

WILD WILD WEST

by

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Story by

Jim & John Thomas (V)

FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY

FADE IN:

CAMERA MOVES OVER the warehouse district of town. It's night. A dog barks in the distance. A train whistle blows. Then silence.

SUPER: "SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS -- 1873"

CAMERA STOPS ON:

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A deserted cobblestone street leads downhill to a bleak warehouse.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

START CLOSE on a combination lock. PULL BACK to reveal a large ornate SAFE. A safe-cracker, SLIM, is hard at work, listening with a stethoscope as he spins the tumblers.

REVEAL a tough gang of TRAIN ROBBERS. The safe sits in the back of a wagon that was used to carry it there.

The gang's leader, LARSON, is one cold-blooded character.

He paces, occasionally glancing out the windows.

LARSON

Come on, come on. How much longer?

SLIM

Keep your britches on. This is a tough one. Railroad's getting tired of losing their money.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - UP THE STREET - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a pair of feet scurrying along the cobblestones. MOVE UP to reveal WALTERS, a pudgy local sheriff, WHEEZING as he runs along. He's headed for the warehouse when --

A hand shoots out of the darkness and bodily yanks him into a shadowy doorway. He YELPS in panic, then realizes he's face to face with a U.S. Marshal --

CAPTAIN JAMES T. WEST. From his distinctive Western attire to his "Colt Single-Action Army," this guy's the real thing. He's here to catch bad guys and nothing else. This is one dog you don't turn your back on.

WALTERS
 Jesus, Marshal! I'm like to have
 wet myself!

Jim is wound up, itching for action, glancing toward the
 warehouse every few seconds.

JIM
 Well?

WALTERS
 (placating)
 They're coming.

JIM
 (gritting it out)
 When are they coming?

WALTERS
 They're rounding up a posse. Figure
 an hour?

JIM
 (re the warehouse)
 In an hour they're gone!

Jim's eyes dart everywhere. He's going to will a solution
 into existence. He spots something. An idea hatches. He
 whips out his Colt SAA. Then grabs Walters' pistol, too.

WALTERS
 Hey...!

JIM
 You're not going to use it, are you?

WALTERS
 Well, come on, that's half a dozen
 armed men...

JIM
 Right.

And Jim's gone.

ANGLE - A FREIGHT WAGON

sits at a loading dock across the way, parked on a grade,
 the rear wheels chocked, piled high with a load of supplies,
 barrels, etc. Jim races over and eyeballs the sloping street --
 it leads straight down toward the warehouse.

He yanks out the chocks and heaves on the spokes of the rear
 wheel. With an ominous CREAK, the heavy wagon starts to
 roll backward.

He moves to the front, grabs the wagon tongue, tilts it back against the seat and leaps aboard.

The wagon's iron-rimmed wheels CLANG along the cobblestones as it rumbles faster and faster. Jim stands atop the load, steering the unwieldy rig by muscling the tongue left and right like a ship's tiller.

It's not easy to control -- first the wagon SCRAPES along an iron fence -- SPARKS FLYING. Then it veers the other way, taking out a row of horse hitches. But Jim wrestles it back on course, straight for the warehouse doors.

Closer. Closer. He gets ready to duck.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Slim swings the safe door open and the men start swiftly transferring cash and gold bars to saddlebags. But now they hear the thunderous CLATTER of the approaching wagon. Larson peers out a window in the warehouse doors.

He staggers back, panic-stricken.

LARSON

What the hell...? Look out! LOOK
OUT!

The gang scrambles back across the room. They dive for cover as the wagon EXPLODES into the warehouse, crushing everything in its path, finally smashing into the wagon carrying the safe. The room is choked with dust.

Before they can get their bearings, Jim leaps up on the load of barrels, two six-guns ready.

The men get up, slowly realizing it's just one guy.

LARSON

What the hell is this?

JIM

This? This is where you surrender.

Tense standoff. Suddenly two of the men draw! Jim FIRES dropping the first before he can even get off a shot.

Jim dives to one side to avoid the second man's shot, FIRING as he goes. It's fast, furious.

Jim drills the second man, who spins in agony, colliding with Larson and Slim. A third man draws and fires.

Bullets ripping into the wagon around him, Jim coolly nails the fool -- leg, chest, head. The guy drops.

The remaining men throw up their hands.

LARSON

We're done! We're done!

Jim rises slowly, pistols poised, his eyes darting. The bad guys don't move. They know this guy can go off at any time. But now there's a weird sound. CREAKING and CRACKING from below. Just as Jim glances down --

The floor collapses beneath the weight of the safe and the wagons! With a ROAR, it all plummets into the basement!

INT. WAREHOUSE LOWER FLOOR - NIGHT

Jim lies dazed in the wagon, its wheels pancaked under it. The massive safe has just missed crushing him. A few barrels have broken open under him. In the darkness whatever has spilled out feels like sand. Jim gets to his knees, realizing -- he's lost his guns in the stuff. Then he notices the labels on the barrels -- "TITAN BLASTING POWDER." He's knee-deep in explosives. As he frantically digs in the powder, he hears from above:

LARSON (O.S.)

Get him! Shoot the bastard!

The gang appears above him at the jagged hole, GUNS COCKING. Jim dives aside into the darkness!

Hidden in the shadows, he sneaks along the wall, looking for a way out. He spots a stairway leading up. He heads for it, but light hits him as the stairway door opens above. There stands Slim, his gun drawn. He grins:

SLIM

Aww, you lost your shooters.

Slim gleefully cocks his gun, but Jim reaches into his lapel, pulling out a deadly throwing knife. SWISH! Slim is pinned to the wall by his ear. He screams in agony.

More FOOTSTEPS above. In seconds the other men will be upon him. Jim backs up, looking around, trapped.

Larson and his men clatter down the stairs. They fan out, warily looking for their dangerous prey. But there's no sign of him. Suddenly, with a HISS, a brilliant light flares up. The men spin, aiming their guns. Oh shit! It's a flaming trail of blasting powder -- racing toward the jumble of broken powder kegs!

The horrified gunmen YELL in panic as they scramble over themselves trying to get away. They don't make it.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

We hear the men SCREAMING. Then the whole place goes up in a HUGE EXPLOSION.

The debris rains down all over the street. As the smoke clears, a stunned, awestruck Sheriff Walters peeks out from his hiding place, then edges cautiously up to the smoldering crater.

ANGLE - CRATER

Down in the ruins nothing is recognizable except -- the scorched safe, now lying on its side. Its door THUDS open. And out rises dazed Jim. He looks up at Walters.

JIM

See? Stand up to 'em and they go
all to pieces.

We hear the CLINK of wine glasses and a MOZART QUARTET and

CUT TO:

INT. MANSION - DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: "NEW YORK CITY"

This lavishly decorated room is filled with upper-crust SOCIETY PEOPLE having their version of a good time.

Among them is an elegant and dashing Frenchman, the BARON. He wears pince-nez glasses above a mustache and full beard. He walks with a pronounced stiff-legged limp. At the moment he's sniffing an inferior wine and scowling at a really bad painting. He winces as a hefty Margaret Dumont type society MATRON slinks flirtatiously up behind him.

MATRON

Oh Baron, so here's where you've
been hiding. All the ladies are
asking about you, but I told them
you are mine tonight!

(re the painting)

Ah, the Baron appreciates a fine
painting, n'est-ce-pas?

The Baron tries to overlook her godawful French and responds indulgently in a Pepe le Pew FRENCH ACCENT:

BARON
In-croy-able.

MATRON
(translating)
In-croy-able...? Incredible, yes?

BARON
Incredible, yes, that this charlatan
has found anyone to buy these
paintings. Ah, but perhaps the poor
man is, how you say, paralyzed and
is forced to hold the paint brush in
his mouth, non?

The lady is speechless. The Baron notices a man urgently
beckoning to him from across the room. It is POMEROY, a
shifty-eyed business tycoon

BARON
Ah! I am desolate to be pulled from
your large presence! But I believe
I am required... uh, you would say
"yonder."

And he hurries away from the overheated, disappointed dame.

INT. MANSION - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Pomeroy ushers the Baron and three other distinguished
GENTLEMEN into the richly appointed library. Suddenly
serious, he locks the door and crosses to a bookshelf.

POMEROY
Gentlemen, down to the real business
of the evening. Allow me to present
our...
(American accent)
... piece de resistance.
(to the Baron)
Is that how you parlay it, Baron?

The Baron smiles graciously and corrects his French:

BARON
Piece de resistance, Monsieur.

POMEROY
Uh... yes...

Pomeroy swings open a section of bookshelf revealing a hidden
compartment. And there stands -- a gleaming brass, carriage-
mounted Gatling gun. Pomeroy proudly rolls it into the room.
The men are impressed.

POMEROY

Dr. Gatling's latest model. Fires
eighty rounds without reloading.

GENTLEMAN

How many of these do you have, sir?

Pomeroy smiles as he moves to a side table and opens a box
of expensive cigars.

POMEROY

Sixteen. All of them freshly, shall
we say, "removed" from a poorly
guarded local armory. And available
to you at a very reasonable price.
Cigars, gentlemen?

The three gentlemen gather round, taking cigars.

Unseen by them, the Baron has moved away and is pulling
something strange out of his pants leg -- a loaded magazine
for the Gatling gun.

GENTLEMAN

Mighty effective, I'd imagine, for
keeping the damn regulators out of
my business. Let's talk money.

Pomeroy smiles greedily and toasts them:

POMEROY

My kind of music.

KER-KLATCH. They all turn at the sound. The Baron is sliding
the magazine into the Gatling gun.

POMEROY

(nervously)
Uh... Baron, sir, what...? Uh... ne
touchez la...

To their horror, the smiling Baron starts calmly cranking
away -- BLAMBLAMBLAMBLAMBLAM!!!

Pomeroy and his terrified guests hit the floor. But the
Baron aims just above them, strafing the oak-paneled wall.

The Baron pauses. He now aims the smoking gun barrels at
the men as they poke their startled faces up from behind the
furniture.

Then he notices another big, awful painting by the same no-
talent painter. He swivels the big gun --

BLAMBLAMBLAM! -- and decimates it. He sighs, satisfied:

BARON

Art lovers will thank me.

He swings the gun back onto the baffled men. Pomeroy's enraged client turns to him.

GENTLEMAN

Who is this madman?!

POMEROY

The... the Baron! He said he came with you.

GENTLEMAN

He most certainly did not!

POMEROY

Well, then who the hell...?!

They stop in mid-argument, wide-eyed as they see --

The Baron removing his fake mustache and beard. He drops his pince-nez, along with his French accent. He is in fact:

ARTEMUS

Artemus Gordon, U.S. Marshal. And you, my good sir, are under arrest for possession of stolen Government property...

Artemus takes a sip of wine, wincing at the flavor.

ARTEMUS

...And for serving a decidedly inferior Pouilly-Fuisse.

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE - ESTABLISH - DAY

It looks pretty much the same except for the dirt driveway and the herd of sheep tending the lawn.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY

The doors fly open and in marches PRESIDENT ULYSSES S. GRANT, a cigar in his teeth, followed by COLONEL RICHARDS, a veteran lawman, and Grant's diffident assistant PANGBORN.

GRANT

Don't try to bamboozle me, Colonel. Has another scientist been kidnapped or not?

RICHARDS

(apologetic)

Well, yes sir. A Professor Morton,
but with just a little more time,
sir, I can assure you a breakthrough
on this case...

Grant marches to his desk, flinging his spent cigar into an ashtray.

GRANT

Listen, in two days I'm embarking on
a tour of the western territories.
And I want to know at least one
problem is being handled competently
in my absence.

RICHARDS

Of course, sir, that's why I've
assigned a new man. And he's no
ordinary Marshal. He's quite
sophisticated. Three college degrees.
A master of disguise. Speaks
French...

GRANT

(unimpressed)

French?

RICHARDS

Yes sir.

GRANT

French? Damn it, I want my own man
on this case. Somebody I trust.
Somebody who doesn't mind breaking
up the furniture!

CRASH! They HEAR a SCUFFLE outside the door. The President smiles. He glances at his watch.

GRANT

Sounds like him now.

The doors fly open. TWO GUARDS are tossed onto the carpet. Jim stands over them, straightening his gun-belt.

JIM

Sorry, sir. What's this about no
guns in the White House?

Grant walks over to greet him.

GRANT

Captain West...

They shake hands warmly.

JIM

Mr. President, good to see you again,
sir.

(re the guards)

Sorry about all that.

GRANT

(to the guards)

That'll be all, boys.

The guards get up and leave. Jim nods to them:

JIM

Good work. Really.

GRANT

This is Colonel Richards.

JIM

Nice to finally meet you, sir.

Jim shakes hands with a baffled Richards who turns helplessly to Grant and blusters:

RICHARDS

Why surely, Mr. President, there
must be some mistake. I mean...

GRANT

A mistake? To assign this case to
the man who blew up all the bridges
on the Chattanooga River and single-
handedly trapped Jackson's entire
cavalry? How is that a mistake?

Richards stews but he knows when to shut up. Grant turns to Jim and gestures to a pile of newspapers on his desk.

GRANT

Here's the problem, James. Somebody
has been abducting this country's
best scientists.

(pointedly to Richards)

That's eight in the last three years.
It's becoming a national scandal...
and God knows I've had enough of
those.

Grant goes to get another cigar, but his humidor is empty.
He starts searching the room for a cigar during:

JIM

Eight? Is there some connection?

JIM

Did they know each other?

RICHARDS

No. No connection at all. Other than the fact that each one was a top man in his field. A chemist, an expert on electricity...

PANGBORN

... a railroad engineer, a ballistics expert...

GRANT

Etcetera, etcetera. The terrible thing of it is they've all turned up dead a number of months later. Brutally murdered.

(re the newspapers)

And I have little doubt the same fate awaits this last poor fellow.

He opens another humidor -- damn, it's empty.

JIM

But what would anyone have to gain from all this...? Unless it were a foreign power.

GRANT

Exactly. Any number of nations would love to cripple our scientific growth. And what better way to tip the scales in their favor than by killing off the greatest minds this country has produced.

He is now looking from one ashtray to another.

GRANT

We find ourselves at the dawn of the Golden Age of Science. And it is the God-given destiny of this glorious nation to carry the torch that lights the way!

JIM

(impressed)

Nicely said, sir.

GRANT

(tossing it off)

Part of some speech they wrote for this trip I'm taking.

Grant fishes an unappealing half-smoked cigar from an ashtray, then catches himself:

GRANT
 Goddamnit! What am I doing?
 (to Pangborn)
 What's happened to all my cigars?
 (to Jim)
 Colonel Richards here has had a dozen
 agents on these cases for over a
 year. No arrests, no leads, no
 clues...

JIM
 And?

GRANT
 And now the job's yours.

Grant smiles for the first time.

GRANT
 You start in the morning. Pangborn
 here will make all the arrangements...
 as soon as he brings a goddamned
 cigar for the President of the
 goddamned United States!

As Pangborn scurries out, we hear a STEAM WHISTLE BLOWING
 and we:

CUT TO:

EXT. THE C STREET TRAIN STATION - PLATFORM - DAY

The train platform bustles with TRAVELERS and PORTERS. Jim moves through it all, his saddlebags over his shoulder. He stops short at the amazing sight of a strange vehicle -- a heavy-duty bicycle outfitted with an early, LOUDLY ROARING, smoke-belching internal combustion engine. The Harley Hog of its day -- the NITRO-CYCLE.

Its high-strung INVENTOR shouts at his ASSISTANT who is trying to drive the vehicle up a ramp onto a freight car.

INVENTOR
 Gently, gently. It's not a horse,
 you idiot!

Jim gazes at the amazing contraption but keeps moving toward --

ANGLE - STEAM ENGINE NUMBER FOUR

A gleaming, steaming, new state-of-the-art steam engine waits at the platform.

Jim eyes the train. Can this be the one? It's just an engine, tender car and two custom private passenger cars. He pulls out his orders to double-check.

Up in the cab is the engineer, DOYLE, a tough little Irishman whose chaw of tobacco gives him the look of a chipmunk in a derby hat. Jim calls to him:

JIM
I'm looking for a train. Supposed to be on track three. Did it leave already?

Doyle spits out a stream of tobacco juice and smiles:

DOYLE
Yes sir and no sir. Yes sir if you're not who I think you are. And no sir if you are.

Jim cuts to the chase:

JIM
Look, I'm Captain James West...

DOYLE
Well, Captain, then the answer is your train is still here.

Jim eyes the train. It doesn't look long enough.

DOYLE
Your private train, sir.

JIM
Private train?

DOYLE
(confidentially)
That would be correct. Orders from the President himself. Transportation at your beck and call. No delays.
(shaking his head)
Although, the government's generosity takes me a tad by surprise, as well.

He hops down, doffs his derby, and pumps Jim's hand:

DOYLE

Doyle's the name, sir. Of the Connemara Doyles. And there's not a man riding the rails who holds a candle to meself. That having been said, sir, you're five minutes late so let's be on our way! Your friend's already aboard.

JIM

My friend?

EXT. THE WANDERER - PARLOUR CAR - OBSERVATION DECK - DAY

Jim reaches the end of the train and spots a plaque affixed to the ornate railing: "The Wanderer." Not a bad name.

But as he climbs the steps he hears -- VIOLIN MUSIC? It's coming from inside. He swings the door open curiously.

INT. THE WANDERER - PARLOUR CAR - DAY

Jim stands in the doorway, impressed at the sight of the richly furnished interior -- a Victorian parlour on wheels.

Half-unpacked crates and steamer trunks are scattered about. Incongruously, there's a work table in one corner cluttered with tools and lab equipment.

The VIOLIN MUSIC continues and now, out of the narrow passage at the head of the car, steps Artemus -- playing the violin, and not too badly. Artemus spots Jim but is lost in the music:

ARTEMUS

Just three more measures...

Finishing with a flourish, he comes back to earth, smiling.

ARTEMUS

J. S. Bach.

JIM

Jim West.

ARTEMUS

Artemus Gordon.
 (off Jim's confused
 look)
 Bach, he's the composer.

JIM

I don't mind him, but who the hell are you... my valet or something?

ARTEMUS

Valet? You jest of course. I am a U.S. Marshal.

JIM

Funny. So am I.

ARTEMUS

Congratulations. Unfortunately, my train is about to leave, and I really must insist you disembark.

JIM

Your train? Listen, friend, you're obviously lost.

(pulling out his orders)

... I've got orders here to take possession of this train and to investigate a certain crime.

ARTEMUS

(pulls out his orders)

Interesting. Mine say the same thing, and they don't mention you, not even as a valet, although we could talk...

Jim takes a glance at Artemus' orders and thrusts them back.

JIM

Just another bureaucratic foul-up. You know how these pencil-pushers are. So, why don't you just run on back and explain what happened?

ARTEMUS

Funny, I was just thinking you should do the same. Since I am already in residence, and am obviously the man for the job, it's been grand making your acquaintance, sir. And best of luck in all your future endeavors.

Artemus steps to the rear door and swings it open for Jim to leave. Jim can't believe this dude's moxie.

JIM

You're quite the wordsmith, fiddle boy. But nobody smooth-talks his way into my assignment.

ARTEMUS

If you're implying our little
imbroglio has reached an impasse
whose only resolution can be found
in a more primitive fashion, then I
for one am fully prepared to do so...
al fresco.

And with that, Artemus throws open the door, gesturing
outside.

JIM

Suits me fine. I'm just glad you
got to the end of that sentence.

Jim eagerly steps out, ready to take this joker. Artemus
pauses by the door to talk into the end of a speaking tube:

ARTEMUS

Mr. Doyle. We're ready. Full steam
ahead, if you please.

EXT. THE WANDERER - PARLOUR CAR - OBSERVATION DECK - DAY

Jim steps off the car, pulling off his jacket. He spins at
the sound of the TRAIN WHISTLE, and is caught off guard by
Artemus giving him a swift kick.

Jim staggers back across the platform, crashing into a stack
of luggage and is buried under an avalanche. As the train
lurches forward, Artemus calls pleasantly:

ARTEMUS

And it's not a fiddle, it's a violin.

Jim angrily tosses luggage aside, scrambles to his feet and
sprints down the crowded platform -- but he'll never catch
the train.

As he slows angrily to a stop, he HEARS:

INVENTOR (O.S.)

Throttle, you damnable idiot! More
throttle!

The inventor is still browbeating his assistant as he shows
him how to operate the ROARING Nitro-Cycle.

INVENTOR

Oh, get off, you useless nitwit!
Let me do it!

The inventor shoves the hapless man off the vehicle and starts
to climb on himself. But Jim rushes over.

JIM
Excuse me. I need this.

And he leaps onto the machine.

INVENTOR
What? Get off, sir! This is the
Nitro-Cycle! The only one of its
kind!

Jim fiddles with the controls.

JIM
Is this how you do it?!

Jim twists the throttle and -- VAROOOM! Up the ramp he sails!
Right into the freight car. There's a brief pause.

Then the Nitro-Cycle blasts back out and takes off up the
platform. All the inventor can do is SCREAM:

INVENTOR
Unhand my machine, you brigand!!

Jim wildly rockets along, managing just barely to steer the
amazingly fast machine around the startled, terrified PEOPLE
who gape at the incomprehensible contrivance ROARING through
their midst!

Jim tests the throttle and cranks it all the way open! The
Nitro-Cycle does a wheelie as FLAMES jet out its exhaust!

He heads for the end of the platform -- a four foot drop!
He hangs on tight and goes airborne! The Nitro-Cycle slams
down, gravel flying, wobbling wildly. But he's able to get
it back under control.

EXT. RAILROAD YARD - DAY

With his eye on the Wanderer, Jim streaks down the tracks
leaving a cloud of blue smoke. The engine SCREAMS, way
overcranked.

INT. THE WANDERER - PARLOUR CAR - MOVING - DAY

Artemus, at his lab table, works on an invention -- a
derringer concealed in an ornate belt buckle. He hears the
peculiar ROAR of the Nitro-Cycle and glances outside.

ANGLE - ARTEMUS' P.O.V. OUT WINDOW

Suddenly Jim appears outside, zooming along on the
inexplicable contraption, keeping pace with the train!

He shoots Artemus a look -- "You're mine, buddy!"

EXT. THE WANDERER - OBSERVATION DECK - DAY

Jim's racing alongside the parlour car. He pulls his feet up onto the seat. Then leaps across to the observation deck, landing gracefully.

The Nitro-Cycle careens off and crashes into a field.

With a satisfied flourish, Jim yanks open the door to find --

Artemus standing there with a big smile, offering a glass of Chateau Margaux '68.

ARTEMUS

Mr. West, I have underestimated you.

Jim, out of breath, fixes him with a cool stare.

JIM

A common mistake, Mr. Gordon.

He decides to accept the peace offering. Jim takes the wine and leans close, deadly serious:

JIM

But don't pull that again.

ARTEMUS

Wouldn't dream of it.

EXT. EASTERN COUNTRYSIDE - THE WANDERER

THUNDERS across the bucolic farmland.

INT. THE WANDERER - PARLOUR CAR - MOVING - DAY

Jim is unpacking his few belongings. Artemus smokes a cigar as he studies the files on the dead scientists.

ARTEMUS

Eight scientists. Eight different fields of endeavor. Hydraulics, optics, ballistics...

JIM

Put them all together and what do we have?

ARTEMUS

(speculating)

A giant... hydraulically operated
microscope... that explodes?

(shrugs)

Or maybe just someone who hates
scientists.

JIM

Then why kidnap them? Why not just
kill them?

ARTEMUS

"Ay, there's the rub." Take a look
at this file on Professor Morton.
Quite a brilliant fellow...
metallurgy.

But as Artemus hands the file to Jim -- CLICK -- a concealed
derringer springs out of his sleeve aimed right at Jim.
Artemus, embarrassed, quickly slides it back up his sleeve
and apologizes.

ARTEMUS

Sorry. Didn't mean that. Just a
little device of mine...

JIM

Wait a minute. Now I know where
I've heard of you. You're the gadget
guy.

ARTEMUS

(indignant)

"Gadget guy?" While I may not be in
a league with these unfortunate
geniuses, I am, sir, in my own humble
way, a man of science.

Artemus proudly flings open a cabinet full of exotic devices
and weapons.

ARTEMUS

My inventions... An arsenal for
fighting crime.

He pulls out a vest adorned with metal buttons.

ARTEMUS

Attractive buttons, yes? But yank
one off, toss it, and poof! It emits
a cloud of sleeping gas.

JIM

You need that real often?

ARTEMUS

Always hoping.
 (grabs another device)
 Or this...

JIM

No offense, but all I ever need...
 (holds up his fists)
 Are these...
 (draws his gun)
 And this.

ARTEMUS

Good Lord, man. The world is
 changing. And mark me, it is always
 the criminal mind that is the first
 to exploit modern invention. We, as
 defenders of the right, must keep
 pace!

JIM

All right, if it'll make you happy,
 I'll try that.

ARTEMUS

Try what?

Jim indicates Artemus' sleeve-gun.

JIM

Your little jack-in-the-box gun.
 That might be useful.

ARTEMUS

(hesitant)
 Well... it's the only one I have.
 It's gotten me out of quite a few
 tight spots...

Then he gets an idea and hands Jim the belt buckle he was
 working on.

ARTEMUS

But here! It's yours. My latest
 concept.

Jim is dubious, but takes the thing.

ARTEMUS

Now slap the buckle like this.

He demonstrates. Jim tries it -- SPROING! A derringer pops
 out, wiggles on its mount -- and promptly falls off,
 CLATTERING to the floor.

JIM
That should put us ahead of the
criminals.

ARTEMUS
I'll work on it.

EXT. PROFESSOR MORTON'S LABORATORY - NIGHT

The remote laboratory sits beside a cornfield. A moving lantern shines through the darkness carried by an old WATCHMAN leading Jim and Artemus to the gate.

WATCHMAN
That's the place. Professor Morton's
laboratory. Ever since he went
missing, I've kept it locked up tight.

A single LIGHT goes on in the dark building.

JIM
So, who's in there now?

INT. PROFESSOR MORTON'S LABORATORY - NIGHT

The door swings open and Jim and Artemus step into the dimly-lit lab. Behind a lab table covered with a jumble of equipment they spot someone moving about. Whoever he is, he's MUTTERING crazily to himself.

They draw their guns and ease around the table to find -- a wild-eyed, unshaven man in filthy clothes squatting on the floor. This is PROFESSOR THADDEUS MORTON. His shirt is ripped open. Tools are scattered around him. He's desperately trying to pry open a strange-looking metal belt locked around his waist.

ARTEMUS
Excuse me...

Morton looks up in terror and dives under the table.

MORTON
No! No!

He scampers on all-fours out the other side of the table, heading for the door. He runs into the watchman.

WATCHMAN
Professor!

MORTON
Help me! Help me!

MORTON

They're after me again! They're after me!

Jim and Artemus glance at each other -- this is the Professor?

JIM

Professor Morton. We're here to help you. We're Federal agents.

WATCHMAN

The God's truth, Professor.

The wild-eyed Professor still isn't sure.

MORTON

Badges! Badges!

Jim and Artemus show him their badges. He calms a little but keeps looking around nervously.

MORTON

I... I got away from them. I got away. They didn't expect it, but I did.

JIM

Who'd you get away from?

MORTON

I don't know. No names. No names. They beat me. I had no choice. I gave them what they wanted.

ARTEMUS

What was that?

MORTON

My research. My formula for a stronger metal. Stronger and lighter. Twelve years and they stole it from me! They said they'd let me go. But no. They were going to kill me like all the others!

Jim grabs the hysterical scientist.

JIM

Calm down, Professor. You're safe with us.

Professor Morton yanks away.

MORTON

No. No, I'm not!

He frantically claws at the metal belt around his waist.

MORTON

Got to remove this belt! That's how they'll get me! Help me!

JIM

Why? What is that?

But the Professor just keeps wildly struggling.

ARTEMUS

Hold still. Let me look at it.

The Professor freezes, but only because he HEARS something. His panicked eyes go even wider. Then we HEAR it -- a HIGH-PITCHED OSCILLATING WHINING NOISE coming closer.

MORTON

Oh God!! The thing!

SMASH!! The window beside them shatters and into the lab flies a bizarre object -- like a wide-winged boomerang, sleek and black, it spins through the air. It arcs high, then banks to one side and streaks with a pulsing, ear-splitting SCREECH straight at Dr. Morton -- homing-in on the metal belt!

MORTON

NO! GOTTA GET AWAY!

He bolts out the door.

EXT. PROFESSOR MORTON'S LABORATORY - NIGHT

The Professor scrambles out, the spinning SCREECHING object following him like a bird of prey! Jim and Artemus sprint after him.

The Professor glances back. The thing is almost on top of him. He hits the dirt. It blasts overhead, barely missing him, then turns and SHRIEKS back toward him. He jumps up, dashing for a tall stand of corn.

EXT. CORNFIELD - NIGHT

The desperate Professor dashes along between rows of corn.

The flying device whips along behind him, slicing the tops off cornstalks as it zeros-in on its doomed target.

CLANK! The vicious thing slams into the Professor's metal belt and locks onto it! He SCREAMS and -- KABOOM!

An explosion lights up the night.

ANGLE - JIM AND ARTEMUS

as they rush to the smoldering crater in the cornfield, staring in bewildered horror. Gun drawn, Jim squints into the darkness for any sign of a perpetrator -- nothing.

Frustrated, he turns back to find Artemus down on his hands and knees beside the crater. Must be sick to his stomach.

JIM
Yeah, this kind of thing used to
make me sick, too.

But Artemus is fine. He's searching the ground. In a moment he spots something and picks it up.

ARTEMUS
Aha!

JIM
Aha?

ARTEMUS
Yes, aha. A brass screw.

JIM
Is this leading somewhere?

ARTEMUS
(trying to be patient)
Potentially. This is the painstaking
process of piecing together clues.
The cornerstone of the modern science
of criminology. Piece by piece we
reconstruct the identity of the
villain.

JIM
Starting with a screw?

ARTEMUS
(annoyed)
Yes. Starting with a screw. Now,
it's not fair of me to expect someone
who's spent his life wrangling with
Western desperadoes to fully
appreciate what I'm doing here, but...

JIM
What about the explosive?

Artemus doesn't get it. Jim picks up a still-smoldering shard of the flying bomb. He sniffs it.

JIM
It's not black powder... It's one of those new nitro-celluloses. Should be easy to find out who made it.

Jim looks innocently at impressed Artemus.

JIM
I think that beats a screw.

Artemus has to agree but he's not going to say it.

EXT. ROBERT & ROSS EXPLOSIVES - DAY

HIGH ANGLE of a bare field pock-marked with craters. KABOOM!! An explosion blows another hole. CAMERA MOVES DOWN to a sign on the roof of a small office -- "Robert & Ross Explosives." CONTINUE DOWN to a window where we see:

INT. ROBERT & ROSS EXPLOSIVES - OFFICE - DAY

Jim and Artemus talk with the company's quirky explosives expert, NORBERT. Throughout the scene test EXPLOSIONS from outside jolt the room. Each time, Jim and Artemus flinch. But Norbert is oblivious. Jim hands him the fragment of the flying bomb.

NORBERT
Murder weapon you say...?

JIM
That's right. We've been to every powder maker between here and Philadelphia. Nobody knows what the stuff is.

Norbert sniffs the residue of the powder, fingers it.

NORBERT
Should've come to me first. No question. Special batch. Custom order. I remember it.

KABLAM! The building shakes. Norbert matter-of-factly catches a falling book.

JIM
Do you remember who ordered it?

NORBERT
Nope. Don't have to. Keep records of everything.

He rolls his chair over to a desk piled impossibly high with papers. Jim and Artemus glance at each other -- this will take forever. But Norbert just stares at the stack like a cat watching a bird and suddenly snatches out the exact piece of paper.

NORBERT

(reads)

Lansbury Rock and Gravel... of New Orleans, Louisiana. A limestone quarry. Funny, don't know why they'd be blowing people up.

And the building is rocked by another mighty BLAST.

EXT. FARMLAND - THE WANDERER - DAY

The Wanderer barrels along, heading south.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS - ST. CHARLES AVENUE - NIGHT

Gas lamps light the cobblestone streets in the well-to-do Garden District of New Orleans. Spanish moss drapes the trees. Jim and Artemus ride along in a carriage, Doyle at the reins. They stop at a tall, ornate iron gate.

DOYLE

Forty-three St. Charles Avenue?

They look off, confused. This is no mining operation. This is --

ANGLE - MIGUELITO'S MANSION

Elegant in a weird, overstated way. The theme park version of itself. And, at the moment, a line of fancy broughams and cabriolets parade through the carriage entrance as turbaned FOOTMEN rush to help PARTY GUESTS descend. Classical MUSIC wafts toward us.

BACK TO SCENE

Baffled Jim and Artemus recheck the address.

ARTEMUS

Limestone quarry?

JIM

(shrugs)

Limestone quarry, Southern mansion. Easy to get them mixed up... I say we invite ourselves to the party.

ARTEMUS

Absolutely. Have to look for clues...
even if it means dancing with
beautiful women.

Artemus pulls a leather case from his jacket. It's a make-up kit complete with mustaches, eyeglasses, etc.

ARTEMUS

Doyle, once around the park. I need
a moment to prepare.

JIM

Prepare what?

ARTEMUS

My disguise. And here...

As the carriage moves off, Artemus hands Jim the belt with the concealed derringer.

ARTEMUS

(re Jim's sidearm)
One doesn't attend these soirees
packing a forty-four.
(off Jim's dubious
look)
Don't worry. I fixed it.

EXT. MIGUELITO'S MANSION - CARRIAGE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Doyle pulls up to the entrance. The turbaned footmen rush to open the carriage doors. Jim steps down. No six-gun, but wearing the concealed belt buckle derringer.

Artemus follows. Disguised with a trim waxed mustache and a long wig, he wraps a flamboyant scarf around his neck. Holding a silver-handled walking stick, he tips his hat at a rakish angle and speaks with an affected ENGLISH ACCENT:

ARTEMUS

Come Llewellyn, don't tarry.

JIM

Call me that again, and you're going
to find a boot where it doesn't
belong.

ARTEMUS

(explaining)
Jim, people talk to foreigners, speak
more openly, especially to those as
famous as I, Chauncey McNeil
Armstrong, English lyric poet.

Jim resigns himself to his fate. As they head for the entrance, he unhappily adjusts his belt buckle.

JIM
Does this thing shoot real bullets?

INT. MIGUELITO'S MANSION - FRONT HALL - NIGHT

Jim and Artemus step into the huge entrance hall and survey the unusual scene. Not your average society bash. The well-heeled CROWD is a bit eccentric with a Bohemian bent. Whites, blacks, mulattos, Creoles and Cajuns mingle. Liberated LADIES smoke cigarettes. A MAN saunters past with a monkey perched on his shoulder.

SERVANTS wearing fezzes offer champagne. Somewhere a STRING QUARTET plays Mozart.

Suddenly a very large hand reaches down to Jim and Artemus. They look up into the ominous face of -- VOLTAIRE, at nearly eight-feet tall he's the world's biggest butler. They smile tensely, hand him their hats and coats, and move off into the crowd.

JIM
That's a lot of butler.

ARTEMUS
Quite. Come, let's mingle.

JIM
Do your own mingling. I'm not hanging around with some dandy named Chauncey.

And Jim swerves away. Artemus shrugs:

ARTEMUS
It's lonely being a poet.

He steps up to a boisterous GENTLEMAN, introducing himself:

ARTEMUS
Good evening, sir. Chauncey McNeil Armstrong.

The gentleman points off:

GENTLEMAN
Why, yes. Mr. Armstrong I believe is on the veranda regaling the ladies with some of his verse. But I didn't get your name, sir.

Oops. Artemus needs a new identity fast.

INT. GRAND SALON - NIGHT

Jim strolls along, nodding pleasantly to the guests. He pauses to admire a large painting -- Rembrandt's "David Slaying Goliath." Surprisingly the painting changes into Jacques Louis David's portrait of "The Emperor Napoleon."

(It's some kind of lantern-slide rear-projection system.)

It's then he notices the mansion features a variety of quirky inventions. But even as he studies the place, he's being studied as well.

We see her face through the crowd -- CASSANDRA THOMPSON, a stunning Southern beauty whose seductive charms mask a single-minded toughness.

Her eyes on the good-looking stranger across the room, she listens with only feigned interest to the boring chatter of the people around her.

Jim continues through the room when, from behind him:

CASSANDRA

Taittinger?

He turns to her. This weird party has just gotten a lot more interesting. She offers him a glass of champagne.

JIM

Thank you, ma'am, but I never touch anything I can't pronounce.

She smiles the kind of smile that makes a man forget his name.

CASSANDRA

I'm Miss Thompson... Cassandra Thompson. Can you pronounce that?

Jim's surprised by her forwardness, but he rolls with it:

JIM

Possibly. With some practice.

They stare at one another for a moment too long, then:

JIM

My name's Tyler. Frank Tyler. Pleased to meet you, ma'am.

CASSANDRA

I get that feeling.

CASSANDRA

You know, Mr. Tyler, I'm the kind of woman who doesn't believe men are much more than a complete waste of time. But after spying you across the room, I'm tempted to suspend my disbelief, at least for the evening.

JIM

You know, ma'am, you remind me of a pearl-handled pistol I once owned. A beautiful thing to look at, but too hot to handle.

CASSANDRA

I don't recollect ever being compared to a pistol before.

Shall I take that as a compliment?

JIM

Please do. I'm a man who appreciates a good firearm.

CASSANDRA

Really?

JIM

Well, where I come from it kind of goes with the territory.
(off her quizzical look)
Texas.

CASSANDRA

(seductively)
My... the wild west.

Jim studies her and smiles charmingly:

JIM

You don't know how wild.

ANGLE - A HAND

stealthily snatches a gold pen from the pocket of a PASSING GUEST. REVEAL the pickpocket is Artemus who has abandoned the Chauncey disguise. He's ditched the wig, grown a goatee, and grayed his hair.

He glides over to a cute MAID, setting the purloined pen on her tray, speaking in a seductive ITALIAN ACCENT:

ARTEMUS

Please, Signora, I have brought this fine gold pen all the way from Milano. A little surprise for my gracious host. But, silly me, I am too embarrassed to give it to him. So, if you would only, for me, put it on his desk in his private office, wherever that might be, then I, Giuseppe Verdi, am your faithful servant.

The infatuated maid smiles, hurrying off with the "gift."

ANGLE - JIM AND CASSANDRA

still moving through the party.

CASSANDRA

Well, sir, you are proving to be one of my more interesting guests.

JIM

Your guests, ma'am?

CASSANDRA

Yes, in a way. I'm the Doctor's social secretary. I handle his correspondence, send out the invitations, you know.

Jim tries not to look worried, but she sees through him.

CASSANDRA

Oh, don't worry. I've already overlooked the fact your name's not actually on our guest list.

JIM

Well, I owe you one, don't I?

CASSANDRA

You most certainly do.

Just then the room resounds with a TRUMPET FANFARE.

ANGLE - TWO UNIFORMED TRUMPETERS

playing a fanfare as Voltaire grandly swings open a set of double-doors.

CASSANDRA ESCORTS JIM OVER:

CASSANDRA

Come, you're in for a treat.

A mysterious woman, ANTOINETTE, steps forward to announce:

ANTOINETTE

Ladies and gentleman... A man of
science, invention, and great genius.
Your host, Dr. Miguelito Loveless!

ANGLE - THROUGH THE DOORS

Marching toward us, like a king making a entrance, comes a tall, elegant gentleman, a glass of wine in his hand.

The party guests APPLAUD, delighted at the sight.

GUESTS

Such a sense of humor... What an
entrance... Brilliant!

Then, strangely, just as he's about to come through the doors, in from the side steps a little man -- three and a half feet tall, identically dressed and also holding a glass of wine. We realize we've been looking at his elongated reflection in a warped funhouse mirror. This is DR. MIGUELITO LOVELESS, whose genius, refinement and towering ego more than compensate for his lack of physical stature.

He takes a bow. The guests all APPLAUD. Jim doesn't know what to make of all this. Miguelito greets his guests as Cassandra escorts Jim over to him.

CASSANDRA

Dr. Loveless, allow me to introduce
Mr. Tyler... from Texas.

They shake hands. Miguelito scans Jim with a studied eye, then smiles slyly at Cassandra.

MIGUELITO

A new friend?

CASSANDRA

We'll see.

JIM

A pleasure, Dr. Loveless. You're
obviously a man of many talents.

Miguelito eyes him with apparent suspicion.

MIGUELITO

Yes, and among them the facility for
seeing straight through a person.
Indeed, to know their secret thoughts.
For example, I can tell what you're
thinking right now...

Jim tenses, wondering if the little man is on to him.

MIGUELITO
You're thinking... "he's really
short!"

A tense moment. Then Miguelito bursts into laughter.

Cassandra and the guests join in. Jim smiles.

JIM
I admire a man with a sense of humor.

MIGUELITO
When you're three and a half feet
tall, sir, life turns you into a
comedian whether you like it or
not.... Come with me, won't you?

Miguelito leads Jim and Cassandra toward the doors to the veranda. Jim is surprised when a well-muscled brute, BRUNO, falls into protective step right behind our host. Jim glances back at the lug and smiles sweetly. Miguelito shouts off:

MIGUELITO
More Mozart, please!

Another Mozart QUARTET instantly fills the air. But we now see it's coming from an amazing contraption -- an automated string quartet machine.

EXT. MIGUELITO'S MANSION - VERANDA - NIGHT

Miguelito, with Bruno still shadowing him, leads Jim and Cassandra out onto the veranda, crowded with more guests.

JIM
I must compliment you on Miss
Thompson... an exceptionally charming
assistant.

MIGUELITO
Thank you. I confess to a
preoccupation with acquiring precisely
that which the world says I cannot
have.

The veranda overlooks a pond surrounded by acres of beautifully tailored gardens. Party lanterns hang everywhere, lighting the whole area brilliantly.

As they walk, Miguelito seems to be getting taller. He's actually walking up a ramp onto a platform. Voltaire steps over and silently hands him a double-barrel shotgun.

Miguelito takes a deep breath and:

MIGUELITO

PULL!

We see two SERVANTS standing by two unusual devices -- all springs and levers. One of them pulls a lever --

And a glass ball, sparkling in the light of a hundred lanterns, is launched high into the night sky. Miguelito snaps the shotgun up and FIRES, blowing the ball into a million scintillating shards that splash melodically into the pond.

OOHS and AHHS and APPLAUSE. Miguelito turns to a dapper MALE GUEST and gestures to another shotgun being held by Voltaire:

MIGUELITO

Be my guest.

The man's FRIENDS goad him on. He embarrassedly takes the gun and assumes the shooting position.

Another glass ball is launched. He shoots. He misses. His friends LAUGH. He hands back the gun. Voltaire reloads it. Miguelito smiles pleased and looks around.

MIGUELITO

Anyone?

CASSANDRA

Here. Mr. Tyler. He claims a certain skill at handling firearms.

MIGUELITO

Wonderful! Our new friend from the wild west. Please...

Jim steps up and takes the shotgun, expertly testing its balance. He nods to the trapmen. A ball is launched. POW. It's history.

More APPLAUSE. Miguelito honors the shot with a slight nod. Jim hands back the gun to Voltaire.

Miguelito raises two fingers to the trapmen. They nod, and launch two balls simultaneously. POW! POW! He expertly blows them both out of the sky. Big APPLAUSE.

All eyes shift to Jim as Voltaire again offers the gun, a clear challenge. Jim takes it, looking Miguelito right in the eye. Then he turns to the trapmen.

Two fingers. Two balls. Two shots. Score tied. Even bigger APPLAUSE!

Miguelito's impressed.

MIGUELITO

Very good, sir! I think my guest might be a sharpshooter by trade.

JIM

No, sir... just a businessman.

MIGUELITO

Really? Must be a dangerous business.

JIM

I deal with some tough customers.

Miguelito smiles. Figuring he can hustle this cowboy, he lays a hundred dollar bill on the table. The crowd reacts. This is a lot of money.

MIGUELITO

Continue doubles to the first miss?

The crowd watches. Cassandra watches, eyes flashing. She likes this action.

Jim coolly matches the bet. CHEERS from the crowd. Miguelito smiles and reloads.

Miguelito's turn. BOOM! BOOM! The guy never misses.

Jim nods graciously and holds up -- three fingers.

MIGUELITO

(snickering)

Sir... I believe you have only two barrels.

JIM

How embarrassing. Did I hold up three fingers?

Then he holds up -- four fingers.

The rattled trapmen look to Miguelito -- what do we do? He scowls. Is this guy for real? But he gives them the nod.

Four balls fly at once. Jim snaps up the shotgun -- POW! POW! -- that's two. He drops the gun and swiftly reaches left and right, pulling a six-gun out of Voltaire's jacket and another one out of Bruno's belt. BLAM! BLAM!

He breaks the last two balls just before they hit the water!

The crowd goes bonkers. Cassandra stares at Jim downright hungrily. Jim hands the guns back to their owners.

JIM

You know, you really shouldn't loan your guns to strangers.

Miguelito's not having fun anymore. A SERVANT rushes up, whispering to him urgently. Miguelito nods to his guests:

MIGUELITO

Will you excuse me? Perhaps Quick-Draw here can give you all some pointers.

(to Cassandra)

Miss Thompson, come!

With an apologetic smile to Jim, Cassandra hurries to follow them. Jim tries not to be too obvious as he follows them out.

INT. MIGUELITO'S MANSION - THE GRAND SALON - NIGHT

Jim glides into the salon, catching sight of the hurried group disappearing into a dark, wood-paneled library. He ambles over and develops a fascination for a Chinese vase near the open door. But Bruno closes the door. Damn.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - SERVANTS' STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Artemus peeks out the servant's stairway into the long hallway. He ducks as the pretty maid he spoke to earlier comes out an impressive set of doors. She walks past unseen Artemus. The coast is clear. He strolls down the hall.

He stops at the doors, pulling a pen-sized object from his pocket. He holds it up to the keyhole and squints through the end of it.

ANGLE - ARTEMUS' P.O.V. - A FISH-EYE VIEW

of Miguelito's office.

BACK TO SCENE

Artemus smiles and tests the doors -- locked. No problem. Out of his lapel he pulls a concealed lockpick. CLICKETY-CLICK. Door's open. He slips inside.

INT. MIGUELITO'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Artemus locks the door behind him. An oversized desk with a small, throne-like chair dominates the office which is cluttered with papers and books. A row of portraits adorn the wall: Miguelito as Ramses, Miguelito as Caesar, Miguelito as Richard the Lionhearted.

Artemus moves quickly to the desk and starts looking through the papers, reading from a stack of receipts:

ARTEMUS

"Loveless Carriage Company, Baltimore,
Maryland... Loveless Investments
Limited, Atlanta, Georgia..."

INT. MIGUELITO'S MANSION - GRAND SALON - NIGHT

Jim is still outside the library. The doors open and

Voltaire lumbers out. Jim gets a quick look inside --

Miguelito sits at a writing table, taking down information given him by a tall, imposing GRAY-BEARDED MAN to whom he is unusually deferential. The man paces the room, unhappy about something.

Jim eyes the man. He recognizes him but can't place him.

Miguelito uses an ink blotter to dry the ink and thrusts the paper at Bruno, who takes it and hurries out.

Miguelito escorts the mysterious man out, giving Jim the cold shoulder. Cassandra smiles, coming over.

CASSANDRA

You must excuse the Doctor. No one
has ever beaten him at his little
game.

JIM

I don't like to lose, either.

Jim steps over to the string quartet machine, now playing a QUADRILLE. He slides a control lever over to "WALTZ."

The machine shudders and segues into "The Blue Danube."

JIM

I assume, Miss Thompson, that you
waltz.

Of course she does. Jim whirls her off across the floor.

INT. MIGUELITO'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Artemus notices on a shelf beside the desk -- a scale model of a cannon, but it's a cannon outfitted with all manner of pistons, gears and flywheels. A pressure hose connects it to a small steam engine. Intrigued, Artemus gingerly throws the lever on the engine.

With a HISS the cannon comes to life, automatically pivoting as it RAPID-FIRES marble-sized cannonballs with steam pressure -- FOOSH! FOOSH!

The balls fly across the room, knocking over a row of tin soldiers.

Artemus is impressed. He spots a little brass plate on the steam engine:

ARTEMUS

"Loveless Steam Engine Works, Houston,
Texas."

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

The romantic waltz continues. Jim dances Cassandra right out of the Grand Salon into the dark, empty library.

CASSANDRA

Have you taken a wrong turn, Mr.
Tyler?

JIM

You tell me.

CASSANDRA

I'm not so sure Dr. Loveless would
like to find his social secretary
dancing in the dark with an uninvited
stranger.

JIM

Forgive me, but you don't strike me
as the social secretary type.

CASSANDRA

Thank you. But the truth is, I'm a
single woman in a man's world. That
leaves me very few choices, doesn't
it?

JIM

I suppose so. But life can be hard
for a man, too.

They drift closer and closer. Cassandra whispers heatedly:

CASSANDRA
Oh, I know well how hard things can
get for a man.

She presses against him, their lips are only inches apart when we hear a soft metallic CLICK. Her eyes widen with interest.

CASSANDRA
Speak of the Devil.

She glances down, surprised to see what's got her attention isn't part of Jim's anatomy. It's the concealed derringer which has popped out uninvited. Jim clicks it back into place, embarrassed.

JIM
Just a little insurance... against
the unexpected.

CASSANDRA
Would that include me?

JIM
Oh, I would hope not.

He kicks the door shut. They've both reached the boiling point and they're in each others arms in a flash. They kiss greedily.

As she pulls Jim's jacket off, he's backing her across the dark room, kicking chairs and foot-stools out of his way until he's got her up against the end of the writing table. She rips his shirt open and starts hungrily devouring his chest. But Jim is mixing business with pleasure. Over her shoulder he's trying to get a closer look at --

ANGLE - JIM'S P.O.V. - THE INK BLOTTER

Miguelito has just used -- the reversed blotchy letters of a name are soaked into it.

BACK TO SCENE

Cassandra heatedly throws herself onto the table and, with one sweep of her arm, sends everything on it cascading to the floor. She grabs Jim and pulls him down on top of her. They're going at it like sharks in a feeding frenzy.

Whatever Jim's doing to her, Cassandra can't help but start MOANING. She comes up for air.

CASSANDRA
You've... done... this... before.

JIM
I've had some practice.

And with that, Jim grabs her and rolls the both of them off the table to the floor.

CASSANDRA
Yes! I like it on the floor.

Jim's looking around and spots the fallen ink blotter slowly swiveling to a stop beneath the table.

JIM
Under the table.

He grabs her, rolling with her under the table.

CASSANDRA
Yes!

In her frenzy, Cassandra knocks the ink blotter skittering off against the far wall. Jim looks at it hopelessly then -- buries his face in her neck.

CASSANDRA
Yes... yes...

And he rips off her pearl necklace with his teeth. Pearls scatter everywhere.

JIM
Oh, I am sorry.

Jim crawls straight for the ink blotter, scooping up pearls as he goes.

CASSANDRA
To hell with them!

And Cassandra practically tackles him against the wall, rolling with him until she comes up astride her stud. She wildly yanks off his belt and tosses it. Now Jim rolls on top of her, making a lunge for the blotter. He snags it!

And, below frame, Cassandra has snagged what she's after. As Jim's face registers appreciation for her well-practiced ministrations, he strains upward with the blotter toward a mirror above him.

Finally he's able to glimpse the reflection of the blotter. The letters, now reversed, can be easily read:

"V. L. Pemberton"

Jim can't help but express his happiness:

JIM

Yes!

EXT. THE WANDERER - DAWN

As dawn breaks, FOLLOW a wire down from a telegraph pole into the parlour car. We HEAR A TELEGRAPH CLICKING.

INT. THE WANDERER - PARLOUR CAR - DAWN

CLOSE ON the CLICKING telegraph key. PULL BACK to see Jim hunched over it while Artemus hovers in the background. Jim sits back with the message.

JIM

Doctor V. L. Pemberton. I knew it. He's a scientist all right. Inventor of the Pemberton Condensed Steam Engine. I'm telling you, Artemus, Loveless is our man.

ARTEMUS

Whoa, Jim. Maybe. But we can't arrest this little pillar of society on maybe.

JIM

All right. How about this? We put a watch on this Pemberton, somebody tries to grab him...

ARTEMUS

Then we've got our proof. Excellent. And where do we find this fortunate scientist?

The telegraph key starts CLICKING again. Jim holds up his hand for silence. They listen, both translating:

JIM/ARTEMUS

"Opel... ousas... Louisiana."

Jim grabs the speaking tube and shouts to Doyle:

JIM

Mr. Doyle! We're off to Opelousas, Louisiana, wherever the hell that is! How soon can we leave?

BAM -- the train instantly JOLTS forward. Doyle's voice rings back through the tube:

DOYLE (V.O.)
 Would that be soon enough for ya,
 sir?

Jim smiles, impressed. He and Artemus settle back for the journey.

ARTEMUS
 You know your Morse Code almost as
 well as I.

JIM
 Almost?

ARTEMUS
 Yes. Now, observe....

He starts winking his eyes, one eye then the other, in an exaggerated way. Jim stares at the strange sight.

JIM
 You feeling all right?

ARTEMUS
 Come on, Jim. I'm serious.
 (points to his right
 eye)
 Dot...
 (and to his left eye)
 Dash. It'll be our secret means of
 communication should we ever need
 it.

He gives Jim a quick flurry of winks.

ARTEMUS
 Now, what was that?

JIM
 You're either having a seizure or
 you just said "hello."

ARTEMUS
 Good, I wasn't sure you were up to
 it.

Jim leans forward and angrily winks a message back.

Artemus is insulted.

ARTEMUS
 No need for profanity.

EXT. LOUISIANA - RAILROAD TRACKS - DAY

Billowing clouds of smoke and steam trail from the Wanderer as it thunders across the delta.

EXT. OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA - ESTABLISH - DAY

The little town is a charming jumble of antebellum brick and wooden buildings.

EXT. OPELOUSAS - NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Artemus and Jim hurry along a muddy street looking for an address in a row of houses. They spot it and rush up the steps. When Jim knocks on the door it swings open partway, unlocked. Bad sign. Jim pulls his gun. Artemus nudges the door open with his walking stick.

INT. DR. PEMBERTON'S HOUSE - FRONT HALL - DAY

Jim and Artemus ease inside, listening. All is silent. Then -- PLINK, PLINK, PLINK. Water is dripping down the stairwell, faster and faster, now starting to pour.

JIM

Dr. Pemberton? Are you there?

No answer, so they race up the stairs.

INT. DR. PEMBERTON'S HOUSE - LABORATORY - DAY

BAM! The locked door is smashed open by Jim. As he charges in we see Artemus crouched in the doorway, his lockpick poised where the lock used to be.

The room is a cluttered, top-floor workshop. Nobody there. Steam billows from a small test boiler. And the water is pouring from a spigot in a holding tank, left running, overflowing a bucket. Artemus sloshes over and shuts it off.

ARTEMUS

Seems like he left in a hurry...

Outside, they hear a SCUFFLE. They dash to the window.

THEIR P.O.V. - THE BACK ALLEY

Three floors below they see familiar faces -- big Bruno, even bigger Voltaire, and TWO OTHER THUGS -- wrestling someone

into an enclosed carriage! The DRIVER lashes the horses. The carriage speeds down the muddy alley.

BACK TO SCENE

ARTEMUS

It's them all right! Damn it!
They're getting away!

JIM

From you maybe.

Artemus is baffled as Jim backs up and bursts into a furious run -- straight for an open side window! He dives straight through!

ARTEMUS

JIM!

EXT. ROOFTOPS - DAY

Jim sails through the air and tumbles onto the flat roof of the lower house next door.

EXT. WINDOW - DAY

Artemus races to the window, relieved to see his partner alive and dismayed that his partner is, in fact, his partner. Artemus turns and runs for the stairs.

EXT. ROOFTOPS - DAY

Jim is already up and sprinting across the roof, keeping an eye on the carriage below. He races to the edge of the roof and leaps into space again!

On he goes, leaping from roof to roof, but gaining on the carriage.

EXT. LAST ROOFTOP - DAY

Jim gets ahead of the carriage, but he's run out of rooftops. He slides to a stop at the roof edge. Now how to get down?

Beside the roof he spots the top of a railroad crossing barrier. It's in the vertical position, letting traffic cross the tracks below. And here comes the carriage toward the tracks.

Jim gets that determined look. He's got to time it just right.

He waits, then leaps off the roof, wrapping himself around the tip of the barrier. It starts to swing down --

EXT. BACK ALLEY - DAY

With perfect timing, Jim arcs down toward the carriage and WHAM! -- lands on the roof right behind the driver. As the startled man turns, he gets booted in the jaw, and flies off the carriage.

Jim pulls the team to a stop, draws his revolver and leaps to the ground. But the carriage door slams open, knocking his pistol off into a puddle and Bruno launches out of the cab into Jim. Over they go into the mud.

Bruno pins Jim beneath him, sits up, and cocks a meaty fist to smash Jim in the face. But Jim jams two fingers up Bruno's nostrils, yanks his face close and slugs him. Bruno's head snaps back. Jim yanks him in again. Slugs him again. Bruno topples off.

One thug, wielding a knife, dives out of the carriage. Jim straight-legs him in the crotch and pivots him straight up and over onto his back -- OOF!!

Jim scrambles up. Catches sight of Voltaire through the rear window of the carriage drawing a pistol! Without hesitating, Jim throws a pounding left hook right through the glass. Voltaire is knocked across the inside of the carriage, pinning the other thug beneath him.

Jim yanks open the other door of the carriage. Frightened Dr. Pemberton flinches. Jim does a startled take -- it's DR. VIRGINIA PEMBERTON, a beautiful young woman. Jim glances around. Nobody else it could be.

JIM
Dr. Pemberton?

PEMBERTON
Yes!

But Bruno flies in, tackling Jim and pinning him in a chokehold against the fence. Jim manages to GAG:

JIM
Would you please run, ma'am?

She happily obeys, scrambling from the carriage and dashing down the alley.

VOLTAIRE
Get her!

The two thugs scramble up and dash after her.

Still pinned to the fence, all Jim can do is spit in Bruno's eye. Bruno flinches and Jim knees him where it hurts most. The big guy staggers back.

ANGLE - DR. PEMBERTON

dashing down the alley. The thugs are just about to grab her when -- a silver-handled walking stick thrusts out, tripping them. Down they go. Artemus steps from around the corner, squares off with them, menacingly twirling the walking stick.

ARTEMUS

Terribly sorry. I'm always sticking this where it doesn't belong.

(to Dr. Pemberton)

Federal agents, ma'am. We're rescuing a kidnap victim...

PEMBERTON

Yes, me!

ARTEMUS

You? Dr. Pemberton? Of course.
How novel.

The thugs jump to their feet, one whipping out his pistol. WHAM! A flash of silver and Artemus has knocked the gun from his hand. He waves a finger at the guy:

ARTEMUS

Never shoot an unarmed man.

The other thug pulls a huge Bowie knife. Artemus strikes an en garde pose and goes a few parries with the guy before deftly knocking the knife from his hand.

Enraged, they both charge like bulls. Wrong move -- WHAM! WHAM! The walking stick is a blur as Artemus hits both dopes up side their heads. As they whirl for another attack, grabbing boards as clubs.

ARTEMUS

Tsk tsk...

He collapses his walking stick like a telescope and pops the silver handle off the end -- it's still connected by a two foot-long cable. Gripping the shortened stick, Artemus swings the heavy silver handle like a Crusader swings a deadly mace.

Spinning it in a blinding blur, he wades into them, bashing and bruising right and left until the bad guys have had enough and go running down the alley.

Artemus is about to give chase when Dr. Pemberton points out:

PEMBERTON
Isn't your friend in a bit of trouble?

Artemus turns to look.

ANGLE - JIM

is surrounded by three very angry guys -- bloody-nosed Bruno, outraged Voltaire, and the bruised carriage driver.

The three men raise their "dukes," the bare-knuckles boxing stance. They're amused when Jim strikes a very different pose -- a martial arts defensive position.

Jim explodes in a blur of martial arts ferocity. A right leg back-sweep drops unsuspecting Bruno.

A back-two-knuckle-punch further damages Voltaire's already unhappy face. A right-leg-side-kick doubles over the carriage driver. Let's just say these three hard cases are totally outclassed -- and in a lot of pain.

The driver gives up first, frantically leaping onto the carriage, lashing the horses. Voltaire and Bruno race after it and scramble inside.

ANGLE - ARTEMUS AND DR. PEMBERTON

gazing off in amazement at Jim.

PEMBERTON
My, he's effective. And he did it without a stick.

Artemus does an insulted take. Jim limps up to them, breathing hard.

JIM
Gotta get the Doctor someplace safe.

PEMBERTON
Who were they? What do they want with me?

JIM
We'll explain on the way.

As they hurry off down the alley:

ARTEMUS
What was all that back there?

JIM

All what?

ARTEMUS

(mimes a martial arts
move)

All that jumping and kicking.

JIM

That? Oh, it's a kind of Chinese
fighting... I was sort of caught
once with a lovely Chinese girl out
in San Francisco. Her big brothers
were kind enough to teach it to me

(pause)

I've got a book on it, if you're
interested.

INT. MIGUELITO'S MANSION - DRAWING ROOM - DAY

Eyes closed in concentration, hands clasped in front of him,
Miguelito is SINGING a rousing patriotic anthem in a fine
tenor voice. He's accompanied on the harpsichord by the
always mysterious Antoinette.

A SERVANT hurries in with a telegram, and hesitates, waiting
for Miguelito to finish.

MIGUELITO

(singing)

... From horizon to horizon, The
freedom we shall bring, Beneath the
one true flag we defend our land,
And make the mountains sing!

He stops unhappily and crosses out some lyrics on his sheet
of music.

MIGUELITO

"Make the mountains sing?" No, no,
cliche, cliche!. "Like... an eagle
on the wing!" Yes! That's it. An
eagle on the wing, don't you think,
my dear?

He happily jots down the new lyrics, then notices the servant.

MIGUELITO

A message? Why didn't you tell me?

He grabs the telegram, reads it and looks up angrily.

MIGUELITO

(to Antoinette)

They failed to get Dr. Pemberton!
Now she's under guard in the city
jail! They're forcing me to become
boorishly heavy-handed.

EXT. OPELOUSAS CITY JAIL - ESTABLISH - NIGHT

Gaslights cast a warm glow on the sturdy brick building.

INT. OPELOUSAS CITY JAIL - NIGHT

Dr. Pemberton, Jim and Artemus sit around the pot-belly stove.
A bored DEPUTY sits at a desk in background.

PEMBERTON

I only met him once, but that was
enough. For such a little man he
had quite an oversized opinion of
himself. He offered me the "rare
and unparalleled opportunity" to
develop a new steam engine for him.
He claims to have some sort of factory
in Texas, I believe. Said I could
have the run of the place. He had
all sorts of specifications. But
when I questioned him closely, it
became obvious he was just another
mercenary businessman. Both he and
his partner had no real love of steam.
(wistful)
It's sad. So few men do.

JIM

Who was this partner of his?

PEMBERTON

A Southern gentlemen. I don't recall
his name. I suppose it's unkind of
me to say it, but he had the most
disconcerting glass eye.

JIM

(suddenly)

A glass eye? That's who it was!
One-Eyed Jack Garrison. Otherwise
known as General Garrison, Confederate
Third Army. I saw him at Dr.
Loveless' party, but I couldn't place
him. He used to wear an eye-patch.

ARTEMUS

Garrison...? Then the President was right. Except it's not a foreign power, it's a bunch of die-hard Rebels trying to make the South rise again.

JIM

And if they've got Dr. Loveless building weapons like those flying bombs... they just might do it.

Suddenly from outside they hear distant SCREAMS then the echo of GUNSHOTS.

EXT. OPELOUSAS CITY JAIL - NIGHT

Artemus and Jim run out. A riderless buckboard races past. At the end of the street they see SMOKE. More GUNSHOTS and SCREAMING.

They dash toward the sounds, but slow down uncertainly as they hear something else -- something downright DEMONIC, a deep ominous RUMBLING. Then an eerie SHRIEK as a cloud of steam billows around the corner. And out of the cloud rolls something BIG.

It's a steam-powered "tank" -- completely encased in steel, and topped with a Monitor-like gun turret. Electric lights glaring, steam belching, driven by ten foot high spiked steel wheels, the heavy metal beast CLANKS toward them!

ARTEMUS

My God!

Gun barrels slide out of narrow ports, firing a VOLLEY at Jim and Artemus. They dive for cover behind a stone wall and come up with six-guns blazing.

From inside the jailhouse behind them, deputies open fire as well.

But the bullets only RICOCHET off the machine's armor.

ARTEMUS

Could I just point out, this is a perfect example of the criminal mind exploiting modern invention.

JIM

(glares at Artemus)
I'm going to hit you.

Now the cannon in the turret OPENS FIRE! And it's no ordinary single-shot cannon. It's automatic. And it fires with a weird HISSING SOUND: FOOSH! FOOSH! FOOSH!

BLAM! BLAM! Powerful explosive rounds start shattering the wall behind which Jim and Artemus are hiding.

JIM

Never seen a gun fire so fast!

ARTEMUS

It's a repeating steam cannon!

Three more exploding rounds chew up more of the wall. Jim and Artemus dash along the wall as it's blasted to bits right behind them.

ARTEMUS

Pretty good one, too...

Now the "steam tank" veers off, flattening a wagon and crushing the boardwalk as it heads for the jailhouse!

Deputies dive out of the windows in panic.

INT. OPELOUSAS CITY JAIL - NIGHT

Dr. Pemberton and one loyal DEPUTY stumble backward from the windows, terrified, as the steam tank SMASHES right through the wall! The hapless deputy disappears SCREAMING beneath it as it rumbles into the room, debris cascading off its sloping sides.

Dazed Dr. Pemberton is half-buried in the plaster and wreckage. A hatch opens in the belly of the beast. Voltaire drops out, grabs the doctor and hauls her inside. The hatch slams shut.

EXT. OPELOUSAS CITY JAIL - NIGHT

Jim and Artemus watch in amazement as the metal monster reverses out of the gaping hole in the building

EXT. OPELOUSAS - DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

The steam tank rolls brazenly right back through town. Astonished ONLOOKERS have no idea what to make of it. Dogs bark. Horses bolt. Women scream.

It moves at only the pace of a quick walk. It's easy for Jim, Artemus and the deputies to overtake it -- but so what? There's not a damn thing they can do to stop it.

Artemus grabs a thick beam from some stacked lumber and jams it through the spokes of the massive rear wheel, but the beam is instantly ground to toothpicks.

Jim runs ahead to a blacksmith's. He dashes out with a heavy chain. He swiftly loops it around two iron lamp posts, stretching it across the street in the path of the steam tank. He waits expectantly as Artemus jogs up.

JIM
 (re the massive chain)
 That oughta hold'em. Be ready when
 they come out!

The tank rolls forward, plowing into the chain -- and effortlessly rips the lamp posts out like weeds. Gas EXPLODES from the severed posts -- WOOMP! WOOMP! Like little oil well fires.

ARTEMUS
 (sarcastic)
 I'm ready. Just say "when."

As they dash after it:

JIM
 At least I tried something.

ARTEMUS
 Hey, I tried the board.

EXT. OPELOUSAS - EDGE OF TOWN - NIGHT

The steam tank rolls relentlessly out of town. Jim and Artemus jog along at a safe distance behind it.

ARTEMUS
 Damn it, this is ridiculous.

JIM
 At least the thing's not that fast.
 We just follow it. Whenever it stops,
 we're there, waiting.

ARTEMUS
 That's right... That's good.

But the steam tank now swerves off the road and heads toward --

ANGLE - RAILROAD TRACKS

It tips and sways as it CLANKS up onto the tracks. But then it suddenly turns to align itself with the rails.

Now a set of railroad driver wheels lowers down from the undercarriage of the tank! CLINK! CLANG! The drivers lock in place, lifting the road wheels a few inches off the ground.

JIM

Oh no!

The tank starts rolling down the tracks, picking up speed. Jim charges after it. He grabs a sledgehammer from a handcart beside the tracks and -- bounds right up onto the tank.

Gun barrels poke out of slits and FIRE, but he slams them back inside like those pop-up gophers at an arcade. Then he starts pounding wildly on the top hatch cover.

ARTEMUS CALLS AFTER HIM:

ARTEMUS

Jim, for Godsake! We'll get the train! Nothing's faster than that!

Smoke suddenly billows from two large tubes on either side of the tank. Jim COUGHS in the acrid fumes, but keeps relentlessly pounding, smashing the hinges off the top hatch. Almost has it broken loose.

The insides of the tubes glow red. Artemus realizes:

ARTEMUS

My God. Jim! They're rockets! Get off! GET OFF!

Huge FLAMES EXPLODE from the tubes! The tank blasts forward, Jim is thrown off, and the machine rockets down the tracks like a ten ton road-runner.

Artemus rushes to dazed Jim, lying flat on his back surrounded by glowing sparks, hair singed, clothes smoldering.

ARTEMUS

Jim, are you all right?

JIM

No, I'm not all right. They got away. And we can't even follow them. They can get off the tracks anywhere they want.

ARTEMUS

Which is why we're heading to Houston, Texas.

(off Jim's inquiring look)

Home of the Loveless Steam Engine Works.

INT. THE WANDERER - PARLOUR CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Artemus bandages Jim's burns during:

ARTEMUS

If you don't mind my asking, were you always the way you are?

JIM

What way is that?

ARTEMUS

So... spontaneous. All that leaping off buildings and Chinese fighting and whatnot.

JIM

"Spontaneous." I like that. Most people say something like "hare-brained reckless son-of-a-bitch."

ARTEMUS

Well... that, too.

JIM

Nothing much to it really. When I was younger I got into a pretty bad run-in with the Wyler Boys. I saw them coming. But I didn't act fast enough. Second-guessed myself. And it cost me... cost me dearly.

Jim falls silent. Artemus waits, but finally:

ARTEMUS

So... what happened?

JIM

Those kids, they took my wagon. Never got it back.

ARTEMUS

(playing catch-up)
Uh... how long ago was this?

JIM

I was six. And ever since, my policy is: Act first and worry later.

Artemus lets this sink in.

ARTEMUS

I see... Well, the world's lucky they didn't, you know, shoot your mother or something.

EXT. STEAM WORKS - WALL - NIGHT

CAMERA MOVES along the high wall surrounding the Loveless Steam Engine Works. We hear Jim GRUNTING and STRAINING on the other side as CAMERA MOVES UP. Jim's sweaty face finally appears over the top.

JIM

Don't see any guards.

Artemus' voice comes from out of sight below.

ARTEMUS

Neither do I.

Jim wonders how Artemus can see. Then notices the top of a thin periscope peeking up over the wall beside him.

Down below, Artemus leans casually against the wall, gazing through the eyepiece in the bottom of his walking stick which he has telescoped up.

JIM

You might have mentioned you had that.

ARTEMUS

I thought all you needed were your fists and your gun.

He SNAPS the periscope shut.

EXT. STEAM WORKS - YARD - NIGHT

The guys drop down from the wall and dash across the yard. They reach the cover of a discarded steam boiler, and study the foreboding factory.

ARTEMUS

Strange... you'd think he'd have this place better guarded.

JIM

I find most criminals slip up somewhere...

Then they hear it -- the ragged, heavy BREATHING of something headed their way. They look around to see --

THEIR P.O.V. -- A PACK OF ROTTWEILERS

gallops toward them, locked-in on the scent of fresh meat!

BACK TO SCENE

JIM

...But not all of them.

They dash for the factory.

As they run, Artemus rips off the second button on his vest and tosses it back in the path of the pursuing canines.

POOF! A cloud of sleeping gas erupts. The first dog races through it, takes a few more steps and -- SPLAT!

Artemus rips off and tosses a few more. The rest of the dogs drop. Artemus and Jim reach the building, glancing back at the neat line of dozing dogs.

ARTEMUS

They're so precious when they're asleep.

JIM

You really enjoy yourself, don't you?

Artemus just smiles as they move quickly to peer in through grimy windows.

ANGLE - THEIR P.O.V. - INSIDE STEAM WORKS

The large dimly-lit space reverberates with the rhythmic POUNDING of a big steam engine running an overhead pulley system -- a maze of pulleys and leather belts which in turn power all the factory machinery.

Miguelito stands with Bruno and Voltaire admiring a large steel casting as it's crated up by several FACTORY WORKERS. Hard to say what the casting is part of.

EXT. STEAM WORKS - YARD - NIGHT

Jim and Artemus move along the windows toward an open loading dock door when:

VOICES

Get them! Stop them! Who let them in...?!

Jim and Artemus take cover and whip out their sidearms. But the shouting's about someone else.

HOOFBEATS approach. Three mounted riders are galloping from the main gate to the loading dock door. It's General Garrison and two of his LIEUTENANTS, chased by a couple of shouting GUARDS.

Miguelito greets them at the door, flanked by Bruno and Voltaire. He calls off the guards:

MIGUELITO

Leave them! Leave them! These are friends!

(to Garrison)

General, my apologies. I'm sure you understand the importance of security.

ANGLE - JIM AND ARTEMUS

hiding only a few feet away.

JIM

(whispers)

That's him! "One-Eyed Jack" Garrison. Perfect. Two birds with one stone.

ANGLE - MIGUELITO AND THE OTHERS

Garrison glances angrily into the factory.

GARRISON

My weapons were to be delivered three weeks ago, as you well know. Instead, I have five thousand loyal men ready to march north and hardly a decent rifle among them!

Miguelito maintains an air of innocence.

MIGUELITO

But delays are inevitable in an undertaking of this size. Surely...

The General angrily thrusts out several pieces of paper.

GARRISON

I won't hear it, sir! I have here documents from this very factory showing our weapons were never even built!

(glancing around)

And I don't need two eyes to see it's true. Do you dare deny it, little man?!

Only Miguelito's eyes betray any reaction to the insult. He remains totally pleasant.

MIGUELITO

And you want to know what I spent
all your money on. A fair question...
with a simple answer. I bought a
little something for myself.

(turning his back)

Now please don't move because we
really must shoot you.

The bodyguards pull their revolvers and mercilessly OPEN
FIRE. Miguelito winces at the sound, and again as the three
bodies THUD to the ground. Without turning around:

MIGUELITO

Dispose of them... quickly.

He scurries off, squeamishly shielding his eyes.

MIGUELITO

Oh, I just hate killing people I
know.

Bruno and Voltaire drag the bodies inside.

ANGLE - JIM AND ARTEMUS

These are two confused guys.

ARTEMUS

Can you fill me in here?

JIM

Sure. We have no idea what's going
on.

ARTEMUS

Thank you.

JIM

Come on, let's at least see if we
can find Dr. Pemberton.

AS JIM STARTS OFF:

ARTEMUS

You go ahead. I'll stick with
Loveless.

They sneak off in different directions.

INT. STEAM WORKS - NIGHT

Miguelito heads for a big work table, impatiently clapping
his hands to assemble people.

Half a dozen ASSISTANTS gather round him as he unfurls a map.

CAMERA TILTS UP TO FIND:

ANGLE - ARTEMUS

now sneaking along a catwalk among the HUMMING belt-drives. He can get near the table but not close enough to hear over the POUNDING STEAM ENGINE. But this doesn't stop him.

He starts pulling mysterious machine components from his pockets, boots, and inside his coat.

EXT. STEAM WORKS - RAILROAD SPUR - NIGHT

Moving along, checking windows, Jim rounds a corner.

A train waits on a siding, its freight cars being hurriedly loaded by more WORKERS. At the end is a private rail car opulent enough for your average Emperor. A SHAPELY SILHOUETTE is back-lit behind a window shade.

INT. STEAM WORKS - CATWALK - NIGHT

Artemus has assembled a small wind-up machine from his various concealed parts. He carefully rolls a pre-cut piece of paper into a small cone and slides its narrow end into a metal ring with a diaphragm stretched across it.

He fits this into place on the machine, then adds the final part -- a foil recording cylinder (the size and shape of a toilet paper tube). He winds the handcrank.

Next he pulls out his cable-firing derringer. He needs a clear shot at a wooden column beyond the table. To get it he has to lean way out from the catwalk, propping himself against one of the (unmoving) drive-belts.

He takes careful aim, timing it just right with the steam engine's rhythmic POUNDING. Just as it POUNDS, he FIRES. The gunshot's drowned out by the noise.

Bull's-eye. The dart sticks in the column, its cable stretching back to the derringer. Artemus hooks his cylinder recorder onto it, switches it on, and lets the thing slide down the cable until it's dangling in the shadows above the hanging lamp directly over the table. He hauls up on his end of the cable and ties it off.

He grins smugly. But that's when the drive-belt he's leaning against starts MOVING. He's yanked off the catwalk, clinging to the racing belt.

In seconds he'll be pulled into the big idler wheel at the end of the line.

He's got no choice. He drops down, grabbing hold of the lower part of the belt. Instantly he's hauled off in the opposite direction zooming along above the oblivious minions below.

There's hope. The drive-belt carries him over a row of unmanned machinery. No one's around. He lets go and plummets to the floor in a heap. Relieved, he shakily gets to his feet. A door opens behind him. He turns just in time to catch sight of Bruno and the incoming fist that knocks him unconscious.

EXT. STEAM WORKS - RAILROAD SPUR - NIGHT

Sneaking along, Jim rolls deftly under the train to avoid the busy workers. He pops up at the rear door of Miguelito's private rail car. Soft MUSIC plays from within.

INT. MIGUELITO'S PRIVATE CAR - PARLOUR - NIGHT

Jim slips in quietly. Nobody there. He spots Miguelito's humidor, opens it, and pockets a few Cuban cigars. Not too shabby. The music is coming from the next room. He moves to the door. Tests the doorknob. It's unlocked. Peeks in.

ANGLE - JIM'S P.O.V. - CASSANDRA

sits at her vanity, brushing her hair, wearing an alluring red dressing gown, provocatively dishabille, an ornate music box TINKLING beside her.

INT. MIGUELITO'S PRIVATE CAR - BEDROOM - DAY

Cassandra GASPS as Jim bursts in behind her.

JIM

Keep quiet if you know what's good
for you.

She manages a smile and looks him up and down hungrily.

CASSANDRA

Well, Mr. Tyler, speaking of what's
good for me...

She stands. Jim can't help but notice her dressing gown is barely doing its job -- or maybe doing it too well.

JIM
I'm not Mr. Tyler and you're no social secretary. Where's Dr. Pemberton?

She turns back to the vanity, "pouting."

CASSANDRA
That strait-laced little prude?
Can't you forget about her? A woman like that couldn't begin to satisfy a man like you.

She selects a bright red lipstick and smooths it on slowly and sensuously. But Jim's not putting up with this. He grabs her wrist. The lipstick goes flying.

JIM
(low and mean)
Where is she?

She glares at him, pulling away.

CASSANDRA
She's perfectly safe.

JIM
Really? Like General Garrison or didn't you hear all that shooting?

That rattles her a little.

CASSANDRA
The General...? Well, Dr. Loveless is a very... purposeful man.
(softening)
But you certainly have nothing to fear... from me.

She leans closer, her enticing red silhouette shimmering through the dressing gown. Then we HEAR a CLICK from below frame. Cassandra steps back, smiling.

CASSANDRA
Where have I heard that before?

She glances down. But this time it's Jim's pistol pointed at her.

CASSANDRA
My. It's gotten longer.

JIM
You bring the best out in a man.

CASSANDRA

I try.

(suddenly desperate)

Please, if you promise to protect me, I'll testify against him. I'll give you an ironclad case.

She steps even closer, pressing herself against the gun barrel, turning her face up to him, bringing her lips closer and closer.

CASSANDRA

And, as you already know, I can give you much more than that.

Jim's not about to trust her, but he is, after all, Jim. He pulls her body to him, pinning her arms behind her, and gives her the kind of kiss that gives foreplay a good name. Then he smiles:

JIM

Not a bad deal.

She smiles back. But it's an eerie smile on those freshly-lipsticked lips.

CASSANDRA

For me.

Jim stares at her warily. Then he realizes -- he's getting woozy.

JIM

What...? How the hell...?

He makes a desperate lunge for the door, but in two steps he drops, unconscious. And she rushes back to the vanity and starts wiping off the potent red lipstick. She's a little dazed herself. Is it from the lipstick -- or him.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STEAM WORKS - MACHINE SHOP - DAWN

CLOSE ON Jim as he blearily awakens. He's tightly bound hand and foot. He looks around. He's in a large dingy basement -- Miguelito's workshop. It's filled with all manner of Frankensteinian equipment and inventions.

He rolls over, and finds himself face to face with General Garrison, dead eyes staring at him. Jim wriggles away, only to find himself staring into the faces of the other two dead men. Jim twists away again, struggling into a sitting position. Finally he sees:

JIM

Artemus!

His partner is tied to a chair. Piled nearby are Artemus' jacket, vest, belt and sleeve-gun. Artemus smiles weakly:

ARTEMUS

I was afraid you were dead.
(noticing something)
What's that all over your lips?

Jim thinks. Then remembers, embarrassed. He lies:

JIM

Blood.

From off-screen, Miguelito LAUGHS sarcastically:

MIGUELITO (O.S.)

Blood!? Such vanity!

Out of the shadows steps Miguelito proudly twirling Artemus' walking stick. He's followed by Cassandra, now in a stunning red evening gown, and Bruno who stares coldly at Jim. His face is still colorfully bruised after his lambasting from Jim, and he hasn't forgotten.

Miguelito strides over to Artemus, toying with the walking stick, switching it into its mace mode.

MIGUELITO

I like a good concealed weapon.
Such a thoughtful gift. Thank you.

He turns to Bruno.

MIGUELITO

Any ideas?

BRUNO

Thought we'd run'em through this.

Bruno indicates a big, strange looking machine. Miguelito's eyes go wide.

MIGUELITO

Good God, Bruno! How grotesque!
(smiles)
And yet brilliant.... Let's do it!

Miguelito whacks the machine's lever with the walking stick. Steam belches from it. Leather drive belts churn to life. Big pulleys whirl. A conveyor belt jolts forward, leading up into a massive hopper.

We can't see inside, but from within the hopper we can hear the ominous metallic CLANGING and GNASHING of its inner workings. Miguelito SHOUTS over the ROAR of the machine.

MIGUELITO

One of my many inventions. A watermelon juicer.

(defensive)

Yes! I admit the public did not share my enthusiasm for the juice of the watermelon. But what do they know?!

Bruno grabs the General's body and heaves it unceremoniously onto the conveyor belt. Swiftly, the body is carried up toward the hopper. At the last moment, Miguelito notices a fine fountain pen in the General's pocket and snatches it up for himself.

Then he hurries over to Cassandra, almost hiding behind her, horrified and yet fascinated. Cassandra just watches, eerily unfazed.

The body disappears into the hopper. We can't see anything, but we hear awful MUNCHING and CRUNCHING. A spout tips down into a barrel and begins filling it.

Jim and Artemus watch grimly. Bruno likes it. He shuts down the machine and steps over to peer into the barrel.

Then slams a lid down on it with satisfaction.

BRUNO

Won't be drinking this batch!

MIGUELITO

Bruno, please!

This whole demonstration makes Jim and Artemus decidedly uneasy.

JIM

Why don't we just cut this routine short? Whatever you do to us, we're not going to talk.

MIGUELITO

(genuinely confused)

Talk? About what...?

(then he gets it)

Oh! About who you are and all that?

He laughs and turns to Cassandra, matter-of-factly:

MIGUELITO

Mr. West and Mr. Gordon are refusing to tell us that they're U.S. Marshals. What are we to do?

He pauses to savor the moment.

MIGUELITO

I love when I get to do that...!
 (smugly)
 You see, I have informants at every level of government...
 (laughs)
 Ironically, they weren't able to tell me a thing. But fortunately, Mr. West, Bruno finally remembered you. It seems you arrested his brother three years ago. He's quite an asset to me.

He strides to the door, then turns.

MIGUELITO

I'm sorry this is all so graphic.
 (casually)
 Just try to relax and think of something else.

He marches out. Cassandra starts to follow, but notices Jim staring icily at her. She pauses to explain:

CASSANDRA

You see, unlike most employers, Dr. Loveless is actually willing to give a woman power, power over men and machines. What more could a girl ask for.

She exits. Bruno drags the other two bodies to the watermelon press, and heaves them up onto the conveyor belt. He turns to Jim, rubbing the bruises on his face:

BRUNO

I'm putting you in like this, feet first. Alive.

He turns back to the machine to restart it. It RUMBLES to life.

While Bruno's back is turned, Artemus gets Jim's attention by blinking one eye then the other. He's sending Morse Code. Jim stares, trying to follow it.

Even though Bruno keeps glancing at them, he has no idea they're communicating.

Artemus keeps blinking.

SUBTITLE: "Push my left heel."

Jim doesn't quite catch it all. He frowns.

SUBTITLE: "Huh?"

ARTEMUS FRANTICALLY RE-SENDS:

SUBTITLE: "Push my left heel. On side."

Jim gets it and peers at Artemus' boot, tied tightly to the chair leg. He glances at Bruno, still busy with the machine. Jim extends his leg and firmly presses the toe of his boot against the side of Artemus' boot heel.

SPROING -- a razor sharp knife blade pops out of Artemus' toe and locks into place. Jim loves it. He wriggles around to block Bruno's view of the boot and starts cutting the ropes on his wrists.

The watermelon press finishes its dirty work. Bruno rolls an empty barrel under the spout, then turns and lumbers toward Jim. He grabs the ropes around Jim's ankles. But Jim's hands are free. He wallops Bruno with a roundhouse punch that sends the big man staggering.

Jim goes to work on his ankle ropes. Bruno ROARS and comes charging back at him. Jim rolls to one side and Bruno piles into helpless Artemus -- they both go over backward in the chair.

Bruno and Artemus end up face to face. Artemus bites his nose. Bruno screams and slugs Artemus.

Jim, his ankles still tied, somehow springs to his feet and starts hopping toward the pile of Artemus' weapons.

Bruno turns and charges at Jim. This will be easy. But he quickly finds himself lost in a flurry of martial arts punches as Jim pogos around to keep his balance. Bruno retreats and grabs a length of steam pipe. He circles Jim warily.

Artemus can see that even Jim isn't going to last long. Still tied to the fallen chair, Artemus wriggles wildly, scooting himself closer to the churning machine.

Jim sees the opportunity. Dodging the swinging pipe, he maneuvers Bruno so that his back is to the machine. Then Jim does the simplest possible thing -- he feints at Bruno, causing him to flinch and step back. He trips over Artemus and -- crashes onto the conveyor belt!

Swiftly hauled up, he clings desperately to the lip of the hopper for a moment, but loses his grip and goes in SCREAMING.

Jim and Artemus wince at the SLOSHING, MUSHING and CRUSHING. Then Jim shuts down the machine.

JIM
(re Bruno)
Liquidated that asset.

EXT. STEAM WORKS - RAILROAD SPUR - DAWN

Jim and Artemus charge out of the building -- Miguelito's train is gone.

JIM
Damn! We go through all that and
does he even wait for us?

He turns to see his partner dashing back into the factory.

INT. STEAM WORKS - DAWN

Artemus leaps up onto the work table and reaches up above the hanging lamp. Jim walks over, leans against the table, wondering what the hell he's up to.

JIM
Having fun? Because we really gotta
catch this guy...

Artemus unhooks the recorder from the cable and sets it onto the table. He starts winding its crank. Jim sure looks confused.

ARTEMUS
(proudly)
Know what this is?

JIM
Sure. It's a wind-up... thing.

ARTEMUS
A cylinder recorder. My own design.

Jim's about to say something. Artemus holds his finger to his lips for silence and resets the needle. He pushes a lever and the cylinder spins. We hear SCRATCHY STATIC and then, miraculously -- a VOICE.

MIGUELITO (V.O.)
... And do give me some room,
Voltaire.

MIGUELITO (V.O.)
 You're breathing on my head! I hate
 it when you breath on my head!

JIM
 Dr. Loveless?

Artemus nods. Jim is amazed.

MIGUELITO (V.O.)
 Now you're standing in my light.
 How many times must I tell you?!
 Very well, gentlemen, what is our
 report on Dr. Pemberton? Is she
 cooperating?

ASSISTANT (V.O.)
 They've persuaded her.

MIGUELITO (V.O.)
 Good, good. Now, everyone, take a
 look at this...

Then SILENCE for precious seconds. The needle has almost
 reached the end of the spinning cylinder. Artemus gazes at
 it impatiently.

JIM
 This is good.

ARTEMUS
 Shhh!
 (to recorder)
 Come on. Tell us something!

MIGUELITO (V.O.)
 That is precisely where we will find
 little Willard. And, unfortunately,
 Willard will have to be exterminated
 if we are ever to be taken seriously.
 We must move quickly. Get everything
 in order. And, Voltaire, be a good
 boy and find me one of those Western
 hats...
 (on second thought)
 No, no, one of those attractive pith
 helmets. It's damnably hot out there,
 isn't it?
 (pause)
 Oh, we are so close. So very close
 to the grand culmination of my dream.
 The entire world will tremble when
 they see...

But the recording cylinder runs out.

ARTEMUS
Oh, damn! That's it.

JIM
It's better than nothing.

ARTEMUS
It is?

JIM
He's going to put on a pith helmet
and kill some guy named Willard.

INT. THE WANDERER - PARLOUR CAR - DAY

The TELEGRAPH CLICKS AWAY. FIND Jim and Artemus eagerly decoding the message. Then, simultaneously, they look crushed. Artemus drops onto the sofa as Jim flops into a chair.

JIM
No record of him.

ARTEMUS
You'd think if Loveless is going to
kill him he could at least be a
prominent citizen.

Artemus looks out the window as we HEAR a train CLANGING and CHUFFING to a stop on a parallel track.

ARTEMUS
What's this?

JIM
Sounds like a train.
(glancing over)
Looks like a train.

ARTEMUS
Yes. And a much nicer one than ours.

The door flies open and TWO BODYGUARDS and TWO AIDES march in. Jim leaps up:

JIM
Who the hell are you? Ever hear of
knocking? You think you can just
barge in here like that...?

The men step aside for -- President Grant who strides in. Jim keeps on talking, but a different tune:

JIM

... well, of course you can. Mr. President, what a surprise. What brings you here?

GRANT

On my way to Denver...

AIDE

Albuquerque is next, sir.

GRANT

Whatever. My whistle-stop tour of the Southwest. One godforsaken cowtown after another.

(sees Artemus)

You must be Gordon. Speak French, huh? Hope it helps.

Grant doesn't pause, reaching out to the aide who hands him a telegram.

GRANT

Got a message from some crackpot named Dr. Miguelito Loveless. Ever hear of him? Wants the U.S. to give him half the Southwest. Claims it's his. If we don't sign his cockeyed treaty, he's threatening to destroy an entire town every day until we do.

Jim and Artemus are stunned.

JIM

Where'd he say he was going to do this?

GRANT

He didn't. That's your job. I'm taking you off that other case until you've nabbed this lunatic. Good luck.

(takes in the parlour car)

Nice train. But mine's nicer.

Grant hands the speechless guys the telegram and instantly marches out, followed by his entourage.

Jim and Artemus take a moment to collect themselves, then brighten as they realize:

ARTEMUS

Willard...

JIM
It's not a guy...

ARTEMUS
It's a town!

They race to the bookshelf, pull down atlases and start flipping through them.

ARTEMUS
Got to be somewhere that's hot. He
said it was "damnably hot."

JIM
(scanning the index)
That rules out Willard, Vermont;
Willard, Minnesota...
(brightening)
Willard, New Mexico?

Jim flips to the right page --

ANGLE - ATLAS - MAP OF NEW MEXICO TERRITORY

MOVE IN on the map, finding the tiny town of Willard.

EXT. THE WEST - DAY - THE WANDERER

churns across the majestic western landscape we've been waiting for!

EXT. THE WEST - NIGHT - THE WANDERER

is a tiny speck streaking through the desert darkness.

INT. THE WANDERER - PARLOUR CAR - NIGHT

Artemus lounges, smoking a cigar, his face hidden behind a book: "A Guide To The Ancient Fighting Skills Of The Oriental Races."

Jim, on the other hand, paces the room, itching for action.

JIM
Damn, I wish this thing would go
faster.

ARTEMUS
Relax. We're almost there.

JIM
 We oughta get a couple of those
 rockets. Voom! We're there before
 we left!

As Artemus lowers the book he's reading:

ARTEMUS
 I'll work on it.

Jim stares -- Artemus is in another disguise with a full
 beard and bulbous nose.

JIM
 What is that?

ARTEMUS
 This?
 (fingers the nose)
 I'm testing a new spirit gum, to see
 how it holds.

JIM
 And people are actually fooled by
 that?

ARTEMUS
 (offended)
 My disguises have helped me solve
 many a difficult case. I spent three
 years on the stage, you know.
 (standing and taking
 off his make-up)
 Remind me sometime to regale you
 with my Lear.

The men get down to business, strapping on their guns.
 Artemus hands Jim the infamous belt-buckle-derringer.

JIM
 Not again.

ARTEMUS
 I adjusted it.

Jim reluctantly straps it on, takes a fighting stance, and
 slaps the buckle. Nothing happens. He tries a few more
 times. Still no gun pops out.

JIM
 So the idea is if a guy punches me,
 he really hurts his hand?

ARTEMUS

(testy)
 You said it popped out too easily.
 Nothing's ever good enough for you,
 is it?

The train BRAKES SQUEAL and we hear Doyle over the speaking tube:

DOYLE (V.O.)
 Willard, New Mexico... I... I think.

EXT. WILLARD - THE WANDERER - PARLOUR CAR - NIGHT

Jim and Artemus step out and freeze. Smoke blows past them. Doyle hurries to join them and they all silently stare. PAN TO REVEAL --

The town has been utterly destroyed. It's Hiroshima. Buildings are shattered rubble. Blackened timbers claw up at the night sky. Embers smolder everywhere.

A twisted rifle lies in the dust. A pair of boots juts from under a smashed wagon. A woman's ragged dress flutters on a splintered beam. There's not a soul around.

Stunned Jim and Artemus stare hopelessly at the horrifying scene.

JIM
 (grim)
 When we find him, he is mine.

ARTEMUS
 Oh, no, we split him fifty-fifty.

Jim spots something. Points off.

ANGLE - THEIR P.O.V. - A LONE FIGURE

on a nearby hilltop, silhouetted against a rising moon.

EXT. HILLTOP - NIGHT

The figure is a Native American, an ACOMA BRAVE. He's utterly confused and stunned by what he's seen. Jim and Artemus quietly approach.

ARTEMUS
 Hope he knows some English...

But Jim holds up a hand, silencing Artemus, and sits beside the man. Jim uses sign language.

The entire scene plays in SILENCE. We see SUBTITLES for the following:

JIM
 (signs)
 Did you see the thing that did this?

The man nods.

JIM
 (signs)
 It was big?

ACOMA BRAVE
 (signs)
 Very big. Made of iron.

JIM
 (signs)
 A lot of steam and noise? With big
 guns?

The Indian nods.

JIM
 (signs)
 Where is it now? Where did it go?

The man points off to some distant mountains.

ACOMA BRAVE
 (signs)
 It lives there, in the Ghost
 Mountains, where no living man goes.

JIM
 Figures.

ARTEMUS
 What? What figures? What did he
 see?

EXT. DESERT HILLS - NIGHT

Jim and Artemus, now on horseback, ride along an old desert trail in the moonlight..

ARTEMUS
 (derisive)
 Ghost mountains... No self respecting
 ghost would live out here.

Jim's been eyeing the ground.

JIM
Awful lot of fresh wagon tracks for
a place "no living man goes."

EXT. NEAR THE MOUNTAINS - DAY

Jim and Artemus still follow the tracks.

ARTEMUS
What if these tracks are just leading
us to an Indian village or some old
coot's mining claim?

JIM
Not likely. There must be tracks of
twenty different wagons. Freight
wagons, carriages, buckboards...

Jim suddenly wheels his horse and stops.

JIM
Look at that.

TILT DOWN TO SEE all the wagon tracks end abruptly along a
straight line. Beyond the line is completely untouched
ground.

ARTEMUS
Well, that's something different.

Jim follows the tracks back from the straight line, noting
that they all make a short detour to pass close to a lone
Joshua tree.

JIM
And they all make this little turn
here, to pass right by this Joshua
tree.

Jim rides over to examine the tree. He whacks it with his
pistol butt. We hear an incongruous metallic CLANK! Jim
and Artemus exchange a look.

Jim eyes a branch that extends over the trail -- gives it a
tentative pull. It swings like a lever. MACHINERY RUMBLES
underground.

Artemus' horse rears as a rectangle of desert floor thirty-
feet long LIFTS STRAIGHT UP!

It's an underground elevator, its roof disguised as desert.
Where the wagon tracks have all stopped is the point where
wagons ride onto the elevator.

Artemus turns graciously to Jim:

ARTEMUS
 Excellent detective work, sir.
 (re the tunnel)
 You should have the honor of going
 first.

JIM
 (sarcastic)
 Oh, thank you.

ARTEMUS
 My pleasure.

Jim rides onto the platform. Artemus follows. He spots another lever on the elevator wall and gives it a kick. The elevator RUMBLES and starts to descend.

INT. TUNNEL - NIGHT

Jim and Artemus are lowered into a long tunnel and start riding cautiously toward dim light at the other end.

INT. TUNNEL - OTHER END - NIGHT

Reaching the end of the tunnel, they find themselves looking down on:

EXT. MIGUELITO'S LAIR - ESTABLISH - NIGHT

In a hidden valley, surrounded on all sides by forbidding mesas, sits a complex of buildings. It's a self-contained manufacturing center for God knows what. Freight wagons RUMBLE to and fro. Steam shovels and traction engines labor. Electric lights cast an eerie glow on everything.

ARTEMUS
 It looks like a factory. And all
 lit with electrical lights!

The dismount and lead their horses into a stand of trees, during:

JIM
 Let's split up. It'll double our
 chances of finding Dr. Pemberton.

Artemus nods and they sneak off down the wagon road into the valley.

EXT. MIGUELITO'S LAIR - WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A giant warehouse dominates the place. Steam rolls out its windows. A deep RUMBLING comes from within.

Out in front, in the glare of the lights, the steam tank is being serviced by a crew of WORKERS. It's even more menacing than before -- fitted with a new turret featuring a bigger steam cannon, a motorized Gatling gun, and twin ROCKET LAUNCHERS!

ANGLE - JIM

in the shadows, stares at the machine with foreboding. Now he hears HARPSICHORD MUSIC. He looks off.

ANGLE - JIM'S P.O.V. - MIGUELITO'S FACTORY OFFICE

Atop a three story factory building sits Miguelito's office, its elegant windows and lavish curtains out of place in this rough-hewn environment. The music's coming from there. This must be the place.

But between him and his goal are a couple of armed GUARDS.

EXT. MIGUELITO'S FACTORY OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

A big freight wagon rolls past between the GUARDS and the outside stairway up to the office. Unseen by them, Jim is clinging to the offside of the wagon. He hops off and sprints up the stairs.

INT. MIGUELITO'S FACTORY OFFICE - NIGHT

In a sumptuous, heavily decorated room, Miguelito holds court behind a vast desk. Antoinette plays dreamily on her harpsichord while Cassandra and Voltaire listen.

Just as Miguelito launches into the first few bars of his anthem, the office door swings open. Jim steps boldly in, locking it from the inside.

Everyone is dumbstruck for a moment. Then Voltaire lunges for him, but Jim's six-gun instantly appears, leveled at the big man's face.

JIM
You're not that big.

MIGUELITO
Restrain yourself, Voltaire.

MIGUELITO

He's just the sort of coward who
would shoot an unarmed giant.

Voltaire backs off, glowering. But Miguelito keeps his cool,
turning back to Jim.

MIGUELITO

Why, Mr. West. I am impressed.
(suddenly noticing)
Ooh, a rhyme!

Antoinette strikes a little "Ta Da" chord and smiles.

MIGUELITO

(going on)
Still alive. Hmm. I suppose that
doesn't bode well for poor Bruno.

JIM

He had a pressing engagement.

MIGUELITO

(scowls at Jim)
Philistine.

Jim now aims his gun at the little man.

JIM

You got that right. Now get up.
We're walking out of here.

MIGUELITO

(flaring)
Has it penetrated that adrenaline-
addled skull that you are surrounded
by seventy-eight of my loyal
followers? You are in my domain!

JIM

Has it penetrated yours that I'm
holding a gun on their leader?
You're under arrest. Now move!

MIGUELITO

(bellows)
You have no authority here! You are
out of your jurisdiction!

Jim thinks the little guy has lost a few more marbles.

JIM

The U.S. is my jurisdiction.

MIGUELITO

Exactly! You are on foreign soil.
You are a representative of the
occupying forces. Or haven't you
checked a map lately?!

He hits a switch. A large wall map of the United States unfurls like a movie screen. But the southern half of California and a chunk of Arizona and New Mexico are all in one color and labeled "LOVELAND."

MIGUELITO

These lands were taken by force from
Mexico in the illegal War of American
Aggression.

JIM

That would be... the Mexican War?

MIGUELITO

Call it what you like. The point
is, I was heir to that land, Mr.
West. It belonged to my beloved
grandmother! Now I intend to have
it back. My own country!

He gestures to a flag on the opposite wall.

MIGUELITO

You see, I have everything. A flag...
My own postage stamps...

He points out colorful stamps in a glass display case. Then he digs in his jacket pocket. Jim warily cocks his pistol.

MIGUELITO

Oh relax!

Miguelito slowly pulls out paper money, tossing the bills on the desk in front of Jim. They bear Miguelito's portrait.

MIGUELITO

I've even printed my own currency.

JIM

(reading from a bill)
"Emperor Miguelito...?"

MIGUELITO

The first.

JIM

Well, your highness, what makes you
think we'll ever sign a treaty with
you?

MIGUELITO

Because I am holding all the western territories hostage, Mr. West! A town a day will disappear! Willard was merely a test run, a stroll in the park. Next, I level all of Albuquerque!

(off Jim's reaction)

Yes, that's right. Only yesterday I learned what you undoubtedly already know: your own President will be there. What an added bonus! The gods are shining on me! After tomorrow every American citizen will rise up and demand I be given back my humble little empire!

JIM

(looking to the others)

So, I'm the only one here who can tell the difference between an Emperor and a murderer?

Miguelito glowers.

MIGUELITO

The definition of what I am, Mr. West, depends simply on... whether or not I win. And guess what? I'm going to win!

With that he suddenly presses one of a row of brass buttons on the edge of his desk. A trap door opens!!

But not under Jim. It opens a couple of feet away. Jim smiles. Miguelito is abashed.

MIGUELITO

Oh poo! Don't you just hate it? I mean, people are simply never standing where they're supposed to be!

He sighs -- then wildly punches several more buttons. Trap doors open all over the floor. Jim agilely leaps from spot to spot. But he can't avoid the inevitable and finally plunges from view.

As the last trap door snaps shut, Miguelito strides over smugly; then suddenly shouts at the floor:

MIGUELITO

You think I'm stupid?!

(to the others)

If he did, I bet he doesn't think so now! At least I hope he doesn't.

MIGUELITO
He'd better not!

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

We're in a dungeon-like room set up as a laboratory. CAMERA PANS to a wall. In a moment, the wall BANGS open -- and Jim rockets out of a chute, skidding on his back headfirst across the room. The wall SLAMS shut.

Jim slides right under a woman's flowing skirt!

JIM (O.S.)
Dr. Pemberton, I presume.

He pulls his head out and finds a startled Dr. Pemberton staring down at him.

PEMBERTON
Why... Mr. West!

Jim quickly gets to his feet. The room is full of scientific equipment -- a combo lab-prison.

Dr. Pemberton looks like she's been through a lot, face dirty, clothes torn.

JIM
Are you all right?

PEMBERTON
(sighs)
For the moment. But I fear not for long. I'm of no use to him now.

Jim tries the bars on the window during:

JIM
You finished the work on his steam engine?

She nods sadly, her eyes misting:

PEMBERTON
They threatened to harm my father...
(sudden anger)
And it's my engine, stolen from my own patents! He put it in his big war machine. But of course he'd installed the valves improperly. It works perfectly now.

Dr. Pemberton sinks down in a chair, hopelessly.

PEMBERTON

He... he's planning to kill us, isn't he?

JIM

He's just full of plans that aren't gonna work out.

He looks around and grabs a small, thick-walled metal cylinder among the lab equipment. He examines it with interest.

JIM

This is something.

PEMBERTON

(not following)
It's a smelting retort.

He unscrews the top of the cylinder, pours out the sandy contents.

JIM

Now it's a bomb.

PEMBERTON

It is?

He pulls a cartridge off his gun belt.

JIM

All how you look at things.

He works the bullet out of the end of a cartridge and dumps the gunpowder into the cylinder. He hands her a few cartridges, indicating she do the same.

JIM

Just have to get it hot enough, and take cover. Come on, help me get the bullets out.

EXT. MIGUELITO'S FACTORY OFFICE - NIGHT

From the top of the stairway outside his office, Miguelito angrily berates a group of GUARDS assembled below. (We notice among them one particularly fierce guard -- a bushy-bearded, eye-patched roughneck.)

MIGUELITO

... Mr. West strolled right through your defenses again! I've had to capture him again! And Mr. Gordon is undoubtedly lurking about again! So find him and shoot him here!

MIGUELITO
 (points to his own
 forehead)
 With a big gun!

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

CLOSE ON the metal cylinder we saw Jim start to fill with gunpowder. It is now capped tight and wired to the bars on the window. A wad of FLAMING RAGS burns below it, heating it up!

PAN TO Jim and Dr. Pemberton hiding behind a barricade of tables and equipment.

EXT. MIGUELITO'S FACTORY OFFICE - JAIL CELL - NIGHT

BOOM! Bars and bricks fly!

INT. MIGUELITO'S FACTORY OFFICE - NIGHT

Miguelito, Cassandra, and Antoinette take cover as plaster rains from the ceiling, shaken loose by the blast downstairs. Miguelito slaps on his new pith helmet:

MIGUELITO
 Call it intuition. Something tells
 me Mr. West is still with us!
 (to Cassandra)
 Come, my dear! Destiny calls!

As Miguelito and Cassandra rush out, he calls back:

MIGUELITO
 Mozart, Antoinette! Mozart!

She starts gamely playing the harpsichord.

EXT. MIGUELITO'S FACTORY OFFICE - JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Jim, with Dr. Pemberton in tow, leaps out through the smoke and dust. They dash around the building --

Only to find their escape blocked by FOUR GUARDS converging ahead of them, their Winchesters aimed. A tense standoff. Jim's thinking about drawing when -- CLICK -- a Colt Peacemaker is suddenly held to his head.

WIDEN TO SEE it's the fierce, eye-patched, bearded guard.

He barks at the other guards:

GUARD

What the hell's a matter with you
yella-bellies? Orders is to shoot
Gordon. Goes for them, too!
(to Jim and Pemberton)
Git movin'!

He shoves his prisoners, marching them off behind a steam
shovel. Almost immediately we hear TWO GUNSHOTS.

ANGLE - BEHIND THE STEAM SHOVEL

CLOSE ON Jim waiting for the bullet. He looks over, baffled.
The guard is holding the smoking pistol pointed in the air.
He speaks:

ARTEMUS

Go ahead, make fun of this disguise.

And Artemus pulls off his disguise! Dr. Pemberton is stunned.
Jim is very impressed.

JIM

No, this one is much better.

Using the steam shovel as cover, the three hurry off into
the darkness.

CUT TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Jim, Artemus and Dr. Pemberton sneak along in the shadows,
staying low behind stacks of supplies.

JIM

Artemus, you ready for this? His
next target is Albuquerque.

ARTEMUS

What? President Grant is...!

JIM

I know! I know!

ARTEMUS

I don't have to tell you what that
would do to our careers!

JIM

We've got to stop him right here,
now! With that armored steam engine
of his it'll be a slaughter.

ARTEMUS

I'd love to stop him, but have you noticed the hundred armed men?

JIM

There's only seventy-eight.

ARTEMUS

(sarcastic)

Oh, well, then let's kick some ass!

Just then they hear a familiar nasty BUZZING. It's a SCREECHING boomerang bomb!

Jim and Artemus realize what that must mean. They spin to Dr. Pemberton. Then look at each other -- no time for propriety. They grab her blouse and yank it up. She SHRIEKS. But there it is -- a metal belt just like Professor Morton wore -- the deadly homing belt!

They throw the poor woman to the ground and dive for cover just as the thing streaks overhead, missing her by inches!

ARTEMUS

You didn't tell us you had this on!

PEMBERTON

(gazing at the bomb)

My Lord, he was telling the truth!

The bomb loops high and dives on its final deadly attack.

Miguelito's guards come running toward the action, but they scramble back and take cover as the BUZZING bomb whirls overhead.

Jim draws his six-gun. He coolly tracks the bomb and FIRES. BOOM! Mid-air FIREBALL. But they hear more BUZZING. Another bomb. They look off to see --

ANGLE - VOLTAIRE

high up on a catwalk, loading a second flying bomb into a weird cross-bow like launcher. TWANG! The thing streaks toward Dr. Pemberton!

BLAM! Jim nails this one, too. Voltaire snarls.

Artemus pulls his lapel lock-pick and goes to work on the belt lock.

ANGLE - VOLTAIRE

He loads two bombs at once!

ANGLE - THE GROUP

BLAM! BLAM! Jim blows both bombs out of the air!

JIM
Hurry up, Artemus! I'm running out
of bullets!

Two more boomerang bombs BUZZ angrily toward them. BLAM!
Jim gets one. But then -- CLICK! Gun's empty.

The second bomb keeps coming!

Another CLICK! But it's Artemus snapping the belt's lock
open! He jumps up, whirling like a discus thrower and heaves
the belt in a high arc.

The flying bomb does a screaming 180 to follow the belt!

ANGLE - HORRIFIED VOLTAIRE

sees the belt sailing toward him followed by the flying bomb!
Oops. It lands right below him. He barely has time to SCREAM
before he's blown sky-high!

ANGLE - THE GROUP

Jim lifts Dr. Pemberton to her feet.

JIM
Are you all right?

She nods uncertainly. But meanwhile Miguelito's guards and
WORKERS are rallying. TWO WORKERS rush out of hiding,
brandishing heavy hand tools as they rush Jim and Artemus.
Jim squares off to deal with them, but before he can make a
move, he's amazed to see Artemus instantly dispatch them --
with a knockout double-split kick!

ARTEMUS
(shrugs)
It was in your book.

JIM
(impressed)
Well, hell, maybe we do have a chance.

But now a nasty sounding STEAM WHISTLE BLARES.

ANGLE - THE STEAM TANK

comes RUMBLING toward them from the warehouse. It opens
FIRE with its motorized Gatling gun!

BACK TO SCENE

Jim, Artemus and Dr. Pemberton dive for cover! BULLETS RICOCHET all around them. They scramble along on their bellies behind stacked supplies. Jim gets an idea, looking at the buttons on Artemus' vest.

JIM
Are those just button buttons or...?

ARTEMUS
Of course not.

Jim rips one off.

JIM
Stay down!

And he runs!

ARTEMUS
Jim?!

ANGLE - JIM

scurries along behind the row of supplies, staying hidden as he does an end-run around the approaching tank.

Jim charges into the open, bee-lining for the tank. He grabs onto the massive rear wheel and rides it up. As he comes opposite the turret he lobbs the button in through one of the gunports!

POOF! Sleep gas surges out from inside the tank.

Gagging and choking, the TANKMEN throw open the hatches, collapsing unconscious as they tumble out.

The machine keeps driving blindly forward. Jim scrambles up on top, takes a deep breath, and dives inside.

INT. STEAM TANK - MOVING

Holding his breath, Jim yanks levers madly, trying to get anything to do anything. The turret spins. Okay, got that down. The Gatling gun FIRES. That's good. More of that.

EXT. STEAM TANK - MOVING

Jim spins the turret in a circle, firing the Gatling as he goes. Miguelito's men run frantically in all directions, diving for cover.

ANGLE - ARTEMUS

is also FIRING at the disorganized guards.

The steam tank rolls up, offering a shield. Jim pops up, taking a much needed gasp of air as the last of the sleep gas dissipates. Artemus and Dr. Pemberton climb up into the tank.

ARTEMUS

My hat is off to you, sir.

JIM

Thank you.

They slam the hatch and they're off!

INT. STEAM TANK - MOVING

Jim takes the steering controls. Dr. Pemberton squeezes in behind him.

JIM

I've got the driving part figured out. Artemus, you... figure out the cannon part.

Artemus eyes the gleaming controls for the exotic steam cannon, having no idea what to do.

ARTEMUS

Right...

EXT. STEAM TANK - MOVING

The steam tank gathers steam. Frantic guards dive out of the way. Some FIRE wildly at the thing, but of course, it does no good.

As Jim struggles to steer, the tank careens drunkenly around the compound, smashing into things while its Gatling gun BLAZES and steam cannon HISSES. Basically it's a rout. Miguelito's panicked men are running everywhere.

ANGLE - MIGUELITO AND CASSANDRA

come dashing through the turmoil, headed for the warehouse.

INT. STEAM TANK - MOVING

Jim spots them and veers toward them.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Miguelito and Cassandra disappear inside. The steam tank rolls up and stops. Jim pops up out of the tank's hatch.

JIM
It's all over Loveless! You might
as well come out!

INT. STEAM TANK

Jim drops back down to his controls, ready for action. Dr. Pemberton seems concerned:

PEMBERTON
You seem so confident, Mr. West. Do
you really think we have any chance
in this little machine?

Jim and Artemus turn slowly to stare at her worriedly.

JIM
I beg your pardon?

PEMBERTON
(realizing)
You don't know what he's built?!
Surely you don't think he kidnapped
all those geniuses to have them make
something as rudimentary as this.

Jim and Artemus glance at each other. Well, yeah, we sort of did. Outside Miguelito's men are LAUGHING derisively.

Before Dr. Pemberton can explain, they hear a GIGANTIC RUSH OF STEAM! With the eerie LAUGHTER echoing all around them, Jim and Artemus peer out.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Huge clouds of steam boil out of the warehouse. Unseen massive metal parts GROAN and CREAK. The walls of the building shudder. The ground shakes.

The roof of the building is shoved upward -- splintering, cracking -- at last falling away to reveal the top of a monstrous, fantastic war machine.

We can see only the top "deck." A hundred feet long, black, brooding, massively constructed of riveted steel.

At the forward end, a raised bridge oversees all. It is protected by unusual see-through armor -- curtains of thick, tightly woven chain-mail which undulate weirdly as the machine moves. Through them we can just make out Cassandra and gleeful Miguelito at the controls.

The machine lurches forward, SMASHING through the wall of the building. We finally see the rest of it.

It doesn't have wheels.

It doesn't have treads.

It has legs. The thirty foot tall behemoth stands on six immense, multi-jointed, piston-powered legs.

This is THE TARANTULA.

Its huge, bulbous body, three decks high, is suspended in the center of the radiating legs. The top deck is open. The center deck contains the engine room and gearing. The lower deck bristles with turret-mounted Gatling guns and cannons.

The body is surrounded by a bewildering "exoskeleton" -- a cage of criss-crossing riveted girders and beams. Narrow catwalks run helter-skelter through the complex.

It's intensely Jules Verne. Everywhere things are moving -- giant gears, whirling flywheels, gleaming pistons. Steam HISSES from dozens of vents.

On the ground, the remainder of Miguelito's men come out of hiding, CHEERING wildly, throwing their hats skyward.

ANGLE - THE STEAM TANK

Jim, Artemus, and Dr. Pemberton gaze up at the thing in absolute dumbstruck wonder.

ARTEMUS

God in heaven, what is that?!

JIM

That's... that's the criminal mind about to stomp our sorry butts!

PEMBERTON

(terrified)

He calls it the Tarantula.

ARTEMUS

But it only has six legs.

JIM

Shut up.

ANGLE - THE TARANTULA

It turns toward them, giant CLANKING legs working in smooth choreography -- the eerie, high-stepping gait of, well, of a tarantula. Each huge foot kicks up a cloud of dust as it SLAMS down.

The Tarantula's vast shadow falls across the hopelessly minuscule steam tank.

Jim, Artemus and Dr. Pemberton shrink down into the tank, slamming the hatch.

EXT. TARANTULA - TOP DECK - BRIDGE - NIGHT

The bridge is jammed with exotic controls: ratcheted levers, steam valves, brass-rimmed gauges. Cassandra consults dials and spins valve-wheels as Miguelito works the walking control levers. Prominent in front of him is a big red-painted lever, the Master Speed Control.

The rest of the top deck is a maze of exposed machinery, pumping, throbbing, and spinning -- OSHA was not consulted.

And the view is spectacular -- a commanding 360 degrees through the chain-mail armor curtains.

Miguelito smiles down at the puny steam tank.

MIGUELITO

Aww! You took my little steam gun carriage! I guess I'll just have to get along without it!

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

The Steam Tank jerks into reverse FIRING everything she has -- Gatlings, cannon, rockets.

ROUNDS EXPLODE against the superstructure of the Tarantula, but don't leave a scratch!

EXT. TARANTULA - TOP DECK - BRIDGE - NIGHT

A cannonball from the steam tank strikes the chain mail curtain. The curtain bulges inward, but stops the shell a foot from Miguelito's head, then springs back, flinging the shell away to explode harmlessly in the air.

MIGUELITO
 (exultant)
 It works! Did you see that?

Cassandra flashes him a heady grin. He gets a new idea:

MIGUELITO
 Watch this! Oh, watch this!

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

The Tarantula raises one of its six legs, swinging it out over the steam tank. The tank backs up desperately but not fast enough.

SQUASH. The tank is half-accordioned. As the massive steel foot rises, the tank's sprung belly hatch pops open. Jim, Artemus, and Dr. Pemberton scramble out.

EXT. TARANTULA - TOP DECK - BRIDGE - NIGHT

Miguelito revels as only he can:

MIGUELITO
 Crushed you like a bug! Feeling a
 bit Lilliputian, Mr. Tall-in-the-
 Saddle, Mr. Fit and Handsome?!

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

The Tarantula marches off with a jaunty step, climbing effortlessly up the steep hillside.

Miguelito's remaining men CHEER wildly as the great machine clears the hilltop.

EXT. THE TUNNEL ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Jim leads the way as they race back to where they left their horses.

JIM
 Come on! We'll beat that thing to
 Albuquerque! Let's get to the
 Wanderer!

As Artemus hauls Dr. Pemberton along:

PEMBERTON
 He's not giving up?

ARTEMUS

Well, see, he had this little wagon
when he was a kid...

EXT. DESERT - DAWN

As the sun rises, we see the Wanderer waiting at a siding in the distance.

ANGLE - DOYLE

bides his time using his long-necked oil can to fill the oil-cups on the engine's side-rods. He looks up to see Jim, Artemus and Dr. Pemberton GALLOPING toward him on their two horses.

JIM

Albuquerque, Mr. Doyle!

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The Wanderer bullets along the rails at full throttle!

EXT. DESERT - MESA - DAY

We hear a foreboding SOUND -- steam locomotive plus elephant stampede. From behind the mesa treks Miguelito's fantastic machine, weird six-legged stride giving it a bizarre gait. Jets of steam ROAR from its vents, keeping syncopated time to its SEISMIC footfalls.

As the machine lumbers past we can hear SINGING:

MIGUELITO (V.O.)

... Like an eagle on the wing! Oh,
Loveland, mighty Loveland...!

EXT. ALBUQUERQUE - ESTABLISH - DAY

The young Western town clings to the green-belt ribbon of the Rio Grande.

EXT. ALBUQUERQUE - CENTRAL AVENUE - DAY

The celebration of the Presidential visit is in full swing. Banners adorn Central Avenue. An exuberant CROWD has gathered, men and ladies in their finest. A BAND plays a rousing march. A company of SOLDIERS stands guard.

At the East end of town --

ANGLE - A HYDROGEN OBSERVATION BALLOON

sways majestically on its tethers, hung with colorful bunting. SOLDIERS manning it offer free rides to the public. A wagon holds the complex of hydrogen generating equipment fed to the balloon through big canvas tubes.

ANGLE - A BANDSTAND

President Grant and smiling local DIGNITARIES preside over the festivities. The GOVERNOR steps to the lectern and signals the BANDLEADER, who brings the march to a close with several big BASS DRUM HITS.

GOVERNOR

Ladies and gentlemen of the great
territory of New Mexico...

Under his speech, deep BASS THUMPS continue. THUD. THUD. THUD. The bandleader glares at the BASS DRUMMER, who shrugs helplessly: "I ain't doing it!"

GOVERNOR

... it is with great honor I present
to you the President of the United
States, Ulysses S. Grant!

The crowd CHEERS wildly. Grant takes the stand. But before he speaks, he becomes aware of the eerie THUDDING, growing louder and louder.

More and more people hear it, looking around, falling SILENT. The ominous sound permeates the atmosphere. Where's it coming from? What could it be?

A CRY goes up. Hands point. Heads turn.

ANGLE - A DISTANT BLUFF

Dust boils from behind it.

The Tarantula marches slowly up into view. It pauses on the hilltop surveying the town like a monstrous predator.

ANGLE - TOWNSFOLK

Stunned. Fascinated. The sight is so astounding they have no idea how to react.

EXT. TARANTULA - TOP DECK - BRIDGE - DAY

Miguelito and Cassandra gaze at the distant crowd.

MIGUELITO

I could get used to this, looking
down on people.

CASSANDRA

They don't even realize they should
be frightened.

MIGUELITO

Well, let's help them with that.
Take the legs.

Cassandra takes over the walking levers. Miguelito moves to a new set of controls. He stomps a treadle, and an ornate glass disk rises out of the floor, stopping in front of his face. It is etched with concentric circles and range numbers -- a 19th century heads-up aiming display. He squints through it, then shouts into a speaking tube:

MIGUELITO

Forward guns ready!

EXT. TARANTULA - GUNNERY DECK - DAY

At the front of the machine, steam cannon barrels slide out of ports in the armored lower deck.

EXT. TARANTULA - TOP DECK - BRIDGE - DAY

MIGUELITO

"Look on my works, ye mighty, and
despair!"

Miguelito merrily yanks the fire controls!

EXT. ALBUQUERQUE - CENTRAL AVENUE - DAY

The first rounds go wide and high, BLASTING a water tower; throwing up geysers in the Rio Grande. But the townsfolk get the point.

Bedlam! Screams! Utter chaos!

The next rounds are more accurate -- explosions march down the street toward the bandstand. Grant and the dignitaries dive unceremoniously off as the bandstand is shattered.

Another blast shears a flagpole and the American flag flying over the courthouse topples in the dust.

Civilians run everywhere. Riderless horses buck wildly. Soldiers are stunned, paralyzed.

PRESIDENT GRANT
 rises from the dust, glaring off at
 the monstrous machine. The old war
 veteran hears the call to battle.
 He bellows at the soldiers:

GRANT
 Soldier, pick up your rifle! You,
 get those horses under control! Man
 the field pieces! Get the women and
 children under cover!

EXT. THE WANDERER - LOCOMOTIVE - DAY

The train thunders along, everybody now in the cab. Dr.
 Pemberton leans way out, face sooty, hair flying, shouting
 to Doyle:

PEMBERTON
 (re the locomotive)
 The cylinders are perfectly balanced.
 You're getting no back-lash even at
 this speed!

DOYLE
 Dear me, woman, you do know your
 engines!

Doyle gazes at her. Fascinating woman.

Jim and Artemus point ahead simultaneously:

JIM
 There it is!

EXT. TARANTULA - DAY

Miguelito's walking war weapon marches along ahead of them,
 bearing down on Albuquerque.

CANNON and small-arms fire ECHO from the city as Grant and
 the soldiers mount a hopeless defense. Puny explosions PUFF
 around the advancing machine like so much harmless flak.

EXT. TARANTULA - TOP DECK - BRIDGE - DAY

Ignoring the EXPLOSIONS and RICOCHETS, Miguelito hums his
 National Anthem as he spins from the fire controls to an
 elaborate pedestal-mounted pair of field glasses.

MIGUELITO

(to Cassandra)

So, my dear, what would you like to be? Princess? Duchess? Countess...?

He peers through the glasses at the fleeing citizens.

MIGUELITO

Yes, run, run. Cower. Hide. Cringe!
Prostrate yourselves before...

(suddenly)

Wait! There he is! It's Grant!
Commander-and-Chief of the occupying
forces! Stop, stop! I need to aim
carefully!

Cassandra heaves back on the red Master Speed Control lever, bringing the Tarantula to a swaying stop. Miguelito springs to his aiming display glass.

EXT. TARANTULA - GUNNERY DECK - DAY

Again the menacing steam cannons slide out into firing position.

But CAMERA BOOMS DOWN along the powerful legs, continuing down, down to REVEAL --

The Tarantula is standing right on the railroad tracks!

EXT. THE WANDERER - DAY

Jim, Artemus and Doyle see this. Too good to be true.

Jim looks at Doyle. Doyle knows what he's thinking.

DOYLE

(with a mad grin)

Would you be thinking... ramming
speed, sir?

JIM

I would, Mr. Doyle! Are you game?

Doyle nods. Artemus turns to Dr. Pemberton:

ARTEMUS

Time for you to get off, Ma'am.

PEMBERTON

Like hell! I'll see it through!
Ram the bastard!

With an admiring double-take at this spirited woman, Doyle spits a stream of tobacco and throws the throttle wide. The Wanderer SHOOTs FORWARD!

EXT. TARANTULA - TOP DECK - BRIDGE - DAY

Miguelito sights through his aiming glass.

MIGUELITO
Adios, Mr. President!

But Cassandra glimpses something to one side.

CASSANDRA
Miguelito!!

She dives for the leg control levers, yanking them.

EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - DAY

The Wanderer is seconds from colliding with the Tarantula when the big machine leans crazily sideways. The two legs on the tracks lift quickly up. It balances like a dog taking a pee.

The Wanderer BLASTS past underneath, so close that the locomotive's smokestack is ripped off as it clips a huge steel foot.

EXT. TARANTULA - TOP DECK - BRIDGE - DAY

The bridge yaws way over as Cassandra fights to keep the machine's balance. Miguelito tumbles ungracefully across the floor and plows headfirst into a chain-mail curtain. He scrambles up, composes himself, and peers out.

MIGUELITO
It's West and Gordon! Again! I would never have given them their own train!

EXT. THE WANDERER - DAY

Doyle hits the brakes. The train SCREECHES to a stop at the edge of town.

DOYLE
Shall I reverse her, sir?

PEMBERTON
Yes! Let's do it again!

But Artemus is looking back.

ARTEMUS

No... I'm afraid it's time to abandon
ship.

EXT. TARANTULA - DAY

The agile machine is twisting around, bringing the forward
steam guns to bear on the Wanderer.

The cannons open FIRE!

EXT. THE WANDERER - DAY

The EXPLODING SHELLS literally chew up the train, blowing
apart the parlour car, the sleeping car, the tender.

Doyle grabs Dr. Pemberton. They dive out one side. Jim and
Artemus dive out the other just as --

BLAAAM! The beautiful locomotive takes a direct hit and is
blown sky-high in a massive steam and TNT blast!

ANGLE - JIM AND ARTEMUS

scramble to their feet, staring off angrily at their trashed
ride.

ARTEMUS

My God! He's so excessive!

JIM

Where have you been?

A HELLISH NOISE interrupts them. The Tarantula's gunners
have opened up with MOTORIZED GATLING GUNS. At an unthinkable
3800 shots a minute, they cut a terrifying swathe toward the
duo. It looks like the ground itself is boiling. Jim and
Artemus run like hell and dive into an arroyo.

After the bulletstorm ROARS over them, they peek up.

THE TARANTULA

pivots back on course, marching onward.

ANGLE - JIM

looks around desperately. If there's a way to fight that
thing, he'd love to come up with it now.

ANGLE - JIM'S P.O.V. -- THE OBSERVATION BALLOON

sways serenely in the distance.

BACK TO SCENE

Jim stares at it, an idea hatching.

JIM
Artemus, come on!

He charges for the balloon! Baffled Artemus gives chase.

ARTEMUS
I'm with you, Jim! Just tell me
what I'm doing!

EXT. ALBUQUERQUE - CENTRAL AVENUE - CHURCH - DAY

Having nowhere else to run, the townsfolk have taken refuge inside a church at the end of the street.

Grant and the few soldiers who aren't dead or wounded man field-guns behind a hastily thrown-together barricade in front of the a church.

GRANT
Stand your ground. We'll fire at
point blank range!

A SERGEANT points off.

SERGEANT
Who the hell is that?

It's Jim and Artemus, heading pell-mell for --

EXT. OBSERVATION BALLOON - DAY

They reach the balloon. Jim grabs a line and ties the balloon to the wagon carrying the hydrogen generating equipment.

JIM
Pull the balloon right in front of
him! We'll board the damn thing!

ARTEMUS
Oh, I see, an easy plan!

Artemus leaps into the wagon, grabs the reins and charges away, towing the balloon behind while Jim clambers up into the basket.

The wagon races along, Artemus towing the balloon right into the path of the oncoming Tarantula. Jim shouts from the balloon:

JIM
All right, Artemus! Get up here!

Artemus reins in the horses and leaps into the back of the wagon to untie the balloon.

But a withering burst of Gatling fire tears up the wagon, literally cutting it in half. It collapses. Artemus falls with it. The balloon's rope rips free.

Bullets ZINGING around him, Artemus rolls for cover.

EXT. TARANTULA - TOP DECK - BRIDGE - DAY

Miguelito gapes as this madman in a balloon soars up directly in front of him. He hops up and down BELLOWING:

MIGUELITO
Will you just stop?!
(into speaking tubes)
Fire! Fire! Don't you see him?

INT. TARANTULA - GUNNERY DECK - DAY

The Gatling gunners try to swivel their guns up for a shot at Jim, but the barrels just hit the top of the gun ports. No one ever thought they'd have to shoot up.

EXT. THE TARANTULA

marches down Central Avenue. Miguelito swerves to one side, trying to avoid passing beneath Jim.

The gargantuan machine SMASHES THROUGH a saloon as though the building were a house of cards.

EXT. OBSERVATION BALLOON - DAY

Seeing the Tarantula avoiding him, Jim swiftly uncoils a rope, forming a lasso. He's only got one shot and he knows it. As the monster keeps veering away, he lets fly with a cowboy YELL -- and snags it!

WHOOSH, the balloon is instantly taken into tow, hauled behind at a crazy angle -- the world's biggest kite.

Without hesitation, Jim climbs out of the basket and starts down the taut rope, hand over hand. He reaches the criss-crossing "exoskeleton" girders on the very stern and gingerly begins to climb down.

EXT. TARANTULA - TOP DECK - BRIDGE - DAY

Miguelito brings the Tarantula to a lurching stop. The chain-mail curtains WHOOSH aside. He and Cassandra rush out. They can see the balloon flying above the stern, but Jim has disappeared.

MIGUELITO

Find West! Find him! Get him off!
You know, kill him... if that's
humanly possible!

Murder in her eyes, Cassandra pulls a big-bore derringer from her garter and moves off aft. The deck starts undulating as Miguelito fires up the Tarantula again.

Down below, Miguelito's gunners open up on Grant and his men with the turret-mounted Gatlings.

EXT. ALBUQUERQUE - CENTRAL AVENUE - ARTEMUS

sees the Tarantula start to move, lifting its legs out of the rubble of the saloon. If he's going to act, he'd better act now.

ARTEMUS

(psyching himself up)
Oh, all right! Act first and worry
later!

He lunges for the massive foot and grabs on.

He's carried high in the air as the foot is raised to clear the wrecked building. The foot starts back down. He braces for the shock, clinging to the riveted cross-members of the "ankle." WHOOM! The foot slams down, but he hangs on.

The leg stays still for a moment while the other legs do their thing. In this pause Artemus scrambles partway up. Avoiding thrusting pistons, he can only climb during the pauses, but he's getting there.

EXT. TARANTULA - TOP DECK - DAY

Jim finally drops down onto the deck. It's a nightmare maze of air intakes, reciprocating gears and pumping pistons that protrude through it from the engine deck below.

Jim eases along a narrow catwalk, avoiding the gyrating machinery.

He ducks as a big counter-weight swings across the catwalk. The move saves his life as POW, a shot strikes the bulkhead where he was. He pops up, gun drawn, but hesitates for a second when he sees it's Cassandra who fired. In that moment, the counterweight swings back, knocking Jim's pistol right out of his hand. It skids across the deck and drops into a narrow grating. Jim tries to reach it, but his arm is too big to fit through.

He jumps up as Cassandra advances on him, moving around an immense reciprocating gear protruding up through the deck. Jim backs up, punching the derringer belt buckle a couple of times. No good.

CASSANDRA

I had hoped I wouldn't be the one who had to do this, Mr. West. I usually don't mind killing a man. But in your case I find myself strangely conflicted.

Jim fixes her with a deadly look.

JIM

You know, I really hate being toyed with before someone shoots me.

CASSANDRA

(with a shrug)
Fine, I'll stop.

She FIRES! The shot hits Jim in the stomach -- right in the derringer belt buckle! SPANG! The derringer flips out and FIRES.

Cassandra is hit squarely. Pure shock and surprise on her face, she sags sideways toward the ROARING gears. She weakly grabs onto a cross member. Eyes wide with terror, she holds herself suspended above the gears, but her fingers are slipping.

Jim lunges to catch her, but is too late. With a horrid SHRIEK Cassandra pitches forward.

CUT TO:

EXT. TARANTULA - TOP DECK - BRIDGE - DAY

Cassandra's distant SCREAM is lost in the machine noise. The Tarantula lurches uncertainly as one of the levers jams momentarily.

Miguelito wiggles it, then taps a pressure gauge. Seems to be all right now. He looks behind him nervously, then grabs a brass speaking tube:

MIGUELITO

Cassandra?

EXT. TARANTULA - ENGINE DECK - DAY

Artemus has climbed up to the "knee" of the leg. Here it makes a sharp bend back down to pass through the wall of the middle deck. When the leg moves back, there is a gap in the wall just big enough to slide through. When the leg steps forward the gap closes.

Timing it just right, Artemus slides down the leg and through the gap!

INT. TARANTULA - ENGINE DECK - DAY

Artemus drops onto a precarious walkway in the heart of the Tarantula, a bewildering M.C. Escher chamber of whirling gears, spinning fly-wheels, hissing pistons, massive CLANKING drive chains.

He's spotted by a UNIFORMED CREWMAN across the chamber. They both pull six guns and rapid fire! But the oscillating machinery between them blocks all twelve shots, bullets RICOCHETING everywhere. Artemus and the crewman blink at each other, unhurt, unbelieving.

Then the crewman charges. They go at it HAND TO HAND, at every moment in danger of falling into the works.

EXT. TARANTULA - TOP DECK - DAY

Jim works his way cautiously toward the bridge.

Miguelito's VOICE comes over the speaking tubes:

MIGUELITO (O.S.)

Cassandra, answer me!

INT. TARANTULA - ENGINE DECK - DAY

The powerful crewman has pinned Artemus against a railing, choking him. Beside them is a big whirling flywheel. Artemus spots the man's long key chain hooked to his belt. He lets go of the man's arms for an instant and flicks the keychain over into the spokes of the flywheel.

In a flash the startled crewman is yanked sideways and instantly sucked into the machinery. Artemus stands and dusts himself off. Problem solved.

Then a door flies open. Five ANGRY CREWMEN burst in -- coal-stokers armed with wrenches, shovels, and what-have-you. They advance menacingly. Artemus gulps.

EXT. TARANTULA - TOP DECK - BRIDGE - DAY

MIGUELITO

Cassandra? Cassandra! Engine deck!
Send someone up here to help me!

A VOICE comes back over the speaking tube:

VOICE (O.S.)

As soon as possible, sir! We have
an intruder on board.

MIGUELITO

I know that, you idiot! That's why
I want help!

EXT. CENTRAL AVENUE - CHURCH - DAY

The Tarantula ambles slowly down the street, smashing awnings, stomping boardwalks, shearing off signs, coming closer and closer to the church.

Grant and his soldiers fire futilely at it, ducking the withering Gatling return fire.

EXT. TARANTULA - TOP DECK - BRIDGE - DAY

Miguelito glowers as he deliberately steers the machine left and right, smashing whatever catches his eye.

Suddenly he's scooped up and tossed aside. It's Jim who's sneaked onto the bridge. He triumphantly steps forward and shoves the Master Speed Control, shutting down the Tarantula. He turns to Miguelito:

JIM

For an Emperor you're one bad driver.

But Miguelito has grabbed Artemus' walking stick and comes at him like a wildman! Jim backpedals, trying to fend off the blows, but finally he has no choice. He spin-kicks the guy right out onto the deck.

The little man slides across the top deck, slamming into a bulkhead. The walking stick goes skittering away down an access hatch. Now defenseless, he leaps up and runs off. Jim runs after him.

INT. TARANTULA - ENGINE DECK - DAY

Artemus has been backed up to a wall by the five stokers. They're about to do him in when, TING, TANG, CLINK, something comes tumbling down from above. It lands right in Artemus' hand. He can't imagine how it's possible, but it's his walking stick.

ARTEMUS

Deus ex machina!

The tables are instantly turned. Artemus snaps it open into mace mode and attacks with a vengeance, a wild-ass one-man tornado.

He forces the stunned stokers out through a hatchway, and SLAMS the metal door, locking them out.

He spins and expertly assesses the complex of machinery all around him.

ARTEMUS

Let's see... that goes there... so that must do that... so that has to be connected to... Ah hah!

He grabs a big wrench and begins unbolting one of the long connecting rods.

EXT. TARANTULA - TOP DECK - DAY

Jim searches for Miguelito in the maze of top deck machinery. He spots him lying face-down on a grating.

JIM

It's all over, little guy.

But Miguelito suddenly rolls over, pulling his arm out from the grating, having found Jim's own six-gun which he aims at him!

MIGUELITO

Look what I found!

Startled Jim raises his hands, backing up.

JIM

Easy now.

MIGUELITO

Easy? Easy? On just what grounds
should I take it easy!?

INT. TARANTULA - ENGINE DECK - DAY

Artemus is merrily disconnecting connecting rods, tossing them out a nearby porthole.

EXT. TARANTULA - TOP DECK - BRIDGE - DAY

Jim is backed up against the control console, totally cornered. His eyes dart around as Miguelito takes very deliberate aim.

MIGUELITO

I will say this, Mr. West, I have
never had to kill someone so many
times!

Jim suddenly shoves the Master Speed Control full forward. The deck tilts wildly as the Tarantula lunges ahead. Miguelito's SHOT goes wild and the little Emperor tumbles backward away from the bridge again.

Jim hangs on, marveling at the power of the machine.

JIM

Man, I gotta get me one of these!

EXT. TARANTULA - DAY

The huge machine rears up like an arachno-stallion and then plunges down the street, CLANKING, HISSING -- ACCELERATING.

INT. TARANTULA - ENGINE DECK - DAY

Artemus hangs on as the room pitches and rolls, doggedly working to unbolt one last connecting rod. Got it!

EXT. TARANTULA - TOP DECK - DAY

Miguelito skids helplessly across the rocking deck and -- disappears HOWLING down an air intake!

EXT. TARANTULA - TOP DECK - BRIDGE - DAY

In the gyrating bridge Jim fights to keep his balance, struggling back to the Master Control.

He yanks it back with grand finality -- and nothing happens. The maniacal mechanical menace keeps going! He frantically works the lever back and forth. No good.

JIM

Hey! Stop!

Just beside the bridge, Artemus comes up out of a hatch, proudly holding up the last connecting rod.

ARTEMUS

Jim! I did it! I've uncoupled all the connecting rods! There's no way they can control this thing now!

He triumphantly flings this last rod overboard. Jim stares at him, aghast. Artemus looks around:

ARTEMUS

Why is it going so fast?

The Tarantula keeps accelerating.

EXT. CENTRAL AVENUE - CHURCH - DAY

Grant and the soldiers eye the Tarantula THUNDERING toward them -- a steel tidal wave.

SOLDIER

It ain't stoppin'... IT AIN'T STOPPIN'!

GRANT

Get everyone out of the church! Get them out! MOVE!

The Tarantula is fifty yards from the front steps. Panicked townsfolk spill out the doors, tumble out the windows.

ANGLE - REAR OF THE CHURCH

President Grant climbs out a window carrying one last person, a LAUGHING TWO YEAR-OLD.

Grant barely manages to dive out of the way as --

ANGLE - WIDE

The Tarantula PLOWS THROUGH THE CHURCH. The building EXPLODES into toothpicks.

PAN with the monster machine as it pounds onward out into the desert, literally starting to gallop, huge feet throwing up truckloads of earth with every SMASHING IMPACT.

EXT. TARANTULA - TOP DECK - BRIDGE - DAY

Jim and Artemus argue as they spin knobs, crank cranks, and try anything to slow down the galloping beast.

ARTEMUS

The machine was stopped! It seemed like a perfect time to disable it! Why'd you have to throw it into full throttle?!

JIM

He was going to shoot me! Do you mind?!

ARTEMUS

All right, all right... It'll be okay. I mean, eventually it'll just run out of steam.

JIM

(pointing ahead)
In the next two minutes?

Artemus looks -- and goes pale.

EXT. HIGH AND WIDE - DEEP CANYON - DAY

The Tarantula's headed straight for it!

EXT. TARANTULA - TOP DECK - BRIDGE - DAY

Jim and Artemus stare at impending doom. Then Jim gets an idea. He looks back to see the Tarantula is still towing the observation balloon.

JIM

Come on!

EXT. TARANTULA - TOP DECK - STERN - DAY

Jim and Artemus race to the rope holding the balloon.

Jim frantically tries to untie it.

ARTEMUS

Here!

Artemus kicks the heel of his boot -- out pops the knife blade. It's a ridiculously awkward task, madly sawing on the thick rope with his toe, but it's their only hope.

Strand by strand it gives way.

Jim glances ahead -- that cliff is coming up fast!

Suddenly, right beside them, a hatch slams open.

Miguelito pops out, still brandishing Jim's gun.

MIGUELITO

Now you die!

Totally deadpan, Jim and Artemus simply point ahead. Miguelito turns and sees the onrushing cliff. He instantly drops the gun and gestures desperately to the rope:

MIGUELITO

Hurry! Cut it! Do it, you idiot!
Do you want to die?!

ARTEMUS

Can you muzzle him or something?!

The rope starts to pop and unravel.

JIM

There it goes! Hang on!

Jim grabs the rope.

EXT. DEEP CANYON - DAY

The monster machine plummets over the edge, legs flailing, dragging the balloon behind it!

EXT. ALBUQUERQUE - DAY

Dr. Pemberton and Doyle are horrified at the sight. Are Jim and Artemus goners?

EXT. TARANTULA IN FREEFALL - DAY

The three men are weightless with the flailing Tarantula. Jim still clings to the rope.

And it finally SNAPS. Jim just manages to catch Artemus by the wrist. Artemus just manages to snag Miguelito by the ankle and all three of them whip skyward!

Up they sail, hanging beneath the ascending balloon, Miguelito dangling upside-down. He covers his eyes as --

ANGLE - CANYON FLOOR

The magnificent Tarantula slams into the rocks like the asteroid that killed the dinosaurs! It shatters into a million fragments, EXPLODING in a volcano of steam!

ANGLE - JIM, ARTEMUS AND MIGUELITO

drift along, staring down at the devastation. Finally:

MIGUELITO

I don't suppose you have any idea
what that thing cost, do you?

EXT. ALBUQUERQUE - DAY

Doyle and Dr. Pemberton are horrified as a huge fire-ball rises out of the canyon. How could anyone have survived?

EXT. DEEP CANYON - DAY

Then the balloon rises gracefully into view, Jim, Artemus, and Miguelito dangling beneath.

EXT. ALBUQUERQUE - DAY

Doyle and Dr. Pemberton are overjoyed to see them among the living. TILT UP TO SEE:

The balloon drifting slowly down toward the amazed, grateful, CHEERING townsfolk. And we HEAR:

MIGUELITO

I remind you all you're dealing with
a genius! Already I am analyzing my
mistakes! I was thinking too small!
Next time I won't settle for just
the Southwest! Oh no! Next time...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ALBUQUERQUE TRAIN STATION - DAY

Artemus walks slowly toward the station, clearly dejected, reading a letter over and over.

A lonely STEAM WHISTLE sounds in the distance. He looks off. A train is coming.

But as the locomotive draws near, he realizes -- it's an exact copy of the Wanderer.

Except the engine is Number 5, the number the show's fans know (and they thought we had it wrong all this time). Artemus is stunned.

As the train steams in, he's further astonished to see Doyle leaning out of the cab with a big grin.

DOYLE

A good mornin' to you, sir. Have you met my new fireman?

Artemus does yet another take as he sees Doyle's new "Fireman" -- beaming Dr. Pemberton!

Now Jim comes hurrying along, dressed in his Western finest, carrying his saddlebags.

JIM

Artemus! Look at that. Brand spanking new. She's a beauty, huh? Let's get rolling.

ARTEMUS

What is this? A whole new train?

JIM

Well, sure. Didn't you get your orders?

Artemus glumly holds out the letter.

ARTEMUS

Yes... yes I did. I'm to take the three-thirty train to Baltimore. I've been assigned a desk job in the exciting mail fraud division.

Jim studies the letter, shocked. He hands it back to Artemus.

JIM

Oh... am I embarrassed. The President made my assignment permanent. New train, two weeks vacation and everything. I just assumed... I mean... I'd never have asked you to meet me here if I'd known.

Artemus tries to shrug it off.

ARTEMUS

Jim, Jim... forget it. Obviously your work impressed everyone. Certainly impressed me.

ARTEMUS
 (after a pause)
 You're kind of unpredictable but you
 are the best partner I've ever had.

He gives Jim a heartfelt handshake.

JIM
 Damn, Artemus, I'm going to miss
 you... and your gadgets, and your
 disguises... your smartass sarcasm...

Artemus smiles weakly. Doyle TOOTS the WHISTLE.

DOYLE
 All aboard, sir! Got a schedule to
 keep.

Jim and Artemus part awkwardly, avoiding each others eyes.

JIM
 Well, we'll stay in touch... you
 know.

ARTEMUS
 I'm sure we will.

Jim boards the parlour car and the Wanderer begins to CHUG
 slowly away.

A YOUNG BOY scurries up to Artemus, thrusting out an envelope.

YOUNG BOY
 Mr. Gordon, this is for you. Envelope
 number two.

ARTEMUS
 Number two...?

YOUNG BOY
 That's right. Envelope number one I
 am to give you at ten a.m. this
 morning, which I did. Envelope number
 two I am to give you the second that
 there train starts moving, which I'm
 doing. Mr. West paid me five whole
 dollars.

ARTEMUS
 He what...?

Artemus snatches the envelope, rips it open - and scans his
 real orders. He whirls to see Jim waving "innocently" from
 the train. Artemus charges after him.

ARTEMUS

You inconsiderate reprobate! It was
my assignment in the first place!
You were lucky I even let you tag
along!

Jim is cracking up as he urges him on. Artemus sprints madly
down the tracks and finally overtakes the train. Jim extends
a hand to pull him aboard and we watch the Wanderer steam
magnificently off into the new

WILD WILD WEST.

FADE OUT

THE END