

'MUSIC INC'
Treatment for a Novel
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Based on an original story
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Hordes of people are pushing against a table at a media event. Camera flashes, television cameras. The couple at the table are unrecognizable. Sounds of a rock and roll band come up, they're playing live to a large and very appreciative audience.

The band, '**MUSIC INC.**', are in full control of a huge, packed dance floor. The band is made up of: **ANDREW** - lead singer and lead stud; **MATT** - lead guitar, a nice looking, slightly serious guy; **ALEX** - bass guitar and all round good guy; **LUKE** - drums although he looks more like he should be modeling rather than in a rock band; and **VIOLET** - keyboards, a beautiful girl. They're all having a great time and the audience, all rowdy, drunk Australians, appreciate them. They finish their last set but the crowd won't let them leave. Another fantastic song and finally they race off the stage to extended cheers.

As the band settle into a couple cases of beer in their dressing room, the roadies start the take down. **STUMPIE** - so named because of his one arm; **ERIC** - the new kid; and **BRADY** - a serious university student, totally out of place.

Back stage, Andrew tries to make his way through a hallway full of groupies all willing to do anything for him to sleep with them. He evades them all and makes it into the safety of the dressing room. Well, the safety of a huge party. Front and center, Violet is telling a TV reporter her thoughts about being a woman in the world of rock. She's pretty cynical about the whole thing, until she gets herself another beer.

At the back of the club, while the bouncers wake up the unconscious, as the roadies drink heavily and take down their equipment, the venue manager is talking with **TOM**, the band manager, a cool middle aged American. Despite the carnage, it was a great night and the band is wanted for some additional bookings.

As the band head off to a industry party, Violet high on cocaine, the roadies load up on beer and drive off to set up the next gig. That's their life, drive, work, party, drive.

The next morning, Tom has to try wake everyone from their

excesses. The band slowly wake up, trying to come too in time to make their bus. The roadies, on the other hand, have left their room in a total shambles, with a unconscious woman sprawled on the bed. Tom sighs, and leaves, he doesn't want to know. Once everyone is inside their tour bus, Tom gets on the way. Violet is suffering the worst for the previous night.

The roadies arrive at their next gig and start setting up, Eric always getting in trouble with Stumpie for doing things wrong. On the road, Violet is fortifying herself with some assorted pills to get her through the trip.

The band arrive to find the roadies in their already thrashed hotel room, watching porno videos, and drinking. Brady is trying to study in the corner. He isn't having much luck.

Before that nights gig, Violet heads off to do some cocaine. She's becoming quite dependent on the stuff to get her through. After another great show, the band load into the bus and head off to their next gig. The pressure of the tour is getting to Violet, and everyone else.

After the next show, the band cool down in the roadies dressing room, indifferently watching pornos and drinking. Violet is trying to sleep in the adjacent room. Eric is fucking a groupie on the top of the bunk bed behind everyone. No one cares. As a food fight erupts in the roadie room, Violet secretly takes a couple more pills to get her to sleep.

The next morning, Tom goes into the roadie room to find everyone still awake. Stumpie opens a beer and heads out to the truck to start driving. Tom just stares after him. Once in the truck, Stumpie hands out pills to Eric and Brady, washing them down with beers. They've got a long way to go today.

Later in their drive, Stumpie rolls the truck, trying to open a beer, change the porno video and drive. They're all fine, except for Brady's broken arm, but they're trapped in the middle of nowhere with only one case of beer.

At the gig, the band mill about, bored, while the manager talks to Tom. Where's their equipment? The show starts in fifteen minutes. Tom distracts the manager with old stories of working with the Stones until Stumpie wanders in. The roadies are totally calm about their accident and meander off to get some beers and start setting up. Meanwhile, the venue is totally packed, everyone getting impatient waiting for Music Inc. The roadies get the equipment set up, mostly. Violet, nervous, loads up on cocaine. The band take the stage to a totally impatient, drunken

unforgiving crowd. It takes a while but they get everything working.

Later on in the show, the drum kit collapses, sending the drums sliding towards the stage. Matt is just able to prop them up and keep playing. Andrew slips and tears a huge hole in his pants from crotch to knee, yet continues to sing while keeping himself in his pants. The song continues until a groaning sound occurs and Alex disappears thru the stage. At the back of the audience, Tom is talking to a smooth looking guy, **CLIVE**. They watch in amazement as the band continues the song, even with Alex stuck under the stage.

After the show, while they laugh off the worst show of their careers, Tom arrives to tell them that the A&R guy for Hysteria Records, Clive, was at the show. The band freak out, it was their worst show ever, but it turns out that Clive liked what he saw and wants to talk record deals.

While Tom and Clive meet, Luke spends time at home with his cute six year old son and his wife, a magistrate. It's a day off for the band, first one in a long time. Violet and Matt hang out, working on a song, creating another hit. Alex spends the day on the beach with beautiful girl and Andrew, he spends the day posing in front of the mirror, working on his moves. At Tom's meeting, Clive sets down the deal. He wants the band doing showcase performances every night, and in the studio recording demos during the day. Tom is worried the band will crack from the pressure but agrees. A record deal is worth it.

That night, Andrew heads out to the clubs, looking to be spotted. Stumpie and Eric go to a massive roadies party, with a live band, made up of roadies. No band members allowed. Brady tries to study, grossing out his roommate with the habits he's learned from time on the road with Stumpie. Alex and the girl from the beach, **JANE**, hang out, having a good time.

Band meeting. The band all goof around while Tom tries to tell them about his meeting with Clive. They're all pretty excited until they find out about the days in the studio, the nights in concert followed by a large tour starting right after that. But they all agree. A record deal is worth it.

The next day, the band arrive in the studio for their first day of recording. That night, at their sound check, Violet is showing the tension of a full days work and lashes out at the band, when they rib her about making a mistake. The next long day in the studio ends with Violet heading off to the toilet to powder her nose. She returns, full of energy to find out that their evening

gig has been moved up. They're going to only have an hour between leaving the studio to being on stage. Violet freaks out and the guys have to calm her down in front of Clive and another guy from the record company, **TRENT**. That night, after a long and exhausting show, Violet can't sleep and has to pop some pills to get her to sleep. She's becoming really dependent on her pills and cocaine.

Tensions are running high in the studio the next day. Violet is on the brink of breaking. Clive is pressuring Tom to get the demos done faster, but Matt won't compromise his music. Violet takes a moment and does some cocaine. They're getting her parts down on tape, despite how wired she is. But Clive is watching.

That night, Matt is supporting an unstable Violet. He's taken her cocaine, despite that she's totally burnt out, totally exhausted and after this show and next day in the studio, they head off on a twelve day tour. Violet barely makes it thru the show then freaks on Matt afterwards for taking her cocaine. She storms out.

Last day in the studio and Violet isn't there. She hasn't shown up yet. Clive is waiting impatiently. He tells Tom the record execs want the keyboards redone. But Violet isn't here! Clive doesn't care, Trent is here and he's one of the best session keyboardists in the city. Tom realizes he's been snookered. But the rest of the band freak out when they see Trent setting up his equipment. But they can't do anything about it, except get Trent to do the songs exactly like Violet would and hope she doesn't notice. Everything is going fine, until Violet stumbles in and sees Trent. She freaks out and races from the building, Matt racing after her.

Matt catches up to Violet outside the studio, in the rain. She freaks on him, accuses him of conspiring to kick her out of the band, and races off. Matt gets up out of the mud and goes after her. Inside, Alex has taken over, ensuring Trent plays the songs just like Violet. At Violet's apartment, Matt continues to be hit with a physical and verbal assault from her.

That night, at their gig, everyone is trying to get hold of Violet and Matt. Meanwhile, Matt is trying to help Violet as she comes down off all the drugs in her system. Having no luck, Tom turns the remaining band members. Have they ever jammed as a three piece? They've got a huge problem.

As Alex, Luke and Andrew try to figure out what they can play, Stumpie tries to keep the audience from destroying the building. Finally, they can't wait anymore and the three take the stage. Weakly, nervously, they start into 'Faith' by George Michael, one

of the few songs that Andrew can play on the guitar. Everyone is holding their breath, waiting to see if the audience kill the band. But through the crowd, two people make their way to the stage. It's Violet and Matt! Eagerly, they get pulled up onto stage and the real 'Music Inc.' kick into a fantastic song. Everyone is completely exhausted but they have forgotten all the bad stuff and are just playing together. This is what they love to do. And the audience know it.

After the show, everyone is celebrating in the dressing room. Violet suddenly stands up and tells everyone that she's got to leave, leave the band, for good. The lifestyle is going to kill her if she doesn't. Everyone is completely unprepared for this and their emotions all show as she hugs everyone and leaves, eyes full of tears. A moment later, the door opens and Tom jumps in, Hysteria Records has signed them!

Violet spends her days at home, doing nothing. She cuts herself trying to find a cup in her full kitchen sink. Tom stops by to try talk to her but she just slams the door in his face. Meanwhile the band continues. But nothing's the same. They start their tour, really missing Violet. At their sound check for their first gig, Clive shows up with Trent in tow. Say hello to their new keyboardist!

That night, after a lacklustre gig, the boys in the band settle Trent down in the adjacent room. In the middle of the night, the roadies arrive, ready to party. Trent can't get out and is trapped in the roadie's party. Motto - party, or die.

Violet is suffering, she's trying hard to find something to do, some way to sleep, but nothing works.

The band are still messing with Trent. Tom is furious, they have to untie him and let him be part of the band unless they want to say goodbye to their brand new record contract. The band sigh and let Trent go.

A few months later, the band including Trent are trying to rehearse their new songs. But Trent is adding all sorts of flourishes to the songs, changing them from 'Music Inc.' songs. Tensions are running high. Trent knows that without him, they don't have a contract.

Tom returns to Violet's. This time, she lets him in. While he cleans up, Tom suggests a rehab center he knows of. But Violet can't afford anything right now, she doesn't know how to do anything but play piano... Tom tells her, he'll pay for everything, out of his pocket, not the bands. She starts to cry,

the band is her only family.

And the band continues. Matt is having trouble writing new songs and there are some new roadies, really macho assholes. Stumpie is ripping them to shreds while working the shows. Eric and Brady are gone. With Trent's new pop songs, the audiences are changing, younger, more teeny bop. The rest of the band don't like the change.

One night, in the middle of a gig, Jane, Alex's friend, shows up and requests an old 'Music Inc.' song. Alex tells Matt and they break into it, leaving Trent behind. The older fans love it and take over the dance floor. After the show, Jane and her friend make their way past the new roadies only to find Trent flipping out on Matt and Alex for not playing the songs on their play list. Before it gets too violent, Alex sees the girls, grabs Matt and the four of them leave.

Violet has started her rehab, sitting up on a stage, telling the rest of the 12 step program about her addiction to cocaine. Meanwhile, the band is in the studio again, this time to cut an album. Their producer has listened to all their demos, the bands and Trent's, and has decided on what songs they'll record. Unfortunately, most of them are Trent's song. Tom tries to reassure Matt, either they do it this way or they all quit right now and become accountants. Matt grits his teeth and sits back down.

Matt gets home to find a letter he sent to Violet returned, not at this address. He can't write anymore. He doesn't know what to do so he goes over to talk to Alex. Jane is just leaving and he is able to spill his guts to Alex. He's been writing to Violet but now she's gone and he doesn't know where she is. And now, now he can't write music, lyrics anymore. And he doesn't know what to do. Depressed, he leaves, walking down the street in an evening rainstorm. But as he walks, an idea strikes him. A song. The song starts, 'Fade Away'. He rushes home and starts working on it, with his home four track studio. Meanwhile, Violet is in a hospital common area, playing bright songs on a stand up piano for the patients. She is looking pretty good.

In the studio, Matt nervously plays the song for their producer. Can he still write? It's good, good enough to be on the album, one of Trent's songs will be dropped.

At the record release party, Clive holds court, leading Trent in the questions from the press. Their first single is heading up the charts. At the other end of the boat, the rest of the band drink and goof off.

The band are on 'Beatbox', a popular 'American Bandstand' type show. It's five months later and their album is still selling well. A couple hit singles and the latest is 'Fade Away'. They've got a pretty good gig going, but Trent is still making life hard for the other guys.

Life is treating them well. Everyone but Trent are enjoying an afternoon beside Luke's pool, drinking beer. Only then do they find out that Luke is married and that the six year old running around is actually his kid. No one knew! He confesses to Alex, he's only doing this for the money, he was about to quit, when they went into the studio, but Alex pulled everything together so Luke didn't quit. Alex doesn't know what to say.

Later, after many beers, Eric arrives at the party, fresh off a tour with AC-DC. With him is Brady, who's now a high school music teacher. Everyone has a great laugh and the party continues.

Back at Alex's place, Jane is lounging, reading Alex's journals. She is totally engrossed and wants to know what happen next. Alex doesn't know.

At the next show, Andy spots Violet at the back of the audience. Excited, he takes Matt's guitar and gives Matt the mic for the next song, Matt's song for Violet, 'Fade Away'. And they sing it, putting all their emotions into it. Violet can't hold back the tears and walks away, not looking back. Up on stage, the band can't go after her, they can't leave.

Later in the gig, Trent moves out from behind the keys with a portable keyboard and takes over at the lead mic. Andrew is left doing nothing and so he semiconsciously heads off the stage. From back stage, Andrew leans out to survey the crowd. A young man is staring at him with total adoration in his eyes. Andrew is confused but flattered with this.

After the gig, while Trent indulges a crowd of teenybopper fans, Andrew ponders his life while the rest of the band wonder about Violet, how is she, what was she doing there? But there aren't any answers and so everyone leaves. Tom reminds them, be at the airport by 1 PM, and they can each bring a friend. They're in the big time now.

Andrew is the last to leave the building, outside, waiting for him is the young man. Andrew has to make a monumental decision. He does, letting the door slam behind him.

The next morning, Alex gets a call from an old girlfriend, she's

just tested positive for HIV. He quickly rushes over to Jane's house to tell her. She's really upset, it's a two week wait until test results are back. She's angry at him, and isn't ready for her life to be over.

At the airport, Alex finds out that Matt and his girlfriend had a big fight and are over. Andrew is deep in thought, thinking about what might happen to his life. Alex is just trying to be calm. Off in the distance, Trent and Clive enter the airport. It seems they're a secret couple, and they're worrying about their cat.

The tour begins, show after show. Meanwhile, Violet has made a decision. In the tour bus, Matt and Alex try to figure out what's happening in their lives. Where is Violet? Are Alex and Jane going to be ok? Why doesn't Trent fall in front of a bus?

Before their next show, while Matt and Alex are actually joking around with Andrew, goodnaturedly, Tom walks in with Violet. She's back. Tom's willing to take the heat, but he feels Violet should play with the band tonight. Everyone is completely thrilled, their family is back together again!

And the show is fantastic. Tom and the audience are juiced up, Clive and Trent less so, but they have to admit, the band is good. But, Clive mutters, how much excitement can Violet take in her weakened state?

At an after gig party in a swank apartment, Violet tries to remain calm, drinking her Coca Cola, straight. Everywhere she looks, someone has some sort of drug or booze. It's hard to be straight. Really hard. Some guy that Violet screwed around with in her drug days tries to chat her up, offering her cocaine and won't believe her when she says no. It takes Matt, Alex, Andy and Luke to get him to join them outside, with Stumpie. Once Stumpie finds out what the guy has been up to, he breaks his nose and leaves him gasping for breath on the balcony, then returns to his beer.

Violet is in the kitchen, talking with Alex when Jane shows up with their test results. Negative! Both of them! Alex is caught up in the moment and pops open a bottle for champagne. Violet sighs, takes another can of Coca Cola out of the fridge and leaves.

On the couch, she's offered more cocaine, this time from a nice girl. She tries to get away from everything but ends up hiding in the bathroom, crying. The girl with the cocaine comes in and joins her. As the girl talks, she starts cutting up her cocaine. Violet watches intently. The girl talks about being in control, about taking charge. Exhausted, Violet believes what she says and

does the cocaine.

Outside in the party, Clive arrive with Trent and a case of champagne. He makes eye contact with the girl who gave Violet the cocaine and smiles. Violet bounces out of the bathroom, obviously wired. As Clive tries to make a speech, the band try to keep Violet from making a scene, but they can't and she keeps interrupting Clive. He just lets her dig her own grave, covering her over with an announcement from Hysteria Records. They are willing to keep the band under contract but only with Trent as keys. If Violet rejoins the band, they will cancel the contract. Violet storms out of the party, as she realizes no one jumped to her defense. Clive has won.

Matt races after Violet, arriving at her apartment building and heading up to her apartment. Inside, he finds her washing dishes in the kitchen. Gasping for breath, he sits down and listens while she talks to him. Everything she's wanted, she's destroyed. She can't fight it anymore, she can't carry on like this. She sighs and looks down into the sink. Matt looks down with her. The water is turning a bright red. Violet has slit her wrists. Matt lunges over the counter as she slips down to the floor, blood spurting across the kitchen. Matt cradles her, trying to stop the blood flow, screaming at her not to die. He grabs the phone and dials 911. Can they get there in time to save her?

The media event from the beginning. It's a book launch. The couple behind the table are Alex and Jane. They are seven years older and looking good, but not rock and rollers. Posters hang behind them advertising a book. Alex's book, '**MUSIC INC. The story of a working rock and roll band**'. Alex finally made it, but not in the band. He signs a book for a lady. She remembers seeing the band when she was young. Alex tells her that Trent and Matt are all who's left, touring, playing all the old hits. The woman asks about Violet, but Alex has to confess he doesn't know where she is. The woman leaves the table and Violet is standing there, with her young son. Alex opens up a book and starts writing. The book is already dedicated, 'To Violet, who faded away'.

Violet takes the book from him and asks, 'Does it have a happy ending?' Alex looks up at her and shakes his head, no it doesn't. Violet smiles and walks back into the crowd, holding her son's hand. Once more, Alex can't leave, but can only watch her go. He sits at the table, memories of his band, their band, the good times, before Trent, before Clive. These are the greatest moments of 'Music Inc.', not the fame, not the money, just the love and their music.

THE END

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Complete soundtrack is available upon request.
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