

ROUGHNECK EMPEROR

By

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EXT. RAILROAD SWITCHING YARD - NIGHT.

SUPER: 1902

It's pouring rain. CLIFF Bailey, 18, handsome, well built, peers over a bush at a group of men about a hundred yards away who are searching for him.

TRAIN WHISTLE.

CLIFF looks in the direction of the whistle and sees a train's headlight. He runs to the train which is slowly heading out of the yard. He heads for a freight car with an open door. He hears a voice behind him.

MACK

Cliff Bailey, hold up!

It's MACK Fallon, a young man the same age as Cliff. He's pointing a double barreled shotgun at CLIFF.

CLIFF

Who's that? Who's out there?

MACK

Mack Fallon, Cliff. You're comin' with me.

CLIFF's eyes go from the shotgun pointed at him to the badge on Mack's chest.

CLIFF

Mack, what the hell're you doin' out here in this rain?

MACK

I'm takin' you back to Buck. You know why.

CLIFF

Mack, that girl's crazy, I never touched her.

MACK

Tell it to Buck. (Mack gestures with the gun.) Let's go.

CLIFF walks slowly toward Mack. He glances at the train as the car with the open door goes by.

CLIFF

Mack, how long've we known each other?

MACK

Long enough for me to know what a son of a bitch you are.

CLIFF

You'd really shoot me with that thing? Just because Buck Tate told you to? I thought we were friends, Mack.

MACK

Not hardly, Cliff.

CLIFF

You think you could point that thing somewhere else?

Mack hesitates, then holds the gun at port arms.

CLIFF (CON'T.)

Thanks.

MACK

Now get movin' or I put a load into your leg. I don't feel like havin' to carry you all the way back to town.

CLIFF

Mack, you know her. Could be anybody's baby. Hell, maybe it's yours.

MACK

Go to hell, Cliff. (He gestures with the gun again) Let's get goin' I wanta' get out of this rain.

CLIFF is standing in front of Mack now.

CLIFF

I don't have time for this, Mack. I need to get on that train. You gonna turn against an old friend because of some damn stupid girl?

MACK

Buck deputized me and the other fellas to bring you in. I'm the one found you, so I'm gonna do it. I got a duty.

CLIFF

I'm getting out of here tonight,
Mack. One way or another. You want
to shoot me, kill me.

MACK

Your call, Cliff.

CLIFF

I don't think you'll do it,
Mack. You haven't got it in you.

MACK points the gun at CLIFF again and pulls the hammers
back.

MACK

Don't count on it, Cliff.

CLIFF

(Looks at Mack for a moment,
then sighs, shrugs his
shoulders) Okay, okay. Guess I
can't bluff you...

CLIFF lunges at MACK and grabs the shotgun, They struggle
and go down in the mud. The shotgun goes off, taking a large
part of Mack's right shoulder off. MACK slumps down, falling
into the mud. CLIFF, still holding the gun looks down at
him. He turns and throws up, then turns back to Mack, his
eyes filled with pity.

CLIFF

God damn it, Mack, look what you
did. Dammit! What the hell you
think you were doing? Shit!

MACK is looking up at him, trying to speak, His eyes
flutter, then close. CLIFF glances at the train, then looks
back at the still body.

CLIFF

Mack...sorry...I'm sorry.

CLIFF runs alongside the train and manages to pull
himself into a car. The train disappears into the darkness
and it's quiet. MACK stirs. His eyes flutter open. He
rolls over onto his stomach and pulls himself forward,
pushing with his legs until he manages to move a little.
Then again. And again.

INT. BOX CAR - NIGHT.

CLIFF pulls the door almost shut and sits down. He leans back and tries to catch his breath. He spots a filthy blanket a couple of feet away and wraps it around him.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A ROAD OUTSIDE SPRING GREEN, WISCONSIN - DAY

It's early morning. A small boy walking to school hears a sound coming from the culvert beside the road. He takes a few tentative steps in the direction of the sound, peering into the weeds that fill the ditch.

MACK
Help...please.

The boy leans over and sees MACK, face up, half submerged in the runoff from the previous night's storm.

MACK
(weakly)
Please

The boy runs away.

DISSOLVE

INT. DAY. DOCTOR'S OFFICE IN TOWN.

MACK is in bed. BUCK is sitting next to him.

BUCK
Who did it, son?

MACK tries to speak, but his strength is ebbing quickly now. BUCK puts his ear to MACK's lips.

BUCK
Was it Cliff?

MACK nods, then seems to gather his last remaining bit of life.

MACK
(weakly)
Cliff.

After a few seconds BUCK can tell that MACK is gone. He looks at MACK for a moment, then stands, puts on his hat and walks out the door.

INT. DAY. BOX CAR

Three days have passed. CLIFF awakens. The train has stopped.

EXT. DAY. RAILROAD SWITCHING YARD.

CLIFF stuffs his things into his bindle. He opens the door and looks out, then jumps down from the car and walks toward some buildings about a hundred yards away.

RED
Hold it right there!

He turns in the direction of the voice and stops. RED, a large, muscular man in overalls is holding a foot long length of cast iron pipe.

RED
Okay, boy, you know the rules. No 'boes in the yard.

CLIFF
Look mister, I fell asleep. I didn't know I was in the yard. I apologize, I was on my way out. Okay?

JAKE
Aw, he was asleep. I bet he's real cute when he's asleep. Huh, Red?

JAKE, another yard bull, is standing behind CLIFF. He holds a sawed off baseball bat.

RED
Just like a little baby.

CLIFF
Hey fellas, just let me go this one time and you'll never see me again. Okay?

RED
No, you freeloadin' son of a bitch, it ain't okay. You got caught in the yard and you're goin' to pay the price.

JAKE steps forward, raising the bat. CLIFF steps back, but is stopped by the boxcar behind him. JAKE brings the bat down, CLIFF ducks to the side., receiving a glancing blow to

his head. He sees stars. JAKE swings again, this time connecting solidly with CLIFF's ribs. CLIFF grunts and goes to his knees.

RED steps up and sets his feet to swing the pipe when CLIFF lunges forward, butting his head into RED's groin. RED steps back, holding his crotch and groaning. Quickly, CLIFF snatches the shotgun from the blanket and points it at JAKE.

CLIFF

Drop it, you son of a bitch.

JAKE hesitates, then lets the bat drop to the ground.

CLIFF (CON'T)

(To Red)

You, too. Drop it.

RED obeys.

CLIFF

Stand next to your friend.

RED complies.

CLIFF

Get down on your knees.

RED

Now look, sonny, we was just doin' our job. You got no call to...to do...this.

CLIFF

Shut up. On your knees.

They do it. CLIFF walks behind them. He picks up Jake's bat and delivers a vicious blow to the back of JAKE's skull.

JAKE falls over, unconscious. CLIFF quickly repeats the action on RED with the same effect. CLIFF hits RED in the ribs twice, hard, then as an afterthought, hits him on the shin with a long sweeping stroke that makes the bone crack. RED groans.

CLIFF does the same to JAKE then drops the bat, picks up his blanket and is about to leave. He stops, rolls the still unconscious RED over and goes through his pockets, removing a money clip holding several bills. He pockets the bills and throws away the clip, then takes a similar wad from JAKE's pocket. He stuffs the money into his pants pocket and walks toward town.

EXT. THE TOWN OF FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS - DAY.

CLIFF stops at a blacksmith's shop.

CLIFF
 (To the BLACKSMITH)
 Hey, mister, where is this place?

The BLACKSMITH points to a sign on a nearby building that says, "Fort Smith Farm Supply".

CLIFF
 Fort Smith where?

BLACKSMITH
 Arkansas.

CLIFF
 Arkansas. Okay. Thanks.

EXT. FORT SMITH - NIGHT.

CLIFF comes out the front door of a hotel, begins walking. He hears music from three doors away. Men stand about on the wooden sidewalk smoking, and drinking. A sign hung over the sidewalk says "The Golden Opportunity". He heads for it.

INT. THE GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY SALOON - NIGHT.

Pushing the swinging doors aside, CLIFF enters. He strides up to the bar, fishes out a nickel from his pocket and slaps it down on the bar.

CLIFF
 Gimme a beer.

The men on either side of him give him the up and down before returning to their drinking. The BARTENDER comes over, drying a glass. He sizes up CLIFF and shoves his nickel back.

BARTENDER
 Beat it sonny, we don't serve
 kiddies here.

CLIFF shoves it back

CLIFF
 I ain't no kid, mister. Now give
 me a damn beer.

The BARTENDER gives CLIFF his best bored, 'I've heard that one a thousand times' expression, knocks the coin back at CLIFF.

BARTENDER

Get lost before I have Leon toss
you out.

CLIFF slaps the coin down on the bar again.

CLIFF

(Shouting)

Give me a fucking beer, goddammit!

The BARTENDER looks past CLIFF and gestures to someone on the other side of the room. He points to CLIFF and walks away.

CLIFF

Hey, where the hell you -?

Big hands grab CLIFF's collar and yank him backward, hard. LEON, still holding his collar, reaches down and grabs CLIFF's belt in the back, lifting him off the floor. LEON carries CLIFF to the door with CLIFF flailing in the air and tosses him into the street.

CLIFF skids in the dirt, then rights himself and turns to see LEON lumbering back into the saloon. CLIFF dusts himself off, adjusts his clothing and stalks back to the door past the men on the sidewalk who are grinning at him. He shoves the doors open. CLIFF walks back to the bar.

CLIFF

Gimme back my nickel.

LEON starts for CLIFF again, and CLIFF brings his fists up, but GRANDY Fitts, a wiry looking man with a large handlebar mustache, standing behind the bar holds up his hand, stopping LEON. GRANDY comes up to CLIFF and motions to the bartender.

GRANDY

Give this gentleman his five cents,
Harry.

The BARTENDER reaches under the bar and flips a coin to GRANDY who hands it to CLIFF.

GRANDY

There ya go, son.

CLIFF snatches it from him and turns to go. He feels a hand on his shoulder and turns, bringing his fists up again. GRANDY steps back and holds up his hands in surrender.

GRANDY

Whoa, hold on. Just wanted to have a little talk with ya, that's all.

CLIFF

Talk about what?

GRANDY motions to a table at the rear of the room. CLIFF hesitates, then walks to it, GRANDY follows him.

GRANDY

(Over his shoulder)

Two beers, Harry. (To Cliff) Name's Grandy Fitts. I own this place and a couple others hereabouts. What's your name, son?

CLIFF

Cliff, uh...Logan.

They shake hands.

GRANDY

Pleasure to meet you, Cliff. I was watching you up there at the bar and I liked your spunk. Took a lot of nerve to stand up to old Leon.

CLIFF

I don't like being pushed around.

GRANDY

You think you could'a taken him?

CLIFF

Doesn't matter. I don't like being pushed around.

GRANDY

I ain't seen you around here before.

CLIFF shrugs.

GRANDY

Where you from?

CLIFF
Up north.

GRANDY
Up north where?

CLIFF
North of here.

GRANDY
(Smiles)
How'd you like to work for me?

CLIFF
Doing what?

GRANDY leans forward.

GRANDY
You know the Indian Territory is
just a few miles west of here.
Right?

CLIFF
Yeah.

GRANDY
Well, the federals got jurisdiction
in the Territory and they don't
allow no liquor over there.

CLIFF
So?

GRANDY
So, the white men livin' there find
that situation to be a bit...well,
tryin'.

CLIFF
So, you're running moonshine to
them.

GRANDY
Yup.

CLIFF
Sounds risky.

GRANDY
I won't lie to ya, Cliff, it can
be.

CLIFF
What's it pay?

GRANDY
Ten dollars for every wagon of
goods you deliver. You'd be
runnin' about two loads a week.

CLIFF
That's chickenfeed. I'll do it for
thirty.

GRANDY
Fifteen.

CLIFF
Twenty and all the free beer I can
drink.

GRANDY slaps the table, laughing.

GRANDY
Done! I knew I liked you, son.

GRANDY puts out his hand. CLIFF shakes it.

CLIFF
When do I start?

EXT. A ROAD IN THE INDIAN TERRITORY - DAY.

It's early morning. CLIFF, ELMER and RUFUS are on a large wagon, traveling down a dirt road. RUFUS, a huge, burly ape of a man is asleep in the back. A sign on the side of the wagon says "Fitts Farm Supply".

ELMER
We'll start to see other people on
the road pretty soon. Jes' wave at
'em, nice and friendly. We're
teamsters haulin' farmin'
tools. Right?

CLIFF
Sure.

ELMER
So, you from around here?

CLIFF
No.

ELMER
Where you from?

CLIFF
Up north.

ELMER
Up around Fayetteville?

CLIFF
No.

ELMER
Missouri?

CLIFF
No.

Elmer looks at him, then looks ahead.

They pass a farmhouse. Two Choctaw women, RENA, an older woman and LIZZIE, a girl of about eighteen are working a patch of lettuce in front of the house. CLIFF's eyes are drawn to the girl. She stops her work and shields her eyes from the sun as she watches them. CLIFF smiles.

LIZZIE
Mother, I believe you have an admirer.

RENA
(Looks up to see the wagon.
Smiles.)
Well, I guess I can still turn heads. Better not tell your father, though.

LIZZIE laughs and looks back at CLIFF for a moment before returning to her work.

CLIFF
(Looking back at LIZZIE)
Damn.

ELMER
(Elmer turns to see what CLIFF is looking at.)
Yeah, I been seein' her ever since I started makin' this run. She's gettin' ripe. Just about ready for pickin'.

CLIFF

You know who she is?

ELMER

Naw. Never met none of those Choctaws. Just see 'em when I pass by. I ought'a snap up one of them squaws for myself before they're all married off. Considerin' what comes with 'em, it's a pretty sweet deal.

CLIFF

What are you talking about?

ELMER

You don't know? The federal government is comin' in and takin' over the Territory, gonna make it a state in a few years. They're buyin' off the locals, givin' each of 'em 160 acres. You marry one of them Indian gals and the land comes with 'em.

CLIFF

I think I'm in love.

ELMER

You best be keepin' your head on business, for now. You can chase them girls on your own time.

CLIFF

Don't worry, Elmer, I can do both.

CLIFF continues to watch LIZZIE until she disappears in the distance.

The wagon arrives in the town of Russelville. ELMER drives the wagon into an alley and stops next to a pair of large doors, above which is a sign that says "Russeleville Feed and Grain". ELMER gets down from the wagon.

ELMER

You all stay here.

He walks inside the building. He returns with a tall, lanky man.

ELMER

(To CLIFF)

(MORE)

ELMER (cont'd)

This here's Bob Webster. He owns this store. (To BOB) That's Cliff, he's new on the job.

They acknowledge each other. RUFUS and CLIFF get down from the wagon, untie the ropes holding the cargo. They unload the crates and put them in the storeroom.

ELMER

Okay, you got twenty five jars in that one and seventy five in that big one there. One hundred jars, two dollars a jar, like always.

BOB

Two dollars a jar. That's sure a lot for a little jar of lightnin'.

ELMER

(Motions for RUFUS to move closer to BOB)

That's what it costs, Bob. That's what you and Grandy agreed on. There gonna be a problem?

BOB

(Looks nervously at RUFUS)

No, no. No problem. I was just sayin', that's all.

He goes to a small safe and counts out two hundred dollars in tens and twenties.

BOB

Here you go, boys.

ELMER takes the cash and counts it, puts it in his pocket. He nods to RUFUS and CLIFF who climb onto the wagon.

ELMER

(As he climbs up to the seat of the wagon)

Good doin' business with ya'. See ya' next week.

BOB

You bet, Elmer. (To CLIFF) Nice meetin' you, Cliff.

CLIFF nods.

INT. RUSSELVILLE - DAY.

ELMER takes the reins and clucks to the horses.

ELMER

He's been complainin' about Grandy's prices lately. I think Bob might be gettin' a little greedy. We'll have to watch that boy.

CLIFF

Well, two dollars a jar wholesale is kinda steep.

ELMER

That's what Grandy charges, that's what they'll pay. They don't like it, that's too damn bad. They sure as hell ain't gettin' it from no where's else.

CLIFF

No one else is running liquor around here?

ELMER

Nope. Grandy's got this whole area all to himself. Say, Rufus, didn't some fella try to move in on him a while back?

RUFUS

Yeah. But he went outta business real fast.

CLIFF

What happened to him?

ELMER

No one knows. One day he just wasn't around no more.

RUFUS

(Chuckles)

Yeah, just up and disappeared. And ain't no one gonna find him.

CLIFF gives ELMER a long look, then looks off into the distance, thinking.

MONTAGE BEGIN

INT. BOB WEBSTER'S STOREROOM - DAY

CLIFF is talking to BOB. They shake hands.

EXT. A FOREST - DAY.

Scenes of CLIFF setting up a still, stirring mash, filling jars with moonshine. He loads the jars into a wagon.

MONTAGE END

EXT. STREETS OF RUSSELLVILLE - NIGHT.

CLIFF is driving a wagon along the deserted streets of Russellville. He looks around warily in the murky darkness. He pulls up behind Bob Webster's store, gets down, reaches up into the wagon and pulls out a sawed off shotgun. He has a pistol on his belt. He starts for the back door, stops, then turns to go through the alley to the front of the store.

INT. BOB WEBSTER'S STOREROOM - NIGHT.

RUFUS is next to the back door, holding a shotgun, waiting for Cliff to enter. BOB is tied to a chair, his face is bloody and he's semi-conscious. Bob's safe is open. GRANDY is standing next to the door that leads to the store. He's pointing a pistol at the back door.

A blast comes from the darkened doorway. RUFUS is hit by a shotgun blast and falls, firing his shotgun, hitting BOB and killing him.

A pistol instantly appears pointed at GRANDY's head.

CLIFF (OS)

Put it down.

GRANDY lowers the gun.

GRANDY

Easy, Cliff. I need to sit down. That okay?

CLIFF

Over by Bob. Stay away from those guns.

GRANDY keeps his hands held up and slowly steps over to a chair near what is left of Bob. He sits. CLIFF is pointing the pistol at him.

GRANDY

Sure, Cliff. No need for more killin'. We can talk this out. Right? You want to make your own 'shine, I can live with that. There's enough business to go around. No need for all this trouble. Damn, I need a drink.

GRANDY reaches into his coat. CLIFF shoots GRANDY, toppling him backward, spraying blood on the wall behind him. A derringer falls from GRANDY's hand.

CLIFF

No trouble at all, Grandy.

He fires again into GRANDY. He steps over to GRANDY's bloody body and goes through his pockets. He finds GRANDY's wad and pockets it. He looks for Bob's money box in the safe, finds it.

As he's examining it, he hears the click of a pistol being cocked behind him. He spins around and shoots RUFUS who fires at the same time, just missing him. He takes the box and walks to the door, turns and takes a last look around. He goes outside, and walks away quickly.

EXT. THE FORMER BOB WEBSTER'S GENERAL STORE - DAY

The sign on the store says "Cliff Logan Dry Goods". CLIFF and LIZZIE ride up in a buggy. They get out and step onto the sidewalk in front of the store. LIZZIE is in a bridal gown, CLIFF in a suit. They are followed by a crowd of people throwing rice as they enter the store.

EXT. A FIELD - DAY

MONTAGE BEGIN

CLIFF stands in a field with a map in his hand, looking at an oil rig a short distance away. He marks the map with a pencil and smiles.

CLIFF watches a drilling rig being built. He watches the crew drilling. He's working on the rig. The rig rumbles as if it has hit oil. The tools are pushed out of the hole. A geyser of fluid comes out the hole to a height of about six feet. CLIFF looks at it, then gets a water glass and holds it near the fluid, filling it. He holds up the glass and sees murky water.

MONTAGE END

EXT. CLIFF'S RIG - DAY

CLIFF sits on the floor of the rig, looking dejected. The glass of saltwater is beside him. A young man, DOC, walks toward him from the direction of a rig in the distance. He stands in front of CLIFF, picks up the glass, dips his finger in it and tastes it.

DOC

Yeah, we hit saltwater, too.

CLIFF glances at him.

DOC (CON'T)

They're shutting it down. Fine with me. I've had enough of working out here in the middle of nowhere. Had enough of that ragtown shithole I've been living in, too.

CLIFF spits in the dirt.

DOC (CON'T)

I have an old friend who runs a rig up near Tulsa. Wrote me that they just discovered a big field up there. He says there's lots of work. I guess I'll head up there.

CLIFF

You think he might have a job for me?

DOC

Sure. Come on along. More the merrier. (He extends his hand) I'm George Durant. People call me Doc.

CLIFF

(Shakes his hand)

Cliff Logan. Doc, huh? Why Doc?

DOC

I have a masters in petroleum engineering from Texas A and M. I guess they can't call me "Master", so I got tagged with Doc.

CLIFF

Okay, Doc. Let's go to Tulsa.

INT. THE DENTRY'S KITCHEN - NIGHT.

CLIFF, LIZZIE, ERMER and RENA sit at the table, having dinner.

LIZZIE
You're going all the way to
Tulsa? Now?

CLIFF
That's where the work is, Lizzie.

LIZZIE
Maybe you could wait until I have
the baby. You don't need that money
right now. We're doing all right.

CLIFF
No, we're not doing alright. I
lost the store, Lizzie.

ERMER
You can work here with me,
Cliff. I could use the
help. Maybe you could head up
there after we plant the fields.

CLIFF
I have a feeling if I don't go now,
I'll never go. It'll be one thing
after another until it's twenty
years from now and I'm still stuck
here on this goddamn farm.

Everyone in the room stops and looks at him.

ERMER
Alright, Cliff. I suppose with
what you had to put up with and all
when you was a boy I can't blame
you if it turned you sour on
farmin'.

CLIFF
I don't mean any
disrespect. You're good people and
I'm proud to be part of your
family.

RENA
We're proud to have you,
Cliff. Just don't let all this oil
business get the best of you. I've

(MORE)

RENA (cont'd)
 seen some folks got so caught up in
 it...just don't let it get between
 you and family, that's all.

CLIFF
 I won't, Rena. I know what's
 important. I just want to do
 what's best for Lizzie and the
 baby.

CLIFF gets up from the table and goes into the
 parlor. LIZZIE goes with him.

CLIFF
 Take me down to the train
 station tomorrow. Okay?

LIZZIE
 Alright, Cliff. Just...if it
 doesn't work out, you'll come back,
 won't you?

CLIFF
 What? Of course I will. Why would
 you say something like that?

LIZZIE
 I don't know. I just...I know you
 hate this kind of life.

CLIFF
 Lizzie. Don't you ever think that
 I'd run out. Don't you ever think
 it. I love you. You're my
 life. You and our baby. I'd never
 -

LIZZIE
 Alright, Cliff. Alright. I'll take
 you tomorrow. I love you.

CLIFF
 I love you too. I'm going to give
 us such a good life, Lizzie. Just
 wait.

EXT. TULSA TRAIN STATION - DAY.

CLIFF gets off the train with DOC. They catch a ride in a wagon filled with drilling supplies. They arrive at a cable tool rig. They step up onto the rig floor and approach an older man tending the drilling cable.

DOC

Fred! Fred Grubbs! How you doing, you old son of a gun?

FRED

Doc? Hey pardner, what you doin' in these parts? Thought you was workin' down south.

DOC

The driller I was working for went broke. I thought I'd come up here and see what I could find. You got anything?

FRED

Your lucky day, son. I need two roughnecks right away. (He looks at Cliff) You lookin' for work, too?

CLIFF

(He extends his hand to Fred)
Cliff Logan. Yes, sir, I need a job.

They shake hands. FRED looks CLIFF over.

FRED

You was roughneckin' down there?

CLIFF

Yes sir. I was drilling on my own land, but all I hit was saltwater. I know my way around a rig, Mr. Grubbs.

FRED

(He looks Cliff over again.)
Okay, son, I'll give you a try. You can start tomorrow mornin', six o'clock. And forget that Mr. Grubbs stuff. Name's Fred. Doc, you got a place to stay?

DOC

Yes, Fred. I'll be putting up with Bill Wirts.

FRED

How 'bout you, Cliff?

CLIFF

No, sir, I don't.

FRED

Alright, we got a room in the barn you can sleep in until you get your bearings. (He looks at his watch.) Got about an hour left on this tour (pronounced "tower"), then we'll go on out to the house. You can meet Mae and get settled in.

CLIFF

Thanks, Fred, you won't be sorry.

FRED

I know I won't, son. You'll do fine.

EXT. A ROAD IN THE COUNTRY - DAY.

They turn into a gravel driveway that leads to a small frame house with a neat yard fronting the road.

FRED

(FRED pulls back on the reins.) Mae! (He climbs down from the wagon.) Mae! Come on out! We got company!

CLIFF hops down and stretches. MAE emerges from the house and steps onto the porch. She's in her late 30's or early 40's. An attractive woman, but with a few miles on her (think Patricia Neal in "Hud"). FRED and CLIFF walk up to her. FRED gives her a quick kiss and puts his arm around her.

FRED

CLIFF, this is my wife, Mae. (To Mae) Cliff is startin' to work for me tomorrow, but he don't have no place to sleep. I told him he could stay in that room in the barn until he gets himself fixed up.

MAE

You're welcome to stay as long as
you need to, Cliff.

CLIFF

Thanks, Mrs. Grubbs.

MAE

It's just Mae, honey. Room's
around in the back of the barn.
Fred'll help you clean it up...if
he wants supper tonight.

FRED grins and gives Mae a pat on the rear.

FRED

Does yours order you around like
this?

CLIFF

All the time, Fred.

FRED and CLIFF walk to the barn. MAE leans in the doorway.
When he's almost to the barn, CLIFF turns and sees MAE
lighting a cigarette with one hand, the other on her hip,
watching him. He looks at her for a moment, then continues
on to the barn.

INT. CLIFF'S ROOM IN THE BARN - DAY.

CLIFF is sleeping on a cot in the barn's tackroom. It's just
barely dawn. FRED bangs on the door.

FRED

Get movin', son. We gotta be at the
rig by six.

CLIFF

(Sleepily)

I'm up.

CLIFF sits up in the cot and stares at the smudge of light
filtering through the dingy window. He stands and dresses.

EXT. THE GRUBBS'S BACK DOOR - DAY

He goes to the back door of the house and knocks on the it.

MAE (OS)

Come on in, Cliff.

INT. THE GRUBB'S KITCHEN - DAY.

CLIFF enters the kitchen. FRED is already seated at the table. MAE stands at the counter preparing food.

FRED
Grab a cup of coffee and sit down,
son.

CLIFF does so. He sits at the table.

MAE
You sleep alright last night?

CLIFF
Just fine, thanks Mae.

MAE brings a large skillet to the table that's filled with scrambled eggs. She pushes half onto FRED's plate, the other half onto Cliff's.

MAE
Dig in boys.

MAE brings a plate of biscuits and fried steaks, then sits down at the table and lights a cigarette, watching Cliff. CLIFF looks over at Mae a few times.

MAE
See you're married.

CLIFF
(Looks at his wedding ring)
That's right. She's still down on
her folks' farm.

MAE
Is she okay with all this? It's
kind'a tough for a woman livin' in
the oil patch.

CLIFF
She'll be okay. I'll bring her up
here when I get some money saved.

MAE
Okay. Guess you know her better
than I do.

She continues studying him. They finish eating. FRED gets up from the table, pulls out a cigarette and lights it.

FRED
Let's get goin'. Just take me a
minute to hitch up the horse.

He gives MAE a quick kiss on the cheek as he passes her.

FRED
See ya' tonight, darlin'.

FRED exits. CLIFF stands.

CLIFF
Thanks for the breakfast, Mae.

MAE
Glad you liked it. Don't let that
old man work you to death out
there.

CLIFF smiles and goes out the door. MAE lights another
cigarette and stands in the door, watching CLIFF walk away.
FRED and CLIFF drive away in the wagon.

EXT. THE OIL FIELD - DAY.

FRED and CLIFF are traveling through an area dotted with oil
rigs. The sound of steam engines and rig tools can be
heard. The glow from the boilers of steam engines and
kerosene lanterns create small pools of light around the
rigs.

They pull up to Fred's rig and get down from the wagon. They
walk toward the rig. DOC stands near the doghouse. They
exchange waves.

FRED
We got a good bunch a' fellas on
this rig, you treat 'em right and
they'll do the same for you.

CLIFF
Sure, Fred. We'll get along fine.

FRED
Hiram! Hiram!

HIRAM stands on the rig platform, one hand on the cable
rising and falling. DOYLE stands by the boiler several feet
away.

HIRAM

Right here! Where the hell'd you think I'd be?

FRED and CLIFF step up onto the rig platform.

FRED

How much hole you make last night?

HIRAM

Bout a hundred. We woulda' made more but about two this morning a couple old boys with guns sneaked up and tried to hijack us. Doyle and me took care of 'em. They ain't been back.

He pulls a revolver from his overalls.

HIRAM (CONT.)

Got a nice pistol out of it, though. Give the other one to Doyle.

FRED

Okay. We'll keep an eye out case they try again. Got a new man here. Name's Cliff.

HIRAM and CLIFF shake hands. HIRAM looks Cliff over, then spits a large wad of brown juice into the dirt beside the rig.

FRED

Where's Jim? He oughta' be here by now.

HIRAM

Beats me.

DOYLE

Last I saw he was headin' out last night with a bottle and that little redhead that works at the hash house in Sapulpa.

FRED

Damn it. Probably holed up in some shack somewhere's. Okay, Cliff, I guess you're promoted from nipple chaser to boiler man.

FRED motions for CLIFF to follow him to the boiler.

FRED (CON'T)
 Cliff, this here's Doyle. Doyle,
 Cliff's startin' today.

CLIFF and DOYLE shake hands. FRED checks the dials and the water level on the boiler.

FRED
 Damn it, Doyle, you're lettin' that water get low again. You wanta' blow us up? Fill the damn thing up, now.

DOYLE
 Okay, Fred. Don't get your knickers in a bunch.

DOYLE walks over to a pipe and turns a valve, filling the tank.

FRED
 Keep an eye on that, ya hear me?

DOYLE gives a little salute in response. FRED and CLIFF return to the drilling floor.

FRED
 Okay, Hiram, I'll take it. How many feet you cut with this bit?

HIRAM
 'Bout twenty, I reckon.

HIRAM steps back, releasing the cable. He leans against the fulcrum and rolls a cigarette. FRED grasps the cable, looking down into the hole.

FRED
 You boys can clear out. Me and Doc and Cliff'll take it from here.

HIRAM
 See ya tonight.

HIRAM gives a little wave and walks away. DOYLE does the same.

BEGIN MONTAGE

FRED, CLIFF and DOC work the rig. Trip out and change the bit.

END MONTAGE

It's late afternoon. A rumbling is heard coming from beneath the rig.

FRED

Shit.

He reaches for the lever that operates the band wheel.

FRED

We gotta get those tools outta there.

He pulls a lever. The rope is drawn rapidly upwards. A burst of gas blows out of the hole, spewing mud.

FRED grabs DOC by the arm and together they jump from the derrick floor. CLIFF runs to them from the boiler. Another belch of gas pops from the hole, followed by a column of oil, pushing the drilling tools before it. The tools fly into the air for thirty feet, then crash to the floor.

Oil gushes from the hole, fifty feet into the air. FRED, DOC and CLIFF are soaked with crude. FRED pulls CLIFF to the side of the derrick, out of the black spray. He claps him on the back, splashing oil from his drenched shirt.

FRED

A gusher on your first day. How's it feel?

CLIFF

Great. Amazing.

CLIFF continues to gape at the column of oil spewing into the air.

INT. THE DENTRY'S KITCHEN - DAY.

LIZZIE is sitting at the kitchen table reading a letter from Cliff. RENA is shucking peas on the other side of the table.

RENA

So he's not going to be here when you have the baby?

LIZZIE

No, I don't think so.

RENA

He ought to be here.

LIZZIE

Mother.

RENA

He's the child's father. He should be with you when you have his baby. Never heard of such a thing.

LIZZIE

Mother, please.

LIZZIE stands and goes to the parlor. She sits and looks out the window.

INT. THE GRUBB'S KITCHEN - NIGHT.

CLIFF, FRED and MAE are seated at the kitchen table eating dinner. CLIFF is eating and looking at MAE, trying not to stare.

FRED

I'm puttin' you on nights startin' next week, Cliff.

CLIFF is still looking at MAE when he realizes that FRED just said something to him.

CLIFF

What? Oh, sure, Fred.

FRED

Everyone on the rig has to take a turn workin' nights for two weeks and it's your turn.

CLIFF

Glad to. I've got no problem taking my turn.

FRED

I know, son. You can keep Mae company while I'm at work. You'll enjoy the company, won't ya Mae?

MAE

You bet, darlin'. Cliff'n me'll have a fine time.

FRED

You can teach Cliff all about the oil business. Cliff, this little gal knows more about the oil

(MORE)

FRED (cont'd)
business then most menfolk. She's
the one really runs the company.

MAE
It's all about who you know in this
business, Cliff. You scratch the
right back and you could learn a
lot about oil.

CLIFF
I'd appreciate anything you'd like
to teach me, Mae. I'll bet I could
learn a lot from you.

MAE
Well, like I said, you just have to
scratch the right back. Oh, by the
way, you got a letter from that
little wife of yours.

She pulls an envelope from a pocket on her dress and tosses
it across the table to CLIFF. CLIFF eyes the envelope, but
continues eating.

MAE
You must miss her. You been
without your woman for, how long
now?

CLIFF
About two months. Yeah, I do miss
her.

MAE
I'll bet you do. My goodness, two
months without a woman. You must be
about ready to pop.

CLIFF almost chokes on his food.

FRED
Ain't she a pistol, Cliff?

CLIFF
Yeah, Fred. She's a card. Thanks
for the supper, Mae. Guess I'll
hit the sack.

MAE
Sweet dreams.

CLIFF
Thanks. Night, Fred.

FRED
Night, Cliff.

Cliff leaves without the letter.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE GRUBB'S BARN - DAY.

CLIFF stands beside the barn watching a farmer plowing a nearby field, then walks in the back door of the house and into the kitchen.

INT. THE GRUBB'S HOUSE - DAY.

CLIFF
Mae!

He hears no answer. He walks into the parlor.

CLIFF
Mae! You here?

MAE (OS)
In here!

CLIFF walks cautiously into the bedroom.

CLIFF
Mae?

MAE (OS)
In here, Cliff.

CLIFF steps hesitantly to the bathroom door which is slightly ajar. He knocks lightly, pushing it open.

CLIFF
Mae?

Mae is in the bathtub, covered, mostly, by the water. She's smoking and holding a glass of whiskey. There's a bottle of whiskey and another glass by the tub.

MAE
Well, hi there, sugar. Come on in
the water's fine.

CLIFF hesitates for a moment, glances over his shoulder out the door, then quickly gets out of his clothes and eases into the hot water, facing Mae. Mae reaches down under the water.

MAE

Nice rig you got there, Cliff. And
I know just where you can spud in.

INT. THE GRUBB'S BEDROOM - DAY.

CLIFF and MAE are asleep on the rumpled bed. CLIFF wakes up and looks at Mae lying next to him, still asleep. He checks the clock, gets out of bed. He stretches and rubs his back looking like he just went ten rounds. He dresses and leaves. The door to the outside slams and CLIFF can be seen through the bedroom window walking to the barn.

INT. THE GRUBB'S KITCHEN - DAY.

CLIFF enters the kitchen. MAE is at the stove smoking a cigarette and frying up steaks. CLIFF comes up behind her, puts his arms around her and kisses her neck. He keeps his arms around her.

CLIFF

Smells good.

MAE

Chicken fried steak tonight.

CLIFF

Yeah, that smells good too. I
kinda worked up an appetite.

Mae takes the cigarette from her mouth, turns around and gives CLIFF a long deep kiss. She replaces the cigarette and turns around to tend the frying meat.

MAE

Me, too, sugar.

CLIFF releases her and goes to the table. The letter is still there. He sits down, opens it and reads it.

CLIFF

Looks like I'm a father.

MAE

Congratulations, lover. Boy or
girl?

CLIFF

Boy.

MAE

You'd better get on your horse and find a place for 'em to live up here. You can't keep your family down there forever.

CLIFF

(Smiling)

No hurry.

MAE

Cliff, you got responsibilities. Our havin' fun don't change that.

CLIFF

We're not going to have much time for fun if I bring them up here.

MAE

We'll manage.

CLIFF

You're serious. You really want me to bring my wife and baby here.

MAE

Hell, yes, I do. I'm no homewrecker.

CLIFF

What if I don't.

MAE

You want to learn the oil business from me, Cliff, you'll get off your ass and do right by your family.

CLIFF

Shit, Mae.

MAE

Don't give me "shit, Mae". You're a grown up man, act like one.

CLIFF

Damn, you're one tough lady.

MAE

I just know men. Most of 'em you gotta kick in the pants on a regular basis to get 'em to do the right thing.

CLIFF

Okay. I'll get everything set up while I'm on nights and then send for them. That make you happy?

MAE

As a June bug, darlin'.

She brings the pan of meat over to the table, puts two pieces on Cliff's plate and gives him a quick kiss.

MAE

Eat up, sugar. You're gonna be needin' your strength.

EXT. TULSA TRAIN STATION PLATFORM - DAY.

CLIFF is standing on the train platform, looking down the tracks.

TRAIN WHISTLE

The train pulls into the station. CLIFF looks up and down the platform until he sees LIZZIE holding DEWEY, their baby. He trots over to her, looks at her for a moment, they hug. They part and he looks at her again. They walk away from the train.

EXT. CLIFF AND LIZZIE'S HOUSE - DAY.

CLIFF, LIZZIE and DEWEY pull up to the house in a wagon. The house is a simple unpainted twelve by twenty shotgun house in a row with several others. CLIFF and LIZZIE, carrying DEWEY, step down from the wagon and go inside the house.

INT. THE HOUSE - DAY

Inside it's plain, no plaster on the walls and a wood plank floor. The furnishings are simple, too. LIZZIE looks around the place.

CLIFF

It didn't look so bad when I was putting it together, but now that I see you in here...I'm sorry, Lizzie. I'll get us out of here as soon as I can.

LIZZIE

I think it's...cozy. We're going to be happy here, Cliff. I don't need more than this. I'm just glad we're together again. You know, I was beginning to worry that you didn't want us here.

CLIFF

Where did you get an idea like that?

LIZZIE

It's just that it took so long. I felt like I was having to beg you to let us come here. Like you were having second thoughts about...us.

CLIFF

How could...that's ridiculous. I've been working like a dog to get the money together to bring you up here. You know, it's not like I'm getting rich working on that rig and I thought, maybe you were better off with your folks for the time being instead of having to live like, well, this.

LIZZIE

This doesn't matter. I need my husband, Cliff, and Dewey needs his father. And whether you know it or not, you need us. Nothing's more important than that.

CLIFF

I know, Lizzie. I know that. I just can't believe you thought... look, let's not get into a big fight on our first day together. Okay? (smiling) We've got the rest of our lives for that. (smiling) Right?

LIZZIE

Alright, Cliff, alright. I'm sorry. I'm going to turn this into a real home for us. We're going to be happy here.

CLIFF

I'm pretty happy already. But what I said still goes. Some day I'm going to give you a real house. A big one. The biggest in the state. You're going to be the wife of an important man someday, Lizzie.

LIZZIE

If you want to be a big oil man, that's fine. I'll help you any way I can. All I'm saying is don't forget about us.

CLIFF

That'll never happen, Lizzie. Couldn't happen. That's the last thing you ever have to worry about.

They embrace.

INT. THE GRUBB'S BEDROOM - DAY.

CLIFF and MAE are in bed.

MAE

Well, what'd you expect. You keep her waitin' down there for months, she's gonna start wonderin'.

CLIFF

Well, how the hell am I supposed to work the rig and learn the business when I have a wife and kid to take care of? I don't need these complications.

MAE

Let me give you some advice, Cliff. Don't say that to Lizzie. It ain't gonna go over well.

CLIFF
I know how to handle women, Mae.

MAE
(Chuckles)
I noticed.

CLIFF
You know what I mean.

MAE
Yeah, I do. But don't think you're gonna handle me, son. Not like that. Been tried by better men than you.

CLIFF
Wouldn't think of it, Mae. I know when I've met my match.

MAE
Oh, brother. Okay, back to business. Did we cover net revenue interest yet?

EXT. OIL RIG - NIGHT.

CLIFF, FRED and DOYLE, are working the night shift on the rig. CLIFF is on the cable. FRED checks it, then goes over to the boiler and talks to DOYLE, who's working the boiler.

There's a roar and a bright light behind CLIFF, coming from off camera. Screams and moaning can be heard. CLIFF looks toward the boiler and sees FRED and DOYLE on the ground. Their clothing is smoldering with small areas still on fire. Their skin is blackened. There are still flames coming from the door of the boiler. CLIFF runs over to FRED.

CLIFF
Oh God! Fred!

FRED
Damn. It hurts, Cliff. Oh, lord it hurts.

CLIFF
Hold on Fred.

CLIFF gently rolls FRED onto a blanket and lifts him into the back of the wagon. He does the same with DOYLE. CLIFF shuts down the boiler, then drives the wagon away.

EXT. THE GRUBB'S HOME - NIGHT.

CLIFF pulls up in front of the house. He gets down from the wagon and walks slowly to the kitchen door. He knocks, but there's no answer. He knocks again.

CLIFF
Mae? It's Cliff.

He knocks once more. MAE opens the door, her sleepy eyes only half open.

MAE
Cliff, what the hell you doin' here
this time of -

Her shoulders sag.

MAE (CON'T)
Oh damn.

She turns and goes to the kitchen table and sits down without turning on the lights.

INT. THE GRUBB'S KITCHEN - NIGHT.

CLIFF follows her and stops in the doorway. She lights a cigarette.

MAE
Hurt or dead?

CLIFF
Fred's dead, Mae. Boiler accident.

MAE
You know, I loved that old man. Not like a husband or anything, but I loved him. He was always good to me. Put up with my shit, never lost his temper. You know, he got into the oil drilling for me, because I asked him to.

CLIFF
I left him at the funeral parlor in town. They'll take care of him, but they'll want to talk to you about how you want things handled.

MAE
Okay. Thanks Cliff.

CLIFF
You want me to stay for a while?

MAE
No, thanks. I want to...

CLIFF
Okay. Sure.

CLIFF sits for another few seconds, then walks out the door to the wagon.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE GRUBBS'S HOME - NIGHT

As he drives away he looks back and sees the light in the kitchen go on.

INT. THE GRUBB'S KITCHEN - NIGHT.

MAE is waiting for the water to boil for the coffee. As she looks out the window, tears begin to roll down her cheeks.

INT. THE GRUBB'S OFFICE - DAY.

CLIFF enters the room. MAE is at the desk, sorting through papers.

CLIFF
Hi, Mae. Didn't know if you'd be up yet. I was kind of hoping you'd still be in bed.

MAE
Cliff, I just buried my husband. Get your mind out of you pants.

CLIFF
Sorry. Just thought you might need some cheering up.

MAE
What I need is a new driller.

CLIFF
Hell, Mae, I can take over for Fred. He said I was ready the last time we talked.

MAE

No, he didn't. We used to talk about that rig every day, Cliff. I know more about what's going on out there than you do, so don't try to bullshit me.

CLIFF

Alright, Mae. Listen, why don't we have a little fun. You need to get your mind off all this for a while.

MAE

Later. First I've gotta find a driller who can start tonight.

She stands, picks up her purse and walks toward the door.

MAE

I'm going to town. You can hang around here if you want, but I'd suggest you go home and get some sleep. You're workin' tonight.

She leaves.

DOOR SLAMS

CLIFF sits at the desk, picking through Mae's papers. He opens a few of the desk drawers and in the bottom right drawer, he finds a cigar box. He opens it, finding several bearer bonds. He takes them out and examines them, then puts them back in the box and returns it to the drawer. He looks at a few more papers, then his watch, stands and exits.

EXT. AN OIL RIG - DAY

CLIFF rides a horse up to a rig. KERMIT and BRADLEY, two middle aged oil company managers are standing next to it.

KERMIT

Well, Cliff. Good to see you, son. How's Mae?

CLIFF

Oh, she's pretty busy these days. She has to run the company all by herself now. Hi, Bradley.

BRADLEY

Hi there, Cliff. Yes, terrible about Fred. Poor Mae. Can't be easy for a woman.

KERMIT

Bradley and I were just talking about poor Mae.

CLIFF

Were you.

KERMIT

We were just wondering how she's managing Fred's rig. You know, it really isn't any kind of business for a woman, Cliff. It's man's work. Needs a man to run it.

BRADLEY

Man's work. Amen. No work for a woman, Cliff.

CLIFF

Well, Mae is a very capable woman.

KERMIT

Oh, sure, sure. Mae's quite a woman, alright. Nobody's saying she isn't.

BRADLEY

No, of course not. Nobody's saying that. But this is a rough business, Cliff, even for a man. There's a lot of things a woman just can't handle, even a woman like Mae.

KERMIT

Machinery. You know women just can't understand machines like a man.

BRADLEY

And how's she going to keep control of a bunch of roughnecks and oil patch hooligans? Those men need a strong hand, someone who can bounce 'em around a little if they get out of line.

CLIFF

I hear what you're saying, gentlemen. In fact I came over here to talk about that with you. I think there might be something we could do about this situation that would be, well, mutually beneficial.

KERMIT and BRADLEY look at each other, then look at CLIFF.

KERMIT
Mutually beneficial?

CLIFF
Yes. I believe that if this is handled properly, arrangements could be made that would profit all of us.

BRADLEY
I like the sound of that.

CLIFF
Of course, the main thing is to help Mae. Right?

KERMIT
Naturally. Mae's welfare comes first.

BRADLEY
Amen. Hallelujah.

KERMIT
What did you have in mind, Cliff?

CLIFF
I was just thinking that if you and some of the other men in the patch could get together with her...

EXT. OUTSIDE THE PARAMOUNT OIL COMPANY FIELD OFFICE - DAY.

CLIFF and MAE drive up in a buggy. MAE is stonefaced. CLIFF looks a little nervous. They get out of the buggy and enter the office. KERMIT is at the door, beaming. He extends his hand to MAE.

KERMIT
Mae. I'm so glad you could make it today. Hello, Cliff. Good to see you again. Been too long.

MAE looks around and sees the room is filled with men who represent the oil companies that are working the patch. BRADLEY is there. There are a few mumbled "Hi, Mae's"; most of them look at the floor nervously.

KERMIT leads her and CLIFF to chairs in front of his desk then sits behind the desk.

KERMIT

So, Mae, my dear, how are you? You know we've all been so worried-

MAE

Cut the bullshit, Kermit. What the hell is this about?

KERMIT

Just like good old Mae to get right to the point.

BRADLEY

Just like her. Right to the point. Amen.

KERMIT clasps his hands on the desk and musters up his best expression of concern.

KERMIT

Now, Mae, the men in this room and I have been talking and we're concerned that you might be in over your head trying to run Fred's rig. We just wanted to run a few ideas past you.

MAE glares at him.

KERMIT (CON'T.)

Well, we know that you're a crackerjack businesswoman, no doubt about that.

He looks up at the men who nod their agreement. Several of them chime in with a "yes, sir," or "amen".

MAE glares.

KERMIT (CON'T.)

But, well, the day to day running of a rig needs a, well, needs a man, frankly. Roughnecks are, well, rough and you need a man to keep 'em in line. We're just concerned that you might not be equipped to handle some of the problems that might come up with the men on the rig.

MAE

I'm not equipped? What the hell's that supposed to mean? I don't

(MORE)

MAE (cont'd)
have a dick so I can't keep some
damn roughnecks in line?

KERMIT
Now, Mae. It's just that we need
to make sure that when we hire out
your rig, we don't have to worry
about the job getting done. We all
have people that we have to answer
to and they expect us to meet the
schedules they give us.

MAE
Get to it, Kermit.

KERMIT
We would feel better, for your own
good, if you took on a partner, a
male partner to help you run
things.

MAE
And just who the hell would this
partner be? You?

KERMIT
Oh, no, good heavens, no. (He mops
his face with a handkerchief) Would
someone open a window back there,
please? No, my dear. We were
thinking that Cliff here would be a
good choice for that position.

CLIFF
Me? Oh, now, I don't know. You
know, Mae's been doing all right
since Fred died.

KERMIT
Yes, she has, so far. But as we all
know, things happen. We just want
to be assured that there won't be
any interruption in drilling if
something happens on Mae's rig
that's beyond her...capabilities,
to handle.

MAE
What the hell is this, Kermit? You
and everybody else in this room
know I've been the one really
running that rig. I'm not saying

(MORE)

MAE (cont'd)
 that Fred wasn't a good driller or
 a good man, but I'm the one that
 built that business up and kept it
 running. (She turns in her seat and
 looks at the men around her.) Any
 of you had any complaints so far?

There is a lot of head shaking and mumbled "No, ma'am"'s.

MAE
 So how do you figure I suddenly
 need a man to help me now?

KERMIT
 You've been mighty lucky so far, my
 dear. Except for, well, you know,
 Fred n' all. And that crew you have
 seems willing to take orders from
 you for now, but there could very
 well come a time when you'll have
 to back up an order with force and
 those men simply won't take you
 seriously.

MAE
 If and when something like that
 comes up, I'll keep my crew in line
 as well as any damn one of you
 men. (She stands and glares at the
 men in the room.) You boys can
 take your 'concern' and shove it up
 your asses. That's my damn rig and
 it's going to stay mine. I'll
 decide if it's time to take on a
 partner and that time ain't now.

She turns and starts for the door. CLIFF gives KERMIT a
 frantic "do something" look.

KERMIT
 (Quickly)
 Mae, if you don't take on a man as
 a partner, you can forget about
 doing any more drilling for the
 companies represented in this room,
 which is just about everyone in the
 oil business in this state.

MAE spins around and dispenses another withering look at the
 men in the room, stopping finally on KERMIT. She
 stands like that for a long moment, then walks slowly back
 to the chair and sits. She looks beaten.

MAE

I won't go fifty-fifty.

KERMIT

Oh no, of course not. No, no, we wouldn't think of making you do that, Mae. But Cliff'll need to have some stake in the profits if he's to be a partner. He'll need to be properly compensated.

CLIFF

(Quietly)

How about thirty five percent, Mae?

MAE

How about five percent?

KERMIT

Now, Mae, let's be fair. Cliff will be doing a lot of the work, he has a wife and child. How about thirty percent.

MAE

Ten.

CLIFF

Twenty five.

MAE

Fifteen.

CLIFF

Twenty.

Pause

MAE

Twenty. But you're gonna earn every penny, damn you. You're not going to sit around the office with your feet up all day like these worthless bastards.

CLIFF

I'll earn it, Mae.

MAE stands and heads for the door again.

MAE

Damn straight you will.

MAE throws open the door, slamming it into the men who are standing behind it as she stalks out.

KERMIT

Well, I think that went well, don't you? (He wipes his face again.)
 Congratulations Cliff, I know you'll be a great help to Mae.

MAE (OS)

God damnit, Cliff, you comin'?

CLIFF

Thanks, Kermit. (He winks at Kermit, shakes his hand, then turns to the others) And thank you, gentlemen. I think we all know that this is in Mae's best interests.

He looks out the open door, nervously. He stands to the side of it and waves his hat in the doorway, then cautiously steps outside. The men look at him as if he's walking the last mile.

MONTAGE BEGIN

Shot of an oil rig with the name "Grubbs/Logan Drilling Company" on it. Shot of another rig with the same sign, slightly different lettering. Shot of another rig with the same sign, different, better lettering. CLIFF and LIZZIE are standing in front of a cottage. DEWEY, now a toddler is running around the front yard.

MONTAGE END

INT. A SPEAKEASY IN TULSA - DAY.

CLIFF and a leasehound, ANDY Barnsdall, are sitting at a table, drinking beer. There are several documents in front of Andy.

ANDY

Where do you think you're going to get a better deal than this, Cliff?

CLIFF

It's not the deal, Andy. I can't get that kind of money together right now. I've got that wife and kid I have to pay for.

ANDY

Find the money. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity, my friend, and time's slipping away. Most of the good land in the Healdton field is already leased. And I'm offering these to you at my cost for the leases. All I want is the same as the farmer's share when the wells come in, one eighth.

CLIFF

Not to look a gift horse in the mouth, but why are you coming to me? You'd make a hell of a lot more up front if you sold them to one of the big oil companies or some wildcatter.

ANDY

Tell the truth, I've already tried. But I'm not selling them unless I get a share of the production and none of 'em'll do it. I'm sick of settling for chickenfeed while those guys get rich. What I'd get for selling these is nothing compared to what I'll make if you bring in even one well.

CLIFF

Drill it yourself.

ANDY

I know buying and selling leases. I know shit about drilling a well.

CLIFF

Three thousand dollars. Might as well be three million. There's no way I can lay my hands on that.

ANDY

Ask Mae, I'll bet she's got that much stashed away somewhere. She'd lend it to you.

CLIFF

Let me tell you what'll happen if I go to Mae about this. First she laughs in my face, then she goes behind my back to you and pushes me

(MORE)

CLIFF (cont'd)
out, takes the deal for herself.
You know she's just been waiting
for a chance to screw me because of
that business with the rig. No, Mae
doesn't find out about this, Andy.

ANDY
Figure something out, Cliff. These
options are only good for three
more weeks.

They sit, thinking.

ANDY (CONT.)
Listen, I heard about this old boy
in Texas a while back needed some
quick cash to bring in a well. He
pulled off this trick. It's kinda
risky though.

CLIFF
Is it legal?

ANDY
Well, not strictly, no.

CLIFF
Okay, not a problem. Just wanted
to know. So what do I have to do?

INT. THE KITCHEN IN THE LOGAN HOUSE - DAY.

CLIFF is in the kitchen eating breakfast, reading the newspaper. LIZZIE is at the kitchen counter. DEWEY is playing next to him with a toy airplane. DEWEY stands and "flies" the airplane around CLIFF's head, then tries to land it on his lap. CLIFF pushes him roughly away. DEWEY falls on his rear end, looking up at CLIFF with a hurt expression on his face and begins to cry.

LIZZIE
Cliff.

LIZZIE goes to DEWEY and picks him up.

CLIFF
I don't need that kid bothering me
when I'm trying to eat.

LIZZIE
He just wants to play with you.

CLIFF
I'll play with him later.

LIZZIE
Well, you didn't have to be so rough. He's just a little boy.

CLIFF
Shut him up, will you? I can't hear myself think.

LIZZIE
He's your son, Cliff. Can't you spend some time with him?

There's a knock on the door.

CLIFF
Great. Go see who that is. Dammit, can't I eat my breakfast in peace just one morning?

LIZZIE carries DEWEY with her out of the kitchen. She comes back in a few moments.

LIZZIE
There are two men who want to see you.

CLIFF
Who are they?

LIZZIE
I don't know. They said they needed to talk to you about some land you bought.

CLIFF smiles.

CLIFF
Okay, Lizzie, tell them I'll be out in a minute.

LIZZIE
When did you buy land, Cliff? And what did you buy it with?

CLIFF
Don't worry about it. It's okay.

LIZZIE

But-

CLIFF

I said don't worry about it. Go tell them I'll be right out.

LIZZIE

Cliff.

CLIFF

Please Lizzie. Just do it, okay? I'm sorry about being such a grouch this morning, I've got some things on my mind, that's all.

CLIFF gives her a quick peck on the cheek and tousles DEWEY's hair. LIZZIE looks at him for a moment, then leaves. CLIFF slowly finishes his breakfast. He folds the newspaper and places it on the table.

He goes to the parlor where there are two men, Alfred PROVOST and Donald FLETCHER, sitting on the edges of their chairs. The men both stand when CLIFF enters.

CLIFF

Hello, gentlemen, sorry to keep you waiting. My wife said you had some questions about the land I recently purchased?

PROVOST

Yes, Mr. Logan. (He extends his hand) My name is Alfred Provost, and this is Donald Fletcher.

CLIFF

Pleasure to meet you both.

He gestures for the men to sit. He sits at his desk.

CLIFF

Now, what can I do for you?

PROVOST

Mr. Logan, we have learned that you recorded a deed to some property down in Carter county a week ago. Specifically, three hundred acres on the Ashton farm near Healdton.

CLIFF

Yes, that's correct. I probably paid more for it than it's worth, what with the oil fever sweeping through there these days, but it's good acreage and I think I'll be able to get my investment out of it nevertheless.

PROVOST

Yes, well, the problem is, Mr. Ashton says he never sold you that land, sir. How do you explain that?

CLIFF

What are you talking about? I met with a gentleman named A.K. Jennings who had a power of attorney from Mr. Ashton to sell that land. He said Mr. Ashton was retiring and wanted to live in the city. He showed me the document.

PROVOST

Well, Mr. Ashton has no intention of selling that land, Mr. Logan. In fact, we have been negotiating with him on behalf of a large oil company to lease that land for drilling.

CLIFF stands and paces the room, clearly agitated.

CLIFF

I don't understand this, gentlemen. I paid good money to Mr. Jennings for that land. I'm going to farm most of it and lease the rest out for oil drilling. Oh, this is terrible.

PROVOST

I assure you, this Mr. Jennings had no authority to sell you that land, Mr. Logan. I'm afraid you've been swindled.

CLIFF sits down heavily in the desk chair.

CLIFF

This is terrible. That was all the money I had in the world.

FLETCHER

We certainly sympathize, Mr. Logan. There are a lot of underhanded characters in the oil business these days, preying on honest citizens like yourself. Yes, sir, we certainly sympathize with you.

PROVOST

However, as badly as we feel for your situation, we must ask you to withdraw your claim to this land. As I said, we are currently putting together a package of leases in that area to sell to a large oil company. Your deed, your fraudulent deed, is holding up the completion of that transaction.

PROVOST takes a document from the inside pocket of his coat.

PROVOST

If you could sign this paper, we can be on our way. We certainly don't want to take up any more of your time.

CLIFF takes the document and reads it.

CLIFF

What is this?

PROVOST

This paper simply voids your deed and releases any claim that you feel you have to the property in question.

CLIFF

Well, now, I don't know. If I sign this, I'm out eight thousand dollars.

FLETCHER

Sir, whether you sign it or not, I'm afraid you're still out the money you paid for the land. As we've made clear, the man who sold it to you had no right to make the sale.

CLIFF

But I bought it in good faith. The county recorded my deed.

PROVOST

Nevertheless, You have no real claim to the land.

CLIFF

I don't know. I think I should talk to a lawyer about this. I spent all my money on this property, surely I should be entitled to something.

PROVOST runs his hand over his face, then with a clearly forced smile, he leans forward.

PROVOST

Mr. Logan, our client will not go through with the deal we have spent weeks preparing as long as your deed clouds the title to this land. If you talk to a lawyer, he will tell you that your deed is fraudulent. You have no legal claim on the land. I am sorry that you were taken advantage of by a confidence man, but we can do nothing to remedy that.

CLIFF

Well, maybe if I go to court, I can get something back. I can't just lose eight thousand dollars. That may not be much to you gentlemen, but it's a great deal of money to me.

FLETCHER

If you go to court, it could tie this land up for weeks, even months. We need to close this deal in a few days, sir. Please, you haven't bought any land. This Mr. Jennings was a swindler. If you go to court you will lose. The only thing you will accomplish is to cause us to lose our deal.

CLIFF

I'm sorry, but I have to try and get my money back. I believe I'll

(MORE)

CLIFF (cont'd)
contact the police about this. If they can catch this man, perhaps I could recover some of what I lost. In the meantime I'll hold onto my deed. At least I'll have something to show for all that money.

PROVOST exchanges a look with his partner.

PROVOST
Mr. Logan, I don't like to say this, but I'm getting a feeling here. This sort of thing has been tried before, in other oil fields. It's actually one of the oldest confidence games in the oil business.

CLIFF
I'm sure I don't know what you're talking about, sir.

PROVOST
Do you know that fraud is a crime, sir? A felony? That you could go to jail for this?

CLIFF
Jail? For what? I'm the victim here.

LIZZIE has come out of the kitchen and is standing in the doorway with a towel in her hands.

CLIFF (CON'T.)
What are you trying to say? That I'm some kind of crook? You come into my home and accuse me of committing a crime?

FLETCHER
Mr. Logan, Cliff. Look, you gave it a good try, but it didn't work.

FLETCHER takes the release form from the desk and offers it to CLIFF.

FLETCHER
If you sign this now, we'll be on our way. We won't press charges. You won't go to prison. Okay?

CLIFF stands, his face red.

CLIFF

Get out of my house. I won't be
accused of being a criminal in my
own home.

CLIFF goes to the door, opens it and glares at PROVOST and
FLETCHET. PROVOST exchanges another look with his
partner. He stares down at the floor for a moment.

PROVOST

All right, Cliff. We can't wait for
this thing to work its way through
the courts. How much do you want?

CLIFF stands at the door for several seconds, glaring at the
two men. He closes the door and returns to his desk chair.

CLIFF

First, I want an apology.

PROVOST

Fuck your apology. Just tell us
what your price is. I'm willing to
be taken, but I sure as hell won't
apologize for it.

CLIFF

Watch your language in front of my
wife, sir.

PROVOST nods to LIZZIE.

PROVOST

Sorry ma'am.

FLETCHER

Just name your price so we can get
out of here.

CLIFF

Well, I paid eight thousand dollars
for that land. That's what I want.

PROVOST

I don't think so. Five thousand.

CLIFF

Seven.

PROVOST

Six.

CLIFF

All right, six thousand. As soon as I have a cashiers check in my hand for the full amount, I'll sign your paper. I also want a clause stating that you won't pursue criminal charges against me.

CLIFF stands and goes to the door again. He opens it and gestures for his two visitors to leave. PROVOST and FLETCHER stand and head for the door.

PROVOST

We'll have it tomorrow.

CLIFF closes the door then sits down on the sofa. He doesn't move for some time, staring into space with glazed eyes. LIZZIE comes back into the room and sits in a chair across from CLIFF. CLIFF notices her and gives her a dazed smile.

LIZZIE

What was that about, Cliff?

CLIFF

Nothing. Just some business. Don't worry about it. It was just a mix up, but we came out of it okay.

CLIFF goes to the bathroom and splashes cold water on his face, then looks at himself in the mirror.

EXT. A FIELD IN HEALDTON - DAY

MONTAGE BEGIN.

DOC is building the rig. A sign on the rig says "Lizzie #1". He begins drilling. He is drilling night and day. He's examining core samples. Drilling.

A telegram arrives at Cliff's home. "Good signs on this site, drilled to three thousand feet but no oil stop suggest skid rig 1/4 mile southeast stop sorry" CLIFF crumples up telegram, obviously angry.

DOC skids the rig, spuds in again. Drilling, examining core samples, drilling.

Another telegram. "Hit oil sand, but not enough oil to make a paying well stop suggest skidding rig another 1/4 mile southeast stop sorry" CLIFF reads the telegram, throws a paperweight into the wall.

DOC skids the rig again and spuds in. Drilling, core samples, drilling night and day. Another telegram, "Drilled to three thousand feet stop no sign of oil stop sorry stop I know where it is now stop skid rig 1/2 mile north we'll hit stop"

CLIFF reads the telegram and sits staring into space. CLIFF writes a telegram: "Shut it down stop I'm coming down there."

MONTAGE END

EXT. LIZZIE #1 - DAY.

CLIFF is standing on the drilling floor. DOC drives up to the rig, gets out of his car and walks up onto the floor.

CLIFF

What happened to you? You look like hell, son.

DOC

Well, I had quite a night, Cliff.

CLIFF

Really? What was her name? Or didn't you ask.

DOC

(Waves his hand)

Met a fella last night in this ragtown dive. Turns out it was Shelby Burnett who just happens to be the best goddamn geologist in the oil business. We talk for a while, then we take a bottle back to his room and do some more drinking and some more talking. After a while, we're both pretty stinko and I talk him into showing me his maps and reports which are supposed to be confidential, right? But it's okay because we're old pals now.

CLIFF

Is there a point to this story?

DOC

Cliff I look at that map and I see that I was right about that third duster. We were right on the edge of the main formation. Now, I was pretty pickled last night, but what I saw was as plain as the nose on your face. If we skid the rig a half mile north, we'll hit oil.

CLIFF

(Sarcastically)

Well, that's great, Doc. Terrific news, really. One small problem. I'm out of money. I'm broke. Busted.

DOC

Cliff, I know where the oil is now. All I need is one more try and we'll find it. I guarantee it.

CLIFF

I'm tapped out, Doc. You could show me pictures of the goddamn oil under the ground and I couldn't put the money together for another well.

DOC

I saw it, Cliff. This is it, I'm telling you, I know where it is. Look, you find the money I'll work for free. I guess I owe you that. But you can't quit now.

CLIFF looks at the rig, then looks into the distance, thinking.

CLIFF

Shit. Alright, don't leave town. I'll talk to some people. I'll get the money one way or another.

DOC

I'll be here. Don't worry about that.

EXT. THE GRUBB'S HOME - DAY.

CLIFF drives up to Mae's house and stops. He sits in the car for a moment, thinking.

CLIFF

Shit.

He gets out and trudges up to the house. He goes inside.

INT. THE GRUBB'S KITCHEN - DAY.

CLIFF

Mae? You here?

There's no answer. CLIFF pours a drink in the kitchen, then goes into the office and sits at Mae's desk.

INT. MAE'S OFFICE - DAY

He pulls out the bottom desk drawer, leans back and puts his feet up on it, waiting for Mae to return. He looks at his watch, then leans forward and starts to close the drawer when he sees the cigar box that contains the bonds he's seen earlier.

He takes out the bonds, fans them out, thinking. He puts them in his jacket pocket, replaces the box and closes the drawer. He goes to the kitchen rinses and dries the glass and puts it away. He goes back outside, gets in his car and speeds away.

INT. A BANK IN ARDMORE - DAY.

CLIFF enters the bank and goes to a LOAN OFFICER in the loan department. They shake hands and CLIFF sits down in front of the man's desk.

LOAN OFFICER

How may I serve you, sir?

CLIFF

I'd like to take out a loan.

LOAN OFFICER

Certainly, sir. And what do you have for collateral?

CLIFF reaches into his jacket and brings out the bonds.

CLIFF

These.

The loan officer takes them, examines them.

LOAN OFFICER

Yes, sir. These will be fine. And what will be the loan amount?

CLIFF

Eight thousand.

LOAN OFFICER

Yes, sir. Eight thousand dollars. Well, let me draw up the papers and we can have you on your way in no time.

CLIFF

Fine.

EXT. LIZZIE #1 - DAY.

MONTAGE BEGIN

DOC is spudding in the new hole. Drilling, core samples, drilling night and day.

MONTAGE END

EXT. LIZZIE #1 - DAY.

DOC is in the doghouse with SAM, a roughneck, looking at the drilling reports.

DOC

We're in the pay zone. That last time we tripped out to change the bit, there was oil in the tailings.

SAM

Yeah, but there's no pressure. How you gonna get the oil out if there ain't no pressure to push it up?

DOC thinks for a moment.

DOC

I'm going to shoot the well.

SAM

Nitro? You crazy? You're gonna collapse the formation. You ain't gonna get shit outta that hole or anyplace around here you do that. You'll wreck the whole lease.

DOC

Or we could break through the formation and bring this well in.

A beat.

SAM

It's a hell of a risk, Doc.

DOC

I know, Sam. (a beat) Take over, I'll be back.

DOC gets into his car and drives away.

Two days later, a nitro truck slowly pulls up to the rig. The sign on the side of the truck says "Dumar Battles, Oil Well Shooting". The crew pulls up the drill string, then they quickly walk about a hundred yards away.

The SHOOTER backs his truck up to the rig and begins gently removing the cylinders of nitro, carrying them to the hole and lowering them down the shaft. He pours pete gravel down the hole and gently tamps it. He sets his fuse and walks to the crew under the tree.

EXT. THE LOGAN HOME - DAY.

CLIFF is walking out the front door, on his way to his car when he sees the telegraph delivery boy coming down the road toward him on his bicycle. The boy stops and gives CLIFF a telegram. CLIFF signs for it and opens it:

**Brought in well at 3:10 p.m.
yesterday stop estimate production
500 to 800 barrels per day stop
told you I'd find it stop come get
your oil**

Doc

CLIFF sits down on the front stoop and reads the message again. His eyes fill with tears.

EXT. ON THE ROAD NEAR THE GRUBB'S HOME - DAY.

MAE comes out of the house, gets in her car and drives away. When she's out of sight, CLIFF drives to the back of the house, walks quickly inside.

INT. MAE'S OFFICE - DAY

He replaces the bonds in the box in the bottom desk drawer. He sits back and breathes a sigh of relief. He pats the top of the desk and walks out of the house.

INT. MAE'S OFFICE - DAY.

CLIFF enters and sees MAE sitting at her desk, smiling at him. She is facing toward him, her feet up on the chair next to the desk. She holds a tumbler filled with champagne.

MAE

Hi Cliff. Come on in.

CLIFF gives her a wary look.

MAE takes her feet off the chair and shoves it at CLIFF with her foot.

MAE (CON'T)

Have a seat, partner.

CLIFF

Sure Mae.

He sits down and looks at the bottle of champagne sitting in an ice-filled bucket on the desk.

CLIFF

Looks like a celebration. What's the occasion?

MAE

Why, our oil well, of course. From what I hear, we hit it big.

CLIFF

What the hell are you talking about?

MAE

I'm talkin' about our brand new oil well down in Healdton. Did you forget about it already? I guess

(MORE)

MAE (cont'd)
bein' rich affects your memory.
Maybe I'd better start writin'
things down, now that I'm rich,
too.

CLIFF
Okay, you got me, you found
out. Where do you get this shit
about "our well"?

MAE
Because I helped pay for drillin'
it, that's why.

CLIFF
That's bullshit. I paid for
drilling that well. You don't own
shit.

MAE
Well, Cliff, it was my bonds paid
for drillin' that last hole, the
one that came in, so I figure we're
partners now.

CLIFF
What the...I...what?

MAE
Got a call from my friend down at
the Ardmore Bank. Said my partner
was down there gettin' a loan with
some bonds for collateral. He
didn't know we were drilling our
own well now. Wanted to know if I
wanted to open an account down
there for our new business. I told
him we'd think about it. Thought
I'd play along for a while, see how
you did. Looks like it worked out
okay.

CLIFF
Okay, so I borrowed your damn
bonds. So what?

MAE
So, the minute you took those bonds
we became partners in that oil
well.

CLIFF

You want a taste of the royalties? Sure, fine, I'll give you two percent for your trouble but we're not partners.

MAE

Save it, sugar. I ain't buyin'. Now, listen up, here's what's gonna happen. You and me are now partners in the, let's see, what'll we call it? I know, what d'ya think about 'Maycliff Oil'? That's M-a-y with a 'y', kinda looks better that way, don'tcha think?

CLIFF glares at her.

MAE (CON'T)

Well, sounds better than Cliffmay, don't it?

CLIFF

You can call it what you want, we're not going partners on this. It's my goddamn well.

MAE

Paid for with money you borrowed, usin' bonds you stole from me. You keep leavin' that part out.

CLIFF

You got the damn bonds back.

MAE

Don't matter.

CLIFF

It's my well.

MAE

I'll send you pictures of it while you're in prison. Stealin's still a felony, you know.

CLIFF

You wouldn't.

MAE

Try me.

CLIFF stands, paces, trying to come up with something.

CLIFF

Look, Mae -

MAE

Oh, don't get so damn worked up. You know, I could take it all and have you thrown in the pokey, but I'm willing to go partners with you. And, whether you know it or not, this is going to work out for both of us.

CLIFF

Bullshit.

MAE

Listen, Cliff, you need me.

CLIFF

Like hell-

MAE

You do, damn it. Now, you're great at makin' the deals, sugar. You can charm the birds out of the damn trees. But, you're no good at runnin' a business, dealin' with the day to day shit that has to be done to keep the money comin' in. That's what I do. You try to build a business on your own and you'll fall flat on your damn face. We work together, we'll both be richer than that Rockerfeller bastard.

CLIFF stares into space, thinking.

MAE (CON'T)

Listen to those gears turnin'. Forget it, Cliff, you've got no play.

CLIFF glares at her, stands and slowly walks toward the door.

MAE (CON'T)

Oh, one more thing, darlin'. That whole story about the bonds and all? It's all written down in a letter that's sittin' in my lawyer's safe right now. Anything happens to me, like I expire from

(MORE)

MAE (CON'T) (cont'd)
unnatural causes or just up and
disappear one day, that letter goes
to the police. Understand?

CLIFF glares at her.

MAE (CON'T.)
Understand? (a beat) Say it.

CLIFF
I understand.

MAE
Good. Listen, Cliff, there's gonna
be plenty of money to go
around. We're gonna make a great
team.

CLIFF
Yeah, sure. Swell.

CLIFF exits the room. MAE sits back, puts her feet up
again, her eyes not leaving the door that CLIFF has just
left through.

MONTAGE BEGIN

Drilling rigs going up - "Lizzie #2, Lizzie #3, etc. Gushers
blowing oil all over. Wells pumping oil. Shots of DOC
working on the rigs. DOC and CLIFF working together,
obviously good friends.

Offices being built for Maycliff Oil. CLIFF drives up to a
nice, but not palatial house with LIZZIE and DEWEY. CLIFF
and LIZZIE get out of the car. CLIFF is beaming. LIZZIE is
pensive, but trying to look happy.

DEWEY is looking out the car window with a sullen look on
his face.

MONTAGE END

INT. OUTSIDE CLIFF'S OFFICE AT MAYCLIFF OIL - DAY.

DOC smiles at Cliff's secretary, LILY as he walks by her
desk, several rolls of paper are under his arm. He enters
CLIFF's office and closes the door. You can hear them
talking through the pebbled glass windows separating his
office from that of his secretary but can't hear what
they're saying. The tone is initially friendly, but then
voices are raised. This goes on for a while, then the door

is thrown open and DOC storms out. He drops one of the rolls of paper. CLIFF comes to the door.

CLIFF
Lily, get Franklin Webster on the phone.

LILY
Your lawyer?

CLIFF
That's right.

LILY
Yes, sir.

CLIFF goes back into his office, slamming the door. LILY makes the call, transfers it to CLIFF. She picks up the paper that Doc dropped and spreads it open on her desk. It's a drawing of a drill bit. The heading on the paper says "Durant Tool Company". Under the bit it says, "Conical roller bit for oil drilling. Designed by George Durant."

INT. A CAFE IN TULSA - DAY

DOC is sitting in a cafe having lunch with his wife, IRENE.

IRENE
How did he take it?

DOC
He called me a traitor for leaving Maycliff and starting my own company, then he said he'd sue me.

IRENE
In heavens name why?

DOC
He's claiming that he owns the rights to my new drill bit.

IRENE
Why would he say that?

DOC
He claims that I worked on it on company time. He says that since the bit is related to the business that Maycliff deals in, the rights to it vest in the company.

IRENE

Is that true?

DOC

No, of course not. I told him that I did all the actual design work at home. But he claims that since I was drawing a salary, I was never officially off the clock. That miserable, back stabbing greedy son of a bitch.

Several of the nearby patrons turn around to look at George.

IRENE

George!

INT. CLIFF'S OFFICE - DAY.

CLIFF

Bob, what the hell have you been doing out there? I send you to sign up that farmer and you come back with shit. Do I have to do everything myself, for crissake? What the hell am I paying you for?

The leasing AGENT stands in front of Cliff's desk, saying nothing, looking at the floor.

CLIFF

Well? Don't just stand there. Give me a good reason why I shouldn't fire your worthless ass right now.

AGENT

Sir, I -

CLIFF

Shut up. Get the hell out of here.

The agent leaves. CLIFF goes back to his work. He picks up a newspaper. An article on the front page says: "DURANT PREVAILS IN LAWSUIT AGAINST MAYCLIFF'S LOGAN. Judge rules Durant Tool Co. owns rights to new drill bit". CLIFF throws the paper across the room.

INT. CLIFF'S OFFICE AT MAYCLIFF OIL - DAY.

It is two days later. ALEX, a beautiful young woman of 17, enters the office. She looks a little dusty and disheveled. She pulls a folded piece of paper from her purse and tosses it on Cliff's desk.

CLIFF

What the hell is this?

ALEX

That's a lease, Mr. Logan. Signed by the farmer Bob failed to sign up the other day. The one you chewed him out about.

CLIFF

Who the hell are you?

ALEX

My name is Alexandra Stewart, sir. I'm a clerk here.

CLIFF opens up the lease agreement and looks at it.

CLIFF

I'll be damned. You went down there by yourself?

ALEX shrugs.

CLIFF

How the hell'd you close him?

ALEX

I simply told him about all the ranches and farms where oil and cattle work side by side. I showed him how you'll protect his land so he can still farm it. Now, Mr. Logan, this man is a widower and he has a son in high school. I explained how the money from the leases can send his son to college. How he can buy more land so that when his son gets back from college, the boy will have a better start than he did. He can get new equipment, a tractor for plowing instead of having to walk behind a mule all day. I promised him that the wells will have his late wife's name on them, that it'll be like

(MORE)

ALEX (cont'd)
she's giving their son a future
that he wouldn't have had
otherwise. By the way, you're going
to name the wells Ida number one
and so on.

CLIFF
Hell, I'll name them Cleopatra if
it'll make him happy.

CLIFF picks up the lease and looks at it, smiling.

CLIFF
I'll be damned. I surely will.

CLIFF leans back in his chair and studies ALEX.

CLIFF
You said your name is Alexandra?

ALEX
Yes. sir. My friends call me Alex.

CLIFF
May I call you Alex?

ALEX
Of course, sir.

CLIFF
You've impressed me, Alex. You
signed that farmer when my best man
couldn't. You showed
initiative. If you were a man, I'd
say you have a lot of balls.

ALEX
I'm glad to hear you say that, Mr.
Logan because I want to be a lease
agent for Maycliff Oil. I've got
too much to offer to waste my time
filing papers.

CLIFF
Well, now, I don't know. You talked
old...(he checks the name on the
lease)...Newt into signing, but
that was a special case. You just
happened to have the assets we
needed to sell him. Not all the
farmers out here are lonely
widowers who are vulnerable to a
sweet talking young girl.

ALEX

I can close a deal with anyone, Mr. Logan. Give me another lease to go after and I'll prove it. I think I've earned the chance.

CLIFF

How old are you? Sixteen?

ALEX

Eighteen next month.

CLIFF

I can't let you go traipsing through those back roads by yourself. You know, some of those old boys out there are pretty rough customers. They see a pretty young thing out there alone and...

ALEX

I've had plenty of experience driving back roads and fighting off farmboys. I can take care of myself.

CLIFF

I admire your spirit, but this is man's work, Alex. These men out here won't talk business with a young girl.

ALEX

I think I just proved you wrong on that one.

CLIFF

Still...

ALEX

Look, Mr. Logan, Either you make me an agent or I'll quit and work for someone else. Maybe I'll even go out on my own and be a leasehound. I'll work for everyone in the business but you and every time I sign up a farmer before one of your men does, you'll kick yourself for letting me go.

CLIFF

You work for me, I'm going to expect results from you the same as

(MORE)

CLIFF (cont'd)

I do from those men out there. That means you make the deal no matter what it takes. Understand? This isn't a game, Alex, this is a cutthroat business and these men aren't going to play nice because you're a girl. Think you can handle that?

ALEX

I think you might be surprised at what I'm capable of, Mr. Logan.

CLIFF

Okay, young lady. I guess I'd better make you an agent before you ruin my business. You're now a lease agent for Maycliff Oil.

ALEX

Thank you, Mr. Logan. You won't be sorry.

ALEX puts out her hand and CLIFF shakes it. CLIFF looks at his watch.

CLIFF

Why don't we get some dinner, I'm starving.

ALEX

No thank you, Mr. Logan. I'm quite tired. I think I'll just go home and go to bed.

CLIFF

I feel like I should do something for you for getting that lease.

ALEX

Just pay me my commission. That's all I expect.

CLIFF

You said you're going to be eighteen next month?

ALEX

Yes sir.

CLIFF

Alex, I think you're a very special young lady and I want us to become good friends. Would you like that?

ALEX

I'd be glad to be your friend, Mr. Logan. Thank you for everything. I'll see you tomorrow.

ALEX exits.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

ALEX sits on the bed, thinking. She opens a drawer in the nightstand, takes out a folded piece of paper, unfolds it and looks at it. It's a page from an old Saturday Evening Post. The article is about the new oil millionaires in Oklahoma. The picture shows Skelly, Sinclair, Phillips and some others at a gathering of the oil magnates. In the background, slightly out of focus is Cliff.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - DAY.

ALEX is working at her desk. A placard on the front of her desk reads "Alexandra Stewart - District Manager". CLIFF enters.

CLIFF

I need you to help me out with a problem.

ALEX

Hello, Cliff. Yes, I'm doing fine, thank you for asking.

CLIFF

Oh, yeah. Sorry. Look, I need you to do me a favor. My son Dewey has been having a little, uh, problem at school and they've asked him to leave.

ALEX

What kind of problem?

CLIFF

That's not important. Listen, I've been thinking that it might do him good to take a break from school. Get a job and work for awhile, you know?

ALEX

All right, Cliff. Why are you telling me this?

CLIFF

I want you to find something for him to do down here. If you can't fit him in at here at your office, put him on a rig, let him roughneck for a while. He's a pretty big kid, I think he could handle it.

ALEX

I don't know, Cliff.

CLIFF

I wouldn't ask, but I knew you wouldn't mind doing your old boss a small favor just this once.

ALEX

(Quietly)
Oh, brother.

CLIFF

What?

ALEX

All right, Cliff. I'll find something for him to do. I'll-

CLIFF turns and shouts out the door.

CLIFF

Dewey! Dewey, get in here!

DEWEY shuffles into the room, standing just inside the doorway. He's slumped over and has a sour look on his face.

CLIFF (CON'T)

Son, I'd like you to meet Miss Stewart. You'll be working here in her office for a while.

ALEX
Hello, Dewey. It's nice meeting
you. I hope you'll like working
with us.

DEWEY reaches inside his jacket and scratches his armpit.

CLIFF
Say something, Dewey.

DEWEY
(Shrugs)
Hi.

CLIFF
You've got your work cut out for
you. Kid's a real disaster.

DEWEY gives CLIFF the finger behind Cliff's back.

ALEX
He'll do just fine. Alice?

Alex's secretary, ALICE appears at the door.

ALEX
Show Dewey around the office and
introduce him to the staff, would
you, please?

ALICE
I'd be glad to.

CLIFF
Make me proud, son.

Alice motions to DEWEY to follow her. DEWEY shuffles out.

CLIFF (CON'T.)
(To ALEX)
I really appreciate this. If this
doesn't straighten him out, I don't
know what we'll do.

ALEX
I'll do what I can, Cliff. How's
Lizzie taking this? She must be -

CLIFF
Why haven't you signed up that
rancher over by Joiner City yet?

ALEX

You mean Bub Quigley?

CLIFF

Yeah. His place is sitting right in the middle of that new field down there and he hasn't signed a lease yet. Why the hell not?

ALEX

No one's been able to sign him, Cliff. He doesn't want anything to do with oil. He's told every leasing agent in the state to go to hell.

CLIFF

I don't care. There's oil under that land and I want it. Sign him up.

ALEX

We've tried, Cliff. I even went down there myself. I couldn't budge him.

CLIFF

Shit. I've got to do everything myself. Come on, we're going out there. I'll sign the son of a bitch up today.

ALEX

I wouldn't count on it. He's not interested, Cliff.

CLIFF

I'll get him interested.

ALEX

(Quietly)

It's your funeral.

ALEX and CLIFF step out of Alex's office. They pass Alice's desk. DEWEY is at a desk nearby, doodling on a piece of paper.

ALEX

We're going out to Bub Quigley's, Alice. We'll be back in an hour or so.

CHARLIE

Hey, Cliff, if he pulls his six shooter, duck to the left, he's got a hitch in his shoulder on that side.

CLIFF stops and faces the agent.

CLIFF

I'll make you a bet, Charlie. If I can sign him up, you're fired. How's that?

CHARLIE

I'll take that bet, Cliff.

CLIFF turns and walks toward the door with ALEX.

CLIFF

(Over his shoulder)

Better start cleaning out your desk.

DEWEY

(Muttering)

Hope the son of a bitch shoots him.

EXT. THE QUIGLEY RANCH - DAY.

LONG SHOT

CLIFF and ALEX pull up at the Quigley home, get out of the car. They go to the front door, knock. A large man BUB Quigley and his son who is just as large, THURMAN step out onto the porch.

There are words exchanged between BUB and CLIFF. BUB takes CLIFF by the collar and belt, carries him to the car and throws him in the dirt. BUB opens the car door for ALEX. Then closes the door after she gets in.

BUB

(To CLIFF)

I'm goin' in the house and get my gun. Don't be here when I come back.

BUB storms back to the house, goes inside. CLIFF stands and brushes himself off. He slowly walks to the car, gets in and checks himself in the car's rear view mirror. He starts the engine. BUB comes back outside with a revolver in his hand, followed by THURMAN. CLIFF looks at him for a moment, then puts the car in gear and drives away slowly.

CLIFF and ALEX drive without speaking. When they arrive back at the office, CLIFF stops the car, but doesn't turn off the engine. He sits staring ahead until ALEX gets out, then he speeds off. ALEX goes inside.

INT. THE MAYFIELD OIL DISTRICT OFFICE - DAY

CHARLIE

Well, should I clean out my desk?

ALEX

No, and I wouldn't say anything to Cliff the next time you see him or you will.

ALEX continues on and passes by DEWEY. He looks up at her.

DEWEY

Did he get him to sign?

ALEX

No, Dewey, he didn't.

DEWEY smiles and returns to his doodling.

DEWEY

Good. Asshole.

EXT. AN OIL RIG - DAY

CLIFF drives up, stops, gets out of the car. He motions to BURT Thompson, a huge man in grimy overalls. BURT goes to him. CLIFF talks to him, gesturing to someplace in the distance. BURT listens, then nods his head. CLIFF gets back in his car and drives away.

EXT. THE QUIGLEY RANCH - NIGHT.

BUB and THURMAN run from the house to see the barn engulfed in flames. They run to it and try to throw some water on it, but give up. The barn burns to the ground.

INT. THE MAYFIELD OIL DISTRICT OFFICE - DAY

DEWEY and one of the leasing agents are fighting. The other men in the room pull them apart. ALEX is standing in the door of her office.

ALEX

Get him out of here. Take him to the Ardmore Hotel and get a couple of roughnecks to watch him.

DEWEY is manhandled out the door. ALEX goes into her office, shuts the door, sits at her desk and makes a telephone call.

ALEX

Cliff, we have a problem with Dewey. He's been acting up again. He just started a fight here in the office.

CLIFF

Put him on a rig, Alex. Maybe some roughnecking will straighten him out.

ALEX

Cliff, no driller's going to let a drunk work on his rig.

CLIFF

It's not his rig, it's mine. Just do it.

CLIFF hangs up.

EXT. THE QUIGLEY RANCH - DAY.

BUB is out in a field, looking at the dead cattle that litter it. He looks in the distance and sees a Maycliff rig on the other side of his fence.

INT. THE MASTER BEDROOM IN THE LOGAN MANSION - NIGHT.

CLIFF and LIZZIE are getting dressed for a formal ball. They barely acknowledge each other. They finish dressing and exit.

INT. THE LOGAN LIMOUSINE - NIGHT.

CLIFF and LIZZIE get into the car. They sit staring ahead or out the window, not speaking.

EXT. THE ENTRANCE OF THE MAYO HOTEL - NIGHT.

Cliff's car pulls up at the front door. CLIFF and LIZZIE get out out and go inside the home.

INT. THE MAYO HOTEL BALLROOM - NIGHT.

CLIFF and LIZZIE give their coats to a girl, then go into the large ballroom. CLIFF is greeted by other men. There is a lot of handshaking and backslapping. LIZZIE goes off by herself out of frame.

CLIFF and his buddies drink, smoke cigars and talk loudly. After a minute of this, CLIFF sees LIZZIE on the other side of the room, talking to some other women. The light on her is soft and she looks quite beautiful. CLIFF talks with his friends some more, then looks over and sees LIZZIE again. By the expression on his face, we can see that he is struck by her beauty.

A friend claps him on the back and, laughing loudly, talks to him. CLIFF looks at LIZZIE again. Everyone else is in soft focus. LIZZIE is exquisite. It is obvious that CLIFF is falling in love with his wife again. He walks away from his friends, crosses the room to LIZZIE, takes her hand and leads her to the dance floor where they dance, looking into each other's eyes.

EXT. ARDMORE - DAY

It's a hot afternoon. The camera shows two Maycliff tank cars on a siding, noisily venting gas. The camera pulls back, then looks into a window in the hotel next to the tracks showing DEWEY inside, yelling and banging on the door of his room. The camera pulls back, showing the street in front of the hotel. LIZZIE gets out of a car in front of the hotel and goes inside. The camera pans and shows THURMAN riding down the street on a horse. The camera continues to pull back, showing the bustling town. It gets a block or two away when the area where the tank cars were explodes, creating a huge fireball and destroying everything in sight.

INT. DOC AND IRENE DURANT'S BEDROOM - DAY

DOC is asleep in bed. He's awakened by the sound of screams coming from another room. He quickly gets up and runs out of the room. He finds IRENE in the baby's room, staring at the crib.

DOC
Irene, What is it?

IRENE
Oh no. Oh no.

DOC looks into the crib and sees the lifeless body of ROGER, his three month old son, lying on his back. Ray reaches down and rubs ROGER's cheek, noting the coldness of the skin.

DOC
Roger. Hey, Roger.

DOC picks him up and holds him, gently rubbing the soft skin on the small back, the tears now coming to his eyes.

DOC
(To IRENE)
What happened? Irene, honey, what happened?

IRENE
I don't know. I came in and...he was...he was like...that. I...I don't know. Oh, George. What happened to my baby?

DOC
Come on, honey, we'll call the doctor.

DOC leads IRENE from the room.

INT. CLIFF'S CAR - DAY

CLIFF, MAE and ALEX are riding in the back of CLIFF's chauffeured limosine. CLIFF is reading a newspaper.

CLIFF
I'll be damned. Doc's wife tried to kill herself yesterday.

MAE
That's terrible, Cliff. Why the hell are you smiling?

CLIFF
Nice break for Doc. This should get him the sympathy vote. Lucky bastard.

ALEX

Poor George. First the baby, now this.

MAE

Does it say in there why she did it? Was there a note?

CLIFF

No, it doesn't say. No note. But hell, if I was married to a Durant, I'd probably try to hang myself, too.

MAE

You can be a real prick sometimes, you know that Cliff?

CLIFF

It's just part of my charm, Mae.

The car pulls up in front of the Maycliff building. They all get out. MAE and ALEX go to their respective offices. CLIFF goes to his office. He sits behind his desk, looks in a personal phone directory and dials the phone.

CLIFF

Yeah, it's C.K. Logan. I've got something I want you to look into for me. I need to know everything you can find out about why Irene Durant tried to kill herself. Yeah. Get back to me as soon as you can.

EXT. A FIELD ON THE QUIGLEY RANCH - DAY

BUB, looking tired and disheveled, is riding his horse out on his ranch. He stops, seeing oil derricks in the distance and takes a long pull from a bottle taken from a saddlebag.

He takes out a hunting rifle with a telescopic sight and looks through it at Mayfield Oil derricks. He dismounts, gets in a prone position behind a shallow swale and sights in on the boiler of one of the rigs. He fires, steam shoots from it. He swings the rifle over and shoots the boiler of another rig. The workers are running for cover.

He stands, returns to his horse, slides the rifle into its scabbard, mounts up and rides away, smiling.

EXT. A MAYFIELD OIL RIG - DAY

Two men are digging a trench that leads from a large earthen oil tank to a stream. On a fence nearby is a sign that says "Quigley Ranch - oil people stay out!" They break through to the stream.

FOREMAN

Okay, you two get outta there.

The men climb out of the trench. The FOREMAN breaks out the dirt from the tank end, causing the oil to flow into the stream.

EXT. A FIELD ON THE QUIGLEY RANCH - DAY

BUB is riding next to the creek, looking at the oil slick on the water. He follows the creek until he finds the source of the oil. Looking across the creek, he sees BURT Thompson, Cliff's enforcer standing next to the opening in the dike, his arms crossed.

BURT

You got a problem, cowboy?

BUB dismounts.

BUB

What the hell you think you're doin', goddamnit.

BURT

Too much oil in the tank. Gotta bleed some off or it'll overflow.

BUB

Well, goddamnit, bleed it somewhere's else. You're poisonin' my stream.

BURT

I don't believe I will, cowboy.

BUB

You dumb fucker, fill in that trench.

BURT

Why the hell don't you make me, tough guy?

BUB sizes up Burt and decides against a fight. He takes a couple of matches from his pocket. BUB strikes two matches on the leg of his jeans and throws them into the oily water. Flames spring up along the length of the stream, producing a huge black cloud of smoke. The flames race up the oil in the trench to the open pit, touching off its contents.

BURT

You crazy bastard! You're a dead man!

Hidden from Burt by the smoke, BUB takes a drink from his bottle. He hears a shot from the other side of the smoke and the dirt jumps twenty feet to his right. Two more shots hit closer. BUB throws down his bottle and runs to his horse just as a bullet hits the animal, dropping it. The horse tries to stand, whinnying in pain, its eyes wild. BUB bends over it, pulling out a revolver. He strokes the horse's head, then puts the muzzle of the gun to its head and fires. He stands and walks to the creek, crossing it upstream of the flames.

BURT is firing through the smoke at the other side of the creek. BUB appears on Burt's side of the creek, coming through the smoke, his gun in his hand. BURT fires and misses. BUB keeps coming. BURT fires again, hitting BUB in the upper right chest. BUB goes down on one knee, then stands and keeps coming toward Burt. BURT raises his pistol again, but BUB quickly fires two shots, hitting BURT in the left arm, and the upper chest. BURT falls. BUB keeps coming, his gun pointed at Burt. BURT fires, hitting BUB in the leg a split second before BUB fires, putting his last round into Burt's forehead. BUB collapses.

The rig's crew emerges from their hiding places, converging on the two bodies and forming a circle around them. The foreman looks at BURT, then checks BUB.

TOOL PUSHER

This one's still alive. You, call the police, tell 'em what happened. Then get somethin' to cover Burt up with. (To the others) The rest of you come with me, let's see if we can keep this fire from burnin' down the whole damn county.

They walk to the tool shed to get shovels and other implements to try and contain the oil.

ALEX'S OFFICE - DAY

ALEX and CLIFF are going over papers.

PHONE RINGS

ALEX answers it.

ALEX
Yes? Which one?

She goes to the window and sees the smoke from the fire.

ALEX (CONT.)
Who? Bub? Are you sure?

She looks at CLIFF who is still going through papers.

ALEX (CONT.)
Okay. I'm leaving now. Yes.

She hangs up, still looking at the fire in the distance.

ALEX (CONT.)
Bub Quigley and Burt Thompson shot
each other at Maycliff #82. Burt's
dead and the holding tank is on
fire.

CLIFF
Quigley's still alive?

ALEX
Yes.

He goes to the window.

CLIFF
Shit. Just have to let it burn
out. Damn shame to lose all that
production.

ALEX
Did you hear what I said? Burt
Thompson is dead.

CLIFF
Yes, I heard you. I don't know
where I'm going to get replacement
for him. Not the kind of job
you put an ad in the newspaper
for.

CLIFF thinks for a moment, then picks up the telephone.

CLIFF
 Ardmore 251. Let me speak to
 Attorney General Dixon. Dix, a man
 named Bub Quigley just murdered one
 of my employees. I want that man
 prosecuted to the full extent of
 the law, you understand? I want him
 in the electric chair for this. See
 to it.

He presses the cradle, ending the call.

CLIFF (CON'T.)
 I want Tulsa. Luther
 602. Harry? Bub Quigley is going
 to prison in a few weeks and then
 they're going to put him in the
 chair. As soon as he's dead, I
 want you at the head of the line to
 buy up his ranch. Yeah. Yeah.
 Okay.

He hangs up. ALEX looks at him for a long moment.

CLIFF (CON'T.)
 What?

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. CLIFF'S STUDY - NIGHT

Close up on a newspaper on Cliff's desk. The headline says
 "Predict George Durant a shoo in for state senate seat in
 November election. Promises to clean up corruption in oil
 industry". CLIFF sits behind the desk sipping whiskey. In
 the room with him are half a dozen assorted politicians,
 political advisors and company men who are also drinking
 Cliff's whiskey. Among them is Cliff's hatchet man, ROGER
 Dunsworth.

CLIFF
 That son of a bitch will be coming
 after me as soon as he gets sworn
 in.

TOADY #2
 He won't find a thing, C.K. You're
 too smart for him.

CLIFF

Don't underestimate Doc Durant. I hate the bastard, but I never underestimate him.

ROGER

He's right. Durant's no pushover.

TOADY #1

So what do we do about it?

A pause.

TOADY #2

Hey, why don't you get yourself elected Governor, C.K. That'd stop him.

Everyone breaks out in laughter, except ROGER and CLIFF who are looking at each other with dead earnestness. One by one, the men notice this and the laughter fades.

TOADY #1

You serious?

ROGER

Sure, why not? We've got the money and connections.

TOADY #2

Governor Logan. What d'ya think of that, Cliff.

CLIFF says nothing, just leans back in his chair and smiles.

MONTAGE BEGIN

Newspaper headline, "LOGAN WINS IN LANDSLIDE." The heading on a column says "Durant elected to senate". Shots of CLIFF taking the oath in front of a cheering crowd. A shot of CLIFF in a car, in a parade, waving at the crowd. A shot of DOC in the crowd looking grim.

MONTAGE END

INT. THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE - DAY

CLIFF rises from behind his desk as SAM enters, carrying a satchel. ROGER is seated on a sofa. He rises and pours a glass of whiskey which he hands to SAM.

CLIFF

Hello, Sam.

SAM

Hello, Governor. Good to see you again. You too, Mr. Dunsworth.

ROGER

Always a pleasure, Sam.

SAM

(Pats the satchel he is holding)

You want to count it?

CLIFF

No, Sam. I'm sure it's fine.

SAM put the valise down on the floor. He stands there, awkwardly for a moment, no one saying anything. He downs the rest of his drink.

SAM

Well, things to do and people to see. You know how it is.

CLIFF

Sure, Sam. Tell our friends that I'll get back to them in a few days about their situation and thank them for me.

SAM

I will, sir. Take care, Governor. And you too, Mr. Dunsworth.

ROGER smiles. SAM exits. ROGER walks over to the satchel, opens it and rummages around through the packs of bills.

ROGER

Looks like it's all here, Cliff.

He closes it and walks to a safe in the corner of the room. He opens it and places the bag inside then shuts it.

INTERCOM BUZZING

SECRETARY

(over the intercom)

Governor, Senator Durant is here to see you.

CLIFF and ROGER exchange a glance.

CLIFF

Okay, send him in.

DOC is shown into the office by the SECRETARY. She closes the door.

CLIFF

You know, Senator, people usually make an appointment to see the Governor. (He laughs) It's good to see you, Doc. Please come in. I think you know my chief of staff, Roger Dunsworth.

DOC

Thank you for seeing me, Governor. I'm sorry about barging in, but I didn't feel that this could wait.

CLIFF

Oh, hell, Doc, there's no need for formalities between us. We've known each other far too long for that kind of thing.

DOC

I'm afraid this is not a social visit, Governor.

CLIFF

Really? Well, have a seat, Senator. What can I do for you this morning?

DOC

Governor Logan, I am giving you notice that the state senate is convening a special panel for the purpose of investigating allegations of illegal activities in your administration.

CLIFF

You know, Doc, I'd heard some rumors that you were trying to trump up some bogus charges against me, but I didn't believe them. I told people that Doc Durant wouldn't use his office to mount a personal vendetta against me to exact retribution for some problems we've had in the past. Problems I personally consider dead and

(MORE)

CLIFF (cont'd)
buried. I really didn't think that
you were that kind of
man. Apparently I was wrong.

DOC
Governor, this is nothing
personal. We've had our
differences, but this investigation
has nothing to do with that. These
allegations are based on evidence
and depositions gathered during the
last six months by senate
investigators working in
conjunction with the state attorney
general's office. I had no
connection to the matter until two
weeks ago when the documents were
first brought to my office by the
AG.

CLIFF
And just what terrible things am I
supposed to have done? Besides
building hospitals and roads and
libraries and putting thousands of
men to work so their families
wouldn't be thrown out in the
street. Tell me, Doc. What awful
crimes have I committed except to
better the lives of every man,
woman and child in this state
during the worst depression in this
country's history?

DOC
The allegations include charges of
kickbacks and favoritism in state
construction contracts. There are
also accusations of influence
peddling.

CLIFF
You know, I should've seen this
coming, Roger. I had to step on a
lot of toes to get those projects
built as quickly as I did, and to
bring them in on budget. Projects
this state badly needed. I'm sure
I've made a lot of enemies among
the contractors and big money men
in this state who saw these
programs as an easy way to line

(MORE)

CLIFF (cont'd)
their pockets. Sometimes I had to play rough to keep them from soaking the taxpayers and I make no apologies for doing it. If I were you, Senator, I'd take anything that those men say with a grain of salt. They have their own reasons for wanting to bring me down

DOC
Governor Logan, this is only a courtesy call to inform you of this investigation. You'll have a chance to present your side of things at the hearing.

DOC rises and heads for the door.

CLIFF
Let me tell you something, Durant, the people of this state won't stand for this. They know what I've done for them and they'll stand behind me. You'll be the one that'll get kicked out of office, not me.

DOC pauses before he leaves.

DOC
Good day, Governor.

CLIFF flings his coffee cup at the door as it closes behind DOC, shattering the cup.

CLIFF
Smug son of a bitch. Roger, get your people to work on this. I want to know who's shooting his mouth off.

ROGER
Okay, Cliff. You want me to begin talking to Durant and the others about a deal? Might be better than trying to fight it and losing everything.

CLIFF
No, goddamnit. That bastard can't beat me. He's forgotten who he's dealing with. I'll crush him.

ROGER

Okay, okay. I'll get my people out there and see what I can find out.

INT. THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION - DAY

MAE is shown into the study by the BUTLER. She takes a few steps in then stops, waiting for CLIFF to look up from the papers he's reading. There's a glass filled with whiskey on the desk. CLIFF looks up and sees her, blinking as the image sorts itself out in his mind.

CLIFF

Mae!

He stands, unsteadily, and walks over to her.

CLIFF (CON'T.)

It's been too long.

They hug and sit down at a small table by a window. CLIFF presses a button on the table. The BUTLER appears at the door.

CLIFF

Bring us some coffee.

The BUTLER nods and leaves.

MAE

Cliff, you look like hell.

CLIFF

Mae, I knew I could count on you to tell me the truth. It's one of the things I've always liked about you.

The BUTLER comes in the room with the coffee and leaves.

MAE

Then let me tell you some more truth. Whether you know it or not, you've got your tit in a wringer with this senate investigation. I've heard what you told George Durant and I'm here to tell you that you haven't got a chance in hell of beating this thing. You'd do yourself and this state a big favor if you just resigned before they cut you off at the knees.

CLIFF

Doc Durant doesn't have a goddamn thing on me.

MAE

Listen, Cliff, George has got everything he needs to put you away. I've seen it. When the people find out how you've been screwin' 'em, you'll be lucky if all they do is ride you out of the state on a rail.

CLIFF

This is nothing but Durant trying to even the score for an old grudge. The people know that. Damn it, Mae, I didn't think you'd take his side against me. I thought we were friends.

MAE

We are, Cliff. Though Lord knows you're not the easiest man in the world to be friends with sometimes. And it's because we're friends and I love you, I can tell you that you can be about the most underhanded, conniving bastard I've ever known. Truth be told, there are times you can be a real son of a bitch. And lately that's been most of the time.

CLIFF

Mae...

MAE

Hang on, I'm almost through.
(pause) You're one of a handful of men who started an industry that this country couldn't do without now. You might've cut some corners doing it, but so did a lot of others; that's just the way folks did business back then. It was rough and tough and you had to fight dirty sometimes. But that was the old days and this is now. This is also the governor of Oklahoma we're talking about. It ain't some dirty back room in Ragtown where you had to do the

(MORE)

MAE (cont'd)

other fella before he did you. This is our state, Cliff and it has to be run right. I'm just askin' you to do the right thing here. You can't win this and if you try to fight it you might end up in jail. I wouldn't want to see that, Cliff. It'd break my heart.

CLIFF

You through?

MAE

(Tiredly)

Yes, Cliff. I'm through.

CLIFF

Okay, you've had your say and now I'll have mine. Mae, you have no fucking idea of what I have to deal with here. I've got every asshole in the state coming through that door with his hand out wanting something. Now, do I take a payment for some of the services I provide? Sure I do. Do you know what I get paid for being governor? For working eighteen hour days seven days a week? Peanuts, Mae, peanuts. And let me tell you something else. I've been responsible for more construction in this state than all the other governors we've had, combined. Think about all the people I've put to work on those projects. I've lifted this state out of the depression almost singlehanded. If that's a crime, then I'm sure as hell guilty.

MAE

I don't deny that you did some great things. Sure you did. But you're not supposed to make a profit on bein' governor, Cliff. All that stuff you just talked about, what you did for the people, that's what you're gettin' paid to do. Hell, you knew what the job paid when you took it. If you had a problem with the money,

(MORE)

MAE (cont'd)
 you shouldn't have signed
 up. Cliff, I've talked to George
 and he's determined to kick you out
 of this office. He ain't screwin'
 around, this is for real.

CLIFF
 Well, I know something that Doc
 doesn't. We're going to get
 together and I'm going to talk a
 little horse sense to him. I
 guarantee he'll be sensible and
 back off this thing. You just
 wait.

MAE
 What the hell are you going to do
 now, Cliff?

CLIFF
 That's between me and Doc. But
 don't worry, I'll make him see the
 light.

MAE
 Oh, Cliff. Don't make it worse.

A beat.

CLIFF
 I'm not a bad man.

MAE
 Good or bad; don't really mean
 anything. You make choices and you
 made yours.

CLIFF stares into space. MAE takes pity on him.

MAE
 Lizzie saw something good in
 you. I guess that counts for
 something.

CLIFF
 Lizzie.

MAE
 You got more choices to make,
 Cliff. Think hard about what
 they're gonna be.

CLIFF stands and walks to the door. He opens it.

CLIFF

Thanks for coming by, Mae. It was good seeing you again.

MAE

All right, Cliff. But think about what I said. Okay?

CLIFF

Drop in again, Mae.

MAE exits. CLIFF closes the door, goes to the desk and empties the whiskey in the glass.

INT. A STATE SENATE HEARING ROOM - DAY

The room is packed. State senators and their aides are bustling around a dais at the front of the room. There is a general commotion and feeling of anticipation. DOC is sitting in the chairman's seat in the middle of the dais.

DOC

(Bangs his gavel)

The room will come to order. The room will come to order. Everyone settle down, we need to come to order, please.

The people in the room slowly find their places and it becomes quiet.

DOC

Thank you. This is the last day of hearings into the activities of Governor Cliff Logan. We have heard from many witnesses this past week. This morning we will hear the testimony of Governor Logan. Would the master at arms please escort the Governor in, please.

Everyone in the room turns to watch as CLIFF comes through the door. He strides to the front of the room, ignoring the crowd which is booing and catcalling. The master at arms has trouble keeping up with him and looks nervously at the crowd. DOC is banging his gavel, calling for order.

When CLIFF gets to the witness table, he turns and looks at the crowd, seeing SAM, the bagman, his old cronies who were in the room when he decided to run for office and ROGER, looking at once sullen and sheepish. He also sees ALEX,

sitting on the aisle in the front row. He smiles and winks at her. He takes another look at the crowd, then turns and scans the senators before settling on DOC.

DOC

Would the Governor please take a seat at the witness table.

CLIFF

No, Doc, I don't believe I will.

The crowd explodes. CLIFF gestures to DOC and walks toward a door at the end of the dais. DOC, looking confused, follows CLIFF through the door. CLIFF walks down a hallway, looking into offices until he finds an empty one, which he enters. DOC follows him inside. CLIFF closes the door and sits behind the desk.

CLIFF

Quite a little lynching party you've got out there, Doc.

DOC

It's no such thing, Cliff. That is a legally convened hearing.

CLIFF

Okay, okay. Look, there's no need for any of this. I've given it a great deal of thought and I think we can get resolve this in a way that will work for everyone. Mae convinced me the other day that the state shouldn't have to go through another impeachment and I'd like to see if we can arrive at a way to avoid it.

DOC

In other words, you're ready to make a deal.

CLIFF

Yes, Doc. I'm ready.

DOC

Fine. I'm glad you've finally realized the situation you're in. Why don't I go back out there and recess the hearing and then you can meet me at my office tomorrow morning. We'll talk it out then.

CLIFF

I need to take care of this today.
I just want to get it behind me as
quickly as possible. You
understand, don't you?

DOC

Yes. I suppose I can understand
that.

The door opens and ALEX comes in, closing it behind her.

DOC

Hello, Alex.

ALEX

Hello, Senator Durant.

DOC

Alex, Cliff and I were about to
hash things out. Could you excuse
us, please?

ALEX

I'd rather stay, if you don't
mind. I want to hear what's said
here.

CLIFF

Yeah, stay Alex. I want you to
hear this. It'll be educational.
That okay with you Doc?

DOC

All right, Cliff. Let's just get
this over with.

CLIFF

Thanks. Have a seat, Alex.

ALEX sits in a chair against the wall.

DOC

Cliff, I want you to know that I
think you're doing the right thing
by giving up this fight. It's the
best thing for everyone and-

CLIFF

Who the fuck said I was giving up?

DOC

Then what are we doing here?

CLIFF

What we're doing here is I'm telling you that you're going to go back to your committee and recommend censure instead of impeachment. You and your friends will write up something that says I'm a bad boy and that will be it. I'm not leaving office, Doc.

DOC

Why in the world would I do that? I've got a mountain of evidence proving everything you're charged with. You don't deserve to remain in office, Cliff and I intend to see that you don't.

CLIFF

Doc, you remember what we went through to bring in Lizzie #1? You remember the three dry holes you drilled before you brought it in?

DOC

Yes, I remember, Cliff.

CLIFF

You have any fucking idea what I had to do to get the money to keep drilling? You have any idea what I've done to get to where I am today? Do you think that someone who could do all that is going to give it all up because of you and your pissass committee? Not fucking likely, Senator.

DOC

You're wasting the committee's time with this, Cliff. I'll see you back in the hearing room.

DOC stands and walks toward the door. He opens it.

CLIFF

Sit down, Doc, I'm not done with you yet. I'm going to tell you why you're not going to impeach me.

DOC
Get to it, Cliff.

CLIFF
You know, Doc, it was a real shame about your baby dying like he did. No one ever figured out how he died, did they?

DOC looks at CLIFF for a moment, then closes the door.

CLIFF
No one except Irene, that is. She knew, didn't she, Doc?

ALEX
What is he talking about, George?

CLIFF
She knew because she killed that baby. And you knew it, too, didn't you?

DOC
That's a lie, Cliff. A damn lie.

ALEX
Cliff, I can't believe that Irene could have killed her son. She was devastated when he died.

CLIFF
She was devastated, Alex, because she'd put a pillow over the kid's face and smothered him. That's why she tried to kill herself, wasn't it, Doc? At least that's what it said in her suicide note.

DOC
How the hell do you know this?

CLIFF
Son, I've got some of the best investigators in the country working for me. They sniffed around and found that note in your office safe. Took a picture of it. I've got prints and the negative. Why the hell didn't you get rid of it?

DOC

I did, about a month after Irene tried...

CLIFF

Yeah, she's still pretty shaky, isn't she? You know, I believe if she were to see a picture of that note on the front page of the newspaper, and a story about what happened, well, gosh, there's no telling what she might do. No sir, no telling. Then there's the little problem of a state senator covering up the murder of his baby son. That could get sticky for you, Doc.

ALEX

Cliff, you've done a lot of despicable things in your life, but you wouldn't do this. It's too much even for you.

DOC

(Quietly)

Yes, he would.

CLIFF

You're goddamn straight I would. In a heartbeat. So, Senator, here's what it boils down to: do you convince your committee to vote for censure and not impeachment, or does your wife end up in a mental institution or maybe blow her brains out? Your call, George.

DOC

I ought to kill you right now. You're the scum of the fucking earth.

CLIFF

Now, now, Doc. You've got a witness here and besides, that note is sitting in my safe with instructions to give it to the newspapers if anything happens to me. I've got you, Doc. Now, you go out there and talk to your committee and we'll call it even. Oh, and by the way, don't

(MORE)

CLIFF (cont'd)
 think that you can dodge this thing
 by resigning and letting someone
 else do your dirty work. The deal
 is you get the committee to agree
 to censure or the note gets
 published.

DOC
 You're giving me too much
 credit. Those men won't vote for
 censure just because I tell them
 to.

CLIFF
 Well, then it sounds like you've
 got your work cut out for you. I
 have every confidence in you,
 Doc. I'm sure you'll make a very
 convincing argument.

ALEX
 That's enough, Cliff. You're not
 giving that note to anyone but me.

CLIFF
 And why the hell would I do that,
 Alex?

ALEX takes a piece of paper and a pencil and writes the name
 "Mack Fallon" on it. She hands it to CLIFF. She crosses to
 a chair in front of the desk, sits down and pulls the
 telephone in front of her. CLIFF throws the paper on the
 desk.

CLIFF (CON'T)
 Is that supposed to mean something
 to me?

ALEX dials the operator.

ALEX
 Hello. Would you connect me with
 the police, please?

CLIFF reaches over and disconnects the call. DOC reaches for
 the paper. CLIFF snatches it away but not before he sees
 the name on it.

DOC
 I don't know who that is, or what
 this is about, but I intend to find
 out.

DOC moves toward the phone. ALEX pulls it away.

ALEX

No you won't, Senator. Sit down,
both of you.

Neither man moves.

ALEX

Sit!

They both reluctantly sit down.

ALEX

This is what's going to happen.

She finds a blank sheet of paper and a pen. She pushes them
across the desk to CLIFF.

ALEX

Cliff, you're going to write out
your resignation. Right now, get
started.

CLIFF pushes the paper and pen back at ALEX.

CLIFF

Like hell I am.

ALEX pushes them back.

ALEX

It's either that or you're going to
prison. Make up your mind right
now. George, when we're through
here, Cliff and I are going to his
office and he's going to give me
the pictures and the negative of
that note. If you tell anyone
about what you heard or saw here
today, they go to the newspapers.

DOC

I know you, Alex. You wouldn't do
that to Irene or me.

ALEX

You don't know me as well as you
think, George. You really don't
want to find out what I'd do.
Neither do you, Cliff. Start
writing.

CLIFF

You'll never be able to prove it. It was thirty years ago. (He leans in to Alex and whispers) And Mack died right in front of me. He couldn't have told anyone who shot him.

ALEX

Then how did I know about it?

CLIFF runs his hands through his hair, thinking of a way out.

ALEX

Go ahead and think about it, Cliff. You've got thirty seconds.

ALEX looks at her watch. After the time elapses, she picks up the phone again.

CLIFF

All Right! Dammit. You know you're through at Maycliff. And if I have anything to say about it, you're through in the oil business.

CLIFF writes out his resignation and shoves it toward ALEX who looks at it, then hands it to DOC.

ALEX

Oh, one more thing, Cliff, if the newspapers find out about that note from you or anyone else, the deal's off and I make that call. Got it?

CLIFF glares at her.

ALEX (CON'T)

Got it?

CLIFF

Yeah.

ALEX

Good. Well, I think we're done here. Let's go Cliff.

ALEX stands, goes to the door and opens it. She waits for CLIFF to get up and go out, then she follows him. DOC is left sitting in the office, looking at Cliff's resignation in his hand.

INT. CLIFF'S LIMOSINE - DAY

ALEX and CLIFF are in the back seat of his limosine on the way back to his office.

CLIFF
You never told me how you found out about Mack.

ALEX
My mother told me about it.

CLIFF
Your mother? Who is your mother?

ALEX
Becky Taft. You remember the name?

CLIFF
Becky? She's your mother?

ALEX
She was. She died just before I came down here.

CLIFF
When were you born?

ALEX
I think you know.

CLIFF is thinking. It finally dawns on him.

ALEX (CON'T)
That's right.

CLIFF
You never said anything. Why didn't you tell me?

ALEX
I almost did a few times, but I just didn't know how you'd take it. I didn't want to take a chance on losing my father.

CLIFF
How did you find me?

ALEX
When Mother got sick she told me about you, she said your real name was Cliff Bailey and that you were
(MORE)

ALEX (cont'd)

my father. She showed me a magazine article about the new oil tycoons in Oklahoma and there you were in the background of a picture of Sinclair and Phillips and Skelly. She said you looked a lot different than you had when you left, but she could tell it was you. She didn't tell anyone about it except me. She thought that since she was dying and you were the only family I had left that I should be the one to decide whether to tell the police about your new life down here.

CLIFF

You look like her. I can see it now.

ALEX

When Mother died, I had no reason to stay in Spring Green. I thought I'd come down here to see what kind of man you were before I made up my mind about turning you in. I got the job with Maycliff and after a while, well, we were working so closely together that I just felt like, like I had a family again and I didn't want to lose that. I know it doesn't make sense. I ignored all the things you did to people and the way you did business because you were my father and I loved you.

CLIFF

I've always been very proud of you, Alex. I've always felt that there was something between us. Now I know why.

ALEX

But when you went after Bub Quigley, I finally saw what you were really like, how dangerous you could be. I told myself that if I stayed with Maycliff I could change you, make you a better man. When Mae and I talked about you she tried to tell me that you'd never

(MORE)

ALEX (cont'd)
 change, but I didn't believe
 her. Well, after what you tried to
 do to George today, I have to admit
 she's right. I'm not going to try
 to change you, Cliff, but I am
 going to stop you from hurting
 George and anyone else who happens
 to get in your way.

CLIFF
 So, how do I know you won't turn me
 in later on if you don't happen to
 approve of something I'm doing?

ALEX looks at him and smiles.

CLIFF
 Okay. I guess I taught you pretty
 well. What I said about you being
 fired, forget it. We'll just go on
 from here. Okay?

ALEX
 Okay, Cliff.

CLIFF
 Good. Good.

INT. DOC DURANT'S OFFICE - DAY

ALEX enters. DOC is at his desk. ALEX pulls an envelope
 from her purse.

ALEX
 I want your word that you will
 never turn Cliff in or tell anyone
 about what you heard in that
 office.

DOC
 Is that...?

ALEX
 Yes. Do I have your word?

DOC thinks.

ALEX (CON'T.)
 Say it, George. I want your word.

DOC

All right. You have my word. I'll never tell anyone.

ALEX tosses the envelope on his desk and leaves. DOC opens the envelope and examines its contents.

EXT. THE SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF THE MAYCLIFF BUILDING - DAY

CLIFF and MAE are strolling down the sidewalk.

MAE

You know, if it was anyone else, I'd think that you might've learned something from all this. But I'm pretty sure you haven't learned a damn thing.

CLIFF

Yeah, probably not. Are we still friends, Mae?

MAE

Hell, yes. My hide's too thick to let your tantrums bother me and frankly, I just don't take you all that serious most of the time. What I can't figure out is why you wanted to be so rich in the first damn place. All that dough just seems to make you miserable as far as I can see. I honestly think you were happier when you were roughneckin' for Fred and me.

CLIFF

(Chuckles)

You might be right, Mae. You just might be right.

MAE turns to go into the building.

MAE

You comin' up?

CLIFF

Yeah. I'm just going to get a paper. Be up in a minute.

MAE enters the building. CLIFF walks over to a paper boy and buys a newspaper. The headline says "Cliff Logan to make run for senate. Party throws full support to candidate Logan."

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - DAY.

ALEX is sitting at her desk on the second floor of the Maycliff building. She looks out and sees CLIFF on the sidewalk.

EXT. THE SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF THE MAYCLIFF BUILDING - DAY

CLIFF looks up from the paper and sees a truck going by. On the side of the truck it says "Tulsa - Oil Capitol Of The World" in large ornate letters. CLIFF smiles. He looks down at the paper, turns it over and on the bottom half of the paper sees a headline, "Bub Quigley released from prison. Served seven years for manslaughter of oil field worker." There is a head shot of Bub in the story. CLIFF looks up and looks directly into the face of BUB Quigley. Immediately, BUB fires two bullets into CLIFF with a small revolver that is silenced with a towel. CLIFF falls to the ground as BUB quickly walks away.

INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - DAY.

ALEX sees CLIFF fall and runs out of the office.

THE END