

OUR JOAN

inspired by the life
of Joan Morrissey

Screenplay
by
Rhonda Buckley

© Media Connections Film Inc.
Producer, Rhonda Buckley
rhondabuckleynl@gmail.com
709-770-5424
www.rhondabuckleyfilm.com

FADE IN:

INT. SADIE OFFICE - DAY

ON SCREEN: ST. JOHN'S, 1975

JOAN MORRISSEY (40) looks at her accolades up close, Juno Nomination, Gold Record: Home Brew.

Her reflection shimmers off the glass. SADIE (40) scurries into her office, and interrupts Joan deep in thought.

SADIE
The launch was a great success.

JOAN
Sure was.

SADIE
You were the first from here
nominated for a Juno.

JOAN
I was, indeed.

SADIE
We've put in more miles to cross
this island.

JOAN
Where's this headed?

Sadie passes Joan an envelope. Joan opens the envelope and the cheque is made out to her for \$38.00.

SADIE
They said they had a lot of
expenses.

JOAN
And I make 38 dollars.

SADIE
If we were men, they would never
pull this stunt.

JOAN
I guess that's what they mean by
fleeting success.

Sadie slams her wrist on the desk.

SADIE
Damn!

JOAN
I had to do it, Sadie, otherwise
we'd be singing to ourselves for
the rest of our lives. You can
only *Thank God We're Surrounded
By Water* so many times.

SADIE
These folks aren't in it for the
songs.

JOAN
They're crooks. Outright crooks.

SADIE
Our first lady of song is going
to topple a big city record
company. Careful.

JOAN
Careful, I am certainly *not*. But
I could land us in court.

SADIE
Court?

JOAN
What odds. It'll be an adventure.

Joan lets out a raucous laugh.

INT. MOLLY & ME LOUNGE - NIGHT

ON SCREEN: MOLLY & ME, TORONTO, 1975

Joan sings to a crowded house. As she walks off stage into the bar she signs autographs, walks past cabaret tables, she greets the audience.

JOAN

*The sea, oh the sea, oh the
wonderful sea, long may she roll
between people and me/ and
everyone here should get down on
one knee, thank god we're
surrounded by water.*

EXT. MASSEY HALL - TORONTO

INSERT: TV NEWS CLIP

Joan receives a Gold Record for *Home Brew*.

ANNOUNCER

50,000 copies sold.

INSERT: JOAN'S ALBUMS AND PHOTOS

GRAPHIC: Joan's albums and photos spiral center screen.

BANNER: Joan Morrissey first Newfoundlander to be nominated for a JUNO.

INT. LEGION CLUB - NIGHT

A cocktail party is in full swing. Gals in stylish dresses, men in tailored suits, martini glasses clink.

AUDIENCE

To Joan... *Our Joan*.

TITLE CARD: OUR JOAN

OPENING CREDITS:

EXT. ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND - DAY

DRONE SHOT: The Island of Newfoundland, ocean waves crash off the cliffs.

Suburban middle-class street. Details of 70's style homes in a row, a family neighbourhood.

FIVE YEARS EARLIER:

INT. JOAN'S HOUSE - MORNING

JOAN (35) sits in front of the TV, folds clothes and watches Sing-Along Jubilee. She wears a 1950's style skirt and beehive hairstyle. Her makeup pops, a classic beauty, like a movie star.

Joan's husband, TOM (36) and SAMMY (7), their youngest, come out of their rooms ready for work and school.

The five older DAUGHTERS run through the door and trip over each other.

Joan looks up to the timer on the stove as it sounds and in one fell swoop pulls the cake from the oven and swirls to grab lunch bags on the counter.

Tom makes his way to the door and Joan passes him the lunches. Sammy lags behind.

SAMMY

Karen's Mom says you're a floozy
cause you sing in a bar.

JOAN

A floozy?

Joan catches Tom's smirk, and Sammy's nervous grin.

SAMMY
What's a floozy?

Joan buttons up Sammy's coat.

JOAN
Karen's mom singing wouldn't put
spare change in the Church plate
on Sunday.

Joan kisses Sammy on the forehead.

JOAN (CONT'D)
We don't call women names in our
house. Now get to school.

Tom turns back and grabs a silver hip flask off the
counter, holds it like a trophy.

Joan catches him out of the corner of her eye.

Tom saunters behind Joan with his hand on her lower
back. He presses his hand to get past her skirt.

TOM
Floozy? You're my floozy.

He leans into Joan as if he's necking with her.

Joan allows the embrace and then turns away. Door
closes on Tom, and Joan returns to fold laundry.

EXT. HOUSE - MORNING

SADIE (35) walks past Tom in the front garden. They
look at each other with contempt.

Tom takes a swig from his mickey of whisky in front
of Sadie, she grimaces with rage.

SADIE
Early for that, isn't it Tom?

Tom takes another swig.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Sadie saunters in and dances across the room.

She tosses the towels from Joan's hand, as she tries to fold it.

JOAN

Any news?

Sadie, pitch perfect, like a cheerleader.

SADIE

Sinbad Hotel are ready to go.

Joan lets out a laugh.

JOAN

We'll hit the road tomorrow. You know I really need this gig.

SADIE

You can do this.

JOAN

I can do this.

SADIE

Will Tom let you go?

JOAN

Tom is Tom.

SADIE

Likes the money.

JOAN

Loves the money.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - MORNING

Joan and Sadie pack up the car, ball gowns thrown over their arms covered in dry cleaner wrap.

Joan still has her hair in rollers.

Tom watches the women from the front steps as he finishes his drink.

He walks to the car.

TOM
Sure, you're not going to
Nashville?

SADIE
What if we were?

TOM
Never know with this one.

Tom slurs, drunk, nods his head to Sadie.

SADIE
Just to Gander for the night.
You'll be alright, my love.

TOM
Right as rain.

SADIE
Joan's a household name, after
all.

TOM
Don't forget to take out your
rollers. Rock and
Roooooollllllers...

Tom laughs. Joan brushes by Tom with a kiss on his cheek and gets in to drive.

SADIE
Don't give up your day job.

INT. CAR - DAY

Joan and Sadie drive away.

Sadie looks in the mirror and checks her makeup.

JOAN

Tom thinks I sing old-timers' songs.

SADIE

Old-timers. What does he know? You sing what you sing.

JOAN

I want our songs to matter. Is that so wrong?

Sadie starts to take Joan's rollers out of her hair.

SADIE

You're better than some old-timer in a fisherman knit sweater. Look at you.

Sadie grabs another roller. Joan squints, as Sadie fusses over her.

JOAN

The legion was almost empty for my last show.

SADIE

You've had lots of radio play since.

JOAN

Tom says it takes a lot more for a woman to fill a legion. For her singing that is.

SADIE

That's what Tom says, is it?

JOAN

You don't want to hear it?

SADIE

No.

JOAN
As long as he lets me go, that's
all that matters.

SADIE
He's with the kids now?

JOAN
He's around. Aggie from next
door will check in.

SADIE
You got those birth control
pills I left you.

JOAN
I did. I got married so fast.
Youngster on the way. You had to
back then.

SADIE
Not much different now.

JOAN
I got married so fast, Mom made
a wedding dress from our
tablecloth.

SADIE
Guess that's not getting passed
down to the girls.

JOAN
We set the table with it every
Sunday.

They laugh.

JOAN (CONT'D)
Hope that crowd shows up tonight.
Tom ...

SADIE
He thinks he's your agent.
Doesn't he?

JOAN
He's mentioned it.

SADIE
Let me know. Cause he'll be the
death of you.

JOAN
He burns through cash. It's
true.

EXT. CAR - PARKING LOT - DAY

SINBAD HOTEL SIGN: Joan Morrissey playing tonight.

Joan and Sadie park in the rear of the Hotel and get
out of the car.

Sadie putters over Joan's hair, takes out the last
roller.

EXT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Joan gets out of the car, pulls off her bathrobe. She
wears a sequenced evening gown.

Joan looks at her reflection in the exterior car
window and side view mirror.

JOAN
Great job on the hair.

Sadie smiles.

SADIE
Ready?

EXT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

They race around the car and Sadie takes the driver's
seat, now acting as a chauffeur.

Joan is radiant, a celebrity, she takes the passenger
seat.

They drive around the Hotel to the front main entrance, get out, and give the keys to the VALET.

VALET
Mrs. Morrissey.

JOAN
Joan. Just Joan, my love.

INT. SINBAD LOBBY - EVENING

Joan walks into the hotel lobby, signs autographs for her fans.

Joan, nervous at first, pushes open the DOUBLE DOORS to the hotel lounge and bustles through the crowd.

INT. LOUNGE - LATER

There are couples standing at high-top cabaret tables, some face and eyes into each other, and others downing drinks.

Air Force crowd in uniforms. Pilots with Gander Airport on their sleeve.

Audience claps, in Joan's mind the applause is thunderous.

Joan shakes hands along the way and then rushes up the stairs and takes center stage to sing.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

JOAN
*I took the bus from Carbonear.
And landed in St John's/ To buy
a shirt for Uncle Dick and myself
some new put-ons/ I thought I'd
stay a day or two. As long as I
was there/So I took the room at
the boarding house on Federation
Square/ She hears a drunken
(MORE)*

JOAN (CONT'D)
*man's hollering and misses a
course of her song.*

Sadie looks on from the side of the stage, mouths the words, as if to help Joan sing.

Audience applause.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Joan dashes through the door. Sadie on her heels, She closes the door and pulls across the chain latch.

They barely get through the door and grab a drink.

SADIE
You, okay?

JOAN
Not exactly what I hoped for.

SADIE
It wasn't bad. Stop being so hard on yourself.

JOAN
Well not bad, isn't really good enough. I need to shine out there. I can own that room. I need to own that room.

SADIE
What's holding you back?

JOAN
Not sure. I fight to be here. I try to run with it. It's hard to command a room that size.

SADIE
Some of those men are not the best.

JOAN

If I can't stand up to the worst of them, I shouldn't be here.

SADIE

That guy in the back hollering. Honestly.

JOAN

I kept my eye on him. I can't let the likes of him mess up my show.

SADIE

You'll get it. I know it.

Joan goes to the washroom to remove her makeup. Sadie lays out her nightgown.

Hard knock at the door - a bang. Sadie rushes to it but keeps the chain across and opens it slightly.

DRUNKEN MAN tries to force his way in. Sylvia pushes back hard on the door against his weight.

DRUNKEN MAN

Joan in here?

SADIE

Get the hell out of here. You drunk.

DRUNKEN MAN

I know Joan is in there. I've been watching her all night.

Sadie barely gets the latch locked. Joan rushes from the bathroom.

JOAN

What the hell? Who's that?

SADIE

A drunkard. That's who.

JOAN
It's him. That man screaming at
me all night.

SADIE
He came to our room. He's got
some nerve.

JOAN
I've had a couple of calls at
home, too.

SADIE
Oh, Joan.

JOAN
Tom will have a fit.

SADIE
Should we call the front desk?

JOAN
No. I don't want there to be a
fuss. People will talk.

SADIE
You're scared.

JOAN
Me? Look at you, pushing that
door on him. He'd be in here
only for you. Doing God knows
what.

Joan looks at Sadie's hand raw from pushing the door.
She gets a face cloth from the bathroom and wraps ice
in it from the ice bucket.

JOAN (CONT'D)
You didn't sign up for this.

Joan presses the cold cloth lightly on her hand.

SADIE
I'm alright.

JOAN
After what you went through with
that bastard husband of yours.
Sorry, maid.

They share a look. Sadie pulls her hand away and holds onto the cloth.

SADIE
You can't go it alone.

Joan reaches for more ice and fills two glasses with whisky.

JOAN
Drink?

SADIE
I'll check the door.

JOAN
Here, something to calm our
nerves.

Sadie grabs her glass.

SADIE
Cheers.

JOAN
Down the hatch.

Joan lays down on the bed but still looks nervous.

Sadie tucks into bed, wraps the cloth tighter and clasps her hands.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Joan is tidying up. Sadie under the covers, one eye open.

JOAN
Sadie, did we see a pool on the
way in?

SADIE

It's 5 a.m.

JOAN

I'd love to go for a swim. How's your hand?

SADIE

My hand is fine. My eyes are shut.

JOAN

Come on, the sun is up.

SADIE

But I'm not up.

JOAN

How many sunny days do we get?

SADIE

True.

Sadie crawls out of bed.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - MORNING

Joan and Sadie try the gate, it's locked.

They find an opening at the back fence, just big enough for them to slip through.

JOAN

(finger to her
lips)

Hush... We'll get caught.

SADIE

Did you sleep?

JOAN

I'm not a great sleeper.

SADIE

Frightened?

JOAN
I can't let a drunken man keep
me down ... You?

SADIE
I'm good. The swelling has gone
down.

JOAN
Let's swim.

Joan jumps in. Sadie eases into the pool. They swim
on their side.

SADIE
That suit's a perfect fit.

JOAN
I'm surprised it can get around
me at all after having six
youngsters.

Joan lies flat on her back in the water.

SADIE
You're lucky to have the girls.

JOAN
They are my everything.

SADIE
Tom's another story. Guess that's
what you signed up for.

JOAN
To honour and obey ...

SADIE
Till death do us part.

Sadie floats gracefully.

JOAN
What about you? Anyone special.

SADIE

No room to spare. Who'd look
after you?

Joan starts to sing the song *Bye Bye Blackbird*.

JOAN

*No one here can love or
understand me/Oh, what hard luck
stories they all hand me/ Pack
up all my cares and woe, here I
go, winging low/ Bye-bye,
blackbird.*

They twirl each other in the pool. Joan puts Sadie up
on her knees so they can spin and make waves in the
water.

SADIE

Grab my waist, my dear.

JOAN/SADIE

*Where somebody waits for me/
Sugar's sweet, so is she. Bye-
bye, blackbird ...*

Joan and Sadie twirl in the pool.

They suddenly hear the guard come. Jump from the pool
and run for the opening in the gate.

They squeeze through the fence just in time.

INT. HOTEL - RESTAURANT - LATER

Joan and Sadie sit for breakfast.

Joan wears a dress suit and matching hat, she stands
out in the restaurant.

She eyes the hotel guests as they pass by in outfits
that are very modern and stylish.

SADIE
You did it, Joan.

Sadie passes Joan the cheque. Joan opens it up and looks pleased.

JOAN
This will help, for sure.

SADIE
I think the line-up went out to the highway.

Joan cuts ham on her plate, and her fake nails get in the way. One breaks and flies over the table, and Joan and Sadie chuckle.

JOAN
I can never get used to all this being gussied up.

SADIE
Get used to it cause it's who you are.

JOAN
It's who I am on stage.

SADIE
You can shoot cans off a fence post at the cabin, anytime.

JOAN
True.

MRS. HALLEY (42) walks over.

Her two CHILDREN wear tartan uniforms with matching buckles in their hair, and carry music songbooks close to their chests.

MRS. HALLEY
Saw your name out front, Joan.

You sing in so many lounges these days.

JOAN

We had a sold-out show.

SADIE

Standing room only.

MRS. HALLEY

Thought you might be here with your girls at the Kiwanis Music Festival.

JOAN

My girls are more into sports. I almost have a softball team in the living room.

A bigger group of young girls in their tartan choral uniforms walk by a sign in the lobby.

SIGN: Kiwanis Music Festival.

MRS. HALLEY

All your talent, and it's just for the men in the barroom. Shame.

JOAN

It's a lounge. Kind of like a cabaret.

MRS. HALLEY

Will you help our choral group at school then? Or is cabaret a bit different?

JOAN

If the choral group started to sing something traditional from our home, I would gladly spend time with the school kids.

MRS. HALLEY

Nothing wrong with the Royal Conservatory of Music, I believe.

SADIE

That's the school's program. Not really our music, is it?

JOAN

My song *Surrounded by Water* is on the radio. They could sing that?

MRS. HALLEY

(ignores her)

I don't get out to the lounges as often as you ladies.

JOAN

You ladies must watch TV. I've got a new show.

MRS. HALLEY

I'll be sure to look it up.

Two young waitress's interrupt.

WAITRESSES

Joan, can we get your autograph, please?

JOAN

Happy to.

Joan signs the photo.

MRS. HALLEY

The young girls call you by your first name.

JOAN

I've been Joan as long as I can remember whether I'm baking bread or singing my heart out.

Mrs. Halley gathers her kids.

MRS. HALLEY

Come along. We must get going.

Joan hollers out.

JOAN

I make a mean loaf, Mrs. Halley,
if you need a recipe.

Mrs. Halley waves her hand halfway in the air. She doesn't look back.

EXT. HOUSE - SAME DAY

Joan and Sadie pull up in the driveway and start to unpack the car and bring in all of the clothes. We hear music from inside. Tom is playing records.

TEENAGERS run to the car.

JOAN

Girls, help bring in your
mother's dresses.

They carry the dresses slung over their arms. MARIE (18) looks with admiration to her mom.

MARIE

How was it, Mom? Was there a
crowd?

SADIE

Line up out through the door.

Your mother was the show.

JOAN

You would've loved it.

MARIE

Maybe I can go on tour with you
someday.

JOAN

That someday comes after your
secretarial diploma. You're
talented, that's for sure.

Marie blushes.

SADIE

Your Mother is right. It's not always the place for a young lady. But it's worth it if you have what it takes.

MARIE

Does Mom?

JOAN

Sadie, stop filling her head with foolishness.

SADIE

Your Mom does have what it takes.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Joan blusters in through the door and lays her dresses across the couch.

She playfully waves the cheque in the air and smiles at Tom. Tom looks eager.

TEENAGERS go outside to play.

Sadie sees their moment from the back door, smiles, and heads back to her car.

JOAN

The show sold out, Tom. I did it.

TOM

I knew you could do it. I told you as much.

Tom slyly takes the cheque for himself.

JOAN

Come on now, you know where that'll end up if it's left in your hands.

Tom ignores Joan and twirls her around as if they are in a movie, romantically starting to dance with her in SLOW MOTION.

INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Sadie sits inside her car and looks towards their living room window, she smiles.

Tom twirls Joan and then pulls her close, intense, and presses her against the window.

He glares over Joan's shoulder, makes eye contact with Sadie in the car, and shows her who's boss.

Sadie sits, watches and catches his eye from the car. Her smile shifts to deep concern.

EXT. BERG'S DRIVE-THRU - NEXT DAY

Joan and the children get ice cream through the window. They are crammed into the car.

EXT. PINK POODLE PUB - DAY

Joan drives past the bar and sees Tom in the distance.

He hangs out the side door. A couple of women are chatting with him.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Joan drives and looks straight ahead to the road to distract the kids from their father.

She eats her ice cream, looks deep in thought, and turns on the radio.

Surrounded By Water is playing.

SAMMY

That's Mom. It's Mom. She's on the radio.

JOAN
 (smiles)
 I'm on the radio.

INT. BELLA VISTA LOUNGE - EVENING

Joan sings *Don't Come Where We're To*. Tom is fixated on Joan.

JOAN
*Oh, don't come where we're to,
 stay where you're at/ On our
 front porch, there ain't no
 welcome mat/We're sick of taking
 sauce from the mainland crew/So,
 don't come where we're at, stay
 where you're to.*

Joan walks off the stage. Tom grabs his coat and hat, ready to go.

JOAN (CONT'D)
 They've asked me to play another set.

TOM
 I'll get another drink.

JOAN
 You should look in on the kids.

TOM
I, should?

Two women, DARLENE (18) and BRENDA (18), walk up.

Tom sidetracked, changes his tune and twirls the young women sharing a waltz.

They are charmed.

TOM (CONT'D)
I can't leave these two young
beauties here to dance alone.
Can I, ladies?

Darlene and Brenda are smitten with the attention.

JOAN
It's a paying gig, Tom.

TOM
I better see that money in the
jar tonight.

JOAN
You know you will.

Tom tilts the last of his drink to the ladies, and
takes his hat off to bid good evening.

Tom blows a kiss to Joan and plays to the crowd.

TOM
I'll see you at home.

Men in the bar cheer Tom on as if he's a lucky man.
Joan plays along and blows a kiss goodbye to Tom.

Sadie grabs another drink, and hurries back.

DARLENE
Hardly seems fair to send your
husband home alone while you're
left with a room of handsome
men.

JOAN
There's work and play, ladies.
I'm here to sing ...

BRENDA
And we're here to play. Do you
do this every night?

JOAN
I *have* to sing. It's who I am.

Sadie walks up and overhears the conversation.

SADIE
You're allowed to have a
profession, ladies, and be a
housewife.

DARLENE
Just seems like double the work.

I'm here to find a husband, and that'll be my job.

JOAN
You're still young. Maybe you'll
have a dream and take a chance
someday.

BRENDA
Maybe.

JOAN
It's worth it.

BRENDA
No matter what the cost.

DARLENE
Who knows what your man could
get up to?

JOAN
I'll take my chances. My singing
comes first.

SADIE
It's a small town, but you can
make a name for yourself in
showbiz. Like Joan.

BRENDA
We're just trying to find a nice
guy. That's all.

JOAN
You're way more ambitious than
I'll ever be.

SADIE
Keep an open mind.

BRENDA
I see some guys from the Harbour
Fleet.

Brenda and Darlene scurry over to catch up with the
young men. Sadie hollers out after them.

SADIE
Don't settle.

Joan heads to the stage, and the women go over to the
bar, eyeing a group of navy officers.

INT. SADIE'S CAR - NIGHT

Joan and Sadie drive away from the bar.

JOAN
Great night.

SADIE
Those young gals. Something
else, hey?

JOAN
It's pretty simple. Get a man,
and it's all grand. Even my man.

SADIE
Tom?

JOAN
They seemed pretty familiar with
him and not just from tonight.

SADIE
I guess he's always in the bars,
whether you're singing or not.

JOAN
Do you see him?

SADIE
You must know how Tom is. With
the young ones, I mean.

JOAN
That's enough now, Sadie. Pull
straight up ahead. There you
are.

Joan points up ahead.

Sadie pulls up to the curb and parks in front of
Joan's house.

Joan gets out, still with the car door open.

SADIE
Don't end up like me, Joan,
after my husband. He'll ruin
you.

JOAN
Drive safe, my dear. I'm home
now.

Joan closes the car door and walks towards the house.
Sadie drives away in silence.

INT. LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

Joan comes through the door. She glances at the couch
where Tom is passed out.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

She tiptoes to their bedroom and lays down, curled up
like a little girl on her side with her hands clasped
under her chin.

She sits up, reaches for a notebook on her bedside
table, and grabs her guitar from the corner.

JOAN

*Make the world go away/ And get
it off my shoulders/Say the
things you used to say/ And make
the world goes away/Do you
remember when you loved me/
Before the world took me astray/
If you do then forgive me/ And
make the world go away/ She lays
the guitar down and looks at her
notebook.*

NOTEBOOK:

-- Tuesday: played the Legion, felt good.

-- Thursday: sadness came over me. Felt dark. Carried on with my day.

-- Friday: very dark feelings.

-- Tonight: dark thoughts continued after the show.

Joan grabs a dictionary from the side of her bed and looks up the word depression.

READS: Depression a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Depression a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act.

Joan lays the dictionary down.

JOAN (CONT'D)

It can't be.

INT. KITCHEN - NEXT MORNING

Joan is up early, house is tidy, lots of baking lines the counter. Tom comes to the table, still groggy.

TOM
I didn't hear you come in.

JOAN
You must've been beat. You were asleep when I got in.

TOM
Coffee?

Joan points to where it always is, on the stove. She pours Tom a cup.

JOAN
I have a meeting.

TOM
Here?

JOAN
Yes. There's muffins.

TOM
This early? With who?

JOAN
Sadie.

TOM
What's she got to offer now?

JOAN
I'll fill you in.

TOM
If anyone's your agent - it's me. Got that?

Tom grabs a few dollars from Joan's jar of bar money she keeps up in the cupboard.

JOAN
We might need one soon.

Tom, annoyed, heads to the door.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Joan sits in front of the TV, she folds clothes.

TV AD: *Ladies' stockings, a modern invention with support, pantyhose. You don't have to wear a girdle.*

Joan watches, captivated.

Sadie walks in without knocking. She carries champagne.

Joan is on the phone with a VOWR reporter.

INTERCUT: PHONE CONVERSATION

VOWR REPORTER
I heard you're a celebrity,
signing autographs. What's it
like?

JOAN
I said I can do it, and that's
why I can. It's no more than
folding laundry or baking bread.
I always knew I could do it. And
so, I do.

VOWR REPORTER
Nothing more to it than that.
We'll be by for a photo...

Joan hangs up.

Sadie is careful, hush in the air from their chat last night about Tom.

Joan awkwardly breaks the silence.

JOAN
 Sadie, see those stockings on TV
 I told you about, pantyhose with
 support built right in? You
 don't even need a girdle.
 Imagine.

Joan looks up and sees the Champagne.

SADIE
 Stop folding clothes and your
 chatter about pantyhose. You've
 been invited to sing at the
 Molly and Me Lounge in Toronto.

JOAN
 Toronto!

SADIE
 And to star on Canada AM. This
 is big.

Joan stops folding clothes.

JOAN
 I should also meet with Decagon
 Records. The first album is
 selling.

SADIE
 Like hotcakes ...

JOAN
 So, I can get the family out of
 this rental.

SADIE
 And build your own home?

JOAN
 Any luck, I'll be on this side
 of the sod when we move in.

Joan sings a verse of *Heading Eastbound*. Sadie and
 Joan waltz.

JOAN (CONT'D)
*I came here to the city. To see
all those pretty lights/ The
buildings and the people we're
exciting to my mind...*

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

Joan and Sadie exit the airport and see a car waiting for them.

JOAN
That plane is something. Like a
washing machine on the rinse
cycle. Whoa, those vibrations.

SADIE
And here I thought you were busy
washing clothes.

Joan and Sadie laugh.

JOAN
I wasn't scared at all. Can you
believe it, my first time on a
plane?

SADIE
It's not old hat for me. I've
only had a few rides now.

EXT. TORONTO CITY STREET - DAY

Joan and Sadie get out of the car and walk onto a
bustling city street.

They both look high up to the skyscrapers.

CLOSE UP: Window display shows stockings being sold
like the ones Joan saw on TV.

Joan points to the window, and they both giggle.

Joan and Sadie walk until they see the *Molly and Me Lounge*.

EXT. MOLLY & ME LOUNGE - DAY

SIGNAGE: Molly & Me Lounge ... Joan Morrissey has come to town! Playing This Weekend.

Joan looks glamorous. Sadie has an appointment book, she flips through her notes.

SADIE

You have performances at *Molly & Me*. A meeting with Decagon records. And I am the producer of your Canada AM Live special...

JOAN

I can't believe I'm here.

SADIE

I can. I knew you'd be perfect.

JOAN

Anything I should know?

SADIE

It's live to air. I think that's all.

JOAN

I'll try to forget that!

Joan and Sadie laugh as they enter the Lounge.

INT. MOLLY & ME LOUNGE - LATER

The manager, DOUG (52), meets Joan and Sadie.

DOUG

I'm Doug. Owner and manager.

JOAN

This is my good friend Sadie.

SADIE

Hey, Doug.

DOUG

Sadie. You must have some gumption to get you gals up here. First time on a plane?

JOAN

'Gumption'. You're not long left home then.

DOUG

There's a few of us around.

SADIE

Transplants. Huh?

DOUG

Sadie, you got Joan the gig with Canada AM.

JOAN

She's the producer.

DOUG

A lot of viewers. Canada AM has almost 300,000.

JOAN

That's close to the population of Newfoundland.

DOUG

You and Sadie settle in. Need anything?

JOAN

I'm meeting with a record company. That alright?

DOUG

Sure, there's a table by the stage. I know the boys.

SADIE

I bet.

Joan and Sadie sit at a table at the back.

INT. LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

RICHARD QUINN (56), Decagon Record Company executive, shows up in a business suit, carries a briefcase and makes his way to the back table.

He nods his head to Doug along the way.

Joan and Sadie sit at a table. He joins them.

RICHARD
I'm with Decagon.

JOAN
Richard.

RICHARD
We're very keen on your singing.

We have the recording you sent.

JOAN
Sadie sent it.

RICHARD
Now that I see you in the flesh,
I can see what all the fuss is
about.

JOAN
I have a bit of a following at
home.

RICHARD
Those recordings are good. I'd
say you'd have many more fans if
you're willing to put the time
in.

JOAN
I believe I've put the time in.

RICHARD

No offense. There are four more albums, for sure.

JOAN

Do you think there are that many?

RICHARD

We would take care of all the studio costs, recordings...

Joan looks at Sadie. Sadie is playing it cool.

JOAN

I'm one of the first ones from home to record an album up here.

RICHARD

We would have exclusive performance rights and include your recordings from the past two years, which is a good thing.

JOAN

So, all my songs.

RICHARD

In perpetuity, of course. Because we'd be the ones who'd promote you.

Joan glazes over. Sadie takes notes.

JOAN

You know best. Do you think the records will sell?

RICHARD

We'd have a big launch in St. John's, and we'd all attend.

JOAN

You'd all come to town?

RICHARD

And the good news is we'd start right away. Only six days to record the whole thing.

JOAN

Six days is a long time to be away from my kids. Tom is on his way up.

RICHARD

Who is Tom?

JOAN

My husband. I guess our neighbour would look after the kids, again.

RICHARD

Tom, your husband, is fine. There's no agent, right?

JOAN

No. No, agent.

RICHARD

Good. Works better that way.

Richard gets up.

Joan and Sadie follow Richard and start to whisper as they walk.

JOAN

What should I do, Sadie?

SADIE

We'll take a look at it.

RICHARD

You're something special, Joan. But you know that.

JOAN

(smiles)

Thank you, Richard.

RICHARD

We'll drop the paperwork by your hotel.

JOAN

The national broadcast makes me nervous.

RICHARD

That's good promotion. It'll help our record sales.

Richard turns to walk away as he finishes his sentence.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

You should be proud of yourselves. Young ladies taking on this big city.

JOAN

Not that young.

SADIE

Speak for yourself.

Joan and Sadie are overwhelmed and giddy.

INT. WINCHESTER HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY

Joan and Sadie sit with the big stack of paperwork from Decagon.

CLOSE UP: Decagon company name and logo.

SADIE

It says we record upfront. There is a per-unit stipend delivered upon cash earned on each album sold.

JOAN

Makes sense. I think it makes sense.

Joan sees some musicians sit across from her, they eye their paperwork and hold a stack of contracts with the same logo. Guitar cases lean against their chairs.

MARGIE (30) and ROY (38) turn to Joan and Sadie.

MARGIE

You got the same stack of paperwork as us, it looks like.

ROY

Pretty heavy reading, hey? Where you from?

JOAN

Newfoundland. You?

ROY

Winnipeg.

Joan turns to Margie.

JOAN

Are you singing long?

MARGIE

They say, since before I could talk. You?

JOAN

I won a contest as a child. In the last couple of years, it's been taking off. Richard says it's worth a shot.

Sadie looks out from under the paperwork.

SADIE

There's a lot to it. Do you think they're on the up and up?

ROY

We've had quite a few successes with them. Thousands of records sold.

JOAN

Thousands?

MARGIE

Records sold are everything.

JOAN

Some men they'd piss on your leg and tell you it's raining. I guess we can trust them...

Roy, taken aback, laughs out loud.

Sadie looks up with a keen ear, a serious look on her face as she looks at the contracts.

INT. MOLLY & ME LOUNGE - NIGHT

Joan is on stage singing. Doug, Richard and Sadie are at the bar.

Tom walks in and joins them.

JOAN

*I came here to the city to see
all those pretty lights/ The
buildings and the people we're
exciting to my mind/ I've seen
it all and had a ball. But now,
at last, I find I'm going back
to the good life that/ I left
long ago/ I'm heading eastbound
out of this big town that they
all call Toronto...*

Joan walks off the stage to applause.

Richard introduces Joan to his Nashville associate, KIRK MOLLOY (46).

Tom stands alongside, dapper, could be taken for a Toronto businessman.

RICHARD

Kirk, this is our Canadian Patsy Cline, rest her soul.

KIRK

Mrs. Morrissey, Joan, is it? You certainly have a voice for Nashville.

JOAN

You've met my husband, Tom, I, see?

TOM

Came straight to the bar. Wouldn't miss Joan in the big city.

RICHARD

It's good timing to have Kirk here. We've just got Joan's record deal in place and maybe a little TV.

TOM

Her shows are sold out almost every night.

JOAN

I signed the papers, Richard, they arrived when we got back.

SADIE

We looked over it. It was all there. Ready to sign.

RICHARD

Good to get this housekeeping done.

TOM

You signed already? Hope we don't lose our new house. Just bought...

JOAN

I have a feeling they're in order. As long as we get those LPs going.

SADIE

It was detailed, for sure.

RICHARD

Your albums will sell, Joan. I think Kirk would like you to perform in Nashville.

KIRK

You're a natural on TV. The Grand Old Opry is a pretty good place to showcase that talent.

Joan and Sadie's ears perk.

JOAN

Gentlemen, this is more than an honour. Singing here tonight is just one of my jobs. I have six youngsters to raise.

Tom is sidetracked, beer in hand. He nudges Sadie to the bar to give her an earful.

INT. BAR COUNTER - NIGHT

Tom and Sadie lean against the bar, as he raises his voice to Sadie, customers start to look.

TOM

And just what the hell do you think you're doing? Paperwork with my wife gets signed by me - no other. You hear me?

SADIE

We signed because of the TV show Tom. And that's my business. I have everything on the line with Joan's show at home and up here. This is it.

TOM

And you're going to handle that, are you? A woman? Sign a record deal. Fat chance.

SADIE

It's done. I've been signing talent for Canada AM for years. I'll be damned if the likes of you will stand in our way.

TOM

And what's this ours? It's me and Joan. That's how it is. My say is what Joan does.

SADIE

I can't stop who you are with her. But I'll see to it she can get by without your say.

Sadie storms off back to where Joan and the Record Executives stand.

Tom stays by the bar and continues to drink.

INT. LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

Richard, Kirk, Joan, and Sadie continue to iron out the record contract.

KIRK

You said six youngsters. Six is a lot, for sure.

SADIE

You don't have to tell me. That's why I don't have a wedding band.

JOAN

I already missed Girl Guides this week.

KIRK

They're lucky to have you. But the Opry ...

JOAN

The Opry would be a dream. Recording these albums also seems worth it. I'll stick to that.

Joan walks back to the stage.

Sadie watches from the side.

RICHARD

Isn't she something? Gorgeous. And talented.

KIRK

It's a first. A singer to give up the Grand Ole Opry for Girl Guides.

INT. CBC TV STATION - DAY

Joan is on the set of her TV show, *Morrissey's Medley*.

She leans against a high wooden stool, centre stage, and holds a large mic effortlessly in front of her.

JOAN

*It was a cold winter's night,
and not a star was in sight/ As
we rolled down the hill to Random
West/On the CNR bus that had*

(MORE)

JOAN (CONT'D)
*caused quite a fuss/ For
replacing our Newfoundland
express.*

Joan stops and goes over to the camera monitor.

JOAN (CONT'D)
Are you sure I look natural? I
don't want to be made a fool.

Sadie pipes up, expecting Joan's hesitation.

SADIE
This stage was born on you. Come
see.

Joan scoots behind the playback monitor. There's a
camera crew behind with them.

JOAN
Yes, my dear, I think we're
getting the hang of this. Let's
go again.

SADIE
Let's go again? It's your fourth
TV show and Christmas special.

JOAN
The kids are watching all the
time. They're putting my ratings
through the roof.

SADIE
Okay, one more take and I think
we're ready for the live studio
audience.

JOAN
That's where the crowd from the
bar come into the TV station,
and we tell them they can't
drink.

They laugh.

SADIE

Your audience loves you.

JOAN

The grocer at Belbin's says I'm blocking the aisles with people chatting me up.

SADIE

You'll have them lining up out through the door soon.

JOAN

Let's get back at it.

SADIE

What could go wrong on live TV?

JOAN

I'm perfectly imperfect, as I like to say.

EXT. HOLLOWAY PRIMARY SCHOOL - DAY

Joan pulls up and lets Sammy (12) out in front of the school.

MARJORIE (36) and TRUDY (38) watch as Sammy carries a can of cookies.

SAMMY

My Mom made cookies.

MOTHERS snicker by the gymnasium school door. Joan and Sammy can overhear the women.

MARJORIE

She must have made those after last call.

TRUDY

For alcohol...

MARJORIE

And who knows what else.

TRUDY

She's out every night.

MARJORIE

No wonder she can't tie her
husband down.

TRUDY

He's a charmer.

Joan rounds the corner in plain sight and catches
their mischievous tone and gossip.

JOAN

Ladies.

MARJORIE

So nice of you to bring cookies.
I don't know how you do it.

JOAN

I'll have to give you my recipe.
They're fresh.

Sammy runs back out to get his mom, Joan.

SAMMY

Will you stay for the first
song?

MARJORIE

How sweet, my Emily never wants
me to go inside.

JOAN

Of course, I will, Sammy. Let's
get in. Have a good day, ladies.

MARJORIE

Poor thing, he never sees her.

TRUDY

No wonder he asks her to go in.

MARJORIE

Wonder what it's like?

TRUDY

What, what's like?

MARJORIE

To be the center of attention.

Have the eyes of a full barroom on you.

TRUDY

And all those men, too.

MARJORIE

Who knows. My man doesn't know
I'm in this world.

Women walk back to their cars, feeling smug.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Joan is sewing at the kitchen table as she puts the collar on a very modern straight-cut dress with flowers.

She has a dress ready for SHERRY (14) and a tie made for Sammy.

Tom wears a suit. It's SUNDAY MORNING CHURCH, and everyone is dressed up. Tom does not have a drink.

JOAN

My first dress made in my own
kitchen, as good as a Toronto
department store.

Joan puts the tie-on Sammy and passes Sherry the dress. Joan straightens their outfits, and they warm with a smile at something new.

She shimmies out of her housecoat wearing a full slip, jumps into her new dress and twirls around.

TOM
Best looking woman in town.

Tom pulls Joan close, a warm kiss. Joan smiles.

Joan starts to do up her dress and takes a pain, trying to reach for her zipper down her back.

She turns around to gesture for Tom to zip her up, he behaves, a family man.

JOAN
I can hardly reach to do myself up anymore. I feel a pain across my chest, so odd.

TOM
All that traveling. You have too many suitcases to carry.

They share a moment. Tom leaps up and grabs his Polaroid camera.

TOM (CONT'D)
Line up. Let's get a photo of the Morrissey's.

He takes a snap. He passes the camera to Colleen.

TOM (CONT'D)
And one of your mother and me.

Colleen fidgets, easily finds the button, and is in awe of the magic of a photo that prints.

TOM (CONT'D)
Tonight's a special night. Your Mom has the big launch of her albums at the Centre. The place will be packed.

JOAN
Stop your nonsense.
(MORE)

JOAN (CONT'D)

Let's get to church first, before
we're made to sit in the parking
lot.

CLOSE UP: Polaroid photos.

INT. CORPUS CHRISTI CHURCH - MORNING

The Morrissey family fill out a church pew. All eyes are peeled, fixated on Joan's new outfit, as they sing with zest amid an otherwise banal group of parishioners.

JOAN

And I thank God for making it
come true ...

DREAM SEQUENCE:

INT. GRAND OLE OPRY - STAGE - EVENING

The Grand Ole Opry stage fills the screen. Joan wears the same dress she has on in church.

Joan and Sadie are pushed in all directions on the balcony and hold hands, not to lose each other.

They round the corner to a big reveal of an enormous stage. Like two schoolgirls but middle-aged women, they giggle.

PAN to the audience to reveal as many country singers sitting in their seats, waiting their turn.

INT. GRAND OLE OPRY - STAGE - EVENING

Sadie pushes Joan onto the stage with both her hands on the small of Joan's back.

She looks enamored as Joan takes CENTER STAGE.

She starts slow and sings... *God's a Woman, too.*

JOAN

*I have a dream of my own. And
its mine all mine alone/It's
been my friend since I was just
a girl/It has a life it has a
heart/It has a soul and it's a
part. Of everything this woman
gives the world/And it's a big
dream/Big enough to share/Like a
rainbow, hanging in the air/And
I thank God, for making it come
true/Makes me think maybe God's
a woman too/ Makes me think
maybe God's a woman too...*

DREAM SEQUENCE ENDS:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Joan is in her bathrobe and looks at all her glamorous outfits.

There are photos of her on stage laid on her bureau, a wedding photo of Tom and Joan when they were young, and the Polaroids they took that morning.

There is a stack of paper photos (not framed) with Joan's autographs on them.

Joan walks around the room and tries on many dresses and long gloves. Glancing at her photos as she goes.

She finally picks out the perfect dress. Joan starts to put on the long ball gown with a long zipper in the back.

She pulls her arms back to do the dress up halfway and inch the zipper up. She reaches further to get the zipper and takes a sudden pain in her chest and collapses to sit on the bed, short of breath.

She looks scared as she gazes into the mirror.

Joan puts her face into her hands and weeps uncontrollably. She looks back into the mirror. Her makeup is smudged.

JOAN

I can't go on. I'm not good enough. I'm never good enough.

Pause. Music underneath.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Just once. Just this once. Can I be good enough.

JOAN (CONT'D)

A silly girl from here, can't make it.

Joan pats her face to remove the makeup smudges and then freshens up her face as she holds up a compact.

She tosses her stained gloves and reaches into the vanity drawer for a new pair.

She lays the dress on the bed flat, does the zipper up first, and then shimmies into it with ease.

Joan transforms from a housewife to a starlet wearing a beaded sequin gown and long gloves. She sits back down in front of the mirror and looks straight ahead.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Okay girl. Get up, dress up, show up and don't you never, ever, give up.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Or just shut up, Joan. That's more like it.

(laughs)

Joan stands tall with elongated posture. She's ready.

INT. ARTS & CULTURE CENTER - NIGHT

Joan is greeted as a celebrity as soon as she walks through the door of the Center for her album launch.

CLOSE UP: Joan's body and men's eyes fixate on her. Men in business suits navigate her through the crowd holding her arm.

RICHARD

The one, the only Joan
Morrissey...

Applause.

Tom moves close and has his hand on her lower back as she moves through the crowd.

Richard kisses her on the cheek.

INT. UPPER CONCOURSE - NIGHT

There's champagne flowing and hors d'oeuvres, looks like a big club in downtown Toronto.

Life size posters of Joan and as promised Decagon has a half dozen executives in town.

Men surround Joan and put their arms on her as she walks up to the stage.

Joan flustered from men touching her, reaches for the big mic with shaky hands.

She pushes herself away from the man on the edge of the platform and takes a deep breath.

INT. SADIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Sadie's office is lined with several photos of TV show specials on the wall that highlights Joan's career: Juno Nomination, Home Brew Gold Album.

JOAN (40) looks at her accolades up close. Her reflection shimmers off the glass. SADIE (40) scurries into her office, interrupts Joan deep in thought.

Sadie passes Joan an envelope with a cheque from the record company. Joan opens the envelope, and the cheque is made out to her for \$38.00. Joan looks down at the cheque.

She turns on her heels and rushes from Sadie's office. Sadie looks after her with deep concern.

INT. HERALD NEWSPAPER OFFICE - DAY

Joan walks up to the receptionist.

NEWSPAPER: Front page banner on the desk, reads 1975.

JOAN

I'll speak to your editor, news reporter. Who takes care of the front page for tomorrow?

Joan huddles in a corner while a reporter holds a steno notebook. She tells her story to the reporter, who writes down every word.

INT. COCHRANE HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Sadie looks at the newspaper in a rage. There's a knock to the door and in walks Joan.

NEWSPAPER: 'Joan Morrissey calls Decagon Records: Die Hard Crooks.'

SADIE

Have you seen the paper?

Sadie holds up the newspaper.

JOAN

I spoke to the reporter myself.

SADIE

Decagon Records crooked as sin?
Are those your fighting words?

JOAN

They are!

SADIE

I just got off the phone with
Decagon. They're suing you.

JOAN

For WHAT?

SADIE

Slander and libel.

JOAN

That company sent me a measly
cheque for my album Headin'
Eastbound.

SADIE

They're the bigwigs!

JOAN

That record sold thousands of
copies.

SADIE

I know.

JOAN

Bunch of old cronies?

SADIE

We'll see them in court, then?

Joan and Sadie give each other a stern look.

JOAN

You can count on it.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Joan takes the stand and JUDGE DAWE (58) presides in court.

JOAN

Does this sales executive think records get sold on their own? That's a lot of miles traveled to become a household name.

JUDGE DAWE

Mrs. Morrissey, Decagon Records contract clearly states that the sales of a record may offset any recordings by the company that have not turned a profit.

JOAN

Does it take a housewife to pay the bills for this Record Label? In Toronto, all the expenses came out of my 6%. I flew all the crowd from Toronto to St. John's. Hotels, dinners, musicians, recording studios, were all paid by me.

JUDGE DAWE

All expenses?

JOAN

I was sent not a cheque but a bill. And that measly \$38.00.

Judge brings the court to order and makes a statement.

JUDGE DAWE

It will be seen that the artist is purportedly bound for a long period of time during which her royalty cheque receipts are in the hands of the production
(MORE)

JUDGE DAWE (CONT'D)
company which can manipulate them by incurring and setting production costs and arranging release dates to suit the best interest of the company. All costs involved in recording your performance shall be constituted as an advance and be charged against your royalties, if and when earned, under this or any other agreement between us.

JOAN
Can you please clarify, your honour? Before I have to write a song about it, and take it on tour.

JUDGE DAWE
Mrs. Morrissey, in accordance with the above stated verdict by the Law Society of NL the lawsuit by Decagon Records is not breaking the law, per se. But we do see it as a gross and ethical manipulation of the contract.
They took advantage of you.

JOAN
They most certainly did.

JUDGE DAWE
There will be a \$500 fee for the court case. Nothing more.
Dismissed.

JOAN
Whose bill is that?

JUDGE DAWE
We will finalize the verdict tomorrow.

Joan walks down from the stand past Decagon Records Executive salesman.

Joan sees Sadie and Tom (42) at the back of the courtroom and walks briskly toward them.

Tom scowls at Sadie and bolts for the door.

Joan walks out and there is a reporter from VOWR.

EXT. COURTHOUSE STEPS - DAY

Joan walks onto the courthouse step to a VOWR Reporter, MIKE (28).

MIKE

Your thoughts, Mrs. Morrissey?

JOAN

It's not just about me, you hear?

MIKE

What do you mean?

JOAN

This town doesn't always treat its performers the best. How are we going to get others to take us seriously if we keep cutting ourselves down. They give you the royal treatment if you come from across the pond, and all of a sudden, the traditional Newfoundland is too quirky or too something. We won't have a pot left to piss in if we keep giving it all away.

MIKE

Any suggestions?

JOAN

Artists can no longer be taken
for a ride.

MIKE

What's next for you then, Joan?
Do you have trouble keeping up
with the new talent?

JOAN

Have you seen these legs young
man. They crushed this island's
music scene before you could
walk.

Joan points to her very sexy legs, raises her dress a
little. The reporter is surprised.

JOAN (CONT'D)

And mind your manners. Who raised
you?

MIKE

I look forward to hearing more
from you, Joan. We'll have a
full page on you this weekend.

JOAN

I'll make sure to pick up a
copy.

Joan walks down the courthouse steps. Sadie scurries
behind her, in awe of Joan's brash tongue.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Joan returns home after the court case. There's
tension. Tom is fixated on the local TV News with
coverage of Joan's trial.

TOM

I told you I should've been
there.

JOAN

You were there. All I remember
you handling was another beer,
just like the one in your hand
now.

TOM

And you signed that contract in
Toronto. Sadie put you up to it.

JOAN

Sadie won't even be paid.

TOM

And you aren't paid.

JOAN

And that means you don't get
your money. Right?

TOM

You don't listen. You never
listen!

INT. LIVING ROOM - NEXT DAY

Tom sits in front of the TV, on his own. Beer in
hand.

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

Joan is on the stand. Judge Dawe presides. Sadie
looks on eagerly.

JUDGE DAWE

Mrs. Morrissey, your contract
says the sales of a record offset
any recordings by the company
that have not turned a profit.
That we can not change.

JOAN

I did my job. Make them do
theirs, your Honour.

JUDGE DAWE

The verdict states the case of Decagon Records Company will be dismissed with costs, as I mentioned.

JOAN

Whose costs?

JUDGE DAWE

Decagon will cover all trial costs. As the complainant, your record will reflect the company's failure to fulfill the contract in good faith. Mrs. Morrissey, you have paved the way for other musicians, and you are not being charged for slander and libel. This charge has been dismissed, which is good news. Court is adjourned.

Joan steps out from behind her lawyer's table and walks past Decagon Records Sales Executive.

Sadie jumps over the banister.

SADIE

We won... kind of won.

JOAN

Wasn't it worth it? We won for the young singers coming up.

Sadie and Joan start to walk down the courtroom aisle arm in arm. They give a raucous laugh.

MONTAGE:

EXT. NEWSSTAND - EVENING

ON SCREEN: *TORONTO, 1977*

Group of musicians pick up the newspaper. Headline:
"Decagon Records takes Musicians for a Ride."

INT. MOLLY AND ME LOUNGE - NIGHT

MARGIE and ROY sit up to the bar, musicians gather to
watch TV highlights on Joan's case.

NEWS REPORTER

Decagon took music singer Joan
Morrissey to court citing libel
as grounds for the case. Joan
Morrissey counter sued and
spearheaded a lawsuit against
Decagon records for inadequate
division of sales. Calling the
company scoundrels. They spent
this week in court and the Judge
dismissed the case. Court costs
will be paid by Decagon, saying
Our Joan paved the way for other
singers to get a fair deal.

Margie and Roy, and the room full of musicians, cheer
Joan on.

MARGIE

She did it! She showed them.

DOUG

Like I say that gal's got
gumption.

ROY

Bold and brazen. She's not the
first musician in this country
to be taken for a ride.

MARGIE

But she's the first to fight
back and win. That a way, Joan.

They clink their glasses, cheers.

EXT. HOLLOWAY SCHOOL - DAY

Mrs. Halley, Marjorie, and Trudy and the other school mothers gather around their cars.

SOUND: VOWR RADIO announces the court case update.

RADIO REPORT

Mr. Morrissey put the boots to the Toronto Record company Decagon. The judge ruled Decagon's actions as unethical and dismissed their defamation charges. Also footing them with the court case bill of \$500.

The women can't help themselves, but to smile.

MRS. HALLEY

She won.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Joan comes into the house after the court case. Tom sits in front of the TV, drink in hand. She can feel the tension. Joan gleeful, but sheepish.

JOAN

We won.

TOM

Won. Who won? You? You and Sadie?

JOAN

She made the case happen.

Tom leaps to his feet.

TOM

And how good is your name, now? Can Sadie answer that, with her producer crap?

JOAN

Sadie has a lot at stake, too.

TOM
And will she sell records. Sell
you?

JOAN
Sadie ...

TOM
Sadie. Sadie. You're the star!

Tom smacks a can off the counter with cash in it,
where Joan keeps her money from playing in bars.

Joan falls to the floor, scrambles to pick up the
money, as she looks up to Tom who stands tall and
looks down on her as if she is a child or a pet on
the floor.

JOAN
No need to toss my hard-earned
cash on the floor. There's less
of yours coming in.

TOM
So, I don't work now? Who's
going to book you, after you
pull a stunt like this. Suing a
record label.

Joan starts to get up from the floor.

JOAN
It'll be fine. We'll be fine.

TOM
You're a housewife. Just a
housewife. And don't you forget
it.

Joan tries again to get up from the floor. She
collapses and holds her chest, drapes her arms around
herself, and holds her sides.

She is wheezing and falls back down, she leans onto the table to catch herself. Tom rushes to her side.

TOM (CONT'D)

Joan! Joan! I'll call a doctor.
I'll call a doctor. You'll be
fine.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Light snowfall outside the window.

Joan has returned from the post operation room. Her radiant smile has hardened. She is visibly in pain.

Sadie comes in and speaks softly.

SADIE

How are you, my love?

JOAN

I guess I'm still here. I'm
good. Good to go.

SADIE

Good to go. You'll go nowhere.
First triple heart bypass in
this province, my dear.

JOAN

(gasps)
What? No.

SADIE

Scared me to death.

JOAN

I'm tired of all these firsts.
Make it stop, Sadie.

Joan holds her chest.

SADIE

Is it pain? Do you want me to
get the doctor?

JOAN

It's... it's tight. No. No my dear.

SADIE

You hungry? Hospital food. I get it.

JOAN

Tom's coming in.

SADIE

Is he? How are the kids doing?

JOAN

Just go by the house there. Make sure they're doing good.

SADIE

I will when I leave here. Maybe I'll bring them some supper.

Sadie passes her hand softly over Joan's forehead, then stands up and leans over her and gives her a kiss on the forehead. Joan smiles.

SADIE (CONT'D)

Still as beautiful as ever.

JOAN

Best looking woman this side of town.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NEXT DAY

Tom comes in to see Joan. He stands at the foot of Joan's bed with his arms on his waist. He declares his plan, as if making a sermon at the pulpit.

TOM

Just talked to the doctor. The surgery went well. You're good to go, as you would say. I'll sign the release form and get your things.

Joan caves deeper inside of herself than seems possible, beyond the physical pain of surgery, she suffers the affliction of an animal who has been captured.

Her head and eyes roll to the side, back into the pillow with despair and resignation.

INT. HOSPITAL - LATER

Sadie returns with soup and greets the nurse PAM (56).

SADIE

I would forget my head, honestly.
I had soup for Joan. I'm just
going to pop it into her. Is she
asleep?

PAM

Joan. Joan Morrissey. She's been
released. Her husband showed up
and said he needed her home.

SADIE

That's impossible. She just had
surgery.

Sadie motions to Joan's hospital room. She walks into the room and the bed is empty.

SADIE (CONT'D)

She's gone. She's not there.

Sadie returns to the hallway to hear Pam.

PAM

Honestly, her husband came in
and talked to the doctor in
charge and that was it. They
would've kept her longer, for
sure.

SADIE
What Tom wants Tom gets.

Sadie walks away. The nurses continue their chatter, confused.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Tom gets up from sitting on the end of the bed. He is back on and leaves the room and grabs a glass of scotch off the bureau, he takes a swig, as he walks out.

Joan compensates for the pain, and puts her hand over the bandages underneath her robe.

The phone rings. Joan picks it up, it's Sadie.

INT. SADIE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Sadie sits in her lounge chair in her bedroom on the phone.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

SADIE
Joan, what in God's name would take you home from hospital that quick.

JOAN
I believe God named him Tom.

SADIE
That would be it.

JOAN
It's done now. I'm here.

SADIE
Indeed, you are. Not by your own doing.

JOAN
Tom needed sex.

Joan is by her bedside and puts a clean sheet on the bed.

JOAN (CONT'D)
As they say... I've made my own
bed...

JOAN/SADIE (together)
And now you must lie in it.

Joan walks over to the mirror and lays the phone on its side, so she can hear Sadie.

Joan lifts a tiny bit of the BANDAGE.

ZOOM IN: Joan looks down at her SCARS.

CLOSE UP: PAN down over the scars on Joan's chest.

She moves her hand down her cleavage and feels the rough SCAR TISSUE on her body.

SADIE
That man's lot in life is coming
to a close.

Joan picks the phone up again.

JOAN
He'll be here long after I'm
gone. Mark my words.

SADIE
A man like him is already gone.
You can have anyone, Joan. Be
done with him.

JOAN
I'm a household name Sadie, but
not much has changed for women
in our time.

SADIE
Godspeed my love. Stay close.

Sadie and Joan hang up. Both stare straight ahead with blank distraught expressions on their face.

WEEKS LATER:

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Joan grabs a clothes bag and a lunch from the car and heads to the veranda of the cabin.

She takes her time and walks through the woods.

Heads back to the cabin steps, she eyes the rifle they have at the cabin and picks it up, sets a can on the fence post and hits it on her second shot.

Gently, she places the gun back in its place and opens her lunch bag and tosses the food back in and pours herself a glass of whisky.

Joan watches the birds fly from the trees and sings under her breath.

JOAN

Bye bye black bird ...

Joan feels the breeze come up as if it whispers to her, she shudders. She collects her things and heads down the steps.

She looks back and does a double take toward the RIFLE.

She grabs it and continues toward the car, tosses the clothes bag and rifle in the trunk.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Joan and Sadie sit in the living room. Sadie shows Joan fan mail from her special on Canada AM.

SADIE
I have fan mail from the Canada
AM studio for you. Can you
believe it?

JOAN
It's something isn't it.

SADIE
They adore you.

JOAN
My own fan club. The children
will laugh.

SADIE
Life certainly can turn on a
dime. You've earned it. Joan
laughs and then takes a pause.

JOAN
... Sadie?

SADIE
Yes. Joan.

JOAN
I don't know what to do. I feel
so down.

SADIE
Heart surgery does cause
depression. Did they tell you
that?

JOAN
The Doctor says the surgery may
have some side effects.

SADIE
Yes. Side effects is their way
to hide the word depression.

JOAN
You suffered from depression?

SADIE
When I was a teenager.

JOAN
I'm having an awful time trying
to hide this.

Sadie reaches out her hand.

SADIE
I had to take medication.

JOAN
It's like I'm under water. Like
I'm drowning.

SADIE
Oh, Joan. Depression can hang
on. Careful.

JOAN
We just finished our dream home.

SADIE
Depression is... Let's not forget
who you share your dream home
with, my dear.

JOAN
No one wants to hear about a
woman my age who suffers from
depression.

SADIE
I don't know how you keep going.

JOAN
Sometimes when I sing on stage
my heart breaks.

SADIE
You should really see someone.

JOAN
And how would that go over? Joan
Morrissey seeing a shrink.

SADIE
I'm only worried about you. You
got that.

Joan stares blank ahead.

INT. DR. CLARKE'S OFFICE - DAY, 1977

Joan sits on the doctor's examining table. Her legs
hang down over the side of the bed, she wears a
hospital gown.

DR. CLARKE
You're going to need another
heart surgery and I want to
schedule it immediately.

JOAN
(in a firm voice)
That won't happen.

DR. CLARKE
Joan, you have to have this
surgery. It was a triple heart
bypass. You need to follow up.

JOAN
What if I don't?

DR. CLARKE
I'm sorry. You won't last the
year.

JOAN
I'm not going to die.

DR. CLARKE
It's that serious. Yes.

Pause.

JOAN
I'll talk it over ... Speak it
over with Tom.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

Joan shovels snow in the driveway and Sadie walks up and picks up a shovel from the snowbank to help.

Tom watches from the window. Joan cripples over in pain and Sadie reaches over to give Joan a hand.

SADIE

Joan, stop. You're keeling over!
Are you alright?

JOAN

I shouldn't be at it, I know,
but we have rehearsal tonight.

SADIE

You think that one would give a
hand.

Sadie eyes Tom, who looks on from the window, with a drink in his hand.

Joan looks up to the window and storms to the house.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Joan (43) comes in from shoveling. She shifts gears from her usual gleeful self and is in a fit of rage.

JOAN

I finally know why my heart gave
out, Tom.

TOM

Why is that?

JOAN

You haven't told me the truth
since the day we were married.

TOM

Truth. What's the truth, Joan?
Are your fans telling you the
truth?

JOAN
I perform to feed this family.

TOM
You do? There are fewer people
lining up all the time.

JOAN
And what if I did want it? What
if performing is who I am?

TOM
It's who you were. Did you think
a court case would help?

JOAN
I had to fight. The artists here
need to be protected.

TOM
You're fighting for the artists
now, are you? Well, where are
they when you need to pay the
bills.

JOAN
Where are you when I need to pay
the bills? And who are you with
every second night?

TOM
Don't start. You're not here!

JOAN
I have an audience, a show each
night.

TOM
They're not here for you now,
are they?

JOAN
The scene has changed. You don't
think I know that. It hurts me
more than you.

TOM
It hurts you. There's no money,
Joan. It's over.

Tom storms out the door.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Tom storms from the house and scowls at Sadie.

SADIE
If I lose that woman, Tom. It's
on you. And you'll have to answer
for it.

TOM
She's not going anywhere. It's
over. Joan is over. Finished.

Tom screeches away from the driveway, in the car they
just shoveled out.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Sadie creeps into the kitchen, easily detects the
tension.

JOAN
I'm sorry I didn't believe you
all those years ago. I know it's
true about Tom fooling around. I
should've known better.

SADIE
He's got the guts to stray. But
too much of a coward to leave.
Good riddance, I'd say.

Sadie and Joan hug. Sadie goes over to the chair and
starts to strum the guitar.

SADIE (CONT'D)
How's that going?

JOAN
Took me ages up late at night.
Would you like me to show you?

Sadie smiles and they sit down and play the guitar together. I had a dream ...

SADIE
Joan?

JOAN
Yeah.

SADIE
You need to go back to the
doctor.

JOAN
I know. I know my dear.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

PHONE CALL comes in. It's Doctor Clarke. Joan listens,
dead air. SILENCE.

DOCTOR CLARKE
Joan, I just wanted to follow up
with you. You know time is
running out. You need a second
surgery. You know that right?
Tell your family or a friend the
truth. It's not about you
performing. You won't live if
you don't get help.

Joan looks straight ahead. She is in a TRANCE.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Joan is on the phone with Sadie, she wears her
bathrobe.

INT. SADIE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Sadie sitting at her desk, takes the call.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

JOAN

Sadie, I have something to tell you. The Doctor says this is not going away. I still have heart problems.

SADIE

Didn't you ask the Doctor to give you something for the pain?

JOAN

I'm sick and I'm scarred.

SADIE

Please. Please Joan. You're beautiful.

JOAN

I'm ugly and scared.

SADIE

Joan...

JOAN

I'm a cut up old rag doll.

SADIE

You'll get through, you will.

JOAN

I'll never never allow them to cut me open again.

SADIE

You had the surgery, Joan. You don't have to have it again?

JOAN

If ...

SADIE

Joan. Joan.

Sadie and Joan stay on the phone in a heavy silence.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Joan walks over to her vanity table.

CLOSE UP: Pans over Joan's chest.

ZOOM IN: She moves her hand down her cleavage, feels the rough SCAR tissue on her body.

Joan sits at the vanity looks towards the closet, and in the back of the closet is the RIFLE revealed, a few dresses hang in front of it.

CLOSE UP: Joan glares at the GUN, in the closet.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT,

Family sits around the table and scoffs down their meal. It's eerily quiet between the kids and Tom and Joan.

JOAN

Let's drive around and look at
the Christmas lights.

KIDS look up kind of dismayed, now older teenagers. One by one they muster up their childhood giddiness.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

The family piles into the car.

SLOW MOTION: Family drives around and looks at the lights. Christmas music is faint in the background, the kid's laughter is low, as they talk over each other.

KIDS

I get the front seat. No, I do.

JOAN
Let's just pile in.

TOM
The front seat is your mother's,
always has been.

Joan plays over in her mind, the phone call she had with Sadie about being sick.

JOAN
*I'll never never be cut open
again. Never.*

Music comes up.

INT. SADIE'S OFFICE - MORNING

Sadie picks up the phone for her daily chat.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Joan sits at her mirror with photos and ball gowns around her. Joan thumbs through a stack of signed photos.

INTERCUT: PHONE CONVERSATION

SADIE
You're there? I was worried
about you. Finished caroling,
yet?

JOAN
Caroling? Twelve days of
Christmas, my arse. Not in
Newfoundland.

SADIE
Here's to the new year, Joan.
Many road trips ahead.

JOAN

It's not like when we first started. This town's got modern ideas of culture now.

SADIE

You are this town, my dear.

JOAN

I gave it my best shot.

SADIE

Others will follow, but you were the first.

JOAN

They'll remember that, I suppose.

SADIE

You better believe it. I'll be by later for rehearsal.

JOAN

We're rehearsed to death, my dear. It can't get any more real than this.

SADIE

Oh, my love.

JOAN

I couldn't have done it without you.

SADIE

And I wouldn't let you. It's not over yet. We're just getting started.

JOAN

Putting the place up at the Bella Vista.

SADIE

Sure, we're the talk of the town.

JOAN
And the bell of the ball...

SADIE
I love you.

JOAN
And I love you way, way, more.

INT. BALLROOM - EVENING

JOAN (44) embraces the crowd and sings *How Great Thou Art*. New Year's Eve party is in full swing.

Family and friends gather around. Waiters walk around with drink and food trays. Crowd cheer Joan on to sing.

Tears fall down Joan's cheeks as she makes direct eye contact with everyone in the room.

JOAN
*O Lord my God, when I in awesome
wonder, consider all the worlds/
Thy hands have made; I see the
stars, I hear the rolling
thunder, thy power throughout
the universe displayed/ Then
sings my soul, my Savior God, to
Thee, how great Thou art! How
great Thou art! Then sings my
soul/ My Savior God, to Thee,
how great Thou art. How great
Thou art.*

INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

ON SCREEN: *JANUARY 10TH, 1978*

ZOOM IN: Her singing awards and PHOTOS on stage.

PAN the bedroom.

ZOOM IN: Gun in the wardrobe.

DETAIL: Makeup table, lipstick, compact mirror, makeup brushes. Long black gloves. Sequin dresses hang over the back of the chair.

PHOTOS: Autographed, unframed, lay on her vanity table.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

CLOSE UP: Closet is empty. Rifle is gone.

SOUND: GUNSHOT.

CUT TO: Joan's hand is limp, lifeless, hanging off the side of the bed.

CLOSE UP: Rifle drops to the bedroom floor.

EXT. JOAN'S HOUSE - LATER

Gunshot sound echoes. Song *How Great Thou Art* rises from their home.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: SINBAD HOTEL - SWIMMING POOL - DAY

INTERCUT:

Joan and Sadie take each other's hand and jump in the swimming pool. They swim and swim.

CLOSE UP: Joan with a big raucous laugh.

Music underneath: Joan sings *Big Dream, Makes Me Think Gods a Woman too.*

JOAN
*There's a full moon tonight/And
 I'm bathing in its light/Naked*
 (MORE)

JOAN (CONT'D)
*as the day that I was born/
There is no shame beneath this
sky/I have kissed the past
goodbye/And mended up my broken
heart so torn.*

EXT/INT. CAR ON HIGHWAY - DAY

Joan and Sadie drive with the roof down on the highway.

Dressed like stars, their scarves blow in the wind, and they share a big laugh. Kindred spirits as they hit the road.

Joan sings and it plays underneath until the screen goes to credits.

JOAN
*With a sweet sound/Only I can
make/And it gets stronger with
every breath I take/And it's all
a part of making me feel/makes
me think maybe God's a woman
too/Makes me think maybe God's a
woman too.*

FADE OUT: