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One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

By Bo Goldman

EXT. WORK FARM - NIGHTFALL

All we SEE is an ELEVATED SHOT of the distant mountains, rolling landscape and McMURPHY -- one cheek laid-open and crusted over with dried blood, his face and prison work clothes caked with dried sweat and dust -- as he sits on the very top of a water tower watching the last rays of sunlight. A long moment passes before McMurphy's attention is drawn elsewhere and he looks down.

REVERSE SHOT - McMURPHY'S POV

Far below, in the prison yard a MAN is SEEN hurrying across the yard where he joins a group of men composed of armed prison guards, officials, and medics -- a stretcher, an ambulance, a fire truck and safety nets spread out at the base of the water tower. The man is seen talking to the officials, then a bullhorn is handed to him and they all look up at McMurphy.

McMURPHY

As he looks down at them, a searchlight is turned on him.

MAN (V.O.)

(through bullhorn)

McMurphy! This is Doctor Shankle, from the infirmary. Can you hear me?

McMurphy doesn't respond.

SHANKLE (V.O.)

(through bullhorn)

Can you hear me, McMurphy?

McMurphy doesn't respond. Another searchlight goes on as a SECOND VOICE is PICKED UP on the BULLHORN.

SECOND VOICE:

(through bullhorn)

Why don't we blast 'im, for Christ sake, he ain't gonna come down... you...

The BULLHORN is TURNED OFF. A long moment passes as McMurphy continues to squat on the tower and wait. He shivers against the coming night when...

SHANKLE (V.O.)

(through bullhorn)

McMurphy!

I have the warden's promise. If you come down, nobody will hurt you! You'll be in my custody! I promise!

An imperceptible smile appears on McMurphy's face.

INT. MEN'S DORM - OREGON STATE HOSPITAL - DAWN

Strange HUMMING SOUNDS, CLANKING PIPES and HISSING RADIATORS as we see beds, with patients lying asleep, line two walls. The third wall is a heavy gauge steel grill, with a door that opens on to the day room. The door is open. On the far side of the day room, a long hallway with other doors opening into

rooms:

room, psychiatrist's office, visitors' room, etc.

Across the day room, a glass enclosed nurses' station where TURKLE, a Negro night attendant, is seen preparing to go off duty.

The CAMERA PANS the beds in the men's dorm. One man turns, another twists, a third lies as if dead.

CAMERA PAN ENDS on BROMDEN, who lies still, eyes wide open, very alert. He reaches down, plucks a stale piece of gum from under the bed frame, puts it in his mouth and starts chewing. A beat, then Bromden carefully undoes the leather strap which binds him to the bed. He slips out of bed and quietly makes his way down the aisle, paying no attention to the other patients, some of who are beginning to stir awake.

Ahead, at the end of the hallway, the door opens and three Negro day attendants, WASHINGTON, WARREN and MILLER, dressed in white uniforms, enter and move down the hallway and disappear into a side room.

Bromden continues his silent journey towards the day room as Turkle emerges from the side door to the nurses' lounge, goes up the hallway as MISS PILBOW, the day nurse, comes in, passing Turkle on the way out. She crosses to the nurses' station and enters as Bromden reaches the day room.

INT. DAY ROOM - DAY

as Bromden makes his way across the day room, past the nurses' station, unnoticed by Miss Pilbow who is busy preparing the day's medication.

Bromden is sliding along the hallway wall, when he is suddenly cut off by a mop which THUDS against one side of his neck. A second mop yokes him on the other side. Bromden freezes. Terrified.