

SCRIPT TITLE

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INT. COAL MINE - DAY

A canary chirps away in a cage. Soot covered men squeeze by to load several carts. Each man has similar amounts of coal in buckets. Everyone except for PATRICK (45). He's got more soot over him than anyone else. He dumps his load into the cart.

TANNER (O.S.)
Save some for the rest of us,
Patrick.

He turns to see TANNER (42) behind him. In his scrawny arms he carries less than any seen before. Unlike everyone else, he doesn't wear a hard hat.

FRANKLIN
It's not like it'd light a fire
under you either way.

TANNER
If bossman would pony up a bigger
bonus, maybe I'd be inclined to
press myself a bit harder.

On cue, BOSSMAN (25) walks up. He examines the different carts and updates his clipboard accordingly. He pats a cart and a worker pushes it to it's final destination. He stops at Franklin's cart.

BOSSMAN
Good work as usual, Franklin. That
10\$ is as good as yours.

FRANKLIN
Thank you, sir.

Tanner jostles Franklin to talk to Bossman.

TANNER
How far am I off the mark.

Bossman flips through several pages on his clipboard.

BOSSMAN
Tanner, you'd need to work about 50
more hours to catch up at your
pace.

TANNER
But it's Friday.

BOSSMAN
I know.

The mine rumbles. Rocks and soot sprinkle from the ceiling. A decent sized rock plunks off of Franklin's helmet. Bossman addresses the whole crew.

BOSSMAN (CONT'D)
Remember, they're doing demolitions
on the other side of the mountain,
so don't forget your hard hat.

He looks right at Tanner when he says this. Franklin picks up his helmet from the ground and shoves it in Tanner's hand.

TANNER
Sorry, boss, won't happen again.

Bossman rolls his eyes and exits. Franklin turns to return to work. Tanner follows.

TANNER (CONT'D)
So you gotta tell me.

FRANKLIN
Telly lou what?

TANNER
Your secret.

Franklin stops at the canary cage. He hold his lantern up to the cage. The canary, Rip, cocks his head at Franklin. Franklin gives gim some feed from the nearby bag.

FRANKLIN
Hey rip, that's a good boy

TANNER
Ya, the secret to your mining
success.

FRANKLIN
Not one. I just put my head down
and work.

Franklin picks up his PICKAXE. He coughs up a lung.

He starts mining away at the rocks with a THUNK each time he strikes. Tanner sits on some rocks close by.

TANNER
I was hoping it'd be a lot easier
than that.

FRANKLIN
Mmm.

TANNER

What's a guy like you do with that bonus money anyway?

FRANKLIN

Save it.

TANNER

That's not surprising. Here's a question, what would you do if you had a sudden windfall of money? Like enough to do whatever you want?

Franklin starts coughing again. He has to put down his pickaxe as he's coughing. He glares at Tanner.

FRANKLIN

Shouldn't you get back to work.

Tanner sighs and uses his pickaxe to stand up.

TANNER

Fine, you don't have to answer. I just thought it'd be fun.

THUNK THUNK THUNK. Rocks crumble as both men slave away. Rip sings his song of safety.

CLANG. Franklin stops mining at this strange sound. Tanner swings his pickaxe steadily.

Franklin bends down and raises his lantern at his target. Something shines off the light. He casts a glance over at Tanner.

TANNER (CONT'D)

I thought you wanted to work, why'd you stop?

FRANKLIN

Got a knot in my back.

Tanner resumes mining, but he picks up the pace slightly.

TANNER

Better not rest too long or that bonus will be mine before you know it. Lord knows I need it.

FRANKLIN

Mmm.

Franklin grabs some soot from the ground and covers the gold. He takes his helmet off and marks the location.

INT. COAL MINE - DAY

The canary watches Franklin chisel flakes of gold from the vein. He scoops up the gold and shoves it in his pocket.

TANNER (O.S.)
Yeah, I'll let him know.

Franklin kicks dirt over the gold. He picks up his pick axe and swings it into rock. Tanner walks up and starts mining next to him, close to his vein.

TANNER (CONT'D)
You missed the weekly meeting with Bossman.

FRANKLIN
Sorry.

TANNER
Don't apologize to me, I don't care. Though, it sucks you don't get yelled at for missing it.

FRANKLIN
My hard work speaks for itself.

Tanner eyes Franklin's bucket. It's nearly empty.

TANNER
Not so much today, huh.

FRANKLIN
Mmm, bad day.

TANNER
Bad day to have a bad day. This week's bonus is a whole 5 dollars.

Franklin has a coughing fit. He spits onto the ground. The mine rumbles.

FRANKLIN
Don't need it this week.

TANNER
Shit, if you don't, I reckon this week is mine for the taking.

He speeds up his mining, getting even closer to the vein. Franklin edges closer to his lode, protecting it.

TANNER (CONT'D)
What you hiding over there.

FRANKLIN
Nothing.

TANNER
Nothing, huh.

FRANKLIN
Mmm.

Tanner shrugs and continues picking away.

TANNER
No matter. Bossman's waiting for your load.

Franklin stops and looks at his empty bucket. He grabs some loose coal and chucks it in there. He looks at his spot before hurrying up the mine.

Tanner waits until he's gone then investigates the area.

TANNER (CONT'D)
What are you hiding from me?

He grabs a nearby lantern and starts moving rocks away. He casts a glance over his shoulder for Franklin. He brushes away dirt before seeing the shine of gold.

FRANKLIN
What the hell are you doing?

Tanner jumps and drops his lantern. It shatters on the ground and removes one less source of light.

TANNER
Franklin, you son of a bitch.
You've been holding out on me.

Franklin pushes him out of the way . He examines the gold to see if any's missing.

FRANKLIN
My claim. Nobody else's.

TANNER
What are you talking about? You're not gonna hoard all that are you?

FRANKLIN

Mmm. It's mine by right.

TANNER

Bullshit, I'm sure the Appalachian Mining Company would disagree.

He turns to walk towards Bossman. Franklin grabs his shoulder and forces him back. Tanner falls on the ground.

FRANKLIN

Don't go doing that, now.

Tanner gets up and dusts himself off.

TANNER

The hell's wrong with you?

FRANKLIN

I need that money, I can't be working no more in this mine.

He cough into his hand. He wipes the black mucus on his trousers.

The cave rumbles again, but it shakes far more violently than before. CRASH. A wave of dust flies at them from up the mine. It covers the two men in soot. They rush towards the front.

They come up to a massive pile of rocks and slag. Tanner falls to his knees and takes his head into his hands. Franklin gets work trying to remove enough rocks to get free.

TANNER

Franklin.

HE ignores him, shoveling rocks with his hands.

TANNER (CONT'D)

FRANKLIN.

Franklin stops and looks back. Tanner shakes his head.

INT. COAL MINE - LATER

The Lantern sits in the middle of the mine. Each man sits across from each other. Franklin sits in front of his claim, clutching his pickaxe. Tanner sits next to the birdcage.

Tanner gets up and starts walking towards the cave in.

FRANKLIN

Where do you think you're going?

TANNER

A man can't piss in private?

Franklin nods towards a pile of rocks nearby.

TANNER (CONT'D)

Easy Rockefeller, you don't get to tell me what to do.

FRANKLIN

You'll stay right here if you know what's good for you.

TANNER

What are you gonna do if I don't, huh?

Franklin rises to meet Tanner.

FRANKLIN

Boy, I will not hesitate.

TANNER

You won't do shit.

Tanner turns from Franklin and walks away. Franklin hurries after him and shoves him with the handle of the pickaxe. Tanner falls to the ground and bangs his head on a rock.

TANNER (CONT'D)

The hell the matter with you.

FRANKLIN

You ain't telling nobody about my gold.

Tanner grabs his head. Blood trickles down. He searches the ground and finds a huge chunk of coal. He gets up and advances on Franklin.

TANNER

I should just kill you right now. Take the gold for myself.

FRANKLIN

You could try. That gold's mine and mine alone.

Tanner breathes heavily as he stares down Franklin. He takes a step towards him, with his rock raised overhead. They circle and size each other up.

TANNER

You selfish bastard. Just share the gold with me. It doesn't have to be like this.

FRANKLIN

If I share it with you, someone will figure it out, then we'll both have nothing.

TANNER

Then one of us is just gonna have to die.

He charges Franklin. Franklin swings his pickaxe. Tanner dodges and brings his rock down on Franklin's shoulder. The pickaxe falls to the ground and knocks over the birdcage. The bird chirps like crazy.

Franklin tackles Tanner to the ground. They wrestle around. Franklin gets on top of Tanner. He reaches for anything. His hand finds the big chunk of coal. He brings it down onto his Tanner's head several times.

CRUNCH CRUNCH CRUNCH.

Franklin's labored breathing is the only thing to be heard in this mine. Even the bird has stopped.

FRANKLIN

Shouldn't have tried it. It's mine. All mine.

He grabs the lantern and holds it to the gold vein. It twinkles despite the blood splattered on it. He collapses to the ground. He looks over at the bird cage.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

You won't tell nobody, will you?

Nothing.

He shines a light over to the cage. The bird lies on the floor of his cage, dead. The light from his lantern starts dying as well.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

No, not now. I was gonna be free. Free at last.

The gold twinkling stops as the light finally gives out. All that can be heard is Franklin's labored breathing. He starts having a coughing fit. He fights for his last few breaths of air.

His coughing stops. Everything's quiet now.