

Third Draft
August 12, 1983

PLACES IN THE HEART

~~THE TEXAS PICTURE~~

Screenplay
by
Robert Benton

Director: Robert Benton
Producer: Arlene Donovan

1 The film opens in the dining room of a modest home in a small town in Texas in the middle of the depression. It is noon on a Sunday and Edna Spalding, an attractive woman in her early thirties, appears in the doorway carrying a steaming bowl of okra. She crosses to the dining table, sets down the bowl and quickly takes her seat. As she bows her head, the CAMERA PANS across the table, past two children: Frank, who is nine, and Agnes (nicknamed Possum) who is six and a half, and comes to rest on Royce Spalding, a handsome, weathered looking man in his early thirties. He has the look of someone who is much more comfortable out of doors than inside. As he bows his head and starts to say the blessing, the credits begin.

Note: During the credits WE WILL DISSOLVE from one family to the next, all in the act of saying grace, all of whom we will meet later in the picture.

DISSOLVE TO:

2 INT: THE SHACK OF A POOR FAMILY OF NEGRO SHARECROPPERS 2
- SAME

The table is crowded with a large family, including a lot of children, all of whom are fidgeting during the blessing.

Note: The walls of the shack are papered with newspapers.

DISSOLVE TO:

3 INT: DINING ROOM OF THE HOME OF MR. & MRS. ALBERT KAUFMAN - SAME 3

This is the most affluent house that we will see, with a mission style dining room suite and a large painting of bluebonnets on the wall. Sitting with Mr. and Mrs. Kaufman at the table is Mr. Will, Albert's blind brother.

DISSOLVE TO:

4 INT: KITCHEN - LOMAX HOUSE - SAME 4

A tiny room that has not been made larger by the addition of a small kitchen table. Sitting at one end of the table, her head bowed, saying grace, is Margaret Lomax, a pretty woman of about twenty-nine or thirty. Next to Margaret is her five year old daughter, Rosalie. Across the table, his head also bowed, is Wayne Lomax, an attractive man a few years older than his wife.

4

CONTD

4

HOLD ON him as WE SEE him sneak a glance at the clock on the wall.

DISSOLVE TO:

5

EXT: HOUSE - DAY

5

WIDE SHOT -- A once handsome, two story, frame house that now could use a new paint job. Through the windows which have no curtains or shades WE CAN SEE that the house is empty. The CAMERA PANS across the yard which hasn't been mowed in six months, past a sign that reads "For Sale, Citizen's Bank." The CAMERA COMES TO REST ON a Buick sedan which is parked at the curb. Parked is not quite the word; its tires have long since gone flat and it is now resting on its rims. The doors of the car are open and WE CAN SEE that the back seat has been converted into a makeshift bedroom. The front seat is packed almost to the roof with all manner of objects that more rightfully belong in a house. Leaning against the front of the car is a large, crudely lettered sign that says, "I HAVE BEEN THROWN OUT OF THE HOME WHERE I HAVE LIVED FOR SEVENTEEN YEARS BY THE CITIZEN'S BANK. THIS IS WRONG. I WILL STAY RIGHT HERE UNTIL THEY LET ME BACK INTO MY HOME. P.S. I AM NOT CRAZY."

A respectable looking, neatly dressed woman in her late fifties is sitting on the running board of the car. She has a plate of Ritz crackers and peanut butter on her lap and a Coca Cola beside her. At the moment she has her head bowed and, like everyone else, is saying grace.

CUT TO:

6

INT: RED ROSE CAFE - SAME

6

The restaurant is crowded with people who have just come from church. The CAMERA TRACKS with a waitress as she carries a couple of plates of food through the crowded room and sets them down at a table in front of Viola and Buddy Kelsey. Buddy starts to reach for his fork in order to dig in, when Viola gently puts her hand on his sleeve. Embarrassed, he puts down his fork, bows his head and together they begin to say the blessing.

Note: Throughout this movie, everyone, regardless of social position, drinks coffee with the meals.

DISSOLVE TO:

7 EXT: BACK DOOR OF A MIDDLE-CLASS HOUSE - SAME 7

A negro man in his mid-forties, dressed in ragged but clean overalls, stands waiting, his hat in his hand, his name is Moses. A moment later, the door is opened and an elderly man appears with a plate of food. He hands it to Moses, who sits down on the back steps and prepares to eat. He is, however, careful to say grace first.

DISSOLVE TO:

8 INT: DINING ROOM - SPALDING HOUSE - DAY 8

ON ROYCE SPALDING -- as he finishes the prayer, says, "Amen," and takes his napkin, places it in his lap. Next he turns over his plate (which until now has been face down on the table) and begins passing a large platter of fried chicken. As he does, we hear the sound of a gunshot. Edna involuntarily glances toward her husband who pays no attention and continues to pass around platters of food. There is another gunshot, this time he pauses for an instant, then continues spooning out a large helping of mashed potatoes onto his plate.

At the sound of the gunshot, Edna begins talking non-stop about nothing; idle chatter to blot out the sound of any further shooting. Her husband listens patiently, nodding from time to time as he ladles out a helping of mashed potatoes or squash onto his plate. Then, just as he is about to take his first bite, we hear:

O.S. Sound: A banging at the front door.

Instantly, Edna is on her feet and, as the CAMERA TRACKS with her, she walks quickly to the front door, opens it.

9 HER POV: A young man, barely nineteen. He wears a threadbare suit with a badge pinned on his lapel. He is very agitated. This is the Deputy Sheriff. 9

DEPUTY

Excuse me, Miz Spalding, is th'
Sheriff home?

CUT TO:

10 INT: DINING ROOM - SAME 10

ON ROYCE -- He sighs and gets wearily to his feet, stuffing a handful of biscuits into his pocket as he does. From O.S. we can hear Edna telling the young man that her husband is in the middle of dinner. The Deputy goes on to say that he is real sorry to bother

her, but there is a drunk nigra down by the railroad tracks that's got a gun. As the Deputy continues to talk, the Sheriff walks to a hall closet, opens it and removes his gunbelt from a hook. He continues into the living room, strapping his gun around his waist as his son follows him, begging to be allowed to come along.

ON EDNA -- She looks imploringly toward her husband.

EDNA

Royce ...

The Sheriff takes his son by the shoulders, spins him around and gives the boy a gentle, but firm push back into the house. He looks up at his wife, grins. She smiles back. There is a beat of silence; he leans across, kisses his wife lightly on the cheek; then turns and follows the Deputy down the walk, stuffing a biscuit in his mouth as he does.

CUT TO:

11 EXT: RAILROAD TRACKS - EDGE OF TOWN - DAY

11

WIDE SHOT -- as the Sheriff appears, trailed by the Deputy, three or four loafers and a gang of children, none of whom have anything better to do on a Sunday afternoon. WE HOLD ON them until they reach the middle distance. Then, as the Deputy points O.S. we

CUT TO:

12 THE SHERIFF'S POV: Standing in the middle of the railroad tracks is a young negro boy, about fifteen. In one hand, he holds an almost empty whiskey bottle and in the other, a six-shooter that is about as big as he is. As WE WATCH, he takes one last swig from the bottle, flings it into the air, fires the pistol and misses by a mile.

CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:

SHERIFF

(calling out)

Wyllie?

The boy turns, sees the Sheriff, waves.

WYLLIE

Hidy, Mr. Royce ... Nice day ...

12 CONTD

12

The Sheriff takes another biscuit from his pocket and starts to eat.

SHERIFF

Wylie, you're drunk as a skunk.

WYLIE

Yessir, Mr. Royce, I'm sure
sorry ...

SHERIFF

You oughta' know better'n that ...

WYLIE

I'm sorry, Mr. Royce ...

SHERIFF

You ready to come with me?

WYLIE

In just a minute, Mr. Royce.

The young boy raises the gun in the air and squeezes off three shots. The gun is so big he has to use both hands to do it. Finally the fourth time he squeezes the trigger there is a click as the hammer falls on an empty chamber.

SHERIFF

You done, Wylie?

The young man grins, nods and starts to hand the Sheriff the pistol, then, clearly thinking that the gun isn't loaded, aims it at the Sheriff and pulls the trigger.

There is a deafening explosion.

QUICK CUT OF THE SHERIFF -- as the bullet strikes him in the chest, jerking him backwards.

WIDE SHOT -- There is a long moment of awful silence as the young negro boy stands there frozen, horrified at what he has done.

CUT TO:

13 EXT: ALLEYWAY - SAME

13

ON A SEEDY LOOKING MAN -- in a greasy black shirt who is holding a bottle of corn whiskey up to the lips of an equally disreputable looking man who is trying his best

to drink all he can without gagging. The man holding the bottle is Dove Haslip, a local bootlegger; when he decides that his customer has had enough he carefully yanks the bottle away without spilling a drop.

Note: Throughout this we hear the sound of a fiddle being played O.S.

DOVE
(turning to the
fiddle player)
Ten dollars, that's my final
offer.

MAN (O.S.)
Fifteen.

DOVE
(outraged)
Hell, I can get Billy Bastrop
an' his boys at that price.

ON THE MAN HE IS TALKING TO -- A runty looking man, about fifty-five and none too clean. This is Tee Tot Hightower, an alcoholic, hillbilly singer who does his best to eke out a living playing country dances and honky-tonks.

TEE TOT
(cheerful)
I guess you ain't heard, ol'
Billy's in jail.

CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:

Dove glares at the musician, then turns to the six or seven other stragglers in the alleyway.

DOVE
(pissed)
You boys here to drink or are we
just gonna' pass the time of day.

At that point, Moze, the negro man we saw begging at the doorway during the credits steps forward, hands the bootlegger a few coins. The CAMERA PANS with Dove as he crosses to the loading platform where a black cardboard suitcase is sitting next to Tee Tot. As Dove opens it, we

CUT TO:

- 14 INSERT - HIS POV: The suitcase is filled with bottles 14
of whiskey, corn liquor or wine of every description.
- 15 HOLD ON DOVE -- as he fishes around, locates a bottle 15
marked "Colored."

TEE TOT

(watching him)

All those people gonna' be
mighty unhappy if they show
up for a dance an' there ain't
no music.

Dove says nothing, crosses back to Moze, shows him the
bottle. The negro man nods. As the bootlegger is about
to raise the bottle to his lips, he stops, turns to Tee
Tot.

DOVE

Fifteen dollars, but you better
show up sober.

And he raises the bottle of Moze's lips. As he starts
to drink a young boy comes running around the corner and
starts to tell them that the Sheriff has been killed.
Dove immediately yanks the bottle away from Moze and
starts to pack up his suitcase.

DOVE

Sorry, boys, store's closed.

CUT TO:

16 INT: EDNA'S HOUSE - DAY

16

ON THE DINING TABLE -- as Edna finishes clearing it,
leaving only her husband's plate, which is covered with
a napkin to keep the food warm. We can hear the children
playing in the back yard. Then:

O.S. Sound: Footsteps on the porch, then, a moment
later, the front door opens.

ON EDNA -- as she turns in the direction of the sound
her shoulders relax for the first time since her husband
left.

EDNA

Royce?

ON THE DOOR TO THE DINING ROOM -- The young Deputy is
standing there. The moment WE SEE him, it is obvious
he has been crying.

16 CONTD

16

CLOSER ON EDNA

EDNA
 (a sharp intake
 of breath)
 Oh, Lord ... How bad is he hurt?

ON THE DEPUTY -- He cannot speak, only shakes his head.
 At that moment, four men carrying the body of her husband
 enter the room.

CLOSE ON EDNA -- as she realizes her husband is dead.
 A spasm of pain crosses her face.

EDNA
 (almost inaudible)
 Oh ...

The men push past her, carrying the body of the Sheriff
 across to the dining table.

FIRST MAN
 Watch it ...

SECOND MAN
 Here, I got him ...

FIRST MAN
 Wait a minute ... Wait a minute ...

One of the men quickly takes the plate that had been
 left on the table and places it on the sideboard while
 the others gently lay the dead man on the dining table.
 WE HOLD for a beat on the corpse; except for the stain
 of blood on his shirt, he looks like someone who has
 simply fallen asleep.

CUT TO:

17 EXT: COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

17

WIDE SHOT -- In the distance WE SEE a car heading along
 a dirt road, raising a cloud of dust behind it.

18 INT: CAR - SAME

18

Viola Kelsey is at the wheel. She leans forward peering
 anxiously out the windshield. As she slows down and
 starts to turn, we

CUT TO:

19 EXT: CAR - SAME

19

PANNING WITH THE CAR -- as it enters a driveway TO REVEAL a deserted farmhouse sitting in the middle of a barren field. Off to one side is a barn that is about ready to collapse and nearby is a broken windmill that creaks throughout the following. The paint on the house is peeling, most of the windows have been broken, and scrawled across the side in crude letters is, "Gone to California."

ANOTHER ANGLE -- as the car drives slowly past the house and turns a corner, WE SEE that another car is already parked there. The second car pulls alongside the first, stops and we

CUT TO:

MED. SHOT, VIOLA -- as she switches off the ignition, looks O.S.

HER POV: Sitting in the other car is Wayne Lomax.

WAYNE

I was afraid you wasn't gonna' come.

ON VIOLA -- She turns to him and smiles, there is something sad in her smile.

Note: Here are two people whose hearts are in their throats. Throughout, Viola's hands are shaking and Wayne is chain smoking.

Wayne gets out of his car, helps her out of hers and they cross to the back door of the abandoned farmhouse.

CLOSER ON THEM -- as Wayne tries the door, it won't open. He tries again, the door won't budge.

VIOLA

It's like us ... It's stuck.

Wayne reaches down, takes an iron rod that is leaning against the house and smashes the glass window of the door. As he reaches inside and unlatches the door.

WAYNE

Like th' man said, "Where there's a will there's a way."

And, as the door swings open and the two of them enter, we

CUT TO:

20 EXT: EDNA'S BACKYARD - DAY

20

WIDE SHOT -- Possum and Frank are playing in the yard.

EDNA (O.S.)

Frank? Possum?

There is something in the tone of their mother's voice that causes both children to stop what they are doing and turn in her direction.

THEIR POV: Edna standing at the back door of the house.

ON THE CHILDREN -- as they start toward her.

MED. SHOT, EDNA -- She sits down on the steps of the porch and, as the children reach her, she sits Possum in her lap and puts her arm around Frank who sits down on the porch step beside her.

CLOSER STILL -- There is a beat of silence, then:

EDNA

Something's happened to Pa ...

CUT TO:

21 INT: HALLWAY - SAME

21

ON THE DEPUTY -- who stands watching her for a moment, then picks up the telephone.

DEPUTY

(to the operator)

Louise? This is Jack Driscoll.
Listen, th' sheriff's been killed.
Can you get hold of Miz Spalding's
sister an' tell her t' get over
here right away.

CUT TO:

22 EXT: TWO BEDROOM, FRAME HOUSE - SAME

22

A small, but neatly kept house with a row of African violets growing in coffee cans along the front porch railing. The door bursts open and Margaret Lomax, carrying her daughter on one hip comes running out of the house, down the walk towards the street. As she passes a sign that reads, "Margaret's Beauty Parlor," we

CUT TO:

23 EXT: FRONT OF THE SPALDING HOUSE - DAY

23

WIDE SHOT -- Neighbors have already begun to gather. Some are inside, the rest stand or sit in small groups on the front porch or in the yard. From O.S. we can hear the sound of several cars approaching. The CAMERA PANS IN THE DIRECTION OF THE SOUND and WE SEE a couple of rattletrap trucks filled to overflowing with men. They are all carrying rifles or shotguns of one sort or another. The CAMERA HOLDS ON them as they come to a stop in front of the house.

ON THE FRONT OF THE HOUSE -- as one of the men disappears inside the house and reappears, a moment later, leading Edna, Frank and Possum.

CLOSER ON THE TRUCKS -- The CAMERA PANS ACROSS TO the corpse of the young black boy (Wylie) who accidentally killed the sheriff. His body has been riddled with bullets, tied to the back of a truck and driven through the town. The corpse is so covered with dust that by now it looks white.

From O.S. we hear:

MARGARET (O.S.)

(outraged)

For pity sake, what do you think
you're doin'!

ON MARGARET -- still carrying her child, she comes charging up.

MARGARET

(fixing them with
a look)

You get outa here ... Right now.

CROSS-CUT TO THE MEN IN THE TRUCK -- somewhat abashed, nevertheless they do not move.

MARGARET

(fierce)

... I mean it.

There is a beat of silence and we hear the sound of the engine of one of the trucks as it starts to turn over. Margaret does not wait to see them leave, instead she turns on her heel and starts up the walk toward the front porch where Edna is standing.

CLOSER ON THEM -- as she reaches out, strokes her sister's hair.

23 CONTD

23

MARGARET

Oh, sis ... I'm so sorry ...
I'm so sorry ...

There is a beat of silence. The two women smile at one another; it is the saddest smile in the world.

CUT TO:

24 INT: DESERTED FARMHOUSE - SAME

24

Inside, the paper is peeling, there are large waterspots from the rain, the window shades are in tatters. The CAMERA PANS ACROSS TO Viola Kelsey, lying on her back on a patchwork quilt that has been thrown across a mattress on the floor. She is naked except for an ashtray that is resting squarely in the middle of her stomach. Lying next to her, in a like condition, propped up on one elbow is Wayne Lomax. At the moment they are passing a cigarette back and forth between them. Wayne takes the cigarette, looks around.

WAYNE

Y'know, I grew up in a place
just like this ...

(he takes a drag,
passes the cigarette
back)

Boy, I hated it. I used t'
run away ever' chance I got.
The place we had, it was up
on top of a hill ...

(he traces a square
on her breast)

... sort've like this.

VIOLA

(grins)

That's not exactly what I'd
call a mountain.

WAYNE

(grins back)

Yeah, well, it suits me fine.

Then, using his finger, he traces a path down from her breast onto her stomach, moving continually lower and lower.

WAYNE

Y'see, I'd go off, round th'
barn, like this ...

(MORE)

24 CONTD

24

WAYNE (contd)
 (skirting the ashtray
 on her stomach)
 ... And then I'd cut across the
 pasture out back, right here ...
 (his hand disappears
 below frame)
 There was a nice little elm grove
 down in this direction, and ...
 right ... in ... the ... middle ...

There is a sharp intake of breath from Viola. Wayne
 leans over her and they begin to kiss, quickly moving the
 ashtray and cigarettes out of harm's way.

CUT TO:

25 EXT: A VACANT LOT ON THE EDGE OF TOWN - TWILIGHT

25

WIDE SHOT -- In the soft evening light, WE CAN SEE the
 corpse of the negro boy, hanging from a tree. WE HOLD
 for a beat. It is very quiet and all we can hear are
 the crickets and the sounds of the birds.

Then, slowly, cautiously, one at a time, five or six
 negro men emerge from the woods. They cross to the tree
 and cut the dead boy down and wrap his body in a winding
 sheet. As they do, we

CUT TO:

26 INT: DINING ROOM - LATER

26

The dead man's clothing has been removed and Edna and
 Margaret are working silently, efficiently, washing the
 body, preparing it for burial.

Note: a damp cloth has been laid across the corpse's
 face to prevent it from discoloring.

CLOSER ON EDNA -- as she stops, touches a scar on her
 husband's abdomen. There is a beat of silence, then:

EDNA

We would've been married fifteen
 years this October ... We had two
 children and I never knew 'til
 just now that Royce had a scar
 here ...

(looking at her
 sister)

... I never knew that ...

CUT TO:

27 EXT: HOUSE - NIGHT

27

ESTABLISHING SHOT -- All of the lights are on and the house is crowded with visitors.

CUT TO:

28 INT: LIVING ROOM - SAME

28

ON THE FRONT DOOR -- Wayne, still dressed in his Sunday suit, is standing near the door, exchanging a few words with each person that enters; directing the mourners into the dining room where the sheriff's body is laid out in his coffin; sending the people with food into the kitchen. WE HOLD ON him as Viola and Buddy Kelsey appear. From the way that Wayne and Buddy exchange greetings it is clear that the two men are good friends and from Wayne's and Viola's attitude toward one another it is equally clear that no one would suspect that there is anything between the two of them.

As WE WATCH, several children are running back and forth, laughing and giggling until one of the adults takes a firm hold of one of the children and tells them in no uncertain terms to stop acting like a bunch of wild Indians.

Note: Since neither Frank nor Possum have any real idea of the enormity of what has happened, they are having a wonderful time, enjoying all the activity and attention.

CUT TO:

29 INT: KITCHEN - SAME

29

The kitchen is crowded with women and children. Food is being cooked, coffee brewed, dishes washed. The tone of the voices which was subdued earlier is now much more lively. At the moment Margaret is in the middle of a conversation with Viola when she glances O.S.

HER POV: Edna separates herself from the people she is talking to, walks across to the door that leads to the back porch and steps outside.

ON MARGARET -- She excuses herself from Viola and follows her sister, pausing long enough to pick up a piece of chocolate cake from the table.

CUT TO:

30 EXT: BACK PORCH - SAME

30

It is quiet out here, although we can hear from inside the house the sound of a lot of people. Edna sits alone on a bench, her face is averted from the light.

ON THE DOOR TO THE KITCHEN -- as it opens and Margaret steps out.

ON EDNA -- She looks around at her sister, smiles, wipes her eyes.

Margaret crosses and sits beside Edna on the bench.

MARGARET

Here, shug ... You got to eat something. Marie Thornton made this, it's real good ...

Edna looks at her sister, shakes her head, no.

There is a long beat of silence as the two women rock back and forth. From inside, we can hear the sound of the crowd of people. Several times Edna starts to say something, hesitates, finally:

EDNA

... Margaret, what's going to become of us? I can't support this family. I don't have the least idea how to go about it. It seems like I haven't done anything all my life but take care of a home and raise children. Royce paid all the bills. I never even knew how much salary he made ...

(almost a whisper)

... And you know the worst part? I can't even grieve for my own husband on account of I'm so worried about what's going to happen to us ... I can't even mourn him.

31 INT: LIVING ROOM - EDNA'S HOUSE - LATE AT NIGHT

31

The body of the sheriff has been dressed and laid in a plain, pine coffin that is resting on a pair of sawhorses at one end of the room. There are fewer people now -- only those relatives and close friends that are spending the night. Edna sits talking quietly to an older woman who is holding her hand. The CAMERA PANS ACROSS TO Margaret, obviously upset, she walks to the front door, steps outside.

CUT TO:

32 EXT: HOUSE - SAME

32

Wayne is standing with a group of men talking and smoking, when he glances O.S.

HIS POV: Margaret steps outside, sees that there are people there and walks quickly around the corner of the porch, looking for someplace to be alone.

ON WAYNE -- as he starts after her. As he turns the corner, looks O.S.:

HIS POV: Margaret leans against the wall, sobbing.

WAYNE

(worried)

Hon?

She looks around, sees that it is her husband.

MARGARET

All -- All I could think of when I saw that poor man in there was what would I do if it was you. What would I do if something was to happen to you?

As she is talking, Wayne crosses to Margaret; stands just behind her, running his hand gently along her neck and cheek.

WAYNE

(trying his best to help)

Oh, darlin', nothin's gonna' happen to me, I'm too ornery.

She turns to him, tries to smile; they are very close.

MARGARET

I don't think I could live without you ... Oh, I love you. I love you so much ...

As we hear voices singing, "In the Sweet Bye and Bye," we

CUT TO:

33 INT: NEGRO SHANTY - NIGHT

33

The front room. (It is the same room WE SAW during the CREDITS). The corpse of the young black boy (Wyllie) has been bathed, wrapped in a shroud and placed in a coffin. The room is crowded with family and friends. As they continue to sing, we

34 A WIDE SHOT -- of the negro shack. It looks tiny in the 34
middle of a field.

Note: We continue to hear the singing throughout,
ending with the funeral.

CUT TO:

35 EXT: COURTHOUSE CLOCK - THE NEXT MORNING 35
ESTABLISHING SHOT -- WE SEE that it is ten in the morning.

CUT TO:

36 INT: DINING ROOM - EDNA'S HOUSE - SAME 36

WIDE SHOT -- The room is crowded with family and mourners. In the F.G., Edna, with Frank and Possum at her side is silent as everyone else around her is singing, "In the Sweet Bye and Bye." As the hymn ends everyone turns and starts toward the door. One of the men (Buddy, probably) announced that anyone who needs a ride to the cemetery should contact him.

As the room continues to empty Edna remains where she was, facing the open coffin. Finally:

MARGARET

(leans across, whispers
to her sister)

Hon, we're goin' t' have t' get
started.

EDNA

(nods)

Would you take the children and
leave me alone for a minute.

WE HOLD ON Edna. As soon as the room is empty, she crosses to the coffin, stands over it for a minute, then reaches down to touch her dead husband's hand. Edna leans over the body and, when she is very close, whispers something that we cannot quite hear. She kisses her husband on the lips for the last time. We

CUT TO:

37 INT: DINING ROOM - EDNA'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER 37

CLOSE ON THE COFFIN -- as WE SEE the lid as it is slid
on top and nailed into place.

CUT TO:

38 EXT: COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

38

A flatbed wagon, pulled by a couple of mules, bearing a coffin, is moving slowly along a dirt road. Following behind the wagon are fifteen or twenty negro families, all on foot. The wagon pulls to a stop at the entrance to the negro cemetery, which is nothing but a half acre of land that has been cleared in the middle of the woods. There are very few trees, no grass and, instead of tombstones, there are wooden planks stuck into the ground with the names of the deceased painted or carved on them. The only bit of color are the little cut glass vases and cups that have been filled with flowers and placed on the graves. As the men lift the coffin from the wagon and start to haul it across to the newly dug grave, we

DISSOLVE TO:

39 EXT: CEMETERY - DAY

39

It is an old cemetery, very green and very beautiful. Across the road, cows are grazing in a field. A large number of mourners have gathered at the grave site. Edna, with her children on either side of her, stands next to the open grave. As the coffin is lowered into the ground, her knees give way and Margaret and Wayne quickly grab her.

DISSOLVE TO:

40 EXT: EDNA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

40

WIDE SHOT -- as the last of the people who have come to pay their respects are leaving. They cross to their car, open the door, take a last look and wave.

ON EDNA -- standing in the doorway. She waves back and remains in the doorway as the people drive away. Then, almost reluctantly, she turns back into the house.

CUT TO:

41 INT: LIVING ROOM - SAME

41

Note: From the time Edna heard that her husband had been killed, the house has been filled with people and noise. Now, for the first time, it is empty and silent.

WIDE SHOT -- The room is almost dark. Edna crosses to a lamp, turns it on. She stands for a moment, helpless, lost. Then as she hears sounds from the kitchen, she pulls herself together and moves around the room, picking up the dirty cups and saucers that the company have left behind.

42 INT: KITCHEN - SAME

42

Margaret is bustling back and forth with an air of relentless good cheer -- as though she is determined by sheer energy to make up for the throng of people who have been there today. Off to one side, the children sit at the table, silent, anxious, watching everything, waiting to find out what is going to happen to them.

Margaret is clearing the table, getting ready to wash the dishes.

MARGARET

Lord, I thought those people
were never going to leave.

EDNA

(seeing her sister
at the sink)
Here, let me help you with that.

MARGARET

No. No. You go on in and rest.
I'll --

At that moment, there is a knock at the back door.
The two women look at one another in surprise.

CUT TO:

43 THE SCREEN DOOR OF THE BACK PORCH - NIGHT

43

Standing on the back steps is a negro man, about forty-five years old. His clothes are worn, but clean. His name is Moze.

Note: We saw him earlier, during the OPENING CREDITS.

MOZE

Excuse me, ma'am ... I was
wonderin' if you folks had any
work needed doin' ...

Before Edna can say anything, her sister speaks up.

MARGARET

(abrupt)
No. There's nothing here. Now
you go on outa here ... Go ...
Shoo!

CLOSER ON MOZE -- He makes no move to leave, instead he is looking at Edna.

CLOSER ON EDNA -- watching him.

43 CONTD

43

EDNA

I'm sorry, we don't have any
work; but if you'd like some
supper ...

MOZE

Thank you, ma'am ... I'd appre-
ciate it ...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

44 EXT: COURTHOUSE CLOCK - EARLY IN THE MORNING 44

HOLD for a beat as the clock begins to strike the hour.

CUT TO:

45 EXT: EDNA'S HOUSE - SAME 45

Everything is quiet. The only thing we can hear except
for an occasional rooster crowing, is the sound of the
clock in the distance.

CUT TO:

46 INT: BEDROOM - SAME 46

WIDE SHOT -- The double bed is made up, but empty. The
CAMERA PANS ACROSS the room and WE SEE that Edna is asleep
in a rocking chair with a quilt wrapped around her. HOLD
for a beat, then we hear from O.S. the sound of wood being
chopped. Edna wakes, gets to her feet, and crosses to
the window. As she looks out, we

CUT TO:

47 HER POV: The black man is in the back lot, chopping wood. 47

CUT TO:

48 EXT: BACKYARD - A FEW MINUTES LATER 48

ON THE BACK DOOR -- As Edna, now fully dressed, comes out
and walks quickly across to Moze, who continues to chop
wood.

EDNA

Excuse me, I thought I made
myself clear last night. You
can't stay around here.

Moze stops chopping, straightens up, turns to her. is sustaining her.

MOZE

Yessm'. I seen you was most out of firewood so I thought I'd chop some for you.

EDNA

(watching him,
mistrustful)

Thank you ... I'll fix you some breakfast, but then you'll have to leave.

MOZE

Yessm' ...

Edna starts to bend over to get some kindling for the stove, but the negro man is too quick for her; he grabs an armload.

MOZE

Here, lemme' get that.

As he starts to follow her into the house, we

CUT TO:

49 INT: BACK PORCH - SAME

49

WIDE SHOT -- as Edna leads the way toward the kitchen.

MOZE

(respectful)

Y'know, ma'am, you got a hen-house over there about ready t' fall down. Nobody's been lookin' after your milk cows an' I don't expect them pigs been fed in th' last couple of days.

50 INT: KITCHEN - SAME

50

ON MOZE -- standing a foot or so inside the kitchen door, no further. He puts the kindling in a bin.

MOZE

There must be close t' forty acres out back just layin' fallow ...

He glances O.S., spots something.

50 CONTD

50

HIS POV: A handful of silver spoons lying on a table not far away.

MOZE (O.S.)

... If you had th' right kind've help you could make yourself a handsome livin' just farmin' cotton.

ON EDNA -- Her back is to him as she is fixing something for him to eat.

EDNA

That may be, but I can't afford to hire anyone.

CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:

MOZE

You got a mighty fine little shed back there behind the barn. With a little work it could be fixed up real nice. I was thinkin' maybe I could work around here for food and a place t' stay.

There is a pause, Edna looks at him doubtfully.

MOZE

(the truth)

Ma'am, there ain't no such a thing as a job nowadays.

ON EDNA -- Her back is to him.

EDNA

(this is hard to do)

No ...

(then more firmly)

No. I'll give you some breakfast, but then you'll have to be gone.

ON MOZE -- His hand goes out, takes the spoons and slips them into his pocket.

MOZE

Yessm' ...

CUT TO:

51 EXT: EDNA'S HOUSE - DAY

51

WIDE SHOT -- as a shiny black Oldsmobile sedan pulls to a stop in front of the house. A well-dressed man in his fifties gets out of the car and crosses the yard toward the house. This is Albert Kaufman and he is a vice-president at the bank.

CLOSER IN -- as he knocks on the front door. A moment later it is opened by Edna.

ALBERT

(as she opens the door)

Afternoon, Mrs. Spalding. I hope I'm not bothering you.

EDNA

(holding open the door)

No. No ... Won't you come in.

CUT TO:

52 INT: LIVING ROOM - SAME

52

As Albert enters, crosses to a chair, takes a seat. Edna sits opposite him.

ALBERT

I just wanted you to know, on behalf of everyone down at the First Citizen's Bank, that if there is ever anything we can do for you in this hour of need, all you have to do is ask.

EDNA

Thank you.

There is a pause, then:

ALBERT

Mrs. Spalding, I don't know how much your husband ever told you about his business ...

CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:

From the expression on Edna's face it is clear that she knows absolutely nothing about her husband's affairs.

ALBERT

(taking a small note-
book from his pocket)

Well ... At the close of banking
hours yesterday you had a balance
of one hundred and sixteen dollars
and seventy-two cents ...

REACTION, EDNA -- relieved. This seems to her a great
deal of money.

ALBERT

However, when your husband
bought this place, he did
borrow money from the bank.
And ...

(clearing his throat)
... at the time of his death,
he still owed ...

(checking his figures)
... Three thousand, six hundred
and eighty-one dollars.

Silence.

ALBERT

(a gentle prod)
... To be paid twice a year.

More silence. Edna sits waiting; it is obvious that she
has no idea of the implications of all of this.

ALBERT

Mrs. Spalding, what that means
is come October fifteenth, you
will owe the bank one hundred
and seventy-seven dollars.

There is an uncomfortable silence.

ALBERT

I -- We were wondering if you
had any ideas about how you were
going to make that payment?

CLOSER ON EDNA -- This is the question she has been
dreading; one that she has no real answer for.

EDNA

(lying)
Well, yes ... as a matter of
fact I do.

Albert waits patiently.

EDNA

(trying this out)

I've been thinking, you know
Rilla Langsford and her sister
have that nice little gift shop.

Albert nods.

EDNA

I thought I could do the same
thing. I could get these pretty,
little things and set them out --

ALBERT

(harsher than he
means to be)

Miz Spalding, who'd want to
come all the way out here when
the Langsford's place is right
on the square.

EDNA

(this hadn't occurred
to her)

Oh ...

(then, if at first
you don't succeed)

Well, I haven't played the piano
in a while, but I used to be
pretty good. I thought if I
was to go back to practicing,
I might could give piano lessons.

ON ALBERT -- He hasn't got an easy job.

ALBERT

Mrs. Spalding, what we at the
bank suggest is that you sell
this place. I know times are
bad, but maybe we can get enough
to pay off the loan and have a
little extra to tide you over
for a while.

REACTION, EDNA -- She looks as though she has been slapped
in the face.

EDNA

But, if I sold this place,
where would we live?

ALBERT
(still not looking
at her)
I believe you have a sister
that lives here ...

EDNA
(thinking he simply
doesn't understand)
Oh, no ... Margaret couldn't
take care of us. She couldn't
afford it and besides, they
don't have enough room.

ALBERT
(carefully avoiding
her gaze)
Mrs. Spalding, when tragedies
like this happen, well ... some-
times we have to face things
that are real hard ... Sometimes
it's necessary to split up
families --
(hastily)
... temporarily. I believe your
husband has some family up in
Oklahoma. I'm sure they would
be glad to take in one of the
children.

CLOSE ON EDNA -- frantic. She gets to her feet.

EDNA
I'm sorry. I'll have to talk
to you about this some other
time.

And before Albert can say anything, she is out the door.
WE HOLD ON Albert as he sits there, not moving. The
hopelessness of Edna's situation is written across his
face.

CUT TO:

53 INT: BEAUTY PARLOR - MARGARET'S HOUSE - DAY

53

The front two rooms of Margaret's house have been
converted into a beauty parlor, while she and her husband
live in the back three rooms of the house. The walls
of the beauty parlor are done in pink, flowered wall-
paper with lots of photographs of hairstyles torn from
magazines pinned up everywhere. There is the usual
assortment of hair dryers and equipment scattered around
the room. In the B.G. we hear the radio playing.

At the moment Margaret is combing out a customer's hair. WE HOLD ON them as they talk about Edna and the tragedy that has happened. Then we hear from O.S. the sound of footsteps on the porch and, in a moment, a soft knock at the front door. As they turn in the direction of the sound,

CUT TO:

THEIR POV: The door opens and there is Edna with Possum and Frank. She is carrying a large sack of tomatoes.

Everyone exchanges greetings, the customer gets to her feet, pays Margaret the seventy-five cents she owes her for the permanent and makes a quick exit.

EDNA

(lame excuse)

Ah ... Mrs. Parks offered to buy a couple of pounds of tomatoes if I'd bring them by tonight; so I thought I'd stop by and say hello.

CLOSER ON MARGARET -- watching her sister, knowing something is up.

POSSUM

Where's Rosalie got to?

MARGARET

She's with her daddy, over t' the carnival ...

(never taking her eyes off Edna)

... You children go on back to the kitchen. There's some Coca-Colas in th' icebox.

The children open a door that leads into Margaret and Wallace's part of the house and race back to the kitchen. Margaret crosses to the door, closes it after them. She stands for a minute watching her sister in silence.

CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:

Edna, trying to gather the courage to do what she set out to do, paces around the room, picking up and putting down pieces of beauty parlor apparatus.

Note: Throughout the following, Edna never looks at her sister.

EDNA
(her voice is
shaking with fear)
Margaret, I --
(try again)
I was wondering ... I thought
maybe I could come to work for
you ... here. I mean, I don't
know much about this kind of
work, but --

MARGARET
(not unkindly)
Oh, hon ... I don't hardly have
enough customers these days to
support me and Wayne.

CLOSE ON EDNA -- She has been expecting this and retreats
instantly.

EDNA
Oh, I understand ... I was
just --

MARGARET
Here ...
(she opens her purse,
takes out some bills)
... I've got twenty-eight dollars
saved and --

EDNA
No. Really, I don't --

Margaret puts the bills into her sister's hand.

MARGARET
Take it. If you don't, Wayne'll
just spend it on some fool thing.

Edna shoves the money back into Margaret's hand.

EDNA
(fierce)
No. No. I don't need it.

There is a long look between the two sisters, that speaks
of fights that go back to childhood. Finally Margaret
takes the money, puts it back into her purse.

53

CONT'D

53

MARGARET

I swear, you're just like Daddy.
You'd've thought he was sawin'
off his leg, just to ask for the
least little thing.

CUT TO:

54 EXT: STREET - NIGHT

54

The street lamps have been turned on and in their light WE CAN SEE the Buick sedan in which the old woman lives. At the moment she is sitting in the back seat with the door open listening to music that is coming from the distance. The CAMERA HOLDS IN POSITION as Edna, Possum and Frank ENTER FRAME. Edna, still carrying the sack of tomatoes, is lost in thought. Frank and Possum walk beside her. At the moment Frank is explaining to his sister that the old woman is crazy and that she kills chickens and drinks their blood. He is just about to get into the really gory part when they become aware of the music in the distance.

CLOSER ON THEM -- as the children realize that a carnival has arrived in town and begin begging their mother to take them. Reluctantly Edna allows herself to be dragged in the direction of the music.

CUT TO:

55 EXT: VACANT FIELD - NIGHT

55

WIDE SHOT -- A ragged, two-bit carnival has been set up in a vacant lot on the edge of town. It consists of three tents: one has a freak show, the next is showing the car in which Bonnie and Clyde were killed and the third is a girlie show. Across the way is a stand where you toss rings for prizes, another where you fish wooden goldfish out of the water for prizes and a merry-go-round that has seen better days.

A fair-sized crowd (mostly children) has gathered and is mostly watching, doing very little buying. The CAMERA PANS ACROSS the crowd and COMES TO REST ON Buddy, Viola, Wayne and Rosalie. They are standing next to the merry-go-round.

BUDDY

C'mon, you guys. I haven't
been on one of these things
since I was yea high.

VIOLA

After all that junk we ate ...

WAYNE

(grins)

I dunno', Bud. That thing looks
way too dangerous for me.

Buddy reaches across, lifts Rosalie off of Wayne's
shoulders.

BUDDY

Hon, you come on with your
Uncle Bud. We'll show them
sissies ...

He carries the child across, plunks down his money at the
ticket-taker's and rushes onto the merry-go-round which
is just starting up.

56 ON WAYNE AND VIOLA -- watching, waving from time to time. 56
There is a beat of silence. Wayne reaches for a pack of
Camels, offers her one. She takes it and, as he lights
the cigarette, lets her hand rest against his.

VIOLA

I miss you ...

WAYNE

Lord, darlin', it ain't been
but three days.

VIOLA

(level)

I miss you.

POSSUM (O.S.)

Hi, Uncle Wayne, Miz Kelsey ...

Both Wayne and Viola act as though they had just been
shot. She instantly jerks her hand away from his; he
becomes elaborately nonchalant.

THEIR POV: Possum, who has run on ahead of Edna and Frank
has come up alongside them.

POSSUM

Where's Rosalie?

WAYNE

Bud took her for a ride on the
merry-go-round.

57 WIDER ANGLE -- as Edna and Frank arrive. Greetings are exchanged and the CAMERA FOLLOWS Frank, Possum and Edna as they walk a short distance away and stand, watching the merry-go-round. Possum is so excited that she can barely contain herself. 57

POSSUM

Isn't it wonderful! Isn't it
the most wonderful thing you've
ever seen!

(spotting Rosalie)

Look, there's Rosalie!

(waving frantically)

Hi, Rosalie ... Hi ...

(turning to her
mother)

Can I have a ride? ... Please?

... Please, Momma?

EDNA

No, hon, I'm sorry, but --

FRANK

(the authority)

Lord, Possum, are you crazy?

EDNA

(a warning shot)

Frank ...

FRANK

(to Possum)

What's the matter with you? We
can't afford nothin' like that.

POSSUM

(outraged)

Why not?! Why can't we, for
gosh sake?!

FRANK

On account of we're poor.

POSSUM

Well, ol' Rosalie is just as
poor as we are an' she got to ride.

FRANK

That's on account of her pa's
still alive, you dope.

EDNA

(the last warning)

Frank, I don't want to hear
another word out of you.

FRANK

(righteous)

All I was trying to do was
explain --

Edna fixes him with a look, then:

EDNA

Yes, Possum, the both of you can
have a ride. You wait here ...

And the CAMERA TRACKS WITH her as she walks across to
the ticket-taker's booth. There is someone in front of
her and she waits patiently as he buys a ticket. Then
she steps in the front.

TICKET-TAKER

How many?

CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:

EDNA

(she swallows, then)

Two, please.

The ticket-taker starts to tear off two tickets.

TICKET-TAKER

Twenty cents, please ...

ON EDNA -- She has no idea how to do what she has to do.

EDNA

It's for my children ...

TICKET-TAKER

Yes'm, that'll be twenty cents.

EDNA

(indicating where they
are)

They're right over there.

TICKET-TAKER

(glancing in that
direction)

They're nice-looking children.
That's twenty cents, please ...

EDNA

(she looks at him for
the first time)

I -- I don't have any money.
(then, quickly holding
out the sack)

There's four pounds of tomatoes here.
I was taking them in to sell them. I

TICKET-TAKER

I'm sorry, ma'am, but I can't do that.

EDNA

They're worth at least forty cents, honestly ...

TICKET-TAKER

I'm afraid I can't ...

EDNA

(she won't give up)
They're real fresh. I just picked them a little while ago.

TICKET-TAKER

Ma'am, I'd like to, but I just can't.

EDNA

The children really want a ride.

He shakes his head.

EDNA

Please ...

There is a long pause, then:

TICKET-TAKER

(mad at himself)

Here.

He reaches across, takes the sack of tomatoes, hands her the tickets. WE HOLD ON him as he turns and sets the bag on the ground beside his booth. WE SEE already there, sacks of corn, peas, beans, squash, etc., etc.

CUT TO:

58 EXT: EDNA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

58

ESTABLISHING SHOT -- There are only a few lights on.

CUT TO:

59 INT: KITCHEN - SAME

59

Edna sits at the kitchen table. She has a ledger open in front of her, and is trying unsuccessfully to make sense

59 CONTD

59

of it. From O.S. we hear the sound of a knock on the front door. As she gets to her feet, we

CUT TO:

60 EXT: FRONT PORCH - SAME

60

MED SHOT -- as the porch light is turned on TO REVEAL Jack Driscoll, the Deputy Sheriff, and Moze. Driscoll has a firm hold of Moze's arm. As Edna opens the door.

DEPUTY

I'm sorry to bother you this late, Miz Spalding, but we caught this nigger, here, with a bunch of things I think might belong t' you.

And he holds out the handful of spoons that Moze stole earlier.

CLOSE ON EDNA -- as she glances from the spoons to the negro man.

DEPUTY

I found him down by the tracks. He claimed he was workin' for you, but it looked to me like he was tryin' t' leave town.

Throughout this, Edna has her eyes glued to the negro man; suddenly she gets an idea.

EDNA

Yes. He's workin' for me. I needed somebody to help me around here so I took on ...
(she doesn't know his name)

MOZE

(quickly)
Moses.

EDNA

I took on Moses for a while, 'til we get straightened out.

Moze, who thought he was a dead man a moment ago turns on the Deputy.

MOZE

(to the manor born)

Didn't I try an' tell you that?!
Didn't I do my best t' 'splain
only you would pay no attention?!

DEPUTY

(he suspects some-
thing is wrong)

Miz Spalding, are you sure?
I mean I found all that silver
on him.

EDNA

(thinking fast)

It was Mamma's and Margaret
asked if she could borrow it.

(to Moze)

If you'd've done what I told
you to instead of foolin' around
you wouldn't've got in all this
trouble.

MOZE

Yessm' ...

ON THE DEPUTY -- He is still dubious, but there is nothing
he can do.

DEPUTY

All right, ma'am. Well, good-
night ...

And he turns and disappears into the darkness. WE HOLD
ON Edna and Moze. A moment later we hear the sound of
the Deputy's car as it drives away.

MOZE

Thank you, ma'am. I appreciate --

EDNA

(cutting him off)

How much money did you say I
could make if I was to plant
cotton?

MOZE

Well, ah ... Last year cotton
fetched six cents a pound ...
you got, say, thirty acres here
... Y'figure three acres t' th'
bale ... an' five hundred pounds
a bale that comes to ...

MOZE (contd)

(quickly multiplying in his head)

... Three hundred an' somethin' dollars. After you take out for the seed an' th' ginnin' fee, you still oughta' come out with two hundred an' sixty, seventy-five dollars.

EDNA

(level)

And you're sure you can do it?

MOZE

(absolutely positive)

Miz Spalding, I been choppin' cotton since I was five years old.

EDNA

All right. You can sleep in the shed out behind the barn.

She turns to go back inside.

MOZE

Ma'am? ...

Edna stops, turns back to him.

EDNA

Yes?

MOZE

I just wanted you to know I appreciate what you done, an' I promise you won't be sorry.

ON EDNA -- There is a long pause, then:

EDNA

(she means it)

Moses, if you ever try and steal anything again, I'll shoot you myself. Do you understand?

ON MOZE -- He swallows hard.

MOZE

Yessm.

As Edna disappears inside the house, we

CUT TO:

61 EXT: COURTHOUSE CLOCK - MORNING 61

WIDE SHOT -- as the clock chimes the hour of ten.

CUT TO:

62 EXT: BANK - SAME 62

ESTABLISHING SHOT -- Edna enters the bank.

CUT TO:

63 INT: BANK - SAME 63

ON THE DOOR -- as Edna enters, looks around.

HER POV: Albert Kaufman sits at a desk not far away. He glances up, sees her, gets to his feet and waves her over.

ALBERT

Mrs. Spalding, it's good to see you so soon.

(motioning for her to sit down)

Have a seat.

CLOSER ON THEM -- as she sits. It is obvious that she is terrified of Albert.

EDNA

Mr. Kaufman, I --

(try again)

Mr. Kaufman, I was --

(her courage fails her)

I was wondering if you could show me how to make out a check. I never did it before and I thought I'd best learn now.

She has pulled her husband's checkbook out of her purse and placed it on the desk in front of Albert.

ALBERT

(he is a full-service banker)

Certainly, Mrs. Spalding. It's the simplest thing in the world. Up here -- see -- right at the top? That's where you put the date.

ON EDNA -- She isn't listening to a word he is saying; instead, she is screwing up her courage for another try. Finally:

EDNA

(tentatively)

Mr. Kaufman, I've been thinking maybe it won't be necessary to sell the farm after all.

ALBERT

(stiff)

Of course, it's necessary. I explained it all to you yesterday.

(back to the check)

Now, down here is where --

EDNA

(cautiously)

You see, I thought if we were to plant cotton, we ought to --

ALBERT

(cutting her off)

Mrs. Spalding, you don't know the least thing about cotton farming.

EDNA

I know, but Moses said --

ALBERT

Moses? Who is Moses?

EDNA

He's this nigre man that --

ALBERT

(abrupt)

I don't know any nigra around here named Moses.

EDNA

(lame)

He's just passing through and I put him to work doing chores and he said --

ALBERT

(with disbelief)

You mean to tell me you're letting some fool nigra hobo

ALBERT (contd)

talk you into planting cotton? WIDER SHOT -- as the clock
(tough)

Did you ever hear about some-
thing called the depression?!

(grabbing a sheaf of
papers from his desk,
waving them at her)

You see these?! These are all
foreclosures, and that's just
in the last three months. And
that's white men, been farmin'
all their lives and they can't
make a go of it ... And you're
listening to some no account
nigra?! You'll excuse me, Mrs.
Spalding, but that's about the
most ignorant thing I've ever
heard.

ON EDNA -- who by now is sitting bolt upright in her
chair.

EDNA

(with great dignity)

Mr. Kaufman, I am not ignorant;
and I am not selling my land.
And I am not giving my children
over to anyone else to raise ...
I am going out and buy fifteen
dollars worth of cotton seed and
I would appreciate it if you
would explain to me again about
how to write a check.

CUT TO:

64 INT: COTTON GIN - DAY

64

INSERT: AN EXTREME CLOSE UP of a blank check FILLS THE
SCREEN. As WE WATCH, Edna's hand appears. Very care-
fully, she first writes in the date and then, below that,
"M.E. Hastings Cotton Gin."

WIDER SHOT -- A counter in one of the loading bays at
Hastings' Cotton Gin. Standing on one side of the counter
is a beefy man in his mid-fifties, wearing soiled chinos
and a sweat-stained straw hat. This is M.E. Hastings,
the owner of the gin. He has a chewed-up pencil in one
hand and is in the middle of doing some fast multiplica-
tion. Gathered around the loading bin are the usual
collection of farmers without farms and workers with no
jobs; men who have nothing else to do but pass the time
and no better place to do it than here.

Note; Hastings chews tobacco and carries with him--
wherever he goes, a coffee cup into which he is
continually spitting.

Across the counter are Moze and Edna. She is concentrating hard, trying her best to pull off this check-writing business as if she had been doing it all her life.

HASTINGS

All right, Miz Spalding, that's ...
 (looking across at
 the scale)
 ... four hundred and fifty pound
 of cotton seed, right?

EDNA

(businesslike)
 Yes, Mr. Hastings.

HASTINGS

(running this part
 by her real quick)
 At point 0, three cents a pound,
 that's ...
 (mumbling to himself)
 ... carry the one ... It comes
 to thirteen dollars and fifty
 cents.

As Edna starts to fill in the rest of the check:

HASTINGS

(to one of his
 helpers)
 You fellers help load this stuff
 in Miz Spalding's wagon.

Throughout this, it is clear that something is troubling Moze and equally clear that he is afraid to speak up about it. Finally, as one of the men is about to lift the first sack off the scale, Moze can stand it no longer. Moze leans across, whispers to Edna.

MOZE

Ah, Miz Spalding?

EDNA

(busy writing her
 first check)

Umum ...

MOZE

(hoping no one
will notice)

This ain't th' seed you paid for.

Edna stops what she is doing, looks at Moze.

MOZE

He's chargin' you for Grade A
seed, an' what you're gettin'
ain't nothin' but Gin Run quality.

ON HASTINGS -- He notices them whispering.

HASTINGS

(oily)

Is anything wrong, ma'am?

EDNA

I believe you gave us the wrong
seed, Mr. Hastings.

There is a pause. One of the men in the B.G. snickers;
another gives Moze a look that says, "You're in a shit-
load of trouble."

ON HASTINGS -- His eyes are on Moze. He doesn't even
bother to look at the cotton seed.

HASTINGS

(he smiles, it isn't
pleasant)

Well, so I did ... That's just
an honest mistake ...

(to Moze)

Isn't it, boy?

MOZE

(terrified)

Yessir.

HASTINGS

(elaborately yelling
to the men in the
back)

You idjits gave Miz Spalding
th' wrong seed ...

(then, back to Moze)

We're lucky her nigger caught
it.

(MORE)

64 CONTD

64

HASTINGS (contd)

(to Edna)

Miz Spalding, you got a real
smart nigra there ... He's a
credit to his race.

Somehow, this isn't comforting.

CUT TO:

65 EXT: BACK OF EDNA'S HOUSE - LATER

65

ON FRANK -- as he comes out the back door, slamming it
shut behind him. (Frank can never remember to close any
door quietly.) He is carrying a pail, heading toward
the barn; anxious to get his chores over with as quickly
as possible. WE HOLD ON him as he stops in his tracks,
spots something O.S.

HIS POV: The shed beside the barn. Moze, his back to
the boy, is busy nailing up all sorts of lucky charms to
ward off evil spells and bad luck. WE SEE that as he
hammers he is talking to himself.

CLOSER IN:

MOZE

(bitter)

Why'd you hafta' go an' shoot
off your mouth --

(whack)

in front of that white man?!

(whack)

You just got yourself in a car-
load of trouble.

(whack)

This ain't your land.

(whack)

You just passin' through.

(whack)

That white woman ain't nothin'
t' you.

(whack)

These people ain't no reason t'
get yourself killed.

As Moze is talking WE CROSS-CUT TO Frank who edges closer
and closer. Finally he cannot stand it any longer.

FRANK

(noncommittal)

Hidy.

65 CONTD

65

MOZE
(just as noncommittal)
Hidy.

There is a beat of silence as the negro man continues working.

FRANK
What's your name?

MOZE
(not bothering to
turn around)
Moses.

Another beat of silence.

FRANK
My name's Frank.

The negro man continues to work, says nothing. Finally:

FRANK
My pa was killed.

MOZE
(he continues what
he's doing)
I heard 'bout that. I'm sure
sorry.

FRANK
He was shot.

Silence.

FRANK
It was a nigger killed him ...

CLOSE ON MOZE -- He remains for an instant, facing the building, trying to decide what he is going to do, then, turning to the boy:

ANOTHER ANGLE -- He turns. The moment he sees Frank, Moze lets out a cry as though the boy was standing right next to a rattlesnake about to strike.

CLOSER ON FRANK -- as he freezes.

ON MOZE -- speaking with the kind of calm voice you use only in the most dangerous situations.

MOZE

How old are you, child?

FRANK

(terrified)

Nine ... and four months.

MOZE

You mean t' tell me you got t' be nine years and four months old an' nobody didn't never tell you it was the worst kind of bad luck to rock a rocking chair with nobody in it?

Frank looks at the rocking chair, jerks his hand away.

MOZE

Don't do no good now, th' damage is done. I knew a man one time he rocked an empty rocking chair, 'fore nightfall he got runned over by a cotton wagon.

Frank swallows hard.

MOZE

(gruff)

Now you quick do what I do an' say what I say. Understand?

The boy nods.

MOZE

All right. First thing is you turn around three times.

They turn around three times.

MOZE

Next thing you walk backwards.

They start walking backwards.

MOZE & FRANK

(together)

Seven, six, five, four, three, two, one. Thank you, Lord Jesus. Amen.

That done, Moze lets go of the boy's hand, and returns to fixing up his shack.

65 CONTD

65

MOZE

Next time you be more careful.
 I got too much t' do t' go
 'round savin' your life all th'
 time.

Moze goes back to work, Frank stands watching him, not moving. Although Moze has made no attempt to be friends with the boy, Frank so desperately misses a man's company that from now on he sticks to Moze like glue.

After several beats:

MOZE

(not bothering to
 look at the boy)

Well, if you're just gonna'
 stand 'round, y' might as well
 be of some use. Fetch me some
 of them nails down there.

ON FRANK -- as he runs to get a handful of nails.

CUT TO:

66 EXT: BACKYARD - EDNA'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

66

There is a large, black cast-iron wash pot in the F.G. with a low fire simmering under it, mostly gone out by now. As WE WATCH, Edna, drenched with perspiration, reaches into the pot with a stick and fishes out a pillowcase. She wrings it out and carries it across to the line where a lot of other wash has already been hung. As she starts to spread the pillowcase on the line, fastening it with clothespins, we hear from the distance the sound of an approaching car. It stops in front of the house and, a moment later, we hear:

ALBERT (O.S.)

Miz Spalding?

CLOSER ON EDNA -- She closes her eyes, sags against the clothesline. The banker is the last person in the world that she wants to see at this particular moment.

ALBERT (O.S.)

(insistent)

Miz Spalding? Are you home?

Edna pulls herself together and, summoning a last bit of determination, starts toward the house.

EDNA
(calling out)
I'm in the back, Mr. Kaufman.

67 EXT: FRONT PORCH - EDNA'S HOUSE - SAME

67

WIDE SHOT -- Albert, looking fresh as a daisy after a gruelling eight hours at the bank, is standing next to a striking-looking man in a threadbare suit who is blind. This is Will, Albert's brother. Although his hair needs cutting, his shirt needs mending, there is an extraordinary dignity about this man.

In spite of, or because of his blindness, Will Kaufman is a very proud man who supports himself by making brooms and caning chairs. He is also intelligent enough to realize that he is a burden to those people with whom he lives. Therefore, he has systematically reduced his needs to only the most spartan necessities: three pipes (two Kaywoodies and a corn cob), a tin of George Washington tobacco, and his prize possession, a Victrola with several albums of recordings for the blind.

The years that Will has spent as an unwanted guest have left him mistrustful of the outside world. Any change in his environment involves a complicated re-learning process that no one with eyesight can fully appreciate.

At the moment Albert is fussing over the blind man: dusting the ashes off his jacket, straightening his tie, etc., etc. He fusses continually at his brother as he does:

ALBERT
(crabby)
Will you put that thing away ...
(indicating the pipe
in Mr. Will's hand)
This woman may not like people
smoking in her house. Now for
once in your life will you try
an' make a good impression --

O.S. Sound: The front door opens.

Albert quickly turns on what little charm he possesses.

ALBERT
Ah, Mrs. Spalding, how are you?
(Emily Post)
I don't believe you know my
brother, Will?

EDNA

How d'you do.

The blind man merely nods.

ALBERT

Do you mind if we come in for
a minute?

And before she can say anything, he takes Mr. Will
by the elbow and guides him into the house.

CUT TO:

68 INT: LIVING ROOM - SAME

68

as Albert leads Mr. Will across to the chair.

ALBERT

Now then, Mrs. Spalding, in
spite of the fact that I still
have the gravest doubts about
this misguided attempt of yours
to hang onto this place. Never-
theless, as a Christian, and
as a Deacon of the Baptist Church
it is my beholden duty to offer
the hand of charity to a human
being in need.

ON EDNA -- She knows something is coming, but she doesn't
know what.

ALBERT

(shifting tactics)

Mrs. Spalding, poor Will here
lost his sight in the Big War.
It was the Battle of the Somme,
wasn't it, Will?

Silence. The blind man clearly finds this a humiliating
experience.

ALBERT

(rolling blithely
along)

He was a real hero, weren't you,
Will?

Silence.

ALBERT

(explaining his
brother's bad
manners)

Will doesn't like to talk about
these things ... Do you, Will?

MR. WILL

(quietly)

No, I don't, Albert.

ALBERT

Anyway, Will has been living
with Mamma up until she passed
away last year. Since then he's
been visiting with my wife and
me. But I got to thinking,
"What better way to help out
this poor woman in need than a
boarder. Someone who can move
in and by paying a modest rent
help out in her time of need."

Silence. Edna doesn't take the hint.

ALBERT

What I'm talking about is what
if my brother was to move in
here and rent a room from you?

EDNA

(stunned)

Move in here?!

ALBERT

Will makes a fine living caning
chairs and making brooms; so
you don't have to worry --

EDNA

Mr. Kaufman, I appreciate your
thoughtfulness, but I'm afraid
this isn't the right time.

ALBERT

(softly)

Mrs. Spalding, speaking on
behalf of the bank; we would
surely take it as a sign that
you were doing something to
provide for your family.

CLOSE UP - EDNA -- She gets the message.

EDNA

When would you want your brother
to move in?

Albert leaps to his feet.

ALBERT

As a matter of fact I've got
his things outside in the car
right now.

And with that he disappears out the door. There is a beat
of awkward silence as Edna tries to collect herself.

EDNA

(trying to be polite)
Well, ah ... there's a real
nice room up in front, if you'd
like to take a look --
(wince)
... at it.

MR. WILL

(stiff)
Anything will be fine.

CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:

EDNA

(if at first you
don't succeed)
If there's ever anything you'd
like to eat. I'm not an especially
good cook, but I'd be glad to try.

MR. WILL

(his patience wearing
thin)
Anything will be fine.

EDNA

(trying desperately
to keep the conversa-
tional ball rolling)
We generally go for a walk down
to the square on Saturday nights,
just to look --
(she catches herself
again)
... in the shop windows and --

MR. WILL

(cutting her off)

Mrs. Spalding, I don't want to be here any more than you want me. But since we don't have any choice, we're going to have to try and get along. Now I'll try not to be any more trouble than is necessary an' the only thing I ask in return is to be left alone ... in peace and quiet.

EDNA

I just thought --

MR. WILL

I know what you just thought, but I don't need your help. I don't need you to feel sorry for me.

At that moment the door opens and Albert enters carrying an armload of Mr. Will's belongings.

ALBERT

Okay, where should I put Will's things?

CUT TO:

69 EXT: FARMHOUSE - TWILIGHT

69

WIDE SHOT -- It is an ordinary, white frame farmhouse; the kind you see all over Texas. At least it would be, if it weren't for the fact that it looks to have been turned inside out. All of the furniture has been removed from the house and placed in groupings all around the dirt yard.

A dance is being held here this evening and the house has been emptied of all its furniture in order to make room for the band and the dancers.

Although it is early, a good-sized crowd has already gathered. Cars, trucks and wagons are parked everywhere. A number of the trucks have mattresses loaded in the back so that the children can be put to sleep while their parents continue dancing.

The CAMERA PANS ACROSS TO a filthy, black Chevrolet sedan as it eases its way through the crowd, heading toward the farmhouse in the F.G.

Note: Painted on the side of the car (although barely visible through the dirt) is, "Tee Tot Hightower and the Lone Star Syrup Boys" and below that, "Texas Most Famous Musical Group." Needless to say this last statement is an outright lie.

CLOSER IN ON THE CAR -- as it pulls to a stop not far from the house. The door opens and Tee Tot Hightower gets out.

As WE WATCH, three other musicians, all wearing matching, gaudy and none too clean cowboy shirts, scramble out of the back and begin unloading instruments. These are The Lone Star Syrup Boys. Individually they are Homer and Leroy, both in their mid-forties and both deserve a better fate than this. Otis, the fiddle player, who is in his mid-twenties, is the only remotely personable one of the group.

The CAMERA MOVES WITH Tee Tot -- as he starts toward the farmhouse, gets no more than a few steps when he turns back to the car.

TEE TOT

Ermine, will you get a move on?

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON THE DOOR OF THE CAR -- as it opens and WE SEE, first, a pair of woman's legs, clad in sheer stockings as she steps out of the car. She straightens her skirt so that WE GET A VIEW of a good deal of leg and thigh. The CAMERA MOVES up her body to her face and WE SEE that she cannot be more than nineteen, if that. She is extremely pretty, very spirited. This is Ermine Hightower, Tee Tot's fifth wife. The CAMERA TRACKS WITH her as she follows her husband toward the farmhouse. It should be obvious that Ermine is just as much of a celebrity as her husband, but for different reasons.

As she catches up with her husband, the CAMERA CONTINUES TRACKING WITH the two of them across to Dove Haslip, who is sitting in a rocking chair on the porch. As the two men begin haggling back and forth about the last minute arrangements, Ermine glances O.S.

HER POV: A good-looking young man in his mid-twenties, a lot more dapper than anyone else around (Eugene) has his eye on Ermine. He gives her his sexy look, grins.

CLOSER ON ERMINE -- She grins back.

70

CONTD

70

ON TEE TOT -- although he has his back to his wife, instantly turns to see who she is smiling at.

HIS POV: The moment Eugene realizes that Tee Tot is watching him, he begins to act elaborately nonchalant.

CLOSER ON TEE TOT -- watching his wife narrowly as he comes to a quick understanding with the bootlegger.

CUT TO:

71

EXT: MARGARET'S BEAUTY PARLOR - LATE AFTERNOON

71

WIDE SHOT -- as Wayne's car turns into the driveway, stops; he gets out and starts into the house.

CUT TO:

72

INT: BEAUTY PARLOR - SAME

72

WIDE SHOT -- as Wayne lets himself in the front door. The beauty parlor is empty; there is no sign of Margaret.

WAYNE
(calling out)

Hon?

MARGARET (O.S.)
I'm in back, darlin'. Where've
you been, we're real late.

WAYNE
Ol' man Wilson ought t' put that
Studebaker of his out t' pasture.
I swear there ain't a week goes
by without somethin' goin' wrong
with that junk heap.

The CAMERA TRACKS WITH HIM as he walks out of the beauty parlor, down the hall and into the kitchen, where he cuts himself a slice of chocolate cake, and heads toward the bedroom.

CUT TO:

73

INT: BEDROOM - SAME

73

The bedroom is just as crowded as the kitchen; a large, double bed along one wall with a tiny child's bed jammed next to it. There is no sign of Margaret or their child.

WAYNE
Where's Rosalie?

MARGARET (O.S.)
Over at your mamma's. She's
gonna' sleep there tonight.

As she is talking, Wayne follows the sound of her voice, reaches the bathroom door and comes to a complete stop.

HIS POV: Margaret is standing there, her back to him, absolutely naked. She is putting on the last of her make-up.

CLOSE ON WAYNE -- Surprised. Suddenly realizing how beautiful his wife is.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- Margaret glances up, sees him looking at her.

MARGARET
(starting to flirt)
You ought not to eat that --
you'll get fat.

And she crosses to him and takes a bit of the cake herself. Throughout all this, there is a complete intimacy between them.

WAYNE
(flirting back)
What about you?

Margaret crosses back to the mirror to finish her make-up. Wayne walks over; they stand side by side, touching.

MARGARET
(wry)
A lot you'd notice.

WAYNE
(kissing her lightly)
I'd notice.

He keeps on kissing her.

MARGARET
(doesn't mean it)
Wayne, we gotta go. Every-
body's waiting for us.

73 CONTD

73

He continues kissing her, slowly runs his hand across her breast, down her stomach.

MARGARET
(having trouble
concentrating)
Wayne, which dress do you think
I ought to wear ... the pink ...
or ... the ... Wayne ...
(then)
Wayne ... we're gonna' be real
late ...

CUT TO:

74 INT: MR. WILL'S ROOM - TWILIGHT

74

ON THE DOOR -- as it slowly opens, REVEALING Possum and Frank just on the other side.

POSSUM
Are you craz --

In a flash, Frank clamps his hand across Possum's mouth, drags her inside the room and closes the door after them. Only then does he take his hand away from her mouth.

POSSUM
Are you crazy? That man's
gonna' skin us alive if he
catches us in here!

FRANK
Look, I got somethin' important
to show you -- D'you want to see
it or not?

Possum says nothing, which means that she is dying to see whatever it is, she just doesn't want any of the blame if they are caught. Frank leads her across to a group of seven or eight boxes that are neatly stacked in one corner of the blind man's room.

Nearby is a wind-up Victrola and several record albums. Frank opens the Victrola, takes a record from one of the albums and places it on the turntable. Next he gives the handle a couple of cranks, sets the arm gently on the record.

A moment later, we hear::

MAN'S VOICE

(melodious, a professional actor)

Recordings for the Blind present
Trent's Last Case, by E.C.
Sently ... Chapter One ...
"Bad News" ... When the scheming,
indomitable brain of Sigsbee
Manderson was scattered by a
shot from an unknown hand --

At that moment, we hear:

EDNA (O.S.)

(calling out)

Frank! ... Possum!

Frank is so wired that he grabs for the arm of the machine, jerking it across the record so that it makes a horrible scratching sound.

EDNA (O.S.)

Frank? Where are you?

Instantly, both children realize the damage that has been done. Frank quickly replaces the record in the album, puts it away, closes the Victrola and makes a dash for the door where Possum is waiting for him, already outside.

CUT TO:

75

INT: FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

75

ON TEE TOT HIGHTOWER AND THE LONE STAR SYRUP BOYS --
They all remain frozen, looking out at the audience.

TEE TOT

And a one ... and a two and
a ...

On three, they all break into a foot-stomping version of
"Cotton-Eyed Joe."

CUT TO:

COUPLES in the living room of the farmhouse that has been emptied of furniture, as they begin dancing.

CUT TO:

CHILDREN at the window -- squeezed in, listening, excited.

CUT TO:

75 CONTD

75

COUPLES out on the porch, waiting their turn, some listen-
ing, some dancing.

CUT TO:

76 EXT: FARMHOUSE - FURTHER AWAY - NIGHT

76

Although we are now some distance away from the house, we can still hear the music. HOLD as a car drives up, squeezes into a parking place. A moment later the doors open and Wayne and Margaret Lomax get out. The CAMERA TRACKS WITH them as they walk hurriedly in the direction of the music. Wayne keeps glancing around nervously.

WAYNE

(worried)

Where d'you think Buddy got to?
He swore he'd be here early.

MARGARET

(loving)

Maybe they got to fooling around
just like we did ...

(taking his arm)

... They'll be along soon.

CLOSER ON THEM -- From the expression on Wayne's face, it is clear that the idea of Viola and her husband making love is very upsetting. The CAMERA CONTINUES TO MOVE WITH them as they reach the porch of the house where a lot of people are gathered, waiting to get inside. Among them WE SEE Buddy and Viola. Buddy has his back to them, listening to the music. Viola, however, is constantly turning around, obviously looking for someone. She spots them, smiles with relief and rushes up to Margaret, paying no attention to Wayne.

VIOLA

(leading Margaret to
the door of the farm-
house)

Where've you two been? Bud was
startin' to get real worried ...

At that point, Buddy turns, spots Wayne and pulls him
aside.

BUDDY

Listen, I got a problem with
that Desoto of mine, it's runnin'
hot. If you could take a look
and ...

76 CONTD

76

As he is talking, Wayne's eyes are glued to Viola as she walks ahead with Margaret.

CROSS-CUT WITH HIS POV:

From the way that Margaret leans across to her friend it is obvious that she is telling Viola exactly why they were late. The moment Viola understands exactly what happened, we

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP, VIOLA -- She spins around and looks at Wayne as though he had just slapped her.

CUT TO:

77 INT: FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

77

The Lone Star Syrup Boys are playing "Take Me Back To Tulsa" as the CAMERA MOVES ACROSS the room, crowded with dancers, to the door where Ermine, looking slightly bored, leans against the doorway. HOLD ON her for a beat as she glances O.S.

HER POV: Standing not far away, watching her is Eugene, the same young man WE SAW earlier. He sidles up to her, remaining carefully out of Tee Tot's line of vision.

EUGENE

Hidy, Ermine ...

Ermine remains aloof, saying nothing.

EUGENE

I ain't seen you around in a while.

ERMINE

I'm a married woman; or haven't you heard.

EUGENE

(with a snicker)

Yeah, I heard all right ...

The CAMERA PANS AWAY FROM them, across to Viola and Buddy who are dancing nearby. Not far away are Wayne and Margaret. Wayne keeps doing his best to get Viola to look at him; however, she refuses; her face remains set, expressionless. As the music ends, Buddy turns to his wife.

77 CONTD

77

BUDDY

Hon, you two wait here ...

(motioning to Wayne)

Wayne an' me are goin' out back
an' get us a bottle of "good for
what ails you."As Buddy takes his friend by the arm and they start off
into the dark, we

CUT TO:

78 EXT: COURTHOUSE - NIGHT

78

It is silhouetted against the night sky. WE HOLD ON it
as the clock begins to chime the hour.

CUT TO:

79 INT: KITCHEN - EDNA'S HOUSE - SAME

79

WIDE SHOT -- Edna, worn out from a long day, is standing
by the stove, a large kettle of water has just come to
a boil. She turns off the fire and, using both hands,
carries the kettle across to a large metal bathtub that
is sitting in the middle of the floor.CLOSER ON HER -- as she dumps the steaming water into the
partially full tub. She sets down the kettle and begins
to unbutton her dress.

CUT TO:

80 INT: MR. WILL'S ROOM - SAME

80

ON MR. WILL -- His room is now straight, everything put
away. He lights his pipe, takes the first record of
Trent's Last Case and carefully places it on the Victrola.
He meticulously wipes the surface of the record and checks
the needle to make sure it is clean. Then he turns the
crank of the Victrola a number of times and as he takes
the arm and places it on the record, we

CUT TO:

81 INT: KITCHEN - SAME

81

ON EDNA'S LEGS -- as her slip drops to the floor at her
feet.MED. CLOSE UP EDNA, FROM THE SHOULDERS UP -- She stands,
pinning her hair into place. The steam rising from the
tub has caused beads of moisture to form along her brow
and the back of her neck.

81 CONTD

81

WIDE SHOT -- Edna stands for a moment in the dimly lit kitchen, her back to us, and then steps quickly into the tub.

CLOSER ON EDNA -- She sinks up to her neck in the water, closes her eyes and, for the first time that day, relaxes. WE HOLD ON her for a beat, then, from O.S. we hear

Sound-effect: The door to Mr. Will's room opens and we hear the sound of his footsteps as he comes charging down the hallway, heading toward the kitchen.

CLOSE UP, EDNA -- Her eyes open wide.

HER POV: The doorknob as it starts to turn.

ON EDNA -- Desperately, she grabs for a towel, but it is too late.

ON THE DOOR -- as it is thrown open and Mr. Will appears.

MRS. WILL

(furious)

Mrs. Spalding?

CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:

Edna is too astonished to answer. Mr. Will enters the room, heading directly toward the tub. One more step and he will go head first into the tub.

MR. WILL

Mrs. Spalding?

ON EDNA -- wondering (a) if he really is blind and (b) what he is going to do next. Finally she recovers enough to answer.

EDNA

Yes, Mr. Will. I'm right here.

MR. WILL

(seething)

Believe me, if I had anyplace else to go beside the State Home for the Infirm, I would gladly leave tonight ... Mrs. Spalding, when I came here the only thing I asked was to be left alone. I am not some kind of freak that is on display for the amusement of those

(MORE)

MR. WILL (contd)
hooligans you call children. And
I will not have them vandalizing
my personal property ... Look at
this.

(he holds up the
damaged record)
It's ruined.

The moment that Edna hears the blind man refer to her children as hooligans, she forgets completely about her condition and becomes just as angry as he is.

EDNA
(Livid)
Mr. Kaufman, my children are not
hooligans or vandals and as long
as you are in my home I don't
ever want to hear you speak of
them that way again ... Ever.

MR. WILL
(not backing down an
inch)
Fine. Whatever they are, you
just keep them away from me.

EDNA
(ready to kill)
I can promise you that.

He turns, starts toward the door.

EDNA
(icy)
From now on I would appreciate it
if you would knock before enter-
ing a room.

MR. WILL
(stiff)
Gladly.

The blind man steps out into the hall and slams the door behind him.

ON EDNA -- She stares at the closed door, then, as we hear the sound of Mr. Will's door slamming shut, she hits the water as hard as she can, splashing it everywhere.

CUT TO:

82

INT: FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

82

ON TEE TOT AND THE BAND -- From time to time Tee Tot takes a swig of moonshine whiskey from a mason jar on top of the piano. Although it is obvious that Tee Tot is feeling no pain, he is absolutely sincere in what he is about to do.

TEE TOT

Friends, don't let's ever forget
it's the Good Lord that's lettin'
us have this fine time tonight.
So I think we ought to get serious
for a little bit and sing a
religious song.

ON HOMER, LEROY AND OTIS -- their spirits sink. If Tee Tot has reached this state this early, it can lead to no good.

Nevertheless, Tee Tot begins to sing, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." At first Tee Tot is the only one singing, then, slowly, one by one, people join in until everyone inside and out is singing.

During this WE SEE: Homer, Leroy, Otis, Margaret, Viola, Wayne, Dove Haslip, Wayne, Buddy all caught up by the hymn.

Then, as it ends, without skipping a beat, Tee Tot breaks into a fast version of "Dance All Night."

CUT TO:

83

EXT: PORCH - FARMHOUSE - SAME

83

Margaret and Viola have moved from the breezeway onto the porch and are now watching the dance through the front window of the house. WE HOLD for a beat on them, long enough TO SEE that there are tears in Viola's eyes. She quickly brushes them away, turns her back to the light, and takes a cigarette from her purse. As she lights it, Margaret glances at her friend. The tears haven't stopped. Again, she hastily wipes them away. Margaret watches her for a bit longer, then:

MARGARET

(concerned)

Hon, we been friends a long time.
If there is something that's got
you down, you know you can talk to
me ... You know that ...

83

CONTD

83

Viola turns to Margaret, smiles; it is a heartbreakingly sad smile. There is a long beat of silence between the two women, and, at this moment, Viola is extremely close to telling her friend everything.

MARGARET

(misunderstanding)

Y'know, if it's something
between you an' Buddy --

VIOLA

(shakes her head)

No. No, it's nothing like
that ...

(lying)

I don't know ... I guess I'm
just ... blue ... It must be
close to my time of the month ...

Margaret doesn't believe that and Viola knows that she doesn't; however, there is nothing more to be said. Margaret puts her arm around her friend, hugs her. It is too much for Viola, who begins to sob, long, gasping sobs.

VIOLA

Oh ... I'm so ... unhappy ...
I wish I ... could die ...

CUT TO:

84 TEE TOT HIGHTOWER AND THE LONE STAR SYRUP BOYS - SAME 84

They are playing "Ida Red" and are really caught up in it, when Tee Tot looks O.S.

HIS PO.: The doorway where Ermine has been standing is now empty.

ON TEE TOT -- He continues to play without missing a beat, but now his eyes begin to dart around the room. He steps back to Homer, his bass player.

TEE TOT

(upset)

You see where Ermine got to?

(nods toward the
empty doorway)

She was there just a minute ago.

HOMER

(intent on playing)

Hell, Tee Tot, I don't know ...
Maybe she hadda go t' th'
toilet.

Nevertheless, Tee Tot isn't satisfied.

TEE TOT

(to himself, looking
around the room)

God damn that woman.

CUT TO:

85 VIOLA, MARGARET, BUDDY AND WAYNE, who are standing 85
in the doorway, drinking Cokes laced with whiskey.
An uneasy silence prevails and Viola is still mute,
careful not to look at Wayne, who watches her nervously,
fearing a storm. Margaret is concerned for her friend.

The Band begins to play "La Golindrina," a beautiful,
slow waltz.

CLOSER ON VIOLA -- suddenly making up her mind. Her
mood seems to shift a hundred and eighty degrees; she
becomes instantly lighthearted and gay (although there
is a slightly strident tone in her voice).

VIOLA

What's got into you, Wayne?
You haven't asked me to dance
all night ...
(she takes his hand)
C'mon ...

To say that Wayne is stunned, is an understatement.
Nevertheless, hoping that she is over her mood, he
follows her onto the dance floor.

CLOSER ON THEM -- as they begin to dance.

VIOLA

Darling, it's not ever going to
work between us, is it?

WAYNE

(nervous)
What d'you mean?

VIOLA

(trying not to cry)
I mean, we don't really have any
(MORE)

VIOLA (contd)
kind of future together and ...
and I can't go on like this any
longer.

WAYNE
Oh, darlin' we'll figure out
something, you wait an' see.

VIOLA
No. No, we won't. I was looking
at Margaret tonight and I thought --
... I thought, she never did any-
thing to deserve this. Neither
did Buddy.

(shakes her head)
We're never going to see each
other again.

WAYNE
(stunned)
No. No, you can't --

VIOLA
I --
(she starts to say, "I
love you," but her voice
breaks)
Good-bye.

And before Wayne can say anything more, she turns and
walks across to Buddy who is dancing with Margaret.
Viola tells her husband that she has a terrible headache
and asks if they can leave right away. As Buddy puts his
arm around his wife and leads her to the door, WE

CUT TO:

86 THE MUSICIANS -- Tee Tot is growing increasingly 86
upset about the whereabouts of his wife and his fiddle
player. Suddenly, in the middle of a number, he puts
down his guitar and turns to Homer.

TEE TOT
I gotta take a leak.

The CAMERA PANS WITH HIM -- as he pushes his way through
the crowd toward the door.

CUT TO:

87 EXT: BACK OF THE FARMHOUSE - SAME

87

In the dim light, half in and half out of the shadows, WE CAN SEE Ermine, leaning against the house. Facing her, standing very close, is Eugene. He holds a jar filled with moonshine, from which he occasionally takes a sip in one hand. It is evident from his attitude that he is coming on strong for her, and that, if she is not exactly picking up on it, she is obviously having a good time.

Under the guise of admiring a locket that Ermine is wearing, Eugene reaches down and picks it up, brushing his hand against her breast in the process.

EUGENE

(re the locket)

My, ain't that pretty ...

ERMINE

(pushing his hand
away)

You quit that ...

EUGENE

(putting his hand
back on her breast)

That old man still able t' show
you any kind of a good time?

ERMINE

A lot better than you ever
could.

EUGENE

(sarcastic)

Ha! ...

(very flirtatious)

Hell, there ain't but one
way for you to ever find
out, is there?

ERMINE

(grinning)

You should get so lucky ...

Just at that point, a hand reaches INTO FRAME, grabs Eugene forcefully by the collar. Then, in a SERIES OF QUICK CUTS, WE SEE:

Tee Tot, livid with rage, punches his wife in the eye, knocking her backwards. She lets out a scream. Eugene doesn't wait to be asked to leave, but turns and starts to run. Tee Tot pulls a small silver woman's pistol from his pocket and aims it at the fleeing man, who ducks inside the house.

88 INT: HOUSE - SAME

88

As Eugene takes a last, desperate look over his shoulder and starts shoving his way through the crowd, heading for the door on the opposite side of the room. A moment later, Tee Tot enters, chasing the young man, firing over his head. In an instant, there is pandemonium: women screaming, men yelling, everyone fighting to get out the doors, windows, whatever.

At the sound of the first shot, Homer and Leroy begin packing away their instruments; understanding, from bitter experience, what is about to happen. The fight is spreading like wildfire across the room.

The CAMERA TRACKS IN FRONT of them -- as they push their way through the brawling crowd. They hold their instruments high over their heads. A drunk is shoved into Homer; he turns, spots the musician, clearly looking for a fight.

DRUNK

(belligerent)

You wanna know somethin' --
you can't sing worth shit.

HOMER

(he's been down
this road before)

That's what my mamma always
used t' say.

DRUNK

(not giving up)

An' you play worse n' you
sing.

HOMER

(trying not to let
it get him down)

You got a good ear, friend.

(to Leroy, who is
in front of him)

Will' you get a move on!

DRUNK

(enjoying himself)

You poor sonofabitch, you
oughta' get outa' this line
of work.

HOMER

(means it)

Believe me, mister, I been
givin' it lots of thought.

88 CONTD

88

DRUNK

(this is almost as
good as a fight)

Y'know, I seen you t' other
day with your wife ... Lord,
she's as ugly as sin ...

HOMER

(weary)

Aw hell, friend, you just cost
me a forty-dollar banjo.

And with that, he slams the instrument as hard as he
can on the Drunk's head, knocking him senseless.

CUT TO:

89 EXT: COUNTRY ROAD - VERY LATE AT NIGHT

89

WIDE SHOT -- WE SEE Tee Tot's car, weaving slowly along
a back road.

CUT TO:

90 INT: CAR - SAME

90

Homer is at the wheel. Leroy is next to the window.
Tee Tot is sprawled across the back seat, picking on his
guitar. They are passing a mason jar full of moonshine
back and forth and it is obvious that they are all very
drunk.

TEE TOT

(he has been going on

like this for some time)

I knew somethin' like this was
gonna happen sooner or later ...
I a'n't nobody's fool ... I could
see it comin' ...

HOMER

(to Leroy)

Did I ever tell you about the
time I run into Jimmy Rodgers
outside the Adolphus Hotel in
Dallas?

LEROY

'Bout a hundred times.

TEE TOT

I'm gonna be forty-seven this
year ...

(he's at least fifty-five)

(MORE)

TEE TOT (contd)

... Ermine's nineteen ... In ten years, when she's twenty-nine, I'll be almost sixty. Hell, you boys've seen Ermine ... You know the kind of gal she is. Tell me, do you think she's the sort of woman to put up with an old man? ... I mean it, I want the truth.

LEROY

(to Homer)

On second thought, maybe I'd like to hear that story about Jimmy Rodgers one more time.

TEE TOT

The trouble is, I really and truly love her.

CUT TO:

91 EXT: CAR - SAME

91

By now, it is much closer to town. As it passes Edna's house, WE HOLD FOR A BEAT, then:

CUT TO:

92 EXT: FIELD - BEHIND EDNA'S HOUSE - SAME

92

In the gray light, just before dawn WE CAN SEE Moze as he hitches the mule to the plow and turns to Edna who is standing nearby carrying a heavy sack of cottonseed slung across her shoulder.

MOZE

You ready, ma'am?

Edna nods. Moze steps behind the plow, takes the reins and loops them around his neck, grabs hold of the plow handles and calls out.

MOZE

Hi, there ... Hi ... Git along now ...

As the mule slowly starts,

CUT TO:

93 EXT: TEE TOT'S HOUSE - DAYBREAK

93

A large gingerbread house that could use a good paint job; in fact, it could have used a good paint job ten years ago.

The yard is overgrown with weeds and there are a couple of beat-up cars on blocks, sitting in the yard.

REVERSE ON TEE TOT -- as he climbs stiffly out of the car. He stands, staring unhappily at the house, then he crosses the yard, walks up the steps and onto the porch.

CUT TO:

94 INT: HOUSE - SAME

94

WIDE SHOT -- No one has done much in the way of decorating, so that the hall is empty except for a couple of packing crates. WE HOLD ON the front door as Tee Tot lets himself in and starts up the staircase.

CUT TO:

95 INT: SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - SAME

95

The upstairs is as bleak as the downstairs. There is not a sound in the house except for the creak of the steps as Tee Tot wearily climbs to the second floor. He reaches the top and the CAMERA PANS with him as he crosses to a door that is closed.

CLOSER ON TEE TOT -- as he opens the door.

HIS POV: ERMINE is sitting in the middle of the bed. She is still wearing her dress from the night before. Now WE CAN SEE that it is torn and smeared with blood. She is holding a towel with ice in it to her eyes.

REVERSE ON TEE TOT -- He doesn't say anything; instead, he begins taking off his ridiculous-looking shirt and begins carefully hanging it in the chiffrage.

ERMINE (O.S.)

(quiet, but deadly)

Tee Tot Hightower, you ever
hit me again, you better do
a good job of it ...

ON ERMINE -- She remains sitting in the bed, not moving.

ERMINE

Because, so help me God, one night
when you've gone to sleep, I'll get
up and go out in the kitchen and
get me an iron and I'll come back
in here and I'll smash both your
hands. I won't kill you, because
they could put me in the penitentiary.
But when I finish, you won't ever
play the guitar again, I promise you
that

95 CONTD

95

ON TEE TOT -- He listens to this, frozen.

TEE TOT

(swallowing hard)

You really thought this whole
thing through, didn't you?

CLOSE ON ERMINE.

ERMINE

You're goddamn right I have ...

CUT TO:

96 EXT: SCHOOLHOUSE - DAY

96

It is recess and the children are playing in the barren dirt yard. Viola stands near the front steps of the schoolhouse, watching them. It is obvious from the look on her face that she hasn't slept at all.

CLOSER ON HER -- as something O.S. catches her eye.

HER POV: PANNING WITH WAYNE'S CAR -- as he drives slowly past.

CLOSER ON HIM -- He is staring at her.

MOVING POV (WAYNE'S): of Viola -- She stands absolutely still, watching him.

CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:

He continues driving slowly by. Neither of them breaks eye contact until:

O.S. Sound: a car honking.

Wayne quickly looks around, sees an approaching car. He swerves to avoid a collision. WE HOLD ON him as he continues down the block, turns a corner and disappears from view.

REVERSE ON VIOLA -- She remains where she was, still watching him. WE SEE that she is about to cry and, in order to do so in private, she quickly walks toward the back of the building.

TRACKING WITH HER -- As she glances over her shoulder to make certain that no one is looking; then she fishes in her purse, finds a cigarette and a book of matches. She is just about to turn the corner when she stops, looks O.S.

HER POV: a cloud of cigarette smoke is drifting out from the hiding place that she was about to use.

96 CONTD

96

CLOSER ON VIOLA -- as she quickly hides her own cigarettes and, as the CAMERA PANS with her, she steps around the corner and surprises three boys, smoking like chimneys. Two of the boys are dressed in ragged coveralls. The third is Frank. As he turns toward the teacher, a look of astonishment on his face, WE

CUT TO:

97 EXT: EDNA'S HOUSE - LATER

97

WIDE SHOT -- as Viola's car pulls to a stop in front of the house. The doors open and Viola, followed by a reluctant Frank, gets out of the car and crosses the yard to the front door of the house. Viola rings the bell and a moment later Edna appears.

CUT TO:

98 MR. WILL'S BEDROOM - SAME

98

The blind man sits working peacefully making brooms, when Possum bursts through the door.

POSSUM

(enjoying every
minute of this)

Mr. Will! Mr. Will! Frank got
caught smoking at school and the
teacher told ma and he's gonna
catch it!

As Mr. Will looks up, startled.

CUT TO:

99 EXT: FRONT DOOR - SAME

99

MED. SHOT, EDNA -- Her eyes glued to her son as Viola finishes explaining what happened.

EDNA

(her voice is very,
very quiet)

Thank you, Mrs. Kelsey. I
promise you it won't ever
happen again.

REVERSE ON VIOLA -- clearly she has begun to feel terrible about making such an issue of this. She starts to say something, but it is too late. She turns to walk back to her car. WE HOLD ON Edna and Frank. There is a long beat of silence between them. Finally:

99 CONTD

99

EDNA

All right, young man, what would
your pa do if he was here?

ON FRANK -- not looking at his mother.

FRANK

I reckon he'd give me a
whipping.

EDNA

Then I guess that's what we're
going t' have t' do.

CUT TO:

100 INT: FRONT HALLWAY - SAME

100

The CAMERA PANS WITH THEM -- as they walk silently toward
the rear of the house. Edna stops at the hall closet
door, opens it.

HER POV: inside WE SEE that her husband's pistol, in
its holster, is still hanging in its customary position.
Nearby is a worn leather razor strap. As Edna reaches
for the strap Frank keeps his eyes carefully averted.

CUT TO:

101 THE DOOR TO MR. WILL'S BEDROOM - SAME

101

Possum is standing beside Mr. Will in the doorway, her
eyes wide.

POSSUM

(a dramatic whisper)

Lord Henry Brinthrop, she's
gonna whip him.

ON THE DOOR LEADING FROM THE HALL ONTO THE BACK PORCH --
as Frank, followed by his mother, appears. They pass
the door to Mr. Will's bedroom and Possum starts after
them.

POSSUM

(she knows full well

what's about to happen)

Ma, what are you gonna do t'
Frank?

Silence.

POSSUM

Frank, what's she gonna --

101 CONTD

101

EDNA

Possum.

It takes a lot to shut Possum up, but there is something in the tone of her mother's voice that does.

Frank enters the pantry. Edna follows, closing the door in Possum's face.

CUT TO:

102 INT: PANTRY - SAME

102

ON EDNA -- as she closes the door and turns to her son, who stands in the middle of the room. There is a beat of silence between them and we suddenly realize that Edna has never done this before. Finally:

EDNA

(awkwardly)

Ah ... your pa ... when he did this ... What ... I mean, how --

FRANK

(understanding what she is driving at)

Most times I'd grab hold of th' table an' he'd let me have it.

EDNA

How many times would he ...

FRANK

Pa'd be pretty mad over somethin' like this. I guess it'd be 'bout ... ten good licks.

CLOSE ON EDNA -- This was worse than she expected.

WIDE SHOT -- Frank crosses to the table, grabs hold of it hard enough so that his knuckles are white.

FRANK

(almost a whisper)

I'm ready

Edna starts to raise the strap, stops; struggling desperately to get control of her emotions.

FRANK

Ma ... I'm ready ...

102 CONTD

102

Then, carefully not looking at her son, she brings the strap down. As it strikes, WE

CUT TO:

103 OUTSIDE THE DOOR - SAME

103

Possum and Mr. Will stand listening. We can hear the strap as it hits, but the boy doesn't cry out and, somehow, his silence is more terrible than any noise he could make would be.

We hear the strap hit again. Possum, suddenly frightened for her brother, reaches up, takes the blind man's hand.

CLOSER ON MR. WILL -- reacting to the touch of the child's hand in his.

The door to the backyard opens and Moze enters and sees Mr. Will and Possum. It doesn't take a genius to realize that something is wrong.

MOZE

What's goin' on?

POSSUM

(in a whisper)

Frank's gettin' a lickin'.

Stunned, Moze turns toward the door.

ON THE CLOSED DOOR -- we hear the strap hit eight, nine, ten times and then silence. A moment later, the door opens and Frank steps out; he is doing his best not to cry.

POSSUM

Did it hurt?

Frank says nothing.

POSSUM

Frank, did it hurt? ... Frank? ...

MOZE

(gently)

Let's let ol' Frank be by hisself for a little bit.

As he leads the child outside, Mr. Will remains where he was.

LOOKING INTO THE PANTRY FROM THE OPEN DOORWAY -- Edna stands across the room, the strap still in her hands. She is not looking in the direction of the blind man.

103 CONTD

103

EDNA

(quietly)
I can't -- I won't do that again --
ever.

ON MR. WILL -- standing in the doorway. For the first time he is aware of what she is going through.

CLOSE ON EDNA.

EDNA

... Oh, God, I miss my husband ...
I miss him so much ...

She begins to cry, but covers her eyes with her hand and turns away from Mr. Will, who remains in the doorway, helpless to do anything.

FADE TO BLACK.

104 EXT: MARGARET'S BEAUTY PARLOR - DAY

104

ESTABLISHING SHOT -- It is threatening rain.

CUT TO:

105 INT: BEAUTY PARLOR - SAME

105

There is only Margaret and a customer: a middle-aged lady under a hair-dryer. The radio is playing, but the music has just about been drowned out by static. Although it is the middle of the day, the room is very dark. Margaret reaches over and turns on the light switch.

MARGARET

Lord, it's gettin' so I can't
hardly see my hand in front of
my face.

MIDDLE-AGED LADY

Feels like rain ...

MARGARET

(glancing toward
the window)

Must be comin' up a real storm ...

ON THE WINDOW -- as if in agreement, a sudden gust of wind makes the curtains billow out.

CUT TO:

106 EXT: FARM - SAME

106

Moze is in the field, plowing, trying desperately to finish before the rain sets in. The mule, however, is unusually skittish and is causing him a lot of trouble.

CLOSER ON MOZE -- as a wind starts up. He glances toward the sky.

107 HIS POV: It is darkening ominously.

107

108 ON MOZE

108

MOZE

Oh, Lord ...

He looks O.S.

109 HIS POV: Edna, some distance away, her back to him, 109 is chopping cotton. Intent on what she is doing, she pays no attention to the sky.

WIDE SHOT -- MOZE quickly ties his mule to the plow and runs to Edna. WE SEE him point skyward. Edna realizes the danger and they start back to the mule. Moze hastily unhitches it and begins dragging the plow toward the barn.

CLOSE ON EDNA -- as she grabs the terrified mule by the harness. He tries his best to bolt, but Edna hangs on ferociously.

ON MOZE -- ahead of her, turns back, sees that she is in trouble.

MOZE

(yelling)

Let him go! You got t' run!

ON EDNA -- Frightened herself, nevertheless, she refuses to let go of the mule. She glances up at the sky.

110 HER POV: It is getting worse quickly. The sky has 110 become black and the clouds are starting to churn.

111 CLOSER ON EDNA -- In desperation, she hits the mule 111 as hard as she can across the nose, then yanks on the harness. It starts to follow her.

CUT TO:

112 INT: MR. WILL'S WORKROOM - EDNA'S HOUSE - DAY

112

ON MR. WILL -- sitting stock still, listening to the sound of the rising wind. He gets to his feet and starts toward the door to his room.

CUT TO:

113 INT: HALLWAY - SAME

113

WIDE SHOT -- The blind man walks as quickly as he can down the hall toward the back door... He stops in his tracks, suddenly remembering something.

MR. WILL
(calling out)
Possum?

There is no answer except the wind. He turns and starts back toward the stairway. In his haste, he misjudges the distance and bangs into the side of the door. He pays no attention and begins feeling his way along the wall to the foot of the stairs.

MR. WILL
Possum!

Nothing.

The blind man hesitates for a moment. Then, with his hand on the railing, he starts up the stairs.

CUT TO:

114 EXT: SCHOOLHOUSE - DAY

114

WIDE SHOT -- Viola sits on the steps. The CAMERA PANS ACROSS TO the schoolyard where WE SEE the children playing.

CLOSER ON VIOLA -- as she glances toward the sky.

115 HER POV: The sky is getting darker.

115

116 ON VIOLA -- becoming aware of the danger. She quickly gets to her feet and begins ringing the bell and yelling for the children to come inside as quickly as they can because it looks like it could be a cyclone. 116

A group of three or four boys who are playing off to one side on the far edge of the schoolyard. At the sound of Viola's VOICE, they turn and start toward the schoolhouse.

CLOSE ON FRANK -- who is about to follow them when he stops, turns and runs in the opposite direction, toward home.

CUT TO:

117 INT: SECOND FLOOR LANDING - EDNA'S HOUSE - SAME

117

Note: This is all foreign territory for Mr. Will. He knows nothing about the location of anything up here.

117 CONTD.

117

WIDE SHOT -- as he reaches the top of the stairs, starts to feel his way along the wall.

MR. WILL
(yelling)
Possum!

By now, the wind is so loud that we can barely hear him, and certainly if the child were calling, we couldn't hear her.

He continues moving along the wall, moving more quickly than he should. Suddenly, he goes crashing over a chair, landing on the floor.

CLOSER ON HIM -- frantic. He scrambles to his feet.

MR. WILL
Possum!

But by now, the wind has drowned out his voice.

CUT TO:

118 INT: BEAUTY PARLOR - SAME

118

An uneasy quiet has descended in the room. The women are aware that this isn't just a windstorm. Margaret, with her child on her lap, sits near the door to the hallway. The only sound that we hear except for the static on the radio is the wind howling outside. Suddenly:

QUICK CUT: as the door is thrown open.

One of the women turns and lets out a scream.

ON THE DOOR -- It is Wayne. He runs across to one of the windows and jerks it open.

WAYNE
(yelling)
Open up all th' windows an'
doors, else th' wind'll take
th' whole house.

As Margaret puts down the child, joins her husband trying to open all the windows.

QUICK CUTS: A window in another part of the room, as it explodes inwardly.

CLOSE UP, ONE OF THE CUSTOMERS -- who has been hit by shards of glass. She is covered wiht blood, screaming.

118 CONTD

118

TWO MORE WINDOWS -- are smashed as though by an invisible fist.

CUT TO:

119 INT: EDNA'S BARN - SAME

119

Edna and Moze are working frantically to secure all the animals who are frightened and are doing their best to get away. Finally, Moze signals her that there is nothing more that they can do, that she should open the door and secure it. She runs for the door, and, fighting with all of her strength, forces it open. As she does, she looks up at the sky.

120 HER POV: It is almost black. In the distance, WE 120
CAN SEE a funnel as it dips down out of the clouds and
gently skips along the ground like a top when it is
first thrown.

CUT TO:

121 MATCHING CLOSE UP OF FRANK -- watching the same 121
funnel. He turns to continue running for home when
we hear:

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
(shouting over the
wind)

Frank! Frank Spalding!

Terrified, he turns in the direction of the voice.

122 HIS POV: THE BLACK BUICK SEDAN in which the woman 122
lives. The door to the back seat is open and she is
crouched there, motioning for the boy to get inside
the car with her.

WOMAN
Frank Spalding, you get on in
here with me.

FRANK
No, ma'am, I gotta get home.

WOMAN
There's a cyclone comin'. You
get on in here or you're goin'
t' get yourself killed.

But it is too late, FRANK has started to run for home.

CUT TO:

123 INT: SECOND FLOOR - EDNA'S HOUSE - DAY

123

WIDE SHOT -- Possum lies curled up in her mother's bed. Miraculously, she is still fast asleep. The noise around her grows in intensity, the house has begun to creak.

REVERSE ON THE DOOR -- as it is flung open and Mr. Will appears. From the increasing intensity of the storm, it is clear that there is no time to waste. Not bothering anymore to feel his way along the walls, but moving like a man playing blind man's bluff, he crosses the room, crashing into things, stumbling as he moves. Finally, he locates the bed.

MR. WILL

Possum?

From nearby, there is a murmur. He feels his way along the bed until he grasps her foot. At his touch, she stirs. He has no time left for gentleness.

MR. WILL

(giving her ankle a
jerk)

Possum!

The child turns, still half-asleep, sees the blind man.

POSSUM

Mr. Will, what are you --

Just at that moment, the limb of a tree comes crashing through the window; shattering it and scattering glass everywhere.

Possum flings herself into Mr. Will's arms, screaming.

VERY CLOSE ON THEM -- Mr. Will does his best to calm her.

MR. WILL

It's all right, honey. You'll
be all right.

(he doesn't believe
it for a moment)

Everything will be okay, but
you've got to help me get
back downstairs ... Please ...

CUT TO:

124 EXT: THE BACK OF THE HOUSE - SAME

124

ON EDNA -- as she reaches the back door, casts one last fearful look back over her shoulder at the approaching

124 CONTD

124

tornado. She opens the door, but the wind takes it out of her hand and slams it against the side of the house. She disappears inside.

CUT TO:

125 INT: HALLWAY - SAME

125

WIDE SHOT, PANNING WITH EDNA -- as she rushes along the hall, throws open the door to the blind man's room.

EDNA

Mr. Will?!

HER POV: The room is empty.

ON EDNA -- She looks toward the second floor.

EDNA

(calling out)

Possum!

She runs to the stairs, turns to start up them, stops.

HER POV: Possum, tears streaming down her face, frightened beyond measure, is slowly, carefully, leading the blind man down the stairs.

CUT TO:

126 EXT: EDNA'S HOUSE - SAME

126

With extraordinary difficulty Moze forces open the door of the storm cellar, turns and looks back toward the house.

127 HIS POV: Edna, carrying Possum and leading Mr. Will 127 comes out of the back door; the wind almost knocking the breath out of them.

128 ON MOZE -- who rushes across to Edna, motions for 128 her to take Possum and get inside the storm cellar. He puts his arm around the blind man and together they fight their way against the wind until they reach the cellar doors. As Moze leads Mr. Will down the steps to the safety of the cellar, the CAMERA REMAINS IN POSITION and WE SEE in the distance the tiny figure of Frank in the distance. A moment later, Moze reappears, his back to the boy, he closes first one cellar door and then as he is about to shut the second.

CLOSE UP, MOZE -- seeing Frank.

128 CONTD

128

MOZE

Oh my Lord ...

WIDE SHOT -- Moze flings the door back and rushes out after the child.

CLOSER ON FRANK -- scared to death, trying his best to be brave, but fighting a losing battle. Moze reaches him, scoops the boy up and starts back toward the shelter. The CAMERA PANS with them and WE SEE that halfway there Edna has also come out of the storm cellar looking for Moze. Together, their arms around one another, Frank in the middle, they struggle back to the storm cellar.

CUT TO:

129 INT: STORM CELLAR - SAME

129

WIDE SHOT -- as they all pile inside. Moze slams the door shut and for a moment everything is black until Edna can strike a match and light a kerosene lantern. She takes Possum on her lap, Frank squeezes as close as he can to his mother, Moze is next to him and Mr. Will on the other side of Edna. Overhead the sound of the storm is horrifying.

It sounds like the shrieking of some bloodthirsty, mindless animal, just outside the cellar door. Possum buries her head in her mother's shoulder and begins to whimper.

CLOSE ON EDNA

EDNA

(very quietly, for her daughter's benefit)

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures ...

From overhead something very heavy strikes the door itself, almost causing it to give way from the force of the blow.

EDNA

... He leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the path of righteousness for His name's sake.

129 CONTD

129

As she continues, there are times when the howling of the wind, the shattering of glass and the splintering of wood overhead drowns her out entirely.

CUT TO:

130 INT: SCHOOLHOUSE - SAME

130

Viola has herded the panicked children into the coat room at the back of the school building.

CLOSER ON HER -- as she starts to step inside and close the door behind her. She takes one last quick look over her shoulder.

131 HER POV: The entire far wall of the school house collapses under the pressure of the wind. 131

CUT TO:

132 INT: STORM CELLAR - EDNA'S HOUSE - SAME

132

WIDE SHOT -- Edna, Possum, Frank, Moze and Mr. Will sitting, frozen, listening to the howling of the wind over their heads. Then, as suddenly as it began, the wind stops. There is a beat of silence as they look at one another.

CUT TO:

133 INT: BEAUTY PARLOR - SAME

133

The place is a terrible mess. Windows have been blown out; there is water everywhere, chairs are scattered around the room. Wayne and Margaret, working together, have managed to calm the customer, clean her wounds. The CAMERA PANS AWAY from them, ACROSS TO the window and WE SEE the curtains which are torn and battered as they hang now, barely moving in the gentle breeze.

CUT TO:

134 EXT: STORM CELLAR - SAME

134

As Moze opens the cellar door and steps outside.

HIS POV: There is debris everywhere, a number of the windows of the house have been smashed and some of the drains have been ripped down, but the house is still standing.

ON THE CELLAR ENTRANCE -- as Edna, carrying Possum and leading Mr. Will, joins him. Slowly, they climb out of the cellar and look around.

134 CONTD

134

The barn has lost a door, but is still upright.
Astoundingly enough, the chicken coop is still intact:
filled with overwrought, but alive, chickens.

MR. WILL

Is everything all right?! The
house, is it still there?

MOZE

Yessir, everything's a little
bent, but it's still there.

CUT TO:

135 EXT: STREET - TOWN - SAME

135

WIDE SHOT -- As Buddy Kelsey's car drives very slowly
along a street that is littered with all sorts of
debris left by the cyclone. Finally, his way is blocked
by a fallen light pole.

CLOSE ON HIM -- as he peers out the windshield.

136 HIS POV: Up ahead is the school house. One half 136
of it looks as if it had been sheared away.

ON BUDDY -- He jumps from his car and begins running
toward the building.

CUT TO:

137 INT: SCHOOLHOUSE - SAME

137

A good portion of it has been destroyed. Timbers are
scattered everywhere, desks are overturned, children's
papers and odd bits of clothing are all over the place.

MED. SHOT, BUDDY -- He steps inside, stops, listens.

O.S. Sound: the children crying.

Buddy turns in the direction of the sound.

HIS POV: The door leading to the cloakroom. Viola's
desk has been thrown against it, blocking the way.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- as Buddy rushes across, pushes aside
the desk, yanks open the door.

Inside, Viola has been doing her best to calm the
hysterical children. As the door opens and she sees
Buddy, she throws herself into his arms.

CLOSER ON HER -- as she looks O.S.

137 CONTD

137

HER POV: There, not five feet away is Wayne, a stricken look on his face.

CUT TO:

138 EXT: STREET - A SHORT TIME LATER

138

WIDE SHOT -- Buddy's car is making its way very slowly through the debris that litters the street: broken furniture and clothing are scattered everywhere, a lightpole is overturned, there is a dead cow lying in someone's yard..

CUT TO:

139 INT: CAR - SAME

139

Buddy is at the wheel, Viola sits beside him, staring out the window, not seeing anything. It is obvious that Viola is utterly miserable. Buddy divides his attention between his wife, about whom he is very worried and the road.

140 HIS POV: Up ahead WE SEE the black Buick sedan in 140 which the woman lived. It is now lying on its top, wheels in the air. A crowd has gathered around, trying to right the car.

CLOSER IN -- WE CAN SEE a woman's legs jutting out from underneath the car. It is obvious that she is dead.

141 ON VIOLA -- She quickly turns away.

141

CROSS-CUTTING WITH BUDDY:

VIOLA

Oh, Bud, let's get out of this town. Please. There are always going to be cyclones. Everybody'll always be poor ...

(tears start)

... Nothing's ever going to work out here. Please, Bud ... I can't stand it anymore ... Please let's leave this place ... please.

142 EXT: EDNA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

142

ESTABLISHING SHOT -- The children have gone to bed and only the lights in the hall and the kitchen are on.

CUT TO:

143 INT: KITCHEN - NIGHT

143

WIDE SHOT -- cardboard has been stuck in place of the broken window. Water has been mopped up. Edna stands at the sink washing the last of the supper dishes. HOLD ON HER as we hear:

MR. WILL (O.S.)
Mrs. Spalding?

As she glances up, WE

CUT TO:

HER POV: Mr. Will is standing in the doorway.

CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:

EDNA
Yes?

MR. WILL
(awkward)
Ah, I was wondering if I might
have a cup of tea?

EDNA
Surely ...
(getting to her feet)
... I'll put on the kettle.

MR. WILL
Thank you ...
(a pause, then)
D'you mind if I wait here?

EDNA
Not at all.

Edna crosses to the stove, puts a fire on under the kettle and begins spooning the tea into a pot. As she does so, the CAMERA PANS ACROSS TO Mr. Will, who makes his way across to a rocking chair and sits down. WE HOLD ON him for a beat, long enough to SEE that something is troubling him. Finally:

MR. WILL
Mrs. Spalding, do you mind if
I ask you a question?

EDNA
(her back to him,
distracted)
I guess not.

143 CONTD

143

A pause, then:

MR. WILL

What does Possum look like?

CLOSE UP, EDNA -- She stops, turns to Mr. Will.

EDNA

Possum? ... Well, she's not quite four feet tall and ... she's got a round face, like you drew it with a compass and black hair and green eyes like her daddy's ... I guess that's who she looks like. I think she's real pretty --

(quickly)

But don't you ever tell her I said that.

MR. WILL

And Frank?

EDNA

(enjoying this)

Frank's a nice lookin' boy, but he's not what you could call handsome. I'm worried he's gonna be short. Most of the men in my family have been on the short side ... I guess he takes after me ... that's probably why I'm so hard on him ...

(lightening things up)

Anyway, he's too skinny and his ears could use a good cleaning.

Edna turns back to work.

ON MR. WILL -- There is another beat of silence, then:

MR. WILL

(clearing his throat)

Mrs. Spalding?

EDNA

(busy with her work)

Ummm ...

MR. WILL

(turning beet red)

What do you look like?

143 CONTD

143

CLOSE UP, EDNA -- startled. She has not thought about what she looks like for a very long while.

EDNA

Me? ...

(then, embarrassed)

... I guess I'm about average height and ... and my hair is brown and it's long so I wear it in a bun and ... Let's see, my face is round and ... an' ... my eyes are blue ...

(we should realize that it has been a long time since Edna has thought about what she looks like)

... I always hated my nose. I always wanted my mother's nose, but ...

(wistfully)

... Margaret got that. Anyway, I, I've got a chipped tooth from a fall I took when I was about nine and ... I'm no real beauty, but I guess I look all right. I mean, Royce never complained, but that might just go to show he needed glasses.

MR. WILL

(smiles)

Thank you.

ON EDNA -- who turns back to the stove. WE HOLD ON her as she busies herself fixing the tea. Then, as she stops what she is doing and turns to look at the blind man, WE

CUT TO:

144 EXT: EDNA'S HOUSE - VERY EARLY IN THE MORNING

144

WIDE SHOT -- By now there is a very big difference in the house itself: the front is covered with hand painted signs that read: "Fresh Milk," "Home Made Preserves," "Fresh Eggs," "Vegetables," etc., etc.

CUT TO:

145 INT: KITCHEN - SAME

145

Although it is very early in the morning, the kitchen is already a beehive of activity. Edna stands at the

145 CONTD

145

stove cooking breakfast for everyone. Possum is beside her, taking hot biscuits from a pan and placing them in a dish. Frank stands at the drain board, carefully sorting and packing eggs. The CAMERA PANS ACROSS TO the door as Mr. Will enters. Both Possum and Edna say hello, but the blind man only mutters something unintelligible in return -- he is not at his best in the morning. Mr. Will pauses to turn on the radio.

CLOSER ON THE RADIO -- as he begins fiddling with the dial, searching for a news program. At first we hear snatches of country western music and a piece of the Farm and Livestock Report.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Hog prices closed two cents down in Chicago yesterday. Cotton held steady after dropping to a record low of three-and-a-half cents a pound over the last four days ...

CUT TO:

146 INT: BANK - LATER

146

ON ALBERT -- he definitely does not look like a happy man at this moment. Mt. Rushmore has more warmth and understanding.

EDNA (O.S.)

Three and a half cents a pound and we've got thirty acres that comes out to be --

ALBERT

(cutting her off)

A hundred and sixty dollars.

ON EDNA -- She sits across the desk from Albert wearing her best Sunday dress.

EDNA

(swallows)

... I was wondering if there was any chance cotton prices would go back up?

CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:

ALBERT

(shakes his head)

I'd sooner believe the Republicans
(MORE)

ALBERT (contd)

will win the next election. How much money is left in your account?

EDNA

Twenty-four dollars. That's all.

ALBERT

That's not going to be nearly enough to make the next payment to the bank.

EDNA

(the real reason
she is here)

I know ... I -- I was wondering if you all would take part of the money now and wait for the rest.

ALBERT

(a deep sigh)

Of course, that's something only the President of the bank can decide, but I don't think you should get your hopes up about that.

EDNA

Could you ask?

Albert's shoulders sag, he pushes his chair back and gets to his feet. The CAMERA HOLDS ON him as he crosses to the door of the bank president, knocks lightly on the door. A moment later he steps inside.

ON EDNA -- watching.

HER POV: Through the open door she can see the bank president at his desk and Albert standing in front of him. WE CAN SEE but not hear Albert explaining the purpose of his visit. The president turns and glances in Edna's direction.

CLOSE UP, EDNA -- She turns quickly away and pretends to be examining a photograph above Albert's desk.

QUICK CUT: HER POV: THE PHOTOGRAPH -- It shows the lobby of this same bank; sitting in the middle, on a platform is a large bale of cotton. Standing on one side are M.E. Hastings (the owner of Hastings' Gin), Albert Kaufman and the president of the bank who is handing a check to a fourth man, clearly a farmer.

146 CONTD

146

ON EDNA -- She sneaks a look back toward the bank president.

HER POV: Albert is still talking, but the bank president is not responding.

ON EDNA -- increasingly nervous, she turns back to the photograph.

HER POV; A SERIES OF EXTREME CLOSE UPS OF THE SAME PHOTOGRAPH: A SIGN ON TOP OF THE BALE THAT READS, "FIRST BALE OF COTTON GINNED IN TRAVIS COUNTY IN 1931."

AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PHOTOGRAPH IS A CAPTION THAT READS, "Mr. Walter Ellis of the Citizens National Bank hands Mr. Leroy Prichard a check for one hundred dollars for growing the first bale of cotton in Travis county this year."

CLOSE UP OF THE BANK PRESIDENT'S HAND; indeed, it is a check that he is handing the farmer.

ON EDNA -- an idea. She quickly begins examining other nearby photographs above Albert's desk.

HER POV: IN QUICK SHOTS WE SEE other photographs, all of the same lobby, all with bales of cotton on prominent display, all with Hastings, Albert and the bank president on one side. the only thing that is different is the farmer who is receiving the check.

MED. SHOT -- Albert and the bank president. The president of the bank shakes his head no and then returns to work, signalling that the discussion is ended. Albert leaves the office, closes the door after him, looks O.S.

HIS POV: The desk where Edna had been sitting a moment ago. It is empty, there is no sign of Edna.

CUT TO:

147 EXT: BACK YARD - EDNA'S HOUSE - A SHORT TIME LATER 147

CLOSE UP, MOZE -- He had better stop this foolishness before it gets out of hand.

MOZE

(firm)

Nosum. It ain't gonna' work.

WIDER SHOT -- Moze, Edna and Mr. Will are all gathered beside the back porch.

CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:

EDNA

(she can't understand)
But it's a hundred dollars. That
would be more than enough to pay
the bank.

MR. WILL

(for once he agrees
with Moze)
Mrs. Spalding, you can't begin
to get the cotton picked in time.

EDNA

Why not? Moses said it was ready.

MOZE

Ma'am, I grant you the cotton's
come in a touch early hereabouts.
But in a couple or three days
those pickers from down south
are gonna get up as far as this
county an' they can go through a
field of cotton quicker than you
can say Jack Robinson.

EDNA

Fine. We'll start now.

MR. WILL

(trying to make her
see reason)
You've got thirty acres to pick.

EDNA

Frank and Possum can help.

MR. WILL

Mrs. Spalding, that's not going
to be nearly enough.

EDNA

(determined)
Then I will pick cotton twenty-
four hours a day.

MOZE

(relentless)
Ma'am, did you ever pick cotton
before?

Edna shakes her head.

MOZE

After about an hour th' hullis starts t' cut your fingers. Then, by noon, both your hands are bleedin'. Later on your fingers start t' swell and after a little more time there ain't no feelin' left in your hands whatsoever. An' I ain't even speakin' 'bout what it does t' your knees. An' I ain't even talkin' 'bout what it does t' your back. We can't do it. Now get that through your head once and for all. We can't do it. Now you best stop thinkin' 'bout this 'fore you end up killin' yourself.

EDNA

(not backing down)

Now you listen to me; if we don't get this cotton in on time, we're going to lose this place. And if that happens, Moses, you're going back to begging for every meal. And Mr. Will, they'll put you in the State Home and me ... I'm going to lose what's left of my family. I don't know about the two of you, but I am not going to let that happen. I don't care what it takes. I don't care if it kills me. I don't care if it kills you. I am not giving up. And if the two of you do, you can go to hell.

CUT TO:

148 EXT: VIOLA AND BUDDY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

148

ESTABLISHING SHOT -- a nice, brick, two bedroom house on a pleasant tree lined street. All of the lights in the house are on and a number of cars are parked along the street.

CUT TO:

149 INT: LIVING ROOM - SAME

149

The living room is furnished with a living room suite (complete with a coffee table with a copy of "The Prophet" prominently displayed). The Kelseys are the only couple in the film who are affluent enough to afford a floor model radio.

149 CONTD

149

At the moment two card tables have been set up in the livingroom and little paper cups filled with salted nuts have been placed strategically around the room. Several couples have arrived for an evening of progressive rummy. Buddy stands to one side, talking to friends, mixing drinks (Canadian Club and Coke) as the doorbell rings. He crosses to the front door, opens it and Wayne (carrying a sleeping Rosalie) and Margaret arrive. Buddy tells Wayne to put the child to sleep on their bed and returns to fixing drinks. The CAMERA PANS WITH Wayne as he carries the child to the bedroom door, opens it and enters.

CUT TO:

150 INT: BEDROOM - SAME

150

Wayne enters, carefully lays the boy on the bed, tucks a pillow under his head and straightens up.

CLOSER ON HIM -- as something O.S. catches his eye.

HIS POV: It is Viola's engagement picture, sitting on the dresser.

ON WAYNE -- as he crosses to the photograph, picks it up.

ON THE DOOR; LOOKING TOWARD THE HALLWAY -- as Viola, on her way from the kitchen to the living room, sees Wayne, stops short.

HER POV: Wayne's back. He does not realize that she is there.

CLOSE UP, VIOLA -- She instinctively reaches toward him.

BUDDY'S VOICE
(from the living room)
Vi? ... Where'd you put the
extra cards? ...

ON WAYNE -- He turns, sees Viola standing right behind him.

CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THE TWO OF THEM:

For a long moment they stand very close, looking at one another, then:

VIOLA
(calling out to Buddy)
I'll be right there, Bud ...
And in a moment, she is gone.

CUT TO:

151 INT: LIVING ROOM - VIOLA AND BUDDY'S - NIGHT

151

The card game is in progress; Buddy, Margaret, Viola and Wayne are all at one table. Buddy and Margaret (along with the couples at the other table) are playing seriously. Viola is nervous, distracted. Wayne is watching her, barely aware of the cards in his hand.

Note: Throughout all of this there is a constant byplay between the people at both tables.

BUDDY

(elaborately nonchalant)

Discard and ...

(slamming his cards
on the table)

Rummy!

(counting up his
score)

That's twenty, thirty. Fifteen
for the ace ...

MARGARET

Where'd you get all those diamonds?
I've been holding all this junk
thinkin' you were collecting clubs.

WAYNE

(a warning edge in
his voice)

You know what they say, Buddy,
"Lucky at cards ..."

CLOSER ON VIOLA -- She shoots Wayne a look.

BUDDY

(cheerful, paying
no attention)

That's okay. It's better'n bein'
unlucky in both.

He scoops up the cards and begins shuffling them.

BUDDY

(to the room at
large)

All right, folks, we've got a
little announcement to make ...

(glancing at Viola)

All right, hon?

Viola nods, carefully keeps her eyes on her lap.

BUDDY

(clearing his throat)

The next time you good people
want to play cards with Viola
an' me, you're goin' t' have t'
drive all the way to Houston
t' do it.

There are exclamations from around the room.

Note: Throughout this Wayne and Viola are watching one
another continuously.

BUDDY

I got offered a job with an oil
company down in Houston, an' it
was just too good t' pass up.

MARGARET

But you've lived in this town
all your lives.

BUDDY

Heck, don't look at me. It's
Vi's idea, an' you know what
she's like when she gets her
mind set on something.

VIOLA

Margaret, I'm going to miss you
a lots, but the truth is somebody
with Bud's potential ought to
be in a place where he can do
the most for himself.

WAYNE

(sarcastic)

You better be careful, Vi. Some-
body like Buddy with all that
"potential," hell, he's probably
some kind of a national treasure.

There is laughter from around the room. No one except
for Viola catches the edge to Wayne's voice.

BUDDY

(to Viola, having
a good time)

I never thought about it like
that before, Vi. I'm not sure
you appreciate me enough.

151 CONTD

151

More laughter and wisecracks from around the room.

WAYNE

(a little tougher)

On the other hand, Buddy, there's a lots of high rollers down there in Houston. Vi might get it into her mind to look for somebody with more "potential" than you.

THROUGHOUT THIS WE CROSS-CUT TO VIOLA:

WE CAN SEE the tension mounting in her.

WAYNE

(relentless)

I don't know, pal -- a nice lookin' woman like Vi, she's bound to get some handsome offers. You never can tell what might happen.

MARGARET

(sharp)

Wayne!

WAYNE

(innocent)

I was just tryin' to explain to my good friends here what life in the "big city" is like.

BUDDY

(uneasy)

Are we gonna' play cards or what ...

(to Viola)

Hon, c'mon an' deal ...

ON VIOLA -- She sits stiff as a rod, her eyes glued to Wayne. She is clutching the pack of cards in her hand so tightly that her knuckles are white. The CAMERA PANS ACROSS TO Margaret, who is watching her friend, a look of concern on her face. Then as she follows the direction of Viola's gaze, we

JUMP CUT IN TO A TIGHT CLOSE UP of Margaret -- as she realizes that Viola and her husband have been having an affair.

CUT TO:

152 EXT: WAYNE AND MARGARET'S HOUSE - LATER

152

ESTABLISHING SHOT -- The car is parked in the drive and the lights are on in the front two rooms.

CUT TO:

153 INT: BEAUTY PARLOR - SAME

153

WIDE SHOT -- Margaret is pacing back and forth, compulsively cleaning ashtrays, putting things away. The CAMERA PANS ACROSS TO the door to the hall as Wayne appears.

WAYNE

I put Rosalie to bed; let's us get some sleep.

Silence.

WAYNE

(looking at Margaret,
for the first time aware
that something is wrong)

Hon?

Finally she turns to him:

MARGARET

(very quiet)

Whatever happened between you and Vi, I don't want to know about it.

(looking at him for
the first time)

... I don't ever want to hear about it.

CROSS-CUTTING WITH WAYNE -- He is stunned.

WAYNE

(recovering quickly)

Vi an' me?! Are you crazy?! I don't know what --

Margaret turns and slaps her husband hard across the face.

MARGARET

Shut up! Just shut up! Maybe you didn't notice but I'm not the same dumb beauty operator you married eight years ago.

There is a beat of silence between them.

MARGARET

Am I right?

Nothing.

MARGARET

(relentless)

Am I right?!

Wayne nods.

WAYNE

What are you goin' t' do?

MARGARET

I'm not sure yet. I got the
beauty shop and Rosalie and me
can do all right without you.

Suddenly, for the first time in their marriage, it occurs
to Wayne that his wife might actually leave him.

WAYNE

(scared)

It's over with, between me and
Viola. I'm never goin' t' see
her again.

MARGARET

(she means it)

It's too late for that. I'm not
sure I can live with your anymore.
I'm -- I'm not sure I love you
anymore.

CLOSER ON WAYNE -- He looks like he has been hit in the
face.

WAYNE

(tears start)

Don't say that! Oh, God, don't
say that.

CUT TO:

154 EXT: FIELD - DAWN

154

MED. SHOT, MOZE -- He is squatting beside a cotton plant,
surrounded by Edna, Frank and Possum.

MOZE

(demonstrating)

Now then, you got t' dig th' boll
out so there ain't hardly any
burr or stem left. Th' thing is
you got t' be careful on account
of the hull is real sharp.

(to Edna)

Ma'am, you try it.

He watches as Edna does as she is told.

MOZE

Fine. That's just fine ... Now,
y'all take it nice and slow. It
don't do t' try and go too fast.

(to Possum)

Hon, any time you get tired or
your hands start t' hurt you
just stop an' rest. Y' under-
stand?

Possum nods..

MOZE

All right, we'd best get started.

One by one they begin to pick, slowly, awkwardly. The
CAMERA BEGINS TO PULL UP AND BACK TO a HIGH CRANE SHOT
until, at the end they are only tiny figures in an immense
field of cotton and the task in front of them seems
impossible.

CUT TO:

155 CLOSE UP, EDNA -- tugging a boll of cotton from a plant. 155
After one or two she begins to get the hang of it and
speed up. Suddenly she winces and draws her hand quickly
back.

INSERT: HER HAND -- a bright red cut along one of the
fingers.

ON EDNA -- She makes a face at the pain, glances around,
sees that Moze has already moved on some distance ahead
and goes quickly back to work.

CUT TO:

156 CLOSE ON THE BOLL OF A COTTON -- as Possum's hand, 156
now covered with grime and scratches reaches INTO
FRAME and gingerly tries to extract the boll of cotton
without getting another cut.

CLOSE UP, POSSUM -- a fierce look of concentration on
her face.

CUT TO:

157 CLOSE ON FRANK'S HAND -- It is just as dirty and 157
even more cut up than Possum's. He yanks out the boll
and goes on to the next.

CLOSE UP, FRANK -- Beneath the grime and sweat WE CAN
SEE a look of grim determination.

CUT TO:

158 MED. SHOT, EDNA -- The sun is now higher in the sky. 158
The day has begun to get much hotter. Edna moves along
a row, bent over the cotton plants. As she picks WE
CAN SEE that from time to time she cuts herself, but
now she doesn't even bother to look. She simply winces
slightly from the pain and continues to pick. Her back
has begun to ache and she straightens up for a moment;
although she is wearing a bonnet WE CAN SEE that her
face is bathed in sweat. As she raises her hand to wipe
her brow, WE SEE that it is covered with blood.

CUT TO:

159 HER POV: Moze is far ahead of everyone else. 159
CLOSER ON HIM -- as he picks quickly and efficiently,
moving with a speed that is astounding.

MOZE

(talking to himself
as he works)

Lord, this ain't gonna' work
... You know there ain't no way
we can get all this cotton picked
an' yet you set us out here any-
ways. I swear, I don't know what's
got into you.

CUT TO:

160 EXT: EDNA'S HOUSE - NIGHT 160

ESTABLISHING SHOT

CUT TO:

161 EXT: BACK PORCH - SAME

161

~~Moze and Mr. Will are talking.~~

MOZE

Mr. Will, you got t' talk t'
that woman. She thinks I'm just
an ignorant nigger, but she'll
listen to you.

MR. WILL

Won't do any good.

MOZE

We only got us four acres picked
today; we should've done at least
six -- an' that's when we're
fresh. What's it goin' t' be in
a week when we ain't in near
this good a shape?

As he is talking, the CAMERA PANS ACROSS TO the kitchen
door where Edna is standing, listening.

EDNA

(interrupting)

How many pickers would it take
to get the cotton in on time?

ON BOTH MEN -- as they turn in her direction.

MOZE

(quick figuring)

Fifteen at the least.

EDNA

(all business)

Then we'd better hire them,
right away.

Note: At this point Moze and Mr. Will should really start
to worry that Edna has gone round the bend.

MR. WILL

(not sure he
heard right)

Hire some pickers?

MOZE

(staggered)

With what?! You said yourself
you didn't have but twenty-four
dollars in the bank. That ain't
near enough t' hire fifteen
pickers.

161 CONTD

161

EDNA

I'll pay them out of the money we
get for the first bale.

MOZE

(sarcastic)

An' what happens if you don't
get the first bale in?

EDNA

(without flinching)

Then I'll have to pay them out
of what I get from the gin.

MR. WILL

Mrs. Spalding, if that happens,
you won't have hardly any money
left.

EDNA

I'll take that chance.

CUT TO:

162 EXT: FRONT DOOR - EDNA'S HOUSE - VERY EARLY MORNING 162

ON THE DOOR -- as Edna backs out, dragging a large, and,
obviously full milk can onto the porch.

She starts to drag the large can across to the edge of
the porch, when she glances O.S.

HER POV: There, sitting on the front steps, is a large
platter with a napkin draped across it.

CLOSER ON EDNA -- as she stoops down, picks up the plate
and lifts the napkin. Inside is an enormous platter of
cornbread.

Edna looks up to see if there is any sign of the person
who left this.

HER POV: Nothing.

CUT TO:

163 INT: KITCHEN - A FEW MINUTES LATER

163

ON THE PLATTER OF CORNBREAD -- HOLD as WE SEE a knife
ENTER FRAME, cut a large slice.

WIDER ON EDNA -- She carefully lifts out the slice, sets
it on a plate. She looks at it for a second, cuts a

PI-STAR PICTURES

163 CONTD

163

OCT 20 1983
 small slice off of the big one and tastes it. Her expression says that it's good, but not a threat. Then she takes the plate and a cup of tea and starts out the kitchen door, on her way to give Moze his breakfast.

CUT TO:

164 EXT: BACK PORCH - DAWN

164

ON THE SCREEN DOOR TO THE BACK PORCH -- as Edna approaches the door, starts to open it, stops dead in her tracks.

HER POV: Standing in the yard are about fifteen negroes, men, women and children (mostly women and children). They are silent, watching and waiting. Moze is in the F.G.

MOZE

(grim)

All right, ma'am, you got what you asked for.

CLOSER ON EDNA -- It takes a moment for it all to sink in. Then, as she is about to hand Moze his plate of food, she glances out at the people waiting.

EDNA

Have they had any breakfast?

MOZE

(no sympathy)

I doubt it.

CUT TO:

165 EXT: BACK PORCH - A FEW MINUTES LATER

165

WIDE SHOT -- Edna has taken the pan of cornbread, cut what is left into small squares and is passing it out among the people who are waiting; while Moze stands beside her pouring tea into a mixed collection of tin cups, jelly glasses, etc.

CUT TO:

* 166 INT. KITCHEN - DAY

* 166 *

WIDE SHOT -- Mr. Will sits at the kitchen table, caining a chair; beside him, on the table is a clock. We HOLD FOR A BEAT as we HEAR the alarm go off. Instantly, Mr. Will gets to his feet, crosses to the stove, takes a wooden spoon and stirs a pot of beans that is simmering on the stove. Next, the blind man locates the burner

* 166 CONTD

166 *

for the oven, turns it off and takes a large pan of corn-bread from the oven.

From the expression on his face, it is clear that, A: he has never done anything like this before and, B: he is extremely pleased with himself. Suddenly, from O.S. we HEAR:

O.S. Sound: From the road in front of the house, approaching trucks.

REACTION, MR. WILL -- Frozen.

CUT TO:

* 166A EXT. ROAD - SAME

166A *

A SERIES OF QUICK CUTS -- as three or four ramshackled trucks and cars loaded with pickers, roar past the house.

CUT TO:

* 166B INT. KITCHEN - SAME

166B *

CLOSE ON MR. WILL -- listening.

CUT TO:

* 166C EXT. ROAD - SAME

166C *

QUICK CUTS -- as more cars and trucks speed past.

CUT TO:

* 166D EXT. BACK DOOR - EDNA'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

166D *

The door is thrown open, and Mr. Will appears. He reaches up, feels around until he locates a string that has been fastened to the side of the house, and, finding it, sets off at a determined pace heading toward the field and using the string as a guide.

In a SERIES OF CUTS we SEE Mr. Will following the string which leads to the barn and then, by way of a series of poles to the cotton field.

CUT TO:

* 167 EXT. COTTON FIELD - DAY

167 *

Mr. Will feels his way along the string until he comes to a place where a clothespin has been fastened. Around him we SEE a number of pickers (mostly women and children) among them is Moze.

* 167

CONTD

167 *

MR. WILL
(calling out)
Moze?! Moze?!

The urgent sound of the blind man's voice causes Moze to straighten up.

MOZE
Right over here, Mr. Will.

The blind man crosses to him.

MR. WILL
The pickers are here.

MOZE
How come you know?

MR. WILL
I just heard eleven trucks pass by. From the direction they were headed, it must've been pickers going out to the Rapp place.

MOZE
How much land the Rapps got?

MR. WILL
Four hundred acres.

MOZE
(quickly calculates)
That means we ain't got more'n three days left.
(calling out to the other pickers)
All right, we ain't got no time t' waste ... We got t' get t' work.

CUT TO:

168 OMIT
169 OMIT
170 OMIT
171 OMIT
172 OMIT
173 OMIT
174 OMIT
175 OMIT
176 OMIT
177 OMIT

168
169
170
171
172
173
174
175
176
177

177 EXTREME WIDE SHOT -- The two of them are alone in the field. All WE CAN SEE are their two silhouettes against the darkening sky as they continue to work side by side. 177

omit 10/11/43

CUT TO:

178 SLOW MOTION: EDNA -- looking fresh and radiantly beautiful is waltzing, slowly, sensually to "La Golindrina." The man she is dancing with is her husband; as they move each from the light into the shadows and back into the light, they never take their eyes from one another. 178

Then, from O.S. we hear:

MOZE

(yelling)

Git along there, mule ... Git along ... You ain't no more tired than I am ...

As soon as we hear Moze's voice, we

CUT TO:

179 INT: EDNA'S BEDROOM - VERY EARLY MORNING 179

ON EDNA -- as she comes immediately awake, turns and looks out the window. It is still dark outside. Wearily she gets to her feet and WE SEE that she has been sleeping in her clothes.

CUT TO:

180 INT: HALLWAY - KITCHEN - SAME 180

Weary, stiff, Edna starts down the hallway. WE HOLD ON her as she enters the kitchen, turns on the light.

HER POV: There, sitting in a chair by the kitchen table, is Mr. Will. He has a large bowl in his lap into which he has been shelling peas; beside him, in a large pile on the table are all the pods. It is clear that he has been at this for some time.

MR. WILL

Morning.

Edna walks to the stove, lights the fire under the kettle.

MR. WILL

That sister of yours does not have a natural talent for cooking. I got to thinking that if we all weren't going to die of ptomaine poisoning, I was going to have to do something about it.

As he is talking, Edna crosses to the sink, turns on the tap. As the cold water strikes the cuts on her hands it is extremely painful and she winces from the pain. She gingerly flexes the stiff muscles; clearly it is agonizing.

CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:

Throughout this we should understand that the blind man is very concerned about Edna and that his constant talking is his way of trying in whatever way he can to make her feel better.

MR. WILL

So I thought I'd fix us some black-eyed peas the way my mamma used to cook them.

During this Edna takes a teapot, spoons a quantity of tea into it. Next she takes a large piece of cornbread that is covered with a dishtowel, slices four generous portions and places each on a plate. WE HOLD ON her as she stands watching the steam rise from the kettle, not hearing a word the blind man says.

Note: Throughout this, she is smiling to herself.

MR. WILL

Mrs. Spalding, are you all right?

EDNA

Yes, I was just remembering a dream.

(then, coming to)

Mr. Will, I forgot what day it is.

MR. WILL

Thursday.

EDNA

When is it we have to be at the gin?

180 CONTD

180

MR. WILL
Tomorrow morning.

Edna takes one more sip of tea, picks up the food for Moze and starts toward the door.

CUT TO:

181 EXT: BARN - SAME

181

WIDE SHOT -- It is still dark, Moze stands near a kerosene lantern that is hanging on a post near the barn door. He has just finished hitching the mule to the wagon as Edna approaches carrying his breakfast. He quickly wolfs down the food as Edna takes the mule by the harness and begins leading him out toward the field.

CUT TO:

182 EXT: EDNA'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - EARLY MORNING

182

ON THE DOOR -- as Frank comes out dragging a heavy container of milk. He glances out toward the porch.

HIS POV: What was one platter of cornbread several days ago has now become seven or eight dishes and bowls all covered with napkins and places around the front steps. In the distance we can hear a car disappearing in the distance.

CUT TO:

183 MONTAGE OF MOZE, EDNA, MR. WILL, POSSUM, FRANK AND THE 183
NEGRO PICKERS working desperately to get the crop in on time.

184 EXT: COTTON FIELD - NIGHT

184

WIDE SHOT -- Kerosene lanterns have been fixed to poles and set out so that the pickers will be able to work even though it is dark.

CUT TO:

185 EXT: THE BACK OF A WAGON - NIGHT

185

MED. SHOT -- Mr. Will's Victrola is sitting on the back of one of the wagons. As WE WATCH, the blind man carefully lifts the arm and gently places it on a record and we hear Trent's Last Case booming across the cotton field.

CUT TO:

186 ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD - LATER

186

ON MARGARET -- as she picks. "In the light from the kerosene lanterns WE CAN SEE that her beautifully polished nails have been ripped and that her hands are cut and bleeding. Although it is obvious that she is inexperienced and that the work is painful, her face is impassive. The CAMERA TRACKS AWAY FROM her ACROSS TO Wayne who is working much more expertly than his wife. Throughout, he keeps glancing in her direction. Neither of them speak to one another.

CUT TO:

187 MONTAGE -- Everyone picking throughout the night, 187
ready to drop. Ending with:

188 EXT: FIELD - THE GRAY LIGHT JUST BEFORE DAWN 188

ON ONE OF THE KEROSENE LANTERNS -- By now it is light enough that the flame from the lantern is barely visible. HOLD ON it as WE SEE Moze's hand ENTER FRAME and pinch out the light. The SHOT WIDENS TO INCLUDE Moze and Mr. Will.

MOZE

Ma'am ...

Silence. Both men squat down beside Edna; she continues to pick, paying no attention.

MR. WILL

Mrs. Spalding.

Nothing.

MOZE

It's done -- finished.

CLOSE ON EDNA -- She doesn't understand.

MR. WILL

(gently)

It's finished. The full thirty acres.

CUT TO:

189 ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD -- The CAMERA TRACKS IN 189
FRONT of Edna as she goes from picker to picker, thanking each of them. Although they are all grimy and covered with sweat, although they are all ready to drop, too exhausted to do much more than smile back, there is an extraordinary sense of exhilaration about the moment.

190 EXT: ROAD - DAY

190

Moze and Edna are sitting in the front of a wagon filled with cotton. Edna has changed and washed her face. She is wearing gloves so that no one can see the scars on her hands. Moze is talking a mile a minute, giving her last minute instructions in how to deal with the owner of the cotton gin.

MOZE

(patiently)

Now let's try it again. He's gonna' start by tryin' t' charge you a fee for ginnin' th' cotton.

EDNA

And I'm going to tell him, "No, he can do it for the seed."

MOZE

Yessm'. An' he's gonna' say he'll take all th' seed.

EDNA

And I'm supposed to say he can only have ...

(can't remember, looks at Moze)

... half?

MOZE

Nosum. We offer a third and settle for half. Ma'am, we got to get us three and a half cents a pound even with th' prize money. You got t' remember that ...

(he glances up ahead, stiffens)

Uh, oh ...

191 HIS POV: Ahead WE CAN SEE the Hastings Gin: a large 191 ramshackle wood and corrugated metal building. The usual crew is sitting on the loading dock waiting, and there, in front of everyone, pacing back and forth, is M.E. Hastings.

CUT TO:

192 EXT: LOADING DOCK - A SHORT TIME LATER

192

WIDE SHOT -- Edna and Hastings stand on the loading dock. Moze is a few feet away, trying to make himself invisible.

HASTINGS

Miz Spalding, that's a nice little load of cotton y' got there ...

(impressed in spite of himself)

You ought t' be right proud ... right proud. Let's go into my office an' see if we can do some business.

He indicates the way she should go. As she starts, he turns to Moze.

HASTINGS

Well, look who's here ...

There are snickers from the men who are hanging around. Hastings turns and leads Edna into the building. Moze hesitates, then, taking a deep breath, follows.

CUT TO:

193 INT: HASTINGS' OFFICE - SAME

193

as Edna enters, takes a seat beside a large, roll-top desk. Hastings sits down in a swivel chair. He props one foot on the desk, gives her his most personable smile. It isn't reassuring.

Note: On the wall, above Hastings' desk is a row of photographs similar to the ones in the bank.

In the B.G. WE SEE Moze hovering, trying his best to get close enough to hear without being too obtrusive.

HASTINGS

Now then. I ought t' explain t' you how things work around here. First I gin th' cotton for you, then I buy it from you if we can agree on a price. Now for ginnin' it's customary t' charge twenty dollars on th' ton.

EDNA

Excuse me, but I was told that you sometimes gin the cotton for the seed.

HASTINGS

(faintly patronizing)

Yes'm, that's another way of
workin' it. I gin th' cotton
an' keep th' seed.

EDNA

The way it was explained to me,
you were only supposed to keep
a ...

(she glances towards
Moze)

... third.

CLOSER ON HASTINGS -- He catches the look she gives Moze
and knows something is up between them.

HASTINGS

(tough)

Well, I can tell you right now,
I'm not payin' that. Excuse
me ...

Hastings reaches across and slams the door shut so that
Edna can't see Moze.

HASTINGS

(a big smile)

... there was a draft. Now ...

(oily)

... out of respect for your late
husband, I am prepared to go
fifty-fifty.

EDNA

(scared)

Fine.

HASTINGS

(leaning back in
his chair)

Now then, Miz Spalding, I expect
you know the bottom dropped out
of the cotton market ...

ON EDNA -- She sits in her chair, very erect, listening
carefully.

HASTINGS

I'm really pretty much doin' you
a favor takin' it off your hands.

193 CONTD

193

ON EDNA -- She takes a deep breath, then:

EDNA

(clearing her throat)

Mr. Hastings, I'm asking four
and a half cents a pound for my
cotton.

Hastings nearly swallows his cigar. He grabs the arms
of his chair and sits bolt upright.

HASTINGS

God almighty, lady. You don't
want me, you want Santy Claus.

(then very tough)

I'll pay you two, point seven
five, and not a red cent more.

EDNA

(like a shot)

Four.

HASTINGS

(turning crimson)

Son of a --

He catches himself just in time, leans forward and, in
a venomous whisper:

HASTINGS

Ma'am, maybe you ain't heard,
but we're in the middle of a
depression. I flat can't pay
that. I can't pay anything
close to that. I'll give you
three cents a pound. Take it
or leave it.

Edna shakes her head. There is a beat of silence as he
looks at her.

HASTINGS

(deeply offended)

I hate to have t' say this,
Miz Spalding, but you know
what your trouble is?

(not waiting for
an answer)

You are the victim of unbridled
greed. Three, point five.

ON EDNA -- She is sitting very erect.

EDNA

No.

HASTINGS

(about to have a
stroke)Ma'am, that's the honest price!

Silence. Edna does not bat an eye.

ON HASTINGS -- She has pushed him too far. He gets to his feet, signaling that the meeting is over.

HASTINGS

(with an airy wave
of his hand)That's it. I done my best.(he takes on the
role of a victim)I tried t' help. You can't
blame me. I can't do no more
for you. Now you can just go
on down t' the square an' see
how much you get for that cotton
of yours.ON EDNA -- She sits for a moment, then, taking her purse
and hat, stands up and starts toward the door.

EDNA

I'm real sorry, Mr. Hastings.
While we were talking I got to
looking at those pictures over
your desk and I remembered how
much store your daddy set on
ginnin' the first bale of cotton
each year. I guess this'll be
th' first year since

(thinks for a moment)

... 1912 you will have missed.
But I expect Mr. Wheeler over
at Wheeler's Gin will be glad to
meet my price, just so he can
spend this next year showing off
at the Mason's.ON HASTINGS -- His face has gone from beet red to ashen
at the thought of that.

HASTINGS

(grim)

Mrs. Spalding, sit down.

194. EXT. GIN - SAME

194

ON MOZE--waiting, watching, scared to death. Finally:

HIS POV: THE DOOR TO SIMMONS' OFFICE as it opens and Edna, followed by Simmons appears. She offers the gin owner her hand. He takes it and gives it a limp shake. Then, turning to some of his employees, he starts to yell.

SIMMONS

All right. Let's start movin' those wagons over t' the loading bay.

ON MOZE--who quickly crosses to Edna.

MOZE

Well?

Silence.

MOZE

(increasing exasperation)

What happened?!

Edna carefully opens her purse, takes out a neatly folded check and hands it to him. Moze opens it, reads the amount.

MOZE

(incredulous)

!

EDNA

Y'know, if we'd 've planted that other ten acres in cotton, think what we would've made.

MOZE

(wiser than Edna
by far)

We would've beed dead is what we would've been.

EDNA

(she chooses not to
hear that)

I was thinking, Mr Estes has been looking to sell off twelve acres of his land--

MOZE

Ma'am, have you taken leave of
your senses?! You can't afford t'
t' go 'round buyin' any land!

EDNA

(still caught up
in her dream)

But that would be close to sixty
acres, and--

MOZE

(sharp)

Miz Spalding, thirty acres like t'
killed us. Sixty'd do th' job for
sure.

EDNA

(not giving up)

But if we were to bring in one good
crop, then the next year we ought to
be able to afford a tractor. And--

MOZE

(hooked)

A tractor...I always wanted t' have
me a tractor...I always thought if
I had me a tractor, there's no tellin'
what I could do....

And they walk away toward the loading bin, deep in conversation
about the tractor as we,

CUT TO:

195 EXT: GIN - BY THE LOADING DOCK - DAY

195

The first wagon has been brought around and the men from the gin are busy unloading it as Moze watches.-- Hastings walks up behind Moze, puts his arm around the negro.

HASTINGS

(very quiet, very
frightening)

I'm real glad t' see you, boy.

CUT TO:

196 EXT: EDNA'S HOUSE - TWILIGHT

196

WIDE SHOT -- Margaret and Wayne's car is parked at the road in front of the house with the motor running. Possum and Frank are running around in the front yard, yelling for their mother to hurry up and join them.

CUT TO:

197 INT: FRONT HALL - SAME

197

Edna, wearing her Sunday dress, comes rushing down the stairs.

EDNA

(calling out)

Mr. Will, we're leaving now ...

I'll be back at --

Just as she reaches the foot of the stairs, the door to the blind man's room is thrown open and Mr. Will, angrier than we have seen him in a long while, appears in the door, holding up a brand new gray sweater.

MR. WILL

Mrs. Spalding!

EDNA

Yes? ...

MR. WILL

(holding up a new
gray sweater)

What is this?!

EDNA

It's a sweater.

MR. WILL

(impatient)

I know that. Where is my old

EDNA

I throw it out.

MR. WILL

(livid)

You what?!

EDNA

I tried mending it, but it was too full of holes and most of the buttons were gone.

MR. WILL

Well, it suited me just fine.

EDNA

(mad herself)

Mr. Will, just because you are blind is no reason for you to go around not caring what you look like. You are an attractive man and it wouldn't do you any harm to act like it once in a while. Now, goodnight.

And before he can say another word she slams out the door. A moment later, in the distance, we can hear the sound of the car driving off. WE HOLD ON Mr. Will for a long beat; then, as he reaches up and begins to smooth down his hair with one hand, we

CUT TO:

198 EXT: GRANGE HALL - EVENING

198

A large shed, open on all sides, surrounded by a grassy area where a lot of cars and trucks are parked. A large crowd has already gathered and is watching the dancers.

CUT TO:

199 INT: GRANGE HALL - SAME

199

ON TEE TOT HIGHTOWER AND THE LONE STAR SYRUP BOYS -- as they begin to play, "Too Old To Cut The Mustard," with all their might. The CAMERA PANS AWAY FROM them ACROSS the dance floor, OUTSIDE ONTO the grass. WE HOLD ON the crowd of spectators until WE SEE Wayne and Margaret squeeze through.

Note: Throughout the following, Wayne is still being solicitous, Margaret is still being distant.

199 CONTD

199

CLOSER ON THEM

WAYNE

Ah, you want t' dance?

MARGARET

(indifferent)

I guess ...

As they start to dance, WE HOLD ON them as another couple approaches.

MAN

Hidy, Wayne ... Margaret ...

WOMAN

My, don't you two look nice together.

WOMAN

Mr. Cheeves ... Ma'am ... Thank you ...

Wayne holds his wife a little closer.

WAYNE

It's a long time since we been dancin'.

ON MARGARET -- dancing closer to her husband. She rests her cheek against his. Suddenly she looks O.S., sees something.

HER POV: Across the room, talking to some friends, are Buddy and Viola.

CLOSER ON MARGARET -- as she stiffens, pulls away from Wayne.

CUT TO:

200 INT: GRANGE HALL - NIGHT

200

ON WAYNE AND MARGARET -- dancing. Wayne is still working very hard. Margaret remains very guarded, out of reach.

WAYNE

Rosalie's starting to get real worked up about her birthday ...

MARGARET

Mmmm ...

200 CONTD

200

WAYNE

I saw a Flexible Flyer down at
Monkey Ward's, d'you think she'd
like that?

MARGARET

(distant)

I guess ...

FAVORING WAYNE -- He can't take it any longer.

WAYNE

God bless it, woman. How many
times am I gonna' have t' say
I'm sorry.

Silence. A moment later the music ends.

WAYNE

(bitter)

Excuse me, I'm goin' t' look
for Dove Haslip an' see if he's
any better company than you are.

And he turns and stalks off.

CUT TO:

201 EXT: DANCE - LATER

201

Margaret is wandering through the crowd, looking for
Wayne, trying to appear nonchalant. The CAMERA TRACKS
ALONGSIDE her for several beats, when:

VIOLA (O.S.)

Margaret?

Margaret instinctively turns in the direction of the
voice.

HER POV: Viola steps out of the shadows.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- Margaret starts to turn away, but Viola
reaches out and grabs her arm.

VIOLA

Margaret, I'm sorry ...

MARGARET

(she tries to pull
free)

Please leave me alone ...

VIOLA

I understand how you feel. I --

MARGARET

(from her gut)

No. No. You don't have the
least idea of what I feel.

VIOLA

I ... I just wanted you to know
I wouldn't have hurt you for the
world.

MARGARET

(vehemently)

Don't you say that to me. Don't
you of all people say that to me.
We were --

(correcting herself)

I was so happy. I loved him so
much. I thought he loved me.
From now on whenever he's a half
hour late, I'm goin' to think
he's run off to you ... I hate
you.

VIOLA

That won't ever happen.

MARGARET

I don't believe you.

VIOLA

Then ask Wayne.

MARGARET

(utterly miserable)

I can't believe him. I can't
believe him ever again.

VIOLA

(turning on Margaret,
furious)

Now you listen to me. Don't
you ever think for a minute that
I wouldn't have taken him away
from you if I could.

And she turns and walks away, leaving Margaret alone.

CUT TO:

202 EXT: EDNA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

202

ESTABLISHING SHOT -- The house is dark except for one
or two lights downstairs.

CUT TO:

203 INT: BACK PORCH - SAME

203

Mr. Will is carrying the chair that he has finished caning out to his workroom, to give it a coat of lacquer. Moze is trailing along behind him, talking a mile a minute. He is still very wound up about the events of the day.

MOZE

I mean, when I tole Miz Spalding
t' ask that much for th' cotton ...
I didn't never expect her to really
get it ...

As he is talking, the blind man stops, listening to something O.S.

MOZE

(noticing)

What's th' matter?

MR. WILL

I thought I heard something.

MOZE

'Course you heard somethin'.
You heard me talkin'. Anyways,
when that woman went in there
and asked him for all that
money ...

(laughs with pleasure)

Lord, I'm surprised you didn't
hear ol' man Hastings cussing
all the way out here ... Now,
what's got into you?

The blind man is stock still, listening.

MR. WILL

(worried)

There's somebody out there.

There is a beat of silence as both men listen. Nothing.

203 CONTD.

203

MOZE

I don't 'spect so, but if it'll
make you feel better I'll go an'
see.

And with that he walks out into the back porch.

CUT TO:

204 EXT: HOUSE - SAME

204

WIDE SHOT -- as Moze steps outside and stands for a
moment, listening.

HIS POV: The dark shape of the barn silhouetted against
the night sky. There is not a sound.

CLOSER ON MOZE -- as he turns to go back inside. Then
we hear:

O.S. sound: a branch snaps, as though someone just
stepped on it.

Moze stops, peers out into the darkness.

MOZE

Who's there?

Silence.

Concerned, Moze reaches across, picks up an axe handle
lying in the corner of the house and starts forward
into the darkness.

CUT TO:

205 INT: HOUSE - SAME

205

WIDE SHOT -- Mr. Will stands, frozen, listening.

MR. WILL

Moze?

CUT TO:

206 EXT: YARD - SAME

206

ON MOZE -- TRACKING IN FRONT of him. He takes about two
more steps when a hand lashes out of the darkness,
smashing him in the stomach.

CUT TO:

207 INT: HOUSE - SAME
ON MR. WILL

207

MR. WILL

Moze?!

The sound of a struggle, then muffled voices.

MR. WILL

Moze?!

Silence. Then a sharp cry.

The blind man drops the material that he has been carrying and feels his way along the wall to the back door.

CUT TO:

208 EXT: HOUSE - SAME
ON MR. WILL -- in the doorway.

208

MR. WILL

Moze?!

REVERSE ON THREE KU KLUX KLANSMEN -- who are holding Moze as a fourth (Hastings) stands in front of the negro, administering a terrible beating.

One of the Klansmen turns at the sight of Mr. Will.

KLANSMAN

You keep outa' this, Mr. Will.
This ain't none of your business.

MR. WILL

Where's Moze?! What are you
doing to him?!

The Klansmen pay no attention to Mr. Will. Hastings punches Moze in the stomach as hard as he can. The negro doubles over, gagging.

ON MR. WILL -- He turns and rushes back inside the house.

CUT TO:

209 INT: HALLWAY - SAME

209

WIDE SHOT -- The blind man, feeling his way along the wall, reaches the door to the hall closet, yanks it open.

209 CONTD

209

CLOSER IN -- On the back of the door WE SEE the Sheriff's gunbelt hanging in its customary place. The pistol is still in the holster. Mr. Will locates the gun, takes it.

CUT TO:

210 EXT: BACK OF THE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

210

ON THE DOOR -- as the blind man appears waving the pistol. In spite of the weapon in his hand he is not a very threatening figure.

KLANSMAN

Put that thing away, Mr. Will.
You're gonna' hurt yourself.

ON MR. WILL -- Without hesitating, he aims the pistol in the direction of the voice and pulls the trigger. There is a deafening explosion.

ON THE KLANSMAN -- The bullet slams into the barn, missing him by inches.

KLANSMAN

Goddamn!

ON MR. WILL -- There is a beat of silence, then:

MR. WILL

(clearing his throat)
I said, let him go.

ON THE LEADER OF THE KLANSMEN

KLANSMAN

You oughtn't to have done that.
You could've killed somebody.

As he is talking, he stoops down, picks up a good-sized rock and tosses it off into the underbrush.

ON MR. WILL -- He fires in the direction of the sound.

One by one, the other Klansmen pick up a bottle, a can, whatever they can find and toss it into the bushes. Each time, the blind man fires. Finally:

CLOSE ON MR. WILL -- as he squeezes the trigger. Click. The hammer falls on an empty chamber. The pistol is empty.

210 CONTD

210

WIDE SHOT -- There is a beat of silence, then one of the Klansmen, the biggest and burliest, comes up behind Mr. Will and grabs him from behind.

CLOSER ON MR. WILL -- He struggles helplessly. The Klansman gently, but firmly, takes the pistol away from the blind man.

KLANSMAN

Now, we ain't got any quarrel with you, Mr. Will.

There are tears of frustration in Mr. Will's eyes.

MR. WILL

Mr. Thompson, why are you doin' this? I don't understa --

At the mention of his name, the hooded man behind Mr. Will stops, looks at his companions.

ANOTHER KLANSMAN

You got the wrong man, Mr. Will. That ain't Thompson.

MR. WILL

Of course that's Carl Thompson, I've been selling him brooms for years. I'd know his voice anyplace.

(to the speaker)

As sure as you're Mr. Upshaw, or that's Mr. Hastings over by the barn.

One by one WE CUT TO the men -- as their names are mentioned. Finally:

Hastings squats down beside Moze who is still doubled over on the ground.

HASTINGS

All right, nigger, but I ain't done with you yet.

(then, getting to his feet)

C'mon, boys, let's us go on home.

As they start to leave, we

CUT TO:

211 INT: FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

211

ON TEE TOT -- drunk as a lord. He holds his hands high above his head.

TEE TOT
(as though he was
Bob Wills)
And now, friends ... one of our
all-time favorites ... "La
Golindrina" ...

As the band starts to play, we

CUT TO:

212 EXT: FARMHOUSE BREEZEWAY - SAME

212

ON FRANK AND MARGARET -- She leans over the boy, whispering in his ear, one hand in the small of his back, propelling him forward. From time to time he tries to protest, but his aunt will have none of it.

Finally, with a firm shove, she sends him in the direction of his mother, who remains where she was, watching the dancers, her back to them.

Frank takes one or two steps forward, turns back to Margaret. She glares at him, and realizing that there isn't any use arguing further, he crosses to his mother, takes her hand.

CLOSER ON EDNA -- as she turns to her son.

FRANK
(giving awkwardness
a whole new dimension)
Uh ah ... Can we ... Can I have
this dance ... please ...

Edna understands that this isn't her son's idea and looks around for Margaret, who tries her best to remain invisible.

EDNA
(to Frank, graciously)
Why, I'd be most pleased.

She reaches out, takes his hands in hers and they begin to waltz slowly. It is the same beautiful, slow waltz that we heard earlier, when Edna was dreaming about her husband. And this SEQUENCE IS SHOT in almost exactly the same way, passing continually from dark into light.

212 CONTD

212

Throughout this, WE REMAIN ON Edna's face and WE SEE the purest look of happiness that we have seen on anyone's face in the picture.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

213 EXT: BACK OF EDNA'S HOUSE - LATE AT NIGHT

213

WIDE SHOT -- Mr. Will sits in the rocking chair, the pistol still in his hand. Standing next to him is Edna. Although we are too far away to hear what they are saying, it is obvious that he is explaining to her what happened. A moment later she opens the screen door and comes rushing out. The CAMERA TRACKS IN FRONT of her as she runs across the yard to Moze's shack, bangs on the door.

EDNA
Moze?! ... Moze?!

From inside we hear:

MOZE (O.S.)
(thickly)
Yessm'.

Edna opens the door, stops in her tracks.

214 HER POV: In the light of a single kerosene lantern WE CAN SEE that the tiny shack looks empty; all of Moze's belongings have been removed, even the dirt floor has been swept clean. Moze sits on the cot packing the last of his things. 214

CLOSER ON HIM -- as he looks up at Edna. Although he has washed the blood off his face and done what he could to patch the cuts, nevertheless, he looks much worse: his face is swollen and one eye is almost closed.

CLOSE ON EDNA -- as she sees him.

EDNA
(a sharp intake
of breath)
Oh! Oh, Moses ... Oh ...

CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:

MOZE
(he cannot look
at her)
Ma'am, I'm gonna' have t' be movin' along...It ain't gonna

214 CONTD

214

MOZE (contd)

be long 'fore that bunch decides
to come back and I'd best be
gone by then.

This is hard news.

EDNA

Oh ... Oh, Moze, what will I do
without you?

Moze looks up at her, tries to smile; the effect is
grotesque.

MOZE

I'd appreciate it if you'd say
goodbye to Frank an' Possum for
me ... I'd soonest not have them
see me like this --

Edna nods. Moze indicates several small crudely wrapped
packages on the table.

MOZE

I ... ah, I been whittlin' a
doll for Possum. If you could
give it to her, I'd be most
grateful. An', Ol' Frank, he's
had his eye on this rabbit's
foot of mine for a spell so I
expect he might as well have it.

(embarrassed)

Here. This is for you.

(he thrusts a small
package into her
hand)

It's a handkerchief belonged to
my mamma. I thought maybe you
could use it ... Well ...

He gets to his feet.

Nevertheless, he pauses at the door, delaying his actual
leaving as long as possible.

MOZE

(taking a last
look around)

I reckon I got a mite more
attached t' this place than I
intended ...

(MORE)

214 CONTD

214

MOZE (contd)
 (he holds out his
 hand to her)
 Well, Miz Spalding ...
 (he looks down at
 the ground)
 I -- I'm gonna' miss you, ma'am.

And he turns and starts out the door.

EDNA

Moze.

He turns back.

MOZE

Yessm'? ...

EDNA

Y'know, you really did it. You
 took a no-account piece of land
 and a bunch of people that
 didn't know what they were doing
 and you farmed that land better
 than anyone else -- colored or
 white could have done. You're
 the one that brought in the first
 bale of cotton in Parker County
 this year ... Don't you ever
 forget that.

ON MOZE -- There is a long beat of silence. Then he
 smiles and stands a bit straighter.

MOZE

Yessm' ... I reckon I did that
 ... I reckon I did

And he turns and disappears into the darkness.

REVERSE ON EDNA -- She is standing, silhouetted in the
 door to Moze's shack. WE JUMP CUT BACK TO A WIDER SHOT,
 and then TO A WIDER SHOT STILL. Until WE CAN BARELY SEE
 her anyone.

CUT TO:

215 EXT: COURTHOUSE CLOCK - EARLY MORNING

215

ON THE CLOCK -- as it chimes the hour.

CUT TO:

216 EXT: EDNA'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - SAME

216

WIDE SHOT -- as the door to the back porch opens and Frank, still half asleep, stumbles out into the yard -- slamming the door behind him as usual. The CAMERA TRACKS WITH him as he crosses the yard, heading toward the chicken house to start his morning chores. Suddenly he comes to a stop, looks O.S.

HIS POV: The shack behind the barn where Moze has been living. The horseshoe that had been hanging above the door of Moze's shack is no longer there; neither are any of the magic charms and good luck signs that he had placed there.

CLOSER ON FRANK

FRANK
(calling out)
Moze?

WIDE SHOT -- the shack. Silence.

ON FRANK -- Worried, he starts forward.

CROSS-CUT BETWEEN FRANK AND A MOVING POV SHOT -- as he approaches the shack. As he reaches the door, the boy pauses.

FRANK
(quietly, as if he
already knew the
answer)
Moze, are you in there?

Nothing. Frank pushes open the door.

217 HIS POV: The room is empty, except for Edna who is 217
sitting on the empty cot. Although she is not crying
now, it is obvious that she has been.

EDNA
Moze is gone, hon.

CROSS-CUTTING BETWEEN THEM:

FRANK
(staggered)
Why would he do a fool thing
like that?

EDNA
It was time for him to move on.

217 CONTD

217

Frank crosses to the cot, sits beside his mother.

FRANK

But why didn't he even say good-
bye to me?

EDNA

There wasn't time ... But he
wanted you to have this.

She takes the rabbit foot and hands it to her son. He
looks at it for a second, then hurls it across the room.

FRANK

(trying not to cry)
I don't care about a dumb ol'
rabbit foot.

EDNA

(she puts her arm
around her son)
Oh, hon, you don't mean that.
Moze loved you.

Frank cannot keep the tears back any longer. He turns
to his mother.

FRANK

I miss Moze ... Oh, Ma ...
(he buries himself
against her and
begins to sob)
... I miss my pa ... I miss him
so much ...

Edna holds her son close to her, gently stroking his hair.

EDNA

(a whisper)
I do too ... I miss Pa too ...

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

218 EXT: CHURCH - LATER

218

ESTABLISHING SHOT -- There are a number of cars and
trucks parked in front and from inside we can hear the
sound of the congregation singing a hymn.

CUT TO:

221 INT: CHURCH - SAME

221

A SERIES OF DISSOLVES -- as the collection is taken.

A weathered man, clearly a farmer, digs into his pocket and pulls out less than a dollar in change. He counts out twenty-five cents and puts it into the plate.

A woman puts a dime in.

A child, a few pennies.

Another man carefully counts out fifteen cents.

And on and on.

Although, by the end, less than five dollars has been placed in the collection tray, we should feel that it is a gigantic amount of money.

CUT TO:

222 EXT: CHURCH - SAME

222

WIDE SHOT -- as we hear the congregation singing:

CONGREGATION

"Praise God from Whom all
blessings flow,
Praise Him all creatures here
below,
Praise them above the heavenly
host,
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost."

The CAMERA PANS AWAY FROM the church TOWARDS the street as WE SEE Buddy and Viola's car with several suitcases tied to the top. As the car PASSES CAMERA, Viola turns in the direction of the music. From the look on her face we should understand that she knows what she is leaving behind. The car continues on and the CAMERA PANS WITH it as it reaches the stoplight at the end of the street, turns onto the highway and disappears from view.

CUT TO:

223 INT: CHURCH - SAME

223

ON THE MEAGER CHOIR -- as it rises and begins to sing.

ON THE DEACONS -- who have assembled at the front of the church. Each man takes a tray from a table just below the pulpit; some of the trays contain small squares of Wonder Bread; the rest are filled with tiny glasses of grape juice.

As the deacons take the trays and begin to serve the members of the congregation, the CAMERA TRACKS WITH one of the trays of grape juice as it is passed from person to person. Each man or woman takes a glass and hands the tray to the person next to them, whispering, "Peace of God" as he or she does.

As WE WATCH, Wayne takes a glass and passes the tray to Margaret, who holds the tray so that their son can take a glass. She then hands the tray to Albert Kaufman, who passes it to his wife, who, in turn, gives it to the deacon. He takes the tray and hands it to a man in the next row. The CAMERA NOW REVERSES ITS DIRECTION, STILL FOLLOWING the tray as it is passed from person to person. Dove Haslip hands it to Homer, who gives it to Leroy, who hands it to Ermine, who passes it on to Tee Tot, who hands it to a woman from the beauty parlor and so on and so on. We begin to realize that we are no longer watching the congregation of a sparsely filled church, but that, in fact, everyone from the town is here, all jumbled up together. Moze is there. He takes the tray and passes it to Mr. Will, who hands it to Frank, who holds it for Possum and then gives it to his mother. Edna takes a glass and passes the tray on to her husband, and, as he takes a glass and gives the tray to the young negro boy who shot him, he says, "Peace of God."

It is THE END.