

THE ALBUM

by

Edward Shine & Frankie Shine

nihongiga@gmail.com

BLACK

A low electrical hum. It grows louder.

A CRACK of electricity --

INT. PUB - STAGE - NIGHT

-- as a jack plug slots into an amp.

CRACK. A jack slots into a guitar.

On stage, a WOMAN straps on the guitar and strums it.

This is PRUDENCE (26). Years of gigging have made her lean and tough, but she still retains the striking look of a romantic artist.

A few students are scattered about the pub, drinking. They pay her no attention.

The MC (40's), an ageing rocker with a comb-over, hops up on stage.

MC

Ready to rock?

Prudence looks back at the drum kit -- no drummer.

She shakes her head, annoyed.

EXT. PUB - BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

A derelict back yard. Prudence approaches a small, beat-up, white van.

JAMES (26), thin and frail with a boyish quality, leans against the bonnet. Drumsticks poke out of his back pocket.

PRUDENCE

We're on now.

James nods without looking up, listless and dejected.

Prudence rolls her eyes and storms back inside.

James grasps the PENDANT NECKLACE hanging from his neck, looks at it contemplatively -- an inscription reads "TO JAMES, DROPOUTS FOREVER, LOVE PRUDENCE".

INT. PUB - STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Prudence straps on her guitar.

James trudges onto the stage and plonks down at the drums -- clearly, he doesn't want to be here.

Prudence leans in close to James.

PRUDENCE
What's up with you?

James ignores her, adjusts the snare drum.

The MC grabs the mic.

MC
Alright lads, our band tonight is
The Dropouts. Give 'em a big hand.

A smattering of applause followed by an ironic cheer.

MC (CONT'D)
Don't forget, it's two-for-one
shots at the bar.

The MC hops off the stage.

Prudence steps up to the mic, scans the indifferent crowd. She glances at James, his eyes downcast.

She's riled up.

BOOM -- She whacks on the guitar, unleashing a wall of deafening feedback.

The audience turns to the stage, startled.

James, shaken out of his stupor, readies his drumsticks.

Prudence launches into a discordant solo. All of her frustration bursts forth in a ball of energy channelled through her instrument.

Prudence nods to James, he kicks up a drum beat. They segue into a song -- James has finally fallen into line.

EXT. PUB - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Pitch black night. A dim porch light flickers above the door. No one in the yard, except for Prudence and James loading up the van. A frosty silence hangs in the air.

Prudence tries to break the ice.

PRUDENCE
Want me to drive?

James shrugs. He grabs the snare drum, pops it in the van.

Beat.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)
Are you going to tell me why I'm
getting the silent treatment?

James hesitates, afraid to tell her.

JAMES
I called Niall back.

Prudence fears the worst.

PRUDENCE
Why?

JAMES
I'm taking the job.

Prudence wilts -- it's like a slap in the face.

PRUDENCE
You wouldn't do that to me.

JAMES
To you? I guess what I want doesn't
matter.

PRUDENCE
Office work just isn't for you,
James.

JAMES
I think bumming around playing
shit-holes like this isn't for me.

Prudence has no answer.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Enough's enough. We gave it our
all, it's not working out, let's
just face up to that. It's time we
both grew up and started living in
the real world.

Prudence stares at him, shocked, insulted.

PRUDENCE

What do you mean the real world?

JAMES

Well, how about a real job, money
in the bank, a house to live in?

PRUDENCE

This is my real job.

James shakes his head. It pains him to let her down like
this.

JAMES

I love you Prudence, but I hate to
see you deluding yourself. It was
exciting when we were young but
now...

Prudence turns away.

PRUDENCE

Is it someone else?

JAMES

No! Christ, how could you say that?

Prudence turns to face him, shaking her head.

PRUDENCE

I don't see how we can go on
without the band.

JAMES

Don't be ridiculous.

PRUDENCE

I'm serious. If the band breaks up,
then we break up too.

JAMES

(shakes head)
You don't mean that.

PRUDENCE

You'll have to turn down that
offer.

He steps back, defeated.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)

I need to get the money. You can
finish packing up the van.

INT. PUB - MANAGER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The PUB MANAGER (50's) sits at his desk, chatting on the phone.

Prudence enters. The Pub Manager nods to her, hands her an envelope. She opens it, counts the money.

PRUDENCE

Hold on, this isn't enough.

The Pub Manager covers the phone.

PUB MANAGER

Times are tough, take it or leave it.

The Pub Manager turns away, chats on the phone.

Prudence, incensed, slams her finger on the receiver -- disconnects the call.

PUB MANAGER (CONT'D)

What're you playing at?

PRUDENCE

I'm not leaving without my money.
We're not some student band you can rip off.

The Pub Manager stares at her. He sighs, pulls a wad of cash from his pocket and peels off two notes. He slams them into Prudence's hand.

EXT. PUB - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

James pushes the snare drum into the van. Footsteps approach from behind.

MAN (O.S.)

Excuse me, are you with the band?

James turns, peers into the darkness. A shadowy, hooded figure approaches. Suddenly --

BANG -- A FLASH of light, a CRACKLE of electricity.

INT. PUB - CONTINUOUS

Prudence walks through the empty pub, clutching the envelope. She looks at the bare stage, disheartened -- wondering if that was the last 'Dropouts' gig.

She pulls herself together, then leaves.

EXT. PUB - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

The door locks behind Prudence. She pads to the van, checks the front seats for James -- no sign of him.

PRUDENCE

James?

She walks to the back of the van, peers inside to see --

James lying face down -- his hands tied behind his back, feet bound, a hood covering his head.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)

(horrified)

James!

The Man steps up behind Prudence, points a TASER GUN at her.

BANG -- a wire shoots out of the taser and hits Prudence in the back. A CRACKLE of electricity as she collapses to the ground, convulsing.

The Man ties her hands and feet, gags her mouth, covers her head with a hood.

He searches her pockets, pulls out a set of keys with a SMILEY FACE key-ring.

He bundles her into the van on top of James, slams the door closed.

The Man hops into the driver's seat, turns the ignition key -
- the engine sputters, stalls --

MAN

Ah, come on now.

He turns the key again and again. The battered engine struggles. Then, finally --

It sparks into life. The Man breathes a sigh of relief. He pulls back his hood.

This is PHIL (40's). His goofy, innocent manner masks a deep-seated anger bubbling just beneath the surface.

He pulls out of the yard and drives into the night.

CUT TO:

OVER BLACK:

CREAK -- a metal door opens. BANG -- it slams shut, locks.
SCREECH of a metal chair on concrete. RATTLING of chains.
Heavy breathing, whimpering -- fear.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Phil rips the hood from Prudence's head. Her eyes dart about the room -- pure terror.

A Spartan cell. Two beds, bare concrete floor, no windows. Fluorescent lights. Metal doors at opposite ends of the room. On the side wall, a wooden sliding door with a 'W.C.' sign.

Prudence and James sit side by side, handcuffed to metal chairs, mouths still gagged. Prudence looks at James as Phil pulls off his hood. She locks eyes with James -- is he going to kill us?

Phil steps up close to Prudence, stares into her eyes. She recoils.

He steps away from them, opens a metal door, and disappears into a darkened room.

Prudence stares through the open door. She hears Phil shuffling about in the dark.

Suddenly, a blue light flickers on from inside the other room -- a laptop screen.

Phil carries the laptop into the cell. He hunkers down in front of them, balances the laptop on his knees.

On the LAPTOP SCREEN is a frozen video image of Prudence.

Prudence gazes at this image of herself, perplexed. Phil stares at her expectantly over the laptop screen.

Phil hits play --

ON LAPTOP SCREEN: An INTERVIEWER (O.S.) holds a mic up to Prudence.

INTERVIEWER

*This is Midland Community Radio,
I'm here with The Dropouts.*

(MORE)

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)

They've been around gigging for a good few years, still looking for their big break. So, my first question is, for a band that's been around so long, how come you haven't recorded an album yet?

PRUDENCE

Well, we've done a few singles, but they were recorded digitally. For an album, we're waiting to record in an analogue studio, it might be a bit mad and expensive, but I think it's worth the effort.

INTERVIEWER

There's not many of those studios around anymore. Not many people doing it that way, why not take the easier route?

PRUDENCE

I just can't stand all this digital crap, you know. Bands recording on their laptops. When we make an album, I want to record on analog equipment, in a real studio. Digital lacks purity. It's too clean. Analog has a quality... it can't be duplicated on the computer.

(pause)

So yeah, we hold out hope that we will get the chance some day.

The image freezes on Prudence -- hopeful, idealistic.

ON SCENE: Phil lays down the laptop, stands up and claps enthusiastically.

PHIL

Couldn't have said it better myself, Prudence.

Prudence's expression is somewhere between dumbfounded and disturbed.

PHIL (CONT'D)

My name's Phil.

(smiles)

I've got a surprise for you.

Phil unlocks Prudence from the chair, stands her up, then handcuffs her hands behind her back. He does the same for James. He ushers them both into --

INT. ROOM - CONTINUOUS

-- the darkened room and in the half-light handcuffs them to a railing on the wall.

Phil flicks a switch.

Glaring fluorescent lights blind Prudence momentarily, then she's astonished to see --

A fully-equipped analogue recording studio -- guitars, amps, drum kit, mixing desk, reel-to-reel recorder, cables.

PHIL
Impressed?

Phil removes Prudence's mouth gag. She gasps.

Phil beams at her like a child, looking for appreciation. Prudence stares back, scared.

Beat.

PRUDENCE
People will be looking for us.

Phil shakes his head.

PHIL
No. They'll never find us here.

PRUDENCE
Why are you doing this?
(whimpering)
Please, just let us go.

Phil sighs.

PHIL
I know this is a lot to take in,
but don't worry, you'll see what a
great opportunity this is soon
enough. We've all the time in the
world.

Phil touches Prudence's shoulder. She recoils. James glares at Phil, mumbling through his gag.

Phil steps back, looks around his studio with pride.

PHIL (CONT'D)

The Dropouts are going to make their first album. And I'm going to produce it.

INT. CELL - DAY

Prudence runs her hand along the edges of a metal sheet bolted over a window. Sealed tight.

James pulls on the handle of the main door. It doesn't budge.

Prudence knocks on the wooden studio partition wall. She runs her finger along the wooden panels, tightly secured with nails.

James rams his shoulder into the metal door, winces. He sighs, then sits down on the bed, puts his head in his hands.

JAMES

This is insane.

PRUDENCE

Oh, you think so?

Prudence opens the sliding bathroom door, looks inside --

She sees a toilet, a sink, and a shower with a metal barrel for a basin.

JAMES

Who the hell is this guy?

PRUDENCE

Our number one fan apparently. At least, we know we have one now.

Prudence steps inside.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

She checks around the room for any sign of escape.

JAMES (O.S.)

Didn't even want to play that gig.

Prudence sits down against the wall. She looks through the doorway at James, his head in his hands.

She leans her head back, stares at the ceiling -- *what the hell are we going to do?*

Her eyes focus on two fluorescent tubes fixed to the ceiling.

PRUDENCE

James.

Prudence springs up.

JAMES

What?

PRUDENCE

Come in here.

James pads into the bathroom. She points at the lights.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)

Give me a leg up.

James glances at the lights, back to Prudence, then shakes his head.

JAMES

It's too risky. We don't know what he's capable of.

PRUDENCE

I'm not going to wait around to find out.

James relents, kneels. Prudence sits on his shoulder and he hoists her up.

Prudence covers her hand with her sleeve and removes one of the fluorescent tubes from its housing.

She hops back down.

Prudence whacks the end of the tube against the sink. It shatters, leaving a jagged end. She hands it to James.

They both stare at the lethal shards.

INT. CELL - DAY

James leans his back against the wall beside the main door. He clutches the fluorescent tube, jagged end pointed outwards.

His breathing heavy, his face sweaty.

Prudence sits on the bed, tense and fearful.

They wait. Then --

They hear footsteps outside, growing louder.

Keys jangle.

James tenses up. Prudence locks eyes with James -- *you can do this.*

Her eyes dart back to the main door. She composes herself for Phil's entry.

The door unlocks, opens inward. James is hidden behind it.

Phil stands in the doorway, the stun gun hanging from his belt. He scans the room, sees only Prudence.

PHIL

Morning.

(pause)

James in the bathroom?

Prudence nods. Phil smiles, stays in the doorway.

PHIL (CONT'D)

I'm dying to get going today. I could hardly sleep last night I was so excited.

Prudence nods, smiles, struggling to keep her cool.

James trembles, gearing himself up.

PHIL (CONT'D)

The ideas stage is always my favorite - anything can happen. No rules, no boundaries - just creativity.

Prudence nods along with this, not sure how much longer she can keep up the charade. Her breathing irregular.

PRUDENCE

We can head into the studio, James should be a few minutes.

PHIL

Nah, we'll wait.

Prudence's calm exterior is cracking, she glances at James.

Phil notices her glance, steps forward into the cell, goes for his stun gun but --

Before he can grasp it, James lunges at him with the jagged edge of the tube.

Phil whips around, smacks the tube out of James's hand. It shatters against the wall.

Phil pounces on James, overpowers him easily. They tumble onto the ground.

Prudence leaps from the bed, grabs Phil by the neck, tries to pull him off James.

Phil elbows her, knocks her back. He pins James down.

JAMES
(shouts)
Just run for it. Get help.

Prudence hesitates, then rushes out the door.

Phil reaches for his stun gun.

EXT. CELL - CONTINUOUS

SMASH. Prudence runs into a chain-link fence that surrounds the cell and bounces backwards.

Frantic, she searches around. Nothing but trees and wilderness as far as the eye can see.

She pulls on a gate in the fence. It's padlocked. She looks up -- no way out but over the fence.

INT. CELL - CONTINUOUS

Phil whacks James on the forehead with his stun gun.

James cries out.

Phil whacks him again -- blood trickles down James's face.

Phil kneels up, pulls out a pair of handcuffs. He turns James over, cuffs his hands behind his back.

EXT. CELL - CONTINUOUS

Prudence is halfway up the fence.

Phil comes out, aiming his stun gun up at her --

PHIL
Prudence! Stop.

Prudence freezes. She looks back at Phil, stun gun pointed right at her.

PHIL (CONT'D)

It's not good to keep using this on you, so don't make me. It could permanently damage your coordination and then you can forget about playing guitar ever again.

Prudence hesitates.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Come down, please.

Reluctantly, Prudence climbs down from the fence. She looks like she might cry but she doesn't.

Phil gestures towards the door. Prudence trudges back inside, defeated.

Phil steps in after her and slams the door shut.

INT. CELL - DAY

Prudence and James sit with their backs to the wall, their hands cuffed. Blood runs down James's forehead.

Phil sweeps up the shards of glass, his face taut with anger.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Phil stands on a stool. He screws a metal grate over the fluorescent lights.

INT. CELL - LATER

Phil rips the mattress off the bed, tosses it onto the ground. He grabs the wooden bed frame and lugs it out the door.

The cell is now bare except for the two mattresses on the floor.

INT. CELL - LATER

Phil stands on a stool and screws a CCTV CAMERA into the ceiling above the door.

PHIL
I didn't think it would come to
this.

Prudence looks at James's face, caked in blood. He's dazed,
out of it.

PRUDENCE
We need to get a doctor for him.

PHIL
He'll be alright.

PRUDENCE
I'm worried he might have a
concussion.

PHIL
Should've thought of that before he
tried to stab me in the back.

Phil steps off the stool and turns to Prudence and James.

PRUDENCE
Just let us go. We won't tell
anyone.

Phil ignores this. He picks up a digital alarm clock amongst
his tools.

PHIL
One at a time in the bathroom.
Fifteen minutes max. Use this clock
to time yourselves.

Phil steps into the bathroom and places the clock on the
toilet cistern. He pads back into the cell, points at the
CCTV camera.

PHIL (CONT'D)
I'll be watching you at all times.

Phil opens the door to leave, but pauses --

PHIL (CONT'D)
I just can't believe you cost us a
whole day in the studio.

He exits.

Prudence stands. She hoists James up. He falters, almost
falls over, but she grabs hold of him.

She leads him over to the mattress. He flops down, moans and cradles his head.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Prudence grabs a towel and wets it under the sink faucet.

INT. CELL - MOMENTS LATER

Prudence kneels beside James. He winces as she wipes the dried blood from his face with the towel.

She caresses his head. He relaxes, closes his eyes. She kisses his forehead.

Prudence shifts, uneasy, remembers there's another presence in the cell. She looks up at the CCTV camera -- it gazes back at her with its watchful eye.

INT. CELL - DAY

Prudence, James and Phil sit in a circle facing each other. Prudence and James are handcuffed. James's forehead is bandaged.

PHIL

I've been mulling over what happened and I think we got off on the wrong foot. Last night, I saw an article about a team building exercise and I think we should try it. It might help smooth out the creative differences we have.

(pause)

Basically, we each tell the group how we got started on our musical journey. And the group gives feedback and positive reinforcement. Remember, positivity only. Good vibrations.

(pause)

So, Prudence... Ladies first.

Prudence squirms, uncomfortable.

PRUDENCE

I dunno what to say.

PHIL

Don't be shy. Why don't you tell us how the band got started?

(MORE)

PHIL (CONT'D)
I've searched online, but there's
not much about the Dropouts.

Prudence feels the pressure, glances at James. Phil stares at her expectantly.

PRUDENCE
Well, we met in college.

PHIL
Ah, that's great.
(leans in)
Love at first sight was it?

PRUDENCE
Suppose it was.

Phil turns to James, smiles, and then turns back to Prudence.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)
And then we formed the band.

PHIL
Beautiful.

James rubs his face, uncomfortable.

Pause.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Go on --

PRUDENCE
Well, we got an offer to do a small
tour. So, we both decided to drop
out of college and dedicate
ourselves to the band.

James glances at Prudence, then lowers his head -- this part of the story seems to irritate him.

PHIL
Ah, I get it -- the Dropouts.
That's great. Thank you, Prudence.
That was lovely.

Phil turns to James.

PHIL (CONT'D)
And James, your turn to share.

JAMES
It's the same as she said. She's
already said it all.

Phil nods.

PHIL

OK, well, my musical journey really goes back to my childhood but I won't bore you with all that. In the last while, my main focus has been my studio. See, just a while ago I was let go from my job at a radio station. I was working there for a few years as a techie. Then they put me in charge of recording a few songs for charity with a really great group from the local nursing home. Anyway, we had some creative differences, they tried to take the album from me, so I had no choice but to lock myself in the studio with it. They wouldn't listen to reason, they wouldn't hear me out. Long story short, the guards were called and I was banned from the place for life. Can you believe that? They stabbed me in the back.

Phil stares at Prudence, gauging her response. Prudence tries to hide her consternation.

PRUDENCE

Yeah, that's really bad Phil.

Phil turns to James.

JAMES

They really done you over there.

Phil lowers his head, breathes deeply.

PHIL

Anyway, positive vibes only. So, I said to hell with them, set up my own studio, and as you can see it's worked out pretty well because I've got you guys here.

Prudence and James exchange a confused, fearful look.

Phil tries to contain his outburst of emotion, tears in his eyes.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Good exercise, I'm feeling good about that.

(MORE)

PHIL (CONT'D)

This is what I wanted, I wanted to make an album with friends. We're friends now.

(pause)

OK, let's do this --

Phil holds his hand out for them --

Prudence and James hesitantly place their handcuffed hands on top of Phil's.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Let's make our album guys.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Phil attaches a chain to a leather belt around Prudence's waist. The other end of the chain is bolted to the floor. Not much room for movement.

James sits at the drum kit, a chain fastened to his waist in the same manner.

Phil sits down at the mixing desk, looks at them expectantly.

PHIL

Whenever you're ready.

Prudence looks to James. He shrugs.

PRUDENCE

Ok. One, two, three, four.

They break into an upbeat song. Prudence tries her best to put the ridiculousness of the situation out of her mind, but after a few seconds she plays a bum note, then stops. She shakes her head.

PHIL

Try again.

Prudence sighs. She steps forward and the chain pulls taut, stopping her.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Go on. From the top.

PRUDENCE

One, two, three, four.

They break into the song again, it lasts a few seconds and peters out to silence.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)
I can't do this. It's stupid.

Prudence puts her guitar down.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)
This isn't how you create music.
It's too forced.

PHIL
What do you mean forced?

PRUDENCE
(rattles her chains)
This!

PHIL
I can't let you off the chain.
This is vintage equipment. I can't
just replace it like a fluorescent
tube.

JAMES
It's alright Phil. We can do it.
Come on Prudence.

Prudence looks at James, sees in his eyes a warning against antagonising Phil.

PRUDENCE
I'm not playing like this. It's
inhuman.

Phil glares at her, then storms out of the studio.

JAMES
We should just play.

PRUDENCE
He can chain us up, keep us
prisoner, but he can't force us to
play.

JAMES
Don't test him.

James points to the bandage on his head. Prudence sits down cross-legged on the floor. She puts her head in her hands.

Silence. Then --

Pounding footsteps... Prudence stands, looks at the studio door.

Phil storms in brandishing a SHOTGUN. He marches over to Prudence, aims the shotgun at her head.

Prudence freezes in terror. James jumps up, SNAP, his chain pulls tight.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Don't!

Phil glares at Prudence. The barrel pressed against her head.

PHIL

Play.

(pause)

Play!

Prudence straps on her guitar, strums wildly.

Phil turns the gun on James. He recoils.

JAMES

Ok, ok.

James grabs his drums sticks. He whacks the drums, tries to get in time with Prudence.

Prudence and James play wildly -- it's barely a song.

Phil lowers his shotgun.

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Prudence and James sit on their mattresses. Phil looms over them, holding two dinner plates. He hands one to Prudence, the other to James.

Phil steps back, leans against the wall.

Prudence and James eat, uncomfortable, as Phil observes them. Prudence feels like an animal in a zoo.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Prudence hits the digital alarm. It starts counting down from fifteen minutes.

Prudence holds her head under the running shower. Her face strained, a confusion of thoughts.

She turns off the shower and wraps herself in a towel. She slumps down on the closed toilet seat, head in hands, staring at the floor.

The thought is really setting in -- she may not get out of here for a long time, if ever.

Silence.

Then suddenly --

A mouse scurries out between her feet.

Startled, she pulls her legs up. She watches the mouse dart about the room, then circle back to the shower basin and disappear behind it.

She throws off her towel and quickly gets dressed. She tip-toes across to the basin. It's too close to the wall to see behind it, so she pulls it back.

The mouse has vanished. But then --

She spots a finger-sized hole at the bottom of the wall which partitions the bathroom and the studio.

She kneels down, pokes her finger inside the hole and pries back the wooden panel. The bottom half of the panel comes free but the top holds fast.

She heaves on the panel again and again but the top half won't budge. She lets go, steps back, stares at it determined -- if she could force it open, then she could get into the studio, and then maybe...

RING RING RING -- the alarm goes off.

INT. CELL - MOMENTS LATER

James lies on his bed, staring at the ceiling. Prudence enters, glances at the CCTV camera.

PRUDENCE

I think I've found something.

James sits up.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

James tugs on the panel, slowly loosening the nails at the top. He's red-faced, out of breath. The panel comes off revealing a thick layer of soundproofing board within the partition wall.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Prudence jams on her guitar, an upbeat riff. James beats out a tight rhythm on the drums.

Phil watches them closely at the mixing desk, headphones on, nodding his head to the music. He makes notes periodically in his small notebook.

The shotgun lies across the top of the desk.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Prudence runs her hand across the soundproofing board. She knocks on it -- it's rock hard.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Prudence and James play fast and lively.

Phil beams at them from the mixing desk -- he can't believe he has a band of his own in his studio.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Prudence grips a nail protruding from the wooden panel. She wiggles it, loosens it, pulls it free.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Phil messes with knobs on the mixing desk, his back to the players.

Prudence scans the studio, her eyes rest on a blacked-out window high up on the back wall.

Prudence catches James's attention, nods towards the window. James sees it too, gets the idea, nods in agreement.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Prudence scratches the soundproofing board with the nail. She's making slow progress at cutting a square hole through it.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Prudence and James snap their attention from the window to Phil as he turns around to them.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

James removes the cut-out square of soundproofing board, behind which is a wooden panel on the studio side. He presses against it. It holds fast.

James whacks his shoulder against the wooden panel, again and again.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Prudence and James drill a song -- harder, meaner, faster. Then, the song abruptly ends.

Phil looks up from the mixing desk, gives them a thumbs up.

PHIL

Great work. You've really made a breakthrough.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Prudence whacks against the wooden panel.

SMASH -- she breaks through and the panel falls against a large amp. She gazes through the hole and into the studio, smiles.

INT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

The room is dark, except for a shaft of light that spills in from the bathroom.

Prudence crawls through, hops up onto her feet. She switches on the fluorescent lights.

She strides over to the back wall, looks up at the window above -- out of her reach.

Prudence looks around the room, spots a large amp. She pads over to it and drags it across the room to the back wall.

She climbs up onto the amp, her face flush with anticipation.

She pulls at the window handle. It doesn't budge.

PRUDENCE

Shit.

INT. CELL - CONTINUOUS

James lounges on his mattress, flicking through a booklet. He tries to appear composed but within he's frantic. He glances at the studio door -- *Hurry it up Prudence*. Then --

Keys rattle in the main door.

James bolts upright, freezes. He looks at the bathroom door but there's not enough time to warn Prudence.

The cell door swings open. Phil steps into the room.

JAMES

Hey Phil.

PHIL

How's it going?

He closes and locks the door behind him.

JAMES

Prudence is just in the bathroom.

Phil turns to James.

PHIL

Yeah I know.

JAMES

What's up?

PHIL

Nothing much.

Phil ambles towards the studio door, but before he can put his key in the lock --

JAMES

Phil, sorry, do you have a second?

Phil stops, turns to James.

PHIL

What?

James pauses, racking his brains for something to say.

JAMES

The, ah, the drums. I was thinking of a new mic set-up for when we record the track.

Phil frowns.

PHIL

Sure. We can work on that tomorrow.

Phil goes to pop his key in --

JAMES

Just a second. I'll draw a sketch of what I was thinking. You'd know better than me, but let's see what you think.

James grabs a pencil and a notebook. Phil pads over to him, watches him draw a diagram.

INT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Prudence is still on the amp, trying to open the window. She pulls at it with all her might, her face flush and sweaty --

SNAP. The handle pops up.

Prudence eases the window open and peeks outside.

She sees the back of a dilapidated two-storey farmhouse across the yard. Then --

She hears James's muffled voice from the cell. She freezes. Panicked, she shuts the window, jumps off the amp.

She starts to drag the amp back across the room.

INT. CELL - CONTINUOUS

Phil stands by the door, the key in the lock. James shows him the sketch of the mic setup.

JAMES

Something like this, it's still kind of raw.

PHIL

You should just concentrate on the drums, let me handle the set-up.

JAMES

Sorry, I'm just trying to help.

PHIL

There were a lotta young fellas at the radio station who thought they knew everything. But I've been in this game a lot longer, I know how to set-up a studio.

Phil unlocks the studio door, grabs the handle.

INT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Prudence finally has the amp back in place beside the door.

The door handle shakes.

She flicks off the lights -- dives in behind the amp and crawls into the hole in the wall.

She pulls the panel back into place silently as Phil steps into the room.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prudence gingerly sets the square of soundproof board, and then the wooden panel, back into place.

Relief -- she releases a long held breath.

She composes herself, opens the bathroom door.

INT. CELL - CONTINUOUS

Prudence sees the look of relief on James's face. Then, Phil steps into the cell. Prudence feigns surprise.

PRUDENCE

Heya, Phil. What's up?

Phil closes and locks the studio door. His notebook under his arm.

PHIL

Forgot my notebook.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Prudence and James are chained up in their usual places. The studio door is ajar. Phil isn't there.

They wait.

Prudence noodles on her guitar, passing time.

JAMES

What's taking him so long?

Prudence shrugs.

INT. CELL - CONTINUOUS

The main door is open. Phil steps inside, coils of wire in his hands. He pads to the studio door.

JAMES (O.S.)

It's hilarious how he thinks he's our friend.

Phil stops at the ajar door and listens.

PRUDENCE (O.S.)

Whatever keeps him happy.

JAMES (O.S.)

It's like being in a mental home.

Phil grimaces, leans closer to the door.

PRUDENCE (O.S.)

I'd rather be in a mental home than here.

Phil frowns. He pads to the main door and slams it closed.

INT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Prudence and James hush up after hearing the door slam.

Phil enters, holds up the coils of wire.

PHIL

Found 'em.

Prudence and James plaster on fake smiles -- all nice and friendly.

PRUDENCE

Good job, Phil. Let's get this song
in the bag.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Prudence and James jam on their instruments -- in sync and
enthusiastic.

Phil eyes them contemptuously. A pent-up frustration bubbling
beneath the surface.

The song ends. Prudence and James silently await Phil's
reaction.

He stands still, arms crossed, stony faced.

A long silence.

PRUDENCE

What do you think? Are we ready to
record?

Phil shrugs, purses his lips.

PHIL

Are you happy with it?

PRUDENCE

Yeah, I think it works. I think
we're ready.

Phil nods slightly, glances at James.

PHIL

You agree, James?

James nods in silent agreement.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Interesting, because I don't.

Prudence shakes her head, dismayed.

PRUDENCE

But you liked it before.

PHIL

Well, I just don't now. Something's
changed, I don't believe your
playing, there's something false
about it.

PRUDENCE

False? What do you mean?

Phil gives an exaggerated shrug.

PHIL

It's not up to me to explain it,
it's up to you to play better.

PRUDENCE

How can we fix it if we don't know
what's wrong with it?

PHIL

You're holding something back. It's
not genuine, not real. It all seems
like a big lie now. And that kind
of music makes me sick. I think of
bands that make music like that.

(shakes his head in
disgust)

They lie. They're two-faced. They
laugh behind people's backs.

Prudence exchanges a look with James, they feel the anger
emanating from Phil.

PHIL (CONT'D)

I just want to blow their heads
off.

Prudence glances at the shotgun on the mixing desk, then back
to Phil -- she tries to keep a cool head, not letting fear
overtake her.

PRUDENCE

Ok Phil, we can get better,
we'll...

Phil slams his fist down on the mixing desk. Prudence jumps
in fright.

PHIL

After everything I've done for you,
you're going to treat me like a
fool. Think that I'll buy your
playacting? Think I don't know
anything about people? How they
work. Phony people?

Prudence steadies herself.

PRUDENCE

(calm)

We are trying our best Phil, if you don't believe us, all we can do is try harder.

PHIL

Ah! Why don't you just tell me the truth? You don't like being here. And you don't like me.

PRUDENCE

Of course we like being here.

PHIL

Then why don't you show it?

Prudence swallows, processing what Phil could mean.

JAMES

We're trying our best, really.

Phil waves a derisive hand at James.

PHIL

Well, it's not good enough.

(to Prudence)

I guess, when you said we were friends, you were lying right to my face.

Phil turns from them, eyes to the floor, defeated.

PHIL (CONT'D)

All this was a waste of time, the studio, everything.

Silence.

Prudence gazes at Phil, sees that he's in an unstable state -
- *no guessing what he might do.*

PRUDENCE

Honestly Phil, I'll speak for myself and James, we're both so grateful for what you've done.

Phil remains taciturn.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)

Maybe we don't show it, but we are. For giving us the chance to record in this studio. For all the time and effort you're putting into us.

Phil turns back towards Prudence, soothed by her words, but eyes still to the floor.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)

You've given us a once-in-a-lifetime chance here and we're not going to blow it. We're going to keep on trying. We value your input and if the song's not good then we need to fix it. That's what we're here for - to make a great album.

Phil looks up at Prudence, his anger receding.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry if you think we're against you but I swear that it's not the case. Just give us that chance and we'll prove it to you. You're a better producer than we could ever hope to find.

Silence.

Prudence watches Phil, hopeful. Then --

She sees a hint of a smile on Phil's face.

PHIL

That's all I wanted. A little recognition for all I've done for you.

(pause)

Maybe the song's not so bad. I was just getting a little caught up about it. Why don't we give it another blast?

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Prudence and James lie together on a mattress, eyes open. Prudence looks at the digital clock -- "02:30 a.m."

She turns to James, nods for him to follow and creeps off the mattress.

She shoots the CCTV camera a worried glance as she pads into the bathroom. James follows.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Prudence pulls back the shower basin. She kneels, pries open the wooden panel and lays it aside.

James listens closely at the door.

JAMES

What if he's watching?

PRUDENCE

He has to sleep at some point.

Prudence removes the soundproofing board.

INT. CELL - CONTINUOUS

The CCTV camera stares down on the empty room. An unnerving silence.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prudence starts to push open the studio wooden panel. Her hands shake uncontrollably -- the fear is getting to her.

JAMES

How much time do you think we have before he notices?

PRUDENCE

I dunno.

James perks his ears up, shushes Prudence --

JAMES

Listen.

Prudence stops dead in her tracks, listens --

Keys rattle in the main door.

They look at each other, frozen in fear.

Prudence starts to close up the hole in the wall.

The cell door creaks open, pounding footsteps approach.

PHIL (O.S.)

(shouts)

Come out. One at a time, hands over your heads.

Prudence hears Phil cock his shotgun. She panics as she pushes the wooden panel back in place, closing up the hole.

PHIL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(shouts)
I have my gun. I can blast through
this door. Now come out!

James quietly pushes the shower basin back in place.

Prudence pulls off her jumper and T-shirt, tosses them aside casually.

PRUDENCE
We're sorry Phil.

She undoes her jeans, drops them to the floor.

James turns, sees she's wearing nothing but her underwear. He frowns, confused.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)
We're going to come out now.

Prudence grabs James's shirt and rips it off.

INT. CELL - CONTINUOUS

Phil aims his shotgun at the bathroom door. He waits.

PHIL (O.S.)
(shouts)
Hurry up. James, you first.

The bathroom door slides open.

James steps out in his underwear, his hands held up high.

Phil narrows his eyes, bemused.

Prudence follows him out, her hands up and her eyes downcast.

They stand side-by-side in their underwear, shivering, looking like a pair of children caught being naughty by their parent.

PHIL (CONT'D)
What the hell were you at in there?

He looks from one to the other -- they keep their eyes downcast.

PRUDENCE
Sorry Phil.

PHIL
Shut it.

Phil scoffs, looks away from his semi-naked prisoners.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Put your clothes on.

Prudence glances at James -- the hint of a sly smile. She ambles into the bathroom, grabs the pile of clothes. She throws James his bundle.

They start to dress. Phil keeps the shotgun trained on them, watches out of the corner of his eye.

Now fully dressed, they raise their hands again --

PHIL (CONT'D)
Turn around. Face the wall.

They both turn around to the wall. Phil approaches and handcuffs both of them behind their backs.

PHIL (CONT'D)
I don't have many rules but this is one of them. I never want to see you two in there together again.

PRUDENCE
We were only --

PHIL
Turn around.

Phil steps back, the shotgun trained on them. He ushers them towards the main door, which stands open to a dark and windy night.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Let's go.

Prudence looks at James, worried.

PRUDENCE
Where are we going?

PHIL
Just move it. Outside.

Prudence and James walk out the main door, followed closely by Phil.

EXT. BACK YARD - NIGHT

Phil marches Prudence and James across the yard, shotgun to their backs. His torch light pierces through the darkness.

PHIL
You act like animals, you'll be
treated like animals.

Prudence, fearful, scans around. She can't make anything out in the darkness.

James breathes heavily.

Phil keeps the pace up, pushing them faster until --

They come to the precipice of a LARGE PIT. Phil shines his torch down into the pit revealing a sea of slurry.

Prudence and James recoil from the vile stench.

Phil pushes them close to the edge.

PHIL (CONT'D)
You see that? You know what that
is? Putrefied animal waste.

Prudence gags.

PHIL (CONT'D)
If you fall in, there's no coming
out.
(pushes Prudence forward)
The fumes would suffocate you
before you even drown. You just
disappear and no one ever sees you
again.

Prudence leans back --

PRUDENCE
Don't.

-- the shotgun pushes into her shoulder.

PHIL
It's a horrible death. Makes
getting shot in the head seem like
a holiday.

Phil grabs them each by the shoulder. Leans in close.

PHIL (CONT'D)

I've put up with a lot from you two, but this is it. The next step out of line and you're going in there. Understood?

Prudence and James nod vehemently.

INT. CELL - DAY

Prudence and James stand side by side, handcuffed to a metal rail above their heads. They squirm, uncomfortable.

A workmans light glares at them on full strength. They look haggard, sleep-deprived.

Phil enters, ambles up to them.

PHIL

Morning.
(grins)
Hope you slept well.

Phil switches off the workmans light.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Let's go to work.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Prudence strums her guitar clumsily. Her eyes black from sleep deprivation. She struggles to hold the weight of her instrument.

James taps on the drums, slumped over. He looks just as haggard as Prudence.

Phil sits at the mixing desk, headphones on, fixing the knobs. The reel-to-reel recorder spins, the red RECORDING LIGHT shines.

Prudence and James falter in their playing, then stop.

Phil hits STOP.

PHIL

Ah, come on. Another failed take.
Get it together will ye? You're
wasting my tape.

Prudence leans on her amp, rubs her face -- out of breath. Phil has the hint of a sly smile -- he's revelling in this.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Come on Prudence. I thought you
wanted to make an album.

Prudence glowers at Phil, her anger and frustration palpable.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Let's go again.
(hits record)
Take 17.

Prudence composes herself --

PRUDENCE
One, two, three, four.

They burst into song. Prudence grimaces as she tries to keep up her guitar fingering.

James, soaked in sweat, beats away at the drums. Suddenly --

Prudence's fingers seize up. She yells. She drops her guitar, rubs her hands together, leans against the amp grimacing.

James stops --

JAMES
You alright?

Prudence shakes her head, still in pain.

Phil hits stop again, gets out of his chair, saunters over to Prudence.

PHIL
See -- if you'd only played by my
rules, then --

Phil picks up Prudence's guitar and holds it out to her.

PHIL (CONT'D)
You wouldn't be having such a hard
time.

Prudence snatches the guitar from Phil and straps it on.

Phil pads back to the mixing desk.

PRUDENCE
(under her breath)
Prick.

Phil sits down, glances to see if they are ready, then hits RECORD.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)

One, two, three, four.

They blast into the song again.

They keep up with the fast tempo, but then --

James beats out of time, Prudence hits a few bum notes, and the song devolves into a mess.

They stop.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)

Fuck.

Phil tuts, smugly.

PHIL

I'm telling you now. We're not going to eat, sleep, go to the bathroom -- nothing -- until we get a full clean take of this track.

Sweat pours down Prudence's brow. She's on the verge of cracking. She shuffles forward and the chain around her waist pulls tight.

JAMES

We can't do it Phil.

PHIL

Can't or won't?

JAMES

Can't. We're wrecked.

PHIL

Excuses, excuses --

Prudence gazes at Phil, a look of pure rage and frustration - she'd murder him if she could. Then --

Prudence slams her foot on the effects pedal, strikes her guitar. A deafening roar erupts from the amp.

Phil and James turn to her, shocked.

Prudence launches into a monstrous, frenzied solo -- this is a side of her playing that we got a glimpse of at the gig, but it's more ferocious.

James and Phil stare at her. It looks as if she might tear the guitar in two.

Phil rushes to the mixing desk, hits RECORD.

Prudence hammers on the guitar, blasting firestorms of feedback from the amp. A high pitched squeal rings out.

Then, her solo starts to mellow out, she turns to James --

He gazes at her, ready, poised --

PRUDENCE

(screams)

One, two, three, four.

They burst into the song, full of passionate intensity. Their playing is on time, in tempo, but even meaner and hungrier than before.

Then, Prudence steps up to the mic and screams out her lyrics.

Phil watches Prudence, blown away by her sudden burst of creativity. He checks the sound levels -- hitting the red.

The song crescendos into a searing solo -- James senses it, stops his drumming.

Prudence wails endlessly on her guitar, swinging it around, pushing herself to the limit. Then --

She whips the guitar off her shoulder and hurls it across the room with a guttural scream. The guitar slams against the floor, smashes, sets off a cacophony of ear bleeding feedback.

Prudence falls against the amp, head down in exhaustion. James lies across his drum kit.

Silence.

Phil presses STOP -- the reel-to-reel slowly ceases to spin.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

The reel-to-reel tape blasts out the finished take over the speakers.

Starved, James scoffs down a burger and chips.

Prudence eats her food but remains fixated on the speaker, entranced by her solo.

Phil sits beside her, a proud smile on his face.

The song ends. The tail end of the magnetic tape flaps around the spindle.

Phil shuts the machine off, awaits Prudence's response.

PRUDENCE
(awestruck)
It... It sounds amazing.

PHIL
You can't beat the old analogue can you.

Prudence puts down her burger. She nods to herself, contemplating.

PRUDENCE
This could really impress some people.

James eyes Prudence suspiciously -- she seems sincere.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)
But we could improve on the next one. Put some synth on it maybe.

Phil grabs his note-pad.

PHIL
Now we're cooking.
(scribbles note)
And I have just the thing for the job.

Phil opens a press and takes out an antique Moog synthesizer. He sets it down in front of Prudence. She ogles it.

PRUDENCE
Wow, I've never seen one of these before.

Phil turns it on.

PHIL
Go ahead.

Prudence plays around with the keys.

PRUDENCE
Something like this.

She vamps on the keys, builds up the chords in intensity.

Phil nods his head to the beat.

PHIL
Sounds great.

James gazes at the enthusiastic pair. He scrutinizes Prudence, wondering where her head is at.

INT. CELL - NIGHT

James paces back and forth. Prudence writes in a notebook.

JAMES
You should be the one to make a run
for it. I'll stay here.

James looks at Prudence -- she's lost in her notebook. He grabs it from her.

PRUDENCE
What?

James throws the notebook on the bed.

JAMES
Aren't you listening?

PRUDENCE
Calm down.

JAMES
I said, you should make a run for
it tonight. I'll hold him off.

PRUDENCE
It's too risky.

JAMES
We don't have a choice. We need to
do something.

Keys rattle in the door. Prudence and James freeze.

The door opens, Phil enters.

PRUDENCE
What's up Phil?

Phil looks from Prudence to James. He approaches, sits cross-legged in front of them.

PHIL
I've been thinking about that night
I found you two in the bathroom.
(pause)
(MORE)

PHIL (CONT'D)
I know what you were doing in there, but I haven't been able to say it.

Prudence and James are frozen with fear.

PHIL (CONT'D)
When I was younger, my mother would always send me out on errands. I thought they were very important. But really, she wanted me out of the house.

Prudence and James stare at him, dumbfounded -- *why is he telling us this?*

PHIL (CONT'D)
What she wanted was alone time with her boyfriends. It's silly that I didn't say so earlier, but I can see that you two need alone time, like all couples do.

Phil smiles sheepishly and lowers his head, eyes to the floor.

PHIL (CONT'D)
I forget sometimes that you're lovers as well as a band.

Phil raises his eyes.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Seeing as you've made good progress today, you deserve a surprise. I'll cover the camera for a half hour so you can have privacy and... fulfil your needs.

An awkward silence.

JAMES
Thanks Phil. That's very kind of you.

Phil stands up. He takes off his coat and covers the camera with it. He turns to them.

PHIL
James... I need to speak with you alone.

James stands up. Phil gestures towards the bathroom.

James walks into the bathroom, puzzled.

PHIL (CONT'D)
 Won't be a moment Prudence. Don't
 worry.

Phil steps into the bathroom and slides the door closed.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

PHIL
 (points at the toilet)
 Take a seat.

James sits on the lid of the toilet.

Phil ambles over to the shower basin and rests his foot on the rim. James, panicked, glances towards the escape route.

He stares at James, intently.

PHIL (CONT'D)
 I won't let anything jeopardise the
 creation of the album.

James steels himself for a possible attack.

JAMES
 We won't jeopardize it, Phil.

PHIL
 You know what I'm talking about,
 don't you?

James sweats, tries not to show panic.

PHIL (CONT'D)
 What you and Prudence are about to
 do -- it could ruin everything.

Phil pulls his foot off the basin, walks over to James.

PHIL (CONT'D)
 I won't let that happen.
 Understand?

JAMES
 I'm... not sure what you mean.

Phil pulls a sealed condom out of his pocket, displays it for him.

PHIL
Promise me you'll use this.

James smiles with relief.

JAMES
We will, don't you worry.

PHIL
Good. I don't want any mishaps.

Phil pats James's shoulder.

INT. CELL - CONTINUOUS

Prudence stares at the shut door. The muffled voices filter through, indistinguishable. Then --

The bathroom door slides open. James enters, followed by Phil.

PHIL
Sorry about that Prudence. Just
some man talk.

Phil walks to the main door.

James shows her the condom. She sighs, relieved.

PHIL (CONT'D)
I'll be back in half an hour.
Enjoy.

Phil exits. The main door locks.

Prudence and James look at each other, adrenaline pumping --
let's get out of here.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Prudence watches James crawl through the hole in the wall and into the studio.

She looks at the bathroom door, nervous.

JAMES (O.S.)
Come on.

Prudence kneels down and crawls into the studio.

INT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

James pushes the amp under the window. He jumps up onto it and then opens the window.

Prudence pauses at the mixing desk -- her attention caught by the reel-to-reel tape of their recording.

She picks it up, runs her finger along the label, contemplating.

James pops his head out the window and scans around.

JAMES
(quietly)
Looks like the coast is clear.

James pulls his head back inside, looks at Prudence.

She's lost in thought, gazing at the reel-to-reel tape.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Come on, we don't have much time.

Prudence jolts out of her reverie -- she puts the tape down on the mixing desk and walks towards James.

He climbs out the window, barely enough space for him to fit through.

Prudence hops up onto the amp. She pauses, glances once across the studio, then climbs out the window.

EXT. STUDIO - NIGHT

James peers through the chain-link fence at the two-storey house. No sign of movement.

Prudence drops down from the window to the concrete.

James kneels, cups his hands to give Prudence a leg up. She traipses towards him.

JAMES
(quietly)
Once you get over, start running
and don't stop.

Prudence pauses before James, hesitant.

JAMES (CONT'D)
(quietly)
Don't be scared. I'll be right
behind you.

She stares out into the dark night beyond the fence.

Silence.

James looks up at her, perplexed.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Prudence?

She steps back from him.

PRUDENCE
What's out there for me?

JAMES
What do you mean?

PRUDENCE
We escape, go back to our lives,
you take that job, the band splits
up, and then I'm left alone. A
nobody.

Prudence gazes out in deep contemplation -- running through
her future in her minds eye.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)
I don't want to be a nobody and
this is my way out. We go back
inside, finish the album, and then
use the escape route to get free.
Imagine the story we would have to
tell, imagine the publicity our
album would get, made in captivity,
forced at gun point. No more
playing shitty pubs and clubs. We'd
be international news.

James stands up, looks her in the eye.

JAMES
Are you crazy? You're putting us
both in danger right now.
Understand?

He grabs her shoulders, his eyes pleading.

JAMES (CONT'D)
We need to go. Now.

Prudence pulls away from him.

PRUDENCE

James, I'm not going. You do whatever you think you need to do, but I'm not passing up this opportunity.

James chortles.

JAMES

You've lost your fucking mind.

Prudence stands firm, confident in her decision.

PRUDENCE

I'm not going back out there without my album.

James looks stupefied -- it's the most insane thing he's ever heard.

JAMES

Do you know how dangerous he is? He could decide to slit our throats on a whim. He could do anything. He has all the control in there.

PRUDENCE

No, he doesn't. I have the control. I have the album he wants inside me. He knows it. He'd never hurt me. He needs me.

JAMES

Christ. You'd put our lives on the line for some pie in the sky fantasy.

PRUDENCE

I'm not going to force you to stay, but I'm not throwing away this opportunity. You can be part of it or not. It's your choice.

With that, she turns around and climbs back up to the window.

JAMES

For Christ sake, Prudence. Don't make me leave you here.

James watches her disappear back inside the studio.

He smacks the fence with his fist, his rage and disappointment boiling over.

He stares out into the darkness -- freedom. Tears in his eyes.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Fuck.

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Phil pulls his coat off the CCTV camera, then turns around.

PHIL

Well, I hope you enjoyed yourselves.

Prudence and James sit on opposite sides of the room. James stares at the floor in disbelief.

Prudence tries to cover for the frosty atmosphere --

PRUDENCE

We did. Thanks so much.

Phil smiles, pleased with himself.

PHIL

No thanks needed. That's what friends are for.

Phil folds the coat over his arm.

PHIL (CONT'D)

I'll be back at eight thirty tomorrow morning, so make sure you get some rest. Sleep well.

Phil exits.

Ugly silence.

James puts his head in his hands, despondent.

PRUDENCE

All you need to do is play along. We'll be out of here with an album and a story in no time.

James scoffs.

JAMES

It's that easy, is it?

Prudence walks over to him, puts her hand on his shoulder.

PRUDENCE

Please James. Do it for me.

James looks her in the eye -- a coldness there now.

JAMES

What choice do I have?

INT. CELL - DAY

Prudence performs her morning exercises. She jogs on the spot with her arms stretched out in front, limbering up for the recording session.

James lies in bed, blankets pulled over his head. The digital clock reads "8:30 A.M."

Prudence stops, takes a deep breath, wipes her face with a towel. She ambles over to James and shakes him.

PRUDENCE

Come on, it's time to get up.

James pulls away from her.

Prudence grins, grabs a hold of the blanket and whips it off him.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)

Come on sleepy head.

JAMES

Don't do that.

He snatches it back from her, covers himself up.

Prudence steps away from him.

INT. CELL - LATER

The clock reads "10:45 A.M."

Prudence paces back and forth in front of the door. James sits on his mattress.

JAMES

You have it all under control,
don't you?

Prudence ignores him, keeps pacing.

JAMES (CONT'D)
You're putting our lives in the
hands of this madman.

PRUDENCE
Something must have happened to
him, he was so excited to get going
last night.

INT. CELL - LATER

The clock reads "04:30 P.M."

James lies on his mattress.

JAMES
If he doesn't come in the next
hour, I'm going.

Prudence presses her ear against the door, desperate to hear
any sign of Phil's approach.

JAMES (CONT'D)
He could be dead.
(pause)
I'm not going to just lie here and
starve to --

Prudence raises her arm --

PRUDENCE
Shh, Shh.

James sits up. Prudence strains to hear. Then --

Hurried footsteps outside, keys rattle in the door. The door
opens --

PHIL
Hope you're not too hungry.

Phil enters holding two trays of food.

PRUDENCE
Is everything alright Phil, we
were...

Prudence notices fresh scratch marks on his face and neck.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)
... we were worried about you.

Phil sets the two trays down.

PHIL
Don't worry about it.

JAMES
We're the ones starving.

James grabs a tray and tucks into the food.

Prudence shoots James an angry look -- *don't rock the boat*.

PHIL
Something has come up, we won't be
recording today.

Prudence can barely hold back her disappointment.

PRUDENCE
What about tomorrow?

Phil shrugs.

PHIL
I don't know when we can start
again. You'll just have to hang on.

Phil looks at Prudence with genuine regret.

PHIL (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, it can't be helped. But
I won't be late with your food
again, I promise.
(pause)
I gotta go, I'll be back with your
tea tonight.

Phil hurries out the door, locks it.

Prudence stares at the door, incredulous. She slumps down on
her mattress in a daze.

JAMES
This is working out perfectly.

INT. STUDIO - NIGHT

The wooden panel falls back against an amp. Prudence pops her
head through the opening and crawls inside.

She drags the large amp under the window and climbs up. She
opens the window and peers outside.

A moonlit night. Past a wildly overgrown hedge, she can see the two-story house. Incandescent light illuminates the windows.

She can see the back door -- No sign of Phil.

She hears the faint sound of Phil's voice from within the house.

Intrigued, Prudence leans her head further out the window. Then --

A light turns on above the back door.

Phil's voice grows louder -- he's shouting. She hears a few plates smash and the banging of furniture.

Phil storms out the back door. Prudence pulls her head back inside the window and peers through the slit.

She watches Phil shout back into the house, his arms flailing in frustration --

PHIL
(shouts)
I'm not standing for that. I'm not,
you understand.

Prudence's breath quickens, unsure of what's going on.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Yeah, yeah. You're a broken record.
I'm sick of it, you hear me? Sick
of it.

Phil slams the back door shut. He grabs a bundle and marches across the yard towards the studio.

Prudence shuts the window quickly and jumps down from the amp.

INT. CELL - MOMENTS LATER

Prudence steps out of the bathroom, relieved.

PRUDENCE
(whispers to James)
He's coming.

James sits up.

The cell door opens, Phil enters. A blanket and a rolled up sleeping bag under his arm.

Prudence feigns surprise.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)
Oh Phil, we were just about to go
to bed. Everything alright?

Phil is flustered, his face flush.

PHIL
It's nothing. I'm going to sleep in
the studio tonight.

Phil pads to the studio door.

Prudence and James exchange a glance -- *what's going on?*

Phil opens the door, steps inside.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Don't mind me. Just bang on the
door if I'm snoring too loud.

PRUDENCE
Will we be recording tomorrow?

Phil sighs.

PHIL
I don't want to make any promises.

He closes the door, locks it.

Prudence rubs her forehead, frustration building.

James lies back down, hands resting behind his head.

JAMES
(whispers)
This just gets better and better.

INT. CELL - DAY

Prudence awakens to see a DEAD MOUSE dangling in front of her
face. Phil holds it by the tail.

PHIL
Look what I found.

Prudence screams, recoils. Phil chuckles. James awakens from
the sound.

PHIL (CONT'D)
How'd this little fella get in
here? Did one of you leave the
front door open again?

Phil looks from one to the other, laughing.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Come on. Let's get to work.

Phil ambles into the studio. Prudence sits up, staring after him.

She looks at James. He turns away from her.

INT. STUDIO - LATER

A white board with a long list of songs.

Phil crosses one off the list.

Prudence strums her guitar, practicing. James sits solemnly at the drums, wiping sleep out of his eyes.

Phil points to a song name on the white board.

FADE TO:

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Prudence and James jam together, keeping good time. The reel-to-reel tape spins, the red record light shines.

Phil fiddles with knobs on the mixing desk, headphones on. Sound level lights jump up and down, green to red.

FADE TO:

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Phil labels a reel-to-reel tape as Prudence looks on. He places it in a box, closes it tight, leaves it on a small stack of similar boxes.

FADE TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

James stares through the studio door at Phil making up his bed on the floor. Phil plops his head down on the pillow.

James lowers his head in his hands, shakes it in frustration.

He looks at PENDANT NECKLACE around his neck -- stares at the inscription "TO JAMES, DROPOUTS FOREVER, LOVE PRUDENCE".

FADE TO:

INT. STUDIO - DAY

James strikes a beat, then stops abruptly. He leans over the drums, panting.

Prudence stops strumming, glowers at him.

PRUDENCE
Come on, pick it up.

James turns to her, irked. She turns away, strums her guitar.

James gives her the middle finger.

FADE TO:

INT. STUDIO - LATER

Phil crosses off a song on the whiteboard. Half of the songs listed are crossed off.

He turns around to Prudence and James, gives them the thumbs up.

FADE TO:

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Prudence labels a reel-to-reel tape, pops it in a box. Phil watches her. She places it precariously on a tall stack of reel-to-reel boxes.

James watches from the drums, losing his patience.

FADE TO:

INT. STUDIO - NIGHT

Phil sleeps soundly on his bed. His head is right next to the removal wooden panel -- the escape route.

FADE TO:

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Prudence and James sleep on opposite mattresses, facing away from each other.

Prudence sleeps soundly, just like Phil.

James lies awake, wide-eyed, contemplating.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

James hammers out a heavy beat in sync with the playback of Prudence's guitar.

Prudence and Phil watch him with a critical eye -- they exchange a look of disapproval.

Prudence switches off the playback. James stops, sweaty, breathing heavy.

PRUDENCE

No, no, no. That's not it. It's too generic. I've heard that beat before.

James sighs, wipes his brow.

JAMES

The beat's fine.

PRUDENCE

It's not fine. Try more high-hats.

James shakes his head, keeps his frustration in check.

Prudence switches on the playback. James starts up a different beat with lots of high-hats.

Prudence listens a moment, then stops the playback.

JAMES

What now, too much high-hat?

PRUDENCE

It's lacklustre. We need something special here.

James grips his drumsticks tightly.

JAMES

There's nothing lacklustre about my playing.

PRUDENCE

You just need to try harder.

JAMES

Here's an idea. Why don't you stick to playing guitar and leave the drumming to me?

PRUDENCE

Let's go again.

Prudence whacks on the playback. James sits, panting, listening to the guitar.

He plays a simplistic beat, mockingly slow -- a grin on his face.

Prudence switches off the playback.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)

Are you going to take this seriously?

JAMES

(chortles)

Seriously?

Phil steps forward.

PHIL

James. Prudence is right. The guitar is so amazing on this one, it needs something big on the drums.

Prudence gestures towards Phil, nods in agreement.

PRUDENCE

See? Thanks Phil.

PHIL

It's not that your playing is bad, it's just not living up to what Prudence is doing.

JAMES

Yeah thanks for the feedback Phil but I don't need the input of a lunatic.

PRUDENCE

James!

Phil stares at James -- wonders if he should discipline him.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)

We're all trying our best here.

James throws his drumsticks down in anger.

JAMES

The only reason I'm playing is because this freak is forcing us to.

Prudence glances at Phil, worried.

PRUDENCE

James, I think you should take a break.

James glares at her, incensed.

JAMES

Fine. Ten minutes enough?

PRUDENCE

No. I don't want you playing with this attitude. I'll do the drums on this one.

He jumps up from his seat, knocks the snare drum over.

JAMES

Knock yourself out.

James steps towards the door. The chain around his mid-section snaps tight, stopping him in his tracks. He pops his hands in the air.

Phil ambles over to James. James stares at Prudence as Phil unlocks his chains

Phil leads James towards the studio door. As he passes Prudence --

JAMES (CONT'D)

I could do without seeing her face for a while anyway.

Prudence ignores this, pads to the drums. She fixes the snare drum.

Phil takes James into the cell, steps back into the studio, and locks the door behind him. He looks at Prudence.

PRUDENCE

Let's get back on track.

PHIL

Sorry if I got in the middle of that.

PRUDENCE

(shakes head)

It's fine, Phil. He's really not taking this seriously.

Prudence sits at the drums, tightens the cymbal, grabs the drum sticks.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)

Now we can get some real work done.

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Prudence and James sit on opposite mattresses in silence. An unopened condom lies beside James. Phil's coat hangs over the camera.

They are alone, unwatched.

JAMES

Remember when you told Phil how we got started with the band?

Prudence doesn't raise her eyes.

JAMES (CONT'D)

It wasn't how it happened.

PRUDENCE

I don't feel like fighting James. Let's just sit here quietly and wait 'til he comes back.

JAMES

Maybe you believe that's how it happened, you might have convinced yourself it was the truth. But it's not.

Prudence looks up at James -- she knows he's about to start digging up old graves.

PRUDENCE

I never forced you to do anything.
You made your own choices.

James chuckles.

JAMES

Want me to refresh your memory?

James sits forward, intent on making his point.

JAMES (CONT'D)

My final year. Three months before
the last exam. You came to me and
told me that you'd been offered a
little tour around the country.

Prudence sighs, doesn't want to hear this.

PRUDENCE

And?

JAMES

I wanted to finish my course, I'd
worked my arse off to get through
it. I said I didn't want to go. And
then what did you do?

Prudence looks into his eyes, shrugs.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You dangled our relationship in
front of me. You said either I play
or we break up.

Prudence sits forward, shakes her head -- she doesn't
remember it that way, or she doesn't want to remember it that
way.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You knew I loved you. You knew I'd
have to go with you. Play in the
band. Give up my course.

PRUDENCE

I never used our relationship as a
threat. That's not fair. Maybe, I
said that I'd love it if you could
come, it would mean a lot to me.
But I never...

She trails off.

JAMES

Do you even believe what you're saying?

Prudence sits back, turns from his gaze.

JAMES (CONT'D)

It's the same thing you did when we had the chance to get out of here.

PRUDENCE

So you didn't love the band?

JAMES

No, I didn't. I loved you. I followed you.

PRUDENCE

What can I say?

Prudence stares into his eyes -- pleading.

JAMES

You don't have to say anything. Just leave with me now.

Prudence hesitates -- she doesn't want to let him down but...

PRUDENCE

I can't, James.
(beat)
I won't.

James sits back, defeated.

JAMES

Then there's nothing else to say.

Silence.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. CELL - DAY

Prudence wakes up, stretches her arms, wipes sleep from her eyes. She turns and looks at James's mattress -- he's not there.

Prudence sits up, startled. Then --

She notices Phil, sitting on his hunkers by the door, watching her. She pulls the blanket up protectively to cover herself.

PRUDENCE
What's going on?

Phil sighs, stands.

PHIL
James is gone.

PRUDENCE
Gone? Where?

Phil steps over to the bathroom, slides open the door.

PHIL
Come see.

He steps inside the bathroom. Prudence throws on some clothes, hops out of bed, and follows Phil into the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prudence steps inside. Phil kneels by the wall opening. The wooden panel and the soundproofing board lie against the shower basin.

PHIL
He broke out through here last night.

He looks up at Prudence, gauging her reaction.

PHIL (CONT'D)
You must've been asleep.

Prudence crosses her arms, feigns surprise at the escape route.

PRUDENCE
How'd he do that?

Phil holds up the sheet of soundproofing.

PHIL
This would take a while to get through. He was at it for a good few days I'd say.
(looks at her)
What do you think?

Prudence glances at the taser on Phil's belt.

PRUDENCE

He must have... kept it secret from me. I'd no idea.

Phil tosses the soundproofing aside, stands.

PHIL

No idea at all?

(pause)

I can expect this from him but I need to know your heart is in this album.

PRUDENCE

It is, Phil. I want to make the album. I thought James did too.

Phil nods, uncertain.

PHIL

Well, he didn't get far. I caught him.

Prudence gulps, fearing the worst. A quiver in her voice.

PRUDENCE

Where is he now?

PHIL

(casually)

In the shed.

(pause)

He's got to be punished. I can't let him jeopardise this album. We need to be free of negativity, distractions, all that.

(pause)

And no more alone time.

Phil steps towards Prudence, staring down at her. She lowers her eyes.

PHIL (CONT'D)

I'd best get to fixing up this hole.

Prudence nods, trembling.

PHIL (CONT'D)

I'll have to chain you up today, can't be too careful anymore. I've been too trusting, too easy going. Letting things slip.

Phil ushers Prudence out of the bathroom and slides the door closed.

INT. CELL - DAY

Prudence sits against the wall, handcuffed. She cradles James's jumper.

The shrill screech of an electric screwdriver echoes out from the bathroom.

Prudence gazes towards the open bathroom door.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Phil kneels at the wall, screwing a metal sheet over the opening.

He runs his hand along the edges -- tight, flush, secure. No one will get through there again.

INT. CELL - MOMENTS LATER

Phil enters, electric screwdriver and toolbox in hand.

PHIL

That's all fixed up now. Not to worry.

Prudence stares at the jumper, not wanting to make eye contact with him.

Phil steps up, looks down on her.

PHIL (CONT'D)

It's alright to feel sad at a moment like this. He left without you, that's probably the worst feeling of all. But he's safe, he's well fed - no harm will come to him.

Prudence closes her eyes.

PHIL (CONT'D)

I need you to concentrate on the album now, Prudence.

(solemnly)

Remember, some of the greatest artists have used sorrow and pain to create their best work.

Phil taps her on the shoulder.

PHIL (CONT'D)
That's what I want from you.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Prudence noodles softly on her guitar, trying out a melody. She jots down notes, deep in concentration.

Phil works at the mixing desk, headphones on. He fiddles with levers and knobs. The tape reels spin back and forth.

The studio has a serene atmosphere of quiet, dedicated work.

The tape reel stops. Phil pulls off his headphones, he turns to Prudence.

PHIL
Mix is almost done. Sounds
fantastic.

Prudence doesn't notice him -- she's lost in thought. Phil waves his hand, trying to get her attention.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Prudence. Yoohoo?

She looks up.

PRUDENCE
Huh?

Phil chuckles.

PHIL
It's nearly done.
(looks at whiteboard)
There's just these last ones to
record.

Phil points to the white board -- all but four songs are crossed off.

Prudence glances at it.

PRUDENCE
(shakes head)
I'm not recording those.

She messes with her guitar. Phil stands, confused, steps over to her.

PHIL

I know it's hard after James ran off on you but you can't give up now.

Prudence concentrates on her playing.

PRUDENCE

I'm not giving up. But I'm not doing those songs.

She grabs her notebook, displays it for him.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)

I've got a new song. It's going to be the finale.

Phil eyes the scribbled lines and weird sketches.

PHIL

I don't know, we were pretty set on this list --

PRUDENCE

Wait 'til you hear it.

Prudence strums her guitar again.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)

It's definitely the ending to the album -- believe me.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Prudence sits at the drums, poised, sticks in hand.

Phil's hand hovers above the record button. He watches Prudence, waits for the signal.

She breathes out deeply, nods to him.

Phil hits record, the tape snakes through the reel.

Prudence taps a soft, delicate beat, building it in intensity until it becomes thunderous, unremitting.

The beat carries over into --

FADE TO:

INT. STUDIO - LATER

Prudence grips her guitar, nodding to the drum beat, waiting. Then --

She strums a bluesy melody, melding perfectly with the beat, building and building.

The beat and melody continue over --

FADE TO:

INT. STUDIO - LATER

Prudence fingers the keys of the synthesiser, adding another layer of bittersweet melancholy to the song. And then --

FADE TO:

INT. STUDIO - LATER

Prudence picks the guitar, a high-pitched and haunting lead riff on top of the rest.

FADE TO:

INT. STUDIO - LATER

Prudence steps up to the microphone, poised.

The drums, guitar and synthesiser coalesce and crescendo into a space for Prudence's voice -- she wails cryptic lyrics of sorrow and loss -- tears stream down her cheeks -- total abandon on her face.

Phil watches, mesmerized.

Prudence continues her vocals to the end, and then stands in absolute silence, depleted.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Phil works at the mixing desk, tape curling through the reels, levels shooting up and down. He stares intensely ahead, affected by the music.

INT. CELL - DAY

Prudence lies curled up on her mattress, alone in the cell. She stares ahead, cuddling James's jumper.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Phil labels the reel-to-reel tape -- "The Album - Master Copy". He places it in a case, closes it tight.

He pulls a metal bin to the mixing desk. He grabs extraneous tape -- all the reels of various songs -- and tosses them willy-nilly into the bin.

"The Album" sits prominently above the mixing desk.

INT. CELL - DAY

Phil enters through the studio door, dragging the metal bin behind him. Prudence sits up on her mattress.

Phil pulls the bin to the main door, opens it wide. Prudence watches him, confused.

PRUDENCE

What's all that?

Phil pulls the bin outside, stands over it. He pulls out a box of matches and a bottle of lighter fluid.

PHIL

Scraps. All the alternate takes.
All the dead weight.

He douses the tape in the bin with the fluid.

PRUDENCE

What're you doing?

PHIL

Don't worry. We have the album -
the master copy. We have to destroy
everything else. Everything we no
longer need.

PRUDENCE

Don't Phil!

Phil strikes a match, then sets the tapes ablaze. Flames lick up the side of the bin.

PHIL
We should only have the final
version of the album, Prudence. Not
these scraps.

Prudence stares at the flames in horror.

Smoke billows up from the bin, obscuring Phil's face.

PHIL (CONT'D)
We'll listen to the album together
this evening. But first, I have a
surprise for you.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Prudence throws cold water on her pale and haggard face. She looks at the metal sheet bolted across the 'escape route'.

EXT. CELL/PHIL'S HOUSE - DAY

Phil leads Prudence across the yard, his shotgun slung over his shoulder. Prudence's hands are cuffed.

Prudence scans around. She spots her WHITE VAN under a tarp amongst broken-down farm machinery.

At the back door, Prudence notices a small shed at the side of the house -- padlocked -- *probably where he's keeping James.*

Phil opens the door, gestures for Prudence to step inside.

Prudence enters, curious and terrified at the same time.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Prudence winces from the sound of a deafening alarm. An orange light flashes on the wall.

PHIL
Ah God, hold on.

Phil leads Prudence along the hall to an open door.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prudence sees an ELDERLY WOMAN (70's) sitting at a desk. She stares at a monitor showing the CCTV camera angle of the cell.

The elderly woman repeatedly presses a button that makes the alarm sound out.

Phil rushes over to her.

PHIL
It's alright Mam, it's alright,
she's with me.

Phil takes Mother's frail finger off the buzzer. He looks at Prudence, chuckles.

Phil helps Mother out of the chair. She picks up her walking stick, brushes Phil away.

MOTHER
I can walk myself.

PHIL
She doesn't like me fussing over
her too much.

Mother limps over to Prudence, stares at her. Phil follows behind.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Prudence, meet my mother.

Prudence is at a loss for words. She holds out her hand for Mother to shake.

Mother clasps Prudence's fingers with her leathery hand, momentarily.

PRUDENCE
Nice to meet you.

Prudence forces a smile --

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - LATER

Prudence and Mother sit on opposite ends of the table. Stacks of self-help books and music magazines are dotted about the room.

Prudence notices a telephone on the wall, but she averts her gaze in case Mother recognises what she's after.

Phil enters, carrying three plates steaming with food. He lays down the plates for Prudence and Mother, then takes his seat.

Phil digs in, scoffing his food. Prudence prods at her plate. She notices Mother glaring at her.

MOTHER

Why have you brought a whore to dinner?

Prudence jolts in her chair. Phil looks up, embarrassed.

PHIL

No Mam, Prudence works with me, we made an album together in the studio. Remember?

Mother chortles, takes a mouthful of food.

MOTHER

(eating)

He never could find a nice girl to bring home for dinner, that's why he needs a whore like you.

PHIL

Mam. Stop that now. Prudence... isn't like that.

Mother leans towards Prudence.

MOTHER

You know, he's never even danced with a girl. They always thought he was too queer.

Phil sighs.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Remember when you used to peek in the window at me and my fella?

Phil drops his fork on his plate, shakes his head.

PHIL

Mam, Prudence doesn't want to hear your crazy stories.

Mother laughs.

MOTHER

Am I lying? I used to have fellas over. We'd be goin' at it and this one would be gawking in the window at us. At his own mother.

PHIL

I never did that.
 (to Prudence)
 One time I forgot my coat and I was
 seeing if it was on the couch.
 That's why I looked in.

PRUDENCE

Don't worry about it Phil. I
 believe you.

MOTHER

See, he's embarrassed now. He's
 turning red. What's the matter? Are
 you embarrassed that you need a
 whore to sleep with?

Phil turns to Prudence, his eyes pleading.

PHIL

I'm sorry Prudence. I thought we
 could have a nice dinner but she
 ruins everything.

Prudence shrugs, uncertain.

PHIL (CONT'D)

See what you've done?

MOTHER

I call it as I see it.

Mother turns to her food, continues eating. Phil sighs, eats
 slowly.

Prudence glances between them, then looks out the window at
 the shed -- thinking of James, trapped inside.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Phil and Prudence sit side-by-side. Her hands are still
 cuffed.

Phil is slumped over, depressed. The TASER hangs from his
 belt.

She breaks the silence --

PRUDENCE

She's one hell of a personality.
 (pause)
 Your mother.

Phil nods, noncommittally.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)
Aren't we gonna listen to the
album?

Phil shrugs, child-like.

PHIL
I don't care.

PRUDENCE
OK. It's just I'd really like to
hear it. After all this work.

Nothing -- Phil doesn't even look at her.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)
She treats you very badly.

Phil perks up, looks at her --

PHIL
You don't know the half of it. She
used to make fun of me in front of
all the girls in my school. That's
why no girls...
(pause)
Whatever. I don't care about that
stuff anyway. All I care about now
is the album. That's all that
matters in my life now.

Prudence looks at the reel-to-reel box of the album on the
mixing desk. She settles her cuffed hands across her legs.

PRUDENCE
Well, that's all I care about too.
Who cares what people think of you
Phil? Remember what you said
before, you have to stay positive.
You should be savouring the moment,
now that the album is finished.

Phil exhales, shakes off his despondency.

PHIL
You're right. It's just never
ending with her.
(sighs)
I shouldn't ruin tonight. It's only
right that we should listen to it.

Phil stands, steps over to the mixing desk. He holds up the reel-to-reel box, admiring it.

PHIL (CONT'D)
It's like a child to me.

Phil loads the reel-to-reel on the player.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Not to say that the next album
won't be even better.

PRUDENCE
The next one?

PHIL
Yeah, I figure we'll have a little
rest, say for a few weeks, and then
we'll get to work on the difficult
second album, as they call it.

Prudence eyes the taser on Phil's belt, thoughts whirring in her head.

PHIL (CONT'D)
We can take our time with it. No
need to rush anything.

In her minds eye, Prudence imagines what will become of her if she doesn't escape this 'prison'.

She steels herself --

PRUDENCE
You know what your mother was
saying earlier?

Phil bristles at the mention of her name.

PHIL
I thought we were going to enjoy
tonight, Prudence? Why bring her up
again?

PRUDENCE
I know, I know, it's just I was
thinking. She said you'd never
danced with a girl before.

PHIL
So?

PRUDENCE
Is that true?

PHIL
It's not something I think about.

PRUDENCE
Why don't we try it?

Phil turns around, gazes at her, confused.

PHIL
What? Dancing?

Prudence nods, a glowing smile on her face. Phil shakes his head.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Nah, I don't even know how. My mother never taught me.

Prudence stands.

PRUDENCE
Ah come on, I can show you. It's easy.

She approaches him. He backs away against the mixing desk.

PHIL
I'd be too embarrassed.

Prudence grabs his hands, her handcuffs clinking.

PRUDENCE
Don't be silly. It's me you're talking to. No need to be embarrassed.

Phil tries a smile -- deep down he knows he wants to.

PHIL
OK. I'll give it a whirl.

Prudence giggles.

PRUDENCE
Yay, that's the spirit. And I know just the song. Can you guess?

PHIL
The last song?

PRUDENCE
Our last song.

Phil nods, turns to the reel-to-reel and sets up the last song. He hits play -- the slow opening beat begins.

Phil turns to Prudence, grinning. Prudence tries to put her arms around Phil but is encumbered by her handcuffs.

PHIL

Guess I'll have to take these off.
Can't dance with your hands cuffed.

Phil chuckles. He pulls his keys from his belt, unlocks Prudence's cuffs, and then leaves the keys on the mixing desk.

The song begins to build in intensity, in emotion.

Prudence takes Phil's hand, places it on her hip. Gingerly, they begin to move about the room.

Phil dances awkwardly, like an oversized child. He accidentally stamps on Prudence's foot.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Sorry.

Prudence laughs.

PRUDENCE

Don't worry, just concentrate on
you feet -- you're not too bad for
a first timer.

The song has reached a high moment of emotion -- Prudence's lyrics of loss and heartache hitting home.

Phil closes his eyes as he moves -- feeling the music.

Prudence sneaks her hand down Phil's back --

Phil opens his eyes, looks into hers --

PHIL

Prudence, I'm so happy.

PRUDENCE

(feigning a smile)
Me too.

Prudence grasps the handle of the TASER on Phil's belt.

The song crescendos. Then --

Prudence jumps back from Phil as she snatches the taser from his belt. She aims it squarely at his chest.

PHIL

No --

Prudence shoots -- sparks of electricity fly.

Phil collapses on the floor, yelling and spasming. She clenches on the trigger, shocking him again and again.

Phil convulses in agony on the floor. Then --

Prudence stops. Phil lies still, unconscious.

She grabs him by the arms, drags him along the ground, and --

INT. CELL - CONTINUOUS

-- into the cell. As she drags him, Phil groans and flails his arms -- *he won't be out for long.*

She leaves him in the middle of the cell.

Prudence sprints back into the studio as Phil crawls along the floor.

INT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Prudence slams the door closed. She looks across the room, the keys are on the mixing desk. But then --

The door handle shakes.

Phil pushes against it, mumbling, not fully conscious yet.

Prudence can hold it for now, but not for long. The keys are too far away -- he'd get in if she moved away from the door.

She spots her guitar close by. She puts her foot firmly against the door -- stretches across -- and manages to drag the guitar over.

Phil whacks his full force against the door. She barely keeps him at bay.

PHIL (O.S.)

Let me out, Prudence, you'll spoil everything.

Prudence rips a string from the guitar. She loops the string through the latch multiple times. She pulls the guitar string tight -- it holds.

BANG, BANG, BANG -- Phil pounds against the door to no avail.

Prudence runs across to the mixing desk. She removes the album from the reel-to-reel player, pops it into its case, and clutches it under her arm.

She shoves an amp under the window and climbs up, placing the album on the window ledge.

She pulls on the window's handle, but --

It's been nailed shut. No chance of opening it.

She jumps down from the amp, scans around. She spots her guitar, grabs it, and hops back up on the amp.

She swings the guitar with all her might and SMASHES the window open.

She tosses the guitar on the floor, then takes a look back at the cell door -- the guitar string holds fast.

She grabs the album and climbs out the shattered window.

EXT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Prudence scales the fence and hops down on the opposite side. She scans the yard -- it's quiet, no-one about. Her adrenaline pumping.

She bolts across the yard to the house.

She pauses at the door, listens, hears the alarm blaring out. She creeps inside.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Prudence pads softly down the hallway, the alarm blasting in her ears, orange light pulsing.

She comes to the monitor room door, peeks inside --

Mother sits at the desk, staring at the CCTV monitor, bashing the alarm button.

Prudence can see Phil on the CCTV monitor, banging on the studio door. He's still trapped.

Prudence, unseen by Mother, creeps down the hallway and into the kitchen.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Prudence puts the album down on the counter.

She picks up the telephone, dials. She searches the counter and finds some envelopes, picks one up.

EMERGENCY SERVICES OPERATOR
Emergency services, how can I help
you?

Prudence reads from the envelope.

PRUDENCE
I need help, I've been kidnapped.
My life is in danger, I'm at Owl
Farm, New Wood Forest.

EMERGENCY SERVICES OPERATOR
Have you been injured?

PRUDENCE
My boyfriend is here too, I don't
know, he could be.

EMERGENCY SERVICES OPERATOR
Well, I need to --

Suddenly --

Mother appears behind Prudence, knife in hand. The floor
creaks.

Prudence spins around. Mother swings the knife but Prudence
deflects the blow.

They struggle.

Mother swings at her again --

Prudence grabs Mother's arm, shoves her.

Mother falls backwards --

CRACK -- Mother's head splits open on the corner of the
counter top. Brain matter and blood spew out from her skull.

Prudence winces, horrified, as Mother's dead eyes stare back
at her.

Prudence steels herself, she must keep going.

She looks out the window to the shed -- *James* -- then rushes
out the back door.

EXT. HOUSE/SHED - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Prudence sprints to the shed.

She pulls at the rickety shed door. It's locked.

PRUDENCE

James?

She peers through the cracks in the wood -- too dark to see anything.

Prudence slams her shoulder into the door. Harder and harder until -- SMASH -- the door caves in.

INT. SHED - CONTINUOUS

PRUDENCE

James.

Prudence looks around -- paint cans, shovel, bales of wire -- no sign of James.

EXT. HOUSE/SHED - BACKYARD

Prudence stumbles out of the shed, confused.

Something catches her eye -- a smouldering mound of ash behind the shed.

She rushes over to it, stares down at the burnt rubbish and twigs. Amongst this debris she sees -- to her horror --

A human skull.

She recoils in fright, but then moves closer -- her worst fears are realised --

She spots James's PENDANT NECKLACE in the ash.

PRUDENCE

(whisper)

James.

She kneels down, picks up the necklace.

She looks at the inscription -- "TO JAMES, DROPOUTS FOREVER, LOVE PRUDENCE".

She clutches it to her chest -- utterly devastated.

Her eyes well up with tears.

PRUDENCE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

The tears stream down her pale cheeks.

She collects herself, gets up, and makes her way back to the house.

INT. HOUSE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Prudence staggers down the hallway, stops at the monitor room door. She steadies herself against the door frame.

The shock of James' charred corpse threatens to overwhelm her, but she fights through the pain. Then --

She looks at the CCTV screen, shocked.

The cell is empty -- the studio door open --

Phil has escaped.

Prudence runs down the hallway and into the kitchen.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Prudence tries not to look at Mother's disfigured head while she tip-toes over the pool of blood gathering on the floor.

She grabs the album from the counter.

INT. PHIL'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Prudence heads to the back door. Keys hang on a wall rack. She spots her van keys with the SMILEY FACE key-ring. She grabs them.

She edges the front door open, peeks out, ready for Phil to appear at any second. She eyes the van -- then -- bolts out the door towards it.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Prudence makes it to the van. She removes the tarp.

Her hand trembles with fear as she unlocks the door and hops in.

INT. VAN - CONTINUOUS

Prudence puts the album down on the passenger seat. She goes to put the keys in the ignition when --

A tremendous roar comes from the direction of the house.

Prudence freezes -- *Phil must have found his Mother.*

She jams the keys into the ignition, panting -- she only has a few seconds before Phil realises where she is.

She turns the key -- CLICK.

Nothing.

She turns the key again and again but the engine only offers a pathetic splutter.

BOOM!!! A shotgun blast shatters the passenger side window. Prudence ducks, yells out.

PHIL
(screams)
Prudence!

Panicked, she tries the key one more time. Nothing.

BOOM -- another bullet blasts through the side of the van.

Prudence grabs the album.

She can hear Phil's footsteps skulking ever closer.

She scans outside and spies the slurry pit in the distance.

PHIL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Prudence, get out.

Prudence looks at James's pendant necklace, at the album, and then towards the slurry pit.

She readies herself for what she's about to do --

She springs out of the van -- opposite side to Phil -- and races for the slurry pit, the album under her arm.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Prudence, stop.

Phil fires off another shot, misses. Prudence sprints as fast as she can towards the slurry pit.

EXT. SLURRY PIT - CONTINUOUS

Prudence reaches the edge of the slurry pit.

She turns towards Phil, holds the album out over the precipice.

Phil approaches her with his shotgun aimed right at her.

PRUDENCE

(shouts)

Stop.

(pause)

Drop the gun or I'll throw it in.

Phil stops in his tracks.

PHIL

You wouldn't dare.

Prudence holds the album out further.

PRUDENCE

Try me.

Phil hesitates, considers his options.

PHIL

Don't Prudence.

PRUDENCE

Throw me the gun.

Phil eyes the album.

PHIL

If I give you the gun, I need your word you won't destroy the album.

PRUDENCE

Throw me it. Now!

Phil relents -- he tosses the gun at Prudence's feet.

Prudence picks it up, aims it at Phil. He puts his hands up in the air.

PHIL

OK. I did as you asked. Now take the album away from the pit. It's yours now. You deserve all the success you get from it. It's more important than either of us.

PRUDENCE

And James?

PHIL

All that matters is that the album
lives on.

Prudence regards the album -- grimaces at it in disgust.

She raises it up high.

PHIL (CONT'D)

No Prudence. Don't!

She hurls it into the slurry pit.

PHIL (CONT'D)

(screams)

No!

Phil gazes with absolute horror, then --

He jumps into the slurry pit after the album.

He wades through the sludge -- gasping, shuddering -- slowly
sinking up to his neck.

Just as his fingertips touch the album, he disappears under
the surface of the slurry.

Bubbles rise up, then nothing.

Prudence -- exhausted, devastated -- watches as the album
sinks quietly into the excrement.

THE END.