

A P P A L O O S A

by

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Appaloosa

by

Robert B. Parker

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1 INT. BOSTON HOUSE SALOON, APPALOOSA - LATE AFTERNOON 1

Particles of dust float in rays of sunlight slicing through louvered saloon doors.

The doors push open silhouetting the holstered guns of two men.

The bartender, FAT WALLIS, looks up as he lights an oil lamp chandelier.

Close on CHALK and BRONC, dangerous looking cowhands.

BRONC
Whiskey.

Fat Wallis maneuvers around the bar, pours two shots.

CHALK
Leave the bottle.

Wallis sets the NEAR FULL WHISKEY BOTTLE on the bar.

2 INT. TOWN HALL, APPALOOSA - SUNSET 2

ABNER RAINES, tall with white hair, one of three CITY ALDERMEN, addresses a packed house.

RAINES
Today is a special day. Seven years ago a death knell rang out in this town. The Indian Wars had forced the closure of our copper mines, the life-blood of our community. Many of our friends and their families left us. Appaloosa was on the verge of becoming a ghost town...empty buildings, silent streets, memories of lives being erased by the dust and the wind.

The townspeople pay solemn attention.

RAINES (CONT'D)
But those of us who stayed refused to let that happen. With our faith in God and one another we fought and struggled through the most difficult of times and have persevered. And now our moment is here...our moment to look forward - into the glow of the future.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RAINES (CONT'D)

So without further ado, on behalf
of my fellow Aldermen, Mr. Earl May
and Mr. Phil Olson, I would like to
welcome...all the way from
Chicago...the man who will be the
Chief Engineer of the newly founded
Appaloosa Copper Company, Mr.
Clayton Poston, and his beautiful
bride Vera!

Applause.

CLAYTON, big and handsome and VERA, his beautiful wife; rise
from their seats and acknowledge the cheering townsfolk.

Clayton strides up to a small table near the podium.

CLAYTON

Thank you. Vera and I have been
warmed by your hospitality. And
believe me, coming from Chicago,
that feels awfully nice.

The audience laughs politely.

CLAYTON (CONT'D)

So thank you. Now on to the
business at hand...Electricity is
the future, and electric wire is
copper wire!

He whips the velvet cover off a contraption with a light bulb
on top. He cranks the handle and the bulb LIGHTS UP.

The audience cheers and claps, in awe.

More cheering. Vera beams with pride.

3 INT. BOSTON HOUSE SALOON - NIGHT

3

Close on the WHISKEY BOTTLE, NEAR EMPTY.

A rough hand grabs the bottle... two drinks are poured.

Chalk and Bronc down their last shots. They turn to go.

FAT WALLIS (O.S.)

That'll be three dollars.

Both men turn and stare dead-eyed at Wallis.

Wallis doesn't want to die for three dollars. He turns away
and goes back to work.

(CONTINUED)

3

CONTINUED:

3

Chalk and Bronc head out into the night.

4

EXT. TOWN HALL - NIGHT

4

Buggies and wagons are leaving. Folks calling good-night to one another.

Vera and Clayton stroll across the street into the darkness.

5

EXT. 2ND STREET, APPALOOSA - A SHORT TIME LATER - NIGHT

5

Vera and Clayton stroll the dimly lit street, arm and arm, obviously in love.

IN THE SHADOWS - Chalk and Bronc.

CHALK

Here he comes.

BRONC

You sure that's him?

CHALK

Gotta be.

Bronc and Chalk step out of the shadows.

Vera stops when she sees them.

VERA

(pulling Clayton's arm)

Let's cross.

CLAYTON

It'll be fine, dear.

A moment's walk and THEY MEET on the boardwalk.

BRONC

Where you goin'?

CLAYTON

We're going to our hotel. If you'll kindly step out of the way.

CHALK

Good looking lady you got.

CLAYTON

My wife.

BRONC

She fuck as good as she looks?

(CONTINUED)

5

CONTINUED:

5

Clayton hits Bronc so hard he's staggered backward.

Chalk drives his hunting knife up into Clayton's heart.

Vera begins to scream as Clayton falls but Bronc clamps his strong hand over her mouth and drags her into the blackness of the alley. Chalk follows...

BLACK OUT

6

EXT. CIRCLE R~B RANCH - DAY

6

MARSHAL JACK BELL, 60ish, heroic looking, on a large black horse, and TWO DEPUTIES ride under arched timbers.

An iron CIRCLE R~B swings from the cross beam.

From the ranch house some distance away, RANDALL BRAGG, 50's, an imposing charismatic presence, steps off the porch. He cradles a WINCHESTER .73.

From the corral, bunkhouse and barn, BRAGG'S MEN... join him.

Bell and his Deputies ride to a halt.

They meet in an open area of trampled dirt between the ranch house and the barn.

MARSHAL BELL

Randall, I'm afraid I'm going to
have to bring two of your boys back
into town with me.

Most of Bragg's dozen or so hands hang back behind him -
including Chalk and Bronc.

BRAGG

You're out of your jurisdiction,
Marshal, beyond city limits. And
you're trespassing on my land.

MARSHAL BELL

They murdered that Chicago fella
and raped and killed his wife. I'm
taking them in.

BRAGG

No.

Bell studies the FACES of Bragg's men.

One of them is a YOUNG MAN, barely 18.

Bell's eyes rest on Chalk and Bronc (who sports a black eye).

(CONTINUED)

Bell looks to one of his Deputies, nods to Chalk and Bronc.

MARSHAL BELL

Those two on the end, cut 'em out.

The Deputy looks uncertain.

MARSHAL BELL

Do as I tell you.

The Deputy nudges forward.

BOOM! Bragg blows the Deputy out of his saddle.

Bell's horse rears - he goes for his gun --

BOOM! Bragg shoots Bell through the neck.

BOOM! Bragg shoots the second Deputy through the heart.

Bragg's men are stunned... it was fast, ruthless and deadly.

SLOW FADE TO BLACK.

Silence... then the sound of whistling wind.

FADE IN:

EXT. OPEN RANGE - WEEKS LATER - DAY

In the distance TWO RIDERS and their PACK MULE cross the vast terrain of southern New Mexico...

HITCH (V.O.)

Like my Father, I'd been West Point, and I was good at soldiering. But soldiering didn't allow for too much expansion of the soul. So after the War Between the States and a year of fighting Indians, I turned in my commission and rode away to see how much I could expand it.

The Two Riders ride on...

HITCH (V.O.)

I shot buffalo for the railways and rode for Wells Fargo with an eight-gauge shotgun. I sat lookout for a while in a gambling parlor in Durango and did a short turn as a bouncer in a whorehouse in Canon City.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

7

CONTINUED:

7

HITCH (V.O.) (cont'd)
Tried my hand at gold mining then
came down out of the San Juan
Mountains looking for something
else to do.

8

EXT. OUTSKIRTS APPALOOSA - SAME DAY - LATE AFTERNOON

8

EVERETT HITCH, 40's, lean, good looking, eight-gauge shotgun
in his scabbard and VIRGIL COLE, 50's, black suit, bone
handled Colt at his side, ride side by side.

HITCH (V.O.)
First time I met Virgil Cole was
when me and my eight-gauge backed
him up in a showdown he was having
with some drunken mountain men.

Cole rides slightly ahead of Hitch as they walk their horses
up a sage covered slope.

HITCH (V.O.)
Virgil asked me right there on the
spot if I'd care to partner up with
him and his peace keeping business.

Hitch comes up along side Cole as they arrive at the edge of
a cliff.

HITCH (V.O.)
Which was why I was with him now
and why I still carry the eight-
gauge... we'd been keeping the
peace together for the last dozen
years or so.

Close on Cole and Hitch looking out.

HITCH (V.O.)
And as we looked down on a town
called Appaloosa, I'd no reason to
doubt that we'd be doing just that
for the foreseeable future.

9

EXT. ESTABLISHING SHOT, APPALOOSA - DAY

9

Nestled in a rocky river valley - well kept buildings spread
out over two full blocks. A brick train station sits at the
end of one of the cross streets. The tracks ribbon their way
into the hills beyond.

10 EXT. MAIN STREET, APPALOOSA - SUNSET 10

Shops and services are closing up along Main Street. A couple of lazy dogs watch Cole and Hitch ride slowly into town.

HITCH (V.O.)

But life has a way of making the
foreseeable that which never
happens... and the unforeseeable
that which your life becomes...

A group of SCHOOL KIDS see them. Two young boys dash up to the doors of the BOSTON HOUSE HOTEL AND SALOON, a two-story brick building with a wide porch, and excitedly call inside.

Hitch and Cole tether their horses and head up the wooden steps to the hotel.

11 INT. LOBBY, BOSTON HOUSE HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER - SUNSET 11

(As one enters the Hotel, a raised landing to the right serves as a parlor/dining area. Beyond the parlor, the reception desk.

A wide stairwell leads to the hotel rooms. Double doors [closed at night] connect the Saloon.

In the PARLOR:

Fat Wallis raises the oil lamp chandelier.

ABNER RAINES paces as he speaks.

RAINES

All we know is that Jack Bell and
his deputies went up to Bragg's
place to arrest the men who
murdered Clayton Poston and raped
and killed his wife.

MAY

And that Jack Bell and his deputies
were never seen again.

At the table is PHIL OLSON, portly with pink skin and EARL MAY, bald, heavy-set and wearing glasses.

Cole sits just out of the light, his brim lowered.

COLE

I knew Jack Bell, he was a good
man.

(CONTINUED)

Hitch sits off to the side cradling his eight-gauge.

HITCH

This fella Bragg, what's his story?

RAINES

Says he's from New York City.
Claims he worked with Chester
Arthur in the Customs Office there.

HITCH

Chester Arthur, President of the
United States?

RAINES

That's what he claims.

HITCH

What the hell's he doin' out here?

MAY

He's after the copper fields.

RAINES

He and his men showed up a month
back claiming they was going to
start a big cattle operation.

MAY

He's after the copper fields.

OLSON

Earl...?

MAY

What?!

OLSON

Let Abner speak, please.

MAY

He is speaking!

A beat.

RAINES

The mines shut down back in '75
because of the Apache problem. We
finally made a deal with a company
out of Chicago to get the operation
going again, a very fair deal mind
you.

(CONTINUED)

MAY

Then this murderin' sonofabitch
comes along.

OLSON

Earl, please.

MAY

What?!!

RAINES

Our investors pulled out after the
killings...

OLSON

Bragg and his men have us all
running scared. They buy supplies
in my store and don't pay for them,
they harass our women, use horses
from the livery and don't bring
them back... eat and drink what
they want and never pay...

MAY

They been living off us like
coyotes live off a buffalo carcass.

COLE

Everything eats meat likes a dead
buffalo.

The men just look at Cole who doesn't meet their pondering
gaze...

RAINES

The good people who stayed here did
so because they want to live here,
work, and raise their families in
peace. We want our town back and
we are ready to pay your price.

HITCH

Who makes the laws in this town?

RAINES

We do... the Board of Aldermen.

COLE

(to Everett)

What do you allow?

HITCH

It's what we do.

(CONTINUED)

COLE

It is, ain't it.

RAINES

Then you'll do it?

COLE

Sure.

OLSON

Thank God.

Cole nods to Hitch...

HITCH

Cole 'n me will do the gun work but we're going to button the town up tighter than a nun's corset. We need you to make laws so we can enforce them.

RAINES

We got laws.

HITCH

You're gonna have more. We need a lot of laws to make it all legal.

RAINES

Well, sure, I mean... if it seems reasonable we'll put them right in the bylaws.

COLE

No.

MAY

No what?

Hitch pulls out a piece of paper and hands it to Raines.

HITCH

What it basically says is, what Virgil says is law.

MAY

Christ, that would mean you was running the town.

COLE

It would.

RAINES

We can't have that.

(CONTINUED)

Cole is silent.

RAINES (CONT'D)
I mean, you're asking us, so to
speak, to turn the town over to
you.

HITCH
Far as I can see you're gonna turn
it over anyway, us or Bragg.

The doors connecting the parlor to the saloon swing open.
TILDA, a small round faced Swedish waitress, hurries over.

TILDA
Mr. Raines?

RAINES
Not now Tilda.

TILDA
Trouble in the bar, Mr. Raines.

RAINES
Tilda!

TILDA
It's Mr. Bragg's men!

OLSON
Oh, Jesus God.

Raines just looks at Cole and Hitch.

TILDA
There's four of them. They have
guns.

HITCH
Space for your signature down there
at the bottom. On the right.

Raines is frozen... looking at Cole's rules.

OLSON
Oh for God's sake, give me that.

Olson signs the paper and passes it to May. After a beat May
signs it. Olson grabs the paper and shoves it back to
Raines.

OLSON
Sign the damn thing Abner, so these
men can do what they came here to
do.

(CONTINUED)

11

CONTINUED:

11

After Raines signs the paper, Cole waves it a moment to dry the ink, folds it and puts it in his pocket.

Cole nods Hitch to the FRONT DOOR. Hitch exits.

12

EXT. BOSTON HOUSE - CONTINUOUS - SUNSET

12

Hitch crosses from the hotel entrance to the Saloon doors. As he enters...

13

INT. SALOON - CONTINUOUS - SUNSET

13

Cole enters from the LOBBY.

Bronc and Chalk are trying to piss into a spittoon from a distance.

TWO more of Bragg's men are leaning against the bar laughing.

COLE

Button 'em up.

BRONC

Who the fuck are you?

COLE

Virgil Cole.

BRONC

Virgil Cole? No shit? Hey Chalk, Virgil Cole wants us to button up.

Chalk turns toward Cole with his penis hanging out. Bronc follows suit.

CHALK

Step a little closer, Virgil Cole, and I'll piss in your pocket.

COLE

I'm the new City Marshal. Put it away or lose it.

CHALK

Hey, Bronc, they got a new City Marshal.

Bragg's other Two Men leaning against the bar, move apart.

BRONC

Didn't they have another Marshal, 'while back?

(CONTINUED)

CHALK

They did. Keep usin' them fucks
up, don't they?

COLE

Put your little contraptions away.
I'm going to walk you down to the
jail house and I don't want to
spook the horses.

Bronc and Chalk bristle. They button up and spread apart.

BRONC

You ain't walkin' us nowhere,
Virgil Cole.

COLE

You pull on me, either one, and
I'll kill you both.

CHALK

Bullshit!

Chalk laughs - he goes for his gun --

-- Cole shoots him before he even touches it.

Bronc goes for his and Cole, almost thoughtfully, shoots
Bronc in the face.

One of the Hands by the bar pulls a .45.

Hitch blasts him off his feet, the FOURTH MAN'S hands go up.

FOURTH MAN

I ain't shootin', I ain't shootin'!

The room's full of smoke.

The patrons stand with their backs to the wall, stunned.

The Aldermen look in from the Lobby... astonished.

Cole flips open the Colt's cylinder and reloads.

COLE

I warned 'em.

Through the windows of the office Cole sets some books on a
shelf. Hitch finds a key on a ring and unlocks the chain of
the gun rack.

15 EXT. STREET CORNER, APPALOOSA - THE NEXT DAY - DAY 15

Hitch looks out the window as Olson scurries by.
Behind Olson, Bragg and eight of his men front the jail.

16 INT. EARL MAY'S CORNER SALOON - CONTINUOUS - DAY 16

Hitch sits at a table facing South Street. Cole sits at a table watching Main. Earl May leans on the rough wooden bar.

(During the following dialogue, Bragg and his men are seen through the Main Street window riding up and dismounting. Two of the men will stay outside.)

Olson hurries in, rattled.

OLSON
Marshal!

COLE
Mornin' Mr. Olson.

OLSON
Bragg and some of his men are at the jail looking for you.

COLE
I ain't at the jail.

OLSON
Yes... um, I can seen that.

COLE
Get a better view of what's going on settin' right here, don't we Everett.

OLSON
What should we do?

COLE
'Bout what?

OLSON
Bragg and his men --

Olson backs away as Bragg and SIX MEN enter. Bragg nods his men toward the bar.

Bragg, starched white shirt, hand-tooled black boots, gun belt, strides over to Cole.

(CONTINUED)

BRAGG

My name is Randall Bragg.

COLE

Virgil Cole.

BRAGG

I know who you are. We need to talk.

COLE

The only thing I need from you, is what happened to Jack Bell.

BRAGG

Can't help you there, Marshal.

Bragg takes a seat uninvited opposite Cole. His men spread out along the bar.

BRAGG

I see the fella with the shotgun.

COLE

Eight-gauge.

BRAGG

Good idea, spreading out like that.

COLE

It is.

Bragg gestures, and one of his men brings him whiskey.

Bragg pours himself a shot, drinks it, pours another one.

BRAGG

You a drinking man?

COLE

Not so much.

BRAGG

And Mr. Eight-gauge over there?

COLE

Everett. Everett Hitch.

BRAGG

(not looking at him)

You a drinking man, Everett?

HITCH

Not so much.

(CONTINUED)

BRAGG

Hard to like a man who doesn't
drink a little.

COLE

But not impossible.

BRAGG

Well, we'll see.
(downs his whiskey)
You shot three of my men.

COLE

Matter of fact, I only shot two.
Hitch shot the other one.

BRAGG

Point is, I can't have my hands
coming in here and you boys
shooting them.

COLE

I can see how you'd feel that way.

BRAGG

So we need to make an arrangement.

COLE

We do.

BRAGG

You have a suggestion, Marshal?

COLE

There's a set of by-laws posted
right outside the door of this here
very saloon. Your boys do like the
by-laws say and everything will be
muy bueno.

BRAGG

And if they don't?

COLE

I arrest them.

BRAGG

And if they don't go along?

COLE

I shoot them... or Everett does,
that's the law.

(CONTINUED)

BRAGG

Your law.

COLE

Same thing.

BRAGG

You proposing to kill us all?

COLE

That'd be up to you boys.

BRAGG

Maybe you aren't good enough.

Cole is silent.

BRAGG

Don't be so sure you're quicker
than me.

COLE

So far I been quick enough.

After a moment...

BRAGG

Perhaps this isn't the time.

COLE

Um-hm.

BRAGG

Doesn't mean there won't be a time.

COLE

I see you and your boys there are
heeled. I know you haven't had a
chance to read the bylaws yet, so
I'm gonna let it pass. But the by-
laws say it's illegal to carry guns
inside town limits, so next time
I'll have to disarm you and lock
you up for a bit.

Bragg looks down at Cole, *trying to figure out just who he's
dealing with here...*

BRAGG

You're an interesting man, Mr.
Cole.

Bragg exits followed by his men.

Olson stands against the wall, open-mouthed.

(CONTINUED)

16

CONTINUED:

16

HITCH

Virgil's been doing this a long
time, Mr. Olson.

LOUD BLAST FROM A TRAIN WHISTLE

17

EXT. VISTA - THE FOLLOWING MORNING

17

A wide panoramic shot of a locomotive, its smoke billows as
it barrels down the track along the river toward Appaloosa.

18

EXT. APPALOOSA, TRAIN STATION - MORNING

18

The train pulls into the station...

19

EXT. APPALOOSA, 2ND STREET - MINUTES LATER - DAY

19

Hitch ambles along. He reins when he sees...

...ALLISON FRENCH, 35, exit the train station. Her satin
carriage dress does nothing to hide her fine figure. She's a
bit travel worn, but good-looking, sexy and confident.

Hitch doesn't feel like taking his eyes off her...

Allison takes in her new surroundings. She takes a deep
breath, picks up her bags, and proudly crosses the street.

20

INT. PARIS CAFE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

20

Allison enters - the first person she sees is Cole.

Cole lowers his newspaper, checking her out.

Allison sets down her bags, brushes a fallen strand of hair
aside and offers a brave smile.

Cole nods, smiles back.

Allison is nearly pulled out of her shoes as CHIN, a young
Chinese boy holding a menu, jerks her to a table.

Cole smiles to himself.

ALLISON

Coffee and a biscuit, please.

CHIN

No sell.

Hitch hangs in the doorway observing the following:

(CONTINUED)

ALLISON
But they're on the menu.

CHIN
With breakfast.

ALLISON
But all I want is a biscuit.

CHIN
No sell.

Cole wipes his plate with half a biscuit.

COLE
(without looking up)
Chin, sell her a biscuit.

CHIN
Menu say --

COLE
-- Sell her a biscuit.

Chin hurries off.

ALLISON
(to Cole)
Thank you.

COLE
It was my pleasure.

Allison sees the star on Cole's chest.

ALLISON
Are you the Sheriff here?

COLE
City Marshal. Virgil Cole. This
fella here is my Deputy, Everett
Hitch.

Allison turns to Hitch.

HITCH
Ma'am.

ALLISON
How do you do?

Allison removes her hat and sets it on an empty chair. Hitch
sits down with Cole.

(CONTINUED)

ALLISON

Could either of you gentlemen
direct me to a clean, inexpensive
hotel?

COLE

We only got one.

ALLISON

Is it expensive?

COLE

Probably more than it should be,
there being no other choice.

ALLISON

I only have a dollar.

COLE

Do you have a name?

ALLISON

Mrs. French. Allison French.

Chin brings her biscuits and coffee.

COLE

You have a husband, Mrs. French?

ALLISON

He died.

COLE

Sorry to hear that. You do any
kind of work?

ALLISON

I play the organ. And the piano.

COLE

You're not a whore.

ALLISON

Don't be crude.

COLE

No need fluffing your feathers
about it. Don't see a lot of
single women in these parts that
ain't whores.

ALLISON

Well, I'm one.

(CONTINUED)

COLE
Sprightly thing.

Hitch nods.

ALLISON
Will the hotel let me stay for a
dollar?

COLE
For as long as you'd like, Mrs.
French.

ALLISON
How can that be?

COLE
Might hire you to play the piano
too. You think so, Everett?

HITCH
I do.

COLE
(stands)
When you finish your breakfast,
Everett here will escort you down
and help you get settled.

HITCH
Be my pleasure.

ALLISON
Thank you very much, Mr. Cole, for
your kindness.

COLE
(smiles)
No trouble at all. I hope to see
you again, Mrs. French.

Cole strolls out the door.

ALLISON
Yes, Mr. Cole. That would be nice.

She looks at Hitch and smiles.

ALLISON
... How can Mr. Cole be so sure
that they will give me a room?

HITCH

Because I'm going to tell the man
who owns the place that Mr. Cole
wants them to.

ALLISON

Does Mr. Cole always get what he
wants?

HITCH

Pretty much.

Allison sips her coffee, nibbles a bit of biscuit.

ALLISON

Have you known Mr. Cole for long,
Mr. Hitch?

HITCH

Call me Everett, and I'm pretty
sure you should call Mr. Cole,
Virgil.

ALLISON

Have you known Virgil a long time,
Everett?

HITCH

Yep...

ALLISON

And have you and he always been
Marshals here?

HITCH

No, we just arrived a couple of
days ago.

ALLISON

Where were you before?

HITCH

We been all over out here. Virgil
gets hired to settle things down in
towns that need settling, and I go
with him, and after the town gets
settled then we move on and find
another town that needs settling.

Allison finishes a biscuit and puts the other in her purse.
Hitch puts some coins on the table.

ALLISON

Do you kill people?

(CONTINUED)

HITCH

Now and then.

ALLISON

Many?

HITCH

A few.

ALLISON

And Virgil?

HITCH

More than a few.

Hitch picks up her bags.

ALLISON

Do you like it?

HITCH

Well, it's kind of clean and complete. You got him, he didn't get you.

They move to the door.

ALLISON

But if you feel that way, what's to prevent you from just killing anyone you feel like?

HITCH

The law. Virgil always says, people obey the law, you don't have a reason to kill 'em.

21 EXT. PARIS CAFE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

21

Hitch manages to open the door carrying Allison's bags. They head up the street on the boardwalk.

ALLISON

What if they kill you?

HITCH

Hard thing to plan for.

ALLISON

I guess I disapprove. I don't know enough about it, really. You seem like a nice man, and so does Mr. Cole, Virgil.

(CONTINUED)

HITCH

I'm pretty nice, I'm not so sure
'bout Virgil.

ALLISON

You have dimples. I think that's
so cute on a man.

HITCH

Me too.

ALLISON

Are either of you married?

HITCH

I'm not.

ALLISON

And Mr. Virgil?

HITCH

Not that I know about.

ALLISON

But you're his closest friend...

HITCH

Virgil don't tell you much.

ALLISON

Really, he seemed so talkative in
the restaurant.

HITCH

Oh he's talkative, talks a lot of
the time, he just don't tell you
much, Mrs. French.

ALLISON

Well, I'm going to ask him. And
call me Allie, my name is Allie.

They head on up to the hotel.

EXT. FRONT PORCH, MARSHAL'S OFFICE - A LITTLE LATER - DAY

Cole sits watching the town.

Hitch strides up, follows Cole's look up to...

...two SILHOUETTED RIDERS on the rim of a ridge that rises
above the north end of town.

(CONTINUED)

COLE

You've been gone awhile.

HITCH

She was asking me a lot about you,
Virgil.

Hitch smiles to himself, goes inside the office. Through the window behind Cole, he pours himself a cup of coffee.

Hitch comes back out, leans in the doorway, grinning. He waits... finally:

Cole looks over his shoulder at Hitch.

Hitch sips his coffee.

COLE

Well, was she asking in a liking way?

HITCH

Wanted to know if you were married.

COLE

By God. What did you tell her?

HITCH

Said I didn't know.

COLE

Well, hell, Everett. You see a wife around here?

HITCH

I don't.

COLE

Then why the hell you tell her you didn't know?

HITCH

Might have a wife in Silver City.
Or Nogales. Or Bisbee.

COLE

Bisbee! Everett, if I had a wife in Bisbee, don't you think you'd know about her?

HITCH

Well, Allie says she's going to ask you, so you might want to have an answer ready.

(CONTINUED)

Beat.

COLE

Had an Apache woman come live with
me once... Never any words spoke
over us or anything.

HITCH

I think she's more interested in if
you are presently married.

COLE

Hell no, I'm not presently married.

HITCH

She'll be pleased.

Beat.

COLE

Allie?

HITCH

Yes, Allie. She likes to be called
Allie.

Cole takes that in... Cole and Hitch watch the horsemen on
the rim for a moment.

HITCH

Whaddaya think?

COLE

I think Mrs. French, Allie, might
become exclusively interesting.

HITCH

Whaddaya think about the men up on
the ridge?

COLE

I think you and me might want to
ride up there and see what they're
doin'.

HITCH

Can I finish my coffee first?

COLE

You surely may.

23

EXT. RIDGE - A SHORT TIME LATER - DAY

23

Cole and Hitch ride up behind the TWO RIDERS. One of them is the YOUNG MAN we saw in the beginning with Bragg. The second rider is DEAN.

COLE

Howdy.

DEAN

The town don't come out this far,
Marshal.

Cole moves close to his side, friendly like.

COLE

By God, I believe you're right. I
believe it ends just down there at
the foot of the hill where that
little wash runs.

Hitch has circled around, now facing the two riders.

DEAN

So up here you're just another
cowboy with a gun.

COLE

You think that's right, Everett?

HITCH

I think no matter where you are,
Virgil, that you ain't just another
cowboy with a gun.

COLE

That'd be my thought.

DEAN

We ain't doing nothing wrong and
you ain't got no jurisdiction up
here.

Cole looks at Hitch.

COLE

Jurisdiction?

HITCH

I believe he means jurisdiction.

COLE

I believe he does. And he's, by
God, right about it.

(CONTINUED)

Cole smiles at Dean.

COLE
So what are you doin' riding round
and round up here?

DEAN
Just keeping an eye on things.

COLE
For who?

Dean shrugs -- Cole *CRACKS DEAN IN THE MOUTH* with the butt of his Colt, almost knocking him out of the saddle.

DEAN
You fuckin' broke my teeth.

COLE
Colt makes a heavy firearm, that's
a fact. Who you riding for?

DEAN
Bragg.

The Young Man just sits on his horse, watching.

COLE
Think Bragg's attemptin' to
frighten us, Everett?

HITCH
Be my guess.

COLE
What's your name?

DEAN
Dean.

COLE
Well, Dean, you may as well go back
to Mr. Bragg and report that we
ain't too frightened.

DEAN
Mr. Bragg ain't gonna like it that
you hit me.

COLE
Don't guess you liked it all that
much yourself, Dean.

DEAN
That's right.

(CONTINUED)

COLE

So you and Mr. Bragg can co-mm...
what word am I trying for?

HITCH

Commiserate?

COLE

Commiserate. That's the word. You
and Bragg can commiserate each
other.

Cole reins his horse, Hitch follows.

HITCH

That fella wasn't actually doing
anything illegal, Virgil.

COLE

He was annoying the hell out of me.

HITCH

That's not illegal.

COLE

No, it's personal.

Cole and Hitch listen as Allie plays the piano. She's not
very good.

COLE

I knew Jack Bell pretty well.
Before the war, we shared a summer
in Indian Territory, chasing
Comanches away from the settlers.
Following spring, down on the Ft.
Belknap reservation, we did some
time chasing settlers away from the
Comanches. He was a damn good man.

HITCH

What do you think happened between
him and Bragg?

Cole just shakes his head.

HITCH

Overconfident?

COLE

Be my surmise. Probably thought
Bragg had some respect for the law.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

COLE (cont'd)

Not just gun play... you know that
Everett, gotta think about men too.

HITCH

Guess that'd be one reason you're
here and Jack Bell ain't.

COLE

That'd be a reason. You'd be
another.

Hitch takes that in... his gaze goes to...

A whore, KATIE, part Kiowa, part Mexican; chatting up a
customer. She feels Hitch's look, turns and looks right at
him...

Hitch nods, gentleman-like.

Allie is finished playing and comes over to sit at their
table.

COLE

Mighty fine piano, mighty fine.

ALLISON

Why thank you.

Cole pours her a whiskey.

ALLISON

Oh, thank you, that's plenty...
Thank you.

She raises her glass, they toast and sip.

ALLISON

So tell me, Mr. Cole. How long you
been killing people for a living?

COLE

Call me Virgil.

ALLISON

Of course, Virgil, how long?

COLE

I don't kill people for a living,
Allie, I enforce the law.
Killing's sometimes a sorta side
thing of that... That ain't what I
want to say. What am I aiming at,
Everett?

(CONTINUED)

HITCH

By-product.

COLE

Killing's sometimes a by-product.

ALLISON

And you've never killed anybody
except as a lawman?

COLE

Never.

ALLISON

Is he telling me the truth,
Everett?

HITCH

Virgil always tells the truth.

ALLISON

Nobody always tells the truth.

COLE

Why not?

ALLISON

Well, they, well, for heaven's sake
Virgil, they just don't.

COLE

Always thought the truth was
simpler. Tell a man what you mean.

ALLISON

And a woman?

COLE

A woman?

ALLISON

That's what I said.

COLE

Allie, I don't really remember ever
telling a woman anything.

ALLISON

Virgil Cole. Are you telling me
you've never had a woman?

(CONTINUED)

COLE
(turning red)
Well, hell, Allie, I don't think
that's a thing I should be
discussing with you.

ALLISON
But have you?

COLE
Well, a' course. Assuredly, I
have.

ALLISON
And did you never tell them
anything?

COLE
Mostly I just did what we were
there to do.

ALLISON
And what was that?

COLE
We won't talk about this anymore.

ALLISON
Virgil, I was just funnin' you.

COLE
(quietly)
I didn't enjoy it.

TEAMSTER (O.S.)
Damn you! Two more Wallis.

Cole turns his attention toward...

THE BAR - Fat Wallis laughs with a TEAMSTER and a CLERK who
are having a drinking competition.

ALLISON
Everett. You ever lie?

HITCH
All the time, Allie. All the time.

ALLISON
Well. Then I understand you.

AT THE BAR: The smallish Clerk out chugs the Teamster.

(CONTINUED)

TEAMSTER

You scrawny little bastard! Where
you puttin' it all? You ain't even
pissed yet.

Fat Wallis laughs as he pours two more glasses of beer.

TEAMSTER

Say when Wallis. No fuckin' feed
store clerk's gonna' back me down.

Cole watches.

FAT WALLIS

When!

The two men drink, the Clerk finishes first.

TEAMSTER

Shit! Shit!

Cole stands and walks to the bar.

COLE

(to the Teamster)
Shut up.

TEAMSTER

What's that, Marshal?

COLE

Shut your mouth and get out of
here.

TEAMSTER

I ain't done nothing. Hell,
Marshal, we're just drinking beer.

Cole KICKS HIM IN THE GROIN - the Teamster groans and doubles
over- Cole *HITS HIM WITH BOTH FISTS*, one then the other.

Cole grabs hold of the Teamster's hair and *SLAMS HIS FACE
AGAINST THE BAR. PULLS IT UP AND SLAMS IT DOWN AGAIN.*

HITCH

Virgil!

The Teamster is defenseless. Cole gets him propped up
against the bar... *HITS HIM AGAIN, AND AGAIN.*

Hitch grabs Cole around the waist and picks him up. The
Teamster falls to the floor.

HITCH

Virgil. Virgil.

(CONTINUED)

Cole is unaware of anything but the Teamster.

HITCH

Virgil.

Cole keeps his fist cocked...but still, his breath snarling.

HITCH

Virgil.

Cole's breath slows.

COLE

You can let go.

Hitch relaxes, but doesn't let go.

COLE

You can let go.

Hitch lets go.

Cole stands still a moment, then walks out of the bar.

Wallis and the Clerk tend to the bloodied Teamster.

Hitch returns to Allie...

ALLISON

(stunned)

My God.

HITCH

Cole gets fractious when he's annoyed.

ALLISON

They were just drinking beer and having a good time. Why did he get so mad at that big man?

HITCH

He was mad at you.

Katie and Hitch pass through the alley to the back stairs leading to her room.

KATIE

Tub wasn't doin' nothing. He was just drinking beer with Bertie Fry.

HITCH

Virgil was annoyed... Mrs. French
was raggin' him a little.

KATIE

You think she's such a sweet thing.
All you men. Girls know better.
She should move up to the north end
with the rest of us.

HITCH

You think she's a whore?

KATIE

She's sashayin' her sweet ass to
get what she wants, what's the
difference?

Beat.

HITCH

Wish Virgil weren't quite so taken
with her.

KATIE

How about you, Everett? Are you
taken with her?

HITCH

I don't think that would be a very
good idea.

KATIE

'Cause of Marshal Cole?

HITCH

No, I just don't think it'd be a
very good idea.

KATIE

(sly smile)
You like the way she plays the
piano?

HITCH

No.

KATIE

Me neither.

Beat. Katie thinks for a moment.

KATIE

Mrs. French... She have a husband?

(CONTINUED)

HITCH
Says he died.

KATIE
Probably fucked him to death, be my
guess.

She ushers Hitch into her room.

B25 OMIT (MOVED INTO SCENE A25)

B25

25 EXT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

25

Olson paces outside. Through the window, a Barber finishes giving Hitch a shave. Hitch steps out of the chair, pays the barber and exits.

OLSON
Mr. Hitch, may I have a word with
you?

Hitch stops, looks at Olson.

OLSON
Mr. Hitch, it's about the Teamster
Mr. Cole... well, the Teamster he
busted up was, is, a city employee.

HITCH
You might want to take that up with
Virgil.

Hitch starts walking. Olson catches up.

OLSON
Yes, well I just thought you might
be more approachable, more
understanding of, well. We can't
have our law officers beating
people half to death for no good
reason...

HITCH
I took a bottle of whiskey over to
Tub this morning, told him Virgil
was sorry.

OLSON
Perhaps he should have taken it
himself.

HITCH
Virgil doesn't do things like that.

(CONTINUED)

OLSON

What he did was crazy.

Hitch stops.

HITCH

You callin' Virgil crazy?

OLSON

Well...

Hitch continues walking, again Olson catches up.

HITCH

You think a man makes a living as a
gun hand ain't crazy?

OLSON

You're not crazy.

HITCH

Maybe, maybe not. But whatever I
am I ain't Virgil Cole.

OLSON

Don't give him the right to go
busting up innocent people.

HITCH

No, it don't. And mostly innocent
people don't get busted up. And if
they do, it's because of who Virgil
Cole is and what he is and you
hired him to be Virgil Cole.

OLSON

I'm not sure I understand.

HITCH

No. I'm not sure you do either.

Hitch heads for the Marshal's Office. He sees Allie heading
in the same direction.

Hitch watches as she enters the office.

THROUGH THE WINDOW: Cole rises on seeing Allie. She crosses
slowly to his desk. They stand silently looking at each
other.

"APPALOOSA"
CONTINUED:

GREEN REVISIONS 10/30/07

38.

26

FADE TO BLACK.

CUT TO:

27 OMIT

27

A28 EXT. ESTABLISHING SHOT, MAIN STREET - MORNING

A28

The town comes to life.

28 INT. PARLOR, BOSTON HOUSE HOTEL - MORNING

28

Cole comes down the stairs.

Hitch eats breakfast.

COLE
Morning.

HITCH
Good morning.

Tilda brings coffee.

They drink their coffee in silence.

HITCH
Everything good with you and Allie?

COLE
Lovely. She's a lovely woman and
everything's lovely between us.

Allie comes down the stairs, looking fresh and pretty.

She kisses Hitch on top of the head, sits next to Cole.

ALLISON
Guess what Everett?

HITCH
What?

ALLISON
Me and Virgil are going to build a
house together.

Hitch just looks at Cole. Cole avoids Hitch's look.

(CONTINUED)

ALLISON

Mr. Olson said he'd give Virgil a good price on that lot at the east end of South Street.

Hitch continues to look at Cole, who won't meet his gaze.

ALLISON

It's going to be the most beautiful house in town with a parlor and a picket fence and a big porch so we can see who's coming to call.

HITCH

Well, how about that.

The Young Man, (Bragg's man who was on the ridge) dishevelled, unshaven, enters the hotel...

Cole stands up so he's in front of Allie.

The Young Man raises his hands in the air.

YOUNG MAN

(unhinged)

I ain't armed. My name's, Whitfield, Joe Whitfield. I'm a hand at Bragg's place. I was on the rim when you and your Deputy come up and you smacked Dean. I need to talk with you.

Tilda brings more coffee.

COLE

Allie, I need to talk to this fella alone.

ALLISON

Oh, well, certainly. I need to do my piano exercises anyway.

Allie leaves for the piano, cracking her knuckles.

WHITFIELD

I took on 'cause Bragg was supposed to be runnin' cattle. That's what I know - cattle and horses.

COLE

What you drivin' at, son?

WHITFIELD

What he done was wrong.

(CONTINUED)

Cole waits...

WHITFIELD

I saw it... I was at Bragg's place
when Marshal Bell and his deputies
was killed.

COLE

Who done it?

Whitfield looks around the room... Allie begins to play.

WHITFIELD

Bragg done it.

COLE

You saw Randall Bragg shoot Jack
Bell?

WHITFIELD

Yessir. And his two Deputies.
Shot 'em all dead like they was
rattlesnakes or something.

Cole looks at him a long steady beat. Whitfield fidgets.

WHITFIELD

I don't want no part of killin'
people.

COLE

Will you testify to what you saw?

Silence... then...

WHITFIELD

Yes... yes, sir.

COLE

With Bragg looking right at you?

WHITFIELD

I will.

COLE

I don't want to go up there and
shoot up a lot of people, and get
Bragg into court and have you dry
up and blow away.

WHITFIELD

I'll say what I saw.

COLE

I got your word on that?

(CONTINUED)

28

CONTINUED:

28

WHITFIELD

You do, but I... I need a place to
stay, a place I'll be safe...
Bragg'll kill me.

29

EXT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DARK

29

All is quiet. The office is lit by the soft glow of a
lantern. Cole's horse waits.

Cole steps out.

Hitch rides up leading a saddled horse.

Cole steps off the porch, mounts up and they ride off into
the darkness.

30

EXT. RIVER - PRE-DAWN

30

Cole and Hitch ford a shallow river.

31

EXT. BRAGG'S RANCH - A SHORT TIME LATER - PRE-DAWN

31

Cole and Hitch, on foot now, quietly leading the horses, move
through the trees.

They move silently along a row of trees stopping fifty feet
from the Ranch House outhouse.

They tie their horses to one of the hedge apples.

Hitch pulls his eight-gauge from the scabbard.

They stand. Quietly.

32

EXT. BRAGG'S RANCH - 1/2 HOUR LATER - DAWN

32

The sky in the east begins to lighten.

In the distance a horse blows. Hitch and Cole turn and see:

A NIGHT RIDER in silhouette moving across the slope to their
right.

A rooster crows.

COLE

(whispers)

Here he comes.

Bragg walks to his private privy.

(CONTINUED)

32

CONTINUED:

32

Cole slips to one side of the privy, Hitch to the other.

They wait... the privy door creaks open...

Cole presses the barrel of his Colt to Bragg's temple.

COLE

You're under arrest for the murder
of Jack Bell. Don't make a sound.

Hitch presses the eight-gauge up under Bragg's chin. Cole
handcuffs him.

BRAGG

You can't do this, Cole.

COLE

We're doing it.

They force him back into the trees.

33

EXT. RIDGE ABOVE BRAGG'S RANCH - CONTINUOUS - DAWN

33

The NIGHT RIDER spots them and comes galloping down the slope
SHOUTING, alarming Bragg's men.

34

EXT. BRAGG'S RANCH - DAWN

34

Bragg is hauled to his horse.

They force Bragg up into the saddle. Bragg's horse has no
reins, the lead rope tethered to Hitch's saddle horn. Hitch
and Cole quickly mount up.

They move off through the twisted trees.

35

EXT. BRAGG'S RANCH - FORESTED RAVINE - MOMENTS LATER

35

Sounds of Bragg's men SHOUTING in the distance.

Off to their left, through the trees, THEY SEE Bragg's men on
the ridge GALLOPING AHEAD of them.

36

EXT. RIVER - MOMENTS LATER - EARLY MORNING

36

By the time they reach the river Bragg's men are on the other
side waiting for them, in various states of undress.

Hitch cocks the eight-gauge against Bragg's side.

(CONTINUED)

COLE

I'm taking you in legal but if you
attempt to escape we'll shoot you
dead.

One of the riders, VINCE, comes forward into the water.

VINCE

(shouts across the river)
What do you want us to do, Mr.
Bragg?!

COLE

Tell them to lower their guns.

BRAGG

Hold off, Vince! Lower your guns!

Cole and Hitch nudge the horses into the river.

Keeping their guns on Bragg, they ford the river.

Bragg's men are parted as Hitch and Cole ride through.

Cole and Hitch, Bragg between them, head up the bank past the
men. Hitch falls back, covering Cole.

COLE

Tell them not to follow or I'll
blow your jaw off.

BRAGG

If you kill me, there ain't no
reason for my men not to kill you.

COLE

Either way, won't make no
difference to you. Tell 'em.

BRAGG

Vince!

VINCE

Yessir, Mr. Bragg.

BRAGG

Don't follow us. You understand.

VINCE

They making you say that, Mr.
Bragg?

BRAGG

They are, but I mean it. Stay put.

(CONTINUED)

VINCE

You say so, Mr. Bragg.

They press on, moving away from Bragg's men.

37 EXT. MAIN STREET, APPALOOSA - MORNING

37

Cole and Hitch ride Bragg through the quiet town.

A lumber wagon rumbles down South Street.

A few shopkeepers opening for business watch as Hitch and Cole lead Bragg to the Marshal's office.

38 EXT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER - MORNING

38

They dismount and pull Bragg up the steps.

BRAGG

I won't be here long.

COLE

Circuit Judge don't come through
for two and a half weeks... if he's
on time.

BRAGG

You're wasting your time. You've
got no proof.

39 INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS - MORNING

39

Hitch opens the door and walks Bragg inside.

Close on BRAGG'S STUNNED FACE.

Whitfield rises from his cot in one of the cells - the door
of which is open.

HITCH

Mr. Bragg, meet Mr. Whitfield.

BRAGG

(to Whitfield)
You're dead.

HITCH

That's not very neighborly.

Hitch ushers Bragg into the cell next to Whitfield.

(CONTINUED)

BRAGG
You'll never hang me, Cole.

COLE
Never's a long time.

Cole closes the cell door and locks it.

A40 EXT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS - MORNING
Cole and Hitch step outside.

A40

COLE
I'm gonna check on Allie. Any
trouble, fire off a couple rounds
and I'll be here.

HITCH
'Less you're riding at a hard
gallop.

Cole turns back.

COLE
We've known each other a long time,
Everett, but I don't care for them
kind of remarks, not about Allie.

HITCH
No, And you shouldn't. I
apologize.

COLE
You meant no harm. Apology
accepted.

Cole heads down to the Boston House.

DISSOLVE TO:

40 OMIT

40

A41 INT./EXT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - NIGHT
(Time passes as follows)

A41

THROUGH THE WINDOW: Cole sits reading, his colt on the desk.
Bragg SNORES in his cell. Whitfield sleeps.

A41 CONTINUED:

A41

The strong wind rattles the window. Cole gets up, checks outside...the streets are empty.

DISSOLVE TO:

41 OMIT

41

A42 EXT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - DAY

A42

Hitch, eight-gauge across his lap, sits on the porch. Tilda brings a tray of food.

DISSOLVE TO:

42 OMIT

42

A43 OMIT

A43 *

43 OMIT

43

44 OMIT 44

45 EXT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - WEEK LATER - WINDY AFTERNOON 45

Cole walks up Main Street. Hitch is on the porch, with his eight-gauge.

COLE

Allie's been chewin' on me like a young dog...

Cole steps up to the porch.

COLE

Says all I do is be a Marshal and sit around minding our prisoner. She says I care more about marshalin' than her. That I ain't even brung you down to see the house.

HITCH

I was figuring to have a look when it was finished.

COLE

Go on down and take a look at it. Calm Allie down a little. Tell her you like it.

HITCH

What you got there?

COLE

Allie asked me which one I liked for the curtains. Hell, Everett, I ain't ever even owned a house. Didn't know what to say.

HITCH

Well, if this wind picks up maybe it'll blow the house down and you won't have to worry about it.

COLE

Got me a carpenter used to build boats in Rhode Island. That house ain't going nowhere. You go on down there. Allie's planning the furniture.

Hitch heads toward the house, always with his eight-gauge.

46

EXT. COLE & ALLIE'S HOUSE - WINDY AFTERNOON

46

Hitch walks to a small framed house without siding and a partial roof.

47

INT. HOUSE - WINDY AFTERNOON

47

Allie cleans the house of rubble.

ALLISON

Everett! Oh my God, look at me. I must look awful.

HITCH

You always look good, Allie.

ALLISON

You're too kind, Everett.

HITCH

House is hurrying right along.

Hitch leans his shotgun against a wall frame.

ALLISON

Yes. It's going to be very grand. If Virgil ever bothers to come live in it.

HITCH

Pretty sure he will.

ALLISON

He don't pay no attention to the house. Hell, Everett, he don't pay no attention to me. Just sits up there in the jail with his gun, being Marshal.

HITCH

Well, it has been sorta expectant of late.

ALLISON

It's his job. It's not his damn life.

Hitch isn't touching that one.

ALLISON

Won't it be elegant, Everett?

Allie takes Hitch's hand and begins to lead him around.

(CONTINUED)

ALLISON

We'll have our parlor here, where
we can look out and see who's
coming to call. And this will be
the kitchen.

Allie continues to hold his hand.

ALLISON

Will you come often and visit us?

Allie rubs her hand on Hitch's back beneath his jacket.

HITCH

Every time I'm invited.

ALLISON

I can cook, you know.

Allie keeps rubbing her hand on Hitch's back.

HITCH

(trying to be polite)
I never thought you couldn't.

Allie turns to Hitch, both arms around his waist.

ALLISON

Do you think I'm pretty?

HITCH

Yes.

Allie pulls in closer.

HITCH

Allie --

ALLISON

I want you to kiss me, Everett.

HITCH

Allie. I think we should stop
here.

Allie pulls Everett's head down and kisses him. She doesn't
let go. After a moment, he kisses her back.

Then he holds her away at arm's length.

HITCH

I'm with Virgil, and so are you.

ALLISON

Virgil's not here.

(CONTINUED)

HITCH

We ain't with each other. We're
both with him.

Allie is silent. Hitch still holds her.

HITCH

Allie. For Christ's sake.

ALLISON

Let me go. Let me go, goddamn you.

Hitch lets her go, hands up in surrender.

HITCH

I'm leaving, Allie.

ALLISON

You bastard!

HITCH

Allie.

ALLISON

Just go!!

She shoves him. Totally bewildered, he grabs his shotgun and
takes off.

ALLISON

You sonofabitch!

Hitch lopes toward the office. SUDDENLY HE STOPS:

At the far end of town a LARGE GROUP OF RIDERS round the
corner heading for the Marshal's office.

Hitch hustles to the office.

Cole calmly steps out the door as Hitch reaches the porch.

The riders ride up and form a semi-circle, three rows deep in
front of the office. Dust swirls in the wind.

A rider next to Vince holds the reins of Bragg's black
stallion, a poncho over the saddle.

VINCE

We come for Mr. Bragg.

COLE

Can't have him.

VINCE

We'll take him if we have to.

COLE

If you do, he'll be dead.

(turns to Hitch)

Everett, you step on into the
office with that eight-gauge and
first thing anything happens, you
blow Mr. Bragg's head off.

Hitch enters the office.

Down the street, Allie has joined a few town folk aware of
the confrontation.

COLE

You boys best redirect them animals
around and shoo.

OFFICE - Bragg's in his cell. A week's growth of beard.

BRAGG

Mind closing that door, getting a
little drafty in here.

Hitch sees Whitfield's gone. The back door is open.

Hitch looks out then closes it.

BRAGG

It appears your star witness flew
the coop.

STREET - Vince and his men have moved closer.

VINCE

We know you're good, Cole. But you
ain't as good as twenty of us.

COLE

You know the arrangement, boys.
First time one of you does an
ineluctable thing...

VINCE

You shoot him, you think we'll ride
off?

COLE

Nope.

(CONTINUED)

VINCE
We'll kill you and Hitch.

COLE
You'll try.

VINCE
There's twenty of us, for God's
sake. You willing to die to keep
us from taking him?

COLE
Sure.

Vince stares hard at Cole.

VINCE
(calling out)
Hitch? You willing to die too?

COLE
Course he's willing to die. You
think we do this kinda work 'cause
we're scared to die?

OFFICE -

HITCH
(to Bragg)
He's got 'em turned. They're
arguing with him.

Bragg knows he's right.

STREET -

COLE
You?

VINCE
Me?

COLE
You afraid to die?

VINCE
I ain't afraid.

Cole steps to the edge of the boardwalk.

COLE
Good. 'Cause you go first.

(CONTINUED)

Vince rocks back in his saddle.

Cole points off to his right, without looking.

COLE
And the boy with the red scarf. He
goes next.

The RIDER with red scarf lowers his rifle.

Cole steps off the boardwalk into the street.

COLE
Go on home, Vince. Too many people
die if you don't.

Cole takes off his hat and swats Vince's horse.

Vince struggles, steadying his mount.

Cole moves among the horses, pushing them.

COLE
Go! Go on home!

VINCE
There'll be another time, Cole.

Vince gives the horse its head and the other riders follow
him out of town.

Cole comes back on the porch. Hitch steps out.

HITCH
Whitfield run off.

COLE
He'll be back...

A crowd begins to gather in the street, coming out from
various buildings on Main. Katie is among them.

Allie comes running up.

ALLISON
Virgil, Virgil! Are you all right?

COLE
I am.

Allie runs to Cole and hugs him.

ALLISON

That was the bravest thing I've
ever seen. Just you and all those
men.

COLE

Everett was with me.

ALLISON

Oh, pooh on Everett. He was
inside, hiding.

COLE

Everett wasn't exactly hiding,
Allie.

Allie turns to the small crowd.

ALLISON

Isn't that the most heroic thing
you folks have ever seen?

Someone begins to clap and pretty soon the whole crowd joins
in. Allie clings to Cole, who's clearly uncomfortable.

COLE

(waving off the crowd)
That'll be fine. That'll be fine.
You folks go on home! It's over,
go on!

Hitch sips beer while Katie nurses a whiskey. It's still
windy outside.

KATIE

He really is something, isn't he?

HITCH

I ain't seen a man like Virgil Cole
ever.

KATIE

Did you like her little
performance?

HITCH

Not so much.

KATIE

That's an evil woman, Everett.

Hitch does not respond.

(CONTINUED)

KATIE

She is. I know about evil women,
Everett, and I know about sex. And
I know how silly men are about it.

Katie eyes Hitch.

KATIE

I'll bet you when Mr. Cole's not
around, she flirts with you.
(off Hitch's silence)
She does. Don't she?

HITCH

Fact is, she got kind of forward
with me awhile ago when we were
looking at the new house.

KATIE

What did you do?

HITCH

I run off.

KATIE

You say anything to Mr. Cole?

HITCH

No.

KATIE

You going to say anything?

HITCH

No. Virgil couldn't hear something
like that.

Hitch takes a gulp of beer.

HITCH

And I don't want him knowing
anything about it from you. If he
finds out, I'll know who couldn't
keep her mouth closed.

KATIE

There been a few times when you
didn't want my mouth closed.

They share a laugh.

KATIE

What if she tells him and says it
was *your* doing?

(CONTINUED)

HITCH
Why would she do that?

KATIE
I tole you, she's evil... Sooner or
later, she's gonna tell him.

A50 INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

A50 *

Cole sits at his desk reading. Bragg snores in his cell.
There is a knock at the back door. Cole readies his rifle.
Bragg stirs.

*
*
*

WHITFIELD (O.S.)
It's me, Whitfield.

*
*

Cole opens the door.

*

Whitfield comes in looking rough and ashamed.

*

WHITFIELD
Slept in the feed bin at the
livery.

*
*
*

Cole looks out, closes the door.

*

Bragg glares at Whitfield.

*

WHITFIELD
I can't face up to guns no more.

*
*

COLE
You keep your word and testify and
I'll make sure you get out of here
safely.

*
*
*
*

BRAGG
The prodigal son returns.

*
*

50 EXT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - MORNING

50

A BRIGHT AND CRYSTAL CLEAR morning. Tilda leaves the Marshal
office carrying a tray.

51 INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - MORNING

51

Hitch & Cole, at their desks, feet up. Bragg sits in his
cell. Whitfield in his cell.

*

(CONTINUED)

BRAGG

I couldn't help but notice your
books, Marshal. What's the
fascination with Emerson?

Cole doesn't respond.

BRAGG

Not the most elegant writer, but he
does get his point across, doesn't
he.

Cole ignores him.

COLE

We been treating you kindly. In
return for that, we expect you to
speak when spoken to and otherwise
stay quiet.

*

BRAGG

I can talk if I want to.

HITCH

And Virgil and I can come into that
cell and beat the sweet Jesus hell
out of you every morning for
breakfast if we want to.

*

*

There's a knock on the door.

Hitch glances out the window, then opens the door.

CLYDE STRINGER, 55, tall, thin with a big mustache and leathery skin, steps in the room followed by his Under Sheriff, CHARLIE TEWKSBURY.

STRINGER

Clyde Stringer. County Sheriff.

(nods to his partner)

Under Sheriff, Charlie Tewksbury.

Virgil Cole?

*
*
*
*

Hitch lets them through the door and nods them over to Cole.

*

COLE

Good to meet you... my Deputy,
Everett Hitch.

They shake hands.

STRINGER

We just come in on the train from
Yaqui with Judge Elias Callison.

(motions to Bragg)

That Bragg?

COLE

That's him.

BRAGG

Good morning Sheriff.

STRINGER

(to Cole)

Judge wants to have the trial day
after next.

COLE

This fella here is our witness,
former hand of Bragg, Joe
Whitfield.

*
*
*

STRINGER

You gonna testify?

*
*

WHITFIELD

Yes, sir.

*
*

BRAGG

If you don't die of fright first.

*
*

Hitch gives Bragg a warning look.

*

(CONTINUED)

COLE

Me and Everett are keeping him seq-
(to Hitch)
What's the word I'm looking for?

HITCH

Sequestered.

COLE

We're keeping him sequestered here
for safety.

STRINGER

Well, Charlie and me'll be happy to
help you out 'til the trial's over.

COLE

Might have to take you up on that.

*
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*

52 EXT. BOSTON HOUSE HOTEL - FOLLOWING MORNING

52

Cole is wiping clean the seats of a nice looking buggy. He checks the rigging on the two-horse team.

Hitch walks down the stairs with a picnic basket and places it in the buggy.

*

(CONTINUED)

HITCH

You sure you know how to handle
this rig?

Cole just looks at him. Hitch smiles.

TWO RIDERS are at the far end of Main, heading this way.

Cole stops what he's doing.

HITCH

You know them?

COLE

Shelton brothers.

HITCH

They do law work?

COLE

They do gun work.

HITCH

They good?

COLE

Excellent.

HITCH

Good as you and me?

COLE

Don't know that they ain't.

HITCH

Don't look like they're packin'.

RING and MACKIE SHELTON ride up. Ring is about 60, looks like a wolf. Mackie is fifteen years younger, bullet scar on his neck.

RING

Been a long time, Virgil.

COLE

Ring.

RING

You remember my brother.

COLE

Mackie.

MACKIE

Virgil.

(CONTINUED)

They dismount and tie their horses to the hitching post,
hold open their coats - no guns. Big smile from Ring.

RING

Can I buy you a drink?

Cole shakes his head and taps the Marshal star on his shirt.

RING

Still doin' that?

Cole nods.

RING

Well, we ain't.

COLE

This here is my Deputy, Everett
Hitch.

RING

You as good as Virgil with a gun?

HITCH

Never been tested.

RING

You seen him work, what would you
guess?

HITCH

Never seen no one better than
Virgil.

RING

But you ain't saying you're not as
good.

HITCH

I ain't discussing it, the truth be
told.

COLE

(cutting this shit short)
What are you and Mackie doing in
town?

RING

Everybody got to be somewhere,
don't they, Mackie?

Mackie nods.

RING

Heard there was a big trial comin'
up, might want to take that in. I
like a good trial.

Cole sees Allie, looking pretty, coming out of the Hotel.

All eyes turn to her. An awkward moment for Cole.

COLE

This here is Mrs. French.

Ring gives Allie a look and tips his hat.

RING

Ma'am.

Allie smiles slightly as Cole helps her into the buggy.

COLE

Well, you been in some of my towns
before. You know the rules.

Cole climbs up, takes the reins and - POP! They move off.

RING

I always figured Virgil for whores
and squaws.

HITCH

She's neither one of them.

Hitch heads back to the office.

RING

I'll be damned.

53 OMIT

53

CROSS DISSOLVE:

54 EXT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - SAME DAY - SUNSET

54

Cole and Allie are returning from their day in the buggy.

Hitch leans on the porch railing. Stringer is at the desk
inside.

HITCH

Have a nice buggy ride?

(CONTINUED)

ALLISON

Oh, Everett, it was lovely. We're
takin' a look at the house, hop in.

Hitch taps on the window, gives a short wave to Stringer, who
nods "go on."

Hitch hops in the buggy next to Allie.

COLE

Sheltons?

HITCH

They rode out.

ALLISON

The boys that were in front of the
hotel?

COLE

Yep.

ALLISON

Who are they?

COLE

They're just gunmen. Known 'em a
long time.

ALLISON

Longer than you've known Everett?

COLE

Yep.

ALLISON

Have you and they been friends?

COLE

Ain't been enemies.

ALLISON

But you don't act like they're
friends now.

COLE

Never were friends. Done some work
with them.

ALLISON

Shooting work?

COLE

Yep.

ALLISON

Can they shoot as good as you and
Everett?

COLE

Ain't never been put to the test.

ALLISON

Are they going to cause trouble?

COLE

Might, often do.

ALLISON

Are you afraid of them?

They've reached the house...it's further along: walls sheeted
and the porch railing is complete.

COLE

No, I ain't... now get down outta
there and quit askin' me questions.

56

EXT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE, PORCH - NIGHT

56

A SPIDER is building a web under the eave of the porch.

Cole and Hitch are sitting on the bench.

COLE

Anything happens to me, Everett,
I'd appreciate you looking out for
Allie.

HITCH

You expecting anything special?

COLE

This is an uncertain kind of work
we do.

HITCH

Yes, it is.

COLE

Allie's better if she's with
someone.

HITCH

She needs help, I'll help her.

(CONTINUED)

COLE
She's not good being alone.

HITCH
She seems like a pretty strong
woman to me, Virgil.

COLE
She's stronger with a man.

They watch the spider a moment.

HITCH
Seems sort of coinciding them boys
should drift in here just before
Bragg's trial.

Cole nods.

HITCH
You think they got hired to bust
him out?

COLE
Everett... neither you or me ain't
never been up against nobody like
Ring and Mackie Shelton.

HITCH
We been up against pretty good.

Cole shakes his head.

HITCH
You ain't sure we can beat 'em.

COLE
When it comes right down to her, no
I ain't.

CUT TO:

57 EXT. BOSTON HOUSE - THE NEXT DAY - DAY

57

Hitch stands at the street entrance on guard. Buggies and
wagons and horses all around. People crowd the windows.

58 INT. BOSTON HOUSE - DAY

58

The place is packed as the townsfolk listen to the TRIAL of
Randall Bragg.

Cole's on his feet behind the Judge.

(CONTINUED)

Allie's dressed-up, as if it were her party.

Ring and Mackie lean against the wall.

Stringer stands next to Bragg and Bragg's attorney, MUELLER.

Tewksbury keeps an eye on Bragg's men.

JUDGE CALLISON, 80, hard of hearing, presides.

Whitfield is on the stand.

WHITFIELD

Then Marshall Bell told one of his
deputies to cut the two men out.

CALLISON

What happened next?

WHITFIELD

Mr. Bragg shot the deputy dead with
his Winchester.

BRAGG

(stands)

You're a goddamn liar!

Stringer shoves Bragg back in his chair.

CALLISON

One more outburst such as that Mr.
Bragg and I will give Sheriff
Stringer the authority to shut you
up in any manner he sees fit.

MUELLER

With all due respect your honor, my
client's life is on the line--

CALLISON

--His life is not on the line yet,
counsellor. He'll get his chance
to speak. Sit down. (to Whitfield)
Go on son.

WHITFIELD

(nervous, but determined)

Then Mr. Bragg killed Marshall Bell
and his other deputy.

Bragg glares at Whitfield.

CALLISON

You saw this happen with your own
eyes, son?

(CONTINUED)

Whitfield stares at Bragg.

WHITFIELD

Yes sir.

CALLISON

Where are the bodies?

WHITFIELD

Bragg had Chalk and Bronc, the men
that killed that Poston fella and
his wife --

MUELLER

-- Objection! Hearsay your Honor,
Mr. Whitfield nor this court, has
any proof Mr. Bragg's employees had
any involvement in the said murder
of Clayton and Vera Poston.

CALLISON

Overruled! You may continue, son.

WHITFIELD

Um...well, Chalk and Bronc took
Bell, his men and the horses back
up in the hills. But those men was
killed by Marshal Cole right here
in this saloon so there ain't
nobody left that knows where Bell
is, though I imagine the coyotes
and bears done disappeared them
anyhow.

Beat.

CALLISON

Mr. Mueller, you may cross examine
the witness.

58

CONTINUED:

58

Mueller rises and approaches Whitfield.

MUELLER

Coyotes and bears, done disappeared
them anyhow. Very colorful, Mr.
Whitfield.

59

EXT. TOWN HALL - CONTINUOUS - DAY

59

The town is empty, quiet.

Hitch holds his eight-gauge at the ready.

60

INT. TOWN HALL - A LITTLE LATER - DAY

60

Vince is on the stand.

VINCE

Jack Bell and his Deputies never
came up to Mr. Bragg's ranch. I
don't know what Whitfield's talkin'
about.

Judge Callison crosses his arms looking plaintively at Vince.

JUDGE

That's the same thing all of you
have said.

Angle on SIX OF BRAGG'S HANDS lined up sitting behind Bragg.

JUDGE

Anybody got anything different to
say other than 'Jack Bell and his
Deputies never came up to Mr.
Bragg's ranch and I don't know what
Whitfield's talkin' about'?

No one stirs.

JUDGE CALLISON

That will do then.
(to Vince)
You may step down.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JUDGE CALLISON (cont'd)

No reason to waste time saying the same thing over and over.

MUELLER

My client has a right to testify in his own defense.

JUDGE CALLISON

Course he does. One moment. Mr. Whitfield, do you own a horse?

WHITFIELD

Ah... yes, yes sir.

JUDGE CALLISON

Well son I suggest while the bees are in the butter (gestures to Bragg's men) you get on your horse and ride. Ride and don't look back.

Whitfield sits frozen, basically unsure what to do.

JUDGE CALLISON

Now.

Whitfield looks around the room. Cole meets his eye. Cole nods slightly and Whitfield leaves.

JUDGE CALLISON

Swear him in Mr. Wallis.

Bragg lumbers to the stand. Fat Wallis pokes the Bible under Bragg's nose.

Whitfield is seen out the window riding off at a hard gallop.

FAT WALLIS

Put your hand on the bible.

Bragg doesn't move. Fat Wallis takes Bragg's hand and slaps it onto the Bible.

FAT WALLIS

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth so help you God?

Bragg doesn't respond.

JUDGE CALLISON

He so swears. What have you got to say for yourself, Mr. Bragg?

(CONTINUED)

BRAGG

Your honor, I feel a certain antipathy towards me here today, perhaps because I'm a relative newcomer. But I didn't kill Jack Bell, or his deputies. Jack was a friend of mine. I have no reason to kill him. Now, the two people who might have known something about it are dead. Mr. Chalk and Mr. Bronc were themselves gunned down by Mr. Cole, merely for having a little drink taken. Mr. Whitfield is nothing but a fearful boy, easily persuaded to say anything, easily persuaded by Marshal Cole. The citizens of Appaloosa have allowed Mr. Cole to take over their town. It is not justice, in this new nation of ours, to let him take away my liberty, or indeed, my life.

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JUDGE CALLISON

Eloquent Mr. Bragg. But unconvincing. I find you guilty of these charges and sentence you to hang at Yaqui Prison.

He bangs his gavel.

JUDGE CALLISON

Court's adjourned!

LOUD BLAST OF A TRAIN WHISTLE

61 OMIT

61

62 OMIT

62

63 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

63

The train moves through the flatlands following the course of the river. Hills rise in the distance.

LATER

64 INT. TRAIN - DAY 64

Cole and Hitch watch the land roll by.

65 EXT. TRAIN - DAY 65

A pack of coyotes watch the train rumble on below them.

LATER

66 INT. TRAIN - DAY 66

The conductor comes ambling through...

CONDUCTOR

We'll bring out sourdough 'n ham at
Chester.

TEWKSBURY

How soon is Chester?

CONDUCTOR

Three quarter hour. When we start
the upgrade, you'll feel us slow
down. It ain't a hell of a grade,
but it's a long one.

The conductor moves on. Bragg stares out the window.

COLE

(to Hitch)

Soon as we feel the train slowin'
we'll head out on to the decks. I
don't want us sitting in here like
a tom at a turkey shoot.

DISSOLVE TO:

67 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY 67

The train begins its slow ascent, climbing the long upgrade.

68 INT. TRAIN - DAY 68

Cole gets to his feet. Hitch moves to the rear of the train,
Cole forward.

69 EXT. OBSERVATION DECK - CONTINUOUS - DAY 69

Hitch scans the landscape around the slowing train. He peeks around the side and can see Cole at the front.

70 EXT. CHESTER WATER TANK - CONTINUOUS - DAY 70

The train slows as it crosses a small bridge, stopping next to the water tank.

The FIREMAN climbs to the top of the engine cab and begins pouring water into the tank. Steam HISSES.

THREE RIDERS TRAILING BRAGG'S HORSE AND A PACK HORSE RIDE OUT FROM UNDER THE BRIDGE. TWO OF THEM ARE THE *SHELTONS*...
ALLIE IS ON THE HORSE BETWEEN THEM.

ALLIE HAS A ROPE AROUND HER NECK. RING HOLDS THE OTHER END.
MACKIE HOLDS A SHOTGUN PRESSED AGAINST HER NECK.

Cole steps down from the train and stands stock still.

Hitch steps from the rear.

The slow blades of the windmill are the only movement.

RING

You see how this is gonna go?
Any sign of trouble from anybody,
and Mackie gives her both barrels.

Stringer moves into a window, rifle aimed at Ring.

RING

So you folks are gonna have to
unshackle Bragg, parade him on out
here, or she gets killed.

STRINGER

I see you in my sights. Whatever
happens to her, you're dead.

Ring smiles gently.

RING

What do you think, Virgil? Think
I'll get scared and change my mind?

COLE

(to Stringer)
Put the rifle down.

STRINGER

This ain't your jurisdiction, Cole.

(CONTINUED)

COLE

Put it down.

Tewksbury's now beside Stringer, rifle to shoulder.

COLE

You too Everett.

Hitch lowers his shotgun.

COLE

I'll kill anybody don't lower their
rifles.

Stringer lowers his gun. Tewksbury follows suit.

COLE

We give you Bragg, you give us the
woman.

RING

(laughs)

Virgil, you know I ain't that dumb.
You give us Bragg. We keep the
woman. You ride off on the train,
and when it's out of sight we cut
her loose.

A few passengers are looking out the train windows.

COLE

Bring Bragg out here.

Stringer nods and Tewksbury goes back into the carriage.

Cole looks at Allie, helpless.

Allie looks at Cole, her eyes wide with fear.

Tewksbury returns with Bragg and uncuffs him.

Bragg steps past Stringer and jumps down from the train. He
heads down the embankment.

BRAGG

(to Ring))

Give me a gun.

RING

No.

BRAGG

(eyes on Cole)

I'm going to shoot the sonofabitch.

(CONTINUED)

RING
Ain't part of the deal.

BRAGG
You work for me. Give me a gun.

RING
You owe me half Bragg. 'Til I get
it, you ain't gettin' no gun.

Bragg stares at Cole.

BRAGG
Told you you'd never hang me, Cole.

COLE
Never ain't here yet.

RING
We can see a long way, so best you
get the train rolling.

Cole is silent. He looks to Allie one last time and gets
back on the train.

The train moves out. The tracks stretch to the horizon.

DISSOLVE TO:

71 EXT. ROLLING HILLS - A SHORT TIME LATER - DAY

71

The train rounds a bend, comes to a halt for a long moment
then slowly begins to back down the track.

DISSOLVE TO:

72 EXT. CHESTER WATER TANK - A SHORT TIME LATER - DAY

72

The train backs to a stop. Cole steps off the train and
walks toward the wash where he last saw Allie.

Stringer starts to follow him.

HITCH
Stay away from him.

STRINGER
We got no horses. We can't go
after them on foot.

HITCH
We'll go on back to Appaloosa and
get some.

(CONTINUED)

STRINGER
Quicker Cole gets back here,
quicker we're on our way.

HITCH
He won't come back.

STRINGER
Won't come back?

Hitch shakes his head and walks after Cole.

Cole stops on the little bridge above the wash, staring out.
Hitch comes up behind him.

HITCH
We got no horses, Virgil. I'll
ride the train back to town and
fetch 'em.

Cole squints into the sun, expressionless. He walks off the
bridge and edges down the side of the dry wash.

HITCH
You leave the wash, leave me a
sign.

Cole walks away along the flat bottom of the wash, following
the Sheltons' tracks.

Hitch looks to the sun then walks back to the train.

HITCH
(calls to engineer)
Head on back to Appaloosa!

The train hisses and starts to chug. Hitch climbs up. He
looks back to the wash and Cole walking away.

WIDE. The train builds up speed and heads to Appaloosa.

CUT TO:

73 OMIT

73

74 EXT. CHESTER WATER TANK - LATE AFTERNOON

74

Hitch leads his horse, Cole's horse and the pack mule out of
the boxcar down the ramp.

DISSOLVE TO:

75 EXT. DRY WASH - HOUR LATER - SUNSET 75

Hitch rides along leading the horse and mule.

76 EXT. CREEK BED - DUSK 76

Hitch continues on.

77 EXT. SAGE COVERED TERRAIN - NIGHT 77

A FULL MOON rises above the hills.

78 EXT. DRY WASH CANYON - NIGHT 78

Hitch stops, looks down...

A foot high pile of stones. Next to it, is a smaller pattern of stones in the shape of an arrow.

Hitch continues on following the direction of the arrow leaving the wash.

DISSOLVE TO:

79 EXT. COLE'S CAMP - FIRST LIGHT 79

Hitch rounds a bend in the creek.

COLE
Well, by God...

Cole sits beside a water hole, boots off, feet in the water.

Virgil. HITCH

COLE
Everett.

Hitch rides up, Cole's horse and mule in tow.

COLE
You bring any coffee?

Hitch tethers the horses... goes to collecting kindling.

80 EXT. COLE'S CAMP - SHORT TIME LATER - SUNRISE 80

Coffee pot heats up by glowing embers.

Hitch cooks a meal. *They don't say a word.*

(CONTINUED)

80

CONTINUED:

80

Finally, Cole takes his feet out of the water and comes to the fire for a cup of coffee.

HITCH

Whiskey in that saddlebag.

Cole gets the bottle and pours some into his coffee cup.

Hitch holds out his cup and Cole pours into it.

Cole sips his coffee.

Hitch hands Cole a plate of biscuits.

The men eat, drink. The sun rises.

COLE

Stringer?

HITCH

Bragg on the loose, he figured they'd best stay in town.

Beat

HITCH

Got any thoughts where they might be headed?

COLE

South.

81

EXT. CHAPARRAL - THE CHASE, DAY ONE - DAY

81

Hitch leads the mule, looking at the landscape.

A jackrabbit scurries out from the brush --

-- Hitch goes for his gun, then catches himself.

DISSOLVE TO:

82

EXT. HIGH CHAPARRAL - LATER IN THE DAY

82

They ride on... above the distant horizon, a circular movement in the sky.

83

EXT. BUZZARD FEEDING GROUND - DAY

83

Buzzards feeding on the carcass of a good sized elk. They fly up as Cole and Hitch approach, landing again a few feet away.

(CONTINUED)

Cole gets off his horse and looks at the remnants. The hide has been removed and a good part of the flesh.

COLE
Scapula's broke.

Cole picks something from the bones and blood-soaked grass.

COLE
Shot.

He opens his hand and shows Hitch: BIG LEAD SLUG.

COLE
Bigger'n a forty five.

HITCH
Fifty, maybe.

COLE
Sharps?

HITCH
I didn't see no sign of one with the Shelton's.

COLE
Nope. Wouldn't take the hide, either.

Hitch rides a slow wide circle around the carcass and stops, looking down.

Cole walks out toward him, squats to better see the hoofprints in the dirt.

HITCH
Indians.

COLE
Yep...not more 'n a day ago.

HITCH
Looks like they're headin' west.

COLE
Sheltons still headed south.

They continue on.

Hitch sits by the fire. Cole stands alone watching the stars.

85 EXT. FOOTHILL - THE CHASE, DAY TWO - MID DAY 85

Hitch and Cole make their way through the new ROCKY TERRAIN.

The hot sun blares down.

The terrain steepens as they carry on.

86 EXT. FOOTHILL CAMP - NIGHT 86

The men sit by a small fire, eating jerky and hardtack, drinking whiskey. The animals grazing close by.

HITCH

We ain't going to be able to follow
these tracks much more if it gets
any rockier.

COLE

Allie ain't much of a rider. She
may slow them down some.

Beat.

HITCH

Hard business. Hard business.

COLE

It's all hard business, what we do.

HITCH

You all right?

Cole is silent for a time.

HITCH

How you feel? 'Bout Allie and all.

Cole is silent again, for a long time.

COLE

Everett, we been together now
awhile. Can't exactly say how
long, but long. And there ain't
anybody I'd rather do this work
with. You're as good as anybody I
seen, 'cept maybe the Shelton
boys... and me.

HITCH

That's pretty good.

(CONTINUED)

COLE

And the reason you ain't as good as
the Sheltons or me ain't got
nothing to do with steady, or fast,
or fortuitous. The reason the
above-named folks are better'n you
is 'cause you got feelings.

HITCH

Hell, Virgil, everybody got
feelings.

COLE

Feelings get you killed.

HITCH

You telling me you don't care about
Allie right now?

Cole is silent. One of the horses snorts, loudly.

COLE

I cared about Allie in town. And
I'll care about her when I get her
back.

HITCH

But right now?

Cole holds out his hand, Hitch gives him the bottle. Cole
takes it, drinks, and hands it back.

COLE

Right now there's something runnin'
and I'm trying to catch it.

Cole and Hitch are halted on a ledge.

Down below a broad river winds through a deep canyon of
narrow tree lined banks that give rise to steep cliffs.

Hitch points far below. Cole looks through an eyeglass.

EYEGLOSS: IN THE FAR DISTANCE DEEP IN THE RIVER CANYON, ARE
THE SHELTONS, BRAGG, AND ALLIE MAKING THEIR WAY ALONG THE
RIVER.

COLE

There they are.

Hitch nudges Cole and points way off to the Southwest. Cole
raises the eyeglass.

(CONTINUED)

EYEGLOSS: ON A HIGH PLATEAU FAR ACROSS THE CANYON ABOVE A
BEND IN THE RIVER: A *DOZEN OR SO INDIANS RIDE CLOSE TOGETHER.*

Cole hands the eyeglass to Hitch. Hitch raises it for a
look.

COLE

Apache?

HITCH

Gotta be. Chiricahua, I reckon.
Prob'ly broke out of San Carlos
heading down to Mexico.

COLE

Looks like they stole some horses
on the way. Few of them ain't
Indian ponies.

Hitch lowers the eyeglass.

HITCH

Pretty ragged lookin' bunch...
They're doggin' those folks.

COLE

Yep.

HITCH

They'll be a problem.

COLE

Speculate they will.

They ride on.

Cole and Hitch wind their way down through the shadows of a
steep narrow gorge.

The men reach the river. High canyon walls rise up on either
side of them.

They ride on, following the river.

COLE

Smell it.

HITCH

Campfire.

89

CONTINUED:

89

Cole dismounts and moves up a small rise for a better view.

Cole motions for Hitch.

Some 200 yards away, in a bend of the river, smoke rises from a campfire.

Hitch moves up next to Cole with the eyeglass. He steadies his elbows on the earth and takes a look.

EYEGLOSS: MACKIE AND BRAGG SIT BY THE FIRE WITH A BOTTLE - NO SIGN OF ALLIE.

EYEGLOSS: SLOWLY MOVING AWAY FROM THE CAMP.

Hitch continues to search with the eyeglass, he stops, *suddenly very still.*

EYEGLOSS: ALLIE AND RING SHELTON STANDING THIGH DEEP IN THE RIVER, NAKED.

COLE

What is it?

Cole takes the eyeglass from Hitch and puts it to his eye.

A woman's laughter ECHOES through the canyon.

Hitch watches Cole. Cole calmly lowers the eyeglass.

90

EXT. RIVER CAMP - MOMENTS LATER - LATE AFTERNOON

90

INTERCUT BETWEEN CAMP AND TREES:

Cole and Hitch, on foot move slowly through the brush until they are FIFTY YARDS FROM THE CAMP.

Cole and Hitch watch the distant figures of Ring and Allie leave the water, laughing as they disappear in the tall grass.

Cole and Hitch watch the camp, then --

-- Suddenly, silently the Indians are in the camp on their horses looking down at Mackie and Bragg.

Three Indians head for Ring and Allie in the tall grass.

Ring quickly pulls his pants on. Allie manages to get her bloomers on. An Indian spears Allie's dress and throws it in the river.

They herd Ring and Allie back to camp.

(CONTINUED)

One of the Indians scoops up Allie's corset with his rifle and waves it in the air. The other Indians laugh.

An Indian leans down from his saddle and takes the whiskey bottle from Bragg, swigs, then passes it to the next Indian.

BRAGG

Any of you bucks speak English?

The Indian with the SHARPS rifle puts the muzzle against Bragg's forehead - makes a silencing gesture.

The Indians go through the camp's belongings.

Two Indians round-up the Sheltons' horses.

Hitch and Cole ready their rifles.

COLE

We start shootin' they'll scatter,
won't know how many we are.

HITCH

They won't go far. There's a lot
of stuff they want.

COLE

They can have everything 'cept
Allie.

The other Indians stuff the guns, clothes and whiskey they've gathered into two big bags on the Sheltons' pack horse.

SHARPS reins his horse next to Allie. He holds out his hand, jerks his head for her to mount up.

ALLISON

No.

Sharps gestures again, Allie steps back behind Ring Shelton.

Sharps speaks and another Indian tosses Allie a blanket which she clutches around her. Then two Indians bring her to Sharps and he jerks her up on the horse in front of him.

COLE

Shoot the packhorse.

Cole shoots - Sharps' horse falls to its knees, then hits the ground.

Allie scrambles away.

Hitch fires - the pack horse goes down.

(CONTINUED)

The Shelton horses break loose and gallop into the brush.

Sharps is up and behind another Indian and they ride off heading into the canyon followed by the rest of the band.

Sharps' horse struggles to its feet and runs off after them.

Cole and Hitch move in quick, guns ready.

Ring moves toward the fallen pack horse for a rifle.

COLE

Where do you think you're goin'?

Cole levels his rifle at Ring.

COLE

Everybody back behind the tree.

Allie stands frozen.

COLE

You too, Allie.

Cole herds everyone out of the clearing.

COLE

Hitch, cut those bags off that pack horse.

RING

(to Cole)

Knew you'd be after us.

COLE
Where you headed?

RING
A little town called Rio Seco, two
days ride.

COLE
I say we put our troubles aside
until we get there.

Ring nods.

COLE
Your word?

RING
My word.

COLE
Mackie?

MACKIE
My word, Cole.

Hitch brings over the bags he removed from the pack horse.
Cole takes them from him.

COLE
Everett, put the cuffs on Mr.
Bragg.

BRAGG
You ain't cuffin' me! You're going
to need another gun.

Hitch swiftly cuffs Bragg.

BRAGG
Damn you Cole!

Cole tosses the bags on the ground. Mackie and Ring get
their weapons.

Allie is huddled in her blanket.

COLE
Mackie, you got any clothes in
there to cover Allie up?

Mackie feels around in the bag and pulls out a pair of pants
and a dirty shirt. He tosses them to Allie.

Allie clutches the clothes and looks for a place to change.

(CONTINUED)

COLE

(to himself)

Seen pretty much everything you got
Allie, no reason to go hidin' it
now.

She ducks behind some bushes. Hitch looks off around camp.

HITCH

Stock scattered.

MACKIE

They ain't common, should drift
back.

(CONTINUED)

RING

If them bucks don't find 'em first.

Allie steps back out wearing oversized clothes.

ALLISON

Are they coming back?

HITCH

Not 'til they know how many we are.

COLE

We'll dig in here, take turns on watch. Mackie you're up first, get up on that ridge there. Should be able to see them coming from either direction.

Mackie heads off.

COLE

Everett, take Ring with ya and see if you can get old Marvin to drag that dead horse out in the current.

91 EXT. CAMP - LATER - NIGHT

91

The WANING MOON peaks over the steep canyon wall.

Cole stands silently watching Allie curled up in her blanket; her eyes are closed. Remaining embers glow in the campfire.

Ring sides up next to Cole.

RING

Bragg owes me money.

COLE

(doesn't look at Ring)
Bragg's my prisoner. He stays my prisoner.

RING

You takin' this personal, Virgil?

COLE

We get to Rio Seco, we'll take care of the business between us.

Allie's eyes open, she's been listening.

(CONTINUED)

COLE
Everett, we'll go spell Mackie.

RING
Be sure and let Mackie know it's
you, you know how quick he is.

Cole and Hitch leave. Allie gets up quickly and follows.

EXT. COTTONWOODS - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Cole and Hitch make their way through the cottonwoods.

COLE
Mackie, Virgil Cole.

MACKIE (O.S.)
Come on.

They side up and change places with Mackie.

Cole and Hitch watch out into the dark for a long moment.

HITCH
Ain't good battlefield for 'em.
They got to cross open land.

COLE
Or swim the river.

HITCH
Either way, they got to come at us
with no cover and four of us
shooting.

Behind them, a small voice.

ALLISON
Virgil.

COLE
Yes, Allie.

ALLISON
Can I come up and sit with you and
Everett?

She comes and sits, cross-legged, between them.

A long silence. Cole doesn't look at her.

ALLISON
I'm sorry, Virgil.

Hitch makes a move to leave.

COLE
Stay here, Everett.

Beat.

ALLISON
I was so alone and Bragg was...
Ring protected me and so did his
brother.

COLE
You been with Mackie too?

ALLISON
I, no. It was Ring, he was in
charge. I was doing what I had to
do to stay alive.

Cole is silent a beat.

COLE
If Ring kills me, you think she'll
go off with him, Everett?

HITCH
I think Allie needs to be with a
man.

ALLISON
You bastard. Don't listen to him.
Sonofabitch tried to put his hands
on me when I was showing him our
house.

HITCH
No Virgil. I didn't.

COLE
No, Allie. Everett didn't do that.

ALLISON
You believe him and not me?

COLE
That's correct.

A long moment of silence.

ALLISON
I want to fix this between us.

(CONTINUED)

COLE

I'll think about that another
time... Everett, you got that
little hide out dingus you carry?

HITCH

I do.

Hitch takes a .41 caliber Derringer out of his pants and
hands it to Cole. Cole hands it to Allie.

COLE

Indians win this, cock that thing,
put it in your mouth, pull the
trigger.

ALLISON

Kill myself?

COLE

'Less you want to be the bottom
squaw in some buck's string.

ALLISON

Oh God.

DISSOLVE TO:

93 EXT. CAMP - FIRST LIGHT OF DAY

93

Hitch, at the rivers edge, washes his face. He looks up:

On a ridge across the river, a YOUNG BRAVE, rifle in hand
stairs back at him. After a moment he disappears behind a
ridge.

Hitch heads back toward camp.

Cole is silent.

There's a sudden movement in the brush --

-- Mackie, lightning fast draws his Colt.

The four Shelton horses drift into camp.

MACKIE

Goddamn, Gip.

94 EXT. VARIOUS SHOTS AROUND THE CAMP - LATER - DAY

94

THE SUN BLAZES - Not a cloud in the sky.

Hitch is back up on the look-out. He scans...

(CONTINUED)

The cliffs and down through the canyon... nothing stirs.

He looks back toward camp.

Cole is on a ridge just below him... eyes glued downstream.

Mackie is in camp... eyes peeled on the opposite river bank.

Ring can barely be seen in the trees keeping an eye upstream.

Bragg and Allie wait in the stingy shade of a juniper.

Bragg's hands are cuffed behind his back.

Allie holds a canteen to Bragg's lips.

Hitch looks up across the river on the high canyon wall.

Young Brave appears on the ridge. They stare at each other a moment then Young Brave moves off out of sight.

Cole looks over to Hitch, who is busy with the horses. They share a knowing glance.

Everyone is hot and even more on edge.

ALLISON

How do we know they're still there?

COLE

We don't.

RING

(to Cole)

What the hell you think they're gonna do?

BRAGG

I tell you what they're going to do, they're going to wait until all our food is gone...

RING

Shut up, Bragg.

BRAGG

Wait until we're all beat down by the heat... and just about the time they smell the blood of one of your stock that you killed because you're starving to death --

RING

-- I said, shut up.

(CONTINUED)

BRAGG

They're going to ride in here and
slaughter everyone of us save you
know who --

-- Ring makes a move for Bragg.

COLE

Ring!

Ring halts in his tracks.

HITCH (O.S.)

I'm gonna ride up and see.

Everybody turns and looks at Hitch.

Hitch has got his horse saddled, ready to ride. Bragg's
horse and saddle are cleaned up, looking like a million
bucks.

Cole looks at Hitch a long beat, nods.

Hitch swings up in the saddle. He heads for the river,
Bragg's horse in tow.

BRAGG

What the hell do you think you're
doing?

- Hitch keeps a tight rein on his frisky horse as they head
across the river.

- Hitch eases up the opposite bank.

- He stops his horse for a moment and looks up the slope... a
steep rocky ravine leading to the plateau high above.

- Nothing moves.

- Hitch clicks his horse, nudging him on.

- Hitch stops again. He looks back toward camp...

- He thinks for a moment then turns back up the grade.

- At the top of the ravine, just where it levels off:

YOUNG BRAVE sits on a buckskin, looking straight down at
Hitch.

- Hitch returns his gaze.

(CONTINUED)

- Hitch eases back the hammers on the eight-gauge.
- Young Brave ambles down the ravine toward Hitch. He has a Winchester in his right hand.
- Hitch's shotgun points to his left.
- Young Brave moves his horse to Hitch's right.
- Hitch swings his shotgun back around.
- Young Brave seems almost to smile as he shifts his Winchester to his left hand, holding it with the butt on his thigh and the barrel pointing up.
- Hitch nods and does the same with the shotgun.
- Young Brave comes closer.
- Hitch can see into his eyes.
- Hitch and Young Brave are now side by side.
- Young Brave slowly raises his arm, reaches out and puts his hand on Hitch's shoulder, keeping it there.
- Their eyes lock. Then... Hitch offers the lead to Bragg's horse. Young Brave removes his hand, takes the lead, whirls his buckskin away and heads hard back up the hill - Bragg's horse in tow.
- As Young Brave reaches the top of the hill the whole band of Indians appear, looking down at Hitch.
- Hitch watches...
- Young Brave spins his horse making it rear and paw the air... settles the horse down and stares at Hitch once more.
- Another one of the bucks plants a LANCE in the ground.
- Young Brave rides off disappearing over the crest of the hill and the other Indians follow.
- Hitch clicks his mount and rides to the top of the hill.
- The Indians are riding away at a comfortable pace. Hitch watches for a moment, then pulls Allie's corset free from the lance.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

97

EXT. RIO SECO MAIN STREET - TWO DAYS LATER - DAY

97

Bragg (riding Marvin, the mule), Ring, Mackie, Allie, Cole and Hitch cross barren railroad tracks leading into the broken down cow-town.

They're all tired and dusty. Allie's looking especially bad.

They pass the STOCKYARDS at the edge of town... few head of cattle lolling about.

MOMENTS LATER

They pass THE RIO SECO HOTEL as they round a corner, heading down the quiet main street.

In the center of town sits La Iglesia Catolica with a tall bell tower.

At the end of Main Street sits a two story sandstone JAILHOUSE with a balcony.

The TOWN SHERIFF steps out the door and waits as Cole leads the group to him.

COLE

I'm Virgil Cole... Marshal,
Appaloosa.

(shows his badge)

This is my Deputy, Everett Hitch.
These are the Shelton boys.

The Sheriff looks to Ring, intently.

Ring just looks at the Sheriff, expressionless.

COLE

(nodding to Bragg)

... This man is my prisoner. He's
been sentenced to hang up in Yaqui
for the murder of a City Marshal.
I need him sequestered for a spell
until we get a few things in order.

Sheriff shifts his gaze from Cole to Ring... who nods ever so slightly.

TOWN SHERIFF

By all means, Marshal.

Hitch dismounts, pulls Bragg off his horse.

The Sheriff leads them into the Jailhouse.

(CONTINUED)

RING

How do I know you won't try and
collect Bragg and skedaddle.

COLE

You've known me a long time Ring,
'long as I known you.

The BELL CLOCK strikes FOUR.. DONG...DONG...DONG...DONG...

RING

Two hours.

Cole nods.

COLE

Where?

RING

Stockyards.

Ring gives Allie a look.

Allie just looks at the ground.

Ring reins his horse, Mackie follows and they ride off.

Cole and Allie sit silently on their horses.

Hitch exits the jail, swings up in his saddle and they move
off slow-footed toward the hotel.

CUT TO:

INT. RIO SECO HOTEL ROOM - A SHORT TIME LATER - DAY

Hitch is shirtless, sitting on the bed cleaning his .45.
Cole is in his undershirt shaving at a small sink. In the
distance through the window are the stockyards.

COLE

What happened at the house?

HITCH

I didn't make no advance at Allie.

COLE

I believe it. I tole you that
already. But I'd like to know what
transacted.

Beat.

(CONTINUED)

HITCH

She was telling me of her plans for the house, leading me by the hand...

COLE

And...?

HITCH

She was in a lively state, a little agitated that you were at the jail so much... asked me if I thought she was pretty. Then put her arms around my waist and 'fore I knew it was kissing on me... wouldn't let me go. It was kinda difficult not to kiss her back seein' how her lips were on mine. Then I held her off, told her we weren't with each other that we were both with you, and she got kinda fitful.

Cole nods slowly, lights a cigar.

COLE

I never met no woman like her. Mostly I been with whores, and some squaws.

Hitch is silent.

COLE

She talks well and dresses fine, and she's good looking. She can play the piano, she cooks good, she's very clean and she chews her food nice... But it appears she'll fuck anything ain't gelded.

HITCH

I ain't sure that's quite right.

COLE

What do you think's right?

HITCH

I think she wants to be with the boss stallion.

COLE

Ain't but one stallion in a herd.

HITCH

At a time.

(CONTINUED)

There's a knock at the door. Cole cocks his pistol and opens the door. A small MEXICAN WOMAN holds two folded clean shirts.

MEXICAN WOMAN

Clean now.

COLE

Thank you.

Cole gives him a few coins and closes the door.

COLE

So when I'm around she loves me.

HITCH

I think so.

COLE

But I ain't around, she loves you.

HITCH

Prob'ly ain't love.

COLE

And when neither one of us is around, she loves Ring.

HITCH

Again, I ain't sure I'd say love.

COLE

She love me?

HITCH

I can't say that she don't. You?

COLE

I think she does.

HITCH

You're the one should know.

COLE

You know she takes a bath every evenin', before she goes to bed.

Hitch just waits.

COLE

I like being with her.

HITCH

Nothin' against it.

(CONTINUED)

COLE

No, I just got to get past this
Ring business.

HITCH

Might not be the last time.

COLE

Be the last time with Ring.

There's a tap on the door.

ALLISON (O.S.)

It's me.

COLE

Come in, Allie.

Allie enters wearing a saloon dress, a size too small.

Cole and Hitch just look at her.

ALLISON

It's all the hotelkeeper could
find.

HITCH

You look lovely, Allie.

Cole straps on his holster.

ALLISON

Aren't either of you afraid?

COLE

Afraid?

ALLISON

Yes. Aren't you afraid that you'll
be killed?

COLE

I don't know, Allie. I guess I
don't think about it much.

ALLISON

I'm afraid all the time.

COLE

Of what?

ALLISON

Everything.

(CONTINUED)

COLE

Like what?

ALLISON

Like being alone, or being with the
wrong man, having no money, no
place to live.

COLE

I'll look out for you.

ALLISON

For how long?

COLE

Long as you need.

ALLISON

Virgil, let's go back to Appaloosa
right now.

COLE

Got to get things back in balance.

ALLISON

But if they kill you what will
happen to me?

COLE

Ring'll look out for you.

ALLISON

Oh God. Oh my dear God.

Cole and Hitch exit the Hotel. Hitch has his eight-gauge and
a Colt in his belt. Cole, his usual gear.

HITCH

We done pretty good over time,
Virgil, 'cause it's always just
been a job. Never been personal...
we're going up against Ring because
of Bragg, right?

COLE

Can't be a lawman and let somebody
take your prisoner.

They start down the street toward the stockyards.

Allie watches them through the second story window.

(CONTINUED)

Off to their left, at the end of the street, sits the jail.
Ring and Mackie step out the door.

RING
(calling out)
Cole!

Cole and Hitch stop in their tracks and turn toward Ring.

RING
Like you said, you've known me a
long time...long as I've known you.
Guess you made your first mistake
Virgil: locking your prisoner in
my cousin Russell's jail.

The Sheriff, RUSSELL, who's carrying a rifle, appears on the
balcony of the jail FOLLOWED BY BRAGG, rifle in hand.

Vince steps out the door.

VINCE
I told you there'd be another time
Cole.

Cole and Hitch look to each other. Then, like they are one,
they start the slow walk toward their fate.

Mackie and Ring walk slowly down the steps.

COLE
(under his breath)
I got Ring, you take Mackie, then
we'll deal upstairs.

Cole and Hitch take a few steps away from each other.

They walk closer. Some thirty feet away and:

-- Ring and Mackie draw, lightning fast.

-- Cole draws.

-- Ring shoots --

-- Cole's hit in the left shoulder but barely flinches as he
extends his arm, and BOOM! --

-- Shoots Ring in the chest. Ring gets off a shot, BOOM! --

-- Cole's hit again in the leg. Cole fires a second shot,
BOOM! --

-- Cole fires again and hits Vince with two shots in the
chest.

(CONTINUED)

-- Ring's hit in the head and falls back flat in the mud.

-- Mackie shoots. Bragg ducks back in through the balcony door.

-- Hitch gets shot in his left side, but he shoots Mackie with his shotgun --

-- Mackie flies backward from the blast.

-- Russell shoots Hitch in the side.

-- Cole's hit in the leg again and goes down in the mud but shoots, BOOM! --

-- and hits Russell. Russell fires as he drops and --

-- Hitch gets shot in his right leg. Hitch goes down but...

-- Hitch shoots Russell again, killing him.

Hitch, down, reloads... hears the SOUND of a horse running -

-- Bragg rides off.

Hitch tries to stand, aim at Bragg but can't, he topples back...

Hitch lays in the mud.

HITCH

Virgil?

Cole lies face down in the mud, he doesn't move.

HITCH

Virgil?!!

Cole shows no sign of life.

Hitch pulls himself through the mud. He reaches Cole and turns him over. Cole opens his eyes. He's badly hurt.

COLE

Left knee's busted.

HITCH

Took less than a minute.

COLE

Everybody could shoot.

Cole closes his eyes...

ALLISON (O.S.)

Virgil!!!

Allie comes flying down the Hotel steps running madly toward them.

ALLISON

Virgil!

(CONTINUED)

HITCH
Virgil?

Silence.

HITCH
Virgil?

ALLISON
Virgil!!!

Hitch closes his eyes.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

100 EXT. ALLIE'S HOUSE, APPALOOSA - SIX MONTHS LATER - NIGHT 100

THE HOUSE IS FINISHED. White wood siding, smoke coming from the chimney, the curtain windows frame the soft glow of lantern light.

Slow move in:

ALLISON (O.S.)
Everett. I don't think I've ever
said enough to you about how you
rescued me from everyone.

HITCH (O.S.)
Virgil did most of that. I just
trailed along.

Through the window: Allie and Hitch sit at the dining table,
sipping wine.

101 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT 101

Allie's finger follows the rim of her wine glass.

ALLISON
You did a lot. I'll never forget
you riding out all alone and giving
that Indian Bragg's horse.

HITCH
It let them ride off without
dishonor.

ALLISON
Oh God, dishonor, men are so silly.

(CONTINUED)

HITCH

Only one who was dishonored was
Bragg.

ALLISON

What do you think happened to him?

HITCH

No idea. Don't expect we'll ever
see him around here again, though.

Allie sips her wine.

ALLISON

And I want you to know how
embarrassed I am that you saw me...
you know...

HITCH

You did what you had to do.

ALLISON

I'm mortified that you saw me with
no clothes on.

HITCH

Allie, it was a pleasure.

ALLISON

Oh, Everett.

COLE (O.S.)

Well, you started talkin' about it.

Cole walking with a severe limp, enters carrying a pie.

ALLISON

(to Cole)

I know, it's just that I'm so
grateful to you and Everett that
you didn't abandon me.

HITCH

Well, you know, it is sort of what
we was hired to do, to find escaped
prisoners and save kidnapped women.
That sort of thing.

ALLISON

Oh, go ahead. The both of you. Be
modest. Pretend you were just
doing what any lawman would have
done.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED:

101

ALLISON (cont'd)
In my heart I know it and I
treasure it. That you did what you
did for me.

Hitch looks at Cole: *Was it personal or was it the law?*

102 INT. WHOREHOUSE - THE NEXT NIGHT

102

Katie traces the scar on Hitch's shoulder with her finger.

KATIE
What is it they call it in a war,
when a general doesn't use all his
troops but holds some out?

HITCH
The troops are in reserve?

KATIE
Yes. That's what I was trying to
say. Allie has you in re-serve.

HITCH
Reserve? Reserve for what?

KATIE
Oh Everett you ain't stupid.
Virgil dies, you replace him.
That's why she's so nice to you.

HITCH
You don't think she loves Virgil?

KATIE
Out here love's pretty hard for a
woman. Mostly it's the men worry
about love. I don't know what she
feels. She probably don't know how
she feels, either. She just knows
he's the top hand and she'll stay
with him till he ain't.

103 EXT. COLE AND ALLIE'S HOUSE - SEVERAL DAYS LATER - DAY

103

Hitch helps Cole laying a stone walkway.

Raines, Olson and May stride up to them.

RAINES
Everett, Virgil?

COLE
What can I do for you boys?

(CONTINUED)

RAINES

Well, there has been a strange,
somewhat of an odd occurrence.

COLE

Occurrence.

Raines hands Cole a handwritten note.

MAY

Came into the telegraph office just
minutes ago... from Judge Callison.

Cole reads the note to himself. He hands it to Hitch.

HITCH

(reading)

Have received notice from U.S.
Department of Justice: Randall R.
Bragg granted full pardon for
murder conviction in Yaqui County
by President Chester A. Arthur.

OLSON

Evidently Bragg's claim of
association with our President
wasn't just thrasonical.

Cole just looks to Hitch.

Tilda serves dinner to Cole, Allie and Hitch.

ALLISON

Oh my God.

Bragg enters, wearing an expensive suit. He spots Cole and
company - strolls over to their table.

BRAGG

Mrs. French, Marshal, Deputy.

Cole places a napkin in his lap.

COLE

You was the only one who run off
down in Rio Seco.

BRAGG

The ones who stayed are dead.

Cole eats.

BRAGG

I'm a law abiding citizen now,
Marshal. You've got no call to
bother me further.

Cole doesn't look up from his plate.

COLE

Not less you give me cause.

BRAGG

That's very fine.

Bragg offers his hand.

BRAGG

Bygones be bygones?

Cole sets down his utensils and looks flatly at Bragg.

COLE

Bragg. I don't know what kind a
deal you worked, but as far as I'm
concerned, you murdered Jack Bell.
Now you're standing here while I'm
trying to have dinner with my
friends acting like you didn't.

Cole returns to his dinner.

BRAGG

Sorry you feel that way.
(tips his hat)
Ma'am, Everett.

Bragg walks on into the saloon. Hitch and Allie look at
Cole, who just continues eating his dinner.

Hitch and Allie start to eat as well.

There's a long silence.

ALLISON

Why do you think he came back here?

Beat.

COLE

Pride's a funny thing.

CUT TO:

105	OMIT	105
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106 EXT. CHURCH - FOLLOWING DAY - DAY 106

Church signboard: TOWN MEETING TODAY AT 2 PM.

Hitch, Cole and Allie enter the church... filled with townsfolk. They stand in the doorway.

107 INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS - DAY 107

Raines stands at the pulpit. The two other Aldermen are seated off to his side, facing the crowd.

Raines waits for quiet.

RAINES

Before we begin this afternoon's session, we have had a special request from a member of the community to address the meeting. With the concurrence of our Board of Aldermen, I have agreed to the request. Mr. Bragg.

Serious murmurs from the crowd.

Bragg rises from his front row seat. He's wearing an expensive dark suit with a gold pocket watch.

Bragg steps to the pulpit.

BRAGG

I was afraid maybe there'd be a lightning bolt when I stepped up here.

Silence.

BRAGG

And if the Lord has chosen to send
one, who can blame him?

A trickle of nervous laughter.

BRAGG

Most of you know who I am. My name is Randall Bragg and I've been an evil man for some years.

The church goes quiet.

(CONTINUED)

BRAGG

Sometime back, I faced death
several times, and escaped with my
life. It made me wonder why. Why
did I not die when so many others
had?

Cole watches, expressionless.

BRAGG

It came to me one day like the sun
coming through a cloud. God had
plans for me. He wanted me to come
back to where I'd done so much that
was bad, and try to do some good.

Rains stands beside Bragg, beaming with pride.

BRAGG

And here I am.

Hitch just watches as Bragg bows his head.

BRAGG

I've been blessed. In this last
year, I've come into money. I'm
back here to use that money; to
help build this town up, where only
a short while ago I did so much
harm in bringing it down.
Today I'd like to tell you all that
I've bought the Boston House Hotel
and Saloon from Abner Raines.

The audience whispers to one another.

BRAGG

I'm going to turn it into the
finest hotel between Saint Louis
and San Francisco and we are going
to need a fine hotel, because in a
few short years this town will be
the envy of the Southwest. This
will be a town where a man, any man
willing to work cannot be just well
off, but rich.

The audience murmurs with anticipation.

107 CONTINUED:

107

BRAGG

Ladies and gentlemen, along with
your honorable City Aldermen, I am
pleased to announce the formation
of the Bragg and Appaloosa Copper
Company!

The murmurs erupt with excitement, some clapping.

Cole shakes his head in disbelief.

Bragg bows his head.

Cole walks out. Hitch and Allie remain.

Bragg only raises his eyes when the applause begins to quiet.

BRAGG

To any here whom I have ever
offended, I beg you to forgive me.
And to all of you here, I thank you
for having me back.

He lowers his eyes again, and with his hands clasped before
him like a holy man, proceeds out of the church.

He nods at Hitch and smiles at Allie on his way out.

108 EXT. BOSTON HOUSE HOTEL - WEEKS LATER - NIGHT

108

Torches light the scene. PAINTERS are putting the finishing
touches on a new sign: RANDALL BRAGG'S BOSTON HOUSE HOTEL.

Hitch glances up at the sign as he enters.

109 INT. BOSTON HOUSE SALOON - NIGHT

109

Hitch walks up to the new dark mahogany bar; a big, gilt
trimmed mirror behind it, a fancy chandelier and new card
tables.

Allie pounds away on a new piano - but it hasn't improved her
playing any.

Bragg sides up to Hitch.

BRAGG

Buy you a drink, Everett?

HITCH

Got one.

(CONTINUED)

BRAGG

Where's your partner?

HITCH

He refuses to come in here.

BRAGG

Fine. Perfectly fine. Cigar?

Hitch shakes his head.

BRAGG

I understand why you boys are feeling hard about me. But I want you to know I'm not the man I was, and I'm hoping we can work together once you boys come to see the truth of my statement.

HITCH

That statement being that you're a reformed man.

BRAGG

I am.

Hitch leans back in his chair.

BRAGG

The City Aldermen like what's happening in this town. You boys don't get on the right side of things, you may find yourselves without a job.

Hitch watches as Bragg saunters to the other end of the bar. He pours himself a brandy and a glass of sherry, then heads over to Allie at the piano.

Bragg places the sherry on the piano, says something to Allie, who smiles, finishes playing 'Old Folks at Home'.

Hitch keeps his eye on them.

Bragg says something else. Allie gives him a demure look. They continue to flirt with one another.

Hitch is getting unsettled.

Allie LAUGHS OUT LOUD at something Bragg says, sips her sherry, and begins to play 'Camptown Races'.

Hitch gets up and slowly winds his way over to the piano, hearing the tail-end of their conversation:

(CONTINUED)

ALLISON

I'm always embarrassed when anyone
talks about that. I mean, Randall,
you saw me all undressed.

BRAGG

Nothin' to be ashamed of, Allie.
Fact is, as I recall, there's a lot
to be proud of.

ALLISON

Oh, my.

Hitch leans on the piano. Allie keeps playing.

ALLISON

Randall and I were just talking
about that terrible time with the
Indians, Everett.

Hitch nods. Allie finishes playing.

BRAGG

Thank you for the nice recital,
Allie.

ALLISON

Thank you, Randall, for the sherry.

Bragg walks away while Hitch thinks of what to say.

ALLISON

Have to be nice to him, Everett.
He's my boss.

110 EXT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - MORNING

110

A BIG BLACK ANGUS BULL is led slowly through town by two of
Bragg's hands.

Cole and Hitch sit on the porch drinking coffee.

HITCH

Ever seen one looked like that?

Cole just shakes his head. He sits silently as if he were
watching sand trickle from an hourglass.

HITCH

Olson told me Bragg bought it in
Scotland. It's a Black Angus...
says the steers make real good
eatin'.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

110

CONTINUED:

110

HITCH (cont'd)

Says that some of the fancy hotels
and restaurants back East will pay
a lot more for them...

Cole remains silent. Hitch looks to his friend.

HITCH

Fella said Bragg had a big Silver
strike in Nevada. 'Nother fella
told me he and some boys robbed a
train in Mexico that was carrying
gold...

Nothing from Cole.

HITCH

Don't guess it matters one way or
the other.

Cole just watches as:

The hands turn the bull around the corner, out of sight.

A long silence.

COLE

I'm takin' the noon train to Yaqui.
See Judge Callison. Bragg murdered
three men in cold blood... he was
tried and convicted and sentenced
to hang. Must be something can be
done.

Beat.

COLE

They ain't gonna run me off.

HITCH

Bragg's got Olson and his bunch
right in his pocket. We got hired.
We can get fired.

COLE

Me and Allie got a house here. I'm
staying.

HITCH

What you gonna stay as?

COLE

Ain't got to that yet.

HITCH

Might make some sense to move on.

(CONTINUED)

110

CONTINUED:

110

Cole shakes his head.

HITCH

You talk this over with Allie?

Cole nods.

HITCH

She don't want to leave?

Cole shakes his head.

Hitch thinks to himself... *So here we are.*

HITCH

I got to say some things, Virgil.

Cole looks to him.

HITCH

I stay here I won't be able to make
a living.

COLE

I know.

HITCH

I got something else...

COLE

She might leave me.

HITCH

You saw how it was with Ring
Shelton. Once you ain't the stud
horse any more...

COLE

I won't leave her.

111

I/E. BOSTON HOUSE SALOON - LATE AFTERNOON

111

Hitch is about to enter the saloon. He sees Bragg
whispering to Allie at the piano.

Bragg leaves her and walks through the open door into the
hotel parlor.

Hitch stays back watching Allie:

She looks around, gets up slowly and follows Bragg.

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

111

Hitch walks up the boardwalk toward the hotel entrance. He stops, puts his hand to the window and watches as Allie goes up the stairs. He continues on to the Hotel entrance.

He sees Allie at the top of the landing, entering a room.

DISSOLVE TO:

112 INT. HOTEL LANDING - A SHORT TIME LATER - LATE AFTERNOON

112

A room door opens. Allie slips out closing the door quietly behind her.

She senses something, turns...

Hitch sits motionless at the end of the hallway.

They just look at one another.

Allie turns and walks away.

113 INT. MARSHAL'S OFFICE - THAT NIGHT

113

Hitch sits alone... thinking. A KNOCK at the door.

HITCH

Come in.

Allie enters. No words are spoken... then...

ALLISON

Everett... you can't tell Virgil.

HITCH

I don't intend to.

Beat.

ALLISON

You don't understand... Bragg --

HITCH

(cutting her off)

-- Allie, Virgil's my friend. Be his woman or move on.

Allie is still... then leaves.

114 EXT. TRAIN STATION - THE FOLLOWING DAY - AFTERNOON

114

The train hisses into the station and stops. Hitch waits on the platform.

Cole steps off the train.

HITCH

Virgil.

COLE

Everett. Callison says there's not a thing can be done. Bragg's attorney appealed the conviction, said the trial was unfair; no bodies were found, evidence was hearsay. The President granted a pardon before the appeal was even ruled on. He's got authority over the territories. The pardon is real. It's the law.

Neither one of them speaks, *there's really nothing to say*. They walk for quite a stretch in silence.

HITCH

I always kind of figured boys like you and me, Virgil, we done gun work because we could. We was better at it than most... and it's better than punching cows, or digging copper, or soldierin'. And if you do it as a peace officer, you get paid regular, and you sort of know when to do it and how.

COLE

Sounds right.

HITCH

But I never took the legal stuff too serious. It was just a way to feel easier about being a gun man.

COLE

I take it serious. Who the hell am I if I don't?

HITCH

What if you had to go against the law someday?

Cole looks at him for a long beat.

(CONTINUED)

114 CONTINUED:

114

COLE

Then you wouldn't be a lawman no
more.

115 INT. WHOREHOUSE - A SHORT TIME LATER - LATE AFTERNOON

115

Hitch looks out the window at the mountains.

HITCH

I killed a man in Tres Piedras
years ago... Only man I killed
before I was a lawman.

Katie is quiet. She knows something's up... She moves up
behind him.

HITCH

I'm gonna be leavin'.

Hitch turns and just looks at her.

Katie looks at him long.

Hitch reaches out, moves her hair from her face.

KATIE

What about Virgil?

116 INT. BOSTON HOUSE SALOON - SHORT TIME LATER - LATE AFTERNOON 116

Hitch enters.

Allie is playing the piano. Bragg leans against it, smoking
a cigar.

Hitch walks over to the bar. He takes the Deputy Marshal
Badge off his shirt, placing it on the bar.

Fat Wallis looks at the star and starts to say something.

Hitch takes a gun out of his belt and puts it on the bar.

HITCH

Give this to Bragg when he asks for
it.

WALLIS

Everett...

HITCH

Just do it.

(CONTINUED)

116 CONTINUED:

116

Hitch walks across to the piano, right up to Bragg and *HITS HIM HARD* in the face knocking him down.

The room gets quiet... Allie's eyes grow wide.

Bragg tries to collect himself.

BRAGG

What the hell are you doing?

HITCH

You are a lying, back-shooting, cowardly sonofabitch.

BRAGG

What is this? What is this?!

Bragg gets to his feet.

HITCH

I'll be out in the street.

BRAGG

Christ, you're a Deputy Marshal.
You can't just call me out.

Hitch *SLAPS* Bragg hard in the face.

HITCH

Wallis has a gun for you. I'm
going outside. You don't come out,
I'll come back in and kill you.

Hitch turns and walks out of the saloon.

BRAGG

(calls after him)

You think you can pull on me
without Cole to back you up!

117 EXT. BOSTON HOUSE HOTEL - CONTINUOUS - SUNSET

117

Hitch comes out of the Saloon down into the street, pistol held at his side.

Cole is walking up from the Marshal's office, Katie off behind him.

COLE

Everett...

HITCH

Leave it be, Virgil.

(CONTINUED)

Bragg comes out of the saloon, the gun Hitch left on the bar held down at his side.

Hitch turns away from Cole, keeps his eyes on Bragg.

HITCH

Cole ain't in this, Bragg.

COLE

Just hold it. What's this about Everett?

HITCH

(eyes on Bragg)

I ever ask you for anything, Virgil?

Cole looks to Bragg, Hitch.

HITCH

(eyes on Bragg)

I'm askin' you now, just leave it alone. Just once, Virgil. One favor.

Cole is silent.

Bragg stands on the boardwalk of the Boston House. Allie comes out behind him... moves off to the side...

Cole looks to Allie, then Bragg, then Hitch...

Finally...

Cole backs away.

Bragg and Hitch stand facing each other.

Nothing stirs... not a breeze.

Bragg breaks first --

-- But Hitch is quicker and BOOM! Shoots Bragg in the chest.

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED:

117

Bragg falls face down into the street. Dead.

Cole just looks, standing still in the middle of the street.

Hitch opens the cylinder, ejects the empty shell, puts in a fresh round and holsters his gun.

Allie moves to the edge of the boardwalk... looks at Bragg... Hitch... Cole.

Hitch and Cole look at each other a long beat...

Hitch climbs up on his horse and heads down the street.

He passes Katie who just watches as he rides slowly away.

Allie comes down off the boardwalk toward Cole.

Hitch rides on.

Cole and Allie, a few feet apart, their backs to us, watch as Hitch rides on out of town.

FADE TO BLACK.

Silence... then the sound of whistling wind.

HITCH (V.O.)

I turned my horse straight into the setting sun and rode west at an easy pace... It was going to be a long ride, and there was no reason to hurry.

THE END