

SKY.

Wind cuts, SNOW FALLS. Its WINTER.

CUT TO:

EXT. SALOON SIGN - DAY

A BULLET HOLE is visible in the dead center of the saloon sign. It swings back and forth with no way of stopping, creaking eerily as it does so.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Muddy, covered in snow, VACANT. The CAMERA BOOMS down to REVEAL, lying in the snow, cold to the touch, is a COLT .45 REVOLVER.

The GRIP is pearl white with streaks of BLOOD.

CUT TO:

FURTHER UP THE ROAD.

The CAMERA PANS across the ROAD, finding a BODY buried almost entirely by BLOODY SNOW.

We PUSH further up the BODY, finding a SILVER STAR pinned to its chest. HOLD.

THE SOUND OF WIND WHIPPING DROWNS OUT AND IS REPLACED BY OTIS REDDING'S "WHITE CHRISTMAS", as we:

CUT TO:

C.U ANOTHER BODY. SAME STREET.

Covered in snow, the CAMERA SLOW PANS over it showing...the ICE COLD FACE...BLOODY FINGERS...SILVER STAR...ENTRY WOUND. Then:

CUT TO:

C.U ANOTHER BODY.

Still panning, Otis redding still singing. And finally, we:

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

EXT. TOWN SIGN - MOMENTS LATER

The shabby brown sign reads: WELCOME TO THE TOWN OF GRIM HOLLOW.

As we read it, a TITLE CARD is written in RED just before us:

**RED CHRISTMAS AT GRIM HOLLOW.**

As the song reaches its end, we abruptly:

CUT TO BLACK:

**SUMMER. SEVEN MONTHS LATER.**

**FADE IN:**

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW - EARLY AFTERNOON

The town is busy, people walk back and forth along the muddy road, standing under the veranda's of the many stores, or stop inside the saloon for a cool drink.

In the midst of all this, a RIDER treads slowly through town on horseback, carrying a rifle in his hand. He sports a beige overcoat, black hat and steel tip boots.

The CAMERA follows him as he makes his way down the street, finally finding THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE.

He hops off the saddle, into the mud.

C.U his BOOTS

as they SQUISH in the sludge. BOOM UP TO REVEAL:

C.U the RIDER.

A SCAR RUNS DEEP UNDERNEATH HIS EYE. MENACING. He lights a cigarette with a match and puts it between his lips.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Rider opens the door and is greeted by emptiness. The Sheriff is no where to be found.

He walks in, scrapes the mud off his shoe, takes a drag on his cigarette, and walks over to the BOUNTY BOARD.

(CONTINUED)

He scans the board, looking for work.

NEW ANGLE, PAN. LOOKING OVER THE VARIOUS POSTERS.

Petty criminals. Theft, assault, larceny, vandalism. Nothing too high paying until we reach the end of the board.

The FINAL POSTER, jammed in by a rusty nail, looking newer than the rest reads:

**"WANTED. CORVER GRADY. FOR THE MURDER OF MULTIPLE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS. VANDALISM. VILLAINY. \$8,000."**

Rider gives it a hard look, locks his cigarette between his lips, and tears the poster from its rusty nail.

Just as he goes to fold it down, enter the TOWN SHERIFF.

He opens the door with a startled look, halting in the doorway. Then:

SHERIFF

Can I help you?

RIDER

You already did.

Sheriff glances over to the board.

SHERIFF

You took the Grady poster?

RIDER

Have it right here.

Holds it up for him.

SHERIFF

Well, I wish you the best of luck then. Nobody's seen him since last winter. Since he came in here like a mad man, drinkin, shootin, killin.

RIDER

Anyone else come sniffing around for him.

SHERIFF

That's the sixth poster I've nailed to that board friend. Men have come, but I'm guessing they met the same fate as

(CONTINUED)

my deputies.

RIDER

Or they just gave up on em.

Sheriff walks over to his desk, lets out a dry chuckle.

SHERIFF

They were all your type. Strong, rough looking men. I don't mean to assume your character, but I suppose you didn't come to be here by occasionally giving up.

RIDER

If the bill is too risky, I've been cautious enough to leave it be. Money ain't worth catchin a bullet over.

SHERIFF

If yer worried bout a cathcin a bullet, I don't think this ones for you.

RIDER

I'll decide that.

Rider sits across from him.

RIDER (CONT'D)

Do you know where he's been, his whereabouts?

SHERIFF

If I did, I'd sick the dogs on that sonofabitch.

RIDER

Well, would you mind telling me how he came to kill, as the handbill says, several law enforcement officers?

SHERIFF

I don't feel inclined to divulge that kind of information to you. I don't even know yer name.

RIDER

My names Russ Stigman. Russ.

(CONTINUED)

SHERIFF  
Well, Russ, I'm Lyle Tate.

They shake hands.

RUSS  
Acquaintances met. Tell all about the  
bandit on the handbill.

Russ drags, rubs his cigarette out. HOLD.

CUT TO BLACK:

**WINTER. 10 DAYS TILL CHRISTMAS.**

**FADE IN:**

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW - DAY

Cold wind whips through the streets. Citizens bundle up going about their daily routines. Snow has yet to fall.

CUT TO:

NEW ANGLE, WIDE. CAMERA FACING THE MOUTH OF THE TOWN.

A YOUNG MAN struggles to keep hold of the reigns on his horse. Blistering cold pelts him through his unfit attire. He rides to just about the center of town, people watch him, he falls off, into the mud.

Citizens come to his aid. A man in a winter coat stands over him.

MAN IN WINTER COAT  
You okay fella? Yer freezing!

The young man doesn't answer back. His lips are cracked cold. Eyebrows forming an icy casing.

The man in the winter coat, along with a couple others, pick him up and carry him.

MAN IN WINTER COAT (CONT'D)  
(to other men)  
Lets get him to the doctor!

They carry him all the way up the road, to the doctors office.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

They barge through the front door. The DOCTOR leaps with a startle, questions them:

DOCTOR  
What the hell is the matter?!  
(notices the young man)  
What's wrong with him?

They waste no time, settle him down gently on a bed and bundle him up.

MAN IN WINTER COAT  
We don't know, poor bastard collapsed  
off his horse, I thought he fell dead.

DOCTOR  
Christ! Everyone give him some space!

They all step away from him. The doctor comes, feels his forehead and neck.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
Fever -- raging by the looks of it.  
(to him, softly)  
What in gods name were you doin out  
there?

MAN IN WINTER COAT  
Is he gonna be fine?

DOCTOR  
Very hard to tell. From the look of  
his person...the chances are as thin  
as fine hair.  
(pause)  
Did one of you retrieve his horse?

MAN IN WINTER COAT  
No.

DOCTOR  
Fetch it, post it in the stable. If he  
makes it, he's gonna need it.

One of the men darts out of the doctors office to retrieve the horse.

MAN IN WINTER COAT  
You need any supplies doc? Food?

(CONTINUED)

Water?

DOCTOR  
No, thank you Bill.

The man in the winter coat, who we now know as BILL, nods to the doctor and exits the office. Everyone else follows him.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
(to the young man)  
Can you hear me?

The young man attempts to speak, its raspy air.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
No, no talking, lay here, reserve all that energy. There's war raging inside you right now and I'd very much like you to win.

The doctor gets up, goes over to a wash bin, dips a rag into it, wrings it out and places it over the young mans forehead.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
There you go. Now, you are probably experiencing a pulsating headache, which is normal, so I will cease my blabbering and carry on with my very boring work.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. STABLE - LATER

Bill and two other men lead the horse calmly into a stable.

Once inside, they begin to sift through the WORN LEATHER SADDLE BAGS finding: Empty cans of food, Tobacco, Pistol rounds, Rifle shells (No rifle in sight).

They close the bag and leave the horse be. HOLD.

CUT TO:

INT. GRIM HOLLOW SALOON - LATER

Bill and one of the guys that helped him with the horse, sit at the bar sipping WHISKEY and speculating on the arrival of the near dead stranger.

(CONTINUED)

BILL

I'm not much for thinking about things that don't need to be thought about, but, that feller does inspire me to do so. What about you Jess?

The other guy, now known as JESS, sips his whiskey and says;

JESS

Well, maybe he got lost. Found the road post hitched up just near Fort Campbell and kept riding.

BILL

That would be right, but you saw them cans. Feller musta been hoof to dirt a long while.

JESS

A long while in this cold will kill ya. I once knew a fella, who knew a fella that was out huntin grizzly's up at Chamber's Valley. Fella told me that that had enough food to match his six day ride. He rode for six days, but the food was only for four. Eventually, the fella had to settle for a poor rabbit stew that damn near killed him.

(the point)

It ain't uncommon for a man to underestimate the danger of his environment.

BILL

That is a possibility. But it ain't an answer.

Jess finishes his drink, sets down his glass, stands up and says;

JESS

Frankly, its the only answer we'll get, that fellas gonna die and it ain't gonna be a big mystery as to why. I'll see you around.

Jess leaves, Bill drinks on his lonely. HOLD. Another man claims the empty stool alongside him, this man would be none other than sheriff Lyle Tate.

(CONTINUED)



BILL  
Howdy Sheriff.

LYLE  
Bill, howya been?

BILL  
Good. Drinks good, wife's good.

LYLE  
That's nice.

BILL  
How bout you?

LYLE  
Can't complain.  
(hails the bartender)  
Whiskey.  
(to bill)  
Got something planned for the holiday?

BILL  
Church with the wife and kids, then  
dinner afterwards.

LYLE  
Got a nice big turkey I bet.

BILL  
Yes, most definitely, a nice big tree  
to match as well.

LYLE  
Sounds like a good time.

The BARTENDER pours out Tate's whiskey.

LYLE (CONT'D)  
Thanks.  
(takes a sip; to bill)  
Who's that fella the docs got all bed  
ridden?

BILL  
I don't know. Earlier he rode up  
through town, fell straight off his  
horse.

LYLE  
Hmmm. Doc said he's real sick, might

(CONTINUED)

not make it till the Christmas holiday.

BILL  
He shouldn't be so sure.

LYLE  
The man was a field medic, there ain't a soul in this town with that kind of experience.

BILL  
I wasn't talking down on his experience, just on his ability to be sure about something like this.

LYLE  
He should be sure. That's what he's here for.  
(downs whiskey)  
Have you seen my brother anywhere?

BILL  
Deputy Holland? No.

LYLE  
(under his breath)  
Shit!

BILL  
Somethin wrong?

LYLE  
Having to find yer brother every other day around the same time a day, like clockwork, is a huge problem.

BILL  
Well, I hope he's fine, wherever you find him.

LYLE  
He is.

Lyle pats Bill on his back, leaves him be. HOLD.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN HOME - LATER

Two kids play out front in the snow. One of them, a BOY,

(CONTINUED)

rides on a wooden horse and imitates shooting with a tree branch. Meanwhile, a little GIRL plays with a raggedy doll and forms a small snow man husband for it.

Lyle approaches them.

LYLE (CONT'D)

Hey kids.

BOY  
Hello.

GIRL  
Hi.

LYLE  
Is yer mother in?

BOY  
Yes.

LYLE  
Is she in bed?

BOY  
Mhmm.

LYLE  
Did Deputy Holland stop by?

GIRL  
Yes.

BOY  
Shhhh!

GIRL  
What?

BOY  
Mommy said not to say his name.

GIRL  
Oh, right.

They stare up at him. He shoots them a smile and presses pass them, into the:

# INT. TOWN HOME - CONTINUOUS

Tate shuts the door quietly behind him and takes a look around.

It's an older house. Small cooking stove, rickety old table,

(CONTINUED)

oil lamps and splintered wood. The place reeks of whiskey and sex.

Tate takes slow steps through the home, advancing to:

THE MAIN BEDROOM.

The door is slightly open. He stops in front, exhales sharply and nudges the door open. He looks in, his expression saying "I knew it". Then:

NEW ANGLE, REVEAL. CAMERA FACING THE BED.

Just as the sheriff detected. His brother is lying naked aside the lady of the house, the mother to the two children, and most importantly, Bill's wife.

She lies naked as well, a small fire keeps the room warm.

Tate walks over to the fire, spits in it, then KICKS the side of the bed.

Holland wakes up, gun in hand, spins around to see his brother. She wakes up as well but not in nearly a fright.

HOLLAND

(to tate)

God dammit! Why the hell you do that!?  
Scared the hell outta me!

LYLE

(sarcastic)

I'm sorry. I shouldn't of bothered you. After all, you did a lot of heavy lifting around town today and the day before and the day before that, you deserve the day off.

HOLLAND

I was workin, I was.

LYLE

"Was" isn't you are. I was expecting you to have your ass out there, in the freezing cold, with Warren and Baxter. Yet, I find you here, with Mrs. Tanner.

(to her)

Howdy by the way.

Mrs. Tanner, or MISSY, nods shy like.

(CONTINUED)

LYLE (CONT'D)

(to Holland)

Get ready. I want breeches on your ass  
and your feet out the door in no less  
than a minute. Go.

Holland gets up, gathers his clothes, and walks out the room.

LYLE (CONT'D)

(to Missy)

How many times do I gotta tell you  
about this?

MISSY

He wasn't staying long.

LYLE

That's why his ass was bare and in yer  
bed? Cause he wasn't staying long?

MISSY

I told you how things was between me  
and Bill. I told you in confidence,  
you listened. I told you about the  
mill, his time with his own children,  
and his time with me. I can only take  
being alone so much.

LYLE

You don't need to go lookin for a  
remedy to yer loneliness, in my  
brother. He's a good feller, but he's  
a child. I know this best for you.  
Leave him be, let Bill be a man for  
once.

He lets the words sit a BEAT before tipping his hat, and  
leaving.

CUT TO:

INT. TOWN HOUSE - NEW ANGLE

Tate joins Holland whom is finishing getting dressed.

LYLE (CONT'D)

Ready?

HOLLAND

Sure.

(CONTINUED)

LYLE

Hmph.

They start walking, leaving the town home. HOLD.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW - MINUTES LATER

Tate and Holland walk up the main street, discussing the moments prior. We FOLLOW alongside them;

TATE

I ain't gonna lecture ya.

HOLLAND

Don't.

TATE

...It's the man's wife.

HOLLAND

I thought it wasn't a lecture.

TATE

It isn't. I just suspect you'll do the right thing and end it. Keep Bill in the dark and go yer separate ways.

HOLLAND

She won't want that.

Tate stops hard, so does Holland. a BEAT.

TATE

I don't care about what she wants. I'm telling you what its going to be -- in fact, its law now. You stay away or you get put away, understand?

Holland nods.

TATE (CONT'D)

Bury the matter deep, keep it that way.

(then)

Come on.

They proceed down the street.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - THAT MOMENT

On the bed, the young man shivers with a RUNNING SWEAT.

CUT TO:

NEW ANGLE, OVERHEAD SHOT. THE YOUNG MAN.

His teeth chatter as his body is slowly regaining color. His bottom lip quivers as his eyes stay shut. The icy casing around his eyebrows has melted. His nose a river. Then:

CUT TO:

QUICK FLASH - DARK ROAD - NIGHT

A BURNING WAGON WHEEL. Its FLAMES are BRIGHT. THREE SILHOUETTES DRESSED IN AVERAGE COWBOY ATTIRE STAND CLOSE TO IT, LOOKING AT IT. HOLD.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - NEW ANGLE

The doctor wears a pair of old rounded reading glasses as he flips through a small medical pamphlet about mountain herbs. Then:

Sheriff Tate and Holland come through the door. They take off their hats and greet the doctor.

TATE (CONT'D)

Howya doin Miles?

The good DOCTOR MILES says;

DOCTOR MILES

Good Sheriff, and you?

TATE

Good, cold as hell.

DOCTOR MILES

How bout you Holland, you fairing well?

HOLLAND

I'm good doc.

Tate looks over to the bed.

(CONTINUED)

TATE

He ain't lookin too good doc.

DOCTOR MILES

No he is not. Fever has him. He might not make it another two days.

TATE

Jesus.

He looks back at the doctor, takes a peek at his book.

TATE (CONT'D)

Mountain Herbs.

(pause; it clicks)

Doc, you ain't plannin on hikin up that mountain are ya?

DOCTOR MILES

If I must.

HOLLAND

Are you crazy? In this damn weather?

DOCTOR MILES

As I said before, he may not make it the next two nights. He needs these herbs.

TATE

Doc, the passes are frozen. Ain't no herbs growing anywhere up there. I'm sorry to tell you.

DOCTOR MILES

The passes frozen yes, but these herbs grow particularly during the winter. I could make it back within a day, maybe less if I left this instant.

TATE

Doc, what if someone else gets sick, someone you know, you gonna risk their lives for his?

DOCTOR MILES

No life is meaningless Sheriff. My time in the war taught me that at least.

Short pause;

(CONTINUED)



TATE  
Lets say you get stuck--

DOCTOR MILES  
I can handle myself, its him I'm most  
worried about.

Tate shakes his head, sighs.

TATE  
I dunno if I could spare ya.

DOCTOR MILES  
I won't be gone long.  
(then)  
Make sure to keep someone posted here,  
have them change that towel on his  
head. I'm gonna gather my things.

Miles walks around and starts gathering his equipment. Tate  
and Holland see themselves out. HOLD.

CUT TO:

EXT. STABLE - LATER

Doctor miles stands by his horse GLIMMY (strawberry roan),  
with his medical bag slung over his shoulder and a rifle in  
his hand.

He tosses the medical bag over the Glimmy's rump, tucks the  
rifle into the side holster near the saddle, and blows into  
his hands.

Just as he goes to mount, Tate enters FRAME with a wrapped  
package of meat.

TATE  
A little something extra to push ya  
along if you get stuck up there.

Miles takes it, stuffs it in the saddle bag.

DOCTOR MILES  
Thank you sheriff. Like I said, I'll  
be back in the morning.

They nod at one another, and with a nudge of his heels, the  
good doctor rides out of town.

The CAMERA FOLLOWS alongside him. HOLD. Then:

(CONTINUED)

**SERIES OF LONG DISSOLVES**

Miles leading glimmy over a small, snowy mound...Miles riding glimmy up a steep hill...Miles riding along a winding forest path...Miles stopping at a river for a moment, letting glimmy drink...Miles on horseback tearing away at a piece of jerky...then...

LONG DISSOLVES END:

**EXT. ROCKY PASS - NIGHT**

Miles feeds glimmy a handful of hay and goes to check on his dinner.

Over the fire sits a steel saucer that Miles is using to cook up the packaged meat that the Sheriff packed for him.

He turns the meat over, showing a golden brown crust, then flips it to the uncooked side where he leaves it for the time being.

As his dinner cooks, he sits by the fire.

He holds out his hands to the flame, then pours himself a small tin cup full of whiskey.

He puts the cup close to the flame and warms up the whiskey. Once warm, he downs it, wipes his mouth clean.

Then, he leans over to his bag - which just a stretch to the side of him - and pulls out his herb pamphlet.

As he flips through it...

OWWWO000000000000!!!!!!!

The HOWL of a not too distant wolf urges him to stop reading, cautiously walk over to glimmy, and remove his rifle from the holster.

He listens closely for another howl, then:

OWWWO000000000000!!!!!!!

Like clock work. He cocks the lever and hammer of the rifle.

The air remains still for a moment long enough to allow Miles to catch his breath.

He sits against a rock, watching the fire and listening to

(CONTINUED)

his surroundings. Everything around him seems to be significantly louder than before.

CUT TO:

NEW ANGLE, DOLLY IN. ON THE FIRE.

As embers spark high and the crackling grows to a roar.

CUT TO:

NEW ANGLE, CLOSE UP. MILES DINNER.

As it sizzles and pops louder than before.

CUT BACK TO SCENE:

Miles lets the noises rest, gets up, and walks over to the fire. He sticks the meat with a blade and pulls it off the saucer.

He turns to go back to the rock, takes a bite, and catches something at the corner of his eye.

In the dark, a set of eyes SHIMMER from the light of the fire.

Miles stops dead in his tracks, stares at the glowing eyes, and drops his dinner.

Then, he takes aim.

C.U. DOWN THE BARREL

his eye stares straight between the notched iron sight at the:

GLOWING EYES. DOLLY IN.

As a GROWL seems to emanate from them. Then:

C.U. TRIGGER. MILES FINGER.

as it SQUEEZES slowly...then:

WIDER -- SAME MOMENT

The GLOWING EYES RUSH from the forest, belonging to a GREY WOLF.

Its ferocious, massive, and looking for the kill.

(CONTINUED)

Miles lets it in just a little close before...BANG! He shoots it dead.

The SHOT rings out in every direction.

Miles drops his aim, goes over to the dead wolf and looks at it.

Realizing the situation, the screech of that shot, and the possibility of a pack lurking in the wood around the camp, Miles acts fast.

He pours some water from his canteen out on the fire.

Shrouded in darkness and cold wind, he goes over to glimmy and lights the lantern that hung around the saddle bag.

He leads glimmy near the campfire, uses the light to pick up his medical bag and the mountain herb pamphlet.

Then he shoves the pamphlet in the bag and slings it over glimmy and mounts up.

The wind is beginning to SCREAM. HOLD for a few beats, then:

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST TRAIL - MUCH LATER

Miles rides up a dark trail, lantern held in his hand extended out in front of him. He and glimmy fight a COLD and FIERCE wind as they push forward.

Miles shivers. One hand controls the reigns as he tries to control the direction of glimmy.

They push further up the road. Approaching the mid-way point of the trail, when:

A GREY WOLF, darts across the trail, STARTLING glimmy.

Miles tugs at the reigns, trying to ease glimmy, until, he is BUCKED OFF.

He falls hard into the ground. Glimmy darts up the trail.

Miles grabs the lantern, shouts into the dark after glimmy.

MILES

GLIMMY!

(then)

(CONTINUED)

GLIMMY!

Miles stays low, holding the lantern out in front of him.

He rises slowly. GRIMACES.

His leg is sprained.

He limps forward up the trail. And we:

DISSOLVE TO:

FURTHER UP THE TRAIL.

Miles takes a few more painful steps before collapsing to the cold.

He shivers violently, almost convulsing. He attempts to bundle up, gets the lantern close to him. Some warmth.

The CAMERA pushes in on him...falling into a C.U.

Lip quivering, eyebrows icy, face colorless.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW - MORNING

DOLLY OUT on a C.U of Sheriff Tate, as he scratches his chin and kicks around mud. He's been waiting for the doctor for the last couple of hours.

He pulls a cigarette, sighs, and turns back down the street.

We FOLLOW him as he takes a turn onto the step of the doctors office.

CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - THAT MOMENT

Tate walks in and is immediately greeted by the YELLOW TOOTHED SIGHT of his Deputy, SYLUS WARREN.

Warren sits with his feet resting of the back of a splintered wooden chair. He lazily spins his revolver as he takes a drink of whiskey out of a tin flask every so often.

TATE

(re: the pistol spinning)

You keep doin that, yer gonna end up

(CONTINUED)

in worst position then our friend over there.

WARREN  
So you keep tellin me.

TATE  
And you insist on doin it?

WARREN  
Its a way to past the time.

TATE  
A deck of cards and a table can pass the time.

WARREN  
Speaking of passed time, when the hell is Baxter gonna relieve me?

TATE  
Tired of being a house cat?

WARREN  
Very much so.

Tate chuckles.

TATE  
Well, Baxter ain't quite yet done with his principal duties, which--

WARREN  
--Which involve hollering at every tit and corset that passes the blue in his eye.

TATE  
Not exactly what I meant.

WARREN  
Yes ya did. Its just hard for you to believe that ya did.

TATE  
In that regard, Baxter won't be sitting in yer seat till come noon.

WARREN  
Just what I deserve. Playing Eagle to some sick stray don't know the

(CONTINUED)

difference tween a coat and a work shirt.

TATE

Doc's invested a lot fer this poor bastard. We ain't gonna just let him die on a whimper. And if he does, we ain't gonna let him die alone.

WARREN

To hell with em I say. We don't why er what he's up here for.

TATE

I'm figuring its the same reason yer up here. You had the horse to carry ya and found out the drink was good.

WARREN

Hardy har.

TATE

Don't let me chipper yer mood.

WARREN

Too late.

At that moment, a TOWNS MAN bursts through the door.

TOWNS MAN

Sheriff!

TATE

Christ, what is it!?

TOWNS MAN

A couple of those boys from the fort, they brought back the doc!

TATE

Holy hell!

Tate, Warren, and the Towns Man, leave the doctors office.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW - MOMENTS LATER

Posted up in front of the GENERAL STORE is a convoy of FOUR CAVALRY HORSEMEN.

(CONTINUED)

Two hitch their ponies while the others remain seated.  
Clinging to the back of one the cavalrymen, is Doctor Miles.  
He has a wool sheet draped over his shoulders.  
Tate and company approach the cavalrymen.

TATE (CONT'D)  
(to Cavalrymen)  
How you boys doin?

The LEAD CAVALRYMEN, the one Doc is holding tight to, answers Tate.

LEAD CAVALRYMEN  
Good Sheriff. How about you and yours?

TATE  
Despite the cold, we're managin. And  
uhh, speakin of mine.  
(to Doc)  
You alright Doc?

A Quiver in his speech.

DOCTOR MILES  
I-- b-b-been through worse.

TATE  
That you have.  
(turns to Warren and the Townsman)  
Help Doc Miles down and take em over  
to the saloon for some coffee and a  
mean will ya?

Warren and the Townsman help Miles down and lead him off  
frame, across the street.

TATE (CONT'D)  
(to the Lead Cavalrymen)  
How'd you find him?

LEAD CAVALRYMEN  
Well, me and the boys went out on  
early patrol, thought we'd shoot us a  
buck on the ride, then we seen these  
tracks a couple hikes down from the  
fort.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)



FOREST TRAIL -- EARLIER.

ECU, Boot tracks in the dirt where Doctor Miles laid for the night. The CAMERA slowly tilts up to reveal the PATROL.

The LEAD CAVALRYMEN gets off his horse and approaches the tracks.

CUT TO:

NEW ANGLE. OVER HIS SHOULDER.

He examines the tracks, turns his head to the left (CAMERA FOLLOWS HIS HEAD) and sees that they trail off into the wood.

LEAD CAVALRYMEN (V.O)  
We trekked all morning, hoping that,  
whoever we found, it wasn't too late  
for them.

CUT TO:

THE WOODS.

The patrol lead their horses, rifles slung over their shoulders, as they follow the tracks in LIGHT SNOW.

CUT TO:

NEAR A CREEK BED.

The patrol follows the tracks near the edge of the creek, where they make a turn. The LEAD CAVALRYMEN examines them, looks to his right, and spots Doctor Miles.

They RUSH over to him.

He is face down, his hand extended, gripping onto something.

CUT TO:

C.U DOC'S ICY HAND.

As it HOLDS tight the CLUSTER of HERBS he came looking for.

In the b.g the soldiers approach, and we:

MATCH CUT TO:

C.U THE PALM OF THE CAVALRYMAN'S HAND

(CONTINUED)

As it holds the herbs.

LEAD CAVALRYMEN

He held onto these viciously. Wouldn't give em up till we reached the edge of town.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW - NEW ANGLE

Tate takes the herbs gently.

TATE

That's a resourceful fella.

LEAD CAVALRYMEN

It would appear so. Stellar war record might I add.

TATE

No need, I already here the stories time and time again.

LEAD CAVALRYMEN

Well, Sheriff, we best be gettin on our way.

TATE

That you shall. Safe travels and have nice a Christmas.

LEAD CAVALRYMEN

As to you.

(Tate starts to walk off)

Oh, Sheriff!

Tate turns.

LEAD CAVALRYMEN (CONT'D)

Before the thought slips my mind. I thought it'd be best for you to know, there's a storm approaching from the north. We caught a rogue wind of it last night, it was a bastard.

TATE

How far out is it you think?

LEAD CAVALRYMEN

Could be a few days. My scouts say

(CONTINUED)

less.

TATE

Hm. You boys gonna be alright up there?

LEAD CAVALRYMEN

No need to worry about us sir. You should tend to your folk.

TATE

Alright, well, thanks for the heads up.

The cavalrymen tips his hat, Tate tips his and walks away.

LEAD CAVALRYMEN

(to the men in the store)

Come on boys, we're gonna get a grillin when we get back!

CUT TO:

INT. SALOON - MOMENTS LATER

Tate passes through the swinging doors. Everyone greets him. He tips his hat. Makes his way over to a small table where the doc and warren are.

Doc seems in slightly better spirits, still holding onto the wool coat, sipping on a cup of hot coffee.

Tate pats him on the back, sets the herbs down in front of him.

TATE

You did it doc. Nearly got yerself killed, but, you did it.

DOCTOR MILES

Wolves could you believe it.

TATE

I could. What happened to Glimmy?

DOCTOR MILES

The dumb beast left me stranded.

TATE

I could send Warren here to find her.

(CONTINUED)

DOCTOR MILES

No, I'm not planning on leaving town for a while anyways. No need for a horse. And there's no need for anyone to get caught in that frozen hell.

Warren rolls a smoke.

TATE

You think these herbs can help him?

DOCTOR MILES

Most certainly.

TATE

Okay then...tell me what I need to do and I'll go make sure he takes whatever it is he needs to take.

DOCTOR MILES

Its very simple.

TATE

I doubt that.

DOCTOR MILES

It is.

Warren lights up. Drags.

DOCTOR MILES (CONT'D)

You need a cup of hot water and something to smash the herbs with.

CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - LATER

Tate rests a tin of water just above a hot stove. Once hot, he carries it over to the front counter.

DOCTOR MILES (V.O)

Now, lucky for you, I have a mortar and pestle underneath my counter, in the cupboard.

Tate kneels down behind the counter and slides the cupboard open. He finds the mortar and pestle and slides the cupboard back.

He sets it on the counter, takes the herbs from his coat

(CONTINUED)

pocket and drops them in.

Then, he MASHES the herbs to an almost paste like consistency.

Next, he adds the water.

ECU, Mortar and Pestle, the herbs float around.

He takes the mixture and we:

CUT TO:

NEW ANGLE, OVERHEAD C.U. THE YOUNG MAN.

DOCTOR MILES (V.O) (CONT'D)  
Tilt his head before you give it to  
him, don't need him choking to death.

Tate's hands enter frame, tilting the Young man's head back, bringing the potion to his mouth, pouring it past his lips.

Once the potion is downed by the young man, we hear the Mortar and Pestle get settled down off screen.

Then...

...the SOUND of a CRACKLING FIRE grows intense.

HOLD on the Young man for a FEW BEATS, then:

QUICK CUTS: A Match scraped against the heel of a boot...a TOWEL inserted into a BOTTLE END (Molotov)...the MOLOTOV SOARS through the sky...EXPLODES...a STAGECOACH BURNS.

FADE TO BLACK:

**SEVEN DAYS TILL CHRISTMAS.**

**FADE IN:**

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW - MORNING

ANGLE ON: The Church, as the BELL SWAYS, RINGING.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - THAT MOMENT

Tate pours himself a cup of coffee fresh off the stove. He carries the tin mug with him over to his desk and sits down.

(CONTINUED)

DING!

CUT TO:

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW, BEHIND THE SALOON - SAME MOMENT

Warren sits on a barrel with a rifle in his hand, rolling a cigarette.

DING!

CUT TO:

INT. TOWN HOME - SAME MOMENT

Bill wakes up next to his wife and softly rubs her back with a smile.

She looks over to him and flashes one back.

Bill gets out of bed.

DING!

CUT TO:

INT. POST OFFICE - SAME MOMENT

Holland is picking up a load of packages that have come down from the fort.

DING!

CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - SAME MOMENT

The CAMERA starts at the FEET of someone standing over the wash bin. The sound of water splashing can be heard as we SLOWLY BOOM UP, panning over a BARE and BRUISED back, hanging over the shoulder a moment, until:

WOOSH!

He pulls his head from out of the water and wipes clean a mirror just in front of him:

Revealing to us the face of the young man who laid on his death bed just days ago, CORVER GRADY (31).

DING!

(CONTINUED)

And in that same moment:

CUT TO:

NEW ANGLE, DOCTORS OFFICE. CAMERA FACING THE DOOR.

The good Doctor Miles steps in, carrying under his arm an assortment of groceries. The final:

DING!

as he shuts the door behind him, sets down the groceries and addresses Grady.

DOCTOR MILES

Good morning Mr. Grady! I can see you are in much better strength today.

GRADY

I still feel...I dunno...sick.

DOCTOR MILES

Well, that is the process of sharp recovery. You must feel a little bit of the symptoms you once faced in order to start feeling better at all.  
(then)

What are your symptoms exactly?

GRADY

My nose runs like a river bed and my back aches like I've laid stiff on a metal cot for the ten years of my life.

DOCTOR MILES

The back aching I cannot help you with, but, the nose, that is something.

GRADY

Whaddya got in mind?

DOCTOR MILES

Simply just wiping it.

Miles smiles at him.

GRADY

If you say so.

(CONTINUED)

DOCTOR MILES

What strikes me is how talkative you are today. Just a few minutes past the early morning rise and I've managed to get more than four words out of you.

GRADY

Didn't have much to say is all.

DOCTOR MILES

Now you got lots, and I wanna hear.

GRADY

Hear what exactly?

DOCTOR MILES

This isn't a grilling. I just would like to know what crazy thought compelled you to ride all the way up here in the dead of winter.

Grady sits on his cot and starts getting dressed, boots first.

GRADY

No thought exactly.

DOCTOR MILES

There had to have been a reason-- I mean, you almost died.

GRADY

Wouldn't be the first time.

Miles takes note of that remark.

DOCTOR MILES

In such a fashion? To a fever at that. Its hard to believe there isn't something more to you.

Grady gets up, throws on a shirt.

GRADY

Doctor, If it'd help you rest at night and seeing as I do owe you my life...I'm looking for work.

DOCTOR MILES

Work?

(CONTINUED)



GRADY

Work.

DOCTOR MILES

What kind?

GRADY

Law.

DOCTOR MILES

Deputy?

GRADY

If I can get the position then yes, a deputy.

DOCTOR MILES

I don't want to be a storm cloud, but, the sheriff has three deputies. His brother, Warren, and Baxter. I couldn't possibly see what use he'd have for ya.

GRADY

I have experience, that's to start.

DOCTOR MILES

Experience from where?

GRADY

I played deputy to a sheriff in a small town just north of the border out in Texas. I did that with a grin for the past seven years.

Grady throws on a coat.

DOCTOR MILES

And what made you want to continue your career up here?

GRADY

...the mountain air.

DOCTOR

The air?

GRADY

Yessir. If you'll excuse me, I gotta go see about some work.

(CONTINUED)

Grady walks past the good doctor, out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW - SECONDS LATER

Grady shuts the door behind him and stands out on the front steps of the Doctors office, taking in his surroundings.

GRADY'S POV;

People passing...sheep being herded down the street...business owners sweeping their steps...the Sheriff's office.

BACK ON GRADY

he wipes his face and starts walking. Just a few steps off the front deck of the doctors office and he starts to catch the stares. People who recognize him as the guy who fell off his horse and nearly died. He's like a ghost that cheated death and got redemption.

Heads turn as he makes his way up the street, to the front door of the sheriffs office.

Grady knocks on the door. From inside:

TATE  
Come on in!

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - THAT MOMENT

Grady pushes open the door, walks in and closes it behind him.

Tate sits at his desk housing his cup of coffee.

TATE (CONT'D)  
Well, look at you. You don't look dead to me.

GRADY  
So it seems.

TATE  
What brings you by Mr. Grady?

(CONTINUED)

GRADY

I came to see about some work.

TATE

Work? For who? For me?

GRADY

Precisely.

TATE

Son, I hate to be this way to ya, seein as you almost died and all that but, I'm fully staffed here. I got my brother--

GRADY

--Warren and Baxter, I understand. But, like I told the doctor, I have experience in the law. Years before my latest, almost costly expedition, I served as a Deputy to Sheriff Delson Cox out of a little town called San Dereena, Just a little ways north of the border.

TATE

Yeah? What was the detail like out in San Dereena? Had to be more excitin than here?

GRADY

Most of the time it was stoppin horse or cattle rustlers, other times it was breaking up a knife at the Saloon, and the rare occasion was the dodging bullets shot by Banditos lookin to peg a gringo deputy.

TATE

...Hell, most action I see is liftin a drunks head out from a water trough.

Grady chuckles.

Tate thinks, sips his coffee.

TATE (CONT'D)

Let me see about sendin a telegram to Texas, to this Delson Cox, and if he confirms what yer sayin, you got the star. But for now, rest a while, have

(CONTINUED)

a drink, kick yer feet up.

Grady tips his imaginary hat, turns to leave.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. SALOON - LATER

Grady pushes through the swinging doors.

The patrons stop dead silent, watching the man they saw drop nearly dead from his horse just four days ago.

Some watch with amazement as he walks over to a table in the corner of the establishment.

Others watch with conviction, upset that this fellow is the one that almost cost the good doctor his own life.

Grady sits down, looks around, and the building slowly goes back to normal.

The bartender comes to his table;

BARTENDER

Good mornin sir, would you like some breakfast?

GRADY

What you got?

BARTENDER

Hot oats is our special, but, we do have some boiled eggs for eatin.

GRADY

The hot oats will do me fine. How bout some drink?

BARTENDER

Well, its still early. We can serve you some lager. Will that do?

GRADY

That'll do fine, thank you.

The Bartender leaves to fulfill the order.

Grady sits back in his chair and looks around the saloon. Everyone looks about the same, citizens pushing through the cold, looking forward to the fast approaching Christmas

(CONTINUED)

holiday.

The bartender comes back out with a bowl of hot oats and a lager.

He sets it down in front of Grady.

GRADY (CONT'D)

Thank ya.

BARTENDER

That's a nickel.

Grady scrounges in his coat pocket, pulling up a LENTY nickel.

GRADY

There you go.

The bartender tucks it and walks away.

Grady digs in on his oats, when:

ENTERING FROM THE SWINGING DOORS

is BAXTER, one of the sheriffs deputies. Everyone mutters an unimpressive howdy or hello.

He goes over to the bar and takes a seat.

BACK ON GRADY

he takes a spoonful of his oats, swallows, and chases the heat with his lager.

Grady watches over at the bar, looks directly at the:

INSERT: SILVER STAR pinned to his chest.

BACK ON GRADY

takes one last spoonful, knocks back his lager and gets up.

He crosses the floor of the saloon and grabs a seat next to Baxter.

Baxter looks over to him.

BAXTER

You that dumb bastard fell out his saddle right?

(CONTINUED)

GRADY

That'd be me.

BAXTER

So, you got yer wind back I see. What the hell you still doin round here?

GRADY

Lookin for work.

Chuckles...

BAXTER

What kinda work?

GRADY

Law. I already seen the sheriff about it.

BAXTER

Ole man Tate. He tell you we got all the hands we need?

GRADY

Yes.

BAXTER

Well it ain't true. Couldn't be further from it.

(pause)

Last year, we had a fella named Ivan, a deputy, get killed by a drunken bastard named Seth. Ivan was one of the last times we inducted a new star. Tate thought things mulled over smoother when it was just the four of us.

GRADY

He still feel that way?

BAXTER

I don't give a damn how he feels. All I know, is that a fifth star around here is what we need.

GRADY

The detail doesn't seem that bad.

BAXTER

It isn't. But account for all the

(CONTINUED)

winters where a drunken husband is down on his luck and is threatening to split his wife in two. And account for all the times we gotta stop a couple fellas from puttin holes in each other over who said what to who at the wrong damn time...its exhausting. And quite frankly, ain't worth the fuckin money.

GRADY

What happened to that feller, Seth?

BAXTER

We hung the bastard within the hour.

GRADY

Swift justice.

BAXTER

The only justice there should be for people like that.

GRADY

So the way I take it is, the sheriff is willingly keeping me off?

BAXTER

Is that not what we're talkin about?  
(then)

Besides, your better off churnin out of town once the holiday passes.

GRADY

What do people do around here for Christmas?

BAXTER

What does any respectable white man do on Christmas aside from go to church?

GRADY

I don't take you for the religious type.

BAXTER

Didn't say I was respectable neither. Only religion I follow is my six iron. Everything otherwise is a joke.

Grady looks down at Baxter's gun belt.

(CONTINUED)

The grip on his pistol is the same PEARL WHITE we saw from the opening scene.

Baxter looks at him -- follows his eye line all the way down to his gun belt.

BAXTER (CONT'D)  
(putting his hand on the grip)  
Like my Iron?

GRADY  
She is a beauty. Friend I knew had something similar.

BAXTER  
That right?

GRADY  
Yessir. He was one of the quickest shooters born out of Amarillo.

BAXTER  
Amarillo? That back in Texas?

GRADY  
Yes. He shot dead Kyle McFurly -- "Crazy Quick Kyle".

BAXTER  
Never heard of him.

GRADY  
You never heard of him because his body is in a hole out in the desert.

BAXTER  
Quickest shooter in all of Texas, yet, you use words like "was". Why is that? Fella bit the bullet?

Grady chuckles.

GRADY  
One day, that fella rode his mouth off just too much. He came marchin down the street, past the hotel, and knocked hard on the sheriff's old rickety office door. Sheriff wasn't there, so I opened. And for the sake of your valuable time...Mister Steve Jenkins, the quickest gun East out of

(CONTINUED)



Amarillo...laid cold in red and white  
linen that day.

Baxter knocks back a glass of whiskey and smirks.

BAXTER  
Fastest gun out of the town of  
Amarillo, fell dead to a fella can't  
keep seated in a saddle?

GRADY  
You'd be right on that.

BAXTER  
What does that make you? A stone cold  
killer? A tougher bastard then he was?

GRADY  
No...it just makes me faster.

BAXTER  
That supposed to impress me?

A BEAT. Baxter stares down a SLY SMILING GRADY, who, with a  
unforgiving stillness in his voice, says COLDLY;

GRADY  
Murphy Baxter. The fastest gun the  
state of Arizona ever saw.  
(then)  
Murderer. Child killer.  
(Pause)  
Coward.

Baxter SLAMS his glass into the floor. The entire saloon  
falls quiet. All eyes on them.

Grady looks down at the glass, raises his gaze back up to  
Baxter.

GRADY (CONT'D)  
Struck a nerve?

A MAN from O.S says;

MAN (O.S)  
You fellas alright?!

GRADY  
(to man)  
We're fine.

(CONTINUED)

(to Baxter)  
Ain't that right Murphy?

BAXTER  
Say my name one more time and I'll put  
one in yer heart.

GRADY  
You'd shoot an unarmed man? In front  
of all these people?  
(then)  
...Yeah...I know you would. But then,  
you'd lose that pretty star in a  
pretty dishonorable way. Ain't that  
right?

Baxter chuckles...

BAXTER  
And you expect me to let you walk  
outta here?

Grady pats on Baxter's shoulder.

GRADY  
Murphy...Our time will come, trust me.  
And when it does, just remember, I  
ain't a child, nor am I woman running  
with her back turned.

BAXTER  
But you'll drop like the rest of em.

GRADY  
(chuckles)  
We'll see. Until then, stay safe out  
there coward.

Grady lifts off the stool, tips his head toward Baxter, then  
the rest of the saloon and goes on his way.

BAXTER

Watches with anger behind his eyes -- a burning fire. HOLD.

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. LUMBER MILL - SAME MOMENT

Bill and a colleague (EDWARD), lift a HEAVY LOG from a  
straight stack. Once its over their shoulders, Edward looks

(CONTINUED)

back.

EDWARD  
(to Bill)  
Got it?

BILL  
(with strain)  
Got it.

EDWARD  
Alright then, march.

Bill and Edward take a few TRUNCATED steps, when:

INSERT: Bill's KNEE -- BUCKLES, SHIFTS from the weight.

BACK TO BILL

BILL  
GOD DAMMIT!

EDWARD  
(startled)  
WHAT?!

BILL  
MY LEG!  
(shouts in agony)  
DROP THE DAMNED LOG!

Edward and Bill roll the log off their shoulders. Bill falls softly to his side. Then:

THE LOG

Rolls wrong. Falls on top of Bill's leg. A freak occurrence.

C.U Bill

SCREAMING at the top of his lungs, CURSING THE LOG to the depths of Hades.

BILL (CONT'D)  
GOD DAMMIT! HOLY MOTHER OF GOD!

HOLD on Bill's ear tearing screaming.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW - LATER

(CONTINUED)

Bill's face is held in CLOSE UP for a moment, as we pull out WIDER and WIDER, revealing that he is being HURRIEDLY HAULED down the street of Grim Hollow, by a few men, including Edward.

This entire sequence is set to NERVE RATTLING DRUMS, a la There will be blood.

We FOLLOW the men in HANDHELD all the way into the Doctor's office.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Bill screams, Men shout, its pandemonium. Miles attempts to a clear a way, getting a fair sight of the BLOODY MESS that is Bill's leg.

The knee is BUSTED, the BONE torn through the side of the leg.

MILES

(talking over the men)

DAMMIT! EVERYONE STAND BACK! IF YOU'RE NOT GONNA HELP, THEN GET THE HELL OUT THE WAY!

(to Edward)

ED, FIND ME A DAMN CLOTH, THEN HURRY TO THE SALOON AND BACK WITH SOME ALCOHOL.

Its bringing the good doctor back some painful memories.

Edward rushes out the door, past the sheriff who's just arrived to the scene.

The sheriff asks;

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW (DOCTOR'S OFFICE) - CONTINUOUS

TATE

(to Edward)

What the hell's going on in there?

EDWARD

Bill's got a busted leg!

TATE

(a thought brushes over him)

Shit!

Tate doesn't go inside, he darts back down the street.

(CONTINUED)

We FOLLOW Edward in HANDHELD, through the crowd that's amassed outside of the Doctor's office.

He makes haste to the Saloon;

INT. SALOON - CONTINUOUS

He BARRELS through the front door. Its empty, apart from Baxter who is seated at the counter with a glass of whiskey, lazily spinning his gun around.

Edward SHOUTS at the bartender.

EDWARD  
I-I NEED SOME SCOTCH AND A RAG! NOW  
DAMMIT!

The bartender reaches behind him, grabs a bottle of scotch, and tears a rag from around his waist.

BARTENDER  
What the hell's goin on!?

EDWARD  
Bill's damn leg.

Edward takes the items and sets off out of the saloon.

We HOLD a moment in the saloon before pushing into a C.U of MURPHY BAXTER.

His face is SULLEN, entirely unbothered by the interaction or the fact that everyone around him has abandoned the saloon entirely.

He knocks back his whiskey, picks up his gun, and HOLDS IT to his head.

We SWING around to the back of his head and RACK FOCUS to the Bartender who says:

BARTENDER  
Deputy? You alright?

Baxter holds it still...then:

BAXTER  
(gains his sense)  
Just fuckin dandy.

HARD CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

EXT. TOWN HOME - SAME MOMENT

DRUMS STILL RATTLING as Tate approaches the cracked open front door of the Town home, the Children are nowhere in sight.

Tate pushes the door open, walks in--

INT. TOWN HOME - CONTINUOUS

Everything is gone. Tate SHOUTS:

TATE

DALE?!

(again)

DALE?!

He crosses quickly to the--

BEDROOM;

Its empty as well. A SMALL fire burns in the fireplace. He's missed them by an hour or so.

NEW ANGLE, FROM INSIDE THE FIRE PLACE. CAMERA FACING TATE. FOCUSED ON THE FIRE.

Its small embers crack and spark in the FRAME as we watch and hear the OUT OF FOCUS sheriff as he storms out of the room;

TATE (CONT'D)

GOD-FUCKIN-DAMMIT!

CUT TO:

INT. STABLE - SAME MOMENT

Grady unlatches the lock on the stable door that holds his horse captive. He approaches, rubs her head, and digs into the second saddle bag, the bag Bill and the others didn't care to check.

In the bag is: A six shooter, a few bills of cash, a couple of handbills, and a gun belt and cartridge belt.

Grady takes the gun belt and cartridge belt and ties them tight across his waist. Then, he takes the iron in his hand while:

He takes the few bills of cash and the bounty handbills and stuffs them in his COAT.

(CONTINUED)

Finally, he goes over to the other bag, sifts through the cans of food, collects every .45 shell, loads his pistol and the rest of the rounds in the cartridge belt.

Then...

...he TOSSES the Iron in his holster with GREAT FINESSE; he's an expert.

OFF that, we:

CUT BACK TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - SAME MOMENT

Billy, still screaming, has a BLOODY CLOTH tied around his leg as the Doctor attempts to operate. The rest of the guys, including Edward, try stop Bill from moving to much.

MILES

I CANNOT OPERATE IF HE CONTINUES TO  
MOVE!

EDWARD  
BILL KEEP STILL!

THE REST OF THE  
GUYS  
BILLY RELAX! COME ON BILL!  
CALM DOWN!

Miles, attempts to get close to the leg, Bill bucks it violently, sending himself into more pain while allowing the doctor to finally come to grips with the situation.

He sits back, looks at the leg.

MILES

The damn bone is a cleaner break than  
I usually deal with.

EDWARD

WHAT?!

MILES

WE NEED TO RESET HIS DAMN LEG -- SNAP  
THE DAMN BONE BACK INTO ITS FORMER  
POSITION!

EDWARD

HOW THE HELL YOU GONNA DO THAT!?

(CONTINUED)

MILES  
(thinks)  
Hold him! This is gonna hurt him a lot  
worse than imaginable.

They hold him down, he's a bit more still then prior.

EDWARD  
(to Bill)  
Listen to me buddy, its fine. Its just  
the leg. Now imagine, if you'd have to  
lose it? That'd be a sight, wouldn't  
it? A Lumberman with a hobble!

Bill laughs through the pain, the guys carry a chuckle.

MILES  
(to Edward)  
Ready?

Edward nods.

MILES (CONT'D)  
Okay. One...two...three!

Miles pulls HARD at the foot of Bill, re-positions it, and  
snaps the BONE back onto the bone protruding out the side of  
the leg.

Bill SCREAMS as if he's been STABBED IN THE GUT -- as any man  
would really -- then:

CUT TO:

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW - SAME MOMENT

LOW ANGLE ON, Baxter, as he walks with a FIRE in his step,  
down the street, shoving through the onlookers in front of  
the Doctor's office as they react to the screaming of Bill.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - SAME MOMENT

Tate BURSTS through the door in a rage and heads over to  
RIFLE CASE that is hung on the wall.

He pulls a small key out of his pocket and turns the lock on  
the case open.

Inside, he takes a WINCHESTER off the mount. Cocking back the

(CONTINUED)



lever, he turns his head towards the door.

STANDING IN THE DOORWAY

Is Baxter, FIRE in his eyes replaced by CONFUSION.

BAXTER

What the hell's the matter with you?

TATE

Dale.

BAXTER

What about him?

TATE

He skipped town, the little shit.

BAXTER

So what?

Tate carries the Winchester in his hand, walks over to the door and says;

TATE

Make sure Bill doesn't leave that Doctor's office. Watch over that poor bastard, understand?

BAXTER

What for?

Tate brushes past him, out the door. We FOLLOW him;

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW - CONTINUOUS (SHERIFF'S OFFICE)

Tate unties his horse from the POST, mounts up, and throws his rifle in the SADDLE HOLSTER.

He spins his pony around, gives it a kick, and he's off down the:

MAIN STREET, NEW ANGLE.

where the onlookers part a path for the Sheriff.

HORSE HOOVES

digging hard into the MUD...BOOM UP TO reveal:

What is now, THE LEAD HORSE OF A SIX TEAM STAGECOACH that is

(CONTINUED)

trotting ROUGHLY through the:

EXT. FOREST

The CAMERA starts SLOWLY down the back of said horse in FRAME, revealing a DRIVER at the head of the Wagon wheel, ending up on the WINDOW of the coach.

Where we see, Holland, Missy, and Bill's two children, sitting closely together.

We PUSH through the window.

INT. STAGECOACH - MOVING

They fight the turbulence of the ride. Holland and Missy hold hands tightly, exchanging smiles.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - SAME MOMENT

Drums begin to RISE. Baxter stands in the office, looking lost, then, he SMACKS himself in the face and INHALES loudly.

Collecting himself, he gathers his sight towards the rifle case the sheriff just dug a Winchester out of, and does the same.

He cocks the lever and tosses the sling over his shoulder.

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. BEHIND THE SALOON - MINUTES LATER

Baxter perches a ladder against the back wall of the saloon and starts to ascend it.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW (DOCTOR'S OFFICE) - SAME MOMENT

Doctor Miles steps out and addresses the CROWD.

DOCTOR MILES

Folks! Everyone! Go on about your day!  
Bill is in good health, there shan't  
be another need to worry!

A MAN from the crowd asks;

(CONTINUED)

MAN FROM CROWD  
What happened to him?!

DOCTOR MILES  
Just a terrible accident, now please,  
go home! You're blocking the street!

CUT TO:

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW (GENERAL STORE) - SAME MOMENT

Grady, with gun and cartridges, walks on the deck of the general store, passing a curious look to the crowd out front as it starts to disperse.

The OWNER OF THE STORE passes by Grady. Grady stops him and asks;

GRADY  
What was happening there?

GENERAL STORE OWNER  
Oh, a fella, Bill, had an accident.

GRADY  
What kinda accident?

GENERAL STORE OWNER  
Something with his leg. A real mess it was, he was screaming like the dickens.

GRADY  
Christ.

GENERAL STORE OWNER  
Yeah, I'm hoping he's alright. He's a good fella. He's the one took you out the mud when you took that fall.

GRADY  
Is that right?

GENERAL STORE OWNER  
Yessir.  
(then)  
Take care.

GRADY  
You too.

(CONTINUED)

The owner goes into his store and we:

CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - SAME MOMENT

Bill lays flat on his back, knocked out. His leg is wrapped.  
Edward stands over Bill while the Doc sits near his leg.

EDWARD  
He's gone be alright?

DOCTOR MILES  
Give em a couple months, he'll be back  
at it hopefully.

EDWARD  
Won't be able to work the same I'm  
guessing?

DOCTOR MILES  
You guessed right.

PAUSE.

EDWARD  
I need a drink.

DOCTOR MILES  
You and I both.

Edward looks around, finds the bottle of scotch they used for  
Bills leg.

EDWARD  
Would some scotch do you good?

DOCTOR MILES  
Absolutely.

Edward shoots a grin, takes a grin, and hands it to doc.

DOCTOR MILES (CONT'D)  
(tips the bottle)  
Cheers.

He takes a swig.

CUT TO:

EXT. SALOON ROOFTOP - SAME MOMENT

(CONTINUED)

Side profile E.C.U of Baxter as he takes aim down the barrel of the Winchester.

NEW ANGLE, OVER HIS SHOULDER. CAMERA FACING DOWN INTO THE STREET.

It is revealed that he has the barrel aimed down, across the street at Grady, who is still on the deck of the:

GENERAL STORE;

rolling a smoke...he lights it up...then:

BAXTER;

Pulls the trigger, BANG!

BACK TO GRADY as the BULLET just misses him, nailing the wall of the general store.

Grady drops. Drums can no longer be heard. Everything is still for a moment aside from Grady's breathing.

GRADY'S P.O.V: he slowly scans the rooftops from a prone position, when:

BACK TO SCENE

BANG! another shot screams over his head, he crawls forward, underneath the doors of the general store...BANG!

INT. GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

The Owner is down on the ground as well. Grady looks at him briefly before getting over to the window and slowly rising up to a crouch position. HOLD.

He takes a peak out the window...another P.O.V as he scans the rooftops again and...BANG!

The BULLET destroys the window. Some shards of glass pepper Grady's cheek.

He wipes them away. Some blood appears. He takes out his pistol.

Back pressed against the wall, he glances again, draws another shot...BANG!

EXT. SALOON ROOFTOP

(CONTINUED)

Baxter fires another shot...BANG!

Cocks back for another...CLICK! Its empty--

He tosses it down...takes out his pistol, and makes for the ladder.

INT. GENERAL STORE

Grady is still pressed against the wall -- the owner is still on the ground -- he raises his head and asks;

GENERAL STORE OWNER  
Is it over?

GRADY  
Not quite.

Grady crouches down under the window and makes way for the door.

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW (GENERAL STORE) - CONTINUOUS

Once again on the deck, Grady climbs slow to his feet, pistol drawn and pointed.

He takes up against a post.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW (SIDE OF THE SALOON)

We FOLLOW Baxter in HAND-CAM as he gets to the edge of the wall, takes cover, draws his pistol and fires at Grady--

BACK TO GRADY

The bullet damns the post. Grady ducks momentarily, figuring out where the shot came from, he looks to his right, see's a cart full of produce stuck in the mud.

He takes a deep breath, pokes out of cover, fans the HAMMER firing THREE shots and dives behind the cart.

BACK TO BAXTER

as he BACKS up from the edge just a bit, then -- he fires once more...BANG! The BULLET:

BACK TO GRADY

(CONTINUED)

Strikes the side of the cart, Grady pokes up, fires again...BANG!

Two more shots come his way, BREACHING the wood of the small cart.

Grady returns fire with his last TWO shots and gets moving onto the deck of the HOTEL;

(the hotel deck is a few feet away from the cart)

BACK TO BAXTER

who TAKES aim at a moving Grady and fires his last few shots, missing -- once he's out, in HANDHELD we track him out of the alley -- up to the deck of the gun store.

C.U. BAXTER'S .45

as he TWIRLS the CYLINDER pushing rounds of .45 caliber shots into the empty chambers, one at a time...

C.U. GRADY'S .45

he does the same, a bit slower, but still with proficiency. He loads them one at a time as well--

INTERCUT between the following:

E.C.U Grady's thumb pushing the SECOND bullet into the chamber...

E.C.U Baxter's thumb pushing his SECOND bullet into the chamber...

...THREE...

...FOUR...

...FIVE...

...SIX.

CYLINDER'S LOADED -- the SCREEN splits down the middle -- LOW ANGLES on both Grady and Baxter -- Heavy panting, Cold breath. Then... they SPRING up -- Split screen end:

CUT TO:

NEW ANGLE, WIDE. CAMERA FACING DOWN THE STREET OF GRIM HOLLOW.

(CONTINUED)

We see clouds of white GUNSMOKE followed by the ringing of GUNFIRE as shots are traded between the two gunslingers, from across the way.

BANG...BANG...--

CUT TO:

TRACKING SHOT. GRADY.

As he moves along the HOTEL deck firing, Ducking...

CUT TO:

TRACKING SHOT. BAXTER

He does the same (obviously), getting across to the DOCTOR'S OFFICE deck...BANG! BANG!

BACK TO GRADY

as he FANS two more shots and we cut back to:

BAXTER

who gets NAILED in the chest and FALLS through the Doctors office doors.

GRADY

breath truncated. The street falls silent as he spins his revolver back into his holster. HOLD for a beat.

CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Baxter lays bleeding out, two holes in shirt where the bullets tore through are now POOLING with blood.

Miles and Edward are laying face down on the floor -- splintered wood all around them -- Bill is still passed out.

Miles raises his head, gets up slowly, and goes over to Baxter.

DOCTOR MILES

Deputy?

Baxter says nothing -- Blood pools -- he gurgles.

(CONTINUED)



DOCTOR MILES (CONT'D)  
Christ...Edward, get--

Just before he starts with instruction for Edward, to maybe save Baxter's life -- Miles is interrupted by the creek of a wooden board:

He looks up...

...its Grady.

He stands like a SHADOW in the doorway.

Miles backs away slowly, never breaking vision from Grady.

Grady towers over the dying deputy and takes out a small pouch of tobacco and some rolling paper.

He rolls tightly a cigarette, takes a drag, and places it burnt tip toward his face, on his chest.

Then, he takes the dying deputies prized soul taker, from his holster and twirls it on his finger.

Baxter continues to choke on his blood, when:

DOCTOR MILES (CONT'D)  
We can still...

Grady trades a look with him -- the Doctor retreats back into himself --

Grady then SHOOTS Baxter square in the forehead -- Miles and Edward are shocked.

He spins the deputies revolver into his holster then leaves the office.

ANGLE ON, Miles who watches the dead deputy's body with stillness. HOLD.

OFF his look, we:

CUT TO:

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW - MOMENTS LATER

Everything is still quiet -- Grady walks away in the b.g -- some citizens come cautiously back to the street.

NEW ANGLE, C.U. GRADY'S HOLSTER.

(CONTINUED)

The Pearl gripped pistol BOBS with every step; a constant reminder of the prize claimed from the moment of destruction.

CUT TO:

BACK DOWN THE STREET.

DOLLY IN CLOSE on a very late Warren who races up the street -- CAMERA PANS WITH HIM -- all the way up to the Doctor's office.

CUT TO:

WARREN'S P.O.V;

He looks down at Baxter's lifeless body -- CAMERA BOOMS UP -- and he's now looking at Edward, Miles, and Bill.

BACK TO WARREN

they trade no words. HOLD.

CUT TO:

EXT. FORT CAMPBELL - NIGHT

CAMERA faces the TALL, PINE LOG GATE as its mouth opens and welcomes an angry Sheriff Tate.

O.S, with Tate entering the fort, we hear SOLDIERS singing a song together in celebration.

CUT TO:

NEW ANGLE, WIDE. FORT CAMPBELL.

We see rows of tents, a small crop garden that has withered away in the winter, a CHRISTMAS TREE, and the large gathering of drunken, singing soldiers. You don't need bifocals to know that this is a celebration.

The soldiers of Fort Campbell have been stationed here for the better half of the last Eight months. And in those eight months they have been subjected to sicknesses, small famine, heavy rains, blazing summers and a plethora of other dangers. But tonight, most of them have been approved of early leave for the Christmas holiday by CAPTAIN WORTH.

ANGLE ON, Tate as he trots slowly on his horse, through the camp.

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO:

NEW ANGLE, AMIDST THE SOLDIERS. BY THE CAMPFIRE.

We FOCUS on one soldier with a Tankard in his hand as he starts with a new MELODY...

SOLDIER #1

(singing)

She once said to me...Don't young  
Johnny don't you plea...If you wish to  
marry me...you mustn't see...

Another soldier jumps in...we SWISH PAN RT. to him--

SOLDIER #2

...Old crazy captain McFee...For he  
will crazy yer head with fancies, of  
spoils and plunder at sea...

All the soldiers jump in...

ALL THE SOLDIERS

...then you couldn't you mostly  
wouldn't care to marry ole me! Please  
please, Johnny don't plea!

They carry on with the song as we:

CUT BACK TO:

TATE

as he's made his way to hitching post, dismounts his horse and hitches him up. Then, he makes his way up a flight of stairs, all the way up to:

CAPTAIN WORTH

(Pre-lap)

What brings you by Tate?

CUT TO:

INT. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - MOMENTS LATER

Tate sits at a table across from the GRIZZLED, CAPTAIN WORTH (50s).

TATE

A deputy of mine abandoned his post.

(CONTINUED)

CAPTAIN WORTH

And you think he came running this way?

TATE

He might've came by here.

CAPTAIN WORTH

The boys would've told me about anyone coming up to fort throughout the day.

TATE

He might've rode past -- could've been taking a stagecoach?

CAPTAIN WORTH

I wish I could help you, but my men haven't reported seeing a wagon wheel today, nor yesterday. If he's abandoned his post, he's been discreet in his doing of such.

TATE

Dammit.

CAPTAIN WORTH

Who was it, if you don't mind my asking?

TATE

Not at all sir.

CAPTAIN WORTH

Cut that sir malarkey Tate, you and me are both service men in our own right.

TATE

Hm. Well...the fella in question is my brother.

CAPTAIN WORTH

Holland.

(then)

What did he do?

Lying;

TATE

Nothing. He just up and left.

(CONTINUED)

CAPTAIN WORTH

Just like that, without a word?

TATE

Yeah, and before he gets himself hurt, or does something regrettable I'd very much like to find him.

CAPTAIN WORTH

So you plan on setting out again soon?

TATE

Early morning, if that's alright with you?

CAPTAIN WORTH

Of course, and before you set off, we'll see about any provisions we can spare.

TATE

Thank you.

CAPTAIN WORTH

Its the least I could do considering the holiday.

Captain worth goes over to a cupboard and pulls out a bottle of whiskey.

CAPTAIN WORTH (CONT'D)

Drink?

TATE

Yes, thank you.

Captain worth tops off a couple glasses with the bronze beverage and heads back to the table.

CAPTAIN WORTH

(raises his glass)

To the holiday's and your brothers well being.

They clink glasses and down the glasses.

Tate turns his head out to a small window, looks at the soldiers dancing and singing by the fire.

TATE

I take it they're heading home.

(CONTINUED)

CAPTAIN WORTH

You'd take it correctly then.

(looks out the window; then)

All the training, drills, patrols, my yelling...those boys have earned themselves a nice Christmas.

TATE

You leaving too?

CAPTAIN WORTH

I thought about heading up to Montana for a spell, resting up on the bank of a river for the time being.

TATE

You got family up that way.

CAPTAIN WORTH

My Wife and my Daughter.

TATE

They waitin on you?

CAPTAIN WORTH

I hope not. I already had the great displeasure of writing the telegram that would hold the details of why I wouldn't be making the trip this year.

TATE

Trip too costly this time around?

CAPTAIN WORTH

Costly? Yes. But not in the way that would imply any monetary loss.

(then)

Been picking up a cold wind these past few days...expecting snow of some sorts.

TATE

Just in time.

Captain Worth pours each of them another glass.

CAPTAIN WORTH

(knocks the whiskey back)

So, Tate, when do you plan on retiring?

(CONTINUED)

TATE  
(drinks whiskey)  
...I don't.

CAPTAIN WORTH  
You should think about it. It serves a  
man well to lay to rest his  
profession.

TATE  
I could tell ya...it won't do me well.

CAPTAIN WORTH  
Of course it would! You could start a  
family, its never too late for that.  
You could pick up carpentry, start in  
an orchard, raise a small ranch.

TATE  
Now yer fillin my head with crazy.

Worth chuckles;

CAPTAIN WORTH  
I'm trying not to. But, it is a man's  
duty to dream every once in a while,  
and I can't help anyone dream  
themselves.

Tate looks out the window at the dancing soldiers.

TATE  
I just hope, whatever happens,  
whatever I decide to do next with  
myself, I hope I'm that free.

CAPTAIN WORTH  
Amen to that.

Pause. BEAT.

CAPTAIN WORTH (CONT'D)  
Well, hows about another drink to top  
off the night?

TATE  
Absolutely.

Worth pours the bronze liquid into each of their glasses,  
raises his high and says;

(CONTINUED)

CAPTAIN WORTH  
To freedom my dear friend...and to  
your brother.

TATE  
(with his glass raised as well)  
...Where ever he may be.

They clink glasses, down the whiskey, and we:

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The Stagecoach that carried Holland, his lover, and her two children, stays at a steady trot down a DARK TRAIL.

CUT TO:

INT. STAGECOACH (MOVING)

The two children are fast asleep, as well as Missy. Holland sits awake with a tin flask of whiskey, a Dime novel, and a REPEATER to keep him company.

He turns a couple pages of the novel then puts it down.

Then, he bangs on the roof of the coach with the barrel of his rifle.

The Coach comes to a stop. The DRIVER climbs down and gets in the window (he's holding up a lantern).

DRIVER  
Yessir?

HOLLAND  
How long till we reach the trading post?

DRIVER  
Well, considering the horses are catchin them selves a short break, and me bein a bettin man...I'd say we get there at dawn or later.

HOLLAND  
Later?

DRIVER  
No sir, I said Dawn or Later.

(CONTINUED)



HOLLAND  
Let's try for dawn then.

DRIVER  
Well, I was until you stopped me, now  
its later.

The Driver climbs back up to take the reigns again.

Missy wakes up halfway:

MISSY  
(to Holland)  
Where are we?

HOLLAND  
We stopped for now, the driver should  
be gettin on the move in a moment.

As he says that the Stagecoach is on its way again.

HOLLAND (CONT'D)  
(kisses Missy)  
See.

She smiles, falls back to sleep.

Holland picks up his novel once more. HOLD CLOSE on him for a  
moment...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOREST - NEW ANGLE

CAMERA faces down the side of the stagecoach as it continues  
to make its march towards the destination.

It's a few hours away from the crack of dawn.

Off to the side of the FRAME, a Title Card appears in our  
view: "Six days till Christmas"

Its hangs there for a moment then dissipates into the waning  
night.

We STAY on the side of the coach for a long beat until...

NEW ANGLE, DRIVER'S P.O.V.

the back's of the four horse team as they rip up dirt and  
track only to be stopped by...

(CONTINUED)

...A man is stuck in the road, lost by the looks of it. He's standing next to the body of a dead horse.

DRIVER

pulls back the reigns, asks;

DRIVER

(to Man in the road)

You alright fella?

From inside the wagon:

HOLLAND

Why'd we stop?

DRIVER

(to Holland)

Feller up on the road here, looks in a bad way!

(to Man in the road)

Are ya?

MAN IN THE ROAD

Excuse me?!

DRIVER

Are you in a bad way?

MAN IN THE ROAD

My horse has killed over and the heels of my boots done damn near fell apart from me trynna move the heavy bastard, so...I won't say I'm in a good way.

DRIVER

Well, if you need a ride, I'll be happy to take ya. Where ya headed?

MAN IN THE ROAD

Wherever you folks are I guess.

DRIVER

Climb on up then.

The man in the road hops up onto the wagon.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

We're headed to the trading post.

(CONTINUED)

MAN IN THE ROAD  
Sounds fine to me.

Driver whips the horses into motion and they're off again.

MAN IN THE ROAD (CONT'D)  
You got some tobacco friend?

DRIVER  
No sir.

MAN IN THE ROAD  
Just my luck then.

DRIVER  
It would appear so. What were you  
doing out here anyway, its cold as the  
dickens.

MAN IN THE ROAD  
Was out huntin elk for the past three  
days...couldn't find nothing. So, I  
gave up, decided it'd be worth  
trekking east just a ways, see if I  
could still salvage what little I have  
left of my holiday.

DRIVER  
You a workin man?

MAN IN THE ROAD  
All year round friend.

DRIVER  
What kinda work do you do if you don't  
mind my asking?

MAN IN THE ROAD  
Anything that pays. Need a hand on a  
drive? I'm your man. Let's say you  
need some security on bank wagon  
coming outta New York...I'm the extra  
gun.

DRIVER  
Sort of a drifter then?

MAN IN THE ROAD  
That'd be me.

(CONTINUED)

DRIVER

You know, I thought about packing up  
and hitting the road - being a  
drifter.

MAN IN THE ROAD

It ain't the life for a man used to  
some structure.

DRIVER

You sayin I wouldn't make the cut?

MAN IN THE ROAD

How long have you been riding driver  
to this company?

DRIVER

Fifteen years.

MAN IN THE ROAD

And in those fifteen years, what have  
you done everyday?

DRIVER

Well, most of my time is waiting.  
Other times, times like this, its the  
trying to stay awake and keeping the  
horses straight that occupies my time.

MAN IN THE ROAD

How much they pay you, if you don't  
mind?

DRIVER

I make six dollars on every ride and  
if the passengers decide they wanna  
hand me extra, they do. So, I'd say  
anywhere between thirteen to twenty  
dollars a trip.

MAN IN THE ROAD

That's steady...that's nice. Now,  
packing it all up and leaving after a  
long fifteen years, just to travel  
around for pocket scraps, it ain't for  
you feller.

DRIVER

I dunno how you'd be able to make that  
assumption, especially from where  
you're sittin.

(CONTINUED)

MAN IN THE ROAD

Yeah?

DRIVER

Yeah! You see, this fifteen year working guppy just saved yer ass from a frozen death.

MAN IN THE ROAD

I didn't need saving friend, just a ride.

DRIVER

I sure couldn't tell from up here, behind my horses.

MAN IN THE ROAD

Maybe it was just fate, a chance. My horse was an old buck. Rode him for some time. Pushed him as far North as Montana and as low South as Louisiana. It was just his time I suppose.

DRIVER

Louisiana?

MAN IN THE ROAD

Yessir. I was workin in the engine room of a steam boat. Played fiddle to fella who was a glorified coal chucker.

DRIVER

Can't imagine a fella like you playing fiddle to not a man.

MAN IN THE ROAD

Hell, that's why I'm here now. Open spaces and stupid thinking to keep me occupied.

DRIVER

Got any family?

MAN IN THE ROAD

Depends on what you think a family is.

DRIVER

Mother? Father? Anyone?

(CONTINUED)

MAN IN THE ROAD  
Had a brother.

DRIVER  
Had? What happened to em?

MAN IN THE ROAD  
Was too stupid for his own good.

They ride in silence that's only disturbed by the galloping of the horses until--

DRIVER  
You should get some rest. Sun's coming up soon.

EXT. SKY - MORNING

The sun rises painting a picturesque view of the COLD terrain that lies ahead -- it runs a cotton candy pink and blue as we DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CLINT TRADING POST - LATER

The Stagecoach is posted outside the SMALL GENERAL STORE that is the Trading post. It's freezing out as a few PEOPLE cross back and forth bundled up.

Driver is standing by the coach, feeding his horses mouthfuls of hay.

Holland and company are nowhere to be seen, same for the Man in the road.

INT. GENERAL STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Standing by the counter of the dried goods and can packed store, is Holland.

MISSY AND THE KIDS--

look around a section of dried meat and candies with tired eyes that look up at the--

ENTRANCE--

where we see the Man in the road walk in.

He tips his hat towards missy and the kids and makes his way towards Holland.

(CONTINUED)

MAN IN THE ROAD  
(to Holland)  
Howdy. Long ride huh?

HOLLAND  
Yeah.

MAN IN THE ROAD  
Where you folks headin?

HOLLAND  
Somewhere far.

MAN IN THE ROAD  
That much is obvious. Nice fella like  
you, beautiful family...it'd do you  
good to take vacation for the lords  
birthday.

HOLLAND  
You plannin on ridin with us?

MAN IN THE ROAD  
No, no...you nice folks have seen the  
last of me. Imma buy myself a steed  
and a saddle and hitch my way back  
towards Grim Hollow.

HOLLAND  
That's a ways back.

MAN IN THE ROAD  
I know it is.

The store clerk comes up to the counter with a crate full of  
Provisions and a couple bottles of Whiskey.

HOLLAND  
(to the Store Clerk)  
How much?

STORE CLERK  
Ten dollars sir.

Holland flashes three FIVE DOLLAR BILLS, sets two on the  
counter and heaves up the crate.

HOLLAND  
Thank you.

The clerk puts the money away -- The Man in the road walks

(CONTINUED)

with Holland --

MAN IN THE ROAD  
Let me carry that for ya.

HOLLAND  
Its alright.

MAN IN THE ROAD  
You sure?

HOLLAND  
Yeah.

Holland signals Missy to bring the kids -- Man in the road pushes the door open for him--

EXT. CLINT TRADING POST - CONTINUOUS

Holland carries the crate of goods all the way to the stagecoach. Missy and the kids climb inside. Man in the road stands close by them.

Holland sets the crate down inside the coach -- then, he pulls out a SMALL LOCK BOX from underneath the SEAT and puts his pocket money in with the rest --

It's a little over a HUNDRED -- Man in the road clocks it.

Holland pushes the box back.

HOLLAND (CONT'D)  
(to Man in the Road)  
May I ask you something?

MAN IN THE ROAD  
Go ahead.

HOLLAND  
Why you headin to grim hollow?

MAN IN THE ROAD  
...truthfully...I heard tell about a Deputy position opened up. Thought it'd be a good place to lay my post a while.

HOLLAND  
Hm. Well...good luck to you then.

(CONTINUED)



MAN IN THE ROAD  
To you too friend.

They shake hands.

Man in the road steps back away from the coach -- Holland  
climbs up --

Driver whips the horses into motion -- they ride out of the  
trading post --

CAMERA DOLLY'S IN SLOW on the Man in the road as he pulls a  
cigarette out from his coat pocket and lights it --

SIDE PROFILE C.U --

He takes a drag, a HAND comes into FRAME landing on his  
shoulder cut to:

REVEAL, a BURLY gentleman with a thick coat and beard to  
match standing right behind him.

He turns, drops his smoke in the road and steps it out.

MAN IN THE ROAD (CONT'D)  
(to Burly gentleman)  
Thought you fellas weren't yella.

BURLY GENTLEMAN  
We're waitin inside.

Burly gentleman walks off.

INT. CARD ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Three rough looking cowboys sit around a makeshift POKER  
TABLE. A ceiling light dangles above the table.

The Burly Gentleman enters the room -- Man in the road is  
close behind him--

Man in the road takes a seat next to one of the guys -- Burly  
gentleman hugs a corner--

MAN IN THE ROAD  
The hell were yall waitin for?

The guys sit in silence until--

COWBOY #2  
What the hell was we supposed to do,

(CONTINUED)

there was children.

COWBOY #1

You can't expect us to go through with  
somethin like this, Jack.

The man in the road, who we will know now and forever as  
JACK, rebukes--

JACK

That fella in that coach has money,  
lots of it. He's got it in a lock box  
just under his boot.

(then)

I understand the situation here...but  
to just let this slip on by...its  
stupid. Kids or no kids, we gotta hit  
that Stage.

COWBOY #3

We saw them leave town already, hell,  
they're gonna have a couple hour head  
start before we could even catch on  
with em.

JACK

The driver, he's a tentative bastard,  
cares more bout them damn horses then  
he does the man in his own possession.

(then)

We stop them horses, we stop him. He  
reaches for that pistol under his  
seat, we put em in the ground.

KYLE

Killing a man trying to kill me is  
easy enough. But it ain't the cause of  
him trying to kill me that's gonna be  
worrisome. Its the children.

COWBOY #1

Exactly.

JACK

Yer one to talk Calvin. What happened  
with the train out past El Paso, hm?  
That kid, couldn't-a been more than  
fifteen. You put him down without a  
thought, right?

(CONTINUED)

KYLE

This is different, for all of us.

Calvin, the cowboy who was just called out for his hypocrisy, looks out the window with a pipe in his mouth--

JACK

I understand that...but if we do it fast, we won't gotta worry about no children.

A thoughtful silence befalls the room -- Calvin puffs on his pipe --

COWBOY #2

When are we heading out?

JACK

Before I can talk about that...are we all good on the plan?

Kyle, Cowboy #2 and Cowboy #3 mutter equivalents -- their eyes fall on Calvin, who smokes his pipe with shameful silence --

He nods.

JACK (CONT'D)

Lets wait a little while.

Jack kicks his feet up. And we dissolve to:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - SAME MOMENT

Sitting on the edge of the bed, is Grady. He looks tired, yet, confident -- he stares out between the rusted bars that hold him --

REVEAL, Warren, who sits still in the Sheriff's chair with a rifle in his lap, watching Grady.

They stare at each other a long moment -- Grady chuckles.

WARREN

Something funny?

GRADY

I ain't ever been under this much supervision.

(CONTINUED)

WARREN

Its warranted, dont you think?

GRADY

Out shooting one of yer best shoo--

WARREN

(cutting him off)

My friend, you killed my friend.

GRADY

Sorry about that. If I had known he was yer friend I would've let him kill me...since he was yer friend.

WARREN

I'm gonna watch you swing - this whole towns gonna watch you swing.

GRADY

Maybe. But, I don't think you can put a man to the gallows that was defending himself.

WARREN

Defending yerself?! Doctor Miles, who's word I trust more than that of God's, said himself that you put that man down when he tried to tell you that he could still save him.

GRADY

And I'm supposed to toss and turn in this here cot because what? I killed a fella that was yer friend, that dishonorably wore that piece of tin? What you thought of Murphy ain't what the mother her buried her eight year old daughter out an Arizona thought of him.

(then)

I did that fella a service, made it quick for him...quicker than he deserved.

WARREN

Boy...you spout more bullshit than an actual bull.

GRADY

I got the handbill to prove it.

(CONTINUED)

WARREN

Yeah?

GRADY

(touches over his left breast)  
Right here.

Warren thinks a moment -- What's his game? --

WARREN

I wanna see it.

Grady reaches into his coat and pulls out three handbills --

WARREN (CONT'D)

Toss it over.

Grady gets off the cot and pushes it through the bars --

GRADY

The other two were done a few weeks  
ago, same town if you can believe it.

Warren looks over Murphy's handbill, it reads:

"WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE. MURPHY BAXTER. FOR THE MURDER OF  
ELIZABETH TRENT, WALLACE MATTHEWS, AND MANY MORE IN THE TOWN  
OF GAMMON'S GULCH, AZ."

Warren is in disbelief -- he hands the bills back to Grady,  
who tucks them away --

WARREN

What now then? Is that why you came  
all the way up here?

GRADY

No. Like I told the sheriff, I'm  
looking for work...Murphy there is my  
resume.

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW CEMETERY (TOWN CHURCH) - LATER

Two grave workers lower a WOODEN CASKET with a Silver star  
nailed in it, down into a freshly dug grave.

Its no secret that this is Murphy's casket.

No funeral. Nobody to see him off aside from:

REVEAL, Doctor Miles and Warren.

(CONTINUED)

They toss handfuls of dirt over the coffin -- Warren climbs down and leaves a bottle of whiskey with him --

CAMERA TRACKS AROUND MILES, to see --

A woman, a PAWNEE WOMAN standing beyond the fencing. Her hair flows like **POCAHONTAS**.

SLOW DOLLY IN on her before we cut to a:

C.U OF MILES--

who watches her -- a poignant look. HOLD.

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW (SHERIFF'S OFFICE) - AFTERNOON

Doctor Miles walks with Deputy Warren up the steps of the Sheriff's office.

MILES  
(re: Grady)  
He say anything to you yet?

WARREN  
(lying)  
Nothing important.

MILES  
Well, I hope he finds peace in what he's done.

WARREN  
The gallows will help him with that.  
(then)  
Thank you Doc, for coming with me.

MILES  
Was my pleasure. I'm sorry about your friend. I know that feeling all to well.

WARREN  
Yeah.

Warren tips his hat and goes inside the Sheriff's office.

Miles walks down the street all the way to:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

Miles is in thought, not saying a word -- Was that who I

(CONTINUED)

thought It was? -- Bill is fast asleep with the medicinal herb pamphlet laid across his chest --

HOLD. A BEAT. He looks over to a LAMP that sits just over the sink -- RACK FOCUS TO IT before cutting to a:

C.U OF THE LAMP

Its bright -- a soft orange glow -- we HOLD on it a moment before PULLING OUT --

As we PULL OUT, the Lamp changes into a LANTERN -- BOBBING -- SWAYING -- THE SOUND OF HORSES TROTting HARD --

EXT. ROLLING HILLS - LATER

An hour into the evening -- light has started to flee.

The CAMERA, pulled out wider now, REVEALS that the lantern is in the leather handed grasp of the stagecoach Driver.

He's made some distance since last we saw him.

EXT. SIDE OF THE STAGECOACH

We see Holland, Missy and the two kids, SAMUEL and TILLY -- through the window.

They ride peacefully -- Tilly sits her head on the ledge of the window -- Cut to:

NEW ANGLE, STAGECOACH WHEEL. CAMERA FACING ALONGSIDE THE WHEEL.

Ripping up the dirt trail -- the wheel is already a tad SHAKY from the day long ride -- It holds steady until --

IT STRIKES A SIZABLE ROCK IN THE ROAD -- One of the SPOKES splits falls off, the wheel SPLITS --

BACK TO THE SIDE OF THE COACH

Holland and Company feel the turbulence -- as does:

THE DRIVER

who RATTLES violently in his seat -- Steering the horses off to the side of the road --

Luckily, the Stagecoach comes to a stop.

(CONTINUED)

The driver hops down and goes over to the window.

HOLLAND

Christ! What was that?!

Driver looks to the back of the Coach, sees the wheel -- broken.

DRIVER

The Goddamn wheel!

MISSY

What?

DRIVER

The wheel broke.

HOLLAND

Is there a way you can fix it?

DRIVER

Course there is. There's some tools in the steel box in the back, imma need yer help if we wanna get movin anytime soon.

HOLLAND

Lets get to it then.

Holland pushes the door open.

EXT. ROLLING HILLS - SAME MOMENT

An ENTOURAGE of COWBOY'S lead by Jack ride hard through the COLD, ROLLING COUNTRY SIDE.

Nightfall has just started touching the backdrop.

Lanterns hang on the sides of their horses. HOLD.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. STAGECOACH - ROLLING HILLS - SAME MOMENT

Driver unlocks the steel box in the back of the stagecoach and hands Holland a couple tools: Nails and Hammer.

Holland cups the nails in his hand and tucks the hammer under his arm.

EXT. ROLLING HILLS - SAME

(CONTINUED)



The Cowboy's stop a moment -- check the trail ahead them -- wagon tracks -- they're getting warm.

They pick up speed again -- hoof to dirt.

EXT. STAGECOACH - ROLLING HILLS - SAME

Missy pokes her head out the window -- P.O.V -- looks down at Holland and Driver.

DOLLY IN SLOW ON, the wheel -- Holland pulls the broken side of the wheel to the other -- puts the nail in place and strikes it with the hammer --

On the strike we:

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. ROLLING HILLS - SAME

Cowboys with the same ferocity, hitting up the side of a hill.

EXT. STAGECOACH - ROLLING HILLS - SAME

Holland and Driver continue nailing away on the wheel -- they put in another nail --

EXT. ROLLING HILLS - OVERLOOK - SAME

They approach a ridge -- look down -- see lights and the WAGON -- they ride hard towards, Jack taking point.

EXT. STAGECOACH - ROLLING HILLS - SAME

Holland with the help of Driver, hammer in the last nail. Driver stands up straight -- BANG!

A bullet rips right through his CHEST, he drops dead in the dirt, his lantern rolls way from him.

Holland ducks down -- breathes heavily --

Inside the coach, Missy screams, grabbing the kids, hitting the floor --

Holland is slow to get up -- horses approach rapidly --

He swings open the door the coach, grabs his rifle, looks at Missy --

(CONTINUED)

HOLLAND (CONT'D)

Stay down!

He slams the door shut -- sits at the corner edge of the coach -- the horses are close now --

Holland takes aim -- sees a rider coming in close -- shoots him off his horse -- dead -- Cowboy #2.

The entourage trade shots with him -- he takes cover --

INSERT, Missy and the kids are face down.

Holland, cocks back his lever, fires.

Another horseman drops down, takes cover behind a rock, its Jack.

He peaks up and over the rock, BANG! fires a shot from his .45 -- it scrapes by Hollands shoulder.

Holland, more cautious, dips away from the corner drops underneath the coach, takes aim --

Jack peaks up a moment, BANG! -- a bullet whizzes past him.

His entourage takes a FLURRY of shots at wagon wheel --

Wood splinters, bullets flying.

Holland trades shots from underneath the coach.

One of them is struck SQUARE IN THE HEAD -- its Calvin.

Jack rushes to his aid -- shit!

Holland continues firing.

Jack turns to Kyle who's down on his belly trading shots -- nods him to come over to him --

Hollands rifle clicks empty.

He rummages fast through his coat pocket.

Kyle is next to Jack -- Cowboy #1 is up on the hill.

JACK

Where's that whiskey you had?

(CONTINUED)

KYLE

Up with there with Amos.

JACK

Go get it.

Kyle hurries to do so. we cut to:

CLOSE UP, a bottle of Whiskey -- Kyle twists the cap off -- puts his bandana into the top -- soaks it.

BACK ON JACK--

he's traded a few more shots with Holland. Kyle comes up behind him with the Whiskey bottle -- hands it to him.

Jack sets it down, takes a match out from in his coat, scrapes it against the bottom of his boot, and lights the bandana.

Its the same sequence as the QUICK FLASH we saw earlier.

Holland -- fires a few more shots -- rifle clicks empty -- he tries to search for a few more shells -- nothing.

He tosses the rifle down -- searches driver -- nothing.

ON THE FLOOR OF THE STAGE, Missy and the kids whimper and cry.

Jack, lets the bandana burn -- stands up and shouts:

JACK (CONT'D)

(to Holland)

Fella! Come out from under that coach,  
or im gonna torch it!

Holland peaks from under the coach -- sees the fire -- shit.

He opens the door to the coach, says to Missy:

HOLLAND

Are you okay?

MISSY

(shaking; crying)

Mhmm...

HOLLAND

You need to get the kids outta here,  
I'm gonna talk to this bastard.

(CONTINUED)

MISSY

No! No!

Holland closes the door.

LOW ANGLE CLOSE UP, Holland sighs, walks around the coach and meets Jack face to face.

JACK

You got some sense.

Silence. Holland notices his face.

HOLLAND

You crazy son-of-a-bitch I'll ki--

Before he can finish, he's shot dead by Kyle.

Missy was watching from the window -- she screams.

MISSY

NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

Jack spins around to Kyle.

JACK

What the hell?!

KYLE

Fella tried to shoot me didn't he?

Missy, spins around in the coach, pulls a .45 from underneath the seat and turns to the window -- SHOTS!

She hits Jack's shoulder -- Jack grimaces -- launches the MOLOTOV into the air --

SLOW MO FRAME, as it glides with a chaotic grace against the night sky -- a tail of fire.

It lands inside the coach, lights immediately...

Missy and the kids scream in agony -- Missy falls out of the coach still ablaze -- Kyle walks up to her -- shoots her dead.

AMOS

rides down the hill, FEAR in his eyes.

(CONTINUED)

JACK  
(to himself)  
Jesus forgive us.

Amos falls to his knees.

Kyle cuts the horses on the stage loose, lights a cigarette.

The horses run free.

Jack holds his wounded arm. and we cut to:

NEW ANGLE, EXTREME LONG SHOT.

The three cowboy silhouettes -- watching the fire as it burns away the stagecoach and their souls with it.

HOLD.

LONG DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CLINT TRADING POST - NEXT MORNING

Tate rides in slow, bundled up, blowing into his hands. Its gotten significantly colder.

"FIVE MORE DAYS TILL CHRISTMAS"

Tate hitches his pony in front of the General Store.

INT. GENERAL STORE - CLINT TRADING POST - CONTINUOUS

Tate rubs his hands with vigor. The chill has followed inside.

Tate raises a hand to the clerk who's teeth are chattering.

Tate then crosses over to the provisions, picks himself up some dry beef and coffee grinds.

He takes his goodies over to the counter.

The clerk, with a freezing body, looks over the items.

CLERK  
Four dollars.

Tate takes out four crinkly dollars.

(CONTINUED)

TATE  
(handing him the money)  
Thought about getting a fireplace?

CLERK  
No sheriff, I have not.

His body winces as he touches the freezing steel of the register and puts the money inside--

CLERK (CONT'D)  
You need a crate with that?

TATE  
No sir.  
(then)  
You seen a fella come this way with a woman, two little kids?

CLERK  
(shivering)  
Yes, just yesterday.

TATE  
They stay long?

CLERK  
No. The fella came in, bought some jerky and left. Took the woman and kids with em.

TATE  
Fella that bought the jerky, he say where he was headed?

CLERK  
Usually when folks are passing through, they're trying for the mountain pass, looking to get to Solomon's Reach.

TATE  
And that's in which direction?

CLERK  
East a ways - big rolling hills. Its beautiful around this time of day.

TATE  
No doubt. Thank you for yer help, have a good day.

(CONTINUED)

CLERK  
You too sheriff.

Tate picks up his stuff and walks out of the general store.

The clerk blows into his hands then rubs them vigorously.

EXT. GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

He stocks his saddle bags with the goods.

A few feet out in the road, a TEENAGE BOY drops an armful of freshly cut fire wood--

They clang rough against one another.

Tate looks over to him.

TATE  
Need some help son?

The boy looks over to him.

TEENAGE BOY  
Actually sir, that'd be great.

Tate latches up his saddle bag and goes over to the boy.

He helps him pick up the logs.

TATE  
A little cold to be out cutting  
firewood without yer pa, ain't it?

TEENAGE BOY  
That's who I'm bringing the wood to  
right now sir.

TATE  
Alright then, lead the way.

Both of them carry logs and start walking.

TEENAGE BOY  
(re: Tate's Star)  
You a Sheriff mister?

TATE  
That's right.

(CONTINUED)

TEENAGE BOY  
Must be exciting - Is it?

TATE  
Some days. Others is real slow. Those  
are the days I enjoy.

TEENAGE BOY  
I wanna be a sheriff or a bounty  
hunter. I could be like Morgan White -  
the White Knight of the West.

TATE  
What does your pa think of that?

TEENAGE BOY  
He says I'm foolish - that my duty is  
to be a cattle hand for some big  
company, like he was.

TATE  
He still work on the drives?

TEENAGE BOY  
Not this year, he hurt is leg during  
the fall - horse bucked him out his  
saddle during a stampede.

TATE  
Wow!

TEENAGE BOY  
That's what I said.  
(then)  
Just up here.

They turn and find themselves at a SMALL COTTAGE surrounded  
by a rot wood fence.

The Teenage boy pushes the gate and leads Tate up the trail--

The boy knocks on the front door--

TEENAGE BOY (CONT'D)  
Pa! Pa!

From the other side of the door, a raspy, almost smoker like  
voice answers him--

PA (O.S)  
Coming!

(CONTINUED)



They wait a beat, then, the door swings open--

PA  
Christ Abel, I thought I was gonna  
have to go and find yer ass!

TEENAGE BOY  
I'm sorry Pa, I couldn't the swing  
down.

PA  
Over the shoulder - straight down.  
Remember that.

Pa finally acknowledges Tate and his star --

PA (CONT'D)  
Something I can help you with Sheriff?

TATE  
No sir, just helping yer boy out.

TEENAGE BOY  
(to Pa)  
These logs getting heavy Pa.

PA  
Come place em down in the fire place,  
the both of ya.

Pa walks back in with a LIMP -- the teenage boy, now known as  
ABEL, walks in second --

Tate follows suit--

INT. SMALL COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

The place is well kept. Sunlight is split into beams over the  
main floor, coming from a small window over the sink.

Pa limps over to the a round table and sits in the seat.

Abel drops the firewood into the cold fireplace -- Tate comes  
right behind him and does the same --

ABEL  
(to Pa)  
Matches Pa?

PA  
Here.

(CONTINUED)

Pa takes out a pack of matches and tosses it to Abel -- he catches it --

Tate goes over the table and sits with Pa--

PA (CONT'D)  
(to Tate)  
You drink?

TATE  
Whaddya have?

PA  
Gin.

TATE  
No bourbon?

PA  
Out grew the taste.

TATE  
Gin it is then.

Pa gets up and limps over to the CUPBOARD that hangs close over the left side of the sink -- Abel light the match and tosses it in the fireplace--

The match doesn't do much -- lights a few more --

Pa limps back to the table with a couple glasses and a bottle of Gin -- notices the low fire.

PA  
(to Abel)  
Toss the whole damn row in, I'm gonna freeze to death.

Abel tosses the entire package in.

Pa sits down -- pushes a glass over to Tate.

The fire starts.

PA (CONT'D)  
(re: the fire)  
There you go, finally!  
(to Tate)  
Lets drink to this warmth, whaddya say?

(CONTINUED)

TATE  
(embracing the warmth)  
I say yes.

Pa chuckles -- Abel sits by the fire, warming his hands,  
reading a Dime novel.

PA  
(takes the cap of the gin)  
Here you go:

Pours Tate a glass;

PA (CONT'D)  
:And here goes I.

Pours himself a glass;

PA  
(raises his glass)  
To the warmth during this cold hell.

TATE  
Amen.

They clink glasses -- knock back the gin.

PA  
Its been a while since had a taste of  
that.

TATE  
Keep it safe for occasions?

PA  
I wouldn't say that, cause this ain't  
an occasion.

TATE  
Have people come up here a lot?

PA  
Cousins mostly.

TATE  
You save the drink for them?

PA  
No sir. In fact, I keep that there  
cupboard guarded all the times they're  
up here.

(CONTINUED)

TATE

That doesn't sound too friendly,  
considering they're yer family and  
all.

PA

(dry, throaty chuckle)  
Family are the main ones will take the  
coin off yer eyes when you gone and  
met the creator. Hell, while yer  
alive, they stick a rifle barrel in  
yer back and dig into yer pockets.

TATE

Strange way to see family that way.

PA

Family shoved me into the drink. Took  
me a long while to give it up. During  
that while, I raised a boy and drove  
cattle.

TATE

I wish I could say I understand how  
you feel.

PA

You will - you do.

TATE

No, the only family I got left is as  
blind loyal as a dog gets with his  
person.

PA

Even dogs bite what keeps them loved.

TATE

Christ feller, I ain't never met a  
soul so black.

PA

And I ain't met a mind so gullible.  
(then)  
Can you drink to that?

Tate pushes out his glass.

Pa fills their glasses.

They clink cups again.

(CONTINUED)

And on the clink we cut to:

EXT. CLINT TRADING POST - LATER

Tate walks over to his horse and mounts up.

He clicks his heels and turns his horse east. Just before leaving he sees THE CLOUD OF SMOKE coming from the cottage.

DOLLY IN SLOW, on the dark column of smoke as it ominously climbs to the sky and we hear a SHARP GUST OF COLD WIND --

We HOLD on the cloud as we start to SLOWLY BOOM DOWN, revealing that we are no longer examining the cloud of smoke that hails from the chimney of the cottage, but the--

EXT. ROLLING HILLS - ROAD - LATER

--Smoke of the now CHARRED STAGECOACH. Bodies are laid about scattered, creating an image of grizzly proportion.

Holland lays faced -- a gaping hole in the back of his head.

Missy is charred -- smoke still rising from her body.

Calvin is on his back -- eyes wide open -- embracing the sky.

Cowboy #2 joins the carnage in the road, as well as the driver.

The two children, Bill's lifeline -- are charred.

COMING DOWN THE ROAD--

is Tate, he rides hard for a moment and stops even harder when he sees the Stagecoach and the bodies.

Fear in his heart -- he picks up speed again.

Tate hops down off his horse and slowly steps around the brutal scene.

He kicks the driver over then looks over to Missy's body.

He loses color on his face when he realizes -- he finds the children--

Collapses to his knees.

Already knowing the verdict, he gives himself a moment and a few deep breaths, then gets up again.

(CONTINUED)

He comes around the coach and crosses over to Holland with shakiness in his step.

Turning Holland over, he collapses again, holding his brothers lifeless body.

Half crying, half almost throwing up.

He squeezes him tight.

TATE  
(to someone, maybe himself)  
Stupid...  
(sniffles)  
...so damn stupid.

He's full on crying now.

CUT TO:

NEW ANGLE, WIDE. TATE HOLDING HIS BROTHER.

we hold on the solemn moment. Then we:

CUT TO:

EXT. ROLLING HILLS - MINUTES LATER

Tate drags his brother to his horse and heaves him over the back of it.

He sniffles -- wiping away tears.

Tate ties him to the back of the beast then looks over to...

...Missy...he thinks of Bill, and what he's gonna have to tell him.

He mounts up and rides back in the direction he just came from.

NEW ANGLE, CLOSE UP. SIDE PROFILE.

Tears fall slowly down his face as he fights the stabbing air.

CUT TO:

EXT. SKY - VARIOUS - SAME MOMENT

Grey clouds roll off the mountain in the distance, carrying

(CONTINUED)

with it, a BLIZZARD.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW (SHERIFF'S OFFICE) - AFTERNOON

Doctor Miles is in ear distance of the office. From outside he can hear shouting -- an argument.

CAMERA FOLLOWS IN HAND-CAM, as Miles walks up the steps, hearing the argument a bit clearer -- its Bill and Warren.

BILL (O.S)  
WHERE THE HELL IS HE THEN GODDAMIT?!

WARREN (O.S)  
Bill, I don't know, but if I could  
wager, I thinking he's looking for  
Dale, Missy and the Kids right now.

BILL (O.S)  
YOU SONS - A - BITCHES ARE DAMN  
USELESS! HOW COULD YOU LET THAT  
BASTARD LEAVE TOWN WITH MY WIFE?!

Miles is hesitant to walk in, taking a deep sigh, he goes in.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Bill is on crutches, his leg is still in a bad way but he can manage. Warren is sitting on Tate's desk.

Grady is watching it all from behind the rusty bars.

Bill turns his attention to Miles.

BILL  
WELL?!

MILES  
Isabelle said Tate rode out a few days  
ago.

BILL  
I DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT HIM! I WANNA  
KNOW WHEN THAT SON OF A BITCH HOLLAND  
LEFT.

MILES  
Same day, earlier time.

(CONTINUED)

BILL  
BUSTED LEG OR NOT, I'M GON' FIND THAT  
BASTARD AND PUT EM IN THE GROUND!

WARREN  
You wanna meet the gallows to?! Huh?!  
You wanna be like him?!

He means Warren, they look to him, he waves.

BILL  
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND WARREN, YOU AIN'T  
A FATHER, YOU AIN'T A HUSBAND. IF I  
LOSE THEM KIDS...I...I DON'T KNOW WHAT  
I'M LIABLE TO DO!

WARREN  
That a threat?

BILL  
ITS A GODDAMN PROMISE GODDAMIT!

Bill accidentally sets his bad leg down, grimaces in pain,  
falls to his side.

Warren and Miles help him up, back on his crutches.

MILES  
You need to calm down Bill. If Tate  
went out to get him, I have faith he's  
gonna find him. And if he finds him,  
he's gonna get Missy and those two  
beautiful kids back to you.

Bill hobbles over to a wall and leans against it.

BILL  
I appreciate that Doc, but I ain't  
gonna be satisfied until that bastard  
is dead.

MILES  
Listen to me...I understand how you're  
feeling, I do:

QUICK FLASH - CLOSE ON:

The Pawnee woman, strong exterior, melted away by a smile.

BACK TO SCENE

(CONTINUED)



MILES (CONT'D)

:But what you're saying, its wrong.

Bill hobbles up to him, gets in his face.

BILL

You know all to well about nothing that I'm feeling. You've taken just as many lives as you've saved Doc, and for what? To those rebels you were just another white man fighting to save some niggers didn't know any better.

(then)

Don't force your bullshit on me.

Pause.

MILES

You don't know as much as you think you know. I understand your anger, but for now, its best we wait and see what comes of Tates expedition.

WARREN

(to Bill)

So stop talking crazy.

Grady, who's been watching the men argue, finally chimes in:

GRADY

So when am I getting outta here?

WARREN

Excuse me?

GRADY

Come jangle them keys my way.

WARREN

You are one thick skulled bastard.

GRADY

That is one I've heard more than too many times. But, it was self defense, and I was serving the court, just like you.

WARREN

No...that was cold blooded murder. You shot him like a dog when he was on his

(CONTINUED)

back, unarmed.

GRADY

He wasn't on his back before I shot him and he sure as shit wasn't unarmed.

WARREN

I don't care about your stories, alright? Once the Sheriff gets back, its your neck in a noose. No avoiding it now.

GRADY

I suppose not.

BILL

(to Grady)

I can't believe I pulled you out the street - should've just left you there.

GRADY

Why? Your kids would still be missing, and your wife would still be taking it in the rear by that "Son of a bitch" Holland.

Bill in anger, tries to step over to the bars, lands on his bad leg again--

Miles and Warren help him once more.

WARREN

(to Bill)

Relax dammit!

(to Grady)

And you need to shut the hell up!

GRADY

Ain't my fault his wife's a whore.

MILES

(to Grady)

Shut up!

In that moment, someone bangs on the door:

It's a woman in hysterics (ISABELLE).

Miles opens the door.

(CONTINUED)

Isabelle falls into his arms, crying, body shaking.

MILES (CONT'D)  
(to Isabelle)  
What's the matter?

She continues to cry, violently.

Miles tilts her head up.

MILES (CONT'D)  
Honey, Isabelle, whats happened?

Isabelle looks around, gathers herself.

ISABELLE  
(talking through tears)  
Some men -- down at the saloon.

WARREN  
What're you talking bout?

ISABELLE  
These men, they just rode into town,  
they stopped by the saloon, said they  
was having a drink. They killed Ned.

BILL  
Ned?

ISABELLE  
They knifed him.

MILES  
Jesus Christ!

WARREN  
(to Bill)  
See what happens when we stand here  
arguing?!

BILL  
This ain't my fault!

Seeing another argument brewing, Miles cuts into it:

MILES  
Stop it, the both of you!  
(to Isabelle)  
Now, honey, are those men still there?

(CONTINUED)

ISABELLE

Yes.

OFF her "yes" we:

CUT TO:

INT. SALOON - SAME MOMENT

The CAMERA creeps slowly along the wooden floor, finding a POOL OF BLOOD.

Off screen we hear the sounds of RABID CELEBRATION, GLASSES BREAKING.

Continuing along the ground, the BLOODY fingers of the bartender, now known as NED, dangle in frame.

HOLD.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - SAME

CLOSE ON, a small drawer, filled with TIN STARS. Warren grabs one and shuts the drawer with authority.

He walks over to Miles and hands it to him.

WARREN

(to Miles)

I need you on this one Doc.

MILES

I can't.

WARREN

Well, I can't go out there on my own.  
And I can't take this wounded fool.

Referring to Bill -- Miles thinks a moment -- takes the star from Warren and pins it on his coat.

He's been deputized.

WARREN (CONT'D)

It suits you. Grab a rifle and lets go.

HARD CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW - MINUTES LATER

TRACKING SHOT, of Warren and Miles as they approach the saloon.

They stop outside a moment and look to the hitching post.

THREE HORSES.

They cock their rifles and march up the steps, through the swinging doors.

INT. SALOON - CONTINUOUS

HAND-CAM, we look over Miles shoulder and RACK FOCUS to the:  
CENTER TABLE--

Where, THREE COWBOYS are seated, Drunk out of their minds, splitting three bottles of Whiskey between them.

The three cowboys are: JACK, KYLE, and AMOS.

The murderous bastards from before. They've made their way to Grim Hollow and are drowning themselves in the towns alcohol.

Jack holds a bandage to his wounded shoulder as he takes a bottle to his lips.

WARREN & MILES--

look over the mess they've made: Broken glass, flipped tables and chairs. And find Ned, pulled halfway over the Bar top with a KNIFE IN HIS THROAT.

Warren exhales sorrowfully. Miles is used to the sight of dead men.

Warren and Miles cross the floor slowly making it over to the drunk cowboys who don't seem to notice them.

WARREN (CONT'D)  
(to them)  
How you fellas doin?

Jack and Kyle look up at him, Amos turns around.

WARREN (CONT'D)  
(re: Ned)  
You fellas do that?

(CONTINUED)

Jack looks over at Ned.

JACK

We're getting pissy over dead  
bartenders now sheriff?

WARREN

Deputy. And yes, we are. When a man in  
this town is killed we like to offer  
those in grievance of said man, a  
quick justice. Hanging.

JACK

Me and my boys here, we been beatin  
the rope before you started playing  
cowboy with that fuckin star. We sure  
as shit ain't gonna let some shit  
kicking deputy, put our heads in no  
noose.

KYLE

(to Warren)

Why don't you and yer friend run  
along, huh?

Miles is watching the exchange -- it's bringing him back to  
his old patrol days.

WARREN

I can't do that boys. I need y'all to  
come with me.

Amos gets out of his seat -- looming.

AMOS

(to Warren)

You dumb or something? We gave you a  
chance...take it...we ain't in the  
mood for no more killin.

WARREN

Okay then, just come with me, be  
peaceful like and maybe we can  
straighten out this whole situation.

KYLE

We ain't goin nowhere with you fella,  
you might as well just understand that  
now.

(CONTINUED)

JACK  
Sixteen years goddamit!

AMOS & KYLE  
(raise the bottles)  
SIXTEEN GODDAMN YEARS!

They drink.

JACK  
(to Warren)  
That's sixteen years without a day  
behind a row of steel bars - and in a  
few weeks, its gonna be seventeen...so  
piss off.

MILES  
Seventeen years without getting  
caught?

AMOS  
And counting.

MILES  
That's a wonderful record. Makes me  
think of how lackadaisical the  
wonderful law enforcement in this  
country has been. You boys must've had  
your selves quite the time.

JACK  
Like you wouldn't believe.

MILES  
That's right, I probably wouldn't.

Miles looks over their coats, notices a CONFEDERATE FLAG  
PATCH on Kyle's left shoulder.

MILES (CONT'D)  
(to Kyle)  
You. You fought in the war?

Kyle looks down at his patch.

KYLE  
That's what this means don't it?

MILES  
Lots of fanatics of the rebel ideology  
don the patches even after the loss,

(CONTINUED)

service or no service. So, did you fight?

KYLE  
Yes, I did.

MILES  
You're not from the south are you?

KYLE  
No.

MILES  
So why fight for them?

KYLE  
Freedom.

MILES  
Freedom to imprison with impunity, is that it? And you knew, that you could get by gracefully with your manifold of crimes had you become an honorable serviceman of the rebel army, right?

Kyle looks deadpan, as does everyone else as they think --  
What the hell is he talking about?

MILES (CONT'D)  
Were you infantry?

KYLE  
Yes sir.

MILES  
So your one of the lucky ones, unfortunately. You get to go on living, not changing a single thing about the character of your person.  
(then)  
Men like you and your friends have had your stay in this country for a long while, but that time has passed, and it will stay that way.  
(pause)  
Please, before things move in a direction irreversible, I suggest for you to comply.

They say nothing and stare. BEAT.

(CONTINUED)



MILES (CONT'D)  
I implore you.

JACK--

leans back in his seat -- the CAMERA lowers down by his side, still keeping everyone in FRAME.

We see him start to inch his hand toward his .45.

Kyle snaps his eyes to him a second -- they are in tune.

TRACK AROUND TO:

KYLE'S RIGHT SIDE--

as he creeps for his pistol grip as well.

Miles and Warren ready their rifles, not taking aim but getting in position to--

The moment is tense. Both sets of men getting ready to fire on one another, when...

CREAK!

CAMERA SWISH PAN LFT.

Scurrying out from under one of the tables is a townsman. He moves two steps at a time and leaves the establishment.

CAMERA SWISH PAN RT.

Back on Warren and Miles, as they've lowered their guard.

Then...

...JACK LEAPS OUT OF HIS CHAIR! FANNING THE HAMMER ON HIS COLT...BANG BANG BANG!

-Miles dives to the ground, quick cocks his rifle and blows a HOLE right through Jack's:

-Ankle, it gushes with BLOOD, hanging by a tendon. Jack hits the ground, screaming bloody murder, meanwhile:

-Warren has dived behind the bar, some blood on his back from rolling over Ned, he cocks his rifle and peaks up -- CAMERA follows him to his feet as he spots:

-Amos crawling on the floor and:

(CONTINUED)

-Kyle, diving behind a downed table, firing shots blindly. A couple of:

-Bottles, explode behind Warren, while:

-Miles, has retreated off the floor, behind a table, peaking up to see:

-Kyle, firing at him, missing and:

-Jack, lying on the ground, screaming in bloody agony, reaching for his loose hanging ankle. All the while from behind another:

-Table, Amos is trying to get a shot on:

-Warren who is firing until, CLICK!. He drops down to reload when, BANG! BANG! BANG! three bullet holes rip through the thin wood "protecting him". He drops to his belly, while:

-Miles, spots Kyle firing from the side of the downed table, and shoots through it, striking:

-Kyle, in his left hip, he falls, screaming in agony, holding his side while:

-Jack, still screams until:

-Warren peaks around the side of the bar and lines a clear shot on his head and BANG! Splits it in two, killing him.

-Amos, sees Warrens arm, takes aim for the wood and:

-BANG! Drops dead, Miles puts him down.

Dust settles, Blood pools, Wood splintered, Kyle groans in agony.

Miles stays down for a moment, calls out to Warren;

MILES (CONT'D)

Warren!

WARREN

Yeah?!

MILES

You alright?!

WARREN

Just fine! How bout them, any of em

(CONTINUED)

still standing?!

Miles stand up, sees Kyle moaning about behind the table.

MILES

Just one, but he's hurt!

Warren stands up from behind the Bar and slowly comes around.

Miles looks around -- Jesus christ.

He drops the rifle on the floor, it goes off - BANG!

WARREN

Christ!

MILES

Sorry.

WARREN

What a mess.

(then; re: Kyle)

What about him?

Miles goes over to him and kneels down, surveying the wound:

It's a strike just above the PELVIS -- Miles turns him over -- he sees no exit wound.

Warren comes to the doctors side --

WARREN (CONT'D)

Whaddya you suggest?

Kyle writhes in pain -- swimming in his own blood.

Miles turns Kyle over. He screams and trembles.

Warren's face churns to the sound.

Miles moves Kyles bloody hand away from his wound.

And holds it tight.

Kyle winces, grunts, all things done with minimal movement.

Warren looks down at the doctor.

Who looks back up at him, they share an understanding.

Warren pulls up a seat and sits down.

(CONTINUED)

Miles holds Kyles hand with a warriors respect.

Kyle's breath is truncated.

Each small rasp of air nicking away at his life.

Finally, he passes with a peaceful silence.

Miles lets go of his hand and puts it on his chest.

Warren gets up and leaves. Miles gets up from the floor and takes his seat.

With Warren gone, Miles reflects on his actions.

In the b.g, out of focus and over his shoulder is the SILHOUETTE of THE PAWNEE WOMAN from earlier.

She watches him. Miles never notices her.

HOLD.

HARD CUT TO:

BEHIND THE BAR--

Miles twists off a cap of WHISKEY and starts to glug it down.

OFF his glugging we:

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW (UNDERTAKERS OFFICE) - SAME MOMENT

Warren is puking his guts out on the wall. The undertaker is standing on the stoop of the backdoor, wacthing him.

A set of pre-made coffins are lined up out back.

WARREN (CONT'D)  
(wiping his lips)  
Christ...

UNDERTAKER  
Are you okay son?

WARREN  
I dunno.

UNDERTAKER  
Well, when you're ready, these coffins

(CONTINUED)

is what I got for right now, unless  
you need em bigger I cou-

WARREN

Quiet a moment dammit!

Warren takes brushes his hair back. Looks over to the  
COFFINS.

CAMERA LOOKS with him.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. GRIM HOLLOW (SALOON) - MINUTES LATER

CLOSE ON, the wheel of a CART digging into the main roads  
cold mud.

Then stopping.

CAMERA booms up, the Undertaker is lead by Warren, who's  
still queasy.

Warren lifts the front of wheel up onto the deck and pushes  
it through the swinging doors.

Undertaker takes a look at the carnage.

UNDERTAKER

My lord!

(sees Ned)

No!

Warren sniffles.

WARREN

Come on, help me with the bodies.

Miles comes up from behind the bar.

The bottle of whiskey half empty.

MILES

(to Warren)

Didn't know if you were gonna come  
back!

Undertaker is suprised to see him.

UNDERTAKER

Doc?!

(CONTINUED)

MILES  
Hello Jessie.

The undertaker, Jessie, sets the wheel down a moment.

WARREN  
Doc, you okay?

MILES  
Ask me again in an hour.

WARREN  
Alright then, but can you help with  
the bodies?

MILES  
Can I help you drag these poor souls  
into a wooden box?

WARREN  
Yes.

MILES  
Come on then.

Miles goes to Ned, sets the bottle down, and pushes him over  
the counter.

He falls hard.

WARREN  
Some respect Doc?

Miles throws up his hands. Picks up the bottle again. Downs  
the last drop.

Warren and Jessie start moving the other bodies.

Starting with Kyle.

Miles twists another cap off a bottle of scotch this time.

Warren and Jessie heave Kyle up and proceed to--

Amos. They heave his body onto the cart, right on top of  
Kyle.

Miles takes a few gulps and looks over to Ned.

He smiles and comes around the bar.

(CONTINUED)

He kneels down and puts the bottle near his lips.

ECU, a few droplets spot his cheek.

WARREN (CONT'D)

DOC!

Miles jolts back, snapping out of it.

RACK FOCUS TO WARREN, who is in the process of putting headless Jack onto the stack.

Once he's on, Warren and Jessie move to him and load Ned up top.

Miles stands back, drinking his Scotch.

Warren and Jessie wheel the cart out of the Saloon.

Miles gives them a smirk and goes back behind the bar where he sinks to the floor, drinking his scotch.

He knocks back enough and sets it down.

He listens to the quiet of the Saloon. Wind starts to pick up outside. Wood creaks.

He starts to whistle a tune. It carries over the following:

CUT TO:

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW (BEHIND THE UNDERTAKER'S OFFICE) - SAME

Jessie and Warren go through the bodies one at a time. Standing them up in the coffins.

Wind has picked up. The chill is harsher then before.

Warren and Jessie notice it as they slow down, blowing into their hands to combat the frost.

HOLD.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLSIDE, A MILE FROM TOWN - EVENING

Sheriff Tate treads down a trail with coldness in his eyes. He sips on a silver canteen. Miles whistling continues.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW - A BIT LATER

Tate comes slow into town, greeted by icy looks. He returns the favor and stops just in front of the Saloon.

He hitches up and goes inside.

Miles whistles crescendo. Stopping as soon as--

INT. SALOON - CONTINUOUS

Tate opens the door. His face almost drops as he looks around at:

Pools of blood.

Broken bottles.

Flipped tables.

Splintered wood.

He tip toes around the scene. Sniffles as he does so, not even caring at this rate.

He sets down in a chair.

FROM BEHIND THE BAR--

Miles slowly comes up with his bottle.

Tate draws his pistol, nearly shooting Miles.

TATE  
Fucking Christ!  
(holsters his gun)  
What the hell you doin back there?

MILES  
Passing the time.

TATE  
(re: the mess)  
You mind telling me what the hell's  
been going on here?

MILES  
Men being what we are.

TATE  
And that is?

(CONTINUED)



MILES  
Violent fools.

Miles takes a glug of his scotch.

TATE  
(re: the scotch)  
Fixing to share a drink?

MILES  
Sure.

Miles comes around the bar. Pulls up a chair. Sits across from Tate.

He hands him the bottle. Tate takes a swig.

TATE  
Where's Ned? Where's anyone?

MILES  
Ned caught a knife to the gut.

TATE  
Jesus...anyone else get hurt?

MILES  
He's dead. But, yes, others have gotten hurt.

TATE  
In this same instance?

MILES  
No sir.

TATE  
Would you mind spilling yer guts then?

MILES  
For another drink of that scotch.

Tate hands it back to him. Miles takes a sip. Puts it down.

MILES (CONT'D)  
Baxter got killed by that man I saved...Grady.

TATE  
(knocks back scotch)  
Dammit.

(CONTINUED)

MILES

He's in holding. Bill is waiting there. Waiting for you.

TATE

Why?

MILES

His family.

Tate knocks back a slug. He smiles.

TATE

I once saw a man hang himself, because he caught his wife with a stable boy.

(then)

He came to me...asking to have the boy hanged...he was twenty at that time. I told him there was nothing I could do, and later that night...his wife come racing up the steps with the devil on her lungs. When I found him, he was naked, strung up from the high beam of their bedroom.

Miles sips the scotch.

Tate smiles, then a tear forms at the corner of his eye.

TATE (CONT'D)

His wife hadn't done nothing with the boy...they told me all that happened...but the thought was something he couldn't bear.

(then)

If the make up in a mans mind can cause him to end his own life...I prayed I wouldn't have to see the devastation caused by reality.

He sobs, taking down the last gulp of Scotch. He looks at Miles.

TATE (CONT'D)

In the morning Doc, I want you to come with me, down to the Jail, then to Bill's house, alright?

With drunken eyes, Miles says;

(CONTINUED)

MILES

Yessir.

TATE

(pats his shoulder)

Thank you.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW - NIGHT

The good doctor stumbles down the dark street of Grim hollow. Everything is beginning to wind down. Business owners are locking their doors and citizens with their faces held almost in their hands, walk home.

A blanket of hollowness (no pun intended) drapes over the town.

Miles halts a moment as a WOMAN darts across the road with her children.

His eyes trace her disappearance in an alley.

Miles continues forward -- his gait affected by the booze, when...

...SNOW BEGINS TO FALL.

It's light. Flaky. Almost like ash.

He stares up at the dark sky. A few others join him. Some children hop around with smiles, holding their tongues out, catching the snow.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE, GRADY'S CELL - SAME

Grady presses his face against the barred window. He feels the cold and catches the snow.

He backs down from the bar and sits on his bed.

Warren watches him from the other side of the iron that holds him.

GRADY

First snow of Christmas.

Warren turns his head and looks past a sleeping Bill, out the

(CONTINUED)

window to see SNOW.

He looks back to Grady.

WARREN

I've never hung a man in the snow  
before.

GRADY

Since that day is approaching  
soon...do you have any feelings on it?

WARREN

None. I just wanna hear yer neck snap.

GRADY

Hmmm. You take pleasure in that?

WARREN

Not mostly.

GRADY

But with me its personal? Personal  
feelings don't always lead to a just  
decision.

WARREN

In this instance, I could give a damn  
about a just decision.

GRADY

You could not give a damn as far as I  
give a damn, but I'm certain Tate is  
gonna have an opinion that outweighs  
yours and rules in my favor.

WARREN

(chuckles)

I wouldn't be so sure.

GRADY

I've know stern types like Tate for  
the better half of my adult existence.  
He's a man that's married to his  
position first and foremost...he ain't  
gonna risk that love of authority for  
some spineless bastard like you.

Warren smirks, rolls a cigarette.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

INT. SALOON - SAME

The clear glass of WINDOW PANE fills the frame. Through it we see the townspeople frolicking under the snow. The CAMERA pulls back slowly. The window no longer fills the frame.

Now in FRAME, is Tate. He's drunk. Sitting among the dried pools of blood, shredded wood, and bullet casings.

He takes a swig of whatever it is he's drinking now and peers out of the window.

For the many town folk, especially after all the bleakness of the past couple of days, the snow is a welcomed omen.

Tate raises the bottle above his head, a toast to the imaginary, and brings the drink to his already tainted lips.

Done. He wipes away the drippings and slams the bottle onto the table. HOLD.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW - SAME

Men with their families. Store owners. Common people who wish to see better days, join underneath the night sky for an impromptu celebration. HOLD.

CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE, BACK ROOM - SAME

Doc's sleeping quarter's, consisting of a small cot, a night stand with a lantern, and a pile of books off to the corner of the room.

Miles sits at the edge of his cot, fiddling with the lantern on his nightstand.

He lowers the light, setting the lantern back down.

He removes his boots and collapses onto his cot, nearly sinking into it.

ANGLE ON, the WINDOW just above his nightstand. The low lantern light in the f.g, adding to the picturesque look of snow falling in the b.g.

HOLD for a few beats...

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO BLACK:

"FOUR MORE DAYS TILL CHRISTMAS"

TATE (V.O)  
Things is hard...I know.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NEXT MORNING

CLOSE ON, Bill, his eyes are devoid of any reasoning or understanding. No tears form. He's shattered as a person. The news has reached him.

A hand comes into FRAME, holding his shoulder.

TATE (O.S)  
We're gonna find who did this Bill,  
you have my word on this.

Bill looks up at Tate--

--Who is seated across from him.

The hand on Bill's shoulder belongs to Doc Miles. Warren leans on a desk. Tears in his eyes.

Grady sits coldly.

TATE  
I told the Doc last night...that its  
best we head on down to yer  
house...move some things around.  
(then)  
That alright with you?

Bill, with a shatterproof stare, nods at Tate who then gets up.

TATE (CONT'D)  
Come on then.

Frank Sinatra's "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas"  
plays over the following:

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. TOWN HOME - LATER

Still morning. Snowfall. Tate leads Bill, Miles and Warren to the entrance of the home.

(CONTINUED)

Miles and Warren stand outside. Bill and Tate head in, with Tate holding the door for Bill.

A weight of dread is placed on Bill's shoulders as he hobbles inside.

Tate is close behind him.

Bill leans his crutches against the wall. He hobbles to the:  
BEDROOM--

stands in the doorway and looks around. Cold. A capsule. Bill hops to the bed.

He eases himself into taking a seat on Missy's side.

He rubs her pillow, lifts it up, and sniffs it.

He holds it tight. Sets it back down.

Standing up, he makes way to his side of the bed.

And with great struggle, he manages to get down on one knee and pull out from the bottom drawer of his nightstand, a DERRINGER.

(A pocket pistol used by working women of the time.)

He glances over the bed at the doorway, sees nothing, and checks the derringer barrels -- its loaded.

Quickly, he drops the pistol into the pocket on his breeches, and struggles back to his foot.

He hobbles out of the room.

Tate pulls his crutches from the wall, hands them to him.

Bill ignores, stopping in front of the kids room.

He stares into it.

P.O.V: A window holds firm between two CHILDREN'S BEDS. Small streaks of sunlight dance through the glass and stretch along the wood floor. Then, as we stare into the room, the streaks begin to disappear and the room grows colder, darker. HOLD.

BACK TO SCENE--

Bill takes his crutches back.

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO:

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW, STAGECOACH STATION - SAME MOMENT

Three stagecoaches are lined up alongside the station platform. People disembark from the coaches. They stretch and yawn. Many of them meet the embraces of their family members.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL, LOBBY - LATER

Townsfolk with their visiting kin folk pack the lobby. We TRACK through the crowded lobby and find --

Bill, Miles and Tate.

They sit in the lounge furniture and wait.

Bill is a void. His stare has almost never left Tate since he heard the news.

Miles sits across from him, watching the craziness.

Tate smokes a cigarette.

Sinatra fades out...the rumble of the hustle and bustle shakes us.

REEVES, early 40s, owner of the hotel, fights through the crowd and approaches Tate and co. personally.

Tate stands up.

REEVES

Sheriff, how you doing?

TATE

Good. You seem busy, should I wait?

REEVES

Nonsense, I have Bethany filling the ledger.

TATE

I need to talk to you outside -- a favor.

REEVES

Of course.

(CONTINUED)



The two fight through the crowd, we FOLLOW them, out onto the:

EXT. HOTEL, DECK, GRIM HOLLOW - CONTINUOUS

Even the deck is littered with people looking for a room.

Tate and Reeves find a secluded spot to converse.

REEVES (CONT'D)  
Considering these past couple of days,  
with all this shooting and  
such...today is a blessing.

TATE  
For some, sure.

REEVES  
Could very well be that way for us  
all.

TATE  
I doubt it -- look, I need a room, for  
Bill.

REEVES  
I doubt the man would want to do a few  
nights away from his wife.

TATE  
That's the thing, his wife left, took  
the kids.

REEVES  
Really?!

TATE  
Yes...and he's real broken up about  
the whole ordeal, won't even step foot  
in his own home.

REEVES  
I couldn't imagine the pain.

TATE  
None of us could.

REEVES  
Although I reel for him, truthfully, I  
do. I just don't think it would deem  
responsible of me to hand out a room

(CONTINUED)

for free, especially during this time.

TATE

It won't be free. I'll pay with what comes of my salary.

REEVES

I couldn't ask that of you Tate.

TATE

You don't have to. Just make sure to keep him here while we work on the situation. Deal?

REEVES

I suppose so.

TATE

That's a big help Reeves, you have no idea.

REEVES

It would be my pleasure, although a pain.

(then)

I can't believe Missy would do something like that -- and take the children too?

Tate nods.

REEVES (CONT'D)

Its an oddity.

BETHANY, late 30s, storms out of the hotel and walks right up to her husband and Tate.

BETHANY

(to Reeves)

Its goddamn crazy in there, and you just leave me?! Stick me with all the signing and smiling and greeting--

REEVES

(jumping in)

Honey, honey! My love, the good sheriff here was asking me for a favor, and I accepted.

(then)

I need you to hustle back in there and fill out Bill's -- you know Bill don't

(CONTINUED)

ya?

BETHANY

The lumberman?

REEVES

Exactly. I need you to fill his name out on the ledger and find him a room.

BETHANY

(raising her voice)

Are you BLIND you damn fool?! It's belt buckle to skirt in there! There ain't no way we can squeeze him in!

REEVES

We can find something, now, run along my beauty.

Red in the face, she spins around and starts back to the hotel entrance.

Reeves smacks her bottom.

REEVES (CONT'D)

(to Tate)

Well, the hard part is outta the way.

Tate and Reeves walk back toward the entrance.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL, 2ND FLOOR, BILL'S ROOM - LATER

Nice. Well organized. Bill sits on the edge of the bed, thumbing around his pocket, feeling the derringer.

He stares blankly at a mirror -- HOLD.

Someone knocks on the door. Bill finds himself. Goes over to the door and opens it.

It's Bethany. She's come up to play hostess.

BETHANY

Hello, how ya doin?

BILL

Not good.

(CONTINUED)

BETHANY  
Is the room okay?

BILL  
It has a bed.

BETHANY  
Okay, well...you mind if I come in,  
talk to you for a bit?

BILL  
I would enjoy my privacy right now.

BETHANY  
I can understand, considering.

BILL  
Considering what?

BETHANY  
(whispers)  
I heard, about Missy and the children:

BEAT.

Bill gives her a death stare.

BETHANY (CONT'D)  
:I feel terrible about--

Bill lunges, GRIPS HER NECK -- shoves her out of the doorway.  
Slams the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW, GALLOWS - AFTERNOON

Tate and Warren stand on the deck of the gallows. Warren  
prepares a noose.

TATE  
This is the last goddamn thing I  
wanted to do .

WARREN  
(tossing the rope over the beam)  
And you think I did sir?

TATE  
That's not how I meant it. I just

(CONTINUED)

wanna know, why?

WARREN

Why what?

TATE

Of all the times we had, all the harsh winters, hot summers, all of it...why now...?

WARREN

(tying the knot on the noose)  
Maybe the big fella has it in for you.

TATE

There isn't a maybe in this -- its definite. Whatever he was stirring up has come to fruition.

WARREN

For most, like our friend in the cell, destiny is an already determined path with no fork in the road. Murder. The rope. The cycle of the fortunately unfortunate.

TATE

What was Murphy's path or my brothers?

WARREN

Well...its different for most. For Baxter, we saw how that ended. And for Dale...Dale was a good fella, just got too big for his own boots.

TATE

And Bill?

WARREN

God has mercy on those who've lost immensely.

TATE

This whole town has lost...people just days ago scrounged about looking for any ample amount of hope. And now...we gotta hang a fella.

WARREN

He's absent, I agree, but he's always mindful.

(CONTINUED)

He adjusts the rope with a tug over the beam -- its secure.  
Finished, he pats Tate on the shoulder.

WARREN (CONT'D)  
Come on old fella, lets go make our  
rounds.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

E.C.U, a LONG BEAD of WHISKEY slips down the side of a glass bottle. The bottle, brown in color, is half empty. Someone's been drinking.

The bottle is lifted out of FRAME and past it, we RACK FOCUS to Grady, behind the bars.

He's leaned back. Hands over his head.

The bottle comes back into FRAME, slamming down on the table as we cut:

WIDER--

The good doctor Miles is drunk but is persistent in his sophisticated manner, looking like a scholar while the booze works him.

In his left hand, he dangles the RUSTY KEYS to Grady's cell.

GRADY  
You should sober up Doc, might drop  
them keys.

MILES  
Yeah...

GRADY  
I mean, it's bad for yer health aint  
it?

MILES  
What isn't bad for your health?

GRADY  
In the short time that I've known you,  
you didn't seem like a drinking  
man...more of a book readin type.

(CONTINUED)

MILES

Therein lies the common misconception -- the Doctor -- the academic. He must be a reader if he's in any profession that doesn't involve horses or cows.

GRADY

Most of the time, that's the case, ain't it?

MILES

Yes, but in this instance, you'd be wrong.

(then; knocking back a drink)

Mr. Grady, why'd you come here?

GRADY

I told you already.

MILES

You have...but why? If he was this far out of your way -- nearly leading you to death, why come for him?

Grady gets close to the bars;

GRADY

I find some men more disagreeable than others. And sometimes, I'm fortunate enough to find their faces hanging on draft boards.

MILES

And you couldn't forgive him instead of bringing hell to our home?

GRADY

Could I, in this instance?

MILES

All men do a manner of things that are disagreeable, from the general store earner to the cloth. It's how we reconcile with our ability to do such things that shape us.

GRADY

My ability to kill didn't get me farther than this here cell.

(CONTINUED)

MILES

(holding out the bottle of whiskey)  
And mine got me here. In this damned  
bottle! On the other side of these  
damned bars, but confined to the same  
walls that follow you all over!

(takes another gulp)  
Only thing is now...you'll be  
freed...and I'll be here, waiting to  
join you.

GRADY

Freedom ain't what I'd call it  
necessarily.

MILES

You toss turn and toil in that cot  
ever since you did what you did, and  
finally, you will have the opportunity  
to be rid of it...and it isn't freedom  
enough.

Grady sits back on his cot;

GRADY

In Texas, I once saw a man who  
survived the gallows. As soon as the  
lever pulled, the rope snapped, and he  
broke his spine. Fella could never  
walk again.

(then)  
He was judged by the almighty right  
there and then.

MILES

What was his crime?

GRADY

He took a young woman's maiden head.  
Forcefully.

Miles shakes his head -- Christ.

GRADY (CONT'D)

I've been a cold bastard since my  
youth, I'll swear to that. But, I  
ain't never been a kill crazy  
cocksucker neither. I've had pistol  
holstered till need be. I've had my  
knife tucked into my boot till need  
for stabbing. I have observed and

(CONTINUED)



served the law of this unfair  
country...and all I have now is a rope  
to show for it all.

MILES

Accolades are buried deep by those who  
don't wish to share the silver.

(then)

For years...I rode with those  
bastards, searching for some  
redemption, some justice for the  
things I saw, things I did. Everything  
went dark. My heart. My faith.

(pause)

I killed with impunity, because I  
followed orders. I killed for a  
greater cause, I understand that...but  
where the hell is my reward...my  
peace?

GRADY

Peace dies in the valley of sinners  
I'm afraid Mr. Miles. And if hell is  
where I'm going...I'd like my senders  
to work for it.

Grady EYEBALLS the keys.

Miles can't even notice, he instead raises the bottle and  
says:

MILES

To hell.

He takes his last huge glug, finishing the bottle, tossing it  
to the floor.

It SHATTERS in a corner;

HOLD.

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. VARIOUS - LATER

Afternoon. In the SALOON, two guys scrub the floor while a  
third picks up the tables and a forth restocks the shelf with  
new bottles of whiskey, tequila, gin, etc.

--We see Warren and Tate making their rounds, on horseback,  
conversing.

(CONTINUED)

--We see the NOOSE, swaying delicately in the harsh wind.

--People shopping inside the General store. The store owner helping out some customers.

--Reeves standing behind the concierge desk in the lobby of the hotel, YAWNING. Match cutting to:

--A CLOSE UP, of Bill putting the derringer in his mouth, finger on the trigger. He doesn't go through with it.

--The BELL TOWER on the town CHURCH. The Bell rings out. Afternoon service.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - LATER

About forty minutes later. Citizens from far and right here, pack the pews of the church. The windows are beautifully ordained with an almost GOTHIC FRENCH finish that can't somehow escape it's Americanisms.

Its the service the town has regularly, before the one on Christmas eve and the one on Christmas day.

FATHER LEONARD stands at the head of the church. From the behind the podium, his voice ROARS; crazy evangelical.

FATHER LEONARD

My friends! My family! My humble townsmen! You think the lord cannot hear you...but I assure you he does! Over these past few days we have experienced the most awful sins, the most AWFUL! Murder! MURDER! What does one great lord instruct his children not to do!?

EVERYONE IN THE CHURCH

Thou shall not kill!

FATHER LEONARD

Yes my friends! Thou shall not kill! And when we open our gates, our lovely home to the mouth of the devils agent, what has been delivered upon us!?

EVERYONE IN THE CHURCH

SIN!

(CONTINUED)

FATHER LEONARD

And all of us being lovely, god  
fearing Christians, what is our duty  
if we are meant to directly serve our  
lord?!

EVERYONE IN THE CHURCH

ABSOLVE SIN!

FATHER LEONARD

And the only way my children, to  
absolve sin, is to throw it in the  
holy fire!

(then)

Burn bright the flesh of sin and cast  
it into the red sea! Let it never be  
found in our homes, our minds, our  
bodies ever again!

EVERYONE IN THE CHURCH

AMEN!

FATHER LEONARD

Never shall we, the anointed servants  
of the lord Jesus Christ, Never shall  
we wash our hands -- BATHE, in the  
blood fountain of sin!

EVERYONE IN THE CHURCH

Amen!

FATHER LEONARD

Now my children...

(bringing it down)

...now let us bow our heads in prayer  
for those who have fallen in these  
past few days.

Everyone bows there heads. A couple children play fight.  
Their mother reprimands them silently. They bow.

FATHER LEONARD (CONT'D)

Good lord...powerful lord...lover of  
man and the universe...see to it,  
please see to it, we ask of you...to  
find a home in your kingdom for these  
men. For these souls that have been  
taken from us by the devils agent. And  
may you look kindly on their flaws.  
Amen.

(CONTINUED)

Everyone says amen, besides one woman, who cries and rushes out of the church.

People turn and look at her. Leonard corrals them back in.

FATHER LEONARD

Ned was a beautiful man. A great father. Most of you knew him well...all too well.

The crowd chuckles.

FATHER LEONARD (CONT'D)

Now, I know most of you that have hailed from beyond our humble little heaven, have wandered in at the end of its downturn. And I'm sure, your friends and family have asserted the details of the goings on here, unto you, and I'm sorry for that.

(Then)

But my friends...my children...on the eve of our lords great birthday...we absolve our selves of SIN!

EVERYONE IN THE CHURCH

Amen!

HARD CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - SAME MOMENT

Miles has fallen out of his chair, asleep. The keys that dangled from his finger have slid across the floor, a little ways from the steel bars that hold Grady.

Grady, desperate, red in the face, pushes his arm through the bars, extending towards the keys.

He's trying with great strain -- nothing.

He inhales a HUFF OF AIR and tries again -- he nicks the edge of the keys just a bit -- not too far out of reach.

Same tactic -- he inhales -- reaches for it.

He gets closer...

...almost...

...ECU, his fingers grazing the rusty surface, when...

(CONTINUED)

SQUEAK! the front door opens, footsteps hurry to the keys.

Warren drops his boot hard on Grady's fingers -- breaking one of them -- skin rising up off the others.

Grady jolts all the way back to his cot, gripping his fingers, shouting:

GRADY  
GOD FUCKING DAMMIT!

WARREN  
YEAH YOU SLIPPERY SON OF A BITCH!

In all the commotion, Miles wakes up.

Grady grabs his arm, carries him off the floor.

Tate walks in now.

TATE  
(over Grady's shouting)  
What the hell happened?!

WARREN  
(re: Grady)  
Sneaky cocksucker almost acquitted himself!  
(to Warren; banging on the bars)  
Shut the hell up!

Warren muffles his scream and stares at Warren with SEARING HATRED.

TATE  
(to Miles)  
Doc, you alright?

MILES  
(groggy)  
Just...fine.

WARREN  
We told you to keep an eye on em!

MILES  
I did.

WARREN  
No you god damn didn't, fucker almost--

(CONTINUED)

TATE

(to Warren)

Shut the hell up, alright? Yelling at him ain't gonna make mucha difference if you caught the fella red handed.

GRADY

Broken handed.

TATE

Shut up dammit!

WARREN

Talk again and the other hand is going!

TATE

(to Warren)

Dammit Warren, Quiet!

(to Miles)

Doc, lets go outside, huh?

Doc lazily nods. Tate takes him by the arm to:

EXT. BEHIND SHERIFF'S OFFICE, GRIM HOLLOW - CONTINUOUS

Tate sits Miles down on a barrel. He slumps over inch by inch. Tate leans against the building.

TATE (CONT'D)

I see you been hittin the drink again.

MILES

Didn't know it was so obvious.

TATE

Maybe you should speak with Father Leonard. Find some peace.

MILES

(chuckle;hiccup)

We can't find peace anymore Lyle. I sit up most nights fantasizing the concept.

TATE

Maybe that's the crux of your situation.

MILES

My problems come with me from the other side. I've walked through hell sheriff. Swore I'd never damn another to such a fate, and here I am.

(CONTINUED)

TATE

Alive and healthy, as healthy as the  
drink will allow you to be, yet you  
sit here, moping.

Beat. Miles raises from the barrel.

MILES

I earned the right dammit! I've earned  
that much in my sorry life! The  
neglect I've dealt to others, those I  
love, I live with the moment everyday!  
If I mope, god forgive me for not  
being a soul that finds the battle to  
live, not worth fighting!

TATE

Then give up damn it! Here--  
(gives Miles his .45)  
--take it!

Miles looks at it a beat -- looks away.

TATE (CONT'D)

(holsters pistol)

Sit down.

(miles does so)

I know what you've been through son, I  
understand. To love someone and have  
to let go, I understand. But you have  
to stop locking into these strange  
codes of honor. It doesn't suit our  
kind.

Silence. beat.

Tate turns to go back inside. Miles says:

MILES

You hang that man...and you'll damn  
us.

Tate absorbs the comment -- proceeds inside.

HOLD on Miles.

CUT TO BLACK:

"CHRISTMAS EVE"

Over the black screen we hear the gathering of a CROWD,

(CONTINUED)

murmuring over one another, then...

DING! DING! DING!

The church bell ringing.

Then...the sound of wind, not whipping and whirling, but rigid enough, followed by...

...a METAL GATE OPENING, and we:

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - MORNING

We still hear the crowd. The entrance to his cell is opened wide. He's still holding his fingers tight.

WARREN (O.S)  
Get right with the lord, we leave in  
three minutes.

A gun cocks O.S and we:

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. BILL'S ROOM, HOTEL, SECOND FLOOR - SAME MOMENT

CLOSE UP, the derringer is dropped gently into Bill's pocket.

WIDER--

Bill is dressed in a thick coat, wearing a crutch under his right arm. He hobbles to the entrance.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW, GALLOWS - SAME MOMENT

Miles stands amidst the crowd, the same crowd we've hearing. It's snowing now, like really snowing.

He's wearing a thick coat with his deputies badge pinned on it.

He looks on to the--

HANGING NOOSE--

which is swaying from the wind.

(CONTINUED)



Then, he turns in the crowd and sees:

THE PAWNEE WOMAN, standing there watching him. He turns forward quickly. HOLD.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - SAME MOMENT

Father Leonard bundles up, kneels by a pew and lets out a quick prayer before marching out the door with a bible in hand.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - SAME MOMENT

Tate and Warren subdue Grady, who winces because his fingers. They march him out the front door with a rifle pointed to his back.

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW, MAIN ROAD - SAME MOMENT

Grady is marched down the ANGRY STREET of Grim hollow. Some citizens who haven't gotten to the main show are standing on the decks, hurling things at him.

He doesn't care.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW, GALLOWS - MINUTES LATER

Nearly everyone has gathered. Miles watches from the crowd. Father Leonard and Bill are two of the last to straggle in.

Warren and Tate march the poor sod up the steps of the gallows. Everyone gets silent as Warren slides the noose over down his neck and tightens it.

Tate steps up to the front of the deck. Warren operates the lever.

TATE

In this county, we, like every other county in the Nation, have laws. We have the laws of the land...and the law of god. When we decide to break those laws we are met with the most dire consequences.

(then)

(CONTINUED)

The man you see before you, is known  
 56as Corver Grady. He's a man you all  
 sought to rescue him, when he was in  
 need. Well, today he is standing here,  
 awaiting judgement, because your  
 slapped your hand away and in turn  
 offered his own hand...

Tate's speech continues as we cut to:

BILL--

who, in crutches, is moving at a pretty reasonable pace.  
 Pushing through the crowd.

TATE (O.S) (CONT'D)  
 ...his own hand of violence. He's as  
 stone cold of a killer as they come.  
 Calculated and deceitful.

Bill is further up the crowd now, thumbing around in his  
 pocket.

TATE (O.S) (CONT'D) (CONT'D)  
 And to this killer, who has no morals  
 or sense of God, I say...I hope he has  
 room in his heart to accept a man with  
 your capacity for evil.

BACK TO THE GALLOWS--

Where Grady shouts;

GRADY  
 (to all)  
 I was serving a damn bounty you fuckin  
 fools! Ask yer Sheriff!

TATE  
 Your intentions were impure. You came  
 here with malice in your heart. And  
 that telegram came back by the way,  
 that fella, the sheriff, never worked  
 with you a day in his life.

GRADY  
 Bullshit!

TATE  
 (to Warren)  
 Lets proceed.

(CONTINUED)

Warren gags Grady and we cut to:

BILL--

who is out past the crowd. He shuffles around in his pocket a beat and pulls out his derringer.

MILES--

sees Bill. A shocked expression comes over him and he starts fighting through the crowd.

TATE--

walks down the staes of the gallows, muttering to himself, angrily.

WARREN--

starts on the lever.

BILL--

positions in front of Tate, aims the derringer, Tate is surprised, then...

POP! Bill fires a shot into Tate's shoulder.

Tate falls on his back, reaches for his holster -- POP! -- gets shot in his arm--

THE CROWD--

is startled, starts to scatter.

MILES--

Was too slow and is getting moved in the direction the crowd intends. It's pandemonium as--

WARREN--

stops with the lever, rushes down the steps up the Gallows with rifle drawn, sees Tate on the ground and Bill with his back turned trying to run.

WARREN

(to Bill)

Turn around now dammit! NOW!

Bill turns slow, derringer still in his hand -- Warren shots

(CONTINUED)

him -- dead.

MILES--

Somehow broke free, rushes to the gallows, past Warren who slings his rifle over his shoulder and goes to help Tate, and up the steps:

On the deck now, he unsheathes a SMALL KNIFE he's had in his boot for many a year and goes over to Grady, and cuts him down, and removes his gag.

Grady with his left hand, thanks Miles, when:

Warren rushes up with his rifle drawn.

Grady WHAMS Miles in his face, causing him to drop his knife.

Grady picks it up, turns Miles forward and places it on his throat.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Let em go!

GRADY

Let me go!

WARREN

Can't do that!

GRADY

Then you best be getting outta my way!

Grady steps to Warren, holding Miles, they ring around and Grady and Miles walk backwards down the steps, stopping at:

Tate. Grady notices his bloody mess. He moves Miles to the side and says.

GRADY (CONT'D)

(to Tate)

Sheriff.

TATE

Cocksucker.

Grady slams down on his face with his boot. Kneels down with the knife hand still pointed to Miles's neck and--

Grabs Tate's .45.

(CONTINUED)

He swaps the knife with the gun and sticks it to Miles's temple.

MILES  
(to Warren)  
Goddamit, shoot!

Warren doesn't. He follows Grady all the way out to the:

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW, MAIN ROAD - CONTINUOUS

It's desolate. People are hiding. Snow has filled the muddy street.

Grady makes it all the way to the Stables. Kicks the door open and hold.

Warren attempts at a proposition.

WARREN  
Grady, you seem a reasonable feller.  
Let me alone with the doc...I'll let  
you ride on outta here, got it?

GRADY  
Being reasonable ain't a strong suit  
of mine and i'm all the more inclined  
on just keepin the good doctor till  
I'm safe assured.

WARREN  
I'll bet you are...but the offer  
stands, its your move.

Grady and Warren get into an almost vintage WESTERN STARE DOWN.

ECU, Warren's eyes. Although in the freezing cold of a mountain town winter, Warren is still able to sweat profusely.

ECU, Grady's eyes. Calm. He's been in this scrap before, just too many decades ago.

ECU, Miles eyes. Darting around, fixing themselves on--

THE PAWNEE WOMAN--

She shoots a smile and then walks away, her black hair flowing behind her. A WOUND IN THE BACK OF HER HEAD. HOLD.

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO:

WIDER--

beat.

Grady shoves Miles out in front of him.

GRADY  
(to Warren)  
Have em!

BANG!

Grady shoots Miles in the back of the head!

WARREN  
(screams)  
NOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

Grady, fans the HAMMER!

BANG! BANG!

Two shots hit Warren in the chest and in his head!

Grady holsters the .45. Looks around. Goes over to Warren's body.

He extends his arm. Holds out his fingers. And steps on them.

Then he spits in his face.

GRADY  
What a fuckin mess.

Grady proceeds into the stable. We stay outside a moment until:

WHEW! He rides out hard, one hand on the reigns, out of town.  
HOLD.

We settle on the silence. Then cut to:

C.U Miles. A window in his head.

C.U Warren. Same ordeal with a whole in his chest to match.

CAMERA pushes in on him, until...

MATCH CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW, GALLOWS - SAME MOMENT

CLOSE ON, Tate, who is FRAZZLED. Shaking awake to his injuries. He groans. Looks around. Bill is dead. He teeters slowly to his feet.

HOLD.

TATE (V.O)

County newspapers couldn't get enough  
of what was told to em. Fellas came  
from all around, asking.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW, STABLE - MINUTES LATER

Tate sees Miles and Warren. He drops to his knees.

TATE (V.O) (CONT'D)

I told them what I could, even if it  
didn't matter.

(then)

All manner of fellers came hunting for  
his head...none ain't ever come back.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - PRESENT - EVENING

Russ Stigman, the rough and tough bounty hunter from the first scene, sits still with a cigarette between his lips. Tate is still across from him.

RUSS

Listen Sheriff, yer concern is  
appreciated. But I've killed bigger  
bastards than this white trash.

TATE

I'm not uncertain of yer capabilities  
son. I'm uncertain of my judgment to  
let you go on with this.

RUSS

I ain't no kid...I bury my head in  
things I choose to bury it in. It was  
only a matter of time before my entire  
body went with it.

Silence. Beat.

(CONTINUED)

TATE

Alright then. You catch the son of a bitch, you bring him here. Nowhere else. No matter where he is.

RUSS

Sure thing.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRIM HOLLOW, SALOON - EVENING

Russ walks up to his pony and unhitches it. Holds the reigns tight with one hand. Reaches into his saddle bag.

He pulls out a ROSARY.

Then, he locks his eyes tight and prays to himself before throwing it back in the bag and latching it up.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Camp set. Dinner ate. Russ writes in his journal. Closes it up. Casts it aside.

He stares up at the stars and goes to sleep.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKOTA PEAK - DAY

A small, and I mean SMALL, logging community. A few cabins made from local timber make up most of what you see, along with a saloon.

The locals greet Russ in a friendly way. He makes his way to the saloon.

CUT TO:

INT. SALOON - MORNING

Its small in here as well. More of a Tavern. A few tables and the bar.

Russ walks over to the bar and speaks with the bartender, O'SHEA.

(CONTINUED)



RUSS (CONT'D)  
(to O'shea)  
Howdy.

O'SHEA  
How ya doin? Drink?

RUSS  
No sir...I'm looking for someone.

O'SHEA  
Don't tell me, its that same Grady  
feller every scar's been comin in here  
askin for.

RUSS  
That'd be him. He say where he's  
going.

O'SHEA  
No...I had the sense he weren't too  
friendly. Didn't say much, just drank.

RUSS  
Any idea what direction he rode in?

O'SHEA  
He wasn't riding, but sure--

RUSS  
Whaddya mean he wasn't riding?

O'SHEA  
He took the coach line.

RUSS  
How far that coach take a person?

O'SHEA  
Texas. Even some parts of Mexico I  
reckon.

RUSS  
Alright then...thank you.

O'SHEA  
No problem.

Russ leaves.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

INT. STAGECOACH - LATER

Trotting down a rocky path. Russ is alone, bobbing about, looking at a photo of his FAMILY.

Two kids -- Little Girls. And his wife.

He folds the photo down, crosses his chest, closes his eyes.

FADE TO BLACK:

The sound of a town plays in our ear...children playing...Spanish language...-- HOLD.

FADE UP ON:

EXT. PUEBLO DEL LOBO - DAY

Sun blazing. Sand white hot and dry to the touch. It's a small grazing town a few miles away from the border.

Russ is wearing different clothes, more fitted to his surroundings.

He goes to a cluster of LOCALS seated under a partially torn tarp. They're sweating by the fucking gallon.

RUSS

Uhh...hola. Speak..English?

The most of them just look at each other shaking their heads, when a YOUNG WOMAN approaches him, speaking in a broken English.

YOUNG WOMAN

Aye, si -- yes, me speakeh, Inglesa.

RUSS

Okay then. I'm looking for someone.  
Looking.

YOUNG WOMAN

Si!

RUSS

(takes out Grady's poster)  
Have you seen this man -- Gringo?

She examines it, takes it from him. Shows it to the others.

They all nod a positive collective. She hands the paper back

(CONTINUED)

to him and points up the road.

YOUNG WOMAN

He live...up...en una pequeña villa.  
Small house.

RUSS

Just up that way?

YOUNG WOMAN

Si!

RUSS

(folds the paper down)  
Thank you. Gracias.

She smiles and goes to sit back down with the others.

Russ turns away from them and goes to mount his mule.

He rides out of town.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DESERT - LATER

Sun still being a bastard. Russ is posted on a ridge line, wiping sweat away from his brow. He takes a drink from his canteen -- his last drop.

He continues on.

NEW ANGLE. HIGH. RUSS TROTting WHITE HOT SAND.

Pressing forward...he stops a moment. Scans his surroundings. Sees a small column of smoke pluming just over the near horizon.

It could very well be a mirage, but he doesn't care at this point and keeps going.

CUT TO:

NEW ANGLE, MEDIUM. CAMERA OVER HIS SHOULDER.

he sees the top of a SMALL PUEBLO VILLA just like the woman said, with a chimney protruding out the top of it.

He wipes the sweat from his brow once more and checks the ammo on his SIX IRON -- FULL CYLINDER.

He holsters the gun and goes toward the house.

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO:

EXT. PUEBLO VILLA - CONTINUOUS

Dead quiet. A tumbleweed whistles by. The only sign of civilization being the chimney.

Russ dismounts, takes out his revolver, and goes over to a window.

P.O.V:

the home is DARK. The only light shown visible is the fireplace.

Russ stares inside for a beat until he hears...FOOTSTEPS approaching from his side.

He quickly spins around, meeting the gaze of the infamous Corver Grady.

Grady is sickly looking. Russ points the barrel straight in his face.

Grady puts up his hands -- fighting a cough as he does.

RUSS (CONT'D)

Turn around.

GRADY

(raspy voice)

I'm in a bad way mister.

RUSS

Turn!

Grady turns. Russ puts the barrel in his back.

RUSS (CONT'D)

You're a real busy fella Mr. Grady.

GRADY

(Coughing)

Yeah...real busy. You a bounty hunter?

RUSS

Handbill's in my pocket.

GRADY

You ever took a bill before fella? Or you come all this way to:

(CONTINUED)

Before he can even finish he lets out a violent cough, almost falling forward.

Russ, still keeping the barrel on his back, looks over his shoulder, seeing some blood on his hand.

Grady is slow to rise, breathing STRAINED and TRUNCATED.

GRADY (CONT'D)

Excuse me, I'd like to sit a moment.

Russ makes no fuss about it. He keeps his gun up, but lets Grady sit in a chair near the entrance of his home.

RUSS

What's the matter with you?

GRADY

T.B.

RUSS

Christ.

GRADY

Its a real son of a bitch, I tell you that.

Grady notices his tensivity.

GRADY (CONT'D)

Sit you fool. I ain't going nowhere.

Russ sits, pistol pointed at Grady's belly.

GRADY

Must've not taken you long to find me.

RUSS

Five weeks.

GRADY

Better than the others.

RUSS

Where are the others?

GRADY

Dig enough graves and you start to grow an immunity to it -- lose count.

Russ looks around. Back to Grady.

(CONTINUED)

RUSS

How'd you catch t.b?

GRADY

While I was on the run from that disaster I caused, I shacked up with a lumberjack with the most awful cough. Stay under a roof that long...it was bound to happen.

(then)

I can't even visit my son...just my punishment, huh?

RUSS

The lord has a plan for all of us.

GRADY

The lord is a fuckin con man.

He starts coughing.

RUSS

If that was true, he wouldn't have offered you mercy -- let you live all out here like this.

GRADY

No...he knows...this punishment, this is the most fitting for me. Solitary.

RUSS

There's still time to repent.

GRADY

...No. Hell, it ain't too bad.

RUSS

You shouldn't say that.

GRADY

I speak truth. Shit, this is hell enough.

RUSS

You still have family -- a son.

GRADY

Ever since his momma...well, that boys had enough of me for ten lives.

He coughs again, violently.

(CONTINUED)

RUSS  
I'm guessing you won't make the trip.

GRADY  
Not exactly.

Beat.

RUSS  
Well, then--  
(cocks the hammer back)  
--you ready?

CUT TO:

NEW ANGLE. TWO SHOT  
the b.g is out of FOCUS. Russ and Grady offer each other  
stares that detail plenty about their persons. Where they  
been and where they'll meet.

Grady watches him with preparation. Russ leans back  
slightly...BANG!

Grady slumps over in his seat. A few draws of raspy breath  
heard leaving him.

Russ sits a moment.

CUT TO:

EXTREME WIDE SHOT.  
dust, hot wind, blazing sun. Hell if there were ever a  
description more applicable. The plume on the chimney  
continues to crawl to the heavens and we watch.

HOLD.

FADE OUT:

THE END.//////////