

"SUR"

FADE IN:

EXT.- BIG SUR COAST - DAY

Sunrise breaks through the mist-shrouded Big Sur coastline. Cliffs tower in ghostly silhouette against the coves, rocks, caves, and beaches below them. Waves from the rolling gray Pacific break into foam as they crash against the huge rock formations guarding the steep Sur coastline. The Sur's inlets and coves remain shrouded in a thick, lifting fog as the ECHOING ROAR of crashing surf gradually subsides.

EXT. KELP BED IN COVE- DAY

A big, white faced adult OTTER is feeding, lying on its back in the kelp mat spread across the cove, POUNDING a shell apart against a stone on its chest, eating its contents. The otter rolls over and dives below the kelp. Waves whisper through the rising fog onto the distant rocky shoreline.

EXT. UNDERWATER IN THE COVE - DAY

The otter dives like a undulating torpedo toward the bottom of the kelp forest in the cove, pausing to search crevices in the rocky bottom for crab or abalone.

The otter seizes a small abalone, prying it from its rocky shelter, and begins its ascent with it toward the surface in dancing shafts of broken sunlight through the waving forest of kelp trunks and their canopy of broad undulating leaves.

EXT. KELP BED IN COVE - DAY

The mat of kelp that nearly chokes the cove rises and falls with the smooth swells making their way toward the shore. When the otter reappears, its broad white

nose pokes up through the kelp and is BLOWN AWAY in a spray of blood and water an instant before the thundering, echoing roar of a RIFLE SHOT arrives.

EXT. SKIFF - DAY

CLOSE of smoke clearing from a large octagonal rifle muzzle, looking up the barrel to WILLIAM MANNING'S squinting eyes and aging face.

EXT. COVE - DAY

Manning's eyes widen to focus on the otter kill. The rifle is unshouldered and CLUNKS dully into his skiff, traded quickly for a double paddle.

Manning furiously strokes his skiff across the kelp filled cove, his head down, eyes up, as he digs his paddle blades into the foam and tangle of kelp he crosses, racing to reach the otter before it sinks.

EXT.- IN THE SKIFF - DAY

The heavy, sleek brown otter is pulled from the reddened water around it and is wrestled aboard and shoved into an oilskin sack that joins the rifle on the floorboards of the skiff.

Manning's head droops, still breathing hard as he stares downward at the sack. He looks up unable to conceal his regret--up slowly to the water around the skiff, red with otter blood, and then upward to study the spectacular cliffs as the surf boils onto the shoreline of the cove. He looks again at the kill sack, panting.

A weary despair sinks across Manning's face as he lifts his hat, wipes his forehead with his other sleeve as he lowers his head, closes his eyes, resting his forehead in his wet hand and FLASHES BACK:

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT.- PRAIRIE - DAY

Manning the boy and his father, with a long muzzle-loading rifle, crouching on a grassy hill, looking down on buffalo.

DISSOLVE
TO:

EXT.- PRAIRIE CORRAL - DAY

Coyote skins line the remote corral fence. Manning the lad, shouldering a small rifle, aims at a tin can on a post and fires. The can dances noisily to a stop.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT.- SUNNY FRONTIER STREET - DAY

Manning as a young man, standing on a rough boardwalk facing three men slowly spreading out on the dirt street. One draws clumsily. The young Manning draws and shoots him and then the other two, while being only slightly wounded himself.

DISSOLVE
TO:

EXT.- SOD PRAIRIE HOUSE - DAY

A grown Manning mounts his horse to join an ugly gang of heavily armed rough riders. His young wife's angry, heartbroken eyes follow him as she holds a small boy next to her.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT.- RAINY FRONTIER STREET - DAY

A mature Manning in a long canvas riding coat, extends his rifle at arm's length and fires as his horse rears and spins. His target, a deputy whose shotgun goes off wildly into the air, is blown backwards between horses and crashes through the hitching post.

Two other long-coated riders, guns drawn and carrying canvas sacks, burst from a brick bank doorway and hurriedly mount their horses. Manning spurs his horse away beside one of the riders down the muddy street, the hooves of their horses flinging clods of mud high into the air as gunsmoke erupts at their flight. The third horseman is shot from his mount as he races away down the rainy street, spilling from his horse in a flurry of greenbacks.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT.- DESOLATE ROCKY CANYON - DAY

Manning's rifle sights align on the lead deputy in a posse entering the ravine below him. Through the recoil down the sights, he can see the lawman flung from his horse as the others in the posse scatter for cover.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT.- PRAIRIE - DAY

The massive, snow-capped Rocky Mountains fill the distance beyond a late-middle aged Manning on horseback, with a pack-horse, crossing the prairie toward them alone.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT.- TRACKBED BENEATH A MOVING TRAIN - DAY

Railroad ties blur beneath the wheels of a moving train to the CHUGGING of the engine and the CLACKING of rails. The train whistle SCREAMS.

EXT.- ON THE MOVING TRAIN - DAY

An old, unshaven Manning looks down at the blur of railroad ties beneath him from the doorway window of the rocking train as it nears a scattered seacoast town. He reaches into his shirt pocket and unfolds a faded, well-creased newspaper clipping.

INSERT

CLOSE of Manning's rough hands unfolding the creased and worn clipping.

It's header reads:

"Prairie Gazette"

It's story title reads:

"California's Sur. Wild Coast Haven for Settlers and Outlaws"

EXT.- TRACKBED BENEATH MOVING TRAIN - DAY

The blur of railroad ties slows with the chugging of the steam engine as Manning re-folds the worn clipping and pockets it. The train whistle BLASTS again and the engine's BELL begins to hammer its ring into the din, joining the SQUEAL of train brakes and the screaming release of STEAM BLASTS as the train slows.

EXT.- TRAIN DOOR WINDOW - DAY

Manning looks up to see the worn MONTEREY railroad sign post pass by as the train approaches the station, crowded with piled crates of freight, teams of horses and wagons, a crowd of people, many Chinese.

EXT.- MONTEREY STATION - DAY

The engine pulls slowly into the station, CHUFFING smoke and BLASTING steam, its bell DRONING through its almost deafening arrival.

Titling over train arrival reads:

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA
1906

EXT.- SIDE OF TRAIN - DAY

CLOSE view of the arriving train's cow-catcher as it passes slowly by, then the drive-boxes discharging HISSING clouds of steam. Huge oily black iron wheels, bathed in steam, roll by with massive horizontal drive rods rising and falling as they circle the slowing wheels.

The train slows to a crawl as the wheels of the coal tender pass by next, followed by those of a freight car, to the steps of a passenger car as the train finally groans to a halt with a wave of CLANKING and SHUDDERING couplings between railcars.

Worn, high boots step down from the train to the rough platform.

EXT.- PASSENGER RAILCAR STEPS - DAY

A rugged but aging William Manning, with a weathered leather grip bag, is followed down the train steps by a rough and noisy group of coarse and vocal Italian fishermen. As they pass around him an excitement rises in their [Sicilian] conversation between each other. The obvious leader of the arriving Italian fishermen rises on his toes and scans the depot, then raises his arm and shouts across the station. His shout reaches and is recognized by a short, flinty fisherman standing beside an imposing, starched white collared, dark-suited man who fidgets uncomfortably.

LEAD ITALIAN FISHERMAN
Pietro! Pietro Ferrante!

EXT.- STATION PLATFORM - DAY

Manning's eyes follow the group of fishermen as they approach the two men. FERRANTE only cocks his head in acknowledgment as the arriving men muscle their way rudely through the station crowd to join him. They are suddenly quiet, however, as they greet Ferrante in low tones, nods and short handshakes in the presence of the dour American businessman.

Manning watches through the moving crowd across the depot platform as Ferrante speaks forcefully to the fishermen whose heads nod in serious understanding of Ferrante's words and gestures. Manning's eyes turn from the group to survey the rest of the crowded station.

EXT.- STEAM ENGINE -DAY

The engine's steam BLASTS in a release that engulfs the station's crude platform.

EXT.- STATION PLATFORM - DAY

Through the steam appears the craggy face of a mustached man in a black bowler hat and black vested suit. His lapel carries a large six-pointed silver star engraved SHERIFF. He's flanked by two rumpled deputies, also in suits, causally surveying the crowd.

EXT.- IN THE STATION CROWD - DAY

Manning, noting the lawmen, straightens his hat as he steps away toward the baggage car. He waits his turn in the small crowd of passengers in line to hand a stub up to the baggage agent standing in its wide sliding doorway. The agent turns and disappears into the car.

As Manning waits he watches a freight car door slid open to reveal a huge, rolled and rope-tied net in the doorway. A team of horses, nervously clomping dust into the air, jumpy at the distraction of the steam and train bell, draws a flat-bed wagon alongside the freight car door.

Ferrante motions the newly arrived group of Italian fishermen to assist its unloading and his men swarm into the freight car to muscle the bulky roll of fishnet onto the wagon bed as the baggage clerk reappears in the doorway of the baggage car, handing down a stout leather rifle case to Manning.

EXT.- STATION PLATFORM -DAY

The sheriff watches Manning through the rolling steam. With a deputy on each side, the sheriff approaches Manning.

SHERIFF

I'd like to see that rifle.

Manning stops, his eyes riveted on the sheriff's, and silently obliges, slowly removing it from its leather case. One of the deputies glances to the Sheriff.

DEPUTY

What is it?

The sheriff studies Manning and reaches for the rifle with both hands.

SHERIFF

(as if speaking to the deputy)

A Sharps. Single shot. About a forty caliber by the looks of it. An old buffalo gun...

The sheriff grasps the gun, taking it from Manning, and carefully inspects it from muzzle to butt stock. The train bell DRONES and steam rushes by.

SHERIFF (CONT.)

...but about the most accurate long range rifle ever made, Sid.

The sheriff continues to inspect the rifle.

SHERIFF (CONT.)

And this ol' boy's kept it in real good condition.

The sheriff extends the rifle back to Manning but doesn't let go, holding it firmly as Manning tries to take it.

SHERIFF (CONT.)
Where're you headed, Mister...?
(pausing for a last name)

Both men hold the rifle firmly.

MANNING
Manning. The name's Manning. I heard
there's some settlin' still done here.
Maybe some ranch work.

Manning tests the sheriff's hold on the rifle with a
little pull. The sheriff releases his grip on the
rifle with the hint of a smile.

SHERIFF
I just like to keep an eye on who
comes to town, Mr. (pause) *Manning*.

MANNING
Any other questions?

The lead deputy glances to check with the sheriff for
an OK and answers Manning's question for him.

DEPUTY
(with surrogate authority)
You can git.

The sheriff eyes Manning closely.

Manning returns the eye-to-eye contact and the two
study each other as Manning slips the rifle back into
its case and secures it. He stoops to pick up his bag
and passes down the track-side from the sheriff and
his two ruffled deputies without another glance at
them.

EXT.- FREIGHT CAR - DAY

As the passengers disperse along the track and Booth's net wagon dustily departs, the Chinese crowd the platform at an open freight car to load bales of dried fish and crates covered in brushed Chinese characters and with a Grant Avenue, San Francisco address crudely stenciled on them. Manning eyes the Chinese work crew curiously as he works his way through them on the platform.

EXT.- CROWD OF CHINESE - DAY

Among the Chinese is a broad, roughly dressed Caucasian who, while ordering his Chinese crews to load their freight into the open boxcar, has noticed the old man is traveling with just a leather suitcase and the long-gun case. As Manning passes through the group, the Caucasian gets his attention and speaks out to him with a broad grin.

NONELLA

Say! Old man! I'm bettin' you must be pretty good with that.

Manning slows his stride alongside the train as Nonella nods at the leather long-gun case. Nonella steps closer.

NONELLA (CONT.)

A Sharps by what I seen of it. I notice the sheriff took an interest in it. I'd be real careful around here. The sheriff, his name's Mike Noonan, it's plain he's got you pegged for trouble.

Manning eyes the big stranger and nods a slow thank you. Nonella steps forward with his hand extended. Manning's raises slowly to shake.

NONELLA

My name's Amariga Nonella, but folks call me

Bill. Might you be interested in doin' some huntin' for me?

MANNING

Thanks, but I'm looking for ranch or homestead work.

NONELLA

The old west is pretty much dried up here except down the coast, in the Sur. And at your age it won't be easy findin' any work on the ranches around here. They got mostly Spanish vaquero hands anyway. But look me up if you ever want to make a livin' with your Sharps.

Manning thanks him silently with a nod of his hat brim and strides away from the station and toward the buildings of town.

EXT.- MONTEREY STREET - DAY

Wagons and surreys rattle past Manning as he walks from the rail station toward the main part of town.

EXT.- FEED & GRAIN STORE - DAY

Manning stops to speak with the canvas aproned storekeeper on the wooden sidewalk beneath the dusty sign of the Pacific Coast Feed & Grain, who listens and then shakes his head.

The STOREKEEPER leans on his broom handle.

STOREKEEPER

No, not much chance of ranch work around here. But, what you've heard about the Sur is pretty much true. There is still some settling going on down the coast, mostly across Big Creek and south of Point Sur. But I don't know right off what work could be had there. You'd just have to get down there to find out. But you better know,

it's real wild down there. And some pretty rough characters.

(begins to sweep)

You'd need to get along on your own.

Manning's eyes show him pondering things a moment.

MANNING

Got a hotel or roomin' house around here?
Somethin' real reasonable?

STOREKEEPER

(with a pointing wave of his hand)

Yeah, you'll find a couple of them up Alvarado and Pacific Streets. Up past the Custom House. Mostly for salesmen, sailors and fishermen. Look for all the bars.

Manning, with satchel and gun case in his hands, nods his hat and moves on.

EXT.- A MONTEREY STREET - DAY

Manning stalks up the dirt street a short distance, past shops, a livery with a small stock-pen, and several noisy bars. He looks up at the faded ROOMS sign above the door and steps into a shabby Pacific Street rooming house.

INT.- SHABBY ROOMING HOUSE - DAY

Manning is watched closely by the clerk as he closes the door and crosses the dingy room. Manning puts down his bag and leans his gun case up against the registration counter.

CLERK

Don't see many guns around here any more.

MANNING

(ignoring the comment)

I've heard there's still some settlin'

done around here. And still some ranch work, maybe.

CLERK

No offense mister, but I'd say you're a might old for ranchin' anywhere near Monterey. Besides, you speak any Spanish? "Habla Espanol?"

Manning turns his head away, faintly shaking it, in silent disappointment at more unwelcome news.

MANNING

What's other work like here, until I can get enough together to head south to Sur?

CLERK

Well, frankly, it idn't good. But there's always pick-up work down next to the steamship pier, at the fish canning shed there. It's owned by Frank Booth, but the guy you'd want to see is a Norwegian by the name a Hovden. Knute Hovden. He's a good man and can probably give you work. Won't be easy, but it's work.

(pausing)

But you'd have to wash up good in the tub out back before comin' inside here; can't have this place stinkin' like a fish Canning shed...

EXT.- CANNERY OFFICE - DAY

Manning enters the crude office of Booth Fisheries. He exits with a surly, aproned foreman that points an arm down the harbor to the shed-like building on the pier extending into the harbor. They nod heads in agreement and the foreman turns to stalk back inside the office.

INT.- FISH CANNING SHED - DAY

CLOSE of fish poured into a trough. Large fish eyes stare blankly to the sound of WOMEN CONVERSING in Chinese and Spanish.

INT.- FISH CUTTING TABLES - DAY

Manning pushes a "gut-wagon" to the long cutting tables at Frank Booth's harbor fish canning shed. In big rubber boots and oilcloth apron, he collects and then carts away fish cuttings from the long tables, lined on both sides by Chinese and Spanish women, their knives flashing at the catch and flicking fish heads and guts into mucky piles at each table.

EXT.- CANNING SHED AND PIER - DAY

Manning, sullenly resenting the mess and the demeaning work, dumps a cartload of collected heads, tails, scales and entrails into the bay off the end of the short pier behind Booth's crude cannery. He is engulfed in a cloud of SCREAMING seagulls rioting to claim the mucky fish scraps.

INT.- CANNING SHED - DAY

The planks of the fish oil saturated floor flex and creak under the weight of Manning's full gut wagon. A plank CRACKS loudly and the gut wagon lurches heavily to one side as one of its large spoked steel wheels splits a floor board and falls to its axle in the space where the plank had been, slopping and spilling muck from the gut-wagon across the shed floor.

The FOREMAN rushes to the noise and finds Manning struggling but unable to wrestle the heavy gut-wagon back upright.

FOREMAN

Dammit! Look at this goddam mess!

Manning glares resentfully up at the foreman as the foreman turns to several other workmen arriving at the commotion.

FOREMAN (CONT.)

(gesturing to the men)

Get it up and outa here.

One of the men, leaning to help push the cart out of the hole in the floor holding its wheel, slips and falls in the slimy fish muck covering the floor. He rolls away in the slimy mess to avoid the gut-wagon as it lurches sideways again into its hole, slopping more muck over its side, pitching some onto the foreman. The foreman curses and glares angrily at Manning.

MANNING

(angry and defensive)

It ain't *my* fault this shed's in such lousy shape. It's a goddam death trap. And it oughta get fixed before the whole damn thing comes down.

FOREMAN

You shut your goddam mouth, Manning. What the hell do you know about it?

MANNING

A hell of a lot more than the guy who put up this shit-house!

FOREMAN

I said shut the hell up, or I'll get the boss in here.

KNUTE HOVDEN, Booth's cannery supervisor, drawn into the shed by the commotion, strides up to confront the two men.

HOVDEN

What's happenink, here?

FOREMAN

This old goat thinks he knows everything there is to building a shed.

MANNING

(to Hovden)

Well I've built enough barns to know this whole damn place is ready to fall over.

(pointing)

Ya see those floor boards warp? Ya see them stringers in the roof goin' cockeyed?

Hovden considers each of Manning's points with interest and concern. Manning gestures again to make his point.

MANNING (CONT.)

No braces between the posts?

Hovden considers each of the complaints.

HOVDEN

(to the foreman)

Valter, you get the carpenters to fixing dees tings, immediately. Ya?

The foreman, in passive silence, nods his head in disgruntled obedience as he flashes an angry glare at Manning.

As Hovden departs, the foreman growls to the men at the gut-wagon,

FOREMAN

Let's get this damn thing freed up so old Manning here can clean up this goddam mess.

Four men tip and pull the slop covered wagon out of the hole in the floor and push it, waddling away on its bent wheel, as Manning angrily contemplates the slimy clean-up.

EXT.- CANNING SHED PIER AND HARBOR - DAY

The shrill WHISTLE of a fishing boat, and the THUMPING of its one-piston engine, signal the arrival of another load of fish to be unloaded into the cutting shed. An open boat, its narrow exhaust stack belching thick black smoke, pulls in next to the pier.

The tender it tows, heavy in the water with fish, is heaved against the canning shed's pilings by a large surge in Monterey's unprotected harbor.

CLOSE of the laden tender crushing against barnacled pilings that CREAK and CRACK loudly as they jolt and tilt.

INT. - CANNING SHED - DAY

The shed shudders to the CRACKING of timbers and beams and then nearly collapses on itself. It's roof pitches and begins to break apart. The plank floor buckles and then gives way in the center of the cutting room in a roar of exploding wood, dumping a row of long tables and two of the Chinese cutting women into the bay below.

WOMEN SCREAM, rushing to escape the building to the POPPING of bolts, RIPPING of beams, falling rafters and the CREAKING TORSION of the pier on its pilings.

As workers flee past him, Manning pauses, looking upward and around the walls to assess if the shed will remain standing, and hears the WAILFUL CRIES of the women fallen through the dark, gaping hole in the center of the shed floor.

INT.- HOLE IN THE SHED FLOOR - DAY

Even as the building GROANS, Manning climbs down the shattered beams and planks into the darkened center of the collapsed floor, awash with waves covered with scummy fish oil.

Manning is joined by two other men who work, waist deep in the slimy bay, to locate and free the two Chinese women from the debris, as the shed above continues to send beams and posts CRASHING through the darkness into the water around them.

INT.- UNDER SHED AMONG PILINGS - DAY

MANNING

(pointing)

You two get her. She looks pretty bad.
I'll help this one.

The more badly injured woman is carried between the two men who struggle to keep their footing on the slimy bottom, buffeted by waves in the darkness under the pier, as they make their way toward the light outside. Manning helps the other Chinese woman walk the slippery bottom in the darkness between rows of pilings, out from beneath the pier into the brilliant sunlight.

EXT.- HARBOR SHORELINE NEXT TO PIER - DAY

A group of vocal Spanish cutting women urge the men to carry the injured Chinese women up the sandy beach at the foot of the pier, into the shade of a large tree. Both injured Chinese women are laid out on the grass in the shade as the other women fishcutters gather to tend to them.

As the wet and bleeding Chinese woman Manning has helped is laid out on the grass, she struggles painfully to express her gratitude to Manning in Chinese, her eyes expressing what her failed English cannot.

Manning asks the arriving foreman.

MANNING

Who's gonna get 'em to the hospital?

FOREMAN

(caustically)

They don't take Chinks at the hospital. I sent a boy to fetch a Chink doctor from China Point. They take care of their own.

Manning glares at the foreman in angry disbelief and stalks off toward the office, muttering.

EXT.- CANNERY OFFICE - DAY

Manning unties his apron and pulls it off over his head as he stalks toward the cannery office shack where Knute Hovden is huddled in a conference on its steps with several of his crew discussing in tense, aurgent tones on how to deal with the pier damage. Hovden continues his urgent conversation as he sees Manning approach.

Manning glares at the group as he strides past them, dripping, into the office where he confronts a clerk.

MANNING

I want my pay. I'm gettin' the hell
Outa here.

Hovden interrupts the conversation with his managers with a raised hand as he turns to lean his head into the office doorway.

HOVDEN

Manning, vat are you doink?

MANNING

I quit. I ain't workin in a goddam
deathtrap like that.

Hovden enters the office.

HOVDEN

I can yoose a goot man like you Manning.
I've got to fix the pier and build a big
new cannery.

MANNING

No thanks, this fish business idn't for me.
I need *dirt* under my boots. I'm headin' down
the coast to the Sur.

HOVDEN

Vell...den you be sure to look up Mr.

Allen ven you get to Point Lobos. He may haff some job for you. And maybe yet you vill help build for me, sometime.

MANNING

Thanks...but I don't think so. But I'd like to get my pay. Now.

Hovden looks to the clerk and nods.

HOVDEN

Pay Mr. Manning.

The clerk obediently lifts a clip-board and studies it a moment and then pencils out a pay chit, turns and opens a battered old safe behind him, and counts out Manning's pay. The clerk turns and counts the money onto the counter.

CLOSE of two one-dollar bills and change counted out onto the counter.

Manning grabs the money, folds it, picks up his change and jams it into his wet pocket, looks at Hovden and passes out the office door.

EXT.- MONTEREY STREET - DAY

As Manning walks up the muddy Pacific Street toward his rooming house in his slimy, wet clothes, a Monterey deputy walking toward the harbor scrutinizes him closely. Manning turns his head only enough to watch from the corner of an eye as the deputy continues past him, as an uncomfortable fearfulness flashes across Manning's chiseled face.

Manning drops his head, continues walking, reflecting pensively as he reaches into his shirt pocket for the soaked magazine clipping which nearly falls apart as he unfolds it. He focuses on

INSERT: wet clipping:

"...Sur. Wild Coast Haven for Settlers and Outlaws."

Manning folds up the disintegrating paper and puts it carefully into his shirt pocket as he resumes his head down plod up the street.

INT.- BOARDING HOUSE - DAY

Manning trades the boarding house owner his leather suitcase for a canvas back pack, a tarp ground cloth and a cavalry blanket.

EXT.- JOSEPH BOSTON STORE - DAY

Manning, standing in front of the narrow two-story brick building, checks its sign and enters with his pack.

INT.- JOSEPH BOSTON STORE - DAY

Manning noses through the Joseph Boston dry goods store, picking out supplies in the shafts of dusty light, asking gruffly for items from the spectacled clerk.

EXT.- CUSTOM HOUSE - DAY

Manning roughly shoulders through a crowd of fishermen carrying their nets to drying racks beyond the adobe building.

INT.- CUSTOM HOUSE - DAY

Manning in the Custom House store, carefully assembles more necessities for life on the road and talks with an old, aproned clerk as his order is filled and paid for. A terse question from Manning is answered by the clerk's upward gesture toward the back of the store. Manning gazes upward, motionless beneath the frame of a large cow-hide leather map of the Spanish grants of the Monterey coast that hangs high in the dark, dusty shadows of the adobe's back wall. Manning's eyes flash over every feature as he memorizes it.

EXT.- MONTEREY COASTAL ROAD - DAY

At sunrise, with his breath in clouds in the chilly gray light of dawn, Manning walks the crooked road along the railroad tracks, away from the foggy harbor, across the open, sloping, boulder strewn terrain of the coast south from Monterey town.

EXT.- CHINESE FISHING VILLAGE - DAY

Approaching the huge rocks jutting into the bay in the misty distance, Manning discovers the bustling Chinese settlement at China Point and its pungent perfume of smoky wood fires, joss incense and drying fish. Manning stops to study and smell it silently before he hikes on past.

EXT.- WOODS - DAY

Walking through heavy woods, Manning discovers an unlikely, gated Methodist camp town. The neatly painted white sign above the gate reads PACIFIC GROVE. As he approaches the gate, a guard and a matronly Victorian woman stare disapprovingly at him.

The woman nudges the guard, who then speaks up.

GUARD

I'm sorry mister, but you can't pass this way,
(nodding to Manning's rifle case)
not with a gun.

The woman draws up, peering sternly at Manning over her spectacles from behind the sturdy white gate.

VICTORIAN MATRON

(arrogantly)

This is a proper, god-fearing, Christian community. We don't abide guns in Pacific Grove, or persons with them. You'll have to take another route to wherever you may be going.

Manning, studies both of them a moment.

MANNING
(sarcastically)
That's mighty kind of you.

Manning backs a step and turns slowly around as he retreats along the length of the white fence, taking a well worn path away toward the SOUNDS of the shore.

EXT.- SANDY PATH THROUGH WOODS - DAY

Manning skirts the camp town, heading back down toward the echoing ROAR of breakers at the seashore, out of the tall Monterey Pines and twisted Black Cypress and onto the sand dunes, walking the coastline from Pt. Pinos to Spanish Bay.

EXT.- DEL MONTE FOREST ROAD GATE WITH GUARD - DAY

Crossing the dunes, Manning approaches the Del Monte Forest toll gate, pausing to assess entry by its road or along its isolated beach dunes. He chooses the dunes, walking a sandy shoreline trail that finally intersects a one-lane road through the pines and cypress of Del Monte Forest.

EXT.- CYPRESS COAST - DAY

[PEBBLE BEACH SCENIC SEQUENCE]

Manning strides along a spectacular coastal vista with the vigor and strength of a far younger man.

Manning's expression reflects clearly that he has never seen a coastline like this before.

Strings of pelicans glide over the surf line.

EXT.- SEASHORE ROAD - DAY

He stops on the wagon-tracked road in the twisted cypress and granite along the shoreline to survey the haunting, awesome beauty and majesty of the crashing green sea.

EXT.- POINT JOE - DAY

Manning is silhouetted against the chiseled granite rocks of Point Joe, stepping forward to closely observe the turbulence of huge crossing, clashing waves in the Restless Sea.

Bending slightly under his pack-load and the gun case slung over a shoulder, Manning resumes his methodical stride on the road before the open sea.

EXT.- BIRD AND SEAL ROCKS - DAY

Manning adjusts his hat brim in a blustery afternoon breeze as he looks to sea as he nears two dark, massive rocks offshore.

He approaches closer to study the colonies of sea lions, cormorants and pelicans clinging and crowding Bird & Seal Rocks.

Clouds of seagulls wheel and scream over the crash of waves that wet the herds of sea lions basking around the waterline of the stark granite islands. Several large sea lions waddle clumsily to the edge of their rockbound roost and gracefully slip into the surging green waves that rise and fall against kelp walls and sea worn granite.

EXT.- CYPRESS POINT - DAY

Stopping along the craggy, forested shoreline, Manning leans back against the gnarled gray trunk of a cypress, stands his gun case up and props an extended elbow to rest on it and gazes at the majestic gray and green of the forest before the sea at Cypress Point.

His brief rest over, he stands to sling the gun case over his shoulder and resume his stride along the rutted road into the dense cypress and pine forest.

EXT.- DEL MONTE FOREST ROAD - DAY

Manning, eyes down and back bent slightly under his load, hikes under the shaded tree cover of the coastal pine forest. Slanting afternoon light pours in from the thinning tree cover as the road again nears the open rocky heights above the sea. Twisted cypress sentinels guard the cliff top.

EXT.- LONE CYPRESS - DAY

Manning stops abruptly.

His gaze widens before the vista of a lone cypress standing on a bouldered granite promontory against the backdrop of a brilliant blue Carmel Bay. The dark, hazy, Santa Lucia mountain range marches majestically down the coast in the distance in his first real look toward the Sur.

EXT.- PESCADERO POINT - DAY

Manning's pace quickens along the road to find an even better point to view the sea coast before him. As the road reaches a nearly barren point and then turns toward the mountains of the coast, he walks out on a rocky ledge above land's end. His eyes sweep the mountains, bay and shoreline again, narrowing on the long, low, dark profile of land that juts far out to sea at the far end of the sweeping bay before him, his gaze dwells on the mysterious Point Lobos.

Standing before this vista of Carmel Bay, Manning surveys his route down the coast, wrestles his pack in position, slings his gun case and turns to the road again.

EXT.- CYPRESS AND PINE WOODS - NIGHTFALL

As the warm, sunset light of the waning afternoon sets in and nightfall approaches, Manning sees dim lights on a plateau above the arc of a sheltered and tranquil cove.

EXT.- FENCED SHACKS - NIGHT

As he nears the lights, Manning sees a cluster of small, rough, low-roofed buildings inside a compound fenced entirely with driftwood. Both sides of the gate to the rough shacks inside are decorated with hanging weathered banners with large, faded Chinese lettering. A large table of abalone shells and trinkets is partially covered with canvas.

The barking of a skinny mongrel dog announces his approach.

MANNING
(calls out)

Helloooo!

Stirring noises from inside the weather-beaten old buildings of Chinese fisherman and trinket seller JUNG SAN CHOY bring a call out to Manning.

JUNG SAN CHOY
(disturbed)

We close. No shells. We close!

EXT.- SHACK WINDOW - NIGHT

Several faces appear at a small, cracked window, peering out to observe a Chinese man with a lantern appear at the rickety gate to greet the untimely visitor.

Manning explains slowly, using gestures, that he is alone and just wants a place to bunk for the night. As they speak, JUNG SAN CHOY nods his head in understanding, pointing over his shoulder and nods again. Jung San Choy opens the gate and leads Manning toward the back of the compound to a small shed he agrees to provide the old man for the night.

EXT.- COMPOUND - NIGHT

By lamp and rising moonlight, Manning raises his eyebrows and shrivels his nose as he adjusts to a strong odor. With a sweeping look around, Manning realizes the entire compound is hanging with the silvery shine of drying fish. But the cramped little shed he's shown will be adequate shelter. In the near darkness, several children dart back to the main house after venturing out for a glimpse of the old white stranger. Jung San Choy raises the lantern as Manning enters the shed with his pack and gun.

INT.- SHED - NIGHT

Manning fumbles in his pack, lights a short candle, spreads his tarp and lays out his bedroll on the rough hewn planks of the floor as Jung San Choy returns to the house.

Manning reaches inside his jacket, into his shirt pocket and unfolds the tattered clipping, holding it up to the dim candlelight and gazes at it.

Manning is startled by the sudden appearance of a broad little face at the door, a Chinese child's face with dark oriental eyes and a wide smile.

As Manning re-folds the clipping, the child carefully sets a worn bowl of thin, steaming soup at the doorway and then disappears, SCURRYING back toward the house.

Manning studies the steaming bowl, then raises it with both hands to slowly sip the hot, strange tasting broth from its chipped but ornately painted rim, his eyes contemplating the unexpected generosity of his Celestial host. The empty bowl is placed outside before the loosely hung door to the shed is helped closed.

Manning eases himself onto the bedding arranged on the floor, pulls up his blanket, positions his hat on the floor as a pillow and blows out the candle.

Splinters of moonlight pierce the shed's ill-fitted plank walls as dead candle smoke swirls on the white shafts of moonlight.

EXT.- COMPOUND - DAY

In the early morning, Manning rises and is packed to move on when Jung San Choy appears from the main house to begin his day on the waves. Manning thanks his host, who politely refuses to accept anything for his stay. Smiling and nodding, the two men part company, the fisherman toward a sampan pulled high on the graveled beach; the traveler turning to continue on the road crossing the broad, open plateau above the curving pebbled beach before turning up into the forested hills.

EXT.- DEL MONTE FOREST - DAY

Manning hikes through steep, deep pines on a narrow twisting road up the foothills. He pauses where a well worn path leads off the road into the woods, heading south above the coastline. He takes it and hikes further through the woods until he can see a number of small cottages in the trees.

EXT.- CARMEL WOODS - DAY

Manning walks into the collection of shanty-like huts and cabins of a wooded village, past a hand painted sign proclaiming, "Carmel-by-the-Sea".

He sees two men on the sloping dirt main street and approaches them. They observe his approach with interest.

EXT.- OCEAN AVENUE, CARMEL - DAY

MANNING

Could you gents tell me where I can put up for the night before I head south?

Poet GEORGE STERLING answers.

STERLING

(noticing Manning's rifle)

We're mostly struggling writers and artists here, without room enough for all of us as it is. As you can see,

(in a sweeping gesture)

they're just beginning to work on building this village. Though I'm afraid shelter is out of the question,

Sterling notices his companion eyeing Manning's rifle case with extreme interest. His companion's eyes meet Sterling's as he continues,

STERLING (CONT.)

you're welcome to join us for what we call a clam-bake, down at the beach. We're making our way down there right now. You could join us.

Sterling slaps his companion gently on the back with a smile.

STERLING (CONT.)

(to Manning)

I'm a poet; my name is George Sterling, and this is my friend, JACK LONDON, who I know is dying to ask you the story of the rifle you carry. You're welcome to join us, if you can stand his pestering.

London and Manning grin as they shake hands. The three walk down the unfinished street in the pine forest in conversation.

EXT.- CARMEL BEACH BONFIRE - NIGHT

From CLOSE of the CRACKLING flames to the group around the fire as echoing surf POUNDS onto Carmel Beach beyond them in the darkness. In the firelight, London converses closely with Manning. Two women, Sterling, and two other men are in the group at the fire, bundled up against the chill, talking and eating.

A darkly pretty girl snaps crab legs, nibbling at them as she holds them with her fingers. She passes some of her crab to Manning.

Manning stays at the driftwood fire as the group retires up the hill into the darkness toward their various accommodations in the pine woods.

Manning lays down in the firelight and pulls his blanket up over him as he settles back to spend the night sleeping by the fire on the beach.

EXT.- CARMEL BEACH - DAY

In the chilly sunrise, his breath in clouds, Manning plods up the dune from the dead bonfire to the narrow one-lane road out to Carmel Point.

EXT.- CARMEL POINT - DAY

Manning hikes the path around Carmel Point to the lagoon of the Carmel River, where he stops to survey again the mysterious silhouette of Point Lobos.

EXT.- CARMEL RIVER MARSH - DAY

To the barking challenges of Martin's dogs, Manning passes the farm beyond the river marsh, to the road past the Carmel Mission that heads down the mountainous coast.

EXT.- COAST ROAD - DAY

Manning turns off the road onto the well worn wagon ruts through the trees that lead out toward the craggy granite Pt. Lobos peninsula.

EXT.- PT. LOBOS COVE - DAY

The wagon ruts emerge from the thick Monterey Pines and lead across an open plain to a small cove with a large white shed at its mouth. The cove harbors a half dozen narrow long-boats.

The hillsides across the cove are strewn with drying abalone and a mountainous pile of their shells. As Manning approaches he is surveyed by several Asians, but not the Chinese he has become accustomed to.

A horse and surrey stand outside a small shack-like office, out of which an American and several more of the unfamiliar Asians emerge on Manning's approach.

EXT.- POINT LOBOS ABALONE CO. OFFICE - DAY

MANNING

Might you be Mr. Allen?

ALLEN

Why, yes I am. And since we don't get many visitors out here asking for me by name, there must be something I can do for you.

MANNING

Mr. Hovden said I should check with you to see if you've got any work.

ALLEN

(smiling)

Hovden. Why that young man will *own* old man Booth's place at the rate he's going. I'd build a fish cannery in Monterey myself if I could get that young man to run it for me.
(with a wave of the arm)

All *this* is *abalone*. And these gentlemen are my Japanese crew. Their head-man, Kodani, is my partner. His men bring in the abalone. They *dive* for it in underwater suits they don't even know about in Monterey. Anyway, I could use you at the abalone canning shed over at the point. Do you know anything about boilers?

MANNING

(apologetically)

I just give a week at Booth's shed in Monterey. It reminded me to stick to settlin'. I guess I'm gonna die an ol' homesteader.

Mr. Allen, pulling at his pipe, asks with sudden interest.

ALLEN

Have you ever worked horses?

MANNING

Some.

ALLEN

Well then, how about giving my foreman a hand with some horses at my corral at Mal Paso. It's four men and a small bunkhouse up off the road about two miles further out. It'll be good for a few days--or as long as you can take the foreman. They tell me he's awfully mean, but I need a strong hand to look after things down there.

Allen walks with Manning toward the buggy.

ALLEN (CONT.)

I've got a corral full of horses at Mal Paso to work before I can deliver them to the 76th Field Artillery at the Presidio in Monterey. We don't have to bust 'em, but we do have to work them to pull artillery. I can use another man down there that knows horses. What do you say?

MANNING

Sounds more like it.
(glancing at the Japanese watching him)
I'll leave the fishin' and cannin' to your
friends.

Allen takes a business card from his vest and opens a fountain pen.

CLOSE of Mr. Allen writing "HIRED" on it.

Mr. Allen hands the card to Manning, who nods as he accepts it.

ALLEN

Give this to Morgan, my foreman. He can't read it, but he knows what it means. He'll get them to make space in the bunkhouse for you.
(tugging his pipe and shaking hands)
Good luck Mr. Manning. And...be careful around Morgan.

EXT.- REMOTE COASTAL MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

Manning, with the Pacific at his back, looks up the trail and trudges up it, toward a rising red cloud of dust from a clearing in the woods with a corral and a crude bunk shed.

EXT.- MAL PASO CORRAL - DAY

Manning's anticipation fades as he approaches to the sounds of COMMOTION and a horse WHINNEYING in distress. As he nears the corral, Manning sees the huge Morgan brutally whipping a bloody, frenzied horse as two corral hands on ropes try to restrain the frantic animal.

GILL, a young hand, is pleading with Morgan.

GILL

Morgan! Stop it! Morgan! Please don't beat her no more! Your gonna kill her. Morgan! Ya gotta stop! Please!

Morgan responds with a lash at the boy, and then sees Manning.

MORGAN, worked up and short of breath, makes one more lash at the horse and turns to confront the stranger, pushing the cringing and whimpering Gill roughly aside.

MORGAN

And just who the hell are you?

Manning approaches, glares up at the brute and slowly replies.

MANNING

I work here.

Morgan strides up to Manning, towering over him as Manning hands him Mr. Allen's card. Morgan snatches it.

MANNING (CONT.)

Mr. Allen said you'd know what this means...

MORGAN

(seething matter-of-factly)

It means you work for me, old man.
(waving the crumpled card at Manning)
It means you keep your mouth shut if you don't want it broke. It means you do everything I tell you or I gladly beat the hell outa ya. You got me, old man?

MANNING

Mr. Allen didn't say anything about whippin' horses...or his corral hands.

MORGAN

(pushing Manning on the chest)
Look, you old son-of-a-bitch, you keep your mouth shut around here or they'll be carryin' you outa Mal Paso in pieces. I make all the decisions and give all the orders around here.

(he turns to shout)
Angelo! Tie that nag up. And show this
old piece a shit where he sleeps.
(back to Manning)
You cross me old man and I'll kill ya.
For the fun of it.

Morgan wheels around, pushes the cowering young Gill roughly aside and stomps off through nervous horses across the dusty corral. As Gill watches the hulking Morgan pass among the horses as he crosses the corral, Manning sees the bleeding welt from the whiplash.

The fearful ANGELO grabs Gill by the shirtsleeve and leads him across the corral toward the bunkhouse, motioning for Manning to follow.

Manning's seething glare follows the hulking Morgan as he disappears into the high mesquite on the far side of the corral.

MANNING
(to Angelo and Gill)
Where's he going?

LEONARD, the other hand, speaks up from behind Manning, startling him.

LEONARD
(with a recently split lip)
He's gonna sit up in his little shack and git drunk like usual. And then he's gonna pick a fight just to beat on one of us. He just loves bein' mean...

MANNING
That bastard is killin' you guys a little bit at a time. Have all of you ever stood up to him?

Angelo's eyes drop painfully.

ANGELO
We tried to, once. An' now we got an Irishman buried up Mal Paso Creek. Morgan figured it was the Irishman's idea.
(shaking his head)

So we don't even think of crossin' him no more.

LEONARD

There ain't no law out here. And nowhere else ta go.

GILL

He's hurt lots a horses. Just for the hell of it. 'Cause he can. No one can stop him. An' he beats on us whenever he wants to knowin' we can't stop him. Mr. Allen, he don't know how bad it is, an' who's gonna tell him?

LEONARD

Not the Irishman. Not O'Rourke, that's for sure.

They all turn to walk slowly toward the bunk house as Manning's eyes look up and around, exploring the corral and bunk house.

INT.- BUNK HOUSE - DAY

Leonard shows Manning to a hard board bunk and where to stow his gear.

LEONARD

Angelo, get the boy cleaned up and send him out to help me with chow.

(to Manning)

Morgan will be back drunk in a while and ready to make trouble if we ain't got his chow ready. And you'd better be real careful. He's just itchin' to get after you.

EXT.- COOKING FIRE - NIGHT

Manning squats down next to Gill. A kerosene train-lamp hangs on a post in the cooking area nearby.

MANNING

How old are you, Gill?

GILL
(nervously)

Eighteen.

MANNING
(ignoring Gill's first response)
How old are you, Gill?

GILL
...Fifteen. Almost fifteen.

MANNING
What are you doing out here? How'd you
get into this anyway?

GILL
I was...

Before Gill can finish his sentence, Morgan can be heard in the darkness, coming back through the brush, silencing Gill's response.

Morgan strides unevenly up to the fire. Without a word he grabs Manning by the shoulder, holding him as a kick takes the old man's legs out from under him. Once on the ground, Manning cannot evade the vicious, repeated, body lifting kicks that Morgan inflicts on him. His face is contorted in pain, eyes closed, mouth clenched as his hair and dirt and blood cover his face. Helpless, Manning tries, straining in pain, to curl up to protect himself.

Gill pleads with Morgan to stop.

GILL
No! Morgan, No! Please! Don't kill him!

Morgan backhands the boy, sending him crashing into the pots and pans in the cooking area. The kerosene lamp jerks and swings wildly, its light flashing confusing, bouncing shafts into the darkness.

In the swinging, uneven light, Morgan resumes kicking the old man, who struggles to rise and is kicked again until there is no sign of movement, no more sound of pain.

MORGAN

Smart-aleck old bastard. I'll teach
ya yer place.

Manning lays motionless, face down in the dirt in the darkness, as Morgan grabs a large fork.

CLOSE as Morgan jabs several huge steaks into a sooty black pot of beans. He uses a glove on the pot's hot steel hoop.

Morgan lumbers through the lamplight carrying the laden pot, past the motionless Manning, bursting into a roar of laughter as he stops, turning back to the cowering hands.

MORGAN

That'll teach the old bastard. If he
lives.

The firelight flickers across Morgan's face as he glares at each of the frightened men frozen in fear, looking each in the eye.

MORGAN (CONT.)

Nobody else better forgit...I'm the
boss around here.

The cowering men in the firelight lower their eyes as Morgan disappears into the darkness back across the corral toward his lair.

EXT.- CORRAL - DAY

Leonard, Angelo and Gill stand meekly together, their breaths in chilly morning clouds, waiting for Morgan to enter and cross the corral to give his orders for the day.

Morgan scans the corral and bunkhouse area for the absent Manning and calls for Gill as he approaches.

MORGAN

What's the matter, Gill? That old-man friend of yours too tired to get up and report for work this morning?

GILL

He's gone. He's hurt pretty bad, but he's gone. You nearly killed him. He slipped out durin' the night.

The burly Morgan back-hands the young Gill, sending him to the dust, crying and moaning in pain. The bully stands over him, taunting.

MORGAN

(looking down at the boy)
And did ya help him, huh? Or did he jest up an' leave all by himself...?

Morgan looks at Angelo and Leonard who stand cringing helplessly in timid silence.

MORGAN (CONT.)

(talking down at Gill)
Well now, aren't you happy you took to the old man? It didn't do you no good now, did it?

Morgan kicks the boy, then bellows at Angelo and Leonard.

MORGAN (CONT.)

Get the hell to work or you're next.

Both Angelo and Leonard tense in unison, wanting to confront Morgan, but they meekly fall back, retreating slowly toward their chores, looking helplessly back to the boy, moaning, writhing face down in the dusty corral.

EXT.- DIRT SURFACE OF THE CORRAL - DAY

CLOSE of Gill's face as it raises, covered with dirt.

Gill looks up to see the heavy boots of the corral boss, and between them, in the distance up the hill, a puff of white smoke in the tree line.

CLOSE OF GILL'S FACE

The WHAP of the bullet hitting Morgan in the knee splatters the boy's face with blood an instant before the rolling echo of a rifle shot reaches the corral.

EXT.- CORRAL - DAY

The SCREAMS of the corral boss ring in the hills as Morgan crashes to the ground and writhes bleeding in the corral dirt, one of his legs all but severed and bent in a grotesque angle.

Angelo and Leonard rush back to help the boy, pulling him clear of Morgan as he rolls and SCREAMS uncontrollably in the dust of the corral.

EXT.- MOUNTAINSIDE ABOVE THE CORRAL - DAY

Angelo motions with his arm up the hillside. Far over the open grassy field from the corral they see Manning stand and slowly raise his rifle.

Gill is helped painfully to his feet, wiping the blood and dirt from his face. Each of them waves weakly back, watching silently as Manning lowers his gun, slowly turns and disappears into the treeline to the echoes of Morgan's SCREAMS.

EXT.- HOT, ROUGH MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

Manning, moves painfully in his escape over the hot, rough terrain of the Mal Paso mountainside.

EXT.- STEEP BLUFF - DAY

In a cloud of drifting dust, Manning slides painfully down a yellow dirt embankment using his rifle butt to help steady himself as he climbs downward into the trees of a shaded gulch.

EXT.- SHADED GULCH - DAY

A sweaty, dirty Manning pauses, still but unsteady, looking upward into the lacy shade of the tree cover. He hears the soft sound of a STREAM gurgling in the gulch. He wipes his mouth with his sleeve, leaving blood and dirt on it's faded flannel. He moves on, limping toward the sound of the stream.

His face is battered and bruised; one eye is badly blackened. He GROANS quietly as he moves, aching and limping from his beating, deeper into the shade of the gulch toward the tall green growth along a small streambed.

EXT.- STREAMBED IN GULCH - DAY

In the dense undergrowth along the stream, Manning sets down his rifle and pack and then painfully lowers to one knee, trying to wash a badly scraped hand.

He cries out in pain as his leg collapses and he falls face-down, prone, into the shallow stream.

He lifts his head, coughing and choking, lying sprawled in the shallow stream, where he remains. He breathes heavily and MOANS with each breath, almost overcome with his pain and desperation.

Manning slowly removes his hat and plops it weakly on a rock in the stream next to him.

He remains prone in the stream, propping himself up on an elbow, gently washing his broken face with his scraped hands. He rolls painfully onto his side to work up his sleeve and soak a huge, ugly bruise on his other forearm.

As he moves, the water lifts his hat off its rock and it begins to float away downstream.

EXT.- STREAM - DAY

Manning's hat floats, spins and glides along in the stream, drifting away from Manning.

A hand suddenly grabs it, lifting it out of the water.

EXT.- STREAMBED IN GULCH - DAY

Manning's wet face jerks up, his eyes frozen in surprise.

EXT.- STREAM - DAY

Standing in the stream, holding a long staff and Manning's dripping hat, is a sturdy, leather-faced CHINESE. He is roughly dressed in an unusual, heavy canvas-like jacket. His pants are shoved into high rubber boots. A wide, pointed straw oriental hat shades a strong, broad face. His braided que reaches down his back to his waist.

CHANG

You wan help, maybe?

Manning, lying helpless in the stream, pauses thoughtfully a moment and responds slowly

MANNING

Yea...I guess I do.

Manning coughs deeply and GROANS in agony. Chang walks in the stream toward him, flinging Manning's hat into the tall grass near his pack and gun. As Chang draws near, Manning tries to get up, uncertain and wary of Chang.

Manning glances toward his gun, useless to him from where he is in the stream if Chang actually intends him harm. The look in Manning's face betrays his apprehension.

Chang stands over Manning, squats, and begins to inspect and help clean his cuts and scrapes in the numbing cold water of the stream.

With Chang's help, Manning rolls over onto his back in the stream. Chang circles Manning to kneel and gently continues washing his wounds to Manning's painful MOANS.

MANNING

What the hell are you doin' here? I mean I'm grateful and all, but where did you come from?

CHANG

I hab camp down to beetch.
(headtrhow motion)
Mus' get you dere for fixie up.

EXT.- GULCH - DAY

Chang helps the dripping Manning stagger to his feet. Manning heavily favors one leg as Chang helps him to a spot in the deep grass on the stream bank where Manning can be laid back against the bank.

Chang inspects Manning's injuries further and tears Manning's shirt to bind an arm and then his head.

CHANG

(nodding to Manning's rifle)
Mus' be youah gun I hear dis mohning.
Plenny big loud.

Manning, wet, lying back, closing his eyes in pain.

MANNING

(through painful breaths)
Yea. I shoot wild animals.

Chang's eyes consider Manning's response.

Chang collects Manning's pack and gun, and pushes Manning's wet hat onto his bandaged head. Chang grabs his staff and pulls Manning's arm over his shoulder and lifts him to his feet to help him limp up the low embankment from the streambed.

Manning leans heavily on Chang as they pass alongside, but do not notice, a crude, weathered cross in the deep green grass. It's cross-bar is askilter, and carved in it is the name, O'ROURKE.

EXT.- LOWER MAL PASO GULCH - DAY

Chang, with his staff, helps Manning limp painfully down the gulch toward the beach. At its mouth, the gulch widens between low cliffs as huge surf THUNDERS onto the shoreline. The small but sturdy Chang steadies Manning who has great difficulty struggling to walk in the sand.

EXT.- SEACLIFF BEACH CAMP - DAY

Chang is nearly carrying Manning as they arrive at Chang's camp, nestled behind the protective cover of several large rocks. A small, canvas covered sampan is pulled high on the beach.

Chang pushes his staff into Manning's hands. Manning leans on it to steady himself as Chang leaves him to throw back the canvas covering the sampan. The weakened Manning is helped to climb into the boat and lay down on it's sloping deck as Chang starts a fire.

SCENE BLURS of Chang's camp.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT.- CHANG'S SAMPAN - DAY

Chang leans over a feverishly sweating Manning. Manning looks up to Chang against the cloudless blue sky.

CHANG

You no do so good, Yank. You sleep
pas' one day. I take you to my frien'.
He fixie you fever or you die, maybe.

MANNING

(woozy)

God, I'm burnin' up.
(looking down at his badly swollen leg)
Ugh. I'll be lucky if I don't die.

(grunting)

And twice as lucky if I don't die and
don't lose this leg.

Manning strains to raise up on his elbows but weakens,
quivers as his eyes roll dizzily, and he passes out.

EXT.- SAMPAN AT SEA - DAY

Chang's sampan rocks and pitches on its way around a
rough, rocky point into a small, sheltered cove, where
a Monterey Clipper lies at anchor in the calmer water.
A familiar figure, Bill Nonella, stands, hands on his
hips, watching the sampan approach.

EXT.- COVE - DAY

Three Chinese aboard Nonella's clipper scurry to catch
Chang's line thrown to them and bring the sampan
alongside.

Nonella leans on the gunwales to get a look at an
unconscious Manning. He studies Manning briefly but
says nothing, turning to direct his crew as they
prepare to take Manning aboard.

EXT.- NONELLA'S CLIPPER - DAY

Manning is lifted in a canvas sling from the sampan to
the deck of the clipper. Chang exchanges a few words
with Nonella before he leaps back into his sampan.
With a wave to Chang, Nonella orders the sampan shoved
away.

Nonella levers the clipper's engine into action. Two of the Chinese crew wrestle to pull the anchor aboard. After a few STUTTERS, the deep, slow, steady TOOMP, TOOMP, TOOMP of its one-cylinder engine moves the sturdy craft out toward open water and the rolling troughs of the Pacific.

Once clear of the cove, thick black smoke rolls downwind from the clipper's stack in the stiff breeze blowing toward Monterey. Nonella stands ably at the engine cover amid-ships as the clipper pitches in the waves. The Chinese crewmen seat themselves to attend to Manning the best they can.

EXT.- BIG SUR COASTLINE - DAY

As Nonella's Clipper moves father out into the ocean, Chang's sampan rests in the calm of the emerald cove below towering cliffs of the Sur above it.

EXT.- CHINA POINT - NIGHT

Torches and pitch fires from the Chinese shanty-town are reflected on the calm, black water of the cove in the lee of the large granite formation that juts out into Monterey Bay at China Point.

As Nonella's Clipper THUMPS close in to the secluded beach at China Point, four Chinese men wade into the waves to their chests to steady the stout boat as Nonella throws it grinding and whining into reverse.

Manning, lying semi-conscious in the canvas sling, is lifted from the Clipper and carried overhead by the group as it moves through the small waves breaking on the beach.

They set Manning down on the sand to reorganize their grip on the canvas, and with a flurry of small steps, sweep up the beach and into the darkened cluster of shacks.

INT.- CHINA POINT INFIRMARY - NIGHT

Manning regains consciousness to find two gentle old Celestial attendants treating him, speaking between themselves in whispered Chinese.

Manning notices two others are also tending a seriously injured young Chinese woman across the small, darkened room.

Nonella's silhouette fills the doorway. The floor CREAKS as he crosses it to squat next to Manning.

NONELLA

My friends are going to hide you here and the Chinese doc is going to get that infected leg cleaned up. Don't give him no trouble; he'll git your fever broke and you'll be on the mend real soon.

Nonella takes off his hat and his face breaks into a grin.

NONELLA (CONT.)

Mike Noonan's posse is chasin' their tails down at Mal Paso, still lookin' for ya for what ya did ta Morgan. You'll be safe here.

MANNING

(weakly)

What about Morgan?

NONELLA

Well, that bastard won't be stompin' anyone no more. Doc Roberts took his leg off.

(grinning)

Nice piece a shootin', I hear.

Nonella stands to leave, outlined in the dim glow of the oil lamp on the floor next to Manning.

NONELLA

I'll check back on ya in a couple a days.

MANNING

Thanks.

NONELLA

(smiling)

Don't worry 'bout thankin' me old man.
You get to work it off when you're up
and around again.

MANNING

(nodding his head toward the girl)
What about the girl?

Nonella's face goes serious. He returns to Manning,
settling down on one knee.

NONELLA

(whispering)

She's raped. Gonna be big trouble over it
maybe. A couple of Booth's new Italians
got drunk. Took too much of all that
"yellow peril" crap too serious. Dumb
bastards don't know just about everybody
in town thinks they're just as no good as
Chinese.

(wipes his mouth with his sleeve)

She was walkin' the tracks back to China
Point a few nights ago and things got
outa hand. Somethin' like that was bound
to happen, though; way too much hatin'
goin' on.

MANNING

(whispering)

Is she goin' to make it?

NONELLA

She'll live. That's all the old healer says.
Says you will, too. But right now you need
a day or two of flat rest. I'll check back
on ya in a couple days.

Nonella's silhouette passes out the narrow door and
pulls it shut, darkening the room. Manning's eyes
close as faint smoky whisps of incense drift over him.

Exotic sounds lull Manning to sleep in spite of his pain and fever.

INT.- TONG COUNCIL - NIGHT

At a hushed council at China Point by oil lamp, the tong elders attempt to prevent any reaction to the rape that would endanger the already defenseless position of their settlement.

One outspoken young Celestial, CHANG JONE MING, speaks sternly to the elders.

CHANG JONE MING
[In Chinese with English sub-titles]
(angrily)
The whites cut our fishing lines. They
Sink our boats. They pull down our squid
racks. And now they rape our women! When
will we say "enough"?

The ancient and wrinkled leader of the elders responds slowly.

WHANG CHING KAI
[subtitled]
We must consider our actions very
carefully. Trouble will only make our
situation worse. We cannot win a fight.
Their police do not seek the villains.
These attacks are not even reported in
their newspaper. But we must not provoke
them; our village is defenseless.

The elder turns to speak directly at the young man.

WHANG CHING KAI (CONT.)
(in a stern warning)
Chang Jone Ming, you are forbidden by
this council to take revenge for the attack
on your sister. It would bring devastation
on our settlement.

Another elder stands, his stern, ancient face accentuated in the kerosene lamplight.

SECOND ELDER

[subtitled]

Xian will recover after a time. Because she did not die, there will be no outrage or effort to help us by the authorities. Anything you do will make things even worse. (lifting his hand and a warning finger)
You are forbidden to strike back. Now go.

The young Chang Jone Ming storms to the door, turning to shout back.

CHANG JONE MING

(controlled anger)

[subtitled]

Something must be done. Sooner or later we must show them we must be reckoned with. Like the rebellion of the Boxers!

A MURMUR arises throughout the council as Chang Jone Ming bows and passes out the guarded door into the night.

EXT.- MONTEREY ALLEY - NIGHT

Two inebriated ITALIAN FISHERMEN, shouting in argument, leave a trashy bar on Alvarado Street. They argue loudly in the street in front of the bar.

A white aproned BARTENDER comes to the front door and waves them away,

BARTENDER

Quiet down and go home!

The two Italian fishermen SWEAR DRUNKENLY at the bartender, grumbling at him before re-igniting their argument, gesturing intensely at each other as they stagger away.

They pass by the narrow alley between the brick Monterey Hotel and the woodframe National 5¢ Store. As they pass, the shadow of a raised hatchet is cast on the bricks of the Monterey Hotel. It lashes downward to the scream of a victim and horrified, hysterical SHOUTS OF ALARM echoing in the dark street as soft FOOTSTEPS flee into the night.

INT.- CHINA POINT INFIRMARY - DAY.

Nonella visits the improved Manning. Manning listens intently to Nonella, propping up on his elbows in dazed interest.

NONELLA

The fisherman's gonna live. But he don't got an ear on one side, now. And the cops got the whole thing hushed up like nothin's happened so's they can keep a lid on the whole mess. An' the tong snuck young Chang outa here on a night-boat up to San Francisco. They banished him to Big Chinatown for goin' against 'em. But a bunch a my boys really admire him for it.

Speakin' a cops, reminds me that you better be ready to pick up and get outa here if they come lookin' for young Chang, door-to-door. Yer still a real prize if they ever find ya.

MANNING

What do you think's gonna happen over all this?

NONELLA

Well, it ain't put the Celestials in a good spot. They pretty much have to give up the bay durin' the daytime to the whites. 'Bout all they can do is go to fishin' at night for squid. It's got real rough out there in the daytime if yer in a sampan.

And that ain't all. The Southern Pacific wants the Celestials offa this point. They want to put mansions on it, like the Tevis place up the road ta town. The Celestials got the papers to stay on it, but the railroad's gonna get their way with the judges, sooner or later. You can bet on that.

Nonella leans forward to rise from his squat next to Manning.

NONELLA (CONT.)

Keep a sharp lookout and be ready to move. See ya again in a few more days.

Nonella stands and CREAKS across the flexing floor planks and out into the sunlight.

EXT.- CHINA POINT ABLAZE - NIGHT.

China Point becomes AN INFERNO, roaring in the darkness. Flames grow and shoot skyward in huge sheets. Smoke almost obscures visibility as the shanty-town is consumed in massive walls of flame.

Chinese figures are silhouetted against the firestorm. SCREAMING and WAILING, people are running, alone and in groups, as others become frozen oriental silhouettes against the crackling blaze.

INT.- SHACK - NIGHT

Manning joins the panic, gathering his few things together in the smoky pandemonium. A Celestial appears in the doorway and helps Manning to his feet. He is helped through the smoke and flames to the beach. Wading together into the black waves, Manning is hoisted into a waiting sampan by three anonymous Chinese.

The sampan is shoved through the gentle surf and, once safely clear of the shoreline, it rests in total silence as the four men in it stoically watch the entire settlement at China Point go up in flames. Along the length of the shoreline, the fire is reflected off the black water.

EXT.- A BIG SUR COASTAL COVE - DAY

Nonella's Monterey Clipper rides at anchor. Two sampans are tied up alongside it.

EXT.- NONELLA'S MONTEREY CLIPPER - DAY

Daybreak finds Manning waking stiffly from beneath a tarp and crude blanket, down the coast on Nonella's boat. His Sharps rifle is leaning against the engine cover.

Nonella reaches for the rifle and hands it to Manning as he struggles to sit up.

NONELLA

Well, my old friend, you are now the last of the otter hunters.

MANNING

(resisting)

I'm what?

NONELLA

William Manning. You're the last of the otter hunters. Or, at least you will be soon.

Nonella stands to lean on an elbow against the clipper's narrow, sooty tin stack.

NONELLA (CONT.)

You're gonna spend a while with me learnin' how to hunt 'em. Where and how to find 'em. How to tell males from females. You're gonna be hittin' 'em in the snout only, so you don't damage the pelt.

Nonella sits next to Manning, resting his elbows on his knees.

I'm gonna stake ya fer the hunt.
An' I pay a hundred in gold apiece
fer every whole pelt in good condition,
less yer stake. And the way you shoot...
you could do real good.

MANNING

I don't know the first thing about
otters. Why don't you just hunt 'em
yourself?

NONELLA

Well, I did pretty well when there was
lots of 'em. Had four crews on 'em once.
But they're almost all hunted out now.
They been gettin real hard to find, and
a lot harder to get near anymore. Yousta
be ya could hit 'em in a hundred yards.
Now its twice that, or more. And, mind ya,
I'm a real good shot. But not *that* good.
But my old friend, you are.

MANNING

(emphatically)

But I don't want to shoot no goddam
otters.

NONELLA

(sternly)

Manning, you just give me one season.
I'll stay quiet about who you really
are, and we'll call us even. Now how
about it?

Manning looks at Nonella in surprise, wondering how or
what he knows about him, and then looks away.

Nonella responds to end Manning's obvious suspense.

NONELLA

(casually looking away)

Found a few things in your stuff...

(looking back at Manning)
A clippin' a yers about a haven for
outlaws and settlers in the Sur...and
an old family picture of you and a
woman and a baby. But the name on the
back's not "Manning".

(clearing his throat)
Turns out, after doin' some checkin'...
it's the name of a guy wanted for years
in Wyoming and Montana. And Colorado.
Seems he just gave the world the slip.

The muscles in Manning's jaw tighten, his eyes stare
straight ahead, avoiding Nonella's.

Nonella reaches to set a box of bullets next to
Manning. Manning hesitates, eyeing it, and then slowly
reaches to take it.

NONELLA (CONT.)

So, fer a man on the run, huntin' otters
aughta keep ya outa sight for a while.
One good season and we're even. How
about it?

Manning drops his eyes and looks away, realizing he's
buffaloed, and then slowly nods his head in
acceptance.

NONELLA (CONT.)

And, besides, I got a surprise for ya.
I'm fixin' ya up with the best damn
boatman I got. It's yer pal, Chang, that
saved yer ass up at Mal Paso!

He'll look after everything for ya. All
you gotta do is hit them snouts. Chang
dresses 'em out and I come down once a
month to supply ya and take out yer pelts.

Oh, by the way, Chang's a great fisherman
and a damn fair cook. He trades fish and
abalone to some of the settlers in the Sur
for beef and chickens. Helps break up the
fish and rice and beans between supply
trips.

Nonella stands to make his point.

Now, I can tell you're not so keen
on this deal, but fer shootin' Morgan
you got a price on ya from here to Santa
Cruz. Ya lay low a year and it'll all
blow over, and we're even. And nothin'
said about the guy wanted in the
Rockies...

Manning shoots a defensive glance at Nonella and then
droops his head in a sigh.

EXT.- SAMPAN -DAY

One of the Chinese boatmen in a sampan tied to the
prow of Nonella's Monterey Clipper calls out to
Nonella in Chinese.

EXT.- NONELLA'S CLIPPER - DAY

NONELLA

That's Chang makin' the point now.
He'll be along side in a few minutes.

EXT.- CHANG'S SAMPAN AT SEA - DAY

Chang, standing at the stern, sculls its long tiller-
oar. The ugly little sampan makes along at a
surprising clip, even in the respectable waves of a
calm Sur coast sea.

EXT.- COVE - DAY

Chang smiles a snaggle-toothed grin at recognizing
Manning as he brings the sampan alongside. The other
Chinese boatmen lash the sampan to Nonella's Clipper.

EXT.- NONELLA'S CLIPPER - DAY

Chang climbs aboard Nonella's boat, nodding to Nonella and then squatting down next to Manning.

NONELLA

I believe you know Chang Dai Chuen.

Chang grins at Manning for a moment and then breaks into a laugh.

CHANG

Dey say you neva gonna make it, Yank.
But you foo dem. An now you an' me we hun'
ottah.

Chang laughs again, looking over to Nonella, rocking in happy laughter as he squats next to Manning.

Manning, breaks into a compulsive smile at the sight of the tough little man that helped him so much.

MANNING

(with resignation)

Yea, Chang.

(he mimics)

We hun' ottah.

NONELLA

(to Manning)

You may as well get your gear into the sampan and get used to it. It's gonna be home for a while. Specially when you can't beach for the night. Tomorrow we'll get you into your skiff.

MANNING

(surprised and wary)

My what?!

Nonella and Chang burst into laughter.

EXT.- COVE - DAY

Manning learns otter hunting from a skiff, with Nonella gesturing instructions from another, as Manning's awkward, early attempts to balance, paddle, maneuver, and shoot from the skiff improve as he spends from dawn to dark every day in a skiff alongside Nonella's. Manning learns to spot an otter in a cove full of bull kelp heads.

Chang also imparts his experienced techniques and Manning is soon navigating big surf, wicked currents, caves, rock arches, fog, and surfing the crashing waves that smoothly deposit the skiff high on Sur's remote, sandy beaches.

Nonella instructs and repeatedly drills Manning in the crucial skill of enduring an occasional swamping of the skiff. Nonella and Chang watch with approval as Manning's water skills sharpen and he becomes at ease and accomplished in the skiff.

EXT.- NONELLA'S CLIPPER - DAY

The day of Nonella's departure arrives and the last of the supplies are transferred from the clipper to the sampan. With waves and handshakes, Nonella and his crew chug out of the cove, around the rocks off the point, and downwind toward Monterey.

EXT.- CLIFFSIDE BEACH - DAY

Chang and Manning beach the sampan and set up camp as sunset nears. Their beachfire CRACKLES and smokes.

EXT.- SUNSET FROM THE COVE - DAY

Strings of pelicans skim the wave tops of a chrome sea against a fiery, cloud strewn sundown. The wind dies down with the waning light over the horizon as they prepare the beach camp for nightfall, watching another sampan arrive to anchor in the cove for the night.

EXT.- COASTAL SEQUENCE - DAY

The following days arrive in foggy mists and end in more fiery Big Sur sunsets as sampans and longboats come and go from the coves and beaches.

EXT.- COVE - NIGHT

After a day of hunting, nightfall finds Chang's sampan joining other fishing and abalone sampans lashed together in a cove. Wisps of smoke from cooking fires drift up the cliffs in the failing light.

EXT.- COASTAL SEQUENCE - DAY

Manning hunts otters from the skiff, cove by cove.

Between coves the skiff is towed by Chang's sampan as they work the steep cliffed, rock-bound shoreline of the Big Sur.

EXT.- EMPTY COVE - NIGHT

The night finally arrives when the Chinese fishermen and abalone gatherers have departed and the cove is empty except for the beach camp of the otter hunters.

EXT.- BEACH CAMP - NIGHT

In the firelight, a squatting Chang laces a dressed pelt carefully to a stretcher. After a knot it joins other otter skins against a stack of stretchers behind him.

A stillness born of absolute isolation sets in, felt but unshared in their silence as Manning cleans and oils his Sharps in the firelight.

Chang stacks the stretched pelts and covers them with a tarp. He steps into the darkness a short distance against the sandstone cliff and in the firelight washes his scraping blades and then his hands in a small basin of water dug into the cliffside, fed by a trickle of water seeping from a seam in the sandstone.

EXT.- CAMP FIRE - NIGHT

Chang returns to the fire and lifts a large wok onto the circle of stones surrounding it.

The wok is soon smoking when he adds oil that SPATTERS and CRACKLES as Manning asks, without looking up from his busy gun rag,

MANNING

What would you be doin' if we didn't work otters, Chang?

CHANG

Maybe hab Chinee lestalant.

Chang chortles. The wok HISSES loudly as he adds to its pungent concoction. It CRACKLES and HISSES again as dinner gets underway under a billion stars and to the SHRILLING of as many crickets.

EXT.- A SHELTERED COVE - DAY

Chang is organizing sacks on the beach for trade with the Sur settlers.

CHANG

(to Manning, cleaning his gun)
Missie Post wan cod...anna Mista Hahlan,
he wan abs an he get two sack lockfeesh.
An I take some shahk to Soo Hip at Deejens,
O.K.? I back tomollow wi' some beef ana
cheekins!

(proudly)

How abow dat?

Chang's smile shows a missing tooth among its jagged fellows as his leathery skin wrinkles with his wide smile.

MANNING

God, I'm sick of fish and jerky and sardines. It's been weeks since we had chicken. It's gonna be great.

Both men nod and smile in shared approval and anticipation as Chang gathers his sacks and starts up the steep trail from the beach.

Chang returns twice more for the rest of the sacks.

Chang announces his final departure to Manning and the empty cove in Chinese, and begins a chantlike song under his breath as he disappears up the trail.

EXT.-BIG SUR WAGON ROAD - DAY

A WIDE, BEARDED MAN in overalls watches from the woods as Chang makes repeated trips up the cliffs on the trail from the beach below the wagon road, carrying up wet sacks of fresh fish and abalone for trade with the local settlers.

From beyond the sharp bend in the road, the wide observer pulls a two-horse freight wagon up to the pile of Chang's sacks, dismounts, and lifts the sacks into the back of the freight wagon.

He hears Chang's chant as he nears the top of the trail again.

EXT.- TRAIL HEAD - DAY

Chang stops his chant, panting at the top of the trail, finding the wagon team on the road.

The wagon trader draws his attention. On his side away from Chang, he holds an ax handle.

TRADER

(garrulously)

Well, good day to you. How are you? I just stopped to see what you were doin'. Perhaps you'd be interested in purchasin' some supplies of some sort.

Chang looks at him, puzzled by his strange, engaging behavior. Chang suddenly glances around for his sacks. His eyes, flashing around in search of them tips the trader off that his theft has been discovered.

The ax handle flashes against Chang's head, knocking him to the ground. Blood runs from his ear as he crawls, shrieking in pain, on his hands and knees, to be struck fiercely on the back with the ax handle.

A round-house kick flops Chang onto the beach trailhead. He lies on his back motionless, his eyes rolled back into his head.

The wagon trader laughs sadistically and begins to push Chang's body closer to the edge of the steep trail with his foot. He bends down to roll Chang over the edge but pauses.

He walks back to the wagon and reaches under the spring seat, returning with a knife. He jabs it into Chang's thigh, beginning a flow of blood, but gets no reaction from the limp body of the Chinaman.

The wagon trader then pulls Chang's que tight and slices off the long, braided black pigtail. He roars with laughter as he raises the que to gage its length as if it were a snake. The trader steps to the wagon and deposits the knife and que under the spring seat, then returns to Chang.

With some difficulty, the wagon trader squats to roll Chang closer to, and finally over the cliffside.

EXT.- BEACH BELOW CLIFFS - DAY

Manning hears ROCKS FALLING down the cliffs, some THUMPING into the sandy beach and some SPLASHING into the cove. He shouts for Chang, thinking he's fallen, and climbs up the trail from the beach and finds Chang wedged in a twisted cypress stump halfway down the cliff, nearly dead.

Manning carries Chang down to the beach and lays him in the beached sampan. Manning snatches a canteen and pours water over Chang's face and wipes the blood oozing from his swollen ear.

Chang barely regains consciousness and tries unsuccessfully to speak. Manning frantically tears a worn blanket into strips and winds Chang's bleeding head in them.

Manning jumps up to rifle through several small boxes under Chang's sampan bunk. He brings a narrow, worn box back to Chang and opens it.

He lights Chang's opium pipe and puts it into the Chinaman's snagged teeth as he tries to bandage his bleeding head the best he can.

MANNING

(pleading)

C'mon, Chang. You're a tough little
Chink...

Chang, coughing blood as Manning cleans his bloody face, murmurs to Manning groggily,

CHANG

Man-chuh...Man-chuh...

MANNING

English, Chang. In English.

CHANG

(dazed eyes searching for)

Wagon. Wagon ta-layda...

MANNING

Wagon trader. The wagon trader did
this.

Manning's eyes widen for an answer as Chang nods yes, and struggles to speak.

CHANG

(almost incoherent)

I catch him...he steal Chang stuff,
Yank.

MANNING

I'm goin for help. I'll get the Post Boys or Pfiuffers or the Harlans to come patch you up. And then I'm gonna git that son-of-a-bitch wagon trader.

Chang's dark eyes glaze and he waves Manning away through wisps of opium smoke.

Manning grabs his rifle and a handful of large brass cartridges which he shoves deep into his pocket. He looks up the nearly vertical cliff, its zig-zagging trail, and then back to Chang. He pulls his hat on tight and starts through the sand to the steep trail.

EXT.- CLIFF TRAIL - DAY

Manning climbs the steep, twisting cliffside trail to its junction with the Old Coast Road, nearly collapsing in panting exhaustion at finally making the road.

EXT.- COAST ROAD - DAY

Manning notes the fresh wagon tracks in the soft yellow dust of the road. He walks the road for a distance, winded from the climb, gasping for breath, then breaks into an Indian-trot with his rifle.

Manning Indian-trots along the narrow coastal road.

POV- TROTTING -DAY [scene jolts with his trots]

Manning sees a homestead ahead. As he approaches the rough sawn building, he calls ahead.

MANNING

Help! Hello! I need help!

Two large dogs bark threateningly at his approach to the wagon trace leading off the road to the rough cabin-like house at the woods.

A woman peers from the dark doorway and disappears back into the cabin. In a moment two men emerge, the senior PFIEFFER, pulling on his shirt, and his teenage son.

Manning stops at a safe distance to show he means no mischief, catching his breath as the Pfieffer men calm the dogs and come down the wagon rut toward him. The young Pfieffer runs ahead.

YOUNG PFIEFFER

What's the trouble, mister?

MANNING

(Panting, to the older Pfieffer as he arrives)
Mr. Pfieffer, my name's Manning. Me and my partner, Chang, we...

The elder Pfieffer interrupts.

MR. PFIEFFER

We know Chang. Heard he got a partner. But what kinda trouble you havin'?

MANNING

Chang caught the wagon trader stealin' our stuff. The trader nearly killed him. Chang's in real bad shape and needs someone that knows how to fix up a bad head wound. Got a knife jab in the leg, too. And a lot of scrapes from being pushed over the cliff. He's tough, but he needs some help, quick. I laid him out in his sampan down on the beach, below the cut about a half-mile south of here.

MR. PFIEFFER

I'll get Julia to bring her medicine box and bandages and we'll get her down to Chang. You need some help?

MANNING

No, thanks. I'm goin' after the wagon trader. I'll be back to give you a hand anyway I can, as soon as I catch up to his wagon.

YOUNG PFIEFFER

He just went through here about a half hour ago. He didn't even stop like usual.

MR. PFIEFFER

Do you want my son to go with you?

MANNING

Naw. This is my job and I don't want anyone getting hurt but the wagon trader.

MR. PFIEFFER

(matter-of-factly)

Aronson. His name's Aronson. Never liked him.

YOUNG PFIEFFER

(wide eyed)

Are you gonna kill him?

MANNING

That's up to him.

Mr. Pfiesser nods at Manning and turns back toward the house.

MR. PFIEFFER

(shouts)

Julia, get your medicine box and somethin' for bandages. We gotta go help a man that's hurt pretty bad.

MANNING

(sincerely)

Thanks.

MR. PFIEFFER

(looking back)

No mind. I hear he swindled the Post's pretty bad on his last trip. But, uh... try not to kill him.

Their eyes share a knowing moment before Manning turns and begins his Indian trot away from the homestead.

EXT.- COAST ROAD - DAY

The sweating, steely old Manning trots mechanically away along the road and then cuts up into the woods.

EXT.- MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

Manning scrambles up a wooded hillside and passes into fields of golden, waist deep grass. He alternates trotting and walking breathlessly as he covers the rough Sur terrain with the stamina of a much younger man. He takes a shortcut near Molera's, plodding breathlessly through brush and sand, up into the hills with a Pacific vista at his back, and finally back into the woods.

EXT.- REDWOOD GROVE ON THE COAST ROAD - DAY

Manning picks a spot against a big redwood and leans heavily against it as he tries to catch his breath. He checks his rifle breech, cocks the hammer and sets the back trigger, waiting in ambush for the wagon trader at the stream crossing in the redwoods on the Old Coast Road. He hears the sound of the approaching horses and wagon and ducks behind the huge trunk of the roadside redwood.

Unaware of Manning's presence, the trader stops his team in the shade at the stream and gets down from his freight wagon, squatting to cup his hands in the clear cold water and drink from them.

CLOSE of Manning's finger slowly moving onto the Sharp's front hair-trigger.

The trader stands to the roar of the rifle as his hat flies wildly off. The bigot stumbles in the stream crossing, cursing through the blue-white gunsmoke.

Manning cocks the hammer again, levers the rifle's breech open, loads another long brass bullet, and levers the breech closed on it.

On seeing Manning, the wagon trader screams

WAGON TRADER

You stupid old son-of-a-bitch! You
could have killed me!

Manning nods, replying tersely

MANNING

If I meant to kill you I'd a put the
bullet two inches *below* your hat band.
And for a man in a gunsight, you sure
got a mighty big mouth...calling me an
old son-of-a-bitch.

(A stare-filled pause)

Killin' you might bring too much trouble.
But ya know, I got half a mind to blow
off one of your feet for what you did
to the Chinaman.

Manning's rifle lowers toward the trader's feet.

The trader's face pales, his eyes widen and his jaw
drops in horror as he backs up awkwardly against the
wagon, convinced by the steel stare of the old
rifleman that he could really do it, blurting

WAGON TRADER

Ohh, shittttt...*you're* the one what
took off Morgan's leg at Mal Paso...

MANNING

Now, if I was to take off one of your
feet, maybe then you wouldn't feel so
big about kickin' around a Chinaman...

WAGON TRADER

(quivering)

I... I didn't know he was yours! Honest!
I wouldn't a touched him if I knew he
was somebody's Chink. (panting in fear)

MANNING

There you go again.

Manning raises his rifle to his cheek.

CLOSE from the muzzle down the rifle sights to Manning's eyes. The wagon trader backs awkwardly in panicked fear against his wagon.

WAGON TRADER

Jeezus, God almighty, don't shoot!

Don't shoot me!

(a cringing cry)

Don't...shoot...me.

CLOSE of sweat running down the quivering face of the wagon trader. His eyes clinch tightly shut as the rifle ROARS again.

A cloud of blue-white smoke drifts away between them. The horses WHINNY and SPOOK, their tack CREAKS and JINGLES as the freight wagon JERKS against the frightened team.

The wagon trader stands, eyes closed, frozen in fear, as if waiting to find where he's been hit. He turns to the sound of liquid spattering onto the ground, pouring in a stream from the bullet hole in the small, shattered keg lashed to the wagon gate.

CLOSE of rifle breech as in a matter of seconds the Sharps' hammer is cocked again, the breech levered open, a long brass cartridge ejected. Another inserted.

Manning levers the rifle breech closed and swings the rifle barrel back to the bigot.

MANNING

You owe the Chinaman big. So I'm takin' you and this team back to the Post Ranch.

(grimacing)

And you better pray the Chinaman don't die.

Manning eases the hammer of the rifle onto the breech.

WAGON TRADER

Wha...? You can't take my wagon! These is *my* horses! You're a damn thief. An outlaw!

(expression changes to fearful)

I just came from Sur; I can't go back there!

MANNING

You didn't happen to treat anybody else badly now, have you?

WAGON TRADER

When I get to Monterey I'll have the sheriff...

MANNING

You must notta heard me. You aren't goin' To Monterey. You're goin' back to the Sur. And right now I want you out of your boots.

The wagon trader looks up stunned.

MANNING (CONT.)

Yea! Your boots. Get 'em off. Now! And Heave 'em in the wagon. And don't be too slow about it...I'm gettin' madder every minute I think about what you did to the Chinaman.

Manning makes the bigot throw his boots into the wagon. Manning then mounts the freight wagon, pointing with his rifle down the road back to Sur.

MANNING

Get walkin'.

WAGON TRADER

But...

Before he can speak another word, Manning cocks the hammer of the old buffalo gun, silencing the bigot. The trader turns to begin the painful walk back to Sur; his first tender steps out of the shade and onto the hot, rocky trail begin an ordeal of pain and payback.

The wagon trader ouches and curses off down the road as Manning gathers the reins and releases the foot brake, turns the team and follows him slowly, watching over the horses, the warm barrel of his Sharp's across his lap.

INT.- CHANG'S SAMPAN - NIGHT.

The dull glow of the kerosene lamp, swaying with the gentle swells of the outgoing tide, pulls at the shadows on the canvas cover of the sampan. In the dim lamplight, the healed scar and creased leather wrinkles of the Chinaman's face gather at the corners of his deep black eyes as he methodically shakes the worn leather tube of fortune sticks until one edges slowly from the others to rise alone from the bundle.

He snatches the mystic messenger and sets the others in the leather tube aside.

Chang's face leans into the oil lamp light and raises the stick to read its glyphic omen. A painful look of alarm seizes his ancient face; he looks up, the oil lamp is reflected in his shadowy eyes.

Chang's gaze unwillingly traces the worn deck planks to the dark prow shelf and to the sleeping Manning. He utters a low and sorrowful Chinese incantation of lament at the portent of bad fortune.

Chang continues his wailful Celestial chant as his face turns down again to the fortune stick, to read its prophecy once again. The lament falls off quietly as his face reflects resignation to some unknown, impending catastrophe predicted in the sticks, certain it will surely happen.

Manning, wakes groggily.

MANNING

Chang...What's that infernal song
about?

Manning twists awake, propping himself up on an elbow
from his bedroll on the deck, asking

MANNING (CONT.)

What's up?

Manning squints into the dim lamp light, waiting for
an answer.

Chang turns his head away into the shadows and mumbles

CHANG

Some no good come.

MANNING

Jeezus, Chang.

Manning sighs in frustration

MANNING (CONT.)

We're wet and cold as hell, on a
sampan in the middle of nowhere,
two days by boat or horse from Monterey,
no one but you and me for twenty miles
or a thousand feet up the cliffs, and
you say 'Some no good come'?

Manning catches himself and pauses apologetically to
ask,

MANNING (CONT.)

The sticks...They tell you that?

CHANG

(nodding hard)

Shu.

MANNING

Well, let's hope they're wrong this time. Or that they're for someone else. We don't need any more trouble. Dammit, Chang, it's been *ten days* since we even *seen* an otter.

Manning lays back, closing his eyes. After a pregnant silence he speaks heavily.

MANNING (CONT.)

Chang. What if I went and killed the last one of 'em, an didn't even know it?

Manning looks to Chang.

MANNING (CONT.)

Maybe I already killed the last goddam one and didn't even know it!

Manning pulls his hat down farther over his face and pulls his bedroll tight around him.

MANNING (CONT.)

(from under his hat)

If we don't get another otter or two by the time Nonella chugs back here from Monterey, it's the end of the line for us. So we got us another three days maybe to find some otter. Can't you get them damn sticks to *help* us find an otter or two tomorrow?

Chang mutters to himself in Chinese under his breath and blows out the lamp, fumbling in the blackness to pull a canvas over himself as the boat rocks to the CHUFF of distant surf, the sampan's CHAFING PLANKS and the CREAKING of hemp lines.

EXT.- SUR COVE - DAY

Morning arrives slowly out of the black sky, not with sunlight, but to the gradual revelation of an entirely gray universe around them.

EXT.- CHANG'S SAMPAN - DAY

Chang's sampan lies motionless in a dense, gray curtain of fog, a fog that wets and then nearly freezes everything it touches; a fog so thick it erases the line between above and below the water, isolating them completely.

The direction of the shore is known only by the MUFFLED CRASH and HISS of diminishing surf.

Sea Lions BARK in the distance.

INT.- CHANG'S SAMPAN - DAY

Manning struggles awake and pulls on a heavy canvas overcoat and tugs his hat down tight.

MANNING

Ya know Chang, I'd prefer a blizzard or a sandstorm to this. This kinda fog, where ya can't see a damn thing right in front of ya...it scares the hell outa me.

Chang, standing against the fog.

CHANG

(chiding)

Shu, Yank! Maybe you go back shoot buffalo, huh?

Manning, pulling on his boots.

MANNING

Dammit Chang, I told you I never shot buffalo! I was a kid. I only seen it. But seein' 'em die made me as sick as I feel when I gotta kill one of these damn otters...what few is left of 'em. I'd rather kill a man...

EXT.- CHANG'S SAMPAN - DAY.

Manning and Chang at opposite ends of the covered sampan.

CHANG

You bes' shot ina fie hunna mile. What else you gonna do but shoot?

(Smiling, Chang ads)

You a lousy fisha-man!

Manning grins and playfully throws a stick of kindling through the length of the sampan's canvas cover at Chang.

Chang deflects it.

CHANG

(threatens humorously)

Hey! No mo dat else you get no coffee, Yank.

They both laugh and go about clearing their sleeping gear to prepare for another day on the swells below the cliffs of the Sur.

EXT.- COVE - DAY

Chang's sampan as the fog begins to burn off. The stillness becomes suddenly overpowering. Every movement on board, even the slightest, has a magnified sound.

The sound of the WAVES BREAKING at the shoreline slowly soften and then disappear.

The swells flatten and the sampan sits motionless on the mat of kelp around it. Only the sound of a few gulls SCREECHING in the distance break the eerie silence in the cove.

EXT.- CHANG'S SAMPAN - DAY

Manning eases over the side of the sampan into the skiff. Chang hands him his rifle. Manning stows it under his feet.

EXT.- COVE - DAY

Manning's skiff makes slowly away beneath the fog, quietly across the kelp mat, to the far side of the broad cove where he sits motionless as he scans the kelp heads farther out for otter.

EXT.- CHANG'S SAMPAN - DAY

Chang coils rope on the sampan, looking up occasionally to watch Manning across the cove.

Chang notices Manning's slow, familiar movement to reach for his rifle between his legs in the skiff: he sees an otter! The rifle is cocked, trigger set, and lifted.

EXT.- COVE - DAY

Manning adjusts his rear sight slowly and aims. He holds the rifle extended, motionless through small movements of his skiff.

EXT.- IN SKIFF - DAY

CLOSE of the octagonal muzzle of Manning's rifle. It fires, recoiling in a cloud of white smoke.

As the smoke clears, Manning's squinting eyes are seen aligned up the sights.

EXT.- COVE - DAY

The cloud of blue-white smoke drifts away from Manning as the ROARING ECHO of the shot reaches Chang from across the cove. The gun is shoved into the skiff and Manning begins a furious paddling charge across the cove to the otter kill.

Chang watches Manning reach the otter, pull it aboard the skiff, stuff it into the kill sack and stow it as usual. And then he watches Manning spend a long time just sitting there motionless in his skiff on the gentle swells, head down in his hands.

EXT.- CHANG'S SAMPAN - DAY

CHANG'S EYES FREEZE IN TERROR at the realization that there are no sea lions barking in the rising mist.

CHANG
(to himself)
No sea lie-yon bhak!

Terror stricken, Chang jumps to his feet, cupping his hands and SCREAMS to Manning across the cove.

CHANG
Sha len chin! Sha len chin!

Chang's eyes flash wildly to find the English word Manning will understand. His eyes flash wide as he renews his scream.

CHANG (CONT.)
Oh-kha!! Oh-kha!!

EXT.- MANNING'S SKIFF - DAY

Manning, sitting motionless in his skiff, his head in his hands, looks up and back to the sampan. He can't make out Chang's echoing shout.

CLOSE of Chang screaming, eyes frozen wide in terror. Chang's head whips from side to side as his eyes wildly sweep the cove. He screams again, as loud as he can.

CHANG

Oh-kha!!

EXT.- MANNING'S SKIFF - DAY

Chang's excited scream reaches him across the cove.

Manning, at the moment of understanding, snaps his head from the sampan to the open cove.

EXT.- COVE - DAY

IN AN INSTANT, WITH AN EXPLOSIVE FORCE, THE SKIFF DISINTEGRATES, blown into the air, breaking into splintered pieces of wood and oil skin and canvas in a watery upward explosion.

SLOW of Manning, arms and legs flailing wildly as his body is thrown skyward like a disjointed rag doll . His rifle twirls and spins up and away.

Manning SCREAMS, unheard over the CRASH OF WAVES and the THUNDERING RE-ENTRY of a huge flash of glistening black and white to the boiling cove.

The Orca has blown Manning and his skiff into the air the way they do a sea lion before catching them mid-air to eat them.

EXT.- THIRTY FEET ABOVE THE COVE - DAY

SLOW of Manning's face frozen in terror as he pauses, flailing on his back, at the apex of his flight, and begins his backward descent to the kelp covered water below and the debris of his skiff.

A dark, massive, black and white streak powers across the scene below, under the surface of the tangled kelp, as Manning accelerates backwards down toward the cove.

EXT.- UNDERWATER IN THE COVE - DAY

Manning hits the surface of the cove with a crash, plummeting deep into the tangled kelp, flailing underwater to find "up".

He freezes, still far below the surface, as his whole field of view is filled with a HUGE BLACK AND WHITE presence.

A HUGE BLACK EYE pauses purposefully to inspect him up close.

Manning, wide-eyed, is transfixed against a dense forest of waving kelp, fish, rock, rising bubbles and shattered sunlight from the surface far above.

CLOSE of the Orca's eye as it moves to assess Manning.

A HUGE, BLASTING, CHURNING SWIRL OF WATER spins and tumbles Manning, as the Orca -- sparing Manning's life -- disappears in the turbulence.

Manning weakly rises in a field of bubbles through the kelp forest toward the surface.

EXT.- SURFACE OF THE COVE - DAY

Manning's face breaks the surface, choking to inhale and exhale. His face and shoulders are crossed with tangled yellow-green bulbs and stalks of macrocystis. He struggles, desperately flailing to gather the mat of kelp around him to help him stay above water, choking and groaning in pain from the water level.

Manning can see the sampan approaching, Chang furiously sculling the oar at its stern, SHOUTING SHRILLY to him in Chinese.

EXT.- IN CHANG'S SAMPAN - DAY

Chang reaches Manning's face in the kelp and grasps him by the lapels to pull him aboard, pausing an instant to look up and around for the Orca.

EXT.- COVE - DAY

There is only dead calm stillness again in the cove, and debris littering the icy green water rising and falling on its way ashore.

EXT.- CHANG'S SAMPAN - DAY

Chang struggles to wrestle the limp Manning into the sampan and lay the soggy, semi-conscious old man out on his back on the deck, checking him for injuries.

Chang looks down at Manning and, after their eyes connect in a brief silence, Chang says slowly,

CHANG

You gonna haffa learn ta fish!

Manning chokes an attempted laugh through his pain and semi-consciousness.

Chang stoops to check and straighten Manning's arms and legs on the wet deck.

CLOSE on Chang as he bends close to Manning's barely open eyes. Chang shakes his head, his eyes wide in emphasis, and whispers

CHANG

(shaking his head slowly)

We don' kiell no mo ottah...

Manning's eyes close.

EXT.- NONELLA'S MONTEREY CLIPPER AT MACABEE BEACH - DAY

Nonella's clipper stands off shore at the edge of the surf.

Nonella, standing at the throttle amid-ships, watches Manning being helped over the side into the surf. Several Chinese pull themselves aboard after helping Manning through the waist deep waves to others who receive him at the shoreline.

NONELLA

(shouts to Manning with a laugh)
Well, at least you can walk ashore
this time.

EXT.- MACABEE CHINATOWN - DAY

Manning, from the beach, grins back and makes a painful effort to wave in thanks as he is helped up the beach to a New Chinatown being built a sandy beach away toward Monterey from the burned out old China Point settlement in the distance.

A small crowd of curious Chinese watch closely as Manning is aided up the beach and into one of the shed-style buildings which serves as the infirmary.

The wrinkled and furrowed faces of two elderly Chinese women seem hardly to notice anything of interest at all, talking softly as they chew their betel nuts.

INT.- CHINESE BUILDING - DAY

Once inside the rough, dark little building, Manning is helped to a woven mat on the floor. He props himself up painfully to look around.

Manning notices a familiar face: it is the young Chinese woman he'd seen in his hospitalization a year earlier at China Point, after he'd shot the corral boss at Mal Paso Ranch. She assists an elder prepare Manning's area in the darkened room.

XIAN looks at Manning: shy, furtive, deferential. She now has a baby to care for and carries him, wrapped closely to her, through all her chores. Manning studies her.

Chang carries in a small bag of Manning's things and squats beside him in the shadows of the unlit and windowless room. Chang notices Manning's interest in the girl.

MANNING

(leaning toward Chang)

Is that...

CHANG

(cuts in)

Shu. Same missie las' year. Chang
Xian Ling. She getta lape by fishaman.
Xian bludda go try kiel fishaman widta
ax. She get beeg mess. Now she get
alla bad work for dat.

(smiling)

Like take care you. I solly for Xian.

Xian silently washes Manning and helps an ancient, wrinkled elder bandage him and lay him out in a narrow space cleared on the crowded floor of the small shack next to the Joss House.

Nonella and Chang and several elders speak in hushed tones near the doorway before Chang and Nonella nod their salutations and depart together.

EXT.- MACABEE BEACH - DAY

Chang wades into the surf to Nonella's clipper and is pulled aboard by two of the Chinese crew.

With Nonella standing at the controls, the clipper strains into reverse as it pitches between waves breaking onto MacAbee Beach and moves off to turn and depart.

EXT.- THE ROAD AT MACABEE BEACH CHINATOWN - DAY

Manning slightly lame, walks with a limp and favoring a cane.

On this blustery fall day, Manning is walking alone along a few rough buildings under construction near the Chinatown at MacAbee Beach when he hears a voice call to him from among some men in a doorway.

VOICE

Manning!

Manning turns, eyes sweeping to locate the voice.

EXT.- BUILDING UNDER CONSTRUCTION - DAY

Knute Hovden steps away from the other men and approaches Manning.

HOVDEN

(smiling)

You come to verk for me now?

Manning turns to see the young Norwegian, the manager for Frank Booth's canning ventures.

HOVDEN (CONT.)

(in a friendly laugh)

I can still yoos a good barn man!

Manning stops, drops his eyes in thought for a moment, pondering his dismal situation, then looks up with a weak smile of resignation.

MANNING

I guess I could keep your stuff from falling into the bay.

HOVDEN

(with a grin)

No more sheds. Now I build a big new cannery. You come make sure they build for me schtrong, yah?

Hovden steps squarely in front of Manning.

HOVDEN

And I haff a small house aboff the railroad tracks you can use.
(pointing away in a wave toward China Point)
It needs verk, but you can help it.

MANNING

(thoughtfully)

Well, throwin' a house in with it makes it kinda impossible to say no to you, don't it, Mr. Hovden. Especially with winter comin'.

Hovden's hand extends for a handshake; Manning's eyes measure the kind Norwegian's as Manning's hand slowly rises to join it.

HOVDEN

(beaming)

Goot.

Hovden takes Manning's hand, shaking it in both of his.

HOVDEN

(repeats with a warm nod)

Goot.

EXT.- WAVE STREET BUNGALOW - DAY

Manning is up on a ladder, shingling the side of a small house that stands nearly alone on the hillside above the railroad tracks near China Point. Sawhorses and two-by-fours and bundles of split shingles stand around its narrow sliding door to a small porch and its front door. Two black cypress trees reach slightly over its roof, as if protecting it from the prevailing wind off Point Pinos.

Bill Nonella arrives to hand a shingle up to Manning which he places and tacks onto the little single-wall, wood frame house.

NONELLA

Other than a couple of our well known local bigots and a few venomous Christian biddies, I think most everyone kinda likes the idea.

MANNING

Xian wasn't sure what to say when I asked her if she and the boy wanted to move in with me. She was kind of afraid I'd own her or something. I told her no--not like a wife or anything--kinda like relatives. Said I'd been married the only time I'm gonna, and that I just wanted her to take care of me and the place and raise up the boy well.

Manning stops speaking to hammer another shingle to the house.

MANNING (CONT.)

With things so bad with the tong, she took me up on it. Doin' it for the boy, I'm sure. But she's takin' good care of me and the place.

(grinning)

She thinks this little ding-bat's a palace. The little room she and the boy got here is bigger than the space for two whole families in the shanties back at the beach. And I'm gettin a real kick outa the boy.

Nonella, handing up another shingle.

NONELLA

How you gonna explain her to that grown boy of your own?

MANNING

(surprised)

Now how in the hell did you know about him, or that he's comin' here?

Nonella bends over in a belly laugh and slaps his thigh as Manning turns and nails the shingle in place.

MANNING (CONT.)

You know, you're a worse gossip than a little old lady.

NONELLA

(lifting a hush-finger to his lips)
Truth is I got a cousin that taps out them telegrams down at Western Union. He's a bit nosy, too, so I generally know about anythin' interestin' about to happen here. At least if news of it comes and goes down them wires.

(matter of factly)

Now I hear you lined JASON up a job with Hovden. He must be a real good lumber man, runnin' the mill at Mendocino and all. Hovden's lucky to get him with all the canneries going up around here now.

Manning steps down the ladder, lifts his hat and wipes his forehead with his bandanna.

MANNING

Believe it or not, it's all on account of those Sicilians of Ferrante's that Booth brung in here to do his fishin'.

(chuckle)

They're catching so many damn sardines Hovden can barely keep up cannin' 'em, no matter how fast he builds. They're a bunch a real hard workin' bastards, that's for sure. An' if they weren't, Hovden wouldn't be pressed to get Booth's new cannery up--or need a number one lumber man like Jason.

They sit on the steps together as Manning wipes his neck with his bandanna.

NONELLA

Well, that's all fine and good, but how are you gonna tell him?

MANNING

You know, Bill, I'm not exactly sure how I'm gonna break it to him. Me livin' with a Chinese girl with a baby boy. After all this time, I don't know what he's gonna think. Probably think I gone crazy.

NONELLA

Well now, that Xian, she's a beauty. And I know you're an old fart and way over the hill, but you ever look at her good? For white or Chinese, she's a fine lookin' woman; and she's got breedin'. When Xian gets herself a husband, she'll be big time in the tong again. Kinda runs in her line.

Nonella spits.

NONELLA (CONT.)

Who knows, maybe Jason'll take to her. The way you been bustin' yer ass on this little ding-bat,
(looks up and around at the cottage)
it looks like yer plannin' on her and the boy to be stayin'.

MANNING

Yea. As long as she wants to. But I got no hold on her. It's just the kid. I didn't have time with my own when he was that age.

Manning pitches his hammer into a bucket of nails.

MANNING (CONT.)

Since the Orca, everything's different. The time I got left's the most important thing now. Especially now that Noonan isn't after me anymore for shootin' Morgan.

NONELLA

Won't be long before they'll be hangin'
that peg-leg bastard for killin' the
Irishman.

(shaking his head, chuckling)

Folks' still talking about that shot...

NONELLA

(slyly inquisitive)

Would you be thinkin' of shootin'
again? I mean, if the chance come up?

MANNING

My Sharps is at the bottom of Partington
Cove. Where I coulda been, real easy.
That Orca brought a lesson on me I guess I
couldn't a learned any other way. It
stopped me killin' things, Bill. For good.

NONELLA

Well, the otter business has gone to
hell since you took to flyin' like that.
I s'pose there's only a couple of them
otters left now anyway. Some say we got
'em all.

MANNING

Naw. Chang and me know where there's
some left, but just as good that everyone
thinks we did get 'em all so the last few
of 'em'd be left alone.

NONELLA

(concealing his surprise)

You mean there's a bunch more of em you
didn't get? How many more you 'spose?

MANNING

Forget it, Bill. It's over. The otter
huntin' is over.

NONELLA

Yea, sure. I s'pose you're the only one
that could hit 'em anyway.

The HISSING of a frying pan.

INT.- WAVE STREET COTTAGE - DAY

Xian, cooking on a small porcelain box stove, sifts flour into a large clay bowl, looking over to the smiling child, GUIDO CHANG.

INT.- COTTAGE - NIGHT

Manning reads clumsily to the boy by kerosene lamp, as if the words he speaks to the alert little Guido Chang will somehow, someday be understood, despite his stumbling, tortured reading. Manning looks up to a pleased and smiling Xian, serving dinner in the simple furnishings of the oil lamp lit room.

EXT.- WHARF CANNERY UNDER CONSTRUCTION - DAY

CONSTRUCTION SCENES

wharf construction,
lumber stacks,
steamers unloading lumber and supplies,
crews of carpenters being directed,
timbers being scrutinized,
Manning and Hovden talking to men with rolls of plans.

EXT.- CANNERY CONSTRUCTION -DAY

Hovden, tapping Manning on the shoulder, points to the black smoke on the horizon from an approaching coastal steamer.

Hovden smiles and pats Manning on the shoulder, dismissing the other men around him.

EXT.- MONTEREY HARBOR - DAY

The small coastal steamship "EUREKA" enters Monterey harbor with a steaming WHISTLE and heavy black smoke from its stack. It draws slowly up to the steamship pier.

EXT.- PACIFIC STEAMSHIP COMPANY PIER- DAY

Hovden and Manning look up to the steamer's deck as it pulls alongside the wharf, its lines thrown to dockside crews that tie it up amid a long WHISTLING announcement of its arrival.

A walkway is winched down from the wharf to the deck of the steamer. A small group of passengers on board crowd the mid-deck railing eager to disembark.

EXT.- PLANK GANGWAY - DAY

When the walkway is firmly installed, the passengers, women first, begin to walk tentatively down the bouncing walkway, holding the walkway rails, to be received into the small crowd on the dockside. After several women and children, the men begin to disembark.

After the last men pass down, the gangway is empty for a moment and then

CLOSE of the rough trousers and heavy boots of a large man stride slowly down the flexing gangway.

EXT.- STEAMSHIP PIER - DAY

A rugged, handsome, sandy-haired man in his late thirties carries a small black grip bag down the gangplank to the pier, his eyes searching the small crowd below him.

EXT.- SHIP'S GANGWAY - DAY

Jason recognizes Manning standing with Hovden at the edge of the disbursing crowd.

EXT.- PIER - DAY

Manning's face beams.

EXT.- GANGWAY - DAY

Jason's beaming face.

EXT.- PIER - DAY

Father and son step into a mutual bear hug, with Manning almost lifting the sizable Jason off his feet as they growl and shout in celebration.

JASON

(grinning)

Damn, you don't look a day over a hundred!

MANNING

Well, you're not exactly a kid anymore either.

They laugh together, and then grow sentimentally serious.

MANNING (CONT.)

(seriously, nodding)

It sure is good to see you.

JASON

(resisting emotion)

Yea. You, too. It's been a long time.

Manning introduces Hovden.

MANNING

(proudly)

Knute, this is my son, Jason, the
best lumber man on the California coast.

(to Jason)

Son, this is Knute Hovden.

Hovden steps up with an animate handshake with Jason.

JASON

My Dad tells about you very highly.
And I want to thank you for the job
with Booth's. I'm going to do my very
best for you.

HOVDEN

(warmly)

You know, I like your fadder very much.
Ven he tolt me about you at Mendocino,
and about how goot you are at lumber,
I beleef him. But I also checked up on
you, yust to be sure.

(he turns, throwing a head move toward Manning)

But I don't think he knows how goot you
really are.

(smiling though a chuckle)

Christensen hated to loos you, but said
you're the best mill-man he'd ever had,
and dat I vas lucky to get you. And do I
haff the verk for you!

The three grin together, Manning gratefully shakes
hands with Hovden as they turn to pass the baggage
wagon and pull another black grip from it as they
pass.

EXT.- RAILROAD TRACKS - DAY

Manning and Jason each with a grip, walk back to Wave
Street along the railroad tracks. They walk along
together beside the tracks, Manning with a slight
limp, talking as they cross the rails occasionally,
heat waves distorting the distance, to follow the dirt
path through the weeds that grow down to the trackbed
from the hillside.

Manning stops to point up the embankment to the small, shingled house perched on the slope under the shady black cypress.

MANNING

Got a surprise for ya.

Manning and Jason climb up a set of cleated planks up the embankment from the tracks and make their way through the small garden plots in the yard behind the house, up to the front of the little wood-frame house on Wave Street.

EXT.- FRONT OF THE HOUSE - DAY

As they arrive at the front of the house, a little Chinese boy runs out the door and up to Manning, clinging to his leg with a big smile. Manning picks up the boy, as his own son stares in shocked amazement.

MANNING

(bouncing the boy)

Meet Guido Chang.

As Manning is making his announcement to his son, the lovely Xian appears at the front door. For a confused moment Jason is surprised and dumbstruck. He is seized with Xian's exotic beauty and stands speechless for a moment.

MANNING

I didn't know how to tell you, so
I didn't. But this is Xian.

He pauses to repeat her name, making sure Jason hears the pronunciation:

MANNING(CONT.)

"Shee-ahn". And her son, we call Guido Chang. But I'll tell ya all about that later.

(to Xian)
Xian, this is my son, Jason.

Xian blushes, her exotic eyes absorbing Jason as she demurely bows to him.

Jason, at a sudden loss of composure, falteringly bows to her in return as she picks up her son.

JASON
(haltingly)
Glad to meet you ... Miss Shee-ahn.

Xian, her eyes on Jason's, bows further and then to Manning and quickly retreats shyly into the house.

JASON
(flabbergasted)
Well I'll be...

Jason turns to look at Manning who sheepishly tries to shrug it off.

JASON (CONT.)
(mischievously)
Why you old goat.

MANNING
(defensively)
It's not what you think, dammit. Get inside and I'm gonna tell ya the whole thing.

They pick up Jason's black grips, Manning leads the way inside, with Jason ducking as he passes under the low doorway of the porch and steps into the house.

EXT.- CANNERY AND WHARF CONSTRUCTION - DAY

CONSTRUCTION SCENES

Jason and Hovden receiving lumber being unloaded from a lumber schooner.

Hovden and Jason inspecting the quality of the lumber with nodding approvals.

Manning and Jason oversee a cannery framework being erected, with a large beam being hoisted into position. Teams of men at each end wrestle it into place. Stacks of pipes and a huge riveted boiler rest nearby.

EXT.- RAILROAD TRACKS - DAY

Manning and Jason walking the tracks home in the fading light.

INT.- WAVE STREET HOUSE - NIGHT

Xian putting dinner on the table, lit by an oil lamp. The warm, yellow lamp-light accentuates the smiles and contentment of the two men and their pleasure at the happy child, attempting to feed himself at the table with them.

Manning, notices the affectionate expression in Xian's eyes as she looks down at Jason, assisting Guido Chang's attempts to feed himself. As she serves Jason's dinner, Manning averts his eyes, remaining undiscovered in his fascinated, secret surveillance. His conversation with Jason continues as he slyly observes Jason notice and then return a special glance with Xian.

Xian looks to Manning. He smiles.

EXT.- CANNERY CONSTRUCTION AT WHARF - DAY

Jason, Manning and Hovden confer at the construction site, Jason explaining a procedure with gestures and turning to point to a place along the wharf. Hovden and Manning nod in agreement. Foremen and workers are waved to join them in a huddled meeting. Heads nod and the group breaks up to proceed with their instructions.

INT.- WAVE STREET HOUSE - NIGHT

Xian finishes washing the pots and pans from dinner in the oil lamp light. Manning gets up from his chair, says goodnight, and leaves the room. Jason carries the sleeping Guido Chang, clutching a small doll, to Xian. As she takes him from Jason, their eyes meet in an awkward, frightened but longing need for each other.

They stare at each other, their eyes searching to explain the feeling between them for a moment and then Xian lowers her eyes and moves toward her room with the sleeping boy. She pauses, turning back to Jason.

Xian, holding the sleeping boy.

XIAN
(tenderly)
Goo'night, Jason.

Jason, looking silently at her in the dim light, wells up with an uncontrollable impulse, then steps up to her. His large hands take her by each arm, holding the boy between them, and draws her toward him.

He bends slowly over the sleeping boy to kiss her.

JASON
(softly)
Goodnight, Xian...

Jason kisses her softly. She hesitates at first, but soon responds weakly as his large hands draw her very gently toward him. Withdrawing to look up at him, her eyes express wonder and fear and desire.

With her eyes fixed on his, she bows slowly, and with a faint smile, she backs slowly into her darkened room with the boy asleep in her arms.

EXT.- CANNERY CONSTRUCTION - DAY

Manning and Jason stand in a river of steam rolling from the cannery building under construction on the wharf.

Fishing boats and tenders off-load large steel buckets of fish into a cannery. Gulls dive and wheel above the holds full of silver fish. The SCREAMING of the gulls is punctuated by a shrill STEAM WHISTLE. Hovden, watching from the pier, nods approvingly.

EXT.- WAVE STREET HOUSE - NIGHT

Lights of Chinese squid fishermen dot the black bay beyond the moonlit house in the shade of the Cypress. A bell buoy ECHOES.

INT.- WAVE STREET HOUSE - NIGHT

The bell buoy ECHOES over the muffled breathing of sensual lovemaking. In near darkness, with faint moonlight through a narrow, curtained window, the panting Xian lies beneath the naked Jason.

Xian's long, glossy black hair cascades over the bedside against the rough white sheet as her slim, delicate hands explore Jason's back, clutching his skin in hushed ecstasy. Her whispered, moaning pleasure is answered by the euphoric, muffled moans of Jason in orgasm.

INT.- MANNING'S ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE of Manning, his eyes closed, lying in bed in the near darkness. His eyes open hearing Jason and Xian. He smiles and closes his eyes with a grin on his face.

EXT.- MONTEREY HARBOR WHARF - DAY

Chang stands on the wharf above Nonella's clipper as Manning greets him with a big smile and an arm thrown over his shoulder before he climbs down the wharf's ladder and steps aboard the clipper tied up next to Manning's construction in the harbor. With a wave to Nonella at the prow, Manning takes a seat against the stern.

NONELLA

(coming aft)

Well, looks like you're makin' out just fine.

MANNING

Yea, Bill. Things are goin' pretty good. Jason's doing great and about to take over construction for Hovden.

Nonella leans against the clipper's sooty smoke stack.

NONELLA

You gonna slow down and retire now?

Manning, leans back against the stern rail, the pier's barnacled pilings behind him.

MANNING

Been thinkin' about it, but don't know when, exactly.

NONELLA

Any chance you'd like to try for the rest of them otters?

A troubled expression seizes Manning's face.

MANNING

No. No way I'd go back to killin' 'em.

Manning pauses to look directly at Nonella.

MANNING (CONT.)

Bill, that Orca changed everything for me. I'm done killin' otters.

NONELLA

Well, damn. I was hopin' you'd give it one more go. Chang'd be with ya, just like before.

MANNING

I thought we agreed that the otter business was over.

NONELLA

(uncomfortably)

Well, truth is, Catania's turned up a couple a guys think they're pretty good. If you turn me down, I gotta use 'em.

MANNING

Bill. Don't send 'em. There's gonna be no more otter huntin'.

NONELLA

What the hell are you talkin' about. There's still some otter down there and I'm gonna get 'em. Ever last one of 'em if I can.

Chang nervously watches from the pier.

Manning jumps to his feet.

MANNING

Don't make me cross you, Bill. But there's gonna be nobody huntin' otters in the Sur.

NONELLA

Goddammit, Manning. You and Chang personally hunted just about all of 'em out as it is. What's the big deal about gettin the rest of 'em? I can't figure you!

MANNING
(sternly)
Don't send 'em, Bill.

NONELLA
The hell you say! You just stay outa
my way.

MANNING
I swear, Bill, I'll rain bullets on
'em from the cliffs.

NONELLA
(rising anger)
Your goddam Sharps is fifty feet
underwater.

MANNING
It ain't the last one.

NONELLA
(furious)
Goddammit, you old son-of-a-bitch.
We're gonna finish them otters. And
you better just stay outa the way.

Glaring at Nonella, Manning leaps off the clipper and onto the piling ladder and climbs to the deck of the wharf. He looks up at Chang as he climbs.

EXT.- WHARF - DAY

Manning and Chang look directly at each other in silence. Chang's eyes drop in regret. Manning, looking down into Nonella's clipper warns

MANNING
(incensed)
Don't send 'em. Bill. I'll kill 'em.
I swear, I'll kill 'em.

EXT.- NONELLA'S CLIPPER - DAY

NONELLA

I'll teach you to mess with me, you
old son-of-a bitch. It's goddam time
the sheriff knows who you really are.

EXT.- WHARF - DAY

Manning, shocked by the cruelty of his former friend.

MANNING

(mutters incredulously)
Why you son-of-a-bitch.

EXT.- NONELLA'S CLIPPER - DAY

NONELLA

(up to Chang)
Chang. Get down here and cast off.

Chang does not move, but looks to Manning. Manning
looks back.

NONELLA (CONT.)

Goddammit Chang. Get aboard. Now!

EXT.- WHARF AND CLIPPER - DAY

Chang steps closer to Manning, defiantly glaring at
Nonella.

NONELLA

Get down here right now, Chang, or it's
over for you.

CHANG

Go to Hehll!

EXT.- NONELLA'S CLIPPER - DAY

Nonella--furious at Chang's allegiance to Manning--rushes to the lines and casts off the clipper, cursing and stumbling back amid-ships and jams the controls forward. The clipper misfires, belches a BACKFIRE that sends a cloud of black smoke up from the stack, then lurches noisily away as Nonella shouts, waving his fist at the two men up on the wharf.

NONELLA

Well then, you can hang with the
old man!

EXT.- WHARF - DAY

Manning and Chang are silhouetted on the wharf against the afternoon sky. Manning extends his hand to Chang in thanks. Chang shakes it. They turn and scurry quickly from the wharf.

EXT.- WAVE STREET HOUSE - DAY

Early the next morning, the sound of HORSES AND WAGON arrive at the little house overlooking the arch of Monterey Bay. The lifting fog blows thin on an offshore breeze to show the rocks at China Point and its Chinese village still lying scarred and burnt and empty.

The lights of a few more houses dot the street further toward town as the daylight quickly sets in.

Chang sits stoically in silence on the wagon seat in front of the house on Wave Street as Manning says good-bye and hugs his son tightly. Manning slaps Jason's back and steps away.

Manning, to Jason and Xian

MANNING

Me and Chang may have to be on the run a while. But we'll make it just fine. When it all blows over, me and him are gonna live down the Sur on a little piece Silva sold me where I can see a hundred miles. Then you can come visit anytime. And I'll come up every now an' then. I promise.

Manning to Jason

MANNING (CONT.)

I never did anything much good in my life so far, and I'm gettin' short of time. It seems I spent my whole life killin', or thinkin' of killin'. I'm sick inside at myself, and I gotta fix it. It's time for me to do right. Even if it's over a few others.

Jason nods silently.

MANNING (CONT.)

And besides,
(smiling)
this place just ain't wild enough
for me.

Jason breaks into a wide grin. Manning and Jason hug tightly.

Manning and Xian kiss each other's cheeks in a gentle hug as Xian's eyes well up in tears.

Manning bends down and picks up Guido Chang. The boy, in his best Chinese jacket, hugs Manning tightly around the neck.

Manning passes the boy to Xian.

Manning turns to the wagon, checking the tie-down ropes that hold a small boat upside down over the wagon load, then climbs up onto the seat of the two-horse wagon with Chang at the reins. Manning puts on a large Chinese coolie hat.

EXT.- WAGON SEAT - DAY

Manning, grinning down from the wagon seat in his coolie hat

MANNING

How do I look?

EXT.- WAVE STREET - DAY

As they prepare to start off south, an *automobile* CLATTERS up the dirt street and spooks the horses a little as it passes on toward town. Manning settles the team down and turns to his son and asks

MANNING

(to Jason)

Do you think those damn things 'll ever come to anything?

Before an answer, Chang and Manning jolt off to sad waves from Jason, Xian and the little Guido Chang.

EXT.- COAST - DAY

SCENIC SEQUENCE

Manning and Chang talk seriously and gesture as the wagon rocks and bumps past *China Point*.

Manning looks back to see if they're followed. Turning to Chang on the spring seat, his eyes say "OK so far".

The wagon passes along the granite rocks and sand dunes of the *Asilomar* shoreline. Towering blasts of spray rise from the collision of steep green waves with the rugged black rocks jutting into the rolling sea.

The wagon leans and climbs a steep curve in the narrow one-lane road under the spreading cover of the trees at *Cypress Point*. Manning turns to check behind them again as surf crashes into its shoreline as they pass.

Manning and Chang wave as they pass Jung San Choy's family and their abalone shell stand at *Pescadero*.

The wagon rolls on toward Carmel Bay,
past Point Lobos,
the Highlands,
Mal Paso,
Palo Colorado,
Hurricane Point,
Point Sur,
through the redwoods of the Old Coast Road,
rocking along the rutted road to the Sur.

EXT.- NONELLA'S CLIPPER AT WHARF - DAY

Nonella's clipper is tied up to the wharf in the harbor. From its deck Nonella speaks up to Mike Noonan on the pier as he fills a canvas sack with deck gear.

NONELLA

The old bastard is gonna shoot my boats
and men from the cliffs if they go in to
take otter. You gotta do somethin', Mike.

Mike Noonan, thumbs jammed into his vest pockets, rocks on his heels, chewing a cigar stub, as he listens with some disinterest. Noonan then pulls the cigar from his teeth, spits off the pier into the harbor and announces to Nonella's surprise

MIKE NOONAN

Well, Bill, it just so happens I'm not the sheriff anymore. I just been made the new Chief of Police for Monterey.

EXT.- NONELLA'S CLIPPER - DAY

A blank, stunned expression flashes across Nonella's face.

EXT.- CLIPPER AND WHARF - DAY

MIKE NOONAN

So you see, the Sur is no longer in my jurisdiction. And I have to admit I'm just as glad it's not up to me to chase that old buzzard all over the Sur ever again.

NONELLA

(blustering)

Dammit, Mike. The old son-of-a-bitch shot Morgan and hijacked Aronson's freight wagon.

MIKE NOONAN

Morgan's gonna hang for killin' the Irishman at Mal Paso...and Aronson was just another nasty problem that got fixed, thanks to Manning.

NONELLA

Well, dammit Mike, his real name's not Manning, either. Truth is the old man's wanted all over the whole goddam western territories.

Noonan lowers his head, lifts his foot onto the wharf ledge, leans over to rest the elbow of his cigar-arm on his knee, and looks down at Nonella.

NOONAN

Bill. I pretty much knew that the day Manning stepped off the train.

Nonella looks blankly in stunned surprise.

NOONAN (CONT.)

But now, unless he breaks the law in Monterey, it isn't any of my concern. Besides, quite frankly Bill, I myself personally object to anything being hunted out: buffalo, bears...or *otters*.

(spitting off the pier)

As for me...I hope Manning really *is* the last of the otter hunters.

Nonella stands stunned, disbelieving.

NOONAN (CONT.)

And, by the way, Bill...

Noonan rubs his chin slowly,

NOONAN (CONT.)

I'd be real careful if I were you before you send any of your boys down the Sur to try to finish off them otters.

EXT.- NONELLA'S CLIPPER -DAY

The stymied, furious Nonella throws the canvas sack of gear he holds onto the deck in a rage, and then kicks at it, sending some of its contents overboard into the harbor.

EXT.- CLIPPER AND WHARF - DAY

Noonan spits from the pier again, jams his cigar back in his teeth, turns and strides slowly away.

Nonella continues his fit of angry, raging frustration in the boat, finally turning to stand, panting, in a fixed glare after the departing Noonan.

EXT.- COASTAL ROAD TO SUR - DAY

The loaded wagon of Chang and Manning rolls dustily into the distance, moving along the narrow, mountainside road to the Sur, with a spectacular vista of the Big Sur coastal range and the Pacific.

EXT.- BIG SUR COVE - DAY

The last wisps of the thinning morning fog blow off the cove to reveal a longboat moving silently into it. One of the two men in it searches the cove intently with a long brass spyglass as the other rows slowly through the kelp. Two rifle barrels protrude over one side of the bow.

Both men cautiously scan the cove and then, together, look upward to the towering cliffs plunging to the BOILING surf CRASHING on the beach ahead of them.

EXT.- CLIFFS ABOVE COVE - DAY

THROUGH A GUN SCOPE:

The cross-hairs in Manning's scope align on the man with the spyglass in the longboat below in the cove, looking upward to the cliffs.

CLOSE as Manning makes an adjustment to the long, tubular scope fitted on a newer Sharps and peers back into the scope.

Through Manning's scope: he moves the scope's cross-hairs back to the man's chest as Manning prepares to fire.

As Manning's finger prepares to squeeze the trigger, the vision in his sights changes from the man below him, to the deep, black eye of the Orca that stared at him beneath the surface of the cove.

Manning blinks and shakes his head, widening his eyes before he peers with determination into the scope again. The cross-hairs align again on the bib overalls of the man in the distant boat in the cove below.

CLOSE of Manning's scope eye slowly narrowing with intense concentration.

EXT.- LONGBOAT IN COVE - DAY

A smashing JOLT wracks the longboat as a large plume of water, splinters and spray bursts upward from a large hole blasted in the bottom of the boat at the feet of the man with the spyglass. Water floods into the boat through the jagged hole as the ROAR of a rifle shot echoes off the cliffs and across the cove.

FIRST HUNTER

Oh, Shit! He's is up there somewhere!

SECOND HUNTER

(terrified)

Jesus! What are we goin' to do?

Another deafening CRACK jolts the boat. Splinters and spray fly as another jagged hole is opened in the floor of the longboat, this time at the feet of the second hunter. To the ECHO of Manning's rifle, sea water floods into the boat, its level rising and swirling as the longboat sinks lower, buffeted by waves that now begin to break over the side of the boat. Bags, crates and gear in the boat begin floating around as the men, crouching to hold to the sides of the sinking longboat, look at each other fearfully, and then finally to the shoreline.

SECOND HUNTER

(angry with first hunter)
Shiiit! We'll never make it to shore.
He's gonna kill us, or we're gonna
drown.

(woefully)

Godammit, I knew we never should have
come down here.

A wave washes over the side of the sinking longboat,
knocking the first hunter off his feet and onto all
fours in the sinking boat. He crawls to the rear of
the flooding boat, its gunwales now awash in the
cove's cold green waves, to join the second hunter.

FIRST HUNTER

Shut up! Just figure how you're gonna
hold onto this boat until it washes up
on shore. It ain't gonna sink, but it's
gonna be hell gettin' through the surf.

The second hunter looks up at the cliffs above them,
unable to see where Manning's shots have come from.

A wave breaks over both men as they both hang
desperately onto the side of the boat. The second
hunter loses his hat; the first hunter's soaking hat
brim droops in his face. He pushes it back, his wide
eyes returning to a survey of the cliffs above them.

FIRST HUNTER

If he was gonna kill us, he coulda
done it. We jus' gotta make it to shore.

EXT.- CLIFFS - DAY

Manning looks with approval at the cove below, a faint
smile slowly creasing his gray stubbled face. From
beside him, Chang grins, as he pats Manning's
shoulder.

CHANG

Dis mus' make Oh-kah happy. No mo
ottah huntahs.

Manning and Chang turn with a warm satisfaction in their look at each other. Manning stands, leaning to look below them once more, joined by Chang, to see the longboat, sunken to its gunwales roughly pitched and rocking in the large waves making their way over and through it toward the beach. The two hunters cling to both sides of its stern.

Turning from the cliff, smiling at each other, Manning and Chang walk casually away from its edge, up a narrow trail toward the steep green and tan hills of the Sur.

EXT.- BEACH - DAY

Large surf breaks over the lurching longboat as it nears the last few towering troughs before the waves break in thundering foam onto the steep, narrow beach. The swamped longboat is lifted up by a huge wave cap until nearly half its length angles up like a breaching whale, and is slammed onto the rocks and coarse sand beach of the cove.

One of the hunters is torn from it and rolled over and over, washed tumbling up the beach by the powerful surf.

The other hunter is thrown clear as the longboat is rolled wildly, turned sideways violently by the surf and flipped end to end as it breaks apart, shedding planks, splintered boards, fittings, gear and remaining contents of the boat.

Both men struggle in the strong waves breaking on the beach as the battered poachers pull themselves wearily up the beach toward safety.

EXT.- BIG SUR MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

OVERHEAD as afternoon sun lowers redly on Manning and Chang as they stride up the trail from the cliffs' edge to the coastal road winding the hillsides of the Sur.

EXT.- COASTAL SCENIC SEQUENCE - DAY

The [aerial] scene continues out over the water, along a series of Big Sur coastal beaches, coves and bays to a secluded green slot in the Sur coast.

EXT.- COVE - DAY

In one of those remote and secluded coves, an otter in the kelp rolls and dives below the surface.

EXT.- UNDERWATER - DAY

The otter rockets deep into the darkness of the cove toward the bottom, shaded from the broken shafts of fading sunlight by the forest of kelp trunks.

The otter turns sharply and cruises gracefully toward a rocky ledge to look for a tasty crab or young abalone, passing the angled form of an encrusted rifle with two triggers, lodged barrel down in a rocky crevice.

The otter pounces to dislodge a crab hiding in the rocky bottom, bites it several times and heads to the surface through the forest of kelp trunks with several strong thrusts of its hind feet.

EXT.- COVE - DAY

The otter's head breaks the surface, lifting a large yellow-green leaf of macrocystis. Next to the otter, which peers momentarily from under the covering kelp leaf, is another adult otter in the warm horizontal light of sunset. A small fur-ball moves on its belly: a baby otter.

The otters lie on their backs in the kelp bed, sharing the crab.

CLOSING SCRIPT ROLLS OVER THIS SCENE

TEXT SCROLLS

On March 19, 1934, a colony of "extinct" California sea otters was discovered by Big Sur pioneer Howard Granville Sharpe, an event which began formal protection and preservation efforts that have helped ensure that California Sea Otters will endure to reclaim their role in the ecological scheme of the wild, Central California coast.

COASTAL SCENES CONTINUE WITH CREDITS.

THE END.

FADE OUT: