

MISSISSIPPI: BURNING

by  
Chris Gerolmo

First Draft

(Sept. 12, 1986)

6

Until every drop of blood drawn with the lash  
shall be paid by another drawn with the sword....

..... Abraham Lincoln

7

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EXT: COUNTRY ROAD: NIGHT

(1)

A TITLE appears over black:

OUTSIDE PHILADELPHIA, MISSISSIPPI.

The title fades.

As a car's headlights sweep across dense woods.

On this moonless night, a Ford Stationwagon makes a turn on a two-lane country road.

The wagon travels unnaturally slowly.

At the wheel, a frightened kid in his early 20's: SCHWERNER.

He looks into the rear view mirror.

Not twelve inches off his back bumper is another car, running no lights at all.

Schwerner slows down even further.

He lowers the window, and waves to the car behind him to go ahead and pass.

The car stays behind him.

The kid in the front seat next to Schwerner, GOODMAN, asks quietly,

GOODMAN

What do we do?

Schwerner grimaces, but doesn't answer.

Instead, he hits the gas, and the stationwagon accelerates with a rush.

Behind him, the other car accelerates, too.

A wild chase ensues; both vehicles hitting over a hundred miles an hour on these backwoods roads.

In fact, we get the feeling that there a couple of additional cars racing along, as well.

But none of those vehicles run any lights, either, so it's hard to tell.

Schwerner just concentrates on his driving, as he muscles the wagon through the turns, throwing up dirt behind him.

Finally, he gets a lead on the car behind him.

At which point, all its lights finally come on, including a rotating red roof light.

(cont)

Schwerner slows down again, puzzled but relieved.

SCHWERNER

Jesus. I think it's just another cop. Thank god.

Beside him, Goodman sighs audibly.

He turns to look out the back window at the car stopping behind them.

In the back seat of the wagon, the other passenger is JAMES CHANEY, a 20 year old black man.

Unlike his two friends, he doesn't look relieved at all.

He remains instead tight-lipped and wary.

Also unlike his friends, his accent is deep south.

CHANEY

Mr. Schwerner, I wouldn't be speakin' to God about this. Even He's scared of the cops around here.

Schwerner turns to grin at him.

Chaney stares straight ahead, into the night, expressionless.

As several bright flashlights CLICK on, from either side of the wagon.

They illuminate the faces of the two white kids in the front seat.

Then, for a much longer time, they linger on the black kid, Chaney.

A heavily accented voice comes through the window.

VOICE

Ya'll were speedin' pretty good, back there.

Schwerner turns to peer out the window, but can see nothing past the lights.

SCHWERNER

Gimme a break, man. You had us scared to death.

VOICE

Don't you call me 'man', jew boy.

Schwerner's face drains of any expression. He asks,

SCHWERNER

No, sir. What should I call you?

From outside the car, no one answers.

(cont)

EXT: COUNTRY ROAD: NIGHT (cont)

(3)

Chaney continues to stare straight ahead.

Another voice says,

ANOTHER VOICE

Just don't call him Chief.

SEVERAL MEN CHUCKLE.

Goodman turns, to peer into the flashlights.

A WHITE-SHEETED FACE suddenly appears in the open window, not six inches from his.

FACE

Boo.

He starts so violently, that all the men around the car laugh.

Even Schwerner can't help but grin.

He puts a hand on Goodman's arm.

SCHWERNER

Take it easy. We'll be alright.

A hand appears behind Schwerner's head.

Holding a Magnum. -----

It GOES OFF, and the back of Schwerner's head is blown away.

THE SCREEN GOES TO BLACK.

A TITLE APPEARS.

JUNE 21, 1964.

In the darkness, under the title, YET ANOTHER VOICE.

THIRD VOICE

Whoa, shit. We into it, now.

The LOUD REPORTS OF FOUR MORE SHOTS.

CUT TO:

INT: OFFICE BUILDING: MORNING

A rumpled bear of a man in his 50's, RUPERT ANDERSON, trots through the lobby of an office building in Washington, D.C.

(cont)

ANDERSON

Hold that, will you, Freddy?

He reaches an elevator that's already crowded, but being held for him, all the same.

He steps sideways into it, nodding and grinning to the DOZEN MEN inside.

ANDERSON

Hey, Freddy. Tom. How are y'all today?

He stuffs his shirttails into his pants as he speaks, but he still manages to look sloppy.

Everyone grins at this huge man with his big smile.

PASSENGERS

Hey, Rupert. What's doing?

ANDERSON

Well, I got a big appointment upstairs this morning.  
With the Director himself.

Several of the passengers nod, impressed.

With his grin, and his cracker accent, Anderson is someone they all like.

All but ALAN WARD; the natty young man in the back of the elevator.

His shoes are shined. The brass hardware on his briefcase gleams.

He doesn't smile.

(cont)

INT: OFFICE BUILDING: MORNING (cont)

(4)

When Rupert Anderson glances back at him, his own grin fades.  
He nods deferentially to the tall young man.

ANDERSON

Mr. Ward.

Ward nods curtly.

WARD

Mr. Anderson.

The elevator doors close.

CUT TO:

INT: ELEVATOR: MORNING

When they open again, several men get off the elevator.

ANDERSON

Take it easy, gentlemen.

PASSENGERS

Take it easy, Rupert. Good luck upstairs.

The doors close.

CUT TO:

INT: ELEVATOR: MORNING

They open again, and two more men exit.

This time, Anderson only nods goodbye.

He looks a little uncomfortable this time, as the doors close.

CUT TO:

INT: ELEVATOR: MORNING

And open again.

Two more men exit, leaving only Anderson and Ward on the elevator.

Ward glances at Anderson, and sighs.

Anderson starts rubbing his shoe against his pantsleg, trying to clean it up a little, as the doors close again.

CUT TO:

INT: ELEVATOR: MORNING

(5)

The doors open, and Anderson steps aside to let Ward out, first.

Then he follows the younger man to the huge oaken doors at the end of the hall.

He shakes his head, all the way.

CUT TO:

EXT: MAIN STREET: AFTERNOON

A black government sedan pulls to a halt on a dusty street in Philadelphia, Miss.

Ward, in the passenger seat, rolls down his window, to speak to an OLD MAN in coveralls, sitting on a porch.

WARD

Excuse me, sir. Can you direct me to the sheriff's office?

The old man grimaces at Ward, at his accent and his suit and his car.

Then he nods toward a low white building at the end of the street.

Then he looks back at Ward, and spits in the street.

WARD

Thank you.

CUT TO:

INT: SHERIFF'S OFFICE: AFTERNOON

When Ward and Anderson come through the screen door, the THREE DEPUTIES inside abruptly stop laughing.

At the front desk, a huge man, DEPUTY CECIL PRICE, stares at these two men in their dark suits as though they were from Mars.

Anderson smiles, and leans down towards him to murmur,

ANDERSON

Tell the sheriff a Mr. Ward is here to see him, would you, son?

Price grimaces, and leans away from Anderson, as though he smelled funny.

Anderson's face hardens.

PRICE

If you a couple more reporters, you better move on out of here.

(cont)



INT: SHERIFF'S OFFICE: AFTERNOON (cont)

(6)

Anderson shakes his head.

PRICE

What's your business, then?

ANDERSON

Just tell him Mr. Ward wants to talk to him, alright?

Price returns his even stare, then finally stands and moves through a door beside the desk.

Ward looks around, and walks over to sit down on a bench against the wall.

A moment later, Anderson joins him.

Price comes back into the room, closing the door behind him.

PRICE

He'll be out when he has the time.

WARD

Thank you.

Anderson just stares at Price, evenly.

CUT TO:

INT: SHERIFF'S OFFICE: AFTERNOON

Ward and Anderson remain seated, now with dark circles of perspiration under the arms of their suit jackets.

The door beside the desk remains closed.

The only difference in the room is that there are now several LOCALS in the doorway, silently watching the strangers.

Anderson pulls out a handkerchief and wipes his face.

Price hides a grin.

CUT TO:

INT: SHERIFF'S OFFICE: EARLY EVENING

Now there are a DOZEN LOCALS in the room with them, and a couple more standing outside the screen door.

Which opens, to admit a YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHER, in shirtsleeves, with a boyish, open face.

(cont)

INT: SHERIFF'S OFFICE: EARLY EVENING (cont)

(7)

Price colors when he sees the photographer.

PRICE

What the hell you doin' here?

The photographer shrugs.

PHOTOGRAPHER

I don't know. Nothin'.

He leans back against the wall though, clearly intending to stay.

Anderson finally turns to Ward, to say quietly,

ANDERSON

We been here an hour and a half, Mr. Ward. You want to go in and talk to the man? Or you wanna just sit here on display?

Ward rubs his chin, and looks around the room.

WARD

Well, you've worked in this area, before. What do you think? Can we just barge in?

Anderson looks at him for a long second. Then he says,

ANDERSON

Letme just take care of the arrangements, okay?

WARD

Go ahead.

Anderson stands, and stretches.

He turns and looks at the photographer, who grins, winding film in his camera.

Anderson nods to him, then turns.

And in two swift steps, reaches the sheriff's door, and kicks it in, with a resounding CRACK.

He shouts through the opening.

ANDERSON

Get the hell out here, you backwoods shitass!

All three deputies go down on their knees behind their desks, guns drawn.

Outside the screen door, several of the locals suddenly have pistols or shotguns in their hands, as well.

(cont)

Anderson hears all this iron being drawn, and ignores it, glaring through the doorway.

The photographer stands open mouthed, and starts to grin.

Ward remains seated, with his hands folded in his lap.

SHERIFF LAWRENCE A. RAINEY comes out of his office, red in the face.

RAINEY

Who in the hell do you think you are, boy?

Anderson reaches inside his jacket, and every gun in the room gets cocked.

He pulls out his leather I.D. case.

ANDERSON

F.B.I.

All the guns CLICK again, as their hammers are eased down.

RAINEY

Well, shit.

Anderson gestures to Ward, who remains seated.

ANDERSON

Special Agent Alan Ward. Sheriff Lawrence A. Rainey.

Ward still doesn't stand.

WARD

Good afternoon, Sheriff. I want you to know I appreciate your cooperation. Thanks.

RAINEY

What?

Ward then turns to look coldly at Anderson.

First thing you're to do, Mr. Anderson, is to find someone in town who can repair that door. And I mean, immediately.

Anderson looks back at him, equally cold. But he nods.

Finally, Ward rises from his chair.

WARD

Sheriff, would you mind clearing off these two desks for us? Just for the day. By tomorrow, we should be a little more established in town.

(cont)

INT: SHERIFF'S OFFICE: EARLY EVENING (cont)

(9)

The sheriff reddens, but then turns to Price.

RAINEY

Do it.

The locals watch from the doorway, eyes wide.

The photographer looks from Anderson to Ward, unable to decide whose behaviour was more remarkable.

Finally, he SNAPS a black and white photograph that includes both of them.

TITLES

Begin over the photograph, and continue over a montage other elegant, black and white news photographs from the period.

Starting with an image of Sheriff Rainey and Deputy Price, wearing their identical rolled-brim hats and polished six-guns.

And continuing with images of the entire backwoods community of Nashoba County, Mississippi, in 1964.

Remote, insular, poor, suspicious of modernity.

White men beside their pickup trucks, with Confederate flags across the back windows.

A dirt poor farmer and his son, standing by the side of the road, under a defaced poster announcing the "Freedom Summer" Negro Voter Registration Drive.

Black farmers working a field with primitive equipment.

A black woman in tears as her son boards a bus, wearing a Marine uniform.

A crowd of smiling white faces outside a clapboard church.

A dozen dull-faced Klansmen passing a bottle of bourbon around a roaring fire, late at night.

Several men at a bar, caught in silent, toothless laughter, as Chubby Checker does the Twist on tv behind them.

Over this image, the MAIN TITLE.

MISSISSIPPI: BURNING.

FADE OUT:

EXT: MOTEL: SUNRISE

(10)

Anderson and Ward and FOUR NEW MEN stand in the parking lot of a motel.

Ward refers to a file on the hood of his car as he speaks.

WARD

They were picked up for speeding, and then released shortly after midnight, according to the Sheriff's office. They were headed west...

Anderson coughs. Ward peers at him, then continues.

WARD

There's one road, but then two turn-offs. So we'll work in three teams of two. House to house interviewing. I want everyone in the area spoken to. You understand?

The four new agents nod.

Ward turns to Anderson again.

WARD

Do you have reason to doubt the information the Sheriff's people have provided, Mr. Anderson?

Anderson grins, and shrugs.

Ward turns to the four young field men.

WARD

My assistant was a sheriff in the state of Mississippi, himself, before he joined the Bureau. Perhaps that experience has left him suspicious of southern law enforcement methods, in general.

Ward turns back to Anderson.

WARD

Is that it?

Anderson's easy grin fades. He shakes his head.

ANDERSON

No, sir.

Ward nods.

WARD

Then let's get started.

CUT TO:

EXT: COUNTRY ROAD: MORNING

(11)

Anderson sits in the passenger seat of another government sedan, grinning.

His driver, FIELD AGENT BIRD, is just as natty as Alan Ward.

Dark suit, striped tie, gold pin in his collar, and a little suede notebook on the front seat beside him.

Anderson can't get over it.

ANDERSON

Where you boys learn to dress like that?

Bird looks over at Anderson's ruffled figure, and grins.

BIRD

Prep school, sir. And you?

Anderson chuckles.

Then he looks up the road, and his grin fades.

ANDERSON

Pull over.

There's a FARMER on a tractor in the field up ahead.

ANDERSON

This should be the guy from the yellow house.

BIRD

It's about time we found somebody to talk to.

Both agents get out of the black sedan.

The farmer spots them, and stops his tractor in the field about 200 yards away.

He climbs down from it, and walks away, into the woods that begin at the edge of the field.

Anderson and Bird see him disappear, and they stop.

BIRD

What the hell was that about?

ANDERSON

Let's try one more stop, alright?

He turns to walk back to the car.

Bird hesitates, then follows him.

CUT TO:

EXT: FARMHOUSE: MORNING

(12)

The black sedan pulls to a halt outside another farmhouse, and the two men get out.

BIRD

Hello, there. Anybody home?

No one answers.

They walk up onto the porch and peer through the screen door.

BIRD

Good morning. Anybody home?

Through the screen door, they can see that someone's left the kitchen in a hurry.

There's a meal half prepared on the table; raw eggs in a glass bowl, an onion half diced.

ANDERSON

Damn.

Anderson walks right into the kitchen, letting the screen door SLAM behind him.

The sound makes Bird start.

BIRD

Hey, you can't do that! What are you doing?

Anderson walks over to the stove, and turns off the flame under some butter that's already started to smoke.

He glances back at his young partner on the other side of the screen, then walks past him without answering.

CUT TO:

EXT: COUNTRY ROAD: MORNING

This time Anderson drives, very fast.

Bird hangs onto the dashboard with one hand, while trying to make notes in his suede notebook with the other.

He looks up abruptly when they pass a farmhouse.

BIRD

Where the hell are we going? Sir?

ANDERSON

Visit a couple old friends of mine. Better than wasting our time where we ain't welcome. Am I right?

(cont)

EXT: COUNTRY ROAD: MORNING (cont)

(13)

BIRD

Well, what about the rest of the people we're supposed to try and interview?

Anderson turns to look at him.

ANDERSON

Just put a bookmark in there where we left off, okay?

CUT TO:

INT: MOTEL ROOM: NIGHT

The six agents sit in Ward's motel room.

Ward is angry, staring at Bird, who looks back at him with the placid eyes of someone who's had a few drinks.

WARD

Do you want to tell me what possessed you to abandon your duties this morning, Mr. Bird?

Bird glances over at Anderson.

WARD

He won't help you.

Bird looks away then, and unfocusses his eyes a little.

BIRD

Our original plan wasn't panning out, sir.

WARD

Wasn't panning out? After two hours, you decided that the plan wasn't panning out?

Bird swallows.

Suddenly, one of the OTHER AGENTS stands, looking out the window.

CARLISLE

What the hell is that?

They all stand, and move to the windows.

Then reach for their weapons, under their suit jackets, and head towards the door.

As the PHONE RINGS.

Only Anderson moves in that direction, as though he'd been waiting for it.

(cont)



INT: MOTEL ROOM: NIGHT (cont)

(14)

But first he grabs Bird by the shoulder, stopping him in the doorway.

ANDERSON

That was a good answer.

BIRD

Thank you, sir.

Bird then races out after the others.

Anderson picks up the phone.

ANDERSON

Hello?...This is me. Whatta you got?

He edges around to gaze out the motel room window as he listens.

He watches the HUGE CROSS BURNING ON THE MOTEL LAWN.

And the figures of the other F.B.I. agents, racing around in the glow.

He sighs, and shakes his head.

CUT TO:

EXT: MOTEL: NIGHT

Anderson walks slowly out into the night, squinting against the glow of the fire.

When he spots Ward trotting by, he reaches out to grab his arm.

ANDERSON

Hey, boss. C'm'ere for a second.

WARD

Let go of my arm, Mr. Anderson.

Anderson CHUCKLES, and walks Ward, whether or not, to a spot directly in front of the burning cross.

He stops so that their backs are to it, and their huge shadows dance on the facades of the homes across the street.

Ward sees Anderson's delight in this effect, and finally jerks his arm away.

WARD

What the hell kind of game are you playing, now?

Anderson doesn't even look at him. He just says quietly,

(cont)

ANDERSON

I just got a call from an old pal I had a drink with toady. The Superintendent of a Choctaw Reservation near here. He sympathized with our problem.

Anderson grins.

WARD

So?

ANDERSON

So he told his people to keep a eye out, and one old trapper just come in to say he found a burned-out Ford wagon way back in the swamp. The Bogue Chitto.

Ward stares at him.

WARD

Then let's go.

Anderson takes his arm again. From a distance, it looks like a friendly gesture.

ANDERSON

Nah, there's people watching us right now. See how we liked their little show. In a hour or so, we can go out the back. Do our business in private. Okay with you?

Ward sniffs. This is hard for him.

WARD

Yes.

He holsters his pistol, and waves his men in from the street.

WARD

Come on back, gentlemen. There won't be anything worth finding, out there.

CUT TO:

EXT: SWAMP: MIDNIGHT

AN OLD INDIAN moves through the swamp in the dark, stepping deftly from tree trunk to tree trunk.

Behind him, the six F.B.I. men follow along, torches waving crazily as they struggle through the muck.

Anderson looks back at Ward and Bird, up to the knees of their elegant suits in swamp water, and he grins.

(cont)

INDIAN

See? I tole him.

Anderson hears this, and splashes ahead.

He trains a flashlight on the burned out hulk of a station wagon, up to its doorposts in brackish water.

The metal of the roof is pure white, and crazed wildly from what must have been an extremely hot fire.

The old indian stands back on a log, and shakes his head.

Ward splashes right up to the wagon, chest deep in the water, and shines a light inside.

WARD

Sonofabitch.

ANDERSON

Empty.

WARD

Yeah.

Carlisle hunkers down in the water by the license plate: MISS. H 25503.

CARLISLE

This is it.

Ward barks back at his men.

WARD

You three! Start walking the area, in widening circles from the car. Shoulder to shoulder. I'm gonna find these goddamn bodies if it kills me. Bird!

BIRD

Yes, sir.

WARD

Take a car, and go on back to that farmhouse a ¼ mile back. Ask to use their phone. I want 50 men here by sun-up. You understand?

BIRD

Yes, sir.

He starts splashing away. Anderson calls quietly after him.

(cont)

EXT: SWAMP: MIDNIGHT (cont)

(17)

ANDERSON

Ask nice. Then show 'em your gun.

Bird grins.

Suddenly, there's a big SPLASH near Ward.

The old indian has just leapt into the water, machete flashing.

He comes up holding a water mocassin by the tail. It's head's gone.

Ward looks back at him and nods.

WARD

Thank you.

CUT TO:

EXT: SWAMP: MORNING

FIFTY NEW AGENTS now move through the swamp, shoulder to shoulder, examining every square foot of terrain.

The entire area is roped off, all the way back to the dirt road.

Anderson makes his way back there, clothes covered with mud.

When he gets within sight of the road, Carlisle calls out to him.

CARLISLE

Sir? Mr. Anderson?

ANDERSON

Yeah?

He walks over towards the rope, and sees immediately what the problem is.

Rainey and Price are there, in the middle of a HUGE CROWD OF ONLOOKERS AND PRESS.

They're obviously angry.

ANDERSON

Can I help you gentlemen?

Rainey seethes.

RAINEY

What the hell's goin' on, here? I had to hear about this from my wife's brother, happens to live up here.

(cont)

Anderson smiles a tired smile, and lifts the rope.

ANDERSON

Hell, Sheriff. If you'd'a known where it was, would you have rung me at my motel, first thing?

Rainey peers at Anderson. Price colors.

PRICE

What the hell's that supposed to mean?

Ward walks up behind them, also looking exhausted.

WARD

Glad you're here, gentlemen. Come on, and let me show you what we've got.

The Sheriff finally turns to nod at Ward.

RAINEY

Alright. And the Mayor wants me to tell you you're invited to dinner up at old man Ramsay's, tonight. You and your man, here.

Anderson CHUCKLES at the thought.

Ward silences him with a look.

WARD

Well, that's just fine. Now, let's get to it.

Anderson raises a hand.

ANDERSON

Mr. Ward, would you like a photographer back there with you, now? Get a picture of the group of you, finding the car?

Ward looks at the sheriff, then nods.

WARD

Why not? We'll take on man back there with us.

Anderson nods, and waves to the boyish photographer to come ahead through the crowd.

He hurries under the rope, and winks at Anderson, then follows the group of lawmen into the swamp.

Anderson watches them go, with a smile.

Then he turns to Carlisle.

(cont)

ANDERSON

You gotta know how to stroke these folks, sometimes.  
You know?

Carlisle grins.

CARLISLE

Yes, sir.

CUT TO:

INT: DINING ROOM: NIGHT

A formal dinner for twelve, and the atmosphere is already strained.

A WRINKLED OLD MAN sits at the head of the table, with THE MAYOR to his left, and Alan Ward to his right.

At the other end of the table sits SAM BOWERS, a sharp featured man with penetrating eyes.

He speaks with the declamatory cadence of a Baptist minister.

BOWERS

I for one believe that the events that are unfolding here in Mississippi this summer may well determine the fate of Christian civilization for centuries to come.

He peers down the table at the two FBI men.

Ward looks off into the distance.

Anderson watches an ATTRACTIVE BLACK-HAIRED WOMAN across the table.

Who discreetly waves over a BLACK MAID, and whispers into her ear.

The maid then moves around the table towards Bowers.

BOWERS

The question remains, gentlemen, are the enemies of Christ...?

He stops speaking, while the black maid leans in front of him, to pour coffee.

He nods, Thanks, then continues.

BOWERS

Are the enemies of Christ entitled to the armed protection of...?

(cont)

MAID

Sugar, Mr. Bowers?

Bowers looks at her with practiced tolerance, and nods.

She sets the sugar beside his cup, and moves away.

BOWERS

Are the enemies of Christ entitled to the armed protection of Christian law enforcement officers?

Bowers sits back in his chair, with a bemused expression.

Anderson watches as the attractive woman glances at the black maid with the subtlest of smiles.

The maid's face is a mask, but her eyes twinkle.

The attractive woman then looks directly at Anderson, knowing that he's witnessed this by-play.

Bowers hasn't been aware of any of it.

BOWERS

Mr. Ward, may I enquire what your own religious affiliation might be?

Ward sighs, and shakes his head.

WARD

Well, I believe that joy is the surest sign of the presence of God. In the same way, hatred is the surest sign of the presence of the devil.

He looks at Bowers for the first time.

WARD

And Mr. Bowers, you've been dressing up your hatred in such pieties all evening that I should think that anyone with any real religious feeling at all would be ashamed.

Bowers' bemused look fades. He starts to color.

There follows a long enough pause that most of the women at the table look down at their hands, embarrassed.

The attractive woman looks at her hands as well, following form, but she does so in order to hide a grin.

WARD

And I'm an Episcopalian, for what it's worth.

(cont)

INT: DINING ROOM: NIGHT (cont)

(21)

Ward folds his napkin, neatly, and tosses it onto his plate.

Bowers shifts his weight, as if he might stand.

The old man at the head of the table nods to the mayor.

Who stands himself.

MAYOR

Perhaps we should take this opportunity to adjourn to the library, where we can indulge ourselves in Mr. Ramsay's fine cigars and liquor. Shall we?

The women all rise, immediately.

Ward remains seated, looking evenly at Bowers.

Rupert Anderson shrugs, impressed. He says, under his breath.

ANDERSON

Well, damn. Wasn't that a truckload.

He stands, as well.

CUT TO:

INT: LIBRARY: NIGHT

Ward stands alone, in one corner of the room.

Bowers stands at the other, surrounded by half a dozen guests.

Nearby, Anderson takes a cigar out of his mouth, and nods.

ANDERSON

Mr. Mayor. Gentlemen.

The mayor moves up beside him, with Rainey and Price in tow.

MAYOR

Mr. Anderson. May I say that I surely hope that with your southern background, our local concerns will make more sense to you than they seem to, to your superior.

Anderson shrugs.

ANDERSON

Well, I think he's crazy, too. If that's what you mean.

The mayor smiles.

(cont)



MAYOR

Perhaps you can help him to understand that our people don't take kindly to outside interference. They look upon the college students who've descended upon us this summer to encourage negro voter registration as a substantial threat to their way of life.

Anderson waves off this concern.

ANDERSON

Don't you worry, Mr. Mayor. I'm not here to change the world.

MAYOR

Well, that's reassuring.

RAINEY

Here, here.

Even Deputy Price smiles at this.

ANDERSON

I'm just here to catch some killers.

He takes a sip of his brandy, and smiles.

ANDERSON

By the way, gentlemen, I wonder if any of you know anything about Ku Klux Klan activity in this area?

What had been smiles on the faces before him are now only masks.

MAYOR

What makes you ask that?

ANDERSON

Oh, we had a little display at our motel the other night. Not that it amounted to much.

The mayor now looks at Anderson very coolly.

MAYOR

Hmm. Perhaps you should take this kind of thing seriously, Mr. Anderson. As a sign of the strength of the feelings we've been discussing.

Deputy Price nods.

PRICE

Maybe you should take it like a warning.

(cont)

Anderson's easy smile fades.

ANDERSON

And how should I take this little get-together?

PRICE

Take it any way you like.

The mayor looks from Anderson to Price, and once again intervenes.

MAYOR

Excuse us, Mr. Anderson. But our host seems to require our attentions.

He bows slightly, and moves off towards the old man, Ramsay.

The sheriff and deputy move off after him.

Anderson watches them go, then downs the rest of his brandy.

When he lowers his glass, he finds himself looking right into the eyes of the attractive woman.

She says quietly,

WOMAN

You asked after the Klan, Mr. Anderson. Aren't you aware that our fellow dinner guest, Mr. Bowers, is the Imperial Wizard of the United Klans of America?

Anderson's surprised expression makes the attractive woman squint, amused.

WOMAN

Perhaps the FBI is not as efficient an organization as I've been given to understand.

Anderson blushes slightly.

ANDERSON

I know who he is, M'am. I was only surprised to hear someone at a party like this say so out loud...Remind me not to be surprised by anything you say or do, in the future.

Now the woman blushes, in her turn.

And for a moment, they have nothing to say to each other.

Finally, Anderson gathers himself to ask,

ANDERSON

May I ask what is your own reason for being here, this evening?

She smiles.

WOMAN

You mean, what paramilitary organization am I affiliated with?

Anderson smiles, as well.

WOMAN

I'm here with Deputy Price.

His smile fades.

ANDERSON

A friend of yours?

WOMAN

No. My husband.

She looks at Anderson so directly, now, trying to read his reaction, that he's momentarily nonplussed.

He looks at the floor.

MRS. PRICE

Tell me Mr. Anderson, are you a fan of english trifle?

Before he looks up again, though, she's gone, off towards the dessert table in the far end of the room.

CUT TO:

EXT: SWAMP: MIDNIGHT

SCORES OF MEN search the bog, wearing hip-waders, and carrying torches.

The young photographer wades through the muck with them, occasionally lighting up the dense vegetation with his flash.

Anderson stops by a tree to stretch his neck, still wearing his tie from the dinner party.

Ward appears beside him, looking equally exhausted.

ANDERSON

Maybe you should get some sleep, boss. This is gonna be a war, you know.

Ward shakes his head.

(cont)

EXT: SWAMP: MIDNIGHT (cont)

(25)

WARD

No. They'll have to join us in the 20th century  
sometime. I'm sure they understand that.

Anderson grins, and shakes his head.

ANDERSON

Well...I'd say it's gonna be a war.

CUT TO:

EXT: CHURCH: NIGHT

~~the~~<sup>3</sup> the dead of night, the white shape of a backwoods church looms.

The United Negro Church of Philadelphia, Miss.

In the calm scene, suddenly the SOUND OF SCAMPERING FEET.

An EXPLOSION rips the church apart.

CUT TO:

EXT: ANOTHER CHURCH: NIGHT

The Meridian Baptist Church EXPLODES, as well.

In the aftermath, we hear SEVERAL CARS START, and RACE AWAY.

CUT TO:

EXT: ANOTHER CHURCH: NIGHT

A car slows in front of another low church building.

A MAN leans out the back window, and throws out a molotov cocktail that bursts  
on a windowsill.

Flames start licking up the walls.

CUT TO:

EXT: ANOTHER CHURCH: NIGHT

Three cars converge on another church.

Caught in their headlights, a BLACK CARETAKER looks up and freezes.

SEVERAL MEN drag him into the darkness, and beat him up.

While ANOTHER pours gasoline down the center aisle of the building, and  
tosses a match to it.

CUT TO:

EXT: ANOTHER CHURCH: NIGHT

(26 and 27)

A car pulls away from yet another church.

Silence.

The car returns. There's DRUNKEN LAUGHTER from inside it.

A MAN gets out, cupping a lit match in his hands.

He runs to a corner of the building, then races back to the car.

The car spins its wheels, hurrying away.

Then this church EXPLODES, too.

FADE OUT:

EXT: MOTEL: NIGHT

A government sedan stops at the motel in Philadelphia, Miss.

Ward and Anderson get out, and stretch.

Bird comes through the front doors to greet them.

BIRD

Welcome back, gentlemen. How was Washington?

WARD

Is everybody ready for us?

Bird's grin fades.

BIRD

Yes, sir. There's one problem, though.

A movement behind Bird's shoulder attracts Ward's eye.

A PALE LITTLE MAN in a robe moves into the doorway of the motel.

(cont)

His anxious wife stands behind him.

WARD

What is it?

BIRD

The owner of the motel, sir. He says we have to be out by morning.

Bird glances back at the couple, as well.

BIRD

Apparently, we're bad for business.

Anderson grins.

Ward shakes his head.

WARD

Buy it from him.

BIRD

Pardon?

WARD

Buy the motel, Mr. Bird.

Bird nods, and starts backing away, then stops.

BIRD

Yes, sir. How high can I go?

Ward shrugs.

WARD

Whatever it takes.

Bird nods.

WARD

And do it somewhere else. I don't want to talk to him.

Bird trots over towards the couple.

Ward and Anderson wait a few moments, then start walking towards the empty doorway.

CUT TO:

INT: MOTEL DINING ROOM: NIGHT

(29)

In the motel's open dining room, more than a HUNDRED AGENTS sit with their notebooks open.

Ward addresses them, standing next to a chalkboard, on which are two words:

MISSISSIPPI: BURNING.

WARD

Gentlemen, as you've probably heard, I require written reports, in duplicate, of every interview, and every encounter. Every night, at the agents meeting.

An UNHAPPY MURMUR moves through the room.

Ward waits for it to subside, then refers to the chalkboard.

WARD

The name of the file refers to the first of the church burnings in the area, which predated the disappearances by some weeks, and first attracted the Director's attention to the area.

Again, Ward pauses, as his men make notes.

WARD

You all heard him on the radio this afternoon. You're all aware of the media attention our presence here is attracting...May I remind you, finally that every agent in this room will be expected to uphold the standards of professionalism, and integrity, of which the Director has become justly proud...Now, let's do it.

The agents rise, en masse.

Anderson stands by the door, murmuring as they pass,

ANDERSON

Remember now, no smoking in bed.

The agents grin.

He winks his goodnights.

CUT TO:

EXT: MOTEL: DAWN

A fleet of black sedans moves out, one after the other, into the countryside.

ONE AGENT directs traffic out of the parking lot.

(cont)

EXT: MOTEL: DAWN (cont)

(30)

The boyish photographer<sup>f</sup> climbs a tree to record the image of this imposing flotilla.

Then he clammers down again, to join Anderson and Bird at their car.

CUT TO:

EXT: FARMHOUSE: DAY

Bird tries to keep his foot in a farmhouse door.

The WOMAN on the other side of it succeeds in shutting him out.

He turns, shaking his head.

Anderson and the boyish photographer lean against the car in the yard, grinning up at him.

He finally nods.

BIRD

Okay. I admit it. I'm just as bad at it as you are.

CUT TO:

EXT: ROADSIDE: AFTERNOON

The black sedan pulls over to the side of the road in a cloud of dust.

Anderson gets out of the car.

He walks over to a wooden fence, to admire some striking wildflowers in the corner of a cultivated field.

Bird and the photographer get out of the car, puzzled.

BIRD

What's going on?

ANDERSON

Nothing.

Then Bird notices a BARREL-CHESTED BLACK FARMER and his 14 YEAR OLD SON, walking through the field towards them.

BIRD

Oh.

Bird commences to admire the wildflowers, too.

(cont)



Suddenly uncomfortable, the photographer starts shooting pictures of the buds.  
The black man arrives with his son, grinning widely.

BLACK MAN

Y'all bein' coo', over here, admirin' the Trumpet-Pitchers. Like me and Mark ain't seen you comin', two counties away.

Bird squints, not understanding what was said.

Anderson shrugs.

ANDERSON

Hell, nobody wants to talk to us. We're reduced to actin' wily.

The black man chuckles.

BLACK MAN

I'm Terry Williams. This is my son, Mark.

Anderson nods.

ANDERSON

Agent Bird. Timmy Akins. I'm Rupert Anderson.

The son stares at the photographer's camera.

MARK

Y'all wanna take my picture?

The photographer grins, and nods.

He moves around for a while, trying to get the kid and the flowers and the sun lined up.

He finally takes a photograph, and everyone grins.

Then, at the sound of a CAR, they all turn.

A beat-up Ford, a quarter mile down the road, slows to a stop, u-turns, and races away.

Anderson turns back to watch the farmer's reaction.

Mr. Williams' lips come back from his teeth. He spits in the road.

Then he looks into Anderson's eyes, and says evenly,

MR. WILLIAMS

Reason nobody'll talk to you is they're scared what they say might get back to the law.

(cont)

Bird squints once again.

BIRD

What does that mean? We are the law.

MR. WILLIAMS

Not around here, you ain't.

Anderson nods, his expression now serious.

He continues to stare evenly at Mr. Williams for a long second. Then he asks,

ANDERSON

How come you're not afraid?

Mr. Williams returns his steady gaze.

MR. WILLIAMS

How come you ain't?

Anderson thinks about that a second, then grins.

CUT TO:

INT: MOTEL ROOM: NIGHT

Anderson sits on a motel bed, looking through a black loose-leaf binder.

He's in a room with over a hundred identical binders, all labelled: MISSISSIPPI: BURNING.

He closes the one he's got, and replaces it on the shelf.

He pulls out another one. This one's subtitled:

Local Authorities,  
Philadelphia & Meridian.

He thumbs through the pages, stopping at a photograph of Rainey to read the biographical information below it.

He stops at another of Deputy Price, and does the same.

He thumbs through a few more pages, then stops.

He folds out a yellowed newspaper photo, from the Meridian Sentinel.

A photograph of a local wedding, on the lawn of a beautiful white house.

In the middle of the photo, Deputy Price, in his uniform, and his wife, in an antique lace dress.

(cont)

INT: MOTEL ROOM: NIGHT (cont)

(33)

On the deputy's side of the photograph, all the USHERS are huge young men. Anderson chews his lip, then pulls out a notebook, and copies down each of their names, from the list below the photo.

Then he stops and stares at Mrs. Price for a while.

CUT TO:

EXT: COUNTRY ROAD: NOON

Once again, Anderson drives.

His hell-bent style keeps both Bird and the photographer hanging onto the door handles, for safety.

Above the roar, Bird shouts,

BIRD

I thought you said it was time for lunch.

ANDERSON

Yeah, maybe we should drop in on our friends here, first.

He spins the wheel, and they slide into a dirt driveway, leading to a well-kept little farmhouse, just off the road.

They pull up, and start to get out of the car.

When a pail hits the side of the vehicle with a BANG!

In an instant, both agents are out of the car, crouching, with their guns drawn.

From the porch, A BLACK WOMAN glares at them, then backs through the screen door, letting it SLAM behind her.

BIRD

What was that about?

Anderson straightens, and holsters his weapon.

Mr. Williams comes out the door.

WILLIAM

I apologize for my wife. She don' like you boys.

The reason is immediately clear.

As Williams' son steps through the door, to take up a position behind his dad.

(cont)

His left eye's completely closed. His lips are puffy and discolored. His cheeks are one big bruise.

Bird grimaces. We hear the photographer's SHARP INTAKE OF BREATH.

ANDERSON

How'd it happen?

WILLIAMS

They blindsided him last night. Walkin' home from his girl's house...One of his girls', anyway.

He turns to smile sadly at his son.

Mark starts to smile, then winces, and puts a hand over his mouth.

ANDERSON

Maybe we shouldn't come around.

Williams looks at Anderson, then turns back to his son again.

WILLIAMS

Well?

Mark looks at the agents for a second, then says,

MARK

Noffin' feef...

He stops, and covers his mouth with his hand, once again.

Then he leans forward, to whisper into his dad's ear.

Mr. Williams nods.

WILLIAMS

He says the only one he's scared of is Mom. So if I can keep her out of it, we okay.

Anderson looks at Mark, and nods.

The kid grins successfully. That is, his lips don't move, but his eyes shine.

The young photographer smiles at him.

PHOTOGRAPHER

You want a picture to remember it by?

The kid shrugs.

PHOTOGRAPHER

You'll never look like this, again.

(cont)

Mark finally nods, his hand firmly over his mouth, preventing that smile.

The photographer walks him over to a nearby tree.

Mr. Williams watches, then turns to Anderson.

WILLIAMS

Maybe I'll ask around a little for you boys, amongst  
my kind...Y'all don't speak nigger so good, I notice.

Anderson shrugs and indicates Bird, with a glance.

ANDERSON

He does, but I don't.

Anderson looks up at him, deadpan.

Mr. Williams looks over at Bird, in his blue blazer and bow tie, and LAUGHS OUT LOUD.

Anderson says quietly,

ANDERSON

Well, maybe we got some homework to do on our end, too.

CUT TO:

INT: MOTEL CORRIDOR: NIGHT

Anderson hurries to keep up with Ward's rapid strides.

ANDERSON

Did you know that Sheriff Rainey's had occasion to  
shoot two negroes dead, in his law enforcement career?

WARD

Yes, I read that, too.

ANDERSON

D'you know he ran for sheriff last year calling himself  
"The Man Who Can Take Care of the Situations That May  
Arise"?

Ward grins.

WARD

That's impressive.

ANDERSON

Can I check them out?

WARD

Them?

(cont)

ANDERSON

Him and Price, the deputy.

Ward sighs.

WARD

When we have something to connect them to the case.  
For the time being, let's just stick to the program,  
alright, Mr. Anderson?

Ward turns abruptly through the wide double-doors to the dining room, where the agents await the nightly meeting.

Anderson stops by the door.

Then he, too, walks into the room.

CUT TO:

EXT: MOTEL: NIGHT

The agents disperse after the meeting.

Anderson paces on the porch of the main building, smoking a cigarette, as VARIOUS YOUNGER AGENTS pass him, murmuring their GOODNIGHTS.

When he's finally alone, he stubs out his cigarette, and walks down the steps into the parking lot.

CUT TO:

EXT: WOODED ROAD: NIGHT

Anderson sits alone, in his car, staring at the beautiful white house from the newspaper photograph.

It's set back in the woods, away from the road.

There are pillars all along the front.

The windows are lit, but the house is quiet, and there's no car in the drive.

Anderson gets out of the government sedan, and closes the door gently.

He walks up the gravel drive to the door, and KNOCKS.

CUT TO:

INT: MRS. PRICE'S HOME: NIGHT

In a beautifully appointed livingroom, Anderson balances a cup of tea on his knee.

(cont)

Mrs. Price smooths her dress with her hands, and looks expectantly at Anderson.  
Anderson smiles gently at her.

MRS. PRICE

Is there anything in particular that you wish to ask me about?

ANDERSON

Yeah, I suppose there is.

She gazes evenly at him.

He looks around the room, at the delicate furniture, at the china in the china closet, at the doilies everywhere.

Then back at Mrs. Price, and at the lace at the wrists of her dress.

ANDERSON

This is your home, isn't it?

MRS. PRICE

Of course.

She's a little bit flustered by the question.

Her agitation makes Anderson become even more calm, as if you could make a person settle down by example.

ANDERSON

I mean, wasn't it yours before you got married? And then your husband moved in?

Mrs. Price understands what he's asking, and blushes faintly.

MRS. PRICE

∴ I'm sorry. Yes. It was. I... Things looked differently, then.

ANDERSON

Is that right?

Mrs. Price looks at him, for a moment, trying to decide something.

Then she says, more easily,

MRS. PRICE

At that time, I believed Mr. Price would use his law enforcement career to take us away from this place, eventually.

Anderson nods.

(cont)

MRS. PRICE

As you used yours.

ANDERSON

I'm not sure I got anywhere much better.

MRS. PRICE

I am.

Anders looks at her evenly, then nods.

ANDERSON

Well...It's a beautiful home, anyway.

MRS. PRICE

You're very kind.

Anderson glances around at the furnishings, once again.

He smiles when he sees an antique Victrola, behind the couch.

ANDERSON

Can it handle the Beatles?

Mrs. Price smiles, and cocks her head.

MRS. PRICE

I'm afraid I wouldn't know.

Anderson looks at the floor, and nods.

Then he sets his teacup aside, and stands.

ANDERSON

Well, I have to be going.

Mrs. Price stands, as well, thoroughly puzzled.

At the door, she asks, lightly,

MRS. PRICE

Tell me, Mr. Anderson. Are all your official visits  
this gracious?

He smiles.

ANDERSON

No, m'am. It's strictly the company.

Mrs. Price smiles.

MRS. PRICE

Thank you.



INT: MRS. PRICE'S HOME: NIGHT (cont)

(39)

Anderson turns away, into the night.

MRS. PRICE  
Was this an official visit?

He turns back.

ANDERSON  
I don't know, exactly. Would you mind if it wasn't?

Mrs. Price smiles briefly.

MRS. PRICE  
Well. I don't know, exactly, either.

Anderson nods.

ANDERSON  
Fair enough.

She gazes at him.

MRS. PRICE  
My husband spends most of his free time at the Longhorn.  
It's a bar in Meridian. He and his friends like it there.

Anderson nods, looking faintly troubled.

ANDERSON  
Thank you. Good night.

He turns, to walk slowly towards his car.

CUT TO:

EXT: COUNTRY ROAD: DAY

Once again, Anderson drives. Bird and the photographer hang on for all they're worth.

Bird shakes his head.

BIRD  
Another stop we're not to include in the report?

Anderson turns to smile broadly at him.

ANDERSON  
Have I ever steered you wrong?

(cont)

EXT: COUNTRY ROAD: DAY (cont)

(40)

BIRD

Just watch the road...Sir.

Anderson laughs.

CUT TO:

EXT: ROADHOUSE: DAY

They get out of the car in front of a ramshackle wooden building with a sign above the door; THE LONGHORN.

Anderson nods to the photographer.

ANDERSON

Maybe you should wait out here.

The photographer nods, unhappy.

Bird murmurs, under his breath,

BIRD

That's reassuring.

He follows Anderson into the bar, unbuttoning his blazer as he walks.

CUT TO:

INT: THE LONGHORN: DAY

The entire room goes SILENT when the two FBI men walk in the door.

Anderson nods to Bird, who remains by the door.

Anderson sits down at a booth, across from Deputy Price.

Price nods; an expressionless greeting.

Everyone in the place watches their table.

Anderson smiles, gently.

ANDERSON

I guess I'm in Klan country, huh?

Price doesn't say anything.

ANDERSON

And this is where you hang out.

Anderson shakes his head.

(cont)

ANDERSON

That's so sad, Cecil.

Price grins at the use of his first name.

PRICE

Don't matter much what you guess, one way or the other, does it? Rupert?

He signals to the BARTENDER to bring Anderson a beer.

At which point, the other patrons turn back to their drinks, and their quiet conversations.

Price waits until the bartender's gone to say,

PRICE

Nobody around here's gonna talk to you. Not the way things are. So a guess is just a guess.

He smiles, again. Anderson shrugs.

ANDERSON

You're right about that.

Anderson glances around the room.

It's full of farmers and mechanics, in their work clothes; big men with tired faces.

Then, from the bar, someone makes a remark loud enough for all to hear.

DRINKER

Any Federal Policeman come on my property, I'd shoot him dead, and plead self-defense. You think any jury in Mississippi would convict me?

Anderson looks at Price, eyes twinkling.

ANDERSON

Now we're talkin'.

He gets up, and walks over to stand near the drinker at the bar.

Who turns to look defiantly at Anderson, then turns back to his drink.

In that moment, Anderson recognizes him as one of the ushers from the photo of the wedding.

ANDERSON

Jimmy Bailey, where is your property, exactly?

(cont)

By the door, Bird's hand rests lightly on his belt buckle.

Bailey doesn't turn to look at Anderson, this time.

Anderson looks back at Price, and shrugs; a broad enough gesture that everyone in the room sees it.

Then Bailey mutters,

BAILEY

You better watch your step in here, big man.

Anderson darkens.

He grabs Bailey by the scruff of the neck, and whips him across the room.

Flat onto his back on Price's table.

The room is absolutely silent again.

Bird has his gun out, held lightly, down by his thigh.

Anderson leans down to whisper, just loud enough for Bailey and Price to hear,

ANDERSON

Don't you mistake me for some other body, now.  
Somebody you can bullshit a little, and he's gonna  
fade away.

He turns from the wide-eyed Bailey, to meet Price's steady gaze.

Then he straightens, and loses his ferocious aspect in an instant.

He pulls out a five dollar bill, and drops it on the table.

He says out loud,

ANDERSON

Thanks for the beer. And thanks for telling me his name,  
Deputy. I appreciate it.

He winks at Price, then looks around the room at all the hard faces looking back at him.

ANDERSON

Great bar.

He walks to the door, and nods to Bird.

ANDERSON

Put that dingus away, will you?

He preceeds Bird outside.

CUT TO:

INT: DINING ROOM: NIGHT

(43)

Anderson follows Bird into the agents meeting that night.

He stops at the door, when he sees that Ward is glaring at him.

WARD

Do you have any idea how much trouble you've caused?

Anderson looks around.

No one else in the room meets his gaze.

ANDERSON

Sir?

WARD

Sam Bowers has been on the local radio station all afternoon, talking about the brutality and the intimidation tactics, of the FBI. I've received calls from the Mayor, from the Lieutenant Governor, and from Washington, D.C., today...And can you tell us how it comes to pass that your bar visits don't appear in your daily reports?

Anderson doesn't say a word.

He just looks evenly back at his boss.

Ward finally shakes his head.

WARD

As of now, when you go out on assignment, I'll be going with you. Mr. Bird, you'll be doing some filing, here in the motel.

Ward turns to face the rest of the agents.

WARD

Let's get on with our regular business.

CUT TO:

INT: APPLIANCE STORE: MORNING

Anderson waits by the door, as Ward talks to a BALD SHOPKEEPER, in the back of the store.

Near the door, a 12 YEAR OLD in an apron eyes Anderson, suspiciously.

Anderson scratches his neck, in such a way that his jacket falls open, briefly revealing his pistol.

(cont)

The kid's mouth falls open.

Anderson grins.

From the back of the store, the shopkeeper raises his voice.

SHOPKEEPER

Hell, no! And I don't have to have you in here,  
either!

The shopkeeper turns to an OLDER WOMAN, who's waiting to be served.

SHOPKEEPER

Excuse my french, Mrs. Tobin.

Then he turns to Ward again.

SHOPKEEPER

Now, you can just be on your way, son.

He shoos Ward towards the door of the shop.

Anderson makes an effort to look dismayed.

When they get outside, the shopkeeper continues to follow them, several steps down the sidewalk.

SHOPKEEPER

You heard what I said!

Then, abruptly, he lowers his voice.

SHOPKEEPER

If I were you all, I'd start with the damn sheriff's  
office, and leave the good people of this community  
alone!

He shakes his head, and goes back into his store.

Anderson looks away down the road, as though this hadn't made an impression.

Ward watches him, nodding.

WARD

Okay. Alright. You don't have to gloat.

Anderson raises his hands .

ANDERSON

Didn't say a word. Sir.

CUT TO:

INT: COURTHOUSE: DAY

(45)

In an interrogation room in the local courthouse, Ward sits behind a long table.

Anderson stands behind him, against the wall.

A STENOGRAPHER sits beside him.

Across the table sits Deputy Price, with TWO MEN IN SUITS.

Ward indicates one, with a nod.

WARD

Who's this?

PRICE

My lawyer. Drew Connaught.

The stenographer types rapidly.

WARD

And this?

PRICE

My other lawyer. Tyrone Alden.

WARD

You sure you need both of them? This is just a preliminary interview.

Price grins easily.

PRICE

Better safe than sorry, though, huh?

Ward shrugs.

WARD

You want to run through again exactly where you were, and what you did, in the hours after you released the three young men?

PRICE

Sure.

CUT TO:

INT/EXT: COURTHOUSE: DAY

Anderson looks out the window of the interrogation room.

He watches Price walk down the courthouse steps with his two lawyers.

(cont)

A crowd of his CRONIES from the Longhorn, including Jimmy Bailey, await him beside his patrol car.

They mill around, asking him rapid questions, and slapping him on the back.

Still seated at the long table, Ward sighs.

WARD

His alibi is solid, Mr. Anderson.

Anderson nods.

Outside, Price opens his patrol car door, and leans in to talk to someone in the passenger seat.

WARD

Of course, he did bring the two lawyers with him. In a better world, you could indict him just for that.

Outside, Price straightens, to shake some hands, and wave some goodbyes.

Behind him, in the car, his wife's face appears.

She squints up at the courthouse windows.

Anderson steps back into the room, and says,

ANDERSON

Almost fifty minutes of it hinges on his wife.

Ward nods.

WARD

You noticed.

Anderson returns to the window, in time to see the patrol car pulling away.

WARD

We'll cross-check everything, but...

He shakes his head.

WARD

The chances of finding a woman with guts in a town like this...

He closes the file before him, and stands.

WARD

Let's go retrace his steps, again.

CUT TO:



INT: MRS. PRICE'S HOME: LATE AFTERNOON

(47)

Ward sits on the couch this time, facing Mrs. Price.

Anderson leans in the doorway to the hall.

MRS. PRICE

Yes, that's precisely correct. He was here for just under an hour.

Ward nods.

WARD

You happened to notice the time when he came in, and then again when he left?

Mrs. Price looks down at the floor.

MRS. PRICE

I watch the clock, Mr. Ward. Wives do, sometimes.

When she looks up again, she looks directly at Anderson.

In her eyes, some kind of a plea.

Anderson smiles gently at her.

WARD

Offhand, do you know the time right now?

Mrs. Price turns, and meets Ward's direct gaze with her own.

MRS. PRICE

No.

Ward nods, again.

CUT TO:

EXT: COUNTRY ROAD: DUSK

The black government sedan travels slowly down a tree-lined road.

Then, it pulls over to the side, and stops.

At the wheel, Ward unfolds a map of the area, shaking his head.

WARD

She's a cold fish, isn't she?

Anderson turns to look at him, but he's studying the map, and doesn't notice.

ANDERSON

You sure you don't want me to drive?

(cont)

WARD

No, thanks. I've heard a lot about your driving.

He finally pulls out into the road again, and drives slowly away.

CUT TO:

INT: MRS. PRICE'S HOME: NIGHT

Mrs. Price opens the door.

To find Anderson, standing with a bunch of the yellow flowers from the side of the road, in his hand.

She suddenly commences to giggle.

Anderson colors.

MRS. PRICE

Oh, I'm sorry. I'm so glad you came by, but...

With one hand, she takes the flowers, and with the other, Anderson's hand.

She leads him into the kitchen, where she finds a vase, and then into the living room.

MRS. PRICE

Do you know what kind of flowers they are, Mr. Anderson?

ANDERSON

Someone told me they were Trumpet-Pitcher plants.

MRS. PRICE

Yes, that's quite right.

She sets the vase down on the piano, then steps back to admire it.

MRS. PRICE

And they're very lovely.

Then she turns to Anderson, unable to suppress her grin any longer.

MRS. PRICE

But they're carnivorous, Mr. Anderson. Their striking color is the bait, luring insects to their deaths.

Anderson shakes his head, and grins.

ANDERSON

Maybe I could've picked a more appropriate gift, huh?

(cont)

INT: MRS. PRICE'S HOME: NIGHT (cont)

(49)

Mrs. Price shakes her head.

MRS. PRICE

On the contrary, Mr. Anderson.

She still can't stop smiling at him.

MRS. PRICE

The only question is, which one of us is the beautiful flower?

Her eyes twinkle.

CUT TO:

EXT: GARDEN: NIGHT

In a meticulously maintained garden, Anderson and Mrs. Price walk, side by side.

MRS. PRICE

Do you have any interest in gardening, Mr. Anderson?

ANDERSON

I used to weed for my grandmother, when I was a kid.

Mrs. Price smiles.

MRS. PRICE

I'm sure she loved to watch you.

Anderson shrugs.

ANDERSON

I just remember being amazed at how tenacious weeds are.

Mrs. Price nods.

MRS. PRICE

And how delicate whatever you're trying to grow is. Yes. It's the gardener's lament.

She reaches over to take his hand again.

MRS. PRICE

Let me show you something.

She leads him around a corner in the garden, into an area enclosed by ivied trellises.

On the ground, lit by hanging lamps, is a labyrinth, grown out of miniature shrubs.

(cont)

It turns elaborately upon itself, but, all the same, you can see right to the center of it, as it's only 18 inches high.

It makes Anderson grin, and nod.

ANDERSON

It's fantastic. It's great.

Mrs. Price glows; this delicate little lady, standing with this big bear of a man.

Then, abruptly, her grin fades, and she looks suddenly desolate.

MRS. PRICE

Having you here makes me feel that I've made a terrible mess of my life.

Anderson looks at her, and sighs.

ANDERSON

And standing next to you makes me feel like Lon Chaney.

Mrs. Price laughs out loud.

CUT TO:

INT: MEETING ROOM: EARLY MORNING

Ward stands at the head of the room, looking out over the assembled agents.

WARD

Is there anything else?

Anderson raises his hand.

Ward shakes his head.

WARD

Mr. Anderson?

ANDERSON

Yes, sir. A confidential source tells me we should talk to a negro called Toby Walker. I don't know what about. And I don't have his address. Yet.

Ward nods, gazing at Anderson with lowered lids.

WARD

A confidential source?

ANDERSON

Yes, sir.

(cont)

There follows a long pause, during which most of the agents busily drink their morning coffee.

A couple of seats away from Anderson, Bird looks at the floor, and grins.

CUT TO:

EXT: SHACK: AFTERNOON

Ward and Anderson stand in the overgrown yard of a rundown wooden shack.

On the porch is a young negro, TOBY WALKER, with a sour expression on his face.

His hair's conked. He wears a bright red shirt, and tight jeans. He coo'.

WALKER

They 'rrested me cause they said somebody done heard me braggin' on havin' a date with a white girl.

WARD

Rainey and Price arrested you?

WALKER

Sure as hell.

WARD

And they held you in the jail till after midnight?

WALKER

Yup. Then they let me go, and I walk out, and a car pulls up, and a man say, "Get in". And there's four of 'em, so... They drive me aroun' a long time, then they take me back in the woods, and they get me on my knees, and they tell me they're gonna cut mah thing off, and then they hold a gun to mah head, and they say, "This is it, nigger." And then they fire. But they don't shoot me, you know? I don't know why.

WARD

And they let you go at dawn.

WALKER

I had to walk more'n fi'teen miles home.

WARD

And you're sure Rainey and Price saw the car pick you up?

WALKER

Shit. They stood in the doorway and waved.

Ward nods, and turns to Anderson.

(cont)

WARD

Okay. We can assume that's how it went in our case.  
That just leaves proving it.

He turns back to Walker.

Mr. Walker, would you recognize the four men who  
kidnapped you?

WALKER

Yup.

WARD

Will you testify against them?

WALKER

I already tole you, man. No way.

Walker shakes his head.

WALKER

Y'all wanna take on those ol' boys, y'all do it on  
y'own.

CUT TO:

INT: COURTHOUSE: DAY

Ward sits at the long table again, clearly angry.

Anderson leans against the wall.

Across the table, Price confers in whispers with his two attorneys.

He finally straightens, and says out loud to Ward.

PRICE

I don't have to say nothin' more. Y'all want to  
indict me, you know where to find me.

He stands.

His lawyers stand behind him.

He glares at Anderson for a moment, then leaves.

When the door closes behind them, Ward SLAMS his hand down on the table.

CUT TO:

EXT: COURTHOUSE: DAY

(53)

A SWARM OF REPORTERS converges on Price when he comes through the courthouse doors.

They SHOUT questions at him, all at once; their northern accents ringing out in the quiet afternoon.

REPORTERS

Are you about to be indicted? Is there evidence against the sheriff's office? Are you prepared to cooperate in the investigation?

He waves them off, shaking his head, and wades through the little crowd, down the steps towards his friends, and his car.

Down below, Jimmy Bailey, and SEVERAL OTHERS, grimace at this display.

They start up the steps to meet the slow-moving group around Price.

When the young photographer sees them coming, he has the presence of mind to step off to the side.

Within seconds, a flurry of pushing and shoving.

The locals knock down several of the reporters, and run off the rest.

The young photographer snaps pictures of the fist-fighting, from a distance.

Just as quickly as it had started, it's over. The reporters are halfway down the block.

Jimmy Bailey shouts,

BAILEY

Go on back where you came from, and leave us alone.

He wipes a trail of blood off his chin.

The young photographer glances up at Anderson's face in the courthouse window.

Anderson turns away.

CUT TO:

INT: COURTHOUSE: DAY

Ward and Anderson walk quickly through the wide corridors.

The mayor turns a corner, and stops right in front of them, red in the face.

MAYOR

Mr. Ward, I've come to register yet another complaint.

(cont)

WARD

What?

MAYOR

I resent your public pursuit of my police officers. You've made every effort to implicate them in these disappearances, and yet they're not charged with...

WARD

What do you know about it?

The mayor stops, surprised by Ward's vehemence.

WARD

What do you know about their late night calls to their friends in the Klan?

The mayor's expression hardens.

WARD

Or do they call you, too, when they catch a negro they want to harass? Or a jew they want to kill?

MAYOR

I don't have to stand for this.

WARD

Then don't come bothering me, anymore.

The mayor takes a step backward.

Ward walks past him, with Anderson a step behind.

MAYOR

I know my rights.

CUT TO:

EXT: TOWN STREET: DAY

Ward and Anderson walk up to their black sedan.

Ward gets in the driver's side, and SLAMS the door.

Anderson waits until they're underway to ask,

ANDERSON

Did you have to tumble Walker to him?

WARD

Come again?

(cont)



ANDERSON

Did you have to make it so clear to the mayor that you knew about Toby Walker?

Ward looks up, and exhales heavily.

ANDERSON

You went all the way through the interrogations without....

WARD

I know what I did, goddammit.

Anderson stops talking.

Ward grimaces.

*probably* WARD  
We know how it went. We know who was probably involved. Now all we need is someone to go on the record with some facts.

He turns to Anderson.

WARD

Who'd you get the tip from?

Anderson looks at him.

WARD

Who told you about Toby Walker?

ANDERSON

Can't say.

Ward glares at him.

WARD

You're walking through this, Mr. Anderson.

ANDERSON

I'm being careful.

WARD

You're going to protect these people?

ANDERSON

Some.

Ward grinds his teeth, then mutters,

WARD

You're another racist, yourself.

(cont)

EXT: TOWN STREET: DAY (cont)

(56)

Anderson looks ahead through the windshield, eyelids at half mast.

Ward slows to stop at the one traffic signal in the town.

Anderson nods, and turns to him.

ANDERSON

And you're a damn fool, Mr. Ward. You're a fool  
for bringing an army down here instead of a squad.  
And a fool for not knowing when to talk and when  
to shut up.

The two men stare at each other.

Until Anderson says,

ANDERSON

I'll walk from here.

And he gets out of the car.

CUT TO:

EXT: MOTEL: NIGHT

Anderson sits on the motel steps with the young photographer.

They both smoke cigarettes, as the agents pass them by, saying their  
goodnights.

When the last of them are out of sight, Anderson stands.

ANDERSON

I gotta go. Take it easy.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Can I come with you?

Anderson shakes his head.

Then he walks over to his car, and drives out of the lot.

The photographer lights another cigarette, and watches him go.

A few seconds later, Ward comes through the motel doors.

The photographer watches him get into an identical car, and drive off after  
Anderson.

CUT TO:

EXT: MRS. PRICE'S HOME: NIGHT

(57)

Ward waits in his car, parked fifty yards behind Anderson's.

He stares through the woods at the white house, glowing in the moonlight.

He gets out of his car, and silently closes the door.

He walks through the woods to the side of the house.

He steps up to a lighted window.

Inside, in the living room, Anderson stands in the middle of the floor, shaking back and forth.

He's teaching Mrs. Price to do the Twist.

For a big man, he's extremely graceful.

Mrs. Price giggles at him, all the same, imitating him from a few feet away, trying to get it right.

They're having a wonderful time.

Just audible through the window is a scratchy recording of SHE LOVES YOU, by the Beatles.

Ward turns away from the window, and presses his temples with his hands.

He looks miserable, out there in the dark.

Without looking back, he turns to walk through the woods again, to his car.

CUT TO:

EXT: WILLIAMS HOME: JUST BEFORE DAWN

A car slows at the head of the drive leading to the Williams farmhouse.

At the wheel, a FAT MAN IN COVERALLS.

The man next to him could only be HIS BROTHER.

The fat man's eyelids drop.

He shakes himself awake, and pulls a shotgun up off the seat beside him.

A BLAST RINGS OUT, through the quiet countryside.

The car races away.

Through the shattered front windows of the Williams home, you can see a light go on, inside.

CUT TO:

EXT: WALKER'S SHACK: JUST BEFORE DAWN

(58)

At Toby Walker's shack back in the woods, an old pick-up truck stops in the road.

A BEARDED MAN stands up in the truck bed.

He lobs a brown paper package onto the porch of the shack.

The pick-up roars away.

Nothing happens.

Riding down the dirt road on a bicycle, a NINE YEAR OLD BLACK KID stops.

He looks at the package with a puzzled expression, then calls out,

BLACK KID

Did someone throw somethin' on your porch?

The package suddenly starts to SMOKE.

The kid gets on his bicycle, and takes off.

The package bursts into flame.

Within seconds, the whole porch is burning.

Toby Walker runs around the side of the house in his red underwear.

He watches the flames, and shakes his head.

WALKER

Son a bitch.

CUT TO:

INT: BEDROOM: JUST BEFORE DAWN

A PHONE RINGS.

THE WOMAN sleeping with Agent Bird grabs it on its first ring, and whispers,

MRS. BIRD

Yeas, this is Mrs. Bird. Don't you know what time it is?

She listens for a few moments.

MRS. BIRD

Who is this?

She listens again, and her expression hardens.

(cont)

INT: BEDROOM: JUST BEFORE DAWN (cont)

(59)

MRS. BIRD

Don't think think you can scare me, you foul-mouthed cretin. I hope you rot in hell.

She hangs up the phone, then leaves the receiver off the hook, and puts her pillow over it.

She lies back down, and just gets her head onto a corner of her husband's pillow.

CUT TO:

EXT: WILLIAMS HOME: JUST BEFORE DAWN

Mr. Williams, in his pyjamas, cautiously opens his front door.

He walks out onto the porch, and sits down in a rocking chair.

He lays a shotgun across his lap, and leans back, trying to get comfortable.

CUT TO:

EXT: TRACT HOUSE: JUST BEFORE DAWN

On the lawn of a recently built home, identical to the ones on either side of it, a CROSS BURNS.

On the porch, Agent Carlisle and his wife watch it burn.

Carlisle wears the same robe as his wife, only he's got his shoulder holster on outside it.

Mrs. Carlisle wrinkles her nose at the smell of the fire.

MRS. CARLISLE

You want coffee, honey? We might as well stay up.

Carlisle looks up at the reddening sky, and nods.

CARLISLE

Yeah. Thanks.

CUT TO:

EXT: WALKER'S SHACK: JUST BEFORE DAWN

The front half of the shack is now no more than charred wood.

SEVERAL BLACK MEN stand around, holding empty pails.

Walker moves through the smoldering remains of his home, stuffing whatever looks salvageable into a duffel bag.

(cont)

EXT: WALKER'S SHACK: JUST BEFORE DAWN (cont)

(60)

He shoulders the bag, and moves past the other men without saying a word.  
He gets out onto the dirt road, and starts walking.

CUT TO:

INT: MEETING: NIGHT

Bird sits in his chair, looking at his notebook, and speaking loud enough for everyone to hear.

BIRD

The caller said, "The next FBI man who drives into Malton will get his head blown off." Or words to that effect...Malton is a little crossroads town I'd been in, that afternoon.

He looks up from his notebook at Ward.

WARD

Is she alright?

Bird nods.

WARD

Well, if you or anyone else wants to make arrangements to send your wives back home, let me know now.

No one says a word.

WARD

Anything else?

Again, no one speaks.

Anderson, standing by the door, looks out over the agents.

He finds Bird staring right at him.

He sighs, and then asks Ward,

ANDERSON

Sir, I think the men would like to know if there isn't anything more...if there isn't a more visible response we might make to this kind of provocation?

Ward looks at him.

The silence in the room deepens.

Ward turns to his men.

(cont)

WARD

Consider it an indication that we're getting somewhere, gentlemen...We'll proceed as we have.

He closes his black loose-leaf binder.

WARD

Only we'll work harder. We'll interview everyone again, if we have to...That's all.

The agents stand.

CUT TO:

EXT: TOWN STREET: MORNING

On a side street in town, Ward and Anderson walk back towards their car without speaking.

Up ahead, a group of WHITE KIDS scatter when they see the two agents coming.

Ward sighs, and shakes his head.

When he reaches for the car door, Anderson suddenly stops him.

ANDERSON

One second.

He looks around, then breaks a branch off a nearby tree.

He slowly opens the door of the black sedan, and shakes the branch under the seat.

He stands up and waits.

A thin black snake slithers out of the car, into the gutter, and down a drain.

Ward nods, and slides in behind the wheel.

WARD

Thank you.

He waits for Anderson to get in on the passenger side, before he asks,

WARD

Any stops you can think of to make that might be more fruitful than this?

Anderson turns to gaze at him, then finally nods.

ANDERSON

Yeah, there is. I got a call this morning that might be something.

(cont)

EXT: TOWN STREET: MORNING (cont)

(62)

Ward nods, and puts the car into gear.

WARD  
You want to direct me?

CUT TO:

EXT: WILLIAMS FARMHOUSE: MORNING

Ward and Anderson pull to a halt in the yard of the Williams home, and get out of their car.

Mr. Williams comes through the front door, grinning at Anderson.

WILLIAMS  
Y'all got yourself a new sidekick, huh?

Anderson smiles.

ANDERSON  
Mr. Williams, this is my boss, Special Agent Alan Ward.

Mr. Williams shakes his head, and sticks out his hand.

WILLIAMS  
Sorry. We more important than I thought.

Ward shakes his hand.

WARD  
Good morning.

ANDERSON  
What do you have for me?

WILLIAMS  
Ain't me. Y'all want to talk to my son, Mark, about it.  
He done all the work.

Anderson nods.

ANDERSON  
He's a good kid.

WILLIAMS  
Gon' be a fine man.

ANDERSON  
Where's he at?

WILLIAMS  
Out playing or something. He seen your car. He'll be  
along.

(cont)



EXT: WILLIAMS FARMHOUSE: MORNING (cont)

(63)

Within a few seconds, Mark appears, walking around the side of the house.

His face looks much better, although one eyelid still droops a little.

Walking along with him, making a game out of keeping up with the bigger kid's steps, is the nine year old who'd witnessed the Walker bombing.

CUT TO:

EXT: WILLIAMS FARMHOUSE: LATE AFTERNOON

That afternoon, there are a DOZEN AGENTS around the perimeter of the Williams property.

They watch the road, and the woods, with their guns drawn.

Near the house, Ward hands a dirty piece of paper to an agent named WALTON.

There's a license plate number scrawled on it.

WARD

I want this license plate number checked against every single name that appears ~~in~~ anywhere in our files. You understand? I want to know who owns that pick-up truck. Today.

Walton nods, and reaches into his car for the radio microphone.

WALTON

We'll have to re-assign some men, sir. There's over a hundred volumes in the file.

WARD

Whatever it takes.

Ward turns to Anderson, and walks him two steps from the other men.

WARD

I just want to...Thank you, Mr. Anderson.

Anderson shrugs it off. Ward shakes his head.

WARD

No. It was your connection.

ANDERSON

But they're your files.

Ward nods, and very nearly grins.

Anderson leads him back towards the porch.

(cont)

He smiles at Mark, who's sitting on a bench with the nine year old.

ANDERSON

Have you decided?

Mark turns to the younger kid.

MARK

'Member what I axed you?

The kid nods.

MARK

You gonna get 'em? Or you gonna let 'em go?

BLACK KID

I'm gonna get 'em.

Mark turns back to nod at Anderson.

MARK

Yeah, he'll testify.

CUT TO:

INT: COURTROOM: DAY

THE RUSTLING of many people standing, all at once.

As JUSTICE BLANTON walks in, eyeing the packed courtroom and gallery with a scowl.

When he sits, everyone sits.

He calls out,

JUSTICE BLANTON

The defendants will rise.

FOUR MEN do so, at the defense bench.

The bearded man who'd thrown the bomb, SATCH SELMON, and his three partners, BOBBY COWENS, and JOJO and BUDDY KITE.

The judge peers at them.

And at their awesome array of weapons, neatly tagged and displayed on the evidence table; rifles, handguns, automatic weapons, grenades, and dynamite.

Then he glances at Toby Walker, sitting at the prosecutor's table, and behind him at Ward and Anderson, in the first row.

(cont)

He scans the gallery, filled with WORKING MEN in t-shirts, and coveralls.

He scowls at everyone in the room.

Until, finally, the place is absolutely silent.

Then he starts to speak.

JUSTICE BLANTON

In this country, a man's home is his castle. That's one of the principles by which this community survives. You men have done violence to that principle. You men have let this community down. But I want you to understand that the Court appreciates the fact that what you have done, and the crimes which you have committed, have been, to some extent at least, brought about by outside influences...

A MURMUR immediately goes through the room. The judge goes right on talking.

JUSTICE BLANTON

There have been outsiders come into your community, and they have been unwelcome, and their presence here has been unnecessary, and they have been, insofar as some of them are concerned, at least, people of low morality, and unhygienic, and their presence here has provoked a lot of people...

The murmuring grows.

There are now whispered conversations audible all over the Press section.

Ward starts to rub his temples with his fingertips.

The judge BANGS his gavel several times, then continues.

JUSTICE BLANTON

So the Court understands- without condoning them, mind you- that the crimes to which you men have pled Guilty were to some extent provoked by these outside influences. So with all this, I am going to make your punishment light. I am going to sentence you each to five years imprisonment. And for the following reasons, I am going to suspend these sentences...

Before he can say another word, the entire press section rises from its seats as one, and bolts for the back doors, and the telephones.

The courtroom is in an uproar.

Everyone in the gallery stands and CHEERS.

The four defendants SHOUT and clap each other on the back.

INT: COURTROOM: DAY (cont)

(65)

The judge shakes his head, and methodically POUNDS his gavel.

Toby Walker turns around to glare at Alan Ward.

WALKER

Now, can I go?

Anderson turns away, and spots the young photographer, camera-less, still seated in the now empty press section.

With hand signals, he indicates that someone took his camera at the door.

Anderson nods, sympathetically.

The judge still POUNDS his gavel, showing no signs of tiring.

As confetti rains down on Alan Ward, thrown by someone in the gallery, up above.

CUT TO:

INT: MOTEL ROOM: NIGHT

Ward stands alone in the middle of his hotel room, with his hands in his pockets.

He watches a shaky black and white tv, as a WELL-DRESSED BLACK MAN speaks from the Capitol steps in Washington.

CHARLES EVERS

Mississippi justice is a disgrace to this nation.  
Such a decision simply gives a license to lawlessness  
and violence.

A NEWSCASTER follows the taped interview.

NEWSCASTER

Reaction to the verdict has been ~~explosive~~ strong, in other parts of the country; from an all-night, candle-lit vigil at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, to an explosion of racial violence in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles.

Ward no longer watches the tv.

Instead, he looks out the window into the darkness.

Anrruptly, he leaves the room.

CUT TO:



WARD

If we could just find the damn bodies.

Anderson nods, and looks away as well.

ANDERSON

Yeah...Listen, I gotta go meet somebody for a drink,  
so...Good night.

Ward nods.

WARD

Good night.

He watches Anderson get in his car and drive off.

Then he walks back into the motel.

CUT TO:

EXT: WILLIAMS HOME: NIGHT

Late that night, several cars coast to a stop in front of the Williams farmhouse.

For a while, they wait in silence.

Then their passengers get out, ~~shoulder~~ shouldering rifles and shotguns.

The fat man in coveralls, and the bearded man, Satch, both step to the front of the group.

Jimmy Bailey joins them, hiding the flame of a lighter with one hand.

They heave sticks of dynamite onto the porch.

The rest of them FIRE SEVERAL SHOTS each.

Then they all pile pile back into their cars.

The front of the Williams home explodes.

The cars take off.

CUT TO:

INT: WILLIAMS HOME: NIGHT

In a bedroom, Mr. Williams has a hand on his son's shoulder.

He speaks in a fierce whisper. You can see the white all the way around his eyes.

(cont)

WILLIAMS

You take Mom out the back way, y'hear? Get the hell back in the woods and stay there. I'll cover you.

Mark nods, wide-eyed.

His father steps carefully back into the already-burning living room.

He shoulders his own shotgun, and then SHOUTS at the top of his lungs.

WILLIAMS

Come on in here and get me, you cowerin' dogs!

He EMPTIES HIS SHOTGUN at the men who are long gone.

He reloads, and commences to SHOUT again.

WILLIAMS

Come on! You ain't gonna run me!

He FIRES AGAIN, standing in the middle of the burning room.

CUT TO:

EXT: WILLIAMS HOME: MORNING

Once again, there are FBI AGENTS all over the grounds.

This time, though, the farmhouse is just smoking ruins.

Ward and Anderson stand under a tree with Mark Williams, who's wearing a dark suit.

WARD

You sure you won't let us relocate you? We'll find you a place somewhere else. Maybe in the midwest?

Mark wrinkles his nose.

MARK

The midwest...No. My mom wants to stay, so...She in charge.

He smiles.

Anderson nods.

ANDERSON

I'm sorry, Mark.

Mark shakes his head.

(cont)

EXT: WILLIAMS HOME: MORNING (cont)

(70)

MARK

He was a fighter. Sometime, you lose.

He shrugs.

MARK

Don't mean you can quit.

He looks out into the field at his mom, who's standing alone.

MARK

I gotta go stay with Mom, okay?

He walks away.

Ward watches him go, then turns to Anderson, and nods.

WARD

It's time. Right?

Anderson looks at him, then shifts his gaze to the kid and his mom, out in the blackened field.

ANDERSON

How do you mean?

WARD

We have to know everything Mrs. Price knows. Before anybody else gets killed.

Anderson turns to gaze evenly at Ward again.

Then he shakes his head. Then he stops.

ANDERSON

Yeah. It's time.

CUT TO:

EXT: FIELD: NIGHT

The Ku Klux Klan's public rally looks more like a county fair than anything else.

More than TWO THOUSAND PEOPLE stroll around, buying fried food and corn whiskey at makeshift booths.

WOMEN push baby carriages. MEN carry LITTLE KIDS on their shoulders.

GROUPS OF COUNTRY GUITAR PICKERS stand around playing together.

(cont)



The whole scene's lit by torchlight, though.

And every dozen yard or so stands a MAN IN A WHITE ROBE, with the red cross of the Klan stencilled on it, and a box labelled CONTRIBUTIONS by his side.

From the far end of the field, Sam Bowers' stentorian voice rings out over the P.A. system.

BOWERS

These northern students, and their atheist-communist bosses...who came into our community this summer, with the wish to destroy it...this week have taken a terrible blow...This week, their cause has been crippled...This week, all these Federal Policemen you see out here taking numbers...This week, they have seen that they are powerless against us...if we stand together...

A DULL ROAR OF APPLAUSE rises from the crowd listening to the speech.

While, in the impromptu parking lots surrounding the field, TWO HUNDRED FBI AGENTS more slowly around, taking license plate numbers.

Alan Ward stands amongst them, arms folded.

He watches the HALF DOZEN KLANSMEN, robed, but hoodless, who stand watching him.

Bowers continues.

BOWERS

This week, in the courts of Mississippi, they have been reminded...that they cannot by force make our community into a replica of their communities...In which negroes riot, unrestrained, and unpunished...As they do this summer, in the streets of Harlem, and in the streets of Watts, and in the streets of Oakland, and in the streets of Chicago...

THE APPLAUSE BUILDS ONCE AGAIN.

At the edge of the crowd of listeners, Rupert Anderson stands.

He gazes at the speakers platform, where the guests of honor sit on folding chairs behind Bowers.

The four men accused in the Walker bombing, a HALF DOZEN OTHERS, and Cecil Price.

Anderson looks around once more, then turns away.

He walks back towards the parking lots, and the fleet of black government sedans.

CUT TO:

In Mrs. Price's living room, the sudden silence is striking.

Anderson sits on the couch, with his elbows on his knees, and his hat in his hand.

Mrs. Price sits close beside him, eyes downcast.

ANDERSON

Things have changed.

MRS. PRICE

I can see that.

ANDERSON

I can't come around anymore.

She looks at the side of his face.

ANDERSON

They know I talk to you. They know you tell me things. If I keep on...

MRS. PRICE

I'm not so afraid as you might think.

ANDERSON

I am, though. I'm afraid.

Mrs. Price nods. Her eyes suddenly moisten.

She leans towards him, putting her face in the hollow of his neck.

He turns, to take her in his arms.

Over her shoulder, we can see his eyes, also wet.

His lips move, silently, as she begins to caress him.

It's odd to see him handling her so gently.

He seems big enough to crush her in his arms, but he touches her as though she were a doll.

She whispers to him.

MRS. PRICE

Come upstairs with me...Just this once...Please.

CUT TO:

INT: BEDROOM: NIGHT

(73)

Mrs. Price lies in the bed, alone, holding her arms across her breasts.

Her black hair is spread out along the pillows.

The bedclothes are all over the floor.

She watches Anderson dress, in the half-light.

He puts on his shirt, and his tie, without ever looking at her.

When he slides his shoulder holster over one arm, she says quietly,

MRS. PRICE

My husband drove one of the three cars that night.

Anderson stops.

She winces, having heard herself say it.

MRS. PRICE

I could never testify to that. You'll have to prove it otherwise.

Anderson sits down at the foot of the bed.

His shoulders slump. He seems suddenly drained.

MRS. PRICE

I can tell you one hard thing, though. The bodies are buried on Owen Burrage's farm. Under a dam he was building at the time.

Anderson turns to her.

He makes as if to speak.

She holds up a hand, and smiles.

MRS. PRICE

Shhh. Just go.

He nods.

Then he stands up, and puts on his jacket.

CUT TO:

EXT: BURRAGE FARM: DAWN

(74)

THE ROAR OF TWO TRANSPORT HELICOPTERS is overwhelming.

They hover in tandem; suspended beneath them on heavy steel cables is a huge earth-moving machine.

They set it down gently on the grass-covered top of an earthen dam, where TWO SCORE FBI MEN are waiting.

They're all armed with shovels and spades.

In the meadow below the dam, and along the stream above it, ANOTHER TWO SCORE agents; these men armed with automatic weapons.

Off to the edge of the meadow, leaning against his car, alone, is Anderson.

He watches the young photographer, who's taking pictures of the airborne arrival.

When the heavy cables are finally worked free of the earth-mover, the choppers pull away abruptly.

They stop over the meadow, and hover in the air.

From the top of the dam, Ward waves to them: Thanks.

Within seconds, they're gone.

CUT TO:

EXT: FARM GATES: NOON

A black government sedan pulls to a halt, inside the front gates of the farm.

Alan Ward gets out.

Immediately, SEVERAL DOZEN VOICES SHOUT questions at him.

REPORTERS

Is it true that you've found the bodies? Who gave you the information? Is there a Mister X?

Ward holds up his hands, and the crowd of reporters being held outside the gates by FOUR ARMED AGENTS finally quiets down.

WARD

This is a crime scene, gentlemen. When we get what we came for, you'll be allowed in.

The SHOUTING starts again, instantly.

Ward gets back into his car, and drives back through the meadow.

CUT TO:

By the end of the day, a v-shaped slash in the red clay of the dam steams in the Mississippi sun.

It's like an open wound in the earth; twenty feet deep.

The agents are in the pit, digging by hand.

Bird works in the middle of the group, still wearing his shirt and tie under his coveralls, although he's completely soaked with sweat.

He shouts,

BIRD

Stop! Stop!

He scrambles on his knees in the bright red clay.

The rest of the agents move towards the spot where he's working.

He digs with a hand trowel, and uncovers, bit by bit, a rotting human arm.

He works feverishly, with a terrible grimace on his face.

After a few seconds, the agents who'd come up to hover over him have to step back a few feet.

Bird keeps working, although he's starting to make some STRANGE GROANING NOISES.

Anderson finally steps up, and lifts Bird to his feet by his collar, and takes him off to the edge of the crowd, where he immediately starts to vomit.

Ward points to two other agents.

WARD

Wet your handkerchiefs, and tie them over your faces.

The two agents do so, then hunker down in the clay to uncover more of the body.

As Bird continues to wretch.

CUT TO:

INT: MOTEL ROOM: NIGHT

Ward's room is completely filled with happy agents.

They each hold little plastic cups full of champagne, and watch the tv news.

Ward stands in the corner, on the phone, with a hand over his other ear.

(cont)

WARD

Say again?

From the tv set, we can hear Lyndon Johnson's voice:

PRESIDENT JOHNSON

...And I'd like to take this opportunity to personally congratulate Director Hoover, on the courage, and perseverance, against mighty odds, of the men of the FBI...

A ROAR goes up in the room, as the agents all congratulate each other.

Ward grabs Carlisle's arm.

Carlisle takes one look at him, and his celebratory grin fades.

WARD

Take five other men, and meet me in the parking lot. Now!

CARLISLE

Yes, sir.

CUT TO:

INT: HOSPITAL CORRIDOR: NIGHT

Ward barks orders to the half dozen men.

WARD

You two take the front door. If anybody looks funny to you, break him down, then ask. You two, on either side of this floor. Carlisle, you're in the room with me. Bird!

BIRD

Right here, sir.

WARD

You're his friend. Go find him, and bring him here. Don't tell him why. If he tries to go anywhere else...

Bird waits for him to go on.

WARD

....Just get him here. You understand?

BIRD

Yes, sir.

CUT TO:

Ward sits with his elbows on his knees, rubbing his temples.

He looks up at the hospital bed where Mrs. Price lies unconscious.

What he can see of her face is black and blue.

There are tubes in her nose, a cast on one arm, and a steel clamp around her neck that holds her jaw still.

On Ward's cheeks, there are tears.

He catches Carlisle staring at them, and says sharply,

WARD

Get out of here.

CARLISLE

Yes, sir.

He moves to the door.

CARLISLE

I'll be right outside.

Ward nods, and wipes his face with the back of his hand.

Carlisle opens the door to the hall, and almost bumps into Anderson.

Who looks at Mrs. Price for a few seconds, then turns on his heel, and walks away.

CARLISLE

Mr. Ward? Sir?

Carlisle's tone makes Ward hop out of his chair.

CUT TO:

INT: CORRIDOR: NIGHT

Anderson walks quickly down the hospital corridor towards the elevators.

Ward trots after him.

WARD

Stop, Mr. Anderson.

ANDERSON

Go to hell.

WARD

I'm telling you to stop, and I mean it.

(cont)

He grabs Anderson's arm with one hand.

Anderson shakes him off, and keeps walking.

Ward takes out his gun, and cocks it.

WARD

Stop.

Anderson stops, and turns.

He looks Ward up and down; this natty young man with a gun, held down by his thigh.

WARD

We're not killers. We're not thugs. That's the difference between them and us.

Anderson nods.

Then takes two steps towards Ward, and SLAMS him against the wall, holding him by the collar.

He ignores Ward's gun, which is jammed two inches into the skin of his neck.

ANDERSON

That's the difference between them and you.

At either end of the hall, the agents cock their weapons and wait.

Bird stands stock still, 30 feet from to two men.

Ward stares at his assistant.

WARD

You're not any more like them than I am.

Anderson grimaces.

ANDERSON

Between them and me is something you'll never understand.

WARD

I understand more than...

Anderson interrupts him, hissing,

ANDERSON

Well, it's my time, now. I got a couple of things I have to do, now. You understand that?

(cont)



WARD

I understand that you're about to make a stupid mistake.

Anderson colors deeply.

WARD

By going after one 25 cent asshole for one beating.

ANDERSON

Shut up.

WARD

Instead of going after the whole system for much greater brutality. You're gonna blow it all when you could bring it all down.

ANDERSON

Shut up!

WARD

This is history, you jackass! It's more important than you're little affair!

Anderson SMACKS him, backhand, across the face.

Ward stares at him.

WARD

Let me go, Mr. Anderson. Now.

Anderson unhands him, and steps back a couple of feet.

Ward lowers his gun to his thigh, again.

Then he hauls off, and SMACKS Anderson back.

Then he adjusts his collar, and straightens his jacket.

WARD

We'll go after them, together.

ANDERSON

You wouldn't know how.

WARD

I learn fast.

ANDERSON

And you don't have the guts.

Ward shakes his head, slowly.

(cont)

WARD

I not only have the guts. I have the power.

He taps himself on the chest.

WARD

Did you hear what I said? I have the power.

Anderson snarls again.

ANDERSON

What the fuck does that mean?

WARD

It means I can do whatever I have to do. No questions asked. The gloves are off, you understand? As long as it's part of a successful resolution to the case... Whatever it takes.

Anderson peers at him. His face gradually relaxes.

ANDERSON

Who's authority?

Ward looks him in the eye, but doesn't say a word.

Anderson finally nods.

He turns to Bird, and raises a hand: meaning, Relax. It's over.

Bird nods. Anderson turns back to Ward.

ANDERSON

Who'll be in charge?

WARD

Us. Together. We'll work it out as we go along. Alright?

Anderson thinks about that for a long second. Then he nods.

And turns away, walking towards the elevators again.

Ward catches up, to fall into step beside him.

They walk into an elevator together, and the door closes behind them.

CUT TO:

EXT: CEMETARY: DAY

(81)

SEVERAL HUNDRED BLACKS attend the funeral of James Chaney.

A BLACK PRIEST eulogizes him, over a Public Adress system.

BLACK PRIEST

James Chaney was a special young man.

Most of the crowd responds out loud.

CROWD

Amen.

BLACK PRIEST

He was a christ-like young man. He was an example to us all.

CROWD

Yes, he was.

In a losse ring around the crowd of blacks, there are almost TWICE AS MANY WHITE MEN.

Photographers, and reporters, and television crews.

And surrounding them, uniformed State Troopers, and several hundred FBI agents, in dark suits.

Their eyes constantly move, scanning the perimeters of the cemetary.

Many of them take notice, as yet another black government car eases to a stop in the dirt road that bisects the cemetary.

TWO MORE AGENTS get out, carrying overnight bags.

They seem slightly older than the other agents, and their faces slightly harder.

They look like dangerous men. Like pros.

They walk over to take up a position at the edge of the crowd.

Another car stops behind theirs, and TWO MORE, like them, get out.

Then another car, and TWO MORE.

BLACK PRIEST

His was a christian example to all who struggle for justice.

CROWD

Amen.

(cant)

Anderson walks by the new agents, nodding to them.  
They follow him out into the middle of the dirt road.  
Ward walks over to join Anderson.

WARD  
Who are they?

ANDERSON  
They're with me.

Ward looks them over, and finally nods.

WARD  
Okay.

From the edge of the crowd, the young photographer watches this little group, as Anderson introduces each of the six men to Ward.

Nearby, Bird watches the little group, as well; his gaze never wandering.

BLACK PRIEST  
James Chaney struggled for justice without violence.

CROWD  
Amen.

Anderson finally notices Bird, staring at him.

Anderson looks away, and sighs.

Then he looks back at Bird, and jerks his head: Get over here.

Bird joins them, immediately.

Anderson speaks softly to the new men.

ANDERSON  
First thing is to let them know we're here, and...  
that the rules have changed.

The oldest of the new agents, KING, asks with a gentle smile.

KING  
What are the rules, Rupert?

Anderson shrugs.

ANDERSON  
Same old rules. Like they were when you joined the  
Bureau, Bobby. Back in the twenties.

(cont)

EXT: CEMETARY: DAY (cont)

(83)

King chuckles. The others grin.

Anderson spots the young photographer walking towards them.

He shakes his head.

The gesture is powerful enough that the photographer stops in his tracks, and turns abruptly to face the black priest again.

BLACK PRIEST

James Chaney dies for what he believed in. But he never raised his hand against a fellow man.

CROWD

That's right.

BLACK PRIEST

He felt the lash, but he did not reach for the sword.

When the young photographer finally dares turn to look again, the little group is already breaking up.

He watches, chagrined, as they move off towards their cars.

Then he spots something in the other half of the cemetery, beyond the dirt road.

A MIDDLE AGED BLACK LADY crying over a coffin draped in an American flag.

TWO BLACK MARINES stand at attention as it's lowered into the ground.

The photographer takes a picture of this tiny funeral, dwarfed as it is by Chaney's.

As the blacks in the crowd around him begin singing WE SHALL OVERCOME.

CUT TO:

EXT: CROSSROADS: AFTERNOON

Three government... sedans stop in a tiny crossroads town, back in the woods.

Anderson turns, in the passenger seat of the first one.

ANDERSON

This it?

In the back, Bird nods.

He and Anderson and Ward get out, to stand in the road.

(cont)

The new agents get out of the two cars behind them.

They all face a little wooden tavern.

Ward calls out,

WARD

My men tell me there's someone in this town who's  
threatened to shoot the next FBI man to set foot here.

One by one, a series of DULL WHITE FACES appear in the windows of the tavern.

No one says a word. They just stare at the nine men in the road.

WARD

Is that right? Or not?

Still, not a sound.

Ward finally looks at Anderson, and shrugs.

Anderson asks quietly,

ANDERSON

Mind if I try?

WARD

Go ahead. This is probably your department.

Anderson walks around to the trunk of the car, and pops it open.

He comes up with a submachine gun, and cocks it.

All the faces in the windows vanish.

The six new agents shoulder machine guns, as well.

Then they BLOW OUT EVERY SINGLE WINDOW IN THE BUILDING.

They keep firing until one of the corners of the wooden roof actually starts  
to sag.

Then they lower their weapons, and Anderson nods to Ward.

ANDERSON

That's all.

Ward nods.

Anderson puts his machine gun back in the trunk, and starts to get back in  
the car, but Ward stops him.

(cont)

WARD

Mr. Anderson, perhaps you should drive.

Anderson nods.

ANDERSON

Yes, sir.

CUT TO:

EXT: FARMHOUSE: DAWN

Anderson leans on his horn, outside a ramshackle wooden farmhouse.

Jimmy Bailey comes through the screendoor in his underwear, holding a shotgun.

The two FBI men step away from each other, guns appearing in their hands.

Bailey doesn't say a word.

He just holds his shotgun steady, pointed somewhere between the two of them.

Anderson taunts him, quietly.

ANDERSON

This is your property, isn't it, Jimmy Bailey?

Bailey looks at him.

His WIFE appears behind the screen door, eyes heavy with sleep.

She ~~mutters~~,  
murmurs,

MRS. BAILEY

Plug the sonofabitch, honey.

Bailey glances at her.

He raises his shotgun at Anderson.

Ward barks,

WARD

Shoot him and I'll blow your fucking head off.

Bailey looks from Anderson to Ward, moving only his eyes.

He finally emits a GROWL, and lowers the shotgun.

His wife shakes her head, and moves away from the door, back into the house.

(cont)

Anderson walks slowly up onto the porch.

Then, with surprising quickness, he grabs the barrel of Bailey's shotgun, and jams it up under Bailey's chin.

Bailey makes a sound like GARGLING.

Anderson whispers to him.

ANDERSON

You're the one I'm coming after, Jimmy.

Bailey winces.

BAILEY

What? Why me?

ANDERSON

Cause you're a coward.

He leans back, releasing the pressure on Bailey's windpipe.

Bailey doubles over, coughing.

ANDERSON

And cause I know you were there, that night.

Bailey stops coughing, and stares up at Anderson.

BAILEY

Who's been telling you that shit?

ANDERSON

You have.

BAILEY

What?

Anderson throws the shotgun in to the yard, and walks back to his car.

BAILEY

What the fuck're you talking about, man?

Anderson ignores him, and starts the car.

He nods to Ward, who's still got Bailey covered.

ANDERSON

Well, you're gettin' the hang of this, right away.

WARD

Thank you.

(cont)



EXT: FARMHOUSE: DAWN (cont)

(87)

Anderson puts the black sedan into reverse, and SQUEALS away.

ANDERSON

"I'll blow your fucking head off." I bet they didn't teach you that up in Harvard, did they?

Ward grins.

ANDERSON

He's the one we're gonna get a confession from.

Ward nods, watching the house recede in the dawn light.

WARD

Just tell me what you need me to do.

CUT TO:

INT: MOTEL: MORNING

Ward faces a press conference, rubbing his tired eyes.

The room is absolutely overflowing with photographers and reporters.

Bright tv lights shine in Ward's face.

WARD

Well, let's just say that since the discovery of the bodies, more and more people are cooperating.

The newsmen all SHOUT at once.

REPORTER

Does that mean you have a Klan informant?

REPORTER 2

Is it the same Mister X who told you where to find the bodies?

REPORTER 3

Is it true that he was paid 30 thousand dollars?

Ward frowns.

REPORTER

Do you have a Klan informant?

WARD

Gentlemen, I'm not going to speak to you anymore, if you insist on jeopardizing my investigation by printing rumors and speculation. Good day.

(cont)

INT: MOTEL: MORNING (cont)

(88)

He leaves the podium, and shoulders his way through the crowd.

The room BUZZES.

Anderson opens the door for Ward, and shakes his head, very sympathetic.

He murmurs,

ANDERSON

You play these guys like a guitar.

Ward nods.

WARD

Subtly, though. See? Subtlety is the key.

ANDERSON

Subtlety, huh?

WARD

Yeah, like deftness, or craftiness, or...

ANDERSON

I know what the goddamn word means.

Ward grins.

CUT TO:

EXT: FARMHOUSE: NIGHT

That night, a black government car waits, empty, by the side of the road.

Right in front of Bailey's ramshackle home.

An old Chevy comes by, and slows down dramatically.

The mean-faced DRIVER stares at the car.

With its D.C. plates, and its whip antenna, it couldn't be more obvious.

He finally mutters,

DRIVER

Son of a damn bitch.

And he races away into the night.

Bailey comes out onto his porch, and yells at the car.

BAILEY

I know what you're trying to do. It ain't gonna work.

(cont)

EXT: FARMHOUSE: NIGHT (cont)

(89)

Behind him, on the other side of the screen door, his wife adds,

MRS. BAILEY

You think they're that stupid?

In the car, Bird lies comfortably on the front seat.

He nods, and chuckles quietly.

CUT TO:

EXT: COUNTRY ROAD: DAY

Two government cars race along a country road at top speed.

In the lead car, Ward holds onto the dash with one hand, and asks Anderson,

WARD

What do we expect to find at this quarry?

ANDERSON

I have no idea. Anonymous caller wanted to speak to me, personally, though.

He turns to grin at Ward.

ANDERSON

I'm gettin' famous.

There are TWO CRACKS of gunfire, and the windshield of their car explodes.

They swerve off the road, into a ditch.

The car behind them screeches to a halt on the other side of the road.

The CRACKS of two more rifle shots.

Ward gets out of the car, nose bleeding, his gun in his hand.

He sees TWO MEN IN OVERALLS, running away, in the field by the road.

He raises his gun into the air, and SHOUTS,

WARD

Halt!

He FIRES a warning shot.

At the same time that Anderson, King, and another of the new agents, FIRE as well.

(cont)

The two men go down in the tall grass like rag dolls.

King and the other agent start walking into the field, towards the bodies, guns held out before them.

Anderson gets up off one knee, and holsters his pistol.

Ward looks at him, and shakes his head.

WARD

I guess that's what we were supposed to find, huh?

Anderson nods. Then he turns to Ward, and grins.

ANDERSON

Sorry about your nose.

Ward touches his face, gingerly.

His nose is already starting to swell. It's obviously broken.

He shrugs.

WARD

I always heard that people who spend a lot of time together start looking more and more alike.

They hear ANOTHER SHOT from the field.

They turn to see the two agents standing together, guns pointed down into the grass.

King waves: It's okay.

Anderson looks back at Ward, his face set.

ANDERSON

It's time to find out exactly who did what, that night.

Ward clears his throat.

WARD

Haven't we been trying, all along?

Anderson shakes his head.

ANDERSON

Not hardly.

CUT TO:

EXT: CAR: NIGHT

(91)

Late that evening, Ward and Anderson sit in their car.

A SWARTHY MAN in a trenchcoat sits in the back seat.

They watch the Ramsay home, where they'd gone to the dinner party.

WARD

Where's his wife, tonight?

Anderson sighs.

ANDERSON

Hospital. Just for observation. She had a minor car wreck this afternoon.

Ward nods, and touches the bandages on his face.

The mayor comes through the door of the Ramsay home, smiling and nodding.

Anderson starts the car.

CUT TO:

INT: MAYOR'S HOME: NIGHT

When the mayor walks in his own front door, he finds the three men walking in with him.

They close the door quickly behind them, and move to lower the blinds.

MAYOR

What in the hell...? You all can't come in here.

Anderson puts a finger to his lips.

MAYOR

You can't come into a man's home, and try to intimidate him like this.

Ward nods, and says quietly,

WARD

For what it's worth, I agree with you completely.

The mayor grimaces, and turns to Anderson.

MAYOR

What in the hell does he mean by that?

Anderson grimaces.

(Cont)

ANDERSON

Let's cut the crap, alright? This guy's got a question he wants to ask you.

The swarthy man takes the mayor's arm in a powerful grip.

He leads the mayor away, towards the dining room.

The mayor can't help but go along.

He says, though, over his shoulder.

MAYOR

I'm gonna tell everybody about this.

Anderson shakes his head.

ANDERSON

You won't want to.

CUT TO:

INT: MAYOR'S KITCHEN: NIGHT

Ward and Anderson sit at the kitchen table, speaking in undertones.

WARD

Where'd you get this gorilla?

ANDERSON

Mario? He's not a gorilla.

Ward sighs.

WARD

Well, he's not exactly verbal, is he?

ANDERSON

Oh. He's just self-conscious about his accent. That's all..I flew him up from Florida. His family owes me a favor. From another case I did, once.

Ward rolls his eyes.

WARD

I'm sorry I asked. I don't want to know any more, alright?

There's a CRASH from the next room.

Ward stands, a hand on his gun, and moves to the door.

(cont)

ANDERSON

Don't bother yourself. It's nothing.

Ward glances at him, but pushes the door to the dining room slightly open, all the same.

Inside, it appears that the antique dining chair the mayor had been sitting in has given way.

Both its hind legs are broken.

In the otherwise elegant room, the mayor lies on his back, with his knees in the air.

Tears roll down his cheeks.

Mario has one foot on his chest, and a sawed-off shotgun in his mouth.

Mario speaks softly, in a beautiful italian accent.

MARIO

There is(a) no shame in loving life. There is(a) no shame in wishing to survive...Give(a) me the names.

CUT TO:

EXT: OPEN FIELD: NIGHT

Anderson walks Mario to a small private plane, idling in an open field.

As soon as Mario gets in, it takes off.

Anderson walks back to Ward, with a crumpled piece of paper in his hand.

ANDERSON

Three cars. Four men in each car. Price fired the slugs in Schwerner and Goodman. Bailey fired the two in Chaney.

Ward sighs.

ANDERSON

Bailey's been heard around town to say, "They only left me a nigger, but at least I shot me a nigger."

Ward looks at the paper, and shakes his head.

WARD

You're sure the mayor won't talk about this?

(cont)

EXT: OPEN FIELD: NIGHT (cont)

(94)

ANDERSON

They'd kill him. He knows that.

Anderson offers the piece of paper to Ward.

Ward shies away from touching it.

WARD

What are you going to do with it?

Anderson frowns at his obvious distaste.

ANDERSON

I'll try to be as subtle as I can.

Ward smiles weakly.

WARD

Yeah.

Anderson looks off into the open field.

ANDERSON

Maybe you should get some sleep.

Ward looks off, too, and nods.

CUT TO:

EXT: SHACK: NIGHT

A man from the photograph of Price's wedding, BO McHALE, walks up to the door of his backwoods home.

Two of the new agents approach him from either end of his porch.

They each take an arm.

AGENT

Let's go for a ride, Bo.

Bo looks them over, then SHOUTS,

BO

Annie!

One agents clamps a hand over his mouth.

AGENT

Shh! You don't want her to see you like this.

They haul him back into the woods.

CUT TO:



EXT: ANOTHER SHACK: NIGHT

(95)

At another backwoods shack, a BLACK HAired MAN parks his old Ford, and gets out.

From the darkness, a VOICE asks,

VOICE  
Hey, Smoky. You got a light?

He CHUCKLES.

The man takes off, on foot.

On the dirt road in front of his house, he's tackled around the knees.

His face SLAMS into the dirt, and he MOANS softly.

CUT TO:

EXT: CAR: NIGHT

One of the BOMBERS of the Williams home sits in the back seat of a government car.

Two of the new agents side on either side of him.

Bird drives, slowly, along a deserted road.

AGENT 2  
You don't see what I'm saying, you dumb shit.

AGENT 3  
He's saying we already know you drove one of the cars, asshole. He just wants to give you a chance to admit it. That's all.

BOMBER  
Go chase yourself.

The agent shakes his head.

He raps the man in the stomach, with a black rubber sap.

The man doubles over, GROANING.

The agent looks at his back, and raps him again, in the kidneys.

CUT TO:

In a one-room local radio station, Sam Bowers speaks into a microphone.

BOWERS

There is no doubt in my mind that this community is swarming with a large number of arrogant and violent men in the FBI service. I am well aware of the power and brutality of these men, and I am afraid of them...

He pauses, as Ward and Anderson have just walked into the control room, on the other side of the plexiglass divider.

The ENGINEER stands, to talk to them.

Bowers goes on.

BOWERS

But I will not remain silent, and see our own American institution of equal justice under law destroyed, without exposing those who work against it, regardless of their position...

He stops again, and frowns.

The red light above his head has just gone out.

BOWERS

What in Tom Hill is goin' on, Eddie?

The engineer holds up his hands, and shrugs.

Ward holds a blue legal document up against the plexiglass, for Bowers to examine.

CUT TO:

INT: MOTEL: AFTERNOON

Ward once again faces the press.

This time, there are even more reporters and photographers in the room.

There are tv lights, and several camera crews.

And in a row of chairs behind Ward, a HALF DOZEN DIGNITARIES, smiling for pictures as he speaks.

WARD

There has been some sporadic violence, yes. The White Knights and the United Klans of America seem to be involved in a struggle over strategy, at this point. Apparently, they're aware that things are starting to unravel.

(cont)

INT: MOTEL: AFTERNOON (cont)

(97)

When he pauses, a SCORE OF REPORTERS BARK QUESTIONS.

The one most clearly audible is,

REPORTER

Your undercover people haven't been fanning the flames, have they?

In the moment of silence that follows, Ward stares at the reporter.

WARD

The Bureau doesn't work that way.

The other reporters BARK QUESTIONS again.

REPORTER 2

Can we expect a major development, soon?

REPORTER 3

When will you start making arrests?

The room quiets, again.

Ward touches his nose, which is still discolored, but no longer bandaged.

WARD

Within the next 24 hours.

The ROOM ERUPTS.

Half the reporters SHOUT additional questions, while the rest struggle towards the makeshift bank of phones in the back of the room.

They very nearly run over Deputy Price, who's standing there.

He grimaces, and struggles not to be swept along in the rush.

CUT TO:

EXT: MAYOR'S HOME: AFTERNOON

A HALF DOZEN GOVERNMENT CARS are parked at odd angles in the drive and in the yard of the mayor's home.

A SCORE OF ARMED AGENTS keep the press behind barricades.

CUT TO:

INT: MAYOR'S HOME: AFTERNOON

In the basement, another SCORE OF AGENTS stand around, talking softly.

(cont)

INT: MAYOR'S HOME: AFTERNOON (cont)

(98)

Ward and Anderson supervise, as two of them cut down the mayor's body.

He's apparently hanged himself, with a tie, from a water pipe in his basement.

They lay the bloated body down on a stretcher, and cover it with a sheet.

Several others start carrying the stretcher towards the basement stairs, but get bogged down in the crowded room.

Ward finally SNARLS,

WARD

Get out of the way, for Christ's sake! What the hell are all you people doing down here, anyway?

The room goes silent.

Then the agents start to rearrange themselves, and the stretcher starts moving, again.

Anderson looks at the floor.

CUT TO:

EXT: COUNTRY ROAD: EVENING

The brothers from the Walker bombing drive slowly down a country road, at sunset.

Between them, on the front seat of their huge Oldsmobile, sits Jimmy Bailey.

Jojo Kite, at the wheel, shakes his head.

JOJO

Man, they been poundin' on everybody, Jimmy. 'Cept you. You understand? People are gettin' nervous.

BAILEY

Shit, it's a set-up, Jojo. It's obvious.

JOJO

Yeah, it's obvious, alright. To me. But I'm your friend, see? Some people are gettin' nervous. That's all I'm sayin'.

He looks meaningfully at Bailey.

His brother, Buddy, nods from the far side of the car.

BUDDY

Yeah. See?

(cont)

Bailey sighs.

BAILEY

Okay. What do you want me to do?

JOJO

Nothin' at all. Just watch who you talk to, and such.

BUDDY

And what you say.

JOJO

And what you say. Okay?

Bailey nods.

BAILEY

You know I will.

Jojo nods, as well, and pulls over at the head of the drive in front of Bailey's ramshackle home.

Buddy moves to let Bailey out of the car, then gets back in.

Bailey leans in the window.

BAILEY

I ain't sayin' nothin' to nobody. Long as we stick by each other, they can't touch us.

JOJO

That's the ticket.

He wheels the big car into the driveway, to turn around.

He stops.

Parked beside Bailey's house is a brand new, jet-black GTO.

With chrome wheels, and a racing stripe, and a supercharger poking up through the hood.

Bailey sees the look on Jojo's face, and asks,

BAILEY

What?

Then he turns around, and goes pale.

BAILEY

I never seen it before in my life. I swear to God.

(cont)

EXT: COUNTRY ROAD: EVENING (cont)

(100)

Jojo glances down at the license plate.

It reads: JIMMY 1.

JOJO

Yeah.

He backs his car out of the drive, and races away.

CUT TO:

EXT: ROADSIDE: NIGHT

On a hill overlooking Bailey's house, Bird stands in the woods.

He wears a flannel jacket, and dungarees.

He looks through binoculars, and shakes his head.

BIRD

Son of a bitch.

ANDERSON

What is it?

BIRD

Price just walked into Bailey's back door. I don't think he knocked.

Anderson nods. He's also dressed in country clothes.

Ward sits in one car, behind a wooden out-building.

He's the only one still wearing a suit.

WARD

Let's move.

ANDERSON

Not yet.

WARD

Pardon?

ANDERSON

When we hear something.

Ward tightens.

WARD

Like what? Gunshots?

(cont)

EXT: ROADSIDE: NIGHT (cont)

(101)

Anderson shrugs.

ANDERSON

Whatever.

Ward looks away, into the night, then back at Anderson's profile.

WARD

Let's go, gentlemen. I'm not going to sit here while somebody else gets killed.

Anderson turns to look at him.

From down below, TWO GUNSHOTS.

You can see their effect on Ward's face.

Then, A DISTANT SCREECH OF TIRES.

BIRD

Bailey just took off in the GTO.

Another SCREECH of tires.

BIRD

Price took off after him.

Anderson's already at the wheel of the other car, with the radio mic in his hand.

ANDERSON

Move it!

CUT TO:

EXT: COUNTRY ROAD: NIGHT

On a two-lane country road, Price chases Bailey, flat out.

In his patrol car, he can just barely keep the GTO in sight.

He muscled the car around the turns, at speed, and scowls.

PRICE

I'm gonna kick your country ass.

Price keeps his foot on the floor.

Then he glances in his rear-view mirror, and blanches.

Three black government sedans are coming up behind him, fast.

(cont)

His first instinct is to slow down, puzzled.

And two of the black cars pass him, as though he were standing still.

The third one RAMS his back bumper from behind.

PRICE

Holy shit!

He mashes the accelerator, again.

But the black car behind him easily pulls alongside, and SMASHES into his patrol car from there.

The patrol car starts fish-tailing wildly.

Price fights to control the wheel.

The sedan's behind him again, and SMASHES his bumper once more.

He stands on his brakes.

The sedan stays within six inches of his back bumper until he's pulled off the road, and stopped.

When Anderson and Bird jump out of either door, shotguns levelled.

Price doesn't move a muscle.

Anderson snarls at him,

ANDERSON

Get out of the car!

Price slowly shakes his head.

PRICE

Why? You arrestin' me?

Anderson rushes at him, hitting him in the side of the head with his gun-barrel.

Hard enough to make Price swoon for a second.

ANDERSON

Get out of the car!

Price tries the left side door, but it won't open, so he has to slide over and walk around the vehicle.

(cont)



ANDERSON

Hands on the hood! Feet spread!

Price assumes the position. His ear's started to bleed, heavily.

Anderson SMACKS the barrel of his shotgun down on Price's left hand.

ANDERSON

Wider!

Price goes down on one knee, then stands again.

His hand is broken.

He says through clenched teeth,

PRICE

If you didn't have that damn shotgun...

Anderson tosses it to Bird, who catches it in the air.

ANDERSON

Lock 'em in the trunk.

Bird walks away to do so.

ANDERSON

And stay back there.

Bird remains behind the bashed up government sedan.

Anderson says to Price,

ANDERSON

Turn around.

Price turns.

ANDERSON

You still got one good hand. And your gun.

Price watches him, then glances at Bird.

ANDERSON

He'll stay out of it. Won't you, Bird?

BIRD

Yes, sir. Till you're done.

Anderson nods.

(cont)

ANDERSON

Make your move.

Price watches him for a long second.

Anderson mutters,

ANDERSON

For your wife, man. Come on.

Price's lips come back from his teeth.

He still doesn't move.

One of the other government sedans comes around the turn, up ahead.

It's bashed up in just the same way as Anderson's; front grille, and right front quarter.

It eases to a halt in the road, and Ward leans out the window.

He looks over this odd situation: Bird standing behind the sedan, and Price and Anderson facing each other in the middle of the road.

He says quietly,

WARD

Bailey's confessed. He's named everybody...He's finally realized it's the safest way to go.

No one answers him. No one moves.

Price and Anderson just stand there, staring at each other.

Ward sighs.

WARD

You have one minute, Mr. Anderson, till our support personell arrive. With the press.

He puts the sedan into reverse, and backs away.

Price calls out,

PRICE

Stick around!

Ward stops, and sticks his head out the window, again.

WARD

Can't.

(cont)

He nods at Anderson.

WARD

He and I have an arrangement.

He starts away, again.

Price shouts,

PRICE

Stay right there! I wanna be arrested! Officially!  
This motherfucker is crazy!

Ward stops his car again, and looks at the side of Anderson's face.

Then he glances at Price, and nods, with a sad smile,

WARD

All in all, though, I'm glad he's on my side.

He puts the sedan in reverse again.

Anderson finally speaks, quietly.

ANDERSON

It's alright. Fuck it.

Ward stops again.

WARD

Pardon?

Anderson shakes his head, and says to Price.

ANDERSON

You're irrelevant, now. You're a fucking cartoon  
character.

Price stares at him.

ANDERSON

So am I.

Anderson turns to Ward.

ANDERSON

I'm done.

WARD

You sure?

(cont)

Anderson nods.

ANDERSON

Yes, sir.

Ward calls, without moving from his car.

WARD

You can come and join us again, Mr. Bird. Take the deputy's guns from him, would you?

BIRD

Yes, sir.

When he passes Anderson, he pats him on the shoulder, and murmurs,

BIRD

Way to go, sir.

Then he puts the cuffs on Price.

As the ROAR OF A HELICOPTER GROWS.

Within seconds, there are two choppers overhead, huge searchlights shining down on the scene in the road.

A number of other government sedans screech to a halt within yards of Anderson.

He still doesn't move, as now dozens of agents scurry about, around him.

Nor does Ward.

He just sits in his car, and watches the side of Anderson's face

He finally says,

WARD

We've got some more arrests to make, Mr. Anderson.  
Care to come along?

Anderson nods.

CUT TO:

EXT: SHACK: NIGHT

The arrests are staged as major press events.

Outside Bo McHale's shack are scores of agents, holding back even more reporters and photographers.

(cont)

EXT: SHACK: NIGHT (cont)

(107)

When they lead Bo out to a government sedan, flashbulbs POP, and tv cameras HUM.

The young photographer takes his picture; hunched over, hands cuffed behind him and held high, stumbling through the crowd.

Over this still, a TITLE:

Tried and convicted in Federal Court  
For Conspiracy to Violate Civil Rights  
Sentenced to three years in prison.

CUT TO:

EXT: FARMHOUSE: NIGHT

The next two they get are the Kite brothers.

The press contingent is just as large.

Their home is lit like a movie set when they're led out, under arrest.

The young photographer takes a shot of them, as well.

Tried and convicted for Conspiracy  
Sentenced to five years in prison.

CUT TO:

EXT: SHACK: NIGHT

Next, the bearded man.

Tried and convicted for Conspiracy  
Sentenced to three years in prison.

CUT TO:

EXT: FARMHOUSE: NIGHT

And the black haired man.

Tried and convicted for Conspiracy  
Sentenced to two years in prison.

CUT TO:

EXT: SHERIFF'S OFFICE: NIGHT

They lead Rainey out in front of an even larger crowd of press and lookers-on.

(cont)

EXT: SHERIFF'S OFFICE: NIGHT (cont)

(108)

The young photographer catches him, snarling at the camera.

Tried and convicted for Conspiracy  
Sentenced to seven years in prison.

CUT TO:

EXT: COURTHOUSE: NIGHT

They bring Price and Bailey in to the courthouse through what has swollen to a huge crowd.

The state troopers have to help them get through to the courthouse steps.

The photographer photographs Price, spitting words at Bailey.

Tried and convicted for Conspiracy and Murder  
Sentenced to ten years in prison.

From another Federal sedan, one more figure is led through the crowd.

It's Bowers, who tries in vain to hide his face from the camera.

Tried and convicted for Conspiracy  
Sentenced to ten years in prison.

Finally, another car moves slowly through the crowd, and stops.

Ward and Anderson make their way through the crowd to the courthouse steps.

When they break free from the crowd and into the glow of the tv lights, the young photographer puts his camera down by his hip.

He starts to applaud them.

Then some BLACKS in the crowd join him.

Then the rest of the members of the press, and even a percentage of the State Troopers.

By the time Ward and Anderson disappear through the courthouse doors, the whole crowd is CLAPPING.

FADE OUT:

EXT: HOSPITAL: MORNING

On a bright, sunny morning, Anderson waits by a new black sedan, in front of the hospital.

Mrs. Price is wheeled down the walk by a HEAVY SET NURSE.

(cont)

EXT: HOSPITAL: MORNING (cont)

(109)

Mrs. Price grins a tight-lipped grin at Anderson.

NURSE

She's embarrassed about the wheel chair, Mr. Anderson.

Anderson opens the car door.

ANDERSON

Thanks, Mary. I'll take it from here.

The nurse grins.

Anderson hops around to the driver's side, and slides in beside Mrs. Price.

ANDERSON

Where to?

Mrs. Price smiles weakly at the question, and says,

MRS. PRICE

Home.

When she speaks, we can tell that her jaw's still wired shut.

CUT TO:

EXT: MRS. PRICE'S HOME: MORNING

They pull up to her white house, and stop.

The door's off the hinges. The windows are all broken.

Anderson reaches for Mrs. Price's arm.

ANDERSON

Wait.

But she's already out of the car, and going up the gravel walk.

CUT TO:

INT MRS. PRICE'S HOME: MORNING

Anderson comes through the front door, and stops.

In the living room, not a single piece of furniture remains intact.

Every piece of china is smashed.

The victrola is in pieces.

(cont)

INT: MRS. PRICE'S HOME: MORNING (cont)

(110)

The couch cushions have been torn up, and the feather's are everywhere.

Anderson moves to the kitchen, which is also a wreck.

He trots up the stairs.

In the bedroom doorway, he stops again.

The bedding's torn up.

The pictures are all down off the walls, and smashed.

On the wall, in animal's blood, is scrawled; NIGGER LOVER.

He walks over to join Mrs. Price, who stares out the back window.

She smiles.

MRS. PRICE

They didn't touch the garden.

Anderson gazes down at the flowers, at the miniature labyrinth.

He murmurs.

ANDERSON

Come with me, Julia. Come to Washington. I'll quit.  
We'll start again...Please.

She shakes her head, and smiles at him.

MRS. PRICE

Don't quit...And thanks ever so much for asking me.  
But no.

She turns back into the room, to start picking up the pieces of a broken picture frame.

Anderson watches her work for a while.

Then he walks out, and down the stairs, and into the sunshine again.

CUT TO:

EXT: MOTEL: MORNING

In front of the motel, a caravan of black sedans prepares to move out.

Agents mill around, with their baggage, and their wives.

Ward leans against the lead car, as Anderson walks up to him.

(cont)



EXT" MOTEL: MORNING (cont)

(111)

WARD  
She gonna be alright?

ANDERSON  
Sure.

Ward nods.

WARD  
Good. You want to drive?

He grins.

ANDERSON  
No, thanks. They wouldn't be able to keep up with  
me.

He very nearly grins as well.

Ward nods, and gets into the car.

When Anderson slides in beside him, he waves a hand out the window, and starts the car.

The caravan moves out.

CUT TO:

EXT: COUNTRY ROAD: MORNING

Dozens of black cars move rapidly down a country road.

Then they reach a superhighway, and stream onto the entrance ramp, one after the other.