

SCENE 4A – WINGER AT THE RIVER

WINGER holds the radio over a running river as REGGIE enters.

REGGIE

Winger! Winger, I heard you! What are you doing with that? Stop?

WINGER

I'm throwing it in the drink, Corporal. It's worthless. It doesn't transmit.

REGGIE

Oh, but it does! We heard you on the radio at the soda shop!

WINGER

The soda shop? Tammy's place?

REGGIE

Yeah. They were listening to Top 40 radio and then there you were. Plain as day. "One-Delta-Foxtrot!" I was there, I heard you!

WINGER

What good is a radio that doesn't call the Commander?

REGGIE

I don't know. But don't toss it, sir! We might need it. Someone might need it.

Enter PICKLES.

PICKLES

Hey fellas. Winger, don't toss that, I'll take it!

WINGER

It's the property of the United States Army, little miss!

REGGIE

Sir, if the radio only works over AM radio, maybe we should give it to her.

PICKLES

I promise I'll take care of it, Winger.

WINGER thinks.

WINGER

No. I'm keeping it.

Scene.

SCENE 5 – SOMEWHERE OUTSIDE

The HIPPIES are pushing the VW bus toward center stage. There's an old sign that says Fitch Fairgrounds. They stop pushing.

POPPY

That's it. We have to camp here.

INCA

I'm tired.

KENYA pats the VW bus.

KENYA

Poor Phoebe. Poor, poor girl.

POPPY

I can't believe we talk to this bucket of bolts like it's human. I wanna go home.

STASIA

Phoebe doesn't have to be human to have a spirit, Poppy. And you can't go home. We have to be in Toledo tomorrow to meet our new manager!

INCA

New manager?

KENYA

There's no new manager.

STASIA

Yes there is! That man from Tulsa? His name is Randy – or Rudy – and he's real and he's got a cool briefcase, *and he knows people at Capitol Records!*

POPPY

And – he's from Tulsa.

TRIBUTE

I've got a new song.

POPPY

I've got enough for a Greyhound, I'm going home.

TRIBUTE

But I was hoping you'd help me sing it.

POPPY

I can't. I'm sorry, Tribute.

SONG 05: BETTER PLACE

TRIBUTE

The words are in my case.

POPPY gets a lyric sheet from TRIBUTE'S instrument case.

TRIBUTE

WHEN THE WORLD IS DARK
 AND THE DAY IS LONG
 AND YOU'RE FEELING LOW
 LIKE YOU DON'T BELONG

SHE PUTS HER HAND
 UP TO YOUR FACE
 IT LIFTS YOU UP
 TO A BETTER PLACE

TRIBUTE

(To POPPY)

You like it?

POPPY

Yeah.

TRIBUTE

Sing with me?

TRIBUTE & POPPY

AND YA BEEN TOO LONG
 BEIN' ON YOUR OWN
 BEEN NO ONE CALLIN'
 ON YOUR TELEPHONE

THEN A LITTLE HOPE
 AND A LITTLE GRACE
 LIFTS YOU UP
 TO A BETTER PLACE

TRIBUTE

OH, WHOA, GUITARS START PICKIN'
 WHOA, AND THE DRUMS START A-KICKIN'
 WHOA, GOOD TIMES WILL BE STICKIN' AROUND
 'CAUSE WHAT YOU'VE FOUND
 IS A BETTER PLACE

(To POPPY...) Take it!

POPPY

LIKE GOLDEN EAGLES
 WAY UP HIGH
 STEPPIN' OFF THAT LEDGE
 WHEN THEY LEARN TO FLY

STASIA, INCA & KENYA

YOU TAKE THAT CHANCE
 TELL HER HOW YOU FEEL
 AND IT FEELS SO REAL
 IN A BETTER PLACE
 OH, OH

Enter PICKLES, SHARLA & KAYCEE.

ALL

WHOA, GUITARS START PICKIN'
 WHOA, AND THE DRUMS START KICKIN'
 WHOA, GOOD TIMES WILL BE STICKIN' AROUND
 'CAUSE WHAT YOU'VE FOUND
 IS A BETTER PLACE

YOU'RE HOLDIN' ON TO HER HAND TONIGHT
 THE STARS ARE OUT AND THEY'RE OUTTA SIGHT!
 AND THEN IT'S FINALLY TIME TO SAY GOODNIGHT

TRIBUTE

BUT THERE'S STILL THAT MOONLIGHT

SO YOU WALK HER HOME
 ALONG THE RIVER BED
 TO THAT LITTLE HOUSE
 WHERE SHE LAYS HER HEAD

THERE'S JUST ONE THING
 YOU STILL HAVEN'T SAID
 AND WHEN YOU DO
 I KNOW YOU WILL BE

IN A BETTER PLACE

ALL

AND WHOA, GUITARS START PICKIN'
 WHOA, AND THE DRUMS START KICKIN'
 AND WHOA, GOOD TIMES WILL BE STICKIN' AROUND
 'CAUSE WHAT YOU'VE FOUND
 IS A BETTER PLACE
 SO STICK AROUND
 'CAUSE WHAT YOU'VE FOUND
 IS A BETTER PLACE
 THAT'S RIGHT
 A BETTER PLACE

Song ends.

PICKLES

Whoa! What was *that?! That's a hit!*

SHARLA

Yeah!

TRIBUTE

Oh. Really? I mean, it probably needs some work.

PICKLES

No! It's great. I mean it, *that's* a number one!

TRIBUTE

Well, thanks, but...

KAYCEE

Who are you guys?

STASIA

We're The Bellweathers. *Certainly* you've heard of us!

KAYCEE

Nope. Sorry.

SHARLA

But you're really good!

STASIA

Excuse me, but *who* are you?

SHARLA

I'm Sharla, that's Kaycee and that – is Pickles. If Pickles says you have a hit, you should listen to her.

PICKLES

We gotta get this song on the radio. I'll talk to Eddie.

STASIA

Stop! Hold on! First of all – not that song. *That* song was just a thing. You know, a *thing* Tribute wrote – but we haven't voted on it yet.

KENYA

Vote yes!

INCA

Yes!

POPPY

Definitely yes for the radio.

STASIA

No!

PICKLES

Oh, I get it. You guys need a manager.

STASIA

The Bellweathers *are* getting a new manager. And we've already *had* a hit! 'The Mother Earth Song'? I wrote that one.

PICKLES

You need a better name, too. That Bellwishers thing – huh-uh. It's too 1969.

STASIA

Bell-weather's!

SHARLA

(to TRIBUTE)

How about you, what's your name?

TRIBUTE

I'm Tribute.

PICKLES

Ooh! "A Band Called Tribute!" *That's* your new name.

KENYA

Vote yes!

INCA
Yes!

STASIA
No!

PICKLES
Okay, okay...album cover photo...here we go. Kaycee, got your camera?

KAYCEE
Right here!

PICKLES
Sharla, work your magic!

SHARLA
Yeah. Okay. You (*INCA*), come here, like this. You (*KENYA*) stand here, then you (*POPPY*) and Tribute, down in front. Yeah, yeah (*TRIBUTE*), put your hand...there. (*Turns and frames the sky with her hand...*) Then, in fancy, curlicue white letters: *A Band Called Tribute. (To KENYA...)* Can you see it?

KENYA
Oh, yeah, man.

STASIA
Excuse me...

INCA
All day!

KAYCEE steps in front and snaps a picture.

STASIA
Hello! What about *me*?

PICKLES
My friends and I will be your new managers. I'm gonna go talk to Eddie. That song is pure, summertime gold! Can you meet me at the station in an hour?

INCA
Our van is broken down.

PICKLES
Kaycee?

KAYCEE
I'm on it!

KAYCEE climbs under the VW bus.

STASIA

Wait. Hold it. Pickles, or Frickles...or whoever you are. We don't need a manger. We don't *need* to be on the radio!

INCA

Then why are we in this band?

KENYA

I'm not feeling very aligned with your vision, anymore, Stasia.

POPPY

If we can get that song on the radio. I'll stay.

SHARLA

Do you guys wanna walk into town for some sodas? We've got a great place.

INCA, KENYA, POPPY, TRIBUTE

Yes! / Yeah! / Let's go! / Sure!

PICKLES

This way!

Exit HIPPIES except STASIA, PICKLES & SHARLA. KAYCEE remains with the VW bus.

STASIA

What is happening to my band?! This was always *my* band! (*Pause...then to KAYCEE...*) I'm the leader. Don't they know I'm the leader?

KAYCEE emerges holding a broken metal pipe.

KAYCEE

Broken axle.

STASIA

That's sure what it feels like.

Scene.

SCENE 5A – RICK ROCKENSHIRE #1

Rick Rockenshire, in a gown, relaxing by the pool with an umbrella drink, talking on the phone.

RICK

Joleen! Babycakes! How's it going out there?

I can't believe you've already left Memphis – did you see Elvis?

No? Well, he's probably planning his big comeback. 1975 is gonna be his big year, I can feel it!

Listen, Joleen, I'm gonna add a stop on your schedge, okay? Little town called Hoosier Falls.

Apparently, they got this new kid who picks hits. Joleen – *I pick the hits*, understand? We don't need some two-bit country kid messing with the Rockenshire Estate, comprende?

You know what to do. And listen, don't make me come out there!

Naw, I'm just kidding, I'd *never* come out there. Ciao!

RICK hangs up.

Scene.

SCENE 6 – RADIO STATION

EDDIE and PICKLES in the broadcast booth. JINGLE GIRLS are at their microphone.

RADIO JINGLE 6: PICKLES PICKS

JINGLE GIRLS

WHUZ – PICKLES PICKS!

EDDIE

And we're back on the air after way too many dumb commercials! So Pickles, last question – how do you know a song is gonna be a hit?

PICKLES

Well, Eddie, it's the way it rings in my ears. A feeling inside...it's like – the song talks to me.

EDDIE

Songs talk to you, huh? Well, speaking of talking, Ken Karmen is in to read the news and Afternoon Abby is up after that. And the girls are here to sing us into the lunch hour!

RADIO JINGLE 7: NEWS ON THE HOOZ!

JINGLE GIRLS

LUNCH AND NEWS ON THE HOOZ
W-H-U-Z!

EDDIE and PICKLES leave the broadcast booth.

Enter BALIN. NORA and DORA collect their things and begin to exit.

NORA

Hi Mr. Balin!

BALIN

Hi girls.

DORA

Like your tie, Mr. Balin!

Exit NORA and DORA.

BALIN

Meh!

FLORA

Hey! Wait for me!

Exit FLORA.

EDDIE

Mr. Balin, I wanna put Pickles on every day. The audience loves her.

PICKLES

They do? They love me?

BALIN

Eddie, number ones only come out once a week. Why would we do that?

EDDIE

Because – I got a call from the Heinz company yesterday. You know, Heinz Ketchup? Turns out they also make *pickles* – and relish, right?

BALIN

So what?

EDDIE

Mr. Balin, they want to pay *big money* to sponsor, "The Heinz Pickles 'Pickles Picks' Relish the Radio Hour on WHUZ!"

PICKLES

Radio *hour*?

BALIN

Hour? Eddie, if Heinz wants in, we'll do *three hours*!

PICKLES

Three hours!

PICKLES faints and falls to the floor.

BALIN

That's great, Eddie. Listen, I want you to meet that new girl I hired. You'll love her. Stay right here.

Exit BALIN.

EDDIE

Hey, kid. You might wanna get up for this. Pickles? Hello?

PICKLES

I'm sorry, I...did someone say three hours? A day? On the radio?

EDDIE

It's a fast moving world, Pickles. But don't worry, bad stuff happens, too.

PICKLES

(woozy)

Oh, boy.

Enter BALIN and MIRANDA.

BALIN

Eddie, Pickles, this is Miranda.

MIRANDA

Hi Mr. Glass. Oh, hello, Margaret.

PICKLES

Miranda?!

BALIN

You two know each other?

MIRANDA

Know each other? We practically *grew up* together. Margaret here is a real – pickle.

PICKLES

(Grits her teeth...) Grrrrrrr.....

BALIN

Oh, I get it – Pickles. Radio name. Yes, very nice, very nice.

EDDIE

Listen, Miranda, one word: coffee.

MIRANDA

Coffee?

EDDIE

Black, no cream, no sugar. Pickles, I'll see *you* in the morning. Get here at seven!

Exit EDDIE.

BALIN

Eddie! Wait, wait up...!

Exit BALIN.

PICKLES

What're you doing in my radio station?

MIRANDA

Your radio station? You come crawling in here with your leech tentacles and that little pixie-dust story about picking hit songs? You don't know anything about music! You're just a loser with a record player!

PICKLES

I'm not a loser! This is my gig, my radio station! They want me for three hours, now. And my name is Pickles!

MIRANDA

Temper, temper, Margaret. 'Cause you know what? I'm gonna be your new boss.

PICKLES

My boss? You can't be my boss. And besides, you hate radio!

MIRANDA

This radio station is my ticket outta here. First I'm gonna learn Mr. Balin's job. Then I'm gonna take Mr. Balin's job. Then, I'm gonna –

PICKLES

Oh my god, you're not gonna kill him, are you?

MIRANDA

Gross!

PICKLES

You hate radio!

MIRANDA

No, ding dong. I hate you. But by this time next year, I'll be in Los Angeles working for Rick Rockenshire.

SONG 06: PICKLES & MIRANDA BATTLE SONG

TO BE WRITTEN.

*The girls end in a combative embrace, then throw each other off.
MIRANDA exits.*

Enter BALIN and JOLEEN.

BALIN

So nice of you to drop in again, Joleen. We always love a visit from –

JOLEEN

Mr. Rockenshire has five new records for summer, all of which will be number ones, and *on these dates*. Here's the schedule.

BALIN

So on these weeks, these songs will be number one.

JOLEEN

I'm so glad you can read from a list, Mr. Balin. We want six to seven plays a day in their 'number one' week.

BALIN

Six to seven plays a day? Joleen, we never play a song more than –

She takes out an envelope, opens it and reveals a large amount of cash.

JOLEEN

Perhaps *this* will persuade you...Mr. Balin.

BALIN

Well, see, uh...I just hope they're good songs, Joleen.

As JOLEEN speaks, BALIN fondles the cash in his hands, not paying attention to her at all.

JOLEEN

Good songs? *Who cares if they're good songs?* In ten years, people will be playing these songs at their wedding receptions, going on and on about how these songs *shaped their youth!* People love whatever we tell them to love, Mr. Balin. Why else would we be in radio?

BALIN

I'm sorry, what was that?

PICKLES

Mr. Balin, no! That would be lying!

BALIN

Pickles! Joleen, this is –

JOLEEN

Pickles. Of course. *You* must be that new 'song picker' girl, aren't you? Pickles Picks.

PICKLES

Yes, ma'am! And I'm real good at it, too.

JOLEEN

Well, then, this should make your life so much easier. Now you can just check the list!

PICKLES

But I don't need a list, what fun would that be? And why all the cash?

BALIN

Pickles, Joleen's just paying back – a loan! That's right. And Joleen, thank you for paying me back. There.

SONG 07: THAT'S JUST THE WAY THINGS ARE

PICKLES

I smell a rat.

JOLEEN

My dear, the engine of radio doesn't turn on its own. Every wheel just needs a little...grease!

WELL, YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD THE SAYING
THAT MONEY MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND
AND ROUND AND ROUND AND ROUND
IT'S TRUE AND SO PROFOUND

THIS LITTLE SONG THAT I AM SINGING
IS PLAYED IN EVERY STATION
IT'S NOT A QUID PRO QUO, OH NO,
IT'S MORE OF A FLIRTATION

PICKLES

Yeah? Looks like a payoff to me.

BALIN

Pickles! Bite your tongue!

JOLEEN

THE PROBLEM IS PERCEPTION
TO YOU, ALL LIFE IS FREE
BUT THINK A LITTLE MORE, MY DEAR
AND SURELY YOU WILL SEE

YOU'LL NEVER GET A GUMBALL
FROM OUT THAT TINY SPOUT
WITHOUT A SHINY NICKEL
TO GET THAT GUMBALL OUT

OH YES!

THAT'S JUST THE WAY THINGS ARE
 SO DON'T BE DUMBSTRUCK
 YOU THINK YOU'LL WANT A FANCY CAR?
 OH, YOU'RE GONNA NEED AN ARMORED TRUCK

'CAUSE THAT'S THE WAY THINGS ARE
 THERE'S A PRICE IN YOUR WAY
 SO DON'T BE SURPRISED OR YELL "LIES,"
 OR HAVE PUPPY DOG EYES 'CAUSE SOMEDAY
 YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO PAY!

BALIN

You see, Pickles, it's important that the we lead people to the music that they're going to learn to love.

PICKLES

It's not the radio's job to tell people what they like, they can decide for themselves!

JOLEEN & BALIN

Darling – seriously?

PICKLES

WHEN PEOPLE LOVE A SONG
 IT'S FOR HOW IT MAKES 'EM FEEL
 THE SYSTEM CAN'T BE RIGGED
 THE MUSIC SHOULD BE REAL

LED ZEPPELIN AND THE STONES
 WOULD BE SHOCKED IF THEY COULD SEE
 YOU SELLING OUT THEIR ART
 WITH YOUR CRAVEN BRIBERY

THAT'S NOT THE WAY THINGS ARE
 OR THE WAY THEY SHOULD BE
 LISTENERS AREN'T LITTLE MINIONS
 THEY'VE GOT THEIR OPINIONS
 THEY KNOW WHAT THEY HEAR AND SEE

Dance break (guitar solo)...

JOLEEN & BALIN

THAT'S JUST THE WAY THINGS ARE
 OH, SO DON'T BE A PUTZ

PICKLES

You think I'm a putz?!

JOLEEN & BALIN

YOU THIHNK YOU'VE GOT MORALS AND VALUES AND GUTS
BUT GUTS AIN'T ENOUGH!

'CAUSE THAT'S THE WAY THINGS ARE
IT ALL COMES AT A COST
YOU MIGHT THINK YOU'RE ABOVE IT
BUT UNLESS YOU CAN LOVE IT
WELL YOU WON'T GET TOO FAR
THAT'S THE WAY THINGS ARE

PICKLES

NOT THAT WAY THINGS SHOULD BE

MIRANDA

BUT THE WAY THAT THEY ARE

PICKLES

SAYS WHO?

JOLEEN

SAYS ME!

Song ends.