

BLOODMETAL: AN ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY

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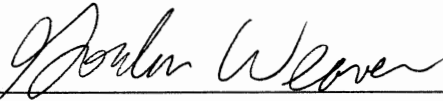
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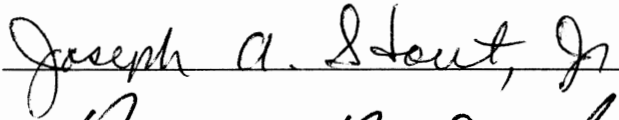
BLOODMETAL: AN ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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"Chuck" Godwin. He always loved a good Western.

The West, the Western, and Bloodmetal

"When the legend becomes fact, print the legend."  
from The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance

We look down on a dusty Western street. False-fronted frame buildings stretch away in both directions. In the distance, white-capped peaks or limitless plains reveal the town's complete isolation. Beneath the noonday sun, two men step into the street and stand facing each other, hands at their sides, ready to bring their holstered guns into action.

One man might wear a badge or a tin star on his vest. He might be marshal, sheriff, deputy; in character, he might be sinner-turned-saint, calculating killer, or hesitant hero. Whatever his past and personality, he stands tall, tanned, seemingly cool and confident. He prepares to defend his town, his job, or his honor.

His opponent is a virtual double, in appearance and possibly even in background. He may be an outlaw, an avenging gunman, or a glory-hound seeking a reputation.



But he too seems sure of his ability to draw fast and shoot straight, to walk away from the confrontation alive.

Except for these two men, the streets are empty. The town holds its collective breath, withdrawn behind curtained windows or locked doors. Time stands still. Wisps of dust, swirling past the two frozen opponents, represent the only movement as both men size each other up, searching for a sign, a moment of weakness. Hands hover over gun butts; eyes narrow to slits.

And then, a blur of motion, as an impossible number of actions takes place in an instant: hands drop to guns, pulling them from their holsters; thumbs pull back hammers; revolvers are leveled and triggers pulled. A peal of thunder issues simultaneously from the two guns, shattering the town's tranquility.

One man staggers, falls gracelessly to the ground, his gun now nestled in a lifeless hand. The other sheathes his revolver and turns away, the incident closed.

Scenes such as this are branded into the consciousness of virtually every film-goer or television viewer, not just in America, but around the world. While the Western film admittedly takes place along a distinctly American frontier, usually in the second half of the nineteenth century, the images of the wild American West--the West of six-guns, cattle-drives, war paint, vigilante justice,

fast-draw duels--are known worldwide. In fact, French film critic Andre Bazin described the popularity of the Western among "Arabs, Hindus, Latins, Germans, [and] Anglo-Saxons" (141), while Japanese film director Akira Kurosawa emphasized that "good Westerns are unquestionably liked by all people, regardless of nationality" (28). This universal popularity poses great challenges for the would-be Western screenwriter. To be successful, the writer must simultaneously address the needs of the genre, respect the outlines of American culture, and write an engaging story.

Although it has undergone a recent slow spell, the Western remains one of the most popular and enduring types of film. To be more exact, the Western film was a consistent money-maker from the turn of the century through the 1960's, although since that time, it seems to come to the screen less and less often. Despite this ebb (and critical pessimism about the future of the genre), such films as A Gunfight (1971), The Life and Times of Judge Roy Bean (1972), and the entertaining Silverado (1985) indicate that it remains possible to create an enjoyable Western.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, the 1988 release of Young Guns, starring four of Hollywood's most popular young actors (Emilio Estevez, Charlie Sheen, Lou Diamond Phillips, and Kiefer Sutherland, with Jack Palance thrown in for good measure as the villain), reveals that the

unique in world history.<sup>2</sup> The Western recreates those lost days of independence, energy, and wide-open spaces, of the collision between wilderness and order. In fact, Michael Marsden believes that it is the Western film itself that "makes the Turner thesis most visible and vital every time [the thesis] is dramatized on movie screens in this country and abroad" (107).

This period is essentially and identifiably American, and films about this era are, as William T. Pilkington and Don Graham have pointed out, "America's unique contribution to the body of mythic lore familiar to most of the human race" (1). This characteristic American utterance displays many facets of the American experience. Westerns, tend, for example, to display an awareness of the dualities of existence which John Cawelti calls "those uncertainties and conflicts of values which have always existed in American culture" (73). In virtually every film, conflicts between such diametrically opposed forces as the individual and community, freedom and restriction, self-interest and social responsibility, and tradition and change are made visible, often through elaborate symbolism, for all to see. These concerns seem to be inherent in the American character.<sup>3</sup>

The Western is, of course, about American history. "This does not mean," as Jim Kitses wryly notes, "that the films are historically accurate or that they cannot be

made by Italians" (8). It simply means that the films recreate the past, presenting their version of American history, a version that is often more than slightly off-center.<sup>4</sup> For example, although readers and film-goers around the world have taken for granted the image of the violent West, the reality, as modern historians continue to demonstrate, was generally somewhat tamer.

The Kansas cowtowns, often believed to have been hotbeds of iniquity with a murder every night, prove to have been relatively safe. Robert Dykstra's research indicates that violence was usually over-emphasized (112-116). Even though the typical depiction of cattle-towns with large numbers of saloons, dance-halls, and gambling parlors is historically accurate, only a very small number of murders seem to have occurred on or around those premises. In fact, during the busiest cattle-drive years in Dodge City (1876-1885), a total of fifteen murders were reported, while the average number of homicides per cattle-town trading season averaged only 1.5, with no killings at all reported in two busy seasons at Dodge (144-146).

Like the cowtowns, the violence connected with the mining booms, another popular subject for Western films (and in fact, the setting for Bloodmetal), also seems to have been overemphasized. Accounts of life in mining camps tend to describe boredom, drudgery, and back-breaking

work. Duane Smith reported that although a small amount of criminal activity certainly existed in the camps, "major crimes were rare," and the notoriety of camps like Deadwood and Tombstone was primarily spread by visitors or reporters who spun accounts which "strengthened the exotic at the expense of the real" (81, 241). The danger to the miners was probably greater from heat, accidents, or fire (above or below ground) than from violence (Greever passim).<sup>5</sup>

Even the staple of most Western films, the gunfight, has usually been depicted in an unhistorical fashion. The traditional face-to-face fast-draw that we saw at the outset appears to have been primarily a dramatic creation after the fact. Dykstra revealed that homicides in the Kansas cattle-towns varied considerably; less than one third of the victims seem to have returned fire, and a good share were not even armed (147). Joseph Rosa, a British historian who is far from immune to the lure of Western legend, nonetheless emphasizes that "getting a six-shooter into action at speed in the heat of battle was not a common accomplishment, even among the expert gunfighters. Few incidents of 'quick drawing' are recorded, and even those are questionable" (124). Common sense indicates that if a man anticipated trouble, he would already have his gun pulled. Further documentary evidence can be found in a letter from Bat Masterson to

film-makers of the American West. In fact, Ford actually knew Earp, who used to stop in on the set during the director's early days at Universal. And yet in this short scene, Ford mangled Western history almost beyond recognition. In the film, James, the youngest Earp brother, was shot and killed by rustlers who made off with all the Earps' cattle. James Earp was, however, the oldest Earp, and his interest in Cory Sue would have led to bigamy, since he was already married to one Bessie Earp. The youngest Earp was Warren, born in 1855, making him considerably older than the fictional baby Earp born in 1864. No Earp was killed by a cattle rustler; they did not, in fact, have any cattle in Tombstone. Finally, the gravemarker lists 1882 as the year of James' death, yet the gunfight at the OK Corral, which allows the Earps and Doc Holliday to get revenge on the Clantons, took place in 1881. As Robert Lyons wrote, "Nothing on the grave marker--despite the factuality that such objects assert--has any accuracy at all" (4). But when taken to task by Western film aficionado Jon Tuska for the inaccuracies, Ford simply asked "Did you like the film?" When the response was affirmative, Ford closed the question: "What more do you want?" (American West 192).

Use of the violent legends of the wild, wild West typically makes a more dramatic story for filmmakers than the often prosaic reality. But the use of the

nonhistorical is also significant for another reason; the Western, like other film genres, also seems to reflect American attitudes toward society and order. A recent article on cinematic uses of American history postulated that cultures have a

'will to myth'--a communal need, a cultural drive--for a reconstruction of the national past in light of the present . . . Modern societies of course are cognizant of a past, but frequently find it filled with unpleasant truths and half-known facts, so they set about rewriting it. (Studlar and Desser 10)

One of the primary means for doing this is through popular media such as film. Film, as Garth Jowett noted, has been both an influential socializer, and a significant mirror of social forces in America.<sup>6</sup>

Because of its thematic concerns--good versus evil, the frontier versus civilization, the Native American versus the white--the Western film provides a particularly valid forum where these societal factors may be studied, and Andrew Bergman's comments on Depression-era Westerns seem to be valid for the entire history of the Western film. In the 1920's, "the classical form of the Western genre was codified and given its first epic expression" (Cook 219). Genres popular in the early Thirties, however (gangster films, "shyster" films), reflected the

ambivalence Depression audiences felt toward law and society. By, 1935 the nation was confident of recovery behind the strong hand of its president, and Bergman's We're in the Money associated the resurgence of the Western in 1935 with popular good feeling about the Roosevelt administration. Bergman concluded that the nation welcomed a new cycle of Westerns, as well as G-man films celebrating contemporary lawmakers, because their confidence in their institutions had been restored. This conclusion seems to be borne out by the evidence.

Since the traditional Western celebrates law and order and the coming of American civilization, American audiences respond most enthusiastically to these films when they have faith in those institutions. When they lack faith, as during the early Depression, the traditional Western seems jarringly artificial, and other types of films are made. Tuska suggests that the tendency of Thirties Westerns to "whitewash" outlaw figures could be traced to

the widespread distrust of government  
which came about with the Crash of 1929  
and the onset of the Depression . . . .  
Resentment at social injustice led  
audiences to endorse the revaluation of  
bad men and the transposition of lawmen  
into the real villains (197).



With the resurgence of faith in government, the films returned to the usual affirmation of American civilization.

This simple formula creates not only an explanation for the importance of Westerns up to World War II and through the post-war years when America was unquestionably the world's most powerful nation, it also sets the past twenty years of relative drought in perspective. In 1969, the nation's uncertainty about the purpose of the Vietnam War and its anguish over the assassinations of the major figures of the Sixties--the Kennedys, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King--is reflected in the ambiguities to be found in three great films . None would be described as a traditional Western, affirming societal values of law and order. True Grit is almost a parody of John Wayne's past film heroics; Butch Cassidy presents two outlaws as heroes, without whitewashing them for public consumption; The Wild Bunch depicts a group of outlaws who garner audience sympathy from their situation, trapped in a world where they are obsolete. All ultimately display concerns that perhaps the path we have chosen has not been the correct one.

Nothing in recent years, with the exception of the first years of the Reagan presidency, has served to restore confidence in our institutions: a vice-president and a president have resigned over malfeasance while in

office, American diplomats and embassy workers have been held hostage, and leading figures in government, business, and religion, have committed crimes, behaved unethically, or lied to the American people. The names of even the recent malefactors crowd a page: Boesky, Bakker, Deaver, Hart, North, Swaggart, and the list goes on.

The exception noted above seems to go the farthest toward substantiating the theory of America and the Western. In the early years of the Reagan administration, confidence in government began to climb, and patriotism again became popular. Not surprisingly, the production of Westerns also increased. Silverado and Pale Rider, both released in 1985, could be regarded as fairly traditional Westerns, while other films light-heartedly spoofed the genre but used the trappings (Lust in the Dust [1984] and Rustler's Rhapsody [1985]).

In the laissez faire moral laxness of the late Reagan years, however, one incident of questionable ethics followed another, until Time, devoting virtually an entire issue to the topic "What's Wrong" with America, concluded

A relentless procession of forlorn faces  
assaults the nation's moral equanimity,  
characters linked in the public mind . . .  
by the fact that each in his or her own way  
has somehow seemed to betray the public  
trust (14).

Not surprisingly, the past few years have been sparse in their production of Westerns, and the most significant, Young Guns (1988), displays an almost annihilating cynicism toward the institutions of law and society. Local governments are crooked (as indeed they were in the factual Lincoln County War), and the sheriff is on the take; the U.S. Cavalry is persuaded to stand by while the house of the lawyer McSween, where Billy and his gang have holed up, goes up in smoke. Society is indeed loathsome; however, no worthy alternatives are presented. Billy and his gang are deputized to bring in the men who shot their boss, Tunstall, but Billy proves to be an unstable, blood-thirsty killer who exposes his gang to unnecessary danger. The disturbing aspect of this film is its success; during August, 1988, Variety box-office tallies revealed that Young Guns was the top-grossing film in America (3). (Naturally, a sequel is in the works.) Today's American audiences must be despairing indeed if the cheers when Billy shoots the villain through the head reflect their preference for Billy, who has neither the charm of Butch Cassidy nor the poignance of the Wild Bunch, over society, however flawed it might be.

As I planned to write a Western screenplay in the late 1980's, I had to analyze all of these aspects--the genre, American history, American culture. The Western genre, for example, has definite characters, settings and

story lines; Frank Gruber suggested that all Western plots could be fit into seven story forms (183-186). A writer must know the genre and what audiences in the past have liked as a point of departure, since audiences have definite expectations from a Western film, but they also want to see advancement in the formula, a new pattern woven into the old fabric. As Robert Warshow put it, "the spectator derives his pleasure from the appreciation of minor variations within the working out of a pre-established order" (52).

Bloodmetal fits, in important ways, within the genre. It affirms the importance of law and order while simultaneously lamenting the loss of freedom represented by the vanishing frontier. Its pivotal character, Sheriff Thomas P. Gallup, is a "good badman" such as William S. Hart might have played in the Western films of the 'teens, though Gallup's reformation is considerably more psychological and much less sentimental than in the Hart films.<sup>7</sup> The pairing of two characters (in this case, Gallup and Charles Scott) who must struggle against great odds is also a standard device; the "buddy film" is a sub-genre which crosses over into other action and adventure stories. The setting, the Sangre de Cristo mountains of northern New Mexico, provides an opportunity for memorable mise-en-scene as in Shane or the Monument

Valley films of John Ford (such as Stagecoach, Fort Apache, and any number of others).

In addition to these characteristics that Bloodmetal shares with earlier films in the genre, it is also marked as a successor by its concern for action. The screenplay even features a climactic gunfight. In between the opening brawl and the closing shoot-out, we find several instances of gunplay, a no-holds-barred fistfight between Gallup and Scott, a chase through the Sangre de Cristos, and a literal cliffhanger, the scene where the two heroes climb along a rotted rope over the raging river.<sup>8</sup> When Scott and Gallup return to Banner at the end of the film, their revenge is carried out both through Scott's skill with explosives and Gallup's skill with a gun. Although the genre almost demands this ending, both scenes are visually different from earlier precursors. The sequence inside the mine lends a dark and claustrophobic air to the stylized violence, while the final gunfight takes place, not under the noon sky, but under a full moon, creating an outdoor analogue to the creeping shadows of the mine.

Just as the action expands on earlier conventions, the screenplay also represents a departure from many Westerns in its character motivations and its configuration of the "buddy" plot. Gallup, the most typical of the main characters, differs from similar gunfighters in his motivations. Warshow concluded that the

Westerner might seem to fight for other reasons, but his primary concern is "the purity of his own image--in fact his honor" (48). During the course of the screenplay, however, Gallup moves away from solipsistic concern for personal honor. His call to action is, instead, the renewing of bonds with others. As he comes to see that a world exists outside of himself, his attitude toward his job as hired gun and toward Scott's plight evolves, until, finally, he is willing to rebel. This return to society is completely atypical in the Western genre; rarely does a Western hero like Gallup attempt to find a life "worth living" within the confines of society. Studlar and Dessar described an oft-used ending in which "the hero's ambivalence toward civilization and the community's ambivalence toward the hero's violence precludes their reconciliation" (14). Shane, Stagecoach's Ringo Kid, Ford's Wyatt Earp, Clint Eastwood's "Man with No Name"--none of these characters can live within the confines of growing law and order. But Gallup remains in Banner, seemingly reconciled to his place in society because of his awareness.

The antagonist of the piece, Fargo Pierce, also differs from similar characters because of his motivations. In many Western movies the only driving concern ascribed to villains is greed--avarice, pure and simple. The Indian agent in Fort Apache, the Clantons in

My Darling Clementine, the Rykers in Shane, the mining conglomerate in Pale Rider, and the banker in Stagecoach represent just some of the many manifestations of this cardinal sin to be found in the genre's history. Yet what are these characters like and what are their motivations? What made Pierce acquisitive to the exclusion of every humane feeling? History gave me the answer.

I was struck in particular by the development of the Comstock Lode, where greed produced cunning and corruption worthy of portrayal in a Chinatown or Wall Street. An investment collapse that left thousands destitute in 1877 provided Pierce's motivation; having been ruined a few years earlier in investment speculation, he was willing to do whatever was necessary to stay on top. And if he had stolen and lied to protect himself, it became more believable that he would also kill. The historical manipulation of investments in Comstock mines gave me the idea for a similar conspiracy in which Pierce would try to regain outstanding stock in the Banner Lode because of an imminent bonanza. William S. Greever related how mine "managers and other insiders tried to keep any discovery a secret among themselves and to buy as many shares as possible at a bargain price" (123). Because of similar manipulation in the stock market today, Pierce's plot is easy to understand, and may be contrasted to the poorly-delineated designs of many other villains.

The pairing of the two main characters also offered me an opportunity to change established formulas. I wanted first to mix them racially, since the historical West was considerably more integrated than other films have indicated. While this grouping is nothing new (Mel Brooks' 1974 Western parody Blazing Saddles redressed cinematic prejudice by pairing Cleavon Little, the Sheriff of Rock Ridge, with Gene Wilder), it is certainly atypical. I also wanted the character of Scott to reverse traditional associations; while I didn't desire the white blackness of Sidney Poitier, I intended for Scott to be intelligent, proud, loving, and somewhat cultured. In many ways, he is a more likable character than Gallup, who at the outset has hardly any concern for others, little book-learning, and no sense of culture, except for "frontier culture." Gallup represents the brawn, the skills of the Wild West. Scott, while a virtual stranger to those skills, has valuable resources of his own, and in fact, makes Pierce's eventual defeat possible because of those same gifts. This reversal of traditional racial roles allows Bloodmetal to be an unusual example of the buddy film.

A final aspect of unusual characterization is provided with Sarah, the love interest. Screenwriter William Goldman, who himself wrote one of the outstanding Western women in Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, recognized that characters like his Etta Place were rare.



In fact, he concluded that, normally, "girls are a drag in a Western. They're always clutching the hero and pleading, 'No, Gary, don't go out there, they'll hurt you'" (470). Sarah is neither this traditional clinging vine, nor one of the fake-tough women of contemporary Westerns who still ultimately relies on a man. Sarah is both worldly and intelligent, and she is Gallup's equal, not his slave. Even though she is forced to sell herself to raise her initial stake, she is after bigger things--a can't-miss investment in Pierce's mine. Sarah and Gallup are drawn to each other, perhaps because they are both survivors, and it is Sarah who ultimately confirms Gallup in the moral choice he struggles with throughout the first part of the screenplay. This combination of independence, moral resolve, and real-life savvy makes Sarah into an unusual Western woman, but I think she will be a welcome one.

Like anyone writing a period piece, I had to delve into history. At first, I did not believe that knowing the history in detail would be particularly helpful. I thought that, as Pilkington and Graham stated: "In the Western, the way it really was in the Old West is not nearly so important as the way twentieth century audiences think it was" (9). There is at least some truth here. But writing without knowing a subject intimately was not my normal procedure. I decided to research the subject so I could make an informed decision on what to use and what to leave

out. By doing so, I discovered that many devices taken for granted by Western audiences (the fast-draw duel in particular) were not historically correct. Yet they had become such a conventional part of the genre that like other unbelievable devices, they had become believable.

I decided to be true to history in as many ways as possible in setting up the location, economics, and institutions of my boomtown. After learning as much as I could on how the cinematic West differed from the reality, I began to research similar camps, mining techniques, even prices. In Lubbock, Texas, I uncovered a treasure-trove of period cabins, bunkhouses, and other buildings at the National Ranching Heritage Center, and the experience of actually seeing authentic Western construction enhanced my descriptions of Banner and Pardue's cabin. I intended for this tendency toward realism to impart a freshness to the screenplay. The mining camp setting, if simplified a bit for clarity, is complete down to the background noise of the ore stamper; miners depart for their shifts at specified times; the unpolished construction of the town itself reflects a mentality which held making money to be more important than comfort. But despite the historical accuracy I wanted to achieve, I retained an awareness of my audience. Realism is fine, as long as it remains dramatically effective. But ultimately, I had to play fast and loose with several things to retain a viable

screenplay. I twisted the geography around to suit my purposes, especially for the chase scene; I put a railroad in where no railroad would have gone at that time; I placed Scott in an occupation that few blacks during that time could have held. And despite the knowledge that the fast-draw was almost exclusively a product of legend, I also knew that it would be expected, so I included it, seizing the opportunity to write a dramatically-satisfying ending. Goldman came to the same conclusion when he said of historical accuracy, "Truth is terrific, reality is even better, but believability is best of all" (145). With Bloodmetal, I tried to strike a balance between fact and fiction that will be accepted by audiences.

I suggested above that a knowledge of current trends in American culture is also necessary in writing a Western, since the reaction to the traditional formula seems to vary, depending on contemporary attitudes toward law and society. Writing in 1989, I am aware that some Americans feel that American civilization has betrayed them, that people in power or people they trusted have exploited them. This cynicism, I said, partially explained the construction of Young Guns, a film in which the government, economic powers, and the military are all corrupt. A modern Western must deal with this belief, and I have done this with the character of Pierce. As the owner of the mine, the smelter, and much of the rest of

well-received? I think not. Recent films in other genres have also recognized that although we may live in a corrupt society, heroic individuals can rise above the system, even triumph over it. The gangster film is the genre most closely related to the Western. It features similar characters and stylized violence, and also crystallizes attitudes toward law and order. Yet the 1987 blockbuster The Untouchables depicts the victory of four unlikely heroes in Al Capone's Chicago, a town so corrupt that aldermen and the chief of police are on the take and Jimmy Malone (Sean Connery) can't speak freely to Eliot Ness (Kevin Costner) inside a police station because "the walls have ears." The film depicts a society which flagrantly disregards the law (Capone remarks, "On the boat it's bootlegging, on Lake Shore Drive it's hospitality"), a society where ethical behavior is the exception. Yet Ness and his Untouchables clean up Chicago by the time the film ends, and audiences loved it: a Newsweek cover story reported that the film grossed \$16 million in just its first week of business (62).<sup>9</sup>

Despite the dissatisfaction that many Americans today feel toward their society, popular response to these films (and others) indicates that audiences are more than willing to entertain the thought that some hope exists, that a hero or heroes can take on a crooked society and triumph. In Bloodmetal, Gallup and Scott face considerable

odds in their fight against Pierce, a man who holds all of society's cards. But I think their victory over Pierce would not only be accepted, it would be demanded. This upbeat ending makes this screenplay a rarity in modern Westerns.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Nash Smith's influential Virgin Land provides one of the most important dichotomies, the American West as paradise versus the American West as desert. For a comprehensive listing of further dichotomies to be found in the Western, see Jim Kitses' Horizon's West (11).

<sup>4</sup> Philip French wrote that "one of the things the Western is always about is American rewriting and reinterpreting her own past, however honestly or dishonestly it might be done" (24).

<sup>5</sup> A number of sources reevaluating the West are worth consulting; in addition to those mentioned in the text, Steckmesser's Western Outlaws and The Western Hero are invaluable for their separation of the historical and the legendary personae of such men as Kit Carson, Wild Bill Hickok, Jesse James, Billy the Kid, and Butch Cassidy, and also for the evaluation of the ballads, books, and films that have shaped our popular image of these badmen. James Horan's The Gunfighters and The Lawmen represents perhaps the best of recent scholarship into these legends, but is strictly historical in its scope.

<sup>6</sup> The landmark study is probably Siegfried Kracauer's work on German film, From Caligari to Hitler, but the subject seems to be of increasing interest in recent

years. Michael Wood has examined America in the Movies in the 1940's, and Andrew Bergman's We're in the Money deals with Depression-era films and how they reflected trends in American society. The growing interest in American Studies as a discipline has meant increasing research into the relationship between American popular culture and the society it represents, as in the recent Movies as Artifacts: Cultural Criticism of Popular Film, edited by Michael Marsden, John Nachbar, and Sam Grogg, Jr.

<sup>7</sup> An excellent survey of Hart's films (and their characteristic plot devices, including the reclamation of the badman) may be found in Fenin and Everson, 78-104.

<sup>8</sup> This scene has similarities to the cliff scene found in Butch Cassidy, a film that I had not seen when I finished my first draft. Although I did have screen antecedents in mind, I was thinking more of evoking the type of adventure recaptured in the Indiana Jones films. When he wrote his screenplay, Goldman himself thought of a similar scene--a sequence from Gunga Din (470).

The abundance of action in Bloodmetal dictated my writing approach. For the most part, I contented myself with simply describing what is happening, and only where I felt it essential did I try to specify camera directions.

<sup>9</sup> Audiences have also flocked to see heroes achieve victory over a corrupt society in other genre films, such as RoboCop and The Running Man (both released in 1987). In RoboCop, America is controlled by huge corporations beset with Machiavellian in-fighting. Police Officer Murphy (Peter Weller) is transferred into a new and more dangerous duty assignment so that he will be killed and his body will be available for creation of a super-cop cyborg. But Murphy turns the tables; he takes revenge on his killers, regains his humanity, and exposes the corruption within the system. The Running Man, while more ephemeral in its concerns, presents America in 2019. Convicts (many of them innocent victims) are forced to participate in a lethal gameshow for the entertainment of the jaded public. After helicopter pilot Ben Richards refuses to fire upon a crowd of unarmed people, he finds himself a "contestant," fighting for his life. When he beats the odds and winds up the winner, even the partisan TV audience cheers him on. Both of these films were successful, with RoboCop also garnering considerable critical acclaim.



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FADE IN

INT. BANNER TOWN JAIL - NIGHT

A silver star that reads "Sheriff, Banner" fills the screen. We slowly pull back and focus, and see that the star rests on a table where a large, smoky game of five card draw is in progress. As we continue to pull back, we see that the jail is built of cheap lumber, with notable chinks in the wall and no ceiling, just the bare rafters above. A centrally-located stove provides what warmth there is. The table is littered with bottles, glasses, poker chips, money. Three men sit around the small table, and one of the prisoners is also playing, his cards protruding outside the bars of the cell. The deck--and the silver star--sit in front of TOM GALLUP, sheriff of Banner, who is pouring himself a drink from a half-empty bottle. Gallup, a man in his mid-thirties, is handsome, despite a two-day growth of beard, rugged, possessed of an aura of self-confidence. He looks first to CROCKER, a foreman at the Banner Lode. Crocker is notably ugly, with both a receding hairline and a receding chin.

GALLUP

Who needs a card? Crocker?

CROCKER

Two.

Gallup deals two cards and Crocker nods in satisfaction.

CROCKER

At least as bad as the ones I had before.  
Thank you much.

Gallup turns next to WILSON, a young man in his early twenties. As he does so, a NOISE dimly heard off-screen--like a laden table overturning--makes everyone look up, except for Gallup.

WILSON

Sounds like the furniture over at Feeney's  
is getting busted up.

The NOISE intensifies in the background--glass breaking, shouts, grunts of pain. Everyone looks nervously at Gallup, who gives no indication that he hears the clamor.

GALLUP

How many?

WILSON

Uh, three. Sheriff, don't you think--

Across the street, glass SHATTERS and falls musically to the floor. Gallup deals three cards to Wilson.

WILSON

Um, Sheriff, aren't you going to do something about that?

GALLUP

About what?

A CRASH like a crystal chandelier falling from a thirty-foot ceiling decides him. He gets up reluctantly and gives his cards to AUGIE, an old drunk who has been observing the game from his cot in the cell.

GALLUP

How's a man supposed to concentrate on a card game with this kind of racket going on?

(to the prisoner)

Lose this hand, Augie, and forget about breakfast in the morning.

He belts on his gun, and is ready to head out the door.

WILSON

Sheriff--

Wilson picks up Gallup's badge from the table and tosses it to him.

GALLUP

Don't none of you take your money away while I'm gone.

He pins the badge to his vest and walks out.

EXT. BANNER - NIGHT

Our first view of the town of Banner doesn't impress--a dirt street with frame buildings in various stages of completion and shacks covering the hills around town. The

completed buildings are rough and graceless, and many of the shacks are roofed only with canvas. Only the ore mill and a Victorian mansion (both belonging to FARGO PIERCE) look like finished structures. It is Friday night in Banner--payday for miners--and the sidewalks are crowded with men seeking entertainment of one sort or other. As GALLUP nears Feeney's Saloon, an ostentatious two-story frame building, the sounds of battle intensify and a chair comes crashing through one of the front windows. As he reaches the porch, a man flies out the opened front door into GALLUP, who catches him in self-defense and then lets him drop to the ground.

INT. FEENEY'S SALOON - NIGHT

The saloon is of the same rough construction as the rest of the town, but the bar itself is carved wood, and a long mirror and cheap reproductions of Old Master nudes hang behind it. Tables are overturned, a wreckage of glasses and bottles litters the floor, and the apparent cause of it all, a huge miner, scoots a tiny, bespectacled clerk along the top of the bar as a screen between himself and FEENEY, a balding Irish behind the bar with a blackjack. No one else shows any inclination to get up and intervene.

The miner, MULLIGAN, is ominously bearded, 6'6", a good three-hundred pounds. Some have mistaken him for a rogue grizzly.

MULLIGAN

(shaking the clerk)

I'm not one of your three dollar a day miners. I risk my life to get that ore, and I want my money, little man.

FEENEY

(seeing Gallup)

Tom, I'm gonna clout him one, I swear to God. He just startin' bustin' up the place, he did.

GALLUP

All right, Mulligan, put him down. Put him down and step back.

MULLIGAN

It ain't my fault this time, Sheriff, honest it ain't. I come into town to sell my ore today, just like always, and I heard this little bastard--

(shaking the clerk)

--braggin' about his scales. They  
been weighin' me short for a year now,  
ever' time I come in.

GALLUP

You've been drinking again, damn you.  
I told you what was going to happen  
the next time--

FARGO PIERCE walks in, curious about the commotion.  
Pierce owns the Banner Lode, the assayer's office, the ore  
mill, and most of the town. A handsome man in his  
forties, he surveys the chaos with a patrician calm, as  
well he might in the company of COWEN and REID,  
tough-faced gunmen who serve as additional protection.

PIERCE

Problems, Sheriff?

CLERK

(seeing Pierce)

W-w-wait. Th-th-there's the man you  
should t-t-talk to.

Mulligan slings the clerk down the bartop, sending the  
free lunch bowls flying, and heads for Pierce.

MULLIGAN

Where's my money, Pierce?

Gallup steps between Mulligan and Pierce. He draws his  
gun with blurring speed, thumbs back the hammer with an  
audible CLICK, and sights at the middle of the miner's  
huge chest. If not the fastest gun in the West, Gallup is  
damn close.

Mulligan looks at the gun and realizes even in his drunken  
haze that it is pointed at him. He looks at Cowen and  
Reid, who stand ready to draw their guns as well. After a  
beat, he drops his hands to his side and shakes his huge  
head mournfully.

MULLIGAN

It ain't right, Sheriff.

EXT. FEENEY'S SALOON - NIGHT

A small crowd has gathered to watch Gallup escort Mulligan  
across the street. Gallup's attention is divided between



Mulligan and the townspeople, some of whom are in the mood for a lynching.

FIRST TOWNSPERSON

Sheriff, I think my nose is broke.

GALLUP

Probably improved it.

The next speaker, the BARBER, carries a straight razor and a shaving brush, and his CLIENT nods his lathered head at everything the barber says.

BARBER

(matter of factly)

The simple son of a bitch, he didn't have to go hog-wild just 'cause the scales are crooked. Hell, any fool knows that.

GALLUP

Do they? Now if you folks will move out of the way, I've got to get him locked up. I'll take your statements later, if you still have a mind to give 'em.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Mulligan has pressed on through the crowd. Before Gallup can catch up, Mulligan snatches a pick from his mule, tied at the hitching bar, and at the sight of the giant with a weapon in his hands, the crowd dissolves into the shadows. Gallup draws his gun just as Mulligan takes a vicious two-handed swipe at him. The sheriff's gun is knocked from his hand and into the middle of the street. (Throughout the following, Gallup ducks and weaves, using posts and columns for cover, while Mulligan plods drunkenly after him, aiming ponderous but potentially lethal swings at him.)

MULLIGAN

Now I don't want no trouble with you, Sheriff. I always liked you. I just want my money. Let me talk to Mr. Pierce. If he won't give me the money he owes me, I'm gonna skin him and make a pair o' gloves out of him.

GALLUP

I can't let you do that. It's my job to protect everyone in this town--

especially him.

MULLIGAN

Sorry to hear you say that.

Gallup darts out from behind a column and gets in one solid combination to the head and body before the miner can draw the pick back again. He bloodies Mulligan's nose, but otherwise has no effect on his lumbering progress.

GALLUP

Don't make me get rough with you. Give me that thing.

He has to dive under the hitching bar to avoid the next swing and stares wide-eyed.

THE POINTED HEAD OF THE PICK

stops a few inches short of his face. Gallup looks longingly at his gun, then sees Mulligan turn to go after Pierce. Mulligan draws up short, fumbling with the door knob, and Gallup puts all of his strength into a roundhouse blow to the kidney. When that proves futile, he tries a new tack.

GALLUP

(panting)

Ah, come on, you big drunken lug. Let's see you hit me. I don't know how you even make a living, the way you swing that thing.

MULLIGAN

That's what you think.

He turns and swings again just as Gallup ducks behind a column. The pick seats itself in the wood with a solid THUNK. Mulligan gives a mighty tug, but can't dislodge it. He pulls again without success, and Gallup steps out, a satisfied grin on his face.

GALLUP

Give it up, Mulligan. It's just not your night.

Then, with a GRUNT, the big miner pulls the handle loose, leaving the head imbedded in the wood. Gallup loses his smile as Mulligan raises the pick handle over his head and brings it down. Gallup dodges the downward stroke, pins

the handle to the ground with his foot, kicks Mulligan in the stomach, and snatches up the handle before the miner can react.

Pierce steps out of Feeney's. Others begin to drift out of the doorways and shadows.

PIERCE

That should do it. Good work, Sheriff.

When Mulligan sees Pierce, he utters an inarticulate roar of rage. Seeing that Gallup stands between them, he runs for the street--and Gallup's gun. The townspeople again scatter.

GALLUP

Great timing, Pierce.

He leaps after the huge miner, club brandished, and it is apparent that he will close the distance between them before Mulligan can reach the gun. As Mulligan bends to pick up the revolver, Gallup raises the pick handle. A SHOT sounds behind them, and Mulligan sinks to one knee, blood spreading across the back of his shirt. He still tries to reach the gun, and another SHOT snaps his head forward. Mulligan crumples gracelessly to the ground, a pool of blood forming beneath his face.

Gallup prods Mulligan with his foot; the huge miner is dead. Gallup stands motionless for a beat. Then he turns to see Pierce holding a revolver casually at his side.

PIERCE

You may thank me later, if you'd rather.

He hands the gun back to Cowen.

Gallup bends down to gently remove his own gun from Mulligan's huge hand. He looks distastefully at it and slides it back into his holster.

GALLUP

(without looking at Pierce)

You didn't have to shoot him.

PIERCE

It looked to me like he was going to kill us both.

GALLUP

I don't think he could have hit either

of us from five feet, not with as much cheap alcohol as he put down his gullet tonight.

PIERCE

Neither of us has lived this long by taking chances.

The danger over, the crowd emerges from the safety of the shadows, murmuring about the shooting. They approach GALLUP, giving PIERCE a wide berth. The barber's client rubs his chin in disbelief, oblivious to the lather there.

FIRST TOWNSPERSON

Nice work, Sheriff. He might have killed somebody.

GALLUP

Yeah. Might have. But I doubt it.

(to the townspeople)

I could have used some help. The least you can do for me now is drag him across to the jail.

JAMESON from the Banner Courier nods at Pierce and steps forward, paper and pencil at the ready.

JAMESON

Was this another dangerous character, Sheriff? How'd you take care of this one?

GALLUP

Not tonight, Jameson.

JAMESON

The people will want to know--

Jameson catches the look on Gallup's face.

But they can probably wait 'til morning.

He quickly retreats. As a group of townspeople survey the mammoth problem of moving Mulligan, Pierce walks over to Gallup.

PIERCE

Crocker said you had a game going. Mind if I sit in?

GALLUP

Well, you've got the money for it, don't you?

PIERCE

What's wrong, Tom? Did I steal your thunder?

GALLUP

I'm thinking about what Mulligan said about the scales--

PIERCE

(laughing)

Tom, I'm surprised you can even ask me that.

GALLUP

Why? Goddamn it, why do you have to cheat at everything?

Pierce throws his arm around Gallup's shoulders.

PIERCE

A man's got to make a living, doesn't he?

CLOSE SHOT on Gallup. He takes a deep breath and realizes that he has no room to talk.

GALLUP

Yeah. You're right about that.

They follow the men attempting to drag the huge Mulligan across the street to the jail and having a difficult time of it.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - MORNING

We move swiftly down the tracks, ties speeding beneath us, a rhythmic CLANKING marking our pace.

Our ANGLE shifts, so that we see two men aboard a hand-car approaching the end of the rail. TOWNSEND climbs down. He is a roly-poly middle-aged man with sweat stains under his arms despite the fact that it is only early morning; he is obviously unused to being in the field. He walks past a group of Chinese workers jockeying ties into

position. Townsend shouts something into a foreman's ear; the answer is a pointed finger. Townsend continues ahead, toward rocky bluffs blocking the line's progress.

EXT. TUNNEL - MORNING

A tunnel extends an unknown distance into the rock in front of us. More Chinese workers are levelling the grade up to the tunnel with picks and shovels. After a beat, CHARLES SCOTT walks out of the tunnel opening, half bent over as he strings a fuse along behind him. Scott is a handsome black man, well-groomed, tall, intelligent-looking. Under one arm, he carries some unused sticks of dynamite, known in the Old West as "giant powder."

When he has trailed the fuse outside and around a corner from the tunnel's mouth, he sets down the extra dynamite, takes out a pocket-knife, cuts the fuse expertly, and WHISTLES loudly to get the attention of the Chinese workers.

SCOTT  
(imitating an explosion)  
Ka-boom. Head for the hills.

The workers drop their tools and head for cover. Scott, nodding approvingly, takes out a box of matches.

TOWNSEND  
(from a distance)  
Scott! Charles Scott!

Scott pauses for a moment.

SCOTT  
Up here!

Townsend rounds a bend and hurries up the grade. He comes straight up to Scott, breathing heavily.

TOWNSEND  
Mornin', Charles.

SCOTT  
Good morning, Mr. Townsend.

Townsend leans against the rock wall and mops his brow with his handkerchief. When his panting dies down a bit, he speaks:

TOWNSEND

Got a message that may mean a little change of plans for you. I've got to get you back to Santa Fe. Right away.

Scott starts to protest, bites it back, and starts over.

SCOTT

Mr. Townsend, this blasting is two months ahead of schedule.

Jeanette started packing last night. How'm I going to tell her we're not going to San Francisco?

TOWNSEND

Don't you worry about that. You'll still get your trip. You've worked hard to put us this far ahead, and I'm not the man to say you don't deserve some rest. It's something else, a private job.

Scott nods his head glumly.

SCOTT

The boss have another friend who needs a tunnel blown?

TOWNSEND

Something like that. It is another friend, but it's a mining job. Seems a friend of his, Fargo Pierce, needs some blasting done in his silver mine in Banner. Just hired a new engineer, fresh out of college--

SCOTT

And he's worried about getting the job done. Well, how long is it going to set me back to go to Banner for this Pierce?

TOWNSEND

Not a bit. I'm supposed to put you on the train this morning. Now.

Oh, almost forgot. I cabled Jeanette. She'll be on the train with you from Santa Fe. You do this job for Pierce and you'll be on your way to the coast. Congratulations.

Scott smiles broadly.

SCOTT

All right, Mr. Townsend. Give me ten seconds and we'll be on our way. Got a charge of giant powder rigged up and ready to go.

He lights the fuse, and we follow the spark as it leads up to the tunnel's mouth and disappears inside. Townsend's eyes grow large; there are apparently few explosions in his office.

SCOTT

This is as good a way to celebrate as any. Keep your head down, Mr. Townsend.

After a moment that whets our anticipation, there is a flash of light and a deafening BOOM that spews dust and debris into the air. Townsend drops to his knees and covers his head with his hands. As the dust settles, Scott pulls the tubby executive to his feet.

SCOTT

Let's go, Mr. Townsend. Can't sit around all day, can we? I've got to catch a train.

Scott picks up a satchel of tools and heads down the incline. The red sun, low in the East, works into the sky against the backdrop of the Sangre de Cristo mountains.

We hear the sound of a steam whistle and

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BANNER - MORNING

A steam-whistle BLOWS, summoning the seven o'clock shift to the mines. Men begin to turn out of the shacks, huts, and boarding houses, all making the climb up toward the mine.

EXT. ORE MILL - MORNING

Puffs of smoke begin to float from the smokestacks. In a few moments, a stamping machine starts up. The tremendously loud CHUNK, CHUNK of the ore being pulverized can be heard in every daytime scene in Banner.



INT. JAIL - MORNING

The poker game has gone on all night. Crocker, Wilson, and Pierce remain at the table with Gallup, but Wilson is asleep, SNORING violently. The stamping machine is audible, but not loud enough to interfere with dialogue.

Pierce is dealing five card draw. If this isn't the last hand, then no one is going to be left awake to play. As he parcels out the cards, the players mechanically gather them in and sort them.

PIERCE

There we go, boys. Take a look at them.

As they are sorting their cards, the sharp-eyed Gallup sees Pierce's cards slip a little in his hand, revealing that he has dealt himself six cards. Pierce sees him looking, and returns his gaze without flinching.

PIERCE

A lucky deal, boys. Hope you won't be upset. Sometimes a man gets all the breaks.

CROCKER

Ah, hell, cain't be helped, Mr. Pierce. You always been lucky.

Crocker considers his cards for a moment, then leans back from the table.

CROCKER

Two.

Pierce looks over at Wilson. A low snore comes from the young foreman. Crocker gently nudges him.

CROCKER

How many cards, son?

Wilson blinks, looks at his cards, and lays his head back on the table.

WILSON

Three.

PIERCE

Well, Tom, you see what happens when you hire these boys fresh out of college. No staying power.

What'll it be?

GALLUP

Two.

PIERCE

And dealer takes two.

And he palms the extra card into those he discards into the slush pile.

PIERCE

Well, Crocker? Can you open?

Crocker lays his cards down in disgust. Before he can answer, Wilson also drops his cards.

WILSON

I fold.

CROCKER

You young pup, how many times do I have to tell you? At least wait until you see what I'm gonna do.

WILSON

Doesn't matter. Haven't had a decent hand all night.

CROCKER

I'm out, too.

PIERCE

You in, Gallup?

Gallup looks again at his cards, plays idly with the bills in front of him. After he looks up at Pierce, Gallup lays his cards on the table.

GALLUP

No. Not this time.

He picks up a one-sheet newspaper as Pierce rakes in the ante.

PIERCE

Another hand?

Hearing the ore mill working, Wilson checks his pocket watch.

WILSON

Oh, shit! Seven o'clock. We're going to have to head straight for the mine.

PIERCE

(in a mock-paternal voice)  
You boys shouldn't be out all night when there's work to do. We have a big day in front of us.

As Gallup absently scans the paper, the rest push their chairs back from the table, muttering as they stand.

PIERCE

Why don't you go back to the house and get some sleep? We've got to go down to the station around four.

CROCKER

To meet that detonations man?

PIERCE

(nodding)

Name of Scott. Charles Scott. Does work for the railroad, but never worked in a silver mine.

GALLUP

(looking up)

It seems like you'd want somebody who knows mining to make up for Wilson's mistakes.

That reminds me--since when do you let Jameson publish bad news about the mine?

He indicates a headline on the paper he holds.

PIERCE

Ah, Tom. There's a lot in this world that you don't know. I told him to print that story.

He looks around the jail. Seeing Augie asleep doesn't reassure him.

PIERCE

Some important things going on the next few days. Why don't we have a

private talk this afternoon?

GALLUP

You mean Wilson didn't really cave in three tunnels like the Courier said?

WILSON

Never going to live that down, am I? But Mr. Pierce told me to do it.

Gallup takes a last swig from his nearly-empty bottle.

GALLUP

All right. I don't want to know. You boys want to play again tonight? I need to make up for that last hand.

PIERCE

Not me. I'm getting too old for these late nights.

CROCKER

We'll have to wait and see. Who knows? Maybe I'll go upstairs with one of Feeney's girls tonight.

As the foremen leave, Gallup calls after them.

GALLUP

You boys try and stay out of trouble today. I don't want to have to haul you in.

CROCKER

C'mon, Gallup. You wouldn't do that to us.

GALLUP

(calling after them)

Don't bet your life on it.

PIERCE

Well, Tom, I should know better than to try and pull one over on you. You catch me every time.

He holds his hand out to Gallup, who looks at it for a beat before taking it.

GALLUP

Well, you go right on trying--I

wouldn't expect anything else.

Pierce picks up a bill from his winnings and tosses it across the table.

PIERCE

You're a good man, Tom. You know when not to make trouble.

GALLUP

Is that a good quality?

PIERCE

It is in my town. See you later.

Pierce leaves, and Gallup goes to the back to take a look at himself in the mirror. He examines himself for a moment, scowls at what he sees there. In one cell, laid out on the floor, we see Mulligan, face down. In the cot of the other cell, Augie snorts in his sleep.

AUGIE

Five on McPherson. Give me five on the big Irish.

GALLUP

Yeah, the big Irish.

Gallup looks blearily down at Mulligan and shakes his head at the rotten beginning to another rotten day. He sits on his cot, eases his boots off, tosses them underneath the cot, where they strike a wooden chest with a hollow thud. Gallup pulls the chest out, hesitates for a moment, then opens the lid. In the top tray, we see a woman's wedding ring and a delicate cameo necklace. Gallup pulls out the ring and turns it, looking at it from several different angles. Then, from the cell:

AUGIE

Clout him one while he's gettin' up.

Shaken from his reverie, Gallup puts the ring back into the chest and closes it. A FOOTSTEP sounds in Gallup's office.

GALLUP

I'm right here.

As he pulls his boots back on, Sarah, one of the barmaids from Feeney's, sticks her head in and peers around. She is petite and pretty, with raven hair and a splash of

freckles across her nose.

SARAH  
There you are. I brought some things  
over for you.

Gallup takes the plate of bacon and eggs from her hand.

GALLUP  
Awful nice of you to do this. And  
Feeney let you?

SARAH  
Mr. Feeney told me to.

GALLUP  
(mouth full)  
No kidding.

SARAH  
He thought you might be a little upset  
about that . . . . Well, about last  
night. Here, sit down and have some  
coffee.

GALLUP  
Well, thank him for me. Sometimes I  
think Feeney's the only decent human  
being in this town.

SARAH  
The only one?

GALLUP  
Well, the only man. He's the only  
one who doesn't belong to Pierce,  
heart and soul.

She sits across from him.

SARAH  
What do you mean by that? Is it so  
hard to work for Mr. Pierce?

GALLUP  
Never mind. Just letting my tiredness  
talk. Nothing you should bother about.

SARAH  
Sheriff, you can talk to me if you want.  
I'm a great listener. I'll bet you don't

have a friend around who can listen like  
I can.

Augie SNORTS in his sleep.

GALLUP

You'd win that bet. Now go on. Get out  
of my jail. I'll be cver around  
lunchtime.

EXT. BANNER STATION - DAY

Crocker sits leaned against the wall of the station. The  
STATIONMASTER passes by as he hears a train whistle  
reverberate from the nearby tunnel.

CROCKER

(sitting up straight)

A little late today.

STATIONMASTER

Not by my watch.

Crocker waits for the passengers to debark. Scott and his  
wife, JEANETTE, are the only passengers who emerge from  
the train. Scott is now sharply dressed and crowned with  
a bowler hat. Jeanette is a stunningly beautiful woman.  
The two look around, as though expecting someone to meet  
them.

Wilson and Pierce arrive on the platform and give the  
Scotts no more than a glance. They walk over to Crocker.

PIERCE

Where is he?

CROCKER

Don't know. Only people gettin' off  
was the uptown nigger and his bitch.

Scott overhears and moves closer. Crocker sees him  
coming, casually spits to his right, making sure that the  
tobacco juice finds its way onto Scott's highly-polished  
shoes.

CROCKER

Sorry 'bout that, boy.

SCOTT

Apology accepted.

He slowly and methodically wipes his shoe on Crocker's pants leg. Crocker looks at him, anger and disbelief vying for supremacy. Before he can decide which will triumph, Scott drops his next bombshell.

SCOTT

My name is Charles Scott. I am supposed to meet Mr. Pierce, of the Pierce Mining Company. Perhaps you can tell him I'm here.

Crocker sputters, fists clenched.

CROCKER

You--you're an engineer? You're black.

SCOTT

(also squaring off)

Very perceptive. Do you have a problem with that?

PIERCE

(stepping forward)

No problem. I'm Pierce, and if you can do a good job for me, I don't give a damn if you're purple.

He holds out his hand for Scott to shake, while giving Crocker a commiserating look.

SCOTT

Thank you, Mr. Pierce. Permit me to introduce my wife, Jeanette. She's travelling on to San Francisco with me after I finish this little job for you.

PIERCE takes her proffered hand.

PIERCE

Enchanted. We weren't expecting you, Mrs. Scott. It is an unexpected pleasure. Crocker, Wilson, get their bags.

I had hoped to put you up in town, but . . . circumstances . . . force me to think you would be more comfortable outside of town. I have a nice cabin where you'll be very well taken care of.



SCOTT

I hope so. What about the mine? I thought I might see it this afternoon.

PIERCE

There's no hurry. We'll get you settled in and then we'll discuss business.

Crocker and Wilson load the bags into a waiting buckboard, and the driver takes the Scotts down the dusty street.

EXT. BANNER - DAY

As they travel out of town, they meet Gallup, who walks back into town with a shovel over his shoulder. Gallup looks them over carefully--as he would any newcomer--and Scott returns his gaze without flinching.

EXT. STATION - DAY

Crocker and Wilson pass a few words with Pierce and head for Feeney's. Crocker is very upset, and he walks with his fists clenched. Pierce doesn't notice--he stands as though deep in thought. Gallup tosses the shovel into the jail and walks up the street toward him.

GALLUP

Who's the black boy?

PIERCE

(seeing Gallup)

Let's go have a drink.

GALLUP

You buying? I spent the morning doing thirsty work.

PIERCE

Sure. I'm buying.

INT. PIERCE'S PARLOR - AFTERNOON

Pierce's lovely maid, ALICE, opens the door for Pierce and Gallup. She takes Pierce's hat and awaits his orders.

PIERCE

Bourbon?

GALLUP

Bourbon.

Pierce nods to Alice, who leaves, and the two men settle themselves into chairs in the parlor. Gallup crosses his legs and puts his hat on his knee. He looks around; the furniture is fine mahogany and the shelves are full of books and silver knick-knacks. Pierce may live on the frontier, but he knows how to do it in style. Alice returns with the drinks and serves them.

PIERCE

To our long association. How long has it been now?

GALLUP

About three years, I guess.

PIERCE

And to think you were an outlaw on the run when you came to me. Now, thanks to me and the city council, you keep the peace instead of breaking it.

GALLUP

Most of the time.

They drink.

PIERCE

Ah, it's a sweet life, Tom. Good whiskey, women, if you want them, and more money than I ever knew existed.

And that's where you come in.

GALLUP

Who do I have to shoot this time?

PIERCE

I'm planning for the future, Tom. Remember when I first met you? What I told you then?

GALLUP

You told me about the soup kitchens in 'Frisco.

PIERCE

(gesturing emphatically)  
I said I was never going to be poor again. And tomorrow, I'm going to

guarantee that.

GALLUP

And how does this Scott fellow you talked about fit into your scheme?

PIERCE

(smiling)

Right on the head, as usual. We found a bonanza, Tom. A fifteen inch vein of silver that gets wider the farther we followed it. Thing is, I don't want to share it.

He offers Gallup a cigar from a humidor; Gallup declines. Pierce takes out a set of silver scissors and clips the end of his cigar.

GALLUP

Not even with your investors?

PIERCE

Aside from you and me, there are only three people that know about it. And after tomorrow, it'll be buried behind a couple of tons of rock.

GALLUP

Now I'm lost. You brought this Scott in to bury it.

Pierce gets to his feet and walks across to an ornate canister on a shelf.

PIERCE

Exactly. The rest of the mine is played out. I've been leaking reports for weeks. That means the stockholders get nervous; they sell low. And I'm going to buy up every share they put on the market, through one source or another. You can buy some, if you like. You've earned it.

He lights his cigar.

GALLUP

I can understand that much. I just don't understand why you brought in an outside blaster--

PIERCE

--when Wilson could have done the work. Simple; his blasting "mishaps" made him look inept. And when I bring in an outside man, it looks to the investors like I'm sparing no expense to get the mine to produce.

GALLUP

But what if this Scott sees something he's not supposed to?

PIERCE

That's where you come in. Just turn your head for a few minutes tomorrow around noon. A long lunch would suit my purposes fine.

He is interrupted by a frantic knocking at the door. Cowen's boots echo across the wooden floors, and he cautiously opens the door. Feeney's COOK, an elderly black, is at the door, calling for GALLUP.

COOK

Sheriff! Trouble in town. Or at least there's gonna be.

GALLUP

(getting to his feet)

What kind of trouble?

COOK

If you don't get there quick, it's gonna be shootin' trouble.

Gallup picks up his hat and heads for the door.

PIERCE

I'd go with you, but I've got other business. Don't get yourself killed.

GALLUP

I can always count on you for good advice.

He puts on his hat and nods his goodbye.

INT. FEENEY'S - AFTERNOON

The cook leads Gallup in the back door, where he can size up the situation. Two DRIFTERS, tall, rangy cowmen, stand

at the bar, their backs to Crocker, who has apparently been drinking hard.

CROCKER  
Wipe the dust off somewhere else!  
This is minin' country. We don't  
need no cattle-humpers here.

The two strangers continue to sip at their drinks, although the taller twitches at Crocker's words.

TALL DRIFTER  
Sit down, friend. Sit down while you  
still can.

GALLUP  
That's enough, boys.

Gallup leads Crocker back to his table and sits him down. Wilson and a half-empty bottle are already there.

CROCKER  
Ain't nothin' says a man cain't have  
a few drinks.

WILSON  
That's right.

GALLUP  
Drink as much as you want. But when  
you start picking a fight, that's  
where I step in. You understand me?  
You want to stay, you sit tight and  
be quiet.

CROCKER  
Gallup, you got no right to talk to  
me like this. We was just having  
a little fun.

GALLUP  
Your fun nearly got you shot.

CROCKER  
I was ready for 'em.

He pats the gun at his side.

GALLUP  
Bullshit. Crocker, you can shoot,  
but you're no gunfighter. And Wilson,

you're just a college boy from the East. What the hell you good for?

WILSON

I'm not afraid.

CROCKER

Good fer you.

GALLUP

Good for you. Tell it to the bullets and see what good it does.

Crocker reaches for the bottle to pour himself another drink. The second drifter, younger than the first, walks over to the table and takes the bottle out of Crocker's hands, splashing whiskey across the table.

SECOND DRIFTER

I think you've had enough.

GALLUP

I've got this under control. Go back and sit down.

SECOND DRIFTER

Sure. I'll sit down. But you better send these fellas home before they make my buddy mad.

He indicates the tall drifter, watching from the bar.

GALLUP

In this town, I tell people when to go home. Why don't you go back and tell your buddy that?

SECOND DRIFTER

I don't think he's gonna like it. Why don't you come and tell him yourself?

Both drifters have straightened up, and stand with their hands at their sides. Gallup fingers the badge on his vest, while behind him, there is a general scramble to get out of the line of fire.

GALLUP

If you wanted to have a few drinks, it looks like you've done it. Why don't you move on?

SECOND DRIFTER

You don't know who you're talking to,  
mister. This here is Black Jack Curry,  
the fastest gun since Hickok.

Curry gives Gallup a slight nod. Gallup's hand drops from his vest to his side.

GALLUP

Black Jack Curry, huh? You might ask  
him if he ever heard of Tom Gallup.  
Folks these days call him Sheriff Tom  
Gallup.

Curry's face shows recognition.

SECOND DRIFTER

Sheriff Tom Gallup? That's a laugh.  
Who'd make him a sheriff?

Gallup looks over at Feeney, who nods his readiness. While the attention has been focused elsewhere, Feeney has brought up his shotgun from behind the bar.

FEENEY

That's enough, lads. Let's settle up  
and call it a night.

The two drifters turn slowly toward the door, hands moving away from their guns. Curry pulls a silver coin from his pocket and tosses it on the bar, where it spins before falling flat. He nods at Gallup and the two men go outside and mount up.

GALLUP

Thanks for your help, Feeney. I'd  
say that calls for a drink.

He walks back to Crocker's table, sits facing the entrance, and reaches for the bottle. The other patrons relax and return to their various diversions.

EXT. SCOTT'S CABIN - AFTERNOON

The cabin is nestled in some trees next to a clearing. Behind the cabin, the river rushes by, the water sparkling in the sun.

INT. SCOTT'S CABIN - AFTERNOON

Scott and Jeanette are unloading their bags, and she is

laying out clothes on the bed.

SCOTT

God damn him. He's in no hurry. I guess he never thought that we might be.

JEANETTE

Watch your mouth, Charles. You've been in the field too long. Besides, San Francisco isn't going anywhere.

Jeanette puts down her clothes and snuggles into his arms.

JEANETTE

I feel so dirty from the train. I wish there was a bathtub here.

SCOTT

I guess we could always go down to the river, like we used to do when we were kids.

She playfully slaps at him.

JEANETTE

Buck naked? In broad daylight?

He kisses her throat, moves to nibble her ear.

SCOTT

(whispering)

We're out here, miles from anywhere, where nobody can see us . . . .

JEANETTE

You talked me into it.

INT. FEENEY'S SALOON - AFTERNOON

Gallup has seated himself at the table with Crocker and Wilson. Sarah brings his dinner. They shyly lock glances.

GALLUP

Thanks.

CROCKER

Sarah, why don't you bring another bottle out. I'm gonna need it.



GALLUP

What's with you two, anyway? Drunk in the middle of the afternoon. Am I going to have to round you up for playing hooky?

WILSON

Mr. Pierce gave us the afternoon off. Said we'd been through enough for one day.

Crocker pours a drink from the bottle brought to him, tosses it down, and sits up straight, ready to expound.

CROCKER

Damndest thing you ever seen. I tell you, Sheriff, there we was, waiting for a goddamned engineer, expecting some Harvard perfesser or somethin', from the way Mr. Pierce talked--

GALLUP

Harvard professor?

CROCKER

An' he was a nigger. A nigger, blacker 'n midnight. Dressed up like a . . . like I don't know what.

WILSON

And he sure made you look like a fool, too.

CROCKER

By God, I'd like to knock that hat off'n his head. At the neck.

GALLUP

So you're telling me that this black boy I saw is your explosives engineer?

His face lights up, and he settles back in his chair, laughing. He slices a piece of steak and puts it in his mouth.

GALLUP

Pierce didn't tell me that. I wish I'd seen your faces. What did Pierce do?

CROCKER

Kept me from kicking the shit out of

him, that's what he did.

GALLUP

What's the matter, Crocker? Afraid  
this Scott will show you up?

CROCKER

A slim chance he'll have at that.

Sarah passes their table to wait on another customer.  
Crocker puts an arm around her waist, and locks both arms  
around her when she tries to move away.

CROCKER

How 'bout takin' me upstairs tonight,  
Sarah? I got plenty of money.

SARAH

I don't do that anymore.

CROCKER

What do you mean? My money not good  
enough for you?

(calls over to the bar)

Feeney, looks like you need to have  
a talk with this girl about bein'  
unfriendly to the customers.

FEENEY

What's that?

GALLUP

Crocker, why don't you let her go on  
about her work?

CROCKER

Sounds to me like she's tryin' to get  
out of some work. And I wanta know why.  
What's wrong, sweetheart? You got a new  
man or somethin'? Someone who don't like  
you sellin' that beautiful body?

Sarah's face turns crimson from embarrassment and anger.

SARAH

Please let me go.

GALLUP

You heard her, Crocker.

CROCKER  
You must be jokin'.

GALLUP  
I'm not.

Gallup reaches across the table and stabs his fork into Crocker's wrist, almost hard enough to break the skin.

CROCKER  
What's wrong with you? That hurts like hell.

GALLUP  
The lady doesn't look to be interested in you, Crocker.

CROCKER  
Lady? Lady, my ass.

He grunts with pain as Gallup applies more pressure. Beads of blood form on his wrist. With a cry of pain and anger, he lets go. Sarah scurries out of reach, but not before throwing Gallup an appreciative look.

GALLUP  
I believe you owe the lady an apology.

CROCKER  
You must be looking for a piece of ass yoreself.

Gallup brings his fork down on the table with a meaningful THUNK.

GALLUP  
Apologize.

Crocker's gaze fixes on his shoes.

CROCKER  
I'm awful sorry if I give offense.

SARAH  
No harm done. No offense taken.

FEENEY  
There a problem there, Gallup?

GALLUP  
Nope. Right, Crocker?

Crocker rubs his wrist, glares at Gallup.

CROCKER  
Guess not.

Wilson has watched the entire scene wide-eyed. He tries to break the tension by returning to the conversation.

WILSON  
You should have seen his wife, though.  
Should have seen her.

GALLUP  
(chewing)  
Whose wife?

WILSON  
She was an awful pretty woman.

CROCKER  
Fer a nigger.

WILSON  
Mr. Pierce acted like he was meeting a  
duchess or something. Took her hand and  
everything.

GALLUP  
Proves he's up to no good, then. He's  
only polite to folks when he's figuring  
how to get one up on them.

CROCKER  
Maybe I'll just tell him you was  
sayin' that agin' him.

GALLUP  
It won't surprise him.

Crocker says nothing. He just pours another drink. We see his glass fill, hear the BURBLE of flowing liquid, and

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER - AFTERNOON

Scott and his wife are bathing at the river. He is in the water up to his waist, backoning her to drop her blanket

and enter the water, which is calf-deep on her now.

JEANETTE

It's too cold.

SCOTT

Of course it's cold. It's almost autumn up here. That didn't stop me, though, did it?

JEANETTE

Is the current strong?

SCOTT

Not here. Don't worry. I won't let anything happen to you.

JEANETTE

All right. Here I come.

She drops the blanket, squeals as she splashes out to join him. Scott throws his arms around her, kisses her, long and passionate as the water swirls around them.

EXT. JAIL - NIGHT

Gallup sits in a chair tilted back against the wall, looking up the street towards the lighted Pierce house. One leg, resting on the railing, anchors him in place; the other swings lazily, occasionally brushing his hand, which holds a glowing cigarette. He is surprised by a shadow coming up behind him and almost overturns before recognizing Sarah. He awkwardly gets to his feet.

SARAH

I didn't mean to startle you. I just came to thank you--for this afternoon, I mean.

Gallup drops his cigarette, grinds it out.

GALLUP

Nothing to thank me for. I just did what any other man would have.

SARAH

No. You're different than those other men. You don't treat me like a whore.

GALLUP  
(gruffly)  
I don't care about that.

SARAH  
Why?

Gallup turns partly away, leans against a post.

GALLUP  
I guess everybody's done something  
they're not proud of, sometime or other.

SARAH  
Sheriff--

GALLUP  
(turning to face her)  
Hell, I can see that there's something  
different about you. You came in, made  
money, got popular, and then quit.  
Pretty unusual behavior, I'd say.

SARAH  
Sheriff, I'm worried. They say the  
mine is going to shut down. I'm tired  
of moving. I don't want to start over  
again.

GALLUP  
You sit tight, if you can. I don't  
think anything's going to happen.

SARAH  
And you would know, wouldn't you?

GALLUP  
Maybe.

He examines her carefully, a thought turning over in his  
mind.

GALLUP  
No, Sarah, it doesn't fit. You're no  
more worried about moving on than I am.  
Hell, everybody has to pick up stakes  
when a boom dies out. What's your game,  
Sarah? Pierce send you to test me?  
Maybe see if I can still be trusted?

He steps closer to her, takes her by the arms, and pulls

her to him. The gesture is menacing, if not yet violent.

GALLUP

Why are you here?

Sarah angrily shrugs her way free.

SARAH

All right. You asked. You're right about one thing. It does have to do with Pierce. But I don't work for him. If anything, it's the other way around.

Gallup has expected anything but this; he is completely lost.

GALLUP

You . . . ? Pierce . . . ?

Sarah laughs, and we see her face light up. Whatever this girl has been through, her intelligence and sense of humor have remained intact.

SARAH

I'm here to keep an eye on the Banner Lode, because part of that mine--a tiny part, maybe, but still, part of that mine--belongs to me.

GALLUP

You're one of Pierce's investors? How did you get the money? Not from--

She smiles at him sadly and nods. Her initial stake came from selling herself. Gallup is visibly touched by this, and warns her, although by the forced nature of it, we see that it is perhaps against his better judgment.

GALLUP

Don't let him know you have any share in his mine. It wouldn't be good for you if he found out.

SARAH

I'm not about to tell him. So he's not going to find out.

GALLUP

What makes you think you can trust me? I work for the man. Why, all this time I thought you were being nice to me and

you were just pumping me for information.

Sarah silences him by touching his arm.

SARAH

You know better than that. Besides, I think you're one of those old-fashioned men who think women need protecting.

GALLUP

Maybe so--with old-fashioned women who really do need it.

Touché. Sarah laughs again. She sees that Gallup is neither stupid, nor a sentimental fool, and both now regard each other with a new respect. Gallup settles himself back in his chair and begins rolling a cigarette.

GALLUP

Sarah, why do you stay here? Why don't you get out of this town before you end up like all the rest of us?

SARAH

I've got to be where Pierce is. If I stayed in Virginia City I'd be no better off than a thousand other investors. Here I can make sure Pierce doesn't cheat me too badly and I can use that ability of his to smell out money.

GALLUP

He hasn't always had that. He lost everything in '77--

SARAH

--when mine stocks bottomed out. I know that. That's what made me think he's worth investing in now. Because he'll do anything to keep that from happening again. Thing is, I don't trust him to do it for anyone but himself. That's why I stay.

She listens to the NOISE from Feeney's for a moment, frowns.

It's getting busy again. I have to go. But really, I did come to thank you.

She kisses him on the cheek, and hurries back across the



street. His hand moves idly up to brush his cheek. Then behind him, Augie begins to MUMBLE in his drunken sleep, and he shakes his head. Her world and his are still miles apart. He goes inside the jail without looking back.

EXT. SCOTT CABIN - MORNING

Scott appears, dressed in his work clothes. Jeanette is standing at the door watching him load the buckboard with his tools. He vaults into the seat of the buckboard, looks around, frowns. He reaches into the back and produces a rifle.

SCOTT

We're a long way out here. Want me to leave this with you?

JEANETTE

What for? So I can shoot myself in the leg with it? No thank you, Mr. Scott. You're stuck with this wife. You just hurry back.

SCOTT

All right. This shouldn't take long. The way he talked, he expected me to take all day on this job. But I should be back in a few hours, and we can catch the afternoon train and be on our way.

He beckons her to his arms.

I love you.

JEANETTE

Hurry up. The sooner you get going, the sooner you'll be back.

SCOTT

Yes, Ma'am.

He tips his hat to her, snaps the reins, and disappears over the hill.

EXT. MINE - MORNING

Scott pulls up the steeply inclined road to the mine's entrance and sees Pierce, Crocker, and Wilson waiting for him. The mill is strangely silent today, so this scene is played against an unusual stillness.

SCOTT

Good morning, gentlemen. If you'll let me get a look at the site, we can get started.

PIERCE

Wilson, take him down and show him the drift where we want that crosscut caved in.

SCOTT

"Caved in," I know. What about "drift" and "crosscut"?

WILSON

On the second level of the mine there's a side tunnel that we need collapsed. Follow me. It'll just take us a second to get there.

Wilson and Scott enter the mine, and Crocker spits.

CROCKER

I hope the ceilin' falls on him.

PIERCE

Now that's nothing to wish on my mine. Or on poor Wilson.

CROCKER

Mr. Pierce, what are we gonna do about the nigger's woman? Cain't let her go wanderin' around, can we?

PIERCE

Well, that is a problem, isn't it, Crocker? I've told Cowen and Reid to take care of Scott when he gets back to the cabin. But I don't think they'll go quite so far as to hurt a woman.

Crocker's eyes light up.

CROCKER

Let me take care of it, Mr. Pierce. I'll fix that nigger bastard for you.

PIERCE

I don't think you should go out there by yourself. Scott might get lucky, surprise or no surprise.

Scott and Wilson emerge from the mine, Scott shaking his head. Pierce and the two foremen watch Scott as he rummages around in the buckboard.

SCOTT

This won't be difficult, especially with giant powder. I don't know why you've been using nitro. Giant powder's been used in silver mines for ten years now, hasn't it? Lucky you haven't levelled the whole mine.

The foremen react to this implied criticism, but Pierce shows no reaction.

PIERCE

I'm sure you'll do it for us the way it should be done. That's why I sent for you.

SCOTT

Right. Is everybody out? I'm getting ready to go in and set the charges.

PIERCE

There isn't anyone down there. Unfortunately, I can't get anyone to work on Sunday.

WILSON

Don't you need to do calculations, or core samples, or something?

SCOTT

No. I can see the blast point clear as day.

CROCKER

Can't be done, Mr. Pierce. He's gonna bring the whole mine down around our ears, not takin' any more trouble than this.

PIERCE

Scott, we're going to back off and leave it to you.

SCOTT

What? Oh, all right.

Scott lifts a drill from the wagon. As soon as he disappears into the mine, Pierce turns to his foremen.

PIERCE

Wilson, you and Crocker need to go out and pay a call to Mrs. Scott. And then I want you to wait around and extend your courtesy to Mr. Scott when he returns.

CROCKER

Yessir. We'll do that.

Wilson and Crocker turn to go, but Pierce stops them.

PIERCE

I don't care what you do out there, and I don't want to know. But make sure of Scott.

Crocker nods, and then thinks of something.

CROCKER

What about Gallup?

PIERCE

(surprised)

What about him? Gallup will swear that the two of them left town on the five-fifteen. Hell, he'll swear that they flew out of town on a broom if I tell him to.

CROCKER

Gallup ain't my idea of dependable, Mr. Pierce. He's gettin' ideas--

PIERCE

Gallup will do whatever I tell him, whenever I tell him to. And if he ever stops, then I'll bring in someone who will. Now get going.

They hurry off.

INT. MINE - MORNING

The mine throughout is six-foot ceilings braced by timber. In a small cross-cut tunnel, Scott works with a hand drill to create a depression in the tunnel wall.

EXT. ROAD FROM BANNER - MORNING

Crocker and Wilson gallop away from town.

EXT. MINE - MORNING

SCOTT reappears, walks to the wagon.

SCOTT

Why don't you back off a bit, Mr. Pierce.  
I wouldn't want you getting hurt if some  
rock flies.

PIERCE

Oh, I'm sure that nothing will happen  
up here.

SCOTT

I just can't be sure of that. The walls  
show some fissures from those blasts  
your men did without me. It wouldn't  
take much to cave in the whole thing.

PIERCE

What?

SCOTT

Mr. Pierce, you just be careful from  
here on out. I don't know anything  
about mining, but I do know rock. And  
that rock is in bad shape.

Scott lifts out a box and carries it into the mine. Pierce  
stands, deep in thought. Could Scott be right?

EXT. ROAD - MORNING

Crocker and Wilson ride on. Banner is now far behind, and  
from the faint noise of running water, they would seem to  
be nearing the river.

INT. JAIL - MORNING

We see Gallup, asleep. After a beat, a loud, if muffled  
EXPLOSION awakens Gallup, who slowly opens his eyes, looks  
blearily around from his cot. He sits up, yawns.

EXT. MINE ENTRANCE - MORNING

Gallup rides up to Scott, who is packing his tools back in  
the wagon.

JEANETTE  
What do you want?

WILSON  
There's been an accident, Ma'am--

JEANETTE  
An accident? Is my husband all right?

She hurries to the door and throws it open. And as she does so, Crocker breaks into a frightening smile.

JEANETTE  
What is wrong? Tell me--has something happened to Charles?

WILSON  
(to Crocker)  
Has something happened to Charles?  
Or will something happen to Charles?

CROCKER  
I fergit. I'm havin' trouble remembering things these days, Ma'am. Gettin' older, I suppose.

JEANETTE  
(coldly)  
What do you want? Tell me or get out.

CROCKER  
Why, we just want a taste of that sweet black body.

JEANETTE  
(backing toward the door)  
Get out of here. You better pray my husband doesn't shoot you down like a mad dog.

CROCKER  
That's not too likely, Ma'am. He's in town setting his charges. Won't be through for quite a while.

She looks up, resignation on her face.

JEANETTE  
So I guess I don't have much choice, do I?

CROCKER  
(turning to Wilson)  
You see, boy? Nothing to worry about.

He goes to take her in his arms, and she claws his face, drawing blood in long vertical stripes along his cheeks. She tries to get inside and shut the door, but Crocker grabs her and pulls her back out.

CROCKER  
Goddamn bitch! I'll learn you some manners.

He backhands her, knocking her to the ground.

EXT. ROAD FROM BANNER - DAY

Scott and the wagon bounce down the rocky trail. He smiles, whistles a tune.

EXT. SCOTT CABIN - DAY

Jeanette comes up clawing, and Crocker barely manages to shield his eyes with his forearm. He grabs her arms--she is still struggling--and pain, contempt, and fear are mingled on her face as he motions for Wilson to hold her. She tries to kick, and squirms so that it is all that he can do to keep her from getting loose.

CROCKER  
Now, woman, if you don't hold still, we're gonna have to knock some sense into you.

Jeanette spits in his face. Crocker's cheeks flood with red as he wipes away the spittle. He draws back his fist and strikes her once, twice, three times. She still struggles weakly, moaning with pain.

CROCKER  
Throw her down.

Wilson does. Crocker grabs her dress at the neckline and pulls, yanking her off the ground until the fabric tears and she falls. He rips the rest of the fabric from her as she tries feebly to cover herself.

JEANETTE  
(almost incoherently)  
No . . . no . . .

Crocker undoes his belt.

CROCKER  
We coulda done it nice and easy. But  
this way is just as good. Maybe  
better.

As he descends on her, we are left with the image of

JEANETTE'S EYES

pleading, horrified, tear-filled.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Scott clucks to the horses and shakes the reins to speed them up.

EXT. SCOTT CABIN - DAY

Now Wilson is nervously undoing his belt and dropping his pants, while Crocker looks on with satisfaction. Jeanette is naked, moaning and delirious with pain, twisting and squirming, but too weak to break away. She has been beaten again, to judge from the bruises around her eyes and the thin line of blood trailing from each nostril. Then they hear the faint SOUND of a wagon clattering nearer.

WILSON  
Do you hear that?

They both look up.

WILSON  
We better get out of here.

CROCKER  
Goddamnit, boy. Pierce said to take  
care of him. Drag her inside.

Wilson pulls his pants up, and both grab revolvers.

Scott appears over the top of the rise. He frowns as he sees the horses at the side of the cabin, the open door.

SCOTT  
Jeanette?



INT. SCOTT CABIN - DAY

JEANETTE  
(muffled)

Charles!

Crocker kicks her in the ribcage, leaving her coughing. Then he looks out the door, takes a shot at Scott. But Scott is nowhere to be seen. The driverless buckboard, horses spooked by the noise, hurtles past the front of the house.

WILSON  
What happened to him? I don't like this.

CROCKER  
Don't worry. He'll come out when he knows we've got his bitch.

He opens the shutters, peers out. As he does so, a shot splinters the wood near his head. He ducks instinctively, then fires off a few rounds in the direction he thinks the shot came from. But where did it come from? Scott is nowhere to be seen.

WILSON  
Let's get out of here.

He ducks outside, around the corner of the house to the frightened horses. A shot kicks up dirt next to Wilson's feet, and he spins, looking frantically for Scott. He clambers into the saddle, and as he does so, a shot knocks him off the horse.

Wilson pushes weakly against the ground and collapses, unmoving.

CROCKER  
Wilson? Wilson?

Crocker begins to panic. He looks wildly around the cabin, his mind racing. There is no remedy within. He has to get out. He trains his revolver on Jeanette.

CROCKER  
Get up. Get out of here.

Jeanette grabs up a blanket, covers herself, and drags herself outside.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Scott sees his wife come out, battered and bruised.

INT. SCOTT CABIN - DAY

Crocker sees Scott rise, partially concealed by a tree. He considers firing on him, then thinks better of it and sprints for his horse. He saddles up and spurs his horse away. Scott rushes out of the woods, his face set in a mask of hate, and fires. Crocker disappears over the rise, and Scott runs to Jeanette. He kneels next to her and pillows her on his lap. She coughs as she tries to speak, a weak smile on her face.

JEANETTE

I didn't know you could shoot a rifle.

SCOTT

If I could really shoot, I would have killed both of them. And I will.

She struggles to get up.

JEANETTE

No. Let's just leave this place. Let's get on the train. They planned to kill you all along. Pierce's idea.

Scott shakes his head.

SCOTT

No. You'll get on the train. I'll follow you when I've taken care of Crocker. And Pierce.

The horror of what has happened to her begins to sink in. She begins to shake, and as Scott holds her, she starts to weep. As he rocks her, we draw slowly close enough to see her tears and Scott's look of almost fanatical determination.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - EVENING

Scott and Jeanette have stopped the train outside of town, and he helps her aboard. As he hands her bag up to the conductor, she holds out her arms, and he holds her tight. Then the conductor taps his watch, and Scott steps off the steps. As the train starts away, he steps back to the buckboard and watches Jeanette until the train disappears into the tunnel.

INT. FEENEY'S - EVENING

The saloon is crowded with miners drinking and gambling. Gallup is standing alongside the bar, having a drink and watching Sarah wait on tables, when Pierce and Crocker hustle in. Crocker is coated with trail dust, and his cheeks will bear Jeanette's scratches for a long time. There is a moment in which the crowd falls silent to regard the spectacle, and then Gallup speaks in a tone of wry amusement.

GALLUP

What the hell happened to you, Crocker?  
Indian attack?

PIERCE

Go get your horse, Gallup. We've got  
a murderer on the loose.

CROCKER

We was shot at by that crazy nigger.  
Scott. He killed Wilson.

A buzz of discussion comes from the miners at this news.

GALLUP

Wilson? Dead? How'd it happen?

PIERCE

Don't you worry about that. You get  
out there and track him down. Don't  
let that murderer get away.

GALLUP

(quietly)

I don't like this, Pierce.

PIERCE

(just as quietly)

I'm not paying you to like things.  
Just to do them.

GALLUP

(with resignation)

All right. Come over to the jail  
with me and tell me where I can find  
him.

He drains his drink at a gulp, sets it down on the bar with a CRACK, and follows Pierce and Crocker out the door

of the saloon, Sarah looking after him.

INT. JAIL - NIGHT

Gallup has opened the gun cabinet and has taken down a rifle that he is loading. He looks up when he hears the sound of boots on the wooden walk outside his door, but he doesn't seem surprised when Scott throws open the door and steps quietly inside.

GALLUP

Looks like you've saved me a trip. I was just getting ready to come looking for you.

SCOTT

I'm here for justice, Sheriff. And I will get it.

GALLUP

Justice?

SCOTT

Two men raped my wife today. They raped her, they beat her, and they planned to kill me, as well. I want these men. You get them for me.

GALLUP

What are you talking about?

SCOTT

Pierce and his man Crocker. The third one was that Wilson boy. He's dead now.

GALLUP

Did you kill him?

SCOTT

I want Pierce and Crocker behind bars. You're the sheriff. That's your job.

GALLUP

I can't do that.

SCOTT

Sheriff, you find them, or tell me where I can find them. Those are the only choices I'm giving you.

Where are they?

GALLUP

That's enough, boy. Nobody comes into my jail and gives me orders.

Scott grabs Gallup by his lapels.

SCOTT

I asked you a question. Where are they?

Gallup knocks his hands away and throws a roundhouse right that is easily blocked. Scott counters with a left and right, knocking Gallup against the desk. Gallup charges like a bull, carrying Scott against the wall of the cell. Inside, Augie moans drunkenly on his cot.

AUGIE

I'll put four bits on McGinty.

Gallup and Scott swap blows left and right. No glass chins here. Gallup splits Scott's lip; he returns the favor by opening a cut over Gallup's cheekbone. Both men are breathing hard.

Scott clinches Gallup against the bars.

SCOTT

I'm going to find them. Find them if I have to go through you to do it.

Gallup butts him in the face and breaks loose.

GALLUP

Not on the best day of your life.

He grabs Scott, bounces him off the cell wall.

AUGIE

I'll put two more down on McGinty.

Gallup goes inside to the body, knocking Scott against the bars again. Augie sits up, sees with a start that the fight outside his cell is a real one, lurches over to the bars to watch. Scott knees Gallup in the gut, keeling him over. Scott then picks up a pewter pitcher, raises it over his head to clout Gallup with it, but comes down with empty hands. He turns around to see Augie's arms stretched through the bars, the pitcher in his hands.

Gallup draws his gun.

GALLUP

Man knows where his next meal is coming from.

He motions Scott toward a cell, opens it, directs him inside.

This is home until I get to the bottom of things. And you just tacked assault on a sheriff onto your charges.

He gingerly touches his battered face.

SCOTT

You can't keep me in here. The real criminals are out there.

GALLUP

I decide who the criminals are in this town. And usually that's people who take a poke at me.

INT. SCOTT'S CELL - NIGHT

We see Scott sitting on his bunk, his food untouched, his face reflecting hatred and anger, an animal at bay. He looks up for a moment as the front door opens and someone enters Gallup's office.

INT. JAIL - NIGHT

Sarah has brought Gallup some food from the saloon, and as she sets it down on the desk for him, she sees his face.

SARAH

What happened? Oh, Tom--Sheriff, I mean. Are you hurt?

GALLUP

I'm all right. Not much you can do to this face.

SCOTT (o.s.)

Isn't that the truth?

She looks back into Scott's cell, sees him.

SARAH

Sheriff, Crocker was talking in the saloon. He said--

GALLUP

Come on, Sarah. You can't believe what Crocker says half the time. He's a bad character.

SARAH

Tom, something happened tonight. I don't know what, but I don't like what Crocker was saying.

Gallup doesn't look up from his plate, but nods.

SARAH

Something is wrong here, and you know it. Why is this man in jail?

GALLUP

He took a swing at me. And besides, Pierce told me to lock him up.

SARAH

Pierce told you to. And I don't suppose you did anything to provoke him into hitting you?

GALLUP

I wish I'd never locked him up. He's about to drive me crazy asking for a lawyer.

SCOTT (o.s.)

Miss, if you'll just help me send a message to Mr. Gerald Townsend at the railroad office in Santa Fe--

GALLUP

You shut up in there. Even if you knew someone that would come out here, he'd be wasting a trip.

Sarah is shocked by his bitterness.

SARAH

Tom--

GALLUP

I just follow orders.

Sarah looks coldly at him; he won't meet her gaze. She gets up, opens the door to leave, but stops to speak.

GALLUP

But you should have seen Pierce's face.  
It must have been the first time in years  
he couldn't control things, and he didn't  
like it one little bit.

How did you get her away?

Scott starts in surprise. He gets up and walks slowly to  
the cell bars.

SCOTT

You didn't tell them.

Gallup shakes his head. He slips his boots off and lies  
down on his cot.

INT. JAIL - DAWN

We see Gallup dozing. Scott lies awake, thinking. At  
last, he sits up.

SCOTT

Gallup! Gallup!

Gallup stirs, opens his eyes.

I give up. Why'd you do it?

Gallup sits up, pulls out the makings for a cigarette. He  
offers them to Scott, who shakes his head.

GALLUP

I was married once. She died in a little  
cabin up in the hills, not too far from  
here. Seems like another life, now. Met  
her when I was a scout in the cavalry.  
She got me to quit the Army, and we were  
going to make a life together, just the  
two of us.

He pulls a match from a metal canister in his vest pocket  
and lights his cigarette. Both men are silent, until  
Gallup continues.

GALLUP

Foolish dream. There's not much left of  
that boy who buried that girl under a  
pile of rocks.

He exhales a stream of smoke through his nostrils.



No, not much. Just enough to tell you that if you ever get out of this fix, you had better get clean out of the New Mexico Territory. You've made Pierce look stupid, and he'll want you dead more than ever. That's bad, because he's too much for you to take on. He owns this town--the mine, the mill--everything.

SCOTT

And everyone?

GALLUP

Damn near. The city council is in his pocket. Every man works for him. The people read the news in a newspaper he owns on the sly. And unless there's rioting in the streets, I'm the only law this side of the vigilance committee.

Hell, it won't be easy, but you'll forget. It'll take a while, and you'll have some rough nights, but you can do it. I did.

SCOTT

I'm not leaving until I see Pierce behind bars or stone cold dead. What you say makes a certain kind of sense, Gallup, and I'd be lying if I said I wasn't scared. But I can't let that stop me. Maybe I don't stack up against Pierce and everyone in his pocket. But if the law won't do its job, then someone else has to do it. Pierce is going to pay.

Gallup nods. His gaze drops to the chest beneath his cot and the memories it contains, and he spends a moment thinking about what Scott has said.

GALLUP

All right. I know a stubborn bastard when I see one. I'll bring you some breakfast.

INT. FEENEY'S - MORNING

Gallup is eating, and looking up at Sarah, who is pouring him coffee but otherwise ignoring him. He takes her arm--gently this time--and she pulls away.

SCOTT

Don't let me out if Pierce's life means something to you. It's gonna take more than a beating to take the spirit out of me.

Gallup turns away angrily, but just who is he upset with? He strides across to the cell door and slams it shut behind him.

INT. FEENEY'S - DAY

Gallup takes a bottle of whiskey off the bar, borrows Sarah from a table she is cleaning, and, on the way out, holds up the bottle so Feeney can see it.

INT. JAIL - DAY

Sarah is in Scott's cell cleaning the cuts and abrasions on his face and torso. Gallup pours a little whiskey in a bowl, and Sarah dips her cloth in it.

SARAH

This will hurt.

SCOTT

Yes, ma'am. You go right ahead.

She starts with the cut over his eye; he winces and grits his teeth, but throughout the scene, he never lets any outcry of pain.

SCOTT

I'm starting to wish they had shot me.

GALLUP

Too fast. They wanted to have a little fun.

SCOTT

Well, next time they come, I'll be ready for them.

GALLUP

Next time?

Sarah's cloth glides gently across a large abrasion and bruise on Scott's ribcage. He winces.

SCOTT

If you keep me in here, they'll come

back for me again. And this time, I'm taking at least one of them with me.

Do you suppose I could apply some of that internally?

Gallup tosses him the bottle.

GALLUP

Just leave some for me. I charged it to my tab.

Pierce opens the jail door and steps inside. He sees Sarah in Scott's cell, the door open.

PIERCE

You're going to a lot of trouble there, aren't you, Sheriff?

GALLUP

He got knocked around pretty badly in the act of apprehension.

Pierce motions him to leave the cell. Gallup walks across to him and Pierce draws him close. Pierce's voice is low throughout the following, while Gallup speaks in his regular voice.

PIERCE

Remember what I was saying yesterday? About a trial for this boy? If he came to trial, it would be. . . embarrassing.

GALLUP

Attention from the governor? Maybe a real marshall appointed here? That would put us on the map, wouldn't it?

PIERCE

Scott will try to escape tonight. You'll scuffle. Shots will be fired. Make sure that you're the one left standing when it's over.

Pierce slaps Gallup reassuringly on the shoulder, but his eyes are anything but reassuring.

PIERCE

It's nice to have a dependable sheriff. Keep up the good work.

As he leaves, Gallup looks at Scott, who meets his eyes and looks away.

EXT. BANNER - NIGHT

The evening's activities are in full swing. Feeney's place is hopping; music and laughter can be heard from inside. At the jail, a lighted window indicates that someone is inside, but only angry voices are coming from within.

GALLUP (o.s.)

Goddamnit, I'm telling you to get out of there!

SCOTT (o.s.)

If you're going to shoot me, you're going to have to do it here and drag me out.

INT. JAIL - NIGHT

Gallup stands at the open door of Scott's cell, ordering him to leave. Scott sits on his bunk, showing no inclination to get up.

GALLUP

How many times to I have to tell you? I'm turning you out. Letting you go.

SCOTT

You must think I'm just some dumb nigger. I'm not deaf. I know what Pierce wants, and I'm not giving you the excuse to gun me down. You're going to have to shoot me while you look me in the face, if you're man enough.

GALLUP

I may just do that, damn your stubborn black hide. All right, suit yourself. I tried to help you. Just see what happens now.

SCOTT

If you want to help me, get that message to my lawyer. He'll get me out of here. There's no case

against me.

GALLUP

You haven't seen yet, have you? This isn't some big city, with a fancy judge in a marble courthouse. Pierce doesn't care if there's a case against you. You heard him this morning. He won't let you go to trial. You'll be dead long before the circuit judge gets here or anyone can help you.

SCOTT

You won't let that happen.

GALLUP

I don't know if I can do anything about it.

SCOTT

Do you mean you can't or you won't? What did they give you a badge for?

GALLUP

Pierce had the city council give me that badge. He gave it to me because he wanted the law to be accountable to him. And it always has been.

FOOTSTEPS on the porch. Pierce opens the door, smiles.

PIERCE

Everything all right, Tom? Any problems?

Gallup looks down at the silver star on his vest. He takes a long look at it, then he looks up at Pierce.

GALLUP

Nope. And there won't be any.

Pierce's smile disappears.

PIERCE

What do you mean?

GALLUP

Scott tells me that he plans to sit right there on his bunk all night.

PIERCE  
Have you lost your mind? I gave you  
an order.

GALLUP  
I'm not crazy. I'm just not going to  
shoot an innocent man on your say-so.

PIERCE  
Innocent man? He's a murderer! He  
killed Wilson!

GALLUP  
That's right. But we know why, don't  
we?

PIERCE  
This doesn't make sense, Tom. Do you  
remember what you were when I found  
you?

GALLUP  
I remember, Fargo. I was a drunk, a  
thief, and a murderer.

(he points at himself in the mirror)  
Just like that man there.

PIERCE  
(turning to go)  
It's a little late to be developing  
principles, Tom. I'm afraid they won't  
last long.

Gallup's hand dangles meaningfully near his belt.

GALLUP  
Fargo, don't send anybody down here that  
you want back in one piece.

Pierce slams the door angrily behind him. Gallup goes to  
the gun cabinet, removes two rifles.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JAIL - NIGHT

A few minutes after the last scene. Gallup is turning his  
desk onto its side to serve as cover. He wheels and draws  
his gun as the door opens; it is Sarah, out of breath.  
The desk falls with a BANG.

GALLUP

Damn it, Sarah, I could have shot you.  
What--

SARAH

Tom, they're coming for him. Pierce is  
rounding up some of his men from the bar.  
Cowen and Reid, I think. Maybe more.  
Tom, Pierce told them to kill you if you  
got in the way.

Gallup gathers up the keys to the cells, tosses them to  
her, then turns to get his guns.

GALLUP

Let him out, quick.

Scott limps out. Gallup tosses him a rifle.

GALLUP

You better get out of here, and fast.  
You in any shape to travel?

SCOTT

Not much.

GALLUP

Can't be helped. Get your ass out of  
here before it gets any more crowded.

Scott shakes his head.

SCOTT

You can't hold them off. It's at least  
two to one.

GALLUP

Once you're gone, they won't worry  
about me. My life will be a lot  
less complicated as soon as you're  
out of it.

SCOTT

I don't believe you. But I'll go.  
Thanks.

He nods at Sarah, limps out the door.

GALLUP

You better get out of here, too.

SARAH

Tom, what if you need help?

He pulls her to him, kisses her. She has been waiting for this; her passion and urgency matches his.

GALLUP

I'm not aiming to let them kill me. I have a few ideas. Now you run along before I paddle your butt.

EXT. BANNER - NIGHT

The buildings are darkened, as though the town senses trouble and is hidden behind pulled shades. The front window of the jail looms black and ominous.

Cowen and Reid make their way along the sidewalks on opposite sides of the street, their boots ECHOING in the silent street. They disappear from our view into the shadows.

INT. JAIL - NIGHT

As we slowly scan the darkened interior of GALLUP's office, we see his desk turned sideways, a rifle barrel glinting from the top of it. The table is overturned to impede the progress of anyone coming through the door. The tall gun cabinet is the only piece of furniture in the room that still stands upright.

Shadows pass across the front of the jail. Footsteps draw nearer. A face appears at the window for a fraction of a second, then darts quickly out of sight.

REID (o.s.)

I don't see him.

COWEN (o.s.)

Gallup, send him out or we come in.

No response. After a beat, Cowen kicks the front door open as Reid breaks in the window and opens fire on the desk, where the rifle faces the door. The wooden desk splinters as one, two, three, shells slam into it. One bullet ricochets from the rifle barrel, and it falls to the floor with a THUD.

Cowen is inside. He looks around, gun drawn.



COWEN  
He's not here. Nobody's here.

Reid steps to the door, peers inside.

REID  
I always thought Gallup had more  
gumption than to just run away.

He holsters his gun. As he does so, the gun cabinet  
opens, and Gallup appears from within.

GALLUP  
You're right.

Gallup raises his gun and shoots the surprised Cowen twice  
before he can react. Reid quickly draws his gun, and  
targets Gallup as the latter is shifting his aim. SHOTS  
sound simultaneously, and Gallup's bullet merely splinters  
the doorframe next to Reid, who, surprisingly, slumps  
forward, then falls heavily to the ground.

Framed by the doorway, gun smoking, Scott limps inside.

GALLUP  
I thought I told you--

SCOTT  
I'm a stubborn bastard, remember?

They look at each other, laugh. Gallup nods.

GALLUP  
All right. Thank you. Now, can we  
postpone the reunion and get out  
of here?

SCOTT  
We can stay, Gallup. We can take  
Pierce.

GALLUP  
You're not in any condition to  
help. And, there's a lot more  
guns where they came from.

SCOTT  
I feel fine.

He pounds himself on the chest, nearly passes out from the

pain. Gallup grabs him and pulls him outside.

GALLUP

Yeah. Right.

EXT. BANNER - NIGHT

Scott and Gallup ride quickly out of town. Lights come on in their wake: lights at the Pierce house, lights in the windows up and down the street, a light at Feeney's, where Sarah stands, watching Gallup go.

EXT. ROAD FROM BANNER - NIGHT

Gallup and Scott are riding out of town in the direction of the cabin, occasionally taking a look for pursuers. Scott is very awkward sitting his horse.

SCOTT

What are we going to do?

GALLUP

Well, first, we've got to find a place where you can heal up. You look like a goddamn piece of meat.

SCOTT

I feel great. I feel like a hundred dollars.

GALLUP

There's an old line shack up in the hills. Pierce built it when he was exploring these hills for silver. Not too many people know about it. I used to go up there to hunt, get away from things, so I tried to keep it stocked. Pierce left some mining supplies there, but he hasn't been back since the Banner Lode opened up.

SCOTT

Tell me something. Why are you doing this?

GALLUP

Damned if I know.

SCOTT

You think they'll be after us soon?

GALLUP

I think they're after us now.

EXT. ROAD FROM BANNER - NIGHT

A hastily-formed posse composed of Pierce, Crocker, and other of Pierce's hired thugs rides out of town after them. They ride quickly, and we can trace their progress as they pass landmarks recently passed by Gallup and Scott as they make their way into the hills.

EXT. TRAIL - NIGHT

Gallup and Scott have dismounted and are forced to lead their horses up a steep and rocky trail. Scott is making little headway, and leans against his horse for support. Horses and men are breathing audibly (and visibly) in the cold mountain air.

GALLUP

We really ought to leave the horses.

SCOTT

I would rather not.

GALLUP

Should be there before sunup, even at this rate.

SCOTT

Why don't you go on ahead? I'll meet you there.

GALLUP

You're not going to make it if I go on ahead.

SCOTT

(grimacing with pain)

Really, Gallup, go on. I know you must be tired, want to put your feet up.

GALLUP

I'll put my foot up your butt if you don't shut up and get a move on.

SCOTT

You're so god-damned irritable.

GALLUP

I'm cold. I'm tired. Men with guns are following me to shoot me. I'm liable to get a little irritable under these conditions.

EXT. TRAIL - NIGHT

Pierce and his men have reached the base of the trail taken by Gallup and Scott.

CROCKER

I don't see nothin'. What're you lookin' fer, Mr. Pierce?

There is no physical trace of their passing, and Pierce sits thoughtfully atop his horse for a moment. The traces of dawn can be seen in the east. At last, he splits the posse, motioning half of them to follow the road, and he takes Crocker up the trail with him.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Gallup kicks the door open and enters, supporting Scott with one arm. The cabin has been deserted a long time, and a thin layer of dust covers the rude cot, table and chairs, boxes and barrels of supplies stacked against the walls. Gallup lets Scott down on the cot, closes the door quickly, clears the grime from a corner of the window to look out. Dawn is not far off; everything is discernable, if a bit murky.

SCOTT

Well, it's cold enough. Why isn't there a stove?

GALLUP

(at the window)

I hope Pierce doesn't think of this place.

SCOTT

Very reassuring. Is there anything to eat in this hovel?

GALLUP

(without turning)

Yup.

Scott lies still for a second, considering this response.

SCOTT

Where?

Gallup turns from the window, fumbles for a moment among the supplies, produces a bottle of water and a strip of dried beef.

SCOTT

How about a cigarette?

Gallup is getting visibly exasperated with Scott, who seems to him to be milking the situation for all it is worth. He produces the makings and rolls a cigarette while Scott tears a chunk from the beef. He hands it to Scott.

GALLUP

You'd think the man had never been beaten within an inch of his life before.

SCOTT

Match?

Gallup smiles and produces one. Scott strikes it on one of the barrels next to the cot, and as it flares up, he sees the legend on the side: "Gunpowder." His eyes go wide, and he frantically shakes the match to douse it while Gallup dissolves with laughter.

GALLUP

Anything else I can get you?

SCOTT

You crazy bastard! You could have killed us!

GALLUP

Well, you're the expert. I was just going to tell you to watch where you dropped your ashes.

A NOISE outside alerts them. Gallup edges to the window and looks out, as Scott slowly rolls off the cot and retrieves his rifle.

SCOTT

I guess Pierce remembered the cabin.

GALLUP

Guess so.

EXT. CABIN - DAWN

Pierce and Crocker have taken cover behind some rocks where they can look up the slope. They see the horses at the side of the shack. Pierce motions for Crocker to head back down the trail to get the rest of the posse.

PIERCE

(yelling)

You caught him yet, Tom? Caught that nigger boy that shot his way out of jail tonight?

INT. CABIN - DAWN

Scott looks at Gallup, who continues to stare out the window.

EXT. CABIN - DAWN

PIERCE

If you've caught him, why don't you send him out, and we'll take him back to town and string him up.

INT. CABIN - DAWN

SCOTT

Sounds like a good offer. You better take him up on it.

GALLUP

If you don't pipe down, I might. Just sit tight for a second. There's got to be a reason he doesn't send them in after us.

EXT. CABIN - DAWN

PIERCE

That's right, Tom, I'd have to say that this is your finest moment since I made you sheriff. Taking off after a dangerous fugitive, catching him single-handed. I'd say you're due a healthy bonus for this night's work.

INT. CABIN - DAWN

GALLUP

I don't have him, Pierce. Why don't you come on in, and we'll talk about the best way to track him down?

SCOTT

Oh, that ought to do it. He'll come traipsing right through that door and sit down for breakfast.

GALLUP

He needs more men. If he had enough, he'd storm the cabin.

SCOTT

What should we do?

GALLUP

He's sent for more men and he's trying to stall us until they get here. Then we'll be pinned in this shack like bugs on a board.

He checks his gun, clicks the cylinder shut.

We're getting out of here.

SCOTT

I guess catching some sleep is out of the question, then.

GALLUP

You ready?

Scott raises his rifle.

SCOTT

You just pull the trigger, right?

GALLUP

Oh God.

SCOTT

Wait. I just had a thought. Maybe I can be of some help.

EXT. CABIN - DAWN

Gallup flings the door open and rolls out, setting himself

to fire prone. Pierce opens up on them, and splinters fly from the door jamb and the walls. Gallup's shots chip the rock around Pierce and send him ducking for cover.

GALLUP

All right, Scott! Now!

Scott lights a short fuse he has affixed to a barrel of gunpowder and rolls it down the hill. He prepares another barrel to roll after it. Pierce dives for cover as he sees the barrel coming, and the powder explodes, showering him with dirt and rock.

SCOTT

Get ready to move. I'm sending the second one.

Both hurry around the corner of the shack just as the second barrel explodes. They scramble from rock to rock farther up the steep trail.

EXT. TRAIL - MORNING

Gallup helps Scott climb, moving from rock to rock as they look back for pursuit. Scott stops to catch his breath, checks his rifle.

SCOTT

Pierce is alone down there. Let's go back. We can circle around and get behind him.

GALLUP

Circle? The only circles you could make right now are the circles you'd make rolling down the hill if I let go of you.

SCOTT

Gallup, I'm serious. This may be my best chance to get him. Get out of my way.

Gallup shakes his head.

GALLUP

Don't make me whip your ass. There's no challenge to it right now.

SCOTT

You gutless--

GALLUP

Watch your mouth, Scott. I could have



let them gun you down. Hell, I could have done it myself.

SCOTT

Damn it, Gallup, I can't let him get away. Not and call myself any kind of a man.

GALLUP

I'm just not that anxious to commit suicide right now. By the time we get back down there, he could have a dozen guns with him.

SCOTT

So what you're telling me is to let Pierce get away with--

GALLUP

I'm not saying to let Pierce get away with anything. There'll be another time, a time when he doesn't hold all the cards. And when that time comes, you won't have to go after Pierce alone.

The two men share a calm glance. They have reached an accord.

SCOTT

Let's get moving.

They rise, begin picking their way upward again.

GALLUP

I know another place, with an old friend of mine in the mountains. But we're going to have to work to get there. It's going to take a while, but we'll be where even Pierce can't get at us while you heal up.

SCOTT

I still don't know why you're doing this. I've torn your life to shreds.

GALLUP

That life wasn't worth keeping. Maybe this one will be. Come on.

EXT. SHACK - DAY

Crocker has returned with the rest of Pierce's men.

PIERCE

A lot of help you slugs have been. I nearly got blown up waiting for you. If they get away, you'll be looking for new employment.

CROCKER

Where you figger they're heading?

PIERCE

Unless they're going to make it down somehow--and the way they were moving, I doubt it--then there's only one place they could be headed.

He stoops, places two rocks a short distance apart, balances a stick across them.

PIERCE

There's a little rope bridge strung across the river--like so. I used to go over to check for ore on Old Baldy. Didn't find anything worthwhile, so I never worried about keeping the bridge up. But I told Gallup about it one time when he said he was coming up to hunt.

CROCKER

You figure it's still up?

Pierce looks down at his model, puts his foot on the "bridge," snaps it.

PIERCE

Nope.

Let's go. We can catch up to them if I can get some hurry-up out of you.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

Gallup and Scott, climbing.

SCOTT

I hate to ask, but what exactly are we

doing? Are we going to fly down once we get to the top?

GALLUP

I know what I'm doing. We're going to cross over the river. Cut the bridge behind us and dare them to follow.

SCOTT

Bridge? Up here?

GALLUP

Well, maybe it's not what you'd call a bridge in the big city, but it's close enough.

SCOTT

Wonderful. I can hardly wait to see this miracle of frontier engineering.

EXT. GORGE - DAY

Gallup and Scott stand at the brink of a dizzying drop into the rock-strewn river. About a hundred feet separates them from the opposite wall, and the only thing that remains of Gallup's bridge is a single strand of rope strung across.

SCOTT

You must be joking.

Gallup kneels, examines a frayed and rotted piece of rope that once paralleled the remaining strand.

SCOTT

I thought you said this was a way out.

GALLUP

Guess not.

SCOTT

So what are we going to do now?

GALLUP

Figure out another way down. I thought for sure this was a good idea.

They turn to climb back down the mountain, but the way is blocked. Pierce and his men are climbing toward them.

SCOTT  
I'd have to say, on reflection, that  
it was a terrible idea, and getting  
worse by the minute.

SCOTT goes cautiously to the lip of the gorge, looks over,  
steps back quickly.

We're stuck here, I think. Or is the  
term "treed"?

GALLUP  
No, we're not. There's still a rope  
across.

Scott looks dubiously at the weathered rope. It does not  
look as though it will bear the weight of an adventurous  
squirrel, let alone a man.

SCOTT  
Go ahead and shoot me now.

GALLUP  
I'll stay here and give you a head  
start.

SCOTT  
I can't do it.

GALLUP  
If they get their hands on you, you'll  
be dead all the same. Get started, or  
all of this has been for nothing.

Scott and Gallup look down at the river rushing beneath  
them. Both shake their heads; things do not look good.

SCOTT  
All right. I'll try. You better be  
right behind me.

GALLUP  
Don't you worry about that.

Scott stretches out on the edge of the gorge, wincing with  
pain. He takes hold of the rope, tests it, makes a  
skeptical face. He lets himself roll over the edge, again  
grunting in agony. The rope sags ominously, but holds, at  
least for the moment.

CLOSE ON GALLUP

who sights down Scott's rifle, squeezes off a shot at Pierce. He smiles with satisfaction as the whole group vanishes suddenly behind cover.

GALLUP

Still want to talk, Pierce? I've got a lot to tell you. Why don't you come up, take a seat?

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

Pierce motions for his men to fan out, move up towards Gallup.

PIERCE

Tom, I think we can work something out. Don't you want that?

GALLUP

I'll tell you what, Pierce. Here's what we can work out: I'll kill every one of you that comes into my sights. Sound like a good deal? Talk it over with your men. Except for this one.

Gallup shoots one of the thugs who has left himself momentarily without cover, and the man tumbles down the slope.

EXT. ROPE - DAY

Scott is making very slow progress. Each movement is an effort. His face shows the strain, his neck muscles cord with exertion. He looks down for a moment.

EXT. RIVERBOTTOM - DAY

Far below him, the river rushes over a rocky bed.

EXT. ROPE - DAY

Scott looks back up, his eyes large. He does not look down again. Instead, he closes his eyes and keeps going.

EXT. GORGE - DAY

Gallup squeezes off shot after shot from the rifle, alternating his fire between left and right. He sees

Pierce's men making their way carefully up toward him and realizes that he is almost out of time.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

PIERCE

Double the money you're making now,  
Tom. You're worth it. And a bounty  
for Scott. Say, a thousand dollars.

Crocker and Pierce exchange smiles; Pierce has no intention of paying off.

EXT. GORGE - DAY

GALLUP

Make it two thousand.

EXT. ROPE - DAY

SCOTT

(hopefully to himself)  
Stalling. He's just stalling.

EXT. GORGE - DAY

GALLUP

I'll have to get him. Hold on a second  
and I'll send him out.

Reluctantly, he props the rifle in place to simulate his presence and crawls back to the rope. Scott is almost midway, making slow progress. The second half will be more difficult, as he combats the upward slope of the sagging rope. Gallup takes a deep breath and climbs after him.

As soon as he dangles from the rope, it sags further, and makes alarming noises of strain. Gallup takes a look at the

ROPE

It shows signs of unravelling. The end anchored near Gallup gives a TWANG as a small strand springs free and beings to unwind.

EXT. ROPE - DAY

SCOTT

Yes sir, a really terrible idea.

He has to yell to be heard over the roar of the river beneath them.

GALLUP

Hurry your ass up. We've got to take the strain off this rope.

Both men pick up the pace, but the rope continues to sag further and further toward the river.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

Pierce and his men move quickly up the trail toward the gorge. One of his men cautiously approaches the rifle in the rocks, then knocks it aside contemptuously.

EXT. ROPE - DAY

SCOTT

I'm going to wake up and yawn, and that's all there is to this. That's got to be it.

The rope near Gallup's end unravels further. Only a few strands of rotten hemp support them.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

Pierce's men are hurrying up to the side of the gorge. They raise their guns, but Pierce stops them.

PIERCE

Wait.

He borrows a pistol, then aims, not at Scott and Gallup, but at the rope mooring ten feet away. He fires, the rock splinters snapping another strand.

EXT. ROPE - DAY

Scott and Gallup freeze. The rope sags even further, and both men begin sliding slowly toward the middle.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

PIERCE

So long, Tom.

His second shot severs what remains of the rope.

EXT. ROPE - DAY

Gallup and Scott hold on as the rope swings back across the gorge, bouncing them off the rocky cliff wall.

GALLUP

Well, at least we're on the right side.

SCOTT

There went two more ribs. If we get out of this, I am certainly going to kill you.

GALLUP

Start climbing if you want to make good on that.

EXT. GORGE - DAY

CROCKER

God damn, those boys have got the luck.

Pierce's men raise their guns.

PIERCE

Do they, Crocker? I think it just prolongs their agony. Let them climb a little. Then shoot.

EXT. ROPE - DAY

Scott hangs from the rope, scrabbling for a foothold.

SCOTT

I don't think I can make it. I'm sorry.

GALLUP

Damn you, Scott. You have to. Don't let Pierce win. Don't let him win.

Scott grits his teeth. He climbs a bit, Gallup closing in on him.

EXT. SIDE - DAY

PIERCE

All right. Go ahead and shoot. But shoot a little above them. Let's see how long they can hang on.

His men smile, start firing about five feet over Scott's



head.

EXT. ROPE - DAY

As bullets ricochet around him, Scott flinches, almost losing his hold on the rope. Gallup is close enough that he can steady him.

GALLUP

They're going to run out of bullets at this rate.

SCOTT

I hope we make it that long.

GALLUP

If they stop shooting for a second, you start up that rope.

SCOTT

What if they don't stop?

Bullets continue to fly, chipping rock around the rope.

GALLUP

We can hang here until we're too tired to hang on any more, or we can climb.

SCOTT

I'll try to climb.

He does, and the fire increases. One bullet nicks the rope, and it begins to unwind.

SCOTT

Tom--

GALLUP

I see it. Climb. Climb!

They keep going, bullets ricocheting left and right.

SCOTT

I think we're going to make it.

The rope gives a final twang, and snaps. They grab at the rock walls, then tumble in a seemingly endless fall into the water far below.

EXT. SIDE - DAY

Everyone rushes to the side to look. Beneath them, nothing can be seen but white water rushing rapidly away.

PIERCE

Do you see them? Do you see them?

CROCKER

Sheeeee-it. Ain't nothin' or nobody could live through a fall like that. Whoo-eee! That was something to see.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

We see the sodden persons of Gallup and Scott swept rapidly down the river. Both struggle to keep their heads above water, and just barely succeed. Behind them, the vantage point where Pierce and his men stand disappears.

Gallup tries to make headway toward shore. He is bounced--hard--against rock after rock. Scott fares little better as the two of them swirl helplessly downstream.

Gallup goes sprawling down a series of waterfalls, tumbling five and ten feet at a drop, cursing with pain at each fall. Scott is swept around the watercourse in a separate channel, disappears under the water for ten and twenty seconds at a time. He is only weakly struggling, and in a matter of moments will disappear underwater for good.

Gallup now swims only with his left arm, while the right hangs limply at his side.

GALLUP

Scott!

Scott is snagged on a jagged rock, and fights to hold on. Gallup sweeps toward him. Scott holds out a hand.

SCOTT

Here! Catch hold!

Gallup grabs his wrist, but the water still tries to rip him loose and propel him downstream.

Scott's fingers begin to slip from the rock.

They're washed loose again, bouncing from rock to rock.

This time though, they fight to keep each other above water, even succeed to a certain degree. Suddenly, the rapids end. The river broadens, the current slows, and they are able to struggle over to the rocky bank. Gallup has gotten the worst of the trip and it is Scott's turn to half-carry him to the bank. Gallup collapses. His arm hangs useless at his side, and he has a nasty lump over his temple that begins to bleed.

SCOTT

I thought I looked bad. And felt bad. Jesus, it's cold. We're going to live through bullets and drowning to die of pneumonia. Gallup? Can you hear me?

GALLUP

Uhhh. Scott?

SCOTT

I'm right here. Are you all right? You've got to tell me how to get to this trapper, or we're going to freeze.

GALLUP

You're right. Cold. Cold, wet, banged all to hell.

Scott tries to raise Gallup to a sitting position, but the sheriff is nearly unconscious.

SCOTT

Pierce is going to pay for this. My God, how he's going to pay. Here, can you sit up? That's a nasty bump. You must have tried to split one of those boulders with your forehead.

GALLUP

Up. We've got to get up into the mountains.

SCOTT

All right. Let me get a look at you first. Then you can tell me how to get wherever we're going.

EXT. FOREST - EVENING

Scott is practically dragging Gallup up a steep slope. They make their way from pine to pine.

SCOTT

We're going to have to stop for the night. I'll go up ahead a ways, look for a spot. Tom, you hear me? My lord, look at you shiver.

Gallup indicates the mountain looming ahead of them, speaks in a near-delirium.

GALLUP

Barton's Peak. Got to get to the far side. Pardue. Jack Pardue. Trapper. Friend of mine. Can't talk. Chewed up by a bear.

SCOTT

I know. I know. But we're not going to make it today. It's getting too dark and too cold. That must be miles off.

GALLUP

Fire. Matches.

SCOTT

I hope you've got some. I sure didn't learn to start fires without them.

He looks through Gallup's pockets, finds the small container of matches in his vest pocket. He looks around, decides that where they are is a potential campsite. He clears away the pine needles, gathers sticks. Gallup weakly nods approval.

GALLUP

Keep the needles for tinder.

SCOTT

This is going to feel so good.

He strikes--the match doesn't catch. Nor does the next one.

GALLUP

Goddamn tenderfoot.

The third one flickers, then burns.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

Scott leans back against a trunk, exhaustion and pain finally taking their toll. As he sleeps, the fire burns brightly. Next to the fire, Gallup moans, tosses.

EXT. CAMP - MORNING

Scott replenishes the fire, takes a look at Gallup. The sheriff is sweating, even in the mountain cool.

SCOTT  
Gallup? Can you hear me? We've got to get some help for you. You're running a bad fever. Forget about how banged up you are--that's not even important.

GALLUP  
(mumbling)  
Scott. Scott.

SCOTT  
I'm right here.

GALLUP  
You son of a bitch. Why did you let me hit all those rocks?

SCOTT  
I did my best. I was kind of busy myself.

GALLUP  
I've got a good mind to kick your ass again. Right now.

SCOTT  
Okay, Gallup. You get up and do it.

GALLUP  
I don't guess I can.

SCOTT  
I don't guess you can either. I'm going to find us something to eat. Then we'll get started.

GALLUP  
Don't waste your time. No cafes around here. You better just get going. Did I tell you how to get to Pardue's?

SCOTT  
You did. But I think it'll take too

long at the rate we're moving now.

GALLUP

That's why you have to go on.

SCOTT

You didn't leave me. I'm not going without you.

GALLUP

This is different, you dumb bastard. You can be there today if you go by yourself. Then you can send him back after me. No sense in us both dying out here. Not when there's a chance.

SCOTT

I'm not leaving you. I'll get you up and we'll get started.

GALLUP

Look at me. I'm not going to make it anywhere. And you're not in any shape to lug me around. Gather some wood for me. Get me some water. Then get started. I'm asking you.

SCOTT

You'll die out here.

GALLUP

I don't think so. I didn't come this far to die in the woods. You just get going.

Scott gathers a pile of sticks and some larger pieces of wood.

GALLUP

I'll be right here. Shit, where can I go? Don't worry about me.

SCOTT

Are you sure about this?

GALLUP

I told you to do it. That takes you off the hook.

Just be careful out there. You're still a city boy, you know.

SCOTT

Look who's still standing. You hang on. I'll bring help quick as I can.

GALLUP

I know. Go on.

Scott takes off up the slope. He turns around once. Gallup nods at him. He turns and continues until he can no longer see the campsite.

EXT. CAMP - DAY

Gallup huddles shivering next to the fire. His pile of wood has dwindled considerably.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Scott trudges on through the forest. Although not as badly battered as Gallup, he is still in bad shape from his beating in the jail and in the water. He clearly has to struggle to keep going. He reaches a clearing, stops and checks landmarks. He looks fixedly at the mountain. Doubt shadows his face. At last, he alters his course slightly to the left and continues on.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

Gallup's fire is dying out--and nothing remains to feed it. He is half-delirious, but still able to discern the feral glint of eyes outside the feeble circle of the fire. With great effort, he drags his revolver close with his good arm (the left), cradles it to him, and closes his eyes.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

It is later that night--and only sparse moonlight filters through the trees. Gallup's fire is completely out, with only a dull glow of embers remaining. A growl wakes him. He looks around to see the shapes of three, four, possibly more, animals stalking nearer and nearer.

GALLUP

(weakly)

Get! Get out of here!

This has no effect on them. They close in on him, and for the first time we see what they are--wolves.

Gallup raises his gun. He unsteadily sights on the nearest wolf, squeezes the trigger. The animal yelps, falls into the embers, scattering them in a shower of sparks. The others scurry to a safe distance and remain there, watching.

GALLUP

Come on, you bastards. I'm just as hungry as you are. Let's see how wolf tastes.

He drags himself so that his back is against a large pine, and he remains, sitting, staring down the wolves.

As the gunshot fades from their memories, the animals creep forward again. A big male takes the lead, and others fan out around him. Gallup watches them approach, blinking as sweat drips into his eyes.

GALLUP

Come on. A little closer. Come on.

Growling, they slink closer. Gallup raises the gun in his left hand. It shakes uncontrollably. He fires, taking the lead wolf through the throat and hitting a second in the shoulder. The pack runs, yelping, leaving the first wolf to thrash for a moment before lying silent.

GALLUP

Damn. Losing my touch.

EXT. CAMP - MORNING

Underneath a cold grey sky, Gallup sits huddled against the tree, his gun hanging from his hand. He is in a fitful sleep, interrupted by groans. We hear something moving quietly through the woods toward him, but he remains insensible to it. One dead wolf lies six feet away from him, in the middle of the fire's ashes. The other body is about ten feet away.

The noise is not animal. It is a tall, grey-headed, shaggy-bearded man who reaches out to touch him--JACK PARDUE. Pardue got the worst of an argument with a bear in Wyoming, with the result that he cannot speak and walks with a decided limp. Scott follows close behind him.

SCOTT

I knew he'd be alive. Gallup isn't the type to die easy.



GALLUP

Scott. God damn, Scott, you made it.  
Hello, Jack.

Pardue salutes him and gives him a dirty smile. Gallup tries to get to his feet and can't. He weakly indicates the wolves.

GALLUP

These little beauties must have felt winter coming on.

SCOTT

Winter? Are you thinking about winter already?

GALLUP

Winter comes early in the mountains. Won't be long until the passes fill up with snow.

SCOTT grabs the trapper's arm.

SCOTT

Is that true? We could be snowed in?

Pardue nods emphatically, and moves to help Gallup up. Together, they lift him to his feet.

GALLUP

Cold. So cold.

He closes his eyes.

SCOTT

Watch his arm. It looks bad.

Pardue nods. He and Scott drape the insensate Gallup between them, begin to drag him away.

EXT. PARDUE'S CABIN - NIGHT

The cabin is small but solid, built of felled logs. A pile of firewood is stacked to the eaves, and a wisp of smoke rises from the chimney.

INT. PARDUE'S CABIN - NIGHT

Gallup is installed in a bed, underneath a blanket of fur. He shakes and sweats fitfully. A large fire is going in

a fireplace, which Scott sits near, looking at one of several books from the mantle. His head keeps dropping to his chest, and it is only with difficulty that he remains awake. Pardue brings in a load of wood and kicks the door shut behind him. The noise jars Scott awake again, and his nose twitches as he smells something.

Scott's nose twitches again. He looks surreptitiously at Pardue, ventures a sniff. Yes, definitely Pardue.

SCOTT

What can we do for him? I don't have much experience in doctoring somebody, but I know he looks awful.

Pardue points to Scott and shakes his head.

SCOTT

You're right, I probably don't look much better. But what can we do for Gallup?

Pardue takes a pad and pencil from the table and writes the word "Banner."

SCOTT

We can't take Gallup back to Banner. If he's going to die, I'd rather he die here.

Pardue's expression of confusion speaks volumes. He draws a question mark on his pad.

SCOTT

If we take him to Banner, Pierce will have him killed. Or sit and watch him die.

Pardue shakes his head sadly, as though he always knew it would happen someday.

SCOTT

That's how it is. Neither of us can go into Banner. Not as long as Pierce is alive.

Gallup groans, tosses in delirium. Pardue reaches a decision. On the pad, he writes, "I'll go. You stay."

Scott's nose crinkles at the prospect of a winter with Pardue, but he nods.

SCOTT

I guess it's the only way. Thanks, Jack.

He produces a wallet from inside his jacket, pulls out a wad of damp bills.

Get whatever he needs. While you're there, find out everything you can.

He looks at GALLUP.

And one more thing. You know Feeney's saloon?

Pardue nods. He knows it well.

SCOTT

There's a girl there. Girl named Sarah. Tell her. . . Just tell her Gallup's alive. Hurt bad, but alive.

Pardue again draws a question mark on his pad, and pointing at Gallup, he shakes his head sadly.

SCOTT

You just let her know. And tell her she has to keep quiet about it.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Pardue stands ready to leave. Scott stands weakly at the door.

SCOTT

How long you figure it'll take?

Pardue holds up two fingers, shrugs, adds a third. He shoulders his bundle of furs and sets off down the mountain.

INT. CABIN - DAY

After shutting the door, Scott waves his hand in front of his nostrils, blinks once or twice.

SCOTT

My lord, Gallup, you don't pick your friends on the basis of cleanliness, do you?

He goes over, takes a closer look at Gallup, who appears to be sleeping a little more quietly.

SCOTT

That's right. You get some rest.  
Going to need every bit you can  
get.

EXT. BANNER - NIGHT

Pardue hoofs it into town. The general store is closed up for the night. Feeney's, though, is open for business, and he heads there immediately.

INT. FEENEY'S - NIGHT

We see that Feeney's is particularly rowdy tonight. Not perhaps as much destruction as the first time we saw it, but every bit as much noise. Crocker and three other men whoop it up at a table. At the bar, Pierce stands next to TOMMY KELLER, the new sheriff. Keller is in his mid-twenties, dressed nattily, his pearl grip Colt hanging low and ready for use. Occasionally he looks down at the shiny star pinned to his vest and smiles.

CROCKER

I wish you'd all been there to see it, the two of 'em bouncin' off the rocks, splatterin' their guts all over the place. I tell you, it was quite a sight. Quite a sight.

Pardue walks to the bar and drops his bundle of furs on the ground.

FEENEY

Hello, Jack. I didn't expect you so early. But it is getting on toward the brisk winter, isn't it?

Pardue makes a sweeping gesture at the noisy crowd, as though to say, "Things are different." Feeney nods.

FEENEY

Been some changes around since you been last. New sheriff.

Pardue raises his eyebrows.

FEENEY

You and Gallup were friends, right? Well,

let's just say that the lad moved on.  
Otherwise, we wouldn't have Crocker over  
there exercising his yap.

Sarah, you need to get that table picked  
up for me.

Pardue perks up at the mention of the name. He sees  
Sarah, pale, quiet, and indicates to Feeney that he'll  
take that table.

SARAH  
What can I get you?

Pardue takes out his pad and writes, "Sarah?"

SARAH  
That's my name.

Pardue writes again, shielding with his hand. "Gallup is  
alive." Sarah gasps as she reads it.

SARAH  
Is he safe? If they knew he was alive,  
they'd hunt him down.

Pardue nods.

SARAH  
Don't let him come back here. He  
wouldn't last a minute.

She sees Pardue smile.

You're right. He'll do pretty much what  
he wants to, won't he? Will you let me  
know before you leave? I'd like you to  
take him something, if you would.

She has wiped off the table. Feeney beckons her back to  
the bar, and reluctantly, she goes. Pardue looks around  
the saloon, which has assumed a malignant sort of  
atmosphere, with Crocker and his friends unchecked by the  
new sheriff smiling benevolently from the bar. Pardue  
motions Feeney over to his table and surreptitiously  
inquires about Keller.

FEENEY  
The youngster with the badge is Keller.  
Tommy Keller.

Pardue is incredulous.

FEENEY

Texas let him go. No evidence. But the boy is hell on wheels with a gun.

Feeney goes back to the bar. Pardue watches Keller, who drains a shot glass, tosses it into the air, snags it effortlessly with a nonchalant swipe of his hand.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Scott is trying to spoon some stew into Gallup's mouth.

SCOTT

Come on, open up. You're worse than a two-year-old. Swallow.

Gallup opens his eyes, looks around.

GALLUP

Scott?

SCOTT

Right here. Open your mouth. You've got to have some food.

GALLUP

Where are we?

SCOTT

Don't you recognize the stench? We're in Pardue's cabin.

GALLUP

I don't feel too good.

SCOTT

Your diagnosis is good enough. Big city doctor would probably tell you about a broken arm, concussion, pneumonia.

GALLUP

Broken arm. Right arm.

SCOTT

Right as rain. And concussion of your head. Take a bite.

GALLUP

Scott. Thanks.

SCOTT

Now we're even up. Nothing to thank me for.

EXT. BANNER - DAY

Pardue has gotten a mule to carry supplies back up. As he departs town, he sees Keller on the edge of town, practicing his draw. Keller rubs his finger together, looks at a bottle set up on a post.

Like lightning, he draws, fires once, twice. The first shot breaks the bottle. The second shatters the biggest piece as it falls. Keller slides his gun into the holster, smiles broadly at Pardue, who turns away, pulling the mule after him.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Gallup tries to sit up. He doesn't quite succeed, tries again and gets up on his elbow.

GALLUP

Scott?

SCOTT (o.s.)

Yeah. Just a second.

GALLUP

What're you doing?

SCOTT

Getting a last blast of fresh air. Pardue is coming up the trail.

GALLUP

Would you rather sleep outside in the shed?

SCOTT

No, I don't think so.

Gallup picks up the dog-eared book next to him.

GALLUP

What's this you're reading?

SCOTT  
Shakespeare. The Winter's Tale.

GALLUP  
Any good?

SCOTT  
Certainly appropriate.

I better go help him unload that beast.

GALLUP  
I'd help you, but I'm a virtual cripple.

SCOTT  
And I've never felt better.

He goes out as Pardue comes in to check on Gallup. Pardue nods approvingly and claps Gallup painfully on the back.

GALLUP  
Hello, Jack. I'm feeling a lot better.  
At least better than I did. But I don't  
know when I'll be up and around.

Scott carries in a load of supplies.

SCOTT  
Not until the work's done, anyway.

INT. CABIN - DAY

The supplies have been unloaded, and Pardue has begun the laborious process of reporting what he learned in town. Gallup finishes reading and looks up.

GALLUP  
They don't know we're alive?

Pardue shakes his head vigorously and writes something for Gallup to read.

GALLUP  
They think we got killed falling off the  
bridge.

Scott snorts as he brings in a load of wood and begins putting it in the fire.

SCOTT  
Rope. And not a very good one at that.



Pardue picks up Gallup's badge, points to Gallup, and shakes his head.

GALLUP

Pierce brought in a new sheriff. Should have figured it. Who is it? Did you find out?

Pardue writes "Tommy Keller." Gallup lets out a low whistle.

GALLUP

Tommy Keller. I'll be damned.

SCOTT

You know this Keller?

GALLUP

Yeah. I used to ride with him in Texas. Good with a gun. Maybe better than I ever was.

SCOTT

Well, what does that mean? Are you backing out on me?

GALLUP

Hell, no. I've got plenty of reasons to go back to that town myself. And no hot-drawing kid with a gun is going to keep me out.

Pardue snaps his fingers, as though just remembering something. He produces a letter addressed to "Tom Gallup" in a feminine hand. Gallup looks at Scott, who nods.

SCOTT

I thought you might want her to know.

GALLUP

You thought right.

GALLUP reads, smiles.

GALLUP

Let's get some rest, boys. We've got a lot of recuperating to do and only one winter to do it in.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Gallup sits at the table, looks out the window at the snow piling up. His right arm is in a sling, and he looks pale, but he is sitting upright. Scott sits across from him, and the two are playing cards. Pardue snores loudly in the background.

INT. JAIL - NIGHT

Keller sits, his feet up on the desk, watching the snow fall. He is cleaning his revolver, polishing it with a loving attention to each curve of the metal.

INT. PIERCE'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Pierce consumes a late supper and watches the snow. He slowly chews his food, savoring every bite.

INT. FEENEY'S - NIGHT

The crowd is relatively light, probably owing to the weather. Feeney is polishing the mirror behind the bar, while Crocker and a group of men are playing cards and drinking. Sarah stands next to the front window. She can see the drunken Crocker reflected in the glass, as she looks outside into the falling snow.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

The snow continues to fall. SLOW DISSOLVE to:

EXT. CABIN--DAY

A sequence of shots which show Gallup and Scott out in the snow, practicing marksmanship. At first, only Scott is shooting, since Gallup's right arm is still in a sling. Scott takes slow and careful aim down a Winchester, misses the tree he's aiming at entirely. We can gauge their progress through Pardue's reactions. At first, he grimaces in near-pain at the poor marksmanship. After Gallup's arm heals, he begins practicing his draw, alongside Scott. Both are still way off-target. As they practice, though, and the series of shots indicates a progression through the winter to the spring thaw, they have more success, as seen through their hits on target and Pardue's reactions. By the final shots, Gallup looks trim, healthy. He draws and fires effortlessly. Scott has grown a beard and is almost unrecognizable. He hits his target consistently. Pardue jumps up and down with glee at their improvement.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

After the final series of practice shots, Gallup twirls his pistol playfully, slides it back in the holster. Scott whistles.

SCOTT

You must have been quite a shootist in your day.

GALLUP

Yeah. Pretty good. But Keller was faster.

SCOTT

Quit your worrying, will you? I'll be there to back you up if things get rough.

GALLUP

That should make me quit worrying?

They laugh and go back inside.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

The three men sit around the table, eating dinner.

GALLUP

The passes are open and the snow's melted off. We're not going to get any readier.

Pardue looks skeptical about the enterprise.

SCOTT

You worry too much. We'll be fine.

Pardue points to himself, then gestures down the mountain.

GALLUP

You've done enough for us, Jack. Without you, we would have froze to death or gotten torn to bits by the wolves, cougars, or coyotes. Thanks to you, we're alive and we've got a fighting chance.

Pardue repeats his gesture.

GALLUP

One more gun isn't going to help that much.

SCOTT

Maybe not, Gallup. But I don't think he wants to wait and hear what happens to us a year from now, either.

(to Pardue)

You just stay out of the way. We don't want you getting hurt.

Pardue nods and goes to lie down. Gallup and Scott move their plates aside and Scott takes out paper and a pencil.

SCOTT

I've thought all along that there's only one way to really hurt Pierce. Here's how we'll do it.

Gallup looks on, and as he watches Scott sketch, he nods with understanding and smiles.

INT. FEENEY'S - NIGHT

Crocker and his gang at the table don't seem to have moved since the last time we saw them. Pardue comes in the front door at the same time that Keller is leaving, and gives him a wide berth. Pierce is standing at the bar, talking with Feeney, who looks as though he would rather be doing almost anything else.

FEENEY

Well, bless me, if it's not old Jack Pardue. What brings you down from the mountains so early?

Pardue pats the bar and motions at the bottles of whiskey.

FEENEY

Well, pull up to the bar, if you got the wherewithal to pay.

Pardue sits on a stool next to Pierce, who suddenly blinks and looks around. His nostrils flare. He locates the offender--sitting right next to him--and scoots farther down the bar. Feeney smiles with secret enjoyment. Pardue plinks a coin onto the bar, and Feeney pours him some whiskey.

As Feeney pours, a distant RUMBLE is heard, a sound that we recognize as an explosion at the mine. Pardue is the only person in the saloon who is nonchalant about the mysterious noise.

PIERCE

What the hell is that? It came from the mine. Crocker, what's going on?

CROCKER

Beats hell outa me, Mr. Pierce. There's no blasting scheduled at night.

Before they can reach any solution, the front door opens, and a GUARD runs in, rubbing his head.

PIERCE

Why aren't you at the mine? What the hell is going on around here?

GUARD

Somebody blew up the mine, Mr. Pierce. Knocked us out and blew up the mine.

PIERCE

You better pray to God that's not true. If it is, you're going to wish you'd never been born.

Crocker, bring your men--and send somebody to the house for more help. We're going up to the mine.

Crocker and the rest of the men at his table begin strapping on their guns. Sarah pokes her head out the back, sees Pardue, who gives her a slight nod.

CROCKER

Mr. Pierce, who'd be doin' somethin' like this?

PIERCE

I don't know.

(to Pardue)

What do you know about this, old man? Seems mighty strange that this would happen right when you pull

into town.

Pierce's men surround Pardue, who looks back at them blankly.

FEENEY

You're howlin' up the wrong tree,  
Pierce. Pardue there is a trapper.  
He wouldn't know a thing about  
explosives.

PIERCE

(to himself)

About explosives. Explosives.

He stands motionless for a beat, lost in thought. Anger and other emotions--perhaps fear--play across his face.

PIERCE

Come on. Get your lazy asses moving.  
We're going to the mine.

He takes Feeney's shotgun from behind the bar.

FEENEY

Hold on just a second--

Pierce tosses him a gold piece. It spins and finally lies flat on top of the bar.

PIERCE

Let me have some shells.

Feeney bends down, brings up half a dozen shells, which Pierce scoops into his pocket on the way out.

INT. MINE - NIGHT

From the inside of the mine, we see a group of around a dozen armed men framed by the mine entrance, cautiously looking left and right. The guard has obviously erred--although the air is thick with dust from the explosion, the walls still stand. Two men in front carry lanterns, which flicker dimly. Another at the rear carries a torch. The men move into the mine, along the tracks for the mining cars.

PIERCE

What do you think, Crocker?

CROCKER

Looks pretty solid here. Must be deeper in.

PIERCE

Let's go, then.

They go farther into the mine. After they pass, we see another figure framed by the entrance, who follows them quietly.

INT. MINE - NIGHT

Pierce and his men look around. As they go deeper into the mine, they see some fissures and stress fractures, but the walls and bracing remain fundamentally sound. Occasional cross-cut passages stretch off to left and right, leading to stopes (chambers where ore is mined). They pass a vertical shaft, where a steam engine, its gases vented to the surface, drops an elevator car to lower levels of the mine.

FIRST MAN

(looking into the shaft)

God, that's deep as a well. You'd fall for a week if you stepped off into it.

CROCKER

Just make sure you don't.

Their feeble, flickering light sources contribute to a sense of claustrophobia, as the walls seem to be closing in on them. The men look around uneasily as they continue deeper into the mountain.

CROCKER

They must have gone all the way to the back to set off them charges. I can't figger it. If somebody wanted to hurt this mine, it'd do more damage to set 'em towards the front.

Pierce draws up short. A thought has just hit him.

PIERCE

Unless they didn't want to damage the mine. Maybe they just wanted to get us in here.

CROCKER

Who'd want to do that?

PIERCE  
(quietly)

Why would anybody want to hurt the mine? We've told everybody it seems to be played out. Couldn't be jealous competitors. Unless someone knows--

He stops short and looks Crocker in the eye.

It's Scott.

We've got to get out of here.

INT. CROSS-CUT TUNNEL - NIGHT

Scott, smiling, leans around the corner to spy on Pierce's group.

INT. MAIN TUNNEL - NIGHT

CROCKER

Scott's dead. Dashed to pieces on the rocks. Dead for six months now.

PIERCE

He can't be. He's the only man who would do this. The only man who could. We've got to get out of here.

Pierce's men begin to get nervous.

CROCKER

C'mon boys, think about it. We saw him fall and we saw him die.

FIRST MAN

I saw him fall. I didn't see him die.

SECOND MAN

Nobody could live through a fall like that. Shut your mouth about it.

INT. CROSS-CUT TUNNEL - NIGHT

Scott leans out again. Behind him in the tunnel are a small keg of gunpowder and a bottle of whiskey with a rag stuffed in the top.

Scott targets the man in the rear carrying the lantern.



He fires twice, quickly. The man falls. The lantern shatters beneath him, and the floor is covered by burning oil. The others scramble away from the flames, deeper into the mine. Scott squeezes off two more shots. Then, hurriedly, he turns the keg over, and we see that Scott has left a trail of powder leading up to it.

INT. MAIN TUNNEL--NIGHT

Pierce's men are in confusion. The wounded man lies, burning, screaming on the floor. The others stand, staring numbly at him or firing randomly in every direction.

PIERCE

Goddamnit! Get out of my way! Let me have a shot at him. I can't see anything. Wait. He's around that corner.

The fire dies down enough for passage.

PIERCE

Come on! Around the corner. Guns ready.

Four of the gunmen, weapons drawn, approach the corner to the side-tunnel where we last saw Scott. One carries the remaining lantern.

INT. CROSS-CUT TUNNEL - NIGHT

They leap, firing, around the corner. Scott is no longer there. But the trail of powder has burned almost to the cask.

INT. MAIN TUNNEL - NIGHT

As Pierce watches, an explosion hurls his men from the side-tunnel against the opposite wall. They fall brokenly to the ground, unmoving. Pierce and his men throw themselves to the ground, waiting for the inevitable collapse of the ceiling. They cover their heads with their hands, and debris patters off of them, leaving them bruised, cut, bleeding. But after the rumble dies away, only a token scattering of rock has fallen--the charge isn't big enough to collapse the tunnel. With the light of their torch, they uneasily take stock.

CROCKER

Jesus, Mr. Pierce. What's happenin'

to us?

PIERCE

Come on, damn it. There's only one of him. Two, if Gallup's with him.

FIRST MAN

Gallup? I thought--

PIERCE

Maybe we were wrong. It looks like Scott's alive, anyway. Doesn't make any difference about Gallup. We'll be just as dead if we don't get out of here.

Scott's voice ECHOS through the mine, chilling the men to the bone.

SCOTT (o.s.)

You were right the first time, you son of a bitch. There's just one of me. Come and get me if you can.

Another explosion rocks the tunnel, and again the ceiling rains debris. The charge on this one is larger; fissures open up, slabs break away from the side wall to shatter against the floor. But again the rumble dies away and they are still alive.

SCOTT (o.s.)

Not yet. You're not going to die yet, Pierce. First, you're going to suffer. Suffer like she did.

INT. MINE - NIGHT

Scott feels his way along the wall until he reaches another side tunnel. The light from Pierce's torch is too dim to let him see. He strikes a match, gets his bearings, reloads his rifle. The bottle is close at hand, ready for him to throw.

As Pierce and company come closer, they are so jumpy that they fire at shadows. Scott smiles in the darkness. He rolls around the corner, fires. One man falls, another, then they all scatter. They drop prone and start shooting. Their combined firepower forces Scott back around the corner, the chips flying from the walls as their bullets ricochet.

INT. MINE - NIGHT

Pierce and his men fire frantically at the corner where they last saw Scott. Panic is growing on Pierce's face, especially as Scott's voice sounds through the tunnel again.

SCOTT  
How does it feel to be trapped? To  
be helpless? To know that someone  
else decides whether you live or die?  
I hope you're scared, Pierce. I hope  
you're good and scared.

Pierce fires the shotgun, discharging both barrels. He cracks it at the breach, nervously loads two more shells from his pocket.

PIERCE  
Pin him down. We've got to get past him.  
We've got to get out. Pin him down and  
I'll make sure of him.

INT. CROSS-CUT TUNNEL - NIGHT

Scott reloads, then lights the rag fuse in the bottle. He rolls around the corner, ready to throw, but a bullet shatters the bottle, spraying alcohol back into his face. He rolls quickly back as the bullets continue to fly. The corner is bathed in blue flame where the bottle fell, and Scott rubs frantically at his eyes, in pain. He crawls farther into the tunnel.

INT. MAIN TUNNEL - NIGHT

PIERCE  
Keep shooting. I think we hit him.  
I'm going to finish him off.

Pierce hurries up the tunnel.

INT. CROSS-CUT TUNNEL - NIGHT

As his men stop firing, he leaps across, frantically discharges both barrels. But again, Scott isn't where they expected him. He's crawled back farther into the tunnel, and Pierce hasn't hit him. Scott is regaining his eyesight, and returns fire.

Pierce reaches into his pocket for more shells. But there are no more. He turns the pocket inside out, hurls the

gun at Scott and heads for the mine entrance. Scott gets one last shot at him, and his eyesight has improved enough that he nicks his arm. He leaps up, but has to choose between taking a shot at the fleeing Pierce or pinning down the men advancing toward him.

INT. MAIN TUNNEL - NIGHT

He chooses the latter. As they scatter under fire, the torch goes out, and they are left in darkness. Scott eases out into the main tunnel, away from the side tunnel, fires a few shots to keep them low, and backs towards the entrance.

Crocker and his remaining men get to their knees, begin crawling forward, taking advantage of the rails for cover, stopping every few feet to listen.

EXT. BANNER - NIGHT

Pierce runs down the darkened, moonlit street as though pursued by hounds. He heads straight for the sheriff's office.

INT. MINE - NIGHT

Framed against the entrance, we see Crocker and his men crawling toward safety. A silhouette sits astride the tracks--a mine car.

FIRST MAN

Mr. Crocker, what's that up there?  
It wasn't there when we came in.

Scott calls to them from the entrance. He strikes a match.

SCOTT

It's a gift. A gift from me. So long,  
Crocker. I hope you enjoy your  
accommodations in Hell.

Crocker and his men raise their guns, fire. It's too late. Scott lights the fuse on a large bundle of dynamite inside the car and pushes it toward them.

CROCKER

Come on. We've gotta snuff that fuse.

The three of them rise to their feet, run toward the car, which rolls slowly down into the tunnel. The fuse fizzles

closer and closer to the dynamite.

EXT. MINE - NIGHT

Scott rolls behind a tree as the dynamite explodes with a flash and a deafening ROAR. The mountainside collapses, tons of rock cascading across the mine entrance.

INT. MINE - NIGHT

Inside the darkened mine, a sequence of shots shows us that Scott's early prediction about the mine's fragility was on target. Huge fissures appear in walls and ceilings as the mine collapses, tunnel after tunnel filling with rock.

INT. JAIL - NIGHT

Pierce jerks nervously, his face white as he hears the destruction of his mine--his life--from a chair in the sheriff's office.

PIERCE

You hear that? The mine is gone.  
You've got to go after him. Kill him.  
Kill them both.

KELLER

Don't worry, Mr. Pierce. You're safe  
with me. Ain't nothin' gonna happen to  
you while I'm on the job.

PIERCE

I'm not worried about protection. I'm  
talking about taking a man down--maybe  
two.

EXT. BANNER - NIGHT

Gallup walks quietly along the wooden sidewalk, past the darkened newspaper office, the dry goods store, toward the jail. At Feeney's, the lights are on, but the place is strangely quiet. The few people in the streets run and hide upon seeing Gallup, as though he were back from the dead. Gallup continues. His steps are steady and unhurried.

INT. JAIL - NIGHT

Pierce straightens up and is suddenly quiet. He hears the STEPS approaching.

PIERCE

It's one of them. Draw your gun.

KELLER

Calm down, Mr. Pierce. There ain't no problem I can't handle.

EXT. BANNER - NIGHT

Gallup steps from the sheltering shadows of the sidewalk to the moon-washed main street.

GALLUP

It's time, Pierce! I've come for you.

INT. JAIL - NIGHT

Keller looks up with surprise upon hearing Gallup's voice.

KELLER

Well, I guess you were right about Gallup. What do you say we go out and see him?

PIERCE

Are you crazy?

Keller gets up, belts on his gun.

PIERCE

Give me a gun, at least. I'm not just walking to the slaughterhouse.

KELLER

Nothin' to worry about, Mr. Pierce. This is what you pay me for.

He tosses Pierce a pistol, which he eases into his belt, and they step outside.

EXT. BANNER - NIGHT

The streets are deserted, the houses darkened in anticipation of trouble. The light streaming out of the sheriff's office mingles with the light from the full moon.

Gallup stands in the middle of the street, feet apart, arms at his side.

In the shadows next to Feeney's, a pale figure appears--Sarah. Gallup sees her, motions her back. Then he steps forward, leaves her behind him.

GALLUP

Evening, Tommy. Be nice to see you under other circumstances.

KELLER

Heard you were dead, Gallup.

GALLUP

Not yet.

PIERCE

What are you standing here for? Quit talking and shoot him. I didn't hire you to pass the time of day--

GALLUP

You standing up for this fellow?

KELLER

Yeah, I reckon so. Besides, someday I got to tell everybody how I beat you to the draw.

GALLUP

Sorry to hear it. Shame for anybody else to die because of this coyote.

Let's get to it.

The two square off, fingers twitching. Both loosen the thongs over the hammers of their revolvers; both push their coats behind the holster. They look, in fact, like mirror images of each other as they prepare.

Sarah looks on from the sidewalk, apprehension and fear betrayed by her expression. Pierce also watches. He has stepped to the side, out of harm's way, and idly fingers the handle of his gun.

CLOSE SHOT

of Gallup, calm, serene. His eyes betray nothing. They are the eyes of a man who fears no outcome.

CLOSE SHOT

of Keller betrays a hint of youthful nervousness, but the

slight sneer twisting his lips shows his confidence.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

In a blur of action, both draw, seemingly at the same moment. Pierce also produces his gun, ready to fire. Gallup falls; Pierce smiles at Keller in satisfaction.

PIERCE

Nice job, Sher--

Keller slowly topples toward him, and Pierce sees, with horror, that his sheriff has been shot through the heart. He steps back to avoid any contact with the falling body.

Up the street, Gallup moans, moves a leg.

PIERCE

Still alive, eh, Tom? Well, I'll manage that little difficulty and get ready for your nigger buddy.

He walks toward Gallup, readying his gun for a point-blank shot. Sarah flies out of the shadows, and tries to grab Pierce's gun.

SARAH

No! I won't let you--

Pierce pushes her away, backhands her with the barrel of the pistol, and she falls. Pierce steps up to Gallup, aims down at his head.

PIERCE

So that's how it is, Tom? I should have suspected something, I guess. But it doesn't matter now. I'll take care of her, too.

Pierce cocks the gun.

Both of us ruined, Tom. But at least I'll be alive to mourn.

Gallup looks Pierce in the eye.

PIERCE

Goodbye, Tom.

A CRACK cuts through the night, and Pierce drops to his knees. Scott lowers his rifle, hurries forward. But



Pierce is only winged--he turns and fires at Scott, who hits the dirt, unable to return fire because of Gallup.

Gallup slowly, painfully, raises his gun as Pierce's bullets kick up dirt all around Scott. Pierce is oblivious to Gallup's silent struggle. The arm continues to rise.

CLOSE SHOT

of Gallup's gun, as his thumb pulls back the hammer with a CLICK.

CLOSE SHOT

of Pierce's eyes, suddenly wide with recognition.

GALLUP

Goodbye, Pierce.

He fires once, twice, three times. Pierce shudders, falls unmoving, and Scott gets up, runs to check on Gallup. Sarah, too, stirs, gets to her feet. She looks down at Pierce.

SARAH

Is he dead?

GALLUP

'Fraid so. There goes your big investment.

SARAH

With you back safe, I'd call it even.

Pardue hurries out of the saloon. He, Sarah, and Scott help Gallup slowly sit up, wincing, and examine his bloody side until he pushes them back. He stands up without their help.

SCOTT

Are you all right? Where you hit?

GALLUP

Listen to the boy. In a crisis, he loses all that big city talk. I'm fine, or going to be. Took a hunk out of my side, I guess.

SCOTT

I thought you said he was better

than you were.

FEENEY

(stepping outside)

I don't believe it. I don't believe it.

He leads a group of people out of the saloon.

GALLUP

I said he was faster than I was. And I was right. He was faster. But there's an old saying. "Speed is fine. Accuracy is final."

FEENEY

I don't believe it.

A small crowd has gathered, and Scott instinctively raises his gun, but there is no reason to. They are all like Feeney, who shakes Gallup's hand and pats him on the back, leaving him coughing.

FEENEY

I always knew he'd be back. Knew it.

FIRST TOWNSPERSON

Nice shootin', Sheriff.

SECOND TOWNSPERSON

Good to have you back, Sheriff.

GALLUP

Sheriff?

FEENEY

We're going to need one, aren't we?

Gallup smiles. He looks at Sarah, who takes his proffered hand.

GALLUP

I suppose this is as good a place as any to settle down.

Sarah nods, he pulls her close, kisses her.

GALLUP

Reckon we're going to need some help to reopen the mine, though. Somebody

who can blast some new tunnels and replace the ones that collapsed in tonight's regrettable mining accident.

Mr. Scott, can you think of anybody who fits that description?

SCOTT

The first thing I want to do is let my wife know I'm all right. But after that, I can't think of any particularly pressing engagements. I could stay and get things started.

Started, mind you.

They shake hands.

GALLUP

I'll settle for that. Now do you suppose we could go inside, make sure I don't bleed to death?

They help him into the saloon, leaving Keller and Pierce lying in the street.

INT. FEENEY'S - DAY

Time has passed. Gallup and Scott sit at a table, gamely playing cards. They are flanked by Sarah and Jeanette, recovered from her injuries and as beautiful as ever. Gallup seems to be losing badly. Sarah watches closely, giving him occasional suggestions.

GALLUP

Can you believe it?

(to Feeney)

Do you suppose I could get a drink before my friend here takes my last dime?

If there's a God in heaven, he's filing this away Scott, I guarantee it.

SCOTT

Just a case of applied study winning out over frontier know-how.

GALLUP

Don't get high-falutin' on me, Scott.

I'll take you any day of the week.

SCOTT

I'm free at four-thirty tomorrow.  
Right after I finish blasting the new  
shaft.

GALLUP

I'll try not to mess you up so bad  
you can't finish your work here.

SCOTT

And I will try not to injure you so  
badly that I have to spend another  
winter tending your wounds.

GALLUP

Deal me another hand. My luck has to  
improve.

Scott looks at Sarah.

SCOTT

I think it already has.

GALLUP

Maybe you should beat me up, Scott.  
Maybe somebody else would nurse me  
through a long, cold winter.

Sarah smiles at him. Gallup pushes the cards away from  
him, stands, and as he does, we see the glint of his  
badge--"Sheriff, Banner." CLOSE on the badge until it  
fills the screen.

THE END

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