

Bing Crosby's
ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD
By Ron Hall

In 1997 Bob DeFlores and myself wrote and produced a documentary about Bing Crosby's rise to fame. It was based on Malcolm MacFarlane's "Bing Crosby: A Diary of a Lifetime," some rare footage from Bob's collection, two rare interviews with Bing and Al Rinker, Bing's early films and Bing's "Call Me Lucky" and other early books about him.

We released the DVD in 1997 and sold many copies to members of Club Crosby. I was so enthralled with the story that I continued to develop it as a screenplay. I finally brought it to a certain conclusion and registered it for copyright July 5, 2002 with the Library of Congress, Reg. #TXu001046371. I soon found it was easier to write a screenplay than to get anyone to look at it. I am not a screenwriter and did not have the time or inclination to pursue an agent or producer.

What you are about to read has not been edited since the last time I reviewed it around 2005. It was not influenced by Gary Giddens' "Bing Crosby, a Pocketful of Dreams," which I delayed reading until registering the script.

"Road to Hollywood" covers Bing's rise to fame through Nov., 1931, told as a flashback by Bing on the day in 1945 that he received his Oscar. I would not expect anyone to make this feature motion picture today. If I was involved, I would completely rewrite it, but because I have no plans to do that I am sharing it now with Bing's fans for their enjoyment and as thanks for their support of the DVD doc that Bob DeFlores and I produced in 1997.

Ideally Bing Crosby's entire life should be portrayed in a mini-series based on Gary Giddens' research. It would take a mini-series to relate all the impact Bing had as the center of cultural and entertainment changes in the mid-20th century. In light of the new "Stan and Ollie" feature, this dramatization of Bing's "Road to Hollywood" may inspire some producer looking for a Hollywood biopic project to consider Bing Crosby.

— Ron Hall, Jan. 2019
(contact: fesfilms@aol.com)

"ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD"
The Bing Crosby Story
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FADE IN:

EXT./INT. LAKESIDE COUNTRY CLUB - AFTERNOON

TITLE: MARCH 15, 1945

In front of the clubhouse 42-year-old BING CROSBY putts and sinks an imaginary ball, thrusts the putter at his caddy and fumbles it into a fountain. Phenomenally successful in films, records, radio, live shows and amateur sports, Bing was recently voted "Most Admired Man in the World."

Journalist JIMMY FIDLER suppresses a smile as he approaches from the clubhouse.

JIMMY

Have a good round, Mr. Crosby?

BING

Terrible, Mr. Fidler! How long you known me, Jimmy, and called me Bing?

JIMMY

Yes, Sir! About fifteen years.

BING

And now you're 'Siring' me.

JIMMY

Today is your big day.

They enter the clubhouse and head to the bar.

BING

That shindig's not for me. I don't think I'm going.

JIMMY

Dixie says you are and what she says...

BING

She says.

INT. CLUBHOUSE BAR - CONTINUOUS

They settle into stools at the deserted bar. Bing turns his hat backwards and fidgets with a cocktail stirrer.

JIMMY

Whisky sour.

BING

A coke for me, Rich. Remember when I imbibed to excess? I cut down after Will Rogers' memorial on the radio. I was pretty tipsy when I got up to sing Will's favorite song, "Home on the Range," and...

JIMMY

Couldn't remember the words.

BING

Yeah. You want another interview.

JIMMY

It'll make front page next to a picture of you and your Oscar.

BING

They've never given that skinny runt to a crooner. That's all I am and all I'll ever be.

JIMMY

I don't agree, but that's the story I'm after. You crooned nearly seven years before "The Big Broadcast" made you a star in 1932.

BING

Here's your story in three words: crooner got lucky.

He pulls a note pad and pencil out of Jimmy's jacket.

BING

Put it down. I'll tell you the whos, the whats and the whens.

JIMMY

(writing)

Got lucky. You're making my job easy.

BING

I'm an easy kind of a guy. The why
of it all escapes me.

JIMMY

You love to sing.

BING

Could it be that simple?

(singing)

WHY MUST I LIVE IN DREAMS
OF THE DAYS I USED TO KNOW?
WHY CAN'T I FIND REAL PEACE OF MIND
AND GO BACK TO THE LONG AGO?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREETS OF SPOKANE - MORNING - FLASHBACK

TITLES: SPOKANE, WASHINGTON - OCTOBER 15, 1925 - 9:00 AM.

(NOTE: The 1925 flashback is in sepia.)

Stagestruck, adventure bound and barely 19, AL RINKER drives his clunky Model T to 508 East Sharp Avenue.

BING (V.O.)

It was late 1925 when Alton Rinker and I decided to test our act in warmer climes. We were young and thought we had an act. We thought we'd drop in on Al's sister Mildred down in La-La Land. Keep in mind this is a true story.

EXT./INT. CROSBY HOUSE - DAY

Al stops, runs in the house and pulls 22-year-old Bing out of bed. Bing dresses in fast motion and stuffs an autographed photo of Al Jolson in his bag.

EXT. THE OPEN ROAD - DAY

They throw Bing's bag and drums in the jalopy and drive west.

BING (V.O.)

(singing)

WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT
MEETS THE GOLD OF THE DAY,
SOMEONE WAITS FOR ME.
AND THE GOLD OF HER HAIR

(MORE)

BING (V.O.) (cont'd)
 CROWNS THE BLUE OF HER EYES
 LIKE A HALO TENDERLY.

The sun jumps from morning to dusk. Their map blows ahead into a road sign: "HOLLYWOOD, 1200 MILES." The car chugs up a rugged dirt road into mountains. The sun sets.

The road turns to a goat trail along a precipice. Snow flakes blow into a blizzard. Headlights probe the unknown. Toward dawn their open car full of snow reaches the peak of a mountain. The engine dies. They get out and push.

BING (V.O.)
 (singing)
 IF ONLY I COULD SEE HER,
 OH HOW HAPPY I WOULD BE...
 WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT
 MEETS THE GOLD OF THE DAY,
 SOMEONE WAITS FOR ME.

The sun rises behind the "Paramount Mountain" and lights up another road sign: "HOLLYWOOD, 999 MILES." Bing flicks snow off his bearskin coat and parts the clouds.

In the distance Hollywood shimmers (in color) with the HOLLYWOODLAND sign, search lights, palm trees, girls and movie studios. A heavenly chorus sings "Hallelujah."

BING
 (in silent movie caption)
 "IT'S THE AMERICAN DREAM, AL."

RETURN TO CLUBHOUSE - END FLASHBACK

Jimmy throws back his drink and clangs the glass on the bar.

JIMMY
 You said this was a true story.

BING
 Hollywood was Wonderland, Shangri-La and Oz rolled into a dream so sweet it ached. Still is, I guess, to dreamers.

JIMMY
 I'm looking for the wild Bing I partied with in 1931. You had some, some demons to work out so you could sing your way.

BING
 (laughing)
 There's a theory! I may meander
 round in due course. When I told
 that little fantasy to Bill Still
 he bit on it longer than you.

JIMMY
 Who is Bill Still?

BING
 A Negro jazz arranger Paul brought
 west with us. You know Bill.

JIMMY
 Oh, William Grant Still. He was
 with you?

BING
 Indubitably. No more interruptions
 now, you hear?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN TOP - RETURN TO FLASHBACK

Hollywood beckons far away. Sky rockets explode. Magic.

BING (V.O.)
 I'll cut to when I told Bill on
 board the Old Gold Special. 1929.
 Spring. Pops was so full of dreams
 and hope.

Bing and Al coast down the mountain, off a cliff and over a
 rainbow into Hollywood.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TRAIN LOUNGE CAR - NOON

TITLE: MAY 27, 1929

With Paul Whiteman's band for three years, Bing has built a
 reputation as a playboy who lives for golfing, drinking,
 gambling, singing and most anything fun.

Musicians BIX BEIDERBECKE (cornet), EDDIE LANG (guitar),
 MARIO PERRY (accordion), JOE VENUTI (violin), FRANK TRUMBAUER
 (sax) and Negro arranger WILLIAM GRANT STILL listen to Bing
 finish his tall tale.

BIX' HORN
 Da-dat da dahhhhh.

BING

And we coasted all the way to
Hollywood!

HARRY BARRIS, the baby-faced member of Paul Whiteman's Rhythm Boys, drops to his knees and waves his hands high.

HARRY

Hallelujah, the promised land!

BILL STILL

You mean that didn't happen?

AL RINKER, taller and handsomer than Bing but not a gifted singer, starts a phonograph record.

AL

I recall taking the coast road,
Bill. Maybe it was Al Jolson
driving with Bing.

AL JOLSON (ON RECORD)

(singing)

CALIFORNIA, HERE I COME,
RIGHT BACK WHERE I STARTED FROM.
OPEN UP, OPEN UP THAT GOLDEN GATE,
CALIFORNIA HERE I COME!

EXT. TRAIN - SAME

The whistle blows. The train speeds through rural Indiana under an overcast sky. Packs of Old Gold cigarettes and Paul Whiteman's smiling cartoon face adorn the last car. Banners proclaim: "KING OF JAZZ" and "HOLLYWOOD OR BUST."

The train passes a sign: "HOLLYWOOD: 2339 MILES." Two young men in a jalopy bounce along the gravel road west.

BACK IN THE LOUNGE CAR

PAUL "POPS" WHITEMAN hands out concert schedules. The famed band leader, radio and recording star galvanized the music world in 1924 with "Rhapsody in Blue" and made his own brand of "Jazz" a household name.

HARRY

(singing)

I OUGHTA BE IN PICTURES.
I OUGHTA BE A STAR!

BING
 (singing)
 I OUGHTA BE IN PICTURES.
 I'M CUTER THAN YOU ARE.

AL
 (singing)
 YOU'LL NEVER BE IN PICTURES.
 YOUR EARS STICK OUT TOO FAR.
 I'M GONNA BE THE HERO,
 A MOVIE STAR...

PAUL
 (singing)
 LET'S CLOSE THE BAR!

Paul takes a flask away from Bix and shakes his head.

PAUL
 I'm the star, boys. No applause,
 please, but they're naming the
 picture after me, 'King of Jazz.'

BING
 Catchy, catchy, Pops.

AL
 Where have I heard that before?

PAUL
 It's supposed to be my life story.
 (clapping hands)
 Get with it! Time to sober up!
 The show must go on!

Paul swigs from Bix' flask and walks off with it.

BILL STILL
 Don't leave me dangling. How did
 you join up with Paul?

BING
 I'm no dangler, merely modest.

JOE VENUTI
 Modest, my Aunt Fanny's fanny!

BING
 (clearing throat)
 I gotta save the warbler. You tell
 'em, Al.

EDDIE LANG
 The truth will out.

FRANK TRUMBAUER

But boring!

AL

My sister Mildred got us vaudeville auditions and we played the coast for a year billed as "Two Boys and a Piano." Pops caught our act at the Metropolitan in late 1926.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. VAUDEVILLE STAGE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Al plays piano and Bing a cymbal to a young, wild audience.

BING AND AL

(singing)

BABY FACE, YOU'VE GOT THE CUTEST
LITTLE BABY FACE, BUM-BUM-BUM-BUM.
THERE'S NOT ANOTHER ONE CAN TAKE
YOUR PLACE, BABY FACE...

BING

What's that smell? Say, Al, did
you take a bath this morning?

AL

Why, is there one missing?

BING AND AL

(singing)

BABY FACE, I'M UP IN HEAVEN WHEN
I'M IN YOUR FOND EMBRACE.
I DIDN'T NEED A SHOVE,
'CAUSE I FELL IN LOVE
WITH YOUR PRETTY BABY FA-A-ACE.

The audience claps and screams. Paul and his manager, JIMMY GILLESPIE, watch from the back.

PAUL

Sign 'em up.

RETURN TO TRAIN LOUNGE - END FLASHBACK

BILL STILL

That's it?

BING

We pummeled the populace purple.

JOE VENUTI
Dead is more the word.

FRANK TRUMBAUER
Sunny-side down.

EDDIE LANG
Scrambled on Broadway.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT./INT. PARAMOUNT THEATRE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Police cars escort Whiteman and his band up Broadway in a motor parade. They unload at the Paramount Theatre at Times Square. The marquee reads: "WELCOME HOME, PAUL."

ON STAGE

The band waits to perform before a packed house.

AL
Our first show in New York. It's a big house, no microphones, hot.

BING
So what, everyone loves us. I guarantee three encores.

The movie ends. Paul conducts "Rhapsody in Blue" as the screen rises and the lights come up to applause.

PAUL
Thank you so much. Now I'd like to introduce you to a couple of boys I recently picked up in Walla Walla, Washington. I just love saying 'Walla Walla.'

Bing and Al can't be heard. 'Two Boys and a Piano' lay three eggs. Paul interrupts the fiasco with a number.

IN THE LOBBY - LATER

Bing and Al sing to the apathetic crowd waiting for the next show. A friendly drunk offers them popcorn.

RETURN TO TRAIN LOUNGE - END FLASHBACK

Paul returns in a tuxedo and breaks up the party. The bandmen adjust their instruments. The train slows down.

PAUL
 Harry and a little 'Mississippi
 Mud' saved your asses. Fort Wayne,
 boys. Storm clouds! Hop to it!

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

A crowd closes around as the train stops. The rear car opens out into a band platform. The bandsmen take their places.

PAUL
 Welcome to our concert courtesy of
 Old Gold Cigarettes. While you
 listen light up an Old Gold.

Bandsmen toss packs of Old Golds into the crowd, then light up Lucky Strikes. Al sits at his piano.

PAUL
 Be sure to listen to my radio show every Tuesday. Tomorrow night we broadcast from Chicago, next week Denver. The boys and I are going Hollywood to film "King of Jazz" for Universal. Don't miss it.

Paul conducts "Whispering." To the side Bing and Harry flirt with two young ladies crowded up close.

BING
 See, no mouth pieces. We can't play a lick, just finger 'em to make the band look bigger.

HARRY
 Nobody plays. Pops has a big record player under his jacket.

BING
 In the shower he's as skinny as Harry here. Not a pretty sight.

The band plays "You Took Advantage of Me." Bix on cornet plays musical tag with Frank Trumbauer on sax.

A toddler climbs off her mother's shoulders onto Al's piano and sways with the music. Al hands her a pencil which she waves like a baton. All horns turn to the new conductor. The crowd cheers. Paul pretends to be miffed.

Bing goes to the piano and holds her hand as she dances.

BING

(singing with megaphone)
 I'M A SENTIMENTAL SAP, THAT'S ALL.
 WHAT'S THE USE OF TRYING
 NOT TO FALL?
 I HAVE NO WILL
 'CAUSE YOU MADE YOUR KILL
 AND YOU TOOK ADVANTAGE OF ME.
 HERE I AM WITH ALL
 MY BRIDGES BURNED,
 JUST A BABE IN ARMS
 WHERE YOU'RE CONCERNED.
 SO LOCK THE DOORS AND CALL ME,
 'CAUSE YOU TOOK ADVANTAGE OF ME.

Bing lowers the girl to her mother. Harry joins him and Al.

RHYTHM BOYS

(singing)
 WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN,
 THE TIDE GOES OUT,
 THE DARKIES GATHER ROUND
 AND THEY ALL BEGIN TO SHOUT.
 HEY, HEY, UNCLE DUD,
 IT'S A TREAT TO BEAT YOUR FEET
 ON THE MISSISSIPPI MUD.

Sprinkles of rain pelt down. Thunder booms in the distance.

RHYTHM BOYS

(singing)
 OH, WHAT A DANCE DO THEY DO,
 LORDY HOW I'M TELLIN' YOU.
 THEY DON'T NEED NO BAND.
 THEY KEEP TIME
 BY CLAPPIN' THEIR HANDS.
 JUST AS HAPPY AS A COW
 CHEWIN' ON A CUD,
 WHEN THE DARKIES BEAT THEIR FEET
 ON THE MISSISSIPPI MUD.

AL

Did you say mud there, boy?

HARRY

I said really black mud.

BING

Well, speaking of mud and rain
 always reminds me...

(singing)
 THAT I LEFT MY SUGAR
 STANDING IN THE RAIN,
 AND MY SUGAR MELTED AWAY.

(MORE)

BING (cont'd)
 SWEETER THAN THE SUGAR
 FROM THE SUGAR CANE.
 WHY I DIDN'T MEANT TO TREAT HER
 THATA WAY.

AL
 He didn't mean to treat her thata
 way. Why did you treat that girl
 that way?

Lightning flashes amidst heavy rain. The bandsmen scurry
 into the train. Soaked spectators run for cover.

BING
 Why, I don't know, but I think we
 better hit the refrain.

RHYTHM BOYS
 (singing)
 I JUST LEFT MY SUGAR
 STANDING IN THE RAIN,
 AND MY SUGAR MELTED AWAY.
 DAH, DADA DAT-DUH, DADADA DAT-DUH,
 DA DA DAT DAT DA-DAH.
 BUT I LEFT MY SUGAR...

AL
 Where'd you leave that sugar again?

BING
 (singing)
 STANDING IN THE MUD.

RHYTHM BOYS
 (singing)
 I'LL BET SHE'S PLENTY MUDDY NOWWWW!

HARRY
 Haaaaaah!

A few drenched children applaud. The bandstand car closes up
 and the train pulls away.

HARRY
 The sun always shines in Hollywood.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KLZ RADIO STATION - NIGHT

TITLE: DENVER, ONE WEEK LATER

Bing and the band in cramped quarters broadcast the weekly
 Old Gold Show live to the nation.

BING
 (singing)
 OL' MAN RIVER, THAT OL' MAN RIVER,
 HE DON'T SAY NOTHIN'
 BUT HE MUST KNOW SOMETHIN,'
 'CAUSE HE JUST KEEPS ROLLIN,'
 HE KEEPS ROLLIN' ALONG.

INT. CROSBY LIVING ROOM - SAME

In Spokane Bing's parents huddle around their radio.

BING (ON RADIO)
 (singing)
 HE DON'T PLANT TATTERS,
 HE DON'T PLANT COTTON.
 THEM THAT PLANTS 'EM
 IS SOON FORGOTTEN,
 BUT OL' MAN RIVER
 HE KEEPS ROLLIN' ALONG.

MRS. CROSBY
 That's my Harry! Why don't they
 ever call him by name?

MR. CROSBY
 That Whiteman is the only star.

INT. DRESSING ROOM AT FOX - SAME

In Hollywood 17-year-old DIXIE LEE listens in her dressing room. The painfully shy starlet wonders why she sings and dances for strangers. Looks -- got 'em.

BING (ON RADIO)
 (singing)
 YOU AND ME, WE SWEAT AND STRAIN,
 BODY ALL ACHIN'
 AND WRACKED WITH PAIN.
 TOTE THAT BARGE, LIFT THAT BALE,
 GET A LITTLE DRUNK
 AND YOU LANDS IN JAIL.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
 Five minutes, Miss Lee.

Dixie examines a record of "Old Man River." The label says "WITH VOCAL REFRAIN" but the singer is not identified.

EXT. LOS ANGELES TRAIN STATION - DAY

BING (V.O.)
 (singing)
 I GETS WEARY AND SICK OF TRYIN.'
 I'M TIRED OF LIVIN,'
 FEARED OF DYIN,'
 BUT OL' MAN RIVER,
 HE KEEPS ROLLIN' ALONG.

The Old Gold Special pulls in. Cameramen and reporters surround Paul. Limousines speed the troupe through Hollywood with a police escort.

EXT. UNIVERSAL PICTURES LOT - CONTINUOUS

The limousines unload at the "Whiteman Lodge." Universal president CARL LAEMMLE and his son, CARL LAEMMLE JR., wait on the porch.

PRESS AGENT
 Gather around. Uncle Carl Laemmle would like to say a few words.

CARL LAEMMLE
 Paul, gentlemen, I am delighted to welcome you to Universal Pictures and the start of our all-talking, all-color, super-production "King of Jazz."

AL
 (whispering in back)
 Color? That lets you out, Bing.

CARL LAEMMLE
 The Whiteman Lodge has been built for you to enjoy day or night.

BING
 Does that mean a full bar?

CARL LAEMMLE
 The studio is yours. Visit our sound stages, the largest in Hollywood, and see how pictures are made. We will now show you the sets and relate the story of "King of Jazz."

Laemmle and Carl Laemmle Jr. escort Paul and most of the company away. Bing, Harry, Al, Joe, Bix, Eddie Lang and Mario Perry sneak away on their own.

ON THE LOT

BING

I hope I get a solo in the picture.

AL

Clara Bow, come to papa.

JOE

I hear if you wear pants, she'll find you.

HARRY

(dancing around)

Gotta sing! Gotta dance! Gotta act, act, act! When you say that, smile. We're gonna take him for a ride. Oh, baby! Be a star!

ON A SOUND STAGE

They barge into a sound stage filming the 1929 musical "Broadway." A studio guide catches up.

BIX

Sweet music.

BING

La, la, laaaaa.

STUDIO GUIDE

You must be quiet! They are recording for a sound picture.

The dancers dance and the cameras roll. Joe Venuti sneaks over to a live microphone and splutters loudly.

JOE

Phhwwwttttt!

The group laughs. The director chases them off.

ON A "KING OF JAZZ" SOUND STAGE

Paul and company tour a night club set.

CARL LAEMMLE, JR.

Bootleggers set you up and your place is raided. Ziegfeld hires you to headline his Follies. The star breaks her leg opening night and your girl goes on instead.

Two boys step forward. The chubby one dressed in a tuxedo and mustache resembles Paul.

CARL LAEMMLE, JR.
 You debut "Rhapsody in Blue" with a
 chorus line of 200 beautiful girls.
 A double will dance for you.

PAUL
 What the hell are they?

CARL LAEMMLE, JR.
 My nephew Fred plays you as a child
 and Wayne is young George Gershwin.

PAUL
 Like hell! Nobody dances to
 "Rhapsody in Blue." Not me! Call
 me when you get a real story.

BACK ON THE LOT

Paul storms out the front gate. The bandsmen straggle behind. Lightning, thunder and rain pour down.

AL
 There goes your solo, Bing.

HARRY
 Melted away.

BING
 (singing)
 HAPPY FEET,
 I'VE GOT THOSE HAPPY FEET.
 GIVE THEM A LOW-DOWN BEAT,
 AND THEY BEGIN DANCING.

MONTAGE - GOING HOLLYWOOD

(NOTE: To Whiteman's 1930 recording of "Happy Feet.")

-- Paul walks into a car dealer, points to a Ford and counts off 25 on his hands.

-- 25 new Fords drive off the lot. Paul's cartoon face smiles from each spare wheel cover.

-- The cars drive to Marion Davies' mansion on the beach at Santa Monica.

-- Charlie Chaplin, DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS, MARY PICKFORD, Marion Davies and other stars dance to Paul Whiteman's band.

RHYTHM BOYS

(singing)

HAPPY FEET,
 I'VE GOT THOSE HAPPY FEET.
 GIVE THEM A LOW-DOWN BEAT,
 AND THEY BEGIN DANCIN.'
 WEARY BLUES
 CAN'T GET INTO MY SHOES,
 BECAUSE MY SHOES REFUSE
 TO EVER GROW WEARY.
 I KEEP CHEERFUL ON AN EARFUL
 OF MUSIC SWEET,
 'CAUSE I'VE GOT THOSE
 HAP-HAP-HAPPY FEET!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MONTMARTRE CAFE - LATE AFTERNOON

An intimate nightclub upstairs at 6757 Hollywood Boulevard. Workers prepare for opening while Harry at piano, Joe Venuti on violin and Eddie Lang on guitar rehearse with Bing.

BING

(singing)

TILL WE MEET, THE GOLDEN SUNSET
 WILL RECALL YOUR SMILE.
 TILL WE MEET, THE WINDS WILL
 WHISPER YOU ARE MINE.

INT. MODEL A CAR - SAME

FRANKIE ALBERTSON drives Dixie Lee to the Montmartre. In a trance she seems to hear Bing sing to her.

BING (O.S.)

(singing)

THE ROSES THAT ARE WET WITH DEW
 RECALL THE TUNE, SWEET LIPS I KNEW,
 AND THE TINTED MIDNIGHT SKIES
 ARE COPIED FROM YOUR EYES.
 LET ME DREAM,
 OUR PRECIOUS DREAMS ARE SO DIVINE.
 THOUGH YOU LOVE ME FROM AFAR,
 I'LL NEVER BE CONTENTED,

INT. MONTMARTRE CAFE - SAME

BING

(singing)

TILL WE MEET
 AND ONCE AGAIN YOU'RE MINE.

An entranced waitress slips off a bar stool. Joe and Eddie put away their instruments and all head to the bar.

BING

Ahhh... bit out of my range. I could do with some lubrication.

HARRY

Croon 'em woo like Rudy Vallee and I'll clean up on song sales.

JOE

Woo, woo! Let's stew!

AL

Got anything new for us, Harry?

HARRY

Same old tunes, but no more "Mississippi Mud."

BING

It don't seem right to sing about darkies since I met Louie.

HARRY

Man, did Satch get it on with Bix in Chicago! Put that in song and it's easy street for old Harry, but Vallee's groaning, the girls are swooning and I'm looking for a new rhyme for June.

AL

Ga-loom.

AT THE BAR

The group orders drinks as the first patrons arrive.

BING

Gimme a special soda, Mac.

BARTENDER

Make it special yourself.

Bing spikes his drink from a flask. Bix enters.

AL

Don't have too many. We want to make good opening night.

BING

Over here, Bix. Set 'em up.

AL
 (whispering)
 He can't stop.

BING
 He can't enjoy himself until he's
 had a few.

AL
 You're talking about yourself.
 Moody when you're sober, fun and
 friendly when you're loose.

BING
 Friendly sells more songs.

BIX
 I need to... Do you think I could
 sit in with your band?

BING
 See to it, Al.

BIX
 Nothing to do gets on my nerves. I
 wish they'd start that movie.

AT THE CAFE ENTRANCE

The host welcomes Dixie and Frankie.

DIXIE
 I'm a Paul Whiteman fan. I'd sort
 of like to meet the Rhythm Boys.

FRANKIE ALBERTSON
 She's Dixie Lee, a big movie star
 at Fox. Give us a good table.

Frankie slips him money. The host escorts them to a table
 and points out Bing at the bar.

DIXIE
 Don't embarrass me. I'm just a
 little fish swimming upstream.

AT THE BAR

Bing autographs sheet music for three giggling teenage girls.

BING
 Be sure to get Harry's moniker. He
 writes the songs.

The girls run off. Bing sips his drink and locks eyes with Dixie. She glances frantically around for Frankie.

BING
Well, well...

Dixie tries to talk but nothing comes out. Bing mouths a silent reply. She blushes and backs away.

BING
Wait. Would you like my autograph?

DIXIE
N-no. Would you like mine?

He fumbles the pen into his drink.

BING
Please, I collect 'em.

She scribbles on a napkin with the wet pen.

DIXIE
You don't know who I am.

BING
You wrong me most grievously. I've always wanted to meet you, Miss...

He tugs the napkin and tears the name.

BING
Gar-bo. Great Garbo.

DIXIE
That's Greta.

BING
You look great! I mean the word, same letters.

DIXIE
I, I feel great! How do you feel?

He grabs her hand and touches it against his chest.

BING
Why, I don't know. How do I?

DIXIE
You're not Paul Whiteman. No stomach, no mustache, one chin.

BING
I'm flattered.

DIXIE
Funny name.

BING
I'm B-B-Bing, Bing Crosby, one of
us three guys.

DIXIE
Didn't your mother tell you?

BING
She never told me about you.

Harry sidles between them and pats Bing's stomach.

HARRY
Move it, Gutless. Oh, my, what I
felt. We're on.

BING
You must be in show business
yourself, Miss Garbo.

DIXIE
Bingo! I sing in The Follies, Fox,
the "Fox Follies of 1929" movie.
Look for Dixie in the credits.

BING
Harmoniously speaking, we may be in
the same racket soon.

ON THE BAND PLATFORM

Bix kicks off "From Monday On." Bing watches Dixie return to
her table, stumbles to the bandstand and steps on Al's foot.

AL
The girl's too young.

BING
Her name is Dixie.

RHYTHM BOYS
(singing)
FROM MONDAY ON MY CARES ARE OVER.
FROM MONDAY ON I'LL BE IN CLOVER.
WE PICK ON MONDAY
BECAUSE IT'S WASH DAY,
AND WE'LL WASH OUR BLUES AWAY.

AT DIXIE'S TABLE

Actors JOBYNA RALSTON and her husband, RICHARD ARLEN, join Dixie and Frankie.

RHYTHM BOYS

(singing)

I'M GONNA START SHOUTING HEY, HEY,
WHEN HE SAYS LOVE, HONOR AND OBEY.
I'LL BE HAPPY FROM MONDAY ON.

JOBYNA

Dixie, we're crashing this fabulous party at Norma Talmadge's. You simply must come and right away. Bebe's gonna be there and Connie an' Laura an' Vilma an' Rod an'...

RICHARD

Better come. Joby never gives up.

ON THE BAND PLATFORM

The band starts the next song softly.

BING

(singing)

YOU CAME TO ME FROM OUT OF NOWHERE.
YOU TOOK MY HEART
AND YOU FOUND IT FREE.
WONDERFUL DREAMS,
WONDERFUL SCHEMES FROM NOWHERE,
MADE EVERY HOUR
SWEET AS A FLOWER TO ME.

AT DIXIE'S TABLE

Dixie tugs on Jobyna to look at Bing. She finally notices, mouths "Oh, My God" and sinks into a chair.

FRANKIE

The stuffed mushrooms look...

DIXIE

Shoosh! He's singing to me.

At every table enthralled women push their dates away.

BING

(singing)

WHEN I LEAST EXPECTED,
KINDLY FATE DIRECTED
YOU TO MAKE EACH DREAM
OF MINE COME TRUE.

(MORE)

BING (cont'd)
 AND IF IT'S CLEAR OR RAINING,
 THERE IS NO EXPLAINING,
 THINGS JUST HAPPEN AND SO DID YOU.

A hat check girl drops hats on the floor. They pile up. A waitress pours water in a woman's lap, but neither notices.

BING
 (singing)
 AND IF YOU SHOULD GO
 BACK TO YOUR NOWHERE,
 LEAVING ME WITH, WITH MY MEMORY.
 I'LL ALWAYS WAIT
 FOR YOUR RETURN OUT OF NOWHERE,
 HOPING YOU'LL BRING
 YOUR LOVE TO ME.

Richard and Frankie shrug their shoulders and drag Dixie and Jobyna away. Dixie blows Bing a kiss.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CASTING OFFICE AT FOX - DAY

Posters for "FOX MOVIE TONE FOLLIES OF 1929" cover the walls. Casting director JAMES RYAN, short cigar, shorter temper, paces in boredom. The Rhythm Boys finish a song and pose.

RHYTHM BOYS
 Ta-dah!

HARRY
 Al and I sing while Bing goes "Ba-
 ba-boo, ba-ba-boo."

RYAN
 What happens when he sings?

BING
 The audience goes "Ba-ba-boo."

RYAN
 Comedians we got and you ain't no
 El Brendel. So you guys want to
 get into pictures?

HARRY
 We already are, Mr. Ryan.

AL
 We're starring in "King of Jazz" at
 Universal.

BING

We're going straight to the top!
We wanted to offer Fox the benefit
of our services 'cause we heard
starlets ran all over your lot.

Ryan removes Bing's goofy hat, wiggles his ears and blows
smoke in his face.

RYAN

So, Mr. Funny Hat likes girls and
would like to act.

BING

(posing his profile)
Wouldn't everyone?

JAMES RYAN

Hell, thinning hair and your ears
stick out. You'll never make it in
pictures. Fox can pass on your
'services.' Next!

Three chimps in tutus waddle in and pose like the Rhythm
Boys. Ryan laughs and claps.

EXT. FOX LOT - CONTINUOUS

Actors, cowboys, dancers, prop men and carpenters hurry
between sound stages. Bing searches for Dixie.

AL

You blew it. Ever hear of
humility?

HARRY

Arrogance wards off the pain of
rejection. That didn't come out so
funny, did it?

AL

You won't find that Dixie girl
either. This place is too big.

Stage hands carry scenery past them. Dixie walks on the
other side, but they do not see each other.

HARRY

Wanna go on that picnic with the
gang?

BING
 (snapping fingers)
 Bah-da-dit dit dit, doodle de dit.
 No, no, let's go, go, golf.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY TO SANTA BARBARA - DAY

Four Whiteman cars drive to a picnic. One car passes, runs into oncoming traffic and rolls over. Mario Perry is thrown from the car. Joe Venuti crawls out holding his arm in pain. The other cars unload. Mario dies on the spot.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SMALL BUNGALOW - NIGHT

MILDRED BAILEY, Al's sister, hosts a party to commemorate Mario's death. A portly woman larger than Paul, Mildred wails sweet blues in night clubs.

A photo on the piano shows Mario flanked by Bing and Al.

IN THE KITCHEN

Mildred prepares trays of food. Bix fingers notes on his trumpet. She jams broccoli in his mouth.

MILDRED
 That'll put color in your cheeks.

Bing, wearing a Hawaiian shirt, stumbles in a little tipsy with his older brother, EVERETT CROSBY.

BING
 Millie, meet m' brother! Everett sells trucks. Mildred is Al's sister an' sings in nightclubs.

MILDRED
 Speakeasies. I'm glad to meet you.

Bing draws two beers from a home still and goes to Bix.

EVERETT
 I'm sorry about Mario. I never met him.

MILDRED
 Me either, but he meant a lot to Al and Bing. They sang together in that Broadway show "Lucky" only last year. Help me.

They take food into the living room. Bing sips his beer while Bix just smiles.

BIX

Keep the ahs and bu-bu-boos, like riffs, freer than words.

BING

Which I forgets.

BIX

Feel. Sing the melody and I'll play round it.

Bix puts his horn to mouth. Bandsmen stampede out of the kitchen. Bing mutes Bix' horn with his hat.

(NOTE: Can be any song from the period, or just scat/jazz.)

BING

(singing)

REACHING FOR SOMEONE AND NOT
FINDING ANYONE THERE, O-OO-AH, OH!
NO SWEET ROMANCES TO ANSWER MY
PRAYERS, ALWAYS BUILDING CASTLES
THAT NOBODY WILL SHARE,
REACHING FOR SOMEONE,
NOT FINDING ANYONE THERE.
UM, BUH-BUH-BU-BOO.

Bing taps drum sticks and scats as Bix finishes the tune.

BING

Come golf with me an' get some sun.
You gotta take care. There's more
to life than chasin' angels in your
head. There's... uh, golf,
baseball, gambling, good food,
soft, sweet...

BIX

Ah, the pretty girls. Yes,
indeedy.

BING

I confess in church so it's okay.
An' friends, family, God and
country.

Bix salutes with his horn. Mildred and Everett return.

BING

Big surprise for Pops, right, Mil?

MILDRED

We'll see.

Bing jams broccoli in Bix' mouth. Al and Harry enter.

BIX

Cut that out!

AL

Tonight's the night, Sis. Paul has a policy against auditioning relatives, but he'll hear you now.

MILDRED

I think I'm going home to Spokane.

AL

No, no and nope. You helped us get started and now it's our turn.

BING

We invited everyone but Pops. He can't stand that. He's fuming. He's...

The back door bell rings. Harry peaks out the window.

HARRY

Here! Fatso, the King of Mice!

Mildred opens the door, gives Paul a bear hug and guides him to the kitchen table. He grabs a platter of food from Everett, sits and devours it.

PAUL

This trip's a disaster! No script yet! Too much time on your hands. Other bands jumping on me in New York and now this terrible accident.

Paul picks up broccoli, looks at Bix and eats it himself. Bing brings him a beer.

BING

Have a little home brew libation. It might inspire a story line.

PAUL

Anything would beat the plot I axed today about my imaginary twin brother.

(MORE)

PAUL (cont'd)

He puts on a fake mustache to marry my girl, then loses his baton so he can't perform in bed.

BING

Rhapsody in blue!

Paul plops vegetables into a bowl of dip.

PAUL

Then there's a number about the birth of jazz. They put music from every country into a giant melting pot and out pops jazz.

He flips gooey vegetables at his listeners.

PAUL

Pop! Pop! They've got Scotsmen, damn it, in kilts and bagpipes. Bleah, bleah, jazz, but I can't use any black musicians.

HARRY

You tried.

PAUL

Louis Armstrong is jazz! They call me King of Jazz but I can't be on the same stage with Louis.

BING

No, he can't play with you, Mr. 'White' Man. I swear, makes no sense. Some day, like in Chicago...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT./INT. CHICAGO NIGHT CLUB - LATE NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A sign on the front door says "Closed." Inside LOUIS ARMSTRONG and his band jam with Bix, Harry and Whiteman musicians. Louis and Bix exchange horns and mouth pieces and go into "St. Louis Blues." Bing joins them.

BING

(singing)

ST. LOUIS WOMAN,
WITH HER DIAMOND RING,
PULLS THAT MAN AROUND
BY HER APRON STRINGS.
I GOT THE ST. LOUIS BLUES,
I'M JUST AS BLUE AS I CAN BE.

(MORE)

BING (cont'd)
 SEEMS LIKE THAT GAL'S GOT A HEART
 CAST DOWN DEEP IN THE SEA...

A blast of music blows the front door open. The "Closed" sign flutters to the ground. The music fades away.

RETURN TO MILDRED'S PARTY - END FLASHBACK

BING
 Some day we'll unlock that door.

PAUL
 Not Old Gold, not as long as they
 smoke down south.

BIX
 Music is color blind.

BING
 Me too. Cain't tell red from green
 so I wears these shirts. Like it?

PAUL
 (slamming beer mug)
 That damned movie! If we had been
 in production, no accident and
 no... Hell!

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Al sits at the piano and Eddie Lang tunes his guitar.

AL
 Sing, Millie. Now's your chance.

Mildred sings "What Can I Say Dear, After I Say I'm Sorry?"
 Bix fingers the tune with closed eyes.

PAUL
 Who, the..? That's the sweetest
 god damn angel I ever heard.

Paul walks behind Mildred and holds her shoulders.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RADIO STUDIO - NIGHT

Mildred and the band finish the song on Paul's Tuesday radio show. The director hands him a message.

PAUL

A listener kindly phoned in to say Mildred's solo is the finest he has ever heard on my show. Thank you so much. I can't agree more.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT./INT. TRAIN COACH - DAY

The Old Gold Special heads back East without the "Hollywood or Bust" banners. Paul addresses the assembled troupe.

PAUL

New York in four days, boys, and Millie. We open at the Pavilion Royale and we've got recording sessions with Columbia while we wait for Universal to call us back.

Harry jumps up with a fake telegram.

HARRY

Just in from Universal! Paul Whiteman loses band. Stop! Also loses 100 pounds. Stop! But sees his feet and finds the green socks he lost in Cincin...

EVERYONE

Stop!

Bing jerks Harry back in his seat amid laughter.

PAUL

Relax. There's nothing but work at the end of this line.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

The band records in Columbia's New York studio. Bix barely finishes his solo.

BING

(singing)

THE WAY IS LONG,
THE NIGHT IS DARK,
BUT I DON'T MIND
'CAUSE A HAPPY LARK WILL BE SINGING
AT THE END OF THE ROAD.

(MORE)

BING (cont'd)
 I CAN'T GO WRONG, I MUST GO RIGHT,
 I'LL FIND MY WAY 'CAUSE THE GUIDING
 LIGHT WILL BE SHINING
 AT THE END OF THE ROAD.

Bix collapses in his chair.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - NIGHT

Paul, Mildred, Bing, Eddie and Frank Trumbauer put an emaciated Bix on a train. Bix stares out the window at his friends and pulls a flask out of his garter.

BING (V.O.)
 (singing)
 THERE MAY BE THORNS IN MY PATH,
 AH, BUT I'LL WEAR A SMILE,
 'CAUSE IN A LITTLE WHILE,
 MY PATH WILL BE ROSES.
 THE RAIN MAY FALL FROM UP ABOVE,
 BUT I WON'T STOP 'CAUSE THE ONES I
 LOVE WILL BE WAITING
 AT THE END OF THE ROAD.

The train pulls away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LORETTI'S SPEAKEASY - LATE NIGHT

A snappily over-dressed gangster, O'CONNELL, offers Bing a drink.

BING
 (barely singing)
 ONES I LOVE... WAITING... END OF
 THE ROAD...

O'CONNELL
 I like your style, son. You got me
 believin' you lost your best pal.

BING
 No! Sent him home... get well.

O'CONNELL
 What's his problem?

BING
 Drinks too much.

Bing downs the drink and passes out face first on the table.

INT. SEEDY APARTMENT - NIGHT

Bing comes to in a dump with O'Connell and his gang.

BING
Where? What?

O'CONNELL
Some bad mugs showed up. You had a wad a cash in your pocket so we brung you along for safe keeping.

BING
Thanks, I... Is your suit real?

O'CONNELL
Glad you like it.

BING
I'll just, uh, go wash up.

In the bathroom Bing checks his money. Machine gun fire comes from the other room. Bullets rip the door. Bing jumps in the full bathtub and gets soaked. Whistles blow.

The other room quiets down. Bing peaks out at policemen, doctors and reporters. He tries to sneak away.

POLICEMAN
Going swimming, Buddy?

BING
I'm a singer with Paul Whiteman's band. I only dropped in to check out the ruckus. Tell him, Burt.

REPORTER BURT
That's right. He's Crosby, the singer, not part of this mob.

Bing slips away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TRAIN DINING CAR - DAY

Paul and Bill Still eat and go over arrangements as Bing and Harry stroll through.

HARRY
(singing mournfully)
CALIFORNIA HERE WE COME...

BING
 (singing)
 RIGHT BACK WHERE WE ST-STARTED
 FROMMM...

BILL
 (handing sheet music)
 Say, Bing, can you sing this fast?

BING
 Likely, but I can't read music.

HARRY
 Can't read it. Feels it.

BING
 This is a Eubie Blake song. It
 would sure be nice to work with...

HARRY
 Get Eubie, hire Jelly Roll, my man
 Fats Waller, King Oliver! Get...

PAUL
 Stop harping! I'd love to put them
 in the band, but I've got fifty
 mouths to feed and I can't afford
 to lose a few bookings down south.

BILL
 You'd lose all of 'em.

PAUL
 And how do you think they'd feel
 using different hotels, diners,
 toilets for crissake from us? Bill
 isn't even allowed in this car.

BING
 We'll have to change all that.

PAUL
 You do that, Bing. You just do
 that. I've got bigger problems.

Harry plops "Variety" on the table with the headline: "WALL
 STREET LAYS AN EGG."

HARRY
 We all do.

CUT TO:

INT. SOUND STAGE AT UNIVERSAL - DAY

Paul and film director JOHN ANDERSON watch a choreographer walk Bing and 200 cowboys through the "Song of the Dawn" number. The orchestra track plays on a large record player.

JOHN ANDERSON

The biography idea is dead. It's a music revue with comedy blackouts.

PAUL

Happy days are here again!

BING

(singing)

DAWN IS BREAKING,
AND A NEW DAY IS BORN.
THE WORLD IS SINGING
THE SONG OF THE DAWN.

JOHN ANDERSON

Looking good, Bing. Final take in the morning. Get plenty of sleep.

Bing meets Harry and Joe Venuti by the record player.

BING

Joe, you got your cast off!

JOE

I'll flex it tonight at Pickfair.
Pops says use the servant entrance.

HARRY

Movie star Paul goes in the front door only if his band comes in the back to entertain.

JOE

And don't miss your beauty rest.

BING

May the god of nod wing me to sweet Elysium. I'll greet the morn...

Bing starts a record and sings with arms spread wide. Six Scotsmen pose behind him and mouth the words.

BING

(singing)

SINGING THE SONG OF THE DAWN!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PICKFAIR MANSION - NIGHT

Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford entertain all Hollywood. Bing, Al and Harry sing and flirt with the Brox sisters.

RHYTHM BOYS

(singing)

SHE LIKES TO BILL AND COO.
I NEVER LIKED TO BILL AND COO,
BUT THAT'S MY WEAKNESS NOW.
SHE LIKES TO (horn notes).
I NEVER LIKED TO (horn notes).
BUT SHE LIKES (horn notes),
AND THAT'S MY WEAKNESS NOW.

The band continues. The boys smile and wave at the girls.

BING

They're in the picture, too.

HARRY

What you gonna do with your girl?

Bing mimes drinking and leaving with his thumb.

AL

I don't think she needs any liquid encouragement.

BING

That's for me.

RHYTHM BOYS

(singing)

THAT'S MY WEAKNESS NOWWWWW!

The band breaks. The Brox Sisters grab the boys.

PAUL

Go home early, Bing.

BING

Beddy-bye, on my way.

BOBBE BROX

Umm, beddy-bye.

Bing leaves Bobbe at the front door, pilfers a bottle of champagne from the bar and bumps into Dixie Lee.

DIXIE

It's you.

BING

Whoa, Sugar. I'll never leave you standing in the rain.

DIXIE

I saw the Whiteman cars and...
Where are you going?

BING

To the stars. Let's renew old times.

Bing sneaks Dixie past Bobbe and out a back door.

EXT. PICKFAIR GROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

They stroll into a garden. A medley from "Showboat" drifts out and reaches "Old Man River."

DIXIE

It is you. You're the one!

BING

I hope so, Sugar.

DIXIE

I'm Dixie, Dixie Lee, the nowhere girl from the south, Tennessee and then south Chicago. Dixie is my stage name 'cause of the accent, real name Wilma. Oooo, why did I say that? Call me Dixie.

Bing sips champagne and offers her his glass. She declines.

DIXIE

I don't... um, I'm...

BING

There's no age limit. It's illegal for everyone!

DIXIE

Oh, I'm eighteen now. This is my favorite romantic record.

BING

Old Man River?!

(singing)

OH THAT OL' MAN RIVER,
HE DON'T SAY NOTHIN'
BUT HE MUST KNOW SOMETHIN,'

(MORE)

BING (cont'd)
 'CAUSE HE KEEPS ON DREAMIN'
 HOW MUCH HE LOVES YOU.

He kneels and pretends to kiss her hand.

DIXIE
 No, silly, the other side. The
 radio never said who was singing or
 the record either. It's like a
 fairy tale running into you. I
 sing too, you know. I'm shooting
 "Happy Days" at Fox and...

BING
 I love fairy tales.

The band begins to play "Make Believe."

DIXIE
 "Make Believe!" That song.

BING
 Let's sing it together.

DIXIE
 I couldn't, not in front of people.

BING
 (pulling her away)
 We can make believe in the bushes.
 I mean sing it, no uh... just sing!

BING
 (singing)
 WE COULD MAKE BELIEVE I LOVE YOU.
 ONLY MAKE BELIEVE THAT YOU LOVE ME.
 OTHERS FIND PEACE OF MIND
 IN PRETENDING.

BING & DIXIE
 (singing)
 COULDN'T YOU, COULDN'T I,
 COULDN'T WE,
 MAKE BELIEVE OUR LIPS ARE BLENDING
 IN A PHANTOM KISS OR TWO OR THREE.
 MIGHT AS WELL MAKE BELIEVE
 I LOVE YOU,
 FOR TO TELL THE TRUTH, I DO.

They step from behind the bush and a crowd applauds. Bing bows and Dixie blushes.

HARRY
The nowhere girl.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - LATE

Bing drives Dixie in his Whiteman Ford with the top down. He scrapes the car on a stop sign and stops in the intersection.

BING
Hah, I'm a terrible driver.

Dixie bounces on the seat and stands up.

DIXIE
Whee! This is fun.

BING
For more fun we could drop in on my friend at the Roosevelt Hotel. How old did you say?

DIXIE
I love hotels!

BING
(gulping)
And play a little... make believe?

She blows Bing a kiss, then slaps her face.

DIXIE
Bad Dixie.

A car bumps the rear of Bing's Ford. Bing speeds up. The other car pursues and nudges him again.

EXT./INT. HOLLYWOOD ROOSEVELT HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Bing pulls into the parking lot of the Hollywood Roosevelt.

DIXIE
(standing, yelling)
Blowzit out your...

The car rams them and Dixie falls to the ground. Bing carries her to the pool side. The hotel doctor arrives and bandages her minor scrapes.

Two policemen arrest Bing and the other driver.

INT. NIGHT COURT - LATER

Dixie limps into court with Bing.

BING

I'll pay up and get you right home.

JUDGE

Car accident. It says actor on the complaint here. I never heard of you Mr. Harry Lillis C-Cusby. And it says you had been drinking.

DIXIE

Lillis?

BING

That's right, Judge. I had a few, but I'm not drunk. He is and he ran into me.

JUDGE

Have you heard about prohibition?

BING

Nobody really pays much attention to that, do they, Your Honor? What's the fine?

JUDGE

Young man, you'll have sixty days to pay a lot of attention to it.

The judge slams his gavel. Bing's smirk drains away.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE AT UNIVERSAL - MORNING

Paul glares at a picture of Bing's car and the newspaper headline: "WHITEMAN SINGER JAILED FOR DRUNK DRIVING."

PAUL

(slamming paper)

I've had it with Crosby. Had it! There's my face on a wrecked car.

HARRY

An itty, bitty scrape.

PAUL

Four months lost and now this!

DIXIE

It wasn't his fault, Mr. Whiteman.
He wasn't drunk either, just honest
in front of the judge.

AL

We need Bing for three numbers.

PAUL

Maybe I can arrange for him to be
brought to the set during the day.
(picking up phone)
Get me the mayor.

DIXIE

Thank you.

PAUL

But no solo, that's out. Universal
has a fine tenor in John Boles and
he'll sing "Song of the Dawn."

MONTAGE -- FILMING "KING OF JAZZ"

- A policeman takes Bing out of his jail cell at dawn.
- The cop delivers Bing to Universal and waits.
- The Rhythm Boys film "A Bench in the Park" with the Brox Sisters. Bobbe changes places to avoid Bing.
- Everett and Dixie watch from the back of the sound stage.
- Bing goes back in his cell at night.

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Everett and Dixie wait in the office. Bing ambles in.

BING

Why, hello. What's up?

DIXIE

You're out on good behavior.

EVERETT

The appeal judge thought thirty
days was enough.

DIXIE

So behave. I'm taking you to the
golf course. It's the new craze.

Everett hands a straw hat and putter to a confused Bing.

CUT TO:

EXT. MINIATURE GOLF COURSE - DAY

A green frog obstacle opens and closes its mouth. Dixie putts in the open mouth, onto the green and into the hole.

DIXIE
(jumping up and down)
Yeah! I got a hole in one!

FROG
Ribbit!

BING
Then in college I worked at the Auditorium when Al Jolson came to town in "Robinson Crusoe, Jr."

DIXIE
I saw "The Jazz Singer" in high school. I got a hole in one!

Bing's ball hits the closed frog mouth and bounces back.

BING
Laughs, cheers and tears, and could Al sing!

DIXIE
I can sing.

FROG
Ribbit! Ribbit! Ribbit!

BING
Then and there I knew I wanted to get into show business, any part of it, lawyer, build props, make 'em laugh. Crooning came easiest.

Bing's ball bounces back again. He flings it in the frog mouth where it grinds and clanks in the machinery.

BING
But lately the great Frog God thumbs his protuberance at me.

The frog spits the ball into his stomach.

FROG
Ribbit!

DIXIE
I'll give you a six on this hole.
Guess who's ahead?

BING
How do they get it to talk?

Dixie gets her ball from the hole and does a dance step.

DIXIE
All I did was win a contest in
Chicago for singing like Ruth
Etting and suddenly I was the
'Varsity Drag' girl on Broadway.

BING
In "Good News?" I saw that show!

DIXIE
(singing)
DO, DO, DO THE VARSITY DRAG.

She dances a Charleston routine. They go to the next hole.

DIXIE
Someone at Fox noticed and plopped
me into pictures.

BING
Movies! I'm ready to bust out and
fly like Bix.

DIXIE
I don't much like 'em. I get
nervous around strangers. I don't
know why I can talk to you. Weird,
huh?

BING
Do like me, sing to audiences.

Dixie putts up a ramp over a water hazard. She runs and
jumps the stream. Her skirt flips up, catches on her belt in
back and reveals her bottom and pink panties.

She squats and stands lining up her putt, again and again,
wiggles and spins around. Bing ogles in a trance.

DIXIE
Easy to say. I did that in New
York and it... got... worse. It...
got... worse. It... got... worse.
Are you listening to me talk about
me?

BING
I'm focused.

DIXIE
I know all about you. Al and Harry
filled me in.

BING
Sagacious... insight.

DIXIE
Stop throwing big words at me. I
never went to college and you
dropped out of lawyer school, but
Al said fun. All you want in life
is to have fun!

BING
I'm having fun. S-s-spin your th-
thing again.

DIXIE
What? You know, my boss at Fox
told me you'll never amount to a
thing. He said I should drop you.

BING
He's right, and I wanna get worse.

Bing absently putts into a pond.

DIXIE
You are already terrible! At golf!

BING
(fishing ball out)
My game is real golf. I'll take
you to Lakeside next time.

DIXIE
What, and do all that walking?

Bing tosses his club in the pond, comes close and hugs her
waist. One hand hovers over her exposed bottom.

DIXIE
A joke... I can walk. Ha-ha. I
was joking.

BING
I'm not.

He unlatches her skirt and lets it drop. She glances behind, turns back and connects with his lips.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FOX SOUND STAGE - DAY

Costumed for "The Big Party," Dixie sneaks Bing onto the set.

DIXIE
How long will you be gone?

BING
All my tomorrows.

DIXIE
Too long. Be quiet back here and you can see how Fox makes films.

She leaves him and joins co-star SUE CAROL on the set.

SUE CAROL
Watch yourself. I hear Crosby is, well, a playboy who stays out all hours, throws his money away and drinks too much.

DIXIE
Maybe he'll take me with him.

Two stage hands push scenery past Bing.

STAGE HAND
Step back, sir, you're in the way.

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE - ON THE ROAD AGAIN

-- Train wheels. Signs announce cities on Paul's tour: "SAN DIEGO." "SAN FRANCISCO." "SEATTLE." "VANCOUVER."

-- "PORTLAND." The band performs to a half empty house.

-- Train tracks criss-cross everywhere and nowhere. SUPER - "VARIETY" with headline: "MUSICALS POISON AT B.O."

-- "NEW YORK." The train pulls into Grand Central Station. SUPER - "VARIETY": "KING OF JAZZ OPENS FRIDAY."

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SARDI'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Bing and Bix smile at each other in silence.

BIX

You've still got a tan. That western sun never agreed with me.

BING

You live on moonbeams.

BIX

I heard you got a girl.

BING

Sure do. Dixie's in one film after another, but she's so shy. I think she'd rather raise a family. I, I miss her.

BIX

I miss the fun we had on the road. I remember that hole-in-one in Rochester, the plane ride to catch the band in Oklahoma and the night in Philadelphia when you sang for your supper.

BING

The whole neighborhood dropped by.

BIX

You never stopped singing.

BING

I never got any meat balls either. Come back to Pops.

BIX

I'd love to but times are tough. You won't be there. Your heart is in Hollywood. I'm glad for you.

Paul walks up behind. Bix stands and they embrace.

PAUL

You're looking better, son. I really want you to rejoin the band. I'm reorganizing. Andy Secrest blows a great horn, but first chair is always yours.

BIX

I make records with the Dorseys, do a little radio, parties... I'm not quite ready for more. You better keep Andy on.

PAUL

The only real jazz I ever had was when I let you fly. Nothing has been the same since.

BING

When St. Bix blows the blues, Wall Street plummets. Come blow sweet notes at the premier.

BIX

Friday? Sorry, I've got a gig up at Princeton. I'm free now.

Bix blows an upbeat tune. Paul conducts with a knife.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE ROXIE THEATRE - NIGHT

"The Melting Pot of Music" number from "King of Jazz" plays on the movie screen. Singers and dancers from all countries march into a pot. Paul stirs the pot to create jazz.

The Rhythm Boys watch from the wings.

BING

That pot's my head.

HARRY

I get it. All music goes in an' Bingo Crosbyana pops out.

BING

Write me a three minute "Rhapsody in Blue," Harry. Put it all in, chaos, utter chaos, that I can soar above and be free.

AL

Better add some love so it sells.

Bing smiles and shakes Al's hand.

The band gathers in the orchestra pit as the movie builds to a climax. Hundreds of dancers fill the screen.

AL
I heard Paul will cut salaries and
lay off half the band.

HARRY
And no Bix!

BING
What say we try Hollywood on our
own?

HARRY
Beside movies, there's radio.

AL
Dance bands, recording studios...

BING
And Wilma Winifred Wyatt... Dixie.

As the last shot of "King of Jazz" fills the screen, Paul and
his band rise to stage level playing "Rhapsody in Blue."

A title comes on the movie screen: "FINIS."

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PATHE STUDIOS - DAY

TITLES: JUNE 5, 1930
HOLLYWOOD'S BACK DOOR

The Rhythm Boys wend their way to a cramped sound stage.

BING
I tell ya, it's not on the map.

HARRY
Pathé only makes comedy shorts,
travelogs and newsreels.

The cheap set depicts the interior of a tailor shop.
Director RAYMOND MCCAREY talks to an elderly tailor, his
granddaughter, the villain and college men.

RAYMOND
And you would be the famous...

The Rhythm Boys strike a dramatic pose.

RAYMOND
Three guys. Join the college boys
trying to save Gramps' tailor shop.
Know any college songs?

HARRY

We can sing.

RAYMOND

I like spunk, shorty. You can be the kid brother. You and Sis here make up some dialog.

HARRY

Harry Barris, romantic crooner, ivory tickler and talkin' fool.

The girl yanks Harry away. Raymond looks Bing and Al over.

RAYMOND

Pretty Boy, you can sock the villain, and Big Boy... fill space. We wrap in two days. Places!

Bing, Al and the extras go offstage.

AL

Well, 'Pretty Boy,' Harry's on his way to stardom.

BING

Brother, can you spare a dime?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Dixie pulls a tipsy Bing onto the porch of a small home and deposits him into a swing.

BING

Big family. Seven of us an' mom an' dad. Big Bro' Everett's helping me find work. Little Bob's got musical aspirations back in Spokane. Did I tell ya, small town, big family?

An upstairs light turns on and a woman yells out.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Get in here, Dixie, and get rid of him, and I don't mean just tonight.

DIXIE

Coming!

BING
We go to church every Sunday.
Roamin' Catholic.

DIXIE
Today is Sunday.

BING
(bolting up)
We gotta go!

DIXIE
When the sun comes up in a few
hours. I'm sleeping in. So you'd
like to have your own kids?

BING
Seems right. Seems time. How
'bout you?

He stretches out on the swing and falls asleep.

DIXIE
Maybe, maybe help until you make
good. I could change into who you
want, go to church with you, have
kids..? Do you hear me? No? Then
how about you change? Get a day
job, come home to dinner, quit
drinking, just stay and, and love
me? Yes, that's better. Do you
take this woman to be your...
whatever they say next... wife?

BING
Snork...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LUTHERAN CHURCH - DAY

The minister preaches to a full house.

MINISTER
And do you take this Man called
Jesus into your hearts for better
or for worse, in sickness and in
health? If you do, then death will
never part you because...

Bing sleeps in a corner of the back pew.

BING
Snork...

EXT. CHURCH - LATER

Bing shakes hands with the minister on his way out.

MINISTER

I haven't seen you before, son.
You are always welcome.

BING

If you took confessions, reverend,
uh, you don't, no... I'd have to
confess I'm lost. Can you direct
me to the Blessed Sacrament?

CUT TO:

INT. RKO SOUND STAGE - DAY

The Rhythm Boys wander onto a night club setting where a
black band is set up to play for a white audience.

HARRY

It's an Amos 'N Andy film called
"Check and Double Check."

DUKE ELLINGTON approaches and shakes hands all around.

DUKE

Nice to see you boys again in sunny
California. You can harmonize this
little number better than my crew.

HARRY

We've rehearsed the song, Mr.
Ellington.

BING

Where do we sing, Duke?

DUKE

(showing microphone)
Back here. Three of my trumpeters
will pretend to sing on camera.
Cootie...

BING

(shaking hands)
Cootie Williams! I love your horn.
It reminds me of Bix.

COOTIE WILLIAMS

Croon me the tune and I'll move the
lips.

DUKE

My band plays in a night club in the film and white singers wouldn't be realistic.

BING

It's never been done.

DUKE

So I'm sorry no screen time, but I'd like to cut the record with you if we can squeeze that by.

BING

Let's just do it! Like I told Pops, put the Negroes in white tux and us white guys in black and mix 'em up. Let the objectors come out of hiding. What, they don't like music? Then don't listen. Go home! We'll have such a ball the world will... have to... beat a...

Duke laughs and shakes Bing's hand again.

DUKE

What planet are you from?

AL

Spokane.

BING

"Showboat" broke the color barrier of whites and blacks performing together as equals in public. Soon audiences won't mind and we'll be free. I swear, they won't notice!

DUKE

Except the music will be sweeter.

Ellington sits at his piano. Cameras move into place.

BEHIND A CURTAIN

The Rhythm Boys gather around a microphone. The band plays.

AL

You should have "double checked" if we would be on camera.

BING

It's an honor to work with the Duke, but I've been talking to Gus Arnheim.

HARRY

At the Grove? Wow, that would...

AL

Shush!

RHYTHM BOYS

(singing)

THREE LITTLE WORDS,
OH, WHAT I'D GIVE FOR
THAT WONDERFUL PHRASE.
TO HEAR THOSE THREE LITTLE WORDS,
THAT'S ALL I'D LIVE FOR
THE REST OF MY DAYS...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT./INT. HOTEL AMBASSADOR - NIGHT

Spotlights blaze! Palm trees sway and so do the stars. All Hollywood sizzles to the beat of the Coconut Grove!

CLOSE-UP - LOBBY POSTER: "THE RHYTHM BOYS -- APPEARING NIGHTLY WITH GUS ARNHEIM'S ORCHESTRA."

Inside dancers whirl about. At tables Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, Gary Cooper, Joan Crawford, Tom Mix and other luminaries eat, drink and schmooze movies.

RHYTHM BOYS

(singing with band)

...AND WHAT I FEEL IN MY HEART
THEY TELL SINCERELY.
NO OTHER WORDS
CAN TELL IT HALF SO CLEARLY.
THREE LITTLE WORDS,
EIGHT LITTLE LETTERS,
WHICH SIMPLY MEAN I LOVE YOU.

The dancers applaud and return to their tables. Al and Harry head backstage. Bing searches the crowd for Dixie.

AT DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS' TABLE

Douglas and Mary entertain RACHEL MURPHY and her husband, DUDLEY MURPHY, a rising director at Paramount.

MARY

Rachel, you'll simply die when you hear Bing solo in person!

RACHEL

I've got all his records, Mary. Can you get him in films over at Paramount, Dudley?

DUDLEY

Last year musicals were gold, this year lead, rhymes with dead.

DOUGLAS

It's a shame, but we had to scrap most of Irving Berlin's tunes in "Reaching for the Moon."

DUDLEY

Poster tag line: "This is NOT a musical." That'll sell tickets.

DOUGLAS

(waving)
Bing! Over here!

A waiter spikes a drink. Bing accepts and downs it.

BING

Thanks, Doug. That's got a kick.

MARY

Meet Rachel Murphy, your number one fan.

BING

I'm most gratified to make the acquaintance of Number One.

RACHEL

After Mary. Dudley here putters around at Paramount. Maybe he can get you in.

Dudley stands and shakes hands.

DUDLEY

Dudley Murphy.

BING

You directed "St. Louis Blues" with Bessie Smith.

DUDLEY

It only played the black circuit.

BING

Too bad. I loved it! I'm trying to sing with her kind of emotion.

DUDLEY

I'll keep my eyes open over at Paramount. Can you act?

BING

I was in "King of Jazz."

DUDLEY

I'll keep your secret. The only music in movies now a days is dance bands so the lovers can clinch. No one wants singers.

DOUGLAS

I disagree and at United Artists we set trends, not follow them. Come sing in my picture, Bing. Bebe Daniels could use some help.

MARY AND RACHEL

Whee! Yeah!

BING

I'd love to.

DOUGLAS

I'll send the song over tomorrow.

Dixie comes over, waves shyly and hides behind Bing.

BING

Excuse me, folks, but...

(singing)

OH, WHAT A NIGHT FOR DANCING,
THE MOON IS ALL AGLOW...

DIXIE

(dragging him off)

Shh!

ON THE DANCE FLOOR

Bing and Dixie glide into the crowd of dancers.

DIXIE

I don't know how to talk to them.

BING

Mary's alright, real down to earth,
and Doug too. You're tense.

DIXIE

You're too relaxed. Breathe in
that direction. You embarrass me
singing at weird times, and I have
to move soon. All they do is yell
at me.

BING

Come live with me.

DIXIE

Is that a hint or scotch?

BING

If this gig works out we could take
the plunge, tie the knot, shop for
sheets. Hint, hint.

The orchestra plays "It Must Be True."

DIXIE

I'd like that. Soon. Oh, they're
playing one of your songs now.

BING

They're all my songs. I can't get
them out of my head, just like you.

DIXIE

Was that a compliment?

BING

All I want in life is to hold you
like this and sing love songs until
the end of time.

DIXIE

You have been drinking.

BING

I got that line...

BING AND DIXIE

...Out of a movie.

BESIDE A SHADY NOOK

Dixie dreams they dance with fireflies in a romantic fairy
glade by a waterfall under a full moon.

BING
 (singing)
 BESIDE A SHADY NOOK,
 A MOMENT'S BLISS WE TOOK TO TALK OF
 LOVE, BENEATH THE STARS ABOVE.
 I HELD YOUR HAND AND THEN I
 WHISPERED, DEAR,
 I LOVE YOU, I LOVE YOU.

BACK ON THE DANCE FLOOR

Dixie opens her eyes in a spot light, realizes Bing has been singing out loud and pushes him away. He dances in place and then with another woman.

BING
 (singing)
 OR WAS IT JUST A DREAM,
 AN IDLE SCHEME OF MINE
 TO FOOL MY HEART,
 AND YET IT SEEMED DIVINE.

ABE FRANK, raging Grove manager in a monkey suit, charges.

BING
 (singing)
 IT MUST BE TRUE,
 I WAS WITH YOU,
 AND YOU ARE MINE, ALL MINE!

Bing spins away from his partner into Abe's arms.

BING
 Not mine.

ABE FRANK
 Like hell, Crosby! Rule number
 nine says no dancing with the
 guests. I'm wise to you screwing
 up everywhere and you won't do it
 here! You'll sing where, what and
 when I tell you.

BING
 Folks, I'm sorry I sang too much.

The crowd applauds. Abe fumes and pounds his fist in palm.

ABE FRANK
 You-you-you're late for your radio
 spot. Get upstairs or get out.

DIXIE

Go... up... stairs.

BING

You're right, Mr. Frank. I'm very happy to be here at the Grove. I apologize most profusely for my reprehensible conduct. Rule nine, you say? I'll make note. Nevermore and away!

He struts off, turns and bows. The crowd applauds.

INT. RADIO STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Harry and Al flounder through an unscripted commercial.

HARRY

Yum, yum, this MJB Coffee is good to the last coffee-tastin' slurp. I can't wait to wake up to a pot, no two pots, of good ol' MJB.

Al peers into an imaginary cup in his hand. Bing enters.

AL

It really, really is, duh, black, hot, wet, uh, hot, I'm hot.

HARRY

Let's sing about it with Bing.

(NOTE: Sung to the tune of "Them Thar Eyes.")

RHYTHM BOYS

(singing)

I FELL IN LOVE WITH YOU,
FIRST TIME I TASTED YOU, M-J-B.
YOU SPARKLE, YOU BUBBLE,
YOU'RE GONNA GET ME
IN A WHOLE LOT OF TROUBLE,
'CAUSE I CAN'T STOP BREWING YOU,
CAN'T STOP SMELLING YOU,
CAN'T STOP LOVING MY M-J-BBBBB!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT./INT. SEBASTIAN'S NEW COTTON CLUB - NIGHT

Marquee lights advertise: "LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND HIS BAND."

Louis and his black band perform for a white audience. Bing and Dixie eat at a table near the stage.

BING

I wanted you to meet Louis soon as he got to town. When he plays he soars. When he sings he bubbles. Louis Armstrong is the beginning and end of music in America.

DIXIE

Oh, that's nice, I guess, but I don't want to meet him. I wouldn't know what to say. I want to leave.

BING

Louis is the friendliest guy you'll ever... Here, drink up. It'll loosen you up like it helps me.

DIXIE

(slowly downing drink)
I shouldn't, but I'm trying... what you want. Um, I don't get jazz. He changes songs in the middle.

BING

You go where the spirit moves you. Watch this.

Bing taps salt and pepper shakers against plates.

BING

(scatting)
BA-DA DIT-DOT-DIT, BIDDLE DA TUNE.
BAH-DA DAH, DIDDLE DE DIT...

Louis picks up Bing's beat with his horn and scats.

LOUIS

(singing)
DIDDLE DE BING WITH MR. CROS.
THE MAN WITH THE BEAT
GOTS ME ON MY FEET.
DAH-DA DIT, DIT, DIT,
AN' WE GOTS JAZZ.

Bing gets up clanging the shakers together. Louis steps off the stage and accompanies with his horn.

DIXIE

(pulling his arm)
Sit down! You're embarrassing me.

Bing tosses his flask at her. She winces and sips it.

BING
 (singing)
 GO WITH THE FLOW...

LOUIS
 (singing)
 AND THE BEAT ON YOUR FEETS.

BING AND LOUIS
 (singing)
 AND JAZZ, JAZZ, JAZZ IS BORN!

A frumpy woman at the next table leaves her huge dinner and scrawny husband, bumps Dixie and pulls Bing and Louis apart.

FRUMP
 You can't do that!

BING
 What?

FRUMP
 Sing with him. He's a Negro and you're not. It's disgusting.

LOUIS
 Blacker than black, that I is.

The frump backs into Dixie a second time. Dixie drains the flask, staggers up and pulls the woman around.

DIXIE
 Look, lady, they aren't hurting you. Everyone else seems OK.

The prissy husband and others surround the group.

HUSBAND
 No, no. Salt and pepper they do not mix.

THREATENING BYSTANDER
 That's right.

THIRD MAN
 We got laws.

DIXIE
 Sure they mix.

She unscrews the tops of Bing's shakers and empties salt and pepper on the woman's half-eaten steak. Dixie smirks. The frump heaves her salad in Dixie's face.

A food fight erupts. Waiters bring pies. Mayhem ensues. Bing catches a pie and licks his finger. Dixie paddles the frump with her own steak. The band cheers.

Bing drags Dixie away covered with goo. Louis laughs his head off and extends his hand.

DIXIE

That loose enough for ya?

She pats blueberry pie on Bing's face.

LOUIS

You gots yourself a keeper, Mr. B.
This be the one!

BING

I think so too and that's jazz!
Now do you get it?

DIXIE

(shaking hands)
Noooooo, but I like it.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BLESSED SACRAMENT ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY

TITLE: SEPTEMBER 29, 1930

(NOTE: Accompanied by Bing's 1928 song "Making Whoopee.")

Everett is best man at the modest ceremony held in the vestry, not at the altar. Harry attends but not Al. Father Stack reads the marriage vows.

DIXIE

(to self)
Now we can settle down.

BING

(to self)
Now I can fly.

MONTAGE -- MARRIAGE BLUES

-- A newspaper headline prints Bing's name wrong: "FOX STAR DIXIE LEE MARRIES ORCHESTRA LEADER MURRAY CROSEY."

-- In a honeymoon suite Dixie hugs and kisses Bing.

DIXIE

Murray, Murray, Murray.

- Bing coaches Dixie's golf swing. She misses the ball.
- Dixie entertains friends at home. Bing falls asleep.
- Bing and Harry sing, compose and drink around a piano.
- Midnight strikes on New Year's Eve at the Grove.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BEACH COTTAGE - NIGHT

TITLE: JANUARY 1, 1931

Bing and Dixie attend a party thrown by Richard Arlen. Jobyna, Sue Carol, Dixie and LOYCE WHITEMAN -- Harry's girlfriend and Grove singer -- crowd around the piano.

BING
(singing)
...I SURRENDER, DEAR!

JOBYNA
You never sing for us, Dixie.

SUE CAROL
But you do in movies. How come?

DIXIE
No, no, I'm not... I don't...

BING
Loosen up.

He waves a drink in her face. Dixie picks up a bowl of nuts to throw. Sue, Jobyna and Harry grab it. A maid escorts the bowl out of the room.

DIXIE
I don't need help. I can have fun
my own way so I, I will sing.

BING
Let's try this new song. Start her
out, Loyce. We alternate lines.

BING AND LOYCE
(singing)
HO HUM, SPRING IS HERE NOW.
HO HUM,
THE SKIES ARE VERY CLEAR NOW.
HO HUM, LOVE IS NEAR NOW,
FOR YOU AND ME.

Bing pulls Dixie in and shows her where to sing.

BING AND DIXIE

(singing)

HO HUM, HAPPY HOURS,
FOR YOU AND ME.
ALL THE WORLD IS SWEET ONCE AGAIN.
HEAVEN'S AT MY FEET ONCE AGAIN.
HO HUM, LAZY WEATHER.
HO HUM, FEELING LIKE A FEATHER.
HO HUM, WE'RE TOGETHER.
AND SO, HO HUM.

Bing motions Dixie and Loyce to continue and walks away.

DIXIE AND LOYCE

(singing, giggling)

HO HUM, HOLD ME TIGHTLY.
HO HUM, KISS ME LIGHTLY.
HO HUM, PLEASURE NIGHTLY,
FOR YOU AND ME.

Everyone laughs. Journalist JIMMY FIDLER pulls Bing outside.

EXT. THE BEACH - NIGHT

Bing and Jimmy stroll along the beach under a full moon.

JIMMY

That was a cute song.

BING

Ho-hum, Jim. Cute isn't enough.

JIMMY

What is?

BING

Songs in my head, maybe, someday.

(singing)

I'M SITTING ON TOP OF THE WORLD,
I'M ROLLING ALONG,
JUST ROLLING ALONG...

(talking)

But that's Al Jolson, not me.

(singing)

SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT,
ALL IS CALM, ALL IS BRIGHT...

He wanders knee deep into the ocean and sings to the moon.

BING

(singing)

I HAVEN'T ANY RIGHT, MADAME,
TO DO THE THINGS I DO.
JUST WHEN I HOLD YOU TIGHT, MADAME,
YOU VANISH WITH THE NIGHT, MADAME.
IN DREAMS I KISS YOUR HAND, MADAME,
AND PRAY MY DREAMS COME TRUE.
HM, HMM, DE-DE DOO-DE-DO...

JIMMY

Nobody sings like you, but you're
still searching.

BING

(singing)

DINAH,
GOT THOSE DIXIE EYES BLAZIN,'
HOW I LOVE TO SIT AND GAZE IN
TO THE EYES OF DINAH LEE.
DINAH, SHOULD YOU WANDER TO CHINA,
I WOULD HOP AN OCEAN LINER
JUST TO BE WITH DINAH LEE.

(talking)

You analyze too much. Let's go
have a drink.

JIMMY

Does that inspire you?

BING

Just bides my time.

JIMMY

While you find your own style.

BING

(laughing)

You journalists, I swear! Gotta
label everything neat and tidy.

INT. FIDLER'S COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

They enter a cottage. Bing sits at a blackjack game in
progress, buys chips and places a bet.

CARD DEALER

Hello, Bing. I heard you were at
that Arlen party with Dixie.

BING

I am. I got this marriage bit all wrapped up. Hit me! Dixie's there when I want her.

CARD PLAYER

So she gives out, huh?

He wins and doubles his bet. Jimmy brings in a round of drinks. Bing downs one and takes another.

BING

Let's say no more dating problems, but her friends, whew! I got tired of singing to them tonight.

JIMMY

That's rare. I'll write about it.

BING

Be my guest. A win! Mention the Grove and how I'd like to get into films. Oh, and you better say my greatest joy in life is singing to Dixie's friends. Double.

JIMMY

Got it.

CARD DEALER

A red Queen for Mr. Lucky.

BING

(singing)

COME TO ME MY MELANCHOLY BABY.

He rakes in the chips and throws back the second drink.

CUT TO:

INT. CROSBY BUNGALOW - DAWN

Dixie opens the door. Bing falls in and stays on the floor.

DIXIE

I sang for you. That was hard, and you walked out.

BING

I did?

DIXIE
 (shaking him)
 And drank! We're married now. I
 deserve a little time and respect.

Bing curls up on the floor. Dixie gets on the phone.

DIXIE
 Joby, still up, I hope. He's dead
 drunk again.

JOBYNA (V.O.)
 Figured it when I drove you home.
 Dead sounds good.

DIXIE
 You once told me to dump him and,
 well, I won't go on like this!

JOBYNA (V.O.)
 Marriage never changes anyone. I
 should know. Shoot the bum.

DIXIE
 If he doesn't shape up, I will, uh,
 leave! It's me or the bottle!

LATER - AROUND NOON

Dixie wakes on the couch and kicks Bing in the ribs.

DIXIE
 You're no teenager anymore.

BING
 No, uh... You are, but...

DIXIE
 You want a little girl?

BING
 I didn't say... What did I do?

DIXIE
 You walked out on me at Joby's
 party!

He gets to his feet, tucks in his shirt and stifles a yawn.

BING
 What party?

She pushes him outside into blinding sunlight.

BING

Oh, um, from now on... I won't do that! I'll always be the man who is there for, uh...

DIXIE

Like I'm supposed to tell you. Go sober up and find out. Maybe I'll be here later, maybe not. Think about it.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COCOANUT GROVE - LATE NIGHT

The ballroom is closed for the night. GUS ARNHEIM listens to Harry compose at the piano.

ARNHEIM

My band can play anything, whatever this is. I gotta get home.

Bing brings over drinks as Arnheim leaves.

BING

It's my melting pot, Gus, a rhapsody to love and chaos. Good night.

(singing)

I SURRENDER, DEAR!

HARRY

What every girl in America wants to hear.

BING

Try a staccato jazz break here so they don't fall asleep.

HARRY

Adagiate the obligato.

Harry pounds out a passage from "I Surrender, Dear." Bing scats to the finish and they drain shot glasses.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF BING'S HOUSE - DAWN

Dixie waits on the curb scowling and tapping her foot. Bing drives up, swerves to a halt on the sidewalk and slumps over the wheel. She pulls him out onto the lawn and speeds away.

EXT. MEXICAN RESORT - DAY

TITLE: MARCH 5, 1931

Dixie and Jobyna sun bathe in Agua Caliente, Mexico. Dixie reads the Los Angeles Evening Herald.

CLOSE-UP: Headline: "DIXIE LEE, 'BING' CROSBY IN CLASH"

She hands it to Jobyna and dives into the pool.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COCOANUT GROVE DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT

Bing dashes from the base of one potted palm tree to another.

AL

I didn't hide your bottle.

BING

The band is betting if I find it.
I don't like people telling me...

AL

The truth? She walked out 'cause
you're a jerk. The paper said
"mental cruelty."

Bing flings straw out of a palm tree base onto dancers.

BING

Don't judge me, Al.

AL

Fine, go your own way, but don't
cry to Harry and me.

Abe scurries toward them. Bing yanks out a bottle and tips over a palm tree into Abe's path. Bing and Al run away.

INT. CROSBY HOUSE - NIGHT

Bing walks into his empty home and turns on the radio.

BING (ON RADIO)

(singing)

AND IF YOU SHOULD GO
BACK TO YOUR NOWHERE,
LEAVING ME WITH, WITH MY MEMORY,
I'LL ALWAYS WAIT
FOR YOUR RETURN OUT OF NOWHERE,

(MORE)

BING (ON RADIO) (cont'd)
 HOPING YOU'LL BRING
 YOUR LOVE TO ME.

EXT./INT. SEBASTIAN'S NEW COTTON CLUB - LATE NIGHT

The marquee lights for "LOUIS ARMSTRONG" blink off.

Inside Louis and his band finish "Shine."

LOUIS
 (singing)
 SHINE YOUR THESE AND THOSIES.
 YOU'LL FIND EVERYTHING'S
 GONNA TURN OUT RIGHT FINE.
 FOLKS WILL SHINE UP TO YOU.
 EVERYBODY'S GONNA
 HOWDY DO-DE DO YOU.
 YOU'LL MAKE THE WHOLE WORLD SHINE.
 (speaking)
 Good night, folks, and leave your
 troubles behind.

The last patrons leave and the lights shut off. Louis steps from the stage and spots someone in shadows.

LOUIS
 Who's there? Is that you, Bix?
 Come out, Mr. Shadow Man.

Bing steps into the light. Louis embraces him.

LOUIS
 I felt Bix out here. How is our
 boy doing?

BING
 Up and down, I hear, back east.

Louis leads Bing out the back door to the parking lot.

LOUIS
 No lovely wife on your arm or song
 in your heart, but you came to old
 Satchel Mouth to cheer you up.

BING
 I was wandering.

LOUIS
 We all got troubles. I just spent
 a week in jail for smoking a joint.
 (MORE)

LOUIS (cont'd)

I was feared the cops might break my jaw so I could never blow again, but they were respectful. We've got our health and we're young. Nothing else matters when we can sing those blues away.

Louis plays a few bars of "Shine" to the full moon.

LOUIS

(singing)

BECAUSSSE... DAH DA-DAT DA-DA...

BING

They put you in jail?

LOUIS

For smoking weed right where we're standing.

(laughing)

Forgive me if I don't offer you one.

He blows more of the song.

LOUIS

You gots to decide if you want her, then reconfigure how you treat her. Does she like music?

BING

She listens to my records all the time. Yours too.

LOUIS

Good girl. Go get her.

Louis blows his horn. Bing ponders and joins in.

BING

(singing)

BECAUSE I'M GLAD I'M LIVING,
I TAKE THESE TROUBLES
ALL WITH A SMILE.
SHINE AWAY YOUR BLUESIES.
SHINE TO START WITH YOUR SHOESIES.
YOU'LL MAKE THE WHOLE WORLD SHINE.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAKESIDE GOLF COURSE - DAY

Bing's short putt misses the hole by two inches and continues another sixty yards into a sand trap.

HARRY

Just missed. Spend more time with
Dixie.

AL

And watch your drinking.

BING

Expeditiously!

(singing)

DEEP IN THE HEART OF DIXIE!

Bing's wild back swing hits the ball. The club flies away into the stomach of a robust man off in the rough, who promptly crumples to the ground. The ball beans him.

They rush over to comedy director MACK SENNETT and comedian W.C. FIELDS.

W.C. FIELDS

Like shooting quail with a shotgun.

BING

(helping Sennett up)

I'm so sorry. My wife left me and
I don't even know where she is.

MACK SENNETT

Haven't seen her. Oomph! Sing her
a love song. This is Hollywood,
the land of romance.

W.C. FIELDS

...Slapstick and delusion.

Fields juggles golf balls and makes them disappear.

HARRY

The moon, the stars, a forlorn
maiden and one more chance!

MACK

Who are you guys?

AL

The Rhythm Boys.

W.C. FIELDS

Meet Mack Sennett, and I'm...

BING

The great W.C. Fields!

W.C. FIELDS

(shaking hands)

It's a pleasure to meet a young man
of such refinement and taste.

MACK

The Rhythm Boys... Say, you must
be Bing Crosby. I didn't recognize
you without your voice.

Al points to Bing, who poses with arms spread wide.

BING

(singing)

I SURRENDER, DEAR, BA-BA-BA-BOO!

MACK

You're Crosby alright, a little
goofy looking in the ears, not bad,
kind of wholesome.

BING

I do my best. Come catch our act
at the Cocoanut Grove.

They walk on to the next tee. Al and Harry trail behind.

W.C. FIELDS

You recorded those "Showboat" tunes
before anyone else.

BING

(singing)

WE COULD MAKE BELIEVE I LOVE YOU...

W.C. FIELDS

I'll pass. Did you know they wrote
the part of Captain Andy for me,
but I was too busy making films to
play it on Broadway?

BING

How about you and me in "Mack
Sennett's Showboat?"

W.C. FIELDS

Make that "Rowboat" on his budget.

MACK

Rain check on the oars.

AL
And up a creek.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COCOANUT GROVE LOBBY - LATER

Harry waves Bing to a telephone. He listens and hangs up.

BING
Dixie's in Mexico! I'm flying
right down. Come with me, Harry.

AL
You miss too many shows. Abe won't
be happy.

BING
Screw him.

INT. SMALL AIRPLANE - DUSK

A small rented airplane flies Bing and Harry to Mexico. Bing studies song lyrics.

BING
You got too many words in here.

HARRY
Just tell her you love her.

BING
I, I, I...

BING AND HARRY
Learn the words.

EXT. COCOANUT GROVE - NIGHT

Abe Frank extends his hand to greet approaching movie stars. A group leaving the club cuts him off.

BETTE DAVIS
Forget it! Bing isn't singing
tonight. The place is a tomb.

MOVIE STAR
Let's go to Ciro's.

The groups walk off together. Abe stalks up to Al.

EXT. MEXICAN RESORT COURT YARD - NIGHT

In a shadowy garden, Bing clambers onto an upright piano and tosses roses into Dixie's balcony. Harry plays piano.

BING
(singing)
JUST ONE MORE CHANCE,
TO PROVE IT'S YOU ALONE I CARE FOR,
EACH NIGHT I SAY A LITTLE PRAYER
FOR... What?

HARRY
One more chance, idiot!

BING
(singing)
...ONE MORE CHANCE.
JUST ONE MORE NIGHT,
TO TASTE THE KISSES
THAT ENCHANT ME.
I'D WANT NO OTHER
IF YOU'D GRANT ME,
JUST ONE MORE CHANCE.

INT./EXT. DIXIE'S ROOM/BALCONY

INTERCUT - BING AND DIXIE

Dixie takes a pitcher of water onto the balcony, sets it on the railing, picks up the roses and steps back in the room.

DIXIE
Those kisses don't sound half bad.

JOBYNA
I'll take off. Don't give in till
the third verse.

BING
(singing)
WE SPEND OUR LIVES
IN GROPING FOR HAPPINESS.
I FOUND IT ONCE
AND TOSSED IT ASIDE.
I'VE PAID FOR IT
WITH HOURS OF LONELINESS.
I'VE NOTHING TO HIDE,
I'D BURY MY PRIDE FOR...
UM, BA BA-BA-BA BOO...

DIXIE
He forgot the words. I'll give him
an 'A' for effort.

JOBYNA

And maybe one more chance. Catchy
tune. Harry is good.

Jobyna leaves. Dixie goes out on the dark balcony.

BING

(singing)

NOW YOU'RE THE JURY AT MY TRIAL.
I KNOW THAT I SHOULD
SERVE MY SENTENCE,
STILL, I'M HOPING ALL THE WHILE,
YOU'LL GIVE ME,
JUST ONE MORE WORD...

Bing climbs from the piano to a tree. The limb breaks and he
splashes into a shallow pool.

DIXIE

Take that up an octave, Harry.

(singing)

JUST ONE MORE CHANCE,
TO PROVE IT'S ME
ALONE YOU CARE FOR.
IF YOU'VE LEARNED
THE MEANING OF REPENTANCE,
YOU'LL SOBER UP AROUND YOUR WIFE.

Jobyna pulls Bing out and shows him a door behind a bush.

DIXIE

(singing)

WHICH BRINGS US TO YOUR SENTENCE,
A LITTLE FAMILY IN YOUR LIFE.
THEN MAYBE, JUST ONE MORE CHANCE...

Bing sneaks up behind Dixie. A frog hops out of his jacket.
The orchestra swells to a kiss in the dark. They bump the
pitcher off the railing. Harry screams.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COCOANUT GROVE - NIGHT

Radio equipment broadcasts from the ballroom.

BING

(singing)

YOUR CASTLES MAY TUMBLE,
THAT'S FATE AFTER ALL.
LIFE'S REALLY FUNNY THAT WAY.
NO USE TO GRUMBLE,
SMILE AS YOU FALL,
WEREN'T YOU KING FOR A DAY, SAY.

(MORE)

BING (cont'd)
 JUST REMEMBER THAT SUNSHINE
 ALWAYS FOLLOWS THE RAIN,
 SO WRAP YOUR TROUBLES IN DREAMS,
 DREAM YOUR TROUBLES AWAY.

To thunderous applause Bing nods shyly and backs away.

RADIO ANNOUNCER
 You have just heard Bing Crosby of
 the Rhythm Boys sing live from the
 Cocoanut Grove ballroom, southern
 California's finest night spot. We
 return you now to our studio.

AT MACK SENNETT'S TABLE

Bing joins Mack Sennett and W.C. Fields.

SENNETT
 Great song! You entertain, and
 that's all I want in my pictures.
 Sing! Have fun! Have a drink!

BING
 I never touch the stuff.

W.C. FIELDS
 I'll cover the two of us.

SENNETT
 I'll put in a lot of comics until
 you get the hang of acting.
 Nothin' to it. Just sing a few
 songs from your records and kiss
 the girl.

Fields hands Sennett the contract he has been groping for.

SENNETT
 Here's a contract for six shorts.
 We can start next week.

BING
 Hmm, \$750 a picture. How about an
 even \$1,000?

Abe Frank creeps to the table.

ABE FRANK
 Watch what you sign. You've got a
 contract with me and I intend to
 keep you.

(MORE)

ABE FRANK (cont'd)
 Believe it or not, I like you, even
 though I'm docking your paycheck
 for missing the show last night.

Bing and Abe glare at each other in silence.

SENNETT
 How about \$500?

BING
 Thank you, Mr. Frank.
 (signing)
 There, see you Monday, Boss. I've
 got to run now for a radio spot.

Bing runs into Whiteman musicians Joe Venuti and Roy Bargy.

BING
 It's great to see you guys!

JOE VENUTI
 We overheard your, uh...

ROY BARGY
 If you can dump this job, the
 Hollywood Roosevelt wants you at
 four times what you make here.

JOE VENUTI
 They want Al, Harry and the rest of
 us. It'll be like old times.

BING
 Tantalizing!

INT./EXT. RADIO STUDIO - LATER - NIGHT

Bing starts a record of the track for "Just a Gigolo."

BING
 I'd like to conclude with a sad
 song about a soldier forced by
 hardship to accept remuneration for
 his attentions to the fair sex.

THE HOLLYWOOD HILLS

A light burns in every bedroom window just before midnight.

BING (V.O.)
 (singing)
 IF YOU ADMIRE ME, HIRE ME,
 A GIGOLO WHO KNEW OF BETTER DAYS.

IN A BEDROOM WINDOW

8-year-old Frances Gumm (JUDY GARLAND) and her two sisters huddle under the covers around a radio and listen to Bing.

BING (ON RADIO)

(singing)

JUST A GIGOLO, EVERYWHERE I GO,
PEOPLE KNOW THE PART I'M PLAYING.
PAID FOR EVERY DANCE,
SELLING EACH ROMANCE,
EVERY NIGHT SOME HEART BETRAYING.

JUDY'S MOTHER

Are you girls in bed, Frances?

Judy pops her head out from the covers.

JUDY

Yes, mother!

(quieter, under covers)

I love that man!

THE HOLLYWOOD HILLS

BING (V.O.)

(singing)

THERE WILL COME A DAY,
YOUTH WILL PASS AWAY,
THEN WHAT WILL THEY SAY ABOUT ME?
WHEN THE END COMES, I KNOW,
THEY'LL SAY JUST A GIGOLO,
AS LIFE GOES ON WITHOUT ME.

(speaking)

Good night, folks.

All the lights blink off except the one in Bing's house.

EXT. BING'S BEDROOM WINDOW - LATER

A drawn curtain cloaks the dimly-lit boudoir.

DIXIE (O.S.)

It's 12:30. What kept you?

BING (O.S.)

Heavy traffic.

DIXIE (O.S.)

Liar! Everyone stays home to hear you sing.

BING (O.S.)

I'm just warming up.

DIXIE (O.S.)
 (purring)
 Me too.

BING (O.S.)
 (singing)
 JUST A GIGOLO,
 EVERYWHERE I GO-ooo...

DIXIE (O.S.)
 Like hell.

The bedroom light blinks off.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MACK SENNETT'S OFFICE - DAY

Bing stumbles into Mack Sennett's seedy office cluttered with empty bottles, cigar-burnt couches and THREE GAG WRITERS.

SENNETT
 Meet your gag men. Cameras roll
 Wednesday. Correction, one camera.
 I had this idea you could play
 yourself, Bing Crosby, the night
 club, radio and recording singer.

The gag men circle, prod and peruse Bing. One lifts his Hawaiian shirt and pats his modest stomach.

FIRST GAG MAN
 Can you smooch?

SECOND GAG MAN
 Maybe a college all-american who
 wins the big game.

THIRD GAG MAN
 No muscles, but looks are okay.

SENNETT
 I want the boy next door, a one-
 girl fellow who falls in love at
 first sight. We only got eighteen
 minutes.

SECOND GAG MAN
 You woo the girl with a smile, a
 joke and a song.

BING
 That sounds like me.

SENNETT

But no smoking dope, no jail time,
no drunken brawls, no wild parties,
no orgies, no...

FIRST GAG MAN

(taking notes)

Like it, like it! Slow down!

BING

My reputation precedes me.

SENNETT

Since when don't you drink?

BING

Since that day we met.

Sennett removes his cigar, swigs from a flask and belches.

SENNETT

Live clean, son.

SECOND GAG MAN

So this one-woman, crooner-next-
door heartthrob cracks jokes.

THIRD GAG MAN

He's got a best friend, the girl's
boyfriend to fight, the mother to
dodge and songs to sing.

Sennett frames Bing with his hands and projects the image on
a movie screen in space. Bing peers over his shoulder.

SENNETT

The new Crosby will be whoever I
put on that silver screen. If
you're a hit, you'll have to become
that make believe shadow.

FIRST GAG MAN

Floppola, who cares?

SENNETT

How true.

SECOND GAG MAN

All we need is a gag for Bing to
meet the girl.

THIRD GAG MAN

Lunch!

They run out of the room leaving Bing in a daze.

CUT TO:

EXT. EMPTY FIELD - DAY

An actress stands in a field with her back to the camera.

SENNETT

You play yourself but nobody knows what Crosby looks like so they don't believe you when you tell 'em you really are 'the' Bing Crosby.

BING

Huh? The script says this is a train station. Where's the train?

SENNETT

Like we should drive downtown? It's over there, see, stock footage.

BING

Next to my Rolls Royce.

Everett Crosby drags Dudley Murphy onto the field.

DUDLEY

Alright, already, he's gonna act. It's only Sennett fer crissake.

EVERETT

Bing's hot now. You come to the Grove twice a week.

DUDLEY

Yeah, yeah, Rachel likes him.

A gag man and a girl run over with suitcases and pull Everett and Dudley into the scene.

GAG MAN

Walk these behind the scene like you just got off a train.

DUDLEY

Me? I'm not a...

SENNETT

One take now. Action! Roll 'em!

Everett and Dudley walk behind the scene carrying luggage, then watch off camera. Bing runs up to the girl, spins her around and kisses her.

BING

Hello, Sis, how are you?

THE GIRL

I beg your pardon.

BING

Oh, well, I beg yours. I thought you were my sister.

THE GIRL

Oh, really?

BING

Yes, you see, you're just her size and just as beautiful. I got a wire from her that said she would be in on the limited on Tuesday.

THE GIRL

But this is Monday.

BING

Oh, Monday. Well, well, you see I work nights and sometimes I get a little mixed up on my days.

THE GIRL

And your sister?

BING

No, really, I have the wire from her right here in my pocket.

The mother and prissy fiancé show up.

FIANCE

Are you her brother?

THE GIRL

He thought he was.

BING

Well, I'm glad I'm not. I'm only waiting for my sister, but I found my ideal!

DUDLEY

Not bad. He's got...

EVERETT
He's got 'It!'

DUDLEY
That's what they all say.

The grizzled cameraman gives Sennett thumbs up.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COCOANUT GROVE - BACK STAGE - NIGHT

The Rhythm Boys wait for their entrance cue.

BING
Mack can't use you to play my buddy
in the next film. You look real
handsome, only, uh...

AL
I saw the screen test too.

Abe Frank comes over.

ABE FRANK
You look a little tired, Bing. I
hear you're working days with
Sennett.

BING
I'm here, aren't I?

ABE FRANK
I wasn't accusing you of anything.

BING
You could pay me more. The place
is packed tonight.

ABE FRANK
You're no Fairbanks. You're just a
crooner. A damned good one and
good for the Grove, but there's
never been a crooner who didn't
flop belly up in films.

HARRY
(stepping between)
Bing is in good voice, Mr. Frank.

ABE FRANK
Sennett ain't MGM either.

The audience claps. The orchestra replays the introduction.

BING

That applause says I'm worth more.
I've got other offers on the fire.

ABE FRANK

Jump in! Sing in hell for all I
care, only be professional. Finish
your contract and we'll talk raise.

Harry and Al pull Bing on stage to sing. The audience
applauds. Abe shakes his head.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PARAMOUNT SOUND STAGE - DAY

Dudley leads Everett onto a night club set.

DUDLEY

It's a college programmer called
"Confessions of a Co-ed."

EVERETT

What do they confess?

DUDLEY

Filthy sex. Who cares? Bing's got
a solo and Rach owes me one.

EVERETT

I owe you.

DUDLEY

Forget it. Quiet now.

Cameras roll. At a microphone Bing sings "Out of Nowhere."

BING

(singing)

YOU CAME TO ME FROM OUT OF NOWHERE.
YOU TOOK MY HEART
AND YOU FOUND IT FREE...

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE-UP: VARIETY HEADLINE:

"Suddenly Missing. Rhythm Boys fail to show at hotel but
there's a nine months option."

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE-UP: VARIETY HEADLINE:

"Rhythm Boys Walk-Out Draws Fire from Union."

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAKESIDE GOLF COURSE - DUSK

The sun sets as Bing, Al and Harry walk onto the 18th green.

AL

What a mess! The Roosevelt job is gone even if the Grove didn't have an injunction out on you.

BING

I'm not going back and that's that. Dixie can't find work either.

HARRY

(sinking putt)
She isn't blacklisted. They just stopped making musicals.

BING

She's looking for night club work, but she's terrified of the public. She should be home starting a family. I'm not providing.

Bing lines up his putt on the fringe of the green. Al two putts and walks to the hole by Harry.

AL

Abe says if you don't come back to the Grove you'll never work in this town again with union musicians.

HARRY

No records, radio or live shows.

BING

Mack can beat that. I'll sing to my own records.

HARRY

I'm going back to the Grove.

AL

Not me. I've had it.

Bing's long putt misses by a few inches. Al kicks it in.

BING
That's game.

He walks off. Al tears up the scorecard. The sun sets.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY

Bing and an actress race down a country road in a sports car. Mack Sennett and a cameraman in a parallel car film a chase.

THE GIRL
Step on it, Bing, they're coming
after us.

BING
Aw, they'll never catch us.

In the third car chasing Bing three comics wrestle with a gorilla. The gorilla pulls off the steering wheel and the car careens into a lake.

Bing drives over and stops by Everett and Dixie.

BING
(singing)
YOU'RE LOVABLE. LOVABLE.
I'M SO HAPPY JUST TO BE AROUND YOU.
AND I'M MIGHTY LUCKY
THAT I FOUND YOU FREE.

DIXIE
Singing again.

BING
Was I?

EVERETT
It pays the bills.

BING
(singing)
I'M SO HAPPY JUST TO BE AROUND YOU.

Mack Sennett and the gorilla pull up beside them.

DIXIE
You could make more doubling as the
gorilla. I hear he makes fifty
bucks a day.

SENNETT

Good gorillas are hard to get. And
that's a wrap.

CUT TO:

INT. LOS ANGELES RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Harry on piano supplies the only music as Bing records "At
Your Command." Everett watches from the control booth.

BING

(singing)

THE THRILL OF A NEW LOVE
HAS FADED AWAY,
MISTAKEN, AWAKENED AM I.
WANTING YOU NEAR ME,
SINCERELY I SAY,
FORGIVE, FORGET, WON'T YOU TRY?

Dixie slips into the booth.

EVERETT

We're going East, Dixie. Jack Kapp
wired train fare so Bing can cut
records for Brunswick in New York.

DIXIE

You borrowed again.

EVERETT

It's an advance on royalties.

DIXIE

What royalties? Record sales are
off 90% and I'm looking for work.

Bing sees Dixie and sings to her with greater emotion.

BING

(singing)

I HAD YOU, I HELD YOU,
YOU GAVE ME ALL.
YOUR LOVE DREAMS, I SHATTERED
BEYOND RECALL.
NOW THAT I'VE LOST YOU,
PLEASE UNDERSTAND,
I'M HERE FOREVER AT YOUR COMMAND.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION PLATFORM - EARLY EVENING

Dixie gives Bing a newspaper and gently kisses him goodbye.

DIXIE
Brunswick is your last chance.

BING
The Embassy Club is your next
chance. You'll be terrific and
I'll make good in New York or get a
real job. I promise.

Bing and Everett get on and the train begins to move. Bing
jumps off, kisses Dixie passionately, runs and boards.

BING
Promise!

INT. TRAIN COACH - CONTINUOUS

Bing slumps in a seat against the window.

EVERETT
Jack wants you to record western
songs with cowboys, Hawaiian tunes
with hula dancers and Christmas
carols with a choir, kind of try
everything to see what clicks.

BING
Wake me when I can sing with Louis.

He puts a hat over his face and falls asleep.

LATER - NIGHT

Bing wakes and sees that Everett has been crying.

BING
What?

Everett passes him the newspaper open to a picture of Bix
with the headline: "DAVENPORT YOUTH, FAMED AS MASTER OF
TRUMPET, SUCCUMBS TO PNEUMONIA."

EVERETT
I'm so sorry, Bing. Who knew?

BING
Friday, see him Friday. I should
of left sooner. I could have got
him help, could have saved him.

Everett touches his shoulder. They embrace.

BING

It was the bottle... flew him high
as his horn and he never came down.
Didn't want to. I won't do that to
Dixie again.

EVERETT

We can help Dixie by finding work.

Bing stands and throws open the window. The train slows
through a shanty town at the edge of a city.

BING

We... were the same age.

EVERETT

All your records are hitting the
chart but nobody's buying 'em.
It's the Depression. Funny how
food comes first.

The homeless dance around a bonfire to an accordion playing
"Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams." The train passes and the
fire lights Bing in the open window.

BING

(singing)

JUST REMEMBER THAT SUNSHINE
ALWAYS FOLLOWS THE RAIN,
SO WRAP YOUR TROUBLES IN DREAMS,
AND DREAM YOUR TROUBLES AWAY.

The homeless double take. The train chugs away into
darkness. Bing sits back down.

EVERETT

And studios aren't making musicals.

BING

They will. Music is the heart, Bix
always said. Somehow, from him, it
seemed so simple and true.

EVERETT

Paramount is tossin' the idea of
putting top radio stars into a
film, Kate Smith, Burns and Allen,
people like that. If you were
still on the radio and...

BING

If anyone would work with me. Get
Abe Frank off my back.

EVERETT

If we could only pay him off.

BING

Money comes out of the air like
radio. Take any work as long as I
can sing. I have to sing.

EVERETT

Paul Whiteman would like you back.

BING

It's time to move on. You heard
from Al lately?

EVERETT

He's producing radio shows. Radio
might be your future too.

The train speeds into darkness where a ghostly Bix plays
"Stardust" on his horn.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OAKDALE CEMETERY, DAVENPORT - DAY

At Bix' grave overlooking the Mississippi River, Bing places
flowers on the fading pile from the funeral two days before.

A train whistle blows in the distance.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NEW YORK RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

BING

(singing)

SOMETIMES I WONDER WHY I SPEND THE
LONELY NIGHT DREAMING OF A SONG.
THAT MELODY HAUNTS MY REVERIE,
AND I AM ONCE AGAIN WITH YOU.
WHEN OUR LOVE WAS NEW
AND EACH KISS AN INSPIRATION,
AH, BUT THAT WAS LONG AGO,
NOW MY CONSOLATION
IS IN THE STARDUST OF A SONG.
THOUGH I DREAM IN VAIN,
IN MY HEART IT WILL REMAIN,
MY STARDUST MELODY,
THE MEMORY OF LOVE'S REFRAIN.

CLOSE-UP: "BILLBOARD MAGAZINE"

"BING CROSBY'S 'AT YOUR COMMAND' TOPS THE CHART."

CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN LINER - DAY

WILLIAM PALEY, President of CBS, relaxes in a deck chair. Nearby two teenage girls play Bing's recording of "I Surrender, Dear" on a portable phonograph.

BING (ON RECORD)

(singing)

WE PLAYED THE GAME OF STAY AWAY,
BUT IT COST MORE THAN I CAN PAY.
WITHOUT YOU I CAN'T MAKE MY WAY.
I SURRENDER DEAR.
I MAY SEEM PROUD AND I MAY ACT GAY.
THAT'S JUST A POSE,
I'M NOT THAT WAY,
CAUSE DEEP DOWN IN MY HEART I SAY,
I SURRENDER DEAR.

People of all ages gather around the record player, forcing Paley to move to another deck chair.

He jots down a telegram: "FABULOUS NEW SINGER ... STOP ... HIRE BING CROSBY AT ANY PRICE ... STOP ... BILL PALEY"

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CBS EXECUTIVE OFFICE - DAY

Ralph Wonders fidgets at his desk as Paley paces and fumes.

BILL PALEY

I told you to hire him! He's even
in New York now.

RALPH WONDERS

Crosby is a screw up, Bill. They
kicked him out of Hollywood. Don't
you read the trades?

BILL PALEY

Bing touches people like no one
I've ever heard, deep inside to
their soul. Tell me you've got a
soul, Ralph.

RALPH WONDERS

Uh, s-sure.

BILL PALEY
He's becoming the voice of the
Depression. I say we give him a
chance.

INT. CBS HALLWAY - DAY

Smiling Everett leaves Paley's office with a contract.

CLOSE-UP: RADIO MAGAZINE COVER

A photo of Bing is captioned: "BING CROSBY - BACK ON RADIO?"

INT. A HARLEM NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Bing's attorney, ROGER MARCHETTI, and Brunswick president,
JACK KAPP, go over papers as Bing listen to THE MILLS
BROTHERS sing "Hold That Tiger" on stage.

JACK
Thanks for coming, Roger. Everett
is out of town and I thought Bing
might be nervous about tomorrow.

BING
Nah, I'm okay, Jack, positively
serendipitous.

JACK
(laughing)
I'm sure you are.

BING
(looking in thesaurus)
What does that mean?

ROGER
If Bing is a hit on the radio we
want a new recording contract.

JACK
Absolutely, but as you can see my
option has four more months to run.
I'll gladly renew at an increase if
sales pick up.

ROGER
Any concerns, Bing?

BING

Nary a one. You're my man, Jack.
You can sure pick what the public
loves to hear.

JACK

Anything by you. Seven tunes have
already hit the top ten this year.
So how's Dixie doing?

BING

I fell asleep talking to her last
night. I never hung up and the
hotel billed me \$130!

ROGER

That's why Bing needs more money.

BING

(laughing)

No, no, I'll do just fine if I get
a radio sponsor. These Mills
Brothers are pretty terrific. You
should sign them to make records.

JACK

I already have. That's why I
brought you here tonight.

The Mills Brothers finish and start to leave.

BAND LEADER

Recording artist Bing Crosby is in
our audience tonight. Perhaps we
can get him to sing for us.

To applause Bing reluctantly goes up and shakes hands.

BAND LEADER

How about a song, Bing? I hear you
sing in your sleep.

BING

Only if I can meet the Mills
Brothers. Get back here.

HARRY MILLS

Our pleasure, Mr. Bing.

BING

It's my thrill to meet you. I got
a hankering to flex the vocals on
"Shine" if you'll stay and help me.

Most of the audience applauds. A waiter puts a drink on the piano. Bing and the Mills Brothers sing "Shine."

Two white couples leave indignantly. Bing downs the drink.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CBS RADIO STUDIO - EARLY MORNING

Kapp and Marchetti carry a tipsy Bing into CBS Station WABC and deposit him on a couch in his dressing room.

LATER

At a microphone Bing opens his mouth but can't make a sound. He shakes his head and points down his throat.

RALPH WONDERS

What? Someone get a doctor!

An assistant runs for a doctor. Wonders pulls Paley aside.

RALPH WONDERS

I told you Crosby screws up. He can't sing so dump him.

BILL PALEY

It looks like an accident. I say we give him another chance.

HARRY VON ZELL

We regret that Bing Crosby will be unable to sing for you this evening as announced. We will continue with a program from records.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MILDRED BAILEY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Wrapped in blankets, Bing soaks his feet in hot water. Mildred applies a steaming, gooey chest balm.

CUT TO:

INT. CBS STUDIO - NIGHT

Bing gargles, clears his throat, sticks out his tongue and shakes his head.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MILDRED'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jack Kapp, Paul Whiteman and Eddie Lang crowd around Bing in bed. Paul extends a flask of booze.

PAUL
We came to help.

Bing flings the flask away and points to Eddie.

BING
(hoarse whisper)
Help me.

CUT TO:

INT. CBS STUDIO - NIGHT

TITLE: SEPTEMBER 2, 1931

The Freddie Rich Orchestra warms up. Eddie Lang adjusts his guitar to accompany Bing. Bing shakes Paley's hand, clears his throat and gestures that he is really okay.

HARRY VON ZELL
Introducing Bing Crosby. Here is the moment you have been waiting for, the delayed appearance of that sensational baritone, Bing Crosby, whose singing has made him the favorite of California through the mediums of the motion picture, the vaudeville stage and the radio.

Paley pulls Wonders aside.

BILL PALEY
I hope he's got it.

HARRY VON ZELL
Bing Crosby's initial program was to have been Monday night, but a severe attack of laryngitis made it impossible for him to appear until tonight. So, offering Bing Crosby in the popular song of the day "Just One More Chance."

Bing sings "Just One More Chance" into the radio mike.

MONTAGE - BING MAKES GOOD!

-- People all over the country listen to Bing on radios.

-- Dixie listens in her dressing room at the Embassy Club. She gathers courage from his voice and goes on stage.

DIXIE
If you can do it...

-- Bing's parents listen to the radio in Spokane.

-- Everett hears the broadcast on board a train.

-- Mack Sennett listens and sorts bookings for Crosby shorts.

SENNETT
That's my boy!

-- Dixie sings with the band at the Embassy Club.

DIXIE
(singing)
JUST ONE MORE CHANCE
TO PROVE IT'S YOU ALONE I CARE FOR.
EACH NIGHT I SAY A LITTLE PRAYER
FOR, JUST ONE MORE CHANCE...

-- Al Rinker and Harry Barris listen on separate radios.

-- Abe Frank turns the radio off, then back on.

INT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - LATER

Bing stops at a telegraph office in the CBS lobby.

CLOSE-UP - TELEGRAM: "DEAR EV, CANCEL ALL CONTRACTS...
STOP...I GAVE ALL I HAD...STOP...AND IT'S NO GOOD...BING."

He leaves dejectedly. Too late to catch Bing, the manager runs out waving a fistful of telegrams.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CBS STUDIO - NIGHT

Crema Cigar ads decorate Station WABC for the nightly show. Bill Paley and Everett watch from the control booth.

HARRY VON ZELL
Here is Bing Crosby, the Crema
Singer...

BING
(singing)
WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT
MEETS THE GOLD OF THE DAY,
(MORE)

BING (cont'd)
 SOMEONE WAITS FOR ME.
 AND THE GOLD OF HER HAIR
 CROWNS THE BLUE OF HER EYES,
 LIKE A HALO TENDERLY...

EVERETT
 Catchy tune.

BILL PALEY
 Bing helped write it. Now that
 he's got a sponsor he's on his way.

BING
 (singing)
 IF ONLY I COULD SEE HER,
 OH HOW HAPPY I WOULD BE.
 WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT
 MEETS THE GOLD OF THE DAY,
 SOMEONE WAITS FOR ME.

EVERETT
 I just signed Bing to appear with
 the Mills Brothers. He's always
 wanted to sing with a great Negro
 group.

BILL PALEY
 They may be on the same bill, but
 they won't sing together. Where
 did you book him?

Bing walks in the booth during a Cremo commercial.

EVERETT
 In the biggest and the best, The
 Paramount Theater.

BING
 Not the Paramount!

INT. PARAMOUNT THEATER - NIGHT - FLASHBACK TO 1927

Bing and Al flounder on stage. The audience boos. The
 elegant Paramount curtain closes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HEAVEN ON A VAUDEVILLE STAGE - ETERNITY

TITLE: "SOMEWHERE IN TIME"

A tawdry olio curtain creaks as it rolls up. Vaudeville placards stage right and left read: 'BING CROSBY' and 'BOB HOPE.' 42-year-old Bing walks out by his name.

A second curtain upstage opens to reveal a movie screen. A projected message crawls up the vaudeville movie screen:

HISTORICAL FOOTNOTE

Bing Crosby and Bob Hope first performed together on December 12, 1932, in the Capitol Theatre on Broadway in a vaudeville act like the one depicted in "Road to Hollywood." Please forgive old Bing for remembering his dates a bit wrong so we could include Bob in this film. What's one year, after all, when it happened so long ago?

Bob Hope strolls out from the other wing.

BING

Wait a minute. They can't change the facts, can they, Bob?

BOB

They already did, old boy. Dixie wasn't the girl in that little car accident that put you in jail.

BING

That's right. Who was she?

BOB

It's called dramatic license, a desperate, hopeless attempt to make this movie about you better.

BING

Since when did you ever make a movie better?

BOB

It needs help. I already dozed off twice.

BING

Nobody sleeps in heaven.

BOB

They reinvented it for this film.
(pointing up)

(MORE)

BOB (cont'd)
 He knows best. Check out the
 audience. There, look at that guy.

They shade their eyes and peer out at the audience.

BING
 Where?

BOB
 Third row, slobbering, popcorn in
 his lap, looks like George Clooney.

Bob pages through the "Road to Hollywood" script.

BING
 (waving, jumping)
 Woo, woo! Wake up!

BOB
 It is George Clooney.

BING
 His snoring is drowning out your
 laughs.

BOB
 Hey! Wake up! You'll miss the
 scene where I beat him at golf.

BING
 You never ever beat me! This was a
 true story until you showed up.

BOB
 It says up there you're the 'old'
 guy with the bad memory.

BING
 That's your handwriting.

Bing stomps off. Bob flips between scenes in the script.

BOB
 So, he bombs in the Paramount in
 1927. That part's good.
 (finding later scene)
 Then he returns for the big
 climax... whew, corn!

BING (O.S.)
 That happened!

BOB
 Whoa, buddy, this never did.

He waves at the camera to zoom in on his face, glances furtively around and whispers to the audience.

BOB

Go home now, folks. Get your money back at the box office. Tell the manager I sent you. No stampeding!

The curtain thuds on Bob's head. They grapple behind it.

BING (O.S.)

Get out of my film!

BOB (O.S.)

You can't make a "Road" picture without me. It's in my contract.

BING (O.S.)

Where? Oh...

BOB (O.S.)

And the Big Guy notarized it.

BING (O.S.)

Who can argue? Put it there, pal. I remember when we first met at the New York Friar's Club like it was only yesterday.

BOB (O.S.)

I, the debonair budding star, and you assisting in the lavatory.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT./EXT. FRIAR'S CLUB LOBBY - DAY

Bing Crosby and Bob Hope enter opposite sides of a revolving door and push to exit but the door will not move. They spot each other through the glass and peer around nose to nose.

BING

Say, you're Bob the Nose Hope. I caught you in 'Ballyhoo.' Not bad. I almost laughed. Came this close.

BOB

Crosby? Do you sing or something?

Bing crowds into Bob's side of the door.

BING

After you, Maestro.

BOB
Going my way?

Bing and Bob walk off down the busy New York street.

BING
It's quite a coincidence running
into you like this.

BOB
I heard you were my warm-up act
Friday. I'd like to try a few old
vaudeville gags but need a partner.

BING
Older than your Civil War jokes? I
don't know, Bob, who is buried in
Grant's tomb?

BOB
(double taking)
He's dead?!

Bing mouths a silent "thank you" to heaven.

BING
Oh, how they'll beg me to sing.
Meet your straight man, brother.

They shake hands.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Bing paces back and forth in the dark smoking a pipe. Dixie Lee and Harry Barris burst in. Dixie gives Bing a big kiss.

DIXIE
Surprise! Look who I bumped into.

HARRY
On the train!

DIXIE
Why are you cooped up in here?

HARRY
I've got a car. Let's blow.

INT. HARRY'S CAR - LATER

Harry drives Bing and Dixie across the Brooklyn Bridge.

HARRY

I timed my business trip to catch your opening.

DIXIE

I missed you too.

BING

Mutual.

DIXIE

My, you're talkative. Loosen up! Tomorrow we'll know. If you're a bust then you can get a real job and settle down.

HARRY

But he's making good money on the radio.

BING

Dixie is right. Crooning will never last. I guess I could finish school and...

DIXIE

Become a lawyer. Use your charm in a court room. I saw your first Sennett short and, really, you'll never be Ronald Colman.

BING

I don't want to be. I just want...

DIXIE

To have fun! Go ahead. Loosen up and have some fun, but my way with no, no intoxication but me!

HARRY

This looks like fun.

EXT. BROOKLYN MOVIE THEATER - CONTINUOUS

Harry stops at a neighborhood movie theater. The marquee reads: "TALENT NIGHT - CROONER CONTEST."

DIXIE

Why don't you enter and let the audience vote? It'll be a hoot.

HARRY

We'll disguise you.

BING
That's plain nuts.

INSIDE THE THEATER

Bing applies a burnt-cork mustache as they walk down the aisle. Contestants dressed like Bing imitate him in every corner. The manager runs around frantically.

MANAGER
Where, oh where, oh where...

HARRY
These guys need help.

Bing bumps into a rotund, would-be CROONER wearing the same funny hat and Hawaiian shirt.

CROONER
Nice hat, but Crosby doesn't wear a mustache.

BING
I do now. Can you sing?

The crooner goes into a broad caricature of Bing.

CROONER
(singing)
BA-BA-BA BOO-TI-FUL DREAMER...

Harry goes on stage to the manager by a mike and piano.

HARRY
You don't mind if I twiddle the keys to get started, do you?

MANAGER
Oh, please, a godsend.

HARRY
Listen up, folks. I've got a new song about crooning. You'll catch on fast. Start it out for 'em, B, B, Bobby.

Dixie pushes Bing to the microphone. Harry plays piano.

BING
(singing)
LEARN TO CROON,
IF YOU WANT TO WIN
YOUR HEART'S DESIRE,
SWEET MELODIES OF LOVE
(MORE)

BING (cont'd)
 INSPIRE ROMANCE.
 JUST MURMUR LA-DA DEE DA-DA-DA,
 AND WHEN YOU DO,
 SHE'LL ANSWER DA-DA DEE DA-DA,
 AND NESTLE CLOSER TO YOU.

The crooner yanks the mike from Bing.

CROONER
 That's nothing like Crosby. Ba-ba-
 boo, not la-de-da, you sissy, and
 jazz it up!

The crooner croons Bing. Contestants include 15-year-old Frank Sinatra, Harry and Dixie. Bing jots down notes.

INSERT - NOTEBOOK PAGE: "HOW TO BE BING"

- 1) Gaudy shirts.
- 2) Dreamy eyes.
- 3) Kiss microphone.
- 4) Sing good.
- 5) Every other line - Ba-ba-boo.
- 6)

Instead of jotting down #6 Bing crosses out "Sing good."

BACK TO SCENE

RUDY VALLEE IMPERSONATOR
 (singing with megaphone)
 I'M JUST A VAGABOND LOVER,
 IN SEARCH OF A VAGABOND DREAM...

The audience boos and throws vegetables. Harry returns to "Learn to Croon." The entire audience joins the song.

AUDIENCE
 (singing)
 LEARN TO CROON,
 YOU'LL ELIMINATE EACH RIVAL SOON.
 IF YOU'RE HEADING FOR
 A SUNNY HONEYMOON,
 LEARN TO CROOOOON!

The manager steps up with a two-foot trophy. The major contestants line up. Harry pounds out a fanfare.

MANAGER
 And the winner is... Mr. Ruben!

The surprise winner (who was not shown competing) goes to the mike and croons a devastating Crosby caricature.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HARRY'S CAR - NIGHT

Dixie waves a four-inch loving cup in Bing's stern face.

HARRY

Third place ain't bad.

DIXIE

I'm on your side whatever happens.
You know that, but you don't want
to be a third string clown.

BING

They just had a good time.

HARRY

Your singing touches them so they
try themselves.

BING

Yeah, anyone can sing like me.

DIXIE

That's my point. Just get a real
job and a real life.

EXT./INT. HOUSE IN BROOKLYN - SAME

They drive past a house where BING'S GREATEST FANS play his record of "I Found a Million Dollar Baby" in the living room.

BING (ON RECORD)

(singing)

I FOUND A MILLION DOLLAR BABY
IN A FIVE AND TEN CENT STORE.
THE RAIN CONTINUED FOR AN HOUR.
I HUNG AROUND FOR THREE OR FOUR,
AROUND A MILLION DOLLAR BABY
IN A FIVE AND TEN CENT STORE.

A teenage girl, her mother and baby sister sort Bing Crosby records, sheet music and magazines. Grandma wheels in great grandma, who waves the New York Times.

The teenager cuts out an ad and pastes it in a scrapbook.

CLOSE-UP: NEW YORK TIMES AD (SHOWS BING'S FACE OVER A RECORD)

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TIMES SQUARE AT 43RD STREET - NOON

TITLE: NOVEMBER 6, 1931

MATCHING SHOT - Bing's face on a billboard: "RADIO'S NEWEST SENSATION -- BING CROSBY -- IN PERSON. STARTS FRIDAY."

BING (ON RECORD)
 (singing)
 INCIDENTALLY,
 IF YOU SHOULD RUN INTO A SHOWER,
 JUST STEP INSIDE MY COTTAGE DOOR
 AND MEET MY MILLION DOLLAR BABY
 FROM THE FIVE AND TEN CENT STORE.

EXT. MUSIC STORE - SAME

A sign advertises: "NEW CROSBY RECORD." Hundreds of people pour into the store and then out with records. The sign changes to: "SOLD OUT."

EXT. NEWS STAND - SAME

A stack of "RADIO LAND" magazines features Bing on the cover. Hands grab all issues and leave change behind. A truck unloads more bundles.

EXT. PARAMOUNT THEATRE - SAME

The 3900 seat movie/vaudeville palace is located at Times Square on the west side of Broadway at 43rd Street.

CLOSE-UP - Marquee: "BING CROSBY, BOB HOPE, THE MILLS BROTHERS. FEATURE FILM: 'ONCE A LADY' WITH RUTH CHATTERTON"

Hundreds of fans line up for the first show around the corner to the stage doors on 43rd Street.

INT. PARAMOUNT - BACKSTAGE - SAME

Bing paces nervously back and forth in his dressing room.

DIXIE
 Just do your best and let the
 audience decide.

She joins Harry and Bob Hope in the hall.

DIXIE

What's with Bing, stage fright?

HARRY

Don't you know? Back in 1927 he and Al flopped on their faces right here in the Paramount. Pops almost fired them.

The STAGE MANAGER takes telegrams to Bing.

STAGE MANAGER

We have ten microphones on stage, Mr. Crosby. Believe me, they'll hear you.

CLOSE-UP - TELEGRAM: "BREAK A LEG ... STOP ... BETTER LUCK THIS TIME ... STOP ... POPS."

The stage manager leaves and the HOUSE MANAGER comes in.

HOUSE MANAGER

Crosby, you've never emceed a show before in New York.

BING

That's right. I'm guessing I say a few words between acts to...

HOUSE MANAGER

Yeah, yeah. Now when you introduce our coonskin act make the audience 'comfortable' with them. Get me? Joke around about their mammy down on the old plantation and what a big family she had.

BING

You can't mean the Mills Brothers. They're a great singing group.

HOUSE MANAGER

They bring in their kind from Harlem. Hell, I enjoy 'em too. I love 'em! They're the best damned nigger group in show business.

BING

Compliments like that aren't funny. They sing better than I do and that's what counts. I won't put them down.

HOUSE MANAGER

No, in their place. Listen up! If you want to stick around this town pay attention to the sensibilities of our better patrons. I want to hear that joke.

The manager leaves and Bob Hope comes in.

BING

I need a revolving door in here. No, don't go, Bob. Do you ever have moments when you don't know where you're going?

BOB

Every time I look in a mirror, so I'm getting into radio. I'll tell 'em I look like Gary Cooper and they can imagine the rest.

Bing snickers, but looks serious.

BOB

Yes, all the time.

BING

The road never goes where you expect. You pick one, you head off, you never get there.

BOB

You want words of wisdom? I'm serious. Go after what you love. Keep friends when you find them. Follow the golden rule, the Boy Scout code, most of the Ten Commandments and don't step on my lines. You feel better now?

BING

(laughing)
Preclusively.

BOB

You know any big words? Here, chase those butterflies away.

Bob gives Bing a flask of booze. Bing considers, sees Dixie in the hall and hands it back.

EXT./INT. RIALTO THEATER - SAME

Across 43rd Street, south of the Paramount, the Rialto movie theater shows Bing's first Sennett short, "I Surrender, Dear" and "The Unholy Garden" with Ronald Colman.

CLOSE-UP: POSTER: "BING CROSBY IN A MACK SENNETT COMEDY"

Inside four teenage girls watch the end of Bing's short.

ON THE MOVIE SCREEN

Bing and the girl drive off in a roadster while he sings "I Surrender, Dear." "THE END" title comes on.

OUT FRONT

The RIALTO MANAGER paces at the entrance as the girls leave.

FIRST GIRL

Let's go see Bing again.

SECOND GIRL

He sings dreamy. He looks dreamy.
I want to go to bed and dream.

THIRD GIRL

With Bing!

FOURTH GIRL

(singing)
I SURRENDER...

ALL OF THEM

(singing)
DEARRRR!

They spot Bing's name on the Paramount marquee.

GIRLS

Wow! Look! Eee! Eee!

RIALTO MANAGER

Excuse me, but is that Crosby the
same as my Bing Crosby?

SECOND GIRL

Where you been hibernating, Buster?

The girls run to get in line at the Paramount. The manager waves his assistant over.

RIALTO MANAGER
Let's put this 'Bing' in larger
letters, the bigger the better.

INT. PARAMOUNT DRESSING ROOM - SAME

Bing enters the Mills Brothers' dressing room.

BING
I've just been told the proper way
to introduce you, but I plan to do
more. I'm joining you on "Dinah."

HARRY MILLS
That isn't done here. When we
rehearsed with you we were just
fooling around.

BING
But it felt right.

HARRY MILLS
No argument there.

BING
I felt free, and what feels right
is right. We're about to record
"Dinah" together for Brunswick.
That's brave of Jack, but he
doesn't care who says we can't. I
don't care either and I'll tell 'em
they're wrong, dead wrong. What's
more, if the audience is receptive,
I want you to stay on stage and
help me sing my last songs.

DONALD MILLS
To a full house?

BING
Keep down stage so they can't pull
the curtain on us.

HARRY MILLS
You're serious.

BING
I played vaudeville.

INT./EXT. PARAMOUNT BOX OFFICE - SAME

The box office puts out signs: "SOLD OUT." Ushers push the hundreds of fans in line outside.

GIRL FROM RIALTO
This is not acceptable!

SECOND GIRL
I can't wait three hours!

THIRD GIRL
Noooooooo!!!

CROWD LEADER
I'm from Texas and we do what it takes. Bing needs us now.

INT. PARAMOUNT STAGE - SAME

Bing joins Dixie, Harry and Bob in the wings. RUBINOFF conducts the orchestra in "Blue of the Night."

DIXIE
Harry told me about the first time you played here and it didn't... go so well.

BING
The past doesn't matter. If they want me, I'll sing. If not...

HARRY
You could beat your feet on that old Mississippi mud.

BING
That, my Harry, would be a treat.

The lights dim. Bing walks on stage in a spotlight.

DIXIE
Break a leg, but don't trip.

Bing trips, grabs a standing microphone and recovers.

BING
That crack wasn't there this morning.

The audience laughs. Bob Hope walks out with a spot on him.

BOB
Ten seconds and you haven't
introduced me yet.

BING
Ladies and gentlemen, meet Junior.

BOB
The name is Hope, Bob Hope.

BING
Hoping for a laugh, which reminds
me, Bob, of two farmers who run
into each other on the street.

They back up, approach and pretend to meet each other.

BOB
How's tricks, farmer Brown?

Bing extends both hands in a thumbs down gesture.

BING
Mighty grim, farmer Jones.

BOB
Relief is right around the corner.

Bob 'milks' Bing's thumbs. The audience laughs.

BING
Have a little cream. Now we'd like
to give you our impression of two
politicians meeting on the street.

BOB
Democrats?

BING
It's your joke. Does it matter?

BOB
I don't think the Republicans are
on speaking terms.

They meet and hug each other while picking pockets.

BING
(lifting Bob's watch)
Howdy, Mortimer. What's going down
up on Capital Hill?

BOB
 (stealing Bing's wallet)
 The work relief bill is such a joke
 it'll put comedians out of
 business.

BING
 (produces Bob's garter)
 You've got nothing to worry about
 there, pal, old pal.

BOB
 Except you.

BING
 I guess they were Republicans after
 all.

BOB
 I see the old hook coming. Play
 "Blue of the Night," Maestro.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE RIALTO - SAME

The manager enlarges Bing's name on the marquee and moves it
 above the title of the feature.

EXT. PARAMOUNT ENTRANCE - SAME

The waiting, restless crowd surges and shouts.

CROWD LEADER
 We can't wait! No, no, no!

CROWD
 No! No! No!

CROWD LEADER
 Help Bing, now, now, now.

CROWD
 Now! Now! Now!

INT. PARAMOUNT STAGE - SAME

Bing introduces the Mills Brothers at a down stage mike.

BING

Please give a warm welcome to the
pride of Broadway -- Harry,
Herbert, Donald and John -- The
Mills Brothers. I'm sure you'll
enjoy them as much as I do. They
just cut their first record for
Brunswick and it's a hit!

The curtain opens. Bing shakes hands and leaves the Mills
Brothers in a spotlight.

MILLS BROS.

(singing)

HOLD THAT TIGER.

HOLD THAT TIGER.

WHERE'S THAT TIGER?

WHERE'S THAT TIGER?

INT. PARAMOUNT HOUSE, LOBBY, OFFICE - SAME

The manager observes from the back of the house and kicks a
seat. A burly patron rises and turns on him. The manager
runs out to the mezzanine and into his ASSISTANT.

HOUSE MANAGER

Damned Crosby never follows orders.
He's history.

ASSISTANT

Boss, we got bigger problems.

They rush to the box office. The aroused crowd threatens to
break in. They run to a second floor office and observe the
street mob through the window above the marquee.

The crowd leader climbs on a car and leads a chant.

CROWD LEADER

We want Bing! We want Bing!

CROWD

We want Bing! We want Bing!

ASSISTANT

Nothin' like this has ever happened
before. Who woulda thought?

HOUSE MANAGER

They used to lynch people all the
time.

(on the phone)

(MORE)

HOUSE MANAGER (cont'd)

There's a riot outside the
Paramount Theatre. Thousands.
Send over the mounted police.

ASSISTANT

We gotta do something, boss!

The manager rips open a crate in the corner.

HOUSE MANAGER

Put these new speakers on the
marquee. Yes, out the window!
We'll pump Crosby's voice out.
That should send them home early.

ASSISTANT

Great idea, boss.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE RIALTO - SAME

The assistant holds up two large capitol "B's." The manager
points to the larger "B."

INT. PARAMOUNT STAGE - SAME

Bing and Dixie wait in the wings while Bob Hope dances on
stage with a female partner.

BING

I wouldn't be here except for you.

DIXIE

Everett booked it.

BING

I'd be singing somewhere alright,
between drinks, but you expected
more from me and... I didn't want
to lose you. If I need to become
that lawyer, the one with charm...

She shakes her head no. He smiles

BING

So thanks for just being there, for
letting me sing but not...

She stops him with an embrace that lingers into a kiss.

DIXIE

Now get out there and sing!

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - SAME

Stage hands wrestle two speakers out the window onto the Paramount marquee. They string wire through the first balcony corridor and down steps to backstage.

INT. PARAMOUNT STAGE - SAME

Harry rushes in from the hall.

HARRY

Everett's on the phone. Make it snappy.

Bing runs out, listens and returns smiling. A painting of giant watermelons flies in upstage of Bob Hope's backdrop.

BING

Ev's on his way over with some kind of news, but Abe Frank accepted our pay-off and lifted the musicians' ban. I can go home!

DIXIE

We can go home, and maybe...

BING

Maybe! Sure! Yes!

He spins her around, sees the watermelons and goes to the hulking, six-foot-six stage hand tying off the rope.

BING

Get that drop out! The Mills Brothers don't need watermelons.

BIG BRUTE

You get out. I know my job.

Bing and the stage hand grapple with the rope. Bob Hope suddenly appears and makes eye contact with Bing.

BING AND BOB

Patty-cake, patty-cake,
Baker's man,
Bake a cake as fast as you can...

They punch out the stage hand, pull the drop out and walk past a dumbfounded Harry.

BING

Thanks, Junior.

BOB

They haven't seen that one yet.

Bob goes back on stage and Bing returns to Dixie.

BING

I've got a million songs in me if
anyone wants to hear 'em. Let's
find out. Nothing to worry about,
that's my new motto.

EXT. PARAMOUNT ENTRANCE - SAME

Thousands of fans on Broadway block traffic, topple mounted
policemen and climb the Paramount walls. One cop on
horseback works his way near the entrance.

CROWD LEADER

Now! Now! Now!

INT. PARAMOUNT LOBBY - SAME

Ushers link arms to hold back the crowd.

INT. PARAMOUNT STAGE - SAME

The Mills Brothers sing "Dinah." Bing walks out from the
wings with a spotlight on him. The audience cheers.

BING

(singing)

DINAH, IS THERE ANYONE FINER,
IN THE STATE OF CAROLINA?
IF THERE IS AND YOU KNOW HER,
SHOW HER TO ME. DINAH,
GOT THOSE DIXIE EYES BLAZIN,'
HOW I LOVE TO SIT AND GAZE IN
TO THE EYES OF DINAH LEE.
DINAH, SHOULD YOU WANDER TO CHINA,
I WOULD HOP AN OCEAN LINER
JUST TO BE WITH DINAH LEE.

While the orchestra plays an introduction, Bing persuades the
Mills Brothers to stay and move down stage. Hands patch the
new speakers into the sound system.

BING

(singing)

I'M THROUGH WITH LOVE,
(MORE)

BING (cont'd)
 I'LL NEVER FALL AGAIN.
 SAID ADIEU TO LOVE,
 DON'T EVER CALL AGAIN.
 FOR I MUST HAVE YOU OR NO ONE,
 AND SO I'M THROUGH WITH LOVE.

Women ooh and ahh, scream and faint.

IN THE AUDIENCE

Young Frank Sinatra, Mr. Ruben with his loving cup and the fat crooner from the contest applaud.

SINATRA
 I'm gonna croon like Bing.

CROONER
 You're too skinny, Frankie. I tell
 ya, that guy looks familiar.

MR. RUBEN
 That's the real Bing, baby!

INT. PARAMOUNT LOBBY - SAME

The assistant runs out from the house.

ASSISTANT MANAGER
 Crosby just sang with the Mills
 Brothers! Not bad, boss. He can
 sing Negro.

MANAGER
 Nobody will stand for it. He's
 history!

INT. PARAMOUNT STAGE - SAME

Dixie and Harry watch from the wings.

DIXIE
 He wasn't supposed to sing with the
 Mills Brothers. There's some kind
 of rule.

HARRY
 Don't you know what you've got?

DIXIE
 He's pretty good, isn't he?

HARRY

Good! He's a true original. No one has ever sung like Bing.

DIXIE

They're starting to.

HARRY

He created a whole new style of relaxed singing and is taking black jazz music to white audiences and love songs into bedrooms on radio and records. He does what comes natural, what's right, and makes his own rules.

DIXIE

How could he flop here in 1927?

HARRY

No microphones. Now he can sing intimate.

DIXIE

To the heart, like he sings to me, and now to the world. I, I didn't understand. I may lose him, but I hope he makes it.

A stage hand throws the switch to the new speakers.

EXT. PARAMOUNT ENTRANCE - SAME

Bing's love song blasts out to Broadway over the speakers.

BING AND LOYCE (V.O.)

(singing)

I'VE LOCKED MY HEART,
I'LL KEEP MY FEELINGS THERE.
I HAVE STOCKED MY HEART
WITH ICY FRIGIDAIRE,
AND I MEAN TO CARE FOR NO ONE,
BECAUSE I'M THROUGH WITH LOVE.

INT. PARAMOUNT LOBBY/AUDITORIUM/STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The mob screams and surges past the box office, taking a mounted policeman along, and stops at the cordon of ushers. The leader swings up onto the horse behind the cop.

CROWD LEADER

I'm from Texas and he loves me.

POLICEMAN

That's not my department.

The horse smells popcorn, rears up and throws off the cop. The leader pulls into the saddle, rears again, charges through the ushers and knocks down the house manager.

The screaming mob chases the horse to the concessions, where it stops to eat popcorn. The leader dismounts and races with the mob down the aisles of the auditorium and up steps to the stage. They slow and sprawl on stage to listen.

Bing motions the faltering organist to continue.

BING

(singing)

WE WERE SO IN LOVE
THE DAY LOVE STARTED.
WHO WOULD THINK THAT WE
WOULD SOON BE PARTED?
I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S TRUE.
I MAKE THIS APPEAL TO YOU.
CAN'T WE TALK IT OVER?

WOMEN ON LEFT

No!

BING

(singing)

LET'S TALK IT OVER,
BEFORE YOU TELL ME YOU'RE THROUGH.
CAN'T WE SIT TOGETHER
AND FIGURE WHETHER
THIS IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

The Mills Brothers two-step into the wings and offstage.

BING

(singing)

I HATE THE THOUGHT
OF SPENDING NIGHTS ALL ALONE,
MISSING THE THRILL
OF NIGHTS THAT WE'VE KNOWN.
CAN'T WE TALK IT OVER...

WOMEN ON RIGHT

Yes!

BING

(singing)

...BEFORE IT'S OVER,
BEFORE YOU WHISPER GOODBYE FOREVER.
LET'S TALK IT OVER, DEAR.

The orchestra plays an up tempo introduction for the last song. Dixie grabs Harry Mills.

DIXIE
What's going on?

HARRY MILLS
Nothing I ever seen. It ain't
safe. You better get him out of
there.

The Mills Brothers leave by the stage doors onto 43rd Street. The doorman, stage manager, stage hands and rats follow.

Women close around Bing trapping him downstage center. Dixie fights her way into the mob downstage right.

DIXIE
Let me through!

BING
(singing)
AH, THOSE LITTLE MEAN THINGS
WE WERE DOING,
MUST HAVE BEEN PART OF THE GAME,
LENDING A SPICE TO THE WOOING.
AH, BUT I DON'T CARE
WHO'S TO BLAME.

Dixie pushes women into the orchestra pit to clear her path.

Rubinoff turns to his last page of music.

CLOSE-UP - Music Score. The last line is hand-written at the bottom: "I SURRENDER DEAR."

BING
(singing)
WHEN STARS APPEAR...
AND SHADOWS FALL...
WHY THEN YOU'LL HEAR...
MY POOR HEART CALL...
TO YOU, MY LOVE, MY LIFE, MY ALL...

Dixie breaks through the mob and steps toward Bing. He throws open his arms in a gesture of surrender.

BING
(singing)
...I SURRENDER, DEAR!

Dixie rushes into his arms. Time stands still. Dixie glances back. The mob screams, charges Bing and Dixie and sweeps them away.

EXT. PARAMOUNT ENTRANCE - SAME

With a roar more fans funnel into the theater entrance.

EXT. STAGE DOORS ON 43RD STREET - SAME

Everett skips up to the doors, kisses a contract, cranes his head at the commotion on Broadway and reaches for the handle.

The doors bolt open. Screaming fans pour out. Women carry Bing out on their shoulders from 43rd Street to Broadway. Everett climbs a car trapped in the mob.

EVERETT

Where you going?!

BING

Don't know!

EVERETT

(waving contract)

Paramount contract! "The Big Broadcast!" Ticket to Hollywood!

Bing reaches for but can't grasp the contract. The mob carries him away from Everett up Broadway.

ON THE RIALTO THEATER MARQUEE

The managers erect eight-foot letters that spell "BING." They pause to watch the mob scene.

RIALTO MANAGER

I gotta get me a bigger sign.

STAGE DOORS ON 43RD STREET

Bob Hope in a cowboy costume rides out on the horse.

BOB

(to audience)

I told you to go home.

(riding into sunset)

One joke, one lousy gag they give me, with a horse yet. Wait till they make my movie. I've got Milton Berle working on it, Red Skelton, Buster Keaton, Jack Benny, Ernst Lubitsch... subtle but funny, not like this turkey...

The horse follows the crowd carrying Bing up Broadway.

BOB
 ...And Crosby sings all his songs
 in the bushes.

EXT. TRAIN - DUSK

A train speeds westward into the setting sun.

SUPERIMPOSED OVER TRAIN - Bing moves into extreme close up.

BING
 (singing)
 TO YOU MY LOVE, MY LIFE, MY ALL,
 I SURRENDER DEAR!

The train vanishes into the sunset.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD - NIGHT

Spotlights play across the "HOLLYWOODLAND" sign in the hills.

PAN DOWN TO:

EXT. GRAUMAN'S CHINESE THEATRE - NIGHT

Searchlights! Screaming fans! Shining stars!

Grauman's marquee that reads "BING CROSBY IN THE BIG BROADCAST" transforms to "ACADEMY AWARDS CEREMONY."

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT - RETURN TO 1945

Jimmy Fidler rides with Bing and Dixie. Their limousine waits in line to unload.

DIXIE
 Outside of the horse, my favorite
 part was when you brought Bob into
 the Paramount.

BING
 Why, wasn't he there?

DIXIE
 I wasn't even there! But I came a
 few weeks later and you said that
 stuff then. And those women! Did
 I fight them off or what?

BING
 (dejected)
 Maybe I did misremember a bit. You
 know all the rest.

JIMMY
 Dozens of films, hundreds of
 records and radio shows...

DIXIE
 Four boys.

JIMMY
 ...The pro-am golf tournaments, Del
 Mar Racetrack, bond drives...

DIXIE
 (kissing Bing)
 Nothing but fun for the laziest man
 in the world who only did one hard
 thing his whole life.

JIMMY
 What was that? It might make a
 good end for my article.

BING
 Don't go there, Jim. I can't talk
 about it.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FIELD FILLED WITH SOLDIERS - DAY

Bob Hope tells jokes to thousands of GIs. Bing waits off to
 the side.

BOB
 In vaudeville they brought down the
 asbestos to close a show, so here's
 Old Fireproof.

The soldiers applaud wildly. Bob goes to Bing.

BOB
 A lot of them won't make it
 tomorrow. Sing 'em what they want.

BING
 You make this so easy.

Bing walks to the microphone. The band plays the
 introduction and the soldiers quiet down. During the song
 many soldiers cry and Bing fights back tears himself.

BING
 (singing)
 I'M DREAMING OF A WHITE CHRISTMAS,
 JUST LIKE THE ONES I USED TO KNOW.
 WHERE THE TREETOPS GLISTEN,
 AND CHILDREN LISTEN
 TO HEAR SLEIGH BELLS IN THE SNOW.
 I'M DREAMING OF A WHITE CHRISTMAS
 WITH EVERY CHRISTMAS CARD I WRITE.
 MAY YOUR DAYS BE MERRY AND BRIGHT.
 AND MAY ALL YOUR CHRISTMASSES BE
 WHITE.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GRAUMAN'S THEATER - SAME

A scene from "Going My Way" plays on Grauman's movie screen.
 Bing and a boy's chorus finish singing "Swinging on a Star."

BING
 (singing)
 SO YOU SEE IT'S ALL UP TO YOU.
 YOU CAN BE BETTER THAN YOU ARE.
 YOU COULD BE SWINGIN' ON A STAR.

The scene fades out and a curtain closes on the movie screen.
 GARY COOPER and Bob Hope stand at a podium.

GARY
 And the winner, of the best acting
 performance in 1944, is the one and
 only Bing Crosby.

To thunderous applause Bing goes on stage and shakes hands
 with Bob. Gary walks away.

BOB
 Where you going, Gary? Gary! You
 forgot the Oscar.

BING
 You're laying this on me here.

Gary hurries back, takes an Oscar and presents it to Bing.

GARY
 I thought it was backstage.

BING
 Thanks very much, Gary. I forgot
 they were still making these.

GARY

I don't know why I should get more confused than you.

Gary and Bob step away from the podium. Bob paces and fumes.

BING

I'm not confused. I'm surprised, amazed. Now we're not allowed to make any speeches, but, uh...

BOB

You better say something, brother.

BING

I haven't anything to say except, uh, there's been a lot spoken recently about...

BOB

Just like you rehearsed it.

BING

About the equality of opportunity in these United States. You are certainly witnessing a practical demonstration of it in me receiving this award. Because if Leo McCarey can take a broken down crooner like me and take me by the hand and lead me through a picture so deftly that I come up with this happy crockery here, why there's a chance for anyone. All you have to do is get Leo McCarey, I guess. Now if he can just find me a horse to win the Kentucky Derby, it'll be the greatest parley in history.

The audience laughs. Photographers rush to the stage and film Bing. Snapping flash bulbs freeze his image in time.

FREEZE FRAME BING CROSBY

Titles scroll up the bottom of the screen.

BING CROSBY (1903-1977)

Bing recorded over 2,600 songs, of which 23 were gold records and another 200 charted in the top ten.

(MORE)

BING CROSBY (1903-1977) (cont'd)

In movies Bing was a top-ten box office attraction for 15 years and the #1 movie star from 1944-1948. He won an Oscar for "Going My Way" and was nominated for "The Bells of St. Mary's" and "The Country Girl."

Bing was the first to tape record radio shows for later broadcast and his company invented videotape. In the 20th century Bing Crosby's voice was heard by more people around the world than anyone else who had ever lived.

The curtain opens on Grauman's screen. The real Bing Crosby sings a few bars of "Blue of the Night" in the original black and white film footage from "The Big Broadcast."

Bing Crosby film clips show during the end credits.

-- Bing sings "Please" from "The Big Broadcast."

-- Bing sings other popular songs from his movies.

-- Bing and Bob sing "Put It There, Pal" from "Road to Utopia."

-- Bing sings "White Christmas" from "Holiday Inn."

FADE OUT

-- THE END --

“Road to Hollywood” Postscript

Thank you for reading my screenplay. I hope you enjoyed it. You are free to share it with others. The main reason that I stopped tinkering with the script or searching for an agent or producer is that around 2005 I thought of a much better way to cover Bing Crosby’s early career. This better idea would have taken time to develop, time I did not have back then to pursue. However, I present the brief treatment here:

The story still takes place on the day that Bing received his Oscar — March 15, 1945 — except that instead of meeting Jimmy Fidler at Lakeside Country Club, Bing runs into Bob Hope. Bing is so apprehensive about the day that he follows Bob on the golf course, around his home and at an Oscar rehearsal at Grauman’s to continue telling his story.

Returning to the present frequently would allow the friendship between the two to develop with jokes and bantering reminiscent of their Road pictures. It would allow Bob Hope to work in a few short scenes about his start in vaudeville.

The story would remain about Bing Crosby’s Rise to Fame. So much more happened to Bing than to Bob Hope during this period. The format would let Bing fantasize about his first trip to Hollywood with Al Rinker and his carried-away climax at the Paramount Theater, since Bob could bring him back to earth with a simple “Never happened.” It would allow Bob to tell about them first appearing together in the Capitol Theater in NYC and that scene could be cut into Bing at the Paramount. It would allow Bing to tell Bob a tall tale (in the closing credits) about being driven into an outpost of aging Nazi guards in France, who let the jeep with Der Bingle go when he starts singing. In fact, any story told between good friends could be exaggerated to capture the spirit of the times while still retaining the basic facts.

After revisiting the 2005 script and writing the above treatment of what could be, I am getting tempted to take up that major revision. Perhaps someone out there can persuade me. Bing the man, the innovator, the role model, the singer, the legend ... his story must and will be properly told on film someday, whether as a romanticized feature or a true-to-life mini series.

— Ron Hall, Jan. 2019
(contact: fesfilms@aol.com)