

“The Rhythm Kings”
Screenplay Overview
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Description of Principal Characters

Lucas Carver: Principal character, guitar hero and leader of The Rhythm Kings instrumental Soul band. Please refer to detailed backstory/character tree for full biography. (I have changed three details, however: 1] Carver's birthday has been changed to December 9, 1941; 2] He does not meet Bobbie Lane until 1966; and 3] The location of Marshall Holtzman's "Crossroads Records" has changed from Rain Creek, Alabama to Chicago, Illinois.)

Roberta "Bobbie" Lane: Principal female character and gifted vocalist whose pairing with the Rhythm Kings results in some of the finest Soul music of the '60s. Romantic interest, eventual wife of Lucas Carver. Please refer to detailed backstory/character tree for full biography.

Basic Premise

The story follows the development of guitarist Lucas Carver, a young white Southerner fervently devoted to black music, and unfolds episodically from the time Lucas is nine years of age, spanning the 1950s to 1985 (with particular emphasis given to the '60s). Carver's attempt to find personal redemption as a professional R&B/Soul musician, his apparent failure to obtain that redemption, and his ultimate deliverance, are the central elements of the screenplay.

Closely related to this is Carver's relationship with Roberta "Bobbie" Lane, the superlative (black) Soul singer who will make classic records singing with his band The Rhythm Kings. Bobbie becomes Carver's first love and wife; by 1967, Roberta Lane and The Rhythm Kings become crossover stars on the pop charts. In '68, tension within the band and Martin Luther King's assassination destroy the racially mixed Rhythm Kings. Lucas and Bobbie become estranged due to Carver's emotional immaturity, and a broken Lucas spends the '70s in dissolute fashion. In 1985, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's inaugural induction ceremony brings Lucas, Bobbie, and The Rhythm Kings together once again, serving as a catalyst for Carver's spiritual regeneration.

"Description of Number of Acts; Why."

Act I: Lucas Carver's backstory and character development from age nine to his decision to leave school at 16 and pursue his musical career professionally. (Note: Scenes providing basic backstory and character traits of Lucas at nine will be followed by scenes of Carver as he grows into young adulthood.)

Act II: Carver's initial foray into the world of R&B to the formation of The Rhythm Kings.

Act III: Development of the band's internal dynamics, music-biz resistance to their efforts, discouraging advent of The Beatles (sic) and introduction of progressive-minded "Crossroads Records" label owner/recording producer Marshall Holtzman.

Act IV: Holtzman's pairing of Rhythm Kings with singing sensation Bobbie Lane. Increasing popularity of Roberta Lane and The Rhythm Kings to crossover success and marriage of Lucas and Bobbie.

Act V: Comfortable success to dissolution of musical partnership between Carver and The Rhythm Kings, as well as romantic partnership between Lucas and Bobbie.

Act VI: Lucas alone, lost and self-destructive from early '70s to his emotional breakdown and abandonment of music altogether in 1978.

Act VII: Holtzman's contacting Carver to attend induction of Rufus Limehouse into Rock and Roll Hall of Fame at NYC ceremony to reformation of Roberta Lane and The Rhythm Kings in its aftermath.

Acts I, II, and III will serve to introduce Carver's backstory and delineate the internal conflicts and exterior challenges that he faces. Act VI is a crucial "transition act" (sic), while Acts IV, V and VII comprise the heart of the screenplay, illustrating the rise and fall of Roberta Lane and The Rhythm Kings, Carver's relationship with Bobbie, and the eventual reunion of all concerned. The rhythm and tone throughout Act IV will reflect the building momentum of the musical partnership and the magic of a shared dream being realized. Then, in Act V, the tone grows darker and more paranoid as that musical partnership (and the Lane-Carver marriage) implodes under the weight of internecine squabbling and social

madness of 1968. The rhythm here will be tense, frenetic, jagged. In contrast the rhythm and tone of Act VI, which features the disillusioned and debauched Lucas drifting through the '70s, will be -- up till its climactic scene -- lethargic and painfully slow. Act VII's rhythm and tone denotes Carver's uncertain reentry into the world of music (i.e. at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony), the consequent healing of his relationships with Bobbie and The Rhythm Kings, and the possibility of redemption as his band readies itself to hit the road again.