

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 lurch 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 , (X)
Mr. Metcalf. Why don't y'grab a
bite while I check out the damages.

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

6 CONTINUED - 2

6

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)

7 AT PAY PHONE - FAVORING ROCKFORD

7

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

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 hazz 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, who is carrying a big shotgun at port arms. Rockford freezes.

(X)

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

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...

(then, sadly)

I only got three thousand for it.

(X)

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

40 CONTINUED - 2

40

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

