

CODE OF THE WEST
A motion picture script
By
Samuel Lockhart
&
Rob Lockhart

© Samuel Lockhart & Rob Lockhart

FADE IN:

INT. DAVID'S STUDY — DAY

A dark wood-paneled room. Books up to the ceiling.

The walls are lined with framed photos from classic Westerns. Gary Cooper, William S. Hart, Randolph Scott and Joel McCrea look down from autographed photos.

A column of degrees covers a corner. A framed certificate of appreciation from University of Texas Austin to 'Prof. David Lowenstein.'

In a glass case, we see a battered hat, an eye-patch, boots, spurs, chaps, a whip, holsters, a tin sheriff's star.

WE SEE

a gnarled hand slide the glass open. Fingertips brush the tin star. The hand removes the chaps.

An old woolen sweater vest falls to the man's feet.

The second arm shrugs the leather vest on and another hand pins the star over the breast.

Boots and spurs next.

The hat is pulled tight over gray hair.

A decorative wooden cabinet is closed and silent. A padlock hangs open on its front.

The old hands begin to swing them open.

FLASH IN:

EXT. WESTERN STREET — DAY

In a battered bit of black-and-white footage WE SEE. . .

A WESTERN LAWMAN is offered a gun.

FLASH OUT:

INT. DAVID'S STUDY — DAY

Within the cabinet, WE SEE a beautiful, gleaming, pearl-handled, somewhat worn but carefully polished Colt .45.

FLASH IN:

EXT. RANCH — DAY

B&W: The western lawman crouches by an adoring boy.

YOUNG DODGE

A gun ain't the answer, Timmy.

FLASH OUT:

INT. DAVID'S STUDY — DAY

The old man's hand closes the box. The padlock SLAPS the closed box.

WE HEAR his FOOTSTEPS as he leaves the room, pausing to open the squeaky study door.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION — DAY

JOE CANTU, Mexican-American cop, late 30s-early 40s, bangs on a battered manual typewriter.

He looks up at

The second hand of the clock crawling slowly across the face: 4:58.

Joe looks down at

A fly crawling across his hand. He studies it. He starts to lift the other hand, puts it back down.

Joe stares at

BORRACHON, 60s, spindly drunk. Borrachon somehow manages to weave drunkenly as he sits in a chair opposite Joe.

BORRACHON

I'll get it.

Borrachon swings at the fly and knocks himself completely off the chair and out of sight.

LIEUT. PRESTON, a bluff, hearty sort, 50s, plants a butt cheek on Joe's desk.

PRESTON

Twenty years, hey, boy?

JOE

I wouldn't count the last five.

BORRACHON (OS)

I'm O.K.

PRESTON

We do our part.

JOE

They also serve, who sit and type, eh?

BORRACHON (OS)

I found a penny.

PRESTON

The boys have a little surprise planned for you.

JOE

I love surprises.

Joe starts to get up from his desk. He winces in pain from his stiff leg.

JOE

Shit.

PRESTON

Don't complain. That bullet pulled you off the street.

JOE

I didn't become a cop so I could collect my pension.

BORRACHON (OS)

I think I'll get up now.

PRESTON
C'mon, quitting time.

JOE
I just gotta finish this thing.

Borrachon pulls himself up onto Joe's desk.

BORRACHON
Your desk tastes funny.

Joe and Preston look at each other.

BORRACHON (CONT'D)
You should have that looked at.

CUT TO:

EXT. STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

A gaudy neon sign reads: All-girl revue. A cowboy silhouette pauses in front of the sign. It walks in.

CUT TO:

INT. STRIP CLUB - BACKROOM - NIGHT

Deafening country rock blares out.

Joe is surrounded by SCHWARTZ (30s), FLICK (40s) and a gang of other fellow cops. Flick shoves a drink in Joe's hand.

We see a stripper reflected in the mirrored bar behind them.

Preston shouts something in Joe's ear.

JOE
(shouting)
I can't h-

Preston indicates that he can't hear Joe.

Something catches Joe's eye.

CUT TO:

INT. STRIP CLUB — MAIN ROOM — NIGHT (JOE'S POV)

STACY, an attractive young Latina, early 30s, is trying to do her pole dance, dressed in a glittery bikini.

CLYDE and DARRYL, 350-pound hooligans, dressed in white from do-rag to Air Jordans, are yelling, throwing things and grabbing Stacy's thighs.

CUT TO:

INT. STRIP CLUB — BACK ROOM — NIGHT

Joe stands up, flinching briefly, and heads for the main room.

All the other cops' eyes are fixed on the stripper.

Without looking, Preston finishes Joe's drink.

CUT TO:

INT. STRIP CLUB — MAIN ROOM — NIGHT

Clyde and Darryl holler and make a scene.

BOUNCER (30s), a mere 275-pound stripling, assesses the situation and goes to the men's room.

A shadowy MAN IN A COWBOY HAT pulls his chair halfway back from the table and begins to stand.

FLASH IN:

INT. WESTERN BARROOM — DAY

B&W: Split-second of a barroom fight as a fist connects with a jaw. POW!

FLASH OUT:

INT. STRIP CLUB — MAIN ROOM — NIGHT

Stacy sees the man in the cowboy hat standing.

Joe limps into the face of Clyde.

JOE

You boys are kind of spoiling the show
for everybody else.

Stacy looks nervously from Joe to Clyde.

CLYDE

What do you care?

DARRYL

Yeah, whadda you care?

The man in the cowboy hat stands poised at his table.

JOE

It's my anniversary today.

CLYDE

(indicating Stacy)

Well then, this must be the missus.
Congratulations, honey!

Clyde, Hoot and Darryl guffaw and make kissy noises at
Stacy.

JOE

You misunderstand me. I'm celebrating
twenty years as a COP with a couple
dozen of my closest COP friends, who
are back there behind that door.

The man in the cowboy hat sits again.

CLYDE

Do I look that stupid?

Joe raises an eyebrow.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

I'm supposed to get my panties in a
bunch over your make-believe friends
behind me?

PRESTON (OS)

You want my make-believe foot in your
ass?

Preston and the COPS are spread across the back wall of the room.

Clyde and Darryl eye Joe. What does he want?

JOE
Walk away clean and we all stay
friends.

The bouncer steps in, takes Clyde and Darryl by the elbow.

BOUNCER
I've got this.

JOE
Gee, thanks.

Stacy takes a big breath. She sees the man in the cowboy hat incline his head toward her and touch the brim.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S FRONT HALL — NIGHT

The front door opens.

JULIE, an attractive young woman in her early to mid-20s, enters, holding a grocery bag.

Sam, late 20s, her fiancée, follows her.

JULIE
Grandpa?

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY IN DAVID'S HOUSE — NIGHT

Julie looks both ways down the hall.

JULIE
I got your stuff.

She sees the open library door.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S STUDY — CONTINUOUS

Julie enters tentatively.

JULIE
Grandpa? Are you in here?

SAM (OS)
Julie?

JULIE
In the library.

Sam enters.

SAM
Where is he?

JULIE
They're gone.

SAM
What is this room?

Julie goes over to the display case.

JULIE
All his treasures. Gone.

SAM
What treasures?

JULIE
The chaps, the boots, the tin star.

SAM
Oh, the movie souvenirs. Maybe he...

JULIE
Wait—

Julie runs to the wooden case, opens it. The revolver is still there. She exhales with relief.

JULIE (CONT'D)
Thank God.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE STRIP CLUB — NIGHT

In the distance, Stacy exits the back door as she calls behind her.

STACY
Goodnight, everybody.

We hear MUFFLED REPLIES as she slams the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET — NIGHT

Stacy runs toward the bus stop just as a bus pulls away.
She SLAMS the back of the receding bus in anger.

STACY
Shit!

Stacy's ankle buckles. She looks down.
Her heel has broken off.

STACY
Shit, shit, super-shit!

Behind her, we hear LAUGHTER. A bottle CRASHES.

Clyde and Darryl stumble out of the shadows of a nearby alley.

DARYLL
Hey!

CLYDE
Shut up! She'll hear us.

DARYLL
Shhh.

Stacy walks faster. The THUGS start to follow.

CLYDE
We just want to talk to you.

STACY
Leave me alone.

The two drunken thugs match her speed easily.

In the distance, we hear HOOFBEATS against the asphalt.

Stacy begins to run, but has trouble running with a busted heel.

The HOOFBEATS grow louder.

Clyde and Darryl run also, outpacing her.

Stacy SCREAMS.

Out of the shadows comes a COWBOY, spurring his horse to greater speed.

FLASH IN:

EXT. WESTERN TRAIL - DAY

B&W: Young Dodge, galloping hard.

FLASH OUT:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Clyde and Darryl frozen in their tracks. What the--?

Stacy has exactly the same expression.

The cowboy twirls his lariat into a lasso.

Clyde and Darryl stare up towards us in horror as they see the lasso coming down on them.

Stacy gasps, staggers back.

The cowboy slips deftly off his horse. He braces his boot against the lamppost as he tugs hard on the knot that fixes Clyde and Darryl to the post.

They wriggle helplessly.

CLYDE

Hey, what do you think yo—

DODGE

If you two don't stay quiet, you're
likely to say something foolish.

He turns and strides toward Stacy as if he has been riding
a horse all his life.

In the background, we hear the three thugs chatter on.

DARRYL (OS)

Hey, what did he mean by tha—

CLYDE (OS)

Shut your face, (etc.)

Dodge removes his hat.

DODGE

You alright, miss?

Stacy stares at the fit, trim 70-year-old man. He wears
the vest, chaps, tin star and all the regalia we saw in
David's study. His manner is confident, but shy.

STACY

I—uh—I'm fine.

DODGE

Good.

STACY

Who are you?

Dodge crumples his hat a little between his fingers.

DODGE

I beg your pardon, miss. They call me
Dodge. Dodge Laredo. This here's
Twister, my horse.

TWISTER nods, paws ground.

STACY

I'm Stacy Perès.

DODGE

Pleased to make your acquaintance.

He makes an awkward bow, then puts his hat back on.

STACY

Oh — um, thank you.

The thugs chuckle a little at Dodge's expense.

DODGE

Don't mention it.

Dodge kicks the thugs behind him.

STACY

No, really, it was great. I mean,
where did you learn to—

DODGE

It's time a pretty lady like you was
home.

STACY

Thank you, I can find my way myself.

DODGE

Meaning no disrespect, but have you
forgotten those three coyotes over
there? They're not the only varmints
out tonight, I reckon.

STACY

Meaning no disrespect, but how do I
know I'd be better off with you?

DODGE

Calm yourself, little lady. If I was
a-gonna hurt you, I'd already have done
it.

STACY

Mr. Laredo, and I mean this is in the
nicest way— get lost.

Stacy starts to stride away, wobbling on her broken heel.

Dodge mounts his horse, follows her at three paces back.

STACY
What are you doing?

DODGE
Horses and women can't travel on broken shoes.

In disgust, Stacy picks up the shoe and tosses it away.

STACY
There!

She steps and we hear KA-RUNCH!

STACY (CONT'D)
Ow!

DODGE
You sure you couldn't use a ride?

STACY
There is no way in hell I am going to get up on a horse with a crazy old man in a cowboy suit.

CUT TO:

EXT. TAXI STAND — NIGHT

Stacy stands tapping her foot.

No cars pass.

Dodge sits on his horse a few feet away. He is leaning on the pommel of his saddle.

A pick-up goes by traveling the wrong direction.

Then nothing.

A crumpled ball of newspaper rolls by like tumbleweed.

CUT TO:

EXT. STACY'S APARTMENT BUILDING — NIGHT

Stacy is riding with Dodge on his horse through an urban residential area.

DODGE
(singing)
. . .As I walked out on the streets of
Laredo,
As I walked out on Laredo one day-

Stacy's expression is softer now.

DODGE (CONT'D)
I spied a poor cowboy wrapped in white
linen,
Wrapped in white linen as cold as the
clay.

DODGE
Well, miss, that was right-

STACY
Wait! This is me.

And they are in front of the door of her section of the
apartment complex.

Dodge gets off the horse and helps Stacy down.

STACY (CONT'D)
You'd better not come in.

DODGE
I understand.

Dodge mounts.

DODGE (CONT'D)
Good evening ma'am.

Dodge tips his hat, turns his horse and trots away.

CUT TO:

INT. STACY'S APARTMENT BUILDING- NIGHT

As Stacy walks down the hall of her building, she notices
RAP MUSIC getting louder and louder.

She reaches her door and gets out her keys.

STACY
(Shouting over the music)
Jared, the neighbors already hate us.
You don't have to give them more...

She slams the door open.

INT. STACY'S APARTMENT — NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

As the door opens fully, we are confronted with the sight of JARED, 11, and two others of the same age. The two others are dressed all in white. Jared is wearing a white bandana. All three sit in front of a boom box. One of the others has a joint hanging out of his mouth.

STACY
Jesus! Out! You two- OUT!

JARED
Mom!

The two delinquents head for the door.

STACY
What were you doing?!

Stacy pulls the bandana off Jared's head

JARED
I was just trying to help.

STACY
Help? What are you talking about? How
does you getting killed help me

JARED
That's why I gotta protect you!

STACY
Protect me? You gonna join a gang just
so you can be a tough guy.

JARED
It's for you!

STACY

Thank you! I always wanted a corpse
for a son!

JARED

Tito's right. You're just another
bitch!

Stacy's jaw clenches, the eyes and nostrils open wide.

Jared spins around, hops nimbly through the window behind
him.

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTYARD OF STACY'S APARTMENT BUILDING — NIGHT

Jared climbs down the ladder at the bottom of the fire
escape. The last rung is about six feet from the ground.

Jared dangles a moment, then drops to the ground, facing
the building.

He turns around and sees

Dodge sitting in front of a roaring campfire over which
hangs a battered coffee pot, and a tin of beans. His
horse, Twister, is tied to the chain link fence.

Dodge looks up at Jared.

Jared stares back at Dodge.

A piece of a grin passes over Dodge's face.

Jared wonders what planet he has stumbled onto.

lifts a tin cup in Jared's direction.

DODGE

Coffee, son?

No answer.

DODGE (CONT'D)

No need to be shy. I put my pants on
one leg at a time.

Jared slowly sits down. He begins to recover his wits.

JARED
Make mine a venti.

DODGE
(chuckle)
You are a tenderfoot. Here.

Jared takes the cup. Sips. Nods.

Dodge nods back.

From overhead, we see the small courtyard, covered in dry grass and thriving weeds. As the campfire grows more distant, we see that they are surrounded by housing projects.

The smoke curls into the azure night sky. More and more stars grow visible.

CITY SOUNDS are overtaken by CRICKETS and SILENCE.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

It is the early morning. Police lights. Crime scene tape.

The BOUNCER at the strip club is making his statement to a uniform. Cops and investigators swarm the location.

Clyde, Hoot and Darryl are still tied to the lamppost, but their heads are slumped forward and each has a massive bullet wound on the side of his head.

FLICK
It's no surprise. These three were
big local dealers for El Jefe.

SCHWARTZ
Yeah, but this one's hinky. It's a
standard pump and dump, except, here--
take a look at this knot.

FLICK
Looks like it was done by some crazy
cowboy.

The BOUNCER overhears this.

BOUNCER
Excuse me, detective...

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER APARTMENT IN STACY'S BUILDING - DAY

Joe sits by a window holding a notepad. MABEL (70s) puts a tray of cookies down on the table and sits.

MABEL
I've had it with all her boyfriends.
This one's been loitering out there all night.

Joe pulls back the lacy curtains and looks out.

He sees Dodge asleep, his hat over his face, lying next to his spent fire and Twister.

MABEL (cont. OS)
He looks so dirty and my book club is meeting this afternoon...

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTYARD OF STACY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Joe approaches the sleeping Dodge. He limps past the fire and disturbs one of the logs slightly.

From under his hat, Dodge opens one eye, then quickly closes it.

Joe finally reaches Dodge's feet and looks down on him for a spell.

DODGE
Why don't you take a tintype? It'll last longer.

JOE
What are you doing here?

DODGE

Call yourself a lawman?

JOE

Not lately.

DODGE

I should say not. Do you know this whole settlement's run by a bunch of rustlers and thieves?

JOE

Yeah, actually, I do.

DODGE

Well why in tarnation don't you do something about it?

Joe looks from side to side. Where is this guy from--?

JOE

Like what?

DODGE

You kill a snake at the head.

JOE

That would be El Jefe.

Dodge gets up and dusts off his chaps.

DODGE

Then let's go see El Jefe.

JOE

And do what?

DODGE

Talk.

Dodge mounts his horse.

JOE

You can't just go talk to El Jefe.
That's crazy!

DODGE

Of course it is. First we need to get
up a posse.

Dodge leads his horse the other direction and trots off.

Joe stands looking after Dodge. A fly lights on his hand.
Joe looks at the fly, shakes it off his hand, then limps
off after Dodge.

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALLISH HOUSE - DAY (MOS)

A TALL BULKY MAN (40s) with a whistle around his neck
laughs and slams his door in Dodge's face.

CUT TO:

EXT. RUN DOWN APARTMENT - DAY (MOS)

A MUSCULAR BLACK MAN (early 30s) answers the door.

Dodge speaks to him and his eyes widen. He shakes his head
no and fearfully shuts the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. ILL-KEMPT HOME- DAY (MOS)

An OLD LADY nods her head furiously.

She disappears behind the door for a moment.

Reappears with an enormous shotgun and a determined
expression.

She begins to stride through the door, ready to do battle.
Dodge gently pushes her back in, tips his hat as Joe closes
the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. BROWNSTONE - DAY

Dodge and Joe stand outside the door. Dodge holds his hat
in his hands.

MRS. PRESTON, a beautiful woman in her late forties, answers the door. She glances back inside for a moment.

JOE

Hello, Mrs. Preston. Is the Lieutenant in?

MRS. PRESTON

No, he's...not in.

JOE

Well, do you know where he is?

MRS. PRESTON

No. I'm sorry. Goodbye.

Mrs. Preston gently closes the door. Preston, sitting on the couch nearby, doesn't take his eyes off the football game.

PRESTON

What'd you do that for?

MRS. PRESTON

You said you'd fix the disposal today, and until you do, I'm not letting you out of my sight.

CUT TO:

EXT. BROWNSTONE - DAY

Dodge and Joe saunter down the stone steps. As Dodge reaches the bottom, he squints at the horizon.

DODGE

Well, it looks as if you and me are gonna have to track down this "El Jefe" on our own.

JOE

No, forget it. I don't know why I've gone along with this so far. You are going back to — wherever you came from, and I'm going back to the station. This is over.

DODGE

What's the matter, lawman? Don't you know how to catch an outlaw?

JOE

Yes, I do. You need probable cause, a warrant and some decent back-up.

DODGE

Sometimes you gotta do what's right, even when no one understands why.

JOE

That's not how law enforcement works.

DODGE

How's it working for the folks 'round here?

JOE

This is America. People have rights.

DODGE

How about their right to keep safe? Now quit your fussin' and help me track El Jefe down.

JOE

Listen, we don't need your help. We know exactly where he is. He goes to church every Sunday at St. Anne's.

DODGE

Well then, let's get on with it.

Joe pulls his gun and points it at Dodge.

JOE

Freeze!

Dodge puts his hands in the air, smiling.

JOE

Oh, what the hell.

Joe holsters his gun.

Dodge puts two fingers in his mouth and whistles loudly.
He looks at the horizon.

JOE
We'll take my car.

Dodge looks perplexed.

CUT TO:

INT. JULIE'S APARTMENT- DAY

Sam is making pancakes on a griddle and the news is on in the background.

NEWS READER
Three men were found dead today in an alley in the neighborhood commonly known as Tagtown. Police say they were lassoed to a lamppost and shot through the head. The only lead investigators have is hoofprints leading away from the scene. The suspect...

Sam watches the screen and continues to pour batter until it covers the griddle.

CUT TO:

INT. JOE'S CRUISER — DAY

Joe driving, Dodge riding shotgun.

DISPATCH
...wears a brown cowboy hat and should be considered armed and dangerous.

Joe WHIPS out his gun and stops the car.

DODGE
I'm unarmed.

JOE
You killed three of El Jefe's dealers?

DODGE
I didn't kill anybody. They were alive when I left.

JOE
Why should I believe you?

DODGE
You have my word.

Joe shakes his head.

JOE
I have to arrest you.

They stare at each other.

DODGE
Make you a deal.

JOE
Deal?

DODGE
If I resist arrest, I reckon I could do
some damage, even if you do catch me.
The deal is: you take me into custody.
I promise I won't leave your sight.

JOE
What's my part?

DODGE
On our way to the jail, we stop at the
church.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSING PROJECT - DAY

Police cruisers pull up to the housing project. Two are
already there.

Stacy and Mabel are being interviewed by the police.

Animal Control is loading up Twister.

Mabel points the way Dodge and Joe went.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S STUDY — DAY

Julie is tearing through stacks of family photos and scrapbooks.

Pages fly onto the floor

A photo of Julie as a little girl and Grandpa David. A tiny pink novelty cowboy hat sits on David's head. Julie wears a mischievous expression.

We see one of those costume 8 X 10 Sepia photos they take at summer resorts. In it we see a younger David, MARY (Late 50s) and Julie (at 9 years old). David is dressed as a cowboy, but not quite like Dodge. Mary is dressed like a dance hall girl, complete with fishnet stockings. She is still attractive, even at her age. Julie is dressed like a cowgirl with lots of fringe.

They are posed. David has his hand clutched over his heart as if Julie has just shot him with one of her two tiny six-shooters. Mary has an overly melodramatic expression of distress.

Sam enters, still holding a spatula.

SAM

What are you doing?

Julie jumps a little.

JULIE

Oh, jeez! Why do you always do that?
I'm going through his old stuff- trying
to figure out where he could be.

SAM

Is that your grandmother?

JULIE

Yes. Here. Grab a scrapbook.

Julie heaves a heavy scrapbook in Sam's direction. Sam leaves through it, but with less hurry than Julie. There are many more photos of Mary.

SAM

How did she die, anyway?

Julie gradually stops flipping pages. She looks at the carpet as if she could see it in front of her right now.

Sam looks at Julie, worried and determined.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH- DAY

Joe leads Dodge along the side of the church- in handcuffs.

DODGE
Stay here, lawman.

JOE
We had a deal.

DODGE
Don't worry, I'll stay in sight.

Dodge uses both hands to open the bottom flap of a stained-glass window.

DODGE (CONT'D)
Enjoy the show.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH- DAY

Dodge opens the double doors of the church and steps inside.

FLASH IN:

INT. OLD WEST SALOON — DAY

B&W: Young Dodge steps through saloon doors

FLASH OUT:

INT. CHURCH — DAY

Dodge takes off his hat. Gradually attention gathers on him.

EL JEFE, a skinny Hispanic 26-year-old sits with his posse in a front pew all to themselves. He wears thick black glasses and is dressed for church with a polka-dot bow tie.

DODGE

Sorry to interrupt, padre. I need to talk to a man they call El Jefe.

The PEOPLE in the pew behind El Jefe and his HOMIES clear out. El Jefe takes a puff from his inhaler.

DODGE (CONT'D)

I wanted to congratulate you. Looks like you got everybody in this town running scared.

EL JEFE

I don't know what you're talking about. I am a businessman. With a very popular product.

El Jefe's Homies laugh raucously. El Jefe laughs and snorts. Dodge laughs, too.

DODGE

(chuckling)

You're good. You are good. So good, you could get me handcuffed without even knowing I existed.

EL JEFE

Oh, I know who you are, Mr. Cowboy Man, but I'm not as stupid as those three in the alley

DODGE

Oh no?

EL JEFE

No. But I don't have any "beef" with you.

El Jefe makes air quotes.

EL JEFE (CONT'D)

You didn't kill my boys. Now, get out of here. My prayers aren't going to say themselves.

El Jefe gets up and puts a thousand dollars in hundreds in the collection plate.

EL JEFE (CONT'D)
Sorry about this, father.

DODGE
I'm afraid not. You see, I came here to see just how good you are.

El Jefe turns around and pulls his gun in one swift motion. His eyes widen and his voice suddenly becomes dark and menacing.

EL JEFE
Good enough to kill you, even here, and walk away.

El Jefe's homies start to converge on Dodge. Dodge doesn't flinch. El Jefe puts away his glasses.

DODGE
That's easy. None of these people care enough to stop you.

A MIDDLE-AGED MAN looks at the floor, ashamed.

DODGE (CONT'D)
Even though it's tearing their town apart.

A TIRED WOMAN looks around, hoping someone else will do something.

EL JEFE
That's right. Why should I care about this hell hole? I do whatever it takes to look out for number one. Me.

DODGE
Whatever it takes.

EL JEFE
That's right. If a guy has a bullet coming, I'm happy to provide it.

DODGE

Even if he's your own guy?

EL JEFE

Life sucks, then you die. I just speed
up the process. Right, "dogs"?

El Jefe laughs, signals for his men to laugh.

El Jefe's homies laugh feebly. They glance at each other.

Dodge starts to walk towards El Jefe with his hands up.

EL JEFE (CONT'D)

You know why I killed those two fat
pigs? Because they weren't pulling
their weight.

El Jefe smirks, but his goons aren't laughing anymore.

EL JEFE (CONT'D)

I will break any law, kill any man and
take anything I want. I own this
neighborhood. I am El Jefe!

One of El Jefe's Homies rolls his eyes.

El Jefe laughs uproariously. He even looks to share the
hilarity with the PRIEST. As he is turning his head back
around, Dodge steps in past his gun arm and punches him in
the face.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH- DAY

Joe is looking in through the stained glass window.

Suddenly, El Jefe flies out of the window and over Joe.

He lands with a THUD and a nerdy GROAN.

Four police cruisers pull up. OFFICERS get out and start
to head to the door.

Joe flashes his badge at them.

JOE
Hold it, boys. I got your perp right here.

OFFICER 1
Sorry, detective. We're looking for a cowboy.

JOE
That cowboy just got El Jefe here to confess to triple homicide in front of a church full of witnesses.

Dodge moseys out the front door of the church, dusting off his hands.

The OFFICERS look at each other: "He caught El Jefe?"

The people from the church are now pouring out of every exit. One of these is behind Joe.

JOE (to churchgoers)
...who will all testify in court.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET — DAY

Sam and Julie walk down a street of shops and restaurants.

SAM
Yes or no- are you coming to my graduation?

JULIE
Fine, yes. I'll be there.

SAM
Are you sure? I don't want to pressure you into it. . .

JULIE
Are you going to be a psychologist or a reverse psychologist?

SAM
I'm a psychiatrist.

JULIE
Not until—

Julie sees something that makes her stop suddenly.

She walks to the newsstand and picks up a newspaper.

WE SEE a picture of Dodge below a headline: "There's A New Sheriff In Town!"

Sam walks over, looks over her shoulder at the paper.

JULIE
Thank God he's alright.

SAM
I don't think he's alright at all. We should go to missing persons.

JULIE
But we know exactly where he is.

SAM
We should have him arrested.

JULIE
But he hasn't hurt anyone.

SAM
We have to do something. He's turned into some kind of vigilante.

JULIE
He's a real cowboy hero!

SAM
Cowboy hero. He's disturbed.

JULIE
I guess that depends on how you feel about cowboys.

SAM
And heroes.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF BARBERSHOP — DAY

Dodge walks down the street. Passers-by glance at him admiringly. Some of them talk to each other behind their hands.

Dodge SEES

A barber pole.

FLASH IN:

INT. OLD WEST BARBERSHOP— DAY

A MUSTACHIOED BARBER shows Young Dodge to his chair.

FLASH OUT:

He feels his chin and neck, nods to himself.

He strides confidently in.

INT. BARBERSHOP — DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Dodge strides in.

DODGE

Can a fella get a shave and haircut
here?

WE SEE a room full of barbers and customers interrupted in mid-cut or mid-shave, staring at this strangely dressed white man. Every one of them is Black, Hispanic or some combination thereof.

One young barber indicates the waiting area nonchalantly.

ICE

Have a seat, mister.

DODGE

Much obliged.

Dodge starts toward the row of seats. He is stopped in his tracks by the barking voice of one older barber.

CEDRIC

Wait a minute, wait a minute. This man should not be waiting for a cut. This man's a hero.

The cutters and customers stare at CEDRIC blankly.

CEDRIC (CONT'D)

Don't you all read the newspaper? That's the problem with this generation of African-American men. They don't take the trouble, they don't have the pride in themselves to take an interest in what's going on in the world.

ALL react, "Oh, no."

ICE

Not this again.

CEDRIC

Yes, this again. And it'll be this again and again until you get it right.

(to Dodge)

Sir, I'm sorry. You sit here in my chair. I apologize for the appalling ignorance of my colleagues.

ICE

Good, he can wait there.

CEDRIC

No waiting. I'm going to cut his hair myself.

Everyone's jaw drops. CEDRIC picks up a pair of scissors, blows a thick layer of dust off them.

CEDRIC (CONT'D)

Don't worry, now. Sit right here.

DODGE

I believe these gentlemen were here ahead of me.

CEDRIC

And they're gonna be there after you. They gonna put down roots they stay any

longer. See that on they head—that's
not hair, it's moss.

The two GEEZERS in the waiting chairs shake their heads. A
couple of the YOUNGER CUTTERS laugh and point at the
GEEZERS.

CEDRIC (CONT'D)
Now git yourself over here.

Dodge lowers himself slowly into the chair.

DODGE
Much obliged.

ICE
So who is this guy?

CEDRIC
This the boy who cleaned El Jefe's
clock.

BARBER 2
Oh yeah, I think I heard something
about that.

CEDRIC
You heard something about that. Bet
you expect a milkbone now. Cut that
head!

BARBER 2 looks down. Everyone else giggles.

CUT TO:

INT. BARBERSHOP - DAY

A few minutes later. CEDRIC lowers the chair and spins it
around to reveal Dodge with a shave and a shiny new
haircut.

DODGE
Thank you kindly.

Dodge reaches into his vest.

ICE

Don't let him pay you, that's on the house.

DODGE

I guess I owe you one.

Dodge walks towards the door, along the rows of barber chairs. Everyone says goodbye and Dodge tips his hat to all of them.

CEDRIC

(under his breath)

Just remember that when El Jefe makes bail. Damn fool cracker.

INT. PRESTON'S BASEMENT- NIGHT

Dodge, Joe, Preston and two other cops, Flick and Schwartz are hunched over the poker table. Poker chips, potato chips, half-empty beer bottles strewn about.

SCHWARTZ

So as I'm slapping the cuffs on him, he draws himself up, you know, all huffy-like—

JOE

Yeah.

SCHWARTZ

He says, 'I beg your pardon, officer, but that whore happens to be my wife!'

All explode in loud laughter.

PRESTON

New game, gentlemen. Everybody know "Texas Hold 'Em'?"

Preston begins dealing.

JOE

This was just back a couple of years ago. I was working one of these 'free gift' cons—you know, "you've won

JOE (CONT'D)
...gift, no obligation to buy," blah
blah blah...

Flick appraises his cards.

FLICK
Check.

JOE
It's a cakewalk. All I gotta do is sit
there, look stupid—

SCHWARTZ
It's a natural.

JOE
Shut up and bet.

SCHWARTZ
Ten cents.

JOE
. . . and let these bozos spill their
guts into the wire I'm wearing.

PRESTON
Your bet, Mr. Laredo.

DODGE
Fifty cents.

JOE
I'm not even carrying.

PRESTON
That's against regs. What's your bet?

JOE
Call.

PRESTON
Call.

Preston turns the first three cards in the center.

JOE

It's going off without a hitch. I've got it all on tape. I stand up to make the collar, back up is coming in. I reach for my Miranda card--

FLICK

Raise fifty cents.

JOE

--and suddenly this idiot is waving a piece in my face.

SCHWARTZ

Call.

JOE

I got my arms out, and the next thing I know--

DODGE

Raise a dollar.

JOE

--I feel my hip burning. Then I heard the shot.

PRESTON

(to Joe)

You standing pat?

JOE

Oh, shit. Raise fifty cents.

PRESTON

That's two dollars to me.

SCHWARTZ

You got shot over a bunco beef?

Preston turns the river.

JOE

The moral of our little story, children, is know who you're playing with.

SCHWARTZ

Check.

FLICK

Check.

DODGE

Raise a dollar.

SCHWARTZ

You're a pretty high roller.

DODGE

I just follow the cards.

SCHWARTZ

I'm out then.

FLICK

Me, too.

JOE

Another dollar.

PRESTON

I'll call.

Preston turns the Flop.

JOE

Turns out these guys had a daddy. A big freakin' daddy.

SCHWARTZ

You didn't know.

JOE

I didn't know.

DODGE

All in.

PRESTON

That's it for me.

Joe looks at Dodge under raised eyebrows.

Dodge's eyes are hidden under the brim of his hat.

Joe looks at his stack.

Schwartz whistles "The Good, The Bad and The Ugly" theme.

Joe shrugs.

JOE

Call.

Joe turns his cards over.

All eyes on Dodge, who is tilted back in his chair.

Dodge leans in, flips his cards.

JOE (CONT'D)

Son-of-a-bitch. I thought you had me.

SCHWARTZ

(to Dodge)

You follow the cards my ass.

FLICK

(to Joe)

Is that how you got the bum leg?

JOE

Yeah. Little bastard got five to ten.
But my point is, I didn't get the real
guy. There's always a bigger daddy.

DODGE

Hmm. You mean like with the railroad.

JOE

(no idea what he's talking about)

Uhh... yeah, I guess.

PRESTON

Who wants another beer?

FLICK

Hit me.

SCHWARTZ

Me, too.

JOE

Yeah.

DODGE

Make it a full house.

PRESTON

I'll be right back. Wait for me.

Preston leaves.

Everyone pushes back from the table.

Schwartz lights a cigarette.

Flick arranges his chips in rows and columns.

DODGE

So you're tellin' me El Jefe works for
somebody else?

FLICK

Ironical isn't it?

DODGE

So who's the big man in this town?

Flick, Schwartz and Joe look at each other and chuckle.

SCHWARTZ

No question.

FLICK

Indubitably.

JOE

McCrea.

DODGE

Who?

JOE

Scott McCrea. You see his name all
over town -- McCrea Hauling.

DODGE

That's a good business.

JOE

Not as good as prostitution, money
laundering—oh, and drugs.

FLICK

Those are his real businesses.

Preston re-enters with beers in hand. He sets them down in front of each player.

DODGE

I see. I expect Jack Dalton and his
clan have a hand in this.

Dodge tilts his hat back on his head. Everyone else looks puzzled.

DODGE (CONT'D)

Well, I reckon I better go talk to this
McCrea fella.

Joe winces. "Not again!"

PRESTON

What's going on?

CUT TO:

INT. STACY'S APARTMENT- DAY

Stacy is struggling over the stove, juggling more than one pan.

Jared is watching an old western cavalry scene on TV.

We hear salsa coming from another apartment.

Stacy checks on whatever's in the oven.

The doorbell rings. Stacy wipes her hands on something she probably shouldn't and walks to the door.

The door opens to reveal STEVE, 30s, weasely. He is wearing an off-white cowboy hat.

STEVE

Hiya honey, what's for dinner?

STACY

Where have you been?

STEVE

I had to do a thing, but now I'm back for good.

STACY

Good? That's a laugh.

STEVE

Have you seen my fishing pole?

STACY

We threw it out three months ago. Didn't think you were gonna come back for it.

STEVE

Aww, c'mon! I've got the whole weekend planned.

STACY

What are you talking about?

STEVE

Jared 'n me were going up to my fishing cabin.

JARED

Shack, you mean.

Steve tries to throw a friendly headlock around Jared.

Jared steps aside and avoids it.

STEVE

Jus' me and my boy.

STACY

What could you have been smoking to make you think I was going to let you take him?

Steve starts to faux box with Jared, who does not respond.

STEVE

Hey there, kiddo. C'mon, get 'em up!

Jared makes his fingers into a gun and points them at Steve's forehead.

JARED

Bang.

STEVE

C'mon, smartass!

Steve grabs Jared by the arm, pulls him toward the door.

Steve yanks the door open, and plows straight into Dodge.

DODGE

Am I too late?

STEVE

About a hundred years, Hopalong!

DODGE

What are you doing with the boy?

STEVE

He's coming with me.

Dodge deftly removes Steve's grasp, releases Jared.

DODGE

We haven't been introduced yet. I'm Dodge Laredo.

STEVE

You're kidding.

DODGE

Where'd you get that hat?

STEVE

What's it to you?

DODGE

That's my lucky hat.

JARED

Really?

DODGE

Give it here now.

STEVE

No way. I paid real money for this.

DODGE

That hat was stole from me.

And indeed, the hat resembles the one worn by Young Dodge.
Dodge's fist clenches.

Steve's eyes dart down at the fist, then back to Dodge's
face.

Steve cocks his fist, throws a clumsy punch.

Dodge grabs the fist, twists it behind Steve's back.

With his free hand, Dodge snatches Steve's hat.

He grabs the door of the apartment, flings it open, shoves
Steve to the floor of the hallway.

Dodge puts on the off-white hat. Perfect fit.

With a contemptuous flip of the wrist, Dodge flings his old
hat at Steve.

DODGE

There you go. You seem to like things
that aren't yours. Now git!

Stacy emerges from the kitchen, pot in hand, just in case.

STACY

(in Spanish)

Miserable son-of-a-whore—

Stacy goes to attack Steve, but Dodge nimbly intercepts
her, closes the door.

Dodge turns to speak to the others, when

BANG!

Steve bashes against the door with his shoulder.

STEVE (OS)

Ow.

DODGE

Y'alright, mister?

STEVE (OS)

I'll be back.

WE HEAR scuffling feet, then a crash, then the steps trail off.

Dodge checks his hat in the mirror.

DODGE

This was always my favorite hat.

Jared smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION — NIGHT

Preston walks over to Joe's desk. He holds a stack of papers in one hand. Joe sees him coming and avoids eye contact. Preston throws the stack of papers at Joe's desk.

PRESTON

What the hell is this?

Joe gets to his feet, starts walking away.

JOE

Gotta take this over to—

Preston follows him.

PRESTON

What gives you the right to bargain with a suspect?

JOE

He was aiding...

PRESTON

Yeah, yeah, pat him on the head and give him a cookie.

JOE

You don't—

PRESTON

Look, we can't have every citizen with a free afternoon enforcing the law.

JOE

Why not?

Preston steps in front of Joe.

PRESTON

Don't encourage this guy, Joe.

JOE

Yes sir.

Joe starts to go, Preston stops him.

PRESTON

Look at me. If you take any part in this cowboy's insane quests, I will make sure you spend the rest of your career photocopying mug books, you copy?

JOE

Yes sir.

CUT TO:

INT. STACY'S APARTMENT — NIGHT

A little while later, Stacy is clearing the dishes from the table. Dodge is rolling a cigarette one-handed as Jared watches in fascination. Stacy speaks as she moves between the kitchen and the table.

STACY

What do you want to do now? We could rent a video, or see what's on—

DODGE

We always used to make our own
entertainment in the evening. Someone
tells a story or recites a poem,
someone else takes out their geetar—

JARED

What can you do?

Dodge takes the spoon that Jared is holding and holds it
together with his own spoon. He performs a spoon solo of
which Buddy Rich would be proud.

JARED (CONT'D)

Awesome!

Dodge turns to Stacy.

DODGE

If it's not presuming on your already
generous hospitality, miss, I'd
appreciate it if you would favor us
with a song.

STACY

I don't sing.

DODGE

I beg to differ with you, miss. That's
why I come to see your show.

STACY

I wondered what you were doing in a
place like that.

DODGE

I confess, I was not familiar with that
style of dancing. And I was most
disappointed that you did not sing.

STACY

(confused)

What?

DODGE

You can make it up to me now. Give us
a song.

JARED
Yeah, c'mon, mom!

STACY
Uh, um. OK.

Stacy starts cautiously, her pitch a little uncertain.

STACY
(singing)
At first I was afraid
I was petrified
Kept thinking I could never live
Without you by my side
But then I spent so many nights
Thinking how you did me wrong
And I grew strong
And I learned how to get along

Stacy is gaining confidence and her voice gains strength.

STACY (CONT'D)
(singing)
And so you're back
From outer space
I just walked in to find you here
with that sad look upon your face

Dodge takes out a harmonica and begins accompanying her.

STACY (CONT'D)
(singing)
I should have changed that stupid lock
I should have made you leave your key
If I had known for just one second
you'd be back to bother me

JARED
Go mom!

STACY (CONT'D)
(singing)
Go on now go walk out the door
Just turn around now

'Cause you're not welcome anymore...

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT COURTYARD - EVENING

Dodge is seated at his campfire, sipping coffee from a tin cup.

Mabel walks up with a tray full of cookies.

MABEL

Here you are, Mr. Laredo.

Dodge takes a cookie.

DODGE

These are right fine biscuits, ma'am.

MABEL

You're so sweet.

WHOOSH! - a tractor-trailer goes by.

The side of the truck reads: McCREA HAULING.

Dodge stands. He walks to the road. Crouches on the pavement. Runs his fingers along the surface. Puts his ear to the ground.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Dodge jogs alongside the highway, tracking. He stays low.

A tractor-trailer pulls slowly past him, turns into a large parking lot.

Dodge follows the truck into the lot.

WE SEE the sign over the entrance: McCREA HAULING.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A number of tractor-trailers are lined up, some with gates up. Headlights criss-cross the area. Drivers milling about.

SCOTT McCREA, beefy 50s, is conferring with FISH, a normally proportioned man with stains all over his supposedly-white clothing. He holds a clipboard.

From nowhere, Dodge appears in front of McCREA.

DODGE

You Scott McCrea?

FISH

You talk to me. Don't talk to him.

McCrea waves Fish off.

McCREA

Are you a driver?

DODGE

Was. Up the Abilene Trail back in the eighties.

McCREA

Fish here will take you to the office...

DODGE

I came here to see you.

McCREA

Well, here I am in the flesh. Speak your piece.

DODGE

Some say you're the boss in these parts.

McCREA

I will not deny I'm a man of some influence in business circles, but you'll still have to go over to the office.

DODGE

I'm not here for a job.

McCREA

Then would you care to reveal why
exactly you have decided to grace us

McCREA (CONT'D)

...with your presence?

DODGE

Let's go see the Marshall and we'll get
this all straightened out.

McCREA

Marshall? I am still not aware of what
this controversy between us consists
of.

DRIVERS begin to gather around this strange conversation.

DODGE

Mr. McCrea, we can do this the easy
way, or the hard way. It's your
choice.

FISH

Let me put this in words of one
syllable. Get out of here.

DODGE

I know you're involved in crooked
business.

McCREA

You do? Are you also aware of the laws
against slander? I will have my
attorney all over you like white on
rice. Now get out before there is a
lapse in the easy-going nature for
which I am well noted among my
associates.

DODGE

Like I said, you're going to have to
come along with me now.

Dodge moves toward McCrea. McCrea nods to TWO DRIVERS
behind Dodge.

The FIRST DRIVER lunges for Dodge, but Dodge ducks and the thug tumbles over him.

Dodge stands and catches a punch square on from the SECOND DRIVER.

Dodge goes down, and a circle forms around him.

FLASH IN:

EXT. SALOON — DAY (B&W)

Thugs beating up Young Dodge.

FLASH OUT:

EXT. PARKING LOT — NIGHT

The DRIVERS take turns kicking Dodge to a bloody pulp.

Fish hands McCrea a cell phone and he speaks into it.

McCREA

I want to report an assault upon my
person. Scott McCrea, 381 North
Highway 17.

CUT TO:

EXT. — DESERT WILDERNESS — DAY

Dodge wakes up covered in dust, bruised and battered, his head resting on a rock.

Dodge stands up with some difficulty, twisting the kinks out of his neck.

Dodge looks around. There is nothing. He starts walking.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT WILDERNESS — DAY

Dodge is barely able to walk. His lips are cracked with heat.

He arrives at a cactus.

He starts to pick the thorns off the cactus.

FLASH IN:

EXT. MOVIE DESERT — DAY (B&W)

Young Dodge cuts open a cactus with a machete. Water comes flowing out.

FLASH OUT:

EXT. DESERT WILDERNESS — DAY

Dodge rips the top off the now bald cactus. He makes a hole nearer to the bottom and uses the cactus-top to catch the water that flows out.

He drinks it calmly.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURB — DAY

Dodge is walking towards us in the distance. He gets closer and closer until he is in the middle of a street where a WOMAN is strolling her BABY.

Dodge collapses in the middle of the street.

DODGE
(gasping)
Jack Dalton . . .

The woman rushes over.

WOMAN
Oh God.

Dodge gazes at the baby, who is wearing a cutesy cowboy hat.

The baby gazes back.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Somebody call the police!!

FLASH IN:

EXT. PLUM ORCHARD — DAY (B&W)

Mary, late 50s, wearing a bonnet and flower print dress, picks a ripe plum from a plum tree. As she bites into it...

CUT TO:

INT. SUPERMARKET — DAY

Mary in modern clothes is biting the same plum. She turns to face us and smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. LOWENSTEIN'S CAR — DAY

David, dressed in a sweater vest and reading glasses, looks up from his book and smiles back at the woman.

CUT TO:

INT. SUPERMARKET — DAY

The GROCER backs into view in front of the woman. Facing him is a ROBBER with a gun. He is wearing torn blue jeans, a muscle shirt and a ski mask.

CUT TO:

INT. GENERAL STORE — DAY (B&W)

The Grocer is now wearing a visor and sleeve protectors. The Robber wears a checked shirt and dungarees, and a paisley bandana covers the lower half of his face.

CUT TO:

INT. LOWENSTEIN'S CAR— DAY

David, hysterical, fumbles with the door lock.

CUT TO:

EXT. WESTERN STREET — DAY

Young Dodge is tied to the hitching post. WE SEE

His hands starting to work the knots loose.

FLASH OUT:

INT. JAIL CELL — DAY

Dodge wakes on an old cot. His hands work against the handcuffs that bind them. His face is a mass of welts and bruises and sand. Joe sits on a chair opposite him.

JOE
What were you thinking?

DODGE
(slurred through bruised lips)
He's an outlaw. You as much as told me so.

JOE
It's my own fault. I should have stopped you sooner.

DODGE
What do you mean, stopped me?

JOE
You can't arrest people.

Joe plucks Dodge's sheriff's badge from his vest.

JOE (CONT'D)
You're not really a sheriff.

Dodge looks away to conceal his hurt.

A GUARD taps on the bar.

GUARD
You got a visitor.

Joe stands, goes to the door of the cell.

JOE
I'm sorry.

Joe goes. Dodge stares up at the ceiling.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON VISITING ROOM — DAY

The room has a number of long tables with visitors on one side, prisoners on the other. GUARDS watch from the sides of the room.

Julie and Sam are seated at a table across from Dodge.

JULIE
Grandpa, you look awful.

DODGE
Don't you worry, missy.

JULIE
Julie, my name's Julie, Grandpa.

DODGE
Pleased to meet you, Miss Julie.

JULIE
We want you to get better and come back home with us.

DODGE
That's a right kind offer, but a fella like me can bunk down pretty much anywhere.

SAM
Sir, do you know who you are?

DODGE
As much as the next fella, I reckon.

SAM
Who is the president?

DODGE
Of what?

JULIE
Grandpa, stop teasing.

SAM

Don't you know this is a serious matter?

DODGE

I kinda thought it was when those big guys started stomping on me.

JULIE

I don't understand. Why are you doing this, Grandpa?

SAM

Julie, you'd better let me talk to him alone. Wait for me outside.

JULIE

Well, I—

SAM

It'll be OK.

JULIE

All right. Thanks, Sam.

Julie stands to go.

Dodge stands, touches the brim of his hat.

Julie leaves, eyes on Dodge all the way out.

DODGE

Good day to you, miss. Pleasure meeting you.

SAM

All right, Professor Lowenstein—

DODGE

You got the wrong fellow--

SAM

I'm afraid not. Your name is David Lowenstein. You're a professor of Film and Media Studies at the University. Julie is your granddaughter.

DODGE

Remind me— which one of us is supposed to be loco?

SAM

You were married for 39 years to the former Mary Wilcox.

Dodge shifts uneasily.

FLASH IN:

INT. GROCERY STORE — DAY

Mary takes a bite out of a plum

FLASH OUT:

DODGE

Looking back is a bad habit.

SAM

Sometimes you have to.

Their eyes lock.

DODGE

Is this your idea of helping me?

SAM

It is.

Dodge leans in toward Sam.

DODGE

If you really wanted to help, you'd bust me out of here.

SAM

What would you do if I did?

DODGE

That'll be the day.

SAM

Would you promise not to go after Scott McCrea?

DODGE

If he comes, I'm going to see this through. Some things a man can't ride around.

SAM

Then there's nothing I can do for you right now. Sorry.

Sam is just crossing the threshold of the cell when he hears Dodge.

DODGE

Sorry don't get it done, mister.

We can see from Sam's expression that this rings a bell.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S STUDY — DAY

Sam surveys the Western memorabilia displayed. Lightly he touches the holsters, the saddles, the photos autographed by long-dead Western stars.

Quickly, he turns and strides to a cabinet and flings the door open. It is packed with cans of 16mm film, and an old projector.

Sam pulls out a can, opens it. He pulls another and another.

He pauses a moment, then pulls out the projector, opens it and starts to set it up.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION — DAY

Joe stares at the Sheriff's badge he is holding in his hand.

He stands before a booth at the entrance to the cells. A CORRECTIONS OFFICER inside the booth listens into the phone a moment and then puts the receiver down.

OFFICER

Sorry, detective, you can't talk to him.

JOE
Is he alright?

OFFICER
I dunno. He's been bailed out.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF POLICE STATION — DAY

Stacy is helping Dodge on with his leather vest.

DODGE
Much obliged, ma'am. I'll surely pay you back.

STACY
I'm not doing you a favor. I need your help.

DODGE
What is it?

STACY
It's my ex.

DODGE
I thought we settled his hash.

STACY
He's gone.

DODGE
Good.

STACY
He took Jared with him.

Dodge puts his hat on. Adjusts it.

DODGE
I'll need my horse.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER - NIGHT

The electric sign for the shelter glows just enough to illuminate the dust of the street and backlight the brush in the foreground.

A cowboy hat bobs in and out of view like a shark's fin.

Dodge nimbly climbs up the storm drain to the second story

He unbolts the loft door. Swings it open, then climbs back down.

A padlock and chain protect the stable's front door.

Dodge yanks and pulls on the padlock. He shakes the door hard.

The top half of the Dutch-style door lazily swings open by itself.

Dodge looks around, leaps over the door.

CUT TO:

INT. COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER - NIGHT

Dodge surveys the rows and rows of malnourished and otherwise abandoned animals.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S STUDY - NIGHT

In the darkened room, Sam gazes at a portable home movie screen. He is chewing on a large rectangular pancake.

The 16mm projector rattles away. Western-style music buzzes and bleats from the tiny speaker.

Julie opens the door, first cautiously, then decisively.

JULIE

Are you still at it?

SAM

Shh!

JULIE

You're on duty in five hours, and you need sleep.

SAM

I know I'll find it in here somewhere--

JULIE

I appreciate what you're trying to do for Grandpa, but--

SAM

Shh!

JULIE

All right! All right!

Julie backs out of the room, closes the door.

JOHN WAYNE'S FACE looms on the shiny little screen in a scene from "True Grit."

JOHN WAYNE

Looking back is a bad habit.

Sam grins at the screen, hunches forward.

CUT TO:

INT. COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER - NIGHT

Dodge spots a SHELTER GUARD with a flashlight walking past the barn. The flashlight beam is segmented by the wooden flats.

WE SEE the Shelter Guard's feet as the beam sweeps the aisles.

Dodge hops over the door of the nearest stall. He crouches behind it just as the Shelter Guard comes around the corner.

The Shelter Guard walks the aisle where Dodge crouches. As he passes, Dodge looks over the edge of the stall.

Dodge glances quickly back at the HORSE whose stall he has invaded. The horse's tail is up.

Dodge scampers over the stall door as fast as he can, almost tripping over himself on the way down.

Dodge scopes out another aisle. He sees Twister and climbs into his stall. Twister nuzzles him.

DODGE

(whisper)

I'll have you out of this place in a minute. Just do everything I say.

Twister's head bobs up and down.

A sorry looking horse wanders aimlessly around the barn.

The Shelter Guard notices the loose horse and looks around.

SHELTER GUARD

How did you get out?

The horse gets as close to a shrug as a horse can possibly get.

The Shelter Guard tries to lead the horse into its stall again, but the horse locks its legs and refuses to go forward.

Dodge and Twister look at each other.

Just as the Shelter Guard has almost gotten the horse back into its stall, he hears a CRASH!

Dodge and Twister go galloping past and towards the front door.

Suddenly, ANOTHER SHELTER GUARD comes into view just behind the front door. He waves his arms and hollers.

Dodge and Twister make a sudden right turn up a ramp to the loft.

They are picking up speed.

Twister lifts his hoofs off the ground and we are jumping.

Up, up, over . . .

Through the upper loft doors, out of the barn, over a bail of hay, over a few OTHER SHELTER GUARDS.

Twister hits the ground running. WE SEE...

Borrachon, (who we last saw in the police station) leaning against a port-a-potty. He sees a cowboy riding past. His eyes open wide and track the strange figure. He lifts his bottle of cheap rotgut to his eyes and squints at the label. He gives a satisfied smile and downs another toot.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S STUDY — NIGHT

Sam is looking into drawers and closets in the room, picking up and examining the items.

Julie, seated on the floor, her arms around her knees.

JULIE

I don't understand how this is going to help Grandpa.

SAM

It's the reality principle. The assumed identity is suppressing the real one. We have to do away with that illusion, so the truth can come through. This is going to be fantastic. I can't wait to write up this case.

JULIE

Who are you doing this for? Grandpa or your reputation?

SAM

How can I get a reputation if I don't help patients?

JULIE

But won't you hurt him?

SAM

He's got to get worse before he gets better.

JULIE

I guess so.

Sam examines an eye patch and whip thoughtfully.

CUT TO:

EXT. — COUNTRY ROAD — DAY

Dodge and Twister trot along the road in the opposite direction of traffic. A child in a back seat waves at the cowboy as the car he is riding in zooms past.

Dodge rides up to a fork in the road and pauses a moment.

Dodge glances down, sees a pile of rocks. WE SEE they are arranged to form an arrow pointing left.

Dodge grins, pushes his hat back, spurs Twister.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANOTHER COUNTRY ROAD — DAY

Steve is sitting in a Pontiac GTO parked on the side of the road. He squints off toward the wooded area off the road.

STEVE

Geez, kid, what are you, sick or something? You've got to pee like every five miles or whatever.

Jared emerges from the woods, gets in car.

JARED

See, if you'd been around more, you would have known about my condition.

STEVE

Get me my violin, I'm so sad. What are you doing now?

Jared squats in the dust, just out of Steve's sightline. He places stones into the shape of an arrow.

JARED

Just gotta tie my shoe.

CUT TO:

INT. STACY'S APARTMENT

Stacy is pacing and talking on the phone, holding the base by the back.

STACY

Have you seen him? I mean lately? Have you talked? Say anything about the fishing shack? Listen, Tiny, think...

The door crashes open to reveal GOON, a huge man dressed in a white suit and a white hat. Next to him stands Fish. They stay just outside the doorway.

Very slowly, Goon reaches over and pushes the doorbell.

STACY

Tiny, call the cops for me? Thanks.

Stacy hangs up the phone, but still holds the base.

FISH

May we come in?

STACY

No.

FISH

Thank you, we will.

Goon and Fish step over the threshold.

FISH (CONT'D)

You're needed down at the club.

STACY

But Jimbo said I could have the night...

FISH

Mr. McCrea says, you're working.

STACY

Make me.

FISH

What the hell do you think he's here
for?

Stacy is puzzled. She walks closer to look closely at
Goon. She swings the heavy telephone into Goon's groin.

This apparently has no effect. Goon smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. YET ANOTHER COUNTRY ROAD — DAY

Dodge slows down to a trot. Dodge squints towards the
distance.

WE SEE a Pontiac GTO with a man in the driver's seat and a
boy seated next to him driving away from us.

Dodge spurs Twister into a full gallop. They are gaining
on the car.

The car picks up speed, pulls away from Dodge and Twister.

Now the car hits a wet patch and fishtails a little, but
continues on.

Dodge takes his lariat from his saddle pack, still riding.

The car is pulling away.

Dodge begins to twirl his lasso, waiting for the right
moment.

The car hits another wet muddy patch, begins to fishtail
even worse.

Dodge releases the lariat.

WE SEE the loop slip over the trailer hitch of the car.

Dodge pulls up hard on the reins and the rope.

The car swings around sideways.

Dodge walks Twister up toward the car taking up the slack
in the lariat.

The car suddenly starts to pull away.

The rope pulls up taut and yanks Dodge off his saddle.

Dodge digs his heels in, then

Instantly, Dodge throws the bitter end of the rope around the trunk of a tree and knots it.

THWACK! The car is yanked to a stop and stalls out.

WE HEAR

the car being CRANKED and CRANKED to restart.

Dodge ambles up alongside the car.

WE SEE

A MAN IN A TRACK SUIT sits beside a LITTLE PERSON in a matching track suit. They look perplexedly at Dodge.

Dodge looks perplexedly at the two men.

LITTLE PERSON

Tell my ex-wife the check is in the mail.

CUT TO:

INT. STRIP CLUB- DAY

Stacy is brought into the main showroom. She is blindfolded. Goon holds her arms behind her back.

Preston and McCrea stand at the bar.

As the blindfold is removed from Stacy's eyes, she sees Preston tuck an envelope into his breast pocket and exit quickly.

McCREA

Ms. Peres. Water coffee, anything?

STACY

No thanks.

McCREA

You've been associating with a Mr. Laredo.

STACY

Who are you?

McCREA

Forgive me, I'm Scott McCrea. I own this establishment...well, through a number of intermediaries.

STACY

I work for you?

McCREA

Actually, it seems that lately you've been working against me. You can correct that, tonight.

STACY

What do you want me to do?

McCREA

Oh, nothing you haven't done a thousand times before. I have an associate, in fact, my counterpart from San Francisco...

GILES, a large black man in a black italian business suit comes out of the shadows. He takes a seat in the middle of the room.

STACY

Oh no.

McCREA

Your reaction surprises me. You are after all, a terpsichorean, are you not?

FISH

You bet she is.

McCREA

You will, then, perform your art in the most intimate and contemporary of fashions.

FISH

You'll get your business all up in his business.

STACY

Do I have a choice?

McCREA

In this life, one always has choices.
You can always dance with him...

McCrea indicates Goon with his head. Goon grins.

STACY

You bastard.

McCrea nods to Fish. Fish flips a switch on a panel.
Music slurs up to speed.

McCREA

You look overdressed.

Stacy stands frozen on the spot. Goon tugs on the shoulder of her blouse as if to tear it. She puts her hand on his to stop him. She reaches for the top button of her blouse, fumbles at it in her nervousness and shame. She starts to wipe a tear. Goon yanks on the blouse and begins to tear it off.

CUT TO:

EXT. STILL YET ANOTHER COUNTRY ROAD — DAY

Steve watches while BOB, a tow truck driver, hitches Steve's car to the winch. Steve has a deathgrip on Jared's shoulder. Bob gives a nod in Jared's direction.

BOB

Hey there, sonny.

You wanna hurry it up there, pal?

Jared mouths the word, "Help" at BOB.

BOB

What is it, kid?

STEVE

Oh, he's a funny kid. He's always
pulling funny comedy gags and jokes.

Steve looks at Jared and speaks mirthlessly.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Ha, ha, ha. You crack me up.
(to BOB)
C'mon, let's get going.

BOB

What's your hurry, mister? This car is
done.

STEVE

I thought you said you could fix it!

Jared tries to signal with his hands.

BOB

What is it, kid?

STEVE

It's nothing, don't pay any attention.
What will it take to fix this car?

BOB

Fix it? I'll give you twenty bucks for
the parts.

Steve shows the grip of a pistol just above the waistband
of his pants.

STEVE

Are you sure?

Bob eyes the gun.

BOB

OK, fifty. But I'm not making a penny
on the deal.

CUT TO:

INT. STRIP CLUB — DAY

Stacy is now wearing only her utilitarian underwear. Stacy is straddling Giles with her bottom towards his face. Although she is rotating her lower torso, she has her arms clasped in front of herself as if trying to hide. One finger wipes the snuffles away from her nose.

Goon is holding Stacy's clothes. He sniffs them.

FISH

You're not puttin' much starch in my boxers here, honey.

Stacy's face hardens. Her jaw clenches. She snuffles up all her drips.

Goon nods approvingly, enjoying the show.

FISH

Is that the best you got? I might as well go home and beat off. Not that I won't do that anyway.

GILES

(to McCrea)

You do know I'm gay, don't you?

McCrea's jaw drops. Stacy grabs the front legs of his chair and flips him back.

Stacy runs towards the doorway. Fish flicks open his switchblade knife as he positions himself between Stacy and the door.

McCrea pulls out a deringer and aims at Stacy.

Stacy dodges Fish's blade and McCrea's bullet in one motion. The bullet lands in Fish. He collapses to the ground.

McCrea looks at his tiny gun in disgust and throws it in Stacy's general direction. He runs in the opposite direction.

Stacy looks at McCrea. She steals the switchblade from the late Fish and looks towards McCrea's back. She tightens her grip on the blade and spins around.

Stacy sizes up her next obstacle-- Goon. Stacy moves towards Goon hesitantly. She swipes the switchblade at his chest. Goon smiles. She steps back a bit and points it at his face. He smiles even more. She points the blade at his groin and he starts to chuckle.

Goon shifts his weight towards Stacy. Stacy throws the switchblade directly down and into Goon's boot, pinning him to the floor.

Stacy ducks out of the way of Goon's falling body. She gets her clothes from the floor behind Goon and runs out of the club.

Giles, still seated, yells after McCrea:

GILES
I appreciate the thought!

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION — DAY

Sam is in the visitor chair at Joe's desk.

JOE
What do you mean, death wish?

SAM
Ever since his wife died, he's been trying to find an honorable way to die.

JOE
So he became a cowboy.

SAM
Not a real cowboy per se. He was a film professor for years. He even taught a course on the American Western.

JOE
What's this got to do with an honorable way to die?

SAM
If he lives like a hero, he can die a hero.

JOE

Uh huh.

SAM

I've spent the past two days looking at every one of the films in his collection.

JOE

Does he have that one where the Indians—

SAM

(interrupting)

He needs to protect somebody, save somebody. And if he can, he'll die doing it. I think I have a pretty good idea where he's going.

JOE

Where?

SAM

Some place that looks like this.

Sam holds up an ancient photograph of a corral with the letters "OK" appearing over the entrance.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OK RENTAL CAR PARKING LOT - DAY

The "OK" sign appears exactly where it appeared on the corral.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR RENTAL OFFICE — DAY

Steve is at the desk talking to the rental clerk. Steve's hand is clamped tightly around Jared's wrist, but Jared is looking behind Steve, towards the door.

HOOFBEATS.

Jared looks up to make sure that Steve has not noticed.

HOOFBEATS.

Jared looks hard at the horizon out the glass front of the rental place. He sees nothing but dirt road and desert through the glass storefront.

THEN--

CRASH! Dodge and Twister leap through a side window and into profile.

People are screaming and fleeing.

Steve snatches his keys from the clerk, pulls out a gun and starts shooting as he makes his way towards the door.

Dodge dismounts quickly and ducks behind the bolted waiting room chairs.

Steve pulls Jared out the side door. Dodge follows.

Joe pulls up to the rental office in his car. He squints at the broken window.

Steve pulls Jared through rows of Ford Tauruses.

Dodge watches carefully and matches their movements a few columns away.

Steve sees Dodge and shoots at him.

Dodge ducks. Between shots he pops up and peers around.

Dodge, crouching and about to close the gap, is yanked behind a plastic valet booth.

JOE

What are you doing? I told you about this.

DODGE

He took the little boy, Joe.

A fly lights on Joe's hand. He kills it immediately.

JOE

How can I help?

DODGE

You best stay here and call for backup.

JOE

I am backup.

DODGE

Not with that bum leg. No, you'd only get in the way.

Joe PUNCHES Dodge as hard as he can in the jaw. Dodge grabs his jaw.

DODGE

Maybe you'll do after all.

Dodge kicks Joe in the chest, pushing Joe and himself out of the way of the Ford Taurus which has just mowed down the valet booth.

Joe lands between two cars with his boots in the air.

JOE

I hate surprises.

Steve and the Taurus back up, still shooting at Dodge as Dodge rolls behind another car. Steve turns towards the gate of the parking lot.

Dodge jumps onto the trunk of a car, then the roof, then the roof of another car and finally the roof of the moving car Steve is in.

Inside the car, Steve hears a THUD on the roof of his car. Steve points his gun at the roof and starts shooting. Dodge's hand comes in through the window and grabs the steering wheel.

The car swerves just as it was about to cross the gates.

The Taurus stops suddenly and Dodge rolls off the roof and the hood, but manages to catch hold of the front bumper just as Steve begins to back up.

Steve turns backwards around a corner, dragging Dodge along the dusty parking lot, until he is again facing the gate.

Joe pulls up in another car, blocking the gate.

Steve continues to go backwards, shooting at Joe as he does.

Dodge pulls himself up, about to climb on the hood, but his hat gets SHOT OFF and he goes back down.

Dodge WHISTLES.

Joe turns and follows in his car, so the two are facing each other.

Steve continues to shoot at Joe. Joe shoots out Steve's tires. The car begins to fishtail wildly.

Dodge is whipped around a moment, but has to let go of Steve's bumper.

Joe sees that he is going to run over Dodge. His jaw drops and he tries to jam on the brakes.

Dodge flattens himself. Joe's car passes over Dodge's body.

Steve CRASHES into the wall of the rental office.

Dodge gets up and dusts himself off. He looks at Joe. Joe looks back: "Sorry."

Steve's car lurches forward on its flat tires and SLAMS head-on into Joe's car. Joe's head WHACKS the steering wheel. He is K.O.'d.

Dodge tumbles over the top of the roof, over Joe's hood. He lands on Steve's windshield and grabs for Steve's gun.

STEVE

Watch out, old man. I'm gonna blow
your damn arm off.

Jared cowers in the far corner of the front seat.

DODGE

Jared, boy - Lend us a hand.

Jared looks at his hand. It is next to the controls for the power windows. He pounds the nearest button.

The driver's door window ZZZZIPS up and KA-RUNCHES Steve's left arm.

STEVE

Shit!

Steve drops the gun.

Dodge looks back toward Joe momentarily.

DODGE

Joe, I've got a prisoner for y—

Steve yanks Dodge toward the door and SLAMS it into his midsection.

Dodge is knocked down under the car door. He reaches forward and yanks Steve's ankles toward him. Steve's legs go out from under him and his shins hit the car door.

Steve hits the dirt. He sees his gun and starts to slither toward it.

From nowhere, a hand picks up the gun. Steve squints to follow the hand.

WE see—

Joe holding the gun on Steve.

JOE

This what you looking for?

STEVE

Who the hell are you?

JOE

I was going to ask you the same thing.

DODGE

Deputy, take this sidewinder into custody. Oh, and don't forget the boy.

JOE

You okay?

DODGE

Never better.

JOE
C'mon kid.

Jared hops out of the car and follows Joe and Steve back toward Joe.

Dodge looks around for his horse. He walks back toward the rental office. He puts his fingers to his mouth and whistles.

DODGE
Twister!

INT. CAR RENTAL OFFICE — DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Dodge enters, looking around.

DODGE
Twister! Where are y—

He turns to find the gleaming barrel of a Colt .45 pressed against his temple.

SAM
Dodge Laredo, turn and face your destiny.

Sam is dressed, head to toe, in black black black cowboy clothes.

DODGE
Jack Dalton. I was expecting you.

SAM
Tell me. Exactly how did you want to die?

DODGE
Who said I was going to?

SAM
Nobody lives forever. John Wayne, cancer. Randolph Scott, heart failure. Gene Autry, lymphoma. They didn't go down in a hail of bullets. They

withered. There's lots of ways to go,
but most are slow, painful and boring.

DODGE

Ever hear tell of a man being talked to
death?

SAM

Your turn, Dodge Laredo.

Sam pulls the trigger. Dodge grabs his heart.

DODGE

Uhhnhh—

SAM

What the—

FLASH IN:

EXT. OK CORRAL - DAY (B&W)

Dodge is gripping his heart. When he removes his hands,
they are covered in blood.

FLASH OUT:

INT. CAR RENTAL OFFICE - DAY

Sam looks at Dodge, who has his hands out as in the
previous shot. There is NO BLOOD on his hands.

FLASH IN:

EXT. OK CORRAL - DAY (B&W)

Dodge is still gripping his wound as the

SCREEN FADES TO BLACK.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR RENTAL OFFICE - DAY

Sam stares as Dodge collapses.

Joe rushes over.

Joe grabs Sam's lapels and pushes him through the doors and against his car. Hard.

JOE
What did you just do?!

SAM
It was just a blank. That wasn't supposed to happen.

Joe reaches through his car window and grabs the talkback from his radio.

JOE
This is Unit 11. I need an ambulance yesterday.

WE SEE

Dodge laid out on the floor, as others rush around.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LOWENSTEIN'S CAR - DAY

David, hysterical, fumbles with the door lock, opens it and runs out.

CUT TO:

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

The Robber has now passed in front of Mary.

Mary, panicked, runs frantically for the door.

The Robber sees this and takes aim at her.

David opens the door and his wife falls into his arms.

The Robber's gun smokes.

Mary smiles, then expires.

David looks up at the Robber.

CUT TO:

INT. GENERAL STORE — DAY (B&W)

Dodge takes the woman in his arms.

He stands straight, holding the woman's limp body. Light streams from the open door behind him.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WAITING ROOM OUTSIDE ICU — DAY

Julie and Sam stand in the waiting room. Stacy and Jared are seated in the nearest corner.

JULIE
You shot my grandpa!

SAM
It was a blank!

JULIE
I can't believe you! Still trying to
justify your...good Lord!

SAM
Julie.

JULIE
If he dies, the wedding is off.

Julie storms off towards the ICU. Sam follows.

DOCTOR blocks entrance to the ICU. Julie & Sam listen anxiously.

Stacy and Jared are over at a payphone. Stacy holds the receiver to her ear anxiously.

DOCTOR
I'm sorry. Mr. Lowenstein's situation
is far too delicate now for him to have
any visitors.

Stacy eyes Julie & Sam. Stacy hangs up forcefully, which draws Julie's attention.

SAM
How long will it be?

Stacy and Jared walk over towards the doctor.

DOCTOR
There's really no way to tell. He's
had a full MI, um, a heart attack. The
best thing is for you to go home now.
We'll call when there's a change.

JULIE
Thank you, doctor.

Doctor heads down corridor.

STACY
Thank you, doctor.

JULIE
(to Stacy)
Have we met?

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S DINING ROOM — NIGHT

Julie, Sam and Stacy are sitting at the table over the
remains of coffee and cake. Jared is making the soda in
his crazy straw go up and down.

SAM
Julie...

JULIE
(to Stacy)
What about going to the police?

STACY
I don't know, I mean, how do I know
who's involved? I haven't been able to
reach Joe, I mean Detective Cantú.

Jared
Where's the bathroom?

JULIE
It's just down the hall on the left.

Jared stands and slips into the hallway.

STACY (OS)

I think your grandpa's been a good
influence on him. Can I use your cell
phone?

INT. HALL OF DAVID'S HOUSE — NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Jared moves down the hall. His eye is caught by a door
which is slightly ajar. Light shows through the crack. He
pushes it open.

INT. DAVID'S STUDY — NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Jared enters, looking all around.

Low-level lights illuminate the display cases.

The pictures and memorabilia seem to glow in a golden
light.

Jared notices the one dark spot in the room. The old
wooden case.

Jared tries to open the case, but the padlock is closed and
locked.

JARED

Aw, man.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S DINING ROOM — NIGHT

Jared slips back into the room.

STACY

What were you thinking?!

SAM

In layman's terms, I
intended to shock him
out of his delusions,
but I'm afraid the shock
was too great for a man
of his age.

STACY

Don't lay that
psycho-bullshit
on me!

STACY (CONT'D)
You didn't think that maybe shooting at
him...

Julie's cell phone rings. Stacy looks at the read-out.

STACY
(to the others)
It's the doctor.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION LOCKER ROOM — NIGHT

Joe takes out his jacket, shrugs it on. He takes a step
but is stopped by Preston's outstretched hand.

PRESTON
Give it here.

JOE
What?

PRESTON
The badge. I warned you.

JOE
I'm calling my rep.

PRESTON
The union's going to be on my side.

JOE
Mind if I check for myself?

PRESTON
Go ahead.

Joe sees a confidence in Preston's eye that makes him
hesitate.

JOE
What do you know?

PRESTON

I know your bullshit won't pass muster.

JOE

The collar's good. I can make it
stick.

Preston holds out his hand again, insistent. Joe opens his
wallet. Preston pulls out the badge.

Joe looks straight in Preston's eye. Preston looks down,
then walks away.

PRESTON

Go home, Joe. Go home and stay there.
You hear me?

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL- NIGHT

Scott McCrea is lying in bed with an oversized neck brace
and an IV drip.

SLICK CARRADINE, greasy lawyer, 50s, sits in the visiting
chair.

NURSE, 20s enters.

NURSE

I saw your page again, Mr. McCrea.
What is it now?

CARRADINE

My client is too weak to speak. He
would however, appreciate another lime
jello.

NURSE

He's fine. He can go home anytime he
wants.

CARRADINE

(to McCrea)

Moan.

McCREA

What?

CARRADINE

You're in pain.

McCrea moans, none too convincingly.

Nurse registers disgust. WE SEE

Her hands as she picks up a tray

We move with the tray out into the large room with the nurse's station and a waiting area.

Nurse makes a U-turn and pushes her way into a similar room.

She places the tray next to DAVID. Around him, Stacy, Jared, Julie and Sam are standing.

David begins to come to.

JULIE

Hi, Grandpa.

DAVID

Julie! And Sam.

JULIE

We brought some friends, too.

Stacy and Jared step forward.

JARED

Howdy, Dodge!

DAVID

Hello. Are you friends of Julie's?

STACY

Don't you remember, I'm Stacy,
the...dancer. Singer. Singer.
Entertainer.

DAVID

No, I'm afraid my memory isn't what it
used to be.

STACY
But you saved me...twice. You're in
STACY (CONT'D)
...the hospital because you rescued my
son, Dodge.

Sam looks ashamed.

SAM
Well, not quite.

DAVID
Why do you keep calling me Dodge?

JARED
That's your name, man.

DAVID
My name is David. David Lowenstein.
Julie, why did you bring these people
here?

JULIE
I thought you would like it.

DAVID
Well I don't. Please leave.

Julie and Sam take Stacy outside.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE DAVID'S ROOM- NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Julie, Sam and Stacy step out of David's room.

JULIE
I'm so sorry about this.

SAM
You have to realize—such a severe
shock.

STACY
I know, —

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Stacy and Julie and Sam can still be seen talking through the window in the door.

David scrunches down into his bed and tries to jam his eyes shut and nap. After a moment, he realizes there is someone else in the room.

JARED

Hi.

DAVID

I asked you to go. I need rest.

Jared reaches into his backpack, rummages around.

JARED

Wait. I brought you something. I think you musta forgot it.

After a moment, he slowly pulls out The Gun. A gleaming Colt .45 six-shooter with a pearl handle.

JARED

I had to bust the lock.

David gapes at the gun for a moment before gathering his fury.

DAVID

What in God's name are you doing with that?!

JARED

Isn't it great?

DAVID

To begin with, a boy like you has no business fooling around with a gun. I see enough of that on the evening news.

JARED

But—

David snatches the gun from Jared, then handles it very carefully.

DAVID

And in the second place, that is a very valuable, extremely rare collectible

DAVID (CONT'D)
item which you broke into my library to steal.

JARED
I didn't—

DAVID
I'm supposed to be happy about this?!

David examines it a moment for any damage, then tucks it between his pillows.

JARED
I shoulda known.

CUT TO:

INT. McCREA'S HOSPITAL ROOM — NIGHT

El Jefe, wearing his glasses and a zipped-up track suit, is standing in front of McCrea's hospital bed. Goon stands beside him.

Carradine stays by McCrea's side.

EL JEFE
Thank you for bailing me out, Mr. McCrea.

McCREA
Well, that's alright. Why shouldn't a man enjoy his last days of freedom?

EL JEFE
What? What about my lawyer?

CARRADINE
I'll be representing you myself, but I don't think this case will be my best work.

McCREA
You win some, you lose some.

EL JEFE

But why?

McCREA

Right now the people think they have won. This is very useful to me. Much more useful than you are.

EL JEFE

You bastard!

El Jefe tenses up.

Goon steps towards El Jefe.

Goon has a gun, and it is pointed at El Jefe's large intestines.

El Jefe stares at Goon, Carradine and McCrea.

He turns and BURSTS out of the doorway into the corridor where Julie, Sam and Stacy are still talking.

As he is moving through the door, he takes off his glasses.

JULIE

Maybe he will calm down in a few weeks, then you can...

El Jefe grabs Julie by the neck and puts a gun to her head. His voice turns dark once again.

EL JEFE

OK, everybody listen to me!

PEOPLE start SCREAMING and running.

Jared starts to walk toward El Jefe, but Sam holds him back.

Sam and Jared look at each other.

Two SECURITY GUARDS pull their guns. One is a chubby caucasian. The other a very old South Asian man.

JULIE

Help!

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

David hears Julie's cry and sits up. Scuffling and struggling continues. He removes the oxygen feed from his nostrils.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The Doctor steps in front of the Guards.

DOCTOR

Hold your fire. Call the police. Tell them we have a hostage situation.

El Jefe grips the gun tighter.

EL JEFE

Anybody touches a phone, they get their face blown off.

El Jefe begins edging toward an exit, taking Julie with him.

EL JEFE (CONT'D)

(to one of the guards)

You! Bubba! Get me a bag!

GUARD 1

What kind of a bag?

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

David pulls the IV from his arm and grabs the metal rail.

He sits up quickly and heaves his back over the rail in a feeble Fosbury flop.

David's face hits the floor with a SLAP.

David closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR — NIGHT

El Jefe now holds a pillowcase and is sidling slightly along the outer wall.

The Guards still have their guns drawn and pointed at him as he moves.

EL JEFE

Everybody put your car keys in the bag.
One at a time. There you go.

PEOPLE from the waiting room walk up, still crouched, put their keys in the pillowcase and scurry away.

Stacy walks calmly up to El Jefe, tosses in some keys and turns around.

EL JEFE

(to old Indian guard)
You too, Apu.

The OLD GUARD puts his keys in the pillowcase nervously.

OLD GUARD

It's only a Kia.

EL JEFE

Shut up!

Doctor walks slowly toward El Jefe with his hands up.

DOCTOR

I think that's everybody, now please
just leave the lady here.

EL JEFE

Back off!

Doctor keeps walking.

DOCTOR

Give us the girl and you can go
wherever...

EL JEFE

I said back off!

El Jefe fires a bullet into the Doctor's thigh at close range.

DOCTOR

Oh God!

Everyone in the room SCREAMS and panics even more.

ANOTHER PHYSICIAN rushes to treat the Doctor's wound.

PRESTON (OS)

(on bullhorn)

El Jefe! Come out with your hands up!
We have the building surrounded. You
can't escape.

El Jefe looks out the window. A bullet shatters one of the panes.

More PANIC.

PRESTON (OS cont.)

We have snipers on all the windows!

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Preston leans on top of one of the police cruisers that surround the hospital.

PRESTON

Are we patched through to the phone
yet?

Joe sits in his own car, watching the hospital from a different angle. A uniformed police officer walks by and Joe shrinks down in his seat.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

PRESTON (OS)

(on bullhorn)

Pick up your phone.

El Jefe makes his way towards the nurses' station.

He passes the Goon who stands against the wall, arms folded.

EL JEFE

Don't move.

El Jefe slowly removes his arm from Julie's neck, picks up the phone, cradles it on his shoulder and grabs Julie's neck again.

SAM

Don't hurt her!

PRESTON (OS)

(on phone)

What do you want?

EL JEFE

I want all charges dropped.

PRESTON (OS)

(on phone)

No can do.

EL JEFE

Then I start shooting.

PRESTON (OS)

(on phone)

Wait! What if I told my boss you were being cooperative? What can you give me?

EL JEFE

I could tell the prosecutor a couple of things about my "friend" Scott McCrea.

El Jefe can only spare one hand to do air quotes.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT — NIGHT

Police cars are clustered, lights flashing. Preston, bullhorn in hand, looks around to see if anyone else heard.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Suddenly, Goon reaches inside his jacket.

El Jefe's head snaps toward Goon.

The Guards look nervously from El Jefe to the Goon.

El Jefe faces the Goon. His gun is still pointed at Julie. He holds her as a shield.

EL JEFE
(belligerent)
What? What?

The Goon adjusts his grip on the gun which is still inside his jacket.

EL JEFE
Go ahead, try me!

PRESTON (OS)
What's going on? Calm down!

EL JEFE
I'm not gonna calm down. This freakin' nutcase has got a freakin' gun.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Preston turns to a uniformed officer next to him.

PRESTON
Who's he talking about? Who else is up there?

OFFICER shakes his head.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

El Jefe lets the phone drop.

He has the gun so tightly pressed against Julie's skull she is almost bent over.

PRESTON (OS)
What's going on? Is there an officer
there?

WE HEAR a door open.

El Jefe turns to see what the noise is.

The Goon starts to pull his gun.

BLAM! BLAM!

SHING! El Jefe's gun flies across the room.

SHING! Goon'S gun comes out of his hand with a spark.

WE SEE

Dodge Laredo in full Western regalia framed in the doorway of David's room, his gun still smoking.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL — NIGHT

Preston is holding the phone.

PRESTON
Gunfire!
(to the uniformed officer)
Send the SWAT team in! Go, go go!

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

El Jefe rolling on the floor, clutching his hand.

The Guards are paralyzed a moment. Then, as one, they jump on El Jefe.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL WINDOW — NIGHT

WE SEE, as if from an opposite rooftop, in a scope-shaped image, Dodge holding a gun.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Dodge flips his gun back into his holster.

A nurse hangs up the dangling phone.

Stacy runs to him.

STACY

Dodge!

DODGE

Howdy.

(to Julie)

You all right, Miss Julie?

Another doctor is kneeling over her.

JULIE

I'm OK, Grandpa.

Jared breaks Sam's grip.

JARED

Dodge, man, that was so cool. You are the mack daddy!

DODGE

I couldn't have done it without the help of my injun friend here.

He indicates the OLDER GUARD.

DODGE (CONT'D)

Thank you. I've always respected your people and their ways.

OLDER GUARD

Yes sir, thank you very much.

JARED

Hey, where'd that other guy go?

The guards lift El Jefe to his feet, each holding an arm behind him. El Jefe is wearing his glasses again. He says in a nervous and nerdy voice:

EL JEFE

He works for Scott McCrea—the guy in that room there.

Carradine steps into the corridor, closes the door behind him.

CARRADINE

My client is resting and has no statement to make at this point in time.

DODGE

Where's your little playmate?

CARRADINE

There's no one here but Mr. McCrea.

DODGE

You don't mind if I see for myself?

Dodge strides into McCrea's room.

INT. MCCREA'S HOSPITAL ROOM — NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Dodge walks the length of the room. McCrea is the only one there. A window stands open.

McCrea is silent.

Dodge walks right up to McCrea, who appears calm.

Dodge gets up into McCrea's face. McCrea starts to waver.

DODGE

Sorry you're not feelin' well.

MCCREA

My doctors are very good.

DODGE
They better be.

CUT TO:

INT. — HOSPITAL CORRIDOR — NIGHT

Everyone has calmed down.

The Guards have cuffed El Jefe.

Julie is seated in a waiting area chair. Sam and Stacy are comforting her.

A RESIDENT has the pillowcase and is giving people their car keys back. Then,

BANG!

The outer doors slam open and a SWAT team pours through, distributing themselves around the periphery of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. McCREA'S HOSPITAL ROOM — NIGHT

Dodge looks up at the noise. He trots cautiously to the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT — NIGHT

Joe sees the SWAT team moving in.

JOE
(to himself)
For God's sake, tell them not to shoot.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL STAIRCASE — NIGHT

Preston is sprinting up the stairs, walkie-talkie in hand.

PRESTON
(into walkie-talkie)
Yes, that's a go. Use all necessary
force.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR — NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Dodge saunters out the door.

SWAT GUY #1
It's him!

SWAT GUY #2
He's got a gun!

The SWAT team OPENS FIRE.

Dodge dives behind a spare gurney just outside the door.

Dodge rolls the gurney with him as he makes a dash across
the room.

BOOM!

ANOTHER SWAT TEAM enters through the back way, followed by
Preston, gun raised.

As Dodge runs, he picks up another gurney to shield his
other side.

He scoops up El Jefe and they are both running between two
gurneys.

Bullets knock chunks of plaster out of the walls all
around. One bullet hits Dodge in the boot.

Finally, Dodge makes it to the opposite side of the room,
lets go of the gurneys and bursts through the double
swinging doors.

INT. SUPPLY ROOM — NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Dodge and El Jefe burst into the room.

DODGE
It's the posse.

Dodge tries to knock out the glass in the door, but the institutional glass is too thick. Then,

RAT-TA-TA-TA-TA-TA-TA-TAT!

Automatic gunfire from the other side shatters the glass. Dodge pokes his barrel through the hole.

EL JEFE

Don't let them take me!

Dodge squeezes off a couple of shots.

BLAM! BLAM!

DODGE

I won't let 'em string you up. No, sir. You'll get a fair trial.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR — NIGHT

Sam steps in front of Preston.

SAM

Stop! Don't shoot! That man hasn't done anything wrong.

PRESTON

Sir, we are observing standard department protocols. We need you and your people to get a safe distance from here.

OFFICERS escort the civilians out of the room by force.

One OFFICER closes the door and locks it.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL — NIGHT

Joe is still hunched over the radio.

SWAT OFFICER (OS)

(over radio)

Repeat, the subject is armed and is holding a hostage. He appears to be a male caucasian of uncertain age wearing traditional Western garb.

ANOTHER OFFICER (OS)
(over radio)
What's that?

SWAT OFFICER (OS)
(over radio)
He's dressed like a cowboy.

Joe straightens up, bolts for the door of the hospital.

CUT TO:

INT. SUPPLY ROOM — NIGHT

DODGE
I'm going to go out and talk with them.

EL JEFE
Tell them we want a car and a twenty-minute head start.

DODGE
You can't reason with a mob. But if I can find a real man out there, just one man, I can get you safely behind bars.

EL JEFE
Maybe I should talk to them.

Dodge smiles, pats El Jefe on the shoulder.

DODGE
That shows a decent feeling, compadre. It just shows that no man is all bad. But I better do this myself.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR — NIGHT

The SWAT team stands at the ready.

Stacy, Julie and Sam watch through the reinforced windows of the main doorway.

Stacy wrestles with the locked door.

STACY

Dodge!

CUT TO:

INT. SUPPLY ROOM — NIGHT

WE SEE

Dodge's eyes.

FLASH IN:

EXT. WESTERN STREET — DAY (B&W)

Young Dodge walks out into the main street to face a band of outlaws.

FLASH OUT:

INT. SUPPLY ROOM — NIGHT

Dodge looks up.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERIOR STAIRWAY — NIGHT

Joe limps and grunts his way up the stairs as fast as he can manage.

CUT TO:

INT. SUPPLY ROOM — NIGHT

Dodge stands up, dusts some imaginary dirt off his chaps.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERIOR STAIRWAY — NIGHT

Joe reaches the landing. Sam, Stacy, Julie and Jared are being held there by SWAT members.

A SWAT GUY steps in Joe's path. Joe fumbles for his wallet.

JOE
It's OK, I'm—

Joe gets his wallet out but sees that there is no badge inside.

JOE
Damn—

Joe BANGS the SWAT GUY's head against the door and shoves it to one side.

CUT TO:

INT. SUPPLY ROOM - NIGHT

Dodge turns and faces the double doors.

WE SEE

His hand on the handle of his holstered gun. He removes the gun, twirls it on his finger, sheathes it in a bin marked "Hazardous Material."

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR — NIGHT

The double doors of the closet begin to swing open.

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWELL LANDING — NIGHT

Joe and Sam put their shoulders into the door.

JOE & SAM
1...2...3!

The door CRASHES down to reveal:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR — DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Dodge paces out from the double doors, hands at his side.

PRESTON

Fire!

Dodge is immediately riddled with bullets.

JOE

STOP! HOLD YOUR FIRE!

The SWAT team stops firing.

Dodge falls to the ground.

JULIE

Dodge!

Joe, Julie and Sam are frozen.

Stacy runs past them and towards Dodge's body.

Jared tries to run after his mother, but is caught round the waist by Joe, who holds him back.

Stacy reaches Dodge's body and falls down beside it.

Jared twists and fights, but Joe holds fast.

Stacy looks up to see Preston behind the SWAT team.

STACY

You! You were at the club!

PRESTON

So what? It was a party.

STACY

No, not then. Later. With McCrea.

JOE

What?

PRESTON

I don't know what you're talking about.

STACY

(to Joe)

He was there. I saw him take the money.

(to Preston)

You bastard. You goddam bastard. You just killed the last real man on earth.

JOE

(to Preston)

Greg, you're under arrest for conspiracy to commit murder.

Joe pulls back Preston's arms and slaps the cuffs on.

STACY

(to herself)

Well, maybe not the very last man.

PRESTON

You can't arrest me. I suspended you.

JOE

I'll take my chances with the judge.
How 'bout you?

PRESTON

Wait! I've got information. We can make a deal...

JOE

Gee, Greg, don't you love surprises?

Joe pushes Preston through the doors.

The sun begins to rise.

CUT TO:

EXT. DUSTY ROAD — DAY

A large passenger van stands in the middle of nowhere.

Sam opens the big sliding door as far as it can go.

One by one, the following people enter the Van.

Stacy, Jared, Joe, Julie.

JULIE
We're all here now, driver.

In the driver's seat sits Borrachon, now clean shaven and sober.

BORRACHON
Yes Ma'am.

The van pulls away slowly.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAIN — DAY

The van kicks up dust as it cruises through the desert.

CUT TO:

INT. VAN — DAY

Everyone silently gazes out their windows.

Sam starts humming "The Streets of Laredo."

Various people chime in as they feel the spirit.

STACY
As I walked out on the streets of
Laredo.
As I walked out on Laredo one day,
I spied a poor cowboy wrapped in white
linen,
Wrapped in white linen as cold as the
clay.

STACY & SAM & JOE
"I can see by your outfit that you are
a cowboy."
These words he did say as I boldly
walked by.
" Come an' sit down beside me an' hear
my sad story.

STACY & SAM & JOE (CONT'D)
 " I'm shot in the breast an' I know I
 must die."

Jared pulls out Dodge'S harmonica and plays along.

STACY & SAM & JOE & JULIE
 & BORRACHON
 "Then beat the drum slowly, play the
 Fife lowly.
 " Play the dead march as you carry me
 along.
 " Take me to the green valley, lay the
 sod o'er me,
 " I'm a young cowboy who tried to right
 wrong."

CUT TO:

EXT. MONUMENT VALLEY — DAY

All of our passengers stand in a row on the edge of an enormous canyon. Borrachon stands by the van.

Sam pulls an urn out of the van and stands at the head of the line.

Sam opens the urn. He pulls out a handful of ashes and holds it before Julie. She takes a handful.

Sam holds the urn before each mourner, as each takes a handful of ashes in turn: Jared, Joe, Stacy.

Sam looks down the line at the other mourners.

Sam raises his arm over his head, swings his fist in a circle, and releases the ashes into the chasm as he shouts.

SAM
 Yee — ha !!

Julie lifts her arm, swings her fist in a circle and releases the ashes.

JULIE
 Yee — ha !!

Jared takes his fistful, swings it and releases.

JARED

Yee — ha!!

Joe takes his fistful, swings it and releases.

JOE

Yee — ha!!

Stacy takes her fistful, swings it and releases.

STACY

Yee — ee — ee — ee — haw !!!

Joe reaches into his pocket, takes out Dodge's sheriff's badge, looks at it. He pins it on Jared.

Jared looks up at Joe and smiles.

WE SEE the five mourners lined up at the edge of the canyon.

Sam takes Julie's hand. Joe takes Stacy's hand. Jared grins at his badge as it glints in the sun.

Now we see the rest of the canyon, the whole valley, the entire vista of the vanished American West.

END