

Manhunt

by

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Based on James L. Swanson's

Manhunt:

The 12 Day Chase for Lincoln's Killer

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EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

The first day of spring. Blossoms drip from the trees.

CONSTANCE CONGER, six years old, hums as she pumps water from the well into a well-worn bucket. Squinting into the late-afternoon sun, she sees something crest a nearby hill... the silhouette of a MAN ON HORSEBACK.

Up on the RIDGE, in a dusty BLUE UNIFORM is LT. COLONEL EVERTON J. CONGER, a weary eyed soldier who's seen enough death in the last few years to last him several lifetimes. A tiny smile breaks his tired face, and he...

CHARGES TOWARD THE FARMHOUSE

CONSTANCE drops her bucket, the water splashing as she races across the field.

CONSTANCE

Daddy! Daddy!

KATHERINE CONGER, hearing her daughter's shouts, bursts from house, beautiful even in her plain country frock. She stops short, a range of emotion playing on her face.

Conger approaches the house and dismounts, his face beaming with joy as CONSTANCE leaps into his arms. Conger swings her around and pulls her tight. Eleanor rushes to him as well, throwing her arms around her husband.

ELEANOR

Thank God you're home.

The family holds one another tight. Then...

CONSTANCE

Daddy... why are you wet?

Conger looks down at Constance's tiny hand. It's covered in BLOOD. He feels his chest. It's SOAKED IN BLOOD. Conger staggers back, letting Constance go.

His hands tear at his uniform, clawing through its thick blue bloody wool. And as we PULL BACK from his hands HE'S NO LONGER AT HOME...

... but lies atop a PILE OF BODIES on a smoke-filled HELLISH BATTLEFIELD, still tearing at his bloody chest as the battle rages on.

VOICE

COLONEL...

EXT. ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

CONGER'S eyes jerk open. In the dim firelight, he sees the rugged features of MAJOR H.W. SMITH, mid-thirties.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

Colonel...

The haunted looks snaps from Conger's face. Hell, most people wouldn't have even seen it... but Major Smith did. These two know each other well enough that a lot goes unsaid, but it's all understood.

Smith motions to CORPORAL BENJAMIN NELSON behind him. The nervous kid, barely eighteen, steps a little closer to the light.

CORP. NELSON

You were right, Colonel. The Judas sumbitch came like you said.

CONGER

When?

CORP. NELSON

I reckon ten minutes. I rode straight here like you told me.

CONGER

Boots and Saddles.

CUT TO:

As Conger mounts his horse, Nelson trots up beside him.

NELSON

If you don't mind my asking, sir, that Reb lover's a fugitive. Shouldn't he be runnin' for Dixie?

CONGER

He should.

NELSON

So how'd you know he'd come here?

CONGER

Ever had a girl, Nelson?

NELSON

(embarrassed)
No, sir.

Conger spurs his horse on, followed by Smith, Nelson and THREE other CAVALRY SOLDIERS, all in their teens.

EXT. WOODED TRAIL - NIGHT

Moonlight streaks through the bare arms of the late-winter trees. Their forboding shadows are trampled by Conger's detail, galloping through the night.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Dark, except for one window on the second floor. At the edge of the woods, CONGER'S DETAIL moves quietly through the trees.

And it's now we notice CONGER'S eyes... Always looking. Always thinking. Always a step ahead.

He doesn't say a word as he dismounts, but uses HAND SIGNALS. In response, the THREE SOLDIERS dismount, rifles at the ready, and move quickly into the woods.

Conger, Smith and Nelson silently make their way through the moonlight to the FARMHOUSE PORCH. Conger and Smith stop short of the porch boards and PULL OFF THEIR BOOTS.

Nelson shoots them a questioning look. In response, Conger taps his boot lightly on the porch. It makes an UNMISTAKABLE SOUND. Nelson nods and begins to remove his own boots.

On the porch now, Conger jimmies a window open with a Bowie knife and eases himself inside the...

INT. FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Moving swiftly through the darkness, REVOLVERS in hand, the three of them silently creep up the stairs.

SQUEAK! Nelson steps on a loose floor board.

Conger raises his hand. The three of them stop cold, and hold their breath. A beat and then the GIGGLING of a girl upstairs.

Conger lowers his hand and they begin to climb again.

A DARKENED HALLWAY -

Except for the sliver of light beneath a door.

Major Smith takes position on one side of that door, Nelson on the other. Conger kneels and withdraws a small HAND MIRROR from his breast pocket.

He slips the mirror under the gap between the door and floorboards, and places his head nearly at floor level. Peering at the REFLECTION of the room, he catches A GLIMPSE OF FLESH and bedsheets.

A curious Nelson edges in front of the door, trying to look over Conger's shoulder at the mirror, when...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Conger sees a STREAK OF BLACK in the mirror - the BARREL OF A SHOTGUN. Conger realizes that NELSON'S right above him.

CONGER

Nelson!

Before he can shove Nelson out of harm's way...

BAAAAMMMMMMM! The door EXPLODES in a hail of SPLINTERING WOOD above the crouched Conger but right into the FACE AND CHEST of NELSON. He's slammed against the wall.

Before Nelson fully comprehends what's just happened...

The barrel of the SHOTGUN lurches through the door's blast hole, going for the kill. Conger grabs the barrel from below and shoves it straight up, when BAAAM!!!!

The second barrel explodes! Harmlessly into the ceiling. Conger winces from the barrel heat as ceiling plaster rains down. A woman's SCREAMS tear through the night.

CONGER (CONT'D)

GO!

As Conger keeps his grip on the barrel, Major Smith pivots and KICKS OPEN THE DOOR, knocking...

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

THOMAS HARNEY, mid-twenties, back through the room. Three days growth on his face and naked from the waist up, Johnny wears the pants of a Union Soldier.

Conger shoulders his way up the door frame, aiming his COLT. Smith levels his .44 as well. But...

Before they can draw a bead, Harney grabs screaming JENNY DARE, a fresh 18 year-old, and pulls her before him as a shield. Her gauzy nightdress hangs from her quaking shoulders, now hostage to her boyfriend.

CONGER

Let her go, Harney! I know you don't want her hurt.

HARNEY

I'll spit in the palm of the devil himself, before you decorate a Yankee oak with me.

And from his rear waistband, Harney pulls a service revolver of his own. BAM! BAM!

His shots send Conger and Smith for cover behind the doorframe, the rounds eating up wood.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IN THE HALLWAY -

NELSON, in shock and blood-splattered from the waist up, gasps for breath. Other DOORS in the hallway open and the DARE family rush out in their nightshirts.

MAJOR SMITH draws a second REVOLVER leveling it at the family, TWO BOYS, six and eight, and THEIR TERRIFIED PARENTS.

JEDIDIAH DARE

What the hell's going on here!

SMITH

Union Army! If I can't count the fingers on each of your hands, I will shoot you dead.

At the door, CONGER tries to draw a clean line on Harney.

CONGER

Give it up, Harney! There's nowhere to go.

But Harney grips Jenny by the neck, firing wildly at the doorway. Conger stands his ground, calmly looking down the sight of his COLT, and...

BAM! Conger's COLT smokes as his bullet tears Harney's shoulder. Harney's revolver CLATTERS to the floor.

As Conger rushes the room, Harney shoves Jenny into him like she was furniture. Harney grabs his gun with his good hand and leaps...

OUT THE WINDOW! Trailing a cloud of shattered glass.

OUTSIDE THE HOUSE, Harney rolls off the eave and drops to the ground, running towards the barn.

But FROM THE WOODS, a POWDER FLASH. CRACK!

Harney buckles and falls hard to the ground, fumbling the REVOLVER in the dirt.

CONGER bursts from the front door of the house, leaps from the porch rail, racing for his fugitive.

Harney pulls himself forward, reaching for the revolver... his fingers stretching out. He grabs its handle and swings it at Conger...

WHAM! A stockinged foot jams down on his hand. Harney looks up. CONGER stares back down the sights of his Colt.

Conger's men from the woods arrive and begin to bind Harney's hands. As the soldiers bind him, they also pat him down for weapons.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CONGER (CONT'D)

Where's he shot?

SOLDIER #1

In his side, sir. It's pretty bad.

As Conger kneels to examine the wound, one of the SOLDIERS pulls some papers from Harney's back pocket and leafs through them.

CONGER

Get 'em up and get him to the Doc.

The Soldier hands Conger the letters.

SOLDIER #2

Letters, sir. From his family.

Conger takes the letters and scans them. Just as he's about to fold them up, he notices something...

CONGER

Give me a light.

The soldier strikes a match. Conger holds it to the papers, reading.

SOLDIER #2

They're just personals. From his mother.

Conger looks at the writing and notices slight discoloration on some of the ink. It's there, but honestly, it's barely noticeable.

SOLDIER #2 (CONT'D)

Sir?

Conger turns one of the letters over revealing a BLANK BACK PAGE. He holds the match underneath the paper, and slowly... as if by magic... dark lines appear in the paper. Invisible ink revealing SCHEMATICS...

CONGER

Holy Christ.

SOLDIER #2

What, sir?

Conger looks up to the Dare's barn.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

The barn door opens revealing...

A WAGON, barely visible in the near darkness - its cargo covered by a tarpaulin.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A MATCH LIGHTS, and CONGER peels back the tarp, revealing POWDER KEGS, emblazoned with the SOUTHERN CROSS. Conger sniffs.

SOLDIER #2

Sir?

CONGER

Powder kegs... Mines.

He shows the soldier the schematics on the letters - Detailed plans to one of the most recognized residences in the world...

CONGER (CONT'D)

He was going to blow up the White House.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Conger strides back out to his men, who carry Harney to one of the horses.

CONGER

Put him down.

SOLDIER

He ain't good, sir.

CONGER

Put him down.

They lower Harney to the ground. Conger kneels beside him. Harney's breathing is labored.

CONGER (CONT'D)

Where did you get these plans?

Harney locks eyes with Conger.

CONGER (CONT'D)

Who are you working with?

Harney smiles slightly, and with great difficulty says...

HARNEY

You have no idea what's involved.

And those are the last words Harney speaks. His breathing becomes raspy and then a DEATH RATTLE. Harney goes still.

SOLDIER #1

The wound was just too deep.

CONGER

Put him on the wagon. Bring him and the powder to camp.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Conger turn to see Smith crossing from the house.

Nelson?
CONGER (CONT'D)

Smith shakes his head. Conger's face drops.

INT. FARMHOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT

In the glow of lamp light, Conger kneels before Nelson, his dead eyes frozen wide in terror. He runs his fingers over Nelson's eyes. Closing them for the last time.

CUT TO:

A TINTED SEPIA PHOTOGRAPH OF KATHERINE CONGER...

In Conger's rough-hewn hands.

CONGER (V.O.)
Read that back, please.

Conger puts down the photo of Katherine. We are...

INT. TENT, UNION ARMY ENCAMPMENT - DAY

As an ARMY STAFF SECRETARY reads from a letter, Conger pours himself a whiskey with his bandaged hand.

ARMY SECRETARY
"Dear Mrs. Nelson... it is with a pained and heavy heart that I write to inform you of the death of your son Thomas who was killed by gunshot last night while apprehending a Confederate spy."

Conger takes a slug, and dictates.

CONGER
Under my command, Ben distinguished himself as a good and loyal soldier...

Despite his stoic veneer, emotion creeps into his voice.

CONGER (CONT'D)
... though his heart never strayed far from home. He spoke often of you and fondly, and longed to make you proud...

Conger trails off. He hates this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

217. CONGER (CONT'D)

ARMY SECRETARY
Sir?

CONGER
How many of these I've written.
218 now.

Conger drains the shot glass...

CONGER (CONT'D)
... As we grieve his loss, we
honor your sacrifice, and extend
the thanks of a grateful nation.

Major Smith enters the tent...

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
Sir, it's time.

Conger nods, pulls on his kepi and gets to his feet.

CONGER
Sincerely, Colonel Everton J.
Conger...
(beat)
The man whose name you'll cuss
until your dying day....

EXT. ENCAMPMENT - DAY

Burial ground. Dozens of recent graves populate this
hill, most with a simple wooden cross as a headstone.

Using ropes, they lower a pine box into freshly dug plot.

ARMY CHAPLAIN
... ashes to ashes, dust to dust.
The Lord bless him and keep him,
the Lord make his face to shine
upon him and be gracious unto him
and give him peace. Amen.

A murmur of amen from the collected crowd. As the crowd
disperse, the grave diggers move in to fill the hole.

CONGER
Never even had a girl.
(shakes his head)
Useless...

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
The Secretary of War's been
informed about Harney's plan.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAJOR H.W. SMITH (CONT'D)

They're posting guards at the
White House in case there were
others.

Conger nods, and as the pair walk back through the ARMY
"SURGEONS" attending to the wounded and dying, Conger
notices tiny buds struggling on the arms of trees.

CONGER

Another spring...

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

If the weather holds.

CONGER

We should be planting seeds, not
bodies...

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

It can't last forever, sir.

CONGER

By my calendar, it already has.
This whole damn country stinks of
death.

A loud WHOOP accompanies thundering hoofbeats as an ARMY
MESSENGER charges through the encampment, cheering at the
top of his lungs. Men crowd into the center of the
encampment surrounding the Messenger as he stands tall in
his saddle and yells...

MESSENGER

GENERAL LEE'S SURRENDERED! GENERAL
LEE'S SURRENDERED. The war's over!
We're all goin' home!

Cheers from the men. Hats are tossed into the air in
celebration. On Conger's face, a small smile breaks his
stoic facade. As we follow the hats flying into the air,
they become...

EXT. WASHINGTON - NIGHT

... fireworks exploding over the city, lighting her domes
and stately marble facades. The City is a portrait of
victory; candles burning brightly in windows, church
bells ringing.

Beneath pristine bunting draped from balconies, MEN,
WOMEN and CHILDREN celebrate in the streets waving the
STARS AND STRIPES.

EXT. WASHINGTON, STREETS - NIGHT

Celebrants in the street. Drunken revelers toasting the
end of the war.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

From a boarding house, Major Smith emerges, pushing past the celebrants to Conger, still mounted, holding the reins of Smith's horse.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
She's full up as well. Said with the war ending, rooms are hard to come by... I'm sure we'll find something in Maryland, a couple miles north.

Conger scratches his chest.

CONGER
Scar's pulling. I could use some time out of the saddle...

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
Don't tell me you wish to join these carrying-ons.

CONGER
I'll celebrate when I'm home.

Conger's eyes spot something at the end of the street.

CONGER (CONT'D)
Tell me, Major, when's the last time you were in a church?

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
I think I was praying for you.

CONGER
That long? We must tend to your soul immediately.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
I do believe the Almighty understands the demands of the battlefield.

CONGER
Well, seeing as it's Good Friday and the nation has been delivered, I think we can spend an hour or so thanking the Lord.

And as they push down the street, the horses trot over a discarded copy of the Evening Star newspaper. We push in on an ADVERTISEMENT.

• "PRESIDENT and Mrs. Lincoln have secured the State Box at FORD'S Theatre TO NIGHT, to witness Miss Laura Keene's American Cousin."

MAN'S VOICE (OVER)
For if the righteous man is God's child, HE will help him...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

And if we know our history, we should have a sense of what's about to unfold as we ...

CUT TO:

A WOODEN BOX OPENING REVEALING...

A DERINGER single shot pistol.

MAN'S VOICE (OVER) (CONT'D)
*...and deliver him from the hand
 of his adversaries. Let us test
 him with insult and torture, so
 that we may find out how gentle he
 is and make trial of his
 forbearance.*

Hands POWDER the Deringer and load a SINGLE BALL.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Conger and Smith sit, head bowed, listening to the words of the REVEREND as he reads the Good Friday service from Wisdom 2:1.

REVEREND
*Let us condemn him to a shameful
 death...*

INTERCUT with THE WHITE HOUSE as -

ABRAHAM LINCOLN steps into his carriage, accompanied by his wife Mary.

REVEREND (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*... for, according to what he
 says, he will be protected....*

BACK IN THE CHURCH, the Reverend's voice thunders through the CHAMBER...

REVEREND (CONT'D)
*Thus they reasoned, but they were
 led astray...*

TO A SHIMMERING KNIFE...

Glowing in the candlelight. Hands drag the blade against a sharpening stone, grinding the edge until it is razor sharp. The words of the Reverend continue.

REVEREND (V.O.)
*... for their wickedness blinded
 them, and they did not know the
 secret purposes of God....*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AND NOW WE'RE IN THE STREETS OF WASHINGTON -

A BLACK CARRIAGE trotting by, carrying the President...

REVEREND (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*... nor hoped for the wages of
 holiness...*

BACK ON THE DERINGER as it's slipped into a waistband,
 and covered with a evening jacket.

REVEREND (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*... nor discerned the prize for
 blameless souls...*

UNDER A STREET LAMP - HANDS SLIP A KNIFE into a COAT
 POCKET, and accept a small wrapped PHARMACY PACKAGE.

REVEREND (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*... for God created us for
 incorruption..*

BACK AT THE CHURCH - the REVEREND brings it home...

REVEREND (CONT'D)
*and made us in the image of his
 own Eternity...*

AND coming down the stairs of a BOARDINGHOUSE we get our
 first good look at...

JOHN WILKES BOOTH. Handsome, brilliantly dressed, looking
 like he carries his own personal spotlight. The refined
 face of a gentleman.

REVEREND (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*... But through the devil's envy,
 death entered the world...*

Back in the CHURCH - The Reverend BOWS HIS HEAD.

REVEREND (CONT'D)
*And those who belong to his
 company, experience it. And let us
 all say... Amen.*

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY, ACROSS FROM FORD'S THEATRE - NIGHT

Obscured by darkness, John Wilkes Booth, atop a BAY MARE
 watches as a BLACK CARRIAGE pulls to the front of the
 THEATRE. From the carriage, PRESIDENT and MRS. LINCOLN
 step out, accompanied by their friends, Major HENRY
 RATHBONE and his fiancée, CLARA HARRIS.

A ROAR OF LAUGHTER takes us...

INT. FORD'S THEATER - NIGHT

Footlights blaze illuminating the stage, where a COMPANY OF ACTORS preen and pout, overselling the lines of this innocuous piece of fluff.

Like a slow rolling tide, a murmur rises from the audience. The ACTORS look up to the Presidential Box and see Abraham Lincoln making his way inside. The PLAYERS STOP and the lead actress, Miss LAURA KEENE, signals to the ORCHESTRA.

"HAIL TO CHIEF" swells from the Orchestra Pit. Spotlights turn and illuminate the Presidential Box. In the center ring of light is Abraham Lincoln.

The Audience BREAKS INTO APPLAUSE, and SUDDENLY RISES, prompted only by the swelling of their hearts.

The ACTORS on STAGE join in the applause.

Lincoln smiles, embarrasses by the crowd.

A LITTLE BOY in the audience tugs on his MOTHER'S dress hem.

LITTLE BOY
Mommy, who are they clapping for?

The Mother lifts up her little boy so he can see.

MOTHER
For President Lincoln, Jed.

WAITING IN THE WINGS of the THEATER...

JOHN WILKES BOOTH listens to the applause, anger in his eyes. Even the stagehands are clapping. Booth checks his pocket watch, and heads toward the door.

CUT TO:

INT. TALTUVAL'S SALOON - NIGHT

As Booth enters, a slight buzz passes across the room. People are looking at him, whispering to each other. He's clearly a celebrity.

Women smile at him, trying to catch his eye. He meets their looks, and they nervously look away.

AT THE BAR, the BARTENDER greets booth with a warm smile.

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CONTINUED:

BARTENDER

Evening, Mister Booth. What's your pleasure?

BOOTH

Any other night, James, I'd say the lady in blue with the chestnut hair. But alas, I have an engagement later that can't be broken, so I'll settle for a Brandy and water.

A PATRON straddling a nearby bar stool leans in...

PATRON

Bartender. On my tab, please... It'd be an honor to buy a round for this country's most gifted actor.

A charming smile breaks across Booth's face.

BOOTH

Well, then. I suppose I must accept.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF WASHINGTON - NIGHT

TWO MEN on horseback stop beneath a street lamp. **LEWIS POWELL**, late-twenties, eyes a TOWNHOUSE across the road.

POWELL

Give it here.

DAVID HEROLD, a nervous looking kid in his early-twenties hands Powell a wrapped PHARMACY package.

POWELL (CONT'D)

What time you have?

INT. TALTUVAL'S SALOON - NIGHT

Booth eyes the clock. Nearly ten. He drains his drink.

BARTENDER

Another, Mister Booth?

Booth catches his reflection in the mirrors behind the bar. He straightens his cravat.

BOOTH

No. But one for my friend down there. It's always a pleasure to meet a devoted fan.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Booth tosses a coin onto the bar and heads for the door. Many eyes follow him, as do the whispers that accompany all celebrities.

CUT TO:

A HAND rapping a lion's head KNOCKER on the door of...

INT./EXT. SECRETARY OF STATE SEWARD'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT

The door opens and a black servant, WILLIAM BELL, finds Powell standing with a wrapped PHARMACY PACKAGE.

BELL

Yessa?

POWELL

Delivery from Dr. Verdi. For the Secretary of State, to relieve the pain of his carriage accident.

Bell reaches for the package, but Powell pulls it back.

POWELL (CONT'D)

It's a special ministration. I'm to show him how it's taken.

Bell eyes Powell, then glances to the street where Herold sits on his horse, holding the reins of Powell's mount.

Bell hesitates a moment, then opens the door for Powell.

INT. FORD'S THEATER, LOBBY - NIGHT

Crossing the lobby, Booth nods to a couple of THEATER EMPLOYEES and receives a steady stream of "Evening, Mister Booth." He heads up a curved stairway to the balcony level. Audience laughter can be heard above the play in the background.

INT. FORD'S THEATER - NIGHT

Booth edges his way through the balcony level, filled with people, several standing against the back wall watching the performance on the stage below. Passing the STANDING-ROOM-ONLY CROWD, BOOTH heads directly for the door of the Presidential Box.

INT. KIRKWOOD HOUSE HOTEL - BAR - NIGHT

GEORGE ATZERODT, a 30 year-old German with a dour face, sits at the BAR, eyeing his whiskey.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KIRKWOOD BARTENDER
Something wrong with it, Mister?

ATZERODT
No. No it's fine.

He takes a nervous sip, and then something in the mirror behind the bar catches his eye. He turns to see a lean, dark haired man in his mid-fifties enters. He walks with an overly cautious gait to cover his drunken state.

DOORMAN
Evening Mr. Vice-President.

VICE-PRESIDENT ANDREW JOHNSON tips his hat at the man. ATZERODT downs his whiskey, slides off his stool, and heads toward Johnson.

INT. FORD'S THEATER, BALCONY - NIGHT

Booth reaches the outer box door, where Lincoln's Valet, Charles Forbes, is seated. Booth hands Forbes a PERSONAL CARD from his coat pocket. Forbes nods his approval.

INT. SECRETARY OF STATE SEWARD'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT

As Powell climbs the staircase, Bell tries to stop him.

BELL
Sir, no one is allowed upstairs.
Not unless the family says. Sir...
Sir.. You must wait until you're
announced.

Powell ignores him. But the Secretary of State's son, FREDERICK, late-20s, cuts Powell off atop the stairs.

FREDERICK SEWARD
What in the blazes...

POWELL
I was told to bring this medicine
to Secretary Seward.

FREDERICK SEWARD
I'll accept the package, sir, and
kindly ask you to leave.

A beat. Powell hands Frederick the package.

FREDERICK SEWARD (CONT'D)
Thank you.

Powell nods and starts back toward the stairs. But as Frederick heads back down the hall, Powell turns and follows... a determined look in his eye.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He pulls a revolver from his coat and levels it, just as Frederick turns to face him...

Powell squeezes the trigger.

Click! MISFIRE. Frederick lunges for the gun, but Powell SLAMS its butt against his head... and SLAMS it AGAIN. And AGAIN. Blood explodes from Frederick's forehead.

INT. FORD'S THEATER, PRESIDENTIAL BOX - NIGHT

Booth now stands behind Lincoln and his party, unseen in the shadows. He reaches into his waist and slowly withdraws the Deringer.

INT. KIRKWOOD LOBBY - NIGHT

George Atzerodt fingers the handle of a knife in his waistcoat as he approaches the stumbling Andrew Johnson.

ATZERODT
Mr. Vice-President?

JOHNSON
Yes?

Atzerodt screws up his courage. His hand tightens around the grip of the knife and he...

Hurries away, leaving the Vice-President UNHARMED.

INT. SEWARD RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

POWELL smashes through the door. Eyes wide. Young FANNY SEWARD, the 19 year-old daughter of the Secretary, screams at the sight of Powell and her bloodied older brother trying to stop him.

Seward's nurse, GEORGE ROBISON, and his advisor, EMERICK HANSELL, launch themselves at POWELL. But Powell's long knife blade flashes from its hilt and strikes violently, cutting both men. Fanny grabs Powell's arm, but she's no match for him. He throws her off and crosses to the MAN in the bed... slashing at SECRETARY SEWARD himself.

FANNY's SCREAMS ring through the night.

EXT. SEWARD RESIDENCE - NIGHT

As SCREAMS emit from the house, William Bell bursts through the front door, shouting...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BELL
MURDER! MURDER!

HEROLD tightens his reins and gallops into the night.

INT. FORD'S THEATER, PRESIDENTIAL BOX - NIGHT

Booth watches Lincoln from behind. And waits. Lincoln turns to Mary and smiles, squeezing her hand, then turns his attention back to the stage.

Booth knows the play so well that he's mouthing along with all of its lines. Waiting. For exactly the right moment... Waiting.

We see it coming on his face. The moment drawing near... Booth mouths along silently as he raises the Deringer...

STAGE ACTOR (O.S.)
*Well I guess I know enough to turn
out inside out, you sockdologizing
old man trap.*

The audience erupts in laughs and BOOTH...

FIRES!

For a moment all time stops, and then...

Lincoln slumps in his chair. Mary SCREAMS.

The actors fall silent, the audience looks up in confusion. The few remaining shreds of laughter are quickly extinguished.

And through the smoky powder haze of the gunshot steps a wild-eyed JOHN WILKES BOOTH, his face ghostly pale against his black clothes, hair and moustache.

He seems stunned himself. And then, all hell breaks loose as the realization sets in.

MAJOR HENRY RATHBONE lunges for BOOTH, and grabs him by the coat. Booth breaks free...

BOOTH
FREEDOM!

... and plunges a dagger toward Rathbone's heart. Rathbone blocks it with the flesh of his arm. As the dagger trenches his skin, the wound erupts in blood.

Booth leaps for the balustrade, and swings his legs over. Rathbone grabs for his coattail, but Booth...

JUMPS from the box, CATCHING A RIDING SPUR on OLD GLORY as he falls, landing awkwardly on the stage below.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He quickly rises, raising the bloody dagger in the air for all to see. Claiming center stage, he cries out...

BOOTH (CONT'D)
SIC SEMPER TYRANNIS! THE SOUTH IS
AVENGED!

He springs across the stage, disappearing into the wings.

RATHBONE
(From above)
Stop that man!

Only one man, JOSEPH B. STEWART, standing in the front row, has the presence of mind to act. He leaps from the front row, and scrambles over the chairs of the orchestra pit onto the stage in pursuit of Booth.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND FORDS THEATRE - NIGHT

Booth bursts out the stage door to find a young man, JOHN "PEANUT" BURROUGHS tending his horse.

JOHN PEANUT
Mister Booth...

Not breaking stride Booth grabs the reins and smacks the boy with the pommel of the bloody dagger still clutched in his hand.

With brute strength, he pulls himself into the saddle...

JOSEPH STEWART bursts from the stage door. Stewart LUNGES for the reins, but Booth kicks him sharply, then PUNCHES HIS HORSE ON THE NECK. The Bay Mare whinnies, taking off at a gallop down the street.

EXT. SECRETARY OF STATE SEWARD'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Lewis Powell bursts from the Seward residence covered in blood. Screams follow him into the street. He locks eyes with a terrified Bell and then looks around for David Herold and his horse.

But the street is bare. Bell's screams draw out neighbors. Lamps are being lit.

Panicked, Powell tosses his knife into the street and runs for all he's worth.

INT. FORDS THEATER - NIGHT

Pandemonium. SHOUTS from the audience: "WHO IS SHOT? IS THE PRESIDENT ALIVE?" And from the PRESIDENTIAL BOX, SCREAMS- "A DOCTOR! WE NEED A DOCTOR!"

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AISLES are CLOGGED with THRONGS.

INSIDE THE PRESIDENTIAL BOX...

POUNDING at the DOOR. Finally, the door gives way. Among the OFFICERS and the VALET rushing to the President's aid is CHARLES LEALE.

LEALE

I'm an Army surgeon! Let me through!

The crowd parts as Leale pushes past the bleeding Rathbone, being tended by Miss Harris, and heads straight to LINCOLN.

MARY

Doctor please! Please...

Leale bends over Lincoln and feels around his head for the wound. His fingers find the hole in his head. He flinches and we can tell it's bad news.

LEALE

A knife! I need a knife!

The crowd clogging the box searches their pockets for a knife as Leale sucks in a massive lungfull of air and blows it into Lincoln's mouth.

EXT. STREETS OF WASHINGTON - NIGHT

A black figure rides hard through the streets past the residents celebrating the end of the war. The silhouette tears past the CAPITOL BUILDING, its newly completed DOME painted by moonlight.

Ripping down a COBBLESTONE ALLEY into an open wide avenue, BOOTH brings his horse to a halt. Breathing hard, he looks behind him. The streets are dark and empty. No one follows.

He trots his horse at a leisurely pace, a smile spreading on his face.

INT. FORDS THEATER, PRESIDENTIAL BOX - NIGHT

Leale pulls a bloody clot from Lincoln's head wound, as DR. CHARLES TAFT leans beside him.

TAFT

Doctor Taft, sir. Can I assist?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEALE
I can't treat him here, and he
won't survive to the White House.
Help me find him a bed.

EXT. TENTH STREET NEAR FORDS THEATER - NIGHT

GEORGE ATZERODT pulls his horse to a sudden stop a block away from the theater. HUNDREDS have spilled into the streets. POLICE, SOLDIERS and THEATER PATRONS are everywhere.

Then a sight chills his blood. Under the glow of flickering gas lamps he sees Drs. Leale and Taft and a host of others carrying LINCOLN across the street.

Soldiers wave unsheathed sabres, parting the crowd as Lincoln is borne to a TWO-STORY brick BOARDING HOUSE across the street.

Atzerodt turns his horse and gallops into the night.

INT. PETERSON HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lincoln is laid out on a bed in a back chamber of the house. Leale presides over the near-lifeless body of the man, as Mary Lincoln fighting away her tears, places her head on her husband's chest.

His breathing is labored, shallow... Weak.

A HYMNAL rises. A hundred voices singing, taking us to...

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

... where the CONGREGATION is on their feet, singing. But from outside, sounds rise. Indistinguishable shouts, growing LOUDER.

Conger's keen sense - Something's wrong. He pushes out of the pews and into the aisle, making his way to the doors.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Pandemonium and confusion. Soldiers gallop through the streets. People carry belongings bundled like refugees.

Conger grabs a FIFTEEN YEAR-OLD BOY running by, carrying a rifle.

CONGER
What's happened?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOY

Let me go!

CONGER

Tell me what's happened!

BOY

The President is shot, sir, and
not expected to live.

CONGER

When?

BOY

Tonight. At Fords Theater! They
say the South is on the march!

SMITH

Impossible.

The boy breaks free and races down the street.

SMITH (CONT'D)

He's made a mistake.

Smith follows in Conger's wake as he makes his way
through the confusion.

EXT. 10TH STREET, PETERSON HOUSE & FORDS THEATRE - NIGHT

Conger rounds the corner and sees the crowd of thousands
in the street. He knows it must be true.

And though Conger says nothing, the depth of the emotion
plays on his face.

CONGER

God help us all.

Just then A BLACK CARRIAGE...

... recklessly careens around the corner and gallops up
to the crowd, a sea of bodies blocking their way, led by
MAJOR THOMAS ECKERT on horseback.

MAJOR ECKERT

MAKE WAY FOR THE SECRETARY OF
WAR!!! MAKE WAY!

But the crowd's too thick. The carriage simply can't get
through. Major Eckert jumps off his mount and throws open
the carriage door.

MAJOR ECKERT (CONT'D)

We can't get through, sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The nation's SECRETARY OF WAR, EDWIN STANTON steps from the Carriage. 50s, a commanding and sobering presence.

STANTON
Then we'll go by foot.

MAJOR ECKERT
Sir. Assassins may be waiting.

STANTON
Damn it man, I will see my
President now.

Nearby, Conger yells to a couple of Union Soldiers.

CONGER
You there. Protective detail.
Behind my lead!

The Soldiers snap to and surround the carriage as Conger approaches. Recognition on Eckert's face.

MAJOR ECKERT
Colonel Conger?

CONGER
Major Eckert. We'll get you
through the crowd.

Conger helps Stanton down. He's followed by Secretary of The Navy GIDEON WELLS, JUDGE DAVID CARTTER of the District Supreme Court, and GENERAL MEIGS.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
Eyes sharp, boys!

Conger and Smith wedge into the crowd, cleaving the mob up to the entry of the Peterson House, guarded by POLICE and SOLDIERS.

INT. PETERSON HOUSE - NIGHT

The carriage detail enters the house and are met by CHARLES FORBES.

STANTON
The President?

CHARLES FORBES
The doctors are with him now.

As Forbes leads Stanton down a hallway, Major Eckert yells orders to the soldiers in front of the house.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAJOR ECKERT
I want barricades set up and the
crowd moved back! Bring
reinforcements if you have to.

Conger corners Eckert.

CONGER
Do we have the assassin?

Eckert shakes his head.

MAJOR ECKERT
Word's gone out to shut the bridges,
but they both had a head start.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
Two men, then?

MAJOR ECKERT
It was a coordinated attack... The
Secretary of State was wounded
gravely with a blade.

GENERAL MEIGS
General Grant was supposed to be
with the President tonight.

CONGER
Have you secured him?

MAJOR ECKERT
He's on the night train to
Burlington. We've cabled ahead,
but if he's been struck...

GENERAL MEIGS
... if he's been struck, Lee'll
rescind his surrender and we'll
have a new war.

Eckert looks at Conger as if he's noticing him for the
first time.

MAJOR ECKERT
General Meigs. Lt. Colonel Everton
Conger. He and I served together
with the New York 16th a few years
back.

CONGER
Major H.W. Smith.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
Sirs.

GENERAL MEIGS
Cavalry, huh?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CONGER

Intelligence now, sir. Army
detective.

MAJOR ECKERT

Conger unmasked last week's
attempt on the White House.

GENERAL MEIGS

For all the good it did. Looks
like the Rebs got what they wanted
after all.

Stanton returns from the back room, his anger covering
his sadness.

STANTON

Wake up every telegraph operator
in the city. Place all Union
Commanders on alert. Turn out all
troops and man every gun in the
district.

(beat)

I'm declaring martial law. North,
East, West and especially South.

GENERAL MEIGS

What of the President?

STANTON

A matter of hours or less.

(beat)

We must tend the country now.

COLONEL WHITMIRE pushes into the crowded parlor and
addresses Stanton.

WHITMIRE

Sir. We've identified the assassin
at Fords.

STANTON

He was recognized?

WHITMIRE

By every man, woman and child in
the theater. Sir... it was John
Wilkes Booth.

STANTON

The Actor?

WHITMIRE

Yes, sir. The Actor. He's been
staying at the National Hotel.

Stanton turns to Major Eckert.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

STANTON

Send a detail. Now.

Conger catches Eckert's eye. Eckert NODS TO CONGER. As Conger and Smith head for the door, Stanton turns to other aides.

STANTON (CONT'D)

Wire the Provost Marshals with his particulars. I want ports and railroads closed. I want men at all bridges. I want Booth in irons by sun-up.

MOVING QUICKLY... We are...

INT. NATIONAL HOTEL - NIGHT

Conger, Smith and several Soldiers rush up the stairway with their revolvers drawn... Conger leads the National Hotel's NIGHT MANAGER by the scruff of his collar.

NIGHT MANAGER

I swear to you, he hasn't been back tonight.

Conger pulls the Manager's key from his hands.

Smith and the Soldiers take position on either side of the door as Conger slips the KEY into the keyhole...

He turns it slowly. Silently. And...

BAAAAM! Smith kicks open the door. The soldiers pour...

INT. BOOTH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Weapons leveled. The moonlight shines through the open window on the EMPTY BED. No BOOTH.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOPER'S HILL - NIGHT

Booth, still in the saddle, comes to a stop on the high ground of a hill... steam rising from his tired horse.

He pulls his left leg out of the stirrups and a look of pain crosses his face. It's pretty clear his leg is messed up bad.

A noise catches his attention. Hoofbeats. He looks behind him, and the moonlight reveals a HORSEMAN galloping toward him, a trail of glittering dust kicking up behind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Booth palms his dagger, so the blade cannot be seen, and steels himself.

But as the rider approaches, Booth recognizes him as David Herold. Relief on his face...

BOOTH
Where are the others?

HEROLD
Powell got tangled inside.

BOOTH
You left him?

HEROLD
I gave him his due, Cap'n. Then
the Sec'tary's nigger come running
out screaming all kinds of Murder.
Waiting was not an option.
(beat)
But what of Lincoln? Did you
strike?

BOOTH
Before God and a full house...
Ambition's debt was paid.

Herold whistles low.

HEROLD
HOLY! The devil's really dead?

BOOTH
I shot true, but whether the blow
was fatal.... We must wait for our
reviews.

Booth winces. His leg...

BOOTH (CONT'D)
And Atzerodt? Is the Vice
President attacked as well?

HEROLD
I've not heard hide nor hair, but
he knows which way we're riding.
(beat)
You look pained.

BOOTH
I think my leg is broken.

HEROLD
How can you ride?

BOOTH
How can I not?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Booth snaps his reins. Herold follows.

CUT TO:

EXT. WASHINGTON DC - NIGHT

The city bears the look of a town in the path of a hurricane. Many citizens have gathered up belongings, preparing to leave in advance of God-knows-what.

SOLDIERS ON HORSEBACK call out...

SOLDIERS

Return to your homes at once! All
bridges are closed by order of the
War Department!

AT THE NAVY YARD BRIDGE - NIGHT

ARMED PATROLS have sealed off the bridge. SOLDIERS search those who attempted to cross.

In a nearby alley, eclipsed by darkness, a blood-stained Lewis Powell watches a beat, and then retreats back down the alley... disappearing in the darkness. There will be no leaving the city tonight.

EXT. MARYLAND COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

Two riders gallop toward...

THE SURRATT TAVERN - its windows dark at this late hour.

Davey Herold jumps from his horse, leaving Booth in the saddle. He pounds at the side door.

Booth surveys the road behind them. Still. Nothing approaching.

Davey's pounding is finally answered by JOHN LLOYD, a burly man in his late thirties rubbing sleep and too much whiskey from his eyes. Herold pushes him inside...

THE TAVERN BAR - NIGHT

HEROLD

(urgent whisper)

Lloyd, for Godsakes, make haste
and get those things.

LLOYD

As if I'm supposed to expect you
halfway through the night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HEROLD

Just get it!

As Lloyd disappears into a back room, Herold grabs a bottle of whiskey and takes it...

EXT. SURRATT TAVERN - NIGHT

... out to Booth.

HEROLD

To dull your pain.

BOOTH

History will dull my pain.

As Booth takes a long drag off the bottle, Lloyd emerges from the Tavern with a wrapped package. Herold pulls it from him and unwraps it.

Even in the darkness we can make out a pair of Field Glasses, a SPENCER REPEATING CARBINE and a pair of REMINGTON PISTOLS.

LLOYD

(to Booth)

Mrs. Surratt arranged for the package, but not the whiskey.

Booth laughs.

BOOTH

I've just made this the most famous tavern in the world and you're asking me for money?

LLOYD

What nonsense is this, Booth?

BOOTH

I'll share a bit of news with you, Mr. Lloyd. I am fairly certain that we have this night assassinated the President and the Secretary of State.

Herold presses a dollar bill into Lloyd's frozen hand...

HEROLD

Thanks for the whiskey.

... and spurs his mount.

Booth shoots a smile at a stunned and confused Lloyd. Then the pair gallop into the night.

INT. NATIONAL HOTEL - BOOTH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Lanterns and candles. As UNION SOLDIERS search the rest of the room, Conger pulls a BEDSIDE TABLE back, revealing a folded letter behind it.

Smith hovers over the Night Manager who sits at the simple desk in the corner of the room.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

How long was he a guest?

The Night Manager's shaking fingers clutch a pen as he scratches out a list on a spare piece of paper.

NIGHT MANAGER

Since the first of the year. We had a number of folks who booked with us because he was so well known. His work on stage and all.

CONGER

(wryly)

Think of how many guests you'll have now.

Conger hands Smith the letter.

CONGER (CONT'D)

Behind the dresser. Sent to Booth weeks ago, before Lee's surrender. The assassination was planned...

Conger points to passage in the letter.

CONGER (CONT'D)

... and Booth didn't plan it alone.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

(eyeing letter)

"Go and see how it will be taken in Richmond?" You think Jefferson Davis ordered this?

CONGER

Harney's attack on the White House. This. They're trying to restart the war.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

Sent from "Hookstown, Baltimore."

CONGER

Signed just "Sam". No surname.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
Friend Sam in Baltimore. You think
he's headed there now?

CONGER
He wants us to think so. He left
this for us to find.

Conger turns to the Night Manager.

CONGER (CONT'D)
Let's see that list.

The Night Manager hands the sheet to Conger.

CONGER (CONT'D)
These all of them? Everyone you
saw him with.

NIGHT MANAGER
All I can recall. But I'm only
here at night.

CONGER
(to a Soldier)
You there.

Conger folds the sheet of paper and writes instructions
on it.

CONGER (CONT'D)
Take this to the District Provost
Marshal. Booth's known associates.
Have him send raiding parties to
search all their residences.

The Soldier nods and pushes from the room.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
You think he never left the city?

CONGER
Not this one. This one's headed
for Dixie.
(to Night Manager)
Get us a water, will you?

The Manager bows slightly and exits the room, aware he's
just been dismissed. Conger touches his chest and winces.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
Sir?

CONGER
It'll pass.

Conger walks out of the room into...

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

He crosses to a bay window that looks out on the street.
People rushing with torches. Pandemonium. Shouts.

From his jacket pocket Conger pulls his wife's picture.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

You have a choice, you know...
In all this madness, no one would
even notice. You could be home in
two days time.

Conger slides the photograph back into his jacket pocket.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH (CONT'D)

When dawn breaks, every Union
Soldier will be hunting this man.
So tell me why, given all you've
done, with a discharge in your
pocket, should you be among them?

CONGER

Because...
(beat)
I'm better at it than they are.

Conger heads down the hall.

INT. FARM HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pitch black...

HEROLD (O.S.)

DOCTOR! DOCTOR!

As our eyes adjust to the dark, we see movement. A shadow
rises from a bed and crosses to the window, a barely
visible silhouette.

HEROLD (O.S.) (CONT'D)

DOCTOR! I'VE A MAN NEEDS CARE!

From across the room...

WOMEN'S VOICE

Who is it?

MAN AT WINDOW

Two men on horseback. One of
them's injured.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - NIGHT

Herold yells to the second story windows of the house...

HEROLD

DOCTOR!

... as he helps a sweating, wincing Booth from his mount.

Booth wails in pain as he slips from the horse. Herold helps him onto the porch as the front door opens and the MAN emerges. We cannot see him in the darkness.

MAN

Bring him this way.

The Man helps Herold bring Booth...

INT. FARMHOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A match flame catches the wick of an oil lamp. A soft glow illuminates the face of Dr. SAMUEL MUDD, 32.

As he turns the lamp on his patient, the light hits Booth for the very first time. Mudd stops cold.

DOCTOR MUDD

Booth.

BOOTH

Evening, Samuel. Been awhile.

INT. PETERSON HOUSE, REAR BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Hushed whispers as Lincoln draws shallow breaths.

Just OUTSIDE THE BEDCHAMBER, Conger, Eckert, Smith and General Meigs flank Stanton as Stanton reacts to the letter Conger found in Booth's room.

STANTON

Close all roads to Baltimore and cable the Postmaster in Hookstown. Have him draw up a list of Sams. We'll go door to door if we have to.

Stanton rubs his temples.

STANTON (CONT'D)

This conspiracy is a miserable business, gentlemen. We still have Southern armies in the field and they could be on the march.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CONGER

Worse, sir. Harney had detailed White House plans, and these men may have had access to Lincoln's movements... We have to consider the possibility that someone on our side with high level access might be giving aid.

Stanton blanches.

STANTON

Within our own ranks?

CONGER

Perhaps even in this room, sir.

STANTON

Booth must be taken alive. Do you understand me? I want to know who ordered this and who helped.

GENERAL MEIGS

Yes, sir.

Stanton's eyes are wet with anger and sorrow.

STANTON

Gentlemen, I'll be damned if I let this treacherous deed undo the work of that great man.

Lincoln convulses. Dr. Leale looks up at Stanton and nods. It's time.

Stanton and his top aides step INTO THE BEDCHAMBER, Stanton crossing to Lincoln's side. Conger and Smith watch from just outside the door.

The men in the room pull out their pocket watches, as Dr. Leale places his finger on the President's right radial pulse. Dr. Taft places his palm over Lincoln's heart. The second hands sweep forward until...

Lincoln DRAWS HIS LAST BREATH, and his war-weary face goes still. A long beat and then...

LEALE

He's left.

A long silence. Finally, Stanton leans over and gently closes Lincoln's eyes.

STANTON

Now he belongs to the ages.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

And we notice Conger, just outside the door, peering in at Lincoln's lifeless body - His eyes wet with tears.

DISSOLVE TO:

BLACK - THE BLACK OF A BOOT... being cut open.

Herold leans against the wall and downs a whiskey as Mudd gingerly removes Booth's boot.

DOCTOR MUDD
Can you stand at all?

BOOTH
Not without unbearable pain.

His foot is swollen. Mudd rolls it in his hands, eliciting a small yelp from Booth.

DOCTOR MUDD
It's a direct fracture. A single bone... about two inches above the ankle joint.

HEROLD
Can he ride?

Mudd reads the faces of the two men.

DOCTOR MUDD
Anxious to be somewhere?

BOOTH
Fix it the best you can.

Mudd stands to see his wife, SARAH FRANCES, standing in the doorway with TWO of THEIR YOUNG SONS.

DOCTOR MUDD
Fetch some hot water for the paste.

Sarah nods and whisks her boys away. Mudd turns back to Booth.

DOCTOR MUDD (CONT'D)
Wilkes... What have you done?

BOOTH
I fell off my horse.

DOCTOR MUDD
You know what I'm asking.

BOOTH
All you need to know is I fell off my horse.

Beat...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DOCTOR MUDD

I have a room you can lay up in a spell... for old times sake. But Wilkes. With that leg. Don't think you can ride.

Mudd steps out of the room to check on his wife.

HEROLD

Doc's being thick, Cap. You can ride. Hell, you rode all night.

BOOTH

Road won't be safe after sun up. Even as we speak, messengers ride the countryside proclaiming the South's new day. Even now our names are being woven into the fabric of history. Even now Jefferson Davis and the whole of the Confederate government is waiting to shake our hands.

(beat)

We'll take the good Doctor up on his offer. And if I can't ride, we'll find ourselves a carriage.

CUT TO:

CONGER holds an AMERICAN FLAG and lays the WHITE STARS on a FIELD of BLUE across the immobile face of our 16th President.

A DETAIL of MEN lift his flag-wrapped body up from the bed and place it into a simple pine box.

INT. PETERSON LIVING ROOM - DAY

Grown men, hats in hand, stand at attention one last time as the slain President is quietly borne through the room by Conger, Smith and several soldiers.

And as we look in the faces of the assembled men, one thing is clear. They loved this man.

EXT. PETERSON HOUSE - DAY

The crowd of onlookers wail when they see the pine box carried down the steps to a waiting BLACK CARRIAGE. The detail slides the President's coffin inside.

Guards close the carriage doors. As it makes its way through the bewildered crowd, Stanton comes up behind Conger and puts his hand on Conger's shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STANTON

We're sending hundred man teams into the field, but none that have your skills.

CONGER

I'll find him, sir. On Lincoln's soul I swear it.

STANTON

Sergeant Corbett.

SERGEANT CORBETT, a baby-faced 20 y.o. soldier looks up from his BIBLE. Catches Stanton's eye and nods.

STANTON (CONT'D)

Sergeant Corbett will see to your needs. Bring an end to this Colonel, before we all end up on the battle-lines again.

EXT. TENTH STREET - DAY

Saddlebags are made ready. Ammunition is checked. Rifles tossed from soldier to soldier.

Hundreds of soldiers, many already on horseback, are readying for the search.

CONGER

Where you from Corbett?

BOSTON CORBETT

Boston, sir. Most everyone pretty much calls me that.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

Boston Corbett.

BOSTON CORBETT

Yes, sir. We have a hundred men standing by for you Colonel.

CONGER

Give 'em to somebody else.

BOSTON CORBETT

Sir?

CONGER

Ever stalk prey with a hundred men on horseback?

(turns to Corbett)

I want two men. One who can shoot, and one who can track.

EXT. STREETS OF WASHINGTON - DAY

People line the street as the black carriage, accompanied by military guard, makes its way over cobblestones. Women weep. Men hold still.

A NEWSPAPER BOY, clutching the MORNING PAPERS, removes his cap out of respect. HUGE HEADLINES scream from the pages in his hand.

"WILL BOOTH BE TAKEN?"

EXT. TENTH STREET - DAY

Major Smith hands Conger a coffee, as he glances through witness reports. Corbett makes his way through the crowd with TWO MEN.

BOSTON CORBETT

Lieutenant Edward Doherty, sir.
16th New York and best shot in the
regiment.

DOHERTY, rugged-looking bruiser, late twenties, and a bit of a hothead sizes up Conger. Doesn't much like him. But orders are orders.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

Doherty, welcome aboard.

BOSTON CORBETT

And Lieutenant Alexander Lovett.
Lieutenant Lovett has a pretty
good handle on Maryland and
Virginia.

LOVETT, also late twenties, is a bit more genial than Doherty, and a bit smarter.

CONGER

Can you get us from town to town?

LOVETT

In my sleep, sir.

DOHERTY

Looks like everybody's heading to
Maryland. That where you wanna go,
Colonel?

All this time, Conger has barely even looked at the two, studying witness reports instead.

CONGER

We'll go to Maryland when we have
a reason to go to Maryland.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CONGER (CONT'D)

You want to find the haystack, go with them. You want to find the needle, follow me.

Conger heads toward Ford's.

INT. FORD'S THEATER - DAY

Conger stands amid the silent empty theater, eyes scanning everything. Lovett watches.

LOVETT

What's he doing?

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

Paying attention.

Lovett heads over to Conger.

LOVETT

Sir, shouldn't we examine the box?

CONGER

Hoping to entertain your tavern mates with tawdry stories of the President's brain splatter?

Conger's eyes go to the tear in the bunting where Booth caught his spur.

LOVETT

I meant, sir, to see how it was accomplished.

CONGER

Leave how to the lawyers. Our sole interests now are the details that will lead us to the man.

Conger leaps on stage, still eyeing that bunting.

CONGER (CONT'D)

Like that tear.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

Witness reports speak of him catching a spur.

Conger examines a heel mark on the stage.

CONGER

Landed hard. What's that jump, Major?

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

About fifteen feet, sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CONGER
Fifteen feet.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND FORDS THEATRE - DAY

Conger and his team surround John Peanut Burroughs, who seems awfully small seated atop an apple crate. He fidgets nervously with a rosary as Conger hard-eyes him.

JOHN PEANUT
Ain't no Johnny Reb, Mister. I didn't know what he done. I just watched his horse like I'd been told.

CONGER
By Mister Booth.

JOHN PEANUT
Yes sir. And he come running out, and he got on his horse and give me this for thanks.
(shows head wound)
Then that man, Stewart I thinks they call him, come running, but Booth give him the boot, sir, and ride off. That's all I know.

CONGER
Can you remember anything else?

But Conger's eyes are already elsewhere. On a BLACK WOMAN sweeping up in the doorway of her alley house. She's trying not to be obvious, but trying to listen to the conversation.

JOHN PEANUT
That's what I know, Mister. Every word of it true, I swear.

Without ceremony, Conger rises and crosses to woman, MARY JANE ANDERSON. Seeing him coming she scampers from sight.

DOHERTY
(aside to Lovett)
Where's he going?

LOVETT
Talk to that Colored, might be.

DOHERTY
What the Sam Hill for?

Conger knocks on Mary Jane's door.

CONGER
Excuse me, Miss.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY JANE ANDERSON
I don't want no trouble.

CONGER
No trouble. I just want to talk.
Has anyone taken your statement?

MARY JANE ANDERSON
No one's much interested in what a
colored girl has to say.

CONGER
I am. You know what happened last
night, don't you?

MARY JANE ANDERSON
Yessah. They killed Father Abe.

CONGER
You were listening just now,
weren't you?

Mary Jane doesn't reply. It's clear she's scared.

CONGER (CONT'D)
No harm'll come to you. I promise.
But I know you saw what happened.
Tell me, is that man telling the
truth?

Mary Jane nods.

CONGER (CONT'D)
Thank you.

But before he leaves...

MARY JANE ANDERSON
Something else funny though, sir.
When he kick that man who come
after him, I seen him punch his
horse... like that.
(punching the air)
Never seen no man spur a mount
that way.

BACK DOWN THE ALLEY -

Conger with his men.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
So... Fifteen foot fall...
Couldn't spur his horse.

CONGER
Looks like our Mr. Booth's got
himself a broken leg.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DOHERTY

We need a list of all doctors
within a night's ride of here.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

That'd take days. You're talking
hundreds of men and miles of
countryside.

BOSTON CORBETT

Besides, he coulda switched
horses. Kept riding past dawn.

CONGER

Could of. But didn't.

(off Corbett's look)

Ever ride with a broken limb?

(beat)

He needs tending. And he needs to
stay off the roads by day.

DOHERTY

Fine. But that don't answer where.

CONGER

Lt. Lovett. What's the most Rebel
loving, Yankee-hating damnable
county in the Union?

LOVETT

That'd be Charles County, sir.

CONGER

Yes it would. And how long a ride
is it?

LOVETT

One day sir. Or one night.

CONGER

Load your weapons.

(beat)

We're heading south.

EXT. BEDROOM - DAY

SARAH FRANCES MUDD enters the room to find Booth awake in
bed, light streaming through the window, his left foot
elevated, splinted and sealed with paste.

She brings over a tray with some cake, a few oranges and
some wine.

SARAH FRANCES

I thought you must be hungry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOOTH
Aren't you an angel.

SARAH FRANCES
It's not everyday we have such a
celebrated villain in the house.

BOOTH
Celebrated villain?

SARAH FRANCES
Handsome and modest. Don't think I
don't know about your work at
Fords Theater.

She places down the tray.

BOOTH
At Fords?

SARAH FRANCES
Yes. We saw your Brutus. You were
quite nefarious. I do love
Shakespeare.

Booth relaxes.

BOOTH
You make me blush. If it weren't
for your husband... Speaking of,
where is your husband... And my
boy?

SARAH FRANCES
Gone to town to hire your
carriage. But I doubt they'll have
much luck.

BOOTH
No?

SARAH FRANCES
It's Easter Sunday tomorrow.

EXT. BRYANTOWN - DAY

As HEROLD and MUDD trot their horses toward town, Herold
pulls back hard on the reins, stopping his horse short.

DOCTOR MUDD
Something wrong?

HEROLD
Uh, No. Nothing. I...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But in the distance Herold can see the town, and the DARK BLUE SHELL JACKET with yellow piping. The VANGUARD of the THIRTEENTH NEW YORK CAVALRY. MANHUNTERS.

HEROLD (CONT'D)

I've just remembered...

DOCTOR MUDD spots the cavalry as well.

HEROLD (CONT'D)

I left my purse at the house. I've nothing to hire a carriage with.

DOCTOR MUDD

Nonsense. I'll secure it with my good name.

HEROLD

I wouldn't think of it, sir. Hold fast, I won't be long.

Before Mudd can respond, Herold turns his horse and gallops away. Mudd looks at the cavalry and wonders.

He spurs his horse toward town, where...

INT. BRYANTOWN TOWN SQUARE, MARYLAND - DAY

Conger and his detail gallop up to the Commander of the New York Thirteenth, LIEUTENANT DANA.

CONGER

Lt. Dana? Lt. Colonel Everton J. Conger, National Detective Police. Secretary Stanton has empowered me to...

LT. DANA

We got enough boys down here, sir. Why don't you look somewhere else.

CONGER

Because I want to look here.

Conger trots on and dismounts. He's aware of the locals eyeing him and the other troops. None too friendly. Southern Maryland. Not enemy territory, but close.

Conger spots what he's looking for. The local PHARMACY.

CONGER (CONT'D)

Lovett.

Lovett dismounts and follows.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LT. DANA

Get this straight, Conger. Don't pull rank or get in my way. I'm real army. Not some bullshit Detective. You understand me?

CONGER

Yeah. I understand you.

LT. DANA

Where you think you going then.

CONGER

You wouldn't deny an officer a little camphor for his toothache, would you Lieutenant?

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

(under his breath)

... or the name of every Doctor in the area.

Conger heads into the PHARMACY, followed by Lovett.

BOSTON CORBETT

I don't understand. What's he got against the Colonel?

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

There's a reward out, kid. And the man don't want to share it.

DOHERTY

Especially with no "Detective".

EXT. COUNTRY WAY - DAY

A panicked DAVEY HEROLD rides for all he's worth, charging toward the Mudd farmhouse.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Herold bursts through the door.

HEROLD

We've got to go, Cap'n. We got to go now!

BOOTH

Did you get the carriage?

HEROLD

Yanks, Cap. The town was crawling with them. Rode right back.

Booth pulls himself up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOOTH

Where's Mudd?

HEROLD

Gone ahead. When he finds what we've done, he's sure to call us out. Come on. We've got to go!

BOOTH

Go where? They'll be on all the roads.

Herold ponders this.

HEROLD

Through the swamp then.

BOOTH

You want to run, Davey? Run. But I'm going to wait to know where I'm going.

HEROLD

The old Capitol Prison is where you're going.

BOOTH

You don't know Mudd. I do. He's loyal to the cause.

HEROLD

Yeah. Well I ain't so sure.

EXT. BRYANTOWN, TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Mudd walks across the main square marveling at the Union Troops. He's heading for the pharmacy.

INT. PHARMACY - DAY

Lovett jots notes in his notebook, as the PHARMACIST, late 60s, recites some names.

PHARMACIST

... Doc Harper. His farm's about two miles down Hollow's Road. And... oh yes... Doctor Daniels, he's an old sawbones here in town. And I'd say that was all.

CONGER

You've been a great help, sir.

EXT. PHARMACY - DAY

As Conger and Lovett exits the Pharmacy, they bump into SAMUEL MUDD.

CONGER

Excuse me.

Mudd nods, and we follow him into...

INT. PHARMACY - DAY

... where he crosses to the back counter.

DOCTOR MUDD

Have you seen this, Copley? The whole of the Union Army seems laid upon our doorsteps. One would think we seceded and are occupied.

PHARMACIST

You've not heard, Doctor?

DOCTOR MUDD

Heard what?

PHARMACIST

The President was kilt last night. His assassin is at large.

MUDD

Killed? By whom?

PHARMACIST

They say an actor, sir... A Mr. John Wilkes...

MUDD

(to himself)

Booth.

Mudd turns suddenly and makes for the door.

EXT. PHARMACY - DAY

Outside, Mudd catches his breath. Looking around he realizes that troops are everywhere.

A Union Soldier spots Mudd and marches right to him. Mudd tenses, but the Soldier just wants Mudd to step out of the way so he can hang a poster. "**\$100,000 REWARD for THE MURDERER of our late beloved President.**" Atop the text, a picture of John Wilkes Booth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mudd looks at the poster. At the \$100,000... hard to know what he's thinking.

INT. BEDROOM - DUSK

Herold bites his fingernails, anxiously staring out the window of his room. The Spencer Repeating Carbine rests in his lap, pointing at Booth.

BOOTH
You mind turning the business end
some other direction.

HEROLD
Sorry.

Booth dips a STRAIGHT-EDGED RAZOR into the basin resting in his lap and watching his reflection in a hand mirror, he hurriedly shaves off his moustache, leaving his upper lip completely bare.

BOOTH
How's it look?

HEROLD
Like you. But without the
moustache.

BOOTH
Feels like a missing limb.

HEROLD
Hey, you think maybe I need a
disguise?

BOOTH
I'm famous, Davey. You're not...
Lord, I wish I had the papers.

Herold sees something out the window. Dust in the distance. Kicked up by the feet of horses.

HEROLD
Damnation... Something's moving
fast.

Herold hands booth the Spencer as he grabs the field glasses. Booth quickly checks the Spencer's load.

BOOTH
How many riders?

A long tense beat, as Herold peers through the glasses.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HEROLD

Just one...
(beat)
It's the doc.

Booth breathes a sigh of relief.

EXT. MUDD'S FARMHOUSE - DUSK

Mudd alights from his horse, and...

INT. FARMHOUSE LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Mudd storms into the house.

DOCTOR MUDD

Where are they?

SARAH FRANCES

Upstairs. What's wrong?

Mudd pushes by her and mounts the stairs.

INT. BEDROOM - DUSK

Mudd throws open the door.

DOCTOR MUDD

You cussed, cussed shits! We never
spoke of murder. Never!

BOOTH

The tyrant is dead?

DOCTOR MUDD

Why in Jesse did you come here?!?
My family! Didn't you stop once to
think?

BOOTH

Say it again, sir. Have I indeed
killed Lincoln?

DOCTOR MUDD

As sure as you've killed us all!

HEROLD

Easy now Doc... No one but us know
we're here. You keep your mouth
shut and it'll stay that ways.

DOCTOR MUDD

Leave my house, sirs. Leave
immediately.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOOTH

What of Seward and the Vice President? Are they assassinated as well?

DOCTOR MUDD

My God man! There were more?

BOOTH

You think this was just me, Sam? With Lincoln gone, everything's going to change.

DOCTOR MUDD

Get out of my house! Get out of my house right now!

BOOTH

As you wish. But first Doctor... Your friends we spoke of that night in the tavern, December last. The ones working the underground...

Despite his broken leg, Booth rises, his voice measured and cold.

BOOTH (CONT'D)

You'll give me their names, Doctor. And directions to their whereabouts.

DOCTOR MUDD

I've done all I wish to. Please... Just leave.

BOOTH

It'd be sorry day if we were caught, sir. A sorry day for Mrs. Mudd and those boys.

We hold on Mudd, weighing his options.

EXT. FARMHOUSE PORCH - DUSK

Conger and his team stand on the front porch of a farmhouse, with an old man and his wife. Doherty stands nearby, rifle in his hands... lowered, but still threatening.

CONGER

It would've been in the pre-dawn hours.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OLD MAN
I already told you we were
undisturbed. Now get your boys out
my house and off my land.

Lovett and Corbett step onto the porch from the house.

LOVETT
House is clean.

Major Smith crosses from the Barn.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
Barn passes muster.

CONGER
Thank you, Doctor. Sorry for the
inconvenience.

As the men head back to their horses...

DOHERTY
Kind of gentle with 'em, Colonel.

CONGER
You have another method, Doherty?

DOHERTY
Yes sir. Put a little fear a God
in 'em. Break a few boards...
Makes 'em think twice about lying.

CONGER
They weren't lying.

DOHERTY
You don't know that.

CONGER
Yes I do. Who's next?

LOVETT
Doctor Samuel Mudd.

Conger spurs his horse. The rest of his men follow.

EXT. MUDD'S FARMHOUSE - DUSK

An oil lamp lights Mudd's way. He struggles along with
home made crutches.

DOCTOR MUDD
Troops are on the roads so you'll
have to pass through the morass.
Hagen's Folly is about two miles
south of town...

EXT. ROAD - DUSK

Conger's detail rides down wooded lanes. Hooves pounding the dusty road.

EXT. MUDD'S FARMHOUSE - DUSK

Herlod brings up the horses.

DOCTOR MUDD

... the Cox farm is a couple miles southwest from there. If anyone can get you across the river, it's Colonel Cox.

EXT. ROAD - DUSK

As Conger's detail hits an open stretch of road.

BAM! A RIFLE REPORT cracks the gloaming.

Conger pulls his horse short. BAM!

CONGER

Sniper!

But even as Conger shouts, Doherty already has his RIFLE leveled and fires at the powder flash in the woods. BAM!

Doherty tosses Boston his spent...

DOHERTY

Reload!

... and Boston tosses him his loaded. Now Conger, Smith and Lovett all have their rifles levelled.

BAM! Another report from the woods and the rifle BALL slams Boston Corbett's saddlebag. His horse rears...

BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! Conger, Smith, Lovett, and Doherty return fire.

... tossing Boston from the saddle. he hits the ground hard, losing Doherty's rifle and spilling his powder.

His horse bolts.

Conger pulls field glasses as spots two TEENAGE BOYS and their FATHER retreating through the woods.

CONGER

They're running.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOHERTY

We gonna follow?

CONGER

No.

(off Doherty's look)

Sooner we have Booth, sooner all this ends.

Major Smith helps Boston to his feet.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

You okay, kid?

BOSTON CORBETT

I lost my powder... And my horse.

DOHERTY

Quit your whining, Beantown. I'll get your dadgone horse.

Doherty takes off at a gallop after Boston's horse.

EXT. MUDD'S FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Booth winces as his splinted foot hits the side of his mount, wrapped in an unlaced, loose fitting brogan.

DOCTOR MUDD

When you reach Virginia, if the leg's still trouble look up a Doctor Stuart. He's a friend.

Booth balances his crude crutches across his saddle.

BOOTH

Doc, I...

DOCTOR MUDD

Just go.

Mudd and Sarah Frances watch Booth and Herold disappear into the reeds and high grass of the Zekiah swamp.

But as they head back toward their farmhouse.

HOOFBEATS can be heard in the distance. In the light of the moon, Mudd can make out a FIVE MAN detail, holding torches, approaching his house. He takes his wife's hand and says with a steady voice...

DOCTOR MUDD (CONT'D)

Two men came. One had a bad limb. I treated him and they moved on that morning. Is that clear Sarah?

She nods.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR MUDD (CONT'D)

Go tell the boys. And smooth out
the upstairs bed.

Conger and his men ride up the country lane to the front
of the farmhouse. The detail comes to a halt in front of
the good Doctor, waiting on his porch.

CONGER

Doctor Mudd?

INT. FARMHOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Conger hands Mudd a wanted poster of Booth.

CONGER

Was this one of them?

Conger watches Mudd closely.

DOCTOR MUDD

It was dark, sir, and I was mostly
at his foot.

CONGER

How bad was the limb? Could he
ride?

DOCTOR MUDD

I suppose he could because he did.

CONGER

You know where they were heading?

DOCTOR MUDD

His companion kept talking about
having a friend in Baltimore.

Conger sees a bead of sweat appear on Mudd's forehead.

CONGER

When I told you the President was
shot, you seemed surprised.

DOCTOR MUDD

Well, it's quite shocking.

CONGER

Yet, surely you heard the news in
town today.

DOCTOR MUDD

In town?

CONGER

You don't remember bumping into
me? At the pharmacy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A surprised Lovett looks up at Mudd. Clearly he didn't remember the man's face either.

DOCTOR MUDD

I was in a hurry for a patient. I didn't stop for the news.

CONGER

Doctor...

Conger offers him a handkerchief.

CONGER (CONT'D)

... you're sweating.

DOHERTY drops a slashed boot on the table.

DOHERTY

Check inside.

Conger peels back the slit to reveal writing on the inside of the boot. "J Wilkes."

DOCTOR MUDD

A man came to me for treatment. I upheld my oath. How was I to know what he had done?

EXT. MUDD'S FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Conger looks at the moon. Shining brightly.

CONGER

(to Doherty)

Now him? He was lying.

DOHERTY

He admitted Booth was there.

CONGER

He lied about not knowing him...

(off Doherty's look)

A man says more with his eyes than he does with his mouth. Bring him back for questioning.

INT. BRYANTON TAVERN - NIGHT

The tavern has been converted into a Union Command Post for the NY 13th. LIEUTENANT DANA examines maps by lamp light, as Conger stands before him.

LT. DANA

And tell me why on earth would I want to turn my men out into the Zekiah swamp tonight?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CONGER

Two reasons, Lieutenant. First, if you refuse, I'll be forced to commandeer your entire detachment under the orders given to me by the Secretary of War. Oh yes... I have that authority and would be awfully pleased to use it. And second...

Conger tosses Dana Booth's boot.

LT. DANA

Is this...?

CONGER

I don't mind men marking their territory so long as they don't get in my way. So you need to ask yourself a question now. Are you gonna help me, or are you going to get in my way?

Lt. Dana eyes the boot and the look in Conger's eye.

EXT. ZEKIAH SWAMP - NIGHT

Dozens of soldiers on horseback are paused at the edge of the swamp, holding torches. Despite the gravity of the situation, it's a beautiful sight, as they...

Ride into the swamp. Led by Lt. Dana.

CUT TO:

A MATCH LIGHTING...

Illuminating Booth's face and the compass he's consulting.

BOOTH

Does this goddamned morass have no end?

Herold leans over from his horse and... BLOWS out the match...

BOOTH (CONT'D)

I...

But Herold clasps his hand over Booth's mouth. In the distance, heading toward them, a line of torches.

VOICE IN DISTANCE

FORMATION!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Herold and Booth spurs their horses gently, moving in the opposite direction of the torchlight, until they see...

ANOTHER LINE OF TORCHES headed their way.

Herold points to a clump of swamp trees. He and Booth steer the horses there. But the lights keep closing.

They still their horses. Clumps of reeds and barren trees are all the cover they have. They hold their breath and try not to move. But the torches keep coming. Fifty feet. Forty feet. Thirty feet away.

Booth eases the Spencer carbine from his bag. Herold pulls a Revolver.

But the torches turn as they approach them, and angle off in another direction.

Booth and Herold back their horses out, and push off through the muddy ground.

CUT TO:

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. - NIGHT

Union flags wave at half mast. Union Soldiers gallop through the tree lined groves off the National Mall.

A beat later, a figure falls from one of those trees. LEWIS POWELL, the man who attacked Secretary Seward.

He moves quickly through the shadows.

EXT. STREETS OF WASHINGTON - NIGHT

Powell stumbles along the street, looking for, and finally finding a townhouse. Looking up and down the street, he quickly ducks up the front stoop and into...

INT. TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

... a well appointed Foyer.

POWELL

Mrs. Surratt! Mrs. Surratt!

MARY SURRATT, mid-forties, appears in the parlor doorway.

POWELL (CONT'D)

Mrs. Surratt. You must help me!

MARY SURRATT

You have the wrong house, man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POWELL

Please, Missus. For the love of
the South, for Mr. Booth and your
son John, you must help me leave
the city. I'm a hunted man.

And now two UNION SOLDIERS appear behind Mary, REVOLVERS
drawn at Powell.

SOLDIER

Not anymore.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRYANTOWN TAVERN - NIGHT

Doherty watches as Boston's eyes follow a busty
BARTENDRESS across the floor.

DOHERTY

Considering some horizontal
refreshment, Beantown?

Boston looks back to his Bible.

BOSTON CORBETT

I don't serve sin. God punishes
the wicked.

DOHERTY

Seems to me like he punishes
everyone, you stick around long
enough.

Lovett hands plates of food to Doherty and Boston.

DOHERTY (CONT'D)

Tell me, Mr. Lovett. What do you
make of the Colonel?

LOVETT

He's a Colonel. I'm a Lieutenant.
That's all I need to know.

EXT. BRYANTOWN TAVERN - NIGHT

Major Smith crosses to the side of the Tavern where TWO
SOLDIERS guard the entrance to a storm cellar.

Smith descends the stairs.

INT. STORM CELLAR - NIGHT

Lit by a hurricane lamp. Mudd sits, hand bound on a bag of potatoes.

DOCTOR MUDD

I told you, Colonel. A man came to me for treatment. I upheld my oath. How was I to know what he had done?

Smith motions to Conger, sitting on a stool opposite Mudd.

CONGER

So tell me, Doctor... At four in the morning, riding from Washington D.C., how did he know enough to come to you?

DOCTOR MUDD

All I know is that he did.

Conger rises to join Smith.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

Cable from Washington, sir. They've caught the Seward assassin. A man by the name of Lewis Powell.

CONGER

Where?

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

At the residence of Mary Surratt. Her son John was on our list of known associates and a known Southern spy.

Mudd leans forward, trying to hear what the two men are saying, but their hushed tones are too soft.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH (CONT'D)

Their search uncovered materials on his person that implicated not only Booth, but another fella, a German who was fixing to knife the Vice President but we're guessing he lost his nerve. Troops are hunting him now...

(beat)

What's more, their business with Lincoln wasn't new. His papers reveal that Booth recruited him and some others a few months back on a scheme to kidnap the President.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CONGER

Kidnap him?

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

To ransom the release of Greybacks from the Old Capitol prison. The intrigue never got up the spout.

CONGER

So they killed him instead.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

Two other men were involved in the kidnapping plot. A Mr. Sam Arnold of Hookstown, Baltimore....

CONGER

The mysterious Sam.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

Now in irons. But he wasn't the only Sam. There was also a secesh down in Maryland. A doctor.

CONGER

Samuel Mudd.

Smith nods, but as Conger turns to Mudd, Smith stops him.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

Sir... Powell's under the impression that Booth was working for someone, someone big.... and that the assassinations are supposed to be the start of something even bigger.

CUT TO:

EXT. ZEKIAH SWAMP - PRE-DAWN

TWO HORSEMEN press their way through the swamp - Booth and Herold. Booth winces as his horse mis-steps in a rut, sending a jolt of pain through his leg.

BOOTH

It'll be light soon, you lickfinger shit. Where's the cussed trail?

HEROLD

It's around. I know it's around.

BOOTH

You said that an hour ago.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Herold whips out his REVOLVER... Up ahead, out of the pre-dawn mist a MAN comes into view. A BLACK MAN, heading for home.

HEROLD
STATE YOUR NAME!

OSWELL SWANN
Oswell Swann, suh.

HEROLD
Anyone with you?

OSWELL SWANN
No, suh.

BOOTH
State your business, boy.

OSWELL SWANN
I live in these part, suh. I'm headin' home.

Booth reaches over and lowers Herold's gun arm.

BOOTH
Seeing as you know these parts, Swann...

Booth pulls a roll of Union Greenbacks from his pocket and peels off a couple of bills.

BOOTH (CONT'D)
Perhaps you could be of service.

CUT TO:

INT. STORM CELLAR - DAWN

Conger stares Mudd down.

DOCTOR MUDD
He said he had friends in power. Friends of Jefferson Davis. People near Lincoln willing to help.

CONGER
Who?

DOCTOR MUDD
There were never any names. Only innuendo. I supposed him a braggart and a fool. He called himself their cat's paw and said there was a bigger plan.

Conger's face darkens at this news.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR MUDD (CONT'D)

I swear to you, Colonel, I only
lied to protect my family. I
didn't think he'd ever do it. I
didn't think he had the guts...

CONGER

You want to protect your family?
You tell me where he's heading,
because if you don't, I'll arrest
them too.

Mudd swallows hard.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - DAWN

Oswell Swann walks leads Booth and Herold to the...

ESTATE OF COLONEL SAMUEL COX

... less of a farmhouse, and more of a Southern
Plantation.

INT. COX RESIDENCE - DAWN

FRANKLIN ROBEY, an overseer in his mid-forties, carries a
candle, lighting the way down the sweeping stairs of the
elegant mansion for COLONEL SAMUEL COX, a Confederate
ally in his late 50s, still in his bed clothes.

FRANKLIN ROBEY

No, sir. They only said it was
urgent. That boy Swann fetched 'em
here.

EXT. COX RESIDENCE - PORCH - DAWN

The front door opens and COLONEL SAMUEL COX finds Herold
on his porch.

COLONEL COX

Good God man! Do you know the
hour?

HEROLD

Are you Colonel Cox?

COLONEL COX

I am. And who the Dickens are you?

HEROLD

Friends of the Confederacy. In
need of your services.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COLONEL COX
My services? Who sent...

Cox stops short as his eyes fall on Booth, still on horseback just off the porch.

COLONEL COX (CONT'D)
Mary, Mother of God. Is that who I think it to be?

HEROLD
Yes, sir. And our fate is in your hands.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Conger, Doherty, Smith, Lovett and Corbett ride in advance of a twenty-five man cavalry team lead by Lt. Dana. Doherty has his rifle in hand, ready for anything.

They gallop to the...

SAMUEL COX ESTATE

The twenty-five soldiers spread out to surround the property, as Conger and his men ride up to the house.

Horsemen take position at the rear of the estate, on the sides, near the barns. Anywhere there's an escape route.

CONGER slams the majestic knocker hard, and MARY, Cox's servant answers the door.

Without a word, Conger leads the Union Soldiers...

INT. COX RESIDENCE - DAY

... into the marble entry foyer.

CONGER
Two man teams! Every room! Weapons at the ready!

MARY squeals. And Colonel Cox appears in a doorway.

COLONEL COX
What is the meaning of this, sir?

Conger moves up the stairs followed by Smith...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CONGER

This house is to be searched,
Colonel. You and your family will
not interfere. Is that understood?

INT. SECOND FLOOR, BEDROOM - DAY

Lovett and Doherty, revolvers at the ready, kick open the
upstairs doors. A GIRL, one of COX's daughters, SCREAMS.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS, LIVING ROOM, KITCHEN - DAY

Boston and Lt. Dana move quickly through the downstairs,
Dana with his revolver and Boston leveling a SHOTGUN.

Various household help shrieks and hides in corners.

INT. SECOND FLOOR, ANOTHER BEDROOM - DAY

Conger and Smith kick open the door, and enter. And
suddenly we cut...

INSIDE A WARDROBE as an EYE peers through a keyhole.
Nervous breathing. As...

KEYHOLE P.O.V. - Conger and Smith walk through the room,
weapons leveled.

Conger scans the bed chamber. Empty. Then he hears the
slightest noise from...

THE WARDROBE.

Conger freezes. He levels his revolver.

KEYHOLE P.O.V. - Conger approaching, followed by Smith. A
sharp gasp. The eyeball pulls back from the keyhole.

IN THE ROOM - On Conger, motioning Smith to one side of
the door as he takes the other. He gently grabs the knob,
turns it and...

THROWS THE DOOR OPEN!

REVEALING...

A FIVE YEAR-OLD BOY, Cox's son, terrified. Conger catches
his breath, horrified by what just might've happened.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Conger across from Cox.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CONGER

Where are they?

COLONEL COX

I told you, sir. They came here for help, and I sent them on their way.

CONGER

Why didn't you report them?

COLONEL COX

Honestly, sir, do you think they were fool enough to identify themselves as the President's killers? They said they were soldiers, just trying to get back home.

CONGER

Confederate soldiers.

COLONEL COX

Everyone knows my sympathies, sir, and I will not apologize for my leanings. After all...

(smiling smugly)

... it's still a free country, right? I mean isn't that what you boys've been dying for?

Doherty lunges for Cox, but is held back by Lovett. Conger shoots him a look, and he backs off.

CONGER

You've helped other soldiers. Why not them?

COLONEL COX

Something about their eyes, sir. They had desperate eyes.

EXT. SAMUEL COX ESTATE - DAY

Conger looks at the sky. Sunny and clear.

DOHERTY

Five minutes, Colonel, and I'll have him begging to be truthful through what's left of his teeth.

CONGER

If we sacrifice honor for victory, Lieutenant, are we any better than Booth?

(to Smith)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CONGER (CONT'D)
I want the house watched. All
coming and going.

Conger surveys the surrounding area.

CONGER (CONT'D)
Lovett, how far's the river?

LOVETT
About eight mile, sir. Crow's
distance.

Conger rubs his chest and winces.

CONGER
I want sweep details through these
woods, from right here all the way
to the Potomac.

DOHERTY
What if they've already crossed?

CONGER
They haven't.

DOHERTY
Everyone else thinks they have.
Everyone else is headed south.

CONGER
Look at the sky, Doherty. The
weather's clear. The moon's near
full. If they crossed now, day or
night, the Union patrols would
spot 'em a mile off.
(beat)
Right now he's in hiding...

Conger takes a step, looks back at the Cox house and out
into the Maryland farmland.

CONGER (CONT'D)
Waiting for the weather to turn.

EXT. PINE THICKET - DAY

Franklin Robey emerges in a pine thicket surrounded by
dense woods. He signals behind him and a moment later,
Booth and Herold emerge on horseback.

FRANKLIN ROBEY
Tie your horses off and lay low
until the Colonel sends his man.

BOOTH
Which man?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKLIN ROBEY

The River Ghost - the one'll take
you across. He's ferried more than
a few Southern hides in his day.

As Franklin heads into the thicket, Herold calls after...

HEROLD

How much longer we gotta wait?

FRANKLIN ROBEY

He'll be along in a day or so, I
expect.

And Robey disappears back into the thicket.

BOOTH

A day or so?

Pain shoots through Booth as he works his way off his
horse. Holding back his anguish, he speaks through
gritted teeth.

BOOTH (CONT'D)

This is intolerable. We should be
in the Carolinas by now.

HEROLD

Or at least in one of Colonel Cox's
beds.

BOOTH

It wasn't safe there and it won't
be safe until we're in Virginia.

As Booth hits the ground, his face contorts in agony. He
lowers himself and his black and swollen leg to the soil.

EXT. FARMLAND - DAY

Union Forces, led by Lovett, march over the countryside.
Searching for Booth.

EXT. BANKS OF THE POTOMAC - DUSK

Federal Troops, led by Doherty, march along the shore.
UNION GUNBOATS patrol the wide flat river.

EXT. MARYLAND COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

Close on the crackling flames of a BLAZING CAMPFIRE.
Conger's crouched next to it, jabbing it with piece of
wood, thinking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Corbett sits close by, reading from his Bible.

BOSTON CORBETT

Be not thou envious against evil
men, nor desire to be with them...

CONGER

... for their hearts studieth
destruction and their lips talk of
mischief.

(beat)

My father was a Reverend. He
passed a few years back.

He tosses the stick into the fire.

CONGER (CONT'D)

Good to have that book at times
like these, isn't it?

BOSTON CORBETT

Is it true what they been saying?
That the Rebels don't want to quit
no more, now that Lincoln's dead?

Conger pokes the fire.

CONGER

You got a family, Corbett?

A flicker of a smile on Corbett's face.

BOSTON CORBETT

There's mother, father. Got my
brothers and sisters. Big one, I
guess.

(beat)

My father makes hats.

CONGER

Hats?

BOSTON CORBETT

Most folks think he's the best in
the whole south of New York.

CONGER

I thought you were from Boston.

Corbett looks around to make sure no one's listening.

BOSTON CORBETT

No sir. I call myself Boston
because that's where I had my
vision. That's where I met the
Lord.

Conger takes it in stride.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CONGER
How long you been with Secretary Stanton?

BOSTON CORBETT
Few months. Says I'm his seeing-to.

CONGER
His seeing-to?

BOSTON CORBETT
Yes, sir. On account of I do whatever needs seeing to.
(beat)
How 'bout you sir? You got a family waitin' on you?

Conger stares into the blazing fire for a long moment.

CONGER
Wife and daughter.

We push in on the fire as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

The majestic branches of a glorious pine tree, swayed by the wind. We are...

EXT. PINE THICKET - DAY

Herold, lying on his back, watches the branches sway back and forth. He's wrapped in a blanket against the cold.

HEROLD
Cap'n?

BOOTH
Yeah.

HEROLD
You ever seen a man hung?

BOOTH
Yeah. Why?

HEROLD
What was it like?

BOOTH
Your mind's running away, Davey.
We're not getting hung...

Herold looks over at Booth. Sees him writing. Booth flinches as he adjusts his black and swollen leg.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOOTH (CONT'D)

In a few short days we'll be in
Carolina with President Davis and
our Confederate brothers, drinking
fine Kentucky bourbon beneath the
Southern Cross.

HEROLD

What're you making at?

BOOTH

Writing in my diary.

HEROLD

Read me some.

(off Booth's look)

I'm tired of my own thoughts. Let
me hear yours.

BOOTH

Very well... "I can never repent
it, though I hated the very
thought of killing. Our Country
owes all her troubles to him, no
one else, and God simply made me
the instrument of his punishment.
This forced Union is not what I
loved. This Nation is not what I
have..."

A branch snaps nearby. Booth fall silent. Another crack.
Someone's walking nearby. The rustling falls silent. They
quietly reach for their weapons as...

THOMAS JONES, wiry, mid-forties, appears out of the
brush. He sees he's in both men's cross-hairs.

THOMAS JONES

If y'all shoot, you'll never set
eyes on the Virginia shore.

BOOTH

You the Colonel's man?

THOMAS JONES

What do you reckon'?

Jones tosses a bundle of FOOD and CANTEEN WATER. Herold
pockets his weapon...

HEROLD

Give us moment, and we'll be ready
to move.

Jones shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

THOMAS JONES

Too much activity along the river.
You're gonna have to lay low a
spell.

Booth winces again as he readjusts his leg.

BOOTH

How long's a "spell"?

THOMAS JONES

Few days at least. We'll go when
we have cover... Don't fret,
you're well-hidden here an' I'll
be back with supplies an' such, as
best I can.

Booth is miserable about it. Herold curses beneath his
breath.

HEROLD

Could we at least get another
blanket and some whiskey?

BOOTH

And it would please us greatly if
you could bring some of the papers
next you call.

THOMAS JONES

I'll see what can be done.

As Jones disappears back into the woods, we...

CUT TO:

BINOCULAR P.O.V. -

A column of Confederate soldiers, nearly 100 in all, walk
along the banks of the Potomac river, heading south.

EXT. RIVERBANK, PORT TOBACCO - DAY

Conger and Smith, on horseback, lower their field
glasses, on the OPPOSITE SIDE of the river. Corbett's
right behind them.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

Could be just going home, sir.

Conger remains silent. Clearly he doesn't think so. But
it's Boston that says what's on everyone's mind.

BOSTON CORBETT

And if they ain't?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CONGER

That's not our business. Not yet.

Conger spurs his horse and trots down the Potomac to a...

TAVERN overlooking the river.

INT. TAVERN - DAY

River rats, ne'er do wells, former confederate soldiers and drunkards. Thomas Jones downs a whiskey as the bartender slides a bottle to him.

BARTENDER

That's two for the bottle, Tom.

THOMAS JONES

Put it on my tab.

Jones puts the bottle in a saddlebag by his feet. The bag clearly has several newspapers in it.

BARTENDER

That's your second in as many days... Your cousin Earl visiting?

THOMAS JONES

Yeah. The louse sure can hold it.

Conger and Smith enter the bar, followed by Corbett. All eyes on them in their Union outfits. Grumbles from the patrons. Whispers under their breath. Tension in the air.

Conger pays it no heed. But Smith's hand is on his revolver, ready to draw.

Conger walks up to the bar, sliding in next to Jones.

CONGER

Seen this man?

Conger slides the carte de viste photograph of Booth to the Bartender.

BARTENDER

Can't say I have.

Conger, aware Jones is listening, turns to him.

CONGER

You?

THOMAS JONES

Yeah... I seen him...

(beat)

In every paper in the country.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jones laughs. Conger doesn't.

THOMAS JONES (CONT'D)
You wasting your time up here, you
ask me. If I was them boys, I'd be
well South by now.

CONGER
Thanks for your insight.

Conger studies Jones a beat, and then moves on to the
other patrons. We see just a hint of relief on Jones'
face as he grabs his Saddlebag to go. As he does, the
whiskey bottle falls out and rolls right over to Smith.

Beat.

Smith picks up the bottle, and hands it back to Jones.

THOMAS JONES
Much obliged.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODED TRAIL - DAY

Lovett and Doherty lead a team of soldiers on horseback
slowly through the woods. Over branches. Through streams.
Whacking bushes with swords as they pass.

EXT. PINE THICKET - DAY

Herold stands before a tree. Narrows his eyes and...

DRAWS his revolver. He smiles a goofy grin and shoves the
revolver back into his pants, then spins and..

DRAWS again. Booth gazes at a small PHOTOGRAPH of a
pretty young gal, LUCY. He takes a slug of whiskey and
scribbles in his diary. Both just passing the time.

One of their horses snort and in the distance they hear a
WHINNY and the sound of spurs. Herold hits the ground.

Voices nearby. Indistinct conversation.

IN THE WOODS NEARBY -

UNION SOLDIERS guide their horses through the trees.

BACK IN THE THICKET -

Booth and Herold hold their breath as the sounds of the
Cavalry fades.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THOMAS JONES
Damn near caught me.

They spin around to see Jones behind them.

THOMAS JONES (CONT'D)
All a Port Tobacco's crawling with
'em. Don't know when I can come
again.

He hands Booth the bundle of papers and Herold the
whiskey. Herold, hands shaking, wastes no time in taking
a tug.

THOMAS JONES (CONT'D)
A few more days till the weather
turns. Just hang on till then.

Just then, one of the restless horses NEIGHS, loudly. And
begins to prance nervously.

THOMAS JONES (CONT'D)
You better quiet them mounts down.

HEROLD
They're hungry.

THOMAS JONES
And they're gonna stay hungry.
(to Booth)
More patrols'll be coming and if
you can hear them from a ways,
they can hear you.

Booth and Herold exchange looks. Jones is right.

THOMAS JONES (CONT'D)
And we won't be crossing with 'em
neither. We're going by boat, not
ferry.

HEROLD
Take them, then. As payment.

THOMAS JONES
It'd be noticed.

BOOTH
What do you suggest?

THOMAS JONES
Dispose of 'em, before the next
patrols come by.

HEROLD
Dispose of them?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

THOMAS JONES

There's a wet patch you can sink
'em in over yonder.

Off Herold's incredulous look.

THOMAS JONES (CONT'D)

What else you gonna do? You let
'em free, more'n likely they'll
lead the Yanks right back here.

BOOTH

Sacrifice our horses, sir? That's
downright inhumane.

Jones hard-eyes Booth.

THOMAS JONES

You killed the damn President.
Surely you can dispose of a coupla
mounts.

ON THE HORSES - LATER

Whinnying and whining. Booth strokes the bay mare's neck.
Cooing at it. Finally he hands Herold the reigns.

Davey Herold, tears in his eyes, looks to Booth.

HEROLD

You sure?

Booth gives a hesitant nod, and Herold leads their two
horses away through the thick pine underbrush.

Booth stands upright on his crutches, as he watches the
MARE and ROAN disappear in the greenery.

Alone now IN THE WOODS, Herold walks the horses to the
edge of small quicksand marsh nearby. The horses are calm
as he raises the Spencer Carbine, and wraps it in a
blanket. His tearful eye looks down the barrel. He holds
the gun leveled a long beat, and...

THE THICKET -

Bam. Bam. The gunshots are muffled, but the look on
Booth's face tells us the deed is done. He lowers
himself to the ground, surprisingly emotional. He takes a
beat and then reaches for the bundle of PAPERS Jones
brought.

EXT. WOODED CLEARING - DAY

Spencer slung on his shoulder, Herold walks away from a
the horses' bodies as they're swallowed by the quicksand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE THICKET -

Herold pushes into the clearing to find a bitter, angry Booth with the papers spread around him.

BOOTH

How could they get it so wrong?
How could they not understand?

HEROLD

Understand what, Cap? What's wrong?

The headlines. ASSASSIN. COWARDLY. LOATHSOME. DISHONORABLE.

BOOTH

The papers, Davey. The bloody papers.

(holds up newspapers)

The Daily Morning Chronicle, the Daily Citizen, The Mirror...

Booth grabs one of the papers and reads...

BOOTH (CONT'D)

*A crime that will live in history
as the most truthful example of
wickedness since the crucifixion
of Christ!*

Grabs another paper...

BOOTH (CONT'D)

That Damnable Powell, may he rot in hell... Do you know what he did... He butchered Seward! Left him alive with a fish gill for his cheek. Attacked the family like a madman. It was barbaric!

HEROLD

Those are the Northern papers. It'll be different down south.

BOOTH

A woman handed out my photograph, in my own church, asking that they find me, and kill me! My family's been arrested... their careers are ruined!

(beat)

You know what they're calling me? A coward. A coward! I...

Booth hangs his head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BOOTH (CONT'D)

I struck boldly. I walked with a firm step through a thousand of his friends and I struck with my heart. For my country. Don't they understand! This was an act of war.

HEROLD

They'll know it in Virginia. We'll be heroes in Virginia, right?

BOOTH

I just hope the others out there hold up their end of this business.

EXT. FERRY LAUNCH - DAY

Doherty combs the banks of the Potomac, coming up on the Ferry landing where a DETACHMENT of Union Soldiers load onto a Ferry to cross the Potomac.

The commanding LIEUTENANT glances over at Doherty.

DOHERTY

Where you headed, Lieutenant?

LIEUTENANT

Heading South. This ground's been picked over. There's nothing here to find.

We can see the frustration on Doherty's face.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Boston mumbles the Bible softly to himself. Lovett and Doherty play cards. Doherty looks over to Conger, who has the picture of his wife out and is writing her a letter.

Doherty throws his cards down a little harder than he should.

CONGER

Something wrong, Doherty?

DOHERTY

(frustrated)

You're the Detective, sir. Why don't you tell me?

Conger doesn't stop writing. Doesn't even look up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CONGER

You think they're gone from here.
That it, Doherty?

DOHERTY

I think they're *hell and gone* from here. And any chance we have of finding them is across that river.

CONGER

You see those troops heading for Virginia, and it makes you all itchy, doesn't it?

DOHERTY

I got four brothers, sir. In the Ohio 1st and 5th, and every day that sumbitch ain't caught is a day the South grows bolder. They're still on the field and thank the Lord they ain't been kilt so far... and they damned well ain't gonna get kilt 'cause I couldn't catch this man. So hell yeah, I want to go to Virginia... Because I ain't scared.

The campsite falls silent. In case you missed it, Doherty's just called Conger a coward. Conger looks up from his letter.

CONGER

You're a good shot, Lieutenant. How many rounds would it take you to fell a moving target at hundred paces if you were blindfolded?

DOHERTY

Depends how lucky I was.

CONGER

And if I take the blindfold off?

DOHERTY

Just one.

His point made, Conger goes back to his letter.

DOHERTY (CONT'D)

I gotta piss.

INT. WOODS - NIGHT

Doherty shakes and tucks it away. As he buttons up and turns he finds MAJOR SMITH behind him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

You got it wrong about the Colonel.

DOHERTY

From what I seen, I'm dead on. Folks shoot at us, he don't pursue. He outranks a fellow, but swallows his spit anyway. I doubt the man's seen a real scrape in his life.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

You think he hasn't seen the elephant? He's fought more men than you can count. Bull Run, Stone River and Antietam.

DOHERTY

So what happened? He lose his stomach?

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

He got a shotgun to the heart. Nearly died... Hell, he still got buck in his chest. But that ain't the bad part...

(beat)

Man who done it was a boyhood friend of his, and, turns out, a Rebel spy. For a small mistake of trust, the Colonel lost forty seven of his men. He lay bleeding on the ground, and had to watch them boys die. First thing he did when he could walk again was track the Judas down. Killed him with his bare hands. He's been hunting Rebels ever since...

Smith hard-eyes Doherty. Almost spooky in this light.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH (CONT'D)

That man's a lot of things. Scared ain't one of them.

Smith unbuttons, and begins to piss. Clearly Doherty's been dismissed.

EXT. SAMUEL COX ESTATE - DAY

TWO UNION SOLDIERS at a small encampment with a view of the Cox estate. Conger and Smith ride up.

The soldiers snap to attention.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CONGER

At ease.

The soldier hands Conger a notebook, and Conger reads the entries, clearly disappointed.

SOLDIER

How long do we keep watching, sir?

CONGER

Until I tell you to stop.

EXT. RIVERBANK - DAY

Conger leads his horse down to the water. He looks out over its wide expanse, at the UNION GUNBOATS patrolling.

CONGER

You think I'm crazy, Major.
Waiting here like this?

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

Have you ever been wrong?

CONGER

If Booth gets away with this, the whole country... the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, hell, democracy itself... None of it'll mean anything if a small cabal of treacherous men can use violence to overturn the will of the people.

As his horse laps the water, a small WIND rustles his hair. RIPPLES blow across the water, and CLOUDS move across the sky. Conger becomes rigid like a cobra about to strike.

CONGER (CONT'D)

Major?

FLASH: Thomas Jones gallops through the forest.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

Yes, sir.

FLASH: Jones pushes his way into the pine thicket.

CONGER

Boots and saddles.

Conger SPURS his horse, taking off at a gallop, followed by Smith. And we FLASH to THOMAS with Booth and Herold.

THOMAS JONES

Make ready. We go tonight.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - AFTERNOON

Conger and company over the map. Conger issuing orders...

CONGER

Lovett, I want checkpoints here, here, here, and here. Vedettes at every crossing. Corbett, find Meigs in Port Tobacco and tell him Conger says to double the boats tonight. Doherty, alert Lt. Dana... I need four man teams up and down the banks, from Port Tobacco to Morgantown.

LOVETT

And you, sir?

CONGER

I'll be on the water.

Conger straightens up and looks his men in the eye.

CONGER (CONT'D)

This is the hour we've been waiting for, boys. Let's go catch this sumbitch.

CUT TO:

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

Dark clouds march across the night sky. The moon is nowhere to be seen. It's a very dark night.

EXT. RIVER - NIGHT

A heavy fog has settled on the water. Glowing orbs dance in the mist -- lanterns of the gunboats on the water.

EXT. PINE FOREST - NIGHT

Fog lays thick upon the trees. Shadows approach...

Thomas Jones and Davey Herold emerge from the haze. Behind them a figure on horseback... John Wilkes Booth. They move slowly. Silently.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

A small group of soldiers gallop up the dark country way, clutching torches. As they pass, we hold on the darkness.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A beat later, Thomas Jones emerges from the trees onto fog covered lane. He surveys the road... Empty.

He whistles.

A beat later, Herold leads Booth on horseback onto the road, trotting toward the river.

EXT. FERRY LAUNCH - NIGHT

Conger and Smith board a Union Gunboat, as Doherty leads a team of soldiers, rifles ready and torches blazing down the banks.

CONGER

Keep your patrols sweeping the bank. We don't stop till sun up.

DOHERTY

Yes, sir.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

A handful of UNION SOLDIERS hold torches and pass around a whiskey bottle.

In the distant darkness, Thomas Jones watches. They don't look like they're moving anytime soon. Jones retreats...

TO HEROLD and BOOTH. He silently leads them off the road, toward a...

FARMHOUSE.

Lights glow in the farmhouse window. Laughter can be heard from inside. Jones and Herold lead the horse around the rear of the house, heading toward the field.

Suddenly, from the darkness...

WOOF! A DOG barks, scaring the shit out of Herold. The angry mutt strains at its chain.

THOMAS JONES

Shhh! Shhh!

But the dog won't stop barking.

INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

The dog's BARKING has got the attention of John Ware, a nasty mountain of a man, who rises from the supper table and throws his napkin down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN WARE
Best not be them goddamn *pics*
again. I swear I'll blow their
goddamn little heads off.

He grabs his shotgun, he crosses to the front door and
throws it open.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

The dog still barks. But there's nothing there.

JOHN WARE
Shut yer hole, mutt!

And even as he yells...

Herold, Jones and Booth on horseback melt into his back
fields.

EXT. UNION GUNBOAT - NIGHT

Conger and Smith stand on the prow of the gunboat,
shining mirrored lanterns at the water. Though their
lights cut through fog and hit water, visibility is still
for shit. Other lights from other boats sweep in the
distance.

CONGER
We'll never see him in this soup.
(To the Captain)
Cut the engine.

Conger blows out his lantern.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
Colonel?

CONGER
Sight's not our only sense.

And suddenly we can hear the river lapping around them.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Jones leads Herold and Booth up to a well-constructed
fence, too high for the horse get over.

THOMAS JONES
(whisper)
You'll have to walk the rest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And in the darkness we hear more than see the collision of bodies as Jones and Herold help Booth and his painful busted leg over the fence.

BOOTH

How far?

THOMAS JONES

Just down the hill.

Booth, using Mudd's crude crutches, follows Jones down the rough incline.

EXT. BANKS OF THE POTOMAC - NIGHT

DOHERTY and his team work their way up the banks of the river, torches illuminating dark trees, rising like skeletons from the earth.

After they pass, the screen goes dark again, and moments later Thomas Jones appears and waves the others on.

Alone in the darkness for god knows how long, the three move quickly.

Herold pulls a small well-hidden skiff from beneath a grove of bushes and drags it down to the water, and Jones flints a candle.

THOMAS JONES

(all in whispers)

Your compass.

Booth's hands fumble in his jacket and pull out his pocket compass. Jones opens it, holding the dancing flame over the compass' protective glass cover.

THOMAS JONES (CONT'D)

Keep to this mark and you'll hit
an inlet on the other side.
Machodoc creek. Mrs. Quesenberry's
house is right at the mouth. Tell
her I sent you and you'll get all
you need.

BOOTH

Quesenberry.

Jones hands him the candle and a patch of oil cloth.

THOMAS JONES

Keep the flame covered or they'll
see you for sure.

Herold holds the skiff steady on the dark and foggy water. Booth takes Herold's shoulder as he hops down to the shoreline, and maneuvers into the vessel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His face is well lit by the small candle.

THOMAS JONES (CONT'D)
(urgent whisper)
Cover the flame.

As Herold boards the skiff, Booth draps the flame with the oil cloth. In the darkness, the boat nearly disappears.

BOOTH
God bless, dear friend. You've
done more for your country than
you know.

And with that, Herold strokes and the pair disappear into the darkness.

EXT. UNION GUNBOAT - NIGHT

Smith and Conger in the darkness...

LISTENING to the lapping of the waves against the side of the gunboat.

EXT. POTOMAC, THE SKIFF - NIGHT

Herold silently rows. Booth looks out over the water at the lights in the fog.

BOOTH
(whisper)
Those lamps are like lighthouses,
showing us where not to go.

Booth spots a patch of darkness off the bow.

BOOTH (CONT'D)
(whisper)
Point up to port. Darkness is our
guide.

Herold looks over his shoulder at a stretch of darkness in the water, and softly rows.

EXT. UNION GUNBOAT - NIGHT

Silence. And darkness. Conger, eyes closed, listens. Waiting for any change in the sound.

And then it comes... in the distant fog. Rowing?

Conger's eyes snap open. Whispers...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CONGER

Over there.

Smith listens... Yes. Faintly. Maybe rowing.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

Shall we pursue?

CONGER

We might lose 'em in the engine noise.

Conger readies his rifle.

CONGER (CONT'D)

BOAT AHOY!

CUT TO:

HEROLD AND BOOTH on dark water. Herold freezes, holding the oars out the water.

CONGER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

IDENTIFY YOURSELF!

Booth shakes his head. He reaches under the oil cloth and pinches out the flame. Silent now and dark. They drift.

CONGER LISTENS

And now hears nothing.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

Coulda been fish jumping.

CONGER

Wasn't fish. IDENTIFY YOURSELF NOW
OR YOU WILL BE FIRED UPON.

They listen. Silence.

ON BOOTH AND HEROLD in the darkness. Not moving. Just drifting.

CONGER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

THIS IS YOUR LAST WARNING!

CONGER raises his rifle AND FIRES!

On BOOTH and HEROLD as the round whizzes, smacking the water nearby.

BAM! Another round. BAM! And another. Herold and Booth don't move, letting bullets whack the water and shred the fog around them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CONGER lowers his rifle and listens. Not a sound.

CONGER (CONT'D)
Light the lanterns.

Soldiers and Smith quickly get the lanterns lit.

On BOOTH and HEROLD... they see the lantern light appear in the distance. Herold silently dips his oars back in the water, and lightly strokes.

CONGER sweeps the fog and water with the lantern. Nothing can be seen in the soup. They shine the light all around the gunboat... but see nothing.

On BOOTH and HEROLD, drifting away from the light.

On CONGER, his troubled face. Straining to hear a sound. But ENGINE NOISE GROWS LOUD and a voice SHOUTS.

VOICE IN DISTANCE
WE HEARD SHOTS. DO YOU NEED
ASSISTANCE!

Conger's FACE FALLS as the RATTLING STEAM ENGINE obscures the subtle sounds of the water. And somewhere nearby..

HEROLD begins to stroke again, heading away from the lights... toward Virginia... toward the promised land.

EXT. RIVERBANK, VIRGINIA SIDE - NIGHT

The skiff slides onto shore. Herold jumps out and banks the boat with Booth still in it.

CUT TO:

THE DOOR OF A RIVER ESTATE OPENS, REVEALING...

An ELEGANT SOUTHERN WOMAN in her mid-forties is led out by her SERVANT. Behind her, the sounds of a PARTY in progress. She is...

HEROLD
Mrs. Quesenberry?

On her front stoop she finds David Herold, looking rough and dirty from his days outdoors.

HEROLD (CONT'D)
We're sent by Thomas Jones. He
said you could help.

She steps outside and quickly closes the door behind her.

EXT. UNION GUNBOAT - NIGHT

Conger looks off into the fog, frustrated.

CONGER
Take us in, Captain. We're gonna
sweep the other shore.

GUNBOAT CAPTAIN
Our draw's too deep for water that
spare.

CONGER
I don't care if we scrape mud,
Captain. Bring us in as close as
you can.

EXT. SHORELINE - NIGHT

Booth lies low in the banked boat. Herold approaches with
a pair of...

BOOTH
Horses?

HEROLD
And food.

BOOTH
How about a bath and a bloody bed?

HEROLD
She had guests, Cap'n. We woulda
been noticed.

BOOTH
What was the name of Mudd's
friend. The doctor in these parts.

HEROLD
Stuart.

BOOTH
Stuart. He'll show us a bed.

Booth pulls himself from the boat, grimacing in pain.

EXT. UNION GUNBOAT - NIGHT

The Gunboat's motor strains as it powers through the
shallow muck. Conger shines a light on the VIRGINIA
SHORELINE, barely visible through the mist.

Conger hangs his head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CONGER

Take us back.

EXT. DOCTOR RICHARD STUART'S ESTATE - NIGHT

Booth waits on horseback while Herold bangs on the door.
After a beat, it's answered by DOCTOR RICHARD STUART.

DR. STUART

State your business, sir.

HEROLD

We're Marylanders, needing
accommodation for the night.

DR. STUART

You came to the wrong house. There
are no accommodations here.

HEROLD

Sir, you were recommended.
Recommended by Doctor Mudd.

Beat. Stuart looks at the pair and decides.

DR. STUART

No one was authorized to recommend
anybody to me.

HEROLD

If you'd just listen to the
circumstances of the case...

DR. STUART

I know the circumstances of your
case.

(to Booth)

Your wanting moustache hides
nothing, sir... leastly not your
infamous, wanton act.

BOOTH

You know me then?

DR. STUART

... as a villain who has wrapped
himself in my beloved flag.

BOOTH

I did my duty as a patriot, sir.

DR. STUART

Patriot? Criminal! You have
sullied the South with a stain
that cannot be removed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOOTH
How dare you, sir!

DR. STUART
And how dare both of you.

Dr. Stuart slams shut the door.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

An angry Booth shakes his head as he and Herold trot into the darkness.

BOOTH
A hero's welcome indeed.

HEROLD
Forget it, Cap. We'll just keep going. We'll git to Port Royal. We'll git us a room somehow.

BOOTH
I can't make it, Davey. I'll die from pain riding this way.

HEROLD
Another night outta doors, then?

BOOTH
Patrols are out. We've got to get off the road.

Booth looks over to a shanty farmhouse just off the road. A blazing fire in the hearth warms a BLACK FAMILY in its gentle glow. Booth seethes...

BOOTH (CONT'D)
Look at them happy niggers warming themselves by the fire. It just ain't right.

INT. SHANTY FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

WILLIAM LUCAS, a BLACK MAN in his mid-forties, has his hand on his wife's pregnant belly.

LUCAS
Maggie... No... Sarah. No... Rosalind.

CLARA crinkles her nose and laughs.

CLARA
Rosalind?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WHAM. The front door kicks open. Lucas jumps to his feet to see Booth and Herold, SPENCER leveled.

LUCAS

Wha... what do you want?

BOOTH

I need a bed.

LUCAS

I don't understand.

BOOTH

We're staying the night.

Lucas' four young children appear in the doorway.

LUCAS

Sir, this is my house. You have no right...

Booth pulls out his dagger, still stained with Major Rathbone's blood.

BOOTH

Ain't no such thing as a property owning nigger where I come from, boy. This house right here, this little shit shack... tonight it's mine. Do you understand?

LUCAS

My wife's with child. She needs her bed.

BOOTH

And if I stick her in the belly, will she still need that bed?

Lucas steps in front his wife to protect her.

HEROLD

Get some blankets and settle your folk outside an' if you do what yer told, we'll leave you in peace in the morning...

BOOTH

But God help me, if you or any of them tar babies go crying for aid, I'll burn this place down and hang each one of you. Understand me, boy?

Lucas nods, and ushers his family out of the house. Booth settles himself on a chair and looks up at Herold.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BOOTH (CONT'D)
Find me some goddamn whiskey.

CUT TO:

EXT. POTOMAC - DAWN

A light mist still hangs on the river as a grey dawn rises. A couple of PATROL BOATS still cut grooves in the placid water, cruising their way up the banks.

ATOP A HILL - CONGER stares out at the wide river Valley. The mighty Potomac snakes through the stunning green vale with a quiet austerity.

Across its wide waters lies the South, lies Virginia.

As Major Smith rides up beside Conger, a cold gusty wind chills both men.

CONGER
It's cold.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
It's early yet. The cold won't last.

CONGER
I was speaking of his trail.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
So was I.

CONGER
Big state, Virginia.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
Big state.

A beat. Conger tugs at his chest.

CONGER
I'm tired.

Smith nods, understanding. There's a long silent pause between the two men, as they look at the wide state of Virginia in the distance.

Conger finally takes a sharp breath.

CONGER (CONT'D)
Back to work.

CUT TO:

EXT. FERRY LAUNCH - MORNING

Conger and his men quietly load onto a Ferry, as the Ferry Man talks in hushed whispers to one of his men.

FERRY MAN

Heard it from one of Grant's Lieutenants at the Gypsum. Said Generals Johnston and Davis were have combined their armies. They're planning to lay siege to Washington.

FERRY WORKER

Even Grant'd have a mighty time holding back that tide.

Conger's men share looks at this news. Smith looks to Conger. He seems unaffected, but Smith knows he heard.

LOVETT

Sir, if you don't mind my asking, how are we gonna get the blindfold off?

CONGER

You head for the deep South from here, there are two rivers you have to cross. The Potomac...

Lovett nods...

LOVETT

... and the Rappahannock.

CONGER

We'll find his trail there.

The Ferry LAUNCHES from southern Maryland and heads into the mist, heading for Virginia.

INT. SHANTY FARMHOUSE - MORNING

William Lucas pushes in the back door of his small farm cabin. Moving cautiously he passes through the tiny kitchen into the...

LIVING ROOM...

Empty. The embers of last night's fire in the hearth still smolder.

LUCAS

Mister? Mister?

No response. He pushes into the...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEDROOM.

It too is empty. Lucas breathes a sigh of relief.

EXT. PORT CONWAY - DAY

Booth and Herold ride toward the small cluster of dilapidated buildings, burned and busted from warfare. Not much life about.

The small town, if you can call it that, rests on the banks of the RAPPAHANNOCK RIVER, nearly the width of three football fields.

BOOTH

The Rappahannock, Davey. The last trial between us and Old Dominion. The Carolinas are in our grasp...

On the bank of the Rappahannock River, aside a rickety skiff, HENRY ROLLINS tends to his fishing net.

HEROLD

Excuse me, sir. Is the ferry to Port Royal still active?

Rollins looks up from his nets.

ROLLINS

It runs from time to time.

HEROLD

Would it be running today?

Rollins shrugs. Booth and Herald converse in a low whisper and then...

HEROLD (CONT'D)

Is your vessel for hire?

ROLLINS

I can take you to Port Royal for the same fare, if you wait for my nets to be set.

BOOTH

We'd be much obliged.

EXT. VIRGINIA COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Flies swarm dead Confederate soldiers lying in a ditch awaiting burial. Houses are burned to their foundation.

Conger's detail trots through this scarred landscape.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They pass a woman and her three dirt streaked children, carrying their bundled belongings with them.

The woman spits at them.

Men, in civilian clothes, stand by their fences holding rifles. Our group is tense. They can feel the hostility.

LOVETT

Sir, I'm getting the feeling we ain't gonna learn much here.

CONGER

You're thinking like a soldier, Lovett. Try thinking like a Detective.

EXT. PORT CONWAY - DAY

Booth leans against a railing. Herold paces impatiently.

BOOTH

How much longer?

ROLLINS

Almost done.

HEROLD

Cap'n! Soldiers!

Booth looks up to see a detail of SOLDIERS riding toward them, backlit by the rising morning sun. The two men tense for action, Herold reaching into his jacket to clasp his pistol.

As they ride out of the sun, we can finally see that their uniforms, dirty and torn, are GREY, not blue.

Herold turns to Booth, excited.

HEROLD (CONT'D)

Confederates!

(shouts)

Gentlemen... whose command do you belong to?

SOLDIER

To Mosby's, sir.

HEROLD

If I'm not too inquisitive, may I ask where you're headed.

The lead soldier is WILLIE JETT, mid-twenties. He's a rough sort with several days growth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIE JETT
Who's asking?

HEROLD
Name's David Boyd. My wounded
brother's James. We're with A.P.
Hill's Corp.

Willie Jett laughs.

WILLIE JETT
You ain't soldiers. Who are you
really?

Herold steps closer.

HEROLD
Alright, sir. Yonder there is J.
Wilkes Booth, the man who killed
the President.

Willie falls silent and trades looks with his two
companions, RUGGLES and BAINBRIDGE.

HEROLD (CONT'D)
His leg's bad and he can't hardly
ride no more. We're to meet with
President Davis and need protection
against Yankee manhunters.

Down by the shoreline, Rollins finishes with his nets.

ROLLINS
Do you wish to go over the river
now, sir?

Willie gives Herold a little shake of the head.

HEROLD
If you're in hurry go on. We're
gonna ride with our friends.

WILLIE JETT
Accompany us, sirs. We'll get you
safe away.

EXT. WOODED CLEARING - DAY

Conger dismounts his horse.

CONGER
Out of uniform. All of you.

Conger pulls off his jacket.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CONGER (CONT'D)
They don't like Yanks? We don't
have to be Yanks.

Conger unbuttons his shirt and for the first time we get
a good look at the ugly scar across his chest, when...

BAM! BAM! BAM! FOLLOWED by a REBEL YELL.

CONGER (CONT'D)
COVER!

RIFLE REPORTS CRACK from the trees.

And in the sudden CHAOS every soldier takes position
behind trees, behind anything. Frantic horses neigh...

DOHERTY has his rifle leveled. Spotting a tuft of GREY he
FIRES. A CLOUD of PINK MIST explodes in the air, but the
target does not go down. And Doherty's reloading...

BOSTON CORBETT hides behind a tree mumbling a prayer. The
bark explodes around him as a ball slams the tree trunk.

Lovett takes aim at the SHOOTER and fires. But his SHOT
goes just wide, clipping through the branches.

The CONFEDERATE pivots on LOVETT, and draws a second
rifle. Has him dead to rights when his CHEST explodes in
a blossom of red.

DOHERTY, rifle smoking from the shot, pivots back behind
the tree. As...

Conger moves quickly through the woods, drawing fire.
Balls smack bark around him. Smith does his best to cover
with his revolver, but the Confederates are too well
covered. Covered that is until Conger hits their FLANK.

He drops to his knees and FIRES his rifle, nailing one in
the neck. The other turns and draws a bead on Conger, but
he draws his Colt and empties five rounds into the Reb.

Breathing heavy, heart heavier... Conger steps over the
log and watches the men die. Both in their mid-thirties.
Grizzled veterans of the war.

BACK IN THE CLEARING -

Our five reconvene and take stock of what they've done.

BOSTON CORBETT
Sir? Are we at war again?

CONGER
God help us if we are. From here on
in, we conduct ourselves like we're
in enemy territory. Understand?

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Booth, wincing at every step his horse takes, rides beside Herold in the company of Willie Jett, Bainbridge and Ruggles.

WILLIE JETT

Mr. Garrett's extremely loyal to the cause and has never turned away a wounded Reb.

RUGGLES

Both his boys came out unharmed, so he thinks he's repaying God.

WILLIE JETT

You lay low here a spell or two till I find us a wagon. We'll be in Carolina before you know it.

BOOTH

You are a good friend of the South, Willie Jett.

And the small group of horses ride down toward...

THE GARRETT FARM - DAY

The small Virginia farmhouse rests behind a wide front porch, surrounded by an open front yard sprinkled with trees. A TOBACCO BARN stands a short distance away.

The owner, RICHARD GARRETT, 45, and his sons - JACK, 21, and WILLIAM, 17 - take a break from their work and cross to meet Willie Jett and his pals.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Five men in regular clothes ride away from four dead Confederates, laid out with crude crosses at their heads.

As they cross the countryside, the horsemen descend toward the Rappahannock.

Doherty catches up with CONGER and Smith...

DOHERTY

So what are we supposed to do, sir? Interview every man, woman and child up and down fifty miles of river bank?

Conger shoots a smile to Smith. You take this one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
Not all of them, Lieutenant. Just
the one's with boats.

And off that we...

CUT TO:

A SERIES OF SHOTS...

Starting with a naked BOOTH, bruised and swollen leg out of the water, descending into a bath. A satisfied smile across his face.

LOVETT walks by a row boat, up to a couple of TEENS working in the field. Shows them Booth's photo.

BOOTH smiling lips sink below the surface of the water and he begins blowing bubbles.

DOHERTY displays Booth's photo to a couple of BLACK FERRYMEN, bringing their boat to shore. They shake their heads.

BOOTH lathers his face with soap, whips out a straight razor and draws it across his face.

CORBETT shows Booth's picture to a couple of old ladies who sit on their wide, expansive porch. They shake their heads.

BOOTH towels off his fresh-shaved face.

SMITH works a SMALL RIVER DOCK where a couple of VESSELS are tied. No luck though.

In the dying sun, HEROLD scrubs out Booth's clothes in a washing tub outside, and hangs them up to dry.

CONGER works a riverfront tavern, showing Booth's photo to patrons. Night is falling.

BOOTH, broken leg elevated on a downy pillow, luxuriates in having a bed. Herold lies beside him on the other side of the bed.

A DYING CAMPFIRE. Conger, Corbett, Smith, Doherty and Lovett sit tired and dejected. Conger leans his head back against his saddle, which he uses for a pillow.

CUT TO:

INT. GARRETT DINING ROOM - DAY

Richard sits at the head of the table, his wife CORA beside him. His sons William and RICHARD JR, eleven, and his daughter HENRIETTA, seven, sit with heads bowed around the table, an empty seat left for Richard's other son, Jack.

Two extra chairs have been added to the table for Booth and Herold, looking cleaner than they have in a week.

RICHARD GARRETT
God in heaven, we thank you for
the bounty you've placed before
us, for delivering Jack and Will
safely back from battle...

CORA
Amen.

RICHARD GARRETT
... and we ask that you bless our
guests, John and David Boyd, and
all others who've given their
service. Amen.

The family dives in to the plates of biscuits and breakfast in front of them.

BOOTH
My brother and I thank you again
for your kindness, sir.

RICHARD GARRETT
It was the kindness of strangers
that brought my boys back safe and
sound.

Jack rushes in, out of breath and takes his seat at the table, instantly sitting at the table.

RICHARD GARRETT (CONT'D)
You missed the blessing.

JACK GARRETT
Got held up in town, sir. Sam
Morris was showing me the paper.
You know what the reward is now
for them two assassins?

Booth doesn't blink.

JACK GARRETT (CONT'D)
They're offering a hundred
thousand dollars.

Richard, Jr.'s eyes are wide in wonder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICHARD JR.

A hundred thousand?

RICHARD GARRETT

And a date with the gallows for abettors, I'm sure. The Union would have little sympathy in that regard.

BOOTH

I'd've expected a higher bounty for such a thing. 500 thousand, at least.

CORA

He must have been paid well, whoever he was.

BOOTH

Paid? Who would've paid for such a thing?

CORA

There were plenty of men who wanted Mister Lincoln dead. From North and South

BOOTH

Well, if I were to guess, I would say he wasn't paid a cent. A man like that would've done it for notoriety's sake, I expect.

(to Jack)

Any news from Willie Jett?

JACK GARRETT

Damnation, almost forgot. He told me to say he secured a wagon and he'll be fetching you tomorrow in the morn.

BOOTH

Would it be possible to impose on your kindness one more night.

RICHARD GARRETT

Of course.

EXT. PORT ROYAL - DAY

Doherty rides the bank, passing dilapidated and damaged structures. An old man sits on his porch, cleaning his rifle. Kids play Yank and Reb, bang banging with their loaded fingers in and around the buildings.

Doherty swings off his horse and crosses to ROLLINS, who's setting his nets.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOHERTY
Nice skiff.

ROLLINS
It does its job.

DOHERTY
Ever hire it out?

Rollins looks up at Doherty, a little surprised.

ROLLINS
That's a funny thing. Coupla men
asked me that very same question
just yesterday.

EXT. FIELD BY THE RIVER - DAY

Conger's in the crops showing some black FIELD HANDS the
photo of Booth.

CONGER
Woulda came through in the past...

VOICE IN DISTANCE
Colonel!

CONGER
...coupla days...

And here comes Lieutenant Doherty charging over the hill.

DOHERTY
Colonel, Colonel...

Doherty pulls up short.

DOHERTY (CONT'D)
I got an eyewitness swears they
tried to hire out his skiff. Says
they headed off with a coupla Rebs
instead.

CONGER
He see where they were going?

Doherty catches his breath.

DOHERTY
One of the Rebs was a local kid,
Willie Jett. And this guys says he
knows for a fact that Willie is
seeing a Miss Izoura Goldman,
whose father keeps a hotel in...
Bowling Green.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Cresting a hill, FIVE HORSEMEN appear, galloping for all their worth. Conger half out of his saddle, leading his men. They descend down a hill toward a...

FERRY LANDING on the RAPPAHANNOCK.

Down at the landing, members of a TWENTY-MAN UNION DETACHMENT load onto a FERRY. Conger's team descends, riding through them.

CONGER

Gentlemen, I'm commandeering this Ferry. I need you to debark at once.

The commander of this detachment, LUTHER BAKER, trots forward.

BAKER

By whose order, sir?

CONGER

Luther Baker, is that you?

BAKER

Everton J. Conger, you ornery cuss. What the blazes are you doing this far South without protection?

CONGER

Tracking Booth. We've just placed him in Bowling Green. Can you spare a few of your men to assist?

Baker fixes Conger with his sober stare.

BAKER

To capture Booth? Hell, man. You can have us all.

EXT. GARRETT FARM - DAY

Booth sits on the front porch, writing in his journal, and looking at the PHOTOGRAPH OF LUCY. Jack Garrett is working out front.

Booth looks up at the sound of an approaching horse. WILLIAM GARRETT comes thundering toward the house.

WILLIAM GARRETT

Union soldiers have crossed at Port Royal! They say the President's assassin has crossed the river!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Young Richard Jr. steps out from the front door and stands next to Booth.

BOOTH
Which way are they headed?

WILLIAM GARRETT
They're comin' right up behind me.

JACK
Let's go see!

As William and Jack race for the road, Booth turns to 11 year-old Richard Jr.

BOOTH
Young man, I need you to bring me something.

INT. BOOTH'S BEDROOM - A MOMENT LATER

Richard Jr. runs to the headboard where Booth's PISTOL BELT hangs. He pulls it off...

INT. GARRETT HOUSE - STAIRWAY - CONTINUOUS

... and thumps down the stairs...

EXT. GARRETT FARM, PORCH - DAY

...to where Booth is waiting. As the young boy hands the GUN BELT to Booth, Richard Sr. comes into view, understandably concerned at the sight.

RICHARD GARRETT
What's going on?

BOOTH
Union soldiers.

RICHARD GARRETT
We've had soldiers before. We'll just tell them you're headed home. There'll be no trouble.

And at that moment, the thundering hooves of approaching cavalry carry through the afternoon air. Booth quickly loads his revolver. It's the first time Garrett has seen a look on Booth's face that is unsettling.

BOOTH
You'll tell them nothing, Mister Garrett.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Booth holds his gun cocked as Herold comes running from the yard holding the Spencer.

They wait in tense silence as Union detachment, galloping hard, rides toward the house...

Passes it...

... and rides away. Booth uncocks his gun. Richard eyes him hard.

RICHARD GARRETT
Where is it you said you served?

EXT. BOWLING GREEN - DUSK

Luther Baker waits with his troops mustered, his men lighting torches.

Conger meets his core team of soldiers... Doherty, Smith, Lovett and Corbett in the middle of the street. The lights of the tavern burn behind them.

LOVETT
No one's talking.

BOSTON CORBETT
He's a local boy. They're protecting him.

CONGER
Her father's hotel?

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
Nothing.

Doherty nudges Conger and points to a middle-aged BLACK MAN grooming a horse out front.

DOHERTY
We been talking to the wrong people.

Conger gives a small smile and crosses to the man.

CONGER
Excuse me, sir. Do you know a man by the name of Willie Jet?

The man eyes Conger up and down. Judging him.

HORSE GROOM
No suh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOHERTY
Sir, please. We think he knows the
whereabouts of the men who killed
Lincoln.

The Horse Groom freezes. Gets this look in his eye. A
cold angry look. He turns to Doherty and...

INT. BOARDINGHOUSE ROOM - NIGHT

...BAM! The door shatters.

WILLIE JETT and MISS IZOURA GOLDMAN bolt up in bed.

WILLIE JETT
What the...

Within half a second, the young soldier finds himself
staring at the business end of Lovett and Corbett's
service revolvers, each man standing tall.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
Step out, Miss.

She takes the sheet with her.

CONGER
Willie Jett...

WILLIE JETT
You don't fool me in them civies,
you sumbitches. I can smell the
stink of a Yank a mile off.

He reaches for a cigarette.

CONGER
You were recently seen in the
company of two men...

WILLIE JETT
You can go to blazes as far as I'm
concerned. You're getting nothing
from me.

Conger's lip quivers with anger.

CONGER
Lt. Doherty. This man speaks your
language, not mine... Perhaps it's
best if I step outside.

DOHERTY
Yes sir.

Doherty rolls up his sleeves and steps toward the bed.

EXT. GARRETT FARM - NIGHT

Herold and Booth cross to the house, Booth now much more proficient with his crutch. But as they come up the front porch, Richard Garrett and his sons bar the way.

RICHARD GARRETT
I'm sorry, Gentlemen, but you're not welcome inside.

BOOTH
What? What do you mean?

JACK GARRETT
You ain't no soldiers with no A.P. Corp.

RICHARD GARRETT
And I fear who you may actually be.

HEROLD
So you just gonna turn us out in the dark? Where the Sam Hill you expect us to go?

RICHARD GARRETT
You can stay in the barn if you like, but I won't have you back in my house. And I expect you to be gone tomorrow morn.

Booth gives Garret a hard look. A mean look.

BOOTH
We'll stay in the barn, sir. And just remember... Anything you say of us, we can say of you. Do we understand each other?

Booth and Herold turn away, heading for the old TOBACCO BARN. Richard looks after them.

RICHARD GARRETT
Lock the barn door behind them. Last thing we need is them thieving our belongings.

WILLIAM GARRETT
You think they're the ones who...

RICHARD GARRETT
Hush, boy. Less we know the better.

CUT TO:

INT. BOARDINGHOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Conger and company wait in the hallway while off-screen we hear the sounds of a man pleading and getting the shit kicked out of him. Finally, the door opens.

Doherty wipes his bloody hands on his shirt. Through the door, we can see a beaten up Willie Jett crying on the bed. Conger shoots Doherty a look. Doherty nods.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
Boots and saddles.

INT. GARRETT FARM - NIGHT

Lamp light illuminates BOOTH'S PHOTOGRAPH of LUCY, tucked in the pages of his journal, the elegant black and white now bent and rough from the past several days.

Herold sits across the barn, his head bowed in search of rest and absolution.

HEROLD
Where are the Southern troops,
Cap'n? When're they gonna come?
(beat)
What if we came all this way for
nothing?

BOOTH
How can it be for nothing, Davey,
when our friends have so much at
stake on both sides of the line?
(beat)
One more day, we'll be in
Carolina, far, far, far from the
Yanks. One more day and they'll
pin medals on our chests.

Booth leans over and blows out the lamp.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GARRETT FARM - NIGHT

It's outline visible in moonlight. TWO HOUND DOGS sleep on the Garrett front porch. All is peaceful.

Then... their ears perk, hearing something that Booth, Herold and the Garrett boys cannot.

The crickets fall silent. A silence we can't help noticing... The dogs begin to BARK.

And then we hear it....

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE RISING THUNDER of GALLOPING HORSES. Closing fast

CONGER and TWO DOZEN SOLDIERS, bearing TORCHES and RIFLES emerge from the darkness, descending on the family home.

INT. GARRETT FARM - BARN - NIGHT

Booth and Herold snap awake. Booth peers through the moonlit slats to see what's causing the commotion.

BOOTH

Cavalry! Move!

Herold rushes the door and quickly finds that...

HEROLD

It's locked!

Booth hobbles over and slams against it himself.

BOOTH

We've been betrayed.

EXT. GARRETT FARM - NIGHT

Conger strides toward the house, followed by Smith and Doherty.

CONGER

Men on each side! Every window,
every door! Remember, people. We
take him alive.

Richard Garrett is already walking toward Conger, Cora and the kids on the front porch.

CONGER (CONT'D)

Richard Garrett?

Jack and Will fall in behind their father.

RICHARD GARRETT

I'm Richard Garrett.

CONGER

You have two men in your care.
We're here to arrest them.

INT. GARRETT FARM - BARN - NIGHT

Booth looks through a slat...

BOOTH

My God, they're everywhere.

EXT. GARRETT FARM - NIGHT

Richard looks Conger straight in the eye. Casual.

RICHARD GARRETT
We had two men, Colonel. Soldiers
heading home. They left south by
wagon a few hours ago.

Conger eyes Richard.

CONGER
You see it, Doherty? You see it in
his eyes?

DOHERTY
Yes sir.

CONGER
Richard Garrett, you're under
arrest for providing shelter and
protection to John Wilkes Booth
and David E. Herold. If they're
found on your premise, I will pass
summary judgement and hang you
right here in front of God and
your family.

JACK GARRETT
Leave him alone! He don't know
anything!

CONGER
Lieutenant. Get a rope.

JACK GARRETT
No. Dad, tell 'em where they are!

RICHARD GARRETT
Go inside boys.

JACK GARRETT
No... You ain't gonna hang for
them worthless trash! They're in
the barn, sir. They're in the
barn. Both of them.

INT. GARRETT FARM - BARN - NIGHT

Herold frantically searches the barn, looking for a
magical escape route.

HEROLD
We have to get out of here!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOOTH

And where do you suggest we go?

Booth glances at Herold; his eyes telling the young man that they are surrounded; that there is no place to go.

EXT. GARRETT FARM - BARN - NIGHT

Within a heartbeat, Baker's men are setting up around the darkened barn; some kneeling, some dropping into a prone position from which to aim...

BAKER

Hold fire! Six men to a side! Hold fire!

Conger moves closer to the barn. Doherty. Lovett. Corbett, All are in position...as are the other twenty or so CAVALRY SOLDIERS.

CONGER

John Wilkes Booth! David Herold!
Throw out your weapons and you
will not be fired upon!

INT. GARRETT FARM - BARN - NIGHT

Booth leans against the wall - straightening his coat, tucking the revolver into his belt - as if he's preparing for a stage performance .

HEROLD

We should surrender.

BOOTH

I would suffer death first.
Hand me the Spencer.

Herold gives Booth the Spencer Carbine.

Booth lifts the CARBINE, and lines its barrel up with one of the gaps in the wallboard. Through it he can see Conger. He has a pretty clean shot.

EXT. GARRETT FARM - BARN - NIGHT

No response comes to Conger's demand.

SMITH

Looks like we do it the hard way.

Jack Garrett tentatively approaches the pair.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK GARRETT
Sir... The door to the barn...
(off their look)
...we locked it, sir. Thought they
might make off with our livestock.

Conger and Smith know the news has obvious consequences.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
Is there another way out?

Jack shakes his head. Conger studies the barn.

CONGER
They can't surrender. Even if they
wanted to.

DOHERTY
We'll have to unlock it.

CORBETT
I'll do it, sir.

CONGER
I'm not sending one of my boys to
get shot point blank.

JACK GARRETT
I can unlock it, sir. He won't
shoot a southern boy. I'll unlock
it if you let my Daddy go...
Please... We thought they were
soldiers. We didn't know.

CONGER
Unlock it and get out.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Booth looks down the sights of his Spencer at Conger,
watching. He fingers the trigger and...

Conger steps out of his sights. Booth lowers the gun.

EXT, GARRETT FARM - BARN - NIGHT

Jack Garrett moves silently to the lock. His shaky hands
slowly unwrap the CHAIN that's keeping Booth and Herold
inside. He's trying hard to be quiet.

So far, so good... until, a very soft...

Clink

He winces, but continues until the last layer of chain is
removed, The door slips open a few inches and JACK...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

... SEES BOOTH, profiled in a sliver of moonlight.

Jack stands frozen.

BOOTH
What have you done?

JACK GARRETT
It's the Cavalry. They want you to
surrender.

Booth waits a beat before replying ...

BOOTH
Tell the Cavalry I decline their
offer. And as for you...

He raises his weapon, and for a split second, it looks
like he might shoot.

Jack back-pedals so quickly that he falls. He scrambles
to his feet and runs, amidst the shouts of...

SOLDIERS
Hold fire! Hold fire!

... to where Conger, Smith, Doherty and Lovett stand.

JACK GARRETT
He says he won't give up.

DOHERTY
Was he armed?

JACK GARRETT
He was.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
So we have at least one man, armed
in a fortified position, who can
see us better than we can see him.

LOVETT
What if we wait till sunrise?

DOHERTY
He'll see us even better.

INTO GARRETT FARM - BARN - NIGHT

Booth settles in opposite Herold once again. Herold is on
the verge of tears. They hear the order from outside...

MAJOR H.W. SMITH (O.S.)
John Wilkes Booth! David Herold!
Surrender your weapons now!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Herold begins to crumble. Still sitting there, he mutters...

HEROLD
(overwhelmed)
I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

BOOTH
For the love of God, man, get a hold of yourself.

But he can't. Lord knows he tries, but the weight of the moment has grown too much for the young man.

HEROLD
I can't do this, Cap'n. I can't...
I'm not like you. I'm not.

BOOTH
Do you know what they will do if you walk out of here?

HEROLD
I didn't kill anyone. I only helped... I only helped.

BOOTH
*Oh judgement, thou art fled to
brutish beasts, and men have lost
their reason.*

Booth calls out...

BOOTH (CONT'D)
There is a man in here who wishes to surrender! He is unarmed!

EXT. GARRETT FARM - BARN - NIGHT

It's the first time they've heard Booth's voice. Conger immediately orders...

CONGER
Watch the door! Do not fire!

INTO GARRETT FARM - BARN - NIGHT

Herold's backing his way toward the door, apologizing to Booth the whole time...

HEROLD
I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

BOOTH
For godsakes, Davey. Get off the stage.

EXT. GARRETT FARM - BARN - NIGHT

Click, click, click. Weapons are readied...all of them aimed squarely at the door to the Garrett barn.

EXT. GARRETT HOUSE - NIGHT

Garrett and his family watch from near the house.

EXT. GARRETT FARM - BARN - NIGHT

The door opens.

BAKER

Hold fire! Do not fire!

Herold emerges, a frightened and beaten young man. He falls to the ground and is swarmed by a HANDFUL OF SOLDIERS. He cries out in anguish... Not from pain.

INTO GARRETT FARM - BARN - NIGHT

Booth sets his weapon by his side for just a moment, closing his eyes for a beat as he ponders his next move. He smiles a pained smile..

...one that comes from a man who knows he has no way out, Finally, he calls out...

BOOTH

I believe you to be fair men! Draw up your soldiers! I shall come out and fight you one by one!

EXT. GARRETT FARM - BARN - NIGHT

Doherty hefts his rifle.

DOHERTY

Fine with me.

CONGER

I will not canonize this man by giving all his kind their very own Alamo to cry at every future battle. He will not go out in a blaze of glory. We will take him, and we will take him alive.

Lovett and Corbett secure Herold to a tree, wrapping his arms around it and securing his wrists on the other side.

INT. GARRETT FARM - BARN - NIGHT

Booth, sweating now, again lifts the SPENCER CARBINE and levels it toward Conger and his crew.

BOOTH
Gentlemen! I need the favor of an answer please! Or do you need proof that I've had the opportunity to fire upon you all night long?

And...

EXT. GARRETT FARM - BARN - NIGHT

BAM! A GUNSHOT pierces the late night air. Jack Garrett's lantern shatters.

Another call to...

BAKER
Hold fire! Hold Fire!

The uneasy soldiers hold.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
If we go in for him, sir, someone's gonna die.

Steely resolve on Conger's face.

CONGER
Burn it down.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
Sir?

CONGER
You heard me, Major. Burn it down.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH
Yes sir.

EXT. GARRETT FARM - BARN - MOMENTS LATER

TORCH FLAMES SOMERSAULT through the night sky, landing on the dry wood roof of the tobacco barn. It quickly catches.

FROM THE HOUSE

The Garrett Family can only watch in increasing horror as the first of the flames reach skyward.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Cora cries out...

CORA

No!

... and Richard, knowing he can do nothing, pulls her face into his shoulder.

INT. GARRETT FARM - BARN - NIGHT

Each soldier keeps their weapon trained on the building, as the flames grow brighter.

BOSTON CORBETT stares at the flames, transfixed. He removes his Colt revolver from its holster.

INT. GARRETT FARM - BARN - NIGHT

Booth finds himself faced with the decision of staying and dying... or walking out. Flames engulf the walls around him, forcing his broken frame to the heart of the barn. Straw is catching fire, cascades of flame tumble around him.

Booth looks up to the heavens.

BOOTH

CAN'T YOU WAIT TILL DEATH TO
SENTENCE ME TO HELL!

He breathes heavily.

BOOTH (CONT'D)

My name...

(beat)

My name shall be remembered.

EXT. GARRETT FARM - BARN - NIGHT

Booth's outline is visible through the slats, dark against the glow of the fire.

The fiery scene outside the barn grows brighter, until it is suddenly interrupted by a loud...

CRACK

The flaming door of the barn kicks wide open, and there silhouetted by the burning orange flames is...

JOHN WILKES BOOTH as if he were the devil himself. He holds his Spencer Carbine out to the side and sees...

HALF A DOZEN SOLDIERS staring down their rifle sights.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Booth turns and for the first time, he locks eyes with Conger... and knows he's defeated.

A long beat. No one seems quite sure what to do.

Until... BAM! Booth's head jerks back. He drops the Spencer, takes a step back, and COLLAPSES TO THE GROUND.

In the light of the fire...

POWDER SMOKE curls from the barrel of a COLT REVOLVER...
BOSTON CORBETT.

Conger stares at Corbett in disbelief.

CONGER

Why?

But the expression on Corbett's face is almost trance-like in the glow of the rising flames.

CONGER (CONT'D)

Why did you shoot him? For
Godsakes Corbett, why?

Corbett looks up at the sky.

BOSTON CORBETT

Providence directed my hand.

A host of soldiers carry Booth to safer ground, away from the roaring flames. The whole area is painted a brilliant yellow and orange from the totally-engulfed barn.

Conger kneels down close to the man he's been chasing for nearly two weeks. Finally looking him in the face.

Booth can't move. But in a pained, faint whisper...

BOOTH

Pocket.

Conger reaches in Booth's coat pocket and removes his JOURNAL.

BOOTH (CONT'D)

Mother.

Conger nods, understanding. But Booth shakes his head.

BOOTH (CONT'D)

No. Tell Mother... Tell Mother, I
die for my country.

CONGER

Here...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Conger opens his CANTEEN, and drips some water into Booth's mouth. Booth tries to lift his hands to the canteen, but they shake uncontrollably.

BOOTH

My hands.

His eyes focus on Conger.

BOOTH (CONT'D)

Useless... Useless...

With that, Booth takes his last breath... and dies.

A PHOTO falls from Booth's diary, held in Conger's hand. The photo of the girl... LUCY. Conger picks it up and slips it back in the diary and then pulls out the photo of his own wife.

We hold on the silhouette of Conger, kneeling over Booth - Backlit by the roaring flame of the Garrett's Barn.

An image for the ages. A milestone of our history.

CUT TO:

A PEN dips in an inkwell.

Conger, on the GARRETT PORCH, perches over a letter. Though the camera doesn't dwell, we see some of what's written in a firm hand:

"DEAR MRS. BOOTH... I regret to inform you that your son, John Wilkes, wanted for the murder of the President, was shot and killed this morning at the Garrett Farm in Bowling Green."

Conger sets pen to paper once again. *"He asked I relay his last words on earth..."*

Smith mounts the stairs to the porch...

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

Sacred duty, a man's last wish.

CONGER

Something you need, Major?

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

Finish the letter, sir. It's the last of those you'll ever write.

Conger looks up at Smith...

MAJOR H.W. SMITH (CONT'D)

We just got word... The remaining Generals have surrendered. The war is finally done.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

A weight lifts from the man's shoulders. A weight he's carried from the opening scene.

MAJOR W.H. SMITH

I guess there was no big
conspiracy after all.

A funny look crosses Conger's face.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

Unless there was something in that
book of his.

A beat as we hold on Conger, it looks like he's making a
decision. Then...

CONGER

No, Major. Looks like I was wrong.

BAKER'S SOLDIERS bear the body of John Wilkes Booth past
Smith and Conger to a waiting wagon.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

Eerie, isn't it?

CONGER

What's that?

Smith eyes Booth's bullet wound.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

His wound... That's exactly where
Lincoln was hit.

Conger glances at Corbett.

CONGER

Maybe Providence did guide his
hand.

The soldiers spread a tarpaulin over the body. And as
they all step away, it is ironically, a free BLACK MAN who
secures the tarp with a rope, lacing it through the
wagon's grommets. Conger watches as he pulls the last of
the ropes through, making ready to tie the final knot.

And then there is a curious moment, one that no one sees
but Conger. As the man begins to tie the knot, he steals
a quick glance at the shape in front of him...

... the man who took Lincoln's life...

*... and a very subtle look of quiet anger flares in his
eyes. And he TUGS the securing rope ever so slightly
HARDER than he needs to.*

Conger finishes his letter and stands.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

Home, sir?

Conger looks over at Boston Corbett, lost in his bible.

CONGER

I've one more thing to do.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Conger stands before Secretary Stanton.

STANTON

Your country thanks you, Colonel.
You have kept this nation whole.

Conger hands Booth's diary to the Secretary.

CONGER

Booth's diary, sir. I read it.
Every word. It names all of his
conspirators. Each and every one
of them.

Stanton freezes. Clearly this means something to the man.
He tries to speak, but words fail him. Conger fixes him
with his eye.

CONGER (CONT'D)

For the sake of the nation, sir, I
consider this matter closed.

Conger turns and strides out of the room. Stanton lowers
himself into the chair, picks up the diary and begins to
read.

EXT. CONGER FARM - DAWN

Serenity. Just before sunrise. In the coolness of the
spring morning, Conger and Smith bring their horses to a
halt on a ridge overlooking Conger's farmhouse. The two
men stare a beat, knowing this is goodbye.

Smith sees the blossoms on a nearby apple tree.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

Another spring.

CONGER

Another spring.

MAJOR H.W. SMITH

You best get planting.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Conger offers his hand to Smith. The two men shake.

Conger dismounts and walks his horse down the trail toward home. Smith takes one last look, turns his horse and rides away.

KATHERINE and little CONSTANCE in their morning frocks, come out of the barn from milking. They both see Conger at the same time. Their milk buckets hit the ground...

CONGER smiles as he sees his family running toward him and opens up his arms...

... pulling his loved ones into a hug. Pulling them close to his scarred and wounded heart as if he believed that somehow their very presence will make it heal. And maybe it will. We hold this moment of homecoming, so long delayed, as...

DAWN BREAKS over the hill in a flare of sunshine.

It's a new day for Conger. And for the nation he served.

FADE OUT.