

RETURN OF THE SEVEN

Screenplay by

BURT KENNEDY



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" RETURN OF THE SEVEN "

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"RETURN OF THE SEVEN"

FADE IN:

1. EXT. BIG COUNTRY - FULL SHOT - LATE DAY

The last glaze of day struggles to stay alive in the towering peaks of the Sierra Madre. Majestic stone monuments stand silent watch over an endless reach of dead land. This then is the country of glory and shame...Mexico--1887.

Nothing but the soft SOUND of the North Sonoran wind as we HOLD for an empty moment -- then fifty horsemen top the mask of a high cutbank: go sudden against the violent red sky, and start off along the spine of the rise at a hell-bent run.

MUSIC AND MAIN TITLE...RETURN OF THE SEVEN, as we TRACK the dust-covered riders on the rim; INTERCUTTING to build the excitement, and ESTABLISHING the horsemen to be a band of fierce looking vaqueros -- bristling with Winchesters and wearing big hats and crossed bandoleers. The CREDITS continue as we STAY with the action. Now the front-riders swing their animals hard to the left; plunge headlong down the treacherous bank; gain a dry river-bed and keep going. A maze of dust and sliding horses as the others follow.

More motion as we INTERCUT once again to build -- then, as the last CARD clears....we..

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

2. EXT. VILLAGE - FULL SHOT - MORNING

This is a small farm community on the fringe of the desert. Here, perhaps fifty families have planted and reaped their harvests for many generations, almost totally unaware of the outside world.

Yet as peaceful and quiet a life as it may seem, the villagers are in constant struggle for survival. Year in and year out they fight to protect their crops

2. CONTINUED

against devastating droughts; flooding rains, freezing cold. And once, long ago, they took up arms to rid their village of an outlaw called Calvera.

No wait now as we look down over the great earthen cross atop the bell-tower of the once white church to see a scattering of low adobe dwellings gone cold in the first light of day.

A cock crows from somewhere off as a faded gray burro takes a morning drink from the time-worn fountain in the village square. A motley crew of chickens scratch their way around the hard-packed plaza. All is well.

3. EXT. STREAM - FULL SHOT - MORNING

A short brown dog barks at a group of young women as they carry their washing down to a thin stream which flanks the village. Others are already at the waters edge scrubbing and pounding clothing on the rocks.

We STAY with the women for a light moment, catching a fleeting glimpse of pretty faces, then a grinding SOUND brings us around to see a boy astride a big-chested mule. The animal is hitched to a makeshift water-wheel, and as the youngster rides him in a tight right circle, the wheel, driven half by the current and half by jackass, scoops up water from the stream and spills it out into a main irrigation ditch which flows down into the fields.

4. FULL SHOT

We STAY with the boy on the mule and the women at the stream for a refreshing moment, then turning our attention to the fields we see...

5. FULL SHOT

Men pulling plows with the strength of their backs -- while small boys follow them planting seed in the open furrows.

5. CONTINUED

Beyond we see a number of old women sitting in the shade of a part fallen adobe wall pounding grain into meal.

The workers continue to toil as we INTERCUT to ESTABLISH the peaceful setting -- then...

6. FULL SHOT

From the direction of the desert we see the figure of a man staggering in toward the village. As he comes closer we see that he is a Mexican in his late forties and torn clothing. His hands are tied behind his back.

7. MED. SHOT

One worker after another cease their labors and stand looking off toward the newcomer.

8. P.O.V.

Strange tension as the lone figure continues to stagger on. Troubled silence from all as we INTERCUT to build suspense, then...

9. CLOSE SHOT

One young farmer frees himself from the harness of his plow and moves hurriedly toward the staggering man. As he runs, we see that this is CHICO -- the hellion who set aside his guns to stay in the village and marry.

10. MED. SHOT

From the crowd of women at the stream steps an attractive Mexican girl. This is Petra -- Chico's young wife.

10. CONTINUED

No wait now as she bends; fills an earthen cup with water and crosses hurriedly in the direction of her husband.

11. MED. SHOT

Chico gains the stranger just as he begins to call. Catching him in his arms, he lowers the man to the ground. No sooner down, PETRA moves up next to Chico; carrying the cup of water. Chico reaches up, takes the cup from her and places it to the lips of the fallen man. Now, many of the farmers and the women have moved forward to surround the apparently dying stranger.

THE STRANGER drinks -- then pulls his head back and looks up into Chico's face.

STRANGER

(in Spanish)

...Hide...!

CHICO leans closer.

STRANGER

(still in Spanish)

Hide...hide...!

Then his lips quiver and he stares up into the sun... but sees nothing. He is dead.

An old woman crosses herself. The farmers take off their battered straw hats and lower their heads. Troubled silence. When they finally speak it is in Spanish.

1st FARMER

(hushed)

What did he mean, hide?

2nd FARMER

It must have been the sun.

3rd FARMER

The sun did not tie his hands.

During this, Chico has taken a knife from his belt and cut the dead man's hands free. Now he gets to his feet and stands looking at the blood-stained length of rope.

Only then does he hear the pounding SOUND of running horses. Turning he sees...

12. P.O.V.

Fifty vaqueros are storming on from the high distance.

13. FULL SHOT

Fear holds Chico and the others captive as they continue to stare off at the incoming horsemen. Next moment...

14. FULL SHOT

A sudden shower of water as the front-riders plunge into the stream and cross at a wide open run -- the others following.

15. MED. SHOT

We get the panic stricken reaction of the women at the waters edge and the boy on the mule, then...

16. FULL SHOT

Chico and the others are suddenly running for the cover of the village.

17. FULL SHOT

High wild action as the fields flanking the village come alive with running men, horses, and women. Excitement mounts as we INTERCUT to build the action...

A half dozen riders trample the fields with absolute disregard for the crops.

Ten more horsemen gallop through the freshly washed clothing which has been spread out on the near bank of the stream to dry.

Gunfire adds to the confusion as we continue to INTERCUT to build the excitement.

18. FULL SHOT

The riders block both ends of the narrow street cutting off any route of escape.

19. MED. SHOT

CHICO pushes his wife against the wall of a building. Next moment he rushes off. PETRA watches in horror as her husband runs between the galloping horses to reach the other side of the street.

The invaders move their horses in and around the farmers herding them together like cattle. The leader begins to shout above the gunfire...

LOPEZ

(in Spanish)

Drive them into the square...!

One of the farmers resists. A rider shoots him down in his tracks. Two other farmers rush at another group of riders and are likewise shot down for their trouble.

20. MED. SHOT

Chico rushes toward his house, only to have his path blocked by two horsemen. Dodging past the animals he ducks around the corner of a building just as the adobe wall is riddled with gunfire.

21. FULL SHOT

PETRA and the other women stand in horror as they see their husbands and fathers pushed together into the center of the town square. Those women who are crowded in with the men are pushed away. Only the men are held at gunpoint in the center of the village.

22. MED. SHOT

CHICO dodges horses and bullets; gains the front door of his house, and dashes inside; slamming the door behind him.

23. INT. ADOBE - MED. SHOT - DAY

No sooner inside, CHICO crosses hurriedly to the far end of the room; bends, and begins to rummage through a chest. Next moment he comes up with a gunbelt.

24. CLOSE SHOT

CHICO hesitates looking down at his guns, then, spinning, he is about to cross for the door when he stops sudden short...

25. P.O.V.

His wife PETRA stands at the door blocking his way.

PETRA

(pleads)

No, Chico...!

A moment of decision for Chico as we INTERCUT to build the standoff, then, pushing Petra aside, Chico moves hurriedly out the door.

26. MED. SHOT

CHICO comes through the door, gun in hand, just as two horsemen storm on. Chico fires. Man and animal hit the ground. Chico fires again. Down goes the second rider.

Blazing action as we INTERCUT to build the battle -- then a rider skulls Chico from behind with a Winchester. Down he goes, dropping his gunbelt in the dirt beside him.

27. FULL SHOT

All the men of the village have been forced into the square. A dozen dead bodies lie around them. The RIDERS are moving from one farmer to another tying their hands behind their backs and lashing a long rope from the neck of one prisoner to another.

27. CONTINUED

PETRA emerges from her house. She sees her unconscious husband being bound up and a rope being tied around his neck. As he staggers to his feet he searches for Petra's face. He finds her. They look into each other's eyes in agony.

28. MED. SHOT

The front-rider called LOPEZ shouts a command, and the riders begin to herd the men out toward the desert.

29. CLOSE SHOT

Panic holds PETRA captive as she stands in the doorway looking off.

30. MED. SHOT

The YOUNG BOY we saw earlier riding the mule hitched to the water-wheel rounds the corner of a building, stops, and stands looking off toward the square.

31. P.O.V.

The fifty VAQUEROS ride herd on the enslaved VILLAGERS making escape impossible.

32. CLOSE SHOT

The YOUNGSTER looks long at the line of MEN being driven off into the desert.

33. MED. SHOT

We SEARCH the faces of wives, children and mothers as they watch the men being taken away.

34. CLOSE SHOT

The BOY continues to look off. Next moment, something on the ground catches his attention. Only then do we see Chico's gunbelt in the dirt at the boy's feet.

The SOUND of the departing horsemen dies over as we HOLD LONG on the gunbelt... then...

CUT TO:

35. EXT CHINCHON - MED. SHOT - DAY

A sudden blur of motion as a red plank door is thrown full open and a huge black bull charges straight at us looking for something to kill. Only when we hear the roar of the crowd, and the blare of a brass band, do we come around to see that we are in the bullring in the colorful border village of Chinchon -- surrounded on all sides by wildly cheering spectators.

Once a year at Fiesta, the village square is turned into a makeshift 'plaza de toros'. The balconies flanking the square on four sides are filled to overflowing with villagers of all ages, shapes and sizes.

Excitement mounts as we return to the ring. The matador and his Cuadrilla, dressed in flat-brimmed hats, rough-out boots, chaps, and ranch-clothes, defy death as they work the bull with their capes. The crowd continues to cheer as we INTERCUT to build the action-- then, coming half around, we see...

36. CLOSE SHOT

A lean, good-looking young man, with wild hair, flashing eyes and a disarming smile sits the top rail of the wooden fence just behind the barrera. (this is EL CORDOBES). We'll call him MANUEL.

MANUEL is beside himself with excitement as he watches every move of the matador and the bull.

Now one of the Cuadrilla crosses close in front of the young hellion leaving his cape hanging over the barrera. Manuel hesitates an uncertain moment, then reaches out and touches the pink and yellow cloth. Next moment...

37. MED. SHOT

The matador fixes the bull in the center of the ring; turns his back on the animal, and walks away with utter disregard for danger. The crowd roars. The brass band blares.

38. CLOSE SHOT

Seeing the bull standing alone in the center of the ring, Manuel makes a sudden decision; grabs the pink and yellow cape, and vaults the barrera. Before anyone can stop him, Manuel is in the middle of the arena facing the bull.

MANUEL

(to the animal)

Toro...!

The bull charges; MANUEL stands his ground as the animal storms by him like a four-legged freight train. The stunned crowd lets out a yell as the bull spins and comes back at Manuel. The young man drops to one knee and lets the animal roar by him -- the horns narrowly missing his head.

A gasp of surprise from the crowd as Manuel executes one fancy pass after another.

Then a gasp of surprise from Manuel as four men grab him from behind; lift him high in the air, and carry him from the ring without ceremony.

39. FULL SHOT

Cat-calls and whistles of disapproval as MANUEL gets the bums rush.

40. MED. SHOT

A furious MANUEL struggles for freedom as the four men horse him up over the barrera and attempt to push him back into the crowd.

40. CONTINUED

A maze of arms and legs for a wild moment, then Manuel lands a haymaker on one of the attendants knocking him headlong against the sword-rack. The fallen man is furious. He grabs one of the blades; gets to his feet, and takes a vicious swing at Manuel narrowly missing him. Manuel dives out of range. The man with the sword sets himself for another attack. The situation is suddenly serious. The crowd falls silent. High tension as we INTERCUT to build. This is truly a Mexican stand-off.

Next moment the man with the blade lunges at Manuel. As he does, someone from off scene trips him. Down he goes in the dust. No sooner does he hit the ground than a boot with a man in it steps hard down on the blade pinning the attacker to the ground. Only then do we look up to see...

41. P.O.V.

A man called CHRIS towers over the fallen attendant. He wears black, two guns, and a dead calm expression.

CHRIS
Hell, let him fight.

Before the man can answer...

VIN'S VOICE
(from off)
I'll pay for the bull..!

Chris turns on the voice and looks high off to see a gringo named VIN sitting on a balcony above -- a bottle of wine in one hand; a girl in the other.

No wait as one of the four men yells a challenge up at Vin in Spanish.

VIN
(puzzled to Chris)
What'd he say..?

CHRIS
(almost smiles)
Wants to know if you'll pay for the funeral too..!

41. CONTINUED

A light moment of decision for Vin, then he digs a leather money-bag from under his gunbelt and throws it down to Chris. Chris, in turn, tosses the money to the nearest attendant; bends, takes the sword from the man on the ground, and throws the blade to Manuel.

The crowd roars. Manuel gives Chris a wide smile; jumps down into the ring, takes a muleta offered to him by one of the cuadrilla, and the fight is on.

42. FULL SHOT

MANUEL moves toward the bull with the scarlet rag and the curved sword in his hand. Tension mounts. Then all hell breaks loose. The animal charges. Manuel stands motionless. Nine times Manuel wills the bull into taking the cloth instead of his body. Nine times he should be killed, but isn't.

42A. MED. SHOT

The fight continues as we see Vin hand his bottle of wine to the girl; climb down from the balcony, and cross to Chris at the barrera. Once there...

VIN

Hello, Chris.

CHRIS

(his eyes on the arena)

Vin.

They watch the action...then...

VIN

Thought you took a job ridin' shotgun for Overland.

CHRIS

I quit.

VIN

Why? *How come*

42A. CONTINUED

CHRIS

My health...
(dry)
...Doctor said I needed a climate
with less lead in the air.

A moment of understanding...then...

CHRIS

(still watching the
fight)
What you doing down here?

VIN

Tracked a man across the line for
bounty.

Chris takes his time.

CHRIS

Who?

VIN

You.

The crowd roars. No reaction from Chris. Vin
hesitates a troubled moment...finally...

VIN

(pained)
Well, ain't you gonna ask?

CHRIS

What?

VIN

Why I'm after you..!

CHRIS

You told me. Bounty.

VIN

Hell, ^{CHRIS} you think I'd do a thing
like that..?
(quick to explain)
...I came after so's you'd know
there was a price on you..!

CHRIS

How much?

42A. CONTINUED

VIN
(hesitant)
Five hundred.

CHRIS
Dollars..?

VIN
(embarrassed)
Pesos.

CHRIS
(hurt)
That ain't very much.

VIN
(new attack)
It's enough some shypoke might
throw down on you from a window..!
Or while you're asleep..!

Chris stays silent. Vin finally gets to the point...

VIN
(trying to be
offhand)
~~Maybe~~ ..maybe I-ought'a string
along with you for a while --
case you need any help.

Chris comes around. Vin avoids his eyes as he turns
his attention to the bullfight.

CHRIS
Wouldn't want to put you to any
trouble.

VIN
(shrugs)
No trouble...
(throwaway)
...No trouble at all..!

We catch a glimpse of a smile in Chris's eyes...then...

43. FULL SHOT

High wild action as we INTERCUT to build the excite-
ment of the fight; bring it to a roaring crescendo,
then...

44. MED. SHOT

MANUEL hurls himself between the horns sinking the sword to the hilt in the bull's shoulder. The animal sways, then crashes to the sand, dead.

45. FULL SHOT

Delirium takes over the plaza as we INTERCUT once again to build.

46. MED. SHOT

Tears of joy stream down MANUEL's face as he stands in the center of the ring being showered by hats, shoes, and flowers. The brass band is all but lost in the roar of the crowd...as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

47 (OUT)

48. EXT. PLAZA - FULL SHOT - NIGHT

The cheering crowd and brass band have given way to the exciting strains of Flamenco guitars.

The village square, which serves as a bullring by day, has been turned into a giant outdoor cantina by night. In the flamelight of a hundred or more torches, flanking the plaza on all sides, we see that two flat-bed wagons have been drawn up in the center of the arena to act as a stage -- while countless tables and chairs have been set up to accommodate a sea of drinkers. From the size of the crowd we get the feeling that there are as many drunks in Chinchon as Bullfight fans.

No wait now as we HOLD HIGH AWAY for a colorful moment, then...

49. CLOSE SHOT

A strikingly beautiful dancer stands in the center of the makeshift stage, her eyes closed; body pulsing, and hands held close beside her head clapping with the staccato beat of the guitars. Now she begins to dance -- the flamelight catching every wild move of her young body.

50. FULL SHOT

All eyes in the crowded arena are on the dancer -- including CHRIS and VIN's who sit a front table. Flamelight throws a strange patchwork of color over the gathering. We SEARCH faces...then...

51. MED. SHOT

The dance continues as we INTERCUT to build the excitement; bring it to the breaking point, then all is sudden silent.

52. FULL SHOT

A roar of applause from the crowd.

53. TWO SHOT

CHRIS and VIN give the little lady a big hand. Then, as Chris turns and picks up a bottle to pour another drink, he stops sudden short. Only then do we see...

54. P.O.V.

A BOY stands across from CHRIS -- only his eyes and the top of his head showing over the edge of the rough plank table.

55. CLOSE SHOT

A puzzled CHRIS stares down at the youngster.

56. CLOSE SHOT

The BOY stares back.

57. MED. SHOT

The strange stand-off continues until VIN turns and sees the youngster.

VIN
(smiles)
Friend 'a yours?

Before CHRIS can answer, the boy reaches up and puts a gunbelt on the table -- Chico's gunbelt. This then is the boy we met in the village riding the water-wheel mule.

58. CLOSE SHOT

Troubled silence from CHRIS as he looks down at the gunbelt. Then, as he is about to speak to the boy, the youngster turns and crosses off through the crowd.

Chris trades a puzzled look with Vin; picks up the belt, and follows the boy.

59. EXT. STREET - MED. SHOT - NIGHT

The BOY comes out of the arena and keeps going. Next moment CHRIS appears; stops, and stands looking off to see...

60. P.O.V.

The BOY hurriedly crosses the narrow street; gains the shadows on the far side, and stops beside his big-chested mule. In the faint flamelight we can barely make out someone sitting astride the animal.

61. TWO SHOT

CHRIS is still looking off when VIN moves on from behind. They exchange another blank look and start off across the street.

62. MED. SHOT

Only when they gain the animal in the shadows does CHRIS recognize the rider.

CHRIS

Petra...?

Chris reaches up and lifts Chico's wife from the mule.

PETRA

(near tears)

I prayed you'd be here...!

Chris holds her close as she starts to cry.

CHRIS

What is it, Petra...? What happened...?

The woman fights back tears.

PETRA

(hesitant)

Two days ago...many men with guns rode into our village... Chico and

62. CONTINUED

PETRA (CONTINUED)

some of the others tried to fight them...it was no use...!

(remembering)

...All the men they did not kill, they drove into the square...tied them, and took them off into the desert...!

(quiet)

...Coming here we passed through two villages, both of them empty of men... Only women crying over their dead...

Chris takes his time, then...

CHRIS

You say there were many men with guns... How many?

PETRA

Fifty, maybe more.

CHRIS

And they didn't say a thing...? Where they were taking them...? Why...?

PETRA

Nothing.

Strong silence, then...

VIN

(quiet)

What do you make of it, Chris?

CHRIS

I don't know.

VIN

(troubled)

We can't fight a whole army of 'em.

CHRIS

Chico would if it was the other way around.

62. CONTINUED

VIN ^{WAS}
 Chico's a fool -- he's always ~~was~~ a
 fool...!

Chris holds up Chico's gunbelt.

CHRIS
 (challenges)
 Because he set his guns aside;
 married Petra, tried to amount
 to something...?

Before Vin can answer the little boy looks up at Chris
 and speaks to him in Spanish. When he finishes...

VIN
 What'd he say?

A faint smile comes into Chris's eyes.

CHRIS
 He wants to know if we're going
 after them tonight, or in the
 morning.

A clumsy moment of guilt for Vin as he tries to avoid
 the youngster's trusting eyes. Then...

VIN
 (looks off, troubled)
 Big country...
 (warns)
 ... Findin' 'em could take a long
 time.

CHRIS
 (to the night)
 I haven't been goin' anywhere
 for ten years...

Chris comes around on Vin.

CHRIS
 (almost smiles)
 ... Either have you.

Vin scratches his head.

VIN
 (half to himself)
 Ain't it the truth.

62. CONTINUED

An open moment of understanding passes close between the two gunmen... then...

CHRIS

Take Petra and the boy to my room at the hotel. They can sleep there.

VIN

Where you headed?

CHRIS

We'll need help.

VIN

(challenges)

Findin' men to go against that many guns ain't gonna be easy.

Chris waits long. Finally...

CHRIS

Depends where you look.

Chris throws Chico's gunbelt to Vin, turns, and crosses off into the darkness. A troubled Vin stands watching after...as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

63. INT. JAIL - CLOSE SHOT - NIGHT

A splash of flamelight as we FOLLOW a lantern with a man on it along a dark passageway. Next moment we come away to see that we are in the village jail TRACKING a little Mexican and Chris as they move down a long row of cagelike cells. This place is a cross between a dungeon and the tower of London.

No wait now as Chris stops at one of the cells and looks inside.

CHRIS

What about this one...?

The JAILOR holds his lantern up, and in the faint light we see a Mexican stretched out asleep on his bunk inside the cage.

JAILOR

He stole a pig, senior.

CHRIS

(pained)

A pig...

JAILOR

Si...

(smiles)

...I can let you have him very cheap...!

Chris gives the jailor a disgusted look and moves on to the next cell. Once there...

CHRIS

This one...?

They look in the cell at another prisoner.

JAILOR

He caught his wife with another man...

(cuts his throat
with his finger)

...both of them!

Chris hesitates, then crosses to the next cell; stops, and stands looking inside.

64. P.O.V.

A tall, lean young man in sun-faded range-clothes, sits the far end of his bunk -- his back against the wall; his battered hat pulled over his eyes.

65. MED. SHOT

CHRIS is still looking off when the JAILOR crosses on with the lantern.

JAILOR

(troubled)

This one is worth many pesos!

(warns)

...But if I were you...!

CHRIS

(indicating cell door)

Open it.

JAILOR

(tries to object)

But, senor...!

CHRIS

(tops him calm)

Open it.

The troubled jailor takes a rusty ring of keys from his belt; opens the barred door, and stands aside. Chris moves on into the cell.

66. MED. SHOT

The PRISONER remains motionless -- his hat still over his eyes. Now CHRIS gains the bunk; takes out a cigar, strikes a china match, and lights it. Finally...

CHRIS

(dead calm)

Hello, Frank.

The tall, young man waits long, then pushes his hat back; and looks up.

66. CONTINUED

This is FRANK RIKER -- a long, quiet gun in his early thirties. Frank has a good face. Only his eyes hold the look of high hopes gone out the window.

FRANK
(simply)
Chris.

CHRIS
Haven't seen you around.

FRANK
Haven't been around...
(almost smiles)
...Been in here.

JAILOR
He killed four men in a gunfight...!

Frank throws the jailor a rotten look, then comes back around on Chris.

FRANK
(light)
That's a fact.

CHRIS
How would you like to get out?

FRANK
I'm listenin'.

CHRIS
Friend'a mine's in trouble.

FRANK
How much trouble?

CHRIS
About as much as you are.
(a quiet warning)
A man can rot in a border jail.

Frank stays silent. Then...

FRANK
How many guns you up against?

66. CONTINUED

CHRIS
Fifty, maybe more.

FRANK
Anybody on your side?

Chris holds up two fingers. Frank takes near forever... then, holds up three. Chris turns to the jailor.

CHRIS
How much?

JAILOR
The risk is very great, senor...!
(sudden)
...A hundred pesos...!

CHRIS
(flat)
Fifty.

JAILOR
He killed four men...!

FRANK
(deadly as he
gets to his feet)
I could make it five.

The jailor changes his mind in a hurry.

JAILOR
(scared)
Fifty.

Chris pays him.

FRANK
Where can I find you?

CHRIS
The hotel. We'll be riding south
in the morning...
(after thought)
... You got a horse?

FRANK
I'll steal one.

66. CONTINUED

Frank crosses to the open cell door and moves off into the darkness. Chris and the jailor stand watching after him for a moment, then...

JAILOR

(troubled)

He is not very friendly.

CHRIS

(quiet)

I'm not hiring friends.

Chris is about to turn away, when...

VOICE

(yells from off)

Are you going to talk all night...?

Chris comes around on the voice to see...

67. P.O.V.

A dark, good-looking Mexican in his early forties, stands behind bars in the last cell. This is LUIS EMILIO DELGADO -- a proud, likeable, colorful bandido.

LUIS

(no wait)

... If you had any respect for a condemned man you would put out that light and let him spend his last hours in peace...!

68. TWO SHOT

CHRIS trades a puzzled look with the JAILOR.

JAILOR

(aside)

He is going to be shot in the morning.

68. CONTINUED

CHRIS

What'd he do?

JAILOR

What didn't he do...!

(pointed)

...That is Luis Emilio Delgado.

The name rings a bell with Chris. He hesitates; makes a decision, then crosses off toward the last cell. The jailor follows. Once there...

LUIS

(indignant)

I take it you did not understand me, senor.

CHRIS

You're Luis Delgado...?

A proud smile lights Luis' face.

LUIS

(bright)

You know me?

CHRIS

I've heard of you.

Luis is about to bust with pride. Now he turns and looks back off into the cell.

LUIS

(smiles)

Did I not tell you I was famous...?

Stunned silence from Chris as he looks off beyond Luis to see...

69. P.O.V.

A gorgeous young woman is stretched out on Luis' bunk. She wears a smile and little else.

70. MED. SHOT

CHRIS is held captive by the bare charms of the girl.

JAILOR

(quick to explain)

That is his last request.

LUIS

(beaming)

You have no idea how good that makes a man feel...!

CHRIS

(his eyes on the woman)

I can imagine.

LUIS

I mean you knowing my name...! Who I am...!

(new attack)

...For years I said to myself, Luis, the day will come when you will not have to ride in the dust of others...! The day will come when everyone will know who you are. There will not be a train or a village robbed that people will not say...the one who stole from us was the bandido, Luis Emilio Delgado...!

A proud moment for Luis -- then his smile dies.

LUIS

(troubled)

And just when I was beginning to amount to something, this had to happen...!

(pained)

...Do you know what people will think of me when they find out I was shot for killing one man...? One stinking little man...!

(explains)

... I have killed a dozen men in a single day -- more...!

(calms)

... I tell you, senor... there is no justice.

70. CONTINUED

CHRIS
(a quiet challenge)
What if they don't find out?

LUIS
But they will...!

CHRIS
Not if you ride south with me.

Luis looks close at Chris.

LUIS
(smiles a challenge)
Against fifty guns -- maybe more...?
(indicates off)
... The gringo you hired... He was
right -- the odds are not very good.

CHRIS
Better than you'll have against that
wall tomorrow.

LUIS
(smiling)
You have a point.

A moment of decision for Luis.

CHRIS
Well?

LUIS
What is the pay?

CHRIS
Whatever it costs to get you
out.

Another decision. Then...

LUIS
(shrugs)
Fair enough.

CHRIS
(to the jailor)
How much...?

70. CONTINUED

JAILOR
 (troubled)
 Oh, but senor. I cannot...!

CHRIS
 (flat)
 A hundred pesos...!

JAILOR
 They would stand me against the
 wall in his place...!

CHRIS
 Two hundred...!

JAILOR
 I have a wife, six little ones....!

CHRIS
 Two-fifty!

JAILOR
 (tops him)
 Three...!

The abrupt change in the bidding stops Chris short.

JAILOR
 (quick to explain)
 But I cannot let him go...!
 (flat)
 ... He will have to escape!

Chris trades a pained look with Luis and pays. The
 bribe takes all but one peso from Chris. He shrugs
 and gives that to the jailor too.

JAILOR
 (all smiles)
 Mucho gracias, senor!

CHRIS
 (indicates cell door)
 Unlock it.

The jailor reaches for his rusty key-ring.

LUIS
 (sudden)
 Uno momento...!

70. CONTINUED

The jailor stops short. Puzzled silence as Luis waits long. For a moment we think he is about to back out of the deal, then he turns and looks at the gorgeous young thing stretched out on his bunk.

LUIS

(aside to Chris)

Do you mind if I escape first thing in the morning?

We get a knowing smile from Chris and the music... then..

DISSOLVE TO:

71. EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - FULL SHOT - NIGHT

Night is half gone. The bullfight ring which was turned into a giant cantina is deserted. A dog barks from somewhere off as we HOLD HIGH AWAY on the arena for an empty moment, then, coming part around, we see the lone figure of a man making his way up the narrow street flanking the plaza.

72. MED. SHOT

Darkness holds the man a stranger until he gains the f.g., then we recognize CHRIS.

Another bark from the faraway dog as Chris hesitates an uncertain moment -- then a roar of gunfire from high off spins him to see...

73. P.O.V.

Glass shatters in all directions as a man dives head-first through a second story window; splinters the balcony rail; hits the ground, and, gathering his hat, coat and gunbelt, takes off down the street at a hell-bent run -- a Winchester blazing away at him from the broken window above.

74. MED. SHOT

High wild action as we INTERCUT to get a reaction from CHRIS; build the excitement, then Chris hangs a flying tackle on the running man, sending them both sprawling in behind the cover of the bullring fence.

75. TWO SHOT

A maze of arms and legs as we go CLOSER on the pair -- then as the two men recognize each other...

COLBEE

(with a sheepish
smile)

Hello, Chris.

Before Chris can answer a bullet tears into the planks close over his head. Then another.

COLBEE

(pained)

Gettin' so a man can't find an
unattached woman anywhere!

Then this is BEN COLBEE -- a fun-loving stud in his late twenties. Colbee has a way with women, horses, and guns.

No wait now as lights and heads begin to appear at windows around the village square. The dog is barking like hell.

CHRIS

(urgent)

Let's get out of here...!

Chris and Colbee get sudden to their feet; cross the empty bullring at a low bending run, and disappear into the darkness on the far side of the plaza. A moment later...

76. MED. SHOT

A Judas steer turns to watch as CHRIS and COLBEE make their way through a network of off-shute corrals in behind the arena and pull to a stop beside the main

76. CONTINUED

holding pen. Six fierce looking bulls eye the two men as a relieved Colbee puts on his coat...

COLBEE

(out of breath)

That was close.

CHRIS

So was the last time...!

(adds)

...And the time before that...!

(pained)

...When are you ever gonna learn Colbee...?

COLBEE

How was I supposed to know she was married...?

(putting on his gunbelt)

...Women ain't like cattle...!

They don't have a brand on their hip to let you know when you're drivin' another man's stock...!

Chris hides a smile as a troubled Colbee ties down his gun. Finally...

CHRIS

How would you like to use that gunbelt for something other than to keep your pants up?

Before Colbee can object...

CHRIS

Village was raided. Friend'a mine taken prisoner. I need help.

COLBEE

(throw away)

I'd like to give you a hand, Chris, but...!

CHRIS

They took all the men, drove them off into the desert.

76. CONTINUED

COLBEE
 (unheeding)
 I ain't been gettin' much sleep
 lately and...!

Colbee stops sudden short; does a take, and comes
 around on Chris.

COLBEE
 They took off all the men...?

CHRIS
 Two days ago.

COLBEE
 You mean they left a village full'a
 women...? With no one to do the
 plantin', or harvestin'...?
 (a smile in his
 eyes)
 ... No husbands...?

CHRIS
 No husbands.

Colbee tightens his gunbelt an extra notch and goes
 all grin.

COLBEE
 (every inch a
 stud)
 The hell you say.

Chris has himself another gunfighter...as we...

CUT TO:

77. INT. WINE CELLAR - MED. SHOT - NIGHT

A blur of blood-stained wings as two fighting cocks
 tear at each other in an arena formed by a motley group
 of feverishly yelling, tequila drinking Mexicans and
 whites.

In the yellow flamelight of a dozen torches we see
 that we are in an abandoned wine cellar. The wood

77. CONTINUED

ribs of the giant casks, which line one wall from floor to ceiling, have been torn apart, and made into makeshift bleachers surrounding the battleground on all sides.

The drunken crowd continues to yell as we STAY with the fight; INTERCUTTING to build the excitement.

78. CLOSE SHOT

The one called VIN stands the other edge of the circle leaning against a cross-timber of the bleachers watching the battle. Vin has Chico's gunbelt slung over his shoulder.

79. MED. SHOT

The fight, and the reaction of the crowd mounts to a fever pitch. As it does, we INTERCUT to ESTABLISH one of the cocks, a runt, getting the hell beat out of him. This done, we SEARCH faces to see...

80. CLOSE SHOT

A big, mean looking gringo yells and shakes a threatening fist full of money at the bantam cock.

81. TWO SHOT

Two peons dunkered in the front row trade pesos as they bet the birds.

82. CLOSE SHOT

MANUEL -- the 'would be' bullfighter with the wild hair and flashing eyes, watches the one-sided battle in troubled silence.

83. CLOSE SHOT

We STAY with the fight for a wild moment, then...

84. FULL SHOT

The cocks cast giant shadows on the adobe wall behind CHRIS as he moves down a stone stairway leading to the cellar. Next moment he crosses to VIN, and stands looking off at the fight. Finally...

VIN

How'd you do?

Chris keeps his eyes on the battle and holds up three fingers.

VIN

They any good?

CHRIS

They're alive.

A moment of understanding...then...

85. MED. SHOT

The troubled MANUEL is sudden on his feet. Next instant he crosses into the ring; pulls the big cock off the runt, and throws him to one side.

Stunned silence from the crowd. The big gringo with the fist full of money is furious. When he gets to his feet, he towers over Manuel.

GRINGO

(hard)

What the hell you think you're doin'...!

Manuel answers him in Spanish. The gringo's blank expression tells us he doesn't understand.

85. CONTINUED

PEON
 (offers from behind)
 He says the little one has had
 enough.

GRINGO
 (harder)
 I got all my money on him...!

PEON
 (shrugs)
 You lost.

The gringo turns on Manuel.

GRINGO
 (in sudden rage)
 Why you...!

WHAM...! A fist full of green bills hits Manuel square on the jaw -- down he goes. Manuel shakes his head; finds his feet, and the fight is on.

86. FULL SHOT

The crowd yells with delight as MANUEL and the big GRINGO trade rights and lefts in the center of the arena.

High wild action as we INTERCUT to build the battle -- a battle much like the cock-fight; the big gringo beating hell out of the runt.

87. TWO SHOT

CHRIS and VIN stand calmly watching the war.

88. MED. SHOT

The two peons hunkered in the front row trade pesos as they bet on the fighters.

89. MED. SHOT

The crowd roars as the GRINGO hits MANUEL with a long, looping right to the head -- down he goes. Manuel gets up -- down he goes again.

90. TWO SHOT

CHRIS trades a pained look with VIN; makes a decision, and begins to drift through the crowd toward the ring. No sooner there...

91. MED. SHOT

MANUEL takes a hard chopping right to the middle, and a left to the chin. Down he goes again.

The big GRINGO is standing over the fallen victim when CHRIS taps him on the shoulder from behind. As he turns...

CHRIS

(indicates Manuel)

The little one's had enough.

WHAM...! Chris all but tears the top of his head off with a hard right. The gringo takes to the air like a big wingless bird, and crashes in a heap on the far side of the arena.

We CUT to get Vin's pained reaction to the punch, then as the gringo digs for his Colt...

CHRIS

(dead calm)

Touch that gun, I'll kill you.

High tension as we INTERCUT to build the stand-off -- then the gringo grunts; lets his hand fall away from his gunbelt.

Now Chris turns and calls off to the battered Manuel.

CHRIS

(in Spanish)

You all right...?

91. CONTINUED

Manuel manages a weak smile and nods.

92. CLOSE SHOT

CHRIS throws the gringo a rotten look; turns, and crosses back off toward Vin. Once there...

VIN
(smiles)
Good fight. I enjoyed it.

~~Chris~~ keeps going -- Vin shifts the weight of Chico's gunbelt on his shoulder and follows. We STAY with the pair for a brief moment, then, as they start up the stone stairway, we come around to see MANUEL standing the edge of the crowd watching them go. The young Mexican holds the beat-up runt of a rooster in his arms, and open admiration for Chris in his eyes. Next moment...

93. EXT. WINE CELLAR - FULL SHOT - NIGHT

Looking high off over the edge of a rough plank loading dock to see CHRIS and VIN come out the massive double doors of the abandoned wine refinery; cross directly toward us; gain the edge of the dock, and jump to the ground. No sooner down, a voice from off turns them to see...

94. P.O.V.

MANUEL is moving on from the double doors of the refinery.

95. TWO SHOT

CHRIS and VIN trade a puzzled look, then...

96. MED. SHOT

MANUEL gains the edge of the loading dock; hesitates an uncertain moment, then speaks down to Chris in Spanish.

When he finishes...

CHRIS

(aside to Vin)

He says his name's Manuel. He heard we were looking for fighters... He wants to come along.

Vin wipes his face with the back of his hand to hide a smile. Vin is still smiling when Chris answers Manuel in Spanish; reaches over; takes Chico's gunbelt, and throws it up to the young bullfighter.

VIN

(stunned)

You're gonna take him...?

Chris waits long; his eyes on the beaming Manuel atop the dock...then...

CHRIS

For luck...!

(bright)

...Counting Chico...that makes seven.

A proud smile from Manuel, and a pained smile from Vin...as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

97. EXT. CHINCHON - MED. SHOT - MORNING

The first grey of day finds us COWBOY CLOSE on CHRIS as he works his animal up a deserted street at a half run.

We STAY with man and animal, INTERCUTTING to ESTABLISH a mounting rhythm to the ride -- then, as Chris rounds a corner, we see VIN bring his horse into line and pick up the cadence of the run. Now COLBEE swings his animal

97. CONTINUED

out of a side street and joins the parade. Then MANUEL on a shaggy bay.

A certain excitement begins to build as the riders hold their horses down to a slow run.

A moment later, Chris and the others sweep by the hotel and we catch a fleeting glimpse of FRANK RIKER, atop a stolen black, as he leads the mule, carrying PETRA and the BOY, out into the street and picks up the pace.

98. FULL SHOT

We HOLD HIGH AWAY on the riders now as they work their animals down one winding street after another. Then, as they gain a big adobe building marked JAIL...

99. CLOSE SHOT

Without breaking stride, CHRIS turns in the saddle and looks off toward the jail.

100. P.O.V.

Two guards sit asleep in flat-back chairs flanking the front door of the jail -- Winchesters cradled in their arms. A lone horse stands hip-shot and ground-tied at a hitch fail nearby.

LUIS DELGADO is nowhere in sight.

101. MED. SHOT

CHRIS trades a troubled look with VIN. Still no sign of LUIS as we INTERCUT to build -- then, as the jail begins to disappear from sight around a bend in the distance...

102. CLOSE SHOT

CHRIS gives one last look, and is about to turn away when a roar of gunfire brings him back around to see...

103. P.O.V.

A horseman storms round the bend from the direction of the jail. A wild moment later we recognize LUIS DELGADO as he gains CHRIS and the others; pulls hard in, and slides his horse to a half run.

LUIS

(bright)

Buenos dias...!

(all smiles)

...It is a beautiful day, no...!

CHRIS

You're late...!

LUIS

(open faced)

I overslept...!

Gunfire from off turns Chris to see...

104. P.O.V.

The two jail guards are blazing away with Winchesters from the bend.

105. MED. SHOT

Bullets scream on all sides.

VIN

(urgent)

Let's get the hell outta' here...'

CHRIS dull-spurs his animal into a full run -- LUIS and the others follow.

106. FULL SHOT

High wild action as we INTERCUT to build the excitement of the escape; bring it to a crescendo, then...

107. MED. SHOT

The two guards are still blazing away with their Winchester...as we...

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

108. EXT. BIG COUNTRY - FULL SHOT - DAY

CHRIS and the other riders are all but lost in the gigantic secrecy of the land as they work their animals south at a part run.

We STAY with the riders for a number of colorful scenes to ESTABLISH distance -- then, as day begins to die in the flaming beyond... we...

DISSOLVE TO:

109. EXT. CAMP - CLOSE SHOT - NIGHT

Night finds us CLOSE on a low cook-fire. Coming away we see PETRA holding a smoke-blackened coffee pot over the flames. Across from the woman kneels BEN COLBEE. Ben is attempting to shave in the flickering light of the fire. He holds a straight razor in one hand -- a cracked mirror in the other. LUIS DELGADO hunkers nearby watching the young stud. FRANK RIKER sits leaning against a rock just outside the ring of flamelight -- his hat pulled down over his eyes. The boy is wrapped in a blanket asleep.

In the dim beyond we see MANUEL on guard at one end of the picket line. CHRIS and Vin are nowhere in sight.

109. CONTINUED

No wait now as Petra takes the coffee pot from the fire and comes around on COLBEE.

PETRA

Coffee...?

Colbee smiles; sets his broken mirror aside, and picks up a thin tin cup.

COLBEE

(bright)

Don't mind if I do...!

Petra leans over to fill Colbee's cup. Ben can feel her young body close to him.

COLBEE

(enjoying it)

... Don't mind at all...!

Petra finishes filling Ben's cup, then has to lean even closer as she pours for Luis. This done, she gets to her feet and crosses off toward the picket line. As she clears...

COLBEE

(his eyes on the woman)

Never know she's around would you... Quiet like she is.

Colbee drinks; sets his cup aside, and picks up his razor.

COLBEE

(shaving again)

Had me a quiet woman once...

(trying to line his face up in the mirror)

... Outside she was as calm as Sunday... But inside...!

(grins)

... Wild as mountain scenery.

(new attack)

Gotta ride that way again one day...!

109. CONTINUED

Where...? LUIS

Sonora Town. COLBEE

 LUIS
 (smiles)
I was there once...!

 COLBEE
 (stops shaving)
Once...?
 (pained)
... You mean you didn't go back...

 LUIS
 (shrugs)
For what?

 COLBEE
There's over ten head'a females
to every man in Sonora -- that's
for what!

Colbee smiles sly and starts to shave again.

 COLBEE
 (remembering)
I ought'a know...went through over
half of 'em... Would'a got around to
'em all if two hadn't pulled a leg
muscle...!
 (quick to explain)
... I was buckin' horses this side'a
the line and sellin' 'em tame up in
Deming...!
 (trying not to cut
 his throat)
... Course a good amount of 'em were
nothin' more than hurrah gals... But
the way I look at it, a woman's a
woman...!

Colbee turns and looks off at Frank Riker.

109. CONTINUED

COLBEE

(smiles)

Ain't that right, Frank...?

Silence, then...

FRANK

(flat)

You talk too much, Colbee.

Colbee tightens, then goes calm and manages a smile.

COLBEE

Since when can a man talk too
much about women...!

CHRIS

(hard from behind)

Colbee...!

Colbee comes around on the voice just in time to catch
a Winchester thrown down to him by Chris.

Strange tension...then...

CHRIS

(firm)

You'll take the first watch.

COLBEE

(tries to object)

But you said Vin was...

CHRIS

(tops him)

I changed my mind.

A disgruntled Colbee gets to his feet and crosses off.
Chris watches after him, then turns to move away.

FRANK

You didn't have to do that,
Chris.

Chris stops; comes back around.

FRANK

I wouldn't have pushed him into
a fight if that's what you were
thinkin'.

109. CONTINUED

CHRIS
 You had, you might have been in
 trouble...
 (simply)
 ... He's fast.

FRANK
 (quiet challenging)
 Fast as you are?

CHRIS
 I'd hate to have to live on the
 difference.

FRANK
 (almost smiles)
 I'll remember that.

Chris looks long at Frank Riker, then moves off into
 the darkness.

110. MED. SHOT

VIN stands alone at the far end of the picketline look-
 ing out into the night. Next moment CHRIS crosses on
 and moves in beside him.

VIN
 Wonder why the hell they took
 Chico and them others off?

CHRIS
 (to the night)
 Damned if I know.

Troubled silence from Vin. Then...

VIN
 Time we get to the village
 blow-sand'll likely have
 covered up any tracks...

No reaction from Chris.

VIN
 We ~~can't~~ strike off blind...! We
~~do we~~ won't stand a chance 'a
 findin' 'em...!

Chris takes his time. Finally...

110. CONTINUED

CHRIS

(calm)

Petra said there were two other
villages raided...

(before Vin can
challenge)

... That means they took close to
three hundred prisoners...

(half to himself)

... Only one way to move that many
men on foot in the desert... Like
cattle -- from one waterhole to
the other.

VIN

That don't narrow it down too
awful much...

(looking off into
the darkness)

... Lotta cow-tails between here
and the Sierra Madre.

CHRIS

With herds moving on them every
day.

Vin begins to see the light -- comes slow around on
Chris.

VIN

(knowing)

And men drivin' them herds.

CHRIS

Sooner or later word'll get around.

VIN

Whatta' we do in the meantime?

CHRIS

Drop Petra and the boy off at the
village, and start ridin' a wide
circle -- see if we can cut their
trail.

VIN

That could take one hell of a long
time.

110. CONTINUED

Chris comes around on Vin, but before he can object...

VIN
(stops him)
I know...!
(almost smiles)
... I haven't been goin' anywhere for
ten years.

~~Vin turns and starts to cross away.~~

CHRIS

Vin...

Vin stops; turns back.

CHRIS

(light)
If you have to worry about something...
(without alarm)
... Worry about what happens after
we find Chico and the others... Not
if we find them.

Chris lets that sink in, then crosses off toward the
cook fire. Vin is lost in thought...as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

111. EXT. BIG COUNTRY - FULL SHOT - DAY

More motion and color as we FOLLOW Chris and the other riders across a sun-soaked sea of land for a number of scenes -- then, as Chris tops the mask of a high rise...

112. MED. SHOT

We go COWBOY CLOSE on Chris as he pulls his animal to a stop, and looks down off to see...

113. P.O.V.

A once white church and a cluster of low adobe dwellings in a shallow valley just ahead.

114. CLOSE SHOT

CHRIS looks long at the village. Now VIN gains his side and reins his animal to a stop.

CHRIS
(half to himself)
Never thought I'd come back.

Chris dull-spurs down the slant. Vin hesitates, then follows.

115. FULL SHOT

Looking off over the great earthen cross atop the once white church, we bring CHRIS and the others on from the near distance. As they gain the far end of the square...

116. MED. SHOT

A troubled CHRIS and VIN come straight at us; pull to a stop, and look off...

117. P.O.V.

Strange tension as we SEARCH the village. All save the wind is quiet. It is completely deserted.

118. MED. SHOT

Suspense mounts as we INTERCUT to build the silence -- then Petra's eyes go sudden wide with panic. Chris spins; tightens and we SWEEP to see...

119. P.O.V.

A man is hanging by the neck from a makeshift gallows in front of the church.

120. MED. SHOT

Shock holds Chris and the others captive for a grim moment, then...

CHRIS
(clearing his
Winchester)
Vin, Colbee, cut him down...

Chris jacks a shell into his saddle-gun as he swings to the ground. Vin and Colbee are already crossing toward the dead man as Luis and Frank Riker dismount and drift into position flanking Chris.

The gunmen are calm but ready for anything.

121. MED. SHOT

VIN and COLBEE have no sooner lowered the dead man to the ground when...

VIN
(urgent)
Chris...!

121. CONTINUED

Chris comes around.

VIN
(a flat warning)
He's just dead.

Chris throws a look off at Petra and the boy on the mule.

CHRIS
(to Manuel)
Get them outta here...!

A puzzled Manuel hesitates; Luis snaps the order to him in Spanish. The young hellion makes a grab for the mule's lead-line, and takes off for the nearest cover at a run. As they clear...

122. FULL SHOT

The wind shifts slightly, sending a dust-devil twirling across the plaza. Now, Chris, Vin, Colbee, Luis and Frank Riker fan out, and begin to drift down the main and only street of the village -- their eyes at every window and doorway.

High tension as we INTERCUT to build the walk; bring it to the breaking point, then...

123. CLOSE SHOT

CHRIS stops; trades a look with VIN, and nods off. Only then do we see...

124. P.O.V.

Two saddled horses stand hip-shot and ground-tied in the shade of a low adobe.

125. CLOSE SHOT

CHRIS is still looking off at the animals when a shot roars from off; the bullet digging into a wall above his head. Chris spins and fires his Winchester all in one sudden motion.

126. FULL SHOT

A hand-gun blazes as a man on foot rounds the far corner of the church and heads for the two ground-tied horses -- firing as he goes.

127. CLOSE SHOT

Lead screams off the wall behind Chris as he continues to fire.

128. FULL SHOT

The two loose horse; panicked by the gunfire, take off across the plaza in a wide open gallop. The running man makes a desperate dive for the nearest animal; gets hold of the on-side stirrup, and is trying to mount when Vin and Colbee throw down on him -- the cross-fire all but cutting him in two. Down he goes, holding the stirrup in a death-grip. The animal is dragging him across the square when...

129. MED. SHOT

A shot whips Frank Riker and Luis around to see another gunman crossing the plaza at a low-bending run in an attempt to gain one of the empty horses in front of the church.

More gunfire as we INTERCUT to build the battle -- then the second man takes one in the chest and falls in among the milling animals. No sooner down...

130. CLOSE SHOT

The SOUND of a running horse brings CHRIS around to see...

131. P.O.V.

A rider storms on from the far end of the village at a hell-bent run -- jacking and firing his Winchester as he comes.

132. MED. SHOT

A dead calm Frank Riker steps out directly in the path of the onrushing horseman and stands his ground -- bullets hitting the dirt all around him.

Blazing action as we INTERCUT to build -- then, just when it seems Frank is going to be rundown by the animal, the gunfighter blasts away at point blank range at his attacker.

133. MED. SHOT

The horse screams in panic; twists in mid-air, and lands in a bone-crushing heap. The rider is dead before he hits the ground.

All is sudden quiet. The fight is over almost before it started.

134. CLOSE SHOT

A spang of breech metal breaks the silence as Chris jacks a spent shell from his Winchester and looks off to see...

135. P.O.V.

The women of the village are beginning to appear at windows and doors of the low adobes. Some are pale,

135. CONTINUED

frightened, and old. Others are flushed, excited, and young.

136. CLOSE SHOT

BEN COLBEE is delighted with the promising crop of attractive Mexican women.

137. TWO SHOT

CHRIS is still looking off when VIN crosses on. Only then do they see...

138. P.O.V.

A woman moves hurriedly across the square to the hanged man on the ground in front of the church. Once there, she kneels beside him.

139. TWO SHOT

A troubled moment of decision for Chris -- then he hands Vin his Winchester and moves off toward the woman.

We STAY with Chris as he crosses the plaza. Gaining the woman he takes off his hat and stands looking down at her.

140. P.O.V.

The woman kneels beside the dead man; head lowered, a rosary clasped in her hands.

141. CLOSE SHOT

CHRIS waits long -- then asks the woman a quiet question in Spanish. No answer. Chris takes his time -- then asks another.

142. CLOSE SHOT

The woman slowly raises her head and looks up at Chris. Fear gives way to trust in her eyes. Finally she begins to speak in Spanish. As she does... we...

DISSOLVE TO:

143. INT. ADOBE - CLOSE SHOT - NIGHT

In the flickering flame light of an open fireplace we see someone draw a jagged line in the dust of the hardpacked sod floor.

CHRIS'S VOICE (over)

The devil's spine...

Coming away we see Chris kneeling in front of the open stone fireplace -- Vin, Frank, Colbee, Luis and Manuel are gathered around him in a half-circle.

CHRIS

(no wait)

... It ranges from the headwaters of the Concho north to the border...

(new attack)

... According to the woman, her husband escaped from a village about here...

Chris draws an "X" in the dust.

CHRIS

... That's where they're holding Chico and the others.

VIN

Did he say why... ?

CHRIS

He wasn't there long enough to find out.

143. CONTINUED

LUIS

(troubled)

But there is no village between the Spine of the Devil and the Concho...! The Rurales they have chased me from one end of that country to the other...! I know it like the back of my horse...! If there was a village there, even a small one...

CHRIS

(tops his calm)

That's what the man said.

VIN

(challenges)

He was a long time in the desert, Chris. He could'a been out of his head. Got turned around.

CHRIS

He found his way back here, didn't he?

A long moment of understanding... then...

FRANK

(dead calm)

I'll catch up the horses.

Frank Riker starts to cross off.

CHRIS

(flat)

We'll leave in the morning.

Frank stops; comes back around.

FRANK

(a calm challenge)

Ride out the night we could save time.

CHRIS

Use up our animals, we'll be on foot.

(firm)

... We'll wait till morning.

Frank shrugs; moves off.

143. CONTINUED

CHRIS
(to the others)
Better get some sleep.

They start to leave.

CHRIS
(light)
You too Colbee!

Colbee grins; ducks his way out the low door of the adobe. Now only Chris and Vin remain. Vin crosses to a side window and looks out into the night. Nothing but the sound of the fire... finally...

VIN
(troubled)
Wish to hell I know for sure.

CHRIS
Knew what?

VIN
Whether I'm along because Chico's
a friend'a mine...
(quiet)
... or that I'm just on the prod
for a fight. Like Frank.

Chris stays silent.

VIN
(half to himself)
Killin' can get in a man's blood.

Chris takes his time.

CHRIS
And you think that's happened to
you...?

VIN
Why else would I be here... Chico's
a friend... but hell I don't even
know his last name.

Strong silence. Then...

CHRIS
(soft)
Either do I.

143. CONTINUED

Vin comes around.

VIN
Don't it make you wonder?

CHRIS
(simply)
No.

VIN
How the hell come?

Chris looks out the window.

CHRIS
(half to himself)
Because in all the years I've
made my way with a gun, I've
never once shot a man just to
see him fall...
(quiet)
... That time ever comes, I'll
throw my guns in the water bucket
and ride out...

Chris comes around on Vin.

CHRIS
(almost smiles)
... So will you.

An open moment of understanding -- then Chris crosses
to the low door and exits. We STAY with Vin as he turns
and looks out the window... then...

143A. EXT. VILLAGE - MED. SHOT - NIGHT

Chris moves across the dark and empty village square
toward Chico's bullet-scarred adobe. Halfway there, he
stops, and looks off to see...

143B. P.O.V.

The boy's big-chested mule stands hip-shot and ground-
tied alongside Chico's low adobe.

143B1. CLOSE SHOT

Only when Chris crosses to the animal and looks down do we see the youngster sleeping on the ground beside his mule. The boy holds the lead-line in his hand.

143C. CLOSE SHOT

A tender moment as Chris looks long at the youngster, then reaching down, he takes the line from the sleeping boy and slides the makeshift hackamore off the animal's head. This done, he takes his jacket and puts it over the boy. Another tender moment -- then as Chris gets to his feet we see Petra move out of the shadows and stand at the gunfighter's side. Finally...

CHRIS

(quiet)

Who does he belong to?

PETRA

His parents are dead. Chico looks after him like he was his own.

CHRIS

Better get him inside.

Chris bends to pick the boy up.

PETRA

(urgent)

Chris...!

Chris looks up the woman.

PETRA

(troubled)

Why would they take Chico and the others away...?

CHRIS

I don't know.

PETRA

Maybe if you went to the Rurales; asked for help...!

CHRIS

Wouldn't do any good.

143C.

PETRA

But they are suppose to protect
us...!

CHRIS

Have they ever done it?

PETRA

(hopeless)

No..

CHRIS

They never will be.

PETRA

Because we are poor...! Because
we cannot pay them...!

(firm)

... That is true, isn't it...?

CHRIS

(hesitant)

Maybe one day it'll be different.

PETRA

(challenges)

And in the meantime...?

CHRIS

(picking up the boy)

We do what we can.

PETRA

(flat)

and die...!

Chris looks long at the boy in his arms... then...

CHRIS

(quiet)

There's always that.

Chris turns and starts for the front door of Chico's low
adobe.

PETRA

Chris...!

Chris stops. Petra takes her time, then...

143C. CONTINUED

PETRA

(soft)

No matter what happens... we will
always be grateful... We will never
forget you and the others...

CHRIS

(almost smiles)

That's all a man can ask.

Chris turns and ducks his way through the low door of
the adobe, as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

144. EXT. VILLAGE - FULL SHOT - DAY

A certain excitement fills the village as Chris and the
others work their animals across the plaza heading south.

145. TWO SHOT

Petra and the boy stand on the stone steps of the church
watching their only hope move through the square.

146. MED. SHOT

We stay COWBOY CLOSE on Chris as he looks off at Chico's
wife and the boy. Then, letting him go, we FOLLOW Vin
for a moment -- then Luis -- then Frank Riker -- then
Manuel. Last comes...

147. CLOSE SHOT

A pained Ben Colbee looks off, and we INTERCUT to see a
number of attractive young women smiling their goodbyes
to the troubled stud.

Then, as the riders gain the far end of the village...

148. FULL SHOT

The great earthen cross atop the once white church throws
a giant shadow over the six horsemen as

148. CONTINUED

they ride south toward the devil's spine...and

DISSOLVE TO:

149. EXT. BIG COUNTRY - FULL SHOT - DAY

A nameless thrill touches Chris and the others as they move their horses through big country heading for unknown danger at a half run.

A silent camaraderie has sprung up between them on this last stretch of ride. They seem closer together -- ready to fight. All but Colbee, that is...

150. TWO SHOT

Colbee and Vin ride side-by-side. Now Ben throws a sad look at their backtrail.

COLBEE

(still troubled)

Ask me I say we should'a stayed on back there and given them women a hand...!

No answer from Vin.

COLBEE

(new attack)

They're sure gonna fall behind in their plowin' and plantin'...!

Vin comes slow around on the young stud.

VIN

(grins)

So are you, Colbee!

We get Colbee's pained reaction, then...

150A. MED. SHOT

Luis Delgado brings up the rear... Frank Riker at his side. Nothing but dust for a moment, then...

FRANK

(challenges)

How come you're still along, Luis...?

(almost smiles)

Thought once you got clear'a that firin' squad you'd head for the hills like a scalded dog...!

LUIS

(guilty)

So did I.

FRANK

What changed your mind?

LUIS

(dead serious)

I had a long talk with myself...

(quick to explain)

... I said, Luis... in all the years I have known you, you have not done one thing for anyone but yourself...! Not one...! And it is about time that you did...!

(new attack)

... Where would you be if it was not for the farmers you have stolen from all these time...? You would be nothing...!

(firm)

... Help these poor people, and you will be able to ride proud; hold your head up high...!

FRANK

(flat)

If somebody don't blow it off.

Luis throws Frank a smile.

LUIS

(shrugs)

Then I will die in good company...!

150A. CONTINUED

FRANK

(tops him)

Good hell...!

(indicates off)

... Chris there, he's been killin' for ten years; Vin about half that time. Colbee, he hunts other men's wives between gun jobs, and that Manuel's nothing but a chicken thief...!

LUIS

(smiles)

And you...?

FRANK

(quiet)

I'm no better than they are.

LUIS

(challenges)

But you are still along. You could have run for the hills, the same as me.

Frank takes his time.

FRANK

(half to himself)

I got my reason for stayin' on...

(hard)

... And it don't have one damn thing to do with friendship, or helpin' poor farmers...!

A puzzled Luis stays silent as we turn our attention to...

151. FULL SHOT

Excitement mounts as we STAY with the horsemen to ESTABLISH distance -- then as they clear the mask of a steep cutbank and start off along a high rim flanking a dry river-bed...we...

DISSOLVE TO:

152. EXT. RUINS - FULL SHOT - DAY

The Sierra Madre stands like a giant armoured lizard; its dorsal crest a jarring succession of spires and fins thrust at a cloudless blue sky.

We HOLD long on the devil's spine; then come slow down to see a maze of Mexicans hard at work rebuilding what remains of a crumbling village. Adobe walls, long since given way to the workings of the desert are being torn down. Streets are being cleared of cactus and bunch-grass. Topless doors leading to nowhere fall under the hatchets and picks of the workers. And on all sides we see guards with Winchesters.

In the center of the ruins stand a church. Made of dust, the house of God is fast returning to dust. Four fallen walls, an altar, bullet-scarred statues, and a battered cross atop an empty bell-tower is all that remains.

No wait now as we turn our attention to...

153. OMITTED

154. EXT. RIDGE - TWO SHOT - DAY

CHRIS and VIN are flattened on a cactus-studded rim looking down off at the workers in the ruins far below. We STAY with them until they trade a puzzled look...then...

155. EXT. CHURCH - MED. SHOT - DAY

A Mexican, dressed in rich, sun-faded, ranch-clothes, comes through the bullet-scarred double-doors of the church; stops, and looks off at the sea of workers -- the battered cross atop the belltower standing against the sky high behind him.

This is FRANCISCO LORCA -- a self-made man in his early fifties. Lorca is a man of many moods. On one occasion he can be warm and friendly -- on another deadly. Like most men of great power, he changes his moods to suit his wants.

Lorca is still looking off at the workers when...

VOICE

(from off)

Buenas tardes, Senor Lorca...!

Lorca comes around on the voice to see LOPEZ -- the front-rider who led the raid on Chico's village.

LORCA

(light)

Buenas tardes...!

Lorca starts to walk. Lopez falls into step beside him.

LOPEZ

(no wait)

Have you seen the priest...? He is looking for you...!

LORCA

(pained)

Again...?

LOPEZ

He heard about the killings...

(hesitant)

... He said we should have tried to reason with them...

LORCA

(tops him)

Reason...?

155. CONTINUED

Lorca stops; comes hard around on Lopez.

LORCA

(hard)

... Did I build an empire upon reason...? Did we reason with renegades, bandits, corrupt officials...?

PADRE'S VOICE

(calm from off)

But these are not renegades...

Lorca comes slow around to see the Priest standing close behind him.

PADRE

(no wait)

...Nor bandits...Nor are they corrupt.

Strong silence. The priest stands his ground. This is FATHER MENDOZA -- a tall, dark man of God in his middle thirties and faded robes. Compassion shows in the rough hewn face.

LORCA

Do you never tire of being my conscience, Father...?

(light)

... Do this, do not do that...!
The strong must be generous to the weak...!

(almost smiles)

... You know who made up that rule...? The weak...!

Lorca turns; crosses back toward the church.

PADRE

(following)

I have to talk to you, Francisco...!

(troubled)

... Two of the workers were killed last night...!

155. CONTINUED

LORCA
 (keeps going)
 Trying to escape...!

PADRE
 But you have no right...!

Lorca spins on him.

LORCA
 (explodes)
 Look, Father...!
 (controls his anger)
 ... I know your feelings for these
 people...but would it be a more
 honorable death if they fell
 pulling a plow like an animal...?

PADRE
 (hard)
 The church cannot sanction...!

LORCA
 (harder)
 Sanction...?
 (builds)
 ... Father you are the one who
 wanted a church...! You found
 you couldn't pray it into
 existence, so you came to me...!

PADRE
 But you are the one who chose this
 place, these methods...!

LORCA
 For a reason...!

PADRE
 What reason can there be for killing
 in cold blood...!

LORCA
 You would not understand...!

PADRE
 I understand murder, slavery...!

155. CONTINUED

LORCA

(tops him)

I set out to rebuild this church,
this village...!

(strong)

... And that is just what I intend
to do...!

(flat)

... With or without your blessing,
Father...!

Lorca starts to go.

PADRE

(firm)

I cannot stand by and let this go on,
Francisco...!

Lorca stops; turns back.

LORCA

(cold)

Nothing says you have to stay...!

The Priest looks up at the battered cross atop the bell-
tower, then down at Lorca.

PADRE

(quiet)

Everything says I have to
stay.

A troubled Lorca is shaken by the Priest's calm determina-
tion. He turns and moves off through the massive double-
doors into the church.

Clumsy silence...then...

LOPEZ

(kind)

He is right, Father... You should
leave this place.

PADRE

(half to himself)

I can't.

155. CONTINUED

LOPEZ
(a quiet challenge)
You mean you won't.

PADRE
(firm)
I mean I can't...!

The Priest turns to cross away then something off scene stops him sudden short. Lopez sees it too.

156. P.O.V.

A lone horseman is working his animal on from the high distance.

157. TWO SHOT

LOPEZ tightens as he continues to look off at the incoming rider. The Padre's expression tells us nothing.

158. FULL SHOT

Tension mounts as the horseman comes closer and closer. Only when he gains the maze of fallen walls and workers at the far end of the village do we recognize CHRIS.

159. MED. SHOT

More tension as we INTERCUT to build the ride. A guard jacks a round into the chamber of his Winchester. Another guard does the same. Then another.

160. MED. SHOT

CHRIS ignores the danger as he rides directly toward LOPEZ and the PRIEST in front of the church.

161. CLOSE SHOT

A prisoner working on the wall flanking the bullet-scarred double-doors of the church, tightens as he sees Chris. This is CHICO.

162. MED. SHOT

CHRIS sees CHICO but keeps going without so much as a side look. A moment later he pulls to a stop in front of LOPEZ and the PRIEST.

Guarded silence... then...

LOPEZ
Buenas tardes, señor...!

No answer from Chris.

LOPEZ
(puzzled)
What can we do for you...?

Chris takes his time, looks around. Finally...

CHRIS
A friend of mine... You're holding
him prisoner...
(simply)
... I want him...

Lopez starts to smile.

CHRIS
(adds calmly)
... And all the others.

Lopez cannot help but admire the nerve of this guy.

LOPEZ
(light)
Just like that.

CHRIS
Just like that.

162. CONTINUED

LOPEZ

(smiles)

You are either a very foolish, or a very brave man, senor...!

(without alarm)

... I have but to give the word and you will be dead.

CHRIS

That'll make two of us...

(flat)

... There's five Winchesters pointed at your head.

Lopez has heard this one before -- but he takes a look around anyway. And we see...

163. P.O.V.

VIN stands against the sky atop a part fallen wall high to the right -- his rifle on Lopez. COLBEE is twenty yards to his left, in a like position.

164. CLOSE SHOT

LOPEZ turns and looks the other way to see...

165. P.O.V.

FRANK RIKER stands atop the shattered remains of a Moorish clock tower -- his saddle-gun on Lopez.

Flanking Riker we see LUIS in a topless second story window -- and MANUEL in a doorless doorway just below him.

166. MED. SHOT

LOPEZ hesitates an uncertain moment...then...

LOPEZ
(knowingly)
Professionals.

CHRIS
Professionals.

Lopez comes around on Chris.

LOPEZ
Perhaps we should have a little
talk.

CHRIS
We just did.

A moment of understanding between Chris and Lopez...
then...

LOPEZ
(aside)
Padre, you had better get
Francisco.

The Padre turns to cross off.

CHRIS
(quiet)
Don't move, Father.

He stops.

LOPEZ
(challenges)
You would shoot a Priest?

CHRIS
Only if I have to.

Dead silence...then...

LORCA'S VOICE
(bright from off)
Same old Chris...!

Chris throws a look off to see a smiling Francisco Lorca standing just outside the scarred doors of the church.

LORCA
 (still smiling)
 I might have known you would
 be along...!
 (crossing toward
 Chris)
 ... It is good to see you...!

Two shots ring out; dirt kicks at Lorca's feet stopping him short. Lorca looks high off to see Vin and Frank Riker jack spent shells from their Winchesters. Now he turns on Chris; finds his smile, and...

LORCA
 Whatever you and your friends
 are being paid... I will double
 it...! Triple it...!

Now a faint smile comes into Chris's eyes.

CHRIS
 Same old Francisco.

A light moment of understanding...then...

LORCA
 (smiles)
 Come, we will talk.

CHRIS
 I can't do that.

LORCA
 It's the only thing you can do...!
 You are six against sixty...!

No answer from Chris. Lorca's smile dies.

LORCA
 Do not expect these... these
 farmers to help you...!
 (in disgust)
 ... They have no stomach to
 fight...!

Chico has drifted into a position flanking Chris. No wait now as Chris clears his Winchester, jacks a

166. CONTINUED

round into the chamber, and throws it to Chico.

Puzzled silence from Lorca and the others. Tension... then...

CHRIS

(calm to Lorca)

Kill him.

Lorca trades a blank look with Lopez.

CHRIS

Go on, kill him -- like you did the others...!

(swings to the ground)

... Only they didn't have guns, did they...!

LORCA

(bitter)

They had guns three years ago when two hundred men gave up their lives inside the walls of this church...! Gave up their lives to rid this country of tyranny...!

(new attack)

... Do you think it concerns them that I did what the Rurales could not do...! That I tracked bandits across five hundred miles of desert, and, together with my vaqueros, fought them to the death here on this very ground...!

(hard)

... While they hid under their straw beds...!

Lorca controls his anger; turns, and crosses to the fallen wall flanking the church. Here he looks off to see...

166A. P.O.V.

A maze of unmarked graves dot the cactus-studded courtyard beside the church.

166B. CLOSE SHOT

Lorca looks long at the graves, then...

LORCA

(quiet)

My sons...

(half to himself)

... Tall, erect, like finely bred
stallions...

(tender)

... They are buried here with the
others.

Lorca comes slow around on Chris -- hate in his eyes
now.

166. CONTINUED

LORCA

(new attack)

No longer will their graves be
marked by ruins...!

(almost fanatical)

... This church -- this village
will be their monument...!

(eyes blazing)

... For those who fought so well,
built with the sweat and blood of
those who never fight...!

Lorca turns, looks off at Chico.

LORCA

I will prove it to you...

(aside)

... Do as he says, Lopez...!

(flat)

... Kill him.

Shock holds Lopez captive. Chico sets himself. High
tension, then...

PADRE

(sudden)

Francisco...!

LORCA

(hard)

Stay out of this, Father...!

PADRE

(harder)

I have stayed out of it as long as
I can...!

(pleading)

... I beg you, Francisco...!
Before it is too late...! Before
God damns you to hell for what you
are doing here...!

The words are no sooner out when Lorca backhands the
Priest hard across the mouth, knocking him to the
ground.

Lorca is trembling with rage when Chris grabs him by
the throat; spins him around, and glares square into
his face.

166. CONTINUED

CHRIS

(deadly)

You saved my life once...!

(flat)

... Now I'm going to save yours...!

(a grim command)

... Take your vaqueros and ride out
of here...! Ride out and don't
look back...!

Tension mounts, as we INTERCUT to build the violent
stand-off between two strong men. Then...

LORCA

(quiet)

I was wrong...

For a moment we think Lorca is going to soften --
instead...

LORCA

(cold)

... You are not the same old Chris.

CHRIS

I won't let you drown your grief in
other men's blood if that's what you
mean...!

Chris lets sudden go of his throat.

CHRIS

(flat)

Go on -- get out!

A desperate moment of decision for Lorca -- then,
torn between hate, guilt and fear, he turns to Lopez
and snaps an order in Spanish. Lopez in turn yells
a command off to the many vaqueros guarding the
workers -- some on foot, others on horseback.

167. MED. SHOT

VIN, FRANK and the other gunfighters watch in si-
lence as the square below them comes sudden alive
with running men and horses.

168. MED. SHOT

CHRIS AND CHICO stand their ground -- their eyes on Lorca and Lopez.

169. FULL SHOT

Excitement mounts as we INTERCUT to build -- a wild moment later the vaqueros have worked their animals into a ragged formation in the square in front of the church -- two empty horses awaiting Lorca and Lopez.

170. MED. SHOT

Tension hangs heavy over the square as Lorca waits long; makes another decision, and crosses to his animal. Once there, he swings up into the saddle, turns, and locks eyes with Chris.

LORCA

(dead calm)

There will be a next time.

With this Lorca yells a command in Spanish; spins his horse, and takes off in a full run -- Lopez and the other vaqueros following.

171. MED. SHOT

CHRIS, CHICO and the PRIEST watch the riders move off through the ruins.

We INTERCUT for reactions all around...then...

PRIEST

(a quiet warning)

He will be back.

CHRIS

(troubled)

I know.

And we....

CUT TO:

172. EXT. SKY - FULL SHOT (STOCK) - NIGHT

A jagged flash of lightning tears at a rainswept sky. Wind and thunder as we build the violence of the storm... then...

173. INT. CHURCH - CLOSE SHOT - NIGHT

A bullet-scarred statue stands the altar-end of the half fallen church looking down on a rain-drenched maze of frightened farmers huddled together in under what is left of the roof.

CHRIS, FRANK, LUIS and MANUEL are on guard with Winchesters at the four corners of the part fallen walls. The gunfighters wear water-soaked slickers and troubled expressions.

More thunder and lightning as we SEARCH faces. Nothing but fear and the storm for a long moment... then...

174. MED. SHOT

CHRIS is looking off into the troubled night as the PRIEST comes up behind him. Lightning throws a strange patchwork of color across their faces... then...

PADRE

(half to himself)

I did not know it would come to this...

Chris stays silent -- his eyes calmly searching the darkness beyond the wall.

PADRE

Three years ago, when Francesco lost his sons, I tried to give him consolation...when he told me he wanted to build a monument to those who had fallen, I convinced him it should be a church...

(quietly)

... I wanted it as much as he did. Even more.

174. CONTINUED

Thunder. Still no reaction from Chris.

PADRE

(a certain pleading
in his voice)

As God is my judge I have tried
to help these poor souls... tried
for so long... I have spoken to
them of faith, of love... and
they believed me...

(hopeless)

... But my words, and their
prayers have changed nothing
for them... The children have
died, the crops have failed...

(pointed)

And... And now I have betrayed
them.

Chris waits long... then...

CHRIS

Are you through?

PADRE

(soft)

Yes...

(beaten)

... Yes I am through.

The priest turns to cross away.

CHRIS

Father...!

He stops. Chris comes around on him.

CHRIS

I'm not a religious man... but
I can tell you this...

(nods off at the
farmers)

... They need you... More now
than ever before.

PADRE

I failed them.

174 CONTINUED

CHRIS
 (challenges)
 You failed yourself...! Got knocked
 down...
 (almost kind)
 ...Get up again, Father... At
 least as far as your knees...

The storm gives way to a strong moment of understanding
 between the two men -- then, a SOUND from off turns them
 to see...

175. P.O.V.

VIN, COLBEE and CHICO are herding a soaking wet group of
 farmers on from the altar-end of the church. As they gain
 CHRIS and the PADRE...

VIN
 (light)
 Well, that's the last of 'em...!
 (shakes water from
 his hat)
 ... What now...?

COLBEE
 (troubled)
 We're not movin' out tonight, are
 we...?

CHRIS
 (quiet)
 We're not moving out at all.

Thunder. Vin and Colbee trade a puzzled look.

CHRIS
 (to the storm)
 Catch us in the open with three
 hundred men on foot we wouldn't
 have a chance.

175. CONTINUED

VIN
 (pained)
 We gonna stand it out here...?
 Chris comes around.

CHRIS
 We've got cover, water, supplies...!
 (pointed)
 ... And they have to come to us...!
 That cuts the odds in half...!

Chris turns back to the night.

CHRIS
 They won't lay out in those hills
 for long...
 (half to himself)
 ... Like as not they'll try to get
 it over with as soon as they can...

Lightning.

COLBEE
 (troubled)
 Wish to hell these walls were higher...!

CHRIS
 (simply)
 They will be.

Thunder.

CHRIS
 Vin, you and Chico split the workers
 in two groups...! One take the south
 wall, the other the north...!
 (firm)
 ... Get rocks, timbers, dobe blocks,
 anything a man can stay alive behind,
 and start building...!

Vin and Colbee trade another puzzled look.

VIN
 (pained)
 Now...?

175. CONTINUED

We go CLOSE on Chris. Thunder and lightning... then...

CHRIS

(flat)

Now...!

And we...

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

176. INT. CHURCH - FULL SHOT - NIGHT

The storm continues to rage. More thunder and lightning as we show a human chain of rain-drenched workers passing rocks, timbers and dobe blocks up to the high men atop the part fallen walls of the church.

The wind tears at the maze of poor souls as we start a MONTAGE to see CHRIS, VIN, COLBEE, CHICO, LUIS, MANUEL, FRANK RIKER, and even the PRIEST, hard at work helping the farmers build a dam against the flood of Francesco Lorca's guns. All this to a crescendo... then...

DISSOLVE TO:

177. EXT. CANYON - MED. SHOT - NIGHT

Thunder struggles to be heard in the distance as Francisco Lorca sits alone by a small fire built in under a shelf of rock -- a rain-soaked serape thrown over his shoulders. LOPEZ stands just beyond the ring of flame-light watching Lorca in silence. In the dim beyond we can see the vaqueros and their animals.

Finally...

LOPEZ

(ventures)

The storm is over, senor...

No answer from Lorca. Lopez moves closer.

177. CONTINUED

LOPEZ

(hesitant)

It is a long days ride to the hacienda... If we were to start now...!

LORCA

(tops him calm)

You would have me run...?

Lorca looks slow up at Lopez.

LORCA

... From seven guns, and those... farmers...? Those cowards...?

LOPEZ

(challenges)

We have only the ammunition in our belts; the water in our canteens, the food in our stomachs...!

LORCA

(hard)

That is enough...!

Violent silence. Lorca gets to his feet; crosses directly into the f.g., and stands looking off into the night.

LORCA

(half to himself)

... That is more than enough.

Hate burns deep in Lorca's eyes... as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

178. EXT. RUINS - FULL SHOT - MORNING

Morning. The storm is over -- only scattered pools of muddy water remaining in the plaza in front of the church and in the empty streets.

178. CONTINUED

A strange, ghostly quiet hangs over the ruins as we HOLD long to ESTABLISH, then...

179. CLOSE SHOT

The one called CHICO stands guard high atop the bell tower, Winchester in hand. All stays dead silent as he looks off to see...

180. P.O.V.

Tension mounts as we SEARCH the empty ruins.

181. CLOSE SHOT

CHICO continues to watch off, then turns and looks down through a maze of timber roof-beams to see...

182. P.O.V.

The exhausted workers are sprawled in various positions on the sod floor of the church -- some leaning against the dove base of the makeshift walls. This is more a fortress now than a house of God.

Nothing but the faint SOUND of the wind as we INTER-CUT to see CHRIS and the other gunfighters standing the walls -- waiting. The PRIEST is on his knees in front of the bullet-torn altar.

183. CLOSE SHOT

CHICO is still looking down from the bell-tower when something off scene catches his eye. Movement in among the fallen walls at the far end of the village.

183. CONTINUED

Next moment a shot rings out and a bullet screams off the dobe above Chico's head. Chico dives for cover as all hell breaks loose. The war is on.

184. FULL SHOT

High wild action as Winchesters blaze away from all directions.

185. CLOSE SHOT

CHRIS is flattened on the south wall of the church firing at Lorca's men.

186. CLOSE SHOT

CHICO is in his glory atop the bell-tower shooting right down their throats.

187. CLOSE SHOT

Lorca's horse dances a nervous half circle as he watches the battle from behind a part fallen wall at the far edge of the ruins -- LOPEZ and fifteen riders at his side.

188. CLOSE SHOT

LUIS DELGADO is right at home on the north wall blazing away at his attackers.

189. CLOSE SHOT

For once BEN COLBEE is not thinking about women -- He's too damn busy trying to stay alive.

190. CLOSE SHOT

A bullet kicks dust in VIN's face. He spits; wipes his eyes, and keeps firing.

191. FULL SHOT

Lorca's men are catching hell from the church. Chris and the others are indeed professionals, and their attackers are finding it out the hard way.

192. CLOSE SHOT

A calm FRANK RIKER stands against the sky on the north wall. Frank takes his time; picks his target, and fires.

193. CLOSE SHOT

CHRIS rolls half over on his side to reload his Winchester. As he does, he sees...

194. P.O.V.

FRANK RIKER stands in plain view of the attackers -- bullets kicking dust all around him. Riker ignores the danger; keeps jacking and firing his rifle, almost in slow motion.

195. CLOSE SHOT

A bullet tears at the wall near Chris's head turning his attention back to the battle.

196. FULL SHOT

Excitement mounts as we INTERCUT to build the action; keeping MANUEL, the PRIEST and the prisoners alive, then...

197. MED. SHOT

A troubled LORCA yells a command in Spanish over the gunfire; digs spurs into his animal, and takes off toward the church at a sudden run -- LOPEZ and the other riders follow.

198. FULL SHOT

The horsemen storm on through the ruins at a hell-bent gallop -- firing their Winchesters and hand-guns as they come.

199. CLOSE SHOT

A certain terror touches CHRIS as he sees the oncoming riders.

200 FULL SHOT

LORCA and his men come dead on; gain the square, then...

201. FULL SHOT

Horse-falls and dead men as the defenders open up on the horsemen at point blank range. Animals and men scream as they are cut down by the deadly firepower from the church.

202. MED. SHOT

Savage action and wild confusion as LORCA see his vaqueros being shot to pieces on all sides.

203. FULL SHOT

A desperate moment of decision for Lorca as we INTER-CUT once more to build the battle; bring it to a raging crescendo, then...

204. MED. SHOT

A panic stricken scream from Lorca's horse -- down he goes.

205. MED. SHOT

Seeing Lorca's horse fall; LOPEZ spins his animal; yells a command to the others in Spanish, and digs out to pick up Francesco. A roaring moment later he gains Lorca's side; swings him up on his horse behind him, and takes off for the far end of the ruins at an all out run.

The other horsemen cover their retreat, then spin their animals and follow.

The struggle is sudden over. A scattering of gunfire -- then all is dead quiet.

206. CLOSE SHOT

CHICO gets slow to his feet in the bell-tower and looks off to see...

207. P.O.V.

LORCA and his men gain the far end of the ruins and keep going.

208. CLOSE SHOT

A satisfied CHICO turns; looks down off at CHRIS and the others, and smiles.

209. CLOSE SHOT

CHRIS looks off at the dead men in the square. His expression tells us that he does not enjoy killing.

210. MED. SHOT

COLBEE trades a smile of relief with Manuel and Luis.

211. CLOSE SHOT

FRANK RIKER jacks a spent round from his Winchester and starts to reload calmly.

212 MED. SHOT

CHRIS is still looking down off toward the plaza when a trouble VIN crosses along the makeshift wall to his side. Once there...

VIN

Don't know about you, but that scared the hell outta me...!

Chris almost smiles -- Vin starts reloading his Winchester.

VIN

Figure they'll hit us again...?

Chris takes his time; looks off toward the far end of the ruins...then...

CHRIS

(dead calm)

Just as hard as they can.

And we...

CUT TO:

213. MED. SHOT

A SOUND like thunder builds in fury as we FOLLOW CLOSE on the legs of running horses for a roaring moment -- then, coming away, we see forty of Lorca's riders storming through the ruins, heading straight for the Church.

214. CLOSE SHOT

CHICO, still atop the bell-tower, holds his fire and his breath as the horsemen charge on.

215. CLOSE SHOT

CHRIS checks the chamber of his Winchester to make sure it's loaded, and waits for the attackers to get in range.

216. CLOSE SHOT

VIN waits.

217. CLOSE SHOT

LUIS waits.

218. CLOSE SHOT

MANUEL waits.

219. CLOSE SHOT

COLBEE tries to swallow -- can't.

220. CLOSE SHOT

FRANK RIKER stays dead calm on the north wall.

221. FULL SHOT

Now LORCA and his men gain the far end of the plaza; fan out in a jagged line, and start firing.

222. CLOSE SHOT

CHRIS throws the Winchester to his shoulder and blazes away.

223. CLOSE SHOT

VIN and the others do the same.

224. FULL SHOT

Gunfire, dust, and blood as we INTERCUT to build the action. Now, CHRIS sets his Winchester aside and goes to his hand-gun. VIN is already using his. So is COLBEE, LUIS and MANUEL.

225. FULL SHOT

One of Lorca's vaqueros reaches the massive double-doors of the church only to be cut down by CHICO from the tower above.

226. FULL SHOT

High wild action as the deadly fire of the professionals begins to drive Lorca's men back across the plaza.

227. CLOSE SHOT

LUIS grabs at pain in his left arm; his hand coming away with blood. Luis swears in Spanish and continues to fight.

228. CLOSE SHOT

COLBEE tries to swallow again -- can't.

229. FULL SHOT

The God's of war shudder as we build all this to a violent crescendo, then...

230. MED. SHOT

A furious, almost fanatical LORCA, screams at his vaqueros in Spanish; spins his animal, and spurs back across the plaza at a full run -- the others follow.

A scattering of gunfire follows Lorca's retreat -- then all goes silent.

231. CLOSE SHOT

CHRIS stops firing -- motions the others to do the same. And we...

CUT TO:

232. FULL SHOT

A sudden cloud of dust as LORCA and his remaining men gain the far end of the ruins; swing in behind the cover of a part fallen wall, and pull their animals to a hard sliding halt. No sooner stopped...

233. CLOSE SHOT

An exhausted LORCA dismounts with an effort, and sinks down against the base of the dove wall.

234. CLOSE SHOT

A troubled LOPEZ swings to the ground; crosses to LORCA, and kneels beside him.

235. CLOSE SHOT

We're in CLOSER on LORCA now as he fights for breath. Lorca is more humiliated than beaten.

LOPEZ

(hesitant)

Are you all right, senor...?

Lorca takes his time -- eyes blazing.

LORCA

(quiet)

No...!

(half to himself)

... No I am not all right...!

Lorca claws at the dobe wall; pulls himself to his feet, and looks off toward the church.

LORCA

(deadly)

I will make them suffer for this
...! I will make them all suffer
for this...!

A grim moment of decision for Lorca... then...

LORCA

(urgent)

Lopez...!

LOPEZ

Si, senor...?

LORCA

(his eyes still on
the church)

You will ride to the Hacienda...!
You will get every man who works
for me -- every boy old enough to
carry a gun...! Take the farmers
from the fields...! The vaqueros
from the range... Bring them here...!

LOPEZ

(challenges)

If I do this you will have nothing
to return to...! The catttle will
scatter into the hills...! The

235. CONTINUED

LOPEZ (CONTINUED)
crops will fail...! All you have
worked for...!

LORCA
(tops him)
All I have worked for is buried be-
side that church...!
(tender)
... My sons...

Lorca leans back against the dobe wall -- his strength
drained by his long remembered loss.

LORCA
(a quiet plea)
Do as I say, Lopez...

Lopez hesitates an uncertain moment... then...

LOPEZ
(troubled)
Si, senor...!

Lopez crosses to his animal; swings into the saddle,
and spurs off in a sudden run.

236. CLOSE SHOT

FRANK RIKER stands against the sky on the north wall
looking off to see...

237. P.O.V.

A spec of motion in a sea of empty as LOPEZ works his
animal off in the distance.

238. CLOSE SHOT

FRANK RIKER's expression tells us nothing... as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

239. INT. CHURCH - MED. SHOT - DAY

Late day finds BEN COLBEE standing at the base of the makeshift south wall bandaging LUIS DELGADO'S slightly wounded left arm with a piece of his shirttail.

COLBEE

(light)

Funny how your mind can play
tricks on you...!

(tightens the bandage)

... Up there on the wall when they
were comin' at us, I got to thinkin'
they were all husbands!

LUIS

(blank)

Husbands...?

COLBEE

Ganged up on me...!

(pained)

... Sent a cold shiver up my spine...!

(new attack)

... We get safe outta here, I swear I
ain't gonna look at another woman...!
Ever...!

Colbee ties a final knot in the bandage to make his point -- Luis yells in pain.

COLBEE

Sorry...!

And we turn our attention to...

240. MED. SHOT

CHRIS and VIN stand high atop the south wall looking off toward the far end of the ruins.

241. P.O.V.

The last blaze of day throws long shadows, and a blood-red wash of color across the battleground.

242 TWO SHOT

CHRIS and VIN stay silent. Then...

VIN
(without alarm)
Looks like they're gonna wait for
night.

No answer from Chris.

VIN
They rush us in the dark it could
get kinda hard to stay alive
in here...!

Still now no answer from Chris.

VIN
(new attack)
We were to make a run for it, we'd
be back in the village in two days...!
Maybe sooner...!

CHRIS
(challenges)
Then what...?

VIN
Make our stand there if we have
to.

CHRIS
What about the women and children?

Vin had forgotten about them.

VIN
(to himself)
Yeah.

A troubled moment for Vin.

CHRIS
(smiles)
Looks like you should'a turned me
in for that bounty.

A clumsy moment for Vin.

242. CONTINUED

ABOUT THAT BOUNTY CHRIS

VIN

(half to himself)

I lied about that...

(embarrassed)

...Never was a price on you...

(guilty)

...I just wanted to ride along
with you for a ways...

Chris is touched by Vin's open admiration for him.

VIN

(throwaway)

Well, maybe they'll back off...!

CHRIS

Not Lorca...!

242. CONTINUED

Vin had started to cross away -- now he looks back at Chris.

CHRIS

(no wait)

... He won't let go till this is over once and for good.

VIN

(smiles a challenge)

You seem to know him pretty well.

CHRIS

I was paid to kill him once.

VIN

Shame you didn't get it done.

CHRIS

(flat)

By his sons!

Shocked silence from Vin. Chris hesitates, then crosses along the wall to a position where he can look down on the graves in the cactus-studded courtyard below.

Chris is still looking off at the graves when Vin moves on. Silence... then...

CHRIS

(half to himself)

He said they were tall, erect, like finely bred stallions...

(quiet)

... They weren't...

(remembering)

... They were gentle... like their mother... Lorca thought they were weak -- he rode rough-shod over them; trying to make them over in his own image...

(almost tender)

... Their mother tried to stop him

... She died trying...

(simply)

... They hated him. Wanted him dead.

VIN

So they hired you.

242. CONTINUED

CHRIS

Lorca found out about it... He could
have had me killed... Instead he gave
me a horse; let me ride out...

(quiet)

... I don't know why...

VIN

Maybe he saw in you what he never saw
in his own.

CHRIS

Maybe.

Vin looks slow around the bullet-scarred church. Finally...

VIN

Wonder how come the two of 'em
ended here?

CHRIS

If I know Lorca they were shamed
into it.

VIN

~~That~~ But why is he buildin' this church
for them...?

CHRIS

Not for them, Vin...
(pointed)
... for him...!

Chris waits long... then...

CHRIS

He finally got his chance to do
what he never could when they
were alive...

(quiet)

... Be proud of them.

A long moment of understanding passes between Chris and
Vin... as we ...

DISSOLVE TO:

243. EXT. CHURCH - FULL SHOT - NIGHT

Darkness has fallen over the ruins. A dog gone wild howls in the distance as we look off across the plaza toward the church for an empty moment... then...

244. MED. SHOT

CHICO and CHRIS stand high atop the bell-tower, Winchesters in hand, looking off into the night. Nothing but the far-away cry of the dog for a long, lonesome moment... then...

CHICO

(quiet)

What are they waiting for...?

Another cry of the dog.

CHICO

(troubled)

I wish now that Petra had never found you, Chris... That you'd never gotten into this...

No answer from Chris.

CHICO

You and the others get killed, what good will it do?

(half to himself)

... Nothing will change... No matter what happens here, nothing will change...

(hate in his eyes)

... There'll always be someone like Lorca -- someone to push men around like cattle...!

Silence.

CHICO

(half to himself)

I've seen enough of fear, or running, hiding...!

244. CONTINUED

CHICO (CONTINUED)

(quiet)

... When this is over, I'm heading north across the border... I made my living with a gun once; I can do it again.

CHRIS

What about Petra...?

(challenges)

... Man runs out on his own people, starts making his way with a gun...

(quiet)

... Doesn't leave a wife a whole lot to be proud of.

Chico hesitates an uncertain moment... then...

CHICO

(shaken)

She'll understand.

CHRIS

Will she...?

Chris crosses away without waiting for an answer. A high troubled Chico stands watching after him... as we...

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

244A. INT CHURCH - CLOSE SHOT - NIGHT

We HOLD on one of the 'stations of the cross' hanging on the battered north wall of the church, then COME SLOW AROUND to see Chris standing in the shadows looking out into the night. Long silence... then...

1ST PEON

(quiet, from behind)

Senor...

Chris comes around on the voice to see three peons, hats-in-hand, behind him. They hesitate an uncertain moment -- then the middle man speaks.

1ST PEON

(soft)

The others... they have asked me to talk to you...

244A. CONTINUED

Chris looks off beyond the three to see the farmers in the dim beyond.

1ST PEON

(hesitant)

They... they do not want you to die here because of them... Go while there is still time...

(new attack)

... They will not kill us all... Those who are left will return to the villages -- begin again...

Chris stays silent; looks off at the farmers once more.

1ST PEON

If we were strong like you...

(hopeless)

... But we are not... We are weak... Too weak to fight.

CHRIS

(a quiet challenge)

You fight every day of your lives... You fight the land to grow crops, you fight to keep a roof over your heads; clothes on your backs...

1ST PEON

That is not the same...!

CHRIS

(tops him)

The hell it's not...!

1ST PEON

(hard)

We are cowards, senor...!

(guilty)

... We are afraid of everyone... of everything...

(half to himself)

... When it does not rain we are afraid the crops will fail. When it rains we are afraid it will not stop; that it will wash our houses away... We are afraid of the cold -- of the wind...

(troubled)

... Our whole life is one of fear. We are born with it... We die with it.

244A. CONTINUED

1ST PEON (CONTINUED)

(quiet)

... It is our way... It will always
be our way.

A lost look comes into the peon's eyes.

1ST PEON

Please, senor...

(pleading in
his voice)

... We beg you... Before it is
too late... Go.

The three farmers turn and move slow back towards the
others in the dim beyond..

244B. CLOSE SHOT

A troubled Chris stands watching off after the farmers...
Finally...

COLBEE

(from behind)

You ain't thinkin'a runnin', are
you, Chris...?

Chris comes around on Ben Colbee.

CHRIS

(quiet)

He could be right.

COLBEE

(smiles)

Knew a fella once... He was loud,
always braggin'. But inside he was
afraid of his own shadow...

(remembering)

... Never would'a got over it if
this other fella hadn't come along.

The smile dies on Colbee's face.

COLBEE

(almost tender)

Talkin' about the night in that
Texas town when you made me stand
alongside you in the street...

(grins)

... Way I remember it, you hadda
knock me down four times before
I'd go against them guns...

244B. CONTINUED

COLBEE (CONTINUED)

(serious)

... We gotta do the same for them,
Chris...

Colbee nods off at the farmers.

COLBEE

(no wait)

... Gotta stand alongside 'em,
so's they can one day stand alone.

Chris takes his time.

CHRIS

(almost smiles)

Thought all you did was think
about women, Colbee...?

COLBEE

(smiles)

Use to be afraid'a them too.

Colbee is suddenly serious again.

COLBEE

We ain't gonna run, are we, Chris?

A moment of decision for Chris. Then...

CHRIS

Hell no!

Chris and Colbee trade a warm smile... as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

245. EXT. CHURCH - MED. SHOT - NIGHT

In the dim light of night we see one wing of the massive,
bullet-scarred doors swing part open. Next moment Frank
Riker moves out of the shadows and stands in the entrance
of the church looking off to see...

246. P.O.V.

Strange tension as we SEARCH the dark, deserted plaza.

247. CLOSE SHOT

A cautious moment of decision for FRANK RIKER, then he throws a look back off inside the church, and begins to drift out into the open -- keeping to the shadows as he does so.

248. FULL SHOT

Looking off over the shattered remains of the water fountain in the center of the plaza, we TRACK RIKER as he works his way low along a half fallen wall flanking the church; gains the ruins of a building at the north end of the square, and disappears into the darkness.

249. CLOSE SHOT

A faint line of light falls across FRANK RIKER's face as he moves quietly into a doorless doorway and stands looking off into the night.

250. P.O.V.

The street, leading to the part fallen wall at the far end of the ruins where we last saw Lorca and his men take cover, is empty and dead silent.

251. CLOSE SHOT

Another decision for FRANK RIKER, then he begins to work his way through the ruins toward Lorca's fallen wall.

252. MED. SHOT

High tension as we FOLLOW RIKER through the ruins; INTER-CUTTING to build the suspense. A tense moment later...

253. CLOSE SHOT

FRANK RIKER stops sudden short; listens; hears hushed voices coming from behind a section of burnt-brick wall just ahead of him.

More tension -- then FRANK drifts quietly into the remains of a dobe cow-shed; sinks to his hands and knees, and begins to make his way toward the voices.

254. CLOSE UP

FRANK gets closer and closer -- the voices get louder and louder. Now we realize they are speaking Spanish. No sooner have we discovered this when Frank gains the burnt-brick wall and flattens himself against it. As he does, we keep going. Only then do we see four of Lorca's vaqueros sitting on the ground leaning against Frank's hiding place. They talk in hushed urgent tones.

255. CLOSE UP

FRANK RIKER strains to hear what they are saying -- he can't. Now he begins to inch closer to them. As he does he knocks a chunk of dobe from the wall. Frank freezes as it falls to the ground at his feet.

256. MED. SHOT

The vaqueros tighten at the SOUND. Tension mounts as we INTERCUT to build suspense -- then Lorca's men relax, lean back against the wall, and begin to talk once more.

257. CLOSE UP

FRANK waits long -- then, taking off his hat, he presses his ear against the wall and listens. As he does, we...

CUT TO:

258. INT. CHURCH - CLOSE SHOT - NIGHT

The bullet-scarred statue of Christ atop the altar of the shell-torn church looks down on LUIS DELGADO, MANUEL and COLBEE standing watch with Winchesters at a breach in the south wall.

259. MED. SHOT

IN CLOSER on the trio now, we listen as LUIS and MANUEL look off toward the altar and speak to each other quietly in Spanish.

Finally...

LUIS

(to Colbee)

I was just saying to Manuel here...

(points off)

... That statue, it reminds me of a night long ago... I was shot in the back room of a cantina -- left for dead in a pile of empty tequila bottles...

(light)

... I was in much pain, and I said to myself, Luis...! If you die in such a terrible place as this, you are going to regret it the rest of your life...!

(remembering)

... So I crawled out the back door, and dragged myself across the street to a church...

(tender)

... It was quiet and peaceful inside... I closed my eyes... When I opened them again I saw the faces of saints looking down at me...

(smiles)

... I thought I was in Heaven... then I remembered who I was -- where I was...

(new attack)

The Priest had found me; called a doctor, saved my life...!

259. CONTINUED

Luis shifts the weight of the Winchester in his hands.

LUIS

They kept me there until I was well enough to ride...

(light)

... The Priest said if I had come to him sooner I probably would never have started robbing people for a living...!

(serious)

... He said I was a sheep, and it was not my fault that the shepherd let me get lost...!

COLBEE

(blank)

Lost...?

LUIS

From the flock...!

(proud)

... From that day until this I have been a religious man...!

(bright)

... I go to the last mass on Sunday...! I pray every time I am in trouble... and I have not stolen one single thing from a church...! Not one...!

COLBEE

(impressed)

The hell you say...!

Luis gives a proud nod and is about to go on when a roar of gunfire from off stops him sudden short. And we...

CUT TO:

260. EXT. RUINS - MED. SHOT - NIGHT

Bullets dig and scream off dome walls as FRANK RIKER runs for his life through the ruins.

261. MED. SHOT

Thinking they are under attack, CHRIS and VIN blaze away at gunflashes from atop the south wall. So does CHICO and the others as we INTERCUT to build the excitement. Next moment Chris tightens as he sees...

262. P.O.V.

FRANK RIKER gains the far end of the plaza and starts across the open at a low bending run. Halfway to the double doors of the church he gets hit in the leg and goes down.

263. CLOSE SHOT

Seeing Frank fall, CHRIS moves swiftly down from the wall; gains the open wing of the double doors, and heads out into the plaza to pick up the wounded Frank.

264. MED. SHOT

Winchesters blaze away as we INTERCUT to see VIN, CHICO, COLBEE, LUIS and MANUEL covering Chris from above.

265. MED. SHOT

Bullets kick dirt around CHRIS as he pulls FRANK to his feet, and together they make a staggering, stumbling dash for the front doors of the church.

266. MED. SHOT

VIN, CHICO and the others keep firing as we INTERCUT for a wild moment, then...

267. MED. SHOT

CHRIS and FRANK gain the open door of the church. No sooner inside, Frank falls back against the closed wing

267. CONTINUED

of the double doors, while Chris spins; clears his hand-gun and joins the fight.

268. FULL SHOT

The battle rages -- then the firing begins to dwindle to a scattering of shots. A moment later all goes quiet.

269. MED. SHOT

CHRIS has stopped firing and is looking off across the plaza from the open doorway when a troubled VIN crosses on and throws a look at FRANK RIKER.

VIN
(to Chris)
He all right...?

Before Chris can answer...

FRANK
Just a crease...!

CHRIS
(firm)
What were you doin' out there,
Frank? Trying to get your head
blown off...?

FRANK
(hard)
It's my head...!

CHRIS
(harder)
You get yourself killed it's not
going to do anybody any good...!

Frank fights pain in his leg... then...

FRANK
(quiet)
Depends how you look at it.

269. CONTINUED

~~Frank pushes himself away from the door and limps off.
As he clears...~~

VIN

What's the matter with him?

No answer from Chris. He hesitates an uncertain moment,
then follows Frank Riker.

270. MED. SHOT

FRANK has gained the base of the north wall and is leaning against it tying his bandanna around his bleeding left leg when CHRIS crosses on. Troubled silence... then...

CHRIS

(quiet)

I saw you up there on the wall
this morning... Now this...

(challenges)

... Why...?

FRANK

(keeps working on
his leg)

None'a your damn business...!

Chris waits long -- then starts to move away...

FRANK

(almost urgent)

Chris...!

Chris stops, comes back around. Frank takes his time.
Finally...

FRANK

(half to himself)

You... you never knew my wife Ellie
did you...?

Chris stays silent.

270. CONTINUED

FRANK

(remembering)

We had a place in West Texas;
wasn't much, just gettin'
started... Had a herd to build,
wire to string and such...

(quiet)

... One night some Comanches got
drunk; jumped the reservation --
lit out killin', burning...

(seeing it again)

... We woke up they were all
around the cabin... Fourteen,
fifteen of 'em... I held 'em
off long as I could...

(quiet)

... Till I had only one shell
left... Ellie started screamin'
at me not to let 'em take her
alive. She'd seen what they'd
done to others... She kept beggin'
me, beggin'...!"

(lowers his head)

... So I...!

Frank pulls hard down on the bandanna wrapped around
his bleeding leg; lets pain blot out the memory for a
moment... then...

FRANK

(quiet)

The Comanches saw what I'd done...
I wanted them to kill me, but they
wouldn't... they rode off...

(deadly)

... Next mornin' I started tracking
'em -- killed 'em one at a time...
All the while hoping they'd kill me...

(half to himself)

... Five years I've been trying to
get it done...

Frank looks slow up at Chris.

FRANK

(without alarm)

But it don't look like I have to
wait much longer...

270. CONTINUED

Puzzled silence from Chris... then...

FRANK

(indicates off)

I heard 'em talkin' out there...
Lorca sent for help... Come
tomorrow he's gonna have two
hundred guns, maybe more...!

(a dead warning)

... And he's not gonna settle
for just us, Chris...

Frank turns, looks off at the maze of farmers crowded
near the altar at the front of the church.

FRANK

(quiet)

He wants them all dead...!

(flat)

... Every last one of 'em.

A certain terror touches Chris as he looks slow off at
the farmers... and we...

DISSOLVE TO:

270A. EXT. HACIENDA - MONTAGE - DAY

The dull clang of a rusty alarm bell rings over as we
start a MONTAGE showing Lopez rounding up Lorca's
workers from the hacienda.

Winchesters, single-action rifles, hand-guns, and knives
are dug from various hiding places. Horses and mules are
hurriedly saddled. Women and children stand open doorways
and windows watching in troubled silence.

Excitement mounts with the pounding SOUND of the alarm
bell... as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

271. INT. CHURCH - FULL SHOT - DAY

Late morning finds us looking down over the battered
cross atop the tower of the half-fallen church. Through
a network of charred roof-beams we can see a maze of
Mexican farmers kneeling in prayer, while the Priest,
wearing faded white vestments, stands before the altar
saying mass. Two of the farmers act as altar boys.

272. MED. SHOT

We're in CLOSER on the PRIEST now as he genuflects; comes around on the worshippers; chants in Latin, and turns back to the altar.

As he does, we go high away to see...

273. MED. SHOT

CHRIS stands against the sky on the north wall -- Winchester in hand. VIN, FRANK, CHICO, COLBEE, LUIS and MANUEL are in like positions above and surrounding the congregation.

A strange combination of peace and pending violence as we INTERCUT to build the beauty of the mass... then...

274. CLOSE SHOT

A troubled CHRIS looks long at the worshippers below -- then, turning his attention to the ruins out beyond the south wall, he sees...

275. P.O.V.

A faint cloud of dust rises from behind Lorca's hiding place at the far fringe of the fallen village.

276. CLOSE SHOT

CHRIS is still looking off when FRANK RIKER drifts on. Nothing but the Priest's prayers in Latin for a moment... then...

FRANK

(quiet)

If you're thinkin' about goin' out there, we'd better get at it...

Chris stays silent -- keeps his eyes on the ruins.

FRANK

(without alarm)

Those others get here, the hills gonna get higher to climb...

Chris takes his time.

CHRIS

How many men does he have left?

276. CONTINUED

FRANK
I counted thirty.

Silence.

FRANK
(new attack)
We could circle high around...
Come at 'em from behind.

CHRIS
(quiet)
One chance in hell.

FRANK
That's better than none at all.

A long moment of decision for Chris as he looks down off at the farmers. Finally...

CHRIS
Saddle the horses.

FRANK
I already did.

Chris and Frank trade a look; almost a smile, as we...

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

277. EXT. CHURCH - FULL SHOT - DAY

FRANK, VIN, CHICO, LUIS and COLBEE are already mounted as CHRIS and MANUEL come through a jagged breach in the north wall; cross on by an over-turned work-wagon, and gain the horsemen. Once there, Chris turns; hands his Winchester to Manuel, and speaks to him in Spanish. Manuel hesitates a reluctant moment, answers Chris in Spanish, and takes the saddle-gun. This done, Chris swings up onto his animal next to Vin. As he does...

COLBEE
(indicates Manuel)
Ain't he goin' along?

277. CONTINUED

CHRIS

We get in trouble, he'll cover us
from the bell-tower.

COLBEE

(challenges)

But we're gonna need all the
help we can...!

CHRIS

(tops him)

He stays behind...!

Strong silence. Vin comes around on Chris.

VIN

(smiles)

For luck?

CHRIS

For luck!

Chris spins his animal, and takes off at a run --
Vin and the others swing their horses around and
follow.

278. CLOSE SHOT

A troubled MANUEL stands watching the riders move
away.

279. P.O.V.

The front-riding CHRIS leads the other horsemen through
the ruins in behind the church and begins to work a
wide circle.

280. CLOSE SHOT

A crestfallen MANUEL leans back against the bed of the
over-turned work-wagon; kicks at a rough plank crate,
and sinks down on it dejectedly. Only then do we go

280. CONTINUED

CLOSE to see that Manuel is sitting on a box marked DINAMITA. (or as we gringos call it: Dynamite). And we...

CUT TO:

281. INT. CHURCH - FULL SHOT - DAY

The PRIEST stands before the altar praying aloud in Spanish. The voices of the congregation echo off the dome walls as they repeat the prayer after him. And we...

CUT TO:

282. EXT. DRY RIVER - FULL SHOT - DAY

CHRIS and the others hold their horses to a half run as they gain the cover of a dry river-bed and continue to circle in behind Lorca and his men.

CUT TO:

283. INT. CHURCH - FULL SHOT - DAY

The PRIEST makes the sign of the cross -- we SEARCH faces as the farmers do the same.

284. EXT. DRY RIVER - FULL SHOT - DAY

A certain excitement begins to mount as we INTERCUT with the gunfighters, the horses, the Priest and the farmers; build it... then...

285. EXT. RUINS - MED. SHOT - DAY

A puzzled LORCA stands t^he half fallen wall at the far end of the ruins listening to the soft SOUND of

285. CONTINUED

prayer coming from the church. His vaqueros and their animals are scattered along the wall flanking him on both sides.

Now the praying stops. All is sudden silent.

286. CLOSE SHOT

We're in CLOSER on LORCA as he reacts to the silence, then moves to a break in the fallen wall, and looks off to see...

287. P.O.V.

No sign of life in or around the shattered church.

288. CLOSE SHOT

LORCA is still looking off when...

289. FULL SHOT

Looking down from high atop the bell-tower we can just barely make out the figure of LORCA standing the break in the wall at the far end of the ruins.

Now the barrel of a Winchester comes slow up into the f.g... High tension -- then, the rifle begins to blaze away.

290. CLOSE SHOT

LORCA flattens himself hard against the wall as bullets dig and scream off the dome close around him.

291. CLOSE SHOT

We catch a fleeting glimpse of MANUEL in the bell-tower jacking and firing his Winchester, then...

292. MED. SHOT

One of Lorca's vaqueros yells a warning in Spanish, and LORCA spins full around to see...

293. P.O.V.

Six horsemen go sudden against the sky as they top the mask of a high rise; swing into line, and storm down the slant toward Lorca and his men -- firing as they come.

294. FULL SHOT

Caught by surprise, LORCA and his vaqueros dive for cover as CHRIS and the others charge on at a hell-bent run.

295. FULL SHOT

Loose horses, stampeded by the gunfire, add to the confusion as we INTERCUT to build the action.

Nothing but dust and dead men... then...

296. MED. SHOT

COLBEE's horse is shot from under him. He rolls clear of the animal; finds cover behind a nearby wall, and continues to fight.

297. MED. SHOT

FRANK RIKER skulls a vaquero with his Winchester and runs another down with his horse.

298. MED. SHOT

LUIS is in his glory as he throws round after round at Lorca's men.

299. MED. SHOT

CHICK is fighting like a madman.

300. MED. SHOT

VIN's horse jumps a section of wall; stumbles, and falls.

301. CLOSE SHOT

CHRIS is looking for Loca -- can't find him.

302. FULL SHOT

High wild action as we INTERCUT to build the excitement; bring it to a savage crescendo, then...

303. CLOSE SHOT

CHRIS drags his animal to a hard sliding stop and looks high off to see...

304. P.O.V.

LOPEZ and a hundred heavily armed riders, sit their animals in a long menacing line atop the mask of a high cutbank to the south.

305. CLOSE SHOT

We get a reaction from CHRIS... then...

306. CLOSE SHOT

VIN sees them.

307. CLOSE SHOT

So does COLBEE, LUIS, CHICO and FRANK as we INTERCUT to build the tension... then...

308. FULL SHOT

A roar of gunfire as LOPEZ and his riders come plunging headlong down the cutbank; hit level ground, and storm on a flat out run.

309. CLOSE SHOT

A decision for Chris, then he spins his animal; puts him over the fallen wall; picks up VIN on the run, and heads through the ruins for the cover of the church.

310. MED. SHOT

LUIS and CHICO are right behind him.

311. MED. SHOT

COLBEE catches a loose horse on the dead run; vaults into the saddle, and sets out in the direction of the church.

312. MED. SHOT

FRANK RIKER keeps killing as long as he can, then swings his animal, and heads for cover at a run.

313. FULL SHOT

Excitement mounts as we INTERCUT to build the desperate dash through the ruins -- then, as CHRIS and the others gain the far end of the plaza...

314. MED. SHOT

CHRIS drags his animal to a hard sliding stop; tightens as he looks off to see...

315. P.O.V.

A hundred more of Lorca's mounted men are charging on from the opposite direction.

316. MED. SHOT

A sudden blur of motion as CHRIS, VIN and the others dismount and dive for cover behind the shattered water fountain in the center of the plaza.

317. MED. SHOT

No sooner has CHRIS hit the ground when a tremendous explosion rocks the plaza. Then another.

A stunned Chris looks off to see...

318. P.O.V.

Five of the front-riding attackers disappear in a blinding cloud of smoke and dust.

319. MED. SHOT

CHRIS and VIN trade a blank look as another explosion tears at the second rank of riders. Down they go.

Only then does Chris look high off to see...

320. P.O.V.

The one called MANUEL stands the bell-tower with his box of 'dinamita'; throwing one stick after another at Lorca's men below. His actions are reminiscent of the fight he put up in the border bull-ring.

321. MED. SHOT

Taking hope from the help from above, CHRIS and the others start blasting away. Lorca's men are coming at them from all sides. Horse-falls and dead men as we INTERCUT to build the excitement.

322. CLOSE SHOT

VIN's gun jams. He throws it at the nearest vaquero; grabs a Winchester from a dead man, and keeps firing.

323. CLOSE SHOT

CHICO flattens himself against the dove fountain; loads his Winchester -- bullets digging all around him.

324. CLOSE SHOT

FRANK RIKER stays full calm -- deadly.

325. CLOSE SHOT

COLBEE tries to swallow -- can't.

326. FULL SHOT

Blazing action as we INTERCUT to build. Even with the help of MANUEL in the bell-tower, the gunfighters are getting the hell beat out of them.

327. CLOSE SHOT

COLBEE is hit in the shoulder. He swears; changes his gun to his left hand, and keeps firing.

328. CLOSE SHOT

CHICO is hit in the leg -- he grabs at blood, and fights all the harder.

329. CLOSE SHOT

LUIS is hit in the chest. He manages to fire three more shots before he falls.

330. CLOSE UP

The battles rages as we go CLOSE on the fallen LUIS. Mortally wounded, he struggles to raise his head, and looks off to see.

331. P.O.V.

The bullet-scarred double-doors of the church.

332. CLOSE UP

LUIS fights pain, then with grim determination, he begins to drag himself across the plaza toward the church.

332. CONTINUED

The roar of gunfire continues over as we STAY with the bleeding LUIS. Halfway to the double-doors he stops, and with one last effort, looks up off to see...

333. P.O.V.

The battered cross atop the bell-tower is all that stands between LUIS DELGADO and Heaven.

334. CLOSE SHOT

LUIS manages a small smile, then falls forward dead.

335. FULL SHOT

More explosions and horse-falls as we build the battle to a roaring crescendo, then...

336. MED. SHOT

LORCA, astride a borrowed black, brings the animal through a cloud of smoke; hesitates to get his bearings, then seeing Chris in the center of the plaza with his back to him, spurs his horse into a sudden run, and heads straight for him.

337. MED. SHOT

FRANK RIKER turns; sees Lorca storming on, yells a warning, gets sudden to his feet, and takes one in the stomach intended for Chris. Frank fires once into the ground before he falls. Chris spins and fires at Lorca all in one sudden motion.

338. MED. SHOT

Lorca's horse screams and falls. No sooner down, Lorca jumps to his feet, gun in hand; but before he can fire, Chris cuts him in two. Lorca grabs at the bleeding middle and falls to his knees.

339. MED. SHOT

Seeing Lorca go down, Lopez yells a command in Spanish. Then another. The attackers spin their animals and follow Lopez off through the ruins. All goes sudden silent.

340. MED. SHOT

CHRIS looks long at Lorca and his retreating men, then kneels beside the fallen FRANK RIKER. Frank opens his eyes. That terrible moment before death... then...

FRANK

(smiles)

I got it done, Chris...

(fights pain)

... I finally...!

Frank Riker is dead. Strong silence, then...

VIN

(quiet warning)

Chris...

Chris looks up to see Vin pointing off. He turns to see...

342. P.O.V.

LOPEZ is moving his animal on through the smoke at a dead walk.

343. MED. SHOT

CHRIS and VIN trade a puzzled look. Strange tension as we INTERCUT to build -- then, Lopez gains the kneeling Lorca; pulls to a stop, and swings down.

344. CLOSE SHOT

We're in CLOSER on the dying Lorca as he senses Lopez close beside him. Lorca keeps his head lowered -- speaks in a savage whisper.

LORCA

Don't stop, Lopez...!
 (breathing hard now)
 ... Kill them...!

Lopez takes his time; looks at Chris and the others. As he does, we see...

344A. MED. SHOT

The Padre moves through the bullet-scarred doors of the church; hesitates, then crosses hurriedly to the wounded Lorca. Once there he kneels beside him for a hopeless moment, then begins to administer the last rites.

344B. MED. SHOT

Chris and the others stay silent as we SEARCH faces. Now the farmers appear on the walls of the battered church; take off their straw hats, and lower their heads.

344C. CLOSE SHOT

When the Padre finishes he looks off at Chris.

PADRE

Senor Lorca is dead.

A defiant Lorca, still on his knees, trembles with rage as he fights to raise his head.

LORCA

(desperate)
 No...! I am alive...! Do as I say,
 Lopez...! Kill them...!

344C. CONTINUED

Lorca tightens; falls into the arms of the Padre and dies.

Strong silence. The Padre waits long, then looks off at the graves in the cactus-studded courtyard beside the church.

PADRE

(quiet)

We will bury him beside his sons.

345. CLOSE SHOT

We get a reaction from Chris and the others, then go HIGH AWAY and HOLD on the blood-stained plaza. The battle is over...and we...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

346. EXT. CHURCH - MED. SHOT - DAY

We STAY with a black iron bell as it is pulled by rope up into the empty church tower. A moment later many hands are lifting it into place. Only then do we see...

347. MED. SHOT

CHRIS, CHICO and the PRIEST stand the plaza looking high off.

348. P.O.V.

A maze of farmers are hard at work rebuilding the church.

349. MED. SHOT

The PRIEST smiles for the first time.

PADRE

(light)

An old bell, but a good one --
cast in Madrid.

CHRIS gives him an answering smile and starts off across the plaza -- CHICO and the Priest follow. Chico limps.

PADRE

(as they walk)

It was Chico's idea to finish
building the church...! To bring
all three villages here and make
them into one...!

CHICO

One strong enough to stand up
against men like Lorca!

349. CONTINUED

CHRIS
 (challenges)
 Thought you were heading north,
 Chico...!

CHICO
 (sheepish)
 I... I changed my mind.

Chris smiles; keeps walking -- a moment later he gains his horse. Vin and Manuel are already mounted.

Now Colbee storms on and pulls his horse to a stop with his good hand -- the other hangs from a makeshift sling.

COLBEE
 (all smiles)
 I'm ready to go, Chico...!

CHRIS
 (puzzled)
 Go where...?

CHICO
 Back to the village to get the
 women...!

COLBEE
 (grins)
 I volunteered...!

Chris gives Colbee a pained look.

CHRIS
 (bright)
 So long, Colbee...!

COLBEE
 So long, Chris...!
 (spurs off)
 ... See you, Vin, Manuel...!

Colbee is off in a cloud of dust. As he clears...!

VIN
 (looking off at
 the workers)
 Too bad Frank and Luis couldn't see
 this.

349. CONTINUED

PADRE

(quiet)

We'll remember them in our prayers.

A moment of understanding... then...

CHRIS

Goodbye, Chico!

CHICO

(hates to see him
go)

Chris.

CHRIS

Bye, Father.

PADRE

(simply)

God Bless You.

Chris turns; swings up in the saddle, and looks off at the church. Despite the back-breaking work, the farmers smile and seem perfectly happy as they horse huge dobe blocks into place on the south wall. Finally...

CHRIS

(shaking his head
in wonder)

I'll be damned.

PADRE

I doubt that...

(smiles)

... I doubt that very much.

A warm moment of understanding passes close between Chris and the Priest -- then Chris swings his animal around and heads out to the north at a part run -- Vin and Manuel follow.

350. TWO SHOT

A certain lonesome touches Chico and the Priest as they stand the plaza watching the three men ride away.

351. FULL SHOT

The workers begin to ring the black iron bell as we go HIGH AWAY and HOLD on the battered cross atop the half fallen church. The bell rings seven times before we...

FADE OUT

THE END

Handwritten notes in red ink, oriented vertically and upside down:
Now
FEED
8:30
MIGHT
DREKERS
ARRIVING
D NO
ON P
HOTEL
DRY
HOTEL
D. J.
LEAVES
NEXT

MON FEB 21

LEAVE HOTEL 8:30

8:30

SHOOT 9:30

ARRIVE 9:40

HOTEL

LEGAL FOOD BREAKS

NEXT DAY CALL 8:30

LEAVE HOTEL 9:30

HOTEL

READY TO SHOOT

Alert
8014 W. 3rd St.
OL 3-2103