

FAT CITY

Screenplay

by

Leonard Gardner

and

John Huston

Adapted from the Novel
by
Leonard Gardner

November 4, 1970

JH
Nov. 4, 1970

FAT CITY

FADE IN:

EXT. - SECTION OF STOCKTON DOCKS - TWILIGHT

The sun is setting on a gray day, tinting mauve the flat undersides of clouds beyond the deserted shipyard. Two great cranes slant against the sky. Leaves and papers blow along the gutters. Boats rock in the floating sheds of the yacht harbor. Farther down the channel a lone freighter is moored by a silo fifty miles from the sea.

A MONGREL DOG trots along the docks, looking anxiously about him. He veers from the docks into:

EXT. CENTER STREET

CROWDS (Mostly men). Some lean against parking meters or parked cars, talking. Others drift in and out of crowded bars and cardrooms, cafes, poolhalls, liquor stores and movies, their paths crossed by lines of urine from darkened doorways.

The lost dog moves along, sniffing, wagging his tail occasionally. He drifts up to the curb, noses at some discarded sandwich wrappings briefly, then resumes his search.

In a tireless jog, the mongrel crosses and re-crosses the street - now and then he hesitates briefly in a doorway or beside a man. We watch his futile hunt along the dirty, reeking pavements until he disappears from view.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STOCKTON BOX FACTORY - TULLY, SAW OPERATOR, FOREMAN, OTHER WORKERS - NIGHT

BILLY TULLY is crossing a huge factory room full of working men, whining saws, flying sawdust.

Tully's face is a youthful pink. There is a dent in the middle of his nose. Thin scars lie one above another at the outer edges of his brows. His rust-coloured hair is crew cut on top and combed back long on the sides. He is short, deep-chested, compact. The size of his neck gives his figure its look of strength.

Tully goes to a saw that is not in use. The SAW OPERATOR, an aging, discouraged-looking man, rises as Tully approaches. He holds a cigarette between the thumb and index finger of his mutilated right hand.

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SAW OPERATOR
(carefully extinguishing
cigarette; yelling over
noise of saws)
Foreman's been by.

TULLY
(voice raised)
What he say?

SAW OPERATOR
(same pitch)
Wanted to know if you were here yet.
Said I thought you were in the can.

Tully takes up his position on opposite side of table from the Saw Operator, who now switches on saw and begins feeding small boards into it. Tully stacks the sawed pieces according to size.

THE FOREMAN, a large, muscular, fairly young man, comes up to Tully.

FOREMAN
(loud)
Well, Tully, I see you finally
made it.

TULLY
I got here on time. I been in the
lavatory.

FOREMAN
I was just in there. I didn't see you.

TULLY
When you came in I went out. You
walked right by without seeing me.

FOREMAN
I don't have to see you, Tully. If
you'd walked past me I'd of smelled you.
I'd know that wine breath anywhere. I
could close my eyes and walk right to you.
(reaches out, takes an incorrectly
sorted piece of wood from Tully's
stack, moves it to proper place)
Look what you're doing here! Are you
drunk? Lucky for you you're not running
a saw.

TULLY
Now you got a lot of nerve. In the first
place I'm not drunk and, in the second
place, I wouldn't have one of your damn
saws. I'm not leaving any of my fingers
behind for these wages.

FOREMAN

(turning away;
disgustedly)

I never seen such a bunch of
deadbeats as on this night crew!

As he walks away, Tully begins to sweat and swallow. He grimaces, closes his eyes. Nausea overcomes him. He gestures to the Saw Operator to stop the saw, hurries away.

CAMERA DOLLIES WITH HIM PAST OTHER WORKERS TO:

DOOR LETTERED "MEN"

Tully pushes open the door, disappears inside.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - TULLY, WORKER, FOREMAN

Half a dozen basins and stalls, dirty concrete floor covered with litter and sawdust.

Tully, hurrying to a stall, encounters another WORKER.

WORKER

(amiably)

How's it going?

TULLY

(barely able to
respond)

Not so good. They can have this box
factory and that half-wit honcho, too.

He hurries into a stall, bends over, vomits. Then tears paper from the roll, wipes his mouth.

TULLY (CONT'D)

I've stood about all I can from that
bastard. Some people just can't
stand authority....

(spits, flushes toilet;
speaks ABOVE THIS SOUND)

He better quit riding me or I'll...

FOREMAN'S VOICE O.S.

What'll you do, Tully?

Tully turns, regards the Foreman, decides not to answer. CAMERA PULLS BACK as he crosses to a basin, turns tap on, stoops, splashes water onto his face.

FOREMAN

(needling him)

What'll you do, tough guy?

Tully gets a paper towel, blots his face, frightened of losing his job.

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FOREMAN (CONT'D)

(realizing Tully
has backed down)

What'd they call you? The Stockton
Terror? Well, I don't care how many
bums you fought. Get smart with me
and you'll wish you hadn't!...Get
out there!

TULLY

(starting out)

Now why do you have to say it that
way? You see I'm going, don't you?
I took a break - all right. Now I'm
going back to work.

FOREMAN

(opens door wide)

Well....get a move on!

Tully walks slowly past him.

INT. BOX FACTORY

Tully ambles out of the Men's Room. The Foreman follows.

TULLY

(moving slowly forward,
shaking his head)

Some people!

Moved suddenly to rage, the Foreman strides after him, grabs him
by the collar. Tully jerks around, glaring, half-choked. The
Foreman releases Tully's collar, puts both hands on his shoulders
and shoves.

Tully stumbles forward, running to keep from falling, catches his
balance, turns and springs at the Foreman with a quick, precise
combination: jab, cross, and hook. The Foreman goes down.

Tully regards the fallen man with a look of surprise. Saws are
shut off. Workers gather. Tully's working mate shoulders through
the crowd, goes to Foreman, kneels:

SAW OPERATOR

(smiling up
at Tully)

Out cold!

Tully pounds fist into his hand, grins.

TULLY

(virtuously)

I warned him not to fool with me!

A very different Tully - head up, chest out, strides away as the
Saw Operator begins to revive the Foreman.

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INT. TULLY'S HOTEL ROOM - TULLY - NIGHT

A high narrow room. Smudges from oiled heads darken the wallpaper between the metal rods of an iron bed, white paint flaking from it. The green shade is tattered, the light bulb dim. Worn linoleum on the floor. A sign on the door reads:

IF YOU SMOKE IN BED
PLEASE LET US KNOW WHERE
TO SEND YOUR ASHES

On the top of the dresser, a battered suitcase with Tully's clothing.

Tully, bathed and wearing a fraying purple satin robe, shadowboxes around the hastily made-up bed. When he turns, jabbing and weaving, we can read white lettering on the back of the robe: BILLY TULLY. He snuffles loudly, pursuing an imaginary opponent, giving the other guy hell.

Now he goes up to the mirror over the dresser, looks at himself long and lovingly, close up, then backs away, flexes his right arm, admires his biceps.

He crosses, hurls himself onto the bed. Its broken springs protest. He bounces up and down a few times, then lies still, staring at the ceiling.

SLOW DISSOLVE INTO

FLASHBACK

INT. CROWDED FIGHT STADIUM - NIGHT

NOISE OF CROWD, VENDORS, (faint, indistinguishable sound of ANNOUNCER'S VOICE from ringside).

BILLY TULLY and HIS WIFE are walking down an aisle. A younger Tully, expensively dressed, fit, full of himself. Clinging to his arm is MRS. TULLY, about 22. Her auburn hair is piled on top of her head. She wears a clinging orange jersey dress with plunging neckline, high backless shoes. Her heavy makeup suits her. She is a real good looker.

CAMERA DOLLIES WITH THEM. Billy is recognized. There are shouts and whistles in appreciation of his wife.

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE O.S.

..Ladees and gentlemen...I see Billy
Tully's with us tonight.
(applause)

Tully and his wife have arrived at RINGSIDE. Tully's wife drops into the second of two aisle seats.

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE O.S.

Billy, come up and say hello to your fans!

CAMERA DRAWS BACK

BOXING RING

A white-haired pot-bellied ANNOUNCER in center of ring. Two preliminary eventers already in their corners. Tully ducks under the ropes, crosses, shakes hands with Announcer.

ANNOUNCER

Billy Tully, the Stockton Terror!
(applause, whistles, some friendly boos)

Tully's fighting Jose Ortiz right here in this stadium next Friday night. Main event next Friday -- Tully versus Ortiz...

(less applause; the audience wants the fights to begin)

Tully goes to each of the corners, shakes hands with the boxers, wishes them luck, then exits from the ring.

TULLY AND MRS. TULLY

Tully sits down beside his wife, looks at her, proud and happy.

CLOSEUP - MRS. TULLY

smiling at her husband. HOLD THIS IMAGE UNTIL IT FILLS THE SCREEN. NOISE OF CROWD AND HER FACE FADE SLOWLY INTO:

INT. TULLY'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Tully closes his eyes to shut out the pictures in his mind, re-opens them. He sighs deeply, reaches under the pillow for a bottle, drinks. O.S. someone in the next room goes into a paroxysm of coughing.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - YMCA - (GLIMPSE OF LOCKER ROOM IN B.G.) - TULLY - AFTERNOON

Tully, wearing pale-blue trunks and a gray T-shirt, walks silently down the shabby corridor on soft leather shoes. He looks down at himself, sucks his stomach in.

O.S. SOUND OF A FURIOUSLY PUNCHED BAG. The Sound INCREASES IN VOLUME AS TULLY ENTERS:

ATHLETIC ROOM - YMCA - ERNIE MUNGER, TULLY

A large room, the floor of cracked concrete. In the center a regulation-size boxing ring. Benches, barbells, discarded skipping ropes, gloves, and a punching bag.

At the bag is ERNIE MUNGER: a well-formed callow face, the forehead wide and high, the nose prominent. His shoulders are broad, his chest flat and hairless, his waist narrow, his arms and legs long and slender.

When the perspiring Ernie sees Tully, he takes a final swing at the bag and sits down on a bench.

Tully swings his arms, rolls his neck, squats - rises in alarm at the loud pop in his knee, conscious all the while of the boy's stillness. After his violent activity at the bag, he now sits motionless on the bench, looking at the wall. His silence affects Tully perversely.

TULLY

Want to spar a little?

Ernie rises, taking in Tully's nose and the scars over his eyebrows.

ERNIE

(quickly, gloomily)

You a pro?

TULLY

I was. I'm all out of shape now.
We'll just fool around easy, and I
can show you a few things, okay?
I won't hit you hard.

Ernie is apprehensive. Nevertheless, he gets gloves off a bench. Tully dances around, shadowboxing. Then they pull on the gloves in silence.

BOXING RING - YMCA - ERNIE AND TULLY

Tully reaches out to touch gloves. Ernie springs warily away. Smiling tolerantly, Tully pursues him.

Ernie has the reach on Tully and he exploits it to advantage, peppering Tully's face with fast left jabs and short hooks. Tully plows forward, only to get more jolts against his mouth and nose and eyes. Ernie's long body stays out of Tully's range - dancing, side-stepping around the ring, flicking hard sharp lefts into Tully's face.

Tully flinches and covers, trying to set himself to counter. In a sudden rage, Tully lunges, swinging like a street fighter. His right leg buckles. Hissing with pain he begins hopping around the ring.

TULLY

Ow!...Goddammit...ow..ow!

ERNIE

What's the matter?

TULLY

Pulled a muscle.

ERNIE

Geez - I'm sorry.

TULLY

My own goddam fault...I ought've warmed up before putting the gloves on...
What's your name anyway?

ERNIE

Ernie Munger.

TULLY

How old are you?

ERNIE

Eighteen.

TULLY

How many bouts you had?

ERNIE

Well, I've boxed with a few guys here at the "Y" - and in High School. No real bouts.

TULLY

You gotta be kidding!
(Ernie shakes his head 'no')

Well, you got it, kid! I know what I'm talking about. I mean nobody used to hit me. They couldn't hit me. They'd punch, I wouldn't be there. You ought to start fighting.

ERNIE

(brightens)

I don't know...I'd like to but --
You think I could make it?

TULLY

(gingerly taking a step)
I'm telling you - you got it! I wish
I was eighteen again! Don't waste
your good years. You ought to go
over to the Lido Gym and see my
manager, Ruben Luna. Tell him Billy
Tully sent you.

Tully starts out of the ring; Ernie following.

ERNIE

You Billy Tully?

TULLY

(turning; pleased)
You heard of me?
(Ernie nods)

They leave the room, start down Corridor, CAMERA DOLLYING WITH THEM

TULLY (CONT'D)

I fought Fermin Soto. He couldn't
touch me. Art Morales. I beat him.
I had Cletus Walker out on his feet.
They couldn't lay a glove on me...
You bet you heard of me! Damn right!
Gonna hear from me again, too, you
bet your sweet ass! Billy Tully's
not over the hill yet. I got a lot
of fights in me! -- I swung on a guy
last night and it all came together
like it used to - jab, cross, and hook -
All I gotta do is get back in condition.
Then I'll show up at the Lido Gym
looking like I used to - only better!
They'll be all over me - especially
Ruben!

As they continue on towards Locker Room, we:

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HARBOR INN - TULLY, OMA, EARL, BARTENDER, OTHERS - LATE
AFTERNOON

Average bar, the usual long mirror on the wall behind the
Bartender. Pasted to the mirror, a notice:

PLEASE DON'T SPIT
ON THE FLOOR.
GET UP AND SPIT IN
THE TOILET BOWL.

Thank you.

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Tully, hair still damp from the showers, is seated on a stool, a glass of port in front of him. Next to him is OMA, white, near Tully's age, with thin pencil lines where her eyebrows have been and a broken nose much like his own. Beside her is EARL, a Negro, with a parted mustache and bald temples, his face indolent and dejected.

OMA

(to Earl)

What's keeping him? He knows we're here. Can't you make him come over and serve us?

EARL

Just take it easy. He be here.

OMA

Well, you spineless son of a bitch, you'd take up for anybody against me.

(stares ahead, her face propped in both hands)

I want a cream sherry.

(to Tully)

Earl and I have something very wonderful together. I love that man more than any man's got a right to be loved. I couldn't live without him. If he left me I just couldn't make it... But you think he'd even raise his voice to get me a drink? No. He'll just sit there and let him ignore us.

Bartender moves towards them.

EARL

Here he come.

OMA

No thanks to you.

EARL

(to Bartender; quietly)

Two cream sherries.

(Bartender nods,
Turns away)

Tully shifts his leg, winces. He gives a small groan. Oma glances at him.

TULLY

Charley horse.

(she doesn't respond)

Wouldn't you just know it! And just as I was about to get back in shape, too!

(Oma's watching the Bartender, greedily)

I invited a lady to get tCONTINUED

TULLY (CONT'D)

I invited a kid to put the gloves on with me this afternoon..and I went and pulled a muscle!

(sips)

Well, such is life! Don't regret it, though. Kid's got lots of talent...wouldn't be surprised if some manager doesn't snap him up... Yeah! Good boy. Good young prospect. Stood up to me pretty good..and I'm a pro!

OMA

Earl?

EARL

Uh-huh.

OMA

This guy's a fighter.

EARL

Oh yeah?

OMA

Christ. Why did I even mention it? What do you know about it anyway?

EARL

Not much.

OMA

That's what I mean. Sorry to bother you. Why did I open my mouth? I apologize. Well, what do you want? I said I was sorry, what more can I say?

Bartender puts down drinks, leaves. Earl gazes toward the mirror where a row of gloomy faces look out into the room.

EARL

I hear you, baby.

OMA

You sure don't act like it.

(sighs, takes up glass)

Sometimes I wonder why I put up with him. Basically they're a mistrustful people. You don't know the things I do for that man, but he couldn't care less. You're not as black as he is, then you're shit in his book. He don't like me talking to you, I know. I got to talk to somebody.

TULLY

(to bring conversation
back to himself)

That kid might make a lot of money
someday.

(drains glass)

He's a natural athlete.

EARL

(leaning across Oma,
his face impassive)

What's his name?

OMA

You wouldn't know who he was if
he did tell you.

EARL

Just asking.

OMA

Got to know everything. Now he
won't talk. He's mad. Butts in
and then shuts up. I wanted to
hear this.

TULLY

There's nothing more to hear.
That's it.

(enjoying himself)

The kid's a natural, that's all.

(exaggerating)

They come along about one in a
million.

(signals for another drink)

OMA

He's so goddamn sour. I'm having a good
talk, that's what's eating him. I don't
see why I can't have a little fun. Let
him sit there and stew, I don't care.
If that's what he wants, why should I?
I believe everybody's got a right to
live his own life. So screw everybody!

(straightens, her voice
louder as a drink is
set before Tully)

I want to say something. I want to give
a toast to this gentleman. I'll make it
short, just a few words. Here's to your
health. God bless you and keep you in
all your battles!

Not a head turns as she raises her glass. With large, dark, intense eyes she regards Tully until he, too, in embarrassment and sudden erotic curiosity, lifts his glass, gulps down port.

EARL

Oma?

OMA

What is it?

EARL

Nothing.

OMA

(turning on him)

For Christ's sake, what do you want, then? Can't I even talk to anybody?

EARL

I'm not stopping you.

OMA

No, you're not stopping me. Oh, no, you just sit there with your sad-ass face shut until the minute I start having a good time. I'm sick of your bellyaching. Is it my fault if you can't fit in? Why can't you mind your own business? And that goes for the rest of you. None of you is worth a fart in a windstorm. So tohell with it!

She gets down from her stool, goes off towards "Ladies".

Uncomfortable, Tully studies the cigarette-burned surface of the bar. A glass of port is set down by his hands. He looks at Earl.

TULLY

(to Earl)

Thanks.

EARL

Don't mention it...

(after a pause)

I don't claim to be nothing more than I am. You maybe can fight, I'm an upholsterer.

TULLY

That's the way it goes.

EARL

One man got muscles, another got steel. It all come out the same.

Tully has been warned off. The two men drink in silence. When

Oma returns, Tully nods to them, leaves.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. - BACK OF LIDO HOTEL - ERNIE, BOCCE BALL PLAYERS - DAY

Ernie, wearing a jacket that has FLORESTANO'S SERVICE STATION in lettering on the back, and carrying a large paper bag, is coming around behind the Lido Hotel.

Several cars, one tireless and up on blocks, rest among dry nettles and wild oats.

In a long, narrow, open-end shed of weathered boards and corrugated steel, a GROUP OF ELDERLY MEN are playing bocce ball with their hats on and arguing in Italian.

Ernie walks quickly past them and around to the:

EXT. - FRONT OF LIDO HOTEL

A three story brick building with a facade of Moorish arches, columns and brightly colored tile.

Over steps on the side, leading down to a basement is a sign:

"LIDO GYM"

Ernie starts down the steps.

INT. LIDO GYM - GIL SOLIS, BABE AZZOLINO, RUBEN LUNA, WES HAYNES, FUENTES, BURGOS AND ERNIE

There is a ring under a ceiling of exposed joists, wiring, water and sewage pipes. A Negro, WES HAYNES, is shadowboxing in the ring. FUENTES, a Mexican, is working out on the bag and BURGOS, a Filipino, is skipping rope.

Three middle-aged men in street clothes: GIL SOLIS, thick with deeply furrowed cheeks; BABE AZZOLINO, bald, short, trim, his voice impaired by Adam's apple punches; and RUBEN LUNA, stocky and plump, wearing a houndstooth-check hat with a narrow upturned brim.

All turn their faces towards the door to examine Ernie, who stands regarding them timidly.

GIL
(crossing to him)
Want a fight, kid?

ERNIE
You Ruben Luna?

GIL

Gil Solis. How much you weigh?
You got a fine reach. Looking
for a trainer?

RUBEN

(approaching)

I'm Luna. You looking for me?

ERNIE

Yeah. I just thought I'd work out.
Like to see what you think. Billy
Tully told me I ought to come by.

RUBEN

You know Tully?

(Ernie nods; Ruben takes
in the paper bag)

Got your stuff there?

(another nod
from Ernie)

Come on, we'll find you a locker.

He gestures. CAMERA DOLLIES WITH THEM as they walk on their heels
through the SHOWER ROOM, the floor wet from a clogged drain into:

LOCKER ROOM

Narrow, brick-walled, windowless. Several Partially dressed
Negros and Mexicans standing around lockers. Phone Booth in one
corner.

RUBEN

(as they walk along)

Tully was the best fighter I ever
managed. He was tough. He had heart.
And if he'd get in shape he could
still be something. But personally
I got my doubts. He was in here - must
of been a year ago, said he was going
to fight again, trained about three
days, borrowed twenty bucks and I
haven't seen him since. I did everything
I could for that guy. He didn't
know how to throw a punch when he
come to me first. I got him on his
way to the top, but you can't watch a
guy twenty four hours a day. So he
went and got himself married, and that
wife of his undid everything I done
for him. She ruined his peace of
mind. He started losing and that was
it! She run out on him.

(opens a locker door)

I'll be out in the gym when you get
your togs on!

INT. LIDO GYM

Ernie, wearing bathing trunks, tennis shoes, 16 oz. gloves, headguard and leather cup, stands in front of Ruben, his face smeared with vaseline.

RUBEN

(pushes rubber mouthpiece into Ernie's mouth)

I just want a look at you. One thing I'm not going to do is rush you. Don't worry. Get in the ring with Wes!

(raises voice)

Wes Haynes this is...

(turns to Ernie)

ERNIE

(nervously)

Ernie Munger.

Ernie walks forward, ducks under the ropes.

INT. LIDO GYM - RING - ERNIE, WES, RUBEN

Ernie and Wes dance around the ring, flicking out jabs and taking a few jabs in return.

RUBEN

(to Ernie)

Hit him! Don't apologize. Go in, throw the right!

ERNIE

(turns towards Ruben)

Huh?

Wes hits him in the face. Ernie counters frantically. STAY WITH THE SPARRING SESSION for a few minutes. Ruben watching, nodding approval.

RUBEN

(finally)

Okay! Hold it!

Ruben climbs into the ring. Ernie and Wes watch him.

RUBEN (CONT'D)

(demonstrating)

Step in with that left - Bing!... Understand what I mean? His head goes back, so you hit him again... understand...

CONTINUED

RUBEN (CONT'D)

..Then throw the right. Bing! Relax,
keep moving, lay it in there, bing,
bing, understand what I mean? Keep
it out there working for you...Then
feint the left, throw the right.
Bing! Understand what I mean?
Feinting. Make your openings and bing,
bing, whop! Understand what I mean?
(Ernie nods; Ruben waves
towards Wes)
All right! Show me!

INT. SHOWER ROOM - ERNIE, FUENTES, BURGOS

Ernie is showering with Fuentes and Burgos.

FUENTES

(motionless, expressionless,
staring ahead)
What do you think of these Stockton
fighters? They tough?

ERNIE

Pretty tough. Where you from?

FUENTES

L.A.

ERNIE

How're the fighters down there?

FUENTES

Tough.

(a pause)

How's the ass up here?

ERNIE

Not so good. How's the ass down there?

FUENTES

Good.

(another pause)

What's the matter, aren't you
getting any?

ERNIE

Well, nothing regular.

FUENTES

(hums a few notes)

You got a car?

ERNIE

Yeah.

FUENTES
(lowering his voice,
indicating Burgos)
This guy says he knows a good
whorehouse but it's out of town.

BURGOS
Good looking stuff.

FUENTES
It's all the same to me. As long
as it's clean. I'm in shape. I
want to be careful.

BURGOS
It's a real good place.

ERNIE
(diffidently)
What do you think - does it take
much out of a fighter?

FUENTES
Not if he don't overdo it.

BURGOS
Harry Grebb used to lay broads in
his dressing room before a fight.
His trainer'd stand guard outside
the door.

FUENTES
Damesege crazyaovainchamps. boy of

ERNIE
Is there such a thing as a top
class fighter who hasn't ever? I mean
ever at all? I mean - is such a
thing a possibility?

FUENTES
Hasn't ever what?

ERNIE
You know - had any.

Fuentes and Burgos exchange glances.

FUENTES
Maybe Marciano. Maybe.

BURGOS
He never had a drink! That's what
Marciano never had. Drink!

All three stare straight ahead. Fuentes begins making noises
remotely musical.

FUENTES

(bursting into atrocious,
improvised song ranging from
bass moans to falsetto)
Baby, baaby, baaaby, uh baby, unh, uuuh,
oh yeah, I WANT you...

NEGRO VOICE O.S.

(from Locker Room)
Well, baaby, I don't wwaaant you!

This criticism inspires Fuentes to greater heights. Ernie and Burgos chuckle.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. - BACK OF OLD TWO STOREY HOUSE (WHOREHOUSE) - ERNIE, FUENTES,
BURGOS, MADAME-NIGHT

Ernie's car comes to a stop in an alley behind an old two storey house. Ernie, Fuentes and Burgos get out, climb steps to BACK PORCH

BURGOS

(whispering)

There was a light on when I was
here last.

ERNIE

Maybe this isn't the place.

FUENTES

I'll knock.

He does so and presently the door is opened by an aging MADAME, who speaks inaudibly to Fuentes and holds the door open for them all to enter. Ernie takes Burgos by the arm, holds him back.

ERNIE

(to Burgos,
whispering)

Sure this is the place?

BURGOS

This is it.

ERNIE

She's not much to look at, is she?

BURGOS

That's the Madame.

ERNIE

Oh.

They follow Fuentes inside. The door is shut behind them.

DISSOLVE TO

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INT. WHOREHOUSE WAITING ROOM - ERNIE, FUENTES, BURGOS, GIRLS 20.

Small sitting room. The old sofa and chairs are spotlessly clean...crisp white curtains at the windows. Cheap pictures and calendars on the walls.

Ernie, Fuentes and Burgos are alone. Fuentes reaches over, extinguishes a burning stub in an ashtray, expression of disgust on his face.

ERNIE

What time is it now?

BURGOS

Don't worry about it. You waited all these years, didn't you -- what's another five minutes?

ERNIE

Very funny.

The door opens. A HENNAED RED HEAD looks in, smiles, nods.

FUENTES

(to Ernie)

Okay, you're next.

ERNIE

No, that's okay. I don't mind waiting. You go on. You need it more than I do.

FUENTES

What's that supposed to mean?

ERNIE

Nothing. You just got to town, you don't know anybody. You been down there in L.A. where everything's good and now you're up here where it's lousy..You were the guy that wanted to come out here in the first place.

FUENTES

You didn't want to?

ERNIE

Well, it didn't make any big difference to me. I'm in no hurry. Go ahead.

FUENTES

(staring at him)

All right. I will.

He joins the Redhead. The door closes behind them.

ERNIE

Funny guy. I thought he was in
a hurry.

BURGOS

(smile deep in
his eyes)
We thought you were.

ERNIE

What's there to be in a hurry about?

BURGOS

Well, I've sat here long enough.

ERNIE

Well, me too.

They fall silent, look bored. Ernie shifts around in his chair.
Burgos rolls his neck. The door opens again. A DARK HAired
GIRL is there.

BURGOS

(to Ernie)
Go ahead.

ERNIE

No, no. You're tired of waiting.
You go.

BURGOS

(low voice)
I don't want this one.

ERNIE

(lowers his voice too)
Why? What's the matter with her?

BURGOS

Nothing.

ERNIE

(whisper)
Well, what is it?

BURGOS

She's fine.

ERNIE

Why don't you want her? Is there
something wrong? Is she okay?

BURGOS

(shoves him on the shoulder)
Man, go on! I want a blonde!

Ernie joins the Dark-haired Girl. CAMERA DOLLIES WITH THEM TO STAIRWAY. As they CLIMB THE STAIRS, the Girl looks back at Ernie.

DARK HAired GIRL

How old are you, sonny?

ERNIE

(his ears redden)

Eighteen.

They reach the head of the stairs. The Dark Haired Girl is smiling.

TOP OF STAIRS - HALLWAY AND DOORS TO VARIOUS ROOMS

The Dark Haired Girl goes to an OPEN DOORWAY

DARK HAired GIRL

Madge...better look at his
driver's licence!

(shoves Ernie forward)

Go on in. I'll be waiting down
in number three.

INT. PAN ROOM - ERNIE AND MADGE - NIGHT

Ernie, confused, is facing a MIDDLE AGED WOMAN (MADGE) in white. She sits at a table on which is a pan of fluid. She beckons him forward.

MADGE

Well. Unbutton.

ERNIE

Huh?

(starts unbuttoning
his shirt)

MADGE

(explicit, reaches
towards his trousers)

Here.

CLOSEUP of ERNIE from waist up. His face registers embarrassment, confusion, reluctant excitement. Then, his eyes pinched shut, an agonized, hopeless, resigned, misplaced orgasm.

MADGE O.S.

(murmuring)

Ohh.

(calling; voice loud)

Sharon! We had a little accident!'

DISSOLVE TO

INT. ERNIE'S CAR - ERNIE, FUENTES, BURGOS - NIGHT (TRAVELING SHOT)

as they drive back from the whorehouse. The three men are in the front seat of the car.

BURGOS

Good stuff, huh?

ERNIE

It was all right.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LEVEE ALONG THE RIVER CHANNEL - ERNIE - DAY

A DISTANT SHOT of Ernie doing road work, wearing leather jacket, levis and tennis shoes, running at a distance runner's pace, past the port, past a tug towing a barge, etc. Local waterway scenery.

EXT. LEVEE ALONG RIVER CHANNEL - ERNIE - DAY

HEAD ON SHOT of Ernie approaching. As he draws near he is seen to be red, sweating, breathing heavily, straining, though maintaining the same relentless pace.

EXT. LEVEE AND GROVE OF OAKS IN LOUIS PARK (DAD'S POINT)

DOLLY SHOT of Ernie entering grove of oaks, still running.

EXT. GROVE OF OAKS AT BANK OF THE POINT

Ernie coming to a stop with nowhere else to run. Water and tules are in front of him. He bends over with hands on knees.

CLOSEUP

Ernie's gasping tortured face.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RUBEN LUNA'S BEDROOM - RUBEN AND VICTORIA - NIGHT

Medium-priced veneered bedroom suite. The double bed has a headboard padded in green plastic. The room is lighted by a bedside lamp, its shade still enclosed in a cellophane wrapping. On the dresser are a number of photos of Luna and his family, in frames and cardboard studio easels, among small boxes, ceramic figurines, and several bronze saddle horses of various sizes standing on doilies.

From one wall the serene face of Christ stares obliquely towards the back yard from a brass grillwork frame with a tiny burnt-out night light at the top.

VICTORIA, Ruben's wife, is in bed, covers folded neatly at her waist. She wears a thin nylon nightdress that accentuates her heavy breasts. Her face is soft and plump, wrinkles where dimples have once been. Victoria's dark hair is long and straight. Her eyes are closed.

Ruben is undressing. As he disrobes, he hangs his coat and trousers neatly over a straight-backed chair; folds his underwear and socks, places his shoes side by side.

RUBEN

(as he undresses)

My white kid might shape up into something.

VICTORIA

(sleepily)

That's good.

RUBEN

He's got a great reach and a good pair of legs. And he's white, you know? A real good-looking kid.

He reaches for a pair of yellow pajamas on end of bed, gets into them. The top is torn under one arm; the front buttons tightly across his chest.

RUBEN (CONT'D)

He could draw crowds some day if he could just fight. And maybe he can if he'd just listen. If I could put all I know in him he could make it. But I didn't learn it overnight either.

Ruben gets into bed beside Victoria, turns out the light.

RUBEN (CONT'D)

I got nothing against col@reds, but there's too many in the game. Anglos don't want to pay to see two colored guys fight. They want a white guy... This kid could develop. He's tall for a welter. You ought to see the reach on him. If he put ~~an~~ some weight on he could grow into a good-looking white heavyweight...

(turns towards her)

Victoria?

VICTORIA

(he's awakened her)

Huh?

RUBEN
(patting her hip)
I was talking to you. Did you
fall asleep?

VICTORIA
(murmuring)
Do you want to? I think it's taking
a chance.
(whispers)
We could if you wanted to. I don't
care.

RUBEN
(withdrawing his hand)
No, no, no. I don't care.

She turns over on her side, sighs. Ruben lies quietly, planning
and dreaming.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. STOCKTON STREET - LABOR POOL - PRE-DAWN

A DARK STREET lined with DILAPIDATED LABOR BUSES and a FEW COVERED
TRUCKS equipped with benches. Vehicles line both sides of the
street for an entire block. Sidewalks are crowded with poorly
dressed FARM LABORERS, and DERELICTS of all kinds.

Among the crowd is Billy Tully. He takes a drink from bag-covered
pint bottle, replaces it in jacket pocket, lifting up a package
wrapped in butcher paper to make room for it. The wine calms his
shivering as he passes the dilapidated buses, the hats and
sombreros and caps of the men inside silhouetted in the windows.

THE DRIVERS stand by the doors, addressing the crowds:

FIRST DRIVER:
Lettuce thinners! Two more men and
we're leaving!

SECOND DRIVER:
Cherries! First picking. Let's
pick those cherries!

TULLY
(pausing)
They ripe?

SECOND DRIVER
Sure they're ripe.

TULLY
We strip the trees?

SECOND DRIVER

Hell no. Just picking the ripe ones.

TULLY

So how many's that?

SECOND DRIVER

They all ripe. Damn near all of them.

TULLY

Sure they are. We be out there all day picking nothing.

He moves on. The sky is still black. As the buses fill, they roll out, grinding and backfiring.

Tully stops at a half-filled sky blue bus with dented fenders. A FAT YOUNG MAN (DRIVER) in jeans is at the door.

FAT DRIVER

Onion toppers! Over here! Let's go!

TULLY

How much you paying?

FAT DRIVER

A man can make fifteen, twenty dollars a day if he wants to work.

TULLY

Shit, who you kidding?

FAT DRIVER

Ever topped before?

TULLY

Sure.

FAT DRIVER

When was that?

TULLY

Last year.

FAT DRIVER

Get on.

Tully climbs into:

INT. BUS

Tully finds his way down the aisle of the dark shell, his shoes contacting bottles and papers. He sits down to wait while the Fat Driver continues to recruit from outside.

(continued comment)

TULLY

(general comment)

If those onions were any good, looks like he could get him a busload.

MAN'S VOICE

They better than that damn short-handle hoe.

TULLY

Maybe I ought to go pick dherries.

MAN'S VOICE

You make more topping onions, if we can get this man moving.

Other trucks and buses lurch away. The crowd is thinning.

TULLY

(yells)

Let's get going, fat boy!

TALL NEGRO

Driver, come on. I got in this bus to top onions and I want to top onions. I'm an onion-topping fool!

EXT. ONION FIELD - TULLY, TALL NEGRO, GRIZZLED WHITE MAN, OTHER WORKERS - EARLY MORNING

The onions have been plowed up and lie on top of the ground in long rows. Each worker has a pile of sacks and a "bottomless" bucket. The sack is placed around the bucket. When full, the bucket is lifted. The topped onions roll through into the sack. An empty sack is then jerked around the bucket, and the process repeated. There is a continuous thumping in the buckets as the stooped forms of workers inch in an uneven line, like a wave, across the field, their progress measured by the squat, upright sacks they leave behind.

Tully has removed his jacket. He is sweating heavily, a dirty handkerchief knotted about his head. In the row next to him is the TALL NEGRO, his face covered with thin scars, his knife flashing among the profusion of plowed up onions. Next to Tully is a GRIZZLED WHITE MAN with white hair and a very red face.

Tully is gasping with exertion. He cuts off the tops of onions, then the bottoms, throws onions towards bucket. He squats, stands, crouches, sits, and kneels again, dragging himself along in acute discomfort.

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20.

EXT. WATER CAN ON END OF TRUCK PARKED NEXT TO SKY BLUE BUS -
TULLY AND OTHERS - NOON

Tully, covered with grime, his jacket over his arm, stands at the tail of a truck drinking cup after cup of warm water. He has sweated himself sober.

He waddles towards the bus, climbs in:

INT. BUS - TULLY, NEGRO WOMAN, GRIZZLED WHITE MAN, OTHERS

Tully falls into the first seat he sees, takes small package of sandwiches from his jacket pocket and an onion. He cuts into the onion, the knife seemingly fastened to his blistered hand.

NEGRO WOMAN

(through a mouthful
of bread)

You got a nice onion for lunch.

~~SEE~~ GRIZZLED WHITE MAN

(removing an outsized
onion from under his
jacket on the seat)

Ain't that a beauty?

(looking around; his smile
exposing rotting teeth)

Know what I'm going to do with it?

I'm going to take that baby home and
put it in vinegar.

(covers the onion again
with his jacket)

Tully, his mouth full, hunches his shoulders, trying to ease the pain at the back of his neck. He looks idly out at the field.

EXT. ONION FIELD - TALL NEGRO

Out in the sun the scarred Tall Negro works on in the deserted field.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ONION FIELD - GRIZZLED MAN, TALL NEGRO, TULLY - AFTERNOON

Through the afternoon sun the toppers crawl on, the rows of filled sacks extending farther and farther behind.

The Grizzled Man, half-lying near Tully, his face an incredible red, is still filling buckets slowly though he appears half-dead.

Tully is standing. He is scooping up onions from the straddled row, wrenches off the tops, ignoring the bottom fibrils where sometimes clods hang as big as the onion itself, until a sack is full. Then he thoroughly trims several onions and places them on top.

Occasionally there is a gust of wind and he is engulfed by sudden rustling and flickering shadows as a high spiral of onion skins flutters about him like a swarm of butterflies.

The Tall Negro is away ahead of all the rest in the field.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. SKY BLUE BUS - FAT DRIVER, GRIZZLED MAN, TULLY, TALL NEGRO -
OTHERS - MID AFTERNOON

The bus is full. The day's work is finished.

TALL NEGRO

(glib, animated)

It was easy to get sixty sacks.

TULLY

(dryly)

So's going to heaven.

TALL NEGRO

If they onions out there I get me my sixty sacks at forty cents a sack! I'm an onion-topping fool. Now I mean onions. I don't mean none of them little pea-dingers.

(Fat Driver
climbs aboard)

Driver, let's go get paid! I don't want to look at, hear about, or smell no more onions till tomorrow morning, and if I ain't there then hold the bus because I'm a sixty-sack man and I just won't quit.

BUS BEGINS TO MOVE

GRIZZLED MAN

(beside Tully; whispers)

Wherever you go there's always somebody hollering their head off.

TALL NEGRO

Just give me a row of good-size onions and call me happy.

TULLY

You can have them.

TALL NEGRO
You want to know how to get you
sixty sacks?

TULLY
How's that?

TALL NEGRO
Don't fool around.

TULLY
You telling me I wasn't working as
hard as any man in that field?

TALL NEGRO
I don't know what you was doing out
there, but them onions wasn't putting
up no fight against me.
(laughs)

BUS STOPS

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

The bus has stopped before a labor camp enclosed by a high Cyclone fence topped with barbed wire.

As the crew rise to join the PAY LINE outside, the Fat Driver stations himself in the aisle beside the steps.

FAT DRIVER
Now I want each and every one of those
onion knives. I want you to file out
one by one and I want every one of
those knives.

TALL NEGRO
(handing over knife)
You going look like a pincushion.

The crew hands over the short, wooden-handled knives as the Fat Driver repeats under the exertion of authority, frowning: "One by one...one by one".

PAY LINE - PAYMASTER'S BOOTH

Tully stands in the pay line behind the Grizzled Man. The paid leave the window of the shack and return to the bus, some lining up at a water faucet.

PAYMASTER

(to Grizzled Man;
looking at a tally)
Is that all you picked? Fifteen
buckets? What's the matter with
you, Pop? If you can't do better
than that tomorrow I'm going to
climb all over you.

GRIZZLED MAN

(grieving)
Well, it takes a while to get the
hang of it...

Two dollars are laid on the counter under the open window.

PAYMASTER

Here's your money.

GRIZZLED MAN

Huh?

PAYMASTER

(enjoying himself)
That's it.

The creased neck sags further forward. Slowly the blackened
fingers, the crustaceous nails, pick up the two dollars. At this
barely discernible impulse towards surrender, four more one-dollar
bills are dealt out. The Grizzled Man picks them up, slouches
away, giving place to Tully.

TULLY

(handing his tally to
grinning Paymaster)
Don't you give me any of that crap!
Just pay me my thirty sacks!

DISSOLVE TO

INT. LIDO GYM - RUBEN, BABE, GIL - AFTERNOON

Gil and Babe stand idly by the ring with their hands in their
pockets. Ruben hurries in.

RUBEN

I just took the kid down and bought
him his AAU card.

BABE

(impaired voice)
That right?

GIL

What if he quits? You're out your
five bucks.

RUBEN

He won't quit. You know what happened at the doctor's? He wanted to get some blood to test, you know, but the needle don't go in.

GIL

Dull needle, huh?

RUBEN

No, he tried two needles. The kid's like leather.

BABE

That's odd, Ruben. That's odd. Let me tell you that's odd. Manny Chavez had thick skin, you know, but he was tough, you guys know that, I mean they don't come like him every day.

RUBEN

That's not half of it. Hold on! He finally gets the needle in, see, and gets the blood and it's almost black...

BABE

I had Chavez down in L.A. against Montoya - first round he gets butted over the eye and the blood starts running and I think well there goes the fight. But it's not his blood, it's Montoya's! He's got a cut on the top of his head must of took ten stitches. Chavez didn't have a mark on him.

GIL

Remember that guy Estrada? I seen him open a Coke bottle with his teeth.

BABE

The hell you say. They break?

RUBEN

Listen, I didn't tell you the half of it. The doctor gets the blood out, it's black, and he's just staring at it when I ask him to burn out the kid's nose - stop those nosebleeds. So he puts the blood down a minute and gets his spark gun and when he gets done burning his nose out he picks up the tube again and turns it upside down to have another look and the blood in it don't even run down. It just kind of stays up at the top of the tube. It's turned to gelatin!

Gil digs thoughtfully between his buttocks; Ruben sighs, makes a few aimless sputters with his lips and begins to hum. Babe clears his ruined throat.

BABE

Manny Chavez had the clearest piss of any man I ever seen. He'd take a specimen and the piss in that bottle would be just as clean and pure as fresh drinking water.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. ERNIE'S CAR - EXIT TO DRIVE IN THEATRE - ERNIE AND FAYE-NIGHT

Ernie and Faye in his car. FAYE is a solemn, dark-haired girl with large attractive teeth, fair skin, and a short fleshy body. She speaks with a kind of stilted archness.

INSB.G. GLIMPSE OF LARGE DARKENED DRIVE-IN SCREEN

Ernie's car moves slowly, behind other cars, towards exit.

ERNIE

I guess I'd better take you straight home tonight.

FAYE

(surprised)

All right. As you wish.

(suspiciously)

I guess you have another date or something.

ERNIE

(dead-pan)

Uh-huh.

FAYE

(stiffly)

Well, I must say it's very honest of you to state the fact in so many words.

(a pause, then, hotly)

Who with? That car hop who made eyes at you? I guessed something was cooking besides cheeseburgers!

(THEY TURN INTO MAIN HIGHWAY, DRIVE DOWN SHADED STREETS)

ERNIE

(chuckles)

The point is I've got to get a
good night's sleep. My date's not
tonight. It's for tomorrow night.

(proudly)

I'm fighting tomorrow night. The
Del Monte Stadium. First real bout.

FAYE

Oh, Ernie, you mean thing you!
Making me jealous!

(suddenly

all-protectiveness)

Ernie - you might get hurt!

ERNIE

When I climb through those ropes
I'll be in perfect condition. I'll
never let the guy get set - going to
keep my left in his face and dance
rings around him! I'm going to
give him a boxing lesson!

FAYE

I don't care if you win or not so
long as you don't get hurt.

ERNIE

(smiling at her)

I guess we could drive out to the
levee and park a little while.

FAYE

No, no! You must get your rest!
It's important, Ernie. There'll be
plenty of other nights.

ERNIE

Just fifteen minutes.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. ERNIE'S CAR - PARKED ON A DIRT LANE THAT RUNS
PARALLEL TO THE LEVEE - ERNIE AND FAYE - NIGHT

Ernie's arms are around Faye. It has begun to RAIN.

FAYE

(sitting up straight)

It's been more than fifteen minutes.
We better go.

ERNIE

Yeah.

FAYE

You've been sweet tonight.

ERNIE

How do you mean?

FAYE

You're not so pushing - you know -
egocentric, only thinking about
what you want.

ERNIE

What's wrong with my wanting to
make love to you? It's only
natural. Everybody else does it.

FAYE

That's what I mean! You do it to
anybody and everybody.

ERNIE

No, I don't.

FAYE

Well, maybe that's an exaggeration -
I hope so, anyway.

ERNIE

Want to know something? I've never
done it.

FAYE

I don't believe you.

ERNIE

It's the truth! Have you ever?

FAYE

Don't ask me things like that!

ERNIE

Have you? How about when you went
with Bonomo?

FAYE

No.

ERNIE

He allowed others to be under that
impression.

FAYE

Well, I didn't.
(pause)
Ernie - you should be at home in
your bed.

ERNIE
(flat, rather
tired voice)

Yeah.

FAYE
Do you really care for me?

The RAIN INTENSIFIES.

ERNIE
Yeah.

FAYE
Much? What do you feel for me?

ERNIE
(resignedly)
I guess I'm in love.

FAYE
(whisperingly yieldingly)
Ernie...Ernie. I love you, too.

He kisses her, reaches for her skirt, his mouth on hers. She breaks away, gesturing weakly.

FAYE
No, Ernie. I don't know. I don't know. ERNIE...ERNIE!

He silences her with a kiss. They slide down onto the seat. Sounds of thrashing about, of the door panel being kicked. Intense silence, then Ernie's foot bangs against the steering wheel and the horn honks. A startled murmur from Faye. The small gasps and cries of lovers - then quiet. We listen to the rain drumming on the car.

ERNIE'S VOICE O.S.
Was it good?

FAYE'S VOICE O.S.
(whispering)
It was nice.

They sit up, re-arrange their clothing. Ernie starts the car. The lights shine out into the rain, the wipers sweeping across the windshield. After a few yards, the car stops, wheels spinning in the mud. Ernie shifts from low to reverse, trying to rock free, but the tires dig in and settle firmly.

FAYE
What'll we do? We should have gone home.

Ernie steps out of the car. Faye moves over behind wheel.

JH
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EXT. CAR - ERNIE - RAIN - NIGHT

Ernie goes to rear bumper, grasps it, his back to car, his shoes gripped by mud.

ERNIE
(shouting)

Now!

He heaves forward. The car thrusts backward. He leaps away, SCREAMING ABOVE the spinning wheels. She shifts. The engine dies. Ernie, his face streaming, gets back in.

INT. ERNIE'S CAR

Faye sits well away from Ernie.

FAYE
(ready to cry)
I can't do it! I wish we hadn't
come. I wish we'd gone home!

The engine turns over. Wheels spin. Ernie gets out again, motions Faye behind the wheel again.

EXT. REAR OF CAR - ERNIE

While the tires spray mud, he grunts and pushes and yells at Faye.

ERNIE
Don't spin the wheels!

Finally, feet sucking and splashing, he walks off in search of boards, crashing angrily through the bushes down the steep slope of the levee. O.S. SOUND of FAYE'S VOICE CALLING HIM.

Whipped by twigs, he is pulling himself along the bank from willow to willow when a WHIRRING OF WINGS rushes up before him. Recoiling, he slips, throwing out his hands, striking the ground on his side and instantly he is in the icy shock of the river up to his waist.

RIVER BANK - ERNIE

tearing away chunks of the bank in terror. Blindly he clambers out and stands quaking on the slick bank, his teeth chattering, water pouring from his pants and his shoes full. Through the hissing rain THE HORN SOUNDS.

Ernie moves along the Bank, CAMERA DOLLYING WITH HIM. He finds a waterlogged board, drags it back to:

EXT. CAR - ERNIE

As Ernie arrives with the board, Faye opens the door, peers out.

FAYE
Ernie? Is that you?

ERNIE
(angrily)
Who else? What's all the noise
about?

FAYE
I was afraid you got lost.

REAR OF CAR - ERNIE

Cursing, Ernie jams the board under the rear tire. He pushes, yells to Faye. The wheels spin, the board cracks; the car surges ahead and mires down, Ernie collapsing in the glow of the taillights.

Wallowing on his knees, he digs at the mud, jams the cracked board back under the tires and heaves while Faye races the engine.

The car moves forward onto solid ground...lurching, careening ahead. Ernie runs after it. Faye stops the car. Ernie gets in.

INT. CAR - ERNIE AND FAYE

He is mud from head to foot. Her hair is plastered to her head. They start back towards the Main Road.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. DRESSING ROOM OF ARENA IN MONTEREY - NIGHT

SEVERAL BOXERS are already in the dressing room, resting on tables, undressing, moving nervously around amid a murmur of voices and tense clearing of throats.

LUNA, ERNIE, BABE, BURGOS, WES, ~~WES~~ BURFORD are grouped together in one corner - Wes, Burgos and Ernie getting ready, being fussed over by Ruben and Babe.

RUBEN
(elated)
We got the winners! What do you
think?

BABE
I'd say we got the winners.

RUBEN

We got four sure winners. You know what I'd like to do some day? I'd like to take these guys to England. They appreciate class over there. When I turn these guys pro I'd really like to make that trip.

Ruben sighs happily. Ernie, in new boxing shoes, leather cup and a pair of purple-trimmed gold trunks with a monogrammed "A" on them, swings his arms, trying his gloves as Ruben smears vaseline around his eyes and down the bridge of his nose. Wes sits in a T-Shirt and jockstrap on the edge of a table, his red straightened hair a high mound. Buford is lost in the folds of a royal blue robe. Buford is still in his street clothes.

RUBEN (CONT'D)

Ernie, this guy can't fight. You'll knock him out. How you feel?... Hardly wait to get in there?

ERNIE

I'll give it all I got.

RUBEN

You may have to go the four rounds, so don't punch yourself out. Don't lose your head.

ERNIE

I won't. I'll pace myself.

RUBEN

It goes fast, though, so don't hang back.

ERNIE

I won't hang back. I'll give it everything I got.

RUBEN

Yeah, but you want to pace yourself -- Buford, your guy's been around so you don't want to let him get a good shot at you. He may be the Fort Ord champ but he's a boozier, you know how these soldiers are. He won't go the limit.

BUFORD

(a tough, dead-pan
Negro kid)

I don't care who he is. Nobody going get by me. 'Cause I gonna be world champ by the time I'm eighteen.

ERNIE

Aren't you eighteen now?

WES

(laughs)
Sheit, he only fifteen!

ERNIE

You can't fight if you're only
fifteen, can you?

RUBEN

(shushing them)
We keep quiet about that. Buford
don't fit the rules.

(looks at watch)

I'm gonna see how much of a crowd
we got - be right back.

Ruben hurries away. Ernie looks at Buford.

ERNIE

Aren't you getting ready?

BUFORD

Plenty of time. Mine's the semi-final.

ERNIE

(glances off at door)

I just hope I didn't leave my fight
in the bedroom -- Don't tell Ruben
this, but I was out getting a little
last night.

BUFORD

I was too. That don't make no difference.
It don't matter if you dead drunk, you
got two hands you can beat that dude. I
don't care who he is. It all in your mind.

ERNIE

I hope so.

BUFORD

(frowning)

Hoping never done nothing. It wanting
that do it. You got to want to win so
bad you can taste it. If you want to win
bad enough you win. They no way in hell
this dude going beat me. He too old. I
going be all over him. I going kick his
ass so bad, every time he take a bite of
food tomorrow he going think of me. He
be one sore son-of-a-bitch. He going know
he been in a fight. I get him before he
get me. I going hit him with everything.
I won't just beat that motherfucker. I
going kill him.

(pauses)

You want to know what makes a good fighter?

ERNIE

What's that?

BUFORD

It believing in yourself. That the
will to win. The rest condition.
You want to kick ass, you kick ass.

ERNIE

I hope you're right.

BUFORD

You don't want to kick ass, you get
your own ass whipped.

ERNIE

I want to kick ass. Don't worry about
that.

BUFORD

You just shit out of luck.

ERNIE

I said I wanted to kick ass.

BUFORD

You got to want to kick ass bad.
They no manager or trainer or pill
can do it for you.

ERNIE

I want to kick ass as bad as you do.

BUFORD

Then you go out and kick ass.

ERNIE

All right.

Ernie moves away, irritated with his deferring to a boy.
Lethargically he bobs and shuffles.

Ruben rushes in a second before we hear a VOICE FROM DOORWAY.

VOICE O.S.

ERNIE MUNGER!

As he hears his name, Ernie begins wildly shadowboxing.

RUBEN

(excited)

Hold off. You'll wear yourself out.
We got to go now...Babe, get the
towels, get the towels.

Babe hurries around in B.G.

ERNIE

I didn't get a chance to warm up.

RUBEN

That's okay, you're ready. Just stay loose.

(nervously)

Where's the bucket?

Babe comes up to them, bucket in one hand, towels over his shoulder.

BABE

(whispers)

I got the bucket in my hand.

RUBEN

Got the bottle?

BABE

The bottle's right here in the bucket.

RUBEN

You put the water in it?

BABE

I wouldn't bring an empty bottle.

RUBEN

I'm just asking. I don't want to bring my kid out there without any water.

BABE

I got the damn water. Take it easy. I told you I got the water.

The three go out into:

INT. - AUDITORIUM - CROWD

As the three hurry down the AISLE TO RING, Babe flings a towel over Ernie's shoulders.

Ernie and Ruben climb into the RING; Babe goes to Ernie's corner.

The REFEREE, a short, bald, heavy man in gray, is leaning back with outspread arms on the ropes.

Ernie scuffs his shoes in the resin box, goes to his corner. Ruben grips the back of his neck, shoves the teeth protector in his mouth.

THE BELL TOLLS IN SUMMONS. WHISTLES, RESTIVE CLAPPING, echoes in the arena. At last a MEXICAN (ROSALES), in a brilliant red robe jogs down the aisle, followed by his HANDLERS. Ducking through the ropes he catches a foot and his lunge into the ring is converted to prancing and shadowboxing, a Second scurrying after him attempting to untie his robe.

RUBEN
(studying Rosales)
Good. You got the reach.

THE ANNOUNCER, tall, well-built, white haired, strides to the center of the ring, carrying a microphone.

ANNOUNCER
(in boxese)
Ladies and gentleman, on behalf of Jackie Harris and the Del Monte Gardens I want to welcome you to a star-studded program of amateur boxing. With your support we hope to hold these bouts at regular intervals in the near future. Each bout will consist of four two-minute rounds, in accordance with the regulations of the California State Athletic Commission. The first bout...

Ruben turns to ringside, raises his hand.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
...in the blue corner, weighing one hundred forty-seven pounds, from Stockton, IRISH ERNIE MUNGER!

Scattered, perfunctory applause. CAMERA PANS TO ERNIE'S CORNER.

ERNIE
I'm not Irish.

RUBEN
I said it that way so they'd know you're white. It'll look great in the paper. Wave to the crowd!

Ernie lifts hand. CAMERA PANS BACK TO:

ANNOUNCER
In the red corner, weighing one hundred forty-nine pounds, from Salinas, MANUEL ROSALES!

More perfunctory applause. The Announcer leaves the ring. House lights go off. The BELL RINGS. Startled by the bell and a shove against his back, Ernie bounds forward.

Rosales turns around in his corner, goes down on one knee, crosses himself. He rises again immediately, his hair, in a grown-out crew cut, standing up like a wild boar's bristles.

The two fighters touch gloves across the Referee's arm. Ernie, a bit thrown by Rosales' prayer, reaches out to touch gloves again. Rosales strikes him on the side of the head. Offended, Ernie lashes out, connects. Ernie dances around the ring while Rosales charges after him, swinging and missing. The Referee manoeuvres his nimble bulk out of their way and the opposing SECONDS SHOUT unheeded instructions.

VOICES FROM ROSALES' CORNER
Pegale! Tirale al cuerpo! Abajo!
Abajo!

STEPS OUTSIDE RING

Ruben crouches on steps beside Babe, their heads on level of canvas.

RUBEN
Throw the right! Jab! Now the right!
One-two, one-two. Hook!

INT. RING - ERNIE'S CORNER

Ernie, back in his corner, on stool, panting. Ruben standing between his outstretched legs, coaching and demonstrating, very worked-up, his face intense and ruthless.

RUBEN
Step in and nail him. Understand
what I mean?

BABE
(leaning through ropes with
water bottle to Ernie's mouth,
his voice croaking)
Hook! Hook him! He's open!

Babe holds bucket. Ernie spits out water.

INT. RING

THE BELL. Ruben is now out of the ring, reaching through the ropes, heaving Ernie by the buttocks up off the stool.

Ernie again dances and jabs, retreating while Rosales charges and misses.

RUBEN'S VOICE O.S.
Nail him, nail him! Step in!
The right - throw the right!

VOICE FROM ROSALES' CORNER
Abajo, arriba! Abajo, arriba!

INT. RING - ERNIE'S CORNER

Ernie, returning to his corner, is slapped in the face with a wet sponge by Ruben. He slumps on stool. Babe pulls out his waistband and pours water into his trunks. Ruben towels his face, pats it, hurriedly strokes on vaseline, then kneads Ernie's shoulders and thighs - talking all the while.

RUBEN

What are you doing? You're throwing it away! He's finished. Go in and get him. Unload on him. Walk in. Two punches, he's yours. He can't touch you. Don't hang back. Go after him.

THE BELL RINGS

STEPS OUTSIDE RING

Ruben, down from the ring again, sitting on ring steps with Babe, tense, absorbed, making abortive, sympathetic motions.

RUBEN

Go in! He's tired, he's tired, he's tired!

INT. RING

Ernie is exchanging punches now with Rosales. Ernie is backed into a corner, attempts to clinch, is hit. Blood pours out of Ernie's nose.

Now struck repeatedly, he hugs Rosales around the waist. The Referee pulls him off, stands in front of Ernie, holding him by the shoulders, looking up at his dazed eyes.

Ernie tries to push the Referee away. The blood is down his chest now and on the Referee too. The Referee reaches up and tries to take out Ernie's mouthpiece.

ERNIE

(turning head from side ,
to side, dodging Referee's
hand)

Shit, I'm okay! Shit goddammit,
I'm okay!

The Referee herds him towards his corner. Ruben springs into the ring with sponge and towel, holds Ernie by the shoulders.

RUBEN

Tilt your head back. Breathe
through your mouth.

ERNIE'S CORNER

Ernie sits down heavily on the stool. Ruben and Babe begin to work on him.

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE O.S.

The winner...in the red corner...
MANUEL ROSALES!

Applause and boos. Rosales, red robe about his shoulders, comes over to Ernie, mumbles 'Sorry, kid, good fight', hangs an arm briefly around his neck, leaves.

BABE
(watching Rosales'
retreating back)
Look to me like he butted you.

ERNIE
I don't know what it was.

RUBEN
Sure he butted you. Because he
can't punch.
(angrily)
Let's go!

INT. DRESSING ROOM OF ARENA IN MONTEREY

Burgos, still in his voluminous royal blue robe, sits on a table beside Wes who now has on gloves, white shoes - but no boxing trunks.

Ruben, Babe, and Ernie ENTER.

WES
(one look at Ernie)
You lose, huh?

RUBEN
He wasn't hurt at all. It should
never been stopped.

Ernie's gloves are pulled off and the handwraps cut away with hasty precision. A GRAY HAURED MANAGER comes over, peers at his nose.

GRAY HAURED MANAGER
You want to get a note from the doctor
before you leave. You can get that
nose set tomorrow and it won't cost
you nothing.

RUBEN
(signalling Ernie to undress)
He was butted. They should throw that
kid out of the ring.

Ernie steps out of the trunks and cup. They are handed to Wes.

WES
(objecting; to Ruben)
They all bloody!

RUBEN
(grimly)
That's all right. It's not your blood.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. MEXICAN CAFE IN SALINAS - RUBEN, BABE, BURGOS, WES, BUFORD,
ERNIE, WAITRESS - NIGHT

Our six are seated in the booth of a small Mexican cafe. Wes sits next to Buford, their dark fists side by side on the table, each holding a bottle of orange soda. Ernie sips at a coke. Ruben, Babe, and Burgos are having beer...obviously not their first.

RUBEN
(forced cheerfulness;
to Buford)
Doing all right? How you feel?

BUFORD
Just pissed off.

RUBEN
You dropped your left. Don't sweat over it. You'll get him again. They'll have you back and you'll knock him out next time. He don't have what he used to have.
(to Ernie, whose nose looks like a boiled sausage)
Ernie, you'll get that nose set as good as new, don't worry about it. Look at mine. Would you believe mine was ever busted?

ERNIE
(wry smile)
Yeah.

RUBEN
I don't know what kind of deal we were getting there tonight, but I never seen anything like it. Stopping that fight when Ernie had the guy beat!.. You saw it, Babe. That kid should of been disqualified. Wes wasn't hurt either. Anybody can get tagged the first round. You take a good punch like Wes does, it doesn't mean a thing... And Burgos, he won every round.

BABE
He did. That's a fact. That was robbery if I ever seen it. You were hurting that boy.

BURGOS
(drinks from bottle;
scowling)
What difference it make?

BABE
(trying to summon Waitress,
his voice failing under
the exertion)
Hey!

RUBEN
(louder)
Hey!

A WAITRESS, about 30, comes over to the booth.

RUBEN (CONT'D)
Sweetheart, give us some more beer,
and some pop for these boys.

WES
(sulkily)
I want a beer, too. I don't want no pop. I already had four bottles of pop. Want a lucky Lager. I'm twenty-two.

WAITRESS
(sympathetically)
I can't help it. If you had an ID I'd serve you.

WES
(wrinkles 17 year old brows,
trying to persuade her)
Left it home.

WAITRESS
(indicating Burgos)
This one's all right.
(sweep of hand to include
younger fighters)
It's just these three.

RUBEN
We been all through this. Forget it! Pop's better for them anyway. Wes, sure you don't want another one? - Bring him another pop. These boys fought their hearts out tonight over at the Del Monte Gardens.

WAITRESS

What are they, boxers?

RUBEN

These boys are the top amateurs in the Valley. We come all the way up from Stockton. You like fights? Come with us sometime. I'll get you in free.

BABE

(lighting thin cigar)

She's married.

RUBEN

How do you know?

BABE

Ring.

RUBEN

(jovial)

That's all right. Your husband wouldn't mind if you went to the fights one night, would he?

The Waitress laughs evasively, walks away.

RUBEN (CONT'D)

(watching her)

Nice ass.

WES

How old you think she is?

RUBEN

She's old enough. She's old enough.

He, Babe, and Burgos laugh disproportionately at this witticism.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. RUBEN'S CAR - NIGHT

Ruben's car weaves from one side of the road to the other.

INT. RUBEN'S CAR (MOVING SHOT)

Ruben is at the wheel, trying to keep his eyes open. Babe is beside him with Burgos on the outside. The three young fighters are asleep in the back. Babe and Burgos SHOUT TOGETHER.

BABE
(yelling, for him)
RUBEN! Pull over! Goddammit...
(hand on Ruben's arm)
Ruben!

RUBEN
(startled out of
his stupor)
Scared the shit outa me yellin'
like that! Might of had an accident!

BABE
You was asleep.

RUBEN
I wasn't asleep.

BABE
Well, your eyes was closed ---
Pull over to the side!

Ruben pulls over obediently, opens door on driver's side, steps out, holds on to door for support.

EXT. CAR - RUBEN, BABE, BURGOS - NIGHT

Babe slides over, gets out.

BABE
Burgos, come and help me!

Burgos gets out, starts around front of car. CAMERA PANS OVER to show the three young fighters, awakened, staring sleepily at the three drunks. CAMERA PANS BACK. Babe and Burgos take Ruben around the front of the car, put him in passenger seat, slam door. Now they both return around the hood to the driver's side. Babe gets under the wheel.

BABE
(door is still open;
to Burgos)
I'm not going to let you behind this
wheel. I'm sorry, old buddy, but
that's the way it is.

BURGOS
(shoving Babe over)
I'm going to drive.

BABE
You're drunker'n pig, Burgos.
You're drunker than Ruben.

INT. RUBEN'S CAR

Burgos squeezes in, forcing Babe over beside Ruben, who is snoring, oblivious.

BABE

Don't get smart with me! I'll whip your ass off! I'll take you on right now...Put up your hands!

BURGOS

(puts car in motion)
Just shut up.

BABE

Don't drive fast, Burgos! I'll nail you one.

As he continues to harangue and threaten Burgos, fist cocked, we:

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. RUBEN'S CAR - LONG SHOT - FIRST LIGHT OF DAWN

Ruben's car coasts down a quiet residential street, stops. Burgos gets out. CAMERA PANS HIM TO A SMALL FRAME HOUSE. He opens the front door with a key, goes in.

CLOSE SHOT - INT. RUBEN'S CAR

All the men are asleep. HOLD on their forms, their awkward positions.

Ernie wakes up, elbows Buford.

ERNIE

Burgos -- where's Burgos?

BUFORD

(sleepily)

Don't know.

EXT. RUBEN'S CAR, ON RESIDENTIAL STREET & ERNIE

Ernie gets out of the back seat, looks up and down the street, sleepily wanders a few yards to the corner, takes in the cross street.

ERNIE

(normal speaking voice
that sounds loud to him)

Burgos?...Burgos?...Where are you?

Nothing stirs. He turns back to the car.

INT. RUBEN'S CAR (TRAVELING SHOT)

Ernie slides under the wheel. Only Buford is awake.

ERNIE

(starts car;
moving off)

Where are we? What town are we in?

BUFORD

Don't know.

ERNIE

I never seen this burg before. We got to find Burgos and get out of here. I want to get home...What are we doing here anyway?

BUFORD

Don't know.

ERNIE

(peering out)

You see him anywhere?

ERNIE MAKES A RIGHT TURN INTO DIFFERENT STREET

BUFORD

We going lose him sure. We should of waited back there till he got done doing what he's doing.

ERNIE

Hey! Look at that street! We got that same street in Stockton!

CAR SPEEDS UP.

ERNIE (CONT'D)

Hey, Buford! We are in Stockton!

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - TULLY, DERELICTS, FARM WORKERS,
CITY HALL MAINTENANCE MEN - MORNING

The park is a block of lawn and shade trees within a periphery of tall date palms with high sparse fronds, faced on one side by the ornate eaves of Confucius Hall and on the opposite side by the slate steeple of Saint. Mary's Church.

There are perhaps forty men and a few women reclining on the grass - gaunt night sleepers in coats, and farm workers in shirt sleeves, unhired at the morning shape-up. Tully is among them, sitting with his back against a tree trunk.

THREE ORANGE CITY MAINTENANCE TRUCKS MOVE INTO BACKGROUND. WORKMEN climb down from the cabs, go around to backs of trucks, start taking out equipment.

TULLY
(to Man nearby)
Now what they going to do, mow
the grass?

GAUNT, TANNED WHITE MAN
Pick up trash, I guess.

TULLY
Probably going to water again. Soon
as I sit down they turn on the water.

GAUNT MAN
(grinning)
They don't like you.

TULLY
(grins back)
Don't like you any better.

IN B.G. WORKMEN ENTER PARK carrying chain saws, axes, ropes, etc. The three teams of two men each, walk off in different directions.

TULLY (CONT'D)
(looking at saws)
Must be a diseased tree.

ANOTHER MAN WITH SCAB
DOWN BRIDGE OF NOSE
(agreeing)
Tree surgeons. Probably a diseased
tree.

LONG SHOT - PARK AND WORKMEN AND CROWD

The rope starter is pulled on the first chain saw. Roaring and sputtering like an outboard motor, the saw digs into a tree. In a moment another saw is roaring on the other side of the park. Ropes are thrown up into the foliage, sawdust flies, the trees sway.

TULLY'S GROUP AND TWO WORKMEN

TWO WORKMEN, carrying chain saw, axe, ropes ENTER SHOT.

FIRST WORKMAN
Okay, you fellas gonna have to move.
This tree's coming down.

MAN WITH SCAB

What is it, some kind of tree epidemic?

SECOND WORKMAN

(ignoring this)

Let's move!

TULLY

Go cut somebody else's tree down.
We're using this one.

FIRST WORKMAN

Come on! Clear out!

Tully and the others rise reluctantly.

TULLY

I don't see nothing wrong with these
trees. The Mayor know about this?

MAN WITH SCAB

Must be some kind of blight.

SECOND WORKMAN

Yeah. Blight all right. But not
in the trees.

(gestures; we see the
ground littered with trash,
bottles, rags, etc.)

What's under 'em. You bums are the
blight.

TULLY

(disbelieving)

You mean you're cutting down these
trees so we can't have shade?

An INERT MAN remains under the tree.

FIRST WORKMAN

Hey, move your buddy!

TULLY

He's no buddy of mine.

SECOND WORKMAN

He won't be anybody's buddy if he
don't move.

TULLY

That's your problem.

FIRST WORKMAN

(prodding him with foot;
Inert Man reacts feebly)

He's breathing.

The Two Workmen lifts the Inert Man up at the knees and shoulders. His head hangs sideways, mouth open, sockless ankles and thin white whins dangling. He is pulled in opposite directions. The Man at his legs drops him. He is now dragged on his rear as the Man holding him at the armpits stumbles backwards. Once again the Two Workmen grasp him and carry him out of the shade.

In B.G. trees are cracking and falling with a rush of green leaves and a crash of branches. Men are rising, shambling away.

The Two Workmen return to the tree Tully and the others had been sitting under, start a chain saw.

CAMERA DOLLIES WITH TULLY as he leaves the Park, crosses the street and enters a bar, LA CUCARACHA.

INT. LA CUCARACHA - OMA, TULLY, BARTENDER, FEW OTHERS - MORNING

Tully comes into the dark bar from the bright streets. He stands for a moment, waiting for his eyes to adjust, then crosses to the bar. Oma is there, a drink before her.

TULLY

(surprised)

Hi! -- How you been keeping?

OMA

Terrible.

TULLY

(to Bartender)

Port. You alone? Mind if I sit down?

OMA

It's a free country. Help yourself.

TULLY

(sits beside her)

Where's the old man?

Oma appears suddenly near tears.

TULLY (CONT'D)

(reacting to her
expression)

Huh?

OMA

(her voice flat
and steady)

In jail.
(drinks)

Do you have any idea what it's
like to be without that man?

TULLY

Uh.

OMA

And he didn't mean it. He just gets so nervous. You don't know what you have to take when you're inter-racial. Every son of a bitch on the street has to get a look at you. - And Earl's really a peaceable man. He's even tempered. He didn't hurt that guy and he didn't want to. Just a little nick on the back of the neck. He wouldn't any more try to assault somebody than you'd get up on that stool and try to fly. He couldn't. He's just not made that way. He's the sweetest natured man in the world.

TULLY

(indifferently)

He'll get out.

OMA

He's so jealous. I wouldn't put it past him to be out already, spying on every move I make.

Tully glances at the open doorway. Mournful Mexican howls from the jukebox.

OMA (CONT'D)

He won't let me talk to people. He's so possessive. He'd never let me out of his sight. And he'd get so mad at me. You know when we talked last time, you and me, way back then? You know what he did to me afterwards? He raped me.

Tully turns to the brown eyes, the lids puffy, eyebrows a short stubble under bluish penciled lines.

OMA (CONT'D)

He just picked me up and threw me on the bed. Well, don't look at me like that! I'm not ashamed to say it. I've never been ashamed of the act of love. I believe it's a part of life.

TULLY

(interest in
her renewed)

Sure, why not? I mean, after all, if people like each other.

OMA

I don't mean free love. I got no use for that.

TULLY

Well, free, depends what you mean free. If it's not free can you call it love?

OMA

I mean real love. I'm talking about love, not just sex. When you're really in love you marry for life. That's the only way it can be. I don't consider my second marriage sanctified. I should of stayed true to Frank.

Tully signals for "two more".

TULLY

Who's that?

OMA

My first husband. He was a full-blooded Cherokee.

TULLY

(as drinks
are brought)
You married an Indian?

OMA

What's wrong with that? You think you're any better?

TULLY

I'm not knocking it.

OMA

(gulps drink)
Just watch what you say. I won't stand for any insults against Frank. I heard enough smart talk when I married him. My family turned against me, and he was cleaner than any of them. They talk about Indians drinking. I never saw Frank drunk. I said to hell with all of them. He was the handsomest man I've ever known.

(displays it)

I still wear his wedding ring.

TULLY

(looks at gold band)
What happened, you split up?

OMA

No.

TULLY

But you're not married any more.

OMA

(pauses before
answering)

I'm a widow.

TULLY

(lowers his eyes)

Uh. Too bad. What happened to him?

OMA

(finishes sherry)

He was shot.

TULLY

No kidding. Who did it?

As Oma begins to tell him about it, Tully puts one hand in his pocket, brings out a couple of crumpled bills, looks at them, pushes them back down into pocket, signals the Bartender, two fingers raised.

OMA

(during above)

He was a police officer. He was killed in the line of duty. He was too brave to be careful...A couple of guys were holding up a bar and he was right there, he and another officer. They got the call and they were right there before the men got off the sidewalk, and Frank jumped out of the car first and they killed him...

(self-pityingly)

We didn't even have time to have children. All I got left of Frank is a widow's compensation - a lousy one-fifty a month!

(a pause; they drink)

I married white next time and all he was good for was running us off an embankment. Marrying him was the biggest mistake of my life. He had unnatural desires.

TULLY

He did?

OMA

The white race is in its decline. We started downhill in 1492 when Columbus discovered syphilis.

TULLY
(leans towards her)
What did he want to do?

OMA
White men are animals.

TULLY
(sitting up)
We're not so bad.

OMA
(raising voice)
White man is the vermin of the earth!

TULLY
(gestures)
All right, not so loud.

OMA
(aggressive; loud)
Don't tell me what to do. Who do
you think killed the American Indian?
I don't care who hears me. I know
I'm making a nuisance of myself to all
these goddam Mexicans sitting here
just waiting for me to leave so they
can get comfortable without any
gringos around. To hell with these
greaseballs! They don't know who
their real friends are!

TULLY
(embarrassed, touches
her arm)
What are you going on about?
Take it easy.

OMA
You can just shut your damn mouth!
And keep your hands off me, too.

TULLY
(flash of anger)
What did you say? Listen, I don't
have to take that. You're liable
to get backhanded right off that
stool someday.

OMA
See if I care one bit. That's all
I need. Go ahead if it'll make
you happy.

TULLY
Forget it. I was kidding.

OMA

Get it out of your system, go on, if it'll do you good, if that's what you need to feel like you're somebody.

TULLY

(turning away)

Oh, Christ!

OMA

Knock some teeth out while you're at it. I still got a few of my own in there the others were nice enough to leave me.

TULLY

God almighty, I wouldn't hit you.

OMA

It shouldn't be too hard. What you waiting for? There's nothing I can do to stop you. It ought to be a big lift for you. Just the thing you need. Don't let it worry you. Far be it from me to spoil anybody's fun. Go on, since you got your mind made up. If that's how you get your kicks, I guess I'll do as well as anybody else.

TULLY

(groans, puts his face
in his hands)

Okay, okay, okay. I'm sorry. I'm trying to tell you I'm sorry, believe me. Listen, I'm sorry. Will you listen to me? I'm sorry.

Tully retains his penitential pose.

OMA

Well, so what? So you're sorry.

TULLY

(baffled; in a
turmoil)

I feel I could just break my head.

OMA

I wouldn't stop you.

TULLY

I feel like beating my head on the bar.

OMA

Go ahead.

JH
Nov. 4, 1970

60.
With a LOUD KNOCK Tully's forehead strikes the varnished wood. Oma reaches out, holds him by the shoulder and under the chin - there is strength in her arms.

Taking up his glass Tully toasts the staring faces; he has regained his authority.

OMA

What did you want to do that for?

TULLY

You can count on me right down the line.

OMA

You want to knock your brains out?

TULLY

You can count on me. Don't you believe me?

OMA

I get along all right.

TULLY

Listen, let me tell you something. You can count on me right down the line.

OMA

I thought you wanted to hit me.

TULLY

Forget that, will you? I never hit a woman in my life. I'm not that kind of lousy bastard. Ask anybody. I won't let a friend down. Let me buy you another drink. Don't you think you can count on me?

(signals for refills)

OMA

Just don't bump your head any more.

TULLY

Will you forget that? I asked you a question -- Do you think I'd let you down?

OMA

I don't know, would you?

TULLY

I wouldn't.

OMA

Maybe you wouldn't. After all, I mean, how would I know?

TULLY

(emphatic slaps
on the bar)

You can count...on...me...I'm the reliable type. You think I'm kidding, don't you? You can count me among your friends. Don't you believe me? Any time you need anything, come see me. You're all right. I mean that.

OMA

Well, I like that about you. You know who your friends are.

TULLY

That's right.

OMA

These others I wouldn't ask for the time of day.

TULLY

They wouldn't give it to you.

OMA

You're the only son of a bitch that's worth a shit in this place.

TULLY

(puts one arm
around her neck)

I appreciate that. I mean because there's something I like about you.

They look at one another; he fondles her curly head. Then he stands up, takes out crumpled bills, flings them on the bar - after which he helps Oma down from the barstool.

At the door, Tully looks back over his shoulder in leering triumph but no one is looking at him.

EXT. SIDEWALK OPPOSITE WASHINGTON SQUARE - TULLY, OMA - MORNING

As Tully and Oma come out of "La Cucaracha", he glances across at the Park. CAMERA PANS OVER:

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE (TULLY'S P.O.V.)

Half the shade trees are now down. Many of the trunks are being cut into sections. Steady roar of saws and ring of axes. CAMERA PANS BACK TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK

Tully turns Oma to him, kisses her, eyes closed. He loses his balance as she surges against him. They walk on, his arm across her back, hers at his waist. She continues to lean against him, forcing him toward walls and store windows. CAMERA DOLLIES WITH THEM.

TULLY
You all right?

OMA
I don't know.

TULLY
Can you make it?

OMA
I guess I'm drunk.

TULLY
I'll get you home. Don't worry about anything. You can count on me.
(solicitously)
We going the right way?

Oma begins to cry; he presses her closer.

OMA
I love you so much.

Tully stops, touches her cheek, his voice tender, a little amazed, hushed and moved.

TULLY
Hey, hey.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. ARENA RING - ERNIE, NEGRO BOXER, RUBEN, BABE, REFEREE - NIGHT

Ernie is out-boxing another amateur, an aggressive NEGRO whose rather crude lunges he is eluding. Ernie shows a little more skill than in his previous bout.

INT. ARENA RING (LATER)

Ernie stands in his corner with a towel over his shoulders. Ruben and Babe are in the ring with him. The ANNOUNCER, looking at a piece of paper, is about to give the decision.

ANNOUNCER
(bored voice)
The winner...
(points)
...MUNGER!

DISSOLVE TO:

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INT. - ANOTHER ARENA RING - ERNIE, WHITE BOXER, RUBEN, BABE,
REFEREE - NIGHT

Ernie is fighting a WHITE BOXER, who is hurt and covering. When he turns partially away from Ernie's attack, the Referee steps between the two and raises Ernie's arm.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. - A THIRD ARENA RING - ERNIE, MEXICAN, RUBEN, BABE,
REFEREE, ANNOUNCER - NIGHT

Ernie is standing in his corner in a new white robe. He is flanked by Ruben and Babe, Ruben fussing at his face with a towel.

Across from Ernie a MEXICAN BOXER waits in the opposite corner with his Seconds.

ANNOUNCER

(reading)

The winner..by a split decision...
blue corner...IRISH ERNIE MUNGER!

DISSOLVE TO

INT. OAKLAND STADIUM - ERNIE, RUBEN, BABE, NEGRO BOXER, REFEREE,
RING DOCTOR - NIGHT

Ernie is in the ring. In the opposite corner is a STOCKY NEGRO with a Mohawk haircut. Ruben, already outside the ropes, is taking the robe from Ernie's shoulders. He is smiling, confident.

The BELL RINGS. Ruben hurriedly descends the ring steps, and Ernie moves toward his opponent. He is struck twice to the body by powerful blows. He retreats to the ropes, blocks a left with both arms and catches a right swing on the jaw.

Ernie goes down on his back; his head hits the floor, then his feet. His legs quiver, then go rigid. He's out cold.

REFEREE

One...two...three...

Here the Referee abandons the count and waves his arms, crossing them twice in front of him, signifying that the fight is over. He removes Ernie's mouthpiece.

Ruben is squatting on the ring apron, cutting Ernie's shoe laces with surgical scissors. Now he ducks into the ring, snips the glove laces and pulls the gloves off. He cuts the hand wraps.

RINGSIDE DOCTOR ENTERS SHOT. He pulls up his trousers, squats beside Ernie. With a long pale index finger he lifts one lid and then another.

Hands shaking, Ruben waves the ammonia vial under Ernie's dented nose.

Babe, pressing a chunk of ice against the nape of Ernie's neck, pulls his ears. The Referee stretches the gold waistband up from Ernie's abdomen as it heaves in desperately rapid respiration.

CROWD NOISE C.S. Voices of Vendors: "Cold beer. Ice cold beer"... and "Hot dogs here..Get your hotdogs, fresh hot hotdogs..."
Crowd is generally quiet.

The scene should not be hurried. Its horror should increase with the length of time Ernie remains motionless.

Ruben's face is distressed but his movements are unhurried, professional, as he continues to wave ammonia vial under Ernie's nose.

The STOCKY NEGRO, in a green robe, comes and stands with his Seconds looking down at the prostrate form.

Finally Ernie's lids begin to flutter. He opens his eyes, blinks, squints, closes his eyes again.

RINGSIDE DOCTOR

(imperious tenor)

What's your name?

Ernie recoils slightly at ammonia fumes.

RINGSIDE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

(to Ruben)

That's enough of that.

Ruben ignores this instruction, keeps waving the vial. Ernie grimaces, tries to raise his head.

RINGSIDE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

What's your name?
(as Ernie squints
up at him)

Where are you?

ERNIE

(slowly)

Did I get knocked out?

RINGSIDE DOCTOR

What's your name? Tell me what your name is. Can you do that?

ERNIE

(dully)

Ernie Munger.

RINGSIDE DOCTOR

What town are you in?..Hum?

ERNIE

Oakland. What round is it?

RINGSIDE DOCTOR

It's all over. How many fingers do
you see? Can you see my hand?
(holds up right hand)

ERNIE

Sure. Five fingers. Sure.

Ringside Doctor nods, satisfied Ernie is all right. When Ernie sits up, CROWD APPLAUDS. The Stocky Negro bends down to him for the belated gesture of sportsmanship. CROWD WHISTLES.

STOCKY NEGRO

Good fight. You all right now?

Ernie nods. Babe rises, pats the victor's back and hoarsely whispers to his Seconds:

BABE

Real good puncher.

Helped to his feet, Ernie stands with one shoulder hunched while Ruben and Babe tie the robe around him.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - OAKLAND AUDITORIUM - ERNIE, BABE, RUBEN,
FUENTES - NIGHT

Ray Fuentes, in gloves and robe, glistening with sweat from his warmup, is shadowboxing as if unconsciously. When Ernie enters with Babe and Ruben, his arms around their necks, he shakes his head, commiserating.

RUBEN

Ray, you're on!
(to Babe, nervously)
Take him out! I'll catch up with
you in a minute.

Ruben helps Ernie to a table, removes his robe, begins to towel him. Ernie's silence bothers him; he takes a bottle of brandy from a medical kit.

RUBEN (CONT'D)

Take a drink of this.

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Ernie shivers, obeys. His face worried, Ruben studies Ernie's eyes. Takes his pulse. O.S. BELL RINGS for next (Fuentes') fight. Ruben looks off toward sound.

RUBEN
How you feel now?

ERNIE
Head hurts. Can I have some water?

SHOUTS OF CROWD O.S. Ruben runs for another manager's water bottle, covered with grimy adhesive tape. As he is returning with it, the door is hurled open. Babe stands there.

BABE
(shouting inaudibly)
He's cut!

Ruben runs to the medical kit. With the water bottle still in one hand, the medical kit in the other, he runs past Babe out into the cavernous auditorium.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. ERNIE'S CAR - SAME DIRT LANE PARALLEL TO LEVEE - ERNIE,
FAYE - DUSK

SOUNDS of frogs and crickets. Ernie and Fay sit apart from one another, staring through the windshield. The silence is prolonged. Finally:

ERNIE
Faye, what's the matter?

FAYE
(petulant)
Nothing.

ERNIE
Don't you feel good?

FAYE
(glumly)
I'm all right.

ERNIE
Is anything wrong?

FAYE
I said nothing.

ERNIE
Well, what you getting mad about then?

FAYE
I'm not mad!

ERNIE

Okay!

FAYE

Can't I be quiet if I feel like it?
Without everybody getting all worked
up?

ERNIE

You're the only one getting worked up.

FAYE

Well, leave me alone then. I have a
right to my moods.

ERNIE

(losing patience)

All right. I can take a hint! Don't
think I don't know what's wrong. I'm
not stupid. I know what it is. Maybe
you need somebody that's got more to
give you.

FAYE

(backing down)

That's not it.

ERNIE

You're unfulfilled. I know, I'm sorry.
I'm not blind.

FAYE

I'm fulfilled. I'm perfectly fulfilled.
That's not it at all.

ERNIE

You didn't get real fulfillment.

FAYE

I feel perfectly fine. I'm fulfilled.
Now don't worry about it. That's not
what's bothering me at all. I just
feel out of touch sometimes.

ERNIE

You mean you're mad.

FAYE

I'm not mad.

(hesitates)

I'm a little worried, that's all.

ERNIE

(with dismal
apprehension)

What about?

FAYE
You know what.

ERNIE
Uh. Are you...?

FAYE
I don't know.

ERNIE
But you might be?

FAYE
Uh-huh.

ERNIE
Uh.

FAYE
What would we do?

ERNIE
If you were?

A long silence.

FAYE
You wouldn't marry me now. Men
just don't after they've slept with
somebody.

ERNIE
They do too. They do it all the
time. What are you talking about?

FAYE
You wouldn't.

ERNIE
(despondently)
I would too.

FAYE
I wouldn't force myself on anyone. If
you don't want to get married you don't
have to. I wasn't asking anything about
that. I just meant what if, you know,
you got drafted or something - how do I
know where I stand? Would you want me
to wait?

ERNIE
Well, sure.

FAYE
I mean these are things I'm just asking
for my own sake. I don't want you to
feel I'm obligating you.

ERNIE

(hurriedly)

I don't. I don't.

FAYE

(as though in
loving surrender)

Oh, Ernie, I don't want to hold you
back. I want to be good for you.

(puts her fingers
on his cheek)

I want to be with you every night.
I want to cook for you.

ERNIE

(torn between panic
and capitulation)

You better go see a doctor.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. CAFE - RUBEN, BABE, WAITRESS, OTHERS - LATE AFTERNOON

A very busy small Cafe. Ruben enters, looks around, sees Babe
at the counter, joins him. Babe is finishing a piece of pie,
and coffee.

BABE

How's it going?

RUBEN

(sighs)

Well, I lost another one. Ernie
snuck off and got married.

BABE

Might have known it.

RUBEN

(as Waitress comes
up to him)

What kind of pie you got?

(without waiting for
her to answer)

Give me what's he's got and a
cup of coffee.

(mechanically, as
she walks away)

She really knows how to fill out
a skirt.

(back to subject)

Yeah. I talked to his mother on
the phone. He got married.

BABE

(sips coffee)

What can you expect?

RUBEN

All that energy they waste. If they're not getting married they're getting arrested, or joining the Navy, or killing themselves on motorcycles. You know why I think he did it? I think that beating discouraged him.

BABE

Can't blame him.

Waitress brings Ruben's pie and coffee. He stuffs his mouth, talking as he chews.

BABE (CONT'D)

I remember the first time I passed blood, I was one scared kid.

RUBEN

Sure. When I got my jaw broken I started wondering what I was doing, but you got to go on. If you don't have confidence in yourself you'll never get anywhere.

BABE

I'll tell you what bothered me. Getting my throat ruined.

RUBEN

You didn't keep your chin down.
(drinks coffee, looks
at Babe affectionately)
Now you and me - we had confidence.

BABE

How's your nose? Can you breathe?

RUBEN

Yeah, can't you?

BABE

Not on a wet day.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. FAYE'S AND ERNIE'S APARTMENT - ERNIE, FAYE,--LATE AFTERNOON

The furniture is worn; none of it matches. A threadbare carpet. New curtains at the windows.

Ernie sits in a straight-backed chair. He is absorbed in rolling his neck while thoroughly masticating.

Faye sits on the couch nearby. She watches Ernie - he is oblivious.

FAYE

You're the most nervous person - always moving - I mean you never seem to relax.

ERNIE

(mouth full)

I'm exercising my neck. Most fighters neglect their necks. A strong neck helps you take a punch.

FAYE

I thought you were through fighting.

ERNIE

Once a fighter, always a fighter.

FAYE

What are you doing now, Ernie?
Exercising your jaws?

ERNIE

That's how to get the most out of a carrot.

(swallows finally)

Sometimes I wonder if you know who you're married to.

FAYE

Why, Ernie!

ERNIE

What's the difference - in your eyes - between me and the next guy?

FAYE

You're not like anybody else! I love you! You're the one man in all the world I'd have for the father of my child.

ERNIE

You mean if I hadn't come along you'd never have got married?

FAYE

I can't imagine being in love
with anybody else.

ERNIE

Why do you love me?

FAYE

Because you're you.

ERNIE

Now we're getting someplace! Who
am I? Who and what is Ernie Munger?
(she hasn't a ready answer;
he prompts her)
Is he a gasoline station attendant?

FAYE

That's what you work at - temporarily.

ERNIE

I'll come directly to the point.
I'm a fighter. That doesn't mean
I go around slugging guys. Anything
but. Real fighters walk away from
trouble - we might even appear cowardly -
except to those who know. We keep
ourselves for worthy opponents.

(bends neck forward)

Of course that don't apply to when
a fighter's in condition. No telling
what he might do then. ~~He's jumping~~
~~out of his skin.~~ Have you any idea
what being in condition means?

FAYE

Healthy?

ERNIE

Healthy - hah! You got to be healthy
or you'd crack up getting in condition.
It takes weeks - months, maybe - of road
work and workouts in the gym. You got
to eat the right things like steak and
raw carrots and ice cream - and drink
lots of water to flush your system out.
So one day it happens! You reach the
peak! You've been purified. You can
smell things you never smelled before.
It's kind of creepy. You duck punches
in your sleep. You're jumping out of
your skin. Nobody can stay in condition
very long. The constitution can't take
it. You'd go nuts! You have your fight,
then taper off.

FAYE

Did you do that?

ERNIE

Well, not exactly. But the champions do.

FAYE

They must be murder to live with.

ERNIE

Oh, there's no living with a champion while he's getting in condition.

FAYE

You mean he can't have relations with his wife?

ERNIE

Not till after the fight.

FAYE

Well, that's another reason for you not fighting -- Imagine!

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. FLORESTANO'S SERVICE STATION - ERNIE, FLORESTANO - NIGHT

Ernie drives into the Station, parks and gets out of his car.

Waiting for him in the office doorway is his employer, MARIO FLORESTANO, a man of about fifty, with a face expressive of petty worries and suspicions. As Ernie saunters over:

FLORESTANO

You left the shitter open.

ERNIE

(puzzled attitude)

I did? I thought I locked it up.

FLORESTANO

You certainly did not. Want me to tell you what I saw when I drove in this morning? A wino coming out putting toilet paper in his pocket.

ERNIE

I'd swear I locked it.

FLORESTANO

Listen, didn't you hear me? I said I saw him coming out. Now what I want to know is how he got in.

ERNIE

(pulling end of his
nose; gravely)

I'd swear I remember checking the
door before I left.

FLORESTANO

You couldn't be checked that door.
That door was open. How else did he
get in there and get that toilet
paper? Did he have a passkey?

ERNIE

I don't know, he might of had one.
I sure don't remember leaving that
door open.

FLORESTANO

Forget it, forget I ever said anything
about it. Don't go on any more.
It's settled.

(paces off a few steps,
turns abruptly, comes back)

If you don't want to admit it, forget
it. He got in there and he got the
toilet paper and arguing won't bring
it back. Now I'm not trying to accuse
you if you don't want to admit it. I
just want you to realize your mistake so
it won't happen again.

ERNIE

I'd admit it if I thought I did it.

FLORESTANO

I'm sure you would.

ERNIE

If you want to put the blame on me
it's up to you.

FLORESTANO

No, no, it's not a matter of blaming
anyone. These things happen. It was
just something I wanted to call your
attention to. Nobody wants to sit on
a toilet seat a wino's been on. You
got to think of the public. It's
public relations. Personally, I couldn't
care less. One man's as good as another
as long as they pay their way. Only
there's people around that don't feel
that way. So if an undesirable asks
you for the key, the shitter's out of
order. If there's no undesirable wet...

CONTINUED

FLORESTANO (CONT'D)

..on the toilet seat you get repeat customers. It's just a matter of consideration. So that door stays locked.

ERNIE

I keep it locked.

FLORESTANO

(giving Ernie a long skeptical look)

So how's married life treating you?

DISSOLVE TO

INT. OMA'S ROOM - TULLY AND OMA - DAY

A large cluttered room. Double bed, a few chairs and coffee tables. Ashtray on the floor, butts scattered about. Dirty glasses, articles of Oma's clothing that remain where they have been thrown and, in the center of the room, a cardboard carton.

Oma sits at a small table by the window, a glass of wine before her - half full bottle nearby.

Tully, looking sour, comes in, goes towards her, stumbles over the cardboard carton.

TULLY

God damn!

OMA

I'll thank you not to kick Earl's box!

TULLY

I didn't kick his goddam box - I fell over it! Why in Christ's name does it have to be out here in the middle of the floor?

OMA

I don't believe in kicking a man when he's down.

TULLY

It ain't Earl lying there - it's his goddam box full of clothes!

OMA

Clothes make the man.

TULLY

Why don't you put it under the bed?

(no answer)

Have I your permission to put it
someplace else than the middle of
the goddam floor?

Tully shoves the carton over to the bed. It won't fit underneath.
He picks it up in his arms, looks around, goes to a corner.
As he does so, we have a glimpse of a TINY KITCHEN.
He passes the Kitchen doorway, arrives at the corner and drops
the box. The thud it makes is gratifying to Tully.

He crosses to the bed, flops down on it, unbuttons his
sweat stained shirt, sighs.

TULLY (CONT'D)

The Canneries aren't hiring.

OMA

Did you try the box factory?

TULLY

I already been fired there.

OMA

So is that my fault?

TULLY

Who said it was your fault?

OMA

That's the way you act.

TULLY

I'm not acting any way at all.

OMA

I'm too touchy, is that it? Is
that what you're trying to say?
Is it my fault the widow's compensation's
already spent?

TULLY

I don't know whose fault it is.
It's your check. You ought to know
where it went.

OMA

Did you think it would see the two
of us through the whole month?

TULLY

All right, all right, I know, I
should of got a job. I'm a bum.
I'll take your word for it. But
it's not like I haven't been trying.

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OMA

You're not a bum. You should just spruce yourself up a little.

TULLY

What's the matter with the way I look? I think I look fine.

OMA

You do. You're a handsome man. But you should try and look more cheerful and they'd hire you.

TULLY

There's no work! Too much in-migration. More workars than jobs....I am cheerful! What you mean I'm not cheerful? Tell me what I got to be cheerful about anyway. I'm a crab, is that what you mean?

Oma comes over, sits on bed beside him.

OMA

You're not so bad.

TULLY

Well, I got a right to be a crab. If I'm a crab, I'm a crab.

OMA

You ought to get something you'd enjoy doing.

TULLY

The work I'd enjoy has never been invented.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. STOCKTON STREET - LABOR POOL - JUST BEFORE DAWN

A DISTANT TRACKING SHOT of Tully approaching the crowds of farm workers and the lines of labor buses.

EXT. FIELD - TULLY, FOREMAN, OTHER WORKERS - SUNRISE

The PROW OF A SHIP appears on one side of the screen. A FREIGHTER comes INTO VIEW. The river channel it is sailing on is not visible, so the ship appears to be sailing through the fields.

THE CAMERA FOLLOWS ITS PROGRESS and takes in stooped WORKERS weeding and thinning young plants with short handle hoes. Continuing, the CAMERA COMES UPON TULLY.

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He stands erect, grimacing from pain, holding the small of his back, an 18" hoe in his other hand. He looks at the ship sailing on across the land, and he again stoops and resumes hoeing, bent double, his legs straight.

A FOREMAN, checking the rows of workers, stops beside Tully.

FOREMAN

What kind of weeding you call that?

Tully straightens, looks at him, looks back at row he's been hoeing. There are large gaps where nothing at all is growing.

FOREMAN (CONT'D)

You're chopping all the lettuce down, too. You better shape up fast.
(walks on)

TULLY

(resumes hoeing,
mutters)

Don't mess with me, buddy, if you want to stay healthy.

Tully accidentally chops down another lettuce plant, props it up between clods, chops down another and props it up.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. FIELD - TULLY, THREE NEGROS - BRILLIANT SUNSHINE

Tully further along his row. He again straightens, more stiffly, with more pain, holding the small of his back.

A few Negroes are working near him.

TULLY

(grunts)

Christ! I thought I was in pretty good shape! How long before you get used to this, anyway?

His neighbors laugh.

MIDDLE AGED NEGRO

I been doing it for twenty-five years and I ain't got used to it yet.

Tully hunches over again. The Negroes work smoothly, but rise now and then themselves to ease obviously painful backs.

MIDDLE AGED NEGRO

What a man want is a woman with a
good job.

TULLY

I had that, but she left.
(Negros laugh)
Now I got one that won't work at all.

YOUNG NEGRO

That the easiest kind to get.

OTHER NEGRO

I had a good one once, but she
divorce me.

YOUNG NEGRO

How come?

OTHER NEGRO

Oh, it was because of wine.

YOUNG NEGRO

Wine?

OTHER NEGRO

Uh-huh. When my wife go to work I used
to sit home and drink wine. And there
was this girl lived across the hall.

YOUNG NEGRO

Didn't take long for a girl to show
up.

OTHER NEGRO

She a friend of my wife and sometime
my door be open and I see her walk by
and ask her she want a drink. So we
started drinking together and she looking
better and better until I'm over there
soon as my wife leave and coming back
just before she get home. Well, my wife
figure something's up. I'm all time
yawning. Fall asleep soon as I get in
bed. And one day she go cross the hall
see this girl and there's a big bunch of
roses in a jar. My wife say where you
get those roses and that girl she say I
don't know, they just come...So my wife
go down the corner to the florist and
ask did I buy a big bunch of red roses
and he say yes. That how wine broke up
my marriage.

The others chuckle.

YOUNG NEGRO

Sound like it was roses to me.

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OTHER NEGRO

It was wine and roses. So now I'm
out here chopping weeds.

Tully squats, holds his back, and speaks silently, his mouth
moving in despair. He drops to one knee, hoeing, his face a
mask of pain. The Foreman comes down this row again.

FOREMAN

(to Tully, in
passing)

You working or quitting?

TULLY

I'm working.

Then, whispering to himself, sounding half-demented.

TULLY (CONT'D)

You're going to get this hoe in the
back of the head. I never quit yet.
I'll make this too!

DISSOLVE TO

INT? SKIDROW BAR - TULLY, OMA, ESTEBAN ESCOBAR, BLONDE - NIGHT

Another Mexican bar. Air travel posters with photographs of
various Mexican cities, temples, ruins, on the walls. "Ranchero"
music from the juke box. CAMERA MOVES IN TO:

BOOTH

Tully, in slacks and a short-sleeved shirt; Oma, in a cheap printed
cotton, none too clean, sit across from:

ESTEBAN ESCOBAR, about 32, in a well-pressed tan summer suit and
yellow silk shirt; and a LARGE YOUNG PLATINUM BLONDE, wearing a
low cut green satin dress, the pits in her face obscured by a
coating of pink makeup.

TULLY

(happy, excited)

Let me tell you girls something!
Esteban here is one hell of a fighter.
He'd a made champ except for his hands.
He hit too hard for the size of his hands.
Show 'em your hands, Esteban.

(Esteban puts up
his broken hands)

You know what happened to me, Esteban?
It was mismanagement. Ruben, he messed
me up. When I fought Soto. To save a
couple hundred bucks he sent me down to
Panama alone and blew my chance.

(to Oma)

You know who Soto was then?

Esteban plants an audible kiss on the girl's fat white neck.

OMA

Soto. He's the one you fought,
isn't he?

TULLY

Oh, for God's sake.

OMA

He was good, huh?

TULLY

Good? I had that bum hanging on. I was all over him like a swarm of flies. I was on that night. I was on. You never seen so many sick faces. My own seconds looked sick, those bums. They all figured me for nothing and for six rounds I'm knocking him silly!..I had that guy by the ass and there wasn't anybody in that arena didn't know it! So I'm back in the corner, I know I got him, I'm not even paying attention to what they're doing. I don't feel a thing. I just know he's going out of there next round..So I go out and there pops me a couple times and here's the referee stopping it and blood pouring all over me. How do you like that? Both eyes cut. Nobody says a thing. They're all happy. Audience screaming their heads off. Seconds patch me up and put me on the plane, all smiles. Adios...So the first thing I get back to Stockton I go see Ruben and he takes off the butterflies and looks at the cuts and says they were done with a razor.

(touches scars)

OMA

Were they?

TULLY

Were they? Sure they were.

OMA

How could he tell?

TULLY

He could tell by looking at them. What do you think? -- So we went up to Sacramento to the commissioner and filed a complaint.

OMA

What happened?

TULLY

Nothing.

He pauses again. The others wait.

OMA

Is that all?

TULLY

That's about the size of it.

They are silent.

BLONDE

That was a dirty trick.

TULLY

That's about it, all right.

(attempts to generate
something more)

I don't know, maybe I should of gone
into something else, like insurance.
You fight your heart out and what
does it ever get you?

ESTEBAN

(clipped monotone)

That was tough luck. Soto's a good
man.

TULLY

Good? I had that guy beat.

ESTEBAN

(arm around Blonde,
nuzzling her)

How about another drink? Tomorrow I
take you downtown, get you something
nice. You like perfume? I don't
care how much it cost, it don't make
no difference to me.

BLONDE

Okay, okay, don't hang on me.

ESTEBAN

You like that, baby. Don't tell me
you don't like that. I hang on you
if I want to hang.

BLONDE

(pushing him away)

Aren't you sweet?

ESTEBAN

I'm sweet if other people sweet to me.

TULLY

I been thinking about giving it one last try. I just let myself go all to pot. I'm going to start doing some running. If I can get in shape I know I can still fight.

OMA

Well, fight then.

TULLY

I'm going to.

OMA

Sure you are. I've heard that one before.

TULLY

I am.

OMA

Sure, sure.

TULLY

I mean it, goddammit!

OMA

Uh-huh.

TULLY

Oh, screw you!

OMA

Blow it out your backside, cowboy!

The four sit in silence, facing ahead, avoiding one another's eyes. O.S. MARIACHI MUSIC.

Esteban gets up; the Blonde scoots out of booth. They say "goodnight", EXIT SHOT. Oma and Tully continue to stare ahead without speaking.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. FLORESTANO'S SERVICE STATION - GAS PUMPS - ERNIE, BONOMO,
GIRL IN CAR - NIGHT

As a HORN BLOWS Ernie crosses from Office towards pumps. His steps slow as he recognizes his customer.

STEVE BONOMO, a young, swarthy Italian, dressed in khakis and boots, stands beside an old sedan. In the car, on the passenger side, is a GIRL.

BONOMO

Ernie! You working here? How the hell are you?

ERNIE

(barely civil)

Hi, Bonomo. When did you get back?

BONOMO

Few days ago.

ERNIE

Still in uniform?

BONOMO

Hell, yes, I'm home on leave. The Army's got me for six more months... I don't mind -

(digs Ernie in ribs)

Girls go for uniforms.

ERNIE

(stiffly)

Gas?

BONOMO

Yeah! Fill her up - Super!

Bonomo follows Ernie to the back of the car. Ernie removes the gasoline cap, takes pump hose, begins filling tank.

BONOMO (CONT'D)

(friendly)

I hear you and Faye got married.

ERNIE

Yeah.

BONOMO

Congratulations.

(Ernie mumbles 'thanks')

Tell her hello for me, will you?

Ernie replaces hose. Bonomo looks at the tank gauge to see how much he owes, hands Ernie a twenty dollar bill. Ernie starts for the Office, Bonomo on his heels.

INT. FLORESTANO'S GARAGE - OFFICE - ERNIE AND BONOMO

Ernie rings up cash register, begins making change. Bonomo looks O.S. towards car

BONOMO

(man to man)

Did you get a look at my girl?

(Ernie shakes his
head 'no')

A real dish! Haven't scored yet
but there isn't a one that don't
want it, is there?

(Ernie counts change
into his hand)

You got to understand their minds.
If you can get your knee between
their legs you're usually on your
way -- right?

ERNIE

(teeth clenched)

Right.

Bonomo has a look at Ernie's face, realizes the hole he's in,
backpeddles.

BONOMO

(Course there are exceptions.

(putting money
away)

Yeah. Sure are.

An uneasy silence between the two men; then Bonomo turns away.

BONOMO (CONT'D)

(wave of hand)

Well -- see you!

DISSOLVE TO

INT. FAYE'S AND ERNIE'S BEDROOM - ERNIE AND FAYE - NIGHT

Bedroom just large enough for a dresser, double bed, and wardrobe
with mirrored panels.

Ernie, in pajamas, is asleep on his side at the very edge of the
mattress. Faye, wearing a pale blue nightgown, is beside him.

Ernie gives a LOUD CRY, wakes with a jerk. Faye turns towards
him.

FAYE

Ernie, what's wrong?

ERNIE

Nightmare.

FAYE

What a pitiful noise you made.

ERNIE

Had a nightmare.

FAYE

Poor Ernie, what was it?

ERNIE

Nothing.

FAYE

Was something after you?

ERNIE

What do you care?

FAYE

Was it about me? Is that it?

ERNIE

You were in it. Leave me alone.
It wasn't anything.

FAYE

Did I do something wrong? I can't
help it if I did. I mean because
I didn't really do anything.

ERNIE

Didn't you?

FAYE

No, I didn't. What was it?

ERNIE

It wasn't anything. Somebody came
up and took your hand, that's all.

FAYE

Just that? Was that all?

ERNIE

And you let him.

FAYE

It was your dream. Don't blame me.
Was it just that?

ERNIE

Isn't that enough? You did it
right in front of me.

FAYE

Well, that isn't so bad. Maybe
he was my father.

ERNIE
He wasn't your father.

FAYE
Did he look like him?

ERNIE
You know who he was.

FAYE
I don't!

ERNIE
You sure?

FAYE
I don't, I don't.

Faye sits up, turns on the bedside lamp, looks down at Ernie in alarm.

FAYE (CONT'D)
I didn't do anything.

ERNIE
I'll bet you didn't.

FAYE
Ernie, it was just a dream. It isn't real, it didn't really happen.

ERNIE
Didn't it?

FAYE
I don't understand you. I didn't do that and I wouldn't and I don't see why you're making such a big fuss about it.

ERNIE
What if it was Bonomo?

FAYE
Was it him?

Ernie nods, watching her eyes.

FAYE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, but I mean it's not my fault. You know I went with him. You went with other girls, too.

ERNIE

I know. Don't get the idea I'm jealous. I'm not, I just don't see why you couldn't find something better than that son of a bitch.

FAYE

I did. I found you.

ERNIE

Oh, come off it. What if he hadn't joined the army?

FAYE

I wouldn't be with him. I never liked him.

ERNIE

That just makes it worse. How many other guys didn't you like?

FAYE

What do you mean?

ERNIE

Jesus, that's really something.

FAYE

What is?

ERNIE

Just that.

FAYE

Not liking him?

ERNIE

And letting him have you.

There is fear in her eyes. Her hand rises to the ribbon threaded through the lace of the neck, then to her hair, the short fingers twisting a dark lock level with her chin.

FAYE

I didn't do that.

ERNIE

You can tell me the truth. I know how it is. I accept that. It's only human. It's a natural drive. I don't hold it against you. But why with that rotten bastard? There ought to have been something else available, and I guess there was, too, wasn't there? It's only natural with a woman and I accept that. It really doesn't bother me. That's just the way things go. How can you fight nature? What's past is past....

CONTINUED

ERNIE (CONT'D)

..It's just the present that counts.
But if I ever catch you with him I'll
kill both of you.

FAYE

Who?

ERNIE

With anybody! I know what you were
doing before you met me. It didn't
take any great brain to figure that
out!

FAYE

I didn't do anything.

ERNIE

You don't have to lie to me. Tell me
all about it, I don't care. It's
natural enough - you're a healthy girl.
I'm not jealous, I'm just warning you.
..Now okay, forget it, I'm not mad,
everything's fine.

(she begins to cry)

For Christ's sake, don't cry. I'm
not mad. What went on before me is
your own business, and if anybody wises
off I'll bust his head..

(fists clenched)

Didn't you know he'd shoot his mouth
off to everybody? Didn't you even
think about that? That's what I can't
stand -- knowing that son of a bitch is
laughing about it. I'm going to kick
ass royal around this shit town..

(Faye sobs)

Will you stop crying? I told you
I'm not mad. Can't you understand
that? Maybe you loved him, I don't
know, though I don't see how you could,
but maybe you did. I know you got
urges. It wouldn't be right if you
didn't.

Faye utters a WAIL of such resonant grief - loud and deep like
an inhuman moan - that Ernie is frightened.

ERNIE (CONT'D)

Faye?

She is silently rocking. From between her fingers tears drop to the sheet. Again that DEEP ANIMAL MOANING rises from behind her hands.

Ernie sits up, rigid, staring at her bowed head, her clenched and digging fingers.

ERNIE (CONT'D)

Faye, it doesn't bother me, it doesn't bother me, it doesn't bother me. It really doesn't bother me. Faye, it doesn't bother me at all. It really doesn't bother me.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. RUBEN LUNA'S KITCHEN - RUBEN, VICTORIA, FOUR CHILDREN,--NIGHT

Pleasant kitchen, decorated with lacquer trays, copper ware, etc.

A Halloween pumpkin grins from the kitchen window ledge; the area over the sink is festooned with orange and black crepe paper from which dangle paper skeletons, cats, witches.

Ruben is at a yellow formica table. He has just finished dinner. Victoria sits near him.

THREE GIRLS, ranging from 10 to 6, wearing Halloween costumes and masks, and a BOY, about 4, draped in a piece of torn sheet with eyeholes cut into it, stand nearby, watching their father.

VICTORIA

(continuing a conversation)

..They can't go out on the streets by themselves. You go with them.

RUBEN

I'm tired.

VICTORIA

I'm tired, too. It takes as much energy to run this house as it does to sit on a forklift all day, I'll bet you.

RUBEN

I don't feel good.

VICTORIA

What's wrong?

RUBEN

I feel low. There's practically no fights. I got nothing to do anymore.

VICTORIA

Well, here's something for you to do - take your children out!

Ruben rises heavily. The Children gather round him with happy cries as he escorts them to the Back Door, ushers them out.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET OF A LOWER INCOME AREA - NIGHT

Ruben is holding the little boy's hand. He looks bored and distracted. The Three Girls run across a lawn to a LIGHTED PORCH. Ruben urges the boy to go after them.

RUBEN

Go on, son. Ring the bell.

CAMERA MOVES IN on Ruben until his profile looms on one side of the frame, his four children visible in B.G.

The door to the house opens. A MAN appears in doorway.

CHILDREN

Trick or treat!

MAN

Oh, you scared me!
(to little boy)
What are you?

LITTLE BOY

Ghost.

CHILDREN

Trick or treat.

Ruben looks more and more depressed, bored and constricted.

MAN

(hands behind back)
What hand is it in?

FIRST GIRL

(pointing)
That one!

MAN

You think so?
(to Second Girl)
What hand do you think it's in?

SECOND GIRL

That one.

MAN

(to Third Girl)

What do you say? Think It's in
that one, or maybe the other one!

RUBEN

(turning, bellowing)

Are you going to give those kids
that candy or aren't you?

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. STOCKTON STREET - LABOR POOL - ERNIE, TULLY, BUS DRIVER,
CROWDS OF WORKERS - PRE DAWN
The street is filled with a milling crowd, including
Tully. CAMERA DOLLIES WITH HIM until he sees a familiar figure:
Ernie. Tully hesitates for a moment, then approaches him.

TULLY

(calling)

Hey, Ernie!

(Ernie looks around
at him blankly)

How's it going? You making the
day hauls now?

ERNIE

(stands with
hands in pockets)

Shit, man, wife's pregnant, I get
up in the middle of the night two
times now and comes down to pick up
a few extra bucks and run into a
mob like this.

TULLY

Go out on nuts.

ERNIE

I won't be going out on anything
with all these guys wanting to
get on. You doing this shit?

TULLY

I go out now and then.

(lying)

I don't pick, though. I can get
on as a checker whenever I want to
work. I'll get you on walnuts...
How's it going? Been doing some
fighting?

ERNIE

I fought awhile.

CAMERA DOLLIES WITH THEM as Tully leads Ernie down block to:

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RED BUS WITH WIRED-DOWN HOOD

Framed in the windows are slumped men. The DRIVER leans on a fender.

DRIVER
(remembering Tully)
You go out yesterday?

TULLY
I was the tree-beater.

DRIVER
(spits)
Get on.

TULLY
I brought you a sacker.

DRIVER
I'll wait and see if yesterday's crew shows up first.

TULLY
You're making a mistake if you pass this guy up. I'll give you my personal voucher, this kid is a nut-sacking fiend.

DRIVER
(gestures impatiently;
looks away)
Get on then, both of you.

EXT. WALNUT GROVE - ERNIE, TULLY, FOREMAN, OTHERS - DAWN

A little ground mist is under the trees. Men are coming out of the bus and going to a pickup truck for sacks and buckets.

The Driver stands beside the Ranch FOREMAN. He beckons Tully to him.

DRIVER
You'll work the tower again.
Can your partner hustle?

TULLY
(indicating Ernie)
This kid's a great athlete.

DRIVER
We'll send him with you then --
(to Ernie)
Just watch out for your hands, kid.

CAMERA DOLLIES with Tully and Ernie as they approach an idling caterpillar to which is hitched a tubular metal tower on wheels. Tully climbs up the rungs of the tower and gets inside. He's fifteen feet above the ground, visible from the waist up. A long pole leans against the tower. He takes it, holds it like a lance.

The tractor driver looks back, starts off, the tower sways, and Ernie is gliding in front of the tractor, crouched, knocking nuts from in front of the track.

Tully commences to beat the tree. Thick hulled walnuts rain down.

CLOSEUP - ERNIE
being pelted with nuts. He covers his head.

ERNIE

Hey!

CAMERA PULLS BACK. More nuts come down. Ernie stoops back to work in front of track. The pole smashes into the tree. Nuts bounce off Ernie's head. In a rage he picks one up and hurls it at Tully.

TULLY IN HIS TOWER

He is laughing. Thrown nut hits his tower. He smashes the tree again, attempts to dodge another nut but is hit. He lashes out at tree.

MED. SHOT - TRACTOR, DRIVER, ERNIE, TULLY

TRACTOR DRIVER

(yells at Ernie)

Hey! Get up here!

Ernie returns to his position in front of the tractor. Cursing inaudibly he scoops away nuts from in front of the track and is pelted. Beyond him under other trees men are on their knees, sacking nuts.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. WALNUT GROVE - TULLY, ERNIE, OTHERS - MID MORNING

The tree beating has ended. Ernie and Tully have joined the others crawling over the clods. Nuts bang into buckets, buckets are emptied into sacks.

TULLY

I'm just a damn fool wasting my time out here. But you get in a bind. I got my responsibilities too. Don't think I don't. I got a woman on my hands and that means getting up at four and breaking your back all day. But if I can start fighting again that'll be the end of that.

ERNIE

Sure, you'll be making some money anyway. You can sleep in the morning. Anything's better than this.

TULLY

It's not just that. I'll flat-ass leave her.

Tully lifts a full sack, jogs with it to a truck, returns, drops on his knees again beside Ernie, picks up empty sack.

TULLY (CONT'D)

All I need's a fight and a woman. Then I'm set. I get the fight I'll get the money. I get the money I'll get the woman. There's some women that love you for yourself, but that don't last long. -- Ernie?

ERNIE

Yeah?

TULLY

Take care of that wife of yours.

ERNIE

I'm trying.

TULLY

I envy you. That's the truth, even though you got to break your back. I was married. I didn't know what a good one I had. -- Don't let anybody knock marriage, kid. You don't appreciate it till it's gone.

ERNIE

It's got its compensations.

TULLY

That's a fact. That's absolutely right. It's got its compensations. I'd say that's exactly it. You can't get around that. I had it good but I blew it.

Tully rises up on his knees, takes out a worn wallet, opens it, hands it to Ernie.

Ernie looks at plastic-covered snapshot.

ERNIE

Good looking.

Tully takes back wallet, looks at snapshots.

INSERT - SNAPSHOT OF WOMAN FROM FLASHBACK IN TULLY'S HAND

TULLY'S VOICE O.S.

Redhead.

ERNIE'S VOICE O.S.

She looks stacked.

BACK TO SCENE

Tully replaces wallet.

TULLY

She was stacked, all right, and I let something like that get away from me. I tell you, if I had some money I'd send her a plane ticket tomorrow. What I'd like to do is get a couple of fights and rent a nice house...You want to go to the Gym sometime? Maybe we could work out again, see how I feel. I was in bad shape last time. I mean don't think I like doing this. You should of seen the house we had. New car. Everything.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. LIDO GYM (ALWAYS LATE AFTERNOON OR EARLY EVENING IN GYM SCENES
ERNIE, TULLY, RUBEN, BABE, WES, BUFORD

Much the SAME as the afternoon Ernie first introduced himself. Wes and Buford are working out. Gil, Babe, and Ruben watch the boxers idly. O.S. DOOR opens. Everyone turns TOWARDS SOUND.

Tully and Ernie, carrying their athletic bags, come in.

Ruben can hardly believe his eyes; he is delighted but is determined not to lose his dignity by forgiving them instantly for their defection.

RUBEN

(hands on hips)
Well, look who's here. Look what
the cat's dragged in!

TULLY

(aimiably)
Which one's the cat - him or me?

ERNIE

Hi, Buford -- Hi, Wes.

BUFORD

How's it going?

RUBEN

To what do we owe the honour of
this visit?

ERNIE

We'd like to work out.

RUBEN

Sure. Go ahead. Feel free to make
use of my facilities - they're at
your disposal. And how would you
like to draw a few bucks while
you're at it?

TULLY

(sourly)
How'd you like to shit in your hat?

He starts away. Ruben raises his voice; he has no intention
of letting Tully get away.

RUBEN

What do you want to work out for?
You going into the Mister America
contest? Surely you don't intend
to come back to the world of boxing.

TULLY

(turns back)
Could be.

ERNIE

We been picking walnuts and we're in
pretty good condition.

WES

Picking walnuts you get worse beat up
than fighting!

TULLY

Well, what do you say, Ruben? Are we welcome here or ain't we?

RUBEN

(makes a show of reviewing the question)

All right. Get into your togs.

As Tully and Ernie go through the door, Ruben is smiling from ear to ear. He's so happy, he begins to do a little shadowboxing.

DISSOLVE TO

MONTAGE OF ERNIE AND TULLY IN TRAINING (EMPHASIS ON TULLY)

EXT. LEVEE ALONG RIVER CHANNEL - ERNIE AND TULLY JOGGING.

INT. LIDO GYM - ERNIE AND TULLY -

ON THE SCALES
PUNCHING BAG
SHADOWBOXING
SKIPPING ROPE
SPARRING

AS MONTAGE PROGRESSES SHOW IMPROVEMENT AND DEMONSTRATE TULLY'S EXPERIENCE AND SKILL. (Ruben will shout instructions; Babe will whisper encouragement, etc.)

INT. MACKIN'S BAR - RUBEN AND MACKIN - AFTERNOON

A prosperous, well-appointed bar. Bartender, couple of Waitresses.

OWEN MACKIN, an elderly man with a hearing aid and a large twisted nose, is having a beer with Ruben.

RUBEN

Billy Tully's back in training.
He's sharp.

MACKIN

(raises eyebrows)

Tully?

RUBEN

I'll tell you what I want -- a good tune up fight for Billy....I don't mean a bum. Maybe some kid ready for main events....What do you think?

MACKIN

Tully won't draw.

RUBEN

He'll draw fine. He's a good clean athlete with a fine record. He's got a lot of class.

MACKIN

Maybe I could use him in a semi-final.

RUBEN

A semi? Tully in a semi? He's still got the old stuff. I don't want him in a semi.

MACKIN

How about Arcadio Lucero?

RUBEN

(startled)

Lucero? -- Well, Lucero, I don't know. He's a puncher. What I meant, you know, was a tune up. Why should I put him in with Lucero when he's just getting in shape? I mean if he had a couple good tune-ups first?

MACKIN

I think I can get you Lucero.

RUBEN

Not that I doubt he can take him.

MACKIN

He made friends here.

RUBEN

Not that I think he'd ever nail Tully.

MACKIN

Well, I'll tell you, I think I can get Lucero.

RUBEN

Wouldn't be a bad win on the record.

MACKIN

I'll phone Mexico City.

RUBEN

How about having a Stockton hometown boy in every bout? I got a fine young welterweight for the opener. I phoned you about him - remember? Irish Ernie Munger.

INT. LIDO GYM - PRIVATE DRESSING ROOM - TULLY, RUBEN

The private dressing room is a windowless cubicle lit by an unshaded bulb, its rough board walls covered with posters of past bouts.

Tully lies on a table, being massaged by Ruben.

RUBEN

You asleep?

(Tully grunts 'no')

How would you like to fight Arcadio Lucero?

TULLY

(turns head towards Ruben)

Uh. Fight Lucero? What for?

RUBEN

I think you can beat him.

TULLY

Why him? I thought I was going to start out with an easy one.

RUBEN

Lucero's over the hill. You've still got the stuff. You let yourself get out of shape, that's all.

Ruben's hands rise to the cords at the base of Tully's neck, slide away. He slaps Tully, signalling the massage is finished.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. OMA'S ROOM - TULLY, OMA - EVENING

Oma lies on the bed, a wine glass resting on her stomach. Her hair is uncombed, dress wrinkled. She is barefoot. CAMERA PULLS BACK as Tully comes into the room, with his athletic bag.

He tosses athletic bag towards corner near kitchen doorway, slows, looks towards corner again, then strips off his jacket, throws it on a chair.

TULLY

Is Earl out of the bucket?

OMA

Huh?

TULLY

~~Was Earl here?~~ His box is gone.

Earle's box? OMA

TULLY
Did Earl come in here today?

OMA
Yeah.

TULLY
Why didn't you say so?

OMA
He was just here long enough to
get his stuff.

TULLY
Is there any reason for not telling
me?

OMA
I was just going to tell you. You
only got in this minute. I didn't
have time to open my mouth.

TULLY
So how is he?

OMA
All right, I guess. Didn't have
much to say. Picked up his clothes
and left. So what's wrong with that?

Tully, with an "Aah" of exasperation goes into:

INT. KITCHEN

Just big enough to walk around the table and its two chairs.
Two-Burner gas stove, small refrigerator, stained porcelain
sink filled with dirty dishes.

Tully goes to refrigerator, takes out paper parcel, reaches for
tin of peas on shelf. Oma stands in doorway, watching him.

(During following, Tully will fry steak, open and heat peas,
set table, etc.)

TULLY
You tell him about me? What he say?

OMA
Nothing.

TULLY
He remember me?

OMA

I don't know if he remembered you. What do you care?

TULLY

He remembers you well enough, that's easy to see.

OMA

He had to get his clothes, didn't he?

TULLY

After he found out he couldn't move back in.

OMA

He didn't mention moving in.

TULLY

What he come over for then?

OMA

I told you - his clothes. He knew I was with you.

TULLY

How'd he know that?

OMA

I saw him before.

TULLY

(turns to stare
at her)

When was this?

OMA

What're all these questions? He came by the day he got out.

TULLY

Why didn't you tell me?

OMA

I guess I forgot.

TULLY

That's a good one.

OMA

What?

TULLY

Nothing.

OMA

I heard what you said.

TULLY

Then why'd you ask?

OMA

You think I'm lying to you.

TULLY

I didn't say that.

OMA

You don't trust me, do you?

TULLY

All I'm trying to do is make us
our supper.

OMA

You're so goddamn high and mighty.

TULLY

If I didn't cook it we wouldn't
eat it.

OMA

Nobody asked you to fix me anything.

TULLY

I know. You'd just as soon drinks
yours.

OMA

If you don't want to make me any,
you don't have to.

TULLY

I'm making it.

OMA

You'd rather not.

TULLY

(serving food)
I got it right here.

OMA

I don't have to eat.

TULLY

(shouts)
I'm making it for you!

OMA

Then I won't eat it if you feel
that way about it.

TULLY

I want you to eat it. I'm cooking
it because I want you to eat it.
I can't eat all this food myself.

OMA

(sighs, resigned)

I didn't say anything and you get
that pissed off.

(Tully sits down)

Now he's mad. He's not speaking.

She goes into the other room; Tully begins to eat. Oma returns
with a full glass of wine, sits at table.

TULLY

Eat your food before it gets cold.

OMA

I don't take orders from you.

TULLY

You need your protein.

OMA

I'm not going to eat with somebody
that talks to me like you do.

TULLY

You want to starve to death?

OMA

That's what you'd like, isn't it?

TULLY

(puts large piece of
steak in mouth)

No.

OMA

That would solve everything for you,
wouldn't it?

TULLY

(chewing)

I just asked a simple question.
Go on, eat.

OMA

Maybe I don't want to eat. Maybe
I don't like how it's cooked.

TULLY

All right, don't eat it. Go hungry.
I don't care. That's good food.
I make you a good dinner and you
don't even appreciate it. So just
forget it. I'll put it away and
eat it tomorrow.

He reaches across for her plate; she clutches it.

OMA

(begins to cry)
I want it. I'm going to eat it!

TULLY

(still holding plate)
I don't want you to eat it!

OMA

Now you won't even let me have my
dinner. You won't even let me eat!

Tully slumps back in his chair. With tears running down her
cheeks, Oma fills her mouth with peas. Tully stuffs his mouth
automatically. After a few moments:

TULLY

So?

OMA

Huh?

TULLY

Well? Do you like it?

OMA

What?

TULLY

Nothing. Forget it.

OMA

Well, for Christ's sake, don't ask
something and then not even say what
you mean.

TULLY

Supper.

OMA

All right, why couldn't you say it?
It's fine.

TULLY

I thought maybe you'd know what I meant, seeing as how you're not having any trouble eating it.

OMA

You don't want me to eat it?

TULLY

Of course I want you to. I just meant now you're eating.

OMA

I'm eating. Sure, I'm eating.

TULLY

So what was the big fuss about?

OMA

(slams fork on table)

Will you stop needling me? The big fuss is that nobody could eat with you sitting across the table.

TULLY

You never had it so good. There isn't another guy in town would make you your supper so you could get something in your gut besides that goddam juice.

OMA

Very funny.

TULLY

I'm serious. Will you show me the common decency of a serious answer?

OMA

Common decency. You wouldn't know any if you saw it.

TULLY

(shouting)

Will you give me a straight answer or won't you?

OMA

(yelling back)

Will you stop doing this to me?

TULLY

Doing what? What the hell are you yelling about? All I asked for was a simple answer.

OMA

You rotten-ass bastard! You're determined not to let me eat this food.

TULLY

Oh, for god's sake, I give up.

(pushes back
chair, rises)

All I've been trying to do is get you to eat. If you don't want my company just say so and I'll get out of your way.

He leaves kitchen; she rises, follows him into:

INT. OMA'S ROOM

Tully jerks his jacket off the chair, shrugs into it.

OMA

Where are you going?

TULLY

Think I'll take a walk around the block so you can eat in peace, since that's what you want.

OMA

Can I go with you?

TULLY

I'll be right back.

OMA

You're going out for a drink and leaving me here.

TULLY

I'm fighting soon. You think I'd go out drinking?

OMA

You won't take me out but you sneak off the first chance you get.

TULLY

That's right, everything I do is wrong. Not a goddamn thing suits you, does it?

(goes to door, opens it)

OMA

Billy, wait for me! Let me get ready. Just let me comb my hair. Are my shoes over there?

Tully leaves, her cries pursuing him.

INT. BAR (ONE WE HAVEN'T SEEN BEFORE) TULLY, RUBEN -
NIGHT

Tully, face propped on his fists, stares forlornly at himself in the mirror behind the bar, an empty glass before him. Ruben hurries in, goes to Tully, refuses to sit down.

RUBEN
Booze is poison to the body.

TULLY
I had to break loose this once --
I'm living with a lush.

RUBEN
(grave, uncompromising)
Get rid of her.

TULLY
That's why I phoned you. Listen, I
got to talk to somebody, Ruben. I
just can't take it any more. She's
out of her gourd. I had to walk out
tonight. I just can't handle it
anymore. I need my peace of mind.
I got a fight to think about...
Don't worry...
(gestures at glass)
I'll run this off in the morning.

RUBEN
I hate to see you swilling that stuff.

TULLY
I'd like to get out of the whole thing.
I just can't feel anything for her.
I don't want to touch her anymore,
and every time she opens her mouth
I think I'm going to go crazy.

RUBEN
You ought to stay away from her -
at least till after the fight.
(takes Tully's arm)
You can sleep at my place tonight.

TULLY
(not budging)
It's not that easy. I got all my
clothes there.

RUBEN
I'll get you some. I'll give you an
advance. If you really want to leave
her, you ought to leave right now.

TULLY
(steps off barstool)
You're right. I know it.

RUBEN
Tomorrow I'll get you a room
somewhere.

TULLY
(as they walk
towards door)
You're right about this. I should
never got mixed up with her. She's
destroying me. But since my wife
left me it's been just one mess after
another. You know that was the only
time I was ever really happy, Ruben.
...And you know something? -- In four
days I'll be thirty.

They look at one another and glance away. A sad, almost
reverent pause. Each is looking into himself. Then:

RUBEN
(briskly)
Come on, let's go.

TULLY
All right. I'm cutting loose.

Their progress to door is resumed.

TULLY (CONT'D)
I appreciate this, Ruben. I number
you among my friends. You stuck
by me.

RUBEN
That's because you got class.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BUS DEPOT - STOCKTON - ARCADIO LUCERO - LATE AFTERNOON

ARCADIO LUCERO, 31, wearing a wrinkled turquoise suit and a
whiteknit shirt, comes out of the Bus Depot carrying a bulging,
strap-cinched leather suitcase.

CAMERA DOLLIES WITH HIM AS HE CROSSES THE STREET. He walks
awkwardly, stops occasionally, grimacing with pain.

A POSTER in a STORE FRONT catches his eye. He stops to look at it.

INSERT POSTER

STOCKTON CIVIC AUDITORIUM

FRIDAY NIGHT _____

CAMERA DOES NOT HOLD ON FULL CARD BUT GOES DIRECTLY TO:

PHOTOGRAPH OF LUCERO
in fighting pose

PHOTOGRAPH OF TULLY
in fighting pose

BENEATH THE PHOTOS: (Each man several years younger and pounds lighter)

MAIN EVENT

ARCADIO "LIGHTNING" LUCERO VS BILLY "THE TERROR" TULLY

BACK TO SCENE

Lucero walks on.

INT. MACKIN'S BAR - LUCERO, MACKIN, BARTENDER

Lucero, his suitcase on the floor, stands at the bar sipping an orange drink. The Bartender comes over to him.

BARTENDER

Mr. Mackin'll be right here.

Lucero nods, moves awkwardly, as though trying to get comfortable. He winces.

MACKIN'S VOICE O.S.

Buenas Tardes, amigo!

Lucero turns. He and Mackin shake hands.

MACKIN

How are you, Lucero? Good to see you.

LUCERO

(voice low)

I am sick, Senor Mackin.

(as Mackin reacts)

I have caught a dose. The clap. This I discovered on the train up from Mexico. I am in pain. My cock feels like it's on fire. I can hardly walk. I cannot fight. Find someone else.

MACKIN

I can't find someone else! Not between now and tomorrow night! You can make it! You don't want to disappoint all those fans of yours.

LUCERO

It is not what I want, Senor Mackin.
It is how I am.

MACKIN

Look - with all these new drugs, you
can get fixed up good enough to go
on. Sure you can --

(takes paper napkin from
bar counter, pen from
breast pocket, begins
to write)

Go see this doctor. Tell him I
sent you. Have him charge it to
me. I'll take it out of your purse.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. CIVIC AUDITORIUM STOCKTON - TULLY, ERNIE, OTHER FIGHTER,
REFEREE, CROWD - NIGHT

INT. RING - ERNIE, ANOTHER FIGHTER - REFEREE

Ernie and his opponent move cautiously around the ring, as though
afraid of one another. The crowd is dissatisfied with the action -
boos and yells. Ernie goes into a flurry of ineffectual blows;
his opponent covers. Ernie drives him to the ropes. He dances
away.

BACK OF AUDITORIUM - AISLE SEAT - TULLY

watching the fight. He shakes his head sourly, rises:

INT. DRESSING ROOM - TULLY, ERNIE, BABE, RUBEN, OTHER FIGHTERS,
INCLUDING LUCERO AND GIL SOLIS

Tully, in pale-blue trunks over his old purple robe. (At far
END OF ROOM we see Lucero, his hands being taped by Gil Solis)

Ruben and Babe come in with Ernie. Ernie's nose is bleeding.
He snuffles, smiling.

RUBEN

Ernie walked all over that dude!

TULLY

Nice going, kid!

INT.. CIVIC AUDITORIUM RING - TULLY, LUCERO, REFEREE, BABE,
RUBEN, GIL, OTHERS

Tully is in the ring with Babe and Ruben. Ruben is massaging
his shoulders.

In the opposite corner is Lucero. On the back of his black satin robe is an image, in sequins, of the Virgin of Guadalupe. He is seconded by Gil Solis and another Mexican. The ANNOUNCER is in the center of the ring.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen, your attention, please -- the main event, ten rounds - wearing the blue trunks, weighing one hundred thirty-five pounds, the pride of Stockton, BILLY
(points)

TULLY!

Moderate applause.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

And from Mexico City, wearing the black trunks, weighing one hundred thirty-six pounds, ARCADIO LUCERO!

There is more applause for Lucero, and some excited yells. (The Audience, not a capacity crowd, is mostly Mexican). The robes are taken off the boxers, and the seconds and the Announcer leave the ring.

The House lights go off. THE BELL RINGS. Tully advances to Lucero. They touch gloves. Tully jabs with his left, throws his right. Lucero bores in. They clinch.

LUCERO

(in clinch)

Take it easy. Let's not kill each other. Gentleman's agreement, huh?
(refusing to break as
Referee hits their arms)
You not hurt me. I not hurt you.

They break. Tully circles around Lucero suspiciously. Lucero drives Tully to ropes, another clinch.

LUCERO (CONT'D)

I'm sick. I got clap. No hard fight. I let you win. Be my friend. We put on a good show - give 'em their money's worth..but not kill each other, huh?

As the Referee parts them, with a warning:

TULLY

Fuck you, Lucero!

He and Lucero exchange some good solid punches. The CROWD ROARS. Once again, Lucero gets Tully into a clinch.

LUCERO

All right, you son of a bitch.
I'll dump you. If that's how you
want it, I dump you on your ass --
kick shit out of you!

Lucero pushes Tully away. THE BELL RINGS. Tully and Lucero go to their corners.

Ruben towels Tully, puts vaseline on his face, murmurs instructions; Babe gives him the water bottle. Tully stares across at Lucero, speculatively.

Lucero, in his corner, stares back at Tully, oblivious of the attentions of Gil and the other Mexican. THE BELL RINGS. Lucero rises.

INT. RING - TULLY, LUCERO, REFEREE

The Main Event becomes one hell of a fight with Tully and Lucero giving everything they have to it. At moments, the CROWD IS ON ITS FEET with excitement. QUICK SHOTS OF RUBEN, BABE, yelling. GIL and MEXICAN - yelling in Spanish.

Game and determined as he is, the moment comes when Lucero cannot continue. He collapses, goes to his knees, makes a restrained gesture towards his crotch, crouches, unable to rise.

Tully wins by a TKO.

TULLY, a new cut over his eye, hand raised - the Winner.

LUCERO, being helped to his corner.

INT. CIVIC AUDITORIUM - LOBBY - NIGHT

A few fans still hanging around. Ruben, Babe, Ernie and Owen Mackin are standing together. Faye, wearing a maternity dress, stands a short distance from the men.

Tully, fresh from the showers, his cut mended with adhesive strips, is just joining the group. Ruben puts his arm around him.

RUBEN

Here he is!

MACKIN

You put up a good fight, Tully.

ERNIE

It was great!

Tully nods, his expression uncertain.

RUBEN

This guy was sensational. This guy's great. I defy anybody to say this guy's not great. First fight in two years and he got himself in perfect condition. He don't smoke, did you know that? Never touches tobacco. He's ready for anybody now. He's got heart...

Lucero and Gil Solis walk SLOWLY INTO SHOT.

RUBEN (CONT'D)

(points to Lucero)

Anybody that can win on a TKO from that guy is ready for anybody.

TULLY

You really sick Lucero?

(meets a look of

disquieting bitterness)

I thought you were pulling something.

LUCERO

Chingado! Chingadero! Su Madre!

Trying not to limp, he thrusts past Tully, Gil following.

A shocked silence.

RUBEN

(shrugging it off)

Sour grapes!

(flings an arm around

Ernie's shoulders)

to Mackin)

What did you think of this kid? Wasn't he fantastic? Wasn't he something? First pro fight and he's cool as ice in there. This kid's got heart.

ERNIE

I better be going.

RUBEN

Sure, sure. Here you go, kid, you did great.

(slips Ernie some
folded bills)

BABE

(hoarsely)

Don't give it all to them baby
doctors.

Ernie and Faye smiles, nod "goodnight", start away.

RUBEN

(to Mackin)

Next time you put Billy Tully on
the card it'll be a sellout! He's
the most colorful attraction in
Northern California.

TULLY

You get the money?

RUBEN

(expansively)

It's all taken care of.

TULLY

Okay. Let's go!

EXT. CIVIC AUDITORIUM - STOCKTON - TULLY, RUBEN - NIGHT

CAMERA DOLLIES WITH THEM as they walk from Auditorium to Ruben's
car.

RUBEN

You earned two hundred and forty
one dollars. You been off too long.
Next time you'll draw three times that.

TULLY

What's my cut come to?

RUBEN

Well, I gave you all those advances.
I got to collect on some of that, but
I don't want you fighting for nothing,
either. We got you on your feet now.
Three, four weeks you'll be ready to go
again. I'll tell you, why don't I just
keep paying your room and board?

TULLY

I'm not drinking anymore.

RUBEN

I know. I know.

TULLY

I'm not going to blow any of it.
That divorce is what messed me up.
Now I'm fighting again I want to get
back with my wife and I got to have
money. Just take your cut and I'll
pay my own bills.

They have arrived at Ruben's car; he unlocks it. He and Tully
get in.

EXT. SKIDROW HOTEL - RUBEN AND TULLY - NIGHT

They are double-parked at the side of the "Oxford Hotel".
Ruben counts bills into Tully's outstretched hand.

TULLY

(disbelievingly)

A hundred dollars!

(Ruben puts rest of
bills in his pocket)

It's not worth the goddamn trouble.

Tully opens the door on his side.

RUBEN

I gave you those advances with the
agreement they'd come out of your
purse. I got four kids. But once we
get another match made I'll stake you.
Don't get out on that side, you'll get
run over! Shut the door. Get out
over on this side.

EXT. RUBEN'S CAR - RUBEN, TULLY

At the same time that Tully steps out on the traffic side, Ruben
leaves by his own door to make room for him. They confront each
other across the hood.

RUBEN (CONT'D)

What did you want to get out on
that side for? Why didn't you slide
over?

TULLY

What do you care?

RUBEN

You can get run into that way.

Tully goes around to sidewalk.

TULLY

You're just looking out for me every minute, aren't you? Except when it comes time to pay off.

RUBEN

I never made a dime off you in more than two years and you been hitting me for plenty. I gave you that hundred because you put on a hard fight and you earned it. But that don't mean we're square.

TULLY

You think I'm going to catch punches for a hundred bucks?

RUBEN

I'll talk to Mackin. Maybe he'll put you on again in two weeks.

TULLY

With this cut?

RUBEN

It'll heal by then.

TULLY

Know why I got this? This is the same place they cut me with that razor blade because you were too tight to go down there to Panama and work my corner.

RUBEN

That's not old scar tissue. That's a new cut.

TULLY

That's what you'd say, all right. Who the hell cares? All I want is the money for my sweat and blood.

RUBEN

(conciliatory)

How about a bite to eat? I'll buy you a sandwich. You shouldn't be out in this wind.

TULLY

I'm going to bed.

RUBEN

Come to the gym in a day or two, huh?

TULLY

Yeah. I'll see you.

JH
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INT. OLD PEERLESS INN (YET A DIFFERENT BAR, this one "respectable")
TULLY, BARTENDER, STRANGERS - NIGHT

Tully lounges at the bar - before him a whiskey with a beer chaser. He downs the whiskey, picks up beer.

TULLY
(to Bartender)
Same again!

The Bartender looks at Tully attentively, then turns to a Poster of the Lucero-Tully Fight on the wall behind him.

BARTENDER
I thought I recognized you! You
Billy Tully?

Tully nods, wipes foam from his mouth.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
(to room in general)
Say -- this is Billy Tully!...
(gestures towards Poster)
...the fighter!

STRANGERS react. One says, "He won tonight!".. "Yeah. Heard it on the radio...".. "Took Lucero in the Main Event..." "TKO" ..etc.

FOUR OR FIVE STRANGERS come up to Tully, shake his hand, slap him on the back, congratulate him.

TULLY
(the celebrity)
Bartender - drinks for my friends
here - and have one yourself...

All accept with disquieting alacrity.

EXT. STOCKTON STREET - TULLY - (BURLESQUE THEATRE) NIGHT

Tully, his pockets considerable lighter and his spirits dampened by the awareness of same, wanders along the street.

He stops briefly before the LIBERTY THEATRE, studies FULL LIFE SIZE PHOTOGRAPHS OF SEVERAL STRIPPERS, hands in pockets.

EXT. - OMA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - TULLY

An ugly, derelict building. Tully comes INTO SHOT, looks up briefly, goes to front door, enters.

INT. HALLWAY BEFORE OMA'S ROOM - TULLY, EARL - NIGHT

The light is on, showing under the door. Tully knocks.
Earl opens the door.

EARL
(looking at Tully with
suspicious recognition)
What you wants?

TULLY
(equilibrium
undisturbed)
Come for my clothes.

EARL
(as if a misunder-
standing exists)
I'm living here. I pays the rent.
(Tully nods)
Got your things in your suitcase
all ready to go.

Earl steps back; Tully enters.

INT. OMA'S ROOM - OMA, TULLY, EARL

Oma is on the bed. Leaning against the headboard she wears a pink dress that exposes her collarbones, the skirt fanning out on the green chenille spread, her legs in nylons, one foot shoeless, the other in a white pump. A tan sweater is over her shoulders and, as Tully enters, she draws it around her elbows.

OMA
Oh, Jesus Christ!

TULLY
(trying not to
appear too familiar)
How you doing?

OMA
Oh, Christ, Mary and Joseph,
look who's here.

EARL
Your suitcase right over there in
the closet. I'm wearing one of
your T-shirts. I take it off for you.

TULLY
Don't bother. I got plenty.

OMA
Will you look what the cat dragged in.

EARL

I got my own. Just wasn't none
clean today.

Earl has unbuttoned his grey and white striped shirt; he throws it on the bed, pulls the T-Shirt - tight, short, yellowed under the sleeves - over his head, uncovering a dark muscular trunk.

EARL (CONT'D)

What's yours is yours. Oma want me to throw your stuff out, but I say a man's stuff is his stuff, when he show up around here I want to send him off with what he come for.

Earl hands Tully the T-shirt, slips into his grey and white shirt, goes to closet, opens door, brings out Tully's suitcase.

OMA

You can take that and shove it up your ass.

EARL

You hush now. He just come for his things and he leaving.

OMA

Don't hush me, you bunch of bums. What do you know about it, anyway?

EARL

Don't pay no attention to her. She been drinking.

OMA

Get that shitbird out of here.

EARL

We been out on the town tonight.

OMA

Take the shirt off a man's back. If that isn't just so perfect. If that isn't just like him.

Earl and Tully edge towards the door.

EARL

She just like to blow off steam. Don't listen to her. We gets along. How I handles her, I just don't pay her no mind. Thing you got to understand about her is she a juice head.

TULLY

I know. And she won't eat, either.

EARL

It all on account of her unhappy life and all that shit, and there nothing I can do about that, so I don't let it worry me. Look like you had your fight. How you come out?

TULLY

I won.

EARL

That right? I seen you on the poster. Like to watch a good fight now and then. Maybe I catch you some time. But they no point in you coming around here no more. She don't want to see you ---
Oma, you wants to see this man?

Oma replies with an incoherent oath and kicks out her foot, her shoe flying off towards them and falling on the floor.

EARL (CONT'D)

You see how it is. I been away - man give me some shit and I don't take shit - now I'm back. You a fighter, you know what I'm talking about. They a right way and a wrong way to take care of yourself.

TULLY

That's right.

EARL

One thing I don't need is trouble. Man see trouble he better off walking down the other side of the street.
(hands Tully suitcase)
You got your stuff.

Tully raises his other hand, still holding the T-shirt, to Oma. She doesn't look at him. He goes through the door.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. MOTION PICTURE THEATRE - TULLY - FEW OTHERS - NIGHT

Tully, bleary-eyed, staring off towards a screen. O.S. a grandiloquent baritone proclaims the virtues of nudism in reverent tones.

VOICE O.S.

..And Rama vowed never to return to the world of tight dresses and tight shoes and all the restraints her upbringing had heaped upon her head. This was her domain, to live in as a woman was intended to live, on a diet of sunshine and fresh air...

CONTINUEE

VOICE O.S. (CONT'D)

..caressed by the cool stream - naked,
bare-assed and beautiful...

Tully drinks from a paper covered bottle, as though he were punctuating each of the Voice's sentences.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OMA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - TULLY, PATROL CAR - NIGHT

Tully, on the opposite side of the street to Oma's Apartment building. He stares up at her lighted windows, his expression mournful, self-pitying.

A PATROL CAR cruises past. The Two Policemen look at Tully curiously; the car slows. Tully starts off in the opposite direction. The Patrol Car continues on its way.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. SKIDROW BAR - TULLY AND STRANGER - DAY

Tully, his jaws bristling with stubble, is talking with a MAN beside him.

TULLY

I'm sick over it! You don't know how much you love a woman till you lose her.

MAN

Uh-huh.

TULLY

Thin little eyebrows and brown curly hair -- You should of seen the body on her. Lose something like that, it hurts.

MAN

Yeah. Yeah.

TULLY

What do you mean 'yeah'? What're you giving me? When a guy buys you a drink you ought to at least have the courtesy to listen. You free loaders are all alike. All you care about is getting a drink in your hand.

The Man shoves his wine glass over.

MAN

Take it back then.

TULLY
Don't shove that at me! I'll
throw it in your face.

MAN
(rising)
Don't you get wise with me!

Tully rushes the Man across the room, slams him against the juke box.

TULLY
(yells)
I bought you a drink!

The Man breaks free, runs out the door. Tully runs after him.

EXT. STOCKTON STREET - TULLY, MAN, EVANGELIST - DAY

The Man is running up the sidewalk. Tully runs after him a few steps, then slows to a walk.

TULLY
(shouting)
Drink a man's liquor and run, do you?

MAN
(looks back, slows
to walk as well)
To hell with you! You're crazy!
Any woman stay with you is nuts!

Tully breaks into a run and the Man runs also.

TULLY
What'd you say? What'd you call her?

The Man disappears around a corner. Tully, panting, turns back towards bar. An unintelligible, elderly FILIPINO EVANGELIST is giving a sermon to an empty sidewalk.

EVANGELIST
Unless you accept Christ Jesus my friends
as your personal Saviour for your sin
redemption remission personal sin, your
personal Saviour Christ Jesus can't save
you from your sin. No He can't. You
have turned your back on Christ Jesus
personal Saviour no peace drink wine
judgment damnation Christ Jesus and only
Christ Jesus only the personal Saviour...

TULLY
Now what is all that about? Hey, what
is all this? Hey, who you talking to?
Piss on you.

JH
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A FEW PEOPLE begin to wander past. As each of them goes by, Tully salutes them with "Piss on you".

The Evangelist raises a trumpet, begins to play a halting version of "Tea For Two".

DISSOLVE TO

INT. HALLWAY SKIDROW HOTEL - TULLY - NIGHT

Tully puts key in door, cannot open it, sees a padlock on it a couple of feet above door knob. He pounds and rattles the door, tries to break it in - raging.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - OUTSIDE CLERK'S OFFICE - TULLY, CLERK - NIGHT

Tully is angrily facing CLERK, who is in a cubicle office behind a half door.

TULLY

(furiously)

I told you I'd pay my rent! I can get money any time I want it!

CLERK

Well, when you feel like getting some, we'll have your bags for you.

EXT. SKIDROW STREETS - TULLY - NIGHT (RAIN)

It is raining. Tully is walking unsteadily. At the corner he steps off curb, stumbles, and runs to keep from falling.

Midway the next block, he disappears into:

DARK RECESSED ENTRANCE OF A STORE - TULLY

Tully comes out as quickly as he went in. Cursing, he backs away from entrance, sits down on the concrete.

MAN'S VOICE O.S.

(from Recessed Entrance)

I'll cut your throat. I got your number. I'm wise to you. Keep your hands off me. You come back here again I'll stick you.

TULLY

I'll come back and kick the shit out of you, you don't shut up.

MAN'S VOICE O.S.

I'm ready for you.

JH
Nov. 4, 1970

125

Rain is blowing in on Rully. He remains long enough to show the other man that he is not intimidated. He gets up, CAMERA DOLLYING WITH HIM, goes along the street, trying the doors of several parked cars.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. - SUPERMARKET LOADING AREA - TULLY, CHINESE CLERK - DAY

Early morning. A young CHINESE CLERK, in a green smock, opens the door to a large (6 ft. in diameter) incinerator. He sees something inside, bends forward for a better look.

CHINESE CLERK

Hey - you! Come on. Out. I
got trash to burn.

TULLY'S VOICE O.S.

Who the hell are you?

CHINESE CLERK

Come on. What you think this is, a
motel or something? Get out!

Tully's unkempt head appears in the opening.

TULLY

Don't tell me what to do.

CHINESE CLERK

Come on, come on! You crazy? You're
going to get killed some day, you
don't watch it. Get out! What's the
matter with you? You don't even want
to move when somebody's going to
light a fire under you? You going
to sit there and argue?

Tully, his feet sinking into trash, climbs out the door. Squinting irritably, he clears his throat, spits, leans forward and, with the aid of a finger, blows one nostril and then the other. Crinkled strips of white paper cling to his clothes.

The Chinese Clerk begins to throw cartons into incinerator.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. LOCKER ROOM - LIDO GYM - PHONE BOOTH - RUBEN, ERNIE, BABE-DAY

Ruben in the phone booth. Ernie and Babe in the open doorway, listening.

RUBEN

(shouting into phone)

O.K. It's a deal. Fifty bucks
and his bus fare.

(hangs up)

Cheap bastard! Wouldn't even go
for two fares. Goddamn Tully anyway -
letting everybody down.

(indicates phone)

They'd have paid three hundred bucks
for Tully. So I'll have to send you
by yourself.

They move away from booth.

ERNIE

Go by myself? How can I go?
There's no expenses for me.

RUBEN

You want the fight, don't you?

ERNIE

Sure I want the fight.

RUBEN

You'll win easy. Salt Lake City's
a long way to send you but you'll
take this guy easy. He can't hit.
Knock him out and come back with a
few bucks for the wife and kid.

Ernie nods worriedly, picks up his athletic bag, leaves.

RUBEN

(to Babe)

Damn that Tully! He could've gone
to the top if he'd just had the right
attitude - but something was missing!
Something's always missing. One boy
can't take it; another can't hit --or
they're girl crazy or on the booze --
and they got so little time...Just a
few short years.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. RING - SALT LAKE - ERNIE AND OPPONENT - NIGHT

SOUND OF RINGSIDE BELL. Ernie comes up out of his corner to meet his OPPONENT, a young man with a ruddy rural face and a body as rangy as his own. The first punch of the fight - a right to the jaw - catches Ernie cold. He drops to his hands and knees, springs up before a count and is slugging back without fully realizing what happened when the REFEREE intervenes to wipe the resin dust from his gloves.

The two young men now slug one another - Ernie punching with a deadly excitement. He takes hard punches himself in the face, on the body.

His Opponent falters; Ernie rushes in, belaboring the suddenly blood-smearred face until his Opponent FALLS.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. BUS STATION - ERNIE - TULLY - NIGHT

A hot Summer night. Ernie, his face bruised, nose swollen, carrying his athletic bag, comes out of the Bus Station. He looks tired as he crosses the street towards his car, CAMERA DOLLYING WITH HIM.

Ernie gets out his car keys, approaches his car. He glances along the street, without interest, then sees someone he knows.

ERNIE

(calling)

Hi!

Tully ENTERS SHOT. He wears soiled clothing, a battered straw hat, is half-drunk.

ERNIE (CONT'D)

Hi! I just won a fight, man!

TULLY

Nice going.

ERNIE

One-round knockout!

TULLY

Let's have a drink - that's cause for celebration.

ERNIE

Not for me....How you keeping?

TULLY

Come on!

ERNIE

(shakes head)

I got to get home to my wife and
kid -

(smiles)

-got a baby boy.

TULLY

What the hell's the matter with you!
Winning all these fights and you won't
even have a drink with an old friend.

ERNIE

Geez, Billy - you started me. I
owe it all to you...

TULLY

(suddenly furious)

When I first saw you in the YMCA
that time I said, 'There's a guy
that's soft in the center'!

ERNIE

I just don't drink - any hard stuff.

TULLY

Do you mind if I say something
personal?

ERNIE

I don't mind.

TULLY

Can I be frank?

ERNIE

Go ahead. Say it!

TULLY

Nothing personal now - just I don't
think you're going to make it. You're
pretty good but there's one hell of a
difference between that and good enough --
So you knocked out somebody? What kind
of shit is that? You know how many guys
I knocked out?

(calms down; relents)

Oh, forget it! I mean great - fine -
congratulations! I'm happy for you.
Don't let it bother you what I said.
You got everything going for you.
You're young, got a wife, family, a
good reach - You'll do fine....No
hard feelings?

ERNIE

Course not, Billy.

TULLY

And you're right about the hard stuff.
Can I buy you a cup of coffee?

They start along the street together, CAMERA DOLLYING WITH THEM.

ERNIE

How come you haven't been training?

TULLY

I got troubles, man. I lost more
than most guys'll ever hope to have.

ERNIE

A woman?

TULLY

(nodding)
Woman.

INT. GOLDEN GATE CAFE - ERNIE, TULLY, WAITER

Tully and Ernie sit down at the counter, which is otherwise unoccupied. There is no music throughout this scene. An old, deadbeat, silent, morose, cadaverous CHINESE WAITER approaches.

TULLY

Coffee.

ERNIE

Same.

The Chinese Waiter shuffles off.

TULLY

How'd you like to wake up some
morning and be him?

ERNIE

Ugh.

TULLY

(bitterly)
Jesus, the waste. Before you can even
get rolling your life makes a bee-line
for the drain.

ERNIE

Maybe he's happy.

TULLY

Maybe we're all happy.

Chinese Waiter brings coffee.

TULLY (CONT'D)

(to Waiter)
Isn't that right?

The Chinese Waiter looks at him disinterestedly and shuffles off.

TULLY (CONT'D)

Would you believe he was young once?

ERNIE

No.

TULLY

Maybe he wasn't.

A silence follows, during which there is no sound except the clinking of Tully's spoon as he stirs his coffee. Ernie shifts his position.

ERNIE

I guess I ought to get home.

TULLY

Stick around and talk a while.

ERNIE

(shrugging)

Okay.

Ernie sips his coffee, then Tully sips his. The Chinese Waiter, gazing into space, sags back against a cabinet. Tully and Ernie are looking straight ahead. The SOUND is at a high volume now. We hear the scrape of Ernie's soles, the sucking of Tully's lips at his cup. The silence continues. Tully again stirs his coffee and returns the spoon to his saucer with a clank.

Ernie drinks, and we hear the sound of his napkin across his mouth. It is a silence of at least two minutes, a silence so prolonged it becomes bizarre, so absolute that it is like a truth, a profound spiritual expression by two men facing the void. The Frame does not freeze. There are small movements; a head tilts, a hand props up a chin. The Chinese Waiter shuffles away, pulling at his dewlap. Ernie and Tully stare ahead. They drink. Tully sucks his teeth. Ernie now stirs his coffee, and the silence continues.

FADE OUT