

END OF THE LINE

Written by

Kris Simonian

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We hear the sound of RUSHING WATER and a horse NAY and we --

FADE IN:

EXT. CEDAR RIVER

The sun BLAZES overhead casting short, stubby shadows on the ground. A lean, lonesome FIGURE sits atop a stocky chestnut quarter horse as they plod along the water's edge - more aimlessly ambling than following any specific route.

The Figure takes off his hat, blocks the sun from his eyes and tries to place it in the sky. He glances away and down at the shadows to confirm the time. He places the hat back on his head and nods. He leans down and whispers into his horse's ears --

FIGURE

Six more hours until that one gets off our back. Think you can handle it?

The horse WHINNIES and, with a grin, the Figure slaps him hard on the neck.

FIGURE (CONT'D)

That's the best thing you've said all day.

The Figure reaches into his satchel, pulls out a beat up flask and take a long pull from the bottle until the liquor runs out. He sticks out his parched tongue and lets the last few drops splash down onto it.

It's the first time we get a good glimpse of his face - weather beaten and covered in stubble but with a handsomeness that can't totally be concealed by grime. His chin, though square and strong, bears a two inch scar. His eyes are as blue as the river below him. This is SAM COTTON (40s). The horse whines again and Sam shakes his head.

SAM

I know, I know, I know. But it was the last of it. You don't drink and I wasn't going to let it go to waste, Jonah.

The Figure stashes the flask back into the bag and pulls out a canteen. He stops Jonah, slides off and kneels down into the rushing water. He fills the canteen and tosses it on the river bank.

Sam takes off his hat, dips it into the water and fills it to the brim. He offers it up to Jonah, who moves his head away from the hat.

SAM (CONT'D)
It's sweet water.

Jonah is unmoved. Sam shrugs and places the hat on his head, letting the cool water fall down his body. He can't help but shiver from the cold. Sam stands, grabs Jonah's reins and starts walking along the riverbank.

SAM (CONT'D)
You're missing out, boy. It's refreshing.

He's about to dip his hands back into the water when he catches the tell tale ripples of a water moccasin swimming towards him. In a flash, he pulls out a Bowie knife and snaps it at the snake. It hits him square in the belly and embeds into the ground. The snake thrashes for a bit and curls around the knife blade but he eventually dies.

Jonah's ears start to twitch, focusing on a rhythmic squeaking sound coming from behind him. Sam turns around to see a beat up looking --

COVERED WAGON

Slowly making it's way back east. A rail thin and older than he looks TEENAGER holds the reins of two sickly looking Oxen. He shoots his bloodshot eyes at Sam and gives a curt nod.

SAM (CONT'D)
Where you headin'?

The Teen turns his eyes forward and doesn't respond. Sam shakes his head.

SAM (CONT'D)
Water isn't as deep a mile south of here.

Still nothing from the Teen. Sam shrugs and is about to turn his back on the whole affair when the wagon suddenly stops. The sun glints off the barrel of a shotgun sticking out the back of the wagon. A timid, FEMALE VOICE calls out --

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Head on your way and leave us be.

SAM
I'd ask you to do the same.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
 Holler out to any of your friends
 that if they know what's best for
 them, they'll stay clear of us.

SAM
 My only friend is Jonah here and
 he's not one for conversation or
 scheming.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
 Best just stay clear of us. I'm
 leavin' like I said I would. I
 don't need no trouble.

SAM
 Point taken, Ma'am. Not headin'
 your way anyhow. Just driftin'....

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
 (overlapping)
 I *will* shoot if you try anything.

SAM
 It's been my observation that
 anyone willing to aim a gun at
 someone's head is probably willing
 to go all the way with it.

The wagon enters the water and the oxen slowly drag it across
 the river. The water quickly rises along the sides of the
 vehicle the deeper it goes. Sam shakes his head.

SAM (CONT'D)
 (beat)
 Before you disappear into the deep,
 mind tellin' me what's on yonder
 that'd got you so riled up?

Jonah's ears start to twitch again - he hears something off
 in the distance. After a beat, Sam can hear it too. He raises
 his hand to shield his sun from his face and narrows his
 eyes.

Nearly two hundred yards in front of him, along the horizon,
 we see the PUFFS of smoke from a charging, westbound TRAIN.
 As it comes into view on a rail bridge across the river, it
 lets out an ear shattering WHISTLE that fills the sky.

Jonah whinnies and starts to buck a bit but Sam keeps him
 calm.

SAM (CONT'D)
 (whispers)
 Loud, ugly and messy but my God
 what a sight to behold.
 (louder)
 Why didn't you take the Northern
 Pacific out of town?

He turns to face the wagon again but all he sees now is the wet wheel marks from where the wagon rolled out of the river on the opposite bank and the glint of the gun barrel still sticking out the back of the wagon.

Sam shakes his head and leans into Jonah's face.

SAM (CONT'D)
 Some people don't share our gift of
 conversation, Jonah.

He remounts the horse and nods towards the speeding train.

SAM (CONT'D)
 Come on big guy, that's where we're
 heading.

They take off in the same direction of the train and we --

CUT TO:

EXT. WEST LIBERTY - MAIN STREET - NIGHT - LATER

West Liberty, Iowa is a town on the grow. People shuffle from the ramshackle saloons, general stores and hotels that line the main drag of the town. The oil lamps that run along the avenue bath the entire town in a supernatural orange light.

We hear a BELL ringing in the distance and while it's not a church bell, it is coming from the town's salvation. At the edge of Main street, where civilization mingles with the wilderness, stands the Northern Pacific Railroad station.

While majority of West Liberty's buildings look as if they were built in an hour with whatever scrap wood they had lying around, the station is a clean, well designed red brick building. It stands out like Gulliver with the Liliputians.

Even in the moonlight, it casts a shadow over everything.

As the CAMERA stays static on the logo adorned side of the building, we see Sam and Jonah come walking into frame. Both look exhausted and beat from their long journey. He pulls off his hat and wipes his brow. He leans into Jonah --

SAM

Okay, it was eight hours.

Sam hears the bell and turns to the station. He nods to the building and adds --

SAM (CONT'D)

Maybe we'll ride on that when we leave from of here.

As the bell continues to ring, we --

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. CHURCH YARD - TWENTY YEARS AGO

As church bells ring after morning services, townsfolk walk out and make sure to thank the handsome yet soft-spoken PASTOR COTTON (30s) and his beautiful but hot tempered wife CHARLOTTE (30s).

As they deal with the PARISHIONERS, we spot two little BOYS away from the crowd. They are squaring off to fight but only one looks like he wants to be there. Standing nearby and taking it all in is a girl, YOUNG BETH (7), who seems to be enjoying the spectacle of it all.

As we get closer, we see that the timid boy is a YOUNG SAM (7). The boy willing to throw hands is YOUNG MITCHELL (7).

YOUNG MITCHELL

Come on...put up your hands.

YOUNG SAM

I don't think it'll solve nothing.

YOUNG MITCHELL

Not suppose to solve anything! Just suppose to be a fight.

YOUNG SAM

Just don't say stuff about my Pa, Mitch. That's all.

YOUNG MITCHELL

He's a coward....just like you!

YOUNG BETH

Sam's not going to do anything, Mitch. Leave him be.

YOUNG MITCHELL

Hush girl. This is man's business!

Young Mitchell comes over and throws two punches - both hitting Sam in the face. A bruise starts to form but, instead of turtling, Young Sam gets mad and swings back but he misses. Before he can throw another punch, Pastor Cotton and Charlotte rush over and break up the fight.

PASTOR

Now, now, what is going on?

YOUNG MITCHELL

We was just playin' around, Pastor Cotton.

Pastor looks at his son, Young Sam, who nods. Pastor turns to Mitchell and Beth.

PASTOR

You two run off now. I'm sure your parents are waiting for you.

The two of them run off and the Pastor looks at his son's bruised face. He sighs.

PASTOR (CONT'D)

Why are you fighting?

YOUNG SAM

Mitch said something mean about you.

PASTOR

That happens sometimes. You have to turn the other cheek.

CHARLOTTE

Listen to your Pa, baby.

YOUNG SAM

Mitchell and his whole family ain't nothin' but trouble. I *hate* them.

PASTOR

Don't fill your heart with hate, Sam. There won't be room for anything else.

(beat)

Remember the story of Saul and his conversion?

YOUNG SAM

Yessir.

PASTOR

Every man walks a path in their life - sometimes they're more like Saul and sometimes, they're more like Paul. You need to *strive* to be Paul, son. Violence might fix a problem but it's never a solution. Understand?

Young Sam nods and Pastor Cotton smiles. He stands and turns to Charlotte.

PASTOR (CONT'D)

World is full of sinners and saints, son. Don't confuse the two.
(nods)
Get him cleaned up, I've got to get back.

She nods and waits until Pastor Cotton is out of earshot. She leans down, starts to clean up Young Sam's face.

CHARLOTTE

Next time, punch him in the nose. It'll makes his eyes water and you can finish him up.

Young Sam smiles and hugs his mom and we suddenly hear a jaunty PIANO tune and we --

CUT TO:

INT. FIRE BOX SALOON

A raucous little saloon that's packed with dozens of COWBOYS that play cards, drink and chat up pretty little WOMEN in tight fitting corsets. It's payday and the crowd is here looking for a good time - be it in the bedroom or in a brawl.

The saloon doors swing open and Sam walks inside. He takes off his hat - his face bronzed from the sun - and slicks back his hair. He tucks his hat under his arm, walks up to the bar, and raps his knuckles on the pine.

SAM

Barkeep, can I get a whiskey?

GUS (30s), the stout bartender, walks over, eyes Sam and snorts.

SAM (CONT'D)

Something funny I'm not privy to?

BARTENDER

Name's Gus and I don't pour a drink until I see some silver.

SAM

That a house rule, Gus?

GUS

I know your type.

SAM

Handsome strangers?

GUS

Broke drifters.

Sam reaches into his pocket, fumbles around for a bit and pulls out a silver dollar. He slaps it on the table and gives the Gus a cock-sure grin.

SAM

Make that two whiskeys...and hurry it up. I'm thirsty.

Gus grabs up the silver dollar and pours the shots. Sam nods at him.

SAM (CONT'D)

Much obliged.

Sam curls his hands around the metal shot glass but before he can take a sip, a delicate hand rubs his shoulders. He turns around and comes face to face with a gorgeous redhead named MOLLY (20s).

MOLLY

I knew you were gonna buy Molly a drink the second you walked in here.

SAM

That a fact?

MOLLY

Of course.

SAM

You Molly?

She nods, grabs the shot glass and holds it up.

SAM (CONT'D)

What are we toasting?

MOLLY
To the good days.

Sam shakes his head.

SAM
No such thing.

MOLLY
(coy)
What about good nights?

SAM
Drink up, honey.

She hydroplanes the shot and plants the glass back on the table with a thud. Sam hasn't taken the drink.

MOLLY
You know it's bad luck to not drink
after a toast.

SAM
Superstition ain't gonna change me,
Darlin'. Bad luck is my stock in
trade.

She leans into him - making sure to press those curves into Sam - and whispers --

MOLLY
Maybe I can change your luck?

Sam should be loving this but instead of paying attention to the girl right in front of him, he eyes a RAVEN HAIRED BEAUTY across the bar that is having a heated conversation with an OLDER MAN in an expensive suit. The Man is flanked by a couple of GOONS who let everyone know they are heavily armed.

SAM (O.C.)
You move fast, huh?

MOLLY (O.C.)
No rest for the wicked, cowboy.

The Man finally snaps and stands as if he is going to go hit the Raven Haired Beauty. She backs away and storms out of the bar. The Man sits back down and makes some unheard joke that cracks up everyone at the table.

Sam's eyes narrow but Molly is oblivious. She runs her hand across his lap.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
Wanna go upstairs?

Sam reaches up, gently grabs her chin until they lock eyes.

SAM
Maybe later, huh?

MOLLY
You sure? I'm a popular gal around here.

SAM
I don't doubt that.

He hands her his shot glass.

SAM (CONT'D)
Another time.
(nods to the glass)
Bottoms up.

She takes the glass and grins.

MOLLY
Shame you won't find out.

Sam can't help but smile as she downs the glass and saunters away. He watches her go until he hears Gus walk back over.

GUS
You want another drink?

SAM
You buying?

GUS
Your silver is good for another.

SAM
Much appreciated.

Gus pours a shot and hands it to Sam. Sam clutches it and nods towards the Older Man in the expensive suit.

SAM (CONT'D)
You'll forgive me for believing this place doesn't cater to the carriage trade, but who's the big bug?

GUS
That's Orville Hood. He's with the railroad.

SAM

Looks more like a banker than an engineer.

GUS

That's because he handles more money than a banker. So crooked he swallows nails and spits out corkscrews.

SAM

Seems like a peach of a guy.

GUS

(dry)

Yeah. He's a real top rail.

He walks away from Sam to handle a new influx of people. Sam raises the glass to his lips to drink when he hears a GRUFF MALE VOICE call out --

GRUFF MALE VOICE (O.S.)

What're doing in my spot?!

Sam, regrettably, lowers the shot glass and glances over and clocks GRANT MILLER (40s) - his looks match his voice - hard, ugly and looks like it's been left out to rot.

SAM

Say that again, friend.

GRANT

You're sittin' in my spot.

Grant nods at the bar behind Sam, who turns and spots the name "Grant" carved into the pine bar.

SAM

I'm guessing you're Grant.

GRANT

So you *can* read.

SAM

But I'm surprised you can write. Half expected to just see an X.

GRANT

Mind your tongue.

SAM

You a big wheel in these parts, Grant?

GRANT
What do you think?

Grant opens his coat some to show off the two pearl handled pistols on his hips. Sam is not impressed.

SAM
My, my aren't those pretty looking.

GRANT
They look better when they're smoking.

SAM
You'd shoot a man for having a drink in a bar? Bit drastic, don't you think?

GRANT
I'd shoot a man who keeps runnin' his mouth to someone he shouldn't.

Sam nods.

SAM
Beat the Dutch, I got it, you're a man I shouldn't mess with.
(beat)
Tell you what, why don't you have a shot of whiskey on me.

He hands the metal shot glass over to Grant. Grant eyes it for a beat and then grins.

GRANT
Not as addled-headed as you look.

Grant brings the shot glass up to his mouth and tips it back. As soon as the bottom of the cup is facing Sam, he pounces into action.

He SLAMS his fist into the bottom of the cup causing it to push into Grant's front two teeth. They SNAP right out of his gums and fall to the floor. Before Grant can process what happened, Sam lands a vicious left cross to Grant's eye socket, sending him tumbling to the ground.

Grant, dazed but fueled by anger, reaches for his gun. In a flash, Sam grabs two steak knives from the people at the table next to him and flings one down at him. Grant SCREAMS in pain as the serrated edges completely puncture the back of his hand.

Sam places a foot on Grant's throat and clutches the other steak knife in his hand. Grant's eyes go wide but he stops struggling. Blood pours from his mouth.

SAM

Now, Grant, I think we got off on the wrong foot. I'd like to be able to rectify this situation if I can. Do you think that's possible?

GRANT

You have any idea who I work for?

SAM

I hope it's a dentist.

GRANT

I'm going to ki....

With a slight flick of his wrist, the second steak knife sticks into the ground right against Grant's cheek. The edge of the blade nicked his skin and a small rivulet of blood seeps from the wound.

SAM

You're going to stand up and take your leave and, if you can manage it, not get blood on my boots.

GRANT

Or else what?

Now it's Sam turn to pull back his coat to reveal a Bowie knife. It glimmers in the bar light.

SAM

I imagine this'll hurt a lot worse than a steak knife, Grant.

Sam takes his foot off of Grant's throat. Grant scrambles to his feet. He wipes his mouth, spits out a glob of blood and points his finger at Sam.

GRANT

You'll get yours.

SAM

They all say that.

Grant turns and looks across at the Older Man in the suit. The Older Man shakes his head "no" and nods towards the door. Grant, furious, turns and walks out of the bar.

Sam pulls the steak knives out of the floor and gives them back to the table he took them from.

SAM (CONT'D)
I'm sure they can rustle up a few new ones.

Sam points to a shot glass on the table.

SAM (CONT'D)
Can I...?

The MAN at the table nods. Sam picks up the shot glass and finally, finally, drinks his whiskey. After he swallows, his face tightens in disgust.

SAM (CONT'D)
Cheap rot gut.

He turns and eyes Molly at the bar - she's draped around another Man but her eyes are glued to Sam and the carnage that unfolded. Sam winks at her.

SAM (CONT'D)
Glad I gave you that shot, darling.

The piano music starts up again and the crowd tries to go back to normal. Gus walks around to Sam and clears his throat to get his attention. Sam turns around.

SAM (CONT'D)
Didn't mean nothing personal with the rot gut remark.

GUS
I'm not mad. *Relieved* actually.
(softer)
But you should head out of town if you know what's good for you.

He discreetly nods towards the Older Man in the suit.

GUS (CONT'D)
I don't know what he's thinking but if it's not favorable, I'd slip out the back.

Sam pats Gus on the shoulder.

SAM
Thanks for the advice but Jonah is out front and I am beat. Is there a hotel you'd recommend?

GUS
 (sighs)
 The Boxcar down the street.
 (beat)
 But sleep with your gun close.

Sam nods at Gus and heads towards the exit. As he does, we spot the Older Man in a Suit lean over and whisper something to one of his Goons. The Goon nods and stands up and we --

CUT TO:

INT. THE BOX CAR - LOBBY

Sam walks inside the quiet hotel - a dingy little place - and hails LEVI, the tired looking hotel clerk. Levi picks himself up from his stool and drags himself over to the front counter.

SAM
 Look like you could use a nap....

LEVI
 I sleep during the day.

SAM
 Your eyelids don't seem to know that.

LEVI
 Don't got much left 'cept for the room under the stairs.

SAM
 What's the rate?

LEVI
 Two a night. Ten a week.

Beat.

SAM
 Little light right now. Can I get you tomorrow?

Levi takes off his glasses and rubs his eyes.

LEVI
 Why do you fellows always ask that?
 What do you think I'm going to say?

SAM
 It'd be mighty Christian of you.

That's when a shadowy figure fills the door frame and a DEEP VOICE calls out --

DEEP VOICE (O.C.)
Don't worry about the room, Levi.

The figure walks into the light and it's ORVILLE HOOD (50s) - the Older Man from the Bar. Now that we're close, we can see that Orville has sparkling green eyes, sharp as a hawk, and a face that recalls the Caesars of ancient Rome. He is flanked by his two Goons.

ORVILLE
It's on me.

Sam looks over at Orville and shakes his head "no".

SAM
I don't do charity.

LEVI
You just asked for a free room!

SAM
That was a *favor*, Levi, and you said no.

ORVILLE
I'm not offering charity. It's payment for services rendered.

SAM
What service did I perform?

ORVILLE
You got in for it back there with Grant. Too big for his britches lately. He's a good man but he needed to be loo'd for a while.

SAM
Now he needs to find his teeth.

Orville grins and points at Sam.

ORVILLE
You got a mouth on you. Bet it's got you into a fair amount of trouble.

SAM
I can handle myself alright.

ORVILLE

Oh, there is no denying that.

(softens)

Let me cover tonight's expense as a
thank you.

Sam eyes him, not sure of what to make of the offer.

ORVILLE (CONT'D)

You've been in town for thirty
minutes and already made an enemy.
I'm reaching out to be a friend.

SAM

I consider Levi a dear friend.

LEVI

I would not agree.

SAM

You're not going to take "no" for
an answer, are you?

Sam takes a beat and finally nods "yes".

ORVILLE

Good man. You deserve a good
night's sleep.

He offers his hand and Sam takes it. Orville pulls him close.

ORVILLE (CONT'D)

I'm going to keep my eye on you.

SAM

I'll have you know that I'm not
decent when I'm sleeping.

Orville grins and slaps Sam on the back a little harder than
he should. It's fleeting, but we can see tension flicker
across Sam's face.

ORVILLE

(grins)

I look forward to talking with you
tomorrow.

SAM

I didn't know there was a return
engagement.

ORVILLE

It's a small town and unless you're heading out at first light, I imagine we'll run into each other again.

SAM

Well, then, I guess I'll see you bright and early. If you want, you can buy Levi and I breakfast.

LEVI

There's no need for that....

Levi hands Sam a key for the room under the stairs. As Sam turns to walk away, Orville pipes up.

ORVILLE

If you want, I can keep my boys posted outside your door in case Grant goes off his nut.

SAM

No need. As you so eloquently put, I can handle myself.

ORVILLE

(firm)
I insist.

He whistles and the two Goons come forward. Sam eyes them and then nods.

SAM

Guess this means I'm safe.

ORVILLE

I wouldn't say all that.

He shoots Sam a smile and then tips his hat.

ORVILLE (CONT'D)

Have a good night.

Orville turns and leaves. Sam looks up at the Goons.

SAM

Come on boys, we're going to sleep.

He turns and walks towards his room. The Goons follow suit. Sam inserts the key into the lock and says --

SAM (CONT'D)

Now boys, I don't care how much you
sweet talk me, I'm not letting you
in.

The Goons do not look amused. Sam walks into the --

ROOM

And closes the door behind him. The grin on his face drops
and he looks concerned. His fingers brush up against the
Bowie knife strapped to his body.

SAM (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Let's hope we can get some sleep,
huh?

He turns, walks to the bed and drops like a rock. His hand
curls around the handle of the knife as his eyes close and he
drifts off to sleep. We suddenly hear the sound of someone
RUNNING and we --

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. WOODS - TEN YEARS AGO

We're on the running bare feet of a young WOMAN. She looks
over her shoulder at someone chasing behind her. She has a
huge grin on her face. She pumps those legs but it's only a
matter of time before a MAN'S arms wrap around her waist. She
lets out an excited YELP and laughs as he picks her up and
swings her around in the air.

WOMAN

Stop! STOP!

MAN

I can't help it, you bring it out
of me.

The two start kissing. In no time, it becomes clear that
kissing is not where this encounter is going to stop. The two
lay on the ground and roll around, lost in each other.

It's then that we notice the man is wearing a gray
Confederate uniform.

As his hand moves down the Woman's body we hear a twig SNAP
in the distance. Both of them snap out of their romantic
embrace and look up to see --

SAM

Standing there in his blue Union uniform - rifle slung on his shoulder and a bouquet of wild flowers in his hand.

The Woman scrambles out from under the Man and stands.

WOMAN

I thought you shipped out....

SAM

Mitchell? You signed up with Gray
backs?

The Man stands up, wipes his uniform and looks away.

MAN

My people are from Virginia....

WOMAN

Sammy...it wasn't any....

SAM

(shakes his head "no")
It was, Beth. It was.

He drops the flowers. It looks like he's about to grab his rifle and Mitchell holds up his hand.

MAN

No need to get violent in front of
her.

Sam laughs.

SAM

You ain't worth the bullet. Neither
of you.

(to Beth)

Tell you parents I left you a "Dear
John" letter. They already don't
like me.

He turns to walk away. Beth grabs his shoulder.

WOMAN

Sammy....

He stops, turns around and stares at her.

SAM

You never cared a wit for me, did
you?

She looks away, embarrassed. Sam's hand twitches near the knife attached to his belt. Instead of drawing it, he spits on the ground.

SAM (CONT'D)
Ya'll deserve each other.

He walks away with hate burning in his eyes. We hear a harsh KNOCKING and we --

FLASH FORWARD:

INT. THE BOX CAR - ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Sam's eyes open in an instant and he sits bolt up in bed - his hand still holding the knife blade. He quietly walks out of bed and slinks his way over to the door. He tightens the grip on his knife and calls out --

SAM
Levi? That you?

No response. Sam looks down and sees a shadow move on the ground on the other side of the door.

SAM (CONT'D)
Better speak up now or you'll be in
a world of hurt.

From the other side of the door we hear Gus speak up --

GUS (O.C.)
You okay?

Sam recognizes the voice and opens the door. Gus is standing there with a grin on his face.

GUS (CONT'D)
You don't look worse for wear.

SAM
Why should I?

GUS
We saw Orville's bodyguards trail
you last night.

SAM
You guys couldn't have been too
concerned...none of you showed up.

GUS

(winks)

That you're aware of. Our people
saw you were safe and peeled off.

SAM

Who, exactly, are these people?

GUS

Can I show you around town?

Sam peers outside the door to make sure this isn't a set up. He doesn't see anyone waiting to kill him, so he's sure it's on the level. He grabs his hat, closes the door and the two of them head into the --

LOBBY

Of the hotel. He spots Levi across the room and tips his hat to him.

SAM

Save my room, Levi. I'll probably
be back tonight.

LEVI

They only paid for one night.

SAM

You'll do the Christian thing
tonight.

LEVI

I'm not running a charity!

But Sam doesn't respond and we follow them out of the hotel and out on --

MAIN STREET

The town has come to life in the morning light with most of the activity centered around the train station. Carriages await PORTERS who drag luggage from the platform. Scores of PASSENGERS headed for California and all other points west come down and enjoy the city for a few hours.

Hotels and saloons and scores of other businesses all ramp up and greet the potential customers. It's like pigs at a trough.

Gus nods at a the train station.

GUS

Eight twenty five came in right on time. Dropped off a load of passengers and mail, picking up more and will light out for the next station in forty minutes. Five minutes after that, it begins again.

SAM

That's the point, isn't it?

GUS

Of course. The Northern Pacific makes a mint along this line.

SAM

I may look like a hayseed, but I understand how commerce works in the Union, Gus.

GUS

I don't doubt it. But if I were to ask you to guess how many buildings the railroad owns in town, what would you say?

SAM

It's not one?

Gus stops, grins and then points to a saloon across the street.

GUS

One...

He points to a general store.

GUS (CONT'D)

Two...

Now a hotel.

GUS (CONT'D)

Three...

Now a blacksmith.

GUS (CONT'D)

Four...

He points at a few other buildings next to The Box Car.

GUS (CONT'D)

Five, six, seven and eight. They've talked about buying the Box Car too. That's not including the half a dozen lots they own but haven't built anything on yet.

SAM

What can I say, they understand the value of land.

GUS

They value the power of a threat.

(beat)

They basically own West Liberty and the people in it.

A PRETTY WOMAN walks by and gives Sam a polite smile. He smiles back and watches her walk away.

SAM

Town seems fine with it Gus. You're bar was filled with paying customers last night.

The two men start walking again.

GUS

They were only there because I've given into them. If I didn't, they wouldn't think twice about ruining me.

SAM

There's still water in your fountain, so what's your complaint?

Gus stops, turns and faces Sam.

GUS

You know that coot you beat down last night? He comes in every night and drinks himself stupid. And his friends. And his bosses.

(shakes his head)

They drink up everything. Even with the crowd, I'm only breaking even. If I speak out, they take the crowds and I'm out on the street.

SAM

You could probably get a job with the Northern Pacific.

Gus shoots Sam a deathly look and Sam backs off.

SAM (CONT'D)

Sorry. Most of the time I speak with my horse Jonah and he doesn't mind a cruel insult.

(beat)

I'll take your word that the people here ain't roily for the Northern, but what does that have to do with me?

GUS

You stood up to Northern man and licked him good.

SAM

And?

Gus points to the remains of a burned down building - it's a lot of torched wood and a pile of rubble.

GUS

The last guy who said anything was run out of town. A few redmen found his body in the river.

(beat)

They went after his wife and son next but they left town before they got to them. Left with nothing but two sick oxen, a shotgun and the clothes on their back.

Sam nods as a look of fear crosses his face but, oddly, it's followed by an impressed smirk.

SAM

They DO seem thorough.

GUS

They are. Half the people in this town depend on them for work and if they start acting out, the company makes sure they stay in line.

A Northern Railroad BULL walks by the pair and gives them a curt nod. He keeps walking and that's when we notice the metal pipe he carries as a club.

SAM

I'm still not sure what you want with me.

GUS
I can't speak to that here...these
streets have ears.
(nods)
Come by the bar around midnight.
We'll talk more then.

Gus pats him on the shoulder and heads back towards his bar.

SAM
What the hell am I suppose to do
until then?

GUS
Stay out of trouble.

Sam sighs and mutters to himself --

SAM
That never works.

He suddenly sees the Goon walking up to him. Sam raises his
hands.

SAM (CONT'D)
Easy fellas, it's too early for a
scratch. I still got sleep in my
eyes.

GOON 1
Mr. Hood wants to see you.

SAM
Does he have breakfast waiting?

GOON 2
We were just told to get you.

SAM
What if I refuse to go?

Beat.

GOON 2
We were just told to get you.

SAM
(sighs)
Can I get my horse?

GOON 1
He wanted to see you right away.

Sam nods and they all start walking towards the "Golden Spike Hotel".

CUT TO:

INT. GOLDEN SPIKE HOTEL - SUITE

Unlike Sam's last room, this is a palace. A "middle of Iowa" palace but a palace none the less. Orville sits on a couch and enjoys a cup of coffee. Across from him, on a small couch and between the two Goons sits Sam. He may look relaxed but inside his mind is churning.

The two men don't say a word just silently feel each other out. It's a game of chess and both men have no intention of making the first move. But Orville is more skilled at this game and he just takes another, long sip of his drink.

Sam finally cracks --

SAM

Nice room. Mine was nicer but this isn't bad too.

ORVILLE

(grins)

I trust you had a pleasant night's sleep?

SAM

Besides the afterclaps, it was alright.

ORVILLE

Sorry about the boys but I had to make sure you didn't cause any more trouble.

SAM

Last night I was your hero.

ORVILLE

Things change swiftly in West Liberty.

(beat)

I am glad you ruffled Grant but he isn't going to stop being a thorn in my side until he gets compensated.

SAM

If you want money, you've come to the wrong person. Last night should have illustrated that.

ORVILLE

Compensation can go beyond minted coins...

(beat)

You know, I don't think we've ever been properly introduced. I'm Orville Hood and you are...

SAM

Sam Cotton.

ORVILLE

Cotton, huh? Your people from the Confederacy?

SAM

South Mountain, Maryland.

ORVILLE

Did you serve in the war?

SAM

Everyone served, whether you held a Springfield or not.

ORVILLE

Amen to that. Thank the Lord above you boys preserved our Union.

SAM

Yeah, my post-war years have been *golden*.

ORVILLE

You drift?

SAM

I amble. Hear California is nice.

ORVILLE

If you got money, it's paradise. Tell me, Mr. Cotton, what did you do before the conflict?

SAM

I was a...*merchant* of sorts.

ORVILLE

What'd you sell?

SAM

Whatever I could get my hands on.

Orville breaks into a big grin and cackles. He points at Sam and wags his finger.

ORVILLE

So you're a scoundrel, huh?

SAM

Never said that.

ORVILLE

Don't have to. It's written on your face.

SAM

I'd be careful who you call a scoundrel, Orville.

ORVILLE

Relax my boy. Everyone worth a damn has some scoundrel in them. *America* herself is a scoundrel. We wouldn't be here if our morally malleable founding fathers hadn't been afraid to break some rules.

(smiles)

Hell, I come from a long line of scoundrels. Daddy swindled and murdered savages in Ohio, Grandpap was involved in the Whiskey rebellion, great Grandpap punched General Washington in the eye at Valley Forge and, rumor has it, great great grandpap is responsible for half the kids in Trenton, New Jersey.

(beat)

Being a scoundrel is what separates the cream from the milk. A house built with stolen supplies still provides shelter for your family.

(winks)

Only you've got extra money to build a shack for your girlfriend.

He laughs - the Goons join in - but Sam just sits there, trying to process everything. Sam leans forward in his chair.

SAM

What makes you a scoundrel?

ORVILLE

Hell, I'm the worst of them all.

(beat)

I work for the railroad.

Orville stands and motions for Sam to join him. The two men walk over to the window in the room. Outside, we can see the smoke curl from the stack of the waiting train. A shrill WHISTLE blows and the few remaining stragglers run for the platform.

Orville nods at the station.

ORVILLE (CONT'D)

You have any idea how much money comes down this line a day?

SAM

Enough to keep you in these fine tailored suits seven days a week.

ORVILLE

(grins)

This isn't just a rail line, it's a man made Comstock lode and there is plenty to go around to those willing to play nice.

SAM

Like your boy Grant?

ORVILLE

He plays nice but he's just mean about it.

Orville looks at Sam.

ORVILLE (CONT'D)

How do you play?

SAM

Depends on the game, Orville.

Goon 1 pipes up --

GOON 1

It's *Mr. Hood*.

Orville waves him off.

ORVILLE

It's fine. He's new here. He'll learn as he goes along.

SAM

Did I miss a portion of the conversation where I accept a position with you?

ORVILLE

Only a fool would turn me down.

SAM

I don't even know what you're asking me to do let alone if I'm accepting anything from you...except another *gratis* stay at the hotel.

Orville looks Sam up and down.

ORVILLE

Son, how would you like to OWN the hotel?

SAM

(beat)

I wouldn't want to put Levi out.

Orville cracks up.

ORVILLE

Levi will survive just fine.
(lowers his voice)
Question is, will you?

That's when Sam hears the CLICK of two revolvers. He glances back and sees the Goons with pistols trained on him. Orville glares at Sam.

ORVILLE (CONT'D)

Now, as an outside observer, you seem to be in fine health presently.

SAM

Thank the Lord for that.

ORVILLE

(ignoring)

But like I told you earlier, things change swiftly in these parts. You wanna stay standing, I suggest walking along with me.

(winks)

Besides, you owe me for the room.

SAM

I thought you were being friendly.

ORVILLE

I was. Now I need you to return the favor.

SAM

Orville, has anyone ever told you how friendship works?

Orville grins. Sam realizes he's not talking his way out of this. He sighs and asks --

SAM (CONT'D)

What do you want me to do?

ORVILLE

Nothing you can't handle. Every Friday, a special train makes a trip from Chicago and hits every major stop from here to northern California. Wanna guess what it's carrying?

SAM

I'm assuming you're not talking about passengers?

ORVILLE

Money...and lots of it. It's the Northern Pacific pay train and I want you to help Grant rob it.

SAM

Won't your bosses be upset?

ORVILLE

You let me worry about the fall out from them.

SAM

What about the sheriff? I'm sure he'd have a problem or two.

ORVILLE

(laughs)

Old man Longman ain't caught nothing but the clap since he's worn the star. He's not a problem.

SAM

Then what the hell you need me for?

ORVILLE

I need a man with your skills to keep Grant honest. Grant needs another person to overpower the guards. It's a win/win for us all.

SAM

What if we get shot?

ORVILLE

I would not suggest that.

SAM

When does this train show up?

Orville pulls out a pocket watch and glances down.

ORVILLE

I'd go get your horse and burn the breeze, Mr. Cotton.

We suddenly hear the steady CLIP CLOP of a horse and we --

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - 15 MILES OUTSIDE WEST LIBERTY - LATER

A group of half a dozen COWBOYS make their way along the edge of the woods near the rail line. Sam is up front walking along with Jonah. Riding next to him is the recently toothless Grant, who is shooting daggers at him. Sam finally looks over at him and the two men lock eyes.

SAM

About the teeth....

GRANT

Just because we're riding together on this don't mean we're square.

SAM

I didn't imagine it did as you're still missing those two front pearls.

(winks)

You make it look good though.

GRANT

After we're done, we can throw hands and fairly this time. No sucker punching.

SAM

Grant, I'm not a violent man generally but you seem to just wring it out of me.

GRANT

Just keep in mind that our little dance ain't over.

SAM

Noted.

GRANT

Don't know why Mr. Hood thought this was a good idea in the first place.

SAM

I'm not sure I understand either but he's the big boss man and we're just hired guns.

GRANT

You ever done anything like this before?

SAM

I've seen a train before but stopping one....

GRANT

It's pretty basic stuff. Even a goney like you'll be able to figure it out.

We suddenly --

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RAIL LINE - LATER

One of the Cowboys stands in the middle of the track in front of his horse, which lays still. The Cowboy waves his hands over his head, begging for the steal beast to stop. It's a risky gamble but this time, the ENGINEER saw them and has applied on the brakes.

The cowcatcher tipped train stops a mere twenty feet from the horse. The Engineer sticks his head out the window and screams --

ENGINEER

What the hell're you doin'? Tryna
get yourself killed?

GRANT (O.C.)

Chippy will stand on the line and
try to get the train to stop....

SAM (O.C.)

(interrupting)

What happens if the train don't
stop?

GRANT (O.C.)

Money gets split eight ways instead
of nine.

CHIPPY whistles and his horse SPRINGS to life and runs off
into the woods. He grins and draws his gun.

GRANT (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Once he stops, two more of our men
will run up into the cab and make
sure the train don't start up
again.

As if on cue, two of the Cowboys run up into the cab of the
train with their pistols drawn. The Engineer's eyes go wide
and he starts to sweat.

ENGINEER

Now, now...let's not do anything
hasty.

COWBOY 1

I was just about to suggest the
same thing.

COWBOY 2

Put your hands up and leave'em
there.

GRANT (O.C.)

While the Engineer is tied up, the
rest of us make our way out of the
woods and head for the money car.

On either side of the train, like ghosts appearing from the
darkness, the remaining men (including Grant and Sam) walk up
to either side of the money car with their guns drawn.

SAM (O.C.)

These trains armed?

GRANT (O.C.)
Sometimes.

SAM (O.C.)
How do you know?

GRANT (O.C.)
When they start shooting.

That's when a rifle shot CRACKS from the money car and the bullet zips right through the brim of Sam's hat. Sam drops to the ground, rolls to the left, raises his gun and fires back at the car.

Soon, everyone is blasting away. It's a madhouse. Bullets WHIZZ all over. One of the Cowboys is hit in the gut and drops, SCREAMING in pain. Another well positioned rifle shot makes his head EXPLODE into pink mush.

The door to the train car opens and six SOLDIERS come spilling out with rifles drawn. A RIFLEMAN raises his gun and puts Sam in his iron sights.

From his spot on the ground, Sam raises his pistol and fires off a shot that nails the Rifleman square in the chest. He drops, his rifle discharging into the ground in front of him.

Before he can even process what's going on, another bullet slams into the ground in front of Sam - sending dirt and grass flying into his face. Sam rolls aside and takes shelter behind a tree.

SAM
(yells)
What the hell, Grant!? How many
times have you pissed these guys
off?

But his voice never reaches Grant, who has also rolled behind a nearby tree for cover. He reaches around the tree and fires off a few random shots in the direction of the soldiers.

SAM (CONT'D)
(mutters)
I should've just let him have the
damn seat.

He flips open the cylinder, reloads and spins it. He peers around the tree trunk and sees that the three Cowboys from the other side of the train have made their way around the money car. The first Cowboy isn't so lucky - he catches a bullet in the eye socket and drops to the ground.

The rest of them help drive the Soldiers back into the train car but not out of the fight. The rest of the Cowboys fall back near Grant. Across the shooting gallery field, Sam is all alone.

COWBOY 3 leans into Grant and nods in Sam's direction.

COWBOY 3

Want me to take someone over there
to support him?

Grant looks over and sees a few rifles shots take out sections of the tree Sam is hiding behind.

GRANT

Let him fend for himself. If he
catches one, he catches one.

Though Sam can't hear Grant's conversation, he's too savvy to know that he probably isn't going to get any help. He takes a beat and then peeks around the tree. We follow his gaze until we're inside the --

TRAIN CAR

Where we see five or so figures, jostling for position, reloading and firing their weapons.

SAM

(counting)
...four, five, six.

He looks down at his revolver. Six shoots.

SAM (CONT'D)

Ah hell.

He reaches down to his knife strapped to his leg. He pulls it out, clutches the handle and looks up at the sky.

SAM (CONT'D)

If you're listening up there you
old bastard, you better get me
through this.

Sam takes a deep breath, stands and walks out from behind the tree. He's in the open - completely exposed. Grant and his men are stunned into non-action.

A Soldier raises his rifle to fire when Sam rears back and hurls his Bowie knife towards the soldier. It flies through the air with the precision of a rocket and SLAMS into the Soldier's heart, instantly dropping him.

Before any of the other Soldiers can respond, Sam pulls up his revolver and shoots from the hip. It's scary accurate - four bullets find the bodies of four Soldiers.

They all slump over, dead or dying, but before Sam squeezes the trigger to finish off the train's protectors, the last SOLDIER calls out --

SOLDIER
HOLD ON! I'VE LAID MY GUN DOWN!

And then --

SOLDIER (CONT'D)
Sammy Cotton? That you?

Sam, stunned to hear his name, lowers his weapon and holds his hand up to shade his eyes to get a better look at the man. After a beat, the Soldier comes walking out with his hands held up.

SAM
Tommy O'Shea?

TOMMY O'SHEA (30s) is a scrawny looking man with a crooked yellow big smile. He walks out of the car with his hands up.

SAM (CONT'D)
Jesus Christ, it is you! How ya been?

TOMMY
(nods at the ground)
I've been better, Sam.

Sam holsters the gun as the two men walk to each other and embrace.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
What the hell are you doing out here? I thought you'd be teaching at West Point or something.

SAM
My time with the Army ended after Atlanta.
(beat)
Sorry 'bout your friends, Tommy.

TOMMY
(shrugs)
Just some fellers I worked with is all. They all cheated at cards anyway.

SAM

Christ, I'm glad I heard you yellin'.

TOMMY

Makes two of us.

(beat)

Christ, good to see you again.

SAM

Been a while since I've seen a friendly face.

TOMMY

So, what happens now?

Just then, a GUNSHOT rings out right next to Sam. The bullet buries itself into Tommy's neck, causing arterial spray to douse Sam in blood. But it doesn't stop him from reaching over and catching his friend before he hits the ground.

Sam wants to speak but, for the first time, the words don't come to him. Tommy closes his eyes and his body shutters as the life slips from his body.

Sam snaps his head back around - his eyes burning with rage - and spots the smoking barrel of the gun that fired the bullet. The Camera slowly tilts up and we see --

GRANT

Standing there with a smirk. The smoke from the barrel of the gun passes in front of his face.

GRANT

He saw our faces.

In a flash, Sam springs up from the ground and makes his way for Grant but the Cowboys step up and hold a bucking Sam back. It's not easy but eventually Sam calms, pushes the Cowboys away from him and takes a few steps back to collect himself.

GRANT (CONT'D)

We don't got a lotta time, so gather up the money and let's ride out.

The Cowboys wait a beat and then head for the train car. With them gone, there is a clear line from Sam to Grant. They lock eyes and just stare daggers at each other. Finally, Grant breaks the silence.

GRANT (CONT'D)

Unless you want to join your friend here, best help them boys gather up that money.

Sam, calm and cool, says in a low, serious tone --

SAM

You're gonna die by my hand. I promise you that.

Grant grins - his finger still curled around that trigger.

GRANT

Mr. Hood is waiting for us and he doesn't like to be disappointed.

Sam glances down at his dead friend. A small rivulet of blood streams from his mouth. We stay tight on him and then we --

CUT TO:

INT. GOLDEN SPIKE HOTEL - SUITE - LATER

Grant stands with his group of men - dirty as sin from the trail ride - but all of them holding a sack of cash. All except Sam - he stands apart from the group, the blood still caked on his face. Grant drops his on the ground and the greenbacks spill across the floor.

GRANT

They must have been paying bonuses, sir.

The Camera spins around and we spot Orville standing up from the couch with a grin from ear to ear. He walks over to Grant and vigorously pumps his hand up and down.

ORVILLE

Bully! Bul-ly!

He leans down and scoops up a handful of money.

ORVILLE (CONT'D)

Ya'll did great work. Real great work! That deserves a little bonus.

Orville hands a stack of cash to Grant and then all of the rest of the eager and excited Cowboys. He finally makes his way over to Sam and holds out a stack of cash but Sam doesn't take it.

Orville looks over at Grant --

ORVILLE (CONT'D)
What's got him sore?

GRANT
He knew one of the Bluebellies we
had to smoke. My guess was they
were wheel-horses from the war.

Orville looks at Sam and they lock eyes.

ORVILLE
Sorry about the mess, but this
should ease the pain.

He tries to hand it to Sam again but Sam refuses. Orville
forces a few bills into Sam's pocket. Sam backs away.

SAM
I don't want your blood money.

ORVILLE
Don't be dramatic. This is all
money going to Northern Pacific
holdings along the line and, trust
me, they won't miss it.
(whispers)
Don't make me out to be a hard
case, huh? Take what you earned.

SAM
Keep it.

ORVILLE
Don't be a scallywag. Take the
money.

He pushes it into Sam's hands. Sam holds it for a beat and
then drops it on the ground, turns and walks out of the
suite. Orville doesn't say a word but just lets him go. The
door SLAMS behind him.

GRANT
If you want, I can make him
disappear.

Orville turns to Grant and gives him a cold stare.

ORVILLE
You just worry about not pissing me
off, understand?
(beat)
Get out of my sight, all of you.

All of the cowboys turn and walk out of the room. Grant lingers for a beat before he joins them. Once the door closes, Orville walks over to the window and stares out at the street below. He clocks Sam as he walks down the street alone. We're tight on Orville's concerned look and we --

CUT TO:

INT. FIRE BOX SALOON - LATER

Sam walks into the near empty bar and bellies up to the bar. Gus looks up from the glass he's cleaning and notices the blood-caked Sam take a seat at the end of the bar. Everyone gives him a wide berth - even the Working Girls.

Gus walks over and nods.

GUS

You okay?

SAM

(beat)

Whiskey. Two shots.

Gus doesn't hesitate. He pours two shots and places them in front of Sam. Sam curls his hand around one of the shots and downs it in a flash.

GUS

Sam, what happened?

SAM

Same shit that always happens around me, Gus.

Sam grabs the second shot glass.

SAM (CONT'D)

(mumbles)

Sorry Tommy.

He pours it onto the ground. Gus watches the whiskey spill from the glass and splash against the floor. He then shifts his attention to Sam's face - he looks dazed.

GUS

Whose blood is that?

SAM

Does it matter?

Sam grips the shot glass and then HURLS it into the wall of liquor bottles. They shatter. Gus is surprised but holds firm. Sam and him lock eyes and then --

SAM (CONT'D)
Where can I get clean?

GUS
Soapy's is where I would go. It's safe there. He's one of us.

SAM
(disgusted)
Us?

Sam stands and stares at Gus.

SAM (CONT'D)
Send the bill to Hood. He's good for it.

He walks away, leaving Gus alone to figure out what Sam meant by that. We watch Sam walk out of the door and we --

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. SOAPY'S BATH HOUSE - TUBS

The back room of the Bath House is lined with claw foot tubs. All of them are empty - save for one. Sam sits alone - his dusty clothes piled up next to him.

The water is brown-ish from his grime. The only part of him that isn't clean is the blood spray on his face. Sam scoops up two handfuls of water and pours the water over his face.

The water makes the dried blood run down his face and drip into the tub water - turning the brownish water rust colored. We suddenly hear a MAN'S VOICE ask --

MAN'S VOICE (O.C.)
You need some more hot water? Bar of soap?

Sam turns and clocks the ancient and leather looking SOAPY (60s) standing there with a small cart of towels, soaps and fragrances.

SOAPY
Cut you a good deal on a fragrance. Smell like a millionaire for the ladies.

Sam shakes his head no.

SOAPY (CONT'D)

Can I clean your clothes? I know a good Chinaman laundry that does a great job mighty cheap.

SAM

No thanks.

SOAPY

Well, if you need anything, just ring the bell and I'll head over.

Soapy walks away and heads back to the front of the shop. Sam holds his breath and plunges his head below the water. He stays below the water for a beat before breaking through the surface. He sighs, leans back in the tub and closes his eyes.

Suddenly, from the front of the store, we hear a WOMAN'S VOICE cry out --

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.C.)

Those bastards did it again!

SOAPY

Lilly, please watch the language.

Sam cranes his neck and he spots LILLY (30s) - the raven haired beauty from the bar the other night. She is just as fiery now as she was the last time Sam saw her. Like before, he can't take his eyes off her.

LILLY

My language isn't the problem, Soapy! It's the goddamn Northern railroad!

SOAPY

What's going on?

LILLY

That cur Hood and his bandits robbed the money train!

SOAPY

What?!

LILLY

Money coming into town is all gone!

SOAPY

Hells bells! I'm owed ten dollars!

That's when tears start to fall down Lilly's face. She rubs her eyes and definitely shakes her head.

LILLY

Soapy...they killed Tommy.

Soapy's face drops. He walks over to Lilly and hugs her tight.

SOAPY

Oh hell...I'm sorry, Lilly.

LILLY

It's not fair. He survives the gray backs and Camp Sumter but is murdered transferring to California in peace time!?

SOAPY

Lord works in mysterious ways, dear.

LILLY

The Lord had nothing to do with this.

She glances up and notices Sam soaking in the tub. She turns to Soapy and whispers something. Soapy looks back and whispers back. Soapy reaches into his pocket and shows Lilly a crumbled bill. Sam can't hear the specifics but he knows it probably isn't good.

He tries to stand up and split before anyone will notice but Lilly storms over to him. She glares down at him.

LILLY (CONT'D)

Who are you?

SAM

A patron of the bathhouse that was expecting some privacy.

LILLY

You know what I mean.

SAM

Name's Sam. I'm from back East. I'd stand up and shake your hand but I don't want to insult your womanly modesty.

LILLY

If I don't care about my modesty
then you shouldn't waste your time
protecting it.

Sam shrugs and stands up. Soapy water runs down his exposed
body but Lilly keeps her eyes level. Sam extends his hand to
shake her.

SAM

You know my name, but what's yours?

Beat.

LILLY

Lilly. I saw you the other night,
you brawled with that bastard Grant
Miller but then Soapy says he saw
you ride out with him earlier
today.

SAM

I'm a complicated man, Lilly.

LILLY

Why are you in town? Who do you
work for?

SAM

I work for myself and I'm just
passing through.

LILLY

You have anything to do with that
robbery?

SAM

You the sheriff?

LILLY

I'm not the type of person you want
as an enemy.

Sam can't help but grin.

SAM

I've done things I ain't proud of,
but I wasn't involved in the
robbery.

LILLY

Soapy said you had blood on your
face.

Sam peers around her and at Soapy.

SAM

Soapy seems to be quite the gossip.

Lilly leans in close.

LILLY

My brother was killed during that robbery, so I hope, for your sake, you were far away from that train.

She hikes up her dress and we spot a pistol strapped to her thigh.

LILLY (CONT'D)

Because if I find out you or any of your friends were involved in my brother's death....

SAM

They ain't my friends, darlin'.

LILLY

Save your "darlings" for the Nannies. I don't have the patience for it.

Sam eyes her and shakes his head.

SAM

I believe that you are someone I shouldn't mess with.

He nods down and gives her a wink.

SAM (CONT'D)

You can take a peak if you want.

LILLY

Trust me, there's nothing special about *it* or *you*.

She turns and storms out of the bathhouse. Sam locks eyes with Soapy, who turns away from him. Sam sighs, steps out of the tub and we hear --

ORVILLE (O.C.)

I'm as mad as a March hare but nothing could be done.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN STATION - OFFICE

Orville sits at his desk in his very modest - damn near shabby - office and shakes his head slowly at JASPER (60s), a well dressed man across from him.

ORVILLE

This robbery caught us off guard.

JASPER

This is the third in as many months, Orville.

ORVILLE

What more can we do? We had armed guards on the train.

JASPER

The company isn't pleased.

ORVILLE

I'm not pleased, Jasper! But look around here. There isn't a lot of money coming to the West Liberty station.

JASPER

What about our business concerns in town?

ORVILLE

Small population, small returns. I stay on them but I can't be seen as some sort of tyrant.

Jasper nods in agreement.

JASPER

Maybe we should bring in a few of our men from back east to protect the line. Men the board trusts.

Orville shakes his hand.

ORVILLE

You ask me, this is just a bad luck streak. These bandits - probably goddamn savages, you ask me - are not a long term problem.

(smiles)

I don't think we want to waste the talents of those men on a short term problem.

(nods)

(MORE)

ORVILLE (CONT'D)

A few folks in town owe me a favor or two, I can ask them to watch the line for a few weeks.

Jasper nods.

JASPER

Sounds like a good idea.

He reaches down and pulls up a locked trunk. He opens it up and there are rows of money. Orville tries his damndest to not grin like a fool.

JASPER (CONT'D)

This should cover costs from the robbery. But Orville, if this happens again....

ORVILLE

(overlapping)

Don't even concern yourself about it.

He grabs the trunk and places it on his side of the desk.

ORVILLE (CONT'D)

Jasper, your people are from Maryland, right?

JASPER

Born and raised in Boonsboro.

ORVILLE

You ever hear of the Cotton family from South Mountain.

JASPER

(laughs)

You talking about Fightin' Sammy Cotton? Everyone in that area knows about him.

(off his look)

Tough sum-a-bitch. Earned a Medal of Honor for what he did in Atlanta.

ORVILLE

What was that?

Jasper shakes his head.

JASPER

Let's just say after Cotton crept into their camp a dozen confederate soldiers didn't have open casket funerals.

(beat)

Why you asking?

ORVILLE

Someone blew into town a few weeks ago starting trouble and said the name Cotton. Thought I'd ask another Marylander.

JASPER

He's trouble you don't want.

ORVILLE

He's moved on. Come to think of it, he might've had something to do with the robbery.

JASPER

If you track him down, let us know. The war's over but he's still fightin' something.

Jasper stands and Orville does the same. They shake hands and we suddenly hear --

GRANT (O.C.)

Don't trust that sum-bitch as far as I can throw him.

CUT TO:

INT. FIRE BOX SALOON - LATER

Grant sits at a table with a few of the other Cowboys from the raid. They are brandishing their money like kingpins - they all smoke cigars, freely drink whiskey and girls from the saloon hang all over them. Grant's ear is lightly being nibbled by Molly, the redhead from earlier. Grant isn't phased by her advances but is feeling the effects of the drink.

GRANT

He's a pain in my ass.

MOLLY

Who you talking about, baby?

GRANT

That bastard that sucker punched me the other night. If it was square, I would have broke his jaw.

MOLLY

You *are* strong, baby.

GRANT

Goddamn right. No one disrespects me in this town. I don't care who he works for.

MOLLY

You seem worked up. Need a release?

Just then, Gus walks over to the group.

GUS

You boys alright?

MOLLY

Doin' fine, Gus...

(to Grant)

Especially in a few minutes.

Gus looks down and notices the pile of cash.

GUS

Good luck at the poker table?

GRANT

None of your goddamn business, is it?

GUS

I don't want to start trouble.

GRANT

Then what are you standing around for?

GUS

Coming to see if you boys need anything else? More liquor? More food? More girls?

MOLLY

Girls are covered, Gus.

GRANT

If you're coming over here with a bill you can turn around and walk on back. You'll get your money when I damn well feel like paying.

Gus starts to back up but Grant isn't having any of it.

GRANT (CONT'D)

Where the hell you backing off to?

Gus doesn't know what to do. Grant pushes Molly off, stands and kicks back the chair back. He walks over to Gus - who doesn't know how to respond.

GUS

Hey now, I don't want....

GRANT

(overlapping)

No trouble. I heard you. But guess what, you found yourself an argy now.

Before Gus can move, Grant SLAPS him hard across the face. Gus tries to cover himself but Grant delivers another hard SMACK to Gus's cheek. The Cowboys hoot and holler.

Two ugly looking cuts have opened on Gus's face and trail blood trickles down his swollen cheeks. His eyes are glassy with tears but he doesn't let them drop. He and Grant just stare at one another.

GRANT (CONT'D)

Say something now. I want you to.

Molly comes over and grabs Grant's arm.

MOLLY

Baby, let's put this energy to good use, huh?

She is successful in pulling him away. He turns his gaze from Gus and drinks in her body. He grins wide.

GRANT

Hot damn darling, you're as hot as a branding iron.

MOLLY

(coy)

Why don't you come leave your mark on me then, cowboy.

She pulls him away and the Cowboys cheer him on. Gus turns and walks away, muttering under his breath. We follow her as she walks up the stairs until we --

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FIRE BOX SALOON - MOLLY'S ROOM - LATER

Grant is passed out and snoring like a freight train. Molly, still nude, sneaks off the bed and makes her way to Grant's pants. She reaches into his pocket and pulls out one the bills. She looks back at him and sneers --

MOLLY

Where did you get this, huh?

She palms the bill and starts to get dressed and we hear --

ORVILLE (O.C.)

What can I do for you, Mayor?

CUT TO:

INT. GOLDEN SPIKE HOTEL - SUITE

Orville stands on a platform and lets a TAILOR measure him for a new suit. Standing across from him is MAYOR BELLNAP (40s) - a meek looking man in a faded bowler cap. When he speaks, he stutters.

BELLNAP

Sir, are you aware of the robbery along the line?

ORVILLE

(shakes his head)

Nasty bit of business. Our men are looking into it.

BELLNAP

Yes, yes, of course, but, as you may not know, there was a cash shipment on that train.

ORVILLE

That is how they transport it these days....

BELLNAP

Yes, well, a lot of our businessmen are due pensions from their service in the war....

ORVILLE

Brave men.

(to Tailor)

Let it out a bit there. I don't want the undercarriage to get swampy.

BELLNAP

Those men need money to make their rents...a lot of rents that your company owns.

ORVILLE

What are you asking, Bellnap?

BELLNAP

Maybe you can forgive this month's rent if folks come up short. It's only fair, considerin' the robbery and all.

ORVILLE

Fair, Bellnap? How is me allowing folks to skip a rent payment fair for me? I got bills myself, you know.

BELLNAP

But the robbery, Orville....

ORVILLE

Maybe Sheriff Longman should've done something besides bend his elbow.

BELLNAP

You know he's been recovering from that infection for quite some time.

ORVILLE

Maybe it's time you appointed a new sheriff.

BELLNAP

You and I both know that's an elected position and Longman is as popular as free hootch. He's never gonna leave.

ORVILLE

(overlapping)

Details, Bellnap, details. Everything can be adjusted. Ain't that right, Lonny?

LONNY, the tailor, nods.

LONNY
Been my experience. Spread your
legs a touch.

Orville does just that and Lonny gets back to his measurements. Bellnap shakes his head.

BELLNAP
Think about it, is all. Some good
folks need a helping hand.

ORVILLE
Whole world has problems, Bellnap.
(beat)
But I'll see what I can do.

Bellnap nods and exits the room and we --

CUT TO:

INT. SILVER STRIKE CASINO - LATER

One of the gambling houses in the town is filled with Grant and the cowboy cronies. They have taken their traveling drunken road show across from the bar to the local gaming house. Not surprising, they are throwing money around left and right.

Grant sits with three Cowboys and a MAN IN A BOWLER HAT at the poker table. They are losing - poorly - but they don't seem to mind. They are drunk as skunks, smoking cheap cigars and harassing any Woman within shouting distance.

It's clear that, while their money is welcome, they are not.

The DEALER flips over the card and wins the hand for the house. Everyone at the table GROANS. Grant throws a fifty dollar bill on the table and eyes the Dealer.

GRANT
How bad you want that bill?

DEALER
I run a gaming house, sir. That's
the goal.

GRANT
Take it.

DEALER
Sir?

GRANT

Take it. Go ahead. I could give every person in this room the same amount and I'd still have enough to play all night.

DEALER

Hit a motherlode in the hills?

GRANT

Something like that.

He catches Lilly, gussied up for her job as a drink girl at the Silver Strike. He motions for her to come over. Lilly hesitates for a beat and then heads over with a fake smile plastered on her face.

LILLY

(mumbling)

Son-of-a-bitch.

She sashays up to Grant.

LILLY (CONT'D)

Need a fresh drink?

Grant puts his arm around her waist, takes in her body and gives her a lascivious look.

GRANT

Rather have a fresh sage hen, darling.

Without missing a beat, Lilly quickly removes his hand from her waist and nods.

LILLY

You want a hen, call a granger. I serve drinks.

Grant pulls out his wad of cash, licks his thumb and then pulls out another fifty. He tucks it into Lilly's bustier and lets his hand linger for a beat too long.

GRANT

Then keep those drinks coming, huh.

She bites her tongue, smiles and says --

LILLY

Of course.

She leans over and fills up his shot glass with whiskey. Grant can't help but admire her body - much to Lilly's chagrin.

GRANT

You got some ranges I'd love to visit.

LILLY

You buying drinks for the gang here or you want change?

GRANT

Boys, ya'll want some more?

Naturally, all of the COWBOYS yelp for more. Lilly moves away from Grant and pours all the drinks.

LILLY

You boys might want to slow up on the booze. Bad things can happen to drunk fools flush with cash.

Grant starts cracking up.

GRANT

Honey, that is a stitch. Who the hell you think is gonna brush with us - drunk or sober?

LILLY

Sheriff?

GRANT

(laughs)
Not a concern.

LILLY

Bunch of hard luck miners needin' some greenbacks?

Grant pulls out his revolver quickly and spins it on his finger.

GRANT

Let'em try, darling.

Lilly stops for a beat and then shakes her head.

LILLY

What about that new fella come into town yesterday? You know...

She runs her tongue across the her two front teeth.

LILLY (CONT'D)
He seems dull enough to get
involved in some ill advised
business.

Grant grits his teeth.

GRANT
Maybe he already has.

LILLY
Oh, of that I'm sure. He seems the
type. Good luck at the table,
gentlemen.

She goes to walk away when Grant grabs her arm.

GRANT
Maybe you need a reminder who runs
this town, girlie.

LILLY
I'm well aware who runs the
town...for now.

GRANT
You know something I don't?

LILLY
(shrugs)
I have hope is all.

GRANT
But I have *power* so maybe you
should be a *lot* nicer to me.

Lilly and him stare at each other for a beat.

GRANT (CONT'D)
(mean)
Who do you think you are?

LILLY
Just a girl selling liquor.
(stern)
Now get your hands off me.

Grant lets her go. Lilly smiles and walks away. As she passes
the bar, we hear --

ORVILLE (O.C.)
What do you want to do with your
life?

CUT TO:

INT. SHACK - EDGE OF TOWN

Orville - with his two Goons standing outside - sits across from the aforementioned SHERIFF LONGMAN (50s). He's as rough as advertised.

ORVILLE
I can't imagine you saw yourself
settling down here in West Liberty.

LONGMAN
It's a decent town.

ORVILLE
Sure it is, why we built a stop
here, but you don't want to spend
all your time in a one horse berg
like this. Not a man of your
stature.

LONGMAN
What do you mean?

ORVILLE
Hell, you're a skilled lawman -
more so than Earp or Masterson or
any of those fools - and you're
wasting your golden years locking
up drunks.
(beat)
I can't imagine that's too
rewarding.

LONGMAN
Neither is getting shot at -
something Earp and Masterson deal
with all the time. I'm content with
locking up drunks.

ORVILLE
Where is your sense of adventure,
Sheriff? There's a whole country to
explore. Ever been to California?
It's God's own playground.
(winks)
(MORE)

ORVILLE (CONT'D)

And the women there, hot DAMN
Sheriff, they're something! New one
every night and twice on Saturdays!

LONGMAN

What am I gonna do in California?
Scratch around in the hills hoping
to find some glitter dirt?
(eyes him)
You trying to get rid of me?

ORVILLE

I'd hate to see this town lose a
man like you but I'm concerned for
your health in these waning years -
and make no mistake, these are the
twilight years. Hell, I'm no spring
bird myself, Sheriff, and when the
time comes, I am off to greener
pastures.

LONGMAN

Well, I ain't sick and I ain't you.
I like it here and California
sounds like more trouble than it's
worth.
(nods)
I'm respected and that's worth more
than coin.

Orville nods then snaps his fingers and one of the Goons walk
into the room with a sack of cash. Orville tosses it on the
ground and the bills spill across the floor and hit Longman
in the feet.

Longman reaches down, pulls up a stack and runs his thumb
along the edge, listening to the rustle of his potential
future in his hands.

Orville grins --

ORVILLE

How's California sound now?

On Longman's suddenly convinced face, we --

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - DUSK

Sam is leading Jonah - loaded for bear - to the edge of town.
He's hoping to slip out unnoticed as the sun goes down. He's
about to mount his horse when he spots --

GUS

Crossing the street in front of him. They lock eyes and Sam notices Gus's busted up face.

SAM
What happened?

GUS
Same shit that always happens if
you want to do business here.

SAM
Grant?

Gus nods. Sam shakes his head. He looks at Jonah and he whispers --

SAM (CONT'D)
I know, I know. Goddamn it, I know.
(to Gus)
You see the Sheriff?

GUS
Nice enough man but he can't do a
damn thing.

Sam sighs. He walks the reins over to Gus and hands it to him.

SAM
Make sure he's safe.

GUS
What are you going to do?

SAM
Where is he?

Gus points across the way to the Silver Strike. Sam nods and heads over into the --

CUT TO:

INT. SILVER STRIKE CASINO

He pushes the swinging saloon doors open and everyone glances over at him - including Lilly and Grant. All actives in the casino stop. Grant's face hardens.

Sam walks over to him and Grant stands up to face him. His hands hang near those pistol revolver handles. Grant eyes Sam and shakes his head.

GRANT

Boy, if all your brain was dynamite you wouldn't have enough to blow your nose.

SAM

What happened to my friend Gus?

GRANT

He opened his mouth when it wasn't his turn.

SAM

Funny, your mouth's open and you can't seem to close it.

Sam grins, exposing his front teeth. A few people cant help but chuckle. Grant is fuming.

SAM (CONT'D)

Now look, I took it easy on you last time. Removed some troublesome teeth and gave you a girlfriend slit in your palm. Unless you want to escalate all of this, you're better off getting out of town and leaving these people be.

Grant laughs.

GRANT

Only one of us is a stranger here and it sure as shit ain't me. I'm more important to this town than the Pony Express.

SAM

I'm only gonna ask you one more time. Get your shit and ride out.

Grant spits a chunk of chaw between his gapped teeth. It lands with a wet SMACK on Sam's boot. Sam calmly kicks it off his foot and trains his eyes on Grant.

GRANT

I'm gonna enjoy endin' you.

In a flash, Grant draws both of his pistols from his holsters and snaps them up to fire. But before he can squeeze the triggers, Sam kicks him behind the knee, causing Grant to fall forward, firing his shots into the ceiling.

Sam lands a CRIPPLING kick to Grant's ribs and we can hear a sickening CRACK followed by painful SCREAMING.

Sam wants to finish Grant then and there but a second Cowboy grabs a nearby beer bottle and SLAMS it across Sam's face.

A massive cut rips open on his cheek and blood streams down his face. Sam wipes the back of his hand against the wound and winces.

SAM

You just biff my face?

The second Cowboy stiffens, ready for a fight but Sam is not rushing into anything just yet. He pulls out a knife that's strapped to his leg and throws it across the room. It sticks into the second Cowboy's leg. In a flash, Sam sprints across the room, YANKS the knife from his leg and BURIES it into his neck. Blood SPURTS out of the wound and he drops to the ground.

Someone SCREAMS as blood pools around his body. A few PEOPLE run out -- including the Bowler Hat Man. We follow him --

OUTSIDE

Where he starts to scream --

BOWLER MAN

(yelling)

Bime-by! Bime-by! Bime-by! It's
time, ya'll! IT'S TIME!

It's enough to get the attention of the LOCALS. Some of them run up to Gus, who nods towards the Fire Box. They all run inside and we're back in the --

SILVER STRIKE

The third Cowboy stands, pulls out the gun and fires off a shot at Sam. But Sam DROPS to the ground - the bullet SAILS just above his head and embeds into the wall, sending a shower of splinters onto BYSTANDERS.

Sam pops up, grabs the leg of a chair, spins and SMASHES it into the Cowboy. The impact of the blow forces the revolver from his hand. It sails across the room and lands at the feet of --

LILY

She reaches down and snatches it from the ground. She pops open the cylinder and notices four bullets still inside. She snaps it shut and we're back on --

GRANT

Who stands up, spins on his heels and wants to fire but before he can, Sam takes the chair leg that's still in his hand and slams it down on Grant's arm - snapping it in half. Grant drops to the ground, clutching his arm and SCREAMING in pain.

Sam pulls out that Bowie knife and SNAPS it down into's Grant's wrist. Sam pulls the blade out but places his boot down on the wound. He stashes the Bowie knife back in its holster and pulls out a revolver from his hidden chest holster.

SAM

Goddamn you for making me do this.

It doesn't look like this is going to be pretty when we find ourselves back outside on --

MAIN STREET

Where Orville comes running from the now departed Sheriff's office and towards the ruckus. He runs past the Fire Box and glances over to see --

GUS

Handing out a cache of weapons to the townspeople. Something is afoot and Orville doesn't like or trust any of it. He makes a mental note of the men involved and the location when suddenly a --

GUN SHOT

Echoes around the town and blasts into the night sky. Everyone snaps their attention to the --

SILVER STRIKE

Where we see Sam standing over Grant, the gun still in his hand but it hasn't been fired. Next to him, however, is a bullet lodged into the table fired from the gun held by --

LILLY

She has it aimed square at Sam. They lock eyes and she is as steely and steady as anyone.

LILLY

You already done enough damage here...I ain't gonna let you add to it.

SAM

You defendin' *him*?

LILLY

I'm defendin' the town and you
ain't part of it. Holster that and
walk out of here.

Sam waits a beat and then re-holsters the gun. He steps off
of Grant's wrist. Grant hobbles up and runs out of the shop,
quiet as a church mouse.

Sam and Lilly hold a gaze for a beat before we're back
outside on --

MAIN STREET

Where Orville stops Grant from taking off. Grant has tears
falling down his face. Orville slaps him - the sound echoes.

ORVILLE

Get your shit together. There is a
bigger problem to handle.

He nods at the Fire Box.

ORVILLE (CONT'D)

Get a posse together and at
midnight it's noon, got me?

Grant nods and then takes off into the darkness. We're back
in the --

SILVER STRIKE

Lilly hasn't lowered the gun.

LILLY

Probably better if you left.

Sam nods.

SAM

Sorry I ruined the evening.

He eyes Lilly and says --

SAM (CONT'D)

Next time, shoot to kill.

He turns and walks out into the --

MAIN STREET

Mayor Bellnap runs up to the middle of the crowd and yells
out --

BELLNAP

What the devil is happening? What is all of this ruckus? Where is Sheriff Longman?

Sam walks out of the Silver Strike and tries to blend into the crowd but Orville grabs him by the arm. Sam tries to slide away but Orville tightens his grip.

ORVILLE

Good people of West Liberty! Gather 'round!

A small crowd forms around him.

ORVILLE (CONT'D)

I've just been down to see the Sheriff about the train robbery when, to my shock and horror, I discovered that Sheriff Longman has up and left town!

The crowd gasps.

ORVILLE (CONT'D)

I share your disbelief but if you head to his domicile presently, neither he nor his effects are present.

BELLNAP

What are you saying? The man is gone?

ORVILLE

Like a spirit in the night.

The crowd MURMURS in shock. Lilly walks out of the Silver Strike and stares across at Orville and then at Sam.

LILLY

What did you hear about the robbery?

ORVILLE

I hate to admit that it was Grant and his flunkies that took part in the raid. I'd say I would punish them but it seems our boy Sam here did that for us.

Everyone starts to clap - save for Lilly who doesn't quite swallow all of this. Orville turns to Bellnap --

ORVILLE (CONT'D)

Mayor Bellnap, I know that Sheriff is usually an *elected* position but in light of that no good dog Longman leaving crime to fester here, I think drastic action is needed.

BELLNAP

What do you have in mind?

Orville grins and slaps Sam's back.

ORVILLE

Hell, this young man would make a helluva Sheriff. He's only been in town a few days and he's already showed us that he isn't afraid to do the dirty work. Honest as the day is long and what this town needs - fresh blood.

The Crowd nods in agreement.

ORVILLE (CONT'D)

What'cho say Bellnap? Should we give this boy the star?

Sam, as uncomfortable as he's ever been, looks over at the Mayor and says --

SAM

I'm not the marrying type, Mayor....

ORVILLE

Every colt says that until they find a filly. West Liberty is your filly, boy!

The crowd CHEERS and Bellnap - ever the politician - seizes on it.

BELLNAP

In recognition of services already rendered in the protection of the town, I nominate Sam Cotton here for Sheriff. Anyone object?

Silence from the crowd. Bellnap smiles.

BELLNAP (CONT'D)

Motion passed. Welcome Sheriff!

Everyone cheers. Sam tries to pull away from Orville but Orville pulls him close. He speaks through gritted teeth.

ORVILLE

You try running and I'll mention
the men you killed in the robbery.
How'd you think that'd go over?

Sam looks out over at Lilly and then sighs. Orville pats him on the back.

ORVILLE (CONT'D)

A new day is upon us ladies and
gentlemen! Hail Sheriff Cotton!

Most everyone cheers. Orville looks over at Bellnap.

ORVILLE (CONT'D)

How 'bout we go have a drink with
our new man, Bellnap?

BELLNAP

Sounds good.

The three of them walk off and we hear --

LILLY (O.C.)

What the hell is going on?

CUT TO:

INT. FIRE BOX SALOON - BACK ROOM - LATER

Lilly is back there with Gus, Soapy, Molly from the bar, the Bowler Hat man, Levi and all the other people who were collecting arms a little bit ago. Lilly glares across at Gus.

LILLY

You tell us all that stranger is
good people and then the next night
he's the new sheriff and palling
around with Orville *Hood*?

Everyone mumbles in agreement.

LILLY (CONT'D)

You damn near told him about all of
us. What if he tells Hood? What if
he starts picking us off?

GUS

Come on now, Lilly. We both know
that ain't gonna happen.

LILLY

Then why was he palling around with Hood?

GUS

I dunno what that was but I know that we all would have kowtowed to Orville Hood if the pressure was on. Hell, I've done it here. Don't make me a snake.

LILLY

But we know you - you're one of us. This...Sam Cotton...who knows?

Soapy clears his throat and everyone turns to him. He pulls out that bill he showed Lilly earlier.

SOAPY

He paid with this earlier.

He shows everyone and then nods at Molly.

MOLLY

And I took this off of Grant.

She shows everyone the bill...both have similar serial numbers and both have blood stains on it. Everyone - save for Gus - gasps and murmurs.

GUS

All you got is some bloody money. Don't mean he did anything. Hell, he could have swiped it from Grant. It's clear they don't like each other and we know Grant works for Hood.

(eyes Lilly)

You think those two would work together?

LILLY

Nothing would surprise me anymore. This whole town is fallin' apart.

GUS

That's why we need to stand together to take it back. Because if we don't, they'll just push us aside.

Everyone is quiet but nods in agreement.

GUS (CONT'D)

Cotton is one of us - even if he don't know it yet. Him being named Sheriff could be best thing that ever happened to us. A man on the inside.

LILLY

I'll believe he's one of us when he does something that isn't solely in his best interest. Until then, he's another problem we need to solve if we want to take back some power in this town.

Everyone nods and we --

CUT TO:

INT. GOLDEN SPIKE HOTEL - SUITE

Orville, Sam and Bellnap stand around with drinks in their hands. Sam looks like he'd rather be anywhere else. Orville wraps his arm around Sam.

ORVILLE

Bellnap, what do you know about our new Sheriff?

BELLNAP

I heard he can throw a punch.

ORVILLE

Oh, that he can. But did you know he's a genuine war hero.

Sam glares at Orville.

BELLNAP

That a fact?

SAM

Not at...

ORVILLE

(overlapping)

Yessir. He earned himself a whole heap of praise and medals for dispatching a mess of butternuts.

BELLNAP

What happened?

SAM
Nothing special.

ORVILLE
Don't be modest boy. He earned
himself the Medal of Honor.

BELLNAP
Hot damn. That *is* something.
What'cha do for it?

SAM
(beat)
Surviving.

Bellnap looks confused. Orville pats Sam with his meaty paws
again.

ORVILLE
This sum-bitch snuck into a yellow
belly camp and dirked fifteen,
twenty men with a bayonet. When he
came back, was wearing a gallon of
traitor blood on his face.

Orville laughs.

ORVILLE (CONT'D)
Musta been a helluva sight!

Bellnap looks a little concerned but hides it behind a quick
smile.

BELLNAP
That was war time. No shame in
that. Won't need that mess here in
West Liberty.

ORVILLE
Don't be so quick there, Bellnap.
West Liberty is a vital stop on the
East/West line. Any manner of
criminal can come drifting in to
town and take root.

BELLNAP
Suppose so.

ORVILLE
Worse yet, these outside agitators
can come here and rile up the
townspeople.

BELLNAP
I'd like to avoid that.

ORVILLE
We all would.

Orville puts his arm around Sam's shoulder.

ORVILLE (CONT'D)
And this is the man who'll stop it,
no questions asked.

Sam forces a grin.

SAM
As long as there is a weekly
stipend....

ORVILLE
Money isn't everything, Sam.

Sam wants to speak but is cut off.

ORVILLE (CONT'D)
Law and order is it's own reward.
(nods)
Yessir, we need men who can keep
these people in line. You know why,
Sam?

SAM
Enlighten me.

ORVILLE
Because they *need* it. Do you know
what happens with people who cannot
govern themselves? Others come to
govern for them.
(nods at Bellnap)
If it isn't people like us doing
the Lord's work here, who knows
what devils would find their way
into power.

BELLNAP
Amen to that.

All of the men clink their glasses. Sam hydroplanes his drink
and hands the empty glass to Orville.

SAM

Gents, thanks for the free hootch
but if you want a proper lawman
around here, probably better I
don't have barrel fever tomorrow.

Bellnap chuckles and extends his hand.

BELLNAP

Look forward to working with you,
Sam Cotton.

Sam nods to Orville.

SAM

I reckon Levi reserved my room for
me?

ORVILLE

I'll set you up at the Continental -
nicer place anyhow. But tomorrow,
we start looking for a permanent
location.

Sam walks out of the room and we hear the CRUNCH of a
footstep and we --

CUT TO:

EXT. FIRE BOX SALOON

A still bloodied Grant walks with a gang of armed MEN. They
walk along in the shadows and peer into the windows of the
saloon. Grant holds a bottle of liquor with a rag stuffed
into it. One of the Cowboys pipes up --

COWBOY 1

I thought you said we was jus'
suppose to burn the place down.

GRANT

That's what we're gonna do.

COWBOY 1

You didn't say nothin' about
toasting those folks.

GRANT

Wrong place, wrong time.

He strikes up a match and it illuminates his face. That's
when we see --

SAM

Enter in through the back of the bar. We move inside the --

FIREBOX

Where Sam clears his throat. Everyone snaps to him and only half seem excited to see him.

SAM

What's going on in here?

GUS

(grins)

Didn't think you'd make it.

SAM

Got held up.

(to Levi)

Don't think I'll need that room tonight, Levi.

LEVI

You don't have money to pay for it anyhow.

SAM

Our friendship is beyond money, Levi.

LILLY

(eyes his badge)

You the law now?

SAM

So they tell me.

LILLY

You working with Hood then?

SAM

Told you I don't work for nobody 'cept me.

GUS

And now us.

SAM

Just who are "us" anyway?

Gus nods to everyone in the room.

GUS

These are people who are going to help you run Orville Hood and his thugs out of town. Help us retake our town.

Just then, the front window SHATTERS as that molotov cocktail comes flying into the bar and smashes into the ground. The PEOPLE inside the bar panic and SCREAM. Just then, three more cocktails SLAM into the tables and chairs, instantly catching on fire. The fire erupts and, thanks to the alcohol, spreads quickly.

The PEOPLE climb all over each other, struggling to get to the exits. It's pandemonium. In the ruckus, Lilly eyes Sam --

LILLY

What did you do to us?

Before he can respond, we're back --

OUTSIDE

Grant laughs as everyone flees like rats from a sinking ship. One of the Cowboys grabs his shoulder --

COWBOY 2

Let's get going, Grant.

That's when Grant eyes Sam.

GRANT

(mumbling)

Son of a bitch.

He pulls out his gun, takes aim and pulls the trigger. As the bullet screams --

INSIDE

Gus eyes Grant's shot and dives in front of Sam to take the bullet. Both men collapse to the ground. The bullet has slammed into Gus's chest and he is rapidly losing blood.

Sam grabs a nearby napkin and places it on the wound but it's no use and both men know it. Lilly leans down, tears in her eyes, and hugs Gus.

LILLY

Gus...Gus...come on, we got go see Doc.

She tries to move him but Sam grabs her arm.

SAM
Get out of here.

LILLY
I'm not leaving him....

SAM
(yelling)
Get out of here before the fire
kills you too!

She takes a beat, looks down at Gus - who nods to her - and she runs out.

SAM (CONT'D)
Why the hell did you do that?

GUS
You're more important to these
people than you know.

SAM
I'm just a fraud, Gus. I'm not what
you think I am.

A huge cross beam CRACKS and falls to the ground, nearly crushing the two of them. The smoke is getting thick and Sam starts to cough. With his remaining strength, he pulls himself up and coughs out --

GUS
These people...need a hero.

SAM
I'm not that.

GUS
(grins)
But you'll do.

The last of his blood pumps out of the bullet wound and Gus's eyes close. He falls back to the ground, dead. We're suddenly back --

OUTSIDE

As flames burn the inside of the building and smoke pours out the windows, a silhouetted figure stands at the front door and walks out.

It's Sam.

Grant and his goons are gone. Some of the TOWNSPEOPLE are rushing over with buckets to douse the flames but it's futile.

Sam stands in the middle of the street as the fire finally eats enough of the wood and the building collapses to the ground. Sam doesn't flinch. We --

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAWN

Thanks to Longman's sudden windfall, he's left behind the arsenal given to him by the railroad. Along the back wall, we see a few boxes of TNT in crates marked "Property of Northern Pacific", a sawed off shotgun, a rifle and few other guns. Longman, apparently, was a big believer in the second amendment.

We clock Sam sitting at the beat up table. In front of him is his Bowie knife and the few remaining bills that Orville tucked into his pocket. Sam sighs and we --

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. SHENANDOAH VALLEY

Sam and a YOUNG SOLDIER are walking along the dense woods of the Shenandoah Valley. They seem to be lost and the Solider is not taking it well.

YOUNG SOLDIER

Lieutenant is going to *kill* us.

SAM

Unless the Goobers get us first.
(off his horrified look)
Relax, we'll find our way back to the diggings soon enough.

YOUNG SOLDIER

Just don't want to get in trouble.

SAM

(eyes him)
How old are you?

YOUNG SOLDIER

(puffed out)
Eighteen.
(and then)
Fifteen.

SAM

Then listen to an elder. If you're
due for it, trouble'll find you.
Nothing you can do but react.

YOUNG SOLDIER

God willing trouble'll leave me
alone until this is all over.

Sam stops, shakes his head and whispers --

SAM

Never that easy.

He points ahead and they spot two --

CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS

Making their way through the forest as well. As of now, they
have not sighted Sam or the Young Soldier. The Young Soldier
shakes his head --

YOUNG SOLDIER

Let's get out of here, they ain't
seen us.

SAM

You think they're gonna say that if
they find some of our boys?

YOUNG SOLDIER

I dunno but I know we don't gotta
do this. What if there's more of
'em?

SAM

Then I hope you're an accurate
shot.

The Young Soldier looks away. Sam sighs.

SAM (CONT'D)

Is it loaded?

(off his nod)

When I say, hand it to me.

Sam raises his own rifle and stares down the iron sights. He
has the farthest Confederate lined up. He exhales and
squeezes the trigger. The bullet EXPLODES out of the barrel
and in an instant, the Confederate's head erupts and he drops
to the ground.

SAM (CONT'D)
 (calmly)
 Hand me yours.

They swap weapons and Sam raises he sights. The other Confederate Soldier raises his gun and fires blindly into the woods. A few bullets SLAM into trees near Sam and the Young Soldier - causing the kid to drop to the ground - but Sam doesn't flinch.

He lines up the sight and curls his finger around the trigger. Pink mist in the air a hundred feet away confirm his kill.

Sam looks down at the Young Soldier. The kid has tears in his eyes. Sam nods and hands him his rifle back. The Young Soldier climbs to his feet, wipes his eyes and nods.

YOUNG SOLDIER
 Are there any more?

SAM
 There always are.

The two of them make their way through the woods and we --

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE

We catch Sam as he walks out of the building and into the morning sunlight. We tilt down at the table. The money is still there. The Bowie knife is gone.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - MORNING

The Firebox Saloon is a pile of smoking embers. Nothing from the night before remains - not even Gus. A few early morning PASSENGERS stand by and idly gossip about the fire.

Off in the distance, a train whistle BLOWS.

That's when we see Sam, jaw tightly clinched, strides down the street with purpose - his long jacket flutters in the breeze. That Sheriff's badge glints in the rising sun. A PASSENGER calls out --

PASSENGER
 What happened, Sheriff?

SAM
Accident.

PASSENGER
Anyone injured?

Sam doesn't respond but can't help but grin. He walks off and we're inside --

CUT TO:

INT. SOAPY'S BATH HOUSE

Soapy, who looks like he hasn't slept all night, sits on a stool and cradles a cup of coffee. He takes a sip when a shadow falls over his face. He looks up and sees --

SAM

Standing in the doorway. Soapy takes in Sam but his eyes fall on Sam's pistol.

SOAPY
What in the....

SAM
Get up Soapy. I'm bringing you in.

SOAPY
For what?

SAM
Conspiracy.

SOAPY
I ain't....

Sam cocks the gun.

SAM
You are. Let's go.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JAIL

Soapy sits down in the jail cell as Sam closes the door.

SOAPY
You ain't right!

SAM
Yeah, I know.

Sam starts to walk away but Soapy stands up and calls out --

SOAPY
Gus believed in you but you ain't
nothing but a coward!

Sam wants to turn around and respond but he doesn't. Instead, he walks out of the jail.

In quick succession we see Sam start to round up all of the townspeople who were in Gus's bar the night before. He marches them all to the jail cell and locks them up.

When he comes for Molly, she spits on his boots and slaps him across the face. He doesn't respond harshly but just marches her down the street towards the jail. Mayor Bellnap walks up to him.

BELLNAP
What are you doing?

SAM
Making sure the people in this town
are safe.

MOLLY
This isn't fair! He's a monster!

SAM
(to Bellnap)
You hired me to do a job, let me do
it.

Bellnap nods and we suddenly --

CUT TO:

INT. GOLDEN SPIKE HOTEL - SUITE

Orville stands near the window and watches Sam march all of the traitors towards the jail. He gives a slight smirk. That's when we hear --

GRANT (O.C.)
I'm telling you, he's a menace and
he's working against us. We can't
trust him.

ORVILLE
You seen him this morning?

GRANT

No, but I saw him last night at
their secret meeting.

Orville moves out of the way and points down at the street.
Grant walks over and stares out at Sam arresting Molly. His
jaw goes slack.

ORVILLE

He's eliminating our only enemy in
town. Because of that, half a dozen
new properties are going to
suddenly be available for us to
purchase for pennies on the dollar.

(smirks)

He plays chess and you play
checkers.

He turns around to face him.

ORVILLE (CONT'D)

Watch him and you may learn
something.

(and then --)

Get out of here, Grant.

Grant walks out of the room and we --

CUT TO:

INT. FIRE BOX SALOON - RUINS

Lilly is standing among the still smoldering ruins of the
Fire Box Saloon. She has placed a sheet over what remained of
Gus. She stands over him and shakes her head.

LILLY

You should've listened to me, Gus.

From behind her she hears a footstep on the rubble. Without
turning around, she accurately guesses --

LILLY (CONT'D)

My turn to be marched to jail?

She finally turns around and locks eyes with Sam. They stare
at each other for a beat and then he nods. She smirks.

LILLY (CONT'D)

You had this all planned out,
didn't you?

SAM

This didn't come together until
last night. But after what I saw, I
knew what had to happen.

She shakes her head.

LILLY

Who are you?

Sam looks at her and we suddenly hear an artillery BLAST and
we --

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. UNION CAMP - OUTSIDE ATLANTA - NIGHT

An exhausted bunch of UNION soldiers - including Tommy O'Shea
- are huddled together around a fire as a light rain falls.
Every once in a while, another shell fires and all the men
jump - save for one.

Sam.

He looks like a lost man. Another BLAST makes his compatriots
jump.

TOMMY

Goddamn artillery is jarring the
teeth out my skull.

UNION SOLDIER 2

How many more days they gonna keep
us pinned down?

TOMMY

(laughs)

They're fighting to hold onto the
South. They'll fight till they
ain't nothing but bones.

That's when we notice Sam move away from the fire and
disappear into the darkness. He walks over to his rifle,
takes off the bayonet.

The moonlight flashes off the bayonet and knife in his hands
as he heads in the direction of the artillery fire. We're
suddenly inside the --

CONFEDERATE CAMP

Two CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS are sitting under a tree to stay out
of the rain, both smoking cigarettes.

They laugh at some bawdy joke one of them tells until the serrated knife edge slices a throat from behind. Blood spray hits the other Soldier but before he can respond, Sam slams the bayonet into the Soldier's heart.

Sam steps out of the shadows. Above him, on a small crest, is the aforementioned artillery, still belching out shells. As they explode out of the barrel, we get a brief view of the camp. The rain starts to fall a little harder and thunder claps join the artillery. In between blasts, all we can hear is the rain.

Sam makes his way in the darkness towards a group of SOLDIERS. In the first flash from the shell, we see Sam SLAM his knife blade into the neck of one man before stabbing another in the eye with the bayonet.

Darkness and then the flash shows us dead Confederate Soldiers. Darkness and then the flash shows Sam dispatching a few more Soldiers. He's quick, quiet and efficient.

Darkness and then another flash and Sam is standing at the base of the crest where the gun sits. In his wake are half a dozen dead Soldiers.

Another BOOM and then Sam crests the hill where he finds --

MITCHELL

The man who stole Beth from him at the outbreak of the war. Mitchell finally looks up and sees Sam standing there. In his hands are the blood drenched weapons. A rifle is within arms length.

MITCHELL

Sam? Holy hell, how are you?

He looks down and sees the bloody knife in Sam's hand. In a flash, he hits Sam in the chin with the butt end of his rifle. It splits open and bleeds but Sam isn't bothered.

Sam's hands tighten around the knife handle. In a flash he's on top of Mitchell. He pushes him to the ground and the two struggle in the mud. They roll around, each man momentarily get the upper hand until finally Sam pins Mitchell to the ground.

In Sam's eye we see a bolt of lightning flash as Sam drives the knife blade into Mitchell's chest. He pulls it out and stabs again. And again. And again. And again. He lets out a primal SCREAM and we're back in the --

UNION CAMP

Tommy and the group of Soldiers haven't moved from the fire. They wait for a beat and then Tommy grins.

TOMMY
Ya'll hear that?
(nods)
It's quiet.

Just then, Sam walks out from the shadows. His face and clothes are drenched in blood. Everyone is stunned. There's a clap of THUNDER.

SAM (O.C.)
I'm a walking curse. I'm bad news wrapped in decorative paper. I'm only good for one thing.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIRE BOX SALOON - RUINS

Lilly takes him in. The swagger seems gone.

LILLY
What's that?

SAM
Death.

She eyes him.

LILLY
Were you in on the robbery?

SAM
(nods)
My hand was forced but I was.

Beat.

LILLY
Did you kill Tommy?

Sam gives her a quizzical look and then the tumblers click in his head.

SAM
Are you Lilly O'Shea?

He slaps his hands together and laughs. Lilly is confused.

SAM (CONT'D)

I served with your brother. He was a friend of mine. He mentioned a sister. Said she was mean...should have put it together sooner.

(beat)

I've killed a lot of men but Tommy wasn't one of them.

Lilly stands firm but a few tears fall down her face.

SAM (CONT'D)

He deserved better. He was a good man.

(shakes his head)

Helluva a lot nicer than you are.

She grins.

SAM (CONT'D)

Still, I gotta take you in.

(beat)

I don't want to cuff you.

LILLY

I'm not going to run and I sure as hell don't want you touching me.

Lilly walks out of the ruins and we --

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL

He marches her into the packed jail cell and closes the door behind her. Everyone in there is YELLING - calling him names and cursing up a blue streak. Sam holds up his hand and waits for the shouts to die down. When they do, he clears his throat.

SAM

I wanna let you know, I did this for your own good.

SOAPY

You don't give a damn about us!

LEVI

We were friends!

Sam grins.

SAM
We still are, Levi.

LILLY
Then what is this all about?

SAM
Safety.

Sam takes the ring of keys and hands them to Lilly through the bars. She is confused but takes them. She tries to unlock the door but he puts his hand over her hand and she stops.

SAM (CONT'D)
Not yet.
(beat)
In a few minutes, ya'll are going to hear a lot commotion outside. A lot of gunfire and more.
(grins)
Your boy Longman was well armed before he skipped town.
(beat)
Just stay in here and you'll be as fine as cream gravy. I'm gonna do my best to save your businesses but don't hold me to it. Things might get messy.
(nods)
After the commotion is done, wait a spell and then come on out. Head to the suite in the Golden Spike - you'll find about ten thousand little surprises there for you.

Sam turns to leave. Lilly calls out --

LILLY
What're you going to do?

He turns and shrugs.

SAM
Kill'em all, I guess.

He walks out of the jail and we --

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET

Sam walks with purpose down the now empty street. Up ahead, outside the Silver Strike casino, he spots Grant and three Cowboys hanging out. Sam turns on his heels and makes his way towards Grant.

Grant stands and shakes his head.

GRANT

That badge don't make you scary.

SAM

The badge, no.

Suddenly, Sam rushes Grant, pulls out his Bowie knife and PLUNGES it so deep into his gut the tip pops out Grant's back.

SAM (CONT'D)

But the knife does.

Sam gashes across Grant's stomach and finishes the job. Grants tries to say something but only blood comes out of his mouth.

The first Cowboy pulls out his gun but Sam pulls out his knife and throws Grant's lifeless body onto the Cowboy, sending him to the ground.

In one quick motion, Sam pulls out his revolver and fires a bullet point blank into the second Cowboy's forehead. He drops hard.

The third Cowboy pulls his gun and fires off a shot that glances against Sam. It opens up a cut the length of his arm. Without hesitating, Sam fires two shots into the third Cowboy's chest and drops him as well.

The first Cowboy has pushed off Grant's dead body and scrambles to his feet. He rushes at Sam and SLAMS into him. Both men go skidding on the dirt - Sam's pistol goes skittering away from his grasp. The first Cowboy grins.

FIRST COWBOY

That's not good.

SAM

Neither is this.

He opens his jacket and pulls up a sawed off shotgun. He pulls the trigger and in an instant, the first Cowboy's mid section is riddled with buckshot. Sam tosses the shotgun aside, scoops up his pistol and reloads it.

Sam heads down the street and we're suddenly inside the --

CUT TO:

INT. GOLDEN SPIKE HOTEL - SUITE

Orville's eyes go wide as he sees his new "friend" making short work of his Cowboy army.

ORVILLE
Son of a *bitch*.

He makes his way to the door, pulls it open and yells at his two massive Goons --

ORVILLE (CONT'D)
You kill that tin badge or don't
come back, ya here?

The two Goons look at each other and rush out of the building. Orville turns back into the room, scrambles to his desk, whips open the drawer and finds his six shooter. He loads up the bullets and we --

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET

Sam snaps his revolver closed and eyes six more of Orville's Cowboys coming out of nearby buildings. They start to fire but Sam doesn't slow down at all. He raises his gun and fires off three shots - each finding a body.

A Cowboy from a second story room fires off a shot that catches Sam in the shoulder. Sam spins with the bullet but, as he comes around, he fires off a shot that nails the gunman dead between the eyes. The Cowboy falls over the railing and SPLATS on the ground in front of him.

The remaining Cowboys fire towards Sam. He rolls and hides behind the body of the dead Cowboy. Three bullets slam into dead body - one making it's way clear through and nearly hits Sam in the face.

SAM
That would've been bad.

Another bullet catches Sam in the ass. Sam grits his teeth, pops up and fires off three quick shots - two bullets catch two Cowboys in the chest, sending them flying backwards. The third fires another shot and it catches Sam in the side.

The shot drops him.

The Cowboy smiles, holsters his weapon and walks over to the body. As soon as he stands over him, Sam suddenly opens his eyes and fires a shot that blows the back of the Cowboy's head clean off.

Sam hops up, grabs the dead Cowboy's gun and limps towards the Golden Spike. He reaches into his jacket and is about to pull out something until the two massive Goons walk out of the front door and grin.

GOON 1
You look tired.

SAM
I've been better, fellas.

GOON 2
This ain't personal.

SAM
By nature, killing is pretty personal.

They both hold up their guns. Sam sighs.

SAM (CONT'D)
Guys, can I have a cigarette before I go? Just a few puffs?

The Goons look at each other and nod.

GOON 1
But don't do anything stupid.

SAM
What the hell am I going to do?
(points to the wound on
his side)
Bleed on you?

The Goon smirks. Sam reaches into his jacket and pulls out a...cigarette and a match. He lights it up and takes a long drag, making sure that cherry is BRIGHT red. He exhales and starts to cough. Goon 2 starts to laugh.

GOON 2
Not a big smoker, huh?

Sam doubles over and the two Goons laugh. As they are distracted, Sam reaches into his jacket and pulls out a stick of dynamite. He pinches off the wick, uses the cigarette to light the stubby wick and stands back up.

He whistles, tosses it to Goon 1 and dives for cover. Goon 1 catches it and, before he can process what he's done, the stick of dynamite EXPLODES. Little bits of the Goons fly through the air and land on Sam's cowering body. We're suddenly inside the --

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL

Some of the people are panicking but they all have stayed in the cell. Levi is holding up Lilly who looks in the direction of the explosion.

SOAPY

What's going on?

LILLY

I dunno. Lot of smoke.

LEVI

Maybe we should leave.

MOLLY

And possibly be blown up? No thanks.

Lilly narrows her eyes to get a better look and we're back in front of --

CUT TO:

EXT. GOLDEN SPIKE HOTEL

There is a small, viscera filled crater where the Goons were standing. The opening to the hotel is now a massive hole. Smoke and dirt are kicked up in the air making it difficult to see.

Sam pulls himself up from the ground - he's looking pretty weak. He cracks his neck and sighs.

SAM

That...that was loud.

Just then, a shot RINGS out and catches him in the gut. Sam stumbles back to the ground. Through the smoky air in front of the hotel walks Orville - a thin trail of smoke leaving his revolver.

ORVILLE
I didn't want to do this. You
forced my hand.

SAM
(coughs)
I owed you for forcing mine
earlier.

Sam struggles to his feet and Orville lets him but keeps that
gun trained on him.

ORVILLE
You could've run this town with me.
We would've made a mint together.

SAM
I saw how you treated your friends.
No thanks.

ORVILLE
I'm tough but fair.

SAM
Only one of those things is true,
Orville.

Orville chuckles.

SAM (CONT'D)
Besides, our partnership would've
never worked. Next time some
handsome stranger blew into town
and killed a few folks for you,
you'd get all weak in the knees and
I'd end up like Grant over there.

ORVILLE
(grins)
Maybe. We'll never know.

We're suddenly back in the --

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL

Lilly is relaying the scene to the people. Everyone looks
scared and a little sad.

LILLY
Aww hell.

She hops down from Levi's shoulders, walks over to the cell door and unlocks it.

SOAPY

Lilly, it's too dangerous out there right now.

LILLY

If Orville Hood survives, it'll be dangerous forever.

She pushes open the cell, grabs a stray pistol on the Sheriff's desk and heads outside. No one follows her. We're back on --

CUT TO:

EXT. GOLDEN SPIKE HOTEL

Orville shakes his head.

ORVILLE

I don't get you, Cotton.

SAM

(shakes his head)

Don't worry, that's not unique to you.

ORVILLE

See, I know I'm a bad guy and I've made my peace with it. But you...you don't seem to understand your place in this world.

SAM

Never was a good student.

ORVILLE

You're not a good man. You don't have any scruples doin' anything outside the lines of the law. But then you get this sudden *righteousness* that does you no favors. I mean, look at you now. How is this good for you?

SAM

I'm a complex man, I suppose.

ORVILLE

(shakes his head)

You had real skills, kid.

(MORE)

ORVILLE (CONT'D)

Talents that I would have paid top dollar to keep around.

SAM

Thanks for the offer but I guess I just don't like authority, Orville. I find it stifles my creativity.

ORVILLE

(laughs)

Smart ass to the end. I'd expect nothing less.

(beat)

Any last words?

Before he can respond, we hear a GUNSHOT ring out from behind Sam. He turns and sees --

LILLY

Standing in the middle of the street with a smoking pistol in her hand. A gusty breeze ripples her dress.

Sam turns his head back around and sees Orville laying on the ground, gasping for breath. Sam nods to Lilly and then makes his way over to Orville's body.

The bullet hit him in the neck and blood is pouring out and pooling below him. Sam kicks the gun away from Orville's grasp and kneels down next to him.

Through globs of blood that he spits out, Orville says --

ORVILLE (CONT'D)

This...didn't solve a thing...there are more men like me...than there are like you.

SAM

Then I guess we'll just have to keep fighting.

Sam slowly stands, reaches into his jacket and pulls out that bloody Bowie knife. With the last of his remaining strength he throws it down and BURIES it into Orville's head all the way to the hilt. Just like that, Orville is dead.

Lilly runs over to Sam and notices the blood from his gut wound. They lock eyes but Sam just gives her an easy grin.

SAM (CONT'D)

You DID miss me on purpose the other night, didn't you?

LILLY
 (re: wound)
 How bad is it?

SAM
 When I was little, I remember
 trying to climb over a barbed wire
 fence. Tore my hands and legs to
 hell. Worst pain I ever felt.
 (beat)
 This is a million times worse than
 that.

LILLY
 Come on, let's go see Doc.

She grabs his arm but he pushes her aside. She looks
 confused.

LILLY (CONT'D)
 What?

SAM
 Lilly...don't take this personal,
 but I don't like this town and I'm
 not goin' stay.

He pulls off his blood stained badge and hands it to her.

SAM (CONT'D)
 This town needs a hero and I ain't
 it. But you...you're the honest to
 God real McCoy.
 (nods)
 Treat these folks right, hear?

He touches his side and shakes his head.

SAM (CONT'D)
 I think I lost about ten pounds in
 this fight.

LILLY
 Don't be dumb. Go see Doc. Just
 because you ain't gonna live here
 don't mean you gotta die here.

SAM
 Who said anything about dying?
 (nods to wound)
 This'll heal in a few days. I'm
 heading for the coast.

Lilly gives him a look.

LILLY

I've asked twice now. Don't make me beg.

SAM

You ain't never begged for a thing in your life.

(grins)

You did your due diligence, Sheriff. I'm just a hard case.

He turns his attention to a building across the street.

SAM (CONT'D)

But before I light out.

He reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out five sticks of dynamite bound together. He lights the wick, takes a few steps and HURLS the bundle with all his might into the --

TRAIN STATION

He turns to Lilly.

SAM (CONT'D)

I'd duck.

She does just as the bomb EXPLODES - utterly destroying the station in the process. The Northern Pacific sign flies through the air and SMASHES into the ground in the middle of the street. It slowly burns away.

Sam, knocked down by the blast, cackles to himself. He slowly stands up and starts to cough. Blood speckles the back of his hand.

SAM (CONT'D)

Hot damn that was fun!

Lilly emerges from her hiding spot and watches the train station burn. She can't help but smile.

SAM (CONT'D)

(whistles)

Jonah! Come on now!

Like the loyal servant he is, Jonah the horse comes trotting over from across the town. He stops in front of Sam and whinnies. Sam pats his neck and sighs.

SAM (CONT'D)

I know you hate loud noises but it had to be done.

He slowly climbs up, blood staining Jonah's side, and grabs the reins. He turns to Lilly and doffs his cap.

SAM (CONT'D)

Sheriff.

LILLY

Sam.

He nods and starts to trot back towards the other side of town. He passes the --

JAIL

Where the rest of the people he arrested are now emerging. They call out to him and beckon to him but he just keeps on trotting. As they make their way over to Lilly, we stay on Sam.

Behind him, the sun is starting to set and the road ahead of him is already darkened. He leans into Jonah's ear and whispers --

SAM

Can you get me three miles tonight,
boy? Three miles along that sweet
water river? I wanna see it before
I go. After that...it's your turn
to drive.

Jonah whinnies. Sam smiles and pats Jonah on the neck as they leave the outskirts of the town. As their silhouettes fade into the darkness, we --

FADE TO BLACK.