

SECOND DRAFT
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EXTREME PREJUDICE

Written

by

LUKAS HELLER

Original Screenplay

by

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THE CHARACTERS

JACK BENTEEN

The Texas Ranger who metes out law and order in Travis, Texas.

BILLY COTTON

Benteen's young, and relatively inexperienced Deputy.

MELANIE WAINWRIGHT

Nurse, recently arrived in Travis.

HECTOR FERNANDEZ

The Mayor of Travis, often in conflict with what he takes to be Benteen's reactionary attitude.

JULIA ARAGON

An attractive, well-educated Chicano, who works for the Mayor.

ALBERT BAXTER

The elderly City Attorney.

FRANK PARAU

A veteran Chicano Deputy.

SARA JENNINGS

Would-be secretary, hired by Benteen.

THE MILITARY

COL. MATSON

An ambitious career officer who launches Operation Columbus.

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THE MILITARY (CONT'D)

MAJOR PRESCOTT

A hard, robot-like professional.

CAPTAIN REYNOLDS

Equally professional, but more thoughtful than his Team Leader.

TEAM SGT. McROSE

A black veteran of many campaigns, an amiable man, who's seen it all.

SGT. ASKINS

A smiling giant, who is only violent when his job demands it of him.

SGT. CHAVEZ

A highly trained Chicano technician in charge of communications.

SGT. BIDDLE

A tough, thuggish-looking man, who is something of a mechanical genius.

SGT. COLEMAN

A big, athletic black man, who is Askins' buddy, but pretends not to be.

SGT. HALL

A rather studious-looking man, trained in psychological warfare.

MEDICAL SGT. TANAKA

The Japanese/American medic.

SGT. CASTELLI

A wiry little Italian-American, who (secretly) models himself on the Frank Sinatra character in "From Here To Eternity."

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IN MEXICO

CARL SCHROEDER

A German emigre, who runs a private army out of San Luis, in the Sierra Madres.

LUIS

Schroeder's Lieutenant.

SCAR-FACE

One of Schroeder's men, whose true identity is a mystery.

"EXTREME PREJUDICE"

FADE IN:

EXT. HOTEL ISABELLA, SAN LUIS, MEXICO - NIGHT

A dusty old pickup truck with Mexican license plates stands in front of the dilapidated, five story hotel, that is now just a shadow of its original colonial splendor.

It is late and there is nobody on the street, though the building adjoining the hotel, which is both a bar and a brothel, SOUNDS lively enough.

Three men come from the lobby of the hotel and pause on the steps. They are, KARL SCHROEDER, a German emigre of less than average height, whose thinning hair makes him look older than his forty years. He wears a rumpled, unfashionable suit, and speaks good Spanish, though his English has a noticeably German accent. Any emotions this man may once have had are long since dead, and his only indulgence is a lugubrious sense of humor that is as bleak as his lifeless, grey eyes.

LUIS, who is evidently Schroeder's lieutenant, is an enormous Mexican, whose smooth manner covers an explosive temperament, and a sadistic nature.

The third man, SCAR-FACE, is a dark hawk-faced Mexican with a livid scar over his right eye. While Luis is something of a dandy, Scar-Face is dressed little better than a peasant.

Though the distance is too great for us to hear what is being said, it is evident that Schroeder is giving Scar-Face some detailed instructions. Finally, Scar-Face shakes hands with Luis and tentatively offers his hand to Schroeder, who refuses it with a look of chilling disdain. Scar-Face manages an apologetic smile, moves down the steps to the truck, and drives off.

DESERT NEAR TRAVIS, TEXAS - DAY

Though the sun has not long risen, a shimmering heat haze is already rising from the road, which runs straight across the silent, parched desert towards the town of Travis in the distance.

REVERSE

The dusty old pickup truck with Mexican license plates approaches from the South -- passes by -- moves on toward town.

INT./EXT. PICKUP TRUCK, DESERT - DAY

Scar-Face is hunched over the wheel. He glances at a big wooden box,

(CONTINUED)

with a wire-mesh front, that rests at his side, and contains one or more somnolent rabbits. Seeing no movement, Scar-Face takes a long pull at his cigarette and blows a cloud of smoke in through the wire-mesh. Reassured by the brief but violent movement within the box, he smiles and turns his attention back to the road ahead.

EXT. CITY LIMITS, TRAVIS - DAY

The truck passes a sign -- Travis, Texas -- Population 11,576 -- and heads on into town.

EXT. DINER, DOWNTOWN TRAVIS - DAY

A car with Texas Ranger markings comes speeding towards the modest restaurant and pulls up abruptly. BILLY COTTON, amiable, wide-eyed, and looking almost too young to be a peace officer, gets out and hurries towards the diner.

INT. DINER

JACK BENTEEN, a big, clean-shaven man in his late thirties, sits alone finishing his breakfast. He wears the traditional Ranger "uniform" of grey gabardine western suit, string tie, and Stetson. Smart as this looks on his slim young deputy, Benteen himself has an even more military bearing; though he can be articulate enough when he wants, there is a self-mocking irony about him that frequently makes Benteen play up to his reputation for being taciturn...

As Billy comes hurrying towards his table, Benteen glances pointedly at the clock on the wall, which shows a couple of minutes before 8 a.m. Billy sits down with an apologetic grin.

BILLY

Morning...

Benteen just looks at him. Billy smiles up at the approaching WAITRESS...

WAITRESS

Good morning. Coffee?

BILLY

Please...

WAITRESS

(as she pours)

You wanna eat something...?

Billy starts to reply in the affirmative, but Benteen cuts him short.

BENTEEN

He doesn't have time.

EXT. RANGER OFFICE AND JAIL, TRAVIS - DAY

The truck with Mexican plates pulls up in front of the jail. Scar-Face climbs down to carry the crate into the office.

INT. RANGER OFFICE, TRAVIS - DAY

A Chicano DEPUTY, with broad Indian features and a closely cropped, anglo-style haircut, looks up as Scar-Face puts his box on the counter.

SCAR-FACE

Buenos dias...

The Deputy deliberately responds in English.

DEPUTY

What can I do for you?

SCAR-FACE

(indicates the box)

I find this.

DEPUTY

You found it?

He peers through the wire mesh to see a rabbit gazing back at him.

SCAR-FACE

Yeah, must'a drop from a truck. Find it right on the highway. I don't know, maybe it belongs to someone.

Irritated by Scar-Face's dopey matter, the Deputy indicates a typed address label stapled to the top.

DEPUTY

Well, sure it belongs to someone.

Scar-Face gazes at the label as if seeing it for the first time.

SCAR-FACE

Ah, si... So maybe you give it back, huh.

He is already moving away as the Deputy takes a pad to start writing down the address.

SCAR-FACE

(from the door)

Mr. Benteen here today?

DEPUTY

(still writing)

You wanna see him?

SCAR-FACE

Nah, maybe just say hello... You tell him I said hello.

DEPUTY

Yeah, I'll tell him. What's the name?

Looking up to see the door close, he shrugs, moves to put the box on a shelf by the wall -- pauses to get the rabbit's attention by tapping on the wire mesh with his fingers...

EXT. DINER AND RANGER'S OFFICE, TRAVIS - DAY

Scar-Face's truck completes a U-turn and is coming back down the street as Benteen and Billy emerge from the diner. Benteen idly watches the truck go by, registers the driver's face, but shows no sign of recognition. The two men start the short walk to the office some thirty yards away on the far side of the street.

ANGLE ON BENTEEN

He is within twenty yards of the office when a massive EXPLOSION blasts the whole front of his office out into the street...

EXT. SEARS BUILDING, CHICAGO - PARKING LOT - DAY

It is raining. Wind chips off Lake Michigan, dark storm clouds pile up in the east. The neon lights of the city stand out as if it were night. The largest of these signs denotes the Sears Roebuck building and a vast complex of shopping centers, sub-structures and parking lots. Through one of these, a lone young black is ambling toward a group of buildings separated from the parking lot by a chain-link fence. His overcoat collar is turned up against the wind, and he carries a transistor radio, which plays a bright, bouncy number that contrasts oddly with the grim weather and bleak surroundings.

CLOSE - SIGN

On the chain-link fence is a sign:

UNITED STATES ARMY
361ST CORPS OF ENGINEERS
PETROLEUM MANAGEMENT
LAKE MICHIGAN

CLOSE - BLACK MAN

He hesitates, then starts through the gate. Behind him a sedan car with U.S. Army printed on the door sweeps into the compound and pulls up with smooth precision. The young man's radio is still playing and he neither hears nor sees the car as he enters the building without looking back.

INT. OFFICE

A sharp-looking LIEUTENANT with the braids, boots and wings of a paratrooper sits behind the desk of a bare, anonymous-looking army reception room. Rising as the YOUNG BLACK enters hesitantly, the Lieutenant is in no doubt whatever that this kid has strayed into the wrong place.

LIEUTENANT

Can I be of assistance, sir?

The kid glances at a recruiting poster on the wall, becomes awkwardly aware that his radio is still playing, and shuts it off.

YOUNG BLACK

Yeah... well, I 'as lookin' to... the uh, recruitment program... What you see is -- I 'as interested in the technical trainin' career... thinkin' about it anyways...

LIEUTENANT

Recruitment?

YOUNG BLACK

Yeah... the uh, technical training.

At this moment the door opens behind him to reveal COLONEL MATSON and MAJOR WILLARD. They are lean, hard-looking men; their eyes hidden behind dark glasses. A SERGEANT holds the door; he is wearing the green beret. They look coldly at the Young Black.

LIEUTENANT

We are not a recruiting office here, sir. But I would be happy to guide you to a recruiting center. Perhaps...

The Black cannot take his eyes off the men in the doorway, whose manner is one of tense, overbearing impatience.

YOUNG BLACK

Yeah... that'd be, uh...

COLONEL MATSON

This man interested in enlistment, Lieutenant?

LIEUTENANT

Yes, sir. I believe he --

COLONEL MATSON

You want to be in the Army, son?

YOUNG BLACK

I 'as thinkin' about it... The technical, uh...

COLONEL MATSON
Great career. You'll like it. No need
to walk in this rain. Take my car.
See to it, Sergeant.

The Sergeant holds the door wider. The Young Black hesitates.

YOUNG BLACK
Hey, like thanks a lot... But, I mean...

The Sergeant cuts him short with a look and steers him through the door, more like a prisoner than a guest. The door closes and the Colonel glances at the Lieutenant.

COLONEL MATSON
Everyone present?

LIEUTENANT
Yes, sir. They're waiting for you now.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - GROUP

Four aging MAJORS, looking very much like the "desk soldiers" that they are, stand chatting in the darkened room -- their presence noticeably overshadowed by a MAJOR and a CAPTAIN, who stand off to one side in enigmatic, but distinctly uncompanionable silence.

CAPTAIN CORBETT W. REYNOLDS -- tall, athletic, and in his early thirties, has dark, intelligent eyes that are expressing a wary curiosity as to why he finds himself here in this company.

MAJOR ROBERT F. PRESCOTT is in his late thirties and built like a football player. In contrast to Reynolds, he is showing no curiosity whatever, much like a formidable robot waiting to be activated. They all turn to face Matson as he enters with Willard.

Though well into his fifties, Matson carries himself like a coiled spring and exudes a fierce, controlled energy. Even his rare smile gives the impression of being entirely calculated. Striding to the front of the room, he removes his dark glasses to peer searchingly at Prescott and Reynolds before glancing quizzically at Willard.

MAJOR WILLARD
Prescott and Reynolds, sir.

COLONEL MATSON
Right, gentlemen -- be seated.

Matson gazes at his audience with conspiratorial solemnity.

COLONEL MATSON
Operation Columbus. This will be a strictly 'one-off' operation, any knowledge of which will be rigorously restricted to the people now in this room.

(MORE)

COLONEL MATSON (Cont'd)
 (a brief pause)
 Before we get into details -- and for the
 benefit of our newly co-opted personnel...

He bestows a brief smile on Reynolds and Prescott, hands them a photograph.

INSERT - PHOTOGRAPH

Officers sitting in f.g., while heavily armed irregulars lead a line of pack animals along a mountain trail.

COLONEL MATSON (O.S.)
 Armed irregulars -- a private army
 engaged in the traffic of drugs...

ANGLE ON MATSON

He turns to glance at his audience.

COLONEL MATSON
 Anyone care to hazard a guess as to
 location?

A TENTATIVE VOICE (O.S.)
 Colombia...?

COLONEL MATSON
 Could well be. Could equally well be
 anyone of half-a-dozen places in Central
 America... But in point of fact, this
 film comes from Mexico. The Sierra
 Madre, within spitting distance of our
 own border.

(indicating screen)
 Those men up there are part of a private
 army run by a man known as Karl
 Schroeder -- Born Berlin, Germany,
 nineteen forty-six...

More photographs are passed around.

COLONEL MATSON
 We only have a very general idea of what
 he looks like -- and there's no point my
 telling you what passport he travels on
 -- he's got a dozen of 'em. As a student
 he was a devout Marxist, and when he left
 University he immediately became involved
 in left-wing political activity. Got
 into the drug trade and is now using the
 profits to finance armed revolution
 throughout the hemisphere. His activities
 have already made serious inroads on the
 integrity of our own population...

INSERT - PHOTOGRAPHS

The photographs of Schroeder at various points in his career are replaced by a still shot of the wrecked Ranger Office in Travis.

COLONEL MATSON (O.S.)
Travis, Texas. The local Texas Ranger had the temerity to interfere with one of Schroeder's operations. This was his response. The truth is, this man Schroeder's operating on both sides of the border with complete impunity and our Federal Agencies are quite unable to do anything about it... In my estimation that's largely because Schroeder has the active sympathy and support of Travis's recently elected Mayor -- about whose loyalty to the United States I, for one, have the gravest doubts...

ANGLE ON MATSON

He looks around the room for emphasis.

COLONEL MATSON
A Special Forces A Team posing as civilians will infiltrate the town. Major Prescott will be in command, while Captain Reynolds will be responsible for intelligence. Aside from identifying any subversive elements, which can be dealt with in the event of a national emergency, the primary objective will be to compromise the Mayor with a view to apprehending this man Schroeder and terminating his activities... Any questions?

Matson's manner is not one that invites too many questions, and there is a pause before one of the Majors pipes up hesitantly.

MAJOR
Sir...?

Matson's gaze makes the Major more hesitant than ever.

MAJOR
Doesn't this, uh... raise some questions of legality?

COLONEL MATSON
I don't think so, Major. In the initial phase our people will simply be gathering information in much the same way as is already common practice amongst credit rating companies or any number of large employers...

(MORE)

COLONEL MATSON (CONT'D)

Furthermore, the legality or otherwise of any given action can only be established in a court of law... Since this operation will be on a strictly 'need to know' basis, I hardly think a court of law would be a likely eventuality... Any other questions?

ANGLE ON REYNOLDS AND PRESCOTT

Reynolds is clearly holding his own counsel, while Prescott's face is a mask -- showing no emotion whatever.

EXT. HIGHWAY NEAR TRAVIS - DAY

A car with Texas Ranger markings on the roof and sides, pulls off the main highway and goes speeding along a dirt road. Leaving a cloud of dust in its wake, the car approaches an impoverished village of Mexican style dwellings, then swings away to pull up in the parking lot of a newly constructed school, where there is evidently some kind of fiesta in progress.

EXT. PARKING LOT AND SCHOOL YARD

HECTOR FERNANDEZ, the Mexican-American Mayor of Travis, is speaking in Spanish from an improvised podium. His audience is predominantly composed of women and children, the overwhelming majority of whom are Latino. Fernandez is a soberly dressed man in his late thirties, who is just good-looking enough to charm his admirers and arouse the scorn of his enemies. A few modest strands of bunting adorn the entrance of the new school and the various fast food stands that have been erected for the occasion.

The arrival of Benteen and Billy Cotton causes a number of heads to turn with the cautious, grudging respect that hallmark the Chicano attitudes toward the Anglo forces of law and order.

Notable amongst this crowd is JULIA ARAGON, a dark, attractive Mexican-American woman of thirty, who is one of Mayor Fernandez' campaign workers.

As the Mayor's speech continues, Benteen ambles over to a Tamale stand on the edge of the crowd.

HERNANDEZ

(in Spanish)

... this will be a fine school with dedicated teachers, and it will give your children opportunities that many of us have never had...

ANGLE ON BENTEEN AND BILLY

The Mayor's speech continues over while Benteen uses two fingers and a grunt to order two tamales, for which the Mexican PROPRIETOR

smilingly refuses payment. Benteen moves away a few paces, as if the better to hear the Mayor, and Billy steps up to get something for himself. Assuming that he is about to be extended the same courtesy as Benteen, he takes his tamale, nods his thanks and starts to turn away.

PROPRIETOR

Uh, Senor...

BILLY

Huh?

PROPRIETOR

Is fifty cents.

Billy hands over some coins and turns to join Benteen, who is munching away as he listens to the Mayor winding up his speech.

FERNANDEZ

(in Spanish)

And finally, I have to remind you that nobody gave you this school. This school is here because people like you voted for it, and in order to vote you have to register. We can achieve many things together, but they all depend on your voice being heard, and it can only be heard if you vote... register and vote. Thank you.

The audience applauds. Fernandez gets down from the podium and starts for his car, shaking hands with various well-wishers as he goes. Julia is some distance ahead of him, and now, as she approaches Benteen and Billy it is clear that, although they try to be discreet about it, Billy and Julia definitely have eyes for each other.

BILLY

Hi, Julia.

She gives him a warm smile and glances at Benteen, who restricts his greeting to a rather formal nod.

JULIA

Hello, Mr. Benteen. Something wrong?

Benteen pauses in the act of polishing off his second tamale, and contrives to look puzzled.

BENTEEN

Not that I know of... Why?

She indicates the school and smiles sarcastically.

JULIA

Since when did you come visiting our part of town unless you were planning to arrest someone? Or have you taken a sudden interest in minority education?

Billy looks distinctly embarrassed, but Benteen simply shrugs and indicates his tamale.

BENTEEN

Aw, you know how it is. I was just lookin' for a free lunch.

Julia is about to retort sharply, when Fernandez arrives with the big Mexican, who is his driver, and greets Benteen with a formal politeness which indicates that there is no love lost between them.

FERNANDEZ

Good to see you, Mr. Benteen. Have there been any further developments?

BENTEEN

(deliberately obtuse)

Concernin' what?

FERNANDEZ

About the bomb that went off in your office.

BENTEEN

Yeah, your good friend, the Governor, sent my Deputy's widow a real nice letter.

There is a pause and Fernandez purses his lips, refusing to take issue, but then can't resist a sardonic comment of his own.

FERNANDEZ

Well, anyway, it's certainly an unexpected honor to see you here. I thought Julia told me you were against extending the school district.

He has used the Spanish pronunciation of "Julia," and Benteen uses his own, anglicized version of the name.

BENTEEN

Aw, hell, no, Mr. Mayor. Julie got that all wrong. Few more schools in places like this, an' maybe you can start makin' those speeches of yours in English.

Fernandez gives him a cool look and turns to Julia.

FERNANDEZ

I have to stop by and talk to Torres.
Will you be back at the office?

JULIA

Yes. I'll be going straight back to town.

Fernandez gives Benteen a frigid nod and moves off with his driver.

EXT. TRAILER PARK, TRAVIS - NIGHT

A n.d. trailer parks on the outskirts of Travis, adjoining which is a small park where poor Mexican kids play basketball under lights. A big pick-up truck enters, followed by a pick-up/camper with three men inside. They wave to the Manager, who is out watering his meager lawn.

FULL - PICNIC AREA

Another camper is parked near some picnic benches, where SGT. ASKINS, SGT. CASTELLI, SGT. BIDDLE, SGT. HALL and SGT. TANAKA sit, looking remarkably like tourists on a fishing trip. Major Prescott and SGT. CHAVEZ get out of one of the newly arrived vehicles, while Captain Reynolds and SGT. COLEMAN come from the other. They are all in civilian clothes, and now converge on the group at the benches.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

All right, gentlemen. I think we can take it that we're alone.

(a pause)

Any problems getting here...? Good.
What about equipment?

SGT. CASTELLI

(indicating camper)

The R.T. and surveillance devices are in there, plus some demolitions.

SGT. BIDDLE

Personal weapons came with me.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Good. You can distribute them when we break up... Captain Reynolds?

On Prescott's cue Reynolds takes over...

REYNOLDS

Right. You all know our primary objectives:

(MORE)

REYNOLDS (Cont'd)
 surveillance of city government and law enforcement, with particular emphasis on the Mayor; plus maximum access to all telephonic communications. I'll let you know the names of any individuals we're interested in in due course... That's all. There'll be a final briefing in twenty-four hours. Meanwhile, you can start establishing your civilian identities. Any questions?

SGT. BIDDLE
 (to Prescott)
 Yes, sir. I understand we contact you here...
 (indicates the camper)
 What about the Captain -- I mean, if we need to contact him?

Prescott cuts in -- hard.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
 You won't. Captain Reynolds will be using the credentials of a Drug Enforcement Agency Special Agent. If he needs you, he'll let you know; if you need him, you'll let me know. Understood?

There is a general murmur of assent.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
 Incidentally, there is a female operative involved in this exercise, who is already established in the community.

There are some ribald chuckles, which Prescott silences with a prim frown.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
 If any of you get to see her at all, it'll be on a strictly 'need to know' basis.

SGT. CHAVEZ
 And who needs it more'n me?

The others laugh and move to disperse...

EXT. MUNICIPAL BUILDING, TOWN SQUARE, TRAVIS - NIGHT

Two or three office windows are still lit up. Benteen and Billy come out of the building and start down the steps.

CLOSER ANGLE

Benteen pushes to gaze idly around the square, as if surveying his personal property.

BENTEEN'S POV

Half-a-block away to the left a patrol car is just entering the police station parking lot. Directly opposite on the far side of the square is a small park with a Mexican war memorial. In the distance are the blinking lights of Jake's Bar and Grill.

RESUME SCENE

Billy interrupts Benteen's thoughts hesitantly.

BILLY

You gonna need me again tonight?

Benteen indicates the bar and grill down the street.

BENTEEN

Oh, you figure they need you over at Jake's place, huh?

BILLY

Can't see my way clear, Jack. Can't afford it.

Billy pats his empty pockets.

BENTEEN

They don't let you run a tab?

BILLY

You told me no tabs any place.

BENTEEN

I did? Yeah, well, it can be kinda embarrassing arresting people when you owe 'em money.

(fishes a bill from
his pocket and hands
it to Billy)

Just see you don't get run down before I get it back.

Billy grins and holds up his hand as if taking an oath.

BILLY

First of the month. See ya tomorrow.

BENTEEN

(dryly)

Yeah. Say hello to Julia.

Mortified that his interest in Julia should be so transparent, Billy produces an embarrassed smile and moves away. Benteen watches him go to his car, then glances across the square to see the A Team's camper drive up and park in front of the war memorial.

INT./EXT. CAMPER AND SQUARE

Reynolds and Prescott are looking through the smoked-glass windshield at Benteen, who has just started towards his car. Sgt. Hall is peering through a concealed observation port in back, where he has a small desk littered with files.

SGT. HALL

Jack Benteen. According to primary intel, he's been running this county like it was his own personal property for about ten years now.

CAPTAIN REYNOLDS

Yeah, I read that profile, too. Far's I can see, there's nothing in his background that'd make him disagree with what we're trying to achieve here. He's damn near obsessed with nailing Schroeder.

Prescott cranes forward to get a better look.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Yeah? Well, he sure doesn't seem to be in a helluva big hurry.

ANGLE ON BENTEEN'S CAR

Benteen behind the wheel as he punches out a number on the phone located alongside the police radio.

BENTEEN

(into phone)

Hi, Arturo... Que pasa?

INT./EXT. CHICANO CANTINA NEAR TRAVIS - NIGHT

ARTURO looks, as they say, like one who has been washed by many waters. He is at the phone behind the bar of the sleazy, rural cantina, that is peopled by some very rough-looking characters as well as a truly delicious-looking girl who sits at the bar sipping a drink.

ARTURO

(into phone)

Nada, Captain, nada. Is very quiet.

A sudden, vociferous argument at one of the tables flares up to contradict his words.

BENTEEN (V.O.)

Yeah, it sounds like it... Any new faces?

Arturo's gaze licks over the room and he shrugs dismissively.

ARTURO

I dunno -- maybe a couple.
(glancing at girl)
Got a real cute girl, though.

BENTEEN (V.O.)

(dryly)
Just one?

ARTURO

Well, maybe two -- three...

BENTEEN (V.O.)

Yeah, well, maybe two -- three perhaps constitutes a brothel -- you better watch out I don't have ta close you down...

(after a pause)
Okay, I'll prob'ly be by to check 'em out...

ARTURO

The girls?

BENTEEN (V.O.)

No, Arturo -- the faces -- the new faces.

BENTEEN

He cradles the car phone, fires up the engine and pulls away.

INT. A TEAM CAMPER, TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

Prescott turns to glance back at Sgt. Hall and indicates Benteen's departing car.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Does your primary intel indicate he's on the take?

SGT. HALL

Not that they know of, Sir.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Small town cop -- chances are he is.

He looks at Reynolds almost willing him to disagree, but Reynolds refuses to be drawn, and Prescott turns back to Sgt. Hall.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Anyway, soon as you're set up, I want a real tight surveillance on him -- twenty-four hours a day.

SGT. HALL

Yes, Sir.

He watches Benteen's car disappear and smiles musingly.

SGT. HALL

Funny thing -- that's just what I wanted to be when I was a kid.

CAPTAIN REYNOLDS

What's that?

SGT. HALL

A Texas Ranger.

Prescott is about to make some caustic comment, when something makes him look up.

POV

The last but one of the lights in the Municipal building has gone out and two men appear at the brightly lit entrance. They are, Fernandez, who is in shirt-sleeves and ALBERT BAXTER, a nattily-dressed man in late middle-age, who is the City Attorney. They are having a lively discussion in which Fernandez is doing most of the talking.

SGT. HALL (O.S.)

The fella in shirt-sleeves, that's the Mayor -- Hector Fernandez ---

MAJOR PRESCOTT (O.S.)

(interrupting)

Yeah, yeah, I know. Who's the old man?

RESUME SCENE

Sgt. Hall consults his notes before replying.

SGT. HALL

That'll be Baxter. Albert Baxter, fifty-nine -- unmarried -- City Attorney since sixty-three.

Prescott and Reynolds looks off across the square.

POV

Fernandez is going back into the building as Baxter moves off along the sidewalk.

CAPT. REYNOLDS (O.S.)
 Check him out. If there are any skeletons
 he'll know where they're buried...

RESUME SCENE

MAJOR PRESCOTT
 Yeah, maybe he can help us dig 'em up.

He nods to Reynolds, who reaches out to start the engine.

EXT. JULIA'S HOUSE, NEAR TRAVIS - DAY (DAWN)

Billy Cotton's car is parked near the back door of Julia's ranch-type house. Billy appears at the back door, buckles his gunbelt, checks the sky, and goes back inside.

INT. JULIA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN AND HALL - DAY (DAWN)

Billy takes a carton of milk from the refrigerator and takes a sip, before starting for the back door again.

JULIA (O.S.)
 Weren't you planning to say good-bye?

Billy turns to see her standing in the hall doorway, evidently having just gotten out of bed. She is only teasing, but Billy is genuinely contrite.

BILLY
 Uh, I thought you were still asleep
 ...Didn't want to disturb you.

JULIA
 Maybe I like being 'disturbed' in the morning.

BILLY
 Okay, I'll try and remember that...
 Will I see you tonight?

JULIA
 No. I'm going to be helping Hector with some campaign stuff tonight.

BILLY
 (mock concern)
 Hector? You mean, Fernandez? You tellin' me that fella's tryin' to steal you away from me?

JULIA
 Don't worry, he's not even interested.

BILLY

You mean our Mayor's queer?

JULIA

No, I imagine he fucks just about the same way you do. Only seeing as how he's married, maybe not quite as often.

Billy is taken aback by her forthrightness, but determined not to show it.

BILLY

Sounds like a great reason for not gettin' married.

JULIA

Yeah. Besides, you have to be grown up to do that.

BILLY

Huh...?

She waves him away in good-natured dismissal.

JULIA

Never mind. You better get to work, or you'll be in trouble with Big Brother Benteen.

BILLY

Aw, come on, he's not my brother for Chrissakes.

JULIA

No, but you sure wish he was, don't you?
(smiling)
Go on, I'll see you tomorrow.

She puts an affectionate hand on his shoulder and steers him to the door.

INT. STATE UNEMPLOYMENT AGENCY, TRAVIS - DAY

Sgt. Askins shifts his massive bulk on a hard chair as he sits reading a magazine, and waits for a job interview. Sgt. Coleman sits across the way staring into space. Another MAN about Askins' age sits on the couch near him, and there are several Latinos on other couches, all waiting.

SGT. COLEMAN

Hey, man...

Askins ignores him and the other man looks over.

SGT. COLEMAN

Hey, man -- what you tryin' for?

MAN
How d'ya mean, buddy?

SGT. COLEMAN
Just askin' -- I mean, like what kinda
jobs the rest a you guys tryin' out for?

MAN
I dunno. Been workin' for the State
Highway Department.

SGT. COLEMAN
Got laid off, huh?

MAN
Yeah.

SGT. COLEMAN
What about you, man?

Askins looks up belligerently.

SGT. ASKINS
You talkin' to me, boy?

SGT. COLEMAN
Yeah -- I mean, what kinda job you tryin'
to get?

SGT. ASKINS
Brain surgeon, asshole -- whyn't you
mind your own fucking business!

SGT. COLEMAN
Hey, man -- I, just tryin' ta ----

SGT. ASKINS
I don't give a shit what you're tryin'
to do, nigger. Just keep it to yourself.
That clear?

SGT. COLEMAN
Jesus, what kinda shit is this?

Askins puts down his magazine. The Latinos shift nervously.

SGT. COLEMAN
Listen, you got no call talking to me
that way.

A WOMAN comes from a back room to call one of the applicants.

WOMAN
Mr. Stevens...?

Askins is on his feet.

SGT. ASKINS

You gonna tell me what I can do, nigger?

WOMAN

Wait a minute here ---

SGT. COLEMAN

I don't have to take this shit!

He advances towards Askins, who promptly knocks him flat. The Woman scuttles back behind the counter, calling out to her colleagues.

WOMAN

Call the police. Will someone please
call the police.

The first Man steps between Askins and Coleman, who is just dragging himself to his feet.

MAN

Hold it, will ya!

Askins flattens him too - one to the stomach -- one to the jaw.

INT. DINER, TRAVIS - DAY

Benteen enters, plants himself in a booth opposite Billy and scowls at the young man's breakfast.

BENTEEN

You planning to go to work today?

Billy glances at the clock above the lunch counter.

BILLY

Sure I am. It's only ---

BENTEEN

(interrupting gruffly)
You got a long day.

BILLY

I have?

Benteen pauses while a WAITRESS pours a mug of coffee for him.

WAITRESS

Hi, Mr. Benteen. Bacon an' eggs over
easy?

He nods curtly and turns back to Billy.

BENTEEN

Yeah, you have. I want you to take a coupl'a statements over in Brackettville, then take a sweep along the border from there right on down to Sharpe's Crossing.

That Sharpe's Crossing is evidently a long way away shows in Billy's dismayed reaction.

BILLY

Sharpe's Crossing?

BENTEEN

That's right, saw a coupl'a new faces at Arturo's last night. They tell me somebody's been cuttin' fences down there.

BILLY

So whatever happened to the Border Patrol? What's wrong with having them look ---

BENTEEN

(interrupting)

They don't know from shit.

Billy raises his eyebrows, pretending to be flattered.

BILLY

And I do?

BENTEEN

No, you don't know from shit, either.

(a faint mitigating smile)

But I figure it's time you started learning.

He buries his face in his coffee mug and Billy resumes his meal.

INT. RANGERS' OFFICE, TRAVIS - DAY

Two painters are putting the finishing touches to the repairs in the front office, necessitated by the explosion a few days earlier. FRANK PARAU, a veteran, Chicano Deputy is doing some paperwork behind the counter. All three men look up as SARA JENNINGS, an exaggeratedly well-shaped girl in her early twenties, enters from the street. Parau greets her with solemn courtesy.

PARAU

Morning, Ma'am.

The formal address makes her smile self-consciously.

SARA

G'morning. Is Mr. Benteen here, please?

PARAU

Will be shortly. What can I do for you?

Her ingenuous, tentative smile is truly ingratiating.

SARA

My name's Sara Jennings. Lady at the agency said you was lookin' for a part-time secretary. She said to ask for Mr. Benteen.

PARAU

Can you type?

SARA

Uh-huh, sure can.

She nods confidently, but then breaks off any further explanations, when she sees a Ranger car lurch to a stop outside. A BIG DEPUTY hustles the now docile, Sgt. Askins into the office and starts to lead him around the counter towards the cell area.

BIG DEPUTY

We got a live one here, Frank. Just busted up the State Unemployment Agency...

Parau peers at Askins, who gives him a big, innocent smile.

PARAU

Regualr white hope, huh? Okay, Ben, lock him up -- Be with you in a minute.

The Big Deputy leads Askins away into the cell area. Parau takes a bunch of keys from behind the counter and turns to Sara before moving to follow the Deputy.

PARAU

You better wiat for Mr. Benteen, Miss. He'll be right in.

She nods cheerfully and turns to catch the two painters gazing at her. She smiles at them too, and they hurriedly resume their work. Parau is about to enter the cell area, when he sees Benteen coming from the street. He turns back as Benteen enters and heads straight for his office.

PARAU

Oh, Jack -- this here's Miss Jennings -- she's come about that job.

Benteen pauses at his office door and gazes at her blankly.

PARAU

She says she can type.

A smile from Sarah.

PARAU

Right?

She nods vehemently and gazes at Benteen, who is at his most laconic.

BENTEEN
Un'erstand Spanish?

SARA
Gee, yeah, I guess so...un pocito.

BENTEEN
Okay, talk to Frank.

He jerks his thumb at Parau, goes into his office and closes the door.

EXT. GAS STATION NEAR TRAVIS - DAY

A bus comes from the direction of town, pulls up and moves on again, leaving Sgt. Biddle at the curb with a small suitcase. He starts across the road to the station, where a single ATTENDANT and the OWNER are sitting in the workshop.

SGT. BIDDLE
One of you gentlemen the owner?

The older of the two, a tall, deeply tanned Latino, nods.

OWNER
I am. What can I do for you?

SGT. BIDDLE
You must be Mr. Melandez. There's a Mr. Knox down at the truck stop told me to ask for you.

MELANDEZ
So what can I do for you?

SGT. BIDDLE
I was told you might be able to give me a job.

MELANDEZ
Pumping gas?

SGT. BIDDLE
Be happy to have anything, but I'm a qualified mechanic -- fix you anything that's got an engine. I've had a lot of expereince. Around Wichita mainly. Worked for Cessna out there for a coupl'a years, and then at the Chrysler agency. I got good references.

MELANDEZ
Why'd you leave?

SGT. BIDDLE
 Wanted to see more of the country. I
 think I kinda like it here.

MELANDEZ
 Why's that?

SGT. BIDDLE
 It's warm.

The Owner gazes up at the burnished sky -- warmth doesn't seem like much of a recommendation to him. He indicates a truck on the forecourt with its hood up.

MELANDEZ
 Think you can fix that truck?

SGT. BIDDLE
 What's wrong with it?

MELANDEZ
 If I knew that, I'd fix it myself.

Biddle accepts the challenge with a grin.

SGT. BIDDLE
 I'll fix it.

As he starts towards the truck, raises the hood, then pauses to gaze curiously at something o.s.

POV

Benteen's car comes hell for leather from the direction of town, goes screaming by the gas station and heads off towards the south.

RESUME SCENE

Biddle turns away thoughtfully and starts to examine the engine.

POV - FIELD GLASSES - DAY - LONG

It is Jack Benteen's car with the Texas Ranger insignia on its side. He turns down a dirt road and moves away fast, leaving a cloud of dust.

CLOSE - MAJOR PRESCOTT

He sits in the passenger seat of an old pick-up, looking off at the distant cloud of dust with heavy field glasses. Sgt. Castelli sits next to him, studying the road map.

SGT. CASTELLI
 Looks like he's taking a short cut.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
Check with Commo.

Castelli pulls up his R.T. speaker.

SGT. CASTELLI
(into mike)
Green Dot to Service -- Smokey just
took off like a jack rabbit. Heading
south on dirt road.

INT./EXT. TRAILER PARK, TRAVIS - COMMO CAMPER - DAY

Sgt. CHAVEZ gazes idly out at the trailer park through his one-way observation port while he speaks into his radio mike.

SGT. CHAVEZ
Uh, Roger Green Dot. Smokey just
got an emergency call from his
partner. Check it out, but proceed
at a distance.

EXT. HILLSIDE - PICK-UP TRUCK - DAY

The truck starts rolling.

SGT. CASTELLI
(into mike)
Got it, Service. Over and out.

He puts the R.T. away.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
We'll go down the main road -- meet
up with him right near the border.

They roll away down the hill.

SHARPE'S CROSSING, NEAR BORDER - DAY

A dirty little gas stop -- one station, a cafe with a few beat-up cars parked outside, and several broken down looking shacks.

NEW ANGLE

Benteen eases his car in the back way by the dirt road and rolls up behind the gas station, where Billy Cotton's Ranger car is parked.

EXT. HILL - TRUCK

A hill overlooking the little settlement. Castelli and Prescott have left their truck on a dirt road and are now climbing to the crest of the hill. They drop flat as Prescott takes out his field glasses...

THIER POV

Benteen is just getting out of his car to join Billy Cotton, who waits by the gas station with two Latinos.

MED. - GAS STATION

Billy looks apologetic as he moves to meet Benteen.

BILLY

Sorry to get you out. But I thought you ought to be here.

BENTEEN

All right, what's the problem?

BILLY

(indicating the cafe)
There's four, maybe five guys from over the border holed up in there.

(indicating one of the Latinos)
That fella there says they gave him two hundred dollars to cut some fences for them. He says they're carrying something.

BENTEEN

Drugs?

Billy shrugs and Benteen glances disparagingly at the two informants, who hover guiltily in b.g.

BILLY

They know I'm over here -- they saw me coming. I guess they're hoping we'll leave. Their car's in back.

BENTEEN

Did you call the border patrol?

BILLY

You said they weren't worth shit.

Benteen shakes his head in disbelief.

BENTEEN

Jesus Christ, Billy. You better start to learn when I'm kidding.

(after a pause)

Well, I guess it doesn't matter. If they're just assholes, we can't take 'em, anyhow. And if it's something Schroeder's set up, they're not about to wait for us to get any help...All right, let's do it.

He takes another look at the cafe and starts for his car. Billy follows unhappily.

CLOSE - HILL

Prescott and Castelli watch intently with their powerful binoculars.

EXT. CAFE

Benteen's car pulls up about ten yards from the door and he starts to get out. Billy can't quite believe this is really happening.

BILLY

You just gonna walk right in there?

BENTEEN

Always do just exactly what people expect -- Surprises the hell out of 'em.

Billy pauses to remove the shotgun from the car.

BENTEEN

Take it around in back -- case anyone tries bustin' out.

Billy nods but Benteen can see how tense he is.

BENTEEN

Take it easy. Try an' look like you're just checkin' the place out.

Billy has only just begun to move and is still looking back at Benteen, when he is suddenly knocked end over by a SHOTGUN BLAST from the cafe window.

CLOSE - BENTEEN

He staggers away from the door, which has been perforated by another SHOTGUN BLAST and now begins to disintegrate under fire from an automatic weapon. Dust kicks up all around Benteen -- he rolls away -- firing two quick blasts through the door and another at the window where the first blast came from.

ANGLE ON BILLY

He screams in agony as he writehs in the dirt. Benteen scrambles towards him. Another burst of automatic fire goes over his head and into the car.

CLOSE - GREEN BERETS

Castelli reacts in shocked amazement, and glances at Prescott, expecting some kind of lead. But the Major continues to gaze calmly through his field glasses.

MED. - BENTEEN

He fires his three remaining shots into the building -- throws his gun back to the car, grabs the shotgun, and drags Billy back with him. A blast from the cafe hits in front of them -- Benteen returns fire, emptying the shotgun with extraordinary speed. Now he discards the shotgun and drags Billy behind the car. Benteen takes Billy's gun and scrambles for his own, but not without drawing more fire interspersed with a lot of hysterical screaming and yelling in Spanish.

Benteen pulls the car door open to try and get to the radio. The opposition sees this and cut into the car with everything they have. Bullets whine everywhere -- some zip under the car -- finally killing Billy. Glass shatters as Benteen reaches for the radio, but is hit in the hand. He rolls away to take cover behind the front wheel. Fire pours into the car sporadically. Benteen winces and starts to reload his .44 Magnum.

DIFFERENT ANGLE

Benteen sees the Informant in the gas station yelling in Spanish to the men in the cafe. Crouched behind a row of empty oil drums about fifty yards away, the Informant is telling the others where Benteen is and that the second policeman is dead.

CLOSE - BENTEEN

He is in pain -- outnumbered, outgunned -- His expression becomes resigned. His wounded hand hangs limp, while his other hand holds the .44 close to his side.

CLOSE - GREEN BERETS

They are still watching when Prescott suddenly scrambles to his feet.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Let's get the hell out of here!

Castelli hesitates -- reluctant to leave the Ranger to his fate -- but Prescott is already moving, and now Castelli follows him back down the hill, while the yelling and shooting between the cafe and the gas station continues.

MED. - BENTEEN

The Informant is encouraging the men in the cafe to come out and finish the job. There is another burst of automatic weapons fire -- the car starts to burn. The door of the cafe opens and the Informant yells again. Benteen raises the .44 with both hands and blasts through the oil drums, killing the Informant and sending the drums clattering away in confusion. He drops and rolls flat.

BENTEEN'S POV

Two sets of feet are seen approaching from under the car. Benteen takes aim and blows the nearest foot off - the man belonging to the foot comes screaming to the ground and Benteen shoots him through the chest.

DIFFERENT ANGLE

There is hysterical screaming - the other set of feet turn and run back to the cafe. Benteen rolls out with one hand and blasts the punk through the hips -- he crashes down in the doorway, flopping like a fish -- his legs thrashing helplessly. Someone drags him inside. A shotgun blast and another burst of fire chase Benteen back behind the wheel. The fire is increasing -- the car could explode at any moment. Benteen reloads and calls out.

BENTEEN

You in there -- this is Jack Benteen,
you hear me?

There is no answer.

BENTEEN

You come out or I'm gonna burn you out!

The response is another shotgun blast. He looks at the car, realizes it must explode at any moment, and decides to make his final play.

Pulling himself to his feet, he steps away from the car and fires three shots into the cafe. Everything is suddenly quiet. The car is burning furiously.

Now the silence is suddenly broken by the roar of a motor car engine springing into life, and then being gunned as a powerful old sedan comes skittering out from behind the cafe and takes off down the dirt road with two men in it. Benteen raises his gun as if to fire, then realizes that the car is already way out of range, and lets his hand fall again.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Benteen is just turning away to look at Billy, when a VOICE calls from the cafe -- and the splintered remains of the door begins to open. Whoever is still inside clearly intends to surrender. Two Latinos walk outside, hands held high...

CLOSE - BENTEEN

His eyes glare -- his bloody hand aids the other in holding the gun. He looks at his right, sees Billy's body lying under the burning car, and looks back at the two men. Suddenly one of them reaches for a pistol under his coat, fires...

MED. BENTEEN AND THE TWO MEN

Benteen shoots the first man solidly through the middle. The second man lurches back and calls out.

MAN

No....!

Benteen fires twice. The first shot flattens the Man against the building, the second spins him away, already dead. Benteen staggers back, looking around. His gun hangs limply in his hand -- the car behind him EXPLODES.

EXT. DESERT - TRUCK - FULL

The Green Berets' truck rushes down a dirt road towards the main highway.

INT. TRUCK

Castelli touches Prescott's arm, drawing his attention to two distant highway patrol cars speeding along the main road. Prescott veers off into the brush and they pull up, surrounded by dust.

Castelli leans back against the seat. Emotionally drained and too shocked to choose his words more carefully, he murmurs as if to himself.

SGT. CASTELLI

Maybe we shouldn've gone in there,
anyway...

MAJOR PRESCOTT

And compromised our entire mission?

SGT. CASTELLI

Yeah, I know...But...

Prescott looks at him and switches off the engine.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

There'll be roadblocks -- whole damn
place'll be swarming. We'll have to
stay out of sight until dark.

The dust has begun to settle and they are in complete, eerie silence. Castelli's mind is still back there at the gas station.

SGT. CASTELLI

(as if to himself)

Oh, man...that was some firefight...

Prescott starts to manoeuvre the truck back onto the dirt road.

FULL - CAFE

State police and border patrol cars are now everywhere - a helicopter lands -- an ambulance approaches -- sirens blaring.

ANGLE ON BENTEEN

He lies propped up against the wall of the cafe. The policeman, Frank Parau, comes to kneel at his side just as the ambulance pulls up and two men start forward with a stretcher. Benteen tries to pull himself up.

PARAU

Take it easy, Jack.

BENTEEN

There's two others, had a car -- headed South.

PARAU

I know. Don't worry. We'll find 'em.

Now as the two ambulance men start to unfold their stretcher, Benteen waves them aside and indicates Billy's body by the burnt out car.

BENTEEN

Take him first.

One of the men stops to look at the body and turns back hesitantly.

AMBULANCE MAN

But he's, uh...

BENTEEN

Take him back anyway.

The Man continues to hesitate until Parau gives him a reassuring nod. Benteen watches with an absent expression as the ambulance men start to lift Billy.

BENTEEN

I should've waited...

Parau takes off his coat, folds it up and puts it behind Benteen's head. The Ranger's eyes close and Parau squats down again, waiting for the ambulance men to return.

EXT. DESERT - FULL

The Green Berets' truck drives through some low trees to a gate with a cattle guard. Prescott stops -- Castelli gets out, opens the gate and the truck drives on through. Castelli is just getting back into the truck when he sees something in the distance.

DIFFERENT ANGLE

The Green Berets look at each other with sharp concern. Rushing towards them out of the brush is the car with the escaped drug dealers.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

It's the car from the station.

SGT. CASTELLI

Shit.

Prescott shispers urgently as he starts to get out.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Play dumb -- let 'em have whatever they want.

CLOSE - CASTELLI

He slips something metallic under his windbreaker as he gets out and the car screeches up.

MED. - THE CAR

Two men leap out, armed with revolvers and a machete -- one of them is Scar-Face -- the man who delivered the bomb to the Ranger Office in Travis.

SCAR-FACE

Hold it, man.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

We're not trespassing -- we're with the surveying crew ---

SCAR-FACE

Shut your mouth. Get away from that truck.

He pushes Prescott away and his companion prods Castelli with the machete. The Green Berets stand aside looking meek, while Scar-Face rips open the truck door to look inside. Prescott addresses the man with the machete.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Look - whatever you want - we don't want any trouble -- If you want money...

The man with the machete gives him an enigmatic grin and turns away to check the truck with his companion. The two men murmur to each other in rapid Spanish, glancing back occasionally at the Green Berets.

TIGHT TWO - THE GREEN BERETS

Castelli murmurs without moving his head.

SGT. CASTELLI
They're talking about killing us.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Scar-Face starts back to the car, while the one with the machete comes back towards the Green Berets with a fixed, ironic smile.

MAN WITH MACHETE
You mind we borrow your truck?

MAJOR PRESCOTT
Go right ahead -- it ain't ours, anyhow.

MAN WITH MACHETE
But you gonna tell about it, ain't ya.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
No...No way...

MAN WITH MACHETE
I think you would.

His smile vanishes and he suddenly steps forward to swing the machete at Prescott's neck. Stepping inside the blow and using his forearm to ward it off, Prescott twists the man around and locks his head in a half-nelson. Meanwhile, Castelli has whipped an Ingram sub-machine gun from under his windbreaker, and Scar-Face goes down in a hail of bullets, which riddle him and the car before he can get off a single shot. Still holding the other man, who has dropped his machete, Prescott murmurs almost lovingly in his ear.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
Talking about killing us is a lot different from doing it, aint' it. Amigo?

He tightens his hold sharply, breaks the man's neck, and lets him fall like a discarded sack. Seemingly unaware of Castelli's troubled reaction, Prescott walks across to inspect the Latino's car. He takes two large, plastic wrapped parcels of white powder from the back seat and starts back to the truck. Castelli stands there, looking dazed. Prescott is about to say something to him, when they both hear the distant whup-whup-whup of a helicopter.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
Shit. Let's get the hell out.

He dumps the packages into the truck and starts up the engine... Castelli moves to join him, and they take off.

INT. CORRIDOR AND HOSPITAL, TRAVIS - NIGHT

A very good-looking nurse, MELANIE WAINWRIGHT, is leading Julia along the corridor. She opens the swing doors into the private room and reacts.

POV

Benteen lies in bed with his eyes closed and his bandaged left hand lying on the coverlet. Medic: Sgt. Tanaka, wearing the uniform of a paramedic, stands at the foot of the bed examining the medical chart that hangs there. Realizing that he has been observed he blandly indicates a pair of boots he is holding.

MEDIC: SGT. TANAKA

The driver found these in the ambulance.

(indicating Benteen)

I thought he'd like to know they didn't get lost.

DIFFERENT ANGLE

Now, as Melanie and Julia move into the room, Tanaka cheerfully acknowledges having cribbed the medical chart, by nodding at it approvingly.

MEDIC: SGT. TANAKA

He's doing well.

Melanie gives him a frown.

MELANIE

Do I know you?

MEDIC: SGT. TANAKA

I'm with the Para-Medics. I just started coupl'a days ago.

MELANIE

(nods curtly;
indicates boots)

Why don't you drop those off at the desk. He won't be needing them for a while.

MEDIC: SGT. TANAKA

Yes, of course. Good night.

He smiles amiably and leaves. Julia turns to Melanie, concerned by Benteen's apparently unconscious condition.

JULIA

Is he all right?

MELANIE

Oh, yes, he'll be fine. It's just that he's heavily sedated...You wanted to sit with him for a while?

Julia hesitates -- not at all sure that this is what she had in mind.

JULIA

Thank you.

She sits down and Melanie discreetly leaves the room. Julia is gazing at Benteen with a kind of angry incomprehension, when he suddenly open his eyes. They look at each other for a long moment.

BENTEEN

They tell you about Billy?

She nods.

BENTEEN

(after a pause)

I'm sorry.

She just looks at him.

BENTEEN

Does it make it any better if I tell
you it was my fault?

She thinks about it for a moment, then shakes her head.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - TRAVIS - NIGHT

Starting close on Sgt. Castelli. He is sitting at the picnic bench, looking up unhappily at Reynolds, who has been cross-questioning him.

SGT. CASTELLI

It was just like the Major said, there
was nothing else we could do.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Reynolds frowns and turns to glance across the park to where Prescott is at the door fo the Communications truck, handing Sgt. Chavez the plastic parcels he took from the Mexican's car. Chavez moves to stow the parcels in the truck. Other A Team members hover discreetly in b.g.

ANGLE ON REYNOLDS AND CASTELLI

Reynolds turns back to Castelli, anxious to cover every eventuality.

CAPTAIN REYNOLDS

Did you cover up...?

Castelli hesitates.

CAPTAIN REYNOLDS

How did you kill them?

SGT. CASTELLI
I got the scar-faced guy with my
Ingram...The other one...
The Major broke his neck...

CAPTAIN REYNOLDS

Shells -- Did you retrieve your shells?

SGT. CASTELLI
Didn't have time -- sounded like there
was some kind of helicopter coming...

Reynolds shakes his head and is just turning away to restrain his irritation as Prescott moves into frame. The Major is quick to catch Reynolds' mood.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
What's the problem?

Reynolds moves away a few paces to exclude Castelli from the argument.

CAPTAIN REYNOLDS
We're less than a week into the operation,
and we've already got two civilian killings.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
They deserved killing.

CAPTAIN REYNOLDS
That's hardly the point, is it. What
happens if the police try to trace
Castelli's bullets?

MAJOR PRESCOTT
Then you'll just have to put up a
few smokescreens. That's what you're
here for, isn't it?

He deliberately turns his back on Reynolds to address the others.

MAJOR REYNOLDS
All right -- there's no sense holding
things up. Operations will proceed as
planned.

(to Chavez)
Do we have everyone in position?

SGT. CHAVEZ
Yes, Sir.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Good. You can start pursuing individual assignments right away. How are we doing on live wire taps?

SGT. CHAVEZ

Completion's scheduled for tomorrow.

A car glides up alongside the Commo truck. Medic: Sgt. Tanaka gets out and moves to join them.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Well?

MEDIC: SGT. TANAKA

They lost the duputy, but Smokey himself's gonna be back in circulation within a matter of days.

Castelli shakes his head in undisguised awe.

SGT. CASTELLI

Jesus, that fucking Ranger must be indestructible.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

You're forgetting your training, Sergeant. Nobody is indestructible.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM, TRAVIS - NIGHT

The room is lit by a small light on the wall above Benteen's bed. Melanie enters with a glass of water and some tablets in a paper cup. Benteen eyes her appreciatively as she approaches.

BENTEEN

Have I seen you before?

MELANIE

I was here when they brought you in.

BENTEEN

No, I mean, around town.

MELANIE

I doubt it. I just got here last week.

She hands him the tablets and offers the glass. Benteen peers at the tablets suspiciously.

BENTEEN

What're these for?

MELANIE

They'll help you to sleep.

He starts to take the tablets, gazing at her all the while.

BENTEEN

(swallowing)

Okay, so now what're you gonna do for me?

MELANIE

What did you have in mind?

Her response comes with a look of such frank appraisal that Benteen actually finds himself slightly embarrassed, and shrugs in resignation.

BENTEEN

Aw, well, it's probably against hospital regulations, anyhow.

MELANIE

(dryly)

Yes, I imagine it would be.

She takes the glass from his hand and moves away.

EXEC. MUNICIPAL BUILDING, TRAVIS - NIGHT

A phone company truck drives up and stops. Sgt. Coleman gets out wearing a phone company uniform and hard hat. He walks over to a telephone pole -- looks up at it. It carries the main wires from the municipal building. He throws a lineman's belt around the pole and starts up it expertly.

CLOSE - PHONE TRUCK

Sgt. Hall sits in the truck -- Castelli moves into the seat next to him. He is dressed in dark overalls -- black gloves. Hall peers out.

SGT. HALL

Okay, he's up at the transformer. Get going.

Castelli gets out and disappears into the shadows.

CLOSE - COLEMAN

He is at the transformers. He works quickly taping a metal box to the pole and running leads to the wires. He hears something and turns to see Castelli's shadowy figure appear on the roof of the municipal building. He waves -- then starts to pull a short antenna from the box.

INT. TRAILER PARK, TRAVIS - CAMPER - NIGHT

Prescott is watching Chavez, who sits hunched over his electronic equipment with earphones on his head. Chavez raises his thumb and

the sound of a telephone conversation begins to filter through the earphones.

FERNANDEZ (V.O.)
... no, really, I'll be there in half-an-hour.

MRS. FERNANDEZ (V.O.)
But Miguelito will probably be asleep.
Just say hello to him now.

FERNANDEZ (V.O.)
All right, put him on.

A CHILD (V.O.)
Hello...?

FERNANDEZ (V.O.)
Hello, Miguel. Tell me what you've been doing today.

There is a long, incoherent giggle on the line. Chavez switches off and removes his earphones. Prescott looks impressed and Chavez shrugs as if to say, "that's nothing."

SGT. CHAVEZ
Tomorrow we'll send someone in to 'service' the phones, then they'll be live even when they're not in use...
(makes a note on his clipboard)
That just leaves the Ranger Station.
They should be working on that now.

A constant pilot light on the listening equipment glows in the darkness.

EXT. DESERT - POV - HELICOPTER - DAY - FULL

Low trees, rolling hills and gullies. We HEAR the beating of the rotor blades as the helicopter skims over the barren terrain. The car used in the shooting at the gas station comes into view. CAMERA CIRCLES and RACKS DOWN as the Pilot's Voice is heard over.

PILOT (V.O.)
Immigration ten to DPS units -- we have an abandoned vehicle here at fence road off of ninety-A alternate...

Suddenly a shadowy animal like coyote scuttles across the open ground and lopes off to vanish amongst the rocks. CAMERA PANS BACK along its path to DISCOVER two bodies lying close to the abandoned car.

PILOT (V.O.)
Well, shit -- looks like we got some bodies down here, too...

The SOUND of the rotor INCREASES and the view below is obscured by the dust of the rotor wash as the helicopter comes in to land.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM, TRAVIS - DAY

Parau is watching Benteen rather awkwardly trying to dress himself.

BENTEEN

I don't get it -- who the hell's supposed to have killed 'em?

PARAU

Could be it was a rip-off. It certainly looks that way. There's some guy from drug enforcement in town -- says he wants to check out the bodies.

BENTEEN

Doesn't take the Feds long to stick their nose in, does it?

He is having difficulty getting his heavily bandaged hand into the sleeve of his jacket. Parau moves to help him, but Benteen brushes him aside and starts for the door, letting the sleeve hang loose. Melanie enters carrying a tray of dressings, and reacts in astonishment at seeing Benteen on his feet.

MELANIE

What do you think you're doing?

BENTEEN

Leaving.

MELANIE

You can't just discharge yourself like that! What about your dressings -- I still need to dress that wound.

Benteen holds the door for Parau and pauses to glance at his hand as if he had already forgotten all about it.

BENTEEN

Maybe I'll come by later.

He gives her the briefest smile and is gone, leaving her looking for somewhere to put down the tray.

INT. HOSPITAL - MORGUE - DAY

A white-coated, Anglo ATTENDANT leads Benteen and Parau through the swing doors and crosses to two bodies that lie on gurneys under plastic sheets.

ATTENDANT

Two males -- both Mexicans...

He catches Parau's impassive, Hispanic gaze and hesitates.

ATTENDANT

... I mean, that's what they look like.

He sounds a note of warning before raising the first sheet.

ATTENDANT

I guess the coyotes found 'em first.

Benteen and Parau look down impassively.

ATTENDANT

This one just seems to have a broken neck...

(dropping the first
sheet; raises the
second)

... but this fella's got enough holes
in him for both of 'em.

An o.s. SOUND makes Benteen look around to see Fernandez and Julia barging through the swing doors. Benteen raises a hand to indicate that this is something Julia will not wish to see and she pauses by the door, while Fernandez strides over to examine the bodies.

CLOSE ON FERNANDEZ

He looks at the first body without blinking, but betrays a definite reaction at the sight of Scar-Face, though whether this is caused by recognition or simply the man's condition is hard to tell. In either event, he quickly controls himself and turns angrily on the others.

FERNANDEZ

What happened to these people?

ANGLE TO INCLUDE OTHERS

The Morgue Attendant smiles helpfully.

ATTENDANT

Like I was just saying, this one looks
like he --

FERNANDEZ

(interrupting)

I mean, who killed them and for what
reason?

He is looking at Benteen, whose shrug is irritatingly laconic.

FERNANDEZ

Do they have any connection with the
people you killed at Sharpe's Crossing?

BENTEEN

I guess they're the guys that ran out the back.

FERNANDEZ

Can you identify them as such, or is that just an assumption?

BENTEEN

It's an assumption. But since they were found right alongside the same getaway car, I think it's a pretty good one.

FERNANDEZ

So naturally you're also assuming that they were criminals of some kind.

Benteen glances across at Julia, but sees that he is not about to get any support from her. He turns back to Fernandez with deliberately casual belligerence.

BENTEEN

That's right, criminals working for Schroeder, and probably illegal aliens at that.

FERNANDEZ

And who do you 'assume' killed them, or haven't you jumped to any conclusions about that yet?

BENTEEN

Who knows? Probably some more scum, just like 'em. That's what I plan to find out.

FERNANDEZ

Every time you people produce a corpse around here, we're told they were involved in drugs. That's yet to be proved, but the one thing that's indisputable is that the corpses are always Latino.

BENTEEN

Now just a fuckin' minute -- my deputy was killed in that shoot out. He sure as hell wasn't any Mexican!

Benteen glares at him challengingly, and Fernandez hesitates as he sees Reynolds enter to hover discreetly in b.g.

FERNANDEZ

I'm sorry about your deputy. He was a good man.

(MORE)

FERNANDEZ (Cont'd)

But I have to tell you, there are people in this town who believe that when he was killed, some of your friends decided to even up the score -- and simply gunned down these men -- no questions asked.

Now, just as Benteen is about to reply, Reynolds steps forward with a diplomatic cough, and flashes his wallet/badge.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)

Excuse me, gentlemen... Bill Petersen, Federal Drug Enforcement Agency... May I?

Fernandez watches intently as Reynolds moves to inspect the bodies, muttering sagely to himself as he does so, before finally turning back to Fernandez with an amiably placating smile.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)

I understand your concern, sir. But I can assure you it'd be wasted on these two here.

FERNANDEZ

Oh, really?

Reynolds raises the sheet to reveal Scar-Face again.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)

Well, I don't know this fella, but that one there, is Miguel Santana. He's on the wanted list, both here and in Mexico. So I guess it's fair to assume that this one wasn't in line for any medals, either.

For just a fleeting moment Fernandez's expression seems to have revealed something like relief, but now he sounds skeptical again.

FERNANDEZ

And yet there were, in fact, no drugs found in their possession, were there?

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)

No... But that just strenghtens the likelihood they were ripped off by some of their own kind.

(casually to Parau)

Your people find any shells, ammunition, that kind of thing?

PARAU

That's all with the Border Patrol Office over in Bracketville.

It's all so familiar and routine to Petersen that he almost yawns.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)
I'll have our people in Washington check
all that stuff out. But chances are
whoever did this'll be long gone.

Fernandez frowns unhappily and prepares to leave.

FERNANDEZ
Perhaps you'll be good enough to send me
a copy of your report.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)
Certainly, sir -- any part of it that's
not classified -- by all means.

It is clearly a bland way of saying he's not going to tell him much
of anything.

FERNANDEZ
Thank you.

He nods abruptly and goes out followed by Julia, who gives Benteen
a quick hostile look. Benteen turns away, still seething, to find
Petersen (Reynolds) at his side.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)
You got time for a drink.

BENTEEN
Why not.

The Morgue Attendant puts the sheets over the corpses and starts
to wheel the first of them away.

INT. JAKE'S BAR AND GRILL, TRAVIS - DAY

As Reynolds and Benteen thread their way through the sparse crowd
to find themselves a secluded place at the end of the bar, the
BARTENDER turns to face them and we recognize him as Team Sergeant
McRose...

SGT. McROSE
Morning, gentlemen. What'll it be?

BENTEEN
Whiskey.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)
Two.

McRose moves away and Reynolds chuckles musingly.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)
That Mayor doesn't seem to take too
kindly to you, does he.

BENTEEN

I guess maybe we just don't visit the same church.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)

Seems to me, you don't even live in the same country.

McRose serves their drinks and moves away again.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)

He been here long?

BENTEEN

Got elected this year -- any luck an' next year he'll get elected Lieutenant Governor.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)

Think he'll make a good one?

Benteen knocks back his drink and pushes his glass for a refill.

BENTEEN

Nobody's ever figured out what a Lieutenant Governor does except shake hands, so I guess he can handle it. Long as he's outta my hair, I don't give a damn...

McRose refills their glasses and Reynolds becomes more thoughtful.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)

That shooting at the gas station. Did it occur to you that you were maybe set up by terrorists?

BENTEEN

(ironic)

You mean folks like Yassar Arafat?

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)

I mean, anyone who sets out to create a state of anarchy and confusion with the ultimate object of subverting the government.

BENTEEN

I dunno, those guys out as the gas station never said anything about any of that.

Reynolds smiles politely, but persists.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)
 Maybe not, but what makes you so sure
 it wasn't a terrorist set up?

BENTEEN
 Oh, it was a set-up right enough. But
 I figure it was that fella Schroeder
 tryin' ta follow up on that bomb he sent
 me.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)
 And you don't think Schroeder has
 political motivations?

BENTEEN
 What's he need politics for? He's
 gettin' rich anyhow.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)
 Did it ever occur to you that maybe he
 was getting rich precisely in order to
 finance acts of terrorism?

BENTEEN
 (gives him a look)
 Seems to me you just got through telling
 the Mayor that those guys over in the
 morgue were drug runners that got
 ripped off. You never said anything
 about terrorists.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)
 No, I didn't, did I.

He pauses as if wondering whether he can confide in Benteen.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)
 Fact is, I been told to watch what I
 say around that guy.

Benteen frowns quizzically.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)
 I wouldn't wanna mention any names, but
 there's some people around Washington
 that think your Mayor's kinda close
 to Mr. Shcroeder.

Benteen deliberately hides his interest behind a bland look.

BENTEEN
 Is that a fact?

Having planted the seed, Reynolds shrugs negligently.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)

Well, who knows...

(finishing his drink)

Anyway, I guess I better get over to Bracketville -- pick up that stuff.

He stands up and takes out his wallet. Benteen rushes it aside.

BENTEEN

I'll take care of it. You be going to Washington from here?

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)

Not right away, no. I'll be over at the Ramada Inn for a while. Maybe we can get together sometime.

Benteen nods. They shake hands and Reynolds moves to leave.

BENTEEN

Lemme know what your ballistics people say.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)

You got it.

Benteen turns back to the bar to find McRose hovering over him.

SGT. McROSE

One more?

BENTEEN

Huh? No, I guess not.

He puts a bill on the bar and moves to go.

INT. BORDER PATROL OFFICE, BRACKETVILLE - DAY

OFFICER McAULEY is a chubby good ol' boy, with thinning hair and a heavy Texan accent. There are two transparent plastic bags on his desk, containing shell casings and spent bullets. The TELEPHONE RINGS.

McAULEY

(into phone)

McAuley... Hi, Jack! How you been keepin'...?

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD NEAR TRAVIS - PAY PHONE - DAY

Benteen's car is parked in a turnout while Benteen speaks into the pay phone at the edge of the road. We now INTERCUT the conversation as appropriate.

BENTEEN

(into phone)

Could be worse...

McAULEY

Yeah, they tol' me 'bout Billy Cotton.
I was real sorry to hear 'about that.
What can I do for you?

BENTEEN

Listen, Sam -- there's gonna be some
big noise from the D.E.A. coming to
see you.

McAULEY

Yeah, he already called.

Benteen glances at his watch, evidently thinking Reynolds must be working abnormally fast.

McAULEY

We have those fellas in here most every
day. What's this one want?

BENTEEN

He wants to send that stuff you picked
up at the shooting to Washington. So
do me a favor, will ya, Sam. You don't
have to tell him about it, but just hold
onto a few shells an' some bullets for
me, will ya.

McAULEY

(laughing)

Shit, Jack -- you sure don't trust those
Feds much, do ya.

Benteen glances over his shoulder with mild curiosity as he replies.
A big car is cruising towards him some several hundred yards away.
But it is moving rather slowly as if the driver had lost his way.

BENTEEN

Oh, hell, no, Sam -- It's not that.
Matter of fact, this one seems like a
real nice fella. Fact is, I wouldn't
wanna hurt his feelings. But you
know how it is -- ya send something
to Washington, and if those clowns
don't actually lose it, they're sure
as hell not gonna be in any hurry to
give you an answer, either... Yeah,
right... I'll talk to ya tomorrow...
Thanks.

As he starts to cradle the phone, the big car suddenly accelerates
and Benteen looks up in alarm.

ANOTHER ANGLE

A sustained burst of machine gun fire spews out from the car -- Bullets kick up dirt and stones all around Benteen as he hurls himself to the ground on the far side of his car, claws for his gun on his belt as he falls and rolls...

Moments later the anonymous car is already racing along the highway and Benteen is scrambling to his feet, apparently miraculously unscathed. He gets off two shots from his Magnum .44 -- but the car is already out of range...

Benteen races around to the driver's door with the intention of giving chase, only to find the whole near side of his car, including the tires, riddled with bullets...

Only now, as he holsters his gun, and pauses to draw breath, does he become aware that the side of his face is raw and bleeding as a result of throwing himself onto the rough surface of the road... He reaches into the car to take the radio/telephone.

INT. TRAILER PARK, TRAVIS - CAMPER - DAY

Prescott looks across at Chavez, who has just removed his earphones to light a cigarette.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

What're you getting from the Mayor's office?

SGT. CHAVEZ

Not a damn thing.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

What's that supposed to mean?

SGT. CHAVEZ

Sorry, sir. I mean, there's a lot of city business -- stuff like that, but nothing sensitive.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

All right, Coleman -- take over for a while.

Chavez starts to rise gratefully to make way for Sgt. Coleman, when the radio receiver at his side suddenly begins to crackle, and Deputy Frank Parau's Voice is heard over.

PARAU (V.O.)

Ranger Two here... Ranger Two... You wanna repeat that, Jack? I'm not receiving you too well...

The man in the camper listen avidly as Chavez adjusts his set to home in on the station and minimize the static.

EXT. TURNOUT, HIGHWAY - DAY

Benteen gazes ruefully at his immobile car as he speaks into his mike.

BENTEEN

Yeah, well, that doesn't surprise me none. Some of Schroeder's guys just totalled my car... I'm out at Mile Twenty-Three, you better come on over an' pick me up...

INT. CAMPER - DAY

Prescott is already moving to leave as he barks at Chavez.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Stay with it -- I'm gonna take a look.

INT. RANGERS' OFFICE - CELL AREA - DAY

The fat JAILER is about to pass a tray of food through the bars to Sgt. Askins as Parau comes hurrying by.

PARAU

Say, Mike, can you take the phones for a while? I gotta go pick up Benteen.

JAILER

Pick him up?

PARAU

They just shot up his car out on Highway Ninety...

The Jailer is still gazing after Parau as Askins reaches out through the bars to take the tray out of his hands.

SGT. ASKINS

Sure is a wild town, ain't it.

The Jailer scowls at him in sharp irritation, but Askins is already complacently examining the contents of his tray.

INT. HOSPITAL, TRAVIS - TREATMENT ROOM - DAY

Benteen sits on a stool while Melanie stands over him, dabbing at the cut on his face with a cotton swab dipped in spirit.

MELANIE

You keep going like this, and the next person that cleans you up'll be a mortician.

BENTEEN

Well, at least it won't hurt.

She looks at the swab in ironic, mock surprise.

MELANIE

This hurts...?

He makes a face and she disposes of the swab, starts rebandaging his hand.

MELANIE

What was it this time?

BENTEEN

Same people as last time.

MELANIE

They must really like you...

It is clearly an invitation to enlarge on the subject, but Benteen doesn't take it up.

MELANIE

D'you have anyone with you out there at this mobile home of yours?

BENTEEN

Yeah, a coupl'a dogs and a horse.

MELANIE

I meant someone that could fix this bandage.

BENTEEN

The Doberman's pretty smart.

They look up to see Parau in the doorway.

BENTEEN

Hi, Frank. Be right with you.

Parau sits down to wait. Melanie finishes her work and straightens up.

MELANIE

There you go.

BENTEEN

(rising)

Thanks... Maybe I'll run into you over in Jake's bar -- buy you a drink.

MELANIE

Thanks, but I'm not in the habit of waiting for strange men in bars.

BENTEEN

Okay, so I'll come by here -- and maybe we'll make it dinner at 'The Branding Iron' -- classiest restaurant this side of Brackettville.

MELANIE

Sounds very grand. Do the waiters speak French?

BENTEEN

Naw, they don't even speak English. But the steaks are okay.

He gives her a quick smile and follows Parau out..

EXT. RANGERS' OFFICE AND JAIL, TRAVIS - DAY

The Jailer and Askins come out to the street, where the Jailer hands Askins a big envelope containing his personal effects.

JAILER

I don't get it -- if you had that money all along, how come you didn't just pay your fine in the first place?

SGT. ASKINS

I figure a fella's entitled to make his protest whatever way he thinks best.

JAILER

What protest, for Chrissakes? Looks to me like you just wanted a few free meals.

Askins grins at him as if to say, "you may be right." Now Askins pauses as if wondering which way to go, and thus remains long enough to hear Benteen and Parau arguing as they pass by him to enter the office.

PARAU

You keep up this one man war, and sooner or later that guy Schroeder's gonna kill you.

BENTEEN

Whadd'ya mean, 'one man war'? You planning to quit, or something?

He glances at Askins and goes on into the office. Askins moves off down the street.

INT. RANGER STATION, TRAVIS - BENTEEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Searching through a large metal filing cabinet, the secretary, Sara, is startled as Benteen bursts into his office, still arguing with Parau.

BENTEEN

I don't give a shit what they're saying
in Austin. If they want my badge all
they gotta do is ask for it.

He becomes aware of Sara looking at him from the filing cabinet.

BENTEEN

And what's your problem?

She reacts nervously.

SARA

Nothing... I was just looking for the
file on that drunk driving case.

BENTEEN

Terry Knight?

SARA

Uh, yes, I guess so.

Benteen gives her a forbearing look and indicates the other filing cabinet.

BENTEEN

Try that one -- it's spelled with a
'K.'

He turns back to Parau, still pursuing his original thought.

BENTEEN

Matter of fact, that might not be such
a bad idea. They take my badge, I can
go on down into Mexico and look for
the sonuvabitch myself.

Looking for something in his desk drawer, he fails to find it,
slams the drawer shut, and hurts his injured hand in the process.

INT. TRAILER PARK, TRAVIS - CAMPER - DAY (EVENING)

Starting on Major Prescott as he sits at a small writing table,
debriefing Sgt. Askins.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Yes, all right, the guns are locked --
the deputies have keys -- the Jailer
doesn't... Anything else?

SGT. ASKINS

They got a real cute secretary working
in the office.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Yes, we know about her. Okay, go get yourself something to eat.

SGT. ASKINS

Yes, sir.

Sgt. Chavez looks up from his listening post as Askins exits.

SGT. CHAVEZ

Sir...? That lady in the Mayor's office just told him about the shooting out on Highway Ninety.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Okay. Keep checking his calls.

Chavez turns back to his post.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DAY (EVENING)

Sgt. Askins joins Sgt. Coleman at the picnic bench with a cheerful grin.

SGT. ASKINS

How ya doing, nigger?

SGT. COLEMAN

Yeah, very funny. I'll tell you, buddy -- you'd make a lousy fuckin' stuntman.

SGT. ASKINS

How come?

SGT. COLEMAN

You weren't supposed to try an' break my fuckin' jaw, you were just supposed to make it look that way.

SGT. ASKINS

Pretty damn convincing though, wasn't it?

SGT. COLEMAN

Convincing, shit. Only reason I didn't whip your ass, you woulda wound up in the hospital 'stead of the jail.

SGT. ASKINS

Oh, sure...

They pause to watch Reynolds drive up and enter the camper...

INT. CAMPER - DAY (EVENING)

Reynolds enters and drops a small plastic bag on the desk in front of Prescott.

REYNOLDS
Present for you, Major.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
The ammo from Castelli's Ingram?

Reynolds nods.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
What do you suggest we do with it?

REYNOLDS
I think we better dump it and send some regular .9mm stuff to ballistics so's we can have some kind of an official report to show Benteen.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
Okay, let's do that...
(mildly amused)
You hear about the shooting?

REYNOLDS
Out on the highway? I checked with Sgt. Biddle on my way back from Brackettville.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
That guy Schroeder could wind up doing us a favor.

REYNOLDS
By killing Benteen?

MAJOR PRESCOTT
Why not? His guys have tried it three times now -- maybe he'll show up to do the job himself...

Reynolds shrugs and starts to turn away.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
Oh, listen -- I've taken Sgt. Hall off that job he was doing for you.

Reynolds looks at him.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
Yeah, I want him full time on that City Attorney. He's starting in on him tonight.

Reynolds nods and is starting for the door, when Chavez suddenly holds up his hand.

SGT. CHAVEZ

Hold it, sir...

Reynolds pauses -- Chavez turns back to listen tensely to his set -- then removes his earphones and turns to Prescott.

SGT. CHAVEZ

The Mayor just called his wife -- told her he has to drive down to Mexico tonight -- San Luis.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

That's where Schroeder's supposed to have his headquarters, isn't it?

Reynolds nods.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Well, good, maybe things are beginning to move. We better keep him under surveillance 'til he gets to the border.

REYNOLDS

Gets to the border? We should keep someone right behind him all the way.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Send military personnel into Mexico?

Reynolds moves back close to Prescott to keep Chavez out of the conversation.

REYNOLDS

Listen, if he makes contact with Schroeder down there, it'll be the first real break we've had.

Prescott thinks about it for a moment, glances across to make sure Chavez isn't listening, and then comes up with a real bureaucrat's solution.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Counter-Intelligence is your department. You want to make that decision, go ahead. Just don't tell me about it 'til they get back.

Reynolds nods, tight-lipped and turns to go.

EXT. TRAILER PARK, TRAVIS - DAY (EVENING)

Sgts. Askins and Coleman rise from the picnic bench as Reynolds strides towards them from the camper.

REYNOLDS

All right, you guys are taking a trip to Mexico. Get a hold of Sgt. Castelli and report back here in twenty minutes.

Askins breaks into a huge grin.

SGT. ASKINS

Si, Senor. Con mucho gusto!

The two Sergeants are already heading for their pick-up truck before Reynolds can comment on Askins' uncalled for levity.

INT. THE BRANDING IRON BAR & RESTAURANT, TRAVIS - NIGHT

The soberly-dressed City Attorney, ALBERT BAXTER, sits at the bar, looking solitary and out of place amongst the convivial young patrons.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Reynolds and Sgt. Hall sit at the other end of the bar. They are watching Baxter as they speak.

SGT. HALL

You know, this kind of duty wasn't exactly what I had in mind when I joined.

Reynolds agrees with him, but isn't about to say so.

REYNOLDS

Never mind. Just think of all the free drinks you're getting.

They watch Baxter slip down from his bar stool and head for the exit.

REYNOLDS

Okay, go ahead. I'll take care of the check.

Sgt. Hall nods and moves to follow Baxter. Reynolds is just finishing his drink when he reacts to something o.s.

POV

Benteen and Melanie are being ushered into a booth by a hostess.

ANGLE ON BENTEEN AND MELANIE

Benteen has just ordered some drinks and the WAITER is moving away as Reynolds moves into frame.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)
Hi, how you been?

Benteen nods laconically.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)
I hear you had a little trouble today.

BENTEEN
Nothing serious.

Reynolds glances politely at Melanie.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)
Don't I get an introduction?

BENTEEN
Huh? Oh, yeah, Melanie Wainwright,
Bill Petersen.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)
(shaking hands)
Pleased to meet you.

MELANIE
Are you in the law enforcement business
too?

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)
(blandly evasive)
Not in any serious way, no.
(indicating Benteen's
wounded hand)
Looks too much like a sure fire way
of getting yourself hurt to me.

BENTEEN
Buy you a drink?

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)
No... No, thanks. I was just leaving.
(to Melanie)
Nice talking to you.

He turns to go and Benteen calls after him.

BENTEEN
You send that stuff to Washington?

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)

Huh...? Oh, yeah, sure. I'll let you know soon as I hear something.

He smiles reassuringly, but then as he turns away his expression betrays just a hint of irritation at Benteen's persistence.

EXT. HIGHWAY NEAR BORDER - NIGHT

A sedan with Fernandez at the wheel goes streaking by and heads on towards the distant glow of light that marks the border towns of El Paso and Ciudad Juarez. Moments later the A Team's pick-up truck with Askins at the wheel, pulls out from behind another car and passes perilously close to a huge, oncoming truck, as the Sergeant strives to stay on the Mayor's tail.

INT./EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT - A TEAM PICK-UP

The big rig goes thundering by, its horn BLARING angrily. Coleman, who is sitting nearest to the oncoming traffic, glances reproachfully at Askins, who keeps his eyes on the Mayor's car up ahead, and seems blithely unaware of the narrow miss they have just experienced.

SGT. ASKINS

Mayor sure is in a hurry...

SGT. COLEMAN

Yeah... Did ya happen to see that truck go by?

SGT. ASKINS

Don't worry, kid. This is a government vehicle -- we got all kinds of insurance.

Coleman feels scant reassurance as the pick-up goes barrelling on into the night.

EXT. BORDER BRIDGE, SAN LUIS - NIGHT

A line of traffic is drawn up on the bridge, waiting to pass on into Mexico. A brief hold-up at the checkpoint gives Fernandez a chance to get out of his car and wipe the windshield with a piece of rag. He glances back uneasily.

POV

The A Team pick-up stands in line just two cars back.

RESUME SCENE

The traffic at the checkpoint begins to flow again and Fernandez has to hurry to get back behind the wheel.

EXT. RECREATION PARK, TRAVIS - NIGHT

Baxter stands by the fence, watching a group of Chicano teenagers playing basketball -- the lithe, fluid movements of their bare limbs in marked contrast to his tense posture and avid gaze.

REVERSE

Sgt. Hall sits watching from his car. He raises a camera with a long telephoto lens.

POV THROUGH LENS

The game is breaking up. Baxter is talking to a good-looking boy in shorts and tank shirt. The shutter snaps -- the motorized drive whirrs and the shutter snaps again, while the boy calls casually to his departing companions before resuming his conversation with Baxter, who is edging him hesitantly towards his car.

EXT. BENTEEN'S TRAILER, NEAR TRAVIS - NIGHT

Two dogs, a Doberman and a German Shepherd, come bounding out of the shadows as Benteen's car comes in off the dirt road and stops in front of the beat-up old mobile home that is adjoined by a small corral. Melanie comes from the car and immediately crosses to examine the horse that has come trotting up to the rail. Benteen follows more slowly, pausing to greet the dogs and then admiring Melanie's figure which is shown to great advantage as she reaches up to stroke the horse's mane.

MELANIE

He's beautiful...

BENTEEN

(absently)

You think so?

MELANIE

Well, of course. Don't you?

She turns to find herself squeezed between the corral rail and Benteen, who has come to stand right behind her. Neither one of them is any longer concerned with actual content of their conversation.

BENTEEN

I dunno... I guess I never thought about it...

There is a long pause.

MELANIE

Aren't you going to show me your house?

BENTEEN

If that's what you want to see...

He reaches out to take her in his arms.

EXT. "LOVERS LANE," NEAR TRAVIS - NIGHT

Sgt. Hall's car is parked with its lights out. He peers out into the darkness and quietly opens the door.

ANGLE ON BAXTER'S CAR

The car is parked on the grass verge of the dirt road. The young Mexican boy is leaning back against the seat. The boy gazes into space with patient indifference. Now, suddenly a series of bright flashes, punctuated by the clicking and whirring of Sgt. Hall's camera, Baxter raises his head from the boy's lap and stares at the camera in frozen horror.

EXT. HOTEL ISABELLA AND STREET, SAN LUIS - NIGHT

The lobby is deserted save only for Schroeder's Lieutenant, Luis, who sits in an armchair, watching Fernandez hurry up the broad stairs to the second floor as Coleman and Castelli enter the lobby and go to the desk, where a shifty-looking CLERK moves to meet them with little enthusiasm. Castelli makes like a cheerfully crass tourist with fractured Spanish, while Coleman watches Fernandez disappear through some double doors on the second floor.

CASTELLI

Hi, there -- Bonnas notches... We'd like a coupl'a rooms -- three if ya got 'em.

CLERK

We don't have three rooms.

CASTELLI

That's okay, we don't mind sharing.

CLERK

We don't have any rooms.

Castelli gazes around the empty lobby, grins at Luis, and digs a fistful of dollars from his pocket.

CASTELLI

Aw, come on -- you gotta be kidding.
Look, real money!

The Desk Clerk gives him a pained look and glances at Luis, who rises to come over.

CASTELLI

Well, whadd'ya say -- you gonna find us a room.

Castelli flourishes the wad of bills in Luis's face, and the big Mexican catches his wrist, gently guides his hand with the money in it back to his pocket, and addresses Coleman with a dangerously amiable smile.

LUIS

We don't have any rooms. You take your friend to the Avenida Carranza, they got nice hotels -- muy tipico.

COLEMAN

(nods agreeably)

Yeah, sure... Come on, Joe -- let's go check it out.

CASTELLI

(an equable shrug)

Okay, why not...

He lets Coleman lead him away. Luis escorts them to the door with a fixed smile, which vanishes as he turns back into the lobby to pick up the house phone.

EXT. SIDE STREET NEAR HOTEL ISABELLA - NIGHT

The A Team truck is parked on a darkened side street, within view of the hotel.

ANGLE ON CAB

Askins and Coleman are dozing, while Castelli keeps watch at the wheel. He is about to light a cigarette when something o.s. attracts his attention and he nudges Askins.

POV

Fernandez comes out of the hotel, gets into his car, and drives away.

RESUME SCENE

Castelli fires up his engine, the truck noses out into the street, and takes off in discreet pursuit.

EXT. SHANTY TOWN, SAN LUIS - NIGHT

Fernandez parks his car, looks around to check that he is not being followed, and continues on foot down an unpaved, dirt road.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The A Team's truck pulls up within sight of Fernandez's parked car. Castelli remains behind the wheel, while Askins and Coleman get out to follow the Mayor.

EXT. HOUSE AND SIDE STREET - NIGHT

Fernandez comes down the badly-lit side street and knocks on the door of a small house near the corner.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Askins and Coleman come around the corner and stop abruptly to avoid being seen.

ASKINS AND COLEMAN'S POV

Waiting on the doorstep, Fernandez is just turning to glance back at CAMERA, when the door is opened by an old MEXICAN WOMAN, whose astonishment immediately gives way to the wide-eyed anxiety of someone who knows they are about to receive bad news. Fernandez ushers her back into the house and closes the door behind him.

RESUME SCENE

Coleman looks quizzically at Askins, who shrugs, then lights a cigarette as if to indicate that all they can do is wait.

INT./EXT. A TEAM TRUCK - LATER

Castelli sits waiting patiently at the wheel. Sensing some presence on the far side of the truck, he looks up to see two men gazing in at him. Turning quickly to his left he finds himself looking straight into Luis's unsmiling face. Now, before Castelli can go for his gun, Luis rips open the door, drags him out, and whacks him across the side of the head with a heavy pistol.

Several more men emerge from the shadows. Leaving the unconscious Castelli with two of these, Luis signals to the others and leads them off in the direction previously taken by Askins and Coleman.

EXT. SIDE STREET - NIGHT

Askins and Coleman are still watching the house recently entered by Fernandez. Askins frowns unhappily and turns to Coleman before moving to take a closer look.

ASKINS

You better go on back and tell
Castelli this is gonna take a while.

Coleman nods and starts back down the street.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Glancing back to check Askins' progress, Coleman turns away again to find himself confronted by six men, strung out across the narrow street barely ten yards away. Clawing for the gun in his shoulder holster, he lets out a cry of warning that is cut short as one of the men throws a knife, which buries itself in his chest.

ANGLE ON ASKINS

He whirls around, sees Coleman go down, and has just pulled his own gun, when a fusillade of shots sends it spinning away into the gutter, and he is almost knocked to the ground by a bullet that smacks into his shoulder. He turns, ducks, and staggers away into a dark alley. The six men, who have been advancing almost at leisure, break into a trot -- totally confident of finishing the job.

EXT. ALLEY AND PLAZA, SAN LUIS - NIGHT - LATER

Weakened -- almost exhausted -- Askins drags himself from the abandoned hovel in which he has been taking refuge and staggers towards the plaza, where the A Team truck was parked.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Askins comes to peer around the corner and sees TWO THUGS standing guard over the badly beaten Castelli, who is slumped up against the truck. Weighing up his chances of jumping the two men, Askins is just starting forward when another four of the men who have been hunting him, come back across the plaza to rejoin their comrades.

CLOSE ON ASKINS

He ducks back into the alley, biting his lip in frustration as he is forced to watch the men throw Castelli into the back of the truck and drive away.

EXT. RANGERS' OFFICE, TRAVIS - DAY

Benteen's car pulls up in front of the office. He gets out, registers a border patrol vehicle that is already parked there, and goes in.

INT. BENTEEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Sam McAuley, the chubby old Border Patrolman from Brackettville, has evidently been enjoying the company of the chronically flirtatious Sara, and now he turns almost guiltily as Benteen enters.

McAULEY

Hey, Jack, how are ya?

Benteen nods.

McAULEY

The little lady's just been telling me you been gettin' yourself in trouble again.

Benteen brushes this aside with a deprecating gesture of denial.

McAULEY

Brought you those samples you asked me for.

He drops a transparent plastic bag of spent ammunition on Benteen's desk. Sara is watching with frank curiosity.

BENTEEN

Thanks -- 'preciate it. Come on, I'll buy you a cup of coffee.

He sweeps the bag into his desk drawer and locks it. McAuley grins at Sara as Benteen steers him out the door.

McAULEY

Nice meetin' ya, Miss.

Sara responds with a mechanical smile then turns to gaze enigmatically at Benteen's desk. It could be the vacuous curiosity of a none too bright young girl -- or it could be something more.

EXT. WAR MEMORIAL AND STREET, TRAVIS - DAY

Sgt. Hall is whittling a piece of wood as he lounges on a bench in front of the Mexican War Memorial directly opposite City Hall. He looks up to see Benteen and McAuley cross from the Rangers' Office to the diner and resumes his seemingly mindless task.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Fernandez's dusty, mud-spattered car comes around the square and pulls up in front of City Hall. Fernandez gets out and hurries into the building. Sgt. Hall discards his piece of wood and moves away rather faster than seems compatible with his previously indolent manner.

INT. TRAILER PARK, TRAVIS - COMMUNICATIONS TRUCK - DAY

The dim glow of a small red light illuminates a section of the trailer that has been set up as a dark room. Major Prescott removes an 8 x 10 photograph from the developing tray and hangs it up to dry, humming a deliberate parody of an old song as he works.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

'Getting to know you...'

He grins mirthlessly at Reynolds, and turns to study the next picture that is still swimming in the tank.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

'Getting to like you...'

He takes the picture from the tank and holds it up for Reynolds to see. It features Albert Baxter's terror-stricken face just as he is raising his head from the Mexican Boy's lap.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
And -- Bingo! We're right into what
you might call a 'full blown' love
affair.

He switches on the light and offers the picture to Reynolds, who
declines to take it.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
Oh, boy, this fella's gonna be downright
anxious to work for us for the rest of
his natural born life.

REYNOLDS
You think so...?

MAJOR PRESCOTT
Well, sure he is -- if 'natural' is
what you wanna call it. I think we'll
go pay him a visit tonight.

REYNOLDS
Don't you think we should maybe wait
until Sgt. Askins reports back?

MAJOR PRESCOTT
Hell, no. What for?

They are interrupted by a knock at the door. Sgt. Hall sticks
his head in.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
What is it?

SGT. HALL
He's back, sir... The Mayor -- I just
saw him drive in.

REYNOLDS
What about Askins? Has Chavez heard
anything?

Sgt. Hall shakes his head.

REYNOLDS
All right, keep checking. Let me know
as soon as you hear something.

SGT. HALL
Yes, sir.

He closes the door and Reynolds turns back to face Prescott, who
indicates the drying photographs with a supercilious smile.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
You still figure we ought to wait?

REYNOLDS

(defensively)

It's still only twenty-four hours...

MAJOR PRESCOTT

That's right, twenty-four hours. But we've gotta report to the Colonel later tonight.

REYNOLDS

So...?

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Well, if you're gonna have to tell him you got three guys missing on an unauthorized trip to Mexico...

(indicating photographs)

Maybe it'd be a good idea to have something positive to report as well.

REYNOLDS

You mean, something 'positive' like we're in the blackmail business now?

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Yeah, well, suppose you let me worry about that.

He turns away and lovingly hangs up the last of the photographs to dry.

INT. HOTEL ISABELLA - CORRIDOR & RECEPTION ROOM - DAY

Though now dilapidated, the threadbare furnishings and grandiose architecture indicate that the place had pretensions; perhaps the home of some long dead governor.

Flanked by Luis and another hulking THUG, Schroeder arrives at the top of the grand staircase and starts down a corridor.

Luis opens a big double door and they enter a dim cavernous room in which receptions may once have been held. Castelli is strapped to a chair, which stands in the middle of the room, that is otherwise devoid of furniture. He raises his eyes as the three men approach. Frightened as he may be, he is clearly determined to play out the role of a tough little Italian.

SCHROEDER

Good evening. My name is Schroeder
-- what's yours?

There is no response. Schroeder glances at Luis, who gives Castelli an open-handed slap in the face that almost takes his head off.

SCHROEDER

You have no name...?

Blood trickles from Castelli's lips, but he remains silent. Luis steps forward again, but Schroeder calls him off with a bleak smile.

SCHROEDER

No, no, at this rate the young man
will be dead before we even get to
know him...

(to Castelli)

What did you come here for?

SGT. CASTELLI

I'm a tourist.

SCHROEDER

A tourist -- without papers...?

Castelli shrugs.

SCHROEDER

And your friends? They're tourists
also?

CASTELLI

Yeah...

SCHROEDER

And if I tell you they are dead -- what
do you say to that?

SGT. CASTELLI

I'd say they had a lousy vacation.

SCHROEDER

And what made you choose San Luis?

SGT. CASTELLI

Seemed like a nice place.

SCHROEDER

It's a shithouse.

(suddenly much harder)

Who sent you?

SGT. CASTELLI

Nobody sent me.

Schroeder nods at Luis, who gives Castelli another whack in the face.

SCHROEDER

I'll tell you who sent you. Mr.
Benteen sent you.

He interprets Castelli's surprised look as one of admission.

SCHROEDER

I've been hoping he'd finally send someone to make a deal with me. But you're not talking -- so you're not here to make a deal -- he sent you here to kill me, right?

Castelli shakes his head and Luis hits him yet again.

SCHROEDER

No...?

SGT. CASTELLI

(weakly)

No...

Luis moves to hit him again, but this time Schroeder holds him back as if some more amusing idea had just occurred to him.

SCHROEDER

So you are just a tourist; you have no name; and you have no purpose here... You know what I think? I think you are a missing person...

(liking the sound of it)

Yes, 'a missing person.'

(turns to Luis)

Take his picture... Perhaps he has friends who would like to help him.

Luis grabs Castelli's hair to hold back his head, while the other thug produces a small Polaroid and proceeds to take a picture.

INT. RANGER'S OFFICE, TRAVIS - DAY - CLOSE - BULLETS

Three slugs on a paper blotter -- a ruler lies next to them to show their size. Next to this is another blotter, half-a-dozen shell casings -- all marked. A hand picks up one of the slugs.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Benteen holds up the slug to the light and scrutinizes it. He looks at it a longtime -- to the point where Parau, who is sitting behind him is showing signs of impatience. Finally, Benteen puts down the slug and picks up one of the shell casings.

BENTEEN

You wanna get me my Cartridge Headstamp Catalogue?

Parau gets up lazily and goes over to a shelf, while Benteen puts down the shell and picks up another.

PARAU
 (bringing catalogue)
 I thought that D.E.A. fella was havin'
 all this done up in Washington...

BENTEEN
 (leafing through
 catalogue)
 He is, but who knows when those guys'll
 get off their ass. Here, take a look
 at this.

He holds up a shell casing for Parau.

PARAU
 What about it?

BENTEEN
 That's one from the bastards that
 killed Billy.
 (looking up)
 See that date? It's fifty-one.

PARAU
 (mildly perplexed)
 So...

Still leafing through the book, Benteen holds up another casing
 for Parau to see.

BENTEEN
 This one's from the dirt road where
 those two Mexicans got it. Dated
 forty-three -- different headstamp,
 different lettering, different markings
 on the cartridge case.

PARAU
 Meaning that whoever shot those
 Mexicans didn't belong to the same
 group that bushwacked you an' Billy.
 But you never thought they did, did
 you?

BENTEEN
 (frowns; thumbs a
 couple more pages)
 No, I guess not... But this forty-
 three here -- I can't find it listed.
 Looks Canadian, but there's no entry
 for forty-three...

There is a knock on the door and Benteen automatically sweeps the
 bullets back into a cardboard box.

BENTEEN

Come in.

Julia appears in the doorway -- to be greeted by a warm smile from Parau and a slightly more tentative one from Benteen.

BENTEEN

Hi, what's uh...?

He sweeps the spent ammunition into a little box.

JULIA

Can I talk to you a minute?

BENTEEN

Sure. How've you been?

She seems tense and preoccupied. Parau is already moving to make a discreet exit.

BENTEEN

Just a moment, Frank.

(hands him the box)

Get this off to our lab people in Austin, will you. Tell 'em I'll give 'em a call later.

Parau takes the box and leaves. Benteen turns to smile at Julia.

BENTEEN

What's on your mind?

Reminded of her purpose, she adopts the stolid frown of someone who expects to be disbelieved.

JULIA

Look, I don't know who's doing it, but there's definitely someone trying to get at the Mayor.

BENTEEN

Get at him...?

Having expected something of greater gravity, he can't resist a sardonic smile. Julia frowns irritably.

JULIA

Yes, trying to make his life here impossible.

BENTEEN

Aw, now who'd want to do a thing like that?

JULIA

You think it's funny?

BENTEEN

Well, hold on now -- you haven't even told me what these people are supposed to be doing yet.

JULIA

Well, for one thing -- and he didn't want me to tell you this -- but he's being watched... Followed by someone.

BENTEEN

(dead pan)

Being followed, huh?

She nods stolidly.

BENTEEN

Well, I'll certainly keep my eyes open, but it's kind'a hard to arrest someone for just --

JULIA

(interrupts furiously)

That's not the point! I'm not asking you to dig up some dumb redneck and slap his wrist. You can find one of those on every damn street corner in this town.

BENTEEN

Then what exactly are you --

JULIA

I'm telling you that there are people at work, who probably share your primitive ideas, who are deliberately setting out to discredit the Mayor and destroy his career.

BENTEEN

That's right, they're called Republicans, they've got an office right down the street.

JULIA

I'm not talking about legitimate political opposition, and you know it!

Anxious to stave off her anger, he comes around the desk and tries to lay a reassuring hand on her shoulder.

BENTEEN

All right, I'm sorry... So tell me, what else are these people doing?

She hesitates, less sure of herself now.

JULIA

I think someone's been bugging our phones.

BENTEEN

What makes you think so?

JULIA

(feeling foolish)

I don't know -- it just sounds different...

BENTEEN

Sounds different, huh...?

JULIA

(pushes him away
angrily)

Yes, it does! It sounds different!

BENTEEN

How come Fernandez isn't telling me all this?

She shrugs, reluctant to answer.

BENTEEN

Maybe he thinks I'm in on this big conspiracy, huh?

Irritated by the implied agreement of her silence, he deliberately provokes her.

BENTEEN

That's the trouble with you redhot liberals -- every time you have a problem you yell foul, and then -- if you don't get your own way, you just decide there's some kind of a conspiracy against you.

JULIA

Fuck off!

She storms to the door and slams it behind her. Benteen turns away, picks up one of the spent bullets from his desk and tosses it thoughtfully in his hand.

INT. ALBERT BAXTER'S APARTMENT, TRAVIS - NIGHT

Baxter hurries into the kitchen to switch off the alarm on the stove, and takes out a TV dinner.

He removes the tinfoil cover and disposes of it with the fussy precision of an elderly bachelor accustomed to fending for himself. But now, as he carries his dinner into the living room, it is clear that he is under some tension that goes beyond his domestic concerns.

Considering that it is only a TV dinner, the table is rather elaborately set and includes a tall candle in a holder. He picks up some kitchen matches as if to light the candle when three peremptory RINGS on the DOORBELL make him start up in fright. He moves to an angle of the window and peers out past the curtains.

BAXTER'S POV

Prescott and Sgt. Hall in conservative business suits stand on the doorstep. One of them carries a briefcase.

RESUME SCENE

Still nervous and now mystified as well, Baxter goes to open the door, where upon Major Prescott steps forward like a salesman to prevent it being closed again.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Mr. Baxter?

BAXTER

Yes...?

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Good evening -- my name's Petersen.
(indicating Sgt. Hall)

This is Mr. Paul -- we're with the
Defence Intelligence Agency -- D.I.A.

He produces a wallet and shows an I.D. marked with all manner of red security clearances. Baxter is already retreating as they enter and close the door behind them.

BAXTER

D.I.A.? I've never -- I mean, is that
like the C.I.A. or something...?

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Something like that, yes. But we work
mostly on internal matters. We'd like
to ask you some questions concerning
security at City Hall.

Baxter is hesitant and confused. Major Prescott indicates the dining table as if seeing it for the first time.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Oh, I'm sorry, I see we're interrupting
your dinner.

(MORE)

MAJOR PRESCOTT (Cont'd)
 (peers at it appreciately)
 Swiss steak, huh? Look, sir, why
 don't you just go right ahead while
 we talk. Pity to spoil your dinner...

He pulls back the chair at the head of the table, giving Baxter
 little choice but to sit down again.

BAXTER
 Well, thank you... But I'm not really
 clear as to how I can help you. I
 mean, what exactly, uh...?

They sit down on either side of him and Major Prescott puts his
 briefcase on the table.

SGT. HALL
 It's quite straightforward, sir.
 Simple, really...

He pauses and smiles, encouraging Baxter to pick up his knife and
 fork.

SGT. HALL
 We have reliable information telling
 us that Mayor Fernandez has close
 connections with certain subversive
 elements, both here in Travis and on
 the other side of the border.

BAXTER
 Subversive...?

MAJOR PRESCOTT
 Terrorists, if you prefer.

BAXTER
 Oh, but that's impossible!

MAJOR PRESCOTT
 On the contrary -- it's an established
 fact. All we need from you is some
 additional data.

BAXTER
 From me...

Major Prescott opens his briefcase without revealing the contents,
 takes out a micro-camera and puts it on the table in front of
 Baxter.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
 We need photo copies of all the
 Mayor's personal papers.

Baxter gazes at the camera and shakes his head speechlessly.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

You have nothing to worry about. The case will never come to court. You'll never be called upon to testify.

SGT. HALL

Besides which, it's your patriotic duty. Your government will be very grateful.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

We may even be able to arrange for some small payment.

There is a pause.

BAXTER

No -- you don't understand -- I'm sure you must be wrong about all this. Mr. Fernandez has been very good to me -- you're asking me to invade his personal privacy. I just can't do that.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

You can't.

Baxter shakes his head.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Seems to me you're being just a little moralistic here... There are worse things than the loss of a little privacy, you know.

He takes a picture from his briefcase and tosses it right into the TV dinner.

CLOSE - BAXTER

He gazes at the gravy-flecked image of himself with the Mexican boy in the car.

SGT. HALL

Oh, much worse, like for instance, having some angry Mexicans tear your balls off.

FULL

Baxter looks up shattered. Major Prescott frowns at Sgt. Hall.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

That's going a bit far, Mr. Paul.

But his smile for Baxter is less than reassuring.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

We certainly wouldn't encourage any violence of that kind. Mind you, I can't say to what extent we'd be able to restrain the boy's father...

(after a pause)

But naturally, you'd lose your job, and some kind of prosecution would inevitably have to follow.

(smiling at Sgt. Hall)

They hand out some really awesome sentences for that kind of thing in this state, you know... Silly really, because sex offenders don't tend to live very long in those state pens, anyhow.

(rising)

No, Mr. Baxter. I don't think a little loss of privacy for Mr. Fernandez is going to be too high a price for you to pay.

He places the camera at Baxter's side, then takes a handkerchief and meticulously wipes the gravy from the photograph before putting it back in front of Baxter.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

You can have this one for your scrapbook. We'll get together again tomorrow -- see if you've got anything that'd make it worth our while to give you back the negatives.

He moves away and Sgt. Hall gives Baxter an effeminate smile.

SGT. HALL

Eat your dinner, darling -- you looked famished.

He follows Major Prescott to the door.

INT./EXT. ABANDONED HOVEL, JUAREZ SLUM - NIGHT

Askins peers cautiously from the doorway of the abandoned hovel in which he has been hiding. The makeshift dressing he has made for his wound is soaked in blood.

ASKINS POV

The closes faces of the people passing by on the busy street at the mouth of the alley provide little reassurance. An old man is selling tacos from a barrow on the corner.

RESUME SCENE

Askins digs in his pocket, finds some money, and starts cautiously for the man with the barrow.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Askins approaches the old man, indicates his wares and holds up two fingers. The man takes little interest in Askins' dishevelled appearance. But now, just as he is paying, Askins sees four tough-looking men approaching. The old man turns to look after him curiously as Askins grabs his tacos and scuttles back down the alley.

EXT. DRIVE-IN, BRACKETTVILLE - NIGHT

A Clint Eastwood double feature is in progress. Prescott and Reynolds pull away from the box office and park alongside a Ford station wagon in one of the back rows. The door of the Ford opens and Colonel Matson, dressed in civilian clothes, gets out, crosses to Reynolds' car and gets into the back seat.

ANOTHER ANGLE

An old convertible with two girls hardly out of their teens pulls up on the other side of Reynolds' car. The first girl immediately draws her companion's attention to Reynolds and Prescott and grins flirtatiously. Prescott has turned in the passenger seat to address Matson, who is hidden in the shadows of the rear seat. But Reynolds, who sits behind the wheel, has no alternative but to acknowledge the girls, albeit with a somewhat half-hearted grin.

INT. REYNOLDS' CAR - NIGHT

There is no sound from the drive-in screen as Matson suddenly flares up at Prescott.

COLONEL MATSON

Are you telling me this was done on
your authority?

Reynolds glances at Prescott, sees that he is not about to get his support so cuts in himself.

REYNOLDS

No, sir. I used my own initiative.

COLONEL MATSON

What do you mean, 'initiative?'
(MORE)

COLONEL MATSON (Cont'd)

Sending military personnel on a totally unauthorized mission into a foreign country isn't 'initiative,' it's a direct contravention of standing orders.

REYNOLDS

Yes, sir. I'm aware of that.

The girls in the car across the way are still grinning at Reynolds, making it even harder for him to come up with an acceptable reply.

REYNOLDS

I assumed that a successful outcome might cause the irregularity to be overlooked.

COLONEL MATSON

But in fact you've nothing to show for it, and right now you don't even know where those men of yours are.

REYNOLDS

(contrite)

No, sir...

COLONEL MATSON

And you apparently have no other progress to report...

REYNOLDS

Nothing material -- no, sir.

Matson pauses disgustedly, and turns to Major Prescott.

COLONEL MATSON

Very well, then, what about this pervert, Baxter?

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Looks promising, sir. I'm expecting some very positive results within the next twenty-four hours.

COLONEL MATSON

Good, good... Now what about this Ranger? Any problem there?

Prescott deliberately gets out from under by deferring to Reynolds.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Captain...?

Reynolds hesitates.

COLONEL MATSON

Well...?

He has turned to Reynolds as if he were someone of whom he no longer expected anything good.

REYNOLDS

Benteen, sir? Difficult to tell.
He certainly has no time for the
Mayor. But he does have a certain
professional pride that could
eventually cause us some problem.

Matson grunts dismissively, then turns to Prescott, and prepares to leave.

COLONEL MATSON

All right, Major, you seem to have
things in hand...

He opens the door, but can't resist a final dig at Reynolds.

COLONEL MATSON

See that I get a report on those men
of yours within the next twenty-four
hours.

He gets out and strides away without waiting for a response.

INT. BENTEEN'S TRAILER, NEAR TRAVIS - BEDROOM - DAY

Melanie is sleeping in the big bed, her clothes slung over a nearby chair. She stretches, wakes, discovers she is alone, and looks up to see Benteen standing in the doorway with a cup of coffee in his hand.

MELANIE

Going to work...?

He nods, still gazing at her nakedness over the rim of his cup. She smiles indulgently.

MELANIE

I don't have to be at the hospital
until noon...

BENTEEN

If that's an invitation, I'll have
to take a raincheck.

MELANIE

Okay, Officer, you've got it. But
it's only good for twelve hours.

BENTEEN

I'll be sure and cash it in.

She grins and snuggles against the pillow and yawns.

MELANIE

D'you mind if I let myself out later...?

BENTEEN

Sure... I'll lock up the dogs in the yard.

MELANIE

(a sleepy mumble)

's all right, they won't bother me.

BENTEEN

No, but you may bother them.

She is already asleep again as he turns away.

INT. TRAILER PARK, TRAVIS - COMMUNICATIONS TRUCK - DAY

Sgt. Chavez looks up from his listening post as Reynolds enters.

REYNOLDS

Anything from Askins?

Chavez shakes his head somberly.

SGT. CHAVEZ

No, sir.

Reynolds' jaw tightens -- he hesitates for a moment, then turns around and stalks out, almost bowling over Sgt. McRose, who is just entering. The big, black Sergeant watches Reynolds stride away before closing the door to join Chavez.

EXT./INT. RANGERS' OFFICE, TRAVIS - DAY

Benteen comes from the street just as the Mailman comes out of the office.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Parau greets Benteen from behind the counter.

PARAU

Morning, Jack.

Benteen nods distractedly as he starts towards his office, passing Sara as he goes. Busy opening the mail, Sara belatedly becomes aware of his presence and calls out a greeting to his receding back.

SARA

Morning, Mr. Benteen...

He raises a hand in salute and disappears into his office. Sara turns back to open another letter, suddenly lets out an incoherent cry of revulsion and pushes her chair back from the desk. Parau moves to her side and she points at something lying on the desk. Parau picks up a Polaroid picture, glances at it with a puzzled frown and passes it on to Benteen, who has come hurrying from his office.

INSERT

The closeup Polaroid of Castelli's bleeding face and glazed eyes. Printed along the white base are the words: "Ready For A Deal?"

RESUME SCENE

Parau is already examining the envelope from which the picture came. Benteen glances at Sara.

BENTEEN

It's all right... Why don't you go sit down in my office for a while.

She nods numbly and moves away. Parau hands Benteen the envelope and indicates the stamp.

PARAU

San Luis...

Benteen nods and reexamines the picture.

BENTEEN

Oh, sure, it's Schroeder, right enough. But who the hell's this guy?

Parau takes the picture to have another look, and frowns.

PARAU

I dunno -- seems to me I've seen him before...

BENTEEN

Around here?

PARAU

I dunno, maybe not. Kind of a mess, isn't he?

BENTEEN

Okay, let's just keep quiet about it for a while, huh?

He takes back the picture, slips it into his breast pocket, and turns away.

INT. LOBBY - RAMADA INN - TRAVIS - DAY

Reynolds crosses the lobby to speak to the DESK CLERK

REYNOLDS

Two-Oh-One, please...

DESK CLERK

There you go, Sir.

(handing him the key)

Oh, there's a Mr. Johnson to see you, Sir.
He's right over there, by the news stand.

Reynold's quick glance across the lobby suggests that this is an unscheduled and, therefore, unwelcome meeting.

REYNOLDS

Thank you.

He starts towards the News Stand, where Prescott (Johnson) is thumbing through a magazine.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Reynolds has almost reached Prescott, when he is intercepted by Benteen, who slaps him jovially on the back.

BENTEEN

Hi, Bill - how ya doin'?

REYNOLDS

(taken aback)

Oh, hi. How are you?

BENTEEN

Fine... Whadd'ya hear from Washington?

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)

Washington...?

BENTEEN

Yeah, about that ammunition.

Something about Reynolds response suggests he is making a snap decision simply to get out from under increasing pressure.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)

Oh, yeah, I was gonna tell you about that. Seems like that stuff was just standard .9mm, like you could pick up anywhere. No special characteristics at all.

BENTEEN

Guess that puts us right back where we started, huh?

He glances idly at Prescott, whose back is turned as he scans his

magazine.

BENTEEN

How much longer you gonna be in town?

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)

I dunno... Another week maybe.

BENTEEN

I figured maybe I'd go shoot some quail this weekend. You wanna come along?

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)

Sounds great...

(modestly)

I dunno how good a shot I am, but...

BENTEEN

Don't worry -- nothing to it. I'll give you a call.

He is about to move off, when he has another thought.

BENTEEN

Oh, say -- remember that stuff you told me about Fernandez?

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)

Fernandez?

BENTEEN

Yeah, the Mayor... About how some folks reckoned he could be involved with drugs, or terrorism, or whatever.

Reynolds nods tentatively.

BENTEEN

Where'd that information come from, d'you know?

Reynolds is elaborately casual.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)

Oh, it wasn't ever anything official... Why d'you ask? You hear anything like that yourself?

BENTEEN

No, not really. I was just wondering if you had some kind of contacts down in Mexico. You know -- undercover agents -- that kind of stuff...?

Benteen nods understandingly, takes the Polaroid from his breast pocket and hands it to Reynolds.

BENTEEN
Ever seen this fella before?

Unable to hide his shock, Reynolds quickly pretends that it is the man's condition rather than his identity that has caused his sharp reaction.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)
Oh, man, he looks like he's been...

BENTEEN
(cutting in)
D'you know him?

Reynolds regains his composure and shakes his head.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)
I don't think so... Who is it?

Benteen shrugs as if to say, "search me," and Reynolds reexamines the picture.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)
It's been trimmed, hasn't it.

Benteen looks quizzical.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)
Yeah, look. Someone's cut the bottom off it.

He hands the picture back to Benteen, who feigns mild surprise at finding that the section on which the message was printed is missing.

BENTEEN
Yeah, you're right...
(shrugs)
Maybe that's the only way to fit the envelope.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)
Where'd you get it?

BENTEEN
Dunno... My deputy found it in the mail.
Probably some nut -- we sure got enough of 'em around here.

He casually stuffs the picture back into his pocket.

BENTEEN
See you Saturday, huh?

He raises his hand in a lazy salute and walks away. Reynolds is still standing there when Prescott appears at his side.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

What the hell was all that with the picture?

Reynolds looks blank and Prescott frowns impatiently.

REYNOLDS

Castelli... It was Sergeant Castelli.

Prescott looks at him with something like consternation.

INT. RANGERS' OFFICE, TRAVIS - DAY

Sara is back at her desk as Benteen enters and starts for his office.

BENTEEN

Get me Ranger Headquarters in Austin, will you.

SARA

Captain Hayes...?

BENTEEN

Whoever...

He walks into his office and closes the door.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS TRUCK - TRAILER PARK - DAY

Prescott is still berating Reynolds as they enter the truck.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

You're damn right Castelli's your responsibility -- and so are the other two as well. But there's not a damn thing I can do about it. Anyway, it's you ---

He sees Chavez trying to get his attention and breaks off.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

What is it? Anything from Askins?

SGT. CHAVEZ

No, Sir -- the Ranger's just calling his people in Austin.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Put it on the speaker.

Chavez throws a switch and Sara's voice is immediately heard over. Prescott and Reynolds move closer.

SARA (V.O.)

Mr. Benteen calling you from Travis, Sir.

CAPTAIN HAYES (V.O.)
All right, put him on... Hayes here.
Listen, Jack, what the hell have you been
up to down there?

BENTEEN (V.O.)
Aw, not a lot, Cap. Same old routine.

CAPTAIN HAYES (V.O.)
'Routine!!' That sure ain't what I've
been hearing. Anyway, what can I do
for you?

BENTEEN (V.O.)
Yeah, well listen, Cap -- I know your
guys are pretty busy an' all. But do
they have any results yet on that .9mm
ammunition I sent 'em?

CAPTAIN HAYES (V.O.)
Hold on, lemme see... Yeah, I got a note
here. Crawford says he'll have it for
you in the morning. That soon enough
for you?

BENTEEN (V.O.)
Yeah, that's fine. Thanks for your
trouble -- talk to ya later.

As the conversation ends a tight-lipped Prescott is already gesturing at Reynolds to step outside so that they can talk in private. Chavez switches off the speaker and turns to watch them go.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DAY

Prescott strides away, before turning angrily on Reynolds.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
Why in hell did you have to tell him that
those bullets were just standard issue?

REYNOLDS
I had to tell him something. How was I
to know he'd gotten hold of some for
himself.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
Yes, and for all we know, he's a couple
of jumps ahead of you about Castelli
as well.

REYNOLDS
It's possible.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
Jesus Christ, Captain! That man could
blow this entire operation!

Reynolds has no answer.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

We may wind up having to ask for clearance to terminate him.

Reynolds looks at him incredulously.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

It's my duty to take any measures necessary to prevent the mission being compromised. You know that as well as I do.

REYNOLDS

If your faith in blackmailing that attorney is justified, we can be out of here in twenty-four hours without compromising anything... except a few basic principles.

Prescott looks at him as if he had just said something treasonable.

INT. BAXTER'S APARTMENT, TRAVIS - NIGHT

Starting on a hand as it reaches into the desk drawer to take out a small camera. Pull back to reveal Baxter, tense but expressionless, as he places the camera in the middle of the desk. Angle to include Reynolds and Prescott sitting across from him.

REYNOLDS

Thank you.

He reaches out to take the camera.

BAXTER

What about the negatives?

REYNOLDS

You'll get them just as soon as we've checked out what you've got for us in here.

BAXTER

I want them now.

He has taken a gun from the drawer and is pointing it at the two men across the table. They hardly seem to notice.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Sure, just as soon as we get that film developed.

Reynolds puts the camera in his briefcase.

BAXTER

There's nothing in there! I didn't use it -- and I'm not going to! I want those pictures you took now!

They look at him blankly as if he had said something quite bizarre. His voice rises.

BAXTER

I'll shoot -- I'll shoot both of you...

Reynolds shakes his head sadly.

REYNOLDS

No, Mr. Baxter -- you don't shoot people, it's not your thing.

Baxter stares at him, unable to comprehend how his threat can simply be brushed aside. Reynolds explains patiently.

REYNOLDS

Anyway, there wouldn't be any point. There's other people would still have the negatives. I'm afraid you'll just have to cooperate.

He puts the camera back in front of Baxter.

REYNOLDS

It's no big deal -- it really isn't. I promise you, nobody will ever know.

Baxter lowers the gun and lets his head fall. Prescott gets up and motions Reynolds to the door, a bit like mourners taking leave of the bereaved.

REYNOLDS

We'll come by and see you again tomorrow.

Baxter looks up, pleading.

REYNOLDS

I'm sorry, but you've left us a little short of time now. We'll need to have something tomorrow.

He follows Prescott out. Baxter puts down the gun and reaches out slowly to pick up the camera.

EXT. BAXTER'S APARTMENT AND REYNOLDS' CAR - NIGHT

Reynolds is already behind the wheel as Prescott settles in beside him.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Sonuvabitch! D'you believe a worm like that tryin'ta pull a gun?

He looks at Reynolds, who seems not to have heard and is making no effort to start the car. Becoming aware of Prescott's curious look, Reynolds is just reaching for the ignition, when a loud gunshot is

heard from the apartment. They look at each other in shocked disbelief, from which Prescott is the first to recover. He reaches across to start the ignition -- making Reynolds aware that they have to move.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Reynolds' car scoots off into the night.

EXT. PEMEX GAS STATION NEAR BORDER, SAN LUIS - NIGHT

The typically disorganized gas station lies within view of the Border Crossing Post. Amongst the various vehicles tanking up is one belonging to a young American couple. Remaining in the passenger seat while her husband goes to pay, the wife sees something o.s. to which she reacts with uneasy distaste.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Looking more dishevelled than ever -- his wound caked with blood and dirt, Askins emerges from the shadows to intercept the young husband as he returns to the car.

SGT. ASKINS

You folks heading back over the border?

Taken aback by Askins' appearance, the husband hesitates, starts to answer in the affirmative, but then registers his wife's vehement frown.

HUSBAND

Well, no... actually we just got here...
I mean, we're going on down to, uh...

His words trail off as he sidles into the car and drives off, leaving Askins alone on the forecourt.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The young couple's car heads straight towards the Border Post, where two sharp-eyed Mexicans, whom we may recognize from the Hotel Isabella, mingle with the Border guards as they watch the stream of cars heading back into Texas.

EXT. BAXTER'S APARTMENT AND STREET, TRAVIS - NIGHT

Parau comes from the apartment to join Benteen, who stands on the sidewalk, watching two medics wheeling the plastic bag containing Baxter's body to a waiting ambulance.

PARAU

Why would he want to do a thing like that?

Benteen responds with a faint shrug without taking his eyes from the ambulance.

PARAU

Who's his next of kin -- do we know?

Benteen is surprised to find himself perplexed.

BENTEEN

I dunno -- there's some folks just seem to come ready made.

He watches the ambulance doors close.

BENTEEN

But I guess that's not true, either...

He turns away.

INT. CITY HALL, TRAVIS - CORRIDOR AND BAXTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Benteen enters the office, where Parau is systematically going through the desk drawers.

BENTEEN

Find anything?

Parau shakes his head and resumes his search. Benteen is moving to join him, when he becomes aware of Julia standing in the doorway. She is holding a file cover.

JULIA

Can I speak to you a minute?

BENTEEN

Of course.

He stands there expecting her to enter the office, but she simply jerks her head to indicate the corridor and moves away. Benteen frowns and turns to Parau.

BENTEEN

Be right back.

He comes out into the corridor to find that Julia is already some way ahead of him and shows no sign of stopping. He moves to follow.

ANGLE ON MAIN ENTRANCE

Julia finally stops by the steps leading down to the street and turns to wait for Benteen, who approaches her with a puzzled frown and gestures back down the corridor.

BENTEEN

What's wrong with back there? You got some problem with Parau?

JULIA

No. I told you -- I think that whole damn place is bugged... Did Parau find anything?

Benteen shakes his head.

JULIA

I did.

She takes a manila envelope from the file cover and hands it to him. He opens it, reacts to the picture of Baxter and the Mexican boy, and looks at her curiously.

JULIA

He never knew I had duplicate keys to his desk.

BENTEEN

What made you think to look?

JULIA

I knew what he was into a long time ago.

BENTEEN

And you never said anything?

JULIE

Wouldn't have changed him much, would it.

Reacting to his frown.

JULIA

We're not talking about seducing minors, for chrissakes. Those kids were way ahead of him.

Benteen glances absently at the picture he is still holding, and Julia scowls impatiently.

JULIA

Look, don't you understand what this means?

BENTEEN

Not yet, no...

JULIA

Well, it's obvious, isn't it. Someone was blackmailing him into spying on Fernandez.

BENTEEN

Yeah, but even assuming that's so -- that still leaves one big question...

(indicating photograph)

If they went to all this trouble, they must've figured there'd be something pretty interesting that Baxter could tell 'em.

JULIA

About Fernandez?

BENTEEN

Any idea what it might be?

JULIA

Are you suggesting he's got something to hide?

BENTEEN

I dunno... But I'd sure like to know what it is they're looking for.

She snatches the envelope from his hand and strides back into the building. He considers following her, then changes his mind, goes on down the steps to his car, and drives off.

EXT. TRAILER PARK, TRAVIS - PICNIC AREA - DAY

Starting on Prescott, who sits at the picnic bench, staring resentfully at Reynolds, who sits across the way, smoking a cigarette, while he pointedly looks everywhere, but at the Major.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

I suppose you think we're back at square one.

Reynolds turns to look at him, hardly bothering to disguise his animosity.

REYNOLDS

Major, I'm not sure we ever got to square one.

Now, before Prescott can think of a sufficiently tart response, he sees Sgt. Chavez come from the Communications Truck and run over to join them.

SGT. CHAVEZ

Sir... Sgt. Biddle just called in -- says the Ranger's on his way back from Brackettville.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Any information on what he was doing there?

SGT. CHAVEZ

Yes, Sir. Sgt. McRose tailed him as far as the public records office. They're still trying to check what he was looking for there.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

And Benteen's on his way back here?

SGT. CHAVEZ

Yes, Sir -- should be back any minute.

Prescott rises, jerks his head at Reynolds, and they start back to the Communications Truck.

INT. RANGERS' OFFICE - RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Sara looks up as Benteen strides in.

BENTEEN

Where's Frank?

SARA

I think he's in your office.

He starts to move on, then has another thought.

BENTEEN

Get me the Mayor's Office, will you.

She picks up the phone.

INT. TRAILER PARK - DAY - COMMUNICATIONS TRUCK

Prescott raises his hand to command silence as he, Reynolds, Sgt. Hall, and Chavez listen to the sounds coming over the loudspeaker.

INT. BENTEEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Parau gets up from Benteen's chair as the Ranger enters.

PARAU

Where've you been all day? I just --

He is interrupted by the telephone on the desk, and Benteen moves to answer it.

BENTEEN

(into phone)

Yeah...?

SARA (V.O.)

There's no answer from the Mayor's Office.

BENTEEN

(into phone)

All right, never mind.

(hangs up)

Where'd you suppose Fernandez has gotten to?

PARAU

If he's not in his office, he'll probably be on his way to the funeral.

BENTEEN

Funeral? Oh, yeah, Baxter -- I clean forgot.

He turns as if to go.

PARAU

Hey, wait a minute. Captain Hayes was trying to reach you from Austin this morning.

BENTEEN

Yeah, I know, I called him back from Brackettville.

PARAU

So what they tell you?

Benteen picks up the ammunition catalogue and tosses it down in front of Parau.

BENTEEN

You know why we couldn't find a listing for .9mm Canadian in forty-three? Because they didn't make any that year. Someone took a lot of trouble making up that ammunition. So I had the lab boys in Austin take a lot of trouble too. Know what they came up with?

Parau frowns quizzically.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS TRUCK - DAY

Prescott and the others listen in tense silence.

BENTEEN (V.O.)

Those bullets came from an Ingram submachine gun -- and a silenced one at that.

PARAU (V.O.)

You think Schroeder's people are --

BENTEEN (V.O.)

No. There's just one organization uses a weapon like that -- Special Forces -- the Army...

Prescott and Reynolds look at each other in dismay.

INT. BENTEEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Parau frowns, still totally bemused.

BENTEEN

You don't get it, do you? Those two
Mexicans at Sharpe's Crossing were
killed by someone from Special Forces.
The Army's been fucking us over, Frank.
And I think I just found out why.

He starts for the door. Parau is still confused.

PARAU

But listen, where are you running off
to now, for Chrissakes?

BENTEEN

I gotta' find that sonuvabitch,
Fernandez. I'll check with you later.

He starts out the door.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS TRUCK - DAY

The door of Benteen's office is heard to slam, and then there is
silence. Prescott turns to Reynolds with grim finality.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Looks like he's finally forced
our hand, huh.

REYNOLDS

You think that's what the Colonel's
gonna say?

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Well, shit, Captain. If the mission's
gonna be compromised, you already know
what the Colonel's gonna say.

REYNOLDS

Look, the only hard evidence Benteen's
got is that ammunition. We could still
tell him it was part of a whole bunch
of stuff that was stolen, or something.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

You think he'd believe that?

REYNOLDS

Why not -- it's happened before.

Prescott has picked up a message pad and is beginning to write
without bothering to reply.

REYNOLDS

Listen, from what Benteen was just
saying, it sounds like he's about to
nail Fernandez. We've at least
gotta wait and see what happens.

(MORE)

REYNOLDS (Cont'd)

Getting Fernandez was what this damn mission was about in the first place.

Prescott pauses in his writing, and indicates the radio.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Yeah, we can wait and see what happens. But that conversation we just heard's already been logged at...

(consulting wristwatch)

... precisely nineteen-oh-five, and if my log doesn't record that I reported that information within five minutes, the Colonel's gonna want to know why.

He goes on writing, then looks up as if just becoming aware that Reynolds is still standing there.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

If you think you've got time to find out what's happening with Fernandez, you'd better get on with it.

He goes on writing and Reynolds turns away.

EXT. CEMETERY, TRAVIS - DAY

Starting on Baxter's coffin as it is lowered into the ground. Pull back to reveal the Priest who is mumbling the usual incantations, while a surprisingly large group of mourners surround the grave with bowed heads.

Standing beside Fernandez, Julia raises her eyes to see Benteen step up discreetly alongside the mourners on the far side of the grave. Their eyes meet -- she looks down again, and the Priest prattles on.

ANGLE ON REYNOLDS

He stands apparently lost in thought as he watches the proceedings from a short distance away. He is just turning away when he almost bumps into Benteen, who has suddenly appeared at his side. Reynolds smiles awkwardly, and Benteen indicates the gathering at the gravesite.

BENTEEN

You like a good funeral, do you?

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)

Matter of fact, I was looking for you... I just heard from our ballistics people in Washington again. Damndest thing -- seems those bullets we sent 'em were part of a consignment that was stolen from a Special Services training camp.

BENTEEN

Sounds kind of careless.

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)

Yeah, well I don't think the Army's too keen to have people know about it, but I understand it was a Marine that stole the stuff and sold it on the black market.

BENTEEN

Sounds downright unpatriotic.

He glances off to see the mourners beginning to disperse.

BENTEEN

Excuse me, I got some business to take care of.

He starts away. Reynolds opens his mouth as if to say something, but changes his mind, and finally it is Benteen who pauses to turn back.

BENTEEN

Oh, say. You still want to go quail shooting Saturday?

PETERSEN (REYNOLDS)

Sure. Why not.

BENTEEN

Good. I'll pick you up at the hotel.

Benteen moves away and Reynolds walks over to the grave that has now been almost filled by two Mexican workmen.

REYNOLDS' POV

Julia and Fernandez reach the Mayor's car, when they are accosted by Benteen and there is what looks like a short, sharp argument. Fernandez shrugs reluctantly, indicates to Julia that she should drive his car, and then turns away to get in beside Benteen in the Ranger's car.

RESUME SCENE

Reynolds is frowning thoughtfully, when he is brought back to earth by one of the workmen, who nudges him politely to show that he is in their way. He steps back, takes a last private look at the grave, and hurries away.

INT. BENTEEN'S CAR - CEMETERY AND HIGHWAY - DAY

Sitting stiffly beside Benteen as the Ranger drives through the cemetery gates and moves off down the highway, Fernandez tries to maintain a dignified mien, but he is clearly feeling put upon and not a little anxious.

FERNANDEZ

Am I to consider myself under arrest?

Benteen just looks at him.

FERNANDEZ

And if not, perhaps you'll be good enough to explain your behavior back there.

BENTEEN

Listen, you've been whining about some so-called conspiracy against you ever since those two Mexicans were killed near Sharpe's Crossing. Only reason I paid any attention was because you had Julia believing it, as well. All right, so I checked it out, but I checked you out, too.

FERNANDEZ

(a supercilious laugh)

Oh, yes? And what did you find?

BENTEEN

I'll tell you what I found. I found you were right -- they are out to get you -- and if you ask me, they got pretty good reasons.

Fernandez shifts uneasily, but maintains his sardonic tone.

FERNANDEZ

Oh, really? You think political persecution is a legitimate function of government, do you?

BENTEEN

Maybe if you've got a brother that's involved with a sonuvabitch like Schroeder, you deserve all you get.

FERNANDEZ

A brother...?

BENTEEN

Yeah, you didn't bother telling Julia about him, did you. Far as she knows you're just a poor orphan boy that pulled himself up by his bootstraps, right?

FERNANDEZ

I have no brother. My background is a matter of public record.

BENTEEN

That's right, I checked it out in Brackettville. Born Laredo, Texas -- mother died when you were just a baby -- so you were adopted by your aunt, who brought you up in Corpus Christi.

FERNANDEZ

I just told you, I've got nothing to hide.

BENTEEN

No, not anymore, you haven't... I talked to an old Ranger in Laredo today -- Charlie Birdsall. Charlie's been a Ranger down that way best part of forever -- maybe you remember him.

The Mayor's shoulders sag and his voice becomes dull, defeated.

FERNANDEZ

Yes, I remember Mr. Birdsall.

BENTEEN

Sure you do. And your mother didn't die, either -- leastways not in forty-one, she didn't. She went back to Mexico in forty-five and took a child with her -- your kid borthier.

FERNANDEZ

(totally defeated)

Yes, my brother...

BENTEEN

Manuel, isn't it?

Fernandez nods.

BENTEEN

Manuel Fernandez... Charlie tells me the two of you were pretty close -- at least until Manuel's politics got to be a bit too radical to fit in with your own ambitions.

Fernandez shakes his head wearily, as if to say, "no, that's not the way it was." Benteen looks unconvinced.

BENTEEN

Charlie Birdsall says he went so far left, he wound up being wanted on both sides of the border.

FERNANDEZ

(ruefully)

'Wanted,' yes -- Marxist or Communist, no. Manuel never believed in anything in his entire life. He simply wanted to be rich -- just like Schroeder. Only difference between 'em, Schroeder's a lot smarter. I guess that's why Manuel wound up working for him.

BENTEEN

So you're admitting it, huh?

FERNANDEZ

Admitting? I thought you already knew all about it.

BENTEEN

Just an educated guess.

FERNANDEZ

Educated, huh -- that's not a word I'd necessarily have associated with you.

(a brief pause)

So anyway, maybe you've guessed the rest of it as well, eh?

BENTEEN

Yeah, maybe. But how come you ever let it get this far?

Fernandez gazes out of the window before replying. They have arrived back in town and are heading for Benteen's office.

FERNANDEZ

Look, I know you never had much time for the things I've been trying to do in this place. But you've got to admit, at least I was trying.. So what would you expect me to do? Advertise the fact that the Mayor, and maybe future Lieutenant Governor, has some kind of a lousy crook for a brother?

Benteen pulls up in front of his office and just sits there without replying.

FERNANDEZ

Anyway, that's just history now...

BENTEEN

Maybe so, but it might have saved Baxter a lot of grief.

FERNANDEZ

(bitterly)

Yes... Why don't you tell that to those people when you hand me over. Who are they, anyway? F.B.I.?

Benteen shakes his head.

BENTEEN

Army.

Fernandez looks at him incredulously.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DAY (EVENING)

Lounging by the picnic area, Sgts. Hall, McRose and Biddle look on with quickening interest as Reynolds drives up fast and hurries to the Communications Truck.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS TRUCK

Reynolds enters in the triumphant manner of someone who thinks they have been vindicated.

REYNOLDS

It looks like Benteen just arrested Fernandez.

(a glance at Sgt. Chavez)

You better stay tuned into that office of his.

Prescott has received the news with studied indifference, and now indicates Sgt. Chavez, who sits at his post, where a faint crackling sound is coming over the speaker.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Yeah, we've been doing that.

Reynolds sits down, somewhat deflated. There is a pause as he gazes at the speaker as if willing something to come over the wires. Now, suddenly remembering, he turns to look at Prescott.

REYNOLDS

Did you inform the Colonel?

Prescott gives him a long look before replying.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

Yes. They acknowledged receipt, and the Colonel responded ten minutes later.

He picks up a decoded, hand-written message and hands it to Reynolds without comment.

INSERT

The message reads: Terminate with Extreme Prejudice --
Soonest.

RESUME SCENE .

Reynolds looks up from the message to see Prescott gazing at him coldly.

MAJOR PRESCOTT
I've already issued instructions.
Medical Sergeant Tanaka will report
on completion.

There is a pause, then Reynolds indicates the message and speaks in a low voice.

REYNOLDS
Has this been put in the log?

Prescott nods complacently.

REYNOLDS
Over your signature?

MAJOR PRESCOTT
Over my signature.

REYNOLDS
(slowly)
I just hope to God you...

MAJOR PRESCOTT
(cutting in hard)
Hope what, Captain?

Reynolds is about to respond, when the sound of footsteps and a door opening is heard over the speaker. Now Fernandez's voice is heard over.

FERNANDEZ (V.O.)
I don't think you have any right!

BENTEEN (V.O.)
Oh, yeah? Well, you just sit down and
let's see, shall we.

Sgt. Chavez adjusts the volume as Prescott and Reynolds listen intently.

INT. BENTEEN'S OFFICE - TRAVIS - DAY (EVENING)

Fernandez is seated in front of the desk, while Benteen shifts the telephone a bit to make room for his notepad. Now, as he sits

down across from the Mayor, we may feel that there is something indefinably mannered about their conversation. This is because in retrospect we will come to realize that it is deliberately staged. But at this moment we should be just as convinced as the people who are listening in.

BENTEEN

All right, Mr. Mayor -- now let's have the rest of it.

FERNANDEZ

The rest? But I already told you -- I broke with my brother three years ago -- right after I found he was involved with Schroeder.

BENTEEN

Now that's not true, either... Know that broken down old chapel, that's on your strip of land up in the hills ...? Yeah, well I talked to that crazy old Indian that sleeps there... He says Schroeder and your brother have been using that place as a way station all year.

FERNANDEZ

But I keep telling you, I haven't seen him in years.

BENTEEN

Oh, really? Well, then now's your chance to get reacquainted.

FERNANDEZ

Reacquainted...?

BENTEEN

Yeah, that Indian fella says your brother's gonna pass through there tonight. Told him to go sleep some place else.

FERNANDEZ

I don't want to see him... If you want to arrest me as an accomplice, you'll know where to find me.

(rising)

Go ahead and do whatever you have to.

BENTEEN

I don't have to do a damn thing!

FERNANDEZ

I don't understand you.

BENTEN

No, I guess you wouldn't... Look, I got no time for you or your lousy brother, either. But meanwhile, I don't hold with the way those Army people acted. This is my county --- always has been. If they'd'a told me what they wanted, I could've found your brother in no time flat -- shot him, too, if necessary. But I'm damned if I'm gonna do their work for them now. So you just go on back there and tell Manuel to get the fuck outta my county. He ever comes back, I'll cut his balls off.

FERNANDEZ

You're not going to arrest him?

BENTEN

No. Fuck the Army and fuck your brother too. I'm going home. Now get outta my sight.

He puts his elbows on the desk and rests his head in his hands. Fernandez looks at him for a moment, then starts quietly for the door.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS TRUCK, TRAILER PARK - DAY (EVENING)

The door of Benteen's office is heard closing. The men gathered around the loudspeaker are momentarily speechless.

REYNOLDS

Well, I'll be damned.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

He's sure leaving us a nice going away present, isn't he?

Reynolds looks at him sharply.

INT./EXT. HOSPITAL, TRAVIS - AMBULANCE GARAGE - DAY (EVENING)

Three brightly colored Paramedic ambulances are parked alongside each other, facing out onto the street, which can be seen through the big open doors. Medic: Sgt. Tanaka is dressed in his paramedic outfit as he comes through the door from the main hospital building. The uniformed ATTENDANT at the desk seems mildly surprised to see him.

MEDIC: SGT. TANAKA

Hi, Bobby.

ATTENDANT

Hello, Mr. Takamura. I didn't know you were on late shift today.

MEDIC: SGT. TANAKA

I'm not. I promised some folks over in Kenton to give a trainee paramedic demonstration.

ATTENDANT

Okay. But don't keep that wagon out all night -- we may need it.

MEDIC: SGT. TANAKA

Don't worry, I'll be back before you know it.

He tosses his medical bag into the front seat, and with his smile dying the moment his back is turned, he clambers into the driving seat and pulls out.

EXT. BENTEEN'S TRAILER AND CORRAL - DAY (LATE EVENING)

Benteen's horse comes trotting over as his car pulls up alongside the corral. He gets out to feed the horse some cube sugar from his pocket. Now, as the horse chomps away, Benteen cocks his ear and frowns slightly as if sensing something missing. He turns and starts towards the trailer.

ANOTHER ANGLE

It is difficult to be sure, but in the remaining half-light it looks as though the door of the trailer is slightly ajar. Establishing that the door is, indeed, open -- Benteen pauses, touches his gunbelt, then shrugs and goes on in.

INT./EXT. BENTEEN'S TRAILER - NIGHT

There is a fleeting impression of a figure on the sofa by the window -- then Benteen switches on the light to reveal Melanie sitting there, and any tension there has been immediately evaporates.

MELANIE

Hi...

BENTEEN

Well now, that's the first pleasant surprise I've had all day.

He turns to the bar and picks up a bottle.

MELANIE

Well, I'm glad it's pleasant, but why a surprise? I thought we'd established what they call 'a warm relationship.'

BENTEEN

Yeah, I guess we have. But I didn't see your car.

He opens the bottle and picks up a glass. She leans back seductively.

MELANIE

I had a friend drop me off -- thought you might like to drop me back at the hospital in the morning.

He holds up the glass quizzically.

BENTEEN

You having one?

MELANIE

At least...

He turns away to put ice in the glass, totally absorbed in pleasurable anticipation of the generous drink he is pouring.

BENTEEN

How'd you get in?

He turns to glance at her and she smiles.

MELANIE

Oh, my! How quickly you forget. You showed me where you keep the spare key -- remember?

CLOSE ON BENTEEN

He turns away to start pouring the second drink.

BENTEEN

Yeah, of course. But I'm surprised the dogs let you through the door.

Now, as she responds from o.s. his expression darkens as he suddenly realizes, both that he is, indeed, surprised that the dogs let her in -- and that the absence of the dogs was what he was missing in the first place.

MELANIE (o.s.)

I guess I've established what they call 'a warm relationship' with them, too.

Benteen freezes as he senses rather than sees a slight movement behind him.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Benteen whirls around. Melanie is standing right behind him. We get a brief glimpse of an automatic in her hand, before he throws the glass of whiskey in her face and decks her with the most uncompromising, full-blooded punch of the season. The gun goes flying out her hand and she skids off along the floor -- she skids a long way...

ANGLE ON YARD

Benteen steps out into the dimly lit yard. The two dogs lie by their feeding bowls with their throats cut -- their blood still seeping into the earth.

ANGLE ON CORRAL

The ambulance is seen in b.g. as Sgt. Tanaka advances silently towards the trailer. There is a big knife at his belt, and he is carrying a submachine gun. He has evidently come to "clean up," but now, as he approaches the trailer, he moves to take a precautionary look through the window, sees Melanie lying unconscious on the floor, and ducks back into the shadows.

ANGLE ON BENTEEN

He comes back into the living room, sees Melanie beginning to stir, and is just moving to examine her, when he hears something outside. He turns, grabs a shotgun from behind the bar, and is just switching off the light, when a sustained burst of machine gun fire demolishes the picture window, shreds the furnishings, and reduces the bar into a heap of rubble.

CLOSE ON MELANIE

The hail of bullets shocks her into full consciousness and instant panic. She scrambles to her feet and dashes to the door.

ANGLE ON TANAKA

He ducks away from the window, starts around the side of the trailer, and sees the door fly open.

ANGLE ON MELANIE

She comes out the door screaming -- and is immediately cut to ribbons by a burst of fire from Tanaka.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Tanaka has just a split second to register what he has done before Benteen appears in the open doorway and rips him apart with two massive blasts from his shotgun.

ANGLE ON BENTEEN

He turns away to look at Melanie, who lies face down in the dirt.

EXT. ABANDONED MISSION, HILLS - NIGHT

Starting close on Team Sgt. McRose as he peers down from his vantage point, high amongst the rocks.

POV

Lying in a bowl, surrounded by hills on three sides, the old Spanish Mission makes a splendid target, but would be a poor place to defend. Built around a courtyard, the adobe walls are cloaked in darkness, which is now intermittently broken by headlight beams that come lancing up from the valley below.

RESUME SCENE

McRose scrambles to his feet and moves to join Sgt. Hall, who stands beside a pickup truck on the far side of the dirt road.

SGT. HALL

(a whisper)

Okay...?

McRose nods and reaches out to take a walkie-talkie from the truck.

SGT. McROSE

(into radio)

Team Sergeant to Team Leader -- are you reading me...?

EXT. APPROACH ROAD NEAR MISSION - NIGHT

Prescott and Reynolds stand beside a car that is hidden from, but has a good view of, the approach road and the mission itself. Prescott responds on his walkie-talkie.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

(into radio)

Go ahead, Sergeant...

SGT. McROSE (V.O.)

Vehicle approaching now...

Prescott can already see the headlights cutting through the darkness.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

(into radio)

Roger -- out.

He switches off and ducks down beside Reynolds. Moments later a car comes around the bend and there is a brief cut clear view of Fernandez at the wheel before he sweeps on by to pull up in front of the old mission.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Fernandez enters through the mission gateway, and moments later a dim glow of light filters out from one of the rooms leading off the courtyard.

ANGLE ON PRESCOTT

He reaches for his walkie-talkie again.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

(into radio)

Team Leader to Team Sergeant... Our first bird just landed... Settle down now, you may have a long wait...

SGT. McROSE (V.O.)

Story of my life, Major.

Prescott turns away to gaze fixedly at the mission.

EXT. TRAILER PARK, TRAVIS - COMMUNICATIONS TRUCK - NIGHT

Sgts. Chavez and Biddle sit on the steps of the trailer having a quiet smoke, when they look up to see a car weaving an erratic course along the road, before turning into the park, almost hitting the entrance gate, and then coming to an abrupt stop a few yards from where they are sitting. The door opens, the driver heaves himself out, staggers towards them, and then collapses in a heap. They run forward to discover Sgt. Askins lying semi-conscious at their feet. He starts to murmur something and they kneel at his side, but he is quite incoherent.

SGT. BIDDLE

Get him inside...

They lift him to his feet and start to drag him back to the trailer.

EXT. ABANDONED MISSION - McROSE'S POSITION - NIGHT

McRose and Hall lie side-by-side, peering down at the barn.

SGT. HALL

What do we have to freeze our asses off up here for? Whyn't we ust go in there an' wait for this guy to show up?

SGT. McROSE

Suppose this guy brings some friends?
(indicating mission)
How'd you like to be in there, tryin' to defend that dump?

Hall peers down -- the prospect is not a pleasant one.

SGT. HALL

I don't even know what the fuck we're doin' here. Make a lot more sense if we were out lookin' for those guys that went to Mexico.

McRose is clearly inclined to agree, but chooses not to comment.

EXT. MISSION - PRESCOTT'S POSITION - NIGHT

Prescott consults his watch and whispers irritably.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

What the hell's happened to Tanaka? He should've reported back by now.

The distant sound of an approaching car makes Reynolds turn quickly. They both shift further back into the shadows.

POV

A beat-up old sedan with its lights doused comes lurching around a bend in the road, passes by beneath their position, and heads on up to the mission. There is no way of seeing the driver or other possible occupants.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The sedan stops in front of the mission and moments later a single, indistinct figure moves through the gateway and disappears into the courtyard.

ANGLE ON PRESCOTT AND REYNOLDS

Prescott rises and beckons Reynolds to join him down on the road. They begin to close in on the mission. They arrive at the broken down gateway and Prescott glances at Reynolds with a kind of patronizing contempt.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

You're supposed to be the D.E.A. agent.
I guess you better go in and make your
arrest. Think you can handle this one?

Reynolds just looks at him, not deigning to reply. Prescott steps forward to get a better look...

POV

Light filters out through the partially open door of the chapel that is situated directly beneath the bell tower at the far end of the courtyard.

RESUME SCENE

Prescott indicates the tower.

MAJOR PRESCOTT

There's gotta be an entrance back of
that tower...

(consulting watch)

Gimme two minutes and I'll get in there
to cover you... Okay?

Reynolds evidently thinks Prescott has some ulterior motive.

REYNOLDS

Yeah. But we want these guys alive --
right?

MAJOR PRESCOTT

(holds up two fingers)

Just two minutes...

He starts back around the outside of the mission, and Reynolds moves quietly across the courtyard.

ANGLE ON CHAPEL

Reynolds moves into frame near the door of the chapel and checks his watch.

ANGLE ON PRESCOTT

He arrives at the back of the tower to find that there was indeed an entrance there. But the door has long since rotted away and been replaced by boards nailed across the gap. Prescott very quietly starts to remove the first of the boards.

ANGLE ON REYNOLDS

He slowly pushes open the door of the chapel.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Reynolds slips carefully through the partially open door.

REYNOLDS' POV

Other than a few broken pews that lie scattered about the floor, little of the original furnishings remain. A lighter patch on the far wall above the altar clearly marks the spot from which a big cross must once have dominated the room; and to the right of this is an open doorway that leads into the sacristy.

Fernandez sits near the altar with his back to camera and a hurricane lamp at his side.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Reynolds glances around, clearly puzzled by the absence of any second person. But now Fernandez turns to face him and he quickly levels his gun.

REYNOLDS

All right, put your hands on your head
and stand up -- slowly...

Fernandez starts to comply.

REYNOLDS

Where's your friend?

Fernandez looks vaguely puzzled and Benteen is heard o.s.

BENTEEN (O.S.)

If you mean the Mayor's Brother -- he
couldn't make it.

Reynolds freezes, then turns just far enough to see Benteen step out from a niche behind him with a shotgun aimed at his back.

BENTEEN

Just turn that gun around and give it to
Mr. Fernandez.

Reynolds reverses his gun as Fernandez starts towards him.

BENTEEN

I sorta figured you'd be the one to show
up. Just goes to show -- you shouldn't
necessarily believe what you hear when
you're bugging people's telephones.

Reynolds looks from one to the other in confusion.

REYNOLDS

That whole conversation was just an
act...?

BENTEEN

Yeah, I guess you could say that...
Now hand him that gun.

Reynolds hesitates.

ANGLE ON PRESCOTT

Benteen smiles sardonically -- he is not about to be fooled.

REYNOLDS (O.S.)

Put up your gun, Major!

Convinced that he now has a traitor to contend with, Prescott moves forward with his submachine gun at the ready.

ANGLE ON OTHERS

Prescott steps into view right in front of Benteen just as Fernandez is crossing to take Reynolds' gun and, in doing so, moves right into the Major's line of fire. A sharp burst from the machine gun hurls Fernandez to the ground and stitches a line of bullet holes right alongside Benteen's head as he lets go with a blast from his shotgun and throws himself aside.

CLOSE ON PRESCOTT

The shotgun blast rips open his chest and hurls his body back through the doorway.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Benteen has fallen awkwardly against an old pew, and now lies there winded, with his gun some distance away. Reynolds turns to face him, still holding his own gun. He looks at him for a long moment, then finally lowers his gun and turns away disgustedly.

REYNOLDS

Oh, for chrissakes, get up, will ya. I wasn't going to shoot you, anyhow.

BENTEEN

What's the matter -- you lose your nerve, or something?

Reynolds slumps down on a bench and gazes at Fernandez's body.

REYNOLDS

No, I didn't lose my nerve -- I guess I'm just tired of killing the wrong people...

(after a pause)

I better call off those men out there.

Seeing that Benteen is still keeping him covered, he pointedly puts his gun down on the bench and rise.

REYNOLDS

Would you rather they came in here blasting?

He takes flashlight from his pocket and starts for the door.

REYNOLDS

Don't worry, I'm not going anywhere...

Deciding that he means it, Benteen watches him step out of the door, aim his flashlight up the hill, and send off a brief signal. Now, as Reynolds comes back, Benteen turns away to put his coat over Fernandez's body. Reynolds watches him, still confused.

REYNOLDS

That act you put on for us -- what made you so damn sure we had your line bugged?

BENTEEN

(straightening up)

I wasn't -- not until you gave me that bullshit at the cemetery, about some Marine stealing those bullets.

(MORE)

BENTEEN (cont'd)

You came up with that hogwash right after I talked to Parau in my office.

REYNOLDS

Yeah, I guess that wasn't too smart, was it...

(looks down at Fernandez)

And that stuff about his brother -- you made that up, too, huh?

BENTEEN

No, he had a brother, all right... Remember the two Mexicans you people killed near Sharpe's Crossing, when you left that ammo lying around? Yeah, well the guy with the scar -- that was Manuel Fernandez... Gave the Mayor quite a turn -- seeing his kid brother turn up in the morgue that way...

(indicating Fernandez)

That's what he went down to San Luis for -- to tell their mother, and fix up some kind of a funeral.

REYNOLDS

And was there a connection with Schroeder?

BENTEEN

Sure there was. Having a kid brother that worked for Schroeder made life kinda difficult -- so Fernandez went to see him -- tried to make him lay off... I guess the only reason Schroeder didn't just kill the poor sonuvabitch, was because he figured he could blackmail him.

The sound of an approaching truck coincides with the arrival of Hall and McRose, who come running up to the chapel door.

SGT. McROSE

Big truck coming, Captain... Looks like it could be ours...

Reynolds looks puzzled and starts for the door, while McRose and Hall pause to gaze at the scene of the carnage.

EXT. MISSION AND TRUCK - NIGHT

Benteen comes from the courtyard to find Reynolds talking to Askins, who sits in the truck that has just arrived, along with Sgts. Biddle and Chavez. Askins is freshly bandaged and looks somewhat rejuvenated.

SGT. ASKINS

... no, Sir. They killed Sergeant Coleman, but I think they're still holding Castelli.

Reynolds is turning away tight-lipped, when Jarvis pipes up apologetically.

SGT. CHAVEZ

Uh, Captain...? The Colonel called in a while back -- he wants an immediate situation report.

Reynolds nods curtly and moves away, as if needing to be alone to cope with all this. But now he finds Benteen at his side, and the Ranger produces the Polaroid of Castelli from his pocket.

BENTEEN

This the guy they're talkin' about?

Reynolds nods dully.

BENTEEN

Just ain't your day, is it.

Reynolds glances at him resentfully and moves on. Benteen studies the Polaroid again.

BENTEEN

Could be he's still alive, you know.

(after a pause)

Wasn't nailing Schroeder supposed to be your main objective?

REYNOLDS

(a bitter laugh)

Yeah, that's right.

BENTEEN

But so far all you've done is shoot the Mayor, make that old man blow his brains out, and lose two or three of your own men... That's quite a performance, Captain.

REYNOLDS

Yeah, isn't it, though.

BENTEEN

Well now, seeing as how the Army ain't gonna be thinking too highly of you anyhow, what do you say we just keep that date and go shoot some quail?

Reynolds frowns quizzically.

BENTEEN

Let's go get that sonuvabitch Schroeder.

REYNOLDS

In San Luis...?

BENTEEN

Well, that's where he's at, isn't it?

As Reynolds hesitates.

BENTEEN

May not do a lot of good, but it'd
sure give us an awful lot of
satisfaction.

REYNOLDS

Yeah, wouldn't it, though...

He turns to address the men, who are hovering uncertainly around the truck.

REYNOLDS

... I'm going down to San Luis with the
Ranger here -- see if we can find
Castelli -- and if we don't, then we'll
sure as hell find the guys that've
been holding him.

There is a buzz of excitement and Reynolds raises his hand.

REYNOLDS

Now wait a minute. This isn't gonna
be the Army's party -- in fact, if you
ever get back, you're gonna find the
Army's real pissed off with you.

A VOICE

Fuck the Army.

Reynolds quells several murmurs of agreement.

REYNOLDS

All right, since you put it so
elegantly, let's move.

There is a feverish buzz of activity as the men start slinging their weapons and equipment onto the truck. Reynolds looks at Benteen and turns to gaze back into the courtyard of the mission.

REYNOLDS

Waht about all this?

BENTEEN

Those people in there -- and the ones
at my place?

Reynolds nods.

BENTEEN

Why don't you let your Colonel try explaining that one -- he set it up, didn't he?

Reynolds considers this for a moment, finds it singularly appropriate, and collars Chavez as he goes by.

REYNOLDS

You bring the log with you, Sergeant?

SGT. CHAVEZ

Yes, Sir.

REYNOLDS

And the last orders signed by Colonel Matson?

SGT. CHAVEZ

Why, yes, Sir.

REYNOLDS

Good. When we get to the border, put 'em in the mail addressed to General Snider.

SGT. CHAVEZ

(increasingly mystified)
General Snider, Sir?

REYNOLDS

That's right, Sergeant -- General Snider.

He lets Chavez move away, then grins at Benteen.

REYNOLDS

Matson's gonna need a lot of imagination to explain this one.

BENTEEN

You can say that again.

They move to join the men.

EXT. MEXICAN BORDER POST, SAN LUIS - NIGHT

A uniformed Mexican BORDER GUARD bends to peer into Benteen's beat-up old sedan -- receives a warm smile, and waves the car on, before turning to check out the truck that follows behind with Sgt. Chavez at the wheel.

The Border Guard glances at the U.S. license plates, and holds up his hand, apparently intending to go through the motions of giving the vehicle a closer examination. Chavez grins disarmingly, but

the Guard looks solemn.

BORDER GUARD
(in Spanish)
Does this vehicle belong to you?

SGT. CHAVEZ
(in Spanish)
No, I stole it from a gringo in El Paso.

They both smile -- two Mexicans enjoying a joke at the expense of the old enemy.

BORDER GUARD
(in Spanish)
Next time you're there, steal one for me...

He laughs and waves the truck on through.

EXT. HOTEL ISABELLA, SAN LUIS - NIGHT

The big thug, who assisted at the interrogation of Castelli, is lounging on the front steps. His manner is casual, but he is nevertheless, clearly on guard.

ANGLE ON SIDE STREET

Benteen, who is now wearing a raincoat to cover his uniform jacket, leaves his car and moves to talk to Reynolds, who is in the cab of the truck along with Chavez and Askins.

CLOSER ANGLE

The four men gaze across at the hotel.

BENTEEN
(to Askins)
You reckon they have any regular guests in there?

Askins shakes his head.

SGT. ASKINS
There's some kind of a desk clerk, but I guess he's just a front.

Reynolds looks at Benteen.

REYNOLDS
What d'you think...?

Benteen gazes across at the hotel before replying.

POV

Luis and half-a-dozen henchmen come from the lobby to join the

thug at the entrance. They exchange a few words and then the henchmen, who are all in high, good spirits, move away to enter the bar of the adjoining brothel. Luis has a parting word with the thug on the steps, then goes back into the hotel.

RESUME SCENE

Benteen turns to Reynolds and points up at the roof of the brothel.

BENTEEN

If we can get two, three guys up on that roof -- they could maybe get across.

Reynolds nods and turns to Chavez.

REYNOLDS

Looks like you're gonna have to go check out the ladies.

He turns to the other three in the back of the truck.

REYNOLDS

Anyone else speak Spanish?

Biddle is peering eagerly at the windows of the brothel.

SGT. BIDDLE

Yes, Sir, Captain. I speak it real well.

Reynolds looks quizzically at Chavez, who shakes his head, and earns himself a scowl from Biddle.

REYNOLDS

Anyone else?

Hall and McRose shake their heads, and Reynolds turns to Chavez again.

REYNOLDS

All right, take Biddle and Hall.
(to Biddle and Hall)

But you two just keep your mouths shut, okay?

Biddle and Hall get out the back, Chavez joins them on the sidewalk.

BENTEEN

(to Reynolds)

Give 'em four minutes to get up there, then we'll go in the front.

REYNOLDS

Right. You hear that, Sergeant?

Chavez nods and they start away down the street. Reynolds turns

to Benton and indicates the hotel.

REYNOLDS

How many you reckon we gotta deal
with in there?

Benteen is gazing up at a brightly lit window on the third floor.

BENTEEN

I'll let you know in about a half hour.

INT. HOTEL ISABELLA - THIRD FLOOR ROOM - NIGHT

Schroeder and Luis are eating at a long dining room at the far
end of which sits Castelli, still strapped into a chair.
Schroeder looks up to see Castelli eyeing him hungrily.

SGT. CASTELLI

(truculently)

I thought you people believed in
sharing.

SCHROEDER

What people?

SGT. CASTELLI

Commies, or whatever the fuck you are.

Luis scowls, but Schroeder is rather amused.

SCHROEDER

You hear that, Luis? He thinks you're
deeply committed to the 'dictatorship
of the proletariat.'

This is more than Luis' understanding of English can cope with
and his scowl deepens.

SCHROEDER

This organization is strictly private
enterprise... Luis doesn't even
believe in charity, do you, Luis?

Luis continues to scowl.

SCHROEDER

Ach, go on, give him something to eat.

Luis gets up, walks around the table and stuffs a chicken leg
into Castelli's mouth. Schroeder laughs, but then relents.

SCHROEDER

Let him use his hands... You know how
to use your hands? Good.

He resumes his meal in great good humor, while Luis starts to untie Castelli.

INT. BAR AND BROTHEL, SAN LUIS - NIGHT

The six henchmen are crowding one end of the bar as Chavez and his two companions enter from the street. One of the gunmen, a small man with a big nose, eyes the newcomers suspiciously, but can't quite figure what it is that disturbs him, and turns back to his drink.

The big room is crowded and there is a fairly constant stream of men and women going up and down the stairs. Chavez leads his companions towards a group of prostitutes lounging at the far end of the bar, and engages one of them in conversation, while Hall and Biddle hover behind him.

SGT. CHAVEZ
(in courtly Spanish)
Good evening, Madam. I believe you
may be of service to us.

She looks at Biddle and Hall and raises her eyebrows.

PROSTITUTE
(in Spanish)
What -- all three of you?

SGT. CHAVEZ
(in Spanish)
Perhaps you have some friends.

She indicates two of her colleagues, one of whom is quite unreasonably fat. Sgt. Chavez cuts in quickly before Hall or Biddle can object.

SGT. CHAVEZ
(in Spanish)
My friends would be honored.

The Prostitute is somewhat surprised.

PROSTITUTE
(in Spanish)
It's not free, you know.

Chavez shrugs gallantly.

SGT. CHAVEZ
(in Spanish)
Even so...

She nods, beckons her two colleagues and starts for the stairs.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Big Nose has sidled up to stand directly behind Biddle and Hall.

Now, as they move to follow the women, Hall grins and points at the fat one.

SGT. HALL

I don't go much for yours.

Big Nose moves away quickly to speak to his companions at the bar, one of whom immediately heads for the exit.

EXT. STREET AND "A" TEAM TRUCK - NIGHT

Watching the street from their truck, Benteen and his companions see the Gunman come from the bar and sprint to the hotel.

ANGLE ON BENTEEN

He looks at Reynolds.

REYNOLDS

Could be trouble.

They wait tensely.

INT. HOTEL - LOBBY AND STAIRS - NIGHT

The Gunman passes the man by the door, runs past three heavily armed men in the lobby and starts up the stairs.

INT. TOP FLOOR - BROTHEL - NIGHT

Chavez and the others have reached the landing of the top floor and the fat lady is already opening one of the several doors that lead off the narrow corridor. Now she beckons Biddle.

SGT. BIDDLE

Hold it, honey. This may have to wait.

Sensing rejection, the fat lady is quick to launch into loud abuse. Chavez glances cautiously back down the stairs and reacts sharply.

POV SHOT - STAIRWELL

The five remaining gunmen from the bar are advancing up the stairs, their guns drawn.

RESUME SCENE

Chavez opens a door at random, and ignoring the portests of the couple already in occupation, quickly starts to bundle the three prostitutes into the room.

SGT. CHAVEZ

In here!

Biddle and Hall help him to shove the three protesting women into the room, and then he locks the door on them.

Now Chavez charges across the corridor to open another door -- this time it is empty and the window overlooks the flat roof of the adjoining hotel. He looks round to find Biddle missing.

SGT. CHAVEZ

Come on -- where's Biddle?

SGT. HALL

He's covering the stairs.

SGT. CHAVEZ

Get him in here...

Hall runs out and Chavez moves to open the window.

INT. CORRIDOR AND THIRD FLOOR ROOM - HOTEL - NIGHT

We get a brief glimpse of Schroeder, still placidly eating his meal, as Luis and three more gunmen come out of the room and start towards the stairs.

INT. TOP FLOOR - BROTHEL - NIGHT

Hall comes running to the head of the stairs just as the first of the gunmen shoots from below and wounds Biddle in the leg.

SGT. BIDDLE

Oh, shit...

Finding that his leg will not support him, he sits down and prepares to fire at the gunmen as they come around the turn in the stairs, and yells at Hall.

SGT. BIDDLE

Go on -- get the hell out!

Hall hesitates, sees that Biddle is immobilized then runs back down the corridor.

EXT. STREET AND TRUCK - NIGHT

Benteen and the others have evidently heard the first shot and are getting out of the truck. Benteen pauses to speak to Askins, who has remained in the cab, holding a big machine gun.

BENTEEN

Soon as we're inside you shoot everyone that tries to get in or out. Right?

Askins nods reassuringly.

INT. TOP FLOOR - BROTHEL - NIGHT

Biddle sits at the head of the stairs and starts blasting as the five gunmen advance. Two of them go down, but moments later

Biddle is riddled by gunfire. His body goes hurtling down the stairs, slowing up the advance of the three remaining gunmen.

EXT./INT. HOTEL ENTRANCE AND LOBBY - NIGHT

Hearing the gunfire from the brothel, the Guard at the hotel entrance hesitates, not knowing quite what to do, and now he sees Benteen, Reynolds and McRose advancing across the street. He claws for his gun, but is much too late and is cut down by a burst from Reynolds' sub-machine gun.

Benteen, Reynolds and McRose enter the lobby and are greeted by withering fire from the three gunmen waiting there. McRose is hit, but is still functioning after the three gunmen go down. He follows Reynolds and Benteen as they start up the stairs, where they are temporarily held at bay by Luis and three others, who are firing at them from the second floor.

INT. TOP FLOOR - BROTHEL - NIGHT

The three survivors of the battle with Sgt. Biddle, charge into the room recently vacated by Chavez and Hall. The flat roof of the hotel can be seen from the open window. But now, as the first gunman attempts to climb through the window, he is hurtled back into the room by a burst of fire from the hotel roof.

ANGLE ON HOTEL ROOF

Chavez and Hall pump several more rounds through the open window across the way.

ANGLE ON GUNMEN IN BROTHEL

The gunman who was thrown back from the window picks himself up from the floor, and staggers after his two companions, who are already heading back towards the stairs.

ANGLE ON HOTEL ROOF

Chavez and Hall rip open a sky-light on the roof and vanish into the top floor of the hotel.

INT. LOBBY AND STAIRS - HOTEL - NIGHT

Reynolds, Benteen and McRose are still fighting their way step by step up the stairs.

Already badly wounded, McRose is hit again and goes tumbling back down to the foot of the stairs in the lobby. But meanwhile, Benteen and Reynolds have accounted for Luis and one of his henchmen, and now the other two panic, and retreat back up the stairs to a higher floor.

EXT. HOTEL AND STREET - NIGHT

Crouching in the truck, Askins sees the three remaining gunmen from the brothel running back towards the hotel. He mows them down with his heavy machine gun as they reach the hotel entrance.

INT. UPPER FLOORS - HOTEL - NIGHT

Chavez and Hall are making their way down to the third floor, when they encounter the two gunmen who ran from Benteen and Reynolds. In the ensuing exchange of fire, Chavez, Hall, and one of the gunmen are killed. The survivor slumps badly wounded in angle of the third floor corridor, waiting for Reynolds and Benteen to appear.

ANGLE ON LOBBY

A mortally wounded GUNMAN crawls towards the exit.

GUNMAN'S POV

Askins still crouches in the truck across the road, his machine gun poised.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The dying gunman takes careful aim. Askins sees him, and starts to turn his machine gun on him. But he is too late. The Gunman fires his last shot and hits Askins right between the eyes.

ANGLE ON THIRD FLOOR

Reynolds and Benteen reach the third floor landing and Reynolds staggers under the impact of a bullet fired from somewhere in back of them. Benteen whirls round, sees the wounded gunman in the angle of the corridor behind them, and blows him away with three rapid shots from his revolver.

Now, as Reynolds drags himself to his feet, and Benteen rapidly reloads, they become aware that complete silence has fallen over the hotel. They look at each other, realizing that somewhere in one of these rooms there is still one person left to be dealt with. Most of the lights in the corridor have gone out, and now Benteen silently indicates the glow of light coming from beneath the door of the room in which we last saw Schroeder and Castelli.

Reynolds and Benteen are moving forward cautiously, when the door suddenly opens and Castelli emerges with Schroeder holding him by the collar and digging the barrel of his pistol into the back of Castelli's ear.

The four of them stand there facing each other, clearly aware that they have arrived at an insoluble stand-off. There is a long moment of silence. Schroeder's eyes flick from Benteen to Reynolds and he begins to smile. Much more badly wounded than he was aware, Reynolds is supporting himself against the wall as he slowly slips to the floor. Seeing Reynolds' condition, Benteen hesitates and Schroeder's smile broadens.

SCHROEDER

So finally it becomes necessary to negotiate, eh?

BENTEEN

You think so?

SCHROEDER

I see no other solution, do you?

He digs his pistol deeper into Castelli's neck.

SCHROEDER

How about you, little man? Do you see some other way out?

Castelli appears to relax and looks at Benteen.

SGT. CASTELLI

I guess he's right.

He smiles regretfully and suddenly throws himself violently aside. Schroeder loses his grip and Castelli's momentum is such that he crashes into the balustrade, which gives way and pitches him down the stairwell to the flag-stoned lobby three floors below.

Betraying little more than mild surprise, Schroeder looks down into the lobby, and casually drops his gun over the side, before turning to face Benteen with a shrug.

SCHROEDER

You realize of course, that the authorities will never allow you to take me back across the border.

BENTEEN

Yeah, I've been thinking about that.

SCHROEDER

So, as I say, it finally becomes necessary to negotiate.

BENTEEN

I don't think so.

He levels his gun and Schroeder's sudden look of distressed surprise becomes his permanent death mask as Benteen deliberately pumps three bullets into him.

Benteen holsters his gun and turns to look at Reynolds, who lies propped up against the wall, close to death.

Benteen crouches down to look at him and Reynolds lets out something like a laugh.

REYNOLDS

You know something... For awhile there
I was afraid things were going to get
really serious...

BENTEEN

Yeah, I was kind of worried about
that myself.

He looks down at Reynolds, feeling that there is something he should do for him, but not too sure what it might be.

BENTEEN

You want a drink, or something...?

He straightens up and looks around.

BENTEEN

Gotta be a drink someplace here...

Now, as Benteen moves away, Reynolds seems to be saying something to himself, but there is no way of telling what it could be.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Benteen walks into the room where Schroeder was having his meal, picks up a glass and a bottle, then comes back out into the corridor. Now, as he pours a big drink, he glances down and sees that Reynolds is dead.

BENTEEN

Oh, shit...

He lowers himself slowly - careful not to spill the drink - rests his back against the wall, and thoughtfully starts sipping the drink himself.

FADE OUT.

THE END