

My Life With Dino

by Bernie DeLeo

FADE IN:

EXT. SEASHORE - DAY

On an overcast day, on a rocky beach backed by pine trees stands SAL, a postman in his late 50s, of sturdy frame and Italian descent, lost in his own thoughts...

SAL (V.O.)

If someone had told me one day I'd be pushing 60 and delivering mail halfway up the coast of Maine, I'd'a laughed. Howled in their face.

THE CAMERA MOVES IN as cold autumn winds whip Sal's gray-streaked hair. We see that his face is almost as hard, craggy and weathered as this unforgiving shoreline.

SAL (V.O.)

But life... sometimes it blindsides you. In bad ways. Good ways. Ways that push your faith to the breaking point till all you've got is nothing ...then suddenly everything again...

Sal stares out at

A HARBOR, WHICH CURVES OFF IN THE DISTANCE, FORMING A BAY.

Only the boats of hardcore lobstermen are out on the choppy black waters.

SAL (V.O.)

But I'm getting ahead of myself. If you wanna know how I got here, we gotta go back...

MUSIC UP: Dean Martin's *Memories are Made of This* -- and the vision of the harbor slowly MATCH DISSOLVES INTO:

A MURAL OF THE BAY OF NAPLES -- the same one you've seen in Mom & Pop pizza joints and Italian restaurants.

CAMERA PULLS BACK FROM THE MURAL TO REVEAL:

INT. A PROSPEROUS ITALIAN GROCERY STORE, CIRCA 1963 - DAY

BEGIN CREDIT SEQUENCE AS THE CAMERA MOVES SLOWLY THROUGH THE STORE, panning lovingly past loaves of fresh baked bread... barrels of olives...tins of olive oil...jars of roasted red peppers...boxes of pasta in every shape and size...hanging salamis, provolone and strands of garlic... can after can of tomato products...a glass case full of meats, fish, cheeses and cold platters...until we END ON:

A BLACK-AND-WHITE AUTOGRAPHED HEADSHOT OF DEAN MARTIN TAPED TO A DARK WOOD WALL; END CREDIT SEQUENCE.

BEHIND THE GLASS CASE/BACK COUNTER

is YOUNG SAL (AT AGE 20), who slices off small hunks of aged Romano and covertly pops them into his mouth.

SAL (V.O.)
 ...It was the early 60s, Cleveland.
 And I worked in my father's store on
 Murray Hill Road.

AN ITALIAN-ACCENTED MALE VOICE makes Young Sal freeze.

MALE VOICE
 You gonna pay for that?

Young Sal turns to face his father, ANGELO, a burly transplant from "the Old Country" with the back-breaking work ethic of the fields still ingrained in him.

YOUNG SAL
 Aw, Pops --

ANGELO
 You eat it, you pay for it, *capisce?*
 And turn that radio down!

YOUNG SAL
 But it's Dino.

ANGELO
 I don't care if it's the Pope! This is
 a business, not a saloon. *Managgia!*
 I wish he'd never come in here!

SAL (V.O.)
 But he had...

CLOSE SHOT: BACK ON THE DEAN MARTIN PHOTOGRAPH

CAMERA FOCUSES IN TIGHT ON THE HANDWRITTEN INSCRIPTION;
 IT READS: "TO SAL, MY BIGGEST YOUNG FAN: DON'T BE AFRAID.
 FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS, KID. -- DEAN MARTIN"

SAL (V.O.)
 ...and it completely changed my
 life.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

The marquee reads: "Martin & Lewis in *THE CADDY!*"

SAL (V.O.)

I was a big Dino fan from Day One.
When I was a kid, Ma took me to all
his pictures.

SAME MARQUEE - DAY

It now reads: "*John Wayne! Dean Martin! in RIO BRAVO*"

SAL (V.O.)

By the time I was old enough to go
solo, so had he.

SAME MARQUEE - NIGHT

This time, it reads "*OCEAN'S 11*"...

SAL (V.O.)

And then came the Rat Pack years...

PAN BENEATH THE MARQUEE

where Young Sal emerges with a pack of Young Italian Pals,
all smoking, with a sated, faraway look in their eyes.

SAL (V.O.)

Me and my pals saw "*Ocean's 11*"
twenty-two times.

CLOSE ON: A BIG BLACK-AND-WHITE TV CONSOLE ON WOODEN LEGS

Onscreen, the Rat Packers schmooze it up at a black-tie
affair with a chuckling JFK.

BESIDE THE SCREEN, Young Sal watches, enthralled.

SAL (V.O.)

Back then, Dino and Frank were gods
in my eyes. But not Pop's...

INT. THE CARLUCCI DINING ROOM - DAY

The whole family's gathered around the table for the Sunday
afternoon dinner: Young Sal, two Sisters, Grandma, and
Sal's apopleptic father, whom he tries to reason with.

ANGELO

How can you respect these men??
They don't work with their hands!

YOUNG SAL

That's right, they work with their voices. Listen to them! Don't they do anything for you?

ANGELO

Yeah -- make me wanna smash the radio! For filling your head with crazy dreams!

YOUNG SAL

What's wrong with dreams?

ANGELO

You don't need 'em! Not when you gonna take over the store!

LUCIA, Sal's mother, trots in from the kitchen with enormous platters of pasta & meat, all smothered in red sauce gravy.

LUCIA

Are you two still going at it??
Enough! *Stazzit! Mangia!*

The family quickly mumbles prayers and dives into the food.

SAL (V.O.)

There'd be no changing Pop's mind... or my own. But let's get back to my brush with fame. Now most folks think Sinatra's the better singer. But I felt connected to Dino. Why? Because he got his start here...in Cleveland.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS OLD PHOTOS FLASH BY OF:

- DOWNTOWN CLEVELAND, CIRCA 1940S; UNDERNEATH, A RADIO ANNOUNCER INTONES OVER MUCH STATIC:

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

The Hollenden Hotel in downtown Cleveland is proud to present the smooth stylings of the Sammy Watkins Orchestra, featuring a talented young crooner by the name of Dino Martini. Take it away, gents...

MUSIC UP: Martin's Latin-inflected, ultrasmooth "*If Love Is Good To Me*."

- A MIDWESTERN FACTORY TOWN WITH SMOKESTACKS BELCHING BLACK PLUMES OF SMOKE.

SAL (V.O.)

He was born Dino Crocetti, a stone's throw away in Steubenville, another Rust Belt factory town.

- PHOTO OF A RAFFISH TEENAGE DEAN MARTIN IN BOXING TRUNKS

SAL (V.O.)

Dropped outta school, worked backroom crap games, even tried his hand at boxing.

- PHOTO OF MARTIN SINGING IN AN EARLY HOTEL GIG, BACKED BY A CLUB ORCHESTRA

SAL (V.O.)

But the man was a born crooner. Got noticed here in Ohio, before taking off for the bigtime...

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT.

Three Cadillacs pull up as DEAN MARTIN and his band pile out of the cars, laughing it up, as they all head inside.

SAL (V.O.)

Yet he never forgot his roots. He came back home and did a show every year. And he'd always eat at the legendary Golden Bowl, right down the street from my father's store.

UP THE STREET

Watching them, agog, are Young Sal and his buddies.

BUDDY #1

Should we -- get his autograph?

YOUNG SAL

And what if we go ask him and he's an asshole? No, I'm just happy I saw him. Dean Martin! On my street! Who'd'a thought?!

SAL (V.O.)

And then it happened, my collision with destiny: March 10th, 1963.

INT. CARLUCCI'S MARKET - DAY.

Young Sal's behind the meat counter alone as the radio plays Dino's first #1 smash: *That's Amore*.

SAL (V.O.)

It was a slow afternoon at the shop.
Pop was making a run to the bank.
So I did what I always did when I
was alone and Dino was on the air...

Sal cranks up radio, holding a pepperoni like a microphone,
as he sings along into a mirror hanging on the wall.

YOUNG SAL

*"When you walk in a dream but you
know you're not dreaming, signore...
Scus'a me, but you see, back in old
Napoli, that's amore! That's amore!
That's amoreeeeeee!"*

Young Sal finishes big, holding the pepperoni high in the
air -- when he's startled by the sound of lone applause.
Mortified, he clicks off the radio, then turns to see:

DEAN MARTIN, HIS IDOL, STANDING RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIM.

DEAN MARTIN

Not bad, kid. You do a mean me.

Young Sal stares, struck dumb. Dino smiles -- he's used to
this reaction, but totally at ease with his celebrity.

DEAN MARTIN

Hey, tuck your tongue back in
or you'll shellac the calamari.

YOUNG SAL

You're -- you're -- !

DEAN MARTIN

Say Joey Bishop and I'll pop ya.

YOUNG SAL

Dean Martin! You're DEAN MARTIN!
What are you doing here?!

DEAN MARTIN

I'm in town for two shows down at
the Palace.

YOUNG SAL

But -- but here, in our store!

DEAN MARTIN

Gotta eat lunch just like you. Folks
say this is the best salami salon in
town -- gonna prove 'em right?

ANGLE ON A SMALL TABLE BY THE COUNTER - MINUTES LATER.

Dino sits polishing off a sandwich and some olives, and notices Young Sal gawking at him from over the counter.

DEAN MARTIN

I'm just eating here, pally.
Nothing special.

YOUNG SAL

Sorry, Mr. Martin. It's just, well,
I gotta tell ya -- you're my idol.
Sometimes I lay in bed at night, I
wish to God I were you.

DEAN MARTIN

Trust me, you don't.

YOUNG SAL

I mean...I wanna be a singer.

DEAN MARTIN

Got the pipes, from what I heard.
What's stopping you?

Young Sal motions to the whole shop.

DEAN MARTIN

Ah. Your Pop's, right? And you're
supposed to take it over.

YOUNG SAL

That's the plan.

DEAN MARTIN

Y'know, if I'd'a followed my Pop's
plan, I'd be cuttin' hair in some
stinkhole in Steubenville. You
stand up to your old man. Follow
your own dreams, kiddo, not his.

YOUNG SAL

I wouldn't know where to start.

DEAN MARTIN

Local clubs. Get your feet wet,
then head to New York. It ain't
brain surgery.

YOUNG SAL

I'll -- I'll think about it.

Dino rises to leave, wiping his hands.

DEAN MARTIN

Well, the grapevine don't lie. You sing as fine as you stack ham, you got a future. Hey, you wanna come see a show?

YOUNG SAL

Me and my buddies got tickets already. For tomorrow night.

DEAN MARTIN

Where are they?

YOUNG SAL

Second balcony. Fifteenth row.

DEAN MARTIN

Tell you what: write your name down and I'll have a pair of real seats waiting for you at the box office. And bring a dame, not a guy.

Young Sal giddily scrawls his name on a napkin.

YOUNG SAL

And couldja, maybe, if it's not too much trouble, leave an autographed picture there too?

DEAN MARTIN

You got it, pally. See ya there.

Dino takes the napkin from Young Sal, pockets it, then turns and saunters out of the store. Young Sal watches him go, trying to imprint the moment into his memory forever...

INT. PALACE THEATER - EVENING

Orchestra, fifth row center, and we're IN TIGHT on Young Sal, dressed in his best, beaming up at the stage.

CAMERA PULLS OUT to show Lucia, Sal's mom, sitting next to him, garishly dolled up and beaming.

SAL (V.O.)

Okay, so I brought my Ma. She did qualify as a dame...

ONSTAGE

In top form, against velvet curtains, Dino slides into his sexy, slinky, marimba-rhythmed "Sway."

SAL (V.O.)
 As I watched Dino up there that
 night, I had an epiphany...this was
 the life for me.

Dino spots Young Sal out in the audience and winks.

CLOSE ON THE BEAMING YOUNG SAL

SAL (V.O.)
 And from that day forward, I planned
 my escape from Cleveland...

INT. CARLUCCI HOME - EVENING.

The Carlucci family sits around the dinner table, all
 except for Young Sal, who breezes through in a black suit &
 tie, on his way out.

ANGELO
 Another date with this girl?

LUCIA
 When do we get to meet her?

YOUNG SAL
 Soon. She's real shy. Gotta go!

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Young Sal warbles *Volare* on a tiny makeshift stage with
 only piano accompanying him. The sparse crowd ignores him.

INT. CARLUCCI'S MARKET - DAY

During a busy Saturday afternoon rush, Angelo and Sal are
 wrapping various orders and ringing them up, when A WELL-
 HEELED CUSTOMER waltzes up to the counter.

WELL-HEELED CUSTOMER
 Hey, Ang. I caught your son's act
 the other night.

Young Sal goes ashen, as his father's eyes narrow to slits.

ANGELO
 What "act"?

WELL-HEELED CUSTOMER
 You ain't seen him? He's a crooner!
 A third-rate one, but give him time.

Suddenly, Angelo turns to the customers and bellows:

ANGELO
We're CLOSED! Everybody OUT!

INT. THE STORE - TEN MINUTES LATER

All the patrons have cleared out, and Young Sal cowers before his fuming father.

ANGELO
So there was no girlfriend?? But you told us we were gonna meet her on Saturday!

YOUNG SAL
And on Friday I was gonna tell you we broke up.

ANGELO
I see...Well you can just forget it! I worked hard to make this store a success. And you're gonna run it one day. That's your future.

YOUNG SAL
N-no, Dad. I wanna sing. That's my future.

Angelo yanks the picture of Dean Martin from the wall and whips it across the shop toward the front door.

ANGELO (CONT'D)
Then go! Sing! But don't come back! Because I will disown you from this moment on!

Young Sal stares at his mule-stubborn father...then down at Dino's photo lying on the floor. And his idol's words ring in his ears:

DEAN MARTIN (V.O.)
You stand up to your old man.
Follow your own dreams, kiddo, not his...

Young Sal whips off his apron, throws it down on the counter, and strides up the aisle to the front door.

ANGELO
Turn around, Salvatore! I'm warning you -- TURN AROUND!!

Young Sal keeps going. He swoops down, without breaking stride, and scoops up the photograph -- and he sails through the door, without looking back.

INT. YOUNG SAL'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Young Sal packs a suitcase laid out on his bed, as his mother stands in the doorway behind him, sobbing.

LUCIA
He didn't mean it.

YOUNG SAL
He did. And my mind's made up.

LUCIA
But you can't go to New York! Your place is here!

YOUNG SAL
Ma, Dino himself walked into our store and told me to go sing. Don't you see? It's a sign. From God.

LUCIA
God sends angels, burning bushes -- not some pickled Vegas playboy!

YOUNG SAL
I gotta give this a shot.

LUCIA
And what if it doesn't work out?

YOUNG SAL
It will. I got faith.

Young Sal stuffs the suitcase closed. Lucia, resigned, removes a silver chain and medallion from around her neck.

LUCIA
Then here. Take this.

YOUNG SAL
Your St. Jude medal? No, Ma --

LUCIA
Take it! You may need it.

YOUNG SAL
(touched)
Thanks.

LUCIA
Your father's gonna forbid me to talk to you.

YOUNG SAL

Do what you gotta, Ma. You're the
one's gotta live with him.

They hug tightly, as tears stream down Lucia's face.

STOCK SHOT - EXT. MOVING TRAIN - DAY

SAL (V.O.)

So there I was, all of 21 years old,
\$900 in my pocket, on my way to...

MUSIC UP: a jazzy female cover of Leonard Bernstein's "*New York, New York (It's a Helluva Town)*", accompanied by a

MONTAGE: OF VARIOUS STOCK FOOTAGE OF MANHATTAN, CIRCA 1963
-- TIMES SQUARE...BROADWAY MARQUEES ALL LIT UP...

SAL (V.O.)

And it was love at first sight.
I checked in at a Y for a few weeks
while I burned through my dough at
the hottest joints in town...

AND WE SEE THE NEON EXTERIORS OF FAMED NIGHTCLUBS FROM A
BYGONE ERA: TOOTS SHOR'S...JILLY RIZZO'S ...THE STORK
CLUB...THE COPACABANA...

INT. GREENWICH VILLAGE NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

ONSTAGE, a sultry FEMALE SINGER heats up the packed house
with the aforementioned "*New York, New York.*"

AT THE END OF THE BAR

A thrilled Young Sal sits, cramped next to the waiters'
door, which keeps opening and closing, bumping into him.

SAL (V.O.)

I saw all sorts of acts, trying to
get the lay of the land...so to
speak.

JEANNIE, a lithesome, wry, young blonde in a dark taffeta
dress turns from the bar with a fresh martini -- when the
waiters' door swings open, smacks her elbow, and the
contents of her glass splash all over poor Young Sal's lap.

JEANNIE

Oh my gosh! I'm so sorry!

She grabs some napkins from the bar and starts wiping down
Young Sal's pants -- which completely agitates him.

YOUNG SAL

Hey, stop! Don't worry about it!
I'll buy you another.

JEANNIE

I should buy you one. Except I
can't afford it.

YOUNG SAL

Then I'll buy us both a drink.

JEANNIE

You don't mind?

YOUNG SAL

Nah. I could use the company. See,
I just moved here from Ohio, and --

JEANNIE

Get outta here! Where in Ohio?

YOUNG SAL

Cleveland. Why, you from there??

JEANNIE

Other end, Cincinnati. I'm Jeannie.

YOUNG SAL

Sal. So what'd you move here for?

She points to the floor show, then speaks excitedly.

JEANNIE

This! I wanna sing! See, I just
worship Rosemary Clooney. All those
jazzy Italian songs of hers -- "*Come
On-A My House*", "*Mambo Italiano*" --
GOD, I love 'em! Got all her albums.
And you know where she got her start?

YOUNG SAL

Cincinnati?

JEANNIE

Good guess! And if an Irish gal like
her can go from the Buckeye State to
the Big Apple singing Sicilian, then
God Almighty, so can I!

YOUNG SAL

That's the same reason I'm here!

JEANNIE

(wryly)

To be the next Rosemary Clooney?

YOUNG SAL

No, Dean Martin. I met him, y'know.

JEANNIE

You're pulling my leg!

YOUNG SAL

Honest to God! In Cleveland, where he got his start. Told me I oughta go into showbiz, and -- Holy Christ!

JEANNIE

What??

YOUNG SAL

Dino's wife is named Jeannie too!

JEANNIE

Oh come on!

YOUNG SAL

It's true! I swear! And you know what I think? It's a sign...that we're supposed to be together.

And Young Sal boldly puts his hand on hers on the bar -- she doesn't remove it. Her heart is racing as fast as his.

JEANNIE

You ever heard that song Rosie does, "*Botch-a-me?*"

YOUNG SAL

Of course.

JEANNIE

Know what the title means in Italian?

YOUNG SAL

Sure. Kiss me.

JEANNIE

If you say so.

With a sly smile, Jeannie leans in to Young Sal and they lock lips, making out right there at the packed, smoky bar. [MUSIC UP HARD: Rosemary Clooney's jaunty *Botch-a-me*, which plays under the following.]

SAL (V.O.)
It was magic. That night and every
one for the next month...

SLOWLY WHIRLING OVERHEAD SHOT: SAL & JEANNIE TUMBLE NAKED
IN BED, ENTANGLED IN THE SHEETS, HAVING SEX WITH ABANDON...

SUPERIMPOSED OVER THEIR INTENSE LOVEMAKING IS A QUICK
MONTAGE OF SHOTS OVERLAPPING EACH OTHER:

- BARTENDER'S HANDS SHAKE & POUR MARTINIS...
- NIGHTCLUB BANDS WAIL UP A STORM...
- YOUNG SAL & JEANNIE SLOWDANCE OUT ON A DANCEFLOOR...

SAL (V.O.)
...until all my savings dried up...

- ASHTRAYS FILL UP WITH CIGARETTE BUTTS...

SAL (V.O.)
...and I had to find a job and a
place to live...

AND IN THE BEDROOM SHOT UNDERNEATH, YOUNG SAL & JEANNIE
FALL BACK ON THEIR PILLOWS, FULLY SPENT...

EXT. STREET (ASTORIA, QUEENS) - DAY

Jeannie and Young Sal walk hand-in-hand down a street lined
with two-family homes, all smack next to each other, with
tank-like Chevys and Buicks out front. MUSIC FADES.

YOUNG SAL
Aw come on -- Queens?

JEANNIE
Astoria. You gotta live somewhere.

YOUNG SAL
But they're all Greeks here.

JEANNIE
So? You look just like 'em. You'll
fit right in. Here we are.

They stop before a house with a "ROOM TO RENT" sign out
front. Young Sal looks at the house, dubious. Jeannie
cozies up to him, nuzzling his ear, whispering throatily:

JEANNIE
I'm only two blocks away.

YOUNG SAL

Sold!

EXT. ASTORIA - BROADWAY - DAY

The beaming, giddy couple walk along in front of small storefronts, Greek cafés and markets...

JEANNIE

I'm telling ya, Mr. Trevino'll love you. Bet he hires you on the spot. You'll love it too, trust me.

...and they stop before a restaurant of simple elegance on a corner lot. In front of the front window drapes, hanging at eye-level lit up in script neon are the words:

Little Napoli

INT. LITTLE NAPOLI - AFTERNOON

It's a quietly tasteful, upscale Italian restaurant. No red-checkered tablecloths and candles-in-chianti-bottles here. Painted on the wall is

ANOTHER "BAY OF NAPLES" MURAL, AS IN SAL'S FATHER'S STORE.

SAL (V.O.)

I felt right at home.

CAMERA PANS BELOW THE MURAL

Where Young Sal & Jeannie sit with ORESTE TREVINO, Little Napoli's 75-year old owner/bon vivant. Oreste pours red wine, as he smokes and speaks in a thick Old World accent.

ORESTE

You from Abruzzi?? What town?

YOUNG SAL

Little place called Campobasso.

ORESTE

Me too! That's all I need to know. I give you the job!

Young Sal and Jeannie cheer, raising their wine glasses to toast him -- when Oreste suddenly starts coughing, hacking really badly.

JEANNIE

You okay, Mr. Trevino?

ORESTE
(rasping)
Sure, fine, of course.

He takes a big swig of wine, recovering quickly.

ORESTE (CONT'D)
You see?

CLOSE ON: TWO HANDS SPRINKLING FRESH CHOPPED PARSLEY OVER A SIMPLE BUT LOVELY PLATE OF MUSHROOM RISOTTO.

SAL (V.O.)
For the next few months, life was good...

INT. LITTLE NAPOLI/KITCHEN - DAY

Young Sal, in a stained apron, slides the risotto onto the pick-up counter then DINGS THE COUNTER BELL.

Jeannie pops in through the swinging door. She picks up her order, winks saucily at Young Sal, then sails back out. Young Sal just stares at her, his heart completely full.

SAL (V.O.)
We worked days & nights together...

INT. LITTLE NAPOLI/DINING ROOM - THE WEE HOURS

Backed by a frizzy-haired piano player off the bar, Young Sal and Jeannie sing a half-decent duet as Oreste sits at a table out front, with an espresso and a cigarette, beaming.

SAL (V.O.)
...and worked up an act after hours.
We loved being together so much, we thought: why not onstage?

INT. GREENWICH VILLAGE NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Onstage in classy outfits, Young Sal & Jeannie sing the same song as before, now with a full combo.

SAL (V.O.)
After a few crummy bar dates, we wound up singing at the same club where we met. If that wasn't a sign, I didn't know what was.

INT. VILLAGE NIGHTCLUB - LATER THAT NIGHT

Young Sal, Jeannie & their band members unwind at the bar.

A gruff, slick-suited CLUB OWNER approaches Young Sal.

CLUB OWNER

Quite an act. I'm in need of one next week. Run the Diamond Room in Atlantic City and I'm short an opener. You want the slot?

Momentarily struck dumb, Young Sal just nods, eagerly.

CLUB OWNER

That's what I like: a man of few words. Call me tomorrow. We'll work out the details.

He hands Young Sal his card, then turns and leaves. The band just stands there, dumbstruck...until Jeannie whoops and jumps into Young Sal's arms, kissing him all over...

INT. YOUNG SAL'S RENTED ROOM - NIGHT

In his small, spare, dimly-lit lodging, Young Sal and Jeannie make love, slowly, sexily...as Dino's gorgeously soaring, heartfelt "Innamorata" plays faintly...

SAL (V.O.)

That was the last happy night of our lives together...

INT. LITTLE NAPOLI - AFTERNOON

Oreste and Young Sal hover intently by a radio, their faces pained; Jeannie wipes away tears, as she pours a brandy.

SAL (V.O.)

The next day, everything started falling apart...

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

-- I repeat, President Kennedy was shot just minutes ago as his motorcade passed through Daley Plaza in Dallas, Texas. He was rushed to Parkland Memorial Hospital and...

INT. ATLANTIC CITY NIGHTCLUB - EVENING

Before a large crowd, Young Sal & Jeannie are decked to the nines as they jam with the band...but something's wrong. Jeannie's pale, sweating, out of sync, looking nervously over at Young Sal, who glances back at her, concerned.

Suddenly, Jeannie looks at Sal, panicked -- then she vomits all over her dress and the stage!

The crowd recoils, some jumping up, heading for the exit. Jeannie covers her face, mortified, then flees offstage. Young Sal stands there, frozen in the spotlights...

BACKSTAGE - MINUTES LATER

Young Sal tries to help Jeannie clean off her dress, but she's inconsolable.

YOUNG SAL

It's okay. There'll be other gigs.

JEANNIE

No, there won't! Don't you get it, Sal?? I'm pregnant!

Right then, the Club Owner stomps over.

CLUB OWNER

You know how much business you just cost me?? Get out of my club! And you can forget about getting paid!

SAL (V.O.)

Or ever working again. Our big dream died that night. And as a bonus, we had a kid on the way. Back then, there was only one thing to do...

EXT. CATHOLIC CHURCH (QUEENS) - DAY

Young Sal & Jeannie emerge in full wedding regalia...to a tiny crowd and streets grey with freezing December rain. Oreste's in front, throwing rice. Young Sal smiles, hopeful. But Jeannie's smile is crooked and grim...

Lucia emerges from the church behind her son, and gives him a big weepy hug.

LUCIA

I wish your father could've seen you.

YOUNG SAL

He could've, Ma.

LUCIA

I know. Let's not think about that. Come on, we'll celebrate anyway.

She looks at Jeannie, trying not to be too accusatory, then moves down the steps away from her. Jeannie grits her teeth -- she knows what her mother-in-law thinks of her...

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - SEVEN MONTHS LATER - DAY

Jeannie lies in bed, wiped out, post-labor, as Young Sal walks into the room with a dozen roses. He beams, proudly.

JEANNIE

Hey. D'ja see him?

YOUNG SAL

Yeah. Saw the nametag too.

JEANNIE

You like it?

YOUNG SAL

Dean Martin Carlucci? What's not to like?

Suddenly, Jeannie starts to cry.

YOUNG SAL

Hey, what's this?

JEANNIE

I'm scared, Sal. I never wanted this. Don't think I'll make a good mother. Didn't have much of an example to follow...drunken bitch.

YOUNG SAL

C'mon, you'll love it, trust me. Little girl to teach how to sing. Little boy coming home with skinned knees, cryin' for his mama. It's just different. As my Ma always said, "God pelts you with tomatoes, might as well make ragu."

This gets her chuckling.

YOUNG SAL (CONT'D)

It's all gonna work out, trust me. God even gave us a sign today. "*Everybody Loves Somebody*" just knocked the Beatles outta #1! So you see? Who says it's all hopeless?

Jeannie hugs him tightly, her fears contained for now.

SAL (V.O.)

But God wasn't just pelting us with tomatoes...it would come to feel more like rocks.