

# **If They Move... Kill 'Em!**

a screenplay by

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story by

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**First Draft**

Yeah, this really happened...

**IF THEY MOVE, KILL EM...**

**EXT. A CLIFF OVERLOOKING THE PACIFIC - EARLY MORNING**

The sun yawns pale light over the Sierras.

A sea of tall grasses surges on an ocean breeze, the camera pans over the sighing field of gold to the broad-shouldered frame of--

A GUNSLINGER--

standing with one foot on the edge of the cliff, wind rippling the tails of his duster.

A hero-shot. Exceptionally well-lit. Cinematic. A 70mm legend at 24 frames per second.

Thin, iron-grey moustache. The handle of a COLT PEACEMAKER sticks out from his hip like a quick-draw artist.

A HAT shades this warrior's weary eyes from the rising sun, as he raises his head--

Suddenly we're no longer in a hero-shot.

The camera swings around, morning light framing our subject now, the image grainy, shaking with a certain hand-held immediacy.

We realize this man is not actually a gunslinger.

The duster he wears is only a ratty BATHROBE, covering a frame that still echoes a Marine-built physique, faded after years of hard living.

The cowboy hat is real. So is the six-shooter -- the handle of the revolver sticking out from one of the robe's deep pockets.

No boots, though. Just leather sandals.

And now A TITLE:

**"Malibu - 1978"**

This is director SAM PECKINPAH.

He's 53. Looks years older. Bleary-eyed.

(CONTINUED)

He's a thoughtful, self-educated top gun with a penchant for violence, who is afraid of nothing -- except the changes in himself and those around him.

SAM'S LETTER TO HIS SON (V.O.)

I am drunk.

Sam steps closer and closer to the cliff's edge, tiny rocks and pebbles falling into space--

**EXT./INT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS (LATER)**

Goats and stray cats roam the grounds. A trailer on blocks off to one side. Sliding glass doors look out on a swimming pool.

Sam navigates around the pool, almost slipping in his stupor.

SAM'S LETTER TO HIS SON (V.O.)

Drunk with gin.

A MANNEQUIN floats in the pool, recently used for target practice.

Sam stumbles through the threshold into the living room.

SAM'S LETTER TO HIS SON (V.O.)

Drunk with Shakespeare.

The place is a wreck -- the aftermath of a great party.

- a Bowie KNIFE stuck in the wall.

- A MOUSTACHIOED MAN and a MODEL-TYPE IN HALSTON sit in a large bean bag chair watching cartoons.

- A PYTHON (yeah, a snake) wanders through the house.

- A FRECKLED GIRL, she looks 16, wearing nothing but a pair of blue terry shorts, is passed out on the couch, Steely Dan blaring from her radio headset.

The camera moves over a glass coffee table littered with party detritus: A drift of cocaine. Quaaludes mixed with .45 cartridges. A hand grenade.

Sam plops down on the couch beside the girl and cuts out a few pick-me-up rails, snorting them.

(CONTINUED)

He sits there a moment, waiting for the coke to spike his heart-rate. Spies a pen and a scrap of paper under all that detritus and begins to write.

SAM'S LETTER TO HIS SON (V.O.)  
Drunk with love. Unemployment.  
(a beat as he sways)  
And drunk with regret.

This is the voice-over we've just heard. It's part of a letter to his son Matthew, who's about to join the Marines, one that Sam's been composing in bits and pieces, and we'll hear throughout this story.

Sam stops writing. Stares down at one word on the page:

*regret*

He keeps staring down at that paper. Doesn't know what comes next, so he folds up the paper and tucks it into the pocket of his robe.

With a headful of snow, Sam grabs the hand grenade and moves down the hallway to the back bedroom, shoulder crashing into a row of framed posters of movies he's directed: *The Wild Bunch*, *The Getaway*, *Straw Dogs*--

**INT. RANCH HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Three GIRLS make it on the California King, and swimming in the middle is ARTHUR "ARTIE" HAMMOND (50), who surfaces long enough to snort a few lines.

He's a stunt man, a hanger-on and an occasional drug-dealer. Sandy-haired, moustache, with sharp blue eyes that are too small for his face.

Artie smiles when Sam enters.

ARTIE  
You want in on this, amigo?

Sam collapses into a chair in the corner.

SAM  
You get it on with them. I'm good.

Artie dives back in, while Sam watches the action with a crooked smile, clenching that hand grenade tight--

CUT TO:

**EXT. VAN NUYS SUBURBS - MORNING**

Hazy layers of brown, from a sky full of smog to streets full of stucco apartments.

**INT. CHARLIE STETLER'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS**

A cramped two-bedroom. Sharp contrast to Sam's pad, with its second-hand furniture. The coffee table's littered with nothing more exciting than past-due bills.

The small bedroom, once a writer's office, is being re-modeled as a NURSERY, as evidenced by the half-assembled crib.

Continuing to the MASTER BEDROOM, we find a young couple spooning in bed -- CHARLIE STETLER (28) and his wholesome (but not too wholesome) wife JILL (26).

Jill watches the sun filter through the blinds, obviously in her last month of pregnancy. Charlie, asleep, cradles her in his arms.

JILL

Charlie, are you awake yet?

Charlie rustles, pulling her closer, kissing her neck.

CHARLIE

I'm up.

She reaches behind her, stroking between his legs.

JILL

Not entirely up, I see. But we can fix that.

CHARLIE

You're ready to pop any moment.

JILL

Don't I know it. Just a quick one to get my day going. Blame the hormones.

Now Charlie's getting into it.

CUT TO:

**EXT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE - ESTABLISHING**

A WPA Moderne-style learning annex in the Valley.

Charlie parks his car, ten years past its prime.

**INT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE - CLASSROOM - DAY (LATER)**

Charlie stands before his students: an OLD LADY from Tarzana; a HOUSEWIFE; a few YOUNG SCREENWRITERS in their 20s; and an INSURANCE SALESMAN, who is in the middle of pitching his latest idea.

INSURANCE SALESMAN

So, there's these mutated muskies--

OLD LADY

What the fuck is a musky?

INSURANCE SALESMAN

This sort of quasi-pike that lives in lakes up in Minnesota. Anyway, these muskies have grown to enormous size due to a chemical plant dumping sludge into the lake, which gives the movie a sort of quasi-ecological feel. They start killing the fishermen on the lake until the local game warden figures out--

YOUNG SCREENWRITER

Sounds like a quasi-rip-off of Jaws.

INSURANCE SALESMAN

That movie was about a shark. This is about muskies -- plural. And this one's set in Minnesota. On a lake.

YOUNG SCREENWRITER

Whatever, man.

INSURANCE SALESMAN

It doesn't have to be muskies. I could make them giant, mutated carp.

Charlie looks down at his WATCH, marking time--

CUT TO:

**INT. NATE AND AL'S - AFTERNOON**

The historic Beverly Hills eatery.

Sam sits in a booth with an untouched sandwich sits in front of him. He can't eat. Can't seem to sit still, either. He moves the plate. Adjusts the salt and pepper shakers. He's chain-smoking. Jonesing.

HARRY (O.C.)

You need another picture, Sam.

Sam's distinguished but distressed business manager, HARRY MERCER (60s), watches him from across the table.

SAM

I'm doing the best I can.

HARRY

You're going broke doing it.

Harry looks at a ledger in front of him

HARRY (CONT'D)

You've got alimony times three. Support payments for the kids. A lien on your car.

SAM

So I'll sell a couple more of my Picasso drawings.

HARRY

You already sold them all.

SAM

Then I'll sell the house. Go live in a trailer at the beach smoking dope and drinking wine all day while I try to get it on with those blonde surfer chicks.

Sam looks at Harry, and Harry's not laughing. Sam only shrugs, while Harry continues to tick off Sam's dwindling assets--

HARRY

Land in Montana. That money you lost on the Mexican deal...

(beat)

*Overhead.*

(CONTINUED)

SAM

What overhead? My secretary quit.  
There's no office salary anymore.

HARRY

I'm talking about all your *cash*  
*withdrawals*.

(taps a finger to his  
nose)

You think I don't know where it's  
all going?

Sam sinks into the booth, the petulant little boy caught  
doing something naughty.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Get yourself straight.

SAM

I've been black-balled before and  
clawed my way back. I can do it  
again.

SMASH TO:

**FLASHBACK:**

**EXT. A DUSTY FILM SET - DAY**

The New Mexico set of Sam's last film -- *Convoy* -- A  
quasi-Western about the vanishing American cowboy,  
swapping horses for 18-wheelers.

HARRY (V.O.)

No one's going to hand the reins  
of a multi-million dollar film to  
an addict.

The CAST and CREW stands ready to shoot the next scene.  
You can tell they've been ready for hours.

Sam's DIRECTOR'S CHAIR sits empty.

The PRODUCER looks at his watch, losing thousands with  
each tick--

PRODUCER

Where the fuck is he?

SMASH TO:

**EXT. NEW MEXICO DESERT - SAME**

A panoramic wide-shot as a LIMO speeds through the frame, kicking up a rooster tail of dust.

**EXT./INT. LIMO - SAME**

The limo speeds along a bumpy dirt road.

Speedometer's pegged at 80 mph. The driver looks back to the rear compartment--

DRIVER

Five minutes!

In the back seat, Sam's female ASSISTANT attends to Sam -- trying to make him look presentable.

Buttoning his shirt. Combing his hair. Wiping dried blood and coke from his nose. She's like a mortician dressing a corpse for burial.

Which is appropriate, because Sam is like a stiff in sunglasses, sliding and bobbing with each turn of the wheel; each bump on the road.

His drink, however, remains perfectly level, like it's on gimbals, ice cubes tinkling but never spilling a single drop.

The production's DR. FEELGOOD pulls a syringe from his bag, as the assistant yanks down Sam's trousers so the doc can jab the needle into the white flesh of Sam's ass, pushing the plunger home on a heroic dose of Vitamin B-12.

CUT TO:

**EXT. FILM SET - SAME**

The limo pulls up, the set suddenly blanketed by a cloud of sand and dust.

When the dust settles, there's Sam, magically sitting in his chair, his assistant next to him, holding his drink. (Notice she carries a well-stocked portable bar).

Sam lowers his sunglasses to peer at his producer and crew--

(CONTINUED)

SAM

(croaking)

What the hell are we waiting for?  
Let's shoot this fucker, before  
they bring in Norman Jewison to  
replace me again.

(gently to assistant)

Can I get a little more gin in  
this. No more ice. Just gin.  
Thanks.

(hissing to the cast  
and crew)

Today please!

SMASH BACK TO:

**INT. NATE AND AL'S - CONTINUOUS**

SAM

Nobody ever gave a shit about me  
making a picture sober before.

HARRY

They give one now. I'm begging  
you, Sam, get into a program.

Sam crushes his cigarette out in the sandwich, pushing  
the plate away.

SAM

I'm a functioning alcoholic. Take  
away my alcohol, and I cease to  
function.

Frustrated, Harry changes the subject--

HARRY

Matthew called me. Said he's been  
calling you.

SAM

Been busy.

Beat.

HARRY

He told me about the letter.

Harry slides a page across the table to Sam. We see it's  
a LETTER OF CONSENT with U.S. Marine Corps letterhead.

(CONTINUED)

SAM  
Why can't his mother sign it?

HARRY  
Because he wants his father to  
sign it.

Sam doesn't read it, but folds it into a pocket.

**EXT. HOLLYWOOD STREETS - LATER**

Sam, in his trademark mirrored sunglasses, drives his six year old dented Porsche convertible down Hollywood Boulevard.

He rolls past the famous Grauman's Chinese Theater. There's a line of people to see the next show.

The marquee announces "Star Wars - Return Engagement."

SAM  
(to a fan in line)  
How many fucking times can you see  
it?

Sam drives off, angry. Frowning at the fan in his rear view mirror. Incredulously muttering to himself--

SAM (CONT'D)  
Great grass. That's the only  
explanation.

**EXT. STUDIO - LATER**

Sam hisses a hello to the elderly STUDIO GUARD smiling and waving the Porsche through the gate.

**EXT./INT. SAM'S BUNGALOW - CONTINUOUS**

Sam walks past sound stages to a BUNGALOW in the back of the lot -- his OFFICE.

It's dark and empty. Decorated with posters from his movies. A wet bar. A desk piled high with scripts.

He just sits there. Quiet. Drums his fingers on the desk. Unfolds the paper that Harry gave him, then folds it back up again -- he grabs a pen and starts writing.

(CONTINUED)

SAM'S LETTER TO HIS SON (V.O.)

I haven't been much of a father to you. I left your raising to your mother -- a mistake, I suppose. I can give you excuses why, but the best is probably fear. Fear of disappointing you. Fear of failure.

Sam pauses, then tears the sheet he just wrote on and folds it up into a tiny square, stuffing it in his pocket. This is not something he wants to deal with now.

Instead he reaches for THE PHONE and punches in numbers.

SAM

Sam Peckinpah for James Aubrey.  
(a disappointed beat)  
Yeah, he can return.

He hangs up the phone and dials another number.

SAM (CONT'D)

Yeah, it's Sam. Peckinpah. Is John in? Uh-huh, well, can you have him call me when he gets back. Thanks, love.

Hangs up. Pours a drink and dials again.

SAM (CONT'D)

Yeah, I'll hold.

Sam waits in his chair, drinking while hold music plays.

Another hang up. Another drink. Dials again--

SAM (CONT'D)

Yeah, sweetheart, I left already two messages! Are you sure he's getting them?

Hangs up. Pours another drink, spilling most of it.

SAM (CONT'D)

Don't give me a line, honey, you tell that little candy-eating prick to get on the phone now.

A hang up. A drink.

(CONTINUED)

SAM (CONT'D)  
(screaming now)  
Well fuck you too you lame-brained  
cunt!

Sam slams the receiver down. His sudden feeling of powerlessness frustrates him. Scares him a little.

Camera follows Sam as he gets up, walks out of his office to the tiny manicured quadrangle flanked by his and other production offices.

He moves with a manic sense of determination -- he needs to do something -- to take action -- but he doesn't know what or how.

So he just unzips his fly and starts taking a piss on the side of his bungalow.

An angry piss.

Marking his territory, he aims his stream, painting a giant "S" on the wall.

ARTIE (O.C.)  
You should take a dump on the  
place.

Sam doesn't miss a drop as he turns to find Artie behind him.

SAM  
I did. Last week. Behind Stage  
Ten.  
(zips up)  
Tell me you brought me something.

ARTIE  
Have no fear, craft service is  
here.

**INT. PRODUCTION OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Artie lays out three fresh rails and snorts one. Sam helps himself to a line, then peers out the window.

SAM  
Those bastards are watching me.

Sam runs around the room shutting all the blinds.

(CONTINUED)

ARTIE

Fuck 'em.

SAM

Right, fuck 'em.

Sam builds a couple of fresh drinks and hands one to Artie before he collapses into his chair. He suddenly feels very old.

SAM (CONT'D)

I'm persona non grata around here, Artie. Trying to get money out of a studio for another picture would be as futile as trying to poke butter up a wildcat's ass with a hot poker.

ARTIE

You don't have to do this, Sam. I know people who respect you.

Sam looks around, as if expecting someone to be listening in on their conversation.

SAM

Your Colombian friends?

Picking up on Sam's paranoia, Artie leans forward, almost whispering.

ARTIE

They'd kill to make a movie with you.

SAM

Really?

ARTIE

I have business down there this week. You should come along. It'll be a helluva time, I promise.

Sam eyes the phone for a moment. Silent. Monolithic.

SAM

There is this project I've been thinking about. Got the potential to be the best thing I've done since *The Wild Bunch*.

(CONTINUED)

ARTIE

Well there you go, then. My friends will put up the cash -- no problemo. And they won't be jumping up your ass the whole time.

(beat)

I'd get to be a producer, of course.

Artie leans back while Sam chews on this--

SAM

One more picture... and this time, we do it right.

ARTIE

Right on.

Artie hits a few buttons on the phone and we--

CUT TO:

**A RAPID SERIES OF IMAGES:**

- Several WOMEN show up. Actresses. Extras. Could just be strippers or hookers. A party begins.

- Sam and Artie make quick work of the coke with the girls.

- Artie's having sex with one, or maybe three of the girls, while a shirtless Sam shows a few others the fine art of knife-throwing using a *Convoy* poster for a target.

CUT TO:

**EXT. SAM'S BUNGALOW - LATER**

Charlie sits on the office steps. He's been waiting a while.

Girls parade past him on their way out. Artie brings up the rear, yelling back into the bungalow as he steps over Charlie:

ARTIE

I'll be in touch, Sam. Meanwhile, pack your bags.

Sam pokes his head through the door and sees him.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

Who the fuck are you?

Charlie stares up at Sam, larger than life.

CHARLIE

Charlie Stetler, Mr. Peckinpah.  
The writer. We had a meeting at  
one o'clock.

Sam stares at him a moment.

SAM

What time is it?

CHARLIE

Two.

SAM

Then you're late.

Thoroughly confused, Charlie gets up.

**INT. PRODUCTION OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Sam returns to his desk, Charlie following behind him.  
He notices a pair of panties on the desk. Knife marks in  
the walls.

SAM

My secretary quit. Seems I tear  
through them like weekends.

Sam snorts up another line, then offers some to Charlie.

CHARLIE

No thanks.

Sam turns on a small black-and-white TELEVISION next to  
the desk. Tunes it to a dead channel, nothing but snow.  
Turns up the volume, white noise filling the room.

SAM

They're listening in. Whole lot's  
bugged.

Charlie sinks into a chair opposite Sam.

CHARLIE

(utterly confused)  
I see.

(CONTINUED)

SAM  
You sent me a script. Western,  
right?

Charlie nods.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Damn fine writing. You've got  
that frontier spirit.

CHARLIE  
Thank you, Mr. Peckinpah.

SAM  
Call me Sam.

Charlie rides tall in the chair.

CHARLIE  
I worked a cattle ranch when I was  
eighteen -- roped and rode, so I  
know my way around that world.

SAM  
It shows. Both in your writing,  
and the way you carry yourself,  
Charlie-boy.

CHARLIE  
My dad used to call me that.

Same smiles wide.

SAM  
You two close?

CUT TO:

**FLASHBACK:**

**INT. MOVIE THEATER - 1960S**

We're inside a one-screen movie house.

While we may not see it, Sam Peckinpah's *Ride the High Country* is playing. It stars Randolph Scott and Joel McCrea, about two aging gunslingers hired for one last job.

In the flickering darkness, we find two people -- a YOUNG CHARLIE, about twelve, with a huge tub of popcorn balanced on his lap.

(CONTINUED)

He looks up at his FATHER, smoking a cigarette, eyes on the screen. He may even resemble Sam in some small way.

His old man laughs at a line in the film, and Charlie laughs along with him, more copying his dad than actually understanding the joke.

His dad looks down at him and smiles before--

CUT TO:

**INT. PRODUCTION OFFICE - PRESENT**

CHARLIE

He used to like to take me to the movies. Really liked Westerns.

(beat)

In a way, I guess he introduced us, Sam.

SAM

He still around?

CHARLIE

He passed away a couple years back. Bet he'd get a real kick out of seeing me talking to you, though. Wish he could see this.

SAM

I'm sure he can. They never really leave you, do they?

Charlie smiles a little.

SAM (CONT'D)

Ever do any acting, Charlie? Because you remind me a little of McQueen.

There's a twinkle in Sam's eye. A mischievous gleam.

SAM (CONT'D)

You arm wrestle?

Sam clears off space on the desk between them, rolls up his sleeve and plants his elbow on the desk--

SAM (CONT'D)

Let's see what you've got.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE

I don't know...

SAM

I'm old enough to be your dad.  
You could take your dad, couldn't  
you?

Charlie reluctantly locks hands with Sam. Without even saying "Go," Sam surprises Charlie by starting the match, nearly defeating Charlie right off the bat.

But Charlie summons his strength, willed on by Sam's mania. And he starts to come back over the top on Sam.

SAM (CONT'D)

You are strong, Charlie. Jesus,  
you're strong.

Then, almost effortlessly, Sam grits his teeth and powers through, pulling Charlie's arm up over the top again and slamming it down on the desk with authority.

Sam leans back proudly, leaving Charlie to nurse his defeated pride.

SAM (CONT'D)

You're no pussy. I like that.

This is the strangest meeting Charlie's ever been in.

CHARLIE

You know, Sam, I love your work.  
Just the idea that you're  
interested in directing my script--

Sam waves his hand, cutting Charlie off.

SAM

The Western's dead. I'm not doing  
any more.

He turns down the volume on the TV for a second, then yells at the POTTED PLANT by the window:

SAM (CONT'D)

And I wouldn't give 'em one even  
if they begged me for it.

He turns the volume back up and smiles. Then he rummages through his satchel. Sets the hand grenade on the desk.

(CONTINUED)

He tosses a DOG-EARED MANUSCRIPT on the desk in front of Charlie: "Snowblind."

SAM (CONT'D)

This is going to be my next picture. It goes behind the scenes of the cocaine trade-- from the dirt-poor laborers in the Colombian factories that process the stuff, to the rich bastards in Manhattan that snort it up.

(beat)

Independent financing -- the deal's all set with some cats from South America. I'm going to make the picture I want. And I want you to write it.

CHARLIE

I don't know what to say. I'm really honored--

SAM

Bullshit. I'm going to really put you through your paces, man. See if you can do your number and get it on like me. I just made a deal to fly down to Bogotá to scout locations and I want you to come with me.

CHARLIE

To Colombia?

SAM

Come on. You're not afraid to go out and get your ass wet, are you?

Off Charlie, the grey square of the television hissing behind him.

CUT TO:

**INT. LAMAZE CLASS - LATER**

Couples practice pain management exercises in the days before the epidural. Jill and Charlie among them, in a seated birthing position rehearsing their breathing, Jill exhaling and talking too loudly--

(CONTINUED)

JILL

Does he know we're about to have a baby?

CHARLIE

It's only going to be a couple of days.

The other couples try to ignore Jill and Charlie. The instructor tries to get everyone back on track.

LAMAZE INSTRUCTOR

Deep and steady pain-free breaths, people.

Jill tries to focus on the exercise. But she can't.

JILL

He hates women, you know.

Charlie knows Jill's fumbling to keep the argument going.

CHARLIE

He doesn't hate women. He's been married three times.

JILL

(inhaling)  
That's hardly surprising.

CHARLIE

Jill, this is huge.

JILL

(exhaling)  
I know--

CHARLIE

The baby's coming, the bills...

JILL

You don't hear me arguing, do you?

CHARLIE

The next time we get gas, maybe we fill up the tank instead of getting a couple bucks worth.

JILL

I get it, Charlie. I do. I think you should go for it.

She turns to smile up at him.

(CONTINUED)

JILL (CONT'D)  
Just promise you'll make it home  
in time to meet your son.

Charlie kisses her on the back of her neck.

CUT TO:

**EXT. LOS ANGELES AIRPORT - MORNING**

A grey and smoggy L.A. morning.

Charlie waits outside the international terminal with his bag and his portable Olivetti typewriter.

A TOWN CAR pulls curb-side and honks. Sam piles out of the car, with Artie, and two WOMEN -- high-class hookers.

Sam looks ready for safari in an open-collared shirt and Levis with a pair of well-worn work boots.

SAM  
Charlie, this is *mi compadre*,  
Artie. We've spilled a lot of  
whiskey together over the years.

ARTIE  
Good to meet'cha, Charlie.

Artie pumps Charlie's hand enthusiastically, then starts to unload their bags onto the curb. SKY CAPS check the bags and Artie snatches a small blue Samonsonite out of their hands--

ARTIE (CONT'D)  
Think I'll just carry that one on  
the plane, amigo.

Artie winks and Sam tips the sky cap with a few bills he pulls from a PAPER BAG. Charlie gets a look inside the bag -- it's filled with cash.

SAM  
Per diem courtesy of our  
producers.

Sam grabs a fistful of cash that he hands over to the girls.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Ladies, this is where we part  
company.

(CONTINUED)

He closes the door on them, smiling and waving as the car drives away.

SAM (CONT'D)

Whores are the most honest a woman can be, Charlie. A whore gives you something no other woman can: security. You know what you're paying for.

Steering him into the airport...

**INT. LOS ANGELES AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS**

Sam watches a trio of STEWARDESSES saunter by.

SAM

Morning, ladies. You wouldn't happen to be headed to South America by any chance, would you?

The girls just giggle.

SAM (CONT'D)

See that? Just whores with uniforms.

They get on the moving walkway to their gate.

SAM (CONT'D)

The way I see it, Charlie, there's two kinds out there. There's women -- like your wife, I'd suspect. Then there's pussy.

He hooks a thumb back towards the stewardesses.

SAM (CONT'D)

A woman is a partner. If you can go a good distance by yourself, a good woman will triple it.

By way of example, he nods at an ELDERLY COUPLE passing on the walkway in the other direction. Probably married fifty or more years, they still seem very much in love.

SAM (CONT'D)

The rest of them are just pussy.

A liberated YOUNG WOMAN on the walkway overhears them and turns, clearly offended.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE  
(quiet, embarrassed)  
I suspect woman's lib might take  
issue with that assessment.

Sam quickens their pace on the walkway, leaving that  
liberated woman behind them.

SAM  
I pay them no mind. Bunch of  
assholes running around in  
sneakers and burlap sacks,  
knocking my films.

CUT TO:

**INT. FIRST CLASS LOUNGE - LATER**

Sam, Charlie and Artie sit drinking, waiting for their  
plane to board.

SAM  
Ali McGraw in *The Getaway* was a  
woman.

Sam scribbles something on the place-mat before folding  
it into his pocket.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Stella Stevens in *Cable Hogue* was  
definitely a woman.  
(beat)  
A good woman *and* a whore.

CHARLIE  
Susan George in *Straw Dogs*?

SAM  
The worst kind: pussy under the  
vener of being a woman.

CUT TO:

**EXT. LOS ANGELES AIRPORT - RUNWAY - LATER**

A huge 747 throttles up and takes off over the Pacific.

**INT. COMMERCIAL AIRLINER - LATER**

Charlie has the *Snowblind* manuscript out in front of him. He seems out of place in first class. Uncomfortable.

Sam sits next to him, sipping champagne and flipping through some TYPEWRITTEN PAGES Charlie gave him.

Artie wears eyeshades, sacked out across the aisle.

Sam sets the pages down. Turns and stares at Charlie.

SAM

Shit.

Charlie sits up, preparing for criticism. And Sam draws this beat out intentionally.

SAM (CONT'D)

Just great, great shit, man.

CHARLIE

Really?

SAM

Yeah. You and I see the same things. Like making the character of Swan like Cary Grant in *To Catch a Thief*--

CHARLIE

Exactly.

Sam downs his champagne. Charlie sees the NAPKIN on the tray has some of Sam's scribbling on it.

ON NAPKIN: *I can tell you a lot about failure, and how to face it.*

Charlie looks at Sam.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Do you want to talk about the story more?

Sam self-consciously stuff the napkin into his pocket.

SAM

Don't worry about the script. The writing doesn't matter anyway. Right now, we're all about research. Meeting our backers.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SAM (CONT'D)

Then getting our beaks and our  
peckers wet.

CHARLIE

Who are these backers?

Sam's got his eye on one of the pretty STEWARDESSES.

SAM

They're gonna love you when you  
pitch them this story.

Sam gets up, tapping Artie on the shoulder.

CHARLIE

Pitch? I thought you said the  
deal was all set--

SAM

When we get back to the States,  
you're gonna come out to my ranch  
in Montana to write this fucker.  
Fly in some hookers, we'll spend  
two weeks fishing, fucking and  
hunting.

Artie follows Sam down the aisle--

CUT TO:

**A SERIES OF KODACHROME STILLs:**

-- Sam, Artie and the stew all crammed into the lavatory.

-- A member of the flight crew exits the lav, wiping coke  
from his nose. Behind him, a different stew sits on  
Artie's lap while Sam lines his pockets with tiny bottles  
of booze from the drink cart.

-- Sam in the COCKPIT, drink in hand, holding court with  
the flight crew, PILOT and CO-PILOT turned to face him,  
laughing at some anecdote while the plane flies itself.

Audio plays over them: the steady rumble of the jet  
engines. Conversation. Ice clinking in glasses.

And loudest of all, Sam's raucous, smoky laughter.

CUT TO:

**EXT. BOGOTÁ AIRPORT - TARMAC - LATE AFTERNOON**

The 747 deplanes and AIRPORT ATTENDANTS guide the PASSENGERS to Customs.

We dolly with SAM, CHARLIE AND ARTIE as they stride in SLOW-MOTION across the broiling tarmac, reminiscent of the Wild Bunch's final march to doom, hauling luggage instead of shotguns and rifles.

RAMÓN VILLALOBOS, an attorney in a stylish suit, sees Artie in line and approaches--

RAMÓN

Arturo!

ARTIE

(to Sam)

Okay, here we go. This here's Ramón, the guy I told you about.

(to Ramón)

Ramón you slick sonuva bitch, how are you?

Ramón goes in for a hug instead of a handshake with Artie.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

Allow me to introduce my good friend--

RAMÓN

Please, I need no introductions, Arturo. I would recognize Señor Peckinpah anywhere. An honor, sir.

Sam shakes hands with Ramón.

RAMÓN (CONT'D)

I hear great things about your new movie with the trucks.

SAM

The movie is a piece of shit, Ramón. I don't care if I had hired Akira-Fucking-Kurasowa to direct the second unit, it would still be a piece of shit.

Ramón has no response to this, so he simply smiles even wider.

(CONTINUED)

SAM (CONT'D)  
This is my writer--

RAMÓN  
(smiling)  
Charlie Stetler.

Ramón grabs Charlie's outstretched hand, holding it for an uncomfortably long time.

RAMÓN (CONT'D)  
Fantastic. This way gentlemen.

Ramón snow-plows through other travellers.

Charlie walks alongside Sam.

CHARLIE  
Who is this guy?

SAM  
Ramón's the attorney for the Madero brothers -- the cats putting up the cash for the movie.

He adds nothing further, and moves into the airport.

**INT. BOGOTÁ AIRPORT - CUSTOMS - CONTINUOUS**

Ramón smiles and nods at the other passengers as he deftly maneuvers Charlie and Sam past them to the head of the line.

Artie carries all their luggage in the rear, and tries to keep up, pushing to the front of the line behind them.

Stern looking CUSTOMS OFFICERS examine the bags of incoming tourists.

Sam watches with quiet concern as they tear through the neatly packed luggage of one of the passengers ahead of him.

CHARLIE  
I don't know what they're looking for. I mean, who the hell brings drugs *into* Colombia?

Sam looks down at the carry-on bag on his shoulder. We ZOOM IN on the bag with X-Ray vision to see a SMALL BAGGIE OF COCAINE.

(CONTINUED)

He looks at the unsmiling customs officers. Their specially-trained German Shepherd stares back at Sam anxiously.

But before Charlie offers his bag for inspection, Ramón pulls him away.

RAMÓN

No need, señor. All taken care of, you'll see.

(to the customs officer)

They are making a movie here!

Surprisingly, the customs officers make no move to inspect any of Sam or Charlie's luggage. They stamp Charlie's passport and nod for him to move along.

Charlie keeps walking toward the daylight beyond the exit ahead. He's not paying attention as a COLOMBIAN POLICEMAN runs past him, spinning him around.

Two more Colombian policemen dodge past Charlie, both carrying AUTOMATIC WEAPONS.

Charlie walks back to the Customs area where the police have gathered. Sam and Ramón plead with the Customs Officers over Artie, who's been pulled out of line, smiling nervously, as a Customs SUPERVISOR hauls the BLUE SAMSONITE onto the table for inspection.

NOTE: Subtitled dialogue in Spanish indicated by *italics*.

SAM

Wait a minute. This man is with me. We're here to make a movie. A big important film here in Colombia.

RAMÓN

*This has already been arranged. You're only making trouble for yourself.*

CHARLIE

What's going on?

SAM

Nothing, don't worry about it.

As an afterthought, Sam thrusts his carry-on bag into Charlie's hand.

(CONTINUED)

SAM (CONT'D)

Hold onto that for me, though,  
will you?

Ramón waves Charlie back.

RAMÓN

I've got this under control, just  
wait over there, please.

The supervisor finds the Samsonite is locked and holds  
out his hand to Artie--

CUSTOMS SUPERVISOR

The key, sir.

Artie hesitates for a second, looking from the  
supervisor's outstretched hand to Ramón, then resigns  
himself to handing over the key from a chain around his  
neck.

SAM

This is absolutely insane!

RAMÓN

*Sir, as I've already stated,  
there's no need for this.*

Other passengers in line gasp when the supervisor pops  
open the suitcase to reveal it's packed with stacks of  
money -- all U.S. \$100 bills.

Suddenly Sam stops yelling. So does Ramón.

The policemen ready their rifles, and seamlessly we--

CUT TO:

**SAM'S MIND'S EYE VIEW:**

Artie, Charlie and even Ramón raise their hands, staring  
down several barrels.

Sam tenses for a stand-off.

He looks at the YOUNGEST POLICEMAN -- Nervous. Sweating.

Catches the young man's eyes--

(CONTINUED)

Sam smiles, winks then makes a move to disarm him as all the policemen OPEN FIRE.

Bullets tear through Sam, \$100 bills fluttering in the air and blood ejaculating in a slow-motion, choreographed hail of gunfire, right out of... well, a Sam Peckinpah movie --

BACK TO:

SAM--

slightly disappointed to be back to reality, as the police haven't moved.

The supervisor eyeballs Artie--

CUSTOMS SUPERVISOR

Does this bag belong to you?

Artie, his ephemeral smile faded, looks at Ramón, who gives him the slightest of nods.

ARTIE

(son of a bitch...)

Yeah, it's mine.

CUSTOMS OFFICER

*There must be at least half a million dollars in here.*

RAMÓN

This money... is for a film production, as I've already told you--

CUSTOMS SUPERVISOR

The money will be confiscated, pending an investigation.

(reads Artie's passport)

Señor... Hammond, you will come with us please.

Charlie gets pushed back even further as several customs officers and policemen move in, cuffing Artie.

Ramón continues to talk to the Customs Officers in Spanish, a little less irate than before. Sam walks over to Charlie, grumbling, lighting a Salem.

CHARLIE

What was all that?

(CONTINUED)

SAM

I can't believe he did that!

Ramón approaches, visibly chagrined.

RAMÓN

That wasn't supposed to happen.

(re: Artie)

I'm afraid he'll be placed into custody until we can sort this out.

SAM

What the hell?

RAMÓN

No more than a day, though. I promise.

CHARLIE

We're just going to leave him?

RAMON

Please, this way gentleman.

Sam shrugs and makes his way to the curb outside. Ramón pushes Charlie out the door into the sunlight and a waiting LIMO.

**EXT. BOGOTÁ HILTON HOTEL - LATER**

The limo pulls up to the Bogotá Hilton. Valets open doors for Sam and Charlie, taking their bags.

**INT. BOGOTÁ HILTON HOTEL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS**

A vast expanse of white marble. Hotel staff all smile when Sam and his party enters.

At one end of the lobby there is a raised platform being constructed by WORKMEN with a BANNER behind it announcing: "Welcome Sam Peckinpah!"

Ramón seems ashamed that Sam sees this now, so he pushes them both across the lobby and into a private elevator.

RAMÓN

Tomorrow, the Mayor will present you with the key to the city.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RAMÓN (CONT'D)

At that time, we will announce your movie and our cooperative venture, which will all be televised.

SAM

Sounds great.

RAMÓN

After that you will be the guest of honor at a luncheon with the Minister of Culture at the university and the film department and host a seminar--

SAM

I hate film students.

The ornate brass doors on the elevator close--

CUT TO:

**INT. PENTHOUSE SUITE - CONTINUOUS**

The elevator opens directly to the PENTHOUSE SUITE -- a beautiful room with a towering view of the city.

RAMÓN

Tonight, the Maderos will host a dinner in your honor.

Valets have laid out Sam and Charlie's bags. There's also a gift basket filled with fruit, wine and cheese.

SAM

Gracias, Ramón. I'll make sure they know you treated us well.

He pushes Ramón into the elevator.

RAMÓN

I'll send a car at seven.

SAM

Fantastic.

And the doors close. Finally, silence. Sam looks out at the view.

SAM (CONT'D)

Not bad huh?

(CONTINUED)

Charlie collapses into one of the couches, exhausted.

CHARLIE

Wonder what sort of view Artie's got. What the hell was all that cash?

SAM

I had no idea he was carrying that. Honest! He's got his own business relationship with the Madero brothers.

Sam peels an orange from the fruit basket as he sits down in front of the TV. Colombian programming -- news, game shows, soaps. The occasional American show dubbed into Spanish.

SAM (CONT'D)

You heard Ramón. I'm sure it's just a misunderstanding. He'll be out in time for breakfast.

CHARLIE

These Madero brothers. They're not in the film business, are they?

Sam ignores him and flips through channels. NOTE: A Spanish-dubbed rerun of either the Saturday Night Live sketch with Belushi as Peckinpah or the Monty Python's Flying Circus sketch "Sam Peckinpah's Salad Days" can be playing here.

SAM

They're my producers, Charlie. Respectable businessmen.

CHARLIE

Bullshit. They're drug dealers.

SAM

Down here that is a respectable business. Just watch. In ten, fifteen years, coke's going to be a legal export, like coffee.

CHARLIE

Do they even know about the movie you want to make?

(CONTINUED)

SAM

All they care about is getting a  
"Sam Peckinpah Movie."

Charlie picks up the phone, dials "0."

SAM (CONT'D)

Who are you calling?

CHARLIE

Just want to let my wife know I  
landed okay.

(into phone)

Yes, I'd like to make a long-  
distance call...

CUT TO:

**INT. CHARLIE STETLER'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - SAME**

Jill picks up on the second ring.

JILL

Hello?

INTERCUT WITH:

**INT. PENTHOUSE SUITE - SAME**

CHARLIE

Hey babe, it's me. Just wanted to  
let you know I'm here.

Sam wanders through the suite. He opens the desk and  
finds a stack of premium hotel stationary. He stands  
there a moment, then empties his pockets of scraps of  
paper he's collected, all with notes on them.

JILL

What's it like?

CHARLIE

About what you'd expect. Hot,  
mostly. I don't know. Really  
haven't seen much except the  
airport and the hotel.

Behind him, Sam sits down and begins to write, trying to  
copy his notes in a completely illegible hand.

(CONTINUED)

SAM'S LETTER TO HIS SON (V.O.)

I have failed at marriage. Failed at fatherhood. I have failed at filmmaking more often than I've succeeded. But please, Lord, don't let me fail now in this with you.

Sam steps back a moment from the page, then fumbles through his notes, trying to read what's on each scrap, each cocktail napkin or matchbook cover.

SAM

Goddamnit!

Back on Charlie: Sam yells loud enough that Jill can hear him.

JILL

Is that him?

CHARLIE

Yeah.

JILL

What's he like?

CHARLIE

Oh. You know.

JILL

About what I'd expect?

CHARLIE

We're supposed to meet the producers later tonight, but I just wanted to check in.

JILL

You sound strange, Charlie. Did something happen?

Beat.

CHARLIE

No. We're good. Don't worry. I love you.

JILL

I love you, too.

(CONTINUED)

She waits a moment, thinking maybe Charlie will change his mind and tell her what's wrong, but he clicks off instead and walks over to Sam at the desk.

CHARLIE

What's wrong?

SAM

I can't read my own fucking writing.

Sam thrusts the folded paper at Charlie.

SAM (CONT'D)

What does that word look like to you?

Charlie can't make out the writing either.

CHARLIE

Giraffe?

SAM

It's not "giraffe."

Sam looks at the paper again.

SAM (CONT'D)

It's probably not giraffe.  
(beat)

I miss my secretary. She was the only one who could decipher my handwriting. I'm a good writer, I'm just a lousy... you know... *writer.*

Sam continues to scribble away.

SAM (CONT'D)

My son, Matthew. He's about to turn seventeen. Wants to join the Marines but he needs my permission first.

CHARLIE

That young?

SAM

Did the same thing when I was that age. I just want to talk to him first. Tell him... what he can expect.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SAM (CONT'D)

What it means to be a Marine.  
Maybe what it means to be a man.

CHARLIE

You don't want to call him? Tell  
him in person?

Sam gets frustrated. Throws down the pen.

SAM

Can't figure out what to say  
anyway.

He folds up his scraps of paper with the stationary and  
stuffs them in his pocket.

SAM (CONT'D)

I don't want to stay cooped up in  
here. Let's go see the sights.

CUT TO:

**INT/EXT. TAXI - DAY**

We see the sights of Bogotá -- Bolívar Square, with the  
Palace of Justice and the Primate Cathedral -- just out  
of view, behind buildings or flashing past a rolled-up  
window, because we're in a taxi, driving to the outskirts  
of the city, as Sam drags Charlie to dive after dive,  
each one more dirty and depraved than the last, until--

**INT. CANTINA - LATER**

Miserable.

The sort of place where they'd slit your throat for a  
buck-fifty and give you change.

Charlie sips a beer. Sam's got a beer, a gin and tonic,  
and several empty glasses around him.

SAM

Hmm-- pregnant. Way to go Charlie-  
boy. That's when they're the  
best. Nothing like a pregnant  
woman. The fullness of her. That  
glow. When's she due?

CHARLIE

Any day now.

(CONTINUED)

Sam pushes back from the bar, angry, spilling his gin--

SAM

Then what the fuck are you doing  
in Colombia with me, asshole? You  
should be with her! Jesus Christ!

Charlie's surprised by Sam's sudden change in tone, but before he can say anything more, Sam waves over the bartender, who doesn't like being summoned.

SAM (CONT'D)

Can I get some more gin in this  
dog-piss you're serving me?

The bartender eye-fucks Sam a moment, then upends a bottle into Sam's glass, spilling half of it.

BARTENDER

*Why don't you go stink up some  
other joint?*

Sam just smiles at him and gulps down his drink. Charlie waits for Sam to get back to talking about his wife, but he doesn't, so instead--

CHARLIE

What'd he say?

SAM

Got me.

CHARLIE

How about you tell me what we're  
doing here?

SAM

Getting a drink.

CHARLIE

There was a bar back at the hotel.

SAM

That's for tourists.

CHARLIE

I thought you wanted to see the  
sights.

SAM

These are the sights. This place  
is reality. Look at these people.  
They're real.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SAM (CONT'D)

They have lives and dreams and failures -- as a writer you should want to experience this. The drama. The guts of it. Or maybe you're not a real writer. Maybe *they* should be studying *you*. Maybe I should get one of them to write this fucker.

Sam turns and looks at a table of rough men. There's a PRETTY YOUNG WOMAN with them seated beside her BOYFRIEND, the biggest, meanest-looking guy in here.

Sam smiles at her. She smiles back -- not because she's interested in the old gringo, but because she's a trouble-maker.

That's okay. Sam's a trouble-maker, too.

The boyfriend gets up, yelling at Sam--

BOYFRIEND

*She doesn't want anything to do with you, asshole!*

Sam slides off the bar stool and the boyfriend's crew rises, ready for a fight. The boyfriend pushes Sam, and Sam pushes right back--

SAM

(flawless Spanish)  
*Why don't you go back and lick your mother's tit!*

Off Charlie's surprised look:

SAM (CONT'D)

One of my wives was a Mexican.

The boyfriend pulls a KNIFE on Sam, waving it in his face, and Sam just stands there.

The knife sails through the air, but Sam heaves the bar stool at him, smacking his arm, knife tumbling.

Sam brings the chair down on the man's head, sending him to a heap on the floor.

The woman charges, smashing a beer BOTTLE across Sam's head.

Before he can even think about it, Sam elbows the woman in the face and she flops to the floor.

(CONTINUED)

SAM (CONT'D)

Whatever those women's libbers say  
about me, I'm all about equal  
rights.

Another man makes a move toward Sam, but Charlie  
intercepts him, decking the guy with one punch.

Sam is impressed.

But before he can leap into the brawl, Charlie pulls Sam  
out the door and back onto the streets.

SAM (CONT'D)

But we're winning!

**EXT. CANTINA - CONTINUOUS**

Charlie half-drags Sam from the bar.

They run through the streets until they realize no one  
from the cantina is after them.

They rest a moment, Sam laughing, blood streaming down  
his face.

SAM

Goddamn that was fun!

CHARLIE

You're fucking crazy!

SAM

It's you and me, partner. There's  
only ten of us left in the world.  
I'm five, and you're the other  
five.

Sam walks off, laughing, leaving Charlie to just stare  
after him. He really does think Sam's fucking crazy.

PRE-LAP:

SAM'S LETTER TO HIS SON (V.O.)

I've tried to take on giants that  
came before me.

**INT. PENTHOUSE SUITE - BATHROOM - LATER**

The LETTER OF CONSENT sits on the sink next to a glass of  
whiskey.

(CONTINUED)

SAM'S LETTER TO HIS SON (V.O.)  
My father. His father.

Sam is in front of the mirror, Cleaned up. Patched up.

SAM'S LETTER TO HIS SON (V.O.)  
Hemmingway and Huston -- those men  
were my Bible.

Adjusting a turquoise bolo tie. He wears a brown leather  
suit, a Navajo belt and black cowboy boots.

He looks sharp.

SAM'S LETTER TO HIS SON (V.O.)  
I know what it's like to live in  
the shadow of greatness.

He makes a gun with his fingers and shoots himself.

SAM'S LETTER TO HIS SON (V.O.)  
And now it's your turn to step  
into the light and make a name for  
yourself.

Suddenly Sam violently retches into the sink until he's  
dry-heaving. Rinses his mouth out with the whiskey,  
spitting it out, then adjusts the bolo once more, as  
though he never vomited. Tucks the letter inside his  
jacket.

**EXT. BOGOTÁ HILTON HOTEL - LATER**

Sam and Charlie find Ramón waiting impatiently by the  
limo.

SAM  
Sorry we're late.

RAMÓN  
I was afraid something might have  
happened.

Ramón sees Sam's bandages and bruises--

SAM  
Why on earth would you think that?

**INT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS**

Charlie leans back against the supple leather seats while Sam readies another drink from the well-stocked bar.

Charlie enjoys the ride, and Sam watches the sights of Bogotá roll past his window, sipping his drink.

He grumbles when he sees a nearby CINEMA, the marquee announcing: "La Guerra de Las Estrellas" with a familiar poster showing STAR WARS.

**EXT. JUNGLE ROAD - LATER**

The limo winds up a paved road cut into the jungle.

**EXT. MADERO ESTATE - CONTINUOUS**

The limo creeps up the driveway to a magnificent estate the size of a small university and stops in front of the palatial MAIN HOUSE.

As they exit, Ramón plays tour guide:

RAMÓN

The Maderos had the masonry brought over from a castle in Spain, brick by brick.

Sam tucks his shades away, getting a good look--

SAM

You think any of those studio assholes in Bel Air have a set up like this?

Charlie scans the grounds: High security walls surround the estate. A garden dotted with statues and surveillance cameras and everywhere men in tailored suits holding machine guns.

**INT. MADERO MANSION - FOYER - CONTINUOUS**

Ramón leads them through the front door. A MAJORDOMO bows as the three men enter.

FELIX (30) and JAVIER MADERO (38) walk down a winding staircase. They are well-groomed and wear matching suits. They look a little like twin CAA agents.

(CONTINUED)

JAVIER  
Sam, such a pleasure to finally  
meet you.

Javier greets Sam like a long-lost brother, going in for  
a big bear hug.

JAVIER (CONT'D)  
I was dismayed to hear about what  
happened to Artie.

SAM  
An unfortunate mistake.

FELIX  
It's corruption! You pay good  
money to these people, and still--

JAVIER  
Felix!

Like a well-trained dog, Felix heels at his brother's  
command.

JAVIER (CONT'D)  
This is Felix, my intemperate  
younger brother, Sam.

Felix excitedly shakes hands with both Sam and Charlie.

FELIX  
I'm sorry. It's just infuriating.

JAVIER  
I hope this mishap with Artie  
doesn't sour you on working with  
us.

SAM  
Not at all. These things happen.

JAVIER  
I have already spoken with our  
President about your new Western--

Charlie looks at Sam: "Western?"

JAVIER (CONT'D)  
-- and there will be no government  
interference. You will have  
whatever you need.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

I only wish I had a producer like you on my last movie.

JAVIER

We will not just be your producers. We are your partners. And to commemorate this partnership--

Javier snaps his fingers and a beautiful woman appears. She's wearing a topless negligee, her full breasts hanging over a tray she's carries, a tray that displays three gold-plated REVOLVERS in white patent-leather holsters.

JAVIER (CONT'D)

I had these made special.

He holds one out to Sam, as a gift. It's ornately engraved, the ivory handle reads: "Sam."

JAVIER (CONT'D)

Have you ever seen a more elegant weapon?

Sam takes the pistol, handling it with calculated reverence. It's gaudy as hell, but he nods his approval--

SAM

Damn fine gun, Javier.

Felix kisses one of the guns before strapping it on.

FELIX

Perhaps you will have room in this movie for two more gunmen?

Felix quick-draws and fires -- Charlie nearly jumping out of his skin as Felix's shot shatters a priceless vase about thirty feet away.

SAM

If I can make a couple of longhairs like Kristofferson and Dylan into cutthroat desperados, imagine what I can do with you two.

JAVIER

And now that the guests of honor have arrived, dinner awaits--

**INT. MADERO MANSION - DINING ROOM - LATER**

A lavish dinner party.

There are several other GUESTS -- Bogotá's elite. Among them, members of the Colombian military and government, including the MAYOR of Bogotá, and his WIFE, the CHIEF OF POLICE, MINISTER OF CULTURE, and a high-ranking GENERAL.

Javier and Felix are at each end of the table, Ramón to Javier's right. Every person in this room is in the Madero's pocket. And they all know it.

Sam holds court in the center, flanked by beautiful women. He rolls up his sleeves, arm on the table as a challenge to the GENERAL opposite him--

SAM

Do you arm wrestle, sir?

Embarrassed, the old soldier politely begs off--

GENERAL

Sir, please--

SAM

Come on now General, surely you've got nothing to fear from some gringo just in from Hollywood?

He bends his wrist in a fay gesture, and winks at the General.

The General nods, accepting the challenge--

GENERAL

Fair warning, sir, I'm still quite spry for my age.

Sam smiles as he clears off the table between them.

SAM

That's what I'm counting on.

Locking hands, Sam lets the General take the early lead--

SAM (CONT'D)

If it weren't for all those stars on your shoulder there, I'd think I was wrestling some young buck lieutenant.

(CONTINUED)

GENERAL

It's the mountain air.  
Practically stops the aging  
process.

There's that twinkle in Sam's eye again--

SAM

I should warn you, I come from  
mountain people, too.

Sam effortlessly pulls the General over the top, slamming  
his wrist on the linen, spilling A GLASS OF WINE.

SAM (CONT'D)

"He giveth power to the faint; and  
to them that have no might, he  
increaseth strength."

MAYOR'S WIFE

You quote beautifully, Señor  
Peckinpah.

SAM

You should see how I fuck, love.

Conversations around the table suddenly hush.

The mayor's wife is blushing, and Sam realizes he crossed  
the line--

SAM (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I'm like an old dog  
you sometimes have to apologize  
for.

She accepts Sam's contrition with a weak smile.

SAM (CONT'D)

My father was a man of great  
faith. Each evening, at the head  
of the dinner table, not unlike  
this one, he would quote  
scripture. Really took the fun  
out of the family meal.

Sam refills the glass of wine he spilled.

SAM (CONT'D)

David Peckinpah, the hanging judge  
of Fresno. And man, he could be  
meaner than a boot full'a barbed  
wire.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SAM (CONT'D)

He presided over his family the same way he did his courtroom. We took to calling him "the Boss," my brothers and I. You know Javier, you remind me a little of my father. His spirit anyway.

Javier smiles. Sam's directing all the action at the table -- a master manipulator.

SAM (CONT'D)

He and my grandfather were pioneers, you see, carving civilization into the wild California frontier, like the jungle here. They've still got a mountain up there named after us.

CHARLIE

And here you are, making movies about their West.

MAYOR'S WIFE

Such violent movies!

Sam bristles slightly, but smiles, then comes over to her, refills her glass. Talks to her like he might a child--

SAM

That's the way it was, love. The real West was violent. Brother has been killing brother for thousands of years, and cats like me have been telling stories about it.

He notices she wears a small gold crucifix.

SAM (CONT'D)

Praying to some poor guy nailed to a cross for two thousand years -- Now that's real violence.

She covers the cross with a hand, almost embarrassed.

Sam refills the Mayor's glass, too.

SAM (CONT'D)

And what happens when I make a picture without violence? Nobody bothers to see it.

(CONTINUED)

The table laughs, but Sam doesn't. Eyes closed, like a poem memorized--

SAM (CONT'D)

I've come a ways and I've paid a price. Cost me plenty. Maybe my sanity, and at least a couple of marriages. And I'm not sure the game is worth it. Sometimes I want to say the hell with it and pack it all in. But I can't do that. I stick, or I know I'm nothing. Then I walk around and I see I'm not alone.

(Sam puts a hand on  
Charlie's shoulder)

There are maybe seventeen of us left in the world. We're a family, and that family's composed of cats who want to do their number and get it on. It's the only family there is. My father said it all one day. He gave me Joel McCrea's greatest line in *Ride the High Country*: "All I want to do is enter my house justified."

Javier raises his glass.

JAVIER

To fathers and sons.

Sam smiles, raises his glass--

SAM

Fathers and sons.

They all drink in toast.

SAM (CONT'D)

Now, if we can holster the maudlin sentiments for a moment, I think the Mayor's got his eye on a match with me.

Sam smiles at the Mayor, rolling up his sleeve and preparing to arm wrestle, standing behind his two dates.

(CONTINUED)

SAM (CONT'D)

What do you say, your honor? I'll put up two of mine against one of yours if you win.

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT. MADERO MANSION - SCREENING ROOM - LATER**

We're in an opulent in-house MOVIE THEATER. They're running a print of *The Wild Bunch*.

It's just Madero brothers and Sam and Charlie and a handful of ESCORTS now. Ramón's there, too, but he's finding it hard to keep his eyes open.

It's the final showdown of the film, where William Holden and his gang show up at the ruined hacienda to get their friend Angel back from the villainous General Mapache and his battalion of soldiers.

Javier is on the edge of his seat. Felix mouths the dialogue. Charlie watches the film while the brunette has her head on his shoulder, Sam eying them.

ON SCREEN: Absolute mayhem. The Gorch brothers, played by BEN JOHNSON and WARREN OATES, are firing away as the Mexicans swarm them.

It's a classic scene. Generations before *The Matrix* came along with its "bullet-time" filming, there was Sam Peckinpah and *The Wild Bunch*, an over-the-top, brilliant slow-motion ballet of violence that solidified Sam's reputation for all time.

ERNEST BORGNINE is tossing grenades. Stockpiles of dynamite go up. WILLIAM HOLDEN blows away the whore that just shot him in the back, calling her a "Bitch."

Felix claps loudly.

ON SAM:

Watching the movie. He winces each time Felix cheers for a spectacular death--

The PROJECTOR clanks away, film spooling through the sprockets, like a circulatory system--

Suddenly we're in the film, which slows even more, until we're seeing it frame-by-frame.

(CONTINUED)

A Mexican soldier falls, a geyser of blood erupting from his chest in slow motion until it STOPS--

The film freezes --

PUSH IN:

**EXT. RUINED HACIENDA - FILM SET - DAY**

We're not watching the film anymore.

We're on the set of *The Wild Bunch*.

In it. More like a three-dimensional snap shot of this famous scene.

Sam walks among the frozen actors, his SPECIAL EFFECTS MAN trailing behind him.

SAM

We need more blood. More bullets. More explosions. Get me what I want or you're on the bus back to Hollywood.

SPECIAL EFFECTS MAN

Sam, we've already used up all the fake blood in Mexico for our squibs. All of it.

Sam walks around another actor, ducking a frozen burst of blood bursting from his back like an icicle.

SAM

I need more blood. Make more. Fly some down from L.A.

SPECIAL EFFECTS MAN

How much more do you really need?

SAM

Does this look fucking real to you?

He looks around at the frozen tableau of violence--

SAM (CONT'D)

Seen the news lately? Sitting down at your dinner table watching kids half a world away bleeding to death on the six o'clock news? *That's* violence.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SAM (CONT'D)

I'm just trying to shock the audience. Rub their noses in it. Show them how terrible it is. It's supposed to be honest. Reality is blood. You can't just shoot a guy and have him fall off his horse anymore.

SPECIAL EFFECTS MAN

Christ, Sam-- It's just an action picture.

SAM

I don't make action pictures.

CUT TO:

**INT. MADERO MANSION - SCREENING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

*The Wild Bunch* plays on--

Grinning like a child, Felix draws his revolver and shoots a hole in the movie screen. He knows the movie by heart, and times his shot with one of the soldiers getting hit on screen.

Charlie jumps when Felix fires, his mellow severely harshed.

Now Sam gets in on the action. He can also time each shot to coincide with a death on screen. Suddenly it's a game, Sam and Felix trading shot for shot.

With his last bullet, Sam shoots the star, William Holden, who collapses against the Gatling gun he was using to mow down Mexican troops.

The lights come up. The movie screen is destroyed. Gunsmoke curls in the air.

Javier claps loudly, and Felix, Ramón and the escorts join in.

JAVIER

I've seen it fifty times, and it's still my favorite movie!

SAM

We got a little carried away there.

(CONTINUED)

FELIX

I do it all the time.

Charlie stands up, still freaked out by the gunfire.

CHARLIE

Maybe we should think about heading back. We've got that press conference tomorrow--

JAVIER

But we want to hear about this great Sam Peckinpah movie you want to make.

FELIX

Yes!

Sam sobers a little, then stands in front of the screen.

SAM

Okay. First I want you to know when I heard about this story, I knew that you were the right men to produce it. I mean, this is the movie you two were born to make. And I was born to direct. And of all the writers I've ever worked with, Charlie's the man to tell this story. We're all gonna win fucking Oscars for this one, I promise you.

Charlie squirms in his seat, smiling weakly at the praise.

SAM (CONT'D)

Okay, Charlie. Go.

CHARLIE

(sitting up)

What?

Sam pulls Charlie up out of his seat--

SAM

You're on. Tell them our story.

The Madero brothers sit patiently -- waiting for genius.

Sam just sinks into his chair with a huge grin on his face.

(CONTINUED)

Realizing he's not getting out of this, Charlie just starts:

CHARLIE

Well, it's about... It's about this guy... Swan... he's a smuggler. A drug smuggler.

The Maderos share a look. Ramón suddenly very awake.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

We meet him after he and his friends get busted for cocaine after an all-night party in Long Island. We come to understand that this guy -- this upper-middle-class guy who seems like the All-American Boy -- is actually one of the biggest smugglers in the world.

Charlie realizes, as he's telling this story, that the Madero brothers haven't moved.

They don't look disinterested.

On the contrary, they look a little too interested.

And they don't look happy.

SAM

Show them the book, man.

Charlie fumbles in his satchel for the wrinkled *Snowblind* manuscript, which he hands over to Javier, who pages through it.

CHARLIE

It's not just about smuggling, though. It goes behind the scenes of the cocaine trade--

JAVIER

No.

Sam whips around to face Javier and hisses though his teeth--

SAM

What the fuck do you mean "no"?

Felix looks ready to explode.

(CONTINUED)

FELIX  
Are you fucking crazy?

Javier plays the voice of reason--

JAVIER  
Artie told me you were going to bring us a western. The next *Wild Bunch*.

SAM  
This is a western! It's about a new kind of West. A new frontier.

Sam stands, so tuned up on coke he's practically vibrating.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Charlie, you're fucking it all up! You're telling it wrong. This is a film with real balls and heart. It's not about the drugs. It's got nothing to do with drugs. This is not a coke story. It's a people story, man. It's all about the people. You and me.

JAVIER  
But I don't want it to be about me.

Charlie can see that Javier is very serious now. He doesn't want to hear anymore. Charlie tries to put a hand on Sam.

CHARLIE  
Sam, maybe we should just take a moment--

SAM  
(throwing him off)  
It was all a game, you see? A struggle for individual freedom. Individual belief. That's the real west out there. The end of an era. And I want to put it on film. I want the audience to all want to do it. I want them to feel it. Nobody really knows anything about this world!

JAVIER  
And we want to keep it that way.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

You don't understand. I'm talking about *To Catch a Thief* here. I'm talking about Cary Grant. Coke is just a metaphor. It's all about change. An evolution of social construct--

FELIX

"Social construct?" What the hell are you talking about?

JAVIER

Under no circumstances will you make this movie.

Sam realizes he is caught up in the Hollywood process he always fought against -- the small-minded executives with their own agendas, stifling his brilliance.

SAM

You don't want to finance my picture, fine. But I am making this movie.

JAVIER

This is no longer about financing. And you will not make this movie, do you understand? Never.

SAM

Not only am I going to make this movie, Javier, old buddy, but at that press conference tomorrow, I'm going to get up and announce to the whole Goddamned world it's going to be my very next film. I was born to make this movie. And you can't fucking stop me!

Charlie gets up, standing between them, trying to guide Sam to a seat, and reason--

CHARLIE

I think it's just late, guys.  
We're all just a little fried.

But the Madero brothers huddle up with Ramón, talking in hushed and rapid Spanish.

**ON SAM AND CHARLIE:**

Sam is at the bar, sloppily mixing a drink which he abandons in order to just drink right from the bottle.

SAM

Motherfuckers! I come to the jungle and what do I find? Snakes! Snakes and well-poisoners. This is my fucking movie. The woods are full of killers, Charlie. They'll eat you alive if they think they can get you to compromise. Chew on you while you're still walking around.

CHARLIE

What did you expect? Did you even read the book?

SAM

Fucking well-poisoners!  
(yelling now, at the Maderos)  
Bagmen, that's all you are!  
You're just handling the cash!

Sam tears at the curtains that surround the screening room, looking for an exit.

SAM (CONT'D)

How the fuck do I get out of here?

The Colombians break huddle. Ramón slinks out the door.

JAVIER

Gentlemen, it is very late. You will remain as our guests.

Several of Madero's armed men enter the screening room.

Leaving is not an option.

CUT TO:

**EXT. JUNGLE ROAD - CONTINUOUS**

A Land Rover plows over rough terrain, following a dirt trail barely wide enough to call a road, fronds whipping against the windows with each tight turn.

**INT. LAND ROVER - CONTINUOUS**

Sam and Charlie are squeezed into the back seat between two imposing Madero gunmen, taking each turn as best they can. Charlie looks nervous, but Sam just closes his eyes.

SAM'S LETTER TO HIS SON (V.O.)

There's no road map to being a man, or a Marine. You just have to feel your way through, blind as shit, like everyone who came before you.

**EXT. JUNGLE ROAD - CONTINUOUS**

The Rover blows past a hand-made ROAD SIGN announcing Bogotá is 250 kilometers in the opposite direction.

**EXT. MADERO COCALE - DAY**

The Rover skids to a stop in the mud in front of a chain link fence surrounding a terraced cocaine PLANTATION cut into the hillside, maybe two or three acres big.

Inside the plantation are a number of structures -- shacks with tin roofs, belching black smoke into the azure sky.

It's a *cocale*, where they process cocaine. And like the Madero estate, there are armed men everywhere.

Only they're not dressed in tailored suits. They're a motley collection -- wearing jeans or military fatigues, T-shirts and bandanas. A mixture of rifles, machine guns and pistols.

**INT. MADERO COCALE - CONTINUOUS**

Sam and Charlie exit the Rover under the watchful gaze of the gunmen. Sam's still in a stupor but Charlie's scared shitless, convinced they're about to be shot.

CAMPESINOS (peasant farmers) move about the compound, hauling bundles of raw coca leaves to feed stills.

Gunmen push Charlie and Sam toward A CRUMBLING ADOBE BUILDING -- the largest structure in the compound.

(CONTINUED)

The HEAD GUNMAN flags down a kid in a Pepsi T-shirt and sunglasses -- LALO. Only 16, he's in charge here; a bright half-black, half-Indian, the handle of a revolver sticking out from the waist of his jeans.

LALO  
*Who are these guys?*

HEAD MADERO GUNMAN  
*Americans.*

LALO  
*No shit.*

HEAD MADERO GUNMAN  
*Here are their passports. Make sure they don't leave.*

Lalo looks around -- dense jungle in every direction.

LALO  
*Where the hell are they gonna go?*

HEAD MADERO GUNMAN  
(points to Sam)  
*Absolutely no cocaine for that one.*

**INT. ADOBE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS**

Charlie and Sam are hustled through the doorway, luggage and Charlie's typewriter tossed in behind them.

One of the gunmen even sets the fruit basket from the hotel room on a table, now crushed and torn, spilling oranges everywhere.

All evidence they were ever guests of the Hilton has vanished.

The door is BOLTED behind them.

There are a couple of cots among the sparse furnishings.

CHARLIE  
*Someone has to notice we're missing, right?*

Sam ignores him, collapsing on one of the cots.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

Charlie, I'm not satisfied with the quality of your work on this picture.

(puts on his mirrored sunglasses)

You're on the bus. Aisle or window.

CHARLIE

What?

SAM

You're fired.

Then he passes out, dead to the world.

CUT TO:

**INT. BOGOTÁ HILTON HOTEL - LOBBY - SAME**

The international press has gathered.

The Mayor and his wife are seated on the dais, ready to hand off the "Key to the City."

Ramón steps up to the dais and smiles weakly at the crowd as some applaud politely.

RAMÓN

Thank you for coming down here today to meet the legendary Sam Peckinpah.

The crowd applauds, much louder. After it dies down.

RAMÓN (CONT'D)

Unfortunately, Mr. Peckinpah had to cancel his appearance.

A stunned murmur moves through the crowd. The Mayor and his wife whisper between them--

MAYOR'S WIFE

*No doubt he's hung over.*

MAYOR MEHECA

*Hung over? He's probably still drinking.*

Ramón surprises the Mayor by taking the "Key to the City" from his lap and holding it up.

(CONTINUED)

RAMÓN

But I know he would appreciate this gesture. So on behalf of him, I thank you.

And with one last smile for the cameras, Ramón escapes off the platform and through the crowd to the exit, leaving everyone to wonder what the fuck just happened.

CUT TO:

**EXT./INT. ADOBE BUILDING - DAY (LATER)**

Bone-sucking heat.

Sam's sweating out last night's booze. Charlie leans against the adobe wall, head balanced on his knees in whatever shade he can find.

The door is unlocked, and Lalo enters with food, which he sets on the table. Oddly, there's a clay vase with fresh flowers.

Lalo slips back out the door, about to lock up.

CHARLIE

*Por favor.* I need to talk to whoever is in charge here. The head man? *El Jefe?* Huh? How about a telephone?

Charlie digs into his pants and holds out a twenty.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Twenty bucks to call my wife.

Lalo stares at the money, then grabs it.

LALO

*Phone's broke, man. Sorry.*

SAM

*How about a little hair of the dog then, eh kid?*

LALO

*You want a dog?*

SAM

*(tapping his nose)*  
*No, man. I'm looking for a little bump, you know?*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SAM (CONT'D)  
(in English)  
Don't tell me you cats don't have  
some lying around somewhere.

LALO  
Ahhh... Sorry. No.

Sam frowns, then looks up with a twinkle in his eye--

SAM  
*How about whiskey? Glass about  
this high? Ice optional.*

JUMP CUT TO:

**MOMENTS LATER**

Sam cleans his plate and takes another shot, pulls out  
his wrinkled pack of Salems and lights up.

SAM  
What do you figure the temperature  
is out here? Reminds me of when I  
shot Dundee. We were down in this  
godforsaken village in  
Tehuixtla... or Cuautla... the air  
thick with humidity. And flies,  
man the flies--

But Charlie doesn't want to talk about the weather.

CHARLIE  
Why wouldn't you just tell them  
you won't make the movie? Why  
would you push them like that?

CLOSE ON: The clay vase.

ZOOM IN:

There's a SMALL BLACK ELECTRONIC BUG on it.

CUT TO:

**INT. TIN SHACK - SAME**

Elsewhere in the compound, a REEL-TO-REEL records every  
word--

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE (O.S.)  
(recording)  
Did you come down here to commit  
suicide?

BACK TO:

**INT. ADOBE BUILDING - SAME**

Sam just sits there, drawing deeply on his cigarette.

SAM  
I don't care who the fuck they are  
or how many guns they've got.  
It's my movie. That's why I came  
down here in the first place: to  
get away from *that* bullshit.  
(beat)  
What about you? What did you come  
down here for? Be a writer, huh?  
A *real* writer? Well I got news  
for you Charlie, from a real  
writer -- you ain't got it.

Charlie flushes with anger.

SAM (CONT'D)  
You don't live it. Here, in your  
gut.

CHARLIE  
Then why'd you pick me?

SAM  
Because you were desperate. I've  
got this weakness for losers on a  
grand scale. And I knew I could  
use you.

Charlie reacts as though slapped.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Sorry, Charlie. Did I push your  
buttons? Or is it something else,  
huh? I remind you of someone  
maybe?

Charlie pushes Sam against the wall.

CHARLIE  
Shut up!

(CONTINUED)

SAM

What was it? What'd poppa do?  
Drink? Beat mommy? Did he touch  
your little Charlie-boy? Maybe he  
just wasn't around. Always too  
busy for you. Ironic, then, huh?  
I mean, here you are, away from  
your loved ones, wife about to  
deliver your first child, and  
you're not even there. Fathers  
and sons, huh?

Every part of Charlie is clenched now. His teeth. His  
fist.

SAM (CONT'D)

No, I know what it is. He just  
couldn't conceal his  
disappointment in his son.  
The choices you made. Couldn't  
tell the fellas down at the office  
what you were doing, because he  
was afraid they'd probably think  
you were a fag, right?

CHARLIE

You son of a bitch!

Tears of rage in his eyes, Charlie wallops Sam across the  
chin with a right hook. Then another, and another.

Sam just takes it, until his glasses fly off and shatter,  
and Charlie's left looking into Sam's watery blue eyes--

Sam drops to his knees, fumbling to put his broken  
sunglasses back together.

SAM

Shit man. Look what you fucking  
did.

He holds those glasses with remorse, like they were a  
living thing to him.

SAM (CONT'D)

I needed those.

CUT TO:

**INT. MADERO MANSION - PATIO - SAME**

Javier lazes by the pool reading the *Snowblind* manuscript, massaged by a beautiful woman, while Felix swims.

Ramón enters from the house.

RAMÓN

*People are going to start asking questions.*

JAVIER

*Let them ask. A few days in the jungle will sober him up.*

RAMÓN

*And if it doesn't?*

Felix emerges from the pool--

FELIX

*We kill him.*

Javier considers this.

JAVIER

*He's too well-known. To many people know he's down here.*

FELIX

*An accident perhaps?*

Javier's look tells Felix no one would buy that.

FELIX (CONT'D)

*Then we send him home. Hire someone in America to do it.*

Javier considers this. Then he tosses the manuscript to Ramón.

FELIX (CONT'D)

*Well?*

JAVIER

*It's actually not bad. Probably would make a pretty good movie.*

FELIX

*Not the book. What do we do about them?*

(CONTINUED)

JAVIER  
(a considerate beat)  
*Ramón will make some calls to  
America. Then we'll see.*

CUT TO:

**INT. CHARLIE STETLER'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN**

Jill flits about, making a sandwich at the sink. Slices it with a bread knife, nicking her finger with the edge.

JILL  
Dammit!

She holds her finger up. It's only a minor cut, a tiny droplet of blood forming, then falling through space as it splatters on the linoleum.

She looks down at the blood splatter. Suddenly more drops of blood join it, each splatter bigger until the floor is slick with red.

JILL (CONT'D)  
What the hell?

The blood's not coming from her finger though. It's streaming from between her legs-- something's very wrong.

JILL (CONT'D)  
Oh my god!

She suddenly doubles over, a plate shattering in the sink. Intense pain brings her to her knees.

JILL (CONT'D)  
Oh my god! Charlie!

But he's not there--

SMASH TO:

**INT. ADOBE BUILDING - DAY**

Shirtless, Sam sits at the window, smoking. He sorts through the notes and papers he's collected -- his thoughts for the letter to his son Matthew.

Unfolds the U.S.M.C. "letter of consent."

(CONTINUED)

Stares at it. The line at the bottom - Parent or Guardian Signature.

He inhales on his cigarette deeply, until the cherry's burning bright red. He holds the tip to the paper, searing a neat hole right through the word "Parent."

Then he folds it back up into an even tighter square of paper and stuffs it in his pocket.

He sighs out a breath of smoke as he stares out at the compound. The campesinos cooking down raw cocaine.

SAM

Water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink.

Lalo lazes in the shade of an overhang of a tin shack, a portable cassette player blaring Pink Floyd.

A group of KIDS are gathered around a LAME DOG, teasing it. Throwing clumps of mud and rocks at the mutt.

A helicopter passes high overhead. Sam cranes his head out the window, trying to see the chopper.

SAM (CONT'D)

Maybe they're looking for us.

Lalo approaches--.

LALO

*That's an Army helicopter.  
Looking for plantations like this  
one. Only they never find them.*

SAM

*Army's bought and paid for, huh?*

LALO

*No. Only the generals.*

SAM

*What's your name?*

LALO

*Lalo.*

*(beat)*

*Why are you here?*

SAM

*Because I make movies, Lalo.*

(CONTINUED)

LALO  
*I love movies!*

SAM  
*Did you see The Wild Bunch?*

Lalo shakes his head.

SAM (CONT'D)  
*How about The Getaway?*

LALO  
*No.*

Sam lowers his head, reluctant to name the next movie--

SAM  
*Star Wars?*

Lalo lights up.

LALO  
*I've seen it ten times already!*

Off Sam's look--

CUT TO:

**EXT. BOGOTÁ - ESTABLISHING**

Modern sky-scrappers amid centuries-old architecture.

**INT. HIGH-RISE OFFICE BUILDING - DAY**

Ramón's office, like the city, is a clash of old and new. A computer on his desk alongside pre-Colombian artwork.

The *Snowblind* manuscript is also there.

Ramón's on a long-distance call, yelling over a bad connection--

RAMÓN  
The money is not a problem. But we would need to make this happen as soon as possible... Yes, I understand it's complicated-- would another ten help expedite things?... Excellent.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RAMÓN (CONT'D)

I can have payment to you today if  
you can execute the contract...

CUT TO:

**EXT. BEVERLY HILLS - ESTABLISHING - DAY**

South of Wilshire, we find the venerable William Morris Agency tucked on a quiet, residential corner.

**INT. WILLIAM MORRIS AGENCY - DAY**

Clean, well-dressed agents and assistants.

Two LATINO MEN move through the halls -- bagmen for the Madero brothers.

One hauls a leather satchel, which he sets on a desk of a young, BLONDE ASSISTANT.

BAGMAN

Mr. Rosenbaum?

The assistant looks up at the two men. With their dark suits, they could easily pass for agents, but for the glimpse of a PISTOL in a shoulder holster. Before she can get a sentence out--

BAGMAN (CONT'D)

We're from Colombia.

She pauses a moment, thrown by the gun, but almost by rote she picks up her intercom line and buzzes--

BLONDE ASSISTANT

Mr. Rosenbaum, the gentlemen from Columbia are here.

She waves the two gentlemen into the office.

**INT. ROSENBAUM'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

JONATHAN ROSENBAUM (40s) stands behind a desk as the men enter.

ROSENBAUM

I just expected a call from  
business affairs, not a personal  
visit. But come in, please.

(CONTINUED)

BAGMAN

We're associated with Ramón  
Villalobos.

Rosenbaum gets up to shake their hands.

ROSENBAUM

You know, I thought I knew  
everyone at Columbia, but I don't  
think I've met Mr. Villalobos. Or  
even heard of him.

BAGMAN

Not from Columbia Pictures. From  
*Colombia*. South America.

Rosenbaum's seriously nonplussed--

ROSENBAUM

South America?

BAGMAN

He asked us to deliver this.

He sets the satchel on the desk. Rosenbaum looks  
nervous, not knowing what he'll find as he opens it.

BAGMAN (CONT'D)

He believes that to be the agreed-  
upon price.

Stacks of money. Rosenbaum flips through the cash -- all  
in small bills. He pushes the satchel back towards the  
bagman.

ROSENBAUM

We usually do business by check or  
wire transfer.

The bagman firmly pushes it right back in front of  
Rosenbaum--

BAGMAN

We don't.

CUT TO:

**INT. ADOBE BUILDING - NIGHT**

An oil lamp throws dusky light around the room.

(CONTINUED)

Lalo has just brought Sam and Charlie dinner. Sam smiles as Lalo sets another full bottle of whiskey in front of him.

SAM  
(pouring a shot)  
Por favor, amigo.

Lalo sort of half-salutes as he exits the room.

Charlie hasn't heard the tell-tale click of the bolt locking into place behind him.

SAM (CONT'D)  
May not be the Hilton, but the natives sure are friendly.

Charlie's up, testing the handle on the door.

CHARLIE  
It's unlocked.

SAM  
So?

CHARLIE  
So we can get out.

Sam just tips back another drink.

SAM  
And go back to what? Hollywood no longer exists for me.

Charlie dims the lamp.

CHARLIE  
We'll find a town, get a ride back to Bogotá. Find the embassy.  
(pulls Sam to his feet)  
Come on!

**EXT. MADERO COCALE - CONTINUOUS**

Charlie steps out into the moonlit compound. He looks around and sees lights on in some of the other shacks.

A GUNMAN stands by the front gate, smoking. Campesinos laugh in the distance. Monkeys chatter in the jungle.

Charlie pulls a drunk Sam out the door behind him.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

I can walk.

CHARLIE

Keep it down.

But the guard near the gate heard nothing. Charlie sees a hole in the fence, and pulls Sam through the opening and into the dense, black jungle.

The GUARD just stands his post, oblivious.

**EXT. JUNGLE - NIGHT = CONTINUOUS**

Under the light of a full moon, Charlie crashes through the thick palmettos and palm fronds, suffering a hell of a thousand cuts in the process, but happy to be free.

Sam treads along behind him.

SAM

Christ. You know, back at the cocale we at least had a bed. And booze.

CHARLIE

Hey, you're welcome to find your way back. Me? I'm going this way.

SAM

You don't even know where you're going.

They emerge on a hilltop overlooking a vast silvery moonlit landscape of jungle below. It goes on for miles in every direction, without a light or any other sign of civilization in sight.

Sam tries to catch his breath a moment.

SAM (CONT'D)

I gotta take a leak or I'm gonna piss my pants.

CHARLIE

(Jesus...)  
Make it quick.

Sam unzips and lets loose off the side of the hill.

(CONTINUED)

He sways a bit, head tilted back to see the stars above him like a hive of brilliant bees cracked open, swarming the cosmos.

SAM

Jesus, Charlie... Will you look at this sky.

Sam leans back farther, mesmerized by the heavens.

SAM (CONT'D)

You can't see this in LA, man.

Back... back... THUD! Charlie turns around to see Sam has passed out cold, flat on his back, but still pissing, straight up, like a fountain.

**EXT. THE COLOMBIAN JUNGLE - EARLY MORNING - ESTABLISHING**

An emerald canopy. A veil of low-hanging mist.

**EXT. JUNGLE CLEARING - MORNING - CONTINUOUS**

Charlie steps into a small clearing. A trickle of water runs across a nearly dry creek bed, but Charlie scoops up sips of water as best he can.

Sam stumbles out of the jungle behind him, hand raised to block out the sunlight, clearly missing his sunglasses.

SAM

I can't see shit, man. Too damn bright.

CHARLIE

Maybe if we follow this creek we might find something--

Charlie suddenly hears something... singing.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

What is that?

SAM

A butterfly.

And Sam has found the source of the singing, as he spies a pretty YOUNG INDIAN GIRL (ELITA, 22) next to a campesino's shanty that sits at the crossroads of a couple of dirt roads cutting through the jungle.

(CONTINUED)

Elita's taking pieces of laundry that hang on lines between the trees, softly singing as she works. The way she moves is almost mystical.

She sheds the worn blouse she wears for a clean one off the line, her full, bare breasts catching Sam's attention.

The image slows as she moves in "Sam Peckinpah" time --

SAM (CONT'D)

She moves as sweet and slow as a morphine drip.

CHARLIE

Maybe there's a phone.

SAM

Can't hurt to ask.

**EXT. CAMPESINO SHANTY - CONTINUOUS**

Sam and Charlie approach Elita.

SAM

Hola senorita.

Elita is startled, and backs away, laundry clutched to her chest protectively.

SAM (CONT'D)

*Please don't be alarmed. We're a couple of tourists who got lost. You wouldn't happen to have a phone, would you?*

ELITA

*No. No phone.*

SAM

*How about some shade and perhaps a push in the right direction.*

*(to Charlie)*

*Show her a little dinero.*

Charlie grabs another twenty from his wallet, holding it out and smiling at Elita.

**INT. CAMPESINO SHANTY - LATER**

Elita pours them both water from a plastic jug.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

*Thanks. You wouldn't happen to have anything stronger, would you? Maybe just a beer?*

Elita shakes her head no and Sam just shrugs and smiles.

SAM (CONT'D)

*Real nice place you have here.*

He knocks on a piece of plywood that makes up one wall.

SAM (CONT'D)

Sort of reminds me of where I grew up. Mind you, it wasn't plywood, but timber my father and grandfather cut and hauled down the mountain. But the sentiment's still the same. Carving out a life on the frontier, anyway you can.

*(wipes his face with his bandana)*

I always thought it would be a wonderful place to die when I go.

*(smiles at Elita)*

You have no idea what I'm saying, do you beautiful?

Elita can only smile and shake her head.

CHARLIE

Ask her where the road goes. Which way do we go to get to Bogotá.

*(to Elita)*

Bogotá? Por favor?

Elita shakes her head again.

Sam reaches in his pocket to find the Letter of Consent. He smiles down at it.

He finds a pen in his pocket, and boldly signs on the dotted line. He seems content.

SAM'S LETTER TO HIS SON (V.O.)

You have everything to learn and nothing to prove, just as I did the day I joined the Corps.

The sound of car engines and brakes. Charlie looks out the window, panicked.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE

Shit. They found us.

Sam just smiles knowingly. He tucks the letter away in his jacket again. Rolls up his bandana into a headband again, wrapping it around his forehead.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

What do we do?

Sam reaches for Elita. Her instinct is to resist, until Sam gently takes her hand in his, and with charming gleam in his eye kisses her hand politely, tenderly holding it a moment before releasing it.

SAM

It's been a pleasure, senorita.

Sam walks out the front door.

**EXT. CAMPESINO SHANTY - CONTINUOUS**

Lalo is standing in front of a cadre of cocaine gunmen who have poured out of a pick-up truck. Sam just smiles and waves at Lalo, who can only return the greeting.

But there are two white Land Rovers with them. Out steps Javier and Felix from one of the cars.

Javier smiles.

JAVIER

We need to talk, Sam.

CUT TO:

**INT. TIN SHACK - CONTINUOUS**

Lalo pushes Sam through the door and directs him to sit on a chair in the center of the dirt floor.

Javier steps out from the shadows. Sam can see Felix and Ramón are there, too.

JAVIER

You've been treated well?

SAM

Liked the Hilton better.

Javier pulls up a chair in front of Sam.

(CONTINUED)

JAVIER

You've had some time to think about your plans for your movie.

SAM

I've thought about it.

JAVIER

And?

Sam smiles wide.

SAM

Can't wait to get home and start production on it, you fuckers.

Felix moves to strike Sam, but Javier waves him off.

JAVIER

Earlier, I thought you were just stoned out of your mind. Now I see that sobriety has done nothing to change your attitude.

SAM

I'm as sober as the day you met me.

JAVIER

Yes. And I'm beginning to suspect you're crazy, Sam.

SAM

Like a shit-house fox.

JAVIER

Maybe...

Javier tosses the *Snowblind* manuscript at Sam's feet.

JAVIER (CONT'D)

It's a good book. Accurate. Insightful.

SAM

I'll make sure to get you tickets to the premiere, amigo.

Javier smiles. Then snaps his fingers and Ramón produces several documents on flimsy Telex paper. It's A CONTRACT, which he hands to Sam to read.

(CONTINUED)

JAVIER

I don't think so. You see, I bought the rights to *Snowblind*. A book, it turns out, you never actually had the rights to in the first place.

Sam flips through the pages. Indeed, it's a purchase agreement for the rights.

JAVIER (CONT'D)

So I feel quite confident when I say, again, you will never make this movie.

Sam lets the pages fall from his hand.

SAM

These rights are about as useful as tits on a boar.

He stares up at Javier. Smiles.

SAM (CONT'D)

You don't own the rights to the cocaine trade, Javier. I can make any Goddamn movie I want about drug lords or cocaine cartels and I don't need the book to do it. In fact I've decided I'm going to write this fucker myself. And you two cocksuckers -- you two are going to be the main fucking characters!

Javier smacks Sam hard across the mouth. Sam rocks back, then composes himself, spitting blood.

SAM (CONT'D)

Come on Javier... is that the best you can do?

Javier unleashes pure fury on Sam, beating him repeatedly. Even Felix seems a little surprised by his brother's anger.

Sam just sits there and takes it.

SAM (CONT'D)

*I've had ladies hit me with more passion.*

Lalo walks out the door.

**EXT. MADERO COCALE - CONTINUOUS**

Lalo lights a cigarette, hands trembling as he brings the flame close. Even with the gun and the power it brings him, Lalo's still just a kid, not used to seeing this level of violence.

Despite the jungle's background chatter, Lalo can still hear the sounds of Sam being hit, and him screaming back at the Maderos.

He pops a cassette into the player--

Pink Floyd. The guitar strains of "Shine On You Crazy Diamond" fill the compound; Gilmour and Waters do their level best to drown out Sam's beating.

**INT. TIN SHACK - CONTINUOUS**

Blood pours down Sam's face from several cuts.

JAVIER

I'm not evil, Sam. Sure, I've killed men. Men who were a threat to my business.

(beat)

But I'm not a villain, Sam. All dressed in black. I was just living my life. You came into *my house*. You brought this to *my doorstep*. What else was I supposed to do? What would any man?

Sam spits blood onto the dusty floor--

SAM

I'll tell you the story I have in mind. In the first act, we meet our two anti-heroes. Brothers. The thin one, he's not so bright. Always in the shadow of his older brother. Which, considering the man's girth, ain't hard to imagine.

Javier viciously hits Sam again and again--

SAM (CONT'D)

Maybe you'd like to get Jewison in here, huh? See how he holds up?

(CONTINUED)

JAVIER  
Who the fuck are you talking  
about?

SAM  
Nevermind.

CUT TO:

**INT. ADOBE BUILDING - MORNING**

The door bangs open, startling Charlie awake.

Lalo and several other men haul Sam through the door and  
toss him on the empty cot.

Sam is bleeding from half a dozen cuts and gashes.

And for the first time, he looks scared.

CHARLIE  
Jesus Christ!

Sam rolls over on his side, hiding his face in the  
shadows, more out of pride than anything.

SAM  
(a weak croak)  
Give us a little booze, Lalo.

The other men leave and Lalo pulls a PINT OF WHISKEY from  
under his shirt. Sets it on the floor by Sam's cot.

He leans in and whispers.

LALO  
*Sorry, Sam.*

When Sam doesn't answer, Lalo exits, bolting the door  
behind him. Charlie takes Sam's bandana, dips it in  
water and dabs at the cut on his lip.

CHARLIE  
What the hell did you say to them?

Sam grabs the whiskey and swigs it down. The booze on  
the open cut stings, but he doesn't care.

SAM  
It doesn't really translate well.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE

You look terrible.

Sam takes another gulp and stares into space.

SAM

He's trying to kill me.

CHARLIE

Javier?

SAM

Steve McQueen.

CHARLIE

What?

SAM

He always hated me because he knew I thought Ali was a terrible actress. She sets my teeth on edge. You see *Love Story*? Christ, she looks like Mick Jagger in drag.

CHARLIE

Just tell them you're not going to make the movie. That's all they want to hear. It's just a movie.

SAM

It's not just a movie. It's never "just a movie" for me. I've lived my whole life between action and cut. Without that, I'm just dead.

CHARLIE

Sam--

Sam pushes Charlie away from him--

SAM

Don't call me that! I've conned everyone into thinking I'm Sam Peckinpah. The Picasso of violence. Assassin of chickens.

(beat)

Bloody Sam. I don't even know who that is anymore.

He jerks out his last cigarette from the pack, shaking so bad that Charlie does it for him.

(CONTINUED)

SAM (CONT'D)

Look at me Charlie. I'm a complete mess. You think I don't know that? I've been living on vitamin shots, booze and cocaine just to make it to the end of each day.

(beat)

I've got the most amazing collection of hemorrhoids modern medicine has ever seen. I mean, full blown Technicolor son of a bitches. I haven't sat comfortably since 1967.

(beat)

Plus, I'm completely impotent.

CHARLIE

What?

SAM

I mean it, man.

CUT TO:

**INT. TIN SHACK - SAME**

Felix and Javier listen in on the conversation--

SAM (O.S.)

(over headphones)

I haven't gotten it up in over a year.

Felix snickers. A stern look from Javier shuts him up.

CUT TO:

**INT. ADOBE BUILDING - SAME**

SAM

It's more than just sex. I'm emotionally impotent. Artistically limp. I just can't get it up any more. Can't get it on. My movies are complete shit.

(beat)

It's a hell of a thing to know that your best work is years behind you.

(CONTINUED)

Outside, a chorus of jungle noises. It sounds a little like laughter.

SAM (CONT'D)

Hear that? My critics.

Sam unfolds himself onto the cot, wincing with fiery pain.

SAM (CONT'D)

I'm just an old gunfighter in an age when we're flying to the moon. But I'm not going to just fade away.

(beat)

John Ford. Howard Hawks. Toughest motherfuckers you ever met. Nobody told them what to do or how to do it. Know what happened to them? They got old. Put out to pasture in Palm Springs. And then what? They got sick and died. Only the sickness isn't what killed them. No. They lost the chance to create -- that's what did them in. Ate away at them like a cancer. Like it's eating away at me. Charlie-boy, I want to go out in flames.

CHARLIE

You're crazy.

Sam lies back, taking a deep drag on his cigarette, coughing out smoke.

SAM

Maybe. But it's my life. I get to direct how it ends.

He passes out, lit cigarette pinned between his lips.

CUT TO:

**SAM'S MIND'S EYE - REPLAY:**

**EXT. A CLIFF OVERLOOKING THE PACIFIC - EARLY MORNING**

We're back at the beginning again.

(CONTINUED)

THE GUNSLINGER -- SAM -- stands with one foot on the edge of the cliff. He steps closer and closer to the edge.

Then Sam LEAPS OFF to the rocks below!

Stay on Sam's face by way of a Hitchcockian camera-move, zooming in while dollying out, Sam always in frame, the rocks below rushing up as he smiles the whole way down--

CUT TO:

**INT. ADOBE BUILDING - LATER**

Sam is still passed out on the cot. Lalo enters. Sam stirs, expecting to have to go to the shack again.

But this time, Lalo points to Charlie.

CUT TO:

**INT. TIN SHACK - MOMENTS LATER**

Lalo guides Charlie to a chair. Javier steps out of the shadows. Charlie can see Felix and Ramón sitting in the dark against the wall.

JAVIER

We must apologize for the way  
you've been treated the past  
couple of days.

Javier holds his hand out for Charlie to shake.

JAVIER (CONT'D)

Believe me, if I could have done  
it differently, I would have. But  
my hand was forced. I think  
you're in a unique position to  
understand my frustration with  
Sam.

CHARLIE

He can be... difficult. But you  
have to understand, he's got some  
problems.

JAVIER

Yes, we know.

Off Charlie's look, Javier motions to the REEL-TO-REEL on the table next to Felix, who presses play:

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE (O.C.)

(on tape)

Did you come down here to commit suicide?

JAVIER

We also know you don't have anything to do with this situation. Which is why we're willing to let you go.

FELIX

Back to your home in Toluca Lake. One-six-three-oh, Revello Drive.

ON CHARLIE: *Shit, they know where I live.*

JAVIER

We trust we can count on your discretion in this matter, yes?

CHARLIE

What are you going to do with Sam?

Javier doesn't answer at first.

JAVIER

Sam's in no danger, I assure you. But I don't think he's ready to leave just yet.

CHARLIE

So, I can go?

JAVIER

If you wish.

CHARLIE

Yes. I do. Wish.

Javier merely waves his hand toward the door. The way out.

Charlie moves for the exit, reaching for the handle.

Ramón steps up and hands a slip of paper to Javier, whispering in Spanish.

JAVIER

One more thing before you go, though.

(CONTINUED)

Javier reaches into his jacket; Charlie expects him to pull a gun. Instead: glasses, which Javier puts on before reading the piece of paper.

JAVIER (CONT'D)  
Your wife, Jill... She gave birth to a boy this morning. Seven pounds, eleven ounces.

He balls up the paper in his fist, and smiles at Charlie.

JAVIER (CONT'D)  
Congratulations.

CUT TO:

**INT. ADOBE BUILDING - LATER**

Sam watches as Charlie throws his things into his suitcase.

CHARLIE  
When I get back to Los Angeles, I'll call somebody... the State Department... *someone*.

SAM  
Christ, don't do that. I still owe back taxes.

Sam scribbles down a number on a piece of paper.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Just call that number. It's my business manager. He'll know what to do.

CHARLIE  
You don't want me to call anybody else?

The door bangs open -- it's Lalo. He hooks a thumb towards a Land Rover waiting in the compound.

LALO  
Señor...

Charlie turns back to Sam. There doesn't seem to be anything left to say.

CHARLIE  
I'll get you out of here, Sam.

(CONTINUED)

Sam only nods.

He seems frail standing there. A lot smaller than when Charlie first met him.

**EXT. MADERO COCALE - CONTINUOUS**

Charlie walks to the Land Rover.

Sam suddenly comes running out--

SAM

Charlie!

Several gunmen move to intercept Sam, but Lalo waves them off.

LALO

Esta bien! Esta bien!

(to Sam)

Sam, you must go inside!

Sam shrugs Lalo off--

SAM

This will only take a second  
amigo.

Sam walks up to Charlie. Pulls out his wallet and hands over a credit card--

SAM (CONT'D)

My son's birthday is next week.  
When you get back to LA, buy him  
something nice for me, will ya?  
His name's Matthew.

CHARLIE

Finish your letter to him instead.  
It's the only thing he wants.  
Trust me.

And Charlie hands his TYPEWRITER to Sam.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Now you don't have any more  
excuses.

Sam tries to smile, but looks like he might cry.

(CONTINUED)

Instead, he wraps Charlie up in a tight hug, that surprises both Charlie and Lalo. Just as quickly though, Sam releases Charlie, and smiles.

SAM

This is the movie we should'a made.

Gunmen hustle Charlie into the passenger seat.

**INT. LAND ROVER - SAME**

Charlie just sits there a moment, stunned. He's going home. He can't believe it.

SAM'S LETTER TO HIS SON (V.O.)

Know that I am proud of you.

The Rover starts with a jolt.

SAM'S LETTER TO HIS SON (V.O.)

If you're lucky, you'll come out of it like I did, with a broken heart and a stiff cock.

They drive off through the gate and Charlie looks in the side-view mirror at Sam -- just standing there, watching Charlie leave, getting still smaller and smaller--

SAM'S LETTER TO HIS SON (V.O.)

I wish I was going with you.

(beat)

Semper Fi, mother fucker.

**EXT. MADERO COCALE - CONTINUOUS**

The Rover disappears down a jungle path.

Lalo puts a hand on Sam's shoulder.

LALO

*You have to go back inside now.*

Sam takes the SUNGLASSES Lalo has perched on his head and puts them on.

SAM

*You look pretty strong, Lalo.  
Very fit.*

(in English)

Ever arm wrestle before?

(CONTINUED)

And there's that mischievous smile again.

CUT TO:

**EXT. BOGOTÁ AIRPORT - MORNING**

The Land Rover pulls up to the loading area. Charlie is hustled from the back seat onto the curb, his bag set beside him, before the gunmen peel out.

**INT. BOGOTÁ AIRPORT - FIRST CLASS LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS**

Charlie enters silently. Unshaven and dirty. Mud-caked boots. He hands his wrinkled first class ticket and passport to the ATTENDANT.

He's surprised to find Artie asleep on one of the couches.

CHARLIE

You've been here the whole time?

Artie sits up, hung-over.

ARTIE

Where's Sam?

TIME CUT TO:

**INT. BOGOTÁ AIRPORT - FIRST CLASS LOUNGE - AN HOUR LATER**

We find them at the bar. Artie makes excellent progress with a bottle of Black Label. Charlie has cleaned up in the washroom.

ARTIE

They suspended my visa -- couldn't leave the damn airport. Figured I'd just wait here for you guys.

CHARLIE

We need to do something about Sam. Get him some help.

ARTIE

The only one who can help Sam is Sam, friend. You shouldn't worry about it.

Charlie just stares into his glass a moment.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE

He said some pretty awful things.

Artie laughs -- this is hardly news to him.

ARTIE

Thing of it is, Sam's sorta like, well, a dirty psychiatrist, you know? He goes prodding around in people's brains until he finds a raw nerve he can use.

Artie taps his head to prove his point.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

He keeps on pressing on that nerve until he gets a reaction. Don't ask me why, but he gets off on it. Done it to all his friends. By the time he finally does kick, they're gonna have to bury him where he drops cuz there ain't gonna be enough pall-bearers left to haul that ol' bastard off to the boneyard.

CHARLIE

"They won't make him out a saint, but they won't put him down too deep."

(beat)

It's the eulogy from *The Ballad of Cable Hogue*.

Artie dashes more Black Label over the cubes in his glass.

ARTIE

Get your ass on that plane.  
Forget you ever met Sam Peckinpah.

Off Charlie--

CUT TO:

**EXT. SKY - LATER**

A 747 hauling ass back to America.

**INT. 747 - SAME**

Charlie looks out the window at a square of jungle green below, receding into the clouds.

CUT TO:

**INT. HOSPITAL - LATER STILL**

Straight from the airport, Charlie enters to see his NEWBORN SON asleep in Jill's arms.

The baby wriggles and smiles as Charlie comes closer, waking Jill. She sees the tear in her husband's eye.

All is forgiven in that moment.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

**INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY**

Charlie pilots his grocery cart down the aisle. He's reading from a list Jill gave him, tossing diapers, powders and other unfamiliar baby items into the cart and not watching where he's going.

He crashes into an empty cart headed in the opposite direction down the aisle.

CHARLIE

Sorry about that.

He looks up to find a smiling LATINO MAN piloting the other cart.

LATINO MAN

No problem.

Charlie nods and steers his cart back down the aisle.

Then he looks back at the man with the empty cart, who's still standing there, watching him. Charlie smiles weakly.

**EXT./INT. CHARLIE'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER**

Jill's waiting with the baby, cooing at it in the back seat as Charlie tosses bags into the front.

(CONTINUED)

JILL  
There's Daddy! Look what he got  
you.

Charlie pulls out, while Jill looks through the bags.

JILL (CONT'D)  
Hey, you didn't get half the stuff  
on the list.

Charlie's not paying attention though. He's watching a  
RED CAR behind them in the rear-view mirror.

JILL (CONT'D)  
Babe?

CHARLIE  
Sorry, what?

JILL  
You didn't get everything on the  
list.

But Charlie's finding it hard to concentrate on anything  
other than the car that's following him.

CHARLIE  
Yeah.

JILL  
Are you okay?

CHARLIE  
Nothing. I'm fine. Don't worry.

Jill's not so sure, and when Charlie checks the rear and  
side-view mirrors again, the red car's disappeared--

CUT TO:

**MONTAGE:**

Each scene conveys paranoia--

- Charlie naps on the couch in front of the television,  
cradling his newborn son. The TV's on, tuned to a dead  
channel. Jill walks by, smiles, uses the clicker to turn  
the TV off. Charlie wakes when she leaves, and turns it  
back on, tuned to hissing snow.

(CONTINUED)

- Charlie at home, picks up the phone to make a call. Static can be mistaken for the tell-tale "CLICK" of someone bugging the line. Charlie slams the receiver down.

- It's late at night. Charlie wakes from a restless sleep. Headlights outside his window. A car door slams. Charlie is up, and grabs a bat from under his bed, moving to the window. But he sees it's just some neighbors, home from a late night on the town.

CUT TO:

**INT. MORTON'S - DAY**

Another famous Beverly Hills eatery.

TITLE:

**"A few weeks later"**

Charlie is at a table near the back, lunch with a POLISHED MAN in a suit -- he's a producer.

POLISHED MAN

I think I can get you some work.

A peal of smoky laughter floats over from another table -- vibrating with familiarity through Charlie.

POLISHED MAN (CONT'D)

I mean, I know I can.

That laugh again. Hearty. Loud.

And definitely familiar now.

Charlie turns to see--

SAM.

He's at a table in the center of the restaurant, holding court with THREE YOUNGER MEN and Artie.

The younger guys look like they might be producers or agents. Sam gets so boisterous at times the other diners seem impatient with the volume of his conversation. He drinks. Gestures wildly. Entertaining for a free lunch.

POLISHED MAN (CONT'D)

Do you know them?

(CONTINUED)

Charlie almost gets up once, then reconsiders, before finally pushing his chair back.

CHARLIE  
Would you excuse me?

Charlie slides out from the table and approaches. Artie sees him coming, and raises his glass in a silent toast.

Sam doesn't acknowledge him. Charlie sees he still has a small cut over one eye, almost healed now.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
When did you get back?

Finally Sam gives Charlie a little nod, instantly uncomfortable. He'll never look Charlie in the eye.

SAM  
Good to see you, brother. You look good.

CHARLIE  
I left you a lot of messages.

Sam shifts in his seat.

SAM  
I've been busy.

CHARLIE  
So what happened?

Sam sits up, suddenly larger than life.

SAM  
All was forgiven. I spent the rest of the week partying, then the Maderos flew me back.  
(for the others at the table)  
In their private jet. They got stewardesses on board who will suck your cock dry between meal services.

Artie and the young men all laugh. But Sam doesn't.

SMASH TO:

**INT. COMMERCIAL AIRLINER - FLASHBACK**

Not a private jet. A tracking shot down the aisle finds  
SAM --

drinking, sullen, bruised -- seated in the very rear of  
the plane, flying coach. No sexy stewardesses.

Artie's next to him, The Key to the City of Bogotá on his  
lap.

BACK TO:

**INT. MORTON'S - CONTINUOUS**

CHARLIE

So, you're okay?

SAM

Why the hell wouldn't I be?

CHARLIE

Did you ever finish that letter to  
Matthew?

Sam looks up at him again -- almost making eye contact.

Almost.

SAM

Turns out I'm a lousy typist, too.

(beat)

Sorry Charlie, but if you don't  
mind, I was telling these cats  
about my next movie. They're  
looking to put up some bread for  
it.

(to the others)

When this picture's done, we're  
gonna go out to my home in  
Montana. We'll fly in some  
hookers, and we can spend two  
weeks fishing, fucking and  
hunting.

CHARLIE

*Snowblind?*

Sam's smile wavers just a moment.

Then he grins, wide.

(CONTINUED)

SAM  
That one's on hold. This  
picture's a Western.

Sam puts his mirrored shades on.

SAM (CONT'D)  
(smiles big)  
See you around, Charlie-boy.

Charlie gets it -- gives Sam one last nod before he walks off. Sam starts to tell an animated story, waving his hands--

ON CHARLIE:

Returning to his table, the focus on Sam behind him softens, but we still hear Sam's raucous laughter.

POLISHED MAN  
Who was that?

CHARLIE  
Sam Peckinpah.

POLISHED MAN  
(impressed)  
I didn't know you knew him.

We stay on Charlie. He lights a cigarette. The first time we've seen him smoke.

CHARLIE  
I don't.

DISSOLVE TO:

TITLE:

*"Sam Peckinpah never made another Western."*

THE END

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