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A Confederate General From The Big Sur

Screenplay Written By Jack Holbrook

Title card:

A Confederate General from Big Sur

The card fades out. We hold in black.

Lens opens looking up over the Ocean. A man in his early twenties walks across the lens from left to right stopping in the middle of the frame. He appears rustic. He is Lee Mellon. Lee Mellon walks into screen from the left to the right. Halfway across the camera's frame he stops. He is smiling, full mouth grinning as if in the middle of a laugh.

Lee Mellon

smiles

Second shot; Lee Mellon is in San Francisco, Camera angle is over shoulder as if following him, we can see his complete head and left side shoulder from behind him, he is grinning again as if about to say something to the viewer

Lee Mellon

smiles

Lee Mellon is in an alleyway at nighttime, smiling and looking at the camera head on.

Lee Mellon

smiles

Lee Mellon is at the front of a library, looking into the cover of a book

Lee Mellon

looks thoughtful

Lee Mellon is in front of a cabin holding a small pet Alligator, petting it and smiling

Lee Mellon

pets Alligator, smiles

Lee Mellon is inside the cabin writing a letter on a postcard. On the table where he's writing are books, a book title can be seen, it's "Rivers to the Sea" by Sarah Teasdale.

Lee Mellon

writes

Jesse Narrating from off-screen

...When I first heard about Big Sur I didn't know that it was part of the defunct Confederate States of America, a country that went out like an ideas or a lampshade or some kind of food that people don't cook anymore, once the favorite dish in thousands of homes. It was only through Lee Mellon, that I found out the truth about Big Sur. Lee Mellon who is the battle flags and drum of this book. Lee Mellon: a Confederate General in ruins.

Lee Mellon is looking at the camera again, head on. He offers a grimace where we can see all his teeth.

Lee Mellon

Grimaces

Jesse Narrating from off-screen

But the amazing thing about Lee Mellon's teeth is their strange and constantly moving placement in the many and varied dentures these poor teeth briefly get to call home.

Lee Mellon on market street San Francisco, he only has one upper left tooth

Jesse Narrating from off-screen

I would meet him down on Market Street and he would have just one upper left tooth in his face.

Lee Mellon On Grant Avenue, he has three lower teeth and one upper right tooth

Jesse Narrating from off-screen

he'd have three lower right teeth and one upper right tooth.

Lee Mellon is in Big sur, by the cabin again

Jesse Narrating from off-screen

I'd see him back in Big Sur, and he'd have four upper front teeth,

Jesse and Lee Mellon walk down the Embarcadero in San Francisco gaily, it is dawn. There is a nadir shot of the two walking down the street. Jesse continues narrating even though we can now see him and Lee Mellon walking down the street, their backs are turned towards us.

Jesse Narrating from off-screen

Jesse: I've adjusted to this teeth fantasia always happening to him; and so now every time I see him, I have a good look at his mouth to see how things have been going with him, to see if he has been working, what books he's been reading, whether Sarah Teasdale to Mein Kampf and whom he has been sleeping with: blondes or Brunettes.

Camera is facing Lee Mellon, he is in conversation with Jesse, both look tired and disheveled, they've both been up drinking all night. Lee Mellon is staring at the sky.

Jesse

What?

Lee Melon points at a seagull overhead

Lee Mellon

Just seagulls, that one.

Jesse Looks up and all he sees is a swarm of random Seagulls.

TRACKING

We are rolling backwards as Lee Melon and Jesse walk down the street towards us and then enter a coffee shop to their left. The lighting indicates it is foggy and early in the morning.

Inside the coffee shop there are a few other people, the two are served coffee by an ugly waitress. The two receive their coffee and sit silently in the coffee shop, the coffee shop is basically silent.

Lee Mellon

I was born in Meridian, Mississippi, and grew up in Florida, Virginia and North Carolina.... Near Asheville, that's Thomas Wolfe country.

Jesse

Yeah (pause) you don't have much of a southern accent

Lee Mellon

That's right Jesse. I read a lot of Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Kant when I was a kid

Jesse

I guess in some strange way that's supposed to get rid of a southern accent

Lee Mellon

When I was sixteen years old I stole into classes at the University of Chicago and lived with two highly cultured young Negro ladies who were freshmen, we all slept in the same bed together. It helped me get rid of my southern accent.

Jesse

Sounds like it may do the trick

The waitress comes over ready to take the two's order

Waitress

You guys want to eat breakfast? The hotcakes are good and the bacon and eggs are good and will fill you up... Hits the spot.

The two are eating breakfast now, along with their coffees Jesse has one plate of hotcakes while Lee Melon has two plates of hotcakes and a plate of bacon and eggs. Lee Melon is talking while eating and Jesse is focused on eating. We're not sure if Jesse is entirely listening.

Lee Mellon

I'd lived on a farm near Spotsylvania, Virginia, I spent a lot of time as a child going over the places where the battle of the Wilderness had been fought.

Lee Melon pauses and Jesse looks up from eating

Lee Mellon

My great grandfather fought there; he was a general. A confederate general and a damn good one, too. I was raised on stories of General Augustus Mellon, Confederate States Army. He died in 1910. The same year that Mark Twain died. That was the year of Halley's comet. He was a general. Have you ever heard of Augustus Mellon?

Jesse

No, but that's really something... A Confederate general, gee.

Lee Mellon

Yeah, we Mellons have always been very proud of general Augustus Mellon. There's a statue of him someplace, but we don't know where it is.

Jesse finishes his hotcakes, Lee Mellon's plate is finished

Lee Mellon

My uncle Benjamin spent two years trying to find the statue. He traveled all over the south in an old truck and slept in the back. The statue is probably in some old park covered with vines. They don't pay enough respect to our honored dead. Our great heroes.

The waitress arrives to collect the plates, Jesse gets out his wallet but Lee Mellon motions him to stop and puts a crisp \$10 on the table. He takes a good look at the ugly waitress.

Lee Mellon

I'll give you a dollar for a kiss

Waitress

(Matter-of-factly): sure

neither Lee Mellon nor the waitress smile, the waitress bends down to kiss Lee Mellon on the mouth.

TRACKING

Lee Melon and Jesse exit the coffee shop, it is now light outside and sunny, they begin walking down the street, Lee Melon is leading, Jesse walks quickly to catch up.

Lee Mellon

I know where we can get four pounds of muscatel for one dollar and fifteen cents.

End scene

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PANNING

The two are seated on a bench at Ina Coolbrith park in San Francisco with a view overlooking the city.

The next frame is looking at the two seated on the bench while they look over the city, in the direction of the camera.

Lee Mellon

Here's to General Augustus Mellon, Flower of Southern Chivalry and Lion of the Battlefield!

Lee Mellon takes off the cap of the muscatel, takes a large swig and hands it over to Jesse.

Lee Mellon

What a warrior.

Jesse drinks and hands the bottle back over to Lee Mellon

Jesse

I know a book that has all the Confederate Generals in it. All 425 of them, It's down at the library. Let's go down and see what General Augustus Mellon pulled off in the war.

Lee Mellon

Great idea Jesse, He was my great grandfather. I want to know all about him. He was a Lion of the Battlefield. General Augustus Mellon! Hurray for the heroic deeds he performed in the war between the states! Hurray! Hurray! HURRAY!

End scene

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The two new buddies are in a library, the camera is at the end of a library aisle, Jesse and Lee Mellon walk into frame and walk down the aisle toward the camera, the library is dimly lit. As Jesse pulls the volume off the shelf a curious librarian walks into frame from the same direct that Jesse and Lee Melon came from, wary of the library's unusual patrons.

CLOSE UP

We see a close-up of the book; Jesse's hand is running over the text. on the left page that the book is open to is the name "General Samuel Bell Maxey" on the right-hand page is "General Hugh Weedon Mercer"

Book's point of view: looking at Jesse and Lee Mellon's face

Lee Mellon

It can't be, it just can't be.

close up of Jesse, he is turned towards Lee Mellon

Jesse

Maybe he was a colonel, there were a lot of southern colonels. Being a colonel was a good thing. You know, Southern colonels and all. Colonel something fried chicken.

Camera is now further back and shows the two of them in the book aisle, the librarian is still staring at them from behind them and walks away with agency.

Librarian

Retreats to her desk and preoccupies herself with books

Lee Mellon

He fought in the Battle of the Wilderness. He was just great... He cut the head off a Yankee captain with one whack

Jesse

That's quite something, they probably just overlooked him. A mistake was made. Some records were burned, or something happened. There was a lot of confusion. That's probably it.

Lee Mellon

You bet, I know there was a Confederate general in my family. There had to be a Mellon general fighting for his country... the beloved South.

Jesse

You bet

The two begin walking back toward the end of the book aisle, the Librarian begins to dial the police

Librarian

Picks up the phone motioning to dial the cops

Jesse puts the book back and puts his hand on Lee Mellon's shoulder

Jesse

Let's go.

Lee Mellon

OK, you believe there was a Confederate General in my family? Promise me you do. There was a confederate general in my family!

Jesse

I promise

Camera angled from behind the librarian so that we are with her behind her desk and Jesse and Lee and in the background

Librarian

Hello, police?

Jesse and Lee Mellon walk hurriedly past the librarian

Camera outside the library, looking at the library doors as Jesse and Lee step out

Lee Mellon

Promise me till your dying day, you'll believe that a Mellon was a Confederate general. It's the truth. That God-damn book lies! There was a confederate general in my family!

Jesse

I promise.

Scene opens overlooking San Francisco, camera pans down to an old looking multistory house.

Jesse is walking to a rundown looking multi story house in a grubby part of San Francisco, as he walks in a man is leaving, the man is wearing a pair of loose blue overalls over a formal business suite. Jesse politely stops his landlord and asks him to look at something. The two re-enter the house.

Hard cut

Camera is looking down the hall, Jesse is pointing at a broken skylight with the landlord gazing at it too. Jesse talks to the landlord.

Jesse

See, there is no skylight

Landlord

There it is

Hard cut

Landlord walks down the hall and opens a closet; he takes several checks out of his blue overalls pocket and puts them into his suit coat. He takes off his blue overalls over his suit and places them on a single hook in the closet, leaves the closet then exits the house.

Jesse walks into community kitchen inside the multistory house, he goes to the cupboard in the kitchen and opens it, inside are cans of Campbell's soup, wonder bread and a bottle of cheap wine. camera pans to the left to reveal an old lady sitting at the community kitchen table, she is "The Heap".

Heap

Good afternoon

Jesse

Good afternoon, would you like some wine?

Heap

Oh, that would be so kind of you

Jesse pours her and himself a glass of wine in plain cups, the heap takes a sip.

Heap

This is good wine

Jesse

Thankyou

Heap

My father once owned a vineyard where we grew up in Italy, have I told you about the vineyard our family owned in Italy?

Jesse:

No, you haven't

Heap

My father was a wealthy doctor back then, he ended up wasting our family's money on some new American electrical device, he had a whole bunch shipped over to Italy, but nobody wanted to buy them. Before those devices withered our vineyard, it had made such a special wine.

The heap takes a sip of the wine again

Heap

The vineyard had been on a hill above the sea, I used to go there in the late afternoon and walk down the shadowy rows of grapes. It was the Mediterranean Sea.

The Heap slowly rises out of her chair

Heap

Let me show you something

Jesse follows the heap into her room

Inside the Heap's room, there is stuff cluttered everywhere, trunks full of things from olden times. She grabs a thick book and shows it to Jesse. The book is an illustrated book full of hospitals put ou by the Italian red cross. It is written in Italian.

Heap

The countryside in Italy was just beautiful, you can see it behind all the hospitals

Jesse

(pointing to a picture of a man) who's that?

Heap

Mussolini, he was a great man. But he went too far. Never do business with Germans Jesse.

End scene

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Scene opens outside the house again; the camera can see the entire building in the shot. Three men each in bus driver uniforms come from the left, right and center of the shot. The bus driver from center is walking across the street. The three bus drivers convene at the door and opens it, all three walk inside.

Jesse is cooking dinner in a room with two other bus drivers, one is absentmindedly clicking his transfer punch.

Three girls enter from the right of the screen and start making friendly conversation to the waiting bus drivers,

Scene fades out.

.....
Camera is in the doorway of Jesse's room in the house facing him as he is sleeping. Jesse wakes up, looks around, then get out of bed and dresses before walking toward the camera in the doorway

Cut to the staircase Jesse is walking down, he approaches a door at the bottom of the staircase and knocks on it.

Lee Melon

Come in!

The camera angle is facing toward Jesse as he walks in the room, the camera is above the bed's backboard. In the foreground the camera sees the back of Lee melon and the girl he is laying with in bed. Jesse turns around and closes the door.

Lee Melon

Gestures toward the girls he is lying in bed with

This is Susan,

Points toward Jesse

That's my buddy

Susan

Hello

Lee Melon

I'm glad you came, I just realized how hungry I was

Susan

Nods in agreement

Lee Melon

Looks at Susan

Yeah but I'm not cooking anything

Jesse

Do we have any food?

Lee Melon

Do you?

The three are downstairs, Susan is cooking scrambled eggs with scallions and cream cheese.

Susan

Puts a cup of coffee on the table next to Lee Melon

Jesse, Lee Melon and I were just talking about In Dubious Battle

Jesse

John Steinbeck?

Lee Melon

Ah see? Jesse's a man of culture!

Susan

Yes, those poor fruit pickers.

Lee Melon

Sips his coffee

It's a sad story, but those stories are worth telling, did you save some of those eggs for yourself?

Susan

Puts coffee next to Jesse

Yes I did, thanks for sharing Jesse.

Camera focuses back on Jesse who sips his coffee, slightly irritated.

End scene.

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Jesse is walking down the street by his house, getting his keys out of his pocket when he is greeted by a large man exiting his parked car on the side of the road where the house is. The man is the freezer king of Sepulveda boulevard

Freezer King

Excuse me son do you live here?

Jesse

Yes

Freezer King

Have you seen a young girl living here the past few days? Her name is Susan.

Jesse

Yes, she's staying with my friend.

Freezer King

Great, I'd love to see her, she's my daughter.

Inside the house, Susan is alone in the kitchen. Freezer King enters and Jesse is behind him but distant.

Susan

Daddy!

Freezer king walks quickly up to her and grabs her by the wrist

Freezer King

What did you think you were doing?!

Susan

Let go!

Freezer King

I'm not. You're coming home right now, pack your stuff let's leave.

Susan

I'm not going back; you weren't supposed to come here! You were supposed to send money!

Freezer King

And you think I'd blindly send money to my daughter who ran away from home? Are you crazy?

Susan

You don't understand, I have a boyfriend, I don't need to go home I just need money

Freezer King

Well you're not getting anything, actually you're getting a ride back to LA with me.

Susan

Lee, Lee!

Lee Melon strolls casually down the stairs.

Lee Melon

Hi, what's going on?

Freezer King

Are you the guy my daughter's been staying with?

Susan

Lee Melon loves me, and he won't stand to have me taken away!

Lee Melon

(to the Freezer King) Yeah, that's me.

Susan shakes her wrist out of the Freezer King's grasp and sits down in the kitchen chair

Freezer King

You've brought shame to this whole family with your antics I waited days until you called me on the telephone, and you wanted to ask for money? Here I was worried sick where you'd gone, and it turns out you're in San Francisco living in a house older than your grandmother doing who knows what with your time. Geez Susan!

Freezer King turns to Lee Melon

Freezer King

I don't want any trouble from this business

Jesse walks past the group and upstairs to his room

Freezer King

You promise me you never see her again and I'm taking her home today, understand?

Lee Melon

Uh-huh

The Freezer King walks up to Lee Melon and hands him a \$20 bill

Freezer King

I could build a fire under you if I wanted to, I have connections so it's...

Susan

(interrupts) Just because you're some Freezer King of Sepulveda Boulevard doesn't mean you have any power, Lee, take the money but not the promise. There's nothing he can do to stop us.

Freezer King

Shut up.

Lee Melon examines the \$20 bill

Lee Melon

Thanks.

Freezer King

Just Don't see her anymore and everything will be alright.

Lee Melon

Sure, I can see your point.

Freezer King

I don't want any trouble and you don't want any trouble. We'll just leave it right there

Lee Melon

Uh-huh

Susan

Dad-

Freezer King

Where's your stuff?

Scene cuts to the Freezer king's car outside, Susan is already in the passenger seat and the Freezer King is climbing into the driver's seat.

The Freezer King slaps Susan across the face

Freezer King

Schicksa!

Jesse and Lee Melon are outside watching the car pull away.

Lee Melon

I can't afford rent now.

End scene.

.....

Lee Melon walks into a seemingly abandoned house, camera angle is facing the front of the house from the street and we see him vanish around the house's backside as he walks in through some unseen door.

Inside Lee Melon walks into a distressed kitchen, there is a table full of books by Dostoevsky, Turgenev, Gogol and Tolstoy. A single lamp is on the table, at the side of the kitchen is a dismantled sets of cabinets and a huge hole leading below ground where the cabinets used to be, Lee Melon reaches into the hole, we hear the squeaking of a valve turning and the quiet hiss of gas escaping. Lee Melon scoots back and strikes a match near the hole, immediately a huge blue flame is coming out of the hole.

Lee Melon goes over to his table to light the lamp as well and begins reading a book.

Close up of Lee Melon's face while he's reading, we see that his eyebrows are missing.

End scene.

.....

Lee Melon is in the back of a truck carrying soil, he sees the house he used to live in with Jesse approaching in front and knocks on the truck's cabin, the truck slows down. Lee Melon hops off and walks over as the truck drives off, never coming to a complete stop.

Jesse and Lee Melon are sitting in the dining room of Jesse's house

Lee Melon

The house has had the gas and electricity turned off since 37', so I tunneled my way to the main gas line and tapped it. I cook and heat the place with it, I put a valve on the line.

Jesse

Where are your eyebrows?

Lee Melon

I haven't quite got the thing under complete control yet.

Jesse

How did you know you could squat there again?

Lee Melon

I'm not squatting, I'm laying siege to Oakland. The highlight of my siege has been this daring cavalry attack on the Pacific Gas and Electric company. But if you really care, the house belongs to a friend of mine who has been living in a California Insane asylum, he's a ping-pong champion there.

Jesse

Oh?

Lee Melon

Yes, class C ping pong champion!

Jesse

Class C?

Lee Melon

Yes, there's three classes, each one plays in their own league depending on how many electroshocks the players have had.

Jesse

Lee Melon, I need to tell you something

Lee Melon

What's that?

Jesse

Susan came by yesterday; she was looking for you. She acts and looks pregnant, is, in my opinion.

Jesse Hands Lee Melon a folded piece of paper

Lee Melon

What'd you tell her?

Jesse

She said, "I've got to see Lee Melon, It's very important.", And I lied: "I don't know where he's living". I told her you'd just vanished.

Lee Melon

That's the way it goes. I can't do anything about it. I'm hungry. Do you have anything to eat around here? A sandwich, an egg, some spaghetti or something? Anything?

Jesse

....

Lee Melon opens the piece of paper, it has Susan's handwriting on it, it shows: "San Geronimo Hotel on Columbus Avenue, Room 34."

Lee Melon

I haven't been laid in five months

Jesse

So, you've just been cooking with your gas line all this time?

Lee Melon

No, I've been reading too. I have a library card.

Jesse

Oh.

Lee Melon

I'm reading the Russians.

Jesse

What do the Russians say about living in an abandoned house up in Oakland?

Lee Melon

...

Lee Melon puts the note from Susan back on the table

Lee Melon

Honestly Jesse I should probably leave, it took me nine hours to hitchhike here and it's going to be cold by the time I get back.

Jesse

Okay, take care.

Lee Melon

...yeah

Lee Melon walks outside and leaves the house.

End scene.

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Lee Melon walks into a laundromat that is empty but for two people doing laundry and the owner behind the counter. Lee Melon walks over to an ironing board, unplugs the iron and runs out with the iron in his hands.

Laundromat owner springs up and runs after to him to the door but stops just outside when he sees Lee Melon has taken off down the street.

Laundromat owner

Stop! You fuck!

Hard cut: shot opens inside a pawnshop, Lee Melon walks into the pawn shop with the stolen iron wrapped up in newspaper. Camera pans to the left as he approaches a man at the counter with his stolen ware.

Lee Melon

How much can I get for this?

Attendant

This? I'll take it off your hands for 50 cents

Lee Melon

C'mon man can you give me more? A dollar?

Attendant

No, that thing's practically worthless.

Lee Melon walks out of the pawnshop with the iron still wrapped up in newspaper and walks down the street.

Hard cut: camera is inside a different pawnshop. We see Lee Melon enter through the door. We hear the voice of the store owner from off screen.

Owner

Hi! How are you doing today?

Lee Melon

Just trying to sell this clothes iron sir.

The store owner opens the wrapped newspaper, looks at Lee melon, looks back at the clothes iron, then back at Lee Melon.

Owner

You stole this, get out.

Lee Melon

What?

Owner

You heard me, I said you stole this. What's a guy looking like you own an iron for? Get out and take this piece of trash with you.

The owner shoves the iron with the wrapped newspaper still around it back across the counter towards Lee Melon

Lee Melon

No, well you see...

Owner

Get out before I call the cops!

Lee Melon takes the Iron, hastily rewraps the newspaper around it and leaves.

Hard cut: Lee Melon is sitting at a bus stop with the stolen iron sitting on the newspapers to his left. Camera is pointed straight at him sitting on the bench with the stolen iron. He is no longer trying to conceal it.

Close up on Lee Melon's face, he is tired and stressed out.

Lee Melon looks over to his left at the iron, to his surprise it has turned into an albatross that is sitting on the newspaper instead of the iron.

Lee Melon

!!!

Albatross

Squwak!

Camera angle returns to the opening shot of him and the iron at the bus stop, only now the iron is still the albatross. The bird is sitting minding its own business.

Lee Melon gets up and leaves, exiting to the left of the frame. A bus rolls past after Lee Melon has exited the frame which obscures the albatross sitting on the bus stop. After the bus has rolled past the albatross has returned to being the stolen clothes irons sitting on the pile of newspapers.

End scene.

Scene opens with correspondence between Jesse and Lee Melon, hard cuts between Jesse writing letters and Lee Melon writing letters.

Jesse Sits down at the kitchen table in his house and begins to write to Lee Melon. Jesse's voice from offscreen narrates while he composes the message. Camera does not change for the duration of the written message.

Jesse

Dear Lee Mellon,

How are things at Big Sur? Things in San Francisco are terrible. I have found out rather painfully that love moves mysteriously through the ways of the stomach, almost like bees, but the game has turned sour like the bees Isaac Babel writes about in *Red Cavalry*. Those bees did not know what to do after their hives had been blown up by the soldiers. "The sacred Republic of the Bees" was reduced to nothing but anarchy and tatters. The bees circled and died in the air.

That's what's happening in my stomach, a rather torn landscape. I'm looking for a way out. Please excuse this rather maudlin letter, but I'm in bad shape.

Yours, Jesse

Hard cut to Lee Mellon who is writing by lamplight. we can see that he is in a cabin of sorts, it is cramped and dimly lit, though it is dimly lit, we can see Lee Mellon has no clothes on, although not all of him can be seen since he is seated at a table writing. he is composing a letter to Jesse.

Lee Mellon

Great! Why don't you come down here? I haven't got any clothes on, and today I saw a blue whale. There's plenty of room for everybody. Bring something to drink. Whiskey! As always, Lee Mellon.

Jesse is up in his room in San Francisco now, he is writing at a desk.

Jesse

Dear Lee Mellon,

I'm in love with this girl and it's just plain hell with onions on it. I certainly would like to go down to Big Sur. I've never been there before.

What's this about your not having any clothes on, and the whale?

Yours, Jesse

Exterior shot of Lee Mellon during the day time, lighting is poor inside the cabin as Lee writes, he is on the dirt wall side of the house, in the foreground where the pond is, a cattail is close to the lens that prevents seeing the lower part of Lee Mellon. Lee Mellon is hunched over writing.

Lee Mellon

Just what I said—no clothes and a god-damn whale! Can't you smell the sweet sagebrush-by-the-ocean air of Big Sur? Have you no feeling sir? Do I have to draw you a nostril picture? Tell the broad to take a flying at the moon and come down here with that whiskey and let's catch some abalone and piss off a cliff. -----As always, Lee Mellon

Jesse is back at his desk, this time there is a bottle of cheap vodka on the desk next to him as he writes.

Jesse

Dear Lee Mellon

I've got to get rid of this girl. It just isn't any good. She has drifted over from my stomach to attack my liver. Is there any shelter down there against the elements? I mean, is there a roof over your head, fella?

Yours, Jesse

Lee Mellon is finally wearing some shorts as he writes to Jesse during the daytime again this time. He's on the catwalk facing toward pond so that his feet are in the water.

Lee Mellon

Oh, shit! Don't make a martyr out of yourself. You know what my philosophy about women is—fuckem/shuckem. Sure there's God-damn shelter down here. What do you think I'm

living in, a burrow? That business in Oakland was something else. A man needs the proper atmosphere to read the Russians. There are four houses down here and I am only one Lee Mellon. This morning I saw a coyote walking through sagebrush right at the very edge of the ocean—next stop China. The coyote was acting like he was in New Mexico or Wyoming, except that there were whales passing below. That's what this country does for you. Come down to Big Sur and let your soul have some room to get outside its marrow. ----- As always, Lee Mellon

Jesse write to Lee Mellon this time at his kitchen table again, The shot begins with the table being empty and Jesse walking into the shot from outside the shot to proofread his letter, when the narration ends he folds it and puts it in an envelope.

Jesse

Dear Lee Mellon,

There are no words to describe the grief this girl is causing me. She's been at it all week.

"The sacred Republic of Bees" flows off toward the sea.

I never thought this would happen to me. I feel hopelessly lost. Do any of those cabins have stoves in them?

Yours, Jesse

Lee Mellon is holding clam meat impaled on a stick over a fire as he proofreads his letter to be sent, in the hand he is holding the letter he has a pencil slipped in his fingers as well. This time Lee Mellon is reading his proofreading aloud, he is not narrating from off camera.

Lee Mellon

Sure they have stoves! Every one of them has a dozen stoves. Make up your mind about that broad. Don't let her tan your balls and make a wallet out of them. Just tell her to take a flying at the moon, and tell her you're going down to Big Sur to let your soul rejoice in its freedom in the coyote camp. Tell her you're going to live in a cabin that has a dozen stoves that all burn whiskey until heaven freezes over. ----- As always, Lee Mellon

Jesse waits at a bus stop as he writes his next letter to Lee Mellon on the back of a book.

Jesse

Dear Lee Mellon,

The girl and I are patching things up. These last few days have been delightful. Perhaps I'll bring her down with me when I go to Big Sur.

Her name is Cynthia. I think you'd really like her. By the way, your last letter shows strong evidence of a budding literary style.

Yours, Jesse

Camera is facing the glass wall of Lee Mellon's cabin as he lies on the floor behind the glass prone, writing a letter to Jesse. Lee Mellon is back to narrating from off screen.

Literary style up your style! My stomach is full of deer steak, biscuits and gravy. Cynthia? Come off it, asshole! Cynthia? You've been writing these crybaby epistles about Cynthia? You really think I'd like Cynthia, huh? I can see it all now—Cynthia? Yes Lee? Fear and disgust in her voice. Yes, Cynthia, the abalone are calling. They need slopping. Oh, Lee! No! No! No! ----- As always, Lee Mellon

Jesse is writing at the desk in his room again, behind him a part of his bed is included in the shot. A women's legs are visible in the edge of the shot while Jesse writes his letter. Jesse narrates from off-screen.

Jesse

Dear Lee Mellon,

I don't know why you are bitter about Cynthia. You've never even met her before. She is actually quite a girl and would easily adapt herself to any kind of life, besides, what's wrong with the name Cynthia? No kidding, I think you'd really like her.

Yours, Jesse

Lee Mellon is writing by lantern again like the scene of his first correspondence although this time he is wearing clothes. It is dark out and he is writing over a desk inside his cabin. This is also the same scene as the very beginning of the movie where Lee Mellon's teeth are being described (including the same books in the background!).

Lee Mellon

I'm positive I would like her! After all  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the English teachers,  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the librarians and  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the society dames in America are named Cynthia. What's another Cynthia more or less, you poor fart-up. The frogs are croaking in the frog pond. I'm writing by lantern because there is no electricity down here. The wire stop five miles away and I think it's nice of them. Who needs electricity anyway? I did OK in Oakland without electricity. I read Dostoevsky, Turgenev, Gogol, Tolstoy--- the Russians. Who needs electricity, but remember when you come down here don't forget to bring Cynthia. I can hardly wait to meet her. Does she have a small mustache? I met a librarian once who was from Battle Mountain, Nevada, that is. She had a small mustache and her name was Cynthia. She came all the way to San Francisco on the bus to give her cherry to a genuine poet. She found one, too. Me! Who knows, it might be the same broad. Ask her something about Battle Mountain, to tell the secrets of BM, like *BM Anthology*. BM! BM! ---- As always, Lee Mellon

Jesse is back in his room, this time there is another cheap bottle of vodka next to him. He writes to Lee Mellon

Jesse

Dear Lee Mellon,

The most horrible thing in my life has just happened. I never thought that I would be saying this. Cynthia has left me.

What am I going to do? She's gone for keeps this time. She flew back to Ketchikan this morning. I'm totally crushed. It just goes to prove that it's never too late to learn. I wonder what that means?

Yours, Jesse

Lee Mellon is sitting on the beach sitting on a large rock with the surf in the background. He is writing a letter to Jesse on the back of a book.

Lee Mellon

Cheer up, smarts! You've still got old Lee Mellon and a cabin waiting for you down here at Big Sur. A good cabin. It's on a cliff high over the Pacific. It has a stove and three glass walls. You can lie in bed in the morning and watch the sea Otters making it. Very educational. It's the greatest place in the world. What did I tell you about Cynthia? She was probably from Battle Mountain by way of Ketchikan. Weigh well the words of an old campaigner.--- A Cynthia in the library is better than two Cynthias in the sack. As always, Lee Mellon.

Jesse is seated at the bench at Ina Coolbrith Park writing to Lee Mellon on the back of a book

Jesse

Dear Lee Mellon,

Now word from Cynthia. All the bees in my stomach are dead and getting used to it.

This is the end. So be it.

How do we keep alive at Big Sur? I've got a few bucks, but is there any way to work down there, or what?

Yours, Jesse

It is night again and Lee Mellon is in his cabin writing to Jesse by lantern light.

Lee Mellon

I've got a garden that grows all year around! A 30:30 Winchester for deer, a .22 for rabbits and quail. I've got some fishing tackle and the *Journal of Albion Moonlight*. Kleenex to absorb the sour of your true love Cynthia, the Ketchikan and/or Battle Mountain cookie? Come to the party and hurry down to Big Sur and don't forget to bring some whiskey. I need whiskey.

Lee Mellon finishes writing his letter, looks at it, and puts it in an envelope.

Jesse is in his room at his desk reading Lee Mellon's most recent letter. There is no narration. Jesse picks up a pen to begin writing but then puts it back down. Jesse stares at the letter for a moment. Then he gets up from his desk and walks out of frame to get a backpack, which he walks back into frame with and begins to pack. There is a gradual fade out.

Beginning of Act II

Opening shot is of the fireplace in the cabin, it is night. There are a couple logs burning in the fireplace. Both Jesse and Lee Mellon are seated on the floor, Lee Mellon is seated on a deer skin rug with his back up against the wooden wall of the shack.

Lee Mellon

Want to put another log on the fire? I think it could use another log. What do you think?

Camera faces Lee Mellon and Jesse as both look blankly at the fire.

Jesse

Yeah, it looks like it could

Jesse steps outside and grabs a log, he puts it in the fireplace. After the log is in the fire, he stands up straight and bangs his head on the ceiling.

Lee Mellon

It takes a little while to get used to that

Jesse keeps staring at the fire, he looks tired.

Jesse

There were bugs on the log

Camera remains on Jesse while Lee Mellon responds

Lee Mellon

Oh yeah? What's the...

Jesse

There bugs are standing there on the log looking at us through the fire.

Lee Mellon

That reminds me, Jesse, there's a poet who going to visit for the day tomorrow, he's fresh from NYU!

Jesse

That's great. I wonder if he likes William Carlos Williams...

Lee Mellon off camera again

Lee Mellon

You can ask him when he gets here!

Hard cut: it's the morning of the next day now, The Camera tracks Jesse as he walks outside across the catwalk out into the open to greet the young poet, Jesse has a copy of the first volume of *Patterson* tucked in his hand. As he approaches Lee Mellon and the poet, the poet is telling a story to Lee Mellon.

Poet

Yeah I met Lew when I was at NYU, though he wasn't doing so great when I knew him. Get this: his inspiration for writing? William Carlos Williams! I mean, no wonder he got screwed up in the head, I would to if I regarded esoteric prose as poetry!

Jesse stands there awkwardly, then introduces himself

Jesse

Hi I'm Jesse

Poet

Nice to meet you Jesse! This is a great place you guys have got here...

Camera cuts to a wide shot of the three young men with the cabin in the background.

Lee Mellon

It certainly is! I built the cabin with some help months ago and I've been living here since, Jesse only came down a short while ago. Here come take a look inside!

Poet

Sure! Thank you.

The Three walk back inside the cabin, camera stays in spot and they walk away from it.

Poet

I'll just finish my train of thought, any classically trained poet such as myself ought to recognize that the works of William Carlos Williams consistently seem either too sparse or too dense. I mean, either the poems a fragment of a thought or a thought so crowded with imagery or metaphors that it no longer resembles one. Some would say that's creativity, but creativity can't work without a format, you know?

Lee Mellon

Right, anyways I was thinking there could be enough room for you on the floor right here...

Poet

Sure, sure, but what do you think about what I'm saying? For instance, does so much rely on this dirt wall? Sprinkled with pebbles? Beside the blue pond?

The poet rests his hand on the dirt wall and pauses for the two's reaction.

Jesse

Well, to be honest I...

The dirt wall the poet has rested his hand on suddenly gives way and engulfs the poet in soil.

Poet

AAAaarggghh! I'm being buried alive!

Jesse and Lee Mellon begin to dig the poet out of the dirt with their hands, the floor of the small cabin is effectively covered in soil. Scene fades out.

Fade in

It is the same day. The poet is sitting outside across the pond, it's late afternoon. He is reading *Journey to Love* by William Carlos Williams. Lee Mellon and Jesse are in the cabin across the pond from him in the cabin. Lee Mellon is rolling up a cigarette. Jesse is looking down into the pond standing up inside the cabin.

Lee Mellon

Soon it will be dark

Jesse

It's almost twilight now

Poet looks up, he is confused

It is silent while the poet is still regarding Lee and Jesse's conversation with confusion. Suddenly as the sun sets the frogs in the pond begin to croak loudly. The croaking is so loud it is almost deafening.

Frogs

Croaks incessantly

Lee Mellon gets up and walks over next to Jesse

Lee Mellon

(barely audible) I wish I had some Dynamite.

End scene

Close up on the floor, five .22 caliber bullets are placed on it by Lee Mellon. Jesse speaks from off screen.

Jesse

Take three

Lee Mellon

Nah I'm going to take them all

Jesse

Save a couple

Lee Mellon

I'm hungry

Jesse

Don't shoot them up in one thrill-crazed flurry

Lee Mellon

I want a quail to eat, a dove or a rabbit or a little deer or a pork chop. I'm hungry.

Jesse

You need to save a couple bullets for a rainy day, we didn't save the .30 bullets and now we're hungry.

Both look outside at a small bunch of large deer eating grass in the clearing just across the pond from the cabin.

Jesse

Maybe tomorrow we'll have a deer in the garden?

Lee Mellon

Jesse I couldn't kill the big deer even if I was right up close, the time I shot that doe with the .22 it limped away faster than I could run.

Jesse

You shot it right in the ass.

Lee Mellon takes all the bullets and begins to leave with the gun

Jesse

You're not going to get anything you know!

Lee Mellon leaves and Jesse looks out over the ocean

Hard cut: Jesse walks on a dirt road over to highway 1. He sits down on a rock with a book and begins reading it.

A car drives by and Jesse looks at it as it passes.

Jesse return to reading his book, he pauses, then takes out a pencil and writes "mysterious morning" at the top of the page he's reading.

A second car drives along the 1, it's a fancy car driven by a chauffeur, an old women is in the back seat. The car glides to a stop by the roadside boulder Jesse is sitting on, the front passenger side window rolls down and the Chauffeur asks him:

Chauffer

How far is it to Los Angeles?

The rear window also drifts down and the lady speaks to Jesse, she is wealthy and drenched in gold and jewels.

Granny

We're hours late, but I always wanted to see Big Sur. How far is it to Los Angeles young man?

Jesse gets up off the boulder and walks closer to the car to speak out of courtesy.

Jesse

It's quite a ways to Los Angeles from here, hundreds of miles the road goes slowly until you get to San Louis Obispo. You should have taken 99 or 101 if you were in a hurry.

Granny

It's too late, I'll just tell them what happened. They'll understand. Do you have a telephone?

Jesse

No, I'm sorry, we don't even have electricity.

Granny

It's just as well, having them worry a little bit about Granny will be good for them. They've been taking me for granted about ten years now. It'll do them a world of good. I should have thought of it sooner.

Jesse looks south down the 1 and smiles to himself, amused that anyone would call the rich old lady "Granny"

Granny

Thank you young man

The windows of the car drift up and the car accelerates smoothly down the road. Jesse is left standing watching it round a turn and disappear. Just as the car disappears, he hears two cracks go off from Lee Mellon's gun in the distance and then a pause. Jesse turns around in the direction of the gunshots. There's a moment of silence and then three rapid fire gunshots. Jesse sighs.

End scene

.....  
Camera is ahead of Lee Mellon as he walks alone down another section of highway 1 where the ocean can be clearly seen behind him. Jesse isn't with him. Lee Mellon has the empty gun slung over his shoulder and hands in his pockets as he looks down at the road while walking. He is scanning the road thoroughly with his eyes.

Lee Mellon stops and stoops down to pick up a discarded cigarette butt on the road. From his pocket he takes out a cleaned-out can of fish that now is used to hold tobacco. Squatting down, Lee Mellon

removes the tiny bit of tobacco from the cigarette butt with surgical precision. He puts the tobacco into the can which he placed on the ground Infront of himself.

Once the operation is done, Lee Mellon puts the tobacco tin back into his pocket and begins walking down the road once again.

Lee Mellon looks over his shoulder towards the ocean as he's walking and see the spouts of whales in the distance. He stops and regards them for a moment.

A car rolls by driven by a girl who looks like Susan. Lee Mellon stays on the side of the road and watches the driver as it passes. There is a close up on Lee Mellon's sunburned face as he daydreams.

Lee Mellon's daydream:

HARDCUT

Lee Mellon is dressed as a Confederate General of the American civil war standing next to Jesse. The two are standing on a busy street corner in downtown San Francisco. The two are waiting for the light to change, not making conversation. Camera changes focus to show a pregnant Susan approaching from behind Lee Mellon, she walks behind him and over to Jesse who has already noticed her. Lee Mellon looks ahead, either unaware or purposely ignoring her.

Susan approaches Jesse

Susan

Have you seen Lee Mellon?

Jesse responds without looking back at Lee Mellon

Jesse

No,

Lee Mellon continues staring at the cross light that's across the street, the cross light changes.

Lee Mellon

The light's changed

Susan stays on her side of the street as the two friends walk across. Jesse walks casually while Lee Mellon strides with his sword rattling in its scabbard with each step.

We cut back to Lee Mellon walking down Highway 1 again, searching for more cigarette butts he can get tobacco from.

End scene

.....  
Jesse and Lee Melon are back at the cabin. They're standing next to one another on the catwalk outside the cabin. The sun is setting.

Lee Mellon

Soon it will be dark,

Lee Mellon and Jesse both stare at the pond.

Lee Mellon

I wish I had some dynamite.

Lee Mellon leaves Jesse and goes into the garden to get some greens, camera tracks Lee Mellon as he walks into the garden.

Camera angle shifts to reveal a rabbit munching greens in the garden. The rabbit is in the foreground and Lee Mellon walks up out of focus in the background, we see the blurry Lee Mellon stop, then the camera brings Lee Mellon into focus and the rabbit out of focus. It is clear Lee Mellon sees the rabbit.

Camera is between Lee Mellon and the rabbit as it shows the rabbit munching on the plants.

Rabbit

Munch Munch...

Camera is closer to Lee Mellon and below him, making him seem big. Lee Mellon squints one eye and points a finger gun at the rabbit.

Rabbit

Looks up at Lee Mellon

Lee Mellon twitches his hand back as if shooting his imaginary gun

Lee Mellon

Pew

The rabbit hops away out of the garden and Lee Mellon stoops over to collect some greens.

Hard cut: Jesse scoops mackerel out of a can onto two plates, Lee Mellon shows up behind him with two fistfuls of greens.

Lee Mellon

I saw a rabbit in the garden.

Close up on Jesse's face as he pauses from scooping mackerel out of the can, his eyes bulge and he visibly bites his lip. He is upset.

Lee Mellon puts a fistful of greens onto Jesse's plate and walks over to a tin in the other side of the room and opens it: he inspects the inside.

Lee Mellon

I guess it's time to make more bread

Jesse rises and hands Lee Mellon a plate with just mackerel scooped out on it. Immediately, the frogs begin croaking incessantly, the croaking is deafening.

End scene

---

Jesse and Lee Mellon sit on the catwalk next to the pond, the croaking is still loud.

Jesse

I'm going to go up and read

Jesse gets up, Lee Mellon comments as Jesse stand up:

Lee Mellon

I'm going to sit here and read frogs.

Jesse pauses

Jesse

What did you say, Lee? I can't hear you . The frogs. Yell louder!

Lee Mellon gets up and grabs a big rock from behind him and throws it into the pond with both hands.

Lee Mellon

(Screams) Campbell's Soup!

Frog pond

Becomes instantly silent.

Lee Mellon

I said I'm going to sit here and read frogs. What's wrong, you don't like frogs?

Jesse

(stares blankly at Lee Mellon)

Lee Mellon

That's what I said. Where's your spirit of patriotism? After all, there's a frog on the American flag.

Jesse

I'm going to my cabin, read some Ecclesiastes.

Lee Mellon

You've been reading a lot of Ecclesiastes lately, and as I remember there's not much to read. Better watch yourself kid.

Jesse

Just putting in time

Lee Mellon looks over the pond, which is still silent

Lee Mellon

I think dynamite's too good for these frogs, I'm working on something special. Dynamite's too fast. I'm getting a great idea.

Jesse

Well, I'll just leave you to the frogs.

Lee Mellon

Mark my words, Jesse. I got a plan going.

Lee Mellon taps the side of his head

The frogs begin croaking loudly again

Jesse

(loudly) good night

Lee Mellon

(loudly) Yes, indeed!

Jesse Leaves, Lee Mellon tosses another large rock into the loud frog pond.

Lee Mellon

(Screams) Shut up!

This has no affect on the frogs, they keep croaking loudly, Lee Mellon throws another rock into the pond

Lee Mellon

(Screams) Silence!

This has no effect on the croaking of the frogs, Lee Mellon grabs another rock and hurls it in

Lee Mellon

(Screams) Campbell's Soup!

There is another instant pause of croaking in the frog pond, Lee Mellon smiles to himself.

Hard cut: Jesse walks up a hill nearby Lee Mellon's cabin to another cabin, this cabin has no door but all wooden walls. Inside there is a single wood burning stove, a disassembled motorcycle, a sleeping bag, some books wedged between two large rocks that act as bookends and a lantern that rests on the disassembled motorcycle engine block. The Lantern is lit when Jesse enters the cabin.

From the books, he pulls out an old bible and a notebook.

Close up on the notebook as Jesse sits down opening it: on the first innermost page there is a table of contents: camera angle is behind Jesse over his shoulder, the title in the table of contents reads "The Punctuation Marks in Ecclesiastes". Jesse flips several pages to a partially finished page, then he opens the bible to a bookmarked page in Ecclesiastes. Jesse sits cross-legged on the floor and continues to record the punctuation marks in Ecclesiastes. The scene fades out.

End scene

Scene opens: the screen is dark, the camera is in the door frame, moonlight illuminates Jesse in his sleeping bag, we hear distressed noises from off screen, Jesse wakes up and sits upright in his sleeping bag. Jesse listens.

Noise Far Away

Aaagh!

Jesse sits up straight

Noise Far Away 2

For God's sake please don't shoot me!

Jesse unzips himself from the sleeping bag and moves outside. Camera cuts to shot that shows Jesse running down the hill towards the sounds silently yet quickly.

Next shot: camera is in front of Jesse as he runs down a hill and positions himself behind a tree to see the source of the voices. It is Lee Mellon pointing the empty gun at two teenagers who are both on their knees as if they were prisoners of war, Jesse watches and listens silently.

Teenager 1

Please, for god's sake... please, please we didn't know, please

Lee Mellon

I can shoot you fellas right through the head like dogs and throw your bodies down the cliff to the sharks and then drive your car down to Cambria. Wipe my fingerprints off. Leave the car there, and no one will ever know what happened to you. The sheriff's car will drive up and down the highway for a few days. The sheriff will stop here and ask some silly questions. I'll reply, No, I haven't seen them down this way, sheriff. Then they will drop the whole business, and you'll both be filed away permanently in the missing persons section in Salinas. I hope you fellas don't have any mothers, girlfriends, or pets because they're not going to see you for a long, long time.

Both teenagers start crying.

Teenager 2

Please, please, please, please, please...

Camera shows the backs of the two teenagers on their knees with Lee Mellon pointing the gun at them, facing the camera. Jesse walks up behind. When Jesse is almost to Lee Mellon, Lee talks to Jesse without turning his head.

Lee Mellon

Howdy Jesse, look what I got here. A couple of smart fuckers, trying to syphon our gas. Guess what Jesse?

Teenagers sniffing.

Jesse

What's up Lee?

Lee Mellon

I think I'm going to kill them, Jesse, I've got to start someplace. This is the third time in the last month somebody's come down here and stolen our gas. I've got to start someplace. Can't let this go on forever. Jesse, I think I'll take these tow shit fuckers for a down payment and shoot them.

Lee Mellon takes the barrel of his gun and rests it on the forehead of one of the two teenagers. Close up on the gun and the teenager as the teenager silently mouths words but none come out.

Camera shifts angle to the right to include the group of four. Jesse turns to Lee who is still holding the gun to one of the teenager's foreheads.

Jesse

Wait a minute Lee, Sure these guys need shooting. Steal a man's gas down here in the wilderness, leave him up shit creek without even a pair of roller skates. They deserve to be shot, but they're only a couple of young kids. Look, barely out of high school. See that peach fuzz?

Lee Mellon takes a step back, lifting the gun from the teenager's forehead and bends down to examine his chin while still pointing the gun at him. Teenagers stop sniffing.

Lee Mellon

Yes Jesse, I know. But we got a pregnant woman down there in the cabin. My wife... that's my wife and I love her. She's ready to have a baby at any time. She's two weeks over. We'd come up here, get in the truck to take her to Monterey so she could have a doctor and a nice clean hospital, and then there wouldn't be any gas in the truck and the baby would die...

No, Jesse, no-no no. For killing my baby son, I think I'd better shoot them now. Hell, I can make them put their heads together and use just one bullet. I got a slow one here. Take about five minutes to go through their heads Hurt like hell.

The second teenager musters a few garbled words.

Teenager 2

I'm nineteen. We couldn't even find the gas tank. My sister lives in Santa Barbara.

Teenagers resume sobbing.

Lee Mellon

Yeah, they are young, Jesse. I guess a person should have a second chance before they get their brains blown out for try to steal gasoline from a baby that hasn't even been born yet.

Jesse

Well Lee, No harm done. Nothing has really happened except that they tried to steal out last five gallons of gasoline.

Lee Mellon

All right Jesse, If they pay for all the gasoline they've been stealing from us this month, I might let them live. Just might. I once promised my mother, God bless her soul in heaven above, that if I ever had the chance to give a helping hand to some wayward boys, I would. How much money do you boys have?

Both teenagers silently take out their wallets. They each pass Lee Mellon a couple bills and coins that total to \$6.72. Lee Mellon takes the money and puts it in his pocket.

Lee Mellon

You boys have shown faith. You can live.

Teenager 1 crawls forward and kisses Lee Mellon's shoe. Lee Mellon steps that foot away from him.

Lee Mellon

Come on now, Don't slobber. Show some class.

Lee Mellon lowers his rifle all the way to the ground. The teenagers stand up. Lee Mellon slings his rifle onto his shoulder and walks towards the two teenagers. He grabs them each by their inner shoulder and swings them around so that he's guiding them back to their car.

Lee Mellon

Now let's get you boys on your way.

Cut to: Jesse is walking around with his hands in his pockets waiting for Lee Mellon to get back. Lee Mellon enters the frame of the camera and walks up to Jesse, its early morning twilight now. Lee Mellon turns around cheerfully and waves his gun in an imaginary farewell to the already gone teenagers. Lee Mellon pulls the trigger and only a soft dull click is heard. Lee Mellon turns around and looks at Jesse. There is a silent pause.

Jesse starts laughing. Lee Mellon snickering before laughing. Both are laughing like some teenagers who just played a mean trick on a young kid.

End scene

Lee Mellon and Jesse are eating cracked wheat with milk in bowls down by Lee Mellon's cabin. It's the morning. They each also have mugs with tea bags in them. Lee Mellon takes the money out of his pocket and puts it on the ground in front of Jesse.

Lee Mellon

Well, we're rich.

Jesse

We can get some food, and maybe some bullets for the guns.

Lee Mellon

I wonder if those guys will ever get the stains out of their pants, it's for sure they won't take them to the cleaners.

Jesse

Chuckles.

There's a few cats that stay around Lee Mellon's cabin. One of them comes by and Lee gives it a piece of some hard bread. The cat sniffs it and decides not to eat it. Leaving the bread on the ground.

Lee Mellon

Let's take this money and get laid, I think that's more important than food or bullets. I did all right without bullets. We ought to move that truck a little close to the highway. It might eventually lead to a good living.

Jesse looks up, dumbstruck.

Jesse

...How do we get laid for \$6.72?

Lee Mellon

We go up and see Elizabeth.

Jesse

I thought she only worked when she was in Los Angeles?

Lee Mellon

Yeah, that's the way she usually does it, but sometimes she doesn't mind. To be different. You have to catch her in the right mood. What she does down in Los Angeles is kind of weird stuff.

Jesse

A box of .22 bullets would be really sweet, a pound of coffee... both of us? A hundred dollar Los Angeles call girl for \$6.72? You're awake aren't you, fella?

Lee Mellon

Sure, I think it might be OK. Anyways, we haven't got anything to lose. Maybe she'll invite us for breakfast. Finish your breakfast and let's get going.

The two approach Lee Mellon's truck. Lee Mellon's truck looks old. His truck looks so old that it looks as if it was built in a time before cars were invented. The bed is almost all rotten away. On the center

forward in the bed there is an oil drum. On top of the oil drum is an inverted jerry can with a rudimentary rubber house vanishing through a hole in the rotten bed. The jerry can is held up through some sort of scaffolding made out of wood. Lee Mellon climbs into the truck and turns it on. The keys have been left in the ignition. Jesse climbs in the back of the bed and puts a hand on the jerry can as it to make sure it stays in place while holding on to the oil barrel with the other hand while he sits on it. Lee Mellon turns the car around so it never needs to go reverse and drives it on the dirt road towards the 1.

The truck drives down highway 1 with Jesse holding on and holding up the jerry can in the back. Music plays offscreen.

The truck is on a dirt road again and stops outside a small shack somewhere else in Big Sur. Lee Mellon gets out and Jesse hops off. They wander up to the house. No one is there. Jesse stops to look at a long line of clothes hung out to dry between two trees. It includes a women's clothes, some kid's clothes, and some baby's clothes. All the clothes are for girls. Lee Mellon's truck is the only vehicle there.

Lee Mellon opens the door to the shack without knocking and walks inside. Inside the shack, illuminated by the late morning light coming from the open door he looks around and takes in the meager possessions the young mother and her children have.

Jesse walks around the front yard of the shack and looks at the children's toys scattered outside. He comes across the remnants of a game dreamed up by the children. Some patterns are drawn in the dirt and between the patterns, deer antlers and abalone and sea urchin shells are scattered.

There are some chickens in a pen. A single rooster struts around the front yard outside of the pen. Lee Mellon walks outside and picks up the rooster, tucking the bird under his shoulder and walking back inside.

Inside the shack, Lee Mellon goes to a table and grabs a pencil, then he goes to a pile of kid's drawings and turns one over then begins to write a message to Elizabeth on the back. Lee Mellon narrates the message he is writing to Elizabeth from off screen.

Lee Mellon

Dear Elizabeth, or Elizabeth's children's caretaker:

I am taking your chicken. I need it. It has been hard going here in Big Sur for me, the usual magic that draws people here seems to have worn off, I hope it is just temporary.

Sending my best regards,

Lee Mellon

Lee Mellon finishes writing and looks down at the rooster.

Rooster

Squak!

Lee Mellon walks outside with the rooster and approaches the truck as if he is ready to go, then stops just before he is to the front door of the truck. Lee Mellon pauses outside the truck's door for a few moments. Jesse is walking to him.

Lee Mellon quickly walks back inside the shack carrying the rooster and takes out the 72 cents and puts it on the table. He grabs the pencil and writes an additional note on the paper below the original message. Lee Mellon narrates this message too from offscreen as he writes it.

Lee Mellon

Yo compro ustedes gallina.

Lee Mellon walks outside again. Jesse is waiting for him outside. Lee Mellon pauses a few steps outside of the doorway and looks at the rooster again. Then he looks at the truck. Then he looks at the rooster. Lee Mellon sighs and puts the rooster down. The rooster walks away.

Lee Mellon goes back inside and takes back the money he put down on the table. Then he takes the message he wrote on the back of the kid's drawing and crumples it up and puts it in his pocket. Lee Mellon leaves the shack and closes the door behind him.

Outside, Lee Mellon walks out to Jesse who is waiting by the truck.

Lee Mellon

Nobody's home.

Lee Mellon climbs into the truck's driver seat and starts the engine. Jesse looks at the rooster walking around the children's toys.

End scene

---

Lee Mellon and Jesse are standing near the cliff nearby Lee Mellon's cabin in Big Sur. The two look out over the ocean and at the birds flying around. Lee Mellon picks up a rock and tosses it casually off the cliff.

Lee Mellon

I wish she had been home.

Jesse

Yeah

Lee Mellon

Who knows what might have happened?

Jesse doesn't look at Lee Mellon, he purses his lips and looks over the ocean. Jesse pauses then decides to play along.

Jesse

Yeah, if she had been home...

Jesse's aloofness makes Lee Mellon start to feel uncomfortable.

Lee Mellon

Let's hitchhike to Monterey and get drunk.

Jesse

(amused) only if I can fill my pockets with rice when we get there, and put a pound of hamburger in my wallet before we start drinking,

Lee Mellon

OK

Hard cut:

Jesse is seated at a bar in Monterey. There is a young girl beside seated next to him. The two are talking but the camera is far away from them and their backs are turned to it as they drink at the saloon. Jesse is to the left of the girl; they are the only two at the bar saloon. Lee Mellon is to Jesse's left, he's underneath the saloon's counter and covered with a large piece of wet cardboard. Lee Mellon is passed out.

Camera is now facing Jesse's left side with the girl in the background and Jesse in the foreground. The two are happy. Jesse pauses quickly to check on his friend on the floor

From Jesse's POV: Lee Mellon is snoring on the floor, face covered by the wet cardboard. His feet stick out.

Lee Mellon

Snores

Camera is looking at Jesse and the girl from the opposite side of the saloon counter, the girl realizes she doesn't have Jesse's attention anymore and turns her head to him. Her name is Elaine. Elaine is drinking a glass of red wine and Jesse has a martini.

Elaine

What do you do?

Jesse pauses for a small eternity and looks straight ahead, thinking of an answer

Jesse

I live in Big Sur

Elaine

Oh, that's nice, I live in Pacific Grove. What do you do?

Elaine leans towards Jesse slightly

Jesse

I'm unemployed

Elaine

I'm unemployed, too, What do you **do**?

Jesse

I'm a minister.

Elaine

I'm a nun. What do you do?

Hard cut: Jesse and Elaine are walking out by the beach in Monterey. It's night. Jesse has his arm around Elaine's waist. The two are walking away from the camera.

Jesse

When did you first decide to go to the nunnery?

Elaine

Oh, when I was about six.

The camera is facing the two as they walk toward it on the beach.

Jesse

I decided to be a minister when I was five

The camera is to the two's right, it has the ocean and the surf in the background, although neither can be seen too well since it is night.

Elaine

I decided to be a nun when I was four.

Jesse

I decided to be a minister when I was three.

Elaine

That's nice. I decided to be a nun when I was two.

Jesse

I decided to be a minister when I was one.

Elaine

I decided to be a nun the day I was born. That very day. It's good to start your life out on the right foot!

Camera goes back to being behind the two, though now it is closer than it was previously.

Jesse

Well, I wasn't there when I was born so I couldn't make the decision. My mother was in Bombay. I was in Salinas. I think you're being unfair.

The two stop and Elaine laughs.

Title card:

The Confederate Socialist Republic of Big Sur,

One Afternoon in 1939.

There is a small chapel perched by a seaside cliff in Big Sur. From afar, we see Lee Mellon, dressed as a Confederate general rides up to the church on horseback.

Camera tracks General Lee Mellon as his horse trots up to the church. He is seated upon a brilliant white horse, on his belt Lee Mellon has a cutlass. Lee Mellon stops in front of the church by a large piece of driftwood.

Lee Mellon

Woah, Traveler!

General Lee Mellon hops off the horse and ties it to the driftwood outside the church. Then he takes off his hat and respectfully enters inside.

The camera is on Lee Mellon as he walks inside the church, there is a quiet murmur all around him from the other members of the church's congregation. Organ music is being played in the front. All the pews are occupied by ragtag looking confederate soldiers. As Lee Mellon passes, they become silent and look up at him with respect. Lee Mellon seats himself in the front row next to the old lady known as the "heap" from Jesse's San Francisco apartment. She somehow manages to look even older and is dressed in an antebellum era dress holding a book of prayer. Lee Mellon is seated to the heap's right. To her left are the two teenage boys whom Lee Mellon threatened to kill. They are dressed in confederate soldier uniforms as well.

Elaine is dressed in a nun's robes and is playing the organ. Jesse appears from a door near the organ and walks up to the altar. He holds a larger book of prayer and is dressed in a minister's robes. There is only one religious symbol in the church, otherwise there are some deer antlers and abalone shells that decorate its interior walls.

Jesse places the book down on the altar. The church's one religious symbol comes into focus behind him: it is a wood carving of Drunk Lee Mellon sleeping under the wet cardboard with his feet sticking out. The organ music stops playing.

Jesse

Thank you, Sister Elaine.

Elaine looks over to Jesse and blushes. She swings her legs around the playing bench and crosses her legs, listening attentively for Jesse's coming sermon.

Jesse

Thank you all for coming here on this blessed 110<sup>th</sup> day of the 5,041<sup>st</sup> year of Kali-Yuga. I would like to begin our sermon today with a commentary on “The Punctuation Marks in Ecclesiastes” followed by teachings from our saint William Carlos Williams.

Jesse opens his holy book and begins to read.

Jesse

The first chapter of Ecclesiastes has 57 punctuation marks and they are broken down into 22 commas, 8 semicolons, 8 colons, 2 question marks and 17 periods.

The second chapter of Ecclesiastes has 103 punctuation marks and they are broken down into 45 commas, 12 semicolons, 15 colons, 6 question marks and 25 periods.

The third chapter of Ecclesiastes has 77 punctuation marks and they are broken down into 33 commas, 21 semicolons, 8 colons, 3 question marks and 12 periods.

The fourth chapter of Ecclesiastes has 58 punctuation marks and they are broken into 25 commas...

The doors to the church burst open and Jesse’s sermon is interrupted. Three uniformed soldiers walk in. They wear uniforms like those of WWII soldiers. The first soldier is Jesse’s former San Francisco landlord dressed as an officer. His uniform is all grey similar to the confederate soldiers one but it is modern looking and clean. He wears an officer’s cap with a frog insignia on it. Behind him he is flanked by the visiting poet from NYU and the Freezer King of Sepulveda Boulevard. Both are dressed as soldiers in the same clean gray uniforms, only these two have on metal helmets with the same frog insignia on them. All of the three have on red armbands that a miniature confederate flag on them.

The officer – landlord steps forward

Landlord

There it is.

Jesse

What is going on here?

The officer - landlord take out a letter and begins to read it.

Landlord

That state of the Confederate Socialist Republic of Big Sur has determined that your cult’s practice must cease at once citing section 40 of article 44...

Lee Mellon, infuriated gets up from his front pew and turns to face the gestapo.

Lee Mellon

Cult? This is our *Culture*!

The landlord – officer clears his throat and continues on, silencing Lee Mellon, the soldiers behind him stand at attention.

Landlord

...from the rules outlined in our states national faith policies, which states that all groups of worship derived from undocumented Confederate Generals are defined as cults and shall be treated as such. Citing section 64 of article 19 I am authorized to arrest any individuals found at a cult's site of worship.

Lee Mellon

Like hell you will!

Lee Mellon draws his cutlass and points it at the officer – landlord theatrically.

At once, half of Jesse's congregation gets up. From their tattered 19<sup>th</sup> century confederate soldier uniforms they pull out crisp clean caps not unlike that of the officer – landlords with the same frog insignia. They also pull out the red armbands with the confederate flag on them and put them on their arms. Most of them also brandish pistols, pointing them at their fellow congregants.

Elaine gets up from the organ bench and runs up to Jesse wrapping her arms around him in fear.

NYU poet – soldier

Do not resist, you will be transferred to a state re-education facility.

Jesse grabs Elaine and the two run out of the church through the door behind the altar.

Cuts to Jesse and Elaine running around the back of the church, camera is tracking fast with them. They run into more soldiers waiting outside. Two soldiers wearing metal helmets catch them as Jesse and Elaine run into their trap.

Elaine

Aaghh!

The soldiers restrain Jesse and Elaine holding their arms behind their backs.

At the front entrance to the Church, General Lee Mellon is lead out by the NYU poet soldier and the freezer king soldier. He is struggling to get free.

Camera goes back to tracking Jesse and Elaine, they are both getting pulled away from the church, then the soldier restraining Jesse stops and Elaine keeps getting pulled away from him.

Camera is still as Jesse watch Elaine get pulled away, she keeps thrashing about, two more soldiers run up to help the first one keep pulling her away.

Camera cuts over to Lee Mellon as he breaks away from the two soldiers who were walking him away from the church. The freezer king soldier shouts out.

Freezer King soldier

Stop him!

Camera stays on Jesse as he watches Lee Mellon try to escape, there are also two soldiers in the frame, one is still restraining Jesse while the other take aim with a rifle and fires. Camera stays on Jesse after the gunshot. It is clear from the horror on Jesse's face that they have shot Lee Mellon.

Hard cut: no title card.

We are back inside the bar where Jesse and Elaine met. Lee Mellon is still asleep on the floor covered in wet cardboard beneath the saloon.

Lee Mellon

Snores.

End scene

.....

We are inside Elaine's room. Jesse and Elaine are sleeping in Elaine's bed together. Jesse wakes up slowly, and delicately climbs out of the bed, then sits on the edge of the bed. Jesse is only wearing underpants. He looks around at the room, the inside of the room has a 1950's modern aesthetic. There is a lamp on a bedside table with an abstract lampshade covering it. There is a poster of a bullfighter on the wall opposite the lamp. On the wall adjacent to the bullfighter poster there is a guitar placed against it. The back of the guitar is facing away from the wall. Written on the back of the guitar is the word "love" with each letter a color of the rainbow. The room is dimly lit, and the lamp is not on, it is dawn.

Elaine stirs and looks at Jesse with just her face popping up above the covers.

Elaine

What are you doing?

Jesse

I've got to go get Lee Mellon out from underneath that saloon, I don't want the police to get him. He wouldn't like that. Hates jail. Always has. The thrill of jail was ruined for him when he was a child.

Elaine

(confused) what?

Jesse

Yeah, He did ten years for murdering his parents.

Elaine pulls the cover over her face partially; we can still see that she can't stop smiling at Jesse.

Jesse looks away and stares blankly ahead

Jesse

The Police will get Lee Mellon,

Jesse turns back to look at Elaine who is still staring at him

Jesse

The police will get Lee Mellon.

Elaine

All right.

Jesse looks down at his hands, from off camera we can hear Elaine getting out of bed and putting on clothes.

With the camera on the head behind Jesse, Elaine walks into frame pulling on a sweater.

Elaine

I'll go with you. We can bring him here and sober him up.

Elaine bends down in front of Jesse to grab a pair of pants and starts putting them on.

Jesse

Who are you?

Elaine

My parents live in Carmel.

Jesse and Elaine walk up to the outside of the bar where they met and where Jesse left Lee Mellon underneath the Saloon, Jesse tries the front door and discovers it unlocked. It is still early morning.

Inside the bar, there is no one there except for sleeping Lee Mellon, he is not snoring. He is still buried under the piece of cardboard. Jesse walks up to the sleeping travesty and begins singing:

Jesse

Way, hay, up she rises. Way, hay, up she rises, Way, hay, up she rises earlye in the morning!

What'll we do with a drunken general? What'll we do with a drunken general? What'll we do with a drunken general earlye in the morning?

Why, send him off to Gettysburg! Off to Gettysburg! Off to Gettysburg! O Gettysburg earlye in the morning!

Lee Mellon slowly sits up underneath the cardboard, he looks terrible. The cardboard falls off him as he sits far up enough to hold himself seated up with his two hands.

Lee Mellon

What happened?

Elaine

Spiritus frumenti.

### Beginning of Act III

The three new friends are driving back down the 1 towards Big Sur in Elaine's car. Elaine is driving and Jesse sits Passenger. Lee Mellon sits in the backseat with two baby alligators on his lap. Beside Lee Mellon in the unoccupied backseat are tons of groceries.

Lee Mellon

Okay, but why are there **two** alligators?

Elaine looks into the rearview mirror to respond to Lee Mellon

Elaine

When I went to the pet shop the alligators were on sale, if you bought one you could get another for just a penny.

Lee Mellon looks down at the two alligators with a huge smile on his face

Lee Mellon

Great Day!

Elaine

I've never been to Big Sur before, my parents moved to Carmel while I was still going to college in the east.

Camera is on the hood of the car as Lee Mellon pokes his head out between Jesse and Elaine from the back, shocked at what Elaine's just said.

Lee Mellon

A college girl?!!!

Elaine

Oh no! I failed all my courses and they blew up the college the day I left the place because I was so stupid. They felt the place couldn't be used for anything again.

Lee Mellon visibly relaxes and reclines back into his seat.

Lee Mellon

Good.

Elaine looks around the landscape as she speeds down the highway

Elaine

This is beautiful!

Lee Mellon

Great Day!

