

THE WEEK



THE HIRED HAND

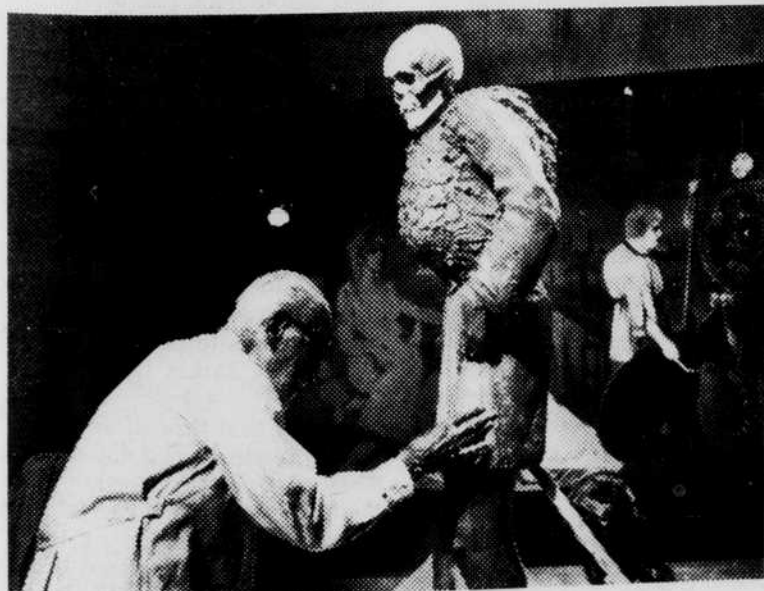
Three "saddle-tramps"—Collings (Peter Fonda), Harris (Warren Oates) and Dan (Robert Pratt)—have their dreams of going to California abruptly interrupted when they stop in a small New Mexican village, Del Norte, for supplies and to enjoy themselves. Dan, the youngest of the trio, is gunned down and killed by the town merchant, McVey (Severn Darden), on the pretense that he was about to rape the merchant's Mexican wife.

There is little Collings and Harris can do about it, though they avenge their pal's death by trying to assassinate his killer. Collings' aim is bad in the early morning light and his bullets only tear into McVey's feet.

Now weary of his rootlessness, Collings decides to go back to his wife Hannah (Verna Bloom), and child he deserted seven years earlier after only a year of marriage. While Hannah will have little to do with her husband at first, soon the old love is rekindled. Harris, who has come with Collings and becomes a "hired hand" on the ranch, takes this as a signal to leave and go it on his own.

Collings learns that his pal is in trouble when some of McVey's henchmen deliver a package to him. Wrapped inside is the identifiable finger of Harris. Collings, over the protests of his wife, goes to rescue his friend.

In the shootout that follows in Del Norte, both Collings and McVey are killed. Harris returns to his place in the barn's loft, to resume his duties as Hannah's "hired hand."



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Carnal Knowledge. **R** An Avco Embassy Picture

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