

Two Weeks and a Briefcase

"Day One"

ACT

FADE IN:

INT. ATLANTIC CITY BOARDWALK - EVENING

The surf pounds the beach. The last bits of sunlight are leaving. On a bench facing out toward the ocean, sits ELVIS COSTELLO JOHANSEN. He is disheveled and dirty. He's clearly slept in these clothes. A few days growth of beard is on his face. He stares out at the ocean.

ELVIS (V.O.)

A week ago, I had a life.
It wasn't much of one,
but it was mine.

Elvis narrates over the following.

INT. CBGBS NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

A YOUNG ELVIS COSTELLO, the famous musician, is finishing a set on stage. He goes over to the bar where a young couple is waiting for him. They are supremely excited.

ELVIS (V.O.)

I'm not named after *the*
Elvis. I'm named after
Elvis Costello. My
parents were big fans.
Family legend goes that
they helped him write
"Everyday I Write The
Book".

The lyrics to the song are scribbled on a napkin that Elvis Costello gives to the couple, along with his autograph.

INT. HALLOWEEN PARTY - NIGHT

YOUNG ELVIS COSTELLO JOHANSEN is at a kid's costume party. Everyone else is dressed as super heroes, clowns, princesses. He is dressed like Elvis Costello and carries a toy guitar.

ELVIS (V.O.)

I was Elvis Costello for Halloween seven out of the ten times I actually wore a costume for Halloween. Everyone always thought I was Buddy Holly.

The other kids look at Elvis funny.

ELVIS (V.O.)

I'm just going to skip over most of the childhood trauma stuff and get to here-

EXT. CHURCH - AFTERNOON

The doors to the church burst open and teenage Elvis and JANICE erupt out into a hail of rice.

ELVIS (V.O.)

Because this is where it gets good. Sort of.

Elvis smiles the most brilliant genuine smile ever. Janice looks quite polite. Wedding guests line each side of the steps. The GROOMSMEN, dressed in their letterman jackets and black ties, finish coating the honeymoon limo in shaving cream.

ELVIS (V.O.)

Maybe we did get married too young. But Janice and I were in love. Crazy, hot love. What can I say? Obama was just

Elvis (cont.)
elected. The world was
full of possibilities.

INT. LIMOUSINE - CONTINUOUS

Elvis and Janice giggle as they fall into the
lush seats of the limousine.

ELVIS
Wow, we did it! I love
you.

Suddenly Janice becomes very serious.

JANICE
You understand the plan
right?

ELVIS
Of course.
(sweetly)
I love you.

Elvis tries to start the honeymoon right there
but Janice pushes him back.

JANICE
We're out in the real
world Elvis. We have to
make something of our
lives.

INT. BURGER JOINT - NIGHT

Elvis works in the kitchen, flipping burgers. A
grease-stained picture of Janice is pinned up
above the fryer.

ELVIS (V.O.)
Janice's plan was for me
to work hard and earn
money to put her through
business school.

He looks up at the picture and smiles.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Janice furiously takes notes in class.

ELVIS (V.O.)

When she graduated and was able to start her own business- either an online auction drop off or something involving nanotechnology- then she'd help put me through school.

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Elvis and Janice are decorating their first apartment. He holds the now framed lyrics napkin. He finds the perfect spot for it on the wall. He picks up a hammer and nail and just as he is about to drive the nail into the wall, a whole chunk of the wall plaster falls apart. Elvis looks stunned. Janice rolls her eyes.

ELVIS (V.O.)

Our first apartment was a perfect first apartment. Life was simpler then. No one had even heard of 'chia seeds or 'kale.'

INT. PHOTO STUDIO - DAY

Elvis and Janice pose for a portrait together. She sits smiling while he stands behind her, beaming.

MONTAGE -

We see Elvis, still posed, dressed for various jobs: construction worker, fast food worker, security guard, orderly, pizza delivery guy, wearing a Haz-Mat suit, janitor, telemarketer, birthday clown. All the while, Janice smiles politely and Elvis beams.

ELVIS (V.O.)
I tried my hand at just
about everything, but
somehow I always ended up
back here.

INT. DONUT SHOP - DAY

Elvis works the donut fryer. The picture of Janice is now even more covered in grease. He uses his thumb to try to wipe the grease away but just ends up smearing the picture.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Janice and some friends from class enjoy drinks after a long cram session.

ELVIS (V.O.)
Sometimes it seemed that
her schoolwork was just
as hard as my soul
crushing minimum wage
labor. It kept her out
late sometimes. Well, a
lot of the times.

INT. SUSHI BAR - NIGHT

Elvis assists the lightning fast SUSHI CHEF. An order for tempura comes and Elvis dutifully goes to the fryer. A new framed picture of Janice rests on a shelf above it. With a dramatic flourish the chef slams his knife down. This causes the shelf to shake and the picture of Janice falls into the tempura fryer. Instinctively Elvis reaches for it.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

A silhouette of a man and a woman are seen embracing in the window of Elvis and Janice's apartment.

ELVIS (V.O.)

For us it was hard to
spend quality time
together, especially on
nights like this.

INT. SUSHI BAR - NIGHT

Elvis sits on a stool as a waitress applies bandages to his fingertips. The chef scolds Elvis in both Japanese and English for putting his hand into the tempura fryer. Busboys stand to the side laughing.

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Janice is grabbing anything of value and putting it into bags, boxes, and suitcases. She keeps checking her watch as if time is running out.

EXT. NEWS STAND - NIGHT

Elvis sees a "Rolling Stone" magazine with Elvis Costello on the cover. He picks it up and smiles. He grabs a bundle of mixed flowers from the stand as well. He goes to pay and sees a HOMELESS MAN sitting despondently on the curb. He rattles a styrofoam cup at passersby but no one deposits anything. Elvis looks torn.

ELVIS (V.O.)

People get a run of bad
luck sometimes and who
knows where they end up.

He puts the magazine back on the rack and puts the extra bills in the styrofoam cup. As he starts to walk away with the flowers, he glances behind and sees the homeless man purchase the magazine. Elvis stops.

ELVIS (V.O.)

I don't know how to feel
about that.

The homeless man immediately starts tearing pages from the magazine. Slowly, methodically, obviously part of some psychosis.

ELVIS

Well, that's not cool.

His shoulders slump a little. Realizing he has no time for this, he rushes off.

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Janice looks around the well-picked over apartment. A nicely dressed MAN, quite a bit older than her, points toward the wall and the nicely framed napkin.

JANICE

No that's Elvis's.

She stares at the lyrics for a moment and shakes her head.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Janice and the man leave the apartment building. She checks her watch and smiles; she has beat the clock.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Elvis runs down the sidewalk, flowers in his bandaged hand. He looks at his watch and tries to run faster. As he rounds the corner to his place, he slams into a hot dog cart and hits the sidewalk hard. His eyes flutter as he is about to lose consciousness. He gets a brief blurry look at Janice as she walks away, not noticing him.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Elvis lies in the hospital room, now with a bandage around his head. His MOM and DAD, old hipsters, enter the room. She is in tears and he holds a letter and a manila envelope.

ELVIS (V.O.)

My first thought was that
it was a letter telling
me I couldn't walk again.
Then I realized, they
probably don't tell you
that kind of thing in a
letter.

His dad hands Elvis the 'DEAR ELVIS' letter from
Janice. Elvis reads the letter holding it in his
bandaged hand. He looks stunned and surprised.
He turns to his parents and looks for more
information. There is none.

DAD

Baby, let's leave the boy
to reading and thinking;
he's got a heart-shaped
bruise.

He hands Elvis the manila envelope. His parents
leave. After a moment Elvis opens the envelope
and finds divorce papers.

MONTAGE -

Janice in a sports car, on a plane, on a
cigarette boat, Janice showering in diamonds and
pearls as PRINCE struts around her with a guitar.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - EVENING

A few days have passed. Elvis is waiting by the
curb in front of his apartment. A car pulls up.
Some of the groomsmen from the wedding are
inside. One even still wears his lettermen's
jacket.

ELVIS (V.O.)

As soon as I got out of
the hospital, my friends
decided to throw me a
re-bachelor party.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAWN

The car returns to the curb now several hours later. The inhabitants of the car are quite drunk and happy. The groomsmen deposit Elvis onto the street. He waves cheerfully to his friends as they swerve away. As soon as he turns to go back to his building, two THUGS appear and pull a gun on him. They demand money and Elvis pulls out his pockets and shows them an empty wallet.

ELVIS (V.O.)

Oh, just wait. It gets worse.

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Elvis leads them inside his empty apartment. Elvis goes to set his keys down on an end table that is no longer there. The two thugs are disappointed. One takes his coat. The other takes his belt. Elvis's pants fall down around his ankles. The thugs run away.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Elvis tries to chase after them, but trips over his pants. The door to the apartment closes and he is locked out. He stumbles down the hall, constantly tripping.

ELVIS (V.O.)

In my drunken state, it made perfect sense to try to find Mr. Rosario, the Super, and get him to unlock my door for me. I didn't count on Mrs. Rosario having to leave for work so early in the morning.

MRS. ROSARIO, an extremely matronly woman, exits her apartment. She sees the drunken, de-pantsed Elvis stumbling toward her. She screams.

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY

Elvis sits in a holding cell, head in his hands.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Elvis approaches his apartment door and sees the eviction notice.

ELVIS

Luckily, I escaped an assault charge and after explaining things to the Rosarios and the police, I ended up with just an eviction.

Elvis opens the door.

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - LATER

Elvis stands in the center of the empty apartment, holding his gym bag of clothing and his framed napkin.

ELVIS (V.O.)

She took everything, except for the money that was in our joint checking account. Which after I paid bills and rent and bail, totaled forty-six dollars and twelve cents.

As he leaves he sees that Janice has left a Polaroid of the two of them on the fridge. He grabs the picture and puts it in his pocket.

EXT. APARTMENT. BUILDING - DAY

Elvis is standing outside the apartment building. Around him, happy people walk. The sun is

shining. Dogs frolic with their masters. Birds sing songs of joy.

ELVIS (V.O.)

This is as bad as it gets.

A bus pulls up with a large ad on the side. "Atlantic City: This is as good as it gets."

INT. RECORD SHOP - DAY

Elvis is at the counter with CHIP, the store owner. Chip examines the napkin.

CHIP

No way.

ELVIS

You don't want it?

CHIP

I don't know. Is it real?

Chip takes it out of the frame and examines it closer.

ELVIS

You know the story. Family legend goes that my parents helped him write-

CHIP

Yeah, yeah.

ELVIS

What would you give me for it?

CHIP

This thing is priceless. I tell you what. Three hundred.

It pains Elvis.

INT. TOUR BUS - AFTERNOON

Elvis sits on a bus filled with elderly Jews on their way to Atlantic City for a fabulous weekend. They sing Neil Diamond's "Love on the Rocks".

He looks at his receipt for the bus ticket, forty six dollars and twelve cents. Elvis takes out the picture of him and Janice. An old matron next to him just pats his hand and smiles.

EXT. BOARDWALK - EVENING

Elvis sits on the bench. He takes out the three hundred dollars.

ELVIS (V.O.)

Here I am.

He gets up from the bench and heads toward the flashing lights.

EXT. KING HORSE CASINO - NIGHT

Elvis stares up at the lights of the sign.

ELVIS (V.O.)

I knew this was the time.
This was where it was all
going to change. Right
here. Right now.

Elvis marches inside.

INT. KING HORSE CASINO - CONTINUOUS

Elvis strides across the casino floor. He changes his three hundred dollars into chips and continues to a roulette table.

ELVIS

All on red.

Elvis puts his chips on the table. The wheel is spun.

ELVIS (V.O.)

This is it. Right now.
This is the part of the
movie where the hero's
luck changes.

The ball falls on the black.

ELVIS

What! No! That's not
what's supposed to
happen!

His chips are swept away. The crowd stops and
watches. A security camera catches his tirade.

ELVIS

Spin it again! Spin it!

Soon, two security GUARDS swoop in behind him and
pick him up. These are big dudes.

ELVIS

That was everything I
had! Just give me
another spin! Spin me
right round! Baby, right
round!

EXT. KING HORSE CASINO - CONTINUOUS

The two guards toss Elvis out onto the sidewalk.
He lays crumpled on the ground. Passersby just
step around him. He looks up and sees something
shiny in the street in front of him. He crawls
toward it.

Cars honk and skid to a stop. Drivers shout at
him. He gets to the shiny object. It is a
nickel.

ELVIS (V.O.)

Remember what I said
before about "this is the
moment where the hero's
luck changes"? Forget

ELVIS (cont.)
that. THIS is the moment
where it changes.

Elvis picks up the nickel and runs back inside.

INT. KING HORSE CASINO - CONTINUOUS

Elvis breezes by the two guards. He runs toward
the nickel slots. They chase him.

He darts through the aisles of slots. They
corner him but he slips away. He makes it to a
slot and puts the nickel in.

ELVIS (V.O.)
This is the luckiest
nickel ever.

He pulls the arm. It starts to spin.

The guards get to him and grab him but he holds
tight to the slot machine. A security camera
watches the scene.

The wheels begin to slow. The first one stops
with a hard clank. A cherry. The second one
stops with another clank. Another cherry. The
third slows.

ELVIS (V.O.)
Here it is. My fortune.
My luck. My opportunity.
I am a winner.

Clank. Plum.

ELVIS
No!

The guards tear his hands off and drag him away. He goes limp
in their arms.