

**BAD DAY AT BLACK ROCK**

Written by

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Based on the story

"Bad Day At Hondo"

by Howard Breslin

**SHOOTING**

**DRAFT**

**FADE IN BEFORE MAIN TITLE**

**BAD DAY AT BLACK ROCK**

**ESTABLISHING SHOT - BLACK ROCK - PART OF TOWN: FOCAL**

**POINT:**

**RAILROAD STATION**

abandoned, in an extreme state of dilapidation. The structure is blistered by the resolute sun, the roof is weather-warped. Dry rot and mildew wage a relentless battle against the foundation. Between the building and the tracks is a long, somewhat narrow platform, its floorboards twisted by time, termites and the elements. The match-board overhang of the building, throwing some little shade to a portion of the platform, sags and bellies. From the overhang is appended a rectangular panel on which, in flaky paint, the town is identified:

**BLACK ROCK**

than the  
One of the broken wires holding the panel is longer  
other, cocking the sign irregularly.

Past  
The railroad tracks reach endlessly into the horizon.  
with  
the town on each side stretches the ocean-like prairie,  
each  
sand dunes rising and falling monotonously, shouldering  
bruise  
other toward infinity. The morning sun lays over this  
wasteland of the American Southwest, a gigantic yellow  
from which heat waves like bloodshot arteries spread  
themselves over the poisoned sky.

from it  
A small shack stands next to the station, separated  
building,  
by a narrow alleyway and leaning toward the larger  
across  
as if for support. The words POSTAL TELEGRAPH are arced  
reinforced  
its dusty vitrine. An old straight-backed chair,  
corner  
with twisted wire, is tilted against the north-west  
telegraph  
of the shack. In it is Mr. Hastings, the postal  
He  
agent, a man of middle years and exorbitant mediocrity.  
receding  
sits there spinelessly, fingering a wart on his  
knuckle  
chin and, once in a while, for variety, rubbing a  
under his watery nose.

#### **FULL SHOT - BLACK ROCK**

intersects  
The town is minute, dismal and forgotten, crouching in  
isolation where the single line of railroad track  
in  
a secondary dirt road. The twin strips of steel glisten  
false  
the fierce sunlight, fencing the dreary plain from the  
stony  
fronts of the town. In b.g. is the bluff of a black  
Rock's  
mountain. Against this ancient mass the houses of Black  
and  
single street\*\*\* (See map, P.2A) are scanty in number

peeled  
tin

insignificant in architecture, a conglomerate paint-modern trussed together with rusty nails and battered strips torn from signs.

nothing  
nothing  
the  
held

The town and the terrain surrounding it have, if else, the quality of inertia and immutability -- moves, not even an insect; nothing breathes, not even wind. Town and terrain seem to be trapped, caught and forever in the sullen, abrasive earth.

**OUT**

Sequence omitted from original script.

**STRAIGHT SHOT - STREAMLINER**

its  
blasting

jarring in its power as it ramrods across the desert, diesel engines pounding. Its horn "WONKS" twice, the shatterable air.

**FULL SHOT - BLACK ROCK - ANOTHER ANGLE**

and  
lazily  
a  
credits  
of  
best

Nothing is changed, nothing is altered. But look close you will see a small shallow current of wind sweeping across the dirt and dust of the single street. HOLD for a beat, then MAIN TITLE appears. Between the ensuing INTERCUT a series of sharp LONG SHOTS. The composition each shot has that hard, sun-beaten texture of American primitive painting -- pressurized in its simplicity -- exemplified, perhaps, by the work of Grant Wood.

**EXT. SAM'S SANITARY BAR AND GRILL - ANGLE ON DOC VELIE**

Black  
veterinarian

assayer and notary public, mortician to the citizens of Rock who have departed to a better place, and

gentleman,  
Grill.  
them  
glances

to its lesser animals. An elderly, somewhat untidy  
he sits nonchalantly on a chair outside the Bar &  
Idling with him are three or four other loafers, among  
Sam, the middle-aged proprietor of the restaurant. Doc  
casually at his watch; no one else moves. The hot wind  
continues listlessly down the empty street.

**OUT**

Sequence omitted from original script.

**EXT. GARAGE - LIZ BROOKS**

cotton  
of  
habit, at  
gustiness

A tall, attractive girl of twenty in dungarees and  
shirt. She stands just outside the open barn-like door  
the garage, staring, from the compulsive force of  
the endlessly receding tracks. The sultry wind, its  
slightly increased, blows through her fine dark hair.

**OUT**

Sequence omitted from original script.

**EXT. PORCH OF HOTEL - COLEY TRIMBLE AND HECTOR DAVID**

him a  
type --  
They  
devil

two enormous men. HECTOR is tall, and there is about  
nasty, raw-boned tautness; COLEY is more the anthropoid  
long thick arms and a round, iron casing of a belly.  
glance down the street, watching incuriously a dust  
swirling in the wind.

its

Now the CAMERA has completed its probe of the town and  
denizens. MAIN TITLE and CREDITS are completed...

**CLOSE SHOT - MR. HASTINGS**

against

still spineless in his chair, the chair still tilted

the  
(engine  
Hastings  
oncoming

the shack. From o.s. and far away, we hear the horn of  
streamliner -- two long "WONKS", a short and a long  
whistle signal for approach to bridge crossing).  
straightens up ever so slightly as he reacts to the  
train.

**STRAIGHT SHOT - STREAMLINER**

moving at tremendous speed.

**BRIDGE**

three

with train barrelling toward it. The horn BLASTS --  
short WONKS (engine whistle signal for stopping at next  
station).

**CLOSE SHOT - HASTINGS**

galvanic  
throws  
arm

getting jerkily to his feet, as though charged by a  
current. The uncharacteristic speed of his movements  
the tilted chair to the station platform. He raises an  
to shield his watery eyes from the sun...

**HASTINGS**

(almost inaudible, as  
if to himself)  
Stopping...?

**SHOT - TRAIN**

a  
CAMERA  
brakes  
rails,  
speed,

heading toward CAMERA, churning across the desert like  
juggernaut. It PANS past CAMERA in a blur of speed.  
SWINGS UP on a level with the great iron wheels as the  
are applied. The wheels shriek agonizingly against the  
kicking up cinders and a wild flurry of dust. She cuts  
brakes hissing, and starts to slow down.

**LONG SHOT MAIN STREET - BLACK ROCK**

The SHOOTING from rear of town, toward the railroad tracks.  
The townspeople step out, frowning, cautious, disturbed.  
The secure ritual of the train passing through, never  
stopping, has somehow, for some unknown reason, been violated.

**CLOSE SHOT - DOC VELIE**

leaving as his mouth tightens. His air of placidity vanishes,  
his features disturbed.

**CLOSE SHOT - LIZ BROOKS**

eyes Her fine young face stiffens almost imperceptibly. Her  
as she are coated with a vague emptiness. She seems confused  
halfturns toward the hotel.

**REVERSE SHOT - WHAT SHE SEES**

of the Coley Trimble and Hector David, standing on the porch  
might hotel. They seem tense, responding variously to what  
glob be fear. Coley's nostrils flare, his flat ugly mouth  
rapidly. compresses. He looks profoundly serious. Hector wipes a  
of dusty sweat from the socket of an eye and blinks

**CLOSE SHOT - HASTINGS**

train as he stands in surprise, nervously alert, watching the  
as it comes to a complete stop. His jaw droops with the  
slackness of fear.

**OUT**

Sequence omitted from original script.

**EXT. STATION PLATFORM**

of a with the train stationary before it. A sleek steel door  
suitcase pullman clangs open. A colored porter carrying a

haired  
associate  
granite-  
about  
but  
somber  
shoulder  
hand is

walks down the wrought-iron steps. He is stately, gray-  
and lean, with the almost finical tidiness travelers  
with trainmen. The man behind him is big-shouldered, a  
like wedge of a man with calm, piercing eyes. There is  
him an air of monumental dependability and quiet humor,  
his eyes are those of a man who has lately lived in  
familiarity with pain. His left arm hangs from his  
with that lifeless rigidity of paralysis, while the  
hidden in his pocket.

**ANOTHER ANGLE - MACREEDY AND PORTER**

distance  
smiles a  
dust.  
the

The porter puts the suitcase on the platform. In the  
the town and its people are seen staring silently,  
motionlessly. The big man glances toward them. He  
sad, distasteful greeting to the town, its wretched  
its mean, modest buildings. The porter disappears into  
train as the conductor enters scene. He turns slowly,  
following Macreedy's gaze...

**CONDUCTOR**

(softly, staring at  
the towns people)  
Man. They look woebegone and far  
away.

**MACREEDY**

(looking around)  
I'll only be here twenty-four hours.

**CONDUCTOR**

In a place like this, it could be a  
lifetime.  
(turning to face  
Macreedy)  
Good luck, Mr. Macreedy.

engineer

Macreedy nods his thanks. The conductor signals the

blasts  
begins  
quite  
Macreeedy  
package of  
free  
the  
cardboard  
with  
scrapes the  
turns  
walks  
grapples  
controls it

(o.s.) and steps on the train. The diesel's claxon  
the torrid air ominously. The train slowly, smoothly,  
to move, picking up speed. The cars slip past until,  
suddenly, the Streamliner is gone. For a moment  
watches it. Then, quite unconsciously, he takes a  
cigarettes from his left hand pocket, taps the last one  
of the pack, sticks it between his lips and, crumpling  
empty pack, drops it beside the tracks. He takes a  
book of matches, flicks it open, bends a match in half  
agile fingers, and with a sure frictional motion  
head against the sandpaper guard. The match flares, the  
cigarette is lit. Macreeedy inhales, exhales deeply, and  
to pick up his suitcase. Then he sees Hastings, who  
slowly, almost painfully, to him. His Adam's apple  
protestingly with his collar. After a moment he  
sufficiently to talk...

**HASTINGS**

You for Black Rock?

**MACREEEDY**

(easily)

That's right.

**HASTINGS**

(uneasily)

There must be some mistake. I'm  
Hastings, the telegraph agent. Nobody  
told me the train was stopping.

**MACREEEDY**

(with a ghost of a  
grin)

They didn't?

**HASTINGS**

(upset)

I just said they didn't, and they

ought to. What I -- want to know,  
why didn't they?

**MACREEDY**

(shrugging)  
Probably didn't think it was  
important.

**HASTINGS**

Important?! It's the first time the  
streamliner stopped here in four  
years.

(swallowing nervously)  
You being met? You visiting folks or  
something? I mean, whatd'ya want?

**MACREEDY**

I want to go to Adobe Flat. Any cabs  
available?

**HASTINGS**

(as if he hadn't heard  
right; as if he wanted  
everyone in town to  
know)  
Adobe Flat?!  
(he gulps, recovers  
slightly)  
No cabs.

**MACREEDY**

Where's the hotel?

of a Hastings looks at him blankly. The thousand-yard stare  
hypnotic glazes his features.

**MACREEDY**

(patiently)  
I asked where's the hotel?

Hastings points.

**MACREEDY**

Thanks.

into With his suitcase, he cuts across a weedy path, running  
stares Black Rock's single street. For a moment, Hastings  
after him; then he breaks hurriedly, entering telegraph  
agent's shack.

**INT. POSTAL TELEGRAPH OFFICE**

as Hastings, fumbling, picks up the phone...

**HASTINGS**

(into mouthpiece)

Hello, Pete? Now, listen...

**REVERSE SHOT - MAIN STREET - BLACK ROCK**

toward the  
SHOOTING down the street as Macreedy slowly walks  
hotel. Not a person has moved, each eye is glued on the  
stranger.

platform  
enveloping  
The hollow rasp of Macreedy's tread on the wooden  
of the "pavement" seems shatteringly loud in the  
silence...

**CLOSE SHOT - LIZ**

as she follows the man's movement.

**OUT**

Sequence omitted from original script.

**CLOSE ANGLE - ON MACREEDY**

following  
townspeople  
five or  
peeling,  
drunk's  
as he walks along. He feels the eyes of everyone  
him, glaring at him. He halts, looks around. The  
continue to eye him brazenly, yet with an almost animal  
incuriosity. He grins and walks on past a cluster of  
six RFD mail boxes and a road sign [1], its paint  
its face punctured by three or four bullets from a  
pistol long ago.

**SHOT - MACREEDY**

farm  
(which  
heading toward the hotel. In b.g. is a relatively small  
equipment yard compressed between a general store

the  
office.  
it,  
legend:

Macreeedy has just passed) and the hotel just ahead. In  
yard are a few tractors, and among them huddles a tiny  
It is empty; the front window is thick with dust. On  
etched by an anonymous, childish finger, is a skull and  
crossbones. Running diagonally across is the printed

**T.J. HATES J.S.**

bemusement.  
hotel.  
engulfing  
whirlpool.

Macreeedy notes the inscription with a sort of wry  
He walks on, reaching the facade of the weather-beaten  
A gust of wind swirls down the street, momentarily  
Macreeedy and the entire area in a sudden eddying  
As it subsides...

**ANOTHER ANGLE - MACREEEDY**

has  
Macreeedy  
Trimble  
and  
battleship.  
the  
jaw.  
one  
thick  
elaborately  
those  
distinguished  
of the

As he peers through the dust toward the dingy hotel. It  
a narrow stoop and outside bay windows on each side.  
mounts the hotel steps. At the top of the steps Coley  
and Hector David watch him silently. Hector is large  
leanly muscular, yet Coley looms over him like a  
He is a gross behemoth of a man, with sharp flinty eyes  
size of glistening pinpoints and a slack, oversized  
Both men wear modern Western work clothes, but there is  
incongruous accessory which Hector affects. Around his  
wrist is a watch with a large flat face and an  
tooled leather strap -- a cheap reproduction of one of  
expensive Swiss timepieces which, among many  
accomplishments, tells the day of the week, the month  
year, the phase of the moon, etc., etc.

**MACREEDY**

(slowing up)  
'Afternoon.

No reaction from Hector.

**COLEY**

(blocking doorway)  
Anything I can do for you?

**MACREEDY**

You run this hotel?

**COLEY**

No.

**MACREEDY**

(pleasantly)  
Then there's nothing you can do for  
me.

He brushes past Coley and enters.

**HECTOR**

(turning to Coley)  
Find Smith!

Coley nods and heads down the street. Hector enters the  
hotel.

**OUT**

Sequence omitted from original script.

**INT. HOTEL**

It is a typical small town hotel, but crummier, with a  
tiny lobby. Macreedy is waiting at the empty desk as Hector  
strolls in, flopping his enormous bulk into a nicked and mothy  
chair. He picks up a newspaper, but his eyes remain on  
Macreedy. Macreedy waits patiently for the absent clerk. For a  
moment, he studies the open registration ledger; his eyes rove  
from the ink-splotched blotter up over the desk to one of  
those World War II banners, the imitation silk now stained  
and

The

faded. It depicts a shrieking eagle rampant, clutching  
Flag in a claw. Under it, the legend:

**"GOD BLESS AMERICA"**

Near it, a tacky placard proclaims:

**DO ALL THE GOOD YOU CAN,  
BY ALL THE MEANS YOU CAN,  
IN ALL THE WAYS YOU CAN,  
AT ALL THE TIMES YOU CAN,  
TO ALL THE PEOPLE YOU CAN,  
AS LONG AS EVER YOU CAN.**

Hector

young

the

softness

sugariness

uneasy

Feeling the eyes of Hector on him, Macreedy turns.  
meets his gaze with bland, insolent interest. Now a  
man (his name is PETE) comes out of a small room behind  
the registration desk and walks up to it. There is a  
softness about his regular features, a certain indefinable  
sugariness about his mouth. He seems tight-lipped, for lorn and  
uneasy as he faces Macreedy across the counter.

**MACREEDY**

(pleasantly)  
I'd like a room.

**PETE**

All filled up.

**MACREEDY**

(a beat)  
Got any idea where I might --

**PETE**

(stiffly, shaking his  
head)  
This is 1945, mister. There's been a  
war on.

tolerance.

small

Macreedy looks at the young man with impeccable  
tolerance. Without shifting his gaze, he slowly lets fall his  
small suitcase. It thuds softly on the frayed carpet.

**MACREEDY**

I thought it ended a couple of months ago.

**PETE**

Yeah, but the O.P.A. lingers on.

before  
firmly,  
it, a  
[...] on

Macreeedy looks down at the open ledger on the desk him. The clerk reaches out to close it. Gently, yet Macreeedy stops him, reopening the big book. He studies finger straying unconsciously inside his collar. He it to relieve the starchy stiffness.  
Pete begins to fidget...

**PETE**

You don't know about the O.P.A...

**MACREEDY**

(without looking up)  
Tell me.

**PETE**

Well, for establishments with less'n fifty rooms hotel keepers got to report regularly about...

His voice fades desperately.

**PETE**

...about tenants and... and...  
registration...  
(drawing himself up)  
There are penalties imposed...

Again his voice trails off.

**MACREEDY**

(eyes still on the  
ledger)  
You seem to have lots of vacancies.

**PETE**

(uncomfortable)  
Well... as I said...

runs

Macreeedy leans over the counter to a rack of keys. He

his splayed fingers over the key rack as...

**MACREEDY**

Lots of vacancies.

**PETE**

They're everyone of 'em locked up.  
Some are show rooms...

**MACREEDY**

Yes...?

**PETE**

(with touching  
sincerity)  
...for cattle buyers, feed salesmen.  
The others -- they're spoken for,  
rented to cowboys, ranch hands...

(Macreedy listens  
respectfully)

They pay by the month. For when they  
come into town. We provide for their  
every wish and comfort.

(weakly)

You understand...?

**MACREEDY**

Not really. But while I'm pondering  
it, get a room ready. Just for  
tonight.

(picking key from  
rack at random)

This one.

Hector. Pete opens his mouth but no sound comes out. [...] at

**CLOSE SHOT - HECTOR**

glowering at Pete.

**TWO SHOT - MACREEDY AND PETE**

as Macreedy signs the ledger.

**MACREEDY**

(signing)

Sure could use a bath. Where is it?

He picks up the key.

**PETE**

Head of the stairs.

Macreeedy nods, reaches for the bag at his feet. Then he hesitates, looks at Hector.

**MACREEEDY**

I don't know just why you're interested -- but the name's Macreeedy. I'm...

(grins)

It's all in the ledger.

**HECTOR**

(slowly, his eyes glued to Macreeedy's stiff arm)

You look like you need a hand.

Macreeedy says nothing. The wales along his face harden.

He  
disappears,

picks up his bag and climbs the stairs. As he

Hector lumbers to the desk and grabs the ledger.

**HECTOR**

(reading aloud)

John J. Macreeedy. From Los Angeles.

(looking up)

I wanna know everything he does, Pete. Check every call -- any mail.

**PETE**

(nodding)

And in the meantime...?

**HECTOR**

(grinning harshly)

In the meantime, I'll crowd him a little...

(looking up the stairs)

...see if he's got any iron in his blood...

As Pete bites his lower lip thoughtfully,

**DISSOLVE:**

**OUT**

Sequence omitted from original script.

**INT. BATHROOM - DAY - MACREEDY**

He  
shave;  
steam  
bath  
finger  
tag. He  
faucet  
cough  
the  
razor,  
in a new bathrobe, before a cracked, discolored mirror.  
draws a safety razor down his face, completing his  
then he wipes a hand over the mirror, which clouds with  
almost as fast as he can clear it. o.s., the SOUND of  
water gurgling down the tub drain. He runs a tentative  
inside the collar of his robe, pulling loose a price  
drops it carefully into a wastebasket. He turns on the  
at the sink to rinse his shaving brush. The rusty pipes  
and rumble, roaring as a trickle of water arrives while  
drain sucks loudly at its departure. He dries the  
turns off the faucet and exits.

**INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - ANGLE ON MACREEDY**

bathrobe  
like a  
towel  
knob. He  
silently,  
As he walks down the dark, narrow hall. He wears the  
and slippers; a large towel is draped over his head,  
prize fighter. He stops outside a door, pushes the  
from his head to his neck and puts his hand on the  
is about to insert the key when he tenses. Slowly,  
he turns the knob and throws open the door.

**INT. HOTEL ROOM**

contents  
sprawls  
He  
thick  
He  
Next to the door, in the corner of the small, sparsely  
furnished room is Macreedy's suitcase, open, its  
askew and scattered over the dusty floor. On the bed  
Hector David, his gigantic body straining the springs.  
lies on his back, hands clasped easily under his head,  
legs crossed, his Stetson tilted over his low forehead.

moment is completely unconcerned by Macreedy's entrance. For a  
Macreedy stares at him. Then...

**MACREEDY**

(slightly amused)  
I think you have the wrong room.

**HECTOR**

(not budging)  
You think so?

his Slowly, his eyes still on Macreedy, Hector takes off  
pants elaborate wrist watch and slides it gently into his  
pocket.

**HECTOR**

What else you got on your mind?

to be Macreedy pauses and takes in the situation. He refuses  
baited.

**MACREEDY**

Nothing, I guess.

**HECTOR**

If you had a mind, boy, you'd of heard what Pete downstairs said. He said these here rooms are for us cowboys. For our every wish and comfort.

**MACREEDY**

And this, I guess, is yours?

**HECTOR**

When I'm in town. And I'm in town, as any fool can see. You see that, don't you, boy?

**MACREEDY**

I guess I do. Would you mind very much if I sort of...  
(he gestures toward  
his suitcase and  
clothing)  
...clean up this mess and get another room?

**HECTOR**

Not at all. But if you want this room real bad...

(he raises his enormous bulk to a sitting position, rubbing the knuckles of one big fist with the palm of his other hand)

...we could maybe settle your claim without all this talk.

(no answer from Macreeedy)

If a man don't claim what's rightfully his'n, he's nuthin'. What do you think?

**MACREEEDY**

I guess so.

**HECTOR**

You guess so. But still you ain't claimin' this room?

**MACREEEDY**

I guess not.

**HECTOR**

You're all the time guessin', boy. Don't you ever know anything?

**MACREEEDY**

One thing I know. Since I got off the train, I've been needled. Why?

**HECTOR**

(after a beat, slowly)  
I guess I don't rightly know.

For a moment their eyes lock. Then Macreeedy goes to his suitcase and throws his clothes in it. As he goes out the door...

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**OUT**

Sequence omitted from original script.

**LOAFERS**

**INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY - FULL SHOT - SAM AND THE**

They sit around, each with his own thoughts. They are generally stolid; only Sam seems nervous. He looks up eagerly as Doc Velie enters the lobby. As he joins Sam... Sam walks light for a big man, Doc.

**DOC**

(straight)

Who?

**SAM**

(irritated)

You know who!

(Doc grins impishly;

Sam's anger subsides)

What do you think, Doc?

**DOC**

Why ask me? He's no salesman, that's sure.

(again the impish

grin)

Unless he's peddling dynamite.

**SAM**

(squirming visibly)

Maybe he's a cop, or something...

**DOC**

Ever see a cop with a stiff arm?

**SAM**

(squinting thoughtfully)

Maybe his arm's all right. Maybe he's just holding tight to something in his pocket...

**DOC**

(scoffing)

Like what? A pistol? A stick of T-N-T?

(gleefully)

To blow up this whole mangy, miserable town!

(with sudden, almost

naive, seriousness)

Why are you so interested, Sam?

**SAM**

Who, me?

**DOC**

I mean, if I was that interested...  
(his eyes look up  
toward the hotel  
stairs o.s.)  
...I'd ask him.

Sam follows Doc's gaze...

**REVERSE SHOT - WHAT THEY SEE 35X1**

Macreeedy walks down the stairs. Pete looks up from the  
desk.  
He is about to dart behind the partition when...

**MACREEEDY**

Hey! Hold it!

Sam and  
He walks to the desk, smiling at Pete. In b.g., Doc,  
the loafers watch.

**MACREEEDY**

Got any cigarettes?

up  
toward the  
Pete studies him, then bends under the counter, coming  
with a pack. Doc leaves Sam and is slowly walking  
stranger, eyeing him curiously.

**PETE**

This is all.

pack,  
Macreeedy throws the money on the desk and opens the  
dexterously using the fingers of his left hand.

**PETE**

How long you staying?

**MACREEEDY**

In my new room, you mean?  
(flatly)  
I'm staying.

**PETE**

I mean, in the hotel.

**MACREEDY**

Just about twenty-four hours.  
(sharply)  
Why?

**PETE**

(flustered)  
I... I was just askin'.

**MACREEDY**

(evenly)  
Why? You expecting a convention?

**PETE**

(doggedly)  
I was just askin'.

then,  
and  
Macreedy looks at him, inhales deeply on his cigarette  
as he slowly lets the smoke out, removes the cigarette  
looks at it.

**MACREEDY**

Stale.

starts  
Now Doc is at the desk not far from Macreedy. Macreedy  
out, then turns to Pete.

**MACREEDY**

Where can I rent a car?

**PETE**

I don't know.

Macreedy smiles and sighs tiredly. Then...

**MACREEDY**

(as to a child)  
Let's put it this way -- if I had a  
car and if I wanted to put gas in  
it, where would I go?

**PETE**

(refusing to cooperate)  
But you don't have a car.

**DOC**

(to Macreedy)  
You might try the garage at the end  
of the street.

his Macreedy pauses, looking at Doc, who blandly returns  
stare.

**MACREEDY**

Thanks.

Pete, Doc nods. Macreedy smiles and walks toward the door;  
Doc et al watching him. He goes out.

**EXT. STREET**

pulls up As Macreedy walks down hotel steps, a station wagon  
fender just before him. Tied with a rope to the right front  
weaves is a magnificent eight-point buck. A stain of dry blood  
unmistakable an uneven course down his glossy flank from an  
car; one bullet hole in his shoulder. Two men get out of the  
toward of them is Coley Trimble. He sees Macreedy coming  
child. him. He stands motionless in the center of the narrow  
swings pavement, picking at his nose with the detachment of a  
joining The other man is broad and excessively masculine as he  
Coley out from behind the wheel. He walks around the car,  
Coley Coley at the curb. Macreedy comes on. The man with  
face, looks at the stranger with colossal indifference, as  
shaven. expressionless as the soil of Black Rock. His handsome  
of under a dusty hunting cap, is taut and hard and wind-  
lips. In Next to Coley he stands motionless, except for the wisp  
lobby smoke from a black Cuban cigarette between his thin  
Macreedy, b.g., the loafers who had been ensconced in the hotel  
Silence move out the door and stand on the porch. They watch  
breaks Coley and Reno Smith, the handsome, taut-faced man.  
soems to settle over everything. It is Macreedy who

it...

**MACREEDY**

(grinning wearily at  
Coley)

Here we go again.

continues  
the  
follows

Gently he walks around Coley and Reno Smith and  
down the street. Coley's eyes follow him. Smith goes up  
steps of the hotel and enters the lobby. Coley quickly  
him. The loafers on the porch go back inside.

**INT. HOTEL LOBBY**

opens

The loafers resume their familiar places as Smith walks  
briskly to the clerk's desk. Pete, in anticipation,  
the hotel register, places it before Smith

**PETE**

(deferentially,  
gesturing toward the  
open register)

That's all I know about him, Mr.  
Smith.

eyes  
the

Smith doesn't answer; he looks up thoughtfully. His  
harden almost imperceptibly as he sees Coley, across  
narrow room, looking out the window after Macreedy.

**SMITH**

(to Coley's back)

Sit down.

**COLEY**

(spinning to face him)

I was only...

**SMITH**

(interrupting)

Sit down.

resting  
gigantic

Coley sits in the nearest chair. Beyond Smith, still  
easily against the high counter of Pete's desk, the

comes

figure of Hector appears at the top of the stairs. He  
down and joins Smith.

**HECTOR**

(after a pause)  
Pretty cool guy.

**SMITH**

Doesn't push easy?

**HECTOR**

(frowning)  
That's it -- that's just it. He pushes  
too easy. Maybe we oughtta...

He hesitates as Doc Velie sidles amiably into earshot.

**SMITH**

What do you want, Doc?

**DOC**

Nothing.  
(archly)  
I was just wondering what all you  
people were worrying about.  
(Smith looks at him  
coldly)  
Not that I have the slightest idea.

**SMITH**

You wonder too much, and you talk  
too much.  
(pauses)  
It's a bad parlay, Doc.

**DOC**

I hold no truck with silence.  
(impishly)  
I got nothing to hide.

**HECTOR**

(suddenly towering  
over Doc)  
What're you tryin' to say?

**DOC**

Nothing, man. It's just, you worry  
about the stranger only if you look  
at him...  
(slowly)  
...from a certain aspect.

**SMITH**

How do you look at him, Doc?

**DOC**

(firmly)

With the innocence of a fresh-laid egg.

**SMITH**

(after a pause)

Keep it up, Doc. Be funny. Make bad jokes.

(he starts to walk  
toward the window,  
Doc and Hector  
following him)

And some day I'll have Coley wash out your mouth with lye.

Smith looks thoughtfully out the window.

**REVERSE SHOT - WHAT HE SEES**

Macreeedy, down the end of the block, saunters easily up to Liz's garage.

**EXT. LIZ'S GARAGE - FULL SHOT**

Against the front of the building is parked a battered bicycle. On one of the barnlike walls a boy of nine is drawing laboriously with a piece of chalk. He puts the last flourish to a skull and crossbones identical with that seen earlier on the window of the equipment yard office. Macreeedy stops a few feet from him, waiting until the boy prints "T.J.". As he steps back to admire his handiwork...

**MACREEDY**

Hi, T.J.

T.J. nods. He approaches the wall, raising his chalk.

**MACREEDY**

This your garage?

**T. J.**

Nope.

**MACREEDY**

(a beat)

Where's the man it belongs to?

**T. J.**

Ain't a man.

He pauses. As Macreedy opens his mouth to interrogate further...

**T. J.**

Lady runs this garage.

of  
mouth...  
Again a pause. T.J. has just completed the final letter  
the word "HATES". And again as Macreedy opens his

**T. J.**

She's not here.

**MACREEDY**

Where'd she go?

**T. J.**

(shrugging)

I dunno. Somewhere.

**MACREEDY**

When will she be back?

**T. J.**

I dunno. Sometime.

work,  
J.S.". And again as Macreedy begins to speak...

**T. J.**

In about ten minutes.

**MACREEDY**

(with a grin)

Thanks.

completes  
of

T.J. turns, pulls the bike away from the building,  
a fastidious "pony express" and peddles furiously out  
scene.

**EXT. STREET - FULL SHOT**

it.

as Macreedy, after a moment's hesitation, starts down  
From the far end, at the telegraph agent's shack, a  
starts running toward Macreedy. It is Hastings.

figure

INTERCUT

doesn't

down,

grins

Hastings,

between the two men. Hastings, in his concentration,  
see the stranger until he is almost upon him. He slows  
suddenly, awkwardly, to a self-conscious walk. Macreedy  
at him, passes on, shaking his head speculatively.  
with a parting glance, gallops up the hotel steps.

**INT. HOTEL LOBBY - FULL SHOT**

with

Smith, Coley, Hector, Pete, Doc, Sam et al are still in  
evidence. Smith is in a tight little group at the desk

to

Coley, Hector and Pete. Doc has taken a position at the  
window, looking out. Hastings bursts in and half-runs

Smith...

**ANGLE FAVORING SMITH AND HASTINGS**

as the excited telegraph agent speaks.

**HASTINGS**

I called the Circle T. He ain't got  
business there -- not if they don't  
know him. Right, Mr. Smith?

Smith ignores him, thinking. Hastings breathes heavily.  
Finally...

**SMITH**

(to Hastings)

Send a wire to Nick Gandi in Los  
Angeles. Tell him to find out all he  
can about John J. Macreedy. Tell him  
I want to know fast. Sign my name.

Hastings nods, scribbling on a pad.

**HASTINGS**

What was that?

**SMITH**

Nick Gandi. G-A-N-D-I. Care of the  
Blake Hotel.

Hastings nods and hurriedly exits.

**COLEY**

(after a beat)

Who's Gandi?

in Smith looks at Coley, trying to decide if the question  
any way challenges his authority. He concludes not...

**SMITH**

He's a private detective.

(beat)

I drive to L.A. now and then.

**HECTOR**

(slightly worried)

He'll get us the dope?

**SMITH**

He'll get us anything, for twenty  
bucks a day and expenses.

(Hector frowns)

Hector, you worry too fast and too  
easy.

**HECTOR**

It's just, I don't like it.

**COLEY**

Maybe he's just passing through.

**HECTOR**

Don't bet on it. He can only mean  
trouble.

**SMITH**

(smiles faintly)

Hector, you're jumpy as a stall horse.

**HECTOR**

(doggedly)

We oughtta see him... talk to him.

**SMITH**

(quietly)

About what?

(Hector doesn't answer)

What'll we talk to him about? The birds, the bees? The weather? The crops?

(pauses)

You tried -- where'd it get you?

**HECTOR**

(uncomfortably)

I only thought...

**SMITH**

Sure. You only thought.

**COLEY**

(after a beat)

What do we do?

**SMITH**

What do you do? You wait. Like Pete here. Right, Pete?

Pete nods, his brow furrowed uncomfortably in a frown.

**SMITH**

That's all you do. But while you wait... I talk to him.

At this point the brittle silence is cracked by...

**DOC**

(o.s.)

Hey!

Smith and those around him look off in the direction of  
Doc.

**DOC VELIE - AT THE WINDOW**

peering out. He turns in the direction of Smith and the others.

**DOC**

Now what do you know?

(beaming)

Mr. Macreeedy seems to be heading for the jail.

(impishly)  
Now what do you suppose he'd want to  
see the Sheriff about?

Smith goes to the window, edging Doc to one side with a  
shoulder. He looks out grimly.

**REVERSE SHOT - WHAT HE SEES**

Macreeedy, down the street, cuts up the steps of the  
jail.

**BACK TO SCENE**

Smith staring out the window with a frown. Doc watching  
him  
crossing  
out of the corner of his eye, a bemused expression  
his puckish features.

**OUT**

Sequence omitted from original script.

**INT. JAIL**

and  
police  
and  
ANGLE on Macreeedy as he enters the jail. It is small  
dirty, with only a tired desk, two chairs and the usual  
posters on the wall. One side leads to the cell block  
Macreeedy heads for it.

both  
the  
his  
Sheriff TIM  
bleary  
ANGLE from interior of cell block comprising two cells,  
of which are open. A man is asleep in the lower bunk of  
front cell. The keys are in the lock. Macreeedy shakes  
head and starts to close the creaking cell door.

HORN, the man in the bunk, lifts his head, blinking his  
eyes. He is in terrible shape.

**TIM**

Hold it, friend.

He manages to crawl off the bunk and out toward  
Macreeedy.

**TIM**

(grinning)  
I ain't hankerin' to get locked in  
my own jail.

**MACREEDY**

Sorry. I thought you were a guest.

**TIM**

As it happens, I'm the host.

the  
He walks out of the cell, Macreedy following him into  
office.

**SHOT - OF THE TWO**

snort,  
Tim breaks out a bottle of booze, starts to take a  
then stops, offers it to Macreedy.

**TIM**

Snort?

**MACREEDY**

No, thanks.

**TIM**

Don't blame you. It's awful.

county. He  
falls  
He takes a belt that would incapacitate half the  
finishes, smacks his lips, lays the bottle down, and  
into a chair. He looks up at Macreedy.

**TIM**

(suddenly mean)  
What're you lookin' at?

**MACREEDY**

(easy)  
You tell me.

**TIM**

(after a beat, relaxing)  
I ain't always this bad -- just that  
last night me and my pal Doc Velie,  
we did a little celebratin'. At least  
I did.

**MACREEDY**

What were you celebrating?

**TIM**

(shrugs)  
You name it.  
(studies Macreedy)  
What do you want?

**MACREEDY**

My name's Macreedy. I came in on the  
Streamliner.

Tim studies him, trying to focus.

**TIM**

You what?

**MACREEDY**

I said I came in...

**TIM**

(interrupting)  
You ain't from around here. Up Tucson  
way -- Phoenix? Mesa? You ain't  
sellin' cattle nor seed nor nothin'  
like that?

**MACREEDY**

No.  
(sighs, then distinctly  
as to a child)  
All I want from you is a little  
information. I've got to get to a  
place called Adobe Flat.

**TIM**

(reacts; then, tight-  
lipped)  
This ain't no information bureau.

Macreedy starts to say something, then stops.  
Reconsidering...

**MACREEDY**

One thing about Black Rock --  
everybody's polite. Makes for gracious  
living.

**TIM**

Nobody asked you here.

**MACREEDY**

How do you know?  
(he moves toward the  
door, with a rueful  
grin)

**TIM**

(starting after him)  
What about Adobe Flat?

**MACREEDY**

I'm looking for a man named Komako.

The Sheriff reaches for his bottle. In his haste he  
drops  
before  
it. Macreedy's hand moves quickly, catching the bottle  
it hits the floor.

**MACREEDY**

Almost a disaster.

**TIM**

(sinking back in his  
chair)  
A fate worse'n death.  
(he takes the bottle  
from Macreedy)  
You move fast for a crip... for a  
big man.

For a moment heavy silence. Finally...

**MACREEDY**

What about Komako?

**TIM**

(slowly)  
If there's no further questions...

Macreedy grins harshly and exits. Tim watches him go,  
then  
shaking  
staring  
slowly reaches for the bottle. He pauses, looks at his  
hand. Then he withdraws it and just sits in the chair  
blindly ahead, seeing nothing.

**EXT. STREET**

Frowning, deep in thought, Macreedy walks down the  
dusty  
street. As he reaches the hotel...

**SMITH**

(o.s.)

Mr. Macreedy.

meet

Macreedy stops, looks toward Smith as he walks out to  
him.

**MACREEDY**

That's the friendliest word I've  
heard since I got here.

beside

As Smith joins him, he walks on. Smith falls in step  
him. GO WITH THEM.

**SMITH**

(grins boyishly)

My name is Smith. I own the Triple-  
Bar ranch.

(holds out his hand;

Macreedy shakes it)

I want to apologize for some of the  
folks in town.

**MACREEDY**

They act like they're sitting on a  
keg.

**SMITH**

A keg...? Of what?

**MACREEDY**

I don't know. Maybe diamonds. Maybe  
gunpowder.

**SMITH**

(disarmingly)

No. Nothing like that. We're a little  
suspicious of strangers is all.  
Hangover from the old days. The old  
West.

**MACREEDY**

I thought the tradition of the old  
West was hospitality.

**SMITH**

(with a sincere smile)

I'm trying to be hospitable, Mr.  
Macreedy.

(boyishly pushes his  
dusty cap back on  
his head)  
Going to be around for a while?

**MACREEDY**

Could be.

**SMITH**

How would you like to go hunting  
tomorrow? I'd be proud to have you  
as my guest.

**MACREEDY**

Thanks, but I'm afraid not.

**SMITH**

(with admirable candor)  
You mean, because of your arm?  
(slaps Macreedy's  
shoulder in a  
friendly,  
understanding gesture)  
I knew a man once, lost an arm in a  
threshing accident. Used to hunt all  
the time.

(almost too blandly)  
But he was quite a man. He...  
(pauses; then, with  
discreet and charming  
gravity)  
I'm sorry. I... What I mean is -- if  
there's anything I can do while you're  
around...

**MACREEDY**

I'm looking for...  
(sighs)  
Never mind. Thanks, anyway.

**SMITH**

(quietly)  
You're looking for what, Mr. Macreedy?

**MACREEDY**

(eyeing him)  
A man named Komako.

**SMITH**

(no hesitation)  
Komako -- Sure, I remember him --  
Japanese farmer. Never had a chance.

**MACREEDY**

No?

**SMITH**

He got here in '41 -- just before Pearl Harbor. Three months later he was shipped to one of those relocation centers.

(shaking his head)

Tough.

**MACREEDY**

Which one did he go to?

**SMITH**

Who knows?

**MACREEDY**

You think maybe if I wrote him, the letter would be forwarded?

**SMITH**

I'm sure it would. Write your letter. I'll see it gets out tonight.

**MACREEDY**

It wouldn't be too much trouble?

**SMITH**

No trouble at all.

**MACREEDY**

Funny. Because I think it would be a great deal of trouble for you. It's been a great deal of trouble for me.

At this point they are in front of...

**EXT. LIZ'S GARAGE**

Macreeedy stops, as does Smith. He looks keenly at Smith  
as  
he takes from his inner jacket pocket a half-dozen  
letters...

**MACREEDY**

I wrote these letters to Komako. They weren't forwarded. They were returned -- address unknown.

(he smiles grimly at Smith)

So I guess there's nothing you can  
do for me, after all.

o.s.  
at the  
silently  
effort, a  
jeep.

Smith opens his mouth to reply when the NOISE of a jeep  
interrupts him. The jeep comes INTO SHOT. Liz Brooks,  
wheel, cuts the engine and jumps out. Smith ambles  
to a wall and leans against it. Liz reaches behind the  
driver's seat and hoists, with both hands and some  
five-gallon drum of axle grease from the floor of the  
jeep. As she rests it on the rear fender...

**MACREEDY**

(going to her)  
Need a little help?

help

The girl looks at Smith, who has made no attempt to  
her.

**LIZ**

I can manage.

She lifts the drum to the ground.

**MACREEDY**

Well, I need a little help.  
(she looks at him  
questioningly)  
I'd like to rent your jeep.

**LIZ**

It'll be two dollars an hour, gas  
extra, and ten dollars for my time.

**SMITH**

(to Liz)  
Aren't you going to ask him where he  
wants to go?

Liz looks from Smith to Macreedy, puzzled.

**SMITH**

He wants to go to Adobe Flat.

seek

Liz hesitates. Macreedy notes her confusion as her eyes  
Smith's for instructions. Quickly he moves in...

**MACREEDY**

The road's marked?

**LIZ**

(nodding)

Yeah. It's about six -- seven miles down...

**MACREEDY**

Then I won't need your time.

knowing  
arm...

Macreeedy hands her a bill. She fumbles with it, not what else to do. Her eyes drift to Macreeedy's stiff

**LIZ**

(uneasily)

I thought you might... need a little help.

**MACREEDY**

I can manage.

He steps toward the jeep as...

**SMITH**

Liz. Do you have a license to rent cars? You could get into trouble.

**MACREEDY**

It's all right. I won't mention it to the Sheriff.

manipulating

He steps into jeep and, with one hand expertly the controls, drives off.

**MED. SHOT - SMITH AND LIZ**

Smith turns his attention to the girl...

**SMITH**

(slowly)

You shouldn't have done that.

**LIZ**

I thought it would be better if he went out there and got done with it.

(Smith looks at her sharply)

I mean, what could he find out?

frown,  
hand.  
For a moment Smith doesn't answer. Instead, with a half  
he lifts the bill Maccreedy had given her from Liz's

**SMITH**

(as he studies it)  
This is liable to be the hardest ten  
dollars you ever earned in your life.

down  
He crumples it, pokes the wad in her hand and walks off  
the street as...

**QUICK**

**DISSOLVE:**

**OUT**

Sequence omitted from original script.

**INT. JAIL - FULL SHOT - DAY**

bottle  
Tim sits in his chair, still staring sightlessly at the  
whiskey bottle. Smith enters. He looks from Tim to the  
on the table, then back to Tim.

**SMITH**

(after a beat,  
disinterestedly)  
What did he want -- the stranger?

**TIM**

(abstractedly)  
He asked about Komako.  
(looking up at Smith)  
You think he'll kick up a storm?

**SMITH**

(easily)  
A storm? About what?

**TIM**

I don't know. All I know, I don't  
want trouble around here.  
(pauses awkwardly,  
then)  
Never again.

**SMITH**

Trouble? You don't know anything about Komako, now do you, Tim?

**TIM**

I do not. That's the point.

**SMITH**

The point is, what you don't know can't hurt you.

**TIM**

Maybe there's something I ought to know. Maybe I ought to ask you... before the stranger comes back and starts breathing down my neck.

**SMITH**

(a faint smile)

Tim, you're a lost ball in the high weeds. I told you a long time ago, nothing happened for you to worry about.

**TIM**

(stands up, facing Smith)

Thing is, I do worry. Maybe I ain't much else, but I'm sure a worrier.

(beat, then with soft emphasis)

And I'm still the law.

**SMITH**

Then do your job, Tim.

**TIM**

What is my job, Mr. Smith? Maybe I'd better find out before Macreeedy does it for me.

**SMITH**

(evenly)

Macreeedy'll do nothing, Tim. And neither will you.

**TIM**

Suppose I decide to try?

**SMITH**

That would be dangerous. You got the body of a hippo, Tim, but the brain

of a rabbit. Don't overtax it.

He stares harshly at the Sheriff. Tim tries unsuccessfully to meet his gaze. Then, slowly, he sits down.

**TIM**

(lowering his eyes,  
mumbling)  
Yes, Mr. Smith.

Smith slowly walks behind Tim's chair and silently, patronizingly pats the Sheriff's slack shoulder...

**INT. TELEGRAPH AGENT'S OFFICE - FULL SHOT**

Hastings is sitting at his desk. The telegraph ticker starts to splutter. Hastings rushes to it. He listens, and starts to scribble. Then he gulps nervously, a confused expression on his face. As the telegraph key stops as suddenly as it had begun, Hastings jumps up frantically and, holding the sheet of paper, runs out of the shack.

**EXT. STREET**

as he runs toward hotel.

**EXT. HOTEL - LONG SHOT**

Hastings runs up the steps, pausing momentarily. His jaws move, but CAMERA is too far away to pick up his obvious question. Coley gestures toward the jail; then Hastings turns and runs down the steps followed by Doc et al.

**EXT. STREET - FULL SHOT**

Hastings runs down the street toward the jail followed by Doc et al.

**EXT. JAIL**

Smith  
are  
the  
stares  
Tim, who  
eyes  
reading

as Hastings runs up the steps with a hobnailed clatter.  
comes out to investigate, followed by Tim. Doc, et al  
congregated at the foot of the steps. Hastings slaps  
sheet of paper in front of Smith. Utter quiet. Everyone  
at Smith, waiting for a reaction -- everyone except  
stares straight ahead, seeing nothing, and Doc, whose  
are locked sympathetically on Tim. Smith finishes  
the wire. His face is expressionless. After a moment...

**HECTOR**

(to Smith)  
From L.A.?

Smith doesn't answer but...

**HASTINGS**

Yeah! From that private detective!

**HECTOR**

(to Smith)  
What does he say? Who is this guy?

**HASTINGS**

Never heard of him, that's what he  
says! He checked and there's no John  
J. Maccreedy. No listing -- no record --  
no information. Nothing.

**PETE**

(quietly, after a  
beat, to Smith)  
Where does that leave us?

**COLEY**

I'll tell you where...

**SMITH**

Shut up!

Smith,  
street.

He folds the message carefully, puts it in his pocket.  
Abruptly Tim turns and disappears inside his office.  
with some restraint, walks down the steps to the

**MOVING SHOT - SMITH**

away,  
and  
as he takes Coley's arm, and Pete's. The trio moves  
taking a position perhaps 15 feet from Doc. Hector, Sam  
Hastings move toward them.

**OUT**

Sequence omitted from original script.

**EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - SMITH, COLEY AND PETE**

Hastings.  
In b.g. at a respectful distance are Hector, Sam and  
SHOOT parallel to tracks, which disappear far into the  
horizon.

The following dialogue is delivered in an undertone...

**SMITH**

(turning to Coley)  
Now, Coley...?

**COLEY**

(takes a breath, then)  
I think Macreeedy's a nothing. A  
nobody.

**SMITH**

Is he?

**COLEY**

So there's nothing to worry about.

**SMITH**

Isn't there?  
(a beat)  
You got brains, you have.

**COLEY**

(squirming)  
But what can he find out? That Komako  
was...?  
(Smith glares at him)  
Suppose he finds out?

**SMITH**

A nobody like Macreeedy can raise a  
pretty big stink. The point is...  
who would miss a nobody like Macreeedy

if he just, say, disappeared? Who,  
Coley?

child,  
Coley is terribly preoccupied, balances himself, like a  
on a steel rail.

**SMITH**

(exasperated)  
Coley!

**COLEY**

(galvanized from the  
rail)  
Huh?

**PETE**

Why don't we wait...

**SMITH**

Wait for what?

**PETE**

I mean, maybe he won't find anything.  
Maybe he'll just go away.

**SMITH**

Not Macreeedy. I know those maimed  
guys. Their minds get twisted. They  
put on hair shirts and act like  
martyrs. They're all of 'em do-  
gooders, trouble makers, freaks.

**PETE**

But there's no danger yet. Let's  
wait and see.

**SMITH**

(interrupting,  
appealing to Coley  
as an equal)  
No danger, he says. This guy's like  
a carrier of small pox. Since he  
arrives, there's been a fever in  
this town, an infection. And it's  
spreading.

(he glances from Coley  
to Pete)

Hastings has been in a sick sweat,  
running around, shooting off his  
face. Doc, for the first time in  
four years, gets snotty with me.

Liz...

(to Pete)

...your own sister -- acts like a fool.

**PETE**

(hotly)

She's just a kid.

**SMITH**

(scoffing)

Kid! She must have strained every muscle in her head to get so stupid! Renting him a jeep! And Tim -- Tim, the rum-dum. Tim suddenly decides he's gotta act like a Sheriff.

(to Coley, gesturing  
at Pete)

And he says what's the danger.

Brittle silence for a moment. Then...

**SMITH**

(easily)

Of course, if you want to take the chance...

Pete doesn't answer.

**COLEY**

(grimly)

Not me.

**SMITH**

All right, then...

**PETE**

It's not all right! You're so mighty quick to kill -- he's not an animal!

**SMITH**

(to Coley, with mock  
surprise)

Well, listen to little spitfire...

(turning slowly on  
Pete)

You sniveling toad! I'm saving your neck! If I don't, who will?

**PETE**

(squirming)

All I said...

**SMITH**

Who will?! Doc? Tim? Your sister,  
with the rocks in her head?

Pete is silent.

**SMITH**

One thing about your sister -- she's  
got twice the guts you have. You're  
only fit for running away.

**COLEY**

It's too late for that.  
(belligerently, slowly,  
at Pete)  
He's in this, and he ain't running  
no place.

There is a long, electric silence. Pete is defeated.

**SMITH**

(finally)  
All right, then...

He pauses for emphasis. Then, as he starts to talk  
again...

**INT. JAIL**

Tim stands facing the wall, shoulders hunched,  
suffering.  
Doc comes in and watches him silently, Tim turns,  
facing  
Doc, turns again to concentrate on a faded newspaper  
photograph framed and hanging on the wall.

**ANOTHER ANGLE - TIM**

SHOOTING over his shoulder. Focal point: the  
"photograph".  
It shows a widely grinning, moderately alert and healthy  
Tim  
of perhaps five years ago. He is wearing, proudly, his  
badge  
of office, and behind him, mildly interested in the  
proceedings, is Reno Smith, his erstwhile sponsor. The  
heading  
on the photo reads: DEPUTY SHERIFF NAMED FOR BLACK  
ROCK.

**MED. SHOT - TIM AND DOC**

to  
Tim takes the photo off the wall and, holding it, turns  
face Doc...

**TIM**

Let Smith find himself a new boy. I  
can't take it another day.

(pauses, looks at Doc)

If you're a sheriff, they gotta  
respect you, otherwise you can't do  
your job.

(shakes his head)

They just laugh.

**DOC**

I don't laugh, Tim.

**TIM**

Why don't you?

**DOC**

Cut it out, Tim.

**TIM**

You should!

**DOC**

In the name of well-adjusted manhood,  
snap out of it. You're going to get  
a complex or something.

**TIM**

Four years ago if I'd of done my  
job... if I'd of checked up and found  
out what happened. But I didn't!  
Just like Smith figured.

**DOC**

What could you have found out? They  
told you a story. You had to believe  
it.

**TIM**

Do you believe it?

Doc squirms but doesn't answer.

**TIM**

Do you know what happened?

**DOC**

I don't know.  
(ironically)  
I lead a quiet, contemplative life.

**TIM**

Me, I didn't even try to find out.

(a beat)

Don't you understand?

(he taps the badge on  
his chest)

When you wear that badge, you're the  
Law. And when something happens,  
against the Law, you're supposed to  
do something about it. It's your  
job.

(simply)

Me... I did nothin'. And that's what's  
eatin' me. What kind of prescription  
you got for that?

**DOC**

I don't know. I've never been able  
to find one for myself.

Tim takes off his badge and throws it on the desk.

**DOC**

Only one thing -- don't quit, Tim.

**TIM**

Why not?

**DOC**

Maybe this feller Macreedy has the  
prescription.

and They look at each other. Slowly Tim picks up his badge  
pins it back on.

**OUT**

Sequence omitted from original script.

**EXT. DESERT ROAD**

road,  
Macreedy  
serious  
An old marker, jutting on an angle at the side of the  
reads: ADOBE FLAT. Beneath it an arrow points ahead.  
steers the jeep up the narrow, rutted trail between a

of enormous boulders.

**ANOTHER ANGLE**

flat as he drives to the far end of the boulders, reaching a  
the piece of land completely surrounded by rocks. Beyond  
an rocks is what remains of a burned-out ranch house, and  
abandoned well.

**OUT**

Sequence omitted from original script.

**MED. SHOT - MACREEDY**

burned-out in the wreckage. The remains of an iron bed. The  
Macreeedy shell of a pick-up truck. Part of a stove. A morass of  
touches bottles, all sizes and shapes, some of them broken.  
removes halts momentarily beside the well. Reaching out he  
opening. the warped sun-beaten boards that cover the mouth. He  
HEAR a There is a long beat and then, from far, far below we  
a faint PLUNK (o.s.). He replaces the board and walks to  
picture. a broken wall. He touches the burned out frame of a  
square The frame falls to the ground, leaving an un-scorched  
standing on the surface of the wall. He goes past a solitary  
among stone chimney. Suddenly he halts, arrested by something  
the rubble, the rottenness and the ashes.

**REVERSE ANGLE - WHAT HE SEES**

rectangular Surrounded by the seared and blackened earth is a  
patch of lovely wild flowers.

**BACK TO MACREEDY**

lined in  
flower  
in a  
wasteland.  
shielded  
ridges.

studying the brightly colored flowers. His face is  
thought. He stoops, gathers a few buds in his hand. He  
examines them, his brow furrowed. As he slowly twirls a  
between thumb and forefinger, CAMERA PANS from Macreedy  
long slow arc, taking in miles and miles of barren  
CAMERA RISES, TILTING UPWARD to a cliff far away and  
from Macreedy's view by the intervening rocks and

**EXTREME LONG SHOT - CLIFF**

and on it the outline of an automobile.

**MED. SHOT - THE CAR**

of  
below;  
rise.  
SLOWLY

empty. It is parked on a narrow dirt road. On one side  
the road the cliff falls abruptly to the valley far  
on the other, the steep, shaly outcropping continues to  
For a moment CAMERA HOLDS on the car. Then it PANS  
upward about fifty feet, HOLDING this time on...

**PINNACLE OF CLIFF**

pair

where a man is looking off toward Adobe Flat through a  
of high-powered glasses. The man is Coley Trimble.

**ADOBE WELLS - MACREEDY**

and

Grimly he walks toward the jeep, still holding the wild  
flowers. Now he pockets them, jumps into the vehicle  
drives off.

**THE CLIFF - COLEY**

the

continues to train his glasses on Macreedy far below in  
moving jeep.

**THE JEEP - MACREEDY**

driving steadily over rough, rocky terrain.

**COLEY**

big,  
climbs down from the pinnacle of the cliff and enters a  
powerful '36 Packard sedan.

**MACREEDY**

country.  
shifts to low gear as the jeep presses into hilly

**COLEY - IN HIS CAR**

turns on the ignition.

**MACREEDY - IN THE JEEP**

side  
curve,  
as it winds along a road with the cliff rising on one  
and falling off steeply on the other. He rounds a  
passes an insignificant side road, drives on.

**THE SIDE ROAD**

Macreeedy.  
The car with Coley at the wheel pulls out, follows

between  
INTERCUT between the two cars, with the distance  
them constantly diminishing.

**OUT**

Sequence omitted from original script.

**EXT. - FLAT ROAD**

both  
a straightaway, cutting through rocky outcroppings on  
sides. Macreeedy's jeep roars by, pursued by the gaining  
Packard.

**CLOSE SHOT - MACREEDY IN JEEP - (PROCESS)**

followed,  
Coley.  
For the first time he is aware that he is being  
and that the man at the wheel of the big Packard is

**SHOT - PACKARD**

picking up tremendous speed.

**EXT. - ROAD BED**

declivities  
whinny,

proceeding over a series of turns, inclines,  
(according to location terrain). Engines roar, brakes  
tires scream, skidding on the turns.

**ANOTHER ANGLE - ROAD BED**

within a  
the  
floor

as Coley overtakes Macreedy. He steers the big car  
foot or two of the jeep. The terrain has steepened; on  
right there is nothing between the road and the valley  
far below but a few inches of soft shoulder.

come  
veering

As Macreedy pulls wide on a razor turn, Coley tries to  
inside him. Macreedy, fighting for control of the  
jeep, succeeds in cutting him off.

**CURVE IN ROAD**

jeep  
maneuvering

In the approach, Coley cuts sharp into the jeep. The  
seems to roll with the blow, then leaps ahead,  
the turn.

**CLOSE SHOT COLEY IN CAR (PROCESS)**

seems  
the  
He  
ram,  
kicking  
the gas  
sickening

Coley is flustered, his face blood-shot with fury. He  
to generate an atmosphere of vicious, cruel craziness;  
wild smile across his mouth is almost sensual, obscene.  
floorboards the Packard. Like some monstrous battering  
the heavy car smashes into the jeep's rear bumper,  
the smaller vehicle jerkily ahead. Coley floorboards  
pedal, again. Each time he slams into the jeep with

metal.

force, with the brutal abrasion of metal pounding

**CLOSE SHOT - MACREEDY - (PROCESS)**

sized  
cliff

With one arm he works frantically to keep his under-car on the twisty road. He sees ahead a precipitous falling off on an impossibly sharp curve. He makes a decision...

however  
road,  
miraculously  
halt

Just ahead the gradient is comparatively gradual, steep by normal standards. He swings the jeep off the onto the declivity. The car plunges downward, upright. Macreedy jockeys it to a whirring, shuddering in the soft sand at the bottom of a draw.

with

Macreedy turns slightly and looks up the mountain-side the road at its summit...

**WHAT HE SEES: EXTREME LONG SHOT - COLEY**

In  
car,

standing at the edge of the road, peering down at him. b.g., the Packard. Coley turns emphatically, gets into drives off.

**BACK TO MACREEDY**

dust  
and  
becomes  
tinkle

His face is caked with the sweat of his exertions and kicked up by the grinding wheels. He exhales heavily runs a shaky hand across the side of his head. He aware suddenly of a NOISE, a trickling, an unmistakable as of running water. He frowns, opens the jeep door...

**MEDIUM SHOT - JEEP**

NOISE

as Macreedy unlatches the hood and throws it open. The continues. Macreedy examines the engine and finds the difficulty...

**INSERT - ENGINE**

carburetor

focal point: the nut joining the gas line with the  
has worked loose in the jouncing the car has taken.  
hand Macreedy screws it tight.

With his

**MEDIUM SHOT - JEEP**

as Macreedy lowers the hood, re-enters jeep. He turns  
on ignition. The engine fires. As he drives slowly out of  
the ravine...

**DISSOLVE:**

**EXT. BLACK ROCK - MAIN STREET CLOSE SHOT - HECTOR**

apple  
with  
stops  
his long face even more horsey than usual, with half an  
in his mouth. He stands in front of the grocery store,  
the baskets of fruit on the sidewalk. He looks up,  
crunching.

**CLOSE SHOT - SAM**

a  
at the window of the Bar & Grill, cleaning an ear with  
toothpick. He looks out. The toothpick is motionless.

**CLOSE SHOT - HASTINGS**

apple  
fidgeting outside his shack. He looks up. His Adam's  
turns completely over.

**OUT**

Sequence omitted from original script.

**REVERSE SHOT - WHAT THEY SEE**

He  
Macreedy slowly driving the jeep toward Liz's garage.  
looks neither to the right nor left.

**GROUP SHOT - FAVORING SMITH AND COLEY**

face  
cold,  
Smith

Standing on the porch of the hotel, watching. Smith's compresses, and his eyes swivel to rest on Coley's with contemptuous anger. Coley licks his lips uneasily. turns and enters the hotel. Coley meekly follows.

**FULL SHOT - MACREEDY**

He

He brakes the jeep before the garage. No one is there. parks the vehicle, gets out and heads down the street.

**EXT. HOTEL**

Coley's  
ugly,  
one  
in  
hotel.  
turn  
so...

Macreeedy is about to go up the steps when he sees car at the curb. Both right fenders are creased. An jagged break has split the front bumper almost in half, part angling crazily toward the sky, the other drooping the dust of the road. Smith and Coley come out of the They stand on the porch, watching Macreeedy as he in watches the car. They exchange a glance. Smith nods,

**COLEY**

Well, if it's not Macreeedy - the world's champion road hog.

Macreeedy.

He walks down the steps to the street, joining Smith remains on the porch.

**MACREEDY**

Yeah. It's a small world.

**COLEY**

But such an unfriendly one. Now why did you want to crowd me off the road?

**MACREEDY**

(with a slow grin)  
I'm kind of sorry if I've incurred

your displeasure.

**COLEY**

Look what you did to my car.

**MACREEDY**

If there's anything I can do to make up for it...

**COLEY**

You ought to be careful, man -- all that one-arm driving.

**MACREEDY**

I'd be glad to pay the damages.

**COLEY**

It's a threat to life and limb.

**MACREEDY**

Fortunately no one was hurt.

**COLEY**

You could get yourself killed that way -- nosin' all over the countryside.

**MACREEDY**

That's the real danger, I can see that.

**COLEY**

Why that's pretty smart of you. How long you intend to keep it up?

**MACREEDY**

I'm getting out of here, right now.

Coley  
like a  
instructions of  
his teacher.

He walks up the steps, past Smith, and into the hotel.  
glances up at Smith, grinning with self-satisfaction,  
small boy who has carried out perfectly the

**INT. HOTEL**

Macreeedy  
and

The lobby empty except for Pete behind the desk.  
goes to him. Pete seems elaborately occupied arranging

He

re-arranging a few file cards. Smith enters the lobby.  
stands in b.g. watching Macreedy and the desk clerk.

**MACREEDY**

(to Pete)

Still expecting that convention?

**PETE**

(looking up)

What...?

**MACREEDY**

If you're expecting any extra cowboys,  
my room is available.

**PETE**

You're checking out?

**MACREEDY**

(nodding)

Is there a train through here tonight?

**PETE**

Nothing till tomorrow morning. The  
streamliner.

**MACREEDY**

I know that. How about freights?

(Pete shakes his head)

Milk train?

**PETE**

Tomorrow. After the streamliner.

**MACREEDY**

Busses?

**PETE**

Closest stop is Sand City -- thirty-  
two miles away.

(a beat)

You're in such a hurry, you should  
have never got off here.

**MACREEDY**

I'm inclined to agree with you.

Smith's

He turns, walks toward porch. Pete looks at Smith.  
eyes follow Macreedy.

**OUT**

Sequence omitted from original script.

**INT. LIZ'S GARAGE - FULL SHOT**

old  
car on  
watching  
garage

In the gloom of the lube pit, Liz's mechanic, a dirty man, is draining the oil out of the crankcase of the the rack. The girl stands beside the pit, silently the old man. Now she pauses, looks o.s. toward the open doors...

**WHAT SHE SEES - MACREEDY**

parked in  
the  
behind

entering the scene, stopping to look at Liz's jeep front of the wide doors. He turns his eyes vaguely in direction of Liz, but he doesn't see her in the shadows the car on the rack, He advances a step, pausing...

**MACREEDY**

Anybody home?

**OUT**

Sequence omitted from original script.

**EXT. LUBE PIT - LIZ**

watches

She does not answer. Instead, she silently twists the crankcase petcock, stopping the flow of oil. She

Macreeedy closely.

**INT. GARAGE**

and

Macreeedy again shifts his eyes to the jeep, then, with decision, he goes to a work bench, opening the drawers

rummaging among the contents.

**LIZ**

(o.s.)

If you're looking for the jeep key...

toward Macreedy turns as Liz comes toward him. She gestures  
the open drawers.

**LIZ**

...it's not there...

stands Macreedy waits for her to go on. She doesn't. She  
there, staring at him.

**MACREEDY**

(after a beat)

In that case, where do you suggest I  
look?

She turns, walks back toward the lube pit.

**LIZ**

(over her shoulders)

The jeep's not for rent.

**MACREEDY**

It was, just a few hours ago.

**LIZ**

(flatly)

Things change.

**MACREEDY**

(with grim amusement)

Sure. And Smith is the kid who changes  
'em.

She doesn't answer. Macreedy goes to her.

**MACREEDY**

Miss Brooks.

(softly)

What's the matter with this town of  
yours?

**LIZ**

Nothing. It's none of your concern.

**MACREEDY**

Then why are they all so concerned  
about me?

**LIZ**

Am I concerned?

**MACREEDY**

No, you're not. But...

**LIZ**

But what?

**MACREEDY**

(easily)

But it strikes me you're a little too unconcerned. So unconcerned you won't even rent me a jeep.

**LIZ**

(flaring)

I don't run a taxi service. I don't have a license.

**MACREEDY**

I wish others in this town were as scrupulously devoted to law and order as you are.

**LIZ**

(hotly)

Why don't you lay off! If you don't like it here, go back where you came from!

**MACREEDY**

Funny thing. They try to kill me, and you feel persecuted.

**LIZ**

I don't want to get involved.

**MACREEDY**

Involved in what?

**LIZ**

(retreating)

Whatever you're up to. Whatever happens, I've got to go on living here. These people are my neighbors, my friends.

**MACREEDY**

All of them?

**LIZ**

(slowly)

This is my town, Mr. Macreedy, like it or not. Whatever happened here,

it was long ago, now it's... it's...

**MACREEDY**

(evenly)

Dead and buried?

(a beat)

Whatever did happen, you don't seem to like it. Why do you stick around?

**LIZ**

(after a beat)

Because of my brother. Pete. He'd never leave.

**MACREEDY**

Didn't you ever think of going without him. You're sort of independent and he's... he's...

**LIZ**

Weak. I know. That's why I couldn't leave him.

**MACREEDY**

(softly)

What did your brother do?

**LIZ**

He... I...

(flaring again)

What do you care? What do you care about Black Rock?

**MACREEDY**

Nothing much. Only, there're not many places like this in America -- but even one is too many. Because I think something sort of bad happened here.

(frowning)

Something I can't find the handle to...

**LIZ**

You just think so. You don't know.

**MACREEDY**

This much I know -- the rule of law has been suspended in this town. The gorillas have taken over.

**LIZ**

You're a fine one to talk! You come in here, sneaking around, trying to steal the key to my jeep.

**MACREEDY**

I kind of had a notion that was the only way I could get it.

what to She opens her mouth to answer, but she doesn't know say.

**MACREEDY**

(simply)

Was I wrong, Miss Brooks?

For a He waits as she tries to answer, and again she can't. with moment he watches her struggle in anguished silence herself. Then he turns and goes out.

**EXT. MAIN STREET - MACREEDY**

hotel. walks thoughtfully down street. He comes abreast of

**EXT. PORCH OF HOTEL**

Macreedy where Smith is still sitting. For a moment he watches speculatively, then...

**SMITH**

(calling)

Mr. Macreedy.

(reasonably, as

Macreedy turns toward

him)

I'd like to ask you a few questions...

as long as you're around...

**MACREEDY**

(walking up steps)

I'm around all right.

He stands facing Smith on the porch, then...

**MACREEDY**

(with just a touch of

wryness)

You probably know that Miss Brooks

is no longer in the car rental business?

**SMITH**

(solemnly)

Good. I wouldn't want to see that girl get into trouble...

**MACREEDY**

You wouldn't?

**SMITH**

...what with rental permits, gas rationing... you know what I mean.

**MACREEDY**

Sure. I admire your sturdy sense of responsibility.

**SMITH**

(dismissively)

It's just, a girl like that has a future.

**MACREEDY**

Let's talk about my future.

**SMITH**

(almost slyly)

Do you have the time?

**MACREEDY**

I don't seem to be going any place.

He takes the other chair.

**SMITH**

(after a pause)

I hear you handle a jeep real well.

**MACREEDY**

I have a way with jeeps. A certain familiarity.

**SMITH**

I think I understand. You're an Army man.

(looking at Macreedy's stiff arm)

Where'd you get it?

**MACREEDY**

Italy.

**SMITH**

(sincerely)

Tough. I tried to get in myself, the day after those rats bombed Pearl Harbor.

**MACREEDY**

What stopped you?

**SMITH**

The physical. They wouldn't take me. The morning after Pearl, I was the first man in line at Marine recruiting in Sand City. And they wouldn't take me.

**MACREEDY**

(flatly)

Tough.

**SMITH**

What do you do in Los Angeles, Mr. Macreedy?

**MACREEDY**

I'm retired.

**SMITH**

You're a pretty young man...

**MACREEDY**

You might say I was forced into retirement.

**SMITH**

What were you looking for in Adobe Flat?

**MACREEDY**

Komako, like I told you. Like you told me, he wasn't there.

Smith laughs quietly.

**MACREEDY**

What's so funny?

**SMITH**

Nothing. It's just -- I don't believe you. I believe a man is as big as

what he seeks. I believe you're a big man, Mr. Macreedy.

**MACREEDY**

Flattery will get you nowhere.

**SMITH**

Why would a man like you be looking for a lousy Jap farmer?

**MACREEDY**

Maybe I'm not so big.

**SMITH**

Yes, you are.

(a beat; looking hard  
at Macreedy)

I believe that a man is as big as the things that make him mad. Nobody around here has been big enough to make you mad.

**MACREEDY**

What makes you mad, Mr. Smith?

**SMITH**

Me...? Nothing in particular.

**MACREEDY**

(bemused)

I see. You're a big man, too. Only...

(calmly)

...the Japanese make you mad...

**SMITH**

That's different. After the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor... after Bataan...

**MACREEDY**

...and Komako made you mad.

**SMITH**

It's the same thing.

(scoffing)

Loyal Japanese-Americans -- that's a laugh. They're mad dogs. Look at Corregidor, the death march.

**MACREEDY**

What did Komako have to do with Corregidor?

**SMITH**

Wasn't he a Jap? Look, Macreedy, there's a law in this county against shooting dogs. But if I see a mad dog loose, I don't wait for him to bite me.

(exhales sharply,  
shaking his head  
with irritation)

I swear, you're beginning to make me mad.

**MACREEDY**

(calmly)

All strangers do.

**SMITH**

Not all. Some of 'em. When they come here snooping.

**MACREEDY**

Snooping for what?

**SMITH**

I mean, outsiders coming around, looking for something.

**MACREEDY**

(pressing)

For what?

**SMITH**

I don't know. People are always looking for something in this part of the West. To the historian, it's the "Old West." To the book writers, it's the "Wild West." To the businessmen, it's the "Undeveloped West." They all say we're backward and poor, and I guess we are.

(snorts)

We don't even have enough water.

(a beat)

But this place, to us, is our West.

(heatedly)

I just wish they'd leave us alone.

**MACREEDY**

Leave you alone to do what?

**SMITH**

(coldly)  
I don't know what you mean.

**MACREEDY**

What happened to Komako?

**SMITH**

He went away, I told you. Shortly after he left, a bunch of kids got fooling around out his place. They burned it down. It was one of those things -- you know how kids are.

Macreeedy laughs quietly.

**SMITH**

What's funny?

**MACREEDY**

Nothing. Only -- I don't believe you. Any more than I believed you about the letters.

**SMITH**

(smiling)  
You don't seem to believe anything I say.

**MACREEDY**

(vaguely)  
Yes, I do -- about businessmen, for instance. I think a businessman would be interested in Adobe Flat.

**SMITH**

Why?

**MACREEDY**

All that land lying fallow. Could be put to some use. Like a graveyard.

(Smith opens his mouth  
to speak but Macreeedy  
goes on)

A historian might be interested, too. Because of the strange customs around here, such as burying cattle...

**SMITH**

Burying cattle...?

**MACREEDY**

(calmly)

Something's buried out there.

in He takes the wild flowers from his pocket, holding them  
front of Smith.

**MACREEDY**

See these wild flowers? That means a  
grave. I've seen it overseas. I figure  
it isn't a man's grave or someone  
would have marked it. Sort of a  
mystery, isn't it?

**SMITH**

Sort of. Maybe you can figure it  
out.

Macreeedy gets up, half turns to Smith.

**MACREEDY**

Maybe.

He starts down the steps.

**SMITH**

Why not give it a whirl?  
(Macreeedy turns)  
It'll help you pass the time...  
(continued;  
    meaningfully)  
...for a while.

**MACREEDY**

Not interested. I got other things  
to do.

He turns and walks down the street.

**EXT. MAIN STREET - MACREEDY**

serves headed towards Doc's establishment. The building, which  
pane Doc as home, office and laboratory, has centered on a  
of glass:

**T.R. VELIE, JR. UNDERTAKER AND VETERINARY**

And in the lower right hand corner:

**ASSAYER NOTARY PUBLIC**

completely

A few of the peeled gold and black letters are missing.

by

David, his

unkempt

spits

The building is separated from the structure next to it an alleyway. Filling the narrow passage is Hector long massive body wedged against the wall like an monument. His little pig eyes meet Macreedy's. Hector in the dust with bland insolence.

**EXT. DOC'S OFFICE - MACREEDY**

walks up the steps and enters.

**INT. DOC'S OFFICE**

insipid

Dark and shadowy. At the far end of a hallway an light bulb burns. Macreedy goes toward it, entering...

**INT. DOC'S LAB**

Departed.

stained

occasion

bookcases

the

corner

other.

devoted to the care and preservation of the Dear In the center of the room is a long rectangular slab with the juices of those unfortunates who have had to rest thereon. The walls are lined with rickety jammed, not with volumes, but with the jugs and jars, chemicals and unguents of Doc's multiple callings. In a three or four neat pine boxes are stacked one on the

goldfish

enters.

Doc sits at a cluttered desk feeding a large bowl of and sipping a glass of milk. He looks up as Macreedy

**DOC**

Hi. Pull up a chair.

**MACREEDY**

(nodding)

Can I use your phone?

**DOC**

Help yourself.

(chuckles)

You know, you're one of the few people  
who's ever been back here I can say  
that to.

Macreeedy reaches for the phone book.

**DOC**

It's 4-2-4.

**MACREEEDY**

(pausing)

What's 4-2-4?

**DOC**

If I've got you pegged -- and I think  
I have -- you're calling the State  
Police. But if I was you -- and I'm  
purely glad I'm not -- I'd look it  
up myself.

(emphatically)

I wouldn't trust anybody around here,  
including me.

Macreeedy thinks it over and comes to a swift decision.

He

checks the phone book. Then, picking up phone...

**MACREEEDY**

(to Doc)

Thanks.

(into receiver)

**4-2-4.**

**INT. TELEPHONE OPERATOR'S OFFICE**

a cubbyhole behind the hotel clerk's desk in the lobby.

At

the switchboard is Pete, and above him tacked on the

wall is

the sign:

**SMILE**

**PETE**

(into phone)

**4-2-4...?**

(he looks up)

The CAMERA PULLS BACK revealing Smith standing beside him.  
two men exchange a nod.

**PETE**  
(into phone)  
Lines 're busy.  
(he clicks off the  
instrument)

**INT. DOC'S LAB**

all Macreedy slowly puts down the phone. Doc sips his milk,  
He the while staring queasily over the glass at Macreedy.  
puts it down, his gaze still fixed on the stranger...

**DOC**  
(sing-song)  
I know -- don't tell me -- lines all  
busy. They'll be busy all day.

**MACREEDY**  
(after a beat,  
grimacing)  
Don't look at me like that.

**DOC**  
Like what?

**MACREEDY**  
Like I'm a potential customer.

**DOC**  
Everybody is -- and I get 'em coming  
and going.

large, He goes to a topographic map hanging on the wall -- a  
sections. impressive map -- faded, fly-blown and divided into

**DOC**  
(gesturing toward it)  
First I sell 'em a piece of land.  
Think they farm it? Nope. They dig  
for gold.

large, He moves to photograph beside the map on the wall -- a  
impressive photograph of a placer mine in operation.

**DOC**

They rip off the top soil of ten winding hills. They sprint in here, fog-heaved with excitement, lugging nuggets, big and bright and shiny.

stone, He moves to his desk, picks up a glistening blob of resting next to an assayer's scales, and examines it...

**DOC**

(rhetorically)  
Is it gold?

He bangs the rock down next to the scales.

**DOC**

It is not! Do they quit? They do not!

reproduction,  
produce  
above He moves to a third illustration -- a colored large and impressive -- of acres upon green acres of in bloom; the kind of picture Southern Pacific places its calendars.

**DOC**

(with theatrical gesture toward reproduction)  
Then they decide to farm. Farm! In country so dry you have to prime a man before he can spit, and before you can say "Fat Sam" they're stalled, stranded and starving. They get weevil-brained and buttsprung...

hand He moves to the coffins piled in a corner and runs his down the smooth pine sides with loving tenderness.

**DOC**

(simply)  
So I bury 'em.  
(a beat, as he rejoins Macreeedy in the center of the room)  
But why should I bore you with my triumphs?

**MACREEDY**

Yeah. I've got a problem of my own.

Doc nods; he points vaguely toward the street...

**DOC**

(like an old testament  
prophet)

They're going to kill you with no  
hard feelings.

**MACREEDY**

(nastily)

And you'll just sit on your hands  
and let them.

**DOC**

Don't get waspish with me, young  
feller.

**MACREEDY**

Sorry.

**DOC**

I feel for you, but I'm consumed  
with apathy. Why should I mix in?

**MACREEDY**

To save a life.

**DOC**

I got enough trouble saving my own.  
(he refills his glass  
from a milk bottle  
on the desk)

I try to live right and drink my  
orange juice every day. But mostly I  
try to mind my own business. Which  
is something I'd advise you to do.

**MACREEDY**

It's a little late for that...

**DOC**

You can still get out of town. And  
you'd better get out like a whisper.

**MACREEDY**

How can I?

**DOC**

(taking a key ring  
from his pocket)  
I got sort of a limousine at your  
disposal.

**MACREEDY**

Where is it?

**DOC**

(tossing him the key)  
Out back.

Macreeedy snares the key and walks out. Doc gets up to  
follow him.

**EXT. REAR OF DOC'S OFFICE**

An old-fashioned hearse, with plate glass sides and  
elaborate lead candelabra -- Doc's "limousine" -- is parked a few  
steps from the door. Macreeedy climbs in behind the wheel as  
Doc comes out and stands on the small back porch.

Macreeedy turns on the ignition switch. His foot kicks  
over the starter, but the spark doesn't catch. He tries  
again, then again. He pauses, frowns, as Doc comes down from  
the porch and joins him.

**MACREEDY**

(concentrating on the  
dashboard)  
Won't start.

**DOC**

(nervously, to Macreeedy)  
Something wrong?

**MACREEDY**

Just won't start...

Again he presses the ignition switch. Nothing. And  
suddenly, in b.g., the great bulk of Hector David looms up,  
leaning against the porch pillar at the corner of the alleyway.  
His

there  
engine

expression is almost dreamy. For a moment he stands  
while Macreedy toys with the ignition and the sick  
wheezes and grinds. Then he ambles up to the hearse...

**HECTOR**

(gratuitously)  
Could be the wirin'. Why don't you  
look under the hood?

**MACREEDY**

For that I thank you.  
(pause)  
How much time you think I've got  
before...?

**DOC**

They'll wait at least till dark.  
(angrily)  
They'd be afraid to see each other's  
faces.

**MACREEDY**

(slapping Doc's  
shoulder lightly)  
Well, so long, Doc. I can't say it's  
been charming but...

**DOC**

Where are you going?

**MACREEDY**

I don't know. But I'm going on foot.

**DOC**

That's no good. You stray ten yards  
off Main Street, and you'll be stone,  
cold dead.

(offers Macreedy a  
cigarette)

That's the situation, in a nut.

Macreedy takes the cigarette, lighting a match with one  
hand.  
He puts the fire to Doc's smoke and then lights his  
own. He  
inhales, exhales, thinking. Finally...  
Macreedy gets out of the car. Hector has already opened  
the

study  
He

hood. Doc peers nervously over his shoulder. As they  
the engine, Hector's horsey face appears behind them.  
gestures toward the engine.

**INSERT - THE ENGINE**

Focal point: a hopeless snarl of ignition wires.

**BACK TO SCENE**

**HECTOR**

It's the wirin', like I said. Now  
wasn't that a good guess?

pants

Slowly he takes off his wrist watch and puts it in his  
pocket.

**MACREEDY**

(quietly)  
It can be fixed.

his  
ignition.

Ignoring Hector, he bends over the engine, controlling  
obvious awareness that Hector has fouled up the

**HECTOR**

Easy. Unless, of course, this here  
wire...

(reaching inside the  
hood, pointing)  
...got broke or something.

**DOC**

(suddenly, heatedly,  
turning on Hector)  
Do the nice little things, like keep  
your big fat nose out of my business.

great  
ripping the

Hector's eyes go hard. He reaches out suddenly, one  
hand closing over the distributor cap. He yanks,  
feed wires out of their sockets.

**HECTOR**

(triumphantly, holding  
up the wires)  
Yep. It's the wirin'.

down. He  
slowly

Still gripping the wires, he walks off. Doc simmers  
turns to face Macreedy, who hasn't moved. Now Macreedy  
lowers the hood of the car.

**DOC**

(softly, after a beat)  
I'm sorry, son. You got to admit, I  
tried.

**MACREEDY**

(as if to himself)  
Maybe...

**DOC**

Maybe what?

**MACREEDY**

If I can't get out of town, maybe I  
can get the state cops in.

**DOC**

(irritably)  
You tried the phone, didn't you? You  
know what happened, don't you?

**MACREEDY**

There's another way. I'll be seeing  
you, Doc.

He walks off. Doc looks after him grimly.

**DOC**

(calling)  
I hope you'll be seeing me.

**DISSOLVE:**

**QUICK**

**INT. TELEGRAPH AGENT'S OFFICE**

Postal  
nervously,  
dew  
ice. His

Macreedy stands at the high counter, writing on a  
Telegraph blank. Behind the counter, watching him  
is Hastings. At the agent's elbow is a big pitcher with  
on the glass. It holds a pale liquid and a chunk of

takes  
message  
the  
glazed

eyes on Macreedy, Hastings refills a glass tumbler. He  
a gulp as Macreedy puts down the pencil and pushes the  
toward him. Now Hastings puts down his glass, picks up  
form and scans it hurriedly. He looks at Macreedy, eyes  
with anxiety...

**HASTINGS**

You notifyin' the state po-lice?

**MACREEDY**

(putting a bill on  
the counter)

That's what it says.

over  
offers it

Hastings again refills his glass, slopping the liquid  
on the counter. He picks up the glass, hesitates,  
awkwardly to Macreedy.

**HASTINGS**

(plaintively)

Lemonade?

Macreedy shakes his head. No.

**HASTINGS**

(mopping his forehead)

It's hot as Billy-be-durned.

bill  
gingerly

He drinks, puts down the glass. Macreedy pushes the  
across the counter toward him. Hastings picks it up  
then pauses...

**HASTINGS**

Don't you like lemonade?

**MACREEDY**

I never thought much about it.

**HASTINGS**

It don't have the muzzle velocity of  
some other drinks drunk around here,  
but it's good for what ails you.

**MACREEDY**

(after a beat)  
What ails you, Mr. Hastings?

**HASTINGS**

Me...?

**MACREEDY**

Why are you so upset about...  
(points)  
...this wire?

**HASTINGS**

Me...?

**MACREEDY**

Are you afraid, Mr. Hastings?

**HASTINGS**

Me...?

(a beat, then softly)  
I guess I am.  
(awkwardly he puts  
Maccreedy's bill back  
on the counter)  
But what's the use talkin'...?  
(with grudging respect)  
You don't know what it's like, being  
scared.

**MACREEDY**

(not unsympathetically)  
You want me to describe the symptoms?  
Right this minute I'm scared half to  
death.

**HASTINGS**

(simply)  
You should be.

**MACREEDY**

Yeah. But not of the state police.

**HASTINGS**

(stonily)  
Neither am I.

**MACREEDY**

Then what are you afraid of? The  
grave at Adobe Flat? A grave nobody  
marked, nobody knows anything about.

**HASTINGS**

That ain't it, either.

**MACREEDY**

Is it Smith?  
(no answer)  
Is it?!

**HASTINGS**

(squirming)  
Look, Mr. Macreedy. I'm just a good  
neighbor...

**MACREEDY**

To Smith you are. How about to Komako?

**HASTINGS**

(meeting Macreedy's  
eyes)  
I never seen Komako in my life.  
Honest.

**MACREEDY**

(again pushes the  
bill toward Hastings)  
Then send that wire, and bring me  
the answer. You'll do that, won't  
you?

**HASTINGS**

(pauses, then worriedly  
picking up the bill)  
Yes, sir.

Macreedy turns and walks out. Hastings stands sweating,  
staring hard at the message in his hand as...

**QUICK**

**DISSOLVE:**

**OUT**

Sequence omitted from original script.

**INT. SAM'S BAR & GRILL**

A few loafers are at the bar, draped bonelessly on high  
stools. There is the usual array of bottles and glasses  
aligned before a cracked, discolored mirror. In the  
corner  
is a jukebox. Along the opposite wall is a line of low  
stools

place.  
grill  
toothpick.  
four  
STERLING

facing a counter covered with oil-cloth thumb-tacked in  
Behind it is a greasy hot plate and a couple of soiled  
displays -- breakfast food, soft drinks, etc. At the  
counter is Sam, cleaning his finger-nails with a  
At the bar, engaged in a worrisome conversation, are  
loafers, FRANKLIN KROOL, WALT MURTRY, RON BENTHAM and  
**LENARD.**

**KROOL**

I tell you, I won't have anything to  
do with it.

**MURTRY**

(nodding emphatically)  
Live and let live, that's what I  
say.

**BENTHAM**

(frowning)  
I don't know. I just don't know.

**LENARD**

(to Bentham)  
You gonna brood about it? Or you  
want another beer?

**BENTHAM**

A beer, I guess. Only...

He looks up, and something makes him hesitate...

**WHAT HE SEES -- EXT. BAR & GRILL - MACREEDY**

large,  
stopping in front of the restaurant. On the window  
rough capital letters in water paint proclaim:

**SAM'S SANITARY BAR & GRILL**

Macreeedy pauses, shrugs and then enters.

**INT. BAR & GRILL**

little  
loafers

Sam is still working on his finger nails. He evidences  
interest in the stranger, but at the bar in b.g. the

stiffen. Macreedy takes a stool in front of Sam.

**SAM**

What'll you have?

**MACREEDY**

What have you got?

**SAM**

Chili wit' beans.

**MACREEDY**

Anything else?

**SAM**

Chili wit'out beans.

Macreedy winces.

**SAM**

You don't like the taste, that's what they make ketchup for.

**MACREEDY**

In that case, I'll have it. And a cup of coffee.

enter.  
The door of the Bar & Grill opens. Smith and Coley  
him. They walk to Macreedy, stopping just a few feet behind

**COLEY**

(to Macreedy, with menacing friendliness)  
You still around? I thought you didn't like this place.

**MACREEDY**

(pleasantly)  
Going to, or coming from?

**COLEY**

Staying put.

**MACREEDY**

No comment.

chili in  
He turns again as Sam plops an unseasonable mess of  
front of him.

**COLEY**

(to Smith, gesturing  
a thumb toward  
Macreeedy)  
No comment, he says. No comment, and  
all the time he's got my chair.

Macreeedy smiles tiredly. He half turns toward Coley.

**MACREEEDY**

I always seem to be taking somebody's  
place around here.

He gets up, with his chili, and sits down three stools  
away.  
Coley straddles the stool Macreeedy has vacated. He  
squirms  
on it, his movements exaggerated. Now he spins to face  
Smith.

**COLEY**

This seat ain't comfortable.

**MACREEEDY**

I was afraid of that.

**COLEY**

I think I'd like the seat you're on.

**SMITH**

(to Macreeedy, mildly)  
He's as changeable as a prairie fire.

**MACREEEDY**

(to Coley)  
Suppose you tell me where to sit.

Coley opens his mouth but, realizing he has been  
outmaneuvered, closes it again. The loafers in b.g. are  
pressure  
silent, watching. Sam, seemingly oblivious to Coley's  
to  
on Macreeedy, places a bottle of ketchup in front of the  
removing  
stranger. Coley gets up slowly and walks stiff-legged  
drowned  
Macreeedy. He takes the bottle of ketchup and, without  
runs  
the cap, upends it over Macreeedy's plate. The cap is  
in a deluge of ketchup which overflows the plate and  
onto the counter.

**COLEY**

(to Macreeedy)

I hope that ain't too much.

**MACREEEDY**

(to Smith, gesturing  
toward Coley)

Your friend's a very [...] fellow.

**SMITH**

(nodding)

Sort of unpredictable, too. Got a  
temper like a rattlesnake.

**COLEY**

That's me all over. I'm half hoss,  
half alligator. Mess with me, I'll  
kick a lung outta you. What do you  
think of that?

**MACREEEDY**

No comment.

**COLEY**

Talking to you is like pulling teeth.  
You wear me out.

(loudly, after a beat)

You're a yellow-bellied Jap lover.  
Am I right or wrong?

**MACREEEDY**

You're not only wrong -- you're wrong  
at the top of your voice.

**COLEY**

You don't like my voice?

**MACREEEDY**

(again turning to  
Smith)

I think your friend's trying to start  
something.

**SMITH**

Now why-ever would he want to do  
that?

**MACREEEDY**

I don't know. Maybe he figures, needle  
me enough and I'll crack. Maybe I'll  
even fight back. Then he or Hector --  
your other ape -- would beat me to

death and cop a plea of self-defense.

**SMITH**

I don't think that'll be necessary.  
You're so scared now you'll probably  
drown in your own sweat.

**COLEY**

Before that happens, couldn't I pick  
a fight with you if I tied one hand  
behind me...?

takes  
around.  
Macreeedy rises to go out. As he passes Coley, Coley  
his limp left arm and spins him slowly but firmly  
The two men face each other.

**COLEY**

If I tied both hands...?

His big  
ducks,  
off  
his  
firmly  
anchoring  
hand in  
ear.  
hard  
Following  
cheekbone.  
face,  
pain  
back.  
Macreeedy shakes free of Coley's grasp. Coley lunges.  
right fist streaks toward Macreeedy's face. Macreeedy  
weaving with the punch. He grabs Coley's belt, twisting  
Coley's body. The momentum of the swing throws Coley  
balance. As he goes past Macreeedy, the stranger tugs at  
belt, twisting him to one side. He plants his left foot  
on the toes of Coley's left boot, for a split second  
Coley in place. He chops the under side of his open  
a short, vicious arc that lands solidly under Coley's  
With the same motion, he brings the heel of his hand  
against and slightly under the tip of Coley's nose. The  
cartilage shatters. Blood spills down his face.  
through, Macreeedy's elbow smashes beneath Coley's  
Macreeedy's arm goes past the astonished, wind-burned  
finding Coley's right wrist. He jerks the wrist out and  
backward. It snaps. Coley whimpers, his face twisted in  
and perplexity. His body lolls forward. Macreeedy steps

right  
lift.  
limber  
face,  
of  
his

He raises his right shoulder a few inches. His bent arm drives up like a piston attached to the shoulder's Fist and arm seem all one rigid piece with only the shoulder giving them motion. The fist strikes Coley's covering for a moment one side of his chin and a corner his mouth between cheekbone and jawbone. Coley shuts eyes and falls unconscious.

fall.  
Smith.

Smith, a puzzled expression on his face, watches Coley He takes half a step toward him. Macreedy looks at Smith stops. Macreedy's face is wooden, with a trace of sullenness around the hard lines of his mouth. Working methodically, Macreedy frisks Coley. He takes from a pocket a long, ugly knife. He snaps the spring and the four-inch blade leaps into place. He looks at the knife in his hand and then at Smith. He smiles gently, even dreamily.

**MACREEDY**

(to Smith)

Wouldn't it be easier if you just waited till I turned my back?

(looking toward the loafers at the bar, then back at Smith)

Or are there too many witnesses present?

The are  
closes  
Macreedy  
door  
scene  
reactions of

Macreedy walks slowly toward him, holding the knife. only three feet apart. Smith's hand goes to a pocket, inside over the outline of a pistol. Sam glances from to Smith to the unconscious Coley. He sidles toward the and runs out fast. (NOTE: From this point to end of INTERCUT from Macreedy and Smith to exploit the the loafers at the bar.)

**SMITH**

(with effortless  
ferocity)  
You're still in trouble.

**MACREEDY**

So are you.  
(Smith snorts)  
Whatever happens -- you're lost.

**SMITH**

You got things a bit twisted...

**MACREEDY**

You killed Komako. Sooner or later  
you'll go up for it. Not because you  
killed him -- in this town you  
probably could have gotten away with  
it -- but because you didn't even  
have the guts to do it alone. You  
put your trust in guys like him...  
(gesturing toward the  
unconscious Coley)  
...and Hector -- they're not the  
most dependable of God's creatures.  
Sooner or later they'll get the idea  
you're playing them for saps. What'll  
you do then -- peel them off, one by  
one? And in the meantime if any one  
of them breaks, you'll go down hard.  
Because they got something on you.  
Something to use when things get  
tough.

Smith  
With a quick motion, he tosses the knife to Smith.  
catches it.

**MACREEDY**

And they're getting tougher every  
minute.

consciously  
the  
like  
Doc,  
Coley.  
He walks past Smith and goes out the door. Self-  
holding the knife, Smith turns to face the loafers at  
bar. They say nothing; they stare at him, through him,  
a panel of ghouls. The door opens, admitting Sam and  
who carries his little black medical bag. Doc looks at

**DOC**

(softly, full of awe)

Man... man-oh-man.

remained  
in  
Coley,

He goes to Coley, bending down over him. Smith has motionless as a monument. Now he doubles shut the knife in his hand. He pockets it, and without even glancing at turns quickly and goes out.

**QUICK**

**DISSOLVE:**

**INT. HOTEL LOBBY**

chairs.  
the  
the  
change  
the  
works  
Then  
wiggles  
sudden  
one-

Doc sits deep in the battered upholstery of one of the chairs. He stares fiercely across the room at Smith who is on the couch, reading a neatly folded newspaper. Behind him at the clerk's desk, Pete is fitfully involved in a game of solitaire. At the foot of the stairs Hector is pouring into a slot machine. It whines, grinds, and clicks with rhythmic monotony, but it never seems to pay off. In the chair nearest Doc is Tim, with one of his boots off. He works hard and with some concentration, removing the other. Then he places them neatly at the foot of his chair. He wiggles his toes -- watching them with some interest. The wheeze and whir of the slot machine stops. The sudden silence turns the eyes of the men toward Hector and the one-arm bandit. They follow his gaze up the steps.

**STAIRWAY - MACREEDY**

the  
walks down, carrying his suitcase. He goes to Pete at the clerk's desk.

**MACREEDY**

Anything for me?

**PETE**

Nothing.

**MACREEDY**

Any message -- a telegram?

**PETE**

(returning to his  
cards)

Nothing.

As Macreedy turns from the desk, Doc joins him.

**DOC**

(to Macreedy, shrilly,  
gruffly)

In case you're interested, Coley'll  
live.

(glaring at Smith and  
Hector)

I'm truly sorry to say.

Smith coolly continues to read his paper. It is Hector  
who turns toward Doc...

**HECTOR**

(to Doc, jerking a  
fat hand toward  
Macreedy)

Your friend's pretty tough.

**DOC**

Yeah. He's wicked. He defends himself  
when he's attacked.

Macreedy ignores the exchange of words. He walks across  
the frayed carpet to the nearest chair and drops into it.  
Doc, who has followed him, stands looking down at Macreedy  
for a long moment. Then...

**DOC**

(with some irritation)

Well...? You going to just sit here  
and let time run out?

**MACREEDY**

I'm waiting for a wire. From the

state cops.

**DOC**

You sent it through Hastings?  
(an audible sigh)  
Just don't expect an answer, if that's  
the way you sent it.

**MACREEDY**

(looking toward the  
door)  
No?  
(he rises)

looks  
rigidly  
his  
gaze.  
machine.  
by

Doc follows his gaze as Hastings enters the lobby and  
around. He sees Macreedy coming toward him. He walks  
in an arc past Macreedy to Smith. He holds out a Postal  
Telegraph form. Smith puts down his paper and takes it.  
Macreedy, followed by Doc, goes over to Smith. Tim in  
stockinged feet joins them.  
Smith scans the message. He looks up to meet Macreedy's  
Smith rises. Hector swaggers over from the slot  
Hastings slips around the back of the couch, protected  
the barricade of Hector's great body.

**MACREEDY**

(evenly, to Smith)  
I think that's for me.  
(he takes the message  
from Smith's hand  
and quickly glances  
at it. Looking up at  
Hastings)  
Where's the answer?

crosses

Hastings is silent. A brittle expression of bemusement  
Smith's features.

**SMITH**

You expect an answer -- to a wire  
that's never sent?

Macreedy's mouth compresses in a harsh grin.

**SMITH**

What's so funny?

**MACREEDY**

Nothing. Just a thought --

(his eyes turn to  
Hastings. Hastings  
wilts)

-- a thought dazzling in its purity...

agent  
Macreeedy takes a step toward Hastings. The telegraph  
bounces away.

**MACREEDY**

(slowly)

You're in a jam, Hastings. You gave  
my telegram to Smith.

**DOC**

(excitedly)

You warty wretch! That's a federal  
offense!

**MACREEDY**

(to Smith)

You're in deep, too.

(grins hard)

Like I said, it's getting tougher  
and tougher.

(to Tim)

Sheriff, you'd better do something  
about this.

from  
insolently  
it  
Tim hesitates, blinking his eyes worriedly, shifting  
one stockinged foot to the other. Smith watches him  
as he takes the message from Macreeedy and gestures with  
vaguely...

**TIM**

(to Smith)

I reckon that's right, Mr. Smith...

**HECTOR**

Don't be a jerk, Tim.

**TIM**

(to Smith, seriously)

Divulging information -- there's a

law...

**SMITH**

Tim, you're pathetic.

**TIM**

(doggedly)

Could be. But I'm still Sheriff.

**SMITH**

That's the point. You're not Sheriff any more. You just lost a job, you're so pathetic.

jabs

He reaches out, clawing the badge from Tim's chest. He  
it on Hector's vest.

**SMITH**

(to Hector)

All right, Sheriff. Take over.

**DOC**

You can't do that!

**SMITH**

Can't I? I put him in office. Now I take him out.

Macreeedy...

Hector moves his elephantine bulk within inches of

**HECTOR**

Now. You want to register a complaint?

Tim's

Macreeedy doesn't answer. Hector takes the message from  
limp hand and tears it into little pieces.

**HECTOR**

To register a complaint, boy, you've got to have evidence. You got evidence?

Macreeedy doesn't answer.

**HECTOR**

You got a big mouth, boy, makin' accusations, disturbin' the peace. There's laws in this county protectin' innocent folks from big mouths. Why, I'd just hate to...

**SMITH**

(interrupting)

Hector...

(wearily)

Come on, Hector.

with  
Tim  
up  
of  
his  
his  
cigarette.  
him,  
too,  
other  
has so  
something  
for  
from  
out  
that  
fierce  
silvery  
has

He walks out, the new Sheriff strutting beside him, Hastings in their wake. For a moment Macreedy, Doc and stand in the center of the lobby. Pete eyes them non-committally and goes back to his solitaire. He glances now and then, moving the cards with a purposeful sort of slowness, as of a more natural swiftness restrained by preoccupation with the three men in the lobby. Macreedy is deep in thought. Abstractedly he tugs at his collar and then repeats the ritual of lighting a cigarette. Tim's shoulders are slumped. Humiliation has corroded flesh and soul. Even Doc is momentarily subdued; he feels degraded, unclean. Macreedy looks from one to the other of the good, ineffectual companions that circumstance haphazardly tossed his way. He takes a few steps to his suitcase, Doc and Tim trailing him; Doc, for want of better to do; Tim, out of his deep, inexpressible need for support. Macreedy takes an untapped bottle of whiskey from his bag. He thumbs the cork loose and holds the bottle out to Tim. Tim takes a drink.

The light on the clerk's desk goes on, and we are aware that day has gone and that night is falling. The pressing, fierce light has drained from the lobby, leaving a shadowy, silvery dreariness. The shadows have lengthened and the silver has tarnished with the darkness.

**DOC**

(hopefully)

It's all right, Tim. We're not licked yet.

**TIM**

(numbly)

Ain't we? I am.

**DOC**

There comes a time, Tim, when a man's just got to do something.

**TIM**

Not me. I'm useless, and I know it.

**DOC**

(imploring)

No man is useless, if he's got a friend...

lamp

Pete comes out from behind the desk, walking from one in the lobby to another, turning them on.

**DOC**

I'm your friend, Tim.

**TIM**

Then let me alone.

He hands Doc the whiskey bottle.

**DOC**

(jabbing at Macreeedy  
with a thumb)

He's going to need you before the night is over.

them.

He downs a snort, then looks at Pete, who approaches

**DOC**

(contemptuously)

And all the useful men are on the other side.

grimace is

As Pete turns on the lamp behind Doc, he reacts ever so slightly to Doc's words. His almost imperceptible

he

not lost on Macreeedy. Macreeedy watches the young man as  
continues to light the lamps...

**TIM**

(angrily)  
Lemme alone, I tell ya!

Doc slams the whiskey bottle down on a nearby table.

**DOC**

I can't let you alone! I can't let  
myself alone! Don't you understand  
that?

(he turns from Tim to  
Pete, who is unable  
to shake his gaze.  
Then, sadly, fiercely)

Four years ago something terrible  
happened here. We did nothing about  
it. Nothing. The whole town fell  
into a sort of settled melancholy,  
and the people in it closed their  
eyes and held their tongues and failed  
the test with a whimper.

can't

Self-consciously Pete has backed off until now he leans  
against the outside of the clerk's desk. But he still  
shut his ears to what Doc is saying...

**DOC**

Now something terrible is going to  
happen again, and in a way we're  
lucky because we've been given a  
second chance. And this time I won't  
close my eyes, I won't hold my tongue,  
and if I'm needed I won't fail.

(almost harshly, again  
facing Tim)  
And neither will you!

Tim sighs, running a thick hand over his forehead...

**TIM**

I got such a headache, I'm bewildered.  
I hurt all over.

**MACREEEDY**

I know --  
(unconsciously his  
right arm strays to

message the paralyzed  
left)  
-- pain is bewildering. I came here  
bewildered, full of self-pity, afraid  
to fight back.  
(gesturing with his  
hand to Pete)  
And then your friend Smith tried to  
kill me.  
(the muscles around  
Pete's mouth tighten)  
Funny, how a man clings to the earth  
when he feels there's a chance he  
may never see it again.

**DOC**

There's a difference between clinging  
to the earth...  
(eyeing Tim almost  
contemptuously)  
...and crawling on it. You going to  
stand by and watch forever?

**TIM**

(flatly)  
I ain't gonna watch, and I ain't  
gonna get into it, either.

There is a moment of crashing silence. Then...

**TIM**

I'm gettin' out. I'm sorry, Mr.  
Macreeedy.

Again

Slowly he lumbers out of the lobby. Doc watches him go.  
the benumbing silence, cut finally, unexpectedly by...

**PETE**

(to Doc)  
You'd be smart to get out, too.

**DOC**

(angrily turning to  
Pete)  
There's too many smart guys around  
here. I'm glad I'm a dummy.

**PETE**

You're a troublesome dummy. You're  
liable to end up on your own slab...

**DOC**

(heatedly)

I expect to be in a lot more trouble  
before I die...

**PETE**

Go home, Doc.

(he jerks his head  
toward Macreedy, and  
with mock bravado...)

He's all washed up.

**MACREEDY**

(grinning harshly at  
him)

You think so?

bottle on  
tense,  
His right hand closes over the neck of the whiskey  
the end table. Abstractedly fingering it, he walks with  
deliberate steps toward Pete at the desk.

**MACREEDY**

I was washed up when I got off that  
train...

He continues to advance inexorably toward Pete.

**PETE**

(flatly)

You shouldn' of got off.

**MACREEDY**

Had to. I had one last duty to perform  
before I resigned from the human  
race.

**DOC**

(quizzically)

I thought you were going to Los  
Angeles, that hot-bed of pomp and  
vanity. Is that resigning from the  
human race?

**MACREEDY**

(shrugging)

L.A.'s a good jumping off place --  
for the Islands, for Mexico, Central  
America.

**DOC**

Why?

**MACREEDY**

(again shrugs)

I don't know. I was looking for a place to get lost, I guess.

**DOC**

Why?

**MACREEDY**

(slapping his paralyzed arm with the whisky bottle)

Because of this. I thought I'd never be able to function again.

(turning to Pete)

Thanks to your friend Smith, I found I was wrong.

He is now within a couple of yards of Pete.

**PETE**

(drily)

Sure. You're a man of action.

**MACREEDY**

(slowly)

I know your problem.

(with mounting vigor)

You'd like me to die quickly, without wasting too much of your time...

(Pete opens his mouth to say something, but Macreedy presses on)

...or silently, without making you feel too uncomfortable... or thankfully, without making your memories of the occasion too unpleasant.

For a moment Pete stares at Macreedy, terribly disturbed by the incisiveness of Macreedy's analysis. Then...

**PETE**

(bitterly)

My memories are so pleasant as it is...

the  
turns,

In sudden frustration, Pete grabs the deck of cards on clerk's desk and slams them down hard. They scatter. He stares blankly [...] between Doc and Macreeedy.

**MACREEEDY**

(quietly pressing his  
advantage)  
What happened, Pete?

Pete doesn't answer.

**DOC**

Are you going to tell him -- or you  
want me to?

(beat)

Smith owns Adobe Flat. He leased it  
to Komako -- thought he had cheated  
him, thought Komako could never even  
run stock without water. There was  
never any water on Adobe Flat. Komako  
dug a well, by hand. He must have  
went down one hundred and fifty feet.

**PETE**

He got water, plenty. Smith was pretty  
sore. He didn't like Japs anyway.

**DOC**

That's an understatement.

**PETE**

The day after Pearl Harbor, Smith  
went to Sand City.

**MACREEEDY**

(interrupting)  
I know. To enlist. He was turned  
down.

**PETE**

He was sore when he got back. About  
ten o'clock he started drinking.

**MACREEEDY**

Ten o'clock in the morning.

**PETE**

Yeah. Hector joined him, and Coley.  
Then Sam, and about nine p.m. -- me.  
We were all drunk -- patriotic drunk.

We went out to Komako's for a little fun, I guess -- scare him a little.

**MACREEDY**

Did you know him?

**PETE**

We'd seen him around some, but none of us knew him. When he heard us coming, he locked the door. Smith started a fire. The Jap came running out. His clothes were burning. Smith shot him. I didn't even know Smith had a gun.

**MACREEDY**

Then you all got scared, buried him, kept quiet.

looks  
table...  
Pete nods helplessly, bowing his head. Macreedy sighs, down at the bottle in his hand, slowly puts it on the

**MACREEDY**

(softly)

Did Komako have any family besides his son Joe?

**DOC**

(puzzled)

His son...? Nobody around here knew he had a son.

**MACREEDY**

He had one. But he's dead, too. He's buried in Italy.

**DOC**

What are you doing here, Mr. Macreedy?

**MACREEDY**

Joe Komako died in Italy, saving my life. They gave him a medal. I came here to give it to his father.

admission,  
at  
Silence. Doc, realizing the enormity of Macreedy's frowns, rubs a hand across his tired eyes. Pete looks Macreedy for a long, shocked moment. He shivers.

**PETE**

(awfully)  
God forgive me...

shot  
He takes the bottle from the table and shakily pours a  
glass of liquor. As he raises it to his mouth...

**MACREEDY**

(to Pete, harshly  
guttural)  
It'll take a lot of whiskey to wash  
out your guts...

lips,  
his  
Pete is motionless, holding the glass inches from his  
hypnotized by Macreedy's voice, as hard and as cold as  
eyes...

**MACREEDY**

...And it will never help -- not  
even a barrel full washes away murder!

bursts  
stare  
Macreedy's hand shoots out, in a short, inexorable arc,  
smashing his palm across the shot glass. The whiskey  
in a spray, the glass flies halfway across the room,  
shattering as it lands against something solid. Pete is  
stunned, Doc perplexed, at Macreedy's violence. They  
at him...

brows  
with  
a  
Macreedy's eyes are murky. The creases between the  
over his nose are deep. His nostrils move in and out  
his breathing. Pete and Doc regard him with growing  
uneasiness. Rage comes into Macreedy's face, turning it  
painful red.

**MACREEDY**

But maybe I'm wrong. Go on -- drink.  
(scornfully)  
What else is left for you?!  
(mounting anger)  
You're as dead as Komako, only you  
don't know it!  
(roaring)  
You also don't know that it's not  
enough to feel guilty. It's not enough

to confess. It's not enough to say,  
"Forgive me, I've done wrong."

**DOC**

Take it easy, Maccreedy. Sit down.

**MACREEDY**

(turning on him)

Sit down?! Or would you rather have  
me kneel, to beg his pardon for  
raising a touchy subject?

Pete squirms under Maccreedy's relentless attack.

**PETE**

(shaking his head)

You don't have to remind me. I've  
never forgotten...

**MACREEDY**

Well, that's mighty noble of you.  
You feel ashamed -- that's noble,  
too.

(in mounting crescendo)

And four years from now you'll  
probably be sitting here telling  
somebody else you haven't forgotten  
me. That's progress -- you'll still  
be ashamed but I'll be dead.

toward  
Maccreedy grabs the bottle, shoving it across the table  
Pete.

**MACREEDY**

Go on, have your drink.  
(with exorbitant scorn)  
You need it.

words  
grimly and  
plugs  
Pete pushes the bottle aside, too ravaged by Maccreedy's  
and his own thoughts to drink. He shakes his head  
then, with sudden decision, goes to the switchboard and  
in a line.

**DOC**

(leaning over counter,  
staring at him)

What are you doing?

**PETE**

(into phone, ignoring  
Doc)

Hello, Liz. Now listen... I... 'm  
getting Macreedy out of town...

**ANOTHER ANGLE - MACREEDY AND DOC**

breath of  
listen  
jumble

as they exchange a glance. Doc takes a long, deep  
relief. Macreedy frowns thoughtfully. He strains to  
to Liz, but all he (and we) can hear is the staccato  
of her words over the wire.

**WIDER ANGLE - FAVORING PETE**

he cuts Liz short...

**PETE**

(into phone)

I don't care about Smith! Let him  
try to kill me -- I might as well be  
dead as...

again...

Again Liz's voice incoherent over the phone, and

**PETE**

(into phone,  
interrupting)

Liz, Liz... There's not much of me  
left any more, but however little it  
is I won't waste it!

(again Liz's voice  
briefly; then...)

I'm telling you because we need your  
help.

(again Liz's voice)

...No matter about the past -- you've  
got to do this! You'd be saving two  
lives, Liz. Macreedy's, and mine.

(again Liz answers  
and...)

All right. Yeah... I've told him  
everything.

comes

Slowly he replaces the phone on the switch-board. He  
around from behind the desk, joining Macreedy and Doc.

**PETE**

(flatly)

She'll be here in five minutes.

**MACREEDY**

Thanks, Pete. Thanks very much.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**INT. HOTEL LOBBY - PETE, HECTOR AND DOC - NIGHT**

Pete and Doc are nervously alert, drained of energy, waiting. Hector is downright bored. He toys with his pistol, squinting at it, twirling the barrel. Finding neither interest nor pleasure in the piece, he jams it back in his holster and strolls with exaggerated surety out on the porch.

**EXT. PORCH - NIGHT**

The congregation of loafers look up as Hector emerges. Imbued with his own bullying importance, he draws the pistol, maneuvers an extravagant pinwheel and a few other gaudy tricks. Then he sighs as boredom again takes over. He walks down the steps to catch a bit of air.

**INT. LOBBY - DOC AND PETE**

The disappearance of Hector (o.s.) down the street galvanizes them into action. They hurry out of the lobby toward the back of the hotel.

**EXT. ALLEY - BEHIND HOTEL - NIGHT**

Vague in the pallid light escaping through a few back windows. The hotel's rear door is tightly shut. Around the far corner of the street (extreme b.g.) comes the gangling body of Hector David. He walks toward CAMERA. Perhaps twenty-five yards away he stops to rest against a fence like a leaning tower.

**CLOSE SHOT - HECTOR**

half  
bleak

His hand goes to a pocket and comes out with a crumpled pack of cigarettes. Suddenly the movement is arrested; something at the other end of the street captures his attention.

**WHAT HE SEES**

up to

A jeep, headlights off, slowly turns the corner, pulls the curb and parks.

**BACK TO SCENE - HECTOR**

a  
back  
toward

pockets his cigarettes and starts slowly for the jeep, quizzical frown on his horsy face. He approaches the door of the hotel, oblivious to it as he continues the jeep.

**INT. REAR HALLWAY OF HOTEL - NIGHT**

unshaded  
To  
slim  
enormous  
alley  
reveals  
alley,  
Glued  
Doc.  
wheels  
nozzle

At the far end b.g., toward the lobby, a single light bulb burns dully. A slight figure stands in f.g. one side is a narrow U-shaped alcove blanketed in heavy shadows. The features of the man in the hall and the lines of his body blend vaguely in the darkness. With care, he turns a knob and opens the door leading to the alley behind the hotel. Light thrown by the back windows reveals that the figure is Pete. The same pallid light from the glancing across the alcove, momentarily illuminates it. as close to the recessed wall as is humanly possible is Doc. He is partially shielded by one of those hotel hose wheels around which an old fire hose is wound. The heavy brass nozzle of the hose hangs from the end.

swallows  
to the  
with

Doc grips a twelve-inch length of lead pipe. Pete nervously and peers outside, first to the right, then left. His eyes glaze with fear, and his jaw tightens tension.

**EXT. ALLEY - ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING PETE**

as he stares at Hector walking toward the jeep.

**PETE**

(controlling his  
jangled nerves)  
Hector!

Hector stops, turns to face Pete. He hesitates, then...

**HECTOR**

Hmmmm?

to  
Then, with a final glance at the jeep, Hector lumbers  
Pete, who disappears inside the hallway.

**INT. REAR HALLWAY**

door  
draw  
Hector  
as Hector enters and stops. Pete quickly closes the  
behind him and walks toward the lobby, attempting to  
Hector toward the black alcove center screen b.g. But  
is not to be sucked in. He glares at Pete, waiting.

(NOTE:

The following dialogue is delivered sotto voce.)

**HECTOR**

What you want?

**PETE**

He's still in his room. Maccreedy, I mean.

**HECTOR**

So...? You want me to tuck him in?

**PETE**

I thought maybe you wanted to tell Smith.

**HECTOR**

(explaining something  
he feels Pete already  
knows)

Smith said he'd be here at midnight.  
He don't want to be disturbed.

frantically  
one.  
He jams a cigarette in his mouth. Pete watches him  
as he searches his pockets for a match. He can't find

**HECTOR**

You got a match?

**PETE**

Come on. I got some in the lobby.

suspicion.  
heavy  
Hector's  
fingers  
book  
He starts to turn. Hector's pig eyes are slits of  
Before Pete can move, Hector reaches out, hooking two  
fingers inside a pocket of Pete's shirt. Slowly  
expression changes to one of insidious cunning. His  
come out of Pete's pocket, and between them is a paper  
of matches.

**HECTOR**

I thought you didn't have a match.

Pete is unable to answer. He is scared to death.

**INT. ALCOVE - DOC**

armed --  
pipe.  
For a  
care,  
the  
sweating with frustration. Hector is six feet away, and  
too far away for Doc to risk an attack with his lead  
Doc looks around vaguely, wildly, for another weapon. A  
fraction of an inch from his nose is the hose wheel.  
split second he hesitates. Then slowly, with infinite  
he tightens the heavy brass nozzle and begins to unwind  
hose.

**INT. REAR HALLWAY**

Now Hector is alert. He studies Pete's twitching face. Elaborately he tears a match from the pack and scratches it. It takes fire, cupped in the rampart of his big hands. It lights up the hall, and as Hector looks around he sees something through a mirror -- over his shoulder and six feet away Doc materializes out of the shadows of the alcove. As Hector whirls, going for his gun, Doc swings the hose with sudden deadly aim. It uncoils like a snake, and the brass nozzle crashes with a mighty thud across Hector's skull. Hector groans. He sinks unconscious to the floor. Doc stands there, paralyzed by his action. Pete tears toward the lobby.

**INT. LOBBY**

as Pete rushes in. He moves directly to the desk, leans over and presses the buzzer behind the desk three times. He turns and runs back toward the rear of the building.

**INT. REAR STAIRS**

as Macreedy barrels down. He pauses briefly in the hall he sees Doc still standing with the hose and the nozzle dangling like a pendulum from his hand. Their eyes lock briefly in understanding...

**MACREEDY**

(with a half smile)  
I'll never forgive you, Doc...  
(he gestures toward  
Hector, out cold)  
...for depriving me of that pleasure.

He heads toward the alley.

**EXT. ALLEY**

as Macreedy rushes out. He pauses, looking quickly right,

the  
off,  
falling  
there,  
gears,

then left. He sees a jeep parked at the curb far down  
street. He runs toward it. The jeep, its headlights  
starts for him. He swings onto the moving vehicle,  
heavily into the seat beside Liz Brooks. He slumps  
breathing heavily as the jeep, with a grinding of  
cuts through the night, picking up speed.

**INT. REAR HALLWAY**

stare  
pistol  
same

as Pete joins Doc. Silently, motionlessly, the two men  
for a long moment at Hector -- particularly at the  
lying beside him. Then they look at each other, and the  
thought seems to flash in their minds...

**QUICK**

**DISSOLVE:**

**EXT. ROAD - MACREEDY AND LIZ**

drives  
toward

as they speed down the long empty ribbon of road. Liz  
hard. Macreedy turns in the bucket seat, looking back  
Black Rock.

**LIZ**

Sorry I can't get more out of this  
heap.

Macreedy does not answer.

**LIZ**

(with a burst of  
irritation)  
We could make better time with a dog  
team.

**MACREEDY**

(calmly)  
You're doing the best you can.  
(a beat)  
Aren't you, Liz?

**LIZ**

Don't expect too much from me.

**MACREEDY**

(dryly)

Don't worry, I won't.

**LIZ**

(quickly)

I mean, people have always expected things from me. You know why? Because I'm pretty. Well, that's not enough.

**MED. SHOT - JEEP**

crossroad.  
little  
with  
moment

with Liz and Macreedy as she cuts sharply into a  
She drives skillfully over the knotty road which is  
more than a trail. Her lovely features are distorted  
her discontent and the ache for attention. After a  
she gives voice to her fantasy...

**LIZ**

(softly)

Maybe I could have been something --  
a model, or something.

(glancing at him)

You don't believe that.

**MACREEDY**

Yes I do.

**LIZ**

Well, I don't, really. I'm a dime a dozen.

**MACREEDY**

That I don't believe.

**LIZ**

I'm too little and too late.

**MACREEDY**

It's never too late.

**LIZ**

I lack the muscle.

**MACREEDY**

(frowning)

Why is muscle so important?

**LIZ**

(cynically)

Oh, you're the brainy type.

(harshly)

Did it take brains to rough up Coley?  
Whatever you did to Hector, you didn't  
do it with brains. How'd you get  
Pete to change his mind?

**MACREEDY**

Not with muscle.

**LIZ**

And not with brains, either. He's a  
pushover for a muscle man.

**MACREEDY**

I'm beginning' to think it runs in  
the family.

(looking at her hard)

You think strength is in the width  
of a man's shoulders.

He does not catch the glance she darts him; his extreme  
awareness is anchored not to the girl at his side but

to the

terrain ahead.

**LIZ**

I'd sure have liked to see you tangle  
with Reno Smith.

**MACREEDY**

He wasn't around when I left... Maybe  
I will yet.

each

His eyes strain to sweep the country -- each boulder,

shadow are

outcropping, each stunted tree. But substance and

blurred and fuzzy in the dark night, black on black.

**OUT**

Sequence omitted from original script.

**ANOTHER ANGLE - JEEP**

with Macreedy and Liz as it winds to the far end of the

Solid  
yet  
terrain...  
Macreeedy

boulders on a trail that drops off into a flat basin.  
forms loom up in the darkness; they are unrecognizable,  
Macreeedy senses some tense familiarity with the  
He frowns. Suddenly Liz brakes the jeep -- so sharply  
lurches forward in the seat.

**MACREEEDY**

(alert, expectant)  
What's this?

**LIZ**

(vamping nervously)  
We need water...  
(she turns off engine,  
pulling ignition key  
from its lock)  
...radiator's overheating.

face

She moves away from Macreeedy to get out of the jeep. He  
reaches across quickly, gripping her arm. She turns to  
him, disturbed by his hardness of jaw and eye...

**LIZ**

Leggo! Leggo of me!

like  
throwing  
grave

Suddenly they are hit by a blinding pair of headlights  
[...] The beams cut jaggedly through the night,  
into sharp immediate relief the lava rocks, the broken  
windmill, the gutted house, the litter-strewn, unmarked  
at Adobe Flat.

the

Liz throws away the ignition key. Macreeedy bails out of  
jeep, still holding the girl.

**CLOSE TWO SHOT - LIZ AND MACREEEDY**

in  
rifle

as they fall to the earth. Macreeedy pins her down. Then  
quick succession, four emphatically loud SHOTS from a  
squirt into the shale around them.

**MACREEEDY**

(harshly, through his  
teeth)

You're stupid, Liz. You're a fool.  
If he finishes me, he's got to finish  
you.

the  
the  
down  
a  
with  
grave.  
them  
away.  
smashes  
dirt  
He  
blind.  
Macreedy...

He looks up blindly into the headlights glaring from  
granitic high ground some 60 yards away. His grip on  
girl's shoulder is like a steel trap. He pushes her  
beside Komako's grave, hugging the side of the jeep as  
SHOT rips the gravel at their feet. Pulling the girl  
him, he takes cover in the slight concavity of the  
The jeep is between them and the headlights -- between  
and the source of the gunfire. Liz struggles to break  
Suddenly bullets kick up a storm around him. A bullet  
into the flowers, exploding tiny cruel fragments of  
into Macreedy's face. He gasps in pain, releasing Liz.  
rubs his eyes as if to convince himself that he is not  
Liz breaks from the grave. Now, five yards from

**LIZ**

(calling toward the  
headlights)  
Smitty! Smitty!

**SMITH'S VOICE**

(o.s.)  
I'm here, honey. Just head for the  
car.

Liz half turns, facing Macreedy with a vicious smile...

**LIZ**

(an almost bantering  
voice)  
So long, Macreedy.

She starts toward the headlights.

**GO WITH LIZ**

enormous She reaches the foot of the rocky ridge, with the two eyes on top. She begins to climb, up... up...

**SMITH**

(o.s.)

Just a few more steps, honey.

five She is almost at the top; a vertically sheer rock about feet high separates her from it. She looks up at Smith, towering over her at the edge of the precipice. He holds his rifle almost languorously.

**LIZ**

(breathlessly)

Get him! Get him now!

**SMITH**

(easily)

First things first, honey.

The girl is frightened by the menace in Smith's voice.

**LIZ**

(unsure, reaching out her hand)

Help me up, Smitty.

**SMITH**

You were going to help me, Liz.

(she looks at him quizzically)

I still need your help.

**LIZ**

(confused)

I did what you said...

**SMITH**

You two started out in a car. That's the way you'll end up. Over a cliff, burning.

(she tries to interrupt him, but he goes on...)

You can blame that on Macreeedy, too. He said I had too many witnesses.

**LIZ**

(dry whisper)

But why me? Why start with me?

**SMITH**

I got to start with somebody.

Liz. Her  
crazily

He brings the rifle down, aiming almost casually at eyes go wide. She steps back, spins around, running down the steep incline.

**LIZ**

(yelling wildly)

Macreeedy! Macreeedy!

down the  
corner  
in her

A SHOT rings out. She falls forward, rolling slowly embankment. She lies there. Blood trickles from the of her pretty mouth. A rattling noise rises from deep throat, and then subsides.

Holding  
sharply  
the  
at

In the silence the outline of Reno Smith emerges. his rifle at the ready, his silhouette illuminated in the twin beams of light, he climbs down the side of cliff. He looks toward the jeep and Macreeedy, not once the girl at his feet.

**LIZ**

(sadly, almost  
reproachfully)

You shouldn't have done that...

with

Smith pays no attention to her. He advances inexorably rifle held at his hip. He fires at Macreeedy.

**EXT. GRAVE**

His

Macreeedy wipes the last of the fragments from his eyes. face is still streaked with dirt and shale. He turns, searching for something, anything, to fight back with.

Then

narrow,  
crawls  
bullet  
ricocheting  
sound.  
familiar

he remembers... Stiffening, his body set, his eyes  
he moves purposefully toward the front of the jeep and  
under it. Again Smith opens up on him. Bullet after  
pours into the confined space, nicking the wall,  
off the jeep with a frightening, fluttery, wheezing  
The firing stops again and in the silence we HEAR a  
TRICKLE, as in running water...

**EXT. RANCH - SMITH**

the

re-loads his rifle. Stiffly, he starts slowly down over  
rocks toward his unarmed victim...

**MACREEDY**

with  
With a  
the  
screws  
collar.  
free  
the  
bottle's

He has unscrewed the nut and unconnected the gas line  
the carburator. A spurt of gasoline is running out.  
quick motion he picks up an empty whisky bottle from  
litter-strewn earth. He fills it with gasoline, quickly  
the nut back on. Now he sweeps his necktie free of his  
Holding it with his teeth, he tears the felt lining  
from its silk face. He twists half the lining inside  
bottle, knotting the other end securely around the  
neck, leaving a long strand dangling.

**EXT. RANCH - CLOSE SHOT - SMITH**

rifle,

moving rigidly toward the hole. He stops, levels his  
fires.

**EXT. GRAVE - MACREEDY**

the

pinned down in the direct line of fire. The burst of  
rifle stops.

**EXT. RANCH - SMITH**

carefully,  
not more than twenty-five yards away, advancing  
rifle at the ready.

**EXT. GRAVE - MACREEDY**

of the  
the  
hard and  
The  
with  
sharp  
ignite.  
on  
lights a match, placing the flame to the dangling end  
tie. It catches. He flings himself to his feet and with  
same motion whips the fiery bottle like a football,  
straight toward Smith. Smith fires once, fast and wild.  
bottle crashes against the rocks at his feet and bursts  
a shattering explosion. Smith screams as the razor-  
slivers rip his flesh. In a puff of flame, his clothes  
He drops the rifle and goes down, squirming frantically  
the black ashy ground.

**EXT. RANCH - FULL SHOT**

shovels  
fire.  
through  
favoring Macreedy as he tears out of the hole. He hurls  
himself at Smith. Wooden-faced, almost dreamy-eyed, he  
the ashy dirt over Smith's prone chest, putting out the  
Smith struggles halfway to his feet. Macreedy grabs his  
shoulder, helping him up. Smith looks at Macreedy  
eyes bleary with fear and pain and shock.

**SMITH**

(through his teeth)  
Go ahead -- kill me. Now.

**MACREEDY**

I'd like to kill you now, but you  
caused too much pain to die quickly.  
(a beat)  
You'll be tried in a court of law.  
You'll be convicted by a jury. Then  
you'll die.

head  
He drives his right fist against Smith's chin. Smith's

on  
hard.  
snaps back as far as it can go and then wobbles to rest  
his chest. He collapses. Macreedy blows out his breath  
He staggers to Liz. As he bends over her...

**DISSOLVE:**

**EXT. BLACK ROCK - DAY (DAWN)**

empty  
tarp,  
the  
inches  
jeep  
He  
Liz's jeep, driven by Macreedy, rolls slowly down the  
main street of the sleeping town. Behind him, under a  
the body of the girl lies lifeless across the seat. On  
seat beside him is Smith's rifle, the balance a few  
from Macreedy's elbow. On the right front fender of the  
Smith sits precariously, his shirt scorched and ragged.  
He wears a sullen expression of pained indifference.

first in  
In b.g., as the jeep passes, isolated lights go on,  
Doc's house, then in two or three others. Macreedy is  
oblivious to them.

**EXT. JAIL - CLOSE SHOT - A MAN**

corner of  
to  
long,  
almost completely hidden, looks out grimly from a  
the jail window. Protruding through the bars, swiveling  
follow the progress of the jeep down the street, is the  
ugly muzzle of a rifle.

**EXT. MAIN STREET - JEEP**

and  
to  
as Macreedy pulls up to the curb in front of the jail  
cuts the ignition. He grabs the rifle, and steps around  
Smith.

**MACREEDY**

(tonelessly, prodding  
Smith off the fender  
with his rifle)

Hands behind your head.

Smith complies.

**EXT. JAIL**

opens.  
carrying  
silence.  
rifle,

as Macreedy marches Smith up the steps. The jail door  
A man emerges, wearing a Mackinaw over his vest and  
a rifle. It is Tim. For a moment Macreedy eyes him in  
His gun finger tightens on the rifle in his hand. Tim's  
too, is at the ready...

**MACREEDY**

(after a beat)

Am I going to have trouble with you?

**TIM**

Nope. But I sure thought the situation  
was going to be like reversed. I  
thought I was going to have trouble...

(nodding sharply in  
Smith's direction)

...with him. I'll take care of him.

**MACREEDY**

(still hesitating)

Just as you took care of his buddies?

**TIM**

Just as I took care of his buddies.  
Me, an' Doc, and Pete...

The SOUND of running feet padding along the dirt road  
increases on SOUND TRACK. Macreedy turns slightly, to  
see  
steps  
the  
Doc huffing toward him. The older man climbs the jail  
and comes to an abrupt halt, his eyes going from one to  
other of the two men in the stand-off.

**DOC**

(to Macreedy)

It's all right, Macreedy...

silver-  
He pulls Tim's Mackinaw to one side, revealing the  
plated star pinned at the breast.

**DOC**

Old Tim here's got his badge back.

his,  
Macreeedy,  
Macreeedy,  
Macreeedy swings his rifle from Tim to Smith. Tim lowers  
stepping to one side, allowing Smith, covered by  
to enter the jail. He goes in, Doc following. Pete sits  
silently at Tim's desk.

**INT. JAIL**

other,  
In one of the two cells are Coley and Hector. In the  
Sam and Hastings.

**MACREEDY**

(looking around)  
Well. The gang is all here.

**TIM**

I thought I'd take one last whack at  
my job. Even if Smith killed me for  
it.

**MACREEDY**

(jerking his head  
toward Smith)  
Put him in with Hastings.

goes to  
Tim turns his key in the cell door. Macreeedy tiredly  
Pete at the desk.

**MACREEDY**

Your sister's outside, Pete.

his  
Pete rises. Macreeedy halts him momentarily, gripping  
arm...

**MACREEDY**

(flatly)  
She's dead.

shoulder  
it  
harshly...  
Pete walks dazedly out the door. Tim grabs Smith's  
and propels him roughly through the cell door. He slams  
hard. As the clatter of the iron door reverberates

**DISSOLVE:**

**EXT. HOTEL - BLACK ROCK - DAY**

The townspeople, with Doc f.g., are gathered silently in the street, staring sadly, dumbly at the hotel before them. Doc wears a dark business suit, neat and conservative. The door opens (o.s.) and the people look up, their eyes lighting with expectancy.

**WHAT THEY SEE**

Macreeedy comes out of the door, carrying his suitcase. For a moment he pauses, looking at the uplifted faces of the people in the street. In the distance we HEAR the horn of a stream-watching liner. Macreeedy goes down the steps, skirts the crowd and heads for the railroad station. Almost immediately Doc falls in step with him. The townspeople, still silent, trail after them

**MOVING SHOT - MACREEEDY AND DOC**

in f.g., the townspeople behind them. In b.g., as we pass, we see the main street just as we saw it when Macreeedy entered town a few short hours ago.

**MACREEEDY**

(walking, after a  
beat, to Doc)  
Tim knows where to find me if I'm  
needed.

Doc nods. He blinks and frowns...

**MACREEEDY**

What's on your mind, Doc?

**DOC**

Nothing. Only... about that medal.  
Can we have it?

**MACREEDY**

"We...?" Can who have it?

**DOC**

We.

(indicating the  
townspeople, with a  
vague wave of his  
hand)

Us.

**MACREEDY**

Why?

**DOC**

Well, we need it, I guess. It's  
something we can maybe build on.  
This town is wrecked, just as bad as  
if it was bombed out. Maybe it can  
come back...

**MACREEDY**

Some towns come back. Some don't. It  
depends on the people.

as do  
A NOISE o.s. attracts Macreedy's attention. He turns,  
Doc and the townsmen.

**WHAT THEY SEE**

Smith,  
escort  
Tim's  
member  
IN HIS  
have  
his arm  
In front of the jail, each of them handcuffed, are  
Coley, Hector, Sam and Hastings. Tim and four cops  
them to two State Police cars which are parked beside  
old sedan and another car (presumably belonging to a  
of the press). The newspaperman (WITHOUT A PRESS CARD  
HAT) stands to one side with Pete. Pete as well as Tim  
changed clothes; they look clean and trim. Coley has  
in a sling. Hector's hat hides the bandage on his head.

**BACK TO SCENE**

with  
pulls  
Macreedy resumes walking toward the abandoned station,  
Doc at his side and the people behind him. The train  
in.

**DOC**

(still pressing)  
That medal would help.

pauses,  
Doc.  
the  
hands it  
Macreedy is silent. He walks on, to the platform. He  
looking at the people silently in his wake and then at  
He takes a black velvet-covered box from his pocket --  
box containing the medal -- looks at it, and slowly  
to Doc.

**DOC**

Thanks, Macreedy. Thanks for  
everything.

after  
him.  
Macreedy turns and exits from SHOT. The people look

**EXT. PLATFORM**

as Macreedy boards the train.

**EXT. STREET**

the  
prisoners. The people move silently toward the train.  
The cars in front of the jail U-turn and start off with

**EXT. TRAIN**

out.  
Macreedy is at the passageway. Slowly the train moves

**INT. PASSAGEWAY OF TRAIN**

is  
seen behind them and the people standing there. In the  
distance, Tim's car recedes.  
Macreedy and a conductor stand at the doorway. The town

**CONDUCTOR**

(curiously)

What's the excitement? What happened?

**MACREEDY**

A shooting.

**CONDUCTOR**

I knew it was something. First time  
a streamliner stopped here in four  
years.

**MACREEDY**

Second time.

He walks into the train.

**LONG SHOT - TRAIN**

gathering speed, diminishing, far, far into the  
horizon.

**FADE**

**OUT:**

**THE END**

**NOTES**

Note from page [9]: (1) The sign should be of whatever  
type  
is feasible and compatible to terrain, emphasizing the  
remoteness of Black Rock. It should list three cities  
with  
arrows pointing in the proper directions:

**SAND CITY 32 MILES**  
**PHOENIX 156 MILES**