

"GODLESS"

Part I

Written by

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Sound of violent WIND. A faint SONG beneath it...

GIRL'S VOICE
*Amazing grace, how sweet the
 sound...*

A FIGURE ON HORSEBACK emerges from the white background and we realize that we're smack dab in the middle of one fucker of A SANDSTORM.

GIRL (O.S.)
...that saved a wretch like me...

SUPER: **THE TOMBOY MINE CREEDE, COLORADO** Then: 1884.

The Rider, his head ducked into the gale, keeps his anxious horse to a walk. His duster blows open revealing A SILVER STAR pinned to his shirt. He looks up and his huge walrus mustache blows back against his cheeks. JOHN COOK.

GIRL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
*I once was lost, but now I'm
 found...*

Cook makes out a wobbling sign stuck into the ground that reads CREEDE. Only someone has altered the "C" with a crude stroke of red paint, so that the sign now reads GREEDE.

GIRL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Was blind, but now I see...

OTHER FIGURES ON HORSEBACK emerge from the white behind the Marshal. These men also have stars pinned to their chests, though theirs are made of tin.

The POSSE rides through the Rocky Mountain town, warily eying the BURNING STRUCTURES along the main street, the DEAD HORSES lying on their sides. Every building either still on fire or burned to the ground so that the entire town smolders.

GIRL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
*T'was grace that taught my heart to
 fear...*

Marshal Cook rides under A LARGE WILLOW TREE where A FIGURE HANGS BY THE NECK, slowly turning in the wind: A WOMAN in a torn hooped skirt, one remaining shoe dangling from a white-stockinged foot.

GIRL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
And grace my fears relieved...

The men ride on past, some crossing themselves as now MORE BODIES appear, many hanging from trees off the main street;

others, from exposed rafters in burning buildings. More lie dead on the sidewalks or in the dirt street.

GIRL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
*How precious did that grace appear
 the hour I first believed...*

A TRAIN DEPOT is wedged between two high cliffs at the far end of the main street. A sign reads, "SAVAGE BASIN LINE."

The Marshal Rides to the platform and dismounts. Stray CASH blows past the Marshal's boots, one of the bills catching on the rowel of his spur.

He looks to the tracks where a still-hissing LOCOMOTIVE LIES ON ITS SIDE. Behind it a coal tender stands tipped onto two wheels while the two cars linked behind it somehow remain upright.

The Marshal takes in the DEAD ENGINEER hanging out of the cab, the FIREMAN crushed halfway beneath the engine.

GIRL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
*Through many dangers, toils and
 snares...*

Beside the train, we see a 17 year-old GIRL, dazed, in a bloodied dress, holding the hand of A DEAD MAN, singing:

GIRL (CONT'D)
We have already come...

We hear a TICKING sound, and the Marshal turns to A DOORWAY, where the STATION MASTER and AN OLDER TELEGRAPH OPERATOR lay piled on top of each other, both shot dead, the telegraph ticking away, waiting for a response that ain't coming.

GIRL (CONT'D)
*T'was grace that brought us safe
 thus far...*

VOICE
 Marshal Cook...

ONE OF THE DEPUTIES points and the Marshal turns to the WATER TOWER across the tracks, looks up at...

A SMALL BOY hanging from the fill pipe. The child swings to and fro by the neck in the blowing dust as the anguished Marshal below him now falls to his knees...

GIRL
And grace will lead us home.

CUT TO BLACK

A moment. Then-- A QUICK FLASH OF LIGHTNING REVEALS...

2

A RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

2

Low slung adobe with an adjacent barn. Nothing else around.

SUPER: TWO MILES OUTSIDE LA BELLE, NEW MEXICO.

ANOTHER FLASH, and this time we're CLOSER TO THE HOUSE. The front door creaks open and the BARREL OF A RIFLE pokes out.

ANOTHER FLASH and we see A WOMAN standing there, holding the Henry rifle, the features of her face lost to the darkness.

WOMAN

Who's there?

She looks out into the black night. The DRY LIGHTNING moving off now, but we see a HORSE standing in the dark, fifty paces away. A RIDER HUNCHED OVER THE HORSE'S NECK.

She cocks the Henry, starts walking towards the rider...

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Declare yourself or I'll shoot!

No response from the rider. We hear a loud BOOM in the night as the woman keeps her promise and blows the rider from his mount. The animal trots off a few tired steps, then stops.

The woman walks to where the rider fell in the dirt, stands there looking down the length of the rifle barrel at him.

ANOTHER FLASH reveals A YOUNG MAN lying on his back. He's bearded, dressed in tattered clothing. ROY GOODE. He stares up at her, and then, oddly, *smiles* before he passes out.

THE WOMAN

Crouches down and considers him as a SMALLER FIGURE walks up behind her. She sees a fresh wound where she got him in the neck, but then sees two more BULLET HOLES in his shirt.

SMALL FIGURE

(a boy's voice)

Looks like he was already shot.

The Woman doesn't react to that one way or the other, studies the man's face another moment, makes a decision, then stands.

WOMAN

Get him in the barn.

Sound of THUNDER, POURING RAIN...

3 **EXT. TOWN - NIGHT**

3

Two dozen men gallop through a heavy downpour. The rider out front -- poncho covering his face -- tosses an empty whiskey bottle into the street, hangs onto his horse.

SUPER: LEADVILLE, COLORADO

The group stops at a two-story structure at the edge of town. A sign sways over the upstairs porch -- "ELIJAH GRAHAM MD." We HEAR A HARD KNOCKING OVER...

4 **INT. DR. GRAHAM'S PARLOR - NIGHT**

4

As the young DR. GRAHAM -- twenties, robe, hair spiked from sleep -- lights a lamp and carries it to the door.

DR. GRAHAM

Coming!

He opens the door and immediately steps back at the sight of the dark clump of men standing in the shadow of his porch.

DR. GRAHAM (CONT'D)

Can I... help you gentlemen?

A FLASH OF LIGHTNING as the man in the poncho lowers his hood to reveal eyes black as ten feet down set into a leering face now drained of blood. FRANK GRIFFIN. He smiles one of those smiles that are not about smiling...

GRIFFIN

I believe I got a bullet in m'arm.

DR. GRAHAM

(hesitates, then)

Come inside.

The Doctor steps aside, watches as the room fills with muddy men. Griffin falls onto a sofa. He pulls the poncho aside so the Doctor can see his left arm...

DR. GRAHAM (CONT'D)

Good God...

Griffin's arm, nearly shot off, barely hangs on the shoulder. The Doctor swallows hard, grabs a pair of scissors from the table and carefully cuts the poncho away, stopping cold when he sees Griffin wears a PRIEST'S COLLAR. Griffin looks up.

GRIFFIN

Your name Elijah? Like the prophet?

DR. GRAHAM

Yes, sir. Elijah Graham.

GRIFFIN
 (closes his eyes)
 That's a damn good sign.
 (opens them again)
 I meant the one you got hangin' out
 front, got your name on it.

Griffin laughs at that, now extends his good hand, which is also blackened and slick with blood.

MAN
 I'm Frank Griffin...

DR. GRAHAM
 I know who you are, Mister. I know
 who you all are.

GRIFFIN
 So tell me, Elijah...
 (closes his eyes)
 M'arm come off yet?

The Doc works another moment, probes here and there.

DR. GRAHAM
 There's no saving it. I'm surprised
 it didn't fall off on the ride in.

Griffin sighs, looks at his arm, as if to say "Good-bye."

GRIFFIN
 Well, you best go on, take it then.

The Doctor turns and looks at the muddy faces all watching him. One has a SNAKE wrapped around his neck, dropping off into his coat like a poisonous muffler. Another has KNIVES in two long sheaths hanging from his neck.

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)
 Don't worry none. These boys ain't
 gonna blame you, I get dealt out. I
 seen my death...
 (that smile)
 ...and this ain't it.

5

EXT. DOCTOR'S HOUSE - SAME

5

As two young men, both eighteen with bruised faces, DONNIE and DARYL DEVLIN, stand guard in the rain. Donnie's in the middle of the street with his arms outstretched, apparently *trying* to get struck by lightning. He's MISSING TWO TEETH.

DARYL
 Fool, you gone get bit!

DONNIE
 (catching rain on his
 tongue)
 I wanna see what it feels like.

We hear a long, low SCREAM from inside the Doctor's house.
 They both turn and look up at the dimly lit window...

DARYL
 You can bet ol' Roy Goode's gonna
 pay for that arm.

6 **INT. BARN - NIGHT (THE RANCH)** 6

A MATCH FLARES revealing the face of AN INDIAN BOY, fifteen.
 He lights a lamp and examines Roy Goode lying in the straw.

Roy awakens and regards the boy. We hear someone else enter
 the barn, bark something in PAIUTE that gets the boy quickly
 backing away from the man.

A WOMAN, can't see her in the dark, squats in front of the
 man, tears his shirt open and studies the wounds. She says
 something to the boy who nods and hurries out of the barn.

The woman studies Goode a moment before casually inserting a
 finger into one of the bullet wounds, grunting without any
 sympathy as the man instantly arches away from her in pain.

She sighs, unties a leather pouch and pulls out a pinch of
 GUNPOWDER. She then packs one of Roy Goode's wounds with it.

She strikes a match and we briefly see her OLD FACE before
 she LIGHTS THE WOUND ON FIRE. Roy Goode bolts upright...

7 **EXT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT** 7

As the Woman who shot him, her face barred in shadow, leans
 against her rifle, calmly listening to the man SCREAM as we:

8 **FADE TO BLACK** 8

MCNUE (V.O.)
 Hello? Anyone there?

9 **FADE IN: CLOSE-UP OF BILL MCNUE** 9

Fifty. Patches of MUD cover his eyes. We hear CHANTING OS. A
 fly lands on one of the mud dressings, then buzzes McNue's
 face. He brushes it away, lies there in the DARK SPACE for
 another moment.

MCNUE
 Fer cryin' out loud...

He sits up, starts to wipe the mud from his eyes.

MCNUE (CONT'D)
 Goddamn waste a time...

McNue gets to his feet, feels his way through the dark...

10

EXT. PAIUTE CAMP - DAWN

10

As BILL MCNUE stumbles out of one of the teepees and squints at the bright sun. We see that he's wearing not a stitch of clothing save his boots.

None of the Indians in the camp pay him any mind at all as he stumbles down a small slope to a stream where he falls to his knees and starts brusquely washing the mud from his eyes.

VOICE
 What are you doing?

Someone tosses A PILE OF CLOTHES to the bank beside him, and McNue looks up at NARRIENTA -- the tall Paiute Chief wearing a linen shirt and a broad cloth suit with a colored blanket draped over one shoulder like a toga.

NARRIENTA
 I said wait till sundown.

MCNUE
 Yeah, well, I'm through with your witchy nonsense. It ain't workin'.

NARRIENTA
 My witchy nonsense takes time.

MCNUE
 It's wishful thinkin's what it is, and I don't got none a that in me no more.

As McNue starts to get dressed, Narrienta looks at McNue's reflection in the stream, then up at the sun, then back to McNue...

NARRIENTA
 You lost your shadow, Bill.

McNue chuckles unhappily, "Yeah, well," stands up and starts to button his shirt which has a BADGE pinned to it.

NARRIENTA (CONT'D)
 Nothing more dangerous than a man, lost his shadow.

MCNUE
 Yeah, and why's that?

NARRIENTA
 He's got nothing more to lose.

17 **EXT. LA BELLE, NEW MEXICO - MORNING**

17

Dying. Amidst low hills. The buildings are all tired, in need of paint. Bill McNue rides past an ABANDONED SILVER MINE. The tall piles of discarded ore rise in the background of the main street.

All the souls on the street are WOMEN. They avoid looking at McNue as he rides through. From somewhere, we hear...

WOMAN'S VOICE
Welcome home, coward.

McNue turns, sees TWO LADIES crossing the street, neither of them looking at him. No way to know which one spoke.

We hear HAMMERING and a moment later McNue passes A DOZEN WOMEN building a NEW CHURCH, pounding nails, sawing wood, laying roof near the newly framed-up spire.

18 **EXT. THE RANCH - BARN - MORNING**

18

Roy steps outside, squints against the sunlight. It's bright even this early. He looks at the house, the low adobe walls, the sod roof. The old Paiute gal smoking on the porch.

A few head of skinny cattle graze near a small garden. A corral abuts the barn where some fifty unbroken HORSES now prance about the dust.

Roy takes a careful step, then walks a few unsteady paces while he gauges his strength. He pauses, watches the horses in the paddock. They're wild -- many still carry their winter coats -- jammed into the corral.

He squints into the field, studying the fence surrounding the pasture... a rail broken here and there: No man around here.

He turns back to the crowded paddock, now sees MOVEMENT IN THE GROUND beyond the corral and starts towards it...

...but stops cold and watches as SOMEONE COVERED HEAD TO TOE WITH MUD CLIMBS OUT OF THE GROUND fifty feet in front of him.

He blinks. Watches as the muddy figure seems to just rise up out of the ground, completely covered with brown earth.

The figure straightens up, shakes off long hair, brushes mud and dirt from the men's trousers she wears over dusty boots.

The muddy woman sees Roy standing there and starts this way, smoothly grabbing the RIFLE off the gate as she comes.

He suddenly feels dizzy, reaches out, but only finds air and drops to his knees. The woman walks up and stands over him, a muddy-brown apparition. He tries to stand, but she puts a hand on his shoulder...

WOMAN

You best stay down there a minute
and collect yourself.

Looking up, he takes in the full of her now. She seems to be somewhere in her twenties, though it's hard to tell with all that mud caked on her.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

What's your name, Mister?

Her hair is long, set off by the dark green eyes of a witch. A damn beautiful witch. Even covered with mud. He sits up.

He tries to speak, but clutches the wound at his throat. She looks back at him, her way of apologizing for giving him that wound.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

We don't get many riders come along
the middle of the night. And the
ones we do get only want trouble.

He starts to get up and she extends her hand, still wrapped in a work glove. He gains his feet, keeps hold of her hand.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

I'm Alice Fletcher.

He nods and looks past her as the Indian Boy climbs up out of the ground, same as Alice did a moment before. He comes over brushing mud off himself.

ALICE

This is my son. Truckee.
(to the boy)
He can't speak as yet.

TRUCKEE

No doubt on account a you shootin'
him in the throat.

Alice gives the boy a look. He ignores it, crouches down in front of Roy.

TRUCKEE (CONT'D)

I thought for sure you was dead.

ALICE

Were dead. Not "was."

Roy contemplates these two strange people as the ground begins to change places with the sky and he starts to pitch forward. Alice and the boy just watch him fall. Then...

ALICE (CONT'D)
 (calmly calls out)
 Iyovi!
 (then to the boy)
 Put him back in the barn.

19

EXT. BILL MCNUE'S PLACE (LA BELLE) - DAY

19

Modest, with a few horses and some livestock. McNue rides up and pulls his saddle. He sets the horse loose in the pasture and wearily walks to the house.

He pauses in front of his porch and looks down. No shadow. A FLOORBOARD CREAKS and he puts his hand on his gun and turns to see a curly-haired little girl of two, TRUDY, her arms outstretched, taking a couple of unsteady steps towards him.

He just watches her toddle right into his legs and grab hold. He stares down at her a moment, doesn't move. When she looks up at her father, it's with that pliant gaze of someone "not quite right."

WOMAN'S VOICE
 You gonna say hello?

McNue looks up and sees his sister, MARY-AGNES MCNUE sitting inside cleaning a rifle. She's a handsome woman near forty.

MCNUE
 What's the difference, she can't understand a word I say.

MARY-AGNES
 There's plenty a ways, say hello don't involve words.

McNue finally reaches down tussles the little girl's hair, then quickly walks inside.

20

INT. BILL MCNUE'S HOUSE - SAME

20

It's a simple cabin with a bed in one corner. McNue peers up into the sleeping loft where there are two more pallets...

MCNUE
 Where's William at?

MARY-AGNES
 School. It's Monday.

He nods, hangs his hat on a peg, turns to face his sister, sees now that she's wearing PANTS. A Man's Hat. Boots. He watches her wipe the gun barrel down with a white rag...

MCNUE
 Them Albert's britches you got on?

MARY-AGNES

Not anymore.

MCNUE

You wearin' his hat, too?

MARY-AGNES

(turns, pats the pistol)
And his rig.

MCNUE

You wanna tell me why?

MARY-AGNES

Someone's gotta look after things
around here.

MCNUE

You look ridiculous.

MARY-AGNES

You ever worn a dress, Bill?

MCNUE

No, and neither do I intend to.

MARY-AGNES

Well, you oughta. You oughta right
now put on a dress. And put on a
damn--

(indicates the white "rag"
she's using)
--corset while you're at it.

McNue looks closely at the white rag as she rubs the barrel
down. There's a STRAP hanging from it. He turns, hangs up his
gunbelt.

MCNUE

I miss anything?

She sets the gun aside, pulls the little girl into her lap.

MARY-AGNES

The Fitch brothers came through
here last week, all three of 'em,
started shooting off their pistols
and wreakin' general havoc inside
the saloon. Barney Mutz took care
of it with some help from Whitey.

MCNUE

Well, okay then.

MARY-AGNES

Course, Barney did express a general wonderment, I think felt by all, as to where the damn Sheriff was off to this time.

He looks at her. She waves him off.

MARY-AGNES (CONT'D)

Don't worry, your little secret's safe with me, though it's gettin' harder and harder to keep.

He shakes his head, sits down at the table, watches the odd little girl in his sister's lap.

MARY-AGNES (CONT'D)

Well, at least tell me was that old Paiute warlock of any use or not?

MCNUE

He jammed cold, stinkin' mud in my eyes, soaked me in some hot spring they got bubblin' near their camp.

MARY-AGNES

Hot spring? Huh. Did that do anything?

MCNUE

Made me feel like a dern fool's what it did. 'Bout all I came away with was a raging erection and an angry demeanor.

MARY-AGNES

I'm sorry I asked. Say g'bye to Aunt Maggie, sweet pea...

She gives the girl a kiss, then hands her to McNue. She then starts stuffing her things into a carpet bag.

MARY-AGNES (CONT'D)

You talk to the widow on your way in?

MCNUE

Which widow would that be?

MARY-AGNES

The one you're so blame fool in love with. Alice Fletcher.

McNue's daughter looks up at him, smiling at nothing.

MARY-AGNES (CONT'D)
Word is, the Paiutes brung her a
whole herd a Mexican horseflesh.

MCNUE
So?

MARY-AGNES
So I thought maybe you'd ask her if
she'd sell some to the town, seein'
as we sold off everything on four
legs--

MCNUE
I told you you'd regret that.

MARY-AGNES
And you were right as always. But
the fact remains, we need horses.

MCNUE
How y'all aim to pay her?

MARY-AGNES
Man from the Quicksilver
syndicate's coming to town this
week. They're offering a ten
thousand dollar down payment on the
claim.

MCNUE
You made a deal?

MARY-AGNES
We're in the throes. She must have
fifty horses up there.

MCNUE
You know how she feels about you.

MARY-AGNES
That's why I thought you'd ask her.

As Mary-Agnes starts for the door, he stares at his daughter.
She looks back at him with an empty expression, smiling at
nothing.

MCNUE
He said I lost my shadow.

Mary-Agnes pauses, looks at him.

MCNUE (CONT'D)
Chief Narrienta, he said that I'm
dangerous, on a account of I got
nothing to lose.
(chuckles)
(MORE)

MCNUE (CONT'D)
He oughta tell that one to folks
around here.

MARY-AGNES
He's talkin' about Anna. The part
about the shadow. You two were so
close. Way you never fought about
anything, it was unnatural.

McNue looks down at the little girl.

MCNUE
There was nothin' to fight about.

21 **EXT. LEADVILLE - DAY**

21

Frank Griffin and his men slowly walk their horses out of town. Griffin's DEAD ARM IS WRAPPED IN CANVAS, TIED TO HIS SADDLE JUST ABOVE HIS RIFLE SCABBARD. A few bluish fingers stick out the end of the roll.

No one's about or on the street. We hear faint SINGING OS and Griffin turns in his saddle, looks off at A CHURCH...

22 **INT. CHURCH - SAME**

22

The congregation stands, singing *Nearer, my God, to thee!* when the doors burst open behind them and in rides Frank Griffin, still on his horse, singing right along:

GRIFFIN
*...Even though it be a cross that
raiseth me... nearer, my God, to
thee! Nearer to thee!*

The entire congregation turns, goes silent as Frank Griffin walks his horse up the center aisle, the only one singing...

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)
*There let the way appear steps unto
heaven; all that thou send'st to me
in mercy given; Angels beckon me...
nearer my God, to thee!*
(gets to the front)
Nearer to thee!

He sits on his horse, eyes various congregation members:

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)
Folks, how 'bout it-- y'all been
Baptized? Y'all wash your bodies
once a week? Have you committed
adultery, ma'am? Have you betrayed
your brother, sir? Do you preside
in your family as a servant of God?

The terrified Methodists just stare back at him.

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)

Y'all know that I don't ever wanna
come back here and burn this house
of the lord down to the ground.

(takes off his hat)

So let's all bow our heads and pray
that Roy Goode don't never show up
here, but that if he does, none of
you well meaning souls take him in.
Else you wanna suffer like our lord
Jesus suffered for all of us.

Griffin sits there a moment staring at each and every face in
the silent, terrified chapel. He finally smiles and says--

23

EXT. ALICE'S RANCH - NIGHT

23

GRIFFIN (V.O.)

Amen.

HIS VOICE ECHOING OVER the soft glow of a lantern inside. The
boy and his mother sit at the table. She's teaching him how
to read.

Roy Goode steps into FRAME, watching Alice lean close to her
son. He stares at her face glowing behind the lantern -- The
mud all gone, washed away. He can't take his eyes off her.

TRUCKEE

*Boats sail on rivers... And ships
sail on seas; But clouds that sail
across the sky are p-- pr...*

ALICE

Prettier.

TRUCKEE

...prettier than these.

Suddenly the door opens and IYOVI, the old Paiute woman,
steps outside, begins rolling a cigarette.

Roy steps back into the shadows and quietly heads back to the
barn.

24

INT. ALICE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

24

Alice looks up from the page to Truckee and kisses him.

ALICE

Very good.
(checks a pocket watch)
Now get yourself to bed.

He closes the book, watches Alice blow out a candle, then
looks thoughtfully across the dark yard towards the barn. A
LIGHT on inside.

TRUCKEE

What all you think happened to him?

ALICE

I don't know, but whatever it was
it comes under the heading of his
own business.

25 **EXT. ALICE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

25

Alice steps out into the yard, stands there looking at the barn. She starts to walk that way when Iyovi, sitting on a stump in the dark, strikes a match and lights her smoke.

IYOVI (SUBTITLED)

He stinks of death, that one.

(sits back)

And, if he stays here long enough,
he'll make us stink of it, too.

ALICE

Go to bed.

She starts for the barn.

26 **INT. BARN - NIGHT**

26

Alice walks into the barn, the lantern illuminating first the old pack horse lying in the straw watching her, then a SADDLE BAG sitting beside it.

She crouches down, looks inside the bag. The only items inside is a TOY GUN, HAND-CARVED OUT OF WOOD and a tattered BIBLE. She's examining the good book when an ENVELOPE slides from inside the pages to the floor.

She holds the lantern over it...

27 **INSERT - ENVELOPE**

27

Worn and dirty like the man. Addressed to **"MR. ROY GOODE.
C/O LUCY COLE, GUTHRIE NEW MEXICO."**

It's UNOPENED.

We hear movement and she looks towards the pallet, raises the lantern and sees Roy Goode standing behind her. She stands.

ALICE

(caught)

Excuse me--

He considers her another moment, then sits down on his pallet, watches as her deep green eyes now move to the envelope.

ALICE (CONT'D)
That your name? "Roy Goode?"

He hesitates, nods. But she doesn't react at all to the name, just bends down and picks up the envelope.

ALICE (CONT'D)
And this--
(reads)
--"Lucy Cole?" Is she someone might
be worried about you?

He shakes his head. She doesn't turn away. Those eyes. Damn. She seems to be all eyes. She turns over the envelope, looks at the back now.

28

INSERT - ENVELOPE

28

The return: **JIM GOODE. ATASCADERO, CALIFORNIA**

ALICE
Jim Goode. He a relation?

Roy doesn't answer, can't speak right now anyway, but he doesn't want to answer. She examines the envelope--

ALICE (CONT'D)
You've not read it.

She looks at him. But he just holds out his hand for the letter. She returns it, saying--

ALICE (CONT'D)
Don't mean to pry. Just like to
know who's lyin here in my barn.

She hands the letter back to him, looks at him, then:

ALICE (CONT'D)
You can't stay here much longer. I
don't have enough to feed you and
even if I did, I don't know you. So
soon as you're well enough, I'm
gonna ask you to leave.

He nods. She doesn't move. Looks at his throat--

ALICE (CONT'D)
You know, you're lucky there wasn't
more've a moon the other night. I
was aimin' higher.

She walks out of the barn, taking the light with her. Roy lies there in the dark, listening to her footsteps.

A.T. GRIGG (V.O.)
 How was it, exactly, you come to
 realize you were facing the vile
 Roy Goode?

29 **INT. THE DAILY REVIEW - TAOS - DAY**

29

Where a young NUN sits across the desk from the editor, A.T. GRIGG, a small man with a weeping eye he continually dabs at with a handkerchief.

NUN
 By descriptions I'd read in your
 newspaper.

She indicates a SKETCH OF ROY GOODE on the wall. The face is exaggerated, the expression is fierce. A PHOTOGRAPH beside it is of FRANK GRIFFIN in the collar standing before his gang.

NUN (CONT'D)
 That captures him exactly right. I
 saw him and with rather crushing
 vividness, the phrase *No virtuous
 woman is safe near Roy Goode* came
 back to me.

The Nun sits back in her chair, fans herself, glances at the young APPRENTICE who works the press in the b.g.

NUN (CONT'D)
 I made an act of contrition, and
 concentrated my thoughts on the
 presence of God.

GRIGG
 (dabs at his eye)
 You recall was his pistol black
 boned in the handle? And did he
 carry it on his right or his left
 side?

NUN
 His *pistol*? I really couldn't say.
 I was too busy paying attention to
 the coffin...

30 **EXT. MOSES, NEW MEXICO - DAY (FLASHBACK)**

30

The Nun sits under a tree eating lunch. She watches as the adult Roy Goode walks up the road on horseback DRAGGING A WOODEN CASKET BEHIND HIM. He slowly turns, looks down at the now terrified young woman as he passes...

31 **INT. THE DAILY REVIEW - DAY**

31

As the Nun shivers at the memory, looks at Grigg...

GRIGG
You sure it was a coffin?

NUN
Yes, for some time later I saw him
in our church graveyard, digging up
a grave...

32 **EXT. CHURCHYARD CEMETERY - MOSES, NEW MEXICO - DAY** 32

The Nun watches from a church window as Roy Goode finishes digging, now jumps down into the hole--

NUN (V.O.)
He took the bones from the dirt and
put them into the casket he brought
with him--

--and pulls up an armful OF OLD BONES drops them into the casket.

NUN (V.O.)
--then re-buried them.

33 **INT. THE DAILY REVIEW - DAY** 33

Grigg dabs at his eye. Scribbles in a NOTEBOOK.

GRIGG
And what town was this you say?

NUN
Moses. Which until then had always
been such a tranquil place.

GRIGG
(interested)
You recall the name on the grave he
dug up?

NUN
There was no name, just a stick for
a marker. But that weren't the
worst part...

She leans closer to Grigg, whispers...

NUN (CONT'D)
He took the clothes.

34 **EXT. CHURCHYARD - MOSES, NEW MEXICO (FLASHBACK) - DAY** 34

As a half-naked Roy Goode, his bullet wounds visible, pulls on the ratty clothes from the grave. UNION ARMY SHIRT and coat-- the clothes he had on when he showed up at Alice's.

GATZ BROWN, along with Griffin, the oldest of the bunch, rides beside an unsteady Frank Griffin.

GATZ BROWN
He had hisself a good teacher.
(looks around)
All one shot to the skull.

GRIFFIN
Not *all*.

Griffin stops, lets his poncho fall off the stump on his left side and we see fresh blood soaking through the bandages. Griffin looks at it, his expression almost bored...

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)
Fuckin barber surgeon.

GATZ BROWN
It ain't good, you doin' so much ridin'. We oughta ride back to the Knob, let you heal up some.

GRIFFIN
(ignores him)
That's his horse.

FLOYD WILSON, the tracker in the group, one milky blue eye alongside one green eye, dismounts, crouches down beside a dead horse -- BLACK WITH A WHITE FORELOCK.

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)
Musta been hard for Roy, put him down like that.

GATZ BROWN
He couldn't a gotten far on foot.

FLOYD
(examining the tracks)
Cept that he ain't on foot.
(turns)
He got onto another animal, this one only shod on the back...

GRIFFIN
The pack horse...
(scans the horizon)
One with all my money.

They look up the canyon. An INDIAN BRAVE sits his horse, backlit by the sun, a mongrel DOG pants beside him.

GATZ BROWN
Wonder how many more a him there are?

GRIFFIN

He looks too hungry to be with anyone else.

(smiles at the brave)

And we will make them white and delightful people...

The Brave turns and rides off. And the smile fades.

FLOYD

The trail stops here.

He looks out over a wide stone shelf, scratches his head.

FLOYD (CONT'D)

He knew there ain't no way to track him over the rocks. And he's got at least a three day head start.

GRIFFIN

So?

FLOYD

So... he coulda head south to the Gunnison River and crossed or, if he was smart, rode right down the middle -- seein' as it's shallow and sandy all the way into New Mexico.

GRIFFIN

Or?

FLOYD

He coulda head north to the Purgatory, followed it for a bit to lose any trail, and then turned and headed up into Wyoming. He coulda even circled around and gone east.

(stands)

It's any man's guess which way he chose.

Griffin looks off into the distance, then--

GRIFFIN

Well, go ahead, then...

(looks at Floyd)

Guess.

Roy rubs mud on the lame leg of the old horse he rode in on. The mare lifts her head at the sound of the animals outside.

Truckee tucks into his stew without saying anything. Iyovi stands over Roy, staring down at him. Roy looks at Truckee. The boy looks up from his food, smiles...

TRUCKEE
She says you look strong.

IYOVI (SUBTITLED)
(still staring at him)
I will call him "Stray Dog."

TRUCKEE
And that she's going to call you...
"Wandering... Star."

Alice sits down, gives Iyovi a look that says "knock it off." The old woman shrugs, starts to eat. Roy looks at the stew.

ALICE
We don't have much.

Roy suddenly becomes alert, looks off towards the pasture. The others turn and look now as well and, sure enough-- A WAGON APPEARS AT THE FAR END OF THE FIELD.

Alice glances at Roy (*How'd you know?*), then grabs her rifle from behind the door and gets up. Roy clocks the HOLSTERED REVOLVER hanging on the peg above it.

TRUCKEE (O.S.)
Was my Daddy's.

Roy turns, sees the boy looking at him.

TRUCKEE (CONT'D)
(re: the gun)
Lotta good it did him.

47 **EXT. ALICE'S HOUSE - SAME**

47

As SADIE ROSE, a young mother, rides across the pasture in a rickety wagon pulled by a single mule. Alice walks out into the field and levels the rifle.

ALICE
That's far enough!

Sadie stops the wagon and we hear A BABY screaming behind her, bundled in blankets.

SADIE
I'm sorry, but I didn't know what else to do...

Alice lowers the rifle and walks to the wagon. She gently unwraps the blankets. The baby, not yet two, is beet red.

ROY
 For the horses--
 (indicates the corral)
 They gonna need the space.

She watches him work a moment. He's focussed, almost angry the way he stabs at the dirt with the shovel. He starts to straighten an old post--

ALICE
 Here...

She crouches down beside the hole, starts to help, pulling dirt from around it. She sees the question on his face...

ALICE (CONT'D)
 There's some lore about finding
 gold under the fence posts.
 (resumes digging)
 They say that's where the old
 ranchers used to hide it from
 Indians and outlaws. Course I've
 never found any myself...
 (then)
 Never had that kinda luck.

Roy cuts a look at her as they work.

ROY
 You mind my asking how you odd
 three ended up in this place?

She keeps working as if she didn't hear him. He's about to forget about it when she suddenly sits back, claps the dirt from her hands.

ALICE
 I was only seventeen when I came
 out here to marry the son of my
 father's business partner.

Roy turns to her, watches her brush hair from her face with the back of a dirty hand.

ALICE (CONT'D)
 All I knew about him was that his
 name was Henry and that he was to
 meet me at the train station. He'd
 sent me a new dress -- yellow so
 I'd stand out -- and told me to
 wear it the day I arrived, so he'd
 know me.
 (then)
 On the way back from the station,
 Henry wants to take a ride around
 the property, show off his land.
Our land, he said.
 (MORE)

ALICE (CONT'D)

After a while, the horse pulling the buggy starts getting antsy. I look up and I see this strange cloud -- black with green around the edges. Henry says, "Looks like we got a bit of rain coming." Next thing I knew the cloud was gone, just vanished.

(then)

Now the horse starts to rear in the traces. Henry helps me out of the wagon when I hear a rumble, I turn around and see a six-foot wall of water coming right at us.

She looks off, seeing the image again in her mind.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Henry, the horse, the buggy-- they all got washed away right in front of me. I almost did, too, but my new yellow dress got hung up on some mesquite, saved my life.

She looks at Roy, shakes her head.

ALICE (CONT'D)

I wandered off for eight days in the wrong direction before I was found.

ROY

Found by who?

ALICE

That's another story.

(looks at him)

You're too young to be a soldier.

ROY

Ma'am?

She nods at the tattered Yankee blouse he's wearing.

ALICE

I'd offer to wash your clothes, but they look like they'd come apart in the creek.

(stands up)

My husband's stuff should fit you.

ROY

Man who drowned?

ALICE
 (shakes her head)
 My second husband. Truckee's
 father.

She leaves it at that. He watches her walk back across the field to the house.

60

EXT. LA BELLE - MORNING

60

As JOHN COOK, the MARSHAL from the opening scene rides into town alone. He nods as he rides past Sadie Rose's shanty, one of dozens of identical one-room structures. WOMEN come out of some of the shanties to take in the male stranger.

WOMAN
 You from the mining company?

COOK
 No, ma'am.

SADIE
 (hopeful)
 You the new preacher?

COOK
 (smiles at that)
 No ma'am...
 (opens his coat)
 I'm the law.

The Marshal rides on, takes in the piles from the SILVER MINE. The town is its usual quiet.

He passes A. LEOPOLD DRYGOODS. An OLD MAN'S FACE in the window, watching him pass. Another, one-legged, man sweeps the porch in front of THE GOOD LODE SALOON. An old negro sleeps in the shade of an empty LIVERY STABLE. HIRAM.

These old and broken men are the ONLY men amongst all the women.

The Marshal nods to a BLONDE BOY -- eighteen, whiter than white skin, long white hair in a ponytail -- slouched against a door frame, the kid giving the Marshal his best bored look, his palms resting on a pair of big Colts nestled in twin holsters. Wears a Badge.

MARSHAL
 (nods)
 Deputy.

A GROUP OF KIDS come running out of a building near the end of the street. A sign above the front door, weather faded and barely legible, reads, "MAGDALENA'S HOUSE OF RAPTURE."

A newer sign hanging just below it reads, "SCHOOL."

A WOMAN, pretty, but worn in an old soul sort of way, helps some of the smaller ones tie their shoes and get their things together. She sees the man on the horse and brightens.

COOK

Afternoon.

He watches as she shoos the last of the kids off and then stands up. He leans over in the saddle, extends a hand...

MARSHAL

Marshal John Cook.

WOMAN

Callie Dunne.

COOK

Miss Dunne, if'n I had me a teacher as pretty as you, I don't think I'd a learned a dern thing.

CALLIE

Oh, I don't know, Marshal, I can be pretty persuasive.

He smiles. No doubt about that. But he has other business.

COOK

I'm looking for Sheriff McNue.

CALLIE

You try the undertaker?

COOK

Undertaker... Why? Someone finally shoot the old raccoon? Or'd he do it hisself on accident?

She smiles back at him.

CALLIE

They play chess about now.

(points)

It's just there beside the jail.

COOK

How convenient.

CALLIE

Used to be.

He touches the brim of his hat and moves off as we now...

61

CUT TO: A DEAD MAN

61

Eyes closed, hands folded across his chest in serene repose.

ELMER (O.S.)
It's a good thing his mouth is
sewed shut...

62

INT. THE TOWN UNDERTAKER - DAY

62

As ELMER KNOWLAND -- seventy, dark suit -- places an already wilting carnation in the dead man's lapel. Behind him, Bill McNue sits at a table studying a chessboard.

ELMER
The man had two kinds a teeth...

Elmer makes another adjustment then comes over and sits down. He watches as Bill McNue makes a move.

ELMER (CONT'D)
Rotten and Gone.
(makes a move)
Checkmate.

We hear CHUCKLING in the doorway and McNue looks up to see John Cook standing there.

COOK
Look at you, McNue, gettin' old and
playin' board games.

MCNUE
You ain't exactly covered with
morning dew yourself, Marshal.

Cook comes over and studies the board.

COOK
I recall you were always more of a
checkers man.

MCNUE
(re: the moustache)
You gonna swallow that squirrel, or
just keep chewin' on him?

COOK
(strokes it)
I'm emulating ol' Jacob Lee from
Abilene.

MCNUE
Oh, Jesus...

COOK
(more to Elmer)
One of the great fornicators of all
time. He also had hissself a finely
groomed patch of facial hair that I
hear served all sorts of purpose.

McNue gets up and shakes hands with the Marshal.

MCNUE

Man also had hisself a pecker
weighed as much as his .45.

(turning)

Elmer Knowland, say hello to
Marshal John Cook.

ELMER

(setting up a new game)

I've heard of you, Marshal. And
your moustache.

COOK

(pulls up a chair)

Man needs *something* to proceed
hisself, other than mere rumor.

(studies McNue)

How are you, Bill? You bein' a good
mama to them little ones?

MCNUE

You kidding? Round here, they got a
hundred mama's.

COOK

(looks out at the street)

They ready to fire you yet, bring
in some real law?

MCNUE

Ain't no need, seein' as they ain't
nothing much boisterous goes on out
here anymore.

ELMER

(makes a move)

Was a time, though, a gun was a
necessity around here after dark
and all day on Saturday.

MCNUE

So what brings you all the way out
here John, besides interrupting my
leisure time?

COOK

I'm looking for Frank Griffin.

And suddenly all good humor drains out of the room.

ELMER

You think he might be *here*?

COOK

There's a regiment up in Olagrande.
I'm on my way up there, see if the
captain'll help me out.

MCNUE

You goin' to the army?

COOK

Ain't no reg'lar posse willin' to
go after him no more... not after
they seen what he left behind in
Creede.

MCNUE

What happened up there?

COOK

Jesus, Bill, ain't you been readin'
the *Daily Review*?

MCNUE

I don't read much of anything these
days.

COOK

(pulls a clipping from his
pocket)

Well, that A.T. Grigg's been
sellin' papers like bullets.

McNue looks at the clipping, glances at Elmer. Cook gets up
and pours himself some coffee from the stove.

COOK (CONT'D)

Griffin's been hittin' mines all
over the territory the last six,
seven months. Lately, though, he's
run hisself into a problem, goes by
the name a Roy Goode.

ELMER

Boy from Moses?

MCNUE

Moses?

ELMER

Town up near Oklahoma. Actually,
there's Moses and Old Moses. I
remember I got lost up there one
time when--

MCNUE

(impatient)

--So you know him?

ELMER

I knew his victims. Kid was a dead gun at sixteen. Put a bullet in a rancher named Ben Broome just cuz he preferred his horse.

COOK

That's the one. Only he's not a kid no more. He's all growed up. Been ridin' with Griffin for least a dozen years till he disappeared a while back. Word was, Goode drowned six months ago, tryin' to cross Harlin Creek. But then he showed up at Griffin's last robbery.

MCNUE

'Showed' up'?

COOK

And stole' the whole take. About fifty thousand dollars worth.

(taps the article)

Grigg's taken to callin' him "Robin Goode" even though the man stole from the crooked and ain't gave a dime so far to nobody.

McNue strains to see the newspaper, sets it aside.

MCNUE

You say this was where again?

COOK

Up in Creede. Griffin hit the Tomboy Mine up there...

We hear A TRAIN WHISTLE OVER...

63

EXT. CREEDE - TRAIN POV - DAY

63

As the small train passes beneath the two sheer-wall cliffs. Three MEN IN SUITS stand on top of the cars with rifles.

COOK (V.O.)

Payroll comes into town on this little narrow gauge, spurs off Savage Basin...

The ENGINEER looks through the cut-outs and sees MEN HIDING IN THE ROCKS on either side of the train. He shouts out...

ENGINEER

LeRoy!

The FIREMAN, a question on his tired face, climbs down from the coal car just as A HUGE EXPLOSION detonates directly in front of the engine, knocking the guards from the train...

64 **FROM THE DEPOT**

64

The TELEGRAPH OPERATOR sticks his head out the door, watches as the engine, several tons of steel, rears up on the track like a spooked horse, then falls onto its side, pinning the bottom half of the fireman beneath it.

The cars behind tilt to one side but remain upright, their topple arrested by the big rocks at the base of the cliff.

A moment of dust and then we hear CRIES OF PANIC from inside the cars. QUICKSILVER MINING INC. is stenciled on the side.

65 **INT. TOWN UNDERTAKER - DAY**

65

McNue and Elmer stare back at Cook.

ELMER

They blew up the *whole train*?

COOK

Weren't just no train neither.

Cook makes a move on the chessboard for McNue.

COOK (CONT'D)

Turns out, aboard was J.B. Sloan, President of the outfit holds the claim on the Tomboy.

66 **EXT. CREEDE - DEPOT - DAY**

66

As the dust clears and several more MEN IN SUITS jump off from one of the rear cars, all carrying rifles.

COOK (V.O.)

Man travels with his own security.

Frank Griffin and his men, numbering well over thirty, aim back at them from the rocks.

COOK (V.O.)

But that didn't matter much...

Several other gang members now stand atop the tilting train car and aim down at them from above.

The Security Detail instantly drops their rifles. As now a WELL DRESSED MAN with a mound of grey hair steps out of the car. J.B. SLOAN. Still in shock, he looks around.

SLOAN
 What in the good holy hell's goin'
 on here?

GRIFFIN (O.S.)
 Hey there...

He looks at Griffin who rides up on his horse from the rocks,
 THE PRIEST COLLAR, grin on his face.

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)
 S'pose you just tell us where the
 payroll's at, save us all some
 time?

67 **FROM INSIDE THE TRAIN - LOOKING OUT** 67

As a YOUNG GIRL, 17, peers out the window of the tilted car,
 watches as Sloan now steps forward, puffed up, spitting with
 anger.

SLOAN
 Goddammit! Do you boys have any
 Goddamn idea who I am?

Frank Griffin draws his gun and shoots the man in the face.
 The girl inside the train SCREAMS.

68 **OUTSIDE THE CAR** 68

As the Devlins hear the girl, exchange a look and move closer
 to investigate.

Frank Griffin, meanwhile, rides right up to the dead Sloan,
 his horse stepping on the body with one hoof. Frank looks
 down at the dead man...

GRIFFIN
 I know that you were Jimmy Sloan.
 And I don't appreciate you usin'
 the lord's name in vain as such.
 (looks up, yells)
 Everybody outside!

SCREAMS as Griffin's men begin hauling people off the train.
 We hear GUNSHOTS here and there. Griffin sits his horse and
 calmly watches the chaotic unloading.

69 **EXT. DEPOT - CREEDE** 69

BILL CHICK, a once-cowboy stands atop the train car, firing
 his gun into the dust near the security detail...

BILL
 Y'all take off them fancy trousers!

GATZ BROWN sits on his horse beside Frank, watching it all calmly.

GATZ BROWN
Sometimes it takes more emphatic
measures, get folks' attention.

70 **INT. TRAIN CAR - SAME**

70

The girl stares at the dead Sloan out the window...

GIRL
Papa...

She hears a commotion, turns as AMOS GREEN, his pet king snake wrapped around his neck, physically throws passengers from the car next door.

She makes her way to the other end of the car, peers out at the opening where BUD LEDBETTER, in a huge Stetson, always grinning, through broken teeth, calmly sits his horse, roping passengers as they clamber off the train.

The girl turns around and bumps smack into THE DEVLIN TWINS who smile at their lucky-day discovery.

DONNIE
Look at you. My-oh-my...

71 **EXT. DEPOT - CREEDE**

71

As Frank sees the trapped fireman squirming and moaning from beneath the engine and rides over to him.

GRIFFIN
*Don't fear death, son. Death holds
no terror. For you shall never go
to a worse place'n you're at right
now.*

And with that, he shoots the man.

72 **EXT. EDGE OF TOWN - SAME**

72

The tracker, FLOYD WILSON, his one milky blue eye to the ground, leads his horse on foot, follows a series of horse tracks.

He comes to the sign that now says GREEDE and crouches down, studies the tracks there, then looks at the freshly altered sign, red paint still dripping from the "G."

FLOYD
Shit...
(looks around)
He's here.

73

AT THE DEPOT

73

DYER HOWE, a pair of knife scabbards hanging from leather chords around his neck, stands holding a long blade to the CONDUCTOR as he pulls a key, shakily opens the lock. Dyer Howe looks around as...

The WIND RISES and DUST begins to kick up. Griffin looks around, suddenly anxious. He watches as his men all pull their shirts or bandanas over their faces.

GRIFFIN

Where's that cashbox at?!

The BOXCAR is opened and we see a GIANT STRONGBOX inside. The giant ALONZO BUNKER tosses the box out of the car. The locks are shot off and stacks of CASH are revealed inside. Griffin nods.

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)

Load it up.

One of Frank's men leads a PACK HORSE with large saddle bags on either side. He starts to transfer the cash. SOME OF IT BLOWS AWAY. Floyd rides up in the b.g., calling out:

FLOYD

He's here!!

Griffin looks around as the wind grows stronger. He follows a bank note as it flies away... and sees ONE RIDER on a black horse, riding up between the cliffs. A RIFLE across his lap. A scarf covers the lower half of his face against the dust.

He ducks behind the train, is gone...

74

INSIDE THE TRAIN

74

As Donnie holds the girl down, Daryl lifts her dress up over her head, his whole body shaking with dark energy.

GIRL

Please... don't...

Daryl unbuckles his britches and covers her with himself, now buries his face in her neck while his hands explore their way under her dress.

DARYL

Damn, you smell good, girl...

75

THE GIRL'S POV - THROUGH HER WHITE DRESS

75

Roy Goode, rifle in hand, his face covered, quietly moves into the car. All we see are his eyes over the scarf as he calmly considers the girl's predicament.

DONNIE

--Roy!

Donnie reaches for his gun, gets a face full of rifle butt and falls back against the wall. His eyes watering as he spits out pieces of broken teeth...

Daryl scrambles off the girl, stands trying to haul up his britches when Roy brings the rifle barrel up into his balls. Then, just as he did to his twin brother, he butts him across the face with the hardwood stock.

Roy looks down at the girl, puts his fingers to his lips.

ROY

Shhhhh.

76

INT. TOWN UNDERTAKER - LA BELLE - DAY

76

As McNue looks at Cook.

COOK

I'm not sure how reliable a witness she is, seein' as they had--
(then)
Well, anyhow, she said they called him "Roy", and that they was all afraid of him...

77

EXT. DEPOT - CREEDE - DAY

77

As Roy Goode walks along the roof of the train, drops onto his waiting horse...

GRIFFIN (O.S.)

Roy!

Frank Griffin sits his horse, looking through the dust as Roy comes around the train at the other end of the station now.

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)

(over the wind)
Why you doin' this?

ROY

Ride out, Frank.

GRIFFIN

What all got you so mad at me?

Roy doesn't answer.

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)

Dammit! I raised you up, Roy!

ROY
 (puts the rifle on Frank
 Griffin)
 Ride on out or I'll take your
 fuckin head off.

GRIFFIN
 (calm as can be)
 This ain't my death.

Roy moves the rifle slightly and shoots the man leading the pack horse. Blows him out of the saddle. He then WHISTLES and the horse runs to him, loaded with the payroll.

Roy turns and rides off. Suddenly GUNSHOTS erupt from the roof of the depot as MINERS from the town now converge and start to fire at the gang.

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)
 Time to move on!

Griffin's men mount up and take off after Roy and the money.

78 **EXT. TRAIN - SAME**

78

As the Devlin Twins come stumbling out of the train only to find out they've been left behind.

DONNIE
 Where is everybody?

VOICE
 They's right here.

They freeze. The GUARDS, still in their longjohns, have all picked up their rifles and now hold them on the Devlins.

79 **INT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - DAY**

79

The TELEGRAPH OPERATOR rushes in, starts sending a message.

COOK (V.O.)
 Town sent word they had two of
 Griffin's boys, so I put a posse
 together and headed up that way...

80 **INT. TOWN UNDERTAKER - DAY**

80

As Cook sits there a moment, watching the street, then...

COOK
 Couple things happened while I was
 en route. First, the good people of
 Creede decided to lynch the Devlin
 Twins...

81 **EXT. JAILHOUSE - CREEDE - DAY**

81

The wind is blowing hard as Daryl and Donnie, their hands bound behind them, are dragged from the jailhouse. Every person in town -- miners, their wives, their children -- is out here now... watching quietly.

Ropes are put around their necks and then several men, miners all, hoist Daryl, then Donnie onto the back of a horse. Both have bruised faces, tears in their eyes.

Two men, each with a cut switch in one hand, move to the back of each horse and gets ready to strike their rump.

MAN

Who wants to watch the other get hung first?

DARYL

I'll go first, brother.

One man nods to the other and they each raise whips fashioned from tree branches when a KNIFE suddenly appears in the chest of one man.

Everyone turns as now dozens of FIGURES ON HORSEBACK slowly ride up the main street...

COOK (V.O.)

Second thing was, Frank Griffin decided to turn around and come back...

Dyer Howe throws his other knife, sinking it in the other man's chest and now panic ensues as Griffin and his men start shooting. Griffin, HIS ARM SOAKED WITH BLOOD NOW, drinks from a whiskey bottle, his eyes on fire...

GRIFFIN

You folks want a lynchin'? You got one!

From his horse, Bud Ledbetter ropes a woman by the neck and drags her off towards a tree, her children running after her. Bill Chick and Alonzo Bunker drag men behind their horses. Amos Green locks the Deputy and several people inside the jailhouse, sets fire to the building.

Griffin watches all of it with the weary sadness of a disappointed parent inflicting a harsh but necessary punishment.

82 **INT. TOWN UNDERTAKER - DAY**

82

As Cook shakes his head...

COOK
I just couldn't reckon with it.

McNue gets up and moves to the window, rubs his chin a moment in thought.

ELMER
But you think Griffin might be headed *here*?

COOK
They been robbin' mines all over Colorado and Wyoming. S'only a matter a time fore they come this way.

ELMER
But we're shut down.

COOK
Frank Griffin don't know that. And when he finds out who all's mostly livin' here, that ain't exactly gonna be a discouragement.

89

EXT. ALICE'S RANCH - DAY

89

As Roy exits the barn leading the mare he rode in on...

ROY
(raspy voiced)
Let's get some air, shall we?

He stoops to check her leg when there's a commotion in the corral as a couple of the wild horses begin to tussle and bite at each other.

Roy ties his horse to the rail and slowly climbs over. He eases his way through the herd.

He moves to one of the agitated animals and rubs it under the tail. The horse starts, then calms, giving Roy the chance to come around and take his head and now whistle in his nose.

The animal closes his eyes as Roy puts a finger in the corner of its mouth, then comes around and rubs its belly button. He then steps back as the HORSE LAYS DOWN.

ROY (CONT'D)
(softly)
Good boy.

Roy then moves to another horse and does the same thing. And then another. Until he's standing there amidst a corral full of decumbent horses. All except one...

90 **INT. ALICE'S HOUSE - SAME**

90

Alice and Truckee and Iyovi all stand at the window watching. Gobsmailed by what they just saw.

TRUCKEE

Like I said.
 (looks up at Alice)
 He knows horses.

91 **EXT. CORRAL - SAME**

91

The black horse stands away from the others. Roy looks at him across the corral, and as they make eye contact, Roy winks at him.

ROY

Soon enough, friend.

92 **INT. "THE GOOD LODGE" SALOON (LA BELLE) - DAY**

92

John Cook walks up to the bar, nods to BARNEY MUTZ, the one legged barkeep.

COOK

Glass a bonded, you got any.

Barney gets the bottle and Cook nods to Asa Leopold, the drygoodsman, the only other person in here. Cook then watches Barney pour, motions him to stop with his hand.

COOK (CONT'D)

My daddy always said it was bad luck, spill even a drop of fine whiskey.

BARNEY

Would certainly explain things 'round here.

ASA

Ain't spilt whiskey causin' all our problems. It's that damn Fletcher witch, cursed this place.

Cook tips his glass down his throat, looks at a tintype that hangs behind the bar-- an image of the miners who worked the La Belle Mine, posing in front of the dark mouth.

BARNEY

Too much coal dust in the shaft. It ignited and the fire drunk up all the air.
 (indicates the photo)
 Eighty-three good men. Gone in less than five minutes.

(MORE)

BARNEY (CONT'D)
 (looks at Asa)
 Just plain ol' bad luck.

COOK
 Why's your livery empty?

ASA
 Stupid women sold off all the horses to a cattle outfit was passing though last winter.

BARNEY
 We needed the food, and they said they'd cut a hundred beeves from the heard. But once they savvied our situation, they left us a couple scraggly heffers and move on.

Cook looks out at the street a moment, sees the blonde kid with the two guns, loitering nearby, then...

COOK
 Outside a the sheriff and that boy deputy, how many folks left around here can fire a gun?

BARNEY
 Why? There gonna be trouble?

COOK
 Just askin' is all.

ASA
 Well... if there's trouble, the sheriff won't be around anyhow.

BARNEY
 But his *sister* can sure shoot.

Cook looks at the two men as they burst out laughing.

93

INT. BARN - DAY

93

Roy comes in with a bucket of water, starts to splash himself with the water, but stops when he sees Alice standing there.

ALICE
 That was something.

ROY
 Yeah, well, puttin' a saddle on 'em all's a whole other matter.
 (puts his shirt back on)
 Thank you for your hospitality.

ALICE
I nearly killed you.

ROY
Yes, ma'am. Too bad about that dark moon.

She looks at him. A strange thing to say.

ROY (CONT'D)
Anyway, I'll be goin' now.

ALICE
Are you sure you can ride? Or if your horse can even carry you?

ROY
Well, I'll probably just lead her for a few days. Take care a *both* our problems.

She stands there, nodding, looking around. Finally--

ALICE
Thing of it is...

She steps aside to reveal A PILE OF MENS CLOTHING on the bale of straw beside her.

ALICE (CONT'D)
I was wondering if you might wanna--

She stops as we hear SOMEONE RIDE UP. She looks off. Then back at Roy.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Excuse me.

She walks out. He moves to the door, watches as Bill McNue gets off his horse and exchanges greetings with Iyovi, then playfully boxes with Truckee. Roy sees the STAR pinned to his chest.

Alice comes out of the barn and McNue immediately takes off his hat. Even a man such as Roy Goode can see the buried devotion in that small gesture.

94

EXT. ALICE'S RANCH - DAY

94

As Bill now smiles at Alice who walks over from the barn.

MCNUE
Afternoon, Miss Fletcher.

ALICE
Sheriff.

McNue studies her a moment, then smiles at the muddy boy when the moment gets awkward.

MCNUE
How's that well comin', son?

TRUCKEE
We're almost there.

ALICE
If he spent more time diggin' down there and less time pondering the universe, we'd have water by now.

McNue smiles, but she can see there's something on his mind.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Truckee, why don't you water the Sheriff's horse.

McNue watches as Truckee hurries off, then...

MCNUE
There was some bloody business up North with Frank Griffin.

ALICE
What sort of bloody business?

MCNUE
Griffin robbed the Tomboy Mine in Creede, ended up killing everyone in town.

ALICE
My God.

MCNUE
He and one of his boys got into it over the money, and now Griffin's tearin' up the territory lookin' for him-- fella named Roy Goode.

Boom. Alice turns to McNue, looks off at Truckee leading the sheriff's horse towards the barn. Not sure what to do now.

ALICE
Let's go inside.

95

INT. ALICE'S HOUSE - DAY

95

As Alice sits down at the table, McNue moves to the window. Alice glances nervously out the door towards the barn. No sign of Roy. McNue looks at the horses...

MCNUE

Looks like you got yourself quite a herd out there.

ALICE

A gift from Narrienta.

MCNUE

A gift or a bribe? His other son just lost his wife to Rubella.

ALICE

(ignores that)

Tell me about this Roy Goode.

MCNUE

(still looking at the horses)

What're you gonna do with 'em all?

ALICE

I been talking to some ex Buffalo Soldiers, having a go at their own town outside Easton.

MCNUE

You mean Blackdom? That's more a few sod huts than any kinda town. You sure them folks got the money?

ALICE

They say they do. And I see them doing odd jobs in town sometimes. What all you know about this Roy Goode?

MCNUE

Marshal in Santa Fe tells me he's killed least a dozen men.

She looks off towards the barn, more sad than afraid.

MCNUE (CONT'D)

Listen, I was thinkin' it might be a nice gesture, you sold a few of them animals to the ladies down in La Belle.

ALICE

Nice gesture? They shot my husband in the back--

MCNUE

You don't know that--

ALICE

I know they left him in the mud to die.

MCNUE

That was a long time ago. They've all had their own heartache since then. Maybe it's time y'all buried the hatchet.

(looks at her)

Hell, maybe it's time we *all* moved on.

He now sits down across from her, worries the brim of his hat in his hands.

MCNUE (CONT'D)

Truth is, I come out here to talk about just that. The future.

She's anxious, keeps looking out the door toward the barn.

MCNUE (CONT'D)

If I don't say this now, I never will.

He takes a deep breath, looks up at her.

MCNUE (CONT'D)

It seems Anna's been comin' to me in my dreams less'n less. Thing is, I can't tell if it's because she's fading away for me... or if it's because I see *you* there more'n more.

She looks at McNue, realizes where this is going.

96

INT. BARN - SAME

96

As Roy thoughtfully examines the chambray shirt and dungarees that Alice left for him.

TRUCKEE (O.S.)

Those were my daddy's.

Roy turns, sees the boy standing in the doorway.

TRUCKEE (CONT'D)

His name was Egan. His Paiute name *E-he-ghant*, but folks in La Belle either couldn't say it or didn't bother trying, so they just called him Egan.

Roy nods, sets the clothes down and starts out of the barn.

ROY
Nice meeting you, boy.

97 INT. ALICE'S HOUSE - SAME

97

McNue reaches across the table for her hands...

MCNUE
Alice, I need to know where I stand
with you.

She glances out the door and sees Roy walk out of the barn
and freezes up. McNue sees her hesitation.

MCNUE (CONT'D)
I'm bein' foolish, ain't I?

ALICE
No, you're not--

MCNUE
S'alright, you don't have to say
anything.
(puts his hat back on)
Ain't the first time the wish was
feather to the thought.

He smiles the best he can, stands up, turns, then stops cold
as Roy Goode steps into the house. Truckee is behind him.

ROY
(to Alice)
S'cuse me, ma'am.
(then, to McNue)
You the local law?

McNue glances at Alice who doesn't move.

ROY (CONT'D)
I'm Roy Goode, sir.

Roy extends his hand and a startled McNue shakes it.

ROY (CONT'D)
And if it's alright with you, I'd
like to turn myself in.

Nobody moves for a moment. Truckee stares wide-eyed at Roy.

TRUCKEE
I knew it! I knew you were
somebody!

ALICE
Truckee, go outside.

TRUCKEE
What-- why can't I--

ALICE
Go!

Truckee leaves the house. McNue takes in Roy, then:

MCNUE
You're Roy Goode?

ROY
Yes, sir.
(to Alice)
Ma'am we may need to borrow your
mare or even the old lady's burro,
seein' as the little pack horse I
rode in on's still--

MCNUE
--Whoa- wait just a minute here.
Just-- Dammit, just... wait.

McNue is completely flustered.

MCNUE (CONT'D)
Alright, suppose you start by
tellin' me exactly what all you're
doin' right *here*?

ALICE
He showed up the middle of the
night, about a week ago.

MCNUE
A week ago? Just when were you
plannin' on tellin' me--

ROY
She didn't know who I was.

MCNUE
What're you talkin' so soft for?

TRUCKEE
(from the doorway)
Ma shot him in the throat! But he'd
already been shot two times!

Alice shuts the door on her son. McNue takes in the wound on
his arm...

ROY
I got into it with Griffin and his
boys, place called Doubtful Canyon.

MCNUE

Don't believe I've heard of it.

ROY

It's up north, in Colorado, a few miles outside a town called Creede.

McNue goes stiff. Creede he's heard of.

ROY (CONT'D)

Frank had just robbed the payroll when I went ahead and took it from him.

MCNUE

And why'd you do a thing like that?

ROY

Because I knew he'd chase me. I was tryin' to draw 'em as far away from the folks in that town as I could, but things didn't quite work out the way I planned.

MCNUE

I'd say not. What happened?

ROY

Well, I seen from his mouth that my horse was fleckin' blood, and then he began to flounder, and I could see the poor boy didn't have much life left...

McNue cuts a look at Alice.

ROY (CONT'D)

Anyhow, it wasn't long before he bottomed out altogether and I had to--

MCNUE

--I wasn't asking about your damn horse. I asked you *what happened?*

ROY

Oh. Well, we ended up shooting it out in the canyon.

MCNUE

You against all of *them?*

ROY

Yes, sir.

MCNUE
Griffin's got thirty-men riding
with him.

ROY
Thirty-two that day.

MCNUE
And you held them off? By yourself?

ROY
Well, sir, situation like that, a
rifle can be mighty comprehensive.

MCNUE
Still, there was *thirty-two* of them
and just one of... *you*.

ROY
Yes, sir, but there was no way they
was gonna work through that gorge,
boxed up the way it was, without
getting shot to a man.

McNue just nods, still trying to picture this man as the
"dead gun" Roy Goode.

MCNUE
And that black handled .38 I heard
so much about? Where might that be?

ROY
I lost it -- and my rifle --
crossing the San Juan.

MCNUE
Uh-huh... and what about all that
cash you stole from Griffin? You
lose that in the river, too?

ROY
I lost everything.

McNue takes in Roy another moment, scratches his chin.

MCNUE
You don't look all that much like a
desperado to me so much as you just
look desperate.

ROY
I am who I say.

MCNUE
Well, if that's true, son-- if you
are Roy Goode, they gonna hang you
for sure.

ROY
Yes, sir. I reckon so.

The three of them just look at one other, stuck as to the next move. Finally, Roy holds out his hands...

ROY (CONT'D)
You best get me to the jailhouse.

98 **EXT. ALICE'S HOUSE - DAY**

98

Alice stands in the doorway with Iyovi as McNue and Roy ride off. Truckee runs a little of the way with them.

TRUCKEE
Good-bye, Mr. Goode!

Then stops at the edge of the pasture, watches sadly as the men urge their horses into a canter and move away from him.

He then looks back at his mother and Grandmother, the old woman spitting into the dust before going back inside. Alice watches the two men riding away another moment, then follows.

Truckee turns back, watches as Roy and McNue disappear.

99 **EXT. HILL ABOVE LA BELLE - DAY**

99

John Cook stops on his way out of town and takes it all in. He looks at the few women out on the street. The one-legged barkeep sweeping the porch. The old blacksmith. And knows they're all fucked. As he turns his horse to the trail...

COOK
God help you folks.

100 **EXT. GUNNISON RIVER - DAY**

100

A moment of quiet and then suddenly THIRTY HORSES LEAP FROM THE BANKS INTO THE WATER and start to make their way across. Frank Griffin's empty sleeve flaps freely behind him as he leads the way southward. The BOOMING HOOVES ECHOING as we--

CUT TO BLACK