

The Royal Nonesuch

by

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OCTOBER 25, 2018

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FADE IN:

EXT. SUNNY CALIFORNIA BEACH - DAY

The shining sea of the Pacific Ocean. Waves applaud as they kiss the shore.

WISE VOICE (V.O.)

It is a worthy thing to fight for  
one's freedom. It is another sight  
finer to fight for another man's.  
Mark Twain.

SUPER: CALIFORNIA, 1867

A BRIGHT STREAK illuminates the sky as it plunges to the earth. A fiery METEOR ROCK cools as it skips across the water's surface several times before making one last leap into the air.

The rock thuds into a mound of white sand thirty yards inland. A tall man wearing a top hat and carrying a dusty coat approaches it.

Drops his coat, viewing the ocean in all its majesty.

He removes his hat, revealing the well worn and wrinkled face of ABRAHAM LINCOLN. His greying hair and mustache-less beard are unkept. A large GAUZE BANDAGE covers his right ear.

Falling to his knees, he pulls papers and a nib pen from his coat. Finds a blank page.

LINCOLN

(as he writes)

Blessed mother... It is most  
regretful you will never read this.  
You would delight at my description  
of Magellan's Sea beckoning me to  
her hemline. I am eager to read it  
myself, having not yet written it.

Rewards himself with a thin smile.

LINCOLN

My desire to see California is  
fulfilled. My dreams of viewing Mar  
Pacifico are realized. This very  
day her seabed will be my pillow.  
Rest, at last.

He looks into the water, staring into his past.

INT. FORD'S THEATER - PRESIDENTIAL BOX

MARY TODD LINCOLN beams, leaning in.

MARY

What will Miss Harris think of my hanging on you so?

EXT. SUNNY CALIFORNIA BEACH - DAY

Lincoln picks up the meteor. His long fingers turn the rock over, inspecting it.

INT. FORD'S THEATER - PRESIDENTIAL BOX

The President and wife steal looks. Laughing together.

In the shadows behind, a Man raises a pistol.

EXT. SUNNY CALIFORNIA BEACH - DAY

His memories are disrupted by the HAMMER OF A PISTOL being cocked. Turns his good ear toward the sound.

LINCOLN

It all ends here, I'm afraid.  
Another hour and you would a' never caught me. An explanation is in order.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

I don't need an explanation, mister. Just your wallet.

Lincoln stands to see the caricature of a cowboy, CLIFFORD, a young man of seventeen.

LINCOLN

(surprised)

Who in blazes are you?

CLIFFORD

Your wallet. Don't make me shoot.

Squinting, Lincoln eyes the barrel of the gun. Part of the barrel is bent and rusty. Looks empty.

LINCOLN

It's an absurd waste a'your last bullet if you're not just wavin' an empty gun at a tired old man.

(MORE)

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

Another fella will be along shortly. He's followed me quite some distance, so I know he means business. Suggest you refill your ammo before he arrives.

CLIFFORD

This here's killin' steel. You have my word.

LINCOLN

Then shoot me and be done with it.

Abraham bounces the meteor rock in his hand.

LINCOLN

I'm a stone's throw away from finishing a very long journey. I'd prefer to be alone.

CLIFFORD

Long journey from where? You come all the way 'cross the desert?

LINCOLN

I've crossed more than just deserts.

He winds up to toss away the rock. Pockets it instead.

Clifford holsters his revolver and grins wide.

CLIFFORD

Hell's fire, mister. You're a tough guy. Just the type I'm lookin' to have join my gang.

Lincoln shakes sand from his coat.

LINCOLN

You've got a gang now, do you? Where are they? Must be lost without you there to lead them?

CLIFFORD

Just joined up with 'em. I'm from Midsummer's Notch. You know the place? Come back with me? I can put in a word for you.

LINCOLN

Give them two. No thanks.

With a tip of his hat, he starts down the length of the beach. Clifford chases after.

CLIFFORD

Don't know what you're missin'.  
Free to travel the world. Free from  
the laws of man.

LINCOLN

Freedom from you is all I need. No  
more gangs, tribes or fellowships.

CLIFFORD

This gang's different. They go  
around disguised as a circus. While  
they're puttin' on a show they rob  
everyone's money from the bank.

LINCOLN

We have a gang like that back east.  
It's called Congress.

CLIFFORD

Never heard of 'em. This one's  
better though, 'cause I'm in it.  
Come with me, please? I could  
really use your help.

Fuming, Lincoln turns on him. Cliff backs away.

LINCOLN

I'm done helping people. Spent my  
whole life in the service of  
humanity and what did I get for it?

Clifford trips, falling to the sand.

Points over Lincoln's shoulder.

CLIFFORD

That the guy chasin' you?

On a cliff overlooking the beach sits a DARK HORSED FIGURE.

LINCOLN

How far to this town of yours?

CLIFFORD

Coupla' hours.

LINCOLN

Let's skedaddle then.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Lincoln hastily crosses a field of chaparral, occasionally looking over his shoulder. Clifford struggles to keep up with the taller man's strides.

CLIFFORD

Who is that guy?

LINCOLN

I've yet to make his acquaintance.

CLIFFORD

He wanna kill you?

LINCOLN

Death doesn't scare me.

CLIFFORD

You're scared of somethin'. No worries. Our gang'll flee so far the devil won't find us.

LINCOLN

Why so anxious to get me in this gang?

CLIFFORD

There's this woman, see.

LINCOLN

Ah, now the plot thickens.

Up ahead stands a MULE, firmly planted in place facing the distant mountains. Lincoln heads for it.

CLIFFORD

She recruited me special. Saw her at the tavern when they first hit town. Had two beers and was lickin' on my third...

INT. GRIZZLY NOEL - NIGHT

Clifford lowers his glass to see two MEXICAN DWARFS carrying luggage to a staircase. Behind them stands MABEL, a sexy dark-haired woman, thirties.

CLIFFORD (V.O.)

Had a case of Irish courage, so I elected myself the welcome committee.

He swaggers over, taking off his hat.

CLIFFORD

Ma'am, I think you're the prettiest  
lady to ever set leg in this town.  
And a fine set at that.

(red-faced)

I mean your legs.

MABEL

That so?

She shoves him against the wall. He's stupefied as she starts fondling him. Drops his hat.

MABEL

I'm no lady, cowboy. Your belt's  
gettin' awful tight 'round your  
middle here. Gonna have to take  
that off. Then where you gonna  
stick your gun?

CLIFFORD

Ma'am?

EXT. FIELD - DAY

The Mule doesn't move an inch as Lincoln nears. Clifford catches up, chatting up his good ear.

CLIFFORD

That's when the Negro feller comes  
over, Samuel. He's the leader of  
the gang, if you can believe that.

INT. GRIZZLY NOEL - NIGHT

Dressed in a suit of bright colors and impeccably clean compared to the dusty lot around, SAMUEL, a dark-skinned man in his twenties, looks Clifford over.

SAMUEL

Easy on him, Mabel. Who's this  
stock of a lad you gone got in ya'  
coil?

CLIFFORD (V.O.)

Clifford I say. 'Cause that's my  
name.

MABEL

Got a deal for you, little  
Clifford. You wanna make a deal  
with a devil like me?

SAMUEL

You wanta be free of this place?

Cliff gulps in the affirmative.

CLIFFORD (V.O.)

She leans in real close to my ear,  
breathin' on me...

MABEL

Gather up some other able bodied  
young men like yourself who can  
perform a service for our company.  
Do that and I'll perform a service  
for you.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Lincoln grabs the Mule's reins and checks its eyes and ears.  
It barely notices.

LINCOLN

Not sure if it's your eyes or your  
ears that are failing. She said  
able bodied young men. I'm hardly a  
qualified candidate.

CLIFFORD

Ain't no other young guys in the  
Notch right now. All off with the  
Mayor fightin' savages. Closest I  
could find was Jimmy Wilkens and he  
ain't nothin' but twelve.

Satisfied with what he sees, Lincoln mounts the Mule. The  
animal only twitches its ears.

LINCOLN

Which direction to this Notch?

Clifford points to the Northeast.

Lincoln clicks his tongue and yanks the reins. Mule doesn't  
budge.

CLIFFORD

So whaddya call yourself?



LINCOLN

Answer to most anything, including rascal. In the past some have called me Paul.

Slaps the Mule's butt. No effect.

CLIFFORD

Tall Paul. That's a good outlaw name. Gonna change my name, soon's I find one I like. Gonna be an outlaw one day. Famous too.

Clifford takes the reins and YANKS with all his might. All he gets is a defiant SNORT. Abe dismounts.

LINCOLN

Infamy is easy when you're out to destroy. Harder but more fulfilling to build prestige. Lifelong work.

CLIFFORD

This your mule?

LINCOLN

I thought it was yours.

He points to the Northeast. Clifford affirms. They set off that way.

Few paces in, Lincoln stops abruptly. Scans the horizon.

No sign of the Dark Horsed Rider.

He ponders the Mule.

CLIFFORD

Must be waitin' for someone. He sure looks lonely.

LINCOLN

If he's trying to choose who among us is the ass, he's not alone.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROCKY INCLINE - DAY

Clifford helps Lincoln ascend a cairn-like hill.

CLIFFORD

Wasn't but a month ago they went and burned down the church.

(MORE)

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Been empty since the preacher ran off with the schoolmarm, but was a waste of a good bonfire. God don't take kindly t'folks dancing round his house when it's ablaze.

LINCOLN

You're talking about the Natives? The ones who were here first?

Cliff plants down on a large stone at the hill's top.

CLIFFORD

Who else? Godless savages, I say.

LINCOLN

The white man has run them from their homes, stolen their land, slaughtered their food source and killed untold numbers of their children. We call them savages?

Uses Cliff's shoulder as a crutch to pull himself up to the zenith. Turns back at the sea.

*I shall return.* He descends the other side.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN - DAY

Clifford leads as they near a small town with large brick buildings in the center, tapering off to shacks and tents around the edges.

CLIFFORD

Don't blame you for wantin' to see the ocean. I visit t'think sometimes. Where I found this gun. Never got bullets for it. Just wear it to show up the other boys. Made me feel real low seein' them in uniform going off to war.

Looks to Lincoln for a reaction. Nothing.

CLIFFORD

You don't talk much do you, Paul?

LINCOLN

I find it's better to keep your mouth closed and let people think you're a fool than to open it and remove all doubt.

Cliff stops to digest this. *Seems important.*

Lincoln gets a good look at the town.

A group of boys white-washes the town's fence. One of their number sits on a barrel eatin' an apple as the others work.

Clifford catches up.

CLIFFORD

Here we are. Welcome to Midsummer's Notch.

Passing under a wooden sign with the town's name, they enter the flow of traffic on Main Street.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

A bustle of activity. Women, children and elderly men move between the parade of horses and cows. The people are majority white with a diverse minority of Mexican, Asian and Middle-Eastern people.

At the north end of the street sits a large Boarding House. To the east is a small Livery Building next to a large two-story Bank. Across from it sits the Town Hall.

Further south is a tavern whose sign reads The Grizzly Noel. Small vendors line the road.

Lincoln gawks at the myriad of society in amusement as Clifford leads the way.

CLIFFORD

With all the men away the women been pitchin' in, doin' all the work. Even I was workin' at the livery a while, but my head ain't into people askin' for stuff all the time.

They huddle around a fruit cart tended by a Young Woman.

CLIFFORD

Only men worth a damn 'round here work for Sheriff Matis.

He points to a mustached man, late forties, bearing a silver star-- SHERIFF MATIS. A younger, dark haired man, DEPUTY RANDALL loiters with him near Town Hall.

CLIFFORD

That's a man you don't want to cross. He's always throwin' me in the clink when mischief finds me.

EXT. TOWN HALL - DAY

Matis eyes his pocket watch as Randall struggles with a mouth full of tobacco. Sheriff sees Clifford pointing at him.

MATIS

Randall, who's the big, tall and ugly talkin' to Clifford?

Randall spits out a wad so he can talk.

RANDALL

Dunno. Looks familiar, don't he?

Spits again, spilling juice down his shirt.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

While Clifford chats up the Fruit Vendor, Lincoln looks over to a group of barefoot children making life and noise.

The leader of the group is JIMMY WILKENS, twelve, wearing a paper cowboy hat. He and two other boys have wooden guns. They flank PEDRO, a Mexican boy of ten, and nine-year-old SIMON. The latter both wear feathers in crude headbands. Three Young Girls huddle close by.

SIMON

Why do I always have to be an Injun? I wannabe a soldier.

JIMMY

Yer not big enough t'be a soldier and you got no gun. 'Sides, yer friends with Pedro and he is an Injun.

PEDRO

Am not. I'm Mexican.

JIMMY

Same thing, you ask me. Come on,  
you gotta capture our women an' try  
to steal our scalps.

Simon wrinkles his nose at a pretty girl of eight, SARAH.

SIMON

What would I wanna steal her for?

Sarah shows him her tongue.

EXT. LINTON'S LIVERY - DAY

Sarah's mother, SUSAN, mid-thirties, is unloading bags of grain from a parked wagon. She spies Sarah with the other kids.

SUSAN

Sarah! Get over here.

Sarah leaves the group as SILAS GRANGER, aged feller who owns the wagon, approaches.

GRANGER

Now, Susan, you let me help you  
unload all this grain.

SUSAN

Mr. Granger, loading and unloading  
feed is how I feed my family.  
You're not tryin' to starve my  
child are you? Any news from the  
front?

GRANGER

News were cows, I'd be a rancher  
with no steer.

SUSAN

Sooner its done the sooner I can  
leave this wretched place. Sarah,  
I've told you a hundred times to  
stay away from that Wilkens boy.  
He's nothing but trouble.

SARAH

We were playing cowboys an'  
Indians.

SUSAN

Thank goodness you're neither.  
Means you can go check your  
grandmother. Make sure she's drawn  
some breath and eaten lunch.

SARAH

Do I have to? She smells like old  
shoes.

SUSAN

When she bounced you on her lap did  
she complain of your smell? She  
didn't. Now go'on.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Sarah walks dejectedly away. Lincoln offers a smile. She just  
stares up as she walks by.

Turning her head, she catches a BRIGHT FACE poke out  
momentarily from behind a hitching post.

She stops to see the head of a man with a bushy beard, his  
face painted like a clown. This is EDMUND.

Closer, from an identical post pops out a nearly identical  
man, also in clown face. This is DAYLAND.

Like mirror images, they step into the street. Dayland bangs  
on a COWBELL as they do a do-si-do. They capture everyone's  
attention and bring traffic to a halt.

EDMUND

(theatrically)

Everyone, gather around! No time  
for questions, no time for frowns!  
A circus in this town is found!

The kids jockey for position as the mob encircles. Susan  
wades through to Sarah's side. Simon's mother, MRS  
BLANKENSHIP, late twenties, pulls him close.

OLD MAN WILSON, sixties, pushes his way to the front.

EDMUND

Don your ties and fashion gowns,  
one night only within these bounds.  
Hear the sounds from the courts of  
crowns. Best part yet? We be the  
clowns!

Lincoln and Clifford find themselves behind an old, dark-haired woman, BARBARA, and a plump MRS WILKENS, thirties, along with her litter of tow-head children.

BARBARA

Look!

The crowd gasps as Samuel leads his troupe into the center. The two Mexican Dwarfs leap, tumble and run along the circle.

Mabel holds aloft a PYTHON for all to see. She's followed by an Arab SWORD SWALLOWER walking on his hands.

SAMUEL

People of Midsummer's Notch! We a traveling troupe from the palaces of Europe and the frozen tundras of Alaska...

MRS BLANKENSHIP

I hear Alaska's real nice!

SAMUEL

One night only, I present the Amphitrite Menagerie & Circus! Featuring masters of clown and magic, Edmund the Greater and Dayland the Lesser!

The clowns make grand bows. Dayland lets out a loud FART.

The kids giggle as Edmund pulls a bouquet of flowers from his brother's butt.

EDMUND

Foul winds bear flowerful fruit!

He throws the flowers into the crowd. Mrs Wilkens catches them, gushing.

SAMUEL

Charmer of snakes an' bitter as venom, I give you the deadly Mabel!

Mabel teases the kids while Edmund and Dayland run down a side street.

MABEL

No men around, you ladies could use a long snake!

Susan grabs Sarah and leaves for the livery, disgusted.

EXT. SIDE STREET - DAY

The clowns run to a horse trough.

SAMUEL (O.S.)  
No object is too sharp for the  
sword swallower, Oliver Cutthroat!

They splash water on their faces, washing off the make-up.

Dayland grabs a carpetbag from behind the basin.

EDMUND  
(sourly)  
I thought you put fresh water in  
here? Smells like horses have  
helped themselves to our washbowl.

Dayland points down. Edmund's standing in horse droppings. He scrapes his shoes and grabs a jar of powder from the bag.

Pelts Dayland with powder. The mute coughs and blinks it out of his eyes.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

One Dwarf leaps onto the other's shoulders.

Everyone cheers as he performs a SOMERSAULT FLIP.

SAMUEL  
Glick and Flick, blessed with  
acrobatics and other feats unknown  
to normal beings!

Randall's riveted. Flashes a tobacco grin at the Sheriff. A tall, bushy bearded man in buckskins, BUTLER, joins them.

BUTLER  
What's going on?

MATIS  
Circus is in town.

The Sword Swallower pulls his saber from his gullet in front of wide-eyed kids. Jimmy Wilkens is impressed.

JIMMY  
I wanna to try that.

Edmund prances back wearing a pink dress. Old Man Wilson's pipe drops. Lincoln eyes Clifford. *Disgraceful.*



SAMUEL

Even have a bearded lady! One night only! Two pennies a person. Half price for children. Tonight at yon Grizzly Noel.

OLD MAN WILSON

The Noel? Don't circuses have tents?

PRIEST (O.S.)

Stop in the name of God!

The circle opens as the crowd murmurs. Marching up is a goateed PRIEST, thirties, in black robes and an Irish accent. He's joined by two Hooded Exorcists sporting large crosses.

TOM COLLINS, bank manager in his fifties, and MR SPECTOR, a mustached lawyer in his fifties, leave the Bank just as the two groups converge in front of them.

MR SPECTOR

What in God's name is going on?

PRIEST

Devil's name more like it, sir. This circus is an abomination! Not meant for eyes of Christians.

Gasps from the ladies.

Only Matis sees a face peer out from behind curtains on the top floor of the Bank. This is MR. SPINNA, Bank owner.

MATIS

Enjoy the show.

Lincoln watches the Sheriff go inside Town Hall.

SAMUEL

Why do you plague us? We jus' humble, meek players. These smart people. They can judge what's good for they children.

PRIEST

From the authority of God, it's revealed that one among them carries the demon Azekyal!

The crowd gasps though none recognize the name.

SIMON

Who's that?

His mother covers his mouth.

SAMUEL

All lies. We are God-fearin'--

Dayland bursts forth, scattering children as they run away. Wearing crude horns, his mouth opens in a mute scream. He charges the Priest.

Priest pulls a bible, stopping Dayland cold.

Hiding behind others, Edmund uses a HORN to provide the demonic voice. His brother mimes the words out of sync.

EDMUND

(speaking for Dayland)

I will crush you, puny man. I am Azekyal. I ate the bones of Adam and devoured the cities of Babylon. I am all powerful.

PRIEST

Not as powerful as the Protestant church and the glorious might of Jesus Christ!

Unseen by the crowd, an Exorcist brushes black paint onto his cross. Slips it to the priest.

PRIEST

I command you, demon! Leave this host and return to the depths of hell. You're forever banished 'til the day of judgement and the moment a'rapture. Out with you!

Presses the cross to Dayland's forehead. He shakes until the Priest pulls away. A black imprint remains on his brow.

Dayland collapses. Crowd gasps. Many cross themselves. Lincoln frowns at the spectacle.

PRIEST

The holy water!

Priest takes the bottle. Spits out the cork. A Lucky Woman catches it.

The water washes away Dayland's powder. Priest grabs a black scarf from the mute's coat and wrestles with it.

An Exorcist sticks a lit match to the end of the scarf.

Disappears in a FLASH of flame.

Crowd cheers. Priest faints into the arms of his companions.

Lincoln shakes his head, walking away. Clifford follows.

Edmund ditches his dress and runs to Dayland's side.

EDMUND

Saved! The demon-- gone. May God  
bless you.

PRIEST

God has already blessed me.

EXT. TOWN GATE - DAY

Lincoln heads for the hills. Clifford blocks him.

CLIFFORD

Where you goin', Paul?

LINCOLN

I may have been born a fool but I  
won't make a career out of it. I'm  
goin' back to the ocean.

CLIFFORD

Ocean'll still be there in the  
mornin'. They're just drummin' up  
business for the show. Like puttin'  
on a play.

LINCOLN

I've lost my fondness for plays.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Samuel raises his hands. Smiles at the crowd.

SAMUEL

We gone get ready for the 'mazement  
tonight promises. Come one, come  
all! One night only!

The Circus Gang marches away. The crowd ogles the Priest.

PRIEST

I'm drained. Would someone kindly  
show me your church?

OLD MAN WILSON

Church burned down.

BARBARA

Injuns burned it down. They did.

PRIEST

I'll settle for a nice hotel then.

GRANGER

Boarding House's full. Only place  
left's the whorehouse, Reverend.

The Exorcists swap smiles. Crowd descends into gossip.

EXT. TOWN GATE - DAY

Abe and Cliff watch the Circus Gang enter the Grizzly Noel.

LINCOLN

Why help rob the bank in your own  
hometown? Ain't it like stealin'  
wheels off your own buggy?

Samuel beckons Clifford to follow him.

CLIFFORD

Don't own a buggy nor much else.  
Anyone got a dollar in the bank's  
got least two under a pilla'. Just  
hear 'em out?

Lincoln sighs, surveying both gate and tavern.

LINCOLN

Well, I'm already here.

CLIFFORD

That's the spirit. Let's go be  
outlaws!

INT. GRIZZLY NOEL - DAY

Cigar smoke dances in the sun beams as Lincoln and Clifford  
walk through the swinging doors. The wooden bar is hosted by  
an elderly BARTENDER with a patch over one eye.

Half the room is raised into a stage with footcandles and  
poorly hung curtains. One wall has a long staircase.

Throughout are the Circus Gang, a couple of bawdy women and a  
few drunks. An Asian Man sits smoking a hookah.

Mabel smokes at one end of the bar. Cliff rushes to her while  
Lincoln sits at the other end next to Edmund and Dayland.

BARTENDER

What can I bend your elbow with,  
mister? We met somewheres before?

LINCOLN

Don't think so. Beer will be fine.  
My first drink in a long time.

Mabel blows smoke in Clifford's face.

MABEL

(whispering)  
Where'd you find him?

CLIFFORD

Caught him combin' the beach.

MABEL

Should'a thrown him back. Not  
exactly what I had in mind, cowboy.

CLIFFORD

He's really smart. My word on it,  
he'll do a damn fine job.

Flicks her cigarette at him, leaves.

Bartender sets Lincoln's beer down. Abe eyes it suspiciously.

A toothless drunk, NELLY FARGUS, wakes up from his chest and  
waves his empty mug.

FARGUS

Whassthe matter? I'll have 'nother.

Bartender fills a glass and slides it down the bar. Lincoln  
is about to pick up his own beer when it EXPLODES, hit by the  
sliding glass. Both beers pour into Lincoln's lap.

EDMUND

Drinks are on you, friend. I am  
Edmund the Greater.

LINCOLN

I go by Paul.  
(looking down)  
It's a pleasure.

EDMUND

This is my brother, Dayland the  
Lesser. Forgive him for not  
introducing himself. He is mute.

Lincoln stares at the cross on Dayland's forehead.

LINCOLN

We all have our crosses to bear.

Edmund spits his beer, laughing. Clifford brings a towel. Dayland's all smiles.

BARTENDER

Ready for another?

Ignores him. Dries himself off.

LINCOLN

You two are brothers?

EDMUND

Twins-- switched at birth.  
Originally I was the mute one.

Samuel joins them. Raises a brow at Lincoln.

EDMUND

Seems our new friend has a drinking  
problem. Be well to introduce him  
to our friends in the temperance  
movement.

SAMUEL

Don't have no friends in the  
temp'rance movement. Over here.

The Priest and Exorcists enter as Samuel and gang sit at an isolated table near the stage.

Priest goes upstairs. Exorcists sit at the bar.

INT. GRIZZLY NOEL - TOP OF STEPS - DAY

Mabel peeks down at the group as the Priest joins her.

MABEL

Cowboy and that old critter are all  
we could cull.

PRIEST

Sheriff's gonna have to make a  
loftier lynching post's all.

INT. GRIZZLY NOEL - DAY

Lincoln spies Mabel and Priest talking. *What's this?*

LINCOLN

You're not concerned with that Priest discovering your plot?

EDMUND

Course not. He's in on it.

SAMUEL

Don't know what Cowboy told you, but bottom fact is we only here for the money in the bank.

LINCOLN

You're thieves. Why all the pomp?

SAMUEL

Confusion, distraction, deception. Holy men say stay away, naturally everyone gone go.

EDMUND

Not thieves, exactly, friend Paul. We're magicians. Magic and crime are akin when done right.

CLIFFORD

How so?

EDMUND

Any magic trick, from simply pulling a penny from your ear--

Reaches for Abe's bandaged ear.

EDMUND

Er, your other ear.

Plucks out a penny. Clifford's in awe.

EDMUND

--To making Dayland here completely vanish, you have to distract the audience. You mesmerize them with your left hand while the right hand does the magic and... voilà!

Dayland is no longer in his seat.

LINCOLN

Great trick if used on the right people.

EDMUND

The circus, the priests-- we are  
the left hand. You are the right.

CLIFFORD

We rob the bank!

SAMUEL

You lookouts. Scares away anyone  
gone see us. Warn us if any law  
types comin'. You up for it, old  
timer?

CLIFFORD

This here's Tall Paul. An outlaw of  
old. Got people chasin' him from  
all over.

SAMUEL

Got rooms upstairs. With a girl if  
you want. Food's awful but hot. Ten  
dollar from the take. Each. How  
that sound?

CLIFFORD

I'll take mine with a girl.

LINCOLN

And if I'm not up for it?

Clifford's breath catches. Got serious real quick.

EDMUND

I'll make you disappear.

LINCOLN

I'll take the room and food. I  
won't do it for profit.

Samuel smiles. Cliff exhales. A LADYBUG lands on Lincoln's  
shoulder.

SAMUEL

Got a bug on you.

He takes a swing. Lincoln grabs his wrist.

SAMUEL

You gone crazy put a hand on me?

LINCOLN

I have an affection for ladybugs.  
I've never harmed one and don't  
mean to let anyone do it for me.



Lets Samuel go. The bug flies off.

SAMUEL

No bugs die long as you work for us. Rooms upstairs.

(to Edmund)

Where's your brother?

EDMUND

A true magician never reveals his secrets.

INT. MABEL'S ROOM - DAY

Samuel enters to Mabel futzing with her dress.

MABEL

Help me. Can't wait to shed this skin.

He leaves her in just a corset. Pulls her into a kiss they both enjoy.

SAMUEL

What do you think'a our lookouts?

MABEL

Quite a contrast. Like us.

SAMUEL

Not sure I trust the old man.

MABEL

He's just as senile as Clifford is stupid.

He grabs a whisky bottle. She lays on the bed.

SAMUEL

Gives me the fantods. Tonight's our last show, Mabe. We gone go off somewhere after. Hear Alaska's real nice.

MABEL

Why can't we go to a country that's more... open minded?

He lays next to her, his head on her chest.

SAMUEL

Somewhere I can marry you? Best be  
no trouble tonight. Need trouble  
like I need a hole in my gut.

EXT. TOWN HALL - DAY

A bearded soldier, WAYNE, late twenties, staggers to the side  
of the building. Bloody hands cover A HOLE IN HIS GUT.

Scans the area. Coast is clear.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Matis plays with his pocket watch, feet up on the desk.

Randall hangs on the empty jail cell while Butler tracks a  
fly buzzing around.

An oily man, forties in a fancy suit-- ADRASTUS BLUB, fidgets  
with a military dress saber hung at his side.

MATIS

You and Butler hide out front.  
Randall in the back. Grab the loot,  
arrest the lookouts. Town will be  
fine so long someone hangs for it.

BUTLER

And the circus freaks?

MATIS

Woman stays here. The others--

Wayne BURSTS in. Butler and Randall draw their pistols. Blub  
dramatically draws his sword.

MATIS

Hello, Wayne.

WAYNE

Sheriff... Mayor's comin' back.

Matis sits up, waving the others to disarm.

MATIS

When is the Mayor coming?

WAYNE

'Morrow mornin'. Had to warn you.

He collapses. Sheriff jumps to his side.

MATIS

Randall, grab the doc. Butler, hand me that whiskey.

Matis waves the whiskey under Wayne's nose. That did it. He wakes to a vision of Blub standing over him.

WAYNE

This hell? That the devil?

MATIS

Adrastus Blub. Blub, this is Wayne.

BLUB

A plesss-eyore. I asssewme you are a town solssier?

Wayne chugs rye, hoping Matis'll translate.

MATIS

Soldier. Blub's a lawyer. Mr Spinna brought him in.

WAYNE

What's with the sword?

BLUB

Prefer the ssseword to a gun. Worn it since the Great Sussession, all through the See-vile War. Was it a ssseword that pierced your abdomen?

Wayne takes another pull.

MATIS

Why's the Mayor coming back?

WAYNE

Knows we burnt down the church, not the Injuns. Wants to stop the war. I don't wanna die, Sheriff.

Matis quickly dons hat and coat, irritated.

BLUB

Should be fine with suffisssiant medical attensssion.

Blub flinches as the door SLAMS. Wayne passes out again.

EXT. MAIN STREET - SUNSET

Less busy. Matis is none too thrilled heading for the Bank.

INT. LINCOLN'S ROOM - SUNSET

Lincoln watches Matis from the window of a small and simple room. Rubs the meteor rock, gathers paper and pen.

Wedged at a small table, he speaks as he writes.

LINCOLN

My wondrous Mary, I joined the  
circus today...

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Lanterns come down an alleyway like fireflies, slowly revealing the townspeople that hold them.

Torches and candles flicker over the line forming outside of The Grizzly Noel. Noisy chatter dances everywhere.

The Priest is giving grace down the line. He lays hands on Jimmy Wilkens' head.

PRIEST

Bless you, sweet child.

JIMMY

Get yer damn hands off me!

PRIEST

I'm merely tryin' to save your soul  
from the fires of hell and the pit  
of everlasting torment.

JIMMY

All I know yer castin' spells to  
send me there. Take it back!

PRIEST

Lovely child.

JIMMY

Take it back er I'll punch ya in ya  
red nose, you bog-trotter.

PRIEST

I take it back in the name of the  
father, son and holy ghost.

JIMMY

Take your ghost wichya too!

INT. GRIZZLY NOEL - NIGHT

Bartender's busy as the place fills up. Glick plays a violin as Flick collects the admission fee. Barbara scoffs as she makes her way to a seat.

BARBARA

Two cents better be worth it! Well,  
it better.

Mr Spector and the affluent folk populate the front tables while the minorities are in back. Samuel peeks out from the curtain. Spector notices, confides to Tom Collins.

SPECTOR

Nigger man among them, I see.  
Perhaps we can look forward to one  
of their native dances.

INT. GRIZZLY NOEL - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Samuel closes the curtain, enraged. *They get what they deserve.* Brings a smile to his face.

Mabel and Dayland tie a corset on Edmund. He winces.

EDMUND

Not so tight. You don't want me  
going from bust to burst.

Clifford and Lincoln have never seen anything like it. Samuel's a wanted distraction.

SAMUEL

Outside, boys. Make sure the  
street's clear. Once we gone in,  
warn us if the law comin'.

CLIFFORD

How d'we warn you?

SAMUEL

Know any bird calls?

LINCOLN

Wouldn't say I'm a master of it.

SAMUEL

Never heard a'no birdcall master.  
Make sures I can hear it.

Edmund pulls a dress over his head.

EDMUND

How do I look?

Dayland wiggles flirty fingers at him.

INT. GRIZZLY NOEL - NIGHT

Jimmy gets to the head of the line and drops a rock inside the penny basket. Flick grabs him and digs out the stone.

FLICK

Hold it, chu little cheat. Since whenza rock worth two pennies?

JIMMY

Who you callin' little? Paid my two cents fair.

FLICK

That case, I raise you fee to four cents.

JIMMY

You're daft.

FLICK

Argue-- It's the same for da rest.

All in earshot shout at him. He knocks Glick's bow, screeching the violin. Grabs his rock and bolts.

INT. LINTON'S LIVERY - NIGHT

Sarah watches out the window as Jimmy runs off.

SARAH

Circus is startin' soon.

Susan sweeps the floor, flustered.

SUSAN

Whole place has been a circus since your father left. Only difference is they're chargin' people.

SARAH

They've got clowns.

She brightens Susan's day.

SUSAN

We've got our share of clowns. Why is it you want to go? Fear you'll be left out of tomorrow's gossip?

SARAH

The clowns.

SUSAN

When your father returns and we're in a big city, I'll take you to a real circus. With monkeys.

She touches up the folds of a PINK DRESS on display.

SUSAN

If no one buys it, I'll don this dress as we roll out of town.

SARAH

When will that be?

SUSAN

Wish I knew.

She watches Clifford and Lincoln pass by outside.

EXT. BANK - NIGHT

Clifford pulls his pistol on approaching the darkened Bank. Lincoln's eyebrows advertise his disapproval.

CLIFFORD

Whaddaya think, Paul?

LINCOLN

Put the gun away. Go check the other streets. I'll stay here.

CLIFFORD

Don't make a run for it. Lotsa crabs on the beach at night. Take your legs off.

Clifford's off. Abraham witnesses the last people file into the tavern. The street's his.

INT. GRIZZLY NOEL - NIGHT

Chatter dies down as Glick and Flick take the stage, lighting the footcandles.

Sword Swallower sits at the TACK PIANO in the corner and begins a honky-tonk circus tune.

The Dwarfs begin a dance for the tickled audience.

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Lincoln ears the music as Sarah runs from the livery. Susan shines her lantern at him.

Small girl ain't afraid of the tall guy. Sarah goes at 'em.

SARAH

You part of the circus?

Kneels to her level.

LINCOLN

Now what makes you think that?

SARAH

You've got a funny hat and a funny beard and a funny face.

SUSAN

Sarah, you're rude. Apologies, sir.

LINCOLN

She is simply being honest, ma'am. A facet that chisels away as we get older. Did you not think my appearance a bit unusual?

SUSAN

I saw you with Clifford Johns. Be careful of that boy. He and mischief are tarred with the same brush. He's had a hard life. 'Scuse me, I'm Susan and this is Miss Sarah Jane Linton.

LINCOLN

Distinctly my pleasure, ma'am. You too, Miss Sarah Jane.

SUSAN

What do we call you, sir?

LINCOLN

Paul.

(standing)

Tall Paul.



INT. GRIZZLY NOEL - NIGHT

Flick is atop Glick, arm's wide.

FLICK  
From the palaces of kings...

GLICK  
And the tundras of Alaska...

Spector leans in to his friend.

SPECTOR  
I hear Alaska's nice.

GLICK & FLICK  
The Amphitrite Menagerie & Circus!

Flick FLIPS to the stage. Cheers as Samuel runs out, bowing.

SAMUEL  
Ladies and gentlemen, we have performed to royalty and blue-bloods. Kings and emperors. Now it is our honor to grace the stage of this marvelous town!

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

The Priest and Exorcists peek out from behind a porch while Lincoln talks to the ladies.

SUSAN  
It's tough times, war and all. Came here to make an honest living. Nothin' honest 'bout this town no more. Mayor's a good man... but the Sheriff runs this town. Rich run him.

LINCOLN  
Sounds like more damage being done here than the front lines.

SUSAN  
Mr. Paul, I have work at the livery if you can stay a while. Got an extra room. It's unpleasant work, but you won't go hungry.

LINCOLN  
Sounds tempting, but I'm only passing through.

SUSAN

Sleep on it. Can feed you at least  
before you leave. Say good night to  
Mr Paul, Sarah.

SARAH

'Night.

He waves as they walk off into the night.

LINCOLN

Another job offer.

EXT. SIDE STREET - NIGHT

Clifford kicks dust, bored. Hears somethin'. Heads that way.

INT. GRIZZLY NOEL - NIGHT

The show continues.

SAMUEL

As promised, we have sword  
swallowers, clown jugglers, snake  
charmners and--

Piano chords build the suspense--

SAMUEL

An authentic Bearded Lady!

Sam leaves. Edmund prances out to jeers and catcalls.

EDMUND

I can read your minds. You're  
asking-- What's a beautiful gal  
like me doing in a place like this?

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Bearing a heavy SLEDGEHAMMER, Samuel meets up with the Priest  
and Exorcists. They hurry to join Lincoln by the bank.

PRIEST

Awful friendly with that woman.  
Chased her off without a kiss?

LINCOLN

I've broken no commandments,  
Father. You're free to covet.

SAMUEL  
 Button up, both you.

INT. GRIZZLY NOEL - NIGHT

Dayland creeps behind Edmund, finger to his lips. Makes crude gestures to the audience's delight.

EDMUND  
 What you should be asking is how  
 did a gal like me get to be so  
 beautiful? One word. Any guesses?

FARGUS  
 Broke mirror!

EDMUND  
 That's two words.

EXT. BANK - NIGHT

The Exorcists pull crow-bars from their cloaks. Samuel leads them to the Bank's front door.

Priest tries the knob. Turns freely.

PRIEST  
 It's unlocked...

INT. GRIZZLY NOEL - NIGHT

Glick and Flick join Dayland on stage. Flick climbs on Glick's shoulders. The three raise a colorful blanket.

OLD MAN WILSON  
 Snake-oil!

SPECTOR  
 Abortion!

Crowd loves it. Edmund gestures to the blanket.

EDMUND  
 Magic is the word. Magic is the  
 cure! Before your very eyes I will  
 now transform myself from a vixen  
 to a clown!

EXT. BURNED OUT CHURCH - NIGHT

Jimmy's henchmen paint Pedro and Simon into clowns. Jimmy wears his shirt as a turban. He searches the ruins for just the right stick.

Clifford rounds a corner, catching them in the act.

CLIFFORD

What in blazes y'all up to?

PEDRO

We're puttin' on our own circus.

SIMON

We're the clowns. They're doing the acrobats...

Jimmy's found a stick he likes. Shakes it at Clifford.

JIMMY

And I'm the sword swallower. Now pay up. Four cents. No, six cents.

CLIFFORD

Who do you think I am having that much cents?

INT. BANK - NIGHT

Priest and Samuel move furniture out of the way.

The Exorcists encircle a large safe of metal and wood. They stab it with their crowbars.

EXT. BANK - NIGHT

Lincoln hears water running. Investigates.

Can just make out a man in the shadows. Whoever it is, he's pissing on a porch.

Across the way he sees another man's boots hidden behind a vendor's cart.

LINCOLN

Aw, to hell with this.

Shakes his head. Strides off to the Noel.

INT. GRIZZLY NOEL - NIGHT

Edmund shimmies behind the cloth. Hooks the bottom of his dress to the blanket while the crowd catcalls.

EDMUND  
(projecting)  
A lady needs privacy while  
changing.

Old Man Wilson elbows Barbara.

OLD MAN WILSON  
Just like you, Barbara. No lady!

She belts him.

EDMUND (O.S.)  
Disarrange what is strange. On this  
stage, rearrange a change!

Dayland and the Dwarfs yank the blanket up. Edmund's only in his corset. The players feign embarrassment.

They cover him then drop the curtain-- Edmund is instantly in a fancy suit and full clown make-up.

Hoots, hollers and applause.

EXT. BURNED OUT CHURCH - NIGHT

Jimmy mimes swallowing the stick. Clifford's not impressed.

One of the boys tries to balance on the other's shoulders but end up falling in a heap.

CLIFFORD  
Ain't nuthin'. I joined up with the  
real circus. Leavin' with 'em  
tonight. Gonna be a fire juggler  
too.

PEDRO  
If you joined the circus, why  
aren't you in the show?

CLIFFORD  
Stupid. Gotta get trained first.  
Well, boys, this is the last you'll  
be seein' me. Don't be followin' me  
neither.

He walks away. Jimmy throws his stick at him.

INT. BANK - NIGHT

BANG! Samuel pounds the hinges with the sledgehammer.

EXT. BANK - NIGHT

Muffled BANGS echo in the night.

Wayne steps out of the shadows of the Boarding House.

Butler leaves his hiding spot.

INT. GRIZZLY NOEL - NIGHT

Edmund beams as Glick and Flick unfold the colorful blanket to the length of the stage.

EDMUND

Now for the trick that impresses  
kings, embarrasses queens and puts  
the court jester in stitches! With  
your help, I will make Dayland  
disappear. Volunteers?

Hands shoot up immediately.

INT. BANK - NIGHT

One last smash breaks through the hinges.

Priest and Samuel bump shoulders to peer inside.

INT. GRIZZLY NOEL - NIGHT

Spector and Tom Collins hold the ends of the blanket.

EDMUND

Spread the magic veil. All the way  
to the end of the stage.

They comply. Edmund jumps down and walks among the crowd.

EDMUND

To prove magic exceeds all  
distances I will proceed to walk  
away from the stage. Further,  
further... Vanishing, vanishing...

INT. BANK - NIGHT

Priest and Samuel peer into the safe.  
Empty save a shiny object near the back.

INT. GRIZZLY NOEL - NIGHT

Edmund waves his hands, edging his way to the door.

EDMUND  
Gentry, lift the veil ever so  
slightly...

Spector and Collins obey. Dayland's boots are still there.

EDMUND  
Now lower, lower, lower. That's it!

INT. BANK - NIGHT

Samuel picks up the shiny object. A single penny.

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Blub, Wayne and Butler draw blades, converging on the Bank.  
Clifford rounds a corner by the Noel. Bumps into Lincoln.

CLIFFORD  
What's goin' on?

LINCOLN  
A trap. Get inside.

The Sheriff stomps down the Town Hall steps, gun drawn.

CLIFFORD  
We gotta' warn 'em.

He lets out a loud BIRDCALL. The deputies spin toward the sound.

Lincoln yanks Cliff into the Noel.

INT. GRIZZLY NOEL - NIGHT

Abe and Cliff stop short-- the entire crowd stares at them.  
Edmund's eyes go wide with surprise.

INT. BANK - NIGHT

Samuel and Priest lock eyes. Worst case scenario.

SAMUEL  
We've been duped.

PRIEST  
Back door.

THUDS pound the front door from the outside.

Back door flies open. Randall freezes in shock. Samuel PUNCHES him out, flees with the Priest into the night.

Front door CAVES IN as the Exorcists collect their tools.

Butler hurls his knife. One Exorcist screams and drops.

The other holds up his crow-bar defensively.

Blub meets him with his saber.

INT. GRIZZLY NOEL - NIGHT

Lincoln and Cliff casually melt into the crowd as Edmund makes his way past.

EDMUND  
Vanishing... vanishing...

INT. BANK - NIGHT

The Exorcist and Blub clash swords. Blub playfully parries before calmly slashing the Exorcist's throat.

Blood splatters Wayne's face.

INT. GRIZZLY NOEL - NIGHT

Edmund stands at the entrance, the crowd enthralled.

EDMUND  
Vanished!

He dashes out the swinging doors. Everyone staring. The doors swing slower and slower. Waiting for something.

Anything?



Everyone turns in synchronicity to the stage. As if on cue, Spector and Collins drop the magic blanket.

Dayland's boots stand empty.

A great cheer goes up. Lincoln rushes Clifford up the steps.

INT. BANK - NIGHT

Matis arrives to Blub licking his sword. Butler dislodges his knife.

Sheriff checks the safe.

WAYNE

No loot, Sheriff. Couple of 'em  
went out the back.

Randall holds his bloody nose.

RANDALL

(muffled)  
Hid me in da node.

MATIS

Spread out. Find one of them. Any  
of 'em.

INT. GRIZZLY NOEL - NIGHT

The laughter and applause die down. Starts to dawn that something's wrong.

Spector grabs the back curtain and yanks--

Only Mabel's python remains. It slithers out on stage.

EXT. BANK - NIGHT

Matis searches the area as Wayne, Randall and Butler fan out. Blub calmly exits.

BLUB

Sseriff, where are the lookoutss?

WAYNE

I see 'em!

Wayne motions to a side street. Everyone runs.

EXT. SIDE STREET - NIGHT

Sheriff and company run up, revolvers ready.

It's the wrong Circus Gang-- Jimmy Wilkens and the other kids stop short seeing the pistols. Jimmy twirls his stick.

MATIS

Put your gun away, idiot. Just kids.

Sheriff quickly high-tails back to--

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Matis rushes at the Noel, gun raised.

Suddenly the entire crowd spills out with Spector in the lead. Sheriff freezes. *What the hell?*

SPECTOR

Sheriff Matis! We've been robbed!

The crowd mobs him, shouting and pointing.

INT. LINCOLN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Clifford grins ear to ear looking out the window.

CLIFFORD

Sheriff's got his hands full.  
Deserves it in my opinion.

Lincoln throws his coat at him.

LINCOLN

What about the people just conned  
out of their money?

CLIFFORD

They deserve it too. They're all  
ignorant. Don't respect anyone  
different from them.

LINCOLN

Well, this gang of yours has got  
the ignorant all riled up. Your  
Sheriff's just upholding the law.

Clifford's mood sours.

CLIFFORD

You think that, Paul, you're ignorant too. He's vile.

LINCOLN

I've sense enough to see your anger. What gives?

CLIFFORD

Know why he's always throwin' me in the clink? 'Cause he rolled around with my ma. 'Til she died havin' his baby.

Cliff scrunches his face to block tears. Abe softens.

LINCOLN

I was just a boy when my mother passed. You lose your oldest companion and your greatest admirer.

Too much. Cliff breaks down. Abraham lays a hand for comfort.

CLIFFORD

Lost more than that.

EXT. BURNED OUT CHURCH - NIGHT

Randall and Wayne on patrol. Randall's got a bloody handkerchief over his nose.

WAYNE

Whole thing stinks if you ask me.

RANDALL

All I shmell's blood.

WAYNE

Gimme that--

He snatches the hanky, throws it into the blackened pyre.

Hanky lands on Flick's head. Glick covers his partner's mouth to silence him in the darkness. Sword Swallower slowly removes the hanky with a flick of his blade.

Edmund peers out from behind a burnt statue, watches Wayne and Randall walk away. Dayland gestures at the night.

EDMUND

(stage whisper)  
Someone approaches.

Samuel and Priest emerge. Everyone huddles near a fallen cross. Edmund pulls a small FLINTLOCK.

EDMUND

I see no bag of treasure, Samuel.  
Your bevy awaits its loot. Dayland  
wishes to depart this grotto.

SAMUEL

Safe was empty. We been tricked.

Priest genuflects and PUKES on the remains of the altar.

PRIEST

Willie and Eugene are dead.

FLICK

Shush, Gal-boy. What happen to da  
money?

EDMUND

Where's the money and where were  
the lookouts? We were exposed!

Samuel shakes his head. Sword Swallower raises his blade.

EDMUND

A convenient fellowship has bound  
us together. Tonight the circus is  
no more. We are now hunted prey.

GLICK

No money?

EDMUND

Our lives are the bounty now,  
little friend. Dayland, grab our  
things.

Swallower sheathes his sword. Samuel realizes...

SAMUEL

Where Mabel at?

INT. GRIZZLY NOEL - NIGHT

Mabel's python slithers up the stairwell.

INT. LINCOLN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Clifford wipes his nose and clears his eyes.

CLIFFORD

Don't matter none. Roundin' up the gang and I'm never comin' back.

LINCOLN

Deserting doesn't mean your troubles won't follow. This woman you're chasing is likely long gone.

CLIFFORD

We'll see about that.

He opens the door to Mabel. She's livid.

MABEL

Where were you two when our men were in the bank? How'd you miss the Sheriff waltzing 'cross the street?

LINCOLN

The plan was for us to get arrested? We get lynched while your gang gets away?

CLIFFORD

What gives?

MABEL

That's a lie and I'll prove it. Clifford, I'll honor that reward I promised you.

CLIFFORD

Hot damn.

Lincoln throws his hat down, aghast.

LINCOLN

Do you always use sex to get what you want?

Mabel's in his face.

MABEL

I'm a snake charmer. Your gut-stick is a long, snakelike flap of skin that sucks blood from the brain. I use it to my advantage. Without advantages might as well coil up like a snake and die.

CLIFFORD

Fine with me.

She pulls up her shawl, covering her shoulders.

MABEL

You know Sheriff Matis' room at the Boarding House?

LINCOLN

What would you see the Sheriff for?

MABEL

Idiot. He set the whole thing up.

(to Clifford)

See me there in the morning. May be one more favor I'll need. Then we'll see about charmin' that snake a'yours.

She leaves them slack-jawed.

CLIFFORD

I'm likin' this bank robbin' bus'ness just fine. What do you think?

LINCOLN

Think I'm leaving in the morning. You take the bed. I suspect I'm taller than the tree that made it.

He rolls up his coat and uses it as a pillow.

INT. MATIS' ROOM - NIGHT

Mabel interrupts Matis' bourbon as she storms in.

MATIS

What happened to the money?

MABEL

You're supposed t'have the money!

Uncoils her wrath on him.

She gets several strikes in before he grabs her arms and tosses her to the bed.

Unties his bolo tie.

MATIS

Been a change in plan.

FADE TO:

INT. MATIS' ROOM - DAY

Matis looks into a mirror, his hair freshly combed. Hands shake as he ties a fresh bow tie. Scratches mark up his hands and neck. KNOCK-KNOCK.

RANDALL (O.S.)  
Got stuff for you, Sheriff.

Regains control and unlocks the door. Randall comes in, stopping short after a look at the room.

RANDALL  
As I live and die in Dixie...

MATIS  
Whatcha got?

RANDALL  
Tom Collins askin' for you at the bank. Mr Spector's asking 'bout the circus business.

MATIS  
Take care of this for me. Then meet Butler out front.

Matis leaves. Randall gapes at the bed.

Mabel's propped up, fully naked. Strangled with a bolo tie.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Matis departs the Boarding House checking his pocket watch. *Gonna be a hell of a day.* He strolls toward the bank before an Oddly Shaped Man catches his eye.

Flick struggles to balance riding on Glick's shoulders under a long coat and bowler hat.

Sheriff starts to follow. Susan gets him first.

SUSAN  
Sheriff Matis, I want to report a robbery.

MATIS  
(sotto)  
Get in line.

SUSAN  
Last night someone broke into my livery and stole an expensive item.

MATIS  
What'd they take?

SUSAN  
A very fine pink dress.

MATIS  
That's it?

He tries to dart away. She blocks him.

SUSAN  
I'm out a great expense and you  
dismiss me like I'm a beggar?

MATIS  
I've more to do than hunt down  
ladies' dresses.

SUSAN  
Looted on your watch. Would you be  
so smug with my husband?

MATIS  
(annoyed)  
I'll look into it.

SUSAN  
And I'll have words with the Mayor  
about you upon his return.

She storms off to the Livery. Matis smiles. Smug.

INT. BANK - DAY

Tom Collins gawks at the empty safe. Matis surveys the piss-poor job his men did cleaning up blood.

COLLINS  
Took it all. Town's gonna be in a  
riot when they find out. Heaven  
knows what to do?

MATIS  
Bank holiday. Women come in, send  
them home. Keep the door locked.

COLLINS  
I can't do that. There's no reason.

Matis looks up the staircase at a closed door.



MATIS

Mayor's comin' back today. There's your reason.

COLLINS

Who's going to tell Mr Spinna?

MATIS

He already knows 'bout it.

EXT. TOWN HALL ROOF - DAY

Wayne sits on the ridge armed with binoculars and a rifle. Something to the west catches his eye.

Through the binoculars he watches The Dark Hosed Figure.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Dayland, dressed as a miner, stuffs fruit in his bag as Edmund, now clean-shaven, plucks a coin from a pretty Fruit Vendor's ear.

EDMUND

(poor french accent)

Bon! Bon mon-sheree. Avec moi!

Butler shoulders a rifle as he walks with Blub.

BLUB

I like to think I put the See-vile in the See-vile War. Left for better passteures. Considered Alasskeea, heard it's nice, but I tend to go where the power is.

They pass into The Grizzly Noel, nearly bumping into Lincoln and Clifford as they head up the street.

CLIFFORD

Any way I can talk you into stayin' 'till I find the others? Ocean's not goin' no where.

LINCOLN

I'll make a deal with you. I stay if you stay away from that woman.

CLIFFORD

Hate to see you go, Paul.

LINCOLN

Boy in your position could earn a good reputation helping out the women while their husbands are away.

CLIFFORD

I do that, their men'll skin me when they get back.

Samuel, wearing a SOMBRERO, looks up with scorn as they pass.

LINCOLN

Susan from the livery offered me a job I'm about to decline. Sure she'd be obliged to have you work there again.

CLIFFORD

Tried being decent before. Just don't suit me much.

Lincoln offers his hand.

LINCOLN

Have a nice life, Clifford Johns. Try and stay out of trouble.

Clifford shakes.

CLIFFORD

May our paths cross again, Paul. Somethin' 'bout you I like and it's not just your hat.

LINCOLN

Okay, son.

They part. Clifford heads for the Boarding House. Before he can make it, Samuel grabs him-- Rushes him off the street.

EXT. SIDE STREET - DAY

Samuel shoves Cliff against a building, pulls a pistol.

SAMUEL

You screwed everythin' up. They gone lookin' for us now.

CLIFFORD

Samuel. Hopin' you'd find me. We off to Mexico?

SAMUEL

We ain't gone nowhere. They  
watchin'. Waitin' for us to leave.

CLIFFORD

We'll steal some horses. After  
Mabel gives me ma reward--

SAMUEL

You seen Mabel?

CLIFFORD

I'm 'bout to see her right now.

Samuel lowers his gun. Smooths out Cliff's rumped clothes.

SAMUEL

Tell her come see me. Now go.

INT. LINTON'S LIVERY - DAY

Lincoln enters to Sarah crying. Simon fidgets next to her.  
Susan boards up a window near the empty dress stand.

SARAH

Please! You never let me do  
anything. It's not fair.

SUSAN

Unfair you don't always get what  
you want when you want it? You can  
see Jimmy Wilkens' leapin' frog  
some other time.

SIMON

But it'll only leap at noon.

SUSAN

And it has to be at Jackson's  
Creek?

SIMON & SARAH

Yes!

SUSAN

If life were fair...  
(noticing Lincoln)  
Mr Paul! You've come for the job  
and the room?

LINCOLN

Yes. In actuality I must--

Pedro runs in excitedly.

PEDRO

The Mayor's comin' back! The Mayor  
is coming now!

SUSAN

The Mayor? Are there any soldiers  
with him?

PEDRO

I think so.

They rush out, leaving Lincoln to mind the store.

LINCOLN

I'm turning it down.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Susan and the kids join the town lining the street.

Lincoln hurries after. Unseen, the Sword Swallower slips into  
the Livery.

LINCOLN

Susan, I'll have to--

SUSAN

I hope Adam is with him. You'll get  
to meet my husband, Paul.

LINCOLN

I'm afraid I'll have to decline  
your proposition.

SUSAN

Nonsense. You work at the livery  
you'll have to meet my husband.

LINCOLN

I have to decline the job.

Old Man Wilson joins the fray.

OLD MAN WILSON

Here they come. I saw the horses!

Clifford turns away and enters The Boarding House.

Two floors up a RIFLE protrudes from a window.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - DAY

Clifford tips his hat to a pleasant gent in his sixties at the front desk, MARVIN, then climbs the steps.

Two Ladies in half dress run down, passing him.

CLIFFORD

Ladies.

Turning on his heel, his SPUR GETS CAUGHT in the wooden steps. Pulls frantically-- STUCK.

EXT. TOWN HALL ROOF - DAY

Wayne sights two HORSED SOLDIERS riding into town. Drops the binoculars and shoulders his rifle.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Matis wipes sweat from his brow, checks his pocket-watch.

A MUZZLE projects from a window at The Grizzly Noel.

The whole town lines the way. A cheer goes up as a two-horse carriage comes into view carrying MAYOR THOMAS, a handsome man in his thirties. His lovely Wife sits alongside. The Mayor's Deputy and his wife sit in front, all waving at the welcoming crowd.

Samuel spies Lincoln across the street. He discretely pulls his gun, aiming for the top hat.

The Town Hall Clock chimes noon. A LOUD GUNSHOT rings out. The Mayor's smile disappears. His carriage slows.

Samuel freezes, staring queerly at his unfired pistol.

A few in the crowd stop waving.

Suddenly MULTIPLE GUNSHOTS ring out. Smoke pours from the Boarding House, Town Hall and Grizzly Noel. The Mayor and his Deputy slump in agony.

A horse by the Livery is hit in the flank, neighing in pain.

LINCOLN dives on top of Sarah and Simon, losing his hat. The crowd freezes in shock, silent.

ONE FINAL GUNSHOT takes the Mayor in the head. His hat flies onto the back of the carriage. Mayor's Wife crawls after it.

A Horsed Soldier leaps from his saddle onto the back of the carriage, pulling the Wife back to her seat.

The street becomes BEDLAM. People run in different directions. Ducking for cover. Running for their lives.

The Soldier pushes aside the Carriage Driver and steers the horses to a stop outside of the Doctor's Office.

Samuel hides his pistol and runs away.

Mr. Spinna sees all from his Bank window.

EXT. TOWN HALL ROOF - DAY

Wayne drops his rifle and rolls down the back of the roof to a wooden trellis.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - DAY

Clifford tugs unsuccessfully to free his spur.

Marvin runs out the front door.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

DOCTOR ELSWORTH, fifties, rushes to help the Soldier with the Mayor. He turns to the others helplessly.

DOCTOR  
My God. He's dead.

Attention shifts to the Deputy Mayor, moving him.

Silas Granger runs to his wounded horse. It bucks wildly, its nose still tied to the post. He struggles to cut the bridle.

Lincoln retrieves his hat. Locks eyes with Matis. The Sheriff doesn't move from the Town Hall porch.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - DAY

As Randall descends the steps, Clifford twists his boot free. Rushes to the door. Wayne blocks him.

CLIFFORD  
What's goin' on?

WAYNE  
Shut it, murderer!

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Randall and Wayne drag Clifford from the Boarding House.

RANDALL  
We got the shooter!

WAYNE  
I caught him!

Matis finally moves, rushing over as a Horsed Soldier kicks Clifford to the ground. Townswomen throw rocks at him.

Lincoln and Susan watch as he's put in manacles and shoved into Town Hall. Sheriff turns his sights on Lincoln.

MATIS  
Arrest this man too.

LINCOLN  
On what grounds?

MATIS  
He's a stranger. Likely helped with the murder.

Susan shields him from the deputies.

SUSAN  
He did no such thing. Anyone who was here can attest to that.

BARBARA  
Looks like a criminal but I saw with my own two eyes he didn't do it. Well he didn't.

SUSAN  
Of course he didn't. He was protecting the children at great risk to himself. There's enough wrong done. Must you add to it?

MATIS  
Women saved you today, stranger. Leave 'fore I arrest you for vagrancy.

SUSAN  
Nothing vagrant about him. He works for me at the livery.

Matis sneers at her. She grabs the children as they cry.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Clifford's dragged to the open cell. He struggles with Randall and Wayne.

CLIFFORD

You can't do this. I ain't done nuthin'.

Blub and Butler enter with Mr Spector.

BLUB

The Hesseean is caught.

Butler punches Cliff in the stomach. Tosses him in the cell.

RANDALL

Found this on him, Mr Spector.

SPECTOR

The murder weapon, no doubt.

Clifford fights for air.

CLIFFORD

Gun's empty. No bullets.

BLUB

Yes, they're resssiding in the former Mayor I presssume.

Cliff uses the bars to climb to his feet.

CLIFFORD

I didn't kill anyone. You have my word.

Spector gets in his face.

SPECTOR

Galleylampowoopballyblob. That is my word. Like yours, it means nothing.

Spector sighs in grief, shaking his head.

BLUB

Spector, you suddenly seem plagued by an issuse?



SPECTOR

(solemnly)

I'm afraid I can't decide between ham or chicken while we watch the boy's lynching.

BLUB

Perhaps a sizzzling squab?

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Lincoln joins a group gathered around Silas Granger as he calms his wounded horse.

GRANGER

She'll have t'be put out her misery. Such a fine animal. Shame.

Pulls his pistol, SHOOTS the horse dead.

Lincoln examines the bridle still tied to the hitching post.

Gazes from the horse's wound, tracing the path back to the Grizzly Noel.

LINCOLN

Strange they're claimin' the boy shot from the Boarding House, yet the horse was hit on this side?

OLD MAN WILSON

Case is solved, stranger. No need to beat a dead horse.

Granger squares off with Wilson.

GRANGER

You sayin' I beat my animals?

OLD MAN WILSON

All I said was no need to beat a dead horse.

Granger kicks his horse.

GRANGER

I'll beat it if I reckon I wanna beat it. It's my horse!

Lincoln leaves the two to quarrel.

INT. LINTON'S LIVERY - DAY

Susan wipes away tears as she enters-- freezes. Someone's there with their back to her-- wearing her pink dress.

She grabs a glass jar, holding it as a weapon.

SUSAN

I warn you, I'm armed.

Edmund and Dayland pop up behind the counter. The Sword Swallower steps out of the shadows.

EDMUND

As are we, my lady.

The Pink Dressed Figure turns, revealing--

SUSAN

The Priest?

Priest blinks back tears as he sinks to his knees.

PRIEST

Beggin' your forgiveness. We're in dire need of your help.

Flick and Glick come out from hiding.

FLICK

They wantchu kill us.

SUSAN

God help you if you had anythin' to do with the killin' here today.

EDMUND

On Shakespeare's grave we did not. They'll lynch us for it, still. Unless...

SUSAN

Why come to me?

PRIEST

You're no friend to the Sheriff. You see beyond your selfish needs. I see it in your eyes.

EXT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Lincoln examines the Mayor's bloody carriage. Runs his fingers along the bullet grooves.

One of the Horsed Soldiers comes up.

SOLDIER

Keep your fingers and your nose out  
of things that don't concern you,  
old man. Lose that nose like ya'  
lost that ear.

He complies, walking past townspeople huddling together,  
afraid and confused.

Sheriff Matis steps out of the Town Hall. His star now hangs  
from an expensive suit and his hair is slicked.

Crowd rushes him with a symphony of questions.

He FIRES his gun in the air, silencing them. Insensitive.

MATIS

Mayor Thomas is dead. Deputy Mayor  
Carter won't survive the night. I'm  
appointin' myself Mayor 'til an  
election can be held. Killer's been  
found. Clifford Johns will be tried  
and hung tomorrow. Burial for the  
Mayor beforehand. That is all.

He walks back inside. The crowd looks lost. Traumatized.

Tom Collins wrings his hands and retreats into the Bank, the  
CLOSED sign still in the window.

Lincoln notes Marvin outside the Boarding House.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - DAY

Lincoln inspects the spot where Clifford's spur was caught.

LINCOLN

Clifford was here the whole time  
the killin' was carried out?

MARVIN

You can see the cut in the wood  
from his spur.

LINCOLN

Will you testify to this in court?

Marvin puts on a thin smile and moves to the desk, pouring  
two whiskies.

MARVIN

Your accent is hard to place. I've heard the intonation somewhere in my past. Missouri?

LINCOLN

Near those parts, yes.

MARVIN

As a young man I was an author and a Yankee from Connecticut. My friends and I were fascinated with California. Land of opportunity.

Offers Lincoln a drink. Abraham waves it off.

MARVIN

We were told that on the sandy beaches and common paths you could pick up gold like rocks. Enough for everyone. A place where all our dreams would come true. So we travelled west.

Sips his drink. Pulls a picture off the wall.

MARVIN

The adventure of a lifetime. All were happy as we set forth from St. Louis.

Hands over the picture. Young Marvin with a party of Westward Travellers.

MARVIN

Broken wheels, shortness of food, dysentery... A lot of deaths later we made it to the mountains. Within days half of us had frozen to death. Other half were starving.

Finishes his drink. Starts the other.

MARVIN

We figured the only way to survive was to cook and eat our companions who perished. Madness filled the kingdom.

Takes back the picture, studying it.

MARVIN

I was the only one of our group to set foot on California soil.

(MORE)

MARVIN (CONT'D)

Instead of gold I found dust and  
despair.

LINCOLN

Seem to have done alright for  
yourself.

MARVIN

All this belongs to Mr. Spinna at  
the bank. I'm merely a worker. Our  
country's solution has always been  
to move further west to find a  
better place. I stood on the shore  
of the Pacific and found there is  
nowhere else to go.

LINCOLN

Testify?

Marvin finishes the second whiskey.

MARVIN

There are those in this town that  
will eat me alive if I do. Killed  
for telling the truth. I ate men to  
survive. There are those who eat  
men only to grow fatter.

LINCOLN

They'll intimidate you into lettin'  
an honest and decent boy hang?

MARVIN

Honesty and decency are remarkable  
traits, Mister. But there's no  
money in it.

INT. SUSAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Susan blows out a lantern near Sarah's bed and enters the  
main room, tidying around Barbara and Mr Granger.

SUSAN

We have to do something. Clifford  
may be a lot of things, but he's  
not a murderer. Adam and I  
practically raised him after his  
mother died.

BARBARA

And a fine job that was! Well it  
wasn't.

GRANGER

Must be a mistake. He wouldn't kill my Gussie. They were friends.

A KNOCK interrupts.

SUSAN

If this is Julie Wilkens whining that I closed the livery they'll have me on trial too.

She opens to Lincoln.

SUSAN

Mr Paul! Beg pardon. With everything that happened today I forgot all about you.

Barbara's face sours as he enters, removing his hat.

BARBARA

Just as well. We must be going, don't we Mr Granger?

GRANGER

What? Sorry, jus' thinkin' of my Gussie. Such a good horse.

BARBARA

Clifford's sewn his fate. No need to blame yourself. Well you shouldn't.

Leaves with a scowl, leading Granger out.

LINCOLN

Hope you don't mind my comin' over. Several women couldn't help but tell me how to get here.

SUSAN

Gossips, all of them.

ANNIE LINTON, Sarah's Grandmother, hobbles into the main room. She lights up at the sight of Lincoln.

SUSAN

Annie, you shouldn't be out of bed. We'll keep our voices down.

ANNIE

My husband voted for you!

SUSAN

I apologize, Mr Paul. I'm afraid Adam's mother has been quite senile these past years.

ANNIE

We all voted for you.

SUSAN

Sounds like a fabulous dream, Annie. Let's go back to it, see if he won.

LINCOLN

Ma'am? Thank you.

Annie beams, allows Susan to lead her to her bedroom. Lincoln gazes around the home, thoughts elsewhere.

SUSAN

Would you like coffee or tea?

LINCOLN

I spent the afternoon makin' inquiries on Clifford's behalf. We both know he's innocent.

SUSAN

We have to speak for him at trial.

She starts on a fresh kettle.

LINCOLN

Susan, I wasn't entirely truthful with you last night. Clifford brought me here to abet that Circus Gang. I believe we were to take the blame for that scheme.

SUSAN

How do you lead a good life when everything's a scheme or a scam?

LINCOLN

At least one of them is liable for putting Clifford where he is. Hard to know for sure. Looks like they've skipped town.

SUSAN

Not exactly.

INT. SUSAN'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Among the crates and barrels lie the Circus Gang and the Priest. They stir as Susan leads Lincoln downstairs.

LINCOLN

You're an amazing woman, Susan.  
I've heard of running off to join  
the circus but you're the first the  
circus has run off to join.

SUSAN

I don't harbor criminals. They've  
assured me they had nothing to do  
with the Mayor's murder.

Edmund removes his hat.

EDMUND

Dayland swears that if we escape  
this town, we are reformed.

FLICK

God our ringmaster now.

Lincoln gazes at the Priest, still in the pink dress.

LINCOLN

I wasn't aware the church had  
changed its dress code from black  
to pink. Isn't yellow more apt?

PRIEST

I'm not a real priest.

SUSAN

The surprises continue.

PRIEST

I was once. When my love of God was  
overshadowed by my lust for another  
priest, I was defrocked. I've lead  
a life of deceit, hurtin' people  
'stead of healin' them.

He sobs.

PRIEST

Two young men I loved were killed  
fer my part in this plot. I've  
sinned against God many times.

He rises, pulling the pink dress over his head so that he  
stands in just his knit underwear.



PRIEST

As of today, no more! My amends to God will be to stay in this town and rebuild its congregation. The temple that was destroyed will be rebuilt. On this rock I will build my church!

Sword Swallower applauds. The others are nonplussed. Flick points at Swallower.

FLICK

That guy don't speak no English.

PRIEST

The very least I can do is help you save your friend. If he hangs from our deeds, my soul's consumed.

LINCOLN

Not sure what part you can play to stop it. Not even sure yet what I can do. But perhaps by the end we'll all find redemption.

FADE TO:

EXT. TOWN CEMETERY - DAY

The Mayor's Wife leads a coffin and small procession of five.

EXT. TOWN HALL - DAY

Fifty gather 'round the doors, brimming with excitement. Susan and Lincoln push their way through the press.

SUSAN

It's disgraceful. Not even in the ground yet and they're already making speeches.

A boisterous man in his fifties, MR. POGUE, barks from on top a soapbox.

MR POGUE

We'll make this town dandy again! Free from Mexicans and krauts, micks and niggers. I am the only one who can--

He's hit in the face by a handful of MUD. Old Man Wilson is the culprit. He's on a neighboring soapbox.

OLD MAN WILSON

This town needs a military man!  
N'aleens, Tippecanoe, Aunt-eat 'em!  
Vote Wilson for a strong leader.

LINCOLN

Looks like democracy to me. Let's  
try to find a seat.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The wooden pews are full and more are trying to budge their way in. Lincoln and Susan shove through to the front.

SUSAN

Must'a filled up at dawn.

She spots Mrs Wilkens and her numerous children taking up the front row.

SUSAN

Julie Wilkens, it's vital that this man and I view the trial. Can you send your children out so we can have a seat?

MRS WILKENS

Seems they have the right to sit here same as everyone else. First come, first serve.

Lincoln cups his hands in earshot of the kids.

LINCOLN

(loudly)

You say they're givin' free sweets outside. Free sweets for children?

Without a look to their mother, the brood scrambles from the pew and out the door. Wilkens gives a side-eye while Susan and Lincoln take their seats.

Randall and Butler push the mob from the aisles as Blub takes his place near the judges' seat.

BLUB

Let's be see-vile. Clear the aisles. Out with you.

Spector's behind the prosecutor's table. A bemused Jury of eight women and an Elderly Man look upon the gallery.

BLUB  
 Asseeind-- Rise for the passeonate  
 Judge Clemens.

Everyone stands for the JUDGE, a slender man in his forties wearing long riding boots. He pulls on his robe.

Slaps his riding gloves against the striking block, drawing queer looks.

JUDGE  
 I have come in haste from Los  
 Angeles. In my hurry I have  
 forgotten my gavel.

He sits. Blub whispers to him while everyone reclines.

JUDGE  
 Grave matter before us today. Grave  
 for this town and a grave for the  
 Mayor. I am a man of particulars.  
 In order to have order everyone  
 must be silent. Except for Mr  
 Spector and the witnesses and--

He gasps at the defendant's table.

JUDGE  
 Where's the defendant?

Blub whispers in his ear.

JUDGE  
 Show in the prisoner.

Wayne pushes a manacled Clifford to the table. The gallery stands and shouts at him. Judge bangs his gloves.

In the chaos, Sarah slips in. Finds Susan.

SUSAN  
 Sarah, who's watching your  
 grandmother?

SARAH  
 I wanna help free Clifford. He's my  
 friend too.

SUSAN  
 On my lap and stay quiet.

Cliff dodges an egg that hits the Judge's bench. Everyone quiets.

JUDGE

This is exactly the behavior I  
abhor. Chaos in a nutshell.

BLUB

Eggssshell.

JUDGE

A good egg gone to waste. Though  
the heat in this room is apt to  
cook it.

Randall scoops up the egg with his kerchief. Carrying it off,  
it spills down his pants.

JUDGE

Clifford Montgomery Johns, you are  
accused of maliciously murdering  
Mayor Thomas. Your plea?

Lincoln stands up.

LINCOLN

Your honor, if it may please the  
court.

Jury and gallery chatter. Blub tries to whisper but is  
brushed off. Gets the gloves waved at him.

JUDGE

Please please us. Yes, nothing that  
would please the court more than to  
have these windows opened. I'm sure  
we all agree.

LINCOLN

Windows?

JUDGE

Unfortunately they're painted shut.  
We're all cursing the white washers  
at this time. Makes us wish we were  
all someplace cool, like Alaska for  
instance. Told it is quite...  
pleasant.

LINCOLN

Beg pardon, I want to address  
council for this boy.

The crowd murmurs, drawing a slap of the glove.

JUDGE

Council for this boy? There is no council for this boy.

LINCOLN

Before you try and hang him he needs to have council provided.

Blub whispers again.

JUDGE

According to whom?

LINCOLN

According to the Constitution of the United States of America.

Blub whispers, *technically he's right.*

JUDGE

Who would represent this Yankee Doodle Dandy?

LINCOLN

I would.

Spector gaffaws.

SPECTOR

What do you know about the law? As familiar as a hot bath and razor?

LINCOLN

I am a lawyer, fully knowing the practice. And if I aren't what I claim, wouldn't you favor an ignorant as an adversary?

SPECTOR

No objection. Pope Pious would not be able to acquit the boy.

(to Jury)

I hear we have his blessing.

JUDGE

Very well. You're his council, Mr?

LINCOLN

Paul. Thank you, your honor.

Blub's at it again as Lincoln walks to Clifford's side.

LINCOLN

May I ask who this is keeps buzzing  
in your ear?

JUDGE

My lawyer. Everyone else is  
entitled. Why am I different?  
Spector, your open.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY - LATER

Spector paces in front of the jury, stroking his mustache at  
just the right moments.

SPECTOR

This tragedy does not have a happy  
ending. It ends with the slaying of  
our dear Mayor Thomas and continues  
with the trial of his killer-- this  
vagrant Clifford Johns. Orphan.  
Loner. Angry young man. You'll hear  
testimony about the varied,  
vivacious, venomous, vicious and  
violent nature in which this  
varmint carried out his carnage on  
the Mayor's carriage.

Smiles all the way back to his seat.

JUDGE

Statement, Mr Paul. Keep it brief  
for perspiration's sake.

Lincoln rises, stepping to Spector's table.

LINCOLN

I'll be brief.

Takes Clifford's pistol and holds it up for the jury.

LINCOLN

They say Clifford shot with this  
pistol. Gun's broken. See for  
yourself, the barrel's twisted.

Clifford frets as Abe waves the gun around.

LINCOLN

Most anyone could get off is three  
shots. Not enough bullets for all  
the damage done. He didn't do it.

Returns the gun. Spector rises.

SPECTOR  
I call Nelly Fargus, a birdcall  
master.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY - LATER

Nelly Fargus, the old drunk from the bar, testifies.

FARGUS  
Was in the vicinity of the Grizzly  
Noel. Heard the call of an olive-  
sided flycatcher in that proximity  
night 'fore. Strange as they're not  
local t'the area.

SPECTOR  
How many shots did you hear?

FARGUS  
Three shots followed by the  
protests of a warbling vireo.

SPECTOR  
Unlike that poor vireo, I've no  
further questions.

Lincoln steps up.

LINCOLN  
Mr Fargus, you're as sure of the  
number of shots as you are of the  
bird you just named?

FARGUS  
Are a dog's lips black?

TRANSITION TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY - LATER

MR DAVIES, the balding local printer, holds a newspaper with  
the headline-- MAYOR SLAIN BY LONE ASSASSIN CLIFFORD JOHNS.

Reads aloud from his own print.

DAVIES

Clifford Johns from board house  
window armed, fired upon heroic  
Mayor's carriage. Causing Mayor  
Thomas fatal harmed, victim to  
assassin's bullet barrage. Smiling  
from ruminations of his sin,  
Clifford Johns is the villain with  
such grin.

SPECTOR

No further.

Lincoln's exacerbated.

LINCOLN

Mr Davies, how did you determine  
these facts in your poem? Were you  
present at the assassination?

DAVIES

It is a sonnet, not a poem. I  
wasn't present, but I heard a full  
account from Mrs Blankenship. I'll  
have more papers for sale this  
afternoon.

LINCOLN

So you did no direct investigation  
yourself? Didn't bother finding  
other witnesses?

DAVIES

What are you implying?

LINCOLN

I'm questioning the truthfulness of  
your article. We look to newspapers  
as a source of facts. History is  
told from facts. What would we know  
of the Battle of Yorktown if the  
printers only relied on Mrs  
Blankenship?

She stirs in the gallery.

MRS BLANKENSHIP

I wasn't at the Battle of Yorktown.

Davies looks offended.

DAVIES

You mean to call our newspaper a  
liar?



INT. COURTROOM - DAY - LATER

Sweat drips from Spector's brow. Everyone fans themselves.

SPECTOR

Our final witness is Deputy James Wilkens.

Doors open. In steps Jimmy Wilkens, hair slicked, in long pants and shoes. Mrs Wilkens beams with pride.

Shows off the SILVER STAR hanging from his shirt as he walks the aisle. The other kids are envious.

Taking his seat, he glows at all of the attention.

SPECTOR

Deputy Wilkens, why were you given the honor to wear that star?

Points at Clifford.

JIMMY

'Cause I helped catch that killer.

SPECTOR

Let the record show that the witness--

JIMMY

Deputy Witness!

SPECTOR

Um, yes, Deputy Witness has identified the defendant as a killer. Tell us your story of that fateful day.

Jimmy's confused.

SPECTOR

Yesterday.

JIMMY

Oh, yeah. Was outside the Boarding House...

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Jimmy stands watch wearing a white TEN-GALLON-HAT. Looks like a bona-fide hero.

JIMMY (V.O.)

Right as the Mayor was 'bout to hit town, I saw the killer comin' up.

Clifford's all in black, shoving bullets into an oversized revolver.

JIMMY (V.O.)

He was loadin' his gun and 'fore he goes inside, he smiles and says--

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Jimmy on the stand.

JIMMY

I'm gonna kill that damn fool Mayor!

SPECTOR

(enthralled)

And then what happened?

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Jimmy blocks the door. Clifford swings the revolver his way.

JIMMY (V.O.)

I tried to stop 'em. He would-a killed me too if he'd-a had time.

Cliff shoves the boy aside and runs in.

From the dirt Jimmy sees the Mayor's carriage arrive.

JIMMY (V.O.)

'Fore I could warn anyone I heard him shootin'.

Clifford's at the window, gun blazin'. Mayor falls over.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Matis is asleep at his desk. Jimmy runs in.

JIMMY (V.O.)

First thing, I grabbed the Sheriff and then we ran--

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Clifford descends the steps as Jimmy brings the Sheriff.

JIMMY (V.O.)  
Back to the Boarding House.

Matis tries to grab him. Cliff ducks under his arms, right into a Jimmy Wilkens uppercut.

JIMMY (V.O.)  
One punch and I had 'em!

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Matis pats Jimmy on the back. Cliff is led away in chains. A Photographer uncaps a camera the size of a bread box.

Jimmy poses for a hero's portrait.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Spector's eyes are wide with admiration. Jimmy scans the gallery to see if anyone challenges his story.

SPECTOR  
On behalf of the town, I thank you  
for your fine work. No further,  
Deputy Wilkens.

Lincoln and the boy lock eyes. The heat and humidity have made Abe's hair scraggly and floppy in a comical way.

LINCOLN  
Deputy, how old are you?

JIMMY  
Twelve an' three quarter.

SPECTOR  
Objection. This is a man of the  
law. Age shouldn't be relevant.

Blub whispers.

JUDGE  
Overruled. Age isn't relevant.

LINCOLN  
How long have you known Clifford?

JIMMY

All ma life. Never been worth a  
snail's piss.

Barbara gasps, confiding to Mrs Blankenship.

BARBARA

Mouth on that boy. Mother should  
wash it with soap. Well she should.

MRS BLANKENSHIP

(whispering)

You seen those Wilkens kids? Don't  
think they own soap.

Lincoln sighs. *How do I question a kid?* Sarah catches his  
eye. She makes motions with her hands. *What?*

SARAH

Ribbit.

Gets it. Gives her a wink.

LINCOLN

Deputy Wilkens, you know Sarah  
Linton?

JIMMY

Heck yeah. Everyone knows her.

LINCOLN

What about Simon Blankenship?

JIMMY

Don't think he's in here.

Simon pops up from beside his mother.

SIMON

I'm right here!

Spector fidgets as the gallery laughs. Jimmy's not amused.

JIMMY

What about 'em?

LINCOLN

They told me something I found hard  
to believe. They said you had a  
leapin' frog that could beat every  
other frog in the county?

Spector bangs on his table.

SPECTOR

Objection. Nothing to do with the murder and it's hearsay!

JIMMY

It ain't hearsay! I've got Dan'l Webster right here to prove it.

Jimmy takes a LARGE FROG from his pocket and sets it on the witness stand.

ALISTAIR WILSON, a boy Jimmy's age, holds up another frog.

ALLISTER

My King George beat Dan'l Webster just last week. He's lyin', Mister Prostitutor!

JIMMY

Shut your mouth, Alistair Wilson, or I'll have you arrested. N'that was 'fore I put the luck curse on.

LINCOLN

If Dan'l Webster were to race King George now, Dan'l would win?

Spector's in a huff.

SPECTOR

Objection! What does this--

JIMMY

Shut your fat mouth.

(to Judge)

Don't bang that glove.

(to Lincoln)

Not how a luck curse works, idiot. Curse was put on at midnight so he only gets leapin' powers at noon. Everybody knows that.

LINCOLN

Only at noon?

JIMMY

Heck yeah. Just yesterday Dan'l Webster beat Billy Gardner's Alexander Hamilton out at Jackson's Creek.

LINCOLN

Jackson's Creek?

JIMMY

I even got witnesses t'prove it.

LINCOLN

If you were at Jackson's Creek, how did you see Clifford at the Boarding House? First shot was heard as the clock struck noon.

JIMMY

(shocked)

I mean--

LINCOLN

What would Dan'l Webster say?

Jimmy thrusts the frog back in his pants, giving Abe a hateful glare. Susan side-eyes Mrs Wilkens.

LINCOLN

I love tall tales but this isn't the time or place for 'em. No more stories.

(to Spector)

No more lies.

SPECTOR

Redirect! Deputy, did you see Clifford shoot the Mayor in cold blood?

JIMMY

Hell yes!

JUDGE

Deputy Witness is excused.

Jimmy spits in Lincoln's face and storms out.

JUDGE

Witnesses for defense?

Abraham scans the courtroom.

LINCOLN

Calling Silas Granger.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Jimmy stands before the Sheriff.

JIMMY

He's a hog-swappin', jack-knifin',  
puddin'-headed, pot luggin', hay  
sniffin', hair pullin', toad  
lickin', backslappin', toe suckin'--

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Silas Granger on the stand.

GRANGER

--Broom-tail, but she was an  
affable horse.

LINCOLN

Which direction was she tied to the  
hitching post yesterday?

GRANGER

She was conoccidental-- had a fear  
of facing west. Was tied facing  
east, lookin' at the livery. Loved  
lookin' in on the candies. Would  
have had 'em too if she had thumbs  
'stead a'hooves.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Jimmy, as before.

JIMMY

Bass kissin', honey-fuggled, slum  
guzzlin', devil dancin', mold  
gatherin'--

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Granger, as before.

GRANGER

Gussie.

LINCOLN

Where did the bullet enter Gussie?

GRANGER

Her right flank.

LINCOLN

The side facing away from the  
Boarding House?

GRANGER

Yes, of course. Coincidentally I  
could a'sworn that I saw the flash  
and smoke of a rifle comin' from  
The Grizzly Noel.

LINCOLN

You are swearin' to it right now.

Spector stands in a snit.

SPECTOR

It could have ricocheted!

JUDGE

Spector, wait your turn.

Slaps his glove.

SAMUEL

Son of a--

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Jimmy, still swearing.

JIMMY

Sod-swappin', coffee boilin',  
bumble bettin', dirt feelin'...

Slows his slurs as Matis takes down a rifle.

JIMMY

Rot-guttin'... bug steppin'... wart  
pickin'...

Sheriff puts the rifle in Jimmy's hands.

MATIS

Time you earned that star, boy.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Lincoln turns to the jury.

LINCOLN

No further.

SPECTOR

Mr Granger, in your expert opinion,  
could the bullet have ricocheted?



GRANGER

I suppose--

SPECTOR

Ha! You see? Ricochet. Bullets  
ricochet all the time.

Everyone's restless and sweaty. Lincoln leans in to Clifford.

LINCOLN

(whispering)

Got an idea. Might not end well. Be  
ready for anything.

CLIFFORD

I trust you.

Clifford slips a wrist out of his manacle for Lincoln's  
benefit then slides it back in.

Abraham rises with renewed vigor.

LINCOLN

Let's hear from Sheriff Matis.

Blub whispers.

JUDGE

Unavailable.

LINCOLN

How about the bank owner? Mr  
Spinna, I believe's his name?

Gasps from the jury and gallery. Whisper from Blub.

JUDGE

Unapproachable!

LINCOLN

The feller who runs the bank,  
what's his name?

BARBARA

Tom Collins. Well it is.

Collins, near the back, stands.

JUDGE

Inaccessible.

COLLINS

I'm right here.

LINCOLN

Will you take the stand, sir?

SPECTOR

He's unable to stand-- Judge, this is hogwash. He has nothing to do--

LINCOLN

Your honor, I don't see the harm in asking him a few questions.

Judge shakes his glove at Blub, deflecting another whisper.

JUDGE

I'll allow it. But if I see the harm you'll hear from my glove.

Collins takes the stand.

LINCOLN

Were you inside the bank during the assassination?

COLLINS

Yes.

LINCOLN

And it was closed at the time?

COLLINS

Er-- yes.

Blub's eyes get big. *That Rassskeal.*

LINCOLN

It's still closed, correct?

Spector stands in such a rush he upends his table.

SPECTOR

This has nothing to do with the--

LINCOLN

(volume escalating)

Your honor, I know for a fact that just like the Mayor's life, the property of the people of this town residing within the safe inside the bank has been stolen!

Room erupts in pandemonium. Everyone's on their feet in a huff.

Judge's glove has no effect.

TOWNSPEOPLE

--money --life savings --still  
closed --thieves--

BLUB

Judge, you must take actcseeon!

JUDGE

I will take action. Mr Paul, you  
are contemptuous. Quiet!

LINCOLN

(yelling over crowd)

It's my belief that the Mayor's  
death was a crime committed to  
conceal this theft using Clifford  
as a scapegoat.

Judge tosses aside his glove and pulls off a RIDING BOOT,  
banging it on his table.

JUDGE

Silence! I will not have chaos.

Arguments break out among the courtroom-- very NOISY.

LINCOLN

(yelling)

Perpetuated by this decadence of  
law--

JUDGE

I will not have chaos!

LINCOLN

And a poor excuse for justice!

JUDGE

(louder than everyone)

I will not have justice in this  
courtroom!

Everyone freezes. A pin could drop.

JUDGE

(embarrassed)

I mean... chaos.

Judge grabs his boot, runs to his chamber.

SPECTOR

Judge?

INT. JUDGE'S CHAMBER - DAY

Judge runs into a tiny room full of books and begins shoving things into a carpet bag.

He uncovers an old GAVEL-- held together by twine.

Matis runs in and grabs his arm.

MATIS

Where you going, Judge?

JUDGE

The stranger told everyone about the bank.

MATIS

You have to stop the trial.

JUDGE

It means releasing the boy.

MATIS

Release him. I don't want the whole town revolting!

JUDGE

They're already quite revolting!

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Blub dodges a tomato.

SPECTOR

Who brought produce to trial?

He's hit with an egg. Collins is fending off an angry mob.

COLLINS

I can explain--

Judge returns with the gavel. He pushes Blub away.

JUDGE

In light of the current chaos and calamity, court is dismissed.

He bangs the gavel HARD, breaking off the top. Pegs Blub. Judge retreats as Collins bolts from the room. The mob chase after in a mad rush.

Clifford slips his chains, grabs his pistol and joins Lincoln, Sarah and Susan as they leave the court.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Exiting Town Hall, Lincoln's troupe wanders into the rowdy, noisy mob besieging the bank.

SUSAN

All my money's in the bank. How'd  
you know it's stolen?

Barbara charges in, finger pointing, cutting him off.

BARBARA

Only way you'd know is if you're in  
on it. Well it is!

The crowd overhears, turning on Lincoln and Clifford.

EXT. UNDER PORCH - DAY

Below a structure near the bank, Jimmy Wilkens blinks sweat out of his eyes while struggling with his rifle.

He aims for Lincoln's top hat.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Arguments spread like wildfire. Mrs Wilkens and Mrs Blankenship push each other. Clifford deflects an attack from an Elderly Woman's parasol.

CLIFFORD

I wasn't even in that winda'!

Sarah tugs at Lincoln's shirttails. He spreads his long arms and attempts to calm the hysterical.

LINCOLN

No sense fightin' each other. Your  
Sheriff's the one with answers.

Randall and Butler manage to block the Bank's door, dodging rubbish and pushing people back.

On the edge of the fray, a sombreroed Samuel pulls his pistol. Aims for Lincoln.

Mr Spinna peers out his window at the anarchy below.

EXT. UNDER PORCH - DAY

Jimmy licks his lips as the crowd near Lincoln clears.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Susan separates Wilkens and Blankenship.

SUSAN  
You both gone mad?

Lincoln glances down at Sarah as she clings to his leg.

SARAH  
Let's go home, Paul.

Old Man Wilson grabs his shoulder.

OLD MAN WILSON  
We'll hang you for sedition if it's  
the last thing--

A RIFLE SHOT rings out.

Samuel looks bewildered at his unfired gun.

The mob scatters everywhere. Clifford grabs Susan, running toward the Livery.

She stops, looking for her daughter.

Crowd thins. She spots Lincoln all alone, kneeling with his back to her at the bottom of the Town Hall steps.

He pivots, cradling Sarah-- a GUNSHOT WOUND to her chest. His eyes glaze. Silently delivers the news to Sue.

SUSAN  
(screaming)  
No! You butchers. Just a baby!

Runs forward, falling onto them.

EXT. UNDER PORCH - DAY

Jimmy's jaw drops in horror. Fighting tears, he rolls away from the scene.

EXT. TOWN HALL - DAY

Susan sobs manically into Lincoln's chest. He wraps his arms around her, holding the lost child between them.

FADE TO:

INT. SUSAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A CRACK OF THUNDER accompanies heavy rain falling on the house. Lincoln's bare-chested, displaying the muscular arms and shoulders of a rail-splitter.

He struggles to don a new shirt, his thoughts miles away.

LINCOLN

Oh Mary... God has called another child home. Ours were taken by nature. This girl by the violence of ignorance. What can I do?

INT. SUSAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A small wooden coffin sits open, Sarah's body lying peacefully inside.

Clifford and Simon stare blankly at it. Barbara, Mrs Wilkens and Mrs Blankenship sit peacefully with the grandmother, Annie. The old woman lights up as Lincoln joins them.

Blankenship fidgets in the uncomfortable silence.

MRS BLANKENSHIP

Beautiful dress she's wearing.  
Betsy Ross couldn't have sown a finer one.

Wilkens feigns a sob.

MRS WILKENS

I was the one who last saw her alive.

BARBARA

Not true. I was right next to her.  
Well I was.

MRS WILKENS

No, no-- it was me. I was just about to take her by the hand.

MRS BLANKENSHIP

You're mistaken, Julie. It was I who saw her last. I can still see her last smile.

MRS WILKENS

I am not mistaken! How dare you accuse me in my time of grief? And I with six children of my own?

## INT. SUSAN'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Susan's eyes are red but dry. No more water in the well. The Priest and Circus Gang look away in shame and guilt.

SUSAN

Best you all leave right now. I'd leave with you just to get away from this forsaken town... but I have a funeral to plan.

She unbolts the back door, letting the sound of steady rain fill the room. The gang lines up to tread its waters.

Edmund leads, stopping briefly to pay respects.

EDMUND

Our condolences, Ma'am.

Dayland, the Dwarfs and Sword Swallower pass into the night. Susan stops the Priest. He reluctantly meets her eye.

SUSAN

Will you speak at the burial? She deserves the proper prayers. I won't have it presided over by her killers.

PRIEST

I'm not-- Of course. You...

(tearing up)

Give me faith in humanity. Your compassion in light of adversity--

SUSAN

Adversity? Humanity and compassion left here a long time ago. I should have followed.

## INT. SUSAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The women continue to argue. Simon slips away to peer into Sarah's room.

BARBARA

I have no children but it felt like Sarah was one of my own.

MRS BLANKENSHIP

I blame myself.



MRS WILKENS

You can't be grieving as much as I.  
Impossible I say.

The ladies' sobs draw Susan upstairs.

SUSAN

Will you three stop this display?  
You want to draw sympathy upon  
yourselves, do it at another house.

MRS WILKENS

Our sympathy is with you, Susan.  
Don't be upset with us. If anyone  
is to blame, it's this stranger in  
the top hat.

The three point venomous looks Lincoln's way.

MRS WILKENS

I hate to be the one to say it...

BARBARA

Say it!

MRS WILKENS

When you took him in, you damned  
your daughter to death!

BARBARA

Are you satisfied with what you've  
done to this town? What do you have  
to say for yourself?

He removes his hat and stands over the coffin.

LINCOLN

Death is a nemesis we all face. The  
lives of our loved ones may be the  
most precious part of ourselves.  
When the cherished are taken away  
they leave a hole that can never be  
corporeally filled. A part of us  
will always be missing.

He puts his broad hand on top of Sarah's clasped fingers.

LINCOLN

Many will say she's in a better  
place. They say she'll always be  
with us. When we die we will see  
her again. I just don't know. We  
all have ideas of what happens when  
we die.

(MORE)

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

What journey does our soul make? Do we become ladybugs? Or does our soul perhaps travel the places we longed to see in life but were never able? My answer would only be a guess.

He sweeps a stray hair on the girl's head then turns to the others.

LINCOLN

One thing I can say for certain is that we should honor and bury this fragile body... but this is not Sarah. This is just what we hugged her with.

Simon stares at one of Sarah's orphaned dolls.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN - NIGHT

Flick makes a dash through the rain, running as fast as his little legs carry him.

EXT. TOWN HALL ROOF - NIGHT

Butler stands from his perch and aims a long rifle.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN - NIGHT

Jumping over the brush, Flick turns back to see a MUZZLE FLASH. The CRACK catches up a split second before he's hit.

Thrown to the mud, his struggle to stay awake is lost.

FADE TO:

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN - DAY

Flick awakens. Fingers the trough graze wound on his head.

Looks up to the REARING HOOVES of the Dark Hosed Rider's BLACK MUSTANG. The horse's NEIGH echoes ominously.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Migrant vendors dump mud from their wares as the midnight stallion trots past.

Dark Horsed Rider wears a UNION OFFICER'S COAT faded black by the sun. Under an overgrown beard he dons a US MARSHAL'S BADGE.

The CLOPS of his horse are offset by the STRIKING of a HAMMER. Deputy Randall nails a sign to the hitching post.

Both horse and hammer cease as The Marshal dismounts. Randall backs off as the larger man reads the poster.

\$100 DOLLAR REWARD: CIRCUS TROUPE WANTED FOR ROBBERY, MURDER

With a loud SNORT, Marshal climbs the Town Hall steps.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Spector, Wayne, Blub and Jimmy flank Matis at his desk. The Marshal holds out a crude sketch of Lincoln in silhouette.

Matis glances briefly before handing it off.

MATIS

How 'bout that, Spector. You got whupped by a wanted man.

MARSHAL

He's still here?

MATIS

We shoot anyone tries to leave. Been a rash of malfeasance lately.

SPECTOR

Who is he?

Marshal takes back his sketch.

MARSHAL

Federal fugitive. I'm to deliver him back east. Alive.

MATIS

Not sure we can oblige, Marshal. He killed a little girl.

SPECTOR

Broke a murderer out of jail.

WAYNE

Robbed our bank.

BLUB

Assasseeanated our mayor.

JIMMY

And he's ugly.

MARSHAL

Can't be the same man.

EXT. SUSAN'S STREET - DAY

Solemn faces as Lincoln and Clifford lead Silas Granger and Old Man Wilson in lifting Sarah's coffin.

Simon puts a HARMONICA to his lips, starting a somber dirge. Pedro accompanies on a QUENACHO FLUTE.

Susan follows the coffin wearing her pink dress, joined by various townspeople while The Priest leads the whole affair.

EXT. BURNED OUT CHURCH - DAY

Randall hears the distant music while sneaking a smoke.

Watches slack-jaw as the Sword Swallower stirs within the ruins. Dayland and deputy lock looks.

Edmund pops up, blinking out sleep. Randall drops his smoke and runs for it.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Matis is doling out rifles to his Posse when Randall bursts in out of breath.

RANDALL

Sheriff, found the Circus Gang. Out at the ol' church.

MATIS

Fugitive'll have to wait, Marshal. Still, might find him 'long the way. Show you how criminals fare in our town.

EXT. TOWN HALL - DAY

Butler climbs down from the roof to join the Posse as they take to the streets. Blub pulls his saber.

The Marshal scowls, tagging after a few strides behind.

They leave Main Street, off to the church.

EXT. TENTH STREET - DAY

Simon's going to town on Chopin backed by Pedro's flute.

It's a poor part of town. Pauper women and children come out to pay respects as the coffin passes.

Susan nods to every one. Too many faces. Unreal.

EXT. BURNED OUT CHURCH - DAY

The Posse fans out, deputies taking cover while Matis stands firm, Colt in hand.

MATIS

Tell me where the money is, I'll  
let all but one of you go.

Only the remote harmonica responds.

MATIS

Even let you decide which one.

Marshal hangs back, not happy with what he sees.

INT. BURNED OUT CHURCH - DAY

It's just Glick. Hiding. Trying to decide.

Wayne finds him. Decides to run. Wayne SHOTS.

EXT. BURNED OUT CHURCH - DAY

Glick bursts out as the wood behind him EXPLODES.

He's only a short distance when the LOUD STACCATO of the lawmen cut him down.

EXT. ELM STREET - DAY

Simon stops playing. Pedro quiets. Gunshots echo.

The cortege stops in the mud, stacking up.

Simon turns to Lincoln for direction.

Reminding him of his own sons, Abraham wrestles with composure as he nods the boy on.

The harmonica plays. Moving again.

EXT. BURNED OUT CHURCH - DAY

Jimmy watches, fascinated, as Glick squirms in mud and blood. Exhales his last breath. *So that's death?*

His eyes stay fixated while his body carries him away.

EXT. SIDE STREET - DAY

The Posse rounds the corner in time to see Edmund and Dayland duck into a side alley. Wayne and Randall lead the chase.

Marshal blocks Matis' way.

MARSHAL

Your men just murdered that unarmed man. No star gives you the right.

MATIS

You don't really consider it a man, do you?

Matis bumps past him. Marshal follows-- under protest.

EXT. SIXTH STREET - DAY

The Harmonica grows louder as Sword Swallower, Edmund and Dayland dash blindly ahead.

One street over the funeral advances the opposite way.

The Posse gives chase.

EXT. SEVENTH STREET - DAY

Crossing the intersection, Lincoln watches the deputies run by. Next the Sheriff. Abraham FREEZES, stopping the procession-- The Marshal crosses, never turning his head.

CLIFFORD

What is it, Paul?

Lincoln's breathe has left him. *Dark Horsed Rider here?*

LINCOLN

Susan, I have to go. There's a man here who's pursued me a long way. I can't put any of you in more danger.

Priest relieves him of coffin duties. Susan hugs him. Takes a beat, but he returns it.

SUSAN

I don't blame you for anything.

She lets go. Turns his glassy eyes to Clifford.

LINCOLN

Clifford Johns, you're infamous in these parts now. No need to find an outlaw name. You've got a good one.

Cliff isn't happy to see him go.

Abe touches the coffin then runs away.

EXT. DELAWARE AVE - DAY

Sword Swallower splits off from Edmund and Dayland.

The harmonica resumes.

Randall and Blub go after the swordsman.

EXT. DEAD END ALLEY - DAY

Randall trains his rifle, advancing on the cornered Arabian.

CLICK- Rifle's jammed. Throws it in the mud.

Reaches for his pistol. Pulls the trigger 'fore it's out of the holster. Shot in the foot.

Sword Swallower coughs up his sword. They lock eyes, connecting, even as the Swallower's blade impales Randall.

Randall throws his eyes to heaven. Beautiful sky.

Blub steps up, swinging his saber.

BLUB

Ah! An adversary with a seeword.

EXT. ELM STREET - DAY

Edmund and Dayland hide in doorways, flintlocks ready. Wayne charges forward, gun raised.

A puff of smoke. Another.

A hole appears in Wayne's face. Another bloodies his eye. He fires his pistol in the air.

Butler watches him fall.

EXT. AMBASSADOR ALLEY - DAY

Lincoln turns his good ear to the gunshot.

EXT. ELM STREET - DAY

Matis, Spector and Wilkens jump over Wayne's body.

Marshal stops, pulls his sidearm. Leaves his own way.

EXT. DEAD END ALLEY - DAY

Swallower and Blub clang steel in time to the harmonica.

Blub parries forward, driving Swallower back. Slashing, CLANGING-- Swallower's sword flies away.

Blub slashes him down the middle.

The Arab SCREAMS, dropping to his knees.

EXT. MULBERRY STREET - DAY

The scream echoes around the funeral party. Susan closes her eyes. A few townspeople peel off for safety.

EXT. DELAWARE AVE - DAY

The Marshal hurries. Runs toward the harmonica.

EXT. SEVENTH STREET - DAY

Edmund and Dayland run for their lives.

EDMUND

We must absquatulate, dear brother.

Butler slips in the mud. Spector and Wilkens take aim.

Blub rounds the corner of a house, in the line of fire.

Jimmy shoots, striking Blub in the throat.



Blub holds his neck, lurching at Jimmy, swinging his sword.  
Just out of reach, Blub stumbles and dies at the boy's feet.

JIMMY  
(in Blub's accent)  
It was an acceadent.

EXT. SIXTH STREET - DAY

Marshal hears HORSE CLOPS approaching.

Hides behind some barrels as it GALLOPS by. On a hunch he follows.

EXT. HARROW ALLEY - DAY

The length of the street is laden with CLOTHES LINES full of linen frills and fancies.

Edmund and Dayland dodge pantaloons, zigzagging.

Butler, Spector and Wilkens raise their rifles.

EXT. POLK STREET - DAY

Lincoln shuffles between doorways. The CLIP-CLOP of a horse grows louder over the constant harmonica.

EXT. MULBERRY STREET - DAY

LOUD RIFLE CRACKS make the funeral party jump. More flee for their homes.

EXT. HARROW ALLEY - DAY

Edmund gasps-- grasping at clothes lines that break under his grip. Staggering as his eyes smile at Dayland.

Dayland's eyes smile back. He covers himself with a stolen blanket, winding it around him.

Matis fires his Colt.

Blanket fills with holes before dropping shapelessly.

Dayland has VANISHED.

EXT. MIDSUMMER'S ALLEY - DAY

Lincoln rounds the corner, into the crosshairs of a man on a horse. The rider lifts his sombrero-- Samuel.

Neither expected the other. Samuel remembers his gun.

SAMUEL

I've never killed anyone.

LINCOLN

Don't let me get you started.

SAMUEL

They killed her? Mabel? She was gone be my wife.

LINCOLN

I'm sorry for you, son.

SAMUEL

Are you? They'll kill me too. Treat me no better than a slave. I'm gone take a few of you with me.

Abraham slowly raises his hands.

LINCOLN

I am not your enemy, sir. We're both runaways.

*Takes one to know one.*

SAMUEL

Can't run forever.

Marshal steps from the shadows.

MARSHAL

He's right. No more running.

Hunter and prey size each other up.

LINCOLN

You've followed me a long way.

MARSHAL

It is you. Mr Lincoln-- why did you leave? Everyone thinks you're dead.

LINCOLN

The reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated.

EXT. SIDE STREET - DAY

Matis, Wilkens, Spector and Butler advance. Jimmy sees the stoic look on the others' faces and tries to ape it.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Simon and Pedro pipe the procession onto Main Street.

Sheriff and Posse make the turn on the opposite end. Both headed toward each other.

EXT. MIDSUMMER'S ALLEY - DAY

Samuel cagily waves his gun between Lincoln and Marshal. His horse betrays his anxiety, stomping side to side.

MARSHAL

I'm a Federal Officer. There  
doesn't need to be any more blood  
shed. I can help.

Lincoln turns to the wailing harmonica-- it's close and LOUD.

Too much for Samuel. Tears blinding, he aims for Lincoln.

Marshal sees what's coming-- JUMPS into action.

MARSHAL

You can't!

Samuel SHOOTS.

The Marshal shields Lincoln. Collapses into Abraham's arms.

Samuel raps his horse's ass and charges away--

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Samuel bolts out, rearing his horse between the Posse and the Funeral. He FIRES MULTIPLE SHOTS at the Sheriff's men.

They FIRE BACK, cutting down both Samuel and horse.

The Priest's hit in the arm. A bullet grazes the coffin-- it falls to Susan's horror.

Simon's harmonica hits the mud, silenced as he's yanked to safety. Everyone flees, even the Merchants.

Only Clifford remains by Susan, righting the coffin.

EXT. MIDSUMMER'S ALLEY - DAY

Lincoln covers the Marshal with his coat. He takes a hard look at the man's ARMY REVOLVER.

Grabs it, runs to--

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Butler dips his rifle and suddenly BELCHES BLOOD. Under his bushy beard is one of Samuel's bullets. He collapses.

Matis and Spector swap faces. *That's that.*

Lincoln peers out from behind a porch.

Susan's had it. Her finger traces the bullet furrow.

Incensed, she marches furiously at the Sheriff.

SUSAN

(yelling)

You call this civilization? You call this FREEDOM? How many children have to die? How many husbands off to a war they never come back from?

She stops a stone's throw from Matis to grab a rock.

SUSAN

This is how you rule us? Steal our lives like you steal our money?

Matis all but dares her.

MATIS

I'm protecting this town.

SUSAN

This TOWN--

She pegs him in the shoulder with the rock.

SUSAN

Needs protection from you!

Wilkins points his rifle at her. Spector the same.

Lincoln stands. *Oh no.*

Clifford steps in front of her. His pistol shifts between the riflemen.

SPECTOR

Matis, tell your bastard to stop  
aiming his gun at me.

Matis sneers as Clifford's whole world changes. *Not him.*

CLIFFORD

She told me you wasn't.

MATIS

She was a liar. Lied 'bout a lot of  
things. Wonder you turned out so  
damned honest.

Cliff's drawn to him. *Hug him or hit him?* Hits him.

Matis knees him severely. Kicks him down. Kicks him when he's  
down.

Susan flails at Matis, spitting in tongues. He clutches both  
her wrists, enraged by this uppity woman.

Lincoln's done. Done running. Done hiding.

LINCOLN

Forgive me, Mary.  
(with force)  
STOP!

Gallantly he strides forward, Colt tucked in his belt. Each  
step fortifying him. He's a leader, damnit!

The Priest sees God's Hand.

Jimmy Wilkens sees a hero.

Matis throws Susan down and looks to the Bank's window.

Spinna's watching. Jerks his head. *Get to it.*

Throwing off his coat, Matis meets Lincoln in the middle of  
the street.

Face to face... hands twitching over guns. Neither blink.

LINCOLN

We could kill each other.

MATIS

We could.

LINCOLN

Lot of death here today.

MATIS  
 (he's right)  
 A lot of death.

LINCOLN  
 We could perpetuate the violence.  
 Stain the land with more blood.  
 What does it accomplish?

MATIS  
 (angry)  
 You come into my town--

LINCOLN  
 This isn't your town!

Gestures to Susan and Clifford.

LINCOLN  
 It's their town. The people's town.  
 Without them you're just a  
 blustering knave. I kill you,  
 another will take your place.

Points at Mr Spinna.

LINCOLN  
 That's who I want see. He's the  
 blight that pollinates your evil  
 deeds. He's the menace to  
 tranquility. The cancerous root.

Back to the Sheriff. Indifference with a bit of pity.

LINCOLN  
 You, sir, are just a trifle. Your  
 vanity buttresses you high above  
 your own nugacity.

Infuriated, Matis reaches for his holster. Spinna KNOCKS on his window-- gesturing to himself.

MATIS  
 The blight wants to see you.

SUSAN  
 No, Paul. They'll kill you.

He gives her a gritty smile.

LINCOLN  
 They've already lost. Theirs is a  
 perdition of their own creation.

INT. BANK - DAY

Matis and Lincoln trod up the steps. Tom Collins stands among bags full of money.

INT. MR SPINNA'S OFFICE - DAY

His cherry-polished WHEELCHAIR matches the walls and the cherry-polished desk.

Lincoln gets his first good look: a balding, bloated sack of stern, dressed to the nines with no use of his legs.

MR SPINNA

The one who's been causing all the trouble, eh?

(as to a servant)

I'll see him alone, Matis.

MATIS

I'll be downstairs.

The door's SCRAPE gives the two a moment to size each other up. Both take a breath, waiting for the other.

MR SPINNA

How would you like to run this town? The Mayorship is up for election.

LINCOLN

You can't buy me. You can't entice me. You can't promise me favors.

MR SPINNA

(confused)

Well what is it you want? A job?

LINCOLN

I worked for one gang of crooks in this town. Not workin' for another.

Got Spinna's attention. Rolls forward for a strike.

MR SPINNA

Crook? I'm a businessman. Do you think I arrange all these things for my own amusement? Stir up the town a bit? Give them a hanging?

Dashes his blanket aside, flashing a small DERRINGER.

MR SPINNA

It's for my business. None of your business. Get out of here.

Abraham pulls his shirt open. *Shoot me.*

LINCOLN

You going to kill me? A lotta people died to make this a country of liberty. All men equal under the law. You've built this ivory tower on the misfortunes of others. You scheme ways to swindle your fellow man out of their money, their happiness, their liberty.

Spinna lowers the gun.

MR SPINNA

Liberty? They depend on me.

LINCOLN

You leave them in desperation. You crave their dependency. You're addicted to it. Without their dependencies you're a shallow, empty-shelled nothing.

Spinna rolls back defensively.

MR SPINNA

Is that all you got? Takes a lot more to offend me, sir.

LINCOLN

In your narcissism and avarice you've no sense of the common good. You've no moral apathy. You inflame the savageness of man, creating false distinctions, fanning envy and resentment. All the while imposing only your will and you--  
(*how pathetic*)  
You robbed your own bank.

That stung a bit.

MR SPINNA

Whaddya propose we do about it?

LINCOLN

We let reason be our rock.

Considers it.



MR SPINNA  
Not in this country.

He SHOOTs from the hip.

Lincoln SLAMS into the wall. Fires back. Stumbles forward.

Floor hits him on the side of the head.

FADE TO:

INT. MR SPINNA'S OFFICE - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

The light catches his top-hat standing upright on the floor.

POUNDING ON THE STAIRS snaps him to his feet, hugging the desk. His lower side's now a BLOODY WOUND.

Spinna remains seated, a hole between his eyes.

LINCOLN  
Sic semper tyrannis.

DOOR BURSTS OPEN-- Spector bumps Matis aside and FIRES!

PING--RING--BEERP

The bullet bounces from cherry wall to cherry wall-- pegs Spector right in his heart.

SPECTOR  
Ricochet?

He drops. Lincoln and Matis UNLOAD on each other. The desk is splintered-- The back wall dotted. ALL MISSES.

Matis dumps his shells. Hands shake reloadin'.

Behind the desk, Abe gasps at a pain in his pocket. Pulls out the METEOR ROCK.

With all energy focused, he RISES. Winds up--

Fastball cracks the Sheriff's head. His legs go rubbery. Off balance, he steps on the brim of Lincoln's hat--

Pinwheels-- the hat flies up. Abe plucks it from the air.

Matis CRASHES through the window, in gravity's hands.

Lincoln puts on his hat.

Grabs five-dollar bank notes to hold his side in.

INT. BANK - DAY

A thousand LADYBUGS fill the air and crawl over a bewildered Lincoln as he staggers down past a shamed Tom Collins.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Matis squirms inhumanly, reaching broken bones for his dropped pocket-watch.

Clifford stands over him, revolver shaking minutely.

The Sheriff's hand starts to wrap itself around--

The revolver ROARS, the saved bullet depriving Matis of a grip. Sheriff out.

Bank door spits out Lincoln. Jimmy Wilkens aims at him.

Abraham's not scared. Jimmy is. His FROG leaps from his pocket and he drops his gun to follow.

Susan and Clifford run to Lincoln's side, catching his fall.

SUSAN

Paul!

CLIFFORD

We gotta get you sewn up.

The boy winces as he peels a bank note. *Not him.*

SUSAN

Get the doctor! Anybody?

The town's peeking out. None respond.

LINCOLN

He... won't be any assistance.

SUSAN

We've got to do something!

*What can we do?*

LINCOLN

Water!

CLIFFORD

I'll get some--

Abe grabs him tight. Pulls him close.

LINCOLN

Take me to the water. I want to see  
it one last time.

Gets it.

Cliff leaps away, leaving Susan and Lincoln to admire each other. *There's more of us out there.*

Clifford bows the Marshal's black horse so that Abe is lifted onto the saddle. Cliff steadies and mounts.

Townspeople come out, doffing their hats when Father Abraham trots past. He slumps.

Susan releases his hand to stand by Sarah's coffin.

Clifford spurs the horse to a run.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN - DAY

A band of soldiers led by a distinguished CAPTAIN LINTON stop their march to see the dark horse ride for life and death.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Midnight hooves break the hard ground, machine-gunning ECHOES throughout the desert.

It leaps over the FALLEN CORPSE of the lone MULE.

EXT. SUNNY CALIFORNIA BEACH - DAY

The horse hits the brakes as it hits the shore.

Lincoln falls from the saddle, his hat tumbling into the water. Cliff jumps off and kneels by his side.

Cradles Abe's head. Lincoln takes in the sea.

LINCOLN

It all ends here.

CLIFFORD

If I hadn't a--

LINCOLN

Whoa, son. No blame for this. I  
was... overdue.

CLIFFORD

You get up there? Tell 'em nice things about me.

Makes him smile.

LINCOLN

You have my word.

Clifford ponders it all.

CLIFFORD

What if there is no heaven? Or a hell? Where do we go?

Tears of hope wet Abraham. *It's out there somewhere.*

LINCOLN

I hear Alaska's nice.

He's with the angels now. Cliff hugs his body.

His top hat washes out to sea, bobbing in the waves.

FADE OUT.