

EXT. ARIZONA DESERT - NIGHT

A crackling fire keeps two cowboys warm in the night. One is leans against a rock, not sitting far from the other.

He listens intently to the other man, his expression almost bashful. ROSCOE, against his better judgement, allows himself to enjoy the other man's yammering.

ROSCOE
...y'think you'd end up out there
for good?

The other cowboy speaks with excitement, occasionally adjusting his hat. He has a wide smile on his face. BLANC wasn't himself without that smile.

BLANC
Someday, yeah. I reckon after I go
to The Canyon, I'll escape to
Mexico. I'll be able to take my
riches and hightail it outta here,
I won't have to worry 'bout not a
damn thing.

ROSCOE
I hope you get there someday.

A beat.

BLANC
I'd take you with me, if you
wanted. Don't you wanna get out of
here? You don't think you're sick
of this bandit life?

Blanc is right. Roscoe did hate it.

ROSCOE
I ain't too sure, Blanc. Besides,
Mo wants me to be a real bandit. He
basically raised me.

BLANC
Mo, schmo. You ain't gotta listen
to every word that man says!

ROSCOE
But he's all I got. All I am now is
just a bandit. Running away and
wanting more. I can't just up and--

Blanc stood up, extending a hand to Roscoe. Reluctantly, Roscoe took it, and is pulled up to his feet.

BLANC
Look here, Roscoe. You're gonna be
just fine paving your own path for
yourself. I swear on all things
holy, you will.

Roscoe nods and fights a smile.

ROSCOE
Yeah. I s'pose so.

BLANC
To the Canyon?

Blanc extends a hand, and Roscoe shakes it with enthusiasm.

ROSCOE
To the Canyon.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE GRAND CANYON - HIGH NOON

The Arizona heat is unforgiving, only relieved by scattered clouds against the sky. A very sweaty and anxious Roscoe is holding a gun with a trembling hand.

Across from Roscoe stands Blanc, tense. His feet are at the edge of the mountain's cliff. Another man rides near them on a horse, yelling toward the others. He furiously dabs a handkerchief to his forehead. MO is used to the heat, but he was sweating for a different reason.

MO
Whew, it's a damn shame we had to
come to this. You're making me look
like a bad mentor, here!

Mo hops off his horse and approaches Roscoe and Blanc, hand on his gun holster.

MO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
If you don't pull that trigger,
you're gonna wish you never stepped
foot out West.

Before Mo got close, Roscoe turns to glare at him, his gun still pressed at Blanc's head.

ROSCOE
Don't get any ideas, Mo. Better do
somethin' with that there gun.

MO
Hey son, I ain't gonna do nothin.
In fact...

Mo takes his gun out of the holster and casts it behind him.

MO (CONT'D)
...I ain't planning on hurting
y'all no how. Don't worry.

Blanc audibly scoffs, earning a glare from Mo. Roscoe focuses his attention back to Blanc, who hasn't moved a muscle. Mo stuffs one hand in his pocket, and another under his vest.

MO (CONT'D)
Son, you ought to know better than
to be letting yourself get
distracted with the likes of that
rookie bandit. He ain't worth your
time no how.

Roscoe kept his mouth shut.

MO (CONT'D)
What, now you're too good to talk
to me?

BLANC
Maybe if you'd stop trying to
control him, he'd--

MO
You watch your mouth, boy. He would
put you in his place if he'd man up
a bit.

BLANC
C'mon, Roscoe, remember what we
talked about? You ain't gotta
listen to him no more! That man
calls you everything under the sun
but your name. Don't you think he
ought to respect you some?

Mo lets out a loud laugh. It's as if his laugh shook the earth itself.

MO
I'm getting it now, youngblood! You
ain't killed him yet cuz you gone
soft for him!

Roscoe bit his tongue to keep from swearing. Mo's hit a nerve, a real sore one.

ROSCOE
I ain't soft.

MO
I ain't ever met no *soft bandit* in all my years. I thought y'all got that beat out of you already!

Roscoe grips the gun in his hand, his finger pressing firmer against the trigger. Blanc's indifferent expression turns to fear. He locks his gaze onto Roscoe.

MO (CONT'D)
You could have anything you wanted, boy! You could be swimming in gold by now, but you're letting this nobody make ya weak? Ain't you ever been grateful for me?

ROSCOE
(yelling) I ain't soft!

MO
Then kill him.

The silence that followed weighs heavy on Roscoe.

MO (CONT'D)
You dug your hole, now g yourself out. Kill him. You gotta have guts to be a real bandit.

Roscoe's breath is shaky.

BLANC
Roscoe?

A beat. Blanc's eyes well up.

BLANC (CONT'D)
Please.

Roscoe stares at Blanc. His lips begin to form his name, but his eyes squeeze shut before he could.

Bang.

The sky above filled with frightened birds. Roscoe peels his eyes open, listening to the splash of Blanc's body into the canyon's river. He feels a sob claw its way out of his throat, and his body completely collapses to the ground.

Behind him, Mo blew the smoke off of his gun. He approaches the grieving bandit, placing a hand on his shoulder.

MO

What a shame. You really did care
for him, didn't you, boy?

Roscoe said nothing.

MO (CONT'D)

I knew you wanted to be a real
bandit, but you didn't hafta shoot
the man.

ROSCOE

I-i didn't shoot--

MO

But you did. You pulled that
trigger, and now he's gone. Ain't
you glad I taught you all that?

Roscoe's eyebrows scrunch together in confusion.

MO (CONT'D)

C'mon, son. You've got some
thieving to do.

Mo strolls off to his horse, whistling a tune to himself.
Roscoe stands up, furiously wiping his tears away and facing
the wind.

END