

ALMOST FAMOUS

INT. BACKSTAGE CREW MEAL - NIGHT

Russell Hammond sits down on a plastic chair with a paper-plate filled with buffet-style food - steak and baked potato. Preoccupied, and several seats away from other crew members. He drinks a glass of milk. Out old friend Sapphire takes the seat next to him, holding a skimpy paper plate of vegetables.

RUSSELL

I feel bad.

SAPPHIRE

Well, at least you feel. That puts you in a higher class of asshole.

They eat in silence. Sapphire looks around. The new breed of groupies eye her, as they cruise Russell on the periphery. They're bolder, flashier. She eyes them back with seniority.

RUSSELL

What did I do?

SAPPHIRE

Well - you can do what the big boys do.

(he looks at her)

Nothing.

RUSSELL

Yeah.

The girls still circle Russell nearby. He's unaware.

SAPPHIRE

You believe these new girls? None of 'em take birth control, and they eat all the steak. She looks sadly at her plate of vegetables.

An ever-sharp mind in last night's clothes, she commands Russell's respect.

SAPPHIRE (CONT'D)

They don't even know what it id to be a fan! To blindly love some silly piece of music... or some band so much that it hurts... please, they're all just after the money. Shoo --

(in their direction)

Go rob a bank! It's more honest!

RUSSELL

Is Penny okay?

SAPPHIRE

The Quaalude Incident. Yeah, it wasn't pretty. She could have died. I always warned her about letting too many guys fall in love with her. I guess I was wrong.

(shrugs)

On of 'em saved her life.

Russell nods.

RUSSELL

Well, it's finally over with Leslie. I'm going to call her.

SAPPHIRE

Let her retire.

(he doesn't respond)

You want to lock her up in a house in Michigan? Please.

(he doesn't respond)

Write her a song someday. She deserves it. Something about that girl brought out the best in a lot of...

(looks around backstage)

... pretty average people. She deserves it...

Russell stares into his crew meal, nodding a little.

SAPPHIRE (CONT'D)

(forward thinking)

... because something tells me twenty years from now, we'll remember her... and not much else.

Russell smiles to himself, knows it's true. Dick passes, placing hands on Russell's shoulders, massaging a little.

DICK

Have a good vacation. I hope the band stays together. Before it all went down the shitter, it was starting to get really good.

Dick claps Russell on the back, and moves on. He turns to Sapphire.

RUSSELL

I'm not going to blame myself. I do make people happy. They just shouldn't get to know me... 'cause it appears to spoil everything.

SAPPHIRE

Don't be so easy on yourself.

RUSSELL

What gives you the right to get this personal with me.

SAPPHIRE

Let's not reminisce.