

SORCERER

A Screenplay

by

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Based on the novel

Wages of Fear

By Georges Arnaud

Revised

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FADE IN:

NO OPENING TITLES

1 EXT. TEL AVIV - DOWNTOWN AREA - DAY

In one of the busiest sections of downtown Tel Aviv, lunchtime CROWDS pour out of the office buildings and into the streets. The small Falafel stands and sidewalk eating establishments begin to fill with the YOUNG SHIRTSLEEVE CROWD that defines contemporary Israel.

SUPERIMPOSE: "TEL AVIV, ISRAEL"

Along a busy sidewalk three young men walk among the CROWDS, dressed in the sport shirts and jeans that are a kind of uniform for Israeli students. One of them carries a small "Adidas" sport bag with a pair of track shoes tied to the handle. The other two carry looseleaf binders and textbooks from a trade school. Although no one could look more Jewish, they are in fact Arabs. The oldest of them is HAKIM, in his late twenties, and the carrier of the bag. A younger man, KASSEM, walks next to him. He laughs a lot and seems to have an easygoing nature. As they walk, he jokes with the others in Hebrew and demonstrates a soccer kick. The third man appears more serious. He is SAYID.

2 EXT. TEL AVIV BUS STOP AND BANK - DAY

At a bus stop in front of a bank, the three men join a CROWD of people waiting for the bus. While they wait, among the other people, Hakim and Kassem walk back and lean against a marble wall at the entrance of the bank. A YOUNG GIRL also leans against it, reading a book.

As people react to the sight of the approaching bus, Kassem sets the bag down and his hand pulls out a small piece of wire that leads through the zipper to the inside of the bag.

The bus stops, and the three men get on amongst the others. In the b.g., the bag remains in front of the bank.

3 INT. BUS - DAY

The three men move to the back of the crowded bus and stand silently among the people who have jammed in.

(CONTINUED)

## 3 CONTINUED:

No words are exchanged, but a slightly different flavor now marks their behavior. They are no longer so completely compelled to play the role of students as they stand amidst their enemy, jostled by the movements of the bus.

## 4 EXT. BANK - SERIES OF SHOTS - DAY

The bag remains in front of the bank as oblivious PEDESTRIANS pass. A WOMAN walks a DOG, an ELDERLY PERSON is pushed in a wheelchair, and TWO pretty young SECRETARIES check the schedule at the bus stop.

With a sudden deafening ROAR, the bag explodes, hurling bodies through the air. In its wake a huge hole is blown in the front of the bank and a shower of plate glass rains down from the windows above.

A WOMAN staggers out of the doorway to the bank, her hands in front of her, blinded by the explosion. In the street, a car is overturned and one of the young secretaries lies shredded by the blast. The wheelchair is on its side and the old man dead beside it. Other mangled bodies lie in various positions as the smoke settles. The small dog hysterically jerks against the leash, still clutched in the hand of his fallen master.

BYSTANDERS run to the scene, screaming at the sight of the carnage left in the explosion's wake.

## 5 EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - TEL AVIV - DAY

The three Arabs arrive, running, at a small eight-unit apartment house.

## 6 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Kassem and the others quickly climb the stairs to the door of an apartment on the first floor. They knock a coded knock and the door opens. Inside are TWO other MEN. They are Arabs, of the same age as Kassem and his associates.

## 7 INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Kassem and his friends move quickly inside.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

The apartment is sparsely furnished with tacky modern items. A small El Al bag sits on a table. Another piece of luggage with clothing is open on a naugahyde sofa. A small RADIO PLAYS a Hebrew newscast.

Hakim takes a gun and shoulder holster from the El Al bag and begins putting it on. Sayid begins to do the same. Kassem crosses to the window with blinds drawn. He pulls them back and looks out.

8 KASSEM'S POV

A large Mercedes, a Peugeot and another nondescript car are parked in the street in front of the building.

9 INT. APARTMENT - KASSEM

He is looking out the window.

10 KASSEM'S POV

Further down the street, beyond the cars, TWO MEN, carrying sten guns, move from one hiding place to another.

11 INT. APARTMENT - KASSEM

Kassem reacts. Immediately he knows that they are going to be hit.

HAKIM (O.S.)

(in Arabic)

Everything okay?

KASSEM

(after a slight  
pause; in Arabic)

Fine.

He turns from the window and crosses to where the others have been arming themselves. He takes the automatic out of the holster and checks the clip, finding it empty. He reaches back into the bag for some shells, and begins shoving them into the clip. Several hand grenades are also in the bag. In the motion of reaching for more shells, he pulls the pin from one of the grenades. Calmly he turns away, shoving the clip into the gun.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

The others are making their final adjustment before leaving. Kassem, holding the gun and shoulder holster, bolts suddenly for the door. He flies through it and flattens himself on the landing. The others have only a split second for a startled look at him before the grenade EXPLODES.

12 INT. LANDING - DAY

Kassem flattens himself on the landing as the door is blown off its hinges and flies across the hallway.

13 EXT. APARTMENT HOUSE - SERIES OF SHOTS

The window is blown out by the grenade and immediately, on all sides, COMMANDOS appear from their hiding places and begin BLASTING away at the window.

14 INT. STAIRWELL AND LANDING

Led by a LIEUTENANT, the Commandos storm up the stairwell of the building and into the front apartment. PEOPLE are screaming on the landing above and emerging from other parts of the building.

15 INT. APARTMENT - DAY

The Commandos look into the room where the grenades went off. The two Arabs are crumpled dead on the floor. Along a back wall, Hakim with half of his face blown away, crawls like a wounded animal. The soldiers run into the rooms.

16 EXT. STREET - DAY

A MOB has gathered in the street below. The Commandos are holding them back and a sudden CHEER goes up as a Commando appears in the window of the apartment building.

17 INT. APARTMENT - LANDING AND STAIRWELL

From above, a Commando leads a group of JEWISH RESIDENTS from the upper floors of the building down the stairwell. Kassem, wearing shorts and an undershirt, is among them.

## 18      INSIDE THE APARTMENT

The Commandos drag Hakim to his feet. They throw his hands over his head and search him. He holds a hand to the destroyed side of his face. His one remaining eye looks at them with cold hatred. Outside, the crowd screams for Arab blood. Three of the neighbors run into the room and drag one of the bodies to the window and toss it out.

## 19      EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING

The body flies out the window and onto the walk below. The screaming mob surges toward it.

## 20      EXT. ENTRANCE TO APARTMENTS - DAY

Kassem is among the other "refugees" from the building that emerge to the front of the apartment house. Some are met by weeping FRIENDS who immediately embrace them. He turns and sees the mob surge forward as another body is thrown out. He begins shouting curses as he is carried along by the crowd.

## 21      EXT. FRONT OF APARTMENT HOUSE

A SHRIEK announces that the prisoner is being brought out. SEVERAL SOLDIERS shove Hakim down the stairs. He holds the damaged side of his face.

Kassem is jammed between the Commandos who protect Hakim and the crush of people that surge forward to spit and curse him. Hakim appears listless, expecting everything that he deserves.

Kassem tries to draw back, but he is forced into a slight elevation behind the soldiers near the Army truck into which Hakim will be shoved.

Hakim's good eye sees him. There is instant recognition. Instead of stunned silence, he bursts with anger. Shrieking, he leaps at Kassem.

HAKIM  
(in Arabic)  
Betrayer... Betrayer...

He screams as he is shoved into the truck. The place where Kassem was standing amidst the jeering mob is empty. Kassem has vanished.

## 22 EXT. PARIS - AVE. FOCH - MORNING

The soft, warm light of summer morning highlights the quiet streets of a stately Parisian district. The large, well-maintained fin-du-siecle houses give an impression of another age, broken only by the occasional Peugeot or Citroen parked along the curb.

SUPERIMPOSE: "PARIS, FRANCE"

A Vietnamese MAID in a white and grey uniform emerges from one of the homes and picks up a morning paper and several bottles of milk from the gate.

## 23 INT. PERFECTLY APPOINTED MASTER BEDROOM

In front of a large mirror in a faultlessly decorated second empire bedroom, VICTOR MANZON dresses for the day. He is a well-built man in his early forties. His face is not "handsome" but he is certainly attractive. His looks and his bearing immediately suggest authority -- unmistakably someone's boss. As he works a gold cuff link through the sleeve of his custom-made silk shirt, the Vietnamese Maid enters with a large French-style cup of cafe au lait, dry toast, and butter on a tray. She quietly greets him and he smiles a good morning. Victor reaches for a small jewelry case that contains his watches. He opens it and stops, with a slight surprise.

## 24 ANGLE

BLANCHE, Victor's wife, watches him from the bed. She is an elegant woman in her late thirties with the kind of mid-life beauty that seems to be a phenomenon found mainly among the wealthy French. She is feigning sleep, but a smile comes to her face as she watches him reach into the box.

Victor removes a Piaget watch-case and opens it. Inside is a gold Piaget watch. Victor looks at it, smiling to himself. He turns it over and on the backside is an engraved message.

## 25 CLOSE SHOT - THE INSCRIPTION

"To Victor - in the 10th Year of Forever - Love Always, Blanche."

26

ANGLE

Victor removes it from the case and puts it on. Then he casually starts tying his tie. He turns away from the mirror and takes up his coat.

Blanche watches him, waiting for a reaction...

Suddenly, Victor tosses the coat back onto the "valet" and he dives onto the bed, grabbing Blanche. He kisses her and hugs her. (NOTE: All dialogue in French.)

BLANCHE

Victor... do you like it?... I never know... is it perfect or just okay?

VICTOR

I adore it and I love you.

BLANCHE

Still?

VICTOR

Still and always.

He kisses her again and Blanche holds him. His arm is around her so they can both admire the watch.

Victor leans out to the bedside table and opens the drawer. He removes a small scarf which is wrapped around a solid object.

VICTOR

(continuing)

I was going to wait until dinner  
... It's not wrapped...

He removes a small delicate Egyptian necklace. An eye of Horus on a string of lapis lazuli beads. He hands it to her.

Blanche takes it, cupping her hand to hold the emblem.

BLANCHE

It's magnificent... ancient...  
How old is it?

VICTOR

They said at least twenty-five  
centuries.

(CONTINUED)



26 CONTINUED:

BLANCHE  
A talisman... Beautiful...

She kisses him. At first a kiss of thanks and then a long passionate kiss.

BLANCHE  
(continuing)  
Stay, be late. Today you can be late. It's allowed.

Victor kisses her and gets up.

VICTOR  
Really, I can't.

BLANCHE  
(coquettish)  
Is it more important than me?

VICTOR  
Nothing is more important than you...

He kisses her again.

27 OMITTED  
&  
28

29 EXT. PARIS BOURSE - DAY

Victor's car pulls up in front of the colonnaded, Neo-Grecian facade of the Paris Bourse. He gets out and climbs the white marble stairs to the entrance.

## 30 INT. BOURSE OFFICE AREAS

Victor walks down a long hallway towards an area where a small desk has been placed in front with an attendant. Above this section a sign reads "Office of the President." He gives his name to the man at the desk who relays it by phone then waves him past. Victor walks down the hallway towards a large set of doors at the end.

## 31 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - BOURSE - MORNING

The room is large and expensively finished with contemporary furnishings that have absolutely no style at all. Along one wall are numerous large photographs of officials that have held important positions. At the end of a large conference table Victor is sitting with two other men. An office boy has brought them coffee and they remain in a tense silence until he leaves the room.

Opposite Victor is MON. LEFEVRE, typifying both in appearance and behavior the top echelon of the French bureaucratic hierarchy. At his side is MON. GUILLOT, his assistant.

Lefevre is very annoyed and in a position of immediate power which he milks for all it is worth.

LEFEVRE

We're not speaking about the levy of a fine for carelessness. We're speaking about fraud. A criminal act. The deliberate misrepresentation of collateral for the purpose of rampant speculation. Fifteen million francs --

VICTOR

This firm has already made arrangements to cover the deficit.

GUILLOT

(looking at a sheaf  
of papers)  
For the full amount?

VICTOR

Yes.

GUILLOT

How?

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

VICTOR  
Securities...

GUILLOT  
From whom?

VICTOR  
My father-in-law.

LEFEVRE  
My position demands I turn over  
all my information for immediate  
criminal prosecution.

VICTOR  
(calmly)  
Let me ask, Monsieur Lefevre, if  
you couldn't see a way to give a  
twenty-four hour reprieve to a  
firm that is over a hundred years  
old. You know the effect this  
would have on the Belleville  
family, on the investors.

LEFEVRE  
It will finish them.

VICTOR  
The fall of an important investment  
house in these times hurts everyone.

LEFEVRE  
Yes...

He removes an envelope from his coat pocket and swings  
it back and forth in his hand. It is obvious that the  
envelope contains money. Victor's reaction is confused.

LEFEVRE  
(continuing)  
I received this yesterday at my  
home...

Victor looks stunned as Lefevre hands him the envelope.

LEFEVRE  
(continuing)  
I think the intent is obvious...

There is a long pause as Victor reads it.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (2)

VICTOR

I can't believe this has happened...  
I'm stunned.

LEFEVRE

Since this is peripheral to the  
matter at hand I'm going to forget  
I ever received it.

Victor exchanges a look with Lefevre. He places the  
envelope inside his coat.

LEFEVRE

(continuing)

If I give you the time and stop  
the criminal prosecution, there  
will still be fines and further  
suspension.

VICTOR

I understand.

Lefevre looks at Guillot and decides.

LEFEVRE

Before eleven tomorrow morning,  
if you present certified collateral  
to reestablish your line of credit...  
I will hold back the criminal charges.  
I have your word this will happen?

VICTOR

Absolutely.

32 OMITTED

33 EXT. PLACE VENDOME - DAY

The car has stopped in front of a lovely old "Belle  
Epoque" building. The doorman comes quickly and opens  
the door for Victor. They exchange a greeting and  
Victor enters the offices of "Belleville et Fils,"  
Compagnie Financier, Agents du Change and members of  
the New York and several other stock exchanges.

34 INT. ELEGANT PRIVATE OFFICE IN THE BELLEVILLE FIRM - DAY

PASCAL DE BELLEVILLE, a young man with weak but aristocratic good looks, sits nervously behind the desk of his office. The office is decorated in English style with hunting pictures and two or three African trophy heads on the walls. Victor stands in front of his desk reading the letter. He is controlling his rage.

VICTOR

'The long and amicable association which you have had with my family would of course be strengthened by any personal consideration that you might find possible to give us in these present complications. I offer my personal guarantee that a tangible expression of our gratitude would be immediately forthcoming.'

He looks at Pascal as he finishes.

VICTOR

(continuing)

I've committed everything I own and every penny I have to saving the company and your contribution is this...

He throws the letter onto Pascal's desk.

VICTOR

(continuing)

Thanks to your little gesture we should be in jail this minute... By some miracle he gave us twenty-four hours. Our only chance is to call your father.

PASCAL

He refused me before, Victor --

VICTOR

Now, it's different, now we face jail... They could give us twenty years... The Baron would never suffer that disgrace. For his son-in-law -- maybe... but not for you, his male heir. Call him.

PASCAL

He's shooting at Fontainbleu... I can't reach him before noon...

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

VICTOR

You have to reach him today --  
Make him understand there is no  
other choice.

35 INT. TERRACE - PRE-CATALAN RESTAURANT - DAY

Victor is seated with Blanche and her friend, LYDIA, who is pretty and obviously of the same social set. The WAITER is just beginning to serve them "Moules."

In the b.g. a STRING QUARTET is PLAYING something less formal than Mozart and the Pre-Catalan is filled with smart, wealthy-looking PEOPLE. Outside the countless windows are the soft greens of the forests of Boulogne.

The Waiter moves away and they take a few bites and begin eating with the style and delight that only the French seem able to show. Victor seems completely at ease.

LYDIA

In Mexico they kept telling us  
about the mussels in Vera Cruz  
... so finally we went there  
and they were disgusting.

BLANCHE

It's the water... too warm. They  
must have cold. Right, Victor?

VICTOR

Right.

BLANCHE

Victor's father was a fisherman.  
He knows everything about seafood.

A WAITER approaches the table.

WAITER

(leaning down to speak)  
Pardon me, Monsieur Manzoni, a  
gentlemen to see you.

Victor looks slightly surprised, but recovers quickly.  
He gets up from the table.

BLANCHE

What is it, Victor?

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

VICTOR

Nothing. I have to sign a paper.  
I'll be right back.

Victor crosses the restaurant to the entrance and lobby. The HEADWAITER escorts him to the door and he sees Pascal in the lobby near the entrance. Pascal is white with fear.

PASCAL

(very rattled)  
He says we took the risk --  
(his voice goes up)  
-- We must bear the consequences.  
Whatever they are.

Victor looks around the lobby and leads Pascal out of the restaurant.

36 EXT. FRONT OF THE PRE-CATALAN

Victor walks with Pascal.

VICTOR

You've got to calm down and speak  
to him again.

PASCAL

(distracted)  
Yes, yes, I'll go to Fontainbleu...

They walk toward Pascal's car which is parked at the edge of the woods across from the restaurant. Victor puts his hand on Pascal's shoulder.

VICTOR

I know this is hard for you, but  
I know you can convince him. When  
he understand what it means to the  
family, he'll agree.

They arrive at Pascal's car, a Porsche Targa. Pascal gets in. On the opposite seat is a shotgun leaning against the door.

PASCAL

(suddenly grabbing  
Victor's arm)  
I can't do it -- What if he refuses  
me to my face?

VICTOR

He won't... He won't... After you  
speak to him, this will all be over.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

Victor turns and walks across the street toward the restaurant. Pascal's car sits in the b.g. and no sound is heard of the car starting. Victor arrives at the steps of the restaurant where several taxis are parked.

Victor is about on the third step when the muffled SOUND of a SHOT is HEARD. He turns and walks swiftly down the stairs and back toward Pascal's parked car. The large back window of the Porsche is shattered. Pascal's head can be SEEN leaning against the glass of the side window.

Victor stands at the bottom of the stairs looking across the street, a stricken expression on his face. He knows that Pascal has shot himself. The forest is quiet.

An expression and a stance of total defeat overcomes Victor. He turns and walks slowly up the stairs of the Pre-Catalan to the lobby.

37 INT. PRE-CATALAN RESTAURANT - DAY

Victor crosses the lobby of the Pre-Catalan to an alcove that leads into the dining room where Blanche is sitting. At the entrance he stops. He can see her in lively conversation with Lydia. He almost starts forward but a strange force prevents him from entering. Something inside will not allow him to walk to her table, reveal that her brother has just shot himself, that her family is in disgrace and that he faces prison. After pausing a few seconds, he turns back into the lobby. He looks around, then he crosses to where the Headwaiter is going over the registry. The Headwaiter looks up as he approaches.

WAITER

Monsieur Manzoni?

VICTOR

Please tell Madam that I had to leave on business.

He removes a crisp note from a black leather Gucci wallet and gives it to the Waiter. The Waiter bows and moves into the restaurant.

38 EXT. PRE-CATALAN

Gathering himself, Victor walks to the front door and down the stairs to the southside. In the b.g., the Porsche still sits across the road. Victor gets into a cab and gives the DRIVER his destination. The cab pulls away. He looks at his watch, the Piaget his wife had given him only that morning.



## 39 EXT. CHURCH FRONT - ELIZABETH, NEW JERSEY - DAY

A seamy church in Elizabeth, New Jersey is decorated with a large sign that reads, "THURSDAY NITE BINGO." It is Sunday afternoon and the streets are quiet with little traffic.

SUPERIMPOSE: "ELIZABETH, NEW JERSEY"

An armored car approaches the church and pulls into the parking lot beside it, continuing to the door of a back entrance.

## 40 EXT. GASOLINE STATION ACROSS THE STREET

At the gasoline station across the street, an ATTENDANT watches as the armored car enters. He is presently putting gas in a CUSTOMER's tank. He finishes his job while being attentive to the action in front.

## 41 ANGLE ON CHURCH

TWO GUARDS can be SEEN getting out of the armored car and carrying two large bags of money into the church through a back door.

## 42 EXT. GAS STATION

The Attendant finishes with the Customer who drives off. He looks back at the church and quickly enters the office of the service station. Inside, he goes to a wall switch and turns it on.

## 43 EXT. GAS STATION

A large sign on the top of the gas station begins to rotate with the turning of the switch.

## 44 LONGER SHOT - ROTATING SIGN

as SEEN through the window of a car in which FOUR MEN are seated. A f.g. figure checks his watch.

## 45 OMITTED

## 46 EXT. CHURCH - ATTENDANT'S POV

The members of the wedding party CROWD are dressed in union hall gala clothes. They represent the types of people that are euphemistically referred to as "Salt of the earth." The mood is good-natured, with a slight inclination toward rowdiness, which will no doubt come to fruition at the reception.

## 47 CHURCH FRONT AREA - SERIES OF SHOTS - DAY

Several cars pull up to the curb and park in an area marked off for members of the wedding party. The BEST MAN (age seventeen) and SEVERAL of his BUDDIES get out of a mid-sixties Buick convertible that is decorated with bunting, streamers and tin cans on the back bumper.

Another car, similarly decorated, arrives and parks at the curb and FOUR MEN get out of it. They are dressed like members of the wedding party and nothing sets them off from the others. They spread out and move as individuals through the crowd. Each one has ready smiles for the people that surround them. They are thieves on a heist.

The oldest of them is MURRAY, a rotund avuncular type, his function is the "chopper" or gunman. He is dressed as a priest.

BOYLE is a smaller man with a wiry build. His smile is a bit more reserved and he seems slightly uneasy as he moves through the fifty or so people whom he doesn't know. He is a "swag man" in charge of transporting the loot.

DONNELLY is a swarthy, well-built man in his early forties. He is of obvious authority, but he blends well with the Italian side of the wedding around him. He, too, is dressed as a priest.

The last of the men is JACKIE SCANLON. He will drive the car when they leave. Among the relatives of the wedding party, none of whom are known to him, he displays a natural charm. The groom's AUNT, her hair in curlers, grabs him to take a picture while she poses with her NEPHEW. Jackie obliges with a smile.

## 48 ANGLE

At the first NOTES from the ORGAN inside the church, the relatives begin to pull themselves together for their entrance.

(CONTINUED)

48

CONTINUED:

The BRIDE-TO-BE stands near the front door and the procession is brought in line by an organizing RELATIVE.

Donnelly, among the others in front of the church, watches as the Guards re-enter the truck empty-handed and it pulls out of the driveway. He exchanges a glance with his associates.

The ORGAN changes from the warm-up MUSIC to the "Wedding March" and the procession changes from chaos to the formal lineup for solemn vows. The Bride and Groom enter the church and there is a squeeze as the last of the relatives follow.

The four men now move to the driveway and begin walking toward the back of the church with a casual but deliberate stride. Inside, the first CHORDS of the "Wedding March" can be HEARD. When they get to a small stairway that leads down a few feet to a basement doorway, they pause and quickly pull surgical masks from their pockets. They have rigged them with rubber bands instead of tie cords so they go on quickly.

Donnelly steps to the door and puts his hand on the handle. From inside they can hear the SOUND of an ADDING MACHINE. He turns the handle and throws the door open and moves through.

49

INT. BASEMENT ROOM OF CHURCH

In a small basement room, FIVE PRIESTS are sitting at a large round table counting piles of money. Several bags are spread out on the table in front of them with the names of different churches in the diocese. Three of the Priests seem to be occupied only with coins and the others are sorting and counting cash. One of them has an adding machine in front of him.

The Priests act with surprise as the men burst into the room. Murray steps to a prominent position just behind and to the side of Donnelly. Jackie and Boyle always maintain themselves out of the line of fire.

DONNELLY

Afternoon, gentlemen. Please refrain from unnecessary conversation.

Jackie opens his coat and takes out one of several pairs of handcuffs that are hanging inside his coat in special pockets. Boyle opens his coat under which he wears a special vest and he moves to the table.

## 50 INT. CHURCH ALTAR

The PRIEST, a sallow young man with a bad complexion, is reading the first part of the service to the Bride and Groom who kneel before him. He ends it, coming to the mid-service "Let us pray."

## 51 INT. BASEMENT ROOM

Jackie shoves one of the Priests in front of him toward a steam pipe that runs from the floor to the ceiling. Another is already handcuffed with his arms around it. Boyle is scooping up the piles of money that have been stacked neatly on the table. FATHER RICCI, a heavysset Italian Priest who has not yet been handcuffed, watches. He is fuming.

FATHER RICCI

You know whose parish this is?

Boyle stops and looks at him. Ricci moves for the door.

MURRAY

Fuck off.

Ricci turns for the door that leads to the rectory. Murray pulls a silenced thirty-eight and drops Ricci with a SHOT in his thigh.

MURRAY

(continuing)

You crawl from now on, you fat zip...

Ricci turns on the floor, holding his leg.

FATHER RICCI

You're dead... You're all dead.

DONNELLY

(to others)

We're either gonna do this with your cooperation or we're gonna blow you away. It's up to you...

Donnelly covers them, undisturbed. Boyle continues picking up the folded money from the table. Donnelly delivers Ricci a kick in the ass to move him toward the steam pipe where the others are tied.

DONNELLY

(continuing)

Move ass!

Ricci drags himself along in front of Donnelly's abuse.

## 52 INT. CHURCH

The Priest is in the middle of the final vows and the "with this ring I thee wed" line. The Bride beams, the vow is given and the Priest mutters an unintelligible "you may kiss the bride." They embrace.

## 53 INT. BASEMENT ROOM

The men have filled their vests with money (except Jackie who doesn't wear one). Jackie tightens the cuffs around the wrists of the last Priest. Ricci sits on the floor, his bad leg out, glaring at the men. Jackie steps back, leaving the Priests positioned around the steam pipe like a group of strange, suspicious primates in the monkey house of a zoo.

## DONNELLY

Thank you, Fathers -- and may the  
Bird of Paradise shit only caviar --  
honk, honk --

Boyle punches the total button on the adding machine and pulls the tape and they back to the door. On the way, Murray rips the phone off the wall. Their coats are buttoned again and they are ready for the street except for the masks.

54 OMITTED  
&  
55

## 56 INT. PASSAGEWAY - CHURCH BASEMENT

The Priest who gave the wedding service walks along an institutional green corridor in the church basement, smoking a cigarette. His face reacts to strange muffled SOUNDS coming from the end of the passage. He walks more briskly to a door at the end, behind which the SOUNDS can be HEARD. Yanking the door open, he sees the grouping of the handcuffed Priests at the steam pipe.

## FATHER RICCI

Call my brother. We been hit.

## 57 EXT. CHURCH FRONT - DAY

The cars are all pulling away from the front of the church with HORNS HONKING, shoes and tin cans dragging.

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED:

Jackie continues with the loosely knitted group and then pulls off around the next corner, letting the wedding party continue on its own.

58 INT. GETAWAY CAR - DAY

Jackie is driving and Donnelly is next to him on the front seat.

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED:

Jackie drives quickly and smoothly.

BOYLE  
 (looking at a small  
 piece of adding  
 machine paper)  
 Sixty-seven thousand dollars.  
 And they were still counting.

DONNELLY  
 Fucking incredible!

MURRAY  
 (reading the totals)  
 This is the entire collections  
 from every church in East Jersey  
 from the last six months. You  
 know what this represents --  
 year after year -- recession,  
 depression, whatever, you know  
 how much these animals are  
 cutting up?

DONNELLY  
 Maybe they'll give us a medal for  
 this one, Jackie --

JACKIE  
 Who?

DONNELLY  
 I don't know -- the Jews!

They laugh.

59 EXT. STREET

The car speeds through a suburban area.

60 INT. CAR - DAY

DONNELLY  
 (nervously looking  
 at speedometer)  
 Don't get us glommed.

JACKIE  
 No way.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

Donnelly looks at the gas gauge.

DONNELLY

The gas gauge says 'E'... What does that mean?

JACKIE

Exciting.

61 EXT. WIDE STREET - DAY

Jackie smoothly takes a corner and cruises along a wide, empty boulevard. It is an empty Sunday afternoon street with the stoplights blinking yellow.

62 OMITTED

&

63

64 EXT. STREET - ELIZABETH, NEW JERSEY - SERIES OF SHOTS - DAY

The car, still dragging the tin cans, makes a boulevard stop, then pulls out and passes two intersections. On the third, a huge truck backs out of a driveway. An approaching car swerves to miss the truck but hits it, then continues out of control toward Jackie's car in a head-on course. Jackie swerves hard into the opposite lane to avoid being hit and he takes the car on Donnelly's side.

Jackie's car is whipped back and Murray is hurled out onto the pavement like a rag doll. The car continues sliding sideways until it hits a post on the opposite side of the street on Boyle's side. Boyle is slammed against the post, crushing the side of his head. The car stops and sits in the street.

(CONTINUED)



64 CONTINUED:

The other car has gone into the opposite curb and the driver is lying in the middle of the road, twisting and moaning. For a few seconds, aside from the SOUNDS of WATER TRICKLING from a broken radiator and an open door warning BUZZER, all is quiet.

Jackie sits for a few seconds dumbly behind the wheel. Slowly he becomes aware of a little voice beside him. It is Donnelly, speaking in an almost childlike weeping.

DONNELLY

Oh, my God... Oh, holy mother.  
Jesus --

Jackie looks over at him and sees him jammed into a distorted position up against the opposite window post. His face is against the dash and his head locked in place by shattered windshield glass. His hand hangs limply from his side. Blood runs off his fingers onto the floor.

Jackie, with sudden revulsion, moves to get out and finds he cannot move. His hand goes down and unfastens his seat belt. He pushes himself back and falls out the open door onto his backside on the sidewalk. He is shaken but unhurt.

65 EXT. STREET

In the middle of the street, a car screeches to a stop and another goes by without slowing down. Jackie looks at the car with Donnelly and Boyle in it, letting his brain pull it all together. An ELDERLY MAN runs up behind him and peers in.

ELDERLY MAN

(muttering)

That guy's gone.

Another MAN comes up from an appliance store. They look at Boyle who is sitting upright in the back seat, quite dead.

ELDERLY MAN

(continuing; muttering)

That guy's gone...

Several other cars have come to a stop. Jackie moves to Boyle's body. He reaches in to take money out of the vest. Immediately he yanks his hand back, covered with blood. The Elderly Man speaks to him.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED:

ELDERLY MAN

No, you can't move him... You just got to leave him till the cops get here. He's gone.

Jackie spins around, annoyed enough to clout the old fart. A cop car screeches to a stop in the b.g. Jackie looks around. Enormous frustration plays across his face. The COPS get out and more SPECTATORS arrive.

The old Man goes off for the cops and Jackie reaches back in through the window. He has to jam his hand inside the vest that Boyle is wearing. He manages to pull out a handful of money. The old Man yells at him.

ELDERLY MAN

(continuing)

Hey, don't move him. The cops are here.

Another COP calls from further away where Murray is lying.

COP

Here's another one.

Jackie reacts as a third cop car pulls to a stop, the SIREN still going.

Murray's vest has broken open and he is twisting and moaning, spreading the blood-soaked money on the street around him. A YOUNG COP looks down at him.

YOUNG COP

Holy shit!... Hey, Mickey.

Jackie sees the entire fiasco about to unravel. He has no choice. He turns around and walks back through the crowd. The attention of the people is completely directed to the gruesome figures in the car, the bent-up Car Driver and Murray, who is spewing money. Jackie continues up the street and walks away.

66 EXT. MOTT STREET AREA - AFTERNOON

Several large impressive cars are parked in front of an imposing Italian restaurant. A Cadillac Eldorado pulls up to the curb and TWO well-dressed MEN get out. They walk into the restaurant.

67

## INT. RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

The restaurant has a clean wholesome family look about it. Much of the decor is white tile and a natural Mediterranean atmosphere prevails. It is nearly empty as the two men enter. They are met by a HEADWAITER and taken to a table at the back. Seated there is CARLO RICCI. The men, MARTY and BEN, approach him.

They greet Mr. Ricci and sit down. The Waiter leaves without asking them what they want.

MARTY

What's the latest on your brother,  
Mr. Ricci?

RICCI

He's going to make it.

MARTY

Oh, that's fine... Thank God.

The other man shows by his expression that he shares the concern. Carlo quietly pours himself an espresso.

RICCI

One of those pigs walked away from  
that accident. His life offends  
me.

BEN

The guy's name's Jackie Scanlon.  
He's a punk from Queens.

MARTY

Mr. Ricci, everybody wants to help  
you on this. The guy can't go  
nowhere, he can't move.

RICCI

He can be on his way to the moon  
by now.

MARTY

We'll get you specialists. We'll  
get you the best -- but it'll be  
from the outside and it's gonna  
cost.

RICCI

He robbed my church -- He shot my  
brother. I want his ass. I don't  
care where he is -- I want the  
fucker dead.

68 EXT. STAR HOTEL - QUEENS - NIGHT

Jackie stands in front of a tawdry third-rate hotel, pacing nervously on the sidewalk. He has changed his clothes since the accident. At a sidewalk Kiosk he buys a newspaper, which he tries to read but can't. He is waiting for someone.

A large, heavy-built man with a florid face and the appearance of a former labor boss emerges. The man is VINNIE, in his late forties, dressed in a mackinaw with a black knit tie.

VINNIE

You've got a problem.

Jackie walks silently beside him.

VINNIE

(continuing)

You're on the hit parade, kid.

Jackie looks at him.

VINNIE

(continuing)

That priest got whacked was Carlo Ricci's brother. Forget the heat. Ricci went off his gourd. Got any money?

JACKIE

Couple thousand.

VINNIE

You're going to need it...

Vinnie starts toward the door of his car as he talks.

VINNIE

(continuing)

Get a train down to Baltimore. When you get there, go to Pier 47 and ask at Customs for Nat Glick. Can you remember?

JACKIE

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED:

VINNIE

Tell Nat you're a 'liberal-minded seaman'... And, Jackie, don't mention me, 'cause right now I don't know you... I owed you a favor and this is it.

He gets into his car and starts the engine.

JACKIE

Where am I going?

VINNIE

I don't know that neither.

He puts the car in gear and backs out. Then he drives away, leaving Jackie standing. An elevated TRAIN ROARS past overhead.

FADE TO BLACK.

SLOW FADE IN:

69 EXT. TROPICAL LANDSCAPE - PRE-DAWN LIGHT

Against a deep cerulean blue that barely emerges from the black of the fade-in, a ragged silhouette of tropical forest can be DISCERNED. Shaggy-topped trees stand against a blue-grey sky hung with a chaos of vines. A few palms reach out of the line of lower brush, desperately pushing shabby fronds toward the sky. The SOUND that accompanies the scene is an unwordly mixture of unseen FROGS and INSECTS.

70 ANGLE NEAR WATER - PRE-DAWN LIGHT

With unrhythmic, jerky steps, a swarm of large fiddler crabs moves through the darkness along a structural ruin of rotting posts and beams. They advance as an army of extraterrestrial monsters with stalked eyes and bizarre faces frozen in hardened shells. The MECHANICAL CRACKLING of their segmented limbs provides an AUDIBLE addition to the unearthly background DIN.

## 71 EXT. RUBBISH PILE - PRE-DAWN LIGHT

With LOW GUTTURAL HISSES, a cluster of vultures FILLS the SCREEN, feeding like a huge feathered polyp on the black mud. A mass of throbbing dark forms broken occasionally by the brief emergence of a scaly reptilian head.

## 72 ANGLE ON JACKIE SCANLON - PRE-DAWN LIGHT

Jackie, looking vastly different than when we last saw him, sleeps against the dirty ticking of a pillow. His face is haggard, his eyes sunken and he has a two-day growth of beard. His hair is a "short back and sides" haircut that has grown out to an irregular shape. The color of his skin is sallow and a glow of unwashed perspiration gives a shiny patina to his skin. O.S., a DISTORTED CHORUS of BELL PROGS blends with the MECHANICAL WINGBEAT DRONE of unseen legions of INSECTS.

Scanlon's eyes begin moving rapidly under his lids with a dream that he is having. His hand clenches, then releases the dirty sheet that is pulled up around him. Blended with the weird surreal ambiance of SOUNDS, the SCREECH of a car's BRAKES begins to come through as Jackie's eyes flicker. There is a THUD and a heavy METALLIC CRUNCH as his eyes snap open and he gasps. He lies for several seconds collecting himself and the DRONE of NOISE continues around him. Where he has sweated in the bed during his dream, the sheet clings to him. He pulls it off his chest and rises up on his elbow to look around.

## 73 HIS POV - WORKMAN'S HOSTEL - PRE-DAWN

Jackie scans the place where he is sleeping. On about thirty other beds, mixed with occasional hammocks, MEN are lying in restless sleep. No color pervades the room in this light except grey. The walls of the building are open to the outside giving a full view to the street of PORVENIR. A row of broken black silhouettes against the gloom, forms what we know are structures only by the logic of their positions.

## 74 EXT. TOWN OF PORVENIR - PRE-DAWN

A heavy leaden sky hangs over the town of Porvenir and the marshy estuary of the Catatumbo River.

(CONTINUED)

74

CONTINUED:

In the windows of the two hundred old shacks that house the populace, occasional glimmers of morning fires can be SEEN. Most of these dwellings are built on stilts over the grey black mud of a tidal swamp. They are interconnected by a series of crudely constructed catwalks which allow the people passage from the shacks to the town's only area of solid ground -- the main street.

The SOUNDS of morning have already begun. A distant BIRD REPEATS a monotonous plaintive CALL. From the shacks, a BABY CRIES, a CUR YELPS and a tubercular Indian greets the day with a fit of HACKING COUGHS.

SUPERIMPOSE: "PORVENIR"

The main street of the town, with its three almacenes (general stores), cantina (El Corsario Negro), and single two-story building (the half-finished city hall), remains abandoned.

On a road, which is a continuation of the main street and leads towards a small pumping station some two miles distant, the headlights of four large trucks can be SEEN approaching.

Along the labyrinth of plankways that lead out from the shacks, SCORES OF WORKERS emerge. Dressed in grey work clothes, they pad their way quietly towards the town's main street. Interspersed with them are a few WIVES carrying cloth-wrapped bundles of food.

Below the catwalks on the mud of the marsh, teams of fiddler crabs scramble over piles of garbage and offal, exposed by the retreating tide.

Along the rooftops of the town's higher building and in the two or three dead trees that loom above the shacks, flocks of roosting vultures sit silhouetted against the tinge of color that is now coming to the sky.

75

INT./EXT. EL CORSARIO - MORNING

Swarms of FLIES BUZZ around several pieces of meat that hang, dripping blood, by an outside kitchen off the bar and dining area of the El Corsario. Although it is euphemistically called a Taberna, the El Corsario is in reality a small filthy courtyard where three or four hovels sit in the open mud to be rented to guests.

(CONTINUED)

At the front is a small open-air kitchen with a mud stove and a corrugated shack in which a bar has been built along one wall and four tables have been set up for eating or drinking. A large Lufthansa poster features the gaiety of Carnival in Cologne and another poster shows a bucolic German scene and advertises the Almacen (general mercantile) of the Stroessner Hermanos in Bogota. In a central position, flanked by fly-spotted national flags, is a picture of Presidente Ignacio Lopez Gutierrez.

A filthy, half-witted NATIVE BOY sweeps the floor of the main "dining" area and an older man in his sixties diligently sprays the merchandise behind the bar with insecticide. He is CARLOS, or even Don Carlos to some of the locals. He is German, but years or even decades of living in towns such as this have removed most of his Teutonic armor. When he speaks either in Spanish or English, the accent is clear. He is dressed in loose-fitting pants and on his feet he wears latex rubber sandals. As he bends over to lift something, his shirt comes up in back, revealing a P-38 pistol tucked in the back of his pants.

Victor sits at an oilcloth-covered table that has been set for his breakfast. He is wearing the same, but now faded, pin-striped pants that he wore in the previous scene. He takes a piece of bread and breaks it. Carlos watches him while shouting orders to the kitchen for his guest.

CARLOS

Agrippa, traes cafe. Rapido.

Victor shoos a swarm of flies off the plate of butter on the table. He begins buttering the bread as the flies resettle on the butter.

AGRIPPA, a homely, slattern, native woman in her middle forties, emerges from the kitchen area and crosses to Victor's table. She leaves him a small battered enamel coffee pot and he nods a "thank you." Agrippa smiles warmly at Victor and carefully fills his cup before returning to the kitchen.

The half-wit, who has finished his sweeping, picks up the can of fly spray and crosses to the table. He begins spraying the table and the butter as a kind of good deed.

VICTOR

No... Laissez... Laissez.

Carlos sees this and immediately shouts at the boy.

(CONTINUED)



75 CONTINUED: (2)

CARLOS  
No, idiota... fuera, fuera.

The boy exits and Carlos looks towards Victor's table. He taps his head.

CARLOS  
(continuing)  
Infra humano...

VICTOR  
Es macht ja nichts... Gibt es Eier Heute?  
(It doesn't matter... are there any eggs today?)

Carlos faces Victor with a smile.

CARLOS  
Freilich, Herr Serrano... Vier Minute die Eier?  
(Yes, Herr Serrano... Four minute eggs?)

VICTOR  
Vier und halb. Bitte.  
(Four and a half, please.)

CARLOS  
Sofort... Agrippa, preparas huevos cuatro y medio minutos.  
(Right away... Agrippa, prepare some four and a half minute eggs.)

76 EXT. MAIN STREET

The four large trucks stop in the town's main street where GROUPS OF WORKERS have gathered to meet them. They are marked with the initials and logo of COREPET. (Compania de Recursos Petroleos S.A.)

The DRIVERS wear clean, pressed uniforms, complete with flat caps and sunglasses, as symbols of their rank and authority. They move to the backs of the trucks and check off the names of the workers as they enter. Each truck carries an armed guard as well as the driver.

## 77 EXT. NEW DOCK AREA - MORNING

While most of the workers stand near the trucks waiting to be checked in, others walk towards a construction site on the edge of town where a new dock is being built.

A cyclone fence encloses a few corrugated tin storehouses, piles of construction equipment, and two large bulldozers.

The workers obediently line up and are checked off a roster as they enter. Each shows a small tattered identity card to the man at the gate. They are mostly natives, but with a sprinkling of foreigners. Germans, Italians, etc. In line with the other workers, Kassem steps up and shows his ID card. The roster man checks him off as he gives the name, "ANGEL FLORES-SANCHES."

## 78 EXT. MAIN STREET - VIEW TOWARD PUMPING STATION - MORNING

As the last of the men are preparing to get into one of the smaller of the two trucks, Victor stands among them. He is checked off under the name Serrano.

The trucks are ready to leave. During the activity, WOMEN appear passing food and other small bundles of clothing, etc., to the men in the two largest trucks. Although there is no great emotional farewell, quiet words are exchanged. It is evident that the men in two of the trucks are leaving for more than just a day's work.

The trucks pull out, leaving the main street of the town, on the same road from which they came.

## 79 EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - MORNING

A group of about TWENTY MEN are hustled rapidly along a path that leads down onto a series of catwalks over the swampy mud of the estuary. ZAYAS, the maestro albanil (labor foreman), shouts directions to them. Each man carries either a pick or a spade.

ZAYAS

Andales... andales... de prisa.

Zayas, content with the speed at which the men are moving, observes the scene from the end of a dock which reaches out over the mud where the men begin working.

Below him the LABORERS step off the ends of the catwalks and slog through the thigh-deep mud in a series of trenches that lead to the caisson settings in which they will work.

(CONTINUED)

79

CONTINUED:

As the men thump down into the mud and begin laboring through it to their places, we SEE Jackie among them. He carries a shovel and drags himself through the mud to his work-site like the others. Behind him on the catwalk the SUB-FOREMAN, who is bossing his gang, shouts orders.

SUB-FOREMAN

Quiten todo el lomo de jado en las formaletas... Rapidos... Tenemos menos que tres horas hasta que viene la marea... Rapidito. (Clear away all that mud around the forms... Quick! We've only got three hours until the next tide. Quick!)

Jackie begins digging at a fresh pack of sticky mud that blocks a wooden caisson molding. Working beside him is JAIR, a robust Brazilian black.

80

EXT. PUMPING STATION AND ROAD - LATE MORNING

The caravan of trucks arrives at the pumping station and the truck carrying Victor and another truck turn off into the gate. The other trucks continue along the road that winds further up the valley toward a distant range of mountains. The road is dry and a plume of dust traces their path against the green vegetation of the mangrove swamp on either side. The road rises and the truck gradually disappears from view as it heads into the mountains.

81

OMITTED

82

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

The truck swings into the construction site where a GANG OF MEN begin unloading the pipe under shouts of TWO SUB-FOREMEN.

The driver of the truck is an American, named PETERS, a weary-looking man in his forties. He leans against the truck and watches the unloading.

(CONTINUED)

82

CONTINUED:

A chain whips off the pipes and they break from the truck to the ground. Immediately a TEAM OF PIPE HAULERS, with Kassem leading them, lifts the pipe and begin carrying it to the mud and the trenches leading to the caisson.

The huge unwieldy pipe is pushed out into a trench. Jackie and the other diggers reach up for it while Zayas and others shout haphazard instructions at them. Jackie struggles with every step. He staggers to the side and the men behind him start slipping. The pipe wavers back and forth, then it falls into the mud. For several seconds they squirm in the mud to regain their footing.

Ahead of Jackie, a NATIVE LABORER is shouting in pain. The pipe has fallen against his leg.

Jackie and the others scramble to their feet and grab the pipe, trying to trip it with their mud-slick hands. They get it up again. Zayas blows a WHISTLE and shouts orders at them:

ZAYAS

Dejalo hay... Dejalo... Hay que meter el tubo... Meten el tubo.  
(Leave him, he's okay... Set the pipe... First set the pipe.)

The men stagger forward to place the pipe, stepping over the Indian who crouches out of their way and groans with pain. Jackie, bracing himself against the weight of the pipe which is now against his shoulder, and trying not to slip in the mud, steps over the man and the pipe is set. He turns as several men lift the crippled Indian up to the top of the ditch. Zayas is at the top with SEVERAL OTHERS of the JEFE (boss) group.

ZAYAS

Cuidado... cuidado idiotas...  
No veas? Esta mal herido.  
(Watch it, you idiots, can't you see this man is hurt.)

The man is unceremoniously placed in a wheelbarrow and wheeled back over the catwalks towards a pickup truck. Zayas returns the men to the labor of adjusting the pipe.

83

EXT. PUMPING STATION - STORAGE TANK AREA - DAY

At the side of a huge crude oil storage tank Victor and several other workers move towards a huge storage tank.

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED:

They carry a solvent hose and a high-pressure nozzle. As Victor unreels the hose from the solvent truck, he sees PIERRE LARTIGUE and CHARLES CORLETTE, two executives from the administration bungalow across the road, emerge from a doorway and walk towards a car. Victor, still blinking from the sting of solvent, watches them as THEIR DRIVER runs ahead and opens the car door. Engrossed in conversation with their business, they get into a dark blue air-conditioned Chevrolet and drive past Victor towards the gate of the pumping station.

84 EXT. ROAD - NEAR "PASO AL INFIERNO"

Mist clouds drift across the weird-hanging vegetation along the sides of the road as the two trucks climb steadily. In the back, the workers sit huddled together against the damp. As the trucks round a bend, the road is SEEN to pass between a narrow gap in the canyon faced on one side by a large rock face. Suddenly the landscape is radically changed into a weird spectre of skeletal forest. The trees are all dead, making up a ghost forest of weird shapes.

As the drivers approach this area, they become solemn and begin muttering prayers. One of them crosses himself and kisses his thumb.

From the back of the truck, a WORKER takes a small "Macumba" cross made of woven palm and drops it beside the road where numerous other wooden cross relics are piled there in the gloom. All the men in the backs of the trucks begin mumbling prayers and rubbing their "Ficas" for good luck against the malevolent spirits of this area.

Along the road itself are slogans of painted graffiti. "Dios nos salva," "Christo es me guia," "Danos la luz de vuestra salvacion."

The mist darkens the sky and the surrounding jungle and the trucks pass and begin a descent after the Paseo al Infierno.

85 OMITTED  
thru  
87

88 EXT. JUNGLE MOUNTAINS - DAY

A range of low clouds hangs over the mountains behind Porvenir, cutting it off from the rest of the amorphous country to which it belongs. From the distant clouds and over the silence of a mangrove swamp the RAGGED DRONE of a DC-3 is HEARD. A small, dark speck, it emerges against the grey-white clouds behind.

## 89 EXT. REFINERY - DAY

Angerman, looking towards the sky, narrows his eyes at the sight of the plane.

## 90 EXT. BUILDING SITE

Kassem, who is digging in the mud, hears the SOUND of the plane. He climbs to the top of the ditch and looks up at it, disregarding the shouts of a nearby FOREMAN. Kassem's face registers a combination of curiosity and anxiety at the sight of the plane.

## 91 EXT. VERANDA - EL CORSARIO

Carlos watches the plane as it swings in low over the town for an approach pattern. Carlos walks down into the street and gets into a filthy, battered pickup truck and he fires up the engine.

## 92 ANGLE ON STREET

As Carlos' truck drives away an OLD EUROPEAN steps into the light of a doorway on the main street. His hair is white, his skin, very fair. He wears a pair of ill-fitting short pants and a clean but threadbare undershirt. His look goes to the sky and the NOISE of the AIRPLANE as it has many times before. Then he retreats, slowly, into the darkness inside.

## 93 PUMPING STATION

The plane makes its final approach over the large storage tanks of the pumping station. Victor, walking with a group of about Eleven Other Workers from one job site to another, slows his gait and looks at the plane as it descends. The native laborers with whom he is walking move on ahead of him.

## 94 EXT. ROAD TO AIRPORT

Jackie and the Other Workers in the truck bounce along a rutted road towards the airport as the plane carefully lines up for a landing. His gaze is riveted to the plane.

## 95 EXT. MUD RUNWAY - AIRPORT

The aged DC-3 banks over a patch of mangroves and dead trees and drops down to a landing on the muddy strip that defines the airport. A small crowd has gathered at a run-down shed made partially of the parts of a crashed DC-3. It is labeled AEROPUERTO PORVENIR.

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED:

Further away, down the runway, is a neat cinderblock hangar enclosed by a cyclone fence. It is posted with signs that bear the unmistakable logo of the COMREPET.

When the plane stops, a pair of double cargo doors open at the back and a passenger's door at the front. The usual crowd gets out: A MISSIONARY PRIEST with a small BLIND NATIVE CHILD. A few well-off NATIVE FARMERS, A FOREST INDIAN, followed by HIS WOMAN, who carries an enormous load, and a FIGURE FROM ANOTHER WORLD.

Dressed in an expensive light blue, raw silk suit, his hair white and his skin the coppery color that signals a failing liver, NILO descends into the crowds of urchins who clamor to carry the bags of deplaning passengers. A heavy element in his appearance defends him from the annoying attentions of the waiting beggars and urchins.

Jackie is on the truck slowly backing up to the cargo entrance of the plane. The truck stops at the cargo doors and the men begin the work of unloading a large generator.

Carlos, moving through the crowd, watches the deplaning passengers. His look, too, is drawn to Nilo. An affable NATIVE FARMER engages him in conversation, but he manages to watch Nilo out of the corner of his eye.

96 INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Jackie shoves the wooden pallet with the generator onto the lift section of the back of the truck. The other men drag it into position on the bed. Jackie is alone in the plane. He looks towards the front, the empty rows of seats, the open door to the cabin. His hand touches the seat for an instant.

PETERS (O.S.)

Forget it...

Jackie looks around and sees Peters in the back of the truck. The generator is in place.

PETERS

(continuing)

If you stop eating, a year's pay might get you a seat to the next rathole.

Jackie jumps to the back of the truck and Peters climbs over the side into the cab.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The passengers have gathered in a small area in front of the airport. An UNSHAVEN EMPLOYEE of the airline passes among them holding a handful of tattered cards marked TRANSITO.

TWO SEEDY-LOOKING POLICE OFFICIALS are sitting at a card table in front of the "terminal" examining passports. Nilo watches them and sees them requesting the papers of a deplaning FARMER. He moves quickly to the MAN handing out transit cards. He stands to the back with a cigarette in his hand. As he waits, he stifles a cough.

NILO

I'm in transit.

MAN

Que?

NILO

Transito... me. I'm going to Managua.

MAN

Ah... Managua... si.

He hands him a card and moves on to ascertain from the Indian where he is going. Nilo walks off towards the airport.

The INSPECTOR looks up as Nilo approaches. Nilo shows him the card.

NILO

Transito... Can I get something to drink?

He makes a drinking gesture.

INSPECTOR

Passaporte?

NILO

In the plane... with my baggage...

Nilo is pointing at the plane.

INSPECTOR

Pase...

Jackie watches Nilo as he moves along the edge of the airport shack. He sees him move to the refreshment stand where he buys a coke. With a handkerchief, he carefully wipes the top of the bottle before taking a drink. Jackie moves in among the other workers in the truck to avoid being seen. The truck gives a heave and pulls away. Jackie's expression darkens with the thought that Nilo might have come for him.

(CONTINUED)



96 CONTINUED: (2)

Nilo finishes the coke and walks quickly to the front of the shed. Carlos, among the crowd, watches him pass. In front, he gets into the waiting taxi, a beatup 1963 Chevrolet with the words "taxi" painted over a place on the door where the logo for the COMREPET was once written. As it pulls away, he dumps the shredded pieces of the transit card out the window. The sky has darkened and a few DISTANT ROLLS of THUNDER are HEARD.

97 EXT. COURTYARD - EL CORSARIO - AFTERNOON - HEAVY RAIN

At a far end of the courtyard of the El Corsario, Agrippa loads wood into a stove, while the Half-witted Servant Boy sits near a large pile of rubbish and plucks the feathers off a chicken. At the opposite side near the kitchen, Carlos emerges from the tavern, followed by Nilo. He cautions him about walking on the planks over the black mud of the yard itself. Nilo's suit is an electric color against the grey and black tones of everything that surrounds him.

98 INT. VICTOR'S HOVEL - AFTERNOON - RAIN

Although the room in which Victor has been living is a filthy hole, he has managed to bring a small degree of order to it. A clean towel hangs at the foot of his bed over the iron bedstead and his clothes are hung neatly on a hook at the back wall near a window. A small electric bulb hangs from a bare cord in front of a mirror and Victor has fashioned a neat handmade reflector out of a piece of cardboard and aluminum foil by which he can shave.

At the moment he is standing with a towel around his waist, his hair still wet from the afternoon shower. He shaves in front of the small mirror. As he hears Carlos speaking to someone outside, he reacts.

CARLOS (O.S.)

(barely audible)

I have three rooms... but one is taken.

Victor moves to the doorway and looks through.

99 EXT. COURTYARD - VICTOR'S POV - AFTERNOON

Carlos is standing with Nilo across the courtyard in front of the door to another hovel. The door is locked.

CARLOS

Agrippa, trae me las llaves...

(CONTINUED)

99 CONTINUED:

Nilo looks around casually, unperturbed at the filth of the courtyard. Agrippa slopes toward them, walking through the mud instead of on the planks. She hands them a key.

100 INT. VICTOR'S HOVEL - DAY

Victor watches as Carlos opens the lock.

101 EXT. COURTYARD

The door is opened. Nilo doesn't enter.

NILO

I'll take it...

CARLOS

For how long?

NILO

(looking around at the  
filthy courtyard)

Let's say a week.

102 EXT. MAIN STREET - PORVENIR - LATE AFTERNOON

Kassem sits on the ruin of an abandoned, pillaged automobile in the main street of Porvenir. His attention wanders between TWO YOUNG TEENAGE BOYS that are playing a kind of soccer game and a conversation that Angerman is having with Carlos across the street.

103 EXT. STREET - IN FRONT OF EL CORSARIO - KASSEM'S POV - NIGHT

Angerman stands with Carlos leaning against his beat-up truck. A few drunken laborers walk past and a SMALL NATIVE GIRL hurries by, carrying a huge basket of corn and a BABY slung across her hip. Nilo stands in front of El Corsario looking around as night comes to the village, then he moves off down the street looking totally out of place, but unperturbed by the depressing spectre that surrounds him.

104 ANGLE ON KASSEM

Kassem watches him pass.

105 ANGLE ON ANGERMAN AND CARLOS

Angerman and Carlos watch casually as Nilo moves away.

(CONTINUED)

105 CONTINUED:

ANGERMAN

Hast du eine Meinung? (What's  
your opinion?)

CARLOS

Jüder ist er auf alle Fälle nicht.  
(He's definitely not a Jew.)

Carlos glances in the direction that Nilo took.

CARLOS

(continuing)

Ein Ami. Verbrechertyp... Böse,  
aber nicht gefährlich. (He's  
American. Nasty, but not dangerous.)

Carlos looks inside the El Corsario where some kind of harm-  
less argument has broken out over a tainted bottle of beer.

CARLOS

(continuing)

Ich muss herein. (I've got to  
go in.)

Angerman nods and walks out to the middle of the street.  
Kassem joins him. They walk a short distance before Anger-  
man speaks.

ANGERMAN

Er behauptet er ist kein juder.  
(He's certain he's not a Jew.)

Kassem looks off in the direction of Nilo.

ANGERMAN

(continuing)

Er hat auch nachricht von Argentinien.  
Wir müssen nach Graz, Oestereich...  
Da gibt's ein Hamid Shabbut, er hat  
seine eigene Antizionistische  
Organization Gegründet. (He also  
had news from Argentina. We've got  
to get to Graz, Austria... There's  
a man named Mohammed Shabbut who  
has founded his own anti-Zionist  
organization.)

Kassem reacts.

ANGERMAN

(continuing)

Ausserhalb P.L.O.... Ölgeld.  
(Outside the P.L.O.... Oil money.)

KASSEM

Es klingt gut. (Sounds good.)

## 106 EXT. ANGLE NEAR WORK AREA - NIGHT

Victor paces along a length of cyclone fence near the machinery enclosure of the town. Above his head large lights shine down into the enclosure and the inevitable clouds of insects swarm around them. Victor smokes a cigarette. In the b.g. are piles of derelict equipment and stacks of oil drums. Victor reacts at the approach of a small BOY about age nine.

In a very brazen way the Boy walks up to him and makes the gesture for a cigarette. Victor extends the pack and the Boy takes two of them. He places one in his mouth and puts the other one behind his ear. He holds up the cigarette he intends to smoke for a light and Victor gives him his own. When it is lit, the Boy turns and with a furtive snap of his fingers, indicates Victor should follow him.

## 107 ANGLE

They quickly walk off the main street into the area of the marshy slum. There are no electric lights and some of the time they walk over rotten planking. From the filthy huts of the workers, an occasional face peers out and several dogs snarl and bark. MUSIC can be HEARD from a transistor radio. The Boy walks ahead puffing his cigarette and obviously pleased with the importance of his mission.

As they approach a hut and the end of the street a MAN passes them on homemade crutches dragging a huge elephantiasis-ridden leg. The attitude of the people here is different to the people of the main street. In the slum even Victor's poverty does not give him acceptance. He is a foreigner, an "extranjero," and somehow, they vaguely relate him to the misery of their lives.

## 108 ANGLE ON HUT

At a small hut, Victor is motioned by the Boy to wait outside. The Boy disappears through the door and within a few seconds, the Boy re-appears and waves him in.

## 109 INT. HUT

Victor enters, squinting into the gloom which is lit only by an oil lamp. O.S., a DOG GROWLS. The Boy indicates a seat just inside the door and Victor can see a MAN at the back seated on a bed. The Boy sits between them and hushes the unseen, SNARLING DOG that is under a chair.

(CONTINUED)

109 CONTINUED:

VICTOR  
Comprende Ingles?

The Boy chain-smokes his second cigarette off the first.

MAN  
Yes... I speak some... You want  
to travel away?

VICTOR  
Yes.

110 ANGLE

In a CLOSEUP the Man can be recognized as one of the  
passport inspectors from the airport.

MAN  
I can fix for you... a la Capital.

111 ANGLE

Victor begins lighting another cigarette.

VICTOR  
I want to go out of this country.

Suddenly, the Man's voice changes tone as though a whole  
new aspect has been introduced to the scene.

MAN  
Out from this country... Difical  
... Very difficult.

VICTOR  
Impossible?

MAN  
No... es possible... Costoso...  
Comprende? Cost much.

VICTOR  
Comprendo...

They are silent for a beat.

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

BOY

(to the Man)

Tiene un reloj de puro oro...  
 (He has a pure gold watch.)

MAN

Deja me ver. Trae me lo.  
 (Let me see it.)

The Boy turns to Victor and taps his wrist indicating the watch.

BOY

El reloj...

Victor considers for a beat. Then removes the watch. He hands it to the Boy who takes it back to the Man. Victor watches as the Man examines it and puts it on his wrist. He looks at it and exchanges some unintelligible dialogue with the Boy, then he looks over at Victor.

MAN

I can fix for you to go out  
 from the country... This reloj...  
 (he taps the  
 watch)  
 ... mas one thousand pesos...

Victor pauses.

VICTOR

I have only the watch.

The Man and the Boy look at him and the Man shrugs.

112 INT. EL CORSARIO - NIGHT (POSSIBLE DAY FOR NIGHT COVER)

The bar area of the El Corsario is full of the pay-night crowd of NATIVE and FOREIGN LABORERS intermingled with a few women. The RADIO BLARES FORTH NATIVE MUSIC. Jackie is at the bar cutting at a very tough piece of meat and shoveling food into his mouth while Carlos stands in front of him adding up his bill. While Jackie eats, Carlos counts to himself in German. Then he makes a final notation.

CARLOS

Four pesos, twenty centavos...

(CONTINUED)

112 CONTINUED:

JACKIE

Including this --

He lifts the meat on his fork.

CARLOS

That's on your new credit.

Jackie takes out his money to pay him. Carlos writes "PAGADO" on a receipt and hands it to Jackie.

JACKIE

Gimme another beer. I'm celebrating.

Carlos gets him a beer.

CARLOS

What occasion?

JACKIE

The end of my dry season.

Jackie reads his old New York Daily News. He takes a drink of the beer and Victor approaches from the door. He maintains his distance a few feet from Jackie. Carlos turns to Victor:

CARLOS

... Und Herr Serrano, was moechten Sie?

(And Herr Serrano, what would you like?)

VICTOR

Ein whiskey...

Carlos, with a certain relish, crosses to a cupboard behind the bar. He removes a half-full bottle of Johnny Walker. Jackie watches, mopping up his gravy with a piece of bread. Victor smiles at the sight of the bottle and there is an obvious pride in Carlos' look.

VICTOR

(continuing)

Das habe Ich in diese Gegen bis jezt nicht gesehen.

(I haven't seen that down here before.)

(CONTINUED)

112 CONTINUED: (2)

CARLOS  
Private Betrieb.  
(Private stock.)

Jackie watches them, slightly annoyed that he cannot understand or share their pleasure.

CARLOS  
(continuing)  
Ganz selten... Nur fuer besondere  
Kunde.  
(Very rare... Only for special  
customers.)

He pours.

JACKIE  
Put it on my account.

Victor looks over at him, then nods an acknowledgement.

VICTOR  
(in English)  
Thank you.

Victor takes his whiskey and moves over towards Jackie. He raises the glass in a gesture of thanks and takes a drink.

VICTOR  
(continuing)  
I'm Serrano --

Jackie nods, without extending his hand or giving his name.

JACKIE  
Glad to know you.

VICTOR  
You're in the worker's hostel?

JACKIE  
I like being near the water.

VICTOR  
Yes, I thought about it myself.

JACKIE  
It's cheap... twenty centavos a  
day, but what you save in rent  
you blow on flea powder.

(CONTINUED)



112 CONTINUED: (3)

Jackie takes a drink of beer.

JACKIE  
(continuing)  
I understand you used to be in  
banking --

VICTOR  
Oh?...

JACKIE  
That's the rumor.

VICTOR  
... I had no idea I was the  
subject of rumors.

JACKIE  
That's all there is in Porvenir  
... rumors and diarrhea. Carlos  
is supposed to be an ex-Reichmarshall  
... Right, Carlos?

Carlos returns a steely glare.

VICTOR  
What is your profession... Mister?

JACKIE  
Dominguez.

VICTOR  
Dominguez.

JACKIE  
My profession... odds and ends.

Victor finishes his whiskey.

JACKIE  
(continuing)  
Carlos, bring Mr. Serrano another  
whiskey.

VICTOR  
Let me get this...

JACKIE  
No, tonight I'm a sport.

(CONTINUED)

112 CONTINUED: (4)

Carlos pours the whiskey.

JACKIE

(continuing)

What brought you here? You read about this place in a travel brochure?

VICTOR

I heard it had a healthy climate.

Victor looks up as Two Police enter the cantina. Immediately there is a reaction from all the foreign patrons. They are still wearing their dark glasses.

JACKIE

And, it wasn't what you expected.

VICTOR

It was exactly what I expected.

Jackie notices Victor's reaction and he turns, giving the Cops a quick but inconspicuous look. He looks back at Victor. In the b.g., the Cops go to a table and begin asking a FOREIGNER for his papers. Victor exchanges a look with Jackie that serves as a warning.

113 ANGLE ON THE COPS

While one examines the papers of a man sitting at a table, the other is looking around the room. Jackie has his back to them. They move to the bar behind Jackie, easing up next to him. Jackie pours his beer, and Victor downs his whiskey. Their newly-formed acquaintanceship vanishes.

CARLOS

(to the Police)

Buenas noches, amigos... les ofrezca algo?

(Good evening, would you like something?)

They have become attentive to Jackie.

1ST COP

No, gracias, Don Carlos, no estamos tomando.

(Thank you, Don Carlos, we're not drinking.)

(CONTINUED)

113 CONTINUED:

The mood of the entire place has grown somber. The Police watch for what seems a long and pregnant period while Jackie drinks his beer.

Victor stares ahead, knowing that Jackie is in deep shit. Finally, one of the Police leans towards Jackie at the bar.

1ST COP  
Juan Dominguez?

Jackie pours a beer, not responding.

1ST COP  
(continuing; speaking  
very fast)  
V.D. No es el albanil Juan Dominguez?  
(Aren't you the laborer Juan Dominguez?)

The other Cop moves around, approaching him.

2ND COP  
Oiga!... Le estamos hablando...  
(Listen!... We are speaking to you.)

Jackie looks at him and replaces the beer. He is calm.

JACKIE  
No comprendo.

Victor starts to casually move towards the back door of the cantina.

2ND COP  
(to Victor)  
Quedate! (Wait!)  
Es amigo tuyo? (Is he your friend?)

VICTOR  
(stops)  
No.

1ST COP  
(to Jackie)  
No me comprendes?... A ver la tarjeta  
de identidad. (You don't understand?  
... Let's see your identity card.)

JACKIE  
Como? (What?)

(CONTINUED)

113 CONTINUED: (2)

1ST COP

La tarjeta de identidad que tienes  
aquí...

(he taps Jackie's  
shirt pocket)

(The identity card that you keep here.)

Jackie is caught. He reaches into his shirt pocket and removes his faked card. The rest of the El Corsario is silent. Victor leans carefully against the bar.

2ND COP

(takes the card, reads  
it aloud for the benefit  
of the patrons)

A ver, Juan Dominguez, nacido  
Noviembre 1939, en Las Columnas,  
en este Pais... Eres Tu?

(Let's see, Juan Dominguez, born  
November 1939, in Las Columnas, in  
this country... Is that you?)

The Cop is getting behind his act.

2ND COP

(continuing)

A mi, no me parece que naciste en  
Las Columnas. (You don't look to  
me like you were born in Las Columnas.)

A few snickers are HEARD from the natives, to whom the cop is playing.

JACKIE

(flippant)

Porque no? (Why not?)

The Cop is suddenly furious at the arrogance of his answer.

2ND COP

Porque no sabes ni palabra de  
Espanol... Porque eres un pinche  
gringo cabron. (Because you don't  
even speak Spanish... and because  
you're a filthy gringo asshole.)

1ST COP

Es un asunto muy serio... (This  
is a very serious situation.)

(CONTINUED)

113 CONTINUED: (3)

2ND COP

(holding the card)

Eso es falso... Es una violacion  
 contra las leyes de imigracion.

(This is forged... It's a violation  
 of the immigration laws.)

The Cops exchange a look, then launch into their full performance. The 1st Cop snaps his gun case open and steps back. The Second Cop barks commands at Jackie.

2ND COP

(continuing)

Las manos encima del bar... piernas  
 atras... rapido... mas atras...  
 no muevas...

It is the full search and arrest number to which Jackie wearily responds. He is forced to put his hands on the bar and spread his legs. They frisk and handcuff him in a ritual learned from American police training films.

Jackie, with his hands behind him, is pushed through the door.

113A EXT. VERANDA EL CORSARIO

As he is shoved across the veranda, he sees Nilo standing calmly in the dark smoking a cigar and watching his arrest. He is pushed into the caged back of a Jeep and driven away towards the police station a hundred yards away. Nilo watches the entire operation from his relaxed position on the veranda of the El Corsario.

113B INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

The main room of the police station is furnished with a beat-up wooden desk, several tacky chairs and, once again, a large picture of the country's current dictator, posing with the visionary gaze of an inspired Rotarian. Jackie is seated in front of the desk, handcuffed, in a chair. The 1st Cop takes a swig of brandy from a bottle on the desk and then sits on the side opposite his partner who is counting the money he has taken from Jackie.

2ND COP

Mas? No tienes mas?...

1ST COP

You have more?

(CONTINUED)

113B CONTINUED:

JACKIE

Search me.

The 2nd Cop holds up the money to the first and smiles.

2ND COP

Que cabron ese... no tiene plata.  
 (This asshole is nearly broke.)

The other Cop smiles and takes a drink.

1ST COP

La tercera parte del sueldo...  
 (Okay, next time you pay...)  
 (he uses his fingers  
 to demonstrate)  
 Ganas three... We take one.

He counts out the remaining money from Jackie's pocket.  
 There are nine pesos. He graciously takes three and gives  
 him back six. Then he smiles broadly.

2ND COP

Comprendes? ( You understand?)

JACKIE

Comprendo. ( I understand.)

2ND COP

Suelte le. (Release him.)

The First Cop moves around behind Jackie and releases him.

1ST COP

Okay... fuera... Puedes ir...  
 (You can go.)

JACKIE

I need my card.

2ND COP

(suddenly angry)  
 Que?... fuera.

JACKIE

I can't make shit without the card  
 ... mi tarjeta...

1ST COP

A la tarjeta, si...  
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

113B CONTINUED: (2)

1ST COP (CONT'D)

(he takes it off  
the desk and gives  
it to him)

Para trabajar.

(he makes a digging  
motion and laughs)

Y para ganar.

He rubs his fingers together.

Jackie puts the card in his pocket and walks to the door.  
It leads directly onto the street.

2ND COP

(mimicking Jackie's  
accent)

Adios, Senor Dominguez.

Jackie steps out into the deserted main street of Povenir.

113C EXT. MAIN STREET - PORVENIR

He walks along under the low wattage lamps through the HUM  
of countless INSECTS and the DRONE of a distant GENERATOR.

114 EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF EL CORSARIO - NIGHT

Jackie walks along the street thoroughly pissed-off and  
depressed. As he passes the veranda of El Corsario, he  
sees Nilo sitting at a corner table. Jackie stops. He  
stands for a few seconds in the street with Nilo sitting  
behind him. There is some MUSIC, a little NOISE from the  
El Corsario, FROG SOUNDS and the usual GENERATOR DRONE.  
Jackie almost turns to confront him, to say "What the fuck  
are you doing, clocking me?..." But he doesn't. Instead,  
he starts moving again doggedly through the oil-slick mud  
of the street toward the vermin-ridden bed of the worker's  
hostel. Nilo watches him disappear into the night.

115 EXT. JUNGLE ABOVE OIL FIELD - HIGH ANGLE - DAY

The stillness of the surrounding jungle is broken by the  
distant RUMBLE of DIESEL MOTORS and the BANGING of PIPE  
as work goes on in the square clearing of the oil field.  
The entire scene seems distant and unrelated to reality,  
like the figures in an industrial diorama in a Museum of  
Science and Industry.

## 116 EXT. DRILLING SITE - DAY

GROUPS OF MEN work on a planked road over the mud that will interconnect the wells. A pile driver hammers supporting stakes into the ground and other men with chain saws are cutting up timber into the necessary pieces.

## 117 AREA NEAR FOREST - DAY

At the edge of the forest, a group of workers chop at the base of a large tree. The American engineer, CHARLES CORLETTE, watches and makes comments to a young LATIN AMERICAN FOREMAN, supervising the operation.

With a huge groan, the tree breaks loose from its remaining piece of trunk and falls heavily into the mud of the clearing. Like an army of ants, workers with axes and chain saws swarm over it, hacking off the branches. A large snake which lived in the tangled growth crawls swiftly out of hiding and is casually hacked in two by a machete-bearing worker. The chain saws move in and deftly begin turning it into timber.

## 118 GUARD TOWER - DAY

Along the edge of the jungle stand four small watchtowers about twenty-five feet in height.

(CONTINUED)



118 CONTINUED:

At the top of one of them, TWO GUARDS casually stand armed with rifles, peering out over the work below. One of them waves his hand against the DRONE of unseen countless INSECTS.

119 EXT. WELL PLATFORM - DAY

A GROUP OF MEN replace the casing on a well. They work in a kind of rhythmic ballet as a huge crane grabs lengths of pipe, lifts them high into the derrick and then places them in a spinning bit to drive them into the ground. The men work within inches of being mutilated by the heavy machinery. In the b.g. is another well and the other WORK CREW that is making a plank road over the mud.

120 EXT. BUILDING SITE NEAR WELLS - DAY

A plank road built from forest lumber is extended towards the wells. Corlette walks along it with the Young Foreman who carries a set of plans. TEAMS OF MEN are busy all around them and not far away is a derrick at the edge of the jungle. Nothing at all seems out of the ordinary. Suddenly, a HUGE EXPLOSION rips away the base of the nearest well.

121 EXT. OIL FIELD - SERIES OF SHOTS

The well EXPLODES. After a slight pause, a giant geyser of flame erupts from the base, billowing up into the atmosphere.

The scene at all work sites is sudden chaos. Men run in different directions under a hail of falling debris.

Corlette and the Young Foreman crouch in the mud beside the plank road, watching in disbelief. The derrick gracefully begins to collapse on itself, coming down gently into the roaring funnel of flame.

A WORKER lies by the planked road to the well. He shouts silently against the ROAR of the FIRE and waves his arm. TWO MEN try to move in towards him, shielding their eyes but they are unable to approach. His waving becomes less as he is cooked by the heat.

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED:

A NATIVE FOREMAN runs up to Corlette and shouts in his ear. They both shout to an armed "CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD" and several other armed men who run towards them. Quickly, GUARDS are sent into the jungle behind the well.

A red Dodge four-wheel-drive fire wagon bounces over the mud towards the scene of the fire. It comes to a stop a hundred yards away, dwarfed by the fire. In front of the fire, the men stand in small groups staring up at the spectacle. They talk in excited gestures, but nothing can be heard through the ROAR of the FLAMES.

In the tower the Two Guards grab their guns and scramble down the ladder.

122 EDGE OF OIL FIELD - DAY

Along the sides of the field, armed guards run, their sten guns ready, looking into the jungle. At a certain point they enter onto a small trail.

123 EXT. AREA NEAR FIRE - DAY

At the scene of the blaze TWO FIREMEN move in while men from the fire truck hold hoses on them. They grab a WOUNDED MAN and drag him back. Near the truck a BADLY BURNED WORKER is holding his face in his hands while a FIREMAN and ORDERLY attend him.

124 EXT. JUNGLE - DAY (FIRE IN B.G.)

Cautiously, with their rifles ready, the Guards move through the jungle. Their vision is restricted by the tangle of green that surrounds them. Suddenly, they react to a SHOUT from O.S.

GUARD

Vengan... aqui passaran.  
(Come here... They passed this way.)

They run towards the SOUND of the VOICE.

125 EXT. JUNGLE CLEARING - DAY

Two Guards have found the remains of a guerrilla camp.

(CONTINUED)

125 CONTINUED:

Keeping their guns ready for ambush, others arrive and examine several empty cans in which the explosives were sealed. One of them lifts a section of detonator and shows it to their SQUAD LEADER. The cans in which the explosives were brought and a piece of oiled paper are covered with Chinese writing.

126 EXT. PORVENIR - MAIN STREET - MORNING

CROWDS of WORKERS mill around in the main street of Porvenir waiting for the trucks to take them away for the day's labor.

127 EXT. MAIN STREET - PORVENIR - TRUCK PICKUP AREA - MORNING

Victor moves through the Crowd in his work clothes. Jair stands talking in excited broken-Spanish with a small, WIRY FRENCHMAN. He gives Victor a Gallic shrug as Victor passes, indicating that he has no idea what is going on. Victor crosses towards Jackie and Kassem who are standing with the group of DAY LABORERS. Kassem speaks to some of the men.

128 EXT. MAIN STREET - SERIES OF SHOTS

The Crowds of Workers fill the street area. They are quiet, but a current of conversation goes through them as the SOUND of TRUCKS is HEARD. ONE MAN climbs to the top of a pile of steel pipes and looks down the road.

MAN

Ya vienen.

(They're coming.)

The mood begins to change to a simple acceptance of the fact that the trucks were late and the men line up to begin the day's work.

Two trucks approach. They are covered with a coating of dust and several ARMED GUARDS stand just behind the cabs. The Crowd surges forward to meet them as they grind to a stop.

The curious Workers clamber along the sides and the Guards begin shouting them back.

(CONTINUED)

128 CONTINUED:

## WORKERS

Que paso' estan heridos... Hay muertos.

(What happened?... They're wounded... Some are dead.)

## GUARDS

Un accidente... Fuego en una poza. Fuera... fuera...

(An accident... A well caught fire... Get back.)

Along the slatted sides of the truck beds, the Workers peer through at the cargo. One of them carries thirteen burned and mutilated bodies wrapped in polythene sheeting. Shouts go up immediately from the Workers.

## WORKERS

Quemados... estan quemados... Que paso matados por la compania...

(They're burned... Killed by the company.)

Asesinos... Asesinos.

(Assassins... Assassins.)

The Guards begin pushing them back.

From the other truck a horribly burned and BANDAGED WORKER is helped down, ANOTHER crouches behind him. The Guards attempt to push the people away as the mood grows nastier.

From the b.g., a GROUP OF WOMEN arrive and move through to the trucks. At the sight of the bodies, ONE of them begins shrieking and pulling at the plastic covering. A horribly burned body is beneath it.

An angry Group of Workers moves on the truck. While a GUARD tries to knock the people away with his rifle butt, Workers scramble up the sides of the truck and drag him over the top. He is disarmed and thrown to the ground.

Now, a full fury sweeps the mob. The Guards are clubbed and beaten by the people. Women spit on them and shrieks go up of "Asesino... mueran los gringo... cabrones."  
"Mueren los petroleros..." "Al carajo hijos de puta..."

Jackie and Kassem stand behind the Crowd as it begins pulling the Guards down and beating them.

(CONTINUED)

129 ANGLE

Peters moves quickly along the street and into the entrance of the workers' hostel. Angerman is standing there. Angerman speaks as he passes.

ANGERMAN

Verrückte Hunde... Bolschevisten...

Kefalos moves to the doorway in his sweated-up pajamas. He looks out at the mob through jaundiced eyes.

Peters, deciding his position is safe, looks back at the mob. He is an old Latin hand, he watches the display with the caution and disdain that the truly downtrodden have for the working class.

Carlos is on the porch of the El Corsario. As he watches he slowly moves his gun from the back of his pants to the front. Nilo, ever casual, steps out the door behind him. He is impassive at the sight of the chaos.

A GUARD in his company uniform climbs onto the hood of a truck and then tries to break from the mob and is thrown down into the mud and stamped on from behind.

Women cling to the burned and mutilated bodies, crying in the midst of the riot that surrounds them.

The Mounted Police ride from the far end of the main street towards the Crowd. At the edges they try to enforce a crowd control unsuccessfully. The horses are skittish and one of them rears and bucks, unseating its rider. As he hits the ground, his horse gallops away down the street.

A Guard is smacked several times in the face with his rifle butt. He holds his hand to his face and staggers out of the Crowd. Kassem kicks him in the ball, dropping him to his knees.

A YOUNG WORKER climbs to the top of the cab and begins shouting an impromptu speech vilifying the Americans and the Company.

WORKER

Miran los hermanos quemado en las Llamas de nuestro propio petroleo. No debemos sufrir asi meintras los petroleros y sus amigos en el gobierno viven como reyes.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

129 CONTINUED:

## WORKER

A donde estan las escuelas,  
 sanatorios, viviendas que nos  
 han prometidos? No tenemos nada,  
 y no tendremos nada hasta que  
 mostramos el poder del pueblo.  
 (Look at our brothers burned in  
 the flames of our own petroleum.  
 Should we suffer like this so  
 the oilmen and their friends  
 in our government can live  
 like kings? Where are the  
 schools, hospitals and housing  
 we were promised? We have  
 nothing, and we will have  
 nothing until we show them the  
 power of the people.)

ANOTHER WORKER rips a five gallon can off the side of the truck. He passes it along to a YOUNG MAN on the top. They begin soaking the trucks with gas and then jumping back. While the last of the bodies are dragged away, a match is thrown and the trucks are set on fire. The Crowd draws back while in the center the trucks set and burn.

Jackie and Victor watch from among the Crowd as the flames leap at the truck. Kassem, slightly out of breath with the excitement, steps back from a place near the truck shielding his face from the heat. Further away, Nilo leans against a building and surveys the scene.

A Guard, his face a mass of blood, stares dumbly at the burning truck.

130 EXT. MAIN STREET - PORVENIR - MORNING

Chanting "Fuera Gringos," a GROUP OF WORKERS carry one of the wounded men on their shoulders away from the flaming trucks.

At the side of the El Corsario, SEVERAL WORKERS take up handfuls of oil-soaked mud from under the pipeline that runs through the town. With a stream of abuse, they hurl it at the political poster of Ignacio Lopez-Gutierrez.

## 131 INT. PUMPING STATION - LARTIGUE'S OFFICE - DAY

Lartigue's office is done in the prissy modern style of a Belgian bank official's. A tasteful painting is hung on one wall and a modern floor lamp looks conspicuously a long ways from home. A picture of the nation's President hangs behind his head and there are numerous plaques attesting that Mr. Lartigue belongs to various international organizations associated with the petroleum industry. LARTIGUE, a smallish man carefully dressed in a blue whipcord suit, rises to greet Corlette. He is pale by comparison to Corlette and he wears rimless glasses. His face is humorless and cold. Corlette places the large bag on Lartigue's desk and removes a tin can covered with Chinese writing and a piece of a detonator with a wire still attached.

LARTIGUE  
(picking up the  
detonator)  
Very professional.

CORLETTE  
If we send it to the capital,  
we might get some action.

A SECRETARY brings Corlette a scotch and Lartigue waits until she exits to speak.

LARTIGUE  
The government has been told  
it's an accident.

CORLETTE  
(takes a drink;  
walks toward the  
window)  
Can I open this? I'm freezing.

LARTIGUE  
(as Corlette opens  
the window)  
It upsets the thermostat.

CORLETTE  
(standing in front  
of the open window)  
Why did we tell them it was an  
accident?

(CONTINUED)

131 CONTINUED:

LARTIGUE  
(leans back in his  
chair)

Charles, in this country, terrorists  
who blow up American oil wells are  
heroes.

Lartigue leans back in his chair under the picture of the  
President.

CORLETTE  
The Government is paid to protect  
us.

LARTIGUE  
El Presidente cannot risk his  
liberal image by sending his  
troops to chase patriots...

Lartigue removes the glasses that he's wearing and care-  
fully exchanges them for another pair.

LARTIGUE  
(continuing)  
This is a Telex from home responding  
to your report... The first part  
just concerns 'regret loss of life,  
etc., etc., injuries and so on'...  
And apparently we have no insurance  
position because of the sabotage  
thing.

Corlette stares out the window.

LARTIGUE  
(continuing)  
Anyway, this is the part that  
concerns you. 'Limitations on  
production in recent months due  
to acts of terrorism and political  
uncertainties emphasize attention  
immediate supply obligations with  
minimum concern R. and D.'

CORLETTE  
What the hell is R. and D.?

LARTIGUE  
Research and Development. 'Please  
advise course of action soonest'...  
and it's signed 'Webber'.'

(CONTINUED)



131 CONTINUED: (2)

CORLETTE

Is that it?

LARTIGUE

Yes.

Corlette begins pacing.

CORLETTE

What are the 'immediate supply obligations'?

LARTIGUE

Two tankers of one hundred and sixty thousand barrels by the end of next month. I can fill one from my tanks here. Can you keep your remaining wells pumping to fill the other?

He closes the window.

CORLETTE

They'll have to delay it.

LARTIGUE

They can't. The charter is running. If we have to take a loss that big, we might as well shut down now and save expenses.

CORLETTE

No. We're not putting my ass in the sling. I can't handle well control with the personnel at the field.

LARTIGUE

You can have anyone you want -- Get Red Adair if you can -- as long as the wells keep pumping.

CORLETTE

No States-side expert is going to tolerate a violation of A.S.P.E. safety rules... I'll have to use a local and hope the fire doesn't jump.

(CONTINUED)

131 CONTINUED: (3)

Corlette thinks for a moment.

CORLETTE

(continuing)

The fire in Minatitlan last year was handled by a young Costa Rican engineer. His name is Del Rios, Bobby Del Rios. Why don't you see if we can get him in here tomorrow.

132 EXT. OIL FIELD - DAY

The fire rages, sending a plume of smoke high into the air over the jungle. The area at the nearby wells is being saturated with water hoses and the entire field is filled with large areas of oil-sliced water and mud. Hoses run in various directions and men are attentive to keeping nearby machinery cooled down to reduce the chance of fire. Into this scene from over the surrounding jungle, a medium-sized helicopter descends. It is a small war surplus Hughes. Patches of lemon-color primer can be SEEN where repairs have been made on the airframe. It resembles a large, shabby dragonfly.

133 INT. HELICOPTER

As it comes in to land at a cleared area, Corlette shields his eyes from the glare of the sun and looks at the fire. Next to him is a young American pilot named BILLY WHITE. He wears a civilian version of a military helicopter pilot's fatigues. Behind them, with a view through an open bay, is BOBBY DEL RIOS.

134 EXT. HELICOPTER

The helicopter lands and the men get out. Del Rios is assisted in bringing a white metallic fire suit out of the plane.

135 EXT. AREA NEAR WELL - DAY

Wearing the fire suit against the intense heat of the blaze, Del Rio walks like an extraterrestrial towards the fire. TWO OIL COMPANY EMPLOYEES stay back from him and hold hoses pointed at him to keep him soaked with water. Del Rios shields his face with his hand, studies the fire for a few moments, then turns and walks back toward Corlette and the others.

## 136 EXT. AREA BACK FROM WELL

Del Rios removes the hood and the fire suit. Under it he is sweating profusely. Corlette and the others are watching him expectantly.

DEL RIOS

(grinning)

Well, I have seen worse... Let's clear away all the junk and blow her out.

## 137 EXT. ROAD FROM PUMPING STATION

A station wagon turns off on a narrow dirt road through the mangrove swamp to a small building enclosed by a cyclone fence.

## 138 EXT. EXPLOSIVES MAGAZINE - DAY

A GUARD at the gate opens it up for the car and it enters the small compound. The MEN get out of the car and they are met by a UNIFORMED EMPLOYEE of the company who leads them in a very deferential way to the entrance of a nicely-painted, well-maintained, corrugated metal building that is marked appropriately as an explosives magazine.

## 139 ANGLE

Corlette and Del Rios wait while a nervous, but very willing Guard fiddles with the key that opens a double lock on the door of the magazine. He moves the latch back and opens the door. The three Men step inside to be confronted by a clean, well-swept room which is completely devoid of anything. At the back, the sunlight glares through a space where a panel of the sheet metal has been ripped away. Del Rios looks at Corlette in confusion. Corlette is stunned by the sight. He steps forward into the room.

CORLETTE

(to the Guard)

Donde estan las cajas de explosivo?  
(Where are the cases of explosive?)

The Guard is now very nervous. He reaches for a clipboard beside the door.

GUARD

Las cajas?  
(The cases?)

CORLETTE

Si... las cajas... Donde esta el  
explosivo?  
(Yes... the cases... Where is the  
explosive?)

(CONTINUED)

139 CONTINUED:

The Guard glances at the clipboard as though hoping for some magic.

GUARD

(looking at the  
clipboard)

Es que hubo cuarenta cajas que  
nos mandaron...

(There were forty cases delivered...)

CORLETTE

(cutting him off)

Donde estan?... Ahora... donde  
estan?...

(Where are they... Now... Where  
are they?)

GUARD

Es que los robaron...

(They were stolen...)

Corlette looks at him stunned.

CORLETTE

Los robaron!...

The Guard seizes on this opportunity to walk towards the open panel and begins to explain the theft. Corlette and Del Rios remain standing near the entrance.

GUARD

(in the b.g.)

Hace come tres semanas llegaron  
por la noche... sacaron las  
cajas por aqui... A lo mejor  
son rebeldes. Quien sabe?...

Yo se lo iba reportar pero pensaba  
que podria encontrar las huellas...

(About three weeks ago they came  
in here at night. They cut this...

They took the cases through here...

Probably rebels, who knows?...

I was going to report it but I  
thought I might find... a trail...

CORLETTE

(not listening to  
the Guard)

Jesus! Forty cases fresh from Dupont

... Rat fucked.

The Guard finishes his explanation near the ripped-out panel. He turns and walks back towards Corlette.

(CONTINUED)

139 CONTINUED: (2)

GUARD

Ahora, solo quedan las cajas viejas...  
 (Now, all we have are the old cases...)

Corlette reacts.

CORLETTE

Cajas viejas?  
 (Old cases?)

GUARD

Hay cajas viejas en el otro  
 almacén...  
 (There's old cases in the other  
 storehouse.)

140 EXT. AREA BEHIND MAGAZINE

Corlette and Del Rios follow the Guard through a heavy undergrowth. The area was once obviously part of a construction machinery yard and rotting metal junk can be seen peering out from underneath the jungle which has begun a natural reclamation. Ahead of them is a rusting corrugated metal building. A faded "PELIGRO" sign and some red and white stripes identify it as a magazine, but unlike the previous building, there are no double locks on the door which is festooned with plant growth. The Guard yanks a stick out of the doorlatch and drags it open.

141 INT. EXPLOSIVES MAGAZINE - DAY

The shaft of light from the door pierces the darkness and a few bats fly around chirping with alarm. In the center of the room is a stack of about thirty cases of explosive. Corlette and Del Rios step inside. Del Rios walks to the cases and reads the text on the side.

CORLETTE

It's been here since they laid  
 the big pipe.

DEL RIOS

(to the Guard)

Tienes palanca?  
 (Do you have a crowbar?)

The Guard moves quickly to the wall and takes down a crowbar. He moves to the box.

Del Rios takes the crowbar and slides it into the top of a box.

(CONTINUED)

141 CONTINUED:

When the top is off, the Guard begins unwrapping the yellowed polythene bag covering the sticks inside. Del Rios waves him off.

DEL RIOS

(continuing)

Okay... esta bueno...

Del Rios pulls the bag open revealing the sticks and he removes one. Placing it between two cases, he pulls at it until it breaks open. He takes the broken half and sniffs at it, then crumbles it away with his thumb. The stuff crumbles away like sawdust. He turns, and throws the stick to Corlette.

DEL RIOS

(continuing)

This stuff is too dry to fart.

(crumbling it

away; to the

Guard)

Cuando dieron vuelta a las cajas?

(When did you last turn these cases?)

The Guard is amazed at his question.

GUARD

Pues, no se ingeniero.

(I don't know.)

Del Rios' hand goes down deep inside. The deeper it goes, the more carefully he moves. His face reacts to something he feels and he very slowly begins to withdraw his arm. His attitude is quite different now than when he casually broke open the stick. He raises his hand and looks at it. A few small drops of liquid cling to his fingertips. His face darkens. Slowly, holding his hand in front of him with a minimum of movement, he rises and walks away from the cases. When he is near the door he flings the drops to the concrete a few feet away. A series of TINY EXPLOSIONS like cap guns are HEARD.

DEL RIOS

That stuff's been sitting the better part of a year. It's worthless.

(CONTINUED)

141 CONTINUED: (2)

CORLETTE

Worthless?

DEL RIOS

When it sits for a long time without being turned, the liquid nitro seeps out of the sticks into the bag. If you give those boxes any kind of a bump it'll blow. I can call the States and get some sent down. It'll be here in four or five days.

CORLETTE

More like a month...

DEL RIOS

A month?

CORLETTE

We can't bring explosives into the country just like that. It takes permits from the military and there're at least four generals that would like to see the whole field go up so they could come in and nationalize it.

DEL RIOS

It's risky just to move one of these cases ten feet. That fire is over two hundred miles away.

CORLETTE

If it were up there, could you use it?

DEL RIOS

I suppose we could boom-load it a little at a time. Yes, but how the hell...

CORLETTE

(cutting him off)  
We'll get it up there.

142 EXT. AIRPORT - DUSK

Corlette stands with the helicopter pilot, Billy White, at the open doorway to the aircraft.

(CONTINUED)

142 CONTINUED:

Billy leans against the seat through the open door. The worn, battered look of the machine can now be seen firsthand.

BILLY

The major problem is the vibration. This thing is like a damned eggbeater. No matter how we shockmount something, it will have a severe lateral vibration.

Corlette listens, feigning interest and concern for every detail. In reality, he would like a simple, direct answer affirming that the job will be done.

BILLY

(continuing)

I thought maybe the stuff could be hung under the bird on a pallet.

CORLETTE

On the winch cable?

BILLY

... About sixty feet down. There'd be no vibration. But the problem is turbulence. We might move it a half a mile that way but not two hundred. I've never had a flight around here that didn't have some bumps in it.

They pause.

CORLETTE

What are you saying, Billy?

BILLY

Not with a chopper. Sir, there's no way.

CORLETTE

I can double the offer when you can think of one.

(CONTINUED)



142 CONTINUED: (2)

BILLY

It's not the money. Mr. Corlette, nobody's gonna get into a chopper with that shit... You need a suicide jockey.

143 EXT. MAIN STREET - PORVENIR - DAY

A single truck is parked in the main street of the town. Two armed COMPANY GUARDS sit on the roof of the cab. From various parts of the town, PEOPLE have begun moving towards it. Most are workers wearing hard hats and company clothes, but among them is a group of FOREST INDIANS, their bodies nearly nude with painted designs. Two of them carry sticks on which are festoons of brilliantly colored carcasses of dead tropical birds. Having no idea why, they move with the gathering crowd towards the truck.

Jackie walks from the Hostel and Kassem is a few steps behind him.

144 EXT. ANGLE ON TRUCK - MORNING

Zayas is making an announcement; he is very stiff and formal and obviously taken with the importance of his task. Corlette stands next to him watching the street gradually fill with people. He is wary, but unafraid. Two armed guards perch on the cab behind him.

ZAYAS

La Compania tiene un aviso muy importante de la parte del ingeniero Charles Corlette jefe de operaciones en Poza Petrolea...  
(The Company has a very important announcement that will be made by Engineer Charles Corlette, the Chief of Operations at the oil field.)

With a slight awkwardness of changing positions, Corlette takes the bullhorn.

CORLETTE

Buenos dias... As you know, we have had a disastrous fire in one of our wells at the field...

(CONTINUED)

144 CONTINUED:

Parroting not only his style of voice, but his movements as well, Zayas translates after each sentence into Spanish.

(Note: Zayas' translation.)

145 ANOTHER ANGLE

Victor walks along the street towards the crowd from a row of stores.

146 ANGLE OVER THE BACKGROUND HUTS OF THE VILLAGE - DAY

MEN and WOMEN begin to emerge and walk quickly towards the center of town where Corlette's speech is in progress.

CORLETTE

We regret very sincerely the suffering among you that this fire has caused...

147 ANGLES - DURING SPEECH

The workers gather quickly. They are curious about the unprecedented announcement, but in the true reticence of their national character, they seem impassive at the words.

CORLETTE

We also regret that a few trouble-makers used the incident as an occasion to destroy company property and injure company personnel causing a shutdown of our operations...

As Zayas translates with an evangelist's zeal, a few of the young troublemakers in the crowd exchange furtive smiles.

CORLETTE

(continuing)

Right now we need experienced truck drivers willing to do a dangerous job...

Jackie moves forward through the crowd towards the truck. He stands near the Forest Indians, who are smiling up at the speakers with a total lack of comprehension.

Victor walks along the edge of the crowd and sits on an oil drum.

(CONTINUED)

147 CONTINUED:

CORLETTE

(continuing)

This job must be done before we  
can reopen our gates and bring  
back full employment to you  
people...

Nilo, unshaven, emerges from the doorway of the El Corsario  
and stands listening to the speech.

CORLETTE

(continuing)

The men who qualify will receive  
exceptional wages...

Kassem stands among the crowd. Peters, Kefalos, Jair and  
Rodriguez are also very attentive to the speech. An  
ITALIAN, CASTELLI, steps forward and shouts to Corlette.

CASTELLI

Que es el trabajo este... de que  
consiste?

CORLETTE

Transporte de explosives... Me  
intienen transporte de explosivos...

Voices from the crowd begin in Spanish.

VOICES

Cuales explosivos?... Adonde?...

Angerman moves to a place near the front. At the front  
Corlette raises his hands. He falls back into English.

CORLETTE

Esperan... I'll explain... Explico...  
We need four men to drive two trucks  
loaded with Nitroglycerin up the  
road to Poza Rica...

The crowd grows quiet as the men absorb the task.

CORLETTE

(continuing)

Many of you know that road... Es  
muy malo el camino... Only  
experienced drivers willing to  
risk their lives can do it...  
No one else should apply...

(CONTINUED)

147 CONTINUED: (2)

Jackie absorbs the idea. A number of the foreigners mull it over in their minds. A few of the local workers have already begun returning to their homes. They make a few loud observations.

## WORKERS

Que no somos locos...  
(We're not crazy...)

## WOMAN

Quieren mas muertos por la Compania.  
(They want more dead for the company.)

Corlette reacts to the shouts of the people.

## CORLETTE

That fire is spreading. Those men at the field are sitting on a time bomb to save your jobs and this village. Cada segundo es riesgo enorme... Poza Rica es una bomba. I promised those men that the fire will be out in three days or we abandon the field. Quatro caminoneros con heuvos pueden salvar Poza Rica y ese pueblo. Four drivers with enough courage can save Poza Rica and this village...

Gathered around the truck are the foreign derelicts of Porvenir. The message now seems to be coming directly to them.

148 EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

A truck from the motor pool with a homemade paint job, carrying nine men, drives along a small, badly rutted dirt road that winds through rolling hill area near the pumping station. As the truck comes down a small hill, the ENGINE can be HEARD RACING as the driver attempts to downshift.

149 INT. TRUCK CAB

Corlette watches impassively as the Italian-former-race-driver attempts, unsuccessfully, to get the truck into any of the lower gears. A small whiskey bottle has been mounted on the dash to display the movement of liquid in response to the motion of the truck over a bad road. At the moment the water is dancing wildly in the flask.

(CONTINUED)

149 CONTINUED:

CORLETTE

Stop at the bottom of the hill.

CASTELLI

I need to know the machine...

CORLETTE

Pull over.

The truck pulls over and the man gets out.

150 INT. CAB

Victor carefully sits in the driver's seat and looks over the dash. In the middle of the cockpit, a series of levers control the lower range of gears and the different axles. Victor examines them closely and moves through the gear changes. Then he takes it out of gear, clears the neutral position, and starts the engine. He eases off the emergency brake and starts out very slowly.

151 ANOTHER ANGLE

Corlette watches Victor who is getting into the rhythm of the complicated shifting patterns. He makes a notation on his clipboard. The water in the glass on the dashboard is hardly moving.

CORLETTE

You've had experience?

VICTOR

Yes.

CORLETTE

Where?

VICTOR

(pause)

Armored cars in Algeria.

152 INT. CAB - LATER

Kefalos, the sickly Greek, sits behind the wheel. His face and shirt are soaked with sweat and he is breathing hard.

(CONTINUED)

152 CONTINUED:

He checks the gear lever for a last time and looks over the gauges. He is clearly afraid to make the final move of actually driving the truck. Corlette looks over at him impatiently.

CORLETTE

Vamos...

Kefalos guns the engine way past the suitable RPMs and abruptly lets out the clutch. The truck lurches forward.

153 EXT. TRUCK

The truck lurches forward hurling the men in the back to the floorboards. Kefalos then hits the brake, tossing them forwards.

154 EXT. DIFFERENT AREA - LONG SHOT

The truck rides easily down a hill and the SOUND of SMOOTH SHIFTING can be HEARD. At the bottom of a hill is an area of smooth road with several small shacks beside it.

155 INT. CAB

The water in the bottle is moving gently with the smooth driving of Kassem. He is alert, but not tense, as the truck shifts into a higher gear on the smooth road.

156 ANGLE

As the truck nears a row of shacks, SEVERAL KIDS are playing. As the truck approaches, one of them breaks away, with two others chasing him, and without looking, runs for the other side of the road. The truck bears down on him.

157 ANGLE ON BACK OF TRUCK

Jackie sees it happen and grips the side of the truck, reacting.

158 INT. CAB

Corlette makes a braking motion with his arm against the dash and his foot slams against the floor. Kassem coldly drives on.

159 ANGLE ON ROAD

The kid just makes it past the looming front wheel of the truck as it speeds past.

160 INT. CAB

Corlette snaps around at Kassem. He is furious about his near killing of the kid, but he knows that Kassem is perfect for the job. Kassem smiles and indicates the water in the bottle, which is smooth.

161 INT. CAB - LATER

Jackie's hand pulls the release knob of the air emergency brake and then removes the gear lever from the medium to the low-range transfer case. He quickly scans the dash and his eyes settle for a moment on the air pressure indicator. He throws a small switch which results in a hiss. Corlette looks at him in slight confusion.

JACKIE

It'll steer better on the dirt  
with the front anchors unlocked.

He puts the truck in gear and starts out. His shifting is perfect, but cautious.

162 ANOTHER ANGLE

The water in the bottle indicator on the dash moves easily from side to side. Jackie drives with a natural concentration.

CORLETTE

Teamster?

JACKIE

Local 84, Queens.

Corlette looks forward at the road, then makes a notation.

163 INT. CAB - LATER

Jair is driving with typical Brazilian abandon. The truck is racing along at a speed that is faster than safe. Jair smiles and looks over at Corlette just as the truck hits a terrific bump that nearly tosses them out of the cab.

164 INT. CAB - LATER

Nilo's hands move on the big wheel of the truck as he turns first one way, then another, swinging the big machine around from lock to lock. He is doing well, but his age shows under the strain. Corlette watches him.

CORLETTE

Straighten her out.

Nilo corrects the direction and takes the truck onto a straight piece of road. He shifts it upwards through the gears, making it, but with some difficulty.

165 INT. CAB - LATER

Angerman grins with total confidence. As the truck approaches a large bump in the road he smoothly downshifts.

166 EXT. ROAD

Angerman brings the truck smoothly from speed to an almost total stop, eases it over the bump, and then accelerates away, leaving a cloud of dust.

167 EXT. FRONT GATE AREA OF PUMPING STATION - LATE AFTERNOON

About FIFTY or so of the TOWNSPEOPLE have gathered out of curiosity at the front of the pumping station and they are peering through at the area in front of the administration building which is about a hundred feet away.

168 AREA IN FRONT OF ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

The men are back from the testing. Kefalos has completely given up hope and he is sitting on a small curb some distance from the others. The other more obvious failures are hoping that some strange circumstance will prevail and they will be accepted. Each of them remains separate from the others, with the exception of Kasseem and Angerman. Jackie is leaning against the truck watching the throng of people, who are looking at him from outside the fence. Victor walks idly with his hands in his pockets about fifty feet away; and Nilo is carefully wiping the sweat from the band of his hat with a handkerchief.

(CONTINUED)



168 CONTINUED:

With a sudden JARRING SOUND, the DOOR to the administration building opens and Zayas emerges. He carries a clipboard.

## ZAYAS

Bueno, Los Senores... Nilo...  
 Jair... Rodriguez... Costelli...  
 y Kefalos... pueden salir...  
 Los demas esperan aqui.  
 (Okay, the following gentlemen...  
 Nilo... Jair... Rodriguez...  
 Costelli... and Kefalos, can  
 go... You others wait here.)

169 ANOTHER ANGLE

For a few seconds there is silence. Almost unnoticed in the b.g., Kefalos rises slowly to his feet and starts toward the gate. Nilo replaces his hat and follows. Jair and Rodriguez both walk behind in the same direction.

Victor has been standing some distance away. He walks toward the door of the administration building. Kassem and Angerman both walk to the steps and Jackie stands watching the door as the others come in around him.

In the b.g., the figures of the men who failed walk to the gate and out into the curious crowd of townspeople. The four men who made it stand separated from the rest of the world.

170 INT. CORLETTE'S OFFICE AREA AT REFINERY - SUNDOWN

Corlette, wearing a terrycloth robe, his hair still wet from a shower, stands at a small bar-buffet in his living room preparing a Daiquiri in a blender. The room is decorated with a few San Blas Molas and some feather pictures. The furnishings are the cheap, varnished maple usually classified as "Early American." In the b.g., Victor sits at a coffee table looking at a large map. Corlette pours two glasses from the blender and crosses to him. He sits, giving him a Daiquiri. Victor takes it, continuing to look at the map.

## CORLETTE

The ride was pretty smooth at  
 about fifteen miles an hour...  
 If you cut that down, you'll  
 average maybe ten...

(CONTINUED)

170 CONTINUED:

VICTOR  
Twenty-seven hours.

CORLETTE  
One man can sleep while the  
other drives.

Victor looks up from the map.

VICTOR  
No one will sleep.

Corlette takes a sip of his drink and looks down at the  
map.

CORLETTE  
When you get beyond the Paso Al  
Infierno, the road gets a lot  
better. The worst place is this  
straight area... washboard.

Corlette becomes slightly nervous at the idea of what he  
is saying. The thought of what he is asking these men to  
do creeps into his mind momentarily.

CORLETTE  
(continuing)  
This is a smooth stretch where  
you get up speed... Our drivers  
take it at forty-five miles an  
hour... You want to write that  
down?

VICTOR  
I won't forget.

Victor takes a drink and Corlette looks back at the map.

CORLETTE  
I've driven the goddamn thing  
at least a hundred times.

VICTOR  
(after a pause)  
We've decided to decline.

Corlette continues looking at the map for a beat, then  
looks up.

CORLETTE  
You what?

(CONTINUED)

170 CONTINUED: (2)

VICTOR

Any logical analysis gives us less than a fifty percent chance of success. Your offer is too low.

Corlette drains his Daiquiri. He picks up Victor's glass and walks to the mixer. He turns it on.

CORLETTE

No decent limes in this country, have to use grapefruit. Serrano... You deserve better than to rot here... Forget the money for a minute. Our company obviously has some pull with the government ... I can swing a legal residence. You could live anywhere, even in the capital, without looking over your shoulder.

VICTOR

I appreciate your offer. I'll add it to our demands.

CORLETTE

(slightly defensive)  
I'm talking to you, Serrano.

VICTOR

I speak for the others as well. I cannot drive two trucks alone.

Corlette settles back on the couch, controlling a growing sense of despair.

CORLETTE

Zayas offered five thousand dollars apiece.

VICTOR

Double that and your offer of legal residence would be acceptable.

CORLETTE

I'm not authorized to go that high.

VICTOR

Not authorized to spend twenty thousand to save twenty million?

CORLETTE

There's five hundred people in that town... I'll get other drivers.

(CONTINUED)

170 CONTINUED: (3)

VICTOR

Only one of the locals volunteered.  
Even the police won't anger the  
spirits of the road by hauling  
explosives over the Paso al Infierno.  
The stupid are also superstitious.  
I'm afraid you're stuck with us.

Victor holds out his glass.

VICTOR

(continuing)

This is quite good. Cheers.

171 EXPLOSIVES MAGAZINE WORK AREA - SERIES OF SHOTS - DAY

The two trucks are parked a slight distance apart as they are prepared for the trip. On one, two mechanics have taken off the door on the driver's side and they are mounting an extra large mirror that will reflect down onto the road, giving a view of the position of the rear wheels. Jackie is supervising the operation, adjusting it to line up perfectly on the rear wheels of the truck.

Victor is on top of the grey truck drilling into the roof to attach a set of lights that will shine straight down onto the road. As he works, the lettering across the top of the cab can be SEEN. The men are painting over it with a band of reflective, orange-stripe paint. It shows only "CEROR" and the men paint over it. Victor methodically fixes the small light.

In the bed of the same truck, MEN are smoothing out sand across the bottom to a depth of about ten inches. When the sand is smoothed out, another truck, filled with sawdust, approaches and the men begin shoveling it out and over the sand of the truck bed.

Angerman is checking the pulleys along a rope arrangement that Kassem has rigged for the loading of the explosive.

Kassem has rigged a small sledge with wheels on it (like a mechanic's creeper) that will travel along a makeshift track and up a ramp guided by ropes and pulleys. Angerman moves the rope back and forth, making sure it will go out the door to the ramp which leads to the back of one of the trucks.

(CONTINUED)

171 CONTINUED:

Kassem makes a last minute check, feeling the ropes where they are joined to the creeper. Then he stands and blows a small whistle.

Immediately all the work stops and the concentration is focused on Kassem. Jackie puts down a small drill he has been using on the door jamb. Kassem leans down carefully and runs his fingers down the side of the case easing them underneath it. When he feels his grip is perfect, he lifts the case slowly onto the creeper. He settles it, carefully removes his fingers, and steps back. He looks at Angerman and ANOTHER MAN who tend the ropes.

KASSEM

Esta bien... la metemos.  
(Okay, let's load it.)

The men begin pulling the ropes and while the others watch, the case moves on the creeper along a ramp like a mechanical toy from F.A.O. Schwartz. It passes out the door into the bright lights of the loading area towards the truck along a makeshift track of boards which guide its path.

172 EXT. MAGAZINE AREA

Kassem walks beside the case with his hand on it as it climbs a wooden ramp to the back of the truck. A channel has been made through the sawdust to the place where it will rest near the front of the bed. Jackie watches silently. Victor lines it up as the two men continue pulling the rope.

Kassem climbs up into the bed and watches the case travel to its appointed spot. When it stops, he eases it off the creeper and settles it into the sawdust. He sets the case firmly, then stands back. TWO BLASTS ON THE WHISTLE and the work around him begins again. The creeper is hauled back for another run.

173 EXT./INT. TRUCK CAB - DAY

A MECHANIC hands a military style carbine to Victor inside a cab. It is placed in a newly installed rifle mount on the dashboard. Jackie leans inside as Victor fixes it and examines it to make sure it is firm and that a trigger locking device is in place.

## 174 INT./EXT. MAGAZINE AREA - DAY

A box of explosives travels up the ramp to the nearly loaded Pegaso. Kassem walks beside it, but as it nears the top he stops and lets it go into the back on its own. Angerman receives it and works it into place. MEN are busily wiring the boxes to hold their position within the sawdust.

## 175 ANGLE - TRUCK - DAY

The back of the truck is open and ready to receive the last case. A view of the back gives a complete description of the way in which the cases are packed in the sawdust and then secured with cross wires into place. Angerman is on the back bed of the truck securing the wiring.

## 176 INT./EXT. EXPLOSIVES MAGAZINE - DAY

Kassem, looking slightly weary from his work, prepares to move the last crate out of the storeroom and onto the truck. He is very methodical and completely devoted to his task.

## 177 INT. MAGAZINE - DAY

With the ramps set out the door to the back of the truck, Kassem wipes his hands in the sawdust of the floor and prepares to lift the crate. With the same caution displayed on the first crate, he eases it onto the creeper.

## 178 ANGLE ON CORLETTE AND VICTOR

Victor is placing the maps into two folios which each truck will carry. He looks up and sees the last case being loaded. Without a word, his attention and Corlette's attention are drawn to the sight of the crate moving along towards the final rise in the ramp that will lead to the truck.

## 179 INT. TRUCK CAB

The man under the dash is wriggling to get a better look at the main hydraulic system. He bumps against the emergency brake which releases with a HISS.

180 ANGLE

With his hand on the tire, Jackie feels it move. The ANGLE SHOWS that the truck is on the edge of a slight depression and it is moving into a bump. Jackie reacts, yelling "Brakes."

181 ANOTHER ANGLE

The case is at the top of the ramp, ready to go into the truck, when suddenly a gap forms as the truck pulls away. The front of the creeper with the case drops into the gap and the case slips forward.

Kassem leaps forward as the other men in the area fall back from the case.

182 ANGLE ON CAB

Jackie dives into the cab and jams his hand on the brake.

183 INSERT - RAMP AND BACK OF TRUCK

The truck jerks to a halt. The case hangs precariously in the gap.

184 ANGLE

Angerman starts to kneel down and move towards it from the top of the rear of the truck. His position is precarious.

185 ANGLE ON KASSEM

Kassem shouts at him.

KASSEM

No, don't move! No one move!

Slowly, while the others stand in their positions, Kassem moves up carefully under the ramp and places himself under the case. He dries his hands on his pants and grips it from underneath. When it is secure in his hands, he eases it up into the back of the truck.

186 ANGLE

Corlette is standing with his hands clenched in front of him like fists. His eyes are tightly shut. Victor watches.

187 ANGLE

Kassem turns smiling when the case has been placed.

KASSEM

Okay... We're finished.

188 OMITTED  
thru  
192

193 EXT. VIEW OF PORVENIR - PRE-DAWN

A strange streak of light sweeps like the blade of a sword across the blue grey of the pre-dawn sky. Porvenir is known only by its silhouettes and the reflections in the patches of filthy water surrounding the houses. The sounds of the nighttime chorus of bullfrogs have given way to the GUTTURAL CROAK of a distant wading BIRD and the high, sharp COUGH of a sick CHILD. Through the stillness, the SOUND of an APPROACHING TRUCK is HEARD. It is a three-quarter-ton flatbed painted the colors of the COMREPET. The SPRINGS SQUEAK as it splashes through the puddle on the main street and draws to a halt.

From the dark doorway of the El Corsario, Victor emerges and walks towards the truck.

(CONTINUED)



193 CONTINUED:

Corlette gets out, holding a thermos. From the workmen's hostel, Kassem and Jackie walk silently towards the truck. Victor arrives first at the truck. He greets Corlette calmly.

VICTOR

Morning...

CORLETTE

Morning.

He begins unscrewing the top of a thermos as Jackie and Kassem arrive from the other direction. He removes the cups and hands one to Victor who takes it. Turning to the others, Corlette holds up the thermos. Jackie takes a cup and stands next to Corlette. As Corlette pours, he notices that his hands are trembling. Jackie smiles slightly and Corlette is aware of what he has seen.

CORLETTE

(continuing)

What about you?

JACKIE

I wouldn't mind a whiskey.

VICTOR

You're driving.

JACKIE

You had to remind me.

Jackie blows on his coffee and Kassem fills his cup.

KASSEM

Sugar?

Corlette takes a box full of sugar and small cream packets from the cab of the truck. Kassem takes a handful. He puts most of them into his pockets and, as he walks away, he empties at least five of them into his coffee.

Jackie moves back and boosts himself up onto the bed of the truck. More of the TOWNSPEOPLE have begun to gather around the truck. Jackie sits for a moment looking out at them. Corlette has removed a folder from the cab. Jackie leans over to get a copy and Victor takes the other copy.

JACKIE

(looking at the list)

Only one machete in each truck?

(CONTINUED)

193 CONTINUED: (2)

CORLETTE

How many would you like?

JACKIE

We might have to put half the  
jungle under our wheels to get  
through the mud.

Corlette turns to the DRIVER.

CORLETTE

Hay machete en este camion?

DRIVER

Si, hay dos.

The Driver begins scrambling to get the machetes as  
Jackie continues to look at the list.

Kassem is standing some feet away, swinging his coffee  
with his hands to cool it. He slurps it, Arab style, to  
take it in hot without burning his tongue.

In the b.g. Agrippa can be SEEN coming out of the door of  
the El Corsario. She looks toward the men for a few sec-  
onds, then comes down the stairs into the street unnoticed.

JACKIE (O.S.)

(still reading list)

What about all this cable? Where  
is it?

CORLETTE (O.S.)

Against the back of the cab. We  
put two dead men on the frame.

VICTOR (O.S.)

Dead men?

JACKIE (O.S.)

Old axles. We can drive them  
into the ground and use them to  
anchor cable.

VICTOR (O.S.)

Oh yes...

Corlette looks around impatiently.

CORLETTE

Where's the German?

(to the Driver)

Toca el claxon?

(CONTINUED)

193 CONTINUED: (3)

The Driver honks a number of times, then stops and there is silence as the men wait. Jackie continues going down the list of things needed for the truck, checking them off in his mind.

Agrippa has moved closer and is standing a few feet away from the group looking at them expectantly. As he turns impatiently looking for the German, Corlette sees her. He speaks abruptly.

CORLETTE

Que quiere?

Agrippa looks around almost ready to run off.

AGRIPPA

(mumbled)

Tengo algo para el Senor Frances.

CORLETTE

(to Victor)

She's got something for you.

Victor looks around and sees her. He smiles and she quickly crosses to him and presses a small strand of beads into his hand.

AGRIPPA

Para su buena fortuna.

(For your good fortune.)

Before Victor can thank her she moves quickly toward the El Corsario. Victor looks at the beads and exchanges a glance with Jackie.

JACKIE

What is it?

Victor winks. Agrippa reaches the veranda of the El Corsario and enters the door as Nilo emerges. He watches as the Driver begins honking again.

Kassem turns and sees him. They observe each other for a beat, then Kassem looks back towards the hostel. His face begins to tighten with a grim thought. Nilo stands on the veranda coolly lighting a cigar.

JACKIE (O.S.)

(reading the list)

Condenser, points, plugs, fuel,  
filter elements --

(CONTINUED)

193 CONTINUED: (4)

Kassem turns once more to look at Nilo, who surveys him coolly. Suddenly, Kassem throws out his coffee and bolts in a run for the hostel.

Jackie and the others react to Kassem, then Victor looks around and sees Nilo.

194 EXT. HOSTEL AREA

A few of the MEN who live in the hostel are up, but most are still flaked out as Kassem runs quickly through. He crosses the yard and runs to the shack where Angerman lives. Kassem yanks several times at the door, then pulls it open. He stares inside, registering what he sees. He turns and runs back towards the truck.

195 EXT. WIDE VIEW OF MAIN STREET

The men stand near the truck as Kassem runs from the hostel straight towards Nilo. Victor and Jackie start towards him to head him off. Seeing him, Nilo steps off the veranda and faces him as he rushes up. Kassem lunges and catches a hard right in the side of the face as Nilo sidesteps. He quickly gets in another kick on Kassem before the Arab can get to his feet. Kassem scrambles forward for another attack as Jackie and Victor grab him.

KASSEM

Murderer! Zionist bastard! I'll  
kill you --

Kassem spits. He struggles wildly to get at him and a burst of Arabic pours out of him. Victor gets an arm behind him. Corlette has come over.

CORLETTE

What happened?

KASSEM

... This Jew dog cut his throat.

Nilo shrugs as Corlette glares at him.

CORLETTE

(to Nilo)

You crazy bastard...

(to the Driver)

Vete avisar la policia...

(CONTINUED)

195 CONTINUED:

JACKIE

Hold on... We ain't gettin' the  
police.

CORLETTE

(cutting him off;  
to the driver,  
yelling)

Vete por la policia.

The Driver stands outside the truck in a moment of confusion.

JACKIE

You send us up the worst road in  
South America riding fucking bombs  
and you piss yourself 'cause some  
dummy gets whacked... Okay, he's  
dead... we put in a relief pitcher.

CORLETTE

(indicating Nilo)

Him?

VICTOR

Yes.

CORLETTE

I'm not sending a killer to do a  
job for this company.

JACKIE

Too late, Corlette. It's all  
laid on...

KASSEM

Never!

(screams at Nilo)

I'll kill you!

CORLETTE

He's too old -- he can't drive  
worth a shit.

NILO

When the money's up, I'm as good  
as any of you.

Kassem struggles to get loose and Victor pushes him up  
against the storefront wall.

KASSEM

(desperate)

It's over for me... I don't go  
with him.

(CONTINUED)

195 CONTINUED: (2)

VICTOR

Listen to me --

(he shakes Kassem)

We need him... We need you... If you stay here, you're a dead man. If you come with us, you may still be dead, but you'll have a gambler's chance... Your life against your freedom...

KASSEM

(screams at Nilo)

I take an oath... Your life is over.

196 EXT. EXPLOSIVES MAGAZINE AREA - DAWN

The huge truck, beaded with moisture, like a perspiring dinosaur, rattles to life.

Outside, Corlette stands next to Victor. Kassem is close to the second truck a short distance away. The heavy initial surges of the diesel engine begin to level out.

197 ANGLE OVER JACKIE

As Jackie scans the other instruments, waiting for the warm-up, Victor approaches. He watches for a minute from the ground, getting no reaction from Jackie, who is really intent on his departure; he steps up onto the running board. Jackie looks over at him.

VICTOR

Good luck, Dominguez.

JACKIE

Go to hell, Serrano.

Victor smiles and steps back from the truck. Jackie looks back at his gauges, checks the air pressure gauges. Nilo watches him as he taps a gauge waiting for it to come up. Then he leans over to him.

NILO

(extending his hand)

I'm Nilo --

Jackie casually places his hand on the top of the gear shift. He completely ignores Nilo's gesture.

(CONTINUED)

197 CONTINUED:

JACKIE

I don't care who the fuck you are,  
 but I want you to understand  
 something... You've been making  
 me nervous since I first saw you...  
 I'm clocking you every second, so  
 if you gotta pick your nose or  
 touch your dupe, you better clear  
 it with me first, or...

(eases the truck  
 into gear)

... I take ten cases of nitro  
 right into a fucking ditch.

198 EXT. ANGLE ON WHEEL

Slowly, as the clutch engages, the front wheels of the truck begin to turn slowly over the dirt of the yard. It picks up speed, moving over the minor irregularities in the ground.

199 EXT. EXPLOSIVES MAGAZINE COMPOUND - DAY

Corlette, Victor and Kassem stand silently watching the truck as it moves slowly towards the gate of the compound. The NATIVE PERSONNEL all stop their tasks and stand watching. At the gate a hush has gone over the crowd.

200 INT. CAB

Jackie grips the wheel as the truck moves forward. It is for real now, the test is over. The truck eases over a small irregularity in the road.

Nilo, who has been feigning calm, looks at the bottle on the dash. The water moves slightly as Jackie eases the truck forward.

201 EXT. NEAR GATE

Near the gate of the compound, the truck moves over a deeply rutted area of road. The wheel eases down slowly into a rut and over some protruding rocks.

202 INT. CAB

Jackie grips the wheel and looks at the mirror which reflects the exact texture of the road. He flashes a look at the water.

## 203 INSERT - THE WATER

The water lurches slowly, but heavily from side to side, then steadies.

## 204 EXT. REAR WHEELS

The rear wheels move through the rut, giving the truck a heavy, but soft yawing motion.

## 205 EXT. HIGH ANGLE - ROAD

The truck emerges slowly from the side road, turns onto the main road. Jackie downshifts through two gears to slow the truck for the turn.

## 206 ANGLE ON MIRROR

The rutted surface of the road goes past as Jackie checks the position of the wheels to the ruts. The CAMERA PANS INTO the cab. Jackie shifts up another gear. Nilo notices Jackie's rolled-up paper cinched in behind the rifle mount on the dash. Nilo thinks about it for a few seconds, then reaches for the paper. He takes it out and opens it. Jackie flashes him a look.

JACKIE

Don't touch that.

Nilo has already opened it.

NILO

It's old.

JACKIE

Put it down.

Nilo puts it down and settles back in his seat. He looks out his side window at the monotony of the scenery, then back through the front window towards the road.

Jackie reacts to a rut in the road. He slows down and checks his side mirror, downshifts and takes the truck through it. When he comes back up to speed, he speaks.

JACKIE

(continuing)

There's a mirror over your door.  
Fix it so I can see that wheel.

(CONTINUED)



206 CONTINUED:

Nilo reaches up and takes the mirror. (Note: The instructions should be accurate for whatever action is necessary.)

JACKIE  
(continuing)  
Why did you hit the German?

NILO  
(smiling)  
I flipped a coin.

Nilo pauses and looks out at the road. Jackie checks the mirror on Nilo's side.

JACKIE  
And the Kraut lost the toss?

Nilo fixes the mirror.

NILO  
No, you did...

Jackie goes cold for a second on the wheel.

NILO  
(continuing)  
... But I'm partial to Americans.

207 EXT. COMPOUND - MORNING

Kassem is idling the truck and Victor is making a few adjustments on the mirror. Corlette steps up on the side, next to Victor.

CORLETTE  
They've had twenty minutes.

Victor looks around suddenly as if the entire scene is unreal and unrelated to him.

VICTOR  
Yes...

He reaches into his pocket.

VICTOR  
(continuing)  
I have a letter... I wonder if you would post it for me...

(CONTINUED)

207 CONTINUED:

CORLETTE

(takes the letter)

Paris?... It could take three weeks...

VICTOR

Yes... Well, maybe I'll call instead... Just keep it for me.

CORLETTE

(understanding)

I'll take care of it.

Corlette steps back, away from the truck. Kassem eases it into gear and it starts forward.

208 ANGLE

Corlette watches as it leaves.

209 EXT. LONG STRETCH OF ROAD

The CAMERA is HIGH, LOOKING DOWN a long, straight stretch of road, hemmed in on both sides by a claustrophobic tangle of tropical second growth. The monotony of the scene is relentless, broken only by the occasional sight of a large dead tree or a sickly stand of palms. Only two colors exist in the scene beneath the leaden sky: the pale laterite earth of the road and the dismal, endless green of the foliage. Slowly, the first truck enters, moving at perhaps twelve miles per hour. Ahead, on the road, are several large chuckholes filled with chalky water. At each of these, the complicated downshifting must be repeated as Jackie slows carefully, in anticipation of a possible bump. Occasionally, the monotony is broken by a small farm surrounded by a dismal banana patch.

210 EXT. ANGLE OF WHEEL

The wheels of the truck slow down and enter the water of a large hole. Mud clings to the tire, quickly coating it with a dripping mass of mud.

Jackie hangs nearly out the door, fighting the wheel slightly as the mud sucks at it. He slams a quick shift and eases the truck forward through the puddle.

## 211 EXT. ANGLE ON TRUCK

The truck pushes through the puddle and onto the drier surface of the road. Jackie shifts up through two more gears and gains some speed.

## 212 INT. CAB

Nilo watches, already bored with the endless effort of driving the truck. He looks out to where there should be some kind of landscape, some view. A ragged wall of endless green moves tediously past the window. At a place where the road widens, they pass a "jitney bus" made out of an ancient pickup truck. Where the pipeline is elevated above the landscape a lone man dressed in brown rags and a castoff, snap-brim hat walks slowly along the top of it.

## 213 ANGLE ON ROAD

Another puddle looms in front of the truck and the effort of careful steering and downshifting is repeated.

## 214 FULL SHOT

The road stretches forever through the green. The SOUND of the truck's SHIFTING and the SQUEAK of the BRAKES remind us of the constant efforts of the man at the wheel.

## 215 EXT. SWAMP LOCATION

Several miles behind Jackie, the "Sorcerer" travels through the last vestiges of the mangrove swamp on which the town is built. Victor downshifts carefully as he passes a huge piece of rotting construction machinery. The pale "Caterpillar" yellow emerges in a few places from behind blotches of heavy rust and a tangle of vines. Near it, on the stump of a tree, an egret poses elegantly, taking flight as the truck passes.

## 216 THEIR POV

In front of the truck the heavy tread marks of the other vehicle can be SEEN in the deep mud of the road.

## 217 INT. CAB

Victor concentrates on keeping the wheels in the same ruts as the other truck. Kassem is still tense as though fantasies of killing Nilo still move through his mind.

218 POV

TWO WOMEN walk in the road balancing heavy pots on their heads. At the SOUND of the TRUCK they run into the brush and stare back with frightened eyes.

219 ANGLE

The truck approaches a small grade at the bottom of which a small creek is flowing. It is very badly rutted -- large, round rocks stick out of the surface on all sides.

220 INT. CAB

Victor is intent as they start down. The truck begins to bump heavily. Kassem's hand instinctively clutches the dash.

221 INSERT - WATER FLASK

The water takes a leap in the flask.

222 CLOSE SHOT - KASSEM

Kassem winces. Victor applies more brake and the truck bounces heavily.

223 EXT. ANGLE ON TRUCK

The truck begins to skid on the mud, sliding sideways.

224 INT. CAR

Victor, thinking fast, yanks it out of gear and the truck rolls forward, taking several bumps, then emerging onto a smooth surface. Kassem takes his hand back from the dash, leaving a large sweaty palm print. Victor begins shifting up again.

225 A MONTAGE OF SHOTS

Both trucks move slowly through the flat vegetation of the lowland forest. The road remains relatively straight and uninteresting, but the effort to drive it is enormous -- exhausting total concentration and sharp pangs of fear inspired by each heavy bump.

226 INT. CAB

Jackie drives carefully over a stretch of road that is much smoother than the straighter stretches that preceded it. He checks the mirror and his wheels and then looks ahead on the road, reacting to the sight of something.

227 HIS POV

The family group of FOREST INDIANS from the town are walking ahead on the road. They stop and turn at the SOUND of the APPROACHING TRUCK.

228 ANGLE

The Indians stand watching as the truck slowly approaches. The WOMAN shifts a BABY from one hip to another. The MAN watches the truck, smiling strangely through a mouth of filed teeth.

229 INT. CAB

Jackie cannot divert his look from the road to even notice the Indians, but something about their presence on the road disturbs him slightly. Perhaps a sense of the futility and stupidity of this mission when contrasted with the simplicity of the Indians' existence. Even Nilo surveys them as the truck draws near.

230 EXT. ROAD

The Indians step to the side of the road as the truck approaches. As it pulls alongside of them, the Indian Man moves forward.

231 ANGLE OVER JACKIE FROM CAB

The Indian smiles up at Jackie and, as the truck passes, the Indian begins jogging beside it, peering up at them with a huge smile.

232 ANGLE

Jackie and Nilo pretend not to notice him, thinking he will soon stop. But the Indian is completely into his effort. With some unfathomable thought in his mind, he runs joyously beside the truck, occasionally muttering unintelligible words, and making great leaps for no apparent reason other than joy.

## 233 A SERIES OF SHOTS

The truck winds through the jungle with the sprinting Indian beside it. When Jackie is forced to slow to a near stop, the Indian, instead of reducing his activity to a walk, whirls and pirouettes around until the truck comes back up to jogging speed. In his mind, it is a magical contest with a huge mechanical brute that has invaded his domain. He displays no malice, only good humor and occasional joyous guttural expletives.

As he follows them, Jackie and Nilo become more and more grim. The absurdity of the Indian's behavior becomes an outrage, a mockery of their fear, their efforts and their desperation. Jackie misses a shift and curses. Nilo watches him with the feeling that it might be a strange omen. Jackie finally shouts at him.

JACKIE

(half to the Indian,  
half to Nilo)

Get lost, dummy... Vamanos!  
Vamanos! You sabe... Vamanos!

At this, the Indian becomes even more excited. He is very winded, but he gives several large leaps and shouts into the truck.

The truck emerges from a bumpy section and picks up speed. Jackie shifts quickly up through the gears. The truck hits a sudden bump. Jackie curses his own carelessness. He accelerates as much as he can on a fairly smooth stretch of road. The Indian, breathing hard, runs easily alongside. Nilo and Jackie watch him with the few glances they can spare from the road. Suddenly, the Indian falls. The truck drives on, leaving him sprawled in the middle of the road. He quickly gathers himself into a sitting position and has a seizure of uncontrollable laughter as the truck drives away.

Nilo watches the Indian grow smaller in the rear view mirror. His look tells us that the event has made him uneasy.

## 234 EXT. ANGLE ON ROAD

The "Sorcerer" winds through a flat stretch of forest, DISAPPEARING behind the trees and then REAPPEARING as if by magic at some other place in the wall of green.

## 235 INT. CAB

Victor's eyes travel methodically from the road to the side mirrors, then back to the road. A coating of dust from the road is forming on his face.

236 EXT. ANGLE ON TRUCK

The wheels roll smoothly over the hard gravel surface of the road. Over the front end, the road stretches away for a quarter of a mile with excellent visibility. Jackie hangs a bit out of the cab, taking air as a relief from the heat.

237 INT. CAB

Nilo looks out the window at the passing scenery. Jackie drives, attentive to the road. He glances down at the odometer; then, without taking his eyes off the road, he speaks to Nilo.

JACKIE

Check the map...

Nilo takes up a map.

JACKIE

(continuing)

We're twenty-three miles out...  
What have we got?

Nilo looks at it. He holds it a long way from his eyes. He is farsighted.

NILO

Nothing. There's some kind of  
mark at fifty-seven miles...

JACKIE

That's the washboard.

Jackie starts to decelerate the truck. Nilo reacts.

238 EXT. TRUCK - ANGLE

The truck pulls over and stops.

239 INT. CAB

Jackie looks over at Nilo.

JACKIE

You drive...

Nilo nods and gets out. He walks around the cab as Jackie moves over.

(CONTINUED)

239 CONTINUED:

JACKIE

(continuing)

Keep it around eighteen miles an hour.

240 EXT. TRUCK - ANGLE

The truck pulls out along the road. Nilo's shifts are not perfectly timed, but they are adequate.

241 INT. CAB

Jackie watches Nilo who concentrates and maintains the truck at eighteen miles an hour. Jackie's eyelids nearly droop in the heat of the day and the smoothness of the road. He reaches for his paper and removes it from the gun rack.

242 ANGLE OVER THE ROAD

In the high overhead light of the sun, no shadow betrays any fault in the surface of the road.

243 ANGLE ON WHEEL

The front wheels glide along at eighteen miles per hour and then they begin a slight up and down vibration which -- over a distance of about ten feet -- becomes very severe. It is the washboard.

244 INT. CAB

Nilo starts to decelerate and the bumps get worse. Jackie is wide awake as the truck shakes savagely up and down. He looks at the ground passing under the cab and sees the regular bands that define the washboard road.

JACKIE

Jesus Christ... Get on it...

Nilo grimaces with fear. He slows down and the bumps get worse.

245 INSERT - WATER FLASK

The water in the bottle is being tossed straight up and down.



246 INT. CAB

Jackie reaches over him for a hand throttle. He yanks it out.

JACKIE

Go, Goddammit! Get up speed.

Nilo, feeling the engine race without his foot on the gas, begins to panic.

NILO

I can't... I can't control it...

JACKIE

Don't think! Just do what I tell you! Clutch...

Nilo hits the clutch and Jackie shoves the lever up a gear.

247 EXT. ANGLE ON WHEELS

The wheels of the truck are dancing over the washboard, picking up speed. It races to the top of the gear. The whole truck vibrates.

248 POV

The truck is weaving on the road from side to side as it accelerates.

249 EXT. ROAD

The truck is barreling along the washboard road at about forty miles per hour.

250 ANGLE ON WHEELS

The wheels are dancing along fairly smoothly over the washboard.

251 INT. CAB

Nilo, terrified, is concentrating on keeping the truck from swerving off the road at the speed that it is traveling.

NILO

I can't hold it.

(CONTINUED)

251 CONTINUED:

Jackie looks at him. He could kill him.

JACKIE

Hit the clutch!

Nilo winces and downs the clutch. Jackie makes the shift.

252 INSERT - SPEEDOMETER

The speedometer climbs up above forty-five miles per hour.

253 INSERT - WATER FLASK

The WATER in the flask HUMS with a slight vibration, but the violent shaking is over.

254 EXT. ROAD

The truck nearly comes off one side of the road, then it slides back to the other. It swerves right up to the edge of a ditch and flies past.

255 INT. CAB

Jackie hangs on, watching the road and watching Nilo. As it slides to the edge of the road, Nilo goes for the brake.

JACKIE

Don't touch that! Steer it out...  
She'll come out.

256 EXT. ANGLE ON ROAD

The truck straightens out and swerves in the other direction, then suddenly it is humming along, hitting occasional large, sweeping bumps.

257 INT. CAB

Nilo fights with the wheel and Jackie shoves the hand throttle to the dash. Slowly, weaving and bumping, the truck slows to a crawl.

258 EXT. ANGLE ON TRUCK

As it slows down, it takes a few large, sweeping bumps, but nothing too severe.

259 INT. CAB

As it gets near stopping, Nilo forgets to depress the clutch and the motor begins to lug.

Nilo depresses the clutch and the truck comes to a stop. He sits stricken behind the wheel. He shakes uncontrollably. Jackie takes a rag and wipes his own face. After a moment, he looks over at Nilo. Their shirts are soaked in sweat.

JACKIE

Get out.

Without a word, Nilo disconnects himself from the wheel and climbs out of the cab. Jackie slides over.

260 ANGLE OVER NILO

Nilo staggers along the front fender of the truck as Jackie moves into the driver's seat. He walks very slowly like an ancient man. This spectre gives Jackie a burst of strength. He begins to feel his balls at the sight of the fear-ravaged murderer.

Nilo moves slowly and deliberately around the truck. Without a word, he stops on the other side of the cab, then he forces himself to grab the rail and pull himself inside. Jackie looks at the map.

JACKIE

Kilometers... That frog marked  
this Goddamn thing in kilometers...!

Nilo sits dumbly in the cab. Jackie puts the truck in gear and they move off.

261 EXT. VIEW OF ROAD BEFORE WASHBOARD SECTION

Kassem seems to float above the high grasses that border the road. He stands on the cab floor, hanging onto the doorjamb, searching the road ahead for the place where the washboard begins.

262 ANGLE

Victor drives easily, steadily. He looks down at the odometer.

263 INSERT

The odometer clicks off another mile.

264 ANGLE ON KASSEM

Kassem sees it and speaks.

KASSEM

It should be just ahead.

265 ANGLE OVER VICTOR

He concentrates, he is concerned but there is a certain "elan" in his look. He may die at any second, but his life is not the stagnation of Porvenir. Victor reacts.

VICTOR

E voila...

266 POV

From the HIGH ANGLE and with the change of light on the road, the washboard can be SEEN perfectly, appearing as a corrugated section. Victor slows the truck to a stop. While it stands idling, he climbs out for a look. Both men pause for a long time looking at the stretch of road.

VICTOR

I'm ready.

267 ANGLE

Silently, they get into their seats in the truck and Victor begins carefully backing it up.

268 EXT. ROAD - SERIES OF SHOTS

Victor backs the truck along the road for about a quarter of a mile from the washboard. Both men lean out, looking back, attentive to what they are doing. When they have come a respectable distance back, Victor stops.

269 INT. CAB

They sit for a few seconds behind the wheel, then Victor slowly eases it into the first gear.

270 EXT. ROAD/INT. CAB - SERIES OF SHOTS

The truck moves ahead rapidly through the gears as it approaches the washboard.

## 271 FORK IN THE ROAD

Jackie arrives at a fork in the road with tracks going off in two directions. He stops the truck.

## 272 ANGLE ON CAB

The rain is pouring down and in the open doors. Jackie squints out into the downpour, then looks over at Nilo. It is dark, as though an unnatural night had suddenly overwhelmed them.

JACKIE

Gimme the map.

Nilo hands him the map and Jackie opens it. He traces his finger along the road, then checks the odometer. With a quick calculation he figures out where they are. Without a word he gives the map back to Nilo and puts the truck in reverse. He backs up to take a line on the road that turns off to the left. As he starts forward he hears the HORN of the other truck.

## 273 ANGLE ON ROAD

Jackie drives the Pegaso over towards the turn-off. The Sorcerer comes up until it is close to his cab.

## 274 ANGLES ACROSS CABS

Victor is driving. He stops and shouts at Jackie from the cab.

VICTOR

That's the wrong road.

Jackie looks over at him.

JACKIE

It's better for us... It goes higher along the canyon wall.

There is a pause while Victor and Kassem look over their map. Jackie waits impatiently. Watching them confer.

VICTOR

We take this one.

JACKIE

(looking at them,  
annoyed)

Jesus...

(CONTINUED)

274 CONTINUED:

He gets quickly out of the cab and walks through the rain to Victor's truck.

275 ANGLE ON "SORCERER"

Jackie steps up on the running board.

JACKIE

This road goes through the fucking swamp... The other road is higher... Less mud... understand?

Victor looks at him.

VICTOR

We have no information on that road.

Jackie is standing in the rain, getting more and more pissed off.

JACKIE

Maybe we'd better decide right now who's running this show --

Victor looks at him for a beat and answers affably.

VICTOR

That's very simple... No one is running the show.

He holds up the map.

VICTOR

(continuing)  
We follow this.

Jackie looks at him for a beat, then suddenly gets off the truck.

276 ANGLE ON TRUCKS

He walks back to his truck and gets in the cab, guns the engine and pulls ahead on the road which Victor indicated they would take.

277 ANGLE - SORCERER'S CAB

Victor smiles slightly as he watches Jackie's truck pulling ahead, then vanishing into the rain on the correct road.

## 278 EXT. SCENERY - SERIES OF SHOTS

In LONG SHOTS the trees above the truck are whipped by the wind. Countless small gullies and rivulets form on the road. As they edge their way along the overhang of an embankment with a sharp drop to the river below, the water above forms small cascades that occasionally gush across the cab of the truck soaking them.

Rounding a bend on this road, they see a bend in the river and a pontoon bridge that leaps across. As the truck heads towards it, the whole scene is suddenly lit by a huge burst of lightning. The last stretch of road to the bridge is a sharp downhill grade and the mud is slick in the rain. Even with Jackie's expert handling, the truck gets a bit sideways as it comes down. Near the edge of the river the truck comes to a halt. Jackie gets out of the cab into the torrent of rain and walks to the water's edge. A sign reads "PELIGRE" and in Spanish gives the maximum weight that the bridge will hold as two tons. Jackie squints at it through the rain.

## 279 ANGLE

Jackie sees a temporary pontoon bridge has been constructed across the river at a point seventy to a hundred feet across. A series of cables hold the pontoons in place. Over the top of the pontoons, two tracks made out of pipe have been laid. The entire thing is soaked by the rain and the river is picking up speed as it is fed by the downpour. The ruins of another bridge can be SEEN and rusting construction equipment indicates that it is being rebuilt.

## 280 ANGLE ON JACKIE

Jackie reacts, annoyed at the difficulty increased by the rain. He walks down and out on the bridge. The water is already starting to rush onto the track. He turns and runs back to the truck. As he nears it, he is startled by a huge burst of lightning.

## 281 INT. CAB

A second burst of lightning holds Nilo stunned with fear. Immediately, it is followed by a huge, CRACKING roll of THUNDER. When it is over, Nilo sits in the cab with the water streaming down on all sides. Jackie's voice comes to him from OFF SCENE.

JACKIE (O.S.)

Out...!

282 ANGLE

Jackie is on Nilo's side of the cab. The older man looks down at him. The firm set of his face is broken. His lower lip hangs loose.

JACKIE

You got to guide me over...

NILO

Not in this.

JACKIE

We got about fifteen minutes before that bridge is under water. Get out.

Nilo stares at Jackie.

NILO

Get fucked.

Jackie steps back, then he turns as if to walk away from the truck. Suddenly, he whirls and leaps to the cab. He grabs Nilo and throws him out into the mud. He hits hard and as he tries to get up Jackie kicks him hard in the ass. Then he rolls him over with his foot.

JACKIE

Get on that bridge.

Jackie goes to get into the truck as another huge flash of lightning and a BURST OF THUNDER crashes in their midst. Jackie jumps unconsciously, then straightens out and climbs into the cab.

283 EXT. BRIDGE SEQUENCE - SERIES OF SHOTS

Jackie eases the truck forward as Nilo walks to the edge of the river. Even in the short span of time that has passed, the current has become more swift. Nilo steps onto it and Jackie drives the truck down onto the pipes. The front wheels, with the weight of the truck, drive the tracks down into the water as they move gradually out onto the bridge.

Jackie checks the position of the front and the back wheels. He looks ahead as Nilo guides him. The truck moves slowly out to the middle of the river. In the midstream current, the bridge is in a strange motion, weaving and bobbing with the growing force of the water.

(CONTINUED)



283 CONTINUED:

Nilo nearly loses his footing. He grabs a cable along the side and steadies himself. A rush of water comes over the pipes, temporarily obscuring the lower part of the wheel for a few seconds, then it clears. As Jackie drives, concentrating on every inch, another burst of lightning illuminates the scene. On the far side, the visibility has improved and Jackie is able to take the truck across.

Reaching the opposite bank, Jackie guns the truck off the bridge and stops. Nilo trots wearily up to the cab and climbs in. Jackie drives a few feet up the road to where it turns, giving a view of the bridge. The rain is pouring down. He stops the truck and looks back as the now raging river rips at the bridge.

284 ANGLE ON JACKIE

JACKIE  
(slightly touched)  
Tough luck, Serrano.

Nilo sits in the truck breathing heavily, disgusted with the misery of this ordeal.

285 EXT. STORM SEQUENCE - SERIES OF SHOTS

The Pegaso heads up the road and the rain falls in an obscuring curtain behind it. Heavy clouds of rain drift through the hills sending cascades of water down over the lush vegetation. On the edge of the river, a large tree, its roots eaten away by the storm, falls heavily into the river.

The wind whips an opening through the clouds and the sun glances through. Over a landscape of the road, Victor's truck approaches. The sky now brightens, showing a patch of blue. The darkness inside the forest gradually disappears with the coming of the sun's rays. The SOUND of countless DROPS OF WATER is HEARD as the light filters back through the trees. The entire landscape is soon alive with the post-rain chorus of billions of unseen frogs.

286 ANGLE ON THE RIVER

The river now roars through the canyon. Its churning, mud-colored water is laden with floating debris.

(CONTINUED)

286 CONTINUED:

Most of the bridge is under water and, in the middle, large amounts of brush are jammed against the upstream side of it. It makes strange, groaning NOISES as the support pilings and cables are twisted and tugged by the current. On the opposite bank, Victor's truck comes to the edge and stops.

287 VICTOR'S TRUCK AND BRIDGE AREA

Victor slowly gets out of the cab. He studies the weaving, bobbing bridge and the churning water that spills over it. Kassem also gets out of the cab.

VICTOR

Salo... Salo... merde alor...

He picks up a rock and throws it into the river. Both men stand for a few moments silently watching it, the GROANING of the bridge and the WHIPPING of the cables counterpointing their desperation.

Kassem remains silent for a few moments, then Victor turns and climbs into the driver's seat. Kassem watches him for a beat, then walks towards the bridge. It is understood that they will try it. Victor drives the truck slowly towards the bridge. It slides slightly in the mud and comes to a stop just ahead of the tracks.

288 EXT. BRIDGE SEQUENCE - SERIES OF SHOTS

The tracks run off the bank for a distance of about seven feet before they disappear under the raging water. Only the support cables and the sight of an occasional pontoon appearing for a few seconds above the foam of the river gives an indication that the bridge actually extends all the way across.

Kassem wades out into the water until it is halfway to his knees. As the truck moves onto the visible portions of the bridge, he wrestles a large piece of branch off the tracks and throws it into the current on the other side.

Victor appears determined as he guides the truck towards the place where Kassem is standing. As he approaches, Kassem starts to move back. Victor shouts to him.

VICTOR

(shouting above the  
roar of the current)

Stay close.

(CONTINUED)

288 CONTINUED:

Kassem nods and lets the bumper of the truck almost touch him. Victor inches the truck forward slowly. Kassem cautiously walks along the bridge, leaning down to check the position of the wheels. The truck moves further out on the bridge. Half the wheel is under water. The hub moves along the surface.

Victor leans way out of the cab to get a better view. The wheels of the truck are halfway under water, barely turning. A sudden increase in the current makes the bridge heave and undulate. The truck yaws from one side to another. Victor clutches at the wheel and Kassem grabs the cable for support. Victor is nearly dislodged from the cab by the movement. The rear wheels of the truck rise up on a high spot in the tracks where a large log has jammed under the bridge. When they are nearly clear of the water, the truck begins to slip sideways off the track. Victor feels it start to go. His cool is broken. Pain shows in his face as he carefully accelerates the engine. Kassem slogs through the water along the track beside the truck watching the wheels as they slide on the track. On the slick pipes of the track, the wheels spin and start to slide off. Kassem clings to the cable, watching. He closes his eyes, expecting it to go.

KASSEM

(figuring it is  
over)

No... No... Reverse...

Victor grimaces, then slams a shift into reverse. The reverse direction brings the wheels back onto the track. Victor eases it back into compound low and starts forward. Kassem watches, immobile except for the motion of the bridge as the wheel comes over the high point of the track and into deeper water. Hanging onto the cable for support, Kassem moves forward to his position at the front wheels. He signals Victor straight ahead.

Victor drives with total attention. Another large gush of water moves the bridge under him. The truck yaws and sways in the motion of the water. Victor keeps it moving forward. They are past the mid-point of the river. The wheels are now only one third exposed in the water. Kassem moves more easily, but still uses the cable for support.

Up river from the bridge, a huge tree swings downstream, turning slowly in the current. In the b.g., the truck is two-thirds of the way across the bridge. Kassem moves carefully ahead of the truck, attentive to the wheels, signaling Victor with hand signals.

(CONTINUED)

288 CONTINUED: (2)

Victor drives slowly, watching him. Kassem reaches for the cable to steady himself; his look is drawn for a second upstream. He sees the tumbling tree carried by the current just as it hits the bridge. A shout sticks in his throat as the tree rides up on the side of the bridge looming out of the water. Frantically, he grabs the cable for support.

GROANING and SHRIEKING against the metal of the pontoons and the support cables, the branches and trunk of the TREE rise up out of the water as it is pushed by the current up onto the bridge and against the truck. Victor ducks as a huge branch enters the cab, tearing along the headliner of the roof. Kassem is caught in a tangle of branches as the tree emerges to full height.

The branches strain against the cables that support the bridge, GROANING and twisting. Suddenly, there is a LOUD SNAP and the entire scene launches into insane motion.

Behind the truck, the bridge has broken loose from the opposite bank and the whole structure swings downstream in the current. Kassem clings to the cable while the track of the bridge and the pontoons shift and GRIND beneath his feet.

As the tree rolls away towards the loose end of the bridge, it drags against the sides of the truck with a terrific CRASHING SOUND. Victor clings to the wheel, his eyes half closed, expecting at any second to disappear from the earth. Kassem fights to hang on as the branches of the tree drag across him, ripping his clothes and his flesh. The truck rides the loose bridge as it swings towards the shore, GRINDING and BANGING over the rocks beneath it. Sections of pipe burst from the tracks and slide past Kassem's feet in the wreckage.

Both men have no choice but to hang on and wait for doom. Finally, the bridge CRUNCHES to a halt as the pontoons catch on the rocky bottom near the shore. The truck sits tilted at a crazy angle. Kassem clings dumbly to the cable, not daring to believe that he is still alive. Victor is immobile at the wheel. He looks ahead. The track is almost out of the water, but to drive it he must take the truck out at a tilt of nearly forty-five degrees.

Victor takes a few heavy breaths and looks out at Kassem still clinging to the cable. Kassem sees the path that the truck must follow. He looks back to Victor, hand signals the angle. Victor understands.

(CONTINUED)

288 CONTINUED: (3)

Kassem lets go of the cable and moves along the track ahead of the truck. Leaning down, he checks the wheels and signals Victor to start. Victor moves ahead slowly in the compound gears. The truck leans precariously, almost falling onto the rocks. Kassem leads as the truck covers the ground. As it leans, the rear wheels on the opposite side lift slightly off the ground at the steepest point of the incline. Kassem watches them. Tears well in his eyes but he keeps signaling the truck forward. The truck moves forward and the wheels settle.

Kassem looks behind him and the mud of the river bank is only two or three feet behind him. He reacts, signaling Victor with his hands. Kassem steps onto the firm ground and staggers back. With a final moment of total concentration, Victor eases the truck off the steep gap left where the tracks have jammed up onto the mud of the shore. The truck rolls off. Kassem watches, his eyes filled with tears. Victor stops the truck.

289 ANGLE ON KASSEM

He sits silently for a few seconds on the mud, then breaks into sobs. No word is uttered. He simply sits sobbing. Victor walks over to him. They embrace, crying and laughing together.

290 ANGLE

The rear wheels of "El Pegaso" turn slowly with poor traction over the thick mud.

291 INT. CAB - DAY

Nilo sits looking out, resigned, but not rid of his fear. Jackie concentrates but drives easily. Nilo begins to feel in his jacket for cigarettes. He gives out his hacking cigarette cough. Then he carefully removes his jacket which is soaked by the rain. There is a long pause while Nilo wrings some water out of the sleeves of his coat. He feels inside the pockets and takes out a soaking handkerchief and throws it out of the cab. Preoccupied with finding a cigarette, he removes a pack from the pocket of his jacket which is still soaked from the rain.

JACKIE

Where you from?

NILO

Does it matter?

(CONTINUED)

291 CONTINUED: (2)

JACKIE

I see it.

Jackie slows down.

NILO

No... I bought distance. Six  
grand to sit on a load of  
bananas in a crummy freighter.

Nilo checks his side of the truck.

NILO

(continuing; a beat)  
But nobody's looking for me...  
I'm not worth the trip... I'm  
not a big leaguer, like you.

Nilo settles and looks over at Jackie.

NILO

(continuing)  
Too bad... If I'd known you were  
such a heavy, I could saved  
myself this lousy ride.

Jackie looks over at him and continues driving.

JACKIE

No way they could have made that  
bridge... They've had it. We're  
into double shares now. Keep a  
stiff pecker and we'll be eating  
steak in Bogota tomorrow.

NILO

Yeah...

292 EXT. HIGH JUNGLE - DAY

"El Pegaso" moves around a bend, emerging, then disappearing behind a cover of jungle trees. As it comes again into the open, it heads down a gallery of large trees at the end of which a huge kaoba has fallen at an angle across the road. The tree is about eighteen feet across near the root structure and eight feet through the trunk.

293 INT. CAB

Jackie reacts to the sight ahead on the road.

291 CONTINUED:

Nilo has opened the pack of cigarettes. The pack is soaking wet and his face registers disgust. He peels the paper away and tries to remove them with his fingers. Then he looks into the ashtray, fishes in it for cigarettes. Carefully, he removes a stub.

NILO  
(continuing)  
You smoke?

JACKIE  
I quit.

Nilo carefully replaces the other stubs in the ashtray.

NILO  
Smart.

He lights the stub, inhales and relaxes behind the rush of nicotine. Jackie downshifts for a bump.

JACKIE  
I figure somebody sent you...  
to call my number.

Nilo looks at him for a beat, then breaks up. He laughs a heavy, throaty laugh and finishes with a slight fit of coughing.

NILO  
I needed that... I should come  
to this shithole and sit on a  
truckload of nitro for a lousy  
contract... I was never that  
dedicated.

He studies Jackie for a moment, bemused.

NILO  
(continuing)  
Either you're full of shit, or  
you must be a very hot item.

JACKIE  
You ain't exactly sunning ass  
in Miami...

Nilo sees something ahead on the road.

NILO  
Rock up ahead.

(CONTINUED)

294 HIS POV

The huge "flying buttress roots" loom above the road like a jagged abstract sculpture as the truck approaches.

295 ANGLE

Jackie slows the truck down and stops in front of the tree. He gets out and walks towards it. Nilo steps down behind him from the cab.

Jackie walks up to the trunk and looks at its immensity. It is still fresh and green and covered with the trappings of a large jungle tree. Vines cling to it and it is festooned with half-broken ant nests as well as parasitic plants. Jackie's face contorts with rage as he moves through the foliage behind a sudden spray of color from a growth of arboreal orchids. He curses to himself.

While Nilo stands in the road almost in relief, Jackie stumbles around the broken branches of the tree's crown. He tries to see deeper to the inside to examine the possibilities and he attempts to move a moderately large branch that's in his way. Grabbing it, he applies all his strength but it doesn't budge.

JACKIE

Jesus motherfucking cocksucker!  
I don't believe this...

Jackie turns and moves back to the root structure. He walks around it, searching for some way in which the truck could be taken around. He trips as he scrambles through the debris. The passage through the forest is blocked by several smaller trees, but even they are three to four feet around the base. Finally, he turns and heads back towards the truck. Nilo stands watching him.

296 ANGLE

Jackie goes straight to the cab. He reaches behind the front seat and removes two machetes.

JACKIE

We'll go around it.

NILO

You're out of your skull...

They move over to an area near the trees and look at the wall of the forest. It looms impenetrable and silent in the heat of midday.

(CONTINUED)



296 CONTINUED:

JACKIE  
 (counts)  
 Eight trees.

NILO  
 No way...

JACKIE  
 Start chopping!

Jackie throws him a machete. Nilo, watching Jackie, stoops and picks it up. Once in his hand, it brings a new, strange calm to Nilo.

NILO  
 Make your move.

297 AREA NEAR TREE - SERIES OF SHOTS

Jackie, already panting with mounting anger, faces Nilo who has dropped into a catlike half-crouch. Jackie rushes wildly at him, swinging the machete. Nilo parries one, then ducks and retreats. As Jackie goes after him, he slips on the debris and falls heavily on the ground. Nilo comes in after him and Jackie tries to scramble to his feet. He is unable to gain ground so he crawls and half rolls in a burlesque fashion under the tangle of roots and branches. Nilo runs along, taking swings, but unable to get a clear strike at him. Nilo swings hard and buries the machete in a heavy trunk. While he goes to wrestle it out, he has a heavy coughing fit. Jackie has time to regain his feet. He comes out stealthily as Nilo looses his blade and turns to face him. Swinging wildly now, he charges at Jackie who panics at his rush and moves backwards. He tries to move backwards down a slight incline into the forest and begins to slide, dropping to his knees.

He falls slightly forward and the machete goes from his hand. At the bottom he looks up. Wheezing and coughing with a combination of total exhaustion and smoker's emphysema, Nilo comes down on him. Jackie has no choice. He faces him and Nilo holds the machete ready to kill him. Jackie looks at Nilo holding the machete. He is scared shitless. The forest is silent except for the distant SOUND of a heavy TRUCK accelerating and shifting. Nilo hears the sound and for a moment neither of them moves, then gradually he backs away. Jackie gets slowly to his feet.

JACKIE  
 Jesus!...

## 298 POV FROM VICTOR'S TRUCK CAB

From the cab through the dusty window, Nilo can be SEEN standing near Jackie as they both emerge from the side of the road near the tree.

## 299 ANGLE ON ROAD

The truck draws to a stop and Victor gets out. Nilo stands in the b.g. as Kassem steps out onto the running board.

JACKIE

Thought you were a memory, Serrano...

VICTOR

Hope you didn't spend our share...

(he turns and surveys  
the fallen tree)

Looks as though none of us will  
spend it.

Kassem jumps down off the running board and stays back. Carefully, Victor takes the machete from Nilo, walks slowly around the fallen tree, then turns to the others as he places his hand against the trunk of one of the trees.

VICTOR

(continuing)

Kaoba... Excellent wood... Very  
hard and very heavy.

JACKIE

There's four of us... We can go  
around this fucker if we can hack  
out eight trees...

VICTOR

In perhaps a week... when the  
field has burned to a cinder.

JACKIE

Bullshit!

VICTOR

When you cut them down, how do  
you move them?

Jackie is becoming desperate. He looks around at the others. He can't allow himself to think of failure.

(CONTINUED)

299 CONTINUED:

JACKIE

We cut 'em up and move 'em out  
with the trucks... We got cable.

Kassem has been looking off on his own.

KASSEM

At least three days' work.

They walk back up on the road and look at the huge log. Kassem climbs up on top of it and stands looking around. As Jackie and Victor walk, he walks along the top, staying parallel to them.

VICTOR

We could possibly section the  
trunks and attach cables, then  
roll them back with the trucks...

NILO

How you gonna clear the stumps?  
How you gonna get these loads  
over fuckin' stumps?

Jackie looks at the huge logs. He can't believe it would really work but he wants desperately to think it might.

VICTOR

C'est gros ca.

He stands back, looking up at the log. Kassem jumps down and walks along an exposed section.

VICTOR

(continuing)

No, impossible... Merde, merde,  
shit!

300 ANGLE ON GROUP

as Kassem walks up to Victor.

KASSEM

I think I can clear it... It will  
take about two hours' work and  
then maybe four seconds to  
actually clear the road...

Jackie looks over at him, then at Victor.

(CONTINUED)

300 CONTINUED:

JACKIE

We can't use that stuff... We need fuses, caps, a detonator...

KASSEM

I have everything I need.

VICTOR

How would you rig?

KASSEM

I guarantee I can take it out. I don't guarantee the shock wave won't set off the trucks. If it works, we can be on our way in less than three hours.

Jackie stands. Nilo moves off the truck.

KASSEM

(continuing)

A risk, but if you move them back about... a mile... maybe not so bad.

There is a moment of silence.

301 EXT. ROAD AND TREE AREA - SERIES OF SHOTS

Jackie cuts a small straight tree with a machete. A new enthusiasm shows in his efforts. Kassem has spread a tarp in front of the trucks and is sorting out nails, tape, pieces of cord, etc. He lifts a heavy lug hammer in his hand and puts it back down, then he picks up a crowbar and feels it carefully for weight.

Nilo pulls at a rope attached to a branch as Victor cuts at it with a machete. It gives way and he falls backwards into the road. He gets to his feet and begins dragging the branch sullenly towards the woods.

Kassem stands on top of the trunk and Jackie hands him up a straight branch that he has cut. Kassem cradles it carefully in a fork he has wired together from two branches. While Jackie watches, Kassem rests a rock on the base to hold it steady, then he sights along a string that he dangles through the crotch. The string is weighted with a large bolt. Jackie moves under the spot and makes a large cross directly below the weight.

(CONTINUED)

301 CONTINUED:

Victor and Nilo bring several large, flat-topped stones to be inspected by Kassem. Kassem lies on the ground beneath the tripod he has erected on top of the log. He sights up a string to the top and makes a final adjustment. He carefully sets a flat stone under it. Victor stands near the back of the truck where he has made a small step. Nilo brings other pieces of rock. They are making an easy incline for a man carrying a case of explosives.

302 ANGLE

Kassem sits in the cab of the truck holding a small bag. The other men stand around him. He examines it, then looks up.

KASSEM

Too small.

He looks at Nilo in the b.g.

KASSEM

(continuing; to Nilo)

Show me your pockets.

Nilo looks about, then slowly turns a pocket inside out. They are filthy, but large; the kind of pockets usually found in tailored slacks. Kassem hands Victor a knife from the toolbox.

KASSEM

(continuing)

Take it... and take his balls with it.

Victor walks to Nilo and cuts away his pocket. He hands it to Kassem who puts his hand inside it.

KASSEM

(continuing)

Perfect.

303 ANGLE - BACK OF JACKIE'S TRUCK

Carefully, Jackie slips the lock off the door on one side of his tailgate. Victor holds a straight pole against it, bracing it against the ground. Jackie walks to the other side and carefully opens the bolt. Kassem looks in from the side.

(CONTINUED)

303 CONTINUED:

KASSEM

Okay...

Slowly and with immense caution, Jackie and Victor lift the straight pole and begin easing off to allow the tailgate to open. Kassem peers inside. The tailgate inches away from the truck and a trickle of sawdust falls out the sides. Victor and Jackie ease it back, their faces strained with exertion and fear. The tailgate squeaks and sticks a bit, then comes away. More sawdust falls away and the crosswires that support the cases can be SEEN.

Kassem watches and signals them. They pull the door back and the tailgate hangs open, showing the sawdust and a portion of one case. All the men stand looking at it for a moment, then Kassem moves forward. He takes the pocket from Nilo's pants and fills it with sand from the bottom of the truck bed.

304 ANGLE

Nilo and Jackie have hacked a hole into the trunk in which the explosive can be placed.

305 ANGLE ON LOG

Kassem wedges the pocket, which is now wired shut, into the crotch of the tripod cross-arm on which the string was hung and the measurements made. Below, on the string held by the wedged pocket of sand, is a crowbar, which dangles over the flat rock. When the rig is set, Kassem stands and looks down at his handiwork.

306 ANGLE AT BACK OF TRUCK

Kassem's hands scoop away the sawdust around one of the cases while the others watch. When it is exposed, he slides up onto the back of the truck bed and Jackie steps into a position below him.

KASSEM

Ready?

Jackie nods. Victor stands next to Jackie. Kassem takes a breath, then he slides the case off the sawdust and very slowly hands it to Jackie. Jackie's hands come around it, his fingers crawling along the sides seeking the best grip. Before letting go, Kassem speaks to him. They are almost face to face.

(CONTINUED)

306 CONTINUED:

KASSEM  
(continuing)  
Got it?

JACKIE  
Yeah.

Slowly, almost one at a time, Kassem's fingers come away from the case until Jackie is holding it. When he is ready, Victor guides him and he walks slowly over the ground towards the log. At the log near the rig, Victor assists as Jackie kneels and places the case carefully on the ground. They both stand up and Kassem approaches. He is holding a crowbar in one hand.

307 ANGLE AT TREE

Kassem kneels beside the case. He runs his hands over the wood and then carefully inserts the crowbar. Jackie, Victor and Nilo watch. The wood GROANS as he pries the top off and pulls the boards away, laying them carefully on the ground.

Now, very deftly, he lifts on the plastic bag that is inside. Even Kassem trembles as he lifts on the bag. Gently, but firmly, it comes up out of the case. Each man stands transfixed. Nilo closes his eyes. Beads of sweat stand out on his face. Each man is now sweating profusely.

Kassem looks at the bag. The sticks are all just slightly out of place from having been lifted. In the bottom is a urine-colored puddle of nitroglycerin. Kassem starts to rise. He is straining as though his knees are suddenly cramped. His face goes red with strain.

KASSEM  
(grimacing)  
Help me... Quick, help me!

Jackie and Victor jump forward. Carefully, they take Kassem's arms and ease him into a standing position, as though assisting an elderly person.

When Kassem is standing, he holds the bag up against the tree. Jackie, knowing his job, picks up a hammer and some nails. While Kassem holds the bag, he places a nail to hang the bag on the trunk a short distance above the stone. Jackie holds the nail for a few seconds; then, with a wince, he hits it with the hammer.

(CONTINUED)

307 CONTINUED:

In four or five strokes, each of them equally painful, he drives a nail in to support the bag. Quickly, he places another nail on the other side.

Victor watches him. Jackie swings again, driving the nails into the side of the tree. Nilo can barely open his eyes. The sound of the hammering nearly finishes him. He starts to cough and stifles it as Jackie is placing the last of the nails. Nilo's cough delays everything for a few seconds, then Jackie drives the nail in.

Four nails support the bag hanging against the trunk of the tree. Kassem now slowly takes his hand away from the bag as the others watch. The bag strains against the nails and finally Kassem can step back. All the men move again. Kassem carefully dries his hands on his pants and shakes his fingers to limber them up.

Victor hands Kassem one of the flasks that was mounted on the dash. Kassem takes the bottle and places his feet squarely on the ground.

KASSEM

(continuing)

I'll do this alone. Get the  
trucks ready.

Jackie picks up the empty case and starts back with Victor towards the trucks.

Kassem turns to the bag. He looks at the corners of it carefully. Where it forms a kind of nipple, he touches it with his finger. Then, with a small knife, he cuts a tiny hole. Pinching it off with his finger, he brings the bottle up to it and allows a small trickle to run into the flask. The yellow liquid runs down the side as Kassem concentrates holding the bottle. When it is about one-quarter full, he pinches off the flow. Carefully now, he leans down and places the bottle on the ground. He reaches up again and takes a strip of electrical tape that he had already cut, that has been hanging from his sleeve, and he wraps up the puncture. Kassem now steps back to examine his work.

308 ANGLES

He makes fast on a tie around the top of the polythene bag that is filled with the explosive. On the top of the trunk Jackie and Victor stand holding a length of rope with which to lift it. Kassem looks up.

(CONTINUED)



308 CONTINUED:

KASSEM

Ready?

Jackie and Victor set their feet and get ready to lift the bag.

309 ANGLE

Nilo is back near the truck. He is tense as they start to lift.

310 ANGLE

Kassem clears the bag from the nail that held it and the two men slowly draw it up onto the tree. In actuality the effort of lifting it is nothing, but they both wince with strain. Even Kassem grimaces as he watches. On the top they lower it into the hole that has been chopped deep into a fork of the tree.

311 ANGLE ON BACK OF JACKIE'S TRUCK

The case has been put in the old place and Nilo brings brush that he has cut to place around it. They are carefully repacking the materials.

312 RESUME KASSEM

Kassem rubs his hands on his pants and kneels beside the flask. Carefully, he picks it up and sets it on the stone. He tilts it onto the side and props it up with a rock. As he places it, the crowbar dangles dangerously above it. Kassem makes a final adjustment, then carefully steps back. He looks, his eyes run up the rigging to the top and he laughs with pride to himself. He walks back a few feet, admiring it, then turns.

Victor looks at Kassem, then Jackie gives him a sign and starts the engine. Kassem flashes Nilo a look, then walks towards the tree.

313 ANGLE AT TREE

Kassem climbs up onto the tree and walks towards the rig. As he gets near it, he slows down and walks very cautiously.

## 314 ANGLE AT TRUCKS

Jackie and Nilo watch him. Behind, "Sorcerer" is backing slowly away.

## 315 ANGLE ON TREE

Kassem takes a knife and, with a gesture that is almost grand, he leans out to a small bag of sand.

## 316 INSERT

His knife makes a small hole in the bottom of the bag through which a trickle of sand begins to flow.

## 317 ANGLE

Kassem jumps gracefully off the trunk and runs for the truck. Jackie is already in reverse, with the truck in motion, as he arrives and jumps on the running board beside him. Nilo's eyes are straight ahead, but he's shivering.

## 318 POV

The truck draws away from the tree painfully, slowly.

## 319 ANGLE

Nilo, checking his side for Jackie, flashes a look at the tree, the fear beginning to rise in him like a clarion of bells.

## 320 ANGLE

The wheels of Jackie's truck move over the ruts of the road.

## 321 INSERT

Sand spews out of the small bag and the CAMERA PANS DOWN TO REVEAL the crowbar dangling over the flask.

## 322 ANGLE ON ROAD

The truck can be SEEN approaching a bend in the road with the tree some three hundred yards in the distance.

## 323 ANGLE AT TREE

The bag shifts down and clings there for a moment as the sand spews out, then it falls.

## 324 EXPLOSION - SERIES OF SHOTS

At TWELVE THOUSAND FRAMES PER SECOND, the tree turns into an enormous surreal amoeba of fire. (Note: In actual time, this CUT would last a second.) The undisintegrated sections of the trunk are hurled high into the air.

The surrounding trees of the forest are sucked in, then snapped back by the shock wave.

Jackie's truck, with him at the wheel, rocks with the concussion. His face is frozen in terror. Nilo winces, drawing up his shoulders.

Victor, at the wheel of his truck, grimaces as his own vehicle is jolted. Above the forest and onto the road, huge chunks of wood come crashing down.

## 325 ANGLE

In the aftermath, the tree is gone and all is still, save for the SOUND of a few sticks that still fall out of the sky and RATTLE through the branches in the devastated trees of the surrounding forest. A gentle snowfall of white ash begins.

## 326 ANGLE

Victor slams his truck in gear and starts down the road. His face reveals what he feels. He may now be alone. Suddenly, he reacts with disbelief to a sight ahead.

## 327 HIS POV

"El Pegaso" stands in the middle of the road. Like everything else in the area, it is covered with fallen leaves and white ash. It looks very old. Kassem steps away from the side at the approach of Victor's truck and Jackie gets out of the cab. Nilo sits frozen, terrified inside.

## 328 ANGLE

Before Victor's truck stops, Nilo steps off the running board. He looks at the men, then shuffles forward.

(CONTINUED)

328 CONTINUED:

VICTOR

Are you all right?

JACKIE

My ears are ringing Dixie... Yeah,  
I'm okay.

Nilo has walked forward. He watches Jackie who walks right past him. Nilo is mortified. Suddenly Nilo shouts.

The men look over at him, reacting as though he were some madman on a street corner. Kassem swings onto Victor's truck.

KASSEM

I want to see my work.

He turns and climbs back into the truck. Silently, Nilo follows him, getting dejectedly into the cab.

329 ANGLE ON ROAD

Driving carefully over the sticks and debris left by the explosion, the trucks move past the chaos of the fallen tree. Jackie drives, looking straight ahead, and Nilo peers mournfully out of the window at the scorched spot where the tree once blocked the way.

329A EXT. MOUNTAIN VIEW - DAY

The sheer might of a huge mountain range looms above the jungle-carpeted river valley. Splashes of green cling in festoons to niches on the face of the grey rock. One abnormal feature of the landscape gives a feeling of its enormity -- the angular, geometric meandering of the road, climbing with countless switchbacks into the swirling clouds above.

329B ANGLE

ECHOING through the otherwise pristine wilderness, is the SOUND of CONSTANT UP AND DOWN SHIFTING from Jackie's truck as it begins to climb.

329C INT. CAB

Jackie, without a word, works hard at driving. Nilo peers down at the jungle landscape which has begun to stretch out below.

## 329D ANGLE

A large white king vulture (no other bird will do) sits on a rock by the side of the road as the SOUND of the TRUCK approaches. Gradually, becoming wary of the intrusion, it leans forward, then tilts off into soaring flight over the green verdure below. The huge white bird remains in view for nearly a minute, contrasting against the monotone colors of the landscape.

## 329E EXT. ROAD

At a sharp switchback Jackie stops, and reverses the truck a few feet to make a tight corner. Then, in compound low, he negotiates another leg of the endless climb.

## 329F ANGLE

In a FULL SHOT, Jackie's truck PASSES the CAMERA while far below Victor's truck can be SEEN on one of the first switchbacks near the base of the mountain.

## 329G INT. VICTOR'S CAB

Victor drives, while Kassem sits on the passenger's side. He is deep in thought. He removes one of the cellophane bags of sugar from his pocket and empties it onto his tongue, smacking his lips to get it down.

## 329H ANGLE ONTO ROAD

Kassem stares down at the road as it passes beneath his seat. The truck moves at perhaps four miles an hour. Against the black rain-darkened soil, occasional, unnatural patches of light brown material are SEEN.

## 329-I ANGLE ON KASSEM

Kassem continues staring down at the cliffside and the edge of the road. He reacts slightly and with curiosity as he looks down.

## 329J HIS POV

Another patch of the light-colored material goes past.

## 329K ANGLE ON CAB

Kassem suddenly thinks he has recognized what he sees. He touches Victor's shoulder, but without alarm.

KASSEM

Stop!... Just ahead.

Victor looks at him and slows down.

## 329L ANGLE

The truck comes to a stop and Kassem gets out. He leans down and picks up a handful of the material, running it through his fingers.

## 329M INSERT

The material in Kassem's hand is sawdust from Jackie's truck.

## 329N ANGLE

The tailgate of Jackie's truck bangs as it hits a bump and through a gap on the side, a puff of sawdust spews out. The truck continues up a steep incline, leaving a path of sawdust in the road.

## 329-O ANGLE ON ROAD AND TRUCKS - A SERIES OF SHOTS

Kassem throws the sawdust down and jumps into the cab. Victor's truck takes off in compound low. In the cab, Kassem leans over and HONKS the HORN, trying to signal the others. Victor's truck can be SEEN climbing and HONKING in a LONG SHOT. At the end of a PAN, Jackie's truck is SEEN high above them.

The SOUND of the HORN HONKING ECHOES through the mountain valleys.

Inside Jackie's cab, only the SOUND of the MOTOR and the CONSTANT SHIFTING can be HEARD.

Victor hangs a shift and rounds a corner. Kassem keeps HAMMERING at the HORN. He sets up for another corner and as the truck makes a sharp curve, one of the outer wheels of the double rear wheels hangs out over the edge.

The TAILGATE of Jackie's truck BANGS and RATTLES, leaving a constant stream of sawdust.

(CONTINUED)

329-0 CONTINUED:

Jackie, sweating from the exertion, shifts for what must be the thousandth time. Nilo looks down at the now enormous drop to the valley below and then looks away at the front of the road.

Victor races around another corner, steering carefully but taking chances. Kassem keeps the HORN going strong. A FULL SHOT SHOWS the separation between them and the enormous distance down the valley. As one truck appears around the corner of the mountain, the other disappears around of different bend in the road above.

Victor slams a shift. Kassem looks at him with slight concern, but says nothing. Victor's truck rounds a corner and accelerates up a straight stretch. Kassem is leaning on the HORN.

Jackie misses a shift and finally, REVVING the ENGINE several times, gets it in gear. He hits a fair-sized bump which makes Nilo clutch the side of the window. The opening in the tailgate pukes out a large burst of sawdust.

Victor's truck is closer. In a FULL SHOT, he comes towards a sharp curve and hangs the truck into it. The rear wheels of Victor's truck hit a slick spot in the road and they fishtail out to the edge. The outer tire of the outer wheel goes over the edge, then eases back.

In a FULL SHOT, the second truck can be SEEN playing another hide and seek game as one rounds one bend and the other disappears from view.

Kassem gets a quick glimpse of the truck ahead of them on the road. Victor accelerates.

Another woof of sawdust comes out of the tailgate. Kassem, wincing, presses the HORN as loud as he can. Victor accelerates and grimaces as his truck barrels along the road.

Nilo stares out at the landscape as the truck appears for a flash in one of his rearview mirrors. The ENGINE is RACING away in compound low. Nilo shifts uncomfortably.

NILO

I gotta slash...

JACKIE

What?

Victor's truck appears momentarily in the mirror.

(CONTINUED)

329-0 CONTINUED: (2)

NILO

I'm gonna piss myself.

JACKIE

Save it till the top.

Nilo squirms and sits back. He rubs his forehead and the truck appears again in the mirror. As he looks up, it vanishes behind a mountain.

Victor hangs it into a curve, losing it for a second, then gaining control again.

The TAILGATE BANGS out more sawdust. In the cab, Nilo is getting desperate. He squirms and his eyes travel to the mirror just as the truck flashes into view. He reacts.

NILO

Christ, they're right on our tail!

The truck vanishes.

JACKIE

What?...

Jackie looks in the mirror and sees nothing.

NILO

Right behind us... They're honking.

Jackie continues to drive, thinking about it for a few seconds, then, reluctantly, he pulls over and stops. When the engine falls to an idle, they can hear the HORN HONKING.

329P ANGLE ON ROAD

Victor comes wailing around the corner and slides to a stop just behind their truck. He holds on for a second to the tension of his driving, then applies the emergency brake as Jackie and Nilo get out ahead.

329Q EXT. ROAD

Jackie slowly gets out of his side of the truck and walks back towards the tailgate. Victor walks from the other direction. Nilo gets out of the cab and begins to pee off the side of the road.

JACKIE

What is it?

(CONTINUED)



329Q EXT. ROAD

Kassem has walked to the back of Jackie's truck. He reaches into a crack where the tailgate has come away from the bed and removes some sawdust, then he gives it a shake. It moves.

JACKIE  
(continuing; seeing it)  
Shit!

Jackie slams his fist on the side of the truck in annoyance. Kassem starts unpacking the tarp.

KASSEM  
You must repack it. You'll have  
to use grass.

Jackie undoes the latch on one side as Nilo appears.

JACKIE  
(to Nilo)  
Get the machetes.

Nilo turns and walks back towards the cab. Kassem and Jackie lower the tailgate and look in at the cases which are held in place only by the wires. A small amount of sawdust remains behind them.

VICTOR  
You've got at least two hours work...  
(he looks at his watch)  
But you can still be off the mountain  
before dark.

JACKIE  
Right...

He starts toward his truck.

VICTOR  
We'll have to go ahead...

Jackie nods. He steps back and looks at the road behind the truck.

JACKIE  
I better get the hell out of your  
way.

329R ANGLE

The mist is blowing in heavily as Victor and Kassem walk towards their truck.

(CONTINUED)

329R CONTINUED:

Jackie gets into the cab of his truck and, without starting the engine, lets it roll back a few feet towards the side of the mountain. Victor starts his truck and pulls ahead. Nilo stands by the side of the road holding two machetes. Victor moves up until he is level with the cab of Jackie's truck.

329S ANGLE

Victor looks across the cab at Jackie.

VICTOR  
See you at the field...

JACKIE  
(gives a half-hearted  
nod)  
Hang loose...

Jackie gets out to begin work on the cutting of the grass.

329T ANGLE

Victor's truck moves up the road. Fog swirls across the scene as Jackie takes up a machete and begins hacking at the grass. Nilo lifts an armful and carries it towards the tailgate as the SOUND of Victor's TRUCK grows more faint in the distance. Jackie and Nilo remain alone, diligently going ahead with their work.

330 EXT. MOUNTAIN AREA - SERIES OF SHOTS

The Sorcerer winds like a phantom through dense mist. Four large fog lights on the front bumper are turned on and the shape of the truck itself is lost. It becomes a huge mechanical ghost ship moving through a William Blake landscape.

Kassem squints out the open door at the mist. The windshield wipers rhythmically sweep across the glass. Kassem reacts to something ahead on the road.

On a square rock beside the road, a round pre-Columbian God-face has been carved. Behind it, vanishing into the mist, is an Inca wall; a black geometry of perfectly fitted cubes glistening in the mist.

Kassem takes up a map and pulls a small light out on the dash.

331 ANGLE

The truck moves through a strange area of ruined Inca terracing. All COLOR is MUTED IN THE SCENE and forms appear and disappear in the windblown fog. The GROWL of the TRUCK'S ENGINE and the mysterious floating orbs of the headlights are reminders that it is a creature from this century. A few groves of twisted trees FRAME the SCENE.

332 INT. CAB

Kassem looks at the map, then puts it back.

KASSEM

Paso al Infierno is four miles...  
The road is good.

Victor and Kassem are silenced into thought by the mood of the place.

VICTOR

Where is your home?

KASSEM

I was born in Jerusalem... I grew up in Lebanon -- in a refugee camp.

VICTOR

I have never been to the Middle East... But I know North Africa quite well.

KASSEM

You were there during the French aggression?

VICTOR

I was in Algeria... Yes...

Kassem looks out the window.

VICTOR

(continuing)

In Oran, I was nearly killed... My armored car was hit by a shell ... My friend... It took his head away... I remember cleaning his brains off the inside of the turret ... When I think of it now, I feel sick...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

332 CONTINUED:

VICTOR (CONT'D)

But when it happened, I felt nothing... It was just a duty... I cleaned him up and it meant nothing to me...

KASSEM

The French are orderly people... You have an orderly approach to everything... whether it's making love or making war.

There is a pause.

VICTOR

Are you a member of the Palestine Liberation Army?

KASSEM

(after a pause)

They are my brothers, but I am Al Fatah.

Victor slows and squints to see. He shifts and comes back up to speed in the fog.

VICTOR

It all seems far away.

KASSEM

Not to me... The struggle is always with me... It is why I am on this road.

VICTOR

(staring ahead)

To me it is far away...

(he turns to Kassem)

I am no longer political.

KASSEM

Everyone is political...

There is a silence between them as the truck grinds forward through the mist.

KASSEM

(continuing)

What is your work?

(CONTINUED)

332 CONTINUED: (2)

VICTOR  
Finance... Investment banking.

KASSEM  
(suddenly laughs)  
Very political.

VICTOR  
Only indirectly...

KASSEM  
(still smiling)  
I think very directly.

There is a pause. Neither man wants to continue the argument.

333 EXT. PASO AL INFIERNO ROAD

The truck creeps through the mist towards the black rocks of the Paso Al Infierno that can be SEEN looming ahead on the horizon under a heavy clouded sky.

334 INT. CAB

Victor takes out a cigarette. He lights it and offers one to Kassem. Kassem declines.

KASSEM  
Are you from Paris?

VICTOR  
I lived there... Yes.

KASSEM  
Where?

VICTOR  
Seisieme Arrondissement... Do  
you know Paris?

KASSEM  
I was there for two days... It  
is very expensive.

VICTOR  
So they say.

(CONTINUED)

334 CONTINUED:

KASSEM

All cities are the same to me.

There is another long pause.

KASSEM

(continuing)

Your family is there?

VICTOR

My wife... Just my wife.

KASSEM

And your children?

VICTOR

No children.

Victor is caught by the memory. He moves slightly in the seat and puts out the cigarette which he only just started.

VICTOR

(continuing;  
starting again)

I met my wife when I first came to Paris from Bretagne... The day she gave me this watch... was the last day I saw her.

(he looks at  
the watch)

It's five minutes before nine in Paris.

They ride in silence for a few moments. Victor reaches for the cigarette stub. He starts to take it out of the ashtray, then puts it back. He has said more than he wished to a man he hardly knows.

KASSEM

We have to look ahead.

VICTOR

It's difficult to look ahead... and impossible to turn back.

Victor relaxes slightly at Kassem's response.

335 EXT. ANGLE ON TRUCK

Moving like a ghost ship, the truck moves along a reasonably straight stretch of road nearing the Paso Al Infierno.

336 INT. CAB

Kassem and Victor sit silently, but Victor starts once to speak, then finally he turns to Kassem and extends his hand.

VICTOR

My name is Victor Manzon...

For the first time, Kassem smiles a warm smile.

KASSEM

I am Tariq Mohammed Kassem.

337 ANGLE ON ROAD

The "Sorcerer" continues to roll through the mist towards the Paso Al Infierno. Everything stands motionless as clouds of endless mist drift past. A scene devoid of color and texture. The lonely, guttural CAWING of a distant raven can be HEARD from some remote, unseen canyon. Passing through a cloud that obscures it and coming again into the open, with its foglights ablaze in the gloom, the "Sorcerer" appears purposeful, at odds with the unfriendliness of the environment, but fully bent on its mission.

At the Paso Al Infierno a large escarpment looms behind the truck. The black rock has been painted with strange religious symbols. Phrases like "Christo mi salvador" and "Danos la luz de vuestra salvacion" are crudely written in white paint. At a sharp turn in the road a small, lonesome shrine stands decorated with auto headlights and other weird ex votos made from the wreckage of ancient vehicles. Inside is the light of a few candles.

In the f.g., the barrel and telescopic sight of a rifle rise INTO the FRAME. The obscure shape of a MAN's HEAD sights along it, drawing a bead on the front wheel. The rifle FIRES, jumping back with the recoil.

338 ANGLE

With a BLAST and a SHRIEK of escaping air, a large chunk is blown from the front tire of the truck.

(NOTE: This could be filmed at over ten thousand frames to accentuate the instant.)

(CONTINUED)

338 CONTINUED:

The tire splits and collapses on the rim, grinding itself against the road and shredding off in strips.

339 FRONT ON VIEW

The huge truck SHRIEKS as the steel of the rim hits the road and begins twisting under the weight of the cab. Desperately, like a wounded rhino, the truck tries to straighten its forward direction as the front bumper dips down, sending up a bow wake of gravel and sparks.

340 ANGLE

The shredded tire is thrown out from the wheel onto the road and the truck SHRIEKS and GROANS in an erratic path towards the ditch at the side of the road.

341 INT. CAB

His face is frozen as Victor hangs onto the wheel. Kassem braces for an instant against the inevitable.

342 EXT. ROAD - ANGLE

The "Sorcerer," slowing down, eases towards the edge of the road in a final agony. It almost stops, then bumps and tilts to a jarring halt, with its good wheel in the ditch, where it EXPLODES.

With an enormous CRACK, it is hurled into the air and in all directions. Sections of the truck, a leg, an arm, the hood, all fly in different directions.

343 SERIES OF SHOTS

Through the mist-enshrouded gorges of the mountains, the ECHOES and the REVERBERATIONS travel, compounding upon themselves.

Jackie and Nilo have just replaced the packing and they are latching the tailgate. After a half a second delay, the SOUND reaches them -- CRACKING through the invisible landscape around them with a force that no thunder ever had.

(CONTINUED)



343 CONTINUED:

They exchange a look. They know instantly what it means. Nilo gasps with fear even at the noise and vibration and Jackie appears suddenly sick to his stomach. Jackie reaches for the doorjamb of the truck. His hand trembles.

For several moments, they stand motionless in the road. The ECHOES CONTINUE and very suddenly STOP. A deafening silence overcomes the scene. They are alone in the mist, cut off from all knowledge of what lies before them, sealed off by the grey walls of rock and the clouds that surround them.

344 ANGLE - AT SCENE OF EXPLOSION

The dust cloud clears, leaving a huge crater from the ditch all the way across the road. Scorch marks run out from it in all directions. The scrubby trees that bordered the road are now smoking skeletons. The scene of the blast has extended the deadly spectre of the Paso Al Infierno to this area as well.

The rock wall near the road steams in the aftermath of the blast. The rear axle, with two smoking tires, is jammed, twisted among the rocks. In a tree beyond the blast, the shredded body of a Guerrilla hangs amidst the torn branches with his gun dangling from him by the strap. Another is jammed among the rocks. Further up on the hill, a few small figures of the remaining GUERRILLAS can be SEEN among the rocks. They are indistinct, Boschian bird people. They group together in excitement and begin making their way slowly down towards the road. There are four of them.

A cloud of mist comes ACROSS the SCENE.

345 EXT. BLAST AREA - SERIES OF SHOTS

Silently, through the damp rocks and scorched trees, the four Guerrillas work their way down towards the road. Their figures become more distinct. MEDINA, their leader, can be recognized by his long hair. TERU, his second in command, is next to him.

They pause at the tree where their comrade hangs dead and two of them wander out from the others.

No words are exchanged until one of them stops near some rocks and raises his hand.

(CONTINUED)

345 CONTINUED:

He calls out, but his voice is small in the silence of the landscape.

GUERRILLA

Aquil...

Medina moves towards him with the others, the damp ground sucking up the noise of their footsteps.

Another dead man has been found, hurled against a large rock and propped in an almost comedic position of death, his clothes shredded by the blast.

Medina and the others look on silently and their faces betray a certain suspicion and confusion. Suddenly, they all react to a SOUND in the distance. It is the other TRUCK ENGINE. Though distant and small, it has the impact of an explosion in the otherwise silent landscape.

346 INT. CAB - "EL PEGASO" TRUCK

Jackie and Nilo drive through the heavy mist.

347 EXT. ROAD

The truck comes out of the gloom, passing a section of Inca terracing.

The truck moves into a heavy fog bank and Jackie switches on the fog lights. The truck now appears exactly like Victor's -- a ghost ship heading for some unaccountable destiny. When it emerges again, it enters the blast-scarred landscape that surrounds the area.

348 INT. CAB - NILO

Nilo stares, frozen, into the misty landscape, which is salted with charred pieces of scrub debris. Suddenly, he reacts.

349 ANGLE - HIS POV

The rear axle of the Sorcerer, its charred wheels still smoking from the blast, perches at an odd angle like an abstract metal sculpture against the landscape.

350 INT. CAB

Jackie flashes a look, then quickly brings his eyes back to the road. Like a man on a tower, afraid to look down, he drives on. He maintains the truck at a steady speed, then seeing something ahead, he slows down.

351 ANGLE

The wheels of the truck roll over sticks and broken chunks of wood.

352 ANGLE

The road ahead is now littered by the blast. A fair-sized piece of charred scrub is right in the middle. Beyond it is the crater. The truck slows and stops.

353 INT. CAB

Nilo sits listlessly, coughing small, almost baby-like coughs which he tries to stifle in the stagnant silence that envelops the scene when the engine is shut off.

Slowly, Jackie gets out of the cab.

354 ANGLE

He hangs for a second onto the truck, almost not wanting to let go of it. Then he steps away, looking at the crater ahead in the road. From both sides of the road, two Guerrillas suddenly stand and cover him. A third is on an elevation ahead and to one side.

Medina rises from the cover of a torn stump behind him. Jackie stops and looks around. He considers a fast move for the truck, then changes his mind. Medina walks towards him, covering him with a sten gun.

No words are spoken. Medina snaps his fingers and waves his hand. The high man from the hill comes down closer to the road, his gun ready.

355 ANGLE

Jackie watches them. He is perfectly still.

## 356 ANGLE ON CAB

Nilo sits silently while a man moves to his side, covering him through the door. He stifles a cough.

Jackie starts to turn as Medina walks towards him.

MEDINA

No te mueves... A rodillas...

Jackie gathers his Spanish.

JACKIE

(Gringo accent)

Como?... No comprendo...

MEDINA

Get down!

(to his buddy)

Saces el otro del camion.

(Get the other one out of the truck.)

(to Jackie)

Get down... on the ground!

Jackie gets slowly onto his knees. The Guerrillas are in command now.

## 357 ANGLE - TRUCK CAB

The Guerrilla holds his gun on Nilo.

GUERRILLA

Vamos por fuera... Te digo, fuera...

Nilo sits frozen in the cab. His stifled cough breaks through and he is into a coughing fit.

GUERRILLA

(continuing; to  
Medina)

No lo puedo sacar... Que lo mato  
de una vez en el camion.

(I can't get him out... Should I  
just kill him here?)

MEDINA

(to the Guerrilla)

No... No tiras al camion.

(to Jackie)

What you have in the truck?

JACKIE

Supplies...

(CONTINUED)

357 CONTINUED:

MEDINA  
(half smiling)  
For what, supplies?...

Teru and the other man are standing close.

JACKIE  
(straight)  
Vienna sausages... Wonder bread...  
Northern tissue...

MEDINA  
Nothing else?

Jackie doesn't answer and Medina smiles at the sarcasm.

MEDINA  
(continuing; to  
all of them)  
Dice que el camion lleva aborrotos.  
(He says this truck is carrying  
groceries.)

The men laugh. Jackie gives a half-assed smile at his  
joke.

MEDINA  
(continuing the  
duplicity)  
Okay, so you just got what we  
need... You don't have to be afraid  
from us...  
(to Teru)  
Traes el otro los tumbamos aqui en  
la carretera.  
(Bring the other one... We'll kill  
them here in the road.)

Teru crosses to the truck and looks up at Nilo, then at  
the man who is covering him. Nilo sits stone-faced,  
trying to stifle coughs. The man guarding him shrugs.

GUERRILLA  
(to Teru)  
Es un loco...

TERU  
(to Nilo)  
Oye... Fuera...

He prods him with the gun. Nilo shrinks away.

(CONTINUED)

357 CONTINUED: (2)

TERU  
(continuing; to  
Medina)

La palomita no quiere quitar su  
nidito.  
(The little dove won't leave her  
nest.)

Medina boosts Jackie to his feet and walks him in front,  
towards the other truck. The other Guerrilla crosses  
with them, covering from a short distance away. Medina  
looks up at Nilo.

MEDINA  
(to Jackie)  
What he has?

JACKIE  
His mother was in the other truck.

Medina stops for a moment, then decides to go on with  
the joke. He smiles.

MEDINA  
(to the other men)  
Que chistoso este gringo.  
(This gringo is very funny.)  
(to Nilo)  
Listen, amigo... Just come out.  
We just need this truck. We need  
food, you know...

He looks at Jackie, setting him up for the joke.

MEDINA  
(continuing)  
And toilette paper...

Jackie smiles and Nilo coughs silently into his hand.

NILO  
Enfermo.

MEDINA  
Es idiota...

TERU  
(speaking very fast)  
Pues lo matamos de una vez.  
(Let's just shoot him.)

(CONTINUED)

357 CONTINUED: (3)

MEDINA

(very fast)

Mejor hos dos juntos en la  
carretera.  
(Better to do them together  
in the road.)

Jackie understands what is being said. He leans against the truck and his hand touches a shovel that is clamped on the cab next to the door. He looks into the cab and sees Nilo hunched over the rifle.

TERU

Quien va manejar?  
(Who is going to drive?)

MEDINA

Tu sabes manejar bien.  
(You're a good driver.)

Jackie looks over at his hand on the shovel, not daring to make a move.

358 ANGLE

Medina looks up to the cab of the truck.

MEDINA

(continuing to Teru)

Hay un monton de explosivos.  
(There is a mountain of explosives  
here.)

As Medina's look crosses to Nilo, his forehead suddenly explodes as Nilo shoots him, dead on.

359 ANGLE ON ROAD AND TRUCK - SERIES OF SHOTS

Nilo FIRES into the other Guerrilla, dropping him, as the man covering the group OPENS FIRE on the cab.

Jackie falls back, grabbing the shovel and wrenching it loose from the cab. As Teru FIRES up at Nilo, Jackie hits him hard in the neck with the shovel.

The distant man runs in, spraying at Nilo and hitting him. But Nilo aims and drops him, then falls forward out of the cab.

(CONTINUED)

359 CONTINUED:

Teru hangs for a moment on the doorjamb and Jackie hits him another time hard in the neck with the shovel. He slides to the ground.

Nilo turns himself around on the ground, reaches the gun out slowly until it is prodding Teru, and squeezes off a shot. He looks up at Jackie. Jackie is poised with the shovel, ready to swing at anything that moves, but all is still.

Nilo drags himself into a half-sitting position in the road. His electric-blue pants are stained with blood.

Jackie throws the shovel down and crosses to Nilo. He looks at his lower body.

JACKIE

Christ...

Nilo tries to move and gasps, leaning over on his face in pain. Jackie is frightened. He looks around at the dead Guerrillas.

360 ANGLE

Spread around the truck are four dead Guerrillas. The scene is silent again except for Jackie and Nilo's breathing.

After a moment, Jackie starts dragging the protesting Nilo towards the truck. Nilo screams with pain as Jackie boosts him up on the running board.

NILO

(gasping)

I can't... make it...

JACKIE

(straining)

Shut up.

NILO

Oh, Christ... No... Leeme here...

Jackie with terrific effort, shoves him up into the cab. He can't get him onto the seat and Nilo bunches up on the floor. He grovels around in the filth that has accumulated. His hand clutches an old cigarette wrapper and the small palm-woven cross that the native girl tossed into the cab. Nilo lies in a heap, breathing hard.

Jackie comes around the other side of the cab and climbs in.



361 INT. CAB

NILO  
Gimme... a smoke...

Jackie pulls him up onto the seat. Nilo sits in a pool of his blood unconsciously clutching the small cross. Suddenly, he laughs. Jackie is lifting out the ashtray. He fishes underneath it.

JACKIE  
Nothin' left... Hang loose till we  
hit the field...

Nilo seems in terrific pain, but he laughs again. He now notices that he clutches the small cross. Extending his arm with a burst of pain he drops it out the door.

NILO  
No way, Dad... I'll never make  
it...

Jackie starts the truck.

362 ANGLE - DUSK

It is getting dark as the truck pulls away. Carefully, Jackie drives around the brush and then down the short stretch of road past the crater. The blue-grey of night has begun to enclose them. The truck lights come on.

363 ANGLE - DUSK FOR NIGHT

The truck moves along a stretch of fairly smooth road through a strange forest of Euphorbia trees. SOUNDS have come back. The sounds of weird CICADAS and FROGS. All the lights are on in the truck, even the cab lights.

364 INT. CAB

(Note: Fast, hysterical overlaps during the following dialogue.)

NILO  
I let you down, kid... I --

JACKIE  
No...

NILO  
Blew it for you... I'm sorry...

(CONTINUED)

364 CONTINUED:

JACKIE

You saved my ass...

NILO

Kid... I took that fucking guy  
out...

JACKIE

You took three guys out, man!

NILO

See me... See me whack that spic?...

Nilo groans pitifully.

JACKIE

Don't... go out on me...

Nilo's groan rises to a gasping for breath as a wave of pain surges through his body. For a few seconds he is rigid, then he settles back into the seat. Jackie tenses with him during these moments, not daring to speak. When Nilo comes back from his moment of agony, his eyes grow clear. His face is pale, but relaxed with the comfort of coming death. Jackie flashes him a look.

365 ANGLE ON NILO

The truck is passing the crosses and the small altar of the Paso Al Infierno. It is night and the road is illuminated only by the headlights of the truck. The orange of the fog lights gives a strange coloring to the scene that is visible from the cab. The rocks, the altar and the rows of crosses have taken on a surreal appearance, but it is all simply background to the confined world that is the cab of the truck.

NILO

(matter of factly)

Down the drain... The whole thing's  
down the drain.

366 ANGLE

Jackie looks at the road ahead. The headlights carve a tunnel through the night.

JACKIE

You're full o' shit...

(CONTINUED)

366 CONTINUED:

Nilo leans his head back on the seat. He lets his eyes close to take in the warm weakness that flows through him.

JACKIE

(continuing)

What are you gonna do with all that bread, you hump?

(a beat)

Talk to me... What are you --

Nilo is silent almost until Jackie feels obliged to speak again.

NILO

(slight smile)

Get laid.

JACKIE

(at first not believing)

Huh?...

Jackie starts to laugh. It builds until he is almost hysterical. Nilo is not laughing, but he is smiling hard, caught up in his own idea.

NILO

Best looking whore in Rio...

JACKIE

Two whores... the best-looking whores in Rio...

Both of them come to the end of their laughter. Nilo turns to Jackie as though he has something terribly important to say.

NILO

You do it, kid.

JACKIE

Huh?

NILO

Do it for me.

Jackie is silent for a moment.

JACKIE

With you, man...

(CONTINUED)

366 CONTINUED: (2)

NILO

No... You do it... For me...  
Okay?...

Jackie drives, not wanting to give in to the reality of Nilo's death.

JACKIE

Okay...

NILO

No bullshit?

JACKIE

I'll do it...

Nilo is fading now. He gathers himself for whatever words he has to say. In between, he is hardly there.

NILO

Jackie... God's old lady...

JACKIE

You got it.

NILO

Jackie...

JACKIE

Yeah, it's all right.

NILO

(quietly, almost  
intimate)

Jackie... kiss her on the mouth...

Nilo laughs and coughs. He rolls his head over on the seat, then his support gives way and he slumps down. Jackie looks at him. At a glance he knows he is dead. He looks back at the road. The vibration of the muffler is intense.

367 FINAL DRIVING SEQUENCE - SERIES OF SHOTS - NIGHT

Jackie is now alone. His eyes are crazed like the photographs of front line soldiers by David Douglas Duncan. His field of vision... his entire world is the cab of the truck and the tunnel forged through the night by the headlights. A melange of weird, abstract shapes move past in the night. Trees with misshapen branches loom out at the cab.

(CONTINUED)

367 CONTINUED:

Vines hang like snakes over the road in front of the truck. The truck itself becomes an exaggerated vibrating demon. The instruments dance on the dash and the wheel vibrates like a thing possessed in Jackie's hands. Jackie's face appears to dance with motion, lit by the eerie map light inside the cab. Nilo lies to one side, throbbing with the same mechanical pulse of life that dominates the scene.

Jackie refuses to look over at him. He stares ahead at the road. The vibration of the truck, which is now becoming more apparent, and the RATTLE of the MUFFLER, reflect the shattered impulses of Jackie's nerves. The occasional white trunks of jungle trees throw back glaring bursts of light, illuminating the mask of his face. The SOUND of the ENGINE, the NOISE of the SHIFTING, and the PERCUSSION of the MUFFLER all blend into a single melange of SOUND.

The images become progressively more abstract. The filthy smudges on the windshield evoke weird distortions of the passing trees. In the mirrors along the side, the texture of the road races past like a microscopic voyage over a piece of diseased skin. The journey has at last broken from the confines of reality into a nightmare of horrors. Jackie drives, searching desperately for some reminder of the real world. (Note: All motion of the truck is heightened by the use of long focal-length lenses.)

Nilo's face dances with vibration beside him. In the glass on the dash, the water takes a sudden, slow motion leap, resembling an explosion. Outside, a huge, unworldly spectre APPEARS. Above the ragged top of the forest, flashes of an aurora of strange colors glow through the mist in the sky. Then, alongside the road, the trees become twisted forms against huge, pulsing ghosts of orange light.

368 SERIES OF SHOTS - NIGHT

Jackie is nearly over the brink as a recognizable object flashes past. It is the rectangle of the COMPREPET sign, but the text is indecipherable.

Suddenly, the abstract pattern of a cyclone fence swims past, staggering Jackie with its vision of abstract motion. He reels back, pulling at the wheel and negotiating a turn. He now heads down a corridor with fence on both sides. At the end, he can see the gate to the oil field and the leaping flames of the fire.

(CONTINUED)

368 CONTINUED:

The GUARDS swing the gate back, just in time, as he drives through. One of them leaps towards his truck, waving and shouting. Jackie does not hear them, but only the garbled sounds of his journey, the ceaseless din that has filled his head for nearly twenty-four hours.

Inside the gate, swarms of strange, distorted FIGURES emerge from the darkness towards him. Characters from the dream of some mad monk... a vision of the welcome to hell ... they splash through the huge pools of water that are burnished by the fire to a tone of molten metal, moving towards him. It has the appearance of a gathering of demons before the spectre of a huge, burning cathedral. Behind the throng, the Gothic derricks of the remaining wells are silhouetted against the flames.

The truck rolls slowly forward over the rough mud of the field as the Figures surround him: white faces and hands reaching out from bodies cloaked in grimy clothing seeking to remove him, to drag him out into their ritual before the fire. Although their mouths open and close in speech, Jackie hears only the din of the road.

FADE TO BLACK:

369 EXPLOSION

Against the Limbo of black a huge deformed ball of fire appears, taking on a monstrous shape. It is accompanied by a throbbing earth shattering crack of sound.

370 CLOSE SHOT - JACKIE

Jackie snaps awake in absolute terror, his eyes wide as the RUMBLE of the EXPLOSION dies off. He gasps for breath, trying to shake off the horror, the feeling that he is perhaps dead... His hearing returns with the SOUND OF CONFUSION that goes on outside the window of the bungalow where he has been asleep. SHOUTS OF MEN moving in to cap the well and the GRINDING ROAR of a BULLDOZER are now realities. After a few seconds, Jackie collapses again into sleep.

371 EXT. ANGLE ON SKY WITH HELICOPTER - NEXT DAY

Out of the gloomy, grey overhang that perpetually covers the town of Porvenir, the oil company helicopter descends. It is like some huge funerary dragonfly, flown by Billy White.

## 372 POV FROM HELICOPTER - DAY

Below, the shabby, ragged collection of huts that is Porvenir stands out against the grey-green of the surrounding swamp. In the main street, two of the company trucks have already pulled in and MEN are milling around as they line up for their perpetual work details.

## 373 ANGLE

Jackie peers out of the door of the helicopter as it settles for a landing in the widest part of the main street. He is wearing chino pants and a shirt that has obviously been borrowed from some company official.

## 374 ANGLE

As the helicopter descends on the town, A CROWD OF CHILDREN runs to watch it. Among the WORKERS moving towards their details, a few stop and stare, but most continue their business.

The police jeep is standing nearby, with the TWO COPS who shook Jackie down, and a station wagon from the refinery is parked nearby with Zayas, who stands, waiting for it to land.

He holds a briefcase. As it touches the dirt, a few of the milling workers look over and exchange comments as Jackie and Corlette get out.

## 375 ANGLE

Jackie steps from the craft and sees Zayas and the police walking briskly towards him. The cop who busted him gives a brisk salute and Zayas shakes his hand. As they walk away from the helicopter, Zayas walks beside Corlette, speaking to him. Jackie stares out at Porvenir. In the b.g., the WORK DETAILS are being gathered and men walk past him. He catches a look from everyone, but, aside from a group of about thirteen CURIOUS URCHINS, no one follows the little band of delegates as they walk towards the El Corsario.

AN OLD WOMAN stops in front of Jackie as he approaches and crosses herself. She turns away as their eyes meet. In the b.g., the helicopter lifts off.

(CONTINUED)

375 CONTINUED:

As they pass near a work detail, assembling into one of the construction trucks, Jackie's eyes meet with Peters' momentarily, but Peters looks away and no word is exchanged. Jackie's action has restored Porvenir to the same misery it has always known. A truck loaded with hard-hatted workers pulls past the group as they near the front of the cantina.

On the steps of the El Corsario, just as they are entering, Jackie stops. He reacts to the SOUND of a PLANE. The others pause for a moment, then continue inside.

376 ANGLE - DAY

Out of the grey clouds that hang on the mountains behind the town, the ragged SOUND of the DC-3 can be HEARD. Within seconds, it appears out of the mist, coming down, and starting its turn into the airport of Porvenir.

377 INT. EL CORSARIO

Corlette, Jackie and Zayas sit at a table. Agrippa is serving them coffee and the idiot boy is staring at them from the b.g. Carlos is supervising their service from a place near the bar. The town cop is standing near the door where several curious children are peering in. Zayas removes a manila envelope from his briefcase and takes out a check and a small card. He hands the check to Corlette who signs it, then hands it to Jackie.

Jackie turns the check over in his fingers. It is a certified company check made out in the amount of forty thousand dollars. Jackie's fingers tremble slightly as he holds it.

CORLETTE

It's good.

JACKIE

No good to me. What am I gonna do? Walk into a bank, lay out my I.D., and give 'em a thumb print?... Our deal was cash.

CORLETTE

Our head office is sending a man named Gus Lefferts to meet you at the plane. He'll take you to our bank and you'll have the cash by dinnertime.

(CONTINUED)



377 CONTINUED:

He hands Jackie a small, grey card. In the b.g., two natives enter the El Corsario. They take a seat at the bar, glancing around at Jackie's table.

CORLETTE

(continuing)

The International Red Cross issues these to stateless persons... It's valid in most of these countries.

Jackie looks at the card and the check. Zayas passes him the manila envelope, so he can put them away. As Jackie's glance wanders, A MAN at the bar gives him a wave, which he returns with a quick nod. Jackie puts the I.D. and the check in the envelope. There are a few seconds of silence.

CORLETTE

I also want you to know, Dominguez, that the company... and myself... we really appreciate what you did...

Zayas gives an overly serious nod of agreement.

CORLETTE

(continuing)

We're going to be able to ship, mainly thanks to you... and the others.

Jair enters the El Corsario. He sees Jackie and crosses to him, giving him an effusive Brazilian greeting.

378 EXT. AIRPORT - PORVENIR - DAY

The DC-3 stands in front of the airport shed of Porvenir. A FEW SMALL CHILDREN begin lining up to carry bags and sell chewing gum as the door opens and the stairs are put down.

A BURLY MERCHANT is the first man off the plane, assisting his OVERWEIGHT WIFE, whose head is swathed in bandages. Behind him, A NATIVE in his best clothes carries a large, cardboard box labeled SONY. A FAMILY GROUP moves in to meet AN ADOLESCENT GIRL and HER SMALL BROTHER.

The TWO MEN who appear behind her and descend from the plane are distinct from all the rest, by their looks and by their dress. One of them is very fair and prematurely bald. He is perhaps forty with the build of a professional golfer. The other is a more slender, slightly more nervous man of the same age, with a full head of dark hair.

(CONTINUED)

378 CONTINUED:

They glance around at the airport shed and its surroundings and exchange a word. They nearly walk in the wrong direction, but they are guided by AN AIRPORT OFFICIAL to the immigration stand where their passports will be examined. They both wear light-weight Miami-type clothing. One of them carries a small suitcase of the size that can be fitted under the seat of a plane and need not be checked. They have wash-and-wear coats which they are carrying in the unexpected heat of Porvenir. At the passport stand, they give their documents to THE OFFICIALS, who examine them quickly. While they wait, the dark-haired man glances around, almost as though he expects to see someone. When their documents are returned, they move through to the front of the airport. The darker man speaks to ONE OF THE NATIVES lounging near the door. Although the exchange is not heard, it lasts several seconds. It would seem that the dark-haired man had made the inquiry in Spanish. The man directs them to ANOTHER NATIVE who is leaning on a taxi.

The man leaning on the taxi nods an immediate agreement and offers to take their bags, which they refuse. He quickly opens the door for them to get inside.

379 INT. EL CORSARIO

MORE PEOPLE have gathered inside. Jair is at a nearby table with several other regulars. The sickly Kefalos is sitting at a table in the rear. The majority are natives, with a few very old derelicts, too old for daily work.

CORLETTE

When you meet Lefferts, you might ask him what's available in the capital. I told him you're a first-rate driver...

JACKIE

Not anymore.

CORLETTE

(smiles)

Well, anyway, if you find something that's any good, send me a post card and maybe I'll join you.

JACKIE

(facetiously)

You mean you'd give all this up?

(CONTINUED)

379 CONTINUED:

CORLETTE

In six months, who knows... I  
might not have a choice...

Corlette takes his coffee cup and then puts it down.

CORLETTE

(continuing)

Hey, Carlos, traega nos tres  
Cervezas...

(to Jackie)

You know there's one place down  
here that can be pretty nice for  
a guy in your situation... Ever  
think of going to Rio?

JACKIE

Rio?... Shit, there's no way I  
can show my face in Rio.

CORLETTE

(after a pause)

Too bad... Great place.

JACKIE

No... Rio's no good for me.

Agrippa arrives and places beers in front of them. Zayas  
taps his watch and speaks to Corlette.

ZAYAS

Ya es la hora...

CORLETTE

They never leave on time.

(to Carlos)

Carlos, ponga musica.

Mechanically, Carlos moves to an ancient RADIO and sweeps  
the dials over a garble of Spanish VOICES and settles on  
an old SONG, about three bars into it. It is Charlie  
Parker's recording of "I'll Remember April," a jazz waltz.

CORLETTE

(continuing; to Jackie  
as he drinks his beer)

How about a chaser?

Without waiting for an answer, Corlette turns and Carlos  
comes up behind him. He leans back to speak to Carlos,  
telling him to bring a bottle of Scotch. Agrippa emerges  
from the bar area, moving in time with the music and then  
dancing to it.

380 ANGLE

Agrippa's ugly features disappear in her gentle rhythmic movement to the music. She is oblivious to the lewd, coarse comments made by the men around the cantina.

## VOICES

Hola chingadera... Te lo doy al culo...

Agrippa continues her slow movement around the floor until she is near Jackie's table. Carlos is handing a bottle of Scotch to Corlette who then takes the top off. Jackie watches her for a few seconds and a strange, gentle smile comes to his lips. He turns to Corlette.

## JACKIE

Do I have a couple minutes?

## CORLETTE

For you, they'll hold the flight.

Jackie rises. He goes over to Agrippa, who smiles at him but continues to move in one spot.

## JACKIE

Senorita, may I have this dance?

He steps forward and takes her in his arms lightly and they dance slowly together. Jackie is gentle, but awkward. The obscene comments have stopped and only the MUSIC is HEARD. The other patrons have gone into a kind of reverie as they watch them. Jackie turns with the music and smiles at Agrippa as though she were a Princess. The moment is very tender.

381 EXT. ANGLE THROUGH WINDOW OF EL CORSARIO AND MAIN STREET  
- DAY

Jackie and Agrippa continue dancing slowly as the CAMERA PULLS BACK from a front window of the El Corsario. A few curious children remain in front and their attention is focused on Jackie and Agrippa, who they are watching through the door. On the PULL BACK, the street is REVEALED in morning doldrums. A few mangy dogs wander in search of shade and the children, who are not watching through the window and doors of the El Corsario, have found other levels of boredom to occupy their day. The MUSIC drifts across the SCENE. In a doorway, the old European man stands, only partially emerged into the light. At the SOUND of an approaching TAXI, he steps back and disappears. The cab ENTERS THE SCENE from BEHIND the CAMERA and pulls up to the front of the El Corsario. The two men get out and pause for a moment, then start inside.

FADE OUT.

THE END