

A YELLOW RAFT IN BLUE WATER

By John Sayles

**Based On The Book By
Michael Dorris**

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(212) 752-8930

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A YELLOW RAFT IN BLUE WATER

Cast of Major Characters

RAYONA TAYLOR: Fifteen year old daughter of CHRISTINE and ELGIN TAYLOR; half Indian, half Black.

CHRISTINE TAYLOR: Forty-two year old Indian woman; daughter of AUNT IDA and unknown father; sister of LEE; mother of RAYONA.

ELGIN TAYLOR: Black mail carrier; estranged husband of CHRISTINE and father of RAYONA.

"AUNT IDA" (GEORGE): Indian woman in her late fifties who has lived most of her life on the reservation; mother of CHRISTINE and LEE.

LEE GEORGE: Late brother of CHRISTINE and son of AUNT IDA; "the Indian JFK".

DAYTON NICKLES: Half-breed boyhood friend of LEE and CHRISTINE.

LECON & ANNIE GEORGE: AUNT IDA's parents.

CLARA: AUNT IDA's maternal aunt (ANNIE's sister).

PAULINE GEORGE: AUNT IDA's sister.

FOXY WALKER: PAULINE's teenaged son.

ANNABELLE: FOXY's girlfriend.

SKY and EVELYN: Married couple (gas station attendant and park cook) who befriend RAYONA.

FATHER HURLBURT: Elderly priest who has lived his whole life on the reservation.

FATHER TOM: Recently arrived younger priest.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CU RAYONA - NIGHT

RAYONA, 15, long and boyish with maple-sugar skin and Black facial features, walks down the corridor of a hospital, worried. We WIDEN as she pauses to let an ORDERLY wheel a dead patient under a sheet past on a bed. Creepy. She continues past a 2ND ORDERLY and a NURSES'S AIDE chatting in the hallway --

2ND ORDERLY

-- same one that was here three months ago.
She's lit up like a Christmas tree, biting,
kicking -- tore the IV out of her arm twice
before we put her under --

We TIGHTEN as Rayona comes to the door to one of the rooms,
peeks in --

INT. ROOM - RAYONA'S POV

An OLD INDIAN WOMAN stares back at her from a bed. We PAN away to a bed behind curtains, CONTINUE PAN to a bed on the left that holds ANOTHER OLD INDIAN WOMAN, also watching Rayona --

RAYONA

Nodding politely --

RAYONA

(Indian) Hello.

We FOLLOW as she steps hesitantly into the curtained bed, reaches out, pulls back the curtain to reveal -- CHRISTINE. Rayona's mother is a round, pretty Indian woman of 40, sitting up in the tightly-made bed shuffling cards. She gives them a loud RIFFLE and looks up at her daughter calmly --

CHRISTINE

You're just in time to help me beat this
game.

Rayona sighs in relief, sits on the bed and pulls a tray over so Christine can deal solitaire. There is an easy, sisterly familiarity between them. Rayona glances down at her mother's hands as she deals --

CHRISTINE'S HANDS - RAYONA'S POV

Christine's rings dig into her soft, wide fingers -- a narrow abalone, an inlaid turquoise-and-jet roadrunner, a sandcast silver turtle and a thin gold wedding band --

2--SHOT

CHRISTINE

Look at your hair. Let me fix it.

RAYONA

It isn't broken.

CHRISTINE

Turn around to me. I'll braid you.

Christine pulls her daughter's wiry hair out and tugs it into a braid. Rayona is pleased at the attention --

CHRISTINE

You ever think of highlighting?

RAYONA

Mom --

CHRISTINE

Just a dash of color under the cheekbone would really bring you out.

RAYONA

I'm out enough already.

A jolt of pain courses through Christine, balling her hands into fists. Rayona doesn't see. Christine takes a deep breath, turns back to her cards --

CHRISTINE

Okay, this is it. I'm gonna beat this game.

RAYONA

You can't beat it, Mom. It's either in the cards or it's not.

This is not at all what Christine wants to hear. She darkens --

CHRISTINE

(softly) Not the way I play.

She looks up sharply to the door. Rayona turns, sees --

ELGIN - THEIR POV

ELGIN, a tall, handsome Black man in a dripping wet mailman's uniform, stands at the door, looking worried --

CONT'D.

ELGIN

Rayona -- what's happening?

2-SHOT - RAYONA AND CHRISTINE

Rayona stands, her face going blank --

RAYONA

Surprised you recognized me.

CHRISTINE

You go on now, Ray. I got to talk to your father.

Elgin steps in to make it a 3-SHOT --

ELGIN

Hold on, baby, let me get a look at you --

Rayona stands torn between resentment and desperate interest in her father's opinion of her --

CHRISTINE

(an order) I'll see you tomorrow, Rayona.

ELGIN

Ray doesn't have to leave, Christine. She's no fool. (digs keys from pocket) I'm returning your car.

CHRISTINE

Keep it till they let me out of here. Come pick me up.

Christine is trying to get Elgin to understand something without spelling it out in front of Ray. He doesn't --

ELGIN

It's gonna take more than a beat up Volare this time --

CU RAYONA

We MOVE IN on her face, ping-ponging from one parent to the other --

CHRISTINE

(off) Is that what you say to a sick woman?! It's got new plugs!

CONT'D.

ELGIN

(off) You don't look any sicker than the last time you pulled this.

CHRISTINE

(off) Look at the chart! Ask the goddam doctor!

Elgin steps close to stuff the keys in Ray's shirt pocket --

ELGIN

Hold these for your mother. It's in A-6.

CHRISTINE

(off) Elgin, goddammit --

CU CHRISTINE

She struggles to get up, but she is tucked so tight she can't budge. She gives up, lies back and covers her face with her arms --

CHRISTINE

Get the hell out of here then. Who needs you, anyway?

We PAN away from her, past Rayona to Elgin, backing out of the door looking sad. He nods to Rayona --

ELGIN

I'll call you, Ray. Promise.

CU RAYONA

Watches him go. She turns --

OLD INDIAN WOMAN

Staring back at Ray, eyes hungry for gossip. She looks across the room. We PAN ACROSS to the other old woman, who trades a disapproving look with her friend --

CHRISTINE

She yanks the sheet over her head. We PAN up to Rayona, alone in the middle of the room. She pulls the curtain around the bed --

HALLWAY

Rayona walking -- stops dead as she sees the stiff from before, waiting alone by the elevator. She detours through the STAIRS' door --

GROUND FLOOR

Rayona walking. She pauses by the door of a private room -- an OLD MAN sits two feet from a TV screen hissing with between-the-channels snow, watching with concentration. Ray moves on, freaked --

REAR EXIT - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A mild Northwest drizzle falling as Ray pushes out into the yellow-lit parking lot. Takes a few steps, stops as she sees -- we PAN with her look. At the other end of the lot someone is jimmying the driver's window of a wasted old car --

RAYONA

Pissed. We FOLLOW as she sneaks up on the thief, a woman in a too-tight candystriper's uniform, using a bent coathanger to fish inside the window. The car is a Volare, in space A-6. Ray makes a fist, reconsiders, then WHACK! slaps her hard on the butt sending them both sprawling to the pavement as the woman leaps in surprise. She scrambles on top of Ray with coathanger upraised -- it is Christine. She lets go, sits back, holds her heart --

CHRISTINE

Christ, you scared the shit out of me!

RAYONA

What are you doing? What are you wearing?

Christine stands, picks up her purse and hands it to Rayona --

CHRISTINE

Here, I won't be needing this. Go home.

RAYONA

(stands) What's the big deal?

CHRISTINE

He killed me! Your father thinks he's in love with some 22 year old bubble-head doper named Arletta --

RAYONA

Oh. Arletta.

CHRISTINE

Arletta!

She kicks the side of the Volare in anger --

CONT'D.

RAYONA

Let's go home, Mom --

CHRISTINE

I'm not going home.

She grabs the keys from Ray's shirt pocket and slams into the car --

RAYONA

Wait a minute! Hold on!

We FOLLOW Ray as she runs around to the other side and throws herself in, the engine roaring to life --

INT. CAR

Christine jams the brake on as Ray nearly tumbles into her lap. She tries to calm herself --

CHRISTINE

Go home, Rayona. Kiss me goodbye.

Ray responds by shutting the door behind her and snapping on her seatbelt --

CHRISTINE

Okay. Be that way.

Christine floors it in reverse, SCREECHING out of the parking lot --

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The car SQUEALS onto the highway from an entrance ramp, sliding on the wet pavement --

INT. CAR

Ray holding onto the dashboard for security --

RAYONA

I know where you're going. (no response)
You're going to the park where you and Dad
used to go.

CHRISTINE

You remember Aunt Ida? On the reservation?
You'll go there.

CONT'D.

RAYONA

Aunt Ida may be your mother, but she wouldn't know me if she fell over me.

CHRISTINE

She likes you. She bought you a doll.

RAYONA

Why don't we both go there.

Christine looks at her, whips the car off an exit ramp --

EXT. PARK -- NIGHT

The car comes to a stop among tall trees overlooking a cliff to the bay --

INT. CAR

CHRISTINE

This is as far as you go.

RAYONA

Forget it.

CHRISTINE

Get out, Ray. There's gonna be an accident.

RAYONA

You're bluffing.

Christine reaches over, unhooks Ray's seatbelt and opens her door, shoving her out --

CHRISTINE

Those State Farm payments are in my name!
Elgin's not gonna get this car -- out!

Rayona stomps out, SLAMS the door in her mother's face and begins to SCREAM and kick dents in the side of the car --

RAYONA

This is the kind of thing that could scar me for life, you know!

Christine tries to start the car. It TURNS OVER but won't catch --

CONT'D.

RAYONA

Go ahead! Go for it! I just hope the fucking insurance is really paid up!

The engine DIES. Christine gets out, her turn to SCREAM --

CHRISTINE

Shit! Shit, shit, shit, shit, shit! He brings back the car with no gas in it!

RAYONA

Get back in, I'll push it over --

Christine looks to Rayona, catches her breath --

CHRISTINE

Watch your mouth, Ray, I'm still your mother. (sits on the hood) How are we supposed to get out of here now?

RAYONA

(calming) There was a Gulf station by the turn-off. You watch the car and I'll go back --

CHRISTINE

You'd leave me here alone? Anybody could come along -- it could scar me for life.

This squeezes a smile out of Ray --

RAYONA

Yeah, but think of all that insurance I'd collect if they got you.

CHRISTINE

For the car, dummy, not me. They have to trash the car.

RAYONA

Looks like somebody already did.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rayona sits on a worn couch with a pair of Hefty trash bags as Christine paces in and out of the frame tossing things at her --

CHRISTINE

We leave him nothing. Not even pocket lint --

Ray examines a military medal in a little case --

CONT'D.

RAYONA

Is this Dad's?

CHRISTINE

What, for Mailman of the Month? It's my brother Lee's --

She sits next to Ray, pops a couple pills from a bottle, makes a face --

CHRISTINE

I'm going to hit on Charlene for a refill.

She dumps most of the pills into a ziploc bag, then rattles the few remaining ones in the bottle --

CHRISTINE

Charity case.

RAYONA

She's working day shift. She'll be asleep --

CHRISTINE

(heading out) I'll wake her up.

Rayona sighs, pulls the medal case out again to look at it. We hear a DOOR being POUNDED down the hall --

CHRISTINE

(off) Charlene!

INT. VIDEO STORE - NIGHT

Rayona and Christine stroll down an aisle of tapes in an all-night video store. Christine lifts the box for the movie Christine --

RAYONA

Mom, what are we doing here?

CHRISTINE

'I am Christine. I am pure evil.'
Remember when this came out?

RAYONA

You saw it three times.

Christine studies the box of Little Big Man --

CHRISTINE

I dated a guy who played an Indian in this --

CONT'D.

They have reached the counter. A bored-looking MANAGER sleepily stares at a monitor playing Slumber Party Massacre at low volume. He barely shifts his eyes to them --

CHRISTINE

Your ad said lifetime membership for 99 cents --

MANAGER

Uh-huh.

CHRISTINE

What if I live another fifty years?

MANAGER

You're covered.

CHRISTINE

What if I put it in her name and she lives to be a hundred?

MANAGER

You can both use it in her lifetime, as long as you continue to share the same domicile.

Christine beams at Rayona --

CHRISTINE

And you'd never kick me out, would you, baby?

EXT. STORE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Ray following Christine out, clutching a bag with the two tapes in it --

RAYONA

We don't have a VCR, Mom. Our TV barely has sound.

CHRISTINE

We can't show up at Aunt Ida's empty-handed.

RAYONA

Does she have a machine?

CHRISTINE

That isn't the point.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Looking past Rayona and Christine to the road opening ahead. A 'Welcome to Montana - Big Sky Country' sign zips past. Jimmie Dale Gilmore sings 'When Nights Are Cold' mournfully on the radio --

RAYONA

It's probably a Federal crime to take stolen videotapes across state lines.

CHRISTINE

They're not stolen. They're rented for life.

They pass a white metal cross on the side of the road --

2-SHOT - (MUSIC CONTINUES)

Looking across their profiles, Christine in the foreground, working something serious out --

RAYONA

There's another one of those crosses.

CHRISTINE

Mmmmmn.

RAYONA

They mark where somebody died. (no response) You anxious to see Aunt Ida?

CHRISTINE

Hah!

RAYONA

She is your mother.

CHRISTINE

Try not to remind her of that. And don't call her 'Grandma'. (looks at her) You gonna miss anybody?

RAYONA

(shrugs) No.

CHRISTINE

You wait. Out on the rez you'll make friends.

CU CHRISTINE - (MUSIC CONTINUES)

CHRISTINE
(moodily) It's a different world.

ROAD - CHRISTINE'S POV - (MUSIC CONTINUES)

Three more white crosses -- zip, zip, zip -- the shot begins to BRIGHTEN, OVEREXPOSING as the MUSIC FADES, replaced by a SOUND of distant, eerie WIND. As the OVEREXPOSURE DARKENS into detail, we see in -- FLASHBACK -- a wide shot of a bleak plain on a winter day, the terrain as flat as a child's drawing, the few scattered houses and trees stacked close against the land behind them. We see a line of MOURNERS, six of whom carry a coffin, outlined by a thin-blue sky. The sound and colors are unnatural, dreamlike --

CU CHRISTINE (27)

A younger Christine is following the casket, dressed in black with no make-up on. We WIDEN slightly to see she has BABY RAYONA (1-year-old) in her arms. Rayona sucks the thumb of her mitten and touches her mother's face with her other hand --

TABLE

A cafeteria table standing among gravestones. The pallbearers lay the coffin on it. The shot BRIGHTENS again, OVEREXPOSING, the MUSIC on the radio FADING BACK UP to -- PRESENT -- as Christine's face takes shape in the shot --

2-SHOT - (MUSIC CONTINUES)

Ray looks over to her mother, grim behind the wheel --

CHRISTINE
Find something else on the radio, would
you, baby?

EXT. HIGH PLAINS - ROAD - DAY

The car comes down a long hill towards us, a piston MISFIRING. It hits a last dip in front of us, STALLS and DIES. Christine and Rayona step out, Rayona turning around to check out their surroundings. Truly the Middle of Nowhere in her estimation--

CHRISTINE
Maybe it threw a rod.

CONT'D.

RAYONA

What's that mean?

CHRISTINE

That neither you or me can do anything about it. We're close enough.

RAYONA

Close to what?

Christine starts hauling Hefty bags full of stuff out of the car --

CHRISTINE

Maybe Dayton can come out and look at it. Remember him from Lee's funeral?

RAYONA

I was two, Mom --

CU HEFTY BAG

Dragging and bumping along the ground. We TILT UP to see Rayona lugging two bulging bags up a barren hill. We PAN with her gaze up to Christine, who has stopped at the crest --

CHRISTINE - CLOSER

In profile, staring down the hill with some trepidation. Ray comes up next to her, panting. We PAN as she joins her mother's gaze down to see a small, gray house at the bottom of the hill. Someone is pacing back and forth in front of it --

2-SHOT - CHRISTINE AND RAYONA

CHRISTINE

(sighs) Let's do it.

She starts down. Rayona hefts her trash bags, follows --

EXT. HOUSE - IDA

IDA, a sturdy Indian woman in her mid-50's, is wearing a black bouffant wig, big overalls, sunglasses, and a Walkman headset. She pushes an old hand mower over a poor excuse for a lawn and sings along with the Walkman tape in harsh, accented English--

CONT'D.

IDA

'Looking for love in all the wrong places.
Looking for love in too many faces' --

She senses somebody close, stops pushing and turns --

CHRISTINE AND RAYONA

Coming to a stop several feet from Ida. Ray plops her bags down, Christine keeps hers in hand --

IDA

She slowly takes the headset off. We can hear the song, tinny and small, from the earphones --

IDA

(Indian) What did the cat drag in. My favorite thing, a surprise visitor.

3-SHOT

Shooting over Ida's shoulder. Ray watches her mother's face--

CHRISTINE

I came home, Aunt Ida.

IDA

IDA

(Indian) Give me three good reasons why I should be glad to see you.

CU RAYONA

Surprised to hear this. We PAN as she looks to her MOTHER'S FACE --

CHRISTINE

(angry) One, Mother, I'm your daughter.
Your only living child.

IDA

Grim --

CU CHRISTINE

CHRISTINE

Two -- I need someplace to stay.

IDA

A satisfied little smile starting on her face --

CU RAYONA

Looks from Ida to Christine --

CU CHRISTINE

CHRISTINE

Three - (hesitates)

IDA

Waiting for an apology or confession of need --

CU RAYONA

Watching Christine, tense --

CU CHRISTINE

CHRISTINE

And three -- go fuck yourself anyway.

Christine bolts back up the hill, we SHIFT to include Rayona, who watches her in a sudden panic, then turns to Ida --

IDA

Mouth open in shock. Then she composes herself, deliberately jams her headset back on --

RAYONA

Left holding the bags again, she snatches them up, turns and we RUN WITH her up after her mother --

RAYONA

Wait! Mom! Hold on!

We're TIGHT on Ray's face as she sprints desperately to catch up, then let her pass, FOLLOWING, her bags snagging and tearing, stuff beginning to fall out. She reaches the top of the hill and we see beyond her down to the road, where Christine is running to catch up with a blue pickup truck. She hops in and the truck blasts off in a cloud of dust --

CONT'D.

RAYONA

(screams) Wait!!!

We hear the TRUCK PULL AWAY as we TRACK AROUND in front of Ray. She sits forlornly on the ground, stuff from her bags starting to blow around her. She SCREAMS and begins to tear weeds out of the earth by their roots, keeps SCREAMING and begins to beat on the ground with her open palms, again and again and again till Ida appears behind and grabs her wrists. Rayona starts to SOB then and Ida kneels and wraps her in a bearhug. They stay that way till Ray stops shaking so hard, then Ida steps away and stands over her --

IDA

(Indian) Save your belongings before they blow away.

She heads back toward the house. Ray, still crying, slowly stands, grabs a half empty trash bag, and drags it along after her grandmother. She disappears over the edge of the hill --

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. IDA'S HOUSE - CHRISTINE'S ROOM - CU RAYONA - DAY

Rayona's eyes pop open. She rolls onto her back, looks around --

ROOM - HER POV

We PAN across posters on the wall -- Elvis, Jackie Kennedy, Connie Francis --

RAYONA

Reacting to the time warp. She crosses to the closet, rummages, pulls out a pair of green pedal-pushers and holds them against her legs -- too short. She pulls out a Bobby Rydell sweatshirt --

RAYONA

Bobby Rydell?

She shrugs, pulls it on. She squats, takes a notebook marked 'CIVICS' from a pile on the floor, opens it --

NOTEBOOK - HER POV

Empty pages flip past, then a list in neat, round handwriting --

CONT'D.

Mrs. Christine Doney
Mrs. Christine Presley
Mrs. Christine La Valle
Mrs. Christine Garcia

etcetera. The book flaps shut --

RAYONA

Turns, sees something under the bed, crawls to it. She fishes out a copy of the Mission High yearbook, lies on her back on the floor and opens it --

ECU - YEARBOOK - HER POV

Flipping through till she comes to the senior pictures. She stops at Christine's. Christine wears a circle pin and a white blouse, her eyes tilted chastely to the heavens --

RAYONA

Snorts and tosses the yearbook on the bed as she stands. We TIGHTEN to meet her in a CU at the door. We hear Ida's voice, off --

IDA

(off, Indian) Worthless. She's a
worthless girl. (pause) Just get rid of
her.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DOOR

The bedroom door opens a crack and Rayona peeks out --

IDA

(off, Indian) I'm tired of looking at her.

Ray steps out past us and we PAN to follow her into the living room. We see Ida sitting with her back to us in front of the TV set --

IDA

(Indian) She'll only break your heart.

TV SCREEN

As the World Turns is playing, a young man pleading with an evil, beautiful woman --

IDA, RAYONA

We shoot from the screen up at Ida, Rayona approaching her from behind. Ida scolds the TV actor --

IDA

(Indian) You never should have kept her in the first place.

RAYONA

Aunt Ida?

IDA

(annoyed) Shhhh!

Ray sighs, and we PAN with her as she crosses to the window. We hear a TRUCK pull up. Ray looks out --

YARD - RAY'S POV

FATHER HURLBURT, a kind-looking priest in his late 50's, steps out of the Holy Martyrs Mission pickup truck. He checks his watch as he moves toward the door. We TRACK BACK and PAN to include Rayona in the foreground as she follows his progress to the door. Ida is there to open at his first knock. He half steps in the door. He speaks better Indian than Rayona does--

FATHER HURLBURT

(Indian) Hi. Got time for a cup of tea?

IDA

(Indian) My show isn't over. And I've got this girl I have to watch. Her mother left her.

FATHER HURLBURT looks to see Rayona, confused at first --

IDA

(Indian) Christine is back. Pauline heard she's living over with Dayton Nickles.

RAYONA

Steps away from the window, reacting. This is the first she's heard of her mother's whereabouts --

FATHER HURLBURT

(off, Indian) Then this is Rayona.

3-SHOT

Shooting past Rayona to Ida and FATHER HURLBURT. He smiles, switches to English --

FATHER HURLBURT

I met you as a baby. And of course I know your mother.

RAYONA

RAYONA

(deadpan) 'I am Christine. I am pure evil.'

3-SHOT

In profile now. FATHER HURLBURT is shaken. Ida almost smiles --

FATHER HURLBURT

Well. The reservation must seem very different than Seattle --

IDA

(Indian) She sits in her room all day.

FATHER HURLBURT

(Indian) Has she made any friends here yet?

IDA

(Indian) She speaks Indian.

FATHER HURLBURT

(smiles, Indian) We'll enroll you at Mission tomorrow. Were you raised a Catholic?

RAYONA

Sort of.

FATHER HURLBURT

Excellent. You'll make a nice addition to the God Squad.

CU RAYONA

RAYONA

(her heart sinking) The God Squad?

INT. MISSION HALL - CU FATHER TOM - DAY

FATHER TOM is a thick, balding priest in his late-30's, with an over-friendly manner. He talks too loud and too much --

FATHER TOM

Hi! I'm Father Tom.

We WIDEN to include Rayona standing by him wearing 50's clothes of Christine's, all a little small. She can tell this is going to be an ordeal --

RAYONA

Hi.

FATHER TOM

You must be Rayona. C'mon down and meet the gang.

We TRACK BACK, leading them down the stairs into the basement, Father Tom in the foreground --

FATHER TOM

I hear you're new in these parts yourself.

A pair of OLD MEN pass them coming up the stairs. Father Tom greets the second one --

FATHER TOM

We missed you at church this Sunday, Mr. Stiffarm!

OLD MAN

(Indian) This one's so dumb he thinks I'm Henry Stiffarm.

They LAUGH, checking Rayona out with no sign of welcome. Father Tom looks back at her, smiles --

FATHER TOM

You don't talk much, do you?

INT. MISSION BASEMENT

Green cinderblock walls, a poster of Chief Joseph, a tilting pool table, folding chairs, two legless couches. Kool and the Gang sing 'Cherish' from an unseen radio. Fr. Tom leads Rayona into the room --

FATHER TOM

Here's the clubhouse. Folks, this is our new member --

Rayona doesn't like what she sees --

ROOM - HER POV - (MUSIC CONTINUES)

The room is empty but for FOXY CREE and ANNABELLE STIFFARM, both slouched on one of the couches, snuggled into each other, both very good-looking, both giggling, probably at Rayona. They look up with cool, challenging eyes --

FATHER TOM

(off) This is Rayona, all the way from Seattle. Annabelle Stiffarm, one of the founders of the God Squad, and Kennedy Cree -- everybody calls him Foxy --

FOXY

I know who you are.

RAYONA - (MUSIC CONTINUES)

Stiffening, waiting for the verdict --

FOXY AND ANNABELLE - (MUSIC CONTINUES)

In profile, Foxy in the foreground --

FOXY

You're Christine's kid. The one whose father is a nigger.

CU RAYONA - (MUSIC CONTINUES)

Rayona stays deadpan --

FATHER TOM

(off) Foxy!

FOXY AND ANNABELLE - (MUSIC CONTINUES)

FOXY

We're cousins -- my mom is Ida's sister Pauline. Of course my mom was married when she had kids --

Rayona knows there is no fighting back right now --

FATHER TOM

Foxy, I am highly disappointed in you.

FOXY

Rayona doesn't care. Does she?

CONT'D.

Rayona squeaks out a weak smile, shakes her head. Foxy stands and yanks Annabelle with him --

FOXY

We got to be someplace.

They step around Ray, Annabelle sneaking a look back at her, then giggling hysterically at something Foxy whispers at her--

FATHER TOM

He's really a very nice young man. And you and Annabelle will get to be great friends.

RAYONA

Sure.

EXT. IDA'S YARD - DAY

The Mission pickup pulls into the yard and we TRACK to meet them, looking into the window across Rayona and to Father Tom as they stop --

FATHER TOM

There's usually a lot more kids who show up. Must be a lot going on today.

RAYONA

(dry) Round-up time.

FATHER TOM

You know, I think you're going to be my special project, Rayona.

RAYONA

(her worst fear) Uh-huh.

FATHER TOM

Father Hurlburt tells me you speak your native tongue.

RAYONA

My Mom was raised here.

FATHER TOM

(proudly, Indian) I smell like dogshit!

Rayona manages not to laugh --

RAYONA

Where'd you learn that?

CONT'D.

FATHER TOM

Vance Windyboy, on the Tribal Council? Did I say it right?

RAYONA

Just say (Indian) hello.

FATHER TOM

Guess I'm no good at languages. (smiles)
You know, if you ever need anybody to talk to --

RAYONA

Sure --

FATHER TOM

Do you have dreams, Rayona?

RAYONA

Dreams.

FATHER TOM

About -- like -- the Wonders of the Human Body --

RAYONA

Science dreams?

FATHER TOM

Reproduction, members of the opposite sex, touching --

RAYONA

(quickly) No. Never.

FATHER TOM

You're fifteen now? You're going to need guidance, Rayona. You're turning into a young lady --

Rayona decides to make her break --

RAYONA

Thanks for the ride, Father.

She hurries out of the car toward us. Father Tom calls out --

FATHER TOM

-- a very attractive young lady.

This stops Rayona. This is the first news she's gotten from anybody that's positive about her looks, which almost makes up for the source --

CONT'D.

FATHER TOM

I'll catch you later, Rayona.

Father Tom backs out of the yard, revealing Ida coming down the hill lugging an enormous plastic jug full of water --

RAYONA

Aunt Ida -- let me help --

IDA

(Indian) I can handle it.

RAYONA

(Indian) Do you do this all the time?

IDA

(pointedly, Indian) Once a week. Twice, now that you're here.

We TRACK with Ida as she leaves Rayona standing with that thought. Ida slows, and we TIGHTEN on her face as she looks to the front door. We PAN AHEAD with her look and -- FLASHBACK-- there is a woman standing at the door and the house itself has changed, becoming what it looked like forty years earlier, slightly shabby, without the siding and other more recent improvements. We TRACK CLOSER and IDA AS A GIRL (15) steps into the FOREGROUND, lugging a couple of sloshing full water buckets. She regards the woman who waits by the door with a mixture of suspicion and wonder. Ida's young Aunt CLARA, prim, pretty, maybe 22 years old, stands by her suitcase, smiling. She wears her hair in a wavy pompadour, has on a high-waisted black and white dress, sheer stockings, patent leather shoes. Ida has never seen someone dressed so well outside of pictures in a magazine. Clara seems shy and nervous --

CLARA

(Indian) Hello, I'm Clara. Which one are you?

IDA

Ida.

CLARA

Of course.

Ida puts the buckets down, picks up Clara's valise and leads her in to the house, calling to the rear --

IDA

Pauline! Aunt Clara is here! Go get Papa!

CONT'D.

PAULINE, Ida's younger sister, hurries by, wiping her hands on her apron, almost curtsying as she goes past Clara --

CLARA

You're Pauline then --

Pauline rushes out, excited. Clara looks around the rough, lived-in interior of the room. Not what she's used to --

CLARA

Can I see Annie?

IDA

She's resting. I'll show you your room.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

We PAN across Clara's belongings -- nice clothes, lots of toilet articles, laid out in neat piles on the narrow bed --

CLARA

(off, Indian) I was so little when Lecon came to court your mother. I'm sure he hardly remembers me.

We WIDEN to see we are in a small room crowded with two single beds and a tiny dresser with a mirror over it. A small crucifix hangs over the head of each of the beds. Clara is at the mirror, fluffing her hair, licking her little fingers to straighten the line of her eyebrows. Ida is at the foot of the bed she's just given up to Clara. As Pauline rushes in, breathless, she fixes a jealous look at Ida --

There is a noise, they all turn --

CLARA

Looking up meekly --

DOORWAY - LECON

Ida's father is quite a presence -- very tall, wide-shouldered, with sun-darkened skin, glistening black hair hanging down his back and haunted dark eyes. He has been working in the field. He fixes Clara with a long, evaluating stare --

ROOM

Pauline and Ida take in the charged moment between their father and their young aunt --

LECON

(to Pauline, Indian) Give her tea.

CLARA

(softly, Indian) Something cool, if you don't mind --

IDA

I'll do it!

We FOLLOW Ida as she rushes past Pauline and her father to get water. We FOLLOW her out into the main room.

CLARA

(off, Indian) Do you think poor Annie is awake now? She's who I'm here for --

Ida stops, looks back, infatuated --

RAYONA

(off) When did this come?

We PAN away from Ida toward the front of the house, where Rayona, back in the -- PRESENT -- is framed by sunlight coming in the open door. She is studying a mail parcel she has picked up off the table by the door --

RAYONA

This is for Mom from Charlene.

KITCHEN AREA - IDA

Ida shoves the water jug back on the counter by the sink, then we FOLLOW as she crosses past Rayona in silence. We HOLD on Ray --

RAYONA

Don't you think we should forward it?

Ida passes again, with no comment --

RAYONA

(Indian) I think it's medicine. Charlene always got pills for her.

We HEAR the TV set flick ON. Rayona sighs, looks at the package --

INT. CLASSROOM - SISTER GONZAGA - DAY

SISTER GONZAGA, small and competent-looking, stands before a blackboard addressing her class --

SISTER GONZAGA

-- so we sent to Seattle for her school records. Now I want you boys and girls to listen to Rayona's grades and think about how proud your family would be if you brought something like this home --

CLASSROOM - KIDS

We PAN across the faces of a dozen bored Mission High students. Foxy is sniggering openly, Annabelle whispering to the girl in the next aisle --

SISTER GONZAGA

US History- A. Trigonometry- B+. English-
A. Biology- A. Physical Education- B.
French- A-. Civics-

When we reach Rayona, sitting a few seats removed from the others, she covers her face with her hands --

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Lunchtime at Mission High, tables laid out in a small gym that also has a stage. Rayona sits alone in the foreground, while behind her we see Foxy and other BOYSS, Foxy entertaining --

FOXY

Her mother's shacking up with Dayton Nickles.

BOY

That weirdo?

FOXY

Must beat hanging out with old Rayona--
(laughter)

INT. IDA'S HOUSE - DAY

Ray comes in carrying school books. The package is untouched on the table. She passes, eyeing it, and crosses to Ida, rolling out dough in the kitchen area --

RAYONA

She didn't come for it yet?

CONT'D.

IDA

(nods to chair, Indian) Pauline sent some clothes over.

Rayona lifts a pair of ragged cut-offs. Acceptable --

RAYONA

These might even fit.

IDA

(Indian) They belonged to Foxy.

RAYONA

(holds shorts away) Great.

INT. BEDROOM - RECORD PLAYER - NIGHT

We start on a tiny, tabletop record player, a 45 of Connie Francis' 'Lipstick On My Collar' playing under the needle. We PAN across the room to Rayona, dressed like Gidget, on her belly reading old Seventeen magazines. The record ends. She crosses, puts another single on. Annette sings 'First Name, Initial' for us. Ray moves over by the door, puts her ear to it. We hear the opening THEME for Miami Vice from the TV, the VOLUME suddenly cranking UP. She frowns, crosses back to the record player, turns that VOLUME UP. She flops on the bed, we TIGHTEN as she opens the old yearbook --

PHOTO - RAYONA'S POV (MUSIC CONTINUES)

We SLOW ZOOM IN to the angelic face of Christine at 15 years--

EXT. IDA'S HOUSE - WIDE SHOT - DAY

Somebody approaching the door --

INT. IDA'S HOUSE - DAY

Empty, quiet. A KNOCK on the door --

CHRISTINE

(off) Aunt Ida? You there?

The door opens and Christine enters cautiously. She doesn't look good -- thicker around the middle, her face drawn, arms thin. She sees the package, tears the wrapper off and shakes two bottles of painkiller pills out of a little box. She pops a couple pills and walks further into her old life --

PHOTOGRAPH

A photo on the wall of her brother Lee and his friend Dayton, both around 14, both dressed in rodeo clothes. We PAN away from it to Christine, looking with mixed emotions. She moves away --

INT. BEDROOM

Christine enters, sits on the bed. She sees her yearbook lying out on the pillow, smiles. She crosses to look out the window and we PAN past her to see the dry plain stretching away from the house to the dark mountains on the horizon. We hear the WHISTLE of an approaching TRAIN, very distant --

EXT. - CU CHRISTINE - DAY - FLASHBACK

CHRISTINE (as a little girl) looks down in fright. We hear KIDS calling, off --

KIDS

(off) Go! Go! Go!

We hear the WHISTLE of an APPROACHING TRAIN, closer --

CU FEET - HIGH ANGLE

Christine's feet inch forward on the narrow top beam of a railroad trestle bridge. Below them is the edge of the bridge, below that a rocky, swift-moving stream --

BOYS, BRIDGE

In the foreground several little BOYS from the reservation call up at the bridge looming in the background, Christine a small figure perched on the very top, balancing like a tightrope-walker --

BOYS

Go! Go! Go!

We PAN and SHIFT to isolate the face of one little boy, LEE, three years younger than CHRISTINE looking worried --

LEE

Christine! Be careful!

BOY

She's gonna chicken out.

CONT'D.

LEE

No she's not! She's not afraid of nothin!

Another WHISTLE, the TRAIN RUMBLES CLOSER --

CHRISTINE

Creeping along. The TRAIN THUNDERS, closer and closer. Christine wobbles, panics, half squats and throws herself out over the beam, hugging herself to it --

CU CHRISTINE

Squeezing her eyes shut in terror as the TRAIN ROARS beneath her. She is shaking. The TRAIN finally RECEDES. Christine keeps her eyes closed, gripping the beam for all she's worth--

LEE

(off) Christine?

We WIDEN to see Christine open her eyes, raise her head. Lee squats a few feet away, more puzzled by her fear than scared by their location. He offers his hand --

LEE

Let's get down.

INT. IDA'S HOUSE - DAY

Same place, different appliances. Christine bursts in and we FOLLOW as she runs past Ida (at twenty five) and into her room, slamming her door behind her and throwing herself on her bed with tears in her eyes. We hear Lee run in outside --

IDA

(off, Indian) What happened? Is Christine hurt?

LEE

She was scared, Aunt Ida! I saved her!

IDA

(off, Indian) Saved her from what? Was this another dare?

LEE

They bet her so she climbed up too high and she couldn't get down till I helped her. She wet her pants, Aunt Ida!

CONT'D.

Christine covers her face with her pillow --

INT. BEDROOM - PRESENT - CHRISTINE - DAY

Christine looks out the window. She sighs, turns -- we PAN with her gaze across the room to the poster of Jackie Kennedy, then ZOOM IN TIGHT on Jackie's smiling face. It starts to MOVE -- FLASHBACK -- We TRACK BACK to see CHRISTINE (16-year-old) tacking up the big fold-out poster of Jackie in a pink pillbox hat. Frankie Avalon's 'Venus' is playing on her little record player. She turns the VOLUME DOWN as she hears VOICES outside --

CHRISTINE

That you, Lee?

Christine opens the door and there stands DAYTON (12-year-old), a moody kid with green eyes, curly black hair, wearing ironed blue jeans and a white t-shirt --

CHRISTINE

(disappointed) Oh. Hi, Dayton.

DAYTON

(shy) Hi.

He passes and LEE (12-year-old) a handsome, athletic kid with a killer smile takes his place --

LEE

Hey, Christine --

CHRISTINE

(softly) What's he doing here?

LEE

(shrugs) We were hanging out.

CHRISTINE

You'd think he lived here.

LEE

We're buddies.

Ida (30 years old) comes by --

IDA

(Indian) Turn that noise off or keep your door shut.

CONT'D.

CHRISTINE

Sure --

IDA

(Indian) What's that on your face?

CHRISTINE

(sighs) Oh, God --

She sees that Dayton has drifted back and is staring at her --

IDA

(Indian) You look cheap.

CHRISTINE

Dayton thinks I look good. Don't you,
Dayton?

Dayton blushes, looks away --

LEE

Leave him alone, Christine.

CHRISTINE

Excuse me for living!

She shuts her door on them. Immediately there is a KNOCK. She opens -- it's Lee, with his apologetic smile --

LEE

(whispers) I think you look great.

Christine laughs, pushes his face out and closes her door, happy again --

INT. BEDROOM -- PRESENT -- DAY

Christine sits on the bed, frowning. She crosses to the closet, looks in, pulls out a silky red cowboy shirt. She holds it out in front of her --

EXT. CORRAL - DAY -- FLASHBACK --

CHRISTINE (18) wearing the red cowboy shirt, walks up to the rail of a corral where Dayton (14) is bragging to a trio of INDIAN COWBOYS. None bother to look at her --

DAYTON

Hell, one of these days he's gonna win the All-Around.

CORRAL, LEE - CHRISTINE'S POV

Lee swings up onto a wild mare. His butt barely touches when the horse goes apeshit, wheeling, spinning, kicking -- Lee bounces, legs flying out, then is thrown -- SPLAT! into the loose dirt of the corral --

RAIL - 2-SHOT, CHRISTINE AND DAYTON

COWBOY

(off) He don't look too All-Around right now.

CHRISTINE

That horse doesn't have a prayer.

Dayton shoots her a look --

CORRAL - LEE, HORSE

Lee comes straight at the panting horse, looking it in the eye, anger and determination in his face. He grabs the rope, steps and swings onto the mare's back. She begins to crow-hop, shaking her head side-to-side. Lee hangs on tight. The horse begins to tire, running circles around the corral --

2-SHOT

Christine and Dayton both smiling. They look at each other. Christine cuts her smile off, walks away --

2ND COWBOY

(off) Lookit that --

3RD COWBOY

(off) My wife says he's gonna be the John F. Kennedy of the Indians. Wunt that be something?

CU CHRISTINE

Walking toward us with the corral at her back. She sees something ahead --

ROAD - CHRISTINE'S POV - PRESENT

Across the plain, there is a dirt road, with three figures walking along on it --

CLOSER - ROAD - DAY

Rayona, wearing Foxy's old cutoffs and a Holy Martyrs t-shirt, walks several yards in front of Foxy and Annabelle, following her just to heckle --

FOXY

Yo, Buffalo Soldier, nice duds. I should send you over some of my underwear.

Annabelle is in stitches --

FOXY

So, you gonna work on that Coppertone Tan now it's vacation?

The Mission pickup rolls up in the opposite direction, Father Tom hanging out the window. We TIGHTEN as he stops to rap with Ray --

FATHER TOM

God Squad express, all aboard!

RAYONA

What?

FATHER TOM

The Teens for Christ Jamboree. You didn't forget, did you?

RAYONA

Oh.

FATHER TOM

Your grandmother won't let you go?

RAYONA

She won't care -- she likes to have the house to herself.

FATHER TOM

Well hop in then! We'll pick up your stuff.

Ray decides, moves to get in the other side. Foxy and Annabelle pass --

ANNABELLE

Got a date, Rayona?

INT. IDA'S HOUSE

We hear the PICKUP IDLING outside as Ray blows into the house --

CONT'D.

RAYONA

(calls) Aunt Ida!

She freezes. The package is gone from the table, only shreds of the wrapping left. We hear MUSIC, faintly, off --

RAYONA

She's been here. (crosses to examine wrapping) She's been here, goddamit.

She backhands the paper off the table, stomps to her room --

INT. BEDROOM

Ray enters - 'Venus' is playing on the little record player. Ray angrily grabs up her Hefty bag of possessions. She rips the 45 from the player and wings it viciously at the wall --

RAYONA

Goddam her!

POSTER

The poster of the smiling Jackie Kennedy, a large gash over her eye. We hear the front door SLAM. We HOLD on the poster. The room DARKENS, CRICKETS begin to chirp outside. We PAN away to see Ida standing looking at the poster and the rest of the trashed room. It is night. We FOLLOW her back into the main room. She looks to a clock on the wall, worried. It is ten o'clock. She crosses to the front door, opens it and looks out. We TIGHTEN on her face. Behind her we hear TUBERCULAR COUGHING -- she turns to look and we PAN to the closed door of her room. In -- FLASHBACK -- Someone inside is COUGHING hysterically. We PAN back and as we do the shot LIGHTENS and there is the YOUNG IDA (15) standing by the door in daylight. She looks out into the yard --

YARD - IDA'S POV

Lecon stands smiling, bare-chested, talking to Clara by the water trough. Clara turns toward the house and Lecon scoops water onto his chest --

INT. HOUSE

Ida turns and kneels to her job -- scrubbing the floor with bucket and brush. Clara steps in past her, bends and gives a tug to her braid. Ida looks up, beams, then goes back to her job as Clara steps away. Ida scrubs her way to the opening of her mother's room, looks in. Beyond her we see Clara sitting

CONT'D.

on the edge of the bed singing happily and filing the fingernails of ANNIE, Ida's mother, who lays propped up by pillows. Annie is drawn with TB, hair lying down on her shoulder in a loose, graying braid --

IDA

Smiling as she goes back to her scrubbing, beginning to HUM along with the song. We TRACK away, losing her out of the frame as we move to the center of the room, CROSSING VOICES till we come to the MATURE IDA in -- PRESENT -- sitting in front of her TV, a show on with no sound, staring into space and HUMMING the old song to herself --

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - PICKUP - NIGHT

The Mission pickup glides along, headlights cutting the black night --

INT. PICKUP

Rayona is still in a black mood about her mother's visit. Father Tom looks over to her sympathetically --

FATHER TOM

Big plans for the summer, Rayona?

RAYONA

I've been thinking of going back to Seattle.

FATHER TOM

(humors her) Oh. I see. When do you leave?

RAYONA

Isn't anybody else coming to this thing?

FATHER TOM

Uhm - not from the Mission - no. You'll be the official God Squad representative. Hey, there's gonna be hootenannies and rap sessions and movies in the evening --

Ray glares out the side window --

FATHER TOM

(sighs) So what about your parents, Ray? Your mother and father.

CONT'D.

RAYONA
(emphatic) My Mom's dead.

FATHER TOM
Oh-

RAYONA
My Dad's a pilot. That's why I can't stay with him. He flies all over the world. Jumbo jets.

FATHER TOM
I didn't know he was living.

RAYONA
He is. He's doing great.

FATHER TOM
(smiles understandingly) It's not easy, is it? When you're different?

RAYONA
I'm not different.

FATHER TOM
I mean your dual heritage. Not that you shouldn't be proud of it --

Rayona is too upset to take him on --

FATHER TOM
You uhm -- you must be noticing the changes in your body lately. The coming of your womanhood --

RAYONA
(cuts him off) My Dad told me all about that.

FATHER TOM
Well, God loves you, Rayona. You are His perfect creation.

He puts his hand over hers. Rayona looks down at it --

HANDS - HER POV

Father Tom gives her hand a quick squeeze, then withdraws quickly --

INT. PICKUP

Father Tom smiles nervously --

FATHER TOM

Summer vacation huh? Nothing like it --

Rayona turns her face to the window and shuts her eyes --

EXT. PARK ENTRANCE - MORNING

We PAN from the entrance sign for Bearpaw Lake State Park across the road to a Conoco station, the pickup at the pumps--

INT. BATHROOM - RAYONA

Rayona is just waking up, her hair mushed to one side, eyes full of boogers. She looks at herself in the mirror, considering the 'attractive' issue, then decides there's no hope, makes a face and splashes it hard with water from the tap --

EXT. STATION

Rayona returns to the pickup, Father Tom chattering at SKY, a skinny, hippie-looking pump jockey in his early forties. Sky has abused a few drugs in his day --

FATHER TOM

-- sure, she's a full-blooded Indian.
We're on our way to the Teens for Christ
Jamboree --

Sky looks up from the pump to give Ray a dubious once-over --

FATHER TOM

Good morning, cowgirl!

RAYONA

Where are we?

FATHER TOM

Oh, close enough. The Jamboree doesn't
start till tomorrow.

RAYONA

It doesn't?

FATHER TOM

There's a lake right down here -- we could
take a dip before breakfast. (to Sky, done
pumping) So what's the damage, friend?

EXT. LAKE

Bearpaw Lake is deep blue, nestled in a bowl made by tall gray mountains, ringed with big pines and high grass. Pristine. A low yellow raft sits out in the middle of the rippling, sun-sparkling water --

RAYONA

Stepping out onto a pier that juts ten feet into the lake, barefoot, still in her cutoffs and t-shirt. She is transported, peaceful for a moment as she breathes in the cool mountain air. Then Father Tom steps onto the pier behind her, soft and white in a red bathing suit, a miraculous medal around his neck. He looks at the water suspiciously --

FATHER TOM

I wonder if there's big fish in here --

He sits and dips a toe into the water --

FATHER TOM

Whoah. Ray, it's freezing.

CU RAYONA

Looking out wistfully --

FATHER TOM

(off) It's too cold.

LAKE - HER POV

The yellow raft beckoning, a beautiful, safe place --

FATHER TOM

(off) We'd better head back to the camp --

RAYONA

RAYONA

I'm going in.

WATER

We shoot from the water as Ray runs towards us, dives off the pier -- Splash! She goes under, surfaces right in front of us --

CONT'D.

FATHER TOM

Rayona, come back! You'll get a cramp!

RAYONA

(freezing) Water's fine!

She swims past us --

YELLOW RAFT

We HEAR, then see Ray climb aboard, gasping with the chill of the water. She stretches out like a cat on the sun-warm boards of the raft, closing her eyes. WE TIGHTEN on her face. A serene smile appears. We hear a SPLASH, off. The smile fades. SWIMMING SOUNDS, then HUFFING, fairly close --

FATHER TOM

Holy Jesus. It's too cold. Rayona -- I've got a cramp --

Ray opens here eyes, looks out --

WATER - RAYONA'S POV

Father Tom is struggling, reaching under to grab at his legs--

FATHER TOM

Rayona!

He goes under!

RAYONA

We DIVE into the WATER with Rayona, murky with silt underneath, till we see Father Tom's luminous whiteness moving ahead --

WATER SURFACE

WHOOSH! Rayona breaks surface with Father Tom's head in the crook of her arm. She begins to sidestroke frantically for the raft --

YELLOW RAFT

First Ray crawls on with one arm, scraping her belly on the boards, then she strains to heave Father Tom up like a giant halibut. She manages to drag him onto the boards and falls

CONT'D.

back, gasping for breath. He is on his side with his face away from us, not moving. Ray panics that he might be dead, moves and rolls him toward her. As he comes his arm falls over her neck, his eyes open, scared and excited --

FATHER TOM

You saved me.

They look eye to eye for a charged moment, then he pulls her to him with both arms. He closes his eyes, begins to grind his hips up into hers. Ray is taken by the moment, by the contact. She puts her arms around him, begins to kiss him on the face. Father Tom stiffens, opens his eyes, pushes her away --

FATHER TOM

What are you doing?

RAYONA

I don't know.

Father Tom sits up, horrified all of a sudden. Ray is totally confused --

RAYONA

I was scared.

She rolls on her back, still breathing hard, and looks at the sky. Father Tom tries to find some rationale --

FATHER TOM

Rayona -- we have experienced an occasion of sin.

EXT. PATHWAY FROM LAKE

Tall trees rustling on either side of them, Rayona walks in the lead, hugging herself against the morning cold, her clothes wet against her body. Father Tom follows, back in his street clothes, wringing his suit out over and over --

FATHER TOM

I shouldn't have gone in when I was so tired. I drove all night. (pause) When we get back, Rayona, we should forget this trip ever happened.

RAYONA

I'm not going back. I'm going to Seattle.

FATHER TOM

(brightens) You have someplace to stay?

CONT'D.

RAYONA

I could look up my Dad.

FATHER TOM

(overeager) If that's what you want to do.
You know there's a whistle stop near
here --

RAYONA

I have to tell Aunt Ida --

FATHER TOM

I'll make a special trip out to her as soon
as I get back. You're so much closer to
Seattle here.

EXT. PICKUP - NIGHT

Parked parallel to the railroad track under a sodium vapor
light. Tom and Rayona stand in the headlights --

CLOSER

Father Tom is very jumpy, eager to get clear of Rayona. She
has a resigned, flattened demeanor --

FATHER TOM

A bright young lady like you -- there will
be so much more for you to do than on the
reservation. And there's more likely to be
people who share you dual heritage.

A TRAIN WHISTLE sounds, approaching --

FATHER TOM

Well -- I hate goodbyes. I want you to
have this, Rayona --

He hands her a gaudy, beaded thunderbird medallion, pure
tourist bait --

FATHER TOM

You wear this, people will know you're an
Indian. Take care --

He hugs her quick and hard, then is off and running for the
pickup as we hear the TRAIN RUMBLING closer --

RAYONA

We HOLD TIGHT on her, face a mask as we hear the TRUCK PULL AWAY, the TRAIN WHISTLE closer. The headlights of the train wash on her face. She turns, waves the engine by, then tosses the medallion under its wheels. As it ROARS PAST we catch an unintelligible snatch of the ENGINEER'S CURSE as he passes. Ray stands unmoving as we hear the TRAIN FADE AWAY. CRICKET SOUNDS return --

LOW ANGLE - TRACKS

Ray's feet appear, crunching across the stones of the road bed. She sits in front of us, picks up a few stones and tosses them into the night. Looks around. She lies back, resting her head on the rail. We TIGHTEN on her face, closing her eyes as we--

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE UP TO:

EXT. RR TRACK - RAYONA - MORNING

Rayona wakes, sits up, shivering cold. She looks around, lost --

ROADSIDE

Rayona comes stumbling up out of the trees onto a road, still lugging her garbage bag full of belongings, rumpled and stiff from sleeping on the tracks. We FOLLOW her across to the park entrance, a chain hung across the access road at this hour. She sighs, sits on the chain. It creaks under her weight. She looks around --

SIGN - RAYONA'S POV

A large red sign announces --

ATTENTION HIKERS! IF LOST, STAY WHERE
YOU ARE
YOU WILL BE FOUND

RAYONA

She finds no comfort in this. She looks like she's going to cry. We hear a CAR PULL UP nearby, a DOOR SLAM, the CAR PULL AWAY. FEET CRUNCH ON GRAVEL. Sky passes, nods to her. She watches after him a moment, then gets up and we FOLLOW after him with her as he crosses to the Conoco station. He talks with her as if lost girls are part of his morning routine --

CONT'D.

SKY

So where's your Father Joe?

RAYONA

(shrugs) He went to Heaven.

Sky almost smiles, pulls a huge cluster of keys out on a beaded ring looped to his belt --

SKY

Best place for em --

INT. CONOCO STATION OFFICE - MORNING

Rayona sits by the desk with her Hefty bag at her feet as Sky putters around making instant coffee on a hotplate. This is quite an operation, with each step demanding that Sky concentrate and bridge some of his damaged synapses --

SKY

So now it's the priest's turn and he goes out to sleep in the barn. The Hindu and the rabbi are just settling in when there's another knock at the door (pauses) It's the cow and the pig.

Rayona smiles and nods politely --

SKY

Get it? They don't want to sleep with the priest --

RAYONA

I don't blame them.

SKY

(squints at her) He said you was an Indian.

RAYONA

Just on my mother's side.

SKY

(nods sagely) You're one of those fresh air funds, aren't you? Where you from?

RAYONA

Seattle. My names' Rayona.

He pours water into styrofoam cups, spoons in instant, stirs--

CONT'D.

SKY

Mine's Sky -- after Big Sky like in Montana? That's what they called me in Saskatchewan.

RAYONA

You Canadian?

SKY

Did a stint up there during the war.

RAYONA

Oh. I had an uncle killed in the war.

He considers this seriously, hands her a coffee --

SKY

Each had to make their own decision.

RAYONA

My Mom says she wishes he'd gone to Canada too. He'd be alive.

SKY

(nods) So you're a runaway too. Didn't take to that Jesus camp.

RAYONA

(diving in) They tried to convert me so I split. But my parents took off for Europe till the end of August. My Dad's a pilot on jumbos.

SKY

(whistles) Jumbos, huh? Off to Europe. That leaves you up shit creek without a paddle, don't it?

Ray tries the coffee, which is terrible. Sky stands watching her, figuring. Rayona gets uncomfortable, rises to go --

RAYONA

Anyhow, it's not your problem. I got to--

SKY

Whoah! Cool your jets. I'm thinking here -- you go see my wife Evelyn, works as a cook over to the lodge here at Bearclaw. She might could set you up with something.

RAYONA

Set me up?

CONT'D.

SKY

Tell her them Bible-thumpers is after you.
She don't feature priests much, Evelyn.

RAYONA

The lodge --

SKY

Just go round to the back door.

RAYONA

Thanks --

He holds his hand out and leads her into a hippie-handshake.
Ray grabs her bag to go and Sky turns to study the candy
machine --

SKY

(musing) Jumbos, huh? The big babies.

INT. LODGE KITCHEN - MORNING

The lodge is old, made of thick, dark logs. EVELYN, strong and
gruff, slips a skilletful of fried eggs onto a plate in front
of Rayona, who sits at the wooden counter where Evelyn is
making bread. Evelyn dresses like a lumberjack and has none of
Sky's spaciness --

RAYONA

Thank you.

EVELYN

Eighteen, huh?

RAYONA

I'm young for my age.

EVELYN

When donkeys can fly you're eighteen.
Where you gonna live? You got a work
permit?

RAYONA

(rising, flustered) I'm sorry. Forget
it --

Evelyn pushes her firmly back into her chair --

CONT'D.

EVELYN

Get to work on those eggs before they cool off. (sits by Ray, thinking) There's not much left here -- just maintenance probly. Damn college kids, hang a whistle round their neck, they make more than me. More than the cook.

RAYONA

I just need to get by till my parents come home.

EVELYN

They must be having a grand old time.

RAYONA

Yeah.

EVELYN

(decides) You can bunk with us for now. It's just me and Norman --

RAYONA

Norman?

EVELYN

Sky. (looks at Ray) When he called he didn't say you was Black.

Before Rayona can react Evelyn is up punching out her enormous pile of bread dough --

EVELYN

Of course with Sky he might not of noticed.

INT. MAINTENANCE OFFICE - DAY

MCCUTCHEON, an overweight, over-serious maintenance supervisor, sights down a broom handle with a nail on the end as Rayona stands by paying strict attention --

MCCUTCHEON

Have you operated one of these devices previously?

RAYONA

No, sir.

MCCUTCHEON

One can never predict when or where you will encounter rubbish, and it is much more sanitary to spear it (demonstrates) than to soil your hands.

CONT'D.

RAYONA

Yes sir.

He hands her the pole like it's a rifle in inspection drill --

MCCUTCHEON

We have never had an individual of your race or sex employed in park maintenance. You're something of a groundbreaker here --

RAYONA

I won't let you down, sir.

MCCUTCHEON

(smiles) I'm sure we have a uniform in your size somewhere --

EXT. PARK - RAYONA - DAY

She walks uncomfortably in a green park outfit that is both too short and too loose on her. More fashion humiliation. A trio of boys, JOHN, ANDY and DAVE, approach going the other way, dressed in maintenance green, John and Andy swordfighting with their poles.

DAVE

Hey, it's the new one --

They block her path --

ANDY

Ramona, right?

RAYONA

Ray, yeah --

ANDY

What cabin you in?

RAYONA

I'm -- uhm -- in a private home --

ANDY

Yeah? Party party. Where you go to school?

RAYONA

I'm just here for a couple months --

ANDY

Yeah, but in real life, what college?

CONT'D.

RAYONA

I'm still in high school.

ANDY

(loses interest) Oh.

DAVE

If you need to know anything just ask.
What section you working?

RAYONA

Seven.

JOHN

Seven! No wonder they hired a girl.

RAYONA

Is seven bad?

ANDY

'You are now entering -- The Panty Zone'

DAVE

It's the girls' water-safety instructors --

JOHN

Aqua-Goddesses. Listen, I got a video
camera and there's this girl Ellen
DeMarco --

DAVE

Pervert --

JOHN

You want her bad, Dave, admit it --

They jostle each other past Rayona and down the path --

ANDY

He wants her? What about me?

DAVE

(turns to wave) Welcome to Bearpaw,
Ramona!

They goose each other away. Rayona is by a little shaving-
stand, a mirror and tin bowl, tacked to a tree. She puts her
ranger hat on, looks into the mirror skeptically --

MIRROR - RAYONA

She makes a face, realizing who she looks like. She deepens her voice --

RAYONA

Only you can prevent forest fires.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Rayona wandering through well-manicured woods. She tosses her pole like a javelin, then walks to retrieve it. Not a tough gig. She sees a scrap of paper by the pole, picks it up and looks -- it's the bottom half of a letter. She sits on a stump, reads out loud in a soft voice --

RAYONA

'It finally stopped raining and the grass was overdue. I just want you to know how -- much we miss you already, but hope you have a marvelous time out there on your adventure. Rascal is scratching on the door to get in, so I'll cut this short. Don't forget to write. Love, Mother and Pops.'

Rayona frowns --

RAYONA

Pops.

She starts to stick the letter in the garbage bag tied to her hip, hesitates, then crams it into her back pocket. She stands, hefts her pole --

RAYONA

Hey Pops, think fast!

She hurls the pole like a spear --

INT. TRAILER - NIGHT

Sky enters first, backhanding a waiting Alabama tape into the cassette player that sits on top of the TV in the big wood-grain cabinet, a twisted coat-hanger for an antennae. He shakes six macaroni-and-cheese TV dinners from a bag and begins to feed them into the little oven, flicking it on to BAKE -

SKY

Torpedoes ready -- fire one! Fire two!

Rayona follows with Evelyn, who pulls a dripping cold six pack of Ranier in cans from a bag --

CONT'D.

EVELYN

Make yourself at home. You'll be on that couch.

SKY

Fire five! Fire six!

Evelyn tears off a can of beer, tossing it, and Sky turns at the last moment to catch it. Evelyn opens a beer of her own and continues through to the back room --

EVELYN

Dinner won't be long. I don't believe in pre-heat.

Sky sits on a chair by the stove and watches as Ray sets her garbage bag of stuff next to the sagging, green plaid couch and sinks into it --

SKY

You and Evelyn hit it off. She don't take to everybody.

Ray smiles politely, yawns --

SKY

The TV is bust. I don't even know what's on these days --

RAYONA

TV Bloopers and Practical Jokes.

He gives her a look --

RAYONA

(shrugs) Monday night. My grandmother watches it back home.

Evelyn shuffles out in a sleeveless housecoat and fluffy slippers. She lowers herself gratefully into the big red recliner that dominates the room --

EVELYN

That's more like it.

They just sit and listen to the music for a moment --

SKY - (MUSIC CONTINUES)

Silently lip-synching to the lyrics --

RAYONA - (MUSIC CONTINUES)

Pulls her legs up to curl into the couch. She is exhausted. Lays her head on the pillow against the arm, starts to fade --

EVELYN - (MUSIC CONTINUES)

Evelyn looks to Ray, then to Sky, jerking her head. We PAN with Sky as he crosses, carrying an old afghan. Ray's eyes are closed as he covers her with it --

SKY

Wasted. She maybe slept in the woods last night. Think that story is straight?

EVELYN

Proibly some runaway. She's just a kid.

Sky sees something on the floor, picks up the piece of letter-
-

SKY

Whups -- whatta we got here?

CU RAYONA - (MUSIC CONTINUES)

Her eyes roll open hazily, half-gone. We hear Sky and Evelyn off --

EVELYN

(off) That's personal, Sky --

SKY

(off) Mother and Pops, it says. And little Rascal scratching at the door. Says she's on an adventure, have a marvelous time --

EVELYN

(off, snorts) Don't that take the cake. Put it back, Sky. And pull her macaroni out the oven.

We hear PAPER CRACKLE, Sky moving around. Ray's eyes flicker, fall closed. Out for the count --

SKY

(off) You think Rascal is a dog?

EXT. DAYTON'S HOUSE - DAY

A pre-fab white ranch house with green shutters, a gate padlocked across the driveway, a silver mailbox with 'Nickles' stencilled in red. We PAN to see the little corral next to the house, a wild mare, BABE, circling around inside --

MARE

Trapped and not happy about it, Babe snorts and paws and trots nervously around, bringing us to Christine, leaning on the other side of the fence. We ZOOM IN SLOWLY to her. She watches the horse, crosses her arms on the rail and rests her chin on them. We hear the opening riff of Nancy Sinatra's 'Boots' FADING UP on the TRACK --

INT. CAR - CU HAND - DAY - FLASHBACK

Christine's hand, turning the radio knob to boost the VOLUME UP on 'Boots'. We PAN back to CHRISTINE (23) in the passenger seat, ratted bouffant hair, lots of eye makeup, singing along with the words. She glances over --

DIAMOND - CHRISTINE'S POV - (MUSIC CONTINUES)

DIAMOND JOHNSON, an Indian man in his late 30's, smiles as he drives, a gold wedding ring glinting from his finger --

EXT. IDA'S YARD - NIGHT

Diamond's car idling. Christine steps out, slams the door, approaches the house. As she reaches the door LEE and DAYTON (both 18) step out past her, dressed in Red Power style -- red bandannas across their foreheads, faded jean jackets, long hair, lots of patches. Lee has a feather hanging from one ear --

CHRISTINE

(smiles) Hey, what's this?

LEE

We gotta go --

CHRISTINE

I thought you two were Red Power boys. You look like a hippie.

Lee ignores her and keeps walking. She grabs his arm --

CONT'D.

CHRISTINE

Whoah, Crazy Horse, it's me. Christine.

Lee turns on her, angry --

LEE

You know, if you stopped running around with your redneck white boyfriends you might learn what's going on in the world!

He and Dayton stomp off. Christine turns to call after them--

CHRISTINE

He's not white!

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Christine storms in. Ida sits watching F-Troop. Christine sits next to her, but Ida won't look at her --

CHRISTINE

You probly wonder where I been all week.

Nothing from Ida --

CHRISTINE

I was in Minot with a boy.

IDA

(Indian) Diamond Johnson. Married with two children.

CHRISTINE

They're not living together --

IDA

(Indian) His mother came over to say it's because of you she's lost her grandchildren.

Silence. We hear the LAUGH TRACK of the TV SHOW --

CHRISTINE

(needs to talk) You ever been to Minot? My God you drive down Broadway, all those lights shining -- there's stores still open after dark, so many people --

CONT'D.

IDA

(Indian) You're turning into a slut.
Nobody will want to marry you.

CHRISTINE

(Indian) Well you should know what that's
like!

Two quick jabs and nothing is going to be the same between
them. Christine gets up, ready to fight, pacing --

CHRISTINE

You want me to leave? Huh? You want me to
move away?

Ida won't look at her. Christine paces, looking around --

ROOM - HER POV

We PAN from one hanging picture to another -- all of Lee. Lee
as a grade-school grad, Lee doing the hop-dance as a small boy,
Lee's senior trip, Lee at the rodeo with Dayton --

CHRISTINE AND IDA

Christine circles her mother --

CHRISTINE

So what are you going to do about Lee?

IDA

(Indian) Lee is fine.

CHRISTINE

He wants to burn down the government. Him
and Dayton. They're practically
Communists.

IDA

(Indian) Lee knows what he's doing.

CHRISTINE

(in a rage) That's right! And he won't
stay with you either!

We FOLLOW as she throws open the door, steps into the YARD, and
slams it behind her. She stands, breathing hard, looking at
the night for a moment. Makes up her mind and goes marching up
the hill on her skinny high heels --

EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Christine stands in front of the reservation's only grocery, the front window a patchwork of community flyers, BIA, State and Federal notices. Christine is checking her makeup in the section of glass that's backed by an Army recruiting poster. She sees Dayton approaching behind her in the reflection, reading a shopping list. She snorts, then notices the poster in front of her for the first time. She smiles, turns, lounges against the window --

CHRISTINE

Hi, Dayton

DAYTON

(terse) Hi.

CHRISTINE

So what's your number?

DAYTON

Number?

CHRISTINE

(jerks a thumb at poster) Number. Draft classification.

DAYTON

(shrugs) 4-A. Sole surviving son. My Dad was killed in the Navy.

CHRISTINE

Lucky you.

DAYTON

(glares) I wouldn't go anyway.

CHRISTINE

You'd go to jail?

DAYTON

Or Canada.

CHRISTINE

You would?

DAYTON

I'm a member of this Indian Nation. Our tribe hasn't declared war. (pointed) Lee feels the same way.

CHRISTINE

So much for the next John F. Kennedy.

CONT'D.

DAYTON

What's that mean?

CHRISTINE

All your plans. The only way people here will have an ounce of respect for Lee is if he serves his country.

DAYTON

But --

CHRISTINE

You know it's the truth. (sighs) Lee could do a lot for our people if he got the chance. Hate to see his future ruined by some hippie idea you fed him --

Christine strolls away, the smile fading from her lips. Dayton stands confused behind her, looking at the poster --

INT. CAR - NEXT DAY

Christine at the wheel of Diamond's car, crossing the reservation. Johnny Rivers sings 'The Poor side of Town' from the radio. Christine passes Lee and Dayton, arguing on the road. She slows, looking in the rearview mirror till they catch up with her. She turns the VOLUME down and calls out as they pass --

CHRISTINE

Lee!

They turn, recognize that it's her for the first time --

CHRISTINE

We've got to talk. Alone.

EXT. CAR - DAY

Barrelling along the empty reservation road, leaving a cloud of dust behind it --

INT. CAR

Christine cool, Lee sullen and confused. The Mysterians thump out '96 Tears' at LOW LEVEL on the radio --

CONT'D.

CHRISTINE

(smiles) So. You gonna go in yourself or wait till he calls?

LEE

Who calls?

CHRISTINE

Uncle Sam.

LEE

(scowls) You too.

CHRISTINE

It makes more of an impression if you volunteer.

LEE

I'm not going to fight a white man's war.

CHRISTINE

White man? When did you start talking like that?

LEE

I'm supposed to help them do to Viet Nam what they did to us?

CHRISTINE

Have it your way. You're finished on this reservation, though --

LEE

Stop the fucking car!

Christine floors the gas pedal --

LEE

I won't fight you, Christine --

CHRISTINE

You won't fight anybody!

She slams on the brakes and they skid to a SCREECHING HALT.
She SLAPS him, hard --

CHRISTINE

You may be hot shit to Aunt Ida and to Dayton, but all I see is a yellow kid scared to defend his country!

CONT'D.

Lee glares at her, steps out of the car. He leaves the door open, walks back in the opposite direction. Christine waits till he's out of sight, covers her face with her hands --

IN. MISSION HIGH GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

All set up for the Labor Day Bazaar -- tables lined in rows, families on benches sitting in front of a baked bean dinner, others up socializing and transporting more food around. We find Christine flirting with an OLDER MAN at the table, then FOLLOW as she continues to get more drinks for them. She passes Aunt Ida and her aunt PAULINE and uncle DALE CREE with little BABY FOXY --

PAULINE

Foxy, let that go. Let it go.

CHRISTINE

(smiles) Aunt Pauline. Uncle Dale.

They nod but Ida looks away. Christine pretends not to care, goes to the drinks table where she runs into FATHER HURLBURT (late 30's) --

FATHER HURLBURT

Christine. We haven't seen you at Holy Martyrs for some time.

CHRISTINE

Yeah. I been busy, Father.

FATHER HURLBURT

I haven't seen Lee, either.

CHRISTINE

Him and Dayton went off on some vision quest bit. (smiles) He's not real high on your white devil religion these days.

FATHER HURLBURT

He gave me the speech. So. Are you okay, Christine?

CHRISTINE

(suspicious) You mean am I in a state of Grace?

FATHER HURLBURT

(softly) No. I mean are you okay?

She can tell he's sincerely concerned --

CONT'D.

CHRISTINE

I got no complaints, Father.

FATHER HURLBURT

Ida worries about you.

CHRISTINE

I wouldn't know about that.

There is a GASP from the people in the room. They turn to see --

ROOM - CHRISTINE'S POV

Lee has just stepped into the gym, sporting a crew cut. The political buttons have come off his Levis. We TRACK IN as he steps past the gawking people, pulling a large brown envelope from his jacket. He reaches Aunt Ida, lays it on the table in front of her. She opens it slowly, pulls out Lee's chopped braid, bound in leather strips at both ends. She turns away from him with tears forming, presses the braid to her cheek --

DALE

(proud) Lee's enlisted!

APPLAUSE, people jumping up to slap Lee's back and pump his hand, blocking our view of Ida --

CHRISTINE, FATHER HURLBURT

Christine smiles, victorious. Father Hurlburt steals a look at her. WILLARD PRETTY DOG (40), a sharply-handsome Indian man with a scarred face, pauses by them, a troubled look on his face. He turns away --

LEE - CHRISTINE'S POV

He looks through the crowd to her, spreads his arms as if to say 'What can I do?'

CHRISTINE

She smiles, salutes him --

ROOM - CHRISTINE'S POV

Lee laughing, accepting the congratulations. We RACK FOCUS to the door beyond him. Dayton stands there, hair still long, forgotten. He turns and exits --

CHRISTINE

That's my brother. He's going to fight in the war.

INT. DAYTON'S HOUSE - PRESENT - EVENING

Christine sits on the couch in the living room, doubled over holding her stomach. When she straightens there are tears in her eyes. We hear sounds of the front DOOR being OPENED. Christine hurries to dab the tears away, regain her composure. By the time DAYTON (late-30's) steps in, she is looking almost cheerful --

CHRISTINE

Dayton. How was your day?

DAYTON

(worried) I just came from Ida's. Rayona's gone and run away.

EXT. WOODS - MORNING

Dew still on the leaves as Ray wanders through, trash bag hanging from the pole over her shoulder like an old-time hobo. She is on the path to the lake. Ray sees through the trees that there is someone already in swimming out to the yellow raft. We TIGHTEN to a CLOSE-UP as she slows to watch --

WATER - RAYONA'S POV

ELLEN DeMARCO, a beautiful, tanned teenage girl in a white tank suit, glides through the water and hoists herself onto the yellow raft in a single graceful motion --

RAYONA

Half hides behind a tree to watch, fascinated --

ELLEN - RAYONA'S POV

Standing in golden morning light, a sleek, dripping goddess-- everything Ray knows she's not right now. Ellen looks around, breathing deep. The spell is broken by a VOICE --

CINDY

(off) You posing, DeMarco?

CONT'D.

ELLEN

Come on out.

CINDY

(off) Ice-Cube City. You're wasting your time, Ellen. None of the guys are even conscious yet.

ELLEN

Fuck the guys.

CINDY

(off) Don't you wish.

Ellen sighs, dives gracefully into the lake --

RAYONA

Musing, still transfixed --

RAYONA

Ellen DeMarco.

EXT. PICNIC BENCHES - DAY

Rayona sits with the boys we met and various other MAINTENANCE WORKERS eating lunch. Dave is staring at Ray's sandwich while the others horse around --

JOHN

I'm talking major bazoongas here. And they point up --

ANDY

When she stands on her head --

JOHN

They defy gravity, my friend. It's the DeMarco Effect -- new law of physics --

DAVE

What is that?

RAYONA

Peanut butter and onion.

DAVE

She never makes anything wild like that at the lodge.

CONT'D.

RAYONA

You know the stuff we find out in the woods --

DAVE

Three weeks in Lost and Found and then it's up for grabs. You got something good?

She lifts a blanket and spreads it out -- there's a picture of a huge buck printed in the middle, antlers set against a red sunset --

DAVE

Wow. Retro.

RAYONA

Good?

DAVE

It's intense. I'll tell these schmucks you got first dibs.

JOHN

(calling) Yo, Rebecca! Have you been inside their bunkhouse yet?

INT. TRAILER - NIGHT

Sky examines an old, torn Grateful Dead t-shirt as Ray and Evelyn look on --

RAYONA

It was in there for three weeks, and I figured --

SKY

This is vintage! '71, maybe '72 -- like this rip here, who knows what was going down when that happened --

RAYONA

And I got paid today, so --

She offers a wad of cash toward Evelyn, who frowns at it like it's dog poop --

EVELYN

I don't see how your sleeping here does our couch any harm.

RAYONA

You have to take it.

CONT'D.

EVELYN

(understands) That's quite a wad. Think we could get to Paris on this, hon?

SKY

(serious) Paris, France?

EVELYN

We'll have to settle for the Hitching Post.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Ray biting into an oversized burger. Sky is proudly wearing the Dead t-shirt and Evelyn mashes her fried shrimp into cocktail sauce, closing her eyes in pleasure as she eats --

SKY

-- she's in a red Toyota Celica, right off the boat. 'Fill it with Premium' she says and then pays with her daddy's credit card. Her license spells out 'E-L-L-E-N'.

EVELYN

What do you care about her for?

RAYONA

(shrugs) She seems nice.

EVELYN

First day up she says, 'Don't serve me anything that ever had scales on it.' I says, 'What you think I run here, the Snake Farm?'

SKY

She don't eat fish?

EVELYN

(indignant) Not even tuna from a can.

SKY

(ponders) Well, as long as the kid don't hurt anybody, she's got a right.

EXT. LAKE - MORNING

Ray pretending to poke trash, but actually watching Ellen supervise the tadpoles swim class. The LITTLE KIDS are scampering out of the water, SHOUTING in their piercing voices --

CONT'D.

ELLEN

Stay with your buddies till you're out of the water! Leslie!

Ellen suddenly turns and sees Ray lingering nearby. She smiles, then turns to the kids.

ELLEN

And take your snack bags to the garbage can. Don't make work for the people who have to clean up!

Rayona beats a quick retreat back down the path --

INT. CONOCO OFFICE - SKY

He is carefully x-ing all the days on the May page of his wall calendar. Rayona sits at the desk by him --

SKY

Hey, man, everything means something. Look at you -- come here out of nowhere, got this big house in Seattle with a Mother and a Pops and a little dog --

RAYONA

A dog?

SKY

Little Rascal.

RAYONA

(nervous) Right.

Sky tears off the completed page and starts x-ing out the days of June --

SKY

It's tough to keep up with these things. Anyhow, you're here and they're in -- where is it?

RAYONA

Switzerland.

SKY

(blown away) Fucking Switzerland! Right? It's gotta mean something.

RAYONA

So how about Ellen?

CONT'D.

SKY

She been to Switzerland too?

RAYONA

About her smiling at me. You think she's nice?

SKY

(ponders) Could be. Why don't you ask her?

EXT. DUMPSTER AREA - DAY

Rayona is emptying her trash bag into a park dumpster when a yellow flyer on the bulletin board next to it catches her eye --

FLYER - RAYONA'S POV

A wildly bucking bronco is surrounded by hand-lettered copy --

4TH OF JULY RODEO!!
THRILLS AND SPILLS!!
\$5,000 PRIZE MONEY

Sponsored by Eastern Montana Tribal Councils and Skol Tobacco

MCCUTCHEON

(off) Rayona! How's it going?

RAYONA - MEAN

McCutcheon stands with REESE, a Dept. of Recreation bigshot --

RAYONA

Fine, sir.

MCCUTCHEON

Are your parents going to make it out for the Fourth?

RAYONA

They'll still be on vacation.

MCCUTCHEON

That's too bad. This is Mr. Reese, our regional chief.

RAYONA

Hello --

CONT'D.

McCUTCHEON

Our Rayona is the daughter of a Black
airline pilot.

REESE

Ahhh --

McCUTCHEON

He flies jumbo jets. And her mother is a
Native American. Fills two Affirmative
Action slots at the same time.

RAYONA

Three, sir. I'm a female.

McCUTCHEON

(smiles) How could I forget?

RAYONA

It's the uniform, sir.

CU PHOTO

Lee and another soldier in dress uniform, posing with a pair of
Hawaiian girls in grass skirts on Waikiki --

INT. DAYTON'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Christine is studying the photo as she takes a few of her
painkillers, washes them down with ginger-ale, sees that she is
running out of pills. She takes the photo and moves with some
difficulty to the kitchen table, sits. She looks at the
picture --

CU PHOTO - CHRISTINE'S POV

We ZOOM IN to Lee in his uniform as MUSIC FADES UP, the Ray
Coniff version of 'Everybody Must Get Stoned' schmoozing out
over Muzak speakers, hear the VOICES OF WORKERS, and FACTORY
RATTLE AND HUM --

INT. FACTORY CAFETERIA - DAY - FLASHBACK

Voices, Muzak, factory, sounds in the background. Christine
sits with the photo beside her, reading a letter next to NORMA,
a fellow assembly worker. The letter is on pale green paper,
Norma sneaking peeks at it as she eats --

CONT'D.

NORMA

Boyfriend?

CHRISTINE

My brother.

NORMA

He's in Nam, huh?

CHRISTINE

It says San Francisco.

NORMA

'APO' -- see? That means he's already over there and the Army is forwarding his mail. He could have been there for months.

Christine studies the letter more seriously.

CHRISTINE

'You wouldn't believe the size of the bugs in this place --'

NORMA

Nam. They always go on about the bugs.

INT. APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

A 'Career Gal Efficiency' apartment -- not a lot of elbow room. Bobby Goldsboro sings "Honey" from a radio in the kitchen. Christine looks in the mirror putting on the last touches of her make-up. Short skirt, wide hip-hugger belt, a very tight poor-boy sweater and fishnet stockings, big silver hoop earrings. We FOLLOW her from the bathroom into the tiny kitchen area, as she grabs her bag and snatches a fish stick from a little toaster oven, singing along with the chorus --

INT. STAIRWAY

Hurrying down toward us, still singing, Christine slows as KATE, the landlady, steps into the foreground. She holds up a letter --

KATE

This come for you today. Got three forwards on it. You been moving around. --

CHRISTINE

Thanks.

She takes the letter, skips down past us --

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Christine bopping along past several clubs with MUSIC spilling out into the street from their neon-lit entrances. She flicks the envelope open, slows as she nears us, reading. Her face tightens. She looks to the back of the envelope --

CHRISTINE

Dayton --

She reads the letter again, her face darkening. She leans back against the light pole. Rhythm-and-blues pounds out from the club to her left, a loud, live version of 'Heard It Through The Grapevine'. Christine straightens, stuffs the letter in her bag, and zombie-walks into the club --

INT. CLUB - NIGHT - (MUSIC CONTINUES)

We HOLD on Christine's face as we TRACK with her through the smoky club. She sits at a stool, lost in thought till the BARTENDER appears beside her. He is Black --

BARTENDER

I help you?

CHRISTINE

Oh --

Christine looks around, suddenly aware. We PAN away with her gaze to see that all the patrons, mostly men, are Black --

BAR - (MUSIC CONTINUES)

Christine turns back to the Bartender, who is smiling at her sudden discovery. Before she can speak --

ELGIN

(off) Hey, pretty lady. First time in here
you get a free drink --

Christine turns and we SHIFT to include ELGIN (mid-20's), tall, Black and handsome in a starched Army dress uniform --

ELGIN

-- compliments of Corporal Elgin A. Taylor.
(smiles) What'll it be?

Christine just stares. Elgin picks up on her mood.

ELGIN

You okay? You in some kind of trouble?

CONT'D.

CHRISTINE

My brother is missing.

ELGIN

Does he come in here a lot?

CHRISTINE

Missing in Action. In the war.. I just heard.

Elgin's face goes serious. He steps up and puts his arms around Christine and draws her close. She relaxes into him --

ELGIN

Hey, it's all right. I know how you feel.

CHRISTINE

I'm okay, really --

ELGIN

He'll be fine, your brother. They get lost all the time, then they get found.

CHRISTINE

Yeah?

ELGIN

Sure. You'll get a telegram under your door some morning, saying he's okay.

Christine eases away, composing herself --

CHRISTINE

Right. He's just lost (to bartender)
Could I have a stinger?

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

They walk in arm in arm. Christine needing support, a bit drunk --

ELGIN

When you came in I thought you were Chinese. The bars in Nam got lots of Chinese women.

CHRISTINE

I'm not Chinese.

ELGIN

What are you then?

CONT'D.

CHRISTINE

Indian.

ELGIN

No. Really? I never talked to one before.

CHRISTINE

You hit the jackpot.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The LIGHT flicks ON to reveal an inexpensive hotel room. Neat, simple, but not too depressing. We HEAR Elgin and Christine--

ELGIN

(off) I get my discharge in two weeks. I'm thinking of staying around here for a while.

Christine steps into the frame, followed by Elgin. There is an awkward silence, Elgin hanging back away from her --

ELGIN

You want to talk more about your brother?

Christine turns, shakes her head. She keeps shaking it as she walks toward him, shuts her eyes, puts her arms around his neck. They kiss --

INT. HOTEL ROOM - VARIOUS SHOTS - NIGHT

We hear Roy Buchanon's spirit-wrenching guitar swooping through 'The Savior Will Come Again' as we see DISSOLVING snippets of a long night of lovemaking. Christine and Elgin on the bed, on the chair, on the floor, against the wall. Their movement together is deep and dreamy, a hungry slow-dance. We END with Christine on her side, face bathed in red street-light coming through the window, tracing the line of Elgin's shoulder blades with her fingers as he sleeps on his stomach --

INT. CHRISTINE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Christine's face is washed by steam rising from a pot of pinto bean chili. She tastes it on a wooden spoon. She is wearing only an olive-green sleeveless t-shirt of Elgin's, army-issue fitting her like a mini-dress. We hear Tom Jones' version of 'Detroit City' from a radio, off. Elgin appears behind Christine, in his underwear --

CONT'D.

CHRISTINE

This is almost done.

Elgin slips his dog tags over her neck --

CHRISTINE

Hey -- jewelry. How do I look?

ELGIN

Like an Army recruiting poster. I got half a mind to re-up.

CHRISTINE

Don't you dare.

ELGIN

(takes her hand) C'mon in here, I got something to show you.

CHRISTINE

I've seen what you want to show me --

ELGIN

This is special --

He pulls her out of the frame --

CHRISTINE

(delighted) Elgin!

INT. KITCHEN - LATER - GARBAGE

A charred substance drops into the grocery bag standing open on the floor. We TILT UP to see Christine scraping burnt chili from the pot with a kitchen knife --

CHRISTINE

This is coming out pretty good --

ELGIN

(off) It's had three days to petrify in there.

Elgin enters carrying the Job Opportunities section of the paper --

ELGIN

'Light assembly, 3 an hour, chance for advancement --'

CONT'D.

CHRISTINE

Light assembly's what I do. It's boring.

ELGIN

That's why they call it work.

CHRISTINE

Find something you can do at home --

ELGIN

(still reading) They're hiring at the Post Office. Veterans preferred --

CHRISTINE

Uh-uh. You look too good in that uniform.

Elgin hugs her from behind and looks into the mess in the pot --

ELGIN

This is your special Indian recipe, huh?

EXT. PARK - DAY

We look out over Puget Sound on a beautiful spring day. Ships move north and south, sun glints off the water. We TRACK BACK to see the green edge of a cliff overlooking the water, then TILT to see Christine's hand sliding up Elgin's bare arm to his wrist. He has on a bracelet of three metal strands twisted together --

CHRISTINE

(off) This is iron, this is brass, this is copper --

ELGIN

(off) You sure?

We CONTINUE BACK to see Elgin and Christine lying naked on a blanket spread out on the ground, facing each other, clothes scattered around them --

CHRISTINE

The guy who sold it to me said so.
(strokes his chest) He said that in Africa
this kind of bracelet brings good luck.

ELGIN

Sure --

CONT'D.

CHRISTINE

It's true. (smiles) I'm pregnant.

Elgin sits up, serious.

ELGIN

How long?

CHRISTINE

Five minutes.

ELGIN

C'mon, Christine. You can't tell that.

CHRISTINE

Yes I can. (grins) It's okay. I don't expect anything extra from you. You don't have to be married to have a baby.

ELGIN

Yes you do. You do have to be married to have my child. You have to be married to me.

CHRISTINE

(happy with this) Okay then.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM NIGHT

Christine, very pregnant, sits up on one of two single beds pushed together. She wears a sweatshirt saying 'Property of U.S. Army' and a blown-out pair of gym shorts. Connie Francis' 'When the Boy in Your Arms (Is the Boy in Your Heart)' comes scratchily from a little record player across the room. Christine looks at the alarm clock on the bedside table. Snorts angrily. She stands and pushes the other bed hard against the wall, making a chasm between the two. We FOLLOW her to the kitchen at the other end of the room. She grabs potholders, whisks a casserole from the oven and dumps the contents into a foot-lever trash can. The SONG ENDS. We FOLLOW her back to the bedroom, where she puts the needs at the head of the single. Connie Francis SINGS AGAIN. Christine sits back on the bed --

INT. BEDROOM - LATER - NIGHT

DARK in the room now. We hear someone MOVING AROUND, trying to be quiet. A CRY as Elgin bangs his shin on the bed in its new position. The bedside LAMP flicks ON. Christine looks up from bed, steamed. Elgin sits on the other bed, wrestling his pant off with one shoe still on, a bit drunk --

CONT'D.

CHRISTINE
Special delivery tonight?

ELGIN
I got tied up.

CHRISTINE
Uh-huh. (lies back) Speaking of tied up,
when does that happen? The marriage
license is getting dusty.

ELGIN
You afraid I'm going back on my word?

CHRISTINE

This is the first time she's suspected that he might. She sets
her face hard --

CHRISTINE
Fuck you word. Fuck you.

We hear the other SHOE DROP. Silence. Then Elgin crawls onto
the bed with her. She tries to push him away but he pins her
arms back, smiling, and kisses her on the face several times--

ELGIN
Just tell me what you want, baby.

CHRISTINE
(struggling) I want to wear -- a long white
dress -- and have a three-foot-wedding cake
-- and go to Hawaii on my honeymoon -- with
Paul Newman.

ELGIN
(grins) That can be arranged.

Roy Buchanon's instrumental of 'Sweet Dreams' starts on the
TRACK --

INT. C&W CLUB - NIGHT - (MUSIC CONTINUES)

A middle-aged INDIAN WOMAN is staring at Christine,
scandalized --

DANCE FLOOR - (MUSIC CONTINUES)

Christine steers them close enough to wave her new wedding ring
under the woman's face --

CONT'D.

CHRISTINE
Today's our wedding day. We're
celebrating.

Somebody shouts 'Hey!' and suddenly people are APPLAUDING and craning to see, circling them to congratulate the happy couple --

EXT. STREET - NIGHT - (MUSIC CONTINUES ON TRACK)

Elgin walks toward us, lost in thought, several steps ahead of Christine, who struggles to keep up in her heels. Elgin passes and Christine stops in front of us, exhausted --

CHRISTINE
Elgin!

ELGIN - (MUSIC CONTINUES)

He whirls, ready for a confrontation, then softens as Christine limps up to him --

CHRISTINE
Where's the fire? Save some of that energy
to carry me over the threshold.

ELGIN
(laughs) I'll show you a threshold.

He stoops and picks her up in his arms like a sleep child --

CHRISTINE
(giggling) Elgin, it's three blocks!

ELGIN
You just hope that elevator's working,
baby --

He carries her, laughing delightedly, into the night. MUSIC
FADES

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

DARK. The LAMP flicks ON. Christine sits up, alone again. Glances across at Elgin's bed. The clock reads 2:30 --

KITCHEN AREA

Christine sits at the kitchen table in her nightgown, pen and postcard in hand, still angry. She speaks softly as she writes, bearing down hard --

CHRISTINE

'I have a husband -- who is not an Indian. His name is Elgin.' (grim) 'His name is Mud.' (writes again) 'I am going to have a baby. Did you hear anything new about Lee? Love - love from your daughter --' that's it --

The hall door opens behind her. Elgin slips in, surprised to find Christine up. She doesn't turn to look at him.

CHRISTINE

Where the hell have you been?

ELGIN

I had to work late.

CHRISTINE

I didn't know they had a beer tap in the sorting room

ELGIN

(pissed) So what's to come to? You sitting around making lists of things to bitch about?

CHRISTINE

The desk clerk was up twice today for the rent. Did you cash your check?

Elgin lurches to her, claws his pockets empty and throws the contents -- change, bills, kleenex, keys -- onto the table in front of her --

ELGIN

You happy now?

CHRISTINE

(evenly) Who is she, Elgin?

He glares at her, turns, marches out and SLAMS the door behind him. She listens to his FOOTSTEPS disappear. She angrily sweeps Elgin's stuff off her postcard, bends to finish writing --

CHRISTINE

'Your daughter, Christine Taylor.'

INT. HOTEL ELEVATOR - DAY

A rickety elevator rattles open and Christine, dressed to go out, steps from it into the HOTEL LOBBY. Two OLD MEN are glued to a black-and-white TV, Bob Eubanks winking to the audience as he questions the contestants on 'The Newlywed Game.' As Christine passes the desk the CLERK calls to her --

OLD MAN

You okay, sweetheart?

She takes several deep breaths and bends over in pain --

OLD MAN

Sweetheart?

CHRISTINE

He's dead.

The old man looks down to the seat of the couch between them, then hops to his feet, freaked --

OLD MAN

Jesus, what are you doing?

CHRISTINE

Call a cab.

INT. DELIVERY ROOM - CHRISTINE

We HOLD TIGHT on her as we hear a NURSE and a DOCTOR off. Christine is at the end of a difficult labor, sweating, crying, pushed to her limit. The NURSE is a jerk --

NURSE

(off) Be a brave girl, now. Be a brave girl --

DOCTOR

(off) You should push now.

CHRISTINE

I can't!

NURSE

(off) You ever watch 'The Price is Right?'

CHRISTINE

What?

NURSE

(off) 'Well come on down!! Make this a real push!

CONT'D.

DOCTOR

(off) I don't want to have to use the
forceps --

Christine pushes, SCREAMING out --

DOCTOR

(off) There's the head --

NURSE

(off) Get mad at that baby! Say Bad baby,
Bad baby' and just shove it out.

CHRISTINE

(defiant) Goodbabygoodbabygoodbaby--
OOOaaaow!

DOCTOR

(off) There we are. Now we're in
business --

We hear a CRY. Christine echoes it, grimacing a smile --

CHRISTINE

Let me see him. Let me see Raymond --

DOCTOR

This isn't going to be a Raymond, dear.
Not without surgery.

We SHIFT to see BABY RAYONA as she is handed to Christine. The baby is skinny and brown, smeared with cream, hair standing up like the Bride of Frankenstein, nose a wide smudge on her face, eyes muddy green. Adorable. She stares suspiciously at Christine --

CHRISTINE

(ecstatic) Oh my God, look at her. Just
look at her!

CU RAYONA - PRESENT - INT. LODGE KITCHEN - MORNING

Rayona, exhausted, rubs sleep from her face. She looks slightly better than when she was born, but not much --

WIDER

Very early, Evelyn laying Ray's pre-work eggs in front of her --

CONT'D.

EVELYN

The Fourth is Sky's big day at the station -- today he'll sell windshield wipers, maps, used tires -- all kinds of garbage people'd never buy otherwise. Makes all his Christmas money --

The look up as the kitchen door opens and Ellen walks in with her parents, BURT and DELL, dressed semi-casually for the 4th. Ellen is not real comfortable towing her parents around --

ELLEN

Mrs. Dial? These are my parents -- Mr. and Mrs. DeMarco -- would it be too much trouble to make them some breakfast?

DELL

Anything is fine.

ELLEN

And I might have an egg.

EVELYN

I thought you was on a diet.

ELLEN

(smiles) An egg won't kill me.

EVELYN

(gives Ray a look) Your wish is my command.

Evelyn goes back to the stove and Ellen sits by Rayona, her parents settling across from them. Ray almost chokes on her eggs --

ELLEN

Those look yummy.

DELL

Introduce us to your friend, Ellen.

ELLEN

This is Rayona. Remember I told you-- she's from Seattle and her father is an airline pilot. He flies jumbo jets --

Rayona coughs up a hunk of egg but manages not to spit it on her plate --

BURT

Wonderful. What airline?

CONT'D.

RAYONA

He's -- uhm -- kind of freelance.

BURT

I see.

DELL

Are you the one who came here from some kind of religious camp?

ELLEN

(embarrassed) Mother --

BURT

Missionaries?

RAYONA

Sort of --

BURT

Marvelous people. You'd be interested in this --

ELLEN

Please, Daddy, not Rocky --

BURT

(shows a photo) rocky is ellen's foster brother in Arizona. He lives on a reservation there.

PHOTO - RAYONA'S POV

Rocky is a skinny, good-looking kid --

BURT

(off) We found him through Save the Children.

TABLE

Ellen is embarrassed. Rayona hands the photo back --

RAYONA

He looks nice.

Evelyn approaches with a platter of toast --

DELL

When he writes now he calls us Mother and Pops just like our own kids do.

CONT'D.

Ray tries to change the subject, realizing the source of her letter --

RAYONA

Ellen's a great lifeguard. The little kids are crazy about her.

DELL

She's always been wonderful with children and animals.

BURT

You should see our little terrier Rascal at home without her. Sits by the door and moans --

Evelyn sets the platter down, locking eyes with Rayona. The jig is up --

CU RAYONA

Looking away from Evelyn's gaze --

DELL

(off) I bet Ellen misses that little dog more than she does her mother and pops --

RAYONA

I've got to get to work --

Rayona bolts away from the table --

EXT. WOODS - DAY

On the path near the lake. The letter is thrown on the ground, crumpled. Ray's foot appears, stomps on it. We TILT UP to see Rayona. She's been crying. She stares at the letter for a moment, then picks it up, sits on a stump and smooths it out. She reads it, sighs and looks off at the lake --

LAKE - RAY'S POV

The yellow raft floating in the blue water. Pure, uncomplicated --

RAYONA

Evelyn walks up behind her, and stands for a long time looking down at her back. Rayona steels herself for a confrontation--

RAYONA

So?

Nothing from Evelyn --

EVELYN

I don't know shit.

RAYONA

I'll tell you the truth if you want.

EVELYN

You don't have to tell me anything.

RAYONA

(almost breaking) Why are you being so nice? I lied to you and Sky --

EVELYN

If you want to talk about things, that's okay too.

CU RAYONA

Thinks for a long moment, wondering where to start. She takes a deep breath --

RAYONA

My Mom bought me a lifetime membership in a video club. For 99 cents --

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EVELYN'S CAR - DAY

Evelyn's car looks as bad as Christine's Volare. She has a determined look as she drives Ray along the park road --

EVELYN

Damn priest should have his ass kicked. Your aunt's probably worried to death, your mom is off sick somewhere --

RAYONA

You think she's really sick?

CONT'D.

EVELYN

Why else would she ditch you like that?

RAYONA

(trying to believe) yeah. Why else?

ELGIN

Norman and me are driving you home.

RAYONA

(panics) It's his big day at the station--

EVELYN

Don't make excuses. We're going.

They sit in silence as Rayona absorbs what is happening --

RAYONA

Why are you doing this?

Evelyn scowls at the road ahead --

EVELYN

Somebody should have done it for me.

Evelyn wheels the car out of the park entrance and skids to a stop in front of Sky at the Conoco, blocking his path to the long line of customers at the pumps. He sticks his head in window, puzzled to see her --

EVELYN

Be ready to roll when we come back in fifteen minutes. We're hitting the road.

SKY

(considers) Just like that? Just take off?

Evelyn nods, gives him a slow grin. Sky rolls it around in his mind for a moment, then smiles --

SKY

Far out. I'll lock up the pumps.

Evelyn pulls away. The grin grows on her face --

EVELYN

That's the kind to get yourself some day. He didn't even ask why.

INT. IDA'S HOUSE - PRESENT - DAY

We look at the front door from the inside. An ENGINE SHUTS OFF in the yard. A KNOCK. Christine steps in, cautious, not looking well --

CHRISTINE

Aunt Ida?

LIVING ROOM - IDA - CHRISTINE'S POV

Ida sits in her TV chair with her back to Christine --

IDA

(Indian) What are you doing here?

REVERSE ANGLE

Ida has Christine's high school yearbook on her lap, open to her senior picture. There are tears in her eyes. Christine can't see her face from where stands in the background --

CHRISTINE

I came about Rayona --

IDA

(Indian) What do you care?

CHRISTINE

(sighs) Listen, I've got something to tell you --

IDA

(Indian) Be quiet.

CHRISTINE

Aunt Ida --

Ida leaps from her seat, turns --

IDA

No! No.

ROOM

They face each other, Christine surprised at Ida's tears --

IDA

(Indian) You're not sick like she thinks. That wasn't medicine. It was lies.

CONT'D.

CHRISTINE

(Indian) It's truth.

IDA

(Indian) I never wanted you! I had no choice!

CHRISTINE

(hurt) You made that clear! You don't have to tell me.

IDA

(Indian) You don't know anything!

Ida hurls the yearbook across the room. Christine steps back, frightened by Ida's sudden passion --

IDA

Christine --

CHRISTINE

(cold, Indian) Just take care of Rayona.

Ida gives it up, runs out through the door by Christine, crying --

EXT. IDA'S HOUSE - DAY

We TRACK ahead of Ida as she rushes out past Dayton's car parked in the yard and halfway up the hill in front of the house. She stops, panting, fighting for control, and looks straight up to the sky --

SKY - IDA'S POV - FLASHBACK

A shelf of clouds stretched across it --

IDA (teenaged)

(off) Everybody else has got someone they're going to marry. Just as soon as we graduate.

We TILT down from the sky to find ourselves in the - PAST - on the roof of Ida's house forty years ago. Ida and Clara lie on the warm shingles of the low overhang, looking out over the hill in front of the house, very sisterly --

CLARA

Isn't there anybody you want?

CONT'D.

IDA
(embarrassed) Willard Pretty Dog. But
that's hopeless.

CLARA
Why?

IDA
He's the one that all the girls want. And
look at me. Besides, he's going to lie
about his age to get into the war before it
ends.

CLARA
He'll come back.

IDA
It would be easy if I looked like you.
Clara just smiles, not one to deflect a compliment --

CLARA
Men always come around in the end.

EXT. ROAD - WINTER - DAY

The ground is frozen and rutted, with a light dusting of snow.
Ida huffs along the road, carrying schoolbooks under her arm,
in a hurry. She sees something ahead, slows --

PAULINE - IDA'S POV

Pauline kneels in the snow at the side of the road, a rosary
laced between the fingers of her praying hands, the cross
dangling below them. She looks up as she senses Ida --

IDA

IDA
What are you praying for?

PAULINE - CLOSER

PAULINE
For all of us.

ROAD

Ida steps clear to the other side of the road as she passes, spooked. Pauline goes back to her prayer, facing a stretch of barren high plains --

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Ida knocks snow off her shoes outside the front door. She steps in --

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Bad vibes all around. WAILING is coming from behind Annie's door. Clara sits on a chair near the front door, sniffing into a white handkerchief, dressed in her travelling clothes with her suitcase at her feet. She looks to Ida for support--

CLARA

I never meant it to happen.

IDA

What?

CLARA

She'll tell you to hate me. Please don't hate me! We couldn't help it --

RACKING COUGHS come from the bedroom. The door is thrown open -- there stands Lecon, eyes red, hair wild, guilt rooted deep in his eyes. He looks from Clara to Ida --

LECON

(Indian) Ida. Help your mother.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

We START on PAULINE'S HAND, fingers working through the beads of a tightly-held rosary, PAN up to her face, lips moving as she silently runs off prayers, eyes and ears wide open, then CONTINUE the PAN over to Ida, crammed into the narrow bed with her, listening for all she's worth to the VOICES in the next room --

ANNIE

(off, Indian) You told them at the store. How could you do that?

CONT'D.

CLARA

(off, Indian) I never said 'mine'. I just said a baby was due here -- I had to tell somebody --

ANNIE

(off, Indian) You did it on purpose! It's part of your plan!

CLARA

(off, Indian) I never planned any of this! I don't know why I let him --

LECON

(off, Indian) Let me? You looked at me that way --

ANNIE

(off, Indian) You be quiet!

A silence. When Clara speaks it is softer, more controlled --

CLARA

(off, Indian) You still need me here. The girls need me.

LECON

(off, Indian) How can I face people if you stay?

CLARA

(off, Indian) I didn't say who was going to have the baby.

ANNIE

(off, Indian) People won't believe it's mine. I can't stand anymore --

CLARA

(off, Indian) Ida would do it for me.

As this hangs in the air we WIDEN to include Pauline, who has stopped her praying and is staring at Ida. She wouldn't. Would she?

CLARA

(off, Indian) It's nothing for a young girl. People would forgive, it happens all the time. As soon as I start to show --

CONT'D.

ANNIE

(off, Indian) No.

CLARA

(off, Indian) She's been after that Willard Pretty Dog who went to the war --

ANNIE

(off, Indian) No!

CLARA

(off, Indian) I could go away with her, then come back with -- after -- and help to raise it. No one would know.

ANNIE

(off, Indian) Why don't you go away!

CLARA

(off, Indian) It would save the family.

Ida gets out of bed. Pauline tries to grab her, Ida shakes her hand away --

LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sad and eerie in the kerosene lantern light. Lecon stands by the bedroom door, Annie is on the chair by the table, wrapped in blankets. Clara stands by the outside door, the suitcase still sitting on the floor nearby --

CLARA

(pleading, Indian) Is that what you want, Lecon? Do you want me to leave?

Lecon averts his eyes --

LECON

(Indian) It won't work. She'd never agree to do it.

The girls' bedroom door creaks and they all turn to look --

IDA

Stepping out wrapped in a blanket, the look of a good soldier volunteering for a bad mission on her face --

ROOM - HER POV

We PAN as she looks, first to Lecon, guilty, to Clara, hopeful, to her mother Annie, sick and heartbroken --

CU IDA

IDA

Yes.

EXT. YARD - CAR - DAY

We START on stencilling that reads 'HOLY MARTYRS', then WIDEN and CRANE UP to see it's on the side of a black '38 Studebaker parked in front of Ida's house. FATHER HURLBURT (20's) sits at the wheel, turned around to speak with Ida, sitting in the back seat, the frame of the car in front of us separating them like a confessional screen. Father Hurlburt is unsure of himself, troubled --

FATHER HURLBURT

You understand what you're doing?

IDA

Yes, Father.

FATHER HURLBURT

And you're willing to endure the sacrifice, to suffer the scorn of others, to care for this child as if it were your own? To keep it a secret forever?

IDA

(considers) Yes, Father.

Father Hurlburt is not too happy with this --

FATHER HURLBURT

I'm new here, I don't --

IDA

A man in a mask did it to her. He --

FATHER HURLBURT

Yes. Your father told me.

Their attention is drawn as Clara comes out the front door --

YARD - THEIR POV

Clara comes out with her suitcase, looking neither pregnant nor traumatized. Lecon appears at the door to watch after. He looks to the car --

CU FATHER HURLBURT

His piercing blue eyes try to kindle a little guilt at long distance --

CU LECON

He stonewalls, steps inside and shuts the door --

INT. CAR

Clara slides in next to Father Hurlburt, tossing her bag in back with Ida, her spirits high --

CLARA

Have you ever been to Denver before, Father Hurlburt?

FATHER HURLBURT

A few times.

CLARA

(excited) Tell me what it's like.

CU FATHER HURLBURT

He looks around to Ida one last time --

CU IDA

Meeting his eyes forthrightly. She knows that he knows the real story --

CU FATHER HURLBURT

Impressed and a little shaken, he turns back to start the car --

FATHER HURLBURT

Denver is an easy place to get lost in.

INT. CHURCH - CU STATUE - DAY

The Virgin Mary spreads her arms in forgiveness and looks down on us --

WIDE SHOT - AISLE - IDA

Ida is on her hands and knees, scrubbing the aisle between the pews in the darkened church --

IDA

Looking up at the statue with some suspicion as she scrubs. We hear FOOTSTEPS approaching, ECHOING behind her. She scrubs harder, not turning --

SISTER VIVENCIA

(off) It's happened. The blessed event.

Ida keeps scrubbing --

SISTER VIVENCIA

(off) Do you understand me? Ida!

Ida, looks around and up --

SISTER VIVENCIA - IDA'S POV

Looming above us, SISTER VIVENCIA is a short, impatient nun. She speaks louder as if Ida doesn't understand --

SISTER VIVENCIA

Your sister has had her baby. An angel from heaven. You're an aunt, now -- do you understand that? Aunt Ida. Can you say that in English? (enunciates) Aunt Ida --

CU IDA

IDA

(softly) Aunt Ida.

INT. CONVENT BEDROOM - DAY

A major crucifix hangs over the head of the bed Clara lies in. She looks tired but at some point has managed to put a little lipstick on after her delivery. Ida approaches, looking for the baby. They speak somewhat formally, in Indian --

CONT'D.

IDA

(Indian) How are you?

CLARA

(Indian) My breasts are aching.

IDA

(Indian) That means you should feed it.

CLARA

(Indian) I'm too weak. The nuns are feeding it.

IDA

(Indian) Nuns can't have milk --

CLARA

(Indian) In a bottle, silly. It's better not to start it with me -- in case I give it up.

IDA

(startled, Indian) What do you mean? We're bringing it back home --

CLARA

(Indian) I have to stay here near the doctor for a while. I like Denver. (sighs) What will I do with a baby?

IDA

(determined, Indian) I won't let you.

CLARA

(Indian) It's my baby. I can do what I want. You can go home and tell people you had a stillborn --

IDA

(Indian) I'll tell the nuns the truth! I'll tell them you weren't raped, that you're not my sister -- they'll throw you out!

CU CLARA

Frozen, frightened by Ida's sudden will. She is ready to deal --

CLARA

(Indian) What do you want?

2-SHOT

Ida stands over Clara, angry and stubborn --

IDA

(Indian) I'll take her home. You can come when you're ready.

Clara turns her face away on the pillow. We hear STEPS again, and PAN to see Sister Vivencia, entering purposefully --

SISTER VIVENCIA

I have the Agency on the phone, Clara. Have you made your decision?

CU IDA

ZOOM IN on her, the good soldier taking command --

CLARA

(off) We're going to keep it.

SISTER VIVENCIA

(off) But I thought we'd

CLARA

(off) I changed my mind. Her Aunt Ida will be taking her home.

EXT. CONVENT - IDA AND BABY - DAY

We FOLLOW Ida as she carries BABY CHRISTINE in her arms, feeding her milk from a glass baby bottle. She reaches Father Hurlburt, waiting at the curb with the Studebaker door open --

FATHER HURLBURT

(smiles) A baby girl --

IDA

Christine. The nuns named her.

FATHER HURLBURT

(Indian) And how are you?

IDA

(Indian, impressed) You've been learning I'm fine.

Father Hurlburt nods, sincerely pleased to hear this. H looks back toward the convent door --

CONT'D.

FATHER HURLBURT

And where is her mother?

IDA

I'm her mother.

She slides past Father Hurlburt into the car. He gets the picture, looks back to the convent, then sighs and closes the car door behind her --

EXT. HILLSIDE - PRESENT - DAY

Ida (mature) sits on the hillside, watching the yard. We hear a car ENGINE START, Christine DRIVE AWAY --

IDA

(softly) Christine --

EXT. PARKING LOT - RODEO - DAY

Ray, Evelyn and Sky crawling out of Evelyn's junkpile of a car. Ray is lugging her Hefty bag of possessions --

RAYONA

She's likely to be here. Everybody comes --

SKY

Five thousand in prizes -- I'd like to get in on that --

EVELYN

You couldn't ride a goat, Sky.

We hear the RODEO ANNOUNCER over the PA system from the arena. Rayona is very nervous, stops walking --

RAYONA

Listen, before we go in, I've got something for you guys. Since I might not -- you know -- anyway, I found it on the job --

She pulls the deer blanket out from her plastic bag. Evelyn shakes it out. She and Sky are dumbstruck --

EVELYN

My God it's beautiful. You sure it's okay?

RAYONA

It's been there three weeks.

CONT'D.

SKY

Now who'd throw a thing like that out?
That should be in a museum.

A ROAR from the crowd. Rayona is having second and third thoughts --

RAYONA

Oh God. I don't know what I'm gonna do if
she is here --

EVELYN

Stick with the program. There's nobody
you're gonna see who you can't handle.

CU FOXY

A mean grin on his face --

FOXY

Rayona!

As he moves we WIDEN to see that we are behind the bleachers, Indians walking to and fro in a happy, holiday mood. Foxy steps out from under the bleachers with a wine bottle in a paper bag in his hand and weaves up to rayona. Evelyn and Sky stand back, not sure of their place here --

FOXY

I saw this dark patch and I thought either
that's the biggest pile of horseshit I ever
seen or it's my fucking cousin Rayona.

RAYONA

Fuck you.

EVELYN

(glowering) You know this one?

RAYONA

Find some good seats out of the sun. I got
to talk to him.

EVELYN

You sure?

Ray nods. Evelyn takes a menacing step toward Foxy, who backs up in surprise. She walks very close, eyeballing him as she passes --

CONT'D.

EVELYN

Don't take any crap.

They continue toward the stands --

RAYONA

You not here to ride, are you?

Foxy grins and pulls out a piece of paper with '37' written on it --

RAYONA

You'll never make it. Look at you.

FOXY

If I forfeit I'm bumped from the circuit for the whole summer.

RAYONA

They won't let you in the box. You can hardly stand.

Foxy steps back and looks at his boots, as if suddenly aware how drunk he is. A thought strikes him, he looks up and grins --

FOXY

You're gonna ride for me.

RAYONA

What?

FOXY

You don't look like a girl any more than I do. Just keep your ass on the horse till it's out of the chute. I don't want to lose my qualification.

RAYONA

Why should I do anything for you?

FOXY

Do it for your Mom. My ride belongs to the guy she's shackled up with.

RAYONA

(snaps to) Is she here?

FOXY

He is. Old Dayton Nickles.

He pulls his beadwork-banded Navaho hat off and jams it on Ray's head, hands her the registration number --

FOXY

looks like I been out in the sun too long.

EXT. RODEO - STOCK PENS

Rayona walks by the stock pens wearing Foxy's hat and his jean jacket buttoned up, the number pinned on the back, wondering if she's going to go through with it --

ANNABELLE

(off) Hey! You!

Annabelle, looking sharp and sexy for the rodeo, stomps up from behind Rayona, angry --

ANNABELLE

Why are you wearing Foxy's stuff?

RAYONA

He made me put it on.

ANNABELLE

(suspicious) What do you mean? Is he drinking?

RAYONA

He can hardly stand up.

ANNABELLE

Asshole. I've had it with him.

RAYONA

He wants me to ride in his place.

ANNABELLE

(snorts) Right.

RAYONA

I've only been on a horse a couple time --

Annabelle falls in step with her, pulls out a cigarette --

ANNABELLE

Where you been?

RAYONA

I got a job. Bearpaw Lake.

ANNABELLE

(impressed) Yeah? God, I should get a job and get out of this place.

CONT'D.

RAYONA

(looking around) My Mom isn't here, is she?

Annabelle shakes her head, seems to look at Rayona in a new way --

ANNABELLE

You're not gonna do it, are you?

RAYONA

huh?

ANNABELLE

Ride for Foxy.

Rayona thinks a moment, then tries to sound nonchalant --

RAYONA

Yeah. Why not?

ANNABELLE

(smiles, impressed) You're a lunatic.

EXT. STARTER BOX

The Indian men by the box pay attention to the bronco, Babe, below them, as Rayona climbs onto the fence and stands ready--

CU RAYONA

Looks like she's about to jump into a snakepit --

BABE - RAYONA'S POV

The mare is quivering, restless. She looks back up at Rayona with a wild eye --

RAYONA

Easing herself down onto the mare's back, grabbing the rope with her right hand, stroking Babe with the other --

RAYONA

Hey Babe. Hey girl.

One of the cowboys touches her and indicates her hat. She grabs the brim, then nods at the gate. The CROWD SOUND FADES to nothing --

CONT'D.

RAYONA

Now!

She and Babe explode out of the chute as the gate snaps open--

ARENA

We try to stay on with Ray as the horse spins and wheels and tilts and kicks, vapor trails of color streaking after her as she is jerked this way and that, legs flapping, body slapping down on Babe's back and slides, too scared to let go and suddenly she's sprawling into the air and the ground is rushing up fast at a strange angle-FWAP!!

RAYONA

Rayona is face first in the arena dirt. She lifts her head, splits out dirt. We hear the Announcer --

ANNOUNCER

Twenty-four seconds for the young cowboy
from eastern Montana. Nice try, son.
Hoka-hay!

Rayona pulls herself to her fee as APPLAUSE trickles around the arena. She looks across the ring --

BABE - RAY'S POV

The mare stands calmly, nostrils wide, staring defiantly at Rayona --

RAYONA

Crossing toward the horse, a fuck-you look in her eyes --

STANDS - DAYTON

We see over his shoulder to Rayona approaching the horse, then TRACK around to his face. He squints, confused by the sight--

RAYONA - DAYTON'S POV

She takes the dangling rope, staring into Babe's eye. The sun silhouettes them -- she looks like Lee so many years before --

CU DAYTON

DAYTON

(freaked) Lee?

ARENA

Rayona grabs Babe around the neck and swings aboard. The mare stiffens, then BANG! bursts into a hard, low print around the ring, Rayona hugging to her neck. Babe runs over by the Brahman pen and puts on the brakes --

CLOSER

Babe has Rayona squeezed between her body and the fence. She scrapes her off --

RAYONA

Hits the ground again, panting, dirt smearing the tears on her face. She sits up to look for Babe, bulls smashing the fence behind her with their horns --

BABE - RAYONA'S POV

Legs wide, head low, winded. She stares at Ray with her teeth drawn back --

RAYONA

She walks back unsteadily up to the horse, grabs her mane, jumps on her back. Babe rears, pawing the air with her forelegs, Ray stretched out along her back --

DAYTON

DAYTON

(amazed and confused) That isn't Foxy Cree-

ARENA

Babe comes down and back-kicks hard three times. Rayona goes flying over her head --

RAYONA

FLUMP! She sprawls hard into the loose dirt and stays. We TRACK IN to her face. She is wheezing for breath, the wind knocked out of her --

ANNOUNCER

(off) Let's have a hand for this kid, folks! He's not much of a rider but he's no quitter!

APPLAUSE. A pair of RODEO CLOWNS lift Rayona out of the dirt and begin to walk her from the arena. They pass Babe, sitting like a big dog on her belly, heaving for breath. Rayona gives her a parting glare --

ANNOUNCER

(off) Looks like he's wore out that wild mare, too!

Real APPLAUSE now. One of the clowns finds the Navajo hat and jams it on Ray's head. She manages a punchy smile --

BEHIND STANDS

We hear RETCHING NOISES, then Rayona appears from under the bleachers, limping and dirty. We hear the ANNOUNCER giving out awards and prizes, OFF. Annabelle appears with a pair of Coke cups, hands one to Rayona --

ANNABELLE

You're out of your mind. You're a maniac.

RAYONA

(drinks) Ummph. That's beer.

ANNABELLE

Do they know you're a girl?

RAYONA

Does anybody?

They start walking around the stands --

ANNABELLE

How do you feel?

CONT'D.

RAYONA

Worse down here than when I was riding.

ANNOUNCER

(off) The judges have voted an unscheduled citation --

ANNABELLE

Uh-oh-

JUDGE'S STAND - ANNOUNCER

Holding up a shiny belt buckle --

RAYONA

Oh shit --

ANNOUNCER

(off) -- we present this hard-luck buckle to a home-grown Indian boy --

CU FOXY

Asleep in the stands --

ANNOUNCER

(off) -- Kennedy 'Foxy' Cree!

Foxy's eyes jolt open as he hears his name --

FOXY

Huh?

RAYONA AND ANNABELLE

Annabelle WHISTLES through her fingers, pushes Rayona forward. Other people turn to CLAP and pat her on the back, pulling her forward --

STANDS - SKY AND EVELYN

Not applauding like the people around them but looking around for Rayona --

JUDGE'S STAND

Rayona takes the belt buckle. Foxy's jacket is open -- the Announcer and the cowboys on the stand realize she's not Foxy. Ray gives the Announcer a shy smile. He pulls her hat off --

ANNOUNCER

Make that cowgirl, folks --

STANDS - SKY AND EVELYN

A BUZZ from the people around them, then LAUGHTER and wilder APPLAUSE --

EVELYN

My God, it's Rayona!

SKY

(confused) She's not in the program, hon --

DAYTON

Smiling, moving to see better --

JUDGE'S STAND -- RAYONA

Beaming, she raises the silver buckle over her head and shows it to the CLAPPING, WHISTLING crowd as we TRACK IN to a CLOSE-UP --

WIDE SHOT, EXT. RESERVATION - WINTER - DAY

We are back in the reverie Christine had on the highway driving to Ida's the first night, though now the shots are somewhere between color and black-and-white. There is NO NATURAL SOUND, only a slow, rhythmic DRUMBEAT and the HOWLING WINTER WIND over all the following shots. We see the line of MOURNERS, six carrying a coffin, outlined against the sky --

CHRISTINE

Following the box, dressed in black with no make-up on. We WIDEN slightly to see she has BABY RAYONA (1-year-old) in her arms. Rayona sucks the thumb of her mitten and touches her mother's face with her other hand --

TABLE

A cafeteria table standing among gravestones. The pall bearers lay the coffin on it --

FATHER HURLBURT (MID-40'S)

Reading a passage from his Bible. The WIND MOANS --

CHRISTINE

Looking around, as if she's an observer in a dream --

MOURNERS - HER POV

Ida Pauline, Dale Cree and Dayton in the foreground. Others we've seen before around and behind them. True sorrow, real tears. Willard Pretty Dog stands apart from the others --

FATHER HURLBURT

His hand rising -- he opens it and lets handful of soil fall--

COFFIN

The soil HITS on the DRUMBEAT and scatters on the lid --

MOURNERS

Tossing their handfuls of soil --

COFFIN

The soil beginning to blow off the lid in the WIND --

IDA

We HEAR HER VOICE as she begins to sing in a high, keening voice --

CU CHRISTINE - (SONG CONTINUES)

Looking down at the coffin, then to the others --

MOURNERS - CHRISTINE'S POV - (SONG CONTINUES)

Pointing at her wordlessly, accusation in their eyes --

CHRISTINE - (SONG CONTINUES)

Looks away from them, back down to the coffin. WE PAN AWAY from her, TILT to see the coffin, then CRANE DOWN closer and closer to the lid, till we PASS THROUGH it into DARKNESS --

DARKNESS

The SONG ENDS and with it with the WIND and the DRUMBEAT. We hear a TRUCK engine, DOOR SLAMS. We FADE IN -- PRESENT -- to DAYTON'S LIVING ROOM. It is SUNSET, and CHRISTINE wakes with a start on the living room couch. She sits up, out of it, then painfully stands, wearing Dayton's bathrobe --

INT/EXT. DOORWAY

Christine appears by the front door, opens and we STEP OUT with her. She shades her eyes against the setting sun --

YARD - CHRISTINE'S POV

Dayton is leading Babe out from the back of his trailer. Somebody familiar stands by him in silhouette against the sun. He turns to look at Christine -- it is Lee (18), dressed in the rodeo clothes Rayona was wearing --

CHRISTINE

Woozy and confused --

CHRISTINE

Lee?

YARD - CHRISTINE'S POV

The person is silhouetted again, walking toward her. When the face comes clear now it is Rayona's. Dayton follows her --

DAYTON

Look what I found.

3-SHOT

Christine is still confused, she looks to Dayton for explanation --

RAYONA

Don't you want to see me?

CHRISTINE

(blows) Aunt Ida's been worried sick! I've been calling all over Seattle for you!

RAYONA

I was working. At Bearpaw State Park?

CHRISTINE

Having fun! At some park. You're no goddam good.

RAYONA

But you left first!

CHRISTINE

That's right, blame me. (to Dayton) She has no heart. She wants to hurt me, sick as I am.

RAYONA

You tried that one on Dad. You're not sick.

A silence. Rayona sees what her mother looks like now, that she really is in terrible shape. She looks to Dayton, who steps in heartily to change the subject --

DAYTON

Hey, your kid is a star. She rode for Foxy Cree, near about busted that Babe of mine. She just wouldn't quit.

CHRISTINE

What are you talking about?

RAYONA

They gave me a buckle, Mom. (shows it) The rodeo at Havre.

CHRISTINE

Rayona can't ride. She's had three lessons --

DAYTON

She gets it from Lee, Christine. She's a natural. Lord, you should of seen her.

CONT'D.

Christine looks at both of them like they're speaking Swahili at her. She is dizzy with confusion --

CHRISTINE

I can't take this in. We'll sort it out tomorrow.

She turns unsteadily and DAYTON hurries to help her inside. We HOLD on RAY, left on the steps, worried about her mother --

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dayton stands over Christine, already under the covers, shaking --

DAYTON

Babe threw her three times -- she just kept getting back on --

CHRISTINE

She could have broken her neck.

DAYTON

Well you just don't worry and get some rest. She'll still be here in the morning.

He pulls the covers tight on her, moves and flicks the LIGHTS OFF --

CHRISTINE

Dayton?

DAYTON

Yeah?

CHRISTINE

Could you stay awhile tonight?

He sits on the bed by her, then lays back and turns to take her in his arms --

CHRISTINE

I thought I saw Lee today.

INT. IDA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

We look from the living room out the open front door into the yard. CRICKETS. There are no lights on, just a bit of moonlight washing in. We PAN slightly find Ida, sitting with her chair facing the door, staring out into the yard. She stands and we FOLLOW her to the wall. She reaches up for the light switch --

CU IDA'S HAND - FLASHBACK

Pausing at the old-fashioned light switch --

IDA (teenaged)
(Indian) I put this in myself. I haven't
tried it at night yet.

IDA (teenaged)

At the wall switch, her face hidden from us in the dark --

WILLARD
(off, Indian) When is the Father coming
back?

IDA
(Indian) He's not. I told him I'd get a
neighbor to take you home.

WILLARD
(off, Indian) I have to go --

IDA
(Indian) Willard, there's nobody here to
see you but me. And nobody cares what I
think.

Hard white LIGHT pops edges onto Ida's face as she flicks the switch. She is just eighteen now, though her bearing is older than her looks. She looks up at the ceiling fixture, then across the room --

REVERSE ANGLE

A man sits in the foreground with his back to us, silhouetted by the bare bulb hanging over the table. Ida stands at the far wall facing him. As she comes to the table we TRACK up to meet her. Ida sits, looking directly into the man's face. We PAN back with her gaze to the face of WILLARD PRETTY DOG. His face is a mess, one side badly burned, with patches of shiny new skin grafted on, an ear missing, part of his lip gone, the side of his neck scarred and red. He looks back at Ida with hopelessness and hatred in his eyes --

IDA

IDA

(Indian) You're better than I expected.

2-SHOT

WILLARD's bitter smile is twisted by the muscle damage. He speaks harshly --

WILLARD

(Indian) What did you expect?

IDA

(Indian) My sister heard you had the face of the devil.

WILLARD

(Indian) People are idiots.

IDA

(Indian) I heard you hadn't come out of your mother's house since they brought you home.

WILLARD

(Indian) Why should I?

IDA

(Indian, shrugs) Other men were hurt in the war. Some men were killed.

WILLARD

(Indian) What would you know about anything?

Ida looks back at him, irritated by the conceit of his self-pity --

IDA

(Indian) Do you know who my girl's father is?

WILLARD

(Indian) Some say it's me.

IDA

(Indian) Does that bother you?

WILLARD

(Indian) I don't care what people think.

CONT'D.

IDA

(Indian) Is that why you told the priest
not to let anyone know you were coming
here?

WILLARD is caught out, losing some of the small degree of
composure his attitude affords him. Ida stands --

IDA

(Indian) I'll go for Pauline. Her new
husband's got a car.

Ida starts past him but he reaches out and takes hold of her
arm to stop her. Ida holds her breath, hoping. He slides his
hand up to her face, softly touching her cheek with his
fingertips --

CU IDA

She holds her breath, presses his hand to her face. She looks
down at him --

WILLARD

He nods toward the light bulb above them --

WILLARD

(Indian) Would you turn that off?

EXT. YARD - DAY

Willard sits in a chair pulled out in the yard, his shirt off,
soaking up sun. Some pretty nasty furrows cut into his arm and
side. Christine, a toddler of two years, runs up and crawls in
his lap, not at all afraid of his looks. He opens his eyes,
smiles, then picks her up and holds her up over his head. Ida
appears behind them in the front door. She stops to watch,
something like a smile lighting on her face for the first time
in a long while. Willard lets her down into his arms, hugging
her --

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

Willard on horseback, galloping hard on the side of the hill.
We PAN with the horse till it brings us to Ida with Christine
on her shoulders in the FOREGROUND. We HOLD on them as they
turn to watch him flash by --

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Willard with his back to us, sitting up in the free-standing bathtub as Ida kneels by it, washing him with a sponge. She is a bit wit, playing with him. We see scars on one side of his back. He reaches out, takes a huge handful of her hair, pulls her close to him and they kiss --

INT. HOUSE - EVENING

Ida, tense, is making fry bread at the stove. She leaves it to bring a sugar bowl over to the table where Willard, stiff and uncomfortable, sits with his mother. MRS. PRETTY DOG is the mother-in-law from hell -- desperately dependant on her son, no one will ever be good enough for him. Ida is not even on the bottom of her list. She looks around, more impressed than she'd like to be --

MRS. PRETTY DOG

(Indian) You have electricity.

IDA

(Indian) Of course.

MRS. PRETTY DOG

(Indian) And a toilet indoors.

IDA

(Indian) I just put it in.

MRS. PRETTY DOG

(Indian) You've been a good nurse to my son. (hesitant) Will he come back here after the next operation or will he come home?

Ida bangs a bowl of jam down next to Mrs. Pretty Dog, shoots a look to Willard --

IDA

(Indian) Ask Willard.

WILLARD just keeps his eyes down and stirs sugar into his tea --

MRS. PRETTY DOG

(Indian) What will they do this time?

IDA

(Indian) He gets an ear made from something that feels like real. They'll work on his mouth and sew more skin on to smooth his face. (pause) He'll be handsome.

CONT'D.

Mrs. Pretty Dog smiles lovingly at Willard --

MRS. PRETTY DOG

(Indian) Like before. Willard was the
most handsome boy --

Ida sets fry bread and a spoon by Mrs. Pretty Dog --

IDA

(Indian) I was in his class. I saw him.

She crosses behind Willard, puts her hands on his shoulders then slides them down onto his chest. Mrs. Pretty Dog blanches -- this is obviously more than a nurse. Willard leans back against Ida's breasts and finally looks his mother in the eye --

WILLARD

(Indian) Eat before it gets cold, Mother.

INT. HOSPITAL BATHROOM - DAY

We hear ~~someone~~ OFF SCREEN, someone throwing up. Ida ENTERS SCREEN, leans over the sink, rubbing her face with cold water. She straightens, looks in the mirror. She turns profile to it., smooths her dress over her belly -- she's not showing yet. She gives the mirror a conspiratorial smile --

HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

Ida crossing the hallway, leading us to Father Hurlburt, standing with one foot in the examination room. He half-whispers to her, grave --

FATHER HURLBURT

(Indian) They're going to take them off,
now --

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - HANDS

We see Willard's hand with the missing fingers being squeezed by a woman's hand --

ROOM

CAMERA LOW behind WILLARD'S back as he sits in a chair. Mrs. Pretty Dog sits beside him, holding his hand. A DOCTOR leans down into him, carefully snipping and peeling away the bandages that wrap his head almost completely. Ida stands with Father Hurlburt beyond the doctor, watching, tense --

CU IDA

Looking into Willard's eyes --

WILLARD

His eyes scared in the slit between the bandages. He holds her gaze --

WILLARD - REVERSE ANGLE

We look over a piece of the doctor's shoulder as he removes the last layer of gauze from Willard's face --

MRS. PRETTY DOG

Gasps, covers her mouth with her hand, tears coming to her eyes --

CU IDA

She gives Willard a reassuring smile --

WILLARD - IDA'S POV

His face is transformed. He has a realistic-looking ear, his lip is full again, chin-line restored, skin red and a bit puffy but much less scarred than before. The DOCTOR hands him a mirror. As he brings it up to look it blocks Ida's view of his face --

2-SHOT

We see Ida in the foreground next to Father Hurlburt, who is beaming at the success --

FATHER HURLBURT

It's wonderful, doctor. It's like a miracle --

MRS. PRETTY DOG

(off, Indian) I prayed for this! I prayed every night for this to happen!

DOCTOR

(off) He was an excellent candidate. When the swelling goes down he'll look even better --

CONT'D.

MRS. PRETTY DOG

(off, Indian) Your life is starting over!
You have your second chance!

Ida's face darkens as she realizes what might happen --

WILLARD AND MRS. PRETTY DOG - IDA'S POV

Mrs. Pretty Dog is ecstatic to the point of thoughtlessness. Willard is still turning the mirror this way and that, rubbing his new ear --

MRS. PRETTY DOG

(Indian) We can go on with all the plans we had before! (to Doctor, English) When can he come home?

Willard puts the mirror down --

WILLARD

(Indian) I'll be going back to Ida's.

She looks as if he slapped her --

MRS. PRETTY DOG

(Indian) But you won't need a nurse now.

WILLARD

(Indian) She's more than my nurse, Mother. You know that.

MRS. PRETTY DOG

(Indian) But you can have anybody now! Why take a woman nobody else wants --

IDA, FATHER HURLBURT

Ida sets her jaw, looks to Willard for defense. Father Hurlburt watches her face --

WILLARD, MRS. PRETTY DOG

Willard looks to Ida with a look meant to be reassuring --

WILLARD

(Indian) Ida may not be beautiful,
Mother --

CU IDA

The words burning in her as he says them --

WILLARD

(off, Indian) She may not be very smart.
But when I needed her she stood by me. In
the Army I learned about loyalty --

WILLARD, MRS. PRETTY DOG

WILLARD

(Indian) Do you think I'm the kind of man
who could turn my back on her just because
I don't need her anymore?

IDA

(off) Willard.

The hardness in her tone snaps him out of his nobility. He and
his mother look up --

HOSPITAL ROOM

Ida's face is deadpan, as if she barely knows him --

IDA

(Indian) Your mother is right. It's better
if you go with her.

WILLARD

Ida --

IDA

(Indian) I'm glad you're cured. (softer)
This is the way it should be, Willard.

WILLARD

Upstaged, confused, but probably relieved deep down inside --

ROOM

Father Hurlburt turns to watch Ida step out of the room --

EXT. ROOF - MORNING

CHRISTINE walks out within a couple feet of the roof's edge, going up on her toes to peek over. There is clothesline tied around her waist. We SHIFT to see that Ida is holding the other end of it, sitting up on her favorite spot on the sunny roof. She is six months pregnant --

CHRISTINE

(Indian) I'm not afraid, Aunt Ida.

IDA

(Indian) I know. That's good.

CHRISTINE

(Indian) Is Willard coming again?

IDA

(Indian) No.

CHRISTINE

(Indian) It's lonely without him.

IDA

(Indian) I know. But pretty soon you'll have a little brother. Or sister.

CHRISTINE

(Indian) When?

IDA

(Indian) September.

CHRISTINE

(Indian) Is that far away? Do I have to wait a long time?

Ida sighs --

IDA

(Indian) Not so long. After it happens, it will be hard to remember it was ever just the two of us.

CHRISTINE takes this in, sits and carefully slides her butt down so she can dangle her legs over the edge. Ida keeps the clothesline fairly taut --

CHRISTINE

(Indian) I could do this without the rope, Aunt Ida.

IDA

(Indian) I know, Christine. That's good.

CONT'D.

We PAN AWAY from them, out over the roof edge, then crane down to the yard. Ida (mature) in the -- PRESENT -- stands pulling her coat on, carrying the high school yearbook under her arm. She sets her face, and we stay on the porch and watch her head off over the hill --

INT. LIVING ROOM - RAYONA - MORNING

Rayona, in the jeans and t-shirt she slept in, eases off the fold-out couch. Every muscle in her body is screeching in pain --

EXT. CORRAL - DAY

Dressed to ride, Rayona stiffly walks toward Babe, who regards her with lowered head, suspicious --

RAYONA

I'm supposed to get right back on you,
Babe. You understand this is nothing
personal --

She swings up on Babe's back and WHAM! is jolted forward by a vicious kick. A second kick sends her flying --

GROUND

~~WE! Rayona hits the dirt on the other side of the fence --~~

CU RAYONA

Lying still on her belly, side of her face resting in soft dirt, content to be motionless. We hear FOOTSTEPS. She shifts her eyes up --

2-SHOT

CHRISTINE sits down next to Rayona. She's still in the bathrobe but more with the program this morning, holding a cup of coffee. RAY's position doesn't seem unusual to her. She ponders a long moment --

CHRISTINE

I'm forty years old and I lost my faith for
twenty-five of those because of that damn
letter.

CONT'D.

RAYONA

Huh?

CHRISTINE

The letter the Blessed Virgin gave to Lucy at Fatima.

RAYONA

Lucy who?

CHRISTINE

They won't talk about it now. But the whole time I was growing up the nuns kept on us about the Letter, the Letter, the Letter. The Pope was supposed to open it first minute of 1960, and by then either the Communists in Russia would be converted or zap -- the world was going to end. There was a rumor the Pope peeked at it early and fainted dead away. I was scared crapless. I read the Bible, the Apocalypse, right? And somewhere it said you were supposed to get up on the roof. I rehearsed getting up there through the attic window at Aunt Ida's. New Year's Eve I made a perfect Confession and turned down the first party I was ever invited to.

RAYONA

(dry) Did the world end?

CHRISTINE

Not a goddam thing happened. I stayed up till three listening to the radio, just in case God was on -- Pacific time. Russia was still Communist. The world was still here.

RAYONA

What a downer.

CHRISTINE

The next day I confronted Sister Alvina, the one who suckered me into making the nine First Fridays six times with the Letter business, and you know what she says to me?

RAYONA

Uh-uh.

CONT'D.

CHRISTINE

It's a mystery. A mystery! I never went back to church again.

RAYONA

Maybe this Lucy faked the letter. Kids do that stuff sometimes.

CHRISTINE considers this --

CHRISTINE

Yeah. But why did the Pope faint, then?

Rayona considers this, then looks up as she senses somebody.
CHRISTINE joins her gaze --

IDA - THEIR POV

Standing with the road behind her, the yearbook under her arm, looking down at them --

CHRISTINE AND RAYONA

Both pretty surprised --

CHRISTINE

Aunt Ida ...

IDA

I'm glad you found her.

CHRISTINE

Me too.

Pause while IDA considers leaving ~~now that she knows CHRISTINE and RAYONA are back together~~

CHRISTINE (making the effort)

Why don't you join us?

And the camera PULLS BACK as IDA moves closer and sits with CHRISTINE and RAYONA, and ~~several~~ all three gaze at BABE, proudly snorting and trotting around his corral.