

INVISIBLE EMPIRE

"Pilot"

Written by

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**TEASER**

FADE IN:

1

INT. BLACKSMITH SHOP - NIGHT

1

The modest room is warmed by the flickering orange glow of a lit CANDLE. The shop's owner, MOSES HARCOURT (50s, freedman), drinks from a glass of moonshine as he chastises his orphan apprentice named BOY (11, freedman).

**CHYRON: York County, South Carolina - April 5, 1870**

MOSES

Been thinkin', it ain't right you don't have a proper name for yourself. Can't keep goin' through life with folks just callin' you "Boy" all the time. How Saint Peter gonna know to let you into Heaven you ain't got a name?

BOY

Boy is all Master Fields called me. Never had parents around to say different neither.

MOSES

Only master you got now is the Almighty himself. You as free as any man, says so right in the Constitution. You want a name, you go ahead and give yourself any one you damn well please.

Boy gives deep consideration to the idea.

BOY

You think Saint Peter'll know who I am if I just keep it like it is? Don't think I'd be able to get used to anythin' else.

MOSES

(laughing; taking a drink)  
Boy it is, Lord help you. S'long as it's your choice who'm I to argue.

The moment is violently interrupted when a TORCH crashes through a window and tumbles along the wooden floor.

Moses rushes to his feet and hurriedly snuffs out the flame with a nearby rag.

Moses, heart racing, nervously peers through the busted window. The CAMERA pushes towards the broken window to reveal --

EIGHT KU KLUX KLANSMEN

-- in full Klan regalia holding TORCHES and RIFLES. The LEAD KLANSMAN calls out:

LEAD KLANSMAN

Come on out, Moses! Got a bone we  
wanna pick with you!

Moses turns away from the window, sees Boy's eyes shimmering with terror. For Boy's sake, Moses projects an air of calm.

MOSES

Goddamn Kluxers.

BOY

(panicking; quiet)  
What do they want with you, Moses?

MOSES

To kill me, I suppose.

Moses takes a beat as his mind works through a plan. He races over to his work table and rips out a piece of paper from a ledger. He quickly writes down a few lines, and thrusts the folded paper into Boy's hands.

MOSES (CONT'D)

You see this gets to someone you  
trust.

Boy looks nervously at the paper.

BOY

You know I can't read, Moses.

MOSES

Never mind what it says, you ain't  
the kind of soul that can do what  
this paper here needs doin'.  
(pointing to the back of  
the shop)  
There's a floorboard back there  
your skinny ass can wiggle through.  
Lead you right into the woods.

BOY

What about you, Moses?

Moses takes a moment to resign himself to a certain fate. He looks into Boy's eyes, and gives him a reassuring grin:

MOSES

When I see Saint Peter I'll tell  
'im to keep an eye out for a man  
named Boy. He gonna know all about  
you by the time you get up there --  
he'll surely let you right on in.  
But I can't give him notice 'less I  
get there first, understand?

Boy nods as tears moisten his cheeks.

LEAD KLANSMAN (O.S.)

We gonna burn you to the ground you  
don't come out, Moses!

MOSES

Over here now.

Boy reluctantly follows him towards the back of the shop where Moses pulls up a loose floorboard. Boy slips himself into the dark space between the ground and the floor.

Boy looks up at Moses for what he knows will be the last time.

MOSES (CONT'D)

Go on, Boy, 'fore they get a mind  
to come in.

Boy disappears underneath the shop to safety as Moses replaces the floorboard.

Moses takes a moment to compose himself. He grabs his glass of moonshine and savors the remainder before heading towards the front door --

2

EXT. BLACKSMITH SHOP - CONTINUOUS

2

Moses throws the door open and steps out, defiant:

MOSES

Which bone is it you wanted to  
pick, then?  
(grabbing his crotch)  
Ain't this one, is it?

Moses GUFFAWS in the face of his would-be killers.

The Lead Klansman shares a look with the others, and we --

CUT TO:

3 EXT. WOODS - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER 3

We TRACK with Boy, who's hoofing it through the dense forest when a string of gunshots CRACKLE through the night. Knowing what they herald, Boy stops. He grips the paper tightly, a silent promise to his now dead friend. Boy runs on, zigzagging through the trees as we --

SMASH CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES

4 EXT. TRAIN DEPOT - EARLY MORNING 4

WE OPEN on a four-car steam-powered locomotive from the Kings Mountain Railroad laboring to a halt under leaden skies. A SCRAWNY CONDUCTOR hops off the train and loudly announces the stop:

CONDUCTOR  
Yorkville Station! Yorkville! Next  
stop Guthriesville!

The PASSENGERS who have arrived at their destination begin to disembark as others begin to board. THE CAMERA finds MAJOR LEWIS MERRILL (late 30s, white, fastidiously dressed in U.S. Army blues) as he steps off the train, suitcase in hand.

A LADY in her finest glares at Merrill and his uniform as she passes. He attempts to diffuse her with a gentlemanly tip his hat -- but it's a gesture that's met with even more vitriol. Merrill shakes off this cold welcome and continues on.

A YELLOW HANDBILL posted on the depot wall grabs his attention. "KKK" is written in large letters across the top third, and the copy underneath reads: "**Your Republican voices shall be shut up. Shut up in a lonesome valley where they will never be heard no more.**"

ON MERRILL, feeling handbill's intended menace --

WOMAN (O.S.)  
Not much for grammar, are they?

Merrill turns, sees APRIL BARNES (late 20s, headstrong, wry) standing beside him. He's already partially charmed by her sarcastic quip when her gentle features and kind eyes win over the rest of him.

MERRILL

Are you offended by the sentiment  
or by the language they've used to  
express it?

APRIL

As a school teacher and a  
Republican I should say both.  
(beat)  
But if I'm being completely honest,  
I care far more about grammar than  
I do politics. Grammar has the  
decency to have rules.

Merrill smiles, appreciating her wit.

MERRILL

(sarcastic)  
We've found ourselves in a  
wonderfully hospitable place,  
haven't we?

APRIL

(smiling)  
Indeed.

PHILIP (O.S.)

April, my sincerest apologies!

April and Merrill look to see PHILIP WINSLOW (30s, an upper  
crust from the Northeast), calling out from his CARRIAGE.

APRIL

(to Merrill)  
My cousin, predictably late. Good  
day to you, Officer --

MERRILL

Merrill. Major Lewis Merrill.

Merrill tips his hat, and April nods in kind.

APRIL

April Barnes.

MERRILL

Perhaps our paths will cross again.  
In friendlier environments.

As Merrill watches April and her BAGS being loaded onto the  
carriage by a FREEDMAN DRIVER, he thinks Yorkville might not  
be so inhospitable after all.

The carriage pulls off as THUNDER cracks above. Merrill looks up at the thick, dark clouds. A downpour begins.

Using his suitcase as cover, Merrill hustles to find shelter under a nearby awning.

BRATTON (PRELAP)

"We are the redeemers --"

5

INT. ALE HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

5

While the downpour continues outside, former Confederate soldier RUFUS BRATTON (40s, a born leader) stands in front of fourteen or so MEN of various ages and appearances, seated around tables in the dank drinking hall. They sit in rapt attention; their eyes alight to Bratton's rousing rhetoric. While they are currently out of their singularly distinguishing attire, this is the Yorkville den of the Ku Klux Klan and Bratton is their Grand Cyclops.

BRATTON

-- the ones who can bring the South back to the way it was before the war of Northern aggression. The Yankees have sought to render us impotent. But our forefathers did not fight to escape British rule just to be put under a new tyranny. Our government's supposed to serve its citizenry by protecting life, liberty and property. But what does our government do? They take away our property. Then they deny us a voice in our government 'cause we fought to keep the property they took from us in the first place! Last week, they show us the greatest indignity of all by givin' the fuckin' niggers, our property, the right to vote!

(beat)

The Republicans and carpetbaggers use our mules to keep themselves in power, and expect us to abide by their laws?

The Men JEER LOUDLY.

BRATTON (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Do these Republican  fucks  think we lack pride? That we will sit idly by under negro rule?

ON BRATTON, reaching an emotional peak.

BRATTON (CONT'D)  
We shall let these Yankee bastards  
know that we will not sit quietly  
subjugated under this grievous and  
most galling tyranny!

The Men CHEER fanatically. Bratton soaks in their adoration,  
feeding off of it.

Bratton lowers his voice now, the Men fall silent in return.

BRATTON (CONT'D)  
We have shown the niggers in York  
County that we are still their  
masters. That if they dare to vote  
Republican, they shall reap the  
bloody consequences.  
(beat)  
We shall redeem the South as the  
Lord himself intends!

As the Men POUND their MUGS of ale on the wooden tables in  
appreciation, we PRELAP the SOUND of FLESH SLAPPING  
TOGETHER...

6

INT. BROTHEL - CORNELIA'S ROOM - LATE MORNING

6

We're TIGHT on RANDOLPH GLENN (mid-30s, unkempt) as his eyes  
flutter open. The sound of slapping flesh, along with MUFFLED  
GRUNTS of pleasure, continues off-screen along with the rain  
peppering the roof and windowpanes.

Glenn sits up and sees the source of the noise -- CORNELIA  
MASTERS (early 20s, soft heart) stands naked, face to the  
wall as a MUSTACHED JOHN, pants at his ankles, vigorously  
fucks her from behind.

GLENN  
Mornin', Cornelia.

Glenn rubs the sleep from his eyes, unmoved by the carnality  
in front of him. He and Cornelia converse as politely as they  
would at a church bake sale.

CORNELIA  
Sorry, Randolph.  
(to the Mustached John)  
I toldja to keep quiet.

MUSTACHED MAN  
(to Cornelia; huffing)  
I can't help it.

GLENN  
S'alright. I had to get up  
sometime.

Glenn unsteadily pulls himself to his feet. Standing, he has the bearing of a retired prizefighter. He grabs a bottle of whiskey off the nightstand to cure the hangover pulsing between his ears.

CORNELIA  
I would've taken him out back, but  
with the rain...

GLENN  
You shouldn't have to fuck standin'  
up on my account.

CORNELIA  
I don't mind, really.

MUSTACHED JOHN  
(as he's thrusting)  
Me neither.

Still, Glenn can't help feeling like a third-wheel. He gathers-up his belongings from the chair and heads towards the door.

On his way he grabs a WAIST HOLSTER off the dresser.

GLENN  
Thanks for the bed.

CORNELIA  
(sweetly)  
Anytime.

Glenn responds with a melancholy smile as he closes the door on his exit.

7 INT. HALLWAY - BROTHEL - CONTINUOUS

7

With the Mustached John's GRUNTING bleeding into the hall, Glenn slides on his shirt and hops into his pants with despondency.

He slumps on the ground, then slides his feet into his boots. Being slightly winded by the exertion, Glenn sits motionless for a beat --

QUICK INSERT OF:

-- A *WASHED OUT* image of a *WOMAN* lying sideways in a bed, her eyes looking into the *CAMERA*. She smiles a radiant smile -- the picture of beauty.

RESUME -- GLENN shrugs off this impressionistic memory as he labors to his feet and pulls his arms through his leather vest.

Affixed to the vest we see a SILVER STAR BADGE with the word "SHERIFF" engraved around the star.

Glenn fastens his waist holster as he makes his way down the hall to an exit.

8

EXT. MAIN STREET - YORKVILLE - LATE MORNING

8

Merrill trudges down the thoroughfare, his suitcase raised above his head as the rain continues. The eyes of the town taking a keen notice of the Federal Officer in their midst.

Merrill passes an UNDERTAKER'S establishment and the CAMERA holds on Moses' bloodied, bullet-ridden corpse lying on a wooden cart out front. His vacant eyes staring up to the sky.

Merrill takes stock of the dead man as the shop's proprietor, THOMAS CRAIG (freedman, 60s), steps outside.

MERRILL

(re: the body)

This the Ku Klux's work?

Thomas furtively scans his periphery, not wanting to give the impression of being accommodating to the interloper.

THOMAS

Don't ask how they get to me, only where they want me to put 'em.

Merrill reads Thomas' concern.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

You might want to think about a change of clothes, sir. Folks you're askin' about could look at 'em as a provocation, understand?

Merrill looks down at his uniform, perhaps something less conspicuous might be in order...

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS (PRELAP)

"We are slaves no more -- "

9 INT. UNION LEAGUE HALL - LATE MORNING

9

The all-freedmen CONGREGANTS fill up the pews and clump along the walls, captivated by the sonorous speaker: CAPTAIN JIM WILLIAMS (30s, freedman, dressed in a Militia Uniform). He stands straight and proud, believing himself to be the embodiment of his people's progress.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

God and Mr. Lincoln, rest his poor soul, saw fit to see us out of the shackles of servitude. And now, as of last week, the Congress of our United States has given us the right to vote.

The Congregants CLAP and PRAISE THE LORD.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

But there are those who would see us back in chains, the nightriders who drag us from our homes and set fire to all that we aim to build. And the Democrats in Congress who seek to end the Radical legislatures that have done so much for our people. Our continued progress is a reminder of their resounding defeat.

(beat)

There are many in this county who doubt us when say we are under attack at all. But tell that to Ezekiel Roundtree. Buffort Carlson. Antonia Cross. And to Moses Harcourt, murdered just last evening.

The Congregants HISS and HOLLER at the mention of the attacks.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

All free negro men and women who were killed for their Republican beliefs and the color of their skin. That is why this Union League is so vital to our survival.

(beat)

A few weeks ago, I petitioned our Governor Scott for arms to protect ourselves from those who mean to do us harm.

(dramatic pause)

(MORE)

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

And I am pleased to say he has answered that petition -- with fifty Winchester rifles!

Elation rings.

ANGLE ON a member of the audience who does not share the crowd's enthusiasm: PASTOR ELIAS HILL (early 50s, freedman, educated). Hill, seated in an improvised wheelchair with a wool blanket resting over a pair of legs withered by muscular dystrophy, observes the room's booming ardor with concern.

As the crowd continues CHEERING, THE CAMERA finds a day-dreaming ERNEST WARLICK (late 20s, a fatless body chiseled from obsidian) as he looks down at his calloused HANDS. As Ernest considers them, we --

CUT TO:

10 EXT. ERNEST'S FARMHOUSE - DAWN - FLASHBACK

10

*Ernest standing with his wife MATTIE (mid-20s, freedwoman, tiny birthmark on her cheek), his brow furrowed with concern as he envelopes her hands in his.*

ERNEST

*Don't like you travelin' alone,  
Mattie.*

*Mattie smiles -- it's a smile that could light the darkest corners of the soul.*

MATTIE

*What's Mr. Lessley gonna say when  
he don't see you in that field?*

ERNEST

*Same thing he says when he does.  
That I ain't worth the food and  
tools he give me to work his  
fields. That I'm the cause of the  
army worm, and the drought and  
every other damn thing on God's  
earth that keeps those fields from  
bearing profit.*

*Mattie touches his hardened palms.*

MATTIE

*Don't want these hands workin' the  
field no more anyhow. We'll find  
you a better job in the city.*

(MORE)

MATTIE (CONT'D)

One that ain't gonna turn your body  
hard.

(looking back up to  
Ernest; playful)

One that's gonna get you nice and  
plump. Like a king.

Ernest, amused, leans down and kisses her.

ERNEST

Don't know how you ever fell for a  
mad bull like me.

MATTIE

Saw that gentle heart of yours  
straight away. And you ain't ever  
given me a reason to doubt it.

(she kisses him)

Now, let me go -- I got a train to  
catch.

ERNEST

See you right this very place in  
three days time.

MATTIE

I'll be back before sundown.

ERNEST

Alright, then. Lord take watch over  
you, Mattie.

MATTIE

He will, Ernest. He got big plans  
for us. You'll see!

Ernest watches, a hint of worry in his eyes, as Mattie walks  
off.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS (PRELAP)

"I'm looking for any and all able-  
bodied men to join my all-negro  
militia --"

11 INT. UNION LEAGUE HALL - RESUME

11

Ernest pulls himself out of the memory as Captain Williams  
finishes his recruitment speech.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

-- In doing so, you will not only  
empower yourself, but the rest of  
our community.

(MORE)

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

(beat)

Any man who wants to come up to the registrar and put his name on the list will leave here with their own uniform and rifle.

The Congregants stand, and most of the Freedmen begin to line-up in front of Captain Williams, eager to pledge their services.

Uninterested, Ernest heads towards the doors. But a freedman, JACOB NELSON (30s), taps him on the shoulder.

JACOB

You ain't gonna join, Ernest?

ERNEST

(shaking his head;  
lighthearted)

Made a promise to Mattie and the Lord I'd never take up a rifle again. I'd sooner take the Lord's vengeance upon me than Mattie's -- General Lee himself would've surrendered his sword to avoid her wrath.

Jacob smiles at the thought.

JACOB

She a helluva woman, Ernest.

ERNEST

She comin' back today from a job interview in Columbia.

JACOB

Columbia? What a country negro like you gonna do in the big city?

ERNEST

Get fat.

Jacob and Ernest share a laugh.

JACOB

I believe that when I see it. Lord be with you.

ERNEST

Same to you, Jacob.

Ernest shakes Jacob's hand and heads to the door. Jacob excitedly takes his place in line.

12 EXT. UNION LEAGUE HALL - CONTINUOUS 12

Ernest walks out into the muddy street. The rain's stopped, and the sun's light shines through the cracks in the clouds. Ernest tilts his head towards the Heavens, letting the sun's rays warm his cheeks.

13 EXT. BRATTON PLANTATION - LATE MORNING 13

Bratton rides his horse up a dirt road towards a once grand, but now decaying PLANTATION HOUSE. A few SHARECROPPING FREEDMEN work the barren cotton fields that flank the road, the morning's rain not enough to make up for months of thirst.

As Bratton regards house...

CUT TO:

14 EXT. BRATTON PLANTATION - DAY - FLASHBACK 14

*A war-weary Bratton, wearing a GRAY CONFEDERATE UNIFORM, walks solemnly up the same dirt path we just saw. The fields around him are bursting with fertile cotton bulbs, far as the eye can see.*

*Bratton arrives at the front door. He takes a moment to straighten his disheveled appearance before KNOCKING.*

*MARY BRATTON (late 30s, cutting, resolute) opens the door. An inscrutable silence hangs between them.*

BRATTON

*I have returned, Mary.*

*Mary's response is to SLAP her husband across the face. Then, without a word, she turns and retreats into the house. Off Bratton, feeling the sting of her welcome...*

15 INT. BRATTON PLANTATION - LATE MORNING - RESUME 15

Bratton enters and calls out into the quiet household.

BRATTON

Mary? Mary, I'm back.

Mary appears from the kitchen and greets her husband with a chaste kiss to his cheek.

MARY

Welcome home, Rufus. There's  
breakfast on the table.

Mary leads her husband into the dining room.

16

INT. BRATTON PLANTATION - DINING ROOM

16

Bratton falls into the chair at the head of the table. In front of him is a peasant's meal. Mary takes a seat at the opposite end. A third place-setting sits between them.

An uncomfortable silence fills the room while Bratton and Mary pick at their food.

Bratton eyes the third place-setting like an uninvited guest. After a long beat, he gets up from his seat, picks up the place-setting and loudly deposits it back in a drawer in the buffet.

MARY

What do you think you're doing,  
Rufus?

BRATTON

Must we have the same damned  
conversation every day?

MARY

If our son should walk through  
those doors and see the table empty  
in front of his chair, what do you  
think his thoughts would be?

BRATTON

If he were alive do you not think  
he would have returned home to us  
by now? It's five years past the  
war's end.

MARY

You made it home, Rufus. That would  
give any reasonable person hope for  
his return.

Bratton strides over to Mary's side of the table, looks down at her with burning contempt.

BRATTON

You would not know the first thing  
about what a man must do to survive  
war.

Mary gives little ground to Bratton's point.

MARY

I know the sacrifices of war. The things I did -- the things I had to do to keep our fields from going to rot while you and Lucas were away fighting the North. You had the luxury of guns and ammunition. I had to make do with what the Lord gave me.

Bratton has the inclination to strike her, but restrains the urge.

BRATTON

We have all sacrificed something.

MARY

And what sacrifice did you make, Rufus?

(beat)

If you were a true man of the Confederacy, you would have seen returning home not as a victory -- but as the ultimate failure it truly is.

Bratton's hand shoots out and grabs his wife by her face, squeezing it tightly in his grip.

BRATTON

Why do you wish me dead, wife?

Mary defiantly wrenches herself from his grasp.

MARY

Because seeing you dead would be less agonizing than seeing you live in the shadow of defeat.

Off Bratton, wishing a part of him did not share her sentiments.

17

INT. ROSE HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY

17

Merrill enters, and surveys the lobby -- its decor on the wrong side of gaudy. The hotel's owner, EDWARD ROSE (40s), looks up from reading the *Yorkville Enquirer* to greet his guest.

EDWARD

Good morning, officer.

Merrill's distaste for Edward is immediate.

MERRILL

Morning.

EDWARD

In need of a room?

MERRILL

How'd you guess.

EDWARD

You've come to the right place,  
then, sir. We show no prejudice to  
our friends from the North. We're  
all Americans here under the roof  
of the Rose Hotel.

Merrill nods towards a sign that reads: "**No Rooms for Niggers.**"

MERRILL

Not everyone, it seems.

EDWARD

We all must have our limits of  
decency.

MERRILL

And some an unlimited indecency.

Edward laughs off Merrill's insult.

EDWARD

How long will you be staying with  
us?

MERRILL

Indefinitely.

EDWARD

Wonderful. I've got just the room  
for you...

Off Merrill, rethinking his choice of lodgings...

PHILIP (PRELAP)

"What do you think? Is it  
suitable?"

18 INT. ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE - DAY

18

We find April Barnes walking along a row of desks in the quaint room; sunlight pours in through the windows. Philip stands in the doorway next to GLORIA FORD (late 20s, white, reserved), watching April assess the room's arrangement.

PHILIP

Or did I lure you all this way only to disappoint you?

APRIL

It will do very nicely, Philip.

PHILIP

Miss Ford here found the desks and the blackboard in an abandoned schoolhouse a few towns over. She has wonderful taste, don't you think?

April reads Philip's puppy dog crush on Gloria.

GLORIA

Their availability was the only factor in their selection.

PHILIP

Still, you did very fine work.

(to April)

If anything was overlooked, alert Miss Ford and she'll help you remedy things. She's astonishingly resourceful.

GLORIA

The schoolbooks you requested arrive tomorrow, Ms. Barnes. I'll have them here from the train station by mid-morning.

APRIL

Splendid. Thank you.

PHILIP

(to Gloria)

My driver can take you. And I would be happy to assist you. Personally, I mean.

GLORIA

I can handle it myself, Mister Winslow. Don't trouble yourself or him.

APRIL

(admiring the room)

If it doesn't blow over at the first gust of wind, I daresay this place is perfect.

PHILIP

Not bad for a former jailhouse, ey?

APRIL

A jail, on a plantation?

PHILIP

The former owner used to lock his more insubordinate negroes in here for punishment.

April runs her hand along the wooden wall, imaging the horrors once contained within.

APRIL

Such cruelty I cannot fathom...

PHILIP

(seeking levity)

Take comfort in, even on your worst days, they will not be the worst this room has ever seen.

Off April and Gloria, amusingly disgusted by Philip's comment...

19

INT. JACOB NELSON'S CABIN - LATER

19

LIZA NELSON (20s, freedwoman, battle ax), looks up from her sewing as Jacob enters clutching a Winchester and his militia uniform. He's beaming like a child on Christmas morning.

JACOB

Liza, look.

LIZA

Oh Lord, what've you done now, Jacob?

JACOB

I'm a militiaman for the Union League of York County.

Liza finds most of her husband's decisions vexing. This one is no different.

LIZA

Militiaman? How much they payin' you?

Jacob puts his uniform on the table, then holds the rifle up over the stove, testing to see how it'll look.

JACOB

Two dollars-a-week.

LIZA

(scoffing)

Your life worth two dollars-a-week, Jacob?

Jacob is too excited to be concerned.

JACOB

(to himself)

Gonna keep it right here above the stove. Put in some hooks to hang it on.

LIZA

You be askin' them Ku Klux to visit our home with that thing mounted on the wall.

JACOB

Those Kluxers come here I'll shoot down every last one of 'em.

LIZA

Only man likely to get shot with that rifle is you, Jacob.

Jacob waves a dismissive hand.

JACOB

I shall fear no man no more, Liza.

LIZA

You don't gotta fear no man, but you don't pick us some corn for supper you gonna sure as hell fear me.

Jacob's runaway enthusiasm is derailed by his wife's ultimatum.

JACOB

Yes, ma'am.

Off Jacob, placing the rifle down and hustling outside to do as ordered...

20

EXT. ROAD - EARLY AFTERNOON

20

Glass whiskey bottles CLINK worrisomely together as ZACHARIAH BREWER (50s, white) abruptly pulls his horse-drawn cart to a halt by the side of the road. He has the shambolic appearance of a drunk who's spent too much time around his own still as he waddles with urgency into a small cluster of trees alongside the country road and into --

A CLEARING

Zachariah wiggles through the tree line just enough to give his shy bladder the comfort to go. He then pulls down his pants to take a piss.

As relief comes to him, Zachariah opens his eyes and casually looks at the pastoral setting around him. It is then that something off-screen catches his eye and sends a rush of terror through his nerves. As he backs away, pants still down and his cock still pissin' in the wind, he catches his foot on a stump, landing him hard on his ass.

ZACHARIAH

Fuck...!

(noticing he's getting  
piss all over himself)

Goddamn it...!

Zachariah stumbles back out towards the road, fumbling to pull up his pants, which are now completely soaked in urine.

21

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - MIDDAY

21

DEPUTY MARION MORRISON (early 20s, eager but lacking intellect) and DEPUTY WILLIAM SNYDER (40s, bulky) stare apprehensively at their visitor, Merrill (now in civilian clothes).

MERRILL

The sheriff usually start his day  
this late?

MORRISON

Sometimes he doesn't make it in at  
all.

ON SNYDER, something about Merrill's been gnawing at him.

SNYDER

Were you at Fredricksburg?

MERRILL

No.

SNYDER

How 'bout Petersburg? I got this suspicion I seen you before...  
Maybe Richmond?

MERRILL

I saw action in Missouri and  
Tennessee, mostly.

SNYDER

Guess I must be mistaken --

MERRILL

Must be.

SNYDER

-- bein' a sharpshooter, if I'd've  
seen you enough to make an  
impression, you wouldn't be sittin'  
here now, but sippin' tea in Hell  
with the rest of them dead Yankee  
cunts.

Snyder leans back in his chair, pleased with himself.

Merrill's patience is just about depleted when the front door  
swings open and Glenn walks through.

MORRISON

Mornin', Sheriff.

MERRILL

(sotto)

Afternoon, more like.

SNYDER

We got us a visitin' Federal  
officer, boss.

Snyder cocks his head to Merrill, who stands to greet the  
Sheriff.

MERRILL

Major Lewis Merrill, Seventh  
Cavalry.

GLENN

Randolph Glenn.

MERRILL

Pleased to make your acquaintance,  
Sheriff.

Glenn eyes Merrill's outstretched hand like a diseased appendage before reluctantly giving it a shake.

GLENN

Likewise, I guess.

Glenn takes a seat at his desk, and casually reaches into a drawer and pulls out a bottle of WHISKEY. A nonplussed Merrill watches him take a long drink before having the bottle extended in his direction to do the same.

Trying to earn a modicum of respect from the room, Merrill grabs the bottle and takes a hearty gulp.

GLENN (CONT'D)

(re: the drink)

Least you got one thing goin' for  
you.

Glenn takes the bottle back from Merrill, has another slug before returning the bottle to the drawer.

GLENN (CONT'D)

So, what business brings you here  
to Yorkville, Major?

Merrill removes a FOLDED LETTER from his jacket pocket and hands it to Glenn.

Glenn scans the document with "GOVERNOR ROBERT K. SCOTT" atop the letterhead, growing increasingly chapped because:

GLENN (CONT'D)

I gotta take orders from you?

Merrill parses his words carefully:

MERRILL

Governor Scott feels the response to the attacks against the negro populace has been lacking. He petitioned President Grant for federal intervention. The Judge Advocate General's office sent me to aid you in arresting and prosecuting the group calling themselves the Ku Klux Klan.

The infringement of the Federal government on their domain does not sit well.

SNYDER  
Bull-fucking-shit.

Merrill ignores Snyder.

MERRILL  
(looking around room)  
If it's not asking too much I'm  
just here to see you all do your  
jobs.  
(off their blank stares)  
The sooner we bring these  
nightriders to justice, the sooner  
I'll be on my way out of town.  
Something I'm sure we can all agree  
would be best for everyone.

Glenn reads Merrill's distaste for his assignment oozing from every pore.

GLENN  
You get caught fucking a general's  
wife or somethin'?  
(off Merrill)  
A lone man sent into hostile  
territory to apprehend a gang ain't  
no one has the faintest fucking  
idea about. I reckon whoever sent  
you here would rather you catch a  
bullet than anyone callin'  
themselves Ku Klux.

Merrill's silence says there's a kernel of truth to what Glenn's laid out.

MERRILL  
"Theirs not to reason why, theirs  
but to do and die."

GLENN  
(whatever)  
What's the first order of business  
then?

MERRILL  
What can you tell me about the dead  
negro in front of the undertaker's?  
Given he was turned into a sieve,  
one can assume his end was not an  
accident.

GLENN

Moses Harcourt. Had a blacksmith shop a little ways out of town. Ol' Moses got drunk the other day and stumbled through town yellin' about how every white man between the cradle and the grave should be put to death. Not exactly a surprise he wound up the way he did.

SNYDER

A man could argue he had it comin'.

Merrill stares down Snyder, his antagonism grating his last nerves.

Glenn clears his throat to break the air.

GLENN

Given the current tensions and the Union League handing out guns to any proffered negro hands, you can understand how some white citizens might take Moses' threats seriously.

MERRILL

(turning to Snyder)

Some should feel very fortunate that talking shit is not a capital offense. Mr. Harcourt's death is murder. Where was his body found? Were there any witnesses? What evidence have you been able to gather?

GLENN

You'll find around here, Major, that even if there were witnesses ain't none of them likely to talk to us. All we end up doing is picking up the bodies. After a while, didn't even make much sense to do that anymore.

MERRILL

We must resolve ourselves to do more than just pick up the bodies then. Let's give those souls the justice they deserve by catching their killers.

In the b.g., behind Merrill's back, Snyder pantomimes jerking off to Morrison, who SNORTS out a laugh.

Merrill spins to see who the offender was, but Snyder and Morrison quickly wipe the amusement from their faces.

Just then Zachariah bursts into the office, panting from his haste.

GLENN

Jesus, Zachariah -- the hell's the matter?

ZACHARIAH

In the woods, down by Little Allison Creek.

A waft of ammonia drifts up Snyder's nose.

SNYDER

(sniffing)

You piss yourself, Zachariah?

ZACHARIAH

That is of no concern, Bill.

SNYDER

(disgustedly amused)

Jesus Christ... You fuckin' did.

ZACHARIAH

We can all agree I'm covered in piss so can we kindly move the fuck on.

(gathering himself)

The issue is the dead negro girl I just saw.

Merrill sits up, engaged.

MERRILL

How far from here?

ZACHARIAH

Five miles or so.

MORRISON

I should fetch Doctor Jeffrys?

GLENN

Yeah, go on.

Morrison exits.

GLENN (CONT'D)  
(to Zachariah)  
Why don't you show Lord Tennyson  
and me to the body.

Off Merrill, trailing them out, realizing Glenn isn't the uneducated hick he thought he was...

22

EXT. CAPTAIN WILLIAMS' HOUSE - AFTERNOON

22

Captain Williams sits in communion with Elias Hill in the shady respite of his porch. Elias is perched in his wheelchair and despite the early afternoon heat he has not shed the blanket from his lap.

Hill's TWO FREEDMAN ATTENDANTS that he relies upon to help move him and his wheelchair from place to place lounge in the shade of a tree, far enough away to give Hill and Williams their privacy.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS  
I am flattered by your visit,  
Pastor Hill. Had I known you wanted  
to speak with me, I'd've made the  
trip back into town.  
(re: Hill's Attendants)  
Seems a great effort for you to  
have traveled this far.

ELIAS HILL  
An effort I play little part in.  
Reliant as I am upon the generous  
strength of my parishioners.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS  
What matters've carried your  
concern to my door, then?

ELIAS HILL  
The all-negro militia you've  
formed.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS  
(amused)  
Are you looking to join?

Elias feels the lash of the Captain's condescension in the suggestion, but quickly moves past it.

ELIAS HILL

My concern is an armed and organized all-negro militia marching through the streets of Yorkville will be every white citizen's nightmares brought real. It is begging for violence to be perpetrated on our people.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

A violence we see nightly at the hands of the Ku Klux already.

ELIAS HILL

But now you've given them an excuse for it.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

Is it better for us to die fearful and afraid, or die fighting back?

ELIAS HILL

I do not wish us to die at all, Captain. Nor do I wish to invite death unnecessarily.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

Nothing done to our people has been by invitation, Pastor Hill. The whites have been deciding our fate since they stole us from our African homelands.

(beat)

These rifles and this militia shows we are capable of deciding things for ourselves now.

Elias cedes to Captain Williams' unwavering position and attempts a different track.

ELIAS HILL

To get these rifles and the blessing of the Governor, you've promised him something, have you not? A politician's generosity does not come without stipulations.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

A guarantee of what would be an eventuality anyway.

ELIAS HILL

That the negroes will show up at the polls come October and punch the Republican ticket.

Captain Williams is impressed with Elias' accurate deduction.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

We will bear our arms, as is our right as citizens of this country and insist our votes be counted.

ELIAS HILL

If even one bullet is fired from a militiaman's gun at a white citizen, the cries for our extinction will not come solely from the mouths of the Democrats and the Ku Klux, but by every white citizen in these whole United States.

Captain Williams is regretful the conversation has taken such a combative tone.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

I'm sorry you came all this way, Pastor Hill. I would have warned you ahead of time against trying to dissuade me from the militia.

ELIAS HILL

I hope to preach a better case to my parishioners against it, then. A majority of which filled your Union League hall this morning.

Captain Williams did not think Elias was the type of man to issue threats, but he respects the cripple's gall in doing so.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

I saw a fire in each volunteers' eyes today when they left with a uniform and rifle in their hands. I saw it in the eyes of the negroes I fought along side with against the Confederates. Something the Lord's teachings never gave them.

(off Elias' look)

Pride, Pastor Hill. I saw pride in their eyes.

ELIAS HILL

I pray yours does not lead us all  
to our end, Captain Williams...

With that final warning left hanging in the air, Elias  
WHISTLES for his Attendants to come fetch him.

Off Captain Williams, considering Elias' words...

23

EXT. ROAD - LATE AFTERNOON

23

Merrill, Glenn, and Snyder follow Zachariah's finger as it  
points into the wooded area to the clearing beyond.

ZACHARIAH

She's a dozen or so yards past the  
tree line. Apologies for not  
wanting to see the sight of it  
again. Don't want to risk my  
nightmares havin' a clearer image.  
(looking down at his  
pants)

I would find a change of britches  
might alleviate me of my shame as  
well.

GLENN

Yeah, go on.

Zachariah nods, chagrined, and rides off.

Morrison, trailed by DR. JOSEPH JEFFRYS (50s, shock of white  
hair), ride up and dismount their horses.

GLENN (CONT'D)

Thanks for comin', doc.

Dr. Jeffrys gives Merrill a once-over.

DR. JEFFRYS

(to Glenn, re: Merrill)  
Where'd you get the Yankee,  
Sheriff?

GLENN

Gift from our great Governor Scott.

Merrill extends his hand to the doctor.

MERRILL

Major Lewis Merrill.

Dr. Jeffrys SPITS on the ground and walks into the clearing.

Merrill looks over to Glenn.

GLENN

Had the decency not to spit on you,  
at least.

(off Merrill)

Doc lost two sons during the war.

Off Merrill, everyone's immediate hatred of him is starting to wear...

THE CLEARING

Glenn, Merrill, et al make their way through the dense trees we've seen before. The BUZZING OF FLIES growing louder with each step.

Then, as they all lay eyes upon the sight that so spooked Zachariah, they're struck motionless, unnerved.

REVERSE ANGLE to show the grisly tableau: Mattie's dead, naked body tied to a tree, her throat slit ear-to-ear.

The FLIES DRONING on the soundtrack move patternless around the body.

Merrill's face is lit with intrigue, while Glenn averts his eyes, affected in a way that's deeper than just the sight of a dead body. Merrill notices his distress.

MERRILL

Sheriff?...

Glenn doesn't respond, he's lost himself to a memory --

INSERT SHOT OF:

-- A YOUNG SLAVE GIRL (12) holding the hand of the Woman we saw from Glenn's impressionistic memory. They're standing on a wraparound porch of an impressive house, giddily smiling like two people sharing a secret. There's a small birthmark on the Slave Girl's cheek.

RESUME -- Glenn, trying to keep his composure as he stares at a birthmark on the dead girl's cheek in the very same place as his memory.

MERRILL (CONT'D)

Sheriff? Are you alright?

GLENN

(shaking it off)

Yeah, fine.

Merrill doesn't press Glenn, satisfied for now to have regained his attention.

Glenn begins to engage.

GLENN (CONT'D)

(to his deputies)

You fellas reconnoiter the area.  
The Lord fucked us with the rain so  
there won't be much luck on a  
trail, but maybe there's something  
that the bastard left behind.

Morrison and Snyder disperse as ordered.

Merrill removes a SMALL NOTEBOOK and PENCIL from his breast pocket to record any significant findings.

Dr. Jeffrys begins to inspect the body, and starts by looking at the knife wound around Mattie's neck.

DR. JEFFRYS

Looks like they did her the same as  
that Cross woman last week.

Merrill stops writing, piqued.

MERRILL

Another woman was killed just like  
this?

GLENN

Some sharecroppers found a negro  
woman named Antonia Cross over on  
George Sturgis' land.

DR. JEFFRYS

Found her tied up and her throat  
slit, same as this one.

(beat)

Like the other, whoever cut her  
throat must've done it somewhere's  
else. Otherwise she'd be covered in  
so much blood even the rain  
wouldn't've been enough to wash it  
all away.

Merrill steps next to Dr. Jeffrys to inspect the wound, then scrutinizes the entire body from head to toe. He notes the BRUISING around Mattie's WRISTS and ANKLES. A picture of her demise begins to form in his mind.

MERRILL

Would suspending a body by its ankles and cutting the jugular be the most efficient way of exsanguination?

Dr. Jeffrys looks over to Merrill, impressed by his knowledge.

DR. JEFFRYS

You have medical training?

MERRILL

No. But I've spent enough time around dead bodies to have learned a thing or two.

Dr. Jeffrys turns back to the body.

DR. JEFFRYS

(studying Mattie's body)

Looks to be as you say.

Glenn winces, thinking about how dreadful Mattie's last moments on Earth must've been.

MERRILL

Might account for the bruising on the ankles, then.

(beat)

Did Ms. Cross have the same bruising on her wrists and ankles?

Glenn trades a knowing look with Dr. Jeffrys.

GLENN

Yeah. Same marks.

MERRILL

(gravely)

It's as if she were slaughtered in the same manner a butcher would a hog...

(beat)

This is something more than murder -  
- each step in the killing was part of a procedure. One thought out in detail...

GLENN

How do you figure?

MERRILL

Do you think someone who simply  
wished to kill would go through all  
this trouble?

Dr. Jeffrys and Glenn let the rhetorical question hang in the  
air.

Merrill turns his attention to the ROPE used to bind Mattie  
to the tree.

MERRILL (CONT'D)

I should like this rope kept for  
evidence. Perhaps it has a  
uniqueness its seller might  
remember. Do you have the one from  
the other murder?

Glenn shakes his head as Merrill's consternation builds.

Then, a SMELL captures Merrill's attention and he SNIFFS  
Mattie's hair.

MERRILL (CONT'D)

That scent, what is it?

Dr. Jeffrys takes a whiff.

DR. JEFFRYS

Chamomile.

Merrill sniffs at different places along Mattie's body.

MERRILL

Her entire body smells of it.

DR. JEFFRYS

Grows all over these parts.

MERRILL

Antonia's body as well?

DR. JEFFRYS

I seem to remember there was a  
peculiarly pleasant fragrance  
around the body.

Merrill takes notes of this odd piece of evidence.

MERRILL

(to Glenn)

Two women killed in the exact same  
manner speaks to them having the  
same killer.

(MORE)

MERRILL (CONT'D)

Is this a manner in which the Ku  
Klux have killed before?

GLENN

I -- I don't know. They don't...  
usually go through all the trouble.

Taking a beat, Merrill, dispirited, looks up to the sky,  
silently cursing his circumstances.

MERRILL

(looking back at the body)  
Is this woman known to either of  
you?

Glenn takes a long, deep breath:

GLENN

Her name's Mattie Warlick.  
(beat)  
Used to be named Mattie Glenn,  
before she was married...  
(off Merrill's look)  
She was one of mine, before the  
war.

Merrill and Dr. Jeffrys are taken aback by this revelation.

Snyder and Morrison return from searching the nearby area.  
Snyder openly displays a contempt for Merrill in every  
gesture.

MERRILL

Find anything?

MORRISON

No, sir.

SNYDER

Nope.

MERRILL

To say you were gone for five  
minutes would be generous. How  
could you have thoroughly checked  
the area enough to give such a  
definitive judgement?

SNYDER

Rained like Hell this morning,  
erased any trail that would've been  
there. A dime-a-fuck whore would've  
seen the effort for the waste it  
was.

MERRILL

You don't want to do the fucking  
job then hand over your badge.

Snyder's had about enough of Merrill.

SNYDER

I know good spot where you can  
shove it, Yankee.

MERRILL

If you'd like to test your mettle  
without the safety of a rifle's  
distance, please, by all means,  
have at it.

Snyder's all too happy for the invitation and tries a quick  
JAB -- but Merrill parries it, and lands a sweeping RIGHT  
HOOK to the deputy's jaw. Snyder falls to the ground --

-- and Merrill is quickly on top of him, PUMMELING the deputy  
with blow-after-blow. Merrill, seeing red, continues an  
unerring barrage until Dr. Jeffrys and Glenn fight to pull  
him off of the defenseless deputy.

GLENN

Enough, Major! Enough!

Merrill looks down at Snyder, sobered by the sight of the  
deputy gasping for air through his bloodied and broken mouth.  
Dr. Jeffrys kneels down to assess the deputy's injuries.

DR. JEFFRYS

Broken jaw, and maybe a cheekbone.  
Got enough missing teeth to make  
eating steak a chore in the future.  
(looking up to Merrill)  
You certainly made your point,  
Major.

MERRILL

One could argue he had it fuckin'  
coming.

Off Glenn exchanging a look with Dr. Jeffrys, both surprised  
by Merrill's brutality...

DISSOLVE TO:

24

EXT. ROAD - LATER

24

Dr. Jeffrys and Morrison load Mattie's body onto a horse-drawn cart. Dr. Jeffrys pulls a white sheet over the body, its outline beneath distinct.

GLENN

Any further need for her body?

DR. JEFFRYS

Nope, not much else I can do for you.

(turning to Snyder)

I'll take him back to town.

Dr. Jeffrys helps Snyder up onto his horse, all the while Snyder glares at Merrill, his mind dancing with thoughts of revenge.

Dr. Jeffrys, Snyder, and Morrison ride off leaving Glenn alone with Merrill.

GLENN

Think you might've overreacted back there?

MERRILL

If I acted as I'd wished your deputy would have lost more than just a few teeth.

GLENN

That's good then, the way you showed restraint.

Merrill brushes off Glenn's sarcasm.

MERRILL

I'm going to have a look around for myself before I lose the light.

GLENN

Suit yourself. I'll see Mattie's body to her husband.

Merrill nods, then turns towards the clearing. Just as he's about to disappear into the tree line, he turns and calls out to Glenn:

MERRILL

About the girl, Sheriff, I am truly sorry.

GLENN

Ain't no one sorrier than me...

Merrill disappears into the trees as Glenn takes a seat on the cart. He snaps the horses to movement, and off this we --

DISSOLVE TO:

25 EXT. WOODS - LATER

25

Merrill scans the area for anything that could resemble a clue. His eyes are alert, active.

He pushes through a bit of dense brush, returning to --

THE CLEARING

He takes a moment to appreciate the beauty of the vista, and we get a sense that Merrill is most at peace when he's by himself. He looks down at his bruised and cut knuckles -- displeased with himself for losing control the way he did.

A RUSTLING catches Merrill's attention. He stands still, waiting to see what or who it could be...

REVERSE ANGLE  
TO:

26 EXT. WOODS - THAT MOMENT

26

We find Boy, still gripping the piece of paper in his hand. He's kneeling down behind the cover of the thick brush as he peers out into the clearing to see Merrill. Terrified of being spotted, Boy stealthily moves deeper back into the thicket.

BACK ON MERRILL

Thinking it probably just an animal he presses on with his investigation. Eventually, he finds himself in the shadow of a large RED MAPLE TREE. Something on the muddy ground catches his eye: a set of three horseshoe prints.

Merrill kneels to get a closer look at the trail. In the indentation of the horseshoe print is a raised Roman numeral: III.

He takes out his notebook and makes a small sketch of the marking. Off Merrill, pondering this possible clue...

INT. ROSE HOTEL - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

WE FOLLOW A WAITER (freedman) as he emerges from the kitchen to place a WHOLE ROASTED CHICKEN among an already cluttered table of food. April stares incredulously at Philip, who's already heaping food onto his plate.

APRIL

You must've ordered everything on the menu.

PHILIP

Not everything. Dessert has yet to be decided upon.

April smiles, delighted to see her cousin so happy.

APRIL

I must admit, when your father told me you set out for South Carolina I thought it was a foolish endeavor. How wrong I was.

PHILIP

But unlike father, you had the decency to keep it to yourself. Part of why you're my favorite cousin.

APRIL

How did you settle upon Yorkville?

PHILIP

A man named John Sloan.

(off April)

He was a prisoner we had a Salisbury. An Irishman who spoke about the region as if it were Heaven itself.

APRIL

I should hope Heaven has little in common with Yorkville.

PHILIP

For Mr. Sloan's sake I hope you're wrong.

(off April's confusion)

He passed from an infection a few weeks before Appomattox.

APRIL

How awful...

PHILIP

Knowing he was dying, Mr. Sloan entrusted me with the task of taking a letter to his wife. But when I came searching for her, she was nowhere to be found. Perhaps she went back to Ireland, or maybe she traveled North. I still have the unopened letter at home. Maybe one day she'll return and I can complete my promise.

(beat)

All this is to say, if it were not for Mr. Sloan I would not have seen the miles upon miles of lumber that led to my good fortunes.

APRIL

It sounds like destiny.

(teasing)

All that remains is for you to find a suitable partner to settle down with. There must be someone out there who could put up with you. Perhaps Miss Ford?

PHILIP

(blushing)

She has too much good sense and taste to consider me a suitable match.

(deep sigh)

I fear I shall not find as perfect a partner as you did when you married Justin.

April's heart tightens. There's a quiet beat.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

I didn't mean to upset you.

April gamely tries to shake off her melancholy.

APRIL

It's been six years since he died, you'd think by now I could stand to hear his name spoken aloud.

PHILIP

I hope Yorkville can offer you the same good fortune and fresh start it has given me.

A beat, then:

APRIL

If I promise to stop you from  
eating yourself to death will you  
promise to stop me from feeling  
sorry for myself?

PHILIP

It's a deal.

(beat)

But your scrutiny of my diet begins  
tomorrow.

Off April and Philip, sharing a smile as they return to  
enjoying their meal...

28

EXT. ERNEST'S FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

28

It's a hot and muggy spring night. Crickets CHIRP invisibly  
in the shadows. Ernest sits shirtless on the porch step, his  
faced etched with worry. There's a LANTERN by his side and  
its flickering light illuminates his back -- which is covered  
in puffy scar tissue.

Ernest perks when he hears the sound of a HORSE-DRAWN CART in  
the distance, getting louder with each moment.

ERNEST

(calling out)

Mattie? Mattie -- that you?

Ernest stands, expectant and curious.

It's Glenn who appears from the darkness, and guides the cart  
to a halt.

ERNEST (CONT'D)

What you doin' out here this time  
of night, Sheriff?

GLENN

Let's go inside and talk, Ernest.

Ernest cranes his head to see the outline of a BODY beneath  
the white sheet in the back of the cart. He reads Glenn's  
morose countenance and a very grim picture starts forming.

ERNEST

Who you got under that sheet back  
there, Sheriff?

With great reluctance, Glenn hops off the cart, walks to the  
back and pulls the white sheet aside to reveal Mattie's dead  
body to Ernest.

Ernest rushes to his wife's side, not believing what his eyes are telling him.

ERNEST (CONT'D)

Oh Mattie... Mattie...

Glenn watches Ernest hold and caress Mattie's corpse, tears pouring from Ernest's eyes...

INSERT SHOT OF:

*-- Glenn, dressed in fine clothes, standing at the threshold of a bedroom. He's a little younger, more clean-cut and handsome. He holds his hat gravely in his hands; his eyes glassy with tears. He watches as a NURSE pulls a white sheet over the Woman we've seen before, now lying dead.*

RESUME -- ON ERNEST as his attention snaps to Glenn.

ERNEST (CONT'D)

Who did this to her -- who the hell did this to her!

GLENN

I -- I don't know, Ernest. But I swear to you, to Mattie, that I will find them and make them pay.

Ernest lunges at Glenn and grabs him threateningly by his lapels.

ERNEST

Was it the Ku Klux?!

GLENN

If it was they'll answer for it. Every last one of 'em.

Ernest pushes Glenn away.

ERNEST

Never lifted a finger to help a negro when the Ku Klux started -- why you gonna start now?

GLENN

Mattie was as close as my wife and I ever came to a daughter of our own...

ERNEST

Your misses was good to her. But she wasn't ever your kin.

(MORE)

ERNEST (CONT'D)

Knew exactly what you thought of her when you sold her away -- just another piece of nigger property to you.

GLENN

Not a day's gone by I didn't hate myself for havin' done it. But the pain of seein' her and thinkin' of Emily was too much for me to bear.

Ernest is infuriated by Glenn's excuses.

ERNEST

You best leave my sight, 'fore I go about gettin' rid of things that remind me of her, Sheriff.

GLENN

I'm gonna find out who did this to her, Ernest. I swear it.

Ernest effortlessly scoops Mattie's body up off the cart and places her gently on the ground.

ERNEST

You and your promises ain't worth shit to me, Sheriff.

Knowing there's nothing he can say to make up for what's happened, Glenn turns and walks back to the cart with Ernest's recriminations echoing around in his mind. He boards the cart and begins the journey back to town.

As the cart disappears into the darkness, Ernest slumps to the ground next to Mattie and weeps...

29 INT. BRATTON PLANTATION - NIGHT

29

An anxious KNOCKING summons Bratton the front door. He opens it to reveal --

DEPUTY SNYDER

-- who quickly enters the house. Bratton takes a subtle and furtive look around outside before shutting the door. Every utterance causes Snyder severe pain.

BRATTON

What happened to you, Bill?

SNYDER

Fed named Merrill. Governor Scott had him sent from Washington to investigate the Ku Klux.

This is troubling news.

BRATTON

What does the Major know?

SNYDER

He don't know shit. And won't get the chance since I'm gonna put a bullet right through that son of a bitch.

BRATTON

I don't think that's wise.

SNYDER

(incensed)

That Yankee fuck needs to die for raisin' his hands to me like he did, General.

(trying to save face)

Bastard sucker punched me before I had a chance to defend myself.

Bratton tries to keep Snyder's emotions in check.

BRATTON

Our power is in our anonymity. We hold dominion over this land because we don't exist. Don't jeopardize our advantage because you have a thirst for revenge.

Snyder hears Bratton's advice, begins to temper his anger.

SNYDER

How do we proceed, then?

BRATTON

Exactly as we have been. No one knows who we are, or when we'll strike. The Fed will be a dog chasing its tail. And when he's asked to report back to his masters, he'll only be able to tell ghost stories because that is all we are. Ghosts.

SNYDER

Just promise me, when the time  
comes, I can kill that Yankee fuck.

BRATTON

Him and all those who oppose us.  
But not until the time is right.

Off Snyder, willing to bide his time...

EXT. MAIN STREET - YORKVILLE - NIGHT

April and Philip exit the Rose Hotel to board their carriage  
as Merrill canters past them down the thoroughfare.

APRIL

(calling out)  
Major Merrill!

Merrill turns his horse, pleased to see it's a friendly face.  
He dismounts as April and Philip approach. The smile on her  
face is a salve on his scaring day.

MERRILL

Ms. Barnes, it is good to see you  
again.

APRIL

How fared your first day?

MERRILL

If I've experienced worse I can't  
recall.

Philip eyes Merrill's battered knuckles.

PHILIP

(re: his hands)  
Was Yorkville that unwelcoming to  
you, Major?

April swats at her cousin.

APRIL

It's none of your business.  
(to Merrill)  
My cousin Philip, what he lacks in  
discretion he makes up for in  
appetite.

PHILIP

She's awfully unkind for someone  
getting free room and board.

APRIL

Be careful, cousin, you're going to get tired holding your generosity over my head.

MERRILL

(enjoying their banter)  
It's good you have someone to help you settle in.

Philip clocks a connection between April and Merrill, decides to play matchmaker:

PHILIP

Let me do the same for you, Major. Join us for dinner tomorrow. April's already grown weary of me and could use a more stimulating dinner companion.

April gives the side-eye to Philip, clearly not happy with his invite.

MERRILL

That's very kind of you. I'd be delighted.

PHILIP

Good. It's settled, then. Tomorrow back here at the Rose.

Merrill tips his cap, and heads back towards the Sheriff's office.

As April and Philip walk to the carriage, April can't contain her displeasure:

APRIL

You've gone too far, Philip.

PHILIP

(taken aback)  
I -- I thought you would be glad to have the Major's company.

APRIL

(quiet rage)  
You assume much and know little.

April and Philip board the carriage in icy silence, Philip unsure what's come over his cousin...

30 INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

30

Merrill enters the office, no sign of Glenn or Morrison. He spots Glenn's SILVER BADGE on the desk and picks it up.

GLENN (O.S.)  
I ain't fit to wear it.

Merrill turns, finds Glenn sprawled out on a cot and half in the bag from the empty bottle of whiskey by his side.

MERRILL  
I wish I could argue the point with you.  
(beat)  
But I can't let you quit, Sheriff. The unfortunate fact is: you're the only man in this town I can trust.

GLENN  
Yeah? How's that?

MERRILL  
You want justice for Mattie, and that gives us a common goal. You know this area, you know these people. We can work together to find her killer, and put a stop to the Ku Klux's reign of impunity.

Glenn can't help but laugh.

GLENN  
If I'm all you got you are well and truly fucked, Major.

MERRILL  
I was fucked before I stepped off that train, Sheriff.  
(off Glenn)  
You were right about what you said. This assignment was a death sentence -- but I've no intention of dying in Yorkville.  
(beat)  
Come here. Got somethin' to show you.

Intrigued, Glenn pulls himself up and drags himself over to Merrill. Merrill takes out his notebook, turns to the page where he recorded the horseshoe print, and shows it to Glenn.

MERRILL (CONT'D)

I found this 'shoe print under a large maple, branches kept the rain from washing it away. It has this distinctive Roman numeral marking. Have you seen any horseshoes marked like this before?

(Glenn shakes his head)

Know of any blacksmiths in the area mark their work?

GLENN

Not offhand, but it'd be worth asking around.

MERRILL

If we can find the maker, we might be able to track down who it was made for.

GLENN

That print being where it was doesn't mean it belongs to the killer.

MERRILL

No -- but it's something, Sheriff.

Glenn's eyes spark with a renewed purpose.

GLENN

I'll have Morrison look into that rope for us tomorrow. And let's have us a visit to George Sturgis tomorrow, too. Maybe we can shake a recollection or two out of those sharecroppers that found Antonia Cross.

Merrill grins, glad to see Glenn engaged, determined. Off their burgeoning partnership...

MEN SINGING (PRELAP)

*"We are a band of brothers and native to the soil."*

31 INT. ALE HOUSE - NIGHT

31

Bratton, Snyder and the rest of the York County Ku Klux sing out the Confederate anthem "The Bonnie Blue Flag" in drunken revelry.

## MEN SINGING

*Fighting for the property we gained  
by honest toil.*

32 EXT. JACOB NELSON'S CABIN - EARLIER THAT NIGHT 32

A GROUP OF KU KLUX bearing torches are lined up outside of Jacob's house. The LEAD KLUXER YELLS into the house:

## LEAD KLUXER

We know you got one of them Yankee  
guns, Jacob! Toss it on out!

## MEN SINGING (V.O.)

*"And when our rights were  
threatened, the cry rose near and  
far --"*

The door opens just slightly -- it's Liza, holding the Winchester.

## LIZA

Take the damned thing and leave us  
the hell alone!

Liza chucks the rifle out at the Kluxers, and shuts the door.

The Lead Kluxer exchanges shrugs with one of his men -- that was easy. Satisfied, the Kluxers collect the rifle go on their way.

33 INT. JACOB NELSON'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS 33

Liza watches the Kluxers ride off, sparing them and their home from harm. She turns to Jacob -- who's sitting huddled in the corner of the cabin, petrified.

## LIZA

Fear no man, my foot.

Off Liza, taking a seat on the floor by her husband's side...

## MEN SINGING (V.O.)

*"Hurrah for the Bonnie Blue Flag  
that bears a single star!"*

34 INT. APRIL'S ROOM - BARNES PLANTATION - NIGHT 34

April's wide awake with troubling thoughts dancing around in her head.

She looks out the window from her cousin's home on the hill, able to see clear across York County from its vantage point. FIRES dot the horizon. It's a discomfoting spectacle.

April closes the curtain in an attempt to forget the violence outside. As she does, she catches sight of two-inch SCAR running along her wrist, the result of a failed suicide attempt.

MEN SINGING (V.O.)

*"As long as the Union was faithful  
to her trust, like friends and  
brothers both kind were we and just  
--"*

April begins to quietly CRY, her husband's death still fresh in her mind, unable to move on.

INT. HALLWAY - BARNES PLANTATION - THAT MOMENT

Philip, having come to check on his cousin, stands outside listening to the sobs coming from the other side of the door, troubled by the depth of her sadness...

MEN SINGING (V.O.)

*"But now, when Northern treachery  
attempts our rights to mar --"*

35

INT. BROTHEL - CORNELIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

35

Glenn knocks on Cornelia's door. Cornelia sees the pain and exhaustion in his eyes and lets him into her room.

Without a word exchanged, she leads him over to the bed, and pulls him down next to her. She holds him in her arms, like a mother comforting a child. We PUSH IN on the silver Sheriff's badge reattached to his vest...

MEN SINGING (V.O.)

*"-- we hoist on high the Bonnie  
Blue Flag that bears a single  
star."*

36

EXT. ERNEST'S FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

36

A SHOVEL is plunged into the dirt, which is then heaved and tossed aside.

REVEAL Ernest, digging a grave for Mattie next to his house. Mattie's body is at his side, a crude WOODEN CROSS has been placed in front of the spot where Ernest digs.

MEN SINGING (V.O.)

*"First gallant South Carolina nobly  
made the stand, then came Alabama  
who took her by the hand..."*

Each plunge of the shovel is more intense and violent than the last -- the "mad bull" Ernest told Mattie he was is emerging from hibernation.

BOY (O.S.)

Mister Ernest?

Ernest looks up to see Boy emerge from the darkness. Exhausted and disheveled from his ordeal, Boy uses sheer will to drag himself towards Ernest.

ERNEST

That you, Boy?

BOY

Yessir.

ERNEST

Go on away from me. Now ain't the time.

Boy continues to approach, undeterred by the warning.

BOY

Please, Mister Ernest. I don't know where else to go.

Seeing the desperation in Boy's eyes, Ernest softens.

ERNEST

What is it, then?

Boy holds Moses' paper out to Ernest.

BOY

Before he was shot, Moses told me to bring this to someone I trust. You and Miss Mattie were always good people to me. Knew you both could read, too.

ERNEST

What he write on it?

BOY

Don't know, but Moses acted like it was the most important thing in the world.

Ernest grabs the paper and looks at it:

CLOSE ON THE PAPER, we see "**Kluxers that come to my shop**" written as a heading in Moses' scratchy handwriting. Written underneath is:

**Horseshoes:**

**I - William Snyder**  
**II - Charles Clawson**  
**III - James Avery**  
**IV - Michael Beamguard**  
**V - John Mitchell**

ON Ernest, as the gravity of the document washes over him.

37 EXT. ALE HOUSE - THAT MOMENT 37

ANGLE ON Snyder as he bids a brotherly farewell to his fellow KLANSMEN. Snyder mounts his horse and rides off into the night. The CAMERA TILTS DOWN to show the horseshoe's impressions -- in each print containing the Roman numeral **I**.

MEN SINGING

*Hurrah! Hurrah! For Southern  
rights, hurrah! Ye men of valor,  
gather round --*

38 INT. ROSE HOTEL - MERRILL'S ROOM - NIGHT 38

Merrill is soundly asleep, but is awoken by the feeling of something crawling on his legs. He throws back the covers and jumps out of bed.

Merrill quickly lights a candle by the bedside and illuminates the bed to reveal -- it's crawling with BEDBUGS. He watches as the vermin scurry away from the light, back to their dark hiding spots.

MEN SINGING (V.O.)

*-- now rally 'round the Bonnie Blue  
Flag that bears a single star!"*

Merrill's heart races, grossed and disturbed by the fact that, even cloistered in his hotel room, he is besieged by creatures of the night.

HARD CUT TO:

39

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAWN

39

Serene silence, as the sun's light announces its imminent ascent.

WE FIND Gloria walking along the road, and we stay on her as a HORSE-DRAWN CART pulls up along side her. We cannot see its lone DRIVER, only a pair of nondescript pants and boots as he converses with her.

DRIVER

May I offer you a ride?

Gloria looks up and smiles at his generous offer.

GLORIA

I am much obliged.

Gloria lifts herself up to take a seat next to the Driver, whose face and any distinctive features we can't see.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Was on my way to the depot when my cart broke down a few miles back. The silly nag ran off, not sparing a moment to look back at the predicament she left me in.

(beat)

An inauspicious way to begin the day, wouldn't you agree?

The Driver mashes his horse to action.

Gloria catches a pleasant WHIFF of something in the air.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Your clothes have the most wonderful aroma of chamomile...

As Gloria and the cart move down the empty country road towards what we can only assume will be her end, we --

SMASH CUT TO  
BLACK.

END OF PILOT