

# 'LONELY ARE THE BRAVE' REVISITED



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What a foolish statement, and I should know better than that by now. The difficulty of the terrain only makes it more desirable for the wealthy few who can take on the challenge of building a home where none should be allowed. Albuquerque's most extravagant—some might say obscene—residential structures now mark—or mar-- Jack's escape route.

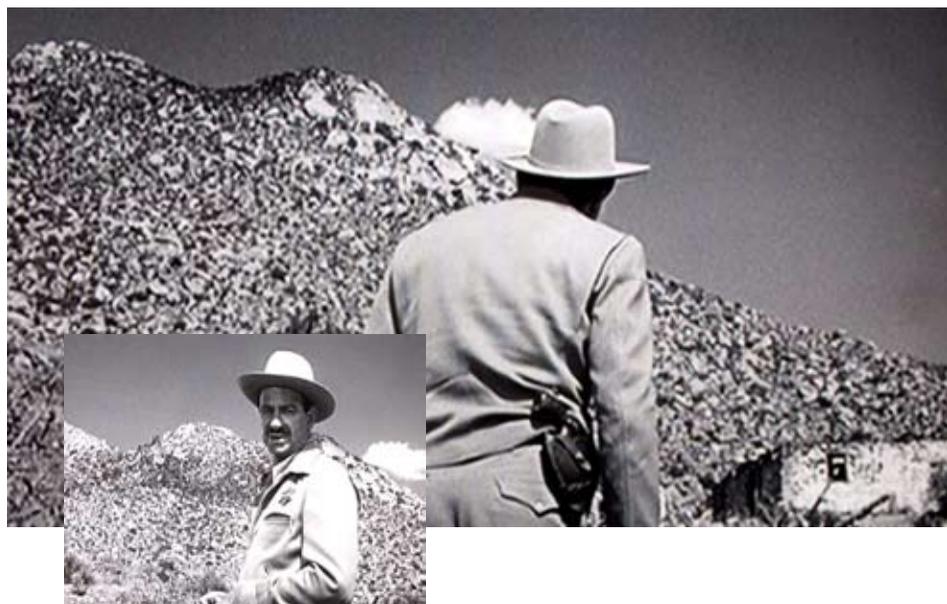


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It seemed like such a quiet place in 1962. And in the film, he pauses near an abandoned adobe and stone cabin to water his horse and pause for reflection. Burns finds a comfortable place in the shade, already showing relief as he moves farther and farther away from the city. And despite signs that the law is getting closer, there is comfort in being back in the wilderness, as it was meant to be. As Jack saddles his horse, he sees a cougar perched on a boulder above him. He eyes the mountain lion with respect and appreciation. It's the human predators that worry him.



In 2014, a mountain lion wouldn't stand a chance here. The old derelict cabin is gone, replaced by a rash of trophy homes, some gated, and all of them ridiculously over-built and seemingly in competition for a page in 'Architectural Digest.' A quick Zillo check showed several homes in the area for sale, ranging in price from \$800,000 to \$1.25 million. I don't think many of Sandia Height's residents would look at Jack Burns as anything more than riff raff...a saddle tramp trespassing on their property.



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Between the McMan-  
sions, up in the foothills,  
is a recreation area and  
on the day we were there,  
the parking lot was full.  
A bulletin board listed  
those pesky rules and  
regulations that Burns  
despised. And a road sign  
warned each approach-  
ing vehicle:



*PARKED VEHICLES MUST DISPLAY  
VALID RECREATIONAL PASS.*

I wonder if Whiskey would count as a vehicle.

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Duke City has changed since 1956, when Abbey wrote the novel, or 1962 when the story came to the screen. If Jack Burns found the city uninhabitable then, what would he think of Albuquerque and the American Southwest now? And what happens to people like Jack in 2014? Where do they go to escape the world today?....

*"...over the great four-lane highway...the traffic roared and whistled and thundered by, steel, rubber, and flesh, dim faces behind glass, beating hearts, cold hands—the fury of men and women immured in engines."*



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Albuquerque, NM 87122

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**If Jack Burns found the city uninhabitable then, what would he think of Albuquerque and the American Southwest now? And what happens to people like Jack in 2014? Where do they go to escape the world today?**

That's Abbey and 'Brave Cowboy' in 1956. He was always ahead of his time. But it must have never given him any comfort.

*POSTSCRIPT: We call this 'volume 1' because there are other film locations we'd like to visit in the future that we were unable to see on this visit. A late afternoon dust storm that reduced visibility almost to zero and shorter days cut our time short. So look for 'volume 2' at some point, hopefully by next summer...JS*