

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. REAR OF OLIVER'S PLACE - BRONSON - DAY

71

He's continuing the dismantling. When presently, there's the building ROAR of a MOTORCYCLE in the distance O.S. He turns to look in that direction.

HIS POV - LONG - RUSS FABER - HIGHWAY

72

Far away on a rise in the mesa, Russ Faber is astride his big "hawg," parked, in neutral, with the engine ROARING louder and louder in angry growls. The bike is dead center on the white divider line running down the middle of the highway. CAMERA ZOOMS IN ON Russ FOR CLOSER ANGLE, his expression as grim as the GUNNING of his bike, both bespeaking challenge.

BACK TO BRONSON

73

He turns from looking to the distant Russ to gaze significantly to his own nearby bike, then he shifts his view back to Russ.

POV SHOT - RUSS

74

as before.

BACK TO BRONSON

75

He returns to his work, ignoring Russ and the CONTINUING CHALLENGE OF THE ROARING BIKE.

BACK TO RUSS

76

Even more grim, gritting his teeth, increasing the ROAR of his engine!

ANOTHER ANGLE - OLIVER

77

who now APPEARS from around the corner of his shack, and keeping his eye on the distant Russ, joins Bronson. Then indicating Russ, he asks Bronson:

OLIVER

What's that about?

Bronson just shrugs.

OLIVER

What's he trying to say?

BRONSON

Come and get it.

OLIVER

Come and get what?

BRONSON

Chicken...down the center line.

OLIVER (worriedly)

You can get killed doing that.

BRONSON (nods)

Yeah.

OLIVER (after a pause)

Well?

BRONSON

Well?...

OLIVER

What are you gonna do?

BRONSON

What you're paying me to do.

Bronson resumes work. Oliver, pleased, starts to leave, but stops after moving some paces, looking O.S. to see:

HIS POV - LONG - RUSS

78

The big "hawg" now speeds threateningly towards Oliver's place.

ANOTHER ANGLE - OLIVER AND BRONSON

79

Oliver looks to Bronson, who ignores the approaching motorcycle, continuing his work. Oliver, worried now, remains.

ANOTHER ANGLE - RUSS ON HIS "HAWG"

80

speeding along, then cutting off the highway and straight towards the rear of Oliver's place and Bronson. He comes to a skidding stop just a fraction of an inch away from Bronson, who keeps his back to Russ as the challenger says:

RUSS

You heard me.

BRONSON (as easy mutter)

Uh-huh.

RUSS

So?!

Bronson shrugs. Russ' cool is dissolving.

BRONSON

Nothing.

RUSS

What's that mean?

When he puts his hand on Bronson's shoulder, it has the effect of an electric prod. Now Bronson for the first time swings around to face him and CAMERA. His tone is an evenly honed razor, and there's a glint of the same steel in his eyes. The two men look at each other. Bronson remains steady while frustration eats at Russ' guts.

ANOTHER ANGLE - WIDER - ALL

81

Russ retreats, riding off in the direction he had come. Bronson turns to look to Oliver. The older man makes the appropriate gesture to the accompanying word:

OLIVER

Peace.

Bronson smiles, nods and returns to work as Oliver leaves, rounding the corner of the shack. Bronson is switching to another tool when he looks out across the mesa, something there O.S. catching his eye. CONT'D (2)

POV SHOT - JOHN CARBONA AND GRANDSON - LONG

82

The old Navajo and the boy ride in atop the pinto.

ANOTHER ANGLE - PAST BRONSON IN F.G.

83

As John and the boy pass, Bronson waves a greeting. But the old man and his grandson, look straight ahead, ignoring it. But, just before they DISAPPEAR around the corner of the shack, the boy looks quickly back over his shoulder to Bronson first, then Bronson's bike. The forbidden glance is fleeting, then Bronson is alone again, and he resumes his work.

ANOTHER ANGLE - FRONT OF OLIVER'S PLACE

84

where John tethers the pony, then lifts his grandson off the mount. Despite his impassiveness, the old man loves the boy, and handles him with gentle care. The boy sits in stoic, cross-legged Indian fashion near the front door of the shack while John goes inside.

INT. OLIVER'S PLACE - DAY

85

As John ENTERS, Oliver places the platter of sandwiches on the table.

OLIVER

Hello, John. Been expecting you.

Nothing from John. Oliver indicates the platter.

OLIVER

Like I told you, fresh every day.

(nothing from John)

Well, maybe you'll change your mind this time.

(still nothing from the Navajo)

If you do, you just help yourself, hear?

A pause, then Oliver indicates the chair for guests.

85
CONT'D
(2)

OLIVER

Sure you don't want to sit down this
time. Long walk across that mesa.
(still John says nothing; now
finally)

All right, John, I guess it's time
to get down to real talk, huh?

EXT. REAR OF OLIVER'S PLACE - BRONSON - DAY

86

working.

ANOTHER ANGLE - FRONT OF OLIVER'S PLACE - THE BOY

87

still sitting; stoic, motionless...it would appear. But
as CAMERA MOVES IN FOR CLOSER SHOT we see his bright eyes
dance and dart towards the side of the building. There's
something on his mind, something quite tempting.

INT. OLIVER'S PLACE - JOHN AND OLIVER - DAY

88

OLIVER

Look, John, you're making it very
tough for me...I mean, never answer-
ing. I'm trying to be friendly, and
all you do is make me feel guilty.
So please don't look at me that way
anymore.

John just looks at him.

EXT. REAR OF OLIVER'S PLACE - BRONSON - DAY

89

working still. But presently, he feels some presence.
He turns to look to a corner of the shack O.S.

HIS POV - REAR CORNER OF OLIVER'S SHACK

90

For a split second we see a face, peeping out from around
the corner, then it's withdrawn from view. But in that
part of an instant we saw it was the Indian boy.

BACK TO BRONSON

91

with the shack now in B.G. Bronson pretends to work, a little grin tickling the corners of his mouth, as he keeps a furtive eye on the lookout. Presently, the Indian boy APPEARS in stages at the corner of the shack, first a hand, then a head, then the rest of him as he steps out cautiously, his interest centered on Bronson's bike. He's halfway between the shack and the bike when Bronson turns to him fully. Since he's beyond the point of no return, the boy makes the most of his situation as he pretends casualness and strides to the bike. Bronson waits as the boy circles the bike, studying it. Finally, Bronson moves to the bike, too, but in a very casual fashion.

BRONSON

Hi. I'm Jim.

The boy makes no response. He squats to look at the engine. Bronson squats too, and points at the engine as:

BRONSON

650 c.c.'s.

(nothing from the boy)

That's 65...pony power.

The joke makes no impression on the boy. Then:

BRONSON

You can get on if you want.

The boy starts to climb up to the seat but can't quite make it. Bronson helps him on. The boy plays at steering. Then:

BRONSON

How about a spin?

The boy shrugs. It's a hellva lot nearer a "yes" than a "no." Bronson puts the boy back in the saddle, then gets on. The boy sits rigidly.

BRONSON

You better hold on to me.

But the boy doesn't. Bronson kicks the starter. The motor turns over with a ROAR. The boy secretly delights in the SOUND, the power of it, as Bronson accelerates in neutral. Then:

BRONSON

You wanna ride, you'd better hold
on.

91
CONT'D
(2)

And the boy wraps his arms around Bronson's waist. They are about to take off when Bronson stops abruptly, arrested by what he sees ahead O.S. The boy peers around Bronson's side, and sees:

POV SHOT - JOHN AND OLIVER

92

The Indian has the pony with him. Oliver stands just a pace or so behind John. Oliver remains near the shack as John leads the pony to the bike. He says nothing. His visage is stern. Speaking for him. He lifts the boy off the motorcycle, places him on the pinto, then leads the pony off across the mesa in the direction they had come. The boy does not look back this time.

CLOSE SHOT - BRONSON'S BIKE

93

To punctuate the scene the motorcycle engine is shut off... cold!

SHOCK CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT - SAND DRAG STRIP - DAY

94

OPEN TIGHT ON a motorcycle engine. In COUNTERPOINT to previous scene this bike motor is kicked into action and revved deafeningly. Then ANGLE WIDENS as the RIDER takes the bike down the strip of sand.

VARIOUS ANGLES - THE SAND DRAG STRIP

95

We now see the strip is just off the highway which runs across the desert. We also see that sand dragging a bike is for only two kinds of drivers; experts or nuts. The loose sand affords minimum traction and the bikes twist, turn and buck, especially when they hot-shift into second. Among those watching are SPECTATORS and CYCLISTS who have run the course or wait their turn. Among those waiting their turn is Russ Faber, but a different Russ Faber than last we saw. He's a smiling, self-assured leader of a FLOCK OF YOUNG CYCLISTS. Valerie is there, too. The

driver now "dragging" the course makes it to the halfway mark then hits the desert dust. For racing Russ uses a sharp "scrambler."

95
CONT'D
(2)

ANOTHER ANGLE - VALERIE

96

who happens to look to the highway, sees something there, and starts to move in that direction.

HER POV - BRONSON - TRAVELLING

97

Riding his bike, he comes off the highway to the sand drag strip. He drives slowly towards the "action," when Valerie ENTERS and begs quietly:

VALERIE

Please...go away.

Bronson smiles without stopping and stops where Russ and his group are gathered near the starting line.

ANOTHER ANGLE - FEATURING RUSS

98

as he turns and sees Bronson. He's stopped, and his expression goes dark, but only for an instant. He puts on a smile and greets Bronson amiably as he moves to the new arrival. Apparently it's a front for Russ' young admirers.

RUSS

Hey, look who's here...

BRONSON (indicates strip)

Thought I'd give it a go.

RUSS

Ever sand drag?

(Bronson shakes "no")

The gang grins.

RUSS

That isn't blacktop out there.

BRONSON

I'd like to try.

Russ is set back but only temporarily. His next gambit is:

98
CONT'D
(2)

RUSS

The entry fee is ten bucks. Paid to our treasurer.

Judging by the surprised reaction of the other cyclists. Bronson knows he's being put on but he hands over the ten bucks. To ARTIE'S surprise, Russ announces:

RUSS

Artie...you're the treasurer.

Russ takes the ten bucks and places it in Artie's hand. Artie is one of Russ' young admirers.

BRONSON

What's the pot if I win?

ARTIE

You don't have a chance.

BRONSON

Yeah, but what if I win? What's the pot?

RUSS

All the beer that ten dollars will buy.

(beat)

Well?

BRONSON

I'll drink to that.

Russ grins, but the grin is a little too casual. Russ prepares to make his run. Valerie, shifting her gaze from him to Bronson, bites her lip. Russ starts his motor. He casts a quick troubled look over his shoulder to Bronson, drops the goggles over his eyes, then roars off in a storm of swirling sand.

VARIOUS ANGLES

99

Russ making his run as we INTERCUT to REACTION SHOTS of Valerie and Bronson. Russ' bike skids, swerves, kicks, balks but makes it to the finish line, and in record time (so posted) to the delight of his followers.

ANOTHER ANGLE

100

Bronson is ready at the starting line. He gets the "GO!" signal. He's off with a ROAR.

VARIOUS ANGLES

101

as Bronson "drags." He's making fairly good time, and handling the bike pretty well despite the rough going. INTERCUT with appropriate REACTION SHOTS of Valerie and Russ, who is near the finish line, watching, waiting. But just before he reaches the finish, the bike skids out of control and Bronson is spilled.

ANOTHER ANGLE

102

Bronson picks himself up and dusts himself off. Russ, who can now well afford magnanimity, wheels Bronson's bike to him.

RUSS

That's the way it goes.

BRONSON

Lose some. Win some.

Bronson, having made his point, EXITS. CAMERA MOVES IN FOR CLOSEUP of Russ. Doubt plagues him again.

DIRECT CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN - INSURANCE OFFICE - DAY

103

It's closing time. Lorene EMERGES from the office, locks the door, and is about to move off when she hears:

BRONSON'S VOICE

Hi.

ANOTHER ANGLE - TO INCLUDE BRONSON

104

He's obviously been waiting for her. She smiles.

BRONSON

Lift?

LORENE

All right.

104
CONT'D
(2)

She joins him, and CAMERA MOVES WITH them a few paces along to a parking space where Bronson's bike is. She looks at the bike, then at Bronson. She's surprised, and obviously disappointed, and apparently doesn't dig bikes.

LORENE

You drive one of those?

BRONSON (evenly)

That's what I drive.

ANOTHER ANGLE - RUSS' STORE - MED. SHOT

105

Artie, whose attention has been riveted across the street O.S. now calls to Russ who's in the store in B.G.

ARTIE

Russ...hey...come here!

Russ joins Artie, who now points across the street.

POV SHOT - BRONSON AND LORENE

106

as the bike pulls out of the parking spot with Lorene on it behind Bronson.

ARTIE'S VOICE

Would you believe it?!

BACK TO ARTIE AND RUSS

107

ARTIE

Lorene Newton on a bike.

POV SHOT - BRONSON AND LORENE - PANNING

108

as they drive by the store. Evidently, Lorene is enjoying herself.

BACK TO ARTIE AND RUSS

109

ARTIE

Miss Untouchable. Turned on....at that. Hey, Russ, that dude's got something big going for him. What'a ya think it is?

Russ hasn't the answer. The old pain dismantles him.

COMPLEMENTARY CUT TO:

EXT. REAR OF OLIVER'S PLACE - CLOSE - LINOTYPE - NIGHT 110

The linotype is dismantled, too. What remains is no longer a threat. ANGLE WIDENS to reveal Bronson, the dismantler of both man and machine. Bronson looks to the highway, CAMERA ADJUSTING in that direction, a low ROAR materializes into Russ Faber on his cycle. Case of beer is strapped to the back of the bike. Russ himself is already half-tanked. He staggers slightly as he carries the case of beer to Bronson. Not a word is said. He lets the case drop with a PLOP! at Bronson's feet. He looks at Bronson. Still not a word. A pause, then he rips open the case, takes out two cans, opens them, hands one to Bronson, then finally breaks the silence.

RUSS

Drink up!

Bronson doesn't. He just studies Russ, who's beginning to slur his words a bit as he continues, urging:

RUSS

Come on. Beer's on you anyway.

Bronson sips. Russ finishes his, tosses it away, then opens another. The silence now is as taut as a rubber band pulled to its limits.

RUSS

You wanna be friends or not?

BRONSON (straight on)

Do you?

RUSS (honestly)

No. But that doesn't mean we can't talk.

BRONSON

So?

110
CONT'D
(2)

RUSS

Your bike fast?

BRONSON

Fast enough.

Russ tosses the beer can as he snaps:

RUSS

Why don't you lay off? What'd I
do to you anyway?!

BRONSON

I don't know what you're talking
about.

RUSS (noticeably drunker)

Guy can't just be friendly, can he?
All right! Okay!

He staggers to his bike and rides off. Bronson watches.
ANGLE ADJUSTS as he turns away, steeped in thought. Then
again is HEARD the SOUND of the approaching MOTORCYCLE.
ADJUST TO PREVIOUS ANGLE as Bronson sees the swerving,
weaving bike approach. Russ slides awkwardly off the
motorcycle and storms drunkenly, unsteadily as he announces
in a thick voice:

RUSS

Forgot my beer!

He picks up the case, starts back for his bike, but trips,
stumbles and falls. The cans spill out of the case around
the sprawled Russ. When Bronson tries to help him up he
snaps in his drunken fury:

RUSS

Lay off! I can help myself.

BRONSON (quietly)

I think you've had too much.

RUSS

No! You think I'm too old. Over
the hill!

Russ is dropping all his defenses like the rags of a leper, venting his sickness, a sickness of our time, a lusting for the unrecapturable youth. Bronson is not unsympathetic, but he'd rather not be here while this man bares his soul. On the other hand, Russ is making his complaint more to the gods than to Bronson. He reels about as he continues:

110

CONT'D

(3)

RUSS

You know how tough it is when everything young is good and everything old is bad? I know. My fortieth birthday was my funeral. It's as if I've been dead for two years and I'm scared somebody will get wise. But the trick is not to look scared, not to act scared. The trick is; don't let on how you really feel. Even to yourself. It always ends up in a bad trip to the mirror. Still as long as you can be some kind of winner you have it licked. Almost.

(then)

I'm so damn tired!

(then)

I gotta get out of here!

He heads for his bike but falls. Again Bronson tries to help him, but he pleads with anguish and agony:

RUSS

Don't help me...please!

With his last ounce of manhood he manages to get to his knees.

RUSS

Why in the hell does forty seem like ten years more than thirty-nine?!

And he pitches forward, out cold.

FADE OUT.

END ACT FOUR