

FINAL DRAFT, January 22, 1960

BONANZA

"ESCAPE TO PONDEROSA".

Production No. 30325.

1. EXT. PONDEROSA DAY FULL SHOT LITTLE JOE, ADAM

They are on horseback and in the process of rounding up a couple of strays, Both of them are wearing sheep jackets buttoned high against the weather. After a moment, they pinch the two strays to a halt between them.

ADAM

You take those two back, Little Joe. I'll take a look the other side of the hill, see if there're any more strays.

LITTLE JOE

You be comin' along after that?

ADAM

IF I don't find any, I'm liable to be back and sitting by the fire before you get those two into the corral.

He wheels, and starts riding o.s. Little Joe looks after him, then heads the strays out.

2 EXT. GULLY CLOSE SHOT

We see a pair of hands linked by an iron chain, which is stretched taut over a small boulder. A hand gripping a rock thrusts into FRAME, and smashes the rock down on the chain. Sparks fly from the chain, but it still holds. CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL three men hunched together in the gully. They are dressed in sciled and bramble-tern army fatigues. Painted on the back of each of their jackets is a large "P" for prisoner. The three are: SUTTON, a stocky, sallow faced man of about 27; TYLER, a good-looking boy of about 23; and MERTZ, who is hulking, dim-witted and basically harmless unless he is roused. It is Mertz whose hands are chained. Tyler is the one who has been trying to release him.

SUTTON

Why don't you give up. You'll never get those things off.

TYLER

We can try --

SUTTON (impatiently)

Much good as it'll do -- Tyler, he's slowing us down. Bolton's bound to've picked up our tracks by now.

MERTZ

You ain't gonna leave me, Sutton?
You wouldn't never do that.

TYLER

We're not leaving you.

SUTTON

We ought to, you stupid oaf. If you hadn't killed that stockade guard, Bolton wouldn't have found out about us for another day.

2

CONTINUED:

MERTZ

I never meant to kill 'im. Just pay 'im back some for what he done to me.

TYLER

It's done now. Stretch your hands.

3

EXT.HILL TRUCKING SHOT ADAM

as he rides. From a distance comes the SOUND of HAMMERING. He REACTS, then spurs forward.

4

EXT.GULLY CLOSE SHOT MERTZ

He is straining his arms apart, trying to break the chain. CAMERA PULLS BACK. Sutton looks on with annoyance.

SUTTON

We passed you the key. Ought to have know you wouldn't have brains to do nothin' but lose it.

MERTZ

Maybe over to your friend's place you said you was takin' us. Maybe there'd be a chisel or somethin' there.

SUTTON

Sure. We'll just walk in and tell her you always go round wearin' chains.

TYLER (reacting)

Her? -- Sutton, you never said your friend was a girl.

In answer, Sutton smiles egotistically and with a slight leer, but his expression changes suddenly as a horse is HEARD approaching from o.s. They freeze.

5

MED.CLOSE SHOT - ADAM

He dismounts and moves cautiously into the gully with his gun drawn. Suddenly, Mertz' hands locm into FRAME, as he loops his cuff chains around Adam's neck and drags him to the ground. CAMERA PULLS BACK, as Sutton lunges in at Adam and smashes a rock across the back of his head. He is about to hit him again, when Tyler grabs his arm.

TYLER

You want a dead body for Captain Bolton? Mertz, strip his jacket off. And quick. We've got to move.

6

ANOTHER ANGLE SUTTON AND TYLER

SUTTON

What're we gonna do with Mertz?

TYLER

We'll have to hide him out till we can get the chain off.

6

CONTINUED:

3.

SUTTON

Suppose...Just suppose now, Bolton
was to find part of what he's huntin'...?
(glances meaningfully toward Mertz)

TYLER (understands; gives

Sutton a scathing look; then:)

We broke out together. We'll face what
comes together.

SUTTON (easy shrug)

Sure..Just so long as it don't include
goin' back to Bolton's stockade --cause
nobody's gonna put me back in that
stink-hole -- not alive anyway.

Adam GROANS slightly, and starts groggily trying to get to his feet. Reacting instinctively, Tyler snatches up Adam's fallen gun, and smashes the butt of it across the back of Adam's head. Adam drops face down and unconscious.

7

CLOSE SHOT TYLER

With a momentary twing of self-revulsion, he stares down at the gun in his hand; then he quickly shoves it into his waistband.

TYLER

All right, let's move.

FADE OUT:

ACT I

FADE IN:

8

EXT. PONDEROSA RANCH HOUSE - DAY

Establishing.

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO:

9

INT. RANCH HOUSE FULL SHOT

HOSS is seated at the table building an intricate house of cards. He is silently intent on what it is doing. Little Joe stands by the fire warming himself. He seems somewhat bored, as he watches Hoss carefully lay another card on the house.

LITTLE JOE (smiles)

Always knew you were good for some-
thing, Hoss. Just that I didn't figure
it would turn out to be building houses
out of cards.

HOSS

Shh! I only got four more cards to go.
I'm going to make it this time for sure.

Little Joe crosses to the table and looks over Hoss' shoulder. A slight, impish smile comes across his face.

LITTLE JOE

You know, I'm proud of you, Hoss.

HOSS

You have to breathe so hard when you talk? This house'll come down.

LITTLE JOE

But when I say I'm proud...
(hitting the "P")
I mean I'm proud.

With the stress on the "P" a whoosh of air knocks the house of cards down.

HOSS (wailing)

Hey!!!

10

ANOTHER ANGLE TO INCLUDE BEN

as he ENTERS from the rear of the house, slapping wind dust from his hat.

BEN

You round up them strays, Little Joe?

LITTLE JOE

Just two of 'em, Pa. Brought 'em in and checked 'em off on the tote sheet.

BEN (looks about)

Where's Adam then?

LITTLE JOE

He said he'd be comin' right along.

HOSS (to Little Joe)

You was over near the line next to the Oakes' ranch, wasn't you? Maybe he took a notion to go see Miss Nedda.

LITTLE JOE

Not Adam.

BEN

Wouldn't distress me any if one of you did spark to Nedda some. She's a fine girl, and handsome too.

HOSS (putting on)

What about Little Joe here? He'd make a fine husband for Miss Nedda.

He turns aside from Little Joe, and gives Ben a big wink.

HOSS (continuing)
You could arrange the whole thing,
Pa.

BEN
Yeah, I guess I could at that.
(playing along)
What do you figure be best, Hoss --
to hold the wedding here or in town?

LITTLE JOE
Wait a minute! I ain't marrying nobody.

BEN
Don't you think Nedda's pretty?

LITTLE JOE
Yeah, she's pretty, but --

HOSS
And she's got the makin's of one of
the best horse ranches in this part
of the cuntry, Her Pa left it to her
free and clear. It's all in her name,
Little Joe.

LITTLE JOE
I don't care. I just don't plan on
gettin' married -- not yet anyhow.

BEN (to Hoss)
He'll change his mind.

HOSS
Sure he will. And we're all going to
be proud of him.

HE begins LAUGHING, then breaks off, as the SOUND of horses is
HEARD from outside.

LITTLE JOE
That's probably Adam right now.

HOSS
Sounds like more than one to me.

11

ANOTHER ANGLE BEN
as he looks out a front window.

BEN
Soldiers...Now that's strange...

As he turns and starts crossing toward the front door, a KNOCK
is HEARD. Ben opens the door, REVEALING Captain JAMES BOLTON.
He is a solidly built man of about forty, whose carriage is
square shouldered and rigid. Everything about him is cold but
impeccably correct, his uniform, his bearing, his attitude.

BOLTON
He... Contaminated?

12

ANOTHER ANGLE

SHOOTING OUT PAST Bolton, as he nods crisply to Ben, then turns to look back at three troopers who are waiting in front of the ranch house on their horses.

BOLTON (barking it)
Detail, dismount. Stand to
your horses.

He turns back to Ben and strips the riding glove off his right hand. (NOTE: It is obvious from the way he takes the glove off that his left hand is hopelessly stiff and useless). He offers his bared right hand to Ben, who takes it.

BOLTON
Captain James Bolton, provisional
barracks, Fort Dayton.

BEN
Well..won't you come in, Captain?

BOLTON
Thank you.

13

FULL SHOT

as he steps inside and Ben closes the front door behind him.

BEN (gesturing)
I'd like you to meet my sons.
Hoss. Little Joe.

Bolton nods quickly to each of them in turn. Ben, almost as if hoping to ease the Captain's stiff attitude, begins trying to make conversation.

BEN
I guess you Army people've got your
hands full these days, what
with the Cheyenne uprising.

BOLTON
Fort Dayton is a Casuals post.

HOSS
Casuals post -- what's that?

BOLTON
A place for troops not deemed
fit for line duty.

The way he says it rather embarrasses the Cartwrights.

BEN
Well, the least we can do is
offer you and your men out there
some coffee. It's pretty cold out
today. Little Joe, you hustle Hop
Sing out with a hot pot of coffee.

BOLTON (sharply)
My men are on duty.

CONTINUED:

His tone, which is essentially that of a command, stops Little Joe.

HOSS

On duty here? This is the Ponderosa. You must've got yourselves lost, Captain.

BOLTON

Hardly. I'm trailing three deserters who escaped from my stockade.

BEN

Did you say your stockade, Captain?

BOLTON

I command it.

LITTLE JOE

You figure they're somewhere out this way?

BOLTON

Their trail led toward your land.

LITTLE JOE

I sure ain't seen no sign of anybody. You Hoss?

HOSS

Nope.

BOLTON

No sign of tracks..campfire..trampled brush?...

Little Joe and Hoss shake their heads.

BOLTON

That's odd.

BEN

Why odd, Captain? This is a big stretch of land. Three men could lose themselves in it easy enough.

BOLTON

Perhaps...

(looks about)

Who else is in the house with you now?

BEN

Our cock, Hop Sing.

(amused)

You don't think we're hiding the three men you're looking for, do you?

Bolton, almost pointedly ignoring the question, continues looking searchingly about the room.

BOLTON

It's not within my province to think one way or the other, Mr. Cartwright.

BEN

I'll save you the trouble of thinking about it, Captain. They're not here.

BOLTON

Then you'll have no objection to my men searching this area.

BEN

Maybe I wouldn't have had any five minutes ago, but I'm not so sure now.

Bolton snaps around at him.

BOLTON

Let me state the situation very precisely for you, Mr. Cartwright. We know that these three men have come into this general area. It is also quite obvious that they can not hope to evade detection here without some outside help. Anyone who aids them in any way will be charged and tried with obstructing military justice.

14

ANOTHER ANGLE - BEN

He glares at Bolton with angry annoyance, but controls his temper.

BEN

Hoss, I think you'd better show Captain Bolton out.

HOSS

Sure, Pa, I'll be glad to do just that.

As he starts to advance on Bolton, SOUNDS of commotion are HEARD from outside.

CORPORAL'S VOICE

(calling from o.s.)

Captain!

They react sharply, and move toward the front door.

CORPORAL'S VOICE (continuing)

We got a man out here, Captain!

15

CLOSE SHOT - BOLTON

A hard, instinctively ruthless expression sets his features, and he yanks out his pistol.

SHOOTING THROUGH the door toward the front porch. Two of the soldiers have hold of Adam, who shows the effects of his beating. Ben, Little Joe, Hoss and Bolton crowd into SCENE.

BEN

LET him go. He's my son Adam.

The soldiers hesitate.

BEN (continuing)

I said, let him go!

The two soldiers glance toward Bolton, as if for instructions. He nods curtly, and they release Adam. Ben immediately takes him.

BEN

What happened to you?

ADAM

I don't know exactly. I heard a noise. I started to look around. Next thing I knew I was being jumped.

BOLTON (jumping at it)

Did you see their faces?

Ben starts shouldering Bolton aside and heading Adam into the house.

BEN

We'll get you inside and take a look at those bruises. Little Joe, get that bottle of liniment.

ADAM

I'm all right now, Pa.

INT. LIVING ROOM - FULL SHOT

as Ben and Hoss help Adam into a resting position. Ben carefully looks him over to see how badly he has been hurt.

BEN

Well, not as bad as it could've been.

Little Joe enters SCENE carrying the liniment. He hands it to Ben, who starts applying it to Adam's bruises.

BOLTON (impatiently)

The men who assaulted you --
Could you tell if there were
three of them?

ADAM

There were at least two of them,
because sort of dim in the back of
my head I could hear them arguing
over whether to kill me or not. Could've
been a third, but I'm not sure.
(flinching)

HOSS

Looks like they tried to club
your head clean open -- and for
no reason at all. Pa, seems like
to me there ought to be some settlin'
done.

BEN

There will be.

(beat)

You bandage Adam up and get him
into bed.

HOSS

I figured on goin' after them
bushwackers with you, Pa.

BEN

Little Joe knows the spot he and
Adam were riding strays.

LITTLE JOE

I'm ready when you say, Pa.

TWO SHOT - BEN AND BOLTON

as Ben crosses the room to take up his gunbelt.

BOLTON

If these are the three men I'm
after, they belong to me.

BEN

I think we'd better get something
straight, Captain. This is my land
you're on. And that's my son over
there who was ambushed. I'll settle
it my way. Now, if you want to come
along with us, all right. But you
ride where I say, and you ride behind
me. Otherwise, take your men and get
off the Ponderosa.

A pause, as Bolton stares back at him. A slight wavering in
his attitude indicates there is nothing he can do but accept
Ben's terms.

BOLTON

And if they are the men I'm
after?

BEN

You can decide that after I'm
done with them.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Ben turns abruptly and starts out. Bolton and Little Joe
follow.

20

EXT. WOODED GROUND - DAY - FULL SHOT - SUTTON, TYLER, MERTZ

They push their way desperately ahead, then draw up by a small culvert.

20A

ANGLE (STAGE)

As Sutton looks about, as if trying to pick up his bearings.

SUTTON

Let's stop for a breather.

TYLER

You sure you know where you're taking us, Sutton?

SUTTON

You want to strike out on your own, go ahead. I'm not stoppin' you, am I?

(looks off; studies land, then;)
Ranch is over that way, I think.
Yeah, I'm sure of it.

MERTZ

How you know they gonna take us in?

SUTTON

I told you, I worked there when I was driftin' west a couple of years back. I'd have stayed on maybe, except the old man that run it booted me off cause his daughter took to me.

(smiles)

But he died... I always told Nedda I'd be comin' back for her. Just a little sooner than I figured, that's all.

Turning, Mertz brushes against a thicket, and YELPS as the branches scratch him.

SUTTON (continuing)

Shut up!

MERTZ

Ain't nothin' around to hear us but hoot owls and crawlies. And I don't like it none either...

SUTTON

You ain't ever known anything better --

MERTZ

No?--Once in Omaha, when I won stakes at faro, I went to a big, fancy hotel -- red velvet everywhere ... brass knobs --

(smiles at memory)

And I met me a woman there... Huyeese...
And she was sure enough a woman, too.

SUTTON

Yeah...I'll just bet she was really somethin'.

MERTZ

You ain't puttin' a lie to me, are you, boy?

SUTTON

And if I was?

They are on the verge of squaring off, as Tyler steps between them and roughly shoves them apart.

TYLER

Cut it out! Both of you. That's an order.

SUTTON (reacts, then smiles)

"That's an order." You hear him, Mertz? Only you ain't an officer no more, Tyler. So maybe you better forget about issuin' orders.

(studies him)

I still don't figure you out. Mertz here was facing the gallows. Me, I had five years left to serve. But you had maybe six months to do and you'd have been free. So why risk your neck breaking out!?

TYLER

My reasons don't concern you.

SUTTON

Maybe...Maybe not.

(looks off)

You two hole up here, and I'll see if it's clear up at that girl's place.

TYLER

I'll go with you, Sutton ---

SUTTON (beat; then:)

All right.

(indicates Mertz)

But not him. Nedda might scare off, if she seen him paradin' up in chains.

TYLER (considers, then to Mertz)

He's right. You'd better lie low till we can get some other clothes and something to pry those chains off with.

MERTZ

You gonna come back for sure though. You give me your Bible word on it?

20A CONTINUED:

TYLER

You have my word.

SUTTON (to Tyler)

If you're comin', then let's
move.

Sutton and Tyler start off, while Mertz heads into the culvert.

21 EXT. OPEN GROUND - FULL SHOT - BEN, LITTLE JOE, BOLTON

They ride out of the area of the gully where Adam was ambushed.

LITTLE JOE

They'd have headed off that way.
Pa, or else we'd have seen some
sign of them.

BEN

Yeah, Probably kept to the creek
bed. Turning dry now...but the bank
would still be soft enough to leave
prints.

He spurs his horse forward, and the others follow his lead.

DISSOLVE TO:

21A EXT. CULVERT AREA - P.O.V. SHOT - DAY

As the riders approach from the distance.

22 EXT. CULVERT - CLOSE SHOT - MERTZ

He huddles cold and shivering in the culvert. From O.S. the
SOUND of horses, then indistinct VOICES, is HEARD. He reacts
with fear.

22A EXT. CULVERT AREA - DAY

The riders gallop in, pull to a halt.

23 EXT. CULVERT - FULL SHOT - LITTLE JOE, BEN, BOLTON, SOLDIERS

Little Joe points toward the bank.

LITTLE JOE

Somebody's come by here -- and
not too long ago.

24 ANOTHER ANGLE - BOLTON

He turns to look back at his men.

BOLTON

Spread out. Search every spot that's
big enough to hide any of them.
(to Ben, sarcastic)

25 CLOSE SHOT - MERTZ

With the pure, instinctive fear of a hunted animal, he hunches back soundlessly, as we see the legs of one of the soldiers crossing the FRAME in front of him.

26 FULL SHOT

as the group spreads out and searches the ground.

27 MED. SHOT - MERTZ

as one of the soldiers approaches his hiding spot. He tenses, and just as the soldier is about to discover him, he lashes out with his chain, and clubs the soldier to the ground. The soldier manages a startled cry. Terrified now, Mertz breaks and starts running.

28 ANOTHER ANGLE - BEN

He spots Mertz, and blocks his way. Mertz flails at him with the chain. Ben ducks, belts him in the stomach, then lays him out with a blow to the chin. He spots Bolton approaching with a drawn pistol.

BEN

You can put your gun away, Captain.

Bolton crosses to Mertz, turns him over with his foot, and peers down at his face.

BOLTON

That's one of them.

(formally)

I charge and hereby arrest this man for known and specific crimes against the articles of war.

(to Ben)

He's a military prisoner now.

Mertz stirs groggily awake, and Bolton turns to one of his men.

BOLTON

Corporal, take the prisoner in charge.

The corporal moves forward and pulls Mertz to his feet. CAMERA MOVES IN, as Bolton starts to question him.

BOLTON

Where're the other two, Mertz?

(beat)

I'll ask you again, where are they?

He cuffs him with a backhanded slap. There are reactions from Ben and Little Joe.

MERTZ

I don't know. And if I did, I wouldn't tell you, not if you beat me to death.

BOLTON

You put a blotch on my record, Mertz, and I intend to erase it. It's going to be a while before you hang. How would you like to spend every second of that time in the hot box?

Mertz reacts, but manages to remain silent.

BOLTON (continuing)

Where are they?

MERTZ

I don't know. We split off --
(turns to Ben)
I'm tellin' the truth, mister.
I swear it.

Bolton starts to hit Mertz again, but Ben catches his arm.

BEN

He might be telling the truth,
Captain --

Bolton stares at Ben, then smiles slightly.

BOLTON

Of course -- if he knew where the others were he'd have poured it out. Because he's scum, and scum always breaks.

(whips around at Mertz)

Isn't that right, Mertz? -- Or have you forgotten what it was like in the hot box.?

MERTZ

Some day somebody's gonna get you yet, you butcher!

BOLTON (cockily)

But not you, Mertz. I can assure you of that.

He nods to the corporal, who starts dragging Mertz off.

MERTZ

NO! -- I'd rather die than go back to that hot box!

As he continues to struggle with the corporal, Bolton slips his foot out, half tripping Mertz, who stumbles forward off balance. Bolton pulls his gun, and is about to fire point-blank into Mertz' back, when Ben hits his arm, causing the shot to go wild.

BEN

You can't kill a man just like that!

Bolton stares at him, slowly resumes his self-control, puts

28 CONTINUED:

BOLTON

The prisoner was attempting to escape. You're a witness to that.

29 ANOTHER ANGLE - BEN

also controlling his anger.

BEN

And I'm a witness to the fact that you deliberately attempted to murder that man. Bolton, I'm going to see to it that my good friend, Colonel Metcalf at Fort Dayton, knows exactly the kind of officer he has in his command.

The two men stare tightly at each other, then suddenly Bolton whips around, turns back to his horse.

FADE OUT.

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

30 EXT. NEDDA'S YARD - NIGHT - FULL - TYLER AND SUTTON

They pause in the moonlight and look around. Sutton wears Adam's sheep jacket.

TYLER

Nice ranch.

SUTTON

Wait'll you see the gal who lives on it.

TYLER

We'd better get cleaned up first. Scare her half to death if we walked in on her this way.

SUTTON

Scare her? I guess you didn't listen good when I told you about her. We were real close, Nedda and me.

(beat)

It ain't her I'm worried about. It's her pa...

(looks around)

The stable's over there.

They move off.

31 EXT. STABLE - NIGHT - FULL - TYLER AND SUTTON

As they make their way to the stable. Sutton opens the door, and the two men go inside.

32 INT. STABLE - NIGHT - MEDIUM

Sutton finds a lantern on the wall and lights it.

SUTTON
Shut the door!

Tyler obeys.

33 ANOTHER ANGLE - FULL SHOT

Sutton looks around and spies a water basin.

SUTTON
There's what we want.

He crosses towards it. Hanging on a nail, is a work shirt, which Sutton takes off and tosses at Tyler.

SUTTON
Put this on...Help you look human again.

He looks around at Tyler who is squatting at one of the stalls, looking at a foal.

TYLER
Good-looking colt. The mother must have died. He needs care.

Sutton who is washing, glances over at Tyler.

SUTTON
This is a fine time to be fussin' over horses.

TYLER
I sometimew prefer them to people.

SUTTON
What's that supposed to mean?

TYLER
Just a general statement of philosophy.

Tyler starts to put on the work shirt over his prison outfit. Sutton glances at himself again in the mirror, then smiles as he slicks down his hair.

SUTTON
I'd like to see Butcher Bolton's face right now! Probably hunting us halfway across the Sierra.

TYLER

I doubt that. He's a sadist,
but he was one of the best Indian
trackers in the Army.

SUTTON (tries to laugh it off)

We're not Indians...

(serious)

Besides, after we hole up here a
coupla days, they'll probably quit
looking for us.

TYLER

Not Bolton.

SUTTON

All right, not Bolton, maybe --
but the brass. They won't figure
we're worth the trouble. You're an
officer -- you know how they think.

TYLER

I was an officer.

He crosses to the basin and uses the water and mirror to
comb his hair.

TYLER (continuing)

That girl of yours... You've been
gone for two years -- how do you
know she hasn't married or something?--

SUTTON (cocky)

I know!

(smiles)

Like to make a little bet on it?

TYLER

You already have -- your life.

SUTTON

Yours, too -- and don't you
forget it.

From outside, they HEAR the SOUND of someone opening the door.
Sutton motions Tyler into shadows, then he stands behind the door.

ANOTHER ANGLE

as NEDDA OAKES, a handsome strong-featured girl of about 22,
enters. She is wearing dungarees. She crosses to the stall where
the foal is. As she takes a blanket and spreads it over the foal,
Sutton slips up behind her and puts his hands over her eyes. She
jumps up, CRIES OUT and starts to struggle as he slips his arms
about her. But as she turns and sees his face her mood changes to
one of surprise and shock.

NEDDA

Jimmy! -- Jimmy, it's you! --
But what are you doing here?
Where --?

Sutton touches her lips gently, stilling her, then draws her into his arms and kisses her. After an instant she responds passionately and clings to him.

SUTTON (laying it on)

I told you I'd be coming back.

NEDDA

Jimmy, I thought -- I thought
maybe you'd forgotten me.

SUTTON

Forgotten? You think I'd ever
forget you, Nedda?

As he starts to kiss her she sees Tyler and REACTS.

SUTTON

Oh, that's my partner. I've told
him all about you -- now he can
see everything I said was true.
(expansively)
Right, Tyler? -- Isn't she a honey?

TYLER

You never even got close, Sutton --
Miss, I'm pleased to know you.
Tyler's my name -- Paul Tyler.

SUTTON (laughs)

Miss? -- Her name's Nedda.
Call her Nedda.

Nedda immediately senses something different in this other man, his manner and speech.

NEDDA (to Tyler)

How do you do?...You're in the
Army with Jimmy?

TYLER

Well, not exactly...

SUTTON (breaking in)

I left the Army, Nedda. Some time
back -- Tyler and I -- we've been
prospecting together...

NEDDA

Oh, I see...Jimmy, why didn't you
and Mr. Tyler come right up to the
house? -- What were you doing here?

SUTTON

We have a lot of trail dirt on us,
honey -- we wanted to get cleaned
up before we barged in...

NEDDA

That's not fair, is it, Jimmy
-- and your getting prettied up
and not giving me any warning.

SUTTON

Honey, you look wonderful --
just beautiful.

She basks in the compliment.

TYLER

I think I'll take a walk
outside.

NEDDA

That's not necessary.

TYLER

I'd like a little air.

SUTTON

Wait a minute.
(to Nedda)
I guess your father's in the
house.

NEDDA

He died, Jimmy -- over a year
ago.

SUTTON

That's a real shame -- I'm sure
sorry.

(beat)

Who's taking care of the place?

NEDDA

Just my hired man - Charlie,
but he's in town for the week.

SUTTON (suppressing relief)

That's awful, you being alone like
that.

TYLER

I'll be outside.
(exits)

35

SHOT - SUTTON AND NEDDA

as he kisses her again.

SUTTON

Hey, honey -- you sure look
good to me...

NEDDA

Jimmy, why didn't you ever
write me?

NEDDA (a touch of
recrimination)

I know how it is...but do you?
Waiting for letters that never
come! Looking down the road for
somebody to ride up...After a while
you quit hoping -- you even stop
dreaming.

SUTTON

I didn't stop. That's all that kept
me going. Nedda, I'm gonna make up
for all the lost time.

NEDDA

I'm not sure you can...

SUTTON

Let me try!

He pulls her close and starts to kiss her on the mouth. She
resists a moment, then finally clings to him.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. METCALF'S OFFICE - DAY - MED. SHOT

Ben faces COLONEL METCALF, a career officer of about 50,
who seems reasonable, dedicated and competent.

METCALF

Ben, I've known you a long time,
but I can't accept these charges
you make against Captain Bolton --
not without proof.

BEN

What kind of proof do you want?

METCALF

At the moment, it's your word
against his.

BEN

What did he tell you? That Mertz
was trying to escape?

METCALF

That's what his report says.

BEN

Have you spoken to Mertz? Have
you gotten his side of the story?

METCALF

I would have done so, of course.
Unfortunately, Private Mertz is dead.

BEN

Dead?...

METCALF

He attacked a guard in the stockade last night. During the ensuing struggle he was killed.

BEN

And you believe that? You really believe that?

METCALF

Why shouldn't I believe it? -- I have the word of an officer to that effect.

BEN

Colonel, how many men have died in Captain Bolton's stockade?

METCALF

There are deaths in every stockade. They are not necessarily the responsibility of the officers in charge.

BEN (standing)

Colonel, if you choose to ignore the facts --

METCALF (standing too)

I don't ignore them, Ben -- I know them, perhaps a little better than you do. Captain Bolton is an officer with a distinguished record, commended several times for bravery in action. Perhaps you noticed his hand. He was captured and tortured by the Sioux.

BEN

The Sioux are savages. Captain Bolton is supposed to be a civilized, responsible man.

There's a KNOCK at the door.

METCALF

Come in.

The door opens and Bolton comes in

BOLTON

The Colonel sent for me?

METCALF

You know Mr. Cartwright?

BOLTON

Yes, I do, sir.

METCALF

Captain Bolton, Mr. Cartwright has made certain charges against you.

I thought you should be here to defend yourself.

BOLTON

I'm aware of Mr. Cartwright's charges. The Colonel knows that my behavior has been and always will be strictly according to Army regulations.

BEN

There's no regulation to cover the killing of prisoners.

BOLTON

Mr. Cartwright, maybe you don't know who you're defending. Private Mertz killed a fellow soldier in a brawl over a card game. As for Sutton, he attempted an armed robbery of an Army payroll.

METCALF

Ben, this is a Casuals post. I don't know whether you realize that -- It's made up of outcasts and misfits.

BEN

But they're still men, and as such entitled to certain minimum standards of treatment.

BOLTON

That's exactly what they get -- certain minimum standards --
(reveals himself)
-- and if you feel you have to bleed your heart over these cowards, murderers and thieves, I pity you!

METCALF

That'll be all, Captain.

BOLTON

Sorry, sir --

METCALF

Ben, I respect your opinions and your judgment, but this is the Army, and I have to stand behind Captain Bolton.

BEN (containing anger)

I understand -- Good day, Colonel.

METCALF

Good day --

Ben turns and goes out.

BOLTON (to the Colonel)

Thank you, sir.

METCALF

Captain, I chose my words carefully in front of Mr. Cartwright, but your conduct has been brought into question. If there is the slightest indication of any transgression of regulations on your part, I'll see that you are investigated and, if the facts so warrant, court-martialed. Is that understood?

BOLTON

Yes, sir.

METCALF

That's all.

BOLTON

With the colonel's permission. I request leave to return to the Ponderosa with a detail of men.

METCALF

That's private land, Captain. We can't search it without permission of the owner, or an order from a civilian court.

BOLTON

I've already obtained the required court order, from the Federal District Court in this Territory.

METCALF

By what authority?!

BOLTON

Judge-advocate general's manual of procedure. Article 39. "When in pursuit of known deserters, the pursuing officer shall be deemed in command, and where time is of the essence he shall initiate and take such steps as are necessary to apprehend the said deserters.

METCALF

Request granted -- But, if I were you, Captain, I'd remember the warning I gave you. I'd remember it very carefully.

Bolton snaps to attention, salutes, exits.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NEDDA'S KITCHEN - DAY - FULL SHOT

Tyler and Sutton, who has shaved now, are finishing breakfast. Nedda, who has a dress on and fixed her hair, is across the room getting coffee from the stove. Sutton, who seems in buoyant spirits, watches her with a smile, then turns to

SUTTON

What do you think of her?
Pretty special, huh?

Nedda crosses back to the table and pours coffee. Sutton puts his hand intimately on her arm.

SUTTON

That was great, honey. A good meal makes a man feel like he belongs.

Nedda starts to clear the plates from the table. She hesitates over Tyler's plate.

NEDDA

You hardly touched your food.

TYLER

I guess I spent too much time eating Army chow.

NEDDA

Army chow?

Sutton immediately covers with a smile.

SUTTON

He was in the Army too -- before we started the prospecting.

A KNOCK is heard on the back door.

SUTTON (continuing)

Who's that? --

NEDDA

I don't know who it could be at this hour.

Sutton catches Nedda's arm as she starts toward the door.

SUTTON

Nedda honey, would you do me a favor? Don't say anything about Tyler and me being here.

NEDDA

Why?

SUTTON

Could be we hit a big silver strike. It's best nobody knows about us -- not yet. You understand.

Before Nedda can answer, there's another KNOCK. She crosses to door.

NEDDA (surprised)
Hoss, Good morning.

HOSS
You sure look fine this morning,
Miss Nedda -- that dress and all.

NEDDA
Well, thank you, Hoss.

HOSS
Don't mean to alarm you, but Pa
thought you ought to know -- there's
a couple of Army prisoners on the loose.

NEDDA
Army prisoners?

HOSS
There were three -- but they caught
one.

39 REACTION SHOT - SUTTON

He pulls out his gun.

40 BACK TO SCENE

Nedda seems distracted. Hoss puzzles over her slightly.

HOSS
Nobody's been around? I mean you're
all right, ain't you, ma'am?

NEDDA (quickly)
Yes, yes -- I'd ask you in for
coffee, but --
(hesitates)
-- the stove, it's not working right.

HOSS (ready to go inside)
Oh, that's too bad, Miss Nedda.
Maybe I could fix it for you.

41 REACTION SHOT - SUTTON

He sets himself with gun.

42 BACK TO SCENE

Nedda is trying to block Hoss' way without appearing rude

NEDDA
Thanks, Hoss, but it's not really
broken -- just a little hard to
handle -- Thanks for stopping by --

HOSS
You're sure you're all right?

42 CONTINUED:

NEDDA

I'm fine -- just fine, Hoss.

HOSS

Well then, I guess I'll hold
back, Miss Nedda --

He hesitates, then turns and starts toward his horse. Nedda watches him, then closes the door.

43 FULL SHOT

Sutton still holds the gun.

SUTTON

He gone?

Nedda nods. He turns to put the gun away, then catches her look.

SUTTON (innocently)

You can't ever be sure about
people, honey. We heard about
those Army prisoners, too. It
might have been one of them.

NEDDA

It might have been ...

(beat; concerned)

Jimmy, just where were you
prospecting?

SUTTON

Up North a piece...Ain't that
right, Tyler?

TYLER

I don't know, Sutton --

(shrugs)

Guess it is if you say so.

SUTTON

Sure it's right! -- what's got
into you!

44 TWO SHOT - NEDDA AND SUTTON

NEDDA

Jimmy?...

(beat)

Is it you they're looking for?

SUTTON (beat)

Yes. But I was framed. It's a
long story, Nedda...You know me,
honey -- I was wild, but I never
did anything dishonest.

NEDDA (worried)

But breaking out of prison. --

SUTTON

You'd have to know what it was like. Beatings...starvation...
(gestures toward Tyler)
You know what happened to him?
Three weeks of the sweat box. He was practically dead when they dragged him out.
(To Tyler)
Tell her!

TYLER

That much is true...

NEDDA

Why didn't you tell me all this last night?

SUTTON

I was going to, but -- I was afraid.

NEDDA

Of me? -- You couldn't have been afraid of me, Jimmy.

SUTTON

That's what Butcher Bolton does to you. He makes you feel like you're an animal, so you're scared all the time --
(grips her shoulders)
Nedda, if you love me you'll help us.

NEDDA

What can I do?

SUTTON

Hide us out here.

TYLER

There's no point dragging her into this Sutton. Let's get out while we can.

SUTTON

Where to? They got Mertz.
(softening)
Look, Tyler, we got a good thing here -- and it's the only chance we have.

Tyler glares at him for a moment, then starts to push past him. Nedda takes his arm.

NEDDA

You can both stay.
(beat)
I want you to...

CONTINUED:

Tyler looks at her and nods...Then he tries to lighten the moment by smiling.

TYLER

Well, if I'm going to stay, I know my way around horses. Maybe I can help you with some of the chores.

NEDDA

Thanks, but Charlie left things in pretty good shape before he went to town.

TYLER

Tell you one thing that's not in good shape. -- that colt in the barn. Think I'll have a look.

Nedda nods her agreement, and Tyler turns and goes out. Nedda looks after him.

NEDDA (to Sutton)

I've never met anyone quite like him before.

SUTTON (appraising her)

You...you like him?

NEDDA

I don't know..I feel sorry for him. I feel sorry for both of you.

(beat)

Let's get some of these dishes off the table -- if anyone came along, I'd hate to have to explain three for breakfast.

SUTTON (smiles)

Honey, you're talking my language.

She starts to clear the table, and he helps her.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CREEK AREA - DAY - FULL SHOT - BOLTON, DETAIL

Bolton and his men are drawn up near the culvert where Mertz had hidden.

BOLTON

I want every inch of this ground combed. Corporal, take half the detail and start searching in that direction. The rest of you will fan out this way with me.

CORPORAL

Yes sir...Only, well, the way I figure it, Captain, they could be half over the Sierras and runnin' for California by now.

BOLTON

They're here. I spent half my career tracking renegade Indians. You learn to sense your quarry.

CORPORAL

But that's different...These men aren't Indians, Captain.

BOLTON

There's no difference. Animals, savages, men like these -- when they're scared they run for the first hole they can crawl into. All we have to do is find that hole... Step your men out.

CORPORAL

YES sir.

As the Corporal barks the command, the detail of soldiers starts forward.

FADE OUT:

ACT III

FADE IN:

46 INT.PONDEROSA - DAY - CLOSE SHOT - HOSS

He is seated at the hearth, worried.

HOSS

I don't know, Pa---she seemed all right---but she was acting kind of nervous-like.

OUR SHOT PULLS BACK AND ADJUSTS to include the rest of the Cartwrights, in the midst of a family conference. Adam shows some of the marks of his beating.

ADAM

You mean her not letting you in the house?

HOSS

That, and --well, it's just something you feel. If I didn't know Nedda so well, I'd say she wanted to get rid of me.

LITTLE JOE

If you were feelin' so much, why didn't you take a good look around the place?

HOSS

Little Brother, I been kickin' myself all the way home for not doing just that.

BEN

I think we'd all better take
a good look around her place.

ADAM (standing)

Suits me fine. I'm getting
tired of being an invalid.

BEN

Adam, I'd rather you stayed here.

ADAM

But, Pa --

BEN

With Captain Bolton and the deserters
still in this area, we shouldn't
leave the house unguarded.

ADAM (smile)

All right, I'll hold the fort.

Ben pats him on the shoulder, and he and the boys go out.

DISSOLVE TO:

47 INT.NEDDA'S KITCHEN - DAY - FULL

Nedda pours some milk into a pot on the stove. Sutton finishes
putting away some of the dishes.

NEDDA

The colt'll be needing this.

SUTTON

You and Tyler...you sure spend
a lot of time worrying about
that colt.

(starts for the door)

I'll see you later.

NEDDA

Where are you going?

SUTTON

I want to scout the area.

(smiles)

Army talk -- I guess it rubs off
on you whether you like it or not.

He goes out. Nedda pours the milk from the pot into a pan
and goes out with it.

8 EXT.STABLE - DAY - FULL

Nedda walks up to the stable door, carrying a pan of milk.
She opens the door and goes in.

INT.STABLE - DAY - FULL

as Nedda ENTERS, Tyler is bending over the colt.

NEDDA

I brought him some milk --

TYLER (looks up, smiles)

Ne needs it. Is it warm?

NEDDA

Should be just about right.

Tyler takes the pan, dips his fingers into the milk, letting the colt drain the milk off his fingers. The girl studies him.

NEDDA

Where did you learn about horses?

TYLER

I grew up with them. My father bred trotters as a hobby..back in Maryland.

NEDDA

Don't see many trotters out here.
--I love them, the way they move.

TYLER

You ought to see them being trained.
They'll fight you, make it tough,
but once you have their trust you
can depend on them --
(turns away)
Wish you could say as much for
people.

NEDDA (slowly)

You've been hurt pretty bad, haven't
you?

Tyler looks at her, rises to his feet, doesn't answer. Then he turns, crosses to the wash basin and starts to remove his shirt.

NEDDA (continuing)

Paul, is there anything you
really care about?

TYLER (tight)

One thing. That stockade --
I'm never going back.

He now has his shirt off -- there are ugly welts on his chest and back.

MEDIUM SHOT - NEDDA

She is shocked by what she sees. OUR CAMERA PANS WITH HER as she crosses to him.

NEDDA

Is that what they did to you?

TYLER

That's right...

10 CONTINUED:

NEDDA
It's -- It's terrible..Paul,
forgive me for not understanding.

He nods and starts to wash, as she watches him.

51 EXT. NEDDA'S HOUSE - DAY - FULL

Ben, Little Joe and Hoss ride up and dismount. Ben walks up to the front door and knocks. There's no answer. He knocks again; then he tries the front door. It opens and he and the boys enter.

52 INT. NEDDA'S KITCHEN - DAY - FULL

For a moment, the room is empty, and we HEAR Ben's VOICE...

BEN'S VOICE
Nedda...

Then Ben and the boys ENTER.

HOSS
Funny...she wouldn't have
gone away without locking up.

BEN
You boys take a look out back.
I'll check the stable.

LITTLE JOE
Right, Pa...

They turn and go out.

53 EXT. STABLE - DAY - FULL

as Ben walks towards the stable door. He stops at the door, as he HEARS VOICES from inside.

TYLER'S VOICE (O.S.)
I'm sorry you had to see those
scars...

54 INT. STABLE - DAY - FULL

NEDDA
I'm not.. I'm glad I saw them.

TYLER (studies her)
Nedda, worry about Sutton, not me.

55 ANOTHER ANGLE TO INCLUDE BEN

as he ENTERS the stable, hears what Tyler says. Tyler whirls, grabs the first weapon at hand--a pickhandle. Ben lets his hand drop to his gun.

BEN
Put it down.

Nedda whips around, reacts to Ben's presence.

NEDDA
Ben, please.

BEN
I don't have any choice, Nedda.
(draws gun)
I mean it now, son-- drop that.

56

REVERSE ANGLE - SUTTON

He stands in the open doorway, holding Adam's gun on Ben.

SUTTON
And you can drop that gun. Now,
Mister!
(beat, as Ben hesitates)
I got the drop and from here I
ain't gonna miss.

Nedda steps protectively in front of Ben.

NEDDA
Jimmy, no---this is Ben
Cartwright, he's ---

She steps in between Ben and Sutton. Ben sees that she's in
the line of fire.

BEN
Nedda, watch out---

Ben's attention is momentarily on Nedda. Tyler takes advantage
of that moment to swing the pick handle at Ben from his blind
side, knocking him down and out.

NEDDA (bending over him)
Ben!

SUTTON (to Tyler)
Good work, pal---

TYLER
Good? I could have killed him!

Tyler kneels beside Nedda.

NEDDA
He'll be all right, won't he?

TYLER
In a little while ...I hit him
hard, too hard.

SUTTON
Ben Cartwright, eh? From the
Ponderosa?
(no answer)
Tyler, from the way he was talking
he knows who we are, doesn't he?

TYLER
I'm afraid he does.

SUTTON
Nothing to be afraid of. It's his hard luck, not ours. Nedda, get away from him.

His gun is ready, and his intentions are clear.

NEDDA (Unable to believe it)
No, Jimmy, what are you doing?

SUTTON
I said get away from him!
(Krushes her aside)
It's him or us!

NEDDA (anguished)
Jimmy! You can't!

He levels the gun. Tyler picks up Ben's gun and faces Sutton with it.

TYLER
Put it down, Sutton.

SUTTON
You decide to start giving orders again, Lieutenant?

TYLER
I've got no choice -- you try killing him, you die yourself.

Nedda watches, horrified, as the two men face each other.

SUTTON
What's the matter with you? You itching to have Bolton beat you to death?

A PAUSE. Tyler stands unmoving. Sutton wavers.

SUTTON
All right, you stay with him. I'm gonna get out. Come on, Nedda --
(as Nedda hesitates)
You're coming with me, ain't you?
(waits; then)
All right -- stay here with him!
See where it'll get you!

He moves quickly to the door, but pauses as he sees something in the distance.

58

EXT. NEDDA'S FARM - DAY - FULL SHOT

Hoss and Little Joe react as they see Sutton.

LITTLE JOE

Come on.

They start running towards the stable.

59

INT. STABLE - DAY - FULL SHOT

as Sutton weighs the situation. He hesitates, just as Ben starts to regain consciousness. Ben moans, then climbs to his feet. Nedda crosses to him.

NEDDA

Ben, are you all right?

BEN (rubbing head)

I think so...

Tyler notes Sutton's hesitation, calls across to him?

TYLER

What's the matter, Sutton? --
anything wrong?

Sutton slowly turns back into the stable, a half-smile on his lips.

SUTTON (to Nedda)

I thought it over, Nedda -- I just couldn't leave you, after all -- not with the big plans I got for us.

(crosses to her)

You and me, honey -- we'll make a great pair.

The girl looks up, stares at him.

NEDDA

Will we, Jimmy? --

60

ANOTHER ANGLE

as Hoss and Little Joe ENTER the stable, guns drawn.

HOSS (to Tyler and Sutton)

Drop your guns, boys --

(they do so, and Ben picks them up)
You all right, Pa?

BEN

I am now.

SUTTON

Tyler here hit him before he knew who he was -- but it's all right now, isn't it, Mr. Cartwright?

BEN

What is it you're after?

SUTTON

Just a chance, that's all. Just so we don't have to go back to that stockade...Mister, they treated us like we were caged animals.

(pulls up sleeve to reveal chain mark)

I could've stood it. But it was for Nedda -- that's why I broke loose.

(to Ben)

Give us a break. You could help us get out of the Territory. Just a break, that's all. Turn us back and it's as good as killin' us.

There's a moment's silence, then Nedda turns to Ben.

NEDDA

I've seen the scars they got in that stockade. Help them, Ben -- you've got to help them!

BEN

It's an Army matter. I don't have any part in it.

NEDDA

What if one of them was your son -- Hoss or Little Joe?

Ben tries to shrug the question away.

NEDDA (continuing)

Look at them, Ben. It's not that impossible.

BEN

If it was my son, I'd tell him to turn himself in.

TYLER (wryly)

To the mercies of Captain Bolton?

61 CLOSE SHOT - BEN

He wrestles inwardly with the problem, then seems to make a decision.

62 FULL SHOT

Ben turns to Sutton and Tyler.

BEN

Give me your name tags.

SUTTON

What do you want them for?

62

CONTINUED:

BEN

I'll need them to convince Colonel Metcalf that I've talked to you and you're both ready to surrender.

SUTTON

You mean to Bolton? --

BEN

I'm not making any promises...
I'll talk to Colonel Metcalf --
I'll try to convince him to treat you fairly.

SUTTON

You ain't got a prayer, Mister --

CAMERA HOLDS on Sutton and Tyler. Slowly, Tyler reaches into his shirt, takes off his name tag, hands it to Ben.

TYLER

Sutton -- do we have any choice?

Slowly, Sutton hands over his tag to Ben.

TYLER

But one thing, Mr. Cartwright --
if Bolton comes for us, I'm
not going back.

Ben looks at him, turns to Hoss and Little Joe.

BEN

Keep an eye on them, boys --

SUTTON

What's the matter? -- Don't you trust us?

Ben looks at him, doesn't say anything.

HOSS

Don't worry, Pa -- they won't be going anywhere.

Ben nods, exits.

DISSOLVE TO:

63

EXT. OPEN GROUND - MED. SHOT - BOLTON

as the Corporal comes up to report to him.

CORPORAL (pointing off)

No sign of them that way, sir.
A mountain goat'd have trouble getting through some of that ground. And even if they had made it, we'd have spotted tracks.

BOLTON (points off)
How about over that direction?

CORPORAL
Some kind of horse ranch, Sir.
And a dirt road that leads to it.

BOLTON (thinks, then)
Take your men that way.

CORPORAL
Yes, Sir.

He salutes and starts off. CAMERA HOLDS on Bolton.

64 EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY - TRUCKING SHOT - BEN
as he rides.

CORPORAL'S VOICE
Halt!

65 ANOTHER ANGLE TO INCLUDE CORPORAL
who steps onto the road and blocks BEN. He FIRES A SHOT
in the air.

66 ANOTHER ANGLE - BEN
He wheels his horse, and is blocked from the rear by other
soldiers.

CORPORAL
Dismount.

Ben hesitates, then starts to comply.

67 ANOTHER ANGLE - BOLTON
as he comes into SCENE. CAMERA PANS with him, as he crosses
to face Ben.

BOLTON
I'm taking you into custody.

BEN
For what reason, Captain?

BOLTON
Aiding and abetting in the escape
of an Army prisoner.
(turns to Corporal)
Search him.

BEN
You're stepping over that line,
Bolton.

BOLTON
You'll allow me to be the
judge of that.

Ben resists as the soldiers start to search him, but there are too many of them. The Corporal finds Sutton's and Tyler's stockade name tags, and hands them over to Bolton. Bolton smiles briefly over them, then turns on Ben.

BOLTON
Where are they?

Ben's expression indicates he has no intention of answering anything. Bolton turns to the Corporal.

BOLTON
Which way was he coming from?

The Corporal points down the dirt road.

CORPORAL
From the west, Sir ---

BOLTON
They found that hole and crawled
into it. Just the way I told you,
Corporal --
(indicates Ben)
Bring him along.

The Corporal gestures to Ben, who then mounts his horse.

CORPORAL (barking the order)
Detail, move out!

As the group rides off...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT III

ACT IV

FADE IN:

68 INT. STABLE - FULL SHOT - DAY

Nedda and Tyler are near the colt's stall. Sutton is on one side. Hess and Little Joe are on guard in b.g.

69 TWO SHOT - NEDDA AND TYLER

Tyler looks at the colt which gets shakily to its feet and

CONTINUED:

moves about the stall.

TYLER

She's going to make it. Funny what a thin line separates things. Yesterday I wouldn't have given that colt much of a chance.

NEDDA

It can be the same with a man...A day ago, I might not have thought you were worth saving.

TYLER

Do you think I am now?

Nedda puts her hand lightly on his arm.

NEDDA

You saved Ben Cartwright's life.

Tyler looks closely at her.

ANOTHER ANGLE - SUTTON

He has eased himself towards the side of the stable, somewhat behind Hoss. He glances thoughtfully about and spots some team traces and halters which hang over a rafter near where Hoss stands. Little Joe turns slightly and looks at him.

LITTLE JOE

You'd just as well sit down, mister. We got us a long wait.

SUTTON

I was just stretching my legs.

LITTLE JOE

Well now, you got all the kinks out, so just sit yourself.

SUTTON

All right, friend -- don't get angry.

MED. SHOT - TYLER AND NEDDA

still by the stall, as Hoss moves into scene.

HOSS (watching Tyler)

You sure care a lot about that little foal --

TYLER

He doesn't have much else to care for him ...

72 REACTION SHOT - NEDDA

showing her growing feeling for the man. Hoss notes this also, looks at Tyler.

HOSS

You don't have to tell me this
if you don't want to...

(hesitates)

But what was it you done got
you into all that trouble?

TYLER

I was convicted of cowardice.

Nedda, Little Joe and Hoss all react. Tyler sees this, laughs
bitterly.

TYLER (continuing)

It's true -- the actual charge
read: Dereliction of duty, refusal
to obey a command, cowardice in
battle.

73 ANGLE - FAVORING TYLER

He hesitates a moment and then shrugs.

TYLER

It was in the border campaign
against the Apaches -- my first
command. The regiment was pinned
down. I was ordered to take my
platoon and make a flank attack
in the open. Twenty-seven men
against four hundred Apaches. I
refused...

(beat)

Maybe it was because I was afraid.
All I know is that I couldn't bring
myself to lead twenty-seven men to
their deaths.

HOSS

Why'd they want you to do that?

TYLER

That's the terrible part -- I didn't
know that it was meant to be a
diversionary attack. The real attack
was from the other flank. They were
thrown back and half the regiment was
wiped out.

(beat)

Maybe my life -- and the lives of my
twenty-seven men could have made the
difference.

(beat)

But now I can't ever know.

ANGLE - NEDDA, HOSS, LITTLE JOE.

HOSS (gently)
Fighting Indians isn't like any other kind of fighting -- you got to be real experienced to know how to figure them devils out.

TYLER (taut)
But I was wrong. Experienced or not, an order was an order. It should have been obeyed.

LITTLE JOE
Too bad they wouldn't give you another chance.

TYLER (lashing at himself)
Why should they? -- Any reason to think I'd work out better another time?

Suddenly, Nedda leaps to her feet, eyes blazing.

NEDDA
That wasn't cowardice, Paul -- just because you wouldn't obey an idiotic order and commit suicide with all your men!

HOSS (shakes his head)
No, Miss Nedda -- you're wrong. It wasn't an idiotic order. The Army generally knows what it's doing.

NEDDA
Then what was it doing when it put those scars on his back?

LITTLE JOE
You can't judge the whole Army by a man like Captain Bolton --

Sutton inserts himself into scene at this point.

SUTTON
But, friend -- that's the man we've got to go back to.

LITTLE JOE
Pa promised he'd take care of that, didn't he?

SUTTON
Your Pa's a good man, and maybe he's got good intentions -- but he never came up against anyone like Bolton before. Friend, I guarantee you -- Bolton'll kill us both.

HOSS

Mister, you're wrong.

SUTTON

There's only one way we can beat it -- and that's if you fix it so we don't have to go back!

HOSS

Now you know we can't do that --

SUTTON

Can't you? -- This morning, when I scouted the terrain, I left a buggy and a coupla horses back in the gully -- all you gotta do is turn your back a coupla seconds -- and Tyler, me and Nedda'll disappear.

LITTLE JOE

You're wasting your breath.

SUTTON

You think a lot about Nedda, don't you? You want her to be happy? All right -- how do you think she's gonna feel watching them take me back to get killed! She's been waiting for me all these years -- Tell them, Nedda -- tell them to let us go!...

NEDDA

I can't do that, Jimmy.

SUTTON

Why not?

(looks at Tyler and the girl)

Hey -- I just wonder what's been going on in this stable besides carin' for sick colts...

TYLER (furious)

Why, you -- !

Tyler charges Sutton and hits him. Sutton falls back. Little Joe and Hoss rush in to break up the fight, and pull Tyler off Sutton who is on the ground. In the melee, Sutton manages to whip Little Joe's gun out of his holster. Then he springs to his feet, his gun in the boy's back.

SUTTON (to Hoss)

Take one step my way and I'll put a bullet in him.

HOSS

Mister, you do that and all the bullets you got in that gun ain't gonna stop me from squeezin' the life outta you.

SUTTON

Don't you worry, friend -- I'll do it. I got nothin' to lose now -- Throw over your gun.

Frustrated, Hoss finally throws the gun on the floor by Sutton. Cautiously, Sutton bends and picks up the gun. With a cocky smile he gives Little Joe a shove away, then covers them with the two guns.

SUTTON (sure of himself)

You think I was just gonna march meek as a lamb back to that pesthole of a stockade?

HOSS

Don't look to me like you're much closer to bein' free now than you was two minutes ago -- unless you figure on killin' all of us. And that'd be a lotta killin' -- even for a man like you. You got nowhere left to run, little man.

SUTTON

I told you -- I got that buggy and those horses.

(looks at Tyler, laughs)

So long, Lieutenant -- you had your chance.

(looks at Nedda)

You can have what's left of him after Captain Bolton gets through with him.

(turns, exits)

75 EXT. STABLE AREA - CLOSE SHOT - SUTTON

as he runs off.

76 INT. STABLE - TWO SHOT - NEDDA AND TYLER

She looks out after Sutton, then turns and holds against Tyler.

NEDDA

I'm sorry for him. I don't know why -- but I can't help feeling bad for him.

TYLER

I know.

He holds her.

77 EXT. STABLE - TRUCKING SHOT - SUTTON

as he flees. Suddenly he stops as he sees:

78 SUTTON'S POV

79 ANGLE - SUTTON

An animal at bay now, he tenses, starts running in the opposite direction.

80 ANOTHER ANGLE

A second soldier suddenly looms up in front of Sutton.

SECOND SOLDIER

Halt!

Sutton turns to run back again, only to face the first soldier. He raises his guns to fire, when suddenly a SHOT rings out, hitting him in the back. He drops on his face, the guns still in his hands.

81 ANGLE - BOLTON

as slowly he lowers his gun. Then he nods to Corporal at his side.

BOLTON

As you saw, Corporal -- he was armed and dangerous.

The Corporal remains silent, tight-faced.

82 REACTION SHOT - BEN

under guard, as he sees the killing of Sutton.

83 INT. STABLE - MED. SHOT - NEDDA, TYLER, HOSS, LITTLE JOE

They rush to door, look out at scene. Suddenly Nedda grabs Tyler's arm.

NEDDA

He'll kill you, too -- just the way he killed Sutton!
(turns quickly to Hoss and Little Joe)
Hoss -- tell him Paul's going to give himself up. Tell him he doesn't have a gun.

HOSS

I'll tell him, Miss Nedda -- but I don't figure Bolton's gonna wait long.

NEDDA

Just keep him out for a moment -- that's all I'm asking, Hoss.

LITTLE JOE

What good's that gonna do?

HOSS (pulling him along)

I guess she'd like to say a private goodbye...

84

ANOTHER ANGLE - NEDDA

She waits until Hoss and Little Joe have moved out, then grabs Tyler and starts leading him toward the rear door. After a couple of steps he pulls up short.

TYLER

What're you doing, Nedda?

NEDDA

The back door. We can make it to the gully.

TYLER

No, Nedda. Don't you know Bolton would shoot you down just as quickly as he would me?

NEDDA

I don't care! I love you. I want to be with you. I'm not going to let them kill you.

TYLER

Would you go on loving me, if I ran now?

85

EXT. STABLE - FULL SHOT

Bolton and his men advance on Hoss and Little Joe.

HOSS

No need for you to go in, Captain. Tyler's comin' out to surrender.

BOLTON

Get out of the way!

86

CLOSE SHOT - BOLTON

BOLTON

Tyler!

87

ANGLE - TYLER

as he comes out of the stable.

TYLER (calmly)

Here I am, Captain.

88

CLOSE SHOT - BOLTON

A cold smile comes across his face, then his features tighten.

BOLTON

Drop your gun, Tyler.

89

CLOSE SHOT - BEN

reacting, as he realizes that Bolton plans to shoot.

BEN

Captain! -- He's not armed. He
doesn't have a gun!

90

ANGLE - SUTTON

Slowly he raises his face inches off the ground. His right
hand tightens on his gun.

91

ANGLE - BOLTON

He ignores Ben, all his attention on Tyler.

BOLTON

I said, drop your gun, Tyler.

He starts to draw his pistol.

92

REACTION SHOT - NEDDA

She cries out.

93

ANOTHER ANGLE - BEN

He pulls his guard aside and slams into Bolton before he
can fire. Hoss and Little Joe start to move in, but the
Corporal stops them with his rifle.

CORPORAL

Stay where you are!

94

ANGLE

as a pair of soldiers grab Ben from behind, pin his arms.

BOLTON (savage smile)

Cartwright, you'll be sorry you
eve4 interfered with the Army.

BEN (bitingly)

Don't you call yourself the Army!

BOLTON (as he starts to

pull of his glove)

I'm all the Army you'll ever
see --

As he raises his hand to hit Ben, a SHOT rings out. Bolton
sways, looks surprised, drops to the ground, dead.

95

ANGLE - SUTTON

A crazy grin on his face.

95 CONTINUED:

SUTTON
That's one Indian trick
you forgot, butcher --

It's his last gasp. His face hits the dirt.

96 GROUP SHOT - DAY

as each man reacts to the climax of events. Ben slowly turns to the Corporal.

BEN
You'd better start back to the
Fort, Corporal...

The Corporal turns to Tyler.

97 TWO SHOT - TYLER AND NEDDA

They are aware only of each other,

NEDDA
How long will it be?

TYLER
I don't know -- but I'll never
run again...

98 FULL SHOT

Tyler takes leave of Nedda and crosses to the Corporal.

TYLER
Let's go back, Corporal...

CAMERA PANS to the Cartwrights.

BEN
We'll look out for her, Tyler
-- until you get back.

As they exchange looks...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT IV.