

"COOL HAND LUKE"

Screenplay by

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Based on the novel by

Donn Pearce

SHOOTING DRAFT

FADE IN:

EXT. SOUTHERN CITY STREET EXTREME CLOSEUP PARKING METER
(NIGHT)

Its irritating head opens a glaring red eye: the red flag
pops across the entire screen:

VIOLATION

INSERT: PARKING METER SUPPORT (NIGHT)

CLOSEUP of a pipe cutter attached to the meter neck, metal
slivers curling out. From o.s. we HEAR -- LUCAS JACKSON
cheerfully humming and mumbling Auld Lang Syne and then:

LUKE

Okay, Mister General, you son of a
bitch. Sir. Think you can put things
right with a piece of tin with a
ribbon hangin' on it? Gonna put you
right.

CLOSEUP PARKING METER (NIGHT)

as the meter head falls out of FRAME.

NEW ANGLE ON METER (NIGHT)

as it falls to the ground amidst a forest of meter stands
and Luke's hand comes into the FRAME to pick it up and we
SEE him in CLOSEUP for the first time. He is cheerful, drunk,
wearing a faded GI Field jacket. A bottle opener hangs on a
silver chain around his neck. He addresses the next meter.

LUKE

All right. Helen, honey. I lost my
head over you. Now its your turn.

Suddenly the beam of headlights crashes in, FLARING the
SCREEN.

ANGLE ON PROWL CAR (NIGHT)

sliding up to us, headlights glaring, red toplight revolving
menacingly. TWO OFFICERS, black shapes, get out and start
warily toward Luke.

ON LUKE (NIGHT)

illuminated by the headlights. He grins as the Officers
approach, lifts a bottle of beer, opens it and drinks,
smiling. On his smile, FREEZE FRAME. ON THE FRAME SUPER-IMPOSE
MAIN TITLE and as it FADES

DISSOLVE TO:

OMITTED

EXT. CLOSEUP A YOYO BLADE IN THE SUN

It swings with a pendulum motion, its shining blade topping a clump of grass and weeds; it swings on the backstroke, lopping more grass, then moves a little away from CAMERA. FROM CAMERA RIGHT, a pair of feet move INTO the FRAME, the feet of the man swinging the yoyo. They are booted and connected by chains, riveted around the ankles. The feet move further INTO the FRAME and the SHOT WIDENS. We are on:

EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD (DAY)

and we see the work gang in uniforms (14 men) flailing away with yoyos, short-handled scythes in the hot sun, guarded by three men. Three of the workers wear chains (Gambler, Dynamite, Sailor). The scene is bleached and hot; the men sweating and dirty in prison shirts and pants. The light shifts during the following:

A MONTAGE OF A FULL DAY - SUPERIMPOSE TITLES AS APPROPRIATE OVER FOLLOWING

ANGLE ON RABBIT

He is a trustee. He walks up INTO CAMERA and sets up sign:
SLOW DOWN -- MEN AT WORK

ANGLE ON DRAGLINE (9:00 A.M.)

He is a giant, covered with sweat and dust. He starts to pull off his shirt.

DRAGLINE

Takin' it off here, Boss!

BOSS KEAN

Yeah, take it off, Dragline!

ANGLE BOSS KEAN (11:00 A.M.)

pulling out watch, looking at the sun.

ANGLE THE BULL GANG

flailing away, most of them naked to the waist.

ANGLE KOKO

He is sweating streams.

KOKO

Wipin' it off here, Boss!

BOSS SHORTY

Okay, wipe it off there, Koko.

Koko takes out a limp handkerchief and mops his face.

ANGLE ON GAMBLER (A CHAINMAN) (NOON)

his yoyo flashing like a sword. He pauses, panting.

GAMBLER
Drinkin' it up here, Boss!

ANGLE BOSS KEAN

BOSS KEAN
Awright, drink it up, Gambler. Water
'em, Rabbit.

NEW ANGLE GAMBLER AND GANG

as Gambler takes a drink from a tin cup, passed by Rabbit.

FULL SHOT THE GANG (2:00 P.M.)

working away like a machine.

ANGLE PAST BOSS GODFREY TO BOSS SHORTY

Godfrey is the Walking Boss, silent, implacable symbol of ultimate judgement. He wears a black hat, globular mirrored sunglasses -- the Man With No Eyes, impassive, emotionless. He nods to Boss Shorty.

BOSS SHORTY
Awright, smoke it up!

FULL SHOT THE GANG

In unison they chant:

THE GANG
Yeah, Boss.

ANGLE SOCIETY RED AND BLIND DICK 4:00 P.M.

Society is checking his yoyo edge with a file, covertly watching a passing car. Blind Dick sneaks a look, then ducks.

ANGLE BOSS KEAN

BOSS KEAN
You eyeballin' there, Society?

SOCIETY RED

SOCIETY RED
Checkin' my yoyo, Boss!

KOKO (5:00 P.M.)

He sees something o.s. He speaks, as they all do outside, like a ventriloquist, not moving the lips, and in a stage whisper, to Dragline.

KOKO

Drag... Drag... Newmeat Bus! We got us Newmeat tonight!

ANGLE ON GAMBLER AND DRAGLINE

They look up covertly.

P.O.V. ANGLE ON ROAD

The Newmeat Bus, a prison vehicle, a panel truck with meshed windows; and men in it, appears down the road approaching the gang. It slows as it passes them and the men covertly look at it.

KOKO AND GAMBLER

KOKO

(whispering)

A bunch. Must be halfa dozen Newmeat.

GAMBLER

No more than five. For a cold drink.

KOKO

(whispering)

Bet! Babalugats, bet here!

ANGLE BABALUGATS

He is the idiot of the gang. He grins foolishly, making the bet official.

NEWMEAT BUS

as it passes, picking up speed, PAN INTO:

CLOSE SHOT GODFREY

looking at the Newmeat Bus.

EXT. CLOSEUP THE EYES OF GODFREY

His sunglasses FILL THE SCREEN, distorting the image of the bus as it moves away from us and the last TITLE ROLLS.

CUT TO:

INT. NEWMEAT BUS

The SCREEN is mostly black, but we see out through the meshed rear windows a desolate panorama of gnarled trees and grubby

landscape, bleak and hopeless.

Now we HEAR outside the barking and baying of bloodhounds, not like they're tracking, but just playing as the truck turns and stops. The BUS GUARD and DRIVER get out. The back of the truck is opened by the guard and through that rectangle of bright sunlight, the silhouettes of the Newmeat descend, Luke last.

EXT. PRISON CAMP LUKE'S P.O.V. (DAY)

The Scene: in a hollow is a long barracks, white-washed, faded gray, one story high. At right is a mess hall and laundry. A chain-link fence surrounds the whole compound. The corners of the fence are telephone poles with floodlights on the tops. These burn all night. Back of the mess hall, again outside the fence, are several kennel runs in which bloodhounds are now ROARING. A wooden tower with a simple board roof stands at two corners of the compound where the guards sit when the prisoners are not locked in the barracks. A picnic table sits in a grassy area just outside and at one side of the gate is a picket fence enclosing a scrubby lawn.

BOSS PAUL

Four. Right.

He hands the papers to the CAPTAIN, a small man with a kindly face but a firm, set mouth who always carries a golf club. In b.g. the bloodhounds are YOWLING:

BOSS PAUL

Dogboy, get them dogs shut up!

DOGBOY, a trustee whose leather gloves are always sticking out of one back pocket, puts his hand to be licked by the dogs who quiet, friendly, like any pets.

DOGBOY

They just smell newmeat is all, Boss.

The Captain has been ignoring this, watching the prisoners, looking at their records.

EXT. NEWMEAT BUS (DAY)

as the Bosses (BOSS PAUL and BOSS HIGGINS) motion for them, the other Newmeat (to be known as TRAMP, ALIBI, and TATTOO) stumble into each other and jostle Luke in their eagerness to obey orders.

BOSS PAUL

You men git lined up here.

The Newmeat jostle into line. They are wearing State Issue gray pants and their own Free World shirts. All except Luke carry a paper bag or cigar box containing their wordly goods. All except Luke look apprehensive, worried. Luke stands with

languid grace, neither insolent nor hostile, nor fearful.
The Bus Guard hands Boss Paul a folder that contains records
as the Captain approaches from his porch.

CAPTAIN

What did they bring us today? Gibson.
A 507, Manslaughter. Good for a two
spot.

ALIBI

It was an accident. I've never been
in any trouble.

BOSS PAUL

You'all call the Captain, Captain.

CAPTAIN

(to next man)

Edgar Potter. A 302 and resisting
arrest. One year.

TRAMP

I was tryin' to keep outa the rain.

BOSS PAUL

Git the wax out'n yore ears. You
call the Captain, Captain.

TRAMP

Yes, sir.

BOSS PAUL

And you call the rest of us Boss,
you hear?

TRAMP

Yes, Boss.

CAPTAIN

This man is gonna make us proud of
him, Mr. Hunnicutt.

(moving on)

Raymond Pratt.

TATTOO

Yes, Captain.

CAPTAIN

Breakin', enterin' and assault. Five
spot. Hmmm. Able-bodied seaman.

TATTOO

That oughta come in handy here,
Captain.

CAPTAIN

Maybe.

(turning to Luke)
Lucas Jackson.

LUKE
Here, Captain.

CAPTAIN
Maliciously destroyin' municipal
property while under the influence.
What was that?

LUKE
Cuttin' the heads off parkin' meters,
Captain.

CAPTAIN
Well, we ain't never had one of them.
Where'd you think that was gonna get
you?

LUKE
I guess you could say I wasn't
thinkin', Captain.

CAPTAIN
(looking at record)
Says here you done real good in the
war: Silver Star, Bronze Star, couple
Purple Hearts. Sergeant! Little time
in stockades. Come out the same way
you went in: Buck Private.

LUKE
That's right, Captain. Just passin'
the time.

CAPTAIN
(staring at him)
Well, you got yourself some time
now. Two years. Hell, that ain't
much, we got coupla men here doin'
twenty spots. We got one who's got
all of it. We got all kinds and you
gonna fit in real good. Course in
case you git rabbit in your blood
and decide to take off fer home, you
git a bonus a some time and couple
leg chains to keep you slowed down a
little -- fer your own good. You'll
learn the rules. It's all up to you.
I can be a good guy or I can be one
mean son-of-a-bitch, it's up to you.

He turns and walks away.

CLOSE SHOT LUKE

His eyes have been wandering during this speech. He sees a doleful, lovable bloodhound, nose at the mesh and winks at him.

CLOSE SHOT BLOODHOUND

He simply stares dolefully.

INT. BARRACKS (DAY)

Bare, unpainted wood. The windows are barred and covered with chain link. The door from the barracks up to the compound passes a small area enclosed by a woven metal strap cage. In this usually sits the WICKER MAN, whom we generally see as a heavy, short shape moving about his own business which is making an endless series of rings or jewelry by hammering coins with the back of a heavy spoon.

The door to the barracks locks by the tongue of a strap iron bar that is thrust through a hole in the wicker where the Wicker Man locks it by padlock. Thus he can always see them, but they can't reach him. The single big room is filled with two and even three-tiered bunks. Bare bulbs hang from the ceiling.

CARR, the floorwalker, a 240 pound behemoth, is indoctrinating the Newmeat while they change into camp clothing: gray twill trousers, shirt and jacket, all numbered, which has been piled on the table. Carr squeezees up and down, a restless man, and CAMERA in following him SHOWS us the room. At the same time, the Wicker Man is moving about the barracks, tapping the floors and bunk posts with a broom handle for signs of tampering. Carr pays no attention to him, addressing the Newmeat.

CARR

Them clothes has got laundry numbers on 'em. You remember your number and always wear the ones that has your number. Any man forgets his number spends a night in the box.

(passing out spoons)

This yere spoon you keep with you and any man loses his spoon spends a night in the box. There is no playing grabass or fighting in the building. You got a grudge against another man you can fight him Saturday afternoon. Any man playing grabass or fighting in the building spends a night in the box. First bell is at five minutes of eight when you will get in your bunk and last bell is at eight...

O.S. now are heard the SOUNDS of trucks arriving and the Wicker Man goes back to the wicker.

CARR

(continuing)

Any man not in his bunk at eight will spend a night in the box. There is no smoking in prone position in bed. To smoke you must have both legs over the side of your bunk. Anyone caught smoking in prone position will spend a night in the box. You get two sheets. Every Saturday you put the clean sheet on the top, the top sheet on the bottom and the bottom sheet you turn in to the Laundry Boy. Any man who turns in the wrong sheet spends a night in the box. No one will sit on the bunks with dirty pants on. Any man sitting on a bunk with dirty pants will spend a night in the box. Any man who don't bring back his empty pop bottles spends a night in the box.

O.S. now are the SOUNDS of men counting off, filling the air with the apprehension of impending arrival.

CARR

(continuing)

Any man loudtalking spends a night in the box. You got questions you come to me.

(attentive now)

I'm Carr, the floorwalker. I'm responsible for order in here and any man that don't keep order...

Luke mouths the next line with him. At the same time, we HEAR the clanking of the Wicker Man's doors opening and the thudding of many steps.

CARR

...spends a night in the box.

(to Luke, sincerely)

I hope you ain't gonna be a hardcase.

NEW ANGLE

As Luke shrugs the chute bursts open and the Bull Gang rushes in, men trying to get hands clean, urinate and get back out into the chowline. Sudden LOUD CHAOS. The Newmeat are seated on the bench, bewildered, except Luke who grins. Koko spies the Newmeat and is unhappy that there are only four.

GAMBLER

(to Koko)

Four. You owe me a drink.

DRAGLINE

(pushing both aside)
Get outa mah way you don't want a
wet pocket!

SOCIETY RED
(passing the Newmeat)
Gentlemen, welcome to the Family.

LOUDMOUTH STEVE
Any of you guys from Connecticut?

CARR
Awright, let's move it along!

NEW ANGLE

as the flow of bodies reverses and the men stampede for the chute, going out, adjusting clothing, etc. Dragline shoves Loudmouth Steve along.

DRAGLINE
Fill your loudmouth with some beans!

And they are in the chute. The Newmeat still sit there. .in the empty barracks, the SOUND of men disappearing across the yard.

CARR
Well, what are you doin' here? You
supposed to be eatin' them beans!

The Newmeat stampede out the chute.

INT. MESS HALL (DUSK)

Most of the other men already have their food and are sitting down with no jockeying for places: everybody knows. They are shoveling it down as fast as they can, getting back up for seconds. Luke and the other Newmeat get their plates and while the others stand there, confused, Luke sits at the first vacant spot and begins to eat industriously.

KOKO
(sotto voce to Dragline)
Newmeat's a hog-gut.

Dragline looks up, goes back to his food. There is an off-stage CRASH.

NEW ANGLE TRAMP

He is sitting on the floor, between his knees a mess of stew on the floor and his plate upside down. He has made the mistake of taking Dynamite's seat. DYNAMITE, the champion eater, has casually displaced him and is busy chowing. Dogboy is serving; he is the only one to break the rule of silence in chowlines.

DOGBOY

These pigs is rollin' in thar slops
now, Boss!

Tramp makes terrified and ineffectual efforts to scoop the stew back onto his plate with his hand, wiping his hand on his uniform, etc., then trying to obliterate the stain on the floor with a foot.

EXT. BARRACKS PORCH (NIGHT)

The men are being shaken down before entering the barracks for the night. They sit and take off their shoes. They empty their pockets into their caps. Carr inspects shoes, throws them inside door, frisks men who stand with backs turned, arms raised. Then Carr mutters a number.

INT. BARRACKS (NIGHT)

Through the Wicker Cage toward door. As the men enter, stoop to pick up shoes, repeat their number to the Wicker Man, as they go through the chute.

INT. BARRACKS NEW ANGLE (NIGHT)

The men are preparing for their hour of free time. Gambler has layed out the blanket for the poker game and is shuffling cards. Koko and BLIND DICK have their seats, are arranging their piles of change. Luke sits at the other end of the table, past the blanket line. Dragline who has been talking to the Wicker Man now enters casually as we HEAR Dynamite, change in hand, moving to the game berating Tramp.

DYNAMITE

Next time you stay outa my place! I
earned it. You try that agin an'
I'll bounce you all over the floor.

TRAMP

I didn't know. I was hungry.

KOKO

You don't take another man's place,
boy.

ALIBI

It wasn't his fault. Nobody said
anything about seats. We --

DRAGLINE

(to Tramp)

You gotta mind your manners, you
actin' like a hillbilly tramp.

KOKO

(delighted)

Tramp! Beautiful!

Dragline nods.

GAMBLER

(to Tramp)

You got your bullgang name, boy.

TRAMP

(good-naturedly)

Ain't no worse than some I been called.

TATTOO

In the Navy, we used to call guys --

DRAGLINE

Fasten your flap! All you Newmeats gonna have to shape up fast and hard on this gang. We got rules here an' in order to learn them, you gotta keep your ears open and your mouths shut.

Luke snorts.

OMITTED

ANGLE ON DRAGLINE

looking up as if he has just heard a strange sound.

DRAGLINE

Somebody say somethin'?

LUKE

I didn't say nothin', Boss.

DRAGLINE

Well, whatta we got here?

LUKE

A Lucas Jackson.

SOCIETY RED

(at mirror, back turned)

Dragline gives out the names here. You'll get yours when he figures you out.

DRAGLINE

(to Luke)

Maybe we oughta call you No-Ears. You don't listen much, do you, boy?

LUKE

(smiling)

Ain't heard much worth listening to
yet. Just everybody handing out rules.

A feeling of discomfort. Koko assesses Luke, who has remained
at the poker table.

KOKO

Newmeat looks like a poker player,
Drag.

DRAGLINE

Wouldn't surprise me none.

(to Luke)

Wicker Man says you got a hundred-
twenny and some change in the
Captain's safe and you got your five
dollars pocket money... That'll buy
you a whole fistfull of cards. You
in or out?

Luke stares at him for a beat, then shrugs -- who needs it --
and walks over to his bunk.

SOCIETY RED

Looks like you've got yourself a
redhot, Dragline.

Dragline just stares after Luke.

GAMBLER

(dealing)

Awright, let's play some poker. First
Jack is the Man... a trey, a duck, a
neighter...

He continues to call cards as we PAN AWAY and DOWN the bunks
showing Alibi writing a letter, Loudmouth Steve reading a
sex book, STUPID BLONDIE working a rattleskin wallet, SAILOR
removing his pants through his chains, CHIEF rolling
cigarettes, etc.

CLOSE THE WICKER

The shadow of the Wicker Man behind it rises and moves to
the tire rim which he beats with a tire iron.

CLOSE CARR

CARR

First bell!

POKER TABLE

The men break it up, some head for the urinal.

ANGLE ON LUKE

He lies in his bunk staring directly into a flyspecked bulb hanging from the ceiling about eighteen inches from his face. It will be on all night. The tire iron SOUNDS again and men hurry for their bunks.

CARR (O.S.)
Last bell. Last bell.

INT. BARRACKS MED. SHOT

Carr moves down the aisle, counting lips moving. The barracks is silent. Finishing the count, Carr goes to the Wicker.

CARR
Fifty, Boss.

WICKER MAN (O.S.)
Fifty. Okay, Carr.

ANGLE ON LUKE

staring up at bulb.

LOUDMOUTH STEVE'S VOICE
Gittin' up here, Carr.

MOVING CLOSE SHOT CARR

Pacing along, his feet squeegeeing on the floor.

CARR
Yeeahp.

ANGLE SHOWING LOUDMOUTH STEVE

In the sleeping barracks he gets up and moves toward the toilets...

ANGLE ON BABALUGATS

He is crouched in a tortured position to pray, in the space between his bunk and the one above.

CLOSE LUKE

He rolls over and goes to sleep. SOUND OVER: Carr squeegeeing along, the CREAK of the bunks as men toss and turn, the WATER RUNNING in the toilets, the DOGS BARKING a little outside.

OMITTED

OMITTED

ANGLE ON CARR

He sits at the poker table. The sound has dropped now in the depth of the night, the chink, chink of the Wicker man

stopped. Carr simply sits staring at his half-finished game of solitaire, a card in his hand, his eyes seeing something far distant. He's breathing but he could be carved of stone.

OMITTED

INT. BARRACKS LONG SHOT BEFORE DAWN (NIGHT)

All others sleeping. Carr at poker table. Suddenly the clamor of the iron bar is HEARD.

CARR

First bell! First bell! Let's go!

ANGLE ON ALIBI

as, still asleep, he is unceremoniously dumped onto the floor by Carr who goes right by. Pandemonium of rushing men all around.

EXT. CHUTE MED. SHOT BEFORE DAWN (NIGHT)

Carr is barring the gate with his body. The door outside is unlocked and opened. The gong SOUNDS. Carr opens the gate, steps outside to the porch and the men begin counting out.

EXT. BARRACKS PORCH BEFORE DAWN (NIGHT)

The voices continue to count off as the men run to lockers and quickly line up outside the mess hall. Watching them go is Boss Godfrey.

GODFREY'S FACE

impassive behind the sunglasses.

EXT. MESS HALL INSIDE YARD BEFORE DAWN (NIGHT)

The men pour out. There is a little dawnlight, but the floodlights are still on. The Yard Man opens the gate and the men begin counting off again. Gambler is the last out of the mess hall and gets a kick in the ass from Boss Paul to get him up with the others.

ANGLE ON CAPTAIN'S PORCH BEFORE DAWN (NIGHT)

He sits in his rocket watching. We hear the SOUND of the men counting, clanging of chains.

TRUCK BEING LOADED (DAWN)

The men clamber inside. The Little Bull Gang truck leaves.

EXT. ROAD NEAR CAMP

Caravan of the Little Bull Gang and Patch Squad trucks moving off down the road into the dawn light.

INT. TRUCK (DAWN)

just as the gate is swung shut. We SEE Godfrey's face looking in, then all is dim and the truck begins to lurch away, gunning fast, throwing the men, searching for their customary seats. Chaos.

DRAGLINE'S VOICE

Git outa my eyeballin' seat, you
Newmeat dummy!

Luke stands, holding a strut in the roof and watching with amusement as Tattoo is shoved away by Dragline, then Koko, and then pushed from man to man as he tries to sit down but always finds a lap in the way. Bawdy laughter; it's a game but earnest. As they settle Tattoo winds up on the floor but grins, understands, finds a place beside Tramp. Across the way Alibi begins a serious conversation with Blind Dick.

ALIBI

(nervously)
Where are we going now?

LOUDMOUTH STEVE

It's the Captain's birthday. They're
takin' us on a picnic.

ALIBI

(uncertainly smiling)
I'm a salesman. I used to drive these
roads all the time. I never thought --
it was an accident, car skidded,
maybe I'd had a drink or two --

ANGLE ON KOKO, TRAMP, TATTOO

KOKO

Man! It's gonna be one hot muther
today.

GAMBLER

Bears gonna be walkin' the road today.

MECHANIC

(to Tattoo)
You ever seen a man bearcaught?

Tattoo and Tramp look uncertain, frightened.

NEW ANGLE

GAMBLER

All the salt goes outa his body and
the water follers the salt and the
brain shrivels up like a dried pea.

TATTOO

(trying to ingratiate)

When I was in the Navy --

SOCIETY RED

(to Alibi)

Convulsions, shivering. Very unpleasant to watch.

BLIND DICK

(to Alibi)

Man's never the same. Makes him lose his sex drive.

ON KOKO, OTHERS

KOKO

(to Tramp)

I'm lucky I got a broom. Work up top. Real easy job. Man, it's gonna be hot down in that ditch.

ALIBI

We work down in the ditch?

GAMBLER

Ain't you never seen a chain gang, in all your driving around?

TRAMP

(to Koko)

I ain't used to hard labor neither. Done my best to avoid it.

TATTOO

I ain't crazy about it myself.

KOKO

(shaking his head)

Gonna be a hot one to learn on.

SOCIETY RED

Koko, why don't you let one of these Newmeats take your broom for today?

KOKO

Hell, no. I ain't goin' down in the ditch.

TRAMP

I shore would appreciate it. I ain't in much shape just now.

TATTOO

What about me?

SOCIETY RED

(to Tramp and Tattoo)
Perhaps if you offered Brother Koko
a small...

(makes money gesture)

TRAMP

I ain't got much. A quarter?

DRAGLINE

(to Koko)

You was to sell your job, maybe this
Lucas War Hero would give you a price.

TATTOO

I'll give you fifty cents.

KOKO

Fifty cents? Sweet job like that
worth at least a buck.

ALIBI

I'll make it a dollar.

KOKO

Buck is a deal.

ALIBI

(apologetically to
Tramp, Tattoo)

I've got this weak heart. Too much
drinking, I guess. As soon as they
find out about it, they'll probably
send me someplace else.

TRAMP

If you even need dough in here, I'm
in big trouble.

LUKE

(to Dragline)

Where'd you get that about war hero?

DRAGLINE

Oh we got our sources... Tearing the
heads off... what was it... gumball
machines? What kind of thing is that
for a grown man?

LUKE

(amused by the put-on)

Well, you know. Small town, not much
to do in the evenings. Mostly it was
settling up old scores.

SOCIETY RED

You'll have to do better than that
if you want to impress these men.

Some pretty hard numbers here.
Dragline's an ex-safe cracker, Koko's
a jewel thief. Blind Dick is a rapist.

BLIND DICK

(to Luke)

Show you the clippings some time.
News-Dispatch called me "The Shiek
of Simonsville." Five broads in
three days...

GAMBLER

'Course two of them were sisters.

SOCIETY RED

Of course some of them, like Stupid
Blondie, were just unlucky... he
fell off the fire escape... and one
or two don't really belong here at
all...

(indicates Babalugats)

...or myself, who just made the small
error of misspelling a friend's
name... on a check.

DRAGLINE

Hey, Koko. You hear that? All this
time I been thinkin' Society just
come here for the sun and exercise.

Everyone laughs.

DRAGLINE

(to Luke who is smiling)

Whatta you so happy about?

LUKE

I just always did like truck rides.

EXT. CLAYPIT ROAD (JUST AFTER SUNRISE)

as the trucks pull up and stop and the men pour out, picking
up tools for the day's work.

EXT. TOOL TRUCK

The guards for the day are: Paul, Kean, Higgins and Godfrey.
As the men move through the line for tools, Alibi approaches
Boss Paul:

ALIBI

Boss, I made an arrangement with
that man to take his broom.

BOSS PAUL

(shoving him along)

Git your shovel and git to work.

ALIBI

I don't think you understand. We
made a deal ---

BOSS PAUL

(canes him on the leg)
Git movin', I said.

ALIBI

(in pain)
But I made this arrangement --

BOSS PAUL

(shoving him)
Cut that backsass!

Alibi sees the light, accepts a shovel and walks off
resentfully to where the others are working, casting hurt,
angry looks at Koko and Society who ignore him.

THE SUN COMES UP

in Godfrey's glasses, and we SEE the gang begin their work.
In VARIOUS CUTS, in each of which the sun leaps forward,
time passing inexorably...

FULL SHOT: THE GANG

rhythmically working away.

CLOSE: ALIBI

Trying to pretend to work, not doing it well and getting a
passing cut from Boss Paul's cane. Resentfully, he goes at
it, sweating heavily.

CLOSE: LUKE

He is working hard but badly, unused to the awkward tool,
trying to master it. Society Red works up behind him.

LUKE AND SOCIETY

SOCIETY RED

You're working too hard. You won't
last two hours. Watch the way the
Human Dragline does it.

ANGLE ON DRAGLINE

He is whipping away with apparently effortless ease but
accomplishing more than the others.

THE ROAD

An open red Continental with kit zips past, the driver

grinning at the Gang.

CLOSE: TATTOO

He is suffering along, sweat pouring off him. The sun is beginning to really beat down now. Dragline works a little behind him.

DRAGLINE

Takin' it off here, Boss!

BOSS PAUL

Yeah, take it off there.

He takes off his jacket and tosses it to the edge of the road where Dogboy collects it. Tattoo decides to imitate, tentatively.

TATTOO

Takin' it off here, Boss?

BOSS PAUL

Yeah, take it off there.

He strips, revealing a tattoo of "Mother" lodged thornlike in his flesh and a great garland of flowers and a girl on his chest.

DRAGLINE

(sotto voce)

Hey, turn around! Let Koko see the broad.

CLOSE TATTOO

turning so Koko can see, grinning, stopping work.

KOKO

Beautiful! A real work of art!

BLIND DICK

(low voice)

Nice broad. Good set.

TATTOO

(proudly, flexing it)

Had it done in Singapore. Bunch of us drunk as coots --

DRAGLINE

(hissing)

Hey, Tattoo!

TATTOO

(not hearing)

-- went down to see this old hag and she had needles the size of that

cane.

MECHANIC

(quietly)

Hey. Swing that yoyo or you gonna
get a taste of that cane.

Tattoo realizes where he is and goes back to work.

MOVING SHOT TRAMP (LATER)

as he seems to spin, his eyes closed, his arms limp, his
head lolling back, he stumbles, twists, careens.

CLOSE DRAGLINE

seeing this.

DRAGLINE

Man bearcaught, boss!

CLOSE BOSS KEAN

BOSS KEAN

Blondie... Sleepy! Git him afore he
falls.

STUPID BLONDIE AND SLEEPY

They drop their tools and rush over as Tramp falls. Without
ceremony, they drag him over the rough ground to the truck,
where Boss Paul locks him in.

DRAGLINE

He is watching Luke, who is very close to the same fate.
Although he has achieved some grace, it is apparent that
Luke is working too strenuously, too determined.

MED. SHOT BOSS KEAN

He reaches into his pocket and takes out a turnip watch,
looks to Godfrey, who nods.

BOSS KEAN

Awright, let's eat them beans!

The men break and head for the chow line.

OMITTED

ANGLE ON LUKE

He has dropped to the ground, examining a blister on his
hand. At Boss Kean's call, he looks up, ruefully resentful,
and gets to his feet and slowly walks to the chow line.

BOSS KEAN'S VOICE
Hey, you. Bean time!

DRAGLINE
(eyeing Luke, to
Gambler)
Cold drink he don't make it.

GAMBLER
Bet. Babalugats, bet!

Babalugats grins. Dragline has his chow, passes Luke.

DRAGLINE
(whispering)
You got to snag it, man. You got to
stop foolin' around and tear up them
weeds.

Luke stumbles past, not paying attention.

FULL SHOT GANG WORKING

It is later in the afternoon.

ON STUPID BLONDIE

He stops.

STUPID BLONDIE
Caught short here, boss!

ANGLE BOSS KEAN

BOSS KEAN
Awright, Blondie. Take it behind
that tree.

ON STUPID BLONDIE

He drops his tool and gratefully trots off in the direction
of the tree.

ANGLE ON LUKE

It is later. He is working hard, stops a minute as he HEARS
a crow cawing overhead. He looks up at it.

CLOSE SHOT GODFREY

He snaps his fingers.

ANGLE ON LUKE, TATTOO, KOKO, OTHERS

looking up as Rabbitt goes to the truck and gets out a single
action rifle which he brings to Godfrey, who puts in a bolt
and bullets from his pocket.

TATTOO

Who's that?

KOKO

Boss Godfrey.

MECHANIC

The walking boss.

TATTOO

Don't he ever talk?

Godfrey has raised the gun and now FIRES.

INSERT CROW ON THE WING

It is hit, explodes in a burst of feathers.

ANGLE ON LUKE AND TATTOO

LUKE

I believe he just said something.

OMITTED

FULL SHOT THE MEN

working, Luke flailing away like an automaton.

INT. THE TRUCK (AFTERNOON)

as it is opened from the outside. Tramp sits up against the bench, still in rocky shape from his collapse. The others step over him as though he weren't there. Luke appears, like a sleepwalker. He grabs the side rails, gets one foot up and tries to pull himself over the edge of the truck body. But the muscles are just used up. Boss Paul sees this and gives Luke a kick, timed so that it coincides with his jump. It gives him just the added momentum needed to send him over the edge of the body and sprawling along the floor. He's the last one and as the guards lock them up, he grins up at Dragline and Gambler from his prone position.

LUKE

(to Dragline)

You owe that fella a cold drink.

The men are not tired, they smoke and talk and laugh: it's been an easy day.

KOKO

Hot damn, Drag. Tomorrow's Saturday.
Another week almost made.

ALIBI

(hopelessly)

I got two years.

DRAGLINE

Only two? Man, I already done eight. Nothin' to it. Just make the days and let the weeks and the years make themselves.

TATTOO

I did three hitches in the Navy. It ain't bad. After a while, you get used to it and the time --

Koko is looking out the back of the truck.

KOKO

Oh, man, oh man. Look at that. On the bicycle. Lookit them shorts. I'm dyin'.

The men rush to look out at the vision of freedom on the bike.

DRAGLINE

(knowledgeably)

She looks just like a lil girl I useta know named Louise Merryweather. Fine lil ol' girl, always partial to home-made whiskey. Remember one time down in the cellar, both of us knee-walkin' drunk and ah had this lil pint and Louise wanted a poke of it. So ah said: you wanna poke and I wanna poke, so...

He starts his story. On the floor, Luke sleeps.

EXT. PRISON YARD LATE (AFTERNOON)

as they are counting in through the gate, their hats with their personal possessions in them held out to be inspected, their pockets turned out. A guard frisks them quickly but efficiently. The Captain stands nearby ignoring them, testing a golf swing. The men move to the mess hall, most of them on the run. Luke moves painfully with exhaustion. Alibi seems quiet and cowed, lost in the crowd. They fall into a line at the mess hall door. Dynamite, his spoon out, moves to the front of the line and Luke winds up somewhere near the rear.

BOSS HIGGINS

(yardman)

Awright, you, Gibson, step out. Boss Paul says you wasn't happy with your job. Done a lot of complainin'. Gone give you a chance to think it over.

Alibi looks around, fearfully steps out, peering up and down

the line, wondering.

BOSS HIGGINS

Get them clothes off.

Alibi is led to the box. A light stands about it shining down into it and it always burns when the box is ready to be used or when there's someone inside. Now a nightshirt is laid out on top of it. Alibi strips and puts on the pajamas. Boss Kean opens the heavy lid of the box and we see it is gridded with heavy chain link fencing and with strap iron bars. A chamber pot is put inside. Alibi stands in the box, looking back at them, then lies down out of sight. The lid is slammed shut.

FULL SHOT

The men watching this. The mess hall door opens and they begin to file in.

INT. BARRACKS (NIGHT)

as the Wicker Man whales away at his tire rim outside the barracks.

CARR

Awright, first bell! Let's hit them bunks!

The men are piling into bunks and the CAMERA FINDS Luke heaving himself with a kind of rueful amusement up to the third tier bunk he sleeps in; he's exhausted.

DRAGLINE

Plumb busted out. Looks like the hard road finally got to Mister Lucas War Hero.

LUKE

(agreeably)

Back at it in the mornin'. Just need a little nap...

He lies back. Across him and in various perspectives are the other participants in this conversation, speaking in the ventriloquist's whisper while the stragglers get into the sack.

KOKO

Man, I never thought they'd put him in the box on his first day.

LOUDMOUTH STEVE

It was just supposed to be a joke. There ain't no brooms. Whoever heard of a chain gang using brooms?

TRAMP

I gotta tell you that I believed it.

TATTOO

He should have known; it was a gag.

KOKO

You can't switch 'round jobs, anyway.
I figured he knew that.

SOCIETY RED

You can't expect him to learn
everything the first day. Hopefully
it's taught him a very valuable
lesson.

LUKE

Well, you fixed it up so he's got
all night to think about it.

LOUDMOUTH STEVE

It's not our fault he's a square.

DRAGLINE

Course not. He ain't in the box 'cause
a the joke played on him. He's there
'cause he back sassed a Free Man.
They got their rules and we ain't
got nothing to do with that. Woulda
probably happened to him sooner or
later, to a complainer like him.
He's gotta learn the rules same as
anybody else.

LUKE

Yeah, those poor old guards need all
the help they can get.

DRAGLINE

You tryin' to say somethin'?

Luke rolls over and goes to sleep.

DRAGLINE

(to his back)

You jus' keep flapping your mouth
and one of these times, you and me
gonna raise a little dust.

The Wicker Man begins hitting the tire rim again.

CARR

Awright, last bell!

Silence.

CARR

(continuing)

Forty-nine and one in the box, Boss!

WICKER MAN'S VOICE

Forty-nine and one in the box. Right,
Carr.

EXT. ROAD CLOSEUP YOYO TRANSITIONAL DEVICE (DAY)

It slashes away like a pendulum, golden in the sun, TICKING away time, over roads that stretch to infinity -- a SHOT that will always tell us that the men are building time. SHOT WIDENS. The gang is laboring, filling in washouts by the roadside. The bosses are Paul, Kean, Higgins, and, always, Godfrey, the Walking Boss.

CLOSE LUKE

He is tanned and hardened now, and has mastered the work rhythm. SHOT WIDENS to show Dragline near him, checking his shovel for nicks but really eyeballing a passing car. In the ditch, Luke expertly scoops up a shovel full of sand and, levering the handle on his knee, flips the sand through the air so it hits spang in the pan of Dragline's shovel while Dragline is still eyeballing. It knocks him off balance and by the time he has caught up, Luke is already catching him with another shovel full.

DRAGLINE

Slow down, man. They ain't passing
out medals for slinging dirt.

LUKE

I thought you knew, boy... they
sentenced me by the mile.

Dragline grins at this insouciance, sneaks a look down the road. He digs into his pocket and hauls out a pair of salvaged sunglasses, which he holds up.

DRAGLINE

Puttin' 'em on here, Boss!

BOSS KEAN'S VOICE

Yeah, put 'em on, Drag!

NEW ANGLE DRAGLINE, LUKE

as Dragline hooks on the glasses. Luke, Tattoo and Tramp are working around here.

LUKE

(to Tramp)

Lookit that. Some Hollywood movie
star jus' joined up with us.

Tramp smiles.

DRAGLINE

(to Koko)

Man, this here Newmeat parking meter bandit thing what calls itself Luke don't know nuthin' 'bout nuthin'.

LUKE

(to Tramp)

But damn if he don't look like a fat old Dragline.

TRAMP

Coulda fooled me.

DRAGLINE

(to Tattoo)

These is my eyeballin' glasses. Now I'm gonna play peek-a-boo and ol' Godfrey ain't gonna know if I'm eyeballin' or tootin' the piccolo.

TATTOO

That ain't nuthing compared to what we used to do in San Pedro. There was this ensign...

DRAGLINE

(has been sniffing
the air)

Ah believe I smell me a blonde-haired lady.

ANGLE ON BULL GANG

They all look up covertly and, sure enough, in the second car slowed down by Rabbit's sign, is a lush BLONDE in a sun dress that is hiked up high on the thighs and cut low over the bosom. She cringes under their gaze and starts the top going up on the car as though to hide from them.

KOKO

Man, see her legs. She's tanned all over.

BLIND DICK

Nice broad. Nice set.

DRAGLINE

She looks just like Mrs. Patricia Handy, a married woman... I useta fool with. Man, I kin sniff blondes from a hunnert yards and redheads from a mile and a half.

KOKO

(to Tattoo)

Drag's been chain-ganging so long
he's got a nose like a bloodhound.

LUKE

Maybe he's been chain-ganging too
long.

DRAGLINE

Long enough to see redhots come and
redhots go.

The car begins to move away. They sigh. The work begins again.

OMITTED

NEW ANGLE ON GANG

Time has passed; they are further down the road. A small
blue coupe kicks up dust as it jitters down the road and
stops across the highway before a small home. A blonde, mid-
twenties, gets out, and heads covertly look up.

THE BULL GANG

The woman is too much for them, too close, too blonde, too
lush. They stop as one and watch as she disappears into the
house.

CLOSE GODFREY

Seeing their odd behavior, he turns to see what's happening
but the woman is gone; when he turns back, the men's heads
are back down.

DRAGLINE, KOKO, LUKE, OTHERS

KOKO

Oh, man, did you see her? Did you
see her?

DRAGLINE

I got eyes, don't I? How my not gonna
see something like that?

BLIND DICK

Nice broad. Good set.

LOUDMOUTH STEVE

How could you tell? You could hardly
see her.

GAMBLER

She's back!

Heads pop up again as the blonde comes out of the house, now
dressed in a short house dress, carrying a radio, a pail and
a sponge. She is clearly buxom. She goes to the outside

faucet, fills the bucket and drags the attached hose toward the car.

LOUDMOUTH STEVE

Look at that!

DRAGLINE

Shut up, you loudmouth jerk!

THE BLONDE

She begins to hose the dusty car, splashing herself, making the cotton dress cling to her body, tossing her hair, every movement and gesture erotic and provocative.

THE MEN

Their work is completely disorganized as they attempt to shovel while watching. Their voices overlap.

KOKO

Man Oh Man.

LUKE

That is one mean lady. Bet her husband spends one day a week shooting milkmen.

BLIND DICK

Lookit her bounce.

GAMBLER

Oh lean over here, lady. Lean this way.

TRAMP

I wouldn't mind being that hose.

GAMBLER

More... a little more.

TATTOO

I don't know if I believe it.

BLONDIE

She's so big!

GAMBLER

Now lean down... a little more.

DRAGLINE

Lookit that little honeypot. Lookit those legs.

MECHANIC

Oh man, I ain't never been so thirsty in my life.

THE BLONDE

She begins to rub the windshield erotically.

BLIND DICK

Oh rub.

SLEEPY

Rub.

DRAGLINE

Rub!

BABALUGATS

Rub-a-dub-dub. Rub-a-dub-dub.

KOKO

I'm dyin'. I'm dyin'!

DRAGLINE

Look, she's got paint on her toenails!
Oh Lord, whatever I done, don't strike
me blind for 'nother couple minutes.
Oh you Lucille!

DRAGLINE AND LUKE

LUKE

Lucille? Where do you get that?

DRAGLINE

(whirling)

That'sa Lucille, you mullet head!
Any girl so innocent and built like
that gotta be named Lucille.

LUKE

Innocent?

BLIND DICK

She don't even know what she's doin'!

LUKE

She knows exactly what she's doin.
She's drivin' you crazy and lovin'
it.

DRAGLINE

Shut your mouth 'bout my Lucille.

LUKE

Your Lucille? Man, you better put
them glasses back on and take a look
at yourself.

DRAGLINE

(glaring)
Boy. You jus' asking to be handled!

P.O.V. MEN TO GIRL

as Godfrey moves across the scene, blocking their view,
staring at them, FILLING THE SCREEN.

OMITTED

INT. SHOWERS (NIGHT)

Trashing bodies and heads in the steam. Feeling of tension,
irritation, except for Babalugats, who is SINGING.

SLEEPY
Babalugats, shut up.

MECHANIC
Leave him alone. He's happy.

SLEEPY
That's because he's a damn moron.

LOUDMOUTH STEVE
Now why don't you just shut up?

INT. BARRACKS (NIGHT)

The men are in their bunks, sullen, quiet as the tire iron
SOUNDS.

CARR
Awright, last bell.

Carr paces, counting. Beds SQUEAK as men turn restlessly,
unable to get comfortable. At the far end of the barracks, a
slow-turning fan CREAKS gratingly. It will continue to do so
throughout the scene, adding irritation to Carr's SQUEEGEEING
steps and the regular SQUEAKING of bedsprings.

OMITTED

ANGLE ON MEN

restless, irritated.

CARR'S VOICE (O.S.)
Fifty, Boss.

NEW ANGLE ON MEN

WICKERMAN'S VOICE
Fifty, right, Carr.

ANGLE ON KOKO

KOKO
Man, it's so hot.

NEW ANGLE ON MEN

GAMBLER
Gettin' up, Carr.

FULL SHOT BARRACKS

as Carr paces, SQUEEGEEING. The fan CREAKS. Springs SQUEAK.

CARR
Yeahhpp.

Gambler gets up, chains JANGLING.

NEW ANGLE ON MEN

uncomfortable, tense, shifting.

LOUDMOUTH STEVE
Giddyap, Carr.

NEW ANGLE ON MEN

CARR'S VOICE (O.S.)
Yeahhpp.

NEW ANGLE ON MEN

Tramp turns, irritated, as Carr SQUEEGEES by.

TRAMP
How can you sleep with that damn
squeaking!

FULL SHOT BARRACKS

Carr pacing. SQUEEGEEING, the fan CREAKING, springs SQUEAKING.

DYNAMITE'S VOICE
Gettin' up, Carr.

CARR
Yeahhp.

Dynamite gets up, chains JANGLING.

ON FAN

It is turning slowly, CREAKING, CREAKING, CREAKING. And now
on the SOUNDTRACK we HEAR low at first, but steadily building,
the tinny SOUND of the Blonde Girl's radio.

ANGLE ON MEN

tense, annoyed, frustrated as the SOUND of the RADIO GROWS, joining the CREAKING, SQUEAKING and SQUEEGEEING.

ANGLE ON DRAGLINE

as Carr passes by. He speaks in a low whisper.

DRAGLINE

Man, that lil Lucille was a lot of
lil girl.

OMITTED

ANGLE ON MEN

some turning away, not wanting to be reminded, some staring ahead unhappily, thinking the same thing.

DRAGLINE'S VOICE (O.S.)

You see how she was jus' poppin'
outa the top of that dress.

ANGLE ON KOKO

irritated, anxious.

KOKO

Aw, come on, Drag.

ANGLE ON DRAGLINE

not paying attention.

DRAGLINE

And down below, that thing didn't
reach no higher than...

(chuckles)

She liable to catch cold... runnin'
around like that.

ANGLE ON MEN

irritated by Dragline's voice and the SQUEEGEEING and the SQUEAKING and CREAKING and the RADIO SOUND, tinny and grating, growing in volume.

DRAGLINE'S VOICE

...And that thing was so tight 'cross
her bottom... made me wanna just
reach out my hands and...

ANGLE ON LUKE

LUKE

Forget it, man.

ANGLE ON DRAGLINE

suddenly angry.

DRAGLINE

Whatta you mean, forget it?

ANGLE ON LUKE

LUKE

Stop beatin', man. You ain't doin'
nobody no good.

ANGLE ON DRAGLINE

his face corroding in fury as the RADIO SOUND and the
CREAKING, SQUEAKING and SQUEEGEEING are at an unbearable
peak.

DRAGLINE

(with slow menace)

Boy, you better get some sleep and
save your strength. 'Cause you're
gonna need it.

OMITTED

ANGLE ON FAN CLOSE

As the SOUNDS threaten to burst our ears with their high-
pitched tension, the CAMERA MOVES SLOWLY into the hub of the
fan and our nerves scream for relief.

OMITTED

EXT. BARRACKS CLOSE ON LUKE AS GLOVE SMASHES INTO HIS FACE
(DAY)

and Luke falls back into the dirt. He's hurt, startled, but
grins. We HEAR a CHEER from the men O.S., as he gets up. He
is stripped to the waist, wears huge 16 oz. boxing gloves.

FULLER ANGLE

showing Dragline similarly dressed. They are squared off in
the yard, surrounded by YELLING men who want blood. It is a
release from the sexual tension built up by the night before.
The guards stand in the guard boxes, watching. The Captain
sits up on his porch, so he can see without being too obvious.

Luke gets up and manages a lunging right across to Dragline's
Adam's apple. Dragline is momentarily staggered but counters
with a terrible clubbing blow that mashes Luke's gloves into
his face, knocking him to the ground. Time is called for the
round.

LUKE AND OTHERS BEHIND HIM

as he gets to his feet.

TRAMP

Why don't you just stay there? He's only gonna knock you down agin.

ALIBI

It's not your fault. He's just too big.

SOCIETY RED

Let him hit you in the nose, get some blood flowing. Maybe they'll stop it before he kills you.

LUKE

(shaking his head,
grinning)

I don't want to frighten him.

The second round is called and Luke advances toward Dragline.

TWO SHOT LUKE, DRAGLINE

circling. Luke has to get in his shot before Dragline gets too close and clubs him again. He feints a punch that moves Dragline off-balance and winds up for a big one, but Dragline smashes him backhand. Luke hits the dirt, the men SCREAM AND YELL. Wiping some blood from his mouth, Luke rises again. He is dizzy. Dragline smacks him down again.

THE MEN

SHOUTING, SHRIEKING, they have blood in their eyes, releasing their tensions.

INTERCUT THE VARIOUS REACTIONS

as the fight continues. The Captain on his porch rocks and spits dry little spouts of wind, Godfrey, impassive, waiting in his guard house. The YELLING gradually subsides as Dragline continues to smash Luke, who keeps getting up.

ANGLE ON DRAGLINE

Without relish, he pokes Luke down again. Now there is no cheering, no yelling, just silence.

ANGLE ON CAPTAIN

as he gets up and walks down to the wire where he can see what is happening. The silence disturbs him.

ON LUKE

He rises, grinning and winds up to throw another punch. But the act of lifting his giant glove is a Herculean task.

Seconds go by in which he tries to raise the glove high enough to launch a punch.

ON DRAGLINE

waiting, gloves at waist level, poised.

DRAGLINE

(low)

Omma pop you one easy. Stay down.

He pops Luke who reels, goes down on a knee and then slowly rises, rises. Dragline is honestly agonized.

DRAGLINE

I'm gonna kill you, you go on...

LUKE

That's what you're gonna have to do.

ANGLE ON CAPTAIN

concerned.

ANGLE ON BOSS GODFREY

impassive.

ANGLE ON DRAGLINE

He raises his fists. But Luke is up again. Dragline realizes he'll have to kill him to beat him. After a long moment, Dragline drops his hands to his sides, looks back toward Godfrey and the captain and then starts walking to the barracks, fast.

ANGLE ON LUKE

He looks after him and reaches up to wipe the blood away, still grinning.

INT. BARRACKS (NIGHT)

The poker game. Five card stud. Playing are Gambler, Koko, Dynamite, Blind Dick and Luke, bandaged. The mood of the barracks is quieter than usual. The men are still assessing the fight, uncertain as to who now is their leader, looking toward Dragline for an indication. Not playing, Dragline lies on his bunk behind Koko, sullenly reading a sex book. Gambler deals the third cards.

GAMBLER

Ana paira ninas. Koko's the brains.

KOKO

Cuter.

Dynamite is already out. Blind Dick now folds.

GAMBLER

Ace calls.

LUKE

Kick a buck.

KOKO

(considers, then chips)

I'm in.

GAMBLER

Ace calls. Here we go.

(deals Luke)

King-five gets a tray for no help.

(deals Koko)

Paira ninas gets a Jack.

(deals himself)

Ana man with the ace gets... slop in
the face... Ninas up.

KOKO

(regarding Luke)

Cuter again.

GAMBLER

Call.

LUKE

(expressionless)

Kick a buck.

Koko is worried. He looks at his hole card, considers, long
silence. Dragline looks over from his bunk.

DRAGLINE

(to Koko)

Whatcha got?

KOKO

Pair'a nines.

DRAGLINE

I kin see that, brick head. I mean
your hole card.

Koko hands it over his shoulder to Dragline, who now sits up
to consider the whole situation.

DRAGLINE

(continuing)

Uh-huh. And he ain't got nothing
showing. Raise his head off.

KOKO

He's been betting his head from the

gun. Gotta have kings.

DRAGLINE

So then you just call him.

KOKO

(chipping)

I call.

GAMBLER

(studies Luke's cards)

I gotta believe. Out!

(folds)

Now they're rollin'.

(deals Luke)

King-five-four gets an eight.

(deals Koko)

Pair'a nines with a Jack gets a four.

Ninas still up.

KOKO

(tentatively)

Cuter.

LUKE

(automatically)

Kick a buck.

KOKO

Damn.

He looks up to Dragline for help.

DRAGLINE

Kick him back a buck!

Koko looks uncertain, but listens.

KOKO

Back a buck.

LUKE

(automatically)

Kick a buck.

Koko looks up to Dragline: What do we do now?

DRAGLINE

Don't look at me, mullet-head.

Koko looks to the others.

GAMBLER

Man, you play like a kokonut. You got to call him at least.

KOKO

I know he's got a paira kings. He
don't have to stick 'em in my ear.

BLIND DICK

Gotta have kings.

GAMBLER

Sure he's got kings but you still
gotta call him.

Koko looks back to Dragline.

DRAGLINE

Man's got a paira kings, get your
tail out.

Koko folds. Luke reaches for the pot at the same time that
Dragline reaches for Luke's cards.

DRAGLINE

Nuthin'! A handfull of nuthin'!

(cuffs Koko)

You stupid mullet-head. He beat you
with nuthin'! Just like today when
he kept coming back at me.

LUKE

(smiling)

Nuthin' can be a pretty cool hand.

DRAGLINE

Cool Hand Luke.

So saying, Dragline saves face and the baton of leadership
is passed.

EXT. YOYO SHIMMERING IN THE SUN TRANSITIONAL DEVICE (DAY)

swinging away the time...

INSERT: ROAD MOVING SHOT DAY

SHOOTING THROUGH cage truck, as it moves swiftly along, the
landscape a blur of shadows and racing phone poles, etc.,
the men shadows slouched on their benches inside.

DISSOLVE TO:

BEARCAUGHT AVENUE

This is a country road running over rolling moors, land open
to the sky and sun, the roads reaching out to infinity. The
cage truck rolls to the end of the road and stops. Stretching
out on either side of the road, every five feet is a pyramid
of freshly dumped sand.

ANGLE ON REAR OF TRUCK

as the bull gang gets down, looks at the sand, are given shovels.

KOKO

Oh no, man! Not on this hot muther.

GAMBLER

All the bears gonna be walking today.

ALIBI

(nervously)

What's the deal?

DRAGLINE

Tar truck.

At these bleak words, over the last rise comes a filthy blackened tank truck with a fire in its belly and an array of pipes and valves at its rear, like a hellish beetle.

KOKO

(to Tattoo, Tramp,
Alibi)

You think you've been working hard.
This muther'll break your back.

SOCIETY RED

This is a big day for the guards.
They get to remind us who's boss.

TRAMP

I ain't forgot.

ON THE MEN

as the truck driver makes adjustments in the heater, flame, etc.

BOSS PAUL

Awright, every second man, git to
the other side of the road.

Dragline, Dynamite, Gambler, Tattoo, Loudmouth Steve, Alibi, Sleepy, Stupid Blondie and Chief cross over, leaving Luke, Koko, Society Red, Tramp, Babalugats, Blind Dick, Mechanic and Sailor. The tar truck begins to move slowly down the road, spreading a black, hot, acrid wake behind it.

BOSS PAUL

(continuing; with
undisguised malice)

Captain heard this gang been doin'
so good, gave us this special job.
We got three miles of tarrin' to
cover today. Let's roll it!

NEW ANGLE ON THE MEN

They begin to work, digging a shovel-full of sand, fanning it out over the hot tar, moving up to the next pile. Luke and Dragline in the lead of their respective groups. The guards move up along the ridges behind the men, urging them to move faster, caning the slow workers.

BOSS PAUL

Let's git with it!

BOSS SHORTY

Roll it, heah?

ANGLE GODFREY

He is at the rear of the columns, walking down the center of the road. With his stick he points to spots where the tar has not been covered and the nearest man flicks a spray of sand over it.

ON LUKE WITH KOKO AND SOCIETY RED LATER

They are working steadily but it is hot, hard, back-breaking labor. Koko stops for a moment to rub his arm.

KOKO

Oh man. I'm gonna twist my arm off if this heat don't kill me first.

Boss Paul canes him across the legs.

BOSS PAUL

Roll it!

ON DRAGLINE

sweating and suffering across the road, just keeping up with Luke.

DRAGLINE

Hey, buddy. Take it easy. You're making me look bad.

LUKE

The man wants speed, let's give it to him. Ram it in and break it off. Go hard. Shag it.

Dragline begins to work harder, digging and fanning, keeping pace with Luke.

ON DRAGLINE AND DYNAMITE

DYNAMITE

(panting)

Whatta we racin' for?

DRAGLINE

Man wants speed, let's give it to
him. Use that shovel like you use
your spoon. Shag it, man!

Dynamite understands and throws himself into it.

FULL SHOT THE MEN

up to their waists in smoke and dust, splattered with tar,
working like devils as the word passes down the line.

BLIND DICK

(to Society Red)
Go hard!

GAMBLER

(to Tattoo)
Ram it in and break it off!

ALIBI

(to Sleepy)
Roll it!

LOUDMOUTH STEVE

Shag it!

They are all working like hell.

ANGLE ON BOSS PAUL

He looks confused, concerned by this sudden manic activity.

ANGLE ON BOSS GODFREY

forced to walk faster to keep up, finding no unsanded spots
for his sorcerer's wand.

ON LUKE, DRAGLINE, OTHERS

enjoying the guard's confusion.

DRAGLINE

(to Luke)
They don't know iff'n to smile, spit
or swallow.

LUKE

They ain't never seen a bull gang
before.

SOCIETY RED

Work those shovels instead of your
mouths.

WORKING ON BEARCAUGHT AVENUE

Essentially a MONTAGE, a wild insane ballet of labor as led by Luke and Dragline, the bull gang throws itself into the madness, muttering Luke's words of inspiration to each other and loving the guards' confusion. (SONG ON SOUND TRACK)

TRAMP

Go hard!

TATTOO

Ram it in...

MECHANIC

Break it off...

SOCIETY RED

Roll it!

DYNAMITE

Shag it!

STUPID BLONDIE

Move it!

Luke grins and works. The guards are tense and uneasy and walk the road backward, not daring to turn their backs on these madmen. Rabbit runs around with his water bucket but the men don't drink, just upturn the water over their faces and keep going.

ON BOSS PAUL

confused, angry, has not been able to cane anyone in an hour. As Rabbit rushes by:

BOSS PAUL

Rabbit! What the hell's goin' on?

RABBIT

(knows but isn't saying)

I don't know, Boss. They must be bearcaught. All of them.

He rushes off, as caught up in the esprit as the others.

WORKING AGAIN

More of the madness but now even faster, sweatier, wilder. The men are bearcaught by their sudden power to confound the guards. ALL SHOTS FAVORING Luke, splattered with tar, working right behind the truck.

ON GODFREY

Replacing his stick with a rifle, as tense and uncertain as the other bosses, staring at Luke with blank, hating eyes.

ON LUKE

as he looks up just as the tar truck turns off the road which has ended, crossed by a small highway. They have finished. Luke stands straight, looking out across the highway to the rolling green beyond. Dragline works up to him.

DRAGLINE

Where'd the road go?

LUKE

That's it. That's the end.

KOKO

But there's still daylight left.

DRAGLINE

(checking the sun)

'Bout two hours left.

LOUDMOUTH STEVE

What do we do now?

Luke has been looking at the guards who have grouped in conference around Boss Paul who has his watch out. They look concerned, gesticulating toward Luke and the others.

LUKE

(smiling)

Nothin'.

The others understand. They have beaten the Free Men by working harder. They all collapse on the ground, rolling about, dazed, tired but happy as hell, laughing.

DRAGLINE

Oh, Luke, you wild beautiful thing!
You crazy handful of nuthin'!

DISSOLVE TO:

OMITTED

INT. BARRACKS (DAY)

Sunday afternoon scene. The chain men are dancing, jingling. Three RADIOS BLARE in different corners; a hell-fire preacher where Deacon and Society Red sit working a letter; romantic ballads (Near You, Heart Aches by Ted Weeks, etc.) for the men reading fuck books; rhythm and blues, country music for a couple of wrestlers, banging into bunks until one departs the other and runs off. CAMERA FOLLOWS THIS ACTION SHOWING the scene. Other men rolling cigarettes, Dynamite still on his rattlesnake wallet, Koko cutting hair, using a board over an ash can for a barber's chair. Everyone is barefoot.

WICKERMAN

Visitor for Luke!

Luke sits up from his bunk, staring at the Wicker, unmoving, amazed.

GAMBLER (O.S.)

Steve. Your mother's here!

ANGLE ON LUKE

as he gets up. Behind him Loudmouth Steve gets up, tossing down his sex book resentfully:

LOUDMOUTH STEVE

Jeez! She never lets me alone.

TRAMP

You oughta be glad you got somebody.

Steve tosses him a finger as he leaves.

ALIBI

My wife hasn't been here for a month.
She must be sick again. She's had
this condition of the liver for...

TATTOO

Alibi, can't you never say nothin'
without explainin' it? Carr says you
even explain when you get up at night.

EXT. CAMP GATE (DAY)

By the picnic table set up for visitors. In far b.g., we SEE Luke come out of the door and start across the yard toward the gate, where he is shaken down and permitted to exit, moving down to the table. A few feet from the end of the table, Boss Godfrey sits in a kitchen chair, his hands discreetly crossed over the pistol in his lap. His mirror eyes play over the scene. Loudmouth Steve, his MOTHER -- a desperately fortyish blonde -- and a couple of other prisoners and visitors occupy the background. Parked next to the table is a truck. In the bed lies Luke's mother, ARLETTA. She is propped up on pillows and wedged in for traveling.

The whole back is set up as for a chronic invalid, everything within reach, etc. She smokes incessantly. Nearby, Luke's BROTHER and his nephew, JOHN-BOY, a kid of twelve, enormously impressed with the sights and the guns and dogs, etc.

LUKE

Comin' out here, Boss?

BOSS PAUL

(by the gate)

Yeah. Come on out, Luke.

A few feet outside the gate, Jackson reaches for the boy, pats him on the head. Shakes hands in passing with his brother, who is unmistakably a farmer, and stands in the doorway looking at his mother. She lies on her side craning to see him.

LUKE

How'd you find me?

ARLETTA

Helen, she sent along your things with a note, and John here, he wrote to the police.

LUKE

Yeah. Well.
(to Godfrey)
Gettin' up here, Boss.

Godfrey just looks at him, says nothing.

LUKE

Well, Arletta, I got to stand down here.

ARLETTA

I allus hoped to see you well fixed and have me a crop of grandkids to kiss and fuss around with.

LUKE

Like to oblige you, Arletta, but right off I don't know where to put my hands on 'em.

ARLETTA

Sometimes I wisht people was like dogs, Luke. Comes a time, a day like, when the bitch just don't recognize her pups no more, so she don't have no hopes nor love to bring her pain. She just don't give a damn. They let you smoke?

LUKE

Smokin' it up here, Boss.

Boss Godfrey nods. He lights cigarettes for her and for himself.

LUKE

Yeah, well, Arletta, you done your best. What I done with myself is my problem.

ARLETTA

No it hain't, Luke. You ain't alone.

Ever whar you go, I'm with you, and
so's John.

LUKE

You never thought that's a heavy
load?

ARLETTA

We allus thought you was strong enough
to carry it. Was we wrong?

Luke gives her the cigarette, and smiles at her.

LUKE

No. But things ain't always like
they seem, Arletta. You know that. A
man's gotta go his own way.

ARLETTA

Well, I don't know, I just wash my
hands of it, I guess I just got to
love you and let go.

She catches his hand as he puts the cigarette between her
lips.

LUKE

Yeah.

ARLETTA

What are you doin' here?

LUKE

We call it abuildin' time, Arletta.

ARLETTA

I ain't askin' what you'll do after
you get out, because I'm gonna be
dead and it don't matter.

His mother's disappointment in him brings Jackson a real
twinge of pain here. He tries to change the subject.

LUKE

You never wanted to live forever
anyways, did you? It wasn't such a
hell of a life.

ARLETTA

Oh, I had me some high old times.
Yore old man, Luke, wasn't much for
stickin' around, but damn it he made
me laugh.

LUKE

Yeah, would of been nice to of knowed
him, the way you talk about him.

She's looking at him and begins to laugh, losing control and coughing to the point it alarms John and Jackson and they have to help her. She pays no attention to the cough.

ARLETTA

He'd... He'd of... broke you up.

She quiets after the fit and lies back, tired.

ARLETTA

You think life is some kind of ocean voyage and you start out with buntin' and hollerin' and high hopes, but the damn ship goes down before you ever reach the other side. Luke?

LUKE

Here, Mom.

ARLETTA

What went wrong?

LUKE

Nothin'. Ever'thing's cool's can be.

ARLETTA

No.

LUKE

Tried to live always just as free and aboveboard as you been, and well, they ain't that much elbow room.

Arletta is looking hard into his eyes as he speaks. She reaches out to him again...

ARLETTA

You allus had good jobs, and that girl in Kentucky I taken a shine to her.

LUKE

She took off with that convertible feller...

ARLETTA

Well, why not? Idee of marryin' got you all choked up, trying to pretend you was respectable you was borin' the hell out of all of us.

LUKE

(grinning at her)

Yeah.

ARLETTA

I'm leavin' the place to John.

LUKE

That's good: he earned it.

ARLETTA

Nothin' to do with it. I ain't never give John the kind of feelin' I give you, so I'm payin' him off now. Don't feel you got to say anything. Way it is, sometimes, you just have a feelin' for a child or you don't, and with John I just didn't.

OFFSTAGE WHISTLE

LUKE

Gotta go, Arletta.

ARLETTA

(recovering)

Laugh it up, kid. You'll make out.

She kneads his hand and subsides onto her bed. Luke turns away from her to face John, who has stood by. Godfrey is on his feet. The other men are getting up and saying goodbye to visitors, picking up their packages, etc., and among them is a chain man, his chains dragging, holding them up with a string. The kid stands by John looking at the chains clinking past...

JOHN-BOY

Why can't you have chains?

Luke looks up at John, Sr. with amusement.

JOHN-BOY

Uncle Luke?

TWO SHOT LUKE AND JOHN, SR.

JOHN

John-Boy looks to you. You're a hero. He's braggin' on you all over the county.

LUKE

(thoughtful)

Yeah.

JOHN

You must've really flung a binge this time. You really hit that cop?

LUKE

(not liking the smug pride in John)

Much as I'd like to oblige you, John,
I didn't hit the cop.

(beat)

She's in pretty bad pain, ain't she?

JOHN

(nods)

Fulla dope, Luke.

LUKE

Keep it with her all the time. Let
her have all she wants.

They understand each other. Luke chucks John-Boy under the
chin, then stops, looks at John, kneels beside him.

TWO SHOT LUKE AND JOHN-BOY

LUKE

You don't want to admire them chains,
John-Boy. They ain't medals. You get
them put on for makin' mistakes.

(beat)

And if you make a really bad mistake,
then you got to deal with the Man...
and he is one tough old boy.

THEIR P.O.V.

Godfrey stares at them, his glasses mirroring.

BACK TO THEM

LUKE

So long, Arletta. Take care.

ARLETTA'S VOICE

You know it, kid.

John holds Luke for a beat and reaches into the truck and
pulls out a battered banjo which he gives Luke.

JOHN

Now there's nothin' for you to come
back for.

ARLETTA'S TRUCK

LEAVING down the road, kicking up dust. Barracks in b.g.

EXT. HIGHWAY WITH YOYO SUPPORT (DAY)

cutting away at the time...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BARRACKS (NIGHT)

Luke sits on his bunk plunking aimlessly at the BANJO. The barracks are quiet, an air of [...]. Suddenly there is an unidentifiable SOUND, low, but all the heads in the barracks look up, waiting, silently. It has begun to rain, the big drops DRUMMING on the roof. It begins to fall heavily. There are moving slams around the building as outside the guards SLAM the storm shutters. It is hot, oppressive.

ALIBI

I guess they have to close those things, or we'd drown. But it's really suffocating.

TATTOO

Talk about drownin', I did some trainin' on a submarine once. Boy, when you're under there you really feel it.

LOUDMOUTH STEVE

Shut up, man. It's too hot to talk.

The air is stifling, desultory. Out of boredom, Dragline turns to Dynamite.

DRAGLINE

You see mah skinny lid boy at chow tonight. He was matching you plate for plate.

DYNAMITE

I wasn't feelin' good. Think I got a ulcer or somethin'.

DRAGLINE

He had a spoon like yours, he'd make you look like a possum [...] on a tree bark.

Society Red is lying on his bunk looking at the bottom of the bunk above.

SOCIETY RED

Oh, come on, Clarence.

Dragline sits up and looks at him aggressively.

DRAGLINE

What do you mean, Clarence? You callin' me a liar?

He waits.

SOCIETY RED

Not a liar. You just have a common -- and likable -- tendency toward

exaggeration.

DRAGLINE

(proudly)

He's the champeen hog-gut of this camp. Hell, I seen him eat ten choc'lat bars and seven cold drinks in fifteen minutes. He kin eat busted bottles and rusty nails, any damn thing. If you'd so kindly oblige as to let me cut off your yankee head, he'd even eat that.

LUKE

I can eat fifty eggs.

They turn to look at him as though surprised to find him there. Before Dragline can think he says...

DRAGLINE

Nobody kin eat fifty eggs.

SOCIETY RED

(to Dragline)

You just said he could eat anything.

DRAGLINE

(doubtfully, to Luke)

You ever eat fifty eggs?

LUKE

Nobody ever ate fifty eggs.

GAMBLER

Bet! Bet! Babalugats!

DRAGLINE

Mah boy say he kin eat fifty eggs, he'll eat fifty eggs.

LOUDMOUTH STEVE

Yeah but in how long?

LUKE

One hour.

SOCIETY RED

Well I believe I'll have to take part of that wager.

DRAGLINE

Two bucks.

GAMBLER

Let's talk money.

DRAGLINE

Awright, twenty bucks. Anything! The
Syndicate'll cover any money you
got. Koko, get paper.

KOKO
Dragline... fifty eggs got to weigh
a good six pounds.

DYNAMITE
(expertly)
Man's gut can't hold that. They'll
swell up and bust him open.

BLIND DICK
You're gonna kill him.

DRAGLINE
Getcha money, up. Gambler! Dynamite!
Everybody. Kokonut Head here is taking
the money. Loudmouth -- get it up!

The initial boredom of the scene is dispelled -- a purpose
has been created to lead them through the endless building
of time.

GAMBLER
How's he gonna eat 'em?

LUKE
(cutting in)
Boiled for fifteen minutes. Then
peeled. I eat all fifty in one hour.

Men are all around Dragline and Koko now with money and
wagers. Koko is frantically scribbling.

DRAGLINE
Koko, write down their names, don't
just make marks.

SOCIETY RED
One rule! No throwing up. He throws
up, you forfeit everything.

DRAGLINE
You ever see mah boy throw up? Shut
your mouth and put up your money!

Koko is on the floor now with Babalugats beside him, assorting
papers, handing out betting receipts. Dragline turns to Luke.

DRAGLINE
Why'd you have to say fifty? Why not
thirty-five or thirty-nine?

LUKE
Fifty's a nice round number.

DRAGLINE

Damn, Luke. What's the matter with you? what's the matter with me?

LUKE

(winking)

Nothin' to worry about. We got a deadlock on that mullet.

EXT. PRISON YARD MOVING TWO SHOT (DAY)

Luke and Dragline jog around the yard like roadwork for a boxer and trainer.

DRAGLINE

What did I do? Stole and stole lies. I loved mah neighbor and his wife, but what did I do to deserve this lunatic to come in mah happy home and beat me outa hard earned bread.

LUKE

(grins)

We got it locked in the sock.

DRAGLINE

Yeah, I know. But what we gotta do first is stretch that l'il ol' belly of yours -- git it all strained out, in fightin' shape, like a barrage balloon.

LUKE

You ol' sack of guts. I had a belly like yours, we wouldn't have nothin' to worry about.

DRAGLINE

(considers paunch)

'Atsa sign I got me an affectionate nature.

LUKE

Like an elephant.

DRAGLINE

(grinning)

Us elephants may be a lil slow, like in makin' love, but you give us a coupla three days to really get with it an' man -- stand back!

Luke grins.

LUKE IN THE CHOWLINE

taking enormous helpings.

DOGBOY

Lookit this hot gut, Boss. Here's a man gone bust the State feedin' his face.

BOSS HIGGINS

Wisht I could eat like that.

LUKE

Thing about bad food, you got to eat a lot of it.

OMITTED

LUKE

He sits in a yoga position, rippling his stomach muscles miraculously. Koko and Gambler pop INTO THE SHOT to watch with amazement.

INT. MESS HALL (NIGHT)

Luke refuses food. He moves to his place, sits before his empty plate.

INT. BARRACKS (NIGHT)

as Dragline stops in front of the Wicker Man.

DRAGLINE

Boss! Man needs a brown bomber and a dose of salts.

Instant UPROAR of protest.

SOCIETY RED

Rules Committee! Rules Committee!

ALIBI

Nobody said nothin' about that!

LOUDMOUTH STEVE

Same as dopin' a race horse!

SLEEPY

It don't sound right.

TATTOO

You can't do that!

DRAGLINE

You jes' watch us!

BLIND DICK

Fair's fair.

KOKO

Got a right to start with a clear
gut!

DYNAMITE

Man can't eat that much no matter --

LOUDMOUTH STEVE

You can't just change the rules any
way you want!

All of this is overlapping: Dragline walks through them
carrying the pile and cup of salts passed out from the Wicker,
ignoring it all.

INT. KITCHEN

JABO, the cook, is lowering the sacks of eggs into huge pots
of boiling water. Carr stands by with a watch, timing. Outside
the open door are Dragline, Dynamite and Gambler watching
tensely.

DRAGLINE

Take it easy now, Jabo. Them is eggs,
not them cathead biscuits.

JABO

I know what eggs look like. I ain't
seen any around here for three years,
but I remember.

ANGLE ON BARRACKS DOOR (DAY)

as a file of men carry the still-steaming eggs in their hats
from the yard into the building.

RABBIT

(adding on a scrap of
paper)

I've got it figured. If he eats an
egg a minute, he's got 10 minutes
left to swaller them.

CHIEF

I just got sent five bucks from the
rodeo company.

RABBIT

What for?

CHIEF

A bull I fell off.

INT. BARRACKS

as the line of men reach the poker table and begin stacking

up the eggs. The Rules Committee sits around the table leaving one side for Luke. It's all set up with towels, etc. They are counting eggs carefully, piling them in pyramids. Dragline picks up an egg and cracks it smartly on the table. Again uproar...

DRAGLINE

Awright! Stand back, you pedestrians,
this ain't no automobile accident!

ALIBI

You're peeling his eggs!

DRAGLINE

That's right, Mister Alibi.

SOCIETY RED

He peels the eggs himself. That's understood.

DRAGLINE

You jus' may be great at hangin'
paper around the big cities, but us
country boys is not entirely
brainless. When it comes to the law,
nothin' is understood.

LOUDMOUTH STEVE

Who made what law about peeling his
eggs?

DRAGLINE

I'm his trainer, I'm the syndicate
what's coverin' all bets, and I'm
his official egg peeler.

SOCIETY RED

Just wait till the hour starts, that's
all.

The champion enters and the talk dies. He's naked from the waist. He does some side-straddle hops and deep-knee bends. His stomach is markedly concave. He, drying himself from a shower, walks to the fragment of mirror on the wall and combs his hair, studies his image a second and, at last ready, moves to the table and sits down.

LUKE

(ingeniously)

What's goin' on?

Dragline jumps up and gives a second's rubdown to Luke's shoulders. There is a flurry of last minute betting, and then silence. Everybody gathered around. Luke shuffles his feet, twitches his toes. One egg from the pile is peeled and in front of him. Carr waits, his eyes on his wrist watch, his other hand up in the air, and all eyes rest on that hand.

All eyes drop as the hand drops. Dragline grabs eggs and peels them, his fingers flickering, the shells flying. Luke picks up the peeled egg and eats it in a gulp.

CUTS OF LUKE, DRAGLINE, REACTIONS

LUKE

He's eating very fast.

SOCIETY RED

(keeping a written
tab)

One, two, three...

(continues counting,
throughout)

KOKO

He's gonna lose a finger eating eggs
like that.

Dragline reaches over and pops an egg into Luke's mouth, his pinkie extended, like tossing a tidbit into the mouth of some animal.

FULL SHOT LUKE IN THE CENTER

The others stand around, motionless. Dragline cracks and peels and Luke eats in a regular musical rhythm inexorable and horrible as it is sustained. Red is checking and counting off eggs...

SOCIETY RED

...twenty-four. Twenty-five, twenty-
six...

LUKE

His face bears an expression of ineffable absent pleasure as though eggs reminded him of something a long way away.

DRAGLINE

looking at him, neutral...

DRAGLINE

Slow down a little.

THE GROUP

Some chew fingernails, some stare, some mouth open, some stand with unlighted cigarettes in their mouths, staring. Some have eyes shut, their lips silently counting with Red.

SOCIETY RED

...thirty, thirty-one, thirty-two.

LUKE

He stops and stands up, stretching. His stomach bulges as though he were pregnant. Slowly he walks across the barracks toward the water faucet. Dragline stands looking after him, alarmed. Luke slowly bends over and washes his mouth out, not taking a drink. He stands, turns, walks up and down, does some exercises. Silence, no one else moves. He walks back, looks at the eggs, making an expression of distaste. He turns away and does some more exercises. Gambler moves over very close to him. Luke is going up and down, up and down doing knee bends. Gambler tries to look into his eyes, examine his stomach, listen to his wind. Luke sticks out his tongue obligingly for a check. Gambler stands up.

SOCIETY RED

Eighteen to go!

There is a flurry of last-minute betting led by Onionhead's examination. Koko, Babalugats beside him, are the tellers.

GAMBLER

He's had it. I'm throwin' in my last tenner.

Sleepy appears, as does Tramp, to make beta.

BLIND DICK

He don't look good.

DYNAMITE

(expertly)

Man's gut can't hold more'n that.

GAMBLER

Oh you gonna come crawlin' around beggin' for a cold drink, Drag. Your boy is done for!

Mechanic has been studying Luke as if he were an ailing carburetor.

MECHANIC

(quietly to Dragline)

If I give you a dollar and he don't eat all fifty eggs, I get two dollars?

DRAGLINE

Mechanic!

Dragline puts his arm around Mechanic's shoulders affectionately.

DRAGLINE

You're a sweet old boy and I don't like to see you pick up no bad habits. Better use that dollar to buy yourself

a new spark plug or something. But as long as you done took a stand, why don't you put some money where your mouth is? Not no measly buck!

MECHANIC

All I got is three-seventy-five.

DRAGLINE

It's a bet! Koko! I gone this far, I'm backin' mah boy all the way! Come on, who's next? Where are the big money men, I want to hear from some high rollers.

Silence.

SOCIETY RED

I believe you've got it all, Dragline. Every nickel in camp is riding.

Dragline turns to Luke and grins. Luke instantly appears to recover and walks casually back to the table. It should be clear this last was a little put-on between him and Dragline to milk the last money into bets. Luke sits and begins eating.

LUKE

cool, confident, but as the egg is crushed in his mouth the first real gagging feeling of total surfeit hits him. His jaw closes and freezes. His eyes grow desperate and swivel toward Dragline, though he doesn't dare move his head lest he give way to nausea.

DRAGLINE

reacts.

LUKE

with a herculean effort, he swallows.

SOCIETY RED'S VOICE

Thirty-three.

Dragline swallows with relief. Gambler moves and looks about, a man feeling victory within his grasp.

ALIBI

Carr? What's the time?

CARR

Twenty-four minutes to go.

Luke swallows another egg; sweat bursts out on his forehead. Dragline signals to a second, Koko, to sit in for him and peel eggs. He moves to Luke.

SOCIETY RED

Thirty-four.

TWO SHOT LUKE AND DRAGLINE

as Dragline stands behind him, massaging his shoulders and neck, tenderly... Luke doggedly eats eggs, one by one. Red counts off under...

SOCIETY RED

Thirty-nine... forty... forty-one...
forty-two...

MEANWHILE:

DRAGLINE

Come on, boy, come on, darlin'. You kin do her. Just let that ol' belly sag and enjoy itself. Stay loose, buddy. Eight more, between you and everlasting glory. Little ol' eggs, pigeon eggs, that's all, fish eggs practically.

Luke almost throws up, and Dragline signals Koko to hold up... he gets Luke of his feet and begins walking him up and down the barracks...

LOUDMOUTH STEVE

Carr? Time?

CARR

Six minutes to go, Dragline.

DRAGLINE

(into Luke's ear)

Just shakin' it down, that's all, settlin' them eggs down...

He sits him down, takes an egg from Koko and puts it to Luke's lips, pursing his lips in a kiss...

DRAGLINE

Come on, Baby... don't be that way. Open your little ol' gator mouth.

Luke opens his mouth, in goes the egg, he chews, chews, swallows. Another egg...

SOCIETY RED

Forty-four...

CARR

Two minutes to time...

DRAGLINE

All right now: get mad at them eggs.
Eat it there boy! Bite it! Gnaw on
it!

SOCIETY RED

Forty-five.

CARR

One minute, thirty seconds.

Another egg goes. Luke closes his eyes and motions to
Dragline; just stuff 'em in any old how!

DRAGLINE

That's it, that's how to do it, chew,
chew, chew!

All eggs peeled, Koko is up and dancing wildly, and a couple
of men, even though they've got nothing but everything to
lose, are intoxicated beyond power to restrain themselves
and are yelling and jumping up and down.

CARR

One minute, fifty-five... fifty...
forty-five... etc.

SOCIETY RED

Forty-five, forty-six, forty-seven...

So that it all comes out in a near dead-heat, with Dragline
yelling and popping in eggs. At the last second before
deadline, two whole eggs are shoved into Luke's mouth, and
Dragline rams Luke's mouth shut for him...

DRAGLINE

All in: that's it: chew, chew, chew!

CARR

Fifteen, ten, nine, eight, seven...
six...

Luke looks around, then takes a mighty swallow, as:

CARR

One... zero!

Luke collapses with his head on the table, his arms flung
out.

SOCIETY RED

He didn't swallow the last...

He grabs him by the hair and pulls his head back. Dragline
pries his mouth open with his fingers. Luke is out...

DRAGLINE

You think so, huh?

NEW ANGLE PAST LUKE'S EAR

as they all peer down into his throat. Dragline grins, looks around at Society.

DRAGLINE

Where's the egg?

He slaps Luke on the cheek affectionately, closes his mouth and lets his head fall back on the table with a loud thump, his arms again sprawled out in the piles of egg shells. A dance of victory for Dragline... he collects all over the place. Dynamite, shaking his head, quietly knights the new champion hog-gut by laying his big spoon on the table next to Luke's head.

EXT. ROAD (DAY)

A car ROARS by, leaving a hint of laughter and music in the air and a cloud of dust. The men are working rhythmically. Godfrey watching.

ANGLE ON LOUDMOUTH STEVE GAMBLER

They have been observing Godfrey.

LOUDMOUTH STEVE

Man looks like a goddamn bus driver.

GAMBLER

(yoyoing)

He gets too close to me and I'll cut his belly open.

OMITTED

ANGLE ON KOKO

He sees snake.

KOKO'S VOICE

Snake in the grass! Boss!

He runs. Men flail at the snake in the grass with their yoyos and CAMERA MOVES WITH Snake though we can't see it and we follow its progress only by the men jumping, hitting at it, yelling.

GODFREY

He rams his cane into the soft sand and Rabbit reaches into the truck cab and hands him his rifle. Godfrey slams the bolt in.

BACK TO MEN

They jump and yell and chase the snake until they reach Luke, who stoops, grabs cooly and comes up with the snake, holding it by the tail.

LUKE

Pickin' it up here, Boss!

GODFREY

His EYES HUGE IN THE SCREEN: Luke seen there IN DUPLICATE, standing tall in the sun, grinning, the rattler wriggling and thrashing in his grasp. Godfrey's face holds for a long beat then the rifle is brought up so that we can now see Luke CLEAR IN ONE LENS and the other he is lined up in the rifle sight pointing directly INTO THE LENS -- or just CAMERA LEFT. There is a SHOT and the rifle is lowered enough so we can see Luke IN DUPLICATE again.

LUKE

looking at Godfrey, grinning, but a little tougher now. The snake has no head. He walks down a little and throws the body of the snake on the road at Godfrey's feet. It brings him close to where Godfrey's cane still stands in the sand. Godfrey kicks at the snake. He turns... Luke pulls the cane out of the sand and holds it out to Godfrey.

LUKE

Don't forget your walking stick,
Boss.

Godfrey turns to face him and stares at him. Luke just holds the stick out to him. Godfrey slowly takes the bolt out of the rifle, looks down the barrel, blows the smoke out, puts the bolt in his pocket and hands the gun back to Rabbit before finally reaching out and taking the stick from Luke. He turns and walks away.

LUKE

You shore can shoot, man.

Godfrey's shoulders almost jerk as though at every word he were being hit with invisible bullets.

SKY CLOUD THUNDER LIGHTNING

EXT. ROAD DRAGLINE LUKE

working.

DRAGLINE

Luke, why you actin' so strange?
What you wanna do somethin' like
that for? You gone too far when you
mess with the Man With No Eyes. You
gonna be outa here in a little bit --
whyn't you jus' take it a little

easy?

Luke has been staring up at the darkening sky which is growing more ominous with clashing clouds and rolling thunder.

LUKE

Man, it looks like the Big Boss is getting ready to let us have it!

It begins to rain, large spattering drops, quickly turning into a downpour.

BOSS PAUL (O.S.)

Awright, you kin git in that truck.

The gang rushes back into the shelter, all except Luke and Dragline.

LUKE

Look at Him go. Bam! Bam!

DRAGLINE

Knock it off, Luke! You cain't talk about Him that way.

Dragline begins to move off toward the truck.

LUKE

You still believe in the Big Bearded Boss, Drag? You think he's up there watching us?

He grins at Dragline and then, after a beat, raises his bush axe straight up to the sky, grinning at Dragline.

ANGLE ON DRAGLINE

He is frightened as he backs off toward the truck.

DRAGLINE

Get in here! Ain't you scared -- ain't you scared of dyin'?

ANGLE ON LUKE

The rain is torrential. He has to shout to be heard.

LUKE

Dyin'? He can take back this nice pretty life any time He wants.

(looks up)

You welcome to it, Old Timer. Come on! Make me know you're up there! Kill me or love me, one or the other.

He holds his bush axe again, laughing, soaking wet.

REVERSE BACK OF TRUCK

The men jammed into the frame of the body, a frieze of shocked faces staring out at him through the rain. There is a blinding flash of lightning and a THUNDEROUS ROAR. They wince but don't turn away.

LUKE

He smiles and lowers the bush axe, walking toward the truck.

LUKE

Standin' out here in the rain! All
alone! Talkin' to myself.

He smiles a little shamefaced, rueful, sad smile and climbs into the truck and the men draw back from him.

ANGLE THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD OF THE TRUCK PARKED BEHIND

Godfrey seen dimly through the rain-misted windshield.

EXT. YOYO SHIMMERING IN THE SUN TRANSITIONAL DEVICE (DAY)

INT. BARRACKS (NIGHT)

It is the free hour. But instead of the poker game, Dragline, Luke and Koko sit at the table dealing with their line of debtors from the egg-eating. Koko acts as secretary, changing the amounts as the men pay off or borrow more. As Blind Dick receives his money and leaves:

DRAGLINE

(to Koko)

Blind Dick is payin' us off three
and borrowin' back five. Next!

It is Tattoo.

DRAGLINE

Borrowin' or payin' back?

TATTOO

Borrowin'.

DRAGLINE

Mister Cool Hand here is the soft
heart in our Loan Department. Next!

ON CARR AT THE WICKER (NIGHT)

He has just been handed a telegram by the Wicker Man. He reads it impassive as always, while in b.g., the business continues and we HEAR:

SOCIETY RED'S VOICE

I believe I still owe you thirty. I

don't suppose you'd take a check.

TATTOO'S VOICE

(to Luke)

My Navy disability didn't come yet.
You know how it is.

Carr finishes reading and we FOLLOW HIM as he walks to the table.

LUKE

Sure do... that's why we didn't bet
with the Navy.

DRAGLINE

Oh, that's mah darlin' Luke. Grins
like a baby and bites like a 'gator.

Carr sets the telegram on the table next to Luke.

CARR

Sorry, Luke.

Luke picks up the telegram and reads. Then he sets it down, stands and goes to his bunk. Dragline looks after him, takes up the telegram and hands it up to Society Red.

SOCIETY RED

(after reading)

His mother's dead.

ANGLE ON LOUDMOUTH STEVE

As he sees Luke go to his bunk, he picks up his sex book and moves down to the other end of the barracks. Alibi does the same with the cigarette papers and tobacco he has been rolling.

ANGLE ON LUKE

sitting on his bunk, bare feet tucked up beneath his drawn-up legs, softly picking out a slow hymn melody on his banjo. Tears slowly stream down his cheeks.

ANGLE ON CARR

as Luke continues playing softly. He walks down to the other end of the barracks, too.

FULL SHOT BARRACKS

All of the other men are congregated at the other end, giving Luke what privacy they can. There is no conversation, only the slow, plaintive plucking of the banjo.

ANGLE ON LUKE CLOSE

playing, the tears coursing.

NEW ANGLE ON LUKE

in his bunk now, staring wet-eyed up at the ceiling.

CARR'S VOICE

Fifty, boss.

WICKERMAN'S VOICE

Fifty, awright, Carr.

EXT. MESS HALL (PRE-DAWN)

As the men pour out they see that the light on the box is burning, a nightshirt is hung on the fence. Their usual hurry-up pace is slowed to a nervous, apprehensive gait.

BOSS PAUL

Awright, git lined up here.

ANGLE ON CAPTAIN'S PORCH

He has been watching, rocking. As the men line up, he gets up and goes down the steps toward the yard.

CAPTAIN'S P.O.V.

pushing the gate open, moving in front of Boss Paul, facing the men.

CAPTAIN

Luke, fall out.

Luke steps forward, pulls off his shirt and jacket. He steps behind the latticework screen to take off his pants as the Captain speaks.

CAPTAIN'S VOICE

(emotionless)

When a man's mother dies and he gits to thinkin' about her funeral and payin' respects, before he knows it his mind ain't right and he's got rabbit in his blood and runs. We're keepin' you off the road fer awhile.

He has said all he has to say. He walks off.

FULL SHOT LUKE AND THE MEN

They are watching him slip on the nightshirt. Boss Kean opens the box.

BOSS KEAN

(to Luke)

Ah'm jus' doin' mah job, Luke. You

gotta appreciate that.

ANGLE ON LUKE IN BOX

LUKE

Boss, when you do somethin' to me
you better do it because you got to
or want to... but not because it's
your damn job.

ANGLE ON KEAN

His eyes narrow. The box door slams. Greyness.

BOSS PAUL'S VOICE (O.S.)

Awright, let's move it out!

And o.s. the SOUNDS of the men counting through the gate and
the truck engines coughing.

EXT. ROAD DAWN (NIGHT)

The bull gang truck pulling out. In b.g. the barracks and
the light over the box.

EXT. CAMP

The bull gang truck stopping. The back is opened and the men
jump out, line up and begin counting off through the gate.
In b.g. as they count is Luke's voice singing.

CLOSE ON DRAGLINE

He smiles... oh that Luke!

CLOSE ON BOSS GODFREY

listening to the mocking voice.

EXT. BARRACKS

It is the next morning. The tire iron SOUNDS.

CARR'S VOICE

First bell! First bell! Let's go!

The figures of Boss Paul and Boss Seven go to the box. Seven
carries Luke's food.

INT. BOX PAUL'S P.O.V.

as it is opened. The dimness of the overhead bulb illuminates
Luke.

LUKE

Shut the door, Boss. You're lettin'
in a draft.

ANGLE ON PAUL

His face corrodes in fury.

BOSS PAUL

Git on your feet! Ah'm gonna teach
you some respect right now!

Furiously he tries to cane Luke with his walking stick. But the cramped quarters restrict him. The cane clangs wildly against the sides of the box as Luke crouches in a corner, covering his head.

ANGLE ON LUKE

protecting, as Boss Paul retreats. The box door slams!
Greyness.

EXT. BARRACKS (AFTERNOON)

as the bull gang counts in after the day's work. The light on the box still burns. No sound from Luke.

CLOSE ON DRAGLINE

He looks worried.

EXT. BARRACKS (NIGHT)

The tire rim SOUNDS and the men scurry for their bunks.

CARR'S VOICE

Last bell! Last bell!
(the pacing of his
steps)
Forty-nine, Boss. And one in the
box.

WICKERMAN'S VOICE

Forty-nine and one in the box. Right,
Carr.

EXT. BARRACKS (PRE-DAWN)

Boss Paul, carrying a shotgun, and Boss Seven are opening the box. In b.g. the tire rim SOUNDS.

CARR'S VOICE

First bell! First bell! Let's go!

And the uproar of the men getting out of their bunks, hurrying to dress and line up by the chute.

INT. BOX CLOSE SHOT LUKE'S P.O.V.

as the door opens and the double muzzle of Boss Paul's shot-

gun stares.

BOSS PAUL'S P.O.V.

Luke is standing at the rear of the box, his arms crossed over his chest, his eyes slightly wild, his face dirty and stubbled. In b.g. the SOUND of Rudolph, the pet bloodhound puppy, yipping.

LUKE'S P.O.V.

Paul's gun draws back. Boss Seven hands Paul a heavy biscuit, grinning. Rudolph is sniffing, nipping at Paul's trousers, smelling the biscuit.

BOSS PAUL

You look hongry, Luke.

(tosses biscuit in
his hand)

Reckon this would taste mighty good,
but Rudolph looks pretty hongry,
too. Why don't we split it with the
pooch, okay?

He breaks the biscuit and dangles half over Rudolph who nips and barks for it.

BOSS PAUL

(feeding Rudolph)

Tha's a good boy.

(to Luke)

Well, here's your piece, Luke.

ON LUKE

He speaks in a low, uneven voice.

LUKE

Might as well give it all to him,
Boss. I just ain't much hungry.

ON BOSS PAUL

Livid with rage, he slams the door! Greyness.

EXT. LAUNDRY FENCE CLOSE ON LAUNDRY FLYING OVER FENCE
(AFTERNOON)

as LAUNDRY BOY tries to catch the flying sheets, pants and shirts being tossed by the men. Behind him we SEE the steaming, pumping cleaning machines.

EXT. YARD (AFTERNOON)

Laundry boy and machines in b.g. as Boss Kean and Boss Seven go to the box. Boss Seven carries Luke's shoes and a freshly cleaned set of state issues. The men turn.

INT. BOX (AFTERNOON)

as the door opens. Luke looks up. Kean's face stares down, not unkind. Luke moves forward.

OMITTED

EXT. BOX (AFTERNOON)

as Luke emerges, Kean behind him.

BOSS KEAN

(gently)

She's in the ground now, Luke. Best forget about it. You got a day ana half lay-in... and tomorrow's a holiday.

OMITTED

INT. BARRACKS (EVENING)

The Fourth of July. All hell is breaking loose. Four radios going, chain men jitterbugging, one of the men has a mouth harmonica, another plucks Luke's banjo. A lemonade barrel is in a corner and men dip into it with coke bottles; others are banging together bottles as instruments, playing combs, etc.

ANGLE ON ALIBI AND DYNAMITE

just filling their bottles with lemonade.

ALIBI

(toasting)

Happy Fourth of July.

SLEEPY

Same to you.

ALIBI

Boy, if anyone had told me where I was going to be spending Independence Day...

(shakes his head)

ON MUSIC MAKERS, OTHERS

Most of them are concentrated in front of Luke's bunk, singing and screaming, trying to make as much noise as possible. Tattoo is reading a new sex book aloud while Dynamite, Loudmouth Steve, others listen intently, some avid, some confused.

TATTOO

(reading)

Wanda trembled, faced by this awesome decision. It was the moment of choice. Could she take the plunge and wantonly hurl herself into pagan abandon? Or would she remain ever fettered by the bonds of her puritanical upbringing? Could she take this chance to experience the sensual thrill of total release and gratification? Or would she turn her back and retreat into frigid denial? Desire and fear, temptation and terror, yearning and horror, warred within her beautiful young body...

Luke is not to be seen among the music-makers and revellers. Moving through the crowd, the CAMERA FINDS Luke on his hands and knees, sawing at the floorboard with a piece of hacksaw.

ANGLE ON CARR

as the tire iron SOUNDS and SOUNDS again to be heard over the din.

CARR

First bell! Let's git to bed. You done had your fun.

The singers and music-makers around Luke finish their song, reaching a high, piercing, noisy crescendo. At the same time, Dragline has been reading another sex book to Stupid Blondie, Blind Dick and Chief who are trying to act out the description, tying themselves into an intricate anatomical knot.

DRAGLINE

(reading)

She moved her head another inch while he reached up and put his left hand on Carol's cheek as Carol pressed her lips to... Oh Lord, I can't read it!

He wriggles, panting with eye-popping pleasure, attracting Carr's attention. Stupid Blondie, Rabbit and Chief are still trying to untie themselves.

DRAGLINE

Carr. Lookit this. Oh I don't believe it.

CARR

What you got there, Drag? You bought yourself another of them dirty books?

Intrigued, Carr sits down on Dragline's bunk and follows Dragline's finger pointing out the lascivious parts. He is

quickly absorbed.

ANGLE ON DRAGLINE

He looks over toward Luke who can be seen between the legs of the surrounding men, poised, waiting to drop down into the hole. Dragline winks.

ANGLE ON LUKE

He winks back, grins and disappears through the hole in the floor.

ANGLE ON DRAGLINE AND CARR

The tutor and the student.

DRAGLINE

Here's a real hot one!

Carr reads intently.

ON THE HOLE BENEATH LUKE'S BUNK

gaping, empty, inviting.

VARIOUS REACTIONS OF MEN

A. KOKO - suppressing a giggle.

B. SOCIETY RED - considering it, cowardly.

C. ALIBI - tense, nervous.

ANGLE ON TATTOO

He has been considering it, weighing his chances, his eyes darting from the hole to Carr, back again. Now he scurries to the hole, drops inside.

ANGLE ON CARR, DRAGLINE

as the tire iron SOUNDS. Carr gets up.

CARR

Awright, last bell!

The men are in their bunks, Carr begins to make his count. As he comes to Tatto's bunk:

WICKER MAN'S VOICE

HEY, CARR! WHAT'S THAT OUTSIDE?

Carr rushes to the window.

CARR

Somebody's on the fence, boss!

EXT. YARD ON THE FENCE

It is Tattoo, half-way up the fence, startled by the clamor as the Wicker Man whales the GONG. He falls back down, starts up again, dogs BARKING.

EXT. YARD NEW ANGLE

as guards come running from the Captain's house, the dogs HOWLING.

ON TATTOO

frantically trying to get up the fence, falling down, starting to run, seeing the guards approaching with guns and canes, turning to the other direction: more guards. Caught like a rat, eyes wild with fear, he makes terrified motions to go in one direction, then the other but is rooted by fear and indecision as the guards move in. He SCREAMS.

INT. BARRACKS ANGLE ON WICKER AND DOOR

which is unlocked. Dogboy is dressed, combing his hair, self-importantly putting on his gloves while the men lie in their bunks, staring contemptuously. Boss Paul, Godfrey and others stare with shotguns leveled from the wicker.

BOSS PAUL

Who else?

Carr has been tearing a sheet off Luke's bed.

CARR

Jackson. He cut a hole in the floor, Boss.

He hands the sheet to Dogboy.

BOSS PAUL

He ain't even got the sense to run from the road like everybody else.

DOGBOY

Blue'll git him, Boss. We'll git that bastid, Cool Hand Luke.

OMITTED

EXT. DOG PEN MED. CLOSE SHOT (NIGHT)

Boss Paul is unlocking the pen. Dogboy stands by the screen letting the yapping, frothing hounds sniff at the sheet.

BOSS PAUL

Stan' back, Dogboy. Git the leash here.

As he opens the pen, the hounds rush out. Dogboy grabs one, Boss Paul grabs another but Big Blue, the lead hound, has the scent and he bolts, howling and tearing off.

DOGBOY

Blue! Come back here! Come back, I said.

EXT. SWAMP (NIGHT)

Luke, smiling, running like hell through the murky water. In b.g. Blue's baying.

EXT. SWAMP (NIGHT)

Blue in pursuit, sniffing, dashing, on the trail.

EXT. SWAMP (NIGHT)

Dogboy with the other dogs being pulled through the muddy, murky, thickly-foliaged swamp. Behind him, wading unhappily through knee-deep water are Bosses Paul, Higgins and Shorty.

EXT. ABANDONED RAILROAD STATION NIGHT (LATER)

Boss Paul is on the phone to the Captain, Bosses Higgins and Shorty sit disconsolate, dirty, wet, exhausted. Only Dogboy is still eager, two hounds by his feet, listening in the distance to the howl of Blue baying.

DOGBOY

Listen to Blue sing. She's on to him. She says: got him.

BOSS SHORTY

Hail, that dog is jus' runnin' in circles.

BOSS PAUL

(returning from phone)
Captain says to wait 'til the Patrol gits here.

DOGBOY

(listening to Blue)
She's on to him. You shoulda waited fer me to git her out -- loose like she is, he kin run her crazy.

BOSS PAUL

It ain't my fault you don't know how to handle your dogs.

DOGBOY

How my suppose to handle a dog someone jus' let loose?

BOSS HIGGINS
I'm beat. This ain't mah job, nohow.

BOSS SHORTY
Me neither.

A Highway Patrol car pulls up.

BOSS PAUL
Here's the Patrol.

DOGBOY
(pulling up dogs)
She's got him! You hear that?

Higgins and Shorty shake their heads wearily.

OFFICER
(to Dogboy)
Okay, let's get started.

EXT. FARM COUNTRY (PIPELINES) (NIGHT)

Luke steps under and through the pipeline supports and vanishes. In b.g. Blue's plaintive HOWLING.

EXT. FARM COUNTRY (PIPELINES) DAY (DAWN)

Dogboy moves ACROSS the SCENE with his pack of dogs, having trouble following through the supports. The Officer behind him.

CLOSE SHOT DOGBOY

plodding along, exhausted, yanking at the dogs as they pull in different directions.

DOGBOY
Come on, Rudolph, Austin, you no good buncha chicken-eaters, we're lookin' for a man. We got us a job to do.

EXT. BUSH BY FENCE (NEAR RAILROAD TRACKS) (DAY)

Luke carefully slips through the barbs, runs a few yards, slips back through again, runs a few yards, returns to the other side.

EXT. BUSH BY FENCE (NEAR RAILROAD TRACKS) DAY (LATER)

Dogboy with his pack and the Officer. In b.g. Blue is HOWLING, the dogs are BAYING frantically. It is with trouble that Dogboy and the Officer get through the fence, pulled by the eager dogs. Then they must cross it again.

OFFICER
Your dogs are crazy.

DOGBOY
He keeps criss-crossin'. He's
smarter'n a dog. But he ain't got us
boxed yet... Blue'll get him.

OMITTED

EXT. RAILROAD BRIDGE DAY

A trestle built of creosoted timber. The dogs reach it, break up into a milling, confused mass. Dogboy wrestles them out of the trestle. In b.g. as always, Blue's plaintive BAYING.

ANGLE ON BRIDGE

as Dogboy fights the dogs to get them across.

ANGLE ON FAR SIDE OF BRIDGE

as Dogboy hauls at the dogs who are pulling in different directions.

CLOSE SHOT DOGBOY

exhausted, disappointed, looking around, puzzled.

NEW ANGLE

The dogs are confused, seem to mill around aimlessly.

DOGBOY
(almost in tears)
Dammit.
(calling)
Blue! Blue!

No answer.

EXT. FARMLAND ORCHARD TRACKING SHOT OF LUKE

running through the thick overhead cover. It is like a jungle. PULLING UP SLOWLY to HELICOPTER SHOT, we SEE that the cover is only a small patch of foliage and on the other side is a huge panorama of rolling, empty moor-like country in which, after a moment, Luke enters, a tiny figure, running free.

EXT. CAMP (LATE AFTERNOON)

The men are coming out of the mess hall, washing their spoons, about to line up for inspection. A Highway Patrol car pulls up outside the gate; from the back seat comes the yipping of dogs. Every head turns. The Captain moves from his rocker and starts down the porch. Boss Paul and Godfrey move toward the car.

CLOSE ON PATROL CAR (LATE AFTERNOON)

as the Officer (seen at the railroad station) gets out and opens the front door. He nudges a sleeping, grizzled figure who emerges. It is Dogboy. The back door is opened and Rudolph and the other small dogs leap out, cavorting, glad to be home. Then the Officer and Dogboy go to the trunk. The Officer opens it. Dogboy reaches in and carries out -- the body of Big Blue. Staggering with fatigue, tears in his eyes, Dogboy stumbles up to the Captain.

DOGBOY

Look, Cap'n. Look what he done to Blue. He's dead, Cap'n. Dead! Run hisself plumb to death. That crazy sadis Cool Hand Luke run her 'til her heart bust.

ANGLE ON DRAGLINE KOKO

DRAGLINE

He made it.

EXT. BARRACKS (NIGHT)

CARR'S VOICE

Forty-eight, Boss. One in the box and one in the bush.

EXT. ROAD

The Bull Gang is working at the bottom of a high embankment and the guards stand on the road high above their heads, looking down, shotguns out now, alert. The men work away at a racketsy pace.

EXT. GODFREY'S EYES (DAY)

as he turns at the SOUND of a distant motor approaching and the image of a car coming closer enlarges in his glasses.

EXT. ROAD

The car pulls up beside the guards and the door opens. The Captain steps up to the road edge and looks down. He says something to Boss Paul.

BOSS PAUL

Awright, hold it!

The men stop working, puzzled, looking up. Then from the car a guard escorts Luke to the edge of the pavement. Luke grins down at the men sheepishly. His prison uniform is filthy and torn, his hands are cuffed behind his back, his face is dirty and stubbled.

EXT. ROAD PAN REACTIONS OF MEN

They are stunned, saddened.

ANGLE ON LUKE, CAPTAIN, GUARDS

Behind Luke are Godfrey, Paul, Bosses Six and Seven and the Captain. Kean and Shorty flank the gang. The guns are held levelled at the men. One guard uncuffs Luke's hands; others produce a sledge hammer, ballpeen hammer and a set of leg irons from the Captain's car. Two guards kneel before Luke and begin hammering on the irons. Silence except for the HAMMERING AND CLINKING. Luke is silhouetted, a tall, straight figure on the low horizon. The Captain looks directly ahead.

CAPTAIN

(to Luke)

You gonna get used to wearing them chains after a while, Luke. But don't you never stop listenin' to them clinkin'. That's gonna remind you of what I been sayin'.

LUKE

Yeah, they sure do make a lot of cold, hard, noise, Captain.

The Captain feeds his fury staring, then reaches out his hand and Boss Paul lays the blackjack in it. As the chain guards finish and stand up, trembling with rage, the Captain takes a convulsive step forward and brings the sap down behind Luke's ear. As Luke tumbles down the littered embankment toward the men:

CAPTAIN

Don't you never talk that way to me!
You hear? You hear? Never!

His rage subsides and his voice becomes calm, reasonable.

CAPTAIN

(to the men)

What we got here is a failure to communicate. Some men you can't reach, that is they just don't listen when you talk reasonable so you get what we had here last week, which is the way he wants it, well he gets it, and I don't like it any better than you men.

Nodding curtly, the Captain gets back in his car. Someone throws a shovel down the embankment. It CLATTERS until it lands beside Luke. Dragline and the others are by his side, helping him to his feet. Above Godfrey stares down at them.

ANGLE ON DRAGLINE, LUKE AND OTHERS

DRAGLINE

Awright, buddy. You be awright. You give 'em a run for their money. Jus' take it slow and easy, baby. You gonna make it fine.

As Luke tries to get his bearings, someone thrusts the shovel into his hands and they get him going like a rusty piece of machinery.

DRAGLINE

Come on, buddy. Show 'em you're awright.

Luke seems to nod and begins to work slowly. The others back away, glancing fearfully at the guards, go back to work, quiet and sullen.

ANGLE ON LUKE

He is working with great difficulty, stiff, tired, aching.

BOSS KEAN'S VOICE

Awright, let's eat them beans.

Luke stumbles gratefully toward the chowline.

ON THE CHOWLINE

Dogboy dishing it out to Luke. Dogboy is gleeful, gloating.

DOGBOY

I knew they'd git you. With them chains an a bonus of a coupla years, you runnin' days is over forever. Ah'd like to see you try to run agin. You gettin' so you smell so bad, I could track you myself.

LUKE

For a natural born son of a bitch like you, that oughta be easy.

NEW ANGLE THE MEN

as Luke settles down with his beans, the others find spots around him so he is the focus of the group. We SEE Tattoo in chains, forlorn. Luke wolfs his food hungrily.

DRAGLINE

Jus' take it slow, buddy.

KOKO

(unable to restrain himself)

What happened? How far did you get?

DRAGLINE

Shut up. Let him eat. Don't pay them
no mind, boy.

TATTOO

(urgently)

I gotta know -- How... how'd they
get you?

LUKE

(between mouthfuls)

Topflight police work.

GAMBLER

Tell us about it.

BLIND DICK

You steal a car?

LUKE

Yeah, found one in this supermarket,
keys in the ignition.

KOKO

Well, how far didya get?

LUKE

(eating)

Fat mile'n a half. Hit this red light,
highway patrol pulls up alongside.

LOUDMOUTH STEVE

Didya fight it out with him?

LUKE

Nope. I jus' kept lookin' straight
ahead waiting for that light to
change. And he kept lookin' over,
wondering what somethin' that looked
like me was doin' drivin' a shiny
new car.

ALIBI

And then...?

LUKE

Then he leans over and sees this
state issue... All there was to it.
Feller's probably a lieutenant by
now.

Luke continues to shovel in his beans. The men are clearly
disappointed. Only Dragline understands.

DRAGLINE

Well now we jus' gonna lay low and

build time and afore you know it the
heat'll be off you and things be
back where they was. Right, sweet
buddy?

Luke winks and slaps Dragline affectionately on the cheek. During this last, Luke has been idly winding a piece of kite string found on the ground beside him. As, idly, he shoves it into his pocket.

ANGLE ON BOSS KEAN LATER

The gang has resumed working, Kean stands looking out at the horizon, not talking directly to Luke, just leaning on his gun, following Luke whenever he moves, his voice as calm and secure as a priest in his study.

BOSS KEAN

Ah hears tell you don't believe in
no God, Luke. Ah was wonderin' how
come a nice lookin' feller like you
come to get put on the Hard Road.
But now ah reckons ah knows. Ah been
on the Road Gang for twenny-two year,
Luke, and in all that time I ain't
never killed no white man but I ain't
afeerd to cause a body has to do his
work. And I ain't never seen no man
that wasn't afeerd to die neither.

LUKE

'Scuse me, Boss. Don't mean to
interrupt... but... caught short
here.

Boss Kean is stunned.

BOSS KEAN

(slow, dangerous)

Awright, Luke. Thas okay... You go
on up there in them trees. Man's
gotta have some privacy sometime.
But you grab a bush and keep shakin'
it, hear? Jes' so we know you're
there. Jes' keep shakin' that bush.

LUKE

Yes, boss.

He begins to trot off, awkward in his chains. Kean looks at Godfrey who snaps his fingers to Dogboy, a gesture that means rifle. Dogboy runs to the truck and brings back the rifle which Godfrey loads and arms with the bolt from his pocket.

ANGLE ON LUKE

Slowly walking off into the rough grass, his chains catching

on brush and stumps. He disappears behind a large bush.

CLOSE SHOT GODFREY

Luke's bush is in distance. He raises the gun to his shoulder and FIRES.

REVERSE HIS P.O.V.

The bush shakes, we can't see Luke.

LUKE

I'm shakin' it, Boss. I'm shakin'
it!

We see the dust kick up behind the stump and another SHOT.

LUKE

Still shakin' it, Boss.

CLOSE SHOT GODFREY

impassively: SHOOTS again, aiming.

REVERSE HIS P.O.V.

The bush goes on shaking. Then it stops.

GODFREY

Caught loading. He brings up the rifle fast, FIRES.

CLOSE THE BUSH

It is still.

FULL SHOT

The gang stops working, looks up stunned.

ANGLE ON BOSS KEAN AND GODFREY

A long beat of shock -- they (and us) think Godfrey's hit him. Boss Kean trots hurriedly up to the bush.

ANGLE BY THE BUSH

Boss Kean appears, looking down and off. CAMERA ADJUSTS so we see what he sees: a piece of kite string tied to the bush and leading off into the brush.

BOSS KEAN

Damn!

He turns and rushing back down toward Godfrey, others.

BOSS KEAN

He's gone! Git the dogs!

EXT. DIRTY ROAD (DAY)

It is a rutted country road with farms on both sides. Luke appears, a filthy wide-eyed, stumbling, bearded beast in filthy uniform and chains. PAN with him past sharecropper's village of ramshackle huts, rusted junk. An OLD NEGRO WOMAN sees Luke and goes inside, closing the door. PAN with him to a General Store where an OLD NEGRO MAN watching, quickly retreats inside leaving only two small Negro boys (BEN and LAWRENCE) staring at Luke as he shambles toward them.

LAWRENCE

(looking at chains)

Whattaya got them on for?

BEN

How do you take your pants off?

LUKE

(smiling)

Well -- the best way is to take the leg irons off first.

(to Lawrence)

But you ain't strong enough.

LAWRENCE

Strong enough for whut?

LUKE

You couldn't heft an axe.

LAWRENCE

Can, too.

He's off, running toward a house. In the distance now, we hear the dogs baying, coming closer. Luke smiles at Ben.

LUKE

What's your name?

BEN

Ben.

(a beat)

Had'n you better take them stripes off your pants?

Smiling, Luke sits in the dirt and begins ripping off the stripes as Lawrence appears, dragging a huge double-bitted axe behind him.

LUKE

(to Ben)

You wanna see somethin' funny? Go get some chili powder, pepper, curry, dried mustard and like that. A lot

of it.

Ben rockets off and Luke turns to see Lawrence, struggling mightily, attempting to bring the axe over his head and down on the chains.

LUKE

Hold it!

He takes the axe, sets the chains up on a stump and begins to back heavily, BAYING OF DOGS growing louder.

LAWRENCE

No, me, me. Let me do it!

Lawrence cries and stomps unhappily, clouding up dust as Luke severs the chain from one shackle. Ben APPEARS with an armload of spices.

BEN

Here's them spices.
(looks at Lawrence,
crying, stomping)
What's wrong with him?

Luke begins backing away, scuffing his feet in the dust, pouring out the spices as he goes.

ANGLE ON LUKE

stopping at Lawrence. The baying of the dogs is much closer now.

LUKE

You remember how them dogs do when
they get here so you can tell me
about it someday.

He is gone.

ON DOGS IN DISTANCE

They are approaching quickly.

ON VILLAGE

Some of the people have reappeared, now go back inside.

ANGLE ON DOGS

They fill the FRAME, milling around the empty street, sneezing, howling, stirring up dust, pawing at their noses.

CLOSE LAWRENCE

He is peeping from a corner. His tears stop and he smiles.

EXT. ROAD CLOSEUP YOYO TRANSITIONAL DEVICE (DAY)

...cutting away at the time.

INT. CAGE TRUCK (PROCESS) (DAY)

as it passes the Negro Church.

DRAGLINE'S VOICE

Thas the church. After he chopped
off those old chains and whilst he
was layin'd down the pepper --

GAMBLER'S VOICE

I heard it was curry powder.

DRAGLINE'S VOICE

It was pepper and curry powder and
dry mustard. Now shut your face.
Whilst he was layin' down them spices,
Luke heard them choir practicin' in
there. So he just sauntered inside,
cool's kin be, and sung along with
them... my baby Luke... and he was
still singin' when the dogs come by,
singing and grinning and eatin' the
food the people had brung him.

EXT. ROAD TRANSITIONAL DEVICE

EXT. ROAD (DAY)

The bull gang at the end of bean time.

BOSS PAUL'S VOICE

Awright, let's git to work.

Dragline and the others deposit their chow plates, pick up
their yoyos and start to work.

DRAGLINE

He ain't eating beans fer lunch.

KOKO

He's eatin' steak and corn with butter
and green beans and...

LOUDMOUTH STEVE

...fried clams, pizza, chocolate,
malted milkshakes.

SOCIETY RED

(yoyoing)
...and a Brown Bomber.

DRAGLINE

(yoyoing)

Shut your mouth. He's out there doin'
it for all of us.

OMITTED

INT. BARRACKS (DAY)

It is Saturday afternoon. Carr is distributing mail and packages, the men clustered around; others lying on bunks, making wallets, etc.

CARR
Magazines for you, Dragline!

ANGLE ON DRAGLINE

Dragline sits up from his bunk, astonished.

DRAGLINE
Magazines? Who's sendin' me magazines?

He looks at the package. Carr has tossed on his bunk.

DRAGLINE
From mah uncle? Ah never heard from
him in eight years and now he's
sendin' me magazines. He musta gone
crazy.

He has torn open the package, looks through the magazines, which are movie fan books, lies back to flip the pages. In b.g. Carr is continuing the mail call. Suddenly Dragline's eyes widen, his mouth opens, but he catches himself and closes it before he has revealed himself.

INSERT THE PICTURE

It is taped to page in the magazine. It shows Luke in a suit and tie, holding up four aces and a joker in one hand, arms around two buxom over-made strippers. On the table in front of them is a giant bottle of champagne and glasses. Scrawled across it is something in Luke's writing.

ANGLE DRAGLINE KOKO SOCIETY RED OTHERS

Seeing Dragline's reaction, they have gathered around.

DRAGLINE
Looka that! Two of them. Oh my...

KOKO
I'm dyin'. I'm dyin'.

Dragline suddenly realizes the danger and closes the book so Carr and the Wicker Man don't catch on. The others reluctantly move away. Dragline casually hands the magazine to Society Red.

DRAGLINE

(whispering)

What's the writing say?

SOCIETY RED

(opening to the
picture, reading)

Dear Boys. Playing it cool. Wish you
were here. Love, Cool Hand Luke.

DRAGLINE

Oh my. Oh my... Give it back here!

Red surrenders the magazine. Dragline opens it again and a
look of pure bliss settles over his face.

KOKO

Lemme see it!

DRAGLINE

(violently)

Get away!

He looks over at Carr but Carr has moved away, is talking to
the Wicker Man, his back to the men. Koko, Loudmouth Steve,
Gambler and the others hurriedly cluster around Dragline.
Their voices are eager intense whispers.

KOKO

Lookit the brunette...

BLIND DICK

The blonde's gotta better set.

GAMBLER

Some legs.

LOUDMOUTH STEVE

They must be six feet tall.

TATTOO

...And the champagne.

SOCIETY RED

(from his bunk)

Domestic.

TRAMP

Wonder how he got the dough.

ALIBI

He's probably a salesman. You can
make pretty good money if you know
what your doing in selling.

GAMBLER

A salesman! Cool Hand Luke a salesman?

BLIND DICK
He's probably a gigolo.

MECHANIC
Or a con artist.

LOUDMOUTH STEVE
The head of the rackets.

KOKO
(reverently)
Oh lookit that brunette.

DRAGLINE
Mah baby! We're diggin' and dyin'
but our boy Luke is lovin' and flyin'.

They all gaze at the picture with loving, dreamy, painful rapture.

OMITTED

INT. BARRACKS (NIGHT)

Blackass time, dull, sad, boring. Koko sits idly flicking cards from the poker deck, men staring into space. The cards sail by Society Red who is clipping his nails.

SOCIETY RED
Stop that.

KOKO
How about you tryin' to make me?

SOCIETY RED
Oh for...

They slowly subside.

KOKO
Dragline, lemme look at the picture.

DRAGLINE
(feigned innocence)
What for?

LOUDMOUTH STEVE
Yeah, Drag. Get it out for a look.

DRAGLINE
You're just a kid. Whatta you know about it? You don't wanna see that dirty picture. Luke and those broads an' all that booze.

KOKO

Come on, Drag. Lemme take a look.

DRAGLINE

It'd go to your coconut head. You'd start getting ideas. Maybe even pass right out.

BLIND DICK

Dragline! Be a buddy!

DRAGLINE

How much you figure it's worth, a peek at this here picture? A quick look, I'm not talkin' about no memorizin' job.

KOKO

A cold drink.

DRAGLINE

A cold drink? You mean one cold drink? To feast yore starvin' fishy l'il eyes on The Picture? A true vision of Paradise itself? With two of the angels right there in plain sight a-friskin' round with mah boy?

KOKO

A cold drink? Okay?

DRAGLINE

Well --- okay. It's a deal. One cold drink, if'n you please. In advance. One chilly bottle right here in mah hot l'il hand... That goes for the rest of you mullet-heads, too.

Activity as the men dig out coins to purchase drinks. Dragline pulls out the magazine and the men all gather round, gazing into it as though it were a crystal ball. Suddenly the wicker door slams open and as the men look up...

THEIR P.O.V.

Luke is dumped to the floor, face down, unconscious, by Boss Paul, Boss Kean, others. The Captain is standing there over him. Luke wears a new prison uniform and two sets of chains.

CAPTAIN

(to Luke)

You run one time, you got yourself a set of chains. You run twice, you got two sets. You ain't gonna need no third set because you're gonna get your mind right... And I mean right.

He looks at the men who are stunned by the juxtaposition of their hero in The Picture and the reality of the unconscious figure before them.

CAPTAIN

Take a good look at your Cool Hand
Luke.

With his foot he prods Luke over onto his back.

CLOSE ON LUKE

As he rolls over we can see he has been badly beaten.

OMITTED

NEW ANGLE THE MEN

As the Captain turns and walks out past the guards who follow, and the wicket chute CLANGS shut, Dragline, Koko and others move forward and gently lift Luke onto the poker table.

DRAGLINE

Oh mah poor baby. They done you real
good... I don't know if you gonna
have them gals chasin' after you for
a while...

CLOSE ON LUKE

lying, eyes closed.

SOCIETY RED'S VOICE

I've got some aspirin.

KOKO'S VOICE

They half killed him.

ALIBI'S VOICE

He should have a doctor.

DRAGLINE'S VOICE

Don't you never learn nuthin'? They
ain't gonna let no doctor see what
they dont to him...

ANGLE ON DRAGLINE, OTHERS

Dragline looks up at Carr who stands hovering above them.

DRAGLINE

Carr, kin we use your razor to clean
up where they cut his head?

Carr moves off to his canteen area.

CLOSE ON LUKE

as Blind Dick, Gambler, others move in...

GAMBLER

How you feelin', buddy?

TRAMP

He don't hear.

TATTOO

Somebody get him something to drink.

SOCIETY RED

Here.

Gently he tucks two aspirin tablets into Luke's mouth, holds a cup of water to Luke's mouth. Luke's eyes slowly open, he drinks the water.

DRAGLINE

That's my baby.

KOKO

He's gonna be awright.

NEW ANGLE ON MEN

as Carr moves in with a razor, bandage, etc. The men clear to give him room.

KOKO

Luke?... We got the picture! See?

He holds it up.

CLOSE ON LUKE

His eyes squint open, close.

BLIND DICK'S VOICE

A pair of beauties. Best I ever seen.

TATTOO'S VOICE

You really know how to pick 'em.

LOUDMOUTH STEVE'S VOICE

Tell us about 'em. What were they like?

CLOSE ON LUKE

as his lips open. He speaks slowly, painfully.

LUKE

Picture's a phoney... Cost me a week's pay.

NEW ANGLE THE MEN

KOKO

A phoney? Whatta you mean, a phoney?

GAMBLER

We saw the broads.

BLIND DICK

Yeah. Did you have them both at once
or --

LUKE

It's a phoney. Made it up just for
you guys.

LOUDMOUTH STEVE

Aw, come on. We saw it all.

TATTOO

The champagne.

TRAMP

Some life.

FIXER

You really had it made.

LUKE

Nothin. I had nothin, made nothin.
Couple towns, couple bosses. Laughed
out loud one day and got turned in.

KOKO

(about to cry)

But -- but --

LUKE

That's all there was. Listen. Open
your eyes. Stop beatin' it. And stop
feedin' off me. Now get out of the
way. Give me some air.

Stunned, the men shrink back.

DRAGLINE

He ain't himself. He's all beat up.
Cain't you see that? He don't know
what he sayin'.

EXT. ROAD DAY

Luke is working with great difficulty, pained, weary under
the double set of chains. Bosses Paul and Kean stand right
over him, watching every move.

ANGLE ON GODFREY

standing far behind, his mirrored eyes on Luke.

ON LUKE

moving, he stumbles on the chains, gets hit by Paul's cane.

BOSS PAUL

You was eyeballin', Luke. You can't
gitcha mind on them weeds if yer
eyeballin'...

LUKE

(wearily)

Boss, you don't need reasons to hit
me.

He gets the cane again.

BOSS PAUL

Gonna learn you not to back sass!

EXT. THE BOX (NIGHT)

as Luke is slammed into it and the door is closed.

INT. THE BARRACKS (NIGHT)

The poker game is in progress: Dragline, Koko, Blind Dick,
Gambler, Tattoo with Tramp behind him. Society Red stands at
the window, looking out as he brushes his hair.

SOCIETY RED

He'll never make it.

KOKO

What are you talking about?

SOCIETY RED

He doesn't know when to give in.
They'll kill him.

KOKO

Give in? That's our Luke out there.

DRAGLINE

That ole box collapse and fall apart
before Luke calls quits.

SOCIETY RED

Your Luke's got more guts than brains.

KOKO

I don't see no sign of guts in you.

SOCIETY RED

No. No chains either.

KOKO

(heating up)

You ain't man enough to wear them!

SOCIETY RED

But you're dog enough. Maybe they'll let you sleep outside the box near your master.

KOKO

Big deal paper hanger! Hell, anyone who can write can pass fifty-sixty dollar checks. Like breakin' open a piggy bank.

SOCIETY RED

You've been having bad luck with masters, haven't you? Your last one left you when the cops came... and now Luke. You should complain to the S.P.C.A.

KOKO

(rushing him)

You phony creep!

Dragline steps in to separate them.

DRAGLINE

Awright, that's enough. You wanna end up in the box, too?

The tire rim sounds.

CARR'S VOICE

First bell! First bell!

INT. MESS HALL (NIGHT)

The men file in from work, sullen and quiet, Dogboy serving but without his usual chatter. Higgins leans back, unusually alert.

ANGLE ON DOORWAY

Suddenly Luke appears, unshaven but cleaned up and in his uniform. The men make room as he moves to his accustomed place at the head of the line, before Dynamite.

DOGBOY

Here's our champeen hog gut. Ain't et for four days, gonna need a little extra... Well we got plenty for you...

He's heaping food onto Luke's plate.

DOGBOY

(continuing)

Now you know the rules... gotta eat everything on the plate or go back in the box, right, Boss?

Higgins nods, Dogboy continues to pile it on. When Luke tries to move on, Dogboy reaches out and grabs the plate with his free hand and continues to ladle it out. Behind Dogboy, Jabo, the cook, looks sympathetic to Luke.

JABO

(to Dogboy)

We ain't got but one pot of stew, you know. He ain't the only one eatin'.

DOGBOY

(piling it on)

Man use to Free World food gotta big appetite... so here's some more potatoes and here's some ice cream and some cake with choclat fudge sauce... there you go, stretch that hog-belly right out.

Luke looks at the impossibly piled plate and moves off.

LUKE AT A TABLE

He is eating with great difficulty, finally puts his spoon down and his eyes close with weariness. Koko reaches over and takes a bite off the plate. Luke sits there and one by one the men get up and file out, each one passing behind Luke and taking a bite until, as Deacon takes the last mouthful, the plate is empty and Luke stands up and leaves.

EXT. CAMP YARD (DAY)

It is Saturday afternoon. The men have just returned from the road. Luke moves slowly toward the barracks, Dragline helping him.

DRAGLINE

You made the week, boy. Plenty of time to rest up for old Monday.

They move a few feet until confronted by...

THEIR P.O.V. BOSS PAUL AND BOSS KEAN

BOSS PAUL

Luke!

Kean steps forward, draws a long line in the dirt of the yard, barring the path, moves three feet back and draws a

parallel line.

BOSS PAUL

Boss Kean say that's his ditch. I tol' him that their dirt is yore dirt. What's yore dirt doin' in his ditch?

Luke looks up at them blindly.

LUKE

(weakly)

I don't know, Boss.

Boss Paul canes him and the other prisoners scatter. Boss Kean throws a shovel at Luke's feet.

BOSS PAUL

You git yore dirt outa his ditch, boy!

Luke takes up the shovel and starts to dig.

BOSS PAUL

Roll! I wanna see you roll it!

He canes Luke across the back, Luke digs.

ANGLE ON BARRACKS

It is later. The men sit on the stoop, the usual Saturday activities.

ANGLE ON LUKE

He is hidden up to his waist in the trench he has dug, about three feet deep and wide and as long as the lines Kean drew.

ANGLE ON MEN

watching.

ANGLE ON BOSS SHORTY

walking along briskly, feigns surprise at seeing what Luke is doing. He stops.

TWO SHOT BOSS SHORTY AND LUKE

BOSS SHORTY

Luke, what you think you doin'?

LUKE

(not stopping)

Diggin' my dirt outa Boss Kean's ditch, Boss.

Shorty is carrying a hoe handle with which he hits Luke on the head. Luke slumps to the ground.

BOSS SHORTY

Be damned iff'n you gonna put your dirt in mah yard. You hear me?

LUKE

(getting to his feet)
Yes, Boss.

BOSS SHORTY

Then git it out there. Roll it, heah?

Luke begins slowly shoveling the dirt back into the ditch. Boss Shorty nods with satisfaction and walks away.

ANGLE ON LUKE (LATE AFTERNOON)

The dirt is almost all back in the ditch. A shadow falls on the dirt beside him. A walking stick falls across his buttocks and he staggers to his knees.

BOSS PAUL'S VOICE

Ah done told you to get yore dirt outa Boss Kean's ditch, didn't ah?

LUKE

(getting to his feet)
Yes, Boss.

BOSS PAUL

Then how come it ain't done yet?

LUKE

I don't know, Boss.

BOSS PAUL

You don't know!

He canes Luke on the back of the legs. Luke falls and rolls over and Paul canes him across the head. Luke gets up on all fours and makes a rush right at Boss Paul. He is so weak and uncoordinated that the attack does nothing but smear blood and dirt over Paul's uniform. The guards beat Luke away and he falls on his back in the soft dirt.

INT. BARRACKS (NIGHT)

The men are restless, their efforts to ignore what's happening are futile. Dragline gets up and looks out the window into the yard. Koko leans over beside him. He holds the picture.

DRAGLINE'S P.O.V.

Luke under the lights, working again, slowly, dumps a shovel full of dirt and hasn't the strength to move the shovel.

Momentarily, he stops moving and is hit. We HEAR the thud and the groan he gives.

INT. BARRACKS (NIGHT)

Dragline goes back to his bunk. We HEAR another thud and a cry from outside. Dragline begins to WHISTLE. Koko begins to chink his chains. Onionhead and Dynamite join in with their chains. Other prisoners rhythmically beat on bunk posts. Only Society Red does not join in.

EXT. YARD (NIGHT)

Luke works. From inside we HEAR the music from the prisoners. Boss Paul and Boss Kean appear.

BOSS PAUL

What's all this dirt in the yard?

LUKE

I... I... I...

He can't talk. Paul hits him and he falls again on the dirt. Paul hits him again.

LUKE

Please! Please!

BOSS PAUL

Git to work!

LUKE

Don't hit me! Please, for God's sake, don't hit me.

BOSS KEAN

What was that? What was that name you said, Luke?

LUKE

God. I pray to God you won't hit me.

(he grovels in the dirt before them, tears streaming down his cheeks)

I'll do whatever you say, but I can't take no more. Please.

TWO SHOT PAUL AND KEAN

A trace of smiles.

BOSS PAUL

(kindly)

You got your mind right, Luke?

CLOSE LUKE

LUKE

Yes, Boss. I got it right.

ON KEAN AND PAUL

BOSS PAUL

Supposin' you was to backslide on us, Luke? Supposin' you was to backsass or try to run again...

LUKE

No, Boss! I won't. I won't. I got my mind right. I got it right, Boss. Please don't hit me no more.

INT. BARRACKS (NIGHT)

The music has stopped, the men listening.

ON KOKO

His face tightens into an expression of contempt, hatred. He grabs the picture on the bunk beside him and violently tears it in half.

EXT. YARD LUKE, BOSSES PAUL AND KEAN (NIGHT)

BOSS PAUL

(kind and reasonable)

Luke, you run again and we'll kill you.

LUKE

I know, I know. Just don't hit me.

The Captain steps in -- out of the dark. He has been watching from his porch.

CAPTAIN

Okay, son. Go get shaved and cleaned up and get you some sleep. I reckon you need it.

Luke slowly struggles to his feet and begins painfully stumbling toward the barracks.

INT. BARRACKS (NIGHT)

as the chute opens and Luke staggers inside and the door is slammed behind him.

LUKE

I got my mind right. I got it right.

He stumbles toward his bunk, passing Tattoo and Alibi who turn away embarrassed.

LUKE

I got my mind right.

Others like Dragline and Koko stare straight ahead, not seeing him; Society Red has his back turned; Dynamite, Blind Dick, Loudmouth Steve meet his gaze contemptuously.

LUKE

(collapsing on his
bunk)

Where are you now? I got my mind
right. You hear me? I got it right!

Silence.

EXT. ROAD (DAY)

The gang is working. Over a week has passed. Luke's wounds are healed. He works in a slow, spiritless way, broken.

CLOSE GODFREY

looking somehow less menacing.

BOSS PAUL

He is sitting, not even looking at the men, relaxed, pulls out watch looks over to Godfrey in b.g. Godfrey nods.

BOSS PAUL

Awright, smoke it up.

The men break and sit down for smoking.

BOSS PAUL

Luke! Water 'em.

Without a moments hesitation, Luke jogs over and gets the water pail and dipper from Rabbit and moves to the group of men.

CLOSE THE GROUP

as Luke moves around filling their cups. The men are silent, some embarrassed, some sympathetic, some confused, some disappointed.

CLOSE GODFREY

He signals with his cane for his rifle.

ON RABBIT

He hurries to the cab of the truck, gets Godfrey's rifle. The other men, but not Luke, watch as Godfrey slips in the bolt, loads, fires at something out in the swamp.

ON BOSS PAUL

As Godfrey takes bolt out of rifle, returns the gun to Rabbit.

BOSS PAUL

Go git it, Luke.

LUKE

Yes sir, Boss Paul!

Grinning, cheerful, he begins to hobble away through the swamp and grass.

CLOSE ANGLE ON TURTLE IN THE MUCK

Luke's hands COME INTO FRAME AND OFFER the head a stick. The jaws clamp down on the stick and Luke lifts the turtle up.

FULL SHOT LUKE

grinning, holding up the turtle by the stick.

LUKE

Here he is, Boss. Deader'n hell but he won't let go.

THE GROUP

as Luke walks back through them carrying the turtle.

BOSS PAUL

You cut that up fer lunch, Luke.

LUKE

Yes, Boss.

He moves off toward the trucks with the turtle, and we HOLD on the disappointed reactions of the men, featuring Dragline.

Then there is the SOUND of a motor starting.

ON THE GROUP NEW ANGLE

as they turn to look, as one man.

THE TRUCK

as Luke tries to get it in gear, there is the SOUND of gears grinding and as the truck begins to move the bed of the dump body begins to raise. The truck begins to move past the prisoners, away from the guards.

ON THE GUARDS

As they begin to run toward the truck, raising their guns.

ON DRAGLINE

on his feet.

DRAGLINE

Oh Lord!

SOCIETY RED

That fool. That damn fool.

DRAGLINE

Oh mah baby Luke.

He starts to run like hell toward the truck coming past.

ANGLE ON GUARDS

stopping to fire but bullets ricochet off the rising bed of the dump body.

MOVING SHOT PARALLELING TRUCK

Dragline running alongside trying to grab the door handle. Inside Luke, grinning fiercely, as he drives. SHOTS sounding. Dragline gets hold of the door, swings inside. HOLD AND PAN the truck off down the road until all we can see is the steel dump body.

REVERSE THE ROAD

It is littered with tools and equipment dumped from the truck body. The guards stand there, their guns empty.

BOSS KEAN

(from another truck)

He's taken the keys. He's got the keys!

Boss Shorty pokes his head out of another truck.

BOSS SHORTY

Here, too.

INT. TRUCK LUKE AND DRAGLINE

DRAGLINE

We're free, Luke. You terrible man. Think of that. We're free. Free!

Over them, appears the SUPERIMPOSED image of Godfrey's glasses, the Man With No Eyes, watching them, denying Dragline's words.

LONG DISSOLVE:

EXT. PALMETTO SWAMP

Dragline is exuberantly hacking away at palm fronds to cover the truck while Luke is filing away at his chains.

DRAGLINE

(rattling frond)

Shakin it here, Boss. Shakin it...
Oh my baby Luke.

He laughs, shakes his head in appreciation. Luke ignores him, continues to file. Dragline does another worshipful imitation.

DRAGLINE

Don't hit me no more, Boss! Don't hit me! I'll do anythin' you say but just don't hit me! Oh Luke. You are an original, you truly are. You really fooled them.

LUKE

Foolin', Hell! I would have eaten that dirt for them. They coulda used my head for a shovel and a my face for a broom... They just never did get a piece of my mind.

DRAGLINE

And all the time you was plannin' on runnin' again.

Luke has filed through the chains, stands up.

LUKE

Yeah, well... I never planned nothin' in my life...

He tosses the severed chain link into the swamp and starts to walk off, Dragline hurrying behind him.

EXT. NEAR NEGRO VILLAGE (DUSK)

Luke and Dragline appear, tired and cold. Dragline is having trouble keeping up. Seeing this, Luke stops and rests, looking off at church visible in distance.

DRAGLINE

Whoee, it's cold. Wisht I had somethin' to eat. Bread, grits, beans even. Soon's we get to my house, we're gonna have us one big meal and then I'm gonna show you some farm girls that...

LUKE

We ain't goin' nowhere.

DRAGLINE

(confused)

What you talkin' about, Luke? We're together, you and me, just like always. Now the thing we gotta work out is how to get Koko outa there and then the Terrible Trio be all complete again. Man, this old Free World ain't gonna know which ear to stand on.

LUKE

Yeah, well, you and Koko kin handle it without me.

DRAGLINE

What you mean, Luke?

LUKE

I've done enough world-shakin' for a while. You do the rest for me. Send me a postcard about it.

He gets up, starts off.

DRAGLINE

But, Luke...

LUKE

Take it easy, Drag.

DRAGLINE

Luke. Where you goin'?

LUKE

On my own.

DRAGLINE

But what am I gonna do all by myself?

(hangs head)

Oh if'n I hadn't lost mah head. I only had two more years to go. But when I saw you tearin' down with that truck... But you right Luke. We oughta split up. Be safer for us both.

He looks up. Luke is in the distance.

DRAGLINE

Luke?

(calls out)

Just the same, you're a good old boy, Luke. You take care, hear?

There is no answer.

OMITTED

EXT. NEGRO VILLAGE (NIGHT)

as Luke trots down the main street, passes the church.

LUKE

Hey, Old Man! You home tonight?

He starts across the bridge.

LUKE

If you kin spare a minute, it's about time we had ourselves a little talk.

INT. CHURCH

Luke mounts the steps of the lectern, looks up.

LUKE

Old Man, I know I'm a pretty evil feller who killed people in the war and got drunk and chopped up municipal merchandise and like that. I admit ain't got no call to ask for much. But even so, you ain't dealt me no cards in a long time. I mean it's beginning to look like you got it fixed so I can't never win out. Inside or out, it's just different bosses and different rules. Where am I supposed to fit in? Old Man, I got to tell you: I started out pretty strong and fast but it's starting to get to me... When does it end?... What you got in mind for me next? Old Man. What do I do now? Awright. On my hands and knees a skin'. Yeah. That's what I thought. I guess I'm just a hardcase and I gotta find my way out myself.

We HEAR the SOUND of vehicles outside, telling Luke that the police have arrived. He starts for the back just as Dragline enters from the side entrance. Seeing him, Luke looks up at the ceiling.

LUKE

Is that your answer, Old Man? You're a hardcase too, ain't you?

DRAGLINE

Luke, are you alright?... They got us, boy. They're out there thicker'n flies. Bosses and dogs and sheriffs and more guns than I ever seen in my life. We don't have a chance, Luke... They caught up with me right after

we split up and they was aimin' to kill you, Luke. But I got 'em to promise if you give up peaceful, they wouldn't even whip you this time.

LUKE

(amused)

Do we even get our same bunks back?

DRAGLINE

Why sure, Luke. I mean I didn't talk to them about that. But why not? They're reasonable, Luke. Hell, we only been gone a coupla hours.

LUKE

You don't understand a thing, do you, Drag?

DRAGLINE

Luke, you got to listen to me. All you got to do is just give up nice and quiet, just play it cool.

LUKE

Like I always do?

DRAGLINE

Thass right. Just play it...

He sees Luke moving toward the window.

DRAGLINE

Luke, what are do doin'?

OMITTED

ANGLE BY WINDOW

as Luke steps out of pitch black into the harsh light in full view, calm, slight smile, having chosen his moment. His voice is loud, clear, mocking:

LUKE

WHAT WE GOT HERE IS A FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE...

A SHOT! It catches Luke in the throat and throws him back, but he stays in the light, still smiling.

DRAGLINE

Luke!

EXT. CHURCHYARD (NIGHT)

ON guards and police, FEATURING Godfrey, who holds his smoking

rifle. There are confused SHOUTS and movements by the sheriffs, but the Captain and the prison guards only look toward Godfrey, then turn away, stoic.

INT. CHURCH

as Luke falls to one knee, trying to hold himself up. Dragline is by his side, helps him up and to the door.

EXT. CHURCHYARD (NIGHT)

where Bosses Kean and Paul move in to handcuff Luke. Dragline, seeing Godfrey, bellows out an INCOHERENT ROAR and charges past the surprised guards to knock Godfrey to the ground, tear his glasses from him. Confused, bewildered, Godfrey gropes for the glasses as the prison guards beat Dragline into submission.

ANGLE ON CHURCH (PRE-DAWN) (NIGHT)

as Luke, handcuffed behind his back, is being led toward the Captain's car by Bosses Paul and Kean. He is half-paralyzed, blood pouring from him. The Captain has turned his back on Godfrey, talking to the Sheriff.

SHERIFF

You follow me and I'll radio the emergency clinic to open up...

CAPTAIN

I'm takin' him to the prison hospital.

SHERIFF

But that's an hour away. He ain't gonna last twenty minutes.

CAPTAIN

Git outa the way. He's ours.

MOVING SHOT LUKE

as he is brought past Dragline, who is being held by several guards. Tears stream down Dragline's cheeks. Luke looks at him, still smiling as he is pushed into the Captain's car.

LUKE INT. THE CAR

as it begins to move out. In the b.g. across the road we SEE the Negro villagers watching, silently. The window of the car is up and the reflections on the glass make Luke already dim, a little distant.

MOVING SHOT THE CAR (DAWN)

as it moves down the road, over the trestle. It is the mystic hour of dawn, the sun's rays just diffusing as we watch the car until it disappears over the rise in the road.

EXT. ROAD CLOSE ON YOYO (DAY)

The yoyo is swinging in the sun. As the shot WIDENS we SEE it is Dragline, wearing chains, wielding the yoyo and now we SEE the others working around him. Godfrey is gone; Boss Paul is now the Walking Boss. The MUSIC gains strength and speeds as

Dragline works with strong, certain grace and determination and the others also seem more vital and free as imperceptibly the CAMERA PULLS BACK and RISES SLOWLY TO:

HELICOPTER SHOT

as the men grow smaller in the limitless field of gold stretching in all directions as far as the eye can see, intersected by four roads that reach out to infinity. Now the men are specks, now invisible in the fields and there are only the roads, lines in the gold, going on forever. OVER THIS, SUPERIMPOSE the PICTURE OF LUKE, now scotch-taped together, HOLD and

FADE OUT:

THE END