

THE BIJOU

by

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"... the magic is all around you.
All the time. Everywhere.
In every thing.
The trick... is to see it."

IN BLACK...

... the insistent, persistent, eight-to-the-bar beat of
BOOGIE-WOOGIE. Hot, exciting, pulsating rhythm, ramping up.

THEN...

... in the blackness, falling s-l-o-w-l-y, tumbling
g-e-n-t-l-y, a picture-postcard:

"GREETINGS FROM HOLLYWOOD!"

Then another... and another, each one dropping through frame,
a gentle rain.

In these old postcards, Hollywood is a dream town where movie
stars glide out of big cars to press their hands-and-
footprints in the wet cement.

Another postcard:

"I'M MEETING THE STARS AT HOLLYWOOD & VINE!"

In this postcard myth, you'd toddle down to Hollywood and
Vine, bump into Bogie and Bacall, and join them for dinner at
the Brown Derby. Or Ciro's. Or the Coconut Grove...

More postcards. Pictures of movie theaters, but not the ones
that you and I know today. These are palaces. Temples.
Grauman's Chinese and Egyptian. The Carthay Circle. The
Paramount, the Million Dollar. From a time when moviegoing
was a complete experience, not a trip to the local mall. The
ushers were friendly and helpful and wore gold brocaded
jackets and guided you to your seat. The popcorn was hot and
fresh and buttered with real butter, not 30-weight motor oil.

CUT TO:

THE PILE OF POSTCARDS

a wild jumble. Then, one LAST POSTCARD drops lazily on top of the pile. It's a view of Hollywood at night, a carpet of lights under the yawning, protective smile of Mt. Lee's most famous resident, the fully-lit HOLLYWOOD SIGN. We PUSH INTO THE PICTURE OF THE SIGN, DISSOLVING UNTIL WE'RE...

... PUSHING INTO THE REAL HOLLYWOOD SIGN, closer and closer, until we fly right through it -- then crazily loop up and behind it until we're looking down at...

EXT. HOLLYWOOD (AERIAL VIEW) - NIGHT

SUPER TITLE: 1951

A gigantic aerial shot. Postwar autos fill the muggy midsummer evening air with the sounds of thousands of HONKING HORNS, a mere precursor to the traffic yet to come. Darkened outlying neighborhoods are evidence of the postwar home construction boom, as scores of stucco bungalows are being built in the areas surrounding the beating heart of the town, a swath of garishly bright concrete called

HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD.

PETE'S NARRATION (V.O.)

Of course, it's not like the postcards say it is. This is what it's like. I'm Pete Appleton, and this is my town.

Still in the same shot, we rocket down into the center of the intersection of Hollywood and Vine, then head west along the boulevard, skimming just above the traffic -- past Musso and Frank's Grill and the Hollywood Canteen, past the Egyptian Theater and a rumbling Pacific Electric Red Car, across Highland Avenue, past the Paramount Theater, and across the street to

GRAUMAN'S CHINESE THEATER.

PETE'S NARRATION (V.O.)

Born and raised here, thank you very much. Sometimes, it seems like everyone here is from somewhere else. But everyone loves the movies, so Hollywood is everyone's town, and they come here by the busload. To them, Grauman's Chinese Theater is just about the most exciting place on the planet.

To me, it's the theater that's
playing "The African Queen."

And like the man said, the film on the marquee is "THE AFRICAN QUEEN." Still the same shot, buses disgorge TOURISTS, who move into the forecourt of the theater. The MEN doff their hats and mop their brows. The WOMEN pull their blouses away from their chests, fanning themselves with movie-star maps as they marvel at the signed cement blocks. We MOVE AMONG THEM, until we pick up A COUPLE, and we stay behind them as they work their way through the crowd, on their way to

THE THEATER ENTRANCE,

where an ornately attired DOORMAN smiles and tears their tickets.

DOORMAN

Newsreel's just starting, folks.

PETE'S NARRATION (V.O.)

That's me and my girlfriend. Her name is Sandra Sinclair, and this is her town, too -- she's from Cleveland. She came out here to be an actress, and that's just what she's doing. The first picture I ever wrote, a little potboiler called "Sand Pirates of the Sahara." Okay, it ain't "Citizen Kane," but you gotta start somewhere.

MOVING INTO THE LOBBY

an explosion of glitz mixed with Chinese myth and legend. Everywhere you look, it's red and orange and plush carpeting and golden light. We MOVE THROUGH the lobby, still in the same shot, still tracking the couple, heading for the auditorium doors, which are swept open by two ramrod-erect USHERS and we move into

THE DARKENED THEATER.

As the couple, Pete and Sandra, find seats, we HEAR the soundtrack of the film before we see the screen, the unmistakable strains of a march, and then -- still in the same shot -- we see the screen...

A NEWSREEL.

As the march SWELLS to a crescendo, we HEAR THE NEWSREEL ANNOUNCER'S SONOROUS VOICE:

NEWSREEL ANNOUNCER
Bringing the news of the world to
you!

Over a newsreel shot of a packed Congressional Committee Hearing Room, a title blares "HOLLYWOOD REDS GO TO JAIL!"

NEWSREEL ANNOUNCER
Four years ago, in one of
filmland's darkest hours, ten men,
the so-called "Hollywood Ten," were
called to testify before the House
Committee of Un-American
Activities, investigating the
proliferation of the dreaded Red
Menace in Hollywood.

We see several shots of WITNESSES engaged in heated verbal battles with congressmen, especially Committee Chairman T. JOHNSTON DOYLE and the Majority Counsel, ELVIN CLYDE.

NEWSREEL ANNOUNCER
Refusing to answer the lawmaker's
questions, cowering behind the
Fifth Amendment's protection
against self-incrimination, the ten
motion picture writers dared
Congress to come after them. Well,
come after them they did! And
after years of court wrangling,
it's now time to pay the piper!

Over shots of several of the "Hollywood Ten" being led to jail in handcuffs, the newsreel narration continues.

NEWSREEL ANNOUNCER
And so, it's off to jail, the
charge: Contempt of Congress! This
should give you fellas something to
write about now! A new round of
investigations begins this fall,
the mandate: Get the reds out of
Hollywood!

In the audience, one man YELLS "Lock up the commie bastards!," and a few others cheer and laugh. As the newsreel moves on to a somewhat more innocuous subject, we

WHEEL AROUND AND...

ENDFRAME ON PETE APPLETON AND SANDRA SINCLAIR.

Pete's a handsome fellow in his 30s, and Sandra's a starlet pretty girl in her mid-20s. As she rummages in her purse, Pete watches the newsreel.

SANDRA

Pete, there's time before the picture starts, you want to get some popcorn?

PETE

You bet, honey.

Pete kisses Sandra on the cheek, then stands and sprints up the aisle to the concession stand, a big unworried grin on his face.

PETE'S NARRATION (V.O.)

We were young, we were in love, and we were working in pictures. Life... was good.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. UNITED PICTURES STUDIOS - MAIN GATE - MORNING

Pete pulls up to the guard kiosk in his spiffy yellow convertible Plymouth. The Guard, RAY, steps out to meet him. Pete lights up a cigarette. We get a better sense of him now. Though earnest, he's jocular, and a bit of a fast talker.

PETE

(very chipper)

Mornin', Ray. Whaddya know whaddya say? Me and Sandra caught "The African Queen" at the Chinese last night. Great picture, great picture.

Ray is nonplussed. Tips his hat. Regards Pete suspiciously.

RAY

Mr. Appleton.

PETE

What's with this "Mr. Appleton" crap? Your boss hiding in there?

RAY

You're clear to go in.

PETE

What's that mean?

Ray heads back to his kiosk, shaking his head.

RAY

Have a pleasant day.

Pete, covering his worry well, drives onto the lot.

EXT. UNITED PICTURES STUDIOS - WRITER'S BUILDING - MORNING

Pete pulls up, hops out, grinds out his cigarette, looks around and goes inside.

INT. WRITER'S BUILDING HALLWAY - MORNING

Pete comes down the hall a few steps, stops. Something's wrong. It's awfully quiet. He pokes his head into the door marked "TYPING POOL."

INT. TYPING POOL - MORNING

A sea of black Underwoods -- all silent. The lights in the room are off, and hard shafts of morning sun stream in through the windows. One typists, LOUISE, is going from machine to machine, pulling covers over them.

PETE

Louise... what gives?

She looks up, startled.

LOUISE

Oh Pete... they, uh, they gave everybody the day off... while they sort things out.

PETE

Sort what out? Are my pages done?

LOUISE

They took 'em.

PETE

They took 'em? Who took 'em?
Louise, what's going on...

LOUISE

Pete, I'm not even supposed to be talking to you...

She rushes past him. Pete doesn't quite know what to think.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Good morning, Peter.

Pete turns. The voice belongs to Pete's agent, LEO KUBELSKY, a rotund man in his fifties. He wears a perfectly tailored silk suit.

PETE

Leo... what's going on?

CUT TO:

EXT. STUDIO STREET - DAY

FROM FAR AWAY, we watch as Leo and Pete come out of the Writer's Building and join a flood of DRESS EXTRAS, all done up in Puritan pilgrim garb and heading for the commissary.

As they move through the mob and emerge on the other side, it's clear that Pete is reeling from something he's just been told.

PETE AND LEO

LEO

Peter, their hands are tied. You see that, don't you?

PETE

I... I don't believe this.

LEO

Are you saying it's a mistake, that you didn't go to any meetings? They say you did.

PETE

Who the hell is this "they?"

LEO

Congress, the FBI, Red Channels, it don't matter who the hell "they" is. "They" know who "they" are, that's all that matters.

(deliberately)
Now, did you go to any meetings?

PETE

(on the spot)

No. Yeah... I... I don't know.
Maybe I did. Leo, this was before
Pearl Harbor. I was in college.
It was a bunch of kids, and I was
just one of 'em. I didn't believe
in what they were saying. Hell, I
didn't even know what they were
saying!

LEO

So, you're saying that it's true.
You went to a meeting of a known
communist organization.

PETE

Leo, I was trying to impress a
skirt. You know me, I'm non-
political. Republican, Democrat,
Communist, there's not a dime's
worth of difference between 'em
anyway.

LEO

You should watch what you say.

PETE

I don't know who fingered me, but
I'm not a communist!

LEO

Kid, that cuts no ice with them.

PETE

(frustrated)

What? That I'm accused of being a
communist when I don't happen to be
one?

LEO

They know you were at that meeting,
Peter. They've been told, and they
know.

PETE

Leo, you're my agent. Tell "them"
to take a flyin' piss. I didn't do

anything wrong. I fought in the war, for crissakes!

LEO

Fought? Come on, Pete, you ran the PX at Fort Dix.

PETE

I was decorated.

LEO

I know. A Purple Heart.

PETE

Exactly.

LEO

You broke your arm. You were coming out of a bar. You were drunk.

PETE

At least I was on our side! Look, they want me to testify? I'll testify. I'll tell 'em anything they want to hear! Jesus, Leo, this is my career!

LEO

You can't testify.

PETE

Why not?

Leo takes a gold cigarette case from his breast pocket, offers a cigarette to Pete and takes one for himself.

LEO

Don't take this personally, kid. If it were up to me, I'd have you testify wearing your uniform and your medal, wrapped in a flag with one hand on your heart and the other hand on a bible. What can I say? I like you.

Leo lights Pete's cigarette and his own. Puts a fatherly hand on his shoulder.

LEO

They don't want you to testify

because you're not a big enough fish for them. They just don't want you writing pictures for now. That's all.

PETE

(under his breath)

Yeah, well, that's enough.

LEO

Peter, I believe in you. More to the point, I read your new script... um...

PETE

"Ashes To Ashes?"

LEO

That's the one, "Ashes To Ashes." I think it's great. But it'll never get made with this communist business hanging over your head. You can't work until you're cleared -- and believe me, starting right now, I'm gonna do everything I can to make that happen.

PETE

So, it is a blacklist.

LEO

(defensive)

Don't say that. There is no such thing as a blacklist.

(calm)

Now, are you gonna play ball?

PETE

(sullenly)

Yes.

(then, pissed)

Leo, goddammit... this isn't fair!

Leo blows out a thin stream of smoke.

LEO

(hand on Pete's shoulder)

Kid, this is the United States Government we're talkin' about. Fair ain't the point.

CUT TO:

INT. WRITER'S BUILDING/PETE'S OFFICE - DAY

Prominent on the wall is a framed "SAND PIRATES OF THE SAHARA" poster. Pete reaches up and takes it down. He leans it up against the desk, then sits heavily in the wooden swivel chair. He swivels around to see

A STUDIO SECURITY GUARD

standing by the door. He's watching Pete's every move.

Two boxes sit on the desk, partially packed with Pete's belongings. Pete lights a cigarette and opens the lower desk drawer. He pulls out a stack of scripts and sets them on the desk. He looks at the cover of the first one:

"SAND PIRATES OF THE SAHARA"
By Peter Appleton
A United Pictures Production
February 19, 1951

Pete shuffles the scripts and looks at the cover of the second one:

"ASHES TO ASHES"
By Peter Appleton

He jams the scripts into one box and turns to the other box, which contains somewhat more personal items. A ragged gold pillow with tassels. Legal pads of notes. An old tin-toy fire truck, its bright red paint chipped and worn. He turns it around in his hands.

PETE
(musing)
Huh. Red...

Footsteps approach, and Pete swivels toward the door.

SANDRA (O.S.)
Pete? Pete...?

Sandra appears in the doorway. She's in costume -- a Louis XIV courtier. She bustles past the Guard, rushes to Pete and embraces him.

SANDRA
Oh, Pete...

They kiss. The Guard watches their every move.

SANDRA

What happened?

PETE

What exactly did you hear?

SANDRA

That you got let go.

PETE

I wasn't alone. Wasn't Frankie Ruskin directing the picture you're in?

SANDRA

He was, but he got sick. We got a new director today. Why?

PETE

Well, whatever Frankie's got, it's catching.

SANDRA

You mean, he was... let go, too?

PETE

(sotto, an appeal)

They're saying I'm a communist, Sandy. But I'm not, you know that. I'm gonna fight 'em, and I'm gonna win, but I'll need your help.

During this last, Sandra has been ever-so-slightly pulling away from Pete.

PETE

A lot of good people are being accused of things they didn't do. Hell, even if I was a communist, this is America, goddammit, a person should be able to be whatever they want to be! Right?

Sandra glances at the Guard, who is watching everything.

SANDRA

(nervously)

Of course, but I... I don't know how I... how much help I can be to

you. This is the sort of thing...
someone saying you're a
communist... it can ruin your
career.

Pete sees where this is going. She's edging toward the door.

PETE

Will you help me, Sandy?

SANDRA

I'll have to think about this. I
have to get back... I should go...

And she's out the door and gone in the blink of an eye. Pete
looks at the Guard.

PETE

So nice to be a pariah.

The Guard turns away. Pete moves back toward the boxes.
Rummaging again, he comes up with a bottle of Jack Daniels
with barely one swig left. He regards the bottle for a
moment, looks to see if the Guard is watching (he isn't),
pops the cork, puts it to his lips and drains it. He looks
at it thoughtfully as we

CUT TO:

A HALF-FULL BOTTLE OF JACK DANIELS setting down on a bartop.

WIDER

INT. THE FROLIC ROOM - NIGHT

The bottle is in front of Pete, who sits at the bar, quietly
getting stewed. The Frolic Room is a classic Hollywood dive,
dimly lit and full of character and characters. It's a quiet
night and getting quieter, as several PATRONS are just
leaving, waving goodbye to the bartender, JERRY, early 40s.
Jerry turns to Pete, eyes him suspiciously from the end of
the bar. Pete picks up the bottle and pours another shot.
Good boy, he got most of it in the glass.

JERRY

Pete. You think maybe you've had
enough?

PETE

Bought the bottle, didn't I?
(raises the shot)

To the United States of America.
Long my she wave.

He knocks it back and Jerry pours him another.

PETE

(trying to light a smoke)
Thanks, Jerry. Tell me something.

JERRY

What.

PETE

You tight with J. Edgar Hoover?

JERRY

(helps Pete light his
cigarette)
The G-man?

PETE

(thickly)
Zackly.

JERRY

Pete, if J. Edgar Hoover walked in
here wearing a dress, I wouldn't
know him.

PETE

Too bad. He says I'm a communist.

JERRY

(glancing around)
You should watch what you say. You
don't know who's listening.

PETE

You know I'm not a communist, don't
you, Jer?

JERRY

Sure, I suppose. That why you're
on a bender?

PETE

This is not a bender yet. This is
the start of a bender. But I can
see how you were confused, they
look a lot alike.

Pete drains his shotglass, puts it back on the bar. He watches Jerry, who is not about to refill it. Pete reaches for the bottle, but Jerry is faster.

JERRY

Pete... go home. Come on, I'll call that girlfriend of yours, what's her name... Sandy?

PETE

(laughs)
Sandra Sinclair.

JERRY

Gimmee her number, I'll have her pick you up.

PETE

Sandra Sinclair. Wanna know her real name? Bella Iskowitz. No one's who they really are, Jer. Everyone's someone else. Even you. Even me. Especially me. I'm Peter Appleton, the communist who's not really a communist.

JERRY

I wanna close up soon. C'mon, let's call her.

Peter stands, stubs out his smoke, drops a few crumpled bills on the bar and grabs his hat.

PETE

Nope. Can't. We're through.

JERRY

Then I'll call you a cab.

PETE

I'll save you the trouble.

(beat)

I'm a cab. There. Did it myself.

Pete's preoccupied with putting on his hat and getting his car keys out of his coat pocket, a daunting task in his condition.

PETE

'Sides, car's right outside. I'll be seein' ya, Jer.

JERRY

Pete...

And he's out the door.

EXT. FROLIC ROOM - NIGHT

Pete takes a few steps, stumbles, stops, takes a deep breath, then totters briskly towards his car. He hauls the door open and sits inside heavily.

INT./ EXT. PETE'S CAR - NIGHT

Sitting slumped against the steering wheel, Pete looks as though he could fall asleep right there, which would probably be a good idea.

PETE

(mumbling)

Drive. Drive. Bad idea. Too drunk to drive.

He looks at his watch.

PETE

One-thirty. Huh! Early. Can't go home yet.

He turns the key and hits the starter. The engine hums to life. Pete sits up, opens his eyes wide, shakes off the haze and puts the car in gear.

The Plymouth lurches forward a few yards, screeches to a halt and stalls.

PETE

Oops.

He re-starts the car, puts it in gear, and pulls away and down the deserted boulevard.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SANTA MONICA BEACH, AMUSEMENT PIER - NIGHT

The full moon is low over the ocean. Pete's car is parked at the edge of the sand, the water fifty yards away. The ferris wheel and the roller coaster of the amusement pier are dark and eerie silhouettes, lit only by moonlight. Pete is asleep in the driver's seat, head tilted back, his hat covering his

face, snoring.

The waves CRASH against the pilings and startle Pete awake.

PETE

Huh? Whatsa...

Instantly, he grabs his head.

PETE'S NARRATION (V.O.)

I had no idea how I got to Santa Monica, but it certainly was a good idea. I don't think I could've faced the headache I had alone in my apartment. At least I had the ocean air.

Pete takes a deep breath... and starts coughing. He gets out his cigarettes and lights up. He takes a puff and glances at his watch.

PETE'S NARRATION (V.O.)

Three forty-five. I had only been there for a couple of hours at most. Truth be told, I was still fairly drunk.

He starts the car and heads for the highway.

PETE'S NARRATION (V.O.)

I'd head north until the sun came up or I ran out of gas, whichever came first.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Pete drives along the moonlit two-lane blacktop. Waves crash to the shore below the roadway.

INT./ EXT. PETE'S CAR (DRIVING) - NIGHT

Pete is finally relaxed. He takes off his hat and jams it down in the back seat. He takes a deep breath -- with the wind in his hair, a smile grows on his face and he seems at peace. He glances down at the speedometer -- then at the fuel gauge.

INSERT - FUEL GAUGE

Pinning on "empty."

PETE

Shit.

PETE'S NARRATION (V.O.)

Guess which came first.

He scans the road ahead -- nothing. Glances to his right.

PETE'S POV

The lights of a small town can be seen off in the distance.

Pete veers the car off the highway and makes the turn that will take him toward the lights. He passes a hand-painted sign that gives him hope: "GAS - 1 MI."

CUT TO:

EXT. RORY'S GAS STATION - NIGHT

Pete's car rolls up and stops. There's a light on the sign and another in the station's window, but the place is deserted.

PETE'S NARRATION (V.O.)

I should've known better than to think that a service station in the sticks would be open at this hour, but it wasn't like I had a lot of choices.

Pete looks ahead toward the town. Its few lights twinkle in the distance.

PETE'S NARRATION (V.O.)

What the hell. At least there'd be a diner opening in a couple of hours. I'd get some pie and coffee, and then I could worry about the gas.

Pete pulls out onto the road.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Pete's car trundles along, blowing past a hand-painted roadside sign which reads:

SLOW!

NARROW BRIDGE - SINGLE LANE - NO GUARDRAIL
USE CAUTION!

INT./ EXT. PETE'S CAR (DRIVING) - NIGHT

Pete's headlights catch a glimpse of another sign, reading "LAWSON WASH," just in front of a small wooden auto bridge.

Barely reducing his speed, Pete heads onto the bridge...

HIS POV - THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

... his headlights pick up the glowing eyes of a hapless possum...

Pete swerves to avoid the animal, and a wheel drops off the edge...

EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

... and the Plymouth careens over the side of the bridge and into the rapidly-moving water below!

EXT. UNDERWATER - NIGHT

The water is flowing very quickly, and the current is intense. Pete pulls himself out of the driver's seat (thankfully, it's a convertible) and swims over the windshield.

But... his left sleeve is caught on the door handle. Nearly out of breath and panicking, Pete shucks off the jacket and heads for the surface.

EXT. THE WASH - NIGHT

Pete breaks the surface and gasps for air. His fight isn't over yet, as the current is pulling him rapidly downstream. He swims with all his might toward the far bank.

EXT. FAR BANK OF THE WASH - NIGHT

Drained, Pete pulls himself out of the water and staggers to his feet.

PETE

(gasping)

Oh my god! I don't believe... oh
my god...

He stumbles along backwards a couple of steps... and his heel

hits a rock...

Pete falls backward -- and his head strikes a glancing blow on another rock. He rolls down the bank, unconscious, and lands face down in the mud.

CUT TO BLACK.

IN BLACK, we slowly become aware of a panting, breathing sound -- the sound of a dog...

FADE IN:

ON A DOG'S FACE

A yellow labrador, full frame. It takes a couple more sniffs, then starts licking furiously.

OLD MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Maggie, whatcha got there? Huh,
girl? Whatcha find?

EXT. FAR BANK OF THE WASH - DAWN

Pete is still laying face down on the bank, being fervently licked in the face by the dog.

ON THE OLD MAN

A no-nonsense sort in his late-60s, he wears overalls and an old railroad cap. He comes down to Pete, and using his walking stick, pokes him in the side.

OLD MAN
Mister, who are ya? my dog likes
you, but that don't mean much, she
likes skunks, too. Sweet n'stupid,
that's why I keep her.

Pete blinks up at the Old Man, his mouth gaping open.

OLD MAN
Mister, you okay? You look wet.
You in an accident or somethin'?

PETE
I... I don't know.

He sits up, and the Old Man gets a look at his head, which is caked with mud and blood on one side.

OLD MAN

You best come with me. Can ya walk?

PETE

I... yes, I think so.

He stands up shakily. The Old Man gives Pete a hand.

OLD MAN

Come on, we'll have the Doc look you over.

PETE

My head hurts.

OLD MAN

I shouldn't be surprises. You smell like that was quite a night before you had there.

(to the dog)

Maggie! Let's go now!

And they head toward the road to town. BOOMING UP, we SEE them pass a roadside sign:

ON THE SIGN:

WELCOME TO
LAWSON, CALIFORNIA
EST. 1869
ELEV. 275 POP. 1755
THE TOWN
THAT GAVE ITS ALL

OLD MAN (STANTON)

Name's Stanton Lawson. My ancestors founded this town.

PETE

Ancestors?

STANTON

Actually, my grandpap. But "ancestors" sounds better, don't it?

(hands Pete a handkerchief)

Here.

Pete takes the handkerchief and wipes the mud and some of the

blood off his face.

PETE

I suppose. Thanks.

STANTON

You look familiar, fella. What's your name?

Pete stops, thinks for a moment.

PETE

I'm... I... I honestly don't know.

CUT TO:

EXT. COMMERCE STREET - LAWSON, CALIFORNIA - DAY

Pete and Stanton walk along Commerce Street, the main drag through the center of the small town. Lawson is a bit run down, creeping inexorably toward decrepit. Despite that, there's a timeless quality to the small buildings, a familiar All-American feel.

Several of the PEOPLE walking along the street take notice of Pete and nod to Stanton, who nods back.

PETE

They all know you?

STANTON

'Course they all know me. And I know all them. Town's got my name, don't it?

They pass the window of the drug store, COLE'S PHARMACY. Pete looks down and sees

TWO FADED GOLD STARS

in the window with two faded photos, all decked in tattered black crepe. Two boys, no more than 18 and 19, who went off to war and didn't come back.

Stanton notes Pete stopping to look at the stars and photos.

STANTON

Ernie Cole here just got himself elected mayor. Lost both his boys in the war. Kenny at Anzio and Willie at Normandy.

PETE
(thinking)
The war...

STANTON
(points across the street)
Mabel over there at the diner lost
her husband Max. Okinawa, I
believe.

ANGLE - MABEL'S DINER

A typical small-town greasy spoon -- with one faded star
prominent in the window.

CLOSER

On MABEL LANIER, a sweet-faced woman in her 30s. She stares
vacantly into space, her reverie broken by a customer needing
a coffee refill.

STANTON
All told, this little town gave
sixty-two of its finest to the war.
Seventeen of 'em at Normandy alone.
More'n its share, I should say.
Got us a letter from President
Truman. City council commissioned
a war memorial. Been sittin' in
the basement of city hall these six
years. Town never had the heart to
put it up. Place just hasn't been
the same since the war.

STANTON AND PETE

Pete looks longingly toward the diner. Stanton takes note.

STANTON
You hungry, son?

PETE
Yes. Very.

STANTON
Got any money?

Pete rummages in his pants pockets, and comes up with three
quarters.

STANTON

Six bits. More'n enough to buy
some breakfast. C'mon.

And they head across the street.

CUT TO:

A PLATE WITH TWO PIECES OF APPLE PIE

A fork comes into frame and tears into one of the slices.

WIDER

INT. MABEL'S DINER - DAY

Pete is fairly shoveling the pie into his mouth, pausing only
to wash it down with gulps of coffee.

MABEL

stands nearby, watching in amazement as her pie is consumed
in record time.

Pete notices that Stanton and Mabel -- and the other PATRONS,
for that matter -- are watching his feeding frenzy. He stops
in his tracks, and starts chewing leisurely. He smiles at
Mabel.

PETE

(mouth full)

Pie's... good.

MABEL

(wryly)

Like you could tell.

(to Stanton)

Where'd you find him?

STANTON

Down by the wash.

MABEL

We gotta put a rail on that thing
before someone else gets killed.

(to Pete)

Three people have died there,
Mister. You're lucky to be alive.

PETE

(draining the coffee cup)

Thanks. More coffee?

Mabel obliges. As she pours the coffee, she looks at Pete.

MABEL

You know, you look familiar. You ever been in here before?

Pete shakes his head.

STANTON

He don't remember who he is, Mabel. Gonna take him to the Doc, as soon as he gets in.

MABEL

(distractedly)

Doc should be in for his coffee and bear claw any minute...

(to Pete)

You sure you never been in here?

Pete looks up at Mabel and smiles winningly.

PETE

I'd remember this pie.

Mabel, thoroughly charmed, smiles back at Pete.

MABEL

(patting his hand)

I'll just get you another piece.

EXT. COMMERCE STREET - DAY

A stoop-shouldered little man in his late 60s, HARRY TRUMBO shambles along the street, headed for Mabel's Diner. There's a sadness about Harry, the world-weary melancholy of a man who has little to smile about because he has little to care about. After a couple of steps, he's met up by DOC BEN LARDNER, a vigorous man in his 50s. He comes up behind Harry and claps him on the back.

LARDNER

'Mornin' Harry. Fine day, isn't it?

HARRY

Morning, Doc. Yes, yes it looks just fine.

LARDNER
Plenty to do today?

HARRY
(vaguely)
Oh, yes, plenty. Plenty.

They're at the door of the diner. Doc opens it for Harry.

LARDNER
After you.

INT. MABEL'S DINER - DAY

Lardner comes over to Mabel, who hands him a tall paper cup of coffee and bags him a bear claw.

LARDNER
Mornin' Mabel, Stan.

MABEL
Mornin' Doc. Got some new business
for you today.

Lardner and Pete make eye contact, and the doctor notices the bump on his head.

LARDNER
Hello, son. How'd that happen?

STANTON
He don't know. And he don't know
his name, neither. Found him down
by the wash.

LARDNER
You'd better come with me, son.
(to Mabel, indicating the
coffee and danish)
On my tab?

MABEL
You bet.

Lardner, Stanton and Pete rise and move to the door. Pete turns back, takes the three quarters out of his pocket, and puts them on the counter, smiling brightly at Mabel.

PETE
Thanks. Great pie.

MABEL
(blushing)
You're welcome. Come again.

ON HARRY

seated at the opposite end of the counter. He glances up at Pete.

HARRY'S POV

as Pete smiles at Mabel and turns to go.

ON HARRY

His mouth falls open, his hand moves to cover it. He's just seen a ghost...

HARRY'S POV - SLOW MOTION...

... as the three men pass by the diner's window.

CLOSE - HARRY

HARRY
(wide eyed)
Sweet Jesus...

CUT TO:

A FINGER --

moving left-to-right, right-to-left through space.

LARDNER'S VOICE
Follow my finger. Just use your
eyes. That's it. Good.

WIDER

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

Doc Lardner is checking Pete's eyes. Pete sits on an examination table, his shirt off, his head freshly bandaged. Stanton lurks in the corner, Maggie curled at his feet.

STANTON
He was passed out cold. Maggie
woke 'im.

LARDNER

Uh-huh. He looks familiar.

(to Pete)

Open your mouth. Say "ah."

Pete does. Lardner has a look as Stanton pulls out a pocket watch.

STANTON

Said as much myself, Doc. Can't place him, though. To look at him, you'd think the cheese slid off his cracker.

(looks at his watch)

Well, morning's half-over. I'm off.

PETE

Thank you, Mr. Lawson.

STANTON

Don't mention it. Whoever-you-are.

Stanton and Maggie exit. Lardner checks Pete's ears.

LARDNER

Any idea how you got here, son?

PETE

No, sir.

Lardner sniffs him.

LARDNER

Been drinkin' a bit, have we?

PETE

I don't remember. I guess so. Smells like it.

(smacks his lips and frowns)

Tastes like it.

LARDNER

Well, you've been wet to the skin. You must've fallen in.

PETE

I guess I did.

LARDNER

Lucky you got out, that water's got

quite a pull, and it empties
straight into the ocean.

Lardner takes a shirt off his counter and hands it to Pete.

LARDNER
Here, one of mine.

PETE
Thanks.

Pete puts on the shirt.

LARDNER
Do you remember if you were driving
a car? Maybe you went over the
bridge. No guard rail there, it's
easy to do. It's happened before.

PETE
It's possible. I just don't
remember.

LARDNER
And you don't know your name or who
you are, that right?

PETE
(frustrated)
I... no, I... I just can't...

LARDNER
(gently)
It's okay, son. We just need to
call you something. That's all.

Pete stifles a laugh.

LARDNER
What is it?

PETE
Call me... Ishmael?

LARDNER
Well, at least you remember "Moby
Dick."

CUT TO:

INT. DOC LARDNER'S PRIVATE OFFICE - DAY

Lardner is on the phone, sipping his coffee and nibbling his bear claw. Pete is standing, nosing around the office -- diplomas, photographs, knick-knacks. He zeros in on one photo in particular.

ON THE PHOTO

one of Lardner and a beautiful YOUNG WOMAN. They've been fishing, and the young woman displays a much larger catch than Lardner.

LARDNER

(into phone)

Stanton found him by the wash. Not hurt too bad, but he took a nasty bump on the head and he can't remember who he is. We both think he looks familiar, but we can't place him. You bet. He'll be here.

Lardner hangs up and watches Pete looking at the pictures.

LARDNER

That's me and my daughter Adele. My pride and joy. Charms the fish right out of the lake, she does.

PETE

She's very pretty.

LARDNER

Thanks. Well, Sheriff's on his way over, and maybe we can get to the bottom of who you are...

Lardner stares at him. Pete takes note, turns toward him.

LARDNER

... sorry 'bout that, but you do look familiar to me.

PETE

Wish I could say the same thing.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOC LARDNER'S OFFICE - DAY

The Sheriff's sedan pulls up to the office and SHERIFF CECIL

ELDRIDGE, 45, gets out. As he gets a few steps from the door, Harry Trumbo jumps out from around the side of the building and stops him.

HARRY

(excited)

Cecil! Cecil, there's a young man in there...

ELDRIDGE

(startled)

Lord love a duck, Harry, you wanna give me a heart attack right in front of the doctor's office?

HARRY

Listen to me! The young man in there...

Eldridge keeps moving to the door.

ELDRIDGE

(interrupting)

Stan Lawson found him unconscious by the wash this morning, and I'm here to investigate, and if we find anything interesting, it'll be in the paper, so why don't you just...

Harry jumps in front of Eldridge and grabs him by the shoulders.

HARRY

Cecil, listen to me!

The sheriff stops.

HARRY

(breathless)

It's Luke.

CUT TO:

INT. DOC LARDNER'S PRIVATE OFFICE - DAY

Sheriff Eldridge is seated across from Pete. He's staring at him intently. Silence.

ELDRIDGE

No wallet, huh?

LARDNER

No identification at all.

(beat)

What're you thinkin', Cecil?

ELDRIDGE

What I'm thinkin' is we got us one a'two things here. A mystery or a damn miracle. And by god I can't tell which.

(to Pete)

Boy, you say you have no idea who you are? That right?

PETE

Yes.

ELDRIDGE

You ever been in this town before, to your knowledge?

PETE

No. But...

ELDRIDGE

But what?

PETE

Well, this place sorta reminds me of something.

ELDRIDGE

What's that?

PETE

"It's a Wonderful Life."

ELDRIDGE

The Jimmy Stewart picture? I remember that one. Saw it over at the Bijou. So, you remember that, huh?

PETE

"It's a Wonderful Life?"

ELDRIDGE

Or the Bijou. Either one.

PETE

I remember the picture... but I

don't remember where I saw it.

The Sheriff rises and crosses to the door.

ELDRIDGE

Doc, with your permission, I want to bring someone in here. Maybe it'll jar this young man's memory.

LARDNER

By all means.

Eldridge opens the door.

ELDRIDGE

(to someone offscreen)

Harry, why don't you come on in here.

Harry enters the office, doffs his hat, revealing a full head of snow-white hair. He nods to Eldridge and Lardner, and slowly turns to face Pete. He looks closer... and closer. Hesitantly, he takes a couple of steps towards Pete, who slowly rises out of his chair to meet the old man's gaze. Finally, they're standing practically toe-to-toe.

PETE

looks a bit puzzled, but the old man has such a sweet face...

HARRY

has tears forming in his eyes. A smile turns up the corners of his mouth, and quickly lights up his whole face.

LARDNER

(softly, to Eldridge)

Are you saying that he's...

ELDRIDGE

(smiling broadly)

Shhhhhh.

Harry takes Pete in his arms and hugs him tightly, burying his face in Pete's shoulder and sobbing.

HARRY

I knew all along. I knew you were alive! Oh, Luke...

Pete doesn't quite know what to think. He clearly has no

idea who this old man is.

LARDNER
(mouth agape in disbelief)
Mother o'god...

ELDRIDGE
(to Pete)
Give the man a hug, boy! That's
your father!

Pete looks at Harry. It's not so much that he remembers anything -- he's swept up in the moment.

PETE
My father...?

Pete wraps his arms around Harry and hugs him tightly, glancing over at

ELDRIDGE AND LARDNER

who look on goofily, fighting back tears. They smile at Pete, who smiles back tentatively.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOC LARDNER'S OFFICE - DAY

Harry, Pete, Eldridge and Lardner come outside.

ELDRIDGE
C'mon, I'll give you two a lift
back to the Bijou.

PETE
The Bijou?

LARDNER
That's where you live.

PETE
We live in a theater?

HARRY
Only one in town.
(he opens the car door for
Pete)
Get in, son.

ELDRIDGE

(sotto, to Lardner)
Ben, when's Delly due back?

LARDNER
(sotto)
Tomorrow afternoon...
(seized by a thought)
... oh my god...

ELDRIDGE
(sotto)
Exactly. Break it to her gently.

Eldridge and Harry get in the car. Lardner comes over to Pete's back seat window.

LARDNER
Get plenty of rest, Luke. You took
a pretty big wallop there.

He turns to move away, then turns back.

LARDNER
Good to have you back.

Eldridge starts the car and they drive away.

(NOTE: Henceforth, "PETE" will be known as "LUKE." It'll be easier to keep track of things, since everyone's now calling him Luke, anyway. Trust me.)

CUT TO:

INT. ELDRIDGE'S CAR (DRIVING) - DAY

Harry sits next to the Sheriff, and Luke has the back seat all to himself. He leans forward toward the front seat and taps Harry on the shoulder.

LUKE
Excuse me... what's your, um, your
name?

HARRY
Harry, son. Harry.

LUKE
And... what's my name again?

HARRY
Albert Lucas Trumbo. But you've

been "Luke" since you were a baby.

LUKE

Ah.

(taking it for a spin)

Luke. Luke. I like it.

Luke looks at the town as they drive down Commerce Street.

HIS POV

Shops are open for business, TOWNSPEOPLE are going about their lives. A few stop and watch as the Sheriff's car goes by.

LUKE

How long have I been gone?

Eldridge looks at Harry, who stares ahead.

LUKE

How long?

Pause. The silence is too thick, and Harry has to answer. He turns around in his seat and faces Luke.

HARRY

(gently)

You never came back from the war.
We were told you were missing and
presumed dead.

LUKE

When did I leave?

HARRY

You joined up one month to the day
after Pearl Harbor. January
seventh... nineteen forty-two.

Luke sits back against the back seat and lets this sink in.

HARRY

Nine and-a-half years ago.

LUKE

Nine and-a-half years...

ELDRIDGE

Comin' up on the Bijou, gents.

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE BIJOU - DAY

Eldridge's car rounds the corner, pulls up and stops.

ELDRIDGE

Here we are.

HARRY

Well, son, you're home!

Luke peers across the street... his mouth gapes open...

HIS POV - THE BIJOU.

The Bijou is a decaying, Dada-esque, grab-bag of building styles. It's as though the architect took random parts of a Chinese temple, a Mosque, a Pagoda, a Sphinx, a symphony hall and a slaughterhouse, put them in a bag, gave it a good shake, tossed the contents out onto a blueprint and promptly built the result.

As a matter of fact, if you didn't know that the place was "The Bijou," you'd probably wonder what the cryptic message

" HE B J U"

was trying to convey from atop the crumbling parapet.

And now, the reason for the deteriorated state of the " HE B J U" sign becomes apparent. Train tracks run right behind the building on an elevated trestle. As we watch, a TRAIN ROARS BY. Everything shakes. It's not an earthquake, it's a trainquake. The "J" teeters at a jaunty angle, threatening to dislodge and tumble down to join its fallen brothers.

LUKE

stares at the monstrosity. His face is ashen. His heart has sunk to somewhere below his knees.

The Bijou.

Harry jumps out of the car excitedly.

HARRY

Thanks for the lift, Cecil.

ELDRIDGE

Don't mention it. Welcome home,
Luke.

LUKE
(faint smile)
Thanks.

Luke opens the back door and slowly steps out. Harry grabs his arm and pulls a ring of keys from his pocket.

HARRY
Wait'll you see the inside!

LUKE
(deadpan)
Can't wait.

CUT TO:

INT. BIJOU LOBBY - DAY

The interior of the theater fulfills every promise made by the exterior. Moth-eaten velvet-flocked wallpaper hangs in shards and pieces from the walls. It's sort of a cross between a gaudy cathouse and a mausoleum, served up with generous helpings of dust and grime, an almost unbeatable combination of questionable taste and neglect.

Above the center of the lobby hangs what was -- and is -- probably the only truly beautiful item in the whole theater --

A DELICATE CRYSTAL CHANDELIER.

Even under a veneer of dust, the fragile droplets of cut crystal seem to pick up every available point of light and scatter it in a hundred directions.

TILT DOWN TO REVEAL

Luke and Harry standing below. Luke is lost in a gulf somewhere between surprise and disgust.

HARRY
We've been closed for a while.

LUKE
(smiling wanly)
Ah.

Luke walks toward the auditorium doors and slowly, cracks one open.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

The ocean of two hundred or so seats on the main floor seem to be, for the most part, intact -- although the occasional row seems to have loosed itself from its moorings and heaved itself up against the row behind or in front.

THE SCREEN

is really not much more than a tatty bit of yellowing muslin, framed by ragged red velveteen drapery.

In the tiny orchestra pit, as we will see later, is an old upright piano.

Luke walks a few steps down the aisle. He picks a seat on the aisle near the middle of the theater and sits. As he does, a CAT, an orange tabby, leaps out from under another seat, jets past Luke and disappears down the aisle and backstage. Harry comes over and sits behind him.

LUKE

(turning to Harry)

Exactly how long has the Bijou been closed?

HARRY

Hmmmm... after you left, it was difficult, and then Lily -- that's your mother -- she took ill and died... we haven't shown a picture since forty-eight.

LUKE

Why?

HARRY

(deep breath)

Well, after the war, with so many of the town's boys killed, people around here didn't much feel like going to the movies, I guess. Some of 'em moved away -- Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Francisco. Wasn't much to keep 'em here, I expect. And now with this "television" thing -- people just aren't going out as much as they used to.

LUKE

Didn't you have any help?

HARRY

Oh, I had Irene and Old Tim but they really couldn't help much. Broke their hearts when we closed up. Broke mine, too.

(brightening)

But now that you're back, well, things will be different around here, that's for sure.

(rises, grabs Luke's arm)

C'mon, I'll show you where we live.

CUT TO:

INT. BIJOU APARTMENT - DAY

The small apartment above the projection booth is quite a contrast to the rest of the theater. It's neat as a pin, and fairly lit, as Harry has just pulled back the curtains, allowing the sun to flood the room.

A beam of golden light falls across a table, atop which are

SEVERAL FRAMED PHOTOS.

One of the photos is of the real, much-younger Luke. It's a Norman Rockwell scene, at a train depot, with an army-issue olive drab duffel bag slung over his shoulder. He has one arm around Harry and the other around his mother.

(And by the way, Pete's resemblance to the real Luke -- even in a nearly 10 year old photo -- is pretty damn startling...)

HARRY

The day you shipped out. That was a proud day for your mother and me. Last time you saw her. Last time I saw you.

He smiles.

HARRY

Till today.

Luke sets it down and picks up another photo, that of a fine looking woman. It's a formal portrait, dating perhaps from the 30's.

HARRY

That's Lily. Your mother, rest her soul.

LUKE
(repeating)
Mother.
(to Harry)
She's beautiful.

HARRY
(coming over)
Well, yes, that she was. She
certainly made this place a home.

He takes the picture from Luke, kisses it, and gently replaces it on the table. Luke goes over to the sofa and sits.

HARRY
(brightly)
Can I get you anything? I can put
some coffee on or some...

Harry looks at Luke, who has almost instantly fallen asleep on the sofa.

He goes to him, gently picks his feet off the floor, lifts them onto the sofa. Removes his shoes, sets them on the floor.

CUT TO:

A BLANKET

being drawn up Luke's chest.

HARRY

stands, looks down warmly at his son. Then, suddenly, he's seized by a thought. He turns and crosses to the window.

CLOSE - THE WINDOW

There's a small picture frame in the window. Harry reaches down, gingerly picks it up and turns it around.

ON THE FRAME

It's a single, faded gold star. One war casualty.

Harry clutches it to his chest, looks over at the sleeping Luke and smiles.

HARRY

(softly)

When I woke up this morning, my son
was dead. Now, I have my boy
again.

(closes his eyes)

I have my boy again.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. BIJOU APARTMENT - MORNING

It's early morning. Luke is sound asleep, still in his
clothes. In the distance, a train sounds its HORN.

Luke rolls over on his back, still asleep, snoring lightly.
Slowly, he starts to wake up, eyes still closed.

Something's strange, though. He frowns. The train is
GETTING CLOSER. Luke's eyes POP OPEN.

LUKE'S POV

As the train RUMBLES BY, shaking everything in the room, Luke
looks up to see three ancient cherubs staring down at him.
Harry, an elderly WOMAN, and an elderly BLACK MAN.

HARRY

(smiling)

'Morning, Son.

ELDERLY WOMAN

(smiling)

Good morning, Luke.

ELDERLY BLACK MAN

(no expression)

'Mornin'.

HARRY

Sleep well?

Luke is speechless. Is he dreaming this?

HARRY

They couldn't wait to see you.

LUKE

Who... are they?

HARRY

This is the staff of the Bijou.

LUKE

Oh. What... what time is it?

HARRY

Six-thirty. I thought we'd get an early start.

Luke sits up on the sofa and tries to get a little more awake. He rubs the side of his head that is still bandaged. The elderly woman nudges Harry gently.

HARRY

Oh, I'm sorry, they know you, but you don't... you need to be re-introduced. Luke, this is Mrs. Irene Terwilliger.

Luke stands and shakes MRS. TERWILLIGER'S hand. She's tiny, seventy if she's a day. She smiles and curtsies slightly. Her eyes sparkle brightly, her manner almost coquettish.

MRS. TERWILLIGER

Head cashier and refreshments clerk. So glad to have you back, my boy!

(to Harry)

Much more handsome than I remember him.

HARRY

And this fine fellow is our head usher, resident fix-it man and custodian. Luke, meet Old Tim.

(to Old Tim)

You remember Luke, don't you?

OLT TIM is -- well, old. His clothes are a tad shabby, but well maintained, though they hang loosely on his gangly frame. He wears an old blue knit cap, which he quickly removes as he shakes Luke's hand. He's a man of few words, his manner is painfully shy -- and he never smiles.

LUKE

Is there a young Tim?

OLD TIM

No.

LUKE

Well, then, why do they call you
"Old Tim?"

Pause.

OLD TIM

I'm old.

Harry steps forward, takes Luke's arm.

HARRY

Well, lots to do, so we'd better
get a move on...

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Luke, Harry and Mrs. Terwilliger walk down the aisle toward the screen. Old Time lags a few steps behind. At the orchestra pit, Harry climbs the steps, crosses the pit. The screen is a sea of repair patches. Harry pats it. Dust flies.

HARRY

'Fraid this has seen better days.
Well, I was meaning to get a new
screen, anyway.

OLD TIM

I n-need me a new uniform.

Luke looks at Old Tim, then at Harry.

HARRY

(to Luke)

I promised him a new uniform when
we re-opened.

(to Old Tim)

And you'll get one, too.

LUKE

You know, I hate to bring this up,
but screens and uniforms and paint
and repairs are going to take
money, which I'm willing to bet
none of us has.

Silence from the group.

LUKE

I thought so.

Beat. Harry brightens, clambers down the steps and races up the aisle.

HARRY

Anyone want to see the projector?

CUT TO:

TWO CARBON ARCS

are squeakily being cranked together above the din of a fan motor. A puff of smoke, then -- BZZZZZZZZZZTT -- LIGHT. A metal door is closed over the arcs.

INT. PROJECTION BOOTH - DAY

Harry dances around to the other side of the projector and adjusts the focus on the beam of light. The others look on as he gazes at the screen through the tiny window.

HARRY

Beautiful. Bright and even from edge to edge. See for yourself.

The carbons sputter and die. The light flickers out. Harry is crestfallen, turns off the motor.

HARRY

She's always been a bit tricky.

CUT TO:

INT. BIJOU LOBBY - DAY

Mrs. Terwilliger is dusting the concession stand with a ragged feather duster, a hopeless task. Old Tim is on a rickety ladder, replacing burned-out bulbs in the chandelier. The orange tabby cat scratches itself on the leg of the ladder.

Old Tim climbs down and catches his breath. Mrs. Terwilliger sneezes.

OLD TIM

Bless.

MRS. TERWILLIGER

Thank you, Timothy.

They both stop their work and glance warily at the door marked "OFFICE."

MRS. TERWILLIGER

(sotto)

What do you suppose they're talking about?

OLD TIM

Dunno. Boy's smart.

MRS. TERWILLIGER

(brightly)

Yes, he seems to be.

OLD TIM

Bad for us.

INT. BIJOU OFFICE - DAY

Luke is poring over the ledger books, adding up figures on an old manual adding machine.

LUKE

Um... Harry? Did I ever keep the books here?

HARRY

No, your mother did, then I did after she passed.

LUKE

Well, I'm the first one to admit that I don't know anything about bookkeeping, but there are some very interesting things in here.

He scans down a page.

LUKE

(reading)

"February 10, 1942. Picture 'Ball of Fire.'"

HARRY

(appreciatively)

Gary Cooper. And Barbara Stanwyck. Yowsa.

LUKE

(reading)

"Eight p.m. showtime, ninety-six admissions, receipts including concessions, \$84.75... plus one fryer and two-dozen eggs."

He closes the book and looks expectantly at Harry.

HARRY

Yes?

LUKE

"one fryer and two-dozen eggs?"

HARRY

Forty-two was a lean year around here. The war had just started... you were gone less than a month... and we were coming off a bit of a drought as I recall. Not everyone could ante up the price of a ticket, and a chicken's as good as money if you ask me. At that time, it meant a lot to the folks around here to be able to come to the pictures.

LUKE

Yeah, I know, but poultry...?

HARRY

(rhapsodically)

I know it's hard to believe, son, but this place, this little place this wasn't a theater then, this was a palace! Any man, woman, child, you, me, it didn't matter, you bought your ticket and you walked in and you...

Harry puts his hand on his chest and sighs.

HARRY

... you were in a palace. It was like a dream. It was like heaven, like you died and went to a palace in heaven, that's what it was like. And spotless, too.

Inspired, Harry stands, takes Luke by the arm.

HARRY

Come with me!

He drags him out of the office and into the lobby.

INT. BIJOU LOBBY - DAY

Mrs. Terwilliger and Old Tim watch as Harry leads Luke through the lobby.

HARRY

(smiling)

Maybe you had problems and worries out there, but once you came through that door, they didn't matter anymore. In here, you were safe. Maybe it was just an escape from reality, but... oh, god... it was beautiful.

Harry leads Luke into the auditorium. The car follows, but Mrs. Terwilliger and Old Tim stay behind.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Harry trots down the aisle and looks up at the screen.

HARRY

(exuberant)

Charlie Chaplin. Keaton and Lloyd. Swanson. And later on, Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert and Jimmy Stewart and James Cagney and Bogart and Beccall and Judy and Mickey... and Fred and Ginger.

He turns to Luke.

HARRY

(emphatically)

They... were... like... gods!

He points to the screen.

HARRY

And that... was the altar. Would you remember if I told you, we felt lucky to be here, to have the privilege of watching them?

(sadly)

This television thing. Why would you want to sit at home and watch a little box with a little screen? Because it's convenient? Because you don't have to get dressed and put on a coat and a tie and a hat? Because you can just... sit there? How can you call that "entertainment," all alone in your living room? Where are the other people? Where's the audience?

Harry comes over to Luke.

HARRY
(emphatically)
Where's the magic?

He stands behind Luke and whispers in his ear.

HARRY
I'll tell you. In a place like this, the magic is all around you. All the time. Everywhere. In every thing.

He turns Luke around and looks him in the eye.

HARRY
The trick... is to see it.

Pause.

LUKE
But I...

HARRY
Son, I think you loved the Bijou even more than I did. You've got to remember that. You've got to.

Still looking at Luke, Harry takes a step back, then slowly walks up the aisle, disappearing into the lobby.

Luke walks down the aisle. At the edge of the orchestra pit, he stands looking up at the screen. The orange tabby cat MEOWS, and Luke glances toward it, standing onstage by the edge of the screen. They exchange looks as we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LARDNER LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Doc Lardner is seated in an easy chair, his feet up, reading Life magazine. The radio is on, and Patti Page is singing "The Tennessee Waltz."

There's a noise offscreen, and Lardner looks up. In the entrance hall, the front door opens.

ADELE "DELLY" LARDNER

enters. She's a strikingly beautiful woman in her late 20s. She takes off a felt cap, and her long, auburn hair cascades down.

ADELE

Dad?

LARDNER

Delly? In here.

Lardner rises as Adele comes into the living room. They embrace warmly.

LARDNER

How'd it go?

ADELE

Not as bad as I thought it would.
I think I passed.

LARDNER

(kisses her forehead)

That's my girl!

(he hugs her again)

Did you...?

ADELE

No hiccups, which was good. Who wants an attorney who gets the hiccups when she gets nervous?

("serious" lawyer voice)

"Your (hic!) honor, I (hic!) object!"

They laugh.

LARDNER

I always told you, baby...

(taps her head)

... it's all up here.

Lardner gives her an extra squeeze, continues to hold onto her just a bit too long. Adele detects something amiss.

ADELE
Dad? What is it?

Beat.

LARDNER
Well, it's...

Adele breaks away from him.

ADELE
(extreme concern)
Oh my god... who died?

CUT TO:

A GLASS OF WATER

on a kitchen table. Offscreen, we HEAR A HICCUP. Then another. Adele's hand reaches into frame.

WIDER

INT. LARDNER KITCHEN - EVENING

Lardner stands over Adele, who is seated at the table, holding the glass of water.

LARDNER
Drink slowly.

She raises the glass to her lips.

LARDNER
From the other side of the glass.

It's a particularly gymnastic way in which to drink water, but Adele accomplishes it with aplomb. She waits for a moment -- then hiccups again.

ADELE
I think (hic!) it's worse (hic!)
now.

LARDNER
That always used to work.

ADELE

Yeah, well it's not everyday you get (hic!) news like this. You're sure he's (hic!) okay? Other than the (hic!) bump on the head?

LARDNER

(hedging)

Well...

ADELE

(hic!) Dad... (hic!)

Lardner sits at the table and takes Adele's hand.

LARDNER

He doesn't remember anything, Delly. Doesn't know how he got here, doesn't remember his father, the town, the Bijou, anyone...

ADELE

... including me. Right? (hic!)

LARDNER

I'm afraid not. He looked right at your picture without batting an eye. But it's probably temporary. He got all the way to Lawson, so he clearly knew who he was and what he was doing until he hit his head. I'm sure it'll all come back to him. It just takes a catalyst.

ADELE

You mean, (hic!) me?

LARDNER

It's possible.

Off Adele's thoughtful hiccuping, we

CUT TO:

EXT. COMMERCE STREET - EVENING

Luke and Harry, walking along, make a turn onto Commerce Street, heading for Mabel's. It's still light out, and a soft breeze skitters some leaves along the sidewalk.

HARRY

I take breakfast and supper at
Mabel's every day except Sunday.
Have for years, since Lily died.
If it weren't for Mabel, I'd
probably starve to death.

ERNIE COLE, a slight, balding man in his 50s, is locking the door of his pharmacy across the street, when he spots Harry and Luke.

ERNIE

Harry! Hold on a second!

Ernie runs across the street and, slightly winded, stands before Luke, staring. Luke shoots a glance at Harry, who taps Ernie on the shoulder.

HARRY

It's really him, Ernie.

ERNIE

(agape)

Well, I'll be...

He sticks his hand out and Luke takes it. Ernie pumps it enthusiastically.

ERNIE

By god, Luke, if it isn't good to see you again.

LUKE

(uncertain)

Uh, thanks. Good to see you again, too, uh...

HARRY

Ernie.

LUKE

... Ernie.

ERNIE

(still at a lose)

Well, I'll be...

HARRY

We were just gonna get some supper. Would you like to join us?

ERNIE

Would I ever!

The three walk toward the diner, but before they get two steps, they hear:

WOMAN'S VOICE

Is that Luke Trumbo?

They turn to see a stout woman, KATIE RUTHERFORD, 40s, rushing toward them. She rushes right into a very surprised Luke's arms and hugs him tightly.

KATIE

Oh, Luke, it's so good to have you back!

HARRY

Katie, would you like to join us for dinner? The more, the merrier.

CUT TO:

EXT. MABEL'S DINER - NIGHT

The diner is packed. In addition to Ernie and Katie, MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN occupy every seat and table, and many more are standing, even hanging out the door.

At the focus of the crowd are Luke and Harry, seated at the counter. Harry is leisurely eating a chicken dinner, while Luke is working on a steak. A young man seated at the opposite side of the counter is speaking. He's CARL LEFFERT, 30s.

CARL

(eagerly)

Hey, Luke, remember the time you and me, we was playing with firecrackers and the one you was lighting blew up too soon and singed all the hair offa my head?

A few people shake their heads, smile and laugh.

LUKE

Uh, no. What happened?

CARL

(deflated)

Well... um, all the hair got singed offa my head. It was pretty funny.

A couple of TITTERS are heard.

LUKE

Oh.

CARL

Even my eyebrows. But they grew back.

Luke leans toward Harry, who never looks up from his chicken.

HARRY

Carl. Friend of yours from high school. Everybody calls him "Cueball."

LUKE

(sincerely)

Oh, hi Cue... Carl. Sorry.

CARL

(brightening)

Oh, heck, that's all right. It's just good to have you back. Isn't that right, Bob? Hey, Luke, you remember my brother Bob? You two joined up the same day.

Luke smiles and nods at the young man sitting next to Carl.

BOB LEFFERT

is a good-looking fellow, a few years older than Carl. His face is pale and downcast, and he wears a cap pulled down on his forehead. He looks up at Luke with hollow eyes. Brings his right hand up, pushes the brim of his cap up. Except there's no hand there -- it's a hook.

LUKE

(quietly)

Hey, Bob. Good to meet you.

Bob doesn't react. He glances away, and for a moment, his eyes meet Mabel's. She smiles warmly. He turns away.

Ernie Cole pipes up.

ERNIE

Luke, I know there's a question that's on everybody's mind.

LUKE

What's that?

ERNIE

Well, now that you're back, what're your plans?

All eyes on Luke. He freezes, having just taken a forkful of food in his mouth. Harry jumps in.

HARRY

Gonna re-open the Bijou, that's what.

A MURMUR goes through the crowd. Stanton Lawson, standing behind Luke, taps him on the shoulder.

STANTON

That true?

LUKE

(on the spot)

Well... we're gonna try.

ERNIE

That's a lot of work, son. Place's been closed, what, three, four years now. Gonna be tough.

HARRY

If it's tough, that means it's worth doing.

Someone shouts "That's the spirit!," another shouts "Hear, hear!," and a chorus of VOICES join in agreement.

ERNIE

Hey, where's Spencer Wyatt?

SPENCER'S VOICE

Uh, back here, Mr. Mayor.

ERNIE

Well, come on out here so's we can see you.

SPENCER WYATT steps around from the back of the crowd near the door. He's a tall, dark-haired, gangly, bespectacled kid, no more than 19 or 20. Painfully shy, he clutches a clarinet case to his chest. He timidly smiles and waves at

Luke, who smiles and nods back.

SPENCER

Hey, Luke.

LUKE

Hi, Spencer.

ERNIE

Spence, that band of yours -- you think they're ready to play?

(to Luke)

Spencer and his pals went ahead and got together a good ol' big band.

SPENCER

We've been practicing... uh, sure, I guess.

ERNIE

Well, how about tomorrow night, eight p.m., in city hall square? What I'm proposin' is a "Welcome Home Luke" celebration.

Vociferous general AGREEMENT from the crowd -- which is quickly quieted by a MURMUR, which starts at the front door. The crowd parts and grow silent, revealing a woman standing in the doorway.

ADELE

She locks eyes with Luke. Her hand goes to her mouth and her eyes well up. Slowly, she moves around the counter, the crowd moving aside for her.

She stands in front of Luke, who has stood up to meet her. Her eyes moist, she looks up at him.

ADELE

Do you... remember me?

LUKE

I've seen you before. Your picture...

Mabel, clutching a napkin, leans over to Katie.

MABEL

(sotto)

Look!

LUKE

... but I don't think I remember
you.

Adele leans up and kisses him softly. He looks at her.

LUKE

But I'll sure try.

As Mabel and Katie dab at their eyes, we

CUT TO:

EXT. COMMERCE STREET - NIGHT

Adele and Luke stroll down the street side by side. She
looks at him for a long moment.

LUKE

What.

ADELE

No, I... I just wondering where
you've been all this time.

LUKE

Me too.

ADELE

You look... different.

LUKE

I do?

ADELE

Yeah, a little. I think you grew
an inch or so. And you've lost
weight.

LUKE

I did? Huh!

Tentatively, she takes his hand and holds it. From behind
them, we HEAR A SHUFFLING SOUND. Adele turns...

ADELE'S POV

Keeping a discreet distance, EVERYONE from the diner is
following them. Adele turns and addresses the crowd.

ADELE

(to the group)

You can all go home, now. He's not going anywhere.

LUKE

Go on home, folks. And thanks for the welcome.

Harry comes over.

LUKE

I'll be home in a little while, Harry. Don't wait up.

HARRY

You two have a lot of catching up to do, I guess.

LUKE

You bet.

HARRY

Goodnight, son.
(tips his hat)
'Night, Delly.

And the rest of the crowd disperses, variously wishing the pair goodnight. Luke and Adele watch them disperse.

LUKE

There. We're alone.

They turn and start walking.

ADELE

Then why do I feel like we're still being shadowed?

LUKE

Well... where can we go?

Adele brightens.

ADELE

I know a place. Come on!

She grabs his hand and they run toward the town square.

EXT. LAWSON CITY HALL - NIGHT

Adele and Luke stand by the front steps.

LUKE
City hall?

ADELE
You must not remember anything.
Come on.

She grabs his hand and they run to the side of the building.

EXT. SIDE OF CITY HALL - NIGHT

Adele and Luke stand by a basement window, inches off the ground. She looks around. Certain the coast is clear, she pounds on the window in three "special" places, and it pops up and open. She looks at Luke.

ADELE
You first.

LUKE
Why me?

ADELE
Be a gentleman. You have to help
me down.

AS LUKE CLIMBS IN, WE

CUT TO:

A LARGE, MUSLIN-COVERED OBJECT.

Slowly, the muslin is drawn off, revealing A STATUE OF A KNEELING SOLDIER, praying before a soldier's grave. We slowly PAN DOWN from the top of the statue...

INT. CITY HALL BASEMENT STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

ADELE (O.S.)
When we were kids, my Dad was
mayor, and you and me and a bunch
of others used to come down here
all the time.

ON ADELE AND LUKE

looking up at the statue in this city hall basement storage room, lit only by a single shaft of moonlight from the window. The muslin covering lay bunched at their feet.

ADELE

Of course, there was a lot more room before they stuck the memorial down here.

LUKE

(looks at the door)

How'd they get it inside?

ADELE

Through the door. It comes apart.

She moves to the memorial. Squinting, she examines its base.

ADELE

Your name's on here. See?

Luke comes over.

ON THE BASE OF THE MEMORIAL -- LUKE'S NAME

ADELE

Right here. "Albert Lucas Trumbo."
And all the others. I knew them all. So did you. We went to school with most of them.

LUKE

It doesn't seem right, this being down here. It ought to be where people can see it.

ADELE

After they commissioned it, no one could ever agree on where to put it. The Methodists wanted it in front of the Methodist Church, the Presbyterians wanted it in front of the Presbyterian Church, the city council wanted it in the lobby of City Hall. Everyone finally got tired of the fighting. So they stuck it down here.

He looks at her for a long moment. There's an electricity between them, and they both feel it.

LUKE

So, you're really gonna be a lawyer?

ADELE

(suddenly defensive)

And why not?

LUKE

Whoa.

ADELE

(smiling)

Sorry. You don't know how many times I've heard that. "A lady lawyer? Are you crazy?" Like a woman couldn't be as good a lawyer as a man. Or better, in fact.

LUKE

Have you always wanted to be a lawyer?

ADELE

You... don't remember, but yes, ever since I was a little girl.

LUKE

What did... what did I want to be?

ADELE

(gently)

Oh, well... I guess you... in high school, you were a pretty good first baseman. And we were on the debate team together. But... I think you were gonna run the Bijou. You were brought up there, and you loved it so much. And I think you knew how much the town needed a place like that.

He turns away, rubs his head.

LUKE

I just wish I could remember some of this.

He turns back to her.

LUKE

You don't have a boyfriend or anyone... you know... like that?

ADELE

Actually, I was married. For four years. But... well, we didn't fit together. I'm divorced now.

LUKE

I'm sorry.

ADELE

No, it's okay. See, when two people belong together, the other person should be the... the key that unlocks the rest of you... I'm not making sense, am I?

LUKE

(moving toward her)

No, you are. I know exactly what you mean. It's not that you're missing something. It's that the other person gives something to you... that you had all the time. You just didn't see it until they came along.

ADELE

(smiling)

Yeah...

Pause.

LUKE

We were in love... weren't we?

ADELE

(quietly)

Yes.

(then:)

Hic!

She instantly covers her mouth, but it's no good. She has the hiccups again.

LUKE

What was that?

ADELE

Nothing. (hic!)

LUKE

Do you have the...

ADELE

I'm (hic!) fine. Really. (hic!)

Luke smiles and watches Adele as she makes the decision to not struggle against the hiccups. She has them, and that's just the way it is.

LUKE

Were we going to get married?

ADELE

Eventually. We were going to be (hic!) engaged... when you came back from (hic!) overseas...

He looks at her. She's strikingly beautiful at this particular moment and in this particular light -- hiccups and all. He moves closer to her. She moves closer to him.

ADELE

(breathless)

... but you had to go... serve (hic!) your country...

They kiss passionately. She reaches up and puts her arms around him. He starts kissing her neck, and she suddenly realizes -- she's stopped hiccuping.

ADELE

Hey... it worked.

And as she smiles and kisses him again we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE BIJOU - NIGHT

Luke comes down the street and heads for the front door. He has a definite spring in his step as he pulls out his keys and enters.

INT. BIJOU LOBBY - NIGHT

It's very dark. Luke is about to swing shut the heavy door, when he looks down and sees

THE ORANGE TABBY CAT

shoot into the lobby, stopping in the middle of the floor. It looks at Luke, and PURRS.

Luke closes the door and moves to the cat. He crouches down and pets it, and its back rises to meet his hand.

LUKE

Hey, fella. So you live here, too, huh? How come Harry didn't mention that?

The cat moves to the auditorium door, pausing to look back at Luke. Curiosity piqued, Luke follows the cat.

INT. BIJOU BASEMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

In the dim light, we SEE an old mop and pail, some dirty film cans, and a large beat-up cardboard standee of "The Tramp" with the legend, "Chaplin Short To-Day."

The cat comes around a corner and disappears through a door at the end of a hallway. Luke, following the cat, comes around the same corner and looks at

THE DOOR.

Slightly ajar, there's a light coming from within, as well as the sound of Old Tim softly humming "It's a Long Way to Tipperary."

Luke moves to the door and knocks.

LUKE

Um, Old Tim? Sorry, it's late.
It's Luke. Can I come in?

The humming stops, and after a moment, the door swings open, revealing Old Tim, a pipe in his mouth, holding the cat, stroking its fur.

OLD TIM

Found me.

LUKE

Yeah. I hope you don't mind. I didn't know anyone lived here... well, besides Harry. And me.

Old Tim moves into the room and gestures for Luke to follow him.

INT. OLD TIM'S ROOM - NIGHT

The room is lit by a small table lamp next to the neat cot, which is perfectly made, military-style.

OLD TIM

Not used to visitors.

(gesturing)

Sit.

Old Tim points to a ragged, overstuffed easy chair next to the "kitchen" area -- a sink, dishes and utensils, a tiny icebox.

Luke sits in the chair, and Old Tim sits on the cot, facing him. Silence. Luke glances up at a photo atop the bureau.

ON THE PHOTO

It's a much younger Old Tim, looking quite serious and handsome in his Great War doughboy's uniform.

The cat jumps down from Old Tim's arms and moves to Luke. He rubs against his legs, purring. Luke leans down to pet him.

LUKE

So I guess this fellow belongs to you. What's his name?

OLD TIM

Cat.

LUKE

Cat. That's simple. I like it.

(pets Cat)

Hi, Cat.

OLD TIM

(sudden change-of-subject)

We thought you was dead, you know.

(another new thought)

It's okay that I live here?

LUKE

Of course.

Pause, then suddenly.

OLD TIM

Do you think I'll get me a new u-u uniform?

Luke looks up at the old man, who stammers when he speaks

more than a couple of words.

LUKE

I'll do everything I can.

Old Tim puffs on his pipe, strangely detached.

OLD TIM

T-t-thank you. Thank you. I... I always... I always wanted to wear my uniform from the Great War, but your daddy, he always said no, that's not an usher's u-u-uniform, that's an army uniform and the Bijou, she's not the army. They give me a medal, but I lost it in the h-h-hospital. I forget things sometimes. Since the w-w-war.

LUKE

Yeah... me too.

CUT TO:

INT. PETE'S APARTMENT (L.A.) - DAY

It's a pretty typical bachelor's apartment. The "SAND PIRATES" poster leans up against a chair. Pete's two boxes of belongings from the studio are on the coffee table, the empty bottle of Jack Daniels on top.

There's an insistent KNOCK at the door.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Mr. Appleton? Mr. Appleton? You in there? This is the Super, I have the master key and I'm coming in!

We HEAR the key in the lock and the door swings open, revealing the building SUPER, 50s. Behind him is Leo Kubelsky. They enter the room, and the Super sniffs the air.

LEO

You smell gas?

SUPER

Don't smell nothin'. He must not be dead in here.

LEO

Jesus.

SUPER

Hey, it's the best way to tell.

Leo moves to the boxes and rummages through them. He picks up the empty bottle, examines it.

SUPER

You think he's drunk somewhere?

LEO

(under his breath)

Wouldn't blame him if he was.

SUPER

Well, his rent's past due and he said to call you in case of an emergency. He lose his job or somethin'?

LEO

(holding out his folding money)

What's his rent?

SUPER

Thirty a month.

Leo peels off a hundred-dollar bill.

LEO

Here's three months rent, and a ten spot for no more questions and to keep an eye on his place. Now, I need a moment alone.

SUPER

(examining the bill)

Huh?

LEO

Take a hike. Am-scray.

SUPER

Huh? Oh, sure. Just pull the door shut when you leave.

The Super exits and Leo crosses to the phone and dials "0."

LEO

(into phone)
Police department. I want to
report a missing person.

CUT TO:

INT. JUSTICE DEPARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

ON A DOOR

It reads: "OFFICE OF THE MAJORITY COUNSEL - MR. ELVIN CLYDE"

AGENT WALTER SAUNDERS and AGENT STEVEN BRETT, both 30s and G-men to the core, hustle into the office.

INT. ELVIN CLYDE'S OFFICE - DAY

ELVIN CLYDE is 35, a small, thin-lipped, reptilian man in the Roy Cohn mold. He's on the phone at the moment.

CLYDE
(into phone)
You say you know nothing about it.
You say this, yet you offer no
proof. How am I supposed to
believe you?

Clyde's SECRETARY knocks on the door, sticks her head in.

SECRETARY
Mr. Clyde? Agents Saunders and
Brett need to see you.

CLYDE
(covering the phone)
You do see that I'm busy, do you
not?

SECRETARY
It's about Appleton.

Clyde's eyes brighten.

CLYDE
Tell them to come in.
(into phone)
I'll have to call you back. I love
you too, Mother.

Saunders and Brett stride into the office.

SAUNDERS

We've got a situation developing...

CLYDE

(interrupting)

Will you take those goddamn hats
off?

They stop, shuck off their hats. Saunders starts over again.

SAUNDERS

We've got a situation developing
out on the coast. Appleton's just
been reported missing.

Clyde grins darkly.

CLYDE

This is good. This is very good.

BRETT

Los Angeles Police Department
investigated. His car's missing.
No signs of forced entry or
struggle at his apartment.

Clyde considers this for a beat, then:

CLYDE

You two are on this as of now.
Tell the LAPD their investigation
has been federalized on my order.
You find me this Appleton.
(leans back, smiling)
I want to see what this one has to
say.

CUT TO:

INT. BIJOU OFFICE - DAY

Luke is sitting at the desk, making notes and adding up some
figures. He puts his pencil down and rubs his eyes, then
looks up at

HARRY AND OLD TIM

who are sitting on the floor, going through piles of lobby
cards and folded one-sheets like little boys fascinated with
their baseball cards.

He shifts his gaze to

MRS. TERWILLIGER

who is straightening out and dusting the tops of the two or three file cabinets in the corner of the office. As she works, she hums an old song, occasionally breaking into the lyrics:

MRS. TERWILLIGER

(sings)

"The object of my affection, Can
change my complexion, From white to
rosy red..."

Luke takes a breath:

LUKE

Well...

HARRY

Yes?

LUKE

Between a new screen, paint,
plumbing for the concession stand,
and about a hundred other repairs
around the theater... it's going to
cost at least nine hundred dollars
to get the Bijou into shape to open
up.

MRS. TERWILLIGER

Oh, my.

HARRY

(taken aback)

Nine hundred...

LUKE

And you have sixty-eight dollars
and thirty-seven cents in the bank.
Your only source of income are my
veteran's death benefit of forty
dollars a month, to which you're no
longer entitled since I'm alive,
and these ten dollar a month cash
deposits you make. What are those?

HARRY

(glances at Old Tim)

They're...

OLD TIM

That's my r-r-rent.

LUKE

Oh.

HARRY

It's all my fault. I was neglectful and this is the price of that.

MRS. TERWILLIGER

Don't say that.

HARRY

Well, it's true. Wanting to open this place back up. It's folly, Irene, pure and simple. Might as well just call it what it is.

Off everyone's worried looks, we

CUT TO:

A TV SCREEN

It's tiny, with rounded corners, black-and-white, and a hopeless chaos of horizontal bars and snow.

WIDER

INT. LARDNER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Doc Lardner is fiddling with a brand-new console television set, trying vainly to tune in a clear picture of "Your Show of Shows." He adjusts the dials, fiddles with the rabbit ears, steps back -- and is successful. SID CAESAR And IMOGENE COCA are involved in an elaborate pantomime sketch, and Lardner fairly roars with laughter.

He turns to go back to his chair, but the second he does so, the reception goes haywire. He returns to the spot in front of the TV, and the picture is perfect again.

The DOORBELL RINGS. He's torn -- if he moves, the picture will break up. The doorbell RINGS again, and we HEAR Adele's voice from upstairs:

ADELE (O.S.)

Daddy, that's Luke, can you let him in? I'll be right down.

LARDNER

Honey, I... I can't... it's the...

There's a KNOCK at the door.

LARDNER

(giving in)

Oh, hell...

He moves from his spot. The reception goes bad, and he marches to the door.

He opens it, and Luke is standing there, wearing a slightly out-of-date coat and tie.

LARDNER

Evening, Luke.

LUKE

Evening, Doctor Lardner.

Lardner freezes, staring at Luke.

LUKE

What's wrong?

LARDNER

(shaken from his reverie)

Uh, no... just seeing you standing there, it reminded me... there's a word for it...

LUKE

Oh, you mean the suit. Harry kept all my old clothes. Fits okay, but it's a little big.

Adele comes down the stairs. Halfway down, she stops suddenly and stares at Luke.

ADELE

Oh...

Awkward pause. Adele's staring at Luke, Lardner's staring at Luke, and Luke's getting nervous.

LUKE

I shouldn't have worn the suit.

Adele comes down the stairs.

ADELE

No... you were wearing that suit
the last time we went out before...

LUKE

Oh...

ADELE

... and It's just... well, deja vu.

LARDNER

That's it. Deja vu.

Another awkward pause as Adele and Luke stare at each other.
Lardner breaks it.

LARDNER

You kids off to the dance?

LUKE

Aren't you coming?

LARDNER

No, I'm not much of a dancer.

ADELE

(chidingly)

Besides, Daddy's still trying to
figure out how to get his new
television set working.

LARDNER

I had it, a minute ago...

He glances at the TV set. The picture is suddenly crystal
clear.

LARDNER

... oooh, It's back.

(encouraging them toward
the door)

Well, you kids have fun now...

Adele takes Luke's arm and they exit, exchanging goodnights
with Lardner, who closes the door and turns toward the living
room.

S-l-o-w-l-y, he sneaks into the room, watching the TV

carefully all the while. The reception is staying perfect. Caesar and Coca are involved in an intricate bit of business, and Lardner wants to laugh, but he's afraid to. He stifles his urge, and heads for his chair. Gingerly, he sits. Still perfect.

Satisfied, he finally LAUGHS out loud and puts his feet up. The picture goes completely haywire again.

LARDNER

Aw, crap.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Adele and Luke walk along, arm-in-arm.

ADELE

This is strange. Do you feel it?

LUKE

What?

ADELE

We've done this before, so many times. The last time was so long ago, but it feels like yesterday.

LUKE

Oh.

Pause.

ADELE

You know, everyone's so excited about the Bijou re-opening...

LUKE

(interrupting)

It's gonna cost over nine hundred dollars to open the place, Delly.

ADELE

(shocked)

Nine hundred...

LUKE

Yeah, and needless to say, none of us has that kind of money lying around.

ADELE

What about a loan? You could go to the bank...?

LUKE

A loan to a man who ran his business into the ground and his son who can't account for the last nine-and-a-half years of his life? Not likely.

ADELE

Well, there's got to be a way...

LUKE

(suddenly)

Have you got a cigarette?

Adele stops.

ADELE

When did you start smoking?

LUKE

I don't smoke?

ADELE

You tried to once. It was pretty pitiful.

LUKE

Oh.

Adele glances curiously at Luke as we

CUT TO:

A CLARINET

launching into the opening bars of "Don't Be That Way," an old Benny Goodman tune.

EXT. CITY HALL SQUARE - DAY

Spencer Wyatt's big band is comprised of a dozen or so MUSICIANS about Spencer's age -- except for the drummer, AVERY WYATT, 40s, Spencer's dad. Though no Gene Krupa, he pounds the skins pretty well, all the while smiling proudly as his son plays clarinet and leads the band.

Despite the last minute decorations, the Square looks nice, hung with multicolored paper lanterns and colored lights.

ON LUKE AND ADELE

dancing to the music, along with several other COUPLES.

LUKE

(nodding toward the band)
They're not bad.

ADELE

No, they're not. I'd say your investment was paying dividends.

LUKE

My what?

ADELE

Back in '37, you heard Benny Goodman play for the first time, so you went out and got a used clarinet. You wanted nothing more than to be able to play like him. You tried hard, but it wasn't long before it was clear that Benny Goodman would never be looking over his shoulder. So you gave the clarinet to Spencer.

LUKE

Huh. That was nice of me.

ADELE

You had a hidden agenda, though. See, when he was five or six, little Spence used to follow you around like a puppy. Bothered the hell out of you. But as soon as you gave him the clarinet...

LUKE

... he started practicing, and he left me alone from then on.

ADELE

Exactly. And he got good.

LUKE

No kidding.

They dance a bit.

ADELE

Now, did you remember that, or...

LUKE

Nope. Just filling in the blanks.

ADELE

Oh. Okay.

And as they dance away, we

CUT TO:

THE SAME - LATER

ON THE REFRESHMENTS TABLE

Luke is pouring two glasses of punch, while Adele is being shyly admired (and having her ear bent) by two twin brothers, ALEX and CHARLIE MCKENNA, mid-20s.

ALEX

You're the luckiest guy in town,
Luke. Delly's 'bout the prettiest
thing ever come outta Lawson.

LUKE

(to Alex)
Thanks, Charlie.

ALEX

I'm Alex. He's Charlie.

CHARLIE

I'm Charlie.

ALEX

Yessir, 'bout the prettiest thing
we ever seen, ain't that right,
Charlie?

CHARLIE

You bet.

ADELE

(ala Mae West)
Thanks boys, ya flatter me no end.

The brothers laugh goofily.

CHARLIE

Hey, she's doin' that movie star,
what's her name...?

ALEX

(ignoring his brother)

Hey, Delly, what was that test you
was outta town takin'?

ADELE

It's called the State Bar Exam.

CHARLIE

Shoot!

ALEX

Imagine that, Charlie! A lady
bartender!

CUT TO:

THE SAME - LATER

Adele and Luke are slow dancing to "Thanks for the Memory."

LUKE

How do you tell those two apart,
anyway?

ADELE

Alex and Charlie? Simple. Alex is
the smarter one.

LUKE

That's... pretty frightening.

They laugh and dance a bit more.

ADELE

Your dancing's very good.

LUKE

Thanks.

ADELE

It never used to be. You were two
left feet on the dance floor. Like
pulling teeth to get you to do a
little box step.

LUKE

Guess I must've learned.

Luke dances Adele away, a slightly nonplussed expression on her face. The band finishes the song, and everyone enthusiastically APPLAUDS. Spencer bows shyly, blushing slightly. He nods to the band, and they bow before he motions for the crowd's attention.

SPENCER

(nervously)

Thanks, folks. Gee, can you tell we never played in front of people before?

The crowd yells "No!," "You guys sound great!," etc.

SPENCER

Well, this is our first time, and it's really all because of Luke. I mean, it's because of Luke coming back that we're here tonight -- but I'm talking about this.

He holds up the clarinet and scans the crowd until he sees Luke.

SPENCER

(to Luke)

When you didn't come back, I learned how to play this so I could remember you. And now that you're back, well, I'll never forget you.

(to the crowd)

Luke gave me this clarinet, but he gave this night to all of us.

The crowd APPLAUDS warmly.

SPENCER

Okay folks, here's Mayor Cole!

The crowd APPLAUDS as Ernie Cole mounts the band riser. He turns and addresses Avery Wyatt, on drums.

ERNIE

Pretty proud of your boy, Avery?

Avery smiles broadly and beats the KICK DRUM five or six times to register his reaction.

ON THE KICK DRUM -- "WYATT'S HARDWARE, LAWSON, CALIF."

ERNIE

Looks like you might have to find someone else to mix paint at the store, 'cause I think Spencer's got a big career ahead of him.

APPLAUSE again, and Ernie waits for it to settle. As soon as he starts speaking, the crowd becomes totally silent.

ERNIE

You know folks, here in Lawson, we gave a lot for our country. A lot. And we never complained and we never faltered. And we never forgot.

Ernie's voice cracks slightly with emotion. He clears his throat and continues.

ERNIE

We never forgot. And so when one of our own came back to us, I gotta tell you folks, it was like a miracle. Luke, seein' you walking down the street, it was... well, it was kinda like seein' one of my boys alive again. I think I speak for everyone here when I say that not a day goes by when we don't keep our boys' memories alive. But Luke, having you back among us... well, it helps us keep their spirits alive, too. God bless you, son.

The crowd APPLAUDS. Adele takes Luke's hand and smiles. Ernie wipes his eyes and changes the subject.

ERNIE

All right, enough a'that. This is a celebration, so let's have us a good time -- but not too good a time, 'cause I see just about every member of the city council here tonight, and we have an eight a.m. council meeting tomorrow morning, and I expect y'all to be there! All right, take it away, Spencer!

And Spencer kicks the band into the next tune as we

DISSOLVE TO:

THE SAME - LATER

Luke and Adele come over to Harry and Mrs. Terwilliger, standing at the periphery. Old Tim stands a few feet back.

LUKE

Why don't you two get out there and dance?

HARRY

Oh, no, I...

Mrs. Terwilliger blushes.

MRS. TERWILLIGER

I haven't danced with another man since Mr. Terwilliger passed.

LUKE

When was that?

MRS. TERWILLIGER

Nineteen-oh-nine.

Harry touches Luke's arm.

HARRY

Son, we're gonna go. You two kids have a lovely time.

Goodnights are exchanged, and the trio leaves. Alex McKenna comes up to Adele and taps her on the shoulder.

ALEX

Delly, can I have a dance?

ADELE

Sure.

Alex leads her to the dance floor as Adele shoots Luke a little "help me!" look. Luke smiles back and watches the dancing crowd. After a moment, a man in a white suit and bow tie, ROSCOE FITTS, 40s, comes over to Luke and extends his hand.

FITTS

Luke, you probably don't remember me, Roscoe Fitts, I'm the grocer here in town.

LUKE

(shakes his hand)

Good to meet you. Again.

FITTS

Like Ernie said, we're all glad to have you back.

LUKE

Thanks.

FITTS

And I hear you and Harry are planning on re-opening the Bijou.

LUKE

We're gonna try. Place needs a lot of work.

FITTS

I can only imagine. You know, I spoke with your Dad last year about maybe taking the Bijou off his hands. I don't think he gave it very much thought.

LUKE

Well, he loves the place. It's his home.

FITTS

Luke, I'm hopping you can help him see the reality of the situation. I'll come to the point. I want to buy the property, and I'm prepared to offer six-thousand dollars for it. And that's just for the property, mind you. If you want, I'll leave it to you and your father to dismantle and liquidate the building for whatever salvage value it has, and you keep those proceeds. I just want the land.

LUKE

(taken aback)

That's... well, that's very generous, but if you've already got a store...?

FITTS

The days of the storefront grocery
are numbered. I plan on putting up
a free-standing supermarket.

LUKE

(it's an alien word)

A super market. Huh.

FITTS

You think it over. No reason to
risk financial ruin for the sake of
a crumbling old building.

Fitts takes Luke's hand and shakes it.

FITTS

Good to have you back, Luke.

As Luke watches Fitts walk off, we

CUT TO:

THE SAME - LATER

ON SPENCER

SPENCER

Last dance, folks!

The crowd MOANS slightly, and Spencer kicks the band into
"Moonlight Serenade," slow and easy.

ON ADELE AND LUKE

As they hold each other close and dance. Adele rests her
head on Luke's shoulder, her eyes closed. Luke strokes her
hair and sways her gently to the music.

Luke looks toward the edge of the dance floor.

LUKE'S POV

Bob Leffert is standing there, staring at the band. Mabel
comes up behind him and taps him on the shoulder. She's
asking him if he would like to dance. Bob looks down at the
ground, self-consciously shoves his hook-hand in his pocket
and moves away, leaving Mabel standing there.

As Luke watches and the MUSIC CONTINUES OVER, WE

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE:

Luke and Adele dancing...

... walking slowly arm-in-arm down Adele's street, up her walk to her door...

... kissing passionately on her doorstep...

... Adele going inside and Luke walking away, each unable to take their eyes off the other...

... Luke walking the quiet streets of Lawson, smiling beatifically...

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE BIJOU - NIGHT

Luke turns the corner and heads for the theater door. He pulls out his keys and enters.

INT. BIJOU LOBBY - NIGHT

Luke's about to close the door, when he looks down and sees

CAT

MEOWING at him from the sidewalk. He holds the door open, and Cat shoots into the lobby, disappearing into the auditorium. Luke closes the door... and stops. He HEARS something, and so do we. Soft and faraway, it's a PIANO. The melody is soft, lilting -- almost a lullaby.

Luke turns toward the music, which is coming from the auditorium. The piano continues, building slightly in volume. He moves to the auditorium doors and tentatively pushes one open.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Luke enters, his face bathed in the soft, flickering, reflected light of

THE SCREEN.

The movie is "The Big Parade." The old, decomposing nitrate print is badly scratched and stained. A young, beautiful Renee Adoree is bidding a tearful farewell to her lover, John

Gilbert, as he marches off to fight the Great War.

Luke stares at the screen. The look on his face is one of bewilderment -- and awe.

ANGLE - THE PIANO

The rickety old upright is tinny-sounding and slightly out-of-tune. But it really doesn't matter.

CLOSER

Mrs. Terwilliger is playing passionately. She never takes her eyes -- which are full of tears -- off the tattered screen, except to close them when she is overcome with emotion. Even so, she never misses a beat.

HER HANDS

fairly dance upon the keys. Stiff and wrinkled as they are, they manage to elicit every possible fragment of sensitivity that the old piano can muster.

Luke is moved by what he's witnessing. This is the magic...

WIDER ANGLE - THE CENTER SECTION

To the right of Luke, sitting in the center of a row, is Old Tim. Stroking Cat, Old Tim stares at the poignant scene unfolding on the screen, pausing only to wipe his eyes and nose with a handkerchief. He doesn't notice

LUKE

who looks up towards the projection booth.

CUT TO:

A BRIGHT, WHITE, FLICKERING LIGHT,

filling the frame. We're looking directly into the beam of light radiating from the projector.

PUSHING INTO THE LIGHT, we get closer to the windows of the booth. We come out of the beam and can just barely make out the figure of Harry, framed in a small window next to the projector.

WE CONTINUE PUSHING IN -- closer and closer -- until Harry's face fills the screen. He is watching the film; his eyes are wide and moist, as though he's experiencing the magic that's

unfolding on the screen for the very first time.

The warning bell on the projector CHIMES THREE TIMES, signaling the end of the reel. Harry moves away from the window.

INT. PROJECTION BOOTH - NIGHT

Never taking his eyes off the screen, Harry watches as the film comes to an end and flap! falp! falps! out of the projector. He kills the motor and cranks the carbon arcs apart, and the bright beam dies. It's not the end of the movie, but it is the end of the only fragment they have.

Harry moves to the house lights rheostat, and slowly fades them up. This done, he pulls a handkerchief from his back pocket and blows his nose loudly.

He crosses back to the projector, unlatches the full take-up reel and takes it down. He's about to move away, when he senses that he's not alone. He looks over the projector to see

LUKE,

standing there. Their eyes meet. Someone should say something -- both men search for words. Suddenly, Luke feels very out-of-place, almost embarrassed -- as though he's interrupted a very private ritual.

Harry senses this. Clutching the precious reel of film tightly to his chest, he searches Luke's face and smiles warmly.

HARRY

Beautiful, wasn't it?

LUKE

(softly)

Yes.

HARRY

Well, son, I wish I could've shown you more, but this is all that's left. Just this one reel that never got sent back from a picture we showed here a long time ago. Nineteen twenty-five, to be exact...

LUKE

Dad, I...

HARRY
(a tiny laugh)
Ha!

LUKE
... what?

HARRY
You know, since you've been back,
that's the first time you've called
me "Dad."

Father and son look at each other for a long moment -- searching each other's eyes. Harry smiles a sort-of half-smile at Luke, and, still clutching the reel, crosses to the rewind bench. Methodically, he mounts it and threads the end of the film onto an empty reel. Slowly, he begins to turn the crank, rewinding the film.

He stops and looks to where Luke was standing... but he's not there.

ANGLE - PROJECTION BOOTH DOOR

Luke is leaning up against the wall just outside of the projection booth.

ONE LUKE

As he closes his eyes...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

ON HARRY

In bed, sound asleep, snoring. A HAND reaches into frame and shakes him awake.

LUKE'S VOICE
Harry. Dad, wake up. Wake up.

Harry opens his eyes and looks up.

INT. HARRY'S BEDROOM - DAY

HARRY
(bleary)

Luke... what time is it?

LUKE

Six-thirty.

(smiles)

I thought we'd get an early start.

CUT TO:

INT. CITY COUNCIL MEETING ROOM - DAY

A meeting of the Lawson City Council is in session, Mayor Cole presiding. Of the dozen council MEMBERS, we also recognize Avery Wyatt and Roscoe Fitts. VERA DWIGHT, the council secretary, a cherubic woman in her 40s, is reading the minutes of the last meeting.

VERA

Finally, Roscoe Fitts moved, and Red Curtis seconded, that the council form a committee to investigate the adoption of a new property taxation structure. Motion carried, nine to two, one abstention.

As Vera speaks, the meeting room door opens and Luke, Harry, Old Time and Mrs. Terwilliger slip inside and take seats on the unoccupied benches.

ERNIE

Thanks, Vera.

Ernie notices Luke and the trio.

ERNIE

Well, the chair notes the presence this morning of Luke and Harry Trumbo and the rest of the Bijou staff. Frankly, the chair notes the presence of just about anyone who ever finds their way into one of these meetings. G'morning, folks.

LUKE & THE TRIO

Good morning.

ERNIE

I'm just guessing, but I bet it's not a sudden interest in Lawson

politics that brings you all here.

Luke stands.

LUKE

Well, no...

(clears his throat)

I wanted to thank you all for giving me such a nice welcome, and making me feel at home. But I... we're... actually here on business of a sort...

DALEY THORNHILL, 30s, the council parliamentarian, pipes up. He's waving a copy of "Roberts Rules of Order."

DALEY

Point of order, Mr. Mayor, this comes under the heading "New Business," and this is not the time...

ERNIE

I think we can make an exception here, Daley.

DALEY

It'll need to be moved and seconded.

Ernie rolls his eyes, then quickly and mechanically, without inflection:

ERNIE

All right, motion to hear the speaker out of order.

WYATT

Seconded.

ERNIE

Motion on the floor, discussion open, discussion closed, all those in favor signify by saying "aye."

ALL

Aye.

ERNIE

Opposed? Hearing no opposition, the motion is carried.

Pause. Ernie turns to Luke and smiles.

ERNIE

Go ahead, son.

LUKE

Thanks. Well, I'll make this short and sweet. The Bijou needs a lot of repairs, and the truth of the matter is, Harry, um, that is, Dad and me, Mrs. Terwilliger and Old Tim, we can't possibly afford them all. So, I'd like to ask your help to... well, to scrounge around a bit, and see if you have anything that might help us out.

WYATT

What kinds of things are you talking about?

LUKE

Oh, paint, brushes, plaster, light bulbs, yardage, and if you can't come up with any of that, we can use some old-fashioned elbow grease.

Fitts leans forward.

FITTS

So... you do intend to fix the place up after all?

LUKE

Mr. Fitts, with all due respect, I think Lawson needs the Bijou a bit more than it needs a super market. And I think Lawson deserves the Bijou. There's not a lot that can be done to help us get past the pain we've all felt...

He looks at Harry and smiles.

LUKE

... but I think a good dose of magic is as good a place as any to start.

The council members MURMUR amongst themselves, then:

WYATT

(eagerly)

Motion to encourage the citizenry
of Lawson to help out the Bijou in
any way they can...

DALEY

(a subtle reminder)

... short of the allocation of city
funds...

WYATT

(agreeing)

... short of allocation of city
funds.

DALEY

(enthusiastically)

Seconded!

ERNIE

(brightly)

Motion on the floor, discussion
open, discussion closed, all those
in favor signify by saying "aye."

ALL

AYE!

ERNIE

Hearing no opposition, the motion
is carried! Congratulations, Luke,
you got yourself a town to help you
out!

CUT TO:

INT. CITY HALL BASEMENT STORAGE ROOM - DAY

As the entire city council and the Bijou trio looks on, Luke
moves to the memorial and pulls down the huge piece of muslin
covering it. Harry steps forward and gathers some of it in
his arms.

Ernie and Daley step forward and look up at the monument.

Ernie touches the names of his two sons inscribed on the
base of the monument.

ERNIE

(slowly)

You know, this really ought to be
out where people can see it.

Luke overhears this last, and as he smiles, he turns to Harry, who brightens as he pulls a large section of the muslin taut between his outstretched arms...

CUT TO:

MONTAGE - WITH SOME HARD-DRIVING BOOGIE-WOOGIE UNDER...

ANGLE - THE SCREEN

Harry's on a ladder, snipping the cords holding up the old screen, which is dropping, bit-by-bit, into the arms of Luke and Adele, who are surrounded by a group of LITTLE KIDS, watching the goings-on in wide-eyed awe.

Harry snips the last line, and the rest of the old screen drops down on Luke's head. Suddenly... LUKE'S A GHOST!! He raises his arms and plays the bogeyman for the kids, who scream in mock terror and scatter, as Harry and Adele laugh.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Old Tim and Harry carry a dilapidated row of seats up the aisle, as Adele and Mabel move in, tearing up the rotten carpeting and sweeping up the dust and debris.

The men are having a tough time carrying the seats, and just as they're about to drop the row, someone rushes in next to Harry and grabs his end. It's Carl Leffert. A second later, someone else grabs Old Tim's end.

BOB LEFFERT

has a good purchase on the seats with his good hand and his hook. He nods to Old Tim, who steps away, mopping his brow.

Luke smiles as he sees this from the front of the auditorium.

INT. BIJOU LOBBY - DAY

Harry, Stanton and Mrs. Terwilliger, with the help of Avery Wyatt and his son Spencer, tear down the rotting draperies and scrape off the wallpaper covering the lobby walls. Then, as Harry, Spencer and Stanton sand down the walls, Avery and Mrs. Terwilliger hand them freshly-mixed cans of red wall paint and brushes. Immediately, they all set to work

painting.

EXT. THE BIJOU SIGN - DAY

Luke is on the roof of the theater, pliers in hand and tool box nearby. He's just straightened out the "J" and he steps back... carefully... to admire his handiwork. For the first time in a long time, the sign actually reads, "THE BIJOU."

But not for long. Luke tenses... the building starts shaking... and the train passes by behind the theater. Luke lunges out of the way as three letters shake loose and fall. Once again, the sign reads, "HE B J U." Luke winces.

EXT. CITY HALL SQUARE - DAY

Ernie Cole and Avery Wyatt stand solemnly at the front of a small group gazing at the base of the war memorial, as it takes shape in a prominent place in the square...

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Harry is on a ladder, attaching the final spring stretcher to a corner of the muslin. It snaps into place, and voila -- new screen! Luke, Adele, Doc Lardner, and Sheriff Eldridge, standing below, applaud enthusiastically.

INT. ORCHESTRA PIT - DAY

As work progresses all around her, Mrs. Terwilliger has just finished dusting off the piano. She opens the keyboard cover and trails her hand delicately over the keys. She sits, closes her eyes, and begins to play -- Chopin's Op. 10 Etude No. 3 -- delicate, flowing music. Even though the piano is a bit out of tune, it's still beautiful.

As she plays, all the work slowly comes to a halt. Before long, all eyes are on her. Everyone's listening. Transported.

After a moment, she stops. Overcome. Everyone applauds. Surprised, Mrs. Terwilliger stands, and, blushing, bows.

LUKE

That was beautiful.

MRS. TERWILLIGER

I taught you that.

LUKE

I can play the piano?

MRS. TERWILLIGER

(all fluttery)

Oh dear, yes. You were an excellent student, before all that clarinet nonsense. You loved Chopin. You used to call it "heaven music." "Teach me some heaven music," you used to say.

She sits at the piano.

MRS. TERWILLIGER

Sit. Play with me.

LUKE

No, I...

MRS. TERWILLIGER

Some of it might come back to you.

Reluctantly, Luke sits down to her left. As she begins to play a Chopin waltz, she encourages him to keep the 3/4 time.

MRS. TERWILLIGER

That's good... that's good...

But it's clear Luke has no idea what he's doing. He's just plunking bass notes. But after a moment, the bass figures he's improvising start to change -- and before long, it's transformed into the eight-to-the-bar figure of a boogie woogie beat. Mrs. Terwilliger stops playing, annoyed.

MRS. TERWILLIGER

Really, Luke! That's no way to treat Mr. Chopin!

She stands and moves away. Luke keeps playing, grinning madly -- he's loving it! After a moment, Spencer Wyatt runs over and takes Mrs. Terwilliger's place, improvising the top half to Luke's bass line.

OLD TIM

is tapping his foot to the beat. He turns to Adele and says:

OLD TIM

I taught him that.

Off Adele cracking up.

THE MONTAGE CONTINUES...

EXT. THE BIJOU SIGN - DAY

Luke and all the letters up again. He steps back, checks his watch, and like clockwork, the rumbling begins and a train goes by. This time, however, only the "J" tips over at a jaunty angle. Luke smiles.

INT. MABEL'S DINER - DAY

Luke, Adele and Harry, wearing coveralls, sit at the counter, devouring hefty plates of turkey with dressing and mashed potatoes and gravy. Luke's and Adele's hair is practically white from plaster dust and Harry's face and hands are stained with paint specks.

At the other side of the counter, Mabel is chatting amiably with Bob Leffert. She smiles at him warmly, then turns to refill Harry's coffee cup. Harry thanks her, then turns back to the newspaper he's reading.

INSERT - THE FRONT PAGE OF THE LAWSON JOURNAL-AMERICAN

Prominent is the black-and-white photo of a little boy and a policeman holding up Pete's jacket, with the accompanying headline:

BOY, 5, FINDS SUSPECTED RED'S
JACKET ON SANTA BARBARA BEACH
Hollywood Writer Feared Dead
Were Red Agents Involved?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE BIJOU SIGN - NIGHT

Luke's standing near the sign. He yells to Adele, down below on the ground. She, in turn, yells to Harry, standing near a switch panel behind the candy counter. He throws the switch...

... and the sign lights up beautifully! Then, they all feel the rumble -- the train rolls past, and, although they rattle and shake, no letters fall. A CHEER goes up from Adele, Harry, and the small crowd of ONLOOKERS below. Delighted, Luke takes a formal bow. The boogie-woogie ends as we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CITY HALL SQUARE - DAY

ON THE MEMORIAL

Complete and polished, standing proudly in the center of the square.

WIDER

It's a clear, balmy day, and the whole town is turned out. Mayor Ernie Cole is at the podium. He finishes his remarks, then picks up the two faded gold stars representing the lost lives of his sons. He holds them up, high above his head.

ON THE CROWD

One-by-one, the gold stars of the town's boys are solemnly held aloft by their loved ones.

Luke and Harry stand at the side of the square, looking out at the sea of four or five dozen gold stars being held aloft. Luke catches a glimpse of a man in an army uniform...

LUKE'S POV

It's Bob Leffert, standing with Mabel, looking very sharp in his dress greens. He brings his hook-hand up and salutes smartly. Mabel takes his good hand, squeezes it as she blinks back tears.

Luke smiles at this scene as Harry wipes his eyes and puts his arm around Luke's shoulder, pulls him close and kisses him on the forehead.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE SAME - LATER

The Lawson High School Marching Band is set up on the steps of City Hall, playing the "Star Spangled Banner." They are being conducted by their director, MR. PHILLIPS. Luke and Harry, hands over their hearts, watch and sing along. Then, Luke takes a closer look at the DRUM MAJOR...

ON THE DRUM MAJOR,

a tall young man wearing an ornate brocaded red and white uniform with "LHS" emblazoned across the chest.

ON LUKE

He has an idea. The anthem ends, and Luke excuses himself

and moves forward, buttonholing Mr. Phillips as he comes down the steps...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BIJOU - DAY

Luke and Adele are on ladders, hanging letters on the marquee, which reads:

GRAND RE-OPENING TONIGHT!
GENE KELLY
AN AMERICAN IN PARIS

Harry comes outside and gets their attention. Grandly, he gestures toward the door, and out strides

OLD TIM,

wearing his new uniform -- it's the Lawson High School drum major's uniform, modified here and there. "B-I-J-O-U" is proudly emblazoned across his chest in gold brocaded letters.

Luke and Adele applaud. Old Time looks up at them -- AND SMILES!

INT. BIJOU LOBBY - NIGHT

Old Tim stands at attention, clutching the front door handle. Mrs. Terwilliger, wearing a new dress, her hair newly and perfectly coiffed, stands at the ready at her candy counter, ready to sell tickets and refreshments.

Harry and Luke nervously pace the lobby. Luke checks his watch. It's time. He shakes Harry's hand, and nods to Old Tim, who swings the door open...

ON THE DOOR

Immediately, PATRONS come flooding into the theater. Luke exchanges surprised glances with Harry -- then walks outside.

OUTSIDE THE THEATER

Luke comes out and looks down the block.

HIS POV

The line of PATRONS stretches two deep down the block and around the corner.

Luke smiles. Success.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE BIJOU'S MARQUEE -- "FRED ASTAIRE - ROYAL WEDDING"

INT. BIJOU LOBBY - DAY

Luke's selling tickets from behind the candy counter while Mrs. Terwilliger sells refreshments to a line of CUSTOMERS. Luke sells a ticket to a WOMAN, who moves away, revealing

BOB LEFFERT AND MABEL.

Luke smiles at Bob, who smiles back, his eyes now fairly dancing with life. He plunks down his admission, and Luke hands him two tickets, which he takes with his hook-hand. Mabel smiles at Luke, takes Bob's good hand, and they move away, revealing A FARMER AND HIS WIFE, 50s.

The Farmer steps up and holds out a plucked chicken by its neck.

Luke, surprised, jumps back -- then smiles, pulls off two tickets, and exchanges them for the chicken.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE BIJOU'S MARQUEE -- "THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL"

INT. BEHIND THE SCREEN - NIGHT

The only light back here is the light of the movie, spilling through the screen. Luke is straightening up the backstage storage area, when Adele taps him on the shoulder. He turns, and she throws her arms around his neck and kisses him. She hands him a paper to read.

ON THE PAPER

Luke angles it so he can read it by the light of the screen. It says:

California State Bar Association
ADELE LOUISE LARDNER
has PASSED the State Bar examination.

Luke, thrilled, grabs Adele and picks her up, twirling her around with joy. He sets her down and kisses her passionately.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE BIJOU'S MARQUEE -- "SAND PIRATES OF THE SAHARA"

INT. PROJECTION BOOTH - NIGHT

Harry is frantically threading the changeover projector. The bell on the running projector DINGS! once, signalling that the reel is coming to an end. Harry looks out the window at the screen, then back to the task at hand.

INT. BIJOU LOBBY - NIGHT

Luke comes out of the office carrying a folded movie poster. With a satisfied smile, he walks through the lobby, admiring how handsome the old place looks. Old Tim, snappily attired in his uniform, is sweeping a tiny pile of debris into a dustpan. Mrs. Terwilliger is straightening up the candy counter. All is well.

Luke goes to the lobby's poster case. He opens it, and unfolds a brand-new one-sheet poster for "SAND PIRATES" -- the same design as the one-sheet we saw in Pete's apartment. Methodically, he thumbtacks the poster up and closes the case.

As Luke passes the auditorium doors, a MAN comes out of the theater and crosses to the candy counter. The door stays open for a moment, and Luke decides to duck inside and catch a bit of the picture.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

ON THE SCREEN - "SAND PIRATES OF THE SAHARA"

The second-to-last reel of a black-and-white early-50's programmer. It's nighttime in the desert. A huge full moon hangs over a B-movie soundstage version of the pyramids. GREGORY, a dark, handsome leading man in a pith helmet is engaged in a fierce swordfight with KHALID, the villain.

Pete takes a seat on the aisle near the door.

GREGORY (ONSCREEN)

You don't think you can win this,
do you?

Khalid lunges and draws Gregory's blood.

LUKE

(ala "Khalid")

"Ha! I'd say I was winning!"

KHALID (ONSCREEN)

Ha! I'd say I was winning!

Luke's look is "How did I know he was gonna say that?"

Onscreen, an EVIL HENCHMAN is sneaking up behind Gregory.

LUKE

"Gregory! Look out!"

WOMAN'S VOICE (ONSCREEN)

Gregory! Look out!

Pete did it again.

Onscreen, Gregory turns and kills the Henchman, then quickly dispatches Khalid. He stands over the body, catches his breath and says:

GREGORY (ONSCREEN)

It's all right, Rebecca.

WOMAN'S VOICE (ONSCREEN)

Is he dead?

GREGORY (ONSCREEN)

Yes, Rebecca. He's dead.

REBECCA, a beautiful American woman, comes into view and takes our attention because she's being played by Sandra Sinclair, Pete Appleton's ex-girlfriend...

ON LUKE

His mouth is gaping open. He stares at the screen.

LUKE

(a whisper)

Sandra...?

Luke stands. Confused, he stumbles backward, moving into the lobby as the Man goes back into the auditorium with his popcorn and the door closes.

INT. BIJOU LOBBY - NIGHT

Luke is staring at the closed auditorium doors. Old Tim and Mrs. Terwilliger take note of his odd behavior.

MRS. TERWILLIGER

Luke? Dear, are you all right?

Without answering, Luke turns and runs to the poster case.

ON THE POSTER - "SAND PIRATES OF THE SAHARA"

Forget the cheesy B-movie artwork. As Luke looks at the poster, it's clear that he's remembering something. He looks at the picture of Sandra -- then scans down to the credits block at the bottom of the poster. His eyes lock upon

WRITTEN BY PETER APPLETON

LUKE

My god... my god... no...

Suddenly, all of Pete Appleton's worries have come crashing down on him...

... because he remembers...

INT. PROJECTION BOOTH - NIGHT

The warning bell DINGS! twice, but the changeover projector's carbon arcs keep sputtering and the motor keeps dying.

HARRY

(pleading)

Oh, baby, make your daddy happy...

Harry's trying to keep the projector going, as the previous reel is about to end. Given no other choice, he finally gives the changeover projector a good swift kick.

It hums to life. A perfect changeover. Harry pets the projector.

HARRY

You're a good girl. No matter what
I say.

As he turns away, he feels a sudden, sharp pain in his left arm. Wincing, he grabs his arm, staggers back towards a chair, and sits heavily.

He tries to clear his throat, but it dissolves into a hacking, choking COUGH. He tries to stand, but drops to his knees, clutching his left arm harder than before.

HARRY

(in pain)
Oh, Jesus...

Harry falls to the floor, and as he does

THE FILM

breaks in the projector gate... flap! flap! flap!...

INT. BIJOU LOBBY - NIGHT

Luke is still staring at the poster, lost in thought.
Offscreen, we HEAR the audience WHISTLING AND HOOTING in
reaction to the broken film.

Mrs. Terwilliger has been calling Luke's name, but he doesn't
come out of his stupor until Old Tim comes up behind him and
spins him around...

OLD TIM
Mr. Luke!

Luke stares wide-eyed at the old man.

MRS. TERWILLIGER
Luke! Luke, something's wrong!
The film broke, and I can't raise
Harry on the house phone!

LUKE
(still dazed)
What?

MRS. TERWILLIGER
You've got to talk to them before
they tear the theater apart!

Finally, Luke pulls himself together, hears the audience
noise, and moves toward the auditorium doors.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Amid the shouting and tossing of popcorn and debris, Luke
tries to regain his composure as he strides down the aisle
toward the stage.

LUKE
Come on, folks, this happens every
once in a while, just settle
down...

The crowd quiets down a bit. Luke shields his eyes from the light and calls up to the projection booth.

LUKE

Harry! Harry, why don't you cut the projector and bring up the house lights?

No reaction. Just the flickering beam of light.

LUKE

Harry? Harry...?

Luke, gripped by a sudden fear, rushes up the aisle and into the lobby. The crowd goes silent...

INT. BIJOU LOBBY - NIGHT

Old Tim and Mrs. Terwilliger watch as Luke tears into the lobby and makes for the balcony stairs...

INT. BALCONY - NIGHT

... and charges between the seats and up the stairs to the projection booth.

INT. PROJECTION BOOTH - NIGHT

Luke bursts in the sees Harry on the floor. He rushes over and kneels down next to him.

LUKE

Jesus...

HARRY

(with difficulty)

The film broke...

LUKE

I know, I know... keep still.

A MAN pops his head into the projection booth door.

LUKE

(to the man)

Get Doc Lardner.

CUT TO:

INT. HARRY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Harry is in bed, eyes closed. Doc Lardner has a stethoscope to his chest. He leans up and pats Harry's hand.

He stands and comes over to Luke and Adele, who are near the door. Just outside, angling for a view into the room, are Old Tim and Mrs. Terwilliger.

LARDNER

It's a pretty massive heart attack. His lungs have filled with fluid, and, well... it seems as though his body is just... shutting down.

LUKE

Can we get him to the hospital?

LARDNER

Even if we could, and the move didn't kill him, there'd be very little we could do there that we can't do here.

(puts his hand on Luke's shoulder)

I'm sorry.

Harry's eyelids flutter.

HARRY

(weakly)

Did you... did you...

Luke rushes to Harry's side and takes his hand.

LUKE

I'm here.

HARRY

Did you... did you...

LUKE

Did I what?

HARRY

(irritated)

Did you fix the damn film? It broke in the last reel.

LUKE

I know. Everyone went home. We offered them refunds.

HARRY
Anybody take it?

LUKE
A few.

HARRY
(closes his eyes)
Vultures...

Luke smiles.

HARRY
I'm not happy about this, mind you,
but if I have to go, at least I'm
going in my own bed, the same bed
my Lily died in, and... knowing
that my son is alive. That's not
too shabby, is it?

LUKE
You're not going anywhere, Harry.

HARRY
Don't tell me, I know about these
things. I've seen it before. It's
all right. It's... all right.
You're here. Oh, God, I love you,
son.

Harry smiles. Luke kisses his hand and leans up, whispering
in Harry's ear:

LUKE
And I love you... Dad.

Harry smiles faintly, looks at Luke. He nods, then closes
his eyes.

HARRY
(softly)
Oh, so... much... lighter...

Slowly, Harry exhales. His face relaxes, completely at
peace. He doesn't breathe again.

Luke looks at Harry's face for a moment. Then as the tears
well up, he leans over and ever-so-gently places a kiss on
Harry's forehead.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAWSON CEMETERY - DAY

It's a beautiful, bright, sunny day. Luke and Adele stand at the front of the large group of mourners. REVEREND COLEMAN, 50s, conducts the service.

COLEMAN

We commit to the earth the mortal remains of Harry Bernard Trumbo, safe in the knowledge that his immortal soul is at peace and at last reunited with his beloved Lillian in the bosom of the Lord. Let us pray.

Everyone bows their heads.

COLEMAN

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want, he maketh me to lie down in green pastures..."

Luke looks up at the sky, then steps forward and lays a single rose on Harry's casket. Then, as everyone surreptitiously watches, he turns and walks away from the gravesite, toward the cemetery entrance.

Adele watches Luke depart...

ANOTHER ANGLE

... and she's not alone. Agents Saunders and Brett are watching everything from their car, which is parked nearby. As Luke walks away, Saunders snaps his photo with a long-lens camera...

DISSOLVE TO:

THE BASE OF THE WAR MEMORIAL,

and Luke's name inscribed there.

EXT. CITY HALL SQUARE - DUSK

Luke stands in front of the memorial, head bowed. After a moment, he sits, leaning against the memorial.

ON LUKE

Lost in thought, he buries his face in his hands.

ADELE'S VOICE (O.S.)

Mind if I join you?

Luke looks up, squinting. Adele stands above him, backlit by the golden light of the sundown.

LUKE

Sure.

She sits next to him. Tentatively, she touches his shoulder. He leans into her, and she enfolds her arm in his.

Pause.

LUKE

Your father said... that I would start to remember things.

Suddenly, Adele feels as though she's walking on eggshells.

ADELE

(slowly)

What... do you remember?

LUKE

Well... everything. It started coming back a couple of days ago. I remember everything now.

ADELE

I see...

LUKE

Delly. I'm... I'm not... Harry wasn't my father. And I'm not... I'm not Luke.

She closes her eyes. All her suspicions are suddenly confirmed.

ADELE

(adrift)

Oh...

Her tears start, and she moves to hug Luke -- but instead, she starts hitting him, flailing, beating on his chest. He hugs her tightly, and she completely lets go.

ADELE

(crying)

Oh, god, I knew! I knew! I knew
from the start! I wanted you to be
Luke! I wanted you to be alive!
You're so much like him, you have
no idea. No wonder everyone else
accepted you! You don't know what
you -- what Luke meant to this
town, suddenly being alive! You
don't know what this town lost!
You just don't know...

She pulls away, stands, and looks him in the eye. Luke
rises.

ADELE

(sobbing uncontrollably)
I knew you weren't Luke! And I
tried not to fall in love with you!
And... I don't even know your name!
Oh, god...

Luke moves toward her. She backs away.

LUKE

I fell in love with you, too,
Delly. Only now I don't know how I
feel, about you or about anything.
I only think I know how Luke would
feel.

She's still sobbing. He moves to her, takes her in his arms.

LUKE

Delly, shhhhhh...

ADELE

(pulling away)
No... I can't... I have to... I
can't...

She runs off, crying...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MABEL'S DINER - DAY

ON SHERIFF ELDRIDGE,

making short work of a steak and eggs. As he powers down his
meal, Agents Saunders and Brett, distinctly out-of-place in
their dark suits and hats, enter the diner. They take note

of Eldridge, and come over.

SAUNDERS

Are you the sheriff?

ELDRIDGE

And I got the uniform to prove it.

SAUNDERS

I'm Special Agent Walter Saunders,
this is Special Agent Steven Brett,
FBI. May we have a word with you?

They flash identification, which Eldridge notes.

ELDRIDGE

(gesturing)

Please, sit.

They sit across from Eldridge. As Saunders speaks, Agent Brett pulls a photo from his coat pocket.

SAUNDERS

A couple of days ago, a county
flood control maintenance crew
pulled a car out of the Lawson Wash
ocean outlet. They checked its
registration, and when the owner
was identified, they notified us.

Agent Brett slides the photo toward Eldridge.

ON THE PHOTO

It's Peter Appleton -- Luke.

ELDRIDGE

(smiling)

Well, that'd be Luke Trumbo. Looks
like you boys've solved a little
mystery we've had going on for a
few months.

BRETT

Sir, that's a photo of man named
Peter Appleton. He's been missing
from Los Angeles for close to three
months now.

ELDRIDGE

What? No, there's got to be a...

SAUNDERS

Sheriff -- this man is a suspected
communist.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

(Oh, and by the way, from here on, he's PETE again.)

Pete sits across from Eldridge, Saunders and Brett. The
silence in the room is thick.

PETE

Am I under arrest?

Eldridge glances at Agent Saunders, who stares at Pete
impassively.

ELDRIDGE

Well, no, but these gentlemen would
like to get some answers...

PETE

I don't know what else to tell you.
I wasn't hiding out. I hit my head
and I didn't remember anything
until a few days ago.

SAUNDERS

Now that you remember who you are,
were you planning on telling anyone
your true identity?

PETE

I already have.

SAUNDERS

Who?

PETE

My girlfriend. If she still is...

SAUNDERS

(checking his notebook)
Would that be Miss Sinclair?

PETE

(ironic smile)
No. No, not Miss Sinclair. I'm

talking about Adele Lardner.

Agent Saunders glances at Eldridge.

ELDRIDGE

The doctor's daughter. She was
Luke Trumbo's sweetheart.

Pause.

SAUNDERS

Mr. Appleton, I have reason to
believe you're holding something
back, and that just rubs me the
wrong way.

(pause)

Sir, are you a communist?

PETE

(firmly)

No. Absolutely not.

SAUNDERS

All right. All right. We'll see.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - DAY

Pete comes out into the bright midday sun. It takes a moment
for his eyes to adjust, and when they do, he becomes aware of
perhaps TWENTY PEOPLE lining the sidewalk in front of the
station.

PETE'S POV

We recognize several of the people. Carl Leffert. Bob
Leffert and Mabel Lanier. Daley Thornhill. Katie
Rutherford. Stanton Lawson. Now, there's nothing in the
least bit threatening about the gathering -- and that's
what's so disturbing about it. They're not an angry mob,
they're just standing there, running the gamut of emotions.
Shock. Disillusionment. Betrayal.

It's an awkward moment. Pete doesn't quite know how to
react. He wants to go over and talk to them, but he wouldn't
know what to say. He wishes one of them would talk to him,
just say something, anything. But no one does.

Then, Bob Leffert turns away from Pete. He shoves his hook
hand into his pocket and sullenly moves away, followed by

Mabel, then his brother, then the others...

... leaving Pete alone.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BIJOU LOBBY - NIGHT

Old Tim, in his doorman's uniform, stands by the open, empty door.

Mrs. Terwilliger, behind the candy counter, wipes up an imaginary spill, a full wheel of unsold tickets by her elbow.

Pete anxiously paces the lobby. He looks into

THE AUDITORIUM.

Every seat is empty.

He glances at his watch, then turns to Old Tim and Mrs. Terwilliger:

PETE

Let's close up.

As Mrs. Terwilliger and Old Tim silently shamble off, Pete goes over and flips OFF several light switches. Most of the theater goes dark.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE BIJOU SIGN - NIGHT

Pete sits leaning up against the base of the dark sign. A gentle breeze tousles his hair as he gazes up at the stars.

After a moment, he HEARS footsteps coming up the ladder to the roof.

PETE

Who's that?

ADELE'S VOICE

It's me.

Adele climbs onto the roof, comes over and sits down next to Pete.

ADELE

Hi.

PETE

Hi.

Pause.

ADELE

I'm sure a lot of people down in L.A. are worried sick about you.

PETE

Yeah? I'm sure a lot more people down in L.A. want a piece of me.

He turns to her.

PETE

This Luke was a pretty good guy, wasn't he?

ADELE

(wistful smile)

Oh, yes. Yes, he was.

PETE

Well... let me tell you, I'm not Luke. I know who I am now, and you don't. And... I don't like me very much.

ADELE

(changing the subject)

You know, it's going to take me a while to get used to calling you Pete.

(she takes it for a spin)

Pete. Pete. It's a nice name.

PETE

Thanks, I like it. I think.

Pause.

PETE

Delly, I want to do the right thing.

Pete can't believe he just said that -- but he did.

ADELE

I believe you.

PETE

The truth is, I'm a lot of things,
but communist isn't one of them.

ADELE

But if you only went to one
meeting, why does anyone care?
Besides, why should it even matter
if you were a communist?

PETE

Come on, Delly, look at the country
today. We're fighting communists
in Korea, we're paranoid about the
Russians, we've got this thing with
the Rosenbergs and the atomic
bomb...

(bitterly)

You think they want "suspected
communists" entertaining the
American public with party
propaganda like, gosh I don't know,
"Sand Pirates of the Sahara?"

ADELE

Forget about all that. You want to
do the right thing? Then defend
your name. If someone says
something about you that's untrue,
you have to stand up and say so. I
know the law, and the law's on
your side.

Beat.

PETE

What about you, Delly?

ADELE

I am, too.

Pete smiles and puts his arms around her.

PETE

You'll stand by me?

ADELE

Whatever happens.

They kiss, and we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RORY'S GAS STATION - MORNING

There's a thick bank of coastal fog just down the road, obscuring any view of the ocean a mile away. It's deadly quiet as gas station owner RORY, late 60s, pulls up and parks his Model A truck. He gets out, and a big old German Shepherd, LOTTIE, jumps out of the truck bed.

Rory moves to the door, and is about to put his key in the lock, when Lottie starts whining, looking toward the fog bank and sniffing the air expectantly.

RORY
Whatsit, girl?

He stops -- he hears something, too -- a LOW RUMBLE. Lottie starts BARKING. The RUMBLE is getting LOUDER. Rory's getting worried. He looks at

THE FOG BANK.

It's starting to GLOW from within. Lottie's barking gets LOUDER and angrier. Suddenly, a large black car punches out of the fog bank and tears down the road. It's followed by another, and another -- and perhaps a dozen more cars and trucks, all heading hell-bent-for-leather toward the town.

Rory moves toward Lottie, trying to quiet her as the cars fly past the station.

RORY
Shhhhh. I know, Lottie. This time, I thought it was the Martians for sure.

CUT TO:

EXT. COMMERCE STREET - DAY

The place is bedlam, overflowing with REPORTERS, NEWSREEL CAMERA CREWS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, you name it.

A RADIO CREW is broadcasting in front of Mabel's Diner. The REPORTER is on-the-air, hugging his microphone, speaking above the din. Mabel stands next to him, his hand on her shoulder. Bob Leffert stands nearby, grim.

REPORTER

I'm here with Mabel Lanier, the owner of the diner here on Commerce Street where Appleton often took meals. Mrs. Lanier, tell me, what are your thoughts about having such a celebrated suspected communist in your midst all this time?

MABEL

Well, its kinds hard to believe, 'cause Luke -- I mean Peter -- is such a... I mean, since he's been back, I've never seen the town so happy and all. It's like he gave us some... I don't know... some hope, I guess.

REPORTER

What she's referring to folks, is yet another bizarre twist in this story. Not only is Appleton alive, but he's been suffering from amnesia and living here in Lawson, where, due to a startling resemblance, everyone in town for the last three months has taken him for one of Lawson's dead war heroes, Albert Trumbo...

MABEL

(a catch in her voice)

Luke. We always called him Luke.

Mabel glances at Bob, who lowers his head.

CUT TO:

INT. BIJOU OFFICE - DAY

Pete is at the desk, staring into space. Adele leans against the radiator behind him. The silence in the room is thick.

Across the desk from Pete sits Leo Kubelsky.

LEO

The FBI can't arrest you, because you haven't done anything wrong.

PETE

Well, that's a relief. I understand they usually don't let

that stop them.

LEO

However... you're gonna be subpoenaed to testify before the Un-American Activities Committee when they open hearings in Los Angeles. Now, if you play ball and tell them what they want to hear, they'll clear you.

PETE

And I won't be a communist anymore.

LEO

Exactly.

PETE

So it doesn't make any difference that I'm not one now, and have never been one.

Leo stands and walks to the window.

LEO

Kid, don't get philosophical with me. This is a game, but it's not your game. You play by their rules, or they'll ruin you. And they have the power to do it.

ADELE

Doesn't it bother anyone that this is a perversion of democracy?

Leo turns to her and smiles. His tone is charmingly matter-of-factly, not condescending in the least.

LEO

Darling, don't kid yourself. We don't have a "democracy" in this country. The Declaration of Independence? The Constitution? These are pieces of paper with signatures on 'em. And you know what a piece of paper with a signature is? It's a contract. And you know what a contract is? Something that can be re-negotiated at any time. It just so happens that the House Un-American

Activities Committee is re-negotiating the contract this time around.

Leo takes out a cigarette, lights it.

LEO

Next time, it might be the FBI. The time after that, it might be the President. But it'll always be someone. Count on it.

PETE

That's not the country Luke fought for.

LEO

Lest we forget, Peter, your own military career was somewhat less illustrious than Luke's.

PETE

It's wrong, Leo.

LEO

Peter, don't let that stop you all of a sudden.

Leo pulls a folded paper from his coat pocket and hands it to Pete.

LEO

Here. When you're called, read this to them. Just tell the bastards what they want to hear, and we can all get on with our lives.

There's a knock at the door. Leo opens it. Standing there is a small MAN wearing a serious suit and an even more serious fedora.

THE MAN

Peter Appleton?

PETE

(standing)

You found him.

The Man reaches into his breast pocket and withdraws a blue backed folded document, which he hands to Pete. As he does,

a FLASH lights the room.

At the door, a pair of PHOTOGRAPHERS and a NEWSREEL CAMERAMAN are jockeying for position. Pete rolls his eyes.

THE MAN

Peter Appleton, you are hereby subpoenaed to appear as a witness before a special session of the House Committee on Un-American Activities. You are to appear in Los Angeles, California, at the Biltmore Hotel, at the date and time specified herein.

Pete takes the subpoena. There's an awkward moment, as the newsreel camera is still rolling. Pete cradles the subpoena like an Oscar statuette and smiles into the lens.

PETE

("on")

This is a great honor. I'll treasure this always. Thank you.

CUT TO:

THE SUBPOENA

in a partially-packed suitcase.

WIDER

INT. PETE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Pete is sitting in a chair, reading the statement Leo gave him.

PETE

(softly)

"I, Peter Appleton, do hereby renounce my membership in the American Communist Party, and by way of purging myself of my indiscretion, wish to provide the following names of fellow members to this committee, so that those persons may have the opportunity to do as I have done..."

He scans down the page. It's a long list.

PETE

Jesus...

He HEARS a "meow!" And turns to look.

CAT

is standing in the bedroom doorway. He folds up and pockets the list.

PETE

Old Tim?

After a moment, Old Tim appears in the doorway, wringing his knit cap in his hands.

OLD TIM

Can I... Can I t-t-talk to you?

PETE

Sure. Come on in. I was just packing.

Pete stands, gestures Old Tim to the chair, as he sits on the bed.

PETE

Please, sit.

OLD TIM

Thanks.

He sits. Pause.

OLD TIM

They'll come back, you know.
They'll all c-c-come back.

PETE

The customers? I don't know...

OLD TIM

They will. They w-w-will.

Pete turns to Old Tim, fixes him in the eye.

PETE

Tim, I have to tell you something.

OLD TIM

Oh.

PETE

It's about me.

OLD TIM

Oh.

Pause, as Pete gathers courage and tries to find the words.

PETE

I'm... I'm not Luke. Luke is dead. He died in the war. He's not coming back, and I'm not him. I don't even belong here. This whole thing started out as an accident, and that's all it is. An accident.

OLD TIM

Oh...

PETE

My name isn't Luke. It's Peter. Peter Appleton.

Old Tim stands and looks askance at Pete.

Pause.

OLD TIM

Did you think I didn't kn-kn-know that?

PETE

(taken aback)

I thought you...

OLD TIM

I know more than you give me c-c-credit, that's for sure. Don't you see, it don't m-m-matter who you are? All that matters is what you g-g-gave us. And you can't take that away now. You're wrong, Peter Appleton. You do belong here.

He leans down to Pete.

OLD TIM

You hafta give us back the B-B-Bijou.

Old Tim straightens up, nods at Pete. Then, silently, he picks up Cat and exits.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAWSON PASSENGER DEPOT - DAY

Pete and Adele walk slowly down the platform toward the waiting train.

ADELE

You've got everything?

PETE

Yeah. Except a chance in hell of coming out of this intact.

ADELE

You'll be fine. No matter what Leo Kubelsky says, you've got a hundred and seventy-five years of American law on your side. Don't forget that.

PETE

I wish you were coming with me.

ADELE

And who's gonna run the projector until you get back? Mrs. Terwilliger?

PETE

Maybe we could train Cat to run the projector. You know, a system of scratching posts, and gears, and levers...

They both smile as the train's HORN blows.

CONDUCTOR

Board!

Pete picks up his suitcase and they walk toward the passenger compartment.

ADELE

Did you bring along something to read?

PETE

Damn...

Adele pulls a pocket-sized leather-bound book out of her purse and hands it to Pete.

ADELE

I didn't think so. Here. This is mine, you can borrow it.

INSERT - THE BOOK

Well-worn and scuffed, nevertheless the title is clear:

CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES
ANNOTATED EDITION

Pete looks at the book, then at Adele.

ADELE

Not exactly light reading, I know. Believe it or not, I've read this since high school, and it got me all the way through law school. Besides, there's something in there that'll help you. You won't have to get very far, it's near the beginning.

PETE

(clearly touched)

Delly... thanks, thank you. I'll take good care of this.

ADELE

Just remember two things. First, the law is a living thing. It made us free and it keeps us free. Sometimes it gets twisted around by people for their own purposes. Sometimes it makes mistakes, sometimes big mistakes. But in the end, the law prevails for the just. Sometimes, it takes a while.

PETE

Okay. What's the second thing?

She thinks for a moment. She needs the right words.

ADELE

I'll be here... if you come back.

The train pulls out. Adele and Pete exchange waves as we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BILTMORE HOTEL GRAND BALLROOM (LOS ANGELES) - DAY

The House Committee on Un-American Activities has effectively taken over the Grand Ballroom of this magnificent hotel, and the joint is packed to the rafters. Members of the AUDIENCE crane their necks to see out into the hallway, from where the witnesses will be entering.

The COMMITTEE MEMBERS are seated at their dais, brightly lit by the dozens of newsreel and TV lights. Elvin Clyde is seated at the far right. Dead center of the dais is the Chairman, CONGRESSMAN T. JOHNSTON DOYLE of Wisconsin, a husky man in his late 50s. He SLAMS his gavel down several times and the room goes quiet -- the talking stops, and the cameras start whirring.

INT. LARDNER LIVING ROOM - DAY

Adele's in a chair, eyes glued to the TV set. Mrs. Terwilliger and Old Tim sit on the couch, watching attentively.

Doc Lardner's in a straight-backed chair at a jaunty angle to the set, holding the rabbit ears uncomfortably high aloft.

ADELE

That's perfect, Dad.

DOYLE (ON TV)

The committee and the chamber will come to order.

Lardner forces a smile at Mrs. Terwilliger and Old Tim.

LARDNER

(sweating and wincing)

This television's a grand little invention, isn't it?

INT. BILTMORE HOTEL GRAND BALLROOM - DAY

DOYLE

The agenda for this morning's special session of the House Committee on Un-American Activities shows a number of witnesses, and

I'd like to admonish those that are here to view the testimony of our first witness to keep order at all times, or this chamber will be closed. I'm referring especially to the ladies and gentlemen of the press. I hope that's clear.

Beat. Doyle scans the room. He clearly means business.

DOYLE

Call Peter Appleton.

All eyes and cameras swing toward the door.

ON PETE

As he enters the chamber, dozens of FLASHBULBS fire as every eye and every camera follows him silently to his seat. As he sits, he glances behind him.

PETE'S POV

Leo Kubelsky is sitting in the front row of spectators. He smiles and nods at Pete.

Pete doesn't acknowledge him, and turns back.

DOYLE

The witness will please stand and raise his right hand.

Pete does as instructed.

DOYLE

Do you swear that the testimony you are about to give before this committee of the United States House of Representatives will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you god?

PETE

I do.

DOYLE

Be seated and state your full name and place of residence for the record.

PETE

Peter Kenneth Appleton. Hollywood,
California.

DOYLE

The chair notes that you are
appearing without the benefit of
counsel today, Mr. Appleton. We
certainly hope this means that you
intend to be fully forthcoming with
this committee?

PETE

(faint smile)

I'll do my best, Mr. Chairman.

DOYLE

Now, we're informed that you have a
statement you'd like to read, is
that correct?

PETE

(innocently)

A statement?

Doyle and Clyde exchange glances.

DOYLE

Yes. A prepared statement.

PETE

Um... no. I don't have a statement
at this time.

Pete turns in his chair and winks at Leo. Leo rolls his eyes
and shakes his head.

INT. LARDNER LIVING ROOM - DAY

Adele breathes a sigh of relief.

MRS. TERWILLIGER

I think he's doing very well, so
far.

ADELE

They haven't called out the dogs
yet.

DOYLE (ON TV)

Very well then, the questions will

be asked by the Majority Counsel,
Mr. Clyde.

The TV shot swings to see Elvin Clyde. He puts on his glasses and fixes Pete with an oily grin.

ADELE

I spoke too soon.

CLYDE (ON TV)

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and thank you Mr. Appleton, for appearing today.

INT. BILTMORE HOTEL GRAND BALLROOM - DAY

CLYDE

Mr. Appleton, you mention that your home is Hollywood, California. But isn't it true that for the last several months, you've made your home in a town called Lawson, California?

PETE

Sir, that is true.

CLYDE

Mr. Appleton, do you know an "Albert Lucas Trumbo?"

PETE

Luke Trumbo? We never met. But I'd like to think I know him.

CLYDE

Is that because you were masquerading as Luke Trumbo while you were in Lawson?

PETE

Mr. Clyde you're twisting things around. I wasn't masquerading. Luke Trumbo... Luke was a good man who gave his life for his country. I just... happen to look a little bit like him. That's all.

CLYDE

(referring to notes)

Yes, I see that Private Trumbo was

reported missing in action and is presumed dead. I also see that you were posted stateside during the war. Fort Dix?

PETE

Yes, sir.

CLYDE

Well, I'm sure we're all glad to see you came through it all right.

A few spectators titter.

INT. MABEL'S DINER - DAY

Mabel and Bob listen to the hearing on a radio in the packed diner.

CLYDE (ON RADIO)

Now, I see that you've been running a movie theater in Lawson called "The Bijou," is that also true?

PETE (ON RADIO)

Yes sir. But I didn't go to Lawson to run The Bijou, that was... that was something that just happened. You see, I was involved in an accident in Lawson, and I spent some time recovering there.

INT. BILTMORE HOTEL GRAND BALLROOM - DAY

Clyde holds up copies of the Los Angeles Examiner and Los Angeles Times with Pete's picture on the front page.

CLYDE

Anyone who reads the newspaper is quite familiar with your... "accident," Mr. Appleton. An accident which, conveniently, came hard upon your dismissal from United Pictures. Tell us, this "accident" of yours, are we given to understand that it affected your memory?

PETE

Yes.

CLYDE

And what is the state of your
memory now?

Beat. Pete smiles.

PETE

I'm sorry, what was the question?

The audience LAUGHS. Clyde nods at Pete, forces a tight
smile.

CLYDE

We... appreciate... your little
note of levity, Mr. Appleton, but
this is a very serious matter, and
it merits your fullest attention.

(back to business)

That state of your memory now, Mr.
Appleton?

INT. WYATT'S HARDWARE - DAY

Avery Wyatt listens to the hearing on a store radio. Spencer
comes around the paint aisle, wiping his hands on his apron.
He moves to the radio and listens solemnly.

PETE (ON RADIO)

Sir, are you referring to the fact
that I was suffering from amnesia,
and I've since recovered my memory?

INT. BILTMORE HOTEL GRAND BALLROOM - DAY

CLYDE

(impatient)

I'm interested in knowing if you
remember things you did in your
past, or if they've been
conveniently "blotted out" as a
result of your "accident."

PETE

(smiling)

Mr. Clyde, I remember everything.

CLYDE

Good. Good.

(holds up a piece of
paper)

Now, I hold in my hand a

photostatic copy of the attendance roster for the "Bread Instead of Bullets Club" of the University of California, Los Angeles, dated October 11, 1935. A copy of this paper is before you, Mr. Appleton. Do you recognize it?

Pete looks on the table and finds the roster. He's surprised to see it.

PETE

Yes... yes, I do.

CLYDE

Referring to line thirty-seven of the document, does your printed name and signature appear there?

PETE

Yes it does.

CLYDE

Mr. Appleton, please tell this committee what was the nature and purpose of the "Bread Instead of Bullets Club?"

PETE

Mr. Clyde, do you want to know what I knew then, or do you want to know what I know now? They're two different things?

CLYDE

Start with what you knew then.

PETE

Well, I'd direct the attention of counsel and committee to line thirty-six of the document, and the name printed and signed there.

CLYDE

We see it. For the record, it reads "Lucille Angstrom." What's the point of this?

PETE

Well, that's what I knew then. Or who I knew, I should say. You see,

I was trying to court Miss
Angstrom. I went to the meeting to
impress her.

CLYDE

(grinning)

Are you asking this committee to
believe that you attended a meeting
of a communist party front
organization in order to impress a
girl?

PETE

(slyly)

Well, if you'd seen Miss
Angstrom...

The audience LAUGHS. Doyle BANGS his gavel.

PETE

You asked for the truth. That's
the truth. I had no idea what the
meeting was about. I just sat
through it so I could be near her.
I'm sure even a Majority Counsel
like yourself is familiar with the
concept of impressing a girl.

The audience LAUGHS. Clyde shoots a look at Doyle, who BANGS
his gavel.

DOYLE

Chamber will come to order.

Clyde shuffles some papers and looks back at Pete.

CLYDE

All right, Mr. Appleton. That was
what you knew then. What do you
know now?

PETE

(takes a deep breath)

Well, I know that I lost my job
because of one meeting I went to
when I was a kid in college. I
know that I've been branded a
communist, which I'm not, but even
if I was, it shouldn't matter, or
what do we have a Bill Of Rights
for?

CLYDE

Mr. Chairman, the witness is being
non-responsive...

A few members of the audience APPLAUD. As Pete speaks, their
numbers grow.

PETE

(passionately)

I know that a lot of good, honest,
decent people, people that I
consider my true friends, feel
betrayed by me, not because of who
and what I am, but because of what
you say I am! I know that I...

Doyle BANGS his gavel several times. Pete stops and the room
falls quiet.

DOYLE

(emphatically)

Mr. Appleton, you will respond to
the questions of this committee
without elaboration or
speechmaking, or the chair will
find you in Contempt Of Congress.
You will not be warned again, is
that clear?

(he lets this sink in,
then)

Continue, Mr. Clyde.

CLYDE

(looking down at his desk)

Mr. Appleton...

Clyde takes a long pause for effect, then looks up at Pete.

CLYDE

Are you now, or have you ever been,
a member of the communist party?

PETE

No, sir.

CLYDE

(holding up the roster)

Are you refuting this evidence and
your previous testimony?

PETE

I'm not refuting anything.

CLYDE

Yet you're contradicting yourself. You earlier testified that you attended a meeting of a communist party-run organization, yet you just said, under oath, that you were not now -- nor ever -- a member of the communist party.

PETE

That's not a contradiction at all, sir. I went to the meeting, but I didn't go as a member.

CLYDE

Well, then, as what did you go?

Beat. Pete smiles.

PETE

I'm a little hesitant to say.

DOYLE

The witness need not be hesitant to say anything before this committee, as long as it's the truth.

Pete shifts in his chair, then leans into the microphone.

PETE

Well, I went as... a horny young man.

The chamber erupts in LAUGHTER. Even the other COMMITTEE MEMBERS are laughing, except Clyde and Doyle, who BANGS his gavel vigorously.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Sheriff Eldridge and Daley Thornhill listen to the hearing on the radio. They are both laughing at Pete's last comment.

ELDRIDGE

Damn, he don't wanna spar with these boys. They'll eat him alive.

INT. BILTMORE HOTEL GRAND BALLROOM - DAY

The room settles. Doyle wags his finger accusingly at Pete.

DOYLE

(angry)

Mr. Appleton, you are making light of a legally constituted committee of the United States Congress. Believe you me, you do not want to incur our wrath.

PETE

(matter-of-factly)

I'm sorry, sir, I have no intention of making light of this committee. And I have no intention of incurring your wrath, Mr. Chairman. I have a few friends who have already incurred your wrath. They've sent me letters from jail.

CLYDE

(interrupting)

Mr. Chairman! Mr. Chairman, the witness is making another speech. I would ask that Mr. Appleton be admonished...

DOYLE

(indifferent)

Mr. Appleton, there is no question before you at this time, but I'm sure Mr. Clyde has plenty more prepared, and if you'd like to either answer them or plead the Fifth Amendment, we can at least get on with the business of this committee.

INT. LARDNER LIVING ROOM - DAY

Adele moves to within inches of the TV screen.

ADELE

Tell them Pete. Tell them...

PETE (ON TV)

(wrestling with this)

Mr. Chairman, as I understand it, the Fifth Amendment pertains to self-incrimination, and I can't incriminate myself because I've

done nothing wrong. Besides,
incrimination is why you have Mr.
Clyde working for you.

CLYDE (ON TV)
Mr. Chairman...

INT. BILTMORE HOTEL GRAND BALLROOM - DAY

Clyde is still protesting, but Doyle waves him off.

DOYLE
Well then, Mr. Appleton, just what
is your intention?

Pete's sweating under the lights. He's bluffed his last
bluff, and he's on the ropes. He reaches into his pocket...
and takes out the prepared statement.

INT. LARDNER LIVING ROOM - DAY

PETE (ON TV)
I... Mr. Chairman, I have a
prepared statement I'd like to
read...

ADELE

Her hand goes to her mouth.

ADELE
Oh, Pete. No...

INT. BILTMORE HOTEL GRAND BALLROOM - DAY

DOYLE
Go ahead, Mr. Appleton.

PETE
(slowly reading)
"I, Peter Appleton, do hereby..."

He stops suddenly. Pause.

DOYLE
Mr. Appleton? Mr. Appleton?

PETE
I... I need a drink of water.

DOYLE

Go ahead, son.

Pete fills a glass from the pitcher. Nervously, he spills a bit, and it splashes onto his coat. As some of the spectators chuckle, Pete brushes the water off. He reaches into his pocket, and pulls out Adele's copy of the constitution. The cover is wet. He wipes it off and sets it down on the table.

He takes a sip of water. Looks at the book. Picks it up.

Pete's terrified, but in control. He speaks slowly -- he's making this up and thinking it out as he goes.

PETE

Mr. Chairman... there's... another Amendment... that I'd like to invoke at this time, but it's not the Fifth Amendment. I wonder if you're familiar with it.

DOYLE

Mr. Appleton, you will...

He opens the book and reads, tentatively at first.

PETE

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

Pause. Silence in the room.

ADELE

She's smiling at the TV. Her eyes are filled with tears.

PETE

He looks up at Chairman Doyle. Now fully confident.

PETE

That's the First Amendment, Mr. Chairman. It's the backbone of this nation. It's everything that

gives us the potential to be right and good and just -- if only we'd live up to that potential. It's what gives me the right to sit in this chair and say my piece before this committee without fear. It's the most important part of the contract that every citizen has with this country. And even though this contract...

(he holds up the book)

... the Constitution and the Bill of Rights -- even though they're just pieces of paper with signatures on them -- they're the only contracts we have that are most definitely not subject to renegotiation. Not by you, Mr. Chairman, not by you, Mr. Clyde, not by any member of this committee -- or anyone else -- ever.

Pin-drop silence in the room. Pete scans the faces of the panel. All betray anger.

ON LEO

He can't help but smile and nod appreciatively.

PETE

And when you get right down to it, that's really all I have to say to this committee. Good morning.

And with that, Pete closes the book, picks up the prepared statement, rips it up, pushes back his chair, stands and walks toward the door. The cameras swing with him, and FLASHBULBS fire like machine guns. Doyle BANGS his gavel insistently.

DOYLE

The witness will resume his seat! Did you hear me?! You are not excused, Mr. Appleton!

And then, slowly, APPLAUSE builds in the chamber, reaching a crescendo as Pete reaches the door and exits.

CLYDE

Mr. Chairman! Mr. Chairman...!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BILTMORE HOTEL - DAY

As Pete exits the hotel, a DOZEN REPORTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS have him completely surrounded. FLASHBULBS pop. He's taken aback, flustered.

FIRST REPORTER

(seeing Pete)

There he is!

SECOND REPORTER

Pete! Are you going back to writing pictures?

PETE

I don't know...

THIRD REPORTER

You a commie, Pete?

PETE

No, of course not...

SECOND REPORTER

What about the girl, Pete? You gonna marry her? Is she coming to Hollywood, or are you...

PETE

Look, fellas, I don't have anything to say...

Pete is trapped in the crowd, when he feels a hand on his shoulder.

LEO

spins him around, and pushes him through the crowd toward the curb.

LEO

Come on, kid.

At the curb is a black Cadillac limousine. Leo hauls open the back door and pushes Pete in, before climbing in himself.

The limo drives away, as the reporters give chase.

INT. LIMO (MOVING) - DAY

Leo and Pete sit side-by-side in silence for a moment. Leo breaks it.

LEO

That was quite a show you gave them today. We shoulda sold tickets.

PETE

I'm not sorry for what I said.

LEO

No, of course not, why should you be sorry? You're the new Peter Appleton. You exercised your rights as a solid citizen, first amendment, freedom of speech, all that. Very noble.

They sit in silence again for a moment until Leo reaches into his pocket and withdraws a gold cigarette case, which he opens and offers to Pete.

LEO

Cigarette?

PETE

No thanks.

Leo takes one for himself and lights up. Pete takes off his hat and nervously scratches his head.

LEO

When'd you quit smoking?

PETE

Luke didn't smoke.

LEO

Oh, I see. But you're not Luke. You're Peter Appleton, the picture writer.

PETE

(laughs)

Not any more.

LEO

Why not?

PETE

Leo, you were in there, you saw what I did. You think they're gonna let me write pictures? Hell, they're probably gonna throw my ass in jail.

LEO

(with a smile)

Not at all.

PETE

Besides, I don't even know if I want to write anymore.

LEO

(snickering)

What, you're going to go back to that hick town and run the projector and marry the doctor's daughter?

But before Pete can answer...

LEO

Peter, I'm an agent. I buy lunches and get deals made for guys like you. That's what I do. You're a writer. You write pictures. That's what you do. And trust me, you'll be back doing it again tomorrow morning.

PETE

What do you mean?

LEO

Kid, you gave them what they wanted. This committee, it feeds on names. The more names, the better. But for some high-profile witnesses, like yourself, any name will do.

PETE

Leo, I didn't give them the names. I wouldn't do that.

LEO

What, all of a sudden, "Lucille Angstrom" isn't a name?

Pete freezes. He slowly turns to Leo.

PETE

(warily)

Her name was right there in front of them. They gave it to me, I didn't give it to them.

LEO

Well, that's not what they think.

PETE

Leo, she was... she was a girl I knew in college...

LEO

You should keep track of your old school chums. Turns out she eventually joined the communist party.

(takes a puff)

On top of which, she's Lucy Angstrom Hirschfeld now, and she happens to be a writer for "Studio One" on CBS.

PETE

(realization dawning)

Oh god, oh, god, no, I...

LEO

So, our lawyers had a talk with the Committee's lawyers. That Elvin Clyde fella won't be too happy about it, but we cut a deal. They cleared you -- and they're gonna thank you publicly for your testimony purging yourself.

PETE

Thank me publicly? For what? For ruining this woman's life?

LEO

(dismissive)

Climb down off your cross. They already knew about her.

(off his look)

She was subpoenaed six months ago! Who the hell do you think named you?

Pete is dumbstruck. He slumps in his seat, ashen.

LEO

(he couldn't be happier)

All of which means... "Ashes To Ashes" is gonna be made, and you've got your job back.

(takes a puff)

Congratulations, kid.

Pete's breathing shallowly, on the verge of tears or screaming -- or both.

EXT. PETE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The limo pulls up, and Leo opens the door. Pete vacantly grabs his suitcase and gets out. Leo shuts the door and calls after him, waving Pete's hat.

LEO

Peter! Your hat!

Pete comes back and takes his hat. Leo grabs his hand.

LEO

I was lookin' out for you all the time, kid. You did good. I'm real proud of you.

(to the driver)

Okay, let's go.

(to Pete)

Get some rest, kid!

As the limo pulls away, we

CUT TO:

INT. PETE'S APARTMENT (L.A.) - DAY

The door opens, revealing the Super, followed by a sullen Pete, carrying his suitcases and hat. He sets them down and goes to the coffee table, where his boxes of belongings from the studio have been gathering dust these last three months.

SUPER

(handing him a key)

Here's a new key for ya. That Mr. Kubelsky, he's got you paid up through this month. You got one swell friend there.

The Super moves to the door and turns back.

SUPER

Good to have you back, Pete.

He exits as Pete reaches into one of the boxes and pulls out the tin-toy fire truck. Distractedly, Pete puts the toy back in the box and replies too late:

PETE

Thanks...

He sets his suitcase down and takes off his coat. As he does, Adele's copy of the Constitution slips out of his coat pocket and falls open to the floor.

Pete picks it up and absently turns it over -- and the inscription inside the front cover catches his eye:

TO DELLY,
THE GIRL WITH ALL THE ANSWERS.
LOVE, LUKE

Pete closes the book. He thinks for a moment, then glances over at the phone. He picks it up and dials "0."

PETE

Western Union, please.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN (MOVING) - DAY

Our view of the moving train is from outside, as it speeds up the spectacular coastline north of Santa Barbara. Looking into one of the train's windows, we SEE Pete sitting, staring out at the passing scenery.

PETE'S NARRATION (V.O.)

Dear Adele, on my way back to Lawson STOP. That is, if they'll have me STOP. Train arrives four p.m. STOP. Hope you can be there STOP. Pete.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAWSON PASSENGER DEPOT - LATE AFTERNOON

The train is just pulling in to Lawson. As it SHUDDERS to a

halt, the door of the passenger compartment opens and Pete steps out -- looks -- and his jaw drops open...

HIS POV

The ENTIRE TOWN has turned out. They're all there, smiling broadly. A large, hand-lettered banner reads:

WELCOME HOME PETE!
LAWSON'S FAVORITE SON

A CHEER goes up from the crowd, breaking the silence. Pete descends from the train and moves into the throng. The first two people he encounters are Bob Leffert and Mabel Lanier. Bob sticks out his good hand and Pete takes it, both smiling as they shake hands vigorously.

BOB

Luke... um, I mean, Pete, if it weren't for you, I wouldn't have had the nerve to ask this fine woman to marry me.

Mabel's mouth drops open.

PETE

Bob, congratulations! When'd you ask her?

MABEL

Holy moley! Just now!
(to Bob)
Yes, Bob! Yes!

As Mabel kisses Bob for all she's worth, Pete continues into the crowd, where he's kissed, embraced, patted on the back.

ADELE

is at the back of the crowd, working her way to the front. She rushes into Pete's arms, and they kiss. Another CHEER goes up.

PETE

I see you got the telegram.

ADELE

Pete, I'm so sorry about what they did to you. I didn't think you'd come back, I thought you'd want to write again...

PETE

Dell, I can't write unless I'm happy, and I can't be happy unless I'm here -- and with you.

(grabs her shoulders)

This is me, Delly. Pete Appleton.
And I love you!

ADELE

(tears in her eyes)

And (hic!) I love you, Pete!

They kiss again. Pete pulls away and looks at his watch.

PETE

(smiling)

C'mon, Dell, we gotta go. Showtime
in fifteen minutes.

The train whistle BLOWS as it slowly pulls out of the station.

PETE'S NARRATION (V.O.)

"Happily ever after" is a relative term, folks. My world is much smaller now, and my dreams are very different than they were. But I have something now that I never had before: I have the magic. And it's for sale at the Bijou, every day of the year. All you need is the price of a ticket.

We BOOM UP to see Pete and Adele moving into and being enveloped by the crowd.

Spencer Wyatt's band is assembled in front of the depot office, and they kick into some up-tempo boogie-woogie as we move up and away -- still in the same shot -- moving over the town, settling down again to grab a shot of the Bijou's marquee. The neon chaser lights POP ON, illuminating the sign, which reads:

THE END

Then, the letters on the marquee START SHAKING. We BOOM UP TO THE TOP OF THE THEATER, and the "BIJOU" sign...

... as the train RUMBLES BY behind the theater...

... and the "J" teeters loose and swings by a thread...

... and we IRIS DOWN ON IT AND...

CUT TO BLACK.