

CANTOOVA

by

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OVER THE BLACK:

Staccato RATTLE from the tail of a viper.

SUPER: SONORA, MEXICO - 1840

FADE IN:

EXT. DESERT - DAY

A SEVEN YEAR OLD BOY cowers against a boulder.
The RATTLE. Louder.

OLDER BOY'S VOICE (O.S.)
Don't move, Reyes. Don't move!

RATTLESNAKE

Diamondback. Curled. Tail a blur. Fangs exposed.

OLDER BOY

Age ten, thrusts a stick into the snake's mouth.
The serpent bites, coils around it.

The Older Boy swings the stick.
The rattler sails away.

REYES (YOUNG BOY)
(terrified)
Run Joaquin! He'll come
looking for us!

JOAQUIN (OLDER BOY)
(laughing)
Animals don't think that way,
Reyes. People do.

FADE OUT

OVER THE BLACK:

Lively Mexican MUSIC, guitars, maracas ...

SUPER: TEN YEARS LATER

FADE IN:

EXT. HACIENDA - NIGHT

Torches surround the tiled patio of the large, affluent estate.

SUPER: BASED ON A TRUE STORY

A party. The band PLAYS. Couples dance.

JOAQUIN MURIETA

Now 20, stands near a table loaded with firearms. Clean cut. Affluently dressed.

PANCHO

A servant, sets up wooden cubes on the stucco wall on the opposite side of the patio.

REYES FELIZ

Now a puckish, wealthy seventeen year old, considers two rifles on the table.

JOAQUIN
Use a pistol.

REYES
And embarrass myself?

Reyes picks up a Winchester.

PANCHO (O.S.)
Ready, Reyes!

Reyes COCKS the Winchester.
A crowd of partygoers gathers behind him.
Reyes sights in at the wooden cubes thirty yards away.
BANG!

CUBES

Untouched.

REYES

COCKS the rifle again. Aims.
BANG!

CUBES

Motionless.

REYES

Frowns, COCKS the rifle, slowly, deliberately.
He aims carefully.
BANG!

CUBES

One SPINS wildly but stays on the wall.

REYES

A smattering of APPLAUSE from the crowd behind him.
Reyes COCKS the rifle one more time. Aims. FIRES.

CUBES

One flies off the wall, disappears into the night.

REYES

The crowd cheers, SLAPS him on the back.

PANCHO

Straightens the four cubes on the wall.

PANCHO

Ready!

JOAQUIN

Selects a revolver from the table.
Reyes laughs, shakes his head.

REYES

Pistol? Forget it.

Joaquin holds the revolver casually, smiles at the crowd.

JOAQUIN

Seems pretty simple.

He whirls, fans off four SHOTS.

CUBES

All four fly off the wall.

JOAQUIN

Smiles, twirls the revolver. Lays it down on the table.
Reyes and the rest of the CHEERING crowd surround him.

A MAN in the crowd yells out.

YELLING MAN
Joaquin! Do some Cervantes!

CHEERS of encouragement.

JOAQUIN
Are you game, Reyes?

REYES
If it's chapter ten.

Joaquin and Reyes walk to the center of the patio. The MUSIC stops. The crowd gathers around. TORCHES throw a flickering light on the scene.

The crowd HUSHES.
Reyes kneels on one knee, takes Joaquin's hand, kisses it.

REYES
May it please your worship,
Senor Don Quixote, to give me
the government of that island
which has been won in this
hard fight, for be it ever so
big I feel myself in
sufficient force to be able to
govern it as much and as well
as anyone in the world who has
ever governed islands.

JOAQUIN
Thou must take notice, brother
Sancho, that this adventure
and those like it are not
adventures of islands, but of
cross-roads, in which nothing
is got except a broken head or
an ear the less. Have
patience, for adventures will
present themselves from which
I may make you, not only a
governor, but something more.

The crowd CHEERS. Joaquin and Reyes stand, bow.

The band PLAYS.

ROSITA (O.S.)
Happy birthday, Joaquin.

Joaquin turns.

ROSITA FELIZ (18), Reyes sister, a flower of Mexico.

JOAQUIN
Dance with me.

He takes Rosita's hand, leads her onto the dance floor.

JOAQUIN
I'm going, Rosita. California
in the spring.

ROSITA
Ah! The United States. The
gold.

OOH's and AAH's from the crowd.

MIGUEL MURIETA (25) and HORATIO MURIETA (48) lead a
lustrous jet black mare outfitted with a black leather
saddle across the patio.

The mare CLIP-CLOPS on the patio tile. Flickering
torchlight glimmers from the silky black coat.

HORATIO
For my son. On his twentieth
birthday.

The crowd APPLAUDS.
Horatio hands the reins to Joaquin.

HORATIO
If you must go to California,
at least you'll leave on a
good horse. Her name is
Diablo.

Joaquin strokes the mare's flowing mane.

JOAQUIN
She's beautiful, father. I
don't know what to say.

HOOTS and APPLAUSE from the crowd.
Reyes runs up.

REYES
I'm coming with you!

JOAQUIN
No, my friend. You must stay
here with my brother Miguel.
(MORE)

JOAQUIN (cont'd)
 Who else will watch over the
 Murieta and Feliz ranchos?

Horatio takes Joaquin's arm, leads him away from the crowd.

HORATIO
 Why Joaquin? Why? Everything
 you could possibly want is
 here in Sonora. The Rancho
 will belong to you and Miguel
 one day.

JOAQUIN
 We've been through this a
 dozen times, Father. I've got
 to follow my own path, make my
 own fortune. I'm going.

He puts an arm around Horatio's shoulder.

JOAQUIN
 To a true democracy.
 California will be admitted to
 the union soon, and I'll be a
 citizen. A citizen of the
 greatest country on earth.

Horatio SIGHS, shakes his head.

HORATIO
 The stories we hear about the
 violence, lawlessness, and
 corruption make me fear for
 you, my son.

Joaquin smiles at his father.

JOAQUIN
 You know I can handle myself,
 Father. Please don't worry.

LATER

The patio. Dark. Deserted.

PALM TREE

Rosita, breathless, leans against the huge trunk. Joaquin
 embraces her. They kiss passionately.

JOAQUIN
 Come with me.

ROSITA
To the end of the earth.

EXT. PLAINS - DAY

The incredible vastness of the American southwest.

SUPER: CALIFORNIA - APRIL, 1850

Four riders travel at a gentle pace.

Joaquin, Rosita and two SERVANTS, Pancho and PEDRO. The Servants lead pack mules and a wagon loaded with supplies.

EXT. NARROW MOUNTAIN PASS - SUNSET

They trot through the pass.
In the background, a haunting sunset of purple and crimson.

EXT. VALLEY - DUSK

A lush, level green valley. The narrow mountain pass in the background.

Two white tents and a campfire in the distance.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

Near the campfire, Joaquin and Rosita snuggle under a blanket. Joaquin points to the dark sky.

JOAQUIN
The three stars in a row are
the hunter's belt. The three
smaller ones below, his saber.

ROSITA
This valley is the most
beautiful place on earth.

JOAQUIN
The Yokuts call it "Cantoova".
"God's fortress". One narrow
mountain pass to the South,
one to the North.

She burrows into the blanket, her head on his chest.

ROSITA
Te amo, Joaquin.

EXT. HARDSCRABBLE - DAY

Rocky terrain. Streams of blue water course between bleached rocks.

Miner's cabins dot the landscape.

Prospectors pan for gold.

SUPER: GOLD FIELDS - MAY, 1850

Joaquin's troupe slowly negotiates the rugged terrain.

EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY

Two small white tents stand near a sparkling blue stream. Pancho and Pedro wash the horses. Rosita cooks at the fire.

Joaquin pans for gold in the stream.
He looks down at the pan.

JOAQUIN
(excited)
Rosita!

Rosita hurries to his side. Joaquin shows her a GOLD NUGGET the size of a man's thumb.

ROSITA
My God, Joaquin! Is it real?

A bright FLASH of sunlight reflects off of the precious metal.

JOAQUIN
As real as the sun in the sky.

Joaquin and Rosita hug excitedly, lose their balance, SPLASH into the blue water, sharing a good BELLYLAUGH.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

Joaquin rides Diablo. They trot past the Sheriff's office. In the background, on the office wall, a large

WANTED POSTER

WANTED FOR HORSE STEALING
THREE-FINGERED JACK GARCIA
\$500.00 REWARD
DEAD OR ALIVE

A drawing of the bandit reveals a handsomely rugged, scarred face.

Joaquin, oblivious to the poster, continues down the street.

SUPER: EUREKA, CALIFORNIA

MOUNTAIN JIM, the Sheriff, lounges in a rocking chair on the porch in front of the MOTHER LODE SALOON. A giant of a man with a walrus mustache and stained ten-gallon hat.

SNEEZER, Jim's Deputy, SNORES in the rocker next to Mountain Jim.

Sneezer suddenly sits bolt upright, SNEEZES three times, rapid-fire. He wipes his nose on a greasy shirtsleeve.

Joaquin notices their BADGES and rides up.

JOAQUIN

Excuse me Sheriff. Where can I go to file a claim on mining property?

Mountain Jim and Sneezer stare at him.

JOAQUIN

Please, excuse me, but I need to know --

MOUNTAIN JIM

You a Mexican?

JOAQUIN

(startled)

Why, yes I am. Now, where can I go to --

Sneezer SPITS a stream of tobacco juice that hits Diablo's hoof. The horse bucks.

SNEEZER

We don't rightly know.

EXT. MURIETA CLAIM - DAY

Two sturdy log cabins have replaced the white tents.

Joaquin and Pancho work a long-tom sluice-box operation.

Pedro carries a bucket filled with gleaming GOLD NUGGETS into one of the cabins.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Joaquin and Rosita cuddle on a Mexican blanket in front of the soft glow from the fireplace.

They CLINK glasses of tequila.

JOAQUIN

What shall we do with our
wealth?

ROSITA

Help our child to become
President.

JOAQUIN

Our child?

INT. MOTHER LODE SALOON - NIGHT

A piano player pumps out RAGTIME on an old upright in the busy gin-joint. Rough-hewn wooden tables and chairs, a small empty stage, long bar.

At the bar, Mountain Jim and Sneezer hang with ONE-EYE and STUMPY. The men knock back shots of whiskey.

One-eye wears an eye patch. Stumpy has no left hand.

STUMPY

We have zero, and that bastard
stumbles into the bloody
mother lode!

MOUNTAIN JIM

I know it's crazy, but the law
says they have as much right
as we do, Stumpy.

ONE-EYE

Dammit, Jim! I lost an eye
fightin' the greasers durin'
the war. Stumpy lost his hand!

STUMPY

Yeah. And now the damn
government's lettin' the
greasers steal our gold.

SNEEZER

We gotta do somethin' about
the tonnage of bullion that
goddamned greaser's stealin'
from our country!

Sneezer issues a short burst of SNEEZES, wipes his nose on
his sleeve.

SNEEZER

I hear the Governor's gonna
pass a law soon that's gonna
make it illegal for greasers
to mine gold.

MOUNTAIN JIM

Heck, two years ago, durin'
the war, I fought alongside
Captain Harry Love. They gave
us medals for shootin'
greasers.

He pours another round of shots for the group.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

Light from the fireplace flickers from the window. Horses
TROT (O.S.), then stop. A SNEEZE (O.S.).

INT. CABIN

Joaquin and Rosita make love under the Mexican blanket in
front of the fire.

JOAQUIN

You are a remarkable woman.

ROSITA

Excuse me, Mr. Joaquin
Murieta, but you had a little
something to do with it.

They smile, gaze into each other's eyes.

THE DOOR

Bursts open. Mountain Jim, Sneezzer, One-eye, and Stumpy storm in, guns drawn.

JOAQUIN

Leaps to his feet, naked.
He gets between the intruders and Rosita.

One-Eye SMACKS Joaquin across the face with the barrel of his Colt. Joaquin staggers back, blood streaming from his nose and mouth.

ONE-EYE

Vamoose while you're still
alive, greaser!

Rosita tightens the blanket around herself, terror in her eyes. Sneezzer and Stumpy give her the up-and-down.

JOAQUIN

This claim is mine! I filed it
in town! You know that,
Sheriff!

The men look to Mountain Jim for direction. He holds a bottle of whisky, guzzles from it, hands it to Sneezzer.

Mountain Jim JAMS the butt of his buffalo rifle into Joaquin's belly SLAMMING him against the wall. Joaquin slides to the floor, unconscious.

MOUNTAIN JIM

I hate greasers. 'Specially
the ones that think.

PEDRO

Runs into the cabin with a pistol.
He fires TWO SHOTS. Both miss.

Sneezzer, One-Eye and Stumpy OPEN FIRE.

Pedro's bullet riddled corpse slides to the floor.

JOAQUIN

Lies unconscious near the fireplace, blood drips from his nose and mouth.

ONE-EYE

Moves toward Rosita.

ROSITA
No, wait. No!

One-Eye unstraps his gunbelt.

ROSITA
Don't! Please! I'm --

Mountain Jim grabs One-Eye, pulls him from Rosita.
She heaves a SIGH of relief.

Mountain Jim looks down at her.

MOUNTAIN JIM
I'm first.

EXT. CABIN

Sounds of a SCUFFLE inside. Then a SMACK!. A female SCREAM
echoes into the night.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Rosita lies sprawled on the floor, naked, reddish-blue
welts on her legs and back. Dried tracks of blood trace
from her mouth and nose.

Joaquin crawls to her, covers her with the blanket.
He strokes her forehead.

ROSITA'S BRUISED EYES

Flicker open. Her voice barely a whisper.

ROSITA
I'm alive.

Joaquin holds her, weeps tears of rage.

ROSITA
They're coming back, Joaquin.
They said they'll hang us if
we're still here.

Pancho, badly beaten, crawls into the cabin. He sees
Pedro's body and makes the sign of the cross.

PANCHO

Joaquin. I'm sorry. I tried to
fight them --

Pancho CRIES over Pedro's corpse.

JOAQUIN

There's not much time, Pancho.
Did they take the horses?

PANCHO

They took everything! A mule
wandered back at dawn.

Joaquin struggles to his feet, stumbles to a corner of the
cabin. He lifts a floorboard and removes a small sack of
gold, gives it to Pancho.

JOAQUIN

Take the mule and this gold.
Ride south to Sonora. Get
there any way you can. Tell my
brother Miguel to get horses
and money and meet us in
Murphy's Diggings. Now, go!

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN THE GOLD FIELDS - NIGHT

A deserted rocky vista. A campfire in the distance.

EXT. CAMPFIRE

Joaquin and Rosita sit by the campfire, huddled under a
Mexican blanket against the chilly night.

No horses, no wagons, no tents. They have nothing but the
blanket and each other.

EXT. MURPHY'S DIGGINGS - TOWN - DAY

Main Street. A Saloon called STRIKE IT RICH, MURPHY'S
GENERAL STORE, and a BANK across the street from the
saloon.

In the street, Joaquin and Rosita bargain with a Native
American. Joaquin and Rosita look dirty, exhausted.

The Native American accepts a gold nugget from Joaquin,
holds it up to the sunlight, and points to A SHACK at the
end of the street.

EXT. SHACK - DAY

Rain.

Miguel Murieta rides through the mud on a white stallion leading two brown mares. The door to the shack opens. Joaquin and Rosita walk out.

Joaquin's hair is longer. Several days growth cover his face. Rosita looks better, her facial injuries visible but healing.

MIGUEL

Pancho told us what happened.
Let's get out of this God-
forsaken country. Now!

Joaquin and Rosita mount up. Joaquin and Miguel hug on horseback.

JOAQUIN

Thank God you've come! We'll
need supplies for the journey
home.

MIGUEL

How bad is it here?

JOAQUIN

Hate burns inside them,
Miguel. We're fortunate to be
alive.

EXT. MURPHY'S GENERAL STORE - DAY

Miguel's white stallion and the two brown mares stand tied to the hitching post.

A crowd gathers.

DUNCAN, a big tough-looking guy, wears a ten-gallon hat, leather vest and a silver sheriff's badge.

Duncan stands in the rain, studying WILLARD and CLIFF, two ragged prospectors.

DUNCAN

You sure, Willard?

WILLARD

Course I'm sure Duncan. Cliff and me raised them two mares since they were born. One of the bloody greasers in the store stole 'em this morning!

DUNCAN

You saw who did the stealin'?

WILLARD

I got a glimpse of him.

DUNCAN

Yeah, well, we ain't hangin' anybody unless you can identify him.

CLIFF

Well let's just stand right here 'til they come out, Sheriff, and see if Willard can pick him out.

DUNCAN

Good thinkin', Cliff. That's fair. Now keep your goddamned eyes open Willard.

Duncan adjusts his sheriff's badge and draws his revolver. He stands in the rain with the rest of the crowd. ALL EYES on the door to the store.

Miguel, Joaquin, and Rosita come out carrying supplies.

Duncan points his revolver.

DUNCAN

Stop right there.

MIGUEL

What's the meaning of this?

DUNCAN

Willard?

Willard walks up the stairs to the store to get a better look. He points at Miguel.

WILLARD

That's him! He did it! He stole my brown mares!

(MORE)

WILLARD (cont'd)
 These other two are probably
 workin' with him!

An angry MURMER from the crowd.
 A DOZEN MEN draw guns and point them at Miguel.

MIGUEL
 I did not! I bought these
 mares this morning! From a
 Frenchman outside of town!

DUNCAN
 Oh yeah? A Frenchman, huh.
 What was his name?

MIGUEL
 Pierre.

DUNCAN
You're a damn liar! There's
 only one Frenchman in this
 town and his name's Raoul!

An angry ROAR from the crowd, getting worked up.

CLIFF
 There's your proof, Duncan!
 Now let's get to it!

The crowd BELLOWS approval.

DUNCAN
 All right! Get the whip and
 some rope! Let's go!

The angry mob charges the store. Men grab the Mexicans and
 shove them down the stairs, sending them sprawling into the
 muddy street.

EXT. OAK TREE

The crowd drags Miguel, Joaquin and Rosita toward the tree.

MIGUEL
 We're innocent! We didn't
 steal anything!

ROSITA
 (hysterical)
You're all animals!

A little boy, no more than 10, rushes up, his face twisted with hatred. He winds up and PUNCHES Rosita in the lower abdomen. She doubles over, vomits blood.

JOAQUIN

Bastard!

A large man SMACKS Joaquin across the face.

WILLARD

Shut 'em up!

The mob blindfolds and gags the three of them. They tie their hands behind their backs.

They tear off Joaquin's shirt, then Rosita's, shove them to the ground.

CLIFF

Gimme the whip!

CRACK! Cliff flogs Joaquin and Rosita.

DUNCAN

Where's the damn rope?!

A man hands Duncan the rope, hangman's noose on one end. He throws the other end over a thick branch of the tree.

Several men shove Miguel onto a horse, force the noose around his neck.

DUNCAN

Do it!

Willard SWATS the rear of the horse with his hat. The animal bolts forward.

MIGUEL'S MEXICAN BOOTS

swing and twitch a few feet off the ground. The crowd ROARS in approval.

A bullwhip CRACK!

EXT. WOODS - DUSK

Joaquin and Rosita stumble through the brush, their tattered shirts soaked with blood.

Rosita falls.

ROSITA
 (faintly)
 I can't go on.

Joaquin lifts Rosita up into his arms and staggers deeper into the woods.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Dark. Joaquin carries Rosita. He looks exhausted. He wobbles, loses his balance, CRASHES to the ground with a MOAN.

They lie in deep grass, unconscious.

DISSOLVE TO:

SAME - MORNING

Sunshine. They lie in the same position.

Joaquin sits up, touches his back, MOANS. He rubs his eyes, looks up.

JOAQUIN
 (startled)
 Who are you?

THREE-FINGERS (O.S.)
 My friends call me Three-
 Fingered Jack. My enemies
 don't call nobody nothin'.

THREE-FINGERED JACK GARCIA (35), a large man dressed in black, sits on a chestnut stallion. Silver medallions line the trousers of his bell-bottomed leather pants.

A SCAR traces its way from his eye to his mouth.

He wears two Colt revolvers and a bandoleer of ammunition. A Bowie knife and Winchester rifle hang from his saddle. He holds four extra horses.

Rosita comes to, GASPS when she sees the bandit.

ROSITA
 (hoarsely)
 Joaquin!

Joaquin comforts her.

JOAQUIN
 It's alright.

Three-Fingers dismounts, helps them to their feet.

THREE-FINGERS
Can you ride? Our camp's not
far.

Rosita passes out. Joaquin catches her.

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN THE GOLD FIELDS - DAY

They slowly make their way across rugged terrain.

Rosita, unconscious, rides with Joaquin, leaning against him. Joaquin holds her gently on the saddle as the horses walk along.

JOAQUIN
Why are you helping us?

THREE-FINGERS
Anybody who gets whipped by
the gringos is a friend of
mine.

JOAQUIN
Why do they call you Three-
Fingers?

Three-Fingers holds up his left hand. No ring finger.

THREE-FINGERS
Captain Harry Love blew this
off three years ago during the
war. Good man. Good shot.

INT. TENT

MARIANA (20s), slender, sexy, and CARMELA (30s), stocky, tough, gently lay Rosita, unconscious, down on a bed of Mexican blankets and straw.

Three-Fingered Jack lays his hand on Joaquin's shoulder.

THREE-FINGERS
Our women are the best, amigo.
If the baby can be saved,
they'll do it. Come, meet the
rest of our group.

EXT. BANDIT CAMP - NIGHT

Joaquin and Three-Fingers approach two men huddled around a campfire. Three-Fingers motions Joaquin to sit.

THREE-FINGERS
Sit. Drink.

Joaquin sits down next to CLAUDIO(40s) and VALENZUELA(30s).

Claudio wears a black suit full of dust, damaged top-hat.

Valenzuela's fringed clothes are made from animal hide. He has a dark complexion, full beard.

Valenzuela passes Three-Fingers a bottle of Tequila.

THREE-FINGERS
Every man has his god-given talents.

He takes a healthy swig.

THREE-FINGERS
Claudio has great intelligence. He plans our jobs.

He passes the bottle to Claudio. He takes a swallow.

CLAUDIO
Welcome, Senor.

JOAQUIN
Do you read?

CLAUDIO
Of course.

JOAQUIN
Cervantes?

CLAUDIO
(laughing)
Afraid not, amigo. Caesar and Alexander mostly. Sometimes Euclid and Descartes.

Joaquin looks impressed.
Claudio hands the bottle to Valenzuela.

THREE-FINGERS
Valenzuela is the spy.
Invisible. Fearless. He gets
our advance information.

Valenzuela extends his hand. Joaquin shakes it.

VALENZUELA
Sorry about your brother.

JOAQUIN
Gracias.

Three-Fingers rolls a cigarette. Lights it.

JOAQUIN
(to Three-Fingers)
And you?

Three-Fingers smiles.

THREE-FINGERS
Claudio?

Claudio selects several stones from the ground. Stands.

CLAUDIO
Six.

Three-Fingers gets up, flexes his right hand.

THREE-FINGERS
Go.

Claudio tosses the stones high into the air above the
campfire.

Three-Fingers draws, fans off six SHOTS.

FOUR OF THE STONES EXPLODE

Joaquin jumps to his feet, whips the other Colt out of
Three-Finger's holster, fires TWICE.

THE OTHER TWO STONES DISINTEGRATE

The Bandits look at Joaquin in awe.

JOAQUIN
Sorry.

Joaquin hands the revolver to Three-Fingers.

JOAQUIN
 Couldn't resist.

Three-Fingers puts a hand on Joaquin's shoulder.

THREE-FINGERS
 Amigo!

EXT. CAMP - DAY

Joaquin COCKS a revolver, aims.

THE EMPTY TEQUILA BOTTLE

Stands on a tree branch fifty yards away.
 A SHOT (O.S.). The bottle SHATTERS.

JOAQUIN

Lowers the weapon.

THREE-FINGERS

Puts a hand on Joaquin's shoulder.

THREE-FINGERS
 Good shot, amigo. Is your back
 healing?

JOAQUIN
 Slowly. I can ride. We'll be
 on our way as soon as Rosita
 can travel. How can I ever
 repay you?

THREE-FINGERS
 You know, Joaquin, revenge is
 sweet. Those bastards in town
 certainly deserve it.

JOAQUIN
 We've been through this, Three-
 Fingers. I'm not a violent
 man. I just want to get my
 family back to Sonora safely.
 Remember my offer. Good jobs
 await all of you on the
 rancho. Just say the word.

THREE-FINGERS
 I'm afraid our rancho days are
 over, Joaquin --

A female SCREAM comes from a tent.

INT. TENT

Rosita lies on a Mexican blanket, weeping.

Mariana and Carmela wash their hands in a basin. Sad faces.

Joaquin and Three-Fingers rush in.

CARMELA

I'm sorry, senor Joaquin.

JOAQUIN

What is it!

MARIANA

The baby. He is gone.

Joaquin sits next to Rosita, holds her.

JOAQUIN

Rosita. And you?

CARMELA

She'll be fine. She's a strong woman.

ROSITA

I'm sorry, Joaquin.

Rosita cries softly, her head buried in Joaquin's chest. He strokes her hair.

JOAQUIN'S EYES

Wild, animal like. He shakes with rage.

THREE-FINGERS

Looks down at them. His eyes meet Joaquin's.

EXT. MURPHY'S DIGGINGS - STREET - DAY

Seven riders deliberately trot down the center of the street.

Townspeople go about their business, don't pay the riders any mind.

Claudio, Carmela, and Mariana veer left toward the BANK.

Three-Fingers, Valenzuela, and Joaquin turn right, dismount in front of the SALOON.

ROSITA

Stops her horse in the center of the street.
She slides a 12-guage shotgun out of a long holster.

INT. STRIKE IT RICH SALOON

Lively PIANO and BANJO music fills the busy smoke-filled gold-rush gin mill.

A half-dozen tables stand in the center of the saloon, crammed with loud PROSPECTORS drinking whiskey and playing cards. Several have beefy PROSTITUTES on their laps.

ONSTAGE

Three overweight DANCING GIRLS pound out a number.

The dance number ends. Half-hearted APPLAUSE. The MASTER OF CEREMONIES, a skinny character in a torn and frayed tuxedo, swaggers onto the stage.

MC

And now! The one you've heard
about! The one you've been
waiting for! Lola Montez and
The Spider-Dance!

RAUNCHY CHEERS and HOOTS from the crowd. The beautiful, scantily clad LOLA MONTEZ struts onto the stage.

The PIANO and BANJO accompany Lola as she gets down into the seductive spider-dance.

AT THE BAR

Duncan, Willard and Cliff in the crowd watching the show. The boys work on a bottle of whiskey.

SWINGING DOORS

Three-Fingers, Valenzuela, and Joaquin quietly enter. No one notices

THE SHOTGUN MUZZLE

Protruding from Valenzuela's ankle-length duster coat.

They stride to the bar and stand behind Duncan and his friends, less than six feet away.

CLIFF

We should've hung the other
two just for the hell of it.

WILLARD

Damn right, Cliff.

DUNCAN

It don't matter. The
Governor's gonna sign the
greaser act. That'll get all
the damn Mexicans out of our
American gold fields.

VALENZUELA

Raises the shotgun. He fires a BLAST through the roof.

The MUSIC stops cold.
Lola SCREAMS.

The card-players and prostitutes dive for cover under the
tables.

THREE-FINGERS

Enjoying the show, Sheriff?

Duncan, Willard and Cliff whirl, face Joaquin and Three-
Fingers. The bar patrons nearby scurry away.

It takes a second until Duncan and his guys recognize
Joaquin. They

GO FOR THEIR GUNS

Joaquin and Three-Fingers whip out Colts, fan off a lethal
BARRAGE of bullets.

Duncan, Willard and Cliff

TWITCH CRAZILY

getting riddled with lead. They tumble to the floor
bleeding and MOANING. Patrons SHRIEK, scuttle for cover.

KA-BOOM! (O.S.)

The Saloon SHAKES, dust spilling from the rafters, from an
unseen, massive nearby detonation.

EXT. STREET

Rosita on horseback, with the shotgun.

BANK

Smoke pours from the windows.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

A DEPUTY bursts out of the door. He COCKS a rifle as he runs, straight for the Bank, right in front of

ROSITA

She FIRES. The Deputy gets the full blast from the 12-gauge in the chest. He sails back six feet, lands with a THUMP.

SALOON

Three-Fingers, Valenzuela, and Joaquin dash out of the door, jump on their horses.

BANK

Claudio, Carmela, and Mariana fly out of the bank hauling bags of loot.

SEVEN BANDITS

Haul-ass out of town, leaving a street full of

DROP-JAWED EYE-WITNESSES.

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN THE GOLD FIELDS - SUNSET

A sunset of crimson and gold behind huge boulders.

The seven bandits pick their way across difficult terrain. They lead a half-dozen pack mules and a couple of jam-full wagons.

EXT. SACRAMENTO - CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY

White marble, imposing, impenetrable.

INT. GOVERNOR'S OFFICE - DAY

COLONEL JOHN BIGLER (50), Governor of California, reclines at his huge desk, surrounded by aides and legislators.

The heavy-set, bald, red-faced man of German extraction lights a large cigar.

He signs a document.

GOVERNOR

The Foreign Miners Tax Act is now law, gentlemen. More commonly known as "The Greaser Act".

LAUGHS from the politicians.

GOVERNOR

All foreigners, namely those goddamn Mexicans, now gotta pay a tax of twenty dollars a month or forfeit their claims. Since we know none of 'em can pay it, this'll get 'em out of our gold fields.

The Governor SLAMS his beefy palm on the desk.

GOVERNOR

And it's about goddamned time!

BELLYLAUGHS from the boys in the office.

GOVERNOR

Now this here law provides funding for a platoon of Rangers to make sure the provisions of the Greaser Act are carried out.

The Governor puffs on his cigar and surveys the room.

GOVERNOR

Unless somebody's got a better idea, I'm gonna hire Captain Harry Love for this. You all know his war record, and I know Harry'll put together a tough bunch of Rangers and get the job done!

APPLAUSE, SHOUTS of approval from the politicians.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

CAPTAIN HARRY LOVE (35) on horseback. A muscular man wearing a black suit, black hat, and large silver badge.

The breeze blows back his suit jacket revealing a long-barreled pearl-handled revolver.

A rifle, bullwhip, and cavalry saber hang from his saddle.

He sports a handlebar mustache. His face expressionless.

A dozen other formidable looking Rangers, all wearing black suits and badges, stand on horseback with him.

A Ranger named WILSON gallops up.

WILSON

They're still there, Captain
Love. About six of 'em.
Panning down at Rabbit Creek.

LOVE

They were warned.

EXT. RABBIT CREEK - SHORELINE - DAY

A group of small tents stands on the shore. An infant
WAILS.

CREEK

Six MEXICANS in white peasant outfits pan for gold.
One of the Mexicans shakes his pan, examines it.

THE NUGGET

In the pan looks like gold but, unsure, he holds the pan
closer to his face. Sun gleams from the precious metal.

BANG!(O.S.)

KRANG!

The pan flies out of his hands. Startled, he looks up.

THE RANGERS

Gallop toward him, stampeding through the tents on the
shore.

Women and children run out of the tents, SCREAMING and
CRYING. One MOTHER with a birthmark on her forehead carries
an infant baby.

The Rangers, on huge stallions, gallop around her.

WILSON

Vamoose!

LOVE
Use the whips!

A stallion bumps the woman, knocks her to the ground.

HER FACE BLEEDS

The baby WAILS.

The Rangers fire SHOTS into the air.

The Mexicans in the stream hotfoot for the shore SCREAMING
 in Spanish.

CRACK! Rangers brandish bullwhips.

WILSON
 Vamoose!

LOVE
 Get out! Get the hell out!

CRACK!

The Mexican families run for their lives into the woods,
 leaving all their worldly possessions behind.

The Rangers LAUGH, CRACK their bullwhips, FIRE shots into
 the air.

MONTAGE:

STREET - DAY - Rangers LAUGH, WHIP a one-armed Mexican boy.
 He SCREAMS, stumbles, away.

MINING VILLAGE - DAY - Rain. Ropes tied to wooden shanties
 lead to Rangers on horseback. Rangers spur the horses, drag
 the shanties down.

PROSPECTORS' TOWN - NIGHT - Fire. Rangers throw torches
 into mining shacks. A Mexican youth runs out of a burning
 shack, screaming, his clothes on fire. The Rangers laugh,
 blow him to pieces with a volley of shots.

EXT. MURIETA CLAIM - DAY

Valenzuela concealed in the woods, watching the two cabins
 built by Joaquin and Rosita.

He holds a small telescope.

TELESCOPE POV -

MOUNTAIN JIM carries a bucket of gold into a cabin.

SNEEZER AND STUMPY work the long-tom sluice box separating gold from dirt and stone.

ONE-EYE pans for gold in the stream.

DIABLO

Stands tied to a post near one of the cabins.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MURIETA CLAIM - DUSK

Lanterns flicker on a table.

Mountain Jim, Sneezer, One-eye and Stumpy play poker.

Mountain Jim fills his glass from a bottle of whisky and knocks back a shot. He checks his cards and throws some poker chips into the middle of the table.

MOUNTAIN JIM

Fifty. Sneezer, you in or out?

Sneezer wipes his nose with his shirtsleeve. He tosses chips into the pot.

SNEEZER

Call.

MOUNTAIN JIM

One-eye?

One-eye studies his cards, frowns, tosses the hand onto the table.

ONE-EYE

Fold. I'm gettin' some tobacco.

One-eye gets up, heads into the cabin.

MOUNTAIN JIM

Stumpy?

STUMPY

I'm thinkin', I'm thinkin'.
What's the bet?

MOUNTAIN JIM

Fifty.

FIVE RIDERS EXPLODE

From the forest, galloping toward the table, rifles leveled at the card players.

Joaquin and Three-Fingers dismount. Claudio, Carmela and Rosita point shotguns at Mountain Jim and his friends.

JOAQUIN

Stands in black leather. Silver medallions adorn the sides of his black leather bell-bottoms. His hair shoulder length, tied down with a white bandana. An image of the classic Mexican bandit.

MOUNTAIN JIM

Frowns. Then recognition floods his face

JOAQUIN

Where's your one-eyed friend?

Mountain Jim thinks, his voice a little too loud.

MOUNTAIN JIM

One-eye ain't here. He's in town.

JOAQUIN

Too bad. Get up.

Mountain Jim, Sneezer, and Stumpy slowly get up, hands raised. Sneezer looks terrified.

Stumpy leers at Rosita, LAUGHS.

STUMPY

Lemme guess, greaser bitch.
Came back 'cause you need a
real man?

BOOM!

The output from Rosita's 12-gauge hurls Stumpy into the side of the cabin with a THUD. His corpse slides to the ground.

INT. CABIN

One-eye, crouched by a window, drops the tobacco and runs to the back of the cabin. He throws open a window, climbs out, and

RUNS LIKE HELL

into the forest.

POKER TABLE

A strange sound, water hitting cardboard.
Sneezer PEES in his pants.

MOUNTAIN JIM

Lookit Murieta! That night! It
was all One-eye's idea! You
can't just kill us all in cold
blood! It ain't human!

JOAQUIN

We're gonna give you a better
than even-money chance,
Sheriff. Two against two. And
my friend here only has three
fingers.

Three-Fingered Jack holds up his left hand.

JOAQUIN

Draw.

They all go for their guns.

Two SHOTS.

MOUNTAIN JIM AND SNEEZER

Each with a bullet hole between their eyes.

The bodies CRASH onto the card table.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MURIETA CLAIM - NIGHT

Joaquin and the gang haul bags of gold out of the cabins,
load them into a wagon.

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN THE GOLD FIELDS - DAY

The seven bandits travel with a dozen pack mules, a string
of twenty horses, several loaded wagons.

Joaquin rides Diablo.

EXT. MOUNT SHASTA VALLEY - DAY

The gang rides. The snow-covered peak of Mount Shasta towers in the background.

SHOUTS and GUNSHOTS (O.S.)

JOAQUIN
Three-Fingers! Let's go!

Joaquin and Three-Fingers gallop into the woods toward the gunfire.

EXT. CLEARING

Joaquin and Three-Fingers pull-up. Two hundred yards away

SIX AMERICANS

On horseback SHOUT and FIRE rifles across a stream at

RUNNING MIWOK INDIANS

An American FIRES.

A Miwok falls, SPLASHES into the stream.
The water runs red.

JOAQUIN

Draws his Colt.

JOAQUIN
Bastards! Let's go!

Three-Fingers grabs his arm.

THREE-FINGERS
It's not our fight Joaquin!
The Miwoks were probably
stealing horses!

JOAQUIN
And we sit here while the
gringos shoot them like dogs?

Joaquin yanks his arm free, spurs Diablo.

ALONG THE STREAM

Galloping, Joaquin FIRES the revolver.

Three Americans fall. The others turn their Winchesters on Joaquin. They FIRE. Near misses.

CLICK!

Joaquin's Colt, empty.
He struggles to reload, still galloping.

The Americans COCK their weapons, take dead aim.

BOOM! (O.S.)

CLEARING

Three-Fingers FIRES a long-barreled buffalo rifle.

STREAM

Another American pitches out of his saddle, SPLASHES into the water. The other two gallop away.

JOAQUIN

Pulls up near the Miwoks, makes EYE-CONTACT with the apparent leader, a teenage brave wearing a headband of BRIGHT YELLOW FEATHERS.

They don't speak.

The Miwoks run off, disappear into the forest.

CLEARING

Joaquin trots back to Three-Fingers.

THREE-FINGERS
That was really stupid,
Joaquin.

JOAQUIN
Thanks for the cover. You
saved my life.

Three-Fingers slides the buffalo rifle into a saddle holster.

THREE-FINGERS
You may not be so lucky next
time.

EXT. BANDIT CAMP - NIGHT

The gang around the campfire. Joaquin looks at Three-Fingers.

JOAQUIN
 You hate them as much as I do.
 You never told me why.

Three-Fingers' eyes fall. He swigs Tequila.

THREE-FINGERS
 (softly)
 The war had just ended ...

DISSOLVE TO:

THREE-FINGERED JACK'S FACE - DAY

A little younger. No scar.

Three-Fingers on horseback, wearing a tattered Mexican army uniform. A blood-soaked bandage wrapped around his left hand.

He trots along, then stops.

THREE-FINGERS' POV

A ranch entrance, "RANCHO GARCIA" inscribed on the gate. Two naked young male corpses hang from the arch.

He dismounts, runs toward a mass of charred debris.

THREE-FINGERS
Maria!

EXT. DEBRIS

Three-Fingers walks slowly through the smoking wreckage. A seared wooden beam CRACKS under his foot. He stops, drops to his knees, cradles the

DEAD BODY

of a naked female in his arms. He weeps.

THREE-FINGERS
 (whisper)
 Maria.

EXT. BANDIT CAMP - NIGHT

Valenzuela reaches for the bottle.

VALENZUELA

Claudio and I worked on the
Rancho Garcia back in those
days. We were there the night
the Yanquis platoon attacked.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

Twenty LAUGHING American soldiers gallop around the house,
waving torches, FIRING rifles.

BEHIND A WOODEN FENCE

Claudio and Valenzuela FIRE rifles at the Americans.

RANCH HOUSE

Two soldiers ride horses up the steps, into the house.

FRONT YARD

A soldier grabs his chest, falls from his horse. Other
soldiers spot the Mexicans FIRING from the wooden fence.

RANCH HOUSE

The two soldiers ride out, dragging two Mexican boys by the
hair.

WOODEN FENCE

Ten SCREAMING Americans on horseback charge the fence,
FIRING rifles, waving swords.

CLAUDIO

Hurls his rifle at the charging Americans.
Valenzuela grabs Claudio, drags him into the bushes.

They vanish.

EXT. BANDIT CAMP - NIGHT

Valenzuela wipes his mouth with his sleeve, hands Joaquin
the bottle.

A tear rolls down Three-Fingers' face.

VALENZUELA

We shot at them until the
ammunition ran out. It was
hopeless.

EXT. SAN JOSE - GENERAL STORE - DAY

Joaquin, Three-Fingers and Claudio load supplies into a
buckboard. Valenzuela rides up.

VALENZUELA

There's something down the
street you better have a look
at, amigos.

Joaquin, Three-Fingers and Claudio mount-up and follow
Valenzuela.

EXT. SAN JOSE SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Wanted posters cover the wall.

One has a crudely drawn likeness of Joaquin -

WANTED
JOAQUIN MURIETA
FOR THE MURDER OF
SHERIFF DUNCAN AND HIS PARTY
\$2,000.00 REWARD
DEAD OR ALIVE

Next to Joaquin's, a rough image of Three-Fingers -

WANTED
"THREE-FINGERED" JACK GARCIA
FOR THE MURDER OF
SHERIFF DUNCAN AND HIS PARTY
\$2,000.00 REWARD
DEAD OR ALIVE

One of Claudio -

WANTED
CLAUDIO SANCHEZ
FOR THE ROBBERY OF
THE MURPHY'S DIGGINGS BANK
\$1,000.00 REWARD

Below Claudio's -

WANTED
ROSITA FELIZ

MISTRESS OF THE OUTLAW
 JOAQUIN MURIETA
 FOR THE MURDER OF
 DEPUTY O'FOLLIARD
 \$2,000.00 REWARD
 DEAD OR ALIVE

The men stare silently at the posters.

THREE-FINGERS
 The stupid bastards got the
 scar on the wrong side of my
 face.

CLAUDIO
 That's a terrible rendition of
 my countenance. They'll pay
 for this.

Joaquin draws his Colt, FANS it putting BULLET HOLES
 THROUGH THE ZEROES of the reward figures.

The civilians on the street scatter. A FAT WOMAN whispers
 to a SKINNY GUY -

FAT WOMAN
 That's him! Joaquin Murieta
 and his gang! Get the Sheriff!

SKINNY GUY
 They're right in front of his
 office. He's hidin' inside.

Joaquin jumps off Diablo, walks to the posters. He picks up
 a piece of coal from the street and scrawls

"MAKE IT \$20,000"

On his poster.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Rain. Captain Love, Wilson, and several other Rangers study
 the wanted posters.

ONE-EYE wears a Ranger's black suit and badge.

Captain Love tears off the posters of Joaquin, Three-
 Fingers, Claudio, and Rosita.

He mounts up, hands the posters to Wilson.

CAPTAIN LOVE

New faces. Make sure all the Rangers study these. Tell 'em to keep their eyes open.

RANGER WILSON

Yes, Captain.

CAPTAIN LOVE

Maybe we can pick up some extra cash.

ONE-EYE

I know them, Captain. They're vicious. A bunch of cutthroats.

EXT. LOS ANGELES COUNTY - DAY

The bandits travel through semi-desert countryside.

Valenzuela gallops up.

VALENZUELA

You better come see this.

THREE-FINGERS

Trouble?

VALENZUELA

No.

JOAQUIN

Then what?

VALENZUELA

I can't explain it. You've got to see this. I've never seen anything like it.

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

Joaquin, Three-Fingers and Valenzuela stand on a hill looking down at a column of

TWO HUNDRED MEXICAN REFUGEES

Men, women, children of all ages. Dressed in rags. Most travel on foot.

Men pull rickety wagons carrying the sick and injured.

The column rolls slowly, inexorably, to the South.

In the background

THE NARROW MOUNTAIN PASS

Into Cantoova.

THE OUTLAWS

Ride up to the refugees. They trot past the ragged band,
toward the head of the column, past

A MOTHER AND INFANT

The Mother has a birthmark on her forehead.

Joaquin stops. The infant cries but no sound comes out, its
lips cracked and dry. Joaquin hands his canteen to the
mother.

MOTHER

May God bless you, Señor.

Three-Fingers looks at Joaquin.

THREE-FINGERS

God had very little to do with
this.

They ride forward, pass

A YOUNG BOY

with one arm, the back of his white peasant shirt stained
with blood. He stumbles, falls.

JOAQUIN

Three-Fingers. Your canteen.

THREE-FINGERS

Hey, c'mon now, Joaquin. Water
ain't too plentiful in these
parts and ...

Joaquin stares at his friend, his hand outstretched.
Grudgingly, Three-Fingers hands over the canteen.

THREE-FINGERS

This is even stupider than
when you saved those bloody
Miwoks.

Joaquin dismounts, helps the dying boy take a sip of water.

Joaquin walks along with the canteen, giving drinks to those who look like they're dying. Three-Fingers and Valenzuela trot alongside.

They reach the head of the column. The leader, an old man named VALDEZ, raises his hand.

The column stops.

Valdez faints. Joaquin catches him, gently lays him down

JOAQUIN
Valenzuela.

Valenzuela tosses his canteen to Joaquin.

Joaquin kneels, pats water on the old man's lips and forehead.

Valdez comes to. Joaquin holds his head, gives him a drink.

VALDEZ
Who are you?

JOAQUIN
Joaquin Murieta

VALDEZ
Gracias, Joaquin Murieta.
(pause)
We're all in pretty bad shape here, I'm afraid.

JOAQUIN
Who are you? What happened to all these people? Where are you going?

VALDEZ
(sighs, looks up at Joaquin)
So many questions. Who are we? Until recently we were prospectors and land-owners in Calaveras County. Some of us had very rich claims.

JOAQUIN
What happened?

VALDEZ

The "Foreign Miners Tax Act",
that's what happened.

Joaquin helps the old man take another sip.

VALDEZ

It's a sham! Even those of us
who could pay the tax were
driven from our claims by the
Rangers. Some from the very
land they were born on. Many
were murdered. We've lost
everything!

Joaquin helps the old man to his feet, gives him another
drink.

VALDEZ

Where are we going? Back to
Mexico. Most of us will die on
the way. The rest will
probably starve when they get
there.

Joaquin looks down the long column of refugees.

JOAQUIN

So many people ...

Valdez shakes his head.

VALDEZ

This is nothing. There are
other refugee groups heading
south. Much larger than this.
Thousands. All starving.

Joaquin points south.

JOAQUIN

Can you see that mountain
pass?

VALDEZ

I'm not dead yet.

JOAQUIN

That pass leads to a valley
called Cantoova. Bring your
people there.

Joaquin mounts Diablo. Valdez looks up at him.

VALDEZ
Bring them there? Why?

JOAQUIN
Why not, old man. What have
you got to lose?

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Candles flicker. Joaquin, distraught, paces back and forth, thinking.

Rosita, arms folded, watches him.

ROSITA
Go back to Mexico without you?
Absolutely not.

Joaquin stops pacing, glares at Rosita.

JOAQUIN
Our lives are in danger every
second we stand on California
soil.
(pause)
You're going.

She puts her hands on his shoulders.

ROSITA
And, Mr. Joaquin Murieta, if
it's so dangerous, why are you
staying?

JOAQUIN
You should have seen them,
Rosita. They're dying.
Hundreds. The old man said
there are thousands more. I
can't just leave them out
there to die.

ROSITA
And you think I can?

EXT. BANDIT CAMP - NIGHT

The seven bandits stand around the campfire.

Three-Fingers, agitated, waves his arms.

THREE-FINGERS

No Joaquin! No! This is by far the stupidest idea you've ever had! We can be back in Mexico in two days with a fortune in gold. Why the hell should we stay here, where we just happen to be wanted dead or alive, and use our money to feed that god-forsaken worthless bunch of beggars!

JOAQUIN

Because the Yanquis have stolen all they have, and without our help they'll all die!

THREE-FINGERS

I don't care!

JOAQUIN

Really? Just like you didn't care when you found two Mexicans near death in a forest and brought them to your camp and nursed them back to life! You don't care? Your full of crap, Garcia!

Three-Fingers stares at Joaquin, stunned.

THREE-FINGERS

(softly)

You never called me "Garcia" before.

JOAQUIN

I was never this mad at you before.

The two men glare at each other.

JOAQUIN

Remember when you told me anybody that gets whipped by the gringos is a friend of yours?

THREE-FINGERS

Si. I remember.

JOAQUIN
 How do you think the one-armed
 boy we saw today got those
 welts on his back?

EXT. BANDIT CAMP - DAY

The bandits, mounted up, ready to travel.

Three-Fingers extends his hand.

THREE-FINGERS
 Adios, Joaquin. My amigo.

Joaquin hesitates, then takes his hand.

JOAQUIN
 Good-bye, Three-Fingers. My
 friend.

The two outlaws hug.

EXT. TOWN - GENERAL STORE - DAY

Joaquin and Rosita load supplies, rifles, and ammunition
 into wagons. They wear wide-brimmed sombreros that hide
 their faces.

EXT. RANCH - DAY

Joaquin gives a rancher a bag of gold for a string of
 horses.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - DAY

Joaquin and Rosita lead the horses and overloaded wagons
 through the narrow mountain pass.

MONTAGE:

SUPER: CANTOOVA - OCTOBER, 1850

LARGE TENT - Joaquin and Rosita distribute supplies.

VALLEY - Refugee families erect tents and shelters.

FIELD - Joaquin teaches refugees how to fire rifles.

EXT. CLIFF - DAY

Joaquin with a dozen teenage Mexicans. Intense faces. All hold rifles.

JOAQUIN

You men are the Cantoova
Scouts. Our eyes and ears. If
anyone comes through the pass,
ride to the large tent. Fast.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Valdez holds the reins of a jittery horse. Joaquin, mounted on Diablo, looks on with a smile.

VALDEZ

Isn't he a beauty Joaquin? I
call him "Cyclone".

JOAQUIN

He looks too high-spirited for
you, old man.

Cyclone pokes Valdez playfully in the shoulder with his snout. Valdez lovingly rubs the horse's face.

VALDEZ

Nonsense! He loves me.
Remember our deal, I'll be a
Cantoova Scout when I show you
I know how to ride and shoot.

JOAQUIN

Let's start with riding.

Valdez sticks his foot in the stirrup, tries to mount Cyclone but the horse moves away. Valdez falls to the ground.

He tries again, same results.

JOAQUIN

Keep practicing, Valdez. You
need it.

Joaquin gallops away. Valdez SHOUTS after him -

VALDEZ

I'll be a Cantoova Scout one
day, Joaquin! You'll see!

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - DAY

Cantoova Scouts watch a ragged stream of one thousand refugees slowly roll into the valley.

ON A LEDGE

Joaquin and Rosita stare at the inflow of humanity.

ROSITA

My God, Joaquin. How will we
feed them all?

Joaquin looks at her, his jaw set.

MONTAGE:

MINING CAMP - DAY - Cantoova Scouts hold American miners at gunpoint. Joaquin loads sacks of gold into a wagon.

TRAIL - DAY - Stage coach. Stopped. Cantoova Scouts level shotguns at the driver and guard. Joaquin removes cash and jewelry from the passengers.

GOLD RUSH SALOON - NIGHT - Joaquin takes a bag of cash from the bartender. Cantoova Scouts hold the patrons at gunpoint.

EXT. CANTOOVA - LARGE TENT - DAY

Joaquin, Rosita, and Valdez sit at a table cleaning Winchesters.

Horses approach. SHOUTS (O.S.) from excited young Mexicans.

HECTOR (17) with a dozen other Scouts, lead a blindfolded young man on horseback, hands tied behind his back.

HECTOR

We caught him, Joaquin!

A crowd of refugees gathers.

The Scouts lead the intruder through the crowd up to Joaquin.

Joaquin studies the blindfolded prisoner, frowns.

JOAQUIN

Reyes?

REYES

Joaquin! Tell these filthy
little urchins to get this
damn blindfold off of me! What
the hell's going on here?

A few Scouts COCK their weapons.

JOAQUIN

Easy. He's a friend.

Joaquin unties Reyes, removes the blindfold. The two
friends hug.

Reyes sees his sister

REYES

Rosita! You're alive!

ROSITA

(crying)

Reyes!

EXT. LARGE TENT - NIGHT

Tequila sits on a table. A lantern flickers.

REYES

They hung Miguel?

JOAQUIN

He was innocent.

Reyes POUNDS the table, weeps.

REYES

Bastards!

Rosita holds him, strokes his hair.

ROSITA

How did you find us?

REYES

Pancho told us what happened.
We sent Miguel to bring you
home. When no one returned, we
gave you up for dead.

(MORE)

REYES (cont'd)
 Then we heard rumors of a
 mysterious valley called
 Cantoova where a great man
 with long black hair had
 created a city and was saving
 thousands of starving refugees
 from the gold fields.

Reyes takes a swig of Tequila, smiles at Joaquin.

REYES)
 I knew it was you.
 (pause)
 There's something you should
 see, Joaquin.

Reyes removes a wadded paper from his pocket, unfolds it,
 lays it on the table.

An excellent likeness of Joaquin's face -

WANTED
 \$20,000.00 REWARD
 FOR THE BANDIT KING
 JOAQUIN MURIETA
 FOR MURDERS, ROBBERIES
 AND NUMEROUS OTHER ATROCITIES
 DEAD OR ALIVE

REYES
 These are everywhere.

Joaquin's eyes meet Rosita's worried look.

MONTAGE:

VALLEY - DAY - Buckboards roll in, loaded with supplies.

TENT - NIGHT - Midwives hold a WAILING new-born infant.

LARGE TENT - NIGHT - Reyes directs young Mexicans in a
 scene from Don Quixote.

FIELD - DAY - Cyclone backs away, Valdez tumbles to the
 turf.

MOUNTAIN PASS - DAY - One thousand new refugees pour in.

FIELD - DAY - Reyes gives rifle lessons.

CANTOOVA - SUNSET - A thousand tents. Twinkling campfires
 stretch to the horizon.

INT. LARGE TENT - DAY

Reyes conducts an acting class. Young Mexicans fill the tent.

On a small stage, Hector plays the role of Don Quixote, SALVADOR (17) kneels before him, playing the role of Sancho.

Salvador, a handsome youth, bears a striking resemblance to Joaquin.

HECTOR

Hast thou read in history of
any, um, any who has or had
higher, ah, mettle in attack?

Reyes leaps onto the stage.

REYES

No! No! No! No! No! Stop!
The enunciation is all wrong!
You're putting the emphasis on
the wrong words!

The crowd LAUGHS.

IN THE AUDIENCE

A stunner, JUANITA (17), smiles.

REYES (O.S.)

Hector, watch me. Listen to
the words and syllables I
emphasize. Concentrate.

Juanita strains to get a better look.

ON STAGE

Reyes assumes a Don Quixote stance, raises his eyes to the ceiling.

REYES

Hast thou read in history of
any who has or had higher
mettle in attack, more spirit
in maintaining it, more
dexterity in wounding or skill
in overthrowing?

SALVADOR

The truth is that I have never
read any history, for I can
neither read nor write!

IN THE AUDIENCE

LAUGHS and APPLAUSE.

Juanita smiles, eyes riveted on Reyes.

EXT. LARGE TENT - DAY

The crowd files out. Reyes stands near the entrance with
Hector and Salvador.

REYES

Well done Salvador. Not only
do you look like Joaquin, you
have his talent for dialog.
Hector, keep practicing.

Reyes turns to leave, bumps into Juanita.

REYES

Excuse me, Senorita.

Juanita extends her hand.

JUANITA

Juanita Pico.

Reyes stares at her, nervously takes her hand.

REYES

Reyes, um, Reyes Feliz.

JUANITA

I know. Everyone in Cantoova
knows you. You're Senor
Joaquin's friend.

REYES

Yes I am.

JUANITA

I love watching you perform.
You're very good. Did you
write it?

Reyes LAUGHS.

JUANITA
What's so funny?

REYES
Did I write Don Quixote? No.
It was written by Cervantes.

JUANITA
Is he a friend of yours?

Reyes LAUGHS again.

REYES
Cervantes lived a long, long
time ago. In Spain.

JUANITA
I can't wait to hear more.

Reyes fidgets.

REYES
You and I could go through
another chapter, I mean, you
know, if you're not busy ...

Reyes still holds Juanita's hand.

MONTAGE:

BANK - DAY - Reyes, Joaquin and Hector come running out
carrying sacks of cash. They leap onto their horses and
gallop away

SALOON - NIGHT - Reyes, Joaquin and Salvador robbing the
place. A cowboy goes for his gun. Reyes cuts him in half
with two blasts from a twelve-gauge.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - DAY

Hector makes hand signals to the other Scouts.

YOUNG FEET

skip across rocks, descend into the pass.

The Scouts COCK rifles, point them at an off-screen enemy.

HECTOR
Hands up! Senor Joaquin
Murieta will decide your fate!

EXT. LARGE TENT - DAY

Joaquin, Rosita, Reyes and Valdez sit at a table, studying newspapers.

REYES

They're blaming us for every robbery and murder from the Rio Grande to Oregon!

ROSITA

What's the difference? They can only hang us once.

JOAQUIN

Listen to this! "The Governor hails the Foreign Miners Tax Act as a great success".

Joaquin angrily crumples up the newspaper, SLAMS it on the ground.

VALDEZ

Gringo animals!

JOAQUIN

They'll never repeal it unless we hit harder! Hit them again and again until --

SHOUTS (O.S.) from young voices.

Joaquin and Rosita look up and LAUGH.

THE SCOUTS

Usher Three-Fingers, Claudio, Valenzuela, Carmela and Mariana, hands tied behind their backs, up to Joaquin.

JOAQUIN

(laughing)

Nice of you to stop by, Three-Fingers. Careful amigos. This is one tough hombre.

HECTOR

Ha! He doesn't look so tough, Joaquin, with his hands tied behind his back and our rifles at his head!

Joaquin and Three-Fingers exchange a knowing look.

THREE-FINGERS
Hands tied behind my back?

He lifts his hands up, the ropes fall off.
He whips out his Colt, FIRES -

KRANG!

The rifle flies out of Hector's hands.

JOAQUIN
Enough! Scouts, back to your
posts. Leave them with me.

EXT. LARGE TENT - NIGHT

Joaquin, Three-Fingers, Claudio, Valenzuela and Reyes pass
around a bottle of Tequila.

Claudio raises his glass.

CLAUDIO
A toast to the infamous Bandit
King. I am honored to be in
your presence, sir.

Joaquin and the Gang share a LAUGH.

JOAQUIN
(serious, to Three-Fingers)
Why did you come back?

THREE-FINGERS
I got bored.

JOAQUIN
And?

THREE-FINGERS
And you will never get them to
repeal the Greaser Act with
petty robberies.

JOAQUIN
You have a better idea?

THREE-FINGERS
Claudio has developed a master
plan for a coordinated series
of attacks, Joaquin. They will
help your cause.

(MORE)

THREE-FINGERS (cont'd)
 You supply the men, we supply
 the know-how. We split the
 loot.

JOAQUIN
 (interested)
 I'm listening.

THREE-FINGERS
 It will require many men.
 Dangerous ventures. But the
 rewards are great. Millions in
 gold. And a knife through the
 heart of the Yanquis
 government.

VALENZUELA
 Three major strikes.
 Marysville, Molekumne Hill,
 and Dead Man's Creek. Major
 American gold centers. None
 have ever been hit before.
 They think they are
 invulnerable.

Joaquin thinks for a moment.

JOAQUIN
 Claudio?

CLAUDIO
 We need many men. Good
 fighting men. We will sustain
 casualties, Joaquin. Careful
 planning is required. I will
 need a few days to work out
 the strategic details.

Joaquin turns to Reyes.

JOAQUIN
 How many of the Cantoova
 Scouts are ready for the real
 thing?

REYES
 I have sixty men I would bet
 my life on. Excellent riders,
 decent shots.
 (pause)
 And they would fight to the
 death on your order, Joaquin.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

A single candle lights the interior.

Joaquin, distraught, paces back and forth, arms folded, deep in thought.

Rosita watches him.

ROSITA

Great leaders have to make
difficult decisions, Joaquin.

Joaquin stops pacing, glares at her.

JOAQUIN

I'm not a great leader.

ROSITA

You are a God to them!

Rosita holds his face, stares into his eyes.

ROSITA

There is no choice. The
Americans will never repeal
without a war.

JOAQUIN

Some of our men will die! It
will be because of my
decision.

ROSITA

They are all volunteers.
(pause)
Like me.

EXT. LARGE TENT - DAY

The outlaws watch Joaquin. Intense. Waiting.

JOAQUIN

We each take twenty Scouts.
Three-Fingers and Carmela hit
Marysville. Claudio,
Valenzuela, and Mariana Dead
Man's Creek. Reyes, Rosita and
I attack Molekumne Hill. We
ride in three days. Lets get
to work.

The Gang CHEERS, applauds Joaquin's decision.

As they walk away, Valenzuela puts an arm around Three-Fingers.

VALENZUELA

If you get bored on your way back from Marysville, you're gonna pass a fat little bank in Downieville. Just waiting to be robbed.

The two bandits LAUGH and walk off into the sunlight.

Claudio and Joaquin walk away from the large tent together.

CLAUDIO

The richest prize of all is Scott's River, Joaquin. But that job would take a small army of trained men, a military operation.

MONTAGE:

FIELD - DAY - Three-Fingers teaching young Scouts to fan SHOTS from a revolver.

SAME - Joaquin showing Scouts how to COCK and FIRE a Winchester on horseback.

SAME - Reyes teaching Scouts how to instantly spur a horse to a gallop.

SAME - Valdez trying to mount Cyclone.

LARGE TENT - Claudio and Valenzuela lecture a class of Scouts. Pasted to the blackboard, a huge map labeled MARYSVILLE.

EXT. LARGE TENT - NIGHT

Joaquin, Three-Fingers, Claudio and Valenzuela hunch over a table. Lanterns FLICKER.

CLAUDIO

Strike at the same time. On the thirtieth, in the afternoon. The Rangers can only devote their attention to one of us.

VALENZUELA

Last time I spotted the
Rangers, Captain Love had
fifty gunmen riding with him.

CLAUDIO

If you see the Rangers, don't
attack. They're much too
strong for us.

Silence. Then -

JOAQUIN

We ride at dawn, amigos.

Three-Fingered Jack hoists a bottle of tequila, guzzles it.
He drains it, WORM AND ALL.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Reyes and Juanita make love.

LATER

They lie together. Juanita's head on Reyes' chest. She
strokes his face.

JUANITA

I'll die if anything happens
to you, Reyes.

REYES

Joaquin is Don Quixote. I'm
Sancho.

(pause)

Nothing can stop us.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

Two big metal buckboards stand in front of the GOLD
CLAIMING OFFICE.

Tough-looking GUARDS lay sacks of gold into the wagons.

SUPER: MOLEKUMNE HILL - NOVEMBER 30, 1850

INT. OFFICE

An OLD CLERK in a top-hat puffs a corn-cob pipe, carefully
weighs gold nuggets on an elaborate silver scale.

EXT. WAGONS

Guards attach teams of horses to the wagons.

More Guards with buffalo rifles watch.

A posse of Guards saddle horses down the street.

JOAQUIN, REYES, HECTOR, and two other Cantoova Scouts stride down the center of the street. All wear long capes and sombreros.

They stop in front of the wagons.

An ALERT GUARD notices.

ALERT GUARD
What the hell are you greasers
lookin' at?

They stand their ground, don't answer.

GUARD
You got a problem?

JOAQUIN
The Foreign Miners Tax Act.

The Guards all LAUGH.

GUARD
Too bad, greaser. Move on
before you piss us off.

The Mexicans hurl back their capes.

REVOLVERS

Fanning, FIRING like crazy.

REYES
(screaming)
Reyes Feliz! Spell it right!

INT. OFFICE

The Old Clerk weighs nuggets, oblivious to the FIRE-FIGHT raging outside.

PING! Bullets bounce off the scale.

RIP! The top-hat flies off his head.

SNAP! His corn-cob pipe disintegrates.

OLD CLERK
Chee-rist!

He dives under the table.

STREET

Guards falling.
One gets off a SHOT.

A Scout clutches his chest, stumbles, bites the dust.

Down the street, Guards SHOUT and SHOOT and charge toward the Mexicans.

Another Scout goes down.

JOAQUIN
Take the wagons!

The charging Guards, almost on top of them -

ROSITA (O.S.)
Now!

RIFLEFIRE (O.S.)

ROSITA

And a dozen Scouts burst out of an alley, Winchesters BLAZING, decimating the charging Guards.

JOAQUIN

Jumps into the first wagon.

REYES AND HECTOR

Into the second.

ROSITA

And the Scouts mount up. Some ride double carrying the wounded.

CIVILIANS

Run into the street, SHOUTING, running at the Mexicans, SHOOTING.

REYES.

Hit. Grabs his arm, slumps in the seat.

INT. CANTOOVA - LARGE TENT - DAY

Juanita, Valdez and several older Mexicans lay out blankets, prepare bandages, get ready for casualties.

Juanita grabs her arm, GASPS, falls.

Valdez catches her.

VALDEZ
Juanita! What is it!

JUANITA
(wincing)
The pain!

EXT. STREET

Hector grabs the reins, holds Reyes, WHIPS the horses.

Joaquin and the wagons take off down the street, followed by Rosita and the platoon of Scouts.

CIVILIAN #1
Mount up, men! After them!

The other civilians stare at him.

CIVILIAN #2
That was Murieta.

CIVILIAN #1
He's got our gold!

They stare at each other, then at the trail of dust kicked up by the rampaging outlaws.

CIVILIAN #2
We can always get more gold.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

A steel buckboard loaded with bags of gold bounces along at a comfortable pace.

Two Guards in the wagon. One drives, the other holds a shotgun, surveys the surrounding woods.

SUPER: MARYSVILLE - NOVEMBER 30, 1850

A dozen Guards with rifles ride behind the wagon.

EXT. WOODS

Three-Fingers and Carmela sit on horseback with Salvador and twenty Cantoova Scouts.

Three-Fingers lights a cigarette, turns to Salvador.

THREE-FINGERS
(quietly)
Leave one alive.

EXT. ROAD

The wagon slowly RUMBLES.
The Guards study the woods ahead of them.

EXT. WOODS

The Bandits gallop out behind the Guards.

GUARD
Ambush!

WAGON

The driver WHIPS the horses.

ROAD

Guards gallop with the wagon, SHOOTING at the bandits behind them.

BANDITS

Chasing. Two Cantoova Scouts grab their hearts and fall.

THREE-FINGERS

Draws his Colt.

SCOUTS

COCK their Winchesters.
They FIRE a volley.

FOUR GUARDS

Blown out of their saddles.

WAGON

Careening down the road.
The driver struggles for control.

ROAD

The Guards FIRE back.

TWO MORE SCOUTS

Pitch from their horses.

THREE-FINGERS AND THE SCOUTS

Answer with a HAIL of bullets.

ROAD

Littered with corpses. All the Guards blown into eternity

THREE-FINGERS

Spurs his stallion.

THREE-FINGERS
Get the wagon!

The Bandits spur their horses toward the unprotected wagon
of gold.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE WAGON

Stopped, surrounded by Cantoova Scouts holding rifles
trained on the Driver and Guard.

Three-Fingers sits on his stallion holding a revolver. He
leans toward the Driver.

THREE-FINGERS
What's my name?

DRIVER
I... I...

Three-Fingers gives the driver a disgusted look, turns to
the Guard.

THREE-FINGERS

What's my name?

The Guard looks tough, unafraid. He replies in an even voice.

BRAVE GUARD

I've seen your picture. You're
Three-Fingered Jack Garcia.

THREE-FINGERS

Who's my partner?

GUARD

The newspapers say your
partner's the Bandit King,
Joaquin Murieta.

THREE-FINGERS

Good. You win.

Three-Fingers smiles at the Guard, yanks the trigger -

BANG!

A BULLET HOLE

Between the eyes of the Driver.
The corpse THUMPS to the ground.

The Guard trembles. Three-Fingers smiles.

THREE-FINGERS

Relax. We're gonna let you go.
Walk down the road. There's
plenty of extra horses.

He lights a cigarette, offers it to the Guard. Terrified,
the Guard shakes his head "no".

THREE-FINGERS

When you get back to
Marysville, tell them Joaquin
Murieta wants the Greaser Act
repealed.

(pause)

Or the rivers will run red
with Yanquis blood.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

Miners load sacks of gold into an iron buckboard.

SUPER: DEAD MAN'S CREEK - NOVEMBER 30, 1850

Several Guards lounge nearby, chatting.

EXT. STREET

Galloping, straight for the wagon, a band of Mexicans wearing capes and sombreros.

CLAUDIO, VALENZUELA, MARIANA and a squad of Cantoova Scouts, BLASTING at the Guards and miners.

Several Guards grab their chests and fall.

Guards FIRE back with rifles, two draw revolvers and fan off SHOTS at the outlaws.

EXT. WOODS

Captain Love and the Rangers hear the GUNFIRE.

CAPTAIN LOVE

Let's go men!

WILSON

Murieta?

ONE-EYE

Get him!

Captain Love and the Rangers GALLOP away.

EXT. TOWN

The battle rages.

Several Scouts lie dead in the street.

The Guards retreat, reloading.

VALENZUELA

Leaps into the wagon.

CANTOOVA SCOUTS

SHOOT like crazy giving him cover.

VALENZUELA

WHIPS the horses.

The wagon takes off down the street.

The Bandits gallop off behind the wagon.

Guards SHOUT, mount up.

EXT. STREET

Captain Love and the Rangers, charging, FIRING, on a collision course with the careening wagon.

CLAUDIO

The first to notice the ambush.

CLAUDIO
Rangers! Take cover!

VALENZUELA

Strains. The wagon slides, flips over.
Valenzuela sprawls onto the dusty street.

MARIANA

Screams from across the street.

MARIANA
Valenzuela!

VALENZEULA

Struggles to his feet, winces with pain.
He grabs his leg and falls.

VALENZUELA
Run! Mariana! Save yourself!

GUARDS

Charge the Mexicans from the rear, SHOOTING.

CLAUDIO

Clutches his throat, falls in the street.

CANTOOVA SCOUTS

Clutch their chests, stagger, fall.

MARIANA

And two Scouts disappear down an alley.

VALENZUELA

Sits in the street, hands raised, surrounded by Rangers.

CAPTAIN LOVE

Dismounts.

He examines the Mexican bodies in the street.

He roll the corpses over with his boot, studies the faces.

CAPTAIN LOVE
(to Valenzuela)
Where is he?

VALENZUELA
In your nightmares.

Love COCKS his Colt, presses the muzzle against Valenzuela's temple.

CAPTAIN LOVE
Talk or die!

VALENZUELA
Go on, shoot. Joaquin Murieta
will see you in hell!

EXT. CANTOOVA - LARGE TENT - NIGHT

The iron wagons stand outside the large tent. A dozen torches flicker.

Valdez and other elderly Mexicans carry sacks of gold into the tent.

INT. LARGE TENT

Mexican women treat several wounded Scouts.

JOAQUIN

Kneels next to Reyes. Juanita strokes Reyes' hair, Rosita holds his hand.

JOAQUIN
How bad?

Reyes touches his left arm, wrapped in blood-stained bandages.

REYES
Just a scratch.

ROSITA
The bullet went through clean.

SALVADOR

Enters the tent. Joaquin turns to him.

SALVADOR
We were successful, Joaquin.
But we lost some men.

JOAQUIN
Three-Fingers and Carmela?

SALVADOR
Unhurt. He told us to return
to Cantoova without him. He
said he and Carmela had some
unfinished business to take
care of.

Joaquin frowns.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

A sleepy backwater town. A saloon, general store, Sheriff's
Office, and the

DOWNIEVILLE BANK

Three-Fingers and Carmela trot down the town's only street
on two magnificent stallions.

A few civilians sit on porches, hardly taking notice. They
sleep, whittle, PLAY the harmonica.

Except for one guy wearing a COONSKIN HAT, sitting on a
rocking chair near The Bank. He sits up, studies THREE-
FINGERED JACK'S FACE.

COONSKIN HAT'S POV

Three-Fingers and Carmela trot by, right in front of him,
past the Bank, past everything, all the way to the end of
the street.

They turn around and trot back. Faster. More purposeful.

Coonskin hat, alert, intrigued.

The couple rides up to The Bank, dismounts, ties up their
horses.

Three-Fingers checks a revolver for ammunition. Carmela WHIPS a Winchester out of a saddle-holster.

They stride into the bank.

Coonskin hat leaps from the rocker, runs down the street, past the saloon and the general store, into -

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Coonskin Hat rushes in, excited, out of breath.

COONSKIN HAT
Sheriff, what's the reward for
Three-Fingered Jack Garcia?

THE SHERIFF, a big tough-looking man with a handlebar mustache, sits at his desk, feet up, polishing a rifle.

He doesn't look up.

SHERIFF
Three thousand dollars.

COONSKIN HAT
How about Carmela Vasquez?

He looks up.

SHERIFF
Two thousand. Why?

COONSKIN HAT
'Cause their robbin' your bank
right this goddamned minute!

INT. BANK

Three-Fingers and Carmela walk backwards toward the door, each with a sack of cash in one hand and a gun in the other.

The Teller stands at his window, hands held high, sweating, looking at -

The Bank Guard, tied to a chair, blindfolded, a gag in his mouth.

The Bandits back out the door.

EXT. STREET

The Sheriff, Coonskin Hat, and two other mean-looking guys
COCK rifles.

SHERIFF
Drop it, Garcia!

Three-Fingers and Carmela turn around slowly.

BANG!

Three-Fingers fires a SHOT. The Sheriff goes down in a
heap.

BOOM! BOOM!

Coonskin hat and the other two BLAST away.

A bullet rips into Three-Fingers shoulder.
His Colt goes flying.

Carmela's chest explodes in blood.
She collapses at the bank's door. She SCREAMS to her lover -

CARMELA
Run, querido! Run!

BOOM!
She gets off one shot.

It shatters Coonskin Hat's shoulderblade.
He SCREAMS, goes down on all fours.

Three-Fingers jumps on his horse, gets out his rifle, but -

BOOM! BOOM!

The other two men FIRE first.

Three-Fingers jerks. Hit. Lurches, hit again.

He spurs the stallion, slumps over.

The horse gallops out of town with Three-Fingers hanging
on.

CARMELA

Lies slumped against the Bank's door, bleeding, gasping for
oxygen.

The two men cautiously approach, rifles pointed at her head.

Carmela SPITS bloody saliva at them.

CARMELA
Bastardos!

EXT. CANTOOVA - LARGE TENT - DAY

Mariana and the two Scouts that survived the Rangers' attack trot up, a dozen young Mexicans lead their horses.

Joaquin rushes out of the tent.

JOAQUIN
 Mariana!

MARIANA
 Joaquin! It was horrible! So horrible! The blood!

She falls out of the saddle into Joaquin's arms.

JOAQUIN
 Easy Mariana. You're safe.
 What happened?

MARIANA
 The Rangers! The Rangers attacked! There were so many of them! They kept shooting and shooting and the blood was everywhere and ...

JOAQUIN
 Where is everyone else?

MARIANA
They're dead! All dead.
 Claudio, all the Scouts. And they ... they captured my Valenzuela!

Mariana faints in Joaquin's arms. He looks at his hand, covered with blood.

INT. LARGE TENT

Joaquin lays Mariana, unconscious, on a blanket next to Reyes.

JOAQUIN
 Reyes, they captured Valenzuela. Can you ride?

Reyes struggles to his feet, wincing in pain.

REYES

Of course.

Juanita grabs him.

JUANITA

No! You can't!

Reyes gently frees himself from her grasp.
He kisses her.

REYES

Yes I can, mi amor.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Wooded terrain. Captain Love, Wilson, and One-eye trot down the road leading a horse carrying

VALENZUELA

The bandit blind-folded, gagged, hands tied behind his back.

Captain Love FROWNS, raises his hand. The four riders stop.

A faint RUMBLE. Growing LOUDER. Like distant thunder.

Wilson gets a small telescope out of his saddlebag, looks down the road.

TELESCOPE POV

Reyes, galloping, holding his own telescope, looking right back at Wilson.

Wilson pans the telescope left to

JOAQUIN

Shoulder-length hair and white bandana flying.

Reyes and Joaquin lead a dozen Cantoova Scouts, charging straight at Wilson.

BACK TO SCENE

Wilson puts the telescope down.

LOVE
Problem?

WILSON
Murieta.

Wilson hands the telescope to Captain Love. He looks through it, assesses the situation, calmly gives the order -

LOVE
Run for it.

Love, Wilson, and One-eye spur their horses and lead the blindfolded Valenzuela headlong down the road. The THUNDER grows LOUDER.

As they gather speed

ONE-EYE

Draws his Colt and FIRES a bullet into Valenzuela's blindfolded head. The bandit spills out of the saddle.

LOVE
Are you crazy?!

ONE-EYE
He was nothin' but a greaser
and he was slowin' us down!

The three Rangers gallop into the woods.

EXT. WOODS - CLEARING

Captain Love, Wilson, and One-eye, hands in the air, surrounded by Joaquin, Reyes and the Scouts.

Reyes rides up and disarms Captain Love and Wilson. He reaches for One-eye's revolver.

JOAQUIN
Leave it, Reyes.

Reyes turns toward Joaquin, surprised.

JOAQUIN
He'll need it.

Reyes nods knowingly, trots away.

One-eye looks to Captain Love, then to Wilson, then to Joaquin.

ONE-EYE
What's goin' on?

JOAQUIN
Valenzuela was a friend of
mine you bastard.
(pause)
And you missed the party with
Mountain Jim.
(pause)
Now draw.

ONE-EYE
(panicking)
I got no chance against you!
Lookit, Murieta, Mountain Jim
made me do it --

JOAQUIN
Draw, or I'll shoot you down
like el scum mugriento que
usted es.

One-eye goes for his gun.

Joaquin draws, FIRES once, puts a bullet through One-eye's
heart.

THUD!

The corpse hits the dirt.

Joaquin rides Diablo slowly around Captain Love and Wilson,
studying them. Reyes and the Scouts train their rifles on
the two Rangers.

JOAQUIN
You're Captain Harry Love.

LOVE
And you're the most wanted man
in California.

JOAQUIN
Do the California Rangers
normally employ rapists and
murderers like our dead One-
eyed friend here?

LOVE
I was gonna shoot that scum
myself. But you should talk!
(MORE)

LOVE (cont'd)

When I look at the savages you
ride with it's like looking at
a wall full of wanted posters.

Joaquin stops Diablo, stands face-to-face with the Ranger
leader.

JOAQUIN

Three-Fingered Jack Garcia
once told me you were a good
man. Why do you persecute my
people?

LOVE

They're breaking the law.

JOAQUIN

By trying to earn an honest
living? The law is wrong!

LOVE

I don't make the law. I
enforce it.

JOAQUIN

Even if it's evil?

LOVE

Right and wrong isn't my job.
I'm a soldier. I follow
orders.

JOAQUIN

Isn't that a very dangerous
way to think in this so-called
democracy of yours?

LOVE

Life is dangerous. Life isn't
fair.

(pause)

Go ahead. Shoot. Get it over
with.

Wilson's eyes BULGE. Joaquin turns to Reyes.

JOAQUIN

Let them go.

REYES

What! Joaquin, maybe we should

--

JOAQUIN
Permita que ellos vayan!

Reyes and the Scouts part, making a path for Captain Love and Wilson to leave.

CAPTAIN LOVE
 This doesn't change anything,
 Murieta. If the situation were
 reversed, I'd gun you down.

Several Scouts COCK rifles. Joaquin raises his hand.

JOAQUIN
 Then maybe you learned
 something today.

EXT. LARGE TENT - NIGHT

Torches flicker. Joaquin, Reyes and the Scouts trot slowly toward the tent. Valenzuela's body lies across the saddle of an extra horse.

Mariana and Rosita run up to them.

MARIANA
 Joaquin! Did you find him?

She runs from Scout to Scout, studying their faces. She runs to Joaquin.

MARIANA
 What happened? Where is he --

She sees the corpse, SCREAMS, falls on top of the body, crying, clutching the head. Rosita gently pulls her away.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - NIGHT

Three-Fingers rides slowly, slumped forward in his saddle, his head resting on the mane of the huge stallion.

He MOANS as the magnificent animal walks slowly into Cantoova.

He faints, falls from the saddle.
 A dozen Scouts catch him.

INT. LARGE TENT - DAY

Three-Fingers, eyes closed, lies flat on his back on a Mexican blanket. Bloody bandages cover his shoulder and chest.

His eyes flutter open. He sees

JOAQUIN

A somber look on his face.

Three-Fingers reaches, grabs Joaquin's shirt, pulls him closer.

THREE-FINGERS

Joaquin! They've got Carmela.
We've got to get some men and
guns and --

Joaquin lays a hand gently on his friend's shoulder.

JOAQUIN

All we can do is pray for her,
amigo.

He slowly hands Three-Fingers a newspaper. Three-Fingers sees the front-page article -

"FIRST WOMAN HANGED IN CALIFORNIA!"

"CARMELA VASQUEZ, A MEMBER OF JOAQUIN MURIETA'S ARMY OF CUTTHROATS AND MISTRESS OF THE OUTLAW THREE-FINGERED JACK GARCIA, WAS HANGED YESTERDAY IN DOWNIEVILLE. A SMALL CROWD WATCHED AS ..."

Three-Fingers drops the newspaper and shuts his eyes. A tear rolls down his scarred cheek. His face twists in rage.

THREE-FINGERS

I'm goin' back to that Bank,
Joaquin! With a platoon of
Scouts this time! I'm gonna
rob it again and shoot
everybody in that two-bit
town! I'm gonna ... I'm gonna
...

He passes out. Joaquin covers him with a blanket.

EXT. CANTOOVA - DAY

A Mexican PRIEST makes the sign of the cross. Joaquin, Three-Fingers, Reyes, Rosita, Juanita, Mariana, Valdez, and a thousand others follow suit.

A wooden cross sticks out of the dirt, inscribed with
"VALENZUELA"

PRIEST

May god give us the strength
to carry on. Pueda la muerte
de Valenzuela no ser en vano.

JOAQUIN ET AL

Amen.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - DAY

In the background, the tent city sprawls on the valley floor.

Joaquin and Reyes lie prone on a large boulder, peering through telescopes. A group of Scouts behind them.

TELESCOPE POV

A long column of U.S. Army cavalry heading West, away from Cantoova. Not a threat.

The telescope pans along the column of soldiers and stops on a flat-bed wagon carrying a large-mouth iron cannon. An honest-to-God artillery piece.

BACK TO SCENE

Joaquin and Reyes put down the telescopes, look at each other and smile.

JOAQUIN

Bring the apples.

EXT. CAVALRY CAMP - NIGHT

A SENTRY strolls past the flat-bed carrying the cannon, WHISTLING, smoking a pipe -

WHUMP!

Joaquin knocks him cold with the butt of a revolver.

Joaquin and Reyes slowly approach the two horses attached to the flat-bed. They feed the animals apples and carrots.

They gently cover the horses' mouths, slowly lead them away from the army camp, into the night.

The flat-bed CREAKS and GROANS slightly as it rolls away.

Three Scouts with Mexican blankets erase the tracks in the dirt. The bandits disappear into the darkness.

INT. GOVERNOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The Governor lounges in a plush chair in the scrumptious office. He sips a brandy.

A KNOCK on the door.

GOVERNOR

Yes?

The door opens. His SECRETARY walks in.

SECRETARY

Captain Love to see you, Sir.

GOVERNOR

Send him in.

Captain Love strides in, walks to the Governor.

LOVE

Good evening, Sir.

They shake hands. The Governor motions to a chair. Captain Love sits.

GOVERNOR

I heard you wanted to see me, Harry. Help yourself to a brandy, if you like.

LOVE

No, thanks.

GOVERNOR

What's on your mind?

LOVE
I've been thinking, Sir, about
the Foreign Miner's Tax Act.

GOVERNOR
(laughing)
You mean the "Greaser Act",
don't you?

The Governor LAUGHS again. Love remains stoic.

GOVERNOR
What about it?

LOVE
I think you should repeal it.

The Governor gets up, walks to his desk.

GOVERNOR
Run that by me again?

LOVE
I think you should repeal the
Tax Act.

GOVERNOR
I don't believe it. I thought
if there was one man in
California with the backbone
to stand up to Murieta and his
cutthroats, it was you. Now
you're sitting here telling me
you don't have the stomach for
the fight.

LOVE
That's not at all what I'm
saying, Governor.

GOVERNOR
No? Why else would the most
decorated officer in the whole
damn Mexican-American war want
me to cave in to a horde of
filthy Greaser slime?

LOVE
Because the Tax Act is wrong.

GOVERNOR

Let's get something straight, Harry, I was elected to govern California. You were hired to enforce the law.

(pause)

Let me show you something.

The Governor picks up a thick pile of papers from his desk.

GOVERNOR

A petition with twenty thousand signatures, Harry, demanding that I do whatever it takes to stop Murieta.

LOVE

The attacks will stop if you repeal the Tax Act.

GOVERNOR

That's not an option!

The Governor tosses the stack of paper on the desk with a THUD!

GOVERNOR

I signed documents today doubling the Ranger payroll. You'll have one-hundred of the top gunmen in the state riding with you.

The Governor refills his brandy.

GOVERNOR

If you want the job. You want out? Just say so. Wilson would take over in a heartbeat.

(pause)

But if you walk out on me, you might as well sign-on with Murieta and ride with him, because you'll never work in law-enforcement again.

Love sits in shock.

LOVE

(faintly)

I think I'll have that brandy now.

The Governor pours him a glass, hands it to him. Captain Love takes a gulp.

GOVERNOR

What's it going to be? Does Harry Love go down in history as one of the great soldiers of our time? Or will he be remembered as the Benedict Arnold of the gold rush?

(pause)

In or out, Harry?

Love thinks.

CAPTAIN LOVE

(softly)

I'm in.

GOVERNOR

Good. Now bring me Murieta's long-haired head, and Garcia's three-fingered hand.

(pause)

And I mean that literally.

EXT. CANTOOVA - NIGHT

A remote spot under a tree. The galaxy of campfires in the tent-city twinkle in the distance.

Reyes and Juanita sit together, stargazing.

REYES

It's only a reconnaissance mission. There's no danger. I won't be gone long.

JUANITA

There's something you should know, Reyes. I was going to wait until you got back but I think I should tell you now.

Reyes stares at her lovingly. She hesitates.

JUANITA

There are three of us.

Reyes, stunned, caresses Juanita's face tenderly in his hands, then kisses her for a long time.

REYES

Let's get married when I get
back, we'll get a, I mean,
that is, if you want to, we
could ...

Juanita GIGGLES as the infamous Outlaw-Actor fumbles for
words.

JUANITA

Yes, I'll marry you Reyes.

They LAUGH, hug, kiss and fall to the ground on top of each
other.

EXT. LARGE TENT - DAY

Reyes, Hector and Salvador, dressed in deerskin, mount up.
Joaquin, Rosita and Juanita stand next to them.

Juanita hands Reyes a book. "Don Quixote".

JUANITA

Maybe the three of you can
find time to practice at
night.

Juanita and Reyes hold hands.

JOAQUIN

Send us word, Reyes. I know
Claudio and Valenzuela taught
you well. The raid on Scott's
River is your decision.

REYES

Usted puede contar con mí,
Joaquin.

Reyes, Hector, and Salvador gallop off toward the Northern
Pass.

Rosita puts an arm around Juanita.

ROSITA

Vaya con dios, my brother.

JUANITA

El corazón está con usted, my
love.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

A single candle flickers on a small wooden table, with a crucifix, a half-empty bottle of Tequila, a Colt revolver, a grainy photo of Valenzuela and Mariana, and a piece of paper and a quill pen.

TIGHT ON the piece of paper - the writing in beautiful script -

MY DEAREST FRIENDS,

I LOVE YOU AND WILL MISS YOU DEEPLY, BUT I MUST LEAVE YOU NOW TO JOIN MY VALENZUELA.

BACK TO SCENE

Mariana covers her head with a black shawl.

ON THE CANVAS TENT WALL

Candlelight flickers.

BANG! (O.S.)

Blood splatters the canvas.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

A hill overlooks the SCOTT'S RIVER GOLD CLAIMING OFFICE.

MAIN STREET

Crowded with prospectors.
People stream in and out of the Gold Claiming Office.

WOODS

Reyes, Hector and Salvador lie on the hill, faces painted black, peering into small telescopes.

TELESCOPE POV

A dozen armed Guards stand near the Office door, alert, constantly looking up and down the street.

EXT. CANTOOVA - SUNSET

Joaquin and Rosita stroll alone on the hill they camped on when they first came into the valley.

The enormous tent-city in the background.

JOAQUIN

Mariana gone. By her own hand.
What a loss!

ROSITA

She lost Valenzuela. Her only
love. God only knows what I'd
do if I lost you.

JOAQUIN

If we had it to do all over
again, would you come with me?

ROSITA

Yes.

JOAQUIN

Why? I've led you into nothing
but pain and blood. We're
wanted criminals, hunted like
dogs! Why would you come?

Rosita touches his cheek softly, kisses him.

ROSITA

Te amo, Joaquin.

Rosita points to the tents and campfires stretching to the
horizon.

ROSITA

And don't you think god meant
you to be here? You've saved
thousands, given an entire
nation hope.

(pause)

Yes. I would still come with
you.

They walk in silence for a moment.

ROSITA

And there's something else.

JOAQUIN

What?

ROSITA

We're not alone.

Joaquin hesitates for a moment then he hugs Rosita. He lays his large hand on her stomach.

JOAQUIN
This child will live. I swear
it!

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Reyes, Salvador and Hector sit close together around a small campfire.

REYES
Salvador, you leave for
Cantoova at dawn, with the map
of the town and the plans for
the raid. Hector and I will
stay here and gather more
information.

SALVADOR
Understood.

HECTOR
The best time to attack is at
month-end. In about three
weeks.

REYES
The Claiming Office will be
overflowing with gold.

EXT. CANTOOVA - FIELD - DAY

A scarecrow made of sticks, adorned with a ten-gallon hat and huge painted blue eyes, gazing balefully at -

THE ARMY CANNON

Pointed at the scarecrow, a hundred yards away.

Valdez and a few Scouts adjust the weapon.

VALDEZ
Here goes.

The old man lights a match, touches the fuse. They cover their ears.

KA-BOOM!

The shell WHISTLES through the air.

Joaquin, Three-Fingers and three-thousand refugees stare at the scarecrow.

BLAM!

The shell EXPLODES twenty yards short, leaving the scarecrow untouched.

Joaquin looks at Three-Fingers, shakes his head.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Reyes and Hector, prone, peering through telescopes.

HECTOR

We've been in the woods for weeks.

Reyes squints, smiles.

REYES

I think you miss that little senorita in Cantoova, Hector. The one with the long hair and big smile. What is her name again?

HECTOR

Margarita.

REYES

Ah, yes. Margarita.

Hector adjusts the focus.

HECTOR

Don't you ache for Juanita?

REYES

I don't want to talk about it.

EXT. CANTOOVA

Valdez lights the fuse.

KA-BOOM!

WHISTLING in.

BLAM!

Ten yards too far, but the blast blows off the scarecrow's ten-gallon hat.

A hopeful GASP from the throng of refugees looking on.

EXT. WOODS

Reyes and Hector, LAUGHING. Reyes puts down his telescope.

REYES

Maybe tonight we can head into
Calaveras County for a bath
and a drink.

HECTOR

I hear there's a Cantina
there.

(pause)

Full of señoritas.

EXT. CANTOOVA

Valdez makes the sign of the cross, lights the fuse -

KA-BOOM!

The shell WHISTLES.

The multitude watches, dead quiet.

BLAM!

The scarecrow disintegrates.

The crowd CHEERS.

Joaquin and Three-Fingers shake hands. Smile.

EXT. SALOON - NIGHT

Ragtime MUSIC, lively CHATTER from inside.

Reyes and Hector walk towards the swinging doors. The boys,
cleaned up real good, in street clothes. Both wear guns.

INT. SALOON

Piano and banjo MUSIC. Crowded. Filled with prospectors,
cowboys, dance-hall girls.

Hector and Reyes, at the bar, LAUGHING and drinking whisky,
entertaining two FLOOZIES twice their age.

Reyes picks up a half-empty bottle to refill everybody's glass.

The MUSIC stops. Dead quiet.

CAPTAIN LOVE (O.S.)
If it isn't Reyes Feliz and
Hector Sanchez. Must be outlaw
night.

Reyes and Hector shut up. The Floozies back away.
The boys turn slowly.

Captain Love, Wilson, and three other Rangers have shotguns leveled at them.

Reyes lifts his hands.

LOVE
You too, Hector. Get 'em up.

Hector goes for his Colt.

The Rangers BLOW him into history.

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Reyes, alone, on a bunk, head in his hands.

Keys JINGLE (O.S.). The iron door GROANS open.

Captain Love and Wilson enter the cell.

Reyes stands. Love and Reyes stare silently at each other for a moment, then -

SMACK!

Love backhands Reyes across the face.
Reyes staggers backwards, SNEERS at the Captain -

REYES
You hit like an old woman!

Love turns to Wilson.

LOVE
Leave me alone with him.

Wilson smiles, nods knowingly, leaves the cell.
He shuts the iron door.

LOVE

Lock it.

Wilson locks it, strides away with a few other Rangers,
LAUGHING.

REYES

El puerco yanqui!

Love checks the cell block. Empty

LOVE

Shut up. There isn't much
time. Where's the raid?

REYES

Ha! You've got to be kidding,
gringo swine!

LOVE

There are one hundred top-guns
waiting to ambush Murieta. If
I don't know where the raid
is, I can't help him.

(pause)

Know this. They will torture
you. You will beg for death.
You will talk.

REYES

No I won't!

LOVE

After you tell them where the
raid is, they'll keep at it.
They want the location of your
refugee camp. They'll kill
every living thing in it.

REYES

Why should I trust you?

LOVE

You have no choice. When they
make you talk, Murieta and his
movement will be destroyed.
The Greaser Act will be the
law of the land. Forever.

VOICES in the hallway.

Love draws his revolver. COCKS it.

LOVE
No pain. I swear.

The VOICES get closer.
Reyes agonizes.

Reyes GRABS Love by the shirt, pulls him close, whispers something in his ear.

Their eyes meet.

LOVE
(whispers)
Scream.

REYES
Why? I'm not afraid.

LOVE
You're supposed to be the
famous Outlaw-Actor! Scream,
dammit!

Reyes SCREAMS. Love BELTS him in the solar-plexus.
Reyes falls to the cell floor, vomiting.

The VOICES are right on top of them.
Love aims the Colt at the back of Reyes head.

LOVE
(sotto whisper)
Goodbye, brave one.

Love FIRES.

A TEAR rolls from his eye.

FOOTSTEPS scurry to the cell.

Wilson unlocks the door.

LOVE
(to Wilson)
Couldn't get a damn thing out
of the little bastard.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Juanita, MUMBLING in her sleep.

JUANITA
No ... no!

She jumps up, holding her head, SCREAMING.

Rosita rushes into the tent.

ROSITA
Juanita, what is it?

JUANITA
My head! The pain!

Rosita sits on the bed and comforts her.

ROSITA
It was just a bad dream.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Love, Wilson, and another Ranger named MCCARTHY drink whisky, smoke cigars.

They study a large map on the wall.

MCCARTHY
It's gotta be nearby.

LOVE
What makes you so sure?

MCCARTHY
The guy in the bathhouse said they stunk like animals when they came in. Like they'd been in the woods for weeks.

WILSON
McCarthy's right, Captain. Murieta sends two of his top men into the wilderness for a vacation?
(pause)
They were planning the next raid.

Love knocks back a shot of whisky.

LOVE
Maybe.

Wilson walks to the map, points.

WILSON

San Gabriel, Ornetas, Scott's
River. It's one of the three.

MCCARTHY

I'll bet it's Scott's River.

LOVE

I don't think so. Too well
protected.

WILSON

McCarthy might be right,
Captain. Murieta leads an army
of outlaws. He'll do anything
to get what he wants. What
better target than the biggest
of them all?

Love downs a shot, studies Wilson and McCarthy.

LOVE

We take thirty men each and
split up. McCarthy, you cover
San Gabriel. Wilson, you take
Ornetas. I'll take Scott's
River.

Wilson and McCarthy look surprised.

MCCARTHY

With all due respect, Captain,
I don't think splitting up is
a good idea --

WILSON

He's right Captain, we should
concentrate all our forces on
Scott's Riv --

Love BANGS his fist on the desk -

LOVE

Those are my orders,
gentlemen!

(pause)

I expect them to be obeyed.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

A dozen Cantoova Scouts work with shovels, digging a deep
trench.

MONTAGE:

WOODS - Joaquin inserts shells into a Colt.

GOLD CLAIMING OFFICE - A deputy spins the barrel of a revolver.

WOODS - Three-Fingers loads a shotgun.

SALOON - Captain Love pushes bullets into the magazine of a Winchester.

WOODS - Valdez mounts Cyclone, COCKS a rifle.

EXT. WOODS

Joaquin, Three-Fingers and forty Cantoova Scouts on horseback.

Salvador gallops up, shakes his head "no".

JOAQUIN

Where the hell are they?

SALVADOR

The wagon's almost ready to leave.

THREE-FINGERS

We have to ride, Joaquin.

Joaquin hesitates, looks desperately into the woods, then turns to the troops.

JOAQUIN

Remember the plan, men!

EXT. GOLD CLAIMING OFFICE

Officials load sacks of gold into an iron wagon. A dozen serious Guards watch, check their weapons.

INT. OFFICE

Clerks weigh gold, mark sacks. Prospectors stand in line, chat casually.

EXT. CANNON MUZZLE

PUSH-IN until it fills the frame.

KA-BOOM!

EXT. OFFICE

The shell WHISTLES. Guards jerk their heads. Wondering.
The WHISTLE, louder and LOUDER -

EXT. STREET

Joaquin and twenty Scouts, SCREAMING, gallop straight for
the wagon.

INT. OFFICE

Clerks and miners chat casually.

BLAM!

The room erupts in fire and smoke. People SHRIEK.

EXT. OFFICE

Demolished. On fire.
Bodies in the street. Guards take cover as -

JOAQUIN

And the Scouts charge them, FIRING like crazy.

The Guards SHOOT back.

Two, three, four Scouts fall from their saddles.

The Mexicans return the VOLLEY.

Guards slump dead near the wagon.

CAPTAIN LOVE

And thirty Rangers galloping, rifles BLAZING.

JOAQUIN AND THE MEXICANS

Caught in a crossfire. Three, four, five more Scouts fall.

THREE-FINGERS

And twenty Scouts fan shots, stampede into the battle.

JOAQUIN

Jumps off Diablo. Reloads his Colt.
A wounded guard ten feet away staggers to his feet.

He aims his Winchester at Joaquin's back.

VALDEZ

Galloping on Cyclone, COCKS his Colt, BLOWS the Guard away.

THREE-FINGERS

Charges past the iron wagon, Guards BLASTING.

He leaps off his stallion, stands back-to-back with Joaquin. The two marksmen fan off SHOT after SHOT. The battle RAGES around them.

THREE-FINGERS

Valdez says "Buenos dias".

JOAQUIN

Tell him "Gracias".

CAPTAIN LOVE

Aims, Joaquin dead in his sights.
He lowers the rifle.

Joaquin notices. So does Three-Fingers. He aims.

THREE-FINGERS

One for our Country.

He squeezes the trigger. Joaquin grabs his arm. The SHOT misses.

THREE-FINGERS

What the hell --

LOVE

(to Joaquin)

Shoot me.

JOAQUIN

What?

Love spurs his horse, over his shoulder -

LOVE

In the arm, dammit!

Joaquin COCKS the Colt, aims, FIRES.

Love grabs his arm, slumps in his saddle.

CANNON MUZZLE

Push in. KA-BOOM!

OFFICE

Engulfed in flames.
The SHOOTING stops. The shell WHISTLES in.

A PAIR OF BLUE EYES

darts back and forth.

STREET

The shell EXPLODES amidst the Rangers, blowing a few out of their saddles. One sails in the air, THUDS against a wall.

JOAQUIN

Take the wagon!

WAGON

Two Scouts leap in. One grabs the reins, WHIPS the horses.

A Guard jumps on, grabs the driver. The second Scout SHOOTs the Guard at point-blank range.

STREET

The wagon rolls. Scouts gallop after it, SHOOTING at pursuing Rangers.

JOAQUIN

Salvador! Three-Fingers!

Joaquin, Three-Fingers and Salvador jump on their horses, ride into an alley.

KA-BOOM! (O.S.)

The round WHISTLES in.

THE WAGON

Careens down the street, surrounded by Scouts.
Rangers in hot pursuit.

THE RANGERS

Rein in their horses, hesitate, then ride like hell in the opposite direction.

BLAM!

A crater in the street, right where the Rangers would have been.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Valdez supervises Scouts unloading gold from the iron wagon into the trench.

VALDEZ
Leave it nice and heavy,
amigos.

Scouts cover the gold with dirt.

Others SWAT the horses attached to the wagon with sombreros.

The wagon, with half the gold, RUMBLES off, driverless.

VALDEZ
Hide it well.

Scouts cover the trench with branches and underbrush.
Everybody mounts up.

VALDEZ
Split up amigos! Vamoose! We
meet in Cantoova!

They GALLOP off in a dozen different directions.

INT. SALOON

Mattresses cover the floor. Doctors treat wounded Rangers.
Prostitutes function as nurses.

Captain Love sits at the bar holding a glass of whisky, his arm in a sling.

The swinging doors BURST open. Two Rangers, MCCLUSKY and GATES rush to the bar.

MCCLUSKY
The wagon headed south,
Captain.

LOVE
What about Murieta?

GATES

North. Into the Miwok nation.

Love smiles, downs his whisky.

LOVE

I want five men with me.
Everybody else that can ride
get after that wagon.

(pause)

I know the Miwok Chief
personally.

EXT. WILDERNESS - DAY

A Miwok brave sits on a horse looking down into a valley.
The snow-covered peak of Mount Shasta in the background.

MIWOK'S POV -

Rugged terrain. Mountainous. Indian country.

THREE RIDERS

Joaquin, Three-Fingers and Salvador pick their way through
the rugged land.

INT. GOVERNOR'S OFFICE - DAY

The Governor at his desk signing some documents. An aide
stands nearby. The Governor looks tired, drained. He hands
the documents to the aide.

GOVERNOR

(sighs)

There. It's done. Get word of
this to the newspapers right
away.

EXT. WOODS - CLEARING - NIGHT

Torchlight illuminates a group of Miwoks and Rangers.

Captain Love and CHIEF SAPATERRA sit near a campfire. The
Chief puffs on a long pipe.

Love shows the Chief wanted posters of Joaquin and Three-
Fingers. The Chief studies them.

A Ranger leads a beautiful brown mare into the clearing, up to the Chief. The Chief looks the horse over, smiles, nods approvingly.

CHIEF

Good.

Love smiles.

LOVE

Twenty more, Chief. Just like her. Just for these two outlaws.

The Chief smiles.

CHIEF SAPATERRA

Good.

LOVE

I want them alive.

The Chief hands the long pipe to Love, cementing the deal.

EXT. STREAM - DAY

Joaquin, Three-Fingers, and Salvador wash their horses.

THREE-FINGERS

That goddamned cannon was beautiful, Joaquin.

JOAQUIN

Yes, it was, Three-Fingers.

SALVADOR

We took Scott's River right in front of the gringo Rangers! Nothing can stop us now!

A twig CRACKS in the forest. They freeze. Alert. Three-Fingers draws his colt.

A hundred armed Miwok warriors emerge from the woods.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Two hundred Miwoks surround the outlaws.

Chief Sapaterra and his son, YELLOW BIRD, march toward the outlaws. Yellow Bird wears a headband of bright yellow feathers.

THREE-FINGERS
(whispering)
Joaquin, isn't that the --

JOAQUIN
I'll be damned.

A brave hands the Chief their gunbelts. Yellow Bird tugs on his father's buckskin jacket, leads him aside.

Yellow Bird whispers into his father's ear, points at Joaquin. The Chief studies the Mexican.

THREE-FINGERS
Maybe you're not so stupid
after all.

JOAQUIN
Maybe.

Yellow Bird and the Chief walk to Joaquin.
The Chief hands Joaquin the gunbelts, then hugs him.

The throng of Miwoks parts, clearing a way out of the village.

THREE-FINGERS
I'll be goddamned.

Joaquin and Yellow Bird's eyes meet.
They exchange a knowing smile.

EXT. CANTOOVA - DAY

Thousands of happy, excited Mexicans load supplies into wagons.

A NEWSPAPER

blows off a table, tumbles over grass, sticks in a bush.
The headlines -

FOREIGN MINERS TAX ACT REPEALED!

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - DAY

Joaquin, Three-Fingers, and Salvador ride.

Joaquin wears a wide black sombrero.

THREE-FINGERS

Could you love somebody else
if something ever happened to
Rosita?

JOAQUIN

That's not the point. The
point is your whole life is in
front of you. We all loved
Carmela but she's gone. Life
goes on, Jack.

PING! ZIP! PING!

Bullets BOUNCE off the rocks.

The three men spur their horses, gallop full speed through
the pass.

EXT. CLIFF

Five Rangers SHOOT like mad at the three riders below.
Captain Love watches the action with a telescope.

EXT. PASS

They gallop, full speed.
Salvador clutches his chest, falls from his saddle.

Joaquin and Three-Fingers streak toward the end of the pass
and safety.

Three-Fingers grabs his arm, jerks, hit again. Falling.

Joaquin grabs his friend, tries to pull him back into the
saddle.

But the corpse falls to the ground.

Joaquin gallops on.

EXT. CLIFF

Captain Love raises his hand.

LOVE

Cease fire!

A few more SHOTS ring out.

LOVE
I'll hang the next man that
shoots!

The Rangers lower their rifles, look at Love strangely.

LOVE
 Let that one go. He's nothing.

Love pulls his cavalry sword out of its scabbard.

LOVE
 Let's get the Governor his
 trophies.

EXT. CANTOOVA - DAY

A column of Mexicans troop past the large tent, wagons loaded.

Rosita and Juanita stand and watch.

Valdez approaches carrying a newspaper, his face twisted in grief.

VALDEZ
 Rosita, I'm ...

ROSITA
 Don't worry about us Valdez.
 Joaquin will be here soon. You
 get these people back to their
 claims and make your fortune.

Valdez, crying, hands her the newspaper.

VALDEZ
 I'm sorry.

Rosita unfolds it -

CALIFORNIA RANGERS DEFEAT THE BANDIT KING

THE LEGENDARY OUTLAW JOAQUIN MURIETA AND HIS
 LIEUTENANT THREE-FINGERED JACK GARCIA WERE SLAIN ...

EXT. HILL - DAY

Joaquin trots along the hill where he first saw the refugee column. He stops.

JOAQUIN'S POV

In the valley below, a column of several thousand Mexicans march north.

Joaquin spurs Diablo, trots toward them.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Joaquin, surrounded by thousands of happy Mexicans. They CHEER, reach out to touch him.

The Mother with a birthmark on her forehead hands him a gold crucifix.

MOTHER

God bless you, Senor Joaquin!
The newspapers said you were
dead!

Valdez gallops up on Cyclone.

VALDEZ

You did it Joaquin! They
repealed the Tax Act!

Joaquin smiles at the old man.

JOAQUIN

We did it, Valdez. All of us.
You saved my life.

VALDEZ

It was the least I could do,
Joaquin. After all, you saved
mine.

JOAQUIN

Where's Rosita?

VALDEZ

Riding South toward Mexico
with a few others.
(his face falls)
Oh my God! She thinks you're
dead!

Joaquin gallops off, toward Cantoova.

The refugees watch him ride away, kissing crucifixes,
making the sign of the cross.

EXT. CANTOOVA - DAY

Joaquin gallops through the deserted tent city.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS

Six riders trot South with pack mules and wagons loaded with supplies.

Rosita and Juanita wear black veils.
Rosita rides, eyes downcast.

HOOFBEATS (O.S.). Rosita stops, turns.

ROSITA'S POV -

One rider, a mile away, galloping straight at her.

ROSITA'S FACE

Quizzical, then hopeful, then her eyes widen.

ROSITA
(crying)
Joaquin!

She spurs her horse, gallops towards him.

Rosita and Joaquin jump off their horses, come together.

Embracing -

ROSITA
The newspapers. They said you
were dead!

JOAQUIN
It was Salvador. They shot
Three- Fingered Jack and
Salvador.
(pause)
Where is Reyes?

Rosita's face grows somber. She looks down.

ROSITA
Reyes and Hector were killed
in Calaveras County, Joaquin.
I'm sorry.

Joaquin closes his eyes. A TEAR rolls down his cheek.
Rosita cradles his face tenderly in her hands.

ROSITA

It's over, mi amor. The
bullets, the blood, the
hatred, the death. It's over.
Let's go home.

EXT. HACIENDA - DAY

Joaquin, Rosita and Juanita trot across the tiled patio.
They dismount.

Horatio rushes across the patio to them. They hug.

FADE OUT

BLACKNESS

SUPER: CAPTAIN HARRY LOVE AND THE FIVE RANGERS DELIVERED
THREE-FINGERED JACK'S SEVERED LEFT HAND AND THE HEAD OF
SALVADOR TO THE STATE CAPITAL. GOVERNOR BIGLER, CONVINCED
HE HAD INDEED RECEIVED THE HEAD OF JOAQUIN MURIETA, AWARDED
THE RANGERS \$30,000.00 IN REWARD MONEY.

SUPER: IN MAY, 1854 THE CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATURE VOTED
AN ADDITIONAL \$6,000.00 BONUS TO CAPTAIN LOVE FOR "RIDGING
THE COUNTRY OF SO GREAT A TERROR".

SUPER: JUANITA PICO RAISED THE CHILD FATHERED BY REYES
FELIZ. SHE NEVER MARRIED.

SUPER: JOAQUIN MURIETA AND ROSITA FELIZ SETTLED DOWN ON THE
MURIETA RANCH IN SONORA. THEY RAISED EIGHT CHILDREN AND
LIVED WELL INTO THEIR SEVENTIES.

SUPER: THE GOLD BURIED AFTER THE SCOTT'S RIVER RAID
REMAINED UNTOUCHED FOR ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY YEARS. ON
MARCH 1, 1972 IT WAS DISCOVERED BY A CONSTRUCTION CREW
CLEARING THE SITE FOR A PET CEMETERY IN THE TOWN OF LOS
ALTOS, CALIFORNIA.

THE END