

Gold Trail Pass

Written for the Screen by:

Rob McNeil

2255 North Bridge Dr
Normal, IL 61761
309-532-1210
robertmcneil11@augustana.edu

OVER BLACK--

Nature makes itself heard.

The sound of a gentle stream...

Wind blowing softly...

OPEN ON:

EXT. GENTLE STREAMLET - BRINK OF DAY

TWO HANDS softly hold a PAN filled with rock, sand, dirt, Earth. He slightly shakes the pan, rearranging its contents.

The hands sift through the clear water, gravel and sediment.

After a brief moment of searching, the hands reveal--

GOLDEN NUGGETS. They are small, but stand out amongst the blandness of the rocks and dirt.

Soft footsteps can be heard from behind. The hands have not left the sides of the pan.

Suddenly, a STAB is heard. Blood pours into the pan, mixing with everything contained within.

The sound of the knife being removed from the MAN's throat can be heard.

The GOLD RUSHER slumps to the ground. He rolls into the water. Blood paints the once clear waters.

GUNFIRE ERUPTS. Pandemonium ensues. OTHER GOLD RUSHERS frantically attempt to escape.

AMBUSHERS scatter from the woods, chasing the GOLD RUSHERS and occasionally stopping at a tree to take aim and fire.

EXT. CAMPSITE - CONTINUOUS

The Horses by the campfire are startled, but keep their place for now...

RHONDA BARNES (30s) peeks her head out of a tent, bewildered. More distant gunfire and occasional screams can be heard.

A FRIGHTENED WOMAN (40s) in the tent next to her can be heard whimpering and shuffling her things.

FRIGHTENED WOMAN
What's happening?

Rhonda stares off in the distance, fiercely attempting to gain a grasp on the situation. It's no help.

RHONDA
Gather your things.

She looks sharply over to her.

RHONDA (CONT'D)
Now!

The Frightened Woman stumbles back into her tent and obeys.
Rhonda rifles through a SADDLE BAG, a six-shooter emerges.

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS

MEN brandishing guns, knives, and any weapon imaginable sprint after scurrying GOLD RUSHERS through the woods on either side of the STREAM.

Some Gold Rushers are fumbling with their PANS of GOLD. Some have abandoned all to rush back to camp.

AMBUSHERS catch up with the fumbling Gold Rushers and cut them down in their struggle.

EXT. CAMPSITE - LATER

The Frightened Woman has gathered all her things, but is struggling getting her footing.

She attempts to run in the opposite direction when--

BLAM! She is blasted away with a BLUNDERBUSS. A Ruthless Ambusher stands by the campfire, his shotgun smoking.

The Horses scatter at the sound...

Suddenly, he's tackled into the fire by WINTHROP BARNES (30s). Winthrop shoves the Ruthless Ambusher's face into the embers. He is unrelenting, even through all the shrieking.

Winthrop is grabbed from behind in an instant. An AGGRESSIVE ATTACKER puts a blade to his throat.

Winthrop struggles, and throws him forward. They both roll around on the ground, just before Rhonda's tent.

INT. TENT - CONTINUOUS

Rhonda timidly creeps to the end of the tent.

She uses the barrel of the pistol to reveal the outside world.

Rhonda's eyes widen to the sight of her HUSBAND, face to the dirt, with the Aggressive Attacker plunging his knife into his neck.

RHONDA
Winthrop!!

The Aggressive Attacker snaps his head to where Rhonda is crouched.

She falls backward, with a flick of her thumb she drops the hammer back and lets loose a round.

It zips through the Attacker's skull. He plops backwards like a block of wood.

Rhonda shudders as she tries to take in what just transpired. She still has no idea.

Winthrop is sprawled out on the dirt, gurgling. Blood is plunging out of the side of his neck, knife protruding.

RHONDA (CONT'D)
(sad, frightened)
Oh--

Rhonda gasps and rushes over to Winthrop's side.

EXT. CAMPSITE - CONTINUOUS

Rhonda is careful not to harm Winthrop any further. She cannot decide whether to take the knife out or leave it in.

She rolls him over, still unsure where or what to do with her hands.

Rhonda is still in shock. Speechless. Hyperventilating.

Winthrop cannot even speak nor gasp for breath.

Rhonda cannot contain her tears any longer. She breaks down.

Winthrop makes sounds with his mouth, in an attempt to tell her, "Go." She does not receive this message.

Rhonda struggles through the tears.

RHONDA
I-- I'm sorry, I--

Winthrop slowly shakes his head.

RHONDA (CONT'D)
I love you.

She barely makes it through saying that before she's overcome with emotion again.

Winthrop tries to gesture to her, he can't get through to her. He looks away.

RHONDA (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry.

At last, he's gone. She buries her head into his chest.

More proximal GUNSHOTS can now be heard.

Rhonda snaps back to reality. She says her nonverbal goodbye.

Suddenly, a BULLET jumps up and kicks dirt near her. Time to run.

She gathers up her saddle bag, snags a canteen, and rushes away carrying her gun.

In her frantic, tear-riddled sprint, she wipes her face but soldiers on somehow...

More gunshots, hoof beats, and cries are heard in the distance.

Rhonda cannot help but cry again.

She has no idea where she is headed, she just makes a bee-line for the MOUNTAINS off in the horizon as we...

SNAP TO DARKNESS:

OPENING TITLE: GOLD TRAIL PASS

Accompanied by the sound of a GUNSHOT.

FADE IN:

EXT. VALLEY - NIGHT

A lone STAGECOACH rides along a dusty trail. Only the moon illuminates the path. It's fancy, clearly its owner comes from wealth...

A DRIVER guides the reigns as the horses trot along.

The Stagecoach is surrounded by ROBBERS in an instant.

Just as the Driver attempts to giddy up, he's gunned down where he sits.

One of the ROBBERS hops in the driver's seat, another ROBBER calms the horses. Comforts them, assures them.

INT. STAGECOACH - CONTINUOUS

A FRIGHTENED WEALTHY MAN (40s) stares at his BODYGUARDS, wide-eyed. He wants to look outside, but thinks better of it.

WEALTHY MAN

Go check it out.

The BODYGUARDS nod to him and carefully crack open the doors and step out from either side of the Stagecoach.

BLAM! BAM! They're cut down instantly. Blood sprays inside the Stagecoach.

SOLOMON TRAVIS (30s) (we don't know this is him yet) slides in the Stagecoach right next to the FRIGHTENED WEALTHY MAN. We can tell Solomon has long hair and is bearded.

He comes in to find the Wealthy Man cowering in fear.

Solomon clutches the Wealthy Man's collar and cocks his pistol-bearing hand back in an attacking motion.

SOLOMON

In your slumber, promise you'll
dream of me, yeah?

The Wealthy Man braces for impact.

Solomon's hand and pistol come crashing down on his face.

Light's out.

SMASH TO BLACK:

The sound of nothingness for a moment, until...

The sound of nature over black.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WILDERNESS - SUNRISE

A scenic mountain view accompanied by a gorgeous sunrise.

EXT. GOLD TRAIL PASS - CONTINUOUS

A small settlement with only the essentials, and little else.

A sign outside the village town reads: GOLD TRAIL PASS.

EXT. BARBER SHOP - CONTINUOUS

A BARBER goes to unlock the door to his shop. It's broken into. Something's up.

The Barber looks around, suspicious, then carefully enters. Hesitant.

INT. BARBER SHOP - CONTINUOUS

It's completely silent. Ominous.

He creeps in, reluctant.

Suddenly, TWO HENCHMEN appear outside the window.

Solomon is parked in a seat, waiting for the Barber to notice him.

A Henchman lets him self in, the other is perched against the wall right by the front door.

The Barber just now has noticed Solomon. Startled, with a gasp, he turns on his heel.

Spooked, the Barber tries to escape, but the Henchman has appeared right behind him. He stops him in his tracks.

The Henchman doesn't do a thing. He's a stone wall.

SOLOMON (O.S.)
I'm about due for a trim.

The Barber turns to face him.

SOLOMON (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Wouldn't you say?

The Barber's face lights up when he realizes who he is...

We still do not see Solomon's face.

EXT. VALLEY - MORNING

An open valley, surrounded by mountains in the distance.

Rhonda is on top of an ASSAILANT, beating him to death with her bare hands. He is battered, bruised and bloody. She does not stop.

Suddenly, a RESCUE PARTY rallies around a hill covered in rocks and trees.

The RESCUE PARTY LEADER spies Rhonda relentlessly pounding the ASSAILANT's face in with her fists.

RESCUE PARTY LEADER
Think he's had enough?

Rhonda looks over her shoulder, her eyes lit up with revenge.

RHONDA
Your enough sure ain't mine.

The Rescue Party Leader is amused by her spunk.

Rhonda lifts a sizeable ROCK over her head.

The Rescue Party all braces for its impact.

Rhonda brings it down with a SMASH and a CRUNCH of the Assailant's skull.

The Rescue Party all cringes in disgust, except its Leader.

RESCUE PARTY LEADER
Gonna need you to come with us,
now.

Rhonda looks back over her shoulder at him again, this time with a glare.

RHONDA
Like hell I am.

A Pistol clicks. It's the Rescue Party Leader's Six Shooter, aimed right at her head.

RESCUE PARTY LEADER
Lest you desire an early reunion
with your buddy there.

Rhonda thinks on it a moment, but ultimately gives in.

EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - LATER THAT MORNING

JANE SMITH (late 20s) a sheriff's deputy, is leaned back in a rocking chair on the porch of the Sheriff's office. She has a rough exterior, but a kind of rugged beauty. She may be pretty, to someone...maybe.

The door swings open to reveal, Sheriff SHERIDAN THOMAS (40s). He has a grim face with an athletic build, but somewhat of a beer gut. He puts on the face of someone who hates everyone, but is good at heart.

He steps out on to the platform and looks around at the barren town. He grits his teeth.

SHERIDAN

Mornin'

JANE

Yep.

Jane has not stopped staring forward. Sheridan's gaze follows the breeze of wind. It's soft, slight.

JANE (CONT'D)

Storm's comin' in.

Sheridan glances around. He slowly turns to step back inside.

SHERIDAN

Doubt it.

He swings the door open and swivels in letting it close behind him.

JANE

(louder)

Betcha a nickel I'm right!

The sound of Sheridan's footsteps as he paces back to his office.

SHERIDAN (O.S.)

(shouting from inside)

Ya ain't got a nickel!

Jane huffs and slowly shakes her head.

A beat passes as Jane finally moves her normal gaze.

Sounds of hoofs pounding the ground is very faint, but present.

Jane, bewildered, rises from her chair as she looks off in the distance.

The sound of horses grows closer.

Jane hops off the deck and trots to the end of town.

EXT. EDGE OF TOWN - CONTINUOUS

She stops in place as she eyes the RESCUE PARTY galloping into town.

JANE
The hell's this?

The Rescue Party Leader is revealed to be...

BUCKY JONES (40s) lands off his horse. He's a rigid looking, crass man. The town criminal.

BUCKY
Gotchya a mean one, Jane.

JANE
I don't want your filth.

Bucky presents RHONDA to her. He's awful proud of it.

BUCKY
Caught her wailin' on a poor fella.

JANE
This don't atone for past sins,
Bucky.

BUCKY
Just a kindness is all.

JANE
I'm inclined not to believe that.

BUCKY
You're a doubter, but I provide.

Jane stares at Rhonda a beat.

Rhonda looks up at her, pitiful.

Jane begrudgingly motions for Bucky and his ASSOCIATE to bring her in.

Bucky looks gleeful as he drags Rhonda to the Station.

EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Sheridan stands with his hands on his hips at the center of the porch.

SHERIDAN
What in God's ever-living--

Bucky stands Rhonda up, a gift, an offering.

BUCKY
Broughtchya somethin'.

SHERIDAN
Whatchyou doin' draggin' poor women
'round for, anyway?

BUCKY
Wouldn'ta done it had she not been
breakin' the law.

SHERIDAN
You break the law everyday you
lousy--

BUCKY
She done killed a man, Sheriff.

Sheridan examines Rhonda up and down, then eyes Bucky. Unconvinced.

SHERIDAN
Forgive me for bein' skeptical,
Bucky.

Bucky shrugs.

BUCKY
Indulge me, Sheridan.

Sheridan throws a glance to Jane. She catches it. He looks back to Bucky.

He slowly steps down the porch, step by step, approaching Rhonda. He arrives at her. She looks him dead in the eye.

SHERIDAN
This true?

Nothing from Rhonda.

SHERIDAN (CONT'D)
What do I call ya?

RHONDA

Rhonda. Rhonda Barnes.

SHERIDAN

Did you kill that man, Rhonda Barnes?

She doesn't back down, but neither does Sheridan. She puts on a strong poker face until she finally concedes.

Rhonda nods, solemn.

Sheridan looks to Jane and motions inside with a nod of his head.

Jane grabs Rhonda, not so gentle, but not too rough either.

She escorts her inside.

BUCKY

What do I get?

Sheridan looks to Bucky, annoyed.

BUCKY (CONT'D)

My reward?

Sheridan turns his back on him and bounds up the porch.

SHERIDAN

(as he's walking away)

The undying gratitude of this town,
Buck.

Bucky scoffs, shakes his head and turns around. Away from the Station. He gestures to his men to follow. They obey.

Sheridan swings open the door and glides in.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Rhonda sits in a chair adjacent to Sheridan's desk.

Sheridan slides into his chair. He relaxes. Casual.

Jane leans up against the wall behind and to the left side of Sheridan's desk. Nonchalant.

Sheridan tries to get a read on Rhonda.

SHERIDAN

Why'd ya do it?

Rhonda hesitates a beat.

RHONDA
What's it matter, huh? Ain't one
murder the same as the next?

SHERIDAN
In the eyes of the law, maybe.

Rhonda shows a bit of surprise, but she keeps it contained.
She remains silent. Jane stands, judgmental-like.

SHERIDAN (CONT'D)
Why don't ya give me your side?

Jane wants to object as she side-glances Sheridan, but holds
back.

Rhonda waits a beat before she begins.

RHONDA
My husband, he--

She struggles to find the words.

RHONDA (CONT'D)
We were attacked.

SHERIDAN
Where? Why?

RHONDA
We're gold miners, he and I. We
were just-- going about our
business when...

Rhonda does her best to hide her emotions.

Sheridan leans forward in his seat.

SHERIDAN
When what?

Jane becomes more interested as well.

RHONDA
It was an ambush.

Sheridan's eyes light up, as do Jane's. But more subdued.

RHONDA (CONT'D)

I-- I don't know how it happened.
It just did. They came from
nowhere.

SHERIDAN

All this, you're saying to me. This
is true, yeah?

Rhonda nods.

JANE

You murder that man? Or in self
defense?

Rhonda's gaze shifts to Jane.

RHONDA

Which one?

Sheridan leans back in his chair. Jane's arms fold.

EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Sheridan walks at a brisk pace from the Station. He heads
right for the SALOON.

SALOON SIGN FACE: THE RUSTY SPOKE

INT. THE RUSTY SPOKE - CONTINUOUS

Sheridan approaches a table with Bucky at its head surrounded
by his POSSE.

Bucky looks up at Sheridan with a drunken surprise.

Sheridan nonchalantly flips a GOLD COIN to Bucky. He catches
it, but almost drops it.

Bucky examines it. Yep, it's solid gold. He admires it.

His Posse all oohs and aahs over it.

Sheridan, just as quickly as he came, swivels through the
swinging shutter saloon doors.

Bucky eyes him as he leaves.

INT. JAIL - LATER

Rhonda sits melancholy on her cot in her prison cell.

Jane kicks back on a wooden chair outside the bars.

RHONDA
Think the world's gonna be safer
with me all cooped up in here?

JANE
Don't matter what I think.

RHONDA
That what he tells ya?

Jane ignores the comment.

RHONDA (CONT'D)
They're fixin' for another ambush.
You know that, don't ya?

JANE
How'd you come upon that
information?

RHONDA
I was there. I lived it.

JANE
Don't mean they aim to do it again.

RHONDA
You just wait and see, huh?

Beat.

JANE
How'd you manage?

RHONDA
I'm more resourceful than I appear.

JANE
Never said you weren't. You seem
capable.

RHONDA
Capable? You haven't the faintest
clue.

JANE
I'm sure you'll give me one soon
enough.

Rhonda doesn't stop staring her in the eyes. Jane loses the
staring competition.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - THE NEXT DAY

Sheridan kicks back in his chair at his desk.

The front door suddenly swings open. A WELL-DRESSED MAN (30s) stands in the doorway. He looks Barber Shop fresh as he carefully shuts the door.

He struts across the room right over to Sheridan.

SHERIDAN

Help ya, sir?

WELL-DRESSED MAN

John Gilmore, Attorney General, at your service.

Sheridan and John shake hands.

SHERIDAN

What can I do for ya?

GILMORE

I need to ask a favor of you.

SHERIDAN

Do tell.

GILMORE

We need you to assist in an ambush.

Sheridan raises his eyebrows to this.

SHERIDAN

Go on.

GILMORE

Our crews have procured quite a sum of gold which was promptly transferred into the wrong hands. By way of theft. We need your help getting it back and ensuring safe passage out of town.

Jane comes into view behind Sheridan.

SHERIDAN

We don't have much in the way of manpower, as you see.

GILMORE

Well, word has spread fast about your efforts here.

(MORE)

GILMORE (CONT'D)
We'd be honored if you could
accommodate our request.

SHERIDAN
What have ya heard about me?

GILMORE
Only the good, I promise.

He winks. Sheridan is unimpressed.

GILMORE (CONT'D)
So! What say you? And your partner?

JANE
We ain't together.

Gilmore shrugs.

GILMORE
Business partners.

Gilmore laughs. Sheridan forces a chuckle. Jane folds her
arms.

SHERIDAN
What's the catch?

GILMORE
No catch! Just doing a service for
the federal government.

SHERIDAN
So, let's say I don't comply. What
then?

GILMORE
Well, okay. It's not so much a
proposition. More of an order.

Sheridan wags his finger at the Attorney General.

SHERIDAN
Ah, there it is.

Jane shakes her head.

GILMORE
Let's not have such a clash of egos
here, Sheriff. We all want the same
thing here! You see justice brought
to these thieves and murderers. We
get what's rightfully ours.

(MORE)

GILMORE (CONT'D)
No losers here, except those
thievin' bastards.

Sheridan is in careful deliberation.

Gilmore eyes Jane, she looks away.

SHERIDAN
Don't seem like there's much of a
choice in the matter, is there?

GILMORE
Suppose not.

Gilmore extends his hand. Sheridan looks down at it.

Hesitant, he interlocks hands.

GILMORE (CONT'D)
You made the right move. Washington
thanks ya.

Jane, shy, slowly approaches the Attorney General. They face
each other down.

She presents her hand, he snatches it up.

GILMORE (CONT'D)
I'll be in touch.

Gilmore lunges toward the door.

SHERIDAN
Be seein' ya.

Sheridan contemplates his actions.

INT. JAIL - NIGHT

Sheridan slowly paces from his Office to Rhonda's cell.

Rhonda acknowledges his presence.

RHONDA
What's to be done with me?

SHERIDAN
The law says you ought to be
hanged. I'm sure you knew that.

RHONDA
Yeah, figured.

Beat.

RHONDA (CONT'D)
 Now if it weren't up to the law?
 What would you say?

SHERIDAN
 I tend to side with the law, more
 often than not.

Rhonda huffs, breaks eye contact.

SHERIDAN (CONT'D)
 But, I don't know what to make of
 all this.
 (brief pause)
 When I come to a decision, I'm sure
 you'll be the first to know.

She chuckles at that. It's kind of funny. Kind of.

Beat.

RHONDA
 Well...
 (slight pause)
 I been ready to meet my fate. And
 someone else.

SHERIDAN
 I've been where you are. You don't
 have to make your peace if there's
 more to live for, you know.

RHONDA
 Seems to me you're doing everything
 you can to talk yourself out of it.
 Why?

SHERIDAN
 I ain't entirely convinced of your
 guilt.

RHONDA
 I ain't gonna plead for my life, if
 that's what you're after.

SHERIDAN
 Just the contrary.
 (beat)
 I begged the Almighty to take me
 away so I could see her again.

Rhonda looks on, interested now.

SHERIDAN (CONT'D)

But I realized, my time wasn't up. Would've been mighty convenient for me. Not so much for the people here, in this town. Somethin' was incomplete. Unfinished. Had to figure out what it was. Now, I know.

RHONDA

What was it?

Sheridan leans in, close to the bars. Closer to her.

SHERIDAN

I know what ready looks like. You ain't. You put on a rough exterior, but I know deep down, it's a face.

Sheridan expects her to back down, she doesn't.

RHONDA

You think you know me. Think you can read people. Well, I'll tell ya right now. You can't. You couldn't be further from the truth. You put on a nice show, but it's quite hollow.

Beat.

RHONDA (CONT'D)

I heard your conversation with the fancy fella.

Sheridan is forced to make eye contact after that.

RHONDA (CONT'D)

You'd be wrong to let this exchange occur.

He looks away.

SHERIDAN

You don't know what you're saying.

RHONDA

Speak on your own behalf.

SHERIDAN

I speak for everyone in this town.

RHONDA

That what you really think?

SHERIDAN
I'm protecting them.

RHONDA
They'll hate you for it.

SHERIDAN
They don't know a thing about it.

RHONDA
You honestly think they won't
figure it out?

Sheridan takes this in.

SHERIDAN
The day they take me for granted,
the man who keeps the peace-- is
the day they meet their end.

Rhonda thinks on this. She has no retort, but when she wants to say something, he disappears.

INT. JAIL - DUSK

Jane is half asleep at her post. Rhonda is restless.

RHONDA
What is your purpose in life?

Jane stirs.

JANE
What? What's your meaning?

RHONDA
Surely you weren't meant to sleep
in a chair, waiting for shit to
happen.

JANE
I'm just doin' as I'm told.
Following orders.

RHONDA
You're no more free than I am.
Taking commands from an old man.
Only difference is the bars.

JANE
We are different. Ain't alike in
any way.

RHONDA

You chose to be settin' right
there. And I chose to be here.

Jane remains silent.

RHONDA (CONT'D)

You're in denial. Refuse to see we
are alike.

JANE

What's your purpose, huh? Go and
kill some men, land yourself in
here?

RHONDA

I walked my path, but life sure has
its way of altering it.

JANE

Sounds to me like you're lettin'
life dictate your path. That is the
difference between you and me.

RHONDA

You don't have a path. You're
wandering. Lost. Once you find your
purpose, only then will your life
change.

Jane hangs on that a beat.

JANE

Get some rest, huh? Let me sleep.
Lord knows I need it.

RHONDA

Yeah. Somethin' I took for granted.

Jane hesitates a brief moment before placing her hat back
over her eyes and kicks back in her chair to sleep.

Rhonda lays back, stares at the ceiling. Her eyes lifeless.

INT. SALOON - MORNING

Sheridan pushes through the double doors, the Bartender looks
up from scrubbing out a glass, then back down at her work.

He then finds a seat at the bar.

The Bartender is a bit surprised to see who is seated before
her, but pours him a whiskey all the same.

BARTENDER

Ain't you a sight for sore eyes?

Sheridan lets out a little chuckle, but it was forced. He's not amused. She can tell.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

You still miss her?

SHERIDAN

'Miss' ain't an adequate word for what I'm feelin'.

She nods, they share in a silent reflection.

BARTENDER

She loved you, you know.

Sheridan shakes his head.

SHERIDAN

That love was lost from her eyes, towards the end.

Bartender regrets saying anything.

BARTENDER

Doesn't mean it was never there.

Beat.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

Ain't seen you in here much these days.

SHERIDAN

We're dealin' in different days now.

The Bartender leans forward up against the counter.

BARTENDER

What's your meanin'?

Sheridan lets out a gruff sigh.

SHERIDAN

Beginnin' to think I ain't got no business keepin' that poor lady locked away.

BARTENDER

What, that murderin' lady?

SHERIDAN

She done somethin' I seem to think
most in this town woulda done bein'
in her boots.

The Bartender thinks on that a moment.

BARTENDER

Not too sure what went down
exactly, but I never seen you to be
the lyin' type.

SHERIDAN

Thought it was right at the time.
Seemed to be my only real choice.

BARTENDER

Ain't no right choices, sheriff.
Only gut feelin's. Far as I'm
concerned.

Sheridan looks up from his glass, and in to her eyes.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

And we trust your gut, Sheriff.

SHERIDAN

Sometimes it don't feel that way.

BARTENDER

Nobody knows the right choices any
more than you do.

Sheridan gets up from his stool, and motions to leave.

SHERIDAN

That's what frightens me the most.

The Bartender shoots him an uncertain glance as he turns to
leave.

Sheridan turns away from her to march out the door.

The Bartender looks solemn as she watches him leave, picks up
his glass and stares into it. Unsure whether to keep or waste
precious whiskey.

INT. JAIL - MORNING

Jane is surprised to see she's the first to wake.

Rhonda lays on her cot, her arm over her eyes.

JANE
Why'd you kill your man?

RHONDA
Wadn't me who killed my man.

Jane lifts her hat.

RHONDA (CONT'D)
I killed the man who took him from
me. Then another. Anyone who had
anything to do with it.

JANE
Why wouldn't you tell us that from
the start?

RHONDA
Would you have believed me?

Jane avoids the question like the plague.

JANE
Why would you kill for a man? Throw
your life away like that?

RHONDA
You ever been married? Found love?

JANE
I never met a good one.

RHONDA
Don't have to've met a good one to
feel the ache of a lost one.

Beat.

JANE
Well, maybe I don't need to lean on
a man to live the life I'm meant to
lead.

RHONDA
You can slide offa top o' that high
horse any time, honey. You think
you're so strong, do ya?

JANE
I know I don't need a man, orderin'
me around, tellin' me what's what.

RHONDA
Isn't that what you do everyday?

Jane sends a hard glare Rhonda's way. She serves one up right back.

JANE
I'm beginnin' to think we've got
half a mind to allow you to keep
drawing breath, each and every day.

RHONDA
Why don't you just do it then, huh?

JANE
Sheridan's got principles.

RHONDA
And what about you?

Beat.

JANE
My man, he wasn't a particularly
good man. He-- got around.

RHONDA
Oh.

JANE
He'd fuck anyone and anything up
and down the strip.

RHONDA
I'm sorry I asked.

JANE
Most people are.

Beat.

Rhonda shrugs.

RHONDA
I mean, there can't be that many
people in this town.

JANE
My point exactly.

Rhonda contorts her face in confusion. Jane raises her eyebrows, turns back around, and puts her hat over her eyes.

JANE (CONT'D)
Best get some shut-eye, good
practice for death.

Rhonda looks wide-eyed.

EXT. SALOON - NIGHT

A DRUNKEN NELSON WILLIAMS (50s) stumbles around outside the Saloon. He then wanders over to the STABLES.

Sheridan watches from afar.

EXT. STABLES - CONTINUOUS

Nelson props himself against the stable doors. He relieves himself on them.

Sheridan is still spying him doing all this.

SHERIDAN
(mumbling)
Don't you damn well do it.

Nelson lets himself in.

SHERIDAN (CONT'D)
Shit.

Sheridan meanders on over to the Stables.

INT. JAIL - LATER

The Jail Cell bars slide open. Nelson is tossed in. He braces himself for impact. Nelson groans, moans.

A hand slides the cell shut. It's Sheridan's.

SHERIDAN
What was it Nelson, third time this week?

Rhonda notices the commotion as she wakes from her half slumber.

NELSON
I lose count these days. Can't be sure of much anything.

SHERIDAN
Yeah, well, I reckon you're fixin' to break your record of seven times in one week. Mighty impressive.

NELSON
 Don't think nobody will be beatin'
 that record anytime soon.

Sheridan locks his cell, he turns to wobble away.

SHERIDAN
 Sure is somethin' to be proud of.

NELSON
 Thank you, I'm here all week.

SHERIDAN
 Nope, just for the night. Thank God
 Almighty.

Sheridan turns away from the office for a brief moment, and
 back towards Nelson.

SHERIDAN (CONT'D)
 On second thought, I can't have you
 in the drunk tank every night.
 You're puttin' us at capacity.
 (gesturing to Rhonda)
 What with Cowgirl here and whatnot.

Rhonda gives him a sleepy glare.

NELSON
 I make no promises, Sheriff.

Sheridan shoos/swats him away as he turns on his heel and
 paces away.

Rhonda and Nelson share in the silence a moment. Nelson
 glances over to her. She does not acknowledge this.

NELSON (CONT'D)
 So, what are you in for?

RHONDA
 Murder.

NELSON
 Oh.

Beat.

NELSON (CONT'D)
 Aren't you gonna ask what I--

RHONDA
 I'm well aware.

NELSON

Oh. Right. Okay.

Nelson retreats to the side of the cell furthest from Rhonda, drunkenly.

Rhonda makes herself cozy to attempt sleep once again.

Jane has not lifted her hat from her face, she's sound asleep.

EXT. SALOON - MORNING

A DRUNKEN COWBOY bearing a whisky bottle stumbles outside, bracing himself with every step.

A HOOKER stands outside the swinging doors, leaning up against the wall.

EXT. BARBER SHOP - CONTINUOUS

A STORE OWNER unlocks his Shop and prepares for his day.

He glances over at the barren Barber shop, confused. Normally the Barber opens at this time, the same time...

A WANTED SIGN is posted outside next to his door for a STAGECOACH ROBBER and MURDERER named SOLOMON TRAVIS. He is bearded, long-haired, and scraggly looking.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Sheridan moseys on over to the Jail Cell (Drunk Tank) and unlocks the cell for Nelson.

SHERIDAN

Sure I'll be seeing you again later
this week?

Nelson wobbles on out of the cell and makes his way for the front door.

NELSON

You can count on it.

Nelson gives a sarcastic wave to Sheridan. He pushes through the front door and makes a bee-line for the Saloon.

Sheridan shakes his head as he meanders his way back to his desk, along the way he pats Jane on the thigh to wake her up.

She stirs, lifts her hat, and props herself up in her seat.

JANE

Seven times in one week, huh?

SHERIDAN

One for each day, cept Sunday so he must've hit a two-fer. Says he can't go on a bender on the Lord's day.

JANE

Why do you keep letting him out?

SHERIDAN

I ain't a monster, Jane.

She glares at him, insistent on a different answer.

SHERIDAN (CONT'D)

I can't count on him to stumble on home, he always wanders. Can only allow it when he sobers up.

JANE

Oh, yeah? And when's that?

SHERIDAN

When it's time for another drink.

Jane rolls her eyes.

Sheridan leans back and relaxes in his chair.

JANE

Don't you think you've learned your lesson by now?

SHERIDAN

Hadn't he learnt his?

JANE

You ought to stop letting him go off and get all drunk. Actin' a fool 'round town.

SHERIDAN

Best part of my day is seein' him. And that's the only time, when he's causing a ruckus.

JANE

It's high time you see that he's punished.

SHERIDAN

It's not like he's Bucky kinda trouble. He ain't hurtin' nobody.

JANE

He ain't hurt no one yet, you mean.

Sheridan shoots her a hard glare, then fixates back on his work.

Jane loses interest and shuffles to the front door.

Sheridan watches her, then glances over at Rhonda.

Rhonda stares back.

INT. SALOON - MOMENTS LATER

Jane pushes through the swinging doors and makes a bee-line for the bar.

Bucky and Company are set up in their usual perch, gawking at Jane.

Jane ignores them (and everyone) all the way to the bar.

She pops a squat in a stool furthest down the bar from Bucky and his men.

The Bartender fetches her a whiskey without a word.

Jane nods, lifts the glass to her mouth, and sips it with a slight bite.

All the while, Bucky has made his approach...and he's a tad bit drunk.

BUCKY

Darlin', the high point of my day is always seein' you 'round.

Jane has refused to acknowledge his presence.

BUCKY (CONT'D)

You sure are prettier than a lilly of the valley, you know that?

She has yet to face him as she takes another sip of her drink.

BUCKY (CONT'D)

Someone ought to make a wifey of ya, and who else but me?

She can't help but let a smile slip through the cracks.

BUCKY (CONT'D)

What do ya say?

JANE

You don't have a knack for poetry,
but I sure respect your penchant
for romance.

BUCKY

How come you and I never--

JANE

Because Jane and Bucky don't have a
nice ring to it, that's why.

BUCKY

That the only reason? You don't
like the sound of it is all?

JANE

I got plenty of other reasons: it
goes against everything I believe.
And you're utterly repulsive.

BUCKY

Seems to me like you got a list.

JANE

Oh, you don't suppose I'm done?

Bucky looks back to his crew, he leans in closer to Jane.

BUCKY

(softly)

Ya ain't gotta go on.

JANE

What's the matter? You ain't likin'
what you're hearin'? Not the
response you expected?

Bucky considers retreating back to his friends, but Jane's
hand pulls him back.

JANE (CONT'D)

A little blow to the ego don't hurt
now and then.

Bucky is even more confused now.

JANE (CONT'D)
I gotta knock you down a peg, Buck.
You know that, don't ya?

BUCKY
So, are you sayin'...?

JANE
Don't chase the unattainable. It's
a hopeless endeavor.

Bucky's eyes dart back and forth between his crew and Jane.

JANE (CONT'D)
(softer)
And this? This...act you're puttin'
on for your buddies-- It's
unbecoming.

She releases her grip. Bucky takes it all in a moment.

JANE (CONT'D)
Hey maybe next time, don't come off
so desperate, huh?

He shuffles his way back to his group, defeated.

Jane smirks as she returns to her whiskey.

BUCKY
(mumbles to self)
Next time?

Bucky looks back to Jane, curious...

Jane nods to the bartender as she slides the glass back over to her, tips her cap.

The group of scoundrels have yet to take their eyes off Jane as she struts on out of the Saloon.

INT. SALOON - LATER

Bucky and his posse sit at their usual table. Nelson stumbles over.

NELSON
I think you and I could be business
partners.

BUCKY
I got no business with drunkards.

Bucky's crew roars in laughter.

NELSON

Then what ya doin' here for?

The laughter subsides. That stung a bit.

Bucky's eyes narrow on Nelson.

BUCKY

All right. State your bidniss.

NELSON

I just recently came upon some information that might be of interest to you.

Bucky thinks on that one, looks around, then back at Nelson.

BUCKY

Go on...

Nelson cracks a half-smile.

EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - LATER

Jane sits out on the front porch, relaxed. Sprawled out.

DISTANT GUNSHOTS can be heard.

Jane raises herself from her seat.

FOOTSTEPS are heard quickly approaching the front door. Sheridan emerges.

SHERIDAN

Go check it out.

Jane clicks the hammer back on her six-shooter.

JANE

You comin' with?

SHERIDAN

Someone's gotta watch the prisoner.

JANE

Sounded like it came from the Bank.

SHERIDAN

Well, go on, now. High tail it.

Jane nods and scurries away, toward the GUNFIRE.

Sheridan watches her go.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Sheridan purposefully approaches the jail cell.

Rhonda keeps her eyes on him the whole way.

SHERIDAN

You ain't goin' nowhere, are ya?

Rhonda looks about her, shrugs.

Sheridan nods, and pulls his Henry lever action rifle from the wall.

He racks in a load and trots out the front door.

Rhonda's eyes dart around, unsure.

EXT. BANK - MOMENTS LATER

Sheridan trots on over towards Jane.

Jane, annoyed, gestures inside the bank for Sheridan.

SHERIDAN

Wot' n' tarnation were those
gunshots, huh?

JANE

They fucked off up into them hills.
Bucky's goons, I presume.

SHERIDAN

Do wolves shit in packs?

JANE

Been my experience.

Sheridan squares up to the Bank, hitches up his britches.

SHERIDAN

Can't go in the Bank, can we?

Jane shakes her head.

Sheridan wipes the sweat off his brow.

Jane leans off to the side, hand on her hip, the other on her Colt.

SHERIDAN (CONT'D)
 (towards the inside of the
 bank)
 Bucky! You dog gone horse's ass!

Brief pause.

NELSON (O.S.)
 (from inside the Bank)
 I done fucked up, Sheriff.

Sheridan's face twists in bewilderment.

Jane shares in his confusion.

SHERIDAN
 Nelson? That you, ya drunk sack o'
 shit?

NELSON (O.S.)
 (defeated)
 Yeah, it's me.

SHERIDAN
 What's the story here, huh?

Slight pause.

NELSON (O.S.)
 (muffled)
 I'll be honest-- I need help,
 Sheriff.

SHERIDAN
 There may not be any help for you,
 Nelson, you dumb sum'bitch.

Beat.

NELSON (O.S.)
 Bucky put me up to robbin' this
 here bank.

SHERIDAN
 (turning to Jane)
 Bucky put you up to this, you say?

Jane turns away, shaking her head.

NELSON (O.S.)
 God's honest truth, Sheriff. He
 done strapped dynamite to my chest.

Sheridan places his face in his hands. Jane shares the same sentiment.

NELSON (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Threatened my life if I didn't
secure him the bank's cash.

SHERIDAN
(softly, to Jane)
Bucky and his god-forsaken
dynamite.

Sheridan shakes his head. Jane rolls her eyes.

SHERIDAN (CONT'D)
(to Nelson)
Nelson, he'll likely kill ya
anyhow. You got highly explosive
material on your person, for
Chrissake!

NELSON (O.S.)
Sheriff-- I wadn't prepared for
death in this manner. I ain't goin'
out sober, dammit! I can't do it!

SHERIDAN
Nelson, I need you to do somethin'
for me.

NELSON (O.S.)
Name it.

SHERIDAN
I need ya to come out here. I'd
like to see those nice Bankers and
Bank patrons unharmed, ya hear?

INT. BANK - CONTINUOUS

Nelson peeks out the window, looking out on the town.

He can see the Sheriff's Station, diagonal from him.

SHERIDAN (O.S.)
Nobody needs to get blown to bits
today.

Nelson can see that whatever's to be done, hasn't been
finished. He looks unsatisfied.

SHERIDAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
That even includes you--

Nelson knows he has to stall even longer...

EXT. BANK - CONTINUOUS

Sheridan continues on, relentless...

SHERIDAN
--ya miserable lowlife good-for-nothin'.

Even Jane balks at that one...

INT. BANK - CONTINUOUS

Nelson looks solemn.

The BANK TELLERS and PATRONS look on in terror.

NELSON
Uh, Sheriff?

Nelson looks out the window once more. Still nothing.

NELSON (CONT'D)
I don't mean to delay your reasonable request any further, but what's another few seconds, huh?

SHERIDAN (O.S.)
Yeah? What is it?

NELSON
Uh-- I'm gonna need you to ask polite-like.

EXT. BANK - CONTINUOUS

Sheridan looks aghast as he faces Jane. She shrugs.

SHERIDAN
The hell you on about?

Sheridan looks to Jane for clarity. He'll get none.

NELSON (O.S.)
I heard you mumblin' them insults at me. Gonna need you askin' me polite.

Sheridan's about had enough.

SHERIDAN

Nelson. I done asked polite. You don't wanna hear my impolite, you scum of the Earth chicken shit imbecile--

JANE

(whispering)
Sheridan. He's stalling.

SHERIDAN

(whispering to Jane)
What?

NELSON (O.S.)

Sure didn't sound too nice.

SHERIDAN

(to Nelson)
Go on and fuck yourself Nelson. I ain't gonna count to thirty, seeing as you probly can't even count that high.

INT. BANK - CONTINUOUS

Nelson felt that one sting.

He looks out the window over at the Sheriff's Station. He sees BUCKY and TWO COMPANIONS.

INT. JAIL - CONTINUOUS

A silence comes over the Station. Rhonda basks in it until...

BUCKY (O.S.)

(muffled)
Lady! You in there?

RHONDA

What? Who, me?

BUCKY (O.S.)

No, the other one. O'course, you!

RHONDA

Who are you? What d'you want?

BUCKY (O.S.)

Watch out for the blast!

RHONDA

Blast?!

Her eyes light up. She cowers in the corner furthest from the wall.

A fuse can barely be heard lighting and reaching the end before--

EXT. BANK - CONTINUOUS

Sheridan has a realization. Jane is right.

An EXPLOSION can be heard off in the distance.

It sounds like it came from the Station...

Jane and Sheridan know that it has to be. Bucky.

INT. JAIL - CONTINUOUS

BLAM!!! The wall between the cells erupts, leaving a hole large enough for Rhonda to fit through.

Bucky hops through the hole in the wall and pulls Rhonda up by her hand she reluctantly offers him.

TWO of BUCKY'S GOONS watchfully guard the hole in the wall, lever-action rifles in hand.

Bucky pulls Rhonda behind him with one hand, six-shooter in the other.

They scurry away from the blast hole in the jail wall.

EXT. BANK - CONTINUOUS

Jane and Sheridan make a break for the Station.

INT. BANK - CONTINUOUS

Nelson sees Jane and Sheridan scurry away.

He peels off the DYNAMITE VEST and lays it on the floor for ALL to see.

NELSON

Not to worry. Won't go off long as y'all stay put.

Nelson pushes through the front doors.

The BANK TELLERS and PATRONS all stare at the DYNAMITE VEST in horror. They don't move a muscle.

EXT. CENTER OF TOWN - CONTINUOUS

Jane and Sheridan sprint as fast as their nonathletic bodies allow. Well, Jane is athletic. Sheridan tries to keep up.

SHERIDAN
(nearly out of breath)
What in the hell do they want with Rhonda, anyhow?

Jane looks back at Sheridan briefly.

JANE
I haven't the foggiest.

SHERIDAN
And where in all that is holy does he get all this damned dynamite??

JANE
I'm the last person you'd wanna ask concerning Bucky's affairs.

SHERIDAN
That ain't what I heard.

Jane glares back at Sheridan.

EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - CONTINUOUS

Bucky and his GOONS see Sheridan and Jane still running towards them as they make their way around the corner with Rhonda.

Jane and Sheridan slide into cover once they see they've been spotted.

Bucky lets loose a couple rounds at Sheridan.

The GOONS open fire on Jane's position.

Sheridan is behind the cover of a wagon, Jane behind a barrel.

The GOONS keep suppressing fire on Jane and Sheridan.

Jane and Sheridan are constantly looking to where they think Bucky, Rhonda, and his men will be.

Bucky, Rhonda, and his TWO GOONS come into view down the street.

The Goons break off formation, coming towards Jane and Sheridan.

Bucky, pulling Rhonda behind him, makes for the Hills.

The movement catches Sheridan's eye.

SHERIDAN

That cheeky sum'bitch!

Sheridan lets a round loose toward Bucky.

Bucky ducks, throws Rhonda behind his back to his men.

The Goons cover Rhonda and make haste across the street and into an alley between the Bank and a Convenience Store.

Bucky takes aim at Sheridan who dives out of the way of the shot.

Jane shoots her shot at Bucky who crouch-runs away toward his escape in his Posse's wake.

Bucky's Men across the street at the bank, all the while, are still pinning Sheridan and Jane down with cover-fire.

Sheridan pops off a desperation round, it goes nowhere.

SHERIDAN (CONT'D)

Should we go after Bucky and Rhonda?

Jane makes a feeble attempt to grab Sheridan's attention.

JANE

Sheriff, they're gone!

Bucky's men, shuffling toward their escape, still aiming at their position, run backwards and shoot to keep Jane and Sheridan busy.

JANE (CONT'D)

Let's head back inside while we can!

SHERIDAN

Agh! Shit! That son of a whore!

JANE
What about Nelson?

SHERIDAN
Fuck him!

JANE
And the Bankers??

Jane, using cover, scurries over to Sheridan, pulls him up and grabs him with her. Firing once over at Bucky's crew.

SHERIDAN
No harm will come to 'em!

They slam open the door dive back inside the station.

INT. STATION - CONTINUOUS.

Jane and Sheridan shuffle across the floor into cover.

JANE
How can you be so sure?

Rounds of gunfire catch the walls next to the door, splintering the wood.

Glass shatters from bullets ripping through the windows above them.

Sheridan shakes his head to her.

SHERIDAN
I ain't.

Jane has a rush of horror wash over her.

EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION / HILLS - CONTINUOUS.

The Goons lay down some more suppressive fire.

They then look at each other, satisfied, make their way up towards the Hills.

EXT. BUCKY'S HILLS - MOMENTS LATER

Bucky and his men escort Rhonda up the hill toward his hideout.

BUCKY
 Friends o' mine say you know
 things.

RHONDA
 What kinda person don't know
 things?

BUCKY
 Says you know important things.

RHONDA
 You're gonna have to be more
 specific.

BUCKY
 I was hoping you would do that for
 me.

Rhonda shoots him a sharp stare. Bucky smirks out of the side
 of his mouth.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - LATER

Sheridan bursts through the front door and heavily stomps to
 his desk.

Jane follows closely behind, but stepping lighter.

SHERIDAN
 The hell we gonna do now?

JANE
 Gotta continue on business as
 usual, what else we gonna do?

SHERIDAN
 What am I if I can't protect this
 town?

JANE
 This doesn't change a thing. We
 still got a job to do.

SHERIDAN
 We gotta get her back.

The door swings open, we don't know who it is yet.

GILMORE (O.S.)
 No hasty decisions now.

Sheridan and Jane turn to face Gilmore.

SHERIDAN

I can't just let my prisoners roam
free.

Jane shoots him a glance. What did you just do with Nelson?

Sheridan returns the glance.

SHERIDAN (CONT'D)

The murderin' ones, anyway.

She rolls her eyes and shakes her head.

GILMORE

We have a more pressing task at
hand.

SHERIDAN

They'll cock up this entire
operation. You know that, don't ya?

GILMORE

That's what I have you for.

SHERIDAN

We don't have the numbers. The
resources.

GILMORE

You mean to tell me you can't
convince the townspeople that this
isn't for their safety and well-
being?

SHERIDAN

I ain't about ta be pullin' them
from their homes and forcin' guns
in their hands.

GILMORE

A household without a gun is hardly
a household at all.

JANE

Sheridan, please. We made this man
a promise. I aim to stick to it.

Gilmore's face stretches into a smirk, he stops it from
becoming a grin.

JANE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

We gotta see this through.

Sheridan mulls it over. He paces back to his desk.

Gilmore becomes impatient with his indecision.

GILMORE
I told you before, you can't back
out from this one. The Federal
Government forbids such inaction.

Sheridan doesn't back down.

SHERIDAN
At least let me try to get her
back.

GILMORE
How will you keep her? Your cage is
in ruin.

Gilmore gestures to the gaping hole in the wall behind the
cell.

Sheridan shrugs.

SHERIDAN
Easy fix.

Sheridan deflates, he knows he's right.

GILMORE (O.S.)
It's out of the question.

Jane's eyes are glued to Sheridan's reaction.

Sheridan sighs.

SHERIDAN
All right. Where do we start?

Gilmore smirks, nods.

GILMORE
That's the spirit, my fellow
lawman. Now, it's time we set a
trap for these imbeciles.

Sheridan shoots a glance over to Jane. She receives it.

EXT. TOWNHOME - LATER

Sheridan knocks on the front door of the home. The door
promptly swings open revealing an annoyed MR. KANE (40s).

SHERIDAN
Afternoon, Mr. Kane.

KANE

Afternoon, Sheriff. What can I do ya for?

SHERIDAN

I need to ask a huge favor of ya. We're setting up a convoy that's to arrive any day now. Would you stand with us to help bring these thieves to justice and return this gold to its rightful owner?

KANE

Sheriff. You lost a murderer in your own jail. You let the bank get robbed. We all coulda been slaughtered in that little skirmish you had in the streets. You can't protect us. I ain't stickin' my neck out on this one. I'm sorry. G'day now.

Kane slams the door in Sheridan's face. All he can do is shake his head.

EXT. OLD RUNDOWN COLONIAL - MOMENTS LATER

Sheridan, timid, knocks on the door.

It opens. A FRAIL MOTHER stands in the doorway.

FRAIL MOTHER

Help ya, Sheriff?

SHERIDAN

Afternoon, Ms. Johnson. Just wanted to tell ya, might be a bit of a skirmish in our midst these comin' days.

MS. JOHNSON

This any different from the tomfoolery that's been goin' on 'round here lately?

SHERIDAN

We got somethin' we gotta do and we would appreciate your cooperation.

MS. JOHNSON

I hope you're makin' a point here soon.

Ms. Johnson's KIDS make themselves seen, just barely, behind her. Sheridan eyes them.

SHERIDAN

Ms. Johnson. I don't want to put your family in the center of danger, is all.

MS. JOHNSON

What are you sayin', exactly?

SHERIDAN

I'm sayin, ya either dig in or you pick up and call someplace else home.

MS. JOHNSON

Ya can't make us leave.

SHERIDAN

You're right, I can't. I'm just tellin' ya, prepare. Somethin's comin'.

MS. JOHNSON

You've brought all this chaos upon us. It's long overdue you fixed it.

Ms. Johnson slams the door in Sheridan's face. He slouches, slinks away, defeated.

EXT. VARIOUS TOWNHOMES - MOMENTS LATER

BEGIN: MONTAGE OF TOWNSPEOPLE SLAMMING THEIR DOORS IN SHERIDAN'S FACE.

EXT. CENTER OF TOWN - LATER

Sheridan, defeated, mopes over to Gilmore, hands on hips.

Gilmore, too, has his hands on his hips, pacing back and forth.

They both come to a stop when they meet.

GILMORE

Any luck?

Sheridan shakes his head.

SHERIDAN
They'll hold their ground if it comes to that, but they ain't stickin' their necks out.

GILMORE
They'll come around.

SHERIDAN
I don't see that as a likelihood.

GILMORE
Wishful thinking. It's all we got.

SHERIDAN
Hmm. Ain't that the truth.

Beat.

GILMORE
How come the State don't send you help? More protection?

SHERIDAN
Ain't got it in the budget, they say.

GILMORE
Ain't got it in the bu--?? You mean to tell me, all the gold that comes through here. And they can't spare shit for you? What kinda lunacy goes on behind closed doors in the Capital, huh?

Sheridan is a bit thrown by the question.

SHERIDAN
I was thinkin' maybe you might be able to tell me, Mr. Big Federal Man.

That caught Gilmore offguard.

GILMORE
Huh, well even being there, sometimes I don't have a clue.

SHERIDAN
That explains a lot, actually.

Gilmore wants to glare him down, but can't help letting a smirk slip through.

SHERIDAN (CONT'D)

Curious though that they'd keep you
in the dark.

A suspicious cloud of silence, uncertainty hangs over them
for a brief moment.

GILMORE

So, they just expect you and a girl
to defend all this gold that comes
in and out of here?

SHERIDAN

She ain't no girl. She's
extraordinary.

GILMORE

Regardless of what she is or isn't,
it's mighty impressive what you two
have achieved here.

Brief pause.

SHERIDAN

Jane and me-- we make do.

GILMORE

That I have no doubt. Just baffles
me-- two people.

SHERIDAN

The way it's always been. I got no
reason to question it.

GILMORE

And you've never had trouble?

SHERIDAN

Everybody in the gold mining
business knows to bring the fruits
of their labor through us.

Gilmore's eyes light up. Christmas.

GILMORE

Then why don't all them thievin'
bastards come rob every transport
of gold?

SHERIDAN

Nobody that's criminals knows about
Gold Trail Pass.

GILMORE
Doesn't Bucky know about it?

SHERIDAN
Nobody but Bucky knows about Gold
Trail Pass.

Gilmore lets that hang in the air a moment.

GILMORE
You think Solomon Travis knows
about this place?

SHERIDAN
Never heard of 'im.

GILMORE
Didn't you put those wanted posters
of him?

SHERIDAN
Doesn't ring any bells.

GILMORE
Hmm. You sure?

SHERIDAN
I haven't the foggiest.

GILMORE
Hmph. Right. Okay, well, better get
to it then, huh?

SHERIDAN
We'll work with what we got.

GILMORE
I like the attitude. Take it easy,
Sheriff.

Gilmore struts with purpose further into town.

Sheridan watches him go, curiosity washing over him.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - LATER

Sheridan glides across the room to where Jane has her chair
propped up against the wall, leaned back, legs crossed.

JANE
Ain't you wary of that politician?

SHERIDAN

What's your meanin'?

JANE

He comes up into town and starts barkin' orders at ya? Ain't never seen him in these parts before. Just shows up in a puff of smoke?

SHERIDAN

What do ya want me to do? Drill a hole in his bedroom wall? Watch him proddin' pleasure ladies all night?

JANE

That'd be a start.

SHERIDAN

I ain't doin' it, Jane. But, by all means, indulge in the unsavory. That'd be a sight to see, huh?

JANE

Be a more decent sight than I'm accustomed.

SHERIDAN

Why don't you then? You jealous of all the action he's gettin' or somethin'?

Jane leans up in her seat, her feet slam on the floor. So do the legs of the chair. She waves him off.

JANE

Forget I said anything.

She storms off towards the door.

SHERIDAN

Don't take much for me to forget anything you say these days.

Jane looks back before throwing open the door.

JANE

Prick.

SHERIDAN

Ya ought to tell me what it looks like when you're done.

JANE

Wouldn't you like to know?

Jane slams the door behind her.

SHERIDAN
Don't pass off your desires as my
own, Jane!

Sheridan thinks on what he said a moment, then lifts himself from his seat.

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Sheridan makes his approach to THOMAS SHEPARD (50s). Elegant and proper are his two middle names. He's dressed as such, too.

SHERIDAN
Howdy.

SHEPARD
Good evening.

SHERIDAN
I need a favor of ya.

SHEPARD
I'm at your service.

SHERIDAN
Can you keep me abreast of the
Attorney General fellow's nocturnal
activities?

SHEPARD
I'm certain I can accomodate your
request.

SHERIDAN
Much obliged.

SHEPARD
Certainly.

Shepard half-bows to him.

Sheridan nods to him then looks up to the rooms on the floor above.

PROSTITUTES and DRUNK MEN look down upon him. They're drinking, caressing each other, and enjoying general merriment. Until they meet Sheridan's eyes. Their smiles disappear just as fast as they came.

SHEPARD (CONT'D)

The vast majority of my tenants are better suited for the most vile of outhouses. But, anyone willing to put up enough coin is entitled to the hospitality I offer.

Sheridan looks back to Shepard.

SHERIDAN

Wadn't no judgment meant, I assure you.

Sheridan peeks back up at the disgusting creatures, in their natural habitat.

SHEPARD

Enjoy the rest of your evening, Sheriff.

Sheridan looks away from them as he approaches the door.

SHERIDAN

Thanks again, Thomas.

Shepard watches as he goes, nodding in approval.

Sheridan pushes through the front door, and can't help looking back again.

INT. BUCKY'S HIDEOUT - THE NEXT DAY

Bucky paces back and forth in front of Rhonda who is tied to a chair.

Nelson stands off to the side, along with RANDOM MEMBERS of BUCKY'S POSSE.

BUCKY

What do you know of the stagecoach robberies?

RHONDA

What? What stagecoach robberies? Not a thing. I wasn't involved in any way.

BUCKY

(to Nelson)

Nelson, you nimwitted horsefucker! You said she knew about the stagecoach robbery!

NELSON
 (trembling)
 I-- I thought she did! My due
 apologies. I--

Nelson, shaking, lifts a whisky flask off the table to his
 mouth and nervously dribbles it in.

BUCKY
 (to Rhonda)
 A prominent figure was said to be
 robbed of his stagecoach, his
 fortune, and his life. You don't
 know of this?

RHONDA
 I have no knowledge of that
 occurrence.

BUCKY
 Strange.

NELSON
 You never saw Solomon Travis? He
 was the culprit, the perpetrator.

RHONDA
 No, it was just bandits. Thieves. I
 don't know who they were.

BUCKY
 It's possible it was his gang. You
 know of them?

RHONDA
 The name doesn't sound familiar.

NELSON
 Well, everybody knows Solomon
 Travis and the Solomon Travis gang.
 Don't you know?

Bucky could kill Nelson right now. Nelson sees this.

NELSON (CONT'D)
 You sure you didn't see anything?

RHONDA
 I ain't seen much of anything as
 I've been confined in a cell during
 my stay here. Haven't you noticed?

Nelson retreats to a corner, defeated, with his liquid
 courage.

BUCKY

So you had nothin' to do with the stagecoach robbery. As a victim or conspirator?

RHONDA

No, I was ambushed in the mountains. I wasn't in a stagecoach. I was on foot, at camp. In a tent. We were all mining gold.

Bucky mulls this over. A realization.

BUCKY

Wait-- what's this you say about....gold?

RHONDA

Yes, I was a gold miner before all this. We were ambushed while scavenging. Me, my husband, and our crew in California. I killed the man who murdered my husband, and I aim to kill the rest. Anyone who had anything to do with it.

BUCKY

No, what about the part with the-- the gold.

Rhonda gives a displeased look to Bucky.

RHONDA

Yes, bandits robbed us all of our gold. They're likely headed this way.

Bucky takes this in a beat.

BUCKY

My, that's even better.

A grin stretches across his face.

Nelson glances up from his drink. He, too, is in awe.

Rhonda no longer looks bummed, as an idea enters her head...

EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - LATE AFTERNOON

Sheridan sits on the porch, scanning the town.

Gilmore makes his approach. Sheridan watches him all the way.

GILMORE
My scouts report they should be
about a day out.

SHERIDAN
Sure is nice to have others lookin'
out for ya, ain't it?

Gilmore lightly chuckles.

GILMORE
You think we're ready?

SHERIDAN
Ready as we'll ever be.

Gilmore nods.

GILMORE
Anything you need from me?

Sheridan thinks on that a moment, a little taken aback he
would even offer.

SHERIDAN
Stay the hell outta the line of
fire.

GILMORE
I don't anticipate a fight. They
should give in easy.

SHERIDAN
Yeah? How do ya figure?

GILMORE
A peaceful surrender is my aim. And
I tend to get what I want.

SHERIDAN
Don't ever assume with these bandit
types.

GILMORE
The Federal Government is willing
to make an enticing offer to ensure
this gold ends up back in the right
hands.

SHERIDAN
It don't ever go the way you'd like
in my experience.

GILMORE

Well. Let's hope for the diplomatic outcome, huh?

SHERIDAN

Hmm. Hope.
(chuckles)
Right.

Gilmore smiles.

GILMORE

Rest easy, Sheriff.

SHERIDAN

And you, Mr. Gilmore.

Gilmore nods, and he retires to the Hotel.

Sheridan watches him in. He glares, then looks to the sunset. It's beautiful.

Off in the distance, he sees the silhouette of who he believes to be Jane.

Sheridan makes his way back to the Station.

Suddenly, the Bartender is seen jogging at a brisk pace towards Sheridan.

He stops in his tracks, just before the door, his hands on his hips. As if to say, "what is it now?"

BARTENDER

(out of breath)
Sheridan. You gotta help us.

SHERIDAN

Normally you ain't the kind who asks nobody for help.

BARTENDER

Wouldn't ask if it wadn't out o' my reach. These cowpokes are causin' a bit of an upheaval at the Saloon.

Sheridan looks annoyed.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

Can ya come take a look?

Sheridan nods.

SHERIDAN

Be glad to.

Sheridan hitches up his britches.

INT. SALOON - MOMENTS LATER

MULTIPLE AGGRESSIVE COWPOKES are causing an upheaval, just as the Bartender had described.

Chairs flying across the room. Glass bottles, pint glasses, shot glasses, shattering.

Sheridan hardly takes one good, solid look at the goings-on in the Saloon before he--

BANG!! He lets off a shot into the ceiling.

The UNRULY COWPOKES all freeze in place. They are shocked to see who stands before them.

SHERIDAN

I'm gonna need y'all to cease your hootin' and hollerin' now.

ONE BITTER COWPOKE creeps towards Sheridan.

BITTER COWPOKE

You got a mean set down there, hombre. But I stop for no one.

SHERIDAN

Think that makes you hard?

The Bitter Cowpoke takes a gander at the Bartender, then back at Sheridan.

BITTER COWPOKE

Plenty of things do.

The Bitter Cowpoke's companions all give that a bit of a chuckle.

Sheridan scans him up and down. Not much to look at.

SHERIDAN

I own this town, funny man. Don't push your chances.

The Bitter Cowpoke inches closer to his face. They're close. All the Bar Patrons, Aggressive Cowpokes, and the Bartender look on in nervous anticipation.

BITTER COWPOKE

You lost this town to Bucky years ago. You shoulda thrown him in the can instead of some cock sucking whore who didn't know her place.

Sheridan instantly grabs the Bitter Cowpoke by the throat. Tight.

SHERIDAN

You think that kinda talk adds bulge to your britches, do ya?

The Bitter Cowpoke struggles to move, he grimaces, turning beat red.

SHERIDAN (CONT'D)

Well, I'll tell ya right now. It don't.

Sheridan shoves him aside. The Bitter Cowpoke is thrown like a ragdoll. Crashing into a chair and spirals downwards.

Everyone looks on in pure silence, utter shock.

Sheridan struts on up to the bar, right to the Bartender.

SHERIDAN (CONT'D)

It's either a glass of whiskey
(waving his pistol at the
Station)
Or the can.

BARTENDER

(pouring a shot)
Gee, Sheriff. You drive a hard bargain.

Sheridan rips the shot, effortless.

SHERIDAN

I don't make the rules.

He wipes his mouth.

Sheridan moseys on out, casual.

The Bartender grabs a sawed-off shotgun amidst the distraction.

As Sheridan pushes through the front door, The Bartender aims at the group of Aggressive Cowpokes.

BARTENDER

Clock just struck closin' time.
Best get while gettin's available.

The Aggressive Cowpokes obey. The Bitter Cowpoke gains his bearings, his footing, and bolts out the door.

EXT. HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Sheridan meanders his way toward the hotel, after a brief moment of considering a trek back to the Station. He decides against it.

INT. HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Sheridan is careful to stay behind the door, peeks through the window to see a HOOKER follow Gilmore into his room.

Gilmore suspiciously looks behind his back before entering.

Sheridan pushes through the front door. He makes a bee-line for Thomas Shepard.

SHEPARD

Greetings, Sheriff.

Sheridan nods.

SHERIDAN

Evenin'.

SHEPARD

How can I be of service?

SHERIDAN

Got anything for me?

SHEPARD

Nothing unusual. Just some bizarre noises coming from his room late at night. But, that's not anything out of the ordinary in my establishment, as you well know.

SHERIDAN

Ya ain't gotta put it into words like that.

SHEPARD

My due apologies.

Sheridan looks up where Gilmore's room is.

SHERIDAN

Well, thank ya for checkin' up on that for me.

SHEPARD

Anything I can do to help.

SHERIDAN

'Preciate it.

SHEPARD

Let me know if there's anything more I can do for you.

Sheridan tips his cap to him. He nods.

SHERIDAN

Much obliged.

Sheridan nods and turns for the door. He shakes his head, wishing he hadn't done anything at all. He knew it.

EXT. HILL OVERLOOKING VALLEY - SUNSET

Jane sits at the peak of the hill, overlooking a valley. The sun is setting over the horizon.

Sheridan softly approaches her, she notices as she barely looks over her shoulder, then back to the sunset.

He hesitates, then makes his way to her side. Plopping himself right down next to her.

SHERIDAN

Enjoying the view?

JANE

It's...acceptable.

Sheridan softly chuckles. They share the silence, the view, for a beat.

JANE (CONT'D)

You must want somethin'.

SHERIDAN

Why you gotta assume such things? Can't I take in the sights with my deputy?

JANE

You wouldn't have made your approach were it not for a purpose.

SHERIDAN
I came for the company.

JANE
You have it.

Sheridan lets the sound of nature take hold a moment.

SHERIDAN
Just worried about tomorrow is all.

JANE
Push it from your mind. React and overcome.

SHERIDAN
You and my wife woulda gotten along.

JANE
You tell me that every other day, it seems.

SHERIDAN
Truth's the only utterance that leaves my mouth, you know.

JANE
A fatal flaw.

Beat.

SHERIDAN
How come a man never entered your life?

JANE
I've ventured down that path. It's a roundabout in my experience.

SHERIDAN
You should be so lucky. Some never get that far.

JANE
I wouldn't call it luck.

SHERIDAN
What would you call it?

JANE
Fate. Destiny.

Sheridan lets that one sink in.

SHERIDAN
I checked up on the Attorney
General for ya, like you wanted.

JANE
Oh? And?

SHERIDAN
Just porkin' hookers like I
suspected.

JANE
Still don't make him innocent.

SHERIDAN
Can't see what he's guilty of
neither, cept maybe in the eyes of
the Lord.

JANE
Eyes that ain't there.

Sheridan is noticeably bothered by that comment, but he lets
it slide. He didn't come for a fight.

A long silence passes before-

SHERIDAN
Get some rest. I'll need you sharp
tomorrow.

JANE
I should say the same to you.

Sheridan smiles. Jane tries to suppress hers.

Sheridan pulls himself up from the ground and strolls away.

Jane watches peripherally for a brief moment until looking
back at the sunset. She lets a heavy breath out through her
nose.

EXT. CENTER OF TOWN - MORNING

A STAGECOACH led by TWO HORSES rolls in to town, followed by
an entire CONVOY.

The CONVOY is made up of TWO other STAGECOACHES, a multitude
of ARMED GUARDS, and HORSES unattached to stagecoaches.

The DRIVER squints ahead at an OBSTRUCTION in the road.

He orders the horse to slow to a halt. The Convoy obeys and does the same.

The Driver hops off the stagecoach and approaches the OBSTRUCTION.

The Obstruction is a tipped over STAGECOACH that nearly blocks the entire road. A DEAD HORSE CARCASS is still attached to the Stagecoach.

A COWPOKE is observing the wreckage up and down, frantically.

DRIVER
Help ya, sir?

The Cowpoke keeps his back turned to the Driver.

COWPOKE
Yes, uh-- actually. That'd be swell. If ya could, please.

DRIVER
How can I--

The Cowpoke turns around, brandishing a six-shooter. The Cowpoke is actually Sheridan.

SHERIDAN
By gettin' your men to stand down.

The Driver, slowly raises his hands in surrender.

The ENTIRE CAVALCADE unholsters and readies their weapons. All trained on Sheridan who uses the Driver as a human shield.

A BANDIT LEADER emerges from the first WAGON.

BANDIT LEADER
That ain't gonna happen, cowboy.

The Bandit Leader, in all his swagger, glides up to Sheridan.

BANDIT LEADER (CONT'D)
How's about you just hand over your pistol? And you'll make it through the day.

Jane pounces from behind the broken down carriage, placing her barrel on the Bandit Leader's temple.

JANE
Not a twitch from you, I just might slip.

The Bandit Leader keeps his cool, glancing back at her, then to his companions.

The Attorney General jumps out, wearing a six shooter as well.

GILMORE
Everybody calm down, let's slide
our fingers away from our triggers.

The Cavalcade looks around, searching for answers.

BANDIT LEADER
Do what they say.

Select few throw down their weapons. Most don't succumb, they latch on to their blind loyalty.

BANDIT LEADER (CONT'D)
Don't be foolish, now. Ease up.

The rest follow suit.

The Attorney General gestures to Jane.

GILMORE
I'll take him from here.

Sheridan shoves the Driver away.

SHERIDAN
No, allow me.

Gilmore and the Bandit Leader exchange glances. He pushes him to Sheridan.

They nod.

GILMORE
This gold is hereby requisitioned
by the Federal Government. You're
all under arrest for armed robbery
and murder.

The bandits all look to each other in dismay.

Gilmore looks extra proud of himself.

GILMORE (CONT'D)
Come, now. You all did this to
yourselves.

Sheridan and Jane both keep their six-shooters trained on each bandit as they shuffle on by.

EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - CONTINUOUS

Gilmore, Sheridan, and Jane walk just ahead of the pack, still pointing their weapons at them.

They escort them past the wreckage, and they nearly reach the Sheriff's department when--

Bucky, Rhonda, and his crew emerge from the Sheriff's department and from alleys on the other side of the street.

Gilmore, Sheridan, and Jane shift their aim from the crowd to Bucky and his men.

The Bandits all freeze in their tracks. They quickly glance about to one another.

Bucky has his gun trained, right on Sheridan's head.

BUCKY

Let's see those firearms hit the dirt.

Sheridan doesn't relieve himself of his weapon.

BUCKY (CONT'D)

Come on, Sheriff. You always knew what I was.

Sheridan hesitates a beat before his retort.

SHERIDAN

Guess I held out hope.

Beat.

GILMORE

Everybody relax, let's all just--

BUCKY

You'd close that trap if you knew what's best.

Gilmore rolls his eyes, shakes his head.

JANE

I'd hate for us to turn to violence. Can you be calm, Bucky?

BUCKY

It don't have to go down like that, so long as you transfer that gold into my possession.

A Mexican stand-off. Everyone is on edge.

EXT. TIPPED OVER CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS

A NERVOUS BANDIT creeps backward, ever so slowly. He comes upon a weapon at his feet. He barely moves a muscle...

EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - CONTINUOUS

Sweat drips from Sheridan's brow. He hasn't taken his eyes off Bucky, or vice versa.

EXT. BARBER SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Nelson, in a drunken stupor, stumbles on by the Barber Shop.

A MUFFLED MOAN can be heard from the rear of the shop, in what seems to be a UTILITY CLOSET.

The muffled moaning and groaning does not cease.

Nelson stops dead in his tracks and tries to make out what this sound might be...

EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - CONTINUOUS

The Mexican Standoff has not de-escalated. Everyone has their respective six-shooters tightly gripped in their hands.

GILMORE

This gold is being requisitioned by the Federal Government, Mr. Buck. You've got no right to it.

BUCKY

I'll be taking it anyway, fuck you very much.

Sheridan resists the urge to facepalm.

SHERIDAN

Nobody's takin' nothin' til all our guns are put away. That seem like a fair proposition?

Eyes dart about the imperfect circle formed by each person.

BUCKY

Don't think fair's in the cards for nobody here. It's gotta be a losing outcome for somebody.

Bucky makes his point abundantly clear when he clicks the hammer back on his pistol.

Sheridan slams his eyes shut, lets out a deep breath, then slowly opens them again.

He raises his arms up, holding out his pistol away from him.

SHERIDAN

I'm gonna relieve myself of my firearm, I suggest y'all do the same.

Nobody follows suit.

BANDIT LEADER

A stupid play.

His gun remains on Jane, she lets out a firm breath from her nose.

SHERIDAN

Anybody care to join me?

Gilmore nervously looks about him.

Sheridan delicately places his gun on the ground.

Bucky kicks the gun behind him the moment it touches the ground.

BUCKY

You're an honorable fool, Sheriff.

Sheridan glares behind him at Bucky.

Jane reluctantly relinquishes her firearm.

Gilmore does the same, he nods to the Bandit Leader.

The Bandit Leader contorts his face in disbelief at Gilmore.

Gilmore, with an urging look, presses him to follow suit. He obeys.

Rhonda nervously scans the crowd. She softly, slowly, holsters her weapon.

SHERIDAN

Now that we've got that taken care
of, first order of business here's-

-

Nelson interrupts the peace offering with an offering of his own.

A BARBER (50s) joins Nelson at his side. He's battered, beaten, and bruised. He hobbles over with Nelson, who isn't standing up straight for different reasons...

BARBER

That's him! That's the man!

Gilmore stares in shock and disbelief.

BARBER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

That bastard beat me to a pulp and
tied me up in my own shop!

NELSON

It's true. I found him there, just
as he described.

SHERIDAN

Slow down, what's your issue?

NELSON

(pointing to Gilmore)
That man is not who he says he is.

GILMORE

This maniac dares to make
accusations with a lack of merit.

SHERIDAN

What are you saying, Mister...?
Barber?

BARBER

He's the one who robbed the
stagecoach, murdered Attorney
General John Gilmore--

NELSON

(interrupting)
The real one.

BARBER

--right. And forced me to give him
a shave and a cut, and has been
posing as the elected official ever
since he showed up here!

The Bandit Leader slowly draws his weapon and hides it at his side.

NELSON

The man's a fraud, Sheriff. Through
and through.

Gilmore scoffs.

GILMORE

A preposterous fable.

Bucky squints at Gilmore, desperately attempting to make out his resemblance to Solomon.

Sheridan shoots a glance at Jane, she returns the stare.

Nelson drunkenly wobbles on over to Sheridan, and hands him the Wanted Poster.

NELSON

It's him, sir. Solomon Travis of
the Solomon Travis gang.

GILMORE

Are we really about to believe the
word of a lowlife and a drunkard?

Sheridan eyes Gilmore up and down. It's true. He resembles Solomon on the Wanted Poster.

SHERIDAN

I'm much less inclined to trust the
word of an outsider.

Everyone falls silent in a curious gaze at the situation. It's as if hearts have stopped for a moment. Anticipating what's next.

SHERIDAN (CONT'D)

This here, what he says, it true?

SOLOMON

Truth? There is no truth. Only
opinions of what we think we know.

SHERIDAN

That what you know to be true? Or
is that what you think?

SOLOMON

My convictions are all I have. Same
goes for anybody.

Sheridan's eyes narrow on Solomon.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
And what do you have? Hmm? A deputy
who barely qualifies as a person,
and an entire village who despises
you.

Solomon raises one eyebrow to Sheridan.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
The scales tip in my favor, no?

SHERIDAN
You're under the delusion that
you're awful tough, aren't ya?
Pointin' that gun round don't make
ya tougher than nobody.

SOLOMON
Your dismal attempts to provoke me
fail you.

Solomon presents his pistol to Sheridan, clicks the hammer as
he raises it.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)
I'm walking out of here with the
gold. There will be no negotiation
of that fact.

Bucky eyes Jane and the Bandit Leader.

JANE
Now everyone, let's just-- relax.

Rhonda looks back and forth between Sheridan and Jane.

Solomon softly approaches Sheridan until he's dangerously
close.

SOLOMON
We can end this peacefully. Let us
depart with the gold, and we can
all leave with our lives. Or. We
can do it the other way. The way
I'm certain that none of us wants.

Silence hangs in the air a moment as Sheridan weighs this in
his mind.

BUCKY
You ought to speak on your own
wants.

SOLOMON

I wasn't conversing with you, was I, Hillbilly?

Solomon slowly turns his head to Bucky, with a laser stare.

Bucky's face remains emotionless, except with a bit of contempt for Solomon.

Solomon directs his attention to Sheridan once again.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

(softly)

What do you say to that, Sheriff?
Escape this quandary, no bloodshed.
Everybody wins.

SHERIDAN

It ain't about winnin'.

Solomon sends a soul piercing look through Sheridan's eyes.

SOLOMON

Well then, let's put all this
competition aside. Prioritize the
lives of those involved, hmm?

The air is tense. Everyone is still eyeing each other.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

You don't relinquish that gold to
me, this moment will mark the end
of your life.
(waves the pistol at Jane)
And the lives of everyone you hold
dear.

SHERIDAN

It's a short list.

SOLOMON

A list of folks whom you care for,
nonetheless.
(gesturing at Sheridan)
Present company included.

SHERIDAN

Go on with what you intend to do.
I've grown tired of your ramblings.

JANE

Come on, Sheriff. This don't have
to go South.

BANDIT LEADER
I beg to differ.

The Bandit Leader flicks his wrist up, bearing the pistol. Simultaneously, he grabs Jane and uses her as a human shield. He lets loose on Bucky.

Bucky returns fire.

Jane looks down at the Bandit Leader's holster. He's got another six shooter hidden away.

Sheridan ducks away and hides behind a wagon.

Bucky is careful not to shoot Jane as he lines up his shot.

Jane elbows the Bandit Leader in the gut, wraps her hand around the other six shooter on his belt, shoots his foot, and wrestles him to the ground.

They struggle on the ground as Jane muscles the six shooter from his holster, from an awkward position, she pulls the trigger in between their bellies, and the barrel is pointed up through the Bandit Leader's chin, and that is the path the bullet follows through the back of his skull.

He rolls off her body, lifeless.

Gunfire erupts from behind the wrecked Stagecoach, and the Convoy.

Solomon's Gang unleashes Hell on their positions.

Jane dives behind a stack of crates next to some barrels.

Rhonda shoots the Bandit who kicked up the pistol to himself from the ground.

Nelson and the Barber scurry back to the Barber Shop for cover.

Solomon shoots Bucky and connects.

Bucky staggers backwards, clutching his chest. In a last ditch effort, he fires a desperation shot towards the crowd.

The bullet catches a BANDIT right on the forehead.

His head snaps back spewing blood out the back as he topples over.

The Bandits have all doubled back for their weapons.

Bucky's crew all come out of the woodwork and open fire on the Bandits.

Rhonda opens fire on Solomon who is making a bee-line for the Gold Wagons. She misses every shot.

Bullets whiz by her head, forcing her into the nearest cover she can find.

Jane shouts over to Sheridan's position, where she thinks he is.

JANE

You okay over there, Sheriff?

Sheridan peeks around cover to find Jane.

SHERIDAN

Be better if I had my gun!

She lets out a half smile and ducks deeper behind her cover when another bullet rips through a crate just by her.

Gunfire continues to dominate the town.

Bucky tosses Sheridan's gun as close as he can to his position.

Sheridan nods to Bucky. He weakly acknowledges it.

EXT. GOLD CONVOY - CONTINUOUS

Solomon races to cover behind the broken down Carriage.

He eyes the Lead Carriage in the Gold Convoy.

Bullets zoom by him as he and his men keep taking fire from Bucky's men.

SOLOMON

(to his Men)

You hold 'em off, we all get a nice, golden payday!

SOLOMON'S MEN look to him, nod, and continue unloading their suppressing fire on Bucky's Men.

LOYAL BANDIT

You heard the man! Keep on 'em!

Solomon's men obey the LOYAL BANDIT.

Solomon looks to the Lead Carriage, determined. He makes a break for the Carriage.

Solomon slides into cover behind it, away from Bucky's men.

He shoots indiscriminately at Bucky's men, then climbs up in it.

The horses tremble in fear. Solomon whips some sense into them and they take off.

The Carriage is steered around the wreck, and tramples a member of Bucky's gang in the process.

Solomon loads up his six shooter, struggling as he also tries to control the reins.

Bucky feebly looks up from his miserable state, laid back on the ground, blood pooling around him.

He raises his pistol to shoot at Solomon in his approach.

Solomon returns fire, hitting Bucky in his shooting arm.

Bucky, with his other hand, strikes a match and lights a stick of dynamite in his pocket...

Solomon charges right at Bucky. He takes aim.

Bucky, struggling for life, lets out a half smirk. As best as he can.

Solomon shoots and hits Bucky once again, a killing blow.

The Carriage runs right over Bucky.

Sheridan watches from his cover, unsure whether to shoot or not.

The Horses and Solomon pass over Bucky, but the container storing the gold is blown sky high from the DYNAMITE EXPLOSION.

The Carriage flips as the horses are discombobulated from the explosion.

Solomon is thrown from the Carriage.

Sheridan cowers behind his cover, protecting his head with his hands.

Jane braces behind her cover.

EXT. BARBER SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Solomon gains his bearings and frantically crawls behind the Barber Shop.

Nelson turns away from the commotion to see Solomon.

The Barber and Nelson desperately attempt to flee.

Solomon guns them both down before they can.

He then peeks around the corner for anyone else. Once he sees that he's safe, he tends to his wounds.

Solomon groans in pain as he tears a cloth for a makeshift bandage for his bleeding arm.

EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - CONTINUOUS

Sheridan clicks his gun and approaches the Barber Shop with purpose.

Jane sees him making his way across the dirt path in the center of town and follows suit once she ensures her flank is safe. It is.

EXT. BARBER SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Rhonda emerges from her cover and creeps up behind the Barber Shop.

She sees Solomon growling in pain as he pulls the knot tight on the makeshift bandage.

Solomon snaps his head to Rhonda.

She raises her pistol with a click.

Solomon flicks his wrist up from the ground, brandishing his pistol.

Rhonda shoots first, the shot lands. Blood spews from his left shoulder, up the base of the wall.

Solomon lets out a battle cry in pain. He gets off one shot.

It skims Rhonda's right ear, tearing a bit off the top.

Rhonda grimaces for a moment, but shakes it off.

She shoots Solomon once again, this time in his pistol hand.

Solomon lets out another wail.

SOLOMON

Fuck!!

She slowly, methodically marches up to Solomon where he sits.

Solomon nurses his hand, all the while shouting out the pain.

Rhonda touches her ear, and reveals the blood to her eyes.

Solomon tries to reach his pistol with his other hand.

Rhonda shoots the ground right next to it.

He pulls his hand back, but goes for it again.

In one fell swoop, Rhonda kicks the gun away and pistol whips him across the face.

Solomon grunts as he nurses his face with his hand, but it's futile. Blood pours from his nose.

She towers over him, he refuses to acknowledge her a moment.

Finally he raises his eyes to her.

Rhonda slowly lifts her pistol to his temple.

Solomon lets out a soft sigh.

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

You'd be doing me a kindness.

RHONDA

I don't intend to be kind.

Sheridan shows himself around the corner.

SHERIDAN

Rhonda, let's not make any hasty decisions here.

RHONDA

He set this all in motion. The reason my husband no longer draws breath. I made a promise to myself I'd see they all met a similar end.

Jane appears behind Rhonda. She raises her pistol at her.

Sheridan eyes her, shakes his head. Motions to her to chill out. She obeys.

SHERIDAN

Your vendetta is understandable,
but it'd prove fatal, and not just
to him.

Rhonda mulls this over. Her trigger finger is getting awfully itchy...

A tense moment. Jane and Sheridan eagerly watch Rhonda in her decision making process.

RHONDA

This piece of shit ain't worth my
lead.

She lowers the pistol. Everyone can breathe again. Solomon sure does.

Rhonda stomps off and weasels around Sheridan.

RHONDA (CONT'D)

You can take 'em.

She disappears from view.

Sheridan looks to Jane, then to Solomon.

SOLOMON

Gonna throw me in jail to bleed to
death, that it?

SHERIDAN

What jail?

Solomon lifts his eyes to Sheridan in confusion.

Jane chuckles to herself.

EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - LATER

Sheridan and Jane sit on the porch of the station looking at the aftermath.

JANE

What ya thinkin' about?

SHERIDAN

I ain't too sure how we done made
it outta that predicament with our
lives.

JANE

I often wonder about that, with
each near-miss I encounter.

SHERIDAN

In times of uncertainty, I call
upon the Almighty for guidance.
Even though he never done answered
none of my prayers.

JANE

Ain't that a silly thing?
Requesting help from someone who
don't provide?

SHERIDAN

Couldn't be sillier than believing
in nothin' at all.

Sheridan looks to Jane, a direct jab at her. She does her
best to ignore it.

JANE

He done answered that one though,
didn't he?

SHERIDAN

Not exactly.

Jane looks to Sheridan, he does not return the glance.

They share the silence for a moment, reveling in the death
and destruction.

JANE

She ain't comin' back, Sheridan.

SHERIDAN

That's my point.

Beat.

JANE

Can't believe what Bucky done. Ya
know?

SHERIDAN

Bucky's sacrifice sure ain't
somethin' that'll leave my memory
any time soon.

JANE

Last person I'd expect.

SHERIDAN

Guess criminals ain't all bad.

Jane softly chuckles.

SHERIDAN (CONT'D)

Even Rhonda done shown me that anyone can change.

JANE

Yeah? How do you figure?

SHERIDAN

I seent it with my own eyes. Even the afflicted can be merciful to the wicked.

Jane nods, looks off in the distance.

Beat.

Rhonda appears from the smoke and marches with purpose towards Jane and Sheridan.

JANE

(softly)

Ya ain't got any idea what you gone do with her, now do ya?

They watch her all the way.

SHERIDAN

Maybe that's another question for the Almighty.

JANE

(softly)

If you've got a shred of integrity left in that flimsy body of yours, you'll choose what's most dignified for her.

That one gets a surprised stare from Sheridan. Jane has not stopped watching her approach.

Sheridan turns his attention to Rhonda. He notices her ear. Or what's left of it.

SHERIDAN

You hurt?

Rhonda shrugs.

RHONDA
Solomon done shot my ear off.

JANE
Doc get ya fixed up, did he?

RHONDA
I poured some alcohol on it...
Jane and Sheridan exchange a quick glance.
Rhonda quickly checks on it.

RHONDA (CONT'D)
...it's alright.

Beat.

RHONDA (CONT'D)
Thank you, for earlier.

Sheridan looks to her, nods.

SHERIDAN
Didn't wanna see ya back in the big
house. At least, not on the wrong
side of it.

Rhonda huffs.

JANE
Couldn't keep ya there anyhow.

They all let out a little laugh.

RHONDA
Suppose I got Bucky to thank for
that.

SHERIDAN
Ya got no one to thank for that,
except your innocence.

RHONDA
I lost my innocence long ago. Like
it was never there.

SHERIDAN
Well, you got your freedom now. No
cage to keep you contained.

Beat.

SHERIDAN (CONT'D)

What's next for Rhonda Barnes, huh?
Now that you've seen justice come
to those men.

RHONDA

It ain't enough.

SHERIDAN

Ain't you never satisfied?

RHONDA

Satisfied is a recipe for
complacency.

Sheridan huffs.

Jane likes this woman.

SHERIDAN

I don't intend to keep on like
this. We could use you 'round here.

RHONDA

What's your meanin'?

Sheridan undoes his badge from his chest. He tosses it to
Rhonda.

She catches it, reveals it to her eyes from her palm.

RHONDA (CONT'D)

You're serious?

Sheridan nods.

JANE

Well, no. I'll be Sheriff. You'll
be my deputy. If that's your fancy.

SHERIDAN

It was more-- a gesture of
goodwill.

Rhonda's mind is racing, she struggles to come up with any
words.

SHERIDAN (CONT'D)

You're leavin', ain't ya?

RHONDA

Never planned on staying.

JANE
Plans always change though, don't
they?

Rhonda looks to Jane and smiles.

RHONDA
Reckon they do.

Beat.

SHERIDAN
Well, don't leave us in suspense!

Rhonda hesitates.

RHONDA
I need time to think.

Sheridan nods. Jane looks to her, knowingly.

Rhonda slowly approaches Jane.

RHONDA (CONT'D)
Besides, this is yours.

She hands Jane the badge.

Jane accepts it and half-smiles to her.

Rhonda shuffles away.

Jane looks to Sheridan, who continues staring at the carnage.

JANE
That'll be a helluva cleanup.

SHERIDAN
Why do you think I'm retiring?

Jane laughs. Sheridan shares in her laugh with a chuckle.

Beat.

JANE
It's like the end of an era, huh?

SHERIDAN
Had to pass the torch sometime.

Jane huffs and nods her head.

Beat.

JANE
Think she'll come around?

SHERIDAN
Woman like her, they always do.

JANE
Think you know women, do ya?

SHERIDAN
Not really.

Jane laughs.

SHERIDAN (CONT'D)
But Rhonda?

EXT. SALOON - CONTINUOUS

Rhonda struts toward the Saloon. She flips her hat on to her head.

SHERIDAN (O.S.)
I know ones like her. She's meant
for it.

She pushes through the swinging doors.

INT. SALOON - CONTINUOUS

Rhonda stands in the doorway.

The SALOON PATRONS and BARTENDER all turn to face her.

EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - CONTINUOUS

Jane turns her head to face Sheridan.

JANE
Remind you of someone?

INT. SALOON - CONTINUOUS

Rhonda lunges to the bar. She gestures to the Bartender.

The Bartender slides a whisky down to her.

She catches it in stride.

BARTENDER
Who you supposed to be?

Rhonda barely acknowledges the question.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
Never seen you 'round these parts.

She finally looks to her.

EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - CONTINUOUS

Sheridan turns to face Jane.

SHERIDAN
Maybe so.

Jane takes it in. She smiles.

INT. SALOON - CONTINUOUS

Rhonda looks the Bartender dead in the eye.

BARTENDER
You ain't that murderin' lady, are ya?

Beat.

RHONDA
You'd better get used to the sight
of me. Some serious changes are
about to be made 'round here.

The Bartender contorts her face in confusion.

Rhonda smirks to her.

She lifts the whisky to her mouth, pours it down her throat,
and slams it home.

RHONDA (CONT'D)
Now, pour me another.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.