and they can't say anything about it.

The band goes shopping for new clothes. Lauren is fielding lots of calls and playing coy with the people who want the band. Teen Beat does a front page article on them. So does Rolling Stone and Forbes.

At Tower Records, the band, in full makeup, are doing a CD release event. A totally crazy scene. Walken is there. Luke's daughter is there - Walken's granddaughter - and is throwing herself at her dad, not realizing that it's him in makeup. Walken is trying to stop her but can't. There's a stalker that's already totally obsessed with Steve Carrell.

The band get all dressed up as the band and go out clubbing with Jack. Making the scene, then coming home and cleaning off

their makeup before anyone sees them. Almost getting caught with the makeup on. Feeble excuses. And then getting up almost immediately and going off to their day jobs.

Luke's daughter is getting frustrated with her makeup. He suggests a specific brand of mascara for her to try. She's really confused by why her dad would know that. He moves up a notch in her book when her friends really like her new look.

The band are on a late night TV show and they don't remember the back stories that they've been given by Lauren. One of them mentions his first concert experience and the host realizes that he would have been only 4 years old for it. Pained silence. Crazy Parents, huh, taking their toddler to Lollapalooza?

Backstage, they are taken to task by Lauren. And they argue with her because they don't want to do anything like that anymore, because they are big stars. But Luke backs Lauren and that starts the fissure. Accusations to Luke that he's letting Lauren control him, mean stuff like that. She's his Yoko Ono.

And the band continue to work at their day jobs. One of the guys gets too into the makeup at work and isn't really able to come up with an excuse. The tensions build because they are working during the days, and doing all sorts of stuff at night etc. Exhaustion is building. They don't look too young, no matter how much makeup. They're snapping at their loved ones. Especially Luke and his daughter.

Lauren gets fed up with the band after they show up late, and not in makeup, at a taping for Entertainment Tonight. Tensions build to the final blow out. The band fire her. They think that they've got clout enough to do that, three of them agree, but Luke isn't sure. He's in a real dilemma and has to make a decision. He picks the band, instead of his heart. He's really torn and can't go against the guys. They've been a band for most of their lives. And Lauren walks because of that. Then Luke walks out on the band. He knows he's made a mistake. The band all hate each other.

ACT 6

Jack, up in his spacious office, gets a call. He is actually cowed by whoever is on the line and agrees instantly to what is asked. We don't know but it's huge. He immediately calls Walken, panic on his face.

Lauren is working away, down at the front desk again. Walken comes in to see her. They've got to talk. He apologizes for Luke and what he said, that he's feeling bad about it. Walken says that the band need her help. The band is in pieces, Luke quit the band after what they did to her, no one is talking and she's the only one that they'll all listen to. We don't hear what the big news is when Walken tells her, but when she hears it, she freaks out with excitement.

Lauren finds Luke on a delivery. She stops him and they talk. They realize what's important while Luke makes his delivery and they kiss while the receptionist is signing.

The band don't want to listen to either Luke or Lauren until she finally breaks the news. They are up for single of the year on the MTV Music Awards and they will get to perform live!

Then they are totally good to let go of their old angers. The band tell Lauren that they're not going to wear makeup on stage anymore, no matter how hip it makes them. She's good with that, but she's not sure how that's going to go over with Jack. Actually, she's sure that Jack isn't going to like that at all. So what are they going to do?

Backstage, MTV Music Awards, Los Angeles. Jack is freaking out, where's the band? Why are the roadies [actually the band, without their makeup] still on stage? The show is live! Lauren tells him the truth and Jack freaks out. Before he can do anything, the band is introduced, the crowds is screaming, the lights come on and there is a sudden shocked silence when the band is seen without makeup.

Their families are at home watching the music awards when the band come out without their makeup on. Freak outs from homes. My dad is cool! Luke's daughter, who's covered her walls with pics of the band and her dad in makeup, faints. Owen is in the audience and doesn't realize that it's his brother on stage.

The band forge ahead and play their song and turn the crowd around to them. It's a huge success and they finish to a standing ovation.

They run off stage into the fury of Jack. He's so mad that they lied to him, he's ready to fire them, but the cheering is still going on. He knows not to get rid of a good thing. So he'll keep them. But what they've got to do is get back in to the studio and get another song produced, fast.

Silence from the band. Confusion from Lauren, Walken and Jack. The truth comes out that the band only have one song. They've never written another song. What kind of a band has only one song?!?

Later. The band are goofing around in their storage locker rehearsal space. Lauren wanders up. She's been fired from the record company. And she's ok with that. Wasn't much of a surprise after the band was fired. The stalker, without all her young makeup, is there with Steve. If only they had more songs, things would be different, they sigh. Zahn looks up, confused. They need songs? He's got hundreds, that he's been recording all by himself. They can have all of them, if they want.

A Tower Records CD release event, the band are there for real. Luke's daughter is there, working the crowd with Lauren. The crowd are normal, polite, and really like the music of the band. Lauren gets a phone call, they've got a tour!

They're doing their live concert in Slovenia, Will's in white tux with tails, at the grand piano, doing the start of their power ballad. Owen is in the crowd, still not recognizing his brother up on stage.

The End

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