

FADE IN:

EXT. BRONX - NIGHT

A street lamp glows against the dark backdrop of a brick lined street. Parked cars and metal fences throughout.

We hear commotion in the background. Yelling mixed with what should be crooning... it's not.

From this we reveal, ALDO DOMENICO "DOM" GRILLO (22), standing outside of a fence looking up to a second story window. He's singing 'Annie's Song' by John Denver... Loud... and not in key... but he's pouring his heart out into it.

A CD comes flying towards him, case and all.. Along with a sweatshirt and a stuffed animal (Teddy Bear, Bunny rabbit). This reveals ANGIE (19), Dom's now Ex-girlfriend. She's pissed... clearly.

ANGIE

Would you stop with that song already! I hate country music!

DOM

This song expresses all the feelings I have for you.

ANGIE

Bullshit! Then why'd you give that girl your sweatshirt?

DOM

...She said she was cold.

ANGIE

Oh my God! You can have these back too, stupid.

Angie reaches into the room and throws out a box of chocolates.

She goes back in for something else...

DOM

I love you, Angie! You can throw away all this stuff but you can't throw my love away... So I'm gonna keep singing till you come down from there!

He does...

Angie appears in the window holding a VASE filled with red ROSES. Dom is pouring his heart into it now.

ANGIE
(over DOM's singing)
DOM!

He stops singing.

DOM
Yeah...

ANGIE
Did you just say you love me?

DOM
Yeah, I did.

ANGIE
Really?

DOM
Yeah, really.

Angie's mood has shifted to the complete opposite of what we were just experiencing. She blushes as she looks at Dom.

We hear something off screen but cannot make out what was said. Angie's face changes...

DOM
What?

ANGIE
My Dad said he's calling the cops
and my brother's coming out to kick
your ass...
(then)
RUN!

HE doesn't.

The sound of the front door reveals Angie's BROTHER (20's) who stands on the stoop.... he's a bulldog.

BROTHER
I'm gonna kick your ass!

DOM
Oh, shit!

DOM takes off down the block. The BROTHER leaves the stoop.

CUT TO:

OPENING CREDITS.

Along with the credits comes in -- 'Annie's Song' by John Denver.

INTERCUT with:

A KNIFE slicing GARLIC.

OIL being poured into a pot.

CHOPPING of onions.

All the actions necessary to make fresh, homemade TOMATO SAUCE for a spaghetti dish.

END OPENING CREDITS.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. GRILLO KITCHEN - NIGHT - SAME

ALDO DOMENICO GRILLO (70's) is at the stove with the "Sauce" apron on. He is in his element.

He sips from a glass of VINO and smacks his lips together. A taste of his own perfection.

ALDO

(To himself) Caro peppino... fa me l'ultimo favore... Presto me seicento dollari, Che domani te` li do`!

(Translation: English)

Dear Peppino... do me this last favor... give me six hundred dollars and tomorrow I'll give it back to you.

With this he drops in a splash of the wine he was drinking.

ALDO (CONT'D)

(calling out)

Dinner's almost ready! Come down and set the table.

INT. GRILLO HOUSE - DOM'S BEDROOM - SAME

There is a knock at the door. We hear a television on. The door opens.

ALDO
Did you hear me?

No one is there.

Aldo scans the room... the window is open.

ALDO (CONT'D)
Vagabond.

He closes the door.

EXT. BRONX STREET - NIGHT - SAME

Dom rounds a corner looking over his shoulder. He's in the clear. Out of breath he heads down the block at a casual pace.

A CAR turns sharply around the same corner, quickly closing the distance between it and Dom.

Tires screech. Dom freezes.

Two guys get out of the car- Angie's BROTHER and his FRIEND.

BROTHER
Yo, Romeo!

They run over to Dom who tries to break away. The friend grabs Dom and holds him.

DOM
I love her...

BROTHER
Yeah, me too..

He throws a haymaker knocking Dom to the ground. The friend kicks Dom to keep him there. Dom goes to get up and they both start stomping on him. He submits...

They finally stop...

BROTHER
Stay away from my sister. She's too good for you.

DOM
You don't even know me.

BROTHER
Yeah, but I know what you come from.

They get back in the car and drive off... Tires screeching.

INT. GRILLO KITCHEN - NIGHT - SAME

Aldo eats alone at a table set for two. He looks at Dom's plate and covers it with a napkin... just in case.

EXT. BRONX STREET - NIGHT - LATER

Dom, who lies on the sidewalk, is looking out into the night sky. He takes a drag off of a cigarette.

DOM
... take me home, country road...

He peels himself off the concrete.

INT. GRILLO HOUSE - NIGHT

We see Aldo going through his nightly routine: pajamas on, brushing his teeth, washing his face.

He looks in the mirror -- sad. Why did he get old? It wasn't in their plans...

He makes his way to the edge of the bed near his night stand. A silver antique frame with a beautiful woman in it -- Annie - sits under the lamp. He reaches for it.

ALDO
Buona notte, Bella.

He kisses her goodnight. Shuts the light. Climbs into bed.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT OF GRILLO HOUSE - NIGHT - SAME

Dom shuffles up the walkway. He stops and reaches into the bushes, pulls out a plastic bag. He takes his shirt off, reaches inside, pulls out another shirt and throws it on. He then places his old shirt in the plastic bag, ties it up, and heads into the house.

INT. GRILLO HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT - SAME

Dom walks slowly past Aldo's open door to his room.

Aldo is sound asleep.

Dom slowly closes the door.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. GRILLO DRIVEWAY - NEXT DAY - MORNING

Aldo washes his prized possession -- a BURGUNDY 1987 LINCOLN CONTINENTAL.

He whistles while he does. A radio can be heard in the background -- "Oldies but Goodies".

Dom exits the house carrying a bag of FROZEN PEAS in his hands. He sits on the stoop and puts the peas to his face.

ALDO

Good morning, Sleeping Beauty!

DOM

Morning, Grandpa.

ALDO

What happened to your face?

DOM

Nothing...

ALDO

I see that.

(then)

Give it up, Dom. If a woman don't want you, she doesn't want you.

DOM

And if you still want her?

ALDO

No.

DOM

No? Just like that?

ALDO

Yes.

(then)

Smart men let women come to them at their own pace. Men who don't know any better will chase women right out of their lives. Don't chase.

DOM
Thanks, Grandpa.

A beat.

ALDO
It's unprofessional to walk around
with black eyes and busted lips.
Maybe try thinking about getting a
job, a career... not getting laid.

DOM
Chicks dig scars...

ALDO
Stop calling them "chicks". Your
Grandmother would kill you if she
heard you say that.

DOM
Sorry.

ALDO
What are you gonna do with your
life?

DOM
I don't know. I haven't figured it
out yet.

ALDO
Wanna work sanitation? I can always
make a phone call.

DOM
No, thanks.

ALDO
Why not? You got a good build.
It'll toughen you up a bit.

DOM
(indicating his face)
I think I can take a beating...

ALDO
Just think about it, will ya?

DOM
No... I don't want to be a garbage
man.

ALDO
Hey... I did pretty good for
myself.

DOM
(sorry about his last
remark)
Yeah. I know.

ALDO
Just get any job... I don't care
what you do.

Aldo goes back to soaping up 'Betsy'. Dom removes the frozen
peas from his face. Thinks for a moment.

DOM
How come we never had ice packs in
the house? Any time I ever got
hurt, there was always a bag of
frozen peas to ice the wound.

ALDO
That bag of frozen peas has saved
you many-a-times after injury.

DOM
But so would an ice-pack...

ALDO
It's natural.

Dom looks at the bag... inspects it a little closer.

DOM
Is it the same bag all these years?

ALDO
See that... that's the "grandpa"
secret!

The phone rings inside the house. Dom doesn't move. Aldo
stops hosing down the soap off the car.

ALDO
You gonna get that?

DOM
I never answer the house phone.

The phone keeps ringing.

ALDO
My hands are wet... Go answer the
phone.

Dom doesn't move.

Aldo holds the hose in a threatening position towards Dom.
Dom jumps up and goes inside.

INT. GRILLO KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Dom picks up the phone.

DOM
(imitating Aldo)
Hello?

AUTOMATED VOICE
You have a collect call from...

DOMENICO
...Domenico...

Dom hangs up immediately and walks away.

EXT. GRILLO DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Dom comes back out. He stands there a moment without saying
anything.

ALDO
Who was it?

DOM
Uh... Telemarketer... I'm gonna
jump in the shower real quick. Did
you eat?

ALDO
It's almost noon, of course I ate.

Dom runs back inside.

ALDO
Hey, put those peas back in the
freezer!

The phone rings again.

ALDO
Never a moments peace in this
place.

Aldo drops the hose and heads inside.

INT. GRILLO KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The phone keeps ringing. Aldo picks it up.

ALDO

Hello?

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)

You have a collect call from...

DOMENICO (V.O.)

Domenico...

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)

Do you accept the charges?

ALDO

Yes...

DOMENICO

Hey, Dad.

ALDO

Domenico... How are you?

DOMENICO

I'm doing good. How y'all doing?

ALDO

"Y'all"... Jesus Christ my sons become a cowboy.

DOMENICO

(laughs)

No, no. Not yet. Still holding on to my roots.

ALDO

I'll bet.

A beat.

ALDO

Everything alright, Domenico?

DOMENICO

Yeah, pop... Everything's great. I'm calling to let you know that I'm getting out on Friday. Spoke with the lawyers.

ALDO

What? That's amazing. This is fantastic news. Friday, you said?

DOMENICO

Yeah, Friday...

(then)

Do you think you can get me a flight home? I know it's short notice.

ALDO

Nonsense... I've been waiting for this. I'll take care of everything.

We see a new shine in his eyes... a new injection of light.

DOMENICO

Thanks...

ALDO

No problem.

The call is disconnected. Aldo hangs up.

INT. GRILLO HOUSE - DOM'S ROOM - DAY

Dom has RAP MUSIC playing as he gets dressed from his shower.

CAR MAGAZINES are spread out across his bed.

There is a knock on the door.

DOM

Come in.

Aldo enters.

ALDO

Hey bud... what do you have planned for today?

DOM

Not sure, yet. Why?

ALDO

Just checking...

DOM

Ok.

(then)

You need help with the car?

ALDO

No. I mean, sure. If you want to put a coat of wax on her, you can.

DOM

Ok.

A beat.

DOM

Grandpa, what's up? Waxing Betsy is your favorite thing to do. I know this isn't why you came up here.

ALDO

Well... Your father just called and-

DOM

Yeah. So?

ALDO

He's getting out on Friday.

DOM

That's great. Why you telling me?

ALDO

Because we're going to get him.

DOM

Who is "we"?

ALDO

You and me.

DOM

No, I'm not. You can go but I'm not going. I have things to do and-

ALDO

What things? You just told me that you weren't sure what you were doing today. What things do you have to do?

DOM

Get a job for one. You just told me to get a job.

ALDO

Yeah, I know. And now I'm telling you that we have to go get your father.

DOM

Don't call him that, ok? He's your son but he's not my father. You raised me... So as far as I'm concerned, I don't have a father.

ALDO

Turn the music off.

DOM

Why?

ALDO

Aldo Domenico Grillo!

Dom picks up his phone and turns the music off.

DOM

Yes?

Aldo sits on the edge of the bed.

ALDO

We share that name... correct?

DOM

Yes, Grandpa. So what?

ALDO

Domenico Aldo Grillo. Your fath- My son's name. Correct?

DOM

Yes.

ALDO

And I raised both of you. Now, I know that you didn't have the most extravagant life... and I know that it was far from "normal"... whatever that is. But I'm not asking you to do this for you, Dom. I'm asking you to do this for me. When your Grandma died, I didn't know if I could raise you alone. I was older... set in my ways. And I depended on your Grandmother for a lot. She was my better half... and I knew that. She knew that I would do anything for her. So, she asked me to be there for you... Like I would be there for her. I did. And boy was it hard. You were a stubborn, tough little bastard...

(MORE)

ALDO (CONT'D)

Testa dura! And you ate like you had two assholes. I couldn't cook fast enough. You had no patience. Your Grandmother used to somehow keep you occupied while she cooked. I couldn't do it. I just couldn't do it. There were many days when I sat there and asked "Why?". What I needed to do, and eventually did do, was ask her for her strength. I still do... every day. Raising you never got easier... but I got stronger. This is my last wish before I join your Grandmother up there at our table. Talk to her, would you?

A beat.

DOM

Ok, Grandpa. For you.

ALDO

Atta' boy! It's gonna be a road trip. Betsy's gonna take us down there!

Aldo gets up and heads to the door.

DOM

Why'd you name your car "Betsy"?

ALDO

Because I could never have an affair on your Grandmother... She would've killed me. So, I gave my car a female name and she never batted an eyelash about it.

DOM

Makes sense.

ALDO

Hope so.

Aldo leaves the room. We are left with Dom for a moment.

INT. TEXAS PRISON - DAY

Domenico pushes a book cart through the halls of the PRISON LIBRARY. He places books on a shelf... moves a bit further and puts up a couple more.

VERNON, (African American, Mid 40s), walks over with two cups of COFFEE (Dunkin' Donuts) from the outside.

VERNON
(stereotypical Texas
accent)

Howdy Partner! This here cup'a'joe happens to have your name on it.

DOMENICO
How'd you swing these?

VERNON
That new C.O they put on gave me the good news. I asked him to do me a favor.

DOMENICO
Thanks Vern... you didn't have to.

VERNON
You're right... I didn't. But I wanted to.

DOMENICO
Appreciate it, man. I was gonna tell you at lunch.

VERNON
No sweat! Just remember me when you're on the outside. I accept care packages of all kinds.

They share a laugh. The friendship is real, despite the circumstances.

DOMENICO
Absolutely brother... absolutely.

VERNON
Come on... I got something else for you.

DOMENICO
What?

VERNON
Let me show you.

Vernon walks away leading Domenico to an area in the library with tables and chairs.