

# THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION (1994)

Written and Directed by Frank Darabont

Based on [Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption by Stephen King](#)

Running time: 139 minutes

## BASIC STORY MAP

**PROTAGONIST:** ANDY DUFRESNE, a banker wrongly imprisoned for the murder of his wife.

**Skill:** His education, accounting skills

**Misbehavior:** Courage

**Achilles Heel/Fatal Flaw:** Insubordinate

**EXTERNAL GOAL:** To adapt to prison life / To escape from prison

**INTERNAL GOAL:** To find and cling to the hope within himself to gain peace

**MAIN DRAMATIC CONFLICT:** The Warden

**THEME:** You can find self-worth in your most hopeless hours.

**CENTRAL DRAMATIC QUESTION:** Will Andy break free of Shawshank Prison?

**ENDING:** Andy escapes Shawshank to Mexico with the Warden's dirty money.

**ARC:** Andy goes from a wrongly-imprisoned convict, to a victim enslaved by the Warden, to a free man able to start anew.

## STORY ENGINES

### ACT I

Andy is found guilty for the murder of his wife and her lover, and is thrown into Shawshank for life. He attempts to adapt to prison life by picking up a hobby chiseling rocks.

### ACT II-A

Andy finds friends and enemies within the prison walls.

### ACT II-B

Andy discovers hope through literature and music, sharing with his fellow inmates. When the Warden discovers his talents as a banker, he uses Andy to launder dirty money. Andy mentors a young inmate who could prove his innocence, but the Warden silences him.

### ACT III

Andy escapes and brings down all the corruption at Shawshank.

### ACT IV

Red is paroled after 40 years at Shawshank. He breaks his parole and reunites with Andy in Mexico.

## BEAT SHEET

### ACT I

*Sequence I: Andy Dufresne is found guilty of the murder of his wife and her lover. He is sentenced to life in prison.*

1 - "[If I Didn't Care](#)" by [The Ink Spots](#) plays over a car radio. **ANDY DUFRESNE**, boozed-up, pulls a pistol from the glove compartment.

5-7 - Andy stands trial for the murder of his wife and her lover. Andy pleads his innocence, but the court finds him guilty and sentences him to life in prison.

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*Sequence II: With a group of new arrivals, Andy enters Shawshank, taunted by inmates. Red, a Shawshank inmate, bets his friends Andy will be the first to break down. Later that night, a new inmate breaks down and is beaten to death in front of the entire cell block by Captain Hadley. Red loses the bet: Andy didn't make a sound.*

8 - **RED**, an inmate at Shawshank, sits in front of a parole board. His parole is denied.

**11 - INCITING INCIDENT:** Andy enters Shawshank. Red tells us he was a banker.

12 - Red and crew gamble on which new inmate will break down first. Red bets on Andy.

15 - **WARDEN NORTON** lectures the new inmates...

WARDEN

I believe in two things: discipline  
and the bible. Here you'll receive  
both. Put your trust in the Lord;  
your ass belongs to me. Welcome to  
Shawshank.

20 - One of the new inmates, the fat man, has a panic attack his first night in the cell. **CAPTAIN HADLEY** beats him viciously in front of the entire cell block.

21 - **STRONG MOVEMENT FORWARD:** Andy doesn't break down.

RED (V.O.)

His first night in the joint, Andy  
Dufresne cost me two packs of  
cigarettes. He never made a sound.

*Sequence III: After discovering the fat man died from Hadley's beating, Andy asks Red for a rock hammer. When Red inquires about its proposed use, Andy reveals a desire to chisel rocks.*

22 - Andy finds a maggot in his food; befriends Brooks. Brooks feeds the maggot to the bird in his coat pocket, "Jake."

24 - Andy discovers the fat man died from Hadley's beating.

**29 - END OF ACT ONE TURN & DECISION:** Andy approaches Red and asks him to procure a rock hammer. Andy decides to take up the hobby of chiseling rocks and adapt to prison.



## **ACT II-A**

*Sequence I: Andy receives the rock hammer from Red. Later, he is raped by "The Sisters."*

31 - Andy receives the rock hammer.

33 - Andy is beaten and raped by the sadistic thugs known as "The Sisters."

RED (V.O.)

I wish I could tell you that Andy fought the good fight, and the Sisters let him be. I wish I could tell you that, but prison is no fairy-tale world.

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*Sequence II: While tarring a roof, he risks his life with a tax proposition to Captain Hadley. He asks nothing of himself, only beers for his fellow inmates.*

**38 - FIRST TRIAL:** While on a work detail tarring a roof, Andy overhears Hadley complaining about taxes he'll pay on an inheritance he received. Andy boldly approaches, risking his life to give Hadley a tax tip that will save him money. In return, he requests beer for the workers.

RED

You could argue he'd done it to  
curry favor with the guards. Or,  
maybe make a few friends among us  
cons. Me, I think he did it just to  
feel normal again, if only for a  
short while.

40 - The inmates drink beer without Andy. Heywood, once hostile to Andy, offers him a beer, but Andy refuses, saying he gave up drinking.

Andy shows growth, considering that alcohol played a large role in his incarceration.

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*Sequence III: Andy discovers the wall chips away with the rock hammer. He asks Red for a poster to cover up the hole he intends to dig. On the way back to his cell, he is nearly beaten to death by Bogs and the Sisters. Time passes and Andy returns from the infirmary to discover a Rita Hayworth poster from Red.*

42 - Late at night, Andy writes his name on the wall of his cell with the rock hammer.

43 - Red watches *Gilda*. An unusual request, Andy approaches and asks for Rita Hayworth.

**45 - FIRST CASUALTY:** Andy is beaten within inches of his life by Bogs and the Sisters. The beating is so bad he spends a month in the infirmary.

47 - Bogs is beaten by Hadley for sending Andy to the infirmary.

RED (V.O.)

Two things never happened again  
after that. The Sisters never laid  
a finger on Andy...and Bogs never  
walked again.

49 - Back from the infirmary, Andy finds a [Rita Hayworth poster](#) in his cell from Red.

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*Sequence IV: Andy narrowly avoids discovery of his plan by the Warden and Captain Hadley. The Warden gives Andy a new job in the library with Brooks.*

52 - Andy's cell is tossed by the Warden and Hadley. The Warden knows Andy's good with numbers. Andy impresses the Warden with his knowledge of the Bible.

52 - WARDEN'S AGENDA SETUP: The Warden notices the Rita Hayworth poster, disapproves, but lets it slide.

53 - The Warden gives Andy a new job working with Brooks in the library.

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*Sequence V: Andy writes for funds to expand the Shawshank prison library. As time passes, Andy gains the trust of the Warden and the guards by doing their taxes.*

57 - With the Warden's permission, Andy writes to the state for funds to expand the library.

58 - Year after year, Andy does taxes for all the prison guards, even the Warden.

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*Sequence VI: After being granted parole, Brooks attempts to kill Heywood. Andy is shaken.*

59 - Brooks attempts to kill Heywood, but Andy and Red talk him out of it. Brooks's parole came through. After spending the majority of his life in prison, the real world terrifies him.

**61 - MIDPOINT (internal):** Around Andy and friends, Red empathizes with Brooks.

RED

They send you here for life and  
that's what they take.

*Andy realizes the longer he stays at Shawshank, the more frightening freedom becomes.*



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*Sequence VII: BROOKS' STORY: Brooks leaves Shawshank. After being institutionalized for the majority of his life, he cannot adapt to public life and hangs himself.*

61 - Brooks releases his bird, Jake, and leaves Shawshank.

63-66 - Brooks finds the outside world too fast-paced. He gets a job bagging groceries, but thinks about robbing the store...anything to get back to what he knows. He chisels "Brooks was here" in his apartment and hangs himself.

*Sequence VIII: Andy receives funds, books, and music for the library. In his first act of defiance against the Warden, he locks himself in an office and blasts Mozart over the prison PA.*

67 - Andy receives funds, books, and music for the Shawshank library from the state.



**69 - MIDPOINT (external):** Andy puts on a record, ["Canzonetta sull'aria" from Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro,"](#) locks the door to the office he's in, and broadcasts the song over the PA for the entire prison to hear.

RED (V.O.)

I have no idea to this day what those two Italian ladies were singing about. Truth is, I don't want to know. Some things are best left unsaid... I tell you, those voices soared higher and farther than anybody in a great place dares to dream. It was like some beautiful bird flapped into our drab little cage and made those walls dissolve away, and for the briefest of moments, every last man in Shawshank felt free.

72 - The Warden has Hadley break down the door. Andy receives two weeks in the hole as punishment.

## ACT II-B

*Sequence I: Andy expresses a feeling of hopefulness, in contrast to Red's pessimism, which is supported by another denial of Red's parole. The two men reconcile, exchanging gifts.*

**74 - ASSUMPTION OF POWER (internal):** During chow, Andy talks with Red and crew about hope....

ANDY

That's the beauty of music. They can't get that from you...you need it so you don't forget.

RED

Forget?

ANDY

Forget there are places in the world that aren't made out of stone. That there's something inside they can't get to; that they can't touch...that's yours.

RED

What are you talking about?

ANDY

Hope.

RED

Let me tell you something, my friend. Hope is a dangerous thing. Hope can drive a man insane. It's no use on the inside. Better get used to that idea.

ANDY

Like Brooks did?

75 - Red sits in front of the parole board, and after serving 30 years of a life sentence, they deny his parole.

76 - Andy gives Red a harmonica.

76 - Red gives Andy a [Marilyn Monroe poster](#) for Andy's tenth anniversary at Shawshank.

*Sequence II: Time passes and Andy makes progress as he grows the prison library and cooks the warden's books, making him a millionaire.*

**78 - ASSUMPTION OF POWER (external):** Andy receives funds from the state and grows Shawshank's library into the best prison library in New England. The inmates now have freedom to read and listen to music.

81 - The Warden uses inmates to work as contract labor outside the prison for huge kickbacks.

84 - Andy works the Warden's books, cleaning the dirty money. Andy claims he'll make the Warden a millionaire by the time he retires. Money is cleaned through a fictitious person.

ANDY

The funny thing is - on the outside, I was an honest man, straight as an arrow. I had to come to prison to be a crook.

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*Sequence III: Tommy Williams arrives and makes a huge impact on Andy's life when he tells the story of meeting the man who killed Andy's wife. Andy pleads with the Warden for help, but the Warden just throws him in the hole.*

85 - Tommy Williams, a young criminal who's been imprisoned all over New England, arrives.

88 - Andy teaches Tommy to read so Tommy can earn his high school diploma.

89 - The 60's: [Raquel Welch is now the poster](#) on Andy's wall.

**92 – END OF ACT TWO TURN:** Tommy informs Andy and Red about Elmo Blatch, his former cell-mate who told him explicit details about murdering a golf pro and his mistress.



**94 - DECISION:** Desperate to clear his name, Andy informs the Warden that Tommy met the man who can prove his innocence. Andy begs the Warden to help, but the Warden refuses, as he needs Andy to launder his dirty money. Andy insists that he will keep his secrets, and the Warden explodes with rage, putting Andy in the hole for an entire month.

## ACT III

*Sequence I: Andy, at his lowest, tries to quit doing the Warden's dirty work, to no avail. He's become Norton's slave.*

96 - In the hole, Andy receives word that Tommy earned his high school diploma.

99 - The Warden has Tommy killed.

100 – Andy tries to quit, but the Warden controls his fate now. He gives Andy another month of hard time in the hole.

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*Sequence II: Andy makes the decision to escape Shawshank and tells Red some key information.*

104 - After sixty days in the hole, Andy tells Red he'd go to Zihuatanejo, Mexico, if he ever got out of Shawshank.

ANDY  
I guess it comes down to a simple  
choice, really. Get busy living or  
get busy dying.

*Andy decides to break out of Shawshank.*

107 - Andy describes a hayfield with a long rock wall near a town called Buxton. Further, under a black volcanic rock, there will be something waiting for Red if and when he gets out. Andy leaves Red perplexed, worried.

109 - Red tells the crew of his concern for Andy. Heywood mentions, at Andy's request, he delivered him a six foot rope. Powerless to help, they believe Andy will hang himself.

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*Sequence III: Andy begins his escape.*

110 - Andy finishes the Warden's books for the night and polishes the Warden's shoes.

111 - Lights out. Andy grabs a rope from under his pillow. A storm closes in...

**112 – TRUE POINT OF NO RETURN:** The cells open for morning roll call. Andy does not come out. The Warden finds Andy's shoes in his shoebox.



115 - The Warden, furious Andy has disappeared without a trace, throws Andy's chess pieces at the Raquel Welch poster and discovers a gigantic hole in the wall. Andy has tunneled out and escaped from Shawshank.

RED (V.O.)

In 1966, Andy Dufresne escaped from Shawshank prison. All they found of him was a muddy set of prison clothes, a bar of soap, and an old rock hammer, damn near worn down to the nub. I remember thinking it would take a man six hundred years to tunnel through the wall with it. Old Andy did it in less than twenty.

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*Sequence IV: The full account of Andy's escape.*



116 - FLASHBACK: Andy, with his new rock hammer, attempts to chisel his name in the cell wall and discovers the wall breaks away easily.

118 - FLASHBACK: On his final night, Andy walks to his cell wearing both the Warden's shoes and the Warden's suit under his prison clothes.

120 - FLASHBACK: To hide the noise, Andy waits for thunder crashes and breaks open a sewage pipe with a large rock.

**120 - CLIMAX** - FLASHBACK: Andy crawls out of the sewage pipe. Rain washes the filth off him. He's finally free.

## ANDY'S EPILOGUE

*Sequence I: The aftermath of Andy's escape, as he makes off with the Warden's money and the Warden commits suicide before the cops can arrest him.*

122 - Andy, wearing the Warden's suit, visits a bank. Assuming the fictitious person's identity he used to launder the money, he cleans out the bank account. Andy mails the Warden's ledger and a note to a newspaper regarding the corruption at Shawshank.

124 - With the police outside his door, the Warden kills himself.

125 - Red receives an unsigned postcard from Fort Hancock, Texas. He knows Andy sent it.

126 - A free man, Andy drives along Mexico's Pacific coast toward Zihuatanejo.

## ACT IV (RED'S STORY)

*Sequence I: Red is paroled. He attempts to adapt to normal life, as Brooks did, but also finds frustration.*

128 - RED'S ASSUMPTION OF POWER: Yet again, Red sits in front of the parole board. They ask if he feels rehabilitated.

RED

Rehabilitated? It's just a bullshit word. So, you go on and stamp your form, sonny, and stop wasting my time. Because to tell you the truth, I don't give a shit.

129 - RED'S TURN: Red's parole is approved and he leaves prison after 40 years of incarceration.

130 - RED'S DECISION: Red rents Brook's old room, working Brooks' old job at the grocery store.



*Sequence II: Red follows Andy's clues to join him on a beach in Mexico. They are both free men.*

136 - RED'S TRUE POINT OF NO RETURN: Along the rock wall, Red finds a box under black volcanic rock. Inside he finds money and a letter from Andy, asking Red to join him in Mexico.

137 - Red chisels into the same wall Brooks did. It now says, "Brooks was here...and so was Red."

RED

Get busy living or get busy dying.  
That's God damn right.

138 - RED'S CLIMAX: Red breaks his parole and buys a bus ticket.



139 - In Zihuatanejo, Mexico, Red reunites with Andy. The old friends are finally free.

**139 - THE END.**

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