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T H E N C A M E B R O N S O N

OLD TIGERS NEVER DIE; THEY JUST RUN AWAY

Prod.#6454

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THEN CAME BRONSON

"Old Tigers Never Die; They Just Run Away"

Prod. #6454

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. A PLACE - VISTA SHOT - DAY

1

There's desolation here, as far as the eye can see. And the ABSENCE OF SOUND, which is a palpable silence. And nothing to characterize time. And nothing to indicate life. This could be another planet; a red desert on Mars, a dusty sea on the moon. Or it could be this, our planet before the first creature crawled up out of the ooze onto dry land.

ANGLE - A ROAD

2

A serpentine gash of blacktop with its white vertebral divider cutting through the desert, winding around the monolithic buttes. Still not a sign of life. Perhaps man has been here and gone, leaving his post-holocaustic monument; a road leading to nowhere. The silence persists. Utterly. But soon a SOUND is HEARD for the first time; guttural and unbroken, gnawing like an animal at the outer shell of this silence.

ANOTHER ANGLE - THEN COMES BRONSON!

3

SMASHING into view as his cycle roars around a curve in the road which at this CAMERA POINT unwraps itself from around the base of a huge copper butte.

CLOSE ON BRONSON - TRAVELLING

4

The ROAR of his motorcycle a welcome relief for us -- from the silence. Travel dust lays heavy on him. And it would appear he's had his fill of desert terrain. Pushing on, almost grimly, which makes for the sharp contrast finally when he comes out into the open from around a bend between jagged outcroppings.

HIS POV - A STRETCH OF WATER - LONG

5

Seen across the expanse of desert and through the gossamery waves of heat, the shimmering blue water seems unreal.

BACK TO BRONSON

6

looking to the O.S. water with the doubt of a lost desert prospector beholding a miracle.

ANOTHER ANGLE

7

PAST Bronson in F.G. to the lake in B.G., as he remains transfixed by the startling beauty of the sapphirine water in its incongruous arid desert setting. Then there APPEARS a small FIGURE, undistinguishable from this vantage point, who moves across the scene in the distance, where the road twists near the lake shore.

CLOSER - VALERIE

8

VALERIE TATE, the figure we see, heads down the highway. She is thirty-five years of mature femininity. The blue jeans and the man's shirt with the tails sticking out accent rather than detract from her womanliness. Presently, she stops, reacting sharply, as she HEARS the SOUND of an approaching motorcycle. The SOUND seems to mean something alarming to her. She searches the area, it would appear, for a place to hide. But there is none. So she turns and continues on her way, instinctively picking up her pace. She continues on as she turns to look back.

HER POV - THE ROAD

9

where Bronson, on his bike, APPEARS from around the bend.

HIS POV - VALERIE - LONG

10

She gestures for a hitch.

ANOTHER ANGLE - BRONSON

11

PAN him to where Valerie waits. He stops. She hops on. They go.

VARIOUS ANGLES - VALERIE AND BRONSON ON THE BIKE

12

They ride in silence. Valerie is caught up in some inner turmoil. Bronson looks over his shoulder at her from time to time, but gets no response.

ANOTHER ANGLE - ANOTHER MOTORBIKE

13

as it APPEARS from around a curve some distance behind Bronson's bike. Neither Bronson or Valerie are yet aware of it but the rider of this bike is very much aware of them as he looks into the distance to see:

HIS POV - BRONSON'S BIKE - LONG

14

as it moves into the distance.

BACK TO THE OTHER BIKE

15

as the rider puts on "steam." This bike is a full-dress Harley. Impressive, big, black. The cyclist, RUSS FABER, compact in build, seems too small for his "monster" bike. He's dressed in black down to the frames of his goggles, but not in the mode of a Hell's Angel. His outfit is smartly tailored gabardine rather than leather, sedate rather than showy, and therefore more distinctive.

ANOTHER ANGLE - BRONSON AND VALERIE

16

FEATURING Bronson who looks back now and sees, for the first time, the big black bike behind him, and quickly closing the gap between them.

ANOTHER ANGLE - WIDE

17

as Russ puts on a flashy, last minute burst of speed and bears down hard on Bronson, who finally veers to the side of the road to let him pass. But the other bike cuts in front of Bronson, forcing him to a skidding stop.

ANOTHER ANGLE - THE TWO BIKES

18

Bronson, fuming, gets off his bike to move towards Russ. There are no permissible TV words to match Bronson's anger. Russ casually removes his goggles and intones in a soft easy drawl.

RUSS

Sorry about that.

That casualness throws Bronson. He stops. Russ continues, indicating Valerie:

RUSS

She's with me.

Russ' smile is as cool and easy as his manner and speech. Yet underneath there's a quiet desperation which refuses to remain hidden, leaking out through the lines around the eyes, and from under that healthy, "youthful" tan. Still Russ Faber isn't old. But you can perceive, if you perceive deep enough, that he's older than he wants to be. But, remember, the problem is subtle, not to be drawn with bold strokes. His smile remains unchanged as he and Bronson look to Valerie. Bronson has detected a threatening note in that lilting drawl of Russ'. He gazes at Valerie for some kind of confirmation, some sign of decision.

CLOSE ON VALERIE

19

Her indecision is deep, painful.

HER POV - BRONSON AND RUSS

20

Both wait her decision.

RUSS (hides his
impatience under the smile)
Let's go.

Now Bronson puts in his two cents' worth.

BRONSON

I'd say that's up to her.

Bronson's comment has the affect of a challenging gauntlet slapped across Russ' face. The smile disappears; the words are sharp, the tone lethal.

20
CONT'D
(2)

RUSS (level)

You mean my wife?

Bronson is stopped dead cold. He looks to Valerie. Finally, she makes her move. Reluctantly she crosses to Russ, stands dutifully at the rear of his bike; her eyes averting Bronson's gaze. Now the smile returns to Russ. He wears his victory over her as a badge of virility. And to add further proof, if only for himself, he presses the conquest, as he continues to look to Bronson, still smiling, as he orders his wife:

RUSS

Well...thank the man for the lift.

Bronson's had it with these two. He doesn't wait for her "thanks." He's on his bike and ready to take off when:

RUSS

Hey!

Bronson looks to him, ready. A beat, then:

RUSS

Where you headed?

BRONSON

Watch!

Bronson GUNS AWAY. Russ and Valerie watch him. Finally, they look to each other. And for the first time she doesn't avert his gaze. But she looks at him head-on, almost defiantly. Her truthful gaze seems to deprive him of his victory. Either that, or it was an empty one to begin with. Whichever, his smile dissolves in a slow death.

ANOTHER ANGLE - BRONSON - TRAVELLING

21

HOLDING Russ and Valerie in the receding B.G. Presently, Bronson turns to look back at them. The couple remains a tableau, frozen in time and space. Bronson shifts his gaze ahead...to whatever waits him.

FADE OUT.

END ACT ONE