BAD DAY AT BLACK ROCK

Written by
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Based on the story
"Bad Day At Hondo"
by Howard Breslin

SHOOTING

FADE IN BEFORE MAIN TITLE
BAD DAY AT BLACK ROCK

ESTABLISHING SHOT - BLACK ROCK - PART OF TOWN: FOCAL
RAILROAD STATION

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

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

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

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

**FULL SHOT - BLACK ROCK**

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

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

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

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
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

assayer and notary public, mortician to the citizens of
Rock who have departed to a better place, and
An elderly, somewhat untidy gentleman, he sits nonchalantly on a chair outside the Bar & Grill. Idling with him are three or four other loafers, among them 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

A tall, attractive girl of twenty in dungarees and cotton of habit, at gustiness

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

two enormous men. HECTOR is tall, and there is about him a type --

nasty, raw-boned tautness; COLEY is more the anthropoid long thick arms and a round, iron casing of a belly. They glance down the street, watching incuriously a dust devil swirling in the wind.

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

CLOSE SHOT - MR. HASTINGS

still spineless in his chair, the chair still tilted against
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).

Hastings straightens up ever so slightly as he reacts to the oncoming train.

**STRAIGHT SHOT - STREAMLINER**

moving at tremendous speed.

**BRIDGE**

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

**CLOSE SHOT - HASTINGS**

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

**HASTINGS**
(almost inaudible, as if to himself)

Stopping...?

**SHOT - TRAIN**

heading toward CAMERA, churning across the desert like a juggernaut. It PANS past CAMERA in a blur of speed.

SWINGS UP on a level with the great iron wheels as the brakes are applied. The wheels shriek agonizingly against the rails, kicking up cinders and a wild flurry of dust. She cuts speed, brakes hissing, and starts to slow down.

**LONG SHOT MAIN STREET - BLACK ROCK**
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 has somehow, for some unknown reason, been violated.

CLOSE SHOT - DOC VELIE

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

CLOSE SHOT - LIZ BROOKS

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

REVERSE SHOT - WHAT SHE SEES

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

CLOSE SHOT - HASTINGS

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

OUT

Sequence omitted from original script.

EXT. STATION PLATFORM

with the train stationary before it. A sleek steel door of a pullman clangs open. A colored porter carrying a
walks down the wrought-iron steps. He is stately, gray-haired and lean, with the almost finical tidiness travelers associate with trainmen. The man behind him is big-shouldered, a granite-like wedge of a man with calm, piercing eyes. There is about 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 shoulder with that lifeless rigidity of paralysis, while the hand is hidden in his pocket.

**ANOTHER ANGLE - MACREEDY AND PORTER**

The porter puts the suitcase on the platform. In the distance the town and its people are seen staring silently, motionlessly. The big man glances toward them. He smiles a sad, distasteful greeting to the town, its wretched dust. Its mean, modest buildings. The porter disappears into the 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.

Macreedy nods his thanks. The conductor signals the engineer
(o.s.) and steps on the train. The diesel's claxon blasts 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. Macreedy 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?

**MACREEDY**
(easily)
That's right.

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

**MACREEDY**
(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?

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

MACREEDY
(patiently)
I asked where's the hotel?

Hastings points.

MACREEDY
Thanks.

With his suitcase, he cuts across a weedy path, running into Black Rock's single street. For a moment, Hastings stares 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

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

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

CLOSE SHOT - LIZ

as she follows the man's movement.

OUT

Sequence omitted from original script.

CLOSE ANGLE - ON MACREEDY

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

SHOT - MACREEDY

heading toward the hotel. In b.g. is a relatively small farm equipment yard compressed between a general store (which
Macreedy has just passed) and the hotel just ahead. In the yard are a few tractors, and among them huddles a tiny office. 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 legend:

T.J. HATES J.S.

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

ANOTHER ANGLE - MACREEDY

As he peers through the dust toward the dingy hotel. It has a narrow stoop and outsize bay windows on each side. Macreedy mounts the hotel steps. At the top of the steps Coley Trimble and Hector David watch him silently. Hector is large leanly muscular, yet Coley looms over him like a battleship. He is a gross behemoth of a man, with sharp flinty eyes the size of glistening pinpoints and a slack, oversized jaw. Both men wear modern Western work clothes, but there is incongruous accessory which Hector affects. Around his thick wrist is a watch with a large flat face and an elaborately tooled leather strap -- a cheap reproduction of one of those 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-splotted blotter up over the desk to one of those World War II banners, the imitation silk now stained and...
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.

Feeling the eyes of Hector on him, Macreedy turns. Hector meets his gaze with bland, insolent interest. Now a young 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.

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.

Macreedy looks down at the open ledger on the desk before firmly, it, a

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...
(drawning 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...

Macreedy leans over the counter to a rack of keys. He runs
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.

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

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.

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

MACREEDY
I don't know just why you're interested -- but the name's Macreedy. I'm...
(grins)
It's all in the ledger.

HECTOR
(slowly, his eyes glued to Macreedy's stiff arm)
You look like you need a hand.

Macreedy says nothing. The wales along his face harden. He picks up his bag and climbs the stairs. As he disappears, Hector lumbers to the desk and grabs the ledger.

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

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - ANGLE ON MACREEDY

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

INT. HOTEL ROOM

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

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

**HECTOR**
(not budging)
You think so?

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

**HECTOR**
What else you got on your mind?

Macreedy pauses and takes in the situation. He refuses to be 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 Macreedy)
If a man don't claim what's rightfully his'n, he's nuthin'. What do you think?

MACREEDY
I guess so.

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

MACREEDY
I guess not.

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

MACREEDY
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 Macreedy goes to his suitcase and throws his clothes in it. As he goes out the door...

DISSOLVE TO:

OUT

Sequence omitted from original script.
INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY - FULL SHOT - SAM AND THE
LOAFERS

They sit around, each with his own thoughts. They are
eagerly generally stolid; only Sam seems nervous. He looks up
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

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

MACREEDY
Hey! Hold it!

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

MACREEDY
Got any cigarettes?

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

PETE
This is all.

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

PETE
How long you staying?

MACREEDY
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'.

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

MACREEDY
Stale.

Now Doc is at the desk not far from Macreedy. Macreedy starts 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.
Macreedy pauses, looking at Doc, who blandly returns his stare.

**MACREEDY**

Thanks.

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

**EXT. STREET**

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

**INT. HOTEL LOBBY**

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

opens
the hotel register, places it before Smith

**PETE**

(deferentially,
gesturing toward the
open register)

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

Smith doesn't answer; he looks up thoughtfully. His
eyes
harden almost imperceptibly as he sees Coley, across
the 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.

Coley sits in the nearest chair. Beyond Smith, still
resting
easily against the high counter of Pete's desk, the
figure of Hector appears at the top of the stairs. He comes 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

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

EXT. LIZ'S GARAGE - FULL SHOT

The garage, without a door, opens on the street. Against the one laboriously skull window from back

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

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

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.

Again the pause. T.J. steps back, having completed his work, which, of course, broadcasts the fact that "T.J. HATES J.S.". And again as Macreedy begins to speak...

T.J.

In about ten minutes.

MACREEDY

(with a grin)
Thanks.
T.J. turns, pulls the bike away from the building, completes a fastidious "pony express" and peddles furiously out of scene.

EXT. STREET - FULL SHOT

as Macreedy, after a moment's hesitation, starts down it. From the far end, at the telegraph agent's shack, a figure starts running toward Macreedy. It is Hastings. INTERCUT between the two men. Hastings, in his concentration, doesn't see the stranger until he is almost upon him. He slows down, suddenly, awkwardly, to a self-conscious walk. Macreedy grins at him, passes on, shaking his head speculatively. with a parting glance, gallops up the hotel steps.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - FULL SHOT

Smith, Coley, Hector, Pete, Doc, Sam et al are still in evidence. Smith is in a tight little group at the desk with Coley, Hector and Pete. Doc has taken a position at the window, looking out. Hastings bursts in and half-runs to 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

Hastings nods and hurriedly exits.

COLEY
(after a beat)
Who's Gandi?

Smith looks at Coley, trying to decide if the question in 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 VELE - AT THE WINDOW

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

DOC
Now what do you know?
(beaming)
Mr. Macreedy 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**

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

**BACK TO SCENE**

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

**OUT**

Sequence omitted from original script.

**INT. JAIL**

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

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

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

**TIM**

Hold it, friend.

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

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

SHOT - OF THE TWO
Tim breaks out a bottle of booze, starts to take a snort, then stops, offers it to Macreedy.

TIM
Snort?

MACREEDY
No, thanks.

TIM
Don't blame you. It's awful.

He takes a belt that would incapacitate half the county. He finishes, smacks his lips, lays the bottle down, and falls 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 it. Macreedy's hand moves quickly, catching the bottle
before 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 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.

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

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

As Smith joins him, he walks on. Smith falls in step beside 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)

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

Macreedy 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.

Smith opens his mouth to reply when the NOISE of a jeep interrupts him. The jeep comes INTO SHOT. Liz Brooks, at the wheel, cuts the engine and jumps out. Smith ambles silently to a wall and leans against it. Liz reaches behind the driver's seat and hoists, with both hands and some effort, a 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?

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

Liz hesitates. Macreedy notes her confusion as her eyes seek 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.

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

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.

He steps into jeep and, with one hand expertly manipulating 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?

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

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

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

**QUICK**

**DISSOLVE:**

**OUT**

Sequence omitted from original script.

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

Tim sits in his chair, still staring sightlessly at the whiskey bottle. Smith enters. He looks from Tim to the bottle 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 Macreedy does it for me.

SMITH
(evenly)
Macreedy'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, murmuring)
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 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

with Doc, Sam, Coley, Hector and Pete on the porch. 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
as Hastings runs up the steps with a hobnailed clatter. Smith 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 Tim, who stares straight ahead, seeing nothing, and Doc, whose eyes 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. Macreedy. 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!

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

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

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 Macreedy'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 Macreedy can raise a
pretty big stink. The point is...
who would miss a nobody like Macreedy
if he just, say, disappeared? Who, Coley?

Coley is terribly preoccupied, balances himself, like a child, 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 Macreedy. 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

"photograph". SHOOTING over his shoulder. Focal point: the
   Tim
   badge
   heading
   ROCK.
   It shows a widely grinning, moderately alert and healthy
   of perhaps five years ago. He is wearing, proudly, his
   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

MED. SHOT - TIM AND DOC
Tim takes the photo off the wall and, holding it, turns to face Doc...

T**IM**

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.

(sha**kes his head**)

They just laugh.

D**OC**

I don't laugh, Tim.

T**IM**

Why don't you?

D**OC**

Cut it out, Tim.

T**IM**

You should!

D**OC**

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

T**IM**

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.

D**OC**

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

T**IM**

Do you believe it?

Doc squirms but doesn't answer.

T**IM**

Do you know what happened?

D**OC**
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.

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

OUT

Sequence omitted from original script.

EXT. DESERT ROAD

An old marker, jutting on an angle at the side of the
road, reads: ADOBE FLAT. Beneath it an arrow points ahead.

Macreedy

steers the jeep up the narrow, rutted trail between a
of enormous boulders.

ANOTHER ANGLE

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

OUT

Sequence omitted from original script.

MED. SHOT – MACREEDY

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

REVERSE ANGLE – WHAT HE SEES

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

BACK TO MACREEDY
studying the brightly colored flowers. His face is lined in 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 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 rise. For a moment camera holds on the car. Then it pans upward about fifty feet, holding this time on...

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

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

THE CLIFF - COLEY continues to train his glasses on Macreedy far below in the moving jeep.

THE JEEP - MACREEDY driving steadily over rough, rocky terrain.
COLEY climbs down from the pinnacle of the cliff and enters a big, powerful '36 Packard sedan.

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

COLEY - IN HIS CAR

turns on the ignition.

MACREEDY - IN THE JEEP

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

THE SIDE ROAD

The car with Cooley at the wheel pulls out, follows between Macreedy. INTERCUT between the two cars, with the distance between them constantly diminishing.

OUT

Sequence omitted from original script.

EXT. - FLAT ROAD

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

CLOSE SHOT - MACREEDY IN JEEP - (PROCESS)

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

SHOT - PACKARD
picking up tremendous speed.

**EXT. - ROAD BED**

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

**ANOTHER ANGLE - ROAD BED**

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. 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**

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)**

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
force, with the brutal abrasion of metal pounding metal.

CLOSE SHOT - MACREEDY - (PROCESS)

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

Just ahead the gradient is comparatively gradual, however steep by normal standards. He swings the jeep off the road, miraculously upright. Macreedy jockeys it to a whirring, shuddering halt in the soft sand at the bottom of a draw. Macreedy turns slightly and looks up the mountain-side with the road at its summit...

WHAT HE SEES: EXTREME LONG SHOT - COLEY

In b.g., the Packard. Coley turns emphatically, gets into drives off.

BACK TO MACREEDY

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

MEDIUM SHOT - JEEP

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

carburetor
With his hand Macreedy screws it tight.

MEDIUM SHOT - JEEP

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

DISSOLVE:

EXT. BLACK ROCK - MAIN STREET CLOSE SHOT - HECTOR

apple
with half an apple in his mouth. He stands in front of the grocery store, stops crunching.

CLOSE SHOT - SAM

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

CLOSE SHOT - HASTINGS

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

OUT

Sequence omitted from original script.

REVERSE SHOT - WHAT THEY SEE

Macreedy slowly driving the jeep toward Liz's garage. He looks neither to the right nor left.
GROUP SHOT - FAVORING SMITH AND COLEY

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

FULL SHOT - MACREEDY

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

EXT. HOTEL

Macreedy is about to go up the steps when he sees Coley's car at the curb. Both right fenders are creased. An ugly, jagged break has split the front bumper almost in half, one part angling crazily toward the sky, the other drooping in the dust of the road. Smith and Coley come out of the hotel. They stand on the porch, watching Macreedy as he turns so...

COLEY

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

He walks down the steps to the street, joining Macreedy.

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
He walks up the steps, past Smith, and into the hotel.

Glances up at Smith, grinning with self-satisfaction,

like a small boy who has carried out perfectly the instructions of his teacher.

INT. HOTEL

Macreedy and

The lobby empty except for Pete behind the desk.

goes to him. Pete seems elaborately occupied arranging
re-arranging a few file cards. Smith enters the lobby. He 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.

He turns, walks toward porch. Pete looks at Smith. Smith's eyes follow Macreedy.
INT. LIZ'S GARAGE - FULL SHOT

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

WHAT SHE SEES - MACREEDY

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

MACREEDY

Anybody home?

OUT

Sequence omitted from original script.

EXT. LUBE PIT - LIZ

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

INT. GARAGE

Macreedy again shifts his eyes to the jeep, then, with decision, he goes to a work bench, opening the drawers and rummaging among the contents.

LIZ

(o.s.)

If you're looking for the jeep key...
Macreedy turns as Liz comes toward him. She gestures toward the open drawers.

**LIZ**
...it's not there...

Macreedy waits for her to go on. She doesn't. She stands 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.

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

MACREEDY
(simply)
Was I wrong, Miss Brooks?

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

EXT. MAIN STREET - MACREEDY

walks thoughtfully down street. He comes abreast of hotel.

EXT. PORCH OF HOTEL

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.

MACREEDY
(looking at Macreedy's stiff arm)
Where'd you get it?
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.

Macreedy 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 Macreedy 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.

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

Macreedy gets up, half turns to Smith.

MACREEDY
Maybe.

He starts down the steps.

SMITH
Why not give it a whirl?
(Macreedy 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

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

T.R. VELE, JR. UNDERTAKER AND VETERINARY

And in the lower right hand corner:

ASSAYER NOTARY PUBLIC
A few of the peeled gold and black letters are completely missing.

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

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

walks up the steps and enters.

**INT. DOC'S OFFICE**

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

**INT. DOC'S LAB**

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

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

**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.

Macreedy reaches for the phone book.

DOC
It's 4-2-4.

MACREEDY
(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.

Macreedy thinks it over and comes to a swift decision. He checks the phone book. Then, picking up phone...

MACREEDY
(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)
CAMERA PULLS BACK revealing Smith standing beside him.

The two men exchange a nod.

**PETE**

(into phone)

Lines 're busy.

(he clicks off the instrument)

**INT. DOC'S LAB**

Macreedy slowly puts down the phone. Doc sips his milk, all the while staring queasily over the glass at Macreedy. He 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.

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

**DOC**

(gesturing toward it)

First I sell 'em a piece of land. Think they farm it? Nope. They dig for gold.

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

He moves to his desk, picks up a glistening blob of stone, 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!

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

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

DOC (simply)
So I bury 'em.
(a beat, as he rejoins Macreedy 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.

Macreedy 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. Macreedy climbs in behind the wheel as Doc comes out and stands on the small back porch. Macreedy turns on the ignition switch. His foot kicks over the starter, but the spark doesn't catch. He tries 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 Macreedy)
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.
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
hood. Doc peers nervously over his shoulder. As they study the engine, Hector's horsey face appears behind them. He 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?

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

**MACREEDY**

(quietly)

It can be fixed.

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

**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.

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

**HECTOR**

(triumphantly, holding up the wires)

Yep. It's the wirin'.
Still gripping the wires, he walks off. Doc simmers down. He 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.

**QUICK**

**INT. TELEGRAPH AGENT'S OFFICE**

Macreedy stands at the high counter, writing on a Telegraph blank. Behind the counter, watching him nervously, is Hastings. At the agent's elbow is a big pitcher with dew on the glass. It holds a pale liquid and a chunk of ice. His
eyes on Macreedy, Hastings refills a glass tumbler. He takes a gulp as Macreedy puts down the pencil and pushes the message toward him. Now Hastings puts down his glass, picks up the form and scans it hurriedly. He looks at Macreedy, eyes glazed with anxiety...

HASTINGS
You notifyin' the state po-lice?

MACREEDY
(putting a bill on the counter)
That's what it says.

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

HASTINGS
(plaintively)
Lemonade?

Macreedy shakes his head. No.

HASTINGS
(mopping his forehead)
It's hot as Billy-be-durned.

He drinks, puts down the glass. Macreedy pushes the bill gingerly 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
Macreedy'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
facing a counter covered with oil-cloth thumb-tacked in place. 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 toothpick. At the bar, engaged in a worrisome conversation, are four loafers, FRANKLIN KROOL, WALT MURTRY, RON BENTHAM and STERLING 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

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

SAM'S SANITARY BAR & GRILL

Macreedy pauses, shrugs and then enters.

INT. BAR & GRILL

Sam is still working on his finger nails. He evidences little 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.

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

**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.

He turns again as Sam plops an unseasonable mess of chili in front of him.
COLEY
(to Smith, gesturing a thumb toward Macreedy)
No comment, he says. No comment, and all the time he's got my chair.

Macreedy smiles tiredly. He half turns toward Coley.

MACREEDY
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 Macreedy has vacated. He squirms on it, his movements exaggerated. Now he spins to face Smith.

COLEY
This seat ain't comfortable.

MACREEDY
I was afraid of that.

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

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

MACREEDY
(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 silent, watching. Sam, seemingly oblivious to Coley's pressure on Macreedy, places a bottle of ketchup in front of the stranger. Coley gets up slowly and walks stiff-legged to removing drowned runs Macreedy. He takes the bottle of ketchup and, without the cap, upends it over Macreedy's plate. The cap is in a deluge of ketchup which overflows the plate and onto the counter.
COLEY
(to Macreedy)
I hope that ain't too much.

MACREEDY
(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?

MACREEDY
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?

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

COLEY
You don't like my voice?

MACREEDY
(again turning to Smith)
I think your friend's trying to start something.

SMITH
Now why-ever would he want to do that?

MACREEDY
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...?

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

COLEY
If I tied both hands...?

Macreedy shakes free of Coley's grasp. Coley lunges. His big right fist streaks toward Macreedy's face. Macreedy 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 Macreedy, the stranger tugs at his belt, twisting him to one side. He plants his left foot on the toes of Coley's left boot, for a split second anchoring Coley in place. He chops the under side of his open hand in a short, vicious arc that lands solidly under Coley's ear. 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.

Following through, Macreedy's elbow smashes beneath Coley's face, Macreedy's arm goes past the astonished, wind-burned cheekbone. finding Coley's right wrist. He jerks the wrist out and backward. It snaps. Coley whimpers, his face twisted in pain back.
He raises his right shoulder a few inches. His bent arm drives up like a piston attached to the shoulder's lift. Fist and arm seem all one rigid piece with only the limber shoulder giving them motion. The fist strikes Coley's face, covering for a moment one side of his chin and a corner of his mouth between cheekbone and jawbone. Coley shuts eyes and falls unconscious.

Smith, a puzzled expression on his face, watches Coley fall. He takes half a step toward him. Macreedy looks at Smith. 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?

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

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

MACREEDY
And they're getting tougher every minute.

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

He goes to Coley, bending down over him. Smith has remained 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

INT. HOTEL LOBBY

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 change 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-armed bandit. They follow his gaze up the steps.

STAIRWAY - MACREEDY

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. who has followed him, stands looking down at Macreedy 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)

Doc follows his gaze as Hastings enters the lobby and looks around. He sees Macreedy coming toward him. He walks rigidly 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 his stockinged feet joins them.

Smith scans the message. He looks up to meet Macreedy's gaze. Smith rises. Hector swaggers over from the slot machine. Hastings slips around the back of the couch, protected by 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?

Hastings is silent. A brittle expression of bemusement crosses 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...

Macreedy takes a step toward Hastings. The telegraph
agent
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.

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

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

SMITH
(to Hector)
All right, Sheriff. Take over.

DOC
You can't do that!

SMITH

Hector moves his elephantine bulk within inches of Macreedy...

HECTOR
Now. You want to register a complaint?

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

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

Macreedy 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.

He walks out, the new Sheriff strutting beside him, with 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 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 Tim's shoulders are slumped. Humiliation has corroded his 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 support. Macreedy takes an untapped bottle of whiskey his bag. He thumbs the cork loose and holds the bottle to Tim. Tim takes a drink.

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

Pete comes out from behind the desk, walking from one lamp 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 Macreedy with a thumb)
He's going to need you before the night is over.

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

DOC
(contemptuously)
And all the useful men are on the other side.

As Pete turns on the lamp behind Doc, he reacts ever so slightly to Doc's words. His almost imperceptible grimace is
not lost on Macreedy. Macreedy watches the young man as he 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.

Self-consciously Pete has backed off until now he leans against the outside of the clerk's desk. But he still can't 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.

    MACREEDY
    I know --
    (unconsciously his right arm strays to
massage 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.
   Macready.

Slowly he lumbers out of the lobby. Doc watches him go.
Again

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.

(Macreedy jerks his head toward Macreedy, and with mock bravado...)
He's all washed up.

MACREEDY
(grinning harshly at him)
You think so?

His right hand closes over the neck of the whiskey bottle on the end table. Abstractedly fingering it, he walks with tense, 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
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...
In sudden frustration, Pete grabs the deck of cards on the clerk's desk and slams them down hard. They scatter. He stares blankly [...] between Doc and Macreedy.

MACREEDY
(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.

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

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

MACREEDY
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.

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

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.

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

(awfully)
God forgive me...

He takes the bottle from the table and shakily pours a shot 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...

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

MACREEDY

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

Macreedy's hand shoots out, in a short, inexorable arc, smashing his palm across the shot glass. The whiskey bursts 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 stare at him...

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

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

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

Pete pushes the bottle aside, too ravaged by Macreedy's words and his own thoughts to drink. He shakes his head then, with sudden decision, goes to the switchboard and plugs 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
as they exchange a glance. Doc takes a long, deep
breath of relief. Macreedy frowns thoughtfully. He strains to
listen to Liz, but all he (and we) can hear is the staccato
jumble 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 Liz's voice incoherent over the phone, and again...

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.

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

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

WHAT HE SEES

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

BACK TO SCENE - HECTOR

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

INT. REAR HALLWAY OF HOTEL - NIGHT

At the far end b.g., toward the lobby, a single unshaded light bulb burns dully. A slight figure stands in f.g. To one side is a narrow U-shaped alcove blanketed in heavy shadows. The features of the man in the hall and the slim lines of his body blend vaguely in the darkness. With enormous 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 alley, glancing across the alcove, momentarily illuminates it. As close to the recessed wall as is humanly possible is Glued 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.
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 with 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?

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

**INT. REAR HALLWAY**

as Hector enters and stops. Pete quickly closes the door behind him and walks toward the lobby, attempting to draw Hector toward the black alcove center screen b.g. But Hector 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. Macreedy, 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.

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

HECTOR
You got a match?

PETE
Come on. I got some in the lobby.

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

HECTOR
I thought you didn't have a match.

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

INT. ACOVE - DOC

sweating with frustration. Hector is six feet away, and too far away for Doc to risk an attack with his lead pipe.

Doc looks around vaguely, wildly, for another weapon. A fraction of an inch from his nose is the hose wheel. For a split second he hesitates. Then slowly, with infinite care, he tightens the heavy brass nozzle and begins to unwind the 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 as 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,
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

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

EXT. ROAD — MACREEDY AND LIZ

as they speed down the long empty ribbon of road. Liz drives hard. Macreedy turns in the bucket seat, looking back toward 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
(calmingly)
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

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

His eyes strain to sweep the country -- each boulder,
each
outcropping, each stunted tree. But substance and
shadow are
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
boulders on a trail that drops off into a flat basin. Solid forms loom up in the darkness; they are unrecognizable, yet Macreedy senses some tense familiarity with the terrain... He frowns. Suddenly Liz brakes the jeep -- so sharply lurches forward in the seat.

**MACREEDY**
(alert, expectant)
What's this?

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

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

**LIZ**
Leggo! Leggo of me!

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

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

**CLOSE TWO SHOT - LIZ AND MACREEDY**

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

**MACREEDY**
(harshly, through his teeth)
You're stupid, Liz. You're a fool.
If he finishes me, he's got to finish you.

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

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

SMITH
(o.s.)
Just a few more steps, honey.

She is almost at the top; a vertically sheer rock about five 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 Macreedy, 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.

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

LIZ
(yelling wildly)
Macreedy! Macreedy!

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

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

LIZ
(sadly, almost reproachfully)
You shouldn't have done that...

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

EXT. GRAVE

Macreedy wipes the last of the fragments from his eyes. His face is still streaked with dirt and shale. He turns, searching for something, anything, to fight back with.
he remembers... Stiffening, his body set, his eyes narrow, he moves purposefully toward the front of the jeep and crawls under it. Again Smith opens up on him. Bullet after bullet pours into the confined space, nicking the wall, ricocheting off the jeep with a frightening, fluttery, wheezing sound. The firing stops again and in the silence we HEAR a familiar TRICKLE, as in running water...

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

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

EXT. RANCH - CLOSE SHOT - SMITH
moving rigidly toward the hole. He stops, levels his fires.

EXT. GRAVE - MACREEDY
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

devices 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

favoring Macreedy as he tears out of the hole. He hurls
himself at Smith. Wooden-faced, almost dreamy-eyed, he
shovels
the ashy dirt over Smith's prone chest, putting out the
fire.

Smith struggles halfway to his feet. Macreedy grabs his
shoulder, helping him up. Smith looks at Macreedy
through
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.

He drives his right fist against Smith's chin. Smith's
head
snaps back as far as it can go and then wobbles to rest on his chest. He collapses. Macreedy blows out his breath hard. He staggers to Liz. As he bends over her...

DISSOLVE:

EXT. BLACK ROCK - DAY (DAWN)

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

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

EXT. JAIL - CLOSE SHOT - A MAN

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

EXT. MAIN STREET - JEEP

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

MACREEDY
(tonelessly, prodding
Smith off the fender
with his rifle)
Hands behind your head.

Smith complies.

**EXT. JAIL**

as Macreedy marches Smith up the steps. The jail door opens. A man emerges, wearing a Mackinaw over his vest and carrying a rifle. It is Tim. For a moment Macreedy eyes him in silence. 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**

 stil 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 Doc huffing toward him. The older man climbs the jail steps 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...

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

Old Tim here's got his badge back.

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

**INT. JAIL**

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

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

**MACREEDY**

Your sister's outside, Pete.

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

**MACREEDY**

(flatly)
She's dead.

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

Macreedy 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 streamliner. Macreedy goes down the steps, skirts the watching crowd and heads for the railroad station. Almost immediately Doc falls in step with him. The townspeople, still silent, trail after them.

MOVING SHOT - MACREEDY 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 Macreedy entered town a few short hours ago.

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

Doc nods. He blinks and frowns...

MACREEDY
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.

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

**WHAT THEY SEE**

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

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

**DOC**
(still pressing)
That medal would help.

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

**DOC**
Thanks, Macreedy. Thanks for everything.

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

**EXT. PLATFORM**
as Macreedy boards the train.

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

**EXT. TRAIN**
Macreedy is at the passageway. Slowly the train moves out.

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

**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