

FADE IN

EXT. - WINDING RURAL ROAD, JEFFERSON, NEW JERSEY - DAY

MUSIC: Dean Martin's "Money Burns a Hole in My Pocket"

A classic cherry-red 1960 Cadillac El Dorado Biarritz convertible winds its way up the grade of a hill towards the CAMERA.

ANTHONY JOSEPH "UNCLE TONE" MANCINI sings along with Martin:

MR. MANCINI (V.O.)

"Money - burns a hole in my poc-ket  
How I wish I had millions of  
dollars and nothing to do  
But just buy - pretty presents for  
you!  
Money burns a hole in my poc-ket  
How I wish I had oil wells in Texas  
to keep me supplied,  
With money while I sit by your  
side!"

DRIVER'S POV through the windshield in a tunnel of lush foliage, his hands in silhouette on the steering wheel.

His right hand reaches over and turns up the volume -

MR. MANCINI (V.O.)

(louder)

"Every day of the week  
We would visit the store -  
All the beautiful things you see,  
would soon be yours!  
'Cuz money - burns a hole in my  
poc-ket  
So I'm bringing your perfume and  
candy and roses of red  
And wishing they were diamonds  
instead!"

He approaches a service station where a YOUNG BIKER is filling up his motorcycle. He waves -

YOUNG BIKER

Yo - Uncle Tone!

From the PASSENGER'S SEAT profile -

Mr. Mancini is a robust 68 years old. Tanned with graying hair- and strikes a movie-star handsome profile.

He smokes a small Italian DeNobli rum-soaked cigar while singing along with Dean Martin.

HOLD SHOT ON Mr. Mancini singing

The music fades, and we HEAR the clinking of cocktail glasses in the background as in a NIGHT CLUB. A round of applause.

Then Mancini's VOICE-OVER while he drives:

MR.MANCINI(V.O.)

Thank you! Thank you ladies and gentlemen. You're very kind. Thank you! It's great to be here tonight!

He employs an old Sinatra/Martin Vegas nightclub joke:

MR. MANCINI

How'd all you people get into my room?

(laughter)

ON SCREEN: The truck enters an old narrow trestle bridge where kids sit on the railing, their fishing lines dropped into the stream below. They too recognize the old red truck and its affable locally notorious driver.

FISHING KIDS

(shouting, in unison)

Uncle To-o-o-o-ne!

He waves and offers them a toot on the horn.

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)

I guess eventually everyone who arrives up here has a story to tell, and I'm certainly no exception. I've been very blessed in my life. Very blessed indeed - as you are about to see the hear.

As he truck passes the local Catholic church, he blesses himself.

INSERT: Tight on his cell phone ringing on the seat, it's green call light blinking.

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)

So let's begin. I was driving back to the lumberyard that bears our family's name in Jefferson New Jersey near Lake Hopatcong.

A voice from the "heavenly nightclub" yells out "Yo 'Jersey!"

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)  
 Eyyy! We got some folks here from  
 Jersey here tonight!

IN THE CADILLAC, Mancini suddenly clutches his chest and  
 shakes his head as if try to clear his dizziness.

He tosses the cigar out the window -

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)  
 I was day-dreaming about our  
 upcoming summer vacation. The  
 Mancini family has always spent  
 summers in Point Pleasant.  
 (a beat)  
 So - everybody ready for the aroma  
 of warm salty air, suntan lotion  
 boardwalk creosote?

Wild cheers and applause.

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)  
 Okay then - hop in! Let's take a  
 ride 'down the Shore.

The CADILLAC veers into a shallow ditch. It lists on the  
 left side. Mancini slumps forward on the horn that sounds  
 continuously.

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)  
 Marrone! Hold on a minute, folks.  
 looks like we got a little problem  
 to deal with first ...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. - MANCINI LUMBERYARD - JEFFERSON, NEW JERSEY - DAY

A sign above the sales counter reads: "MANCINI LUMBER"

The retail shop is a bustling hardware/lumber store full of  
 customers buying supplies for summer homes on the lake.

ANGELA "ANGIE" MONTEFIORE is 32, and the manager. She's a  
 pistol. She writes up and order, talks on the phone cradled  
 between her neck and shoulder and chews gum - all at once.

ANGIE  
 C'mon, Uncle Tone ... an-suh ya  
 phone, huh? Puh-leeese ...

AT ROADSIDE - SAME TIME -

The motorcyclist arrives at the accident. He dismounts and approaches the nearly overturned truck.

YOUNG BIKER  
 (terrified)  
 UNCLE TONE! Uncle Tone - y'alright?  
 Oh man ... hold on - help's comin'!

ON MR. MANCINI slumped over, out cold. His phone continues to ring.

BACK TO THE LUMBERYARD -

Angie drums her pencil on the counter.

Enter DEAN ANTHONY MANCINI, 30, known as "Dino". He is a stocky kid, handsome like his father - and he knows it.

He wears a tight black t-shirt to exhibit his athletic physique, blue jeans and a red shop apron.

DINO  
 Ange - where the hell's Pop? Brian  
 and me need to run some material  
 down to some lakefront asshole  
 who's breakin' my balls about his  
 friggin' dock material.

Angie cradles the phone in her neck.

ANGIE  
 I'm tryin' t' get him on his cell  
 phone. He ain't answerin'. Probably  
 singing along with Dean Martin  
 blarin' on that new CD player he  
 had installed.

DINO  
 (laughs)  
 Yeah, that sounds like the old man!

ANGIE  
 This ain't funny ... I told you  
 that sound system was a bad idea.  
 Th' phone's ringin' off the hook  
 and he can't hear it!

AT ROADSIDE, SAME TIME -

The paramedics have arrived and are removing Mr. Mancini from the Cadillac to the EMS van.

PARAMEDIC

Mr. Mancini - can you here me?  
We'll get you outta here, sir. Just  
hang on ...

They get him on a stretcher and slide him into the ambulance. As they do, he mumbles ...

MR.MANCINI

(weak voice)  
Tell em ...

PARAMEDIC

You awake, sir ...

The tow truck hooks up the Cadillac to extract it from the ditch.

MR. MANCINI

(full voice)  
Tell em to be careful. That's a  
rare El Dorado. It's only got  
18,000 miles on 'er ... quad  
headlamps, power seats ...

PARAMEDIC

Don't worry, sir ... they'll be  
careful. Let's just get you down to  
St. Clare's an' get you checked  
out.

They close the door and speed off.

LUMBERYARD, SAME TIME -

Dino plucks a jelly donut from a pink bakery box and clamps it in his mouth while he pours another cup of coffee.

Angie gives up on the phone and slams it down in the cradle on the wall beside her.

ANGIE

Two bits he's rehearsing his night  
club routine an' smokin' those  
goddamn cigars.

DINO

Two bits? Here ya go!

He flips her a quarter that she deftly snatches in mid-air. She drops it into a change cup.

ANGIE  
(mumbles, to herself)  
I got a bad feelin' about this -

CUT TO:

EXT. - MANCINI HOME - OUTDOOR GARDEN - DAY

The Mancini home is a lovely old turn-of-the-century home overlooking Lake Hopatcong.

CONCETTA "CONNIE" MANCINI, 36, stakes up tomato plants in neat rows in a beautifully tended vegetable garden. She wears shorts, a floral blouse and garden gloves.

Her auburn hair is cut short under a Yankees baseball cap. She wears fashionable Ray-Ban sunglasses.

In the b.g., on a portable boombox, the Yankees game.

Her flip-phone rings. She notes the caller ID.

CONNIE  
(cheerfully)  
Hey Dino! How's my favorite  
brother today?

Her pleasant expression turns serious. She removes her sunglasses, propping them up over the bill of the cap.

CONNIE (CONT'D)  
When ... where is he, Dino?  
(pause as she listens)  
Okay, now calm down. Call Rosalie  
and Uncle Pete. I'll see you at St.  
Clare's. Take it easy. Everything  
will be okay. 'Love you, Dino.

She flips the phone closed, grabs her coffee cup and the boombox, and runs up towards the house.

CUT TO:

INT. - ST. CLARE'S HOSPITAL - DAY

TIGHT on Connie's soft hand, bearing a simple gold band, contrasted with her father's weatherbeaten old paw.

A plastic hospital admittance band around his thick wrist.

TIGHT on Mr. Mancini's face. His eyes closed. An oxygen tube set in his nostrils.

Connie leans in close to whisper in his ear.

CONNIE

Easy, now, Pop. We've been here before, right? With God's help, we'll get through this again. Everyone's on their way down.

She combs back his silver gray hair with her delicate fingers.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

Just rest easy.

We HEAR Mr. Mancini's VOICE-OVER as Connie rests her head on his shoulder.

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)

(soft, gentle voice)

I knew you'd be the first to get here, Concetta. I can always count on you.

Connie places a soft kiss on his forehead.

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)

Thank you, sweetheart.

CONNIE

'Love you, Daddy.

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)

'Love you, too. Ti'amo.

(turns a slight smile)

CONNIE

There you go! Can you hear me?

TIGHT again on their hands together. He exhibits a slight grip - and a twitch.

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)

Yes, I hear you. Fetch me a cold one, huh?

Again, she smooths his hair.

CONNIE

(whispers)

I'll bet you'd like a nice cold beer about now. Me too!

(MORE)

CONNIE (CONT'D)

Tell you what - soon as they let you out of here, we'll sit on the porch with a cooler full of 'em. Just you and me, okay?

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)

An' a couple meatball sandwiches from Sal's.

Suddenly, the mood is broken by the arrival of visitors.

Dino and ROSALIE MANCINI BERGMAN, 40, enter the room with faces of stone.

Mascara streaks run down Rosalie's face from tears.

Dino props her substantial heft upright as if she would otherwise fall over and collapse.

Mr. Mancini lies hooked up to monitors. An intravenous tube drips fluid.

Rosalie gasps in horror.

ROSALIE

(faintly, emotionally)

Oh my gawd ...

Dino puts his hand firmly on Rosalie's shoulder as he rolls his eyes and turns, speaking softly to Connie.

DINO

Eyyy ... how's e' doin'?

Mr. Mancini answers - again, WE HEAR HIM - those on-screen DO NOT -

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)

I was doin' great up 'till now.

CONNIE

He's stable. And I think he can hear us.

Rosalie repeats herself.

ROSALIE

Oh my gawd ...

Dino approaches his father and leans in close, speaking softly.

DINO  
 How ya doin' Pop -  
 (takes his hand)  
 Not so good, huh?

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)  
 I'm doing as well as can be  
 expected, son. Thanks for coming.  
 Now get back to work, and take  
 Rosalie with you.

Dino slides his butt cheek and thigh onto the side of the bed.

DINO  
 Everything's under control down at  
 the store. Don't worry about the  
 business. I'll handle it, Pop. I'm  
 with you now.

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)  
 What is this, the Godfather? You  
 can't handle a bar of soap, Dino.

DINO  
 Don't worry, I'll handle it.

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)  
 I'll handle it. I'll handle it. You  
 sound like a goddam parrot. Angie  
 will handle it, like always. Now  
 get off my bed, back to work - and  
 sell something!

DINO  
 (contritely)  
 I'm with ya, Pop.

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)  
 (frustrated, he yells)  
 NURSE - SECURITY - SOMEBODY!

Then, in the next breath, Dino turns to Connie.

DINO  
 I think I'll step outside for a  
 quick smoke ...

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)  
 Good idea, Luca Brasi. An' keep an  
 eye out for the Barzini's and the  
 Tattaglia's out there, huh?

He shuffles out. Connie takes Rosalie's hand, leading her closer to the bed.

CONNIE  
You okay, Rosie?

Rosalie bathes in Connie's sympathy.

ROSALIE  
Yeah, I'll be fine.

She removes a tissue from her small, glitzy designer purse and blows her nose.

INSERT: Nurse's station as the nurses react to the loud honking nose-blow emanating from Mr. Mancini's room.

BACK IN ROOM -

CONNIE  
How are the kids?

ROSALIE  
Oh fine. They're fine. They're in the Hamptons with Carl this week.

CONNIE  
Things any better with Carl?

Wipes nose again, and sniffles.

ROSALIE  
I don't know ... one minute it's this - next minute it's that. He's being real good financially, thank God. I've just got SO MANY responsibilities, Conn!

Mr. Mancini's been listening.

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)  
Yeah, like waking up in the morning and watching one of Hanoi Jane's old exercise videos or listening to Dr. Phil spew relationship advice.

ROSALIE  
Sometimes I think he really loves me, and sometimes I think he just wants me gone.

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)  
Ya THINK?

Dino slides back into the room.

CONNIE

The kids are doing okay with everything?

ROSALIE

Oh, they are just angels. If it weren't for them, I'd go to pieces.

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)

It's BECAUSE of them, you're a basketcase.

CONNIE

Go ahead, talk to him, Rosie. He may be able to hear you.

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)

A pity, that.

Rosalie tentatively moves in closer to her father, as if making a confession. She blesses herself, and closes her eyes as if to pray.

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)

Oh Christ, here we go ...

Dino, surreptitiously to Connie.

DINO

(whispering)

Somebody shoulda drowned those kids like a sack a' cats. An' that shyster lawyer soon-to-be ex-husband ... fucking asshole!

Connie glares at his foul language.

DINO (CONT'D)

Uh, pardon my French, Con.

CONNIE

Ça ne fait rien, Dino.

DINO

Huh?

CONNIE

That's French for "fuggedaboutit" - but in plain English - watch your language.

Angie enters the room with a small bouquet of flowers.

ANGIE

Hi guys ... how goes it?

She gives Connie a lingering hug, while observing the monitor and the steady beep-beep-beep of the equipment.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

He gonna be okay?

CONNIE

Yes, thank God. They say he'll be able to walk out of here just like before, and the time before that. But now he's really going to have to slow down, and get off those horrid cigars.

DINO

We're gonna hav'ta talk about the shore ...

Back at the bedside, Rosalie continues her litany.

ROSALIE

An' Pop, the kids are praying for you, too.

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)

Rosie, zip it.

ROSALIE

They both send their love. They're in the Hamptons with their father.

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)

'Poor bastard ...

ROSALIE

I think we'll be able to work things out with our new counselor.

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)

The one he's sleeping with?

ROSALIE

It just takes time ... in time, Carl will be able to open up and share his feelings.

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)

I feel nauseous.

Connie, Angie and Dino step out into the hallway to confer.

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)

Oh Jesus - hey - HEY! Don't leave  
me alone in here!

ROSALIE

I've lost some weight too, Pop.

MR.MANCINI (V.O.)

No, Rosalie - just your mind.

ROSALIE

I've been dieting and running a  
little too.

MR. MANCINI (V.O.)

Great. Then how 'bout running along  
- nice to see you!

She gets up, brushes off and smoothes her gray pants suit,  
exhibiting her ample frame.

ROSALIE

Even the kids say I look good!

MR. MANCINI (V.O.)

Don't wear gray, Rosie. If you were  
any bigger, people would be feeding  
you peanuts.

CUT TO:

INT. - HOSPITAL HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Hospital staff stroll by as Connie, Dino and Angie continue  
to discuss the situation privately.

CONNIE

I talked to Dr. DeFranco. He says  
it wasn't a heart attack. It was a  
mild stroke.

DINO

A stroke?

ANGIE

A stroke?

BACK AT BEDSIDE - SAME TIME

ROSALIE

A stroke of bad luck, Pop. That's  
all this is.

(MORE)

ROSALIE (CONT'D)

Carl and I will work this out.  
You've got enough to worry about.

MR. MANCINI

The only thing I'm worried about is  
when you're gonna get the hell out  
of here and leave me in peace.

BACK IN HALLWAY -

CONNIE

His heart condition isn't going to  
help matters. Right now, he just  
needs rest. We need to prepare for  
some immobilization and slurred  
speech that's common with stroke  
victims.

Angie raises her hands to her cheeks.

DINO

JESUS CHRIST!

Connie reacts again to Dino's language.

DINO (CONT'D)

Uh, what I mean is, y'know, slowin'  
down ain't Pop's style.

CONNIE

We're all going to have to pitch in  
on this - even Rosie. We'll all get  
through this as a family.

(emphasizes)

The MANCINI FAMILY!

She smiles, followed long pause to consider that.

BACK AT BEDSIDE -

ROSALIE

I'll be here for you, Pop. Not like  
before. The kids and I will move  
into the guesthouse. I'll do all  
the cooking! You'll be able to  
relax and play poker with the kids  
all - day - long!

MR. MANCINI (V.O.)

Rosie ... 'you see that cord  
attached to the machine that's  
keeping daddy alive?

(MORE)

MR.MANCINI (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Just pull it out of the socket -  
 just give it a good, hard tug!

CUT TO:

EXT. - SEASIDE HEIGHTS BOARDWALK - DAY

The boardwalk is deserted this early in the year.

TOM DELANEY, 38, is the Borough of Seaside Heights city manager.

Tom's a boyishly handsome Irishman, and speaks with a slight Boston accent. He wears navy peacoat and a Red Sox cap.

TIGHT ON TOM as he peers down under the 2X4 planks with a concerned look as an inspection occurs.

TOM  
 See anything?

An unseen inspector hollers up from below.

INSPECTOR (V.O.)  
 WHOA BOY!

TOM  
 "Whoa boy" doesn't sound good.

The inspector pops his head up from below the boardwalk.

INSPECTOR  
 Th' summer crowds are already here,  
 Mr. Delaney. Termites. Millions of  
 'em. Big, well-fed ones.

CUT TO:

INT. - SEASIDE HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS - NIGHT

[AUTHOR'S NOTE: Many celebrities hail from the Garden State. It is the writer's vision to cast this city council scene( a one-day shoot)with former New Jersey elected officials such as; Jon Corzine, Christine Todd Whitman, Bill Bradley, Chris Christie. Everyone has but one or two lines.]

The council is assembled en masse. The council chamber is an 1970's-era wood-paneled room.

The Borough Seal on the back wall.