

THE MAJESTIC

written by
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FINAL SHOOTING DRAFT

FADE IN:

1 CLOSEUP ON PETER APPLETON

1 (

In his early 30's, an up-and-coming screenwriter with a practiced ease and engaging manner (slick and charming, in other words). The year is 1951, and Pete's in the middle of a story meeting. That means taking notes, nodding in the right places, making vague noises from time to time.

We never leave Pete's closeup during the entire scene. We're in the office of WARNER SAMUELS, head of the studio, but we never see him or the other men in the room. At most, somebody will wipe frame or drift through the background. Dialogue plays fast and loose O.S., everybody talking over everybody else as they brainstorm "fixes" to Pete's latest script:

VOICE #1

What about the kid?

VOICE #2

What kid?

VOICE #1

You know, the kid who rings the bell.

VOICE #2

What kid, what bell? What the hell are you talking about?

VOICE #1

The kid, after the mine caves in, the kid. Runs up the hill, rings the bell to alert the town...

VOICE #3

...is that in the script? What page are we on...

VOICE #1

What if we gave the kid a disease?

VOICE #4

A disease?

VOICE #1

A disease. Braces on the leg, that sort of thing.

VOICE #5

Braces could work. It's visual.

VOICE #4

But he runs up the hill.

(CONTINUED)

VOICE #5

He could hobble.

VOICE #6

Hobbling's good. A "How Green Was My Valley" thing.

VOICE #7

That McDowell kid was great. Is he available?

VOICE #8

Too old now. Plus he's English.

VOICE #7

So he's English, so?

VOICE #8

Script's set in Tennessee.

VOICE #3

...Tennessee? Did I get that page...?

The boss, Warner Samuels, suddenly speaks:

SAMUELS

Forget the disease. Nobody wants disease. It's depressing.

EVERYBODY AT ONCE

Boss is right/Who needs disease?
Better off without/I'm depressed
just thinking about it...

A pause. Men thinking. Scratching. Drumming pencils. Pete suffering silently, staying zen.

SAMUELS

Hold on. I think I got a what if.

Everybody waits. A CHAIR CREAKS as Samuels rises. He goes to the window, an indistinct figure over Pete's shoulder.

SAMUELS

What if. We give the main character, what's his name...

VOICE #1

Floyd.

SAMUELS

Terrible name. Change it. Say we give no-name...a dog.

(CONTINUED)

VOICE #4

A dog?

SAMUELS

A dog. No-name's faithful companion. Toils at his master's side in the coal mine, day in, day out. Cave-in happens. Only the dog gets out...

VOICE #7

...right, right, 'cause dogs are smaller usually...

SAMUELS

...and it's the dog that runs up the hill and rings the bell.

A hushed beat, then everybody at once:

VOICE #2

Holy crap, that's beautiful.

VOICE #1

I'm choked up.

VOICE #5

People love dogs. Goddamn Lassie pictures always gross high.

VOICE #3

So instead of a disease, we give the kid a dog?

VOICE #8

Forget the kid, there is no kid. The kid's a dog.

VOICE #6

Brilliant. Could be just what the movie needs.

VOICE #1

Let's ask the writer. What do you think, Pete?

A pause. All attention now focused on Pete. We can tell from his hesitation that it's the dumbest idea he's ever heard.

PETE

Wow. That's just...amazing.

BOOGIE WOOGIE PIANO begins, insistent and exuberant, ramping up in rhythm as we

FADE TO BLACK

2 IN BLACK, MUSIC CONTINUES OVER CREDITS as: 2

Falling s-l-o-w-l-y, tumbling gently, a picture postcard:

"GREETINGS FROM HOLLYWOOD!"

Then another...and another...each one dropping through frame in SLO-MO. Palm trees. The Hollywood Sign. In this postcard myth, you'd bump into Bogie and Bacall at Hollywood & Vine, have dinner at the Derby. Or Ciro's. Or the Coconut Grove...

More postcards. Pictures of movie theaters, but not like today. These are palaces. Temples. The Egyptian. The Carthay Circle. The Paramount. The Million Dollar. From a time when moviegoing was a complete experience, not a trip to the mall.

THE LAST POSTCARD

drops lazily atop the pile. A frozen, hand-painted photo of Grauman's Chinese Theater. Tourists crowd the forecourt and spotlights etch the sky.

PETE (V.O.)

Of course it's not like the postcards say it is. It's not glamour everywhere you look. I should know, I live here. This is my town...

CAMERA PUSHES IN on the postcard, DISSOLVING THROUGH...

3 EXT - GRAUMAN'S CHINESE THEATER - NIGHT 3

...and TRANSFORMING INTO THE REAL THEATER before our eyes. The tourists come to life, milling excitedly about. The spotlights start sweeping the clouds. A Pacific Electric Red Car RUMBLES past, heading down Hollywood Boulevard.

CAMERA MOVES IN toward the theater, which is playing a double bill: "The African Queen" and "Sand Pirates of the Sahara."

PETE (V.O.)

Sometimes it seems like everyone here is from someplace else. The reason? The movies. Everybody loves the movies, which makes Hollywood everybody's town, and they come here by the busload...

WE FOLLOW AN AVERAGE COUPLE as they walk from the ticket booth through the crowd. He's wearing a hat and tie, she's wearing prim gloves, prim hat, prim dress. An USHER in a gold brocade jacket tears their tickets. CAMERA FOLLOWS THEM INSIDE...

4 INT - CHINESE THEATER LOBBY - NIGHT

4

...and the couple veers off as CAMERA CONTINUES MOVING through the lobby, PEOPLE WIPING FRAME in all directions. WE ARRIVE at the concession counter behind a YOUNG MAN getting his change.

PETE (V.O.)

For most of these folks, Grauman's Chinese Theater is the most exciting place on the planet.

He turns. It's Pete, arms loaded with popcorn and sodas. WE FOLLOW HIM toward the auditorium.

PETE (V.O.)

For me, it's the theater playing my very first film credit.

He pauses at the first poster display: "The African Queen."

PETE (V.O.)

No, not that one. I wish.

He moves to the next: "Sand Pirates of the Sahara."

PETE (V.O.)

I'm the B-movie tonight. "Sand Pirates of the Sahara." Not a bad picture, if I say so myself. Hell, you gotta start somewhere.

There's a greasy smudge on the glass obscuring his credit. He breathes on the glass, rubs it clear with his elbow, smiles and exits frame. PUSH IN ON: "Written By Peter Appleton."

PETE (V.O.)

God, I love seeing my name on a poster...

5 INSIDE THE DARKENED THEATER

5

A NEWSREEL blares a crescendo of march music as:

NEWSREEL ANNOUNCER

Bringing the news of the world to you!

Over a grainy shot of a packed Congressional Hearing, a title declares: "HOLLYWOOD REDS GO TO JAIL!" We see several shots of WITNESSES engaged in heated verbal battles with CONGRESSMEN, including Committee Chairman T. JOHNSTON DOYLE. Also prominent in the newsreel is Majority Counsel ELVIN CLYDE, an icy little man with a bow tie, a bland smile, and too much power.

(CONTINUED)

NEWSREEL ANNOUNCER

Four years ago, in one of filmland's darkest hours, ten men, the so-called "Hollywood Ten," were called to testify before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, investigating the spread of the communist menace in Hollywood.

PETE

comes down the aisle guided by an USHER with a flashlight.

NEWSREEL ANNOUNCER

Refusing to answer the lawmaker's questions, cowering behind the Fifth Amendment's protection against self-incrimination, the ten motion picture writers dared Congress to come after them. Well, come after them they did! And after years of court wrangling, it's time to pay the piper!

DOLLYING BEHIND PETE

silhouetted against the movie screen where the "Hollywood Ten" are being taken to jail in handcuffs. He finds his row and starts excusing himself along the line of seated people.

NEWSREEL ANNOUNCER

So it's off to jail, the charge: Contempt of Congress! This should give you fellas something to write about now! A new round of hearings begins this fall, the mandate: Get the Reds out of Hollywood!

Someone in the theater yells: "Lock up the commie bastards!" Laughter and applause. Pete sits next to his girlfriend, SANDRA SINCLAIR. PUSH IN for a silhouetted TIGHT TWO SHOT as he hands her a box of popcorn.

PETE

Miss me?

SANDRA

Every second.

They lean in...

REVERSE ANGLE

...and enjoy a lingering kiss. Sandra's an eye-catching babe, a starlet-pretty girl in her mid-20's.

(CONTINUED)

PETE

That's my girlfriend, Sandra Sinclair, and this is her town too -- she's from Cleveland. She came out here to be an actress, and that's just what she's doing.

They end the kiss and start munching popcorn, still cuddling and lovey dovey.

PETE (V.O.)

The first picture she ever appeared in was...take a guess...the first picture I ever wrote.

TIMECUT:

6 THE MOVIE SCREEN

6

"Sand Pirates of the Sahara." It's black & white, with more verve than budget. We're in an Egyptian tomb. Sandra Sinclair, adorable in pith helmet and khaki shorts (revealing as much leg as the Hays Code would let them get away with), recoils in feminine terror as the evil but handsome ARAB PRINCE KHALID looms from the shadows, face flickering in the torchlight.

KHALID

I knew I'd find you here. The lovely Emily. My desert dove.

Suddenly, the dashing and handsome explorer ROLAND drops between them in a cat-like crouch, rapier poised.

ROLAND

You found more than that, you snake.

KHALID

You! I thought you were dead!

ROLAND

You thought wrong.

Quick as a flash, Khalid kicks over a brazier of hot coals. FLAMES LEAP UP as he draws his saber, and the fight is on!

7 ANGLE SHIFTS to Pete and Sandra in the audience, each fixated on the movie for their own reasons. She's watching her own performance, while Pete is softly muttering the dialogue a moment before the actors do:

PETE

You don't think you can win, do you...

(CONTINUED)

ROLAND (on screen)
You don't think you can win, do
you?

PETE
Seems to me I am winning...

KHALID (on screen)
Seems to me I am winning!

Sandra glances to Pete, amused. She beats him to the next
line:

SANDRA
Roland, look out...

SANDRA/EMILY (on screen)
Roland, look out!

Pete turns to Sandra, realizes what he's been doing. He grins,
feeds her the next line:

PETE
This time I'll make sure you're
dead...

SANDRA
Taste my steel, you dog...

KHALID
This time I'll make sure you're
dead!

ROLAND
Taste my steel, you dog!

Pete and Sandra kiss again as the sword fight rages O.S.

PETE (V.O.)
We were young, we were in love, and
we were working in pictures. Life
was...good.

CUT TO:

8 EXT - MOVIE STUDIO - MAIN GATE - DAY

8

A brand new 1951 Mercedes Benz 220A convertible pulls in with
Pete at the wheel. He tosses a wave at HAL THE GUARD.

PETE
Hal! Whaddya say, whaddya know?

HAL
Name?

(CONTINUED)

This stops Pete short. He peers over his sunglasses.

PETE

Hal? It's me.

HAL

Name, please.

PETE

Pete Appleton. What's the gag? I change faces overnight?

HAL

(scans a clipboard)

Mr. Appleton, you're cleared to go through.

The gate arm swings up. Pete drives in, perplexed.

CUT TO:

9 INT - WRITER'S BUILDING - DAY

9

Pete enters. TWO WRITERS stroll into view, take one look at him, and cut off in another direction.

PETE

Good morn--

But they're gone. Pete moves on, growing more uneasy. He's starting to realize the place is deserted. He enters --

10 THE TYPING POOL

10

-- and finds a sea of Underwoods, all silent. A lone typist, LOUISE, is pulling dust covers over the machines. She's surprised and flustered to see him.

PETE

Louise! What gives?

LOUISE

They gave everybody the day off...while they sort things out.

PETE

Sort what out? What about my pages?

LOUISE

Your...pages?

PETE

Louise, I'm on a deadline, I need my pages...

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE
But...those men took them.

PETE
What men? Louise, those pages aren't ready yet...

She startles him by bursting into tears.

LOUISE
Oh, Pete! I'm not even supposed to be talking to you!

She rushes out past him, leaving him stunned.

CUT TO:

11 INT - MAIN BUILDING - LOBBY - DAY

11

Pete strides to the desk of a wary RECEPTIONIST.

PETE
The boss in?

RECEPTIONIST
Mr. Samuels is in a meeting.

PETE
Till when?

LEO (O.S.)
All day, I'm guessing.

Pete turns to find his agent, LEO KUBELSKY, sitting in the lobby. With him is BANNERMAN, a studio lawyer. It dawns on Pete that they've been waiting for him. An ominous sign.

PETE
Leo? What are you doing on the lot?

LEO
(rises)
C'mon, kid. Let's take a walk.

CUT TO:

12 EXT - STUDIO BACKLOT - DAY

12

We find Pete walking with Leo and Bannerman through bustling activity: EXTRAS in period garb, WORKMEN, etc.

BANNERMAN
They're saying you attended these meetings in college. Are they wrong?

(CONTINUED)

PETE

Who is "they?"

LEO

Congress, FBI, Red Channels...it doesn't matter who "they" is. "They" know who "they" are, that's enough. Now answer the question.

PETE

(racking his memory)
Meetings. Meetings. How the hell do I know, it was a long time ago. I went to college on the G.I. bill, just after the war...

BANNERMAN

(checks a dossier)
The, uh, "Bread Instead of Bullets Club?"

Pete stops in his tracks.

PETE

They were communists?
(off their looks)
What do I know, we were a bunch of kids! I couldn't figure out half of what they were saying!

BANNERMAN

So why'd you go?

PETE

There was this girl.

LEO

You consorted with communists to impress a skirt?

PETE

Hey, I got dragged to poetry readings too, that doesn't make me Carl Sandburg. C'mon, Leo, you know me, I'm non-political. Republican, democrat, communist, they all look alike to me.

BANNERMAN

(glances around)
Peter, as legal counsel for this studio, I strongly advise you to watch what you say.

Pete takes Leo aside, speaking out of Bannerman's earshot:

(CONTINUED)

PETE

Leo, put on your agent hat. There's gotta be some angle you can work here.

LEO

I'm fresh out of angles, kid. This is over my head.

PETE

But the timing's a disaster. We're right in the middle of negotiating my new contract...

LEO

(gently)

The studio suspended negotiations this morning. Along with your services.

Pete absorbs this, stunned.

PETE

I've been blacklisted?
(to Bannerman)
I've been goddamn blacklisted?

BANNERMAN

(defensively)

There is no blacklist.

LEO

Right. No blacklist. The studio just doesn't wanna know you. Not with this thing hanging over your head.

PETE

But I can't just leave. We're shooting in three weeks!

Leo sighs, gives Bannerman a look -- you tell him.

BANNERMAN

"Ashes to Ashes" has been pulled from the production schedule. I'm sorry, Peter.

LEO

The Feds took your script as evidence. You believe that?

Pete goes numb, finally understanding the full scope of this. He takes a moment to steady himself, looks to Bannerman.

(CONTINUED)

PETE

So what does this mean? I have to testify?

BANNERMAN

Assuming they let you.

LEO

Why wouldn't they?

BANNERMAN

Fellas, these people thrive on headlines. The bigger the fish, the better the headline. No offense, Peter, but as fish go, you're one of the little ones.

PETE

If they're gonna call me a communist, least they could do is let me clear myself.

BANNERMAN

The studio will lobby on your behalf. That's all I can promise at this point. No guarantees.

Bannerman walks away.

LEO

You really up for testifying?

PETE

What choice do I have?

LEO

The committee feeds on names, kid. You go up there, you're gonna have to give 'em some.

PETE

I'm a writer. I'll make up names if I have to.

(off Leo's look)

Leo, we're talking about my career. My life. Christ, I'll give 'em anything they want.

Suddenly:

SANDRA (O.S.)

Pete!

They turn and see Sandra rushing through the backlot activity dressed like Marie Antoinette.

(CONTINUED)

LEO
You want me here for this?

Pete waves him off. Leo beats a grateful retreat as:

SANDRA
(rushes up)
Pete! Is it true? I heard you were
let go!

PETE
It's a little more complicated than
that. And it wasn't just me, there
were three other people...

SANDRA
But why?

PETE
Sandy...they're saying I'm a
communist.

SANDRA
A...communist?

PETE
I'm not, of course. I mean, it's a
mistake, you know that.

SANDRA
Oh, god...a communist...

PETE
(measured)
Sandy. You do know it's a mistake.
Tell me that you know that.

SANDRA
Sure. Sure I do.

But she's glancing around as she says it, realizing how many
people are looking their way.

PETE
Honey, look, it's gonna blow over.
We can get through this, I promise.
I just need you to believe in me,
that's all.

SANDRA
I do believe in you...of course I
do...but...

PETE
But what?

(CONTINUED)

SANDRA

This sort of thing...someone saying
you're a communist...it can ruin a
career...

Pete reads the implication of what she's saying. He also
realizes how panicky she is being seen with him right now.

PETE

Sandra. I need you right now. I
really do.

An A.D. appears at a soundstage door, hollering:

A.D.

Background on set!

Sandra looks flushed and guilty. She searches Pete's eyes,
desperate to be let off the hook.

SANDRA

They're calling for me.

PETE

Sandy, don't walk away from me. Not
right now. Please.

SANDRA

Pete. Don't. I have to go.

She turns and hurries off. All Pete can do is just stand there
and watch her leave.

CUT TO:

13 INT - PETE'S OFFICE - DAY

13

Pete packs his personal belongings into a cardboard box while
a pair of STUDIO GUARDS watch his every move.

He hefts the box and heads for the door...but pauses, seeing
one last item. It's a floppy STUFFED TOY MONKEY seated atop a
bookcase, peering down at him with an idiotic grin.

Pete knocks his elbow against the bookcase, jarring it. The
monkey swan-dives into the box as we

CUT TO:

14 INT - OCEAN BREEZE BAR & GRILL - NIGHT

14

The stuffed toy monkey sits atop the bar, grinning blankly as
Pete knocks back another shot. He's steadily getting shitfaced
while the hour grows late. Only a few PATRONS left.

(CONTINUED)

Pete pours himself another shot. He pauses, staring foggily at the monkey, raises the glass in a toast.

PETE

C'mon. Toast with me.

(beat)

To the land of the home and the
free of the brave.

JERRY, the bartender, has been eyeing this strange behavior as he wipes down the bar.

JERRY

Pete? Think maybe you've had enough?

PETE

Tell me something, Jerry. You tight
with J. Edgar Hoover?

JERRY

I wouldn't know J. Edgar Hoover if
he walked in here wearing a dress.

PETE

Too bad. He says I'm a communist.

This gets Jerry's attention. Pete holds the empty shotglass to his eye, peering at Jerry through it like a spyglass.

PETE

In fact...at this very moment...
some gray little FBI guy in a gray
little FBI suit is hunched over my
screenplay in some secret location,
checking it line by line for the
poisonous Marxist propaganda which
surely lurks therein. Hope they
check for spelling while they're at
it. I can always use help with that.

JERRY

You're babbling.

PETE

"Ashes to Ashes." My movie.

(beat, softly)

Could'a been great. Even with the
stupid dog. My "Grapes of Wrath."
My shot at doing something really
good. Something...beautiful.

JERRY

What's it about?

(CONTINUED)

PETE

Pain. Nobility. The Human Condition.
Truth. It was...

(knocks back his drink)

...my chance to get out of B movies
and jump onto the A list.

JERRY

Pete, go home. Why don't I call
that gal of yours...what's her name,
Sandy?

PETE

Sandra Sinclair. Wanna know her real
name? Bella Iskowitz. This is
Hollywood, Jer. No one's who they
really are. Everyone's someone else.
Sandy. Me. Especially me. I'm Peter
Appleton, the communist who's not
really a communist.

JERRY

C'mon, what's her number, I'll call
her...

PETE

Can't. She dumped me.

JERRY

In that case, I'll call you a cab.

PETE

I'll save you the trouble. I'm a
cab. There. Did it myself.

He hauls himself off the bar stool, unsteady on his feet, and
struggles into his overcoat.

JERRY

You're not gonna drive in this
condition, are you?

PETE

I can't take this constant nagging.
I'm leaving you, Jerry. I'm leaving
and I'm taking the monkey with me.

He grabs the monkey, heads for the door...

15 EXT - OCEAN BREEZE BAR & GRILL - SANTA MONICA - NIGHT

15

...and exits with the monkey clutched to his chest. He pauses
to get his bearings, swaying on his feet. Somewhere, DISTANT
CALLIOPE MUSIC plays softly. He totters off toward...

(CONTINUED)

...his Mercedes Benz parked at the edge of the sand with the top down. Beyond it, the FERRIS WHEEL and ROLLER COASTER of Pacific Ocean Park light up the sky with gaudy, cheerful neon.

Pete gets in the car, slumps forward onto the steering wheel. He looks like he could fall asleep right there, which would probably be a good idea.

The DISTANT CALLIOPE MUSIC dies. The cheerful lights of the ferris wheel and rollercoaster sputter into darkness.

Nothing now but moonlight and the SOUND OF WAVES.

Pete stares at the darkness, considering his situation. An idea forms. He peers at the monkey.

PETE

Hey. I got a "what if." What if you and me just drive up the coast until the sun comes up or the gas runs out? We'll change our names, start new lives, never come back.

(beat)

Yeah, that sounds good.

He starts the engine, gets the car in gear, and lurches onto the deserted Pacific Coast Highway as we

DISSOLVE TO:

16 EXT - PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - NIGHT 16

Hours later. Pete's car comes winding up PCH, headlights probing the darkness, waves crashing on the rocks below.

17 INT - CAR - NIGHT 17

Pete drives along, disheveled but decidedly more sober. He notices a HAND-PAINTED SIGN: "GAS! 2 Miles!" A crude arrow points down a tiny access road.

Pete glances at the gas gauge, sits up straighter.

PETE

Crap.

THE GAS GAUGE

hovers near empty.

PETE

slows the car, realizing he doesn't have much choice. He turns around and doubles back to the turn-off, disappearing down the access road in search of gas as we

DISSOLVE TO:

18 EXT - ACCESS ROAD - NIGHT 18

Barely paved, winding through wooded hills. The Mercedes comes jouncing along, headlights cutting the mist.

Pete passes another sign: "One Lane Bridge! Use Caution!" He steers the car onto:

19 THE BRIDGE 19

A rickety-looking wooden structure spanning a swollen river below. The Mercedes accelerates across. Suddenly:

A POSSUM

appears in Pete's headlight beams, trundling across the bridge. It turns toward him, hissing at the onrushing car...

PETE

slams on the brakes and swerves! The nose of the Mercedes SMASHES through the wooden railing...

...and the car lurches to a very precarious stop: balanced at the edge, front tire spinning in thin air, the vehicle doing a slow, gut-churning teeter-totter over the water below.

Pete is frozen, gripping the steering wheel in terror. The only thing keeping the car from going over is his weight in the driver's seat and a few shattered railing posts.

The car's nose dips. Pete presses back against the driver's door, shifting the weight and causing the nose to rise back up. Teeter-tottering for keeps. His hand creeps slowly toward the door latch...

Fast, Pete throws the car door open and hurls himself out --

-- but his overcoat is snagged on the parking brake and yanks him back. We catch a brief glimpse of his shocked face as the car tips decisively over the edge, taking him with it!

20 THE MERCEDES 20

plummets in freefall with Pete SCREAMING all the way down. The open convertible spins completely upside-down and impacts hugely on the water, smashing Pete into:

21 DARK SWIRLING CHAOS 21

that affords us only jarring glimpses:

Car spinning underwater. Pete dragged along, face contorted with terror. The toy monkey whipping past, still grinning.

(CONTINUED)

Pete manages to shrug out of the coat as:

22 THE CAR

22

breaks the surface, tail bobbing up like a cork. Pete pops up, gasping in great lungfuls of air, everything a blur of rushing water and terrifying noise...

The car sails down the river, bobbing from view. Pete struggles desperately, trying for shore, but the current's got him, sweeping him along, faster and faster...

...and Pete smacks face-first into the bridge footing in the middle of the river, getting dragged under as we

SMASH TO BLACK

HOLD IN BLACK

as an odd sound slowly intrudes on the silence. The sound of...well, panting.

23 IMAGE FADES UP:

23

A dog. Golden retriever. Staring down at us.

REVERSE ANGLE

Pete. Lying face-up on sand. Purple bruise on his forehead. One eye black and swollen. Wondering where he is. Trying to remember. The dog bends down and starts licking his face.

OLD MAN (O.S.)

Maggie? What'cha got there, girl?

EXT - BEACH - DAY

Pete is lying on a beach where the river dumps into the open sea. The scenery here is magnificent, but it's the last thing on Pete's mind right now. He's batting weakly at the dog, trying to get it to stop licking him.

STAN KELLER, in his 80's, comes hurrying up the beach stashing some driftwood treasures in his bag.

STAN

Maggie, knock it off! Sit!

The dog obeys. Pete just lies there, wiping his face.

PETE

I guess she likes me.

(CONTINUED)

STAN

She likes everybody. Sweet and stupid, that's her.

(comes closer)

You're a sight, son. What the hell happened?

PETE

Can't exactly say.

Stan helps Pete sit up. Pete looks blearily around.

STAN

Town's just up on the way. Think you can walk?

PETE

Give it a try.

Stan helps Pete stand up. Pete's a little shaky, but manages okay. Stan pauses, peering intently at him for a moment.

PETE

What?

STAN

Nothing. Just....you seem an odd bit familiar. Do I know you?

Pete has to really think about this. He's surprised to find himself drawing a total blank.

PETE

I...I don't know. Do you?

WIDE SHOT OF BEACH

The two figures walk up the beach with the dog running on ahead. CAMERA BOOMS UP, revealing the gorgeous little TOWN OF LAWSON situated on the bluffs overlooking the ocean.

CUT TO:

24 EXT - OUTSKIRTS OF LAWSON - MORNING

24

A sign proclaims:

WELCOME TO
LAWSON, CALIFORNIA
"The Town That Gave Its All"
Est. 1867 - Elev. 80

ANGLE SHIFTS to Pete, Stan, and Maggie the dog walking into town. Except for DISTANT WAVES and CHIRPING BIRDS, the place is silent.

25 EXT - MAIN STREET OF LAWSON - MORNING

25

Idyllic, trapped in time. As a state of mind, it's as far away from Los Angeles as you can get. Except for a few early risers, the streets are deserted.

PETE

It's so quiet.

STAN

Still early. Most folks just waking up. 'Course it's usually pretty quiet even then.

They pass COLE'S PHARMACY. Pete pauses, seeing:

TWO FADED GOLD STARS in the window, along with BLACK & WHITE PHOTOS OF TWO YOUNG MEN in uniform, the entire display decked with dusty black crepe.

STAN

Ernie Cole, our druggist. Also the mayor. Lost both his boys in the war. Joe at Anzio, Willy at Bastogne. Good boys, both of 'em.

They move on. Pete is noticing how many gold stars and photos are lining the shop windows.

PETE

There's so many.

STAN

All told, this town gave sixty two of its young men to the war. More than its share. Seventeen of 'em at Normandy alone. That was a bad day.

PETE

I can imagine.

STAN

Even got us a letter from President Roosevelt. White House commissioned us a war memorial. Been sitting in the basement of town hall some ten years now. Folks around here just never had the heart to put it up.

Stan points at a diner across the street.

STAN

Mabel over at the diner lost her husband Max at Okinawa. Woman does wonders with an egg. Hungry?

(CONTINUED)

PETE

Yes. Very.

STAN

Doc Stanton pops in every morning on his way to the office. Let's see about breakfast while we wait.

They head across the street.

26 INT - DINER - DAY

26

HARRY TRIMBLE is having coffee and perusing a paper at one of the booths lining the large plate glass windows. Harry's in his 60's, a kind man with an aura of long-held sadness.

BEHIND HIM WE SEE:

MABEL, a sweet woman in her 30's, scrambling some eggs behind the counter. A handful of CUSTOMERS scattered about.

The bell above the door DINGS. Mabel has just scooped the eggs onto a plate, turns to see Stan entering with Pete.

MABEL

Oh my gosh.

STAN

Morning, Mabel. Doc been by yet?

MABEL

Should be along any moment.

(to Pete)

Was there an accident?

PETE

I'm...not sure.

STAN

Found him down by the wash, lying there like a landed trout.

MABEL

Who is he?

STAN

(glances at Pete)

Uh, we're still working on that one. Meantime, I think the boy could use a meal. Those eggs spoken for?

MABEL

Harry? You mind?

(CONTINUED)

Harry, still at his booth, is tossing curious looks over his shoulder (but every time he does, Pete's face is turned away).

HARRY

Not at all. I can wait.

Mabel adds a few strips of bacon and sets the plate down before Pete, who grabs up a fork...

PETE

Thanks.

...and starts shoveling the food into his mouth like a starving animal. Stan and Mabel (and a few other patrons) watch in quiet amazement. Pete notices them staring.

STAN

Trying to set a record?

Pete forces himself to slow down, chewing leisurely, gives them a big smile.

PETE

It's good.

MABEL

Like you could tell.

She pours a cup of coffee, slides it toward him. He sips it gratefully, notices Mabel peering at him.

MABEL

You ever been in here before?

PETE

I think I'd remember these eggs.

MABEL

I don't know why, but...you look kind of...

STAN

...familiar? Said the same thing myself.

The bell above the door DINGS. DOC STANTON enters, hale and hearty, moves to the counter.

DOC

Morning Stan, Mabel. My bearclaw ready to go?

Mabel lifts the pastry cover and snags a bearclaw.

(CONTINUED)

MABEL

Uh, Doc, somebody here you should say hello to.

She tilts her head, indicating Pete. Doc glances over.

DOC

Hello, son. How'd that happen?

PETE

I have no idea.

Doc glances to Stan, who lifts his finger to his temple and makes a "there's nobody home" motion.

DOC

Ah. Well...

(to Pete)

...perhaps you'd better come along with me, let me look you over.

Pete rises obligingly, pats his pockets to pay for his meal. All he can manage is a few coins. Doc looks to Mabel.

DOC

On my tab?

MABEL

Of course.

Pete thinks a moment, lays the coins on the counter as a tip.

PETE

The food was wonderful. Thank you.

MABEL

My pleasure. Come again.

HARRY TRIMBLE

is stirring his coffee as Pete exits with Doc and Stan b.g.

Through the plate glass windows, we see the group turn and come this way. Idly curious, Harry raises his coffee cup and turns to watch them pass by his window...

...and gets the shock of his life as he finally sees Pete's face. The coffee cup goes slack in his hand, dribbling hot coffee into his lap as we

CUT TO:

27 TIGHT ON PETE'S EYES

as a finger moves slowly back and forth...

27

(CONTINUED)

DOC (O.S.)
Follow my finger. Just with your
eyes. That's good...

INT - DOC'S OFFICE - DAY

Pete sits shirtless, following Doc's finger. Doc glances up.
Stan is watching in rapt fascination. So is the nurse, MURIEL.

DOC
Muriel, be a doll and give the
sheriff a jingle, tell him we could
use him down here.

MURIEL
Yes, doctor.

Off she goes. Stan leans forward in suspense:

STAN
So? Doc? What do you think?

DOC
(hesitates)
I think he looks...strangely...

PETE
...familiar? I'm getting that a lot
lately.

STAN
Mabel and I said the same thing.
Vexing, isn't it?

PETE
Aside from vexing, how am I?

DOC
Well, you took a pretty good knock,
no doubt about that. The good news
is, you'll live. Here, you can put
your shirt back on...

Doc grabs Pete's shirt, sniffs it.

DOC
...on second thought, take one of
mine. It's big, but clean.

Doc pulls a laundered shirt from one of several hanging in
his closet, hands it to Pete.

PETE
That's nice of you. Thanks.

(CONTINUED)

Pete looks around the office as he puts on the shirt, sees a framed photo of Doc and a beautiful YOUNG WOMAN.

PETE
She's very pretty.

DOC
My daughter Adele. My pride and joy. Charms the fish right out of river, she does...

Doc's voice trails off. Pete turns, catches him staring.

DOC
I'm sorry, it's just...well, your face really does seem familiar.

Pete checks himself in a mirror as he finishes buttoning up.

PETE
Wish I could say the same thing.

CUT TO:

28 EXT - DOC'S OFFICE - DAY

28

Harry Trimble, a bundle of agitation, pants still stained with coffee, is pacing the corner of the building trying to work up the courage to go in.

A SHERIFF'S PATROL CAR pulls to the curb b.g. SHERIFF CECIL COLEMAN gets out, heading for the entrance...

...and Harry darts out, scaring the bejeezus out of him.

HARRY
Cecil! Cecil!

COLEMAN
Lord love a duck, Harry, you wanna give me a heart attack right in front of the doctor's office?

HARRY
Listen to me, there's a young man in there--

COLEMAN
(keeps walking)
I know all about it, I'm here to investigate, if there's anything interesting it'll be in the paper, so just lemme do my--

(CONTINUED)

HARRY
 Cecil, listen to me!
 (Coleman stops)
 It's Luke.

29 INT - DOC'S OFFICE - DAY

29

Coleman, dumbfounded and uncertain, stands staring at Pete, his little cop's notebook poised.

COLEMAN
 You have no recollection prior to waking up on our beach...no idea who you are, how you got here...

PETE
 All I remember is a dog licking my face. Before that...blank.

COLEMAN
 (looks to Stan)
 No wallet, no I.D., nothing?

STAN
 I looked all around.

COLEMAN
 (to Pete)
 And to your knowledge, you've never been in this town before?

PETE
 Wait, don't tell me. I look familiar, right?

COLEMAN
 (to Doc)
 I think there's someone who might be able to shed light on this. Okay if I bring him in?

DOC
 Please.

Coleman opens the door to the outer room. Harry's outside, wringing his hat in his hands. He enters...

...and his gaze lands on Pete. Harry approaches hesitantly, eyes searching Pete's face with a sort of desperation, a mingling of hope and fear.

Pete just stares back. Deeply puzzled.

(CONTINUED)

DOC

looks from Harry to Pete...and back to Harry again as the implication starts to sink in. Softly to Coleman:

DOC

You don't mean...

HARRY AND PETE

come nose to nose. Tears are shining in Harry's eyes...a smile slowly forms...and he abruptly throws his arms around Pete, hugging him tightly.

HARRY

It is you! It is! Oh, Luke, I never gave up hoping! Luke! My boy! You're alive!

Pete looks to the others. Who the hell is this? Harry just keeps sobbing onto his shoulder...

...while Doc, stunned, looks to the framed photo of himself and daughter Adele. Coleman follows his gaze, whispers:

COLEMAN

Break it to her gently.

CUT TO:

30 EXT - SHERIFF'S CAR/SIDEWALK - DAY

30

Pete settles in back holding an ice pack to his bruised face. Coleman shuts the door, joins Harry and Doc on the sidewalk:

DOC

Harry, now listen, if this really is Luke--

HARRY

Of course it's Luke, how can you say that? Just look at him! A father knows his son...

DOC

I'm not saying he isn't. I'm saying if he is, he's gonna need help remembering. From what I've read, the thing to do in a situation like this is gently reintroduce the person to things that were once familiar.

HARRY

And that could jog his memory?

(CONTINUED)

DOC

It might, it might not. All you can do is be patient and show him everything. You never know what'll bring him around, could be the least little thing.

HARRY

Well, I've got a lot to show him, don't I? My son's got his life in this town.

(gazes off at Pete)

My God. So much lost time...so many years to make up for...

CUT TO:

(NOTE: From here on, PETE will be known as LUKE.)

31 INT - SHERIFF'S MOVING CAR - DAY

31

Luke is looking around as they drive through town. Harry keeps glancing back at him. So is Coleman, using the rearview mirror.

LUKE

Sir? What'd you say your name was?

HARRY

Harry. Harry Trimble. And you're Albert Lucas Trimble, but everyone's called you Luke since you were a baby.

LUKE

Luke. Huh.

(beat)

And where exactly are we going?

HARRY

Where do you think, son? I'm taking you home.

CUT TO:

32 EXT - THE MAJESTIC - DAY

32

A decaying, Dada-esque mixed bag of architectural styles run through a deco blender -- some Egyptian, some Chinese, some of this, some of that. What it is, really, is the all-American movie theater fallen on hard times. An ornate little ticket booth stands in the small entry forecourt.

The sheriff's car pulls up. Harry hops out, opens the back door for Luke.

(CONTINUED)

COLEMAN

You fellas take good care now. Harry,
you need anything, just call me.

HARRY

Bless you, Cecil. For everything.

The car pulls away. Harry turns to find Luke gazing up at the theater, stupefied. Above the neon marquee facing the street is this cryptic message:

" HE M JESTI "

Harry watches Luke, hoping for recognition. All he gets is:

LUKE

"Hemjesti?"

HARRY

"The Majestic." Few letters need
replacing.

33 INT - MAJESTIC LOBBY - DAY

33

The inside is just as sorry-looking as the outside. It's a gaudy mausoleum, served up with generous helpings of dust, grime, and neglect. In the center of the lobby ceiling hangs what was once the most beautiful item in the theater -- a CHANDELIER coated with years of dust.

TILT DOWN to Luke and Harry standing below.

HARRY

We've been closed a while.

LUKE

Ah.

HARRY

Any of this ring a bell?

LUKE

Can't say that it does.

Luke moves to the auditorium doors, pushes one slowly open with a CREAK...

34 INSIDE THE AUDITORIUM

34

...revealing more decay. The two hundred or so seats on the main floor seem mostly intact and the balcony seems solid enough, but the paint is hanging in long strips amid the cobwebs. The muslin screen, what's left of it, has nearly rotted from its moorings. In the tiny orchestra pit, an old upright piano stands lonely vigil.

(CONTINUED)

Harry appears at Luke's side. Luke glances up, hearing pigeons fluttering in the rafters. He's almost afraid to ask:

LUKE

Harry? How long have I been gone?

HARRY

Nine and half years.

LUKE

(stunned)

Nine and a half...years?

35 INT - STAIRCASE - DAY

35

A dark, creaky staircase. Harry brings Luke up from below, rattling through a huge set of keys chained to his belt.

HARRY

...after you left, it was difficult,
and then Lily -- your mother --
took ill and died...we haven't shown
a picture here since forty-six...

36 INT - APARTMENT - DAY

36

Neat as a pin, light and airy, in sharp contrast to the theater. A set of large windows affords a view of the street below (though the view is partially blocked outside by the theater's old neon marquee tower and scaffolding).

Harry unlocks the door and brings Luke in. Luke looks around, pleasantly surprised by how clean it is. His gaze falls on a large array of FRAMED PHOTOS displayed neatly on a sideboard.

Harry touches his elbow, encouraging him to look, hoping they might trigger his memories.

HARRY

Go on. It's us. You, me, your
mother...

Luke goes and picks one up. It's Luke in high school, crouching on the gridiron and smiling for the camera (and even though the picture is some twelve years-old, the resemblance between them is pretty damn startling).

HARRY

Your junior year. You ran eleven
touchdowns that season.

Luke picks up another photo: a fine-looking WOMAN in an old formal portrait. Harry waits, the suspense killing him, hoping Luke will recognize her.

(CONTINUED)

LUKE

My mother?

Harry's heart skips a beat. He almost forgets to breathe.

HARRY

(hesitates)

You remembered?

LUKE

(gently)

Just a guess. She's beautiful.

Harry hides his disappointment, takes the photo from Luke.

HARRY

Yes, she was, rest her soul. I miss her. She certainly made this place a home.

He kisses the picture and carefully puts it back.

LUKE

I'm sorry. This is all so much to take in.

HARRY

And me blathering away like a fool. I'll go make us some coffee.

Harry exits into the kitchen, starts clattering around. Luke sits on the sofa, exhausted to the bone, so tired he's dizzy.

LUKE

Harry? Why'd you close the Majestic?

IN THE KITCHEN

Harry's measuring scoops into the filter basket as:

HARRY

Well, after the war, people here just didn't feel like going to the movies much, I guess. Some moved away...Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Francisco...you still take cream, no sugar?

(no answer)

Luke?

Harry goes to the doorway and sees:

LUKE

keeled over on the couch, passed out asleep.

(CONTINUED)

Harry enters the shot, swings Luke's feet up onto the couch, removes his shoes. He drapes him with a blanket, gazes down for a long moment, then steals quietly out of the room.

37 INT/EXT - MAJESTIC LOBBY - DAY 37

Harry comes downstairs and pulls his keys, sorting through them as he heads out the entry doors to:

38 THE TINY TICKET BOOTH 38

in the forecourt. Harry unlocks the ticket booth door and tugs hard to get it open -- it's warped and hasn't been used in years. He steps into the booth, finds a creaky old stool.

Harry sits, faces the street through the grimy windows... imaging people lining up out there...thinking back on how it used to be...

He shakes the feeling off. That's not why he's here. He reaches across a dusty roll of old movie tickets and pulls an old framed photo from the booth window. Turns it around.

It's Luke, circa 1942, proudly wearing the uniform of the 101st Airborne Infantry. Attached to the frame is a small gold star. Another casualty of the war.

Harry removes the star, eyes welling up. Softly:

HARRY

When I woke up this morning, my son was dead. Now, I have my boy again. I have my boy...

FADE TO BLACK

39 INT - MAJESTIC APARTMENT - MORNING 39

We find Luke still fast asleep on the couch, mouth open to the skies. SMALL TOWN STREET SOUNDS drift gently through the windows. He stirs, slowly opens his eyes...

...and finds three old people staring down at him. He jolts awake, badly startled.

HARRY

Just us, son.

Harry offers him a mug of coffee. Luke waits for his heart rate to settle, accepts the mug.

LUKE

How long have I been asleep?

(CONTINUED)

HARRY
Since yesterday.

EMMETT
You slept all through the night and
most of this morning.

Now that he can focus, Luke looks to the other two people
with Harry: an ELDERLY WOMAN and a very old BLACK MAN.

HARRY
Now that you're awake, I'd like to,
uh, reintroduce you to the staff of
the Majestic. Luke, this is Irene
Terwilliger, our candy lady...

IRENE
So glad to have you back, Luke.
Why, it's a miracle, is what it
is...
(to Harry)
...he's even more handsome than I
remember.

HARRY
And this fine fellow is Emmett Smith,
head usher and fix-it man.

EMMETT
(abruptly to Harry)
You gonna tell him about the watch?
I'm gonna need me a watch.

Luke just blinks. Watch?

HARRY
One step at a time, let's not get
ahead of ourselves...
(to Luke)
Luke. Fact is, we've been talking
it over while you slept...and, well,
good news, son. Now that you're back,
we decided to re-open.

Luke stares up at them. A dumbfounded beat.

LUKE
Re-open?

40 INT - MAJESTIC LOBBY - DAY

40

HARRY
How hard can it be? We fix the place
up, sell tickets...

(CONTINUED)

ANGLE SHIFTS to Luke. Emmett and Irene watching him.

LUKE

Harry, look around. It's a dump.

EMMETT

(mutters to Irene)

...told you so...

HARRY

I am looking around. All I see is potential.

LUKE

Potential for what? This place is ready to fall down. All you have to do is walk outside and give it a good shove.

HARRY

You're wrong. You are, you know. I know she doesn't look like much now...but once...once...this place was like a palace.

LUKE

A palace.

HARRY

That's why we called her Majestic. Any man, woman, child, could buy their ticket and walk right in, and here they'd be...and here we'd be...

(mimes tearing tickets)

...yes sir, yes ma'am, enjoy the show...

(moving into lobby)

...and in they'd come, entering a palace. Like in a dream. Like in heaven. Maybe you had problems and worries out there, but once you came through those doors, they didn't matter any more. And you know why?

Luke has no answer. Harry grabs his hand, pulls him into...

41 THE AUDITORIUM

41

...where he brings him to an abrupt stop.

(CONTINUED)

HARRY

Chaplin, that's why. And Keaton.
And Lloyd. Garbo. Gable and Lombard.
Jimmy Stewart, Jimmy Cagney, Bogart
and Bacall, Fred and Ginger. They
were gods...

(points to screen)

...and they lived up there. That
was Olympus. Would you remember if
I told you how lucky we felt to be
here...to have the privilege of
watching them?

(beat)

This television thing. Why would
you want to stay home and watch a
little box? Because it's convenient?
Because you don't have to get dressed
up? Because you can just sit there?
How can you call that entertainment,
alone in your living room? Where
are the other people? Where's the
audience?

(draws close)

Where's the magic?

He looks around, conjuring a theater full of people in his
mind's eye.

HARRY

I'll tell you. In a place like this,
the magic is all around you. The
trick...is to see it.

(beat)

Son, I think you loved the Majestic
even more than I did. You've got to
remember that. You've got to.

Beat. Luke's feeling overwhelmed by this unfamiliar old man.

LUKE

I don't.

He turns away, heading up the aisle toward the lobby.

HARRY

Luke! I know it sounds crazy, but I
promise you, we can make this place
shine again...we can make it like
it was...

Luke whirls back, boiling with frustration:

(CONTINUED)

LUKE

I don't know how it was! Don't you get that? None of this means anything to me...

HARRY

It used to mean so much.

LUKE

It doesn't. How can it? Harry, I don't even know who I am.

HARRY

No? Then come with me.

CUT TO:

42 EXT - LAWSON CEMETERY - DAY

42

A beautiful old cemetery overlooking town. Gravestones dating back 150 years. Feet come CRUNCHING through the leaves...and we find Luke wandering among the headstones with Harry.

They arrive at an area in contrast to the rest -- a cluster of some 60 headstones, all gleaming white and much newer. Luke slows, noticing the difference, noticing also:

Small glass boxes with wooden frames are mounted on most of the headstones. Many contain photos of young men in uniform. Others display military decorations -- Purple Hearts, a Silver Star here, a Bronze Star there.

Luke looks to Harry...but finds Harry gazing at a headstone.

HARRY

(smiles)

Bobby Rilke. Red hair and freckles. Always charging up and down the street on his bicycle, screaming like a banshee, scaring the crap out of the old ladies...

(moves along the rows)

Brad Henderson...Virgil Toynbee... Patrick Vitger, he was on the football team with you...

(pauses)

Stevie Wardlow. His old man was a drinker, used to knock him around. You'd bring him home, we'd clean him up, make sure he had a hot meal. Kid practically lived with us for a few years. He died on Saipan. Silver Star for bravery.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HARRY (CONT'D)

(moves on)

Teddy Parker...Jimmy Trask...and
this boy over here...

He brings Luke to certain headstone. In the little glass box,
hanging from a blue satin ribbon, is the Medal of Honor.

HARRY

...bright kid, honor student. Not
just smart, but decent, with a good
heart. Joined up right after Pearl
Harbor. Parachuted into France on D-
Day, June 6th, 1944.

Harry pauses to pull a handkerchief, wipes at his eyes.

HARRY

Three days after the invasion, his
platoon got pinned down by German
artillery. They were damn near wiped
out. Most boys dead or wounded,
torn up by the shells...

(beat)

This fella here carried the injured
to safety one by one, always going
back until every living man was
accounted for. He never wavered.
Just kept doing what he had to do
until it got done.

(beat)

He was reported missing in action a
month later, near Saint-Lo. His
body was never found.

Harry pulls his key chain, finds the smallest key, bends down
and unlocks the small glass box on the headstone. He removes
the Medal of Honor, smoothes the ribbon with his aging hands.

HARRY

Congress posthumously awarded him
the Medal of Honor for courage in
saving the lives of eight men without
thought to himself. His name was
Albert Lucas Trimble, and he was my
son...

Harry raises the medal, places it around Luke's neck.

HARRY

That's who you are.

CUT TO:

43 EXT - LAWSON TRAIN DEPOT - DAY

43

The TRAIN is pulling in. Doc Stanton waits on the platform. He catches a glimpse of his daughter Adele at one of the windows. She smiles and waves, excited to see him.

The train stops, PASSENGERS disembarking. Adele steps down with an overnight bag. Doc's happy to see her, but not looking forward to breaking the news. They embrace warmly.

ADELE

I missed you.

DOC

Not as much as I missed you. How'd it go?

ADELE

Not so bad. I think I passed.

DOC

That's my girl! What about the, uh, you know...

ADELE

Hiccups? Not a trace, thank goodness. Who wants an attorney who hiccups when she gets nervous?
(lawyerly voice)
"Your--hic--Honor, I--hic--object!"

DOC

Like I always said, honey...
(taps her forehead)
...it's all up here.

He gives her a big hug...and holds on just a little bit too long. Adele senses something wrong.

ADELE

Dad? What is it?

He hesitates, not sure where to start. She pulls away.

ADELE

Oh my God. Did somebody die?

DOC

Well...somewhat the opposite, actually.

TIMECUT:

44 Adele's on a bench in front of the depot having a furious hiccup attack. Doc hands her a paper cup of water. 44

DOC
 Drink slowly.
 (she starts)
 From the other side...

She twists her wrist around, drinks from the other side. She waits a moment...and hiccups again.

DOC
 That usually works.

ADELE
 I think it's (hic!) worse now. Are you (hic!) sure it's (hic!) him?

DOC
 Harry's absolutely certain of it. I suppose he should know.

ADELE
 And Luke (hic!) doesn't remember (hic!) anything?

DOC
 It might just be temporary. Could be all he needs to get his memory back is the right catalyst.

ADELE
 Like (hic!) what?

DOC
 Well...you, possibly.

CUT TO:

45 EXT - MAIN STREET - DAY

45

Harry and Luke are walking to the diner. PEOPLE on the street stop what they're doing to stare -- SHOPKEEPERS, a GROCER helping a LADY with her bags, a MAILMAN and his CUSTOMERS.

Suddenly, ERNIE COLE, druggist and mayor, intercepts Harry and Luke with the biggest smile you've ever seen:

ERNIE
 Well, I'll be...

HARRY
 Morning, Ernie.

(CONTINUED)

ERNIE

I heard about it, couldn't believe it. Had to come see for myself, there he stands, and I still can't believe it. Well I'll be...

HARRY

It's really him, Ernie.

ERNIE

I can see that! By God, Luke, it sure is good to see you again!

Ernie grabs Luke's hand and pumps it warmly, overcome.

HARRY

Luke, Ernie Cole, our mayor.

LUKE

Mayor Cole.

ERNIE

That's too much, son, you just call me Ernie.

HARRY

We were heading down to Mabel's for lunch. Join us?

CUT TO:

46 INT - DINER - DAY

46

The place is packed with people wanting to see Luke for themselves, every table and chair occupied, standing room only. Those who can't squeeze in are out on the sidewalk, peering through the glass. In the middle of it all:

Luke and Harry are seated at the counter having lunch. At the end of the counter is CARL LEFFERT, 30's, regaling them:

CARL

Hey, Luke, remember that time you and me, we were playing with firecrackers, and one of 'em went off too soon and singed all the hair off my head?

The people around him laugh, shaking their heads.

LUKE

Uh, no. What happened?

(CONTINUED)

CARL

Well, um...all the hair got singed off my head. It was pretty funny.

LUKE

Oh.

CARL

Even my eyebrows. But they grew back. You really don't remember?

LUKE

I'm sorry.

CARL

Heck, that's all right. It's just good to have you back. Isn't that right, Bob? Hey, Luke, you remember my cousin Bob? You two joined up the same day...

Carl points behind the counter where Mabel and BOB LEFFERT, her short order cook, are being run ragged by the unexpected rush.

Leffert, scraping the grill, pauses to glance back, nods.

LUKE

Bob. Good to meet you.

Luke reaches across the counter, offering his hand. Leffert hesitates, then turns around to shake...

...and Luke finds himself shaking not a hand, but an articulated metal hook.

BOB

Welcome back.

LUKE

(softly)

Thanks.

Leffert turns back to his grill, keeps working. The place has gone mostly quiet. Ernie jumps in:

ERNIE

Luke. What are your plans, now that you're home?

HARRY

Gonna re-open the Majestic.

A MURMUR goes through the crowd.

(CONTINUED)

ERNIE

You don't say! Is that right?

LUKE

(on the spot)

Well...we're still discussing it.

ERNIE

That's the spirit, fellas, let's have more of that.

(looks around)

Hey, where's Spencer Wyatt?

SPENCER

Right here, Mr. Mayor.

SPENCER WYATT comes forward, a gangly 19 year-old with glasses. He regards Luke with a hint of hero-worship.

SPENCER

Hey, Luke. Good to see you again.

LUKE

Hi, Spencer.

ERNIE

Spence? That big band of yours ready to play?

STAN

What are you thinking, Ernie?

ERNIE

I'm thinking this town's had a blessing of good fortune after a long dry spell. I'm thinking we've got a lot to celebrate.

(looks around)

What say everybody? Saturday night, out on the point? A welcome home celebration for Luke?

The diner erupts with CHEERS and BABBLING VOICES...

...which suddenly go hushed. Luke turns, sees:

Adele entering. The crowd parting for her. She locks eyes with Luke. She looks gorgeous and vulnerable. Softly:

ADELE

Luke...?

(CONTINUED)

LUKE
 (hesitates, nods)
 Adele. The doctor's daughter. I saw
 your picture.

ADELE
 Do you...remember me?

LUKE
 No. But I'll sure try.

CUT TO:

47 EXT - STREET - DAY

47

Luke and Adele are strolling together. She keeps sneaking glances at his face, trying to reconcile her memory of it. He keeps sneaking glances right back at her. Finally:

LUKE
 Adele?

ADELE
 Yes?

LUKE
 It might just be my imagination,
 but...I get this feeling like we're
 not alone.

Adele looks back, revealing:

EVERYBODY from the diner is following them down the street, trying to keep a discreet distance. They're subtle as a herd of elephants. Adele turns, addresses them:

ADELE
 You can all go about your business
 now. He's not going anywhere.

LUKE
 It's okay, folks. Go on home. And
 thanks for the welcome.

The crowd hesitates, looking sheepishly to Harry.

HARRY
 Well...you two have a lot to catch
 up on, I expect.

Harry nods. The crowd disperses. Luke and Adele keep walking.

LUKE
 You handled that well.

(CONTINUED)

ADELE

Thanks.

LUKE

(beat)

So where to?

CUT TO:

48 EXT - TOWN HALL - DAY

48

BOOM DOWN from the clock tower to Luke and Adele arriving on the lawn. He stops, looks at her.

LUKE

Town Hall?

She searches his eyes for a glimmer of recognition. There is none. She takes his hand, pulls him along.

ADELE

Come on.

She pulls him along...

49 INT - TOWN HALL BASEMENT - DAY

49

...and they appear outside a ground-level window. She taps the window frame with her fist, jarring it open.

ADELE

You first.

LUKE

Why me?

ADELE

In case the vicious guard dogs haven't been fed.

(off his look)

So you can be a gentleman and help me down!

LUKE

Oh.

Luke comes through the window, drops down. Adele is next. Luke looks around. There's old office furniture stacked in corners, paint and cleaning supplies, lots of nooks and crannies.

LUKE

A large, gloomy basement. Nice.

(CONTINUED)

ADELE

It was a lot roomier before they put the monument down here.

He follows her gaze to a large muslin-covered object prominent in the center of the room. He draws the muslin off and sends up a cloud of dust, revealing a bigger than life-size BRONZE SOLDIER kneeling in prayer at a fellow soldier's grave.

LUKE

The gift from Roosevelt. Stan Keller told me about it.

ADELE

Your name's on there. So are the others.

LUKE

I knew all these guys?

ADELE

We both did. We went to school with most of them.

Luke moves away from the statue, looking around.

ADELE

You really don't remember?

(he shakes his head)

We used to sneak in here all the time when we were kids. This was our secret place. You, me, Stevie Wardlow, Tully Wentworth...

LUKE

That's why you brought me here?

ADELE

Think of it as a stroll down memory lane. Dad said if I took you places we used to go, showed you things only we knew about, it might help you remember.

LUKE

Oh. So we're here purely for medical reasons.

ADELE

Not entirely. I'm trying to make up my own mind. About you being Luke.

LUKE

Join the club. So what do you think?

(CONTINUED)

ADELE
Jury's still out.

LUKE
Fair enough.
(beat)
Any other secret places I should
know about?

DISSOLVE TO:

50 EXT - "THE POINT"/OLD LIGHTHOUSE - SUNSET

50

The lighthouse is perched on a magnificent bluff overlooking the Pacific, the coastline here wild and dramatic. We find Adele leading Luke across the grassy bluff, laughing as:

LUKE
...okay, you're going to have to start making sense sometime soon. You wanted to be a lawyer because of the Majestic? Explain that to me.

ADELE
Well, we used to go to the movies all the time when I was a kid. Once when I was eleven, the film playing that week was "The Life of Emile Zola..."

LUKE
Right. Paul Muni, about the Dreyfus Affair. Great picture.

ADELE
(stops in her tracks)
You remember movies, but you don't remember your life?

LUKE
Yeah. Weird, huh?

ADELE
Unbelievable...
(resumes walking)
...anyway, in the movie, when Zola stood up in court and accused the French government of forfeiting its honor for wrongly accusing an innocent man...well, Zola wasn't a lawyer, of course, but the way he spoke...I decided right then and there that's what I wanted to be when I grew up.

(CONTINUED)

LUKE

Just from that?

ADELE

"Just?" C'mon, it was great!
(dramatic delivery)

"In the presence of this tribunal, which is the representative of human justice, before you gentlemen of the jury, before France, before the whole world, I swear that Dreyfus is innocent! By my forty years of work, by all that I have won, by all that I have written to spread the spirit of France, I swear that Dreyfus is innocent..."

LUKE

"...may all that melt away, may my name perish, if Dreyfus be not innocent..."

ADELE

(big finish)

"...he is innocent!"

Luke's smile falters a moment. Something about exchanging movie dialogue like this has broadsided him with deja-vu.

ADELE

Pretty good stuff, huh?

LUKE

(grins)

Yeah. Not bad at all.

Beat. A moment passes between them, an electricity that they both feel. Flustered, she looks toward the horizon.

ADELE

Sun's going! Come on!

51 ON THE LIGHTHOUSE

51

They come up from below onto the widow's walk that encircles the top of the lighthouse. The ENORMOUS LENS turns within like a big jewel, light pulsing from its many facets.

ADELE

Watch your eyes.

She brings him around to see the setting sun, leaning on the railing. The horizon is a shimmering band of silver and gold, the clouds every color of pink and orange.

(CONTINUED)

LUKE
Is this another secret place?

ADELE
Our special one. We used to come up here all the time to watch the sunset.

LUKE
That's what made it special?
She hesitates, wondering if she should tell him.

ADELE
This is where we had our first kiss. We were fourteen.

LUKE
That is special. I wish I could remember that.

ADELE
(softly)
Me too.

He sneaks a look at her. She glances over, catches him.

LUKE
We were in love, weren't we...

ADELE
(quietly)
Yes.
(then)
(hic!)

LUKE
What was that?

ADELE
Nothing. (hic!) I'm (hic!) fine. Really. (hic!)

LUKE
You don't sound fine.

ADELE
Just (hic!) ignore it. It's...it's going away.

Luke nods, willing to be a gentleman, presses on:

LUKE
So...were we going to be married?

(CONTINUED)

This kicks off a renewed flurry of hiccups:

ADELE

(hic!) When you (hic!) got back
from (hic!) overseas. We were (hic!)
engaged just (hic!) before you (hic!)
shipped out. (hic!)

Luke stares, amazed. Try as he might, he can't ignore it:

LUKE

Is there something I can do to help
you with that?

ADELE

Yes, but (hic!) it's something only
we (hic!) knew about. (hic!)

LUKE

Tell me.

ADELE

I'd (hic!) rather (hic!) die first.
(hic!)

LUKE

Come on. Your dad said any little
thing could jog my memory.

Adele considers it...and tosses caution aside. She throws her
arms around his neck, gives him a long, passionate kiss...

...and her hiccups stop. She pulls back.

ADELE

Hey. It still works.

TIGHT TWO SHOT

This time Luke kisses her. Their silhouettes come together
against the GIANT LENS spinning slowly in its tower as we

DISSOLVE TO:

52 EXT - STREET/MAJESTIC - NIGHT

52

Luke is walking home, a definite spring in his step.

53 INT - MAJESTIC LOBBY - NIGHT

53

Dark in here. Luke enters and pauses, hearing SOFT MUSIC
drifting up from the basement. An old jazz ballad from the
30's. He follows the sound...

54 BASEMENT LEVEL

54

...and comes downstairs, seeing light ahead. He moves along a tangle of pipes and cleaning supplies, entering...

55 THE FURNACE ROOM

55

...where he finds Emmett on a cot, stroking a grizzled little old DOG and listening to a 78 rpm disc on a Victrola.

EMMETT

Found me.

LUKE

I'm sorry. I didn't know anybody was down here.

EMMETT

Just me. And the dog.

LUKE

What's his name?

EMMETT

Dog.

LUKE

(beat, nods)
Simple. I like it.

EMMETT

Come on in.

Luke enters. The furnishings are spartan: an old easychair, a scuffed bureau, a Victrola playing a 78 rpm disc. Luke sees a framed picture on the bureau -- a handsome, serious young black man in a World War One doughboy's uniform.

LUKE

That you?

EMMETT

1917, thereabouts. It's okay with you that I live down here?

LUKE

Why wouldn't it be?

EMMETT

Just checking. You think I'll get me a watch?

LUKE

Uh, yeah, the watch. What's it for?

(CONTINUED)

EMMETT

So I make sure the shows always start on time. That's important.

LUKE

I'll see what I can do.

EMMETT

Thank you. I...I had me a nice watch once. Pocketwatch kind, like with a chain. Kept good time until it broke, never had the money to get it fixed. By then the theater was closed down, so it didn't seem like I needed it much anyway. I put it somewhere for safekeeping, but that was years ago, and I can't remember where. Lost me a m-medal for bravery once, too, back during the Great War. Lost it in the h-h-hospital, I think. I forget things sometimes. Since the war.

Luke pulls his Medal of Honor from his pocket. Softly:

LUKE

Yeah...me too.

CUT TO:

56 INT - ELVIN CLYDE'S OFFICE - WASHINGTON - DAY

56

A SCRIPT fills the frame, titled "Ashes to Ashes," held by a man's pink little manicured hands. The last page turns. The script lowers to reveal HUAC MAJORITY COUNSEL ELVIN CLYDE, the bland little man with the bow-tie we recognize from the newsreels.

CLYDE

Trash. Vile, despicable, trash.

Across the expanse of his massive desk sit AGENTS ELLERBY AND SAUNDERS, a pair of humorless FBI men.

CLYDE

It's about the West Virginia coal miner's strike of 1920. The plight of the downtrodden worker and all that. Communist propaganda, beginning to end.

ELLERBY

That bad?

(CONTINUED)

CLYDE

Well, there's a dog in it I like,
but aside from that...

He lays the script on the polished surface of the mahogany desk, slides it across to them.

CLYDE

Tell me about this Appleton.

ELLERBY

His agent reported him missing last night. Nobody's heard from him in four or five days.

CLYDE

Four or five days.

(mulls this)

Gentlemen, we may have stumbled onto something here. What kind of American goes on the lam after being implicated? Certainly not an innocent one.

(off their looks)

What if this Appleton is more than he seems? Not just another schmuck with an Underwood, but an important communist operative? One with lots of secrets to spill?

SAUNDERS

The Reds would do anything to keep him out of our hands.

CLYDE

(nods)

We have one of two scenarios. Number one, his communist friends killed him to shut him up. Number two, they're trying to get him out of the country even as we speak.

(rises)

Well, I, for one, don't intend to open a copy of Pravda and see this "writer" getting a hero's welcome in Red Square.

He goes to the window, admiring his view of Capitol Hill.

ELLERBY

What shall we tell Mr. Hoover?

(CONTINUED)

CLYDE

Tell him this has top priority. You find him, gentleman, living or dead, whatever it takes.

(faces them)

I promise you, his trail will lead us to a nest of communists that'll make the Rosenbergs look like Ma and Pa Kettle.

CUT TO:

57 SPENCER WYATT

57

brings a clarinet up into frame, trilling a sweet, rising note. ANGLE WIDENS to include the entire BIG BAND...

EXT - "THE POINT"/OLD LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT

...and the CITIZENS OF LAWSON arriving for the celebration, the area lit by paper lanterns and colored lights. A banner above the bandstand reads: "Welcome Home, Luke!"

58 INT - STANTON HOME - NIGHT

58

Doc's at the bathroom mirror, concentrating gravely to get his bow-tie knotted. He hears the DOORBELL RING.

DOC

Adele?

ADELE (O.S.)

Got it!

59 INT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

59

Adele answers the door. Luke stands outside wearing a suit.

LUKE

Hi.

She pauses, staring at his clothes, blindsided by deja-vu. He glances down at himself.

LUKE

Is there a stain? What?

ADELE

Nothing. It's just...seeing you there gave me a weird feeling. You wore that suit last time we went out.

(CONTINUED)

LUKE

Oh.

(beat)

I could go home and change.

ADELE

Don't be silly. It still fits and everything.

Entering the shot is:

DOC

Kids ready?

60 EXT - STANTON HOME - NIGHT

60

They exit the house, heading down the walk. The normally quiet residential street is filled with cars and people going by, all heading for the party.

WE PAN to reveal that The Point and the old lighthouse are just down the road, walking distance from the house.

61 EXT - "THE POINT"/OLD LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT

61

The party's getting into gear, people laughing and mingling, having a great time. Suddenly:

VOICE (O.S.)

There he is!

All eyes turn to Luke arriving with Adele and Doc. Spencer launches into an impromptu CLARINET RIFF of "When Johnny Comes Marching Home." The crowd BURSTS INTO APPLAUSE, some singing along. Luke is taken aback by this outpouring of affection.

Spencer waves the crowd silent, leans to the microphone.

SPENCER

I think Luke and Adele should lead the first dance, don't you?

More APPLAUSE. A FOLLOW SPOT kicks on, pinning Luke and Adele in a beam of light. People are clearing the dance floor.

LUKE

Uh...care to dance?

ADELE

I think we'd better.

Spencer launches into a slow version of "Stranger On The Shore." Luke and Adele begin to dance, awkwardly at first, painfully aware that every eye is on them. They soon find their rhythm, moving well together.

(CONTINUED)

ADELE
You're pretty good.

LUKE
Thanks. So are you.

ADELE
(beat)
When'd you learn to dance?

HARRY

is watching them with a beatific smile, eyes shimmering. Emmett and Irene are nearby, both beaming.

SPENCER

slows to a graceful pause, then signals the band to join in at double-time rhythm...

...which is everybody's cue. Other couples now drift in and start to dance. The FOLLOW SPOT is turned off, granting Luke and Adele some anonymity. They both breathe easier.

ADELE
Well. That was nerve-wracking.

LUKE
(nods at the band)
I'd kill that Spencer kid, except he's really good.

ADELE
Yeah. Looks like your investment paid off.

LUKE
Investment?

ADELE
Back in high school, you saved up and bought a clarinet. You wanted to be Benny Goodman in the worst way.

LUKE
And?

ADELE
You were Benny Goodman. In the worst way.

LUKE
Ouch.

(CONTINUED)

ADELE

So you gave the clarinet to Spencer.

LUKE

That was nice of me.

ADELE

Not really. Spencer used to drive you crazy when he was little. He'd follow you around all the time like a lost puppy...

LUKE

...so I bribed him with the clarinet. He started practicing all the time and left me alone.

ADELE

(beat)

Did you remember that, or...

LUKE

Just filling in the blanks.

She nods, draws closer. As they keep dancing, Luke sees:

Bob Leffert standing by himself. Mabel approaches him, asking for a dance. He shies away, shaking his head, hiding his hook hand in his pocket self-consciously.

62 HARRY

62

holds a glass of punch, watching Luke and Adele. Doc appears at his side.

HARRY

Look at 'em together. Aren't they a sight?

DOC

So they are, Harry. So they are.

Doc's reply seems a bit distant. Harry glances over.

HARRY

Something wrong?

Doc hesitates, wondering if he can put words to it -- or should even try. He pulls Harry aside. They find some folding chairs where they can sit and talk out of everybody's earshot:

DOC

Something is troubling me, Harry.

(CONTINUED)

HARRY

What could trouble you on a night like this? Just look...

(nods to Luke and Adele)

...your daughter dancing with my son. Everything the way it should be. God's in His heaven, Ben.

DOC

Still. I can't help wondering... where's Luke been all this time? I mean, nine and half years...

HARRY

What's it matter? He's home now.

DOC

He went missing during the war, right? So it stands to reason he must have been injured overseas and lost his memory then. So what happened when he came back, not knowing who he was? He start a new life for himself? A career?

(leans in)

Harry, what if Luke spent the last decade actually thinking he's somebody else?

HARRY

I don't care about that life. I care about his life here.

DOC

But don't you see? He might have people looking for him, people who care about him. Maybe even a wife and family. God sakes, Harry, you could be a grandfather and not even know it.

Harry absorbs this, shaken by the thought.

DOC

I'm not trying to step on your joy. It's my joy, too. But what if his memory does comes back? Which life is he going to remember? Which would he choose?

They both gaze off at:

63 LUKE AND ADELE

63

The dance ends amidst APPLAUSE. Mayor Cole mounts the stage.

ERNIE

Proud of your boy, Avery?

The drummer is AVERY WYATT, Spencer's dad. He pounds the KICK DRUM five or six times to register his pleasure.

ON THE KICK DRUM

is written: "WYATT'S HARDWARE STORE, LAWSON, CALIF."

MAYOR COLE

turns to the microphone, playing to the crowd:

ERNIE

Looks like you might have to find someone else to mix paint at the store, 'cause I think Spencer's got a big future ahead of him.

MORE APPLAUSE. He waits for it to settle, then:

ERNIE

You know, folks, here in Lawson, we gave a lot to our country. A lot. And we never complained and we never faltered. And we never forgot...

The crowd's completely silent now. Ernie's voice cracks slightly with emotion. He clear his throat, presses on:

ERNIE

We never forgot. And so when one of our own came back to us, it was like a miracle. Luke, seeing you walking down the street, it was...well it was kinda like seeing one'a my boys alive again. I think I speak for everyone here when I say that not a day goes by when we don't keep our boys' memories alive. But Luke, having you back among us...well, it helps us keep their spirits alive, too. God bless you, son.

Sustained APPLAUSE. Many in the crowd are visibly moved. When the reaction finally dies down:

(CONTINUED)

ERNIE

On a lighter note, we've had a special request from one of Lawson's leading lights, Irene Terwilliger. C'mon up, Irene.

The crowd APPLAUDS, welcoming her to the stage. Irene takes the microphone:

IRENE

I've tutored music in this town for more years than I care to say. In fact, many of you here tonight have been my students through the years. And as talented as you all were, I have to say, the most talented pupil I ever taught...

The FOLLOW SPOT kicks on, pinning Luke. He looks around, thinking it's somebody else.

IRENE

...was Luke Trimble.

Luke looks up at her, stunned.

IRENE

Luke, you played the piano like an angel. It would do my heart a world of good to hear you play again. Won't you come up?

APPLAUSE! Luke shoots a look of frozen panic at Adele. It's painfully obvious he doesn't remember ever playing the piano.

LUKE

(clenched smile)
You didn't tell me about the piano.

ADELE

Go ahead. You said any little thing could jog your memory.

Luke glares at her -- thanks heaps. He gets swept off toward the bandstand by the enthusiastic crowd, people urging him on and patting him on the back.

He mounts the stage, where Irene is waiting. They sit together at the piano. An expectant hush falls.

LUKE

Uh...I'm not sure I really remember ever playing.

(CONTINUED)

IRENE

Music is in the soul, Luke. Just put your fingers on the keys and let it come back to you. Franz Liszt, Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2.

He puts his hands to the keyboard, but it's completely unknown to him. He doesn't even know how to get his fingers started.

Irene, the very picture of patience, she puts her hands to the keys and shows him how, playing the beautiful opening bars.

IRENE

Like this...follow me...

Luke starts hitting the same keys, faltering a bit but pretty much managing to get the notes.

IRENE

Now you alone.

He plays the opening bars again and again in game but halting fashion, like a kid just learning. Finding the notes... getting a touch better...almost getting the hang of it...

...and as he plays, the Liszt cadence transforms, becoming increasingly fluid and uptempo...

...until Luke finds himself playing with complete assurance, laying down a blazing BOOGIE-WOOGIE RIFF. The crowd goes nuts, cheering and hollering.

Luke is stunned, but Irene is positively shocked. From the look on her face, you'd think she just heard the Pope break wind during Easter mass.

IRENE

Luke! Really! That's no way to treat Mr. Liszt! Stop that!

Luke keeps going, having the time of his life, fingers pounding the keys like lightning. Irene starts swatting the back of his head in prim outrage...

IRENE

Stop it! Stop it, I say!

...but Luke plows on, laughing helplessly as Irene keeps smacking his head to make him stop...

ANGLE ON CROWD

...while Emmett stares at Luke, coming to a realization. Whatever it is, he doesn't look too happy about it.

(CONTINUED)

IRENE (O.S.)
Who taught you that? I demand to
know!

Emmett glances in mounting panic at the people around him --
and shouts at the stage:

EMMETT
I taught him that! When you weren't
lookin'!

A BURST OF LAUGHTER from the crowd...

64 AERIAL SHOT

64

...and the camera drifts like a dream, the celebration now
just a small patch of colored light and revelry atop the bluffs
at the edge of the sea, the lighthouse turning endlessly as
the BOOGIE WOOGIE BEAT plays on...

65 MONTAGE:

65

Luke and Adele dancing the last dance...

...walking arm-in-arm down Adele's street, up to her door...

...kissing passionately on her doorstep...

...Adele going inside and Luke walking away, each unable to
take their eyes off the other...

...Luke walking the quiet streets of Lawson, smiling, feeling
completely at home here for the first time...

66 EXT - MAJESTIC - NIGHT

66

Luke comes up the street. He pauses, seeing a FIGURE in the
shadows up ahead. The figure moves into a spill of light. Bob
Leffert. Cap pulled low, eyes hollow.

LUKE
Bob? Bob Leffert, isn't it?

BOB
That's who I am. Question is...who
are you?

LUKE
I'm...not sure what you mean.

BOB
I knew Luke Trimble. Didn't like
him much. Not saying he was a bad
guy, just rubbed me the wrong way.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BOB (CONT'D)

(moves closer)

You know that feeling? Somebody rubs you the wrong way? You can't even explain why?

Leffert gets unnervingly close now, peering at Luke.

BOB

You kinda rub me that way. Not that that makes you Luke. So what I wanna know is...what kind of game are you running? Who are you really?

Luke is bristling, but keeps his cool:

LUKE

Just a guy trying to figure things out.

BOB

This town's had enough heartbreak. Too much. Me, I think you're setting everybody up for more. I hope I'm wrong. I haven't had to kill anybody since the war.

Bob steps past Luke and heads off, having said his piece. Luke is seething. He turns. Softly:

LUKE

Why didn't you dance with her?

Bob freezes, turns back. He drifts this way, head cocked as if he didn't hear right. Dangerous.

BOB

Excuse me?

LUKE

Seems to me if a pretty girl asks you to dance, and you say no, you came home more crippled than you thought.

Beat. Both men glaring. Bob punches Luke in the mouth with his good left hand, knocking him flat on his ass in the street.

Bob stands over Luke for a moment, fist still clenched as if to hit him again...then uncurls his fingers and walks away.

Luke rises painfully. He pulls a handkerchief, presses it to his bleeding lip...then walks on toward the Majestic, muttering:

(CONTINUED)

LUKE
Welcome home, Luke...

67 INT - MAJESTIC LOBBY - NIGHT

67

Luke enters, handkerchief still pressed to his lip. He stops, looks toward the auditorium, sees FLICKERING LIGHT within. It draws him forward...

68 THE AUDITORIUM

68

...and he stops at the auditorium doors, his face bathed in the soft flickering light of the TATTERED SCREEN.

A silent movie is playing. "The Big Parade." The decomposing nitrate print is badly scratched and stained. A young Renee Adoree is bidding tearful farewell to her lover, John Gilbert, as he marches off to fight the Great War.

Down in the first row, center seat, is Emmett. He's watching the poignant scene unfold up on the screen, wiping his eyes and nose occasionally with a handkerchief.

Luke finds himself strangely moved by all this. The silent film still conveys its emotional power after all these years, bad print and all. This is the magic Harry was talking about.

Luke glances up toward:

69 THE PROJECTION BOOTH

69

BRIGHT, FLICKERING LIGHT fills the frame. CAMERA MOVES past the light, closing in on the booth. We see Harry framed in the window next to a massive old carbon-arc projector.

Harry watches the film, eyes wide and moist as if experiencing that magic on the screen for the very first time. The bell on the projector CHIMES THREE TIMES, signaling the reel change...

70 INSIDE THE BOOTH

70

...and Harry smoothly changes over projectors. He takes the finished reel and heads over to the rewind bench, still watching the movie through the tiny booth window...

He senses a presence in the room. He looks over and sees Luke at the door. A stretch of silence, neither knowing what to say. Luke looks almost embarrassed, as if intruding on some private ritual.

HARRY
Beautiful, isn't it?

LUKE
Yes.

(CONTINUED)

Harry reverently mounts the reel on the rewind, carefully threads the film.

HARRY

This was the first movie we ever showed here. Your mother liked it so much I bought the print. Cost us our first month's profits. That was back in 1925. Before sound, you know. You were just a little kid then.

LUKE

Dad, I...

HARRY

Ha!

LUKE

...what?

HARRY

Since you've been back, that's the first time you've called me "dad."

Harry turns the crank, rewinding the film. He's about to say more, glances back to where Luke was standing...

...and finds him gone.

OUTSIDE THE BOOTH

Luke is leaning against the wall outside the door, emotionally drained by the evening. He closes his eyes as we

FADE TO BLACK

71 INT - HARRY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

71

Harry's sound asleep. A hand reaches in, shaking him gently.

LUKE

Harry? Dad? Wake up.

HARRY

What...what time is it?

LUKE

6:30. I thought we'd get an early start.

72 INT - MAJESTIC - DAY

72

Emmett heaves an old tarp off the concession counter, kicking up a cloud of dust. Irene flicks a lightswitch, illuminating

(CONTINUED)

the glass display case. It's filled with cobwebs. The lights flicker intermittently, shorting.

ANGLE SHIFTS TO Luke standing with a clipboard, face frozen, pen poised to make notes. Harry's at his elbow.

EMMETT

Display wiring needs help.

LUKE

(muttering)

Should'a stayed in bed...

He moves on, making notes, with Harry anxiously dogging his steps and peering over his shoulder.

73 INT - MAJESTIC OFFICE/LOBBY - DAY

73

Luke's hunched over an old adding machine, awash in a sea of papers and ledgers, trying to make sense of everything. Harry and the others are out in the lobby, cleaning as best they can, throwing anxious looks his way.

Luke emerges. Activity comes to a standstill.

LUKE

(checks his notes)

Okay, at minimum -- new screen, paint, refinish floors, replace carpet, re-do wiring as needed, fix plumbing as needed, plus about a hundred other repairs. I'm no expert, but I figure nine hundred, maybe a thousand dollars to get this place in shape.

IRENE

Oh. Oh my.

HARRY

A thousand dollars...

LUKE

And you have a grand total of 72 dollars and 16 cents in the bank. Your only source of income is my veteran's death benefit of forty dollars a month, which, strictly speaking, you're no longer entitled to, since I no longer seem to be dead.

IRENE

What...what about a loan?

(CONTINUED)

HARRY

To a man who ran his business into the ground? Irene, please.

(beat)

It's all my fault. I was neglectful, and this is the price of that.

IRENE

Don't say that.

HARRY

Well, it's true. Wanting to open this place back up. It's folly, Irene, pure and simple. Might as well just call it what it is.

A worried pause. Emmett scans their faces.

EMMETT

So that's it? We just give up?

CUT TO:

74 INT - TOWN HALL - DAY

74

The Lawson Town Council is in session, Mayor Cole presiding. Among the dozen or so PEOPLE assembled are Stan Keller and Avery Wyatt. VERA, the council secretary, is finishing up the minutes of the last meeting:

VERA

...motion was carried, nine to two, one abstention. The meeting was thereafter adjourned.

ERNIE

Thank you, Vera. Without objection, the minutes are accepted.

Luke, Harry, Emmett, and Irene slip into the room and take seats. Ernie glances up, noticing them, glad for the distraction:

ERNIE

The chair notes the presence this morning of Harry and Luke Trimble, and the rest of the Majestic staff. Frankly, the chair notes the presence of just about anyone who ever stumbles into one of these meetings. What brings you here, folks? Sudden interest in Lawson politics?

(CONTINUED)

LUKE

Well, no, sir...
 (stands, clears throat)
 ...uh, actually, we're here on
business of a sort.

DALEY THORNHILL, the council parliamentarian, pipes up, waving
 a copy of "Robert's Rules of Order:"

DALEY

Point of order, Mr. Mayor, this
 comes under the heading of new
 business.

ERNIE

I think we can make an exception
 here, Daley.

DALEY

It'll need to be moved and seconded.

Ernie rolls his eyes, then quickly and mechanically:

ERNIE

Motion to hear the speaker out of
 order.

STAN

Seconded.

ERNIE

Motion on the floor, discussion
 open, discussion closed, all those
 in favor signify by saying "aye."

EVERYBODY

Aye.

ERNIE

Opposed? Hearing no opposition,
 motion is carried.

(smiles to Luke)

Go ahead, son.

LUKE

Thank you. I'll make this short.
 The Majestic needs a lot of repairs,
 and the truth is we can't possibly
 afford them all. So we'd like to
 ask your permission to scrounge
 around for any surplus materials
 you might have lying around.

ERNIE

What sort of materials?

(CONTINUED)

LUKE

Oh, paint, brushes, plaster, light bulbs, that sort of thing. Plus, we'd like to ask for any volunteers who might pitch in and help.

The council members MURMUR amongst themselves.

AVERY

I could kick in a few things from the hardware store. And I'm sure Spencer'd be anxious to help.

HARRY

Thank you, Avery. That's very kind.

AVERY

Oh, please. Least I can do. That clarinet was the best thing that ever happened to my boy.

STAN

Motion to encourage the citizens of Lawson to help out the Majestic in any way they can...

DALEY

...short of the allocation of municipal funds...

ERNIE

...short of the allocation of municipal funds...

HARRY

Seconded!

ERNIE

Motion on the floor, discussion open, discussion closed, all those in favor signify by saying "aye."

EVERYBODY

Aye!

ERNIE

Congratulations, Luke, Harry. Where'd you like to start?

LUKE

Your basement.

75 INT - TOWN HALL BASEMENT - DAY

75

Ernie and the town council peer around at all the supplies stored down here.

ERNIE

Hell, I didn't even know this stuff was down here. Take what you can use.

Luke steps past him, pulls the huge piece of muslin off the war memorial.

LUKE

Harry, Emmett, grab the other end.

Ernie moves forward, gazing up at the statue. He looks down at the plaque, reading his sons' names. Luke glances over his shoulder as he and the others wrestle with the fabric.

LUKE

You know, that ought to be out where people can see it.

The council members trade glances. Luke and Harry stretch the muslin between them, snapping it taut into the camera lens...

MONTAGE WITH MUSIC:

SOME HARD-DRIVING PIANO BOOGIE KICKS IN...

76 INT - MAJESTIC - DAY

76

...and the muslin rises out of frame on a batten, revealing a row of guys hoisting it toward the ceiling of the stage with ropes -- Luke, Carl, Spencer, Emmett, members of Spencer's Big Band. Harry and Adele supervise, making conflicting motions with their hands and debating each other...

77 INT - MAJESTIC - DAY

77

...and a TRACKING SHOT takes us up the rows, revealing more and more activity...rotting carpet being pulled...floors being scrubbed...rows of seats being re-secured...

78 INT - MAJESTIC - DAY

78

...and we find Luke and Carl up on ladders near the stage ceiling, securing the muslin with spring stretchers...while down below, Emmett and Harry do the same...

79 INT - MAJESTIC - DAY

79

...rotting draperies are pulled down...the peeling paint scraped off...fresh paint applied with rollers...

- 80 EXT - MAJESTIC - DAY 80
...and the tarps drop from the front of the building to reveal the old neon tower in dusty, neglected condition. Luke and the others gaze up at it...
- 81 EXT - MAJESTIC - DAY 81
...and Luke hands up a power cable with a huge plug. WE FOLLOW it up a ladder to Adele, who in turn passes it up to:
Avery and Carl atop the marquee. They're re-wiring the neon. Carl connects the plug, hollers down for power. Emmett throws a switch below, causing a SHOWER OF SPARKS to erupt, as well as a lot of hollering and arm-waving. Emmett kills the juice...
- 82 INT - MAJESTIC - DAY 82
...and Harry turns the projector on, throwing a bright square of light. Luke and the others are down in the orchestra pit. They turn to check their new muslin screen. Bright and even from edge to edge...
- 83 EXT - MAIN STREET - DAY 83
...and Luke and Adele stroll along, both loaded down with supplies from the hardware store. Luke suddenly stops, peering in a store window...
...at beautiful POCKETWATCH on display. WE TILT UP with his look to reveal the word "PAWNSHOP" on the window glass...
- 84 INT - PAWNSHOP - DAY 84
...and a note is being handwritten: "ONE DOZEN FREE ADMISSIONS TO THE MAJESTIC, signed Luke Trimble." ANGLE WIDENS as Luke slides the note across the counter. The SHOP OWNER -- Stan Keller, as it turns out -- smiles and slides the pocketwatch across to Luke and Adele...
- 85 INT - MAJESTIC - DAY 85
...and the source of the PIANO BOOGIE is revealed as we find Luke at the upright piano in the orchestra pit, pounding the keys during a lunch break. Up at the sandwich table, Carl and the boys are stuffing their faces, enjoying the music...
...but Spencer is trading looks with the members of his band. One guy's tapping in rhythm, everybody getting the same idea...
- 86 INT/EXT - TOWN HALL BASEMENT - DAY 86
...and we find Luke and a dozen other men pulling the war memorial out into the sunlight with ropes and floor dollies, everybody shouting suggestions at once...

- 87 EXT - MAJESTIC - DAY 87
 ...and Spencer and his boys come pouring out of the "Wyatt Hardware Store" PANEL VAN that doubles as their touring bus, hurtling back into the theater with their instruments...
- 88 INT - MAJESTIC - DAY 88
 ...and Spencer joins in on Luke's piano boogie, blowing a STUNNING CLARINET RIFF. The other band members join in one by one, raising the roof with a dose of ragtime boogie...
MUSIC CONTINUES AS:
- 89 EXT - SANTA BARBARA BEACH - DAY 89
 ...a LITTLE BOY comes running up the sand, chasing birds. He pauses, seeing something in a rotting tangle of kelp. He grabs a stick, pokes it into the kelp...
 ...and raises Pete Appleton's overcoat into the air...
- 90 SAME BEACH - LATER 90
 ...and a familiar Mercedes Benz 220A is hoisted into the air by crane, spilling seawater before a CROWD OF SPECTATORS.
 ANGLE SHIFTS TO Agent Ellerby nearby, looking out of place in a dark suit. He's going through a water-damaged wallet, sorting various forms of Pete Appleton's I.D.
 Ellerby turns as Saunders walks up with a COUNTY ENGINEER:
- ENGINEER
 I'm telling you, there's no way that
 car was driven onto this beach.
 There's simply no access.
- ELLERBY
 So how'd it get here?
- ENGINEER
 Best guess? I'd say it fell in the
 river, got washed out here to sea.
- SAUNDERS
 River?
- ENGINEER
 You got two, three main tributaries
 dumping into the ocean along this
 coast...
 (points)
 ...to the north of here.

(CONTINUED)

Ellerby and Saunders both turn, gazing north.

MUSIC CONTINUES AS:

91 INT - MABEL'S DINER - DAY

91

A NEWSPAPER PHOTO shows the Mercedes dangling from the crane. The headline: "BOY, 5, FINDS SUSPECTED RED'S COAT ON SANTA BARBARA BEACH."

ANGLE WIDENS to reveal Harry at the counter, sipping coffee as he peruses the paper. Luke, Adele, Carl, Spencer, and a whole array of Majestic volunteers are scattered about, finishing lunch, everybody covered with plaster and paint.

CARL

Thanks, Mabel. Hey, you picking out something nice to wear for the big re-opening?

MABEL

You bet. Wouldn't miss it.

CARL

Hey, I don't think Bob's doing anything that night.

Bob shoots a dark look from the grill, aware that Mabel is now watching him.

BOB

Pretty sure I'm busy.

CARL

Too bad. Should see the place. It's really coming together.

MUSIC CONTINUES AS:

92 EXT - MAJESTIC - DUSK

92

It's just gotten dark. Luke and the others are out front, gazing up at Avery and Carl atop the marquee. Everybody's holding their breath.

Carl signals for power. The switch is thrown...

...and the neon kicks in, climbing the tower and spreading to the surrounding array like a giant, gaudy, joyful tiara. The Majestic comes to life before our eyes, lighting up the entire street...

MONTAGE AND MUSIC END as we

DISSOLVE TO:

93 EXT - TOWN HALL SQUARE - DAY

93

The whole town has turned out. The HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND finishes the last few bars of "The Star Spangled Banner." THE CONDUCTOR turns, nods to Mayor Cole up on the podium:

ERNIE

...let's all join together now in
silent reflection...in memory of
those not here...

At his signal, fabric is pulled away, revealing:

The BRONZE SOLDIER kneels in prayer at his comrade's grave in this park-like setting, flowers planted all around. Lawson finally has its War Memorial on display.

In complete silence now, Cole holds up the two faded gold stars representing his lost sons.

In the crowd, one by one, the gold stars of the town's boys are held aloft by their loved ones...dozens and dozens. Many faces are streaked with tears.

Luke and Adele stand together. Luke glances over at:

Bob Leffert in his WWII dress greens, standing with several other VETERANS, including Stan Keller and Emmett in their WWI uniforms. The men all raise a salute to the fallen, Leffert with his hook-hand.

PUSH IN ON LUKE

staring at the men, moved by their devotion as we

DISSOLVE TO:

94 EXT - MAJESTIC MARQUEE AND TOWER - NIGHT

94

The array flashes/stutters to life, the neon sequencers racing around in deco patterns. The marquee reads:

GRAND RE-OPENING TONIGHT!
GENE KELLY AN AMERICAN IN PARIS

95 INT - MAJESTIC - NIGHT

95

Harry paces in agitation before Luke, Adele, and Irene.

HARRY

Where is he? We have to open!

ADELE

Just give him a second. He's a little nervous.

(CONTINUED)

HARRY

He's nervous...

IRENE

Sshhh. I think I hear him.

All three wait, eyes riveted to the basement door. It opens a crack. Dog comes waddling out...

...followed by Emmett -- in his old usher's uniform. He stares at them, waiting for a reaction.

LUKE

Wow. Damn.

EMMETT

You think?

HARRY

Fits you like you never took it off.

EMMETT

I put on a few pounds since. Adele let it out.

HARRY

She did a fine job.

Luke prods Harry, who steps forward with a small box in his hands.

HARRY

Uh...this is really Luke's doing...

LUKE

It's from all of us.

Emmett accepts the box and opens it, stunned to find the beautiful pocketwatch within. He pulls it out by the chain.

EMMETT

Oh. Oh my.

LUKE

So you can make sure we always get started on time.

Emmett takes a moment to find his voice. He's very moved.

EMMETT

This is very fine. Very fine indeed.

LUKE

Ready to man your post?

(CONTINUED)

Emmett looks up at them...and smiles.

He attaches the pocketwatch to his vest. He pauses, shoots his cuffs and straightens his tie. This is his moment. He kicks the doorstops down, swings the doors wide...

...revealing people lined up outside. Luke and Harry exchange an electrified look. This is their moment.

HARRY

Let's show some movies.

Luke nods, steps out into the forecourt, enters...

96 THE TINY TICKET BOOTH

96

...where he sits on the stool and faces the window. Expectant customers wait outside the glass, faces peering in. Mayor Cole steps up, slides his money through the slot.

ERNIE

I have the honor of being the first.

LUKE

Two adults?

ERNIE

(big smile)

That's right.

Luke slides two tickets through the slot. Mayor Cole takes them, waves them at the line of people. The crowd APPLAUDS!

97 MAJESTIC LOBBY

97

People are streaming into the lobby. Harry's greeting them, chatting, accepting congratulations... but most of all, he's watching this miracle unfold with childlike joy and wonder, unable to believe it's really happening...

DISSOLVE TO:

98 BOOMING DOWN THE MAJESTIC MARQUEE

98

which now reads "FRED ASTAIRE -- ROYAL WEDDING." CONTINUE BOOMING DOWN to:

THE TICKET BOOTH

Luke selling tickets to the crowd. As a FAMILY takes their tickets and heads inside, Luke looks up and sees:

The next couple in line. Bob Leffert and Mabel. Both dressed up for what is obviously a date.

(CONTINUED)

Luke is stunned, but doesn't show it. Bob leans in.

BOB

Two, please.

LUKE

(gives them two)

Yes, sir. Enjoy the show.

They move on. Luke glances over his shoulder, watching them go in as we

DISSOLVE TO:

99 BOOMING DOWN THE MAJESTIC MARQUEE

99

which reads: "THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL."

MICHAEL RENNIE (V.O.)

(as Klaatu)

We have come to visit you in peace
and with goodwill...

100 INT - MAJESTIC - BEHIND THE SCREEN - NIGHT

100

Luke is straightening up backstage as "The Day the Earth Stood Still" bleeds through the screen from the other side, image reversed. The SOLDIER SHOTS! Klaatu is hit and goes down!

Somebody taps Luke on the shoulder. He turns to find Adele. She hands him a letter. Puzzled, he angles it toward the light of the screen and reads:

California State Bar Association
ADELE LOUISE STANTON
has PASSED the State Bar Examination

Luke looks up at her, thrilled and proud as can be.

LUKE

Wow. Does this mean you're qualified
to tend bar?

She punches him in the chest, both trying to stifle their laughter. He takes her in his arms, kisses her...

...while above them, Gort the robot lays waste to our armed forces, melting tanks and artillery with his eye-beam...

DISSOLVE TO:

101 BOOMING DOWN THE MAJESTIC MARQUEE

101

which reads: "SAND PIRATES OF THE SAHARA."

102 INT - PROJECTION BOOTH - NIGHT 102

The movie's in progress. Harry's contentedly threading up the changeover projector for the next reel.

103 INT - LOBBY - NIGHT 103

Quiet activity. Irene's doing a candy inventory. Emmett's sweeping up.

LUKE

is at the poster display, cleaning the glass with spray cleaner. He's staring at his own poster.

IRENE

Luke, dear. We'll need to order more Raisinettes. Oh, and Jujubees. Will you remember?

Luke steps back, checking to see if the glass is clean...

LUKE

Raisinettes and Jujubees, check.

...and pauses, frowning, getting a vague hit of deja-vu from the poster. He dismisses it, crosses to the counter, returns the spray cleaner to Irene.

LUKE

Having a run on candy?

IRENE

People have a sweet tooth, especially at the movies.

LUKE

Speaking of which...

He reaches over and swipes a box of candy from her display. Off her look of mock outrage, he grins and heads into...

104 THE AUDITORIUM 104

...where he stands just inside the doors. He opens the box and pops some candy in his mouth, chewing as he watches:

105 THE MOVIE 105

unspooling in black and white. A familiar low-budget Egyptian tomb. Sandra Sinclair (as Emily) looks adorably terrified as she creeps through dark corridors with PROFESSOR MEREDITH, her father. He holds a lantern aloft, peering into deep shadows.

(CONTINUED)

SANDRA/EMILY
 Father...are we lost?

PROFESSOR MEREDITH
 Can't tell...damnably dark...
 (beat)
 Where are Whetherby and Sykes? They
 should have been here hours ago...

106 PUSHING SLOWLY IN ON LUKE

106

watching the movie. His expression starting to register
 something...the barest flicker...

SANDRA/EMILY (O.S.)
 Wait! I see a light! Down that
 corridor!

PROFESSOR MEREDITH (O.S.)
 Stay behind me, child...

107 THE MOVIE SCREEN

107

Suddenly, Professor Meredith is struck from behind! The old
 man sprawls unconscious on the stone steps! Emily recoils in
 feminine terror as the evil but handsome PRINCE KHALID looms
 from the shadows, face flickering in the torchlight.

KHALID
 I knew I'd find you here. The lovely
 Emily. My desert dove.

Suddenly, the dashing and handsome explorer ROLAND drops
 between them in a cat-like crouch, rapier poised.

ROLAND
 You found more than that, you snake.

KHALID
 You! I thought you were dead!

ROLAND
 You thought wrong.

Khalid kicks over the brazier of coals and the fight is on!

108 PUSHING TIGHTER AND TIGHTER ON LUKE

108

becoming transfixed, watching by the movie. Why does this
 seem...familiar? He mutters softly:

LUKE
 You don't think you can win, do
 you...

(CONTINUED)

ROLAND (on screen)
You don't think you can win, do
you?

LUKE
Seems to me I am winning...

KHALID (on screen)
Seems to me I am winning!

LUKE
Roland, look out...

SANDRA/EMILY (on screen)
Roland, look out!

Luke's expression is going slacker and slacker, a mix of
puzzlement, fear, and ever-dawning recognition...

109 PROJECTION BOOTH

109

Harry cranks the carbon arcs together on the changeover
projector. He turns to the windows, hand on the lever,
preparing for the reel change...

KHALID (O.S.)
This time I'll make sure you're
dead!

ROLAND (O.S.)
Taste my steel you dog!

110 THE MOVIE SCREEN

110

Roland runs Khalid through with his sword. Khalid dies,
spitting curses. The lovers rush together on screen...

111 CLOSEUP ON LUKE

111

...and the look on Luke's face transforms to shock...

SANDRA/EMILY (on screen)
Oh, Roland.

ROLAND (on screen)
Oh, Emily.

LUKE
Oh, shit.

...because his memory is rushing back. He stumbles backward
through the swinging doors out into...

112 THE LOBBY

112

...where he presses against the wall in utter horror. His eyes go to the poster display case. He tears across the lobby...

POSTER DISPLAY

...and finds a damn smudge on the glass covering his name! He breathes frantically on it, rubbing it clean with his sleeve to reveal:

"Written by Peter Appleton."

He freezes, eyes going wide, numb all over. Softly:

LUKE

Oh. My. God.

(And from this point on, LUKE is PETE again.)

113 PROJECTION BOOTH

113

The projector CHIMES for the changeover. Harry stands poised, preparing to switch projectors...

...but a sharp stab of pain hits him in the chest. He winces, rubs his chest, tries again for the lever...but the pain redoubles. He sinks to his knees, gasping in pain:

HARRY

Oh, God...not now...

The film runs out of the first projector, flap-flap-flapping on the reel...

114 AUDITORIUM

114

...and the screen goes white. People start turning around, glancing up toward the booth, wondering what's going on.

115 LOBBY

115

Pete's still staring at the poster, unable to move, his world crashing around him. Emmett rushes from the auditorium:

EMMETT

Luke! Something's wrong!

PETE

Huh? What?

(CONTINUED)

EMMETT

The film broke or something, and I
can't raise Harry on the house phone!
He's not answering!

The words finally sink in. Pete tears himself away from the poster, rushing upstairs with Emmett at his heels.

116 PROJECTION BOOTH

116

Pete and Emmett burst in. Harry's sprawled on the floor. Pete rushes over, dropping to his side.

PETE

Harry! Jesus...
(to Emmett)
Get Doc Stanton!

117 BALCONY

117

Emmett rushes from the booth, hollering down into the auditorium:

EMMETT

Doc! Doc, Harry's in trouble!

People start rising from their seats. Doc jumps to his feet, hurrying up the aisle...

118 PROJECTION BOOTH

118

...while Pete loosens Harry's collar, trying to make him as comfortable as possible.

HARRY

I missed...missed...

PETE

Missed what?

HARRY

...missed the...goddamn reel
change...

PETE

I know, I know, keep still. You
just hold on, Doc's on his way...

119 INT - APARTMENT - SITTING ROOM/PARLOR - NIGHT

119

Thick silence. Pete sits with Adele, keeping vigil. Emmett and Irene hover silently in the hallway.

The bedroom door opens. Pete and Adele rise. Doc Stanton emerges, quietly closes the door.

(CONTINUED)

DOC
He's asking for you.

PETE
How is he?

DOC
It was a massive heart attack. His lungs have filled with fluid. His whole body is just...shutting down.

PETE
Can we get him to a hospital?

DOC
The move would certainly kill him. But even if we could, there's nothing they can do for him in a hospital that we can't do here.
(beat)
I'm sorry.

Pete absorbs this. He moves to the bedroom door...

120 INT - HARRY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

120

...and lets himself in. Harry's lying there, eyes closed, barely conscious, his breathing slow and labored. Pete moves to Harry's bedside, not sure what to do.

PETE
I'm here.

Harry's eyes drift open.

HARRY
Did you...did you...

PETE
Did I what?

HARRY
...get the last reel up?

PETE
No. Everybody went home.

HARRY
How will people know...how the movie ends? Good little picture, too. Damn shame...I'll never...see how it turns out...

PETE
The good guy wins.

(CONTINUED)

HARRY

Good. That's good. The good guy should always win...

PETE

Forget the movie. You just try to hang on...

HARRY

It's okay, son. It's okay. If I have to go, at least I'm going in my own bed, the same bed my Lily died in, and...knowing that my son is alive. That's not too shabby, is it?

PETE

Harry, I'm not...
(off Harry's look)
...not...ready to say goodbye.

HARRY

It's all right. It's all right. You're here. That's all that matters. Oh, God, I love you, son.

Pete's at a loss. Does he lie to a dying man? Or tell the truth and break his heart? He hesitates...and forces himself to say what Harry desperately needs to hear:

PETE

And I love you...Dad.

Harry smiles, eyes going unfocused...

HARRY

(softly)
Oh, so...much...lighter...

...and with that, he dies. At peace.

DISSOLVE TO:

121 EXT - LAWSON CEMETERY - DAY

121

A crowd of MOURNERS is gathered, with Pete and Adele nearest the grave. A REVEREND is finishing his eulogy:

REVEREND

...anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

(CONTINUED)

LONG LENS ON PETE

as the funeral breaks up. People drift over to Pete, offering condolences, shaking his hand, when suddenly:

CLICK! The image freezes in black & white.

The image resumes as before, people wiping frame, chatting solemnly with Pete...

CLICK! Another black and white still.

The motion resumes, but the flow is broken again and again by a series of frozen still images: CLICK! CLICK! CLICK!

AGENTS ELLERBY AND SAUNDERS

are snapping away with long lens cameras. Other FBI AGENTS are with them, some training binoculars on the funeral below.

CUT TO:

122 EXT - STREET/TOWN HALL - DAY

122

Pete wanders down the street by himself, still wearing his dark suit from the funeral, hands in his pockets. He's staring at the ground, lost in thought.

Adele catches up with him, falls in step:

ADELE

Hey.

PETE

Hey yourself.

ADELE

I was looking for you. You okay?

PETE

Adele...I may be many things...but okay is far from one of them.

ADELE

You want to talk about it?

Pete sighs. It's unavoidable. They walk up the grass...

123 THE WAR MEMORIAL

123

...and sit at the base of the statue.

ADELE

Luke...I know this can't be an easy day for you...

(CONTINUED)

PETE

You have no idea.
 (off her look)
 Your father said...I'd start to
 remember things.

Adele suddenly feels like she's walking on eggshells.

ADELE

And?

PETE

He was right.

ADELE

What...do you remember?

PETE

Everything.
 (pause)
 Adele, Harry wasn't my father. I'm
 not Luke.

ADELE

(small voice)

Oh.

Adele says nothing for the longest time. She stares off,
 letting it truly sink in. A tear spills down her cheek.

PETE

I'm sorry.

ADELE

Oh, god, I knew. I knew! I knew
 from the start! I wanted you to be
 Luke! I wanted you to be alive!
 You're so much like him, you have
 no idea. You don't know what you --
 what Luke meant to this town,
 suddenly being alive! You don't
 know what this town lost. You just
 don't know...

She rises, furious with herself:

ADELE

I'm so stupid! I knew you weren't
 Luke, but I let myself think...and
 I tried not to fall in love with
 you! And...and...I don't even know
 your name...

PETE

I'll tell you my name.

(CONTINUED)

ADELE

...no, don't. Look...whoever you are...I can't...I have to be by myself a while, okay?

She turns, walking across the street. Pete follows...

PETE

Adele, please!

...and he pauses, hearing a LOW RUMBLING SOUND. He turns, gazing down Main Street...

PETE'S POV

...as a COLUMN OF HUGE BLACK CARS veer into view, coming up the street. People are pausing to stare, some scurrying from their path. The cars keep coming, bearing down relentlessly...

ANGLE ON PETE

...and coming to an abrupt stop. Car doors fly open and MEN IN SUITS pour out, led by Ellerby and Saunders.

Pete sees his Hollywood agent, Leo Kubelsky, emerge from one of the cars, giving him a rueful look.

Townspople are drifting from all directions, most just back from the funeral, amazed at this invasion.

Adele watches in stunned silence from the sidelines. Doc appears at her side.

PETE

finds himself facing at least a DOZEN MEN. Ellerby turns to a CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATOR, motions toward Pete. The C.I. pulls a document from his bag as Sheriff Coleman rushes in:

COLEMAN

I'm Sheriff Coleman. Mind telling me what's going on here?

ELLERBY

(displaying I.D.)
Federal Agents. We're here to serve a subpoena...

(looks to Pete)
...on him.

COLEMAN

Luke Trimble?

(CONTINUED)

SAUNDERS

Sheriff, I don't know what this man has led you to believe, but his name is definitely not Luke Trimble.

Coleman is shocked into silence. As the townsfolk watch, the C.I. steps to Pete and launches into:

C.I.

By authority of the Congress of the United States of America, you are commanded to appear before the Committee on Un-American Activities in special session in Los Angeles, California, and there testify on matters of communist conspiracy and subversion. Herein fail not.

Pete, all eyes on him, accepts the subpoena as we

CUT TO:

124 INT - SHERIFF'S COLEMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

124

Pete sits surrounded by G-MEN. Coleman and Leo are present.

PETE

So am I under arrest?

SAUNDERS

You will be if you're not on that train in the morning.

LEO

Fellas, I'm here to guarantee his return. That was the deal. Now unless some law's been broken...

He looks questioningly to Coleman. Coleman, in turn, shoots a pointed look at the FBI.

COLEMAN

I'd have to say that doesn't appear to be the case.

ELLERBY

Appearances are tricky.

(beat)

Tell me, Sheriff, what is your political affiliation?

Coleman is taken aback by this.

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED:

124

COLEMAN

Me? I'm registered with the "go to hell" party. Always vote the straight ticket.

Ellerby and Saunders don't even blink. Ellerby calmly picks up his hat, heads toward the door.

ELLERBY

We'll just be canvassing the town a bit. Asking questions. Checking backgrounds. That sort of thing.

CUT TO:

125 EXT - SHERIFF'S OFFICE/STREET - DAY

125

Pete exits with Leo and Coleman. As Pete's eyes adjust, he sees PEOPLE standing in loose groups in the street -- among them Carl and Bob Leffert, Avery and Spencer Wyatt, Daley Thornhill, Ernie Cole, Mabel, Stan Keller...

Not an angry mob. Just a bunch of frightened, disillusioned people staring at him, running the gamut of emotions. Shock. Sadness. Betrayal. Pete hears AGENTS questioning people across the street:

AGENT #1

You've lived here all your life?

OLD LADY

Why...why yes, I have...

AGENT #2

Do you have any relatives in Russia?

Pete stares at these people, and they just stare at him. Nobody saying a word. Not much to say.

Bob Leffert spits on the ground, walks off. The others follow, drifting away by ones and twos, leaving Pete alone as we

DISSOLVE TO:

126 EXT - MAJESTIC - NIGHT

126

The marquee is flashing, but there's not a soul in sight.

127 INT - MAJESTIC - NIGHT

127

Thick silence. Irene's at the candy counter, wiping it down. Emmett's hovering by the door. Pete's pacing the lobby. Leo's sitting on the stairs leading up to the balcony, waiting. Pete meets Leo's gaze, checks his watch, turns to Emmett and Irene:

*
*

(CONTINUED)

127 CONTINUED:

127

PETE

Let's call it a night. I'll close up.

A reluctant beat. Emmett and Irene leave. Pete and Leo are left alone. *

LEO

What did you expect? Big turnout?

PETE

I expected somebody.

LEO

Why? These aren't your people. This isn't your town. L.A. is.

PETE

Not after the Committee gets through with me.

LEO

Kid, look. I been on with our lawyers all day. Our lawyers have been on with their lawyers... *

PETE

So?

LEO

So, they hate to admit it, but maybe they ran off half-cocked. Maybe you're not the top commie spy they thought you were.

PETE

Gee. There's a relief.

LEO

Hey, don't knock it, a break's a break. Seems they're anxious to save a little face after the big stink they made, which means they might be in a mood to compromise.

(off his look)

I'm talking about a deal.

(CONTINUED)

127 CONTINUED: (2)

127

Leo pulls a folded sheet of paper from his jacket pocket, hands it to Pete. Pete cautiously unfolds it.

LEO

The studio lawyers had this drawn up.

PETE

(reads aloud)

"I, Peter Appleton, by way of purging myself of my indiscretions do hereby renounce my membership in the Communist Party, and wish to provide the following names of fellow members, so that those persons may have the opportunity to do as I have done..."

(glances up)

Jesus, Leo.

LEO

Boilerplate, kid. They even provided the list of names.

PETE

(scans it)

I don't know any of these people.

LEO

Doesn't matter. They've already been named, so it means nothing. All you do is show up, read the statement, salute the flag, everybody goes home happy.

PETE

And I won't be a communist anymore?

LEO

That's the idea.

PETE

Doesn't matter that I never was one?

LEO

(rises, faces him)

Don't split hairs, kid. This is all a game, but it's their game. You play by their rules, or they'll destroy you. Bottom line.

PETE

I thought this was a democracy.

(CONTINUED)

127 CONTINUED: (3)

127

LEO

That's a fairy tale we tell our
kids so they'll go to sleep at night.

(off Pete's look)

The Declaration of Independence?
The Constitution? Those are pieces
of paper with signatures on 'em.
And you know what a piece of paper
with a signature is? A contract.
And you know what a contract is?
Something that can be renegotiated
at any time. It just so happens the
House Un-American Activities
Committee is renegotiating the
contract this time around. Next
time it'll be somebody else, but
it'll always be somebody.

(leans in)

You want your life back? Read the
statement.

Pete hesitates, nods. Leo pats his arm, turns to go.

LEO

See you at the station, bright and
early. We'll grab some breakfast
before the train leaves.

128 EXT - MAJESTIC - NIGHT

11

Leo heads up the street. Pete is left standing alone in the
lobby, staring at the statement. He rouses himself, moves
across the lobby, disappears from view...

...and a few moments later, the marquee and neon tower are
turned off, lights flickering into darkness. A SLOW, BLUESY
PIANO STRIDE begins...

129 INT - MAJESTIC AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

129

...and we find Pete at the piano, jacket off and sleeves rolled
up, playing in the empty theater.

ANGLE WIDENS SLOWLY to reveal Emmett standing in the aisle.
Pete realizes he's there, lets the tune trail off.

EMMETT

You think they'll come back?

PETE

The customers?

(Emmett nods)

Sure they will.

He motions for Emmett to join him.

(CONTINUED)

PETE

Emmett, we have to talk.

Emmett walks down, perches in a theater seat.

PETE

I'm leaving tomorrow morning.

EMMETT

Why?

PETE

(beat)

Were you on Main Street this afternoon? When those men came in to town?

Emmett looks puzzled. Pete sighs.

PETE

I'm sorry to be the one to tell you this...but I'm not Luke. It was all a mistake. Luke went off to war and isn't coming back. I'm not him.

EMMETT

Yeah. I knew that.

PETE

You did?

EMMETT

Since the welcome-home dance. When you got up and played the piano.

PETE

You're kidding me.

EMMETT

Lemme tell you something. Luke could play the classics like nobody's business...but when it come to getting jazz, he was a lost boy. I know, 'cause I tried. When I heard you poundin' that fine roadhouse boogie up there, I knew you wasn't Luke. Couldn't be.

PETE

And you didn't say anything?

EMMETT

Just 'cause I knew, didn't mean everybody had to. This town needed you to be Luke, so you were Luke.

(CONTINUED)

PETE

But I'm not Luke anymore. That's why I'm heading back to L.A.

EMMETT

For how long?

PETE

For good.

EMMETT

(tries to absorb this)
But...but who's gonna run the Majestic?

PETE

You are.

EMMETT

Me?

PETE

You and Irene.

EMMETT

But...

PETE

Emmett. The Majestic belongs to you. It always has.

Pete pulls Harry's keys, unclips the chain from his belt.

PETE

Harry would have wanted you to have these. Go on, take 'em...

Pete unhooks a single key -- the littlest one -- and hands the rest to Emmett.

PETE

...except this one. I'm going to need this.

DISSOLVE TO:

130 INT - LUKE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

130

Pete finishes packing a bag. He turns to the dresser, where the tiny key and Luke's Medal of Honor lay side by side.

He sweeps them off the dresser, pockets them...

131 EXT - MAJESTIC - DAY

131

...and emerges into daylight, handing his bag to Leo, who's waiting at the curb with a TAXI CAB.

PETE

Go have breakfast without me. I'll meet you at the station.

LEO

Where do you think you're going?

PETE

I have to return something.

Pete heads up the sidewalk, leaving Leo behind:

LEO

What, a library book? Don't do this to me, kid, I got a nerve condition!
(calls after him)
You better be there!

CUT TO:

132 EXT - LAWSON CEMETERY - DAY

132

A beautiful, sun-dappled day. Luke comes up the hill among the tombstones. He pulls the tiny key from his pocket...

THE WORLD WAR TWO GRAVES

...and stops, seeing a figure at Luke's headstone. It's Adele, sundress fluttering in the breeze.

He stands for a long moment, wondering if he should just turn around, not wanting to disturb her...

...but she realizes she's not alone and looks his way. Pete breaks the awkward silence:

PETE

I didn't know you were here.

ADELE

I was just...saying goodbye.

Pete nods, approaches her.

PETE

Adele. I'm sorry the way things turned out. I never meant to hurt anybody, least of all you.

(CONTINUED)

ADELE

I know that. People get hurt
sometimes, we can't always help it.
It's just the way things are.

(beat)

So. You really a communist?

Pete is taken aback, can't help laughing.

PETE

No. I'm really not.

ADELE

I didn't think so.

(smiles)

Only a dyed-in-the-wool capitalist
could get the Majestic up and
running.

PETE

Great endorsement. Can I call you
as a witness?

ADELE

If it helps.

(beat)

What are you going to tell the
committee?

PETE

I'm going to tell them what they
want to hear. I'm sorry, I won't do
it again, blah blah blah.

ADELE

(beat)

You're not serious.

PETE

What's wrong with it?

ADELE

Everything.

PETE

Can we be more specific?

ADELE

Well, aside from the fact that this
is a free country, and you can be a
communist if you want to be a
communist, leaving that aside, if

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ADELE (CONT'D)

somebody accuses you falsely, you have a duty as well as the right to stand up and suggest they drop dead. Specific enough?

PETE

Oh, Emile Zola, slow down. I can see you feel strongly about this...

ADELE

Damn right I do.

PETE

...fine, but it doesn't make the game any less rigged. There's a reason they call it a witch hunt.

ADELE

There's such a thing as burden of proof. Innocence before guilt.

PETE

Maybe in law school, but the rest of us have to live in the real world. In the real world, I mess with these people, I go to jail.

ADELE

All the more reason to fight them!

PETE

What, like Luke would have done?
(off her look)
Go ahead, say it.

ADELE

Yes, like Luke would have done!

PETE

Oh, God, here it comes. Go ahead, tell me again what a great guy Luke was. Because I haven't heard that enough yet.

ADELE

He would have stood up to these people.

(CONTINUED)

PETE

Yeah, well, he's not here to vouch for that, is he? We have to take your word for it, and, frankly, everybody's memory of Luke is a little rose-colored in this town.

(moves closer)

Besides, I'm not Luke. While he was off liberating Europe, I was running the PX at Fort Dix. He played Liszt and Chopin like an angel, I played boogie-woogie in the Officer's Club for tip money on the weekends. He couldn't wait to save the world. Me, I was happy not to go overseas.

ADELE

Why?

PETE

Because I didn't want to end up like him! I wanted to survive!

(off her look)

You stand up for a cause, you get mowed down. That's the real world.

Adele just stares, really seeing him for the first time.

PETE

I want my goddamn life back, Adele! Is that so hard to understand?

ADELE

Wow. I really did have you two confused.

Pete turns and leaves, heading back down the hill.

CUT TO:

133 EXT - TRAIN STATION PLATFORM - DAY

133

The train is in. Passengers getting on and off. ANGLE SHIFTS TO LEO, sweating bullets. He turns, relieved to see Pete walking toward him. Leo rushes over:

LEO

Where the hell have you been!?

PETE

Walking.

LEO

For two hours?

(CONTINUED)

He grabs Pete's arm, hustling him over to their bags waiting on the platform. As Pete picks his up, he notices:

Ellerby and Saunders. Watching from a distance. Making sure they get on the train.

Pete and Leo head in the opposite direction to board the train...but Pete pauses, seeing:

Doc Stanton. He's been waiting too. He crosses the platform, somewhat embarrassed and uncertain.

PETE

How is she?

DOC

She came back from the cemetery a bit upset, but...she'll be fine.

He pulls something from his jacket pocket -- a small package wrapped with brown paper and twine.

DOC

She wanted you to have this.

PETE

(takes the package)

What is it?

Doc smiles and shrugs...

DOC

I didn't think to ask.

...and walks away.

CUT TO:

134 INT - TRAIN - DAY

134

Pete unwraps the small package to find a small, dog-eared softcover book, obviously old. On the cover:

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES
ANNOTATED EDITION

Pete shakes his head, amazed and annoyed. He idly flips it open...and finds a handwritten inscription:

"TO ADELE, THE GIRL WITH ALL
THE ANSWERS. LOVE, LUKE"

This gives him pause, realizing this book must be very precious to Adele. He starts riffling the pages...

(CONTINUED)

...and a letter falls out. He picks it up. It's an old World War Two "V-Mail" letter, yellowed with age. He checks the date on the letterhead: "June 4, 1944." Feeling a bit like a peeping tom, he begins to read:

PETE (V.O.)

Dearest Adele. I have a feeling we'll be moving out very soon, so I may not get a chance to write again for some time. First, let me thank you for all your letters. I can't tell you how much they cheer me up and make me think of home...

CAMERA PUSHES SLOWLY IN on Pete...as Pete's voice FADES OUT and Luke's voice FADES IN...

LUKE (V.O.)

Adele, I'm not trying to frighten you, but please know that I'm going into this having accepted the fact that I may not be coming back. If that should happen, you must promise me you will not mourn my passing, but move on, and live your life to the fullest in order to give mine meaning... and to honor the cause we're over here fighting to achieve. I could speak in platitudes about tyranny and oppression, but it comes down to this... when bullies rise up, the rest of us have to beat them back down, whatever the cost. That's a simple idea, I suppose, but one worth giving everything for.

(beat)

The only thought that saddens me, aside from failing at our task, is the thought of never seeing you again. Not holding you, not seeing our children grow, not spending the passing years with you...

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

135 INT - INFANTRY BIVOUAC - NIGHT

135

...and we find ourselves SLOWLY PUSHING IN on a solitary FIGURE hunched over a field table, writing a letter by lamplight. His back is to us, so we never see his face...

(CONTINUED)

LUKE (V.O.)

...but if I should not come back,
know that I will never truly leave
you. Should you be walking some
years from now on a beautiful spring
day, and feel a warm breeze graze
your cheek, that warm breeze will
be me, giving you a kiss...

...and CAMERA DRIFTS IN OVER HIS SHOULDER, PUSHING DOWN to
the letter, closing in on the words as:

LUKE (V.O.)

Remember, finally, above all, that
I love you. Luke.

136 INT - TRAIN - DAY

136

Pete stares numbly at the letter, not knowing what to feel,
stunned by the knowledge that he's just met Luke.

CUT TO:

137 INT - PARK PLAZA HOTEL BALLROOM - LOS ANGELES - DAY

137

HUAC has taken over the ballroom. The place is packed to the
rafters, lit by television and newsreel lights. Up on the
dais, CONGRESSMAN T. JOHNSTON DOYLE sits center stage. Seated
to his right is Majority Counsel Elvin Clyde.

Doyle SLAMS his gavel, bringing a hush to the room...

138 INT - STANTON LIVING ROOM - DAY

138

...while Doc fiddles with the rabbit-ear antenna of his TV
set, trying to get clear reception.

DOYLE (on TV screen)

The Committee and the chamber will
come to order...

ANGLE FROM KITCHEN

Adele is chopping vegetables, trying to ignore the broadcast
as Doc fiddles with the television b.g.

139 INT - PARK PLAZA BALLROOM - DAY

139

DOYLE

Let me begin by saying we have a
full agenda. I admonish those here
to view testimony today to keep
order at all times, or this chamber
will be cleared.

(CONTINUED)

Beat. Doyle scans the silent room. He clearly means business.

DOYLE

Call the first witness.

All eyes and cameras swing toward the door as:

PETE

enters the chamber. A BLIZZARD OF FLASHBULBS follow him to the witness table, where he takes his seat next to Bannerman, the studio lawyer.

Pete glances back and sees Leo seated right behind him in the first row. Leo gives him an encouraging look as:

DOYLE

The witness will please stand and raise his right hand.

(Pete rises)

Do you swear that the testimony you are about to give before this committee will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

PETE

I do.

DOYLE

Be seated and state your full name and place of residence for the record.

PETE

Peter Appleton. Hollywood, California.

DOYLE

In the interest of brevity, I'm informed you have a prepared statement you'd like to read.

Pete hesitates, reaches into his jacket pocket...

140 INT - STANTON HOME - DAY

140

...while Adele drifts to the kitchen door, watching in spite of herself.

141 INT - PARK PLAZA BALLROOM - DAY

141

Pete pulls out the statement and rises...but, suddenly, Elvin Clyde leans to his microphone:

(CONTINUED)

CLYDE

Mr. Chairman, before the witness reads his statement, I'd like to ask a few clarifying questions. Just to clear the air.

Doyle, mildly surprised, glances to Clyde.

CLYDE

I'm sure we all agree the American people deserve to know the extent of the communist conspiracy that threatens our very way of life.

Doyle hides his displeasure -- he'd like to get this over with as efficiently as possible -- but:

DOYLE

Fine. I'll allow it.

Pete is trading surprised looks with Leo and Bannerman.

BANNERMAN

(leans to his mic)

Mr. Chairman, with all due respect, we were told the witness would be allowed to read his statement.

DOYLE

And so he will, Counsel. But he'll answer a few questions first.

CLYDE

(leans forward)

Mr. Appleton, I hope you intend to be fully forthcoming with this committee.

PETE

Yes, sir.

CLYDE

(refers to his notes)

You mention your home is Hollywood, California. But isn't it true that for the last several months you've made your home in a town called Lawson?

PETE

Yes, that's true.

CLYDE

And have you ever met...an "Albert Lucas Trimble?"

(CONTINUED)

PETE

No, sir, that wouldn't be possible.
Luke Trimble is dead.

CLYDE

Ah, yes, I see that here...
(glances up)

...and yet that didn't prevent you
from masquerading as Luke Trimble
during your time in Lawson.

PETE

I wasn't masquerading. I was mistaken
for Luke. There was an accident...

Clyde picks up a newspaper, displays it. FLASHBULBS POP as:

CLYDE

I'm sure anybody who reads the paper
is by now familiar with your
"accident," Mr. Appleton. An accident
which, oddly enough, came hard upon
your being named by this committee.
Forgive me, but it all sounds a bit
convenient.

PETE

Convenient or not, it happened.

CLYDE

What I fail to understand is why
you were in such a hurry to leave
Los Angeles in the first place. A
reasonable person might view that
as a flight from authority.

142 INT - WYATT'S HARDWARE STORE - DAY .

142

Avery, Spencer, and their CUSTOMERS are glued to the radio as:

PETE (filtered)

I was not fleeing, sir. I simply
went for a drive and had an accident
that affected my memory.

CLYDE (filtered)

And what is the state of your memory
now?

PETE

My memory is fine, sir.

143 INT - PARK PLAZA BALLROOM - DAY

143

CLYDE

I'm relieved to hear that. Perhaps you might recall the item being placed before you...

A COMMITTEE PAGE crosses to Pete, lays a photostat on the table before him. Pete peers down at it.

CLYDE

It's the attendance roster for the "Bread Instead of Bullets Club" of the University of California, Los Angeles, dated October 3rd, 1940.

(scans down)

Referring to line thirty seven of the document, does your printed name and signature appear there?

PETE

It does.

CLYDE

Mr. Appleton, tell us about the "Bread Instead of Bullets Club."

PETE

Do you want to know what I knew then? Or what I know now?

CLYDE

Start with then.

PETE

Well, if the committee will note line thirty six of the document.

CLYDE

Thirty six? "Lucille Angstrom?"

PETE

I was courting Miss Angstrom at the time. I attended the meeting for the sole purpose of being with her.

CLYDE

Are you asking this committee to believe you attended a meeting of a communist organization because of a...a girl?

(CONTINUED)

PETE

Yes. I attended the meeting not as a member, but to be near her. I'm sure even a Majority Counsel like yourself is familiar with the concept of impressing a girl.

A RIPPLE OF LAUGHTER in the audience. Doyle BANGS his gavel.

DOYLE

Chamber will come to order. Mr. Appleton, you will please confine your answers.

PETE

I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman.

DOYLE

Continue, Mr. Clyde.

CLYDE

I'm having trouble reconciling your testimony here, Mr. Appleton. We're told you're prepared to read a statement purging yourself of communist ties, yet when questioned about the meeting you attended, you claim not to have gone as a member.

PETE

I didn't.

CLYDE

Then what did you attend as?

PETE

I'm a little hesitant to say.

CLYDE

You agreed to be forthcoming. I insist you do so now.

Pete glances around uncomfortably, leans to the microphone.

PETE

Well, I went as...a horny young man.

The chamber ERUPTS IN LAUGHTER. Doyle BANGS his gavel...

144 INT - MABEL'S DINER - DAY

144

...while Mabel, Carl, Mayor Cole, Coleman and a host of other folks laugh at Pete's comment. Even Bob can't help smiling.

(CONTINUED)

ERNIE

Damn, he doesn't wanna spar with these boys. They'll eat him alive.

145 INT - PARK PLAZA BALLROOM - DAY

145

DOYLE

Mr. Appleton, I remind you this is a legally constituted committee of the United States Congress. Believe me, you do not want to incur our wrath. Now you can either answer these questions appropriately or plead the Fifth Amendment. One way or the other, I wish to get on with the business of this committee.

PETE

(swallowing his anger)

Sir, as I understand it, the Fifth Amendment pertains to self-incrimination. I cannot invoke it, because I've done nothing wrong.

BANNERMAN

(intervenes)

Mr. Chairman, what is the purpose of these questions? Mr. Appleton came here today with the intention of cooperating fully with this committee, and thus far has been treated as a hostile witness.

DOYLE

Point taken, Counsel. Why don't we just cut to the chase and let Mr. Appleton read his statement?

CLYDE

Mr. Chairman, if the witness is not pleading the Fifth, I do have further questions.

TIGHT TWO SHOT

Doyle, at the end of his patience, covers his microphone with his hand and whispers angrily to Clyde:

DOYLE

Look, Elvin, let's not open this can of worms any further. I want this little turd to read his goddamn statement and get the hell out of here.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DOYLE (CONT'D)

(leans back to his
mic)

The committee sees no cause for
further questions. Mr. Appleton may
proceed with his statement.

Bannerman gives Pete a nod. Pete picks up the statement and
rises...

146 INT - STANTON HOME - DAY

146

...while Adele watches from the kitchen doorway, her heart in
her throat.

147 INT - PARK PLAZA BALLROOM - DAY

147

Pete hesitates, working himself up to it. Finally:

PETE

"I, Peter Appleton, by way of purging
myself of my indiscretions..."

His voice trails off. Silence.

DOYLE

Mr. Appleton?

PETE

I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman.
(clears his throat)
I think I need some water.

DOYLE

Go ahead, son.

Pete shakily pours a glass of water from a pitcher and drinks.
The silence in the room is deafening.

Pete turns, sees Leo and Bannerman both staring holes in him.
Pete covers his microphone and leans over. In whispers:

PETE

I can't do this.

BANNERMAN

Pete, I'll make this simple. You
read that statement, or you go
straight to jail for contempt.

PETE

Jail?

LEO

Jail. Now read the goddamn statement!

(CONTINUED)

Pete absorbs this, rises to his feet, unfolds the statement.

PETE

"I, Peter Appleton, by way of purging myself of my indiscretions, do hereby renounce..."

And again he stops. Doyle leans forward.

DOYLE

Mr. Appleton, the committee's patience is wearing thin.

PETE

Yes, I understand that, Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry...

He folds the statement carefully, puts it down, glances around the room.

PETE

...sorry. I guess I'm not very good at this sort of thing...

(beat)

...but it occurs to me...there's a bigger issue here today than whether or not I'm a communist.

CLYDE

There is no greater issue.

PETE

Well, actually...not to be contrary, I think there is...

(takes a deep breath)

...gosh, I really, uh, don't know quite what to say here.

He takes another sip of water, steadies himself.

PETE

Fact is, I've never been a man of great conviction. I never saw the percentage in it. And, quite frankly, I suppose I lacked the courage. See, I'm not like Luke Trimble. He had the market cornered on those things. I never met the guy...but I feel like I've gotten to know him a little bit...and the thing is, I can't help wondering what he'd say if he were standing here right now.

Pete pauses, scared. But determined. Mustering all his courage, he looks Doyle and Clyde right in the eye:

(CONTINUED)

PETE

You know, I think he'd probably tell you the America represented in this room is not the America he died defending. I think he'd tell you your America is bitter, and cruel, and small. I know for a fact his America was big. Bigger than you can imagine. With a wide open heart. Where every person has a voice, even if you don't like what they have to say. If he were here, I wonder how you'd respond...if you could explain to him what happened to his America.

DOYLE

Mr. Appleton, you are skating on the very thin edge of contempt.

PETE

Well, that's the first thing I've heard today that I completely agree with.

An UPROAR from the spectators. Doyle BANGS his gavel...

148 INT - MAJESTIC AUDITORIUM - DAY

148

...while Emmett, alone and listening to the radio, cackles out loud...

149 INT - PARK PLAZA BALLROOM - DAY

149

As the room comes to order, Bannerman frantically tries covering for Pete:

BANNERMAN

Mr. Chairman, my client is clearly under an enormous strain as a result of Mr. Clyde's belligerent questioning, and not responsible for his comments. We wish to invoke the Fifth Amendment at this time...

PETE

...no, no, we don't...

BANNERMAN

...yes, we do...

(CONTINUED)

PETE

...no, Kevin, we don't, so knock it off, okay? Just shut the hell up and let me get through this...

(to the committee)

...the Fifth Amendment is out of the question, but there is another amendment I'd like to invoke. I wonder if anybody here is familiar with it...

He pulls Adele's book from his pocket, flips it open to a specific page, reads aloud:

PETE

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press...

150 INT - STANTON HOME - DAY

150

Adele is glued to the TV, eyes filled with tears.

PETE (on TV)

...or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

151 INT - PARK PLAZA BALLROOM - DAY

151

PETE

That's the First Amendment, Mr. Chairman. It's everything we're about, if only we'd live up to it. It's the most important part of the contract every citizen has with this country. And even though this contract...

(holds up book)

...the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, even though they're just pieces of paper with signatures on them...

(a pointed glance to Leo)

...they're the only contracts we have that are most definitely not subject to renegotiation. Not by you, Mr. Chairman, not by you, Mr. Clyde, not by anybody ever. Too many people have payed for this contract in blood.

(CONTINUED)

He pulls one last thing from his trouser pocket, holds it up for them to see. Luke's Medal of Honor.

PETE

People like Luke Trimble. And all the sons of Lawson, California.

Pin-drop silence in the room. Pete gathers up the book and the medal, pockets them...

PETE

When you get right down to it, fellas, that's really all I have to say to this committee.

...and then turns and simply walks out. The chamber ERUPTS IN PANDEMONIUM. Doyle furiously BANGS his gavel...

DOYLE

The witness will resume his seat! You are not excused, sir!

...but the NOISE IN THE ROOM is drowning him out. Doyle pauses, glancing around, realizing...

...that the noise is turning into DEAFENING APPLAUSE. The room is on its feet. Doyle shoots a poisonous look at Clyde, then motions to the C.I., whispering urgently in his ear...

152 CAMERA POV - INT/EXT - PARK PLAZA - DAY

152

...as doors swing open onto the Park Plaza steps, revealing a crush of REPORTERS sweeping toward CAMERA, surrounding us with SHOUTED QUESTIONS and SIZZLING FLASHBULBS...

...and ANGLE SHIFTS to Pete atop the steps, fielding questions as best he can, trying not to be overwhelmed. There's a dreamlike, surreal quality to the blur of faces, the shouted questions, the waving microphones...

LEO AND BANNERMAN

observe the feeding frenzy from the sidelines. The C.I. approaches Bannerman, muttering to him. Leo joins the conversation, and before long, all three men are throwing glances in Pete's direction...

CUT TO:

153 INT - LEO'S CADILLAC LIMO - DAY

153

The door SLAMS and the car peels away from the Park Plaza, leaving the mob of reporters behind. Pete and Leo ride in back, grateful for the silence.

(CONTINUED)

LEO

You have a way with words. You ought to be a writer.

Pete, emotionally exhausted, can only give a tired laugh.

LEO

Drop you somewhere?

PETE

Home. I gotta pack.

LEO

Pack?

PETE

If I'm going to prison, I'm gonna need at least a toothbrush and clean underwear.

LEO

What makes you think you're going to prison?

PETE

Leo, you were there, you saw what happened. I just told those guys to go screw themselves.

LEO

That's one way to look at it.

PETE

How many ways are there?

LEO

Try this one. Those knuckleheads made a hero out of you without meaning to. What are they gonna do, promote you to martyr? I don't think so.

(beat)

I told you, this is about them saving face. If you're gonna be a hero, you're gonna be their hero.

(off Pete's look)

While you were out front with the reporters, some committee lawyer came up to us talking deal.

PETE

(warily)

What kind of deal?

(CONTINUED)

LEO

I told you, the committee feeds on names. With a high-profile witness like yourself, any name will do.

PETE

But I didn't give them any names.

LEO

What, all of a sudden, "Lucille Angstrom" isn't a name?

PETE

But...I didn't give them her name. They gave me her name. They already had it, it was right in front of them.

LEO

That's not the way they see it.

PETE

Why should it even matter? She's just a girl I knew in college. She's not in show business...

(apprehensive beat)

...is she?

LEO

You should keep track of your school chums. Turns out she eventually joined the communist party. She's Lucille Angstrom Hirschfield now, and she happens to be a producer for "Studio One" on CBS.

PETE

...oh...oh my god...

LEO

Which puts you in the clear. At this very moment, Committee Chairman Doyle is before the press, thanking you for your testimony purging yourself.

PETE

Thanking me? For what, ruining this woman's life?

(CONTINUED)

LEO

Climb down off your cross, kid, you didn't ruin her life. The committee already knew about her. She was named six months ago.

(off Pete's look)

Hell, who do you think named you?

PETE

(numb)

She...named me?

LEO

Water under the bridge, my friend. Point is, your movie's back in production. You report for work in the morning, so get some rest.

(beat)

Congratulations, kid. You got your life back.

HOLD ON Pete, drained, staring at nothing as we

CUT TO:

154 CLOSEUP ON PETER APPLETON

154

The exact same shot that began the film. He's back where he started -- in the office of Warner Samuels, in the middle of a story meeting. Dialogue plays fast and loose O.S., everybody brainstorming fixes to Pete's script.

As before, we never leave Pete's closeup during the entire scene:

VOICE #1

...but what about the end of the movie? It doesn't seem, I dunno, loaded enough...

VOICE #2

...doesn't feel like the character went through enough anguish...

VOICE #1

...anguish, right. I mean, guy shows up at that rally at the end, makes an impassioned speech, how we gonna know how noble he is unless he suffers more?

VOICE #3

So what about that cave-in? If there's room in the script to lay in anguish, it's gotta be there...

(CONTINUED)

VOICE #4

How about a serious injury? I know he breaks his arm, but what if it's worse...

VOICE #5

...we could break his leg...

VOICE #3

...no, that's like a bad showbiz joke, break a leg...

VOICE #6

Look, if a mine falls in on you, I'm thinking that's serious. What if he winds up in an iron lung?

VOICE #7

What, he should go to the rally in an iron lung? They should roll him up there?

VOICE #8

Guys, you don't wind up in an iron lung when a rock falls on you. C'mon, think...

A pause. Men thinking. Scratching. Drumming pencils. Pete suffering silently, staying zen.

SAMUELS

Hold on. I think I got a what if.

(beat)

What if, the main character, what's his name now?

VOICE #1

Heywood.

SAMUELS

Another terrible name. Change it. What if during the cave-in, no-name gets conked on the head...and goes blind. That way, during the rally, his faithful dog who saved him now leads him up there to give the big speech.

A hushed beat, then everybody at once:

VOICE #2

Oh my God, I'm choked up...

VOICE #5

You? Look at me, I got tears...

(CONTINUED)

VOICE #4
 ...it's better than great, it
sings...

VOICE #6
 ...not a dry eye in the house, not
 a dry eye...

VOICE #1
 Let's ask the writer. What do you
 think, Pete?

A pause. All attention now focused on Pete.

PETE
 Wow. That's just...
 (beat)
 ...just about the dumbest idea I've
 ever heard.

Stunned silence in the room. Pete glances around.

PETE
 Hey. I got a what if.

And with that, he stands up out of frame. WE HOLD on this
 empty shot. We hear him cross the room. A DOOR OPENS AND
 CLOSES. A long beat, then:

VOICE #1
 Did he just leave?

CUT TO:

155 EXT - UNION STATION - DAY 155

In all its deco glory. A YELLOW CAB pulls up...

156 INT - UNION STATION - DAY 156

...and Pete, carrying a bag, steps to the Western Union window.

PETE
 I'd like to send a telegram, please.

WESTERN UNION MAN
 (grabs a pencil)
 Yes, sir?

PETE
 Dear Adele, STOP. Coming back to
 Lawson to return what I borrowed,
 STOP. Also would like very much to
 ask you a question, STOP....

157 EXT - CALIFORNIA COAST - DAY 157

A TRAIN winds its way through gorgeous scenery.

PETE (V.O.)

If you are not on the platform when I arrive, I will understand, STOP. I will leave Luke's medal and your book with the station-master, get back on the train, and just keep going, STOP.

158 INT - TRAIN - DAY 158

Pete sits in a window seat, peering ahead, not looking too hopeful. Lawson coming up.

159 THE TRAIN 159

pulls into the depot, shuddering as the brakes are applied.

PETE

stares through the glass, his expression changing as:

LUKE'S POV

reveals the entire population of Lawson has turned out. Pete, stunned, rises from his seat...

160 EXT - LAWSON STATION - DAY 160

...and steps down from the train. The HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND strikes up. A hand-lettered banner reads:

WELCOME HOME, PETE!
LAWSON'S FAVORITE SON!

Everybody's here, from Mayor Cole to the Wyatts, from Stan Keller to Daley Thornhill to Emmett:

EMMETT

(grinning)

Knew you couldn't stay away.

Pete moves through the crowd with people pressing in from all sides...and sees Bob Leffert with Mabel clinging to his arm, the two of them looking very much like a couple.

BOB

Welcome home.

PETE

You too.

(CONTINUED)

Pete moves on, trying to find Adele...

...and there she is. Waiting for him. Pete steps up to her...

TWO SHOT

...and says nothing for a moment. He holds out his hand.

PETE

My name is Peter Appleton.

ADELE

Pleased to meet you, Pete.

(beat)

So what was your question?

Pete hesitates, staring into her eyes...

PETE

I forget.

...and pulls her into a passionate kiss. A CHEER GOES UP around them. CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal the train platform, with Pete and Adele kissing at the center of the crowd...

PETE (V.O.)

"Happily ever after" is a relative term, folks. My world is much smaller now, and my dreams are very different than they were...

DISSOLVE TO:

161 EXT - MAJESTIC - NIGHT

161

CAMERA PUSHES IN on the tiny theater, all lit up like a gaudy tiara. People are buying tickets, hurrying in for the show...

PETE (V.O.)

...but I have something now that I never had before. I have the magic. And it's for sale at the Majestic, every day of the year. All you need is the price of a ticket.

...and as the next couple step up, we find Pete in the tiny ticket booth:

PETE

Two adults?

WE IRIS DOWN on him and

FADE OUT

