

"B R E A K E R M O R A N T"

A screenplay by Bruce Beresford

Based on a play by Kenneth Ross and a
film script by Jonathan Hardy and David Stevens

SHOOTING SCRIPT

April, 1979

CHARACTERS ...

Lt. Harry "The Breaker" MORANT ... Bushveldt Carbineers
Lt. Peter HANDCOCK ... BVC
Lt. George WITTON ... BVC
Major J.F. THOMAS ... NSW Mounted Rifles. Defence Counsel
Major Charles BOLTON ... Prosecutor
Cpt. Alfred TAYLOR ... Field Intelligence
Lt. Col. DENNY ... 2nd Northampton Reg. Court President
Cpt. Percy HUNT ... BVC
Lord KITCHENER ... Commander, all British & Colonial
Forces in South Africa
Sar. Maj. DUMMOND ... BVC
BOTHA ... A Boer, attached to BVC
Cpl. SHARP ... BVC, a Cockney
Col. HAMILTON ... On Kitchener's staff
Dr. JOHNSON ... Civil Surgeon, attached to BVC
Cpt. ROBERTSON ... BVC

German Farmer ... At scene of Hunt's death. In court.
Rev. C.H.D. HESSE ... A German Missionary
VISSER ... Boer prisoner
Judge-Advocate
Brevet-Major J. LITTLE ... Royal Field Artillery
Brevet-Major THOMAS ... RFA
Capt. NICHOLSON ... 1st Cameron Highlanders

Two young British Officers seen in Mess

Three Boer girls. Young. (One seen again in blockhouse)

Various Cameron Highlanders

Boers

Townspeople, both whites and blacks

Black guide

Black servants (2)

Band

Scottish Piper

SYNOPSIS

Harry Morant, Peter Handcock and George Witton are arrested for the murder of Boer prisoners while fighting with a guerilla force (Bushveldt Carbineers, which consists mostly of Australians) in a remote part of the Transvaal during the Boer War (1899 - 1902.)

Morant is English but has lived in Australia for 15 years, gaining a reputation as a horse-breaker (he was nicknamed "The Breaker") and a poet. Many of his verses were published in "The Bulletin." Handcock, a former blacksmith, and Witton are both Australians.

The Australians believe that Lord Kitchener has had them arrested to convince the Boers of the impartiality of British justice, in an attempt to hasten a peace conference which could end an expensive and wasteful war. He invites an Australian Major (THOMAS) to defend the three men, but gives him only one day to prepare his case. Thomas still manages a skilful fight arguing that the Australians were fighting the Boers commando style, so that the regular rules of warfare do not apply; that Morant was temporarily deranged by the Boers brutal killing of his best friend; that the Carbineers were under instructions from Kitchener's headquarters to take no Boer prisoners. He demolishes argument after argument by the prosecution and discredits witness after witness. The members of the court-martial recommend mercy, but only Witton escapes the death sentence.

Morant and Handcock were executed on 27th February, 1902. They walked hand-in-hand to their place of execution - two Bentwood chairs placed on the open veldt.

The film shows not only the tense courtroom struggle, which is not without humour, but cuts frequently to the incidents under discussion.

Among the many curiosities of the trial, is an attack by Boer Commandos on the prison in which it is being held. The three Australians are armed and pushed out to fight.

A military band is playing in a bandstand. Various CU's. Other CU'S are of people listening, or passing by. English soldiers in khaki, Scots wearing kilts, Boer townspeople, children, blacks. CAPTAIN TAYLOR is seen.

A wide shot reveals the whole scene. A turn of the century town. Behind the bandstand is the "Jubilee Hotel."

A title is supered ... "Pietersberg, South Africa, 1901."

B. PRISON. PIETERSBERG. MORNING EXT.

B.

Band music can still be heard. ^{MEN are} cleaning rifles, moving stores, water.

Outside the high walls of the prison are a number of tents where an English and Scottish regiment are quartered. There are a few soldiers around, plus some blacks who are washing uniforms. One soldier is having a bath in a tin tub. Some play soccer. Some are having hair cuts.

Horses are standing in picket lines. Beyond the tents is the open veldt.

C. PRISON. INT. MORNING.

C.

Band music can be heard, but fainter.

In a large room, possibly once in use as a refectory, THREE ENGLISH ARMY OFFICERS are seated at a table. They have a number of paper and files in front of them. Each has a notepad and pencil. (NOTE: OFFICERS ARE NICHOLSON, plus 2 OTHERS NOT SEEN AFTER THIS) Opposite them are three soldiers, although the shot is too wide to allow recognition. There are no papers on their table.

The Officers are speaking among themselves, in low tones. They look up towards the three men opposite. The Senior Officer speaks.

NICHOLSON

This Court of Enquiry has now completed its investigation and will close with a statement of service from the prisoners.

In CU, MORANT stands. He has a sensitive, well-bred face with a suggestion of ruthlessness. The shot remains in CU as he speaks, but his head is framed to one side, and the main titles of the film appear as he makes his statement.

MORANT

I enlisted for the Boer war in South Australia and was in the 2nd Contingent for nine months. I was promoted to Sergeant in that Corps. I received my commission when I transferred to the Transvaal Constabulary. I returned to England for six months and... with the help of my friend, Captain Hunt... patched up an old quarrel with my family.

C.
(Cont.)

C.
(Cont)

MORANT (Cont.)

I'd planned to go back to England after the war. On my return to South Africa I was in the advance to Bloemfontein and fought at Karee Siding and Kroonstadt under Lord Roberts. I also fought in General French's Calvary Brigade at Diamond Hill.

After that there were requests for volunteers to join the Bushveldt Carbineers in the Northern Transvaal. I joined on 1st April, 1900 ... April Fools Day.

In the Carbineers I was responsible for the capture of the Boer Commando leader, Kelly. I was recommended for a DSO.

I take full and entire responsibility for ... the events at Fort Edward but I was acting under orders. I was deeply disturbed by ... what happened to Captain Hunt ...

1. CACTUS FARM. EXT. NIGHT. (TO BE SHOT DAY FOR NIGHT)

1.

Cu CAPTAIN HUNT. A good looking man in his late thirties. He is standing behind a large clump of cactus, peering through the leaves. He raises a pair of binoculars.

His POV. A small farmhouse stands out clearly in the moonlight. There is no sign of life. No sound except for the wind.

Standing beside HUNT are a BOER INTERPRETER and GUIDE, BOTHA, and a BLACK AFRICAN. Behind them are 15 SOLDIERS, members of the Bushveldt Carbineers. They are all wearing khaki. BOTHA and the AFRICAN are not in uniform.

HUNT (to BOTHA)

Ask him how many.

BOTHA (In Dutch, to the AFRICAN)

(How many are there?)
Hoof fiel me a iss dar?

AFRICAN

About eight, boss.
(Omtrent agt, baas)

As they speak HUNT looks again through the binoculars.

BOTHA

He says about eight.

1.
(Cont.)

1.
(Cont.)

HUNT

They're all asleep. Not even a sentry.
Viljoen's getting careless... Sergeant
Major Drummond ...

BOTHA interrupts and captures his attention.

BOTHA

It's not good, Captain Hunt.

HUNT winks at him, gives him a smile. Doesn't interrupt the flow of his order to DRUMMOND.

HUNT

... Stay with three men ... and this
boy (HE NODS TOWARDS BOTHA)... keep the
horses quiet. Cover us.

DRUMMOND nods. He glances towards the farmhouse, perhaps relieved at his exclusion.

HUNT gestures to the other men in the patrol. They all draw their pistols and move from behind the long row of cactus and across the open ground before the house. HUNT is in the lead, and the BOERS, who are crouching behind a small wall a few feet from the front door of the building, let him get very close before a command is given to fire.

BOER

Skit! (Shoot!)

The firing is intense. CARBINEERS fall. Some lie on the ground and fire back, others retreat. HUNT is hit in the shoulder and the in the leg.

BOTHA sees HUNT fall. Some retreating CARBINEERS reach the comparative safety of the cactus. Others are shot down as they run. Fire is returned to the farmhouse.

DRUMMOND (Loudly)

Fall back!

He begins to move towards the horses, but is restrained by BOTHA.

BOTHA

But ... Captain Hunt ... send them back.
To get him. He is alive ...

DRUMMOND has a quick look towards the farmhouse. Shakes his head.

DRUMMOND

Fall back!!

1.
(Cont.)

The CARBINEERS mount and ride off across the featureless veldt. BOTHA is the last to leave.

Five CARBINEERS lie dead on the open ground before the farmhouse. HUNT is immobile.

One of the BOERS calls back towards the house.

BOER

Commander Viljoen. Commander
Viljoen.

The door opens and a big bearded middle aged MAN comes out, his right arm in an improvised sling. Almost immediately, HUNT, who everyone assumed to be dead, raises his revolver and shoots VILJOEN through the heart.

2. FORT EDWARD. EXT. DAY.

2.

Fort Edward is merely a fortified farmhouse on the veldt. A Union Jack flutters in front of it. There are a number of tents around, mostly in tattered condition. Horses are at the rear of the building. A COOK is working at the outdoor kitchen. A few MEN are outside the main building at listening posts. The wind is blowing and it is cold. LTS. WITTON and HANDCOCK are near the horses. HANDCOCK is inspecting a horse's foot.

HANDCOCK is a burly genial man in his thirties. He is uneducated and direct. WITTON is younger, in his twenties, and his manner and bearing suggests more refinement. His eyes are sensitive and his face still has traces of the idealism of the young.

HANDCOCK

Just a shoe. Cut into him when it came off. Pinch someone's horse for a few days. He'll be alright.

WITTON nods. HANDCOCK looks up to where some natives are idly watching. They are dressed in cast off European clothes. A young woman is dirty, but with a good figure and strong negro features. HANDCOCK grins at her and gestures. He accompanies his words with exaggerated sign language.

HANDCOCK

You. Lady. You come my tent .. there .. there fourth one .. one ... two... three ... four ... when sun go down, moon come up ... yes ...

The GIRL giggles shyly, looking at the two YOUNG BOYS with her, though she understands what he is saying. HANDCOCK laughs. He is joking, though wouldn't mind if she turned up.

2.
(Cont.)

2.
(Cont.)

HANDCOCK looks up, across the veldt.

His POV. The patrol is returning from Viljoen's farmhouse. Although it is some distance away, there are clearly riderless horses.

HANDCOCK (Calling)

Harry! Harry Morant!!

HANDCOCK and WITTON mount up and ride to meet patrol.

In a shot from behind the returning patrol, MORANT comes out of the house.

CU his eyes flit across the returning horsemen.

MORANT

Where is Captain Hunt?

DRUMMOND

They were waitin' for us.

BOTHA

There were many men. Captain Hunt was shot, Lieutenant Morant.

MORANT is stunned. TAYLOR comes out of the house and stands nearby.

DRUMMOND

There was nothin' we could do. Bullets whizzin' round us like blowflies. Lost five men.

MORANT

Saddle up! Get my horse! Saddle up!!!

DRUMMOND

They were waitin' for us. Must ave known we was comin'.

HANDCOCK looks at BOTHA. Rides around him as he talks.

HANDCOCK

Knew. Course they bloody knew. You can't trust these blokes. How many sides you fightin' on mate??

2.
(Cont.)

2.
(Cont.)

BOTHA is upset. Makes no reply.

MORANT (To TAYLOR)

So much for your damned intelligence reports. Eight Boers. Exhausted. Horses with fever. What do you say now?

TAYLOR

I say avenge Captain Hunt.

SCENES 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, DELETED

8. PRISON EXERCISE YARD. EXT. DAY.

8.

CU MORANT, thinking of the preceeding events. There is the sound of a lock turning. A cell door opens, throwing more light across his face. He steps forward.

Image cuts to a wide shot of the exercise yard. A large open area, dusty and hot. An SERGEANT and three CAMERON HIGHLANDERS form the escort party. Three MEN have come out of their cells. Band music can be heard from the town.

In a closer shot, HANDCOCK and WITTON are standing behind MORANT.

SERGEANT

Gentlemen.

He leads the way out of the exercise yard. The three PRISONERS follow and then the three HIGHLANDERS.

9. PRISON. INT. DAY.

9.

They enter a door from the exercise yard. The rooms are bare. They cross the small courtyard behind the main gate of the prison.

WITTON

They might just forget it all now.

9.
(Cont.)

9.
(Cont.)

HANDCOCK

Pigs might fly.

They enter another room, stacked with guns and boxes of ammunition. OFFICER knocks discreetly on door.

DENNY (Voice)

Come in.

10. DENNY'S OFFICE. INT. DAY.

10.

The three PRISONERS enter the office of Lieutenant Colonel DENNY, a professional soldier with the 2nd Northampton Regiment. A large file is on his desk.

The room is bare apart from a desk, two chairs, a black draped picture of Queen Victoria and a new one of King Edward VII.

The SERGEANT remains in the room, but the THREE MAN escort stays outside.

L/C DENNY SPEAKS in an educated, detached voice.

DENNY

The Court of Enquiry has come to a recommendation on this matter.

HANDCOCK (Not too quietly)

About time.

DENNY

It has been decided to proceed with a Military Court-Martial, here at Pietersberg. You will remain under close arrest.

NEXT SCENE 12

11.
(Cont.)

11.
(Cont.)

WITTON

Well, why did you enlist?

MORANT is perhaps not going to answer him, but WITTON'S youthful directness doesn't deserve a snub.

MORANT

I was getting a bit tired of Australia, George... or vice versa. When you need a few brandies before you can get up on a wild horse maybe it's time to quit. I thought I'd see South Africa on the way home to England.

WITTON

Neither of you care at all what we're fighting about!

HANDCOCK

That's right mate. I still don't know.

WITTON

The Boers are trying to break away from the British Empire!

MORANT

From what I've gathered, George, it isn't so much the British government they hate as any government. If I was living here, I'd be with 'em.

MORANT finishes shaving, picks up his shirt and walks out into the exercise yard. WITTON stares after him.

12. KITCHENER'S HEADQUARTERS. EXT.DAY.

12.

KITCHENER has taken over the grandest house in PRETORIA. A Landau cart pulls up and a young BRITISH OFFICER gets out. It is MAJOR CHALRES BOLTON, Royal Field Artillery.

Over a long shot of the house, a title is supered:

"LORD KITCHENER'S HEADQUARTERS, PRETORIA.
12TH DECEMBER, 1901."

Deleted

14.
(Cont.)

14.
(Cont.)

KITCHENER

I have a rather important prosecution
for you to handle.

BOLTON

Yes, sir.

KITCHENER nods to HAMILTON.

HAMILTON

Charles. You've heard of the Bushveldt
Carbineers?

BOLTON (turning to KITCHENER)

A special force that Lord Kitchener
raised to deal with the Boer guerillas.

KITCHENER nods.

HAMILTON

Correct. Colonials. Most of them.
Australians.

BOLTON

I understand they've been quite
effective.

HAMILTON

Very effective. We've just arrested
three of them for shooting Boer prisoners
and a German missionary.

KITCHENER

I have received, Bolton, a telegraph
message from Whitehall that the German
government has lodged a serious protest ...
about the missionary in particular.
The Kaiser, as you know, is our late
Queen's grandson.

BOLTON

Yes, sir.

13. KITCHENER'S HEADQUARTERS. INT. DAY.

13.

An entrance hall. On a long shot, BOLTON enters.
An ORDERLY stands.

BOLTON

Major Charles Bolton to see Lord
Kitchener and Colonel Hamilton.

ORDERLY (A Sargeant)

Yes sir.

The shot is so distant that the voices can barely be heard.
The ORDERLY goes to a side door, knocks and enters.
BOLTON brushes dust from his uniform. Camera cuts to a
big CU of him, so we see him in CU for the first time.
He is in his early 30's, with a strong intelligent face.

He moves to the side door as the ORDERLY motions him inside.

14. KITCHENER'S HEADQUARTERS. INT. DAY.

14.

BOLTON is ushered into KITCHENER'S office - a large study
or living room - where he salutes KITCHENER and Colonel
HAMILTON.

The room is furnished in a lavish Victorian style - by the
Merchant who owns the house. KITCHENER is seated behind a
huge desk. Very little has been added by the military, only
some files and a large map of South Africa.

Colonel HAMILTON, is an urbane, relaxed, precise man in his
forties. KITCHENER is 49 years old.

He is tall and trim. His manner of speech is direct and
unassuming, his accent not quite so refined as HAMILTON'S.
He never becomes friendly in any sense, but maintains (quite
unconsciously) a deGaulle-like aloofness from those around him.

HAMILTON and BOLTON shake hands after BOLTON'S salute.

HAMILTON

Charles.

BOLTON

It's good to see you again, sir.

KITCHENER

You come highly recommended, young man.

BOLTON

Thank you, sir.

14.
(Cont.)

14.
(Cont.)

HAMILTON

The fact is that Whitehall feels the Germans may be looking for an excuse to enter the war ... on the Boer side, of course. We don't want to give them one.

KITCHENER

Needless to say, they don't give a damn about the Boers, it's the diamonds and gold of South Africa they're after.

BOLTON

They lack our altruism, sir.

KITCHENER

Quite.

HAMILTON

(GIVING HIM A LARGE FILE) Here's the report of the preliminary enquiry. The evidence against the Australians is overwhelming. Your job should be fairly easy. I expect their defending officer will advise a plea of "guilty" So it's simply a matter of a sentence.

BOLTON

Who is handling the defence, sir?

HAMILTON

Oh, we expect no difficulties there... selected one of their own chaps, a Major .. with the New South Wales Mounted

15. FARM. VELDT. EXT. DAY.

15.

Previous scene cuts to a big CU of THOMAS. Sounds of animals moving, people talking. Women's voices yell abuse in Afrikaans.

J.F. THOMAS is in his early 30's. He has an air of quiet assurance and determination, even when faced with his present job which is not one he likes.

THOMAS nods.

In a wide shot we see a Boer farmhouse. Outside it, is a wagon loaded with household goods. SOLDIERS are watching two BOER WOMEN who are near the wagon. There are also some SMALL CHILDREN, TWO BLACK SERVANTS and an OLD MAN.

Super Title:

"13th JANUARY, 1902."

A sergeant (of the NSW Mounted) takes THOMAS'S cue and hurls a flaming stick at the house. Other SOLDIERS follow. In seconds it is burning fiercely.

One of the BOER WOMEN screams at THOMAS.

BOER WOMAN

Yula roynik! Fer domde bluksums!!
Dit sol yuella nux help knee. Unse sol
net harrderferrgh. Dus unsa lant!!!

INTERPRETER

Very bad language, Major.
She says do not think that burning their
houses will make the Boer people surrender
to the English. They will fight much
harder now.

15.
(Cont.)

15.
(Cont.)

THOMAS (almost to himself)

I'm sure she's right.

The BOER turns to translate. THOMAS stops him.

Don't tell her that.

SERGEANT (calling)

The cattle sir?

THOMAS

Shoot the cattle. (HE LOOKS TOWARDS
THE WAGONS.) Move those people out
of here.

The old BOER WOMAN climbs up into the wagon, then reaches back and produces an ancient rifle. She aims at THOMAS and the recoil of the gun knocks her backwards. A hole is blasted into the ground six feet in front of where THOMAS is standing. There is a moment of silence before he waves the wagons on.

The SOLDIERS urge the wagons forward. In the background there is the sound of rifle shots as the cattle slaughter begins.

Behind THOMAS a despatch RIDER has arrived. One of the SOLDIERS indicates THOMAS to him. He rides over, salutes, and hands THOMAS a sealed envelope. THOMAS salutes.

DESPATCH RIDER

Major Thomas? (THOMAS nods.)
Orders from Lord Kitchener's headquarters,
sir.

THOMAS takes the envelope and tears it open. A YOUNG LIEUTENANT is looking at him quizzically. DESPATCH RIDER moves away a few feet.

16. COURTROOM. INT. DAY.

16.

Courtroom is being swept by TWO BLACKS. They talk to each other in their language.

17.

17. PRISON. INT./EXT. DAY. WASHROOM/COMMUNAL ROOM/EXERCISE YARD 17.

MORANT and HANDCOCK are shaving. One door is open showing the Communal room beyond and another leads out to the prison exercise yard.

WITTON

I still can't get used to it ..
a court-martial.. on the ship
coming over we used to joke about
who'd be the first to get a V.C.

HANDCOCK

Scratch yerself from that race mate.

WITTON

My father said the war'd make a man
of me.

MORANT

Everybody's father says that,
George.

WITTON

It's really .. (CAN'T THINK OF THE WORD)

MORANT

Ironical?

WITTON

Ironical. He believes in the British
Empire, you know. We all do .. in my
family. That's why I volunteered to help
keep the Empire together ...

HANDCOCK

Yeah? I volunteered because there's a
depression back home and I've got a wife
and kid.

WITTON (A statement)

You believe in the Empire, Harry.

MORANT has finished shaving.

MORANT

Do I?

He takes the basin out into the exercise yard and empties it.

17.
(Cont.)

17.
(Cont.)

HANDCOCK

Don't reckon he does.

WITTON is offended. Is about to follow MORANT into the exercise yard, when a bolt is heard on the door leading into the Communal room.

WITTON

That'll be him.

He moves into the Communal room.

HANDCOCK

About time.

HANDCOCK is still shaving. He stays in the washroom. MORANT has heard the lock and looks into the Communal room from the exercise yard.

THOMAS is let into the room by a Scottish guard. The door shuts behind him. THOMAS is carrying a travelling case a couple of files and a huge book.

THOMAS

I'm Major J.F. Thomas, your defending officer.

WITTON

George Witton.

MORANT is now in the doorway.

MORANT

Morant.

HANDCOCK (Surveying his uniform)

New South Wales Mounted. What kind of a lawyer are you?

THOMAS walks to the table and puts down his case and papers. He replies casually to HANDCOCK.

THOMAS

They haven't locked me up yet. What kind of a soldier are you?

MORANT steps into the room.

17.
(Cont.)

17.
(Cont.)

THOMAS (To MORANT)

What's it like here? They taking care
of you? Looks a bit ... spartan.

THOMAS is unpacking his case.

MORANT

It's not the Hotel Australia.

HANDCOCK

More like the Coffee Palace. No grog.
Throws Brandy flask to HANDCOCK. He drinks gratefully.

MORANT

They gave you the report? Of the
preliminary enquiry?

THOMAS holds up a bulky file.

THOMAS

Yesterday.

MORANT

Yesterday!
HANDCOCK throws flask to MORANT.

WITTON

But .. the trial starts tomorrow.

HANDCOCK

Yeah, we thought you were gonna miss it.

WITTON

Well you don't know anything
about us ...

THOMAS

Only what's in the report. And that's not
very flattering.

HANDCOCK, carrying his shirt, steps into the room and picks up a huge
book THOMAS has placed on the table, alongside numerous sheets of
paper, pencils and other books.

17.
(Cont.)

In a CU we see it is "Manual of Military Law."
He flips through it.

17.
(Cont.)

HANDCOCK drops the book loudly back onto the table.

HANDCOCK

How many court-martials you done?

THOMAS

None.

WITTON

None?

HANDCOCK

Jeez. They're playin' with a double-headed penny aren't they?

THOMAS

Would you rather conduct your own defence?

THOMAS is slightly sharp for the first time. HANDCOCK thinks better of making a smart reply.

WITTON

But you have .. handled a lot of court cases? Back home, sir.

THOMAS

No. I was a country solicitor. I dealt mostly in land conveyancing and wills.

HANDCOCK (Almost to himself)

Wills? Might come in handy.

THOMAS sits. Opens the file. Picks up a pencil.

THOMAS

I'm going to need a lot of information...

17.
(Cont.)

17
(Cont.)

WITTON

Do you think they're going to imprison us
or cashier us, Sir? (My father'd be terribly ...)

THOMAS

Haven't they told you?

CU's of MORANT and THOMAS reveal that they know the information
THOMAS is about to impart, but have been concealing it from
WITTON.

There are a number of murder charges.
The penalty is death.

17A. OFFICERS MESS. EXT. NIGHT.

17A.

An attractive house on a hillside is being used as an
officers mess. Lights are on. There is a little light in
the sky.

SCS. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 DELETED

NEXT SCENE 25

DENNY looks up as THOMAS enters.

DENNY

Never thought you Colonials got lost,
Major.

THOMAS

I've been at the prison, sir.

DENNY

Major Thomas .. Major Bolton, Captain Nicholson,
Lieutenants Reed and Baxter, Captain Macdonald,
Miss

He doesn't know their names.

BAXTER

Meintjes, Pelsaert, Huisman.

THOMAS nods to everyone, moves to his place.

BAXTER (In Dutch)

He's the Australian Major. For the Court
Martial.

GIRL Nods.

BLACK SERVANT brings THOMAS some soup. A silence.

REED

I understand your Mr. Morant is something
of a poet, Major?

THOMAS

That's right. Wrote for a paper called
"The Bulletin", in Sydney.

BAXTER (to girl, in Dutch)

One of the men on a charge is a poet.
(IN English) A Tennyson of the Transvaal.
A Byron of the Bushveldt Carbineers.

REED

Why is it he's referred to as "Breaker"
Morant?

BAXTER

A ladies man, perhaps, a breaker of hearts?

THOMAS

No. He was a horse breaker. Said to be the
best in Australia.

25. OFFICERS MESS. INT. NIGHT.

25.

A fairly large dining room in a comfortable but not lavish house. DENNY, BOLTON, NICHOLSON, BAXTER and one other OFFICER are sitting around the table. There are still a couple of unoccupied chairs. Cigars are lit, port is being passed. Three attractive young BOER GIRLS at the table speak only Dutch. Lt. BAXTER has to translate for them.

LT. REED is standing, reciting, rather self-consciously.

REED

Long as the waves shall roll
Long as fame guards her scroll
And men through heart and soul
Thrill to true glory.
Their deed from age to age
Shall voice and verse engage
Swelling the splendid page
Of Englands story.

During this recitation, DENNY talks to BOLTON at the far end of the table, his voice low.

DENNY

In my view we should have kept the Colonials out of this war.

BOLTON

But, sir, is it possible to generalise from one case (to include a whole) ...

DENNY

I believe so. It's a matter of discipline. Tradition. Do you think this business could have happened with any contingent other than the Australians?

REED finishes his poem. There is polite applause. DENNY and BOLTON joining in. REED returns to his chair.

BAXTER (In Dutch, to one of the girls)

Did you understand any of it?

GIRL (In Dutch)

A little. (In English... little ..
(SHE LAUGHS) (In Dutch).. no, nothing...

BOLTON (To DENNY)

Morant's not an Australian, sir.

DENNY

You're splitting hairs. He's been out there 15 years or so. Learnt all their bad habits. Taught them a few, I gather ...

25.
(Cont.)

BOLTON

25.
(Cont.)

Quite a Renaissance figure.

A HIGHLANDER gets the nod from DENNY to enter the room. He is followed by a big bearded BOER and his wife. They go to the piano.

DENNY

I daresay - if everything goes well - he could come and recite for us one night. In the meantime... (HE INDICATES THE BOER) ..this refined looking fellow is an ex-opponent of ours who has wisely signed the non-combatants pledge. They say he has a fine voice. Only speaks Dutch though.

A shot from behind the BOER, who is arranging the music and facing away from DENNY, indicates this might not be the case.

So Mr. Baxter and the ladies will have to tell us what it's all about.

The BOER sings the folk-song "Sari Marais". At one point, he exchanges a glance with one of the BOER GIRLS at the table.

26. TOWN SQUARE. PIETERSBERG. EXT. DAY.

26.

A military band is playing in the bandstand. People are watching. The tune is "Sari Marais."

26A. COURTYARD. EXT. MORNING.

26A.

The SERGEANT and ESCORT PARTY are unlocking the cells. THOMAS is waiting, a pile of loose papers in his hand. MORANT, HANDCOCK and WITTON come out of the cells.

THOMAS

A few things to check. How many men at Fort Edward?

MORANT

Around fifty. Sometimes a few more. Sometimes less.

THOMAS makes a correction.

26.A.
(Cont.)

26.A.
(Cont.)

THOMAS

Most of them were Australians?

HANDCOCK

We told you all this last night.

MORANT

About forty five of them were.

OFFICER

Gentlemen.

ESCORT PARTY and PRISONERS walk towards the door into the main part of the prison. THOMAS walks alongside. He drops one of his notes. HANDCOCK shakes his head. WITTON is concerned.

26B. PRISON . INT. MORNING.

26B.

PRISONERS and ESCORT, followed rather awkwardly by THOMAS enter the building on the way to the refectory, which is to be used as a Court room.

THOMAS (To HANDCOCK)

And those prisoners .. you forced them to travel in front of the ...

HANDCOCK (annoyed)

Cripes, don't bring that one up!
There was enough trouble at the time.
I don't want it comin' out here.

THOMAS makes another note.

They reach the door leading to the Courtroom.

27. COURT ROOM. (A part of the Gaol). INT. MORNING.

27.

The room is empty. The band music can be faintly heard.

27.
(Cont.)

27.
(Cont.)

A soldier SERGEANT enters (GORDON HIGHLANDER) and stands near the door. The PRESIDENT (Lt. Col. DENNY) follows with the JUDGE ADVOCATE. DENNY is carrying a large file and sits at the centre table, which faces the others. The JUDGE ADVOCATE sits near him. BOLTON enters. FOUR OFFICER MEMBERS enter and sit.

Finally HANDCOCK, MORANT, WITTON and THOMAS enter. They sit at a table facing the prosecution. The witness chair is between prosecution and defence.

DENNY

This court-martial is convened
by order of Horatio Herbert ...

THOMAS stands.

THOMAS

I'd like to ask for an
adjournment, sir.

DENNY

An adjournment?! We only
just arrived.

JUDGE ADVOCATE shakes his head.

THOMAS

That's right sir. I only arrived
in Pietersberg yesterday.

That's not enough time
to prepare a defence. The prosecutor's
had six weeks.

DENNY

The prosecution has witnesses who
have travelled more than sixty miles
for this hearing. Do you expect us to
keep them waiting around at taxpayers'
expense.

THOMAS

Yes sir, I'd like more time to ...
(thoroughly prepare)

JUDGE ADVOCATE

Quite out of the question, Major ...

DENNY

Thomas.

THOMAS sits.

DENNY

This court-martial is convened by order ...

THOMAS stands.

Yes, Major Thomas?

THOMAS

This court-martial is unconstitutional, sir. The three defendants are Australian subjects and as the country is now an independent Commonwealth, can only be tried by the Australian army.

DENNY confers with the JUDGE ADVOCATE. They cannot be heard.

DENNY

The defendants, Major, were serving in the Bushveldt Carbineers - a unit under British command.

THOMAS sits.

This court-martial is convened by order of Horatio Herbert Lord Kitchener of Khartoum and Aspell, G.C.M.G., G.C.B.R.E., Commander in Chief of British and Colonial forces in South Africa. (The Charges are as follows ...

Lieutenants Morant, Handcock and Witton are charged with the murder of a Boer prisoner by the name of Visser. They are also charged with the murders of six other Boer prisoners, names unknown. In addition, Lieutenants Morant and Handcock are charged with the murder of a German missionary, the Reverend H.C.V. Hesse.

He stops reading and looks up at THOMAS.

How do you plead?

MORANT stands.

MORANT

Not guilty.

(SITS)

HANDCOCK stands.

HANDCOCK

Not guilty.

(SITS)

WITTON Stands.

WITTON

Not guilty.

(SITS)

DENNY

Not guilty!!! Of all three charges?

He looks, surprised, at the Judge Advocate.

THOMAS

Yes sir

27.
(Cont.)

27.
(cont.)

NICHOLSON

Take the Bible in your right hand
and repeat after me. (ROBERTSON DOES SO)
I swear by Almighty God that the evidence
which I shall give this court shall be
the truth, the whole truth and nothing
but the truth. So help me God.

ROBERTSON sits in the witness chair. He is a seedy looking
Scot in his middle to late 30's. Slightly stubbly.
Although not drunk now, he is shaking slightly and has the
furtive air of a heavy drinker. He is in civilian clothes.

THOMAS is still looking through his notes.

BOLTON

You were in the regular army for
twenty years, Captain Robertson?

ROBERTSON

Yes, sir, I was with the 10th
Hussars, before taking command of the
Bushveldt Carbineers in the Transvaal.

BOLTON

And how was discipline in the
Carbineers?

ROBERTSON

Orr, impossible, especially
with the Australians. They didn't
like picket duty, or guard duty,
and the only day we could get them
on parade was pay day.

BOLTON

Could you give the court other examples
of their breaches of discipline?

ROBERTSON

Orr, well... there were so many ...
they'd only salute the officers
they liked.

HANDCOCK (quietly)

I reckon you didn't get too
many salutes, mate.

DENNY looks towards BOLTON and the JUDGE ADVOCATE.

DENNY

Major Thomas. You are aware of the seriousness of these charges?

THOMAS

I believe there were legally justifying circumstances, sir.

HANDCOCK (soft voice)

Were there?

DENNY is furious. He looks to the JUDGE ADVOCATE for advice, but as THOMAS is quite within his rights, there is none to give.

DENNY (Loudly)

Your first witness, Major Bolton.

BOLTON (To COURT ORDERLY)

Call Mr. Roland Robertson.

ORDERLY leaves the room.

ROBERTSON is now walking down the courtroom to the PRESIDENT'S table.

THOMAS

Who's he? Robertson??

THOMAS shuffles through his notes. HANDCOCK and MORANT exchange a glance of loss of confidence.

HANDCOCK

Golly, mate, we talked about him last night.

The JUNIOR MEMBER (NICHOLSON) of the court-martial walks to where ROBERTSON is standing, to swear him in.

27.
(Cont.)

27.
(Cont.)

DENNY

Order.

ROBERTSON

Some of them had illegal stills.
Made this really ... strong ...
drink out of corn and boot polish.

HANDCOCK (Bit louder)

You'd know. You were their best
customer.

DENNY (Tapping pencil on table)

ORDER!!!

ROBERTSON

They stole cattle and sold them ...

THOMAS (Tentatively)

I must object, sir, two of the
defendants were not even at Fort
Edward at the time of (Mr. Robertson's
command) ...

BOLTON

Sir, I am trying to establish
for this court the irregularities and
unsoldierly behaviour of the Bushveldt
Carbineers.

DENNY

Objection overruled.

THOMAS sits. Goes on rustling through his papers.

BOLTON

Thank you, sir.
Captain Robertson.

Go on,

ROBERTSON

I had to reprimand Handcock there
for what I considered a serious
breach of the rules of war.

BOLTON

What was that?

27.
(Cont.)

27.
(Cont.)

ROBERTSON

He placed prisoners of war in open wagons in front of train engines. They could have been shot at by their own side.

BOLTON

Thank you, Captain Robertson.

ROBERTSON gets up to go.

THOMAS

Ah, just wait a minute there.

THOMAS is searching through his notes.

DENNY

Do you wish to cross-examine the witness, Major Thomas?

THOMAS

Yes ... I do... sir.

He finds the paper he is looking for. He gets up and walks towards ROBERTSON, shuffling the papers as he goes.

Tell me, ... us ... when you joined the Carbineers what were you told they'd be doing?

ROBERTSON

Fighting the enemy.

THOMAS (Respectful)

Yes ... but how? I mean it was a new kind of Corps, wasn't it?

ROBERTSON

That's right ... ummmm we had to fight behind the lines. Against the Boer Commandos.

THOMAS (Naive)

Commandos. That's a new word, isn't it? A Boer word. What does it mean?

ROBERTSON

Commandos had to live off the land, use hit and run tactics, surprise attacks ... that sort of thing. The Boers did it, so it was the only way to fight them.

THOMAS (Earnest)

And it was quite hard to keep discipline under such conditions?

ROBERTSON

Well it was with the Australians.

THOMAS (Admiring)

But you tried?

ROBERTSON

Aye.

THOMAS (Straightforward)

Like when you reprimanded Lieutenant Handcock for placing open prison carriages in front of train engines?

HANDCOCK cringes having asked THOMAS not to mention this.

ROBERTSON (Nods)

I told him we didn't do that sort of thing.

THOMAS (Simply)

But as Carbineers you were doing a lot of things that hadn't been done before.

ROBERTSON

That's right, but there's a limit.

THOMAS gives the impression he has finished his questions. He remembers something.

THOMAS

Ahm, what was Lieutenant Handcock's reason for placing these carriages of prisoners in front of trains?

27.
(Cont.)

27.
(Cont.)

ROBERTSON (Unaware)

The Boers had been mining the
lines and blowing up a lot of trains.
He thought it might stop them.

THOMAS

Did it? (casually)

ROBERTSON looks towards BOLTON.

THOMAS (Forceful. Pretense over)

DID IT?

ROBERTSON

Well, yes, they did stop blowing up
the trains, but (I don't know
if it was)...

THOMAS (Crisp)

Tell me, when you were in command
at Fort Edward, before the late Captain
Hunt and Lieutenant Morant took over -
what did you do with Boer prisoners?

ROBERTSON

How do ye mean?

THOMAS

Well, Fort Edward was only a farmhouse.
No facilities for them there. What
did you do with them?

ROBERTSON

Well, we sent them down here under
guard to Pietersberg.

THOMAS

I see. How many did you send ...
down here to Pietersberg?

ROBERTSON (After a hesitation)

Fifty, seventy ... I really
couldn't say.

BOLTON is beginning to look concerned.

THOMAS

Just think. (HE SHUFFLES THROUGH HIS PAPERS, LOOKING FOR A PARTICULAR SHEET. HE FINDS IT.) I've been informed that during your command only 29 prisoners were sent to Pietersberg. (LOOKS AT DENNY). If you'd like to supply the official records, sir, this figure could be confirmed for the court. (BACK TO ROBERTSON)... So what did you do with the others? (Quite a discrepancy between ... your figures and the official figures ...)

BOLTON

Objection, Mr. President, this man is not on trial.

HANDCOCK (Loud)

He bloody oughter be!

DENNY

Extraneous comments prejudice your case, Lieutenant Handcock.

HANDCOCK (To MORANT (aside)

What in hell does that mean?

DENNY (Continuing from above)

Objection allowed.

THOMAS (Interrupting. Loud)

Was there a policy to shoot prisoners in the Bushveldt Carbineers?

BOLTON (Loud)

The Defence Officer is attempting to incriminate the witness!

DENNY (Loud)

Major Thomas!! Objection allowed.
The witness is not on trial.

THOMAS

The Prosecuting Officer extended a courtesy addressing you as Captain, didn't he MR. Robertson? Why did you lose your commission? Why were you recalled from Fort Edward? Was your own incompetence and lack of authority...

27.
(Cont.)

27.
(Cont.)

BOLTON (Interrupting)

Objection. These questions have no bearing on the case.

THOMAS

Sir, I am establishing Mr. Robertson's credibility.. (CORRECTS HIMSELF) lack of credibility as a witness.

DENNY

Objection allowed. You are incriminating the witness, Major.

THOMAS (Quiet again)

Alright ... just one more question. Did you discontinue the practise of placing prisoners in open carriages?

ROBERTSON (After a pause)

No no ... I didn't.

THOMAS

Why not? If you objected to it.

No answer.

THOMAS

Could it have been that the practise, although irregular, was effective in controlling Boer attacks. Eh?
That will be all, Mr. Robertson.

THOMAS sits. MORANT, HANDCOCK and WITTON congratulate him.

Jump Cut to DRUMMOND on the stand. In a CU he is easily recognised as the 2 IC at HUNT'S death.

BOLTON's voice is heard over the CU of DRUMMOND.

BOLTON

I will proceed now, sir, with the extraordinary events following the death of Captain Hunt and the subsequent murder of the Boer prisoner, Visser...

THOMAS

Objection. This has not been proved.

27.
(Cont.)

27.
(Cont.)

BOLTON

...death of the Boer prisoner, Visser. Sergeant Major Drummond... following your patrol's return to Fort Edward, Lieutenant Morant ordered a force to return immediately to Viljoen's farmhouse?

DRUMMOND

Yes, sir. He didn't even let us have a feed.

27A. VELDT. EXT. LATE AFTERNOON

27A.

CARBINEERS ride fast across the almost featureless plain.

In a CU MORANT is riding at the head of the men. He is determined obsessed.

CU HANDCOCK
CU WITTON
CU BOTHA
CU DRUMMOND, disgruntled.
CU JOHNSON

28. VILJOENS FARMHOUSE. EXT. MORNING.

28.

A group of NATIVES and an old FARMER are lifting the stripped bodies of the dead CARBINEERS into a small open wagon. They look up as the horsemen approach, MORANT in the lead. HANDCOCK dismounts and goes into the house. BOTHA rides up to the wagon and looks over the side. He grimaces, horrified:

BOTHA

Lieutenant Morant! Lieutenant Morant!

MORANT and DR. JOHNSON ride up to the wagon. MORANT looks in at what can only be the body of HUNT. (We never see it.) His face is agonised, tearful. HANDCOCK comes out of the house.

MORANT (Yelling)

Rest the horses for two hours then we're going after them!

DRUMMOND

They've got nearly two days start and we don't know the direction.

WITTON

We've left Fort Edward almost undefended, Harry.

MORANT never takes his eyes from HUNT'S body.

28.
(Cont.)

28.
(Cont.)

MORANT

They've gone towards the Waterberg.
Where else could they go ...

SC. 29 DELETED

30. A HILL. EXT. DUSK.

30.

CARBINEERS ride towards camera.

DRUMMOND (Voice only)

We rode another coupla days. Hardly
ever stoppin'. Morant was right
about where they'd gone ...

CARBINEERS look down a steep hill. MORANT has binoculars.

31. BOER CAMP. EXT. DUSK.

31.

BOERS are camped at a small running stream. Their wagon can be
clearly seen. MEN eating, cooking. An OLD MAN is singing.

32. HILL. EXT. DUSK.

32.

MORANT hands the binoculars to HANDCOCK. WITTON, DRUMMOND and BOTHA are nearby.

MORANT

We'll get them now.

HANDCOCK

Better wait a few hours, Harry.
They'll be asleep. Only a coupla
sentries then.

MORANT

We'll get them now.

Below the crest of the hill, the CARBINEERS mount.

33. BOER CAMP. EXT. NIGHT (TO BE SHOT DAY FOR NIGHT)

33.

Most of the BOERS are sitting around the fires. There is occasionally chatter in Dutch. One BOER has a squeezebox, and is singing "Johnny with the Wooden Leg."

Suddenly they look around towards the kopje as the Carbineers' horses thunder towards them.

BOER

Feyant!

2ND BOER

Atelonders!! Redumda royneks!!

3RD BOER

Vergh iss onse!!

Bullets fly. Some of the BOERS fall but most mount their horses and ride off, leaving a wagon behind. As the CARBINEERS enter the camp, there are only a few dead BOERS around - the others have disappeared across the dark veldt.

HANDCOCK

No point in going after them.

MORANT and others dismount. They look at the BOERS lying around to see if they are still alive. MORANT stands lone, morose, brooding.

HANDCOCK

Harry!

MORANT looks around. HANDCOCK is dragging a BOER out from under a wagon. He pushes him towards MORANT.

HANDCOCK

He's wearing Hunt's uniform.

MORANT takes the PRISONER a short distance from the others. BOTH A accompanies them.

MORANT (Intense, barely in control)

His name.

BOTHA

Vot iss yo naam?

VISSER

Visser. Denys Visser.

MORANT

You were at the farmhouse. You killed Captain Hunt. The British Officer.

BOTHA

Hay sair, yea het dee engelser offiseer do it hurgh mark.

VISSER

Near, near, dit voss knee aknee, ek viet knux dar fon knee!!!

BOTHA

He says no, he didn't kill him, he ...

MORANT

Didn't kill him!! Then how the devil did he get this?! (HE GRABS VISSER BY THE UNIFORM AND SHAKES HIM VIOLENTLY. SLAPS HIM ACROSS THE FACE. VISSER FALLS TO THE GROUND.)

MORANT turns and addresses the MEN, who are a short distance from where he is standing with the prisoner, VISSER, and BOTHA.

33.
(Cont.)

33.
(Cont.)

MORANT

This is the man who killed Captain Hunt. He is to be executed immediately. Sargeant Major Drummond, I want an eight man firing squad.

There is a moment of silence as the MEN look from one to the other undecided. They talk quietly among themselves.

1ST MAN

I dunno. I reckon we oughter take him back to Fort Edward.

A few MEN agree with this.

HANDCOCK

Captain Hunt's orders were not to take prisoners.

2ND MAN

Yeah, and that came from Pretoria.

BOTHA watches them talk, though he cannot hear them clearly. He turns to MORANT.

BOTHA

I want to be on the firing party, Lieutenant. (HE POINTS TO VISSER.) He killed Captain Hunt. If he did not he would not have his uniform. Please, Lieutenant Morant.

VISSER (Distraught, pleading)

Dis knee aknee. Ek viet nux dar fon knee!

DRUMMOND turns to WITTON.

DRUMMOND

Most of the blokes aren't too keen on this. You have a word with 'im. (GESTURES TOWARDS MORANT) He might take some notice of you.

WITTON looks at MORANT, then nods. He walks over to where MORANT is standing.

WITTON

Harry ...

(Cont.)

MORANT (Obsessively)

He's to be executed. You didn't know Simon Hunt like I did, George. He was my best friend. The bullet wounds he had were only in the shoulder and the leg. (CALLING) They mutilated him with knives while he was still alive ...

MORANT has raised his voice so the last part of what he had to say was heard by the other MEN.

A GROUP OF them start preparing their rifles for the execution. VISSER is petrified with fear.

1ST MAN

Alright ...

2ND MAN

Get some of our own back ..

3RD MAN

Hunt was a good officer.

4TH MAN

He'll never get to heaven if he doesn't die;

They walk a few feet away from the camp, to the open veldt.

BOTHA looks pleadingly at MORANT, as two of the CARBINEERS drag the weeping VISSER away. MORANT nods. BOTHA picks up a rifle and joins the others.

WITTON stands where he was, looking from the firing party to MORANT. MORANT is transfixed, immobile.

fires. HANDCOCK gives the order and the squad We do not see VISSER fall.

34. COURT ROOM. INT. DAY.

34.

DRUMMOND is still on the stand.

BOLTON

Did you object to Lieutenant Morant's treatment of the prisoner?

DRUMMOND

Yes sir.

34.
(Cont.)

34.
(Cont.)

BOLTON

Do you consider the prisoner was given
a fair trial?

DRUMMOND

No, sir. Not in the state Lieutenant
Morant was in. He was er ... like a madman.

BOLTON looks significantly at the COURT MEMBERS.

BOLTON

Thank you, Sargeant Major Drummond.

DENNY

Any questions, Major Thomas?

THOMAS

Sargeant Major Drummond, the Boer prisoner,
Visser, was wearing British khaki?

DRUMMOND

That's right.

THOMAS

You are aware that Lord Kitchener issued
an order some months ago that all Boers
caught wearing Khaki were to be shot?

DRUMMOND

Well... er... yeah ...

DENNY is conferring with the JUDGE ADVOCATE.

DENNY

Major, Lord Kitchener's order only applied
if they were wearing khaki "with an intention
to deceive." Was that the case, Mr, Drummond.

DRUMMOND

I don't reckon, sir. More like he was
tryin' to keep out the cold. Boers are
real short of supplies.

As DRUMMOND speaks MORANT looks enquiringly at THOMAS.

MORANT (Referring to "DECEIVE")

I never heard that before.

34.
(Cont.)

NEW PAGE 43A.
34.
(Cont.)

THOMAS

Obviously how they're interpreting it.
(TO DRUMMOND). You are a regular soldier
and were one of the first to join the
Bushveldt Carbineers. You served under
Captain Robertson?

DRUMMOND

That's right.

THOMAS

I understand it was difficult to find
volunteers for the Corps. despite the
generous pay offer of 7 shillings a
day. The country was isolated
and your Boer opponents were formidable.

DRUMMOND

Yeah ... er yes.

BOLTON

Objection. This is becoming a history
lesson, Mr. President.

THOMAS

I am establishing for the court sir,
the behaviour of the Bushveldt Carbineers.

DENNY makes a gesture of resignation.

(TO DENNY). Your recruits were
nearly all Australians.

DRUMMOND (Nodding)

Cow cookies they were (TO EXPLAIN) Bushmen
not real soldiers.

THOMAS

It seems Bushmen were needed to fight
the Boers. In six months they almost
cleared the Northern Transvaal of Boer
commandos. In fact, I've heard that
since the arrest of Lieutenants
Morant and Handcock, the Boers
are returning.

DENNY

We are not interested in troop movements,
Major Thomas. We are trying three men
for murder.

THOMAS

Yes sir. Would you agree, Sargeant Major
Drummond, that discipline improved in the
Carbineers once Mr. Robertson was removed
and Captain Hunt and Lieutenant Morant
took over?

DRUMMOND

I suppose.

THOMAS

Try yes or no.

DRUMMOND (Ungraciously)

Yes.

THOMAS

Morant and Handcock broke up illegal
stills and forced troopers to return
stolen cattle?

DRUMMOND

Yes.

THOMAS

There were dismissals from the Corps.
Did this cause resentment against Morant
and Handcock?

DRUMMOND

Well ... a bit ... it's natural.

THOMAS

And some of those dismissed are now witnesses
for the prosecution.

DRUMMOND

Yes!

34.
(Cont.)

34.
(Cont.)

THOMAS

Weren't you yourself reprimanded for holding stolen cattle?!

DRUMMOND

I explained that! I came across them on patrol - I only impounded them that's all!!

THOMAS

No more questions.

HANDCOCK

You couldn't lie straight in bed, Drummond.

DRUMMOND

I don't have to take that from you!

HANDCOCK

You want to do something about it? Come on outside. I'll drop yer.

DENNY (Banging table)

Control yourself, Mr. Handcock, or you'll find yourself in serious trouble.

HANDCOCK laughs.

DENNY

You find that amusing? ~

HANDCOCK

I was just wonderin' how much more serious things could be.

DENNY (To DRUMMOND)

You may stand down.

DRUMMOND exits, passing HANDCOCK.

HANDCOCK (Hissing)

Anytime mate, anytime.

34.
(Cont.)

34.
(Cont.)

BOTHA is brought into the courtroom. He avoids the eyes of the prisoners as he walks towards the MEMBERS table to be sworn in. While this takes place MORANT whispers to THOMAS.

MORANT

He's a witness for the prosecution?

THOMAS

Yes. Is that surprising?

MORANT

He was as attached to Simon Hunt as I was.

THOMAS looks at BOTHA with renewed interest.

BOTHA walks to the witness chair. In the background MORANT is talking urgently to THOMAS, who is making notes.

BOLTON

Since signing the non-combatants agreement you had been assisting the Bushveldt Carbineers as a guide and interpreter?

BOTHA

Yes.

BOLTON

Will you tell the Court what happened after the capture of the Boer prisoner.

BOTHA

No one wanted to go on the firing party, so he (POINTING TO MORANT) said if we didn't he would shoot the prisoner himself.

MORANT looks up sharply. Whispers to THOMAS.

BOLTON

Mr. Botha ..

BOTHA (Correcting his pronunciation)

Berta.

BOLTON

I'm sorry ...

BOTHA

Berta. You say Berta ...

BOLTON (With an effort)

Mr. Berta. Do you consider the prisoner Visser received a fair trial?

THOMAS interrupts as BOTHA is about to speak.

THOMAS

Objection. The witness is obviously not qualified to answer.

BOLTON

I will re-phrase the question.
Was Visser's trail in any way similar to this Court-martial?

BOTHA

No. Nothing like this. No.

THOMAS

I repeat. The witness is not in the British army. He is not qualified to answer.

DENNY

I believe the question is pertinent. You may proceed, Major Bolton.

34.
(Cont.)

34.
(Cont.)

BOLTON

I have no more questions.

But ... would like to add that I am being generous in even using the words "trial" or "court-martial" in relation to the killing of Visser. It was a consultation, a conspiracy, a measure to mature a criminal purpose, but it was not a court.

THOMAS is walking towards BOTHA.

THOMAS

Trooper Botha, didn't you volunteer to shoot the prisoner Visser?

BOTHA doesn't answer.

HANDCOCK (to MORANT)

If word got around the locals he was offerin' to shoot his mates his life wouldn't be worth half a crown.

THOMAS

You volunteered, Trooper Botha.

BOTHA

No. No, I didn't. I was commanded.

THOMAS

Didn't all the troopers in the firing squad volunteer?

BOTHA

No! No! I only obeyed orders.

THOMAS

You knew Captain Hunt had told Lieutenants Morant and Handcock not to bring in prisoners, but to shoot them?

BOTHA

No. I did not. I know nothing of such orders.

MORANT shakes his head as if to say "It's hopeless."

34.
(Cont.)

34.
(Cont.)

Jump cut. MORANT is on the witness chair. He is disheartened by the clearly biased evidence presented.

BOLTON

Captain Hunt was a particular friend of yours?

MORANT

I was engaged to marry his sister, in England.

BOLTON

So his death was very disturbing to you?

MORANT

It was more .. the way he died. He was mutilated by the Boers.

BOLTON

Were you present at the action at which Captain Hunt was killed?

MORANT

No.

BOLTON

Then how do you know he wasn't killed in a fair fight?

MORANT

I saw his body.

BOLTON

Some time later. You can't possibly know how Captain Hunt met his death. So you cannot produce any evidence to connect Visser with it. So why did you order him to be shot.

34.
(Cont.)

34.
(Cont.)

His manner is one of resignation. He knows the court is determined to shoot him, and perhaps doesn't care.

MORANT

Well, it's customary during a war to shoot as many of the enemy as possible.

THOMAS shakes his head, unhappy with this response.

DENNY (Pompous)

And was your court at the trial of Visser constituted in any way like this? (INDICATES THE COURT ROOM). What rule did you shoot him under?

MORANT (His temper flaring)

Was it like this??? No, it wasn't quite so handsome. As for rules, we didn't carry any military manuals around with us. We were out on the veldt fighting the Boers the way they fought us.

I'll tell you the rule we applied. Rule 303. We caught them and we shot them under Rule 303!!

35. BOER CAMP. NIGHT EXT.

35.

Rifles fire. VISSER falls, MORANT watches.
35A. PRISON. EXT. NIGHT

35A.

SCOTS SOLDIER singing.

36. COMMUNAL ROOM. INT. NIGHT.

36.

MORANT is writing. HANDCOCK and WITTON are idly listening to the song. It is a hot night. The evening meal has been over some time. Dishes and mugs litter the table. Door opens. THOMAS enters, with the SARGEANT.

WITTON

Did you get a reply?

34.
(Cont.)

34.
(Cont.)

THOMAS

No. Either the English aren't sending the telegrams or the Australians are ignoring them. (TO SARGEANT) How's your eye sight?

SARGEANT

Very weak, sir.

THOMAS throws his hip flask to MORANT.

THOMAS

You're the best witness the prosecution got, Harry. You'll have to watch your temper.

MORANT

Always my problem ... impetuosity.. most un-British.

MORANT throws the flask to HANDCOCK.

THOMAS

And you watch yourself, too. It's a British courtroom, not a backblocks pub.

THOMAS

Well, we've got some of our own witnesses tomorrow, anyway.

HANDCOCK

Bloody few. Just about anyone with a good word to say for us has been shipped to India.

HANDCOCK throws the flask to WITTON. HANDCOCK looks over to MORANT.

HANDCOCK

Come on then. Read it to us.

MORANT

You don't like poetry, Peter.

HANDCOCK

There's not much bloody else to do around here, is there?

34.
(Cont.)

34.
(Cont.)

WITTON

Come on, read it Harry.

MORANT reads.

MORANT

"Oh! Those rides across the crossing
Where the shallow stream runs wide,
When the sunset's beams were glossing
Strips of sand on either side.

We would cross the sparkling river
On the brown horse and the bay:
Watch the willows sway and shiver
And their trembling shadows play.

'Tis a memory to be hoarded -
Oh, the foolish tale and fond!
'Till another stream be forded -
And we reach the Great Beyond."

HANDCOCK shrugs, not understanding the meaning.

WITTON (Quietly)

I don't want to die.

MORANT

Everyone lives their life knowing there's
going to be a dreadful execution at the end
of it. Yours will be quicker and less
painful than most.

WITTON

And a lot earlier than most.

36B. PIETERSBERG. TOWN SQUARE. MORNING.

36B.

Band is playing an Elgar Pomp and Circumstance March.

SC. 37

37A. VILJOENS FARMHOUSE. EXT. DAY.

37A.

As seen previously, DR. JOHNSON is looking over the side of
the cart containing SIMON HUNT'S body.

JOHNSON (voice only)

There were multiple lacerations about
Captain Hunt's body. The neck had been
broken and the face bore marks ...

DR. JOHNSON is on the stand. He is grey haired and in his late 40's or early 50's. Australian. He is recognised as the man who examined HUNT'S body in the wagon at the farmhouse. Dialogue continues from previous scene ...

JOHNSON

...of hob nailed boots; also the legs and the genital region had been deeply slashed.

THOMAS

Did the mutilations take place before or after death?

BOLTON (Quickly)

Objection, Mr. President. The doctor could not say positively exactly when these injuries took place. It can only be conjecture.

DENNY

Objection allowed.

JOHNSON

Nonsense! I've been watching men die for two years. I know what kills them and how long it takes. The original wound was caused by a bullet from a German Mauser. It entered the clavical - collarbone - and it is impossible for Captain Hunt to have died by the time the Boers abandoned the farmhouse. In my opinion, they beat and stabbed him on the way to their horses.

THOMAS

Thank you, Dr. Johnson. Perhaps the court will now understand Lieutenant Morant's reaction at the discovery of his friend's body.

Court MEMBERS are impressed.

THOMAS walks back to his chair. BOLTON stands.

38.
(Cont.)

38.
(cont.)

BOLTON

I submit, Mr. President, that Lieutenant Morant's emotional state does not excuse his subsequent behaviour. Murderers are not pardoned because they were in a fit of passion at the time of their act.

He turns to DR. JOHNSON.

These alleged lacerations, Dr. Johnson ...

JOHNSON

Alleged? I saw ...

BOLTON

... couldn't they have been simply the result of bullet wounds - from a fair fight - And the bruising and subsequent marks came from a heavy fall to the ground?

JOHNSON

Apart from the stab wounds I mentioned, the hands were crushed and bloody - as if an attempt had been made to deflect kicks from the face.

BOLTON

Are you a friend of Lieutenant Morant's, Dr. Johnson?

JOHNSON

Are you implying I'm lying to defend him?

BOLTON

Just answer the question .

JOHNSON

Yes. I am a friend of Harry Morant.

BOLTON

Thank you. That will be all, Dr. Johnson.

JOHNSON leaves.

Mr. President, may I introduce a witness at this point whose evidence will be relevant to this matter?

DENNY

Major Thomas?

THOMAS (Puzzled)

Go ahead.

BOLTON

Call Mr. Feist.

THOMAS, MORANT, HANDCOCK and WITTON are bewildered. THOMAS starts searching through his notes.

THOMAS

Feist? My mind's gone blank.

MORANT

Never heard of him.

Jump cut. FEIST in the witness chair. He is very nervous.

It is the old German Farmer who was first on the scene of HUNT's death and loaded the body into a cart. He is nervous and replies tentatively.

BOLTON

Mr. Feist. You were the first person to discover Captain Hunt's body. You helped lift it into a cart.

FEIST

Yes. That iss correct.

BOLTON

Did you notice any marks on his face?

FEIST

Zere waz a graze over 'is eye.

BOLTON

Did you notice any blood, any signs of cruelty.

38.
(Cont.)

38.
(Cont.)

FEIST doesn't understand. Looks around, puzzled.

BOLTON

In your opinion, had Captain
Hunt's body been maltreated?
Had it been touched - kicked
or stabbed?

FEIST

No.

BOLTON looks towards the MEMBERS. THOMAS and MORANT exchange
a look - the cards are well stacked against them.

HANDDOCK (Shaking his head)

It's enough to make a Jew drop his moneybox.

39. TOWN SQUARE, PIETERSBERG. MIDDAY EXT.

39.

Band is playing a popular tune. People watch. Suddenly a rifle
shot rings out. The music stops. People rush to where someone
has fallen.

In a close shot we see a body on the ground. People move around
it, chatting, questioning. It is BOTHA, dead, his eyes staring.

40. COURT ROOM. INT. DAY.

40.

Reaction from MORANT to music stopping. Then it starts again.
Captain TAYLOR is in the witness chair.

THOMAS

Captain Taylor, you were with
the Bushveldt Carbineers but not
actually a member of the Corps?

TAYLOR

That's correct. I joined the
Carbineers as Intelligence OFFICER,
at the request of Lord Kitchener.
I lived in South Africa before the
war and speak some of the native
languages as well as Dutch.

40.
(Cont.)

40.
(Cont.)

THOMAS

Were you senior to Lieutenant Morant?

TAYLOR

Senior, I was. But the day to day running of the Corps was left to Lieutenant Morant, although sometimes he referred matters to me.

THOMAS

What is your opinion of Lieutenant Morant?

A pause. He looks at MORANT. Undecided.

TAYLOR

A good fellow. One could not help liking him. He was very hot headed ... did things on the impulse of the moment. The men obeyed him. He was a good soldier.

THOMAS

Did you know Captain Hunt well?

TAYLOR

Hunt. I did.

THOMAS

Did you know of any orders to shoot Boer prisoners?

Court tenses.

TAYLOR (Very quietly)

There was an understanding.

1. KOPJE. ONE TREE HILL. DAY. EXT.

41.

HUNT, TAYLOR, DRUMMOND, SHARP, BOTHA and other CARBINEERS are sitting on a hill with a commanding view of the surrounding plains. They are eating and resting. HUNT turns and looks as MORANT arrives on horseback with 8 CARBINEERS and 6 BOER PRISONERS. MORANT and his men, plus the BOERS, are unshaven and dirt

41.
(Cont.)

58

41.
(Cont.)

HUNT

It went well Harry?

MORANT

Only lost two and one wounded. We
got about thirteen of them. This
lot surrendered.

He indicates the BOER PRISONERS, standing a short distance
away.

HUNT

God, we've got no facilities
for prisoners. Can't even feed
them. (HE CALLS). Taylor!

TAYLOR stands. HUNT indicates the prisoners.

Execute those men.

TAYLOR walks off calling names for a firing squad as he goes.

TAYLOR

Naissmith, Dengate, Seary, Grey,
Macdonald, Nichols.

MORANT (to HUNT)

I thought the proclamation only
applied to Boers wearing English
khaki?

MORANT dismounts.

HUNT (Casual)

New orders, Harry. From Kitchener.
Colonel Hamilton confirmed it to me
personally. No prisoners. The
gentleman's war is over.

He throws MORANT a biscuit.

Here you are. Break your teeth
on this.

A rifle volley rings out. MORANT turns and looks. No one
else reacts.

TAYLOR is walking among the dead BOERS administering an
occasional coup de grace.

THOMAS

Captain Taylor, had Mr. Morant executed any prisoners prior to the death of Captain Hunt?

TAYLOR

He had not.

THOMAS

He had disobeyed orders then?

TAYLOR

That is correct.

THOMAS (to COURT MEMBERS)

And he is now on trial because he later obeyed them.

BOLTON

I object, sir. (HE READS FROM A MARKED PASSAGE)
"Persons captured under arms against British forces in the field shall be placed within the jurisdiction of the nearest Provost Marshal or Garrison Commander."

MORANT

They weren't the orders we operated under!

BOLTON

Indeed? You saw a copy of Lord Kitchener's new orders? Sanctioning executions!!!

MORANT

No... but they were common knowledge.

TAYLOR

I've told you. They were verbal orders. From Pretoria.

BOLTON

And no one can substantiate them!

TAYLOR

Captain Hunt relayed them.

BOLTON

Captain Hunt is dead.

42.
(Cont.)

DENNY

Order! This evidence is completely irrelevant.

42.
(cont.)

THOMAS

Irrelevant!!! When I have established it was common practise in the Bushveldt Carbineers to shoot prisoners? Why would an officer of Captain Hunt's spotless reputation invent an order?

DENNY

We all admire your zeal in defending your fellow Australians, Major Thomas, but intemperate speech and wild accusations do not further your cause.

THOMAS

Captain Taylor, did you know if any other incidents similar to the Visser case?

TAYLOR

I once saw a Boer dealt with in similar fashion for wearing British khaki.

THOMAS

Shot?

TAYLOR

He was shot.

DENNY

Major Thomas, you are still introducing irrelevant material.

THOMAS

I wish to establish, sir - and have made the point before in connection with Mr. Robertson - that a precedent in this war had been well and truly set.

BOLTON

May I point out to my colleague, sir, that the factor of a crime being previously committed in no way pardons the behaviour of Lieutenant Morant and his friends.

THOMAS (wearily)

I have no more questions.

42,
(Cont.)

42.
(Cont.)

BOLTON walks towards TAYLOR.

BOLTON

You are, are you not, the same
Captain Taylor who is yet to be court-
martialled for the murder of six Boer
prisoners?

TAYLOR

I am.

BOLTON

Would it not be in your ... ah...
interest to suggest orders were
given that Boer prisoners be shot?

TAYLOR

Are you saying I'm lying, Major?

BOLTON

Just answer my question.

TAYLOR

You answer mine.

A pause.

DENNY

You are answering questions, Captain
Taylor, Major Bolton is asking them.

TAYLOR

I suppose it could appear
that way.

42.
(Cont.)

62
42.
(Cont.)

BOLTON (Interrupting)

Thank you. That will be all,
Captain Taylor.

TAYLOR reluctantly moves to leave the witness chair.

BOLTON

Oh, one more thing.

TAYLOR sits back.

Is it true that the natives call
you "Bulala"?

TAYLOR

They do.

Court shorthand writer, an African, looks up suddenly at TAYLOR.

BOLTON

And what does it mean?

TAYLOR

It means - the Killer.

BOLTON's point is made. WITTON, MORANT and HANDCOCK are
depressed.

43. TENTS OUTSIDE GAOL. NIGHT. EXT. (SHOOT MAGIC HOUR)

43.

Oil lamps shine from inside most of the tents. A SCOTTISH
SARGEANT walks into the foreground. Bugle plays in distance
and lights go out.

SARGEANT

Three cheers for his Majesty King
Edward VII. Long may he reign.
Hip, hip.

VOICES FROM TENTS

Hooray!!

This is repeated twice more.

44. EXERCISE YARD. EXT. NIGHT. (SHOOT MAGIC HOUR OR DAY FOR NIGHT) 44.

The last "Hurrah" is heard over a shot of the yard, looking towards the cell doors.

45. WITTON'S CELL, INT. NIGHT. 45.

The cell is rectangular. Quite small. There is no furniture apart from a rough bed. WITTON is asleep. As camera moves into CU of WITTON'S face, the noise fades in of a party. Slowly. It becomes clear that it is WITTON'S farewell party in Melbourne. Voices become more distinct.

WOMAN (Voice only)

George is going to the Transvaal!

2ND WOMAN (Voice only)

Oh, he's so young!

WOMAN (Voice only)

His father says young men fight wars.
Make a man of him, he said. His
father was in India during the mutiny ...

A male voice fades in over the others.

MAN (Voice only)

George!

WITTON sleeps.

George!

WITTON wakes. He looks up.

46. WITTON'S HOUSE. WINDOW ONLY. INT. DAY. 46.

A middle aged man, with the proud look of an ex-soldier, is standing with his glass upraised. Sound of the other people present dies down.

MAN

George Witton. Honour, Glory
and a safe return.

Other people repeat "Honour, Glory and a safe return." FATHER
drinks.

WITTON is staring into the blackness. Noise of the party has vanished.

48. HANDCOCK'S CELL. INT. NIGHT

48.

HANDCOCK is lying on his back, awake.

49. BLACKSMITH'S FORGE. EXT. DAY.

49.

HANDCOCK is in the working area.

He looks up as his WIFE comes in, carrying their young SON. HANDCOCK puts his arm around her.

HANDCOCK

I'm not much of a letter writer,
yer know ... if yer ever heard from me
it'd probably be bad news ...

50. MORANT'S CELL, INT. NIGHT.

50.

MORANT is sleeping.

51. ENGLISH COUNTRY HOUSE. INT. NIGHT.

51.

N.B. The scene is shot principally with CU's of MORANT, HUNT and HUNT'S SISTER.

MORANT is standing by the piano singing a typical Victorian ballad (of his own composition.) Towards the end of it his eyes meet those of Hunt's SISTER.

The pianist is unseen. Perhaps we see an elbow or side of a coat of another guest, or someone passes camera, but no more.

Song.

AT LAST

Lyrics H.H. Morant

When I am old, and tired, and worn,
And harrassed by regret;
When blame, reproach and worldlings scorn
On every side are met;
When I have lived long years in vain
And found life's garlands rue,
Maybe that I'll come back again -

(Cont.)

51.
(Cont.)

51.
(Cont.)

AT LAST (Cont.)

At last - at last - to you!

When all the joys and all the zest
Of youthful years have fled
Maybe that I shall leave the rest
And turn to you instead;
For you, Dear Heart, would never spurn
(With condemnation due!)
If, at the close of all, I turn
Homeward - at last - to you!

When other faces turn away,
And lighter loves have passed;
When life is weary, cold and gray -
I may come back - at last!
When cares, remorse, regrets are rife -
Too late to live anew -
In the sad twilight of my life
I will come back - to you.

Gaol wall on the left, tents across the centre of frame, veldt and a low hill in the distance. Two blockhouses have been built on the outer edge of the tents, with peepholes towards the open veldt.

About 20-25 BOER HORSEMEN appear over the crest of the hill.

Closer shot of the Blockhouses.

The SENTRY is in the embrace of a young BOER GIRL. She has unhooked her dress, so it is hanging from her waist. SENTRY has leant his rifle against the wall and his clothing and hair are dis-arranged. They kiss. She puts her head on his shoulder and looks past him out of the peephole, where the BOER HORSEMEN can be seen much closer, moving slowly. (Same girl as at Officers' Mess.)

GIRL (In Dutch)

Ek mutt loerp
(I must go now)

SENTRY (A scot)

What did ye say? I can't understand ye?

GIRL

Ek Grhan
(Go... me ...)

She makes signs to indicate she is leaving. She starts to button up her dress.

SENTRY

Aye, m'love, but you'll be back, won't ye? One week from tonight, eh?

He follows her to the door.

54. BLOCKHOUSES EXT. PRE-DAWN.

54.

BOER GIRL exits quickly from the Blockhouse. Another GIRL exits from the 2nd Blockhouse, a short distance away. They both run quickly.

The instant they leave, the BOER HORSEMEN gallop the short distance remaining to the two Blockhouses.

55. BLOCKHOUSE. INT. PRE-DAWN.

55.

SENTRY is looking at the girl. He suddenly hears the hoofbeats and runs across to the peephole. The HORSEMEN are almost level with the Blockhouses.

56. BLOCKHOUSE. EXT. DAWN.

56.

BOER HORSEMEN reach the Blockhouses and throw in sticks of dynamite. They explode. The roofs fall in. BOER LEADER is recognised as the man who sang "Sari Marais."

Some SOLDIERS rush from the tents. A BUGLER starts to blow the alarm, but is shot by a BOER. BOERS ride among the tents, shooting down the men who've emerged and firing through the canvas walls at the others. As there are three or four men in every tent, most bullets find their mark.

57. PRISON EXERCISE YARD. EXT. DAWN.

57.

TWO GUARDS rush in and quickly release MORANT, HANDCOCK and WITTON.

GUARD

Bloody Boers are attacking the prison. They're probably after the armoury. Scavenging bastards are short of ammunition.

58. PRISON. EXT. DAWN.

Fighting continues. Some BOERS fall from their horses. One BOER climbs onto another's shoulders, on horseback, then leaps onto the wall, a few sticks of dynamite in his hand. He runs along toward the main gate.

59. PRISON EXERCISE YARD. EXT. DAWN.

59.

MORANT, WITTON and HANDCOCK are going through the door leading to the main gates of the prison. HANDCOCK turns and sees the BOER on the wall, lighting the fuses of his sticks of dynamite. Without aiming, HANDCOCK takes GUARD'S rifle and fires at him from the hip.

60. PRISON. EXT. DAWN.

60.

BOER on the wall falls. He lands on top of his own dynamite. As the fuses are lit, the sticks explode in a few seconds. The blast blows him to pieces, but doesn't substantially damage the wall.

61. PRISON. BEHIND MAIN GATES. INT. EXT. DAWN.

61.

MORANT, HANDCOCK and WITTON get rifles from the armoury and start with them behind the gates.

62. PRISON. EXT. DAWN.

62.

A BOER yells out (in Dutch) to stay away from the area immediately in front of the huge wooden gates.

BOER

Terugh!! Terugh!!

He lights a couple of sticks of dynamite and throws them into the courtyard immediately behind the gates.

63. PRISON. BEHIND MAIN GATES. INT. EXT. DAWN.

63.

Dynamite lands. Fuses are burning. MORANT quickly rushes WITTON and HANDCOCK into another room.

64. ADJACENT ROOM. INT. DAWN.

68
64.

The THREE MEN get behind the wall of the adjacent room. The walls are very thick. The room is stacked with weapons and boxes of ammunition.

65. PRISON. BEHIND MAIN GATES. INT. EXT. DAWN.

65.

Dynamite explodes, splintering the gates. There is an immense cloud of dust.

66. ADJACENT ROOM (ARMOURY) INT. DAWN.

66.

MORANT and HANDCOCK rapidly and expertly assemble a Maxim gun. WITTON grabs a few belts of bullets. They leave the room.

67. BEHIND MAIN GATES. INT. EXT. DAY.

67.

MORANT, HANDCOCK and WITTON set the gun up facing the remnants of the gates. The dust is settling from the explosion.

At a yell from the BOER LEADER, BOERS come running into the prison. The Maxim gun opens fire and mows most of them down. WITTON shoots another two BOERS from the top of the wall.

A hand grenade (also with a fuse) lands under the machine gun. WITTON scoops it up and throws it quickly into a room on the opposite side of the Armoury. It explodes, sending out smoke and dust.

BOER LEADER gives the order to retreat,

BOER

Kum. Onse mutt vergh!!

68. PRISON. EX.T DAWN.

68.

BOERS begin to retreat back towards the hill. ENGLISH and SCOTTISH SOLDERS are now better organised and pour heavy fire into them as they go. Some fall from their horses.

68.
(Cont.)

68.
(cont.)

MORANT, HANDCOCK and WITTON race outside the prison and fire at BOERS who were on the far side of the door and now have to ride past them to reach the veldt.

As the BOERS ride off a pom-pom gun goes into action. Shells explode over the BOERS as they ride towards the hill.

HANDCOCK

Well that broke the monotony, didn't it?

PRIVATE

Lads! Three cheers for the bloody
Colonials! Hip. Hip.

SOLDIERS

Hooray.

69. COURT ROOM. INT. MORNING.

69.

Big CU L/C DENNY.

DENNY

Irrelevant! The defendants were
called upon to do their duty, no
more.

THOMAS (Reading from book)

Sir, the Duke of Wellington stated ..
"The performance of a duty of honour
and trust after knowledge of military
offence ought to convey a pardon."

DENNY

What on earth has a statement by
the Duke of Wellington to do with
military law? I will tolerate no
further mention of this morning's
events in this Court.

THOMAS

But sir, the Duke of Wellington wrote
practically all of the "Manual of Military
Law."

DENNY

The Duke of Wellington also had a disgraceful
relationship with a lady beneath his station.
Does that mean we should all follow his
example?

69.
(Cont.)

69.
(Cont.)

HANDCOCK (Aside)

The way I feel right now, I wouldn't mind.

MORANT

Forget it Major. You're wasting your time.

DENNY

Order. We will proceed with the second charge. Concerning the six Boer prisoners killed at Fort Edward on 23rd August, 1901.

70. FORT EDWARD. EXT. DAY. 23RD AUGUST, 1901.

70.

A row of bottles are set up on a table. There is a gap in the middle. MORANT and HANDCOCK are mounted. TAYLOR is watching. At a signal they ride towards the bottles, firing their rifles. Most of the bottles are hit. They are about to wheel around to get the remaining ones, when WITTON comes galloping up from the open veldt. MORANT and HANDCOCK see him. He stops near them.

The wind is blowing. It is winter.

WITTON (Pointing)

Group of Boers, a couple of miles out. Coming in. They've got white flags.

HANDCOCK

Yeah? That's an old one. We get within a hundred yards and they open fire.

WITTON (Handing his binoculars to Morant)

Not this lot. They look really shabby.

MORANT is looking through the binoculars. We see the BOERS some distance away. Some are riding, some walking. Three white flags are fluttering.

HANDCOCK

In that case they'll have a few free feeds, sign the non-combatants pledge then go back out on the veldt and snipe at us, when it warms up a bit.

MORANT has ridden off nearer the house. TAYLOR is mounting his horse.

MORANT (Calling)

Sargeant. Major Drummond, Cpl. Clarke, Troopers Donaldson, McRae, Challis, Morris. Mount up.

JUMP CUT.

CU barbed wire enclosure, with background of open veldt. BOERS are being herded in. Some are wearing either British khaki jackets or trousers, though others are in frayed and worn clothes of their own.

MORANT (Obsessively)

They're part of the same group that killed Percy Hunt.

WITTON

How can you be sure?

MORANT

They're part of Kelly's Commandos. The only ones left in this area. The others have given up or gone to Portuguese territory.

They are walking up and down behind the barbed wire looking at the BOERS.

TAYLOR

Execute them.

MORANT nods in agreement. WITTON looks from MORANT to TAYLOR.

TAYLOR

This is a guerilla war, not a debutante's ball. There's no rules here.

MORANT

(CALLS TO HANDCOCK). Get a squad together when the old man's gone.
(HE INDICATES THE MISSIONARY, WHO IS AT THE HOUSE LOOKING IN THEIR DIRECTION.)

HANDCOCK nods in agreement. MORANT walks up to where HESSE is standing, near his Cape Cart. WITTON looks after him.

HESSE is a bearded German, dressed in Boer style, with flowing coat buttoned at the neck. Rather Evangelical. In his late 50' or early 60's. Wears a wide-brimmed hat.

HESSE

Goot afternoon, Lieutenant.

MORANT

Good day, sir.

HESSE (Indicating the prisoners)

Who are zese men?

MORANT

Boer prisoners. I'd appreciate it if you don't talk to them. Are you travelling on today?

HESSE

As soon as I haf some vater from your men, I leaf for Leydsdorp.

MORANT

That's Boer guerilla country, Mr. Hesse.

HESSE

Ah yes, but zey do not bozzer wiz a harmless old man who iz spreading ze word of God.

MORANT goes into the house.

MORANT enters the central room and lights a cigarette. A few seconds later, WITTON enters.

71.
(Cont.)

73
71.
(Cont.)

WITTON

But .. the white flag ... they
came in under a white flag.

MORANT

Remember the order from Pretoria
High Command ... "If they show a white
flag we can't see it." I can't see it.

WITTON (Intense)

Harry. Handcock said you never gave a
damn for orders if you didn't agree with
them. You're only doing this to revenge
Captain Hunt.

MORANT (Realising the truth of this)

...You might be right, George .. and
it won't bring him back - but it's
the next best thing.

As he talks MORANT goes to the window and looks out.

72. MORANT'S P.O.V. EXT. DAY.

72.

HESSE, sitting in his Cape Cart, is talking to the Boer
prisoners.

73. FORT EDWARD INT. DAY.

73.

MORANT quickly leaves the room.

74. FORT EDWARD EXT. DAY.

74.

MORANT comes out of the house. HESSE is now driving his cart
back towards the Listening Post. MORANT puts his hand up and
stops him.

MORANT

You had no right to speak to
those men, Mr. Hesse. I instructed
you not to.

74.
(Cont.)

74
74.
(Cont. t.

HESSE

I am sorry, Lieutenant Morant, they called me to say a prayer for them. The Boers are religious men. I could not refuse.

MORANT hesitates a moment. Then signals him to leave.

Camera follows as HESSE drives his Cape Cart to where Cpl. SHARP is at a sentry post some distance from the farm building.

HESSE shows his pass and proceeds onto the open veldt.

The SIX BOERS are being lined up, with only the veldt behind the The FIRING SQUAD is preparing to shoot. WITTON, pale faced, stands to one side of them some distance away.

HANDCOCK

Ready! ... Aim ...

WITTON turns so his back is to the BOERS. One of them, a BIG MA suddenly breaks away from the group and races towards WITTON. WITTON turns but the man is upon him. They fall to the ground, struggling for WITTON'S pistol. It goes off, the BOER is shot dead. WITTON, dazed, looks up.

HANDCOCK

Fire!!!

The CARBINEERS fire. We do not see the BOERS fall, only WITTON'S expression.

75. COURT ROOM INT. DAY.

75.

THOMAS walks towards DENNY.

THOMAS

I propose to settle once and for all, sir, the issue of whether orders were issued to shoot prisoners.

DENNY (Knowing)

Do you, Major Thomas? Major Bolton has proved there were no standing orders and Captain Hunt is dead.

THOMAS puts a paper on DENNY'S desk.

75.
(Cont.)

75.
(Cont.)

THOMAS

Yes sir. Here is a formal request
that Lord Kitchener attend this
courtroom ...

EVERYONE reacts with shock. They all speak at the same time.

DENNY

Lord Kitchener!

BOLTON

Lord Kitchener!

JUDGE ADVOCATE

Quite out of the question!

MORANT, WITTON and HANDCOCK are jubilant.

THOMAS

He can tell us from his own lips
there were no such orders.

DENNY

You are impertinent, Major Thomas.
Are you suggesting that the most
senior soldier in the British Army,
a man .. venerated .. throughout
the world would be capable of
issuing an order of such barbarity???

THOMAS

I don't know, sir, but a number of
orders one would classify as "barbarous"
have been issued in this war. Over thirty
thousand Boer farmhouses have been burnt
down, tens of thousands of women and
children have been herded into unsanitary
refugee camps where thousands have died from disease,
farmers cattle have been slaughtered and
crops burnt. These orders were issued, sir,
and soldiers like these men here had to
carry them out - however unwillingly.

DENNY looks towards the JUDGE ADVOCATE.

DENNY

There is no precedent for this request.
I do not think there is any obligation
whatever for Lord Kitchener to attend
this courtroom.

75.
(Cont.)

76
75.
(Cont.)

THOMAS walks back to his table, MORANT hands him a book. THOMAS opens it at a marked spot and reads.

THOMAS

"The accused is allowed full liberty to cross examine any witness against him and to call any witnesses or make any statement in his defence."

He shuts the book. DENNY, stunned, looks toward the JUDGE ADVOCATE.

76. PRISON GATES. EXT. AFTERNOON.

76.

DENNY, BOLTON and JUDGE ADVOCATE are leaving for the day. They climb into a wagon which moves off towards the town. Other COURT MEMBERS are in the background. BLACKS surround them, trying to sell them native artifacts. BOLTON and DENNY ignore them.

BOLTON

Sir. Did High Command issue orders to shoot prisoners?

DENNY

I've absolutely no idea, Bolton. Of course, any hope of a conviction is gone if they confirm it.

77. VERANDAH. OFFICERS' MESS. EXT. LATE AFTERNOON.

77.

A few YOUNG OFFICERS are sitting around small tables drinking and talking. Two BLACK AFRICAN SERVANTS wait on them. THOMAS is at a table alone, with a beer in front of him, plus a pile of notes. BOLTON joins him.

BOLTON

May I join you?

THOMAS gestures towards the chair. SERVANT arrives.

BOLTON

Gin and Tonic Water. (TURNS TO THOMAS)

It seems our little case is attracting some interest.

THOMAS looks up at him.

Oh yes, there have been requests from some of those correspondent fellows to attend the court .. all turned down, of course.

THOMAS

Of course.

BOLTON

I've ... er wondered if you fully understand how anxious your own Government is for a conviction?

THOMAS

What do you mean?

BOLTON

Well, you've just become a Commonwealth. Your Prime Minister, Mr. Barton... is anxious to.. dissipate .. any lingering impressions of a frontier colony ... frontier behaviour. You can be sure a quick conviction of these men will meet with Australian approval.

BOLTON is convinced of the logic of his argument. THOMAS knows that what he is saying is probably true.

And Morant and his friends are obviously guilty

THOMAS

Are they? Why not arrest the firing squad? They did the actual killing.

BOLTON

But they were only following Morant's orders!

77.
(Cont.)

78.
77.
(Cont.)

THOMAS

That's right. Just as Morant was following orders.

BOLTON

You realise, of course, that when High Command denies the orders were issued your whole case will collapse. Perhaps your request is not in your clients' best interests.

THOMAS

I've thought of that.

BOLTON (Eager)

Then you will withdraw the request?

THOMAS

No!

78. KITCHENER'S HEADQUARTERS. PRETORIA. INT. DAY.

78.

KITCHENER and HAMILTON are in KITCHENER'S large office. KITCHENER is still never seen clearly. He is silhouetted against a window, filmed from behind etc. We see his highly polished boots, porcelain collection, portrait of King Edward etc. NB: Porcelain must be very good pieces, KITCHENER was a connoisseur.

KITCHENER

It seems very simple to me. I don't see how it's come to this. You said our fellow there... that damned Irish ...

HAMILTON

Captain Taylor, sir ...

KITCHENER

Taylor... yes Taylor assured you the case against the Australians was overwhelming. Now he seems to spend his time giving evidence on their behalf.

78.
(Cont.)

78.
(Cont.)

HAMILTON (Delicately)

Certain proprieties have to be observed, Sir, and Taylor fought with Morant. It creates a bond. I don't think he's the problem. Major Thomas is putting up an unexpectedly good defence. Two of the Court Members are showing some sympathy for the Australians.

KITCHENER

I daresay it's too late to transfer them to India.

HAMILTON

I did mention at one time, sir - the complexities of charging soldiers with murder while they're actually in the field.

KITCHENER

God, Johnny, I'm not trying to prove some academic point. I'm trying to end this useless war. The Boer leaders can see in this court-martial a demonstration of our impartial justice. If these three Australians have to be .. sacrificed .. to help bring about a peace conference it's a small price to pay.

HAMILTON

I quite agree, sir, though I doubt the Australians share our enthusiasm.

KITCHENER

You go to Pietersberg, Johnny. You deal with the order to shoot prisoners.

78.
(Cont.)

78.
(Cont.)

HAMILTON

What do I say?

KITCHENER

I think you know what to say.

79. COURT ROOM. INT. DAY.

79.

COLONEL HAMILTON is being sworn in. He is pale and nervous.

HAMILTON

...the truth, the whole truth, and nothing
but the truth. So help me God.

He walks to the witness chair. BOLTON stands.

BOLTON

Colonel Hamilton, Lieutenant Morant
has stated in his evidence that
Captain Hunt received orders from
you that Boer prisoners were to be
executed. Is this true?

HAMILTON

Absolutely untrue.

BOLTON (With a gesture)

No further questions.

DENNY

Satisfied, Major Thomas?

THOMAS

Colonel Hamilton, last July Captain
Hunt took two polo ponies up to
Lord Kitchener's Headquarters at
Pretoria, at which time you had
a conversation with him.- Do you
remember?

HAMILTON

I have no recollection whatever.
I have never spoken with Captain
Hunt with reference to his duties in
the Northern Transvaal.

MORANT (Standing)

Liar!

HAMILTON recoils.

DENNY

Order!

79.
(Cont.)

79.
(Cont.)

THOMAS

You are under oath.

HAMILTON

I am aware of that.

MORANT and HANDCOCK exchange a glance of hopelessness.

DENNY (Smug)

Major Thomas, I trust you'll agree that closes the issue of the alleged orders to shoot prisoners.

A long silence. All are convinced THOMAS is defeated.

THOMAS

No, sir. In fact, I don't regard Colonel Hamilton's denial as having any bearing on the defence. I submit that it is inadmissible evidence.

BOLTON and DENNY are shocked. THOMAS cannot be stopped.

A conversation is stated to have taken place between Captain Hunt and Colonel Hamilton, which conversation was mentioned by Captain Hunt to Lieutenant Morant. It really does not matter from where Captain Hunt got his instructions. The fact is clear from the evidence that Captain Hunt did tell his sub-ordinates, not once, but many times, that prisoners were not to be taken. This fact is admitted by witnesses for the prosecution. Captain Hunt's instructions were entitled to weight and go to remove any question of malicious intent by the defendants. This entire court-martial should be dismissed.

79A. PIETERSBERG PRISON. EXT. SUNDAY MORNING.

79A.

A church service is in progress. The men are in lines, their heads bowed. The CHAPLIN prays.

CHAPLIN

O Lord of Hosts, we entreat thy blessing for the soldiers of our race called to do battle in South Africa. Be Thou a strong tower for them against the enemy, O Thou who dost accomplish thy will by war as well as by peace. Order the minds of statesmen and generals that they may ever love

(Cont.)

79A.
(Cont.)

79A.
(Cont.)

CHAPLIN (Cont.)

righteousness and equity; and grant that no stain may rest upon our Nation in the end. And for this cause we beseech Thee so to accomplish Thy Will that the issue of this war may be lasting peace. Finally, we pray thee to hasten the coming of the day when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. We ask this in the name of our only Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. Amen.

During the above, THOMAS rides up on horseback and dismounts outside the prison gate. (The prayer continues to be heard during the following scene.)

80. EXERCISE YARD. EXT. DAY.

80.

MORANT is sitting in the shade of the wall, writing on a note pad with a pencil. HANDCOCK is aimlessly walking around. WITTON is listening to the voice of the CHAPLAIN.

WITTON

I used to hate Sundays in Melbourne. No trams or anything. On a hot day you couldn't even go down to St. Kilda and swim.

MORANT

Did you have family readings?

WITTON

No.

MORANT

We did. I had to sit in a stiff-backed chair, with a lace collar... and my father read from 'Pilgrims Progress' .. "glorious it was to see how the open region was filled with horses, with trumpeters and pipers, with singers and players on stringed instruments, to welcome the Pilgrims as they went up, and followed one another in at the beautiful gate of the city" ...

HANDCOCK

Sunday was a good day for chasin' a few tarts around Bathurst. Everyone else was in church. I'd whip 'em down the river bank for a bit of smoogin'.

THOMAS is let into the exercise yard.

HANDCOCK

Worst thing about dyin' .. no more girls.

MORANT (to THOMAS)

We've saddled up for the home stretch.
Any news on the first two cases?

THOMAS

No. Nothing. In my view everything is going to hinge on the last one. The German missionary.

They all look towards HANDCOCK.

Are you going to stay with that story?

HANDCOCK

What's wrong with it?

THOMAS

Damn it, man, he leaves Fort Edward in a cart. You leave a few hours later with a rifle and the next morning he's found dead; then you trot out a lame story about shooting game!

HANDCOCK drops his head. Obstinate. THOMAS turns to MORANT pleading.

Harry?

MORANT

We don't have to go in the witness chair.

THOMAS

No. But a refusal will be equivalent to a confession of guilt.

80A. OUTSIDE THE COURTROOM. INT. MORNING.

80A.

THOMAS, MORANT, HANDCOCK, WITTON, SARGEANT and ESCORT PARTY enter from the door leading to the exercise yard and walk towards the door leading to the Courtroom. They are about to enter when the SARGEANT touches THOMAS on the arm.

SARGEANT (quietly)

I was in a public house a few nights ago, sir.

THOMAS

Were you, Sargeant?

SARGEANT

Yes sir. I happened to be standing near one of the witnesses. In his cups, he was. A very indiscreet gentleman, sir.

81. VELDT. EXT. DAY.

81.

HESSE'S Cape Cart is sitting on the veldt, some yards from the road. The horses are calmly eating grass.

In a closer shot, we see HESSE inside. He has been shot dead.

DENNY (V/O)

We will proceed, gentlemen, with the final one of the three charges. The death of the Reverend H.C.V. Hesse. Lieutenants Handcock and Morant have pleaded 'not guilty' to respectively inciting and committing the murder. Major Bolton ...

82. COURTROOM INT. DAY.

82.

SHARP is on the witness chair.

BOLTON

You realise you are on oath, Corporal Sharp?

HANDCOCK (To THOMAS)

This bloke'd say anything except his prayers.

SHARP

Oh, yes sir. Right sir.

BOLTON

On the 23rd day of August last, that being the last day the Reverend Hesse was seen alive - you were on sentry post - is that correct?

SHARP

Yes sir. That is correct, sir.

BOLTON

Did you see the deceased that day?

SHARP

The what, sir?

BOLTON

The deceased - the Reverend Hesse

83. FORT EDWARD EXT. DAY. AUGUST, 1901.

83.

SHARP is at a post some distance away from the farmhouse. HESSE is coming towards him in a Cape Cart. MORANT and HANDCOCK are standing by the front of the house.

SHARP (V/O)

Yes sir. I saw the deceased alive on that day. It was about ten o'clock in the morning, sir.

HESSE stops the cart near SHARP and hands him a paper. SHARP looks at it and hands it back.

SHARP (Chirpy)

Lovely day isn't it sir? We could do with a bit of this weather in London, sir. Always foggy there. Can't see a foot in front of yer face. (HE HOLDS HIS HAND UP ABOUT A FOOT FROM HIS FACE.) It's a

(CONT).

83.
(Cont.)

85
83.
(Cont.)

SHARP (Cont.)

hand, see! (HESSE is unresponsive, pre-occupied.) Ah well, you've gotta 'ave a bit of a laugh.

Cape Cart moves off across the veldt. SHARP watches it go.
NB: Cart has a white flag attached. He turns back and sees MORANT talking to HANDCOCK, though he can't hear them.

84. COURTROOM INT. DAY.

84.

SHARP is still in the witness box.

SHARP

I just checked the deceased's pass;
it was signed by Captain Taylor,
then orf he went.

BOLTON

You never saw him again?

SHARP

The deceased? Oh, no, sir. Not
again, sir.

BOLTON

Did you witness anything else which
might affect this court-martial?

SHARP

Yes sir, about two hours later ...

85. FORT EDWARD EXT. DAY. AUGUST, 1901.

85.

SHARP is still at his post. He looks around, towards the farmhouse. He sees HANDCOCK, mounted, come around from the rear of the house, stop for a few seconds and talk to MORANT, then ride off across the veldt. He doesn't follow the route HESSE took, but is going more or less in the same direction. He passes SHARP at a distance.

SHARP is still in the witness box.

SHARP

He went East, sir, but not the exact same way the deceased took, like.

BOLTON

Naturally.

THOMAS

Objection!

BOLTON

I withdraw the involuntary remark. Corporal Sharp, how did Lieutenant Handcock look?

SHARP

Like .. he had something on his mind, sir. It's er (LOOKING FOR A LEAD) hard to put into words.

BOLTON

Did he look agitated?

SHARP (Pleased)

Yees. That's it. Yes, agitated, sir.

THOMAS

Objection. Major Bolton is leading the witness.

BOLTON

I will re-phrase the question. Tell me, Corporal Sharp, how did lieutenant Handcock look?

SHARP (Brightly)

Agitated, sir.

MORANT and HANDCOCK exchange a glance conveying their opinion of SHARP.

BOLTON

Is there anything else you wish to tell the court?

SHARP

No sir.. only: They - Lieutenants Morant and Handcock, they weren't real soldiers. Some of the troops even called them by their first names, sir - to their faces, sir.

BOLTON

Thank you Corporal Sharp, that will be all.

THOMAS walks to the witness chair.

THOMAS

Corporal Sharp, why did you leave the Bushveldt Carbineers?

SHARP

I requested a transfer, sir.

THOMAS

Weren't you made to transfer? Weren't you punished by Lieutenant Handcock for stealing a Boer's property while on patrol?

SHARP hesitates.

I can have your charge sheets brought into this court.

SHARP

Yes, sir. It's true sir.

THOMAS

And have you not been staying in the hotels of Pietersberg that you would walk barefoot from Cape Town to Pietersberg to be on a firing party to shoot Lieutenant Handcock?

CU SARGEANT at back of courtroom. Almost impassive.

SHARP

I might 'ave said something like that over a pint but it was just the beer talking, sir.

COURTMEMBERS are convinced SHARP is an unreliable witness.

Jump cut

MORANT is in the witness chair. BOLTON stands near him.

BOLTON

You testified previously that you told Reverend Hesse not to speak to the BOER prisoners. Why?

MORANT

He was a German. It was for security reasons.

BOLTON

But we're not at war with Germany.

MORANT

Every soldier is aware of the sympathy Germany is showing to the Boer side. It's well known the Boers fight with German weapons and German soldiers operate their field guns.

BOLTON

You were on good terms with Reverend Hesse?

MORANT

Cordial. He had dined with us several times.

BOLTON

When he left Fort Edward you knew he was going to report to the authorities here in Pietersberg.

MORANT

I had no way of knowing what he was going to do.

BOLTON

It would have been in your interest to prevent him, would it not?

MORANT

I don't know about that. Someone prevented him and I'm still here on trial.

BOLTON

I suggest you instructed Lieutenant Handcock to follow Reverend Hesse and shoot him.

MORANT

I had sent a message to Colonel Hall at Pietersberg myself informing him of the Boer prisoners. I had nothing to hide.

BOLTON

I find that statement hard to believe.

MORANT

Then bring Colonel Hall back from India to confirm it. I don't mind waiting.

86.
(Cont.)

86.
(Cont.)

BOLTON

No more questions. Lieutenant Handcock
to the witness chair, please.

HANDCOCK, aware that the evidence is now clearly against him,
looks desperately towards THOMAS. THOMAS takes out his pocket
watch.

THOMAS

I would like to request an adjournment,
sir, until tomorrow morning.

DENNY

Do I understand, Major Thomas, that
Lieutenant Handcock refuses to take
the witness chair?

COURT MEMBERS exchange glances. THOMAS looks toward HANDCOCK.

THOMAS

No sir. I simply need more time to
discuss this case with my client.

BOLTON

I have no objection, sir.

DENNY (Reluctantly)

Request granted.

86A. HANDCOCK'S CELL. INT. NIGHT

86A.

HANDCOCK is locked inside. THOMAS talks to him through the barred window.

THOMAS

For God's sake tell me the truth, Peter! If you're concealing something I want to know it. If you killed Hesse I want to know. It's not just your life at stake - you'll take Morant and Witton with you!

HANDCOCK

We've got no bloody chance anyway.

THOMAS

I think you have. They obviously regard this as the most serious charge. If we can convince the Court Members of your innocence on this one you could all be acquitted.

HANDCOCK

Alright, but we've gotta be real careful. I don't want these.. witnesses in court.

THOMAS

Why not? Do you want to be executed?

HANDCOCK

Course not. But I made a promise - two promises - to be real tactful ...

86B. COURT ROOM. INT. DAY.

86B.

HANDCOCK is on the witness chair.

THOMAS

Where did you go when you left Fort Edward approximately two hours after the Reverend Hesse?

HANDCOCK

Ahh, I went visiting!

THOMAS

Visiting!

DENNY

Visiting!? Who could you possibly have visited?

HANDCOCK

Well, I ... ah went to the farms owned by the Shiels and the Bristows.

DENNY

Why? Who was at these farms?

HANDCOCK

Nobody ... er ... only the ladies, sir.

DENNY

And they received you into their homes alone?

HANDCOCK

I was quite well known to them.

DENNY

You mean to tell me you were on intimate terms with two Boer ladies?

HANDCOCK

You could put it that way, sir.

DENNY

Where were their husbands?

HANDCOCK

One is an English prisoner of war, and the other is with the Boer Commandos. I was er just checking they were alright.

87. BRISTOW'S FARM. EXT. INT. MIDDAY.

87.

HANDCOCK rides up to the farm. MRS. BRISTOW comes out of the front door. Throws her arms around HANDCOCK. Speaks terms of endearment to him in Dutch.

MRS. BRISTOW

Hencork! Mae lifflun. Ekk is soe
blay om yo te sin.

Camera tracks down the outside of the house as they pass through the front room and into the bedroom. MRS. BRISTOW pulls HANDCOCK on top of her on the bed.

88. COURTROOM INT. DAY.

88.

THOMAS

You spent the full afternoon at
these ladies homes?

HANDCOCK

My oath. It was about 5 o'clock
when I got to the Schiels place.

89. SCHIELS FARMHOUSE. INT. LATE AFTERNOON.

89.

A knock on the door. MRS. SCHIELS opens it.

MRS. SCHIELS

Hencork!!

She looks around quickly, then pulls HANDCOCK inside. She embraces him ardently, begins to undo his jacket. She pushes him toward the bedroom. HANDCOCK is a little weak and protests feebly.

HANDCOCK

Jeez, how about a cuppa coffee first.
I'm a bit tired, been ridin' all
day.

MRS. SCHIELS

Koffee laater. Kum nau bed to.

90. COURT ROOM. INT. DAY.

90.

HANDCOCK is still in the witness box.

THOMAS

I would like to present the Court with written depositions from both the ladies in question.

THOMAS hands two statements to DENNY.

DENNY

Lieutenant Handcock, what does Mrs. Schi els mean by "entertained"? Did you sing to her?

HANDCOCK looks sheepish. MEMBERS of the court-martial smirk.

THOMAS

Sir, you can appreciate that these ladies' reputations are in a vulnerable position. As the letters confirm Lieutenant Handcock's whereabouts on the day in question, could they forego the embarrassment of actually appearing in this court?

DENNY looks at BOLTON.

DENNY

Major Bolton?

BOLTON (Who now has the letters)

No objection, Mr. President.

DENNY looks at the JUDGE ADVOCATE, who nods in agreement.

DENNY

I must say I find this sort of behaviour - from a soldier in the British army - morally disgraceful. These were married women!!

HANDCOCK (To himself)

Well, they say a slice off a cut loaf is never missed.

THOMAS

Lieutenant Handcock's personal morality is not on trial, sir.

DENNY

Regrettably.

91. TOWN SQUARE. PIETERSBERG. EXT. DAY.

91.

Band is playing.

92. EXERCISE YARD. EXT. MID DAY

92.

MORANT, HANDCOCK and WITTON are standing in the shade. There is a long silence.

WITTON

Who do you think did kill the missionary?

MORANT and HANDCOCK exchange glances. MORANT nods.

HANDCOCK

Me.

WITTON

What! But... the ladies....?

HANDCOCK

That was later.

WITTON

Does Major Thomas know?

MORANT

No, he doesn't. And he's not going to.

But we've always told the truth!! Major Thomas has been pleading justifying circumstances". Now, we're just lying!

HANDCOCK (Angry)

We're lying! What about them? (GESTURES TO INCLUDE EVERYONE.) It's no bloody secret! Our graves were dug the day they arrested us at Fort Edward!!!

WITTON is aware of the truth of this statement.

WITTON

But ... but... killing a missionary...

92.
(Cont.)

92.
(Cont.)

MORANT

We're fighting a new kind of war, George.
A new war, for the new century. It's the
first time the enemy hasn't been in uniform.
They're farmers ... people in the town ..
women.. children. They shoot at us from
houses and paddocks when we least expect
it. Some of them fight in the newspapers ...
some of them dress up as missionaries ...

93. FORT EDWARD. EXT. DAY. AUGUST, 1901.

93..

MORANT talks to HANDCOCK. (As before, but this time
we are closer and hear what they say.)

MORANT

Peter, Hesse talked to the
prisoners.

HANDCOCK

I saw him.

MORANT

He's going to Leydsdorp. He'll make
a full report to their commando leader ..
Beyers. Hesse has caused enough
trouble. It was him told the black-
fellars about that farmhouse. Led
Simon Hunt right into a trap.

HANDCOCK looks after the departing capecart.

HANDCOCK

Yeah.

MORANT

Are you game to go after him?

HANDCOCK nods. Mounts and rides off.

94. VELDT. EXT. DAY. AUGUST, 1901.

94.

HESSE drives his cart along a primitive track. The countryside is almost featureless.

95. VELDT. ANOTHER PART. EXT. DAY. AUGUST, 1901.

95.

HANDCOCK gallops to the top of a small rise. He pauses. Sees the cart in the distance, then rides off parallel to it.

96. VELDT. EXT. DAY. AUGUST, 1901.

96.

HESSE'S Cape Cart goes down a small hollow, or dry creek bed. There are a few trees around.

A shot rings out. HESSE pitches forward, but stays in the cart. The horses run off the road a few yards and stop calmly.

HANDCOCK re-slings his rifle, looks around quickly, then rides off.

In a LS. The cart is on the immense veldt. Same shot that opened the sequence.

97. COURTROOM. INT. DAY.

97.

Camera is on a high angle of the courtroom.

Lighting indicates it is now afternoon, everyone is seated again, except THOMAS, who is moving into the centre of the room to address the MEMBERS with his summing up.

THOMAS

The main fact of this case - that Boer prisoners were executed - has never been denied by the defence.

Further, no one denies the admirable fighting ability of the Boers. Or, in general, their sense of honour. However, those Boers fighting in commando groups in the Northern Transvaal were outlaws, renegades, often under no recognised control - addicted to train wrecking and the looting of farms. Lord Kitchener himself recognised the unorthodox nature of this warfare when he made up a special force, the Bushveldt Carbineers, to deal with them.

(Cont.)

97.
(Cont.)

THOMAS (Cont.)

97.
(Cont.)

When the rules and customs of war are departed from by one side, we can only expect the same behaviour from the other. Accordingly, officers of the Carbineers should be, and up until this court-martial were, allowed a wide discretion in dealing with the enemy. I don't ask for proclamations condoning distasteful methods of warfare, but say we must take it for granted these things will take place. Don't let officers have indefinite hazy instructions as to what they may do. Don't let us have them reprimanded by their seniors for hampering the column with prisoners and, at another time, and another place, haul them up as murderers because they do the opposite!

Lieutenant Morant shot no prisoners before the death of Captain Hunt. After that he changed a good deal and adopted the sternest measure against the enemy. Yet there is no evidence that Lieutenant Morant had an intrinsically barbarous nature. The fact is that war changes mens natures. The barbarisms of war are rarely committed by abnormal men. The tragedy of war is that the horrors are committed by normal men in abnormal situations - situations where the ebb and flow of every day life has departed and been replaced by a round of fear and anger, blood and death.

Soldiers are not to be judged by the rules of civilian life - as the prosecution is doing - even though they perform actions which, calmly regarded afterwards, can only be judged unchristian and brutal.

If, in every war, especially guerilla war, all the men who committed reprisals were to be charged and tried as murderers, court-martials like this would be in permanent session. I say we cannot judge such matters fairly unless we ourselves have been submitted to the same pressures and provocations as the men whose actions are being tried.

98. COMMUNAL ROOM. INT. NIGHT.

98.

MORANT, HANDCOCK and WITTON have been drinking and are quite cheerful. HANDCOCK pours some white liquid into MORANT'S tin mug.

MORANT

I won't ask where you got this stuff.

98. COMMUNAL ROOM. INT. NIGHT.

98.

MORANT and HANDCOCK have been drinking and are quite cheerful. WITTON is subdued.

MORANT

The Bushveldt Carbineers! The best fighters in a bad cause.

They drink.

Where'd you get this stuff?

HANDCOCK

One of the Jock guards.

WITTON

What do you mean "a bad cause?"

MORANT (to HANDCOCK)

I thought we broke up all those stills.
(to WITTON) The Boer War, George. Half a million men getting stuck into a few thousand farmers.

HANDCOCK (drinking)

Every bugger we kicked out of the Carbineers came down here to Pietersberg.

WITTON

Well you volunteered.

MORANT

You can't always choose who you'll fight for. It's easy to end up on the wrong side.

HANDCOCK

Specially when yer left Australia one step ahead of the debt collectors...

98.
(Cont.)

nt.)

MORANT climbs onto the table.

MORANT

When a man hath no freedom to fight for at home,
Let him combat for that of his neighbours
Let him think of the glories of Greece and of Rome.
And get knocked on the head for his labors.
To do good to mankind is the chivalrous plan,
And is always as nobly requited;
Then battle for freedom wherever you can ...
And ... if not shot or hanged - you'll get knighted.

They all laugh. Even WITTON, whose jollity is restrained.

WITTON

Did you write that, Harry?

MORANT

No, a very minor poet named
Byron.

HANDCOCK

Never heard of him.

MORANT

I just said he was minor.

HANDCOCK

I know some good pomes, too.
That surprised ya, didn't it?

As he clumsily climbs onto the table, THOMAS and TAYLOR come
into the room. They are carrying bottles of champagne.

HANDCOCK

There was a young man from Australia
Who painted his arse like a dahlia
The color was fine
Likewise the design
The aroma? - Ah, that was a failure.

ont.)

All laugh, including THOMAS and TAYLOR. They move forward to the table and begin opening the bottles.

THOMAS

Champagne from two of the court members!
You've been officially acquitted in the
Hesse case!

HANDCOCK yells in delight. WITTON looks up sharply, guiltily at MORANT.

MORANT

They didn't send any champagne in
after the other two cases.

They raise their glasses for a toast.

WITTON

To freedom.... and Australia!

MORANT

Freedom, Australia, and Horses.

HANDCOCK

Freedom, Australia, Horses ...
and women.

They all laugh, then drink. The glasses are refilled.

THOMAS

You're still likely to get a couple
of years, you know.

MORANT

You mean I'll miss the Melbourne
Cup this year?

THOMAS

Probably.

MORANT lifts his glass.

MORANT

Live every day like it's going to be
your last .. for one day you're sure to
be right.

TAYLOR drifts up beside MORANT and talks to him quietly. THOMAS,
WITTON and HANDCOCK are in the background.

nt.)

TAYLOR

I wouldn't be too certain of this verdict, Harry?

MORANT

No? And you? Your trial's coming up.

TAYLOR

They don't want me. Intelligence service, Kitchener's staff and all that it wouldn't go down well. But a wild, simple fellow like Handcock, and ...a black sheep ...

MORANT (Softly)

They won't be missed.

TAYLOR

That's right.

MORANT looks at him.

I can arrange a horse for you. Some of the guards are sympathetic.

MORANT

Where would I go?

TAYLOR

Portuguese territory. Lorenzo Marques. Get a ship from there. See the world.

MORANT

I've seen it.

The TWO MEN look at each other, TAYLOR understands MORANT'S attitude - he is tired of running, England and Australia are both closed to him forever. Death is the only alternative to an acquittal.

PRISON EXERCISE YARD. EXT. MORNING.

99.

An escort party of CAMERON HIGHLANDERS enters the huge exercise yard. They are more formal than ever before. The OFFICER IN CHARGE opens the door of one of the cells (WITTON'S). SAME GROUP AS BEFORE - OFFICER & TWO MEN.

00. WITTON'S CELL. INT. MORNING.

100.

WITTON wakes. He is drowsy and slow because of the party the night before. He leaves with the HIGHLANDERS.

01. PRISON EXERCISE YARD. EXT. MORNING.

101.

WITTON and the HIGHLANDERS go into the main building.

02. LT. COL. DENNY'S OFFICE. INT. MORNING.

102.

DENNY is seated behind a desk. There is a knock and the OFFICER ushers WITTON into the room. DENNY begins reading as soon as WITTON reaches the desk.

DENNY

George Ramsdale Witton, you have been found guilty of murder and sentenced to death.

He pauses and looks up at WITTON who is reeling with shock.

Lord Kitchener has been pleased to commute your sentence to penal servitude for life.

3. WITTON'S CELL. INT. MORNING.

103.

WITTON enters, stunned. The door is locked behind him. He hears another door open. MORANT passes his cell on the way to DENNY'S office. WITTON waits, anxiously.

4. COURTYARD. MORNING.

104.

Courtyard is empty.

105. DENNY'S OFFICE. INT. MORNING.

9-106.
105.

MORANT stands before DENNY.

DENNY

Harry Harbord Morant, you have been found
guilty of murder and sentenced to death.

He pauses and looks up at MORANT who is strong, contained.

106. WITTON'S CELL EXT. INT. MORNING.

106.

WITTON hears the HIGHLANDERS returning with MORANT. He presses up
against the door hatch.

WITTON

Harry, what happened?

MORANT keeps walking, barely seems to acknowledge WITTON.

MORANT

Shot tomorrow morning.

HIGHLANDERS lock MORANT inside his cell and open HANDCOCK'S door.
HANDCOCK is marched off down the yard to the door into the prison.

107. WITTON'S CELL, INT. MORNING.

107.

WITTON waits anxiously, pacing around.

108. MORANT'S CELL. INT. MORNING.

108.

MORANT is sitting on his bed, staring ahead.

109. WITTON'S CELL, EXT. INT. MORNING.

109.

WITTON hears HANDCOCK returning. Rushes to the door hatch.
Sees HANDCOCK returning with the HIGHLANDERS.

109.
(Cont.)

109.
(Cont.)

WITTON

Peter?!

HANDCOCK (Quite casually)

Oh, same as Morant.

110. KITCHENER'S HEADQUARTERS, PRETORIA. EXT. DAY.

110.

Same angle of the building as before. A cart is heard to pull up i.e. behind camera. Footsteps approach then a figure passes into shot. It is THOMAS. He enters the building.

111. KITCHENER'S HEADQUARTERS. INT. DAY.

111.

A YOUNG OFFICER is standing in the entrance hall by a small desk or table. THOMAS sweeps in.

OFFICER

Can I help you, sir.

THOMAS

I hope so. I've come to see Lord Kitchener.

OFFICER

I'm afraid that's not possible.
(HE PICKS UP SOME DOCUMENTS) Do you have an appointment?

THOMAS

No, I don't have an appointment and I want to see him immediately.

A door opens (Not the door into KITCHENER'S office) and COL. HAMILTON comes out.

HAMILTON

Major Thomas.. the death warrants have been signed. There's nothing you can do.

111.
(Cont.)

111.
(Cont.)

THOMAS

Let me see Kitchener. That trial was a bloody sham. Two members of the court recommended mercy for Morant and Handcock as well as Witton.

HAMILTON

In which case the casting vote belonged to the President, Lieutenant Colonel Denny ...

THOMAS quickly strides to the large doors to KITCHENER'S office and flings them open.

112. KITCHENER'S OFFICE. INT. DAY.

112.

In a LS we see the room is empty except for THOMAS in the doorway. HAMILTON walks up beside him.

HAMILTON (Calmly, as always)

Lord Kitchener's been called away for a few days. Out on the veldt somewhere. Quite uncontactable.

THOMAS

I want a stay of execution so that I can send a telegram to the King and the Australian Prime Minister.

HAMILTON

The sentence has been approved by Whitehall and the Australian Government has expressed it's support of our decision. Forget it, it's a sideshow of the war.

THOMAS takes a couple of slow steps into the room. Weary, defeated

HAMILTON

I have some good news, Major. There's hope of a peace conference in a couple of months. Soon - we can all go home.

THOMAS doesn't react.

113. EXERCISE YARD. PRISON. EXT. DAY.

113.

A high angle shows both sides of the wall. Inside is the row of cells, outside THREE ARMY CARPENTERS are busily building two coffins.

HANDCOCK and MORANT are at the open hatches of the cell doors. The hammering is loud.

HANDCOCK

They could've had the decency
to measure us first.

MORANT

They haven't had a lot of
complaints.

114. PIETERSBERG GAOL. EXT. NIGHT (SHOOT DAY FOR NIGHT)

114.

It is 'lights out.' The troops give three cheers for the King.

115. HANDCOCK'S CELL INT. NIGHT.

115.

HANDCOCK is writing a letter to his wife.

HANDCOCK (V/O)

... I am going to find out the
grand secret. I will face my God
with the firm belief I obeyed
my orders and served my King as
I thought best. If I overstepped
my duty I can only ask my people
and country for forgiveness...

He continues writing. Finishes the letter. He is about to fold
it up when he writes something more along the side.

CUT TO CU. The addition reads 'Australia for ever .. Amen.'

He takes his ribbons from his pocket and puts them on the letter.

.16. MORANT'S CELL. INT. NIGHT.

116.

A small table has been put in the room. MORANT is sitting at it, writing. A couple of letters have already been written and sit, in envelopes, on the edge of the table. There is a signed photograph of a girl on the table.

In a CU we see he is writing a poem. His voice is heard.

MORANT (Voice only)

The night's a trifle chilly, and the stars
are very bright,
A heavy dew is falling, but the tent is rigged
alright.
You may rest your bones till morning, then if
you chance to wake,
Give me a call about the time that daylight
starts to break.

17. EXERCISE YARD. EXT. NIGHT.

117.

The yard is in moonlight. Deserted. MORANT'S voice.

18. PIETERSBERG GAOL. EXT. NIGHT.

118.

Shot includes gaol and tents. Moonlight. Only a few pickets. MORANT'S voice continues to recite the poem.

19. VELDT. EXT. DAWN.

119.

The sun breaks over the plain. MORANT finishes reciting ... i.e.

"Give me a call about the time that daylight
starts to break."

20. PIETERSBERG. MAIN SQUARE. EXT. DAWN.

120.

Bandstand and street are deserted. The Union Jack flutters in the morning breeze.

Title is supered ... "27th February, 1902."

The door to WITTON's cell is unlocked. He is taken outside and is quickly handcuffed. MORANT and HANDCOCK press their faces to the bars of their cells. WITTON, tearful, distraught, moves to MORANT'S cell. OFFICER moves to restrain him, then lets him go.

WITTON (Yelling)

Harry!!! Peter!!!

MORANT

Goodbye, George.

HANDCOCK

See you in hell, mate.

WITTON

Harry, why did they do it to us?!
Why???

OFFICER drags WITTON away. MORANT yells after him as he is taken across the exercise yard.

MORANT

They have to apologise for their bloody war!! They're trying to end it now.. they need scapegoats .. that's us, George. We're the scapegoats of the empire!!!

122. PRISON GATES. EXT. DAWN.

122.

WITTON comes out. He sees a GROUP OF MEN lounging around with their rifles. Some are giving them a last minute inspection, etc It is the TEN MAN FIRING SQUAD OF CAMERON HIGHLANDERS.

123. MORANT'S CELL. INT. DAWN

123.

MORANT looks up as the door opens. The ESCORT PARTY OF HIGHLANDERS (SGT. .. & 3 HIGHLANDERS) is waiting. THOMAS walks into the cell. MORANT picks up his last letters ..

MORANT

-Cheer up. You look like you're going to a funeral.

THOMAS

Harry ...

MORANT

Don't worry about it, Major. It's been a good run. There's nothing for me in England any more and.. back in Australia ... well they say you've had it when you need a couple of brandies before you can get up on a wild horse.

MORANT gives THOMAS the letters.

MORANT

See these get sent for me, will
you ? One to my mother in
Hampshire, one to my girl in Devon.

THOMAS waits. MORANT hands him the sheet of verse.

And see this little effort gets
published, eh? We poets do crave
immortality.

Their eyes meet. They shake hands.

MORANT steps outside, with the ESCORT PARTY. THOMAS remains in the
cell.

24. EXERCISE YARD. EXT. DAWN.

124.

HANDCOCK is by now also in the yard. MORANT falls in with the
Escort. A MINISTER is a few feet away from the group. OFFICER &
SARGEANT are both present.

OFFICER

Do ye want the Minister ?

MORANT

No, I'm a pagan.

OFFICER (Turns to HANDCOCK)

And you.

HANDCOCK

What's a pagan?

MORANT

Someone who doesn't believe in a divine
being up there somewhere (POINTS TO
SKY) dispenses justice to mankind.

HANDCOCK (To OFFICER)

I'm a pagan, too.

MORANT (To the MINISTER)

There's an epitaph I'd like though.
Matthew 10:36.

OFFICER (Quietly)

Fall in, prisoners and escorts.

4.
ont.)

124.
(Cont.)

MORANT

This is what comes of Empire
building.

The GROUP moves towards the exit door.

OFFICER

Quick march.

5. GAOL. EXT. DAWN.

125.

The prison wall is in the right of frame and the veldt stretches
away into the distance. MORANT, HANDCOCK and ESCORT PARTY OF
HIGHLANDERS emerge from behind the wall and start walking across
the veldt.

6. VELDT. EXT. DAWN.

126.

The horizon is bare. MORANT and HANDCOCK walk away from camera.
They reach for each others hands and hold them as they walk.

7. MORANT'S CELL. INT. EXT. DAWN.

127.

THOMAS looks towards the MINISTER, who is thumbing through the
Bibles.

THOMAS

Matthew 10: 36?

MINISTER (Reading)

"A man's foes shall be they of
his own household."

THOMAS lifts the paper with MORANT'S last verse and looks at it.

MORANT (V/O)

It really ain't the place nor time
To reel off rhyming diction;
But yet we'll write a final rhyme
While waiting crucifixion.

18. VELDT. EXT. DAWN.

128.

Two bentwood chairs sit on the veldt. There is nothing behind them but grass.

MORANT (V/O)

For we bequeath a parting tip
Of sound advice for such men

Another shot shows two GROUPS OF OFFICERS. One English, one Australian, standing a few feet apart.

Who come across in transport ships
To polish off the Dutchmen.

MORANT and HANDCOCK enter frame and sit in the chairs. Both wave away the offer of a blindfold.

OFFICER

Load!

In CU one bullet is inserted in each rifle.

MORANT (V/O)

If you encounter any Boers
You really must not loot 'em
And if you wish to leave these shores
For pity's sake, don't shoot 'em.

MORANT throws cigarette case to SARGEANT.

FIRING SQUAD. EXT. DAWN.

129

NB. This is a different location from the chairs, as they must have an effective veldt background, while the prison can be seen some distance behind the firing squad.

OFFICER

Aim!!

VELDT. EXT. DAWN.

130.

~~NOT~~ MORANT and HANDCOCK on the chairs.

MORANT (V/O)

Lets toss a bumper down our throat
Before we pass to heaven,
And toast: "The trim-set petticoat
We leave behind in Devon "

10 .
Cont.)

130.
(Cont.)

MORANT (V/O) Cont.

SHOOT STRAIGHT YOU BASTARDS! DON'T
MAKE A MESS OF IT!!

He folds his arms as he speaks.

OFFICER

Fire!!!

The impact of the bullets knocks MORANT and HANDCOCK backwards.

31. CELL. INT. EXT. DAWN.

131.

THOMAS reacts to the shots.

32. RAILWAY STATION, EXT. DAWN.

132.

WITTON, still handcuffed, is boarding the train, but stops as he hears the shots.

33. PRISON WALL. EXT. DAWN.

133.

TAYLOR has been watching from the side of the gaol. He reacts almost imperceptibly to the gunfire.

34. VELDT. EXT. DAWN.

134.

In slow motion, MORANT falls into a CU. His eyes are open and his arms still folded. Shot holds for some time.

35. CELL. INT. EXT. DAWN.

135.

A freeze frame of THOMAS, with optical track in to big CU.

135.
(Cont.)

135.
(Cont.)

Title fades on:-

J.F. THOMAS returned to Australia and resumed his law practice in a small country town. He died in 1945.

136. RAILWAY STATION EXT. DAWN.

136.

Freeze frame of WITTON, with optical track in to big CU.

Title:

George WITTON was released after serving only two year of his life sentence. He returned to Australia and wrote a book "Scapegoats of the Empire" (1907) He died in 1943.

137. PRISON WALL. EXT. DAWN.

137.

Freeze frame of TAYLOR with optical track in to big CU.

Title:

Alfred TAYLOR was tried and acquitted of his charge of murdering Boer prisoners.

138. VELDT. DAY DAWN.

138.

The bodies of MORANT and HANDCOCK are being picked up and placed in the coffins.

On the soundtrack we hear the most famous of Boer War songs, "Soldiers of the Queen."

SOLDIERS OF THE QUEEN

Britons once did loyally declaim
About the way we rul'd the waves
Ev'ry Briton's song was just the same,
When singing of our soldier braves.
All the world had heard it - wonder'd why we sang
And some have learn'd the reason why
But we're letting it
Fade away and gradually die,
Fade away and gradually die.
So when we say that England's master,
Remember who has made her so

SOLDIERS OF THE QUEEN (Cont.)

It's the Soldiers of the Queen, my lads,
Who've been my lads,
Who're seen my lads,
In the fight for England's glory, lads,
When we've had to show them what we mean
And when we say we've always won,
And when they ask us how it's done,
We'll proudly point to ev'ry one
Of England's soldiers of the Queen!
It's the Queen!

END TITLES ROLL UP DURING SONG.

MORANT and HANDCOCK are lifted into their coffins. HANDCOCK doesn't quite fit. His boots are removed and his feet pushed in.

END