

Title card:

*New York City
1961*

The card fades out. We hold in black.

Hard cut to a singer accompanying himself on guitar, performing "I've Been All Around This World." He is Llewyn Davis. He is spotlighted, seated on the small stage of a New York club, maybe The Gaslight.

He finishes the song to applause.

Llewyn

Thank you. You've probably heard that one before, but what the hell. . .

He rises to go but dips back into the mike:

. . . If it was never new, and it never gets old, then it's a folk song.

As the applause abates something catches Llewyn's attention:

Nick Porco, the owner of the club, Greenwich Village Italian, nods Llewyn over. He is broadly smiling.

Nick

Boy you were some mess last night.

Llewyn

Yeah, sorry, Nick. I'm an asshole.

Nick

Oh I don't give a shit. I even agree about the music. Funny to hear you say it though.

Llewyn

Yeah, I'm a funny guy.

Nick

S'very true. Anyways, someone wants to see you out back.

Llewyn
Who?

Nick
Guy in a suit?

A clatter offscreen attracts Llewyn's attention:

Backlit in the smoky spotlight someone with a battered guitar is just sitting down on the stool onstage.

BACK ALLEY

The steel door of the club swings open and Llewyn emerges. A thin, angular man, older than Llewyn, in a suit a size too big is leaning against the far wall of the alley smoking a cigarette. He studies Llewyn for a beat, then, in a Kentucky accent:

Man
You a funny boy, huh?

Llewyn
What?

The man tosses the cigarette away and pushes himself off the wall.

Man
Had to open ya big mouth, funny boy?

Llewyn
Had to—what? It's what I do. For a living. Who're—

Man
What ya do? Make fun a folks up there. Folks up there sangin'?

Llewyn
I'm sorry, what? I'm—oof!

The man has just socked him in the mouth.

Man
You sit there in the audience last night yellin yer crap?

Llewyn is holding his mouth.

Llewyn
Oh for Christ's sake. You yell stuff, it's a show.

Man
Ain't a fuckin fag show!

He hits him again.

... Wasn't your show!

He hits him again and Llewyn goes down in the slush of the alleyway.

Llewyn
It's not the opera, jackass!

He kicks. Llewyn curls into a defensive ball and bellows from behind protective forearms:

Llewyn
It's a fucking baskethouse!

The man kicks again.

Man
We leavin this fuckin cesspool. You kin have it, smartass.

TRACKING

We are pushing forward at floor-level along a hallway dimly daylit from the room in the background that it opens into.

Music enters at the cut, an Italian tenor, singing opera. The music has some perspective: a record playing in another apartment, perhaps, down an airshaft.

A cat's feet enter frame and it leads the continuing push in.

The cat enters the background room, camera keeping pace. The cat veers to one side bringing into frame the bottom of a sofa. The arm of someone above frame asleep on the couch lolls down onto the floor. We can hear the sleeper's heavy breathing.

The cat leaps up, leaving frame.

Close on the sleeper: Llewyn Davis, lying on his back. At the sound of a soft impact he lets out a startled grunt and his eyes open. He blinks.

He looks down the length of his body, chin digging into chest.

His point of view: the cat stands on his chest staring back, purring with a loud rhythmic rumble.

Llewyn raises a hand to swipe the cat away.

As we hear the cat padding around the room we cut wider on Llewyn. He stirs and rises, swinging his feet out. He is in his undies.

The walls in this den are decorated with masks and totems and other naïve early-civilization art.

Llewyn sits gazing stupidly about for a beat.

He reaches for pants, plops them into his lap.

He look down at the end table just off the sofa arm. On it, some change and three subway tokens, which he swipes into an open hand and dumps into one pants pocket. Also on the table, a wallet. He thumbs open the bill compartment. It contains three dollars.

Close on him as he looks, then flips the wallet shut and shoves it into another pocket.

DOWN A HALL

We are looking down the length of a darkish hallway giving onto the brighter den.

Llewyn's head appears at the far end as he cranes to peer down the hall. He stares out for a still beat.

Llewyn

... Hello?

No answer.

Llewyn relaxes, enters the hall, walks toward us in his underwear. The cat crosses the room behind him.

LIVING ROOM

Llewyn enters and bends with an oomph to pull his guitar out of a case.

He sits on a sofa, experimenting idly with chords til he finds his way into the continuing opera. He accompanies it through a couple of chord changes, humming. He loudly clears phlegm.

KITCHEN

Eggs are cracked into a bowl.

Wider: Llewyn, still undied, whisks the eggs.

After a long beat of vigorous whisking he looks about, pulls open a drawer, doesn't see what he is after. He looks around, lost, at all the cabinetry.

HALLWAY

Llewyn walks down the hall forking scrambled egg from a plate to his mouth, idly looking at the pictures on the walls.

LIVING ROOM AGAIN

Llewyn stands, mouth agape, before a shelf of records, running a finger along the frayed cardboard spines of the record jackets. The plate of eggs, empty now, sits abandoned on the hi-fi cabinet next to him.

He lands on a record, pulls it out. He looks at the sleeve with a half-smile, slips out the LP, puts it on the hi-fi spindle.

MINUTES LATER

"Dink's Song" issues from the hi-fi, sung by a harmonizing male duo.

Dressed now, wearing a corduroy sport coat, Llewyn is hunched at a sideboard, scribbling something onto scratch paper:

Thanks for the couch. I was a sorry mess last night.

He signs:

LI.

COMMON HALLWAY

"Dink's Song" continues to play, now as score.

Llewyn is just exiting the apartment, guitar case in hand. The hallway is a small space with only one other apartment door giving on to it; there is also an elevator.

As Llewyn leaves, the cat tries to accompany him.

A grunt from Llewyn. He tries awkwardly to hook the cat with a foot as it goes by; he fails. The purring cat runs to the far end of the hallway.

Llewyn hops after it, setting down his guitar case. One step into pursuit he hears the apartment door close—solidly—behind him.

Llewyn

Shit.

He turns back to the door, tries the knob which he knows will not turn. And it does not: locked.

... Goddamnit.

The cat is winding around the legs of a small table in the hallway. Llewyn reaches for it; it eludes him; he hems it in with one waving hand and corrals it with the other.

He straightens with the cat, looks around the small space.

He goes to the neighbors' apartment door and knocks.

A beat.

... Hello?

Another knock; more silence.

He pushes the elevator call button.

While waiting, he pointlessly tries the first apartment door again.

We hear the elevator arriving, a cage door being slid. The outer door is opened by the attendant.

Llewyn grabs his guitar and steps in.

Hi. . . Could you, could I leave this cat with you?

INSIDE THE ELEVATOR

The attendant closes the doors and sets the car in motion.

Attendant

With me?

Llewyn

Yeah, I, it's the Gorfeins' cat. Just til one of them gets back.

Attendant

With me?

Llewyn

It just slipped out, I don't have the key. If you could just keep it til they get back?

Attendant

I have to run the elevator.

Llewyn

That's not a problem, is it? It's the Gorfeins'.

Attendant

No no. I have to run the elevator.

ADDRESS BOOK

It is being held open: a well-worn address book with sloppy entries faded to different degrees, some made in pencil, some in ink.

We hear ringing filtered through a phone line.

Wider shows Llewyn standing in a phone booth with the handset wedged between shoulder and ear and one hand holding the address book and the other hugging the cat to his chest.

City traffic rumbles through slush in the background, and people walk by in winter wear all heavier than Llewyn's corduroy coat.

The ringing is cut off by a female voice:

Voice

Sociology.

Llewyn

Professor Gorfein, please.

Voice

He's in a lecture, could I take a message?

Llewyn

Yeah, could you tell him, don't worry, Llewyn has the cat.

Voice

Llewyn is. . . the cat.

Llewyn

Llewyn has the cat. I'm Llewyn. I have his cat.

STREET

"Dink's Song," dipped for the preceding dialog, comes back full for this credit sequence.

An Upper West Side sidewalk subway entrance. The sign is for the A, C, E lines. Llewyn descends, guitar case in one hand, cat hugged to his chest.

TURNSTYLE

Guitar hoisted over it.

SUBWAY CAR

Llewyn in the middling-crowded train, seated, body jiggling with the motion of the car. He looks:

A strap-hanging businessman in overcoat and narrow-brimmed fedora holds a folded-back newspaper, not reading it. He is staring at lightly dressed, cat-hugging Llewyn.

Back to Llewyn. An eye shift.

Two black kids, probably on their way to school, also staring at him.

Back to Llewyn. The cat jumps free.

Llewyn leaps up and crouch-hustles after it. People make way for cat and pursuing man, giving looks.

WEST 4th STREET

Another sidewalk subway entrance. Llewyn emerges, the recovered cat once again held to his chest.

VILLAGE STREET

Llewyn walks, guitar in hand, cat to chest. As the credits end he turns into a tenement building halfway up the street.

TENEMENT FOYER

Llewyn scans the tenant list and presses the buzzer for BERKEY 6C. No answer. He presses the button for SUPER 1C.

INSIDE

Llewyn is buzzed in. An older Italian man in a wifebeater and blue work pants cinched high on his midriff cracks open a door at the end of the hall.

Llewyn

Hey Nunzio.

Nunzio

Yeah, they ain't home though.

Llewyn

It's okay, I know. Can I use the fire escape?

AIRSHAFT

As Llewyn tops the fire escape stairs on the sixth floor. He sets the cat down on the metal-slat landing to free a hand and slide up an apartment window. As he does so the cat makes to bolt. Llewyn corrals it, hugs it while he finishes getting the window up, and eases inside.

INSIDE THE BERKEY APARTMENT

Before setting the cat down Llewyn closes the window behind him, then goes to the window next to it, which is cracked open, and closes that.

He sets down the cat.

A MINUTE LATER

Llewyn has the door to the refrigerator open and is angling his head to look inside.

SAUCER SET ON FLOOR

Llewyn's hand enters to pour in some milk. The cat scurries in to lap at the milk. We hear the refrigerator door being opened and closed, off, and then receding footsteps followed by the heavy apartment door being opened and slammed shut.

OUTER OFFICE

Small, seedy. Musician photos on the wall suggest the business is music-related. Each posing musician has an arm around the same small stout middle-aged man. Some of the pictures are autographed, with sentiments to "Mel."

A pebbled-glass door standing ajar shows an inner office where the short middle-aged Mel of the pictures sits behind a desk. His chin rests squarely on the desktop. His shoulders are slumped down behind the desk.

We see effort in his body as we hear something being dragged along the floor.

Mel relaxes and rolls his castored chair back. He stoops out of the chair and rises hoisting a filebox he has just pulled from under the desk. He drops it on the desktop and starts leafing through.

Llewyn is entering.

Llewyn
How we doin'?

Mel
We're doin' great!

Llewyn
Really? New record's doing well?

Mel is instantly sad:

Mel
Oh—how we doin'. Not so hot, I gotta be honest.
(projects) Ginny, where's Cincinatti?

Her voice projects, like his, on the back and forth:

Ginny's Voice
... What?

Mel
Cincinatti. It's not in here.

Ginny's Voice
It should be in there.

Mel
It's not in here. I'm tellin' ya.

Ginny's Voice
... Cincinatti?

Mel is still rummaging.

Mel

... Yeah.

Ginny's Voice

... I got it.

Mel

What.

Ginny's Voice

I got it.

Mel

Is it...

Ginny's Voice

What.

Mel

You got Cincinatti?

Ginny's Voice

Yeah. You want it?

Mel

... Could I have it?

Ginny's Voice

Should I bring it in?

Mel

Yeah.

Llewyn tries to reclaim the floor:

Llewyn

Do you owe me anything? You have to owe me something.

Mel

(sad shake of head)

I wish.

Ginny enters with a file that Mel examines. She leaves.

. . . People need time, you know. Buy you as a solo act. Even know you're a solo act. . . (*shaking his head at the file*)
Cincinatti is not good.

Ginny's Voice

That's it, right?

Mel
(*sad*)

Yeah, this is it. God help me.

Llewyn

Nobody knew us when we were a duo. It's not like me and Mike were ever a big act. It's not a big reeducation. For the public. Mel. Mel.

Mel is roused from the file:

Mel

Yeah. Yeah. How ya doin'?

Llewyn

Mel, there was no advance on my solo record, there's gotta be some royalty. Fucking christ's sake, it's cold out I don't even have a winter coat.

Mel

Jesus Christ! Ya kiddin me!

He drops the file, shocked.

He rounds the desk and leaves the office.

Llewyn looks around, puzzled.

Through the open door we see a wedge of the outer office. There is a coat rack. Mel's hand enters to pluck a coat from it.

The hand disappears and after a moment Mel reenters with the coat.

Mel

Take this, kid.

Llewyn

Mel—no.

Mel

I insist! I insist!

Llewyn

I don't want your fuckin coat! What'll you wear?

Mel

Kid—I'll get by.

Llewyn

It won't even fit me! This is bullshit, Mel! This is just a big fat fucking bluff!

Mel

BLUFF! Kid, what, what do you—Bluff! I offer you this!? Get the fuck out of my office!

Llewyn

All right. Thanks for the coat.

Mel

What? All right, wait, shit—Lemme give ya forty dollahs.

BUILDING DIRECTORY

A finger enters to buzz BERKEY.

The door buzzes and clicks off its latch.

Llewyn pushes through it.

FIRST FLOOR

Nunzio is leaning out of his apartment door.

Nunzio

They home.

Llewyn

Yeah.

He starts up the stairs.

HIGH LOOKING DOWN

We hear Llewyn panting as we see his hand sliding up the bannister.

APARTMENT DOOR

It is swung open by Jean, a young woman.

Jean

Explain the cat.

Beyond him, in the apartment's main room, a young man in camo fatigues and boots sits on a rocker, stroking the cat now in his lap. The young man's buzz cut shows off a high forehead.

Llewyn

It's the Gorfains'. Sorry. I crashed there last night—

Young Man

What's its name?

Llewyn

I don't know. He snuck out the door when—

Jean

Do you think you're staying here tonight?

Llewyn

Hoping to. Jim around?

Young Man

It's a lovely cat.

Jean

Jim's not here. We told Troy he could crash here.

Young Man

Troy Nelson. How are you?

Llewyn

Yeah, hey. Llewyn Davis.

Troy

Oh—hello! I've heard your music—and heard many nice things about you. From Jim and Jean, and from others.

Llewyn

You have not heard one nice thing about me from Jean. Ever. Have you, Troy.

Jean

You tell the Gorfeins' you'll take care of their cat, and then bring him here for us to take care of?

Troy

I've heard nice things from Jim and Jean. And others.

Llewyn

I didn't—it just happened—

Troy

It's a peaceful cat. Very contented.

Llewyn

So I can't stay here tonight.

Jean

Look. We told Troy he could stay. We don't keep the couch free on the chance you'll show up.

Troy

If this is awkward, I could hitch back to Fort Dix, after I perform tonight.

Jean

Don't be silly. We offered you the couch.

Llewyn

You're giggling somewhere?

Jean

Troy is playing at the Commons tonight. We're meeting Jim there.

Troy

Well, I could sleep on the floor, here. Llewyn could have the couch. I'm certainly not a man of comforts. Alternately—I could hitch back to Fort Dix after the show.

Jean scribbles furiously on a page of a spiral notebook. As she rips the page out and hands it to Llewyn:

Jean

Llewyn can sleep on the floor. With his cat.

Llewyn

It's the Gorfeins' cat.

He looks at the paper:

I'm pregnant.

He looks up at Jean.

... What the fuck!

Troy

Well, I don't want to put anyone out.

THE COMMONS

Onstage, now wearing slacks and sweater, Troy performs "The Last Thing on my Mind."

In the audience, Llewyn sits near Jean, one empty seat between, both of them gazing up at the performance.

Hands enter from behind Llewyn to grab his shoulders and squeeze. The person—a young man—drops into the empty seat.

Jim

Hey Llewyn! Good to see you, man!

Llewyn

Hey.

Llewyn smiles and is immediately uncertain whether to look as Jim leans away to give Jean a kiss.

Jim looks up at the performance.

At length, sotto voce, eyes still directed up at the stage:

Llewyn
... What do you think?

Jim
(also looking up)
What.

Llewyn
Him. Troy.

Jim shakes his head admiringly.

Jim
Wonderful performer.

Llewyn
Is he?

Jim
Wonderful.

Llewyn
Does he have... higher function?

Voice
Sshh!

Llewyn looks around for the shusher, then leans in closer to Jim.

Llewyn
Look Jim, I didn't want to mention this in front of Jean,
you know how she gets.

Jim
What do you mean?

Llewyn

You know, just—I need a little money. I can pay you back soon. That, and the last loan. There's a girl I know who's in trouble. Needs to get fixed.

Jim

Not again.

The song is ending. Healthy applause; Llewyn leans in closer.

Llewyn

Different girl. Don't tell Jean.

Jim

I can't get it without Jean knowing. It's okay, she'll be okay with it.

Llewyn

No no no, that's okay, I, uh, I can find it somewhere else.

Onstage:

Troy

Thank you very much. Thank you. There's someone special in the audience tonight, who'll maybe get up and help me out here if you give a round of applause. . .

Llewyn rolls his eyes.

Llewyn

I don't have my guitar.

Troy

I know that you folks know'm and love'm, ladies and gentlemen—Jim and Jean!

Llewyn

Uh. Yeah.

He applauds with the crowd as Jim and Jean take the stage.

Three guitars and three voices: they perform "Early Morning Rain."

Jean swivels at the mike she shares with Jim, giving the crowd eye contact. When her look crosses Llewyn it darkens.

He gives her a what-did-I-do.

Her look moves on.

Nick Porco plops himself into the empty chair next to Llewyn.

Nick
Boy they're not bad.

Llewyn
Uh-huh.

Staring beat. Then:

Nick
That Jean, I'd like to fuck her.

Llewyn
. . . Yeah. I guess.

APARTMENT

Night. Light snoring.

The cat walks past a large shape on the floor—Troy Nelson—and leaps up out of frame.

Llewyn's light snoring stops in a grunt of surprise as the cat lands on his chest.

He and the purring cat look at each other.

MORNING

The clinking of a spoon.

Llewyn stirs, looks around.

Troy Nelson sits in a low rocker, knees sticking up, once again in his fatigues and boots, spooning cereal from a bowl.

Troy
Sorry. Early. Tried not to wake anyone.

Llewyn
S'okay.

Troy
Morning mess.

Llewyn
Uh-huh.

Another clink; the crunch of corn flakes between teeth.

And another.

Troy sets his spoon down and looks at the bowl for a beat. Then he raises it with both hands and drains the milk from it. He clears his throat:

Troy
Well. That was very good.

Llewyn, resting on his side, props his head on a fist and stares.

Llewyn
Well. . . What's next?

Troy
Whaddy mean?

Llewyn
Do you. . . plug yourself in somewhere?

Troy blinks at him.

Troy
No.

His look holds for a beat, then wanders around the apartment. When it reaches Llewyn again he sighs, then slaps his belly.

Well. Report for duty. Back to Fort Dix.

Llewyn
They making you a killing machine?

Troy

Oh, no—heh-heh! No, it's probably different from what you imagine. There's the discipline, which is what you're referring to. I actually like that. The weaponry is—well, it's part of the job.

Llewyn

Uh-huh.

He gets up, starts pushing his few effects into a bag.

Troy

Armaments are not my thing. I don't even approve of war toys.

Llewyn

Is it a career?

Troy

No, no. I get out in a few months. Bud Grossman has expressed interest in representing me.

This gets Llewyn's attention.

Llewyn

Bud Grossman. What's he like?

Troy

Mr. Grossman is a wonderful man. He's been very supportive. I played at his club in Chicago on my last furlough, right after I got back from Germany.

Llewyn swings his feet out and puts his pants on.

Llewyn

You meet Elvis?

Troy

No. Everyone asks that. I did not meet Private Presley.

He has finished packing. Llewyn puts a cigarette in his mouth and pats himself down for matches.

Llewyn

So you played at the Gate of Horn.

Troy

Yes. Mr. Grossman liked what he saw, I guess. He thinks I can have a career.

Llewyn

Uh-huh.

He pushes the window open a foot and reclines on the couch head-towards-window, to smoke.

Troy pauses with his kit at the door. Near the bedroom, he keeps his voice low:

... Thank Jim and Jean for me. Don't want to wake them.

Llewyn

Will do.

Troy

Good meeting you.

Llewyn

You too.

Troy goes through the door and eases it shut behind him.

Llewyn draws on the cigarette, angles the exhale towards the window, then looks back into the room.

The cat walks toward him, tail up, purring.

Llewyn

What's your name, again?

The cat leaps onto the sill and is out the window.

... Fuck!

He lunges for it, sticking an arm through the window over the fire escape—but is not even close.

He sticks his head out the window.

His point-of-view down: the cat pat-pat-pats away down the fire escape toward the alley below, each step on the metal stairs giving the faintest *clung*.

Llewyn

Fuck!

He draws his head back in, banging the back of it on the window sash, and bolts for the apartment door and through it, letting it close behind him with a SLAM.

STAIRWAY

He passes a surprised Troy Nelson one flight down.

Llewyn

Cat!

EXTERIOR

Llewyn bangs out the front door and sprints several feet to the alley mouth and into the alley.

No cat in sight.

Llewyn walks down the alley in his T-shirt, hugging himself against the cold, looking from side to side.

Llewyn

Cat. . . kitty. . . kitty. . . Fuck.

Nothing moving anywhere.

. . . Fuck.

Llewyn retraces his steps back up the alley. He emerges and looks one way down the street.

Early-morning empty. A couple of cars cross a block away.

He looks the other way.

Just as empty, except for one receding figure, already small: a camo-clad soldier with a guitar case in hand and a duffel bag on his shoulder.

APARTMENT

Jean, in a nightie, opens the door to Llewyn.

Jean

(hissing)

Thanks for keeping quiet, asshole.

Llewyn

I'm freezing! Can we talk?

Jean

Not here! Fuck you!

Llewyn

Well—I'm sorry, which? Out, or fuck you? Let's go out.
Can I borrow Jim's coat?

Jean

Fuck you!

STREET

They walk along Washington Square North, Llewyn in the borrowed coat.

Jean

I don't know!

Llewyn

You don't know if it's mine.

Jean

No! How would I know?

Llewyn

So it could be Jim's.

Jean

Yes! Asshole!

Llewyn

But you don't want it either way. To be clear.

Jean

To be clear, asshole, you fucking asshole, I want very much to have it if it's Jim's. That's what I want. But since I don't know, you not only fucked things up by fucking me and maybe making me pregnant, but even if it's not yours, I can't know that, so I have to get rid of what might be a perfectly fine baby. A baby I want. Because everything you touch turns to shit. Like King Midas's idiot brother.

Llewyn

Well. Okay. I see.

Jean

You know a doctor, right?

Llewyn

Yes.

Jean

From when—whatever—Diane.

Llewyn

Yes.

Jean

And you'll pay for it.

Llewyn

Yes.

Jean

Don't tell Jim. Obviously.

A silent beat of walking.

... I should have had you wear double condoms. Well—we shouldn't have done it in the first place. But if you ever do it again, which as a favor to women everywhere you should not, but if you do, you should be wearing condom on condom. And then wrap it in electrical tape. You should just walk around always, inside a great big condom. Because you are shit.

Llewyn

Okay.

Jean

You should not be in contact with any living thing. Being
shit.

Walking beat.

Llewyn

... You know the expression, It takes two to tango—

Jean

Oh, fuck you.

Walking beat.

Llewyn

I could say, we should talk about this when you're less
angry, but that would be... that would be... When would
that be—

Jean

Fuck you.

They walk for a beat.

... I miss Mike.

Llewyn

Could I ask you for a favor?

Jean

You're joking.

Llewyn

Not for me, it's for the Gorfains. Their cat got out—could
you leave the fire escape window open?

She stares at him.

Jean

It's winter.

Llewyn

Just enough for the cat? To squeeze back in? It could come back.

Jean

Come back? To our apartment? It was there like six hours! Why would it come back there?

For the first time in the conversation Llewyn is exercised.

Llewyn

I don't know, I'm not a fucking cat! Think about it, I lost their fucking cat! I feel bad about it!

Jean

That's what you feel bad about?

SUBWAY CAR

Train rumble bangs in at the cut. We are close on Llewyn, body joggling with the motion of the train. The window behind his head is, in the black of the train tunnel, a dull mirror of the car.

Long hold.

The window pops into brightness as the train emerges onto a bridge-approach, giving us a brief view down the East River.

QUEENS STREET

Llewyn is a small figure receding down a quiet residential street.

STOOP

Llewyn sits on a stoop reading a newspaper, elbows on knees.

At a sound, he looks up.

A woman a little older than him is coming up the walk with a bag of groceries. She is surprised to see him.

Woman
Hello. Where's ya coat?

Llewyn stands, folding the newspaper.

Llewyn
Not that cold.

Woman
Y'out a ya mind?

KITCHEN

Llewyn sits at the table as the woman puts away groceries.

Woman
So how's the music goin'?

Llewyn
Oh, pretty good. Pretty good.

Woman
Oh good. So you don't need to borrow money.

A beat as she continues to put things away.

Llewyn
Actually, I was wondering. . .

Woman
Uh-huh?

Llewyn
Is it sold?

Woman
The house?

Llewyn
Yeah.

Woman

Yeah, uh-huh. I mean it's in escrow.

Llewyn

For what?

Woman

Twenty-two five, but—why? It's not our house.

Llewyn

Not our house?

Woman

Well, yeah—mom and dad's house. Llewyn, it goes to his upkeep.

Llewyn

Right.

Woman

We don't get any.

Beat.

... Good thing ya music's goin good.

Another beat.

... I'm sorry.

Llewyn

Yeah, well. What the fuck.

Woman

Llewyn.

Llewyn

What.

Woman

The language.

Llewyn

Oh—yeah. Sorry.

Woman
I am not one a ya Greenwich Village friends.

Llewyn
Okay, yeah.

She eyes him for a beat.

Woman
Still got ya seaman's papers?

Llewyn
Yeah. Why?

Woman
If the music's not. . .

Llewyn
What—quit?! Merchant marine again? Just. . . exist?

She laughs.

Woman
“Exist”? That's what we do outside of show business? It's not so bad, existing.

Llewyn
Like Dad?

Woman
Llewyn!

Llewyn
What.

Woman
You say that about your own fatha!

Llewyn
What.

Woman
That he exists!

Llewyn
I didn't say—you said it! I—forget it.

Woman
That he "exists"! Like that?!

Llewyn
Yeah yeah. Sorry.

Woman
. . . Seen him?

Llewyn
Yeah. What? Should I?

Woman
You tell me. He's ya fatha.

Llewyn
Yeah, right. He sure is.

Woman
(rising)
I got—wait—I got—you got a minute?

Llewyn
Well they, they want me back, rehearsals for the Sullivan show. And I got some autographs to sign. Champagne reception. . .

Woman
(leaving)
Don't go way.

He looks idly around.

Working-class kitchen. Oilcloth on the table. Some seafaring knickknacks.

Projected, from off:

Woman
I cleaned it out, the house. There was some stuff. I put ya stuff in a box. . .

She reenters with an open box.

... What I thought ya might want.

She sets it on the table in front of him. He looks with no particular interest, flips through a couple of things, shrugs.

Llewyn

I don't know, Joy, just, what would I... just stick it out at the curb.

Woman

Llewyn! Are you kiddin? Lookit this. You know what this is?

She is pulling out an EP-sized record in a plain white sleeve.

... This is when you recorded "Ladies of Spain" for Mom and Dad!

He looks at her, shrugs a so-what.

... You're whateva, you're like eight years old! It's so cute!

Llewyn

Well, see, Joy, in the entertainment business you're never supposed to let your practice shit out. Ruins the mystique.

She is disappointed that he won't share her enthusiasm.

Joy

I'm sorry, I don't know a lot about the entertainment business.

Llewyn

Yeah. Well. Don't be sorry.

SUBWAY PLATFORM

A Queens open-air station. Llewyn is on a pay phone.

Llewyn

No no no, I'll bring the cat up, it's fine, I just, not today as it turns out, I can't bring her today—

Voice

He.

Llewyn

—He. He's hanging out at Jim and Jean's, he likes it there, he's fine, believe me.

Voice

I'll run down and pick him up, I don't want to—

Llewyn

No no no, they're never home, anyway I couldn't ask you to do that, all the way down to the Village, I'll bring her up tomorrow. Him.

Voice

Okay. Okay. And remember to call Jim. He said it was urgent.

Llewyn

Yeah, I doubt if it's urgent but yeah, I'll call him, thanks.

Voice

No, he said it's urgent. A session this afternoon at RCA, somebody got sick, dropped out—he thought you'd like the work—

Llewyn projects over the roar of an approaching train which, from our perspective, buries the voice at the other end.

Llewyn

What? WHAT? Do I need my guitar? . . . DID HE SAY DO I NEED MY GUITAR? . . . NO?—

The approaching train roars into frame.

SWANK DOUBLE-DOORS

The RCA logo adorns the large reception desk inside.

Llewyn bangs through the doors.

INSIDE

He goes up to the receptionist:

Llewyn
I'm here for Mr. Cromartie's session? Llewyn Davis?

Receptionist
Have a seat, I'll let him know you're here.

SEATING AREA

Minutes later.

Llewyn sits waiting, on furniture more expensive than he is used to.

Very, very quiet.

He looks around.

Gold records on the wall, tastefully framed.

Black-and white photographs, nicely lit, of performers, in the studio. Different genres are represented—Dizzy Gillespie, Johnny Matthis, a young Leonard Bernstein.

The muted click of a door latch draws Llewyn's attention.

Ambling down the hall, hands dug into pockets, is a distinguished, Waspy gentleman in tweeds. Llewyn jumps to his feet.

Cromartie
Llewyn?

Llewyn
Mr. Cromartie, an honor to meet you.

Cromartie
Where's your guitar?

STUDIO

A nice but not especially large studio. Jim is walking Llewyn in, beaming, arm around his shoulder.

Jim
You'll play a Gibson, right?

Llewyn
Yours? Sure. You're playing—

Jim
The D-15. You know Al?

Another young man, with guitar, is at one of the three stools ranged around a microphone.

Llewyn
Hey man.

Voice through the talk-back:

Voice
Read a chart, Llewyn?

It is Cromartie who, in the control room, stands behind the board.

Llewyn
I . . . I . . . can stare at a chart and fake it, sir.

Mutely, behind the glass, Cromartie laughs. We get the tail of the laugh as he punches in:

Cromartie
Jim and Al will teach it to you. Take your time. We're here to have fun.

Llewyn
Okay. *(to Jim)* So . . . we're the, the what? The John Glenn Singers?

He looks up.

His point-of-view: a high ceiling. Hanging sound reflectors of blond wood.

Cromartie's Voice

It's not the most serious music we've recorded here.

Jim

(explanatory)

It's a thing.

MANY MINUTES LATER

The three men are setting themselves at the microphone.

Llewyn

So I'm going down on "capsule," I'm doing this...

He demonstrates on guitar.

Al

Yeah, I'm taking the high...

They run through a couple of phrases, voice and guitar, not full volume.

Llewyn

Okay. Okay. *(low)* I'm happy for the gig, but... who wrote this?

Jim looks uncomfortable.

Jim

I did.

Cromartie

(through talk back)

Okay?

Some last minute arranging of weight on stools. Throat clears.

Jim

So, okay.

Cromartie

Good?

Al

Okay.

Cromartie

One second.

Waiting beat.

Muted back-and-forth in the control room between Cromartie and the engineer. Cromartie laughs silently. Engineer, smiling, nods. Engineer checks something. Cromartie gets serious, leans forward for the talk-back button:

Cromartie

Okay. . . "Please Mr. Kennedy" take one. Sound of a blast-off and. . . we're rolling.

Al and Llewyn look to Jim who nods in time, whispering a count-off:

Jim

. . . two three four. . .

And they perform the song.

CORNER OF THE STUDIO

Some time later.

Llewyn sits on a folding chair, one of several along one wall, near a table on which sit a coffee percolator and some cups and other paraphernalia. Mike stands are ranged nearby.

Jim and Al are shrugging into coats. Another man, in shirtleeves and tie, stands over Llewyn who has a pen and a clipboard holding papers. As he squints at the top sheet, Llewyn addresses Jim:

Llewyn

No, thank you, I appreciate it. I needed this. As you know.

Jim

Don't thank me, thank Richie Sheridan. Puked his way out of the John Glenn Singers.

Llewyn

Tough ruck. We'll be touring, right?

Al laughs.

Al

Touring my ass.

Llewyn

I'll get my vaccinations. *(to shirtsleeved man as he continues to squint at papers)* Where?

Man

You are AF of M right?

Llewyn

Yeah.

Man

Sign there and there. You don't have a label?

Llewyn

I do—Legacy.

Man

You're exclusive to Mel? I'll need a permission. He'll give you one.

Llewyn

But it'll take, shit. . . I need the money now.

The man shrugs.

Man

You wanna just be an independent contractor, accounting'll give you a check today. Bill us for services, \$200. It's more than the session fee 'cause you don't get royalties.

Llewyn

Okay. And I can cash it?

Man

Sure, right around the corner. But you don't go on the session sheet then.

Llewyn

That's fine. That's okay. . .

As he signs:

. . . Where do you live, Al?

Downing Street. Al

Nice place? Llewyn

Dump. Al

Uh-huh. Got a couch? Llewyn

LEGACY RECORDS

The seedy office where earlier we met Mel Novikoff.

We hear the clack of a typewriter as we push in. Now, though, the inside doorway to Mel's office stands ajar, exposing desk and empty chair and late sun.

Llewyn looks over at Ginny, typing something.

Where's Mel? Llewyn

Ginny, eyes on her work, replies absently while still typing:

Mel, is at. . . a funeral. Ginny

Boy, that man goes to a lot of funerals. Llewyn

He likes people. Ginny

Fewer and fewer! Llewyn

She continues typing.

Ginny

This is family. His nephew Georgie is engaged to a girl whose mother just passed.

Llewyn

I . . . don't know if that's family.

Ginny's eyes remain on her work.

Ginny

He likes funerals, I don't know what to tell you.

Llewyn

I forgot to pick up my mail yesterday. So pissed at Mel.

Ginny

Ya didn't forget to pick up your mail.

Llewyn

Yes I did.

Ginny

You don't have any mail.

Llewyn

Oh. *(beat)* Shit. Nothing? *(she types on; he is hesitant)* . . . I didn't get anything from Bud Grossman? In Chicago?

Ginny

You were supposed to get something from Bud Grossman?

Llewyn

I had Mel send him my solo record. When it came out. Whenever, more than a month ago.

Ginny

Oh!

She stops typing and rises, giving Llewyn momentary hope.

. . . No, you didn't get anything, but we were making space

in the stock room and dumped the rest of the old record. All the remainduhs. Yours and Mikey's. . .

She hoists a box from behind the counter.

. . . Mel set one box aside, thought you might want to keep some copies.

Llewyn pulls a copy from the box, shaking his head, and looks at the cover.

The artists are Timlin and Davis, Llewyn himself recognizable though clean-shaven, looking only a little younger, on a stool with a guitar, mouth frozen mid-song. Standing behind him is, presumably, Mike Timlin, transported by the music, joyously vocalizing to the heavens with his body tensed and his hands turned up. The name of the record is, "If We Had Wings!"

Llewyn
Whuh. . . I. . . (*shrugs*) What'm I gonna do with 'em?

Ginny resumes typing.

Ginny
Should I throw 'em out?

HALLWAY

The dingy hallway of the office's building. "Dink's Song" plays.

Llewyn has the box at the elevator and presses it with his body against the wall in order to free one hand and hit the call button.

STREETS

The song continues to play as Llewyn walks down slushy Village streets, sweating, the box held awkwardly out before his stomach.

VESTIBULE

The box is body-pressed against the vestibule wall and Llewyn's freed hand goes to the directory. It finds CODY, 6A, and buzzes.

STAIRWELL

We are looking down six flights' worth of stairwell. We catch glimpses of Llewyn ascending, midway up, some of his shoulder and his arm pressing box to stomach swinging into view with each laborious footfall.

SIXTH-FLOOR HALLWAY

A spent Llewyn drops the box to the floor and leans against the door jamb of 6A and knocks, panting.

We jump in as Al, from the recording session, opens the door.

Al

Good, here's the key. I'm running out to Jersey to pick up my mother's car.

Llewyn

(heavy panting)

Okay.

INSIDE THE APARTMENT

Llewyn looks around the small studio, hands on hips.

He sits and bounces experimentally on the couch: how's this one? He swings his legs up and lies back to see if it affords full extension. Pretty close.

He rises, and bends down to shove his record box under Al's couch. It won't go under all the way; something is blocking.

Llewyn peeks, reaches under, pulls out an uncovered box similar to his, packed with LP's.

He pulls one out showing that the box contains copies of one record. Its title: Another Point of View. The artist: Al Cody. The cover photograph of Al, whom we've only seen happy, has him looking rather pensive.

Llewyn gazes at the album.

VESTIBULE

Llewyn rings BERKEY 6C.

A beat.

Jean's Voice
Yeah?

Llewyn
It's me. Llewyn.

Jean's Voice
Yeah?

Llewyn
Can I come up?

Jean's Voice
No.

Llewyn
Well—okay. Well. Can I have my stuff?

A beat.

Jean
... I'll bring it down. I'll meet you at the Reggio.

CAFÉ REGGIO

Jean sits into close shot. We are in a dark Italian coffee shop.

Jean
Who won the lottery tonight?

Llewyn
Huh? Oh. I'm staying at Al Cody's. So. When do you want to do this thing?

Jean
The abortion? The sooner the better. Tomorrow if I can. Jim won't be around, I won't have to make up a story

where I'm going.

Llewyn

Okay, I'll see if the guy can do it then.

Jean

The guy? I hope he's a doctor.

Llewyn

Yeah yeah, he's a doctor.

Jean

You got the money?

Llewyn

Yeah, I got the money—don't worry.

Jean

With you I worry.

Llewyn

Well you shouldn't.

Jean

Yes I should. God knows you never do. You just let other people. Like your method of birth control.

Llewyn

Please don't start with the double-condoms again.

Jean

Do you ever think about the future at all?

Llewyn

The future? You mean like, flying cars? Hotels on the moon? Tang?

Jean

And this is why you're fucked.

Llewyn

No, it's why you're fucked. Trying to blueprint a future. Move to the suburbs. With Jim. Have kids.

Jean

That's bad?

Llewyn

If that's what music is, for you, a way to get to that place, then yes—it's a little careerist. A little square. And a little sad.

Jean

I'm sad! You're the one who's not getting anywhere! You don't even want to get anywhere! Me and Jim try!

Llewyn gropes:

Llewyn

I do wanna. . . I wanna—

Jean

We try! You sleep on the couch!

Llewyn

Bad thing to throw in my face, man!

Jean

You don't wanna go anywhere, and that's why all the same shit is going to keep happening to you. Because you want it to.

Llewyn

Is that why.

Jean

And also because—you're an asshole! Let's not forget that! Who sleeps with other people's women!

Llewyn

Well you're being pretty kind to yourself now, aren't you!

Jean

Who's couch are you on tonight?

Llewyn

I told you, Al Cody's.

He is tensing, rising, looking out the window.

... You don't listen, you just, spout vitriol. . .

Jean looks at him, puzzled by the trance he has entered. His eyes widen further.

... Keep an eye on my shit!

He bolts.

OUTSIDE

Llewyn pounds down the sidewalk, missing most—but bumping some—of the pedestrians.

Llewyn

HEY!

A couple of people glance around; none of them are his focus. He pounds along.

... HEY!

As he nears the object of his pursuit his eyeline drops.

... Hey! Hey! Hey!

He is hastily crouch-walking now and he reaches forward and scoops—

The Gorfeins' cat, which twists and struggles, but only a little, as Llewyn tucks him against his chest.

BACK IN THE COFFEESHOP

Llewyn enters with the cat.

Llewyn

God damn. I am one lucky bastard. Thank you for suggesting this place.

He glances furtively around, then takes his coffee cup off its saucer and pours cream into it from the silver creamer. He sets the cat on the table to feed.

... Thing can't have eaten since yesterday, it's a damn housecat.

Jean watches the cat lap milk. Llewyn pets it and it pushes back against his hand, purring as it continues to lap milk.

... Do you know his name? I can't remember its name.

Jean

I don't know its name. I barely know the Gorfeins.

Llewyn

Jesus. Thank God. Good kitty. Well—where were we?

All the acrimony is spent. The exchange is matter-of-fact:

Jean

You were calling me a careerist. And I was calling you a loser.

Llewyn

Right. Well. Those are your categories.

Jean

No—those are your categories.

Llewyn

Ya know, in my experience the world is divided into two kinds of people: Those who divide the world into two categories—

Jean

—and losers?

FOLLOWING THE CAT

We follow at floor level as the cat pads through Al Cody's apartment. When it reaches a table leg it leaps up out of frame.

We cut up as it lands on the table. It pads onto a pile of mail, starting to disarrange it, until Llewyn hooks its belly with one hand and dumps it back on the floor.

Llewyn

Not your house.

He nudges the mail back into a pile as the apartment door opens and Al enters, shucking his coat. Llewyn's look has caught on the mail.

Llewyn
Who's Arthur Milgram?

Al
That's me. Gonna change it legally. At some point.
What's up with the cat?

Llewyn
It's not staying, I'm bringing him back to—long story.
Taking him home to the Gorfeins' tonight.

Al
Okay. No, that's fine. But, uh. . . Llewyn, tonight and
tomorrow is good here, but then my girlfriend's coming
down from Boston.

Llewyn
Okay okay, thanks for the two days.

Al
You don't want to go to Chicago do you?

Llewyn
Why the fuck would I want to go to Chicago.

Al
Right.

Llewyn
Why do you ask?

Al
I'm loaning my mother's car to a friend who does stuff for
Roland Turner. You know Roland Turner? (*Llewyn
shrugs ignorance*) Old timer. Jazz guy. He won't fly.
They're driving out to Chicago for a gig, looking for
someone to help pay for gas.

Llewyn
No reason for me to go to Chicago. But—thanks—I'll find

something.

DOOR OPENING

A door opens and a uniformed nurse emerges from an inner office and steps into the foreground.

Nurse

Mr. Davis?

The reverse shows Llewyn incongruously sitting among pregnant women. He rises.

INNER OFFICE

Llewyn is now seated across a desk from the doctor, Gary Ruvkun.

Llewyn is shaking his head.

Llewyn

No no, she won't want me with her.

Gary

Okay, well, she should have a friend though, someone who can help her home.

Llewyn

Okay, I'll tell her.

Gary

It'll have to be on a Saturday, I can do it this Saturday.

Llewyn

Okay. I'll pay you now since I won't see you, cash I, uh—

He is reaching into a pocket.

Gary

No no! No charge.

Llewyn is flummoxed.

Llewyn
... What?

Gary
You know, from last time.

Llewyn
... From last time? You mean Diane?

Gary
Yeah. I didn't have a number, or an address for you.
Where do you live, anyway?

Llewyn
Wait, what?

Gary
I didn't have a—

Llewyn
Why is there no charge this time?

Gary
Huh?

Llewyn
Why—

Gary
Well, you know.

Awkward beat.

Llewyn
Well—no, I don't know, man. You working pro-bono
now?

Gary
Well, no, since it didn't happen last time.

Longer beat.

Llewyn
What didn't happen.

Gary blinks.

Gary

Diane didn't tell you? (*responds to Llewyn's look*) Diane did not terminate the pregnancy. She came in to tell me she'd decided to... go to... term. (*another beat*) She didn't tell you?

Llewyn

Uh... no.

Gary

She... jeez. She asked me to refer her to a doctor in Cleveland.

Llewyn

In Cleveland...

Gary

To deliver the, uh...

Llewyn

The—the... Uh-huh. (*a beat*) I knew she was going to Cleveland. She's from Cleveland.

Gary

Yes. I'm sorry, I thought—

Llewyn

Her parents are in Cleveland.

Gary

Uh huh.

Llewyn

... The kid'd be about two now?

Gary

Yeah, I guess... Yes... I'm sorry. I didn't know how to get the money back to you. I never see you at the hoots anymore.

SUBWAY CAR

Llewyn sits in the middling-crowded car, cat hugged to his chest, staring vacantly down, mentally chewing, body moving with the motion of the car. At length he shrugs away his thought, whatever it was, and his look drifts.

It catches on something.

A straphanging businessman is looking at him. Is it the same one he saw going downtown from the Gorfeins'?

INSIDE AN ELEVATOR

The same operator is holding the throttle down in the Gorfeins' elevator looking suspiciously behind him as the floors slip by outside the gate. Llewyn is standing at the back of the cab holding the cat securely against his chest. We hear a fist rapping.

THE GORFEINS' DOOR

As it swings open to reveal a short bespectacled middle-aged man in a cardigan.

Mitch

There's the cat!

It spills out of Llewyn's arms and runs into the apartment. Mitch hugs Llewyn.

. . . Home from the hill! Llewyn, welcome! Come on in, Lillian is in the kitchen making her famous moussaka!

Llewyn

Oh, that's okay, I can't barge in for dinner, I just wanted to—

Mitch pulls him into the apartment.

Mitch

No, what're you talking about, one more person— moussaka?! C'mon. . . Do you know Marty Green and Janet Fung?

A Jewish-looking man and a Chinese woman nod and smile greeting.

Llewyn
Nice to meet you, Llewyn Davis.

Marty Green
Oh! Mitch and Lillian's folk song friend!

Mitch
You crashing with us?

Llewyn
No no, I hadn't even planned on dinner—

Mitch
Llewyn's not an Upper West Side guy. We only get to see him when he's. . .

Llewyn
When I've rotated through my Village friends.

Mitch
We're the last resort. Marty is in my department—and Joe is a musician, this is Joe Flom, he plays in Musica Anticha with Lillian.

Llewyn
Hey, how ya doing.

Joe
Nice to meet you.

Llewyn
What's your instrument?

Joe
Well anything with a keyboard, I play celeste and harpsichord in MA. I'm a piano instructor most days.

Llewyn
Bum a cigarette?

Joe
Sure.

Mitch

Glass of wine, Lewyn? Little dago red?

Lewyn

Sure, I uh, I should've brought something.

Mitch

Don't be silly, you brought the cat.

Lewyn

I took piano lessons when I was a kid, from Mrs. Sieglestein. You don't know Mrs. Sieglestein do ya? Very big calves, orthopedic shoes? Lives in Far Rockaway? Upstairs from the Kurlands?

Joe

Does she play Early Music?

Lewyn

Harry James, on the radio. On piano she played mostly, what, we played, uh, Drink To Me Only With Thine Eyes. I don't know. Sounded early.

Joe

Uh-huh.

Lewyn

She was not a swinger.

Joe

Well—Harry James.

Lewyn

Well, okay. Her playing though, pretty on the beat.

Joe

You still play piano?

Lewyn

I'll sit down and fiddle with anything, but not really. Not so's it sounds pretty.

Joe

Well, pretty is overrated.

Llewyn

Yeah, I agree. That's why I sing. I'm kind of a shouter.

Mitch

What did Anton say? When Llewyn takes a solo. . .

Llewyn

Yeah, the hogs are restless for miles around.

BABY PICTURE

Insert on a picture of a strange looking two-year-old, half Asian, half something else.

At the cut the clink-clank of a dinner table, and Llewyn's voice:

Llewyn

He's. . . he's adorable. How old is he?

Wider on the dinner table as he hands the picture back to Janet Fung.

Janet

Turned two in April. He's with my mother now.

Marty

Grandmas come in handy.

Llewyn

What's his name?

Marty

Howie.

Janet

He already calls him Howie. Howard.

Marty

Howie Greenfung.

Llewyn

What, like, Green, Fung? Hyphenated?

Marty

No no, one word. Greenfung.

Janet

Howard Greenfung.

Llewyn

You're—kidding, right?

Janet

(puzzled; ready to take offense)

No.

Leaping in:

Mitch

Why don't you give us a song, Llewyn?

Llewyn

Oh—no, I—

Lillian

Oh, please—he's very good. Joe should hear you.

Mitch

And Marty and Janet.

Lillian

Well of course Marty and Janet.

Llewyn

No, they don't need to sit through—

Mitch rises.

Mitch

I'm getting my Kalamazoo. You get to play it if and only if you sing.

Llewyn

Okay, yeah, I can tell, this is one of those things, I keep saying no you think I'm just asking you to beg more.

Lillian

That's right.

Llewyn
You know, I'm not a trained poodle.

Mitch reenters with guitar case.

Mitch
Not even housebroken.

Llewyn
Yeah yeah, okay. Boy. Nice instrument.

He takes it, runs a couple of licks.

... This is, this one's pretty early, Joe should like it.

Receptive chuckles from the little audience.

Llewyn starts playing, and singing, "Dink's Song."

The small group listens, genuinely taken with the performanc.

As Llewyn begins the second verse, Lillian Gorfein cases in a high, sweet harmony.

Llewyn stops playing.

Llewyn
(*sharply*)
What are you doing.

The spell is broken. The little audience is puzzled. Lillian is lost.

Lillian
... What?

Llewyn
What is that? What're you doing?

Lillian
I—

Llewyn
Don't do that.

Lillian

... It's... it's Mike's part...

Llewyn

I know what it is. Don't do that. You know what?

He is more and more testy as he opens the guitar case and lays the guitar inside.

... This is bullshit. I don't do this. I do this for a living, you know? I'm a musician. I sing for a living. It's not a parlor game.

Mitch

Llewyn, please—that's unfair to Lillian—

Llewyn

This is bullshit. I don't ask you over for dinner and then suggest you give us a lecture on the peoples of Meso-America or whatever your pre-columbian shit is. This is my job. This is how I pay the fucking rent.

Lillian rises. She is choking up.

Lillian

Llewyn, that's not, this is not—this is a loving home!

Llewyn

I'm a fucking professional. And you know what, fuck Mike's part.

Lillian

This is terrible. This is dreadful.

Mitch

It's okay Lillian.

Lillian

I'm going—I'm going—I do not want to be in this room.

She leaves, weeping.

Llewyn

Well she doesn't have to leave. I'm leaving. Obviously. Thank you for the moussaka. I'm sorry if I fucked up your

evening.

Walla of protestation, calls for calm, from Mitch, Joe, Marty Green—cut short by a scream.

Everyone freezes, looking to where Lillian exited.

A still beat.

Lillian rushes in, holding the cat up, face-out, by its front paws.

Lillian

This is not our cat!

A staring beat. Mitch's mouth hangs open.

Mitch

... Oh my god!

Llewyn

What? ... Of course it's your cat.

Mitch

Oh my god, Llewyn!

Llewyn

No, that's—that's your—

Lillian

It's not even a male!

Lillian shakes the cat, its jiggling body emphasizing her point

Where's its scrotum?!

Llewyn

... I... it's—

Lillian

Llewyn, WHERE'S ITS SCROTUM!

Mitch

Oh my god. Llewyn!

BLACK

FADE IN

A point-of-view through a windshield, moving down a Village street. Slushy, grey, early morning. A figure is waiting at the curb, guitar case and small bag at his feet, holding a cat to his chest.

Cut outside as we pull up.

The car is a big four-door. The driver is an all-American young man, good-looking although something not quite right about his face makes him less than a matinee idol. His blond hair is combed back in a pompadour. The stub of a cigarette hangs from his lip.

Llewyn looks in the back seat. A large man in a fedora is very still inside, either asleep or passed out. Next to him are two canes with silver animal knobs.

The pompadoured driver, though he has stopped for Llewyn, seems to be ignoring him. Llewyn holds up his guitar case.

| | |
|------------|--------|
| | Llewyn |
| Trunk? | |
| | Driver |
| It's full. | |

He jerks his thumb toward the back seat.

Llewyn opens the back door and stows the case upright, careful not to disturb the—sleeping?—fat man. He has a goatee and sunglasses. He has a feather in his broad-brimmed fedora and an animal fetish tie pin. His french cuffs are secured with bangles.

Llewyn gingerly shuts the door and climbs in front.

The driver puts the car in gear and starts driving.

Llewyn, somewhat bewildered, looks at the wordless driver—white t-shirt, leather jacket—staring out at the road. Llewyn looks back at the big man in the back seat, whose body now joggles with the motion of the car.

Llewyn turns back to the driver.

Llewyn

Hello.

The driver's eyes stay on the road.

Driver

Yeah, heya.

COUNTRYSIDE

Some time later.

Llewyn is vacant, nodding, looking out.

Elaborate gagging and wake-snarfling noises from the back seat draw his attention.

The man in back stirs, smacks his lips, looks around.

He sees the guitar case.

Roland Turner

What's this.

Llewyn

My guitar.

Roland Turner

Sure, move in, make yourself at home, don't mind me.

Llewyn

He said the trunk was full.

Driving beat.

Roland Turner

What're you, a flamenco dancer? What's your name?
Pablo?

Llewyn

Llewyn Davis.

Roland Turner

I'm Roland Turner. This is my valet, Johnny Five.

Llewyn looks at Johnny Five.

Johnny Five is still unemotionally focused on the road. The butt still burns on his lower lip, though it seems to be the same length.

Llewyn looks back at Roland Turner.

Llewyn

Yeah, we met. I think.

ANOTHER TIME CUT

Roland Turner is fully awake and has a lot to say.

Roland Turner

And that was the last time I was in Murfreesboro. Gave me to understand I would not be welcomed back. I said, that's okay, brother, I might have managed on my own not to make it back to your little flyspeck horseshit town. What's the N stand for?

Llewyn

... What?

Roland Turner

What's the N stand for? Lou N. Davis?

Llewyn

Llewyn. Llewyn. L-L-E-W-Y-N. It's Welsh.

Roland Turner

Well it would have to be something, stupid fuckin name like that. Here, this would interest you, Johnny and I were in Seattle, playing The High Spot—remember this, Johnny?—and I became indisposed after eating a toasted cheese sandwich. May well have been a rancid slice of bacon. Found myself purging from every orifice—one of them like a firehose—I said to the manager, What do you call that thing I just ate? He said “Welsh rarebit.” I said okay, does everything from Wales make you shit yourself or just this piece of toast. He said, and I'll never forget it because it almost made the experience worthwhile, he said

Mr. Turner—Holy Jesus what is that thing?

He has seen the cat, peeking over Llewyn's shoulder.

Llewyn

My cat. Well not my cat, it's uh. . .

Roland Turner

Grown man with a cat? Is it part of your act?

Llewyn

No.

Roland Turner

What'd you say you play? Flamenco?

Llewyn

Folk songs.

Roland Turner

Folk songs! I thought you said you were a musician. Folk singer with a cat. You queer?

Llewyn

Ah—I—it's not my cat. I just didn't know what to do with it.

Roland Turner

Oh yeah? So did you bring your dick along too? I'll tell you something about Welsh rarebit you probably didn't know, at least the way they make it at the the High Spot according to the manager, Dickie Wardlow—ever played for Dickie? Well no, you wouldn't've it's a music club, he said, I asked about the fucking toast he said—

Outside the window something attracts his attention.

Johnny, hold up, there's a Sinclair station. Your turn to pay for gas, Elwyn.

GAS STATION LOT

In the foreground Llewyn, back to us, leans against the car. Receding across the lot toward the station in the background is Roland Turner, elegantly dressed, herky-jerking away with his two canes.

MINUTES LATER

Llewyn comes out of the gas station office with a soda.

Johnny Five is leaning against the building, one knee bent and foot planted against the brick. His thumbs are hooked in his pockets.

Llewyn looks at the empty car, looks at Johnny Five.

Llewyn
He still in there?

Johnny Five
Yup.

MINUTES LATER

Llewyn is leaned back in the front passenger seat, its door open. His eyes are closed.

The sound of a distant door.

He looks out: Roland Turner is rounding the corner of the building, herky-jerking towards the car, slower than on his walk in.

Johnny Five unperches from the building and goes to help.

CAR

Traveling. Minutes later.

Quiet. Llewyn looks back.

Roland Turner is in the back seat, eyes closed again. A trace of drool.

Johnny Five drives, smoking cigarette on his lip.

Llewyn

Llewyn

Couldn't tell you.

Roland Turner

Clay. But! Not just any fucking clay, Belgian clay. They have this clay—what did you say your name was?

Llewyn

Llewyn.

Roland Turner

That's right. They have this clay, only place in the world they can find it, just outside of Bruges. Harder than my dick if it's fired properly. Throw it against a wall. Many times as you want, go ahead, Elwyn, you ain't gonna break those little bastards. No massé shots, no coins on cloth. My ass. Girl scout rules. Like music: you play like you play. Well you don't. But in jazz, you know, we play all the notes. Twelve notes in a scale, dipshit. Not three chords on a ukelele.

An assaultive drone:

Geeee. . . . Geeee. . . . Ceecc. . . . Geee. . . . Ceeee. . . . Deee. . . . Gec. Jesus Fucking Christ. Well, if you make a living at it more power to you. Solo act?

Llewyn

Yeah. Now.

Roland Turner

Now? Used to, what, work with the cat? Every time you played a C major it'd puke a hairball?

Llewyn

I used to have a partner.

Roland Turner

What happened?

Llewyn

He threw himself off the George Washington Bridge.

Beat.

Roland Turner

Well shit, I don't blame him, I couldn't take it either having to play Jimmie Crack Corn every night. Although, pardon me for saying so, but that's pretty fucking stupid isn't it? George Washington Bridge? You throw yourself off the Brooklyn Bridge. Traditionally. George Washington Bridge, who does that? What was he, a dumbbell?

Llewyn

Not really.

Roland Turner

And that's when you picked up the cat? Thank God I never had to resort to gimmicks. People pay to see Roland Turner. Playing what he plays, going where he goes. Exploring. It's the freedom they're paying to see. They don't wanna see some jackass playing a song they've heard eighteen hundred times before. Though if you make a living at it more power to you.

The cane whacks Llewyn's shoulder again.

Here, this would interest you. There was this act I saw in Montreux Switzerland—bass, piano, and sound tree—

Llewyn

Mr. Turner I'm wondering.

Roland Turner

Huh?

Llewyn

Would that cane fit all the way up your ass or would a little bit stay sticking out?

Roland Turner stares at him.

Roland Turner

Okay. Okay. Except threats and intimidation won't work with me and do you want to know why? This would interest you. I studied Santeria and certain other things that squares like you would call the black arts, due to lack of

understanding, from Chano Pozzo in New Orleans. You say you'll mess me up? I don't have to make those childish threats, I just do my thing. I do my thing and one day you wake up wondering why do I have this pain in my side? I stretch and I eat right and I take warm baths but it just won't go away, this pain, why is that? Or maybe it won't even be that specific, depends, maybe it's just Why is nothing going right for me? Doesn't matter what I do, it just won't come out, I just can't make anything come out right. My life is a big bowl of shit. I don't remember making this big bowl of shit. And meantime, Roland Turner is somewhere a thousand miles away laughing his ass off. That's what happens.

A beat.

Think about that, Elwyn. In this car, bad manners won't work. Your turn to pay for gas.

GAS STATION

Roland Turner is herky-jerking away into the background.

Johnny Five is once again in the driver's seat, Llewyn in the passenger seat. Llewyn's look shifts from the receding jazzman to Johnny Five.

Llewyn

Bum a cigarette?

Johnny Five

I'm out.

Roland Turner recedes: *clack-clack... clack-clack...*

LATER

Tire chirp as the car pulls out of the station.

INSIDE

Roland Turner asleep, drooling.

Llewyn, in the passenger seat, is looking at:

Johnny Five driving. A cigarette burns on his lower lip.

Llewyn

You a musician?

A faint smile curls Johnny Five's lip. After a beat:

Johnny Five

I act.

Llewyn

... In talkies?

LATER

Same driving configuration. Roland Turner still asleep.

We seem to have caught Johnny Five in a long beat between thoughts. He shrugs, pulls the cigarette from his lip and stubs it out.

He exhales smoke.

His eyes remain on the road as he speaks.

Johnny Five

Willowwall Carnival. Also.

A beat.

The Brig.

Another long beat staring at the road.

Three weeks on that show. Coulda been more. Cops closed it.

A beat while Llewyn waits for him to elaborate, but he doesn't. Llewyn prompts:

Llewyn

How come?

He hoists himself with a grunt and clacks away across the nearly deserted restaurant.

LLEWYN AT THE REGISTER

The cash register's ring-open hits the cut.

A waitress takes Llewyn's cash and makes change.

Llewyn
How far are we from Chicago?

Waitress
Three hours. A little more, this weather.

TABLE

Johnny Five sits alone, elbow on table and hand up; extended thumb propped against his temple and burning cigarette wedged between two fingers. He stares with a quizzical expression at the book he once again reads. His mouth hangs open.

Llewyn is arriving back at the table. He drops some change on the tabletop.

Johnny Five
Ha ha ha ha ha!

With his eyes still on the book, Johnny Five's mirth mellows into a smile. The smile slowly fades. His mouth once again hangs open as he reads on.

Llewyn looks at the empty throw of restaurant.

MEN'S ROOM

Llewyn enters.

A clean, empty, fairly high-ceilinged bathroom with a long row of urinals and a long row of stalls.

Roland Turner's legs are visible beneath the door of one the nearer stalls.

Mindful of privacy, Llewyn goes a few stalls over and bumps its door open.

INSIDE THE STALL

Llewyn lowers himself into close shot.

He sits for a beat, waiting for things to develop.

His eyes idly shift. His look catches on something:

Graffiti on the partition wall:

What are you doing!

Llewyn gazes at it.

There is the sound of slithering fabric ending with a flop-thump that echoes on the tile.

Llewyn frowns. He starts to rise.

BATHROOM

Llewyn emerges from his stall and goes to the other occupied stall. Roland Turner is partly visible lying on the floor. Part of an arm is visible: coat off, sleeve pushed up, hose wrapped.

He is face-up head toward us so that the top half of his face is visible. He is unconscious, eyes rolled up, sheened with sweat. He twitches.

DOOR

Banging in at the cut.

Llewyn reenters the bathroom leading Johnny Five.

Roland Turner is twitching more violently.

Llewyn
You stay with him, I'll call an ambulance.

Johnny Five, unconcerned, flicks the match with which he has lit a fresh cigarette.

Johnny Five

Nah, he's fine.

He goes for the body.

Grab his sticks.

RESTAURANT

Johnny Five has one of Roland Turner's arms draped over his shoulder and is helping him—all but hauling him—toward the door. Llewyn follows with his canes.

CAR

Johnny Five is easing Roland Turner into the back seat.

The displaced cat walks circles around the part of the seat still unoccupied.

Llewyn dumps in the canes with a clatter.

The door is slammed shut.

DRIVING

Johnny Five gazes out, driving one-handed, cigarette on his lip.

His free hand fiddles the radio knob.

Very intermittent headlight-bys, accompanied by the whoosh of tires on wet asphalt.

Whining static hisses into music as Johnny finds a live station.

The thud of our car's wheels on road seams.

Llewyn eases his head back against the headrest.

Johnny Five starts humming along with a pop song.

FADE OUT PICTURE AND SOUND

IN BLACK:

A silent beat broken by a sharp *thwack-thwack*: metal against glass.

Close on Llewyn opening his eyes.

The car is parked. It is still night.

Llewyn looks to his left:

Johnny Five is also stirring. Past him, a sweep of light ends with another *thwack*: a flashlight rapping against the driver's window.

Johnny rolls it down. Our view from the passenger's side crops the head of the leather-jacketed cop standing outside.

The wheels of a passing car whoosh by behind the cop: we are lower than the roadbed, pulled off on a shoulder.

The cop shines his light into Johnny Five's face.

Voice

What're you doing.

Johnny Five recoils from the light.

Johnny Five

What. We're just—

Voice

Can't stop here.

Johnny Five

I just pulled over to rest a minute.

Voice

Are you inebriated?

Llewyn

He's not drunk.

The cop briefly dips his head and shines the flashlight in at Llewyn.

Cop

I didn't ask you. You, get out of the car.

Johnny Five

Me?

Cop

You. Get out of the car.

Johnny Five opens the door, gets out.

Cop

C'mere.

The cop grabs him by the upper arm.

I want you to walk this—

From Llewyn's point-of-view: Johnny Five shakes the hand off. The two torsos are raked by a twirl of white light as the flashlight is dropped. A confusion of body parts as the officer regrabs Johnny and Johnny violently swings his arm away. Johnny's body is spun and slammed into the car chest-first.

Llewyn recoils at the impact.

Johnny's arms are being twisted behind his back. He is yanked away.

Llewyn's look follows, view half-obscured by car body and sleeping Roland Turner in the back seat.

Johnny is frogmarched, hands cuffed behind his back, toward and past the headlights of a car parked behind. Its slowly turning gumball light sketchily shows the cop opening the back door, putting his hand on top of Johnny's head to sit him in, then climbing in front.

After a beat the siren fires up and the police car lurches into gear and bumps up onto the road, spitting shoulder gravel. It hangs a hard U-turn.

Red tail lights grow smaller. The siren recedes.

Llewyn's look shifts from back window to back seat.

Roland Turner sleeps on, breathing softly, sweating lightly.

The disturbed cat walks back and forth on the seat.

The whoosh of another car-by.

Llewyn's look wanders forward.

The ignition: no key.

Llewyn looks around, not for anything in particular. He shakes his head.

A still beat, thinking.

He decides.

He opens his door, gets out, closes the door.

He opens the back door, gets out his guitar and bag, hesitates.

The cat is seated now, looking up at him.

Beat.

Llewyn closes the door.

He mounts the shoulder to the road.

Sparse traffic both ways. Headlights hit him from front, from back. The backlight shows his breath vaporizing.

He takes a few steps in the direction the parked car was pointed, glances back.

His point-of-view: the car, a toppy view since it sits on a low shoulder. Dark inside.

Back to Llewyn. A few more steps. A car is approaching: he walks backwards, sticking out his thumb.

BLACK

FADE IN:
OUTLYING CHICAGO

Dawn.

Wide: a car pulls over on a highway shoulder. Llewyn emerges, pulls his guitar and bag from the back seat.

Down from the shoulder a little ditch separates highway from broad weedy verge. Further still is a service road and on it a CTA bus terminus: fenced-in lot with a bus shelter outside of it.

Wind blows. The verge is patched with old snow.

The car pulls away and Llewyn goes down the shoulder, wades into the grass clogging the ditch, tries to hop and jump over the lowest point.

We hear a liquid squush.

Llewyn

Goddamnit.

He comes grimacing up the other side.

Goddamn. Shit. Fuck.

He looks down at shoes and cuffs, soaked through.

Goddamn piss.

He crunches across crusted snow patches toward the bus stop.

BUS INTERIOR

Llewyn is one of two passengers in the parked bus.

Suddenly its public address sounds.

The driver, talking into his handset, says something about the route unintelligible through the PA.

The other passenger sits reading a newspaper, not listening.

The driver muscles the door shut and puts the bus in motion.

LATER

Through the window at Llewyn. The bus is now crowded. The window reflection shows downtown Chicago.

CHOCK FULL O' NUTS COUNTER

Walla and dish-clatter bang in at the cut.

We are on a side-on long-lens close-up of Llewyn. He has a cup of coffee. Stacked up beyond him are the morning-rush customers—all men, all in suits, some in overcoats. Foreground body parts of more men in suits.

Cut down to Llewyn's feet. He has slipped one shoe off and is now using his wet stockinged toes to pry off the other shoe so that his feet can dry.

Up to Llewyn drinking coffee.

Back down to his feet again. Both stockinged now, they relax onto the raised footrest whose black ribbed-rubber surface is itself wet and filthy. The feet draw back, nudge the shoes into place so that they may rest upon them.

The waitress comes by.

| | |
|--------------|----------|
| | Waitress |
| More coffee? | |
| | Llewyn |
| Thanks. | |

PHONE BOOK

One of a pair of very thick books bound in pebbled black posterboard, sharing a pivot rod. The one is swung up to flop open in the middle.

Llewyn is at the public phone in the coffeeshop.

He flips pages.

We see him find the listing. In bold face that distinguishes it from the listings for private residences: GATE OF HORN.

Llewyn dials.

It rings through.

As Llewyn listens to it ring he copies the street address onto the front of his newspaper.

Several rings.

He hangs up.

COUNTER

Llewyn sits back in. The counter is now nearly empty

Waitress

We're switching over.

Llewyn

Huh?

Waitress

We're switching over to lunch service. And my shift is up.
Can you pay the ticket?

STREET

Llewyn walks, guitar over his back, one hand carrying bag, the other clutching his corduroy jacket closed at his neck. It is blowing hard.

CLOCK

Echoing interior.

A big institutional clock: 12:15.

Llewyn sits into frame side-on, onto a tall-backed wooden bench, eyes up at the clock.

He leans his head back against the wooden back, closes his eyes.

After a beat a commuter sits into frame in the foreground.

Commuter

You hear that about the South Bend train?

Llewyn opens his eyes.

Llewyn

What?

Commuter

You hear that announcement? How long is it delayed?

Llewyn

No. Don't know.

The man rises and leaves.

Llewyn closes his eyes again.

Soft, in the background, a man in a blue uniform is looking at Llewyn. A moment of hesitation, then he walks toward us and Llewyn, growing sharper but head cropping out the top of frame.

Cop's Voice

What train you waiting for?

Llewyn's eyes open again. He looks for a wordless beat.

Another prompt:

Got a ticket?

A beat of Llewyn's sullen stare.

GATE OF HORN

Its exterior sign. Below the name of the club:

Folk Music

Jazz

Charcoal Sandwiches

It is late afternoon. Llewyn goes to the front door and tries it. It is locked.

He rattles it, then drops his bag and cups his hands at the window to try to see in.

He steps back, looks to either side.

BACK OF CLUB

There is a stage door. Llewyn pushes on it: it gives.

INTERIOR CLUB

The house is dark. Llewyn has entered from just off a little stage.

Llewyn
Hello?

There is an office door ajar in back. A young man sticks his head out.

Man
Hello?

Llewyn
Is Bud Grossman here?

Man
Isn't in yet.

The person disappears back into the office.

Llewyn looks around, a little lost. He projects:

Llewyn
Can I wait here?

From inside the office:

Voice
Sure. Maybe an hour.

LATER

Llewyn has one of the chairs down off a table and his guitar out and is playing, idling.

The scrape of the stage door. Llewyn stops playing.

Bud Grossman enters, stamping off snow. He has a nice coat.

He walks toward the back, past Llewyn, noticing him but not interested.

Llewyn, perhaps waiting for Bud Grossman to speak first, now watches him pass and disappear into the back office.

Murmur of voices.

Llewyn leans the guitar against the table, picks up his bag and goes to the office door.

Bud Grossman and the young man we saw earlier look up from their conversation.

Llewyn

Mr. Grossman?

A beat.

Bud Grossman

Yeah?

Llewyn

I, uh. I'm Llewyn Davis.

A beat.

Bud Grossman

Uh-huh.

Llewyn

I'm sorry—do you know who I am?

Bud Grossman

No.

Llewyn

Mel Novikoff sent you my record, maybe a month ago,
"Inside Llewyn Davis"—

Bud Grossman

Oh, you're with Mel?

Llewyn

Yeah, I was in Chicago—just passing through, uh—do you like the record?

Bud Grossman

Don't know. Didn't get it.

Llewyn digs in his bag.

Llewyn

Here it is, this is it anyway. It's, here it is.

Bud Grossman takes it, looks at it.

That's five dollars.

Bud Grossman doesn't react.

He looks up from the record. Llewyn holds his look for a beat.

... I was joking.

Bud Grossman

Uh-huh.

A beat.

Llewyn

Well, I'm interested in maybe gigging here but also in obtaining management.—

Bud Grossman

Getting any money out of Mel?

Llewyn

Not, uh. . . not, uh—

Bud Grossman

Yeah I'll bet.

The faintest smile fades. He shrugs.

Okay. Let's hear something.

Llewyn

. . . You don't want to listen to the record?

Bud Grossman

Why should I, you're here. Play me something.

He looks down at the record.

Play me something from. . . Inside Llewyn Davis.

Llewyn

Okay. Here? Stage?

Bud Grossman

Not here.

A MINTUE LATER

Onstage, guitar in one hand, Llewyn swings a chair into place with the other.

He sits, puts the guitar on his knee.

Bud Grossman sits near the front of the mostly-dark house.

Llewyn looks at him, looks at the guitar. A beat.

Llewyn

Okay.

He plays.

He finishes the song.

He looks out at Bud Grossman.

Bud Grossman has yet to show any reaction, to anything.

A good beat, and then:

Bud Grossman

I don't see a lot of money here.

Llewyn keeps eye contact and does not display emotion either.

At length:

Llewyn

Okay.

Another beat. Bud Grossman doesn't get up; neither does Llewyn.

Okay. That's it?

Bud Grossman shrugs a What else would there be?

Bud Grossman

You're okay. You're not green.

Llewyn nods at the compliment, such as it is. He hesitates; then:

Llewyn

But I don't have what, say, Troy Nelson has.

For the first time, Bud Grossman seems pleasantly interested:

Bud Grossman

You know Troy?

Llewyn

Yeah.

Bud Grossman

Good kid. *(nods thoughtfully)* Good kid.

Llewyn rises. Bud Grossman continues:

... Yeah, he connects with people.

Bud Grossman watches Llewyn stowing his guitar.

Look, I'm putting together a trio. Two guys and a girl singer. You're no front guy but if you can grow a goatee, stay out of the sun, we might see how your voice works with the other two. Comfortable with harmonies?

Llewyn

No. Yes, but, no. I had a partner.

Bud Grossman

Uh-huh, well that makes sense. My suggestion? Get back together.

Llewyn

That's good advice. Thank you Mr. Grossman.

SNOW-PATCHED VERGE

The bus terminal is in the background. A very low, very weak, grayed-out sun hangs at the horizon. The wind blows hard.

Llewyn is negotiating the ditch, coming toward the foreground highway, guitar across his back and bag in hand.

SAME PLACE

Several minutes later.

Now dusk: some ambient light but the cars all have headlights on. It has started to snow.

A car pulls over to where Llewyn stands with his thumb out. A crew-cut college-age youth leans over to roll down the passenger window and look up at him.

Youth

Where you going?

Llewyn

New York.

Youth

Man, that's great! I'm going home to New Jersey, I have not slept—you drive, right?

Llewyn

Yeah.

Youth

Well as long as you drive and let me sleep, we can do it all the way, man! Put your cello in back.

Llewyn opens the back door to stow his gear. The youth unstraps his seatbelt and slides over to the passenger side.

You're not gonna try to talk to me?

Llewyn

No. Just show me the knob for the windshield wipers.

FULL NIGHT

A point-of-view: heavier snow swirls into headlights and sticks soft and dark to the foreground windshield. The wipers, beating a soporific *thid-thud*, take it away.

Passenger seat: the crew-cut youth, asleep. Regular, heavy breathing.

Llewyn driving. Bedraggled.

Llewyn looks around the dash, locates, and reaches.

The radio goes on. The tuner is thumbed through static hiss. Coming through it, finally, distant music. Knob-fiddling cannot make clear. More exploring. Radio off.

Llewyn blinks himself more awake. He reacts to something he sees:

Hinging point-of-view of approaching sign: it marks the turnoff for *Cleveland*.

Llewyn's head turns as he tracks the sign. His eyes shift in the direction of the sign's arrow.

A glow through the snow of distant city lights.

Back to Llewyn. His eyes hold on the ghost of the city for a brief beat, then shift back forward.

He drives.

FADE OUT

LATER

Still snowing.

As he drives Llewyn sings, half aloud, "Ladies of Spain."

A glance over at:

The youth, still sleeping deeply.

A look back forward—and a startled reaction:

Almost as soon as we see it, movement in the headlights is lost below the hood.

Impact thud. Squeal of brakes.

Llewyn rocks forward at the hard brake and so does the youth, who then flops back. His deep breathing continues undisturbed.

Llewyn takes a wide-eyed moment. He looks around through the back window.

Nothing is visible outside except dimly falling snow.

Llewyn opens his door.

EXTERIOR

Driver's side headlight in the foreground. Blood on the bumper.

Llewyn is walking into the foreground to look. A looking beat. He recedes into the background.

He stands behind the idling car, looking at the highway behind.

No traffic, peaceful, dark, falling snow. Nothing visible on the road.

Llewyn's look travels.

Something catches his eye.

Movement, perhaps thirty yards back, off the shoulder: a small animal?

Llewyn squints against snow.

A badger- or ferret-sized creature is hauling itself haltingly toward the woods that line the highway. Before we get a good look at it, it disappears into the dark of the trees.

On Llewyn, looking.

CAR INTERIOR

Llewyn sits in.

The engine rumbles in park.

The wipers thud.

The youth breathes in and out.

After a beat, Llewyn puts the car in gear.

EXTERIOR

Locked-down: the car pulls away from us, into the background. Tail lights recede, leave us in falling snow.

SUBWAY CAR

Loud train clatter bangs in at the cut.

No time of day: we are underground. Llewyn sits in a mostly empty car, still with guitar and bag, and still—judging by his unrelieved haggard look—sleepless.

CLOSE ON LLEWYN ASLEEP

Early morning—somewhere.

Llewyn emerges from peaceful sleep. He rolls onto his back, looking up.

Cottage-cheese ceiling, underlit by light leaking around a curtain.

Llewyn rises to an elbow, looks around, orienting himself.

A child's room. He is in a child's bed.

A plastic red-framed something on the nightstand at his elbow: he picks it up.

An Etch-a-Sketch. Written on it in the spidery way permitted by the device:

Welcome Uncle Llewyn

EXTERIOR

Morning. Llewyn emerges from his sister's Queens house.

GREAT HALL

Cut in with a crash of echoing walla. It is the interior hall of a once-grand beaux-art institution gone to seed.

Llewyn sits at the battered wooden desk of an aging man who seems more working-class than bureaucrat.

Man

No you cannot.

Llewyn

Why?

Man

Ya not on the rosta.

Llewyn

Well, okay. Can you put me on the roster?

Man

Me? No I cannot.

Llewyn

Why?

Man

Why ya think?

Llewyn

I don't know. Because I'm a communist.

The man, suddenly less bored, glances around and then leans in, voice lowered:

Man
Shachmanite?

Llewyn
What?

Man
(*"my mistake"*)
Nah, no. It ain't that. Y'ain't current.

Llewyn
I'm not current.

Man
That's another way of puttin it.

Llewyn
Is that a nautical term?

Man
Y'ain't current, on ya dues. Pay ya dues, ya go back on the rosta, I can ship ya out. There's a post on The Maid Of The Gate, Seaman First Class, weighs anchor this Friday 6pm.

Llewyn is looking in his wallet.

Llewyn
The money, what I owe, can't they take it out of, whatever, the first week? I can't run out on it, I'm in your fucking sardine can.

Man
Yeah, they don't do that. Ya gotta be current to ship out.

Llewyn finishes thumbing through his wallet.

Llewyn
Okay. Wow. I just make it. I'm leaving naked, man. Clean start. Can I pay you?

Man

Yeah. I'll write ya a receipt. And the pier and ship number, and the time. Still got ya Masters Mates and Pilots License, right? Ain't shippin out without that.

Llewyn

Yeah, I got it.

Man

Okay. Here it is. "Llewyn Davis." Ya not Hugh's kid are ya?

Llewyn

Why not.

OCEAN

Looking out at gray ocean and gray sky. Waves beat weakly against foreground rocky shore.

A building: a hulking brick institutional building facing the water. Over a rectilinear portico is the building's name: Landfall.

INSIDE

A card set into a metal frame on a tile wall, next to an interior door. Below the card is a glass display box. On the card, in marker, two names:

Hugh Davis
John Corsicatto

Inside the box are little personal mementos and snapshots. Some of the photos show an old man in a sweater with a grandson, and with grandson and Joy and a man presumably Joy's husband. There is also a ship-in-the-bottle inside the display box, and a few greeting cards.

From off, the sound of a door being pushed open.

INSIDE ROOM

As Llewyn enters with guitar case.

Llewyn

Hiya.

Hugh Davis sits by the window, not looking out. He does look up at Llewyn's entrance.

The other occupant of the room, on the bed further from the window, is mostly hidden by a curtain on a ceiling ring. We see only his slippered feet.

Llewyn sets down his guitar and swings a chair around to face his father.

... How's it going.

No answer, but none, it seems, is expected.

... Taking off, Pop. Won't see you for a while, shipping out.

His father's look rests upon him, not with much expression.

A beat of looking at each other.

Llewyn rises, not uncomfortable, to look out the rib-height window.

... Try something new.

He looks out for a beat.

... I mean, something old.

His point-of-view: parking lot, some marshy grass, ocean.

He shrugs, looking out. He sits back down.

... How's it going.

The old man's eyes have followed him back and forth.

Llewyn leans forward to unclasp the guitar case. He withdraws the guitar.

... Okay, here's this. You used to like this.

He limbers his fingers briefly, then plays, and sings, "Ladies of Spain."

The old man watches him sing. Once, even, his eyes shift to look at the guitar fingering.

Second verse. The old man's eyes shift, dreamily, to the window. They hold there for a long beat, then return to Llewyn as the song finishes. The last chord is held, and rings out. The two men look at each other, lost, it seems, in the music as it floats away.

A long beat, and then, from Llewyn, softly:

... Wow.

Another silent beat, and a more definite:

... Wow.

He looks briefly at John Corsicatto, then back at his father.

He realizes he still holds the guitar and stirs, leans forward to lay it gently in its case, and rises.

HALLWAY

Wide, looking the length of the hall with sun glaring on the linoleum and streaking the tile walls. Llewyn emerges from his father's room small, in the background, without the guitar.

Emerged fully into the hall he stops, and looks briefly up and down its length.

He walks toward us, head turning to look into the rooms he passes.

We jump in on his walk as he checks to the side, and then stops:

A young black orderly is making a bed in an empty room.

Llewyn

Excuse me.

The man looks up.

... Can I... trouble you... My father, uh, had an accident and uh... might need some help... He needs to be cleaned.

QUEENS HOUSE

Llewyn enters with his guitar. His sister is in the kitchen at the stove, and a six-year-old sits eating at the table.

Joy

How is he?

Llewyn

He's great. Good to see what I have to look forward to.

Joy

What. Llewyn.

Llewyn

No, I'm not kiddin. I've got it all figured out now. Put in some hard years, yeah, but eventually ya get to kick back, your food brought to ya, don't even have to get up to shit.

Joy

Llewyn! Danny is sitting right here!

Llewyn

I'm sorry.

Joy

What is wrong with you! Shame on you!

Llewyn

I'm sorry. It was good to see him. It was great. Where'd you put my file box.

Joy

Huh?

Llewyn

From the house, where's my file box?

She stares at him.

Joy

You told me to throw everything out.

He stares back.

Llewyn

All the old stuff! Fuck, Joy, you threw out my file box?

Joy

Llewyn!

Llewyn

Yeah, no cursing, except now I gotta go back to the fucking union hall! It had my Masters Mates and Pilots license, Jesus Christ, Joy!

She comes close so that Danny won't hear. A fierce whisper:

Joy

You told me to put it out by the curb. It's what I did. I want you to leave. Get outta heah.

Angry, not apologetic:

Llewyn

Fuck. Yeah. I know, I'm a dick, right?

Joy

That's right.

Llewyn looks at the eating child.

Llewyn

Danny, your uncle's a bad man.

Danny

Okay.

FOYER DIRECTORY

The familiar glass-covered tenant listing, showing BERKEY 6C.

A finger enters to buzz.

Filtered:

Jean

Hello?

Wider on the foyer as Llewyn, guitar on back and bag in hand, leans in to a round mesh grill:

Llewyn

It's Llewyn don't hang up I don't wanna stay, I just need a place to dump my stuff please I'm tired of dragging it all around with me.

UPSTAIRS

As Jean lets Llewyn into the apartment. She indicates where the bags may be stowed:

Jean

Under the couch. Where you gonna stay?

Llewyn

I don't know, I only need two nights, there must be someone in the five boroughs who isn't pissed at me. How do you feel?

Jean

Fine. Why?

Llewyn

I'm sorry. So it went okay?

Jean

I'm doing it Saturday, Jesus Llewyn, you don't even fucking remember?

Llewyn

Oh, yeah, boy. I've been away—seemed like a long time but I guess it was only a couple days, yeah. Yeah. Sorry.

Jean

Where were you?

Llewyn

Chicago.

Jean

Why?

He shakes his head, gropes.

Llewyn

Nah, nothin.

Jean

Nick'll let you play tomorrow, pick up a couple bucks.

Llewyn

No he won't, I was there less than a month ago.

Jean

He will. I asked him.

Llewyn

Well. Thank you. That was nice of you. But I'm out, I'm done. Going back to the merchant marine.

Jean

What? That's it? *(he shrugs)* This could be good for you, tomorrow.

Llewyn

Playing the Gaslight for the four-hundredth time? Really? For the fucking basket?

Jean

Um. You'd have to split the basket, there's another act. *(Llewyn laughs)* But the Times is gonna be there.

Llewyn

Big fuckin deal! I'm sorry—Thanks for the thought. It's not going anywhere, and I'm tired.

Jean

You're tired.

Llewyn

I am so fucking tired. I thought I just needed a night's sleep but it's more than that. But thank you. For trying. I love you.

This gets a genuine laugh from Jean.

Jean

Oh come on.

LOW SHOT

Llewyn in the union hall.

Llewyn

Are you shitting me?

A different old geezer than in the first visit.

Man

In what way, buddy?

Llewyn

Eighty-five dollars. To replace the license.

Man

You don't t'row out the license. That's the one thing you keep.

Llewyn

I can't—where'm I gonna. . . Fuhhh. . . Well. . . lemme get this money back then. . .

He is digging in his pocket.

I kept this fucking thing. I just paid my dues this morning, a hundred and forty-eight bucks, here's the receipt.

Man

Huh? You don't. . . we don't pay you dues back. Wuddya nuts?

Llewyn

I just paid it this morning! Four hours ago!

Man

Yeah?

Llewyn

Wait wait wait wait—you're saying I can't crew the ship,
and I can't get this money back?

The geezer shrugs, looking at the receipt.

Man

This was money you owed your union. . . Say, you Hugh
Davis's kid?

Llewyn

Yeah.

Man

How's he doin'?

Llewyn

He's fucking great! Matter of fact he's been asking after
you!

THE GASLIGHT

Three Irishmen in Aran Island sweaters are performing traditional music.

The house is full and some people watch leaning back against the bar. Llewyn is the only
person seated at the bar and facing it, glowering, a drink in his fist.

Nick Porco sits in, squeezing Llewyn's shoulder.

Nick

Hey. We gonna hear you tomorrow.

Llewyn

(no warmth)

I guess you are.

Nick

Well—ya welcome. *(no answer)* Wuddya think a these
guys?

Llewyn swivels, drink still in hand, and looks darkly at the stage.

At length:

Llewyn

I like the sweaters.

Nick stares at the stage also, mouth open, nodding.

At length:

Nick

Ya know, you wouldn't fuckin believe the rent here. This folk shit, I don't know.

Both men stare at the stage.

... You know any comics?

A beat.

Llewyn

Only you, Nick.

Nick

(modest) Aw, I couldn't puhfawm. *(after a beat gazing at the stage, he waxes philosophical)* Comics, they don't look like much, most of 'em. Jews, by'n large. Lookin like that I guess ya gotta be funny. Some a the folk acts on the otha hand, ya gotta give 'm they look good. They look good at least. Jim and Jean we get a good crowd. You know why, Llewyn? A lotta these guys, a lot of 'em come in here catch the act because—they wanna fuck Jean. Is why they come in. And some of 'em. Some of these guys, Llewyn, they come in here cause they wanna fuck JIM! Heh heh heh! They wanna fuck Jim, know what I mean?

Llewyn

You mean they wanna fuck Jim.

Nick

Exactly! *(he nods)* Exactly. Well. *(sighs)* Me... I've only fucked Jean.

The Irish trio's song, and set, is ending, to applause. Nick's line has brought Llewyn's look around from the stage.

Llewyn

Huh?

Nick is thumping his hands together for the trio.

Nick

Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Ya know. Ya wanna play the Gaslight...

Nick shrugs.

Llewyn's look darkens further, and swings back to the stage.

Llewyn

Huh.

Irish Singer

Thank you ladies and gentlemen. Thank you... Thank you Nick Porco, and let's all give a great big welcome to Elizabeth Hobby, from Elinora, Arkansas!

An older woman smiles thanks as she takes the stage with an autoharp. She has stringy blond hair and a gaunt face and frame, and her smile, though warm, shows that she is missing a tooth or two.

Elizabeth Hobby

Thank you ladies and gentlemen. Yer so nice. Thank you. This is my first show in New York—

Llewyn bellows:

Llewyn

How'd ya get the gig, Betty?

A few uncomprehending titters from the house.

Elizabeth Hobby, flustered, shades her eyes.

Elizabeth Hobby

... Hello?

Llewyn, with a significant look to Nick, points a finger at the woman onstage and cocks his head to pose a question.

Nick Porco laughs.

Nick
Aw c'mon Llewyn, gimme a little credit.

Elizabeth Hobby
I'm gonna do a song, it's like most of the songs I do, it's a
song I grew up with.

She starts playing and singing.

Llewyn
Where's your heybale!

Looks and shushes from other customers.

... Where's your corncob pipe! Ya wearing gingham
panties? Show us your panties!

Nick
C'mon Llewyn. It's enough.

He shakes off Nick's hand.

Llewyn
I hate fucking folk music.

Nick motions to the bartender.

Nick
Okay Eddie. We might need Bob.

Llewyn
Fuck Bob! Fuck you, Nick!

FRONT OF THE GASLIGHT

Wide on the front of the club as Llewyn stumbles out, under impetus from the bartender and another man.

There is the beginnings of a line for the second set. Llewyn glares at the onlookers, and, as he starts to wander off:

Llewyn

The show is bullshit. Three micks and Grandma Moses.

STREET

A phone booth seen in wide shot.

Wind blows, traffic goes by.

Llewyn is a small figure in the booth, not on the phone but looking down motionless, studying something held in one hand.

We jump in as he reaches for it with his other hand: his open address book. The hand turns the page, lingers for a moment, turns again.

APARTMENT DOOR SWINGING OPEN

Mitch Gorfein beams out.

Mitch

Llewyn, come on in! Lillian is making her famous tabouleh salad!

Llewyn

Thanks, Mitch. I really appreciate this, after last time. I just can't tell you how sorry I—

Mitch

Oh forget it! We all get a little emotional over Mike. It comes out in different ways. He had such life. Such a talent. It's a big hole. A big hole.

Llewyn

Yeah. Uh-huh.

Mitch

How long'll you be with us?

Llewyn

Just a day or two, if it's okay. Just until I figure out the next, um. . . the next—

Mitch

This is Arlen and Dodi Gamble. This is Llewyn Davis, our folksinger friend. Arlen knows Jim Berkey.

Arlen

You're Jim and Jean's friend!

Llewyn

Well—sort of—

Charlayne

Jim played us a pressing of that record—"Please, Mr. Kennedy." It was hysterical.

Arlen

So funny! That's gonna be a hit, man. Royalties on that, it's gonna pay out for a long time.

Llewyn stares, then nods, blankly.

Llewyn

Uh-huh.

Charlayne

I wish I was in your business—one hit can fix you up!

Llewyn

Uh. Yeah, I—

Lillian

Llewyn!

She enters, beaming, bearing a large bowl that she hastily places on the table so as to be able to hug Llewyn.

Llewyn

Hi Lillian.

Lillian

I'm so sorry I upset you—

Llewyn

No no!—You're apologizing to me? Jesus, Lillian, I—holy

shit!

He breaks the embrace, looking off.

A white Persian cat has trotted in.

. . . Well—that's good. You got a new cat.

No.

Mitch

Lillian

He came home.

She scoops the cat up.

Mitch

He found his way back.

Lillian

The doorman heard something scratching yesterday morning.

Mitch

Early morning. Wee hours.

Lillian

See?

She is holding the cat up, belly out, by its forepaws.

. . . It's Ulysses.

Llewyn looks from the cat's scrotum to Lillian.

Llewyn

It's what?

Lillian

Ulysses.

Llewyn

I didn't, uh. . . That's its name?

LATER

Llewyn plops down onto the study couch. Lights are off. The apartment is quiet.

He digs into pockets to empty them onto the nightstand. Coins and tokens from one pocket. His wallet from another. He pokes through the bill compartment: six dollars.

He shakes his head, dumps it on the nightstand.

LATER STILL

Close on Llewyn, eyes closed, on his back, the regular breathing of deep sleep.

After a long beat: a soft thud and a "Huh!" of surprise from Llewyn as his body tenses and his eyes fly open.

After a moment to register where he is, he looks down his body.

Close on the cat, standing on his chest, looking back at him, purring loudly.

NEXT MORNING

Looking down the dim hall towards the less dim study.

Llewyn's head peeks out.

Llewyn

Hello?

No answer.

He emerges to walk down the hallway in his undies.

COMMON HALLWAY

Outside the apartment door.

Llewyn emerges, dressed, and takes care with one foot to keep the cat hemmed in the apartment as he exits.

STREET

Llewyn is walking. After a beat his attention is caught by something to one side. He slows, looking, and stops.

His point-of-view: an illustration of a housecat. On either side of it is a dog. The three pets are out in the wild.

Llewyn looking.

Wider point-of-view: the illustration is a poster in a movie-theater lightbox, the theater not yet open.

It is a poster for The Incredible Journey. The tag line promises *A Fantastic True-Life Drama*.

As Llewyn stares, music fades in: Llewyn himself, performing "I've Been All Around This World."

CLUB

The music is a pre-lap of Llewyn in *The Gaslight*, spotlit as at the beginning of the movie.

He finishes the song to applause.

Llewyn

Thank you. You've probably heard that one before, but what the hell. . .

He rises to go but dips back into the mike:

. . . If it was never new, and it never gets old, then it's a folk song.

As the applause abates something catches Llewyn's attention:

Nick Porco nods Llewyn over. He is broadly smiling.

Nick

Boy you were some mess last night.

Llewyn

Yeah, sorry, Nick. I'm an asshole.

Nick

Oh I don't give a shit. I even agree about the music.
Funny to hear you say it though.

Llewyn

Yeah, I'm a funny guy.

Nick

S'very true. Anyways, someone wants to see you out back.

Llewyn

Who?

Nick

Guy in a suit?

A clatter offscreen attracts Llewyn's attention:

Backlit in the smoky spotlight a young man with a dutch-boy cap and a guitar and a harmonica on a rack is just sitting down on the stool onstage.

He blows a couple times on the harmonica.

BACK ALLEY

The steel door of the club swings open and Llewyn emerges. The man waiting against the wall:

Man

You a funny boy, huh?

Llewyn

What?

The man tosses his cigarette away and pushes himself off the wall.

Man

Had to open ya big mouth, funny boy?

Llewyn

Had to—what? It's what I do. For a living. Who're—

Man

What ya do? Make fun a folks up there. Folks up there sangin?

Llewyn

I'm sorry, what? I'm—oof!

The man has just socked him in the mouth.

Man

You sit there in the audience last night yellin yer crap?

Llewyn is holding his mouth.

Llewyn

Oh for Christ's sake. You yell stuff, it's a show.

Man

Ain't a fuckin fag show!

He hits him again.

... Wasn't your show!

He hits him again and Llewyn goes down in the slush of the alleyway.

Llewyn

It's not the opera, jackass!

He kicks. Llewyn curls into a defensive ball and bellows from behind protective forearms:

Llewyn

It's a fucking baskethouse!

The man kicks again.

Man

We leavin this fuckin cesspool. You kin have it, smartass.

More kicking.

Yellin yer crap when my wife is up there tryin to sang! And there was a record man there ya fuckin fag! I took her home cryin!

As the kicking and Llewyn's reaction abates, we can hear the performer inside the club. It is Bob Dylan performing "I Was Young When I Left Home."

The man is striding down the alley.

Llewyn stays balled up for a long moment. Once he is certain no more kicks are coming, he begins, slowly and painfully, to straighten out, exploring tender places with one hand.

The man has disappeared around the alley corner.

Llewyn rises experimentally to a crouch, straightens a little more. He takes a few uneven steps toward the mouth of the alley, one hand brushing the wall for balance.

Near the mouth of the alley he sinks back down to seated position, back against the wall, looking down the street in the direction the man exited.

The man is halfway down the block. He raises his hand and whistles down an oncoming cab. He climbs in.

After a short beat, the cab starts moving again.

As it passes the mouth of the alley, Llewyn touches two fingers to his forehead in salute.

Llewyn

Au revoir.

The cab is past.

Its tail lights recede.

Cut to black.