LARAMIE

"THE VERDICT"

(9-22-59)

8-31-59

REVUE PRODUCTIONS, INC.
UNIVERSAL CITY
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PROD. #12231
August 31, 1959
REV. 9/22/59

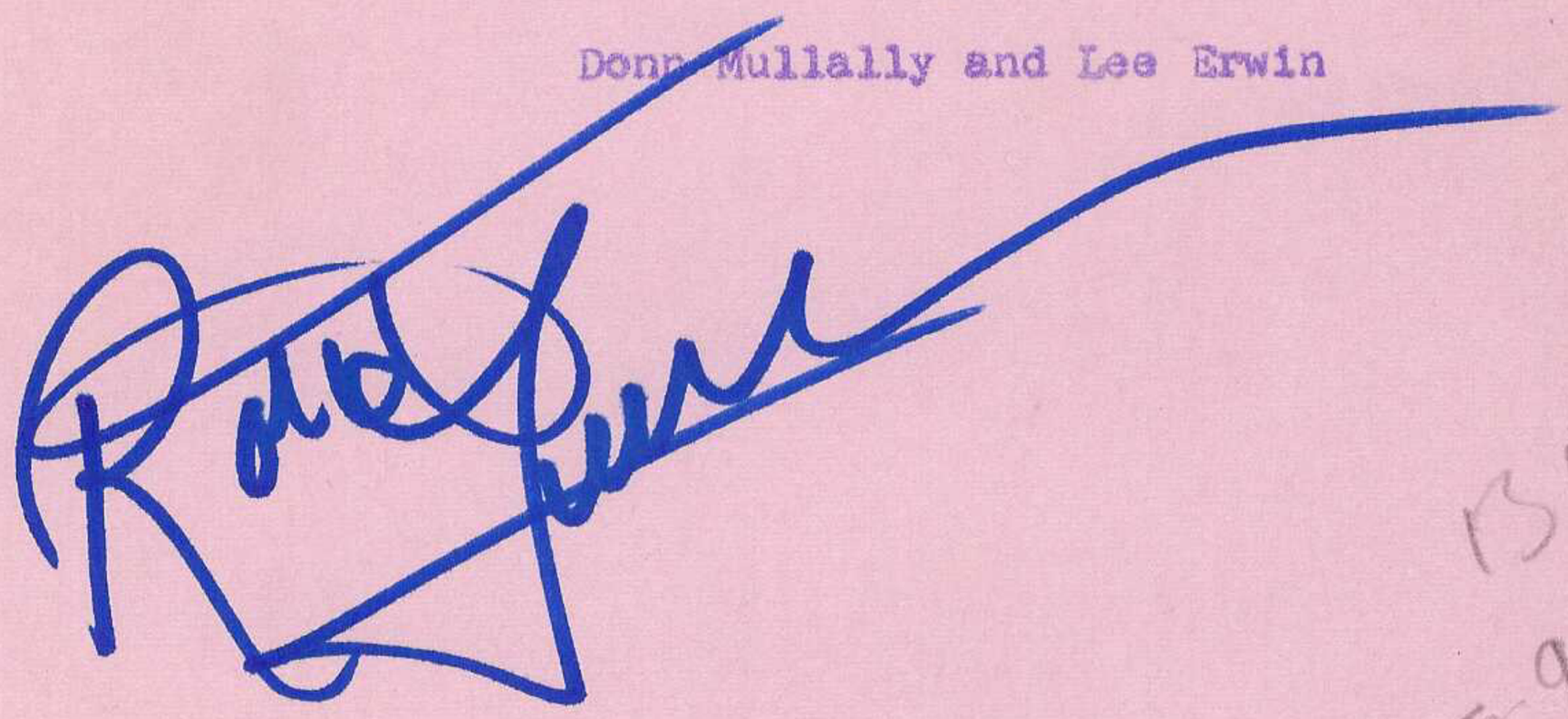
LARAMIE

"THE VERDICT"

Written

by

Donn Mullally and Lee Erwin



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LARAMIE

"THE VERDICT"

CAST

JESS	
SLIM	
JOHN McLANE	Tough-looking, youngish; a drifter, saddle-tramp and a fast gun. Almost the same age as Jess.
JIM HEDRICK	SPECIAL DEPUTY. A big, cold-eyed man. In his thirties.
JUDGE HEDRICK	Big, solid man despite his advanced years. Something reminiscent of a painting of an Old Testament Prophet about him...craggy features, burning eyes, massive head.
VERN COWAN	A big man, homicidal.
JUDGE ROGERS	Younger, smaller and more dryly-legal in manner than Judge Hedrick. Impressive.
TRACY	TERRITORIAL PROSECUTOR. Craggy-jawed man.
CARTER	One of the posse...a man about Jim Hedrick's age.
SAM	Posse member.
CARL	Range hermit; grizzled, fifty or better. Ragged.
OLD PROSPECTOR	
CLERK (TRIAL)	
(2) DEPUTIES	
JURY FOREMAN	

EXTRAS (TOWNSPEOPLE, SPECTATORS AT TRIAL, JURY MEMBERS, POSSE)

PROD. #12231
August 31, 1959

LARAMIE

"THE VERDICT"

SETS

EXTERIORS:

RELAY STATION

ROAD

OPEN COUNTRY

CAMPSITE

WOODED AREA

LARAMIE STREET

SIDE ROAD

SLOPE

INTERIORS:

SHERMAN HOUSE

SALOON

COURTROOM

PROD. #12231
August 31, 1959

LARAMIE

"THE VERDICT"

FADE IN

1 EXT. RELAY STATION - DAY - FULL SHOT 1
The Sherman place is quiet and apparently deserted. The horses are drowsing in the corral and a scattering of chickens are hunting up a mid-morning meal.

2 ANOTHER ANGLE - McLANE 2
The quiet is broken by the entrance of McLANE, who rides in on a black gelding with a lame foreleg. Mac pauses in f.g. He is not much older than Jess, and judging from the way his right hand never strays far from the tied-down gun he wears, he is used to drifting and not likely to be ridden over by anyone.

3 CLOSE SHOT - McLANE -(DOLLY) 3
Although softly whistling "The Streets of Laredo" as he rides in, Mac's eyes are wary, his manner alert. Dismounting, he moves first to the barn, then to the house. PULL BACK with him toward the porch as he calls out: "Anybody home?"

4 MED. PAN SHOT - McLANE 4
He glances in through the windows of the house, then looks around generally, until he's satisfied that he's alone. Then he takes a lariat and lassos one of the horses in the corral, snubbing the line to a post.

5 WIDE ANGLE - MAC 5
Working quickly, he removes the saddle from the lame gelding. As he starts to turn away, his arms laden with gear, a six-gun is suddenly rammed into his back.

JESS' VOICE
Hold it right there, mister.

FADE OUT

(FIRST COMMERCIAL)

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ACT I

FADE IN

6 EXT. - DAY - MED. CLOSE TWO - FAVORING JESS 6
JESS has Mac leaning his weight against the corral, so that the latter's hands are occupied as Jess quickly searches and disarms him.

JESS
(stepping back)
You can turn around now -- slow.

Mac turns to face Jess and the latter does a surprised 'take' as he gets a good look at Mac's face.

JESS (contd)
Mac!

MAC
(with relief, smiles)
Jess! What are you doing up here?

JESS
(holsters gun)
I work here. Last I heard, you were down in Texas.
(grins)
Get too hot for you in the Panhandle?

MAC
Just about cooked me.
(urgently)
Amigo, I'm in a jam with this lame horse.

JESS
I see you are. It belongs to Doc Webb in Laramie.

MAC
I don't know anything about Webb. When I woke up this morning who's jamming a gun in my ear? Vern Cowan!

JESS
(reacts)
Vern? He's still cheating a rope?

MAC
(hotly)
Yeah -- he takes my Palomino stud I raised like a kitten and leaves me with this three-legged dog!
(contd)

CONTINUED

6 CONTINUED 6

MAC
(contd)
(earnestly)
You got to let me have a horse, Jess...so I can go after that....

Before Mac can say "S.O.B.," Jess interjects, shaking his head:

JESS
Not my horses to give, Mac.

MAC
(impatiently)
I'll pay for one!

He digs a tobacco bag out from under his belt, takes out a roll of bills and peels off several which he hands to Jess, adding with a grin:

MAC (contd)
Vern overlooked this...in such a big hurry to swap horses.

As Jess looks at money:

MAC (contd)
More'n your crowbait's worth but I've gotta be on my way. That Palomino of mine covers ground like a jack rabbit.

He has picked up the saddle and now throws it on his purchase, starts to cinch it up. Jess takes paper and pencil from a pocket.

JESS
(hands gun back)
I'll write you a bill o'sale, Mac.
(as he does so, grins)
Listen -- Catch up with Vern...Skull him once for me.

MAC
That's a deal!

DISSOLVE

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7 EXT. BARN - DAY - MED. SHOT - JESS 7 -
Jess holds the gelding and examines the horse's lame leg.

JESS
(gently)
Easy, boy...that tendon's really bowed. Let's get you in the barn and....

He looks o.s. as there is o.s. SOUND of horses coming on at a gallop.

8 MED. LONG SHOT - POSSE (JESS' POV) 8
Five men, headed by Special Deputy JIM HEDRICK, are riding toward CAMERA.

9 ANOTHER ANGLE - GROUP
The posse rides INTO SCENE and Hedrick (a big, cold-eyed man in his thirties) reins in virtually on top of Jess.

JIM
(to others, indicating)
Doc Webb's horse.
(to Jess)
Where's the man who rode it in?

JESS
Sold him a horse...just left here. Why?

JIM
(hard)
You knew he was riding Doc Webb's horse.

JESS
Sure...I'm taking the horse back to Doc soon as I put a bandage on that tendon.

JIM
(bites it out)
Don't hurry. Doc's dead...and we're going to hang the horse thief who killed him!

Hedrick wheels his horse and leads the posse out, as Jess reacts, and we

DISSOLVE

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10 EXT. ROAD - DAY - TRAVELING SHOT - SLIM 10
SLIM SHERMAN is driving along in a hay rig. He pulls the team of draft horses up as he hears o.s. DRUMMING SOUND of horses approaching. Slim is not armed.

11 REVERSE ANGLE - POSSE (SLIM'S POV) 11
The posse is coming toward him, riding hard along the road.

12 FULL SHOT - GROUP 12
The posse stops near the buckboard and Hedrick rides up to Slim.

SLIM
Morning, Hedrick. You seem to be in a big hurry -- what's going on?

JIM
Sherman -- anyone pass you heading this way?

He indicates direction of posse.

SLIM
(nods)
Just about five minutes ago....
(gestures off)
Man riding one of my horses -- said he bought it from Jess. Wanted to know if I'd seen a rider on a Palomino stud. Told him 'no'... and he took off across country...like he was headed for Long Ridge.

JIM
(to posse)
That's our man. Let's go.

SLIM
Hold on! What's he done?

Hedrick, moving away, shouts:

JIM
Killed Doc Webb.

Hedrick gallops o.s. and the posse follows him.

13 MED. SHOT - SLIM 13
Slim gazes after the posse, looking deeply troubled and very thoughtful. Then he shakes up the team and continues on toward the Relay Station at a flat trot.

DISSOLVE:

14 EXT. SHERMAN RANCH YARD - DAY - MED. SHOT 14
Slim drives the hay rig into the yard as Jess is just finishing saddling his mount. He has a carbine in the saddle boot.

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15 MED. SHOT - JESS AND SLIM 15

SLIM
Hi, Jess...Any word from Jonesy and Andy yet?

JESS
(in a hurry; mounts up)
They're staying on another week. Letter's in the house.

SLIM
(troubled)
You're not joining Hedrick's posse?

JESS
(shakes his head; grimly)
Stopping it...before Hedrick has them string up the wrong man. So long, Slim.

SLIM
Wait! I'll get my horse and go with you! Just take a minute....

JESS
No time.
(beat)
Anyway...you better stay out of this!

Jess rakes his horse and gallops off in a big hurry. Slim looks after him, then piles hurriedly out of the wagon.

DISSOLVE

16, 17 OMIT (omitted) 16, - 17

18 EXT. OPEN COUNTRY - DAY - MED. PAN SHOT - MAC 18
Mac's horse is loping along, Mac intently eyeing the trail up ahead and softly whistling his favorite tune. As he approaches a ridge, he dismounts and cautiously moves up on foot until he can scan the country ahead of him.

19 FULL SHOT - MAC'S POV 19
A lot of Western real estate - No tract houses, no supermarkets, no nuthin'! Particularly, no rider on a Palomino horse.

20 TIGHT SHOT - MAC 20
Mac peers warily over the top of the ridge and then relaxes, disappointed. He turns back toward his horse and then stops, reacting to the sight of:

21 LONG SHOT - POSSE - MAC'S POV 21
They're riding hard toward CAMERA.

22 MED. SHOT - FAVORING MAC 22
Mac hesitates, thinking about this development. He takes his canteen off the saddle, unscrews the cap and has a drink as the posse RIDES INTO SCENE.

MAC
Howdy....

Hedrick and the others have their guns ready. Hedrick studies the brand on the chestnut and then nods a signal to an o.s. member of the posse. A rope snakes INTO SHOT and settles around Mac, drawing tight and pinning his arms. As Mac reacts to this, we

DISSOLVE

23 EXT. OPEN COUNTRY - DAY - TIGHT SHOT - FAVORING MAC 23
There's a hangman's noose drawn up behind Mac's left ear. His hands are bound behind him; he's seated on the chestnut and the other end of the noose is fast to a limb of a tree. Mac is looking toward CAMERA and, as the CAMERA DOLLIES BACK to INCLUDE Hedrick and the others, we see that they too are all looking in the same direction. We DISCOVER why as the CAMERA DOLLIES BACK far enough to INCLUDE Jess. His carbine is aimed at the posse.

JESS
(coldly)
Take that rope off his neck, Hedrick.

JIM
(levelly)
I'm running this posse -- not you... not your gun. Want to swing beside your friend, shoot one of us.

JESS
(just as level)
Not one of you, Hedrick. I'm taking you out with the first shot.

Jim looks around...none of the men in the posse are

CONTINUED

23 CONTINUED (contd) 23

volunteering to take his place, as:

JESS (contd)
Get that rope off...Move!

JIM
You gave this killer a horse so he could get away. Now you're going to shoot me to save his neck from the rope.
(meaningfully)
I'm beginning to wonder how you figure in this, Jess?

JESS
(flatly)
Mac didn't kill Doc Webb.

JIM
(tauntingly)
Mac didn't? You know this gentleman! That's interesting. Maybe you know too much...Maybe you belong up here with him.

24 MED. ANGLE - OVER CARTER 24

CARTER'S one of the posse, a man about Hedrick's age... and, like the others, a satellite to Hedrick's dominant personality. He has edged his horse around during the above exchange, his right hand out of Jess' sight. He starts to sneak his gun out of its holster, as:

JESS
One last time, Hedrick -- the rope!

Mac spots Carter's move, shouts:

MAC
Jess...the little guy!

Jess swings his gun on Carter.

JESS
Let go of it, Carter.

Carter lets the gun drop to the ground.

JESS
(coldly)
Thank you.

JIM
Thank your friend, Jess....

25 ANOTHER ANGLE - OVER MAC 25

JIM
Guess I was right about you...
(looks around)
What were you doing while Mac shot
Doc Webb?

JESS
The rope...Hedrick.

Jess has the carbine levelled on the posse's leader. Hedrick doesn't move. We see (as does Hedrick) Slim move out from cover behind Jess. His gun is out, pointed at his friend's back.

SLIM
(quietly)
Ease off, Jess. Put the gun down.

JESS
(reacts)
No.

SLIM
Don't make it tougher than it is.
Do what I say.

JESS
And let them go ahead with the lynching?

SLIM
There isn't going to be a lynching.
Leave your gun right there, and go
take the noose off him.

Jess slowly drops his carbine, walks over to Mac's horse, steps up in the left stirrup and lifts the noose over Mac's head.

MAC
Thanks, amigo.

26 MED. ANGLE - FAVORING SLIM 26
as Hedrick angrily watches the above, glowers down at Slim, who is holding the posse at bay with his six-gun.

JIM
(echoes acidly - to Slim)
Thanks, amigo -- what more do you
want, Sherman? Jess is in this
with him. I know it!

CONTINUED

26 CONTINUED (contd) 26

SLIM
(quietly)
I know better. Jess wasn't off my place last night. He tended the morning stage when it came through.

JIM
(hotly)
That's not good enough for me!

SLIM
(eyes narrow)
Let's get this straight, Hedrick. What is your stake in this?

JIM
I'm a Special Deputy! In charge here!

SLIM
Who appointed you -- Sheriff Kiley?

JIM
Kiley wasn't in town. My old man appointed me when Doc Webb's body was found!

SLIM
Your father has no authority to appoint deputies...organize posses.

JIM
Dad appointed more law men than you ever saw, Sherman!

SLIM
That was ten years ago...before he retired. He's not a Territorial Judge anymore.

JIM
(acidly)
Suppose you are? What're you going to do with this killer -- turn him loose?

SLIM
No -- we're going to take him into town, let Sheriff Kiley hold him for the Circuit Judge. He's going to have his day in court.

CONTINUED

26 CONTINUED (contd) 26

JIM
(angrily)
Day in court -- Like he gave Doc Webb before he emptied his six-gun in his back and stole Doc's horse!

SLIM
(including posse)
Look -- Doc Webb meant a lot to me, too. Saved my kid brother when he had pneumonia. You all know that. But if this man you've caught is guilty, I want to hear it from a Judge. After a fair trial.

27 MED. SHOT - GROUP 27
The other members of the posse are beginning to waver. Hedrick only seems even more determined.

HEDRICK
I know what you are trying to do, Sherman...Give this murderer a chance to escape!

Slim is working as much on the posse as he is on Hedrick.

SLIM
Ben Kiley's a pretty good Sheriff. He should be able to hold a prisoner until the Circuit Judge gets to Laramie.

CARTER
(protesting)
The Circuit Judge isn't due here for at least a week.

SLIM
(coldly)
What's the rush? You got hangin' fever?

Carter turns away from Slim's chilling glance. Hedrick looks around at his posse and then turns to Slim.

JIM
You want this man to have a fair trial before a Judge? All right. He'll get one. Today.
(to posse member)
Sam...ride back to Laramie. Get my father and have him meet us at the Relay Station. We'll hold court there.

CONTINUED

27 CONTINUED (contd) 27

Sam nods, spurs his horse out on his mission, as:

SLIM
Your father can't hold a trial! He's not a judge anymore.

JIM
He cleaned up this territory once, didn't he?

This elicits nods of agreement from the posse.

JIM (contd)
He knows how to handle killers -- good as he ever did. Nobody in Wyoming's going to say this man here didn't get all the justice coming to him!

JESS
(laughs bitterly)
"Hangman" Hedrick...that's what they used to call your old man when he was a judge.
(a beat)
This your idea of a fair trial?

JIM
(coldly)
It's the only trial your friend is going to get.
(to Slim)
That's it. Either put up your gun -- or -- start shooting.

28 ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING SLIM 28

Slim looks around at the posse. They're all behind Hedrick's proposal.

CARTER
We're all friends and neighbors, Slim. Do what Jim says.

MAC
You and Jess saved my neck, mister. Don't get yourselves shot. I'll take my chances on the trial.
(wry smile)
I want you around so there'll be one.

Slim slowly puts his gun away. He motions to Jess and the two of them draw apart from the others. Hedrick and the posse start to retie the hands of the prisoner, this time to his saddlehorn, for the ride back.

29 MED. SHOT - SLIM AND JESS 29
They confer, their voices low.

SLIM
You know this man...What about him?

JESS
(nods)
We rode together, once. Mac's no angel but I'm sure he didn't shoot Doc.
(beat)
If he had, the posse would never have taken him like they did. Mac's too good a man with a gun.

SLIM
Okay. I'm with you, Jess.

Jess looks at Slim, appreciatively. In the b.g. the posse mounts and rides off with Mac in their midst, as:

JESS
Mac claimed he was chasing a gunslinger named Vern Cowan. I know Vern, too. He'd kill Doc for a horse or anything else he wanted.
(beat)
I'm going to bring him in. You stay with the posse and stall that trial!

SLIM
Maybe I can do better than that. If I get word to Ben Kiley, there won't be a trial. Not with Judge Hedrick presiding.

JESS
Good. All I need is time, Slim.
(grim smile)
Hold tough...counting on you.

They shake hands. Jess runs to his horse, mounts and rides off.

30 CLOSE SHOT - SLIM 30
Slim is looking worried, as we

FADE OUT

END OF ACT I

(COMMERCIAL)

ACT II

FADE IN

31, 32 OMIT (omitted) 31, - 32

33 EXT. RELAY STATION - DAY - FULL SHOT - POSSE 33
as they ride past the outbuildings of the Relay Station and then rein up, reacting to the sight of:

34 ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING JUDGE HEDRICK 34
JUDGE HEDRICK is mounted on his horse and the CAMERA is SHOOTING UP TOWARD him. The effect is that of an equestrian statue of heroic proportions. Sam, the posse member who brought the message to the Judge, is merely a small inconspicuous figure in the b.g. The Judge is a big, solid man despite his advanced years and there's something reminiscent of a painting of an Old Testament Prophet about him -- the craggy features, the burning eyes and the massive head. He now slowly inclines his head in greeting.

HEDRICK
Gentlemen.

35 MED. SHOT - GROUP 35
They ride up and dismount. The Judge also dismounts and they cluster around him.

SLIM
I'd like a word with you, Judge Hedrick.

HEDRICK
Yes, Mister Sherman?

SLIM
Before we go any further, I want Sheriff Kiley out here.

CONTINUED

35 CONTINUED: (cont'd) 35

Hedrick shakes his head slowly and sadly.

HEDRICK
I'm afraid that won't be possible. Ben Kiley is dead -- shot down by the same man who murdered Doctor Webb.

This is a big shock to the others, and an even bigger shock to Slim.

SLIM
(numbly)
Kiley's -- dead?

HEDRICK
(grave nod)
Shot in the back..six times... Exactly as Doctor Webb was slain.. wantonly. Brutally, without warning. The body was found out on the South Pass Trail..not more than an hour ago. Been there all night.

One of the posse members suddenly lunges at Mac, but Jim blocks him off.

JIM
(righteously)
None of that!
(beat)
We brought the prisoner here for trial.. and that's what he's going to get!
(beat)
No matter how we feel about what he's done -- we're not a lynch mob.

There are ad lib growls of assent from the posse members. Mac swallows hard and licks his suddenly-dry lips.

36 ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING SLIM 36

SLIM
(quietly firm)
Judge..talk to your son..these men with him. Make them understand you have no legal right to try this prisoner!

HEDRICK
I am aware of the legalities involved, Sherman.

CONTINUED

36 CONTINUED (contd) 36

SLIM
Good -- We can send work to the Circuit Judge -- have him call a special session!

HEDRICK
Are you suggesting I am no longer capable of performing the necessary duties of a Trial Judge? Do I appear senile. Infirm?

Slim hesitates briefly.

SLIM
No, sir. But I'm talking about the law. I expect you to tell your son and these other men....

HEDRICK
(cuts in)
The law, in this case, Mister Sherman, stems from a text in the Bible -- a text with which we are all familiar. It is also the creed by which I lived during my long career on the bench, and it is the creed by which I still live.

37 TIGHT SHOT - FAVORING HEDRICK 37
He turns and regards the prisoner, and the smoldering flame in his deep-set eyes seems to burn more fiercely as:

HEDRICK
"Thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning".

There's a silence for a moment after Hedrick has finished. When Hedrick speaks again, he is almost whispering.

HEDRICK (contd)
Prisoner, pray for your soul as I shall pray for mine.
(to Jim)
Deputy-- no one but the law wears a gun in court. Please disarm the others, and the trial will proceed.

As Jim obeys, Slim frowns in disapproval and we:

DISSOLVE

36 EXT. OPEN COUNTRY - DAY - FULL SHOT 38
We're up on some kind of ridge, looking down over a pocket valley. Jess rides in from CAMERA and reins in for a look around. He reacts to a plume of smoke he sees rising from the valley floor. Jess takes his horse down the steep wall of the ridge.

39 ANOTHER ANGLE - JESS 39
as his horse slides down the shale and breaks into a gallop as it reaches solid, flat ground on the valley floor. CAMERA PANS Jess off in the direction of the smoke.

40 EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY - TIGHT ANGLE - AT FIRE 40
CAMERA TILTS UP as Jess comes pounding in..stopping his horse and looking off.

41 HIS POV 41
A rider is getting the hell out of there. WE SE Jess take off, urging his mount.

42 SERIES OF BRIEF CUTS 41
thru thru
45 THE CHASE. The rider Jess is after finally boxes himself 45
into a corner of the valley where the walls rise steadily overhead. He pulls a gun and jumps down...running for cover. Jess rides in and swerves to go after the rider's horse.

46 TIGHT ANGLE - HORSE 46

It is a dapple roan.. no bay. Jess rides up to it, looks at it and grimly leads it back to where its rider has taken cover. As CAMERA PANS to a WIDER ANGLE, WE SEE Jess stand up in his stirrups and hold his hands up.

47 CLOSE SHOT - JESS 47

JESS
(calling)
Nobody's after you...come on out! I know it's you, Carl.

He keeps ~~his hands~~ up and CAMERA PANS to some rocks where a man appears and walks warily toward Jess. His gun is still in evidence, though not on Jess.

JESS (cont'd)
Want to talk to you.

CARL
Last time you said you was through talking. You said what you'd do if you caught me butchering a Sherman steer.

CONTINUED

47 CONTINUED (contd) 47

CARL is a kind of character, a range hermit who lives on other people's beef -- grizzled, fifty or better, ragged.

JESS
(flatly)
This time I didn't see you butchering any of Slim's stock.
(beat)
I want information, Carl. You happen to see anybody ride through here this morning on a Palomino horse?

Carl puts up his gun, rubs his jaw, shakes his head.

CARL
No...I sure haven't.
(beat)
If I should see him...what do you want me to do?

JESS
Give him plenty of room.

Jess grimly spurs his horse out as Carl reacts, and we

DISSOLVE

48 thru 52 SERIES OF BRIEF CUTS 48 thru 52
THE SEARCH...with Jess stopping people, riding up to isolated ranch houses, asking questions and always getting a negative shake of the head to his questions. Jess looks increasingly grim and, in the last SHOT OF SERIES, we should be in CLOSE on Jess as he urges his horse on, his face drawn with worry.

DISSOLVE

53 INT. SHERMAN HOUSE - DAY - CLOSE SHOT - SLIM 53
He, too, is a worried man. CAMERA PULLS BACK and we see that the "court" has been improvised, using the kitchen table as the Judge's bench. The "jury" consists of the men of the posse, who are seated along the wall on straight chairs. Mac is seated in a kitchen chair beside the table. Judge Hedrick is apparently revitalized by the whole aspect of his "court." He seems years younger as he raps on the table and intones:

HEDRICK
The People of the Territory of Wyoming vs. John McLane.
(beat)
(contd)

CONTINUED

53 CONTINUED (cont'd) 53

HEDRICK
(cont'd)
You are charged with the crime of murder, Mr. McLane. How plead you?

Before Mac can clear his throat, Slim is standing before the bench.

SLIM
Judge Hedrick....

HEDRICK
It is customary to address the bench as 'Your Honor'.

SLIM
(grimly)
All right...Your Honor...
(shaking his head)
This has got to stop <u>right here</u>!
(looks around)
Everybody in this room knows as well as I do that you're preparing to commit murder!

HEDRICK
(angrily)
You are challenging the authority of this court!

SLIM
I am. It has no authority!
(beat)
The courts are supposed to protect a man's rights.
(indicates Mac)
You are setting out to deny this man his rights. This is no court at all. You can't hold a trial. You don't even have a prosecutor...

HEDRICK
(inclines his head)
We will appoint a prosecutor.... Jim. Hold up your hand and I'll swear you in.

Jim Hedrick smiles slightly and starts to move forward. Slim blocks him.

53 CONTINUED (contd) 53

SLIM
Your son is no prosecutor, Judge.
(beat)
Doesn't matter if you swear him in. He has no more authority than you do!

HEDRICK
(coldly)
Mr. Sherman...be seated. Before I find you in contempt.

SLIM
(pointing at Mac)
Where's the defendant's lawyer? That's one of his rights and you can't deny it!

HEDRICK
(smiling)
Of course. We have no intention of denying the defendant representation.
(to Mac)
Mr. McLane, feel free to choose any man in this room to represent you. The law also recognizes your right to plead your own defense.

SLIM
The Law....how can you use that word, Hedrick?

HEDRICK
I've warned you, Mr. Sherman. One more personal attack on this court and you will be barred from these proceedings.

54 ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING SLIM 54

as he turns in frustration to face the "jury"...looking levelly at each of them.

SLIM
Think this over. How would you feel if you were sitting where John McLane is?

Jim Hedrick..without warning..spins Slim around and slugs him. Slim sprawls against the wall and Jim has his gun out, levelled on Slim. Jim Hedrick, by the way, is the only man in the room wearing a gun.

CONTINUED

54 CONTINUED 54

JIM
Think this over, Sherman. How would you feel if you were Doc Webb's widow?

CAMERA ZOOMS TO A CLOSE ANGLE of Slim as he pulls himself to his feet, blood trickling from the corner of his mouth. He looks dazed, grim.

DISSOLVE

55 EXT. OPEN COUNTRY - DAY - CLOSE SHOT - JESS 55
The same grim desperation has set to his features as he scans the landscape for some sign of movement. He goes "on point", and CAMERA PANS as he rides off through some rocky country. We see him break into the open below us and ride on toward a man who is hobbling along beside a pack burro.

56 MED. ANGLE - FAVORING JESS 56
as he rides up on the man with the burro. This is an OLD PROSPECTOR type, who squints at Jess.

JESS
Hello, Pop...looking for a man riding a Palomino stud. Seen anything like that this morning?

PROSPECTOR
Nope...

Jess sags.

PROSPECTOR (contd)
...didn't see no man. But I seen a fine-looking Palomino...just a while back.
(points)
Them trees. Saw the horse was hobbled...figured the rider must be around someplace. None of my business.

JESS
(nods)
Many thanks.

He wheels his horse and rides out fast in the direction indicated by the old man.

DISSOLVE

57 EXT. WOODED AREA - DAY - TIGHT ANGLE - THE PALOMINO 57 -
At the moment, the animal is hobbled, his saddle is on, but the cinch has been loosened. He's cropping away at the grass. VERN COWAN moves out from CAMERA, a big man, roughly dressed, with a growth of whiskers on his jaw that may have marked him for his nickname. In our day, he'd be typed at once as homicidal. Vern carries a bridle, which he slips over the horse's head. He tightens the cinch. Then he reacts to the faint o.s. SOUND of a horse approaching. He yanks a carbine out of its boot, leads the horse quickly out of sight behind some trees.

58 LONG SHOT - JESS (COWAN'S POV) - INTERCUT 58
ANGLING THROUGH the trees at Jess riding toward CAMERA.

59 MED. PAN SHOT - COWAN 59
Cowan moves cautiously up toward the edge of the woods, seeking a point where he can get a clean shot at Jess.

60 TIGHT PAN SHOT - JESS 60
Jess is riding directly into Cowan's line of fire. Suddenly Jess (and his horse) react to a SOUND -- the whinny of Cowan's horse concealed in the woods.

61 MED. SHOT - JESS 61
Jess rolls out of his saddle, hits the ground and dives into cover, a split-second before a bullet kicks up dirt at his heels.

62 EXT. WOODS - DAY - TIGHT SHOT - COWAN (INTERCUT WITH ABOVE) 62
He takes aim and then shifts his aim and snaps off a shot.

63 MED. SHOT - FAVORING COWAN 63
Jess fires at Cowan and then runs into the woods. Cowan fires in return, too late, and begins to retreat.

64 MED. PAN SHOT - JESS 64
Jess is circling through the woods, crouching low. He picks up a rock, tosses it behind him and then advances again as Cowan FIRES at the sound.

65 MED. PAN SHOT - COWAN 65
Cowan fires again. Then he reloads and runs to his horse, crouching low.

66 MED. SHOT - FAVORING JESS 66

CONTINUED

66 CONTINUED (contd) 66

As Cowan starts to climb up into the saddle, Jess breaks cover and sprints toward him. Cowan drops out of the stirrup and tries to bring his rifle to bear, but Jess is upon him and the gun goes flying as Jess and Cowan hit the ground together.

67 ANOTHER ANGLE - FIGHT 67

Cowan kicks out at Jess and breaks free. He draws his pistol but Jess deflects his aim and then clips him with a couple of devastating blows -- to the jaw. Cowan sags to the ground. Jess disarms him, picks him up and rams him against a tree. Cowan sags limply, clutching the tree for support as Jess steps back and draws his own gun. Cowan's back is to Jess and he looks fearfully over his shoulder at him.

68 MED.SHOT - TWO 68

JESS
(coldly)
They pay off on you dead or alive, don't they, Vern?

COWAN
You got the wrong man, friend.

JESS
If I have, I'll apologize later.
(beat)
Want to turn around and get on your horse, or would you rather have it in the back?

Jess is running a bluff but there's no way of Cowan's knowing it. Jess fires a shot and Cowan jerks his hand away as the splinters fly inches from his fingers.

JESS
What's it going to be? We've got a long ride. The trip will be a lot easier if I haul your carcass back in a blanket.

COWAN
(turning)
Where you taking me?

JESS
Laramie.

COWAN
Laramie? Maybe we better talk.

CONTINUED

68 CONTINUED 68

JESS
Why?

COWAN
You're no law man...I seen you someplace before.

JESS
(grim nod)
Panhandle country.

COWAN
(smiles)
That's right. I know you, now. Jess something, ain't it?
(Jess nods)
We can work this out. Make you a sweeter deal than the Bounty money, Jess..lot sweeter.

JESS
Save your breath - We're going to Laramie.

COWAN
Might as well shoot me here. Sheriff out of Laramie tried to take me last night. I killed him.

69 ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING JESS 69

Cowan's words shake Jess.

JESS
The Sheriff --?

He breaks off as Cowan suddenly lunges for him. Jess sidesteps, bringing the barrel of his gun down across the back of Cowan's head. Cowan falls heavily and lies still. Jess backs off, gets a rope from Cowan's saddle and starts to tie him up, as we

DISSOLVE

70 INT. SHERMAN HOUSE - DAY - FULL SHOT - GROUP 70

Judge Hedrick is seated behind the table in his makeshift courtroom. Slim, Mac, Jim and the other members of the posse are the rest of the group. Jim is striding up and down before the defendant - living the role of prosecutor.

JIM
(to Mac)
And that is your alibi?

MAC
It's the truth. I didn't do it. But I know the man who did. Figures...Vern Cowan had the Doc's horse when he made me swap.

JIM
This other man, this Vern... if there is such a person...I suppose he's a friend of yours?

MAC
(shakes his head)
I'm particular about who I pick for a friend.

JIM
Or a cell-mate?

71 ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING JUDGE HEDRICK 71

He smiles with fatherly pride, nodding approval of his boy's questioning.

MAC
What do you mean?

JIM
(arrogantly)
Don't ask this Court to believe you've never been in prison, Mr. McLane! You've been arrested before this, haven't you?

72 MED. ANGLE - FAVORING MAC 72

Mac is sweating but he's doggedly fighting back. Slim is sweating right along with him.

MAC
I been in jams -- plenty of them. I killed a couple of men. I'm not proud of it - I'm not denying it. But -- I never shot a man who wasn't gunning

CONTINUED

72 CONTINUED 72

MAC
(contd)
for me. Never shot a man in the back. I sure didn't do the thing you're trying to hang me for!

Judge Hedrick gestures to his son - taking over...

HEDRICK
Is that all you have to say in your defense?

MAC
(hot)
What the devil do you want me to say - It's the truth!

HEDRICK
Young man, you have a great deal to learn. Blasphemy will not help.

73 MED. SHOT - FAVORING SLIM 73
Slim gets to his feet. He's burning with anger but trying hard to suppress it, as:

SLIM
Judge Hedrick --
(His Honor bridles)
--Your Honor...If you're going to call this a trial, hadn't you better try to find witnesses?
(indicates Mac)
Your son is out to convict this man of the crime of murder. Where's the evidence?

HEDRICK
We've seen the evidence, Mr. Sherman...the dead bodies of two fine men -- our Doctor and our Sheriff.

SLIM
That doesn't prove Mac killed them! He could be telling the truth about Cowan. At least give Mac a chance to call a witness.

CONTINUED

73 CONTINUED (contd) 73

HEDRICK
(looks sagely around)
A witness for the defense - who would that be?

SLIM
All right...I'm one!

Hedrick studies Slim. Jim takes out his gun, but his father waves him off.

HEDRICK
You are, Mr. Sherman? You have testimony to give for the defendant in this action?

SLIM
Yes, sir, I have

HEDRICK
(cold smile)
We shall see.

SLIM
I have aright to testify!

HEDRICK
You have only the rights the People confer upon you. As a Magistrate, I have always jealously protected those rights.
(beat)
I will not permit you to obstruct the course of this trial. If that is your purpose.

SLIM
(flatly)
I'm here to testify for John McLane.

74 ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING HEDRICK 74
He loves every minute of this.

HEDRICK
Had you ever seen the defendant before he was taken into custody by my son?

SLIM
I have...that's what I want to tell the Court.

CONTINUED

74 CONTINUED (contd) 74

HEDRICK
You knew him?

SLIM
No. But....

HEDRICK
(sharp interjection)
Simply answer my questions - yes or no.
(beat)
Did you have knowledge of the defendant's whereabouts at the time of the murders with which he is charged?

SLIM
No, sir.

HEDRICK
You admit that you have no personal relationship with the defendant?

SLIM
I do not.

HEDRICK
(sighs)
As I suspected, you are merely obstructing this trial.

SLIM
(hotly)
I have something to say, Your Honor!

HEDRICK
(flatly)
According to your own testimony, you know nothing about the defendant.
(beat)
Please sit down, Mr. Sherman.

75 TIGHT ANGLE - SLIM 75

SLIM
(angrily - shouts)
No! I'm going to say this!

HEDRICK
This is a Court of Law....

CONTINUED

75 CONTINUED (contd) 75

SLIM
It's a kangaroo court! But you're going to listen to me.

Jim starts to move on Slim...his pistol raised to bring it down on Slim's head. This time Slim is ready for him...rocks out of the path of the descending weapon and smashes Jim on the side of the jaw. Jim starts to turn with the gun coming on Slim. But Slim kicks the gun out of his hand and polishes him off with several solid blows to the face. Slim starts to pick up Jim's gun, freezes, as:

HEDRICK
(coldly)
Don't make another move, Sherman...or I'll blow your head off.

76 ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING HEDRICK 76
He hasn't moved from the table, but he has a derringer in his hand and it is pointed at Slim.

HEDRICK (contd)
Kick that gun over to me

Slim does and Hedrick scoops it up.

HEDRICK (contd)
In my days as a jurist, I've dealt with many like you.

Slim walks slowly back to the table and stands before the Judge. He eyes the Judge coldly.

SLIM
Shoot any time you want, Judge Hedrick, but until you do, I'm going to say this!
(beat)
There's one witness you ought to hear before you decide to hang John McLane. I'm talking about Vern Cowan.

HEDRICK
(acid smile)
Is Mr. Cowan in the Court?

SLIM
He will be. Jess has gone after him. He'll bring Cowan back if it's humanly possible. Just give us time!

CONTINUED

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76 CONTINUED (contd) 76

HEDRICK
(mercilessly)
I'm sure Doc Webb and Sheriff Kiley pleaded for time -- and did not get it!
(pounds with gavel, looks around at faces)
To sum up, gentlemen: The defendant, John MacLane, admits to having been in jail. He further admits to having killed other men in the past. It has been proved that he rode Doc Webb's horse to this very place. Beyond any doubt, this man is guilty of ---

SLIM
(interrupting)
But MacLane gave up to your posse without a fight! Does that sound like a man who's running away from two murders?

The posse members are moving toward Slim now. The Judge's hard voice SOUNDS over all:

HEDRICK
The accused was outnumbered. The posse was determined and heavily armed. Possibly, he counted on the leniency so prevalent in our Courts of Law today.
(beat)
If you will take your seat, Mr. Sherman, we will proceed.

Jim Hedrick gestures and several men grab Slim -- drag him, struggling, back to his chair, as we:

DISSOLVE

77 EXT. OPEN COUNTRY - DAY - FULLSHOT - JESS AND COWAN 77
Jess is riding across country at a full gallop. Cowan, severely bound, is swaying back and forth on the saddle of a following horse, to which Jess has attached a lead rope.

78 MED. PAN SHOT - JESS AND COWAN 78
Their horses are flecked with foam.

79 EXT. ROAD - DAY - TRAVELING SHOT - JESS AND COWAN 79
The sun is setting behind the hills as Jess and his prisoner cut on down to the road and gallop along it toward the Relay Station.

DISSOLVE

80 EXT. RELAY STATION - DAY - MED. SHOT - FAVORING JESS 80
Jess and Cowan ride into the station. Dusk is settling over the scene but the last reflection of the sun's rays are lighting the sky in the b.g. Jess rides INTO CAMERA and pulls up short. Suddenly, he is almost physically ill from the horror that overcomes him as he sees:

81 VERY LONG SHOT - MAC (JESS'S POV) 81 -
A limp figure is dangling from a rope -- suspended in mid-air from the branch of a leafless tree on the hill. In b.g. MUSIC is discordantly playing "The Streets of Laredo".

82 ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING JESS 82
Jess dismounts, moving stiffly, as a man in physical pain. He takes the coiled rope from his saddle, moves to Cowan, unties his hands from the pommel of the saddle. When he speaks, his voice is strained, harsh -- as though it came from another throat.

JESS
Get off!

COWAN
(terrified)
What're you going to do?

Jess lashes out at him with the coiled rope. Cowan cries out and scrambles to the ground, almost whimpering. Jess shoves him over to a tree and ties him to it. Then he turns and walks into the house.

83 INT. SHERMAN HOUSE - DAY - MED. SHOT - FAVORING JESS 83
Jess enters and looks around. The light from outdoors is fading fast. The place is apparently deserted. Jess lights a lamp, his hands trembling slightly. Almost beyond the radius of this new light, he sees Slim. Slim's back is turned to him and he's bent over the sink -- sloshing water on his face. Jess addresses Slim's back and Slim responds without turning.

CONTINUED

83 CONTINUED (contd) 83

JESS
(bitterly)
Great job, Slim -- Did you help them fix the noose?

SLIM
(wearily)
I'm sorry, Jess...I...

Jess' rage continues to build, as he continues, heedlessly:

JESS
(interjects)
Maybe you were asleep when it happened!

SLIM
(with resignation)
Say it and get it over with.

Jess is almost shouting as:

JESS
I just asked you for time - until I could catch up with Vern Cowan. All right, I got him outside! What good does it do?
(beat)
Couldn't you stop them! Didn't you even try!

84 ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING SLIM 84
Slim's been holding a towel to his forehead. Now he lowers the towel, turns around the moves a step forward. The light glints off an ugly wound that runs down onto his forehead - a gashed swelling such as might have been made by a blow from the barrel of a pistol.

SLIM
I tried.

Jess is brought up short. He stares at the wound, his face working.

JESS
(hoarsely - shakes his head)
Slim...Slim...
(beat)
Who did that to you?

CONTINUED

84 CONTINUED 84

SLIM
Jim Hedrick, I think. I'm not sure. When they started to take Mac, I remember fighting. That's all.

Slim sways groggily. Jess gently guides him to a chair and forces him to sit down.

JESS
Anything I can do for you?

SLIM
No...I'm all right.

Jess backs off, CAMERA DOLLYING with him.

JESS
You sit tight...huh? Got a little thing to do.

SLIM
Where are you going?

As Jess exits, his face twisted in a caricature of a smile:

JESS
Visiting. I haven't been invited but that's all right because I'm bringing a nice present.

85 TIGHT SHOT - SLIM 85
Slim shakes his head, groggily, winces from the pain this causes. He starts to get up, slumps back in chair. Finally, he forces himself to his feet and staggers toward the door. As he begins to move, we HEAR the SOUND of hoofbeats outside.

SLIM
(calling)
Jess...Jess!

Slim stops in the doorway, leaning against the frame for support.

86 EXT. RELAY STATION - DAY - FULL SHOT - JESS AND COWAN 86
(SLIM'S POV)
Jess is riding o.s., with Cowan slumped on the horse at the end of the lead rope.

FADE OUT

(COMMERCIAL)

ACT III

FADE IN:

87 EXT. LARAMIE STREET - NIGHT - FULL SHOT - FAVORING JESS 87
Jess rides down the street with his prisoner. They stop in front of a saloon. Without dismounting, Jess bends over and peers through the space above the swinging doors.

88 INT. SALOON - NIGHT - FULL SHOT - GROUP 88
Jim Hedrick, the posse members and as many townspeople as are feasible are solemnly drinking it up at the bar. These are simple, honest men who have watched a man die at the end of a rope they put around his neck. They are seeking alcoholic reassurance and public acceptance of what they have done. In the center of the group - basking in the alcoholic adulation of the others - is Judge Hedrick. Carter lifts his drink for a toast and we can see that he's intoxicated, as:

CARTER
To the Judge!

AD LIB CHORUS
To the Judge...I'll drink to that, etc.

89 ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING JUDGE HEDRICK 89
He waves his hands, rejecting the tribute.

HEDRICK
Gentlemen! Gentlemen! I was merely doing what had to be done.

CARTER
(drunkenly)
This country needs more men like you, Judge. Fearless enforcers of law an' -- an'--

Carter's voice fades out and he stops -- puzzled by the fact that the crowd has grown silent. They're all looking toward the o.s. door. Carter swings around, swaying.

90 MED. SHOT - FAVORING JESS 90
Jess is standing just inside the door. He's holding Cowan erect as the man threatens to sag to the floor. Jess still has that strange smile on his face and his tone is deceptively quiet, as:

CONTINUED

90 (CONTD.) 90

JESS
Vern, I want you to meet these men. You're all in the same business -- murder.

JIM
What're you doing here, Jess?

JESS
Why, Mr. Special Deputy Sheriff Hedrick, I'm doing the job you and your brave posse set out to do -- catching the man who killed Sheriff Kiley and Doc Webb!

Jess suddenly shoves Cowan - hard. Cowan goes sprawling across the room and crashes against the bar, hangs on beside young Hedrick.

91 ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING JESS 91

Jess moves forward, as:

JESS
That's Vern Cowan. He murdered Kiley and the Doc - just like you murdered Mac. Only Vern did his killing alone - with a gun. It took seven of you and a rope to get Mac.

Carter, his face green, staggers to a chair - falls heavily into it - holds his face in his hands.

JESS
What's the matter, Mr. Carter? Don't you want to propose another toast or something?...No?
(to the others)
Guess Mr. Carter doesn't feel up to it..Anyone else?

Jess looks at the other members of the posse and at the Hedricks. All of them but Judge Hedrick seem to be almost as sick as Carter. Judge Hedrick's face is like granite, but he's aged twenty years in the past minute.

CONTINUED

91 CONTINUED (contd) 91

JESS
No toast? Well, I'll make one.

Jess pours himself a drink and lifts the glass.

JESS (contd)
To law and order -- your style.

Jess throws the entire contents of his glass full in Jim Hedrick's face. He steps back, his hand poised near his gun. There's a collective gasp from the crowd, but nothing happens. Jim, leaning against the bar, slowly lifts his hand and wipes his face. Jess' phoney smile and his unnatural quietness disappear.

JESS
(snarling)
Come on, Special Deputy Sheriff -- draw!

Jim shakes his head and Jess whirls on the others. He's almost shouting as:

JESS (contd)
One of you other heroes -- any one of you -- all of you -- come on!

There are no takers. Jess switches to a mad persuasiveness.

JESS (contd)
You got to help me out here! I want to do some killing but I'm not a murderer. Some of you murderers will have to go for your guns!

SLIM'S VOICE
No, Jess -- nobody draws.

92 ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING SLIM 92
Slim moves from just inside the door to beside Jess. He places his hand on Jess' shoulder, his voice is soothing -- his tone is reasonable as:

SLIM
You're going to get what you want, Jess.
(beat)
You can wait just a little while, can't you?

CONTINUED

92 (CONTD.) 92

Physical fatigue and emotional exhaustion have pushed Jess to the point where he's momentarily not quite sane. Still, Slim is managing to reach him.

JESS
I don't know...I don't think I can...

SLIM
Sure, you can. It's only until the Circuit Judge gets here. Then we'll have them -- all of them -- tried and sentenced for murder.

HOLD briefly, and then

DISSOLVE :

93 INT. COURTROOM - DAY - TIGHT SHOT - JUDGE ROGERS 93
The Circuit Judge (ROGERS) is not from the same mold as Judge Hedrick. He's younger, smaller and more dryly legal in manner. Nevertheless, he is most impressive, as:

ROGERS
(solemnly)
..And at the hour of 11:30 on the morning of the sixteenth day of August, eithteen hundred and seventy, you shall be taken from this place of confinement to the place of execution.. and there to be hanged by the neck until dead.

94 MED. PAN SHOT - SPECTATORS (INTERCUT) 94
The CAMERA PANS among the spectators - showing us their reactions and the reaction of Slim and Jess to the above.

95 ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING COWAN 95
Now, for the first time - as he is being led away - WE SEE that the condemned man is Vern Cowan.

96 MED. SHOT - FAVORING ROGERS 96
Rogers lowers his head for a moment. It may be that he is praying. Finally:

ROGERS
The Clerk will call the next case.

The CLERK rises:

96 (CONTD.) 96

CLERK
(calling)
The People of the Territory of Wyoming versus James Hedrick, Matthew Hedrick, Josiah Carter, Samuel Bartlett, Thomas Willard, Abraham Edwards and Lucius Corey. The charge: That they did wilfully conspire to commit and did commit the crime of murder on the person of John McLane.

The prisoners as named are led into the Court. They are in irons. Two Deputies are in charge.

ROGERS
Is the Territorial Prosecutor ready?

The Territorial Prosecutor (a craggy-jawed man named TRACY) rises.

TRACY
Yes, Your Honor.

ROGERS
Who is appearing as Counsel for these defendants?

97 ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING JUDGE HEDRICK 97
As one of the Deputies removes his irons, Hedrick steps forward.

HEDRICK
I have been entrusted with that responsibility, Your Honor.

ROGERS
Very good. Do defendants wish a trial by jury?

HEDRICK
We do.

ROGERS
(to Clerk)
Clerk - call the first twelve members of the panel.

As the Clerk rises and starts to draw the names from a box -

DISSOLVE

98 INT. COURT - DAY - MED. ANGLE - AT JURY 98

Twelve citizens of Laramie...a mixed bag...are standing in the jury box with hands upraised as they take their oath.

CLERK
...and according to your conscience render a just verdict, so help you God.

There is an ad lib muttering of "I do".

ROGERS
The jury will be seated.

As jury sits, CAMERA PANS to a WIDER ANGLE, INCLUDING JUDGE ROGERS. He peers down from the bench, clears his throat.

ROGERS
Mr. Prosecutor, do you wish to make an opening statement?

TRACY
(rising)
I do, Your Honor.

He moves from his table to the rail of the jury box. His manner is calm and direct.

TRACY
Gentlemen of the jury, the People of this Territory have called you to perform a very solemn duty. They ask you to defend the most sacred right ever won by man... the right to trial by jury.
(beat)
We shall prove that the defendants in this action, who themselves are enjoying all the benefits of that right, did in fact deny another human being his day in court. Through a mockery of this hallowed and precious procedure we call trial at law, the defendants did condemn and execute an innocent man.
(beat)
This we shall prove...beyong shadow of doubt.

As Tracy is addressing the jury, CAMERA PANS from him OVER the faces of the defendants...who stare stonily straight ahead...to Jess and Slim, who are seated in the first row of the spectators' section, listening attentively. WE HOLD BRIEFLY on Jess, and

DISSOLVE

99 INT. COURT - DAY - TIGHT ANGLE - JESS 99
He is in the witness chair, undergoing direct examination by Mr. Tracy.

TRACY
Now, sir..will you tell this court when it was you first realized the posse under James Hedrick's direction was planning to lynch John McLane?

CAMERA HAS PULLED BACK to a WIDER ANGLE including the Defense Table. Judge Hedrick is on his feet.

HEDRICK
Objection...Counsel is leading the witness.

ROGERS
Sustain.

TRACY
I will re-phrase.
(to Jess)
Did Mr. James Hedrick or any of the defendants say to you that they were going to lynch John McLane if they caught him?

JESS
They did.

TRACY
When was that statement made?

JESS
Hedrick said it right after he saw Doc Webb's horse.

TRACY
That was before McLane was taken prisoner?

JESS
It was.

BLUR DISSOLVE TO:

100 INT. COURT - DAY - CLOSE SHOT - JUDGE HEDRICK 100
He is leaning on the jury rail conducting his cross-examination of Jess, who is still in the witness chair.

HEDRICK
Jess..tell me and the court...how do you feel about capital punishment?
(slight smile)

CONTINUED

100 CONTINUED (contd) 100

HEDRICK (contd)
For example -- if I were to say to you that we are going to hang a certain guilty man, what would your reaction be?

JESS
(meaningfully)
Some men I can think of...I'd like to tie the knot.

CAMERA HAS PULLED BACK, and Jess' reply elicits a nervous laugh from a spectator or two.

HEDRICK
You would like to tie the knot... in other words, you would approve of hanging this man?

JESS
Yes. If a court of law found him guilty -- a legal court.

HEDRICK
Then, if my son James said to you that he was going to hang a man he believed guilty of a loathesome crime -- as you have testified he did -- you would not be morally offended by this form of punishment?
(quickly)
Answer yes or no, please.

JESS
No --not if your son James was an officer of the law -- a legitimate one!

HEDRICK
(hard; cold)
Will you please confine your answers to yes or no!

JESS
No!

Another small, nervous laugh from somewhere. Hedrick sees he cannot intimidate Jess; he proceeds, with more care, ignoring Jess' outburst.

CONTINUED

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100 CONTINUED (contd) 100

HEDRICK
When James Hedrick said he was going to hang MacLane, did he say that MacLane would not have a trial?

JESS
I knew what he meant.

HEDRICK
You thought you knew what he meant.

CONTINUED

100 (CONTD.) 100

JESS
(hotly)
I wasn't too wrong. When I caught up with them, they had a noose around Mac's neck!

HEDRICK
(smiles)
And you, sir...when you caught up with the posse, what did you have in your hands? Was it a carbine?

JESS
It was.

HEDRICK
And did you threaten the posse with it?

JESS
I told Jim to take the rope off Mac.

HEDRICK
You were going to free the prisoner. Is that right?

HEDRICK
If the posse refused, you were going to start shooting? Answer yes or not, Mister!

JESS
(angrily)
Yes...and ~~maybe~~ it's too bad I didn't start shooting first!

HEDRICK
(pleased)
That's all.

He returns to his table and CAMERA TILTS DOWN to a CLOSE SHOT of the old Judge as he sorts papers, and we

BLUR DISSOLVE

101 INT. COURT - DAY - CLOSE SHOT - JUDGE HEDRICK 101
He is now engaged in direct examination of his son, who is discovered in the witness chair as CAMERA PULLS BACK.

CONTINUED

101 (CONTD.) 101

HEDRICK
Now, James...following your capture of the man you believed had murdered Doctor Webb in cold blood, did you and your posse, as we have heard in testimony here, place a noose around the suspect's neck?

JIM
We did.

HEDRICK
You did. And what was your purpose in so doing? Were you going to actually lynch him on the spot?

JIM
No, sir.

HEDRICK
Was this noose merely a device you hoped would make McLane confess?

JIM
It was.

102 MED. ANGLE - SPECTATORS 102
But with Jess and Slim in f.g. There is a reaction in the crowd to the above and Jess leans close to Slim and, in a loud ~~stage whisper:~~

JESS
He's a liar!

103 ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING JUDGE ROGERS 103

ROGERS
(rapping)
Order!

HEDRICK
Thank you, Your Honor.
(back to Jim)
Now...with the noose around McLane's neck, what happened?

CONTINUED

103 (CONTD.) 103

JIM
Jess stepped out from behind some rocks with his carbine pointed at us.

HEDRICK
He was prepared to shoot?

JIM
He was.

HEDRICK
Did he order you to release your prisoner on pain of death?

JIM
He did.

HEDRICK
And then Jess' friend, Slim Sherman appeared?

JIM
Yes.

HEDRICK
He, too, carried a gun in his hand?

JIM
Yes... a .45.

HEDRICK
You and your posse were armed; of course. Did you, at any time, draw your weapons?

JIM
No, sir...they had the drop on us.

HEDRICK
I see. And as a compromise reached under those circumstances, you agreed that rather than release the prisoner, you would take him to Sherman's place for a hearing?

JIM
That is right.

CONTINUED

103 (CONTD.) 103

HEDRICK
Jess and Slim must have agreed to this, also, since they had you and the posse covered?

JIM
Yes, sir...they did.

Hedrick nods satisfaction with this answer, and we

BLUR DISSOLVE TO:

104 INT. COURT - DAY - CLOSE SHOT - CARTER 104
He is on the witness chair and nervously working his hands in his lap. Judge Hedrick enters to him from CAMERA AS IT PULLS BACK.

HEDRICK
Mr. Carter..we have heard all of the testimony in this trial. The facts have been confirmed and reconfirmed.
(beat)
I have only one question concerning what happened that eventful day to put to you, sir.
(beat)
When Jess first appeared from behind that rock with his carbine levelled at the posse...were you frightened?

CARTER
Yes, sir!

HEDRICK
In other words, you fully believed he meant to shoot members of that posse if they did not turn a man loose who, to the best of your knowledge, was guilty of brutally murdering your friend, Doctor Webb?

CARTER
That's right!

105 TIGHT ANGLE - JESS AND SLIM 105
They are surrounded by spectators, everyone eagerly listening to the testimony. Jess looks around, leans close to Slim, whispers:

CONTINUED

105 (CONTD.) 105

JESS
Next he'll say we lynched Mac!

SLIM
(sotto voce - grim)
I don't think it would make any difference now..if we had.

CAMERA PANS to INCLUDE the Judge..who frowns off at Slim and Jess, taps with his gavel as Hedrick goes on.

HEDRICK
Now, Mr. Carter..will you tell the Court how long you have resided in Laramie?

CARTER
Over twelve years.

HEDRICK
You are married and have children?

CARTER
(nods)
Two children.

106 ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING TRACY 106
As he rises.. his voice dry and heavy with sarcasm.

TRACY
Your Honor.. the Prosecution will stipulate that all of the defendants are men of high character and pillars of the community.
(beat)
In the interests of saving the Court's time, we will further stipulate that prior to that day on which they committed murder, they were as innocent and pure of spirit as newborn children.

ROGERS
The Court will accept this stipulation if the Defense has no objection.

CONTINUED

106 (CONT'D.) 106

HEDRICK
(slight bow)
No objection, Your Honor.

BLUR DISSOLVE TO:

107 INT. COURT - DAY - FULL SHOT 107
Judge Hedrick moves slowly toward the jury box and stops there, his head lowered. He does not speak, and the silence seems to stretch on and on. Finally:

HEDRICK
(quietly)
We, the defendants, are guilty.
(long beat)
There is only one thing I humbly beg you, the jury, to do. Remember, with me, what this territory was and what it is now becoming. Remember this rich and wonderful land was a jungle teeming with wild animals in human form. Animals like Vern Cowan.
(beat)
Animals like John McLane -- the man we hanged!

108 TIGHT SHOT - SLIM AND JESS (INTERCUT) (THEIR REACTIONS)
They're puzzled by the beginning of Hedrick's speech and outraged by his later indictment of McLane. Slim has to keep Jess from leaping to his feet.

109 thru 112 REACTION SHOTS - ROGERS, JURY, DEFENDANTS 109 thru 112
The latter are mesmerized.

113 ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING HEDRICK 113
Judge Hedrick turns away from the jury and indicates his co-defendants.

HEDRICK
Here are the men the Prosecutor has asked you to destroy. Honest, hard-working men who came to a land that was a haven for gamblers, thieves and killers. Because they had the courage to fight the Cowans and the McLanes, we now have a world in which decent, God-fearing citizens...like you, gentlemen of the jury...may live

CONTINUED

113 (CONTD.) 113

HEDRICK (Contd.)
and prosper. Will you sacrifice these useful lives in payment for the life of a man who surely deserved to die for crimes unpunished?
(long beat)
The decision is yours, gentlemen. We face it without fear -- secure in our belief that we are all soldiers fighting side by side -- united in a common cause.

The old man looks searchingly into the faces of the jury and smiles at them -- a warm, friendly smile -- before turning away to resume his seat.

114 FULL SHOT - SPECTATORS 114
They burst into scattered applause at the conclusion of Judge Hedrick's speech. The pounding of Judge Rogers' gavel finally reduces them to silence.

115 TIGHT SHOT - FAVORING JESS 115
Jess is pale with anger at the reaction of the spectators. Slim eyes him warily as Jess turns toward the people seated near them. These people are the first to stop applauding - reacting to Jess' expression as he stares at them.

DISSOLVE TO:

116 INT. COURTROOM - DAY - FULL SHOT - COURTROOM 116
The jury is filing back into the box. They remain standing and the spectators rise as Judge Rogers enters and takes his seat.

117 ANOTHER ANGLE - GROUP 117
Rogers turns to the jury and the FOREMAN arises, as:

ROGERS
Have you arrived at a verdict?

FOREMAN
We have, Your Honor.

ROGERS
The defendants will rise and face the jury.
(defendants comply)
What is your verdict?

CONTINUED

117 CONTINUED (contd) 117

FOREMAN
We, the jury, find the defendants guilty of homicide....

Hedrick slumps, defeated, then straightens his shoulders as the Foreman continues:

FOREMAN (contd)
And to this verdict we add our strongest recommendation for clemency. We find said act of homicide to be without criminal intent.

118 FULL SHOT - SPECTATORS 118
After a beat, there is an outbreak of applause and the SOUND of the Judge pounding his gavel. The audience quiets.

119 ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING JUDGE 119

JUDGE
The court agrees with the verdict and with the jury's recommendation.

Beginnings of more applause; Judge quiets it.

JUDGE (contd)
It is the opinion of this court that the defendants' act of homicide is punishable only on the basis of individual indictments. Until such time as proper charges are drawn, the court releases the defendants on their own recognizance....

120 MED. SHOT - DEFENDANTS (INTERCUT) 120
They are jubilant with the relief and they are trying to congratulate Judge Hedrick but the old man merely stares straight ahead -- expressionlessly.

120 CLOSE GROUP - FAVORING JESS 120A
Jess is almost as impassive as Judge Hedrick. As Slim turns away, shaking his head, Jess rises and makes his way through the courtroom.

FADE OUT

(COMMERCIAL)

PROD. #12231

ACT IV

FADE IN

121 EXT. RELAY STATION - DAY - MED. SHOT - SLIM AND JESS 121
Slim gallops up and dismounts. He seems relieved as he sees Jess. But his relief is momentary. Jess is strapping on his guns and he has a pair of lariats coiled on a peg nearby.

SLIM
Going somewhere?

JESS
Yeah. Judge Hedrick's quite a hand for quoting the Bible, from what you tell me...Well, I believe in that thing he said, too -- "life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth".

SLIM
Hedrick and the others have been acquitted, Jess. I don't like the verdict, either -- but -- it stands.

JESS
With you, Slim -- not with me.

122 TIGHT SHOT - JESS 122
He picks up the coiled ropes and holds them out to Slim.

JESS
If Jim Hedrick and his father can pass out justice around here, so can I.

I'M GONA PASS OUT A LITTLE

He turns and secures the lariats to his saddlehorn. AND THEN I'LL KEEP GOIN
As he starts to mount:

SLIM
What you're talking about, Jess, is ax wrong as anything the Hedricks have done.

JESS
Maybe I'll wind up being a Judge, or a Deputy Sheriff.

SLIM
You'll wind up dead. No percentage in that.

JESS
You stopped me once before. Don't try it again.

CONTINUED

122 CONTINUED (contd) 122
Slim steps in front of Jess during the foregoing.

SLIM
(quietly)
Then don't make me have to.

123 thru 127 TO COVER THE FOLLOWING: 123 thru 127
For a long moment Jess seems ready to tear into Slim. Then the pent up anger he has been accumulating seems to drain away. In its place is Jess' familiar grin -- warm and winning -- and perhaps even a little sheepish.

JESS
(easily)
Guess you're right. It'll all blow over in time anyway.

These reassuring words put a smile on Slim's face. He is about to put his arm around Jess' shoulder when the latter turns with unexpected swiftness. In the same movement, Jess brings up a savage blow. The force of it sends Slim crashing back into a nearby post. He crumples unconsciously and lies still.

128 TIGHT SHOT - FAVORING JESS 128
He looks worried until he satisfies himself that Slim is still alive. Then, straightening, he looks down at his unconscious friend.

JESS
(with feeling)
Sorry, Slim.

CAMERA PANS with Jess as he moves to his horse and rides out.

129 MED. PAN SHOT - JESS 129 -
taking him along the road in a fast ride.

130 MED. SHOT - SLIM 130 -
Slim stirs, groans and lifts his head. After a moment, he rises, crosses to his horse. Mounting, he rides out.

DISSOLVE

131 EXT. ROAD - DAY - MED. PAN SHOT - SLIM 131
is momentarily slouched in the saddle. Forcing himself erect, he spurs his mount to greater speed.

132 ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING SIGN 132
Slim stops the horse at a crossroads sign. The sign indicates the direction to Laramie and the turnoff to the "BAR - H.J. HEDRICK, PROP." Slim turns onto the side road that leads to the Hedrick Ranch.

DISSOLVE

133 EXT. HEDRICK RANCH HOUSE - FULL SHOT - NIGHT 133
The place is dimly lit, a shaft of light streaking the porch through the front door which stands ajar. The feeling is almost that the ranch has died -- it's former occupants seemingly having abandoned it to the elements. A raking sheet of dust buffets Slim as he rides in and dismounts.

134 CLOSE SHOT - SLIM 134
He looks the place over, sensing that something he cannot quite give a name to is wrong. He calls out once. Only the wind answers. He moves up to the porch and pushes open the door.

135 INT. HEDRICK RANCH HOUSE - CLOSE SHOT - SLIM 135
The heavy door swings back, the light from inside illuminating Slim as he pauses in the doorway. From o.s. a faint SOUND catches his attention. Stepping inside, he moves toward it.

136 INT. RANCH HOUSE STUDY 136
A pale yellow glow from the fireplace is the only light in the room as Slim enters through an open doorway. Abruptly he stops in CLOSE F.G., his face mirroring horror as he sees:

137 MED. SHOT - HEDRICK 137
A quick flash shows him slumped over a desk, the derringer near his hand. There are no details of his death, just a glance establishes the fact itself.

138 CLOSE SHOT - SLIM 138
Almost involuntarily Slim takes his eyes from the body. Suddenly he turns as footsteps sound behind him.

139 CLOSE SHOT - JESS 139
Appearing at the doorway to the study, his face shows both relief and surprise as he sees Slim.

JESS
(moving toward him)
Slim....

140 CLOSE SHOT - SLIM AND JESS 140
Slim looks at Jess appraisingly.

JESS
(nodding to Hedrick)
I didn't do it. You've got to believe that. He's just the way I found him.

SLIM
Is there anyone else around?

CONTINUED

140 CONTINUED (contd) 140

JESS
That's what I was trying to find out when I heard you come in.

SLIM
(glancing around)
Looks like everybody's cleared out. I'd sure like to know what happened.

JESS
(taking a note out of his pocket)
I found this all crumpled up on the floor of the back hall. Haven't had much of a chance to read it yet.

Striking a match, Slim takes the note and reads from it.

SLIM
(reading aloud)
"Dear Jim: I defended you in court today, you and the others, but I could not defend myself. As a Judge, there was no defense for my part in the crime we committed..."

141 CLOSE SHOT - JIM HEDRICK 141
He appears out of the darkness which shrouds a doorway near the storm cellar in the back hallway. He is the somewhat frightening picture of a man who has tried to drown his sorrows and has not succeeded. He holds a nearly empty bottle in one hand -- and a gun in the other. And right now, listening as Slim reads from the letter o.s., it is obvious the younger Hedrick's only satisfaction can come from using the gun he holds.

SLIM (contd)
(reading from o.s.)
"Living as I have always lived, there is only one possible verdict for me..."

142 FULL SHOT - RANCH HOUSE STUDY 142
Jess lights another match for Slim as the latter continues reading from the note. They are visible in b.g. as Hedrick moves into f.g. He is utterly silent and now carries only the gun with him, having carefully set the empty bottle aside.

CONTINUED

142 CONTINUED (contd) 142

SLIM (contd)
"I know it is going to be hard for you to accept this admission of guilt on my part -- just as it will be hard for you to understand that neither Sherman nor Harper nor anyone else is to blame for what I now must do..."

From outside, the sound of the wind grows stronger.

143 CLOSE SHOT - SLIM AND JESS 143
Jess glances at Slim as the latter continues reading.

SLIM (contd)
"By the time you find this, I will have carried out the only justice that is left for me. May God bless you..."

144 CLOSE SHOT - JIM HEDRICK 144
He brings the gun up, readying himself to fire on Slim and Jess as:

SLIM (contd)
(reading o.s.)
"And help you to become a better man than -- your father."

During the foregoing, the wind has pushed open the front to its widest extent -- so that the door is banging against the wall. Hedrick glances nervously toward it.

145 CLOSE SHOT - SLIM AND JESS 145
Glancing toward the door, Jess sees Hedrick at almost the instant the latter is firing on them. Pushing Slim aside, Jess dives to one side, diring as he does so.

146 ANOTHER ANGLE 146
For a split second nothing moves. Then the body of Jim Hedrick -- he is obviously dead on his feet -- pitches forward, falling in full view of Slim and Jess.

147 CLOSE SHOT - GROUP 147
Slim moves in beside the lifeless form. Bending down, he sees quickly that young Hedrick, like his father, is beyond helping. As Jess joines him, we

FADE OUT:

(COMMERCIAL)

THE TAG

FADE IN:

148 EXT.SIDE ROAD - TRAVELING SHOT - JESS AND SLIM 148
Jess is riding slowly along the road as Slim canters up and joins him.

149 MOVING TWO SHOT 149

SLIM
Heading the wrong direction, aren't you?
(then indicating)
Home's that way.

JESS
Let me alone, Slim. Everything I touch turns to trouble.

SLIM
What happened here could have happened anywhere. No sense blamin' yourself for that.

JESS
(surprised; reins up)
You mean you want me to stay -- after what I did to you an' all?

SLIM
(touching his jaw)
I've been decked before. Worse things can happen.

JESS
Well, sure, I guess so -- but I thought you'd--

SLIM
(cutting in)
Never mind what you thought.
(then smiling)
I've got plenty of work to do.
(turning his mount)
And so have you.

Without waiting for Jess, Slim spurs his mount back toward the ranch. Jess grins and digs out after him. CAMERA PANS as the two riders disappear off down the road.

FADE OUT:

THE END

NOT MUCH ELSE HE COULD DO