

THE MOSQUITO COAST

a screenplay

by

Paul Schrader

based on the novel

by

Paul Theroux

Producer: Jerome Hellman

Director: Peter Weir

Second Draft
Revised

1. EXT. COUNTRYSIDE, MASSACHUSETTS DAY

A classic New England scene. Green fields stretch away down a hill toward a cluster of red-painted farm buildings. A picture postcard accompanied by the sounds of droning bees and the occasional bird call.

Alien sounds, faint at first, drift toward us--laughter, a snatch of song, the chatter of foreign voices.

The camera eases imperceptibly back to frame the view in the window of a stationary pickup truck.

ALLIE (O.S.)

Here come the savages.

The "savages" appear from the direction of the farm buildings, tracking slowly across the fields, their silhouettes shimmering in the May heat. They are Honduran migrant workers, dressed in shabby clothes, some with rags on their heads, others wearing broad-brimmed hats. There are both men and boys in the group, all of them carrying long knives. They form a striking contrast with this most Yankee of landscapes.

A match is struck in the cab of the truck and clouds of smoke from a cigar diffuse the scene.

ALLIE (O.S.)

Why do they bother to come here?

More cigar smoke.

ALLIE (O.S.)

Money you tell me?

The first face we see in the truck belongs to CHARLIE FOX, 13--he glances up at his father. Charlie's face is pleasant, innocent, intelligent--we'll see the story through his eyes.

His father continues:

ALLIE (O.S.)

But how could it be money?

Cut to ALLIE FOX, a strongly built man in his mid-forties. He stares out the window, contemplatively chewing on his thin cheroot.

CONTINUED

1. CONTINUED

Suddenly, he's all action, as if what he's just seen has both excited and infuriated him. He starts the truck, guns the engine and releases the brake, as a torrent of words pour from his mouth.

ALLIE (O.S.)

It sure as heck isn't money.
These days a dollar's only
worth twenty cents.

CUT TO:

2. INT. TRUCK, CREDIT SEQUENCE DAY

Allie drives hard and fast toward the town of Northampton. Close on Allie's lips, as the words fly--

ALLIE

They're migrant workers,
right out of the jungle,
didn't know when they were
well off...I'd have traded
places with them. They think
this is paradise. Should never
have come. Know what they've
got down there in the jungle?
Geothermal energy. All the
juice they need five-thousand
feet underground. It's the
earth's bellybutton.

Close on Charlie as he sneaks a glance at his father;
he loves these tirades.

ALLIE

(continuing)

No T.V. where they come from.
No Nipponese Video crapola, and
look at the ecosystem in the
tropics. Hasn't changed since
the world began. Why do they
think we have the answers?

Allie gives Charlie a playful jab in the ribs. Charlie
beams; he has the most unique, the most courageous, the
best father.

CONTINUED

2. CONTINUED

ALLIE
(continuing)

They don't know what to do with
what they've got...Geothermal
energy. Why change things when
you can come here and go to pieces?

The words stream from Allie as he builds to his
finale.

ALLIE
(continuing)

'Give me the wretched refuse of your
teeming shores,' have a Coke, watch
T.V., go on welfare, get free money,
turn to crime. Crime pays in this
country. Mug somebody, become a pillar
of the community, why does anyone put up
with it?

The rave is over and there is a sudden, overwhelming
silence. We become aware of the rattles and squeaks of
the vehicle. Allie glances at Charlie.

ALLIE
I'm just thinking out loud.

END CREDIT SEQUENCE

CUT TO:

3. EXT. NORTHAMPTON, STREET DAY

The pickup swings into Main Street.

CUT TO:

4. INT. TRUCK DAY

ALLIE
I don't know. Look around, Charlie.
This place's a toilet.

Northampton, a small American town. A little too artsy,
a little too cute maybe--but certainly no toilet.
Teenagers share the sidewalk with locals and weekending
New Yorkers. Their truck approaches a gaggle of small
town girls:

CONTINUED

ALLIE

(continuing)

It's not the college girls, though they're bad enough.

(motions to Charlie)

Look at Tugboat Annie over there. The size of her. She's so big it would only take eleven of her to make a dozen. But that's fat--that's not health. That's cheeseburgers.

He sticks his head out the window and hollers:

ALLIE

That's cheeseburgers.

The girls turn open-mouthed; then return to their gossip.

Allie wears a faded Sears work shirt and sweat-stained baseball cap. The flaps of his pockets and collar are frayed white with wear. Charlie wears a loose short sleeve shirt.

Allie slows the truck as they near the supermarket. He points out an ice vending machine.

ALLIE

They sell ice--ten pounds for half a buck. But water's as free as air. Those dingbats are selling water! It's big news--water's good for you! Low-cal beer--know what's in it? Know why it keeps you thin? Know why it costs more than regular? Water!

"Wattah," Allie repeats in the Yankee fashion as he parks the truck.

CUT TO:

5.

EXT.

STREET, NORTHAMPTON

DAY

Charlie jumps out of the cab and steps alongside his father; they head for the supermarket. Allie wears old "refitted" army pants. Buttoned and zippered pockets have been patch-quilted onto the olive fatigues; his lower half resembles a walking junk drawer. It would take half an hour to search him. They pass a policeman as they go. The policeman eyes Charlie intently, then follows.

CONTINUED

5.

CONTINUED

POLICEMAN
Shouldn't he be in school?

ALLIE
(w/o breaking stride)
Sick.

The officer overtakes them, blocking their path.

POLICEMAN
Hold on. Why isn't he in bed, then?

ALLIE
With a fungal infection? Go on,
Charlie, show him. He doesn't believe
me. Take off your shoes. Give him a
whiff.

Charlie dutifully bends over to untie his shoelaces.
The policeman thinks better of it.

POLICEMAN
Forget it.

ALLIE
(smiling)
Don't apologize. It's a sign of
weakness.

POLICEMAN
(hard)
What did you say?

ALLIE
(still smiling)
Just thinking out loud.

They resume walking.

ALLIE
Would you really have taken off your
shoes and showed that cop your healthy
toes?

CHARLIE
You asked me to.

CONTINUED

5. CONTINUED

ALLIE

Right. But what kind of sense does it make when cops go 'round looking for fungal infections while murderers and rapists roam the streets. I tell you Charlie, no one thinks of leaving this country--I think of it every day. I'm the last man!

CUT TO:

6. INT. HARDWARE STORE DAY

The electronic doors crash open as Allie and Charlie enter the neon-lit store. Allie strides down an aisle, Charlie almost jogging to keep up with him. They approach a counter. A clerk looks up. He sighs as Allie approaches; he has dealt with Mr. Fox before.

ALLIE

I want a rubber seal, eight feet of it, with foam backing.

The clerk nods and heads for the storeroom; he knows Allie is not one for small talk. Allie turns to Charlie, continuing an earlier train of thought.

ALLIE

You know why gas is so expensive? They put water in it - you don't believe me?...

Allie's voice fades and we hear Charlie's narration. He speaks with the voice of a mature man, remembering these events. Sometimes he speaks with the reflected wisdom which time has brought; at other times he speaks as if he were still thirteen, remembering what he felt at that moment.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Father had dropped out of Harvard, to 'get an education,' he said. He was an inventor, a genius with anything mechanical. Nine patents, six pending. I grew up with the belief that the world belonged to him and everything he said was true.

CONTINUED

6.

CONTINUED

The hardware clerk returns with a coil of rubber, interrupting both Allie's diatribe and Charlie's narration. Allie examines the coil, spots the stamp indicating its country of manufacture--and hands it back to the clerk.

ALLIE

Don't want it.

CLERK

That's what you asked for.

Allie shoots him a pitying look.

ALLIE

(smiling)

Who are you working for, the Japanese?

CLERK

If you don't want it, just say so.

ALLIE

I just said so, Jack. It's made in Japan. I don't want my hard-earned dollars converted into yen. I want an AMERICAN length of rubber seal, with foam backing.

The clerk has heard all this before, and spotting another customer, he scuttles away.

ALLIE

Do You Work Here?

The clerk glances back, then introduces himself to a customer. Allie leads Charlie out of the store.

ALLIE

We'll find it someplace else.

(looks back)

Maybe I should have said
'Sayonara!'

CUT TO:

7.

EXT.

SCRAPYARD

DAY

Charlie and Allie wander through the organized chaos of a junkyard. Everything from piles of battered furniture and household goods to stacks of old tires. Allie whips out a screwdriver from one of his many pockets and begins taking the back off an old "fridge." He's looking for a "rubber seal with foam backing."

CONTINUED

7. CONTINUED

ALLIE

I'll tell you, Charlie. I'm not going into Northampton again. I'm sick of meeting people who want things I've already rejected. Things they've seen on T.V.--where they talk about nuclear war as if it were some game show question--here, give me a hand with this.

Allie disentangles the rubber coil from the back of the fridge and passes it to Charlie.

CUT TO:

8. INT. ALLIE'S WORKSHOP DAY

Allie works on a curious wooden box filled with a tangle of copper pipes. Charlie watches as his father fits the recently acquired rubber seal into the inner workings of the machine.

Allie's workshop reflects the outward disorder of his ordered mind. Maps and schematic diagrams are tacked to the shelves; tools and coils of wire hang from every available space. Allie's inventions, some complete, some discarded, some in progress, stand between tool benches and cardboard cartons. Mottoes and quotations, lettered on pieces of cardboard, are tacked to shelves and cupboard doors.

Charlie's brother, JERRY, age eleven, enters the workshop and wanders over to join Charlie.

ALLIE

It's like a human's insides.

(Jerry and Charlie peer into the box)

See? Entrails and Vitals.

(He points with a screwdriver)

Brisket. Digestive tract. Respiration. Circulatory system. Fatty tissue.

JERRY

What is it, Dad?

Allie closes the lid, turns smiling to his sons.

ALLIE

It's perfection, that's what it is. Just wait'll old Roly sees it.

CUT TO:

9.

EXT.

WORKSHOP/FOX HOUSE

DAY

Allie and the boys struggle out of the workshop carrying the wooden box. They place it on the back of the pickup parked in the driveway.

The Foxes live in a large, somewhat idiosyncratic farmhouse set back from the narrow road. Signs of self-sufficiency abound; a well-tended vegetable patch, a solar heating system, and an elaborate composting machine.

Twin girls, APRIL and CLOVER, aged 9, play on the front porch. Allie ruffles Clover's hair as he makes his way inside.

CUT TO:

10.

EXT./INT. KITCHEN WINDOW, FOX HOUSE

DAY

As Charlie locks up the tailgate of the truck, he glances up to the open kitchen window to see his father and mother talking. His mother is an attractive, intelligent country girl in her early thirties. She's referred to by all in the family, including Allie, as "Mother." Charlie's point of view is diffused by the fly-screen mesh on the window, and it's rather like looking at an old faded photograph.

MOTHER

Polski was looking for you.

ALLIE

Don't worry about Roly.

MOTHER

He was pretty mad, said you'd promised to fix the hopper.

ALLIE

Forget that. I got something better for him out there.

MOTHER

Allie, you promised...

ALLIE

Mother, I'm gonna knock his boots off, I'm gonna straighten his hair...

CONTINUED

10. CONTINUED

Close on Charlie watching. The dialogue in the kitchen fades into narration.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Mother was always perfectly calm. Father lectured us, but she never made speeches. When he was around, she gave him her full attention, but when he was away, she was ours. Father didn't approve of school, so he kept us at home, and Mother became our teacher.

Through the window we see Allie playfully embrace his wife. Her laughter drifts outside. Close on Charlie.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Together, they seemed like a wild man and an angel.

CUT TO:

11. INT. ALLIE'S PICKUP/ROAD THROUGH A FIELD DAY

Allie follows a battered old truck through a narrow corridor of asparagus growing on either side of the road. The truck stops to unload its cargo of migrant workers. They take little notice of Allie and his boys, in the cab of their pickup, as they file off toward their primitive quarters, after a hard day in the fields. Allie studies them, puffing on his cigar, lost in thought, as he was the first time he saw them.

ALLIE

Imagine the problems they have in the jungle without refrigeration. If they saw an ice-cube they'd probably think it was a diamond or some kind of jewel.

(He turns to the boys)

Ice is civilization.

CONTINUED

11. CONTINUED

CHARLIE
Maybe they don't have
electricity?

Jerry glares at his brother, then turns away. He's envious of the special relationship between his older brother and his father.

ALLIE
You don't need electricity for
refrigeration--just suction.
You can get ice out of fire (he
smiles), you'll see.

Allie draws on his cigar, stares at the men.

ALLIE
(continuing)
'Savages.'

He says the word with affection. They watch as one of the men waves his long asparagus knife in the air.

JERRY
Are they dangerous?

ALLIE
Not as dangerous as your
average American. And only
when they get mad. You know
they're mad when they're
smiling.

Allie smiles at the boys. The truck ahead moves off and Allie follows.

CHARLIE
Then what?

ALLIE
They turn into animals, killers.
Animals sort of smile just before
they bite you.

JERRY
Do those men bite?

CONTINUED

11. CONTINUED

ALLIE

Know how they do it, Jerry? Kill you?
I'll tell you.

(he lowers his voice)

They hollow you out. That's why it
would take courage to go to their
country--and not ordinary gumption,
but four-o'clock-in-the-morning
courage. Who's got that?

The boys look uneasy and Allie smiles to himself at
this.

ALLIE

Admit it boys, this is better than
school.

CUT TO:

12. EXT. POLSKI'S FARM DAY

The Fox pickup pulls onto a semicircular gravel
drive in front of the Colonial style "mansion."
Beyond the main house stretches an asparagus farm,
replete with modern farm machinery, a shiny jeep
and several warehouses.

Allie's wood contraption slides on the flatbed as
he brakes.

TINY POLSKI--having spotted Allie coming--steps out
of his house. Polski, 50, short and plump, sports
an L.L. Bean shirt, clean Dubbelwares and shiny
boots. The kind of man who's always dressed for
work but never gets dirty.

Allie hops out of the cab; Charlie and Jerry follow.

POLSKI

I was looking for you all over.
You fix my hopper?

(He notices the box)

What's this?

Allie smiles at him.

ALLIE

Got a match, doc?

POLSKI

You come all the way over here
to ask for a match, Allie?

CONTINUED

12. CONTINUED

ALLIE

Yep. And a glass of water, if it isn't too much bother. Regular faucet water.

Muttering "vegular water," Polski goes inside. Mrs. Polski appears at a window and looks out. Allie turns to the boys.

ALLIE

He's going to love this.

A moment later Polski returns with a box of kitchen matches and a glass of water. Allie thanks him for the water, sniffs it, then walks around his box-like invention. Polski speaks with an ingrained Eastern European accent.

POLSKI

Pretty small for a coffin.

ALLIE

Ain't a coffin.

(opens box)

What do you see?

POLSKI

Nuthin.

ALLIE

That's right.

(to Charlie)

You're the witness.

Allie pours out half the water then places the glass inside his contraption. He adjusts the pipes and fittings which protrude from the box, then lights a kerosene burner underneath.

POLSKI

Don't tell me you're going to cook a glass of water?

Allie's having a grand old time. Charlie looks nervously from Polski to his father.

CONTINUED

12. CONTINUED

ALLIE

You won't be disappointed, doc.
How's the asparagus?

POLSKI

Too much of it. It's the heat. I
got more than I can store. What's
this anyway?

Allie's contraption coughs smoke.

ALLIE

Charlie, what is it?

CHARLIE

It looks like a fat baby. A fat baby
boy.

ALLIE

'Fat Boy.' Good. That's what we'll
call it.

Charlie beams--he's named father's invention. Polski
turns to Charlie.

POLSKI

Vat is it? Ask your father. He
never gives me a straight
answer.

Allie flourishes a cigar, lights it with a Polski match
and blows a slow ring of smoke as if he has all the time
in the world.

POLSKI

I've got work to do, Mr. Fox.
Mind opening up that box? The
water must be cooked by now.

Allie thinks, then turns to Charlie.

ALLIE

Let's take a look.

Allie, now the roadshow magician, pushes up his sleeve
and reaches into "Fat Boy." He withdraws the glass with
much ado and hands it to Polski, who bobbles it,
shifting it from one hand to the other.

CONTINUED

12. CONTINUED

POLSKI

A hot potato--I mean, a cold one!

The glass is frosted over.

ALLIE

Go on. Pour it.

Polski turns the glass upside down and shakes it. It's frozen solid. Allie says triumphantly:

ALLIE

Ice.

POLSKI

Ain't that sumthin.

ALLIE

But where's the juice? Where's the electric cord?

POLSKI

Kerosene.

ALLIE

(winks at Charlie)

You mean I made ice out of fire?

POLSKI

So it seems.

ALLIE

Want to know how it works?

POLSKI

Some other time.

ALLIE

Stick your hand in there. Feel how cold it is. Take your fingerprints off. You've never seen anything like it. This is just a scale model. I'm planning to make a huge one. What do you think?

POLSKI

It's ingenious, Mr. Fox. I always said you were ingenious. That's why I hired you. Now I have work to do. It's a fine invention, but I got no use for it.

CONTINUED

12. CONTINUED

They watch as Polski turns and walks toward his asparagus.

Allie struggles with conflicting emotions. He wants to walk away, but he can't. He grabs the specimen of ice and hurries after Polski. Charlie watches, dumbfounded. He's never seen his father chase anyone after being snubbed. Allie thrusts the melting ice at Polski.

ALLIE

You're out of touch with reality, doc! I'm asking you to consider the possibilities of the thing! No noise, no juice--you could run it on chicken shit for that matter!

POLSKI

Electricity's cheap.

ALLIE

What about ten years from now? Or twenty? What then? Think of the future!

POLSKI

(turning away)

I won't be here in the future.

ALLIE

That's America's epitaph!

POLSKI

(boiling)

Look. I'm in the asparagus business, not the inventing business. I pay you plenty to keep this farm running and right now we're harvesting more asparagus than I can store!

ALLIE

Is that your problem Doc? Well, I could preserve the excess!

POLSKI

Yeah? How?

ALLIE

Fat Boy, that's how.

CONTINUED

12. CONTINUED

POLSKI

That thing there? It's too small.

ALLIE

Wake-up, Doc. I told you it's a scale model... I see a vast cooling plant and cold store, seven or eight levels, looks like a cathedral with a chimney for a steeple. What's that bulge in the ground? That's your power unit. All your pipes and tanks underground. It's a perpetual motion machine. You get your refrigeration, your heat, run a duct to the house and you've got air-conditioning.

Allie has woven his spell about Polski, and his eyes gleam.

POLSKI

Now that could be something. I could store the crops. Sell when the price goes up!

Allie is appalled.

ALLIE

Why that's the lousiest thing I ever heard! Creating shortages so prices rise!

POLSKI

That's business, Mr. Fox.

ALLIE

Monkey business! You want to use MY Fat-Boy to cheat people.

Polski seems distraught, about to cry.

POLSKI

You're talking yourself out of a job, Mr. Fox.

ALLIE

Don't threaten ME Doc!

CONTINUED

12. CONTINUED

POLSKI

You can't make me sell that
asparagus. I only wish I knew what
to do with it.

ALLIE

Eat it!

POLSKI

Keep talking, I might just have to
let you and your contraption go.

He abruptly turns and walks toward the house. Charlie
joins his father. Allie stares at Fat-Boy.

ALLIE

'Contraption.' That nearsighted
turkey called it a 'contraption.'

CUT TO:

13. INT. DINING ROOM, FOX HOUSE NIGHT

The family eats in unfamiliar silence. Knives and forks
clatter on plates, eyes furtively dart in father's
direction.

APRIL

Why's Daddy not talking.

CLOVER

He's thinking, April.

CHARLIE

He's just tired, aren't you Dad?

JERRY

(to Clover)

You don't know anything, Clover.

CLOVER

More than you, crummo.

JERRY

Spackoid.

CONTINUED

MOTHER

Will you ALL stop bickering.

Allie abruptly rises from the table and moves to the window.

MOTHER

Come on now, girls--clear away. Boys wash-up. Hurry up Jerry.

The children reluctantly move, still arguing amongst themselves. Mother crosses to Allie.

MOTHER

Call him up tomorrow, explain...

ALLIE

No. I'm happy, Mother.

MOTHER

Happy? Walking out on a perfectly good job? What do you want, Allie?

ALLIE

Elbow room. I just realized it.

Charlie, alone at the table, watches and listens as his father walks toward the front door.

MOTHER

Where are you going?

ALLIE

To give Fat-Boy to the 'savages.'
They'll appreciate it. Won't cost them anything to run, and they can come back from the fields and have a nice cold drink.

(he embraces Mother)

I had to do it, Mother; I'm the last man!

CUT TO:

14.

INT.

CHARLIE'S BEDROOM

NIGHT

Mother tucks Charlie into his narrow bed.

Charlie reaches to turn out the table lamp:

CHARLIE

I think something is going to happen, Mother.

MOTHER

What do you mean?

CHARLIE

Something terrible.

CONTINUED

14. CONTINUED

She turns off the lamp, adjusts Charlie's blanket:

MOTHER

When you're young, the world seems big and strange. If you think about it too much, you start to worry.

CHARLIE

But Dad's not young, and he's worried.

MOTHER

No. He's just got a lot on his mind. He's always like this before a new invention.

CHARLIE

But something is going to happen to us.

MOTHER

(kisses him)

Something good.

CUT TO:

15. EXT. FOX HOUSE NIGHT

Somewhere a dog has started barking and it's soon joined by others, the sound echoing around the countryside.

CUT TO:

16. INT. CHARLIE'S BEDROOM DEAD OF NIGHT

Charlie wakes with a start, as if from a nightmare. He gets up and tip-toes out to the hallway.

CUT TO:

17. INT. HALLWAY, PARENTS' BEDROOM NIGHT

His mother is asleep alone in the bed. Charlie stands in the doorway. There is no sign of his father.

CUT TO:

18. EXT. FOX HOUSE NIGHT

Dressed in hip boots and pajamas, Charlie heads toward the asparagus fields--flat and smooth as a parking lot.

The fields pass by as if in a dream--some muddy-colored, others ash-grey.

CUT TO:

19.

EXT.

ASPARAGUS FIELD

NIGHT

Charlie has walked down the road between the asparagus crops. To one side of the road, he sees a dim light in the migrant workers' hut, his father's pickup parked outside. He crouches down as several figures emerge from the building. They carry torches, their light projecting grotesque shadows against the surrounding out-houses.

Charlie inches into an irrigation ditch as the ghostly procession moves out into the fields. Before them they carry a wooden cross bearing the shape of a man. Charlie hears Allie's detached voice.

ALLIE (V.O.)

They hollow you out.

The men set the cross upright. The body slumps into place.

ALLIE (V.O.)

I'm the last man, Charlie!

The men, muttering to themselves, drift away. The crucified figure remains silhouetted in the night.

Soaked with fear, Charlie cowers in the trench. The voice from the cross speaks softly now:

ALLIE (V.O.)

I'm the last man, Charlie.

Charlie wants to run but he must know. He summons up all his courage as he creeps slowly toward the body. He's almost at the base of the cross when the head of the figure suddenly drops onto its chest, sending out a shower of straw. Charlie flops with relief at the foot of the scarecrow.

CUT TO:

20.

INT.

HALLWAY, FOX HOUSE

DAY

A KNOCK on the front door. Allie walks through the living room, opens the door a crack, then calls back into the kitchen:

ALLIE

It's the men, Mother.

CUT TO:

21.

EXT.

FOX HOUSE

DAY

Allie walks out among a motley group of Polski's MIGRANT WORKERS:

ALLIE

(expansive)

Now, what do you troublemakers want?

The migrants giggle. They look at Allie obediently, their faces shining with admiration and gratitude. Mother and the children step onto the porch. Allie speaks to SEMPER, the leader of the group.

ALLIE

What you got there, brother?

Semper offers him his machete; Allie admires it.

ALLIE

That's a beauty. I could shave with this. Thank you very much, sirs. We'll need it where we're going.

Mother is puzzled by this last remark. Allie takes the machete, tests its sharpness. Jerry and Charlie share a look. Allie beams, winks at them. He has a "secret," which he'll reveal when he's good and ready. The men chatter to him in bastardized Spanish.

ALLIE

They're thanking me for Fat-Boy. They want to meet you. That's Mr. Semper there. He speaks good English.

SEMPER

(heavy accent)

No.

ALLIE

(makes introductions)

This is my wife, Mrs. Fox; that's Charlie--step forward, Charlie--Jerry, and the twins, April and Clover.

CONTINUED

21. CONTINUED

Charlie lags behind the others. Semper puts his skinny arms around the boys:

SEMPER
Dis fadder a great man. He my
fadder, too. We his childrens.
We trading places.

Mother and the boys look stunned.

MOTHER
What's he mean, 'trading places?'

MR. SEMPER
(beaming)
You go live in our country.

ALLIE
Elbow room, Mother. Elbow room.

CUT TO:

22. INT. KITCHEN, FOX HOUSE DAY

A scene of some mayhem. Allie has invited Mr. Semper and his team in for a farewell drink. The children run riot, while Allie, his arm around Mother, paints a glowing picture of their new life. Amongst his dialogue we hear:

ALLIE
You know, I love this country, Mother.
I just can't stand to see what's
happening to it. We'll be like the
Pilgrim Fathers. We're starting again.

CUT TO:

22a. INT. CAMPING GOODS STORE DAY

Like ducklings in a file, the Fox family trail after Allie. Sales people come from all directions with various items Allie has requested:

- A lady rolls out yards of mosquito netting.
- The kids try on straw hats.
- Father discovers a compass he is buying was "Made in China," and he rejects it.
- Water bags, boots, sleeping bags and lanterns--all demonstrated for Allie's close inspection, by the wary staff.

CUT TO:

23. EXT. INTERSTATE FREEWAY DAY

The Fox pickup drives through the industrial wasteland of northern New Jersey. Miles of tank farms, smoking factories and polluted streams. In the distance, construction cranes are silhouetted against the skies, like carnivorous birds.

Charlie and Jerry sit in the flatbed amid knapsacks and camping gear. The adventure has begun.

LATER. The pickup passes a sign reading "BALTIMORE NEXT SEVEN EXITS."

CUT TO:

24. EXT. BALTIMORE SHIPYARDS DAY

Allie parks the truck alongside a yellow-and-white freighter. Rust stains drip down the ship's side like blood. Allie and the family swarm onto the wharf.

ALLIE
(pointing at the ship)
There it is, Mother, our Mayflower.

CUT TO:

25. EXT. DECK, SHIPBOARD DUSK

The sky literally glows, a clawlike mass of crimson and grey: refracted fumes from the nearby factories.

The ship, emblazoned with the legend "Unicorn," pulls out into the harbor. The excited Fox family, grouped around Allie, stand watching as tug whistles fill the air with screeching. Allie stands on the lower rung of the deck rail and bellows out at the retreating city skyline.

ALLIE
Goodbye America.
And have a nice day!

His voice is almost drowned in another round of hoots and whistles.

CUT TO:

26. EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN DAY

The Unicorn, alone, on an empty sea.

CUT TO:

The Unicorn's mess is predictably short on creature comforts. The ceiling is low, the room narrow. The wood panelling and brass fittings have been allowed to deteriorate.

The adults and older children sit at a long table which runs the length of the room. The children (Jerry, April and Clover, among them) are arranged at tables squeezed into the corners. CAPTAIN SMALLS sits at one end of the table, Allie at the other. Smalls, a bourgeois old salt, wears his uniform without enthusiasm. Behind his head a faded sign reads "Capt. Ambrose Smalls."

Between them, across from Mother, sits REV. GURNEY SPELLGOOD, an imposing figure with a blast of white hair and a surprisingly kind face. His wife sits to his right; his daughter EMILY, 12, on his left. The rest of his brood are scattered around the room.

The evening meal is underway. The various diners pass dishes and scrape their soup bowls. The room rattles with boiler room vibrations.

Spellgood offers Allie a plate. Allie declines, indicating that Spellgood should pass it counterclockwise.

ALLIE

The Captain first, Reverend.

SPELLGOOD

'The last shall be first.'

ALLIE

'Some.'

SPELLGOOD

Pardon?

ALLIE

'Men will come from the north and south and sit at table in the Kingdom of God. And some of the last who will be first, and some of the first who will be last.' Luke.

SPELLGOOD

I was quoting Matthew.

ALLIE

You were misquoting. Matthew says 'many,' not 'some.' 'Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother for my name's sake, will receive a hundred-fold and inherit eternal life.' Chapter 19.

CONTINUED

SPELLGOOD

You certainly understand my mission, Mr. Fox--and a pretty good knowledge of the Scriptures, too.

MOTHER

He used to invite Jehovah's Witnesses into the house, until they wouldn't come anymore.

ALLIE

I've tinkered with the Bible a little. It's sort of like an owner's handbook, isn't it? Except it don't work. So I started wondering, is it us or the handbook?

Smalls interrupts before Spellgood can respond--no arguments over dinner; it's a small boat.

SMALLS

Is this your first visit to La Ceiba?

Allie doesn't answer. He wants to continue baiting the Reverend.

MOTHER

Actually, it's more than a visit. We're planning to stay awhile.

SMALLS

Ever been there before?

ALLIE

I ate a banana from La Ceiba once. It tasted mighty good, so I figured why not migrate?

MRS. SPELLGOOD

Really?

Mother tries to suppress a laugh. Although Allie maintains a straight face, she knows he's joking--and she loves his sense of humor. Seeing his mother, Charlie joins in the laughter. By now, Mother is laughing through her hands. The others stare at her and Charlie, not understanding Allie's humor. Smalls ignores this diversion.

SMALLS

In most ways, this part of the world is fifty years behind the times.

CONTINUED

ALLIE

That's fine with me.

SMALLS

I had a fella like you on board a couple years ago. He was going to live there, too. Lasted two days. Couldn't take it.

Allie stares at the coffee cup in front of him. The coffee is distinctly higher on one side of the cup than the other. Allie smiles at the captain, while pointing at his coffee.

ALLIE

You've got a 19 degree list to port.

Everyone stares at the cup.

ALLIE

Hey, I like this banana boat! I think I'll go back to my cabin and smoke a joint.

Spellgood's jaw drops.

ALLIE

Just joking.

The captain glares at Allie, but his gaze is drawn irresistably back to the coffee cup.

CUT TO:

28.

EXT.

UNICORN

DAY

The banana boat has moved into tropical waters. The ocean is level and green. Heat waves radiate from the ship's metal deck.

Charlie, wearing jeans and a T-shirt, fishes at the railing. Emily, in pedal-pushers, intent on pestering him, walks over:

EMILY

You never catch anything.

CHARLIE

It's too hot. The fish go down to the bottom and don't eat.

EMILY

If you think it's hot here, wait till we get to La Ceiba.

CONTINUED

Charlie, chagrined, concentrates on his fishing line.

EMILY
Where you from?

CHARLIE
(thinks)
Hatfield.

EMILY
Never heard of it. What's their team.
He doesn't know what she's talking about.

EMILY
We're from Baltimore. We got
the Orioles. They almost won
the World Series. I'm wearing a
new bra. I bet you don't even
have a team.

CHARLIE
Yes we do. They're on television.

EMILY
What's your favorite TV program?
Charlie's stumped. Not only doesn't he have a team, he
doesn't even have a TV.

EMILY
I watch The Incredible Hulk,
Hollywood Squares and The Muppet
Show. On Saturday I watch
'Creature Double Feature.' My
dad was on TV once. He said the
light hurt his eyes. I bet your
dad was never on TV.

CHARLIE
My father's a genius.

EMILY
What does he do?

CHARLIE
Lots. He made a remote-controlled
mop.

CUT TO:

Spellgood reads on the afterdeck as Allie walks by with April and Clover. Spellgood jumps to his feet:

SPELLGOOD

Ah! Mr. Fox. There you are. I've got a gift for you.

Spellgood takes a book covered with dungaree cloth and hands it to Allie.

SPELLGOOD

It's the latest. The Blue-Jeans Bible. It was designed by a psychologist.

Allie holds the B-J Bible with two fingers as if it were soaking wet. He shows it to the twins:

ALLIE

Take a good look, kids. This is what I've been warning you about.

He hands it back to Spellgood.

SPELLGOOD

May God forgive you.

CUT TO:

Charlie and Emily study a map tacked to the wall. La Ceiba, a polka dot on the coast, has almost been worn away by fingerprint marks.

EMILY

We study communication at school. Miss Barsotti teaches it. She's got a new Impala. It gets eighteen miles to the gallon. Our school has two swimming pools--one's Olympic-sized. Miss Barsotti gave me a ride in her car and bought me a whopper and a Coke. She says her boyfriend's bionic. What's your favorite cereal? Mine's Froot Loops.

Charlie is lost; his world seems so old-fashioned.

CONTINUED

CHARLIE

Your father's a missionary. You don't live in Baltimore.

EMILY

Yes we do. My father's got two churches. One's in Guampu and the other one's in Baltimore. A drive-in.

CHARLIE

What kind of drive-in?

EMILY

There's only one kind--outdoors, with cars. Gosh, you're stupid.

CHARLIE

My father can turn fire into ice.

EMILY

Charlie, do you have a girlfriend?

CHARLIE

No.

EMILY

I could be your girlfriend if you want. I think about you when I go to the bathroom.

A confused Charlie is rescued by Captain Smalls.

SMALLS

Charlie, there you are. Follow me. Your mother says I'm supposed to show you kids the engine room.

Emily, moon-eyed, watches Charlie follow Smalls.

CUT TO:

31. INT. FOX CABIN NIGHT

Charlie, Jerry and the twins sit on a bunk around Mother for evening lessons. Each holds a book from the ship's library.

MOTHER

Each of you will tell us something you learned on your own today--then we'll discuss the books you're reading. April, you're first.

CONTINUED

APRIL
(prepared)

Captain Smalls says that compass error
sometimes can be used in compass
calculations...

Charlie looks at his battered copy of Billy Budd as he
narrates over his sister's voice:

CHARLIE (V.O.)
I didn't know where to begin.
I didn't know who the Orioles
were or about Froot Loops.
Should I mention Miss Barsotti
and her Impala? And her bionic
boyfriend? I couldn't remember
anything about the book I'd read
for an hour.

Clover is now speaking.

CUT TO:

32.

EXT.

AFTERDECK

DAY

Allie and his children walk along the deck. Storm
clouds in the distance.

In the bow, Spellgood leads his brood in Bible reading.

Allie points out the various features of the ship and
their functions:

ALLIE
...each of the booms which bring
on the cargo are secured by these
six cables--they're called
shrouds. They hold the booms in
place and are attached by blocks
to the top of the derrick.

CHARLIE
(correcting him)
The 'kingpost.'

Allie does a double take.

CHARLIE
That's what Capt. Smalls called it.

CONTINUED

ALLIE

Well, if that's what he called it that must be it's name. That there's the davit. How high could you climb on the shrouds, Charlie? Could you make it to the top?

(no answer)

Think you can?

Charlie anxiously looks across the water:

CHARLIE

Looks like it might rain.

ALLIE

Water never hurt anyone.

CHARLIE

I feel seasick.

ALLIE

Just a misunderstanding of the inner ear. Concentrate on the horizon: it'll go away.

CLOVER

(pointing)

There's a ladder over there.

ALLIE

Any fool can climb a ladder.

Charlie glances at his brother and sisters, then whispers to his father:

CHARLIE

I'm scared, Dad.

Allie puts his hand on Charlie's shoulder:

ALLIE

Then you'll have to do it. That's the only way to stop being afraid of it. Boys your age used to do it all day long on the great sailing ships.

JERRY

Let me try.

Charlie now has no choice. Jerry isn't going to humiliate him. He kicks off his shoes and climbs the lower blocks which secure the shrouds. He starts upward.

CONTINUED

ALLIE

Good boy.

(to Jerry)

You can go next.

Eight or ten feet up, Charlie is buffeted by the ocean winds. Spellgood's high-pitched voice grows faint. Charlie looks down at the top of his father's baseball cap.

He is directly over the sea. Reaching a masthead, he braces himself and tries to walk horizontally. Allie, Jerry and the twins are tiny specks. The ship pitches with the waves.

Six feet from the top, Charlie can go no farther. Paralyzed, he grasps the shrouds with his spray-frozen hands, afraid to look down. Jerry looks to his father with alarm.

ALLIE

He's OK. He's done it!

Captain Smalls' VOICE calls from the loudspeaker:

SMALLS (O.S.)

Attention! Rodriguez, Santos to the afterdeck. Mr. Fox stay right where you are!

Smalls runs--in his fashion--across the deck. A moment later, two black men in yellow life jackets with ropes tied to their waists are climbing the shrouds toward Charlie.

They gently pry Charlie loose and help him down as Smalls shouts at Allie:

SMALLS

Who do you think you are? Are you trying to kill that boy?

Allie just folds his arms and stares at Smalls:

SMALLS

Have you got a hole in your head?

RODRIGUEZ and SANTOS lead Charlie to the Captain. Making sure he's alright, Smalls reprimands Charlie:

SMALLS

I thought you were smarter than that.

CONTINUED

Allie says nothing until the Captain and his men walk off. Then he winks at Charlie and says as they walk:

ALLIE
If you had climbed a little faster, you would have made it to the top and he wouldn't have seen you.

JERRY
(to Charlie)
Crummo.

Mother meets her family as they prepare to go below. She is shocked by Charlie's appearance:

MOTHER
Charlie! You're covered with grease!

CLOVER
Daddy made him climb the shrouds.

APRIL
Captain Smalls got him down.

Mother stares at Allie: it looks as if she's about to cry. Allie replies softly:

ALLIE
Don't you turn on me, Mother.

MOTHER
Get them inside.

She leads her children below.

CUT TO:

33. EXT. LA CEIBA EVENING

The sun is low over La Ceiba. The Unicorn is docked alongside motor launches with names like "Little Haddy" and "Island Queen."

A hundred or so locals have gathered for no ostensible purpose--a dock full of migrants without asparagus. A row of women sell baskets of fruit and greaseballs wrapped in green leaves. The ocean, more brown than turquoise, laps against a littered beach. A desiccated cow stares out to sea.

CONTINUED

The Foxes and the Spellgoods disembark. Allie's eyes light up at the sight of this New Land. Mother and the children seem more ambivalent. The streets swelter in the "cool of the day."

A dozen black girl choristers in pink dresses and straw hats greet the Spellgoods. As the families head in different directions, Emily whispers to Charlie:

EMILY

I'll think about you when I go to the bathroom.

Charlie, openmouthed, stares--but before he can respond, Emily merges with the Spellgood menage.

Each of the Foxes wears a knapsack and carries a bag; Allie lugs three. He leads the way down the dirt road toward the center of town. Small fires flicker from woodshed homes that look more like chicken shacks. The air is thick with the smell of mankind--cooking, swearing, shitting.

In eerie counterpoint, a boy stumbles past, playing a flute no larger than a twig. The melody drifts away like an old invitation.

Allie's "raring to go," Mother says to Charlie, as Allie plunges through the crowd:

MOTHER

I love him when he's happy.
Look at him go.

Jerry steps beside his brother:

JERRY

It's junk, it stinks, it's crappo.

CHARLIE

Don't let him hear you.

Mother and Allie, now arm in arm, approach a rundown, pink two-story hotel called "The Gardenia." Allie leads his family into the lobby.

CUT TO:

34. INT. GARDENIA LOBBY EVENING

The tropic heat has already exhausted the children.
They plop their bags to the marble floor.

ALLIE
(bouyant)
You kids help Mother check in.
Me 'n Charlie are goin' shopping.

Before Allie and Charlie reach the door they encounter
Rev. Spellgood, his wife and two black choristers:

SPELLGOOD
Here you are Mr. Fox. I guess the Lord
intends for us to team up after all. You
and your family should pay us a visit.
You'll find us in Guampu doing the Lord's
work.

ALLIE
The Lord never mentioned Guampu to me.
Wish he'd get in touch, though. I could
give Him a few pointers if He's planning
any other worlds. He certainly made a
mess of this one.

Allie pushes past Spellgood. Charlie, embarrassed,
hurries to catch up with him.

ALLIE
We gotta get outa here!

They cross into the street and are lost to view in the
crowd.

CUT TO:

35. INT. SECOND FLOOR, GARDENIA HOTEL NIGHT

It is unbearably hot in the little room. The girls stir
restlessly under their mosquito net. Jerry lies in his
bed, staring at the only decoration on the wall--a
coloured picture, most likely cut from a gas station
calendar, of a wooded New England lake. Mother sits in
a chair near the window fighting off clouds of mosquitos.
She occasionally glances down into the street from where
we hear the sounds of guitars and shouting and laughter,
loud enough to prevent sleep. The door bursts open to
admit Allie and Charlie.

ALLIE
Tell them the news, Charlie.

CHARLIE
Dad bought a town.

CONTINUED

35. CONTINUED

MOTHER

You're joking.

ALLIE

A small one. Called Jeronimo.

(shows deed)

A drunken German sold it to me.

He was glad to get rid of it.

Best thing: no road, no one goes there. A few savages--the rest is sunshine.

MOTHER

How do we get there?

CUT TO:

36. EXT.

LA CEIBA HARBOUR

DAY

HADDY

This 'spear mint gonna sink me launch fer sure.

Mr. Haddy is the creole proprietor of the weather-beaten boat which bears his name. He watches anxiously as Allie loads another crate. The boat is already settling low in the water, under the weight of sacks of seeds and a profusion of pipes, scrap metal, and timber. There is still as much, if not more, piled on the wharf. All of the family work beside Allie, watched by a melange of local layabouts.

Allie, sweat dripping off him, turns to a local (Samson), a huge hulk of a man, who stands idly watching. He pokes Samson in the ribs.

ALLIE

Tell me something. Why is it you people are all so damned puny? Admit it, you're weaklings.

SAMSON breaks the silence with a laugh.

ALLIE

Okay, Samson, let's do an experiment.

HADDY

Another 'spear mint!

ALLIE

How many pushups can you do?

Samson misunderstands, he kicks at a pile of heavy sacks.

CONTINUED

36. CONTINUED

SAMSON

Me move dat stuff? Nah.

Voices from the crowd correct him.

CROWD

Pushups, man! He say pushup,
like dis!

SAMSON

Oh. Sure me do dat pushup.

ALLIE

Okay, make room.

MOTHER

Allie, be careful.

Allie clears a spot; he and Samson prepare for a pushup contest:

ALLIE

Clear space, gentlemen. Give us
some air.

Allie and Samson start pushups stroke for stroke. The locals count off in Spanish: "uno, dos, tres..." Samson collapses after thirty-five pushups; Allie continues.

Reaching seventy, Allie, winded, stops, stands, looks around and gasps:

ALLIE

I could do lots more, but there's
work to be done!

He turns his eye to the chagrined Samson as he embraces Mother:

ALLIE

Watcha get? Thirty-two? My young bride
could do that the day we were married.
(kisses her)

Allie picks up a large box and struggles toward the boat. Samson acknowledges a new respect for this Yankee. He smiles as he helps load "Little Haddy." Others move to help until the entire crowd is working. Allie organizes them, shouting orders and encouragement, slapping backs and poking ribs.

CUT TO:

37.

EXT.

MOSQUITO COAST

DUSK

"Little Haddy," overloaded, putt-putts along the coast.
The waterline hovers inches below topside.

Jerry, April and Clover lie in their bags under the
canopy--all feigning sleep despite oppressive gasoline
smells, jungle noises and bat shadows.

Allie, Haddy, Mother and Charlie stand at the wheel.

ALLIE

(to mother)

Could you make some coffee?

Haddy waits till she walks to the stern:

HADDY

Wish we wuz gung to Utila.

CHARLIE

Why Mr. Haddy?

HADDY

Utila two hours. Santa Rosa ten.

CHARLIE

But we're going to Jeronimo.

HADDY

Jeronimo? Jeronimo's jungle. No
launches go there. Only men with
tails.

CHARLIE

(to Haddy)

But Dad said...

ALLIE

(to Charlie)

Don't interrogate the man.

(to Haddy)

Let me take the wheel.

HADDY

Against regulations.

ALLIE

What regulations?

HADDY

Me launch. I steer, you passenger.

ALLIE

I know every star up there. I got a
quadrant and sextant in my head.

CONTINUED

37. CONTINUED

HADDY
Regulations.

ALLIE
How many pushups can you do?

Haddy grips the wheel tighter, determined to retain control.

CUT TO:

38. EXT. LITTLE HADDY NIGHT

Charlie lies under the canopy. The other children are asleep. Haddy slumbers in a hammock. Allie, a dead cigar in his mouth, steers the launch through black jungleness. Mother is at his side, her arm on his shoulder, her pale face and straight hair reflected by the lantern light.

Charlie watches, his eyes barely open:

CHARLIE (V.O.)
His eyes shone like glints of shellac.
He was active and watchful. Mother
watched him, calm, without expression.
Father would often ask, 'How am I
doing?' I always said, 'Fine,' but
I didn't know what he was doing or
why. I just wanted to be near him.
If he dies, I thought, we are lost.

CUT TO:

39. EXT. JERONIMO COAST DAY

"Little Haddy" stands at the edge of a dense jungle.
High tide: the water flows inland as far as they can
see.

Haddy, nervous as a nelly, steps beside Allie:

HADDY
Please, Mr. Fox, this no cayuka.
This me launch.

Allie steers inland.

HADDY
This no way, Fadder! I'm the steerer!

CONTINUED

39. CONTINUED

ALLIE

Sit down. This is no river, this is a flood. I studied the map. It'll take us straight to Jeronimo.

HADDY

Another 'spearmin.

ALLIE

But I can't do it alone.

(to Haddy)

Are you with me or not?

(to boys)

Charlie, Jerry, look down. Tell me how I'm doing.

Haddy joins Charlie and Jerry. They lean over the side of the launch as it moves across the sea of grass.

The water steams with new smells; odd, piercing cries call from the green darkness around them.

CUT TO:

40. EXT. RIVER AND JUNGLE (HELICOPTER SHOT) DAY

Bird's eye view of the little boat steaming upriver. For hundreds of miles there is nothing but the green expanse of the jungle stretching to the horizon.

CUT TO:

41. EXT. RIVER DAY

TIMECUT. "Little Haddy" has gone as far inland as possible. The boat beaches at jungle plain: Allie jumps over the bow and wades through the water. The others follow as Haddy secures the launch.

After a hundred yards, Allie encounters several ZAMBUS, black natives wearing shorts and carrying fishnets and sticks. Allie calls Haddy over:

ALLIE

Ask these men where we are.

Haddy slaps a mosquito with the disgust of a seafaring man, then points to the green wall of the jungle.

HADDY

That "Jeronimo."

The Fox family straggle up beside Father.

CONTINUED

41. CONTINUED

CLOVER
(puzzled)
Where's the town, Daddy?

Allie ignores Clover and calls to the natives.

ALLIE
Hola!

No reply. Haddy says in English:

HADDY
How's it?
(to Allie)
Them Zambus.

ZAMBU LUNGLEY
Right here.

ALLIE
They speak English?

The black men laugh. Lungley, their leader, approaches Allie:

LUNGLEY
Naksaa, Fadder. Me name Francis Lungley.
Kin we help you?

Allie bursts into a grin as he extends his hand:

ALLIE
Hey, I've been looking all over for you!

CUT TO:

42. EXT. CLEARING DAY

Allie, his baseball cap cocked sideways, plows his way through chest-high foliage. A scabby black pig humps through the clearing.

ALLIE
Nothing--nothing! This is what I've
always dreamed about.

MOTHER
You're right. I don't see a thing.

ALLIE
Do you see it, Charlie?

CHARLIE
No, Dad, I...I don't see it.

CONTINUED

42. CONTINUED

Allie looks around the overgrown clearing, laying out a settlement in his mind:

ALLIE

I see a house here. Kind of a barn there, with a workshop. Over there the outhouse and plant. Slash and burn the whole area and we've got four to five acres good growing land. We'll put our water tank on the rise and divert the stream. The house should face east. The ground seems high enough but we'll raise it to be on the safe side. I'd like to see some drainage back there--some three-foot culverts will do the trick...

Allie's family follows him around the clearing as the Zambus, at Haddy's instructions, unload the launch.

The Foxes approach the remains of a once well-constructed hut. The stilts are rotting and the thatched roof has half fallen away. "Football faces" peer out the windows.

HADDY

Some folk already lif here, Fadder.

Allie picks a batch of wildflowers and walks over to the hut. A man steps outside to greet him.

ALLIE

Who are you? Ask them, Haddy.

The man, staring at the flowers, replies timidly:

MAN

Maywit.

HADDY

That the name of the flower, Fadder.

Allie hasn't heard Haddy's explanation. He extends his hand.

ALLIE

I think we're gonna get along just fine, Mr. Maywit. I'm Allie Fox and this is my family. We've got some work for you to do.

The "Maywits," thus accidentally named by Allie, number six in all. They emerge from the hut. They are short with brown barklike skin, a creole mixture of Indian, Spanish and English blood--shrunk shadows of the Foxes. The children look each other up and down.

CUT TO:

Several days later. Signs of civilization already abound. Tents have been staked out, a lean-to built. Cords of firewood stand at the campsite.

The old bean patch has been freshly weeded and hoed. Allie lines up each of his "settlers"--Francis Lungley, Charlie, Jerry, DRAINY MAYWIT (age 10), Maywit, ZAMBU BUCKY (age 20)--in front of a planting row. Placing a handful of seeds in each of their palms, Allie instructs them:

ALLIE

These are miracle seeds. Each of you is in charge of a row. This row is called Francis, this one Drainy, this one Mr. Maywit, this one April...

Allie has already integrated his little community. He has a natural genius for organization and motivation.

LATER. Allie, Haddy, and Lungley stake out the main house with vine ropes. Across the way, Mother and the children help the Maywits clean their shack.

ALLIE

(to Haddy)

Right now, Captain, someone in America is putting an electric squeezer down the garbage disposal and saying, 'It's busted.' Someone just opened a can of chocolate-flavored soup because he can't get his car started to eat out. He really wanted a cheeseburger.

(Haddy nods)

There's an interior decorator standing in the lobby of a bank. The bank is failing. It needs depositors. Maybe a new lobby will help. But the decorator doesn't know what color to paint it. He says to the banker, 'What do you want this room to say?'

HADDY

That fer sure, Fadder.

ALLIE

Someone just poisoned himself with a sausage of red nitrate but he's smiling 'cause it tasted so good.

HADDY

That no good.

CONTINUED

ALLIE
That's right, Captain. That's why we're here.

Zambu Lungley calls to Allie.

CUT TO:

44. INT. JERONIMO GAZEBO NIGHT

A mosquito-net gazebo has been erected on the foundations of the main house. Inside, the Jeronimo community (minus Haddy and the Zambus) gather around an oil drum fire. They have been joined by MA KENNYWICK, lighter skinned than the Maywits and quite daffy.

Somewhere far away, the drums of the Black Carob Indians are beating, and the Fox children sit spellbound as Mr. Maywit tells the old tales of his people. Only Allie is beyond the power of the setting. He sits to one side and looks rather disinterested.

Mr. Maywit holds forth:

MR. MAYWIT
Before the Zambus, before the Miskito, before the Paya and Twahkas come the Munchies. The Munchies have no tails-- they great people. They were peaceful and built pyramids and were very, very tall. When you first come, I think you Munchies.

ALLIE
Tell us about their gold. Nuggets big as your fist. They roll it for writing paper.

CLOVER
Dad knows everything.

MR. MAYWIT
Haddy tell you this?

ALLIE
Nope. Save your breath. I don't want to hear about white Indians who are angels or devils from Nicaragua...

MR. MAYWIT
The ones they carry ruckboos?

CONTINUED

ALLIE

And the ones that make things go wrong,
give you headaches and flat tires and
hide the things that belong to you so
you never find them again...

MR. MAYWIT

Never hear of them. Where you hear?

MOTHER

Allie's pulling your leg, Mr. Maywit.

Maywit checks his leg to see how far it's been pulled.

ALLIE

Tell me something I don't know. Forget
the Munchies and devils.

MR. MAYWIT

I belief in God. So does Mrs. Maywit.

MRS. MAYWIT

Ma Kennywick see God in Shouter church.

Allie frowns: missionaries have already been here.

ALLIE

And what did God look like?

MR. MAYWIT

Ma Kennywick Shouter. I Baptiser.

MRS. MAYWIT

I Shouter too.

MA KENNYWICK

I see God up Shouters. He look like
bill-bird in a cloud. It was 'spearience.

ALLIE

I'm sure it was. Know about Duppies?

CHARLIE

(interjects)

Mr. Haddy told us about them.

MR. MAYWIT

Everybody belief in Duppies, Fadder,
even Zambus. Duppies like ghosts--only
alive.

ALLIE

I see.

CONTINUED

44. CONTINUED

MR. MAYWIT
Everybody have Duppies. They is you
other self. Got their own bodies.

ALLIE
So half the world is people, half
Duppies?

MRS. MAYWIT
'Cept you can't see them.

Allie fixes Maywit with a hard stare:

ALLIE
How do you know I'm not your Duppy:
(Maywit pales)
I'm your Munchie Duppy.

The Maywits, terrified, study Allie wrinkle by wrinkle.

MOTHER
That's enough, Allie.
(to Maywit)
He's just joking.

The Maywits don't seem relieved.

CUT TO:

45. EXT. CAMPSITE NIGHT

It's late, lamps have been extinguished and the little
community of settlers are apparently sleeping soundly.

CUT TO:

46. INT. GAZEBO NIGHT

Charlie wakens, alert. He looks around the gazebo.
Sleeping forms. All but his father. Then he sees him,
sitting alone outside, staring at the jungle.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
After we got to Jeronimo, Father claimed
he could go without sleep. He was awake
when we went to bed, at work when we got
up.

CUT TO:

Jeronimo rises from the jungle. Charlie narrates the daily activities as the compound evolves.

--Allie rings the morning bell.

--Zambus work on the frame of the main house. It has a long porch in the grand colonial style.

--Allie demonstrates a jerryrigged pump which brings water from the river to the bathhouse. The Zambus hardly believe their eyes.

--Haddy returns with more supplies.

--Mother cooks hot lunch for the "workers."

--The crops have begun to sprout.

--Everyone showers at day's end. Their dirty clothes are thrown into a boiling communal tub.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

There was a bell at sunup, by which time Father already had the fire going and coffee on. Each morning he gave us our targets for the day. He said he could go for days without food, never got sick and wasn't bitten by mosquitoes. This mystified the Maywits and Zambus but I knew he was trying to set an example. By lunchtime the heat was terrible. Lunch was always hot soup. Father said it was necessary to sweat buckets. It was nature's way to keep cool. Afternoon work was interrupted by rain, but the downpours didn't last long. Just before sundown we took turns in the bathhouse. We had to shower every day. In Hatfield we had never kept so clean, but here Father became a maniac for cleanliness.

--Soon Jeronimo consists of a main house, bathhouse, workshop, rebuilt houses for the Maywits, cleared fields of crops and foundations for a large new structure, all as Allie first envisioned.

CUT TO:

Mr. Haddy eases his boat up against the landing stage, the deck crowded with supplies and equipment of various kinds.

CONTINUED

Allie does not like what he sees. Mr. Haddy has a passenger, a white man in sunglasses carrying a suitcase. He steps onto the mushy bank. Allie calls to Haddy.

ALLIE

Who's this hamburger?

HADDY

This here Mr. Struss from Rosy.

MR. STRUSS

How do you do? What lovely kids, and you've made yourself a beautiful home.

ALLIE

What do you want?

He blocks the man's path. The Maywits and various Zambus troop down from the garden. Mother and the children join the group, a dozen or so watching the confrontation.

MR. STRUSS

I came here to ask you a question.

ALLIE

We're not interested in your questions.

MR. STRUSS

You've just answered it brother, because the question is 'Are You Saved,' and I've got a funny feeling, the Lord--

ALLIE

The Lord is up in that tree.

Allie points, and the man stares up at a bill-bird sitting on a branch.

ALLIE

Go away.

MR. STRUSS

You can't answer for all these people here.

ALLIE

I own this place and you don't have permission to come ashore. Half-mile due north you'll come to Swampmouth, the Jeronimo Line. You can do all the preaching you like there. Start walking, Mr. Struss.

CONTINUED

MR. STRUSS
The Lord sent me here.

ALLIE
Bull. The Lord hasn't got the slightest idea this place exists. If he had he'd have done something about it a long time ago.

Mr. Struss is breathing hard.

ALLIE
Anyone want to go with him? I won't stop you.

MOTHER
You'd better do as my husband says. There are canoes at Swampmouth. You'll have no trouble getting back to the coast. I'll get you a bag lunch.

MR. STRUSS
The Lord wants me here.

ALLIE
Listen, I'm not going to tempt you with martyrdom so just shove off and don't come back.

Mr. Struss knows he's beaten, for now. Allie gives him a beautiful smile, before turning away and heading back to work.

CUT TO:

49. EXT. JERONIMO DAY

The First Thanksgiving--and the first day off for Jeronimo's inhabitants.

Allie has declared a holiday. The community (now with additional Zambus, almost twenty strong) gathers around a wood-hewn table. Mother and Mrs. Maywit set plates of cassava and curassows on the table as Haddy tells tales of coastal pirates. Mr. Maywit sits upright in his La Rosa ("Enriquecida con Vitaminas") Flour shirt.

Allie stands and silences the table. He turns to April and Clover.

ALLIE
Okay, girls, you promised you would sing us a song on our first Thanksgiving.

CONTINUED

49. CONTINUED

CLOVER

Dad...

ALLIE

A promise is a promise.

MOTHER

Go on, girls.

Clover and April stand and sing a new song a capella:
 "Under the Bam, Under the Boo."

It has been a good summer. The Maywits, even the Zambus, seem calmer, happier--more "civilized." The principle facilities have been built; the crops harvested. Jeronimo is a greater success than anyone but Allie would have imagined.

Seen from above, it is even more impressive. Jeronimo rests serenely on the bank of a wide brown river: a well-ordered community carved out of jungle. Beyond the compound, nothing but miles of swamp, formless rivulets and guanacaste trees. A distant mountain range breaks the monotony of the horizon.

CUT TO:

50. EXT. JERONIMO DAYBREAK

A low-lying mist hangs over the encampment. The main buildings emerge from the dimness as the first rays of the sun strike the compound. A new and strange looking building, off to one side, is still mostly shrouded in the gloom.

CUT TO:

51. EXT. JUNGLE DAYBREAK

Several primitive natives, some carrying bows and arrows, stare in the direction of the camp. Suddenly they react with a mixture of fear and awe. There is much sucking in of breath and muttering in their language.

CUT TO:

The mists surrounding the new building are clearing to reveal a remarkable sight. A vast wooden monolith, several stories high, rises to treetop level. It has no windows and only one hatchway door--a box, a gigantic box with a tin lid.

From inside come vague rumbles and echoes mingling with the sound of a man singing--yet distorted, unearthly.

CUT TO:

53. EXT. JUNGLE DAY

The natives, on hearing the noises from the monolith, become alarmed and back off until lost in the jungle wall.

CUT TO:

54. EXT. THE MONOLITH MORNING

The Zambus, Maywits and children gather around the structure. It looks oddly like the box Allie and Charlie took to Polski's--although twenty-five times larger. From inside we hear Allie singing away as he works.

Allie comes outside, outfitted in a welding mask and gloves. He stops singing to speak. Sparks surround his words:

ALLIE

A pair of lungs, that's what he needs.
No one ever invented anything. Anyone
who invents is only magnifying. All the
inventions are based on the human body.
The ball-and-socket joint is the hip;
airplanes are just magnified sparrows
with leg room.

The Zambus hang on every word.

ALLIE

What's a Savage?

(flips up mask)

A Savage is someone who doesn't bother
to look around and see that he can
change the world. That's what's wrong
with your missionaries. They teach you
to put up with things, not change them.

His audience murmurs assent. Mother approaches them.

CONTINUED

ALLIE

I'm not saying all inventions are good.
Take cheese spread that you squirt out
of an aerosol can onto your sandwich.
That's as low as you can go. But I
never made anything that didn't exist in
a similar form before--rubber heart
valves, metal muscles.

HADDY

So, so, Fadder. I sometime think arm
crane.

ALLIE

Now you're catching on.
(points to the Monolith)
And what's this?

HADDY

That's 'spearmint. You never catch me
in there.

ALLIE

Charlie knows what it is. Tell them.

Charlie hesitates, then speaks:

CHARLIE

It's Fat Boy.

Even Mother is surprised: "so he knew."

ALLIE

That's right. Nothing to be scared of.
Charlie's not scared. Want to see him
climb to the top?

LUNGLEY

Wouldn't get out alive.

ALLIE

That's an ignorant remark.

CLOVER

Dad, Charlie's shaking.

CHARLIE

No, I'm not.

Bolstering his courage--more accurately, hiding his
fear--Charlie enters Fat Boy. Allie closes the door
behind him.

CUT TO:

Inside, Charlie's composure fails. It's pitch black except for light slivers through the planks. He glances around: iron pipes, greasy with sealer, rise along the walls--the innards of a monster.

CHARLIE

Oh, rats.

Charlie starts climbing the midsection pipes--what Allie called the "kidneys,"--across the rusty "gizzard" toward a steel tube called the "gullet."

Charlie freezes in the darkness, listening to every sound. He hears only the distant muffled sound of Allie holding forth outside.

He looks down, shaking. But he takes stock, then climbs upward.

CHARLIE

Like the human body, like the human body...

Everything is black, terrifying, but Charlie presses upward. One slip and he'll fall into the darkness. He continues.

Finally he reaches the top of Fat Boy. He bursts into a big smile; then, partly out of fright, partly out of enthusiasm, frantically pounds the ceiling: bam, bam, bam! No response.

Suddenly a trap door opens: sunshine floods the plant and Allie's face appears. He offers a hand to his son.

ALLIE

Good work, son.

CUT TO:

Several days later. The extended Jeronimo family watch as Allie and Haddy board "Little Haddy." Mr. Maywit attempts to join them.

ALLIE

I need you here, coach. From now on you're my Field Superintendent. I've got to get some juices for Fat Boy.

Allie quickly hugs the children, kisses Mother and jumps in the launch.

CONTINUED

56. CONTINUED

ALLIE

In the meantime, pick some tomatoes. We should be back in a week--if the Duppies don't get us. Just joking.

He starts up the engine, pulls away.

Charlie narrates as the boat disappears upriver:

CHARLIE (V.O.)

With Father away, Jeronimo was very quiet--no speeches, no songs, no hammering.

CUT TO:

57. EXT. JUNGLE DAY

Zambu Lungley and Bucky escort Mother and the children through an uncharted section of forest.

MOTHER

Francis, what kind of tree is this?

LUNGLEY

That's hoolie.

Mother dips her finger in the sap, smells it, tastes it.

MOTHER

Chicle. There's enough chicle here to make a ton of rubber.

(laughs at herself)

That's what Allie would say. If he was here, he'd have us all making galoshes. Jerry, make up a sign reading "hoolie" and "sapodilla" and nail it to this tree.

Mother points the way as the Zambus lead on.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Father's work was work, Mother's work was study and play, but she left us mostly to ourselves. Little by little we ventured further from Jeronimo.

CUT TO:

The Fox and Maywit children play in a secluded clearing. The high trees offer natural protection. They have built a crude "church and store" hut near the fresh-water spring.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

We found a path that led away from the river into the jungle, which was thick with screaming birds. We made our camp at a deep pool, a half hour walk from Jeronimo.

Drainy and ALICE MAYWIT are Jerry's age; LEON and VERYL are April and Clover's age. Just as Jerry likes to give Drainy the what-fer, so the twins enjoy lording over Leon and Veryl.

DRAINY

They's munsters in the water.

JERRY

There's your Duppy in the tree.

(Drainy frightened)

Thicko! Crapoid!

They all laugh, but are startled as a wild pig dashes through. But it doesn't faze Clover: she seems more and more like her father.

CLOVER

It's just a white-lipped peccary.

APRIL

Know-it-all.

CLOVER

I run the school and store.

APRIL

Jerry runs the store.

JERRY

And the telephone. You run the church.

CLOVER

Drainy runs the church!

APRIL

I want to make a call! Leon!

April and Leon dash for the "telephones"--two split coconuts strung together by a vine.

CONTINUED

58. CONTINUED

April and Leon start a sotto voce conversation for the benefit of the others, since neither can possibly hear what the other is saying.

JERRY

This is like back home.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

But it wasn't like back home. I liked this place because it was filled with the things father had forbidden. Spending stone money at the store and talking on the telephone were pleasant. We called this place Acre.

CUT TO:

59. INT. MAIN HOUSE NIGHT

The children lie in their beds as Mother reads by the lamplight. It's a story set in New England, rich in the description of their old life, and the children lie still, listening intently to every word, their thoughts of home.

CUT TO:

60. EXT. ACRE DAY

The children sit in a circle beside the pool.

DRAINY

We all got to get Baptized. I run the church. You go to Hell if you don't get dunked.

JERRY

Okay--dunk time!

They all strip to their skivvies.

ALICE

Drainy don't know how to swim. He can't be the baptizer. He'll get et by the munsters.

DRAINY

I know how.

CHARLIE

If you're afraid, you don't have to.

CONTINUED

DRAINY

I ain't afraid. You don't get dunked,
you go to Hell.

CLOVER

We don't believe in Hell. Only ignorant
people do.

DRAINY

If Alice pull down her bloomers she go
to Hell, that's sure.

ALICE

Drainy Roper, you shut up!

Alice claps her hand over her mouth.

CLOVER

What did you call him? Drainy Roper?

LEON

That's our name.

ALICE

Shut your mouf!

CLOVER

They've got two names.

DRAINY

We got one name and it ain't Maywit.

CHARLIE

Where did Maywit come from?

ALICE

You fadder give it to us and our fadder
take it.

CLOVER

You're crummoid.

DRAINY

Your father can do magic.

CHARLIE

It ain't magic--it's science.

ALICE

That's worse.

CHARLIE

Why did your father change your name?

CONTINUED

DRAINY
He wuz afraid of you fadder.

APRIL
Why?

DRAINY
(to Charlie)
You ain't afraid of him?

CHARLIE
(looks at Jerry)
Of course not.

CUT TO:

61. EXT. FAT BOY EARLY MORNING

Allie, back from La Ceiba, is at work on Fat Boy.
Several Zambus help him haul gas drums inside the
structure.

LUNGLEY
What you do, Fadder?

ALLIE
Enriched ammonia. What do you think I
was doing in La Ceiba--spitting in the
plaza? No sir, I was juicing up my
ammonia. The richer it is, the quicker
the evaporation.

He turns to Charlie.

ALLIE
Charlie, get everyone over here. I want
them all to see this. Mother!

Mother joins him as Charlie calls in stray villagers.

ALLIE
Here, Mother. I want you beside me.
This is history being made here today.
Francis? You in position?

LUNGLEY
Yes sir, Fadder.

He stands beside a large tap, obviously ready to turn it
on Father's command.

ALLIE
Bucky! What about you?

CONTINUED

BUCKY ZAMBU
All ready here, Fadder!

Bucky stands beside a switch-box built into the side of Fat Boy. Allie scans his audience.

ALLIE
Leon, come here. You're the youngest.
You light up Fat Boy. You'll live
longest to remember this moment.

Allie gives Leon a box of stick matches and instructs him where to ignite the pilot light.

ALLIE
(to Haddy)
Bet you still don't know what this is?

HADDY
Cooking?

ALLIE
No guesses. Okay, Leon, light here.

Leon strikes the match and lights the boiler. Everyone waits in anticipation: no sound from Fat Boy.

ALLIE
Just wait.

Then there's a GLOOP from within Fat Boy, followed by RUMBLES and GURGLES. Soon the entire structure is shaking.

MR. MAYWIT
Shoo!

Smoke belches from Fat Boy's chimney.

MRS. MAYWIT
Can we pray?

ALLIE
Do what you want, but this is no
miracle--just thermodynamics.

Allie suddenly gets up and climbs the ladder alongside Fat Boy. He opens the hatch and crawls in.

HADDY
Hope we ain't have to drag him out by
his stumps.

MOTHER
Allie knows what he's doing.

CONTINUED

Allie emerges from the hatchway, waving his hand. He holds a white ball, like a lump of raw cotton. He bounds down the ladder.

HADDY

What Fadder got dere?

Allie throws the white ball into the crowd:

ALLIE

Haven't you ever seen a snowball?

The snowball splatters across the ground. The children rush forward to touch it. Jerry makes a snowball and throws it at Drainy.

But this is only the start of the Allie Fox show...

ALLIE

Francis, now!

Francis Lungley turns the tap and water spews out, iced water.

LUNGLEY

Dat cold water, Fadder!

ALLIE

Bucky!

Bucky Zambu throws his switch and to the amazement of the crowd a length of flat plastic piping which had lain unnoticed on the ground suddenly begins inflating. As the air rushes through it the tubing seems to come alive like a giant snake, until it reaches the house. It's an air-conditioning duct. From the house one of the Zambus appears, moving her arms and shouting.

ZAMBU

Gone cold in here, Fadder!

Father addresses the multitude.

ALLIE

This is why I'm here, this is why I came!

CUT TO:

TIMECUT. The staggering demonstration has provoked an impromptu party and while children and natives play with a large pile of snow, someone beats out a calypso style tune on a guitar, making up a song about father's exploits. There is much shouting and leaping about as the camera eases through the crowd to come in close on Allie. He has a faraway look in his eyes as dreams begin to take shape.

ALLIE

I want to go where the missionaries have never been. I want to take a load of ice to the hottest, nastiest corner of the jungle, where they pray for water and never see ice and have never heard of cheese in aerosol cans.

LUNGLEY

Seville like that. Seville a stewy bat-shoo place. People there eat dirt and walk monkey. They almost naked. They not Christians.

ALLIE

Sounds like my kind of place.

CUT TO:

A large block of ice rests on a series of planks nailed to two native dugout canoes, making a sort of catamaran. It is powered by a pedal mechanism that works a stern wheel, something like the Swan boats in the Boston Public Garden. Because of its shape and cargo, Father has named the boat the "Icicle."

Allie, Haddy, Lungley, Charlie, Clover and Jerry pedal the ice block upriver. The Aguan seems to circle without purpose. Allie studies his byzantine opponent:

ALLIE

Some dynamite and a few willing hands and we could blow a canal straight through here.

(looks at ice block)

At least the ice is holding up; more than I can say for the crew. Keep pedaling.

Allie takes his place and resumes pedaling. His shirt is wet with sweat.

CONTINUED

LUNGLEY

Wait, you see Seville. Not possible to go further.

Now and again the riverside undergrowth rustles with movement. Odd melodies--primitive musical instruments or animal cries?--drift across the water.

CUT TO:

64. EXT. SEVILLE DAY

The river has become a swamp. Ahead, faces peer through the dense vegetation.

LUNGLEY

Seville.

"Icicle" runs aground. Allie calls to the jungle:

ALLIE

Hello! We've got a surprise for you!

The faces disappear.

ALLIE

Get the duckboards. We're going after them. You first Charlie.

CHARLIE

Why me?

ALLIE

Because you're the bravest one here, sonny.

Charlie's trapped again. Soon he is walking over duckboards across the spinach swamp.

ALLIE

Stamp your feet, Charlie!

Charlie does and a tree snake, hanging from a low branch, falls to the water and swims away. Charlie now makes every step a stamp.

HADDY

I no like this place, Fadder.

They pass a group of small tufty huts that look more like beehives than homes. Monkeys, waiting to be eaten, are tied to a stake.

CONTINUED

CLOVER

What kind of houses are these, Dad?

Allie hugs Clover but doesn't answer. Haddy swats a mosquito.

HADDY

We could go home, Fadder. We could slap our own mosquitoes.

Allie fans himself with his baseball cap:

ALLIE

They can't be far away. Probably down at the drive-in hamburger stand. Could be at the gas station, waiting in line to fill up with high-test.

(calls out)

Okay, the game's over! We can see you! Stop hiding--you're wasting our time! Get out from behind those trees!

Amazingly, Allie's approach works. One by one, natives emerge from the jungle. Soon, twenty men and women in ragged dresses and shorts stand in a group. Their clothes are more symbolic than functional; private parts are randomly visible through rips and tears. Yet, but for their clothes, they resemble Polski's migrant workers.

ALLIE

(to Haddy and Charlie)

Okay, go to work.

They get a piece of ice from the large block on the launch.

HADDY

What a 'spear-mint.

CLOVER

(sounding like Mother)

He's right at home anywhere.

An old man, the GOWDY, limps to the forefront of the natives. He wears a pair of striped cut-off slacks, wire spectacles and a bicycle clip on each wrist like a bracelet.

LUNGLEY

This is Gowdy.

ALLIE

You Gowdy?

CONTINUED

GOWDY
(giggles)

Gowdy.

Charlie and Haddy return with an ice block.

ALLIE
We've got a little surprise for you.

Allie cuts open the banana leaves and hacks out a piece of ice. He hands the ice to the Gowdy.

The Gowdy bobbles it, just as Polski had. The other natives take turns touching the ice.

ALLIE
So, what's the verdict?

GOWDY
Good morning, sah. I am well, thank you.
Where are you garng? Thank you. That
is good lesson.

ALLIE
Hasn't the slightest idea. He's
completely in the dark.
(puts arm around Gowdy)
What's that?

GOWDY
Hice.

ALLIE
(shocked)
Jesus Christ Almighty!

The natives fall to their knees at the mention of Jesus' name. Their sudden movement sends birds flapping through the trees.

GOWDY
"Ah Fadder wart never bead name..."

ALLIE
Stop that! Get up!

The natives continue praying. Allie turns to Francis:

ALLIE
Traitor! You gave me a bum steer.
"Bat-shoo place!" Thanks a lot.

Allie turns and heads back toward "Icicle," leaving the ice and natives behind. Clover follows. He yells back at the natives:

CONTINUED

ALLIE

A fine bunch of savages you are!

The natives examine the ice, chattering amongst themselves. Charlie turns and follows after his father.

CUT TO:

65. EXT. ICICLE, RIVERSIDE DAY

Father sits in the bow with Clover in his lap, hugging her like a big teddy bear. He looks close to tears as Charlie sits down beside him.

ALLIE

They prayed at me, Charlie. What can you do with people who've already been corrupted? I thought we might inspire them, help them out, cool their fish and give them time for farming--do all the things ice lets you do. That's the whole point isn't it? Give them the benefit of our experience.

CHARLIE

Don't give up, Dad.

ALLIE

Ah. What's the point? I know what they'll do with the ice, they'll cube it and dump it into their glasses of Coke, and just go haywire like everyone else.

The rest of the Fox party plus one or two Seville natives arrive at the boat. Mr. Haddy tries to put a bright face on the failure.

HADDY

We go to Santa Rosa. They like ice there, Fadder. They love ice!

But Allie is staring at the jungle-covered mountainside which tumbles down into the river.

ALLIE

What's over those mountains?

LUNGLEY

Nuthin, and more nuthin, Fadder. 'Cept Olanchitos.

ALLIE

Injun country.

CONTINUED

65. CONTINUED

LUNGLEY

Yes, sir. Dangerous up dere.

ALLIE

No ice up there.

LUNGLEY

Dat for sure, they never see ice, they never see nuthin.

ALLIE

Then that's where we're going. Haddy, you take Clover back, tell Mother the new plan. We'll be back by nightfall.

LUNGLEY

But how you gung carry ice!

ALLIE

We. We, are going to build a sled. Cut down some sapedillas, make up cross ties and use bamboo for runners, then we'll rig up a harness. We'll drag it up!

(Allie paces about, excited)

One of the most efficient transport devices ever invented. Why, ancient Egyptians dragged rocks as big as houses when they built the pyramids.

They stare at him, no one moving.

ALLIE

We're not going back!

CUT TO:

66.

EXT.

MOUNTAINSIDE

DAY

Allie and Francis Lungley, fitted into a crude harness, haul the large block of ice on its makeshift sled. Charlie and Jerry lead the way, clearing a path with machetes. Allie, the veins popping out on his forehead, speaks through clenched teeth.

ALLIE

No prayin' Gowdies, no Shouters or Dunkers or Duracells, just savages--with tails!

JERRY

I'm tired. When do we rest?

CONTINUED

ALLIE
Rest? We haven't started yet.
(points to hill)
After that peak, it's all downhill.
You'll be in your bed before dark.

CUT TO:

67. EXT. OLANCHITO PLAIN DAY

The searing midday sun beats down on the procession as it nears the rise. The ice has begun to melt, leaving watery rudder trails behind the sleds. Allie sloshes forward, ignoring the mud and melting ice.

Allie rushes to the top of the rise to see the valley. Charlie and Jerry follow.

But there is no valley--just another jungle plain and another mountain rise.

CUT TO:

68. EXT. OLANCHITO MTS. SUNDOWN

Allie and Charlie, now in harness, pull the ice sled up a 35° slope. The ice block has shrunken to half its size.

The melon-slice of sun sets through the trees. Reaching the top of the slope, Charlie slows to watch the sun vanish behind yet another peak.

CHARLIE
We'll have to go home in the dark.

ALLIE
We can't go home until we deliver this ice.

Allie surveys the scene: his sons sweat like beaten animals, the ice is melting; Francis Lungley has collapsed, panting, on the ground.

ALLIE
Alright, we'll make camp.

JERRY
But where will we sleep?

Allie launches into a familiar tirade, but now it's not so funny.

CONTINUED

ALLIE

Why, just over there, across the street, in the Holiday Inn! You two kids can lounge by the poolside while I fix us up with a couple of rooms. Want a king-sized bed? I know I do, and I sure hope they've got air-conditioning and color TV...

...Want a roll of quarters for the juke box, Jerry? Play some tunes?

Charlie takes Jerry by the shoulder and leads him toward the underbrush:

ALLIE

There goes Charlie to get a Fudgsicle. Careful crossing the road.

CHARLIE

(weak protest)

We're getting some wood to build a lean-to.

ALLIE

(to Lungley)

Hear that? Charlie's going to show us how to build a camp.

LUNGLEY

Charlie know how.

Charlie looks sharply at Francis: he must know about Acre.

ALLIE

Alright, improvise! Charlie "know how!"

CUT TO:

69.

EXT.

MOUNTAIN CAMPSITE

EVENING

Charlie, Jerry and Lungley have built a make-shift camp. They roast a paca rat and eat eddoe yams round a small campfire.

Allie has had no part in these doings. In fact, he sits on a stump viewing them with disdain. Francis offers him an eddoe slice.

ALLIE

I'm not hungry. Besides, I don't eat rats and weeds.

CONTINUED

69. CONTINUED

Silence falls over the group. Allie's presence is pervasive. Finally he cuts the proceedings short:

ALLIE
Put out the fire. You're melting my ice.

CUT TO:

70. EXT. MOUNTAIN CAMPSITE NIGHT

The dead of night: the only sounds are insects, humming wind and an insistent plink-plink of melting ice, as if someone were striking a high piano key.

Charlie sticks his head out of the lean-to and watches his father beside the block of ice; it's a quarter of its original size. Allie sits like a white statue over a dark tomb.

CUT TO:

71. EXT. CAMPSITE DAY

The ice has shrunk to the size of a football and Allie is carefully wrapping it in banana leaves. He feels the boy's stare and looks up sharply.

ALLIE
What are you looking at? This is the first time since creation ice has melted here. Think about that!

He stuffs the ice package into a small rucksack which he puts on his back as he strides off. The others slowly follow, grateful at least not to be dragging the heavy sled.

CUT TO:

72. EXT. INDIAN VILLAGE DAY

A stream runs past a village, where women kneel in mud, doing laundry. The huts look more like beehives than homes. A rawboned dog, a spider monkey clinging to its back, sniffs past them as they enter the village.

CHARLIE
Those women are doing clothes.

JERRY
So what?

CONTINUED

72. CONTINUED

CHARLIE

No one's wearing any clothes.

True enough. The women are naked. They scatter at the sight of the Fox expedition.

ALLIE

We're probably the first white men they've seen. Don't do anything to frighten them.

A second later, they're surrounded by a band of male INDIANS. They raise their arms slowly.

ALLIE

Francis, you're the Moskito expert, tell them who we are.

LUNGLEY

Who are we, Fadder?

ALLIE

We're friends.

LUNGLEY

Friend! Friend!

ALLIE

Not in English, in some damn lingo...

LUNGLEY

Ain't Moskito. Don't know lingo.

Allie suddenly remembers the reason for their trip and opens his rucksack. The ice "block" is now only a puddle.

LUNGLEY

All wadder, Fadder.

ALLIE

There must be some.

Allie finds a piece the size of a twig. He quickly offers it to the Indians--but it's gone. Allie stares at his wet palms.

ALLIE

I don't believe this.

(to Indians)

It was ice. Water like you've never seen before--cold, hard. Good for preserving meat, killing pain. I'll be back. I'll bring you more.

CONTINUED

The head INDIAN speaks through black stumplike teeth:

OLANCHO INDIAN

Go away.

ALLIE

Do you know how long it takes to drag
ice from the coast? Don't blame me!
Have you ever seen ice? Ever touch it?

OLANCHO INDIAN

Go away!

LUNGLEY

(tugs at Allie)

We go, Fadder.

Allie stands solid in his Yankee shoes.

ALLIE

I'm not moving. We haven't eaten since
yesterday. The kids are tired. What
about you, Charlie?

CHARLIE

I'm not moving.

ALLIE

Tell them.

CHARLIE

Food?

Charlie makes "eating" gestures. The Indians walk back
to the village. Allie sits:

ALLIE

We'll wait here. If the ice hadn't
melted they would have been all over us.
I guess we got what we bargained for.

Three skinny white men, pale under dirt and whiskers, walk
toward them, carrying baskets. They are dressed in ragged
trousers, broken sandals and have sallow sunken faces.

ALLIE

This is what they didn't want us to see.
They keep white slaves!

The three men (RUCKBOOSES--antique Creole jargon for
"arquebusses," guns) offer Allie's party boiled bananas,
greasy corncakes and wabool. Allie eats with the others.
Today's hunger transcends yesterday's principles.

CONTINUED

72. CONTINUED

Allie and the Ruckbooses speak in Spanish, which Allie then translates to the boys. As Allie talks, Charlie's attention is caught by the sight of a weapon, an automatic rifle of foreign make, which stands propped in the doorway of a hut. None of the Indians carry rifles. Charlie wonders if he should mention it to his father. Allie turns to him, talks in a low voice.

ALLIE

These guys were captured. They do all the dirty work. They thought we were missionaries.

Allie resumes his conversation. Charlie stares at the three men, then back to the gun.

ALLIE

(to Charlie)

They want us to go. Quietly. I offered to help spring 'em but they've got their own plans. I suggested they try and make it to Jeronimo.

Allie rises slowly. The first Ruckboos hands Allie a gourd of water and some food. Allie leads the group away as the Indians watch from a distance.

CUT TO:

73. EXT. JERONIMO EVENING

The Fox/Zambu party trudges down the path.

Jeronimo in twilight is quiet: empty--something's wrong. In the center of the compound, Allie stops in his tracks:

ALLIE

Somebody's been here.

Mother stands on the dark porch:

MOTHER

Thank God you're back safely.

ALLIE

(looking about)

What's going on?

MOTHER

Missionaries. They came in a motorboat. Took the Maywits and others away. I couldn't stop them. Haddy yelled at them.

CONTINUED

APRIL

They said we were communists.

JERRY

What about Drainy?

HADDY

All them in Shouter.

MOTHER

I did everything I could, but they were so frightened...

ALLIE

You don't hve to spell it out.

HADDY

We glad you here, Fadder.

ALLIE

So the Maywits ran out on us.

CHARLIE

(bolsters himself)

Their name ain't Maywit. It's Roper.

ALLIE

Who says?

CHARLIE

Drainy and Alice. They told us their father was afraid.

ALLIE

(staring at Charlie)

Afraid of what?

Charlie looks away.

ALLIE

You can't take your eyes off these people for a minute!

MOTHER

That's just what Polski used to say.

ALLIE

Don't compare me to that turkey!

MOTHER

You're getting shrill, Allie.

ALLIE

Don't you turn on me, Mother.

He slowly walks away.

CUT TO:

74. EXT. ACRE DAY

Charlie, Jerry, April and Clover chase a spider monkey around the deep green pool.

The monkey jumps up a guancaste and taunts them. He picks a guava, pretends to eat it, then throws it at Jerry. The guava breaks open as it bounces off Jerry's chest. The delighted monkey shrieks as he jumps to another tree.

Clover picks up the broken guava, smells it, takes a bite.

CUT TO:

75. EXT. ACRE DAY

CHARLIE (V.O.)

We returned to Acre and lived like monkeys. We missed the Maywits, of course. Without them, there was no need for a store or church. Anyway, it was too hot to think of Hell. It was the dry season. No one in Jeronimo knew this. The gardens were still growing there.

CUT TO:

76. EXT. FAT BOY DAY

Fat Boy is renowned along the Mosquito Coast. Multi-hued natives journey to visit the ice shrine.

Allie and Haddy give each pilgrim a cube of ice, allotment of seeds--and a lecture on Western Civilization.

Charlie's narration continues over Allie:

CUT TO:

77. EXT. ACRE DAY

The Fox kids play "church" in handmade clothes.

CONTINUED

CHARLIE (V.O.)

My birthday came and went. The river dropped fifty feet and Jeronimo became dry and dusty, but Acre remained green, fed by natural springs. Fat Boy had to be shut because of lack of water. We were afraid to tell Father about Acre. We didn't know how he would react. I was fourteen and still younger than I wanted to be.

CUT TO:

78. EXT. JERONIMO DAY

Drought defines Jeronimo. Allie, Charlie, Jerry, Kennywick and the Zambus relay water from the river to the compound by bucket brigade.

ALLIE

If only I had the hardware, I'd do this in nothing flat.

Haddy runs toward them, Mother follows.

HADDY

Men!

ALLIE

Huh?

HADDY

Three of them.

At the edge of Jeronimo the three "prisoners," from the Indian village, step out of the forest carrying rifles. They reek of menace.

MOTHER

They've got guns, Allie.

ALLIE

I'll handle this.

Ma Kennywick and the Zambus disappear into the woods. Charlie watches as the Ruckbooses approach. Allie greets them in Spanish and to his surprise they reply in English.

FIRST RUCKBOOS

We didn't think we would find you.

ALLIE

(to Charlie)

They speak English!

CONTINUED

FIRST RUCKBOOS

How many are you?

ALLIE

Thousands--that's counting the white ants. We're infested. Termites have gotten into everything and are eating us alive.

FIRST RUCKBOOS

Where are your Zambus?

ALLIE

Took off. Saw your guns. Probably thought you were soldiers. I didn't have time to tell them you were friendly. They're probably out dipping their poison arrows now. Right, Charlie?

CHARLIE

(goes along)

Right.

ALLIE

Where are you headed?

The Ruckbooses aren't bluffed.

FIRST RUCKBOOS

Where's this ice machine you told us about?

ALLIE

No water for ice anymore. Look at the river--it's like a sewer. But there's enough to float a cayuka to the Aguan. I'll draw you a map. It's about a day to the coast. You'll like it there.

SECOND RUCKBOOS

We like it here.

ALLIE

I wish I had room for you--but everything's infested with ants.

(to Charlie and Haddy)

I told you to rip down those shacks. Now get a crowbar and go do it.

Charlie and Haddy scurry off to collect tools to tear down the Maywits' house. No questions asked--the tone of Allie's voice says everything.

FIRST RUCKBOOS

We don't see any ants.

CONTINUED

ALLIE

That's right. If you could see them, you could kill them. Well, I've got work to do. We're not on vacation!

Allie strides off. The Ruckbooses follow him a few steps, until he turns to give them a cold stare.

FIRST RUCKBOOS

We'll look around.

ALLIE

Go down to the river. There's a cayuka there. Take it. It's yours.

SECOND RUCKBOOS

We'll look around.

Allie walks toward Charlie and Haddy as the Ruckbooses cross the clearing.

CUT TO:

79. EXT. MAYWITS' HOUSE DAY

Charlie and Haddy have torn off the roof and are hacking the walls when Allie joins them.

ALLIE

(whispers to Charlie)

I thought they were prisoners of the Indians. Seems like it's the other way around. When I make a mistake, I make a big one. Kick me, Charlie.

HADDY

I ain't seen no hants, Fadder.

ALLIE

Just keep working. We're going to tear down all the out-buildings. Charlie, get Jerry to spread chicken manure in the cold store till it stinks. Tell Mother what we're doing.

HADDY

I ain't like them friends, Fadder.

CHARLIE

What about Fat Boy?

ALLIE

Don't touch him.

CONTINUED

79. CONTINUED

Allie spots the Ruckbooses playing with Clover and April. His face flashes hot. This is the first time we've seen Allie truly angry; it's frightening. Grabbing a claw hammer, he charges across the clearing.

CUT TO:

80. EXT. JERONIMO CLEARING DAY

Allie is suddenly upon the Ruckbooses:

ALLIE

Get away from those kids! Keep your hands away from my children!

They instinctively back away. Allie, hammer poised, stares into each of their eyes--chilling, even to armed men.

FIRST RUCKBOOS

They are intelligent children.

ALLIE

(lowers hammer)

They have intelligent parents.

SECOND RUCKBOOS

They were telling us the many wonderful things you can do.

CLOVER

I didn't say anything, Dad, it was April.

ALLIE

Go mind your own business, girls. Don't bother these men.

The First Ruckboos scrutinizes Allie, his hammer; then shrugs. Now is not the time for confrontation.

FIRST RUCKBOOS

We'll be back for supper.

He leads his companions into the jungle. Allie escorts the girls to the Main House. Charlie and Haddy have destroyed the Maywit shack.

CUT TO:

81. EXT. MAIN HOUSE DUSK

Jeronimo is in shambles. All the buildings have been torn down; only Fat Boy and the Main House remain. The water tower lies on its side. A year's work destroyed in a day.

CONTINUED

The Ruckbooses, guns on their laps, have returned for supper; they rest in the gazebo with the remnants of the Jeronimo community. Haddy, Charlie and Jerry are exhausted from the day's work.

Allie's clockwork mind processes the alternatives as he studies his unwelcome guests.

ALLIE
(amiable)

You're staying tonight, aren't you?

FIRST RUCKBOOS

Yes.

ALLIE
I wouldn't be surprised if you stayed two nights. Maybe until the rain comes and we start planting--that's weeks away.

FIRST RUCKBOOS
(cold)

We will stay until we are ready to go.

MOTHER
Allie, ask them to put their guns away.

The First Ruckboos flashes her a cruel stare; Allie notices this:

ALLIE
You'd be fools to leave now. The termites haven't left us much, but what we have is yours. So please, set your guns down. It bothers my wife and children. You're our guests.

They make no move to lay down their guns.

The First Ruckboos and Mother exchange glances. He smiles lasciviously to the Third Ruckboos--the cruelest of the three. Frightened, Mother goes inside.

Allie picks up the conversation; the children whisper amongst themselves:

CLOVER
I want to go to Acre.

CHARLIE
Be quiet.

Allie has become quite the host:

CONTINUED

ALLIE

I first thought you were the prisoners of the Indians! Slaves! Wasn't that something?

(Ruckbooses laugh)

Better not sleep outside tonight. The insects get real mean--Isn't that right, Haddy?

HADDY

I sleeping on me launch, Fadder.

ALLIE

It's a good thing the bunkhouse is empty for you gentlemen.

Jerry mouths to Charlie: "What bunkhouse?"

ALLIE

Right after dinner, I'll show you where. Speaking of dinner...

Allie holds up his hand as he walks inside.

CUT TO:

82.

INT.

MAIN HOUSE

DUSK

Allie steps beside Mother:

ALLIE

They want food, Mother.

MOTHER

I guess we're stuck with them.

ALLIE

Stuck with them? We're not stuck with anyone. If I believed things like that, I'd still be back in Hatfield. No one with any spark has to endure oppression in this world.

She can't help but smile.

ALLIE

Mother?

MOTHER

Yes?

ALLIE

Hold me a moment.

She does: they share a silent embrace.

CUT TO:

Allie, holding a mothly light, leads the Ruckbooses toward the "bunkhouse." They stare at the odd monolithic building. Lit by moonlight, Jeronimo looks like it did when construction began: littered with junked lumber and discarded supplies.

ALLIE

(opens Fat Boy)

I set out a few mats for you.

The First Ruckboos looks inside.

FIRST RUCKBOOS

You're a smart man. I think we'll get along okay.

ALLIE

I'm sure.

CUT TO:

84.

INT.

CHARLIE'S ROOM

NIGHT

The awesome poetry of the jungle echoes through Charlie's room: the cacophonous drone of insects, the bellythumping of frogs interrupted by regular shrieks of monkeys and parrots.

Yet, Charlie hears SOMETHING ELSE--something suspicious, something scary.

His eyes do not move. All of his senses concentrate in his ears.

SUDDENLY, a hand clamps over his mouth. His wide eyes make out his father's shadow. Allie whispers hoarsely:

ALLIE

Don't say a word. Get your shoes on and follow me.

CUT TO:

85.

EXT.

JERONIMO

NIGHT

Outside, they feel the immediate oppression of the insect world. Charlie watches his father. Allie's baseball cap is tucked in his back pocket.

Allie picks up a freshly cut, five-foot 2x4 placed against the house. He speaks softly but intensely, enunciating each word:

CONTINUED

ALLIE

I gave them every chance to go. Even offered them my cayuka.

(Charlie nods)

But they refused. You heard them. They're planning to fasten on us just like they fastened onto the Indians in the hills.

Allie squashes a mosquito with his finger, shows the blood to Charlie:

ALLIE

Don't pity those men, Charlie. Don't pity insects. This is not the insect's blood; it's my blood. Remember those poor Indians squatting with their dogs?

CHARLIE

They looked scared.

ALLIE

Did they?

(a beat)

I'm not wrong often, Charlie, you know that. But when I am, I'm as wrong as can be.

Allie leads Charlie toward Fat Boy. Charlie watches the 2x4 hanging in his father's hand: not much of a weapon to take on three armed men.

They approach Fat Boy. Charlie notices that his father has already wired and barricaded the main door--the first lock in Jeronimo.

Allie speaks softly.

ALLIE

Can you get up that ladder and shove this beam through the brackets on the hatchway door without making a sound?

CHARLIE

(wants to run away)

I guess so.

ALLIE

You'd better be more sure than that. You could get us all killed.

Charlie braces himself, then nods again.

CONTINUED

ALLIE

Up you go.

Charlie takes the offered 2x4 and climbs the ladder. Soon, he is at treetop level. The black jungle blanket stretches as far as he can see.

Charlie feels his way through pipes and valves. He reaches the hatchway.

He locates two fresh iron bracket jambs. Allie must have installed them in the afternoon. Charlie places the beam between the braces; a perfect fit. He starts back down.

As soon as Charlie touches ground, Allie removes the ladder:

ALLIE

Stand back.

He lowers the ladder and whispers to Charlie:

ALLIE

You didn't climb that ladder.

(a beat)

You didn't bar that door.

(a beat)

We don't have any locks in Jeronimo.

Allie squeezes his son's arm:

ALLIE

I brought you here to test your eyes.
To see if they're as good as mine.

(points to firebox)

Look there. Somebody's left a fire
burning.

There is no fire.

CHARLIE

I can't see it.

ALLIE

(lights a match) -

Look. It was all prepared--kindling,
twigs, limbs. Somebody lit a fire here.
I told them not to.

CHARLIE

Yes.

Allie's face, lit by match light, is wild.

CONTINUED

ALLIE

No fires.

Allie lowers the match to the kindling. The twigs have been soaked in oil. They whoosh into flames. Allie closes the firebox door.

ALLIE

We'll just have to let it burn. There's nothing we can do about it.

Fat Boy's liquid tanks begin to swallow and burp.

CHARLIE

The men...?

Allie leads Charlie back to the house.

ALLIE

Some devil has done this. Start counting, Charlie. By the time you get to three hundred, they'll be asleep. They'll feel no pain.

Before they reach the Main House, a new sound comes from Fat Boy--the sound of GUN BUTTS RAPPING AGAINST THE WALLS. The Ruckbooses are trying to get out. Charlie silently counts.

ALLIE

If they lie down, they'll be alright.

The hammering grows more intense.

A light goes on in the house. Mother calls from the gazebo.

MOTHER

Are you alright, Allie?

ALLIE

Stay inside, Mother.
(to Charlie)
Keep counting.

CHARLIE

126, 125, 124...

Jerry, Clover and April join Mother. They call out:
"Where's Dad?" "Where's Charlie?"

Haddy charges over in an undershirt and shorts:

HADDY

What's this racky puppysho, Fadder?

CONTINUED

ALLIE

It'll be over in a minute.

CHARLIE

77, 76, 75, 74...

HADDY

What's cracking?

ALLIE

Crickets.

But the noise grows louder; it's the sound of gunshots.

Allie's face turns to fright.

ALLIE

They're going to put a hole in him!

Haddy hops up and down. The twins cry. The sound of breaking metal.

CHARLIE

"39,38,37,36...."

Allie rushes toward Fat Boy:

ALLIE

No!

Fat Boy rumbles and shakes. Allie stops in his tracks. He can't prevent the inevitable. He turns back to the others, screaming.

ALLIE

Get down!

Fat Boy bursts into a BALL OF FLAME. Charlie and Haddy's faces are scorched with light. The explosion brings a red glow to every tree, every bush in the clearing.

Allie turns away from the blast. One side of his face is fiery; the other black. He has one red eye.

Charlie stares: his father's one red eye is fixed on him. Allie's mouth is open, but his scream is lost in the detonation.

CHARLIE

"20,19,18,17...."

Fat boy lifts off its foundations, then collapses in a series of explosions which sends fiery jets of gas in every direction.

CONTINUED

85. CONTINUED

The dry grass burns, the trees catch fire, then the Main House.

Allie pulls Charlie and Haddy toward the burning house. He calls to Mother:

ALLIE

Bring the children! Follow me!

Ammonia fumes fill the clearing. Haddy chokes:

HADDY

We gung die.

Mother leads the children out of the house.

CHARLIE

"5,4,3,2,1,."

ALLIE

There's more hydrogen in the tanks.
Cover your faces!

They struggle to the edge of the clearing. Allie scans the jungle, not knowing where to take them.

MOTHER

Where are we going?

Allie has no answer. Charlie interrupts:

CHARLIE

I know a place. Follow me.

Charlie takes Mother's hand; she takes Allie's. Haddy follows, carrying April. Jerry holds Clover's hand. A final gas tank blows as Charlie leads them into the jungle.

CUT TO:

86.

EXT.

ACRE

DAY

The next afternoon. Mother, Haddy and the children eat eddoes and guavas in a circle.

APRIL

Are we going to die?

CLOVER

Where's Dad?

MOTHER

Let him sleep.

CONTINUED

HADDY
His 'spearmint almost kill us.

MOTHER
We're alright now. Charlie saved us.

JERRY
This isn't Charlie's camp! It belongs
to all of us. The Maywit kids helped
build those lean-tos. Now Crummo gets
the credit.

HADDY
I were skeered! I was praying. That
was a Shouters' Hell, I see Duppies
dancing.

CLOVER
What happened to the men?

MOTHER
They're gone.

CHARLIE
I saw them go.

MOTHER
Don't think about it.
(hugs Charlie)
It's alright now.

Allie's boots swing out of the lean-to. He jumps to his
feet:

ALLIE
Let's go.

He looks around, then sinks to his knees and sits. The
others just stare at him.

ALLIE
(defensive)
What are you looking at?

His voice is flat and dull. Mother kneels beside him
and touches his face:

MOTHER
Your hair is singed.

ALLIE
Had an awful night. Hardly slept a
wink.

HADDY
It afternoon, Fadder.

CONTINUED

Allie looks in the direction of Jeronimo. He sniffs the aroma of ammonia and smoldering wood. His mind wildly fluctuates between denial and acceptance of last night's reality.

ALLIE
(defeated)
It's finished.

MOTHER
All your work.
(starts to cry)
I'm sorry, Allie.

ALLIE
(stands)
I'm happy. We're free. Jeronimo is destroyed.

HADDY
She up in crackers.

ALLIE
I was wrong to bring toxic substances to the jungle. I learned my lesson.
(looks around)
What is this place?

CHARLIE
Acre.

JERRY
Our camp.

ALLIE
You had fresh water here?

CLOVER
It's where we play.

ALLIE
Looks like a place for monkey food and monkeyshines. Why did you take us here, Charlie?

MOTHER
He saved us. He found us food and water.

ALLIE
He didn't grow the food, he didn't dig the water. Get your things together. It's late.

CONTINUED

JERRY
Why can't we stay here?

ALLIE
Use your nose, son. Nothing can grow
here for a year. It's poisoned.

Allie leads his family out of Acre.

CUT TO:

87. EXT. JERONIMO DAY

They emerge from the jungle. Jeronimo looks bombed:
mostly powder, gray ash trees burnt to spikes. Fat
Boy's pipes have collapsed and whitened like bones.

The Foxes try not to look back--but the results of
yesterday's carnage is too tempting.

ALLIE
You want to see it! Feast your eyes!

MOTHER
Don't touch anything.

HADDY
Nothing to touch.

ALLIE
I heard that, Haddy. We're all here.
We're all alive. That's all that
matters. We're getting out just in
time.

CUT TO:

88. EXT. RIVER DAY

The river presents a similar scene: burnt branches,
floating fish. Haddy cries at the sight of his launch,
totally destroyed.

HADDY
Me launch. She all I own in the world.

CONTINUED

ALLIE

What good is a boat without a river?

HADDY

The river is dere, Fadder.

ALLIE

The river is full of ammonium hydroxide--contaminated. If we stay here, we'll die.

Allie walks one way; Haddy points the other.

HADDY

La Ceiba dat way.

Allie looks to the mountains on the other side of the river.

ALLIE

We're headed over those mountains, Captain. We got a walk ahead.

Allie picks up April and wades through the knee-deep river of mud and ashes. In the distance the family sees a number of their Zambus, including Ma Kennywick and Francis Lungley. The only one to even acknowledge their presence is Lungley. He turns and stares at them for a moment, before turning his back and following the lonely band of refugees. Allie turns back to Mother and the others. He starts to speak. His face is crumpled: he is crying:

ALLIE

I know what you're thinking! Alright, I admit it. I did a terrible thing. I polluted this place. I'm a murderer.
(April wipes his tears)
Mother? They wanted to feed on us! Destroy us!

MOTHER

Allie! We can't go on like this.

JERRY

I want to go home.

CUT TO:

The Foxes and Haddy make their way down a saddle ridge. They have been on the march for several days and resemble a ragtag, retreating army--all except Allie, who stands tall and walks with a confident gait.

Allie has stopped shaving. He speaks to Mother as he surveys the parched, brushy hills:

ALLIE

Did you see those hoolie trees yesterday? A few weeks ago I would have lacerated them and cooked us up a pair of galoshes. But no more. Spare the trees--let them multiply. I'm a changed man. I've had an Experience.

CUT TO:

A high angle shows the little family struggling across a boggy marsh toward a river bank.

CUT TO:

The riverbank is piled high with all kinds of salvage--timber, wire, torn fishnets and the like--evidently deposited during past flooding.

The family straggle out onto "the beach" and flop on the sand.

Mr. Haddy points downstream.

HADDY

Me town dat way, Fadder.
Brewer's Lagoon. Maybe half-day walk.

ALLIE

No. This is where we part company.

HADDY

Ain't you comin' with me, Fadder?

ALLIE

We're staying here.

CONTINUED

HADDY

I don't know what to do! I ain't got nothin left. They gung say 'where's your launch?'

ALLIE

You can tell them you've had an experience.

Father slips the gold watch off his wrist. Gives it to him.

HADDY

I kin't take you watch, Fadder.

ALLIE

I've got no use for it anymore.

He drags Haddy's skinny hand out of his pocket and pushes the watch over his struggling fingers. Haddy looks at Mother.

HADDY

'Speerience!'

MOTHER

Keep it. You've been a good friend.

HADDY

But you all like Brewer's. Just down stream. That me family!

ALLIE

If it's on a map I can't use it.

The family one by one embrace Haddy, while Allie paces excitedly about the river beach, picking up odd bits of timber. His voice drifts over them as each takes a solemn farewell of their old friend.

ALLIE

Here we can live simply: gardening, fishing, beachcombing! Just a flush toilet and a hut. I'm a changed man. No more chemicals, no more poisons. If what you want isn't washed up on a beach you probably don't need it!

Haddy walks slowly away watched by all the family, with the exception of Allie.

CUT TO:

92. EXT. MONTAGE, THE NEW SETTLEMENT BY THE RIVER DAY

As Charlie narrates, Father leads the family in building a hut solely from what he finds on the beach.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Somehow we found what we needed.
We built a latrine, then a small hut, and planted a vegetable garden. Father's hut was like a small barge. He took care to make it waterproof, tarring its cracks to seal it from rats and moisture. One day a Zambu passed. It was then I noticed that Father, with his long, greasy beard and wild eyes, looked more the savage. Father found an old outboard and took the motor apart, cleaning it piece by piece. He was fond of saying that 'in the end, Robinson Crusoe went back home.' But we were staying.

The small hut on the bank is now complete. A pile of junk eight feet high, collected from the river, stands to one side of the hut. The contrast between Jeronimo and the new settlement is inescapable and pathetic.

CUT TO:

92a. EXT. RIVERBACK, NEW SETTLEMENT DAY

Clover and April pull nails out of a pile of driftwood. The boys take the nails and straighten them with an improvised hammer.

Some distance away Mother washes clothes in the brown water of the river.

Allie strides past the children to join her. The children watch and listen, sensing a confrontation.

ALLIE

Soon as we get the crops in we'll be self-sufficient.
'Self-sufficiency,' Mother.
That's the new motto.

MOTHER

Your garden is imaginary.
Your crops are imaginary.
You're putting us through an ordeal for your own...

ALLIE (interrupting)

An 'ordeal' is a 'square deal.'

CONTINUED

MOTHER

Don't bully me, Allie. Just
look at yourself! You don't
look human.

ALLIE

Think of this as freedom.
It's like being shipwrecked.

MOTHER

I don't want to be shipwrecked!

ALLIE

Mother!

The children have stopped their work.

CLOVER

Ma's starting trouble.

JERRY

You're a crapster, Clover.
It's miserable here. I hope
she bangs him over the head.

APRIL

This is crummo. I want to run away.

CHARLIE

Shut-up all of you!

The children go quiet again as their parents' voices drift
toward them.

ALLIE

I'm making life tolerable, I'm...

MOTHER

Allie, you'll kill us here!

CUT TO:

93.

EXT.

HUT

NIGHT

The family sit scattered around a fire, finishing their
meager evening meal.

The night sky, outlined by the mountains, suddenly
GLOWS A PALE ORANGE--as if the sun were about to rise
prematurely. The incandescent effect resembles those
sometimes reported by sailors at sea--an aurora borealis
ten thousand miles off course.

Charlie and Jerry watch as the glow fades away as quickly as
it came. They turn to their father for an explanation.

CONTINUED

CLOVER

What was that, Daddy?

ALLIE

Only one thing can make the night sky light up like that. Gamma rays, implosion of neutrons, atoms splitting from one side of the USA to the other. I knew it was going to happen. Got out just in time.

MOTHER

Allie!

ALLIE

You saw it Mother. I know what I'm talking about. That was the end. Massachusetts, tin-foil, cheeseburgers--all gone in a blinding flash. There's nothing to go back to.

JERRY

(to Mother)

How long will we have to stay here, then?

ALLIE

Answer him, Mother.

MOTHER

(she pauses, then responds)

The rest of our lives.

Suddenly, the distant sound of rolling thunder shatters the night. The children are awed and frightened.

ALLIE

We're in luck--sounds like rain.

CUT TO:

94.

INT.

HUT

NIGHT

Mother is tucking the children into their beds. Their cramped quarters are separated from their parents' by a wooden partition. The thunder still echoes outside. April is already asleep.

CLOVER

Has Hatfield, and Mr. Polski, and our chickens and all America been blown up?

Mother hugs her little girl.

CONTINUED

MOTHER

Ssh! If it has, we're the luckiest people on earth.

Jerry stares up at the ceiling.

JERRY

What if it hasn't?

Mother can't meet his eyes.

MOTHER

Then we've made a terrible mistake.

CUT TO:

95.

EXT.

RIVERBANK

DAY

The children work in the garden, Mother makes clothes out of salvaged sailcloth. Thunder cracks and booms, causing monkeys in the nearby jungle to cry out their "goong-goong" noise. Mr. Haddy appears from the direction of Brewers Lagoon; he carries a bright plastic bucket. The children rush to greet him. Allie keeps working, restoring the corroded old outboard.

HADDY

Brung you some fish, Fadder!

ALLIE

Do I look hungry?

Haddy stares at Allie's outboard, laid out in pieces.

HADDY

This is 'spearmint for true. That motor ain't got no sparks.

Allie remains silent.

HADDY

(continues)

I bring you spark plugs and gas next time.

ALLIE

Don't want 'em.

HADDY

How's 'dat?

ALLIE

'Cause we're not going anywhere.

CONTINUED

Haddy looks at their hut.

MOTHER

Doesn't look like much at the moment,
but Allie has plans. You know Allie.

HADDY

'Spearmints! House pretty close to water.

ALLIE

Water's over there.

HADDY

Gung be up here when rain comes. Man,
we gung get some storms, Ma! Gonna be
over dat junk pile there.

(he points at Allie's carefully collected debris)
Who made that trashpile? Monkeys do
dat?

ALLIE

Tell us how you lost your watch.

Haddy touches his wrist.

HADDY

Swapped it for me new boat. Sail boat.
Want to see her?

ALLIE

No.

HADDY

I call her 'Omega,' like the watch.
She's a pretty thing.

ALLIE

I had that watch fifteen years.

HADDY

(looking up at the sun)
It's three--three-thirty.

ALLIE

He just gave it away.

MOTHER

I thought you approved of that sort of
thing.

ALLIE

Haddy, can't you see we've got work to do.

CONTINUED

HADDY

You in trouble here, Fadder. Rain 'gung wash you 'spearment out to sea. Ma and kids could come to Brewer's. Good for family dere.

ALLIE

He's suggesting it's dangerous here. This savage is telling me--.

MOTHER

Don't be so rude, Allie!

ALLIE

We live here! Get that! This is a Pioneering Effort.

JERRY

I want to go with Mr. Haddy!

ALLIE

(to Haddy)

See what you've gone and done. Alright Jerry, you go. But don't come back, ever.

MOTHER

Allie!

Jerry glares at his father.

ALLIE

Haddy, before you go, look around. Tell me what you see.

HADDY

You talking about that trashpile, Fadder?

ALLIE

You've got no vision, have you? None at all. You can't see--over there you have your cornfields. I see tomatoes beyond and right here a fish trap. A ropeworks yonder and a smoke-house out back. A thriving village living in harmony with nature. That's my vision, and anyone without vision has no place here.

He resumes his tinkering with the outboard as Mother takes Haddy's fish from him.

JERRY

(to Charlie)

I hate him. I wish...I could kill him.

CUT TO:

Raindrops big as baby fists pelt against the river and swamplands. The river has risen and rushes in a torrent past the Fox hut. Mingling with the roar of water and the thunderclaps can be heard the terrified howling of the monkeys.

CUT TO:

97. INT. HUT NIGHT

Charlie lies awake, listening to the crash of trees nearby and the sizzling smack of rain on the tin patches of the hut walls. A shutter beside him rattles, straining at the hinges. Charlie is frightened and draws the covers about him.

The others are asleep, when one of the shutters is suddenly flung open by the wind. Raindrops spatter onto Charlie as he rises from his bed and reaches out to draw the shutter closed.

A cold wet thing closes over his hand. He is about to scream when a black hand slaps across his mouth. It's Mr. Haddy. He holds a finger to his lips, then beckons Charlie outside.

CUT TO:

98. EXT. HUT NIGHT

HADDY

You ain't tell Fadder I come here!

He leads Charlie to a little boat bobbing and thrashing in the current. He lifts out a drum of outboard gas, then, from inside his coat, a paper parcel.

HADDY

Sparks! For Fadder's outboard.

CHARLIE

What'll I do with them?

HADDY

Tell him you found 'em. Don't mention Haddy. You gung drown without dat outboard. There gonna be water everywhere.

He gets into his boat, and expertly maneuvers it out midstream; within a second he's gone. Charlie stares at the gleaming spark plugs.

CUT TO:

It's all hands on deck as the family fight to keep water and debris out of their hut. The rain is even heavier than the night before, but the real danger lies in the large branches caught up in the raging water and hurtling close by like battering rams. Allie, clearly frightened, is everywhere at once, shouting orders and attempting to push away branches snagging on the hut. He orders the girls inside with Mother and ties ropes about himself and the boys, then lashes them to the hut to avoid being swept away.

A huge tree, narrowly missing Jerry, shakes the hut loose from its foundations and it floats free from the bank. It's then we realize that Allie has ingeniously constructed the hut as a barge. But with the water moving at this rate and without either means of steering, or power, they are in grave danger of being swamped. Allie tries to hang onto a corner of the barge to prevent it being swept out into mid-stream. He uses all his strength, acting as a kind of human anchor. Allie spots Charlie on the deck. He calls at the top of his voice:

ALLIE

Help me!

Charlie frozen; Allie repeats desperately:

ALLIE

Charlie! Help me!

Charlie unties his safety rope, disappears inside a moment, to return carrying something in his hand.

Close on Charlie's hand as he opens it to show his father Haddy's spark plugs. Allie looks from the spark plugs to his son.

Charlie jumps off the "houseboat" to retrieve the can of gas from its hiding place under the junkpile. He struggles back toward the boat, fighting against the raging current.

CHARLIE

(shouting)

Found it, last week!

Allie hauls Charlie up on deck as the bank collapses and the houseboat swirls out into midstream. He clamps the outboard to the stern and works feverishly to fit the plugs. Mother joins him as he pours gas into the engine, a difficult task as the boat corkscrews wildly in the current.

MOTHER

We can go to Haddy's!

CONTINUED

ALLIE

Dead things go downstream, Mother.
Life is upstream, we didn't come to
run away!

MOTHER

Give it up, Allie! Give it up!

Her voice is drowned out by the roar of the outboard.
Allie takes the tiller and swings the boat about. It
buffets its way upstream, throwing spume up over its bow.

CUT TO:

100.

EXT.

UPRIVER

DAY

The rain has stopped and the jungle steams.

The "house-barge" is driven by push-poles and the
outboard. A thatched master cabin provides crude
shelter. The legend "Victory" is scratched to the side.

Allie sits in the stern at the tiller. Charlie is up at
the bow, poling. Clover sits idly nearby. Something in
the water catches Charlie's eye--a gleaming metal object
floating toward them. It clinks against the side of the
boat. It's an empty can of Coke. It bobs along toward
the stern. Clover is watching it, too, and is about to
call her father's attention to it when Charlie roughly
grabs her. The violence of Charlie's action frightens
her and she forgets about the can. She bursts into
tears and runs to her mother.

Allie surveys the jungle with delight: utter emptiness.

ALLIE

Look around. We could stop
anywhere we want.

CHARLIE

(suddenly determined)

No, let's go on. It's better
upstream. I know it.

ALLIE

Fourteen years old and at last
you're showing some backbone.

Charlie stands, poling all the harder. Bit by bit, more
and more, the refuse of civilization floats past: a
plastic detergent bottle, a sheet of notepaper. This is
the trash of the old world, and it looks beautiful to Charlie.

Allie doesn't notice the refuse. In the distance Charlie
detects a new sound: singing. Not native chants, but
organized choral voices.

CONTINUED

MOTHER
(listening)

Allie.

ALLIE

Birds.

JERRY

Who's singing?

ALLIE

Savages.

CUT TO:

101.

EXT.

GUAMPU

DAY

"Victory" rounds a river bend. Ahead, the trees clear to reveal a dock made of oil drums and planks.

Set back from the river are bungalows with shiny corrugated roofs. In the center of the clearing stands a wood white-framed church and belfry. Everything is orderly and clean: a transplanted world.

MOTHER
It must be a mission.

CLOVER
Where are we, Dad?

APRIL
They have real houses.

ALLIE
We'll see about this.

JERRY
There's a backboard! They play
basketball!

Charlie steadies himself, then it occurs to him.

CHARLIE
Maybe it's the Spellgoods.

The others stare at him:

CHARLIE
The Spellgoods. The preacher family
from the boat.

ALLIE
I knew it was savages.

CONTINUED

MOTHER

Allie, maybe they can help us.

ALLIE

We don't need any help!

MOTHER

Look at us!

Allie hitches the boat. His boots thunk on the dock planks:

ALLIE

I've got news for these people.

Allie storms toward the compound. Charlie, Jerry and Mother run behind him. They walk through the bungalows--six in number, each bordered by a well-kept flower bed.

Reverend Spellgood's VOICE echoes from within the church:

SPELLGOOD (O.S.)

Jee-doff...

ALLIE

I'll knock his block off.

JERRY

Is this the future?

ALLIE

I'll remember that, sonny.

MOTHER

Let's go back, Allie. Let's get out of here.

ALLIE

(to Charlie)

She's afraid.

MOTHER

I've never seen you so angry.

They approach the white church. It's shadowy dark inside; they strain to look through the windows.

INSIDE: a congregation of Indians sit watching Rev. Spellgood on a 4x4 Advent video screen. IN VIDEO, Gurney uses a kazoo to illustrate the story of Gideon.

CONTINUED

101. CONTINUED

CHARLIE

That must be broadcast from the U.S.

ALLIE

Impossible. The U.S. is destroyed.

JERRY

Where's it from?

ALLIE

That box. It's a video cassette. A cheap trick. The Indians think it's magic.

Allie looks around: the Spellgoods are nowhere to be seen:

ALLIE

Back to the boat!

CLOVER

Can't we look around?

ALLIE

This place doesn't exist!

Allie leads them back. There is no question of disobedience.

CUT TO:

102.

EXT.

"VICTORY"

NIGHT

Charlie and Jerry slip into the water and silently dog-paddle toward Guampu.

CUT TO:

103.

EXT.

GUAMPU

NIGHT

Charlie and Jerry sneak across the compound toward the main house. They peek in the window:

INSIDE, Emily Spellgood, considerably grown, lies on the floor in designer jeans, watching the Advent with her brothers and sisters.

CONTINUED

SPELLGOOD CHILD #1
Let's play Pac Man!

SPELLGOOD CHILD #2
No, I want to see The Muppets again.

EMILY
Star Trek!

Rev. Gurney, tired of this petty bickering, shoves a new cassette into the VCR:

SPELLGOOD
Let's watch something wholesome.

World Crusade for Christ comes on--organ music and Spellgood's sonorous gospelizing.

JERRY
We'll be here all night.

INSIDE: Emily, bored, gets up and walks out.

Charlie and Jerry duck beside the steps. Emily sits on the first step. Charlie whispers:

CHARLIE
Remember me?

Emily turns in sudden fright:

EMILY
What?

CHARLIE
Charlie Fox--and Jerry. From the "Unicorn," Remember?

EMILY
(recognizes him)
What are you doing here? This is weird.

CHARLIE
We're going upriver. We're stuck.

EMILY
(examines him)
What happened to you? You're all dirty.
You got smaller. Your hair's gross.

CHARLIE
Be quiet.

Charlie leads Emily and Jerry around the house.

CONTINUED

JERRY
Is America Okay?

EMILY
Baltimore's freaky now. They closed
Dad's drive-in church. They couldn't
pay the taxes.

JERRY
Is America still there?

EMILY
Are you nuts or something?

CHARLIE
My father says America's been wiped out.
There's no one left but us.

EMILY
That's stupid.

JERRY
Yeah!

EMILY
I thought my Dad was weird.

CHARLIE
It all went up in flames. That's what
he thinks.

JERRY
(hitting his brother)
I knew it! Liar! Liar! He was a liar
all the time!

EMILY
(to Charlie)
Your brother's weird.

CHARLIE
Emily, we're in bad trouble. Will you
help us?

EMILY
Sure. I like you a lot.

CHARLIE
We gotta get outta here.
Is there a road to the coast?

CONTINUED

EMILY

Sure, and Dad's got a nifty Toyota Landcruiser. Four-wheel drive. Green with black upholstery. It's parked over there.

She points to the other side of the river.

CHARLIE

Where are the keys?

EMILY

Under the mat. Won't your father go crazy if you leave without him?

JERRY

He's already crazy.

EMILY

My Dad's got a gun. A Mossberg repeater. It's for the Communists. How do you like my hair?

The generator suddenly kicks off. The compound GOES DARK.

EMILY

This happens all the time. It must be outta gas.

Noises come from the house.

JERRY

We better go.

EMILY

Come in and watch TV. The power'll come back on.

CHARLIE

(dead serious)

My father would kill us.

EMILY

Holy wow. That's incredible--he's even worse than mine.

Jerry, shaking, holds Charlie's hand. Emily leans over and kisses Charlie. He keeps his arms at his sides.

Rev. Spellgood's VOICE echoes from inside. Charlie breaks away from Emily and dashes off with Jerry. He stops, looks back at Emily, wondering what to make of her kiss.

CUT TO:

104.

EXT.

"VICTORY"

NIGHT

Mother waits by the cabin as the boys climb aboard.
Attempting to be angry, she sounds scared:

MOTHER

Where have you been?

CHARLIE

It was my idea. Don't blame
Jerry.

JERRY

Where's Dad?

MOTHER

I thought he was with you.

JERRY

He was lying to us, Ma.

CHARLIE

We talked to Emily. Baltimore--
everything in America is okay.

JERRY

Mom! America's the same! There's
nothing wrong.

MOTHER

He hated the way it was. He'll
never go back.

JERRY

I'm not staying here.

CHARLIE

Neither am I.

JERRY

We're making a mistake if Dad was lying.
That's what you said.

MOTHER

This is our life now. We have to live
with it. There's no way out.

CONTINUED

CHARLIE

There is a way out. The Spellgoods have a jeep. I took the keys.

(shows the keys)

You can drive us.

MOTHER

And leave Dad behind? I can't believe what you're saying.

Charlie grabs his mother by the shoulders:

CHARLIE

Please, Ma. This may be our last chance. Wake up the twins and let's go. Hurry, before he stops us.

Mother and Charlie confront as equals:

MOTHER

What about me? Don't you think I want to go too?

JERRY

Please, Ma! Please!

MOTHER

(voice trembling)

I can't think straight.

CHARLIE

Tomorrow will be too late.

Their argument is interrupted by a FLASH OF FIRE, from Guampu. Flames leap above the compound; bird squawks mix with human shouts. The stink of burning gasoline surrounds them. They glow in amber:

JERRY

Fire!

A GREATER EXPLOSION: the generator disappears in a ball of fire. The twins cry inside the cabin.

MOTHER

Oh God! Oh God, we should've never stopped here. Why didn't we keep going?

CHARLIE

Jerry, get the twins.

(takes Mother's arm)

We're getting out of here.

CONTINUED

A voice booms out of the darkness:

ALLIE

Sit down!

Back-lit by fire, he stands knee-deep in the river. His face is wild, in orbit.

MOTHER

What's happening?

ALLIE

The fire's under control. No one's hurt. I did them a favor--nipped it in the bud.

Jerry

You're a liar! Liar! Liar!

ALLIE

Charlie, get that pipsqueak inside. We're clearing out.

Charlie stands straight, challenging his father:

CHARLIE

We're not going with you. Not after those lies. Not after you made us suffer for nothing.

ALLIE

Get in!

MOTHER

Listen to him, Allie. He's got a plan.

ALLIE

You! You've always been against me! You've always tried to undermine me! You're no more use than these kids!

Spellgood's shouts echo from Guampu. Mother is terrified.

Allie raises his hand to hit Mother.

JERRY

(striking at Allie)
I'll kill him.

ALLIE

Charlie! Grab those lines! If those savages see us, they'll be down on us like a ton of bricks.

CONTINUED

Allie steps in the center of the coiled sounding chain. Charlie suddenly darts forward, grabs the chain and yanks it tight around his father's ankles. Allie tries to move but trips himself over, coming down hard, smashing his head against the rail.

ALLIE LIES ON HIS BACK ON THE DECK. A confused, stunned, half-smile grows across his face. Charlie is appalled at what he's done.

CHARLIE

I'm sorry, Dad!

Jerry wraps his father's feet in rope:

JERRY

Help me!

MOTHER

Allie, what do you want me do to?

But Allie doesn't understand. In Guampu, the fire slowly succumbs to the jungle. Flashlights flicker in the compound.

MOTHER

They've got lights!

Allie rouses to an incoherent awareness:

ALLIE

Hey?

He strains at the ropes which tie his hands and feet, but it's too late. He bites at the binds.

Charlie leads the others off the boat:

CHARLIE

Let's go! It's this way.

GUAMPU HAS MOBILIZED. Gurney Spellgood, Mossberg Repeater in hand, surveys the smoldering settlement. He hears voices from "Victory."

MOTHER

Where's Dad?

CHARLIE

He's not coming.

Spellgood fires a shot in their direction:

SPELLGOOD

Communistas! Santanas!

CONTINUED

104. CONTINUED

Allie, bound hand and foot, bleeding from the head, rises to his full height. His dark form is silhouetted in cobalt.

Mother and the children call from the river.

MOTHER

Allie! Here!

Allie speaks in a dead calm voice, as if he were the only sane man in Bedlam:

ALLIE

Would you give me a hand here?

There's another gunshot. Allie's hit. He falls. Spellgood grows closer.

SPELLGOOD (O.S.)

I'm coming after you!

Mother, Charlie and Jerry rush back to the boat.

Mother takes charge.

MOTHER

Back on board! All of you!

They clamber onto "Victory." Allie lies in a heap on the deck, his shirt stained with blood.

ALLIE

(a small voice)

I'm bleeding. Don't leave me.

I'm alright.

SPELLGOOD (O.S.)

Who's there?

ALLIE

I can't move.

MOTHER

Charlie! Start the engine!

We're not leaving him.

Charlie knows what to do. He cuts the anchor rope, forces the twins and Jerry to lie flat on the deck as random shots zip through the air. Then he races to the stern, pulls the ripcord on the outboard. It won't start. A second furious tug and it coughs into life, Charlie swings the tiller and points the boat back downriver.

MOTHER

We won't leave you, Allie.

CUT TO:

Days have passed. "Victory" glides down the widening river. Mother sits at the stern, guiding the boat.

The Foxes pass increasing signs of civilization. On shore, Indian children eat fruits as natives stretch an alligator skin across a wood frame.

Allie lies in the bow. He is no longer bound: his paralysis has made this unnecessary.

The twins sit to one side of their father, brushing flies from his face. Charlie sits obediently on the other side, watching guard.

Allie is nothing but a talking head attached to a limp body. He's neither dead nor alive, neither coherent or crazy--yet he continues to speak, as if from another world:

ALLIE

I can't move.

CHARLIE

You'll get better, Dad.

ALLIE

Man sprang out of a faulty world, Charlie. It's a bad design, the human body. Skin's not thick enough, bones aren't strong enough, too little hair, no claws, no fangs. We weren't meant to stand up straight--our posture exposes our heart and genitals. We should be on all fours, hairier, with tails. Look at me. Yes sir, I'm going to live on all fours from now on.

TIME DISSOLVE. High noon. Huts and campfires appear with regularity on the shore.

Allie, lying prone in the bow, continues to speak. Sweat drips over his eyes, down his cheeks. Charlie has not moved from his side.

ALLIE

It's worse for other people. Women, Charlie, they're in bad shape. They leak, they drip. It's terrible about women's bodies, how they leak. I thought I was the strongest man in the world. I'm just pulp. Like a savage. There's sand in my eyes! I'm alive but I can't see! Mother!

CONTINUED

105. CONTINUED

Mother steps over with a thin white cloth. She places it over his face:

MOTHER

The sun is not good for you, darling.
This will shade you.

ALLIE

We're going upriver, Mother?

MOTHER

Yes, we're going upriver.

But they are not, and she hates this final lie. She kisses his cheek through the cloth. Allie continues:

ALLIE

Nature is crooked. I wanted right angles and straight lines. Ice! Oh, why do they all drip? Women! You cut yourself opening a can of tuna and you die. Listen to me, grow wings and they'll never get you!

The boat turns a corner and there it is: the wide blue expanse of the Caribbean. A lighthouse in the distance.

Allie recognizes the SOUND OF WAVES. He suddenly waves his previously immobile arms:

ALLIE

No!

The white cloth falls from his face.

CUT TO:

106.

EXT.

BREWER'S LAGOON

DAY

The Fox boat is beached on a sandy lagoon. Charlie and Jerry sit next to their father. Allie has been silent. He speaks:

ALLIE

Where's Mother?

CHARLIE

She went to get supplies.

Allie grimaces. He no longer has any control; over the world, others, himself.

A small sailing boat makes for them.

CHARLIE

It's a boat, Dad!

CONTINUED

106. CONTINUED

Allie tries to raise his head. Jerry helps him.

JERRY
It might be Mr. Haddy

ALLIE
(to Charlie)
Go see who it is.

Charlie looks at his father's face again: he is dead serious. He stares at Charlie: the delirium seems to have passed.

ALLIE
Go on. I'll be right here.

Charlie and Jerry wave to the boat as they dash down the beach.

CUT TO:

107. EXT. BREWER'S LAGOON BEACH DAY

Charlie and Jerry hear a cry in the distance, stop in their tracks, and turn to look back. Their father is gone.

Now they hear Allie's pitiful cries:

ALLIE (O.S.)
Mother! Mother!

The boys start to run.

Over the dunes they see him. He has crawled across the sand like a dying turtle heading inland. Hand and foot tracks lead from the boat.

Struggling to hold himself on all fours, Allie collapses:

ALLIE
Mother.

Charlie and Jerry are now crying, running. Vultures, waiting nearby, descend as Allie collapses. The boys swat the giant birds off Allie's sad corpse.

The vultures scatter. Charlie falls protectively over his father's body.

CUT TO:

The Foxes and Mr. Haddy stand about the small cairn of stones erected over Allie's lonely grave. Haddy looks about him; the family, still in shock, can say nothing. He takes off his hat, stares at the grave.

HADDY

You wern't no prayin' man, Fadder.
But if you go to God, you gung show him
some good 'spearmin'ts, dat for true.
Amen.

Mother, Charlie, Jerry, Haddy, Clover and April stand alone; they don't touch or exchange glances. They sense the loss of something larger than they will ever know or fully understand.

Then Mother takes April and Clover by their hands and leads them away.

CUT TO:

Haddy helps Mother and the children into a chartreuse taxi. Around them La Ceiba bustles, impervious to the events of the last year: everyone selling, hassling, arguing, complaining. No one seems to care whether the Foxes are coming or going.

They each bid Haddy an affectionate farewell. His eyes are wet.

CUT TO:

The Foxes crowd in the garish third-hand Plymouth. The driver honks as he accelerates down La Ceiba's main drag.

The driver turns on the cheap AM radio hanging from the rear-view mirror. Tinny Latin imitation disco echoes through the car.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Once I had believed in Father and the world seemed very small. Now he was gone and I hardly believed in myself and the world was limitless. Part of me died with him and part of me was afraid he was still alive. Here, in this taxicab, the music sounded like it came from a church and what I saw out the window looked like splendor.

THE END