

FADE IN:

EXT. THE MINT KARAOKE LOUNGE - DAY

Brass 1950s lettering advertises THE MINT on a squat green building squished between a looming modern glass office tower and a little sushi restaurant. In case you missed it, jutting out from the green building is a hot pink neon sign, THE MINT KARAOKE.

The sign isn't lit up yet, but a door with the address: 1942 Market Street, swings open and a laughing couple spill out for a smoke break. MUFFLED off-key vocals waft out behind them.

A few paces away, a man waits alone in front of the sushi restaurant. This is DAVID (late 40s) clean shaven, in a windbreaker, jeans that seem too high but are actually a proper fit, and sensible, comfortable shoes. Hands stuffed in his pockets, collar and shoulders up against the chill of the air, he squints across 4 lanes of daytime traffic. A younger woman waits at the light. It changes and she crosses toward him. He straightens up and tries to catch her gaze as she approaches.

DAVID

Sarah-Beth?

The woman just walks on. He calls after her in apology.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Sorry, thought you were-

SARAH-BETH(O.S.)

Hi.

He swings around to SARAH-BETH (21) fresh faced in a jacket, sweater, jeans, clean sneakers. Her hair pulled back in a messy low ponytail.

SARAH-BETH(CONT'D)

You're David?

He nods as he speaks, but stumbles. She just stares.

DAVID

I- I am. And I'm so glad you reached out. Yeah, well, uh, shall we go in?

She nods but doesn't move, so after a moment he walks ahead to the karaoke bar and opens the door for her. Her eyes widen. Guess they're not getting sushi after all.

DAVID (CONT'D)

After you...

INT. THE MINT KARAOKE LOUNGE - CONT.

The dark bar is half full. A real mash of folks. Sour old drunks and flamboyant performers pepper the room. A couple argues in a booth. A hen party in it's early stages is getting rowdy. The KARAOKE JOCKEY/KJ (30s) wears a floral muumuu, platforms and a beard - elegantly, and an elderly man seated on stage belts out the first chorus to MRS. JONES.

SINGER

*"Meeeeee aaaaaannnnnddd  
missus...missus Joooooooooones...we  
gotta thing going on..."*

Sarah-Beth takes a step into the bar and stops. She's followed by David who extends an arm to help guide her, but quickly pulls it back. Instead he takes step forward to lead the way.

The long, empty bar is punctuated with baskets of paper, pencils, and song binders. He plops down and pads the stool next to his. She removes her jacket to sit on.

DAVID

They have snacks here. Hungry?

SARAH-BETH

I'm alright.

DAVID

You can have some of mine.  
(to bartender) Stevie! An order of  
fries.

David looks back to Sarah-Beth who looks down at her hands.

DAVID (CONT'D)

(to Sarah-Beth) A drink?

He signals to the waiting bartender, points to a sign advertising the specials and puts up a two with his fingers.

The bartender nods.

SINGER (O.S.)

*"...we gotta be extra careful that  
we don't build our hopes up too  
high..."*

DAVID

So this is just plain awkward, huh?

She nods.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
I'm not even sure where to start.  
This is my first time meeting  
someone... doing this.

She smiles meekly meeting his eyes for a moment, then lowers her gaze again.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Obviously yours too. I hope they  
made it easy for you, the er,  
agency?

SARAH-BETH  
Yeah.

Two pints arrive. David signals his thanks to the bartender as he takes a sip and pauses for the song. The singer is really feeling it.

SINGER (O.S.)  
*"...mrs jones, mrs jones, mrs  
jones..."*

The order of fries arrives. David pushes it over to her.

DAVID  
Have one. They're great here.  
Truffle butter and all that.

SARAH-BETH  
I'm good. Not really hungry.

DAVID  
Suit yourself.

They both take a drink and she studies his hand. No wedding band. He notices her looking and reaches out to put his hand on hers. Startled, she pulls her arm back in a jerk reaction and stands.

SARAH-BETH  
I, uh, need the bathroom.

DAVID  
(off her reaction)  
No wait, that was too fast. Please  
stay, I'm up next. I'm about to  
sing. Stay?

Sarah-Beth obliges. She sits back down.

The final notes of the song end to sparse applause, most people are absorbed in their own personal dramas and performances. A moment of mic feedback as the KJ stumbles back to work from flirting with a patron.

KJ

Wonderful, wonderful. A round of applause for Alan! Ok, lets see... Davy boy is up next with a little something from Sir Elton John: Your Song. Take it away!

David reaches down the bar to a thick binder of songs and slides it over to Sarah-Beth. She raises her eyebrows. And he's off.

He takes the stage like a seasoned pro; moves the mic stand; covers one ear with his first two fingers; closes his eyes to the opening Muzak piano chords...

DAVID

*"It's a little bit funny, this feelin' inside. I'm not one of those who can easily hide. I don't have much money, but boy if I did... I'd buy a big house where we both could live"*

His brow is furrowed and his voice is trained. It's pitch perfect. Sarah-Beth takes a long sip from her beer and watches.

DAVID (CONT'D)

*"If I was a sculptor, but then again, no. Or a man who makes potions on a traveling show. I know it's not much, but it's the best I can dooooooo  
My gift is my song, and this one's for you"*

Her eyes begin fill. She grabs the binder and tries to scan for a song. Anything to distract from this moment.

DAVID (CONT'D)

*"and you can tell everybody that this your song. I hope you don't mind, I hope you don't mind that I put down in words- how wonderful life is now that you're in my world. "*

David takes a deep breath and finally opens his eyes to her gone. He looks side to side and back to the bar. The bartender motions toward the bathroom- the show must go on.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sarah-Beth pushes through a swinging door to a filthy single stall bathroom and puts both hands on the sink to steady herself as she tries to breathe. She takes long, hyperventilating breaths as she looks into the scratched, tagged mirror. Her balance fails, and she leans her back against a wall, slides down and crumples to the floor as huge sobs erupt.

The bearded KJ walks in to find Sarah-Beth with her forehead on her forearms, sobbing.

KJ

Oh honey! Baby doll-fin. You okay?

Sarah-Beth looks up revealing a wet, red, snotty face. She sniffles. The KJ helps her to her feet and hands her a roll of TP.

KJ (CONT'D)

Boy trouble?

SARAH-BETH

(blows nose and huffs a chuckle) I guess. It's my dad. My dad is singing.

KJ

Oh, ho ho! So our Davy is- hmm. Well, c'mon his singing isn't *that* bad.

SARAH-BETH

No. I just met him. This is the first time.

A pause as the KJ begins to put it together.

KJ

Oh dear. I see. Well, I can't really help with any of that. Come here and let me help you with your face though.

The KJ dabs away tears and adds a little powder to Sarah-Beth's face.

SARAH-BETH

I'm sorry. It's weird. I don't know why I'm crying. I wanted to meet him, this guy, this donor, but-

KJ

You want words for it? Oh child, let's see. Expectations? Relief? Disappointment? Pressure? All the feels? Nunna the feels?

The KJ steps away for a better look, and after a breath moves back in for another attempt at fixing Sarah-Beth's face up.

KJ (CONT'D)

It's O-K. Kinda wish I had some dirt on him to share. All I know is he comes here every week - loves him some show tunes, or some Elton, Freddie. He's a classic.

SARAH-BETH

Yeah, I just found that out.

DAVID (O.S.)

*"I hope you don't mind, I hope you don't mind that I put down in words, how wonderful life is while you're in the world..."*

KJ

Ok hunny, you look better. Have sunglasses? Never mind. Listen, That song is about to end and I'm on. You. Are. Doing. Fine.

The KJ gives her a squeeze and heads for the stage but stops mid stride and flips around before leaving.

KJ (CONT'D)

You sing?

SARAH-BETH

Uh, sometimes.

KJ

You signed up? For a song?

Sarah-Beth shakes her head. The door swings close as the KJ heads out to the final flourish of the song. Sarah-Beth takes a hard swallow and follows.

INT. THE MINT KARAOKE LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

KJ

A round of applause for Davy!

Sparse applause.

David arrives offstage to his seat. He clocks Sarah-Beth as she emerges from the bathroom and bee-lines for her pint, avoiding his eyes. She promptly shoves a handful of fries in her mouth and nods approvingly at him. He takes a swig of his beer and nods back.

DAVID

I- I didn't really think about that song. I just wanted to do something in my range, but the lyrics are really heavy (and) I'm sorry?

He searches her face. She's avoiding his eyes, furiously eating the fries.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I am though... I am really happy you're in the world. In my world.

They lock eyes and the tiniest eye smile peaks through.

KJ

Alright folks! We have a KJ's pick! That's right. Dealer's choice. Rockin' roulette. A very special duet is queued up next, any takers?

The hen party tries to nominate the horrified bride-to-be. The KJ rolls their eyes.

KJ (CONT'D)

Maybe brave first time karaoke-at-the-minters?

The arguing couple smile at each other hopefully.

KJ (CONT'D)

I'm looooooking over to the bar.

SARAH-BETH

Oh no. She means us.

DAVID

Yeah? You want to try?

Flushed red, her look of fearful apprehension says it all.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Ok, ok. C'mon lets get out of here.

Sarah-Beth beams appreciation. She scurries to the front door without looking back. David grabs her jacket and puts down cash. As he walks to the door he blows a kiss to the KJ who responds with a wink.

EXT. THE MINT KARAOKE LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

Sarah-Beth and David look at one another. Large grins erupt.

DAVID

Hmmm. Well, we'll work on that.

SARAH-BETH

No thanks. I *really* don't think it's hereditary.

They're smiling, but its an awkward moment. They're hovering. Buying time. What's next? David takes the lead as they walk toward the sushi restaurant.

DAVID

Are you in school?

SARAH-BETH

Berkeley.

DAVID

Ah, my alma mater. It was expensive, even back then. That's why I, y'know. So what are you studying?

SARAH-BETH

I'm undecided.

DAVID

That's normal at your age.  
(searching) Twen-ty... two?

SARAH-BETH

Twenty one.

DAVID

Twenty one. Hmm. Yup. Makes sense.  
Any interests, leads?

SARAH-BETH

Still figuring it out I guess.

DAVID

Amen to that.

They stop in front of the sushi restaurant. A staff member turns the sign to OPEN.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I saw you housing those fries.  
Let's get some sushi. Please tell  
me you like sushi.

SARAH-BETH

I do! I love ma-gu-ro ni-giri, it's  
a favorite.

DAVID

Alright then. Something in common.  
Maybe it runs in the family.

Without meeting his eyes she smiles.

SARAH-BETH

Well Broadway absolutely does not.

DAVID

Ha! I'm learning, i'm learning  
here, after you...

He holds the door open for Sarah-Beth and they enter  
together.

FADE OUT.