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The Ghost and the Darkness

By William Goldman

FADE IN ON:

A TINY FIGURE OF A MAN hurrying toward camera. The figure gets larger as he approaches. But as yet we cannot tell who he is or where we are.

MALE VOICE (over)

This is the most famous true story of Africa. It happened a hundred years ago, but even now, when children ask about it, you do not tell them at night.

(The FIGURE continues to grow)

It began with the race to build a railroad across Africa.

(beat)

But this is not about building a railroad- it is about Patterson.

And now we can tell that the FIGURE is a YOUNG MAN, A LIEUTENANT COLONEL. This is PATTERSON. He is gifted and bright and serious, serious about his life, serious about his career. He has been successful in everything he's attempted, in part because of his talents, in part because he is willing to outwork anybody.

AND THIS IS WHERE WE ARE: ENGLAND.

More specifically, in a high-ceilinged corridor of an elegant building - lovely woodwork all around. Everything is neat, everything is clean and in order.

MALE VOICE (over)

Patterson was thirty. A brilliant engineer. A fine man, but do not become attached to him- there are many fine men in this story but do not become attached to any of them.

(beat)

So many of them die.

Patterson stops at a large ornate door, knocks. Waits.

MALE VOICE (over)

And remember this: only the impossible parts of what follows really happened...

(Now the door opens and we-)

CUT TO:

Just a wonderfully handsome man standing in the doorway. This is ROBERT BEAUMONT - 40, with an irresistable smile. We're in his office and the place reflects the man - clean, cold. There are maps and charts on the walls. He ushers Patterson inside.

BEAUMONT:

(The great smile flashes)

John Henry Patterson, come in. I'm Robert Beaumont.

(They shake hands)

Firm- I like that, tells me a lot about you-

(beat)

-now why don't you tell me about me?

To get you started, many people find me handsome, with a wonderful smile.

I'm sure you agree.

(Surprised, uncomfortable, Patterson nods)

Winning personality, heaps of charm?

PATTERSON:

My wife is the game player in the family, sir.

BEAUMONT:

Games?

(staring dead at Patterson)

Look at me closely, Patterson: I am a monster. My only pleasure is tormenting people who work for me, such as yourself.

(again the smile - only now it's chilling)

One mistake and I promise you this:

I'll make you hate me.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, as he realizes Beaumont is serious. Beaumont turns sharply and moves to a large map.

CUT TO:

THE MAP. It covers a great deal of East Africa with a very clear line that ends at Lake Victoria, a distance of some 600 miles.

BEAUMONT:

(pointing along the line)
We are building this railroad
across Africa for the glorious
purpose of saving Africa from the
Africans. And, of course, to end
slavery. The Germans and French
are our competition. We are ahead,
and we will stay ahead providing
you do what I hired you to do-

CUT TO:

A MORE DETAILED MAP. This one ends at "Tsavo," 130 miles in.

BEAUMONT:

-build the bridge over the Tsavo
river. And be finished in four
months time. Can you do that?

PATTERSON:

I'm sure you've examined my record.
So you know I've never yet been
late on a bridge.

BEAUMONT:

You've never built in Africa.

PATTERSON:

But I have in India- every country
presents problems.

BEAUMONT:

You'll need your confidence, I
promise you.

PATTERSON:

I've got a reason far beyond

confidence:

firstborn in five months and I
promised I'd be with her when the
baby comes.

BEAUMONT:

Very moving, Patterson; I'm touched
you confided in me.

(beat)

But I don't really give a shit about
your upcoming litter. I've made you
with this assignment-

(the smile)

-don't make me break you.

PATTERSON:

(smiling right back)

You won't have the chance.

(glancing at his watch)

Any further words of encouragement?

(silence)

Then I've a train to catch.

They look at each other a moment in silence - and it's very clear
they do not like each other. Patterson turns, leaves and we

CUT TO:

A RAILWAY STATION, IMMEDIATELY AFTER

A train is loading up. A lot of activity, a lot of noise.

Patterson stands in the midst of it, anxiously looking around.

CUT TO:

HELENA PATTERSON, hurrying through the crowd. Early 20s, with the
kind of serene beauty of Jean Simmons. She is still slim, has not
begun to show. She spots him, puts a smile on, goes straight into
his arms.

HELENA:

I tried to be late, John- it would
have been easier if you'd gone.

PATTERSON:

(They are nutty about
each other - he nods)

We're not much good at goodbyes,
Helena.

HELENA:

(brightly)

Tell me about Beaumont- does he

understand how brilliant you are,
how lucky he is to have you?

PATTERSON:

It was embarrassing- the man showered
me with compliments.
They start to walk hand in hand along the platform toward a
quieter place. Patterson is suddenly very serious-

HELENA:

Oh dear-
(beat)
-you're getting that downtrodden look
again-

PATTERSON:

-well, it's just...
(beat)
...other men don't abandon their wives
at such a time-

HELENA:

(not unkindly)
-oh please- if I'd been against your
taking this, you would have abandoned
me. You've been desperate to see Africa
your whole life.

PATTERSON:

What if there are complications?-

HELENA:

-not "what if"- there will be, there
always are. Which only means that our
"son" and I- note my confidence- will
have an excuse to come visit.
THE TRAIN WHISTLE sounds.

HELENA:

Go, now.
(He kisses her hand)
Such a gentleman.
(Now he holds her)

PATTERSON:

I am desperate to see Africa- but I hate the leaving.

CUT TO:

HELENA. She hates it, too.

HELENA:

You build bridges, John-

(beat)

-you've got to go where the rivers are.

They hold each other a moment more, then break, then back into each other's arms a final time, then-

CUT TO:

THE TRAIN, and thick clouds of steam-

-Patterson runs into the clouds and disappears.

HOLD FOR A MOMENT.

KEEP HOLDING.

Patterson runs out of the steam and we

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

A DIFFERENT TRAIN, A DIFFERENT COUNTRY, A DIFFERENT WORLD.

This is the train to TSAVO and Patterson is alone on the engine seat- a wooden bench in front of the engine used by railroad inspectors and visiting VIPs. Behind it is a white circular piece of wood used to keep the engine heat from the passengers.

CUT TO:

NIGEL STARLING, running as best as he can alongside the train, trying to pull himself up onto the engine seat.

STARLING is a terribly appealing young man. Clothes do not fit him well, and he is constantly tugging at this sleeve or that shirttail, trying to get things right. He wears glasses, tends nonetheless to squint at the world. He is, above all, a good man, morally impeccable and very much a product of these Victorian times.

STARLING:

(as Patterson helps him aboard)

Many thanks.

(squints)

You're Patterson, yes?

(Patterson nods)

Nigel Starling- I'll be assisting you at Tsavo- but surely Beaumont must have told you that.

PATTERSON:

He just gave me his "monster" speech.

STARLING:

That. I know Robert seems dreadful, but when you truly get to know the man, well, he's much worse.

(beat)

And I'm one of his defenders.

(Patterson smiles)

Forget him for now- it's your first ride to Tsavo- I think you'll find it breathtaking.

(And on that word-)

CUT TO:

STARLING coughing like crazy, hands over his face which is caked with dust- he and Patterson stare out at an absolutely dreary desert.

PATTERSON:

(shouting toward Starling)

"Breathtaking" doesn't begin to do it justice.

(As Starling starts to laugh, his mouth opens and sand flies in, and his coughing fit returns and)

CUT TO:

THE DESERT. ENDLESS. LATER IN THE DAY.

CUT TO:

THE TWO OF THEM, bent over, arms covering their faces as the dust gets worse- a wind has kicked up.

CUT TO:

THE TRAIN, TRYING TO MAKE IT UP A STEEP GRADE. STILL LATER. Patterson and Starling are walking beside the train now, helping

to push it, trudging through the dust. All the other passengers spread out behind them, also pushing- the train obviously needs all the assistance it can get.

CUT TO:

INSIDE A RAILROAD CAR, EARLY EVENING.

Patterson and Starling, filthy, sit together. Starling has nodded off. Patterson has a book open in his lap-
-we can tell there are drawings of African animals- not all that accurate.

Now Patterson's eyes close and he sleeps.

CUT TO:

THE TRAIN POUNDING THROUGH THE NIGHT.

Stokers shovel coal. They are exhausted but they keep at it.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. WAKING IN THE CAR, RUBBING HIS EYES. IT'S DAWN.

He stares out-

-and from his face it's clear something special has happened. And now, at last-

CUT TO:

SOMETHING SPECIAL- and what it is, of course, is Patterson's first view of the Africa of his imagination.

Because the desert has ended, and now there are grasses and trees and one more thing-

-bursts of animals. On both sides of the train.

A flock of birds materializes here, a cluster of gazelles doing there amazing leap there.

Patterson is like a kid in a candy store.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND STARLING, back outside in the engine seat again.

Starling points-

STARLING:

Aren't they amazing?

CUT TO:

WHAT HE'S POINTING AT: Some giraffes running along, their absurd shape suddenly graceful as they eat up the ground in incredibly long strides.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND STARLING, staring out.

PATTERSON:

You know the most amazing thing about them?- they only sleep five minutes a day.

(Starling glances at him- clearly, he didn't know that)

CUT TO:

A FAMILY OF HYENAS. Close by, loping in their scary way.

STARLING:

Don't much like them.

PATTERSON:

(nods)

The females are bigger- only animal here like that- have to be or they wouldn't survive because the males eat the young.

CUT TO:

STARLING studying Patterson. Clearly, he didn't know that, either.

CUT TO:

SOME HIPPOS moving along. Starling turns to Patterson.

STARLING:

Anything special about them?

PATTERSON:

Just that they fart through their mouths.

(beat)

Must make kissing something of a gamble.

STARLING:

(laughs)

I've lived in Africa a year and I don't know what you know. How long have you been here?

PATTERSON:

(looks at his watch)

Almost three hours.

(beat)

But I've been getting ready all my life.

(Now, from them-)

CUT TO:

A BUNCH OF IMPOVERISHED-LOOKING NATIVE WOMEN. They hold children who wave at the passing train. The children are more impoverished looking than their mothers.

STARLING:

(suddenly touched)

Every time I see something like that, I know we're right to be here- to bring Christianity into their lives, enrich their souls.

PATTERSON:

Beaumont says it's to end slavery.

STARLING:

(shrugs)

We all have our reasons. Mine is simply to make them understand happiness, accept salvation, know the serenity that comes-
(interrupts himself)
-best I stop. One of the by-products of my belief is that I can become amazingly boring. But I know God smiles on me.

PATTERSON:

(They really like each other)

Have you got that in writing?

(Starling, amazingly good natured, laughs. And now-)

CUT TO:

A WHITE CLAW.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

Hundreds of white claws.

KEEP PULLING BACK TO REVEAL

They aren't claws at all, they're thorns as sharp as claws and they're on a twenty-foot high thorn tree.

And there are dozens of those trees, packed together. All mixed in with other trees, low and stunted, and thick underbrush and baked red rocks-

-now the train begins to slow.

Smoke drifts across.

A bunch of wildebeest scatter off the tracks.

STARLING (over)

Welcome to Tsavo.

(on the word)

CUT TO:

TSAVO.

We have arrived at the train station area and what we see is a place that is still being built. There are tin shacks; a water tower is under construction-

-men are working everywhere, for that's what Tsavo is: a place for work.

THE TRAIN goes slower still.

No one stands idly around here.

But no one looks happy either.

ONE MAN is apart from the rest: this is SAMUEL.

An ageless Masai, tall and slender, he has a smile that can light the world.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND STARLING as they step off the train.

STARLING:

(indicating Samuel,
who is approaching)

Samuel is camp liaison- absolutely indispensable- the only man here everyone trusts.

PATTERSON:

(softly)

Does he speak English?

SAMUEL:

(not softly enough)
And very poor French.

STARLING:

(introducing)
Samuel- John Patterson.

SAMUEL:

(as they shake)
The bridgebuilder-
(gesturing to the
working men)
-we have been getting ready for
you.

PATTERSON:

Excellent. Could I see the bridge
site?
(Samuel nods)

STARLING:

I've got medical supplies to
deliver. Come along to the hospital
when you're done.
(starting off)

SAMUEL:

I will bring him, Nigel.
We should realize by now that Samuel's was the voice we heard at
the very beginning of the picture.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND SAMUEL, starting to walk. They pass the water tower.
Standing on top of it in a precarious position is an extremely
powerful INDIAN. He waves to Samuel who waves back. This is SINGH.
WORKERS study Patterson as he moves by. Not smiling. Up ahead,
some SIKHS are erecting tents. Not smiling.

PATTERSON:

Why do the workers look unhappy?

SAMUEL:

Because they are here.
(beat)

Because Tsavo is the worst place in the world.

(He points ahead)

Come, John- to the bridge.

(And on that-)

CUT TO:

THE RAILROAD TRACKS as the camera pans along.

CUT TO:

THE RIVER in the distance as they walk toward it.

And here is as good a place as any to explain just what the spot where the movie takes place was like.

There were five hundred men working for Patterson. And they lived in a spread out area. A bunch of Indian coolies who might have come from the same town back in their country might choose to live in one cluster of tents. A group of natives might be in another cluster.

What we have then, as far as living places are concerned, are dozens of clusters of tents. (Eventually, as the terror began, these areas all got surrounded, each with its own thorn fence.) The places we'll come to know best are, among others, Patterson's living area, the hospital tent area, the area by the river where the bridge is to be built, etc., etc.

As they move, Samuel points out various camps.

A SECT OF INDIANS is getting ready for prayer.

ANOTHER SECT OF INDIANS is eating.

A GROUP OF AFRICANS are cleaning their tent area.

Anyway, you get the idea. Just remember that the place covered a wide expanse, maybe a mile square, maybe more.

Okay, back to the story.

PATTERSON:

(as they pass the INDIAN tent area where prayer is starting)

It's all wonderfully under control, Samuel- you've done a splendid job.

SAMUEL:

Thank you. The truth is this: you have to work at it constantly.

PATTERSON:

The workers don't get on?

SAMUEL:

Get on? They detest each other. Obviously the Africans hate the Indians. But the Indians also hate the other Indians. Some of them worship cows, while others eat them. (As they move on)

CUT TO:

RAILROAD TRACK.

PAN ALONG TO:

MORE RAILROAD TRACK.

KEEP PANNING:

And suddenly the track just stops in mid-air as we PULL BACK TO REVEAL PATTERSON AND SAMUEL standing high above the Tsavo River. The track has come to the edge of the area above the riverbank- where it just stops- -and picks up on the far side. All that's missing, in other words, is the hundred-yard-long bridge that will connect the pieces of track.

SAMUEL:

(to the far side)
Railhead is across there.

CUT TO:

THE DISTANCE. Nothing can be made out clearly but there are great clouds of dust.

SAMUEL:

Three thousand men laying track- when the bridge is done, it all joins up. Patterson nods, says nothing, but goes to his haunches, staring at the space where the bridge is to be.

SAMUEL:

Did it look like this in your mind?

PATTERSON:

(shakes his head)

This is more difficult-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. CLOSE UP. Excited.

PATTERSON:

(eyes bright)

-but how wonderful that it's difficult, it should be difficult- what better job in all the world than build a bridge?- make things connect- bring worlds together- and get it right!

(Now from Patterson-)

CUT TO:

THE HOSPITAL TENT

as Patterson and Samuel walk in. Patterson glances around- -it's not bad at all. Of course there are some patients, injured or with fever. But like the rest of the camp we've just seen, everything is working well, everything is under control. Starling approaches.

STARLING:

Finish your tour?

PATTERSON:

(nods)

And anxious to get started.

(indicating the hospital)

What is this, mostly malaria?

STARLING:

Yes- but their suffering is only transitory- once they except God into their hearts, He will vanquish all pain.

MAN'S VOICE (over)

That's just vomitous talk, Nigel- the poor bastards will relapse if you keep on that way.

(As they turn-)

CUT TO:

DOCTOR DAVID HAWTHORNE. A tough, middle-aged cockney. And a heavy drinker. A man who hasn't been tactful in twenty years.

HAWTHORNE:

(to Patterson)

I'm David Hawthorne, this is my hospital. And my advice to you is, "don't get sick in front of it."

(beat)

That was meant to be charming, sorry. I seem to have lost the knack.

STARLING:

You never had it.

HAWTHORNE:

Nigel and I don't like each other much.

SAMUEL:

(breaking the tension)

I am also liaison between these two.

PATTERSON:

(to Hawthorne)

Clearly you don't agree about building the railroad?

HAWTHORNE:

This sham? Ridiculous. Who needs it? It's only being built to control the ivory trade, make men richer.

PATTERSON:

Then why do you stay?

HAWTHORNE:

Who else would hire me?

(to Starling)

Beat you to it, didn't I?

(beat)

Oh yes, almost forgot- brought you a little welcoming gift.

(Now he gestures and we-)

CUT TO:

A NERVOUS ORDERLY who approaches them. He has been freshly bandaged across one shoulder.

HAWTHORNE:

This is Karim, one of my orderlies-
attacked by a man-eater earlier
today- first incident of that kind
here.

Patterson says not a word, just studies the wounded man.

STARLING:

(incredulous)

A man-eater attacks and you're such
a buffoon you almost forget to mention
it?

HAWTHORNE:

Well, he got away, didn't he?

(to Patterson)

Riding a donkey not far from here
when the lion sprang on them- donkey
took the brunt of it- then suddenly
the lion ran off.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. Listening. No emotion on his face.

CUT TO:

HAWTHORNE. He's kind of enjoying this. Bearing down.

HAWTHORNE:

I know it's your first day and of
course you must be tired from the
journey-

(beat)

-but what are you going to do about
it?

PATTERSON:

(a long pause, then evenly-)

Karim will have to show me where it
happened. And of course, I'll need

the donkey.

(beat)

With any luck, I'll sort it out tonight.

(And he walks out, leaving
an astonished Starling
staring after him)

CUT TO:

PATTERSON'S TENT AREA

Starling has a tent there, too, as do Samuel and Hawthorne. And there are half a dozen ORDERLIES.

Right now, Patterson is unpacking, moving in and out of his tent. Starling, sipping tea, sits and watches.

STARLING:

I couldn't believe it when you said "sort it out." As if it were the most normal thing in the world. "Ho-hum, what lovely tea, I think I'll bag a killer beast this evening, nothing much else going on anyway."

PATTERSON:

Well, he put me in a spot, didn't he? But that's all right- after all, I'm responsible for everything that happens here. And it certainly won't do much for morale if a man-eater's on the prowl. He goes into his tent with some books now and we go with him. There is a photo of Helena on a small table. A photo of an ELDERLY COUPLE, clearly his parents. His clothes are stacked with precision. He arranges his books precisely too. Clearly, John Patterson is a man who believes in order.

STARLING:

(calling out)

You said "of course" you'd need the donkey. Why "of course"?

PATTERSON:

(taking a rifle,
moving outside)

We know three things about man-eaters. First, they always return to where

they've attacked before. Second, they're always old- they can't catch other animals so they turn to us. And third, they're always alone- they've been cast out by their pride because they can't keep up.

CUT TO:

STARLING, sipping his tea and there's no hiding it, he's excited. But also a bit reluctant.

STARLING:

I don't suppose I could watch.

PATTERSON:

(delighted)

Might be exciting for you.

STARLING:

I've never been all that adventurous. I wouldn't be in the way?

PATTERSON:

I'd love the company. And I've hunted all my life.

STARLING:

(gathering courage)

Well, why not? You seem so calm and experienced.

(standing, teacup in hand)

Why not, indeed!

(Now from that-)

CUT TO:

A SLIGHTLY WOUNDED DONKEY

It's roped loosely to a tree, bells around its neck. When it moves, they make a sound. Middle of the night. A night wind.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

We're in a clearing with thick trees all around.

KEEP PULLING BACK TO REVEAL

PATTERSON AND STARLING, seated uncomfortably in a tree on the edge of the clearing, twelve feet up in the air. Patterson has his rifle ready. This next is all whispered.

STARLING:

(embarrassed)

I hate to be a bother, John, but the cramp's getting worse.

(Pulls up his trousers-
his leg is knotted)

The pain is actually quite unbearable now.

PATTERSON:

Shhh.

STARLING:

I'm sure you mean that to be comforting, but-

PATTERSON:

(interrupting)

-you'll have to deal with it, Nigel.

STARLING:

That is precisely my plan- but back in my tent.

(And he begins to climb down)

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, grabbing him.

PATTERSON:

They own the night- nobody moves when there's a man-eater out there.

Starling glumly obeys. Then-

STARLING:

John? I know this isn't the time to ask, but-

PATTERSON:

What?

STARLING:

Since you'd only been here three hours when we met, are you sure this is how

you hunt lions?

PATTERSON:

Not to terrify you, Nigel, but it's worse than you think- I've never even seen one.

CUT TO:

STARLING, not pleased with this news. He massages his calf, tries to get comfortable, which is impossible. Patterson just stares at the night.

CUT TO:

JUST BEFORE DAWN

The donkey dozes. So does Starling. Patterson has not so much as moved.

Now the bushes behind the donkey shake just a little.

And the donkey is suddenly awake and scared-

-and then it all goes crazy- the donkey screams and a lion appears from the bushes and Patterson fires one shot and the sound

EXPLODES-

-and Starling topples from the tree to the ground, landing shocked but unhurt-

-he has landed close to the dead lion- he stares at it.

STARLING:

(amazed)

...one shot...

PATTERSON:

(even more amazed)

So that's what a lion looks like.

(Now from the tree-)

CUT TO:

THE HOSPITAL TENT AREA - JUST AFTER DAWN

HOLD for a moment.

SAMUEL (over)

One shot- one-

KEEP HOLDING:

Now Samuel comes walking into the shot, really excited-

-it's the first time we've seen his wonderful smile.

SAMUEL:

Patterson has made the nights safe again.

KEEP HOLDING FOR JUST A MOMENT MORE.

As he walks on, behind him come THREE COOLIES carrying the body of the lion. As dozens of men come running in from all over to see the dead man-eater-

SAMUEL:

(mimes shooting)

BOOM!

(Now as the crowd continues to grow-)

CUT TO:

A ROUGH ENGINEER'S DRAWING OF WHAT WILL BE THE BRIDGE

It has two embankments on either side of the river.

These embankments are big- forty feet wide, fifty feet high.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND STARLING standing on the high ground where the embankment will start. From here, there is a slope down to the river itself.

Also present is UNGAN SIGNH, who we saw earlier standing precariously atop the water tower. Singh, enormously powerful, is another assistant. Bright, a great worker, another main character in what is to follow.

Now Patterson starts to walk down the slope towards the river- it's not that easy to do without falling, but that doesn't bother him. He talks and gestures as he explains to the other two who move down with him.

Singh, for all his massive size, moves like a cat. Starling does not, slipping and sliding.

PATTERSON:

(gesturing)

All right, I'd like to start the embankments today-

(to Singh)

-sufficient supplies on hand?

SINGH:

(nods)

More than.

STARLING:

With much more on the way-
(loses balance, falls)
-John- we could have had this chat on
flatter ground-

PATTERSON:

-true enough- but without the comedy
relief.
(Starling, amazingly good
natured, smiles, gets
back up)

CUT TO:

THE RIVER as they scramble down to it.

CUT TO:

THE SLOPE they've come down- it's a long way back to the top.

CUT TO:

THE THREE MEN. It's a glorious morning.

PATTERSON:

How lucky we are.

STARLING:

Aren't we full of ourselves today?
(beat)
I think it's because of the lion.

PATTERSON:

Possibly.

SINGH:

(soft)
You know, I too have killed a lion.

STARLING:

How many shots did you need?

CUT TO:

SINGH. Almost embarrassed.

SINGH:

I used my hands.

He holds his big hands up, palms out. Starling looks at Singh to see if he means it-

-he means it all right. Now, from Starling's perpetually surprised face-

CUT TO:

SURVEYING EQUIPMENT

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

PATTERSON sighting through it- we are on the far side of the river now. Singh is there, Starling, too.

Behind them:

PATTERSON:

All right- thee second embankment will go there.

(He gestures toward the river)

STARLING:

You do plan to mark it a bit more precisely than just-

(imitating Patterson)

-"there."

PATTERSON:

(smiling)

In your honor, Nigel. And you and Singh will be in charge of building them- and you'll also build the roadbeds and the three foundation pillars- and you'll be finished in eight thrilling weeks.

STARLING:

(very dubious)

John, it will not be easy.

PATTERSON:

Nigel, you'll just have to use your hands-

(And he smiles, repeating Singh's gesture, both

palms out)

CUT TO:

SINGH. He smiles back, starts to reply. But his words stop, his smile dies. He just stares and we-

CUT TO:

WHAT HE'S STARING AT- the surrounding field of tall grass. Nothing unusual about it.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. He stares, too.

CUT TO:

THE FIELD OF TALL GRASS- suddenly it begins to bend and sway in a fresh wind.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. Silent. As before. Starling follows his glance.

CUT TO:

SINGH. Frozen.

CUT TO:

THE FIELD. And now the field is making odd patterns- as if something unseen were moving through.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. Quiet. Just the wind.

CUT TO:

THE FIELD. Nothing visible. But the odd pattern seems to be making its way across the field.

CUT TO:

SINGH AND STARLING. Quiet. Just the wind.

CUT TO:

THE FIELD. The odd pattern seems to stop. Around it, the wind makes different shapes of the grass.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, as the wind continues to blow. He continues to stare at the spot where the pattern stopped.

CUT TO:

SINGH. As before. Except for one thing: suddenly, he begins to shiver, as if from cold.

CUT TO:

THE BUILDING SEQUENCE

And what we see are a lot of cuts of a lot of activity. Huge wooden logs are carried in and hammered to each other and driven deep into the ground- the framework for the embankments. And Singh carries the heaviest loads and leads the workers- and as the structure rises, he is the one darting along the top, high in the air, pulling more logs up, helping here, helping there. And alongside him is his assistant, ABDULLAH, a little man with glasses and very bright eyes. Meanwhile, Starling is leading construction on the embankment that is on the far side of the river. And he does his best, tries to help on the top part as it rises- but alas, he is a bit on the clumsy side and balance is a problem for him. But he stays with it, does well. And Patterson, in tremendous spirits, helps when needed, but mostly he is dealing with other aspects of the bridge- such as the placements of the three stone foundation pillars- -he wades into the water, climbs the structures, takes it all in- and at the start he is still in the uniform he has worn since the start of the story- but it's clumsy for labor- -so he changes halfway through to civilian clothes- -which is all he wears from now on. And the workers tire in the heat- but Singh keeps them going, working with the power of three- -and there are accidents and explosions, injuries and falls- and Hawthorne appears when needed to help with the wounded- -it's hard, brutal work- -but gradually, the wooden structure part is finished- two huge skeletons facing each other across the Tsavo River- and now work on the roadbed is going full blast and in the river, the three foundation pillars are taking shape-

CUT TO:

TONS OF RED ROCK- being shoved into the wooden skeleton to complete the embankments. As this goes on-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND SAMUEL in the river- the foundation pillar work is

going very quickly.

Patterson stops working, looks across the river-
-movement in the grassy area on the far side.

CUT TO:

SEVERAL NANDI TRIBESMEN as they rise out of the grass, gesture to Samuel who gestures back. The Nandi are a tribe of powerful little men, primitive, with teeth that have been sharpened to points.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND SAMUEL watching them.

PATTERSON:

What are they looking at?

SAMUEL:

You- they cannot believe you're still here.

PATTERSON:

Nonsense.

SAMUEL:

You don't know what Tsavo means, do you?

(Patterson doesn't)

It means "slaughter"...

CUT TO:

THE NANDI TRIBESMEN, staring at Patterson, shaking their heads.

CUT TO:

THE TWO EMBANKMENTS, as more and more red rock is shoved and pushed into shape.

CUT TO:

THE THREE FOUNDATION PILLARS- almost finished.

CUT TO:

THE ROADBED. The same.

CUT TO:

THE NEAR EMBANKMENT as still more rock is forced in and

CUT TO:

THE FAR EMBANKMENT done at last-

CUT TO:

-and Singh stands on the top of the near one while across the river, Patterson pulls Starling to the top of the other. And they all look at each other- the embankments are both finished- THE THREE OF THEM are flying-
-and what they do is this: hold their hands out toward each other, in Singh's gesture. It's kind of become their password.
HOLD. A big moment for them all!

CUT TO:

SINGH'S TENT AREA

He sits around a fire and the man is exhausted. His dinner plate is beside him, untouched. He's too tired to eat.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON'S TENT AREA

Starling is there, getting ready for bed. He's wiped out, too.

CUT TO:

SINGH, going into his tent, lying down, breathing deep.

CUT TO:

STARLING is in his tent, turning out his lamp, half asleep already.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON in his tent, closing his eyes.

CUT TO:

SINGH, deep asleep in his tent-
-he shares it with a dozen others and they're all deep asleep. They lie on the floor of the tent, heads together toward the center pole, feet toward the edges of the tent.
HOLD ON SINGH. It's very dark. HE AND HIS MEN just lie motionless, breathing deeply.
KEEP HOLDING.
Now the CAMERA moves up, high into the center of the tent, looking down at the circle of men.
KEEP HOLDING.
They don't move, not even an inch. The steady breathing is the only sound.

YES, KEEP HOLDING.

KEEP HOLDING.

Nothing is going on down there. Nothing at all.

KEEP HOLDING.

Not a goddamn thing.

KEEP ON HOLDING. KEEP ON HOLDING.

And now two things happen at the same time- Singh's eyes go wide-
-and he starts to slide out of the tent, as if being pulled by
some giant invisible wire-

CUT TO:

SINGH. CLOSE UP. Screaming.

CUT TO:

THE OTHER MEN IN THE TENT, waking, staring around and

CUT TO:

SINGH as he slides out of the tent into the night and his screams
grow even louder as we

CUT TO:

THE OTHER MEN IN THE TENT and it's like a bomb just went off, they
rise, spin, cry out, stare-

CUT TO:

THE NIGHT OUTSIDE AND SINGH'S BODY sliding along the ground. It's
pitch black, and he's going head first now, face upwards and he's
going at tremendous speed and whatever the hell it is that's
making this happen is something we can't make out- because it's so
dark and because it's on the far side of the man, and his body is
in our way and

CUT TO:

UP AHEAD, some bushes and

CUT TO:

SINGH, his body going faster than before and his cries are
weakening-

-CUT TO

THE NIGHT and his body and there is no sound at all coming from
him now and there is no sound from whatever it is that is making
this happen- all we see, barely, is the limp body of the big man
as it skims along and-

CUT TO:

UP AHEAD NOW, a low clump of bushes.

CUT TO:

SINGH'S BODY, coming closer and

CUT TO:

THE BUSHES and as we get in on them we can tell they are thorn bushes and now-

CUT TO:

SINGH, suddenly rising magically in the night, his body flying over the bushes and gone!

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND STARLING, early morning, their rifles held in front of them, racing along, suddenly stopping, staring down and

CUT TO:

THE GROUND. At first we can't make out much. Then we can- a spot of red.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND STARLING, hurrying on again.

CUT TO:

THORN TREES, and as they force their way through them-

CUT TO:

A LARGE VULTURE, wings spread wide as it floats slowly to earth-
-HOLD-
-as it lands we can see A DOZEN OTHER VULTURES are already there, surrounding something-
-but we can't make it out. We are in an area of grass and shadow-
-and specks of blood.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, cries out in shock and fury, fires his rifle, races forward.

CUT TO:

THE VULTURES screeching and screaming, taking off, and as we watch them soar into the morning sky-
HAWTHORNE'S VOICE (over)

What the lion must have done, once
he'd killed Singh, was lick his skin
off so he could drink his blood-

CUT TO:

THE HOSPITAL:

Hawthorne is examining Singh's body, trying to be professional,
but he's clearly upset- it's awful.

HAWTHORNE:

-then he feasted on him, starting
with his feet-

STARLING:

(evenb more upset)
-please- you needn't be so graphic-

HAWTHORNE:

You intend "sorting this out" tonight?

PATTERSON:

I'll try- but this feels so different-
that old lion I killed could never
carry off a man Singh's size.

STARLING:

(maybe a little alarmed)
But you said they were always old.

PATTERSON:

That's what the books say...
(Now from that-)

CUT TO:

FLAMES RISING IN THE DARKENING SKY. NOW-

CUT TO:

ABDULLAH in tears. Where are we?
PULL BACK TO REVEAL
This is Singh's funeral pyre.
Singh's body is being burned.
A LOT OF INDIANS are there. We've caught sight of some of them
before- they worked with Singh on the embankment or lived with him

in his tent.

There is a terrible sense of shock.

Patterson stands at the rear. He is terribly moved. Now, unseen by the others, he holds his hands out in Singh's gesture one final time.

CUT TO:

THE FLAMES; they continue to rise...

CUT TO:

SINGH'S TENT

Night. The flaps that were open when Singh was alive are now shut and tied.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, the middle of the night. He is alone, fifteen feet up in a tree near Singh's tent. He holds his rifle, ready for anything. He cannot get comfortable.

CUT TO:

THE AREA- nothing, no movement.

CUT TO:

SINGH'S TENT. As before.

CUT TO:

THE AREA. No sign of movement of any kind. Dead.

CUT TO:

THE MOON. Lower in the sky. The night is growing to a lose but there is still darkness.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. Battling fatigue- but now, for a moment, losing- his eyes, against his will, start to close, and as they do-

CUT TO:

TWO HUGE YELLOW EYES. That's all we see, just the eyes and they are near Patterson's tree and they are staring up at him and-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, startled, grabbing his rifle more tightly, staring down and-

CUT TO:

THE HUGE YELLOW EYES- only they're gone.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, blowing on his hands, looking toward the sky.

CUT TO:

THE SUN, RISING, THE NIGHT DONE.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, wrinkled and weary, frustrated and sore, walking back toward his tent area. Now he stops.

CUT TO:

ABDULLAH and a large group of workers- only they're not working. They smoke, play cards, sit around.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, steaming, going up to Abdullah.

PATTERSON:

You were contracted to work-

ABDULLAH:

(gesturing around)

-malaria epidemic; very sudden.

PATTERSON:

Let me see the sick.

ABDULLAH:

(not backing off)

Oh, you're a doctor now, too?

PATTERSON:

There is no reason for fear.

ABDULLAH:

On that I choose to remain dubious.

(beat)

Two are dead now in two nights.

(And on that news-)

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. Rocked. He didn't know. Behind him now, Starling hurries up, Samuel alongside.

PATTERSON:

(to Starling)

Second death? Where?-

STARLING:

(gesturing)

-far end of camp- man wandering alone at night. Hawthorne's examining the body now.

(beat)

There's even less of him than of Singh.

PATTERSON:

(just shakes his head)

But it's crazy- the lion shouldn't be that hungry this soon.

(getting control- he

looks to Samuel)

Samuel?

SAMUEL:

We should construct thorn fences around every tent area. Fires burning at night.

PATTERSON:

Fine. Get started. And a strict curfew- no one allowed out at night.

(to Abdullah)

Send half your men to the bridge, the rest with these two.

(Abdullah nods)

And I'm sorry for my tone earlier. But I repeat- there is no reason for fear. I will kill the lion and I will build the bridge.

ABDULLAH:

Of course you will, you are white, you can do anything...

(They look at each

other. They are not
friends. Now-)

CUT TO:

THE THORN BUSHES WE SAW ON OUR ARRIVAL TO TSAVO
ENDLESS NUMBERS OF THEM. There is a machete-like sound as we

CUT TO:

A BUNCH OF WORKMEN, led by Samuel, chopping down branches. They do
it with care- these are claws-

CUT TO:

-STARLING, in charge of another area, and he's not hanging back,
he's taking less care than the others, hacking away with his
machete, moving in between bushes and

CUT TO:

ONE OF THE BUSHES, SNAPPING BACK into Starling, and Starling
taking the blow with his arms- the claws cut his clothing-
-his arms are starting to bleed-
-he is unmindful, continues to wade into the bushes, chopping at
them, cutting them down. He is a good man doing a good thing and
right now, he is possessed.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, leaving his tent area, lost in thought, going toward
the bridge. Up ahead is a grassy area.

CUT TO:

THE GRASSY AREA:

For a moment, nothing. Then there is the same kind of movement we
saw with Singh. Something is making the grass move-
-only now there is no wind... HOLD.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. Did he see it? We'll never know.

CUT TO:

STARLING, in charge of a thorn fence that is halfway finished. His
clothes are shredded. A WORKER has finished with a section and
satisfied, moves on-
-but Starling is far from finished. He grabs the thorns with his
bare hands and squeezes them together.

STARLING:

Not good enough- look, it's got to be tighter. Tighter.

CUT TO:

THE AREA IN WHICH HE'S BEEN WORKING. FENCES ARE WELL ALONG TOWARD COMPLETION. IT'S LATE AFTERNOON.

PULL UP:

We see more fences around more camp areas.

KEEP PULLING UP:

The entire place is filled with fences now, all the individual areas protected.

The skies are starting to darken- dusk is coming fast.

Fires start up. Dozens of them.

Still darker.

Now workers come racing home to their camps, anxious for safety before darkness takes over. They zig-zag this way, that way, dodging past each other sometimes they slam into each other, fall, get up, run on-

CUT TO:

THE SUN. Falling out of the sky.

CUT TO:

THE CAMP. The fires rise higher. No one moves... HOLD.

CUT TO:

STARLING in the main tent area. He is bathing his bloody hands. Samuel is with him. Both are exhausted.

Patterson brings them each drinks. They nod thanks, drain them. They stand there together, lit by the flames of their fire. You get the sense these three will be friends forever.

STARLING:

What a good week.

PATTERSON:

You mean nobody died?

STARLING:

(shakes his head)

We all worked together. Worthy deeds were accomplished. I liked the labor.

(beat)

My mother insisted on piano lessons- broke the dear woman's heart when I turned out to be tone deaf- but she still was always at me about being careful with my hands.

(looks at them)

I like the blood, is that strange?

SAMUEL:

Oh yes, I think so.

(Starling smiles, starts to speak)

PATTERSON:

Look out, Samuel, here it comes.

STARLING:

Even you two must admit that it is a glorious thing, what Man can accomplish. When there is a common splendid goal, there are no limits. Think what we will accomplish when we all have God's warmth in our hearts.

(Samuel's eyes have closed; he begins to snore.

Patterson can't help laughing)

CUT TO:

STARLING. As good natured as ever.

STARLING:

I am immune to your disdain.

(He looks at them now)

When I came here, I had but one small

goal:

of Africa.

(shakes his head)

Now I've decided to move on to something really difficult: I will not

rest until both of you are safely in the fold.

SAMUEL:

I've had four wives, good luck.

STARLING:

The struggle is the glory...
(HOLD ON the three friends)

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, the next morning, working with Abdullah and some others at the bridge.

CUT TO:

STARLING completing work on the fence from the day before. It's high and taut and he's done a terrific job.

CUT TO:

TSAVO STATION:

A BUNCH OF OTHER MEN are working near a large grassy field. One of the men starts a chant. The others pick it up. It's really pretty.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON wading into the river- he stops as the sound of the chant comes distantly to him on the wind.

CUT TO:

THE WORKMEN CHANTING LOUDER. It's turning into a stunner of a day-glorious blue sky broken up by pale clouds.

CUT TO:

STARLING. Pauses briefly, listening to the sound of the men.

CUT TO:

THE MEN WORKING AND SINGING. As before.

CUT TO:

THE GRASSY FIELD. As before-
-except it isn't. Because if you looked carefully, something flicked in a 180 degree arc. No telling what it was, it was gone too quickly.

CUT TO:

THE MEN WORKING, SINGING ON.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON waist deep in the river, listening to the sound of the men, of the birds. The sun is higher in the sky.

CUT TO:

THE GRASSY FIELD-

-and here it comes again, only the other way this time, flicking back in another 180 degree arc-

-still hard to tell for sure what it was but maybe it was this: a tail. Now quickly-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON wading out of the river as Samuel comes into view. He holds an envelope.

SAMUEL:

For you.

PATTERSON:

(taking it)

Thank you, Samuel.

SAMUEL:

(watching as Patterson opens it)

Good news?

PATTERSON:

(glancing at the letter)

I expect so- it's from my wife.

SAMUEL:

Do you love her?

PATTERSON:

I do, actually; very much.

SAMUEL:

(his wonderful smile)

You give me hope, John.

(As he walks away-)

CUT TO:

STARLING, probing at the thorn fence, searching out any last weaknesses.

Behind him now, in the tall grass, something moves. Starling, intent on his work, notices nothing.

CUT TO:

THE SINGING MEN, getting more and more into it.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, by the river, reading the letter.

There is a large tree up the riverbank. It casts a large shadow.

In the shadow now, something moves.

Patterson, intent on his reading, notices nothing.

HELENA (over)

Darling one- the big excitement yesterday was when some school-children spotted a whale-

(pause)

-they were looking at me, John-

CUT TO:

HELENA, in their bedroom, moving across to the window, staring out. She now has a considerable stomach.

HELENA:

That was an attempt at humor but I don't feel very funny these days. I miss you terribly and after our son- I still have total confidence- well, after he's born I think travel might be broadening. As he kicks me at night I'm quite sure he's telling me he definitely wants to come to Africa.

(pause)

Thought you might need reminding.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON by the river. He smiles, folds the letter. Now-

CUT TO:

THE SINGING WORKMEN at Tsavo station- and they sense how good they sound, and they really concentrate on it, on making that sound

even better-

-there must be twenty of them, working and singing-

-and screaming!

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, turning his head sharply and

CUT TO:

STARLING, doing the same and

CUT TO:

THE SCREAMING WORKMEN and they're running now, running and shrieking and that's all we see, the workmen-

-some of them run left-

-some run right-

-and now a few of them are starting to cry.

CUT TO:

A FAT COOLIE running and running, glancing back, screaming louder, running on and on and

CUT TO:

-a shadow in the grass- no telling what- but it's big and it's moving and

CUT TO:

THE FAT COOLIE and this next goes so fast it could be a dream- or, more accurately, a nightmare-

SHOCK CUT TO:

A GIGANTIC WHITE MANED LION as it leaps onto the Fat Coolie, brings him to earth, bites his neck in two, kills him, just-like-that.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND SAMUEL, as they race away from the river and

CUT TO:

STARLING, running from the fenced area- he holds a rifle in his hands.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER PART OF THE CAMP AND A DIFFERENT BUNCH OF WORKMEN- they freeze as the screams reach them and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, on the way to his tent area and

CUT TO:

DIFFERENT WORKMEN listening in fear and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, racing to his tent, grabbing his rifle and cartridges and

CUT TO:

STARLING, running toward the screaming and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, as he charges ahead, loading his rifle on the fly and

CUT TO:

SAMUEL, carrying more ammunition, running behind Patterson, keeping up and

CUT TO:

TSAVO STATION and nothing is visible now- the men are gone and from this angle, it looks deserted and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, catching Starling, leading him into the TSAVO STATION area, Samuel just behind them.

CUT TO:

A RECTANGULAR SHED, ahead of them. They move to it, slow-
-then they stop-
-a sound is heard- from around the corner- the sound continues-
Patterson glances at Starling- the sound could be this: the
crunching of bones.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, checking his rifle.

CUT TO:

STARLING, doing the same. Samuel, holding the extra ammunition, moves close to Patterson. Now-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON as he suddenly steps away from the shed, rounding the corner and as he does-

CUT TO:

THE WHITE LION, with the Fat Coolie- the lion is crunching at his feet-

-then the lion stares toward the shed as we

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, moving out into clearer view, Starling and Samuel right with him. THE LION is a good distance away.

CUT TO:

THE WHITE LION, a low growl coming from him as he takes the coolie's body by the shoulder, begins backing away with it.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, dropping to his knees for the shot and

CUT TO:

STARLING, doing the same and

CUT TO:

THE WHITE LION, growling louder and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, taking aim and

CUT TO:

SAMUEL, crying out and pointing and suddenly we're into super slow motion-

-Samuel has pointed back toward the roof of the shed and-

-and this thing is suddenly there-

-this huge dark thing and it seems to suddenly appear from the flat roof of the shed and

CUT TO:

THE SUN, blocked out as this dark thing moves across it, fully stretched, it seems to go on forever and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, turning around to see and

CUT TO:

STARLING, turning too, and we're coming back into regular motion now as we

CUT TO:

This enormous BLACK-MANED LION diving into the three, sending them all sprawling and

CUT TO:

THE WHITE MANED LION roaring and

CUT TO:

THE BLACK MANED LION roaring, running to the other and

CUT TO:

THE TWO LIONS IN CLOSE UP.

THE GHOST AND THE DARKNESS, for that is how they will be referred to-

-and The Ghost has blood and bits of flesh on its mouth-

-The Darkness has eyes that are crazed-

-they are destruction bringers, these two, they can kill the old and the young and the fat and the strong-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, lying in pain, dazed, shoulder bleeding, trying to reach for his rifle and

CUT TO:

THE GHOST AND THE DARKNESS, the white and the black, as they move toward the field of tall grass, roaring and

CUT TO:

SAMUEL, lying in pain, his leg is bleeding and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON'S RIFLE and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, as he reaches it, manages to lift it and the roaring sounds are deafening now and

CUT TO:

THE TWO GIGANTIC MALES, backing into the tall grass-
-they roar one final time-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, gun ready to fire but it's futile and he knows it as we

CUT TO:

THE TALL GRASS and they're gone, the grass is full of moving patterns from the wind- that's all we see- just the grass blowing this way, that way-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, staggering to his feet, staring at the grassy field.

PATTERSON:

(dazed)

Jesus, two of them...

CUT TO:

SAMUEL. Dazed too. He points. Patterson registers, turns and

CUT TO:

STARLING, LYING DEAD, his throat ripped open. HOLD briefly on the young man, then-

CUT TO:

THE STATION AREA

A train from Mombassa is slowly pulling in. And things are fairly chaotic- there is the usual activity of what is ordinarily one of the busier parts in camp-

-but now, something new has been added: Abdullah is there with several dozen coolies who work under his command. They are waiting for the train.

Patterson and Samuel are there too- and at the moment, Abdullah and Patterson are in the middle of a screamer- first one of them walking away, then coming back, then the other doing the same.

PATTERSON:

(shouting over the noise of the approaching train)

-oh, sing a different song, Abdullah-

(gesturing toward the men who stand by the train tracks)

-there's nothing wrong with your men so stop telling me there is-

ABDULLAH:

(advancing on Patterson now)

-you do not call me a liar- you know nothing of their health- consider yourself fortunate I persuaded so many to stay- consider yourself fortunate I have decided to stay-

PATTERSON:

(losing it)

You think you matter?

(gesturing toward the train which is close to stopping now)

-Beaumont is on that train- he matters-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, moving in on Abdullah now-

PATTERSON:

He sees this chaos, he'll replace you all.

ABDULLAH:

He'll replace you, too- that's all you really care about.

PATTERSON:

You think so? Fine.

(finished arguing)

It's best you get out. Go. Tell all your people to go, run home where they'll be safe under the covers and when the bridge is built and the railroad is done, they can tell their women that out of all the thousands who worked here, they were the only ones to flee-

(And he wheels around, starts to walk away as we-)

CUT TO:

ABDULLAH. Quiet, staring after Patterson.

CUT TO:

SAMUEL. Patterson has won. As the two of them exchange a quick glance-

CUT TO:

BEAUMONT standing in the door of a passenger car, handsome as ever. Somehow his clothes are still pressed. Patterson moves up. In a splendid mood. Samuel is happy too.

PATTERSON:

Pleasant journey?

BEAUMONT:

(stepping off the train)

How could it be? I hate Africa.

Now there is the sudden sound of men singing- Patterson looks around and we

CUT TO:

ABDULLAH and his workmen, moving away from the train- they are singing the same song that the workmen sang just before The Ghost and The Darkness attacked- it's pretty- but it's also a little unnerving.

CUT TO:

BEAUMONT. Listening a moment.

BEAUMONT:

Lovely sound- they seem happy.

PATTERSON:

Don't they, though?

BEAUMONT:

So work must be going well?

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. He and Samuel share another glance.

PATTERSON:

(delicately)

Truthfully?

(beat)

There has been the occasional odd hiccup- but then, as you so wisely told me, I'd never built in Africa.

BEAUMONT:

But overall, you're pleased?

SAMUEL:

(moving in)

I have never experienced anything like it.

CUT TO:

BEAUMONT; almost longingly looks back at the train.

BEAUMONT:

I almost feel like getting right back on.

(glances at his watch)

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND SAMUEL. They do not breathe.

CUT TO:

BEAUMONT. He really wants to leave and for a moment it looks like he just might.

BEAUMONT:

(a sigh)

I suppose it would be a dereliction of duty not to at least look around. Now Abdullah wanders happily by.

PATTERSON:

(waving)

Morning, friend, glorious day.

ABDULLAH:

As are they all.

CUT TO:

BEAUMONT. He takes a step inside the passenger car.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND SAMUEL. Hoping.

CUT TO:

BEAUMONT. Reluctantly returning. He has a large box.

BEAUMONT:

I do need to see Starling.

PATTERSON:

(dully)

Starling?

BEAUMONT:

Awhile back he ordered some bibles-

(indicating the box)

-I've brought them.

(looking around)

Is he here?

PATTERSON:

(beat)

Yes he is.

BEAUMONT:

Well, I need to speak to him.

SAMUEL:

(helpfully)

Let me deliver the bibles.

CUT TO:

BEAUMONT. His eyes flick from one man to the other. It's over.

BEAUMONT:

Excellent show.

(voice low)

Where is Starling?

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. The jig is up. He gestures-

PATTERSON:

Here he comes now.

(And on that-)

CUT TO:

HALF A DOZEN NATIVES CARRYING STARLING'S COFFIN. They start to put it on the train and as they do-

CUT TO:

BEAUMONT. Stunned. And furious! He storms off the train and we-

CUT TO:

THE BRIDGE:

as Beaumont sees it. Patterson and Samuel are with him. Little more work has been done than the last time we saw it. A few men are working slowly. And now there are guards with rifles patrolling it.

CUT TO:

BEAUMONT. A deadly look at them. He storms off.

CUT TO:

THE HOSPITAL:

as Beaumont sees it- Patterson, Samuel, and Hawthorne stand quietly. It's much more crowded than the last time. Still under control, but barely. Beaumont is icy now. He gestures sharply toward Hawthorne to join them.

CUT TO:

OUTSIDE THE HOSPITAL
THE FOUR MEN speak low and fast-

BEAUMONT:

What in hell is going on?

SAMUEL:

The Ghost and The Darkness have come.

BEAUMONT:

(snapping)
In English.

PATTERSON:

It's what the natives are calling
the lions-
(beat)
-two lions have been causing trouble-

BEAUMONT:

-what's the surprise in that, this is
Africa?

PATTERSON:

It hasn't been that simple so far.

BEAUMONT:

What have they done besides kill
Starling?

(beat)

How many have they killed?

(Patterson nods for
Hawthorne to answer)

CUT TO:

HAWTHORNE. Doing his best.

HAWTHORNE:

Well, of course, I can't supply a
totally accurate answer because
there are those that are actually
authenticated and there are those
that we once thought were workers
killing each other or deserting
from camp so any number I give is
subject to error-

BEAUMONT:

(cutting through)

How many?

HAWTHORNE:

Thirty, I should think.

BEAUMONT:

(stunned)

Christ!

(whirling on Patterson)

What are you doing about it?

(Now from there-)

CUT TO:

SOMETHING VERY ODD:

We are looking at a small railroad car in a deserted area. This is not near the track but off by itself, in an area surrounded by thorn trees.

Several workers are erecting a cloth tent to cover it, trying to disguise the fact that the small railroad car is, indeed, nothing but a small railroad car.

It is difficult work and they are perspiring heavily.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

PATTERSON AND BEAUMONT looking at it.

BEAUMONT:

This is supposed to be salvation?

(staring at Patterson)

What kind of idiocy are we dealing with here?

PATTERSON:

(keeping control)

I'm calling it my "contraption"- we're going to surround it with a boma- a fence, to you- and we're going to leave a small opening opposite that door.

CUT TO:

THE RAILROAD CAR. There is, in fact, an open front door. Patterson gestures for Beaumont to follow him inside.

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE CAR AS THEY ENTER. It has been divided in half by thick metal bars from floor to ceiling. The bars are close together, only a few inches between them.

PATTERSON:

In that half will be bait- human

bait- I'll start things off-

(points to the open

doorway)

-a sliding door will fit above that

and a trip wire will run across
the floor.

BEAUMONT:

(The smile is back)
Genius- the beast will enter,
tripping the wire, the door will
slide down, trapping him, you, safe
behind the bars, will have him at
your mercy and will shoot him.
Patterson nods. Beaumont explodes.

BEAUMONT:

Are you running a high fever, man?
How could you expect something as
lunatic as this to succeed? How
could you even conceive of it?

PATTERSON:

I didn't conceive of it for the
lions- I built one in India when
there was trouble with a tiger.

BEAUMONT:

(incredulous)
And it worked?

PATTERSON:

(He hates to say this)
In point of fact, it didn't.
(hurrying on)
But I'm convinced the theory is
sound.

CUT TO:

THE TWO OF THEM. They move outside. The tension between them is
considerable. Beaumont looks at Patterson for too long a moment.

PATTERSON:

What?

BEAUMONT:

I made a mistake hiring you-
you're simply not up to the job.

(Silence. Then-)

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. CLOSE UP.

PATTERSON:

You genuinely enjoy trying to terrify people, don't you? Well, fine-

(lashing back)

-except there isn't a higher rated engineer and we both know that. And since time is so important to you, how long do you think it would take to find someone else qualified and bring him here?

CUT TO:

BEAUMONT. Blazing.

BEAUMONT:

Let me explain about time- you've been here three months and already two months behind. And the Germans and the French are gearing up. And I don't care about you and I don't care about the thirty dead- I care about my knighthood and if this railroad finishes on schedule, I'll get my knighthood and I want it.

(glancing around as

Samuel appears, goes to the workers)

Professional hunters may be the answer.

PATTERSON:

All they'll bring is more chaos and we've plenty of that already- and if they come in, word will get out- and what happens to your knighthood then?

BEAUMONT:

I'm going to try and locate Redbeard- I assume you've heard of him.

PATTERSON:

Every man who's ever fired a rifle has heard of him- by the time you find him, the lions will be dead.

BEAUMONT:

(long pause)

Very well, the job's still yours, I'll go. But if I have to return, you're finished. And I will then do everything I can to destroy your reputation. Am I not fair?

(The great smile flashes)

Told you you'd hate me.

(And he turns, walks off)

CUT TO:

SAMUEL. Moving up to Patterson. Samuel has a bag.

PATTERSON:

(staring after Beaumont)

I do hate him.

(takes the bag from

Samuel, pulls out flares)

I want you to distribute one bag of flares to every tent area-

(takes out a flare)

-tell the men to light them if there's trouble-

(beat)

-make it two bags.

(HOLD briefly, then-)

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. ALONE. THAT NIGHT. IN HIS CONTRAPTION.

A lamp burns alongside him. Across the bars, the door of the railroad car is open. Flickering shadows. Above the doorway is a thick wooden slab the size of the door. n the ground, barely visible, the trip wire.

CUT TO:

THE DOORWAY. Outside, something is moving.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, rifle ready, holding his breath.

CUT TO:

THE DOORWAY. Silence. Nothing moves now.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. He rubs his eyes with his hands...

CUT TO:

FLICKERING SHADOWS on the wall. It's later that night.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. The man is bleary with fatigue. He sits in a corner of the car, writing a letter.

PATTERSON'S VOICE (over)

"Dearest...

...peace and tranquility continue to abound here- the workers report each day with a smile- except for your absence, this whole adventunre is providing me nothing but pleasure..."

CUT TO:

THE FLICKERING WALLS OF THE RAILWAY CAR. It's later still. Patterson, finished writing, stares out at the night.

CUT TO:

A FLARE, rising brightly toward the sky.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, seeing the flare. The man is miserable.

CUT TO:

A TREE BRANCH. MANY FLOWERS AS WELL AS THE CLAW THORNS.

PATTERSON'S VOICE (over)

Fire.

The branch is destroyed, the flowers blown away.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND THREE INDIAN COOLIES. NOT FAR FROM HIS CONTRAPTION. THE COOLIES hold rifles. They look like brothers, which they are. They also look tough. And they are that, too. THREE STREETFIGHTERS.

PATTERSON:

(impressed)

Very good indeed.

MIDDLE COOLIE:

(he wears glasses)

We have hunted since childhood.

PATTERSON:

All right- you'll spend your nights inside.

(He indicates the railroad car. The Coolies nod)

You'll have plenty of ammunition.

You're totally protected, you have really nothing to fear.

MIDDLE COOLIE:

That is correct.

(beat)

Nothing.

Patterson looks at the three men. Obviously, he could not have chosen better. From them-

CUT TO:

THE BRIDGE. DAY.

A lot of men working under Patterson. Progress is slow.

CUT TO:

THE BRIDGE. NIGHT.

Some men sit on the part that's been built. Spending the night there for protection. Now, they all turn and we

CUT TO:

ANOTHER FLARE going off in another part of camp.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, in a tree alone, in despair.

CUT TO:

THE THREE COOLIES IN THE RAILROAD CAR.

Tough as ever. Ready for anything. But nothing is happening. Silence.

CUT TO:

THE BRIDGE AGAIN AS NIGHT FALLS - MORE CROWDED THAN BEFORE.
STILL MORE MEN are moving into the river. They wade til the water
is up to their necks. Then they reach out, hold hands, start to
sing.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON moving high into a tree. He listens to the sound.
Lovely.

CUT TO:

MOONLIGHT ON THE WATER. The men stand as before, singing softly.
The river here is calm, no current to speak of. The men are safe-
-or rather they should be.

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS swimming softly, his great jaws silently encircling
the neck of the last man in line, pulling him silently away and as
the others start to scream-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, watching another flare rise, helplessly listening.

CUT TO:

A CATTLE PEN. THE CATTLE ARE NERVOUS-
-one of them kicks wildly at the wind.
They should be nervous-
-The Ghost walks among them, chooses which one to kill, leaps on
it, brings it to earth as the dust rises.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER FLARE IN THE NIGHT.

CUT TO:

THE HOSPITAL. DAY. PACKED.
HAWTHORNE seems overwhelmed.

CUT TO:

SOMETHING.
And for a moment we don't know what it is. There is a faint light
and now we see what it is we're looking at: a wire.
HOLD ON THE WIRE.
And now a paw walks across it-

-and the instant that happens-

CUT TO:

THE THREE COOLIES, the brothers, in the contraption, two of them asleep, a flickering lamp the only illumination in the railroad car and

CUT TO:

THE DOOR OF THE RAILROAD CAR slamming loudly down and
PULL BACK TO REVEAL

THE DARKNESS, standing alone in one half of the railroad car- it's incredible, just incredible but Patterson's idea actually worked and

KEEP PULLING BACK TO REVEAL

The entire of the car- the thick bars separating the two halves. In one half, the huge lion. In the other, the three armed, tough coolies.

For a moment, it could be a frozen tableau- both sides are too startled and surprised to do anything but stare-
-and then all hell just explodes as we

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, and this incredible roar comes from his throat, the kind of roar that can be heard five miles away in the night but this one in the enclosed room sounds even louder and more terrifying and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, throwing his huge body at the bars and

CUT TO:

THE BARS and both his front claws are slashing through and

CUT TO:

THE THREE TOUGH COOLIES and they retreat against the rear wall of the car.

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, rage building, throwing its body at the bars again and

CUT TO:

THE COOLIES, pressed in fear against the far wall, unable to do anything but stare and

CUT TO:

THE CLAWS, ripping at the air and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, leaping forward, smashing into the bars and

CUT TO:

THE CEILING WHERE THE BARS are connected and the sheer power of his leap has made them jiggle just the least bit and

CUT TO:

THE COOLIES, staring up at the ceiling and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, AND HERE HE COMES AGAIN, roaring and his body hits the bars and

CUT TO:

THE CEILING- and the bars shake-
-but they're not giving way.

CUT TO:

THE TOUGH COOLIES, as they begin to realize this and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, clawing for them and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, raging and roaring on his side of the bars and

CUT TO:

THE FIRST COOLIE, raising his gun and

CUT TO:

THE SECOND COOLIE, his gun raised too and

CUT TO:

THE THIRD COOLIE and he's ready and

CUT TO:

ALL THREE AS THEY FIRE-
-and reload-
-and fire again, and reload, and-

CUT TO:

THE RAILROAD CAR- and suddenly the lamp is knocked over-
-and a fire starts, flames grow and it's starting to look like
hell in there-
-only it gets worse as we-

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS at the bars-
-and suddenly it stands up- it seems to fill the car, towering
over everything, it's like a nightmare come to kill you-

CUT TO:

THE COOLIES staring up at this giant thing, and of course they're
more terrified now than they've ever been in their lives- but
these are tough men and they ignore the flames, ignore the
deafening roars of the beast and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, standing there, going crazy on his side of the bars,
trying to knock them down but they're holding and

CUT TO:

THE TOUGH COOLIES, reloading and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, racing around the enclosed area now and he's trapped
and the flames make him seem like something unalive and his eyes
have never been so bright, his roars as deafening and

CUT TO:

THE THREE COOLIES, firing again and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, leaping at the bars again, and they shake, sure they
shake, but they keep on holding and

CUT TO:

THE COOLIES, firing, reloading, firing, reloading and as they do,
something's starting to come clear-
-amazing as it may seem, impossible as it may be to conceive,
they're missing.

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, whirling on his side, roaring and leaping and

CUT TO:

THE COOLIES and sure they fire, but they're still so goddam scared and

CUT TO:

THE DOOR THAT SLID DOWN- it's held in place by some thick wooden bars-

-and now the Coolies start to hit something- the wooden bars because they begin to splinter and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, whirling, leaping at the bars and

CUT TO:

THE COOLIES firing and then-

CUT TO:

THE DOOR as it flops open and just like that-

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS. Out the door and gone. HOLD.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON JUST AFTER DAWN IN THE DAMAGED RAILROAD CAR.

Patterson stands where The Darkness was. The three Coolies are where they spent the night, on the other side of the bars.

This was the lowest point yet for Patterson. Not only had his notion come so close to working, he could never fully comprehend how the coolies missed. It never seemed possible- but of course, it really happened.

PATTERSON:

Not once?- you didn't hit it once?-

MIDDLE COOLIE:

-I would never make excuses- but a fire broke out- the light was bad- he kept moving-

PATTERSON:

-well, of course he kept moving- but he couldn't have been more than ten

feet away from the three of you- surely
you must have wounded the thing-

MIDDLE COOLIE:

I assure you we came close many times-
Abdullah is in the doorway near Patterson now- with several dozen
men. And from Abdullah's face, this is clearly going to be a
confrontation.

MIDDLE COOLIE:

-the next time we will do better.
(Patterson makes no
reaction; moves outside)

CUT TO:

ABDULLAH, simmering, moving straight to Patterson as soon as he's
out.

ABDULLAH:

The next time will be as this time-
The Devil has come to Tsavo-

PATTERSON:

(not in a mood for this)
-that's ridiculous talk and you can't
seriously believe it-

ABDULLAH:

(moving in- tension rising
as others crowd behind him)
-now you're telling me my beliefs?- I
don't think so-

CUT TO:

THE BUSH just beyond- something is moving- an animal?- Impossible
to say.

PATTERSON:

I wasn't and you know it and don't
push it- just listen- we have a
problem in Tsavo-

ABDULLAH:

(cutting in)

-at last you're right- we do- you are
the problem in Tsavo-

PATTERSON:

-careful, Abdullah-
Patterson and Abdullah and suddenly it's dangerous.

ABDULLAH:

You do not tell me "careful"- you do
not tell me anything- you listen
while I talk-
(Now suddenly a shadow
seems to cross-)

CUT TO:

ABDULLAH. CLOSE UP. His eyes widen.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

AN ENORMOUS PISTOL. Pressed hard against Abdullah's temple.

MAN'S VOICE (over)

-change in plan- you listen while
I talk- because you have a question
that needs answering.

(beat)

Will I pull the trigger?

PULL BACK FURTHER TO REVEAL

REDBEARD.

We are looking at one of those legends- ageless and powerful, with
a tanned face and a thick grey beard. He has seen everything and
is capable of anything.

Just now he seems more than capable of killing Abdullah. Very
calmly, he cocks the pistol.

SAMUEL (over)

It's Redbeard, Abdullah- he'll kill
you.

REDBEARD:

(not looking around)

No hints, Samuel.

ABDULLAH:

(The name has registered)

You don't know all that has happened
here- the Devil has come to Tsavo.

REDBEARD:

You're right. The Devil has come. Look at me. I am the Devil.

CUT TO:

ABDULLAH, staring at Redbeard. Right now Redbeard just could be.

ABDULLAH:

(louder)

I am a man of peace.

REDBEARD:

Am I to take it you want to live?

ABDULLAH:

Most certainly. Absolutely. Yes.

REDBEARD:

Excellent decision.

(Now he suddenly reaches out, shakes Abdullah's hand)

Your name is Abdullah? I'm sure we'll meet again. Go and enjoy the splendid morning.

ABDULLAH:

(dazed- leaving)

I think it's been a pleasure.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD, and now he does another surprising thing: embraces Samuel.

REDBEARD:

(three words)

You got old.

(Now he releases Samuel, turns to Patterson)

I'm sure you're John Patterson.

(before Patterson can reply)

Stay out of my way.

(And without another word, he's gone)

CUT TO:

THE HOSPITAL:

as Redbeard moves through, taking it all in. It's even worse than when we last saw it- bodies crammed everywhere and always the sound of pain and sickness.

Patterson stands in the doorway, watching, waiting.

PATTERSON:

(as Redbeard approaches)

I didn't have a chance to thank you.

REDBEARD:

(preoccupied)

What did I do?

PATTERSON:

Got me out of trouble.

REDBEARD:

(matter of fact)

Nonsense- Samuel would have done something.

(starts to move on)

PATTERSON:

We need to talk.

REDBEARD:

Let me save time- (1) you are the engineer; (2) you are in charge; (3) you're sorry I'm here. Right so far?

(Patterson nods)

Good- because (1) I am not an engineer, (2) I don't want to be in charge, and (3) I'm sorrier than you are that I'm here- I hate Tsavo. So I will help you by killing the lions and leaving, and you will help me by doing what I tell you so I can leave. See any problems?

PATTERSON:

Actually, no.

REDBEARD:

All right- let's go into battle.

(suddenly taking
Patterson's hand)

I'm Redbeard.

(as they shake)

PATTERSON:

Somehow I guessed.

(As they move outside-)

CUT TO:

THE FRONT OF THE HOSPITAL

A BUNCH OF MEN WAIT. Hawthorne, Samuel, Abdullah, and perhaps a dozen other worker leaders. Redbeard and Patterson move to them.

REDBEARD:

Starting now, we attack them.

ABDULLAH:

How; we don't know where they are?

REDBEARD:

We'll have to make them come to us,
won't we? And since there are two of
them, we're going to set two plans
in motion.

(to Hawthorne)

First:

hospital by tomorrow night.

HAWTHORNE:

(appalled)

That's a terrible idea-

REDBEARD:

(backtracking)

-is it, I'm sorry, but then, of
course, you're the doctor, you
should know.

HAWTHORNE:

Silliest thing I ever heard of- why
in the world should we go through
all that?

REDBEARD:

(charming now)

I suppose I could answer you. I
suppose I could explain that the
place is so inviting, what with the
smell of blood and flesh, that they
have to strike. It's even possible
that I tell you I found some fresh
paw marks around back which means
they're already contemplating
feasting here.

(Turning on Hawthorne
now- his voice building)

But I don't want to answer you
because when you question me you are
really saying that I don't have the
least idea what I am doing, that I am
nothing but an incompetent, that I am
a fool.

(big)

Anyone who finds me a fool, please
say so now.

HAWTHORNE:

(The words burst out)

I have been desperate for Patterson
to let me move the hospital since the
day he arrived.

REDBEARD:

(nice smile)

Then we agree.

(And on that-)

BEGIN THE BUILDING SEQUENCE.

It was a huge effort and they got half of it done that day- but
there was always the sense of impending bloodshed.

What we see first are Patterson and a bunch of shots of a lot of
workers- laying out the dimensions of the new boma that would
surround the place. This was to be by far the biggest wall fence

they had in Tsavo.

And now here comes Abdullah leading a crowd of men, wading into a huge patch of thorn trees, cutting the thick branches down, starting to load them for carrying-

-and it's high noon now, and Patterson drenched with sweat, leads the start of the actual building- taking the thorn branches, bunching them together, forcing them so there is no room between them-

-and we can just begin to get the sense of what the fence will be- except at the moment it's barely a foot high-

-and now Redbeard appears, beckons to Patterson, and

CUT TO:

A LONG SHOT OF A FLAT GRASSY PLAIN. AFTERNOON NOW.

Patterson, Redbeard, and Samuel walk quickly.

CUT TO:

SAMUEL turning to Redbeard and Patterson.

SAMUEL:

Soon.

(Redbeard nods)

PATTERSON:

(to Redbeard)

I have to ask- why do you need me?

REDBEARD:

I don't really. But understand something- even though it may take me two or three days to sort this out-

(Patterson has to smile at the phrase)

-when I'm gone, you'll still have to build the bridge. And I don't want the men to have lost respect for you.

PATTERSON:

(kind of surprised)

That's very considerate.

REDBEARD:

I'm always considerate- my mother
taught me that.

CUT TO:

SAMUEL, who just breaks out laughing.

REDBEARD:

Why do you laugh?- you don't
believe she taught me?

SAMUEL:

I don't believe you had a mother.
(And as Redbeard
laughs too-)

CUT TO:

A MASAI VILLAGE as they approach. Redbeard walks ahead.

PATTERSON:

You like him, don't you?

SAMUEL:

Oh yes. But it takes time.

PATTERSON:

You've known him long?

SAMUEL:

(He has)
Since his beard was red.

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE VILLAGE. AN AGED CHIEF RUNS THINGS.
Redbeard, Patterson and Samuel stand near him. WOMEN and CHILDREN
are there. Some of the children look at Redbeard, mime shooting,
fall down dead. Samuel translates as necessary.

SAMUEL:

How many cattle?

REDBEARD:

Four should do it.

SAMUEL:

They will want a lot of money.

PATTERSON:

(to Redbeard)
Have you got it?

REDBEARD:

No, but you do-
(beat)
-see, you were needed after all.
(to Samuel)
And fifty warriors at the camp
before dawn.

SAMUEL:

(Samuel explains. The
Masai Chief replies.
Translating)
Why so many?

REDBEARD:

Because I have two plans to kill
the lions- one involving the cattle,
the other the men.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD AND PATTERSON watching as Samuel tells the Chief.

CUT TO:

THE MASAI CHIEF. He moves toward Redbeard and Patterson. As he
speaks, Samuel translates quietly. There is a sadness in the
Chief's tone.

SAMUEL:

(translating)
The Ghost and the Darkness have
come... and we can do nothing...
but if you anger them... they will
stay in Tsavo... and life will
become more unberable, that I know...

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, watching as Redbeard replies.

REDBEARD:

(beat)

Two lions are all that have come...
they're only lions, that I know.

(beat)

And I will kill them both tomorrow.

(HOLD BRIEFLY, then-)

CUT TO:

SHADOWS AND FIRELIGHT. IT'S NIGHT NOW.

We're not sure for a moment where we are but we can hear metallic sounds.

Now we hear voices.

REDBEARD VOICE (over)

I'll need you by me in the morning.

SAMUEL VOICE (over)

Whatever you wish.

CUT TO:

WHERE WE ARE- IT'S PATTERSON'S TENT AREA. Patterson, Redbeard, Hawthorne, and Samuel sit around a fire.

They are cleaning their guns, getting ready.

A WORD ABOUT THEIR WEAPONS. Patterson's is a good rifle and he cleans it expertly.

Redbeard's surprisingly, is the oldest. And the way his hands move as he assembles it, he might be bathing a child.

Hawthorne is the least skilled of the three. But his rifle is clearly the finest. Bigger than the others, with great killing power.

There is a tremendous tension- Patterson, Hawthorne, and Samuel show it. Redbeard is as before.

HAWTHORNE:

(terribly tense)

You're certain about tomorrow?

(Redbeard is)

But you don't seem excited.

(Redbeard isn't)

PATTERSON:

You don't enjoy killing, do you?

(Redbeard doesn't)

HAWTHORNE:

Then why do it?

CUT TO:

REDBEARD. CLOSE UP. He stares at the fire. Then-

REDBEARD:

I have a gift.

CUT TO:

THE CAMPFIRE. Silence for a moment except for the sound of the weapons being reassembled. Redbeard's hands fly. His rifle is back together. He stands, nods, goes.

CUT TO:

HAWTHORNE, watching him.

HAWTHORNE:

Strange man.

(to Samuel)

Has he always been this way?

SAMUEL:

Much gentler now.

HAWTHORNE:

(shakes his head on that)

John?-

(He holds out his
beautiful rifle)

Change guns with me- mine's much
more powerful. I'll be finishing
the hospital tomorrow so I won't
be with you- but if you'll use
this...

(beat)

...then I will.

Patterson, touched, changes weapons.

PATTERSON:

Thank you.

(He turns to Samuel)

Why does he need you by him?

SAMUEL:

He doesn't. He needs nobody. But
we have hunted many times...

(beat)

...he knows I am afraid of lions...

HOLD ON THE FIRELIGHT UNTIL WE SHARPLY-

CUT TO:

THE BRIDGE. BEFORE DAWN.

Misty- hard to see much.

Then GHOSTS appear-

KEEP HOLDING:

-they're not ghosts, they're MASAI WARRIORS emerging from the
mists. They are powerful and painted and they carry noisemaking
equipment- tin cans and tom toms and as more and more of them
materialize-

CUT TO:

A HUGE THICKET.

Redbeard, Patterson, and Samuel wait as the Warriors approach.

REDBEARD:

(whispered)

I spotted one of them-

(gesturing toward

the thicket)

-in there.

CUT TO:

THE THICKET again- alive with thorn trees. Dark, filled with long
dark shadows.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD AND PATTERSON AND SAMUEL. A lot of tension.

REDBEARD:

The best way to ensure the kill
when you're using trackers is for
one to shoot while the other uses
the trackers to force the lion
toward the shooter. Have you ever
led trackers?

PATTERSON:

(He hasn't)
I can try.

REDBEARD:

(no good)
Samuel says you killed a lion.

PATTERSON:

It was probably luck- I'd rather
you did the shooting.

REDBEARD:

You'd never force the lion to me-
and nobody ever got a lion with
one shot by luck.

(points- hand out
straight)

Around there's a clearing- you'll
know it from the anthills- get
there and hide and listen to the
sounds- I'll make the lion come
directly to you.

(He gestures for
Patterson to take
off and as he does-)

CUT TO:

THE WARRIORS as Redbeard goes to them-

REDBEARD:

(as Samuel translates)
-all of you- spread the width of
the clearing- no gaps- go-
(claps his hands once)

CUT TO:

THE WARRIORS, spreading apart.

CUT TO:

THE SUN. Starting to appear more strongly on the horizon.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, running like hell.

CUT TO:

THE WARRIORS, moving quickly, silently.

CUT TO:

A THICK CLUSTER OF THORN TREES.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, ducking his head, blasting through.

CUT TO:

THE WARRIORS, starting to cover the entire width of the thicket.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, quickstepping over rocky terrain.

CUT TO:

SAMUEL staying close to Redbeard. The fear is there.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD, studying the position of the Warriors, who are almost ready.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, circling now, racing toward a clearing, picking up speed.

CUT TO:

THE WARRIORS, spread out. They look to Redbeard.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD. Not yet.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, racing into the clearing, glances around- lots of anthills.

CUT TO:

AN ANTHILL, eight feet high. It casts a long shadow.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. Holding Hawthorne's marvelous rifle, he slips silently into the shadow.

HOLD ON PATTERSON- it's almost as if he weren't there.

CUT SHARPLY TO:

REDBEARD. CLOSE UP. Suddenly screaming and

CUT TO:

SAMUEL, screaming too and

CUT TO:

THE WHOLE LINE OF WARRIORS, suddenly moving forward, all of them shouting and screaming and pounding on their drums and it is loud.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON in the shadow. The noise is faint- but he can hear it.

CUT TO:

A DOZEN DRUMMERS, moving forward, banging away.

CUT TO:

A DOZEN MORE DRUMMERS, even louder.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD, moving forward, his eyes flicking ahead-

CUT TO:

THE THICKET AHEAD. Nothing. No movement. No lion.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. Just the least bit louder now.

CUT TO:

THE WHOLE LINE OF WARRIORS, screaming and pounding and

CUT TO:

SAMUEL- the fear worse, dogging Redbeard's steps.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD. His eyes flicking ahead.

CUT TO:

THE THICKET AHEAD. Nothing. No movement. No lion.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. It's a lot louder now. He's totally still. And he's ready.

CUT TO:

THE DENSEST PART OF THE THICKET we've seen yet.

CUT TO:

THE WARRIORS, slashing their way through, drumming and shouting and

CUT TO:

REDBEARD, at their head, eyes, as always, flicking.

CUT TO:

THE THICKET AHEAD. Nothing. No movement. No lion.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD- starting to suddenly get louder and point-
-because something is there-

CUT BACK TO:

THE THICKET AHEAD, and we didn't see it before, only Redbeard saw it before-

-but now something begins to move and

CUT TO:

REDBEARD AND THE WARRIORS and it's all going crazy now, and they're starting to move faster and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON IN THE SHADOW.

The noise has kicked up and all the time it's coming closer and

CUT TO:

REDBEARD AND THE WARRIORS and the movement up ahead is more distinct and the Warriors are almost in a frenzy as we

CUT TO:

A FLASH OF THE GHOST IN THE THICKET- eyes bright- it starts to move away from the sound-

-and toward where Patterson is waiting.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD. Faster, screaming louder and

CUT TO:

SAMUEL and the fear starting to leave and he screams louder too

and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON- he fingers the weapon.

CUT TO:

THE GHOST, angrily retreating faster from the sound- and now instead of going straight back it begins to veer left and

CUT TO:

REDBEARD, immediately spotting the shift, gesturing to the Warriors to get left and

CUT TO:

THE WARRIORS, shifting over as Redbeard directed, blocking The Ghost's intended path and

CUT TO:

THE GHOST, shifting, trying to go the other way this time and

CUT TO:

REDBEARD; he spots that too, gestures for the Warriors to shift the other way and

CUT TO:

THE WARRIORS, racing to thier new positions, blocking the animal's path again and

CUT TO:

THE GHOST, rattled, upset, and now it starts retreating back in the original direction- toward Patterson and

CUT TO:

REDBEARD AND THE WHOLE LONG LINE OF MEN, and it's as if mass hysteria has gripped them, because their sound keeps building and sure, their throats must ache and yes, their arms must tire, but you couldn't tell that from what they're doing-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. Waiting by the anthill. Waiting. Then, at last-

CUT TO:

THE GHOST, backing into view, staring back at the sound, unaware of Patterson's existence behind him.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. Noiselessly he steps away from the anthill into the sunlight. He raises Hawthorne's gun.

CUT TO:

THE GHOST, backing toward Patterson.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, sighting along the glistening barrel.

CUT TO:

THE GHOST, starting to turn.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, ready to fire.

CUT TO:

THE GHOST IN CLOSE UP, CAUGHT IN THE CROSSHAIRS OF THE RIFLE. And now its lips go back as it sees Patterson.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, CLOSE UP, and this is it, this is the moment and as he squeezes the trigger-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND THE GHOST, and a totally unexpected sound- a dull snap- Hawthorne's rifle has misfired.

CUT TO:

THE GHOST, unharmed and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON desperately working the rifle, trying to make it function and

CUT TO:

THE GHOST. It stares at Patterson.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, and the goddamn gun won't work and he's a dead man and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND THE GHOST-

-and for a moment, they might be frozen in some horrible tableau-
-THEN THE GHOST ROARS-

CUT TO:

REDBEARD as he hears it, breaking into a wild run-

REDBEARD:

Shoot for chrissakes!-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON standing his ground as now THE GHOST takes a step toward him.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD, firing, reloading on the move, and up ahead is the clearing and as he reaches it-

CUT TO:

THE GHOST. Its great head turns in the direction of Redbeard and

CUT TO:

REDBEARD's position- anthills block him from getting a clear shot at the animal- he curses, races for a better position and

CUT TO:

THE GHOST. One final stare at Patterson-
-then it makes an effortless leap into the thicket-
-and it's safe and free and gone.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. CLOSE UP. Rocked.
The low point of his life.

CUT TO:

SAMUEL, catching up to Redbeard.

SAMUEL:

Did you ever see a lion that size?

REDBEARD:

Not even close.
(Now he moves to
Patterson)
What happened?

PATTERSON:

(a whisper)

...misfire... it jammed...

REDBEARD:

Has it ever done that before?

PATTERSON:

...don't know...

SAMUEL:

It's Hawthorne's.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD. Trying for control.

REDBEARD:

You exchanged weapons?

(Patterson nods)

You went into battle with an untried gun?

(Patterson nods)

CUT TO:

REDBEARD. CLOSE UP. For a moment it's impossible to tell what he's going to do. It seems that a Homeric burst of fury is about to happen.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. Drained, he expects it. It's very quiet.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD, studying the younger man. And when he finally speaks, his voice is surprisingly quiet.

REDBEARD:

They have an expression in

prizefighting:

until they're hit."

(beat)

You've just been hit...

(beat)

...the getting up is up to you...

(And he turns, moves
off and)

CUT TO:

THE NEW HOSPITAL.

Nearly finished. The fence is eight feet high and Hawthorne is supervising men and material that are being transferred.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD, checking security in the New Hospital which is close to the center of camp. (The Old Hospital was situated on the outskirts, because they wanted to keep the workers away from the sick and the wounded.) Late afternoon, now.

Patterson, Samuel and Hawthorne are moving with him. As are TWO EXPERIENCED ORDERLIES, both armed with powerful rifles. Patterson is silent here, the effects of the misfire still evident on his face.

REDBEARD:

(to the Orderlies)

Gentlemen, there's no sickness smell at all here, and little blood. When we leave, close the gate securely, don't open it til morning and keep your fires high. Any questions, ask them now.

(They understand- now
to Samuel and Hawthorne)

You two will sleep beautifully in your tents.

(beat)

And stay there.

SAMUEL:

And where will you sleep beautifully?

REDBEARD:

(smile)

Patterson and I will be in the old hospital- where the enticing smell of sickness still lingers-

(beat)

-and by the time we're done, I

promise you, the odor of blood will
be irresistible.
(And on that-)

CUT TO:

THE OLD HOSPITAL. STARTING TO GET DARK.
Redbeard and Patterson have buckets which they empty around the
inside perimeter-
-buckets of blood.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND REDBEARD. Darker. They empty still more full buckets
of blood. Redbeard seems pleased.

CUT TO:

SAMUEL AND HAWTHORNE, hurrying toward their camp.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND REDBEARD, leading Masai cattle into the grounds of
the Old Hospital.

CUT TO:

THE ORDERLIES IN THE NEW HOSPITAL, firmly closing and locking the
gate.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND REDBEARD, just outside the fence of the Old
Hospital- they carry many large chunks of raw meat, drop them as
they move.

CUT TO:

THE SUN. Dying... dying...

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND REDBEARD. They slip inside the deserted Old
Hospital, pull the gate securely shut.

CUT TO:

THE CATTLE. They stand in the center of the Old Hospital, calling
to each other.

CUT TO:

THE NEW HOSPITAL. Full. Clean. The men are exhausted. Most are
already asleep. The Orderlies sit by a fire, alert for anything.

CUT TO:

THE OLD HOSPITAL. Patterson and Redbeard stand across from their fire, waiting. The cows are quiet.

CUT TO:

HAWTHORNE by his fire near his tent with Samuel. Nervously, they drink tea.

CUT TO:

THE MOON. Higher. An hour has passed. Perhaps more.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD. Walking the fence perimeter.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. The cows are edgy. He calms the cows.

CUT TO:

OUTSIDE THE OLD HOSPITAL. The large chunks of meat are visible in the moonlight.

CUT TO:

THE NEW HOSPITAL. The orderlies are calm.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD, still walking the perimeter.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON sitting by the fire, staring at the night. Redbeard moves to him, speaks in a whisper.

REDBEARD:

Think about something else.

PATTERSON:

Have you ever failed?

REDBEARD:

(sad smile)

Only in life...

(He walks away.

Patterson watches.)

CUT TO:

THE NEW HOSPITAL. The Orderlies tend the sick. Quietly.

CUT TO:

THE NIGHT AND THE MOON. Lovely.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD. Stalking the perimeter. No sound. The night is deadly quiet.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. He stalks the perimeter now too, on the far side from Redbeard- and suddenly a different and frightening sound- the ripping of flesh-

CAMERA MOVES UP:

Now we can see both Patterson inside and also outside where, in shadow, The Ghost and The Darkness are devouring a hunk of meat. Redbeard moves quickly across the perimeter, gestures for Patterson to switch positions with him.

As he reaches where Patterson was, the eating sound stops. Silence again.

Patterson reaches the far side of the fence.

Now the eating sound comes again, and again, BOTH LIONS are outside, directly across from Patterson.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD looks across the perimeter at Patterson. Whatever's going on, it's sure as hell odd.

CUT TO:

THE CATTLE- they are very upset suddenly- one of them kicks out violently against the night- the same gesture the cattle did just before The Ghost walked through their pen and killed one- -now a different sound is heard: scratching-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND REDBEARD tracking the sound- -the main gate is starting to be pushed in. Inside the gate the ground is covered with blood stains from where they emptied their buckets.

CUT TO:

THE GATE. More pressure against it- it could give way any moment.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD AND PATTERSON and from the look on Redbeard's face, this is it! Patterson sees this, readies his rifle and we-

CUT TO:

THE CATTLE, going nuts and then-

CUT TO:

THE GATE. All pressure gone.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND REDBEARD. Patterson is furious.

PATTERSON:

Goddammit!

REDBEARD:

It's all right. Stay ready.

(indicates the blood)

They know it's there.

Patterson takes a few steps away, stares at the moon.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD; he studies Patterson who so clearly craves redemption.

REDBEARD:

(going to him)

Meant to ask you- the railroad car trap. Your idea?

(Patterson nods)

Excellent notion- I used the same device myself once.

PATTERSON:

But of course yours worked.

REDBEARD:

In point of fact it didn't- but I'm convinced the idea is sound.

He goes back to walking the perimeter. Patterson watches him- and for the first time since the misfire, Patterson's mood begins to lift.

CUT TO:

THE NEW HOSPITAL

and an ORDERLY, blood pouring from his throat as he lies by the fire and

CUT TO:

THE SECOND ORDERLY rounding a corner, seeing the violence; before he can scream-

CUT TO:

THE GHOST AND THE DARKNESS suddenly beside him, and their giant paws slap out so fast we can't follow and

CUT TO:

THE SECOND ORDERLY, dropping to the ground, and now we're starting to spin into madness and these next cuts go like lightning.

CUT TO:

A TENT FULL OF SICK MEN with malaria and

CUT TO:

A PAW flashing and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, lips pulling back and

CUT TO:

A SICK MAN, falling from his bed, blood pouring from his slashed face and

CUT TO:

TWO MORE SICK MEN, trying to rise and

CUT TO:

THE GHOST, leaping on them and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, eyes narrow and brilliant and

CUT TO:

A SICK COOLIE, and he's terrified and he tries to scream--the sound barely escapes him, but even so, it's the first cry we've heard and

CUT TO:

THE ENTIRE CAMP, NIGHT, WITH ALL THE FIRES BURNING- AND
PATTERSON'S TENT AREA IS CLOSE BY-
-but the New Hospital is on the other end, a good distance away.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND REDBEARD, rifles ready- but no sound reaches them.

CUT TO:

HAWTHORNE, out of his tent, because he's close by and he heard it
and he lights a torch, starts for the gate of the camp as Samuel
does his best to stop him-
-but Hawthorne rips free and we

CUT TO:

A SECOND TENT, as it starts to collapse and

CUT TO:

THE MEDICINE TENT, as The Ghost and The Darkness enter and

CUT TO:

MEDICINE, flying across the tent and

CUT TO:

GLASS, shattering and more medicine is destroyed and

CUT TO:

A BLIZZARD OF CUTS, of lions' claws and lions' teeth and those
terrible bright blazing eyes and

CUT TO:

A TENT POLE, being pulled out of the ground and

CUT TO:

THE GHOST AND THE DARKNESS and what they are doing is this:
destroying the New Hospital and

CUT TO:

MORE TENTS collapsing and

CUT TO:

THE GHOST AND THE DARKNESS. CLOSE UP. Eyes crazed.

CUT TO:

HAWTHORNE ALONE IN THE NIGHT, scared shitless as he runs.

CUT TO:

SHADOWS, moving, as Hawthorne's torch lights the surroundings and

CUT TO:

HAWTHORNE, heart pounding, looking around and then he gasps as we

CUT TO:

THE AREA NEARBY- TWO LARGE EYES are staring at him.

CUT TO:

HAWTHORNE, panicked, stumbling, falling, getting up, staring around-

CUT TO:

THE AREA AROUND HIM- the eyes are gone-
-and now there are loud shrieks in the night coming from the New Hospital and the instant they are heard

CUT TO:

REDBEARD AND PATTERSON, grabbing torches, throwing the gate open and they're off as we

CUT TO:

HAWTHORNE, running toward the New Hospital just up ahead now.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND REDBEARD, tearing through the night.

CUT TO:

THE NEW HOSPITAL. (We see all this next through Hawthorne's eyes.)
The tents are all down. The place is devastated.

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE FIRST TENT. Filled with the dead and the dying.

CUT TO:

HAWTHORNE. Ashen. Moving on.

CUT TO:

PAN ALONG THE TENT

Dead. Blood. Pain.

PAN TO THE SECOND TENT

More dead.
More dying.
It's a slaughterhouse.

CUT TO:

HAWTHORNE. He's crushed. His body sags. He takes a breath, his last.
THE GHOST AND THE DARKNESS are on him, roaring.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND REDBEARD as the roar reverberates- they glance at each other-
-then they slow.
Because the New Hospital has come into view.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD, CLOSE UP, staring at the disaster.
And this terrible crosses his face. For a moment, you think he's going to fall. His body seems drained of all its power. He stands there. Just stands there. Unable to move.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. And he does move. Slowly. Carefully. Into the chaos. He stares around- the dead and the dying are everywhere. Hawthorne, his face clawed almost unrecognizably, lies alone. All that's left now is this: the sound of pain.

HOLD.

Dust rises. It covers everything. Only the sound remains. Now different sounds take over-
-an incredible babble of human voices.

AND A RAILROAD TRAIN.

Patterson walks through the dust. Samuel, a worried look on his face, is a few steps behind.

We are at the STATION AREA and it is jammed. A train has pulled into the station-
-only you almost can't tell it's a train: all you can see are workers climbing up, and the inside is full so the workers clamber up onto the roofs of the cars-
-covering the cars-
-everyone is leaving-
-Patterson can only watch.

Abdullah stands on one of the cars-

-the train begins to pull out of the station.

More and more workers chase after it, get pulled on.

Now the station area is empty, the flat car roofs full.

Patterson still watches, eyes vacant.

Abdullah sees him, looks away.

The train gathers speed.

Rounds a corner...

...gone...

Patterson turns from the scene, begins to walk. Samuel stays close behind him, the worried look still there.

CUT TO:

THE OLD HOSPITAL.

A FEW AFRICAN ORDERLIES do the best they can. Patterson watches only a moment, walks on. Samuel still behind him.

CUT TO:

THE CAMP as Patterson walks through. A ghost town now. Only Africans remain.

CUT TO:

THE CONTRAPTION where the coolies missed The Darkness. Patterson looks at it a moment, walks on.

CUT TO:

THE ANTHILL IN THE CLEARING where Patterson misfired. Patterson looks at it a moment, walks on. And now, at last-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON'S TENT AREA. One or two Africans. Samuel darts into his tent, emerges with something, holds it out to Patterson.

IT'S A NECKLACE OF LION CLAWS.

Patterson makes an almost courtly bow of thanks, puts it on- he never takes it off again. He walks on alone now until at last-

CUT TO:

THE BRIDGE.

It stops abruptly, halfway done; the foundations are in place, a lot of the scaffolding, but it's useless. Late afternoon.

Desolate.

Redbeard sits alone, high on one of the foundations. He looks as he did the night before.

Patterson walks to the top of the near embankment. He is unshaven, wrinkled, he fingers the lion claw necklace.

For a moment, neither says a word. Then-

REDBEARD:

(out of the blue)

It would have been a beautiful bridge, John. I never noticed before, occupied with other business, I suppose...

(He's rambling)

...never really pay much attention to that kind of thing but I've had the time today, nothing else on, and this... it's graceful and the placement couldn't be prettier... and...

(He goes silent now, stares off)

PATTERSON:

You just got hit.

(Redbeard nods)

The getting up is up to you- but they're only lions-

(beat)

-and I'm going after them crack of dawn...

(And on that-)

CUT TO:

A LONG SHOT OF A HIGH ROCKY CLIFF-

-we haven't seen anything like it before- it's hundreds of feet tall- gorgeous early morning light.

As we watch, we realize there are two dots on the side of the cliff.

As we watch a moment more, we realize the dots are moving.

CAMERA MOVES CLOSER.

THE DOTS are Patterson and Redbeard, working their way along the rock face. Patterson is much more nimble. It's dangerous, of course, but neither of them seems to have that uppermost in mind. They travel lightly- small knapsacks and their weapons.

CUT TO:

THE TWO OF THEM as they make it over the cliff face. They stand, stare out.

CUT TO:

WHAT THEY SEE:

CUT TO:

A RAVINE. They are moving along the edge. It's tricky going- if you fell you wouldn't much like it. They are both concentrating on their movements, paying no attention to each other as Redbeard starts to speak. They don't stop moving.

REDBEARD:

In my town, when I was little, there was a brute, a bully who terrorized the place.

(beat)

But he was not the problem. He had a brother who was worse than he. But the brother was not the problem.

(beat)

One or the other of them was usually in jail. The problem came when they were both free together. The two became different from either alone.

(beat)

Alone they were only brutes. Together they became lethal, together they killed.

PATTERSON:

What happened to them?

REDBEARD:

(pause)

I got big.

(They move on)

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND REDBEARD working their way up a steep ravine. It's hard going. They help each other.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND REDBEARD, moving along the edge of the ravine now. Slow. Silent. Redbeard stops, points-

CUT TO:

A TANGLE IN THE BUSHES AND THORNS with one odd thing about it: there is a clearly defined archway, as if a buffalo or rhino used it as a regular passage.

CUT TO:

THE TWO OF THEM at the archway. They look at each other, without a word move through it.

CUT TO:

THE OTHER SIDE. A small clearing. And at the end of the clearing: a cave.

CUT TO:

THE CAVE MOUTH. Dark.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD AND PATTERSON. They each check their guns, move toward it.

CUT TO:

THE CAVE MOUTH. Closer. Suddenly it's getting eerie.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD, moving slowly, Patterson right with him.

CUT TO:

THE CAVE MOUTH. They're by it- Redbeard squints inside.

CUT TO:

WHAT HE SEES:

tunnel you have to half-crawl through.
Without a word, they start inside.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD AND PATTERSON, crouched low, moving through the tunnel. Ahead there is light. They move on.

CUT TO:

THE END OF THE TUNNEL- they can see the cave beyond.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD AND PATTERSON. They glance down. Nothing much there- just a copper bracelet, the kind a native might wear.

Now they move past it and as the tunnel ends, they stand up.

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE CAVE - IT'S BIG.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND REDBEARD, moving deeper into the cave. It's scary-dark with shafts of light coming from cracks in the rock. It's dank. It all feels as at any moment, the world could end.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD. CLOSE UP. Thunderstruck-

REDBEARD:

Dear God-

(And on those words-)

CUT TO:

THE FLOOR OF THE CAVE. More copper bracelets. And still more-
-and now bones-

-the floor of the place is littered with human bones-

-eyeless skulls peer up at them from all around.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

The rest of the cave. We are looking at a carpet of bones.

PATTERSON:

Their den?

(Redbeard nods)

Have you ever seen anything like
this?

REDBEARD:

Nobody's seen anything like this.

Lions don't have caves like this-

(beat)

-they're doing it for pleasure.

CUT TO:

SEVERAL TUNNELS, dark and ominous, leading from the cave-

-and now there is a sound from one of the tunnels-

-something is coming close and coming fast and

CUT TO:

REDBEARD AND PATTERSON as Redbeard fires into the tunnel and the sound explodes-

CUT TO:

THE TUNNEL-
-shrieks-

CUT TO:

REDBEARD AND PATTERSON. What the hell is it?

CUT TO:

THE TUNNEL- and here they come, screeching and angry-
-bats-
-swarms of them- hundreds of them-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND REDBEARD, diving to the ground, lying there amidst the bangles and the bones and the skulls-

CUT TO:

THE BATS. Circling above them. Screeching louder.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND REDBEARD, lying very still, eyeless skulls all around, staring.

CUT TO:

THE BATS. For a moment, it seems as if they might attack.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND REDBEARD. Waiting, waiting. Then-

CUT TO:

THE BATS back into the tunnel and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND REDBEARD, scrambling to their feet.

REDBEARD:

One of my chief attributes is that
I'm always calm.
And then without warning, from behind them, a roar-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND REDBEARD spin around, start back toward the entrance of the cave-

CUT TO:

THE LOW ENTRANCE TUNNEL as they scramble half-crawling through it.

CUT TO:

OUTSIDE as they make it, stand straight, look around-

CUT TO:

THICK BUSH beyond- another roar and sudden movement and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND REDBEARD, entering the thick bush- but carefully, because they are vulnerable now and an attack could come from anywhere- there is the sound of water-
-slashes of light hit their eyes, making it hard to see- and they're totally vulnerable now but it doesn't stop them- the water sound gets stronger- and as they burst clear-

CUT TO:

AN AMAZING PLACE- AN AREA OF FLAT ROCK SPLIT UP AHEAD BY A WIDE FAST-RUNNING WATERFALL.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND REDBEARD. They look around. Nothing is there. But the spot is wide open, exposed.

PATTERSON:

(The words pour out)
Where could it have gone? How
could it get across the water?
(looks at Redbeard)
They're only lions, yes?

REDBEARD:

(shakes his head; he
doesn't know)
Don't they have to be?...
They look around a moment more. Nothing to see-
-they turn, leave, re-enter the thick bush. And now-

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS- who knows where it is but it's there-
-watching Patterson.

HOLD BRIEFLY on The Darkness, then-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON'S TENT AREA. JUST BEFORE DAWN-

-outside the fence a dreadful sound- the crunching of bones.

Patterson, Redbeard, and Samuel emerge from tents, listen.

Patterson is on one side of the area, Redbeard and Samuel on the other.

SAMUEL:

(pointing)

Both of them over there.

He is pointing to Patterson's area. Patterson goes to Redbeard.

PATTERSON:

Ever have to use a machan?

(Redbeard hasn't)

I did once. In India. We will
tonight.

(Now from that-)

CUT TO:

A CLEARING. LATER IN THE DAY.

Patterson leads the few remaining men in constructing an odd
looking structure: four slender poles lashed together, slanting
inward with a plank tied on top, a dozen feet up in the air.

Redbeard and Samuel approach.

PATTERSON:

They're used to people in trees,
not in a clearing.

(indicating the plank)

It may be tight.

REDBEARD:

Not for me- I'm too bulky and it's
your idea, you go up there.

(to Samuel)

Take the others to the water tower
for the night.

PATTERSON:

I'll be bait alone?

REDBEARD:

Yes. And I'll be in some distant tree where I can provide no assistance whatsoever.

(beat)

Can you control your fear?

PATTERSON:

I'll have to.

REDBEARD:

I can't control mine- I'd be lost without the shame factor driving me.

PATTERSON:

Was that supposed to make me feel better?

(Redbeard doesn't reply. Now-)

CUT TO:

A DONKEY BEING LED IN. LATER.

THE MEN start to tie it down, across the clearing from the machan. Patterson takes a long look at the machan. He tests the support poles- they're rickety.

CUT TO:

DUSK. The sun quickly beginning its quick fall.

CUT TO:

THE WATER TOWER IN THE STATION AREA. Samuel is with the remaining men who clamber up to the platform on top.

CUT TO:

THE DONKEY IN THE CLEARING. Quiet.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

Redbeard, holding a wooden ladder that is propped against the plank. Patterson climbs his slow way up. It's dangerous.

CUT TO:

THE PLANK as Patterson makes it, clambers off the ladder, manages to sit.

CUT TO:

THE VIEW. Nothing is around the machan. He is totally vulnerable.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD, taking the ladder down. Patterson tries to get comfortable. He can't.

REDBEARD:

(glancing around)

It's certainly the best chance they've had to kill you.

PATTERSON:

You think they'll come then?

(Redbeard does)

Why?

REDBEARD:

(not answering)

Good luck.

PATTERSON:

Why?

REDBEARD:

(beat)

Because I think they're after you.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. This registers. Finally, he nods. Redbeard starts to leave.

PATTERSON:

How many do you think they've killed?

REDBEARD:

(reluctantly)

The most of any lions... a hundred...?

(beat)

Probably more.

(Now Redbeard looks

up at the younger man)

Johnny...?

They study each other in the gathering darkness. They've been through a lot together, these two. They're not what they were when they first met. An emotional moment clearly is at hand.

REDBEARD:

Don't fuck up.

(And he turns, never looks back, just goes)

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. He is alone now.

CUT TO:

SHADOWS. Growing longer.

CUT TO:

SAMUEL. On top of the water tower. The remaining men are with him.

CUT TO:

THE DONKEY. It peers around.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. His fingers move slowly along his rifle barrel-
-there is no noise- but you have the sense that, at any second, the world could explode.

CUT TO:

THE EDGE OF THE CLEARING, a good distance away. A bunch of trees. Nothing unusual.

MOVE IN CLOSER:

Redbeard, motionless, rifle in hand, is high in the branches.

CUT TO:

THE SUN. About to die.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, trying to get comfortable. It's not possible.

CUT TO:

THE DONKEY, tethered, but able to move.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, testing the machan- not a good idea- it trembles. He stops, stares out at the setting sun, the light hitting his skin, giving it color.

CUT TO:

THE SUN and here's the thing about Africa- the sun doesn't just set, it literally drops out of the sky. Suddenly it's bright and in a blink it isn't. As it drops-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. CLOSE UP. It's madness that he's up here. And he knows it. And that shows.

CUT TO:

THE SKY. No moon. Just thick cloud.

CUT TO:

THE DONKEY. Quiet.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. On his precarious perch. He scans constantly ahead of him past the donkey.

CUT TO:

THE THICK BUSH BEYOND THE DONKEY. Nothing moves-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. He swallows, moistening his throat. He stares down at the donkey.

CUT TO:

THE DONKEY. LATER. MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. DARK.
And now, just the beginning of a mist.

CUT TO:

THE SKY. THICKER AND THICKER CLOUDS. LATER STILL. GETTING TOWARD MORNING.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON sitting there twelve feet up as the silence extends, listening for something, anything-
-but all there is is silence.

CUT TO:

THE DONKEY. It lies still and quiet.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, looking around- you get the feeling he'd like to scream.

CUT TO:

THE BUSHES AROUND HIM. The mist is getting stronger.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD in his tree, cursing, trying to see through the growing mist.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, listening, listening-
-and then there is a sound and it's so quiet you can barely hear it but to Patterson it might as well be thunder-
-from behind the donkey there has come this: the snapping of a twig.

CUT TO:

THE DONKEY, and it's eyes widen-
HOLD ON THE DONKEY.

Because now something happens that hasn't happened before:
suddenly there are no colors, only tones-
-because lions can't see colors, only tones, and that's what's happening- we are looking at the donkey from the point of view of the lion-

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

THE EYES OF THE GHOST. Watching the donkey.

And from now on, when we are using PATTERSON'S POINT OF VIEW, everything is clouded and thick with mist, and sounds are muted. When we are using THE GHOST'S POINT OF VIEW, everything is totally clear- and sounds are thunderous.

CUT TO:

WHAT PATTERSON SEES: just mist and vaguely, bushes.

CUT TO:

WHAT THE GHOST SEES: The donkey. And CAMERA begins to move closer as The Ghost moves, just the barest few steps closer.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. Still no sound- but beyond the donkey there seems to be some movement in the bushes.

CUT TO:

WHAT THE GHOST SEES: The donkey, very, very close-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. Squinting desperately at the area beyond the donkey but the mist is so thick, he can't make certain of anything.

CUT TO:

WHAT THE GHOST SEES: THE DONKEY.

HOLD.

Now there is something else visible, something behind the donkey: the four legs of the platform.

HOLD.

Now we travel up the platform- the four legs grow closer together.

HOLD AS THE GHOST AT LAST SEES PATTERSON.

CUT TO:

THE EYES OF THE GHOST. NARROWING.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. Involuntarily, a shiver.

CUT TO:

WHAT THE GHOST SEES: PATTERSON, but the angle shifts-
-what's happening of course is this: The Ghost is circling around the platform in the safety of the bushes and the mist.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, following the whispered sound of the bushes moving. He half turns the other way quickly, making sure that nothing is behind him.

CUT TO:

WHAT THE GHOST SEES: PATTERSON shifting as the angle continues to change.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON as the realization hits: the beast doesn't care about the donkey anymore, it's stalking him.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD. In the tree. The mist obscures everything.

CUT TO:

WHAT THE GHOST SEES: PATTERSON. Still circling, still closer.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, and it's scary now, this thing circling and circling, always closer, never visible and his throat is dry and you know he's just dying to blast it with his weapon or scream for it to do anything but this constantly circling movement. (In truth, the lion circled him for two hours, always coming closer, never quite seen.)

CUT TO:

WHAT THE GHOST SEES: PATTERSON, always the circling around.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, trying to turn on his shaky plank, trying to never to let the animal's position out of his sight.

CUT TO:

WHAT THE GHOST SEES: PATTERSON. Closer...

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, staring, staring at the goddamn mist, about to come apart now with the tension as it builds and builds and builds and

CUT TO:

WHAT THE GHOST SEES: PATTERSON. Closer.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, gripping his weapon tightly as his head keeps on turning.

CUT TO:

WHAT THE GHOST SEES: PATTERSON. Closer.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, suddenly yelling out loud as an owl lands on him- that's right, a goddamn owl landed on him, thinking he was a tree, almost knocking him off the plank and

CUT TO:

WHAT THE GHOST SEES: PATTERSON, starting to slip off the platform

and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, fighting the owl away, but his balance is going and he's trying not to fall and

CUT TO:

WHAT THE GHOST SEES: PATTERSON, beginning to topple off and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, helpless, balance going, going-

CUT TO:

THE GHOST, starting to charge forward and Christ he can move and as he starts his leap-

CUT TO:

REDBEARD, racing from the tree to the edge of the clearing, firing his rifle, firing again and

CUT TO:

THE GHOST, as this incredible roar comes from him, and he spins, lands, and sure, he's been hit but he's gone, back into the bushes and the night has him and

CUT TO:

SUDDEN DAWN AND PATTERSON AND REDBEARD, running, stopping, staring at the ground-

CUT TO:

THE GROUND. Blood.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND REDBEARD, moving quickly forward again-

CUT TO:

THE GROUND. More blood and...

CUT TO:

THE TWO OF THEM, starting to slow-

CUT TO:

STRANGE TERRAIN- huge anthills all over, the tallest we've seen, some of them fifteen feet high, some even higher.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND REDBEARD. They separate, take different paths through the anthills.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD. Alert. One step at a time.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. The same. One step at at time.

CUT TO:

THE GHOST. Crouched high up behind one of the biggest anthills, staring down at them both.

CUT TO:

REDBEARD. He gestures for them to stop. They do. For a moment they might be statues.

CUT TO:

THE ROCKY GROUND. Spots of blood. Redbeard kneels to examine them and as he does-

CUT TO:

THE GHOST, launched in mid-air and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, whirling, falling, firing and as the sound detonates-

CUT TO:

THE GHOST, in mid-air, body twisted and-
-and FREEZE.

Freeze on The Ghost silhouetted against the morning sky.

HOLD. Then-

CUT TO:

SAMUEL, WALKING INTO THE SHOT-

-we're by the river and this is a repeat of the earlier moment when the three men brought the old man-eater into camp-

-only now eight men appear, carrying The Ghost- eight is the actual number of men that it took, and as they lower the dead animal to the ground-

CUT TO:

THE GHOST- and now there's a flash of light as we

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

BEAUMONT, kneeling by the dead animal. He is smiling beautifully, and there is no questioning the look of triumph on his face.

CUT TO:

A PHOTOGRAPHER; loads of bulky equipment. Patterson and Redbeard stand behind him, watching him. We're in a lovely spot by the river. Patterson and Redbeard have definitely been drinking.

BEAUMONT:

I think another for posterity-
this is an important moment in
my life.

He strikes another pose- the Photographer goes to work.

BEAUMONT:

Understand, I had help-

PATTERSON:

-not a time for modesty, Bob-

REDBEARD:

-undeniably your triumph.

BEAUMONT:

Oh surely there's enough credit
for us all- let's not forget, you
did the actual shooting. Of course,
I hired you, I was the general who
put the team together. And generals
are the ones who tend to be
remembered.

PHOTOGRAPHER:

Perhaps you might put your head in
its mouth, sir- could be a corker.

BEAUMONT:

Clever idea, I like it.

CUT TO:

THE MOUTH OF THE GHOST- it is huge-

-Beaumont manages to get it open- puts his head between the

enormous set of teeth- he's nervous, tries to hide it when we

CUT TO:

REDBEARD suddenly giving a loud imitation of a lion roaring and

CUT TO:

BEAUMONT, surprised and frightened-

-he jerks his head away-

-there is the sound of laughter, Patterson's and Redbeard's-

-Beaumont tries for his smile, can't bring it off, looks around, humiliated, and as the laughter builds-

CUT TO:

THE TENT AREA. NIGHT.

Patterson and Redbeard flank a fire. It's a sweet moment for them, their first, no fear in the vicinity.

It should be noted that they both are drinking from bottles of champagne.

It should also be noted that the Patterson we see is a world away from the young man who went to meet Beaumont. He's unshaven, his eyes have seen terrible things, he is weary, he has known failure- he is more at ease with the world.

PATTERSON:

(drunk)

I never thought I'd say this, but I'm glad you came.

REDBEARD:

(drunk)

Understood- you realize now you could never have done it without me.

PATTERSON:

Actually, I could have done it much more easily without you, but for whatever reason, I'm glad you came.

(They toast each other)

Samuel, with his own bottle of champagne has wandered over, joins them.

SAMUEL:

(drunk)

Where do you go next?

REDBEARD:

Some Russian princes want to hunt
the Himalayas. You?

SAMUEL:

Help finish the railroad.

PATTERSON:

I want to meet my son- he must be
what, two months old?
They look at the fire a moment. Then-

SAMUEL:

Three years I've worked for the
railroad. Now I don't know why. It
seemed a good idea once.

PATTERSON:

I feel the same about the bridge.
This country certainly didn't ask
for it, doesn't need it.

REDBEARD:

Too soon to tell.
They look at him.

REDBEARD:

My life was shaped because someone
invented gunpowder. Our lives have
crossed because two lions went mad.
But what if in the future the three
of us do something grand for
humanity? Was that worth all the
lives? Too soon to tell.

SAMUEL:

(drinks)
Some mysteries should not have
solutions.

REDBEARD:

(finishes his bottle,
rises, looks at Patterson)
Hold your son high.
(And he turns, goes
to his tent)

PATTERSON:

(beat- quietly)
He has children?

SAMUEL:

(beat- quietly)
Once...
(HOLD on the two
in the firelight. Then-)

CUT TO:

THE STATION MASTER AT TSAVO STATION, WORKING IN HIS OFFICE. THE
NEXT DAY.

FEMALE VOICE (over)
I'd like to see John Patterson,
please.
(As he looks up-)

CUT TO:

HELENA standing there in Tsavo; she looks weary from travel, but
still lovely. She holds their son in her arms. The kid is
adorable.

HELENA:

Could you tell him that his wife-
(catches herself, smiles)
-that his family has come to see him.
(On that-)

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AT THE BRIDGE- Samuel hurries to him with the news-
Patterson takes off running and

CUT TO:

TSAVO STATION and Helena; she holds the sleeping child, walks back
and forth along the shaded front of the building, no sound at all
but her heels.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, running like crazy and up ahead now is the station area.

CUT TO:

HELENA- and now, in the distance, she sees him and she leaves the building, walks out into the open, smiling and waving excitedly and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, excitedly waving back and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, moving out of the grassy area behind Helena and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, suddenly screaming "Get back- back-"

CUT TO:

HELENA, and she's too far away- his words are lost on the wind- she smiles again, waves again and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, screaming now, all he has, "GET BACK" and

CUT TO:

HELENA, and she still can't make out what he's saying but just the same, she stops and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, stalking silently, closing on the mother and child.

CUT TO:

HELENA, and the baby wakes, smiles and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, starting to run and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON and now it shows on his face- he's not going to get there, he's never going to get there-

CUT TO:

HELENA, and at last she knows something is terribly wrong and she

turns-

-but too late, too late as we

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, flying toward her now and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, in agony.

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, leaping on them, taking them to the ground and as Helena cries out helplessly-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, crying out helplessly and

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

PATTERSON IN HIS TENT,

continuing to cry out until he realized the nightmare he just had is over-

-he staggers to his tent opening, goes outside.

CUT TO:

OUTSIDE. It's dawn. Patterson, shaken, tries to rid himself of the dream. He looks around.

Redbeard's tent is ripped- Patterson runs to it-

CUT TO:

INSIDE THE TENT. It's empty. Patterson stares around-

-there is blood on the tent floor and quickly-

CUT TO:

THE SUN. RISING.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON running wildly, rifle in hand and

CUT TO:

SAMUEL, carrying a weapon, hurrying to keep up and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, flying across rough terrain and as he and Samuel splash across a small river, he gestures for them to split and they do, widening the area of search and

CUT TO:

SAMUEL, veering off and

CUT TO:

THORN TREES, as Patterson rips through them, unmindful of the damage to his clothes or his skin and

CUT TO:

MORE THORNS- he plunges wildly ahead and

CUT TO:

A LARGE ANTHILL- it seems to be casting an unusual shadow- Patterson slows, rifle ready, takes a breath, moves around it- -nothing at all- just his imagination which has been working overtime and is only getting worse- Patterson stands there a moment, unsure where to go, what to do- -and then SAMUEL'S VOICE on the wind- calling to him-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, tracking the sound- Samuel's voice cries out again, louder- -Patterson starts to run and run, and as he rounds a bend-

CUT TO:

A FIELD OF WHITE GRASS. So lovely. With one patch in the middle that is blood red. Something is moving in the blood red area. Patterson has his rifle ready- -and then Samuel rises from the blood red patch.

CUT TO:

SAMUEL. In shock, in despair, call it what you want- he has seen something beyond imagination.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, rushing across the field of white grass, rushing to where Samuel stands in the patch of blood red grass- he looks down into the grass- -clearly, Redbeard is there and clearly he is dead. Patterson and Samuel stare mute at one another- -and now, from frighteningly near them, comes the triumphant roar of The Darkness. They don't even react.

CUT TO:

FLAMES RISING IN THE LATE AFTERNOON.

We should already have a sense of where we are; we've done this before.

START PULLING BACK.

Samuel stands there, trying to hold it together.

KEEP PULLING BACK.

Patterson stands there too, trying to hold it together.

KEEP PULLING BACK TO REVEAL

REDBEARD'S FUNERAL PYRE. Flames consume the body.

Just Patterson and Samuel. No one else is there.

The flames lick at the sky...

HOLD...

CUT TO:

A LARGE BABOON. ONE LEG IS TIED TO THE END OF THE BRIDGE. GETTING DARK NOW.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

PATTERSON AND SAMUEL, both armed, climbing the crane tower in use at the bridge, not far from the baboon.

PATTERSON:

You're positive lions hate baboons?

(Samuel is)

Pebbles?

(Samuel holds up a bag)

Let's get it over with.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND SAMUEL as they reach the crane tower platform, fifteen feet from the baboon.

They help each other into position. Almost night.

CUT TO:

THE LARGE BABOON, baring its enormous teeth, shrieking out into the darkness.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND SAMUEL on the platform. Samuel tosses a pebble toward the baboon and the baboon cries out again, not in pain but irritation-

CUT TO:

THE PLATFORM. PATTERSON AND SAMUEL ARE FLOODED BY MOONLIGHT. IT'S THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.

They're both tired. Samuel throws another pebble. The baboon cries out.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, TENSE, ON THE PLATFORM. MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.
He's tossing pebbles now as Samuel dozes. Paterson looks wild; only nervous energy is keeping him going now.

CUT TO:

THE SKY. The moon. Peaceful- then it turns bright yellow and frightening black clouds gather and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, blinking, coming hard back to reality because the sky is not yellow nor were there black clouds- he's starting to hallucinate.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND SAMUEL ON THE PLATFORM.
Samuel is awake now. Patterson stares at the river which is calm.

CUT TO:

THE RIVER, raging and black and lethal.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, hallucinating again.

CUT TO:

JUST BEFORE DAWN
and The Darkness suddenly is there, creeping across the bridge toward the shrieking baboon and the instant it appears-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. Firing-

CUT TO:

-THE DARKNESS, and it's hit and it roars and goes down and-

CUT TO:

-PATTERSON, turning, reaching for Samuel's rifle, grabbing it, turning back, ready to fire again-

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS- gone.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND SAMUEL, blinking, looking around.

PATTERSON:

Where is it?

SAMUEL:

(pointing down)

Underneath.

(beat)

Somewhere.

CUT TO:

WHERE HE'S POINTING. The superstructure for the bridge- it goes several levels beneath the level where the railroad will run. They look at each other- not good news and we find out why when we

CUT TO:

EARLY MORNING LIGHT.

Patterson and Samuel climb carefully down from their platform to the railroad level. They reach the railroad level. Patterson releases the baboon which races away.

CUT TO:

WHERE THEY ARE. At the end of the bridge where they began construction. The bridge, two thirds finished, stretches away before them.

CUT TO:

They begin to walk the incomplete bridge... carefully... ..as they go they look down through the crevices of their level, making sure they miss nothing.

CUT TO:

SAMUEL. Terrified. Holding his rifle extremely tightly.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. Ready for anything.

CUT TO:

THE BRIDGE up ahead of them. There are some holes.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND SAMUEL slowing.

CUT TO:

THE HOLES. The nearest one is the largest.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. He goes on tiptoe, trying to see what's in the hole.

CUT TO:

THE HOLE. It seems empty.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND SAMUEL. One step forward. Another. They hold their breaths.

CUT TO:

THE HOLE. It seems empty.

CUT TO:

A SHOT FROM BELOW BRIDGE LEVEL- The Darkness is there.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, firing.

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, going down through another level of scaffolding.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND SAMUEL, trying to track it.

CUT TO:

THE SCAFFOLDING. Nothing is visible.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND SAMUEL- Frozen. They listen-
-nothing but their breathing.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, looking around everywhere.

CUT TO:

THE HOLE. Nothing.

CUT TO:

THE FIRST LEVEL of scaffolding. Nothing.

CUT TO:

THE SECOND LEVEL of scaffolding. Nothing.

CUT TO:

SAMUEL, looking this way, that way.

SHOCK CUT TO:

THE HOLE AS THE DARKNESS JUST FUCKING FLIES OUT OF IT- Patterson falls back and fires and The Darkness is hit and goes down but it gets up and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, turning for Samuel's rifle-
-only Samuel isn't there-
-he's taken off for the trees at the end of the bridge and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS ROARING AND

CUT TO:

PATTERSON and he turns, starts running too, running across the narrow half-completed bridge and it's a bitch to do it without slipping or falling and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, wounded, sure, but the mother can still run and it takes off after Patterson and

CUT TO:

SAMUEL, making it to the end of the bridge and jumping for the nearest tree and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON running for his life across the bridge and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, closing the gap and ordinarily Patterson would be a dead man but even though The Darkness hasn't got its ordinary speed, it's still faster than Patterson and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, and he's never gone this fast in his life and

CUT TO:

THE TREE HE'S HEADED FOR, a different one from Samuel's and it's just up ahead and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, closing and

CUT TO:

THE TREE, and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, springing into the air now and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, diving for the lowest branch, grabbing hold with both hands, swinging his body up as we

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, barely missing as Patterson gets his body onto the branch and now comes this insane roar and

CUT TO:

SAMUEL with his rifle, as he climbs higher into his tree.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON in the next tree, climbing higher, until he's fifteen feet up.

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, on the ground, circling the trunk of Patterson's tree, raging with frustration.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, exhausted but it's okay now, he's safe, and as he looks across at the next tree not far away where Samuel is-

SAMUEL:

(embarrassed)
Afraid of lions.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON.

PATTERSON:

It's all right, Samuel- we all
get hit-
(Now he shuts up
fast and-)

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, as it does this incredible thing- it starts to climb
the tree after Patterson. Lions are cats and when they want to
climb, up they go and that's what The Darkness is doing now, going
up and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, and it's terrifying- he reaches for the branch above,
climbing higher and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, climbing higher too and the tree is sturdy but there
is a four hundred pound thing rocking it now and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, going still higher but the branches are getting thinner
and the tree is shaking, and he could fall-

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, climbing on, nothing can stop it-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND THE DARKNESS, together in the tree, and there's no
further Patterson can go and it's harder for The Darkness too, but
slowly it moves in and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, calling out-

PATTERSON:

Samuel!
(And he gestures for
the rifle and the
instant he does-)

CUT TO:

SAMUEL, and he takes the rifle between his two hands and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, steadily moving in and

CUT TO:

SAMUEL, tossing the rifle with great care and Patterson's less than fifteen feet away and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, hands out to catch it and

CUT TO:

THE RIFLE in mid-air and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, both hands ready and

CUT TO:

THE RIFLE as it strikes a tree branch, spins away to the ground.

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, almost on Patterson now and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, suddenly leaping out of the tree, and yes it's a long way and sure it's going to damage him but sometimes there aren't a lot of choices in this world and

CUT TO:

SAMUEL, staring as Patterson falls and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, crashing hard to earth, stunned, hurt, ribs broken, leg broken and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, and it's so big it's hard for it to get room to turn but it does and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON crawling for the rifle, and he's in terrible pain but he reaches the weapon, grabs for it and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, skittering down the tree and as it reaches the

ground

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, forcing himself to his feet and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, a dozen feet away as with a roar it starts its charge.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, aims, fires and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, hit again and down it goes again but up it comes again and

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, firing the final shot and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, hit again and it has to stop, it just has to-
-but it doesn't.

It roars and roars and moves slowly toward Patterson.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON; all bullets gone, no place to hide.

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS. Still moving forward.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. He takes a step backward, falls backwards over a branch, lands hard and

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, framed between Patterson's legs. Six feet away, now four, now-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON, helpless on the ground.

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, and the eyes glow-
-a branch is on the ground in front of it- it buries its huge

teeth into the branch-
-now a long dying sigh... and it goes to the ground.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. Can't breathe.

CUT TO:

THE DARKNESS, dead, its teeth still buried in the tree branch.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. CLOSE UP. And suddenly he just empties and tears pour down his face and he begins to cry out loud, his body wracked with sobs. He manages to get to his knees, moves next to the animal-

CUT TO:

PATTERSON AND THE DARKNESS. Just the sound of Patterson's tears...
HOLD.

KEEP HOLDING.

CAMERA BEGINS TO RISE-

-WE ARE LOOKING AT THE BRIDGE NOW- AND IT'S FINISHED!

-hundreds of people are watching as the first train goes over it-

-Samuel is there- lighting up the world with his smile-

-and Patterson's there, too. He stands with Helena, his young son in his arms.

Everybody smiles, everybody waves, the train goes triumphantly by.

CUT TO:

PATTERSON. He looks wonderful again, vibrant and young. Watching him, you might think he hadn't been through the nightmare as he stands there, holding the boy tightly.

But with his other hand, he fingers the lion claw necklace...

HOLD ON PATTERSON.

Now slowly dissolve to an African evening. Animals stretch from one horizon to the other.

SAMUEL VOICE (over)

Here we still wonder about them.

How did they escape for nine months?

And kill 135 men? And stop the railroad?

(beat)

And were they only lions?

(beat)

If you want to decide for yourself,
you must go to America. They are at

the Field Museum in Chicago, and
even now, after they have been dead
a century, if you dare to lock eyes
with them...

(beat)

...you will be afraid.

In the distance, the animals continue to move.

SAMUEL VOICE (over)

Sleep well.

HOLD ON THE ANIMALS. They seem to go on forever...

FINAL FADE OUT.

THE END: