

A HARVEST OF MEN

Written by

Casey William Walker

A Short Film for IAPFilms
Screenwriter Competition

caseywilliamwalker@gmail.com
801-712-7888

EXT. TOWN CENTER SQUARE - DAY

The morning blue sky is all that can be seen. White text comes on screen which reads:

April 1914 - Bedrock,
California

From O.S The worn and aged face of old DEPUTY FRED JACKSON appears staring downward. After a few moments the burly middle aged face of SHERIFF BLAIN CONNOLLY appears from the opposite side. Both staring intently downward.

JACKSON
Son of a bitch.

Connolly looks at Jackson, takes a deep breath and looks back down.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
I mean, that's a damned shame.
Perfectly good girl going to waste
like that.

CONNOLLY
Third one this month.

The Head of DOCTOR LINDSEY HYMAN pops in obviously looking at the same thing as the other two. He has a bruise on his forehead.

CONNOLLY (CONT'D)
Well, what d'you think doctor?

Hyman lets out a sigh. He has a slight accent to his speech that only when listened to closely does it sound unlike the others.

HYMAN
Well Sheriff. Young Laura Elsworth.
He father won't be happy to hear
about this.

CONNOLLY
Yep.

JACKSON
He's been out of town for days. Had
some business in San Fransisco I
think. Nasty bruise there Doc.

HYMAN

I get clumsy in the middle of the night.

A fourth head appears opposite of Dr. Hyman, the head of REVEREND LUCAS ALMOND also peers downward.

ALMOND

A quick prayer Gentlemen, before you get started.

Connolly shakes his head in approval at Reverend. They all bow their heads slightly.

ALMOND (CONT'D)

O' Lord! Please guide the soul of this young girl to thy kingdom. May she find happiness and solace from the brutality that she has seen in this life. Although a very sinful woman in this life, my thy mercy be ever bounteous but ever just. Amen.

They all mutter "Amen" along with Rev. Almond.

JACKSON

Thank you Reverend. That was...nice.

CONNOLLY

Well, lets get this started then.

The bloodied dead body of LAURA ELSWORTH is finally revealed as the object they have been looking at. The body lie face first in the mud with her white undergarment dress appearing to have many rips and tares on it. A crowd of TOWNSPEOPLE of about 25 or so stand watching and murmuring at the gruesome sight. The buildings are all wooden resembling and old western town. And everyone's clothing reflects the attire of 1914.

CONNOLLY (CONT'D)

Looks like two bullet holes to the back.

HYMAN

Yeah.

CONNOLLY

Some bruising on the wrist and....ankles.

HYMAN

Yeah.

People are slowly moving closer to have a look. Jackson waves at the people to move back. A YOUNG BOY peeks his head from behind his MOTHER.

BOY

EW!

JACKSON

Alright enough is enough, Nothin' to see here folks! Give the man some space!

CONNOLLY

Come on Jackson help me flip her over.

Jackson moves down to help Connolly. Rev. Almond moves to the people.

ALMOND

May we lift our spirits with a hymn?

He begins to sing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" the Townspeople slowly join in as he conducts. They flip the body over. Her whole front is covered in bloody mud. They shake their hands of the mud.

JACKSON

Looks like one of the bullets went through.

CONNOLLY

Yep. The other ones still in her.

JACKSON

It's all a damned shame.

HYMAN

Perhaps I can take the body off your hands Sheriff, clean her up for a proper burial.

CONNOLLY

Yeah. In a minute there Doctor. When it's an obvious murder you just got to take a closer look.

He examines up and down the body. From amongst the crowd appears WILLIAM HARRIS a young man in his mid to late twenties. He sees the dead body and has an immediate look of panic on his face.

WILLIAM
 Laura? No! Laura!

CONNOLLY
 Oh shit, William Harris.

William runs almost to the body and begins to sob.

HYMAN
 I'll handle this Sheriff.

WILLIAM
 What happened?

HYMAN
 We don't know yet son.

WILLIAM
 I mean, I saw her only yesterday!
 How did this happen. Who did this.

HYMAN
 Sheriff Connolly and Deputy Jackson
 are looking into it.

Connolly notices something silver in her clenched hand.
 William and Hyman are occupied talking to each other not
 watching The Sheriff and Deputy examine the body.

CONNOLLY
 What is this?

He peels open the hand to reveal a Silver "Iron Cross" with a
 brown fabric still attached to the back pin. He examines all
 sides of it.

CONNOLLY (CONT'D)
 Huh.

JACKSON
 What do he have here?

CONNOLLY
 A clue.

He puts the Iron Cross into his pocket.

CONNOLLY (CONT'D)
 Got lacerations around the facial
 area and arms.

JACKSON
 Could be glass.

CONNOLLY
That's my guess. Look at these.
Burn marks on her temples.

JACKSON
Just like the other two.

WILLIAM
(Sobbing)
No! Sheriff what happened?

CONNOLLY
I'm not sure son. You said you saw
her yesterday?

WILLIAM
Yes sir. Saw her last night.

CONNOLLY
What time would you say? Reverend I
know it's beautiful but can we stop
with the music?

WILLIAM
I'd say around ten thirty when she-
The chorus fades as the poeple stop singing.

JACKSON
When she "what" now boy, come on,
spit it out..

WILLIAM
When she left my place.

ALMOND
Now Sheriff music sooths the soul.

CONNOLLY
So you two...were uhh...

WILLIAM
Yeah. But I loved her! I would
never do anything to hurt her!

ALMOND
It's times like these people need
an uplifting spirit.

CONNOLLY
Okay Reverend. No one ever said you
did son.

WILLIAM

I know.

CONNOLLY

How long were you...with her. And did you see her acting unusual at all?

WILLIAM

No sir.

ALMOND

The boy is in mourning Sheriff and I don't think they did much talking when they saw each other last night.

WILLIAM

Hey you shut up you old bastard!

JACKSON

Come on now let's be civil.

WILLIAM

We talked all the time! It's how I knew we were meant to be together. I didn't do anything to hurt her!

CONNOLLY

No one ever said you did!

ALMOND

It's just the nature of two sinners to not do much else but sin when they are together.

WILLIAM

You horses ass!

William lunges for the Reverend but is held back by Connelly as he reacts quickly. Jackson and Hyman stand between William and Almond.

ALMOND

God does not lie.

WILLIAM

Maybe so but you do! How do we know you didn't kill her yourself!

CONNOLLY

William that's enough!

ALMOND

I am a man of god incapable of such atrocities.

WILLIAM

You said so yourself yesterday! You called her a whore and said god would have his revenge on the wicked and He would smite her down!

ALMOND

Truths out of the mouth God's servant to a drunken wench isn't very incriminating.

WILLIAM

I'm sure you did! You did you sick bastard!

Connolly restraining William with all his strength and finally throws him down into the mud.

CONNOLLY

You are done William. Just calm yourself down!

ALMOND

I see the devil raging in you son.

JACKSON

Reverend one more word from you and I'm sure the boy will make sure there are two dead in the street today.

HYMAN

Sheriff I really ought to take the body now.

CONNOLLY

(Snapping)

Not yet Doctor! Why the big hurry!?

WILLIAM

No more is the devil in me than he is you! She told me what you have done to her to satisfy your "lusts".

ALMOND

I don't know what you mean.

WILLIAM

Life can get awfully lonely as
celibate don't it reverend?

CONNOLLY

William what are you talking about?

Jackson seeing the path in the mud the girl obviously dragged herself through before she died. He begins to follow it.

WILLIAM

She told me all about how the good
Reverend took a part in her
services.

CONNOLLY

Is this true Reverend?

EXT. ALLY WAY - DAY

Jackson walks into an ally way between two wooden buildings following the ground. He sees a wet path that leads to a dead end. He notices a door in the side of a building. The door is chained shut.

EXT. TOWN CENTER SQUARE - DAY

Returning to the scene in the town square.

ALMOND

A man of God cannot be held
accountable for sin when he is
moved upon and tempted by the
devil's whore!

WILLIAM

You see!

CONNOLLY

Reverend did this happen!

WILLIAM

Don't you deny it!

ALMOND

I don't deny I succumbed to evil
spirit!

WILLIAM

She told me everything last night
before you killed her to cover up
the truth about yourself!

(MORE)

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

She was talking about you then all she talked about how the world is doomed and she kept going on about war! No doubt nonsense you told her!

ALMOND

I never killed her! I never laid a finger on her!

CONNOLLY

Okay I think that's quite enough!

HYMAN

We need to move the body, it's indecent just lying here. And I haven't much time.

CONNOLLY

Fine Take it!

EXT. HYMAN'S CLINIC PORCH - DAY

Jackson emerges out of the ally way and looks around. He sees the building on his left with a sign that reads:

"LEARMY'S GENERAL STORE"

Jackson then looks to his right at the same building the chained door was on. A big sign on the roof that reads:

"HOSPICE"

JANE a woman in her fifties is across the street washing and scrubbing some clothing sees Jackson and waves. He waves back and smiles.

JACKSON

You're not interested in the murder down there?

JANE

No sir! Work doesn't stop just cause some poor soul passed on.

He red coloration of the water shines in the sun as she pours the water out.

JACKSON

Say, Miss Jane. Whose clothes you got there?

JANE

Just the good Doctors. I guess he had to put a horse down yesterday. Said he needed everything washed right quick before he leaves tonight.

Shouting is heard in the distance. Jackson start running.

EXT. TOWN CENTER SQUARE - DAY

Connelly has his gun drawn pointed at William whose drawn his gun and aiming at the Reverend who is on his knees in the mud. Doctor Hyman puts body wrapped in cloth over his horse.

WILLIAM

I know he did it!

CONNOLLY

You don't know that. I don't know that. You aren't thinking straight Will!

ALMOND

I'm sorry William. I truly am, please forgive me.

WILLIAM

You filled her head full of ideas of war and desolation and pain!

CONNOLLY

William you put that gun down right now and no one here has to suffer anymore than they already have!

WILLIAM

Say you are a sinner! Tell me and everyone how you have sinned!

Hyman leads his horse away.

ALMOND

I am a sinner! Oh how I have sinned before you all brothers and sisters. I am a liar! But I did not kill her William! That is the truth!

WILLIAM

Nothing but lies!

William fires a shot at Almond hitting him in the chest. Connolly doesn't hesitate to fire on William, shooting him dead. Jackson runs up to the scene. Connolly looks around for the Doctor frantically. Almond is gasping for air and struggling to breath.

CONNOLLY
Doctor! Doctor!

JACKSON
What happened?

CONNOLLY
Things got out of hand. Did you see where the doctor went?

JACKSON
No I saw him leave with the body I don't know where to. Probably to his clinic.

Connolly is stricken with a blank face of horror as he looks at William's limp body and Reverend Almond struggling to breath. Connolly grabs Almond and puts his hand over the bleeding wound.

CONNOLLY
Help! Someone help!

A middle aged woman comes out of the Post Office door to assist.

CONNOLLY (CONT'D)
Put your hand right here! We are going to get the doctor okay Reverend! Just stay here you are going to be fine!

ALMOND
Okay.

CONNOLLY
We need to bring the Doctor back!

JACKSON
I don't know where he is but I don't think he is coming back.

CONNOLLY
What do you mean?

JACKSON
Follow me.

EXT. CLINIC STREET - DAY

Jackson walks fast leading Connolly to Jane doing laundry.

JACKSON

Do you remember anyone losing a horse yeasterday?

CONNOLLY

No I don't. Where is the doctor. Doctor Hyman!

JACKSON

Jane said Doctor Hyman had to put down a horse yesterday.

CONNOLLY

What about it?

JACKSON

She was washing his clothes that were all bloody from putting down a horse yesterday. This is a small town. And I know no one has lost a horse.

EXT. JANE'S PORCH - DAY

Jane is washing clothes as Connolly and Jackson stand talking to her.

JANE

No sir. He came by just a minute or two ago and grabbed all his clothes. Weren't even dry yet. He was in a big hurry. Said he couldn't wait til tonight to leave, had to go now.

CONNOLLY

Where is he? Did you see him leave town?

JANE

Thought I saw him go. But he left this behind.

CONNOLLY

Let me see that.

Jane hands Connolly a brown shirt. He notices a hole torn in the fabric. He pulls out the Iron Cross with the same fabric still in the pin.

CONNOLLY (CONT'D)
Where did he say he was leaving to
tonight?

JANE
Back home. To Germany!

INT. CLINIC - DAY

Connolly busts through the front door of clinic. Vacant of anyone. He and Jackson have their guns drawn moving to the back to of the clinic. Window glass lay shattered on the ground from a broken window in a wall between rooms.

CONNOLLY
He couldn't have left town that
fast. He has to still be here. Be
careful.

JACKSON
Doctor! Doctor Hyman!

CONNOLLY
Doctor we need to have a word with
you. Reverend Almond has been shot
and William is dead.

They approach a door in the back of the building. They try to open it. But it's locked.

CONNOLLY (CONT'D)
One. Two. Three.

Connolly and Jackson ram the door with their shoulders breaking it open.

INT. HYMAN'S LAB - DAY

Busting open the door the find a well lit room with an operation chair in the middle of the room with arm and leg straps, belt straps and a device that looks like it goes over the head. Thick chords and electrical cables lead from the chair to the wall A map of Europe on wall with large arrows spreading from Germany to all the surrounding countries. Large font that says "Eine Regel!" A large German flag baring the Iron Cross hangs on another wall.

CONNOLLY
What is this?

Jackson notices all the blood on the ground.

JACKSON
It's a torture chamber!

From a dark room off to the left a voice is heard.

HYMAN
No. It is a control room.

CONNOLLY
Doctor! What have you done!

Hyman emerges from the shadows. He has a gun drawn.

HYMAN
Only that which I was commissioned
to do by my superior officers.

JACKSON
This is sick!

HYMAN
It's science. And this is my chair.
Did you know that your brain
produces electricity. So we are in
fact just like machines. "Eine
Regel". One Rule is what this
means. That is what we want. Peace
and prosperity. This can only
happen if everyone is united under
one rule. But not everyone agrees
sadly. That is why I have been
commissioned to tinker with the
mind with electricity. Just like a
broken machine the mind can be
fixed with what we call
electroshock therapy. With enough
electric current through the brain
we can take an unwilling mind and
make it obedient. In theory. In a
few months time the certain events
will trigger a motion of war that
your country will not and cannot
stop. A war that will unite all
under one roof. The roof of
Germany. My three test subjects
here were just the beginning of our
control.

JACKSON
You are sick.

CONNOLLY
Now that you told us your whole
evil plan. What now?

HYMAN

Yes. What now. That is up to you. I was sent here to Harvest Men, for soon the great reaping of nations will commence under the iron cross. But I know I will live to see that day. Poor Laura had been seeing me for sometime. It wasn't until I told her I needed her to come to Germany with me as proof of my success. But I suppose after she hit me over the head with this metal pipe in defiance of my request I had to put her down as a failed experiment. Just like the rest.

Hyman flips a light switch next to him and the room goes dark. Several shots are fired and all that can be seen is the gun flashes. The light is turned back on by Connolly. Jackson has fallen dead on the floor. A door is heard opening and closing. Connolly chases after the sound.

EXT. BEHIND THE CLINIC - DAY

Behind the clinic empties into nothing but fields, grass and trees. Hyman is riding his horse away from the town as Connolly emerges out from the back door. He holds his gun aiming at Hyman. His line of sight follows Hyman as he rides. A shot is fired.

BLACK OUT

THE END