

EXEC. PRODUCER: Meta Rosenberg  
PRODUCER: Stephen J. Cannell

33  
PROD. #42609  
July 22, 1975 (Spec. Run)  
Rev. 9/15/75 (F.R.)  
Rev. 9/18/75 (S.R.)

THE ROCKFORD FILES

PASTORIA PRIME PICK

Written by  
Gordon Dawson

THE ROCKFORD FILESPASTORIA PRIME PICKCAST

JIM ROCKFORD  
JOSEPH ROCKFORD

VERN SOPER  
WAITRESS  
EMMETT BYRD  
RITA  
PETE KOLODNEY

(X)

SHERIFF GLADISH  
HONCHO  
HOOD #1  
BETH DAVENPORT  
KAREN SANDERS  
GILBERT UNIVASCO  
COURT CLERK  
JUDGE  
CASHIER'S VOICE  
RADIO VOICE

DEPUTY  
HOOD #2  
BREWSTER  
GUARD  
HIGHWAY PATROLMEN  
LINCOLN OWNER  
MAN IN GREEN CHARGER

(X)

SETSINTERIORS:

(X)

SOPER'S TOW TRUCK  
SIERRA DINER  
ROCKFORD'S TRAILER  
PASTORIA PINES MOTEL  
OFFICE - ROCKFORD'S ROOM  
SOPER'S STATION - SERVICE BAY  
AND OFFICE  
INT. SHERIFF GLADISH'S OFFICE  
BYRD'S HOUSE - KITCHEN  
VISITOR'S ROOM  
UNIVASO'S OFFICE  
CORRIDOR OF MUNICIPAL BLDG.  
PASTORIA COUNTY COURTROOM  
BETH'S MOTEL ROOM  
PLYMOUTH  
UNIT I (GLADISH'S SQUAD)  
RAMBLER

EXTERIORS:

HILL COUNTRY  
NEW PASTORIA - MAIN STREET  
AND OUTSKIRTS  
SOPER'S GAS AND OIL  
PASTORIA PINES MOTEL  
COUNTRY ROADS - VARIOUS  
ORANGE GROVE  
BYRD'S HOUSE - YARD AND BACK  
PORCH  
MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
BETH'S MOTEL  
MOUNTAINS - DIRT ROAD AND  
CLEARING  
EIGHT MILE GRADE  
HIGHWAY - AGRICULTURAL AREA

THE ROCKFORD FILESPASTORIA PRIME PICK

FADE IN

1 EXT. HILL COUNTRY - TWO LANE HIGHWAY - DAY - ESTABLISHING 1

a sparkling, rural panorama. A sign in the f.g. reads: "New Pastoria - 3 Miles - Home of 'Pastoria Prime Pick'." It's a beautiful day and Rockford's car passes orchards of apple, apricot and cherry -- unfortunately it is ass-in-the-air behind a big tow truck that says "Soper's Gas & Oil" on the doors, and that it's "Radio Dispatched" out of "New Pastoria." The rig's a beaut, too: Twin spots, plenty of chrome, a long, snapping aerial, lots of red and orange lights. Over this:

SOPER'S VOICE

Aw, stop yer grumblin', mister, yer  
just lucky I was on my way over to  
Holtville to pick up them radials  
I ordered for Harve Nyquist's Riviera.

2 INT. SOPER'S TOW TRUCK - DAY - MOVING 2

Big Vern Soper is behind the wheel. Rockford is beside him, brief case in lap, the picture of disgust.

ROCKFORD

Yeah...lucky. My brakes go out,  
I have to lunch the trans to stop  
and it only costs me fifty to get  
you to turn around to tow me in.

SOPER

Y'could still be out there, an'  
the nearest phone was ten miles.  
I stop'n help you out -- all I  
get for it's complaints.

ROCKFORD

And fifty bucks.

3 EXT. NEW PASTORIA - MAIN STREET - DAY - ESTABLISHING 3

a beautiful little town, spruced to the tee and obviously thriving -- Currier and Ives with parking meters. Soper's rig rumbles through, Rockford's car in tow. Over this:

CONTINUED

3 CONTINUED

3

SOPER'S VOICE

Pretty little town, ain't she  
...? Y'wouldn't recognize it  
from five years ago...it was  
just called Pastoria back  
then.

4 INT. SOPER'S TOW TRUCK - DAY - MOVING

4

Rockford couldn't care less. He takes a photo out of his  
brief case, holds it up for Soper. It's an 8 x 10 of a  
nice looking young man in his early 20's.

ROCKFORD

You seen this guy around here  
in the past couple a days?  
Name's Ronny Brown?

Soper glances at the photo, shakes his head, measures  
Rockford.

SOPER

Nope. Why?

ROCKFORD

I'm an insurance adjuster...  
(fishes out  
his "card")

Larry Metcalf. Golden West  
Casualty held a policy on Brown's  
father. Fifty thousand dollars.  
Old man dies, son gets check,  
life goes on.

SOPER

Lucky boy.

ROCKFORD

Well, he and his father were  
close.

(beat)

A salesman over in Holtville  
thought he recognized the face.  
Might have given Ronny a lift  
two days ago and dropped him off  
on his way through here. He  
said Ronny planned to look for  
work.

(X)

SOPER

Then he probably found it...no  
unemployment in New Pastoria.

5 EXT. SOPER'S GAS & OIL - DAY - WIDE PANNING

5

The tow truck pulls past the A&B Diner and into the spotless, ultra-modern service station. Over this:

SOPER'S VOICE

Food's real good in the Sierra ,  
Mr. Metcalf. Why don't y'grab a  
bite while I check out the damages.

(X)

6 INT. SIERRA DINER - DAY

6  
(X)

Rockford sits at one end of the counter, working on a cheese-burger and a beer. The place has a bad case of the mid-afternoon deads. At the far end, an old gent in a straw stetson plays gin with the 48-going-on-60 Waitress. She deals. He is Emmett Byrd -- 61, salty, drinks Wild Turkey with a milk back. As they play:

BYRD

It isn't the progress I object to,  
it's the blight that comes with  
it! Parkin' meters, lines in the  
middle of the street, taco stands.  
I remember when Pastoria was a  
place where....

WAITRESS

(interrupting)

A place where people came to work  
hard at starvin' to death. I  
remember it, too, Sheriff.

ROCKFORD'S VOICE

Miss...? I'll take that pie now.

The Waitress pockets her cards and moves to the pie case.  
Rockford gets out the photo, his card, comes down the counter.

ROCKFORD

Excuse me, Sheriff, but maybe you  
can help me out. My name's Larry  
Metcalf, with Golden West Casualty  
down in L.A...? I'm looking for  
the beneficiary of a recent policy  
holder...

(shows photo)

Ronny Brown. About twenty-four --  
entered the area two days ago?

Byrd glances at the 8 x 10, shakes his head, studies Rockford.

CONTINUED

6 CONTINUED

6

ROCKFORD

Y'sure? A man named Creekmore said he might have given him a ride into town.

(X)

BYRD

I coulda missed him I guess, what with all the strangers we get through here these days. I used ta know every face that crossed the county line.

ROCKFORD

Anyone been hiring new help lately?

BYRD

Everyone's hirin', Mr. Metcalf. Y'might check with the Agricultural Information Center at the edge a'town.

ROCKFORD

Thanks. I'll give it a try.

The Waitress comes back, looks at the photo, shrugs, takes the cards out of her pocket. Rockford moves back toward his pie, is just sitting down when Vern Soper enters, carrying Rockford's suitcase, face dripping with bad news.

SOPER

It don't look good, Mr. Metcalf. Road vibrations must'a jiggled the connection loose right at the master cylinder, and y'know how the emergency cable crosses above the exhaust....?

ROCKFORD

Yeah, just behind the crankcase.

SOPER

Right. Well somethin' jammed your exhaust pipe straight up into the frame, an' the frame cut the cable clean.

ROCKFORD

(disgusted nod)

Must've happened when I bottomed out going across that shoulder.

SOPER

You really tore up that trans, an' there's no way I can get a new one up from L.A. before noon tomorrow.

CONTINUED

SOPER (Cont'd)

(shrug and a  
little smile)

Won't be cheap, that's for sure.

ROCKFORD

(wearily)

I can do without the note of cheer.

SOPER

I just got off the phone with Harve Nyquist, who decided to buy his radials from Chuck Miller, which means I just ate a hundred and ninety bucks worth of rubber! Now, I'll have an estimate ready by four, and I don't care if y'take it'r not!

Emmett Byrd looks up from the gin game.

BYRD

Easy on the man, Vern...sounds like his luck's been runnin' a little slow.

Soper looks at Byrd, then shakes his head and shrugs.

SOPER

Yeah...

(a little  
laugh, then)

Look, don't take it personal. This ain't been my day, either. I'll give ya every break I can. Why don't you check into the Pastoria Pines across the street. There's a coupon worth five gallons of gas in every Bible.

ROCKFORD

Thanks. See you at four.

Soper nods, exits. Rockford pushes the untouched pie away, opens his brief case and takes out a small plastic device about the size of a deck of cards. He gets up and heads for the pay phone outside the diner.

(X)

ROCKFORD

Yeah...area code 213...555-9000  
...station to station.

(X)

(X)

He digs out some change, feeds the slots, then, intercut with:

8

INT. ROCKFORD'S TRAILER - INSERT - PHONE AND ANSWERING MACHINE

8

The phone stops ringing -- the machine plays Rockford's message:

ROCKFORD'S VOICE

Jim Rockford. When you hear the tone leave your name and message. I'll get back to you.  
(beep)

ROCKFORD

(into receiver)  
Wednesday, the thirteenth. Three-thirty.

He holds that plastic gadget up to the mouthpiece, pushes a button and it emits a long, shrill tone -- which causes Rockford's message tape in L.A. to rewind, then play back his messages:

JOSEPH'S VOICE

Jimmy? Only me, son. Just callin' to see if you're home yet, and to find out if they ever got a hold of you about cancelling your car insurance.  
(beep)

MAN'S VOICE

This is Timmons. Ronny came home. My daughter's forgiven the bum and now they're both on me for sending you out to find him...which you didn't do, so our deal's off. If you want the rest of your fee, you'll have to sue me.  
(beep)

ROCKFORD

You can count on it!

ROCKFORD'S VOICE

Wednesday, the thirteenth. Three-thirty.

Rockford hangs up, rather hard.

9

INT. PASTORIA PINES MOTEL OFFICE - DAY

9

Rockford fills out a registration card as Rita gets his key. She is seventeen, sunshine and daisies, and the vibes are good.

CONTINUED



9 CONTINUED

9

RITA

You're really lucky. This is the last room, and it was reserved. Mister Ramsey called in and cancelled not more'n ten minutes ago.

(handing  
him key)

Number four. Come on. I'll show you.

10 INT. ROCKFORD'S MOTEL ROOM - DAY

10

Rockford and Rita enter the room. While Rita checks the room, Rockford crosses to the closet. As he opens the door, he notices a large suitcase in the back.

ROCKFORD

Someone forgot a suitcase.

RITA

Oh. I'll get it.

Rita goes to the closet, drags the suitcase out, struggles to lift it. Rockford comes to her rescue.

ROCKFORD

Here, I'll get that.  
(takes  
suitcase)

RITA

Thanks. My cart's right outside.

Rita crosses in front of Rockford, opens the door.

11 EXT. PASTORIA PINES MOTEL - DAY - ON DOOR #4

11

Rita stands in the door, waiting for Rockford to go by, but the suitcase is rather large and they kind of get in each other's way and are laughing about it when the flashbulb goes off in their faces!

12 WIDER ANGLE

12

A man with a camera jumps into a green Charger and smokes away.

CONTINUED

12 CONTINUED

12

RITA  
(shaking  
with anger)  
No! Please!

She runs back into the room. Rockford reacts to it all, follows.

13 INT. ROCKFORD'S MOTEL ROOM - DAY

13

Rockford shuts the door, drops the suitcase and looks at Rita, who is sitting on the edge of the bed, trying not to cry.

RITA  
Why can't they leave her alone!?  
They're always tryin' to tear  
her down! It's not fair!

(X)

ROCKFORD  
Look, nothing happened.

RITA  
It doesn't matter! They'll twist  
it all around. Now they're using  
me to get at her!

(X)

ROCKFORD  
At who...?

RITA  
My mother. They can't stand it  
that she's a woman!

ROCKFORD  
They can't?

Rita can't hold back the tears any longer and Rockford puts a consoling hand on the sobbing young girl's shoulder. She pulls away when she feels his hand, looks around the room with a sudden new horror and jumps off the bed.

14 EXT. PASTORIA PINES MOTEL - DAY

14

A police car pulls in, the Deputy Pete Kolodney climbs out -- young, huge, Rita's fiance.

CONTINUED

14 CONTINUED

14

He starts for the office, then turns to see Rita bolting out of #4 in obvious distress -- Rockford comes out right behind her. Kolodney's reaction is immediate: Rockford is grabbed, spun, and slung against the wall. Then, as the Deputy is kicking his ankles out real wide:

ROCKFORD

Hey! C'mon, pal! Lighten up, huh?!  
That isn't necessa...  
(takes a hard  
kick, reacts)  
Easy, I'm not wearin' any shoes.

KOLODNEY

Shut up!  
(to Rita)  
I told you this was going to happen  
someday, Rita!

Kolodney gives Rockford a fast, hard frisk, then steps back.

RITA

He didn't do a thing!

KOLODNEY

Then what're you cryin' about?!

Vern Soper comes up during this, watches, confused.

RITA

Not about anything he did!

ROCKFORD

That's right! You want'a do some  
toe steppin', then get down on the  
clown in the green Charger...can't...  
(points)  
...have more'n two minutes on you!

RITA

(crying)  
Pete! Please! It's the truth!

KOLODNEY

Yeah...?  
(to Soper)  
You see a green Charger?

SOPER

No. But I wasn't lookin' for one,  
either. What's goin' on, anyway?

CONTINUED

14 CONTINUED - 2

14

KOLODNEY

I plan to find out.

(to Rockford)

And I'd better find that Charger.

(to Rita)

You gotta quit this job, Rita!

The Deputy jogs back to the squad car, jumps in, burns out.

RITA

(wet faced)

I'm really sorry!

ROCKFORD

Yeah...Who was that?

SOPER

Pete Kolodney. And he can be meaner.

RITA

We're engaged and I guess he thought

...well, you know....

ROCKFORD

Yeah...and me without my shoes.

What was that picture all about?

(X)

Tears well anew in the young girl's eyes. Rockford rubs a foot.

RITA

Oh...it's a long story, Mister Metcalf...and it really doesn't involve you anyway.

(X)

ROCKFORD

Right. And that's how I'd like to keep it.

RITA

Don't worry, they don't care about you.

She turns and goes back to the office, crying.

SOPER

Nobody around here messes with Rita.

(X)

ROCKFORD

I didn't mess with anyone.

(then)

Is that the bad news?

CONTINUED

14 CONTINUED - 3

14

Soper nods, hands Rockford a well itemized repair estimate. Rockford glances at the bottom line, then looks Soper squarely in the eyes:

ROCKFORD

You ought to be in jail!

SOPER

(fed up)

That's it, Mister! You call a tow truck an' get your car outta my place!

ROCKFORD

You bet I will!

CUT TO

15 INT. SOPER'S STATION - SERVICE BAY - DAY - ON ROCKFORD

15

ROCKFORD

(almost pleading)

Now come on, Vern, I was way out of line and I admit it. We've both had a rough day. What do you say?

Pull back: Soper is lubing a pickup and Rockford is following him around under the rack. Rockford's car is parked over the other rack (lowered) in the b.g. Soper is in no mood for apologies:

SOPER

Same as I said before: Get it out! If ya don't, I'm gonna start chargin' rent on the space it's takin' up.

ROCKFORD

You know I can't move it. You have the only tow truck for seventy miles. C'mon now...be reasonable.  
(last resort)  
I'll pay cash?

SOPER

(stops working)

Cash, huh? I'd need a substantial deposit before I'd do any work.

ROCKFORD

How substantial...?

SOPER

Five hundred bucks.

CONTINUED

15 CONTINUED

15

Rockford swallows his first impulse, reaches for his wallet and painfully counts the bills into Soper's greasy hand.

SOPER

That leaves a balance due of one-sixty-two, forty-nine, unless we run into somethin' else, of course.

ROCKFORD

Like what?

SOPER

No tellin', but y'said you was all over that mountain an' y'wouldn't want 'a risk drivin' outta here with loose linkage or a cracked drive shaft, would ya?

ROCKFORD

(with remarkable restraint)

No. Sure wouldn't, Vern.

SOPER

Didn't think so. I'll get your receipt.

Soper enters the office. Rockford looks over at his car.

16 ANGLE INTO OFFICE - ON SOPER

16

at his desk, writing the receipt. He finishes, comes back toward the service bay, then stops in the door and angrily reacts to:

17 OMITTED

17

18 NEW ANGLE - FULL

18

Rockford has raised his car and is checking out the drive shaft.

SOPER

Hey! Whatta ya think you're doin'!?

ROCKFORD

Drive shaft looks fine to me, Vern...  
(moves forward)

Tie rod's a little bent, but nothing that can't wait 'til I get back to L.A.

(X)

CONTINUED

18 CONTINUED

18

SOPER

(coming forward)

Only station employees're allowed  
to operate a hydraulic rack, an'  
that's a state law! Get outta  
there before ya hurt yourself an'  
I got a lawsuit....

ROCKFORD

(cuts in,  
points at  
master  
cylinder)

Have you worked on this yet?!

SOPER

Nope. Now I told you get out  
of....

ROCKFORD

Well someone's had a wrench on it!

He brushes past Soper, reaches up, pulls down the severed  
ends of the emergency cable, which are a cross between frayed  
and melted.

ROCKFORD

Didn't you tell me the frame cut  
the cable 'clean?'

SOPER

(confused,  
defensive)

Well, now, I didn't look at it  
myself. I was on the phone with  
Harve Nyquist. One of the boys  
checked it out.

ROCKFORD

Looks like it's been burned with  
some kinda acid.

(X)

SOPER

(examines  
ends, nods)

You could be right, but...?

ROCKFORD

(stunned)

Someone in Holtville tried to kill me!

SOPER

You'd better find the sheriff!

19 INT. SIERRA DINER - DAY - AT CASH REGISTER

19  
(X)

The waitress is making change for Emmett Byrd as Rockford enters and comes up, hot as hell.

ROCKFORD

We have a lot to talk about, Sheriff! I've been kicked by your deputy, robbed by Vern Soper, someone tried to kill me, and I'm registering an official complaint!

(X)

BYRD

Hmm, wish I could help, but it's outta my hands.

ROCKFORD

Out of your hands? You're the sheriff!

BYRD

Not any more. I was the sheriff of Pastoria County for thirty-two years, until the new mayor decided to...

(a mite bitter)

...modernize the department. They retired me. A few years ago.

WAITRESS

Don't get him started on that.

BYRD

Well, they shoulda given T.K. Moses my job!

(to Rockford)

He was my deputy. But they bring in an outsider an' the first thing he did was fire ol' T.K. an' send out for six new men of his own. So, if y'got a complaint to file, mister, then y'better trot it down to the new municipal building...and see Sheriff Gladish.

20 INT. SHERIFF GLADISH'S OFFICE - DAY - ON GLADISH

20

The sheriff is a polite, clean cut, all business pro with an American flag patch on the shoulder of his perfectly tailored uniform. He scans a lengthy statement, then looks up:

GLADISH

I think I have all the details, Mr. Metcalf. I'll get right on it.

CONTINUED



Pull back to reveal Rockford, sitting across the desk. The office is done in Certificates of Merit, shooting trophies and family photos. Gladish picks up the phone:

GLADISH

Alert Holtville that we're going to be working on an attempted 187 together. Then call Vern Soper and tell him we're sending the lab team over and not to touch that Firebird until I say he can. You can also tell him I'd like him in my office in the morning...to discuss his towing permit.

(X)

(hangs up,  
shakes head)

Three complaints this month. I'll have a talk with him.

ROCKFORD

(impressed)

I'd appreciate that. I never heard of a town this size having its own crime lab.

GLADISH

(a little pride  
shows through)

Ours ranks with the best.

(standing)

I'll be in touch the moment I learn anything, Mr. Metcalf, and...thanks again for bringing Kolodney's rough stuff to my attention. We can't correct these things unless we know about them, and there's nothing worse than a cop with an emotional problem.

(extends  
his hand)

I'll take care of it. One of the men'll give you a lift back to your motel.

They shake and Rockford knows his case is in good hands.

(X)

Rockford stirs to the sound of men mumbling outside, then the sound of a key in the lock sits him straight up, but it's too late: The door flies open and three men rush the

CONTINUED

21 CONTINUED

21

bed, flip it over and pin him between the mattress and floor. Then one (Honcho) cuts the phone cable and hits the lights -- all are wearing black sweaters, gloves, watch caps and nylon stockings over their faces. A quick search turns up that beige suitcase and it is thrown roughly on top of the box springs. Only Rockford's head is visible, sticking out from under the mattress, as one of the intruders pries open the hasps. (X)

ROCKFORD

(finally;

gasping)

C'mon...you're crushin' my....

HONCHO

(sitting on

box spring)

We didn't figure Dinaldi for having a partner. Not until we caught up with him and he didn't have the suitcase. Your switch might've worked, but Dinaldi was allergic to torture. Most people are, Ramsey.

ROCKFORD

...Wrong man...Ramsey's the...guy who reserved this room...but... he....

HOOD #1

It's here!

Honcho lifts a large baggie filled with white powder out of the suitcase (one of many), undoes the twisty, dips in an index finger and tastes the goods through the stocking -- the goods are obviously very good. During this:

ROCKFORD

That was here...when I checked in!

(X)

HONCHO

Sure, Ramsey. And it's still here, which makes you two hundred pounds of fertilizer in an orange grove.

(X)

ROCKFORD

I'm not Ramsey.

CONTINUED

21 CONTINUED - 2

21

HONCHO

Make it look like he ran out on his  
bill, then plant him with Dinaldi.  
We'll meet you on the coast tomorrow.

ROCKFORD

Look...this is a mistake...!

(X)

Hood #1 pulls out a revolver with a silencer as Honcho and  
#2 exit with the beige suitcase. He motions for Rockford to  
get out from under the bed.

HOOD

Get up an' get dressed.

ROCKFORD

(dressing)

Look, friend, I know you just follow  
orders, and someone has ta do the  
dirty work, but I'm the wrong target,  
and y'gotta believe that!

HOOD

Start packing.

Rockford complies; his mind searching desperately for a saving  
con.

ROCKFORD

(finally;  
steely-eyed)

We were tipped Dinaldi was pulling  
this rip-off, and that a buyer was  
waiting. This place is staked out  
to the teeth! I'm a Federal narc,  
pal...you try to take me out of  
here and you are dead!

HOOD

I hate a talky hit. Keep packing.

ROCKFORD

You're not listening, sport! We  
let you have Dinaldi, but we want  
this buyer real bad, and....

He cuts himself short because of a sudden, frantic pounding  
on the door. The hood cuts the lights and, keeping his gun  
on Rockford, moves to the window, eases back the curtain,  
peers out.

22 EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT - HOOD'S POINT OF VIEW - RITA 22  
obviously in deep trouble, crying, beating on the door:

RITA  
Please! It's me! Rita!

23 BACK TO SHOT 23

The hood crosses behind Rockford, jams the pistol in his back.

HOOD  
Who's Rita?!

ROCKFORD  
Just a kid who works the desk.

RITA'S VOICE  
You've got to get out of here!

HOOD  
(starting  
to sweat)  
Open the door two inches and get  
rid of her! Any wider and she  
buys it too!

Rockford nods, cracks the door, revealing a slice of Rita.

ROCKFORD  
Yeah...?

RITA  
That photographer called my mom!  
Told her he had proof I was having  
an affair at the motel...with you!  
And...and she believed him...and  
called Petel. He's on his way.

Rockford is visibly shaken. So is the hood, without knowing why.

RITA  
People're always getting hurt  
because of me an' I just can't  
take it any more!

A siren is heard in the distance. Rita cries anew. Rockford swallows, then winces as the hood digs the gun into his back and nods at the door. Rockford flashes Rita the "momentito" sign and closes the door.

CONTINUED

23 CONTINUED

23

HOOD

(a hoarse  
whisper)

Who's Pete?

ROCKFORD

Pete Kolodney. Ten to one that's  
him.

HOOD

A cop?!

ROCKFORD

Is he ever.

RITA'S VOICE

Don't you understand?! He'll  
kill you! He knows you filed  
a complaint against him. You've  
got to split! Now!

(X)

The hood backs out of shot.

24 ANGLE IN BATHROOM

24

The hood enters, climbs onto the john, opens the window,  
exits.

25 AT DOOR

25

Rockford glances behind him, emits a marginal sigh of  
relief, then opens the door. The siren is almost on top  
of them and Rita is doing a desperate little dance as:

ROCKFORD

My car's locked up at the gas  
station.

RITA

(digging  
frantically  
through purse)Use mine! It's the blue Rambler  
behind the office! Leave it at  
the gas station in Holtville...  
the one where they rent cars.(puts key  
in his hand)

Go!

She turns and runs. Rockford grabs his bags, heads for  
the bathroom.

- 26 EXT. PASTORIA PINES MOTEL - NIGHT 26  
A patrol car swerves in, skids to a halt. Kolodney jumps out, strides to door #4, kicks it in and enters, gun drawn.
- 27 AT REAR OF MOTEL 27  
Rockford runs up to a Rambler, throws his bags into the front seat, slides in after them and starts the engine.
- 28 ON KOLODNEY 28  
He runs out of #4, hears the sound of a winding engine, then jumps into the patrol and peels out in siren wailing pursuit.
- 29 EXT. NEW PASTORIA OUTSKIRTS - NIGHT - RUNBY 29  
The blue Rambler roars through shot; Rockford really has his foot in it, too. Moments later, the patrol car screams through.
- 30 EXT. COUNTRY CROSS ROADS - NIGHT - FULL 30  
The Rambler hangs a sliding right, stops, the lights go out, then it rockets back across the intersection in reverse, bumps off the road and buries itself ten feet back in an orange grove. The engine is cut. Then the patrol races into shot, slides the corner and churns away. When it's gone, the Rambler's engine kicks over and it tries to pull out of the grove, but gets hopelessly stuck.
- 31 INT. RAMBLER - NIGHT 31  
Rockford tries to "rock-shift" it out of the loose dirt, finally gives up, grabs his bags and climbs out. Hold as his footsteps fade, then tilt down to reveal an object on the floor behind the front seat: It is that beige suitcase.
- 32 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY - ANGLE PAST MAIL BOX 32  
Faded letters say: "Sheriff Emmett Byrd." Rockford approaches, reads the mail box, looks a little relieved as we pan him up the dirt drive which disappears into the middle of an orange grove.
- 33 EXT. BYRD'S HOME - MORNING 33  
The old house in the middle of the grove could use a coat of paint.

CONTINUED

33 CONTINUED

33

A '62 Plymouth is parked in front; it was a squad car, once. Rockford stashes his bags behind a tool shed, then goes up onto the porch and knocks on the front door. It opens and Emmett Byrd gives Rockford a good squinting over.

ROCKFORD

Remember me...?

BYRD

How'd ya git way out here?

(X)

ROCKFORD

It's a long story...I'm in a little trouble.

Byrd measures him, finally nods. Relieved, Rockford enters.

34 INT. BYRD'S KITCHEN - DAY

34

Byrd pours coffee and Rockford sits at the table.

BYRD

Yer trouble have anything to do with that fella yer lookin' for?

ROCKFORD

No. Someone's trying to kill me.

(X)

(X)

BYRD

You give someone reason to want kill you?

(X)

ROCKFORD

No. Well...he thinks I made a play for his girl, but I didn't.

Byrd is chuckling as he puts a mug of coffee in front of Rockford and sits across the table from him.

BYRD

You city boys give me a kick, always messin' with the local lovelies, then runnin' for cover when the local Leroy wants to mess with you!

CONTINUED

34 CONTINUED

34

ROCKFORD

Yeah, well this Leroy's got a gun!

BYRD

Leroy's usually do, Mr. Metcalf.

A police radio suddenly crackles to life and Byrd opens a cupboard, revealing an old police broadcaster.

RADIO

New Pastoria to Six County Grid:  
A warrant has been issued for the  
arrest of Larry Metcalf, male,  
Caucasian, approximately six feet  
two inches, two hundred pounds....

35 CLOSE ON ROCKFORD - REACTING TO

35

RADIO

Suspect is wanted on charges of  
Transporting and Possession of  
Narcotics, Grand Theft-Auto,  
Resisting Arrest, Attempted  
Kidnapping, Contributing to the  
Delinquency of a Minor, Vandalism....

He closes his eyes in disbelief, opens them and it get worse:

36 NEW ANGLE

36

Byrd has Rockford squarely in the sights of his hog-legged  
.45; in the other hand he holds a microphone:

BYRD

Two-six-niner to County Central.

RADIO

Mr. Byrd, you've been warned about  
using official police frequencies.

BYRD

Knock off the lip, son, I have yer  
dope peddler in custody.

KOLODNEY'S VOICE (RADIO)

Unit Three to Central: I'll take  
it. I'm only a few miles from  
Byrd's place.

(X)

Byrd replaces the mike, settles back in the chair to wait;  
smug with pride, his pistol aimed at the bridge of Rockford's  
nose. In the distance, once again, Kolodney's siren.

CONTINUED



36 CONTINUED

36

ROCKFORD

That was Kolodney! You can't turn  
me over to him! He's the local  
Leroy.

(X)

BYRD

Hands on the table an' no guff!  
They may've retired me, but they  
didn't take away my momentum!  
I'm still a cop!

During this, and as Byrd continues, Rockford's attention  
becomes focused at a point behind Byrd -- very intent.

BYRD

They may wear real uniforms now,  
carry pistols big enough to flatten  
a barn, drive high speed cars --  
you're not listening to me.

(X)

Rockford's attention returns to Byrd for a moment.

BYRD

They may have their own gas pump  
behind the new municipal building,  
but who just bagged the big dope  
dealer!? By Ned I'm still a cop!

(X)

Rockford nods absently, his gaze and full concentration  
fixed behind Byrd. The siren is very near. Byrd cannot  
resist the impulse, spins to look. Rockford tips the table  
over and crashes through the back door.

(X)

37 EXT. BYRD'S HOME AND ORANGE GROVE - DAY

37

Rockford rounds a corner, comes face to face with Kolodney, (X)  
who is carrying a big shotgun at port arms. Rockford freezes.

KOLODNEY

Hands on your head, creep!

Rockford very reluctantly complies. The silence is broken  
only by more sirens. Kolodney shoves him face down in the  
dirt, yanks his arms behind him, slaps on the cuffs and  
ratchets them down hard. Then, with his knee in the middle  
of Rockford's back, and reading from a card:

KOLODNEY

You're under arrest. You have the  
right to remain silent....

CONTINUED

37

CONTINUED

37

Sheriff Gladish and two deputies run up during this and when the "rights" are finished Rockford is jerked to his feet. He looks at Gladish with a dazed but profound relief:

ROCKFORD

Am I glad to see you!

GLADISH

That's a little hard to believe.

(to Kolodney)

Outstanding piece of work. You just earned a Certificate of Merit.

ROCKFORD

Certificate of Merit!? He's a psycho! You saved my life.

GLADISH

I doubt that, but I may've saved a few kids because your poison won't find its way up their veins.

(to Kolodney)

Check on the old man.

Kolodney moves off to the house.

GLADISH

(to Rockford)

Come on. We're taking you in.

ROCKFORD

Wait a minute...I must not be tracking...?

GLADISH

We have the suitcase.

(on Rockford's look)

The one you abandoned with the car? Beige...? Initials 'L. M.' on it...? Your initials, Mr. Metcalf.

ROCKFORD

(wearily)

My initials are 'J. R.'...for James Rockford!

(on Gladish's

reaction)

I'm a private investigator, and I work with the Los Angeles police all the time!

CONTINUED

37 CONTINUED - 2

37

ROCKFORD (Cont'd)

(beat;  
shrugs, then)  
It's very easy to explain, really.

GLADISH

Then you'd better start.

ROCKFORD

I took the name Metcalf for a wife and child abandonment case and posed as an insurance adjuster. If I tell people I'm dogging a wayward spouse they think I'm a heel and lie through their teeth, but if they think they're helping someone come into an unexpected fortune, they'll finger the poor slob every time.

GLADISH

(cutting in)

It doesn't matter whose initials are on the suitcase, it's whose prints the lab finds that interests me.

(X)

ROCKFORD

Sheriff...It isn't my suitcase.

(X)

GLADISH

We put a two hundred thousand dollar street value on the heroin. Largest bust in county history. You're looking at 'five to life.' And knowing how Judge Cline feels about narcotics, it'll be a lot closer to 'life' than 'five.'

Rockford studies the sheriff, at first unable to believe the realization which is creeping over him. Finally:

ROCKFORD

Is this whole thing a set up?

(X)

GLADISH

What 'whole thing' is that, Rockford?

CONTINUED

37 CONTINUED - 3

37

ROCKFORD

You're shaking me down, right?

GLADISH

There's a mountain of evidence against you, and we're just beginning our investigation. Odds are we'll find more narcotics in your car.

ROCKFORD

Oh, come on! Okay! I'll bite! What's the tab on this scam?! A grand? Two?! How about it, Sheriff...?! Could I 'walk' for five!?

(X)

GLADISH

Try 'ten'...in cash, any time before the arraignment. It'll be out of my hands after that.

Rockford glares at the sheriff, whose expression has never changed throughout. Finally:

ROCKFORD

Go suck an orange!

GLADISH

(shrugs, then)

You should know better than to offer me a bribe...it'll probably cost you another fourteen years.

ROCKFORD

I want to call my lawyer!

GLADISH

I suggest you do just that, Mr. Rockford.

Gladish heads for Unit One. Rockford is shepherded after him.

38 OMITTED

38

39 INT. VISITOR'S ROOM - DAY

39

A deputy stands by the door. Rockford sits behind the wire mesh, wearing "county blues." Joseph is across from him.

JOSEPH

I thought she'd have ya sprung by now.

ROCKFORD

It always takes too long. How'd you come up with the cash?

CONTINUED

39 CONTINUED

39

JOSEPH

I had to sell the pickup.

(anticipating  
his reaction)Beth signed the pink slip for you  
... 'Power of Attorney' it's called...

(X)

(then, sadly)

I only got three thousand for it.

ROCKFORD

It's worth twice that much!

The deputy admits Beth Davenport. She joins them with bad news:

BETH

You're being held without bail.  
Not unusual...considering the charges.

ROCKFORD

The charges are a crock!

BETH

Let me find out how hard the County  
Prosecutor intends to land on you,  
then we'll go from there.

ROCKFORD

Tell him we have a witness that the  
suitcase isn't mine and see what  
that does to his narcotics case!

BETH

Do we?

ROCKFORD

You bet! The only trouble is she's  
in on it and you're going to have  
to break her down on the stand.

(X)

40 INT. VISITOR'S ROOM - DAY - LATER

40

The deputy escorts Rockford to the chair at the mesh. The woman seated on the other side is Karen Sanders -- late 30's, quite attractive, sharply dressed -- all business.

ROCKFORD

Am I supposed to know you?

KAREN

No. My name is Karen Sanders.  
You know my daughter. Rita.

CONTINUED

40

CONTINUED

40

KAREN (Cont'd)

(beat)

A man contacted me and demanded a thousand dollars for the negative and only copy of a photograph in which you and Rita are supposedly checking into a motel. I paid him.

ROCKFORD

It's part of the same set up I'm in here for and Rita's in it up to her eyeballs!

(X)

KAREN

(taken aback)

Are you suggesting that I've been set up by my own daughter?

ROCKFORD

I'm the wrong one to ask for a character reference. Rita lent me her car, then reported it stolen.

KAREN

(confused)

But...that's impossible. Rita doesn't even own a car. It was Vern Soper's car which you stole.

(X)

Rockford really wasn't ready for that one.

ROCKFORD

It just keeps coming...is that it?

KAREN

I'm not sure I understand. I just want to avoid any further scandal.

(beat)

My husband died six years ago. Diplomats aren't supposed to die in wars, but Edward always was an exception. I didn't want to raise Rita in the D.C. rat race, so I settled in Pastoria...but it was full of rats, too. Food wholesalers, exploiting the small farmers and citrus growers unmercifully, and they'd been at it for years.

ROCKFORD

I'm really not into apples and oranges.

CONTINUED

KAREN

Please. I'm going to ask something of you, and I want you to know why.

(beat)

I decided to do something about it and organized a movement which resulted in the founding of our own produce co-op. Then, three years ago, the people voted to change the name of their town to New Pastoria. They also elected me mayor.

ROCKFORD

You...are the mayor?!

KAREN

(nods, then  
with a trace  
of pride)

While the rest of the country is on its economic backside, we enjoy booming prosperity, and...within six months, our 'Pastoria Prime Pick' will become a nationally known and distributed brand.

ROCKFORD

You'll still talkin' apples and oranges to a guy who's worried about 'five to life.'

(X)

KAREN

Someone is out to tear me down. Maybe they think that if I fall, the town will too, I don't know. But we've all learned that scandal can destroy. That's why I don't want you to drag Rita into your rather sordid case in any way.

ROCKFORD

Forget it! She's my key witness and my lawyer is going to break her little act wide open!

She ignores this and takes an 8x10 from her purse, then holds it up to the mesh: It's of Rockford and Rita -- he's standing so close to her, grinning, holding that beige suitcase.

KAREN

If you agree, I'll drop the Attempted Kidnapping and Contributing charges.

CONTINUED

40 CONTINUED - 3

40

KAREN (Cont'd)

If you don't agree, then I'll have  
to add Statutory Rape to the charges.  
I'm sorry. I hope you understand.

(beat)

It's entirely up to you.

41 CLOSE ON ROCKFORD

41

stunned into silence. Pull back to reveal it is later:  
Beth and Joseph are on the other side of the mesh, along  
with the dapper County Presecutor, Gilbert Univaso. Beth  
is happy:

BETH

The prints were smeared and Mister  
Univaso is going to drop the  
narcotics charges.

UNIVASO

(pleasantly)

I understand you can produce a  
witness who'll testify that the  
suitcase is not yours?

ROCKFORD

(finally)

No. I can't.

UNIVASO

I see....

Beth sits abruptly. Univaso studies Rockford. Finally:

UNIVASO

How big is your detective agency?

JOSEPH

He's got a quarter page ad in the  
yellow pages! That big enough!?

(X)

ROCKFORD

(running a  
strong bluff)

I'm well connected in L.A. My  
people aren't too happy about this,  
either, so whoever's pulling the  
strings can expect some very heavy  
stuff to come down. Wheels are  
already turning.

(X)

CONTINUED



41 CONTINUED

41

UNIVASO  
Was that some sort of a threat?

(X)

BETH  
(quickly)  
Absolutely not. My client is far  
too intelligent for that.

Rockford smolders and, somehow, manages to keep silent during:

UNIVASO  
I should hope so. Our legal system  
tends to favor the cooperative  
spirit.

BETH  
Then we have nothing to worry about.

UNIVASO  
Good. Plead your client 'guilty'  
to Attempted Bribery and Grand  
Theft Auto and I'll withdraw the  
other charges and see if I can get  
him off with a fine. It may be a  
financial inconvenience, but the  
alternative could be fifteen years  
in the state penitentiary.

BETH  
How large of a 'financial incon-  
venience' are we discussing?

UNIVASO  
Oh, ball park figure? Fifteen  
thousand. If your client declines  
the county's generosity, I'll pro-  
secute all counts to the fullest  
...the evidence will speak for  
itself, as will his prison record.

BETH  
I understand.

UNIVASO  
I hope your client does. The ar-  
raignment is at ten in the morning.  
You have until then to decide.

Univaso exits, leaving a deadly silence behind him. Finally:

JOSEPH  
What was that all about?

CONTINUED

41 CONTINUED - 2

41

BETH

It's called plea bargaining.

ROCKFORD

It's also called a royal....

BETH

It was a rather severe example of the art. And what happened to our witness? I felt like an idiot.

ROCKFORD

How many years does Contributing, Attempted Kidnapping and Statutory Rape add up to?

BETH

Seventy-five, give or take a decade.

ROCKFORD

That's what happened to her.

42 INT. COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE - DAY - FULL

42

Sheriff Gladish sits on a couch, wearing a set of earphones. Univaso breezes in, wearing a smile.

GLADISH

You upgraded him to a 'fifteen?' Creekmore called him in at 'ten.'

UNIVASO

He sounds like a man who can raise it. I'll put them on the speaker.

Univaso flips a switch under his huge desk and they sit back to listen to the conversation in the visitor's room:

ROCKFORD'S VOICE

...wouldn't surprise me if this rip off went all the way up to the judge.

BETH'S VOICE

I don't think so. I checked him out and, based on everything I've heard, I have to respect him.

CONTINUED

42

CONTINUED

42

ROCKFORD'S VOICE

Should I count on that?

Univaso and Gladish trade glances.

BETH'S VOICE

I didn't say he was lenient! He has a reputation for punishing to the maximum. I'm not sure I can walk you clean, Jim, it's too stacked here. Plead guilty to the lesser charges and we'll get it reversed like 'that' in a higher court.

UNIVASO

Come on, Rockford, listen to the lady.

ROCKFORD'S VOICE

If you think the judge is fair, then I want my day in court.

BETH'S VOICE

All right, Jim...It's your choice.

Univaso flips off the switch in disgust.

GLADISH

Looks like we're going all the way on this one.

UNIVASO

He'll never know what hit him.

43

INT. PASTORIA COUNTY COURTROOM - DAY - FULL

43

Rockford and Beth are seated at the defendant's table; Joseph is a glum face behind them. Sheriff Gladish is here, so is Kolodney, Brewster, and Emmett Byrd. Univaso scans his notes with quiet confidence as the court clerk drones through the charges:

COURT CLERK

...Possession of Narcotics for Sale, Transporting Narcotics, Grand Theft Auto, Resisting Arrest, Destruction of Private Property,

CONTINUED

43 CONTINUED

43

COURT CLERK (Cont'd)

Assault and Battery, Assaulting  
an Officer of the Law, Attempted  
Bribery, Vandalism, and Reckless  
Driving.

Judge Russell Cline is an unsmiling and rather blunt man; he's  
also an institution on the Pastoria County bench.

JUDGE

Plead your client.

BETH

(stands, then:)

Not Guilty on all charges, your  
Honor.

WIPE TO

44 INT. COURTROOM - DAY - PANNING SLOWLY

44

across a large bulletin board, revealing various articles of  
photographic evidence: Angles of the blue Rambler, axle deep  
in the orange grove; of Byrd's window; of the motel room,  
in shambles; blowups of finger prints; of the "Metcalf"  
registration card; an 11x14 of several bags of dope stashed  
in the guts of Jim's car door. Pan continues to and along  
the length of a table which is literally stacked with  
evidence: That beige suitcase; several baggies full of  
narcotics; a magnetic "Hide-A-Key" box; plaster casts of  
Rockford's footprints, etc. And, over all of this:

UNIVASO'S VOICE

...so we have before us a man who  
came here under an assumed name,  
carrying enough narcotics to  
destroy the life of every young  
person in town. Your Honor, not  
only does the county have an  
abundance of hard evidence, but,  
in every instance....

Pan continues to and holds on Univaso, standing before the  
bench, holding up a thick stack of depositions.

UNIVASO

...it is corroborated by the sworn  
statements of officers of the law  
and some of New Pastoria's most  
respected citizens. There's no  
doubt that the county can sub-  
stantiate the charges, your Honor,  
and I move that the accused be  
bound over for trial, and that he  
be held without bail until that  
time.

45 NEW ANGLE - FULL SHOT - INTERCUT REACTIONS

45

Univaso takes his seat. The Judge looks at the evidence, then at Rockford. Obviously, he doesn't like what or who he sees. Rockford's expression tells us that's just how he feels, too.

JUDGE

Does the defense have a statement before I rule on the well considered motion?

BETH

Yes, Your Honor. The defense is quite impressed at the speed with which the county was able to amass this formidable display of evidence, but it's my client's contention that all of it is either irrelevant, circumstantial, fabricated and or falsified.

JUDGE

That doesn't surprise me, considering the weight of the charges. The accused is hereby ordered to stand trial on all charges, and....

Emmett Byrd gets to his feet, interrupts:

BYRD

Now you hold on a minute, Russ! I got somethin' to say!

JUDGE

Sorry, Emmett, but this just isn't your territory any more.

BYRD

Who says it ain't!? I'm the one who brung the Destruction of Private Property an' the Assault an' Battery charges against him, an' I want 'em dropped!

(X)

UNIVASO

The county is charging the accused, Your Honor, not Mister Byrd, or any other private citizen!

CONTINUED

45 CONTINUED

45

UNIVASO (Cont'd)

(on Judge's look)

But, in view of his lifetime of service, we will consider his wishes and ask that the accused be held over on all but those charges....

JUDGE

Thank you, Counselor. It is so ruled. The trial date is set at five weeks from today.

(X)

BETH

Your Honor, may the defense petition the court to grant bail?

UNIVASO

Would that be wise, Your Honor?

Rockford really sweats it out.

JUDGE

I believe it's wiser to make a criminal pay the cost of crime and I see no reason to burden the people of this county with his keep until the trial. Bail is set at twenty-five thousand dollars. This hearing is dismissed.

46 AT DEFENSE TABLE - ON ROCKFORD AND BETH

46

Joseph leans across the rail, pokes his face between them:

JOSEPH

We're way shy on bail, son.

ROCKFORD

We only have to come up with ten percent. That leaves us with five hundred to spare.

(stands as

deputy approaches)

Let's get me outta here before he changes his mind.

BETH

It shouldn't take too long.

47 NEW ANGLE - ROCKFORD AND DEPUTY

47

starting out. Then Rockford stops at the prosecutor's table. Univaso looks up from loading his brief case.

ROCKFORD

You really didn't want to see me running loose, did you.

UNIVASO

No. Your kind jumps bail.

Rockford notices a small tone device in Univaso's brief case.

ROCKFORD

Someone should report you to the state bar's board of inquiry.

UNIVASO

Be my guest. We meet on the first and third Tuesday of each month.

Univaso snaps his brief case closed and strides away.

48 EXT. MUNICIPAL BUILDING - LATE AFTERNOON

48

The building is new, three stories and the pride of the town. Rockford exits (dressed in civies again), steps up to Beth and Joseph. Emmett Byrd sits on a bench nearby.

ROCKFORD

What took so long?

BETH

We finally used my credit rating.

JOSEPH

(nods at Byrd)

He says he has your suitcase.

BYRD

(stands, nods)

In my trunk. I found it behind the tool shed.

ROCKFORD

Thanks. A lot.

(to Beth)

He's another one...invites me in, pours coffee, pulls a gun, calls the cops, presses charges, drops them and brings me my suitcase... see what I mean about this town?

CONTINUED

48 CONTINUED

48

BETH

What changed your mind about the charges?

BYRD

I was there when Vern Soper toted in his bags...didn't see any beige one, though...an' somethin' else's been botherin' me since then, too....

ROCKFORD

Yeah? What's that?

BYRD

Harve Nyquist sold his Riviera and bought himself one'a them foreign matchboxes...three weeks ago.

ROCKFORD

(lighting up)

Terrific!

BETH

Terrific?

ROCKFORD

Harve Nyquist didn't order any radials!

49 INT. BETH'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT - ON ROCKFORD

49

as he hangs up the phone, victorious:

ROCKFORD

And Ronny Brown never even heard of New Pastoria...or Creekmore!

Pull back to reveal Beth and Joseph, totally confused. Rockford dials again.

ROCKFORD

No wonder I couldn't figure it! I thought it all started at the motel!

(into receiver)

Yeah, get me the Travel Inn over in Holtville, huh?

(to Beth and Joseph)

Creekmore must be the roper. He bought my insurance adjuster cover, figured it was a good job, lied about Ronny Brown so I'd come here.

CONTINUED



49 CONTINUED

49

ROCKFORD (Cont'd)

He had a super-wrench do a number  
on my brakes and called ahead to  
alert the Pastoria Players.

(into receiver)

Cashier, please...I'll hold.

JOSEPH

What's that got to do with radials?

ROCKFORD

Soper lied about having to pick them  
up in Holtville to cover the fact  
that he was waiting for me. He  
knew I was coming. Smart. But  
he's not smart enough to keep his  
dialogue updated.

BETH

So, if we knew who Creekmore called....

ROCKFORD

(into receiver)

Hi, hon, Gene Creekmore....

CASHIER'S VOICE

What can I do for you, Mr. Creekmore?

ROCKFORD

I hope you can save my neck. Y'see  
my company ships on bills of lading  
computer coded to the customer's  
p.o. number and cross coded to the  
billing address's telephone number...  
can't be too careful when you're in  
pharmaceuticals.

CASHIER'S VOICE

What can I do for you, Mr. Creekmore?

ROCKFORD

I lost my phone book and had to  
call in the Pastoria order from  
memory, but I must'a been off a  
number because the computer punched  
out the bill of lading but it kicks  
back the invoice every time and my  
tail's in a wringer because there's  
Oxadynaphenomomital lost in the  
shuffle and no way to trace it unless  
I come up with the number, which I  
can't do because I don't have my  
book.

CONTINUED

49 CONTINUED - 2

49

CASHIER'S VOICE

What can I do for you, Mr. Creekmore?

ROCKFORD

I need the numbers I called Tuesday night. I'll hold, while you get them off my bill?

(waits, pencil  
poised hopefully)

JOSEPH

I'm surprised you're not in more trouble than you are....

CASHIER'S VOICE

(finally)

You made three calls, Mr. Creekmore.  
All to the same number...555-6631.

ROCKFORD

Of course! Thanks, Hon. I  
owe you a good time, next trip.

He hangs up, dials the local number, waits expectantly as the phone rings twice, stops, but no one answers. He's about to hang up when he hears a short tone. But the tone is followed by more silence. He hangs up and gets that tone device out of his brief case, then dials again.

ROCKFORD

This probably won't work, but....

Two rings. Silence. The short tone, then he holds the tone device to the mouthpiece, presses the button: It emits a long, shrill beep. Rockford listens, shrugs, then hangs up.

JOSEPH

What didn't work?

ROCKFORD

There's an answering machine buried in the woodwork, somewhere. I tried to rip off its messages, but the rewind and playback mechanism will only respond to the right beeper.

BETH

Creekmore calls a machine! What a program! Can it be busted?

JOSEPH

We're all packed an' ready to go, son.

CONTINUED

49 CONTINUED - 3

49

ROCKFORD

You can't intercept their messages,  
so, if you can't link Creekmore to  
the man, or the man to the machine,  
you can't bust their game.

BETH

How do they keep it all straight?  
The best liars forget something,  
eventually.

ROCKFORD

These people're too sharp not to  
have that covered. Records?

BETH

Coded, maybe. Or well hidden.

ROCKFORD

(sparks)

Not if they were part of official  
county documents! In official  
county files! Kept by official  
county crooks!

JOSEPH

Only thing not in the car's us.

ROCKFORD

Unpack your tape recorder for me,  
Beth. Rocky, I'll need your  
flight bag.

50 EXT. MUNICIPAL BUILDING - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

50

51 OMITTED

51

52 INT. UNIVASO'S OFFICE - NIGHT - ON ROCKFORD

52

wearing gloves, going through the files, scanning documents,  
slipping a gew into the airline bag.

53 OMITTED

53

54 INT. UNIVASO'S OFFICE - NIGHT - ON ROCKFORD

54

using a letter opener and a pair of scissors on the desk  
drawer. It opens. Rockford finds a tone device, and a smile.  
He pulls a small Sony tape recorder out of his bag, clicks it  
onto "record" and pushes the button on the tone device --  
then freezes when the shrill beep in the silence is just that.

CONTINUED

54 CONTINUED

54

He records a four second blast, releases the button, listens to the silence and hears running footsteps in it. He puts the tone device back in the drawer, shoves the Sony into the bag, steps quickly to the door, grabs the coat rack and holds it poised like a bat. The door flies open and in bursts Kolodney, gun drawn -- he takes the base of the coat rack letter high and drops. Rockford throws the gun behind the couch, hurries into the corridor.

55  
and  
56 OMITTED

55  
and  
56

57 INT. UNIVASO'S OFFICE - NIGHT - FULL SHOT

57

Sheriff Gladish is watching Univaso check the files.

UNIVASO

Why wasn't someone on him the moment he made bail?

GLADISH

We can't be everywhere. We were working three programs today.

UNIVASO

Come on, Cliff, you had the dress salesman cooled off by five, the man from Austin was drunk in the Sierra until nine, and Rita's holed up with that feed lot manager on the murder beef.

(X)

GLADISH

The guy went ape, Gil. We had to pull the raid a day early. Creekmore didn't tell us he had a gun, either. We picked up a gravy '245' but Rita almost got shot.

Mayor Sanders enters, and she doesn't look too happy.

MAYOR

You know Friday is my committee night, and with the lemon festival only four weeks away, I simply do not have time for these interruptions.

UNIVASO

Rockford broke into my office.

CONTINUED

57 CONTINUED

57

The Mayor looks at both of them, expels a breath.

MAYOR

You're having a great day, aren't you. I heard what happened. Don't put Rita in with that kind of man again.

UNIVASO

She can handle it.

MAYOR

I know she can. But I don't want her to have to. Is anything missing?

UNIVASO

The file on Jim Rockford. Hard to say what else. There's a big play coming in tomorrow. I'd recommend putting it on 'hold.'

(X)

MAYOR

How big?

UNIVASO

Fifty...base.

MAYOR

(beat)

Could Rockford hurt us with anything he might've seen or taken?

(X)

UNIVASO

I wouldn't rule it out.

MAYOR

(things about it, then)

We've overcome too many obstacles to pull back now. We're so close to turning the corner.

(beat)

Bring the 'fifty' home...and put out an A.P.B. on Rockford. State wide. If you take him in the county...kill him.

58 EXT. BETH'S MOTEL - NIGHT

58

Rockford slips around a corner, knocks on a door.

CONTINUED

58 CONTINUED

58

ROCKFORD

We've got to move! I blew it!

JOSEPH'S VOICE

Be right there, Jimmy.

He moves to the next door, knocks. Beth opens it. He enters.

59 INT. BETH'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

59

Beth is the picture of distress:

BETH

I'm an officer of the court, I  
can't help you run from the law!

Rockford hands Beth a sheet of paper.

(X)

ROCKFORD

Here...they even keep a balance  
sheet. Your 'law' engineered over  
five hundred felony convictions  
in the past two years! Collected  
two and a half million in fines!  
And probably extorted twice that  
much from the ones who 'bribed  
out' with Gladish!

(X)

BETH

How could they get that many  
convictions without a pattern  
developing?!

ROCKFORD

Univaso had me on eight counts,  
and it's his option to press any  
combination of them...which gives  
him a couple thousand ways to go,  
just with me. The next mark'll  
be framed on a different set of  
beefs. They never repeat them-  
selves.

(pounds on wall)

JOSEPH'S VOICE

I'm hurryin's fast as I can!

BETH

But...you're talking about our  
legal system! You can't get a  
conviction without evidence!

CONTINUED

59 CONTINUED

59

ROCKFORD

They have more than they need,  
because ninety percent plead  
'guilty' to the lesser charges  
Univaso offers. The sentence is  
always a fine...it's paid and off  
they go. The other ten percent  
are doing hard time.

BETH

What about appeal?! Surely the  
higher courts would reverse...?

ROCKFORD

Nobody appears. Would you risk  
reopening an 'Indecent Exposure,  
Lewd Act, Child Molesting' beef  
against yourself, just to beat  
Grand Theft Auto? I wouldn't!

BETH

(shaking with  
anger)

I can't even think in these terms!

(beat, shakes  
her head)

I'm sorry, Jim...I was wrong about  
the Judge. Which means you should've  
paid the sheriff his rotten bribe.

ROCKFORD

(quietly)

I would've...if I had the money.

BETH

Jim, we've got to do something!

Joseph sticks his head in the door.

JOSEPH

Come on, Son, let's go.

Rockford and Beth move to the door and exit.

60 EXT. BETH'S MOTEL - NIGHT - MOVING WITH THEM

60

as they move for Beth's car (a late model Mercedes sedan).

ROCKFORD

You're both clean. Drop me outside  
of town, then get to Dennis and  
give him everything in this bag.  
It might be enough.

CONTINUED

60 CONTINUED

60

BETH

What're you going to do!?

As he starts to answer he reacts to the sound of an approaching siren.

(X)

(X)

61 NEW ANGLE - PANNING TWO SQUAD CARS

61

into the parking area, sirens wailing, red lights flashing. They skid to a halt behind the Mercedes -- Gladish and Brewster jump out of one, Kolodney out of the other and they yank the doors open and drag out Beth and Joseph! Gladish checks the interior of the Mercedes, finds it empty.

BETH

What is this!? You have no right!

(X)

GLADISH

Search the trunk! Check the rooms!

Kolodney starts kicking down motel doors; Brewster rips the key from Beth's hand, heads to the rear of the car.

BETH

(starting for  
Brewster)

You need a warrant to do that!  
Where do you think you are!?

(X)

Gladish cuffs her wrist, hard enough to make her cry out.

JOSEPH

Hey, now! You can't treat a lady  
like that.

(X)

Gladish slams him against the car, frisks him, cuffs him to Beth. Kolodney comes out of her motel rooms, shrugs. Brewster slams the trunk, shakes his head. Then, as Beth and Joseph are being roughly shoved into Kolodney's patrol:

GLADISH

You're both under arrest!

(to Kolodney)

Book 'em on Aiding, Abetting and  
Resisting for openers. I'll add  
the rest later. Then get back  
out on the road. This joker can't  
be too far, yet.

They climb into the squad cars and pull away. Hold. A hand appears from under the bumper, gropes upward, closes around the key in the trunk lock, disappears again. The driver's side door opens a moment later and Rockford crawls in, dragging the flight bag after him. The engine starts. The Mercedes eases off into the night.



62 INT. BYRD'S KITCHEN - NIGHT - ON BYRD

62

sitting at the table, listening to police transmissions:

                    KOLODNEY'S VOICE (RADIO)

Unit Three to Unit One: I got the  
Mercedes. On Bludecker Road.  
Abandoned. Tank's empty. Tires're  
about an hour cold. Suitcases  
still in it.

                    GLADISH'S VOICE (RADIO)

All right, boys, he's on foot.  
Let's get down on him: Pattern  
four converge into section three.

Distant sirens begin to wail.

63 EXT. BYRD'S YARD AND BACK PORCH - NIGHT - ON ROCKFORD

63

running into the yard, gasping for air, dripping and torn  
from flight. He stumbles up onto the back porch.

64 INT. BYRD'S KITCHEN - NIGHT - FULL SHOT

64

Rockford enters, leans against the door for support. He'll  
never catch his breath in this scene, nor will he ever need  
it more as he finds himself looking into the muzzle of Byrd's  
pistol, again.

                    BYRD

Y'can't stay out of it, can ya?  
What'd y'come here for?! Y'know  
I gotta turn ya in!  
                    (reaches  
                    for mike)

                    ROCKFORD

                    (gasping)  
No...! You...you arrest me....

                    BYRD

What?

                    ROCKFORD

You...put me under arrest...you....

                    BYRD

                    (lowering pistol)  
I can't arrest no one....

-  
CONTINUED

64 CONTINUED

64

ROCKFORD

Yeah...y'can. Citizen's arrest...  
put me in protective...custody....

(X)

Byrd looks at the mike in his hand, at Rockford -- finally:

BYRD

Well...I dunno. Say I do...then  
what...?

ROCKFORD

Can you slip me...out of the  
county?

BYRD

(raising  
mike)

I can't help ya run from the law,  
Son.

ROCKFORD

You're callin' a good squad...an'  
maybe that doesn't bother you, but  
they're holding my father and my  
attorney...

(X)

(pauses to  
suck in air)

...an' there's nothing I can do  
about it unless I can get the  
evidence to someone I can trust....

BYRD

Evidence...?

ROCKFORD

I have enough to bring it all down.  
Slip me out of the county...turn me  
over to Sergeant Becker...L.A.P.D.....

BYRD

(weighs it,  
finally nods)

I been sayin' there's somethin'  
wrong here for a long time.

Byrd gets a gun belt from a drawer, straps it on, then takes  
his badge out of a little velvet box. Rockford's relief is  
short lived and Byrd chuckles at his distressed reaction to:

GLADISH'S VOICE (RADIO)

All Units: Run a 'twenty-nine' twice,  
at ten miles an hour...lights out.  
Kolodney, you run a 'Reverse four'  
at seventy with everything shaking.

CONTINUED

64 CONTINUED - 2

64

GLADISH'S VOICE (RADIO)

I'll alternate between the two at irregular intervals. That should pop him up in someone's sights.

BYRD

(still chuckling)

Don't worry 'bout them. I was runnin' this county with my lights out long before any of them deputies was born.

(badge pinned in place)

Let's go.

ROCKFORD

I have a call to make first.

Byrd watches, confused, as Rockford takes the Sony from the bag, plugs in the telephone pick-up, attaches its suction cup to the receiver and dials. He listens a moment, then puts the Sony on "play" and it emits a long, shrill beep into the mouth-piece. Then Rockford switches the Sony onto "record," and waits.

65 INSERT - TELEPHONE AND ANSWERING MACHINE - SOMEWHERE

65

a red light goes on -- machinery begins clicking and whirring.

66 BACK TO SHOT

66

ROCKFORD

(listening)

It worked!

(then, annoyed)

It's half in code!

BYRD

You're a strange one, mister.

GLADISH'S VOICE

(radio)

Meet me at the Green River Bridge, Kolodney. I just had a notion.

BYRD

Y'd best hurry now...

(waits, then, finally)

C'mon, Rockford! That transmission wasn't more'n a mile from here!

ROCKFORD

It's still going...if I don't get it now, I never will.

CONTINUED

66 CONTINUED

66

BYRD  
(shakes his  
head, then)  
I'll be in the car. It's up to  
you.

Byrd exits. Rockford hangs in, sweating it out.

GLADISH'S VOICE  
(radio)  
All right, Kolodney...let's make  
it go down hard and fast!

Still, Rockford hangs in at the phone -- then becomes a blur as he pops off the suction cup, hangs up, jams the Sony into the bag, turns out the lights and exits.

67 EXT. BYRD'S HOME AND BACKYARD - NIGHT - FULL SHOT

67

Rockford jumps into the Plymouth. It peels out and disappears into the orange grove. Hold. Two squad cars roar in, their dust swirling red as they slide to a halt. Gladish, Kolodney and Brewster pile out, armed with shotguns. Too late.

68 EXT. MOUNTAINS - DIRT ROAD - DAY

68

The Plymouth winds up through the trees. Birds sing and fly free in the early morning mountain air. Then, over this:

ROCKFORD'S VOICE  
Are we out of the county yet?

BYRD'S VOICE  
Can't get outta the county this  
way. No road over the top. This  
just leads to a pretty spot in  
the mountains.

69 INT. PLYMOUTH - EARLY MORN - MOVING SHOT

69

Rockford stares at the old man for a long moment, then:

ROCKFORD  
Who else is going to be there?

BYRD  
Russ Cline. You can trust him  
with your evidence.

CONTINUED

69 CONTINUED

69

ROCKFORD

(incredulously)

The Judge?! Aw, Emmett, you're doin' it to me again! He could be the head man! Now you just turn this tub around, Emmett! Right now!

(X)

BYRD

If I did, it'd be the first time I ever took orders from a prisoner.

(X)

ROCKFORD

How does he know we're coming?

BYRD

He don't. He comes up here every Friday night to spend a peaceful weekend workin' on his book.

ROCKFORD

(dulled)

Yeah...gets it ready to throw again on Monday. How do I do it...?

70 EXT. MOUNTAINS - DIRT ROAD - EARLY MORN - PANNING PLYMOUTH

70

into a small clearing with a nice wilderness view. The car stops near Cline's motor home. Byrd climbs out, then, reluctantly, so does Rockford. The Judge looks out the windshield, reacts to Rockford and steps out -- the casual clothes do nothing to soften his look. He frowns at the sight of Byrd's badge, and gun.

BYRD

I had'ta get this man to ya, Russ. He's got somethin' to say. I'm still gaggin' on it, an' I only half believe him.

JUDGE

I couldn't discuss his case with him even if I wanted to.

BYRD

He's got new evidence.

JUDGE

Then his lawyer can submit it through proper channels.

CONTINUED

70 CONTINUED

70

ROCKFORD

No. She can't. She's in jail.  
The police kidnapped her.

JUDGE

The police do not kidnap people!

ROCKFORD

They do in New Pastoria. Every day.

BYRD

Rockford here broke into the  
municipal building last night.  
There's an A.P.B. out on him now.  
(on Judge's look)  
It's okay, Russ, he's my prisoner.

JUDGE

Emmett, you can't have a prisoner.

BYRD

Well, I got one. Hear him out, Russ,  
then I'll do whatever you say.

ROCKFORD

You don't have to listen to me.  
Read this.

(X)

Rockford hands the papers to the Judge.

(X)

JUDGE

Wait over there.

(X)

71 EXT. MOUNTAIN CLEARING - DAY - ON JUDGE CLINE

71

sitting on a stump, looking over the papers.

(X)

72 ON ROCKFORD AND BYRD

72

sitting at the base of a tree -- waiting. Rockford listens  
to the Sony through an ear plug, makes notes. Byrd looks off  
toward the Judge, obviously saddened as he rambles on:

BYRD

...An' me an' ol' T.K. Moses used  
ta work the highway...haul them low-  
flyin' lead-footed tourists into  
Russ' court...it was in his house  
back in them days. Well, someone  
had'ta pay our salaries....

CONTINUED

BYRD (Cont'd)

'better the violaters than our friends,' Russ use'ta say, an' he was right. County folks was too poor to pay their taxes, anyway. Sure, it was a speed trap town back then, but it was just survival... that's all...

(looks at  
Rockford)

You're wrong about Russ...you'll see.

ROCKFORD

(looking off)

I hope so. If not, I'm dead.

The Judge walks slowly up to them. Byrd stands, Stetson held nervously in one hand. The Judge looks at Rockford, then:

JUDGE

I can't accept it.

ROCKFORD

I knew it!

JUDGE

You don't know a thing. Half the crime in this country is caused by lenient judges...thank God I'm not one of them. But I don't hold people for ransom, either! A man owes me something if he admits to committing a felony in my county! And I'm going to make sure he pays it!

Rockford notices the fists clenched at the Judge's side -- Byrd does, too, then meets his old friend's eyes and quietly:

BYRD

Russ...? What if it's true?

JUDGE

How can it be, Emmett? Take him down the mountain...turn him in, before you get in trouble, too.

ROCKFORD

I knew it!

BYRD

All right, Russ...if you say so.

(then, again)

But what if it's true...?

CONTINUED

JUDGE

It's not, Emmett. It can't be.  
And there's no way to prove it.

BYRD

Let's nose into Soper's records.  
See how many of your confessed  
felons came into town behind his  
rig?

JUDGE

Circumstantial. Where's the link?  
You'd have to be able to prove he  
knew the man was coming. No, I....

ROCKFORD

There's one due in this afternoon.

JUDGE

What?!

(X)

ROCKFORD'S VOICE

(X)

Here's the call he made about me.

The hand snaps the recorder onto "play":

CREEKMORE'S VOICE

Adjust Injurs. 5 base, 10 top.  
Try G.T.A. front, 11501 back. Wise  
guy so use heavy hammer, maybe a  
261.1. 1400 Wednesday, 189. '75  
orange Po-Bird, Cal zero-G. Roller-  
coaster. C.W. -60/40 against.  
(beep)

(X)

The Judge is a doubting mask.

(X)

ROCKFORD

The last part told them when I'd  
be coming in, where, what I'd be  
driving and what'd be wrong with  
it. Figure the first part out  
for yourself...G.T.A. means Grand  
Theft Auto....

He rewinds, plays back that section of the message, then:

JUDGE

11501? Narcotics. A narcotics  
'back'?

CONTINUED



ROCKFORD

That's the one Univaso offers to drop if you cop 'guilty' to the 'front.' The 'hammer' is a little something to make you like the offer. Good ol' Statutory Rape in my case, hand carried by the mayor.

JUDGE

Karen?! She couldn't possibly be mixed up in this! Pastoria would still be an exploited and impoverished county if she hadn't come along with her dreams!

ROCKFORD

(sarcastic)

Terrific. You finally admit there's something to be a part of.

BYRD

(squinting  
around)

Don't get a smart mouth. This's a lot easier on you, no matter what y'been through.

ROCKFORD

Sure. Let's see how 'easy' it's going to be on the next guy:

He guns the tape forward, clicks it onto "play":

CREEKMORE'S VOICE

Exelectronic. 50 base, 75 top but feel higher. M with three. Religious. 496 Receiving front, natural for a 288 back and a 187 hammer. Great annuity shot. 1600 Saturday, eight mile grade. LinCoBlu, Ill nine-four. Old faithful. No C.W. Piece of cake.  
(beep)

ROCKFORD

(clicks  
off tape)

Creekmore says he's good for at least fifty grand, Judge. How're they going to get it? By the numbers?

CONTINUED

72 CONTINUED - 4

72

JUDGE

A Receiving Stolen Property 'front,'  
Child Molesting 'back,' and...oh  
no....

ROCKFORD

Right...they're going to make him  
think he killed someone. I'll bet  
this kind bribes out every time.  
No court. No records. Sounds like  
a blackmail follow up, too.

(beat)

Your proof should be on something  
called the eight mile grade.

73  
and  
74

OMITTED

73  
and  
74

75 EXT. HILL COUNTRY - DAY - ON ROCKFORD

75

standing among some boulders, looking into the valley below.  
Byrd and the Judge step in beside him, puffing from a short  
climb. Rockford points with his cuffed hands. They peer  
off, then the Judge's expression says it all.

76 HIGH ANGLE - THEIR POINT OF VIEW - THE TOW TRUCK

76

is parked on a turn-out at the top of a long grade. Soper  
sits atop the cab, scanning the miles below through binoculars.

77 BACK TO SHOT

77

Rockford watches as the two older men try to find something  
to say to each other.

Money changes hands and Soper starts to turn around.

Rockford waits. Finally:

JUDGE

All right. I've seen enough.

ROCKFORD

Good! Let's get to a phone so  
you can call the highway patrol  
and anyone else you can think of!

More silence. The old-timers exchange meaningful glances,  
then:

CONTINUED

77

CONTINUED

77

JUDGE

Emmett...you're the county sheriff again. If you feel up to it.

BYRD

I'm up to it.

JUDGE

Then let's start with Soper.

(X)

ROCKFORD

Hey! Go get some help! Titles aren't going to mean a thing once they know we're onto them! They'll hit us like the marines!

BYRD

He's probably right, Russ...but I'm game if you are.

JUDGE

It's my garbage, Emmett, and my fault for letting it happen. 'Game' is all I've got left.

ROCKFORD

Well it's not my garbage! And I'm not game! Get some help!

BYRD

We'll handle this. You just stay in the car an' y'won't get hurt. Let's go.

(X)

They get into the car and take off.

(X)

78

EXT. CURVE ON EIGHT MILE GRADE - DAY - FULL SHOT

78

One look at the owner of the Lincoln and you just know the "Pastoria Players" would've made hamburger out of his mind. He just watches, without comprehending, all that follows:

The truck has turned around and is backing up to the Lincoln. The Plymouth comes around the curve, slows across the double line and parks on the shoulder in front of (and pinning) the tow truck. Soper starts to climb out as Byrd and the Judge come up.

(X)

BYRD

(hand on butt  
of pistol)  
Yer under arrest, Vern.

CONTINUED

SOPER

How's that again?

Soper squints into the Plymouth, reacts to the sight of Rockford.

BYRD

We know it all, Vern. You'd be way ahead if y'came quiet....

Soper flings the cab door open, catching Byrd chest high and sending him sprawling to the road. Rockford jumps out of the Plymouth. Soper leans back into the cab, grabs the mike, and:

SOPER

It's all gone tapioca on the eight mile! Rockford's here! And....

Rockford pulls Soper out of the cab by his feet, causing his head to bounce off of things all the way down to the pavement. He lies there, dazed, still holding the microphone. Byrd gets up, hopping mad, and cuffs Soper as:

GLADISH'S VOICE (radio)

Soper?! What's happening out there?!

(then)

Unit One to Unit Three! Did you copy?!

KOLODNEY'S VOICE (radio)

Yeah, I copied, Sheriff.

GLADISH'S VOICE (radio)

Cover the road to the county line. I'll check on Soper.

As they get Soper up into the cab:

ROCKFORD

Get the tow truck off the road. There...to the left. And play out the cable.

BYRD

Got it.

(to man in  
Lincoln)

Sir, official business. Take your car to the end of the road and block traffic headed in this direction.

Action of moving cars and rigging the tow truck cable.

ak #42609

59  
(X)

79  
and  
84  
OMITTED

79  
and  
84

85 EXT. TOW TRUCK

85

                    KOLODNEY'S VOICE (radio)  
I'm at the county line, Sheriff.

                    GLADISH'S VOICE (radio)  
Hold there. We're almost at the  
eight mile grade.

                    BYRD  
He's comin' up fast!

                    ROCKFORD  
Get ready in the tow truck.

The Judge enters the tow truck. Rockford and Byrd move  
Soper to the Plymouth, now in the middle of the road.  
Byrd and Soper enter the car. Rockford stands beside it,  
waiting.

The approaching siren increases in volume as the police  
car nears. And at the moment it rounds the bend:

                    ROCKFORD  
                    (yells)  
Now!

Rockford jumps into the Plymouth and starts away as the  
Judge guns the tow truck forward, tightening the cable  
to windshield level. The Sheriff's car hits the cable,  
demolishing the top. It skids to a halt sideways in the  
road as the Plymouth roars back in reverse. Byrd and  
Rockford rush to the Sheriff's car and Byrd makes the  
arrest of the totally subdued and dazed Sheriff.

86  
thru  
91  
OMITTED

86  
thru  
91

92 EXT. MUNICIPAL BUILDING - AFTERNOON - ON ROCKFORD AND JUDGE

92

sitting on a bench near the entrance. Rockford is busily  
writing on a legal pad. The Judge stands a little  
apprehensively as Sheriff Byrd approaches with Mayor  
Sanders and Univaso. Both are cuffed and in the firm  
custody of three highway patrolmen. They stop in front  
of Judge Cline and, for the first time, his face grows  
soft:

                    JUDGE  
Karen...I'd give anything if it  
weren't true.

CONTINUED

KAREN

I'm the best thing that ever  
happened to this county, Russ.  
And you know it.

(he nods)

I found a poverty area and turned  
it into a thriving, viable  
community. The federal government  
can't even accomplish that. We  
would've turned the corner in six  
months, too, and Pastoria County  
would've emerged nationally  
respected, self supporting,  
legitimate and....

ROCKFORD

(looks up  
from pad)

...And built on the bodies and  
broken backs of a lot of innocent  
people.

UNIVASO

(dulled)

There are no innocent people left.

ROCKFORD

I'm one.

KAREN

Is there a town which hasn't been  
built that way, Mr. Rockford?  
What about L.A....? Or Chicago...?  
(to Judge)

You burnt a lot of people, right  
along with us.

JUDGE

I didn't bring the charges.

KAREN

Oh, come on, Russ, a fine is  
nothing more than legally demanded  
ransom, in anybody's court.

JUDGE

No, Karen. It's a bill that's  
come due.

BYRD

Well a big one came due for the  
county today. C'mon! Let's go  
get your fingers dirty!

CONTINUED

92 CONTINUED - 2

92

They watch the salty old Sheriff lead the procession off to the waiting patrol cars, then Rockford tears a page from the legal pad.

ROCKFORD

Speaking of bills, Judge, I figure there's gonna be a long line and I'd kinda like to get mine settled before the rush...?

The Judge nods, takes the "bill," glances at the bottom line, shakes his head and is folding it up and putting it in his pocket as Beth and Joseph exit the building.

JOSEPH

Jimmy!

Rockford turns and then his grin goes ear to ear as he watches them approach, ruffled, but all smiles. Beth turns her face up so it can be touched by the late afternoon sun. As they come up:

ROCKFORD

Hi. How's it feel to be out?

BETH

This is the first time I've ever been sprung by a client!

Choose a great frame, freeze, then:

FADE OUT

THE END