

"SAVE LINCOLN! "

FADE IN:

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN A DREAM - (1861) - NIGHT

Blurred figures in black and dismal shades of gray rise slowly up and down in DEAD SILENCE.

One, a tall, lanky, SAD FIGURE with whiskers wears a stove pipe hat.

Beside him, also rising slowly up and down, but out of sequence with his movement and beyond reach, is a PUDGY WOMAN dressed in black.

Behind them is another FIGURE DRESSED IN BLACK.

He is handsome, rakish, with a trimmed handlebar mustache.

He trails the tall man, rising up and down behind him.

He slowly removes a derringer from his waistcoat and points it in the direction of the tall man.

He fires the derringer.

There is a considerable EXPLOSION OF SMOKE from the derringer.

There is no sound of the shot.

The woman screams hysterically, one hand outstretched towards the tall man, the other holding a lace handkerchief.

The tall man pays no attention.

He rises slowly up and down, while she screams silently and rises slowly up and down beside him.

Everything is dead silent.

Behind the man with the pistol, another handsome, MUSTACHED MAN, remarkably similar in looks, dress and style, rises slowly up and down.

He reaches out and tries to prevent the man with the derringer from firing, but he is out of reach.

His mouth is open in a silent shout of warning to the tall man.

No one hears him.

We gradually see that they are all on horseback, slowly rising up and down and going round and round in a circle.

The horses are made of wood.

They are grotesque and shrouded in black crepe.

They are on a carousel.

They go up and down in this circular game of pursuit.

No one can escape.

The tall man in front, rides silent and sad.

The pudgy woman, screams silently beside him.

The rakish figure fires his derringer at the tall man.

His lookalike chases them all in slow motion, shouting warnings that cannot be heard, never catching them.

The carousel goes round and round in desperate, silent slow motion, the characters slowly rising up and down.

He fires the derringer over and over, but it makes no sound.

A bullet slowly spirals towards the back of the head of the tall man.

The lookalike yells his warning, but has no voice.

The pudgy woman screams hysterically, but no one hears.

The tall man rises up and down, oblivious to it all.

Gradually the scene blurs into color and we hear the SOUNDS of a TRAIN WHISTLE simultaneously with that of a STEAM CALLIOPE playing a lilting waltz.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS NEAR THE U.S. CAPITOL (1861) - DAY -
TRAIN LOCOMOTIVE

The TRAIN WHISTLE harmonizes with the calliope as the train slows and passes the fairgrounds on its way into Union Station.

INT. RAILROAD PASSENGER CAR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The noise of the whistle startles one of the PASSENGERS from his sleep.

VIRGIL GUNN, a handsome, mustached young man in a Quaker suit, bolts upright and looks around.

He wipes beads of sweat from his forehead and sighs a breath of relief.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - DAY - CONTINUOUS

MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN circle round and round on a colorful carousel. The MUSIC of its calliope fills the air.

The riders laugh and sing and shout as they circle around in blissful happiness.

INSERT - A SIGN

which reads "SCHAEFFER BROS. CIRCUS".

BACK TO SCENE

The carousel is the centerpiece of the traveling Schaeffer Brothers Circus.

A small CROWD of civilians of all ages and military strolls the midway as a BARKER motions to them AD LIB (M.O.S.) to enter the tent that holds the show.

The circus is a poor excuse for grand entertainment, but seems to be a pleasant diversion for the folks in attendance.

A SOLDIER throws balls at a pyramid of milk bottles while a PRETTY GIRL smiles affectionately and a CONCESSIONAIRE taunts him AD LIB (M.O.S.).

He knocks over the bottles with his allotment of balls and wins a small faux diamond ring which he presents to the girl.

She swoons in delirious delight as he puts it on her finger.

The STEAM WHISTLE of the calliope signals the start of the next ride on the carousel.

INT. RAILROAD PASSENGER CAR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Virgil looks out the window at the circus as the train passes and shakes his head in disbelief.

A CONDUCTOR walks through the cars and announces the station stop.

CONDUCTOR
Washington City. Last stop.

Virgil and the other passengers gather up their baggage and prepare to detrain.

The music of the calliope in the distance is heard throughout the vicinity of Union Station.

EXT. WASHINGTON - DAY - UNION STATION - CONTINUOUS

Virgil and OTHER PASSENGERS detrain amid a stream of MEN, WOMEN, CHILDREN, MILITARY and WOUNDED SOLDIERS.

BAGGAGE HANDLERS push carts of luggage around the station platform.

Virgil carries one small bag. He heads for the street.

EXT. UNION STATION - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Virgil hails a horse drawn cab.

A lovely YOUNG LADY approaches him, all smiles and giggling with her train ticket in her hand.

YOUNG LADY
I saw you in 'Hamlet'. I think
you're wonderful. May I have
your autograph?

Virgil is gracious, but abrupt.

VIRGIL

Thee mistakes me for my brother,
young lady. He is the 'actor'
in the family.

YOUNG LADY

Oh, I didn't know he had a
brother. May I have your
autograph anyway? I've never
been this close to a famous
actor's brother.

Virgil accepts the ticket and the lady's pen and writes
his name on it.

VIRGIL

Very well... there.

He gives it back to her and steps into the cab.

She looks at it wide eyed as she reads it. Then her
expression turns to bewilderment.

YOUNG LADY

Virgil Gunn?

VIRGIL

Julian's brother.

She continues to look puzzled as the cab draws away.

VIRGIL

(continuing)
Grover's Theater... E Street
and Pennsylvania Avenue.

EXT. WASHINGTON STREETS - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The streets are busy with horses, cabs and pedestrians.

Pigs, fowl and small livestock freely roam the streets
around the railroad station.

There is a saloon and livery stable on every street
corner.

Virgil's cab moves along to its destination through
the hubbub.

EXT. GROVER'S THEATER - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The cab stops in front of Grover's Theater. Virgil gets out, pays the driver and walks in the front entrance.

INT. GROVER'S THEATER - DAY - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

A MAN busies himself inside the box office in the lobby sorting tickets.

VIRGIL

Good morning, I...

The man is startled.

MAN

Julian, that you?

VIRGIL

No, I'm his brother. He told me to call here.

MAN

He's upstairs in Deery's Saloon with your brother, Milton. There's a big game going on.

INT. DEERY'S SALOON - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The NOISY saloon is filled with MEN.

Men stand and drink and talk at a long bar along one wall.

Others play billiards with the owner, JOHN DEERY.

A crowd gathers around a table watching a game of poker.

Seated at the table, among other CARD PLAYERS, are MILTON GUNN and ELIAS SCHAEFFER.

Behind Milton stands a man with a remarkable resemblance, his brother, JULIAN.

Julian whispers words of caution in Milton's ear AD LIB (M.O.S.).

Milton smiles and waves away his concerns.

Schaeffer sweats and tugs at his collar. He plays his cards close to his vest.

Milton casually puffs a cheroot.

SCHAEFFER
I should have jumped off that boat when I had the chance.

MILTON
That's a permanent solution to a temporary problem, my friend.

Virgil enters, choking and gagging, waving his hands through the smoke looking for his brothers.

VIRGIL'S P.O.V. - THE CARD GAME

He sees Milton at the table.

BACK TO SCENE

Virgil shakes his head in disapproval.

He quietly walks over to his brothers and stands behind them while the game progresses.

They do not see him yet.

Schaeffer looks up from his hand, sees Virgil behind Julian.

SCHAEFFER'S P.O.V. - THE BROTHERS

The three are identical in looks. They could be triplets.

BACK TO SCENE

SCHAEFFER
Good Lord, I'm seeing things.
I've had too much to drink.

MILTON
Nonsense, there's no such thing as too much.

He takes a wad of cash from inside his coat and throws it into the kitty, which is already substantial.

MILTON
(continuing)
I raise you five hundred.

Schaeffer puts down his hand and reaches inside his coat pocket.

SCHAEFFER
All I have left, Sir, is a Bill
of Sale for my circus, which is
worth far more than your raise.
If you will accept it, I will
offer it and call.

MILTON
I accept.

Milton spreads his cards on the table.

MILTON
(continuing)
Full house, aces high.

Schaeffer sinks back into his chair in despair.

SCHAEFFER
Congratulations, Sir. You are
the proud new owner of Schaeffer
Brothers Circus. And would
someone please direct me to the
tallest building in town?

Milton stuffs his winnings into his pockets.

Schaeffer stumbles out of the saloon into anonymity.

The crowd that had been watching the game moves over
to the billiard table where John Deery is beating all
challengers.

Milton and Julian notice Virgil for the first time.

MILTON
Why, little brother. What a
surprise!

VIRGIL
If mother could see thee, she
would roll over in her grave.
Drinking, smoking, gambling.
For shame.

JULIAN
It's only a game, Virg.

VIRGIL
Only a game? And acting, I suppose, is a noble profession?

JULIAN
I don't know about noble, but there's no business like it.

MILTON
We have to get you out of those clothes. Come... to the fairgrounds.

VIRGIL
(to Julian)
Oh, by the way, I gave some innocent young lady my autograph at the station. She mistook me for thee. She said she loved thee in 'Hamlet'.

JULIAN
Really? What a great business... I never even played Hamlet.
Did you get her name, Virg?

Virgil looks at him with disdain.

EXT. DEERY'S SALOON - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The boys exit the saloon and unhitch some horses from a hitching post.

Milton and Julian mount theirs. Virgil stands there, holding his bag.

MILTON
Grab that horse there, Virg.

Virgil mounts a third horse and they ride out Pennsylvania Avenue to the fairgrounds.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

The boys ride along and catch up on the recent past.

VIRGIL

That man... he lost everything
in a card game? No wonder it's
a sin to gamble.

MILTON

Relax, Virg. He was at the end
of his rope anyway. Banks
wouldn't lend him anything. He
needed money, my money.

JULIAN

Lucky thing for you, nobody
ever gets to see your "money".

MILTON

First, I would have to lose...
and I never lose.

VIRGIL

Drinking, smoking and gambling.
Lord save us. Thee seem to
forget how thee were raised.

MILTON

Wait till thee... you... see
the circus, Virg. That'll change
your mind.

VIRGIL

I saw the circus.

MILTON

Remember when we wanted to run
away with a circus? Now, we
own one! Good fortune smiled
on us today, hey brothers?

JULIAN

Indeed, as long as you don't
get caught.

VIRGIL

And is this horse one of the
fruits of thy vice?

MILTON

That one? Nope. Never saw it
before.

VIRGIL
Well, whose is it?

MILTON
How should I know? You're the
one riding it.

Virgil pulls on the reins and stops.

VIRGIL
Whoa! This is not thy horse?

MILTON
Nope. Wish it was... nice horse.

JULIAN
Sure is.

VIRGIL
Don't they hang people for
stealing horses?

MILTON
I don't know, I never got caught.

Milton and Julian laugh out loud.

MILTON
(continuing)
Relax, Virg. They gotta catch
you first.

Virgil jumps off the horse, turns it back towards the city, grabs his bag and slaps the horse with his hat. It gallops back to the city.

VIRGIL
I'll walk.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - DAY - CIRCUS SITE

The big top is a ramshackle tent, shredded and full of holes.

Milling around are CIRCUS PERSONNEL who double as performers, laborers and all around help.

Cavorting among them unattended are some ANIMALS, dogs, monkeys, a pig, some horses and mules, an old lion, and two elephants, one a baby.

JULIAN
Good Lord! People pay twenty-five cents to see this?

MILTON
We'll make a fortune.

VIRGIL'S P.O.V. - THE CAROUSEL

The carousel stands silent.

SUBLIM

The mustached man on the dream carousel reaches out in slow motion and tries to prevent the man with the derringer from firing, but he is out of reach.

His mouth is open in a silent shout of warning to the tall man.

BACK TO SCENE

VIRGIL
Oh, no, no.

JULIAN
What's the matter, Virg?

VIRGIL
It's an omen.

As the boys ride up, WINNIE, the fat lady, rumbles towards them in a highly agitated state.

WINNIE
Have you seen Mister Schaeffer?

Milton shows her his Bill Of Sale.

MILTON
Mister Schaeffer is no longer associated with the circus. I am the new owner.
(to Julian)
Send the horses back to the stable.

Julian whacks the horses with his hat and they gallop off towards the city.

VIRGIL
Those were not thy horses,
either?

MILTON
Rentals. We have an account
with the stable owner.

Milton is suddenly surrounded by Winnie, EDUARDO, an ACROBAT, MANUEL, a JUGGLER, TINY, a GIANT, BONES, a LIVING SKELETON, ILLUMINATO, a TATTOOED MAN, MIX and MAX, a PAIR OF MIDGETS, and MADAME X, A CURIOUS LOOKING BEARDED FELLOW dressed in a scarlet robe.

WINNIE
When do we get paid?

MILTON
Oh, please, we've only met and
already we're quibbling about
the root of all evil? I hope
this is our only problem.

WINNIE
It's not... Magnifico has
disappeared!

JULIAN
Who's Magnifico?

ILLUMINATO
Our magician. He was wonderful.

MILTON
Disappeared? What do you mean?

WINNIE
He's... vanished... poof!

MILTON
Vanished, you say?

ILLUMINATO
Gone... without a trace.

Milton scratches his chin and ponders the situation.

MILTON
Well... he's either very good...
or very bad.

EDUARDO
Maybe if we don't get paid,
we'll all disappear.

BONES
I haven't had a decent meal in
weeks. Look at me.

Bones is truly a living skeleton. Without teeth.
His voice is scarcely a whisper.
He PLAYS 'Chopsticks' on his ribs with wooden mallets.
The tune is faintly recognizable.

BONES
(continuing)
I get lightheaded sometimes.

WINNIE
I've lost over a hundred pounds.

MILTON
Now, now, my new found friends,
times are tough. There's a war
on, you know. We all have to
make sacrifices under these
circumstances. Let me talk
this over with my associates.

Milton calls Virgil and Julian aside and they whisper
in consultation.

JULIAN
What are we going to do? We
can't pay them with your money.

VIRGIL
(to Milton)
What's wrong with thy money?

MILTON
The ink rubs off.
(beat)
This is my plan... we offer
them a share of the gate.

JULIAN
But it's a losing proposition.

VIRGIL
The ink rubs off?

MILTON
We can't lose. We've invested
nothing...

VIRGIL
Why don't thee take it to a
bank and exchange it?

MILTON
That's a good idea, Virg...
(to Julian)
And we can make a fortune on
the games of chance... if we
eliminate the chance.

VIRGIL
Perdition awaits thee, Milton.

MILTON
People love to gamble. We're
only offering them love. Weren't
thee taught to love thy neighbor?

VIRGIL
Thee speaks with the devil's
tongue.

The boys go back to the circus gang with the proposition.

MILTON
Congratulations! You are now
all shareholders of the Circus.
Each of you will share equally
in the box office receipts...
After expenses, of course. The
animals have to eat. We will
only keep the income from the
games. Fair?

They look at each other and mumble AD LIB acquiescence.

ALL
Sounds fair. About as fair as
can be, I guess. All right.

MILTON
All right is right. Let's get
the show on the road. Tomorrow,
Manassas. We'll massacre 'em
in Manassas.

EXT. HOWARD'S STABLES - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Milton's and Julian's horses trot up to Howard's Stables, a popular livery.

HOWARD and TWO BUSINESSMEN watch as they arrive.

BUSINESSMAN
Here come our horses now.

Howard shakes his head.

HOWARD
Ah, not those guys again.

He grabs the horses by the reins and looks them over.

BUSINESSMAN
You know who stole them?

HOWARD
Yeah, but at least they send
them back.

EXT. MANASSAS, VIRGINIA - DAY - CIRCUS SITE

The circus carousel goes round and round, the steam calliope PLAYING a delightful waltz.

There is no crowd gathering, however.

The performers talk among themselves, AD LIB (M.O.S.).

JULIAN
Why isn't there anyone here?
Think it's a little early?

MILTON
No, I see people on the hills
all around us.

JULIAN
What are they waiting for?

MILTON'S P.O.V. - A THREE HUNDRED SIXTY DEGREE VIEW OF THE SURROUNDING HILLSIDE

On the North, barely visible, men in blue and Zoaves, with their colorful baggy-legged pants, line the hills.

On the South, men in gray form lines in front of artillery.

BACK TO SCENE

MILTON
I don't know... Hit the bell on the carousel, Virg.

Virgil RINGS the BELL on the carousel.

MILTON
(continuing)
We should see some action any time now.

JULIAN
Judging from the size of the crowd, business should be booming.

MILTON
Everybody loves a circus!

While Virgil rings the bell, a LOUD, WHISTLING NOISE hurtles close overhead, followed by an EXPLOSION on a surrounding hillside.

The boys are startled and confused.

The performers scream in hysteria.

MILTON
(continuing)
Whoa! What do you suppose that was all about?

JULIAN
You didn't even cheat anyone yet and they're shooting at us.

VIRGIL
Maybe we should talk to them.

More and more artillery shells go WHISTLING overhead from all directions.

The shelling continues throughout the scene.

The circus animals bleat and fret and strain at their tethers.

The wild ones pace in their cages.

The carousel continues to turn, empty and unattended.

It plays a repertoire of gay waltzes in syncopation with the aerial bombardment.

EXT. SURROUNDING HILLS - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Men in blue and gray descend on the valley screaming and yelling and firing their rifles as they run.

THE BOYS P.O.V. - THE DESCENDING ARMIES

From their perspective, it appears that both the blue and the gray are running towards and shooting at the circus.

BACK TO SCENE

MILTON

This has to be a
misunderstanding.

VIRGIL

We can't run. We're surrounded.

JULIAN

I thought the war was over.

VIRGIL

We'd better surrender.

The boys throw up their arms in unison as the armies run towards them.

Milton looks around for his performers.

They huddle together shivering in fear.

MILTON

Throw up your arms. I think I
can talk our way out of this.

Both armies converge on the site of the circus simultaneously and engage in ferocious hand to hand combat.

Soldiers from both sides jump on the carousel and shoot at each other as it turns, churning out its lilting melodies.

Chips fly off the horses as they deflect bullets.

Soldiers spin off the carousel as they are hit.

Bodies lie strewn about the site and in an almost perfect circle of blue and gray around the carousel.

EXT. CIRCUS SITE - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

When it seems like there are no more men to kill or be killed, the fighting subsides.

The boys and the circus people stand silently, stunned, with their arms still raised in surrender.

Miraculously, none of them are hurt.

Around them, dead and wounded, blue and gray lie intertwined in a curious camaraderie.

The banks of the Bull Run are littered with the colorful uniforms of Zoaves.

From a distance, it looks like a field of poppies.

The carousel continues to circle round and round in three-quarter time, oblivious to the carnage.

NIMBUS the lion roams free from his cage among the bodies.

He stops and licks the face of a trembling REBEL BOY in gray.

Tiny, the giant, puts his arm around the lion's neck and leads him back to his cage.

TINY
Come on now, Nimbie, don't be
afraid.

The rebel raises his head and looks around.

REBEL BOY
Am I dead?

VIRGIL
No, thee are alive.

MILTON
Where are you from, boy?

REBEL BOY
Texas, sir.

MILTON
Is there any war down there?

REBEL BOY
Not yet, sir.

Milton makes a pronouncement to the small gathering.

MILTON
Pack it up, we're headin' for
Texas.

EXT. TEXAS ROAD - DAY - A FEW MONTHS LATER

Virgil rides ahead of the circus putting up posters in advance of the spectacle as they head through Texas.

He is a comical sight atop his dispirited old nag, ANNIE, laden with rolls of circus posters and flyers, buckets and brushes, all dangling and clanking as he rides.

He dismounts out of pity and walks ahead of Annie.

VIRGIL
I think the walking's faster,
old girl.

Annie slows to a stop as Virgil tacks a poster to a tree.

INSERT - THE POSTER

THE MOST SPECTACULAR SHOW ON EARTH - PLAYING NOW AT
THE HOUSTON FAIR GROUNDS - THE SCHAEFFER BROS. CIRCUS
WILD ANIMALS - ACROBATS - ANOMALIES OF NATURE - GAMES -
ADMISSION ONLY TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

BACK TO SCENE

He tries to get her in motion again. She is reluctant to move.

VIRGIL
(continuing)
Come on, Annie. Come on,
darlin'. We're almost home.

He coaxes her in his sweetest voice.

VIRGIL
(continuing)
Know what I'm going to give
thee when we get there? A big,
juicy carrot. Hmmmm! Doesn't
that sound good? Hmmmm. I can
almost taste it. Hmmmm.

Annie just looks at him, woefully.

Virgil looks her straight in the eye.

She ignores him.

VIRGIL
(continuing)
Are thee deaf?

At this precise moment she jerks her head to rid herself of a pesky horsefly, appearing to answer him in the affirmative.

VIRGIL
(continuing)
Don't thee be smug. If Milton were here, thee would soon be in the glue pot.

Annie shakes her head at the same fly. Virgil mistakes it as an act of defiance.

VIRGIL
(continuing)
Either thee are the dumbest
creature... or the smartest.

She shakes her head again.

VIRGIL
(continuing)
Wouldn't surprise me if thee
struck up a conversation with
me one of these days.

EXT. FIELD NEARBY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Two oafish farm hands, LEM and CLEM, working in a field nearby overhear Virgil talking to Annie.

CLEM
Lookit, thar, Lem. That thar
boy's talkin' to his hoss.

They both guffaw at the observation.

Clem yells over to Virgil.

CLEM
(continuing)
Hey thar, boy... is that thar
one o' them talkin' hosses?

They both guffaw again at this humorous barb.

EXT. TEXAS ROAD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Virgil surveys the landscape for a quick getaway as the oafs approach.

Next to Virgil they are giants.

VIRGIL
Oh Lord, what would Milton do
in this situation?

Virgil puffs up his chest and responds in his most officious circus-speak.

VIRGIL
(continuing)
As a matter of fact, she is.

The clods surround him menacingly.

LEM
Whaddayew mean?

VIRGIL
I mean she is that rarest of
creatures, 'Equus Dictus', a
talking horse.

The smaller of the two clods, who stands a foot over
Virgil, snarls.

CLEM
Oh, yeah, let's hear 'er say
sumthin'.

VIRGIL
Gentlemen, please, you insult
the lady. You can't expect her
to perform at the slightest
notion.

LEM
Why not?

VIRGIL
Because she is a professional.
Just look at her. Why, she is
indignant. Do you each have a
quarter?

They shake their heads, no.

VIRGIL
(continuing)
Well, that is the price of
admission to any circus to see
a talking horse. Sorry,
gentlemen.

He starts to lead Annie away.

Clem grabs the reins.

CLEM

Wait jest a minnit. How about
if'n we give ya a sack o'
turnips? That's wuth more'n
fifty cents.

He mumbles to himself.

VIRGIL

A sack of turnips?

LEM

Yew better take 'im up on it.
Clem don't lak it when folks
turm 'im down.

They look at each other and guffaw again.

VIRGIL

A sack of turnips. What a
generous offer. I couldn't
possibly refuse.

Clem walks over to the side of the road and picks up a sack of turnips and with one hand throws it over poor Annie's back.

She almost collapses under the strain.

LEM

Now, let's hear 'er say sumthin'.

Virgil looks at the old mare with imploring eyes. He crosses his fingers and takes a deep breath.

VIRGIL

Well, Annie, would you like to
say something to these nice
men?

As luck would have it, that same horsefly bites a piece out of her leeward ear.

She bares her teeth and jerks her head around away from the audience.

Virgil, in the best imitation of a horse's voice and without moving his lips, whinnies and neighs.

VIRGIL
(continuing)
No, I have a headache.

He turns to the country bumpkins and throws up his hands in feigned frustration.

VIRGIL
(continuing)
Just like a woman.

Lem and Clem look at each other in bewilderment.

CLEM
Did' ja hear that?

LEM
Well, ah'll be dogged. If'n ah
didn't hear it, I woodenanever
believed it.

VIRGIL
Excuse me, gentlemen. And,
thank you for the turnips.

He leads Annie away, holding his breath, not daring to look back.

Clem and Lem watch Virgil and Annie amble down the road.

They stand mumbling to themselves, scratching various parts of their bodies and shaking their heads in wonder.

EXT. CIRCUS SITE - DAY - LATER

Virgil arrives back at the circus site with Annie.

He gives the sack of turnips to Tiny.

VIRGIL
For the animals. Where are my
brothers?

TINY
They went into town. Should be
back by now.

There is the SOUND OF HOOFBEATS.

A dozen or more SOLDIERS, some in gray uniforms, some in everyday clothes, rein up in front of Virgil.

The leader is CAPTAIN TRAVERS.

Just far enough behind them not to be seen come Milton and Julian.

They stay out of sight in an arroyo and watch the scene unfold.

CAPTAIN TRAVERS
I'm Captain Travers of the
Liberty Fusiliers. How many
head of horses do you have?

VIRGIL
(pointing)
Just Annie.

CAPTAIN TRAVERS
Any mules?

VIRGIL
A few.

CAPTAIN TRAVERS
Good, we need them. Men, gather
up the mules.

VIRGIL
Thee cannot do that.

CAPTAIN TRAVERS
Apparently you haven't heard...
there's a war on.

VIRGIL
We are not part of thy war.

CAPTAIN TRAVERS
I'll give you a voucher for
payment from the Treasury of
the Confederacy... We're also
looking for volunteers to join
our Fusiliers.

He motions to one of his men, WILEY STEWART.

CAPTAIN TRAVERS
(continuing)
Search the area.
(to Virgil)
You look able-bodied.

VIRGIL
I cannot do harm to my fellow
man.... and, besides, I don't
know how to fusile.

The soldiers dismount and surround him.

Wiley Stewart comes out of the tent shaking his head.

WILEY
There's sumthin' wrong with
those folks. One of 'em looks
lak he's daid.

The giant, the midgets, the fat lady, the tattooed man
and the bearded lady and Bones follow him out of the
tent.

CAPTAIN TRAVERS
You talk funny, boy. Where you
from?

VIRGIL
Philadelphia.

WILEY
A Yankee... string 'im up.

They all AD LIB threats.

ALL
Yeah, string 'im up. Hang 'im.

One of the men throws a noose around his neck.

WILEY
Get 'im over to that mesquite
tree.

VIRGIL
Ow... thee are... you're choking
me.

WILEY
That's the point, Yankee.

The men all laugh. They are only playing a terrifying game with him.

CAPTAIN TRAVERS
Hold on, boys, maybe our gentle friend has second thoughts.

They remove the noose.

Virgil massages his bulging neck and breathes deeply.

VIRGIL
Perhaps I can help thee with the sick and wounded.

CAPTAIN TRAVERS
We accept. Mount up. Want's your name, Yankee?

VIRGIL
Gunn... Virgil Gunn.

THE BOYS' P.O.V. - FROM THE ARROYO

Virgil mounts a mule without formal farewells to the circus troupe and looks back over his shoulder towards the arroyo.

VIRGIL'S P.O.V. - THE ARROYO

Milton and Julian wave a cautious goodbye.

EXT. ARROYO - DAY - CONTINUOUS

MILTON
Quick, Julian, I have a plan.
We haven't a moment to lose.

JULIAN
We gonna save Virg?

MILTON
No, we're going to save ourselves.

They ride over to the tent.

EXT. CIRCUS SITE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The boys are greeted with hysteria.

WINNIE

They took Virgil and the mules.
What are we going to do?

Milton grasps Winnie's hand and shakes it vigorously.

MILTON

Be brave... and, congratulations.
You're the new owner of Schaeffer
Brothers Circus.

WINNIE

But, what should we do? Where
should we go?

MILTON

Everybody loves a circus! Get
back up north... Gettysburg.
They'll die laughing in
Gettysburg.

WINNIE

Will we be safe there until the
war's over?

MILTON

There's nothing there but farms.

They all gasp as Milton and Julian turn and ride east
towards the Mississippi.

Milton calls back over his shoulder.

MILTON

(continuing)
Good luck!

EXT. BATTLEFIELD IN VIRGINIA - DAY - SOMETIME LATER

Virgil's Company is pinned down and exposed to
relentless mortar and artillery fire on a broad expanse
of hilltop.

Demolished wagons and dead, bloated horses lie scattered
among the men and equipment.

They're all hugging the ground as fire rains on them from the sky.

Embers ignite the grass and equipment and some land on the men as well.

Virgil blows and pats out some smoldering patches on his uniform.

VIRGIL

Phoo, phoo.

Whistling bullets drop men right and left as snipers pick out easy targets.

Some drop dead forward on their faces in silence. Others spin in a macabre death dance, screaming in pain before dropping.

VIRGIL

(continuing)

Whose idea was it to capture
this hill?

WILEY

Wasn't me, Virg.

Wiley uses his hat to pat out a grass fire near him.

Embers ignite on his arm. He blows them out.

WILEY

(continuing)

Phoo, phoo.

The rain of fire continues as mortar shells explode over the hill and men scream and die.

A dead soldier cuddles a terrier in his arms. The dog shivers and whines.

Virgil crawls over to the dog and gives it a drink of water from his canteen.

VIRGIL

Poor little dog.

A huge explosion scatters a ton of dirt, obliterating everything in sight and hurling bodies into the air.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VIRGIL'S RECURRING DREAM - NIGHT

Blurred figures in black and dismal shades of gray rise slowly up and down in DEAD SILENCE.

In front, the same tall, lanky, sad figure with whiskers wears a stove pipe hat.

Beside him, also rising slowly up and down, but out of sequence with his movement and beyond reach, is the same pudgy woman dressed in black.

She screams hysterically in silence, one hand outstretched towards the tall man, the other holding the lace handkerchief.

The tall man pays no attention.

He rises slowly up and down, while she screams silently and rises up and down beside him.

Behind them is the same dashing figure dressed in black.

He is handsome, rakish, with a trimmed handlebar mustache.

He trails the tall man, rising up and down behind him.

He slowly removes a derringer from his waistcoat and points it in the direction of the tall man.

He fires the derringer.

There is a considerable EXPLOSION OF SMOKE from the derringer.

There is no sound of the shot.

Everything is dead silent.

Behind the man with the derringer, Virgil rises slowly up and down.

Virgil is remarkably similar in looks, dress and style to the man with the derringer, who begins to look like Virgil's brother, Julian.

Virgil reaches out and tries to prevent the man with the derringer from firing, but he is out of reach.

His mouth is open in a silent shout of warning to the tall man.

No one hears. It is all dead silence.

They are all on horseback, slowly rising up and down and going round and round in a circle.

They are on the same carousel with the grotesque wooden horses shrouded in black crepe.

They go up and down in the same circular game of pursuit as the earlier dreams; no one escaping; no one catching up with the others.

The tall man in front, rides silent and sad.

The pudgy woman, screams silently beside him.

The rakish figure fires his derringer at the tall man.

Virgil chases them all in slow motion, shouting warnings that cannot be heard, never catching them.

The carousel goes round and round in desperate, silent slow motion, the characters slowly rising up and down.

He fires the derringer over and over, but it makes no sound.

The same bullet slowly spirals towards the back of the tall man's head.

Virgil yells his warning, but has no voice.

The pudgy woman screams hysterically. No one hears.

The tall man rises up and down, oblivious to it all.

A BURLY, BEARDED MAN in a bowler hat rides behind Virgil.

The burly man has a blackjack in his hand.

He raises his arm and strikes at the back of Virgil's head.

There is the SOUND of an enormous THUNDER CLAP.

INT. CHIMBORAZO ARMY HOSPITAL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS
Virgil awakes with a start and bolts upright.
He is in a hospital bed. He is soaking wet with sweat.
A violent thunderstorm rolls through the night.
Occasional lightning illuminates the ward.
Around Virgil are some twenty other beds with wounded
and sick SOLDIERS.
Some moan. Others lie still.
He falls back on his bed and puts his hands over his
eyes and trembles.

INT. CHIMBORAZO ARMY HOSPITAL - DAY - THE NEXT MORNING
PHOEBE, a NURSE, makes the morning rounds in Virgil's
ward.
The patients all brighten up and smile as she passes
and comforts each one AD LIB (M.O.S.), seeing to their
needs.

She gently shakes Virgil to wake him up.
He struggles to lift his head from his pillow.
He can't focus his eyes.
Sweat runs off his face; his bed and clothes are soaked.

PHOEBE
Virgil, are you all right?

He mumbles almost incoherently.

VIRGIL
What?

PHOEBE
Can you hear me?

He answers unconsciously.

VIRGIL
Is it Thee, Lord?

PHOEBE
Are you all right?

He tries to lift his head and look around.

VIRGIL'S P.O.V. - THE WARD

Everything is blurred, but the blur is deep red, the color of blood.

The deep red turns to black, then fades into gray and finally a brilliant white.

He can make out nothing.

BACK TO SCENE

VIRGIL
I don't know, Lord. Is this Heaven?

PHOEBE
No, it's Virginia.

He is suddenly catapulted back into reality.

VIRGIL
What happened to me?

He feverishly searches his body for bullet wounds and clothes for signs of blood.

VIRGIL
(continuing)
Where was I shot?

PHOEBE
You weren't shot, Virgil, you've been delirious with the fever.

He grins sheepishly.

VIRGIL
The fever again?

PHOEBE
The fever... still.

He struggles to focus on the nurse's face.

VIRGIL
Phoebe, is it thee... you?

PHOEBE
Yes, it's me.

He sinks back into his sopping wet pillow.

VIRGIL
Oh, Phoebe, I thought I might
never see thee... you... again.

PHOEBE
You've been in my care six weeks
already.

VIRGIL
Six weeks?

PHOEBE
Delirious most of the time...
but you're recovering. Destiny
won't let you get away from me.

She smiles and gives him a fresh pillow and leans over
to whisper.

PHOEBE
(continuing)
I'm going to be extra special
sweet to you later.

He whispers back.

VIRGIL
When?

They both look around, wary of eavesdroppers.

PHOEBE
Tonight.

INT. CHIMBORAZO ARMY HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The patients are all sleeping soundly, except for Virgil
who struggles to keep his eyes open.

Phoebe slips into the ward.

She carries a basin of water and some towels.

The only intermittent light is from the storm that grows weaker and distant outside.

She places the basin on the table beside Virgil's bed and soaks one of the towels in the water.

She wrings it out and wipes his face and forehead.

She unbuttons his nightshirt and gently massages his chest with the wet towel.

She leans over and brushes the hair back from his brow and kisses him.

The thunder and lightning subside and the two figures blend into the silent darkness.

INT. CHIMBORAZO ARMY HOSPITAL - DAY - THE NEXT MORNING

Virgil awakes refreshed, in a clean bed, wearing a clean nightshirt.

Phoebe looks after another patient nearby.

VIRGIL
Good morning, angel of mercy.

She turns and goes to his side.

VIRGIL
(continuing)
Was I delirious again last night?

PHOEBE
No, but I was... Did you sleep well?

Virgil contemplates.

VIRGIL

No, I had the same confusing
carousel dream again... I'm
trying to save someone... I
don't know who or why... And
someone is trying to stop me...
I never saw these people
before... I wish it would go
faster... I'd like to know how
it ends.

PHOEBE

All the boys have bad dreams,
Virgil... It's part of the
healing.

VIRGIL

But I've been having this dream
for a long time.

PHOEBE

Your subconscious at work...
guiding you... it's probably a
metaphor... you're trying to
save someone's soul... like a
good Quaker.

VIRGIL

I don't know good from evil
anymore... it was all so simple
in the safety of the Community...
isolated... from the real world.

Virgil looks out the window. His face lights up.

VIRGIL

(continuing)
Phoebe, look!

He grabs her by the hand and pulls her through the
door onto the porch overlooking the James River to the
south.

EXT. CHIMBORAZO ARMY HOSPITAL - DAY - PORCH -
CONTINUOUS

VIRGIL'S P.O.V. - THE SKY

A gigantic rainbow fills the sky, literally.

It stretches from one end of the horizon to the other.

BACK TO SCENE

PHOEBE
Oh, Virgil, it's so beautiful!

They stand holding hands, mesmerized.

The ground trembles faintly as CANNON fire is HEARD from the distant south.

VIRGIL
How can men kill each other
beneath a rainbow?
(pause)
Phoebe, darlin', I have to get
out of this... save the man on
the carousel... maybe influence
the outcome of the war... I
think that's the key, somehow.

PHOEBE
But, how? One man can't change
the course of history.

VIRGIL
A plan... I have a plan.

PHOEBE
Will I ever see you again?

VIRGIL
I'll make you part of the plan.

EXT. SIDE WHEELER ON THE MISSISSIPPI - NIGHT -
ESTABLISHING

MUSIC plays and MEN laugh and talk as the boat paddles down the river.

INT. SIDE WHEELER - NIGHT - GAMBLING ROOM - CONTINUOUS
Milton plays Poker with other GAMBLERS as Julian watches from behind.

The pot is full and the faces of all at the table but Milton reflect tension.

Only Milton and one other man remain in the game.

OTHER MAN
All I have left is my Arabian
thoroughbred, Winged Fury,
currently stabled in New Orleans.
If you'll accept a bill of sale,
sir, I'm still in the game.

MILTON
I accept, sir.

The man writes out a quick bill of sale and throws it in the pot.

OTHER MAN
I'll see you and call.

Milton lays his cards out on the table.

MILTON
Full house, aces high.

Milton scoops up his winnings and the bill of sale and stuffs it in his pockets.

The other players check the cards.

OTHER MAN
Hey, how come there's five aces
in this deck?

MILTON
What? Can't we trust anyone
any more? Let me see those.

Milton grabs the cards and shuffles them.

MILTON
(continuing)
By the stars, you're right...
someone in this room is a cheat!

He throws the cards on the table in disgust.

OTHER MAN
And you're it! Get him!

The other players rush Milton but Julian turns the table over and they exit the gambling room with the players in hot pursuit.

INT. SIDE WHEELER - NIGHT - BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

They run through the grand ballroom, dodging or knocking down DANCING PATRONS while an ORCHESTRA plays a waltz.

The dancers impede the pursuers who trip and fall over them.

EXT. SIDE WHEELER - NIGHT - DECK - CONTINUOUS

Milton and Julian run down the deck of the boat to the stern, turning over deck chairs and throwing life preservers in the path of their pursuers.

The other gamblers chase them down the deck hurdling or tripping over the obstacles.

They jump over the stern of the boat unceremoniously.

The pursuing gamblers shout AD LIB threats after them.

GAMBLERS
Stop the boat! Get those
cheaters! Shoot them!

The men on the boat fire revolvers at them as they swim for shore.

Little PINGS and PLUNKS of the bullets hitting the water follow them as they swim.

EXT. RIVERBANK - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Milton and Julian pull themselves up on the bank of the river, exhausted.

The SOUND of the boat fades in the distance.

JULIAN
We should've kept the circus.
No one shoots at circus people...

MILTON
Those men were cheating. They
were stacking the deck and
dealing from the bottom.

JULIAN
... Except for that time in
Manassas.

MILTON
I tell you, brother, the world
has gone crazy. You can't trust
anyone any more.

JULIAN
Maybe we should go up to
Gettysburg with the circus. At
least we wouldn't get shot at.

MILTON
Always thinking of yourself.

He checks his pockets and counts his winnings.

MILTON
(continuing)
Not much for hazardous work,
but it'll get us to New Orleans.

He shakes water from the bill of sale and reads it to
himself.

MILTON
(continuing)
We can always sell the horse.
I hear thoroughbreds can fetch
a mighty pretty penny.

He holds up a dripping wad of paper money from his
inside pocket and throws it back in the river.

MILTON
(continuing)
Damn cheap ink!

EXT. NORTHERN VIRGINIA FIELD - DAY

It is Sunday. Virgil, his friend Wiley Stewart, and
his unit pause from the march to battle somewhere.

The men are sermonized by JOHN STEVENS, a Preacher man
from Texas.

Stevens is a huge man whose voice is laced with fire
and brimstone.

Wiley and Virgil talk between themselves as Stevens preaches to the assembly.

STEVENS

The Lord is our rock, and our fortress and our deliverer, our shield and our strength...

WILEY

March, march, march. Ah'm so glad General Jackson gives us Sunday off.

STEVENS

... He delivered David from his enemies which were strong, and the Lord rewarded David for his righteousness for he had kept the ways of the Lord.

WILEY

Ah'm gittin' tired of marchin', Virg.

STEVENS

He taught David's hands to war and girded him in strength to battle...

VIRGIL

Recite the Psalms while you march, Wiley, it'll go faster.

STEVENS

He destroyed his enemies and consumed them so they could not arise and turn against him...

WILEY

Yea, though I walk through the valley of death...

STEVENS

God was his strength and power as He is our strength and power.

WILEY

... Like that, Virg?

STEVENS
Let us give thanks and sing
praise unto His name. Amen.

ALL
Amen.

VIRGIL
Well, not about death...

The men disperse, shaking Stevens' hand AD LIB.

ALL
Nice sermon.

Stevens shakes Virgil's hand as he leaves.

STEVENS
Good mornin', brother.

VIRGIL
Yes, that's it exactly.

STEVENS
What's that?

VIRGIL
Brother... you called me brother.

STEVENS
Indeed I did. We're all
brothers, aren't we?

VIRGIL
Have you forgotten the Lord's
words, John? 'Ye shall not
fight against your brother!'

STEVENS
It is the cause, brother. They
have taken up arms against us.
We only want to live in peace,
free from the chains of Northern
tyranny.

VIRGIL
Yet we keep our brown brothers
in chains, we and they who all
worship the same God. How can
you call upon Him to guide you
in battle?

STEVENS

Because our cause is just. We
are in the right. He shall be
our salvation.

VIRGIL

God did not let His people remain
in bondage. Remember, John? I
would think twice about asking
God to choose sides. He might
take a good look and pick the
side not as righteous as yours.

STEVENS

The Lord is my light and my
salvation; whom shall I fear?

Stevens storms off piously, leaving Virgil and Wiley
alone.

WILEY

Yew shore told him a thing or
two. Ah'm surprised nobody's
shot you yet, Virg.

VIRGIL

Wiley, I have to get out of
this. Think! How can I get
out of the war?

WILEY

Well, yew could desert... but
they'd shoot ya.

VIRGIL

No, I have a low threshold of
pain.

WILEY

Or, yew could be a sharpshooter.

VIRGIL

What's that?

WILEY

Yew git to shoot the Yanks from
a tree or somethin'.

VIRGIL

I can't shoot people!

WILEY

Well, yew could be a spy... and
spies don't hafta shoot nobody.

VIRGIL

A spy, yes, a spy... that's
more my liking, sounds
challenging, even gentlemanly.

Virgil fantasizes about being a spy.

INT. SOUTHERN MANSION - NIGHT

Virgil is all dressed up at an elegant party surrounded by beautiful young SOUTHERN BELLES, cooing and giggling AD LIB.

BELLES

Oh, Virgil, are you really a
spy?

VIRGIL

Shhh! It's a secret.

BELLES

You are so dashingly handsome...
and dangerously mysterious.

Virgil blushes.

BACK TO SCENE

WILEY

'Course, yew better not git
caught.

VIRGIL

Caught? What happens if I get
caught?

WILEY

Yew git hung.

VIRGIL

Hung? Like from a tree?

WILEY

Yep. I saw a hangin' once.
Wasn't a pretty sight.

(MORE)

WILEY (cont'd)
He hung there a wheezin' and a
gaggin', eyes bulgin' out and
then he stopped twitchin' and
his tongue jest hung out all
purple, right down to his
shoulder and then his face turned
black. It wasn't a pretty sight,
Virg.

Virgil tugged at his collar as he turned a pale hue of
green.

WILEY
(continuing)
Yep, yew'd make a good spy,
Virg. Yer real smart.

VIRGIL
Thank you.

WILEY
Yew'd make a good scout, too,
Virg, and scouts git a horse.

VIRGIL
What's the difference between
spying and scouting?

WILEY
I reckin if they catch yew
scoutin', yew don't git hung.

VIRGIL
Scouting... doesn't sound all
that bad.

EXT. LAFLEUR'S STABLES - DAY

Milton and Julian approach a ramshackle stable at the
end of Orleans Street in New Orleans.

INSERT - SIGN ON STABLE

which reads "THE NEW ORLEANS PALACE, Jacques LaFleur,
Proprietor".

BACK TO SCENE

LAFLEUR is a huge, grisly looking muscled man.

He is shoeing a horse.

Julian whispers to Milton as they approach cautiously.

JULIAN

Why are blacksmiths all so
immense?

MILTON

The size of the body is inversely
proportional to the size of
their brain. It's a scientific
fact.

LaFleur looks up from his work and leers at them with
a mouthful of nails.

LAFLEUR

What's that?

MILTON

I was pondering the wonders of
science. Would you kindly fetch
my mare, Monsieur LaFleur, s'il
vous plaît?

LAFLEUR

And what mare might that be?

JULIAN

Winged Fury.

LaFleur curls his lip and shakes his head.

He calls to a stableman.

LAFLEUR

Hey, boy, fetch Winged Fury,
and for God's sake, be careful.
She's dangerous.

MILTON AND JULIAN'S P.O.V.

The stableman disappears into the steaming shadows and
returns leading the mare.

She is sway backed and emaciated and surrounded by a
swarm of flies.

The wretched creature lets out a pitiful neigh as it
limps towards them.

BACK TO SCENE

Milton's and Julian's jaws drop simultaneously.

LaFleur lets out a guffaw as they all wave their arms to chase away the flies.

JULIAN

Oh, Lord.

MILTON

Beelzebub! I've been hoodwinked!
What did I do to deserve this?

LAFLEUR

That'll be five dollars.

MILTON

Five dollars? For what?

LAFLEUR

Ten days room and board, and if you don't pay, she goes to the abattoir.

MILTON

Hmmm... the abattoir...

(beat)

Only five dollars? Why, your luxurious accommodations are worth twice that. In fact, mon ami, I would be willing to pay you twice that. Ten dollars.

JULIAN

What?

LAFLEUR

What?

MILTON

That's right. I will pay you the sum of ten dollars on the flip of a coin. If Dame Fortune smiles on you, you will be ten dollars the richer.

LAFLEUR

I'm no fool. What's in this for you?

MILTON
(aside)
Don't underestimate yourself.
(to LaFleur)
There's nothing for me to gain
and nothing for you to lose.
If I win the toss, I simply
don't pay. There's no money in
my pocket if I win and none out
of yours if you lose. So you
see, mon ami, you can only win.

LaFleur is momentarily stunned by the logic.

While he struggles to figure out what Milton proposes,
Milton assumes his agreement and continues with his
line.

MILTON
(continuing)
I'll even give you the choice
of calling heads or tails.
What could be fairer than that?

Milton has both hands in his coat pockets as he speaks.

LAFLEUR
Tails.

Milton produces a coin from his right pocket which he
quickly tosses high into the air.

All eyes are on the coin as it spins in slow motion
above them.

LAFLEUR
(continuing)
Let it hit the ground.

The coin plops in the dirt, scattering a small cloud
of dust.

MILTON
Voilà! La tête!

LaFleur looks down in disgust.

LAFLEUR
Merde!

Milton picks up the coin, blows off the dust into LaFleur's face, and while LaFleur wipes the dust from his eyes, Milton puts it in his pants pocket.

Milton takes the mare from the stableman.

MILTON
Winged Fury, champion of
champions. What riches will be
ours come the morrow?

He leads the mare back down the street.

Julian looks over his shoulder at the blacksmith.

JULIAN'S P.O.V.

LaFleur stands watching them, wiping his eyes.

BACK TO SCENE

JULIAN
Milton, what would you have
done if it came up tails?

MILTON
Impossible. I used my lucky
coin.

JULIAN
What impossible? The odds are
fifty-fifty.

Milton reaches into his left coat pocket and produces another coin.

MILTON
If he called heads, I would
have used my other lucky coin.

Julian shakes his head.

MILTON
(continuing)
Wagering is a science.

The mare is a sorrowful sight limping along behind them.

JULIAN
Better slow down, she can't
keep up with us.

MILTON
How far is the abattoir?

EXT. CONFEDERATE ENCAMPMENT - EVENING

Captain Travers addresses a complement of TWENTY SCOUTS ON HORSEBACK. Virgil is among them.

CAPTAIN TRAVERS
Your mission is to ride north
to the Chickahominy River, scout
the countryside and return. Do
not engage the enemy. Observe
numbers and movement, equipment,
firepower and report. We'll
have two hundred other scouts,
spies and sharpshooters out
there... so... don't shoot 'em.

VIRGIL
(to himself)
Sounds easy enough.

The scouts gallop off, each spread out in a different direction.

EXT. WOODLANDS ROAD - NIGHT

Virgil trots along by the light of just enough moon to see his path.

The road goes from wooded areas through meadows and marsh land to thick brush.

He slows his horse as he nears railroad tracks.

He dismounts and listens for any sound of the enemy.

He hears CHATTING from a distance.

He pats his horse on its nose.

VIRGIL
Shhhh!

As he gets closer he can make out the O.S. chatter between TWO UNION PICKETS.

PICKET #1 (O.S.)
Hey, you hear somethin'?

PICKET #2 (O.S.)
Probably just one of us. Nothin'
to worry about.

PICKET #1 (O.S.)
But what if it's a Reb?

PICKET #2 (O.S.)
So? What's one Johnny Reb gonna
do against a regiment?

VIRGIL
(to the horse)
A regiment. With luck, from
Philadelphia.

He looks up and down the tracks.

VIRGIL'S P.O.V. - THE PICKETS

The pickets stand talking to each other, facing away from him.

BACK TO SCENE

VIRGIL
(continuing)
(to the horse)
We'll have to make ourselves
invisible... can you do that?

The horse wrinkles its nose and jerks its head up.

Virgil leads his mount silently across the tracks and down the embankment on the other side into heavy brush.

When he can no longer hear the O.S. chatter of the pickets, he mounts his horse and rides further into enemy territory.

EXT. FIELD NEARBY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Virgil rides towards a lighted sky over a forested area.

He approaches the crest of a hill silhouetted against the bright sky and dismounts.

He hears VOICES, but can't make out any words.

He tethers his horse to a tree and crawls to the crest of the hill.

VIRGIL'S P.O.V. - OVER THE HILL

Before him is an encampment of at least a regiment, possibly a brigade of Union soldiers.

Thousands of blue coats huddle around hundreds of campfires.

BACK TO SCENE

VIRGIL
(muttering to
himself)
Oh Lord! Now what do I do?
Return and report.. or...

The O.S. VOICE of a PICKET behind him settles the question.

PICKET #3 (O.S.)
Don't move, Reb, I've got you
covered.

Startled, Virgil springs to his feet and faces the picket, who is only a boy, before he finishes the sentence.

VIRGIL
Yahhhh!

The sudden movement distracts the young picket who drops his rifle.

Virgil picks up the rifle instinctively and points it at the picket.

PICKET #3
Don't shoot! Don't shoot!

VIRGIL
Shhhh!
(MORE)

VIRGIL (cont'd)
I'm not going to shoot you... I
guess you're my prisoner or
something... I've never done
this before.

PICKET #3
All right, all right, just don't
shoot me.

VIRGIL
Shhhh! Do you have a horse?

PICKET #3
No.

VIRGIL
Oh, wonderful!
(beat) (whispering)
I'll tell you what... I'll let
you go on parole if you promise
not to give the alarm until I'm
out of sight.

PICKET #3
Sounds fair to me.

ANOTHER O.S. VOICE emerges from the darkness behind
Virgil.

PICKET #4 (O.S.)
I've got a better idea. You'll
come with us down to headquarters
as our prisoner.

The other picket pokes Virgil in the ribs with his
bayonet.

Virgil drops the rifle and puts up his hands.

VIRGIL
Say, any of you boys from
Philadelphia?

PICKET #4
Never mind where we're from.
Get movin'.

He prods Virgil with his bayonet and the three start
down the hill towards the camp.

VIRGIL
I'm a Quaker, myself.

PICKET #4
Yeah, and I'm color blind.
That's really a blue coat you're
wearin'.

The camp below begins to stir with activity.

Suddenly, a CONFEDERATE HORSEMAN appears from the darkness with Virgil's mount in tow.

HORSEMAN
Throw down yer guns, gents.

He is one of Virgil's fellow scouts.

The Union pickets comply.

HORSEMAN
(continuing)
Mount up, Virg, we're gittin'
outta here.

VIRGIL
(to himself)
Damnation... Snatched from the
jaws of freedom.

There is a huge COMMOTION of hoofbeats and unintelligible O.S. AD LIB voices as a Union cavalry unit surrounds them all.

The pickets take back their rifles and Virgil and the other confederate soldier are marched off to the camp.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS FAIRGROUNDS - DAY

INSERT - A FLYER

on a building which reads "\$500 - FIRST PRIZE - \$500,
LOUISIANA STAKES RACE, SUNDAY, NEW ORLEANS FAIRGROUNDS".

BACK TO SCENE

Milton removes the flyer from the building and shows it to Julian.

MILTON
This is our ticket back North.

JULIAN
You're crazy. That poor nag
can hardly walk.

MILTON
While you were sleeping I engaged
the services of a physician...
Some herbs and a mustard plaster
and she'll be as good as new.

JULIAN
A doctor? Where'd you get the
money to pay a doctor?

MILTON
I pledged a share of the purse.

JULIAN
And who's going to ride her?
You? Me? We'll break her back.

MILTON
Here's comes our jockey now.

THEIR P.O.V. - THE JOCKEY

RAMON, a MIDGET dressed in red silks and surrounded by
four attractive young BORDELLO GIRLS rides "Winged
Fury" down the street towards Milton and Julian.

BACK TO SCENE

JULIAN
Where did you find him?

MILTON
At Mademoiselle Fifi's. Like
his outfit? I designed it and
the girls made it.

JULIAN
The bordello? Oh, you were
busy while I was sleeping!

MILTON
Well, you can't expect to find
midgets just roaming the streets.

JULIAN

And you're paying him with...
what? No, don't tell me... a
share of the purse?

MILTON

You're learning.

JULIAN

What purse? We can't possibly
win!

MILTON

It's not important.

JULIAN

Not important? What?

MILTON

Julian... when will you learn
it is hope that motivates
mankind? We are giving these
people the gift of hope. A ray
of hope in their otherwise
boring, drab lives.

JULIAN

Oh, great... I'm going to be
murdered by a midget in red
silk nighties.

The entourage reaches the boys.

Milton introduces the jockey.

MILTON

Julian, meet Ramon. Ramon,
meet Winged Fury's trainer,
Julian. Ladies, we're off to
adventure.

The girls latch onto Milton and Julian, one on each
arm, giggling and laughing.

Milton walks along proudly. Julian is embarrassed.

Ramon follows on an apparently healthy mare.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - DAY - THE RACE TRACK - LATER

Milton calls Julian aside and gives him some money.

MILTON

This is the last of our money.
Enter the horse and entertain
the girls. I'll be busy. See
you after the race.

JULIAN

The last of our money? Then
what?

MILTON

Relax. I have a plan.

They part company. Milton heads for the paddock.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - DAY - THE PADDOCK - CONTINUOUS

Milton talks M.O.S. with JOCKEYS, TRAINERS and OTHER SHIFTY LOOKING CHARACTERS.

He inspects the other horses in the race.

The horses are paraded before the crowded grandstand.

TOUTS peddle odds.

BOOKMAKERS take bets from the crowd.

Milton shakes some hands. Smiles are exchanged.

Milton heads for the clubhouse.

INT. FAIRGROUNDS - DAY - THE CLUBHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Milton looks over the crowd.

MILTON'S P.O.V. - THE CROWD

A table of FIVE WELL APPOINTED WOMEN seem to be without male company.

BACK TO SCENE

He approaches their table.

They are engrossed in studying the field, all with perplexed looks on their faces.

MILTON

Good afternoon, ladies. May I offer my services in your selection of a winning horse?

They exchange glances among themselves. One dares to respond.

FIRST LADY

We have no idea on which horse to bet. We've never done this before.

Milton helps himself to a seat.

MILTON

I can only tell you my own choice.

He points to Julian who is standing by the rail with the girls from Fifi's hanging all over him.

MILTON

(continuing)
You see that man there? That man is Winged Fury's trainer. I know him and the jockey personally. It's the horse to bet on and I can get good odds.

FIRST LADY

That's as good a choice as any, I suppose.

The other ladies nod in agreement and open their purses.

FIRST LADY

(continuing)
Will twenty dollars each be enough?

Milton stifles a cough.

MILTON

It's small enough not to be missed, I suppose. If you like, I can carry it to the bookmaker for you.

The five women each give him a twenty dollar bill.

MILTON
(continuing)
I'll leave my hat and cane here
until I return.

Milton leaves.

SECOND LADY
Is it wise to give our money to
a stranger like that?

FIRST LADY
I know a gentleman when I meet
one. He'll be back. Besides,
he left his hat and cane. And
he's right over there placing
our bet.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - DAY - JUST OUTSIDE THE CLUBHOUSE -
CONTINUOUS

Milton is hustling a BOOKIE.

MILTON
Who's the favorite?

BOOKIE
Better Days.

MILTON
What're the odds on Dancing
Lady?

BOOKIE
Two to one.

MILTON
Make it three to one and I've
got a hundred to win.

BOOKIE
Yeah, I can do that, but take
my advice, it's Better Days.

MILTON
Better Days has seen better
days.

He turns and smiles at the ladies.

MILTON
(continuing)
I'm in the mood for dancing.

Milton gives the bookie the money, takes his slip and heads back for the ladies table.

INT. FAIRGROUNDS - DAY - THE CLUBHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

FIRST LADY
See, I told you he'd be back.

MILTON
You're all set.

He sees that they have some champagne on the table.

MILTON
(continuing)
May I offer you ladies a drink?

FIRST LADY
No thank you, we already ordered
some champagne. Would you like
a glass?

MILTON
Why, thank you, I am a little
parched.

She pours him a glass as we hear the STARTER'S GUN.

The race is off.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - DAY - THE RACE TRACK - CONTINUOUS

The horses bolt out of the starting gate and thunder around the track.

MILTON
Come on, Winged Fury. Come on
girl... you can do it... Don't
let us down.

Winged fury doesn't get very far.

She stumbles and falls, but gets up and limps around the track.

Better Days maintains the lead for most of the race until the horses reach the final stretch.

The crowd is screaming as the horses round the last turn and pound down the home stretch.

Dancing Lady runs neck and neck with Better Days.

Dancing Lady edges out Better Days in the last furlong.

Dancing Lady is the winner by a nose.

Winged Fury limps across the finish line... last.

Milton feigns disappointment.

The ladies with him all sigh.

MILTON
(continuing)
Curse that horse and his trainer.
I lost a small fortune myself,
ladies. My condolences.

FIRST LADY
Oh, fiddle-dee-dee. My husband
will just have to run a few
extra bales of cotton through
the Union blockade tomorrow.

MILTON
Heading North?

FIRST LADY
Yes, his ship, the 'Bonaventure',
is bound for Philadelphia in
the morning.

The ladies depart.

When they are out of sight, Milton goes to the bookie and collects his three hundred dollars.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - DAY - THE RACE TRACK - CONTINUOUS

Julian, Ramon and the girls all seem to be limping in sympathy as they lead Winged Fury towards Milton.

RAMON
Sorry, Monsieur Milton.

MILTON
Well, let this be a lesson to
us all. Horses are
unpredictable.

JULIAN
(to himself)
To a degree.

He rubs the mare's nose.

MILTON
I'm going to miss you, old gal.

JULIAN
Someone going somewhere?

MILTON
Ramon, you are now the proud
owner of an Arabian thoroughbred.
Take care of her and maybe she'll
bring you good fortune. And
give my regrets to the doctor.

RAMON
Mercí, Monsieur Milton.

Ramon, the girls and the horse limp home while the
boys watch until they're out of earshot.

JULIAN
That was too easy. What's going
on?

Milton shows him the winnings.

MILTON
We're off to Philadelphia.

INT. UNION ENCAMPMENT HEADQUARTERS - EVENING

Virgil stands at attention before the COMMANDING GENERAL
of the Union regiment that captured him days earlier.

GENERAL
You say you're a Quaker? From
Philadelphia?

VIRGIL

Yes, sir.

GENERAL

Quakers don't usually bear arms.

VIRGIL

I was conscripted, Sir. Under pain of death. I am a peaceful man and opposed to all war.

GENERAL

If we give you a parole, will you swear allegiance to the Union?

VIRGIL

I don't usually swear, but...
Yes, Sir.

GENERAL

Very well... To be sure, I will assign you to work in a hospital in Washington for the duration. Any objections?

VIRGIL

No, Sir.

INT. PHILADELPHIA - DAY - ARCH STREET THEATER - MONTHS LATER

INSERT - A SIGN

over the front of a theater that reads "ARCH STREET THEATER, JOHN AND ASIA CLARKE, PRODUCERS".

BACK TO SCENE

Julian is on stage about to audition for a permanent role in the repertory theater.

Milton sits in the back of the theater, observing.

ASIA CLARKE, co-owner of the theater, sits in the first row of seats.

Clarke's brother JOHNNY, who bears a remarkable resemblance to both Julian and Milton, is center stage playing MacBeth.

Julian, as MacDuff, stands at the stage's edge.

ASIA CLARKE
Begin, Thane MacBeth.

JOHNNY
Why should I play the Roman
fool, and die on mine own sword?
Whiles I see lives the gnashes
do better upon them.

Julian walks on stage and confronts Johnny.

JULIAN
Turn, hell-hound, turn!

JOHNNY
Of all men else, I have avoided
thee: but get thee back; my
soul is too much charged with
blood of thine already.

JULIAN
My voice is my sword, thou
bloodier villain than terms can
give thee out!

They circle each other, brandishing their swords.

JOHNNY
I bear a charmed life, which
must not yield to one of woman
born.

JULIAN
Let the angel tell thee...
MacDuff was from his mother's
womb untimely ripp'd.

They engage in a realistically violent game of swordplay.

They lunge and parry and knock each other off their feet, tumbling over the props on the stage.

They rip down the curtain.

Julian does a back flip as Johnny lunges at him.

Julian pulls out a rug from under Johnny who defends himself with a candelabra as Julian slashes at his head.

They drive each other back and forth across the stage apron, teetering over the orchestra pit.

Milton jumps from his seat and runs down the aisle.

Asia is visibly frightened. She bolts from her seat and shouts.

ASIA CLARKE
Stop! That's enough! Stop...
Now! Johnny... stop it... Now!

After a few more thrusts and parries, the combatants yield to her directions.

ASIA CLARKE
(continuing)
What are you trying to do, kill
each other... I have a hard
enough time finding good actors
and swordsmen, and you try to
kill each other?

JOHNNY
He's good.
(to Julian)
You are very good.

JULIAN
You're good. You are very good.

ASIA CLARKE
You're both good... but you're
only good to me if you're alive.
Dead actors don't play well.
At least not in Philadelphia.

Julian and Johnny smile and shake hands.

JOHNNY
Yes, you're only good to us if
you're alive.

ASIA CLARKE
Mr. Gunn... You're hired.

JOHNNY
Ever play Washington?

JULIAN
Once, Grover's Theater... then
the war intervened.

JOHNNY
How would you like to play Ford's
Theater?

JULIAN
You know the Fords?

JOHNNY
My dearest friends.

EXT. WASHINGTON CITY (APRIL, 1865) - DAY -
ESTABLISHING

A panoramic view of the White House.

INSERT - SUBTITLE

Washington, April 11, 1865, The War is Over!

EXT. FORD'S THEATER - DAY

CHURCH BELLS RING throughout the scene.

INSERT - A SIGN

outside the box office that reads, "Now appearing in
'MY AMERICAN COUSIN' with Miss Laura Keene - direct
from the Arch Street Theater in Philadelphia, the
acclaimed actor - Mr. Julian Gunn."

BACK TO SCENE

Julian and Milton admire the sign.

JULIAN
Think my name should be bigger?

MILTON
Who ever would have thought it?
You, making more money than I?

JULIAN
Without being shot at.

MILTON
Life is not fair.

Milton continues to look at the sign.

Julian turns as he is approached by a lovely young girl gushing with admiration.

Milton has his back turned to the girl.

GIRL
Oh, oh, oh.

She searches frantically through her purse and comes up with a pencil and a piece of paper.

She thrusts it at Julian.

GIRL
(continuing)
I saw you on stage last season.
You were wonderful! Would you
give me a memento of this
occasion?

Milton turns and faces the girl.

The girl looks at him, then at Julian, then back and forth between them.

GIRL
(continuing)
Oh.. or was it you? Which of
you is...

MILTON
My brother is the famous actor.

She hands the paper to Julian who signs it with a flamboyant flourish and gives it back.

She is radiant.

She reads the autograph. Her expression turns perplexed. She looks at Julian and back at the autograph.

GIRL
Julian Gunn?

JULIAN
In person, dear lady.

The boys turn and walk away.

She looks puzzled.

EXT. FORD'S THEATER - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Milton and Julian walk towards their boarding house on "H" Street.

JULIAN
I am amazed at my popularity.
I tell you Milton, there's no
business like show business...
like no business...

MILTON
I know! I know!

JULIAN
I must be the most famous person
in the city.

MILTON
By week's end people will be
tripping over each other trying
to get their hands on you.

JULIAN
I hope so... Maybe I should
start going out with girls.

MILTON
You should. You'll like them.

EXT. QUAKER MEETING HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Virgil emerges from a meeting house on the other side
of the city with a group of Quakers after worship.

An O.S. VOICE calls to him.

PHOEBE (O.S.)
Virgil. Is it you?

He turns towards the voice. It is Phoebe, his nurse from Chimborazo Hospital in Richmond.

They embrace, and then Virgil catches and composes himself.

He looks around to see if anyone is watching.

VIRGIL

Phoebe, darlin', what are you
doing here?

PHOEBE

Looking for you... I heard that
you were captured and paroled.
I hoped I would find you through
one of the Quaker meeting houses.

VIRGIL

No... I mean here, what brings
you to Washington?

PHOEBE

My brother was wounded. He's
being held at Fort Delaware,
but he's near death. I'm trying
to get a pass from the War
Department to bring him home.

VIRGIL

Perhaps I can help. I know a
lot of people in the War
Department from working at the
Soldier's Home. Where are you
staying?

PHOEBE

A friend's boarding house.
Come, I'll introduce you.

They walk arm in arm towards the boarding house.

EXT. STREETS OF WASHINGTON - DAY - CONTINUOUS

PHOEBE

Virgil, do you have relatives
here?

VIRGIL

I have two brothers, but I don't
know where they are.

PHOEBE

Are their names Milton and
Julian?

VIRGIL

You know them?

PHOEBE

They're staying at my friend's
boarding house.

VIRGIL

What a curious coincidence.

EXT. 541 "H" STREET - DAY - LATER

Julian and Milton meet Virgil and Phoebe in front of
the boarding house.

JULIAN & MILTON

Virg!

VIRGIL

Milton, Julian!

VIRGIL, JULIAN AND MILTON

(together)
I thought you were dead!

They embrace, laughing and crying.

VIRGIL

What good fortune... what divine
providence has brought us here
together?

MILTON

Could be just dumb luck.

JULIAN

How did you find this place?

VIRGIL

Phoebe, here, my nurse... but
that's a long story.

PHOEBE
Mary's an old friend of a friend.
I want Virgil to meet her.

They walk up the steps to the main entrance and go into the house.

INSERT - AN ADDRESS PLATE

on the house that reads, "541 'H' Street".

INT. 541 "H" STREET - DAY - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The four of them crowd the small hallway.

O.S. MUFFLED VOICES are heard from behind closed doors to the parlor.

PHOEBE
Probably a prayer meeting.

The door suddenly opens and Johnny, Julian's actor friend from the Arch Street Theater in Philadelphia enters the hallway.

JOHNNY
Well, hello, boys! Phoebe!
And who's the handsome stranger?
Wait, let me guess... another brother?

JULIAN
Johnny, this is my brother,
Virgil. Virg, meet John Wilkes Booth. Johnny got us this place when we first came to Washington. And he got me a contract at Ford's Theater.

VIRGIL
A pleasure, sir.

They shake hands.

JOHNNY
Three of you. This is fantastic!

VIRGIL
I never thought of it quite like that.

JOHNNY

Phoebe, darlin'... you are a
lucky girl! Well, the prayer
meeting's over... We're just
leaving. Boys, join me for a
drink at Deery's saloon.

He leaves. Three other men follow and crowd the hallway even more.

A younger man who doesn't look that bright, DAVID HEROLD, an older dirty looking man with beady eyes and a slouch hat, GEORGE ATZERODT, and a big, dangerous looking man with a sneer, LEWIS PAINE, who leers at them menacingly.

The boys hug the wall and try to keep out of their way as they exit the house.

MILTON

That's an interesting group of
worshippers.

JULIAN

Did you see the empty look in
that big one eyes?

VIRGIL

We're all the Lord's children.

JULIAN

I think he's a half-wit.

MILTON

An incredibly huge half-wit.

MARY SURRETT, a plain looking, plumpish woman with black hair pulled back in a tight bun comes out of the room.

PHOEBE

Virgil, this is my friend, Mary.
She owns the boarding house.
Mary, this is Virgil.

VIRGIL

A pleasure, ma'am.

MARY

I'd know you were Milton's
brother in the dark. You are
all so handsome.

She puts her arm in Milton's and smiles at him.

MILTON

Mary's kinda like my sweetheart.

MARY

I'm making a cold lunch. Please
join us.

She leaves without waiting for an answer.

MILTON

If you want to wash up, Virg,
we're on the third floor. You
can even move in if you want.
Plenty of room.

Milton and Julian leave Virgil alone in the hall with Phoebe.

VIRGIL

Phoebe, darlin'? Booth called
you, Phoebe, darlin'?

PHOEBE

The mark of a Southern gentleman,
Virgil, nothing more. He's an
old friend of the family, and
kind enough to help me find a
place to stay while I'm here.

VIRGIL

You're very fortunate, indeed,
to have so many old friends of
the family. And why did he
call you a lucky girl?

PHOEBE

I may have told him about us.
Wash up... I'll meet you
downstairs in the dining room.

INT. DEERY'S SALOON - NIGHT

The saloon is LOUD.

It's jammed with MEN, SOLDIERS and POLICE, all drinking, celebrating the end of the war, playing cards and challenging John Deery to billiards.

Johnny sits in a corner with JOHN PARKER, a burly, bearded man in a bowler hat. Both have sullen expressions on their faces.

Milton and Julian chat AD LIB (M.O.S.) at the bar with other men.

MILTON'S P.O.V. - JOHNNY AND THE MAN

Johnny and the man talk secretly, exchanging furtive glances around them.

BACK TO SCENE

Milton nudges Julian

MILTON
Julian, watch those two...
something's going on over there.

JULIAN
What? They're friends.

MILTON AND JULIAN'S P.O.V. - JOHNNY AND THE MAN

Johnny takes an envelope out of his pocket and gives it to the burly man.

The burly man looks around and sneaks it into his coat pocket.

BACK TO SCENE

MILTON
Just friends?

JULIAN
I'm sure it's perfectly innocent.

MILTON
They look like sneaks, they act
like sneaks... if sneaks could
quack...

JULIAN
Why don't you go over and ask
them what they're doing?

MILTON

He's your friend, not mine...
who's the gent he's with?

JULIAN

Parker... He's a policeman.
If we can't trust the police...

MILTON

My point, exactly!

Parker passes Milton and Julian as he leaves.

He gives them dirty looks as he passes.

Johnny brings his bottle of brandy over to the bar and joins Milton and Julian.

JOHNNY

Drink up, boys... for tomorrow
we may die!

MILTON

I'll take a rain check.

JULIAN

Parker looks like he has the
weight of the world on his
shoulders.

JOHNNY

Yes, poor man. Daughter sick...
needs money for an operation.
I'm a man devoted to friends,
as you know, Julian, and he is,
after all, the President's
bodyguard. An important man.

JULIAN

You are a colossus among men.

JOHNNY

Yes... yes, I am.

EXT. 541 "H" STREET - DAY

Milton pulls up in front of the boarding house in a buckboard early Good Friday morning.

Mary is waiting for him. She climbs in. She is carrying a small package, wrapped tight.

MARY

I must get the money that's owed me for the Maryland farm... and deliver this package for Johnny.

MILTON

What's in it?

MARY

It's fragile... that's all I know... and we have to pick up something for him.

MILTON

What?

MARY

I don't know.

MILTON

I hope we're back by evening, my dear. Johnny gave me tickets for the theater. I have to find Virg and give him his... And there's a poker game at Deery's after the show. I'd like to make the rent money.

MARY

I wish you wouldn't go.

MILTON

Not go? But the President's going to be there.

MARY

I know.

MILTON

I've never seen the President. This might be my last chance.

She sniffles into her handkerchief.

MARY

Yes, I know.

EXT. "H" STREET - DAY - APPROACHING NO. 541 - LATER
Virgil and Phoebe approach Mary's boarding house.

PHOEBE

Thank you for helping me get my brother's body released to the City Hospital, Virgil, and on Good Friday, no less.

VIRGIL

The War Department never sleeps.

PHOEBE

It's sad that prison made his health worse than his wounds.

VIRGIL

I am deeply sorry. When do you plan to take him home?

PHOEBE

Tomorrow, probably.

EXT. 541 "H" STREET - DAY - CONTINUOUS

They reach Mary's, walk up the steps and enter the hallway.

INT. 541 "H" STREET - DAY - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

As they pass the closed parlor doors, they stop and listen.

There is the O.S. SOUND of unintelligible whispering.

VIRGIL

Probably a prayer meeting.
They should be an example for my brothers.

They tiptoe up the stairs to the third floor.

INT. 541 "H" STREET - DAY - PHOEBE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Phoebe fetches her carpet bag.

PHOEBE
I wish your brothers were here.
I'd like to say goodbye.

VIRGIL
Milton's probably at Deery's
socializing, and Julian's at
Ford's, rehearsing. I'll say
goodbye for you.

They go back downstairs.

INT. 541 "H" STREET - DAY - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

As they pass the parlor door we hear continued
whispering. Johnny's voice can be distinguished.

JOHNNY (O.S.)
It's settled then. You...
Seward. You... Johnson...

His O.S. VOICE drifts off.

Virgil bends to listen at the keyhole.

He has a terrified expression on his face.

SUBLIM

Booth fires his derringer at the tall man on the
carousel.

Now we recognize the tall man as the President.

A bullet from a derringer spirals towards the back of
his head.

BACK TO SCENE

He stands up and looks aghast at Phoebe.

She bends over and listens.

She puts her hands over her mouth, stifling a scream.

JOHNNY (O.S.)
(continuing)
I'll see to him personally.

They look at each other in disbelief.

VIRGIL

That explains all the prayer meetings. We've got to do something.

PHOEBE

What?

VIRGIL

Shhhh! I don't know...

He grabs her hand and they sneak outside, closing the door quietly behind them.

EXT. 541 "H" STREET - DAY - CONTINUOUS

VIRGIL

... we have to warn the President.

PHOEBE

I can't. I'm from Richmond, remember?

VIRGIL

You're right... get your brother, go home... I'll meet you there.

PHOEBE

But what about you?

VIRGIL

I'll go to the War Department. Stanton knows me from the Soldier's Home. He'll listen.

PHOEBE

Oh, be careful, darlin'.

Phoebe watches Virgil until he's out of sight, then she returns to the boarding house.

INT. 541 "H" STREET - DAY - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

She hides in the shadows at the end of the hallway.

The parlor doors open as Booth and his prayer meeting break up.

They all crowd into the hallway.

JOHNNY
I rented horses for all of you
at Howard's. Do not fail me.

All the conspirators leave except Booth.

Phoebe walks to him and looks him straight in the eye.

PHOEBE
He knows.

INT. WAR DEPARTMENT - DAY - STANTON'S OFFICE LOBBY -
LATER

There is a lot of activity. SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS
mill about, doing their very important business amid
b.g. OFFICE NOISE.

Virgil is one of many people seated in one of many
chairs lined up against a wall.

A CLERK beckons to him.

CLERK
Mister Stanton isn't in, but
his Secretary will see you.

Virgil follows the Clerk to the back of the cavernous
room where the SECRETARY is conferring with OTHER
CLERKS.

CLERK
(continuing)
Wait here.

INT. 541 "H" STREET - DAY - PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

PHOEBE
It's over, Johnny... give it
up. He's going to the War
Department.

JOHNNY
It doesn't matter. Anything he
says will implicate him and his
brothers.

(MORE)

JOHNNY (cont'd)
By the time the bumbling fools
in the War Department figure it
out, it'll be better than a
circus... and my business will
be finished.

PHOEBE
I didn't mind running messages
between the lines for you, but
I begged you not to get him
involved.

JOHNNY
This is bigger than you and
your Quaker friend.

PHOEBE
Please don't do it, Johnny.
Think of your family, at least.

JOHNNY
When I leave the stage tonight,
I will be the most famous man
in America.

EXT. HOWARD'S STABLES - DAY - LATER

Atzerodt, Herold and Paine approach Howard.

They pretend not to know each other.

HEROLD
You have a mare for me? Mister
Booth rented it. I'm Davey
Herold.

HOWARD
Yeah. Wait a minute.

Howard goes inside to get the horse.

Atzerodt and Paine try to ignore Herold and each other.

HOWARD
(continuing)
Here she is. Have her back
here by eight. No later than
nine.

Herold mounts and rides away.

HOWARD
(continuing)
Understand?

Herold doesn't respond.

HOWARD
(continuing)
(to Atzerodt)
Yes?

ATZERODT
You have one for me too. I'm
George Atzerodt.

Howard retrieves his horse and Atzerodt gallops off in another direction.

HOWARD
Be back by eight.
(continuing; to
Paine)
And what do you want?

Paine sneers.

PAINE
You got a horse for me, too.
The Captain rented it.

HOWARD
Who's the Captain?

PAINE
What are you, stupid? Wilkes
Booth.

HOWARD
Oh, yeah.
(beat)
You three together?

PAINE
No, I never saw them before.

He goes inside and brings out a draft horse.

HOWARD
Don't keep her out after dark.

Paine rides away.

Howard calls behind him.

HOWARD
(continuing)
She's blind in one eye.

INT. WAR DEPARTMENT - DAY - STANTON'S OFFICE LOBBY -
CONTINUING

Stanton's Secretary finally gives Virgil an audience.

He is annoyed at the interruption.

SECRETARY
Now, what is so important?

INTERCUT

the following scene rather quickly between the
characters as they AD LIB (M.O.S.).

Virgil gestures wildly as he relates the details of
the plot as he understands it.

The Secretary's eyes widen with horror. His mouth
drops open.

He questions Virgil, gesturing just as wildly.

Virgil has a sheepish look and is defensive.

He shrugs his shoulders and shakes his head in denial
of the Secretary's questions.

The Secretary points his finger violently in admonition
to Virgil who backs out of the office.

SECRETARY
(continuing)
Wait here.

Virgil sits down. His expression is now more
apprehensive.

VIRGIL'S P.O.V. - THE SECRETARY

The Secretary confers AD LIB (M.O.S.) with a burly man in a bowler hat standing with his back to Virgil, who cannot see his face.

The talk between them is animated, but subdued, almost secretive.

The burly man turns. It is John Parker, the President's personal bodyguard.

The Secretary points to Virgil.

Parker whispers something to the Secretary.

The Secretary motions to a group of SOLDIERS nearby and directs their attention to Virgil.

SECRETARY
(continuing)
Arrest that man!

BACK TO SCENE

Virgil leaps from his chair and bolts out the front door.

The soldiers all try to get through the door at the same time and get stuck.

The one in front succeeds in freeing himself from the others, but falls on the floor.

The others fall on top of him.

They get up and trip over themselves before reaching the door and pursuing.

EXT. STREETS OF WASHINGTON - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Virgil runs to the nearest stable.

EXT. HOWARD'S STABLES - DAY - CONTINUOUS

A horse sits saddled and ready to ride.

Virgil jumps on the horse and gallops down the street.

Howard runs out of the stable and down the street after him.

HOWARD
Stop, thief! Stop that man!

A POLICE OFFICER on the scene takes up the chase.

POLICE OFFICER
Stop in the name of the law!

The soldiers round the corner, shouting AD LIB.

SOLDIERS
Stop that man! Stop him!

They all give chase, but cannot catch up to the horse.

Other POLICE and SOLDIERS join in the chase.

EXT. STREETS OF WASHINGTON - DAY - CONTINUOUS

They seem to come out of all the streets and saloons and buildings along Virgil's path.

He narrowly escapes being grabbed a number of times.

Soon there are scores of chasers, running down the street, kicking up a dust storm.

Livestock and fowl scatter as the posse pursues the thief.

Black folks gather on the wooden sidewalks and gawk.

Gradually, Virgil disappears in the distance and the chase subsides.

The members of the posse hold their sides and pant, trying to catch their breath.

Howard stands on a carriage stepping stone and addresses the men.

HOWARD
I must say, I'm impressed.
Thank you all for your help.

The posse disperses and the men return to their previous activities.

Howard turns in the direction of the long gone Virgil.

HOWARD
(continuing)
I know you from somewhere.

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE - EVENING

Virgil surveys the entrance to the White House warily.

He listens to the unintelligible O.S. AD LIB banter between the guards at the door.

He summons up his nerve and approaches the guards.

VIRGIL
Evening, boys. The President
in?

GUARD
Not that it's any of your
business, but he went to the
theater.

VIRGIL
Oh... well, have a nice evening.

Virgil backtracks to the Avenue and heads on foot for the closest theater, Grover's.

INT. GROVER'S THEATER - NIGHT - LOBBY - LATER

The lobby is empty.

Virgil runs over to the box office.

The same man Virgil met years earlier is still working there.

VIRGIL
Is the President in the audience?

MAN
Why, no, he's at Ford's...
Julian? Aren't you supposed to
be...

VIRGIL
I'm not Julian!

Virgil dashes out of the lobby and heads for Ford's.

EXT. PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE - NIGHT

Johnny canters up and down the Avenue between Willard's Hotel and the President's House.

He is dressed entirely in black.

Passersby smile and wave in adoration.

INT. KIRKWOOD HOUSE - NIGHT - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

George Atzerodt walks nervously across the lobby to the DESK CLERK.

ATZERODT
Is the Vice President in?

DESK CLERK
I don't think so.

Atzerodt wipes his brow and goes into the bar.

EXT. SECRETARY OF STATE SEWARD'S HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Dave Herold and Lew Paine dismount slowly in front of Seward's house.

Paine hands the reins to Herold.

PAINE
You wait for me here.

Paine walks to the door and knocks.

A diminutive black servant answers.

SERVANT
Yes?

PAINE
Is Secretary Seward in? I have some medicine from the Doctor.

SERVANT
You can give it to me.

PAIN
I can only give it to Mister
Seward, Doctor's orders.

SERVANT
Wait here.

The servant closes the door, leaving Paine waiting on the door step.

EXT. FORD'S THEATER - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

It is intermission.

The President's carriage is parked out front.

SOLDIERS and PATRONS congregate around the entrance. Milton, dressed entirely in black, is among them.

PATRONS
(AD LIB)
Isn't Mister Lincoln handsome?
And she is so regal. I wonder
why General Grant didn't come?
The paper said he was invited
to sit with the Lincoln's.
Isn't that new actor interesting?
I'd swear I was watching John
Wilkes Booth.

One of the patrons points to Milton.

PATRONS
(continuing)
Isn't that Booth over there?
Looks like him. No, here he
comes riding towards us now.

A BELL RINGS signaling intermission is over.

They begin to go back into the theater.

Johnny rides up, dismounts and strolls into the lobby behind the patrons.

EXT. FORD'S THEATER - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Virgil watches from shadows across the street.

He, too, is dressed entirely in black.

VIRGIL'S P.O.V. - THE LOBBY

Johnny lingers in the lobby.

He and patrons AD LIB greetings as they walk to their seats.

JOHNNY & PATRONS
Hello. Nice evening.

Johnny passes the TICKET TAKER in the ticket booth.

JOHNNY
Do I need a ticket?

TICKET TAKER
No, Mister Booth, go right in.

BACK TO SCENE

Virgil has a terrified expression on his face.

VIRGIL
Oh, no, no. What do I do now?

He wipes his brow and runs across the street to the theater.

INT. FORD'S THEATER - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Booth strolls around the rear of the theater, looking over the crowd, especially the soldiers.

The play begins and the patrons quiet down.

BOOTH'S P.O.V. - THE PRESIDENT'S BOX

The President's box is draped with flags. Mrs. Lincoln sits closest to the box ledge. The President is hidden by a curtain. Only his hand is visible resting on the ledge.

BACK TO SCENE

Booth slowly makes his way behind the audience towards the stairs to the Dress Circle and the President's box.

INT. KIRKWOOD HOUSE - NIGHT - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Atzerodt comes out of the bar, wiping the sweat from his face.

ATZERODT

Is the Vice President in yet?

DESK CLERK

I still don't think so.

Atzerodt ignores the clerk and makes his way nervously to the first floor suites behind the lobby stairs.

He stops to check his pocket, revealing a revolver, then continues down the hall.

INT. FORD'S THEATER - NIGHT - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Virgil nonchalantly saunters into the lobby, trying to get past the box office and two soldiers who are paying attention to a pretty girl, without being noticed.

The ticket taker looks up.

VIRGIL

I don't need a ticket, do I?

TICKET TAKER

I said you didn't Mister Booth.

Virgil walks past and into the theater hurriedly.

The ticket taker does a double take and looks after Virgil with a puzzled expression on his face.

TICKET TAKER

(continuing)

Mister Booth?

INT. FORD'S THEATER - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The play has begun. The theater is dark.

Virgil looks around for Booth.

VIRGIL'S P.O.V. - BOOTH

Booth moves like a cat in shadows up the stairs to the Dress Circle.

BACK TO SCENE

Virgil hugs the rear wall as he maneuvers about looking for the President's box.

We HEAR the O.S. VOICES of the players on stage throughout the theater scenes.

VIRGIL'S P.O.V. - THE PRESIDENT'S BOX

He sees the flag draped box and Mrs. Lincoln.

The President's face is visible for a moment as he leans forward to look down at the audience.

BACK TO SCENE

Virgil shields his face as discreetly as possible as he passes through the rear of the audience and follows Booth quietly in the shadows.

EXT. SECRETARY OF STATE SEWARD'S HOUSE - NIGHT -
CONTINUOUS

Paine paces nervously on the steps of Seward's house.

Herold holds and quiets the horses at the end of the drive.

The servant opens the door again.

SERVANT

Mister seward is asleep. You can give me the medicine.

PAINE

I told you the Doctor said I can only give it to Mister Seward.

Paine towers over the little man who sputters and quivers in fear.

SERVANT

Well, Mister Seward cannot be disturbed.

PAINÉ
Out of my way.

Paine pushes the servant out of his way and bursts through the door.

INT. KIRKWOOD HOUSE - NIGHT - FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY -
CONTINUOUS

Atzerodt approaches Vice-President Johnson's room and knocks on the door.

He glances around nervously and fumbles with the revolver in his pocket.

INT. FORD'S THEATER - NIGHT - DRESS CIRCLE -
CONTINUOUS

Virgil reaches the Dress Circle and looks for Booth.

The only sounds are the muted lines of O.S. DIALOGUE from the players and laughter from the audience.

VIRGIL'S P.O.V. - BOOTH

Booth slips down the stairs from the Dress Circle towards the entrance to the President's box.

The guard's chair is empty.

BACK TO SCENE

Virgil follows cautiously.

The audience laughs gaily.

Booth enters the passage to the President's box and closes the door behind him.

INT. KIRKWOOD HOUSE - NIGHT - FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY -
CONTINUOUS

Atzerodt fidgets nervously with his revolver.

A man answers Johnson's door.

ATZERODT
Is Mister Johnson here?

MAN
No, he's not. Can I help you?

ATZERODT
No... no... never mind. It's
not important.

Atzerodt turns and walks rapidly down the hall.

As he reaches the lobby he begins to run.

INT. KIRKWOOD HOUSE - NIGHT - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Atzerodt runs through the lobby and out the front door.

The hotel guests and desk clerk look after him with
curious expressions on their faces.

EXT. KIRKWOOD HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Atzerodt forgets his horse and runs down the street
into the night.

INT. SECRETARY OF STATE SEWARD'S HOUSE - NIGHT -
CONTINUOUS

Paine rushes up the stairs to the second floor.

INT. SECRETARY OF STATE SEWARD'S HOUSE - NIGHT -
SECOND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The Secretary of State's son, FREDERICK SEWARD, comes
to the top of the stairs putting on a robe.

FREDERICK SEWARD
What's the commotion?

Paine pulls out a pistol, aims at Seward and pulls the
trigger.

The gun misfires.

Paine beats Seward over the head until the pistol
breaks.

Seward falls to the floor.

The servant runs out into the street.

EXT. SECRETARY OF STATE SEWARD'S HOUSE - NIGHT -
CONTINUOUS

SERVANT
Murder! Murder! Murder!

Herold, in a panic, tethers Paine's horse to a hedge,
mounts his horse and gallops away.

INT. SECRETARY OF STATE SEWARD'S HOUSE - NIGHT -
SECOND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Paine steps over the body of Frederick Seward and heads
for the nearest door.

He tries the door knob, but it is apparently locked.

He throws his bulk against the door repeatedly until
he smashes it.

INT. SECRETARY OF STATE SEWARD'S HOUSE - NIGHT -
BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Someone struggles in the dark with Paine.

Paine takes out his Bowie knife and thrashes around
the room at his attacker.

The attacker SCREAMS in pain.

Paine jumps on the bed and stabs the figure of a body
repeatedly. The body is that of the Secretary of State,
WILLIAM SEWARD.

We HEAR muted, confused screams as the body lurches
and rolls and falls between the bed and the wall.

Paine gets up without uttering a word and leaves.

EXT. SECRETARY OF STATE SEWARD'S HOUSE - NIGHT -
CONTINUOUS

Paine gets on his horse and gallops away with the
servant running down the street after him.

SERVANT
Murder! Murder! Murder!

INT. FORD'S THEATER DRESS CIRCLE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS
Virgil opens the door and enters the darkened passage to the box.

INT. FORD'S THEATER - NIGHT - PASSAGE WAY - CONTINUOUS

VIRGIL'S P.O.V. - THE PASSAGE WAY

Virgil sees a dark shadow at the other end of the hall.

In the dim light, Virgil recognizes Booth. He holds a derringer in his right hand.

SUBLIM

The rakish figure on the carousel raises his derringer and fires it at the tall figure in front of him.

BACK TO SCENE

The door behind Virgil opens and a burly, bearded man in a bowler hat enters.

VIRGIL'S P.O.V.

The man raises his hand and wallops Virgil with a blackjack.

SUBLIM

The man behind Virgil on the carousel strikes Virgil with a blackjack.

There is an enormous THUNDER CLAP.

BACK TO SCENE

Virgil drops to the floor, almost losing consciousness.

The burly man calmly exits the passage way and closes the door behind him.

Virgil gets up, rubbing his head.

There are O.S. HYSTERICAL SCREAMS from the President's box.

SUBLIM

The pudgy woman on the carousel rides with one hand outstretched towards the tall man. WE HEAR the SOUND of her SCREAMING hysterically in sync with Mrs. Lincoln in the theater.

INT. FORD'S THEATER - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS
INTERCUT between the audience and the stage throughout.
There is a commotion in the audience.

Julian, dressed entirely in black, and the other actors on stage all stop and look up at the President's box.

INT. FORD'S THEATER - NIGHT - PASSAGE WAY - CONTINUOUS
Virgil enters the President's box.

INT. FORD'S THEATER - NIGHT - PRESIDENT'S BOX -
CONTINUOUS

Booth stands wild-eyed at the ledge of the box and says to no one in particular,

JOHNNY
Sic semper tyrannis.

Booth leaps over the ledge, gets his spur entangled in the decorative bunting and falls to the stage.

Mrs. Lincoln fusses and weeps over the slumped body of the President.

MRS LINCOLN
Oh, Father, speak to me. Ohhhh!

A MAJOR and a YOUNG WOMAN, guests of the Lincolns', look on stunned. The Major holds his bleeding arm.

Virgil rushes past them to the ledge of the box.

VIRGIL'S P.O.V. - BOOTH ON THE STAGE BELOW

Julian runs towards the side of the stage below the President's box.

Booth knocks Julian to the floor and limps off stage.

BACK TO SCENE

Virgil turns to Mrs. Lincoln and attempts to console her.

VIRGIL
I'm sorry, Ma'am, I tried...

She wails hysterically.

MRS LINCOLN
Ohhhhhh!

The outburst startles Virgil and he tumbles backwards over the ledge of the box.

He grabs the decorative bunting as he falls and tries to lower himself to the stage, but it rips and he lands on Julian.

INT. FORD'S THEATER - NIGHT - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Virgil and Julian both get up limping.

JULIAN
What happened?

VIRGIL
Your friend Johnny just shot the President.

JULIAN
The scoundrel... right in the middle of my big scene! What are we going to do?

VIRGIL
Exit stage right.

They limp off stage as the audience reacts with a frenzy of fear and confusion.

INT. FORD'S THEATER - NIGHT - AUDIENCE - CONTINUOUS
Milton watches with his mouth hanging open.

MILTON
Oh, my Lord!

The audience SCREAMS SHOUTS of outrage and grief AD LIB as they begin to understand what happened.

Milton watches in stunned silence as his bloodied baby brother and Julian limp off the stage after Booth.

EXT. FORD'S THEATER - NIGHT - REAR DOOR - CONTINUOUS
Booth gallops away as Virgil and Julian exit the rear door.

A STABLE BOY struggles to his feet and rubs his stomach.

STABLE BOY
He kicked me.

Soldiers emerge from the theater and shout AD LIB at Virgil and Julian.

SOLDIERS
Hey you, stop... get them...
one of them did it... the one
with the limp... I saw him....
they're both limping... well,
one of them did it.

EXT. STREETS OF WASHINGTON - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Virgil and Julian limp around the corner, cross the street and open a gate to an alley in between rows of shacks.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

They hug the shadows as the O.S. AD LIB shouts of the soldiers chasing them subsides.

SOLDIERS
Get them... where'd they go?
They can't be far.

JULIAN
Why are they chasing us? We
didn't do anything!

VIRGIL
We have to catch Booth. It's
the only way to get ourselves
out of this mess.

Virgil sneaks open the gate.

The streets are clear and quiet.

VIRGIL
(continuing)
You still have an account with
Howard's stables?

INT. FORD'S THEATER - NIGHT - AUDIENCE - CONTINUOUS

Milton tries to get out, but the audience is a scene
of bedlam.

The crowd fills the aisles. People push and shove in
panic.

EXT. FORD'S THEATER - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

A CROWD gathers around a MAN on the ground while they
beat and kick him for reasons unknown.

One of the crowd points at Milton.

CROWD MAN
There he is... get him!

Milton runs back into the theater with some of the
crowd in pursuit.

INT. FORD'S THEATER - NIGHT - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

He ducks and runs between confused, exiting patrons as
his pursuers try to spot him.

INT. FORD'S THEATER - NIGHT - DRESS CIRCLE -
CONTINUOUS

He runs up the steps to the side of the Dress Circle opposite that of the President's box and down the steps to the door of the passage way to the boxes.

CROWD MAN (O.S.)
Where is he? Did anyone see
where he went?

INT. FORD'S THEATER - NIGHT - PASSAGE WAY TO BOXES -
CONTINUOUS

Milton quietly opens the door to the box nearest the stage and enters.

INT. FORD'S THEATER - NIGHT - BOX - CONTINUOUS

The box is dark and empty.

Milton looks across the theater at the President's box.

MILTON'S P.O.V. - THE PRESIDENT'S BOX

Mrs. Lincoln weeps uncontrollably off to one side.

The young woman guest comforts her.

A doctor tends to the arm of the Major.

Doctors administer aid to an unseen body on the floor of the box.

BACK TO SCENE

Milton lowers himself to the stage, falls, and gets up limping.

INT. FORD'S THEATER - NIGHT - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Milton limps towards the rear exit.

One of his pursuers yells from the audience.

CROWD MAN (O.S.)
There he is... the guy with the
limp... Get him!

Milton limps off stage and out the rear door.

EXT. FORD'S THEATER - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Milton ducks into an alley behind the theater and closes the wooden gate behind him.

CROWD MAN (O.S.)
Where'd he go? He can't be
far.

He listens as the sound of footsteps come closer, pass and fade in the distance.

He opens the gate a crack, looks out and heads for Howard's stables.

EXT. SALOON - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Milton limps past a saloon near Ford's Theater, looks in the window and stops.

MILTON'S P.O.V. - INSIDE THE SALOON

John Parker, the President's bodyguard is drinking a schooner of beer and chatting with friends.

Parker looks in Milton's direction.

PARKER'S P.O.V. - MILTON

Parker sees Milton looking at him.

MILTON'S P.O.V. - INSIDE THE SALOON

Parker puts down his schooner of beer and dashes towards the door.

BACK TO SCENE

Parker looks up and down the street, but Milton is nowhere in sight.

A group of men goes running past Parker shouting AD LIB.

CROWD MAN
Where is he? There he goes...
get him!

The group flushes Milton out of a hidden alleyway.

He heads for Howard's stables.

Parker returns to his drinking.

EXT. HOWARD'S STABLES - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

A MAN returns a horse and tethers it in front of the stable with other horses. He goes inside.

Milton mounts the horse and gallops into the night.

Howard and the man run out into the street and watch as he rides away.

HOWARD'S P.O.V. - MILTON GALLOPING AWAY

Milton yells back over his shoulder.

MILTON
Don't worry... I'll send it
back.

BACK TO SCENE

HOWARD
Oh, not again!

MAN
You know him?

HOWARD
A regular customer.

Howard and the man go back into the stable.

Julian and Virgil limp out of the shadows from an alley behind Ford's Theater and sneak over to Howard's.

Two other horses stand tethered to the hitching post.

They jump on them and gallop down the street.

Howard comes out of the stable screaming.

HOWARD
(continuing)
Stop! Thief! Stop those men!

He yells after them.

HOWARD'S P.O.V. - JULIAN AND VIRGIL GALLOPING AWAY
Julian yells back over his shoulder.

JULIAN
Don't worry... We'll send them
back.

BACK TO SCENE

HOWARD
I know you. You won't get away
this time.

The group pursuing Milton runs past Howard yelling AD LIB.

CROWD MAN
Get him... stop him!

They are followed by the Soldiers chasing Virgil and Julian, shouting AD LIB.

SOLDIERS
Stop them... get them.

Howard pauses and watches as they race past his stable
after the boys.

HOWARD
Thank you... I really appreciate
your help.

He runs back inside and returns with another horse,
older and well worn.

He mounts and rides after Milton, Virgil and Julian.

EXT. STREETS OF WASHINGTON - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

There is no one in sight in any direction.

Howard stops to listen for hoofbeats.

He HEARS the sound of a lone horse approaching.

He waits in shadows.

Davey Herold races past.

HOWARD

Hey, you... I told you to have
that horse back by eight.

Howard pursues Herold who races south for the Navy Yard Bridge to Maryland.

He chases him through the streets.

Howard is falling behind in the chase when another horse crosses in front of him going in the other direction.

It is Paine on the one eyed draft horse.

HOWARD

(continuing)
Hey, you... I told you...

Howard takes off after Paine.

He pursues Paine through the streets, but his horse is tiring.

Milton watches from an alley.

Howard is out distanced again.

When Howard and Paine pass, Milton remounts and gallops off in the opposite direction.

Howard slows his horse to a walk, then turns and sees Milton behind him.

HOWARD

(continuing)
Hey you... Come back here with
my horse.

Howard spurs his horse again but it can hardly move.

He pulls back on the reins and sits watching Milton disappear in the distance.

HOWARD
(continuing)
One of these days....

Two horses gallop past him as he sits.

It is Julian and Virgil.

HOWARD
(continuing)
Hey you two...

Howard sits and watches in frustration as they disappear.

HOWARD
(continuing)
I want my horses!

EXT. STREETS OF WASHINGTON - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Virgil and Julian happen upon Booth making his getaway.

They give chase and catch up with him.

Julian leaps from his saddle, knocking Booth to the ground.

They both roll over in a cloud of dust and get up limping in pain AD LIB.

JULIAN & JOHNNY
Ow! Ow! Ow! Ow! My foot!

Virgil chases after Julian's horse.

Booth beats Julian about the head and shoulders with his riding crop.

Julian fends off the blows with his forearm and moves in close.

JULIAN
You blackguard!

JOHNNY
What, no bloodier villain?

He gets Booth in a head lock and wrestles him to the ground.

JOHNNY
(continuing)
Ow! Ow! Ow! My foot... be
careful, you blockhead, I think
it's broken.

They wrestle and tumble in the dirt throughout the scene.

JULIAN
Your foot? I'll be out of work
for weeks, thanks to you.

JOHNNY
You're lucky you even got work,
you has been who never was.

JULIAN
Oh, the Fords are my dearest
friends... I'll get you a
contract with them.

Booth gives Julian an elbow in the ribs.

JULIAN
(continuing)
Ooooh!

Julian lets go his grip on Booth.

Booth hops to his one good foot.

Julian hops up on his one good foot.

JOHNNY
No one in America would ever
have heard your name if it
weren't for me.

They dance limping around each other striking pugilistic poses and throwing a punch now and then.

JULIAN
Oh, pardon me, Mister most famous
name in American theater.

JOHNNY
You second rate stooge...

JULIAN
Second rate? I demand
satisfaction, sir!

Julian slaps Booth across the face with his glove.

JOHNNY
I'd love to fight you to the
finish... But I'm already late
for immortality.

Booth picks up a handful of dirt from the street and throws it in Julian's face and mouth.

JULIAN
Ptoo! Ptoo! Horsie-doo! Ptoo!
Ptoo!

Julian cleans his eyes and spits and sputters as Booth mounts his horse and gallops away.

He disappears in the distance as Julian spits out the detritus of the street.

EXT. STREETS OF WASHINGTON - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Virgil comes back with Julian's horse.

VIRGIL
You let him get away?

Julian spits up a bit of straw.

JULIAN
Ever taste horsie-doo, Virg?

EXT. STREETS OF WASHINGTON - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Howard, the livery owner, leads his tired horse back to his stables mumbling to himself.

HOWARD
I know those guys.

EXT. NAVY YARD BRIDGE ACROSS THE POTOMAC - NIGHT -
MOMENTS LATER

Virgil and Julian approach the SENTRY guarding the bridge to Maryland.

The sentry holds his rifle at the ready.

SENTRY
Hold it right there.

VIRGIL
Did any riders pass here in the last few minutes?

SENTRY
Yeah, a man in black, a little while ago... As a matter of fact, he looked just like you two. The three of you related?

VIRGIL
No relation. Have a nice evening.

They turn and head back to Mary's boarding house.

EXT. STREETS OF WASHINGTON - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Milton overtakes Julian and Virgil as they near the boarding house.

They get off their horses and send them back to Howard's livery.

They whisper as they limp along through the shadowy streets.

VIRGIL
Booth escaped to Maryland.

MILTON
I told you he was up to no good.

VIRGIL
I went to the War Department.
No one would listen.

JULIAN
Who could know?

VIRGIL
What this government needs is a Federal Bureau of Investigation for conspiracies like this. With competent agents, not like these blockheads.

MILTON
We have to get out of town. Go where no one knows us.

VIRGIL
They may not know us, but we'll still look familiar.

JULIAN
We'll have to wear disguises.

MILTON
Shave the mustaches or grow beards or something.

JULIAN
What a waste of great talent. An illustrious career down the sewer. What a tragedy.

MILTON
What do you care about Booth's career?

JULIAN
Not his, mine.
(pause)
Okay, we have to go to the Metropolitan Police and explain everything.

MILTON
Are you insane?

VIRGIL
I'm too young to hang.

JULIAN
What? We haven't done anything.

MILTON

It's not the nothing we've done... it's the something someone may think we've done. Think... You're both actors. Booth has told people you're his best friend. And funny you showed up just in time, Virg. He wanted us all at Ford's tonight to implicate us in his scheme and to confuse people. The prayer meetings... with those geniuses... here... at our boarding house. I tell you we'll be found guilty of something just by association.

JULIAN

You're so negative.

VIRGIL

The Lord will provide.

MILTON

Like He provided for Lincoln?
And that policeman, Parker...

SUBLIM

A burly, bearded man in a bowler hat clubs Virgil over the head with a blackjack.

BACK TO SCENE

MILTON

(continuing)
... whose little girl needed the operation and Booth loaned him the money? Well, guess where he was when he was supposed to be guarding the President tonight? Next door in a saloon having a beer! I tell you my brothers, it is best we exit this city post haste... And not through a gallows trap door!

EXT. HOWARD'S STABLES - NIGHT - LATER

Howard rubs down his horse with a brush and towel.

The three horses the boys borrowed all come back together.

Howard stands with arms akimbo and shakes his head.

HOWARD
At least they send them back.

EXT. 541 "H" STREET - NIGHT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The boys creep into the darkened hallway.

Milton speaks in a hushed tone.

MILTON
And I'll tell you something
else... I bet you my sweet mother
hen, Mary Surratt, knows more
about this than meets the eye.
The buggy trips to Maryland...
Oh... And I'm her sweetheart...
yeah! Another nail in our
coffin.

INT. 541 "H" STREET - NIGHT - THE BOYS' ROOM -
CONTINUOUS

Milton lights a gas lamp in their room and they begin packing.

JULIAN
You know, Milton... we know
enough about this business that
our information would be helpful
to the government. Don't you
think we should report it?

VIRGIL
I tried it. It's not as easy
as it sounds.

JULIAN
It's a matter of ethics.

MILTON
Julian, you should been a man
of the cloth. Don't you
understand?

(MORE)

MILTON (cont'd)
We are not witnesses... we are
suspects. In the heat of passion
they hang suspects!

VIRGIL
I have to find Phoebe. I can't
leave her. Someone might link
the two of us with Booth and
our landlady... She has to pick
up her brother's body at the
City Hospital... that's it...
Write me in Richmond... if they
let you write.

EXT. METROPOLITAN POLICE STATION - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Milton and Julian limp up the steps to the police station.

The place swarms with frenzied POLICE, SOLDIERS and POTENTIAL WITNESSES who AD LIB the latest information.

ALL
The President's dead. Some
actor did it. Guard the river.
Watch for rebels. Could be an
uprising from the South.

Milton and Julian pull their coat collars up and the brims of their hats down over their eyes.

MILTON
You could be in trouble.

INT. METROPOLITAN POLICE STATION - NIGHT - VESTIBULE - CONTINUOUS

A line of well dressed PEOPLE and Howard, the livery owner, were ahead of them.

The boys do not notice Howard.

MORE PEOPLE file in as the evening progresses.

Milton speaks to one of the MEN behind him.

MILTON

May I ask what all these people
are doing here?

MAN

I believe we're all giving some
eye witness testimony... say,
you look familiar.

MILTON

Um... I was sitting next to you
at Ford's.

MAN

Oh... That must be it... Tragic
evening wasn't it?

JULIAN

In more ways than one.

The OFFICER interrogating the witnesses barked orders
to other policemen.

OFFICER

I want every suspect arrested
and thrown into prison.

The boys look at each other.

MILTON

Well?

OFFICER

No train or boat enters or leaves
the city without all passengers
questioned and baggage and cargo
inspected. Seal off all bridges
and roads leading out of the
city.

Howard is being interviewed.

OFFICER

(continuing)
What do you know?

HOWARD

Three of my rented horses haven't
been returned, and three other
men took horses without paying.

OFFICER

We can't be bothered with missing
horses. Get out of here.

HOWARD

But they're all friends. I've
seen them together.

OFFICER

I can't arrest people for being
friends.

HOWARD

I think one of them is an actor.

Milton and Julian pull their hats further down over
their eyes.

OFFICER

An actor... I'm not surprised.
Now, get out of here.

Milton and Julian are next in line to be questioned.

Howard does a double take as he passes them.

He pauses and gives them the once over.

HOWARD

Don't I know you two?

JULIAN

No, we're... uh...

MILTON

... just passing through...
with the Red Cross.

Howard eyes them suspiciously but leaves rubbing his
chin.

OFFICER

Come on, come on... What can
you tell us?

JULIAN

We were just wondering about
the president's condition.

The Officer loses his temper.

OFFICER
He's been shot, you fool... get
out of here!

EXT. METROPOLITAN POLICE STATION - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

MILTON
Now what, Mister John Wilkes
Booth lookalike?

JULIAN
We could take a train, but his...
our... picture's going to be
posted all over by morning.

MILTON
What luck!

JULIAN
It used to come in handy.

MILTON
Well, the tide in our affairs
is going the other way, brother,
and as the Bard wrote, our voyage
of life is about to be bound in
shallows and in misery.

JULIAN
That's very good, Milton.

MILTON
I have a plan!

EXT. UNION STATION (6:00 A.M.) - DAY

The dawn comes cold, damp and gray.

Union Station teems with UNION SOLDIERS and POLICE.

They stop and question all passengers leaving the city
on the 6:15 train for Baltimore and search all their
baggage.

Milton and Julian are there in disguise. Milton is
dressed as an elderly gentleman and Julian as an elderly
woman.

MILTON
Excuse me, Officer, could you
lend a hand for a moment?

The gentleman holds the elderly woman under her left elbow while the OFFICER lifts her up the steps into the train by her right arm.

MILTON
(continuing)
Gently, now... watch your step
my dear.
(beat)
Thank you so much, Officer.
It's the rheumatism, you know,
and this cold, damp weather
doesn't help it.

OFFICER
No sir, it certainly doesn't.

INT. RAILROAD PASSENGER CAR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Milton and Julian negotiate their way to an empty seat and wait for the train to leave.

A contingent of SOLDIERS comes down the aisle inspecting passengers and questioning passengers AD LIB (M.O.S.).

SOLDIER
Where are you folks bound?

MILTON
Philadelphia.

SOLDIER
What business did you have in
Washington?

MILTON
Our son is in the Soldier's
Home. Wounded at Gettysburg.
May not live.

Milton shakes his head sadly. Julian sniffles into a handkerchief.

MILTON
(continuing)
I brought his dear mother here
to visit him. May be the last.
Sad, very sad.

SOLDIER
You have my deepest sympathy,
mother.

JULIAN
Thank you.

The soldier pats Milton on the shoulder and moves down
the aisle.

The train begins to chug and pull out of the station.

JULIAN
(continuing)
I hate walking out of a contract.

The little old lady fixes her hair and adjusts the
veil over her face.

JULIAN
(continuing)
I'll have to send the Fords a
telegraph apologizing.

MILTON
You're the least of the Fords'
problems.

JULIAN
I wonder if Virg got away safe?

EXT. LONG BRIDGE ACROSS THE POTOMAC - DAY

Phoebe drives a one horse wagon.

There is a coffin in the back of the wagon.

A Confederate soldier sits alongside her. His face is
bandaged. His arm is in a sling.

The wagon nears a SENTRY guarding the bridge and stops.

SENTRY
Who are you and where are you
going?

PHOEBE
I'm bringing my brother home to
Richmond. I have his release
papers from the War Department.

She hands the sentry the document.

He reads it and gives it back to her.

SENTRY
What's the matter with him?
Can't he talk?

PHOEBE
Could you talk if you were shot
if the face and most of your
teeth and jaw were gone?

SENTRY
Who's in the coffin?

PHOEBE
My other brother. He wasn't as
lucky. Want to see him?

SENTRY
Nah. I can smell him. Go on.

They cross the bridge into Virginia.

EXT. NORTHERN VIRGINIA ROAD - DAY - LATER

VIRGIL
I apologize for the indignity I
imposed upon your dear brother
in stripping him of his uniform.

PHOEBE
I'm deeply grateful for your
understanding, Virgil. I tried
to keep you out of it... I
tried to talk him out of it...
but he was out of control. I
never really believed he would
do such a maniacal thing.
(MORE)

PHOEBE (cont'd)
I'm afraid he's implicated a
lot of other innocent people.
If anyone makes a connection
between him and us...

VIRGIL
Well, it's over and we're safe...
Nothing to worry about any more.
We'll start new lives in
Richmond. No more war!

Virgil removes the bandages from his face.

They pass through idyllic landscapes on the way south.

The countryside is perfectly silent except for the
SOUND of birds, until

The SOUND of thundering hoofbeats fills the scene.

Virgil turns to look behind them.

VIRGIL'S P.O.V. - UNION CAVALRY

A TROOP of UNION CAVALRY is in hot pursuit.

BACK TO SCENE

VIRGIL
(continuing)
We may not be so lucky after
all.

PHOEBE
Do you think they're after us?

VIRGIL
Who else?

PHOEBE
I can't outrun them.

VIRGIL
Don't even try. If I have to,
I'll do the explaining.

He covers his face with bandages again.

The cavalry troop pulls up alongside the wagon.

The MAJOR grabs Phoebe's reins.

MAJOR

Have you seen a rider with a
broken leg anywhere on the road
this morning, maybe together
with a half-wit?

PHOEBE

No, you're the first.

Virgil shakes his head.

MAJOR

Sorry to bother you folks.

He looks over the coffin in the rear of the wagon,
then waves his hat in his face.

MAJOR

(continuing)
Better take care of that.
(to his men)
Let's go.

The cavalry gallops off.

Virgil and Phoebe breathe a sigh of relief.

Virgil removes the bandages and the sling.

They continue on their journey to Richmond.

VIRGIL

If only I could have saved him.
I'll never get over it. It was
all there in the dream. Why
couldn't I see it?

PHOEBE

You did all you could, darlin'.
No one could ask for more.

VIRGIL

You're right, I guess. One man
can't change the course of
history.

FADE OUT:

THE END