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And Starring Pancho Villa As Himself

By Larry Gelbart

More, more, Mr. Walsh.
You got to kill them all.
The last thing in the world you'd want
is to be captured by those heathen redskins.
Rush to him, Miss Sampson.
Rush to your protector.
Seek the shelter of his manly arms.
True love, Adrian.
True love laced with heartrending,
devotional gratitude.
And cut.
Cut, everybody.
- Next setup, Charlie.
- Yes, Mr. Griffith.
Go get those horses.
I know you're freezing. We're all freezing.
There he is, Frank.
Ask him over, gently.
Very good, my dear. Very good, indeed.
Mr. Griffith, sir...
Mr. Aitken's in the car.
He'd like to have a word with you.
- Duffy, how are we with Mr. Walsh?
- Hello.
A bit higher than usual.
How about there?
Be more generous with the blood.
Lay it on thick.
He's over there, sir. Says that it's important.
When will Mr. Aitken understand
that when Griffith is filming...
nothing is of greater importance to Griffith?
Sorry, David,
but we need to move fast on this...
if you think it's worth moving at all.
Eli Morton in our Texas office...
went for some kind of press conference
over the border...
pulled together by this Pancho Villa fellow...
- Villa.
- The Pancho Villa?
Right. According to Eli...
Villa is offering exclusive rights
to any motion-picture company...

interested in filming
his revolutionary army...
- with the vision del norte...
- Del norte.
...in action against the federal forces of,
who he calls...
the despotic President of Mexico, Victorio...
- Victoriano Huerta.
- Huerta, right.
Villa's terms as follows.
He's asking for \$25,000 in advance
against 20% of the profits.
- He wants the money in gold.
- Quite the horse trader.
He's supposed to be some kind of Injun
or something.
He's mestizo. It's a racial mix.
Where'd you get all that stuff?
Is it worth a shot? No story, no actors.
Just shooting an actual military scrap.
- Just that, and that alone.
- Just filming men at war?
Being allowed to place cameras
in the thick of battle?
This may prove as much a revolution
for motion pictures...
- as the one Villa is waging on the ground.
- Real death, real blood.
People will get sick to their stomachs
with that show.
Hold it a minute, Harry.
Give her your gloves, will you?
Excuse me.
- Miss Sampson.
- Hello.
I'm Frank Thayer.
I'm with the Mutual Company.
Mr. Griffith said that...
You're in charge of gloves, are you?
Harry, thousands of words could be used
to describe individual achievements.
But the historian's pen
over time will be no match...
for the image the moviemaker captures

in the eye of his camera.
who's never done a movie before.
There's not a day that passes...
when this guy is not featured
on the front pages of the world press.
The man is a star. And stars
are the mother's milk of box office.
You wouldn't consider going down there
and try getting us a better deal?
A bird hasn't been bought yet that
D. W. Griffith couldn't charm down a tree.
Be serious. If all I've got to do
is setting up the California studio...
Just how competent would you say he is?
You think he's ready
to do something useful?
- Who? Who are we talking about?
- Your nephew.
Who, Frank?
Anyone else bidding on the rights?
- Hand me those.
- Thanks.
Any other movie companies
showing an interest that you know of?
We got the inside track.
Money does a whole lot of talking
around here...
- and the heavier it is, the better it's heard.
- Right.
You gotta keep your wits about you
around here.
- Yes, sir.
- First, number one thing to remember:
When you meet him,
never look Villa straight in the eye.
You forget that,
you wake up deader than a doornail.
And making any sudden moves
around him...
that's another real good way
to get your scalp creased.
When do we actually meet? What's the plan?
Villa calls the shots.
Gotta work out how to slip over the border

and find out wherever he's hiding out.

We have to be smuggled into Mexico?

There ain't no "we" in that equation,

Mr. Thayer.

Eli Morton has got a wife and kids
to think about.

- That's not gunfire, is it?

- Step right this way, Mr. Thayer.

Let's get you boys a ringside seat
at the Revolution.

Come on up.

The chairs are in there. Come on, fellows.

Let's get a look.

Let's go up to the front, come on.

Let's go right up here. Excuse us for a sec.

Colonel, how're you doing?

Do you mind? Thanks.

These guys are from back East.

They've never seen... Thank you.

Come here, step right up.

There you go.

Thank you.

Feels almost like watching a show
from up here, doesn't it?

Well, it's a bit more than playacting, sir.

What you're watching is a dictatorship
in the throes of dying.

Yielding up one life at a time.

John Reed, Metropolitan magazine.

Frank Thayer, Mutual Film Company.

You're taking the bait, Mr. Thayer?

You're going to film the battle?

I'm going to try.

Have a peek at your picture show.

- It's my turn.

- Don't push.

Look at that. To your left.

Hope you don't have any stock
in Doheny Oil, Mr. Thayer.

Oh, God.

Shows you what Pancho Villa thinks
of Americans owning Mexican oil.

The bastard doesn't care
whose property he burns.

There he is.
There's your bloody Robin Hood of Mexico.
What's he doing?
He's only taken half the town.
- It's off to bed, fellows.
- Good night, Frank.
- Get some sleep.
- Yeah.
Wait. I've never been on a horse.
You will like it.
Come on.
He wants to know why the movies
sent him such a clown.
He wants to know was Charlie Chaplin
too busy to show up down here?
- He wants to know...
- Griffith wanted to come. He truly did.
Only, he's kind of involved right now.
And this guy's
just fucking around down here, right?
He says he don't trust nobody
who don't look him straight in the eye.
I was told that he would kill a man
for doing that.
That's a pile of crap. They don't stop
telling stories about this guy.
- What's that all over your tie?
- It's my school emblem.
My college's.
To which college do you go?
Did, sir. Harvard in Boston.
S. That's the school
where you make presidents. S?
A few have attended, yes, sir.
One day...
Pancho Villa will send his son
to Boston, Harvard.
He says he's knocked out enough sons
to fill every college in America.
Is that the gold?
Cash would have been a whole lot lighter,
I can assure you.
The last person who tried to give him cash,
Pancho cleaned up his glasses with a bullet.

- Your contrato?
- Yes, sir. It's right here, sir.
Those are the glasses.
One for you, one for me.
Those actresses you work with,
they're like nurses, right?
They got to have it all the time, don't they?
I'm not sure that's really true.
Yeah, right. Like you're not
jazzing your brains out, are you?
What?
What's this 10% of the profits bullshit?
His cut's supposed to be 20% .
You lie to Pancho Villa,
you go back to Harvard in a box!
Sir, that is a mistake. Somebody must have
changed the figures before I had a chance...
It's just my pen.
El plumo, or whatever you call it.
Let me change all these 10s here
into 20s, okay?
Here we are. Fixed.
See, you gotta understand.
He needs the money.
With Wilson's goddamn embargo...
you gotta go the black-market route
to get guns.
It costs an arm and a leg
to kill somebody down here.
No, please.
This pen has gone to college.
It's for your son. Any of your sons.
But your Seor Hearst...
he only writes bad words about Pancho Villa
in sus peridicos.
In his newspapers.
People, I think...
they believe more what they see
on the picture screen.
When your President Wilson
sees my movie...
he will know he must support Pancho Villa.
He will see that Pancho Villa is a good guy.
That he's not like Presidente Huerta.

- That donkey fucker.
- Yeah, got it.
I hope he's not gonna be offended.
I'm not much of a drinker.
Don't worry about it.
He never touches the stuff.
You are Frank.
- That's your name?
- Frank Thayer, yes, sir.
Pancho is also Frank. Pancho is Francisco.
That's his real moniker.
Tell me, what would you like,
Francisco Two?
Lemon, vanilla.
Thank you.
I've never seen anyone like him.
There is nobody like him, sonny boy.
If there was, he would blow their brains out.
- How do we do this?
- You got a plan, Frank?
Besides praying a lot.
I think you all just fan out.
Catch whatever you can.
Other than bullets, you mean.
Those crazy bastards are not gonna last
Gentlemen, the Mutual Film Company
is about to make history.
Thanks to an exclusive arrangement
with Gen. Pancho Villa...
who joins such illustrious Mutual artists...
as Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford,
and Fatty Arbuckle...
the public will, for the very first time...
be treated to the thrills and chills
of an actual battlefield...
as seen through the lens
of the motion picture camera.
Are you worried about the physical danger
your people might be exposed to?
Gen. Villa has assigned
his crack guards, his dorados...
that's D-O-R-A-D-O-S...
to guarantee the safety of each
and every one of our camera operators.

Set up in the doorway. Hurry!
Turn around and film the gunner.
Sir, you must be really devoted
to this cause!
For \$1,000 a month, there's nothing
Sam Drebben can't get devoted to.
Plus all the gold teeth I can pull.
Watch your ass, sonny boy.
Another day, another dollar.
Hearst Publications.
You don't have any qualms
about manipulating public opinion...
in favor of a man
many people consider to be...
nothing more than a socialist rabble-rouser?
Unlike your employer Mr. Hearst...
this company has no interest whatever
in meddling in politics...
foreign or domestic.
For the millions he's trying to free
of a cruel dictatorship...
Pancho Villa hardly needs Mutual's help...
to enhance his reputation
as the George Washington of Mexico.
Bloody hell!
Francisco, you're not dead yet?
Still alive, sir.
These are just civilians, aren't they?
Yeah. You make the mistake
of supporting Pancho Villa...
you wind up being a tree ornament.
Saves ammunition.
That one's mine.
Next patient.
The kid's gonna have a playmate soon.
Somebody knocked her up.
- That figures.
- What?
The Father's the father.
He's swearing to take care of the kid
and the baby however long they need it for.
Hi, Charlie.
Good work, Frank.
You didn't get in my way once.

Thank you, Hennie.
And how did it feel today, Mr. Thayer?
Being smack in the middle
of the killing ground.
It's shameful to admit
how exciting I found it.
That's strictly a survivor's sensation.
Someone else's death
serving as your own reprieve.
You're in good company, Mr. Thayer.
Shamelessness has a big following
down here.
Bank robbers, painters, poets,
soldiers of fortune.
Enough anarchists to blow up Wall Street
Healing Jews and fighting Jews.
Maurice Grossbaum,
a surgeon from Indiana.
Sam Drebber,
machine-gunner from the Bronx.
Gen. ngeles came over from the Federales.
Studied von Clausewitz,
well-read, an idealist.
He's the other side of the peso
to Gen. Fierro.
He gets really ugly unless he kills
at least one prisoner before breakfast.
From the merely curious
to the merely morbid.
All of this on Villa's order.
All of this in Villa's thrall.
You take home a nice recuerdo,
verdad, amigo? A souvenir.
But be careful...
should they give you some crawly souvenir
in your underwear.
Her husband got killed in the fighting today.
And her youngest son, too.
Get this.
He just gave her more money
than her old man saw in his entire life.
What will they think, my American friends...
when they see the movie of Pancho Villa?
I think Mr. Doheny

is gonna be very impressed indeed.
He worships the ground that is Mexico.
Doheny worships what's underneath it.
Your Seor Hearst
is also muy nervioso. Sintense.
Very nervous.
You know how much
he owns of Mexico, Francisco?
Seor Hearst. You know how many acres?
More like 8 million.
How many head of cattle
have you stolen from him? 60,000, he says.
You are loco, Juanito. 60,000.
So, Francisco, today was not too...
- Boring.
- Boring. It was not too boring?
You became more a man a little,
I think, today.
- Maybe you and your amigos...
- Yeah, I'd say we had a good start.
Today I think they found,
a little bit, their huevos.
Even though a few of them got a little wet.
Yes.
You will help.
You'll help Americans know
that hope does not stop at the border.
It's my Virgin of Guadalupe.
I'm deeply honored, sir.
He says you should be.
You've got the only virgin left around here.
Please bear in mind
that our camera operators...
had to constantly deal
with movement of men and horses...
exploding bombs, clouds of gunpowder.
But what you're looking at is,
without a doubt...
never-before-seen footage of live action
shot on an actual field of battle.
Never-before-seen footage?
You still can't see it.
They'd have bit the dust a lot better
if D.W. Griffith had directed it.

Let me assure you that every one
of these men and women, and every child...
died in the very best way that they could.
There he is, boys, on motion-picture film
for all the world to see:
Gen. Pancho Villa.
Despite its technical flaws...
clearly more people
would discover Pancho Villa...
from a few feet of this crude, historic film...
than from the reams that are written
about his struggle...
to rid Mexico of its greedy robber barons...
the only ones to profit
from their cozy marriage...
with rapacious American interests.
Unfortunately, not everyone happens to be
the socialist-lover that John Reed is.
Hearst, no surprise,
is putting our nuts through a wringer.
Pardon me.
With all he's got invested in Mexico...
Hearst stands to lose
one or two of his fortunes down there.
Speak up, Harry.
We're a whole country apart, for God's sake.

Listen to this:

"Pandering to Villa's overblown vanity...
"the perpetrators
of this clumsy excuse of a film..."
"...clearly demonstrate
they were more interested...
"in selling tickets to a gullible public...
"than in telling the real truth..."
I'll take the pastrami on rye.
"...the real truth
about the self-styled Gen. Villa...
"and his ragtag army with nary
a piece of modern artillery to its name."
It'd be more productive
for you to read the want ads.
You know what's so galling about all this?
It's all true.

We had so little control
over what happened.
Villa comes off as some kind of simple,
starstruck cowboy.
Give me the strudel.
We didn't offer a clue to his complexity,
to his greatness.
What a movie that would make.
This would all be better said
to someone with a checkbook, wouldn't it?
He's been beaten and tortured all his life.
They say that he still has whip scars
across his back.
He was a convict before he turned 20.
It's midnight.
Before he was 12,
he was already being hunted by the law.
Now there are places in Mexico
where he is the law.
Don't make me fire you twice in one week.
He's the James Boys, he's Billy the Kid,
he's Napoleon...
all rolled into one.
But he asks nothing for himself.
He takes nothing.
He builds schools where there were none.
He seizes the homes of the wealthy.
He redistributes the land.
He gives it to the poor. He feeds them.
He even prints his own money.
Prints his own money?
The man's not all bad, is he?
Tell me that this material would not make
a fantastic moving picture.
Forget it. The Times said the one we made...
looked like a high-school play
that couldn't afford the costumes.
For my money, and that's sure as hell
what every penny of it was...
we gave Pancho Villa more than his shot.
- But we didn't. That's the whole point.
- Be realistic.
You'd never crowd all that stuff
into a two-reeler, not in a million years.

I'd make it more like seven.

- Seven reels?

- Seven reels.

Did you smoke some of that funny stuff
down in Mexico, Frank?

Who in their right minds...

is gonna wanna sit through a movie
that runs for over an hour?

There's never a first until someone tries.

Don't give me fortune cookies

in the middle of the night, Frank.

And seven reels is a whale of a show...

you're ready to give away

for a nickel a ticket.

Then double it.

Double it?

- A dime a ticket?

- A dime a ticket.

One good first deserves another.

- These are exciting thoughts, Frank.

- They are.

- I'm definitely getting excited.

- Don't let me stop you.

If only they didn't all look
so crummy down there.

For 10 cents,

people are gonna wanna see a lot more...

than a bunch of barefoot buggers
jumping around in the cactus.

We can help them look better.

I know we can.

I have to run this past D.W., of course.

He'll see the possibilities in a minute.

I promise you.

The Life of General Villa.

Okay.

Hey, you moron, watch the vase!

- Hello, sir.

- Francisco Two.

- Do I know you were coming?

- I sent a telegram.

When I see it, then I will know you are here.

- I missed you many times, mi amigo.

- I've missed you.

Yeah, good. Bueno.
The Virgin, does she answer your prayers?
Not with my Spanish, she doesn't.
It's not Spanish. Never Spanish. Mexicano.
There are two things
Spain give to my people:
the church and the weapon.
You should write a book.
Maybe I have to read one or two first.
This is the battle?
So much there.
Two little circles.
Magic.
Tomorrow, we must liberate
a projector somewhere.
Tell me are you hungry, thirsty?
House of great wealth.
Not one drop of ice cream.
If my father saw us here,
me and my brother, he would say:
Before your head grows a boot.
A room like this.
Such a room could be only for a don.
Or for a foreigner.
Into a room like this,
my father could only crawl...
to beg for some food for himself,
for his family.
There are books here
that weigh more than he did when he died.
Welcome back to Mexico.
- Are you all right, Francisco?
- Yes, thanks.
Is the horse riding you well?
You did not come all this way...
- only to bring me my film, right?
- Right.
Another movie? You want to make
another movie with Pancho Villa?
Yes, sir. Same deal as last time.
Same money.
Your President Wilson
has lifted the arms embargo.
Money is not a problem

for Pancho Villa anymore.
Tell me, has there ever been
a movie of Don Quixote, do you know?
No, not that I know of. No, sir.
Not one movie of Don Quixote?
And Seor Aitken wants to make
two of Pancho Villa.
We believe that this story, this photoplay...
will greatly enhance your popularity...
and it's gonna go a long way
to helping the Revolution.
You still have a lot of enemies
in high places though.
Yeah. That's the best place for enemies,
high up where you can see them.
You'd be doing me a very big favor.
Remember Don Quixote, mi amigo.
A man must not fight windmills.
Villa positively not interested.
Returning New York immediately.
Awfully sorry. Did my level best.
Frank N. Thayer.
"N" for "nephew."
You're welcome.
Don't give me that happy-peon lark.
You're on my land.
You and the other bloody bandidos...
think you can just ride off here
with my horses and my guns, amigo?
No.
Soldiers of Pancho Villa are no bandidos.
You've been robbing me blind
and you bloody well know it.
Five thousand head of my cattle...
and not so much as
one bloody fucking peso.
Thank you very much.
These tinhorn bean-ocrats down here
may put up with the crap you dish out.
But you've finished shitting
on this white man. Comprende?
Did you read Hearst today?
I've got it right here.
"The cold-blooded murder in Mexico

of English ranch owner William Benton...
"that was the latest example of the socialist
Villa's rabid hatred of foreigners...
"reinforces the Hearst
Corporation's demand...
"that the civilized nations of the world
act in all haste...
"to introduce the self-styled General
to the business end of a rope."
Mr. Aitken.
Does the General have any questions?
The General has no questions.
"Whenever engaging the enemy,
you guarantee..."
- That's you, sir.
- I know I am "you."
"...you guarantee that any fighting
by the forces under your command...
"will occur only between the daylight hours

of 9:

Agreed.
"There is to be
no night combat whatsoever...
"and the Mutual Company," that's us...
"is to be informed and consulted...
"as to the nature
of any and all military engagements."
S, cut, print, iris in, iris out, pan...
It's muy simple.
Very good, sir.
"In the event that a major exchange
cannot be filmed...
"you will agree to restage such battles,
or stage new ones as may be necessary...
"for the benefit
of the Mutual Company's cameras.
"For its part, the Mutual Company
agrees to furnish wardrobe..."
Problem?
He wants to make sure
Frank's gonna be working on this one, too.
No Francisco, no Francisco.
I promise you, General...

this fine young man is gonna be with you every damn momentum of the day.

Whatever you need, whatever you want, this is gonna be your man.

Every bit as he's gonna be mine.

It's right here, sir.

\$25,000, as before.

I take it we have a deal, sir.

The soldiers of Pancho Villa...

have left behind many hurfanos y viudas.

Lots of widows and orphans.

He's up to his ass in them.

They are very sad. They're very poor.

The General is most sensitive.

A leader must be muy sensitive.

You must give to Pancho Villa,

when into Mexico City...

after the Revolution...

- A print?

- A print.

He wants his own print.

I think he wants to have

his own premiere here.

Pancho Villa, too, needs nickels.

Many nickels for those who lost so much...

and for those who lost so many.

I will be very happy to write that

into the agreement this very minute, sir.

No es necesario, my good sir.

For Pancho Villa, your hand is your word.

Certainly. Of course.

It's my pleasure, sir.

- Hiya, Duffy.

- Hey, Frank.

- Everything okay? Nice to see you.

- At least we made it.

Hi, Charlie, how are you?

- Where's the Scotch, Frank?

- Didn't you bring it?

I see you've got gloves this time.

- Welcome to Mexico.

- Thank you.

Gen. Villa...

please allow me to introduce our director.

This is Mr. William Christy Cabanne.
I am so looking forward, sir.
And this is Miss Teddy Sampson
who will play the role of your sister.
And this is Miss Irene Hunt
who will be your mother.
And Charlie Rositer of course you know
from Ojinaga.
Are your huevos all dry now, Charlie?
For the moment.
And this, sir, is Mr. Raoul Walsh.
General.
He'll be playing the young Pancho Villa.
Tell me, Raoul Walsh...
you know even
which end of the horse shits?
You can be me.
Okay, Carl, camera. And action.
And say goodbye, Mom.
Very nice, yes.
Sis, go get you a little of that.
And lovely. Okay.
And it's farewell, Pancho. Let's go.
And he goes.
And cut! Okay.
Very nice.
Little more of a routine goodbye, Raoul.
Listen, your character
has no way of knowing...
what tragic events the day's gonna bring.
- So keep it big, make it small, okay?
- Christy, I want...
Adrian, give me a wee bit less.
Just hearts, no flowers.
- Okay?
- Yes, sir.
Uno ms, people.
As pronto as possible por favor, makeup.
Okay, let's go, people.
- I was just thinking that maybe...
- No, don't think, darling. Just act.
Let's just make a movie here.
That's enough, okay?
Look, he's a Mexican. Mexicans sweat.

He's fine. Leave him alone.

- Carl, crank them.

- Okay.

And from the kiss, por favor.

And action.

Much better. And sis...

Lovely.

Okay, and farewell, Pancho.

Off he goes. Goodbye, Pancho.

That's good.

One last look at Mom and Sis. A fond look.

Fond!

You love them. Good.

Wham-bam, out the door.

And, perfect!

Cut, print. Beautiful!

Next setup.

"Unquestionably the most expensive and longest motion picture ever contemplated."

So reads

the Mutual Film Company publicity.

An unprecedented seven 15-minute reels...

two of which will be filmed

during the upcoming battle of Torren...

for which Villa's forces are now preparing.

Mutual Company promises

an additional 5 reels...

devoted to a specially written photoplay:

The Factual Story

of the Heroic Life of Pancho Villa.

Every page is a page of lies.

I don't understand.

Mierda means "shit."

I know that.

I just don't know why you say that...

"Pancho Villa becomes an outlaw when the Federales take away his father's land."

The land of Pancho Villa's father

was his grave!

Mr. Aitken feels that's more colorful.

That's only dramatic license.

It is a license to lie!

- You don't understand.

- Yes, I understand.

I understand that never does Pancho Villa...
want the world to see his sister Mariana
raped by Federales.
But that's what turned you into a rebel.
I know why I became what I became.
Pancho Villa does not have to see a movie
to find out who is Pancho Villa.
Presidente Villa.
From where does this fantasa come?
You have learned nothing from Juan Reed.
- There will never be a Presidente Villa.
- But there could be.
The Revolucin
is to feed the people's hungry bellies...
- not the ambition of Pancho Villa.
- All right, but it's a wonderful scene.
Okay, we can make it a dream sequence.
Pancho Villa's dream...
is for a man of education
to be presidente of Mexico.
Your Presidente Wilson,
he was a professor, s?
Pancho Villa is a professor
of horses and soldiers.
See, that's exactly what General Grant was,
and he became president.
That drunk dogface.
He killed Mexicanos
like he killed his whiskey bottles.
I had no idea.
No, in your history books
there are no bad Americanos.
He came before there was oil to steal.
He came for the gold. He came for the silver.
He came for the azcar. Es un insulto.
You want to shoot the battle of Torren,
you bring your cameras there.
You don't shoot the life of Pancho Villa
that he has never lived.
Mutual has a fortune sunk into this.
Lies are expensive, Francisco.
Seor Aitken, he tells to the world
he will tell the truth about Pancho Villa.
Esta basura! This is fake garbage!

May I ask you, sir...
did you murder William Benton?
I don't believe you did.
But a hell of a lot of your enemies...
are trying to convince
a hell of a lot of other folks that you did.
If you can believe Jack Reed...
there are plans in the works
in Washington right now.
Plans to invade Mexico
and make Chihuahua our 49th state.
Plans to finish you off, knock you off,
any way they can.
You have to understand...
that this is the kind of story
the public expects, that they demand.
When they go to the movies,
you give them what they want.
They give you what you want.
And what you want is something
you have never needed more in your life.
Their approval.
I think every time you see me...
you grow one more huevo, Francisco.
And dismount, Raoul.
Everyone dismount.
And run to greet them.
Welcome your hubbies home.
Ladies, come on.
Let's go, ladies!
Come on.
Mr. Cabanne.
Can I get some hugs and kisses here?
Ladies, come on.
Sweet Jesus! Cut!
That's a cut, everybody.
It's just not in their nature.
These women are shy.
Shy? They are as wooden
as fucking Indians.
Most of them are fucking Indians.
Give me five minutes.
Come on, let's go.
And dismount, Raoul.

- And cue the ladies.

- Ladies.

He has his own train.

It's just one more thing

he's liberated from the government.

Fitted out a few hospital cars to take care
of the wounded, made one for the press.

Like a city on wheels.

I walked it the other day.

It's almost 2 miles long.

- Hiya, fellows.

- Hey, Frank.

Hello there.

These are the Sanchez brothers.

Abraham, Anastasio.

Ever paralyze anybody in Spanish before?

So this will be the lab.

We'll be able to develop our own film.

This is the editing room.

We can watch our own dailies...

which I think will make a real difference
in our work.

Going on and on, aren't I?

- You've changed down here.

- Have I?

When I first met you,

it was hard to know you were even around.

I never once had that problem with you.

I gathered.

Guess I was fairly obvious.

Girls don't mind that one bit.

- What have we got here, boss?

- New wardrobe.

Civil War surplus?

Yeah, Aitken got a good deal on it.

You don't think these guys are gonna mind?

- Dressing up like the losing side.

- I think we'll keep that our little secret.

Pretty impressive.

French, 75 mm. Perfect for the job.

Really! Mary Pickford doesn't take this long
in makeup.

Mary Pickford isn't running a revolution
on the side.

Don't think she couldn't.
Here we go.
How do I look?
You're weary, General.
Trappings of power mean nothing to you.
Your every goal has been achieved.
You've avenged your family.
You've righted the wrongs
against your people.
Many lives have been sacrificed...
but in the end, you have
saved the life of your beloved Mexico.
But the work of a president is never done.
Lawrence.
And return to your desk, General.
Pick up the pen...
and sign the document.
Good.
Lawrence, take the paper and leave.
Bow and go.
And now the weariness returns.
Can you give me a sigh, General?
Beautiful.
And now your speech.
Into the camera...
into the lens that is the eye
that sees for all the world.
Chapeau to you, sir. One take.
Is there anything the man cannot do?
It is easy to be president in a movie.
In a movie, Pancho Villa could be the Pope.
In the end, there will be other better men
who will sit in Mexico City.
And you'll do what? Surely not retire?
I think the government would open a factory
to make good saddles at Frago.
Pancho Villa, his hands filled with leather.
Pancho Villa's hands are leather.
And you would settle for just doing that?
That and watch that Mexico
does not become...
another star on the flag of your country.
And what about you?
What Pancho Villa wants...

for himself?
A parade when he dies.
A parade, many tears, and many flowers.
For the children to miss his candy.
A funeral...
with many poets and singing.
And at the end, a tomb.
A big tomb...
where they can come...
where people can come,
and see Pancho Villa...
will be always there for them.
Always.
You know, I wrote this scene in my head...
the very first time I laid eyes on you.
Was I okay?
You want to try one more take?
Is it too soon?
I don't know. Maybe not.
I'm sure not.
"Onward and upward" is the ticket.
That's what Mom always taught me.
Tomorrow we leave...
to begin the last chapter of the Revolucin.
Bravo, General.
You have much to film in the battle,
my friend.
- The battle, sir?
- The battle of Torren.
I won't be going with you.
No, I finished my part in this film.
I'm going to New Jersey.
To start a new one.
Really. You can call my agent.
Excuse me, Gen. Villa.
Me, I don't go, sir.
You, too? You're not going?
No, sir, my work's through here.
Only the camera operators are going.
- What's happening?
- I'm not sure.
Oh, my God!
Calling for a firing squad.
Here, Pancho Villa is the director.

Here Pancho Villa says
who is finished and who is not finished.
Now you know
what you will miss at Torren.
Will you take this?
Too bad them actresses don't do no jazzing.
The hell they are!
Put the gun away.
General, these boys
have been such a help to the movie...
and now you're turning them into soldiers?
You can't.
Is this what you want
for the children of Mexico?
Schools for only some,
Harvard just for yours, death for the rest?
One boy for you, one boy for Villa.
How can anyone possibly make that choice?
That one for you. I'll take the winner.
Now we find the end of the shots.
Close your stinking mouth.
- You remember our agreement.
- Pancho Villa forgets nothing.
All right, got your cameras?
Ready?
Everyone ready?
Start cranking!
And action!
Keep firing.
Come here.
In the center in the valley of Torren...
is the armory of Huerta.
Enough guns for Pancho Villa
to make a hundred revolutions.
At Torren...
Pancho Villa will give his General ngeles
and your Seor Aitken...
the mucho boom-boom.
Excuse me, sir.
You're attacking from here. This is the east?
You're firing at the Federales from the east?
Is there any special reason
for that plan, sir?
S. Because it's mine.

What?

Your camera's going to shoot
into the sun, huh?

Your lenses are not strong enough.

Nowhere near enough, no, sir.

Maybe you can move the cameras
to the side.

This way the sun can come across.

Or...

Or what?

Could you change your attack
so that you fire from the west...
instead of the east?

That would give us so much better a picture.

We kill them all your way.

Action, Seor Griffith.

Action.

The thing is, it's always easier for an army
to defend a position...

than it is for one to take it.

I suppose you're right. Took the Turks

What's this?

If we fight the Federales for 1,000 years
we cannot beat them...

unless we fight them this way.

By day we can win the battle,

by night we will win the war.

But you always must've known that.

In the dark I can smell the Federales' fear.

With fear comes defeat.

You never really intended

to honor our contract, did you?

My only contract is honored with Mexico.

There's no choice.

It's better for me to lose the movie

than the Revolution.

What the hell was in there?

The Federales hide their ammunition
in the church.

This way they go to heaven faster.

Plenty of light now, Francisco.

- Hello, sonny boy.

- Hi.

Take some of this.

Thanks.
Frigging rainwater.
That's all there is.
If you ask me, cows have been pissing in it.
Hell of a show the boss put on last night.
I didn't get one foot of it.
There are those days, kid.
There are those days.
- Sorry, Sam.
- Don't worry about it.
You can take a Jew apart,
you can never kill him altogether.
Used to aggravate the hell out of my mother.
There's a law, you know.
Anybody with a tattoo, no Jewish cemetery
will let you get buried there.
As if it's gonna bother somebody
in the next grave, right?
I can't tell you how happy
this is going to make my mother.
Charlie, set up fast.
This is the scene we missed at Ojinaga.
My God.
How could you?
Don't speak to me of God.
God has never been to Mexico!
If he has been, he has a heart of stone!
Go home, Frank.
All of you!
Go where to be born is to be equal.
The children of Mexico are not yet so lucky.
Mr. Walsh.
One more!
Very still, now. Very still.
As far as I'm concerned,
two-reel films are a thing of the past.
I can imagine the time...
when a 5-reel picture was...
It's not gonna be an easy thing to see
for us, because we...
Good evening.
Nice to see you again.
Good evening.
Onward and upward. That's the ticket.

Jack.

I want you to know

I fought against editing that shot that way.

It means a lot to me

for you to understand that.

I understand the difficulty

in selling tickets to see a hero...

who mows down widows in cold blood.

I even understand the commercial need

to transform an outlaw into an aristocrat.

Or passing off whores as loving wives.

Barefoot peasants who are

entitled to freedom...

only after they've been properly dressed

for the occasion.

It's a process of evolution.

It's the movie's turn to make truth

the first casualty of war.

- Is there a second?

- Well, if that's the first, who cares?

Why did he kill her, Jack?

So coldly, so brutally.

It's as though

he killed the whole Revolution.

You know what it is

to say to a whole country:

"Let me make everything that's wrong

right for you.

"Let me carry you all on my shoulders"?

Eventually you begin to resent the weight.

You'd never know that from the movie

I let it become.

Well, you'll find a way to live with yourself.

You'll find a way to live with Pancho, too.

You used each other, Frank.

Mutual and Villa.

Together you proved that the lens...

is a hell of a lot mightier than the sword.

Hey, sonny boy!

Sam Drebben.

My God.

Sit 'im here. Park it.

Yeah, careful, sweetheart.

She's got a bladder like a faucet.

Watch what you say.
She thinks I'm a paint salesman.
Yeah, right, Ma.
- ice cream.
- Okay, Ma.
Shades of Pancho Villa.
She's tougher, believe me.
Got too good a look at a Federale bayonet.
- You don't still work for him, do you?
- No, not since after the Revolution.
Funny guy, Pancho.
He gave me a letter of reference.
He said Moses should have used me
for a machine gun.
Wrote it with your pen, too.
He was pretty browned off with you guys.
He never did get to see that movie.
Jack Reed said that
we made him look so good...
that Washington held off the idea
of invading Mexico.
Be that as it may, you welshed on him.
I was there...
when you promised him
a print for the widows, remember?
- And the orphans, remember?
- Aitken was mad he broke the contract.
Like Aitken needed an excuse
to be full of shit.
Some revolution.
The new fuckers
are the same as the old fuckers.
Big guys up here still control
everything that's going on down there.
Both sides of the border still scared shitless
Pancho's going to start shooting again...
because the Revolution's turned sour.
You want my two cents,
for what they're worth?
Mexico would be a hell of a lot better off...
if God had taken his goddamn oil
and shoved it under Brooklyn.
I wish very much
that you had been in Baralf...

for the christening of my first-born:
Anastasio Francisco.
Named for my brother and for you.
I hope he will be proud to say one day...
that he is the godson of Pancho Villa.
At the christening party...
the General was very much
as the General always was.
Though some said later
he was more quiet, more thoughtful.
They say he had a premonition.
After giving my son
his medal of the Virgin of Guadalupe...
which many times over
he would say really belonged to you...
he started to drive back
to his hacienda grande...
with his secretary and two guards.
And then, in the center of Parral...
Some say the government
killed Pancho Villa.
Some say it was the gringos.
Some say it was both.
The General was dragged away
like an animal.
Even in death they are afraid of him.
He is without a grave. He has no tomb.
How will they remember him, Seor Frank?
How will the sons of Mexico
remember our Pancho Villa?
Following his assassination,
the name of Pancho Villa...
was stricken from all official records,
statues, monuments, even children's books.
When the government decided it was safe
to disinter his body...
it was discovered
that someone had stolen his head.
In 1976, after half a century,
the remains of his remains...
were laid to rest in Mexico City,
alongside other heroes of the Revolution.
Finally he'd been given the funeral
he'd always dreamed of.

As in the case of his head,
the film *The Life Of General Villa...*
has been lost to posterity.
If anything at all, Frank Thayer
remains just a footnote in history.
No complaints, it's not too bad
being a footnote to a legend.