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DEAD MAN.

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FOR EDUCATIONAL
PURPOSES ONLY

"It is preferable never to travel with a dead man."

-- Henri Michaux

BLACK:

The hypnotic, chugging and clattering sounds of a 19th century train fade up on the soundtrack.

SLOW FADE FROM BLACK TO:

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Moving light flickers across the lids of CLOSED EYES. Gradually the EYES open, emerging from sleep. They blink drowsily, then shift, gazing off to their left.

On the dirty surface of a train window, faded, now illegible graffiti has been scrawled in the dust. Blurred, abstract shapes move across it.

Slowly the focus shifts, defining the shapes as details of the passing landscape. Overgrown fields dwarf a simple wooden farmhouse. The house floats out of view and the fields become forests. The forests are replaced by more fields, then rolling hills. The hills become flat plains. Several abandoned, broken conastoga wagons pass through the frame of the train window, their tattered canvas coverings flapping in the strong wind, thick weeds growing through their wheel spokes. Then more woods, which again are replaced by empty plains.

EXT. TRAIN - DAY

The locomotive's smoke stack coughs out clouds of black smoke as it hurtles along a stretch of straight track. It pulls behind it a low coal car, then a single passenger car, which is followed by two windowless box cars.

A FIREMAN can be seen standing precariously on top of the coal car, frantically shoveling coal into the open back of the locomotive.

INT. TRAIN WINDOW - DAY

Again the vast plains pass by beyond the train window. In the distance what looks like the remnants of a burned-out tepee village goes by. Then more empty plains.

INT. TRAIN'S PASSENGER CAR - DAY

BILL BLAKE continues to gaze out the dusty window at the passing landscape. He appears to be in his late twenties or early thirties, and is very neat. Under a bowler-style hat, his longish hair is neatly tucked behind his ears. He wears a starched white shirt and tie under a simply-tailored, plaid serge suit.

Rowdy laughter interrupts his thoughts. BLAKE's dark eyes drift from the window to the train car's interior. He looks around furtively at the other passengers. All are men, rough-looking and dirty, dressed in animal skins. Laughing, one passes an earthen flask to another, who swills down some of its contents. Several others look on, clutching long rifles and mumbling incoherently.

Just then, behind them, BLAKE sees the train's FIREMAN enter the passenger car. He is about the same age as BLAKE, weasel-thin, and manic-looking. He wears a railroad cap and most of a railway uniform, though the shirt under his jacket is checkered flannel. All of his clothes (and most of his face) are covered with black coal dust. Apparently taking a break from his shoveling, he staggers down the aisle toward where BLAKE is sitting.

BLAKE looks away to avoid eye contact, but the FIREMAN, as though sensing this, throws himself into the empty seat directly across from him. BLAKE looks over at the FIREMAN, who stares back at BLAKE, then at his clothes, sizing him up.

FIREMAN
(looking into Blake's eyes,
speaking with the remnants of
an Irish accent)

So, what's your story, then?

BLAKE

What?

FIREMAN

Everybody's got some kinda story,
don't they? So what in hell's name is
yours?

BLAKE
(uncomfortably)

Me? Uh... I don't really, uh, have...

FIREMAN
(cutting him off aggressively)

Where you from?

BLAKE
(caught off guard)

I'm from Cleveland.

FIREMAN

Cleveland! Where the hell's that?

BLAKE

It's in Ohio, back East, in the North
near Lake Erie...

FIREMAN
(interrupting again)

Got folks back there?

BLAKE
(looking away)

No. Not anymore. I lost both my
parents just recently, and I, uh...

FIREMAN
(now gazing out the window)

Sorry to hear that. [brief pause] No
wife?

BLAKE

Uh, no.

FIREMAN

No fiancé?

BLAKE

No. No fiancé either.

The FIREMAN looks back over at BLAKE, directly into his eyes. BLAKE quickly breaks the eye contact.

BLAKE

I did have a fiancé, but she, uh, she changed her mind and she, uh,...

FIREMAN

(completing the sentence)

She found herself somebody else, huh?

Well all that still don't explain why

in the name of Satan you'd be wantin'

to go all the way out here, does it?

All the fuckin' way to hell.

BLAKE immediately fishes for something in the inside pocket of his suit jacket. Carefully, he extracts an envelope, and from that a folded piece of paper -- a typed letter.

BLAKE

(unfolding the letter)

Oh, well, uh, I got this job out

here, in the town of Machine. See?

He holds out the letter, but when the FIREMAN reaches for it he pulls it back, careful not to let the coal-stained fingers touch the precious document.

FIREMAN
(derisively)

Machine? That's the end of the line,
ya know.

BLAKE

This hereby guarantees me the job of
accountant at the Dickinson Metal
Works in the Town of Machine, just as
soon as I can get there.

FIREMAN
(looking away from Blake)

Is that so. Machine, huh. Well, I
wouldn't know 'cuz I don't read. But
I know I sure would never trust no
words writ' down on no piece of
paper. Not from no Dickinson in the
town of Machine, that's fer sure.

BLAKE
(carefully refolding the letter
and replacing it, and envelope,
back inside his suit)

Oh, no, its been confirmed. That's
what this letter...

FIREMAN
(again looking directly at Blake)

So is that it, then?

BLAKE
(confused)

What?

FIREMAN

That's your story, the same old
story? Goin' out West to find your
goddamn story?

BLAKE

Well, uh, I guess you could say...

FIREMAN

(leaning in and slapping a dirty
hand on Blake's leg)

More likely to find your goddamn
grave!

The FIREMAN leans back, and a split-second later LOUD
GUNFIRE erupts from the interior of the train-car. In a
panic, BLAKE throws himself onto the floor. Covering his
head, he shouts to the FIREMAN over the sound of blasting
rifles.

BLAKE

What is it? Indian attack?

He looks up from under his hat, only to see the FIREMAN
still calmly seated and watching, almost obsessively, out
the window of the moving train. His eyes seem newly
glazed-over, drugged.

FIREMAN

(without taking his eyes from
the window)

Hell no, not this time. They're just
shootin' at buffalo. A regular
shootin' gallery. [pause, his eyes
lighting up from another kill]
Government says we killed over a
million of 'em last year alone.

(more)

FIREMAN (cont'd)

[another brief pause due to another
kill] Gets rid of the injuns too,
somehow.

BLAKE pulls himself up, just enough to peek out the window. He sees a herd of buffalo kicking up clouds of dust as they run across the flat landscape moving in the same direction as the train. Each time a shot goes off inside the train car, a corresponding buffalo drops to the ground and comes to a rolling stop just before being left in the dusty background.

The car's interior is filled with whoops and yells from the shooters, as well as smoke from their rifles. BLAKE, wide-eyed, stares out the window in amazement, flinching each time another gunshot goes off.

MUSIC CUE AND FADE TO BLACK

MAIN TITLE SEQUENCE (white on black)

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN OF MACHINE TRAIN STOP - AFTERNOON

The train behind him, BLAKE stands in the foreground holding his new-looking suitcase. He is shell-shocked from his voyage and out of context with the other passengers bustling past him.

To his right is a large sign which identifies the town of 'MACHINE'. Under this, in smaller letters it reads 'HOME OF DICKINSON METAL WORKS'.

BLAKE looks around him in a daze. The town has no train depot, but instead a strange wooden platform; a crude wooden turntable with railroad tracks across it.

As soon as BLAKE is several yards away from the train, scruffy, drunken looking men appear out of nowhere, and begin to turn the train platform around, pointing the locomotive in the opposite direction.

Other men, as though competing in a contest, simultaneously begin to unload cargo from the two boxcars. These, as well as the passenger car, are now uncoupled from the locomotive and coal car.

BLAKE notices that many of the voices swirling around him are in languages he doesn't understand. Confused, he makes his way through the chaos. When he stops, he finds himself looking at the town of MACHINE.

It consists of one main dirty street, lined with newly built, dirty, wooden structures. In the distance, directly past the end of the street, is a large FACTORY made of blackened brick. Surrounding it are small, black, wooden buildings which apparently house its workers. The FACTORY's single smoke stack releases streams of black smoke into the sky, creating the effect of a storm cloud hovering over the entire town.

Behind him BLAKE hears the sound of the train. He turns to see it departing, returning in the direction from which it came. Several large wooden carts filled with freight unloaded from the train rattle past him. He watches them curiously, wondering why the carts are pulled by men instead of horses.

BLAKE's eyes drift beyond them, again to the town in front of him. A single sign identifies the only street as LUDLOW STREET. BLAKE looks from the town to the sign to the town again. Surrounding the town on all sides is a cleared area, a kind of no-man's land, and beyond that thick forests that sweep upward into encircling mountain sides.

He takes a deep breath and begins to walk stiffly down the single street, directly toward the factory. Clutching his suitcase and trying not to call attention to himself, he surveys various activities as they occur around him.

Two ragged young boys, chanting something in a sing-song cadence, attempt to set fire to the town's TELEGRAPH OFFICE, but are chased away by an older woman wielding a rusty axe.

Some drunken men are engaged in a spitting contest, betting on who can spit the furthest distance. BLAKE unwittingly walks through their field of contest, getting spit on in the process.

He passes some mangy horses tight to a post. One urinates as he passes.

A short distance later, in a narrow alleyway between the SALOON and another building, BLAKE sees a man hunched over what appears to be another person. Impulsively, BLAKE stops and takes a step or two toward the alleyway, sensing something is wrong. When he gets closer he sees that the hunched man is holding a revolver to the head of a woman, who is kneeling in front of him. The man holds her hair as her head bobs up and down giving him a blow-job at gunpoint. Just as the wide-eyed BLAKE realizes what is going on the man looks over his shoulder. Seeing him, the man makes a quick movement of his arm, and suddenly the gun is pointed directly at BLAKE. BLAKE's eyes grow even wider. The man cocks the hammer of the six shooter; his other hand still tangled in, and pulling up and down on the woman's hair. In a panic BLAKE literally jumps out of the way and begins walking much more quickly down the street.

As BLAKE nears the FACTORY, he jumps again, startled at the sudden movement of someone appearing just in front of him. It is a small girl, her dirty hands holding tight to the rusted barrel of a broken twelve-gage shotgun. The little girl thrusts the remains of the gun toward BLAKE's chest.

YOUNG GIRL
(shouting)

BOOM!

With a start BLAKE flinches, automatically closing his eyes. A moment later, when he opens them, the girl is gone.

Again, BLAKE takes a deep breath. In front of him is the FACTORY. Large block letters chiselled into a stone panel on its facade simply read the word 'DICKINSON'. Below it is a large rectangular doorway, in the center of which several sweating men load iron barrel-hoops onto a large wagon.

Still holding tight to his suitcase, BLAKE reaches into his inside suit pocket with his free hand. He carefully pulls out the envelope, and walks toward the FACTORY's doorway.

He awkwardly maneuvers his way around the men loading the wagon, and slips inside the building.

INT. FACTORY

BLAKE finds himself standing on the wide-planked floor of the factory's main room; the deafening machine room. It's size is like that of a great hall, or very large church.

Machines driven by giant gear wheels clank and grind, while men load metal scraps onto wooden carts. Beyond, workers hammer at pieces of metal jerking past them on a noisy conveyer. Still others, shirtless and sweating, pull glowing iron loops from a flaming furnace.

BLAKE makes his way down a single aisle which cuts through the center of the big room. At the end of the aisle is a short wooden staircase leading up to a small room with glass windows which overlook the machine room floor, the factory office.

BLAKE heads toward the wooden steps, then glancing back over his shoulder, stumbles up them. He knocks on the door to the office, but amidst the din of the factory his actions seem to create no sound at all. Again he looks over his shoulder, then turns back to the door. Turning the door knob with the hand holding his envelope, BLAKE opens the door and enters the office.

INT. FACTORY OFFICE

Three men in shirt sleeves shovel large papers and blueprints across the surface of a broad wooden table. They take no notice of BLAKE who, after closing the door, stands stupidly before them with his wrinkled new suit and his suitcase. Suddenly BLAKE turns his head and looks behind him.

There on the wall, as though looking over BLAKE's shoulder, is the large painted portrait of a strong, severe-looking man wearing a black suit, big black head, and smoking a long cigar. A small brass plate on the frame identifies him as 'JOHN DICKINSON'.

BLAKE turns back toward the men in the room. He clears his throat, but remains unnoticed. Putting down his suitcase he extracts the letter from its envelope.

BLAKE
(unsure of himself)

Excuse me...

The men look up from the table.

BLAKE

Uh, is, uh, Mr. Krause here?

The man in the center [MR. KRAUSE] -- a middle-aged, mean-looking man, barrel-chested, with the stub of a cigar in the corner of his mouth -- responds curtly.

MR. KRAUSE

Whaddya want?

BLAKE
(extending his hand)

Mr. Krause? It's a pleasure to meet
you. I'm Bill Blake, the new
accountant. Uh, from Cleveland.

KRAUSE doesn't shake his hand, but instead looks at him
coldly, blankly. There is an awkward pause, then BLAKE
holds his letter out to MR. KRAUSE.

BLAKE

You sent me this letter confirming
the position, so...

Before he can complete the sentence KRAUSE, annoyed,
snatches the letter from BLAKE's hand and scrutinizes it.

MR. KRAUSE
(his eyes on the letter)

What the hell are you doin' here?

BLAKE

I'm, I'm here to report for my new
job. I just got off the train, uh,
just now.

MR. KRAUSE

This here letter is postmarked over
two months ago. [pause] Which makes
you about a month too late.

KRAUSE then gestures to a thin, infirm-looking man with
spectacles seated to his right.

MR. KRAUSE

This here is Mr. Olafsen. He's our
new accountant.

OLAFSEN nods meekly, then looks back down at the
tabletop, at the stacks of paperwork in front of him.

BLAKE
(becoming pale)

There must be... must be some mistake!

MR. KRAUSE

On your part, yeah. I think we sent
you a telegram, and that was over a
month ago.

BLAKE

Telegram? I never received any tele...

MR. KRAUSE
(cutting him off)

Look, Mr. Black, I'm a busy man. Mr.
Dickinson don't pay me for no idle
conversation.

BLAKE
(flustered and upset)

But, but that letter assures me of a
job! I spent everything I had left
after my folks' funeral just
travelling here!

After a brief pause KRAUSE shakes his head and hands the
letter back to BLAKE. Reluctantly, BLAKE's trembling hand
takes back the useless piece of paper, desperation
flooding into his eyes.

MR. KRAUSE

Listen, Mr. Black, I've got work to do here. This ain't my problem. Tell you what, though. If you come back an' see me tomorrow morning I'll see if maybe I can hire you somewhere on the floor out there. Best I can do.

BLAKE

But... I want to speak to Mr. Dickinson.

In unison, the three men look up and glare at BLAKE.

MR. KRAUSE
(laughing sinisterly)

No, I don't think you wanna do that. Just take my advice and come back tomorrow.

There is a deadly silence, then KRAUSE speaks again.

MR. KRAUSE

Now, if you'll kindly excuse us.

BLAKE stands motionless as the men return to their papers and blueprints.

BLAKE
(mumbling to himself)

But... tomorrow?... somewhere on the floor out there...

He stands there for a moment longer, invisible to the others. Then, as though having just received a prison sentence, he slowly turns. Again he sees the portrait of John Dickinson looking sternly down on him. BLAKE looks away, not able to make eye contact even with a painted portrait.

Closing the door behind him, he descends the several steps and slowly walks back through the cacophonous machine room. He moves like a phantom, oblivious to the men who repeatedly shove him out of their way as they work. Eventually he makes his way out through the large rectangular doorway.

EXT. MACHINE - DUSK

Outside, the daylight has now faded into dusk. A pale and confused BLAKE, on the verge of tears, stands for a moment looking blankly ahead at the miserable town of MACHINE.

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Night has fallen. His suitcase next to him, BLAKE sits on the edge of a wooden walkway next door to the GREEN DOOR SALOON. His arms are wrapped around a half-empty bottle of whiskey, and with a dazed expression he listens to the mixture of rowdy voices and tuneless piano music coming out of the saloon.

Two men wearing muddy buckskin and matted fur exit the saloon. They take no notice of BLAKE, and disappear into the darkness. A moment later, BLAKE jumps at the sound of a GUNSHOT not far away, then hears the two men laughing. Their voices fade as they move even further away from BLAKE.

He looks down at this closed fist, then opens the hand, palm upward. In the hand are his last remaining coins, and he begins to count them, adding them up in his head.

Just then a figure is shoved and lands in the muddy street next to where BLAKE is sitting. It is a YOUNG WOMAN [THEL RUSSELL]. BLAKE springs to his feet, his mouth open, his eyes wide, and just stands there. The coins drop from his open hand.

Flowers fall into the mud from a basket the YOUNG WOMAN is carrying. As she gets to her feet, a big drunken MAN appears in the doorway of the SALOON. He spits and calls after her rudely with a voice like gravel.

MAN

We liked ya a lot better when you was
still a whore.

The YOUNG WOMAN whirls and kicks the MAN on his upper leg, but the blow has no effect, as though his leg was made of wood. He laughs as he turns and goes back inside. The YOUNG WOMAN looks down at the flowers, then begins to brush the dirt and mud from her dress.

THEL RUSSELL
(to herself)

Shithead...

BLAKE has not moved and stands there stupidly still clutching the bottle under one arm. He is in awe of her. Her beauty is wild, in a way unfamiliar to him. Her hair is dishevelled under a bonnet which is untied under her chin, and her faded dress is not at all provocative which seems, somehow, not to suit her. Her eyes, particularly, seem wild to BLAKE. They are looking at him. She has noticed him staring and now stares back.

THEL RUSSELL

Well, why don't ya just paint my
portrait?

Her sarcasm takes a moment to sink in before BLAKE reacts.

BLAKE

I'm... I'm sorry.

She sighs and looks away. As she moves back and kneels to pick up the flowers, BLAKE rushes over to help her, crouching next to her. She fishes for the flowers that aren't muddied, placing them back into her basket. BLAKE places one, a white rose, on top of the others, but she snatches it out of the basket and flings it back into the mud.

THEL RUSSELL
(without looking over at Blake)

That one's no good. It's ruined.

BLAKE carefully selects another flower and puts it in the basket, just before she stands up, the flower almost falling back into the mud. BLAKE stands too. She looks right into his eyes. He quickly looks away.

THEL RUSSELL
(coldly)

Thank you.

BLAKE
(still avoiding her eyes)

Oh, uh, you're welcome.

Neither one moves, and when BLAKE looks back at her, she is looking down at the bottle of whisky cradled in his arm. BLAKE looks at the bottle, then back at the YOUNG WOMAN.

BLAKE

Oh, do you want... to have a drink?

She looks at him, her eyes now smiling a little.

THEL RUSSELL
(after a brief pause)

No. Not really.

CUT TO BLACK AND FADE UP ON:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

BLAKE and the YOUNG WOMAN sit in the half-darkness near a narrow alleyway, drinking. The out-of-tune piano music from the SALOON down the street can still be heard faintly, now sounding even more confused, or somehow oriental.

They sit on a wide baseboard, the WOMAN's legs outstretched, her feet crossed at the ankles and resting on BLAKE's upright suitcase. BLAKE stares at her ankles, unable to look for too long into her eyes.

BLAKE

You, uh, sell flowers?

She takes a drink, and looks at the basket at the ground next to her.

THEL RUSSELL

Sometimes I do, yeah.

While she is talking her fingers select a white rose from the basket.

THEL RUSSELL
(handing Blake the flower)

Here.

He takes the flower and looks at her face.

BLAKE

Thanks. It's... it's beautiful, like
you.

BLAKE begins to thread the stem through his lapel, but
her hand stops his.

THEL RUSSELL

Hey, wait! Aren't ya gonna even look
at it?

BLAKE
(confused)

What?

He looks at the flower carefully, then back at her.

BLAKE
(unsure of what to say)

It's a... white rose. [pause] Thank
you.

THEL RUSSELL

No, stupid. You didn't really look.

She takes the flower from his hands and looks down at it.
Parting the petals with long, thin fingers.

THEL RUSSELL
(half to herself)

It's not a real white rose.

BLAKE

It's not?

Her eyes stay on the flower as she nods her head.

THEL RUSSELL

It's paper.

She hands it back to him, looking in his eyes. He looks at the flower more carefully, touching its petals, while she gazes off into the darkness.

THEL RUSSELL
(a kind of resignation in her voice)

Yeah. Paper flowers. I make 'em out of paper.

BLAKE
(looking at her)

You made all those flowers?

She takes a drink, then leans over toward him. Taking the flower from his fingers, she threads it through his lapel, her face now close to his. She looks into his eyes.

THEL RUSSELL
Hey, you wanna go upstairs? To my room?

BLAKE
(awkwardly)
Oh, uh, no, I don't think, uh,...

CUT TO BLACK AND FADE UP ON:

INT. THEL RUSSELL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Faint light filtered through a half-opened, shuttered window mixes strangely with the light of a single candle. On the bed in the center of the cluttered room, BLAKE and the YOUNG WOMAN are making love. She is on her knees and elbows, with BLAKE on his knees behind her. As she rocks her body back against him, his hands innocently tangle themselves in her long hair, pulling her head back slightly.

A short time later, the two fall forward, breathing heavily, their bodies entwining into each other. Then they lie still, drunk and sleepy.

BLAKE's longjohns are only partially still on, but he still wears shoes and socks, while the YOUNG WOMAN wears only dark, thigh-high socks, and a black corsetted bodice which is half-untied.

Around them the room is filled with flowers; on the night stands, the dresser top, the windowsill. Flowers lie in a pile on a small table, others are in baskets tied in bundles, while more flowers are scattered on the floor between small piles of discarded clothing. There is also a wooden card table with flower-making supplies on its surface; scissors, small rolls of paper in several shades, wires for stems, pieces of cloth, a glue pot and brushes...

The WOMAN sighs, her head shifting a little closer to BLAKE's. She looks at the ceiling.

THEL RUSSELL

Hey, what's your name?

BLAKE

Blake.

THEL RUSSELL

That's a funny first name.

BLAKE

No, Blake's my last name. [pause] My first name is Bill.

THEL RUSSELL

Oh. That's not so bad, [pause] hey Bill, you got any tobacco anywhere?

BLAKE

No, I don't.

THEL RUSSELL

Damn.

BLAKE

(after a pause)

What's your name?

She has turned from him, and is looking through a drawer in the night stand next to her.

THEL RUSSELL

Russell.

BLAKE

Russell. [pause] But... That's a boy's name, usually, isn't it?

THEL RUSSELL

(turning back to him, laughing)

No, stupid. Russell's my last name. Like Blake is yours, get it?

BLAKE

Well, what's your first name, then?

THEL RUSSELL

(looking away)

I won't tell you.

BLAKE

Why not?

THEL RUSSELL

'Cuz, you'll say it's a funny name.

BLAKE

Yeah, but at first you thought my name was funny.

THEL RUSSELL

So?

BLAKE

So, what's your first name?

THEL RUSSELL
(quietly, after a pause)

Thel.

BLAKE

What?

THEL RUSSELL
(louder)

Thel!

BLAKE

Thel. [pause] That's a beautiful name.

THEL RUSSELL

It is?

BLAKE
(aloud to himself)

Thel...

THEL RUSSELL
(after a pause)

Hey, Bill, could you look over in
that drawer on your side an' see if
maybe there's some tobacco in there
I forgot about?

BLAKE

What?

He turns and opens the drawer in the small table on his
side of the bed. There is no tobacco, but he pulls out a
Colt revolver and turns back, holding it up. It is nickel-
plated with ivory-colored grips.

THEL RUSSELL
(calmly)

Watch it. That's loaded.

BLAKE
(looking at the gun)

Why do you have this?

THEL RUSSELL

'Cuz this is America, stupid.

She leans over and kisses him, his arm holding the gun falling limply between them.

She pulls away a little and looks into his eyes.

THEL RUSSELL
(softly)

Hey Bill. [pause] You think you might
stay around, in town for a while?

BLAKE sighs and looks past her at the flowers overflowing from baskets on the windowsill. In the half-light they have a magical quality.

BLAKE

You made all of these flowers?

THEL RUSSELL
(glancing around her room)

Yeah. [pause] If I ever get the
money, I'd like to make 'em out of
cloth. Silk. [pause] An' I put a
little drop of perfume, French
perfume, on each one.

She looks back over at BLAKE, then moves a few inches closer to him. She strokes his hair.

THEL RUSSELL
(quietly)

You didn't answer me.

BLAKE

What?

THEL RUSSELL

I asked if you gonna stay in town for
awhile?

BLAKE
(distantly)

I don't know...

THEL RUSSELL

I kinda wish you would.

She leans in and kisses his forehead.

BLAKE
(half to himself)

Thel... [pause] Silk flowers...

His hand finds her leg, and caresses it.

BLAKE

Your skin feels like silk.

She wiggles a little, laughing.

THEL RUSSELL

Well, your underwear feels like
goddamn sandpaper!

BLAKE laughs with her, then the room is quiet. The
strange, distant piano music from the SALOON seems to
leak in through the walls, as they lie there, holding
each other.

Suddenly the door to the room flies open, as though being
kicked in. The intrusion causes THEL to jerk half-
upright, while BLAKE flinches, his eyes widening with
concern.

A MAN [CHARLIE DICKINSON] stands in the doorway, young,
handsome and drunk. He is unshaven, his clothes caked
with dirt. In one hand he holds a small cloth sack -- an
opened whisky bottle in the other. Seeing the two in bed
together, the grin on his face slides off, quickly
replaced by a slight psychotic twitch around his dark
eyes.

THEL RUSSELL
(loudly, semi-hysterical)

Charlie? [pause] What the hell do you
think you're doin' in here? Get the
hell out, now!

The YOUNG MAN's eyes are now fixed on BLAKE, remaining
there as he speaks.

CHARLIE DICKINSON

I found gold, Thel. [pause] A whole
lotta gold. [then, shaking the small
cloth bag in his hand] This here is
only a little of it.

THEL RUSSELL
(some fear now detectable in her
strong voice)

I said get out! A year later you
think you can just walk right in here
like you're still my fiancé? Will ya
just get out of my room!

THEL reaches over and grabs a bottle with a rose in it
from the night stand. She flings it toward the MAN
(CHARLIE DICKINSON) in the doorway. He moves slightly to
dodge the bottle, which hits the door frame and bounces
off without breaking.

The MAN's eyes remain locked on BLAKE. He drops the
bottle in his hand to the floor, which shatters, then
pulls a pistol from under his belt. Pointing it at BLAKE,
he kicks the door closed behind him.

CHARLIE DICKINSON
(addressing Blake)

Just what is goin' on here? What do
you think you're doin' with my woman?
I think you are a dead man.

BLAKE's fingers tighten around the pistol at his side, hidden in the bedclothes.

THEL RUSSELL
(screaming)

I'm not your woman! I made that clear
before you went off lookin' for your
goddamn gold!

The MAN cocks the hammer of his Colt pistol.

CHARLIE DICKINSON
(through clenched teeth)

Get outta the way, Thel.

His face twitching, MAN cocks the gun. In a frenzied instant, he fires it just as THEL throws herself onto BLAKE. The bullet rips through her neck, splattering blood on BLAKE. In the next second BLAKE, trembling, raises THEL's gun toward the MAN. The MAN quickly fires again, hitting BLAKE in the chest. With a jerky, insane motion, BLAKE fires back. The bullet tears through his attacker's face. The MAN flies back against the door and slides to the floor, bringing down on top of him the small table covered with THEL's paper flowers. He lies there motionless, his face a bloody mess, his chest covered with white, blood-splattered roses.

Silence. As blood leaks from his chest, BLAKE is frozen, petrified. The room is completely still. He touches THEL. Her eyes roll back in her head. She is dead. A horrifying coldness creeps into every detail of the room. In extreme shock, BLAKE begins to tremble uncontrollably. He caresses THEL's hair for a moment, his other hand moving to his chest in a futile effort to stop the streaming blood. There is another pause. BLAKE is now shaking violently, his breathing heavily and uncontrolled, as though gasping for air.

Some awareness of the situation returns to him as he hears footsteps outside in the hallway. Someone is coming up the staircase. Pistol still in hand, BLAKE jumps from the bed and haphazardly gathers up his clothes -- including his hat and suit -- but not his suitcase. Kicking the shutters open, he inadvertently scatters more flowers to the floor, before disappearing through the window.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Half falling, BLAKE lands in a small alley next to the BOARDING HOUSE. A few of THEL's flowers float silently down after him, landing around him in the mud. Getting to his feet, his chest bleeding badly, his eyes wide with fear and shock, he looks up and down the alleyway. At one end he sees a saddled horse, a pinto, tied to a post. Clutching his clothes and pistol, he runs frenetically toward the horse. With great difficulty, and stubborn resistance from the pinto, BLAKE finally succeeds in pulling himself onto the saddle. With the horse kicking and snorting, stopping and starting, BLAKE rides off berserk into the night.

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - MORNING

Some time during the night BLAKE has lost consciousness. Hearing the neigh of a horse, his eyes open slowly, his vision blurred. Rays of daylight stream through the forest's mottled canopy. Then, as though in a dream, BLAKE sees the vague form of a very large figure kneeling over him.

As the details become sharper, a shock-wave of fear floods over him. The figure is a massive Indian ("NOBODY") with one knee on BLAKE's abdomen, his hands busily digging into BLAKE's chest with a long, tarnished hunting knife.

BLAKE lets out a scream of pure fright, and struggles violently. In contrast, the huge INDIAN effortlessly holds BLAKE in place by sitting on top of him. Coughing and writhing, BLAKE looks up into the INDIAN's face.

It is a big face, moon-shaped, lineless, framed by wild black hair and feathers. Wide antlers sprout from a deer's head worn on top of the INDIAN's head. His clothes are a strange mixture of various animal skins decorated with feathers and beads, with a European-style waistcoat worn over them. All around his waist hang small leather pouches of different shapes and sizes.

The INDIAN's mysterious, wide-set eyes look down into BLAKE's. Somehow calmed by them, he ceases to struggle. After a pause, the INDIAN lessens his grip on BLAKE and speaks English in a low, hypnotic voice.

NOBODY

There is white man's metal next to
your heart. I tried to cut it out,
but it's too deep inside. The knife
would cut the heart instead, and
release the spirit from inside.

[pause] Stupid fucking white man.

There is another pause. The INDIAN stares at BLAKE intensely as though sealing his words into BLAKE's eyes. As the big INDIAN backs away, BLAKE, in great pain, sits up slightly, watching him, then looks down at his wound. A small amount of fresh blood is leaking out, soaking into the dried blood already on his chest and clothing.

Too weak to move, BLAKE looks around hazily. He sees the INDIAN disappear behind an unfamiliar horse. It has a decorated blanket thrown across its back, strange 'saddlebags' made of skunk pelts, and an odd assortment of feathers and shells laced around its neck. Also tied to the horse are more small deerskin pouches, like those the INDIAN wears around his waist.

To his other side, BLAKE sees the saddled pinto from MACHINE tied to a thin tree. The pinto appears to look straight at him -- its presence alone recalling the horrifying experience of the night before.

BLAKE again looks down at his wound, and above it notices the white rose THEL gave him, still perfectly intact and threaded through his lapel. He then looks up again, and sees the INDIAN, now kneeling by a ready fire which BLAKE did not notice before. The INDIAN appears to be cooking something. Retrieving a gourd-shaped object from the flames, he then returns to BLAKE, sitting cross-legged on the ground next to him.

Without speaking and without resistance from BLAKE, the INDIAN pulls BLAKE's coat open, exposing the bloody hole in his chest. He takes a wet, paste-like vegetal substance from the gourd and methodically applies it to BLAKE's wound. BLAKE watches the process with a passive, almost childlike expression. When the INDIAN has finished applying the medicinal poultice, he presses his huge hand over the area, holding his palm in the place for several seconds. When he removes his hand, he looks directly at BLAKE.

NOBODY

Do you have tobacco?

BLAKE
(groggily)

Tobacco? Uh, no. No, I don't smoke.

The INDIAN is visibly upset by this response. He begins roughly rifling through BLAKE's pockets, but finds only the crumpled LETTER and flings it away. Standing up abruptly, the INDIAN moves to the other side of the fire, pulling a branch off a small tree in the process. He turns and glares at BLAKE, then in one frenetic motion snaps the branch in half and angrily hurls it into the fire.

NOBODY

Stupid white man!

This is immediately followed by a brief tirade spoken in an Indian language. After a pause he sits down on the ground, and stares into the flames. The two men remain motionless, enfolded in an eerie silence.

CUT TO BLACK AND FADE UP ON:

INT. DICKINSON FACTORY OFFICE

Two men sit on chairs behind the broad wooden table, waiting in silence. From their appearance they are obviously not employed by the factory. One, CONWAY TWILL, is completely disheveled, wearing layers of ragged, stained animal skins and a battered, out-of-fashion beaver-pelt top hat. He has a small beard, the rest of his face unshaven and dirty. Weathered ammunition belts cross his chest and two Colt pistols are holstered low across his hips. The corners of his mouth and eyes twitch as though a current of dangerous electricity jolts irregularly through his body.

The man next to him, COLE WILSON, is very clean in contrast to TWILL. He is thin and wiry with very long, straight hair and big, suspicious eyes. He wears a cleanly-tailored black suit, white shirt with silver collar, and black hat with a gleaming silver band around its crown. The buttons on his suit and vest are also silver, as are the bullets in the gun belt around his waist, which also holds a single silver Colt revolver.

He wears black boots decorated with what look like silver coins.

Both men look up at the portrait of JOHN DICKINSON hanging on the wall in front of them. TWILL touches his lips unconsciously, and looks over at WILSON.

TWILL

Hey Wilson, you got any extra tobacco
by any chance?

WILSON looks over at him blankly. He opens his mouth to speak, revealing two rows of almost entirely silver teeth.

WILSON

No, I don't never carry extra tobacco.

TWILL
(frustrated)

Figures. [pause] Well do you got some
I could purchase from ya, then?

WILSON
(distantly, looking straight
ahead)

Nope.

They both look again at the portrait of DICKINSON, focusing on the cigar on his mouth. TWILL's eyes begin to twitch and water.

The door to the office opens suddenly. MR. KRAUSE, much less self assured than last time, enters nervously. He steps aside to let a fourth man into the room. JOHNNY 'THE KID' PICKETT is a young, small wild-looking black man. He wears a polka-dot shirt with wide sleeves under a buckskin west, and a Texas-style hat with one side of the brim pinned to the crown. Along with two Colt pistols, his gunbelt also holds an assortment of throwing knives.

THE KID's eyes dart back and forth between TWILL and WILSON as he slips, weasel-like, into the empty chair between them.

MR. KRAUSE
(not making eye contact)

Well now, that's all of ya. I'll just
go and get Mr. Dickinson, then.

He turns and awkwardly leaves the room, closing the door
behind him. Both TWILL and WILSON stare intimidatingly at
THE KID.

TWILL

So you're Johnny 'The Kid' Pickett,
huh?

THE KID

That's right. [pause] Killed 14 men
so far.

TWILL
(condescendingly)

Is that right. [pause] Well you got
anything to show for it -- like maybe
some tobacco to share?

THE KID

Fuck no. I don't smoke that shit
'cept when I get a good cigar now and
then. Mostly I prefer to smoke
jimsonweed.

TWILL
(disgusted)

Oh yeah? Jimsonweed. Maybe that's why
yer brain thinks you killed so many
people.

THE KID's right hand jerks to his gun, as does TWILL's in
response. The tension, however, is immediately broken by
the door opening, and the entrance of JOHN DICKINSON.

DICKINSON is tall, dark-haired, sternly handsome and in his fifties. His presence is riveting. He pauses, standing before the three men, his own portrait behind his shoulder. DICKINSON lights his cigar, completing the exact likeness of the portrait to the man. He slowly exhales a stream of smoke, examines the glowing end of the cigar, then looks down and across the table at the three men.

DICKINSON
(soberly, with a very deep,
commanding voice)

I suppose you boys know why I called you in here. [pause] Last night my youngest son, Charlie, God bless his soul was gunned down in cold blood right here in our own hotel. The gutless murderer, one Mr. Bill Blake, [he pauses to spit out a speck of tobacco leaf] also ruthlessly shot to death Miss Thel Russell, the fiancé to my beloved son. [he takes a puff on his cigar] Not only that, he stole one very spirited, and valuable horse, a beautiful young pinto, that belongs to my own personal family stable.

He looks directly at each of the three men, controllingly, for emphasis.

DICKINSON
(continuing)

Now, you know I respect all three of
your reputations as the finest
killers of men and injuns in this
territory, and maybe the whole
goddamn country.

He puffs again on his cigar, rolling the smoke around in
his mouth before exhaling. The three killer's eyes widen
as they watch the smoke.

DICKINSON
(continuing)

Boys, I need your help. [then, in a
loud voice] I want this man brought
here to me. I don't care if he's dead
or alive, but I want him!

DICKINSON paces back and forth for a moment before
returning to the spot where he stood before.

DICKINSON
(continuing)

I'll pay whatever it takes. Money is
no object. But I need the three of
you to work together on this.

WILSON

I only work alone.

TWILL
(his eyes beginning to twitch
again)

Excuse me, Mr. Dickinson, but I don't
never work with nobody else neither.
Never have yet.

THE KID
(as though taking his cue from
the others)

Uh, yeah, me too.

DICKINSON's fist slams down hard on the table in front of them, causing both TWILL and THE KID to jump noticeably while WILSON's eyes grow slightly wider.

DICKINSON
(very loud)

My son Charlie is dead!

He steps back, glaring in turn at each of the killers.

DICKINSON
(regaining the calm tone in his
resonant voice)

Now, I ain't askin' this time. I'm tellin'. An' if somebody don't like it, I'm prepared to do some killin' of my own. [a heavy pause] Now then, I figure the bastard ain't got too far yet, 'cuz they tell me the bloody mess in that hotel room indicates that my boy managed to put some lead in this Mr. Bill Blake before the coward stole my pinto and left our fair town. I want the three of you to take fresh horses, if your own ain't, and get some supplies, and saddle up an' get on his trail right now, 'cuz time is slippin' away.

TWILL

Uh, Mr. Dickinson, if you don't mind my sayin' somethin', I think we should leave at first daylight tomorrow. Hell, it's already way after noon by now, an' by the time we get all packed up an' on the bastard's trail, night'll be about to fall on us.

DICKINSON
(leaning in on the table,
smoldering)

Mr. Twill, now to me means now, and now is what I said. I hope you ain't hard a hearin'.

TWILL
(submissively)

No, no, I heard real good. You're certainly right. Sooner the better, I always say.

DICKINSON

I want him brought here to me. Alive or dead don't matter, though I reckon' dead'll be easiest. Now, Mr. Krause will make sure you get whatever you need from the Tradin' Post and my stable. He'll also pay you gold in advance.

(more)

DICKINSON (cont'd)

But that's just a kind of retainer.
I want you to know there'll be a real
big reward to devide up between the
three of ya when that murderin' son-
of-a-whore is brought back here to
Machine[pause] See, I'm hirin' you
boys on an exclusive basis, so I'm
willin' to pay more than you've ever
seen before, and I don't need nobody
else involved in this matter. [he
puffs on the cigar, looking at it]
Boys, the hunt is on.

The three men stand and file out of the room, passing
DICKINSON who remains directly in front of his identical
portrait.

CUT TO BLACK AND FADE UP ON:

INT. DICKINSON'S STABLE - LATE AFTERNOON

TWILL and THE KID are preparing their saddlebags and
horses in the stable. Both have unlit cigars in their
mouths. TWILL slyly looks over at THE KID, then glances
around them before speaking in a low tone.

TWILL

Hey kid, this's the first time you
ever met Cole Wilson?

THE KID

Yeah.

TWILL

You heard of him though, right?

THE KID

Well, yeah. He's even more famous
than you are. [pause] Or than I am.

TWILL

(annoyed)

Silver-toothed pervert. You know he's
a sicko, don't ya? Hell, I heard he
fucked his own parents 'fore he
killed 'em.

THE KID looks at TWILL with amazed curiosity.

TWILL

(quietly, looking around them
again)

An' then I heard, after they was
dead, [then leaning over, whispering]
he fucked 'em again!

THE KID looks around nervously, then back at TWILL, who
adjusts his saddlebags.

TWILL

(not looking at The Kid)

Ya know, if we was smart, we'd get
rid of that lunatic 'fore he kills us
to get the whole reward. [pause] See
what I mean?

THE KID looks at him, then hears someone enter the stable
behind them. It's WILSON. He too, has an unlit cigar in
his mouth. THE KID looks again at TWILL, then turns and
walks past WILSON and out of the stable.

TWILL observes WILSON for a few moments as WILSON fastens
saddlebags onto a black horse, then walks over to him.

WILSON, expressionless, glances over at TWILL, then back to his horse.

TWILL

So I was talking to that damn kid. A perpetual liar. Fucker smokes jimsonweed too. Hey, know why his skin's so dark? [pause, no response at all from WILSON] 'Cuz he's so damn full a'shit!

TWILL laughs, but there is still no response whatsoever from WILSON. TWILL moves a little closer, and speaks more quietly.

TWILL

(eyes twitching)

I don't trust him far as I can throw the little knife-chuckin' bastard. [brief pause] I was thinkin' maybe we might just hafta put a couple of holes through him 'fore we get one 'a his knives in the back. Probly takes scalps, too. See what I mean?

WILSON turns to TWILL and stares poker-faced into his eyes. Continuing to stare, he pulls a saddle strap tight around his horse, then turns his back on TWILL and walks out of the stable into the fading light.

CUT TO BLACK AND FADE UP ON:

EXT. FOREST - LATE AFTERNOON

BLAKE's eyes, in CLOSE-UP. Slowly they open -- BLAKE returning to consciousness. He struggles to focus his vision, then sees the big INDIAN by the nearby fire, preparing more medicine and some food. The INDIAN notices that he is awake and glares over at him.

NOBODY

Go back to sleep, stupid white man.

BLAKE closes his eyes, but opens them again, wincing in pain. He touches his wound, then winces again, quickly pulling his hand away. He looks at the blood on his fingers. The INDIAN sees this and yells at BLAKE loudly.

NOBODY

Stupid white man! Don't touch that!

He glares at BLAKE, who draws a deep breath, exhaling slowly.

BLAKE
(after a pause)

Am... I gonna die?

The Indian looks at him for a long time, his expression itself revealing very little, but the hardness that was previously in his eyes has changed, softening somehow.

NOBODY

The patterns in the clouds will
answer this question.

His eyes then move away, returning to his preparations on the fire. Heavily, BLAKE looks up into the pitch-black sky, then back down at the Indian, as though dreaming.

BLAKE
(after a long pause)

Why... why are you helping me?

NOBODY
(not looking up)

A bird told me.

BLAKE

What? [pause] A bird told you?

NOBODY
(looking over, as though bored
by the question)

A small magic bird with very bright
blue feathers. I was following him in
the forest hoping to acquire one of
his indigo feathers. And then I lost
him. And then I found him again, and
he was sitting on your chest, tasting
your blood. And then he looked at me,
and then flew directly West, in a
very straight line, his small beak
red with your blood.

The INDIAN returns to his work.

BLAKE
(drowsily)

A small... bright blue bird... tasted
my blood... [then, as though
surfacing unconsciously from a deep
place in his memory] "Billy, the
small blue birds are back... they're
in the mulberry tree... the indigo
buntings..."

He closes his eyes for a moment, then opens them halfway.
The Indian's eyes register surprise, and he studies BLAKE
carefully, his interest piqued by something he has just
said.

NOBODY

How is it that you know the name of
this magical bird, the indigo bunting?

BLAKE offers no response, as though unaware of what he has said. His eyelids flutter a little.

BLAKE

Are you a... medicine man? [pause]

And, how come you... you speak such perfect English?

For some reason this angers the INDIAN, and he glares and yells at BLAKE.

NOBODY

Why is there metal in the stupid white man's heart?

BLAKE

(at first confused)

Metal in... Oh. I got... A man shot me. [pause] And he killed Thel... He killed a... beautiful woman. [pause] And then I... I killed him. [pause] I think I did anyway.

NOBODY

(looking at him intensely)

Was she your woman?

BLAKE

What?

NOBODY

(exactly the same as before but much louder)

Was she your woman?

BLAKE

(fingering the white paper rose in his lapel)

I... I, uh,... I don't know, exactly.

This response angers the INDIAN even more.

NOBODY

Stupid fucking white man!

Again he grabs a stick and breaks it in two, then stands and throws the pieces off into the forest. He turns back to face BLAKE, looking down on him threateningly, his eyes wild.

NOBODY

(sternly)

All wholesome food is caught without

a net or a trap!

He then turns and begins to pace around and around in a circle. BLAKE watches the INDIAN's consistent and dizzying movements. In CLOSE-UP BLAKE's eyelids become heavy, as though hypnotized, then slowly close as he falls off into unconsciousness.

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST TRAIL - EVENING

The sun is setting. On a narrow, inclining mountain trail, CONWAY TWILL passes by, his horse laden with supplies, guns and ammunition, a smoldering cigar stub between his teeth. He looks behind him, his eyes twitching nervously.

THE KID rides past, behind TWILL. He also smokes the stub of a cigar. His horse carries fewer supplies, and he looks around attentively, listening to the sounds of the surrounding forest and sniffing the evening air.

After THE KID comes COLE WILSON, the setting sun glinting of the silver on his clothes, gunbelt and saddle. He looks straight ahead, a smoking cigar stub clenched in his silver teeth.

Just after the hooves of WILSON's horse pass from view, a crumpled piece of paper is swept by a breeze out onto the trail. It settles there, and [in extreme CLOSE-UP] typed words become legible.

The words 'William Blake' are identifiable, and it is clear that the paper is Blake's crumpled LETTER of introduction for his job in the town of Machine.

CUT TO BLACK AND FADE UP ON:

EXT. FOREST CAMPSITE - NIGHT

BLAKE opens his eyes to discover that night has fallen. Again reclined, he raises himself up a little and looks around. In the glow of the campfire he sees the INDIAN across from him, sitting on the ground and staring into the low flames. The campsite though, seems to have been rearranged, or they have moved since BLAKE was last conscious.

His neck feels stiff, and he realizes he is propped against the saddle from his pinto. His slight movements remind him of the wound in his chest, a sharp pain shoots through his body.

The INDIAN looks over at him without expression, his stare going right through BLAKE. When he finally speaks his voice seems to bounce around before it finds BLAKE's ears.

NOBODY

The round stones beneath the earth
have spoken through the fire.

BLAKE
(after a pause)

What?

There is another pause the INDIAN's eyes are fixed on BLAKE.

NOBODY

Things which are alike in their
nature grow to look alike, and the
speaking stones have lain a long
time, looking at the sun.

BLAKE is not sure if he is awake or dreaming, alive or dead and in another realm.

BLAKE
(weakly)

The... the stones?

NOBODY
(his eyes still on Blake)

Some believe that these stones
descend with the lightning, but I
believe they are on the ground and
are projected downward by the bolt,
imbedding them deep into the earth.

There is a pause.

NOBODY

Did you kill the white man who killed
you?

BLAKE

But... I'm not dead. [pause] Am I?

He puts his hand inside his coat, touching his wound and
cringing.

NOBODY

What name were you given at birth,
stupid white man?

BLAKE

I... my name is Blake, William Blake.

The INDIAN's eyes widen in amazement, as he stares in
disbelief.

NOBODY

Is this a lie or a white man's trick?

BLAKE
(confused, but sincere)

No, I'm William Blake.

The INDIAN jumps to his feet, excitedly.

NOBODY

Then you are a dead man! [pause] You
have been dead for many years!

BLAKE
(feeling delirious)

I don't understand...

NOBODY

Are you really William Blake?

BLAKE

Yes, but...

The INDIAN steps closer to BLAKE, looking down on him
with excitement and great concentration.

NOBODY
(eloquently)

Every night and every morn some to
misery are born. Every morn and every
night some are born to sweet delight.
Some are born to sweet delight, some
are born to endless night.

The INDIAN kneels down next to BLAKE who, once again,
appears to be slipping from consciousness.

BLAKE

I don't... understand.

The INDIAN places a blanket over BLAKE.

NOBODY

But I understand, William Blake. You
were a poet and a painter, and now
are a killer of white men.

BLAKE
(fading)

I really... don't...

NOBODY
(his round face, in awe, now
close to Blake)

Don't speak, William Blake. The
stones will explain all this to me.
You must sleep now. [then, quietly]
Good night... William Blake.

BLAKE's eyes slowly close.

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - DAWN

The sounds of hundreds of singing birds greet the dawn,
slowly pulling BLAKE from his sleep.

He lets the soft light enter his eyes through slightly
opened lids, and gazes up at the forest's thick canopy.
His gaze drifts lower. Next to him, NOBODY is already
awake, sitting up cross-legged. He is in the process of
trying on BLAKE's short-crowned top hat. Straightening
his spine, the big INDIAN's posture seems to lend a new
dignity to the hat. He then takes it off again, examining
it momentarily before leaning over to return it to its
place beside BLAKE's head. BLAKE quickly shuts his eyes.

BLAKE waits for a few seconds before sneaking another
look. Opening his eyes just a crack, he sees the INDIAN
adjusting the deer headdress, having replaced it on top
of his head. BLAKE then closes his eyes.

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

EXT. - DAY

It is mid-morning. The two men travel on horseback.
NOBODY sits upright, alert, riding bareback (except for
the blanket) and pulling BLAKE and the pinto behind him.

BLAKE, in only slightly better condition than before, rides slumped in the saddle, doing his best just to hold on. One hand is inside his suit jacket, covering his heart. They move through the forest, craggy mountains looming in front of them.

Pausing for a moment, NOBODY surveys the landscape, looking for the best route by which to proceed. BLAKE, jerked upright by the sudden stop, looks around bleary-eyed. He looks over at the INDIAN.

BLAKE
(hoarsely)

Where the hell are we?

NOBODY sniffs the air, then looks up at the sky.

NOBODY
You are being followed, William Blake.

BLAKE
(looking behind him)

How can you tell?

NOBODY
Often the evil stench of the white
man precedes him.

BLAKE
(still looking around them)

Well, what're we gonna do?

NOBODY
(looking directly into Blake's
eyes)

The eagle never lost so much time as
when he submitted to learn from the
crow.

He turns away, spitting on the ground. Then, without speaking, he indignantly points toward the mountains. As BLAKE looks off in the indicated direction, he is again jerked in the saddle.

Abruptly, they continue winding their way through the dense, wooded terrain.

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

Darkness. BLAKE and NOBODY sit near a campfire, gnawing pieces of some kind of meat skewered on thin sticks. BLAKE is dishevelled, pale and a little haggard-looking, in contrast to the strong, relaxed appearance of the Indian. As BLAKE shifts position, THEL's pistol falls from his jacket, landing on the ground. They both look down at it, then at each other. After a brief pause, BLAKE picks up the gun and puts it back inside the jacket.

NOBODY
(talking while chewing)

Is William Blake good with this
weapon?

BLAKE
(trying to hide slight
embarrassment)

Me? Well uh, no, not really.

NOBODY
(after a pause)

This weapon will now replace your
tongue. You will learn to speak
through it, and your poetry will now
be written with blood.

Once again completely perplexed by the Indian's strange words, BLAKE is momentarily speechless. The two men look into the fire, both chewing the last morsels of meat.

BLAKE

What's your name?

There is a long pause.

NOBODY

My name is Nobody.

BLAKE

Nobody?

NOBODY

My name is HE WHO TALKS LOUD SAYING
NOTHING.

BLAKE

But... I thought you said it was
Nobody.

NOBODY

I prefer to be called Nobody.

BLAKE

(after a pause, confused)

Well, what's your story, exactly, if
you don't mind me askin'.

The Indian gives him an indecipherable look.

NOBODY

My story is a sad one, William Blake.

[pause] I will tell you in the
daylight when the sun can watch the
world around me.

BLAKE then watches the Indian lie back on his blanket,
preparing to sleep.

BLAKE

Uh, He Who Talks,... uh, I mean,
Nobody?

There is no response. BLAKE continues to watch as the
Indian's eyes close.

Soon his breathing becomes even, rhythmic, leveled by sleep. BLAKE too lies down, and waits for sleep to overtake him. His eyes close.

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

EXT. KILLER'S CAMPSITE - NIGHT

TWILL, WILSON and THE KID are preparing their bedrolls around a campfire.

TWILL
(gruffly)

Well, I don't understand why the hell we ain't caught up with the bastard yet. Somethin's funny about all this.

THE KID
(to WILSON)

Are you sure we're on his trail?

WILSON
(looking off distantly)

Yeah.

TWILL
Yeah, well we better catch up with him by tomorrow, or some goddamn injuns are gonna be eatin' him fer dinner.

No one responds to this, the three settling into reclining positions, THE KID and WILSON on either side of TWILL. There is a period of silence as each one, lost in thought, stares into the dying flames.

TWILL looks back and forth between the other two. They appear to nod off into sleep, TWILL continuing to watch them out of partially closed eyes. After a few moments he slowly, silently reaches for a Winchester rifle propped next to him. Once it is in his hands, he carefully puts his thumb on the hammer, preparing to pull it back.

Suddenly, like two marionettes attached to a single wire, both WILSON and THE KID sit upright, revolvers simultaneously drawn and pointed at TWILL. There is a loud CLICK as their hammers are cocked in unison. TWILL, with a stupid grin on his face, carefully lowers his rifle.

TWILL

Hey, come on, now. I just wanted it
close by in case of an injun attack.

WILSON's cold eyes cut through TWILL like a knife.

WILSON

Hand it over here, butt first.

TWILL

(reluctantly handing over his
rifle)

You gonna protect us then if they
come for our scalps?

WILSON doesn't respond, grabbing the rifle from TWILL.

TWILL

(settling back into a reclining
position)

Awe, fuck ya both.

WILSON and THE KID also settle back, each keeping a pistol in hand and across their respective chests, both guns pointing in toward CONWAY TWILL. After a few moments, as their eyes close, TWILL's left hand moves silently to the pistol hidden beneath his belt.

CUT TO BLACK AND FADE UP ON:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Again it is day, and the two men continue travelling. Although dirty and unshaven, BLAKE seems to have regained some of his strength. His horse is no longer tied to the Indian's. But BLAKE's hand is once again pressed into his chest.

They have entered foothills, and now move slowly up an incline. BLAKE has trouble handling the pinto. The horse then stops completely, refusing to continue. NOBODY looks back over his shoulder. Gracefully, with uncanny control of his own horse, he returns back down the steep slope, and takes the reins of the pinto from the frustrated BLAKE.

NOBODY

William Blake, I can find no poetry
at all in your horsemanship.

NOBODY pulls BLAKE's pinto alongside his own horse and the two continue riding up a slope, then onto a flatter trail.

BLAKE

So, you said, you'd tell me your
story in the daylight. Just what the
hell is your story, Nobody?

The Indian looks over at BLAKE, then back at the trail in front of them, his eyes strangely illuminated by light reflected from the bright sky.

NOBODY

My blood is mixed. My father was
Blackfoot, and my mother Blood. This
mixture was not respected. As a small
boy I was often left to myself by the
others, so I practiced many months
stalking elk to prove I would soon
become a good hunter. One day finally
I touched an elk. I was able to get
so close that I touched her fur. This
was my proof.

(more)

NOBODY

And each time I arrived at another city, somehow the white men would move their people there ahead of me. The new city would contain the same white people as the last, and I could not understand how a whole city of people could be moved so quickly.

[another brief pause] I observed the ways of the white men, and was forced to speak in English. Eventually I was taken by ship across the great sea to England. I was paraded before them like a captured animal, an exhibit, and so I mimicked them, imitating their ways, hoping they might then lose interest in the young 'savage'. But their interests only grew. I was good at copying them, and so I was placed in the white man's schools.

He looks over at BLAKE who is completely captivated at the Indian's strange story.

NOBODY
(continuing)

It was then that I discovered, in a book, the words that you, William Blake, had written. Your words were strong.

(more)

NOBODY (cont'd)

They spoke to me: "O why was I born
with a different face, / why was I
not born like the rest of my race? /
When I look each one starts! When I
speak I offend, / then I'm silent &
passive & lose every friend..."

He pauses, looking up into the sky, then back to the
trail twisting into the forest before them.

NOBODY
(continuing)

After years of this activity, my
imprisoners became lax. They believed
my lies -- that I wanted to remain
with them, never to return to my
people. But I made careful plans, and
eventually I escaped. I stole from my
captors, and with their gold I found
a man who would hide me on a ship.
[another pause] Again I crossed the
great ocean, and after many days
arrived in Baltimore. Many things
happened to me. In Washington I saw
the white man's forest of guns. Then
I learned much about the conditions
of many different tribes.

(more)

NOBODY (cont'd)

Like a disease the white man had
stolen lands that cannot be owned,
spilling blood of many tribes. I saw
many sad things, as I made my way
back to the lands of my people.

[pause] Upon my return, even my own
village had been moved. And then,
when I finally found my people, I
told them of my adventures. At first
no one remembered me, and even my
mother and father were not to be
found. But then my father was
located. Still, even when they
realized who I was, the stories of my
adventures angered them. Like before,
they called me a liar, He Who Talks
Loud Saying Nothing, and somehow I
could not blame them. But I also
could not convince them. They said
the white man had replaced the
insides of my head, and I was no
longer the son of my own father. I
was spit on and ridiculed.

BLAKE notices the Indian trying to conceal the strong
emotions flooding into his eyes.

NOBODY
(continued)

They said I was a disease, a
contrary. They said I had an evil
disease inside my head, and they
threatened to kill me. Even this, I
understood. Maybe this was true. And
so I left my own people, my blood, to
live alone in the forest.

BLAKE

Wow. [pause] And that's... that's
when you found me?

NOBODY
(spitting on the ground)

No. I travelled, visiting many
tribes, but all considered me to be
crazy in the head. As though my
stories were all invented, imagined.
They labelled me a man with visions,
a man with bad magic, and as a
consequence I began to learn about
magic, about the powers of plants and
magical animals. There are tribes
which now would welcome my knowledge,
but my presence is never really
accepted. [long pause] I am Nobody.

BLAKE

Wow. [then, after another long pause]

But... that part about William

Blake... I don't understand what...

NOBODY

(interrupting)

Do you believe what I have told you,

William Blake?

BLAKE

Yeah! I believe you. It is an amazing story, though. But, yes, I believe you.

NOBODY

That's because you are already a dead man. You have lived before, and your words called out to me. [pause] That is why I must take you West, to the place where the waters are a mirror, and you will pass through their reflection into a world that is the exact reverse of this one. [pause] Because William Blake is the one white man who disclosed some truth to Nobody.

He looks BLAKE in the eyes.

NOBODY

What is now proved was once only imagined.

There is a period of poignant silence.

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN FOREST - NIGHT

Night having fallen, the two men ride on. Although NOBODY no longer tows the pinto, BLAKE is again having difficulty with the stubborn horse, and lags somewhat behind.

NOBODY stops his horse and sits, motionless, as BLAKE catches up to him. When BLAKE is along side of him, the Indian, looking intently into the darkness, raises his hand signalling BLAKE to be still. NOBODY sniffs the air with concentration.

BLAKE
(quietly)

What is it?

NOBODY

White men.

BLAKE strains his senses for some indication, but sees, hears and smells nothing.

BLAKE
(whispering)

How do you know?

The INDIAN doesn't reply, his eyes now fixed on some invisible point in front of them. He turns to BLAKE.

NOBODY

You will go to them, William Blake.

BLAKE
(confused)

What do you mean? What'll I do? What about you? [pause] Let's just ride on past them.

NOBODY
(sternly)

No. You go. [pause] This is a test.
Nobody will observe.

BLAKE
(starting to panic a little)

What? [pause] What if we get
separated? What if they kill me?

NOBODY

Be quiet and go.

NOBODY sends BLAKE's pinto off into the darkness. Unable to stop his horse, BLAKE looks back at the Indian with a startled, almost pleading expression.

Alone in the blackness of the forest, BLAKE rides on helplessly. He looks nervously around him, listening, sniffing the air for some clue. Then, in the near distance he sees the light of a campfire through the trees. Getting closer, BLAKE can hear voices. They are loud and rowdy, and speak in a language he is unable to even identify (it is Finnish)..

Still unnoticed he is very close now. There are four or five men eating and drinking near the fire, their horses standing in a group off to the side. BLAKE, unable to control his horse, and with a stupid expression on his face, rides right into their camp.

Seeing BLAKE, the men jump to their feet, producing pistols and rifles out of thin air. BLAKE is immediately surrounded. Some words are exchanged in their strange language as BLAKE looks nervously around him. The men are big and mean looking. Grease drips from their mouths, and they are covered in muddy, foul smelling animal furs. One of them, with long dirty hair and beady eyes, lowers his rifle slowly and addresses BLAKE in heavily accented English.

1st FINN

What do we have here?

He reaches out and pulls BLAKE roughly from his horse. BLAKE groans as he hits the ground with a THUD. The men come close, surrounding him like vultures. The 1st FINN speaks to the others in FINNISH, and they laugh.

He kneels down next to BLAKE, touching the material of his plaid suit.

1st FINN

What are you wearing? With that suit
maybe you plan to run for President!

The others laugh loudly.

BLAKE

(trying to conceal his fear)

I'm, I'm a little lost out here,
and...

Before he can finish, the man grabs him and literally drags him over to the fire. He then takes what looks like a burnt potato from the fire, and throws it at BLAKE. Watching them cautiously, BLAKE picks it up reluctantly.

2nd FINN

(to Blake, drunkenly)

Please eat it. We can't kill a
President who's stomach is empty.

Keeping their guns near them, the men reassemble around the campfire -- with the exception of one, who leads BLAKE's horse over near their own, examining it carefully. Watching this, BLAKE notices that several of theirs are mules, laden with animal pelts. When BLAKE's pinto is tied up with the others, the man returns to join them, all staring at the 'intruder'.

BLAKE

(nervously eating the potato)

So you guys are, uh, trappers, huh?

1st FINN

(angrily)

Trappers? No we are not trappers!

These days animal pelts are not worth
shit. We no longer bother to trap
them ourselves. We...

(more)

1st FINN (cont'd)

we just 'trade' them. [pause] And who
are you then, Mr. President?

Again there is laughter. Then, rather suddenly, the 1st
FINN drops his rifle on the ground and violently takes
BLAKE by the lapels. He shakes him hard, causing the
potato to fall from his open mouth.

1st FINN

So we fed you Mr. President. Now what
do you have for me? Some tobacco
maybe?

BLAKE, choking on the potato, is unable to respond. The
big man rifles through BLAKE's pockets, as several of the
others move closer.

BLAKE
(coughing)

I don't have [cough] any tobacco...

The 1st FINN stops his search. He backs off a little and
glares at BLAKE, then approaches again and slaps him
across the face, backhanded. Standing up, he towers over
BLAKE.

1st FINN
(furious)

No tobacco! I could kill you just for
that! [then, raving] Or for wearing
so stupid clothes, you! [snarling,
teeth clenched] You... you are so
small potatoes...

Behind them, across the fire, there is the sound of a
match being lit. They turn to see one of the others
smugly lighting a handrolled cigarette. He inhales, as
the others watch the fragrant smoke curling upward.
Suddenly, one of the others lurches toward the cigarette,
attempting to snatch it from the man's mouth.

Immediately, a fight breaks out between the two men. The others watch with concentration, ready to pounce if the coveted cigarette re-emerges.

Then, somewhere amid the wrestling men, a shot goes off. In the confusion, one of them has been shot in the leg. Several others draw guns. Another shot goes off, and complete chaos breaks out. BLAKE, still on the ground, watches in petrified amazement, their loud, incomprehensible voices whirling around him. Then one of them [he can't tell which] yells out in English.

FINN

It's all his fault!

The 1st FINN spins back around to face BLAKE. In panic, BLAKE awkwardly picks up the FINN's abandoned rifle next to him. It goes off unexpectedly, hitting the 1st FINN in the thigh. He drops to the ground snarling. Another points a gun at BLAKE and BLAKE fires again frenetically -- though intentionally this time. Surprisingly, the shot explodes in the man's chest, and he flies backward onto the ground.

More shots go off. Blood splatters, as another falls to the ground -- accidentally fired upon by one of his comrades. Off to his other side BLAKE sees the last standing man pointing a rifle directly at him. BLAKE freezes in terror.

Immediately, NOBODY appears behind the man. One of the INDIAN's arms quickly encircles the FINN's chest, while the other hand, clenching his big knife, assuredly slits the FINN's throat. The man drops silently to the ground.

Trembling, BLAKE watches the INDIAN grab the 1st FINN -- the one BLAKE shot in the thigh. NOBODY pulls the man up from the dirt. The others lie dead around the camp, blood still gurgling from their fatal wounds.

1st FINN
(whimpering)

Please, don't kill me. Please.

The INDIAN shakes him and he becomes quiet. NOBODY points toward BLAKE, and the big FINN looks over. His eyes are wide with terror, matching those of the shuddering BLAKE.

NOBODY
(pointing toward Blake)

That is William Blake.

1st FINN
(muttering)

William... Blake...

Solemnly, the Indian throws the man back to the ground, and watches as he desperately crawls away into the underbrush.

The camp is suddenly very quiet. BLAKE, in shock, cannot move. He watches as the Indian begins to methodically collect things from the 'traders' camp -- guns, ammunition, buttons from their clothing. He places them in a pile next to BLAKE. Then, finding the half-smoked cigarette between two corpses, the Indian grunts with pleasure. He lights it with a twig from the fire.

Then, in horror, BLAKE watches NOBODY, cigarette between his lips, looking, one by one, into the dead men's mouths, prying out selected teeth with his knife. BLAKE winces in disgust, his hand moving automatically to cover the pain in this heart.

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

EXT. - DAWN

Dawn light reveals the two men, once again travelling west, NOBODY towing BLAKE and his pinto behind him. But things have changed -- behind BLAKE, a third animal follows. It is a pack-mule taken from the 'traders' camp. The mule is loaded with animal pelts, blankets, a large burlap bag, and other supplies. BLAKE too is loaded down -- ammunition belts cross his chest, two rifles (a Winchester and a big shotgun) are slung from his horse, and a rolled blanket is strapped behind him, as he nods off in the saddle. NOBODY on the other hand, appears exactly as before, sitting confidently atop his horse, which carries only the feathered blanket skunk-skin saddlebags, and smaller, leather medicine pouches.

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

NOBODY again leads the small caravan. They emerge from the trees and into the mid-day sunlight. BLAKE appears to be half-asleep in the saddle as they approach a dirt road which runs along the bank of a river.

Reaching the road near the water's edge, NOBODY stops them. He motions to BLAKE to stay put, then dismounts silently. As NOBODY walks off a few yards to the right, BLAKE attempts to silently dismount also, in the same way as the Indian. Instead his foot slips from a stirrup, and he falls from the horse, landing on the soft ground with an audible THUD. He picks himself up, attempts to brush the mud from his jacket and trousers, then walks stiffly over to where NOBODY is standing, looking at something attached to the trunk of a birch tree.

As BLAKE approaches, he notices that NOBODY is reading a piece of heavy paper nailed onto the tree. It is a WANTED POSTER. In the center of the poster is a sketch of BLAKE, above which, in bold block letters reads: WANTED (and just beneath) BILL BLAKE. REWARD \$ 500.---

BLAKE

What?!

BLAKE steps even closer to the tree, his eyes widening in amazement, which soon changes to shock as he reads aloud the finer print across the bottom of the poster.

BLAKE

(reading)

Wanted for the heartless murders of
one Thel Russell and one Charles
Dickinson, the son of John Dickinson
of Machine, and the following traders
of the Northwest Territories: Timo
Kaurilankula, Kari Kominalka...

His voice trails off as he stumbles over the difficult Finnish names. Eyes wide, he turns and looks at NOBODY, whose face shows no expression.

BLAKE

(upset)

Fuck! [pause] I didn't... They
can't...

Emerging from his stupor BLAKE suddenly becomes animated, tearing the poster from the tree and ripping it to shreds.

While in the process of this action, BLAKE notices another identical poster nailed to another tree several yards further along the river bank. In a panic, he rushes over and rips down this second poster, and begins to tear it up as well. As he is doing this, the Indian's big hand comes down on his shoulder. He whirls around to face NOBODY.

BLAKE
(loudly)

What?

NOBODY
(calmly)

These actions are useless.

BLAKE
(still upset)

Why?

NOBODY

Clouds can not be stopped by the
building of a ship.

BLAKE
(almost annoyed)

What!?

NOBODY

Go back to your horse. We must
prepare to ford the river now.

The two men stand face to face. There is an intense moment of silence, emotion flooding across BLAKE's open face in stark contrast to the Indian's total lack of expression. Finally, the Indian brakes the silence.

NOBODY

Are you sure you have no tobacco?

BLAKE
(flaring up, as though provoked)

No! I told you that already. I don't
even smoke!

BLAKE turns and sullenly stomps off, back toward where their horses stand waiting. NOBODY stands motionless, silent, gazing down the road which follows the bank of the river. Off in the distance he sees a small wagon stopped by the road, and near the wagon an old man, who is nailing more and more WANTED POSTERS onto the trees.

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER BANK - LATE AFTERNOON

On the trunk of the tree by the river, is, again, a WANTED POSTER for BILL BLAKE. Beyond the tree is the same landscape where NOBODY and BLAKE previously forded the river. But now the sun is seen, setting across the water.

Suddenly, with a THWACK, a knife is thrown directly into the portrait of BILL BLAKE, in the exact center of the WANTED POSTER. As the knife still vibrates from the impact, the KID's voice is heard:

THE KID (Off Screen)

What the fuck is this shit?

There, on the narrow road running along the river, the three hired killers sit atop their standing horses. Each looks directly at the WANTED POSTER. Both TWILL and THE KID are visibly upset.

TWILL dismounts and walks over to another nearby tree, pulling down yet another poster. He turns back and stands a short distance in front of the horses.

THE KID dismounts and moves next to him, as they both look down at the poster in TWILL's hand, reading it. WILSON remains mounted, looking distantly across the river.

TWILL

Well I'd say we was getting fucked
royally, by the royal Mr. Dick-in-son
himself.

He hurls the poster onto the ground in disgust and begins
walking animatedly around in a circle.

TWILL

This means that asshole's got every
goddamn rubberneck in the territory
on the hunt fer that Blake bastard.

THE KID seems to become infected by TWILL's emotional
state and begins slicing yet another poster from a nearby
tree.

THE KID

Mr. Dick-in-fucking-son. He said we
was hired special for this job, that
asshole!

Suddenly, WILSON's voice cuts through their ravings.

WILSON

Whatsa matter. Worried about the
competition?

They both look up at WILSON, glaring.

WILSON

I thought you were professionals.

THE KID

Yeah? What about the reward money he
promised us? That's probably bullshit
too.

(more)

THE KID (cont'd)

An' now, like Twill says, every joker
in the fuckin' territory's already
lookin' for Blake.

TWILL

Yeah, fuck Mr. Dick-in-son.

WILSON
(to THE KID)

You gonna start sheddin' tears, kid?

THE KID turns, one hand poised over the gun in his
holster. WILSON doesn't even move for his gun, but
remains atop his horse, glaring down at THE KID.

WILSON

I wouldn't.

After a moment of tension THE KID slowly drops his arm to
his side.

THE KID

Yeah, well fuck you.

THE KID turns, and walks a few yards down the river's
embankment, and kneels to splash some water on his face.
TWILL watches him, then looks back over at WILSON, eyes
twitching. From his holster, WILSON slides out the silver
Colt, takes aim at THE KID and fires. The shot splits
through the back of THE KID's head in a spray of blood,
and propels him forward, his body splashing halfway into
the river.

TWILL's jaw drops as he watches the river water
surrounding what's left of THE KID's head darken with
swirling blood. He looks back over at WILSON speechless.
WILSON is calmly replacing his Colt in its silver studded
bolster. He then looks over at TWILL.

WILSON

You were gonna do it anyway. [pause]

We don't need him.

(more)

WILSON (cont'd)

More efficient just the two of us.

TWILL, obviously disturbed by this new development, walks back to his horse, without making further eye contact with WILSON.

TWILL

Yeah, uh, that's exactly right, Cole.

TWILL mounts his horse, while WILSON sends THE KID's pony off into the woods with a slap on its rump.

As the two men begin to ford the river, the hooves of their respective horses splash past THE KID's partially submerged corpse, his dark blood now spreading even further into the moving water.

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

BLAKE and NOBODY again sit near a glowing campfire, this time nestled in a rocky overhang or small cave. Around them, outside their protected alcove, a misty rain is fallen.

BLAKE sits hunched over, gnawing on a piece of dried meat, NOBODY has given him. He watches the Indian, who is examining various herbs and talismans laid out on a small piece of blanket spread on the damp ground in front of him. Among the leafy and powdered substances are also what appear to be dried up frogs and lizards, feathers and small bones. Having taking inventory, or located what he was looking for, the Indian replaces these things into their respective deerskin pouches, and ties them back onto small leather loops hanging from his clothing.

Without looking over at BLAKE, NOBODY then examines some small, dried button-like pieces of something in the light of the fire. He places them in his mouth, then, reaching for a small gourd containing rainwater, he drinks and swallows the substance. He then leans back, relaxing his massive body, and looks over at BLAKE.

NOBODY

I have ingested some 'food of the
Gods'.

BLAKE

What?

NOBODY

Peyote. My Southern brothers were
once prohibited from eating it by the
Spanish Devils. Now even the Cheyenne
and Arapaho brothers know of its
magic.

BLAKE

Well, what is it?

NOBODY

(staring into the flames)

It is not for use by the white man.
Even William Blake would not be able
to control the sacred visions it
calls for it.

There is a fairly long pause as BLAKE curiously watches
the Indian, who in turn watches the fire. They listen to
the sound of light rain falling around them, and the soft
snorting noises of their horses who stand close by
beneath the rocky overhang. In the distance, the howl of
a lone wolf or coyote echoes through the mountainous
landscape. After it has died away BLAKE speaks.

BLAKE

The other night, I guess it was last
night, I had a strange dream.

The INDIAN looks over at him without speaking, his eyes
starting to glaze over from the powerful drug he has
ingested.

BLAKE
(continuing)

I... I dreamed that you and I were travelling together in the winter, through very deep snow. We were in a... a white blizzard. Everything was white. We didn't have our horses, though. Instead, we were able to travel across the surface of the snow on... on machines. We rode atop of these machines. [pause] We each had one.

NOBODY looks at him curiously for a moment, before speaking.

NOBODY

I know that my brothers in the North, the ones called 'Those Who Eat Raw Meat', travel across the surface of deep snow in wagons without wheels. They are pulled by many strong dogs.

BLAKE

Yeah, but in my dream there weren't any dogs. There were just machines. They moved all by themselves. We... we didn't need dogs.

NOBODY, his eyes now very glazed and distant, appears to consider this for a moment. The idea seems to irritate him.

NOBODY
(flaring up a little)

Your dream is no good. This idea is
stupid.

BLAKE
(a little defensively)

Well, it was just... just a dream.

NOBODY
(still angry)

How stupid. One needs dogs in the
snow, not machines.

BLAKE
(after a brief pause)

Why?

NOBODY looks at BLAKE as though he is an idiot, then
responds loudly.

NOBODY

In a white blizzard a machine could
never know the way back home!

There is silence, as BLAKE, somehow embarrassed looks
away from the Indian and into the fire. NOBODY, however,
continues to stare at him, a strange expression crossing
the Indian's face. BLAKE seems almost frightened to look
over at him.

The Indian continues staring. As he studies BLAKE, in his
hallucinatory state, the white man slowly begins to
transform before his eyes. BLAKE's skin appears to melt
away, and his exposed hands and head become skeletal, the
whiteness of his bones glowing in the fire light.
NOBODY's brow tightens and a previously unseen emotion,
close to fear spreads over his round, broad face. In
shock, he quickly stands up and looks down at BLAKE.
BLAKE's skeleton head looks up at him, and his voice
seems to reverberate electrically as he speaks.

BLAKE
(alarmed)

What? What's wrong?

This skeletal manifestation of BLAKE has deeply disturbed the hallucinating Indian. He takes a step or two backward, his eyes still fixed on BLAKE.

NOBODY
(moving backward toward his horse)

This is wrong. [pause, as he grasps the reins of his horse] Why am I here with a dead white man? The spirits have tricked me!

Then, in a kind of panic, the INDIAN turns his horse around and, leading it by the reins, runs off into the rainy darkness. BLAKE (now returned to his normal state) jumps up in a state of shock. He quickly takes several steps in the direction of NOBODY's abrupt departure, and calls out after him.

BLAKE
(yelling into the night)

Nobody! [pause] Nobody! Come back!

[pause] Please come back!

He listens for a moment as the rain drowns out the last faint sounds of NOBODY and his horses footsteps, fading away into the distance.

BLAKE
(yelling again)

Nobody!

His voice echoes in the distance. He stands there stupidly for a moment, then turns back toward the campfire, tears beginning to well up in his dark, round eyes. Suddenly he grimaces in pain, and places his hand inside his clothing, feeling the wound near his heart. He pulls his hand back out, and in the dim light examines the glistening blood on his fingers.

BLAKE
(wincing, looking down at his hand)

Fuck.

He turns once more, looking off in the direction of NOBODY's flight. After a confused moment, he turns back and sits down next to the fire.

Slowly he puts his head in his hands, his body curling into a seated, almost fetal position, the sound of the falling rain splashing around him.

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPSITE - EARLY MORNING

In CLOSE-UP, hard sunlight rakes across BLAKE's eyelids. Beneath them his eyes flutter. Around him the sound of birds and animals is dense, exaggerated. The sounds apparently seep into BLAKE's dreams, and when a chattering squirrel begins to scream BLAKE sits upright in a single jerk, his eyes wide open in near-terror.

Immediately his eyes change to a squint, shielding himself against the painful sun. He looks at his surroundings; dead campfire, the rocky overhang above him, the half-damp blanket covering his legs.

Then his eyes change again, because something is wrong with the picture. BLAKE looks over at his horse, then springs to this feet. In the process his pistol falls to the ground, and for a moment he looks down at it as though it fell from the sky. He bends to pick it up and cringes, reminded of the pain in his chest. He stands back up, one hand dangling the gun from his fingertips, the other pressed into his heart.

BLAKE looks around, his life now a painful, confusing dream. The sounds of birds and insects still seem to vibrate from every rock and leaf. BLAKE takes a cautious step forward.

BLAKE
(tentative)

Hello? [pause] Nobody?

The trappers' pack-mule snorts and BLAKE looks over, then at his pinto. The Indian's horse, though, is gone. BLAKE looks back at the mountain forest, stretching down and away from him. He takes a few more steps away from the campsite.

BLAKE
(louder than before)

Nobody!

He waits, listening, the sounds of the forest swelling around him.

BLAKE
Are you there, Nobody? [then, more to
himself, aware of the irony] Is
nobody out there?

There is a pause. The Indian is really gone. A subtle, slightly deranged smile overtakes his lips, as BLAKE slowly begins to stumble into the forest.

He moves clumsily, his thoughts floating away from his physical being. He walks through briars, not noticing when they grab and tear parts of his clothing. He finds a strangely shaped rock protruding from the ground, and circles it several times before continuing aimlessly.

A short distance later he stops, the need to piss calling him halfway back to his body. Turning toward the base of a huge cedar, BLAKE temporarily fumbles with the pistol he carries, undoing his pants requiring both hands. Finding a solution, he clamps the pistol in one armpit, and a moment later is relieving himself against a trunk of the tree.

BLAKE closes his eyes, the sound of his urine striking the tree, the cicadas singing, the birds twittering...

His bleary eyes open again. They drift down the cedar trunk, then follow the thin stream of his urine a short distance beyond the base of the tree.

There, just behind the tree, is a small, natural hollow in the ground. BLAKE's eyes widen, seeing something odd. It is a hand, resting limply on the mossy ground. The hand is attached to an arm.

Buttoning his pants, BLAKE takes a few steps to his left in order to see around the tree. He stops suddenly, eyes narrowing in shock.

In the hollow area are three mutilated bodies, CORPSES -- a young man, a young woman, and between them a small child. They are Indians, dressed traditionally, apparently a family.

Their curled bodies cling to one another, mouths and eyes open in terror, with hideous expressions twisting their bloodless lips. Their exposed skulls indicate that they have been scalped.

BLAKE is numbed by the horror. His eyes move from their hairless heads down to the arm of the young man. It crosses over the child, and clutches the hand of the young woman.

BLAKE's expression becomes confused, as he notices that on top of each corpse a single PLAYING CARD has been placed. His body, moving at half-speed, bends down next to them, his hand reaching out and plucking the CARD from the child's chest. He stands back up, looking down at the ACE OF SPADES he is holding, the confusion in his eyes mixing with a deep sadness.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPSITE - MORNING

BLAKE's horse whinnies and bucks, upset by something nearby. Several yards away, two men have silently entered the campsite.

Both are lumbering white men, one maybe twice the age of the other. Both wear dusty hats, long dusty coats over buckskin, carry Winchester rifles, and both wear silver badges in the shape of a star.

The older one bends down, examining the spent campfire, while the other approaches the pinto and mule. BLAKE's horse bucks again and the man takes a quick step backwards.

YOUNGER MARSHALL
(very quietly)

Hey Marvin, how come Dickinson's
telegram didn't give no description
of the horse this murderin' fucker
stole?

OLDER MARSHALL
(now examining Blake's 'Indian'
blanket, speaking softly)

It did, Lee. A pinto, just like that
one.

He nods his head towards BLAKE's nervous horse.

YOUNGER MARSHALL
(still very quietly)

It did? I don't think it did, Marvin.

OLDER MARSHALL
(exploding)

You asshole! You got the damn
telegram on ya! Take it out an' look!

YOUNGER MARSHALL
(almost whispering)

Yeah, okay. I'll check. Maybe I'm
thinkin' of them Wanted Posters.

He sets down his rifle and begins to fish through his
clothing, eventually pulling out the crumpled telegram.
He begins to unfold it as though working out a
complicated Chinese puzzle. His associate, on hands and
knees, begins sniffing around the campsite like a dog.

At this moment, a short distance away, BLAKE is stumbling
absently toward the campsite, the forgotten pistol now
dangling from a single finger, the ACE OF SPADES clutched
in his other hand. His heavy footstep through the
underbrush alert the MARSHALS, who momentarily freeze in
their ridiculous positions, staring intently in the
direction of his approach.

A second later BLAKE comes bounding into view. The older
MARSHALL rises onto one knee, cocks his rifle and points
it. BLAKE slows when he sees the two MEN, but he doesn't
stop, still dazed and somehow oblivious to any danger.

OLDER MARSHALL
(to Younger Marshall)

Lee, it's him! [then louder, to
BLAKE] Are you William Blake?

BLAKE, still approaching, looks at him curiously.

BLAKE

Yes, I am. Do you know my poetry?

A split second later, clumsily tripping over a rock or stump, BLAKE flies forward into the air. The OLDER MARSHALL prepares to fire, but BLAKE's pistol, in mid-tumble, goes off instead. The bullet sears through the OLDER MARSHALL's forehead.

His jaw drops, as blood begins to gush from the hole, and as he falls heavily over on his side his Winchester goes off. Its bullet rips through the chest of the YOUNGER MARSHALL, who has bent over to pick up his own rifle.

BLAKE completes a crude, unconscious somersault just in time to see the YOUNGER MARSHALL fall over just beyond his dead partner.

There is a moment of extreme quiet. Even the birds and insects seem to have stopped. BLAKE stands up stiffly, his eyes wide again. He looks at the revolver in his hand, then steps closer to the two Men.

The OLDER MARSHALL's eyes are open but unmoving. BLAKE notices that the dead Man's head has landed in the exact center of the extinguished campfire, its circular ashes and burnt twigs forming a kind of blackened halo around it.

BLAKE's eyes follow the blood from his wound to where it meets, in a pool, with blood now spurting from the younger man's body. BLAKE steps over the pool, and stands over the MARSHALL. His chest still heaving, blood now gurgles from his open mouth. Small, disturbing noises come from somewhere inside his throat, and his eyes roll around in their sockets. BLAKE, delirious, looks down at him, as though looking at an untied shoe.

BLAKE

(distantly, to no one at all)

Some are born to endless night...

He raises the pistol, points it at the gurgling man's head, cocks the hammer and fires. BLAKE winces from the loud report, and the YOUNG MARSHALL's body jerks in one final spasm, blood squirting from his head. Slowly, heavily, BLAKE's arm returns to his side. He looks down at the PLAYING CARD in his other hand, then lets it fall. It flutters downward, landing face-up on the dead man's chest. The ACE OF SPADES.

Placidly, as though drugged, he turns his body away from his campsite and gazes off into the forest, becoming aware once again of the density of its sounds.

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN SIDE - MIDDAY

BLAKE's eyeballs roll beneath their lids. The lids open, the eyes briefly struggling to focus, then the eyes widening, registering shock.

BLAKE
(to himself, remaining
motionless)

Oh, shit...

He sits upright on his pinto, the horse dead still. Behind them, connected by a leather lead, is the pack mule, loaded with pelts, stolen from the dead Finns. Both animal's heads are down as though asleep, and both are standing precariously on a rocky ledge, inches from the precipice, on a narrow mountain trail.

BLAKE, in shock, remains completely still, not knowing how he got here, or what to do next. He draws in a slow, conscious breath, as though his lungs would not if left on their own. Then, speaking softly to his horse, BLAKE's mouth is the only moving part of his body.

BLAKE
Come on, baby. [pause] Let's go, now.

[pause] Giddyap.

The horse exhales loudly, a kind of sigh, but refuses to move. BLAKE's hand, very tentatively, moves to the horse's neck and gently strokes its fur.

BLAKE
(softly)

Come on, now. [pause] Here we go.

The horse snorts this time, and jerks its head up to shake BLAKE's hand from its neck. BLAKE reclaims the hand quickly, but is careful to maintain its balance.

BLAKE

Whoa, easy. [pause] Easy...

The pinto drops its head again, its breathing evening out. Very cautiously BLAKE twists in the saddle in order to look at the pack mule behind him. Its position is exactly that of BLAKE's pinto; head down, motionless, breathing softly as though asleep.

BLAKE turns back in his saddle. Then, leaning slightly forward, his widened eyes glance over the cliff and down into the thick pine forest below. But he is quick to pull his eyes back to his own altitude. Slowly his body returns to a very stiff, upright position atop the dozing pinto.

Everything is quiet. Then a LOUD SCREECH from overhead lifts BLAKE's eyes to the sky. Two turkey vultures circle directly above him sinisterly. His eyes drift back down, and he looks into the distance, letting his focus slip away until he is looking at nothing at all.

CUT TO BLACK AND FADE UP ON:

EXT. BLAKE'S PREVIOUS CAMPSITE - AFTERNOON

The OLDER MARSHALL's head and its halo of burned firewood, a miniature river of dried blood threading to the right, past a pair of black boots with silver trim. They are worn by COLE WILSON.

WILSON looks down at the dead man's head as though considering a composition, and the arrangements of its details. Just beyond, CONWAY TWILL kneels over the YOUNGER MARSHALL, going through his pockets.

When he finishes, he stands back up and looks over at WILSON who, with his left boot, moves the OLDER MARSHALL's head a fraction of an inch.

TWILL
(breaking WILSON's deep
concentration)

Hey, Wilson.

WILSON turns his head and glares in TWILL's direction.

TWILL

Look at this.

He takes a few steps over to WILSON and hands him the ACE OF SPADES. WILSON takes it from him, looking at it without expression.

TWILL

That card don't make no sense. That's
the sign of an Indian-killer, ain't
it?

TWILL watches as WILSON pockets the card.

TWILL

There's more, too. Take a look at
this here.

He hands WILSON the crumpled TELEGRAM, then watches while he reads it, again without showing any emotion.

TWILL

Fuckin' Mr. Dick-in-son's even got
the goddamn lawmen in on this.

Silence, as WILSON carefully folds the telegram and places it in a shirt pocket. TWILL just watches. WILSON's glare finds TWILL again, bearing down on him until he thinks of something to say.

TWILL

Guess who took their Winchesters.

More silence, WILSON still staring until TWILL looks down again at the dead men.

TWILL

If he keeps killin' the Law I might
just start to like this Blake bastard.

Hoping for a reaction, he looks back over at WILSON, whose eyes, unchanged, shift from TWILL back to the dead man at his feet. He raises one leg over the haloed head, then brings his boot down hard on it. THE BLOW caves in the skull.

TWILL, eyes twitching, watches WILSON, who watches new blood mixed with brains leak from the broken head as though observing the gradual reaction of a scientific experiment.

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN FOREST - LATE AFTERNOON

In the background behind BLAKE, the pinto and pack-mule are tied to the trunks of young birch trees which stand on the edge of a small clearing. BLAKE, dazed and hungry, carries a heavy double-barreled shotgun. As he moves across the clearing he clumsily kicks his way through the knee-high grass and weeds, hoping to flush out a game bird, or any small edible animal.

Suddenly his body flinches, startled by a squirrel or rabbit darting just in front of him. Then, almost as an afterthought, he swings up the big gun and jerks back the trigger. Both barrels explode, the shotgun kicking into his shoulder and almost knocking him to the ground.

Regaining his balance, BLAKE shakes it off, then opens the breach of the smoking gun and loads in two more shells. He snaps the shotgun closed and continues through the small bushes and weeds.

The clearing ends, and BLAKE enters the bordering pine forest. He steps quietly now, his eyes scanning the ground and trees for any sign of movement.

Several yards later BLAKE stops and slowly raises the shotgun, his eyes now fixed on a target. Just in front of him, at the base of a thick fir tree, a small red squirrel has stopped to nibble on a pine cone.

BLAKE concentrates, the squirrel watching him, as it eats. He squeezes the trigger and again both barrels discharge like two cannons going off. The top half of BLAKE's body is forced backward, but his feet remain planted, and he swings back forward, peering through the gun smoke.

His eyes light up. Success. He rushes over to the base of the tree to claim his prey. With thumb and index finger, BLAKE lifts up the small animal by the tail. The head and tail remain intact, but the rest of the small animal is nothing more than a blasted pulp of blood and sinew.

BLAKE holds it up in front of him. The squirrel head swings from a thread of tissue attached to whatever is left of an exposed spine. Disgusted, BLAKE tosses the carcass into the bushes and turns away, heading back toward the clearing where he left the horse and mule.

CUT TO BLACK AND FADE UP ON:

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

A fragile layer of moonlight illuminates BLAKE's eyes. They look down intently at his hands.

In front of a small pile of sticks and twigs carefully constructed into a tepee form, BLAKE, shivering, sits cross-legged on the ground. His hands busily twirl a shaved stick against a flat stone, but with a technique that suggests he once read it in a book or manual. He continues with concentration.

Finally, unable to produce fire, he flings the stick and stone off into the surrounding forest. With a lost, blank expression BLAKE rises to his feet and walks over to the pack-mule. He pulls the large burlap sack from the mule and tears it open. Inside are several small animal pelts, and a larger piece of what looks like raccoon fur. Kicking the pelts to the side, he picks up the matted fur and it unfolds in his hands. It is a coat, a raccoon coat. BLAKE immediately pulls it on to his thin frame, crossing his arms to capture his body heat inside it.

BLAKE walks back to where he was previously, and sits down in the same spot. He looks at the delicately-built but unlit fire just in front of him. Still trembling from the damp chill, he holds his arms out, rubbing his hands together, then warming them over the imaginary flames.

The pinto, unsaddled and standing several yards from BLAKE, walks over to him. BLAKE doesn't seem to notice, still holding his arms out over the unlit fire. Lowering its head, the pinto nudges BLAKE's hat off his head and it falls to the ground.

BLAKE

What?

He looks at the horse's head now a few feet from his own, then picks up his hat, dusts it off, and replaces it on his head. Pulling the coat tight around him, BLAKE settles back against his saddle, briefly grimacing from the foul stench of the the dirty raccoon fur.

Around him the thin moonlight barely defines the abstract shapes of rocks and pine trees. BLAKE's left hand finds its way inside his coat and covers his heart, now almost as an unconscious reflex.

In the distance, echoing through the trees, a haunting music played on a single flute or pipe rises from the darkness. (INDIAN FLUTE MUSIC). It is a kind of music BLAKE has never heard before, and its sad, rounded tones have an hypnotic effect.

Drowsily, BLAKE pulls his right hand out from his coat, and is half-surprised to find it clutching the white paper flower that THEL gave to him. He looks at it closely in the moonlight. He raises it to his nostrils, breathing in. It has no smell. BLAKE's hands fold themselves over his chest, one delicately holding the artificial flower. His eyes close.

The music floats on the air around him, growing more clear, and closer. BLAKE's breathing becomes calm and even, and then the music stops. His heavy eyelids open halfway. Just beyond the unlit campfire, above the top of a bush, is a FACE. It is looking straight at BLAKE. It is decorated with paint, the scalp partially shaved, with feathers and bones tied into a thick shock of jet-black hair almost standing on end. The effect is theatrical and frightening.

BLAKE blinks, but the face doesn't go away. His eyes shift to the left, and there, next to a pine shrub, is another, similar FACE also peering directly at him. To the right BLAKE sees yet ANOTHER, peeking over a large rock, and near a tree behind a rock, a fourth painted FACE watches him.

Unable to move, or to decide whether or not he is dreaming, BLAKE decides not to look any further, and allows his eyelids to close, sealing his eyes against his own vision.

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN-VALLEY TRAIL - MORNING

In the light of mid-morning, BLAKE is once again on the move. His pinto, followed by the overloaded pack-mule, moves along a rutted trail through a mountain-valley. A stream runs along one side, on the other a field which, in the distance, slopes gently into low mountains.

BLAKE's appearance and demeanor have radically changed since his arrival in the town of Machine; he is wind-burned and unshaven, his once pristine hat now stained and broken, beneath it his hair now wild and tangled. Over his torn and blood-stained suit ammunition belts cross his chest, his pistol tucked beneath them, and over that the long, dirty raccoon coat. Strapped to his saddle on one side is the big shotgun, and on the other, a Winchester rifle. The look in BLAKE's eyes has changed as well, as they dart around him, paranoically attracted by each sound, each motion of grass or branches.

As the horse and mule round a bend in the dirt trail, his eyes squint to focus on something in the distance ahead. BLAKE sees a wagon, apparently stopped in the muddy ruts. He can just make out the silhouettes of two figures, attempting to push the loaded wagon from behind.

BLAKE pulls the shotgun from its saddle-sling, and lays it across his lap, as his pinto plods on toward the wagon.

As he draws nearer, the two figures, both men, turn to watch his approach. The index finger of BLAKE's right hand nervously encircles the trigger of the shotgun. One of the men, a short, stocky, grizzled man, waves both arms above his head.

1st MAN

Allo der!

He speaks with an accent, French or maybe German. BLAKE's pinto draws close to the stranded wagon. It is loaded with animal pelts and supplies, several big mason jugs hanging off the sides. The stocky man walks closer, BLAKE surveying him to make sure he isn't armed.

1st MAN
(to BLAKE)

Our goddamn wagon is stuck here in
all dis mud here. Mebbie you could
give a hand?

BLAKE remains motionless, without responding, watching cautiously as the 2nd man approaches. He is tall, reed-like, with pock-marked, emaciated cheeks and cold, glinting eyes. While his eyes lock with BLAKE's, the 1st man notices the pelts strapped onto the pack-mule.

1st MAN

Hey, what you got der? Dese look
pretty good condition.

BLAKE turns as the man is speaking, the 2nd man staying
very close to their wagon.

1st MAN
(looking back at Blake)

Mebbie we can make with you a trade,
[pause] I'm sure we got some tings
you must need, no?

Suddenly, a metallic CLICK draws both their eye lines
back toward the wagon. The 2nd man has silently pulled a
long, big-barreled rifle from somewhere on the wagon, and
is now pointing it, menacingly, directly at BLAKE.

1st MAN
(backing away from Blake's pinto
and the possible line of fire)

What is dis, den, Carlo?

2nd MAN
(his accent somehow slightly
different then the other's)

Dat is him. Da one dey hunt for. Da
keeler.

1st MAN

How you know dis?

2nd MAN
(eyes glued to Blake's)

Da posters. Dat's him for sure.

[pause, then aggressively to Blake]

Your name is Bill Blake?

BLAKE's eyes reveal nothing, remaining locked on those of
the tall, thin, pock-marked men aiming the rifle at him.

BLAKE
(calmly)

Well, it's really William Blake.

Without hesitation, the 2nd man yanks on the trigger of his rifle. CLICK. Nothing happens. Then, frantically, the tall man nervously fusses with the breach of his rifle. As he does, BLAKE swings the shotgun over the head of the pinto and points it at the man.

BLAKE

I think your gun is jammed.

The man's eyes open wide in panic. Then, holding the stock of the shotgun tightly against his hip, BLAKE pulls the trigger.

The BLAST hits the 2nd man full in the chest, blowing a hole through him the size of a grapefruit. He flies backwards into the dirt, coming to a motionless rest by the side of the trail. BLAKE calms his horse, then methodically reloads the shotgun while the 1st man rushes to the side of his dead partner. When he looks back up at BLAKE, he finds he is looking down the barrels of the shotgun.

1st MAN
(trembling)

You, you keeled my friend!

The 1st man stands up, simultaneously stretching his arms high above his head.

1st MAN

Don't keel me! Please!

BLAKE
(calmly)

Let's talk about that trade.

1st MAN
(terrified)

Take what you want! Just don't keel
me!

BLAKE keeps the shotgun pointed at him, as he pulls his pinto alongside the wagon.

BLAKE

You got anything to eat?

1st MAN
(still trembling visibly)

Some dried buffalo meat. Dat is all.

BLAKE

Get it.

He watches carefully, as the man reaches into the wagon. He then turns back to BLAKE, holding out some strips of dried meat tied with a buckskin cord. BLAKE takes the package from him.

BLAKE

What's in those jugs?

1st MAN

Jugs? Oh, uh, corn liquor.

BLAKE

Hand me one.

The man quickly unties a corked mason jug from the side of the wagon and gingerly holds it out to BLAKE.

BLAKE

Tie it to my saddle.

While the man does this, BLAKE pulls out his pistol and points it at the man's head. With his other hand he then slides the shotgun back into its sling on the other side of the saddle. Completing a knot, the man steps back, again raising his arms high above his head.

BLAKE

(motioning with his head)

Now, stand over there.

The man moves nervously away from the wagon, and stands on the edge of the trail, his back to the wide, rolling field. Keeping his pistol on the man, BLAKE twists slightly in the saddle, and unties the lead that attaches the pack-mule to his pinto.

BLAKE

I'm gonna leave this mule, and all
this stuff on him, with you. As a
kind of trade.

The man nods nervously in agreement.

BLAKE

Oh. One more thing. You got any
matches?

The man nods again, and reaches inside his clothing.

BLAKE

(watching him cautiously)

Careful, now.

As though handling a hot potato, the man pulls out a
cardboard box, his trembling hands causing it to shake
like a wooden rattle.

1st MAN

Is just matches!

BLAKE

Okay. Toss them over.

The man tosses them in the air, BLAKE catching them with
his free hand, then stuffing them away in the pocket of
his raccoon coat. The man's arms are once again thrust
straight up into the air. BLAKE pauses, noting the
ridiculousness of the man's posture.

BLAKE

Okay. Now, you're gonna run way out
into that field until I can't see you
anymore.

The man nods and turns his head, glancing at the endless
grass sloping of into distant mountains, then turns back
to BLAKE.

BLAKE

Go on, now.

The man, his arms still in the air, runs off into the field making sharp zig-zag patterns, as though to avoid being shot at. BLAKE smiles, slightly amused, as the absurd figure becomes smaller and smaller... until it is just a tiny speck, arms still raised, receding into the landscape.

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

EXT. STREAM - AFTERNOON

BLAKE has stopped near a narrow stream flowing through a small, open area in the forest. In the background the pinto bends to drink, while BLAKE, in the foreground, stands looking down at something on the ground. He kneels next to it.

It is a young deer. The fawn's corpse seems newly dead. Still, BLAKE can find no visible wound, or mark of any kind on the young animal. He leans to stroke the soft spotted fur, his heavy coat falling open. In the process, from the lapel of his suit the flower falls, now stained with grime and blood. The gift. It lands softly on the side of the fawn. Surprised, BLAKE looks down at the new composition, the spotted fur, the once-white rose, its curled edges, now partially colored with dried blood from BLAKE's wound.

BLAKE's eyes remain fixed on the flower, while his hand finds the handle of a hunting knife under his belt. Then his other hand reaches for the paper flower, and puts its artificial stem between his teeth.

With a quick, deliberate motion of BLAKE's right arm, the knife cuts a deep line the length of the dead fawn's white belly. Trancelike, his eyes see thick blood seep slowly into the dirt, darkening the ground in an expanding pattern.

He leans forward, even closer, and then pulls the incision open with his hands. His hand slowly takes the flower from his mouth, and then the arm plunges it deep inside the dead animal. He pulls the arm out slowly, now red with blood from the elbow down, the hand empty, the rose gone.

He looks at the empty red hand, then turning his body, lies down, his head pillowed by the fawn.

Unconsciously, he rests his bloody arm across his forehead, and gazes at the sky directly above him. Dark, swirling storm clouds slowly roll into view. Gradually claiming more and more of the sky. BLAKE watches them, muttering quietly to himself.

BLAKE

Clouds cannot be stopped... by the
building of a ship...

His breathing becomes even, regulated, as his eyelids slide down...

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

The calm rhythm of BLAKE's breathing continues, but his head now rests against his grounded saddle, his closed eyelids illuminated by the glow of a campfire.

A sharp, rustling sound draws the eyelids open with a sudden jerk. BLAKE's body, in turn, jerks up into a sitting position, his pistol simultaneously emerging from inside the matted fur coat.

The barrel quickly finds its target -- the source of the noise. Across the fire BLAKE sees a large raccoon, sitting upright, its eyes locked onto his as it gnaws voraciously on a strip of BLAKE's dried meat.

Stunned, BLAKE does nothing but gawk at the animal. The raccoon, jaws moving rapidly, stares back at the pale human with gun drawn, clogged in the thick coat of raccoon fur.

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

EXT. A DIFFERENT CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Suspended on a makeshift spit over a campfire is some blackened, unidentifiable meat. CONWAY TWILL, crouched next to the fire, reaches in and tears off a piece. He raises it quickly to his mouth and gnaws on it as though it might, at any moment, disappear. Jaws moving much like those of the raccoon in the previous scene, TWILL stares out over the flames.

Next to him, COLE WILSON is also crouched, watching. TWILL's eyes dart in his direction:

TWILL
(mouth full and still chewing)

You ain't gonna eat none?

Holding the meat with both hands as he eats, TWILL's eyes dart back, again looking off over the fire. WILSON, a sour look on his face, says nothing. He rises to his feet and takes a few steps away from the fire, now standing behind TWILL, his back turned. TWILL's eyes try to follow, without his head turning. He hears the sound of WILSON pissing into the bushes, and his eyes jump to the spit over the fire.

In a flash, his hand greedily reaches into the flames and snatches out another piece of black, greasy meat. Again holding it with both hands he continues chewing furiously. Behind him, WILSON's legs turn, and a moment later are standing next to TWILL.

There is a CLICK, and before TWILL can turn to look toward WILSON, a gun goes off, projecting a bullet clear through TWILL's head. His mouth continues his chewing motion while his body falls over with a THUD next to the fire. A leg jerks, and then the whole body is still, blood flowing from the head.

WILSON, expressionless, crouches back into his original position, and looks into the fire. Slowly, his hand reaches in and pulls the remaining bit of greasy meat from the spit. He raises it to his lips, his teeth tearing a small piece off. With methodical repetition, WILSON chews on the morsel of blackened, unidentified meat.

CUT TO BLACK AND FADE UP ON:

EXT. WOODED VALLEY - DAY

Weighted down with guns and ammunition belts, BLAKE sits heavily atop the loaded pinto, as it picks its way through a shallow valley that winds through wooded hills.

BLAKE appears to be in a trance, falling in and out of consciousness, his eyes opening half-way then closing, then half-opening, opening again. Again the natural sounds around him seem exaggerated and unreal. They lull him, like music.

His right arm moves slowly, automatically inside his coat, again finding his heart.

The hand comes back out, and with difficulty BLAKE focuses his eyes on it. Dark, fresh blood is smeared across his fingers. He studies the hand for a moment, as though not even sure if it's his own. He watches as the hand wipes the blood off on the fur of his coat, then returns to the reins of the pinto, the horse still navigating carefully around rocks and shrubs.

CUT TO BLACK AND FADE UP ON:

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

BLAKE now walks along, absently holding the reins in one limp hand, the pinto following just behind. BLAKE is not in good condition, but under the strong light of the full moon the forest around him seems magical, imagined, and somehow its ethereal quality spurs him on.

They enter a small break in the trees, the light opening into a wider circle around them. As he walks, BLAKE listens to the rush of the tall grass as it brushes across his boots and pant legs like gentle waves against a shoreline. Then new sounds mix into, and against, the waves of grass. ANIMAL-LIKE SOUNDS, grunts and gasps. BLAKE stops walking, and listens.

These new sounds draw him in their direction. He drops the reins silently, leaving the pinto, and moves quietly, slowly toward the sounds as though hypnotized.

The noises become more defined, somehow rhythmic, and he stops walking. Just ahead, a patch of moonlight falls on a bed-like area of short, fine grass, or moss. BLAKE sees something -- undulating shapes in a soft pool of light.

Two big animals are mating, a male, more upright thrusting behind the other.

BLAKE steps closer, watching curiously. The more upright figure is bear-like, but in some dream-like contradiction he has broad antlers on his head. BLAKE can now see that he is on his knees, entering the other from behind. And the other figure, on hands and knees, is human-like -- the curves of its skin reflective.

BLAKE, in a trance, moves even closer. This second figure is a young WOMAN, her hair long and black.

She squirms and moans with each thrust, the big figure pulling her head back by the hair, roughly rocking her body back against his own.

But the form of the male figure still confuses BLAKE. This draws him still closer. Then, only yards away from them, BLAKE sees that the male too has hairless, human skin, and the body of a MAN.

BLAKE's eyes widen in a split second. Their movements have abruptly halted, and the big figure is now looking directly at him! It lets out a strange growl, and a second later is on top of BLAKE, straddling him on the ground; the WOMAN shrieking and climbing to her feet behind them.

The big naked figure raises his arm over BLAKE's head, its large hand clutching a heavy rock. And then, at the instant the rock should come down on him, smashing into BLAKE's head, the MAN's arm freezes. Silence. BLAKE is looking up into the eyes of NOBODY.

The Indian too, in this suspended moment, recognizes the face of WILLIAM BLAKE. His eyes widen to match those of BLAKE.

The moment is broken by the voice of the other figure, the WOMAN, speaking rapidly in an Indian language. Simultaneously, the two men look over at her. She is a beautiful, full-figured Indian girl, black hair falling almost to her waist, completely naked, but holding her balled-up buckskin clothing against one hip, petulantly.

NOBODY responds to her in her language, and she, in turn, speaks again, this time even more animatedly. BLAKE recognizes the tapping of her foot on the ground as a familiar gesture of female annoyance, and when she finishes her brief tirade she whirls around and runs off into the forest, soon disappearing from view. NOBODY yells something after her, a trace of pleading evident in his low voice. He then turns back, looking down at BLAKE.

NOBODY

William Blake, you have just
disturbed a very romantic moment.

BLAKE

I'm, uh, I'm sorry.

NOBODY, naked except for the deer head and antlers, rises to his feet.

BLAKE looks up at his massive form, washed in the moonlight and towering over him.

NOBODY
(sternly)

Make your camp here, and do not
leave, until I return.

BLAKE
(dazed)

Okay.

The big Indian then turns, and runs off in the direction of his interrupted lover's abrupt departure. BLAKE, head slightly raised, watches, quietly amused by the vision of NOBODY running naked and antlered in pursuit of the beautiful GIRL, and disappearing into the shadows of the trees.

BLAKE's head drops back to the ground, a slight smile on his lips, his eyelids gradually sliding down and covering his eyes.

CUT TO BLACK AND FADE UP ON:

EXT. FOREST - DAWN

BLAKE is asleep, the early light playing over his closed lids, his mouth still holding a faint smile.

Then, a big foot, enclosed in a deerskin moccasin appears next to his head. It pushes strongly against his shoulder, moving his body a few inches to the right. BLAKE's eyes open.

NOBODY, fully dressed as in the past, stands over BLAKE and looks down at him. BLAKE raises his head. Beyond the Indian is the pinto, packed and ready for travel, and by its side stands NOBODY's horse, also fully prepared.

NOBODY

A dead body revenges not injuries,
William Blake. Rise now, and drive
your cart and plow over the bones of
the dead.

Confused, sleep still in his eyes, BLAKE raises his body halfway up and yawns. The Indian turns his back on BLAKE and walks over to their horses, examining the supplies tied to BLAKE's pinto.

NOBODY
(his back to Blake)

You have new material things.

BLAKE
(drowsily)

Yeah...

NOBODY
(looking back over his shoulder
at Blake)

Do you have tobacco?

BLAKE

No. [pause] No tobacco.

The Indian turns away, exhaling sharply in frustration. BLAKE watches him as he appears to make final preparations for their departure. BLAKE yawns again, rubbing his eyes with closed fists.

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

EXT. HILLS - MORNING

NOBODY, tall on his horse, antlers stretching toward the sky, rides next to BLAKE on the pinto.

The landscape around them is a bizarre series of rounded, seemingly identical, grassy hills which appear to stretch off into infinity. NOBODY navigates the horses around or over various hills as though participating in a game, or winding his way through an endless maze.

The Indian is alert but somehow sullen, while BLAKE seems sleepily bemused. BLAKE looks over at the Indian riding next to him. He wonders what this other man's thoughts are. He looks at the strange decorations on the man's clothes and on his horse, as though having just landed on another planet, or fallen into a different time period.

The Indian, however, doesn't look over, doesn't seem to feel BLAKE's eyes on him.

As BLAKE watches him ride, small, uniform hills drift rhythmically past him. BLAKE studies NOBODY's face, and the distant, ancient expression it wears.

BLAKE
(after a long pause)

Nobody?

NOBODY glances over, momentarily snapped from his thoughts, then looks back ahead of him, without responding.

BLAKE

You, uh, ... I mean... that girl,
uh, ...

The Indian looks over, almost threateningly.

BLAKE

Are you gonna just, uh, are you
leavin' her behind?

NOBODY turns away from him.

NOBODY
(somerly)

Yes. [pause] She doesn't want me. She
only allows me to mate with her.

[pause] Then she sends me away.

There is a period of silence as they continue riding.
Then the Indian turns back to BLAKE.

NOBODY

Anyway, after I've delivered you, I
will go back to mate with her some
more. [pause, his expression
changing] If she will still allow me
to, by then.

BLAKE laughs at this quietly, then his expression suddenly changes.

BLAKE

Hey. What do you mean, 'deliver me'?

NOBODY
(looking away)

Only because you are William Blake...

[he then spits on the ground, as though for punctuation] and a killer of white men, I will take you to the bridge made of water. The mirror. [he turns, making eye contact with Blake]

It will take you back up to the next level of the world, back to where William Blake came from, and where his spirit belongs. There are reasons for all things. I know that William Blake has been thrown back down into this place for a purpose. But now, in order for William Blake to return, I must make sure that you pass back through the mirror, at the place where the sky meets the sea.

His eyes remain fixed on BLAKE's for a moment longer, then drift down to the mason jug tied to BLAKE's saddlebags.

NOBODY

I see you have acquired some corn liquor.

BLAKE

Oh, yeah. [pause] Do you, do you want
a drink?

He unlashes the jug and offers it to NOBODY. The Indian looks over at it for a moment before accepting. He then takes the jug and drinks from it. He pauses, then takes another before passing it back. BLAKE drinks, then coughs up most of it, wincing. When he recovers, he takes a smaller drink, holds it in, and passes the jug back over.

The Indian takes the jug, but his eyes are now on the new rifle slung from the pinto's saddle. BLAKE follows his eyeline to the gun.

NOBODY
(eyes still on the rifle)

Winchester.

BLAKE

Uh, yeah. [pause] You, you want it?

NOBODY
(looking away)

No.

BLAKE pulls the rifle from its saddle holster.

BLAKE

You take it. [he holds it out to
Nobody] Really! I took it off a dead
white man!

NOBODY

Did William Blake kill this white man?

BLAKE

Yeah. William Blake killed him.

NOBODY looks at the gun, then reaches over and takes it, exchanging the jug with BLAKE.

BLAKE takes another drink, again coughing a little, while NOBODY happily examines the Winchester rifle, cocking the lever, aiming, looking into the muzzle and up the barrel...

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

EXT. RIVERSIDE - AFTERNOON

BLAKE and NOBODY have stopped near a small cove on the side of a river. The two men sit on the ground, cross-legged, drinking and passing the jug of liquor. NOBODY's new Winchester lays across his lap. Next to them the two horses, heads bowed down, drink from a shallow pool of water.

In the distance is a wooden structure partially overhanging the river. Several canoes are secured to it, while the opposite side of the building borders a dirt road. There, several horses are tied next to a big, uncovered wagon.

BLAKE and NOBODY laugh, now quite drunk. The Indian takes another long drink, swallows, and again puts the jug to his lips. Finding it empty, he looks over at BLAKE, who laughs out loud at the sudden seriousness of NOBODY's expression. The Indian flings the jug into the woods and, out of sight it SMASHES against a rock or tree.

BLAKE stops laughing, seeing the Indian staring sullenly into the dirt in front of him.

BLAKE

What.

NOBODY's eyes do not rise to meet BLAKE's.

NOBODY
(becoming morose)

This is no longer our world, William Blake. [pause] The white man thinks the land can be owned. But the land belongs to no one. [pause] The measure of the land and the measure of our bodies is the same.

A longer pause, then BLAKE awkwardly climbs to his feet. Drunkenly, he reels over to the edge of the river and looks off toward the wooden building, noticing it for the first time. He watches a tiny figure lift a crate from the wagon then turn and disappear inside.

BLAKE
(drunkenly)

Hey, Nobody. What's that over there?

NOBODY
(still sitting, staring at the dirt)

Trading post. [pause] Indians can
buy diseases there.

BLAKE
(looking over at him)

What?

Slowly the big man rises to his feet, clutching his new rifle. He rocks back and forth, as though at sea, then stumbles over and stands, wavering, next to BLAKE. The two stand drunkenly, looking off toward the TRADING POST.

NOBODY

We need to acquire a canoe.

BLAKE looks over at NOBODY, who stares off down the river toward the building. There is a pause, then NOBODY looks down at the rifle still cradled in his arms.

NOBODY

And I need to try out my new
Winchester.

He pauses again then looks over to meet BLAKE's uncertain eyes.

NOBODY
(slurring his words)

Let's go shopping.

BLAKE looks with drunken blankness into the Indian's bloodshot eyes.

CUT TO BLACK AND FADE UP ON:

EXT. TRADING POST - LATE AFTERNOON

BLAKE and NOBODY are now just outside the TRADING POST, standing beside their horses, still reeling slightly from their drunken state.

BLAKE watches stupidly as NOBODY strips down the horses, flinging the saddles and supplies into the dirt. He then picks up the Winchester, hands the big shotgun to BLAKE, and then attempts to shoo the horses away. They trot off into the forest, but seconds later the pinto reappears, peeking out at them from the bushes, curious.

NOBODY then turns to face BLAKE, who wears a child-like and also curious expression, as though awaiting instructions from a parent or teacher. NOBODY looks into his eyes.

NOBODY

We will go inside, and you will tell
them we are here to acquire a canoe.

NOBODY continues to look into BLAKE's eyes for a moment, making sure that his words have registered. He then turns and steps up onto the wooden planks just outside the building's doorway. BLAKE follows, but both men stop, as BLAKE's eyes catch hold of a WANTED POSTER tacked to the building just above a weathered rocking chair, and between several other machine-printed handbills. On either side of these posters, animal skins are also nailed to the wooden, exterior walls.

BLAKE steps over and angrily snatches down the poster. As he reads it, NOBODY looks over his shoulder. The reward money for BLAKE has now increased substantially, and the list of his crimes is much longer. BLAKE is shocked.

NOBODY

This is not bad.

BLAKE
(looking over at him)

What?!

NOBODY

This is not a bad picture of William
Blake.

The Indian then takes the poster from BLAKE's hands and throws it to the ground. Once more he stares into BLAKE's eyes, attempting to call him back to their present situation. The shock gradually drains from BLAKE's expression, and the two men, holding their rifles at their sides, turn and enter the TRADING POST.

INT. TRADING POST

Inside it is musty and dark, horizontal stripes of light leaking between the wooden slats of the walls. More animal skins are hung here and there, others piled on wooden racks. Bags of grain and rice are stacked against the walls, as are axe handles, various tools, bolts of coarse cloth, etc.

There is a counter at one end of the room, and behind it stands a thin, aging MAN. His mean, bitter eyes follow the two men from the moment they enter, and his hands reach silently for a shotgun from under the counter.

NOBODY runs his hand through a fox fur tacked to the wall, while BLAKE's eyes are attracted to a stack of carefully placed, sealed tin cans. He picks one up, looking at the fancy paper wrapper on the tin's flat surface. The label has a colored, machine-printed image of a smiling fish under the words 'processed herring'.

Just then, BLAKE hears a grunt coming from NOBODY; a signal. He replaces the tin, and looks at NOBODY, then over at the MAN behind the counter, whose eyes move suspiciously back and forth between them.

BLAKE

Uh, we are here to acquire a canoe.

MAN

(coldly)

They're outside by the river, if you
wanna take a look.

NOBODY

(aggressively)

Do you have tobacco?

MAN
(glaring at the Indian)

Nope. None at all.

NOBODY glares back at him, anger visibly rising from his body and flooding into his face. In a sudden jerking motion, and without raising it from his side, NOBODY cocks the lever of his rifle and pulls the trigger. The bullet rips into the MAN's chest, and as the blow throws him back against the wall, NOBODY cocks again and fires. He fires three more times at the MAN's torso as he slides to the floor, out of sight behind the counter.

BLAKE, partially in shock, and in a weak and drunk condition, looks over at the Indian. NOBODY looks back at him, smiling.

NOBODY

One less white man.

Just then, from a small doorway, a second MAN with a long rifle jumps into the room and takes aim at NOBODY. In a reflexive action, BLAKE swings up the shotgun and pulls the trigger. The blast tears off part of the 2nd MAN's shoulder, and he crashes onto some sacks of grain, knocking other objects to the floor in the process.

BLAKE recovers from the recoil, and sees the 2nd MAN motionless and bloody, lying there. He then turns and sees NOBODY just finishing the grizzly procedure of taking the 1st MAN's scalp with his hunting knife. The Indian tears the clump of hair and skin from the MAN's head, then stands upright, stuffing it under his belt and looking at BLAKE with a demonic expression.

NOBODY

Come, William Blake. We shall select
a canoe now.

The Indian turns and exits through a doorway on the river side of the building, BLAKE following, zombie-like.

EXT. TRADING POST DOCK - AFTERNOON

As they emerge back into the overcast light, NOBODY sees a third man running frantically away along the bank of the river. BLAKE watches NOBODY cock his Winchester, raise it to his shoulder and take aim at the receding figure. BANG.

The figure of the man, hit squarely in the back, tumbles dramatically into the shallow edge of the river, then remains motionless. NOBODY looks happily at his rifle, then over at BLAKE.

NOBODY
(with satisfaction)

Winchester.

NOBODY then turns and quickly surveys the canoes, lined up in the water. He points to one -- the only one made in the Indian style, dugout, and carved from a single cedar trunk.

NOBODY
(pointing)

That one.

BLAKE stumbles over to the canoe, gets in, and moves toward the prow. NOBODY gets in immediately after him, unleashing the boat from the narrow plank dock.

BLAKE, feeling weak and dizzy, lies down in the front section of the long wooden canoe, while NOBODY shoves them off and into the strong current of the river.

BLAKE
(weakly, his hand again inside
his coat)

Is this the boat that will take me
across the bridge of water?

The Indian, paddling, looks over BLAKE at the river.

NOBODY

No. This one is not strong enough.

A moment later the canoe passes the point on the shore near the TRADING POST where NOBODY stripped and shooed away their horses. BLAKE lifts his head up just enough to see the pinto, still there, again watching curiously as the two men drift, past. Upset, the horse lets out a whinny, and takes several steps into the water, attempting to follow the swiftly moving boat. Still watching them, the pinto angles its head to one side, like a confused dog. It makes another noise, and splashes futilely through the shallow water. BLAKE watches it recede, his vision beginning to blur.

Heavily, he lays his head back down into the V-shaped bow of the long canoe, wrapped in the raccoon coat. His eyes closed.

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

EXT. CANOE ON RIVER - NIGHT

BLAKE's head is still nestled in the moving canoe's prow, eyes closed, asleep. But it is night now, moonlight finds its way onto his eyelids in passing patterns as the boat moves under overhanging branches. The river laps soothingly against the sides of the boat.

Other much more distant sounds interrupt the gentle sound of water, and BLAKE's eyes open slowly. He concentrates on the distant noises. He hears gunshots, first sparse, then becoming very dense. The yells of men mix with screams from women or boys. BLAKE hears horses' hooves and more gunfire, then strange whoops and more screams.

His eyes focus on NOBODY, paddling smoothly, rhythmically, but with a strange, distant expression of exhaustion which betrays his almost mechanical movements.

The sounds continue, but become sparse again, and seem to fade into the distance, the moving water once again taking precedence. Slowly BLAKE's eyes close again as he drops off into a place far from his consciousness.

CUT TO BLACK AND FADE UP ON:

EXT. CANOE ON RIVER - DAYBREAK

The early light is misty, like fog and smoke combined, rolling in waves through the cool air. NOBODY continues to maneuver the wooden boat assuredly along the side of the river.

At first, with BLAKE still reclining and asleep, NOBODY appears to be alone in the canoe. Then BLAKE raises himself onto his elbows, and looks back at NOBODY. The Indian says nothing, and doesn't look at him. His eyes are fixed on something in the distance ahead.

More smoke or fog rolls over the small boat as it glides along, BLAKE now propped up slightly, peeking at the landscape drifting past. The boat follows a curve, and the river widens.

NOBODY
(without looking at BLAKE)

Stay down low, William Blake.

BLAKE shifts down a little until just his eyes and head peek over the side. Another wave of smoke, and when the air clears, the men stare silently off to their right.

An INDIAN VILLAGE stretches across a cleared area just on the river's edge. It consists of totems and wooden lodges rather than tepees. But the totems are charred, the buildings smoldering. Burnt canoes lay like wreckage on the riverbank. There is no sound or movement in the village and as the canoe passes close by, BLAKE and NOBODY recognize the forms of corpses in the rubble. They too are blackened, some bloodied.

The two men's heads turn, their eyes remaining on the smoking village as the canoe begins to leave it behind. Then NOBODY turns and then again looks forward, distantly, his eyes never coming close to BLAKE.

A short distance later, NOBODY's eyes again seem fixed on something up ahead. He stops paddling, and BLAKE shifts his body to look.

The canoe glides as if on its own, the water slowing it only slightly. Just next to it, in the water, is a CORPSE. It is the body of a young Indian warrior, floating face down, a small amount of his blood still escaping into the river through soaked buckskin and ornamental feathers. His long dark hair is fanned out around his head like a halo.

Still in silence, the two men stare down at the young warrior, their heads again turning to keep it in view. BLAKE's eyes move to NOBODY, who is turned away from him at the waist, motionless, watching the corpse receding as the river pulls it away in the opposite direction.

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

EXT. RIVERSIDE FOREST - EARLY MORNING

The gentle sound of the moving river is heard in the background. In a misty, wooded area near the water, a young FEMALE INDIAN WARRIOR lies dead in the underbrush, her deerskin clothes pushed up above her waist. Her flushed face and the dark bruises around her neck suggest strangulation as the very recent cause of her death.

Just next to her are the black and silver boots of COLE WILSON. He stands over her, looking down while buttoning up his trousers, the soft morning light glinting off his silver teeth. There is something newly frightening in WILSON's expression -- a demonic, paranoid quality not previously exhibited.

When his pants re-fastened, he kicks the young woman's corpse, rolling it over, then reaches into a pocket of his jacket. He drops something -- it flutters down and lands on top of the Indian girl. It is the ACE OF SPADES.

WILSON pauses briefly, admiring the composition -- the black and white card, face-up, lying on the skin of the young woman's shoulder, her thick black hair framing it.

Then, stepping over the body, he moves next to a second corpse which lies nearby. It is a YOUNG BRAVE, fresh blood from a very recent bullet wound gurgling from his neck and running down onto beaded buckskin.

WILSON kneels down next to the dead body, simultaneously pulling a silver knife from inside his right boot. With a hard jerk, WILSON's left hand pulls back the long hair of the dead warrior, while his right hand aligns the knife blade along the hairline of the forehead. The corners of WILSON's lips curl up slightly, again exposing his shining teeth, as he prepares to take the dead warrior's scalp.

EXT. CANOE ON RIVER - MID-MORNING

The light is now brighter, though overcast. The sun has burnt away the earlier fog and mist.

NOBODY sits upright in the canoe, staring ahead, continuing to paddle gracefully while BLAKE hangs partly, limply, over the side. With half-focused eyes BLAKE watches broken cedar trunks occasionally floating past, while NOBODY scans the shoreline, with its silhouetted fir and pine trees.

Then, NOBODY stops paddling. Noting this, BLAKE's eyes move to the Indian, who stares at the shore to the left. BLAKE follows his eyeline and sees a pair of deer, one with big antlers, watching them from the bank. They stand completely still, frozen, next to a cluster of wild berry bushes.

Suddenly, one leaps and disappears into the woods. NOBODY stares intently at the remaining deer. It is the antlered male, and as BLAKE's eyes move between NOBODY and the wild animal it registers that their antlers appear to be identical.

The Indian says something to it softly in an Indian language, the deer staring directly back at him. After a moment, as though having communicated with the Indian, it too bounds gracefully into the trees following the female. When the animal has disappeared from view, NOBODY turns his head back to the front, and resumes paddling.

A short distance later, NOBODY abruptly stops, paddling again.

NOBODY
(firmly, but quietly)

Get down low in the canoe, William
Blake.

BLAKE slides down onto the narrow floor of the boat, eyes widening a little. As the canoe drifts silently, NOBODY's eyes again scan the shore. There, standing next to trees, and behind bushes, are several Indians in full war dress peering at the passing canoe. Several more appear behind them. NOBODY addresses them in an Indian language, and one of them replies. NOBODY speaks again. His tone is strong and rounded, calm.

BLAKE pulls himself up slightly, just enough for him to peek over the side of the canoe. To him, the warrior's frightening paint and iridescent feathers seem to grow directly from the geometry of the landscape around them.

NOBODY gives BLAKE's leg a kick with his foot, and BLAKE slides back down out of view. NOBODY again resumes paddling, propelling the long canoe further down the moving river.

CUT TO BLACK AND FADE UP ON:

EXT. ON RIVER BY INDIAN VILLAGE - AFTERNOON

BLAKE's eyes open slowly. He looks at the sky, the clouds passing above the canoe. He turns his head slightly, and over the side he sees a gigantic bird, perched with huge wings out-stretched. The bird's detail is unreal, impossible, and BLAKE pulls himself a little higher straining to focus his eyes, his head turning to follow the bird.

It sits atop a tall, thick totem by the river's side. BLAKE now sees, below the carved bird, some kind of fish or whale, and below that other animal forms; a wolf's head, a strange frog or amphibian, a bear.

Just as the totem begins to recede, BLAKE notices the animals' faces, how strange they seem, with lips and eyes like humans.

BLAKE looks up at NOBODY as he paddles and at the huge antlers above his head. NOBODY doesn't look at BLAKE, but turns his head, looking to the other side. BLAKE drowsily follows the Indian's eyeline.

There, passing in the other direction, is another canoe. Unlike their simple cedar canoe, this one is intricately painted, with large ornamental animal heads at each end.

In the canoe are two YOUNG INDIAN WOMEN. Their expressions are serious, and they look over with dark, cutting eyes. The one in front holds a rifle. They wear tall hats, like woven baskets, on top of thick black hair, and their bodies are wrapped in feathered blankets. The center part of their canoe is filled with arrows and spears. Under these, several more rifles are partially visible.

NOBODY says something to them in their language, and one of them nods. As their painted boat begins to recede, BLAKE feels the WOMEN staring at him. Uncomfortable, he turns away and looks again off the other side.

On the bank BLAKE sees more totems rising into the sky. Beyond them are intricately painted wooden buildings, decorated like the totems, and like the landed canoes BLAKE now sees on the shore.

EXT. SHORE OF INDIAN VILLAGE - AFTERNOON

The canoe hits the sandy bank, and suddenly NOBODY has jumped out, water splashing around his shins, to land the small boat.

BLAKE now sits up like a sleepy, amazed child having just arrived at a vacation destination. He looks around as though imagining all this. Then NOBODY's hand is under his shoulder, pulling him up onto land.

NOBODY turns him, and the two now stand facing the INDIAN VILLAGE. Several of its INHABITANTS stop to look at them. All have serious, suspicious expressions, matching those of the women in the painted canoe. One wears a blanket covered with buttons, another neck rings of bark and a large, animal-shaped headdress. All wear elaborate war paint.

NOBODY says something to them, and one replies, turning and pointing toward the VILLAGE. Then another says something, angrily.

NOBODY responds, and there is a tense pause.

BLAKE
(to Nobody, goofily)

What, you asked them for tobacco?

NOBODY's serious expression does not change, and he responds only by propping BLAKE up. The two take a few steps forward toward the village. The Indians around them disappear. Apparently having more urgent things to attend to.

NOBODY
(half to Blake, half to himself,
as they walk along)

Even this, this ancient land by the
sea is now a war zone [pause]
violated.

He spits on the ground, and the two men enter the village, BLAKE half-conscious, using the bigger man's body like a crutch.

EXT. INDIAN VILLAGE - AFTERNOON

As they continue, BLAKE strains to focus, noticing that the Indian village is laid-out exactly like the town of Machine. Instead of the railroad there is the river, then a single mainstreet lined with painted wooden structures. At the end of the street, where the factory would be is a LODGE, or long-house, a tall totem above it instead of a smokestack.

Around them, the VILLAGE seems to be in a state of near chaos. Indians rush past them, frantically preparing for the coming apocalypse. They pass several corpses laid out on striped blankets.

BLAKE feels someone's eyes on him, and turns to see a woman squatting in the open doorway of a building. While her hands appear to chisel spearheads, a babbling baby is suspended next to her in a kind of sling. A thin rope runs from the sling to the woman's big toe, and as she works she moves her foot, gently rocking the baby. She glares at BLAKE, and he turns away.

Consciousness is now a fragile state for BLAKE. His body seems rubbery, his vision unclear.

As the two stagger along slowly, BLAKE thinks he is having a deja-vu; two small Indian boys, chanting something in a sing-song cadence, seem to be attempting to set fire to one of the village's buildings. Just then, an elderly Indian woman appears, yelling, and chases them off, swinging at the mischievous boys with a hand-made broom. Then BLAKE's focus slips.

The two men approach a building toward the end of the street, near the big lodge. Over its doorway is a kind of thatched awning, creating beneath it a pool of shade. NOBODY maneuvers BLAKE into the shade, and lowers him to the ground, propping him up against an exterior wall.

NOBODY

William Blake!

BLAKE lifts his heavy head to look up at the towering, out-of-focus Indian.

NOBODY

The man who lives here knows me.

[pause] He is a great builder of sea canoes.

BLAKE
(dazed)

Sea canoes...?

NOBODY then turns, and disappears into the building. BLAKE wobbles a little, and puts his hand inside his coat, pressing on his heart and taking a deep breath.

Exhaling, he looks up. In a haze, he sees two YOUNG INDIANS pass by, each dragging, with difficulty, the CORPSE of an equally young warrior. A YOUNG WOMAN follows them, crying silently.

As they leave his field of vision, BLAKE's eyelids begin to fall, and he loses consciousness.

FADE TO BLACK AND CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN BEACH - LATE AFTERNOON

In the misted sea air, NOBODY now carries BLAKE, who is not conscious, in his big arms, down the sloping sand leading into the water. He staggers a little under the weight, taking one step at a time. The sea is relatively calm, as the sun begins to make its descent toward the vague horizon beyond them.

There, by the edge of the water, is a long sea canoe. It is not decorated with the ornamental animal heads, like the one they passed on the river, but its sides are elaborately painted and carved in the forms of different mythical creatures.

Arriving next to the boat, NOBODY takes a deep breath, then slowly lowers BLAKE into it, placing his head again in the bow and pointing toward the horizon, his body stretched out the length of the large canoe.

BLAKE's eyes open, and he sees the face of the Indian who now kneels next to the boat. His deer antlers seem to reach toward the clouds as he looks down at BLAKE.

BLAKE
(very weakly)

Is this... the bridge of water?...
the mirror?

NOBODY just looks at him, without a response.

BLAKE
(now struggling to speak)

I wish... I knew... what the hell was
happening... to me...

NOBODY
(staring off into the sea)

The crow wished everything was black,
the owl, that everything was white.
[pause] There is nothing ...t to
know, William Blake.

There is another long pause, as NOBODY continues to look out toward a point where the sky meets the sea.

NOBODY
(solemnly)

You throw the sand against the wind,
and the wind blows it back again.

His eyes return to meet BLAKE's.

BLAKE
(his voice only a whisper)

Yeah...

The Indian stands and walks the bow of the sea canoe into the water. When the boat is far enough out, NOBODY again looks down at BLAKE, whose expression seems both calm and frightened, unsure of anything.

The Indian lets the boat drift until its aft end is near him, and then, with one arm clutching on either side of the canoe, he takes several more big steps, splashing through the waves, and thrusts the boat away from him out into the sea.

As the canoe floats away, BLAKE struggles to pull his head up just far enough to look back. NOBODY has stepped back, and now stands near the shore, water playing around his ankles. He doesn't wave or make any gesture, but looks back at BLAKE, the antlers of his headdress silhouetted against the pale sand rising into a bank behind him.

BLAKE's head drops back. He looks up into the sky, attempting to focus on the pattern of the clouds. They are dark and swirled, their arrangement somehow more fragile than threatening he listens to the waves slapping against the carved cedar that surrounds his head.

Then BLAKE hears another sound, a human sound, muted and gasping, like a scream that is being swallowed. He pulls his head up once again, and looks toward the shore. As his vision goes in and out of focus, he sees NOBODY, now much smaller, on the shore.

But there is another figure there too, and BLAKE is just able to make out the image of the big Indian with his hands clenched around the throat of a second figure, a white man. The man struggles, his black hat studded with silver falling to the ground. (It is COLE WILSON).

NOBODY, in contrast, seems motionless, as though wringing the life from a dummy, or a puppet.

The man's body goes limp, and BLAKE sees it fall lifelessly to the sand just before his head drops back into the prow of the boat with a small thud.

BLAKE's eyes close, then slowly open again, the clouds gracefully shifting their positions above him.

From the beach, the sea canoe now recedes, becoming smaller and smaller. NOBODY is gone from sight. Only the body of COLE WILSON lies limply stretched across the sand, silver teeth glinting in his open mouth, eyes rolled up inside his head.

In the background, the boat moves further out into the waves, rolling away toward the horizon, where the sun will soon sink behind the glowing water.

A short time later, two young Indians, faces painted for war, enter the tableau. As one looks curiously off at the receding sea canoe, the other bends down over the corpse of COLE WILSON. He pulls a hunting knife from his clothes, then the other kneels and does the same. The two young warriors, like birds of prey, begin to strip the corpse of its silver -- one rapidly prying teeth from its mouth, the other cutting pieces of silver from its clothing.

Adeptly, they continue the process, as the boat in the background becomes still smaller, and smaller. When they have finished, they rise and walk away, placing pieces of silver into small leather pouches on their belts.

The canoe, now almost a speck on the rolling water, moves further out to sea, toward the thin line where the waves dissolve into sky.

SLOW FADE TO BLACK:

END CREDITS ROLL