

LAST OF THE DOGMEN

by

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FADE IN:

Super MAIN TITLE over a BLACK SCREEN. Fade title to:

1 EXT. MONTANA ROCKIES - DAWN 1

A splash of color appears behind a backbone of jagged peaks. Somewhere deep in the forest a BULL ELK bugles a primeval challenge.

2 EXT. FOREST - EARLY MORNING 2

Three men dressed in prison issues race through the forest. The lead man carries a shotgun. His name is SEARS, a hardened convict and a killer. He's followed by a wiry KID and a TATTOOED CON with a handlebar moustache. All three are badly banged up. The Kid cradles his right arm, blood seeping from a deep gash in his forearm.

3 EXT. CREEK - EARLY MORNING 3

The cons splash into a shallow creek, drop to their knees and begin gorging water. They're exhausted. Sears washes dried blood from his face. The Kid runs water over his cut, winces. All three peer into the surrounding forest -- strangers in a strange land. Sears gets up and fords the creek. The others follow.

4 - 5 OMITTED 4 - 5

6 A GROUND LEVEL STATIC SHOT of a tie-down area at a tiny airport. BEGIN CREDITS as a POLICE CAR speeds toward us across the tarmac, lights blazing. It skids to a halt CLOSE, a pair of work boots get out and race THROUGH FRAME. A few moments later we lift up from the tarmac nearly a hundred feet before swinging out and away toward a mountain range beyond the airport. (HELICOPTER POV) 6

DISSOLVE TO:

7 CREDITS CONTINUE as we pass in amongst a series of peaks, reach an abrupt edge and hurl straight down toward the earth (our stomachs should give out). We level off and follow a timbered ridge line, dipping and climbing with the contour of the terrain. (HELICOPTER POV) 7

DISSOLVE TO:

8 A RIVER cutting a swath through an unbroken sea of wilderness. We dive toward the river, level off once again and follow the winding course a few feet above the water's surface. (HELICOPTER POV) 8

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

At a wide point in the river we stop and hover above a gravel bar where below TWO MOUNTED DEPUTIES watch over a PACK OF BLOODHOUNDS racing back and forth along the water's edge. One of the Deputies waves. We circle once before moving away. (HELICOPTER POV)

DISSOLVE TO:

9 Mile after mile of VIRGIN FOREST. We're traveling fast, barely skimming the treetops. A vast carpet of green broken only by the cobalt horizon line. CREDITS END as we crest an opening in the forest and an ACCIDENT SCENE is revealed to us. FADE IN the staccato pop of chopper blades and b.g. radio interference. (HELICOPTER POV) 9

FOUR AMBULANCES are parked near a broken guardrail, waiting to transport the injured and dead. POLICE CARS with lights flashing line the narrow roadway. STATE TROOPERS measure skid marks, reconstruct the accident. The twisted and battered hulk of a prison bus lies in a deep ravine. The hillside is dotted with PARAMEDICS and MORE POLICE bearing stretchers between the bus and highway above. (HELICOPTER POV)

We MOVE IN CLOSER, toward a MAN standing alone by the sheared off guardrail. (HELICOPTER POV)

DEEGAN

Deegan here. You boys have any luck?

VOICE (OS)

(static)

The phrase 'needle in a haystack' ring a bell?

10 EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - ACCIDENT SITE - MORNING

10

The man is SHERIFF DEEGAN. He spits out a match he's been chewing on and raises a walkie talkie as a POLICE CHOPPER drops smoothly INTO FRAME and hovers over the accident site.

DEEGAN

Shoot down around Buck Creek. They might have got that far.

VOICE (OS)

Ten four.

DEEGAN

I want those bastards found.

The chopper swings out and away over the treetops. Deegan watches another body being removed from the bus far below.

CUT TO:

DEPUTY BRIGGS hurries past ambulances, medics and a growing row of body bags. Early thirties, energetic and capable. He approaches Deegan.

BRIGGS
They pulled this out of one of
the guard's throat.

Briggs hands Deegan a crudely made shiv. The Sheriff looks it over.

DEEGAN
Jesus...

Briggs looks out across the mountains.

BRIGGS
What do you suppose they'll do?

DEEGAN
Run like hell. If only they
knew what they headed in to...

WIDE on the mountains as Deegan continues:

DEEGAN (OS)
The Oxbow -- six hundred square
miles of the meanest country God
put on a map. Not a road, not a
town... Hell, even Lewis and
Clark went around it.

We continue looking out over the mountainscape just described. Rugged and isolated. Beautiful and foreboding all at once.

BRIGGS (OS)
Sheriff?

Deegan looks at Briggs, who is watching a black sedan wind in amongst the emergency vehicles.

BRIGGS (CONT'D)
Isn't that a government plate?

The sedan parks. Three IMPORTANT LOOKING SUITS get out, survey the scene.

BRIGGS (CONT'D)
Who are those guys?

Deegan watches one of the suits flip open an ID, ask an officer a question. The officer points to Deegan.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEEGAN

Find Gates.

Briggs' jaw hits the pavement.

BRIGGS

Lewis Gates?? But I thought-

DEEGAN

(turning to Briggs)

Just find him.

BRIGGS

Yes sir!

Briggs races to his patrol car as Deegan waits to greet the suits.

11 EXT. SMALL MONTANA TOWN - DAY

11

From a high hill we are looking down on a small western Montana town surrounded by mountains. Briggs' police car flashes THROUGH FRAME and off down toward the town...

12 INT. COWBOY SALOON - DAY

12

Seventy-eight year old DOC CARVEY unlocks the door and steps inside his darkened saloon. He flips a light switch, removes his cowboy hat and hangs it along with his cane from an elk rack beside the door. He walks behind the bar, plugs in the coffee machine, turns on a neon Rainier beer sign. As he strolls back onto the floor and begins removing chairs from tables, he walks right past a MAN IN A WHITE COWBOY HAT stretched out asleep on a pool table. Doc leans across and turns on the light over the pool table.

DOC

Rise and shine, Lewis. Time to open up.

Doc continues about his business. The Cowboy stirs. He slowly sits up. His hat falls off and we meet LEWIS GATES - - early forties, rugged and handsome: the Marlboro Man with a hangover. Gates holds his head in his hands and MOANS. He peeks out between his fingers.

GATES

What are you looking at?

A small scroungy wire-haired misfit of a dog (henceforth known as ZIP) is waiting patiently beside the pool table. Zip cocks his head innocently to the side.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GATES (CONT'D)

You were supposed to stop me
after three, remember?

Zip BARKS. Gates winces. Doc appears and hands Gates a
steaming cup of coffee.

DOC

'Peers I'm gonna have to start
chargin' you rent.

GATES

'Peers.

Gates sips the coffee. Doc takes a long look at him.

DOC

We all miss her, Lewis. Been
nearly two years. Get on with your
life, son. And take that sorry
excuse for a dog with you.

Zip growls. Gates slowly climbs off the pool table, puts on
his coat.

GATES

Tell you what, Doc. I'll get on
with my life when you learn to make
a decent cup of coffee.

Gates hands Doc the coffee cup.

13 EXT. COWBOY SALOON - DAY

13

Gates stumbles out into the bright sunlight. He shades his
eyes against the glare. From inside-

DOC (OS)

Lewis!

Gates turns and his cowboy hat comes sailing out the door.
He catches it and puts it on.

GATES

(looks at Zip)
Hope you remember where we parked
'cause I sure as hell didn't.

Zip trots off down the boardwalk, turns back and BARKS.
Gates starts to follow, is nearly run down by two TEENAGERS
on skateboards.

14 OMIT

14

15 EXT. SIDE STREET - DAY

15

Gates is walking away from Main Street when a short SIREN BLAST causes him to turn. A sheriff's car pulls next to the curb. Briggs leans across and lowers the passenger window.

BRIGGS

Lewis! I've been looking all over hell for you!

GATES

I didn't do it and whoever said I did is a liar.

Gates continues on his way.

BRIGGS

Lewis! Wait!

Briggs rolls the car forward.

BRIGGS (CONT'D)

We got us a hell of a situation! Busload of prisoners from Deer Lodge went off the road last night! We got three runners, headed straight into the Oxbow!

GATES

I don't do that kind of work anymore.

Gates and Zip start across an intersection. Briggs cuts them off, swings open the passenger door.

BRIGGS

You don't understand.

(lowers his voice)

The Feds showed up. They need one brought out alive. Deegan himself sent me to find you.

GATES

Tell Deegan he can kiss my ass.

Gates starts to go around. Briggs pulls forward, blocking his way. He dangles the car radio from his finger.

BRIGGS

Tell him yourself.

GATES

Give me a break, Briggs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRIGGS

Sorry, Lewis. Sheriff's on the hot seat and you're too broke to bribe me.

Gates looks around. He considers running. He sits in the car instead. Zip jumps in behind him. Briggs shies away from Zip who has climbed in between the two and begins licking the Deputy's face.

BRIGGS

When are you gonna bathe this mutt??

GATES

Next time it rains.

Gates picks up the radio.

GATES (CONT'D)

Deegan! I told your deputy, now I'm telling you. Not interested. Over and out.

DEEGAN (OS)

(static)

I thought that was you, Gates. I can smell the bourbon on your breath clear up here.

16 EXT. ACCIDENT SITE - DAY

16

Deegan is being watched by the three suits. He turns TOWARD CAMERA, lowers his voice.

DEEGAN

Now you listen good. I need you on this one. Drunk or sober, you're still the best tracker in the state.

17 EXT. SIDE STREET - DAY

17

GATES

You always were a charmer. She used to tell me how much I reminded her of you. Imagine that.

A long pause. Finally-

DEEGAN (OS)

Deputy Briggs, does Mr. Gates look like he's carrying any money?

Briggs takes the radio from Gates.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRIGGS

Not a dime, sir.

DEEGAN (OS)

Then drive him and that mangy dog over to county lockup and charge him with vagrancy. Set bail at five hundred dollars. Over and out.

Deegan clicks off. Briggs hangs up the radio and looks at Gates.

BRIGGS

You shouldn't provoke him, Lewis.

Gates faces front.

GATES

(sighs)
I shouldn't do a lot of things I end up doin'.

18-20 OMIT

18-20

21 A HORSE RAMP CLANGS as it hits the pavement. Gates backs a chestnut MARE out of the trailer. She's saddled and ready to go. He ties her off, cinches down her belly strap. He pulls an ancient Winchester out of the saddle scabbard, pumps the action several times, jams it back in. He straps on an Smith & Wesson six shooter. An OLD TIMER standing with some locals speaks up. 21

OLD TIMER

You goin' in after them convic' fellers?

GATES

Yup.

Gates takes out the pistol, checks the chamber, expertly twirls it back into the holster.

OLD TIMER

My cousin walked into them mountains twenty years ago. Never came out.

GATES

Any message in case I run across him?

The Old Timer scratches his chin, suddenly brightens.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OLD TIMER

Yeah! Tell 'im I run off with his wife!

The Old Timer puts an arm around a heavy set WOMAN, busts a gut. Gates smiles, swings into the saddle.

22 EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

22

Deegan and Briggs watch as a HIGHWAY CREW prepares to winch the bus up out of the gully.

GATES (OS)

Where'd they go in?

Both men turn. Gates is sitting on his horse, looking down the hill. He taps a can of Copenhagen against his saddlehorn, opens it and folds a pinch of tobacco between his cheek and gum.

DEEGAN

Bottom of the ravine, other side of that wash. Dogs lost the trail at the North Fork.

GATES

Armed?

BRIGGS

One shotgun, one .357.

Gates stares out over the mountains.

GATES

Four thousand cash per man plus expenses.

DEEGAN

My ass.

Gates notices the three suits standing nearby.

GATES

From where I'm sitting, I'd say you're in no position to argue, Sheriff.

Deegan glares at Gates.

DEEGAN

(cooly)
You'll get what you've always been paid.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GATES

(sighs)

Looks like we're goin' to jail, Zip...

Gates turns his horse around. Deegan watches him go until he realizes it's no bluff.

DEEGAN

Gates!

(begrudgingly)

Four thousand.

Gates returns, looks at Deegan.

GATES

Apiece.

DEEGAN

Apiece, fer chrissakes!

GATES

Do me a favor, Briggs. Get that in writing.

Gates coaxes his horse forward, whistles for Zip. Deegan and Briggs are forced to move aside.

DEEGAN

Gates!

Gates stops his horse, turns back. Deegan tosses him a tin star.

DEEGAN (CONT'D)

I don't give a damn about the other two, but this guy Calhoun comes out alive. If he has one scratch on him, you won't even get horse feed.

GATES

What's the matter, Sheriff? Turning soft in your old age?

DEEGAN

Let's just say he's important to some people.

Gates looks at the badge, then at Deegan.

GATES

I'll treat him with kid gloves.

He pins the star on his vest, continues on his way. He guides the mare down the steep hillside. Zip runs out ahead, BARKING.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gates pauses in the bottom of the gully to watch as the bus is slowly winched CREAKING and GROANING back up the hill.

GATES
(to the mare)
Let's go, girl...

The horse trots across the gravel wash and up the small embankment on the other side.

23 EXT. GUARDRAIL - DAY

23

Deegan and Briggs watch Gates ride away. CUT BETWEEN the State Troopers, paramedics, even the Old Timer as they pause to watch. Horse, rider and dog are soon swallowed up by the thick forest.

DISSOLVE TO:

24 THE FLATHEAD RIVER. Gates rides out on to the gravel bar where the trail was previously lost. He pauses, scrutinizes upriver and down. Zip waits impatiently beside the horse, his hind quarters quivering with anticipation. He keeps his eyes on Gates, waiting for the signal. Gates finishes surveying the river, relaxes in his saddle, looks down at Zip.

24

GATES
What are you waiting for? Get to work.

Zip sprints ahead as if shot from a cannon. He works up and down the riverbank, trying to pick up a scent, searching for visual clues. He suddenly stops, peers at the shoreline, head cocked. The rocks. Several appear to be pushed down further in the soft sand than their surrounding neighbors.

FLASH CUT:

25 THE SAME ROCKS (NIGHT BEFORE) -- Sears' boot steps down on the rocks as the cons are heard splashing into the river.

25

CUT TO:

26 ZIP lets out a YELP and plunges headlong into the freezing waters. Gates trots forward and follows the dog across.

26

27 EXT. FAR BANK - DAY

27

Gates is standing in the shallows inspecting a fairly steep embankment. He reaches out and fingers a blunt impression in the dirt.

FLASH CUT:

28 THE RIVERBANK (THE NIGHT BEFORE) -- The toe of a boot slams into the dirt as the cons scramble up the embankment. 28

CUT TO:

29 GATES follows the trail up with his eyes until he comes to a bush with several inches of roots exposed. 29

FLASH CUT:

30 THE BUSH (THE NIGHT BEFORE) -- A hand reaches out and grabs the bush as one of the cons pulls himself up. 30

CUT TO:

31 GATES mounts his horse and rides forward out of the river. Zip scrambles after him. 31

32 EXT. FOREST - DAY 32

Gates tracks his prey. He is the consummate hunter, stopping frequently to look and listen, aware of every tree, every bush; watching for something that doesn't fit into the forest scheme. Zip is out ahead, roving to and fro. Man and dog working together, an inseparable and interdependent team. Up ahead, Zip barks. Gates dismounts and bends close to the ground where Zip is waiting. He reaches out and fingers a leaf spattered with several drops of dried blood. He looks toward the forest ahead. HOLD.

33 EXT. STREAM - DAY 33

Gates, Zip and the horse are getting a drink from a cool mountain stream. Gates leans up, notices three sets of depressions in the stream bed where the cons knelt and drank hours before.

GATES

Looks like we aren't the only ones who got thirsty.

Gates remounts, splashes across the stream with Zip leading the way.

34 EXT. MEADOW - LATE AFTERNOON 34

Gates and Zip traverse a high mountain meadow. Dark clouds have gathered on the horizon. Thunder rumbles in the distance.

35 EXT. CAMP - NIGHT 35

Gates leans back against his saddle, a heavy wool blanket draped over his frame. Zip is curled up next to his cowboy hat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gates stares past the flames at the dark shape of the mountains. Simultaneous lightning strikes reveal the vast and rugged wilderness stretching before him. Thunder booms across the mountains.

36 EXT. MEADOW - EARLY MORNING

36

A BULL ELK stands in the middle of his harem of cows and BUGLES to an unseen challenger. Steam vents from his nostrils in the cold morning air.

A37 EXT. HILLSIDE - EARLY MORNING

A37

Gates pauses to listen to the elk bugling in the forest below before moving on.

37 EXT. FOREST - DAY

37

Gates has momentarily lost the trail. He backtracks a few yards, kneels down and examines the ground. Just ahead, Zip gives a short BARK. Gates crosses over to a thorn bush. A dime-sized piece of material hangs from one of the thorns. Gates plucks it free, examines it. He takes a hunk of jerky out of his vest pocket, bites off a piece, tosses the rest to Zip.

38 EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

38

Gates is fast asleep. Zip is curled up beside him. Somewhere in the forest an owl HOOTS. The mare is tied to a sapling, nearby. She begins to fidget, grumbles quietly. Zip is up instantly, ears erect, alert for any foreign sound. He senses what the horse felt, GROWLS softly. Gates bolts upright with rifle cocked and ready, all in one fluid motion. He looks at Zip.

GATES

(whispers)

Four legs or two?

Zip answers with a LOUDER GROWL.

GATES (CONT'D)

Check it out.

Gates slaps Zip on the ass with his cowboy hat. The dog races off into the night. Gates tenses, ready to spring into action. Seconds pass...

A RACCOON suddenly scurries through camp making Gates' heart leap. He relaxes, shakes his head. Zip reappears and pads quietly up behind him, leans out and licks his ear. Gates nearly jumps out of his skin!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GATES
(harsh, whisper)
Dammit, Zip!

Gates throws his hat. Zip easily dodges it.

GATES (CONT'D)
I almost let the air out of you!
Next time make some noise!

Zip curls back up beside the fire. Gates grabs his hat, punches it back into shape, lies back down. He nudges the cowboy hat down over his eyes. The last thing he does is take out his six-shooter and lays it across his chest.

CUT TO:

39 POV - THROUGH BINOCULARS - DAY

39

The view shifts into focus to reveal THREE MEN traversing a small opening a quarter mile in the distance. The lead man carries a shotgun slung across his shoulder. Gates lowers the binoculars, scratches a five day old stubble.

GATES
Howdy, boys...

40 OMIT

40

41 EXT. FOREST - SUNSET

41

CLOSE on a rabbit being torn apart by bare hands. Pieces are tossed all around. The cons each take a tentative bite. It's truly disgusting but the urge to feed is overpowering and soon all three are eating voraciously.

42 EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

42

CAMERA MOVES PAST the sleeping forms of the Kid and Tattoo over to Sears who is sitting with his back to a tree, cradling the shotgun. His eyes close and his head droops forward...

43 EXT. VANTAGE POINT - NIGHT

43

Gates edges back from a rocky vantage point and climbs down to where Zip and his horse are waiting. He unties his blanket, spreads out his bedroll. Zip whimpers.

GATES
Relax. They're not going anywhere.
We'll take 'em just before
daylight. Besides, I'm beat...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gates settles in. Zip lies beside him, rests his chin across Gates' chest. Gates pets him, looks up at a night sky glimmering with stars.

GATES (CONT'D)
 Tomorrow we cash in, Zip. Maybe we'll finally get that log cabin built. Think you could handle a real roof over your head?

Gates continues staring at the stars.

GATES (CONT'D)
 'Course this ain't such a bad roof either...

44 EXT. MOUNTAINS - BEFORE DAWN

44

A faint glimmer of color has appeared beyond the mountain peaks. The valleys are still cloaked in darkness.

45 SERIES OF CLOSE SHOTS

45

- a pair of leather gloves are pulled on.
- shells are loaded one at a time into the Winchester.
- the cylinders of both pistols are checked and spun.
- the saddle is tossed onto the mare's back, straps cinched down.

Zip sits patiently, watching Gates prepare. Gates swings into the saddle, adjusts his cowboy hat, gives Zip a nod. Together they start quietly down off the hill toward the forest below.

46 EXT. FOREST - BEFORE DAWN

46

The cons are sound asleep. CAMERA MOVES SLOWLY in on Sears who is curled up at the base of the tree. Somewhere in the forest, the soft grumble of a horse. Sears' eyes open. He remains still, listening. A twig snaps. Sears slowly sits up, swings the shotgun into position. His eyes dart back and forth. A slight breeze stirs the leaves. Pale shafts of moonlight pierce the forest canopy. Sears slowly gets to his feet, backs away, keeping the shotgun leveled. He reaches Tattoo, gives him a kick.

TATTOO
 Hey-!

Sears motions him to be quiet. Tattoo sits up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TATTOO (CONT'D)
(whispers)
What is it?

SEARS
(staring)
Somebody's out there.

Tattoo scrambles to his feet. The con peers into the surrounding darkness. Sears motions for Tattoo to follow, slowly starts to move off, gun held ready. Tattoo looks back at the sleeping form of the Kid.

TATTOO
What about the Kid?

SEARS
Leave him.

The two men move off into the surrounding forest.

47 EXT. DARK FOREST - BEFORE DAWN

47

The cons move quietly, senses alert. An owl HOOTS. The men stop. Somewhere up ahead, a horse snuffles.

TATTOO
(whispers)
Cops...?

SEARS
Not this far out.
(then:)
Goddamn bounty hunter. I got a surprise for this asshole...

Sears and Tattoo creep forward through the forest. Suddenly, the silhouette of a mounted rider appears up ahead in a small moonlit clearing. Sears raises the shotgun and fires! The figure buckles and disappears!

TATTOO
You got him!

Sears races forward! Tattoo follows!

48 EXT. OPEN HILLSIDE - NIGHT

48

Gates reins in his horse at the sound of the gunshot.

GATES
What the hell...?

Another SHOT echoes out of the forest below. Gates rips the Winchester free of its scabbard, spurs his horse into action!

49 EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

49

The KID bolts upright at the sound of the gunshots. Disoriented and scared, he scrambles over to a windfall, conceals himself amongst the tree's branches.

50 EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

50

SEARS races ahead, catching a glimpse of horse and rider ahead in the timber! He stops and sprays the forest with buckshot until the click of the firing pin signals an empty chamber.

SEARS

(yells)

Bastard!!

He tosses the shotgun aside, yanks out the pistol. The two men stand together, breathing hard.

TATTOO

He won't be back.

SEARS

Hell no, not with a belly full of buckshot.

The two men turn just as a formless shape plunges out of the darkness in front of them! The beat of pounding hooves - a wild apparition - something thrust forward, touching Tattoo on the shoulder. In a heartbeat the shape is gone, vanished into the dense forest beyond.

SEARS

What the fuck was that??

TATTOO

(suddenly nervous;
backing away)

I think we better get outta here-

Tattoo turns and flees into the forest.

51 EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

51

Gates races his mare at full speed! Zip sprints alongside the galloping horse!

52 EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

52

Tattoo plunges blindly through the underbrush, branches scraping and clawing at his face and clothes. He pauses beside a huge tree to catch his breath.

CUT TO:

53 SEARS is slowly backing away, keeping his eyes on the dark forest ahead. SCREAMS suddenly shatter the morning quiet, emanating from the direction Tattoo disappeared. Sears wheels and raises the pistol. He holds his position, eyes darting everywhere. He's scared now... 53

54 EXT. FOREST - DAWN 54
Gates' horse leaps over a fallen log! Zip bounds up and over, right on his tail!

55 EXT. FOREST - DAWN 55
Sears -- just his face -- his eyes darting back and forth. Sweat pours off his forehead.

SEARS
(suddenly yells)
WHO ARE YOU??

No answer. Then a new sound, like a rush of air. It starts small, grows louder before ending with a dull thump. Sears' eyes widen in surprise as a short gasp escapes his lips.

56 EXT. FOREST - DAWN 56
The Kid. CAMERA MOVES IN on his terrified face half hidden amongst the foliage. His cheeks are streaked with tears. Suddenly, a dull rumble builds in crescendo until a thunderous pounding of many hooves passes by the fallen log OFF CAMERA. PUSH IN on the Kid. His eyes widen in disbelief, the blood drains from his face. When the sound of the beating hooves fades away, the Kid sits quietly for a moment, suddenly begins to giggle, then laugh. Whatever he saw made him lose his mind. He bursts from his hiding place and races away in the opposite direction, laughing his ass off...

57 EXT. MEADOW - DAWN 57
Gates is galloping across a meadow, closing the final bit of distance between himself and the last gunshot. Suddenly a BLUR OF MOVEMENT catches his attention. He reins in and comes to a jarring halt. A dark mass is moving silently and quickly away from him across the meadow. A low hanging fog makes it impossible to discern any detail but it appears to be a small band of...horses? Gates is momentarily thrown off by this sudden turn of events. Should he follow and investigate or continue on? Reluctantly, he presses ahead.

58 EXT. FOREST - DAWN 58
Gates slows the mare to a walk, keeps the Winchester ready. He stops, scans the forest ahead. Dawn is breaking but it is strangely quiet. Not a bird sings, not a leaf rustles. Zip begins to whimper.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GATES

I know fella. I feel it too...

Gates starts forward. His senses tingle with anticipation. He holds the Winchester like a pistol, ready to draw down on the slightest movement or sound. Up ahead, Zip paws at the ground. Gates dismounts and walks over to the spot, bends down. The ground is littered with empty shotgun shell casings. And large splotches of fresh blood. Gates removes a glove, touches the blood, stares at his fingers. Somewhere nearby Zip begins BARKING. Gates wipes the blood off on his pants, stands.

CUT TO:

59 A RIPPED AND BLOODY SHIRT caught in a bush. Gates plucks the shirt off the bush, looks it over, pushes his fingers through what appear to be claw marks. He peers around the forest. What the hell happened here?? HOLD. 59

60 EXT. MEADOW - EARLY MORNING 60

Gates is riding in the direction where he saw the strange phenomenon earlier. The morning sun is climbing higher. Up ahead, Zip BARKS and circles excitedly. Gates dismounts and bends down to inspect a section of ground, covered with tracks. He fingers one of the impressions, puzzled. Then he spots it. Lying half-hidden in the grass -- a broken arrow shaft. Gates picks it up. The feathered end of the shaft is caked with dried blood. The arrow is primitive but extremely well crafted. Gates stares at it, completely perplexed. He looks ahead at the timber where he last saw -- what the hell did he see? And why is the hair on the back of his neck suddenly standing straight up?? The mare grumbles nervously, paws at the ground. Zip delivers a low growl toward the timber. Gates slowly stands, keeps his eyes glued on the edge of the woods where the mystery horses disappeared. HOLD CLOSE.

61 EXT. COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY 61

Gates' Blazer pulls INTO FRAME and stops with a small SCREECH. We follow a pair of cowboy boots as they climb out of the Blazer, stride up the stone steps of the old courthouse, through the front door and down a brightly lit hallway.

62 INT. SHERIFF DEEGAN'S OFFICE - DAY 62

Sheriff Deegan has a phone cradled between shoulder and ear, is going over some forms. On his desk is a picture of a pretty young woman -- his daughter. We HEAR the door open. A tin star is suddenly tossed in the middle of Deegan's paperwork. He looks up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEEGAN

Harry, I gotta call you back-

Deegan hangs up the phone, leans back in his chair and peruses Gates who's standing before his desk, holding his saddlebags.

DEEGAN (CONT'D)

That didn't take long. They give you any trouble?

GATES

No trouble at all...

Gates is staring at the picture of the woman, his wife. Deegan reaches out and tilts the picture toward himself. A chasm the size of the Grand Canyon separates the two men.

GATES (CONT'D)

(quietly)

We never talked about it.

DEEGAN

(stares at his daughter's picture; softly)

There's nothing to talk about. And there never will be, you sonofabitch.

Gates gives the Sheriff a long look. The chasm just got a little wider. He unties one of the saddlebags, takes out the bloody shirt, tosses it to Deegan.

DEEGAN

What the hell is this?

GATES

All that's left of your runners.

Deegan inspects the shirt, notices the claw marks. He looks at Gates, speechless.

GATES (CONT'D)

They're dead.

DEEGAN

(explodes out of his chair)

Jesus Christ!! All of them??

GATES

I think we can rule out a shaving accident.

He looks at the claw marks on the shirt, then at Gates.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEEGAN

What are you saying? An animal did this!?

GATES

-Grizzly. Sow from the looks of the track. My guess is they got between her and her cubs.

Deegan stares dumbfounded at Gates, looks at the shirt, suddenly throws it down on his desk!

DEEGAN

Are you out of your mind? You expect me to believe that story??

GATES

I don't give a damn what you believe. All I know is there was enough blood on the ground to paint a house. And that shirt. And that's good enough for me.

DEEGAN

What about remains? Goddammit, there'd be something left!

GATES

Grizzlies bury their kills. If you want to ride back in and dig up half the countryside, be my guest. Hell, you might even get lucky and find 'em. Or what's left of 'em.

Gates drapes the saddlebags over his shoulder, heads for the door.

DEEGAN

Dammit! That's what I hired you for!!

Gates turns back.

GATES

Oh yeah, about my money? I just wouldn't feel right getting paid for someone else's work.

Gates turns to leave.

DEEGAN

Where are you going?? I'm not finished with you!!

(pounds his desk)

I WANT SOME ANSWERS!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Just as Gates opens the door, Briggs bursts in.

BRIGGS
Sheriff! Gates is-

GATES
(interrupts)
-just leaving.

Gates goes out.

DEEGAN
Briggs! Arrest that sonofabitch!

Briggs looks confused, trails halfheartedly after Gates.

BRIGGS
Uh, Lewis? You have the right to
remain silent, anything you say-

GATES
Knock it off, Briggs.

Gates waves off the Deputy, continues on his way. Deegan yells after him.

DEEGAN
There will be an investigation!
You hear me, Gates? GATES!

Gates doesn't look back.

63 EXT. TRAILER HOUSE - SUNSET

63

A darkened trailer house on the edge of a small lake. Gates' Blazer is parked in front. Nearby sits a half-finished shell of a log cabin.

64 INT. BEDROOM - SUNSET

64

In the distance, the lonely sound of a TRAIN WHISTLE. Gates is sitting on his bed, fully dressed, sipping a beer. Zip is lying beside him, curled around his cowboy hat. He lifts his head, sees that Gates is starrng at a picture on the nightstand of he and his wife, a happy couple in love. Zip whines.

GATES
(sighs)
I know fella. I miss her too...

Zip licks his hand. Gates pets him. His eyes fall on the broken arrow shaft. He stares at it, troubled and perplexed. An idea suddenly crosses his mind. He gets up and walks into the front room.

65 INT. FRONT ROOM - SUNSET

65

Gates crosses over to a closet. Upon opening it, a mountain of junk tumbles out. Gates rummages through the pile and pulls out a big coffee table book entitled 'Plains Indians of North America'.

66 INT. BEDROOM - SUNSET

66

Gates opens the thick volume. On the inside cover is a handwritten inscription: 'Happy Birthday, Sweetheart. Don't worry. Lots of pictures. Love Forever, Lisa'. Gates begins flipping through the pages, stops at an illustration. It's a comparison of different arrows used by the Plains Indians. Gates holds the broken arrow close to the photograph, moves down the line. None of them match. Gates leans back, stares at the shaft, troubled. He remembers the strange feeling in the meadow, the feeling of being watched. He remembers the mare's reaction; Zip's growl... But most of all he remembers-

67 FLASH CUT - THE BLUR OF MOVEMENT in the pre-dawn light.

67

68 GATES' eyes narrow, straining to see through the haze of his memory picture.

68

69 FLASH CUT - THE BLUR, closer now, in slow motion. The dark shapes of horses...and riders in silhouette...half-naked... long hair trailing in the wind...tied with feathers-

69

70 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

70

Gates slams the book closed. What he's thinking is utterly preposterous! He takes a slug of beer, finds himself staring at the arrow once again. Nothing makes sense. He suddenly flips to the back book jacket, to a small biography of the author. The book was written by Professor L. D. Sloan, head of the History Department at the University of Montana, Missoula. Gates leans back, looks at Zip.

GATES

What do you say we take a ride
down to Missoula in the morning?

Gates takes another slug of beer, stares at the arrow.

71 EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - NEXT DAY

71

Gates' Blazer drives past a sign identifying the University of Montana.

72 INT. LIBERAL ARTS BUILDING - DAY

72

Gates and Zip walk down a small hallway looking for a particular room number. Several COEDS pause to fawn over Zip. One of them looks at Gates in utter disgust.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COED

Hey mister, why don't you give
your dog a bath?

SECOND COED

(petting Zip)

Poor baby...

When they continue on their way-

GATES

Y'know, that sympathy act of
yours is really nauseating.

Gates stops before a door marked 'History Department'.

73 INT. HISTORY DEPARTMENT - DAY

73

A RECEPTIONIST looks up as Gates enters, frowns at the sight
of Zip.

RECEPTIONIST

Veterinary clinic is two buildings over.

GATES

I'm looking for Professor Sloan.

RECEPTIONIST

Sorry, out of town.

She returns to her typing.

GATES

Out of town where?

RECEPTIONIST

(curtly)

Supervising an archeological dig
for the Smithsonian.

GATES

And that would be where?

RECEPTIONIST

(without looking up)

You can leave a message.

The receptionist continues typing.

GATES

Look, I'll make a deal with you.
You're married, right?

The receptionist stops, turns and looks at Gates rather
suspiciously.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RECEPTIONIST

So?

GATES

That red clay on your shoes.

She looks down. There are indeed red clay streaks on her pumps.

GATES (CONT'D)

It's fresh.

(glances at the clock)

Picked up on your lunch break would be my guess. Now I grew up in Missoula. And there's only one place I know of where that particular clay is found, a little spot right down along the old highway.

(leans on counter)

And there's only one place a person can stop along that highway and get that clay on his shoes -- the Pine Mountain Motel. I know because I spent many a wild night there in my youth. Now I ask you, how many reasons could an attractive married woman like yourself have for spending her lunch hour at the Pine Mountain Motel?

A cold glare emanates from the receptionist. Finally-

RECEPTIONIST

(through clenched teeth)
Judith Gap.

GATES

(smiles)
Much obliged.

At the door-

GATES (CONT'D)

Warm water and a little Lysol for the shoes. Worked for me.

Gates tips his hat and goes out. The receptionist begrudgingly yanks off her pumps.

74 EXT. DIRT ROAD (EASTERN MONTANA) - LATE AFTERNOON

74

In the distance, Gates' Blazer can be seen approaching.
CAMERA over a rough road dividing the flat, arid prairie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dust boils out behind, leaving a dirty contrail. As the Blazes passes CAMERA, reveal a sign that reads: University of Montana/Native Nations College Joint Research Project. A large open air canvas tent rests at the center of the site. A small army of GRADUATE STUDENTS, both Indian and non-Indian, are spread out over a five acre tract, working half-naked under the hot sun. All wear cowboy hats or sun visors. Small groups of students work with picks and shovels, gently tilling the soil. Others follow behind with sifters (flat wooden boxes with mesh bottoms) to painstakingly search the uncovered soil for artifacts. When something of interest is found, a small red flag is placed in the ground and the artifact is taken to one of the tents where it is cleaned, tagged and bagged.

The Blazer rolls to a stop in a swirl of prairie dust. Gates and Zip get out. Several students stop their digging, come toward him.

FIRST STUDENT

You the one bringing water?

GATES

Sorry.

They turn away disappointed.

GATES (CONT'D)

Hey, where can I find Professor Sloan?

SECOND STUDENT

(without looking back)

Over there...

The student motions in the general direction of the dig site.

75 EXT. DIG SITE - LATER AFTERNOON

75

Gates and Zip circulate through the dig site, stopping frequently to inquire as to the whereabouts of Professor Sloan. Always, the answer is the same: 'Over there', 'That way', or a simple point of the finger in a general direction. Finally, Gates approaches a WOMAN and TWO FEMALE STUDENTS standing together examining the contents of a sifter. The woman is mid-fortyish, dressed in levis, hiking books and t-shirt. Her hair is tucked up under a baseball cap. She has the slightly weathered look of someone who's spent more time outdoors than in, yet she's naturally attractive without effort. This is a woman whose last concern in the world is make up.

GATES

'Scuse me-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The women look up.

GATES (CONT'D)

(frustrated)

Where the hell is Professor Sloan?
-And don't say 'over there'. I've
already been 'over there' -

(points)

-and 'over there' and 'over there'.

WOMAN

So who wants to know?

GATES

(sighs)

Gimme a break, lady. I drove four
and a half hours to get here. I'm
about ready to sic my dog on
somebody.

The women look down at Zip.

WOMAN

You call that a dog?

GATES

Would somebody just point out
the old fart??

The two grad students raise their hands and point at the
woman. Gates slowly closes his eyes.

WOMAN

L.D. -- Lillian Diane. You're
not the first person to make
that mistake, Mr.-?

GATES

(humbled)

-Gates. Lewis Gates.

Lillian turns to the grad students, indicates several
artifacts in the sifter.

LILLIAN

Take these over to Sandy. Nice
work, girls.

The students leave, laughing quietly at Gates. Lillian
looks over some forms that another student brings to her.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

Now then, Mr. Gates -- what can
this 'old fart' do for you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gates is miserable.

GATES

I read your book on Plains Indians.
You don't look like a Professor.

LILLIAN

I'm not. I'm a Doctor. Ph.D.'s in
history and anthropology. I hope
it was worth a four and a half hour
drive to clear that up.

Lillian returns the forms to the student with her signature,
starts walking across the dig site. Gates catches up, walks
with her.

GATES

Actually, there is another reason
I'm here.

LILLIAN

You don't say.

GATES

You claim to be an expert on Indian
artifacts.

LILLIAN

Do I now?

GATES

(getting frustrated)
Look, I came across something the
other day. I was hoping-

LILLIAN

Ah, another would-be Indiana Jones.

GATES

Pardon me?

Lillian pauses to inspect several students' work. She
continues on.

LILLIAN

Everyone who stumbles onto an
arrowhead or piece of pottery
thinks they've made a significant
historical discovery.

She stops, faces Gates.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

I'll let you in on a little secret, Mr. Gates. These plains are filled with Indian artifacts, most of them of little or no value, scientific or otherwise.

(looking him over)

Something tells me whatever you found will look right at home on your coffee table. Good day.

Lillian turns and begins walking away.

GATES (OS)

I doubt whether the man whose blood is on it would think so.

When Lillian turns back, Gates is holding up the broken arrow shaft. Lillian stares at the arrow, then at Gates.

76 INT. OPEN AIR TENT - LATE AFTERNOON

76

Under a huge protective canvas covering, tables have been set up with individual work lights run by a small generator. At the tables, students clean the artifacts, inspect them under microscopes, log notations. A work lamp is switched on, the arrow brought under the light. Lillian inspects every inch of the shaft.

LILLIAN

Where did you find this?

Gates is standing behind her.

GATES

In the Oxbow.

She continues scrutinizing the arrow.

LILLIAN

What were you doing in that hellhole?

GATES

Last week a busload of prisoners went off the highway forty miles north of Deer Lodge.

LILLIAN

Yes, I recall reading something about it in the paper.

GATES

Three escaped. I was called in to find them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lillian looks up at Gates, surprised.

LILLIAN
A bounty hunter, Mr. Gates?

GATES
(winces)
Please. Civil servant. It sounds
less-

LILLIAN
Barbaric?

GATES
(frowns)
I tracked the runners for four
days. Trail ended in a meadow
twenty miles in.

Gates sits on the edge of the desk.

GATES (CONT'D)
Somebody got to those men before
I did. There was blood everywhere
-- and that.

Lillian leans back, switches off the light.

LILLIAN
That's quite a story.

She looks at the arrow once again, holds it up.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
Do you know what this is?

GATES
I wouldn't be here if I did.

LILLIAN
Fair enough. It's a Cheyenne war
arrow.

Lillian gets up.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
Dog Soldier to be precise.

GATES
Dog Soldier?

Lillian leads Gates over toward a long table filled with
artifacts, each labelled with a colored tag.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILLIAN

Within the Cheyenne tribe there was a military society made up of the strongest and bravest men. They referred to themselves as (Cheyenne name) or Dog Men; to the cavalry they became Dog 'Soldiers'. Collectively, they vowed never to surrender. They acted as "rear guard" to their people, fending off attackers while women, children and others escaped.

Amongst the artifacts are a half dozen wooden shafted arrows. Lillian holds the broken shaft next to an arrow on the table.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

You see?

GATES

They're the same.

LILLIAN

Not quite. These are authentic, well over a hundred years old. This looks to have been made quite recently, less than a year I'd guess.

GATES

What does it mean?

LILLIAN

Nothing really.

Lillian smiles, hands the arrow to Gates.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

Except that perhaps another 'civil servant' beat you to those escaped men.

Lillian crosses over to where some students are busy tagging some new specimens. Gates approaches, holds up the arrow.

GATES

What about this??

LILLIAN

An authentic reproduction. You can pick one up in any tourist shop for about fifteen dollars.

GATES

I saw something in that meadow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lillian looks at him.

LILLIAN
Saw what, exactly?

Gates looks down, shuffles his feet.

GATES
I'm not sure. But later I found
horse tracks.

LILLIAN
And what is so unusual about that?

GATES
They weren't shod.

Lillian reacts once again. This time Gates catches it.

GATES (CONT'D)
I checked with the Forest Service.
Nobody's running stock in that
country. And nobody rides unshod
horses except-

LILLIAN
-Indians?

Gates shifts uncomfortably.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
That is what you're implying,
isn't it?

GATES
(backpedaling)
Well-

LILLIAN
(raises her voice)
Mr. Gates, you don't seriously
expect me to entertain the notion
that Cheyenne Dog Soldiers are
riding around loose in the Oxbow,
do you?

Gates looks around the tent. The students have all
interrupted their work and are staring at him. He feels
foolish. He looks at Lillian.

GATES
(quietly)
No, of course not. I just- I'm
not a nutcase, okay? Maybe I was
(MORE)

GATES (CONT'D)
hallucinating, hell, I don't know.
I'm just looking for some answers,
that's all.

Lillian closes her notebook, faces Gates.

LILLIAN
Perhaps Mr. Gates, what you're really
after is an excuse to rationalize your
inability to capture those men.

Gates glares at Lillian, is about to reply when a sudden
commotion ensues.

GRAD STUDENT (OS)
Come back here!!

A Grad Student bursts into the tent chasing Zip who's
clenching a human leg bone in his teeth. Zip races over and
hides behind Gates.

GRAD STUDENT
(pissed)
Is that your dog?

GATES
(sighs)
Give it back, Zip...

Zip pads over and deposits the leg bone in front of the Grad
Student. He picks it up, checks it over for damage, scowls.

GRAD STUDENT
The group from the Institute is
here, Dr. Sloan.

LILLIAN
I'll be right there.

The Grad Student gives Gates a dirty look, leaves.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
Mr. Gates, it's been...
entertaining. If you'll excuse
me, I have a tour to give. Drive
carefully.

Lillian turns and walks toward the tent entrance. Just
before she goes out-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GATES

(loudly)

Somebody killed those men,
'Doctor'. It wasn't me, it
wasn't another bounty hunter...
and it wasn't Indiana Jones.

Lillian looks at Gates one last time, goes out. HOLD on
Gates.

77 - 78 OMIT

79 EXT. DIG SITE - LATE AFTERNOON

79

As Lillian leads a small group of CORPORATE TYPES on a tour
of the site, she pauses to watch Gates climb in his Blazer
and roar out of the compound. HOLD.

80 EXT. SLEEPING INDIAN MOTEL - THAT NIGHT

80

A rustic sleepover with small individual log cabins. All
are dark, except one.

81 INT. CABIN - NIGHT

81

Lillian is sitting up at a desk, a topo map of the Oxbow
spread before her. She wears a robe, her long hair hanging
loose past her shoulders. Lillian studies the map in a
small pool of light cast from a reading lamp. Her
concentration is suddenly interrupted by a KNOCK at the
door. She looks at her watch, frowns. Another KNOCK, this
time louder. Lillian gets up, pulls her robe closed,
crosses over to the door and opens it. Gates and Zip are
standing outside her door under the porch light.

LILLIAN

(sighs)

Ah, Mr. Gates and his killer dog.
I should have guessed.

GATES

Your light was on. Trouble
sleeping?

LILLIAN

Are you always this persistent?

GATES

I made it halfway home before
turning back. Call it gut instinct.

LILLIAN

I see. And what is this 'gut
instinct' of yours telling you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GATES
That you're hiding something.

The two stand apart, sizing one another up. Finally-

LILLIAN
Would you like a drink?

GATES
Thought you'd never ask.

82 INT. CABIN - NIGHT

82

Gates wanders around the cabin. Piles of books are scattered throughout, charts cover the walls, a pair of levis draped over a chair along with a bra. From the kitchen-

LILLIAN (OS)
I assure you, Mr. Gates, I'm not hiding anything that a little diligent research on your part wouldn't eventually uncover.

Gates picks up an Indian war club, admires the intricate beadwork. Lillian reappears with two bottles of mineral water.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
Therefore, I'm willing to satisfy your curiosity if you promise not to bother me again.

GATES
Deal.

Gates sets the war club down, takes the mineral water, looks at it a little funny. He was hoping for something stronger.

LILLIAN
Mineral water. It's good for you.

Lillian moves past him, starts rummaging through the piles of books. Gates takes a sip of the mineral water, winces.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
Here we are-

Lillian extracts a thick book from the pile, brings it over and sets it on the desk, purposefully covering the map of the Oxbow.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
By late 1864 the Indians had been
(MORE)

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
raiding settlements, stealing horses
and making a general nuisance of
themselves. Not only the Cheyenne
but other tribes as well.

Lillian begins flipping through the book. Gates watches
her. He can't help noticing that she's attractive.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
The Governor of the Colorado
Territory sent out a proclamation
that all friendly Indians should
move into certain forts. The
Cheyenne under Black Kettle wanted
peace. They camped at Sand Creek near
Fort Lyon where they were assured they
would be safe.

Lillian looks at Gates.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
At dawn the following day, the camp
was attacked by the Third Colorado
Militia under the command of
Colonel John M. Chivington.

She shows Gates a picture of Chivington.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
As soon as the soldiers were spotted,
the Cheyenne raised an American flag
along with a white flag of peace.
The soldiers ignored the overture and
charged in, shooting women and children
as well as warriors. Afterward, the
dead were chopped up and scalped.

GATES
And they called the Indians savages...

LILLIAN
Three hundred Indians died that day
at Sand Creek. Among those that escaped
were twenty men, women and children led by
Lone Wolf, fearless leader of the Dog
Soldiers. The soldiers pursued them for
weeks- northward through two states-

Lillian hesitates, not sure she wants to reveal the next bit
of information.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
-right in to the Oxbow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gates reacts.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

A blizzard forced the soldiers to turn back. The Indians had no food and very little clothing. They were given up for dead. Here-

Lillian hands Gates the book.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

Lone Wolf.

Gates finds himself staring at a picture of a young Cheyenne warrior circa 1861. Lone Wolf is kneeling on one knee. A Winchester not unlike Gates' rests across his other thigh. Lillian suddenly reaches out and takes back the book, snaps it shut.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

There now, you know everything there is to know. It's late. I'm tired. Goodnight, Mr. Gates.

Lillian turns out the light, starts toward the bedroom.

GATES

Wait a minute! Don't you see??
It all adds up!

LILLIAN

What adds up?

Gates comes forward, barely able to contain himself.

GATES

Just suppose! What if, by a fluke, or a miracle, or whatever...what if Lone Wolf and those Indians did survive. Isn't it possible their descendants could have remained hidden in the Oxbow-

LILLIAN

(interrupts)
Out of the question.

GATES

Why not??

LILLIAN

They were starving, in a hostile environment with no clothes on their back. They didn't survive.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GATES

You're sure of that.

LILLIAN

Really, Mr. Gates, if there were Indians in the Oxbow don't you think someone would have seen them by now??

GATES

Not necessarily.

Lillian stares at him.

LILLIAN

You are a nutcase.

GATES

Look at the wolf! We know wolves live in the Oxbow. I've found their tracks, heard their howls, even found where one sat and watched my camp for half a day. But I've never seen one. And I've ridden those mountains all my life!

LILLIAN

It's not the same!

GATES

It is the same!

LILLIAN

Nonsense! Utter nonsense!

GATES

Why are you being so goddamned pig-headed?

LILLIAN

Because I'm good at it!

Gates turns away, frustrated.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

(sighs)

Mr. Gates- Lewis... I appreciate your dilemma. I do. But I refuse to invest time and energy in pure fantasy. I rely on facts. And the facts in this instance are a foregone conclusion. Now I'm going to bed. As it's late, you're welcome to the couch but I should warn you -- I tend to walk around naked in the morning.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

With that, Lillian turns and disappears into the bedroom. Gates is so flustered he drains half the bottle of mineral water without thinking. He winces again, sets the bottle on the desk. Only then does he see the topo map of the Oxbow. He stares at the map for a moment before turning to the closed bedroom door.

82A INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

82A

Lillian is lying in bed, staring at the ceiling. Outside, we HEAR Gates' blazer start up and roar away. Lillian reaches across and turns down an oil lamp. In the darkness, she continues to lie awake...

83 EXT. MOUNTAINS (OXBOW) - DAWN

83

The first light of dawn is rising behind the vast range of mountains that is the Oxbow. Gates has parked on a secluded overlook, is lying back on the hood of the Blazer with Zip, watching the sun rise over the wilderness. Gates is lost in thought. He can't let it go. Not that easily! Dog soldiers, Cheyenne, Lone Wolf, Colonel Chivington - the answer lies somewhere out across the mountains that stretch before him...

A VOICE comes to him. The Oldtimer from the accident scene.

OLDTIMER (VO)

My cousin walked in them
mountains twenty years ago. He
never came out...

Gates suddenly leaps off the hood of the Blazer!

84 A STRETCH OF DIRT ROAD. We HEAR an engine turn over followed 84
by the sound of tires spinning out as the Blazer roars INTO
FRAME and off down the road! A moment later, the Blazer
skids to a halt. The driver's door opens. Zip races INTO
FRAME after the Blazer, leaps in the open door.

GATES (OS)

Sorry, Zip...

The door closes and the Blazer peels away in a cloud of dust!

85 OMIT

85

86 EXT. CHRONICLE - DAY

86

Gates pulls to a stop in a swirl of dust outside the Weekly Chronicle office.

87 INT. CHRONICLE OFFICE - DAY

87

The SENIOR EDITOR of the Weekly Chronicle, a well fed woman in her sixties, trundles out of the back room lugging several thick leather-bound volumes.

SENIOR EDITOR
These catalogues contain copies of
every issue we've ever published.
Ninety-three years' worth.

She drops the volumes on a workbench in front of Gates. A century's worth of dust rises in his face.

SENIOR EDITOR (CONT'D)
There you are, son. Happy hunting.

The woman walks back to her desk. Gates opens the leather cover of the first volume to the first issue of the Chronicle -- a single sheet dated July 15, 1898. He scans the page, flips to the next issue. Zip curls up at the base of the stool.

QUICK DISSOLVE:

88 GATES scans each issue of the paper, searching... His eyes flow down the page, suddenly stop. A small article near the bottom of the page with the heading:

88

LOST HUNTER

Gates reads. A local, gone hunting, lost - in the Oxbow. Gates' eyes shoot up to the top of the page. Date - October 22, 1918. Gates jots down the name of the hunter and the date. He flips to the next issue.

QUICK DISSOLVE:

89 ANOTHER ARTICLE:

89

SEARCH SUSPENDED

Gates reads. Search suspended for local fisherman, lost - in the Oxbow. Date - August 3, 1946. Gates copies down the information.

QUICK DISSOLVE:

90 ZIP sound asleep, a peaceful contrast to Gates, feverishly searching through the old papers.

90

91 ANOTHER ARTICLE:

91

YOUTH MISSING

CONTINUED:

A camping trip in the Oxbow. July 4, 1966. Gates writes. Another date: November 17, 1974; and another: September 22, 1985. Gates has worked his way to the latest issue of the Chronicle. An ironic headline greets him:

CONVICTS MISSING IN OXBOW

Gates stares at the headline, leans back and picks up the list. He's astonished! CAMERA PANS DOWN the list of names and dates -- there are nearly twenty! All of these people, missing in the Oxbow over the years. Gates starts to close the volume. Something catches his eye. Another article that he somehow missed. The headline reads:

WILD BOY CAPTURED

CAMERA REVEALS fragments of the article as Gates reads to himself:

GATES

...naked, half-starved...found by
Union Pacific employees Ed Vallee
and Ned Hollis... nicknamed 'Jacko'..
doesn't speak a word of English...

Gates reads the date - March 16, 1935. He flips to the next edition of the paper, searches the page; then the next. There's no follow-up. Perplexed he turns back to the article, stares at it. HOLD.

92 EXT. WEEKLY CHRONICLE - DAY

92

Gates walks purposefully toward the Blazer. A car suddenly HONKS. Gates turns as Deputy Briggs pulls up beside him.

BRIGGS

We were starting to think you
skipped town, Lewis. Deegan wants
to see you.

GATES

(moving away)
I'd really love to oblige, Briggs,
but I think I left some water
boiling somewhere.

Gates climbs in his Blazer, lowers the window-

GATES (CONT'D)

Tell the Sheriff I'll come in when
I'm ready.

He backs out and roars away. Briggs watches him go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRIGGS
(under his breath)
He isn't gonna like it...

93 EXT. RETIREMENT HOME - DAY

93

A large southern style mansion with white pillars and immaculately groomed grounds. Several ELDERLY RESIDENTS are sitting on the expansive front porch playing checkers.

94 EXT. GARDENS - DAY

94

A young NURSE leads Gates through the blooming gardens in the rear of the home. An old man well into his eighties is sitting on a bench facing a small pond, holding a fishing pole. A bobber floats lazily on the glassy surface. Gates and the nurse approach.

NURSE
(cheerful)
How are we today, Mr. Hollis?

MR. HOLLIS mumbles something unintelligible. His eyes are glazed over and his shoulders sag forward. His right hand shakes uncontrollably. Basically, the guy's a vegetable.

NURSE (CONT'D)
(scolds)
Mr. Hollis, stop that. This is Mr. Gates. He's going to sit with you awhile. Be nice.

More gibberish from Mr. Hollis. The nurse motions Gates to sit, leaves the two alone. Gates sits down on the bench and looks out over the pond, disappointed. Mr. Hollis suddenly sits up and begins reeling in. He looks at Gates.

MR. HOLLIS
(normal voice)
Who the hell are you?

Mr. Hollis shrugs when he sees the look on Gates' face.

MR. HOLLIS (CONT'D)
I like to have fun with 'em.
So what? Only entertainment
I got left.
(checks his bait)
Sure ain't any damn fish to
catch...

Mr. Hollis rears back and casts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. HOLLIS (CONT'D)
So? You gonna sit there all day
with your thumb up yer rear?

GATES
Tell me about 'Jacko', Mr. Hollis.

MR. HOLLIS
Jacko!?

Gates unfolds a xerox copy of the Chronicle, hands it to Mr. Hollis. The old man sets the fishing pole aside, slips on a pair of bifocals, reads.

MR. HOLLIS (CONT'D)
(lowers the paper)
Well I'll be ...

GATES
You remember then.

MR. HOLLIS
Remember!?
(shakes the paper
at Gates)
I caught the little runt!

Gates takes out his snuff can, taps it on the bench.

GATES
What happened?

Mr. Hollis eyes the snuff can, licks his lips.

MR. HOLLIS
Nothing like a good chew to clear
the cobwebs out of a fella's
memory.

Gates smiles, opens the can and holds it out. Mr. Hollis takes a pinch, leans back...and remembers.

MR. HOLLIS (CONT'D)
Back in '35. I was a lineman for
the Union Pacific. Me and Ed
Vallee was haulin' a load of lumber
up to Swan Valley.

CUT AWAY TO:

95 EXT. MOUNTAINS (1935) - DAY (FLASHBACK)

95

An ENGINE pulling cars stacked with cut timber labors
through a mountain pass.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. HOLLIS (VO)
Just past Harding's Reservoir I
spotted somethin' on the tracks.
I thought it was an animal, a deer.

96 INT. ENGINE - DAY

96

A young Mr. Hollis motions to his partner, points. A SMALL
FIGURE is standing on the tracks just ahead.

MR. HOLLIS (VO)
Well, right about that time, it
started runnin' away on two legs.
Right then I seen it was a boy.

The figure leaps off the tracks and scrambles away over some
rocks. The brake is jammed forward. The wheels lock.

MR. HOLLIS (VO)
Ed stopped the train and we lit
out after him.

97 EXT. TRAIN - DAY

97

The two railroad men jump down and take off after the boy.

MR. HOLLIS (VO)
We run him down pretty quick on
accounta' he was weak from bein'
half starved. He didn't speak
English, just sorta grunted.

The men corner the boy and pounce. He scratches and claws
but soon stops struggling altogether. The boy has long jet
black hair and dark, scared eyes.

CUT TO:

97A THE TWO MEN walk back to the train, the boy riding on
Mr. Hollis' shoulders, wrapped in the engineer's oversized
workshirt.

97A

GATES (VO)
What did you do with him?

MR. HOLLIS (VO)
Well, me and Ed didn't know what to
do with him. So we brung him down
to Sheriff Case.

98 INT. JAIL - DAY

98

A cell door is closed. The boy stands looking around like a
scared animal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. HOLLIS (VO)

He stuck him in a cell 'cause he
didn't have no other place to put
him.

The SHERIFF and the two railroad men stand outside the cell,
peering in at the boy.

GATES (VO)

What happened to him?

MR. HOLLIS (VO)

He set in that cell pretty glum.
Didn't say nuthin', didn't eat
nuthin'. We nicknamed him Jacko
cause his face kinda looked wide-eyed
and scared -- like a Jack-o-
lantern.

PUSH IN on the strange boy, sitting alone in the cell, still
wearing the oversized workshirt. A plate of untouched food
rests nearby. The boy stares out the window, past the bars,
at the mountains...

MR. HOLLIS (VO)

The next mornin' he was gone.
Managed to loosen one of the bars
durin' the night.

The boy twists and turns a loose bar in the window until it
pops free. He hauls himself up and squeezes through the
opening.

WIDE as the oversized workshirt drops INTO FRAME and the boy
runs away FROM CAMERA down the middle of main street back
toward the mountains... HOLD.

CUT BACK TO:

99 MR. HOLLIS in the present. The old man turns and squirts
some tobacco juice.

99

MR. HOLLIS (CONT'D)

That was the end of it. Never saw
him again. Mos' folks figured we
pulled some kinda hoax. But that
boy was real, sure as we're settin'
here.

GATES

And no one knows who he was or
where he came from...

(CONTINUED)

CONTIUNED:

MR. HOLLIS

Aw hell! I knew! But you think anybody'd listen to me?

GATES

Who was he?

MR. HOLLIS

Not 'who', what.

(beat)

That boy was Indian -- free as the wind.

Gates' adrenalin surges.

GATES

Are you sure?

MR. HOLLIS

Son, my Grandaddy fought redskins fer twenty years. When I was a youngster he'd set me on his knee and tell me stories about soldierin', about fightin' hostiles.

Mr. Hollis leans forward.

MR. HOLLIS (CONT'D)

That boy was Indian!

100 EXT. RETIREMENT HOME - DAY

100

Gates steps lively down the main path toward the gravel parking lot, a million thoughts coursing through his brain. He looks up, slows to a stop.

GATES

Oh shit...

Sheriff Deegan is leaning against Gates' Blazer, arms folded across his chest. Five patrol cars have the Blazer boxed in, lights flashing. HOLD.

101 INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

101

Zip is sitting patiently, watching as Gates paces back and forth. Deegan comes in the room, closes the door, and tosses a file to Gates.

DEEGAN

Forensics' report from Helena. You can read it but I'll save you the trouble. Whoever was wearing that shirt you brought back was murdered. And not by any bear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gates reacts.

DEEGAN (CONT'D)

(smiles)

You know what really chafes my ass?
That you actually believed I'd be
stupid enough to buy that horse
piss of a story.

Deegan steps up to Gates.

DEEGAN (CONT'D)

One last time. What happened
out there?

GATES

You want to know what happened?

(a moment)

Indians got 'em.

Gates winks. Deegan's expression turns dark, then he
smiles.

DEEGAN

Well, they didn't get all of 'em.

Deegan crosses over and begins putting on his jacket.

DEEGAN (CONT'D)

(off Gates' reaction)

Yeah, survey crew picked one up
about an hour ago, wandering along
a skid road south of Deer Creek.
He's on his way to the hospital
right now. Guess he's in pretty
bad shape. Poor bastard was
barefoot when they found him.

(looks at Gates)

What's the matter, Gates? You look
a little pale.

Deegan opens the door to the interrogation room-

DEEGAN (CONT'D)

BRIGGS!

Deegan crosses over and stands before Gates.

DEEGAN (CONT'D)

I will get to the bottom of this.
And if it turns out you've been
hiding something, I'm gonna bury
you, mister. In the meantime,
I'm holding you here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GATES
On what charges?

DEEGAN
Charge? I don't need a charge.
But as long as you're asking, how
about one you're familiar with?
Reckless endangerment.

Gates simmers. Briggs appears.

DEEGAN (CONT'D)
Lock him up. I'll be at the
hospital taking a statement.

BRIGGS
What about the dog?

Deegan looks at Zip, then at Gates.

DEEGAN
Call the pound.

Deegan leaves. Zip whimpers. HOLD on Gates.

102 INT. HALLWAY - DAY

102

Gates is walking with Briggs down the hallway. His hands
are cuffed behind him. Zip pads along beside them. As they
pass the men's room-

GATES
(stopping)
I gotta take a leak.

Briggs hesitates.

GATES (CONT'D)
C'mon, Briggs. Where am I gonna
go?

BRIGGS
All right.

Briggs undoes Gates' handcuffs.

BRIGGS (CONT'D)
Maybe I should come with you.

GATES
Sure. You can hold it, too.

Gates disappears into the restroom. Briggs waits in the
hall. A beefy DOG CATCHER approaches dressed in white
coveralls.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOG CATCHER
Hey, buddy, this the dog goin' to
the pound?

Zip growls at the man.

BRIGGS
That's him.

Zip suddenly sits back on his haunches and commences a
mournful howling. People stop to stare, some pop their
heads out of offices.

DOG CATCHER
Don't mind him. They all do it.

BRIGGS (CONT'D)
(embarrassed)
Get it over with will ya?

The Dog Catcher holds out a collar. Zip starts barking.

DOG CATCHER
(inching forward)
Easy boy... Nobody's gonna hurt
you.

The Dog Catcher lunges. Zip easily dodges him. Briggs
jumps in his path. Zip latches onto his pant leg and pulls,
ripping it.

BRIGGS
Damn- dog-!

Now people are laughing. Zip tears off a piece of the
Deputy's pant leg, takes off running down the hall! Briggs
and the Dog Catcher watch as Zip bounds out the front door,
down the steps, across the sidewalk and into the Blazer
waiting at the curb. Gates is behind the wheel! He tips
his hat at the slack-jawed Deputy, roars away! Briggs' face
turns beet red! He races to the men's room, throws open the
door! A window high above one of the stalls has been
wrenched open! HOLD CLOSE ON THE WINDOW AS-

BRIGGS (OS)
DAMN YOU, LEWIS!!!

103 HISTORY DEPARTMENT - DAY

103

Gates shoves through a door and strides down the hallway of
the History Department at the University. His jaw is set.
He is a man on a mission. Zip walks beside him, same
determined look engraved on his furry snout.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Receptionist from the other day approaches, glancing over some papers. She looks up and smiles as Gates and Zip pass -- freezes. She turns and hurries after the pair.

RECEPTIONIST

Hey, Sherlock Holmes! You can't have a dog in here! I said-

Zip wheels around and growls, stopping the lady dead in her tracks.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

(flustered)

That's it-

She turns and walks quickly back down the hall as Gates and Zip enter the main auditorium.

104 INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

104

Dr. Sloan is standing behind a podium center stage, delivering a lecture to the crowded auditorium. A commotion in the back causes her to look up from her notes. Gates and Zip are striding down the center aisle, right toward the stage!

LILLIAN

(sighs)

Oh my God...

-resounds over the loudspeakers. The students turn and watch as Gates and Zip reach the stage, climb the steps and cross over to the podium where Dr. Sloan is standing, tapping her notes with a pen. Gates leans across the podium, covers the microphone with one hand, looks directly into her eyes.

GATES

(calmly)

We have to talk.

Lillian just as calmly straightens her notes, looks at Gates-

LILLIAN

If I had a gun right now, I would shoot you.

The doors at the back of the auditorium swing open.

RECEPTIONIST

There he is! That's him!

Two SECURITY GUARDS stride down the aisle toward the stage.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A LOUD MURMUR spreads amongst the students. Gates stares hard at Lillian. Time to fish or cut bait. Lillian remains calm, almost indifferent. When the security guards reach the stage she suddenly holds up a hand.

LILLIAN
It's all right.

The guards hesitate. Lillian looks at Gates.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
Mr. Gates is a guest of this class.

105 INT. DR. SLOAN'S OFFICE - DAY

105

Lillian's office is a cluttered replica of her motel room. She drops wearily into a leather chair.

GATES
Look at this-

Gates takes out the list of missing names, hands it to Lillian. He can barely contain himself.

GATES (CONT'D)
Seventeen people - disappeared!
- in the Oxbow since 1898!
Seventeen people! Doesn't
that seem a little odd?

LILLIAN
It's rough country - for
godsakes!

GATES
Wait! There's more-

Gates brings out the xerox of the newspaper, unfolds it. Lillian just shakes her head. Gates hands her the one sheet, points to the article.

GATES (CONT'D)
In 1935 a boy was found on the
edge of the Oxbow. Didn't speak
a word of English. I talked to
the man that caught him.

Gates moves in close.

GATES (CONT'D)
The boy was Indian! A goddamn
Indian, Lillian! In 1935!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lillian looks over the article. It has an effect. Her resistance is beginning to falter.

GATES (CONT'D)

Don't you see? They could still be out there...

LILLIAN

Impossible!

Lillian gets out of her chair, pushes past Gates, stares out the window for a time. She finally turns to Gates, glaring.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

What do you want from me?

Gates comes forward.

GATES

I'm going back in. But I don't want to end up on that list.

(motions to list
of names)

I need someone along, someone you can trust, that knows the situation and can speak Cheyenne. One of your students-

Lillian reacts.

GATES (CONT'D)

(quickly)

All I'm askin' for is a couple days. We ride in, have a look around, ride out again. Three days!

LILLIAN

(angry)

If you think I'm going to send one of my students on a wild goose chase-

Gates slams his fist on Lillian's desk, turns away frustrated. He calms down, turns back.

GATES

You rely on facts, isn't that what you told me? Here. These are the facts-

Gates shoves the list of names into her hand.

GATES (CONT'D)

Take a good look and then tell me I'm crazy! Go ahead!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

When she doesn't make a move -

GATES (CONT'D)
 You can't do it, can you?
 (calm; intense)
 If they're in there, I have to
 know. And goddammit, so do you...

Lillian stares at Gates for a long moment. She finally turns away, crosses her arms and lets her eyes wander out the window, to the mountains beyond the campus...

106 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

106

The Kid is lying back in a hospital bed, near death, IV tubes running into both arms. Sheriff Deegan is sitting beside the bed, leaning forward, his ear close to the Kid's mouth. The Kid's lips are barely moving. After a time, Deegan stands and comes toward the door and a young DOCTOR waiting there. He looks pale, his eyes glazed.

DOCTOR
 You okay?

DEEGAN
 (snapping to)
 Yeah. Fine.

DOCTOR
 He's delirious - severe
 hypothermia. I'd take anything
 he says with a grain of salt.

At that moment the Kid suddenly goes code blue. The Doctor rushes to his side, screams for a nurse. Deegan backs into the hallway as several nurses rush into the room. He watches the mad scramble to save the Kid's life, all to no avail. HOLD CLOSE on Deegan.

DEEGAN (VO)
 You what??

107 INT. DEEGAN'S OFFICE - DAY

107

Briggs is standing at attention in front of the Sheriff's desk.

BRIGGS
 (quavering voice)
 I've already checked his house.
 He wasn't there. His trailer and
 horse are gone, too.

DEEGAN
 Goddamn you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Deegan steps up beside him, lowers his voice.

DEEGAN (CONT'D)

(menacingly)

I want him found. Use every man,
every unit, call in the National
Guard, I don't care.

BRIGGS

Yes, sir!

DEEGAN

If you screw up again, you'll be
back on line at the mill breathing
sawdust for the rest of your life,
you got that Deputy?

Briggs gulps.

108 EXT. ACCIDENT SCENE - MORNING

108

Gates is readying two horses and a pack mule. As he cinches the belly strap on the mule, a Jeep pulls to a stop nearby. He watches as Lillian and a graduate student get out. The student carries a small duffel bag on his shoulder. (Note: this is the same grad student whose bone was stolen by Zip.) As they approach-

LILLIAN

Mr. Gates-

GATES

(interrupts)

Folks, I'm in a bit of a rush,
so uh-

He indicates the duffel. The grad student looks at Lillian. She nods and he tosses the duffel to Gates. Gates ties the duffel to the pack horse, listens to Lillian and the student arguing quietly-

GRAD STUDENT

I got a bad feeling about this.

LILLIAN

Relax. Mr. Gates is a capable man.

GRAD STUDENT

(glaring at Gates)

I don't trust him.

Gates finishes, comes around the horse.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GATES

Let's mount up. We've got a long ride ahead of us.

Gates turns and walks toward his horse, overhears:

GRAD STUDENT (OS)

Good luck, Doctor.

Gates stops in his tracks. When he turns back, Lillian is adjusting the stirrups on the second horse. The grad student is walking back toward the Jeep.

GATES

Uh, excuse me?

(Lillian looks up)

What the hell are you doing?

LILLIAN

Adjusting my stirrups

(cinches down stirrup)

There, that should do it.

It suddenly dawns on Gates what her intent is.

GATES

Oh no... No way!

(turns to the grad student)

Hey kid! Get back here!!

LILLIAN

(yells)

Stay where you are, John! I'll see you in three days! Now go on!

The grad student reluctantly turns away, gets in the Jeep and roars back down the highway. Lillian turns to Gates-

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

Like you said, if they're in there, I have to know.

Lillian returns to her horse, prepares to mount. Gates is right behind.

GATES

Dammit, lady, this isn't gonna be a picnic! I've seen this country reduce grown men to tears! It's no place for a woman!

Lillian faces him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILLIAN
No place for a woman!?
(smiles)
You really are a cowboy, aren't you?

With that, Lillian turns and swings onto her horse, looks down at Gates.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
What is it you fellas say? We're
burning daylight?

Lillian walks her horse ahead. Gates glares after her, glances down at Zip.

GATES
(sourly)
What are you lookin' at?

Gates heads for his horse.

109 EXT. HIGHWAY - MORNING

109

CAMERA DOLLIES along the guardrail, stopping at the gaping hole where the bus went over the side. SHIFT FOCUS to reveal the tiny caravan in the bottom of the ravine, heading into the forest. Gates leads, followed by the pack horse. Lillian brings up the rear. Zip bounds out ahead.

DISSOLVE TO:

110 EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY

110

Gates and Lillian are tiny in the FRAME against a majestic backdrop of rugged mountains.

DISSOLVE TO:

111 THE CARAVAN splashes across a shallow stream, moves further into the wilderness.

111

112 GATES pauses in a small clearing, removes his hat and wipes sweat from his brow. Lillian rides up and joins him. Gates looks up at the hot sun.

112

GATES
Maybe we should rest.

LILLIAN
If you're tired.

Gates glares at her, spurs his horse forward. Lillian smiles, follows.

DISSOLVE TO:

113 GATES AND LILLIAN traverse a high mountain meadow chased by the last rays of the setting sun. 113

114 EXT. CAMP - NIGHT 114

A BLAZING CAMPFIRE over which a pot of stew is being tended by a tired and stiff Gates. He stirs the concoction with his hunting knife, licks the blade. Lillian is chopping wood with a hatchet. She has more energy now than she had before the ride.

LILLIAN
Smells good. What is it?

GATES
Lewis Gates' wilderness stew.

LILLIAN
Really. And what's in Lewis Gates' wilderness stew?

GATES
Anything that isn't nailed down.

Lillian smiles, drops an armload of wood next to the fire.

LILLIAN
You know, it's funny.

GATES
What's that?

As she prepares her sleeping bag-

LILLIAN
We're all aware how difficult it was for the early pioneers; subject to Indian depredations, harsh winters, starvation. But it's only out here that one can fully appreciate their resilience, their determination. Being in the wilderness is truly invigorating...life affirming, don't you agree?

GATES
(under his breath)
Wonder woman...

Gates stabs his knife into a piece of wood, dishes stew into two bowls, slowly straightens up, grimacing at the stiffness. Lillian notices.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILLIAN
I've got some aspirin.

GATES
I don't need any aspirin, thank
you.

LILLIAN
(taking her bowl)
Boy, aren't we in a pleasant
mood.

Gates points his spoon at Lillian.

GATES (CONT'D)
Look, just 'cause I let you ride
along doesn't mean I have to like
it. And stop treating me like a
child.

LILLIAN
I didn't realize I was.

Lillian sits beside the fire. Gates take a seat opposite.
Lillian notices two carved initials in the handle of Gates'
hunting knife.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
A.G.?

When Gates' looks puzzled she motions to the knife. Gates
removes the blade from the wood.

GATES
Abraham Gates. My Grandfather.
He gave it to me when I was a kid.

LILLIAN
You really hang onto things, don't
you?

GATES
Some things.

Gates sheathes the knife. He watches as she tastes the
stew. When she doesn't immediately comment-

GATES (CONT'D)
(impatient)
Well?

LILLIAN
It's good.
(adds quietly)
If you're not too concerned about
taste...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GATES

I heard that. Tomorrow night you
can cook, how's that?

Gates gets up and huffs away to tend to his horse. Lillian looks at Zip.

LILLIAN

Is he always like this?

115 EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

115

Gates lays out his bedroll. Lillian is across the fire already in her sleeping bag. Gates lays back, exhales a deep sigh. Lillian is watching him.

LILLIAN

Goodnight, Mr. Gates.

GATES

G'night, Doc...

Gates pushes his cowboy hat down over his eyes, relaxes, suddenly pushes his hat back up, turns and looks across the fire.

GATES (CONT'D)

(concerned)

You aren't gonna walk around naked
in the morning, are you?

LILLIAN

Not unless you give me a reason to.

With that, Lillian turns over and goes to sleep. HOLD on Gates.

116 EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAWN

116

The sun rises over the pristine wilderness.

117 EXT. BROKEN ARROW MEADOW - DAWN

117--

Gates trots INTO FRAME and reins to a stop. Presently, Lillian joins him. Gates takes out a topo map, checks their bearings with a compass.

LILLIAN

Why are we stopping?

GATES

This is the meadow where I found
the arrow and horse tracks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The meadow. Quiet, serene. Several DEER bounce away.

GATES (CONT'D)
I've guided elk hunters in this
far. But I've never gone beyond
that ridge.

(points)
And that's the direction the
tracks headed.

Gates looks up at a few ominous clouds passing overhead.

GATES (CONT'D)
(folding map)
Just wish I knew what kind of
weather lay ahead...

LILLIAN
Thirty percent chance of showers
through tonight; clearing by
tomorrow.

Gates looks at her.

GATES
(impressed)
Really? Old Indian trick?

LILLIAN
KQRP all news radio.

Lillian lifts a small transistor radio out of her pocket.
Gates just shakes his head, starts out across the meadow.

DISSOLVE TO:

118 WIDE - GATES AND LILLIAN. Two dots are winding their way up a steep mountainside. 118

DISSOLVE TO:

119 GATES AND LILLIAN have stopped before A STEEP ROCK SLIDE, that ends at the edge of a cliff. There's no going around. They have to cross. Gates dismounts. 119

GATES
We'll lead 'em from here.

Lillian dismounts, looks nervously down toward the edge of the cliff. For the first time her confidence falters.

LILLIAN
(casually)
There isn't another way?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GATES

There is if you want to backtrack and lose half a day. Watch your footing. And if your horse goes down, don't go with him.

LILLIAN

(not amused)

Thanks for the tip...

Gates leads his horse out into the slide. Lillian follows. Tiny rocks dislodge and tumble down over the cliff as the pair makes their way carefully across. Lillian takes a step and the ground beneath her suddenly gives way! She loses her grip on the reins and is swept down toward the cliff's edge!

GATES

Lillian!!

At the last moment, she's able to reach out, grab hold of a bush and stop herself! Gates leaves the horses and makes his way down to her. When he reaches her, he squats down.

GATES (CONT'D)

I told you to watch your step.

She glares at him.

GATES (CONT'D)

Out here, a little mistake like that can get you killed.

Gates reaches out to her...and slips! As he goes sliding past Lillian, she grabs his hand. His boot heels stop just short of the cliff edge! Lillian looks at him.

LILLIAN

You were saying?

They're really in a fix. Gates looks down over the cliff, gulps.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

Feel free to take charge, Mr. Gates.

Gates glares back at Lillian, brings his free hand to his lips and whistles. Gates' horse steps gingerly down the slide until her reins are dangling just in front of Lillian.

GATES

When I count to three, let go and grab the reins with both hands.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILLIAN
What about you?

GATES
Don't worry about me! Just do it!
Ready? One...two...three!

Lillian lets go of Gates and grabs the reins! As Gates starts to slide past, he grabs Lillian around the ankles! His boots dangle over the edge of the cliff! Ever so slowly, Gates' horse starts backing up the hill, dragging her cargo along with her. They finally reach a level spot where Gates and Lillian lie for a few moments, catching their breath.

GATES
You okay?

LILLIAN
It's a little disconcerting to realize that the smartest member of this expedition is a horse. Other than that, yes, I'm okay.

Gates gets to his feet.

GATES (CONT'D)
Saddle up. We've still got two hours of daylight left.

Lillian gets up, dusts herself off.

DISSOLVE TO:

120 GATES AND LILLIAN ride out onto a small promontory. A lush green carpet of virgin forest stretches before them, bordered on both sides by lofty snow-covered peaks. They drink in the view. V's of Canadian geese heading south for the winter honk overhead. The pair watch the geese for a moment, smile at one another before continuing on.

120

121 EXT. CLEARING - LATE AFTERNOON

121

A brook runs through a small opening in the dense forest. Gates and Lillian are sitting atop their horses while they water. Gates shades his eyes and peers at the sun which is low on the horizon.

GATES
Might as well make camp.

LILLIAN
My horse is acting lame.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gates leans down and looks at the horse's legs.

GATES

He's not cut. Probably threw a shoe back in that rock slide.

122 EXT. CAMP - SUNSET

122

Gates is shoeing Lillian's horse. Lillian stands beside him, holding several tools. She watches him work.

LILLIAN

You like it out here, don't you?

Gates uses a pair of nippers to trim the horse's hoof.

GATES

I like the solitude. Lately, seems like the only time I'm at ease is when there's about a hundred miles between me and the rest of humanity.

LILLIAN

Sounds like you were born a century too late.

Gates chuckles.

GATES

That's what my wife used to say.

LILLIAN

'Used to say'?

GATES

She died a couple years back.

Gates takes the rasp from Lillian, smooths out the bottom of the hoof.

LILLIAN

I'm sorry.

GATES

(shrugs)

Hey, that's life, right?

LILLIAN

Was she sick?

Gates doesn't answer at first. Then-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GATES

We were on a ride in the back country. She loved the spring-time, the wildflowers.

Gates trades Lillian the rasp for a new shoe and nails.

GATES (CONT'D)

Her horse threw her while we were making a river crossing. I went in after her, but the current was too much. One second she was there... Anyway, I was able to grab hold of a branch and pull myself to shore.

Gates hammers the shoe into place.

GATES (CONT'D)

Her father blames me to this day.

LILLIAN

What more could you have done?

Gates smiles to himself, as if the answer is obvious.

GATES

Drowned.

Gates takes another nail from Lillian.

GATES (CONT'D)

What about you? Ever married?

LILLIAN

Only to my work. I decided early on that I wasn't going to let a man dictate the course of my life.

Off Gates' look-

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

Don't get me wrong. There have been men -- lovers. Some good, some not. But always on my terms.

Gates stares up at her.

GATES

Lady, if I was born a century too late, you were definitely born a century too early.

Lillian smiles. Gates checks the shoe. Satisfied, he leans up and leads the horse away. HOLD on Lillian.

123 EXT. ACCIDENT SCENE - NIGHT

123

A car door is shut. Then another. Two flashlights are turned on. Sheriff Deegan and Briggs follow the beams until they spill across Gates' Blazer and horse trailer, parked in a turnout on the highway.

BRIGGS

Russ and his wife came across it
when they were out berry pickin'.

Deegan walks around the vehicle, shines the light through the windows. When he completes a circle, he clicks off the light and steps over to the railing. Briggs waits behind him. Deegan stares out over the Oxbow, listening to the night sounds.

DEEGAN

(quietly)

What the hell are you up to,
Gates?

No one answers.

A123 A tiny DOT OF FLAME somewhere in the vast wilderness. A
curtain of shimmering stars overhead.

A123

124 EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

124

Gates and Lillian are seated around the warm campfire. Lillian's transistor radio is playing some country music. Gates tosses another chunk of wood on the fire, sending a shower of sparks spiraling into the night sky.

LILLIAN

Do you know the one thing on earth
that looks the same now as it did
a thousand years ago?

GATES

What's that?

LILLIAN

The campfire.

Lillian stares into the orange flame.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

When we stare into the coals of a
campfire, in some strange way
we're actually communicating with
our primitive ancestors.

(looks up; smiles)

That sounds crazy, I know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GATES

Not really.

(then:)

How about a drink?

LILLIAN

I'd love one.

Gates produces a small flask, uncaps it, holds it out to Lillian. When she hesitates-

GATES

(remembering the
mineral water)

Whiskey. It's good for you.

LILLIAN

Touché.

Lillian takes the flask, raises it to her lips and takes a swallow. She winces, hands it back to Gates who smiles and takes a gulp himself. He looks at her across the flames.

GATES

I'm curious about one thing.

LILLIAN

(smiles)

Only one?

GATES

Why Indians?

LILLIAN

Because I admire them. And because as Americans we owe them a tremendous debt.

GATES

How's that?

LILLIAN

Consider what the history of the country would have been without them. A boring chronicle of Europeans moving slowly westward, carrying along their archaic ideas and dull culture. Thank God there was a frontier! And thank God there were Indians fighting them every step of the way.

(MORE)

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

You see, Mr. Gates, it's not our friends who have the most to do with shaping our characters, it's our foes. And the Indians shaped the character of an entire nation.

GATES

We sure picked one helluva way to say thank you.

LILLIAN

What happened was inevitable. It's the way that it happened that's unconscionable.

(then:)

Anymore of that whiskey left, cowboy?

Gates smiles, tosses her the flask. Lillian uncaps it and takes a swallow. This time she doesn't grimace.

125 EXT. CAMP - EARLY MORNING

125

Gates is cinching down the pack mule. Mist rises off a nearby stream. Lillian trudges out of the bush carrying a roll of toilet paper. She's sporting a monumental hangover. As she passes Gates-

LILLIAN

(cranky)

My head feels like a punching bag thanks to you.

GATES

(pleasantly)

I've got some aspirin.

Lillian pauses to glare at him. Gates smiles, looks out into the woods as he packs the horse. The forest is alive with SINGING, SQUAWKING birds. Rays of golden sunlight pierce the forest canopy. Coupled with the mist it creates an almost supernatural aura. Lillian packs up as well. She cinches down a saddlebag.

LILLIAN

(still cranky)

We've been riding for a week now. I agreed to three days. I think it's time we consider starting back.

Gates peers into the forest. Something is different. It's quiet. The birds have stopped singing...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

It was a romantic notion, Indians in the Oxbow. I admit I got caught up in the idea myself. But the fact is we both have better things to do than go traipsing around these mountains looking for ghosts.

(beat)

Mr. Gates?

Gates has stopped packing. His eyes are riveted on the forest ahead.

LILLIAN

Mr. Gates!

Gates momentarily snaps out of his trance, turns to Lillian.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

Have you listened to a word I've said?

GATES

You want to go back.

Off to the left, a squirrel suddenly chatters excitedly. Gates looks in that direction. A quick flash, like the glint of sunlight on metal. Or was it his imagination?

LILLIAN

I'm a history teacher. Not Daniel Boone. I think we should go back.

(beat)

Mr. Gates!

Gates looks back at Lillian.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

Please toss me my canteen. I wish to fill it before we head out.

Gates bends down to pick up Lillian's canteen. Zip delivers a soft growl at something hidden in the forest. Gates freezes. He slowly straightens up, drawing his pistol. Lillian is standing impatiently beside her horse.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

What is the matter with you??

She sees the pistol.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
(crossing her arms)
Now what are you going to do?
Shoot me?

A grouse flushes somewhere in the forest behind Lillian.
Gates slowly cocks the pistol.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
Mr. Gates! My canteen!

GATES
(angry)
Here's your damn canteen-

Gates turns toward Lillian just as-

ssssssSSSSSSUMP!!

An arrow flies out of nowhere and hits him in the chest!!
Gates is thrown to the ground by the impact!

LILLIAN
Lewis!!

Gates sits up. It is only then that we realize the arrow has pierced the metal canteen, not Gates' chest. Suddenly, a familiar rush of air-

GATES
GET DOWN!!

Gates grabs Lillian by the ankle and yanks her to the ground as a second arrow zips past, narrowly missing her! Gates and Lillian slowly raise their heads and stare ahead into the surrounding forest. Gates starts to raise his pistol. Lillian grabs his arm.

LILLIAN
(harsh whisper)
No guns!

They wait for a few agonizing moments. Lillian suddenly springs to her feet!

GATES
Lillian! For chrissakes-!

Lillian cups her hands to her mouth and SHOUTS IN CHEYENNE-

LILLIAN
We come in a good way!!!

Nothing happens. Gates slowly gets to his feet. They wait. Lillian's chest heaves with excitement.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The forest -- beautifully menacing, shafts of sunlight, drifting mist, shifting shadows, and now-

FIGURES ON HORSEBACK. At first, only fleeting glimpses. Silent... Gliding through the bush... Then they come. From all directions. Three...six...ten! They emerge out of the silent forest, out of the shadows, out of history itself... Gates and Lillian stare in awe as the Indians slowly reveal themselves.

LILLIAN

My God...

Gates and Lillian stand surrounded by a DOZEN CHEYENNE DOG SOLDIERS!! CAMERA PANS AROUND the circle of Indians. Stolid faces painted for war, sunburned skin, long dark hair, many tied with eagle feathers. Several warriors stand out in particular:

YELLOW WOLF - leader of the Dog Soldiers; he wears a feathered sash across his chest, signifying his leadership.

LEAN BEAR - medicine man; he wears the honey-colored cape of a grizzly bear, extending down both muscular arms, the claws overlapping his own fingers.

TWO WOLF SCOUTS - dressed in wolf skins, their faces and hands painted to blend in with their forest surroundings.

A few of the Indians have complimented their dress with some form of modern accoutrement -- one wears a hunting shirt, another has an old fashioned time piece hanging from his neck. Long seconds pass as the Dog Men study the two whites.

LILLIAN

Lewis?

GATES

I'm here.

LILLIAN

Throw down your pistol.

When Gates hesitates-

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

(snaps)

Throw it down!

Gates tosses his pistol on the ground.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

I suggest you refrain from any sudden movement.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GATES
Does breathing count?

LILLIAN
(awed)
Look at them!

Several of the warriors appear to argue with Yellow Wolf.

GATES (CONT'D)
What are they saying?

LILLIAN
There seems to be some
disagreement- I- I'm not-

GATES
What!?

LILLIAN
The dialect is difficult-
Something about a white woman
speaking their language-

Yellow Wolf motions firmly to the other warriors, steps his horse ahead out of the circle, addresses the two. Lillian answers in Cheyenne, much to the astonishment of the other warriors. Yellow Wolf studies the two whites for a long moment, especially Gates.

GATES
What did you say?

LILLIAN
I told him that we come in peace;
that we mean them no harm. I also
told him that you are a powerful
warrior who isn't afraid to fight
them all singlehandedly.

GATES
You're kidding, right?

LILLIAN
The Cheyenne admire bravery.
Let's just hope they don't put you
to the test.

GATES
If they do, I'm coming after you
first!

Yellow Wolf turns and motions to several of his soldiers. Two Dog Soldiers slide off their mounts. One approaches Lillian; the other Gates.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Zip suddenly leaps INTO FRAME, stands before Gates snarling viciously. The Indian hesitates. The other warriors laugh at this feisty display. As Zip stands his ground there is a moment of confusion.

GATES (CONT'D)
(starting forward)

Zip-

LILLIAN
Don't move-!

Yellow Wolf suddenly raises his bow-

GATES
NO!!

It's too late. The arrow finds its mark. Zip YELPS in pain, goes down. He lies on his side, seriously wounded. Gates kneels beside the stricken dog, pulls out the arrow, gently strokes him.

GATES (CONT'D)
Zip...

He slowly looks up at Yellow Dog. An intense hatred grows in him. He starts for the Indian with murderous intent. Lillian grabs him by the arm-

LILLIAN
Lewis! Don't be a fool!
Getting yourself killed
isn't the answer!

Gates delivers a penetrating glare to the leader of the Dog Soldiers. They'll settle this later... Yellow Wolf motions to the two soldiers. They advance, disarm and search Gate and Lillian. Several other warriors plunder the pack horse and supplies. When one of the soldiers removes Gates' hunting knife, Yellow Wolf motions him to bring it to him. Yellow Wolf holds up the knife, admiring it, straps it to his legging, looks at Gates. HOLD.

126 EXT. FOREST - WIDE RIVER - DAY .

126

The Dog Soldiers ride single file through the forest. Yellow Wolf leads. Several packhorses carry deer carcasses. Gates and Lillian bring up the rear. They're afoot, each wearing a length of rawhide, one end of which is tied tightly around their waists, the other around the waist of the Indian riding ahead of them. Their faces are scratched from countless encounters with stickers and Devil's Club.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They stumble along, exhausted. Gates cradles Zip in his arms. He's made a crude bandage from his shirt but blood has already soaked through. As they begin crossing a shallow but wide river-

LILLIAN

(breathing heavy)

Lewis...you were right... They are Cheyenne...Dog Soldiers... Do you realize...what this means? Lewis - in my life! - I never would have believed... Yet here we are... A step back into time...into history itself! My God but I feel privileged-

Lillian suddenly stumbles and falls into the water. She flounders, too exhausted to get up. She begins to be dragged forward under the water.

GATES

Lillian!

Gates digs in, holds Zip with one arm, grabs Lillian's rawhide leash and gives a solid jerk! The warrior in front is pulled right off his horse into the river! He leaps to his feet mad as hell, unsheathes his knife and comes toward Gates! A SHOUT stops him. Yellow Wolf comes trotting back. The others have stopped also. Some are laughing at their unseated companion. Meanwhile, Gates has dragged Lillian to shore. He lays Zip gently aside, turns Lillian over.

LILLIAN

(coughing water)

I'm...sorry... Guess I'm not so tough after all...

GATES

Like hell you're not.

Gates is suddenly blindsided by the Indian who was jerked off his horse. The two grapple, Gates kicks him off and stands. The Indian starts forward with a drawn knife when Yellow Wolf shouts for him to stop. The Indian reluctantly backs off. Gates turns to Yellow Wolf. He motions to Lillian.

GATES (CONT'D)

She can't walk. She needs a horse.

Gates points to Yellow Wolf's pony.

GATES (CONT'D)

Horse!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

No response from the Indian.

GATES (CONT'D)
(getting ticked)
She's weak! She has to ride!

Still no response from Yellow Wolf.

LILLIAN
(gasping)
Lewis, I'll be fine-

GATES
Shut-up.

Gates takes a step forward.

GATES (CONT'D)
Listen, asshole, either she rides
or you can kill us both right now.
Maybe you can't understand my
words but you know what I'm
saying. What's it gonna be?

Yellow Wolf finally motions to the others. A warrior leads Lillian's horse back. She's helped into the saddle by Gates, groggy but okay. Yellow Wolf studies Gates for a long moment before returning to the front position. HOLD on Gates.

127 EXT. CLIFFS - DAY

127

The tiny hunting party is dwarfed by a series of high rock cliffs as they move deeper into the heart of the wilderness. A waterfall plummets hundreds of feet from the top of the cliffs to the valley floor where it pools out amongst a deposit of boulders. The Indians make their way to the base of the roaring falls, dismount. They lead their horses up along a narrow foot trail some fifty feet above the pool and in behind the falls. Eons of erosion have formed an opening in the rock directly behind the falls, barely discernible at first, through which the Indians now pass. CUT BETWEEN GATES AND LILLIAN. Soaked from the heavy mists. They stare in awe as they pass through the opening.

128 INT. CAVERN - DAY

128

Once inside, the opening widens into a large cavernous tunnel. The roar of the falls fades. Darkness surrounds them. Light ahead indicates an opening as they pass directly through tons of solid rock.

129 EXT. CAVERN OPENING - DAY

129

The Indians emerge into the bright sunshine, gather together on a rock outcropping. The cavern has spit these time travelers out at the far end of a narrow, forested valley, well-protected on all sides by towering rock cliffs. A blue ribbon stream meanders through the valley. Lillian takes a lungfull of fresh air, turns to Gates, overwhelmed by the beauty.

LILLIAN

This is where Lone Wolf must have
hid from Chivington's soldiers.
It's like Shangri-la.

Yellow Wolf blows on an elk bone whistle. From somewhere deep in the valley the whistle is repeated. Yellow Wolf motions the others forward. They start down off the rocks toward the valley below.

130 EXT. VALLEY FLOOR - DAY

130

The Indians make their way along a well-worn trail through the timber. A small group of INDIAN BOYS have come out to greet the returning hunting party. They jog alongside Gates and Lillian, staring in wonder at the strange white people. Lillian smiles and greets the young boys in Cheyenne. The boys are so startled that when one stumbles, they all go down! They jump up and race ahead SHOUTING, spreading the news.

GATES

Whatever you're saying, I hope
it's friendly...

131 EXT. CHEYENNE VILLAGE - DAY

131

Hidden amongst the ancient old growth timber is the Cheyenne village. The forest canopy provides protection for perhaps twenty permanent earthen lodges interspersed over several acres. Several smokeless cooking fires are being tended by CHEYENNE WOMEN. Gates and Lillian are led right into the heart of the camp. Indians emerge from everywhere as the entire village turns out to see what the hunters have brought back. Old men, women and children form a circle around the two, stand and stare. There are nearly fifty in all. An Indian GIRL, perhaps twelve, takes note of Zip and his injury. CUT BETWEEN GATES AND LILLIAN as they stare back at all the curious faces.

LILLIAN

(breathless)

Magnificent!

GATES

(apprehensive)

Yeah, magnificent...

132 EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

132

Gates and Lillian are seated with their backs to a fir tree, their necks, arms and bodies lashed to the trunk. The camp is quiet. Fires have burned low. Gates struggles silently against the rawhide.

LILLIAN

It's no use, Lewis. Before the Boy Scout there was the Indian. I'm quite sure the knots are solid.

Gates finally relaxes.

GATES

What are they going to do with us?

LILLIAN

I don't know.

GATES

You're the expert, remember Doctor?

LILLIAN

Well, traditionally speaking, many Cheyenne prisoners became absorbed into the tribe.

GATES

Absorbed-?

LILLIAN

The Cheyenne treated their prisoners so well that they often refused to return to their original homes, even if the opportunity arose.

GATES

Their hospitality overwhelms me.

LILLIAN

You can't blame them really. They're afraid of us.

A WHIMPER. Zip is lying next to Gates.

GATES

Hang in there, boy...

Zip crawls forward until he can lick Gates' hand. The Indian girl from earlier that day approaches and kneels beside Zip, unafraid.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She uses a knife to cut away the blood-soaked bandage. Gates watches the young girl inspect the bandage. She removes a handful of herbs from a leather pouch, presses them into the wound. This has an immediate soothing effect on Zip. As she bandages the wound-

GATES

His name is Zip.

The girl gives Gates a cursory glance, finishes the bandage, gathers her things.

GATES (CONT'D)

Lillian, how do you say 'thank you'?

Lillian repeats the Cheyenne equivalent in a low tone. As the girl starts away-

GATES (CONT'D)

Ha ho'.

The girl looks at him unemotionally for a long moment, turns and disappears into the surrounding darkness. HOLD on Gates.

133 EXT. CHEYENNE VILLAGE - NEXT DAY

133

Yellow Wolf and several Dog Soldiers walk purposefully through camp over to where Gates and Lillian remain tied. Yellow Wolf locks eyes with Gates. He unsheathes Gates' knife, steps forward and slips the razor sharp blade between the rawhide leash and the soft flesh of Gates' throat. Gates doesn't flinch. Yellow Wolf holds the knife blade flat against his throat for a moment before turning the blade out and cutting the rawhide. The other warriors step forward and cut Gates and Lillian free. Gates helps Lillian to her feet. They stand together, stiff and sore, rubbing their raw wrists. Yellow Wolf says something to Lillian.

LILLIAN

He wants us to follow him.

Yellow Wolf leads them and the others in a procession through the village. The Cheyenne people interrupt their work to watch. Gates notices several lodges that appear run down and deserted.

GATES

Looks like there's a housing surplus.

Lillian says a few words to Yellow Wolf who replies tersely.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILLIAN

He says like the wolf, they are becoming fewer and fewer.

Yellow Wolf leads the two toward a lodge set apart from the others. From this time forward, Gates and Lillian are guarded at all times by two or three armed Dog Soldiers.

134 EXT. LODGE - DAY

134

Yellow Wolf pulls aside an elk hair blanket, motions them inside. Gates hesitates, ducks down and enters the lodge. Lillian follows.

135 INT. LODGE - DAY

135

Gates steps into the warm glow of a smoldering fire on the earthen floor. He is joined by Lillian. Gates starts to sit but Lillian touches his arm.

LILLIAN

(quietly)

Not so fast. There's etiquette here.

GATES

Etiquette!?

Yellow Wolf motions to them, speaks a few sentences.

LILLIAN

You're there-

(points right)

I'm over here.

Lillian sits on the left side of the fire, Gates on the right. Across the fire, hidden in shadow are the figures of half a dozen TRIBAL ELDERS. They're seated on either side of a FRAIL FIGURE wrapped in blankets and robes. Several of the elders are softly SINGING. Yellow Wolf crosses over and sits cross-legged beside the figure, whispers in a low voice. Gates and Lillian glance at one another...wait. Presently, the figure leans forward into the glow of the fire and speaks in a hoarse WHISPER. We behold an old, wizened face. When he finishes, Lillian answers him. The two exchange dialogue for several moments, much to the frustration of Gates who is left completely in the dark. Finally, Lillian leans back in astonishment.

LILLIAN

Dear Lord...

GATES

Talk to me, Lillian.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILLIAN

Lewis? Meet Spotted Eagle, Chief of the Cheyenne and last surviving son of Lone Wolf. He wishes to know if we've come to return him to the House of Iron Bars.

Gates looks confused.

LILLIAN

Seems when he was a young boy he was captured by some white men and put in a cage.

Gates stares at Lillian as it suddenly dawns on him.

GATES

Jacko...

Lillian nods. Gates turns and gazes incredulously at the old Chief. HOLD on Spotted Eagle's weathered face.

CUT TO:

136 A SERIES OF BEAUTIFUL DRAWINGS on the walls of the lodge tell a story that Spotted Eagle is now relating to Lillian. As Spotted Eagle speaks, she translates for Gates:

136

LILLIAN

He tells of many Cheyennes killed; of his father's flight from the Pony Soldiers. There was a great storm. The Indians were lost and starving. A wolf appeared and led them to this valley. The wolf spoke, telling them to remain hidden here from the white man forever. The valley was fertile. Game was plentiful. They survived. This was during the Moon when The Deer Shed Their Horns...a hundred and twenty-eight years ago.

Gates and Lillian are awed by the drawings. Spotted Eagle motions to the pair.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

There are many things he wishes to ask. He will rest now. We are free to move about the village as his guests.

137 EXT. CAMP - DAY

137

Yellow Wolf leads Gates and Lillian toward a small lodge on the edge of the camp.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GATES
(motions to
Yellow Wolf)
Did you get a line on Mr.
Personality here?

LILLIAN
His name is Yellow Wolf. He's the
leader of the Dog Soldiers and
next in line to be Chief.

GATES
I guess it takes a real man to
shoot a dog.

LILLIAN
You should be thankful he didn't
eat him.

Off Gates' look.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
Oh, didn't I tell you? That's the
other reason they're called Dog
Soldiers.

138 OMIT

138

138A INT. LODGE - DAY

138A

A blanket is thrown back. Yellow Wolf leads Gates and
Lillian inside the lodge. A small cookfire is burning.
Bedding for both has been laid out. Zip is resting near the
fire. Yellow Wolf motions to Lillian, speaks.

LILLIAN
This is where we stay.

A commotion at the entrance to the lodge. Several CHILDREN
enter, giggling and shy. They step forward and offer
Lillian and Gates bowls of food and strips of dried
pemmican. Lillian smiles and says something to the children
that brings grins all around. Yellow Wolf motions them out,
looks hard at Gates before leaving himself.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
I'd say we've made some friends.

Gates is at the lodge entrance. Outside, three Dog Soldiers
take up positions.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
I don't know about you, but I'm beat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She lies down on the bed of furs, watches Gates standing at the entrance.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

You should get some rest. We've been invited to a tribal council tonight.

GATES

You rest. I'm fine.

Gates continues staring out the lodge entrance. Lillian watches him for a moment before closing her eyes.

138B INT. TRIBAL LODGE - NIGHT

138B

In an expansive tribal longhouse, the villagers have gathered around a roaring bonfire. Lillian is holding court, wowing them with stories of the 'outside'. There is laughter and disbelief. The medicine man points to the sky, asks Lillian a question. She looks at Gates.

LILLIAN

He wants to know about the silver birds with the long white tails.

Gates smiles. Lillian launches into an explanation of a jet airplane using hand signals to compliment. The Cheyenne are filled with wonder at first. Their wonder dissolves into hearty laughter when someone points at Lillian and shouts something. Lillian turns to Gates.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

They think I'm a wonderful liar.

Spotted Eagle speaks. The crowd hushes. When he finishes, Gates notices Lillian hesitate.

GATES

What is it?

LILLIAN

He wants to know about other Cheyenne. He wants to know how they are living.

GATES

What are you going to tell him?

A moment. Then-

LILLIAN

The truth.

Lillian turns to the tribe and begins to describe the situation on the outside for the other Cheyenne people.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She tells of reservations, of poverty and despair, of a people stripped of their culture and all hope. The faces of the tribe turn somber. And when Lillian tells them that they are the last of their kind who still live the 'old ways' there are tears in many of the peoples' eyes. Yellow Wolf suddenly jumps to his feet, points at the two whites and shouts! When he's finished, he stalks out of the lodge. Lillian looks at Gates. They both feel terrible.

139 INT. LODGE - NIGHT

139

Gates and Lillian are lying awake with their backs to each other, each lost in their own thoughts.

GATES

You know something, Lillian?

LILLIAN

Yes, Lewis?

GATES

I know what you mean now, about feeling privileged. We can't let anything happen to these people. No one must ever find out. No one...

The look of relief on Lillian's face says it all. She reaches across and takes Gates' hand, squeezes. Someone approaches the lodge entrance. The Indian girl appears. Zip sits up, wags his tail at her approach. Gates watches as the girl pets Zip, speaks softly to him while tending his injury.

140 EXT. CAMP - NEXT DAY

140

Gates and Lillian are seated under some shade, eating cooked venison and potatoes off wooden plates. Three Dog Soldiers stand nearby, watching. A commotion at a nearby lodge catches his attention. Yellow Wolf is shouting at Lean Bear, imploring him to enter the lodge. The Indian refuses and stalks away. Yellow Wolf's WIFE appears at the lodge entrance. When he sees what has transpired, she drops to the ground and begins WAILING as if in agony. Yellow Wolf tries to comfort her.

GATES

What's that all about?

LILLIAN

I don't know. Let's go see, shall we?

Before Gates can protest, Lillian is on her feet and walking toward the lodge. Gates gets up and looks at the three grim-faced Dog Soldiers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GATES

We're just, uh, going over there-

He hurries to catch up with Lillian. The Guards follow at a casual walk.

141 EXT. YELLOW WOLF'S LODGE - DAY

141

Lillian approaches Yellow Wolf and his wife. She delivers a greeting and asks what is the matter. Yellow Wolf answers with an angry grunt that we interpret to mean 'mind your own business'. But his wife commences to speak rapidly through her tears. As Gates joins them-

LILLIAN

Their son has sustained some sort of injury. The tribe's Medicine Man has been treating the boy with little effect. She fears for her son's life.

(looks at Lewis)

I'm going to ask to see the boy.

Lillian addresses Yellow Wolf. He answers sharply, shakes his head no. But his wife is desperate. She intercedes, holds aside the elk hide entrance to their lodge. Lillian turns and hands Gates her plate, follows Yellow Wolf's wife inside. Gates looks around for some place to set the plates, finally hands them to one of the guards, follows.

142 INT. YELLOW WOLF'S LODGE - DAY

142

Lillian and Gates are shown over to a bed of blankets and robes upon which a YOUNG MAN of eighteen is lying on his side. He is covered by a soft deerskin. Only his face is showing and that is covered in a cold sweat. He's groggy and his eyes roll back in his head. Yellow Wolf's wife gently pulls back the deerskin, revealing a ghastly wound on the boy's left side and buttock.

LILLIAN

Dear Lord...

GATES

He's been shot.

Yellow Wolf steps up, speaks.

LILLIAN

He says they were out hunting when his son became separated. The boy apparently was ambushed by two white men.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GATES

The convicts...

Lillian bends close and inspects the wound. She puts her hand on the boy's forehead.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

He's burning up.

When she straightens up-

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

No wonder the medicine man was frustrated. He's treated the wound but infection is spreading. In a hospital they'd put him on antibiotics. But out here I'm afraid there's nothing more to do but wait for him to die.

Gates looks at the sick child.

GATES

Tell me what he needs.

Lillian looks at him.

GATES (CONT'D)

Convince them to let me try, I'll ride.

Lillian nods, turns and addresses Yellow Wolf and his wife. Yellow Wolf immediately becomes agitated, starts shoving Gates and Lillian out of the lodge. But his wife intercedes once again, begs her husband to reconsider. Yellow Wolf looks at the two whites, then at his sick child, then at his wife. He seems to weaken a little. He speaks to Lillian.

LILLIAN

He says the decision is not his.

143 INT. SPOTTED EAGLE'S LODGE - DAY

143

Yellow Wolf is seated next to Spotted Eagle who is listening attentively to Lillian's proposal. Gates looks closely at the old Chief, searching for some clue in the wrinkled face. Lillian finishes. Spotted Eagle sits quietly for a time, pondering. Finally, he speaks. When he's finished, Lillian translates for Gates.

LILLIAN

I'm afraid the Chief has turned down your offer, Lewis.

(MORE)

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

He appreciates the spirit in which it was made but he says his people have survived all this time without the white man's help. To ask for it now would be inviting trouble.

Gates looks at Yellow Wolf. The warrior has accepted the Chief's decision impassively.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

There's something else.

Gates looks at Lillian.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

He believes that allowing us to return to the outside will bring the tribe bad luck.

(beat)

We can never leave, Lewis.

Gates stares at Lillian, slowly turns to Spotted Eagle.

144 EXT. CAMP - THAT NIGHT

144

It's late. The fires have burned out. All is quiet. Somewhere a coyote is YIPPING.

145 INT. YELLOW WOLF'S LODGE - NIGHT

145

Yellow Wolf is sitting up beside his son, watching the boy's fitful sleep. He looks across to his wife who has fallen asleep from sheer exhaustion. A soft moan issues from his son's lips. Yellow Wolf places his hand gently on the boy's cheek. HOLD CLOSE on the warrior.

146 INT. LODGE - NIGHT

146

GATES AND LILLIAN are asleep. A hand ENTERS FRAME and clamps down over Gates' mouth. His eyes snap open and he struggles momentarily until he recognizes Yellow Wolf.

147 EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

147

Yellow Wolf leads Gates and Lillian to a small clearing where Gates' horse is waiting, saddled and ready to go. He points at Gates, then at the horse.

GATES

You don't need to translate. I think I know what he wants.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gates steps forward and cinches his saddle. Lillian joins him.

LILLIAN
Penicillin.

GATES
Isn't that a little tough to
come by without a prescription?

LILLIAN
Use your imagination.

GATES
Right...
(looks at Yellow Wolf)
Tell him I want my pistol back.

Lillian translates Gates' request. Yellow Wolf hesitates, pulls Gates' pistol from his belt and hands it over. Gates slips it into his holster. But he's not done.

GATES (CONT'D)
Now the knife.

LILLIAN
Lewis...

GATES
The knife.

Lillian translates. Yellow Wolf is clearly at odds, but his son's life is more important than a white man's knife. He removes it from his belt, hands it to Gates. Gates is about to mount up, stops.

GATES (CONT'D)
Oh, one more thing-

He turns and delivers a roundhouse punch to Yellow Wolf's jaw! The Indian sprawls flat on his back!

LILLIAN
Lewis! What the hell are you
doing??

GATES
(shakes out his hand)
That's for Zip...

Gates walks toward his horse. Yellow Wolf springs to his feet, ready to attack. Lillian quickly says something to the enraged Indian that keeps him at bay. Gates mounts his horse. Yellow Wolf glowers at him. Lillian steps up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILLIAN

That was a damn foolish stunt.

GATES

Sorry, Lillian. Before I do anyone a favor the score has to be even. Just the way I am.

LILLIAN

Yellow Wolf will accompany you part way. I needn't remind you that time is of the essence.

Lillian puts her hand on the reins.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

Be careful.

The two hold eye contact for a long moment. Yellow Wolf speaks angrily to Gates.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

Oh, one other thing. Should you not return, I'll be killed.

(on Gates' reaction)

It's just the way he is.

Gates looks at Yellow Wolf, nods his understanding. He turns and gallops away. Yellow Wolf leaps atop his pony and gallops past Lillian who watches them disappear into the night.

149 EXT. MEADOW - NIGHT

149

Gates and Yellow Wolf gallop across a moonlit clearing accompanied by the constant THUMPING of hooves. Gates kicks hard at his horse's flanks, urging her on. Yellow Wolf follows close behind, riding low on his pony, dark hair trailing in the wind. Two men, worlds apart, united in a common cause.

150 THE TWO RIDERS gallop hard and fast toward the 20th century.

150

151 EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

151

Gates' mare is in a breakneck gallop. A loose rock. She trips. Gates is thrown straight over the horse, sprawling hard on the ground.

GATES

Goddammit!!

Gates gets up and hustles over to his horse, favoring his right leg. He strokes the mare, checks her leg - nothing broken. He turns to signal Yellow Wolf. Only then does he realize he's alone...

152 FULL FRAME - A BLAZING SUN

152

SMASH CUT TO:

153 GATES charges right at us, leaping OVER CAMERA and OUT OF FRAME!

153

Gates is covered with sweat, riding hellbent!

Along ridges... Across meadows... Through forests...

154 EXT. THICK FOREST - NIGHT

154

Dark and eerie. Gates has to ride slower, feel his way along. He pauses. A twig SNAPS. Gates' eyes dart swiftly here and there, searching the shadows. The mare grumbles nervously.

GATES

(whispers)

Easy girl...

Gates removes his pistol, his senses alert. He spots something on the ground up ahead, coaxes the horse forward, discovers a freshly killed deer.

GATES (CONT'D)

I don't like this...

Suddenly, A HORRIBLE SCREAM shatters the night! Gates turns. A pair of yellow eyes glare from a nearby branch several feet from his head! A MOUNTAIN LION gathers itself to spring! Gates' horse rears, neighing in terror, plunges away through the underbrush in a blind panic! Gates tries desperately to bring her under control. A thick branch whacks him in the side, breaking a rib and nearly unseating him! Another cracks him above the eye, whipping his head back! Stunned, he somehow manages to hold on to the saddle horn with one hand, slowly pull himself upright. Blood flows freely from a gash on his forehead. Suddenly, the woods fall open! Horse hooves CLACK against asphalt! A blinding pair of headlights are rushing toward them! The horse rears-

HOOOOOOONNNNNNNKKKKKKK!!!!

A semi swerves and disaster is narrowly avoided. The truck's taillights disappear around a curve. Gates is left standing in the center of the highway, bloody and shaken. On top of that, his hat is missing. He reaches down and strokes the lathered mare, her sides pumping oxygen with every breath.

GATES

You did good, girl. You did good...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gates is on a small hilltop. He stares down at the lights of town shimmering in the distance...

155 EXT. DRUGSTORE - NIGHT

155

Establish a small drugstore and pharmacy.

156 INT. DRUGSTORE - NIGHT

156

An ELDERLY WOMAN being checked out at the register is chatting away with a FEMALE CLERK when Gates strolls in. He looks like he's been through a war zone. Filthy from the long ride, covered with dried blood, an ugly wound over his eye... He musters a smile as he passes the gawking women-

GATES

Ladies...

-continues toward the pharmacy in back.

157 A SERVICE BELL resting on the counter. Gates' hand ENTERS frame and rattles off several DINGS. Gates waits impatiently at the counter. A VOICE from the back-

157

PHARMACIST (OS)

Read the sign! We're closed!

Gates angrily dings the bell some more. A bespectacled and balding PHARMACIST appears.

PHARMACIST (CONT'D)

I said we're-wow!

He stops at the sight of Gates.

PHARMACIST (CONT'D)

What happened to you?

GATES

Her husband came home early.
Look, I need-

PHARMACIST

(coming forward)

-a Doctor. Not to mention a bath.

GATES

I'll settle for penicillin.

PHARMACIST

She give you a dose too?

The Pharmacist laughs. Gates doesn't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHARMACIST (CONT'D)

Okay, take it easy. Prescription?

Gates searches his pockets.

GATES

Gee, I must have misplaced it.

(looks hard at the

Pharmacist)

Guess you'll just have to take my word.

PHARMACIST

What are you, a moron? No prescription, no penicillin.

Gates takes out his pistol and points it between the Pharmacist's eyes.

GATES

No penicillin-

(cocks the pistol)

-no brains.

The Pharmacist gives the gun a cursory glance and, without missing a beat-

PHARMACIST

Two week supply be enough?

GATES

Perfect.

The Pharmacist moves quickly to fill the order. Gates reholsters the pistol, focuses on a candy display on the counter -- a small pez dispenser with the head of a smiling Indian.

158 EXT. DRUGSTORE - NIGHT

158

Gates walks quickly out of the drugstore, a small sack tucked under his arm. Suddenly-

BRIGGS (OS)

Halt!

Gates stops and turns. Deputy Briggs is hiding behind his patrol car, gun drawn and trained on Gates.

GATES

(squinting)

Briggs?

The sound of sirens approaching.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRIGGS
Don't try anything! I already
called for back up.

GATES
(angry)
What'd you do that for??

BRIGGS
You made a fool outta me, Lewis!
Now you just stay right where you
are!

Briggs comes out from behind the patrol car, approaches
Gates. He's nervous. He's probably never drawn his gun
before now. The sirens are approaching from several
different directions.

GATES
You're not gonna shoot me, are you
Briggs?

BRIGGS
No more games, Lewis. I'm takin'
you in.

At that instant, the Pharmacist bursts out the front door-

PHARMACIST
Stop that man!! He just robbed
me!! He's got a gun!!

BRIGGS
(confused)
Lewis-?

Briggs turns toward Gates only to be met by a hard fist to
the jaw! Lights out... Gates stoops beside the prone
Deputy, empties his gun of bullets.

GATES
Rule #1, Briggs. Never take your
eyes off the suspect.

The terrified Pharmacist races back inside the store. Gates
scrambles around the side of the drugstore, reappears on
horseback, gallops away across the parking lot! Briggs sits
up, rubbing his sore jaw.

BRIGGS
(yells after)
You'll never get away!! -ow!

159 GATES galloping down the center of the street! A POLICE CAR 159
is in pursuit, siren blaring, lights flashing! The police
car pulls up alongside the galloping horse and a COP sticks
his head out the window-

COP

Pull over!

GATES

You pull over!

Gates yanks his rifle out of its scabbard and in a sweeping
arc brings it down on the police car's flashing light bar,
smashing it! The cop ducks, loses control of the wheel!
The police car jumps the curb, smashes through a fence,
skids across a lawn and smashes into an above ground
swimming pool!

160 GATES galloping hard for the edge of town. TWO MORE POLICE 160
CARS appear up ahead and roar toward him! Gates holds the
reins in his teeth, brings the rifle up! His first shot
punctures a front tire on the first car! It spins off out
of control! Gates ejects another shell into the chamber,
FIRES again! His second shot punctures a tire on the second
car, sending it caroming off to the side!

A FOURTH POLICE CAR suddenly appears out of a side street,
blocking his path! Gates hauls back on the reins! Sparks
fly from the horse's shoes as they slide along the pavement!
He turns.

ANOTHER POLICE CAR is bearing down on him from behind! He
spurs the mare forward, leaving the street and galloping in
between two houses! The police cars squeal through 180
degree turns, burn rubber in an effort to get over to the
next block and cut him off!

161 - 162 OMIT 161 - 162

163 EXT. STREET - NIGHT 163

Gates is riding hard for the edge of town! Lights flash
from behind as several police cars bear down!

164 INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT 164

Briggs is behind the wheel of the first. He keeps Gates in
his headlights.

165 EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT 165

We are looking across a bridge spanning a small river on the
edge of town. Two police cars suddenly ENTER FRAME and come
together, forming a roadblock. Sheriff Deegan steps INTO
FRAME and stands before the two cars. He draws his pistol,
waits.

166 GATES sees the roadblock up ahead.

167 BRIGGS sees it too.

BRIGGS

Got you now, Lewis...

He stomps on the gas!

168 EXT. ROADBLOCK - NIGHT

168

Deegan holds his position as Gates approaches. An OFFICER standing nearby raises a bullhorn-

OFFICER

Stop immediately! We have you surrounded!

169 GATES -- aw, the hell with it! He bears down, heads straight for the Sheriff! CUT BETWEEN DEEGAN AND GATES. Deegan raises his pistol and takes aim! Gates digs his spurs into the mare's flanks! Deegan fires! The shot misses Gates and smashes through Briggs' windshield! Deegan's eyes bulge as he realizes Gates isn't going to stop!

169

DEEGAN

Sonofa-!

He dives out of the way just as Gates leaps straight up and over the roadblock!!! He hits the pavement on the other side, gallops across the bridge!!

170 BRIGGS slams on his brakes but it's too late! He smashes into the roadblock, sending one of the police cars spinning off over the edge and into the river!!! The police car following Briggs smashes into the second roadblock car, shoving it onto its side across the roadway, effectively cutting off any further pursuit of Gates.

170

HOLD on Deegan as he watches Gates gallop away into the shadows at the far end of the bridge...

171 EXT. HIGHWAY OUTSIDE TOWN - NIGHT

171

Gates crests a small hill, pauses to look back. The lights from half a dozen disabled police cars are sprinkled around town. When he faces front, something he sees OFF CAMERA brings a tiny smile to his lips.

GATES

Well, I'll be damned...

172 A FAMILIAR SHAPE stuck in some bushes. CAMERA PUSHES IN as 172
the sound of a galloping horse draws near. Just as we
recognize the shape of Gates' cowboy hat, a blur of pounding
hooves thunder THROUGH FRAME along with a hand that snatches
it from the bushes.

173 GATES gallops back into the heart of the wilderness, his hat 173
securely in place.

A174 EXT. RIVER - NIGHT A174

Gates enters the river and dismounts. He moves upstream,
the horse downstream. After a time they both leave the
river and climb onto the far bank, disappearing from sight.
A short, sharp whistle follows.

B174 EXT. FOREST - NIGHT B174

Gates' horse gallops through FRAME with rider intact, leaps
over a fallen log and leaves us with only the sound of her
fading hooves...

174 INT. GATES' TRAILER - NIGHT 174

The front door CRASHES open! Sheriff Deegan leads half a
dozen Deputies inside. He watches as Gates' trailer is
ransacked. Drawers are opened, dumped on the floor; dishes
are broken; closets pillaged. Deegan picks up the small
framed photo of his daughter, looks at it for a moment,
turns it over, slides the picture out and into his pocket,
as he sets the empty frame back on the counter.

A175 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT A175

Deegan comes in, takes a cursory glance around, spots the
broken arrow resting on the nightstand. He picks it up,
examines it under the light, chips off several flakes of
dried blood. He opens a book resting on the nightstand to a
marked page -- a photograph of Lone Wolf and the story of
the Sand Creek Massacre. Deputy Briggs enters the room
behind him.

BRIGGS

Sheriff, there's not a damn thing
here.

Deegan looks closely at the arrow once again.

DEEGAN

Right. Clear out.

Briggs leaves. Deegan stares at the arrow, the wheels
turning behind those cold blue eyes.

175 EXT. WILDERNESS - DAY

175

Gates splashes into a small creek. He slides off the mare, drops to his knees in the shallow stream bed, exhausted and hurting. He gulps the cool water, splashes his face. An image appears in the reflection of the water. Gates looks up. Yellow Wolf is sitting on his pony at the edge of the creek. Gates looks around only to discover that he's surrounded by Dog Soldiers. He looks back at Yellow Wolf, wipes his mouth on the back of his sleeve.

176 INT. YELLOW WOLF'S LODGE - DAY

176

Lillian administers a pill to Yellow Wolf's son as Gates, Yellow Wolf and his wife look on. She covers the sick boy with the deerskin, stands.

GATES

Is he gonna make it?

LILLIAN

I don't know...

177 EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

177

A HALF-DOZEN RAMPS hit the asphalt! Horses are unloaded. Saddles are tossed onto sweaty backs, cinched down. High-powered rifles are jammed into scabbards.

178 EXT. ACCIDENT SCENE - DAY

178

TWENTY-FIVE MONTANA STATE MARSHALS are saddled and ready to ride. Pressed uniforms, broad-brimmed hats and shiny gold stars - they're a formidable looking group. Deputy Briggs trots to the head of the formation where Deegan is waiting on his mount.

BRIGGS

All ready, Sheriff.

DEEGAN

Good.

BRIGGS

Uh, Sheriff? Some of the men are wondering what it is exactly that we're looking for.

Deegan looks out over the mountains.

DEEGAN

Tell 'em they'll know when we find it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Deegan motions to a lone BEARDED MAN sitting ahead on his horse. The Tracker nods and rides out. Deegan spurs his horse forward. The troopers slowly move out in a long line...

179 EXT. CHEYENNE CAMP - DAY

179

Gates watches while the Indian girl changes Zip's bandage. Zip is getting stronger by the day, but he'll never be as fast.

GATES
(to the girl)
I've got something for you-

Gates takes out a little Indian pez dispenser, the one he saw in the pharmacy. He pops out a pez, puts it in his mouth.

GATES (CONT'D)
Ummmm...

He holds the dispenser out to the girl.

GATES (CONT'D)
It's candy. You'll like it.
Trust me.

She remains suspicious. Only when Gates flips one to Zip does she finally accept it. She turns it over, inspects every inch before pulling the head back and popping out a piece of candy for herself. She slips the pez in her mouth, tastes it. She immediately pops out another, then another.

GATES (CONT'D)
Hey, slow down! I don't have
a refill.

She ignores Gates and continues popping pez like there's no tomorrow. Gates laughs. Lillian is nearby, watching several women scrape hides. She has witnessed the exchange between Gates and the girl, smiles to herself.

180 INT. LODGE - NIGHT

180

Yellow Wolf's son is sitting up in bed, taking food for the first time in many days. The fever has broken and his condition appears much improved. Gates and Lillian are standing at the lodge entrance, watching. They smile at one another.

181 EXT. CHEYENNE CAMP - DAY

181

The little Indian girl is playing with Zip while Gates and Lillian stand in the center of camp.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Many Indians are lined up awaiting to show their appreciation in the form of presents. A WARRIOR steps up to Gates leading a fine pony. He offers the lariat to Gates.

GATES

(embarrassed)

That's very nice but I couldn't-

LILLIAN

Lewis, this is how they show thanks. To refuse their gifts is to insult them.

Gates accepts the horse, smiles awkwardly.

GATES

Thank you. Very beautiful.

He turns and hands the lariat to a young INDIAN BOY standing behind him who is holding a dozen more horses already given to Gates! There is also a small mountain of fine blankets and robes.

GATES (CONT'D)

What am I gonna do with all this stuff?

LILLIAN

What all rich eligible bachelors do - find a wife and settle down.

An Indian woman standing nearby is ogling Gates. She smiles. He quickly looks away.

GATES

Funny. Very funny...

Chief Spotted Eagle has appeared on the scene with Yellow Wolf. The Indians grow silent. The other Dog Soldiers make a loose circle around their Chief and Yellow Wolf. They each hold their pony quirts.

LILLIAN

Oh dear. I feared something like this might happen.

GATES

(watching)

I'm listening.

LILLIAN

Yellow Wolf has defied his leader. He's to be punished by his peers.

(MORE)

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
 Although he will continue to lead
 the Dog Soldiers-
 (looks at Gates)
 ...he can never be Chief.

Spotted Eagle steps away from Yellow Wolf. The other Dog Soldiers press forward and begin whipping him with their quirts. Yellow Wolf stands straight, shows no emotion. Some of the women begin to wail, but his wife stands proudly. When Gates starts forward to intervene, Lillian gently takes him by the arm.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
 It is their way...

Gates watches as Yellow Wolf is beaten until he bleeds. He's shocked by the intensity of the punishment.

GATES
 He knew this would happen and he
 let me go anyway...

The two men lock eyes; the white hero and the once proud warrior now standing in shame before his tribe. Yellow Wolf lowers his eyes. A single feather releases from his sash and floats to the ground where it lies in the dirt... HOLD.

182 INT. LODGE - LATE THAT NIGHT

182

Gates and Lillian have finally been afforded equitable sleeping arrangements. Both are sacked out on soft beds of furs. Suddenly, SCREAMS OF TERROR shatter the bubble of Gates-

LILLIAN
 (scared)
 Lewis-?

They scramble for the lodge entrance.

183 EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

183

Lillian and Gates emerge from the lodge to find the village in a state of panic! Indians are racing around in confusion. Many have dropped to the ground, cower in fear. Some are pointing toward the sky.

LILLIAN
 (points)
 Look!

Gates turns and follows Lillian's point. At the far end of the valley and heading right toward the village are THREE BRIGHT LIGHTS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They hover in the night sky, seem to float toward the Indians. The lights arc back and forth, throwing beams on the forest below. A THUNDEROUS VOICE suddenly sounds from above-

VOICE FROM ABOVE
This is the Montana State Police!
Everyone remain where you are!

Three choppers hover over the village, shining their spotlights on the frightened Indians. Lillian looks out across the fields bordering the village. What she sees makes her heart stop.

THIRTY POINTS OF LIGHT are bobbing across the field toward the village!

VOICE FROM ABOVE
Nobody move! We have you
surrounded!

The choppers light the way for the MOUNTED POLICE who reach the village and halt in a single line, training their rifles on the frightened Indians. Lillian scoops the little Indian girl up in her arms, waits with Gates and the others. Yellow Wolf suddenly appears on horseback, his face painted for war. He rides forward, stops between the police and the Indians. He dismounts, drives an arrow into the end of his sash, turns and faces the troopers. He raises his arms and lets loose a defiant war cry! The order to 'charge' is suddenly given! Lillian starts forward-

LILLIAN
NO-!!

The troopers gallop forward! Yellow Wolf holds his ground, raising his bow. He lets fly an arrow just as the troopers DISCHARGE A VOLLEY! Yellow Wolf is cut down along with many other Indians. The Cheyenne flee back through the village, chased by the mounted troopers! Lillian carries the girl, two soldiers bearing down. The choppers open up from above with .50 caliber machine guns, pulverizing the village! Everywhere there is chaos and death! Gates knocks a trooper from his horse, hears a scream! He turns and sees Lillian go down, shield the little girl with her body. The troopers dismount and drag her off. She is held screaming by one while the second lifts the girl and brings his revolver to her head.

TIGHT ON GATES

Racing to help. His reaction when the trigger is pulled-

184 INT. - LODGE - NIGHT

184

Gates bolts upright INTO FRAME! His face is dripping with sweat. He looks around the lodge, gets his bearings. Lillian is sleeping nearby. Gates listens. All is quiet. We finally realize that it was only a dream. But all too real...

185 EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

185

Lillian sits talking with a GROUP OF WOMEN. The discussion is friendly, animated. One of the women allows Lillian to hold her newborn infant.

186 EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

186

Gates is standing beside a Dog Soldier, watching the little girl play with Zip. He notices an old fashioned timepiece hanging from a leather thong around the Dog Soldier's neck. Gates reaches over and clicks open the face. He winds the watch, brings it to his ear. He lays the watch back on the soldier's chest, pats it. The Dog Soldier picks up the watch and brings it to his ear. A tiny smile forms on his lips.

186A EXT. STREAM - DAY

186A

A large steelhead is lying in the bottom of a pool near the bank. Yellow Wolf sneaks forward with Gates and several of his soldiers. Yellow Wolf motions to one of the soldiers who sneaks upstream and enters the river. The Indian stirs up the bottom, sending a murky curtain of silt downstream into the pool. Yellow Wolf drops on his belly at the river's edge above the pool. Gates and the other crowd forward and watch as Yellow Wolf lowers his hand into the pool, fees around. Yellow Wolf's arm tenses. He suddenly jerks upward with a splash! The silver-sided steelhead lands at Gates' feet. He stares in utter amazement. Yellow Wolf pick up the fish, stands grinning.

186B EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

186B

Gates is standing with a group of boys who are shooting arrows at a small bundle wrapped in a rabbit pelt. One of the boys holds his bow out to Gates. Gates draws back, takes aim and lets fly. The arrow sails wildly, burying itself in the side of a nearby lodge! Gates and the boys scatter as an old man emerges from the lodge, sees the arrow and searches for the culprit.

186C EXT. MEADOW - DAY

186C

LILLIAN AND SPOTTED EAGLE stroll through a meadow. Around them the pony herd grazes contentedly. Lillian appears to be asking something that gives the old chief pause for thought. After a time, he nods his head. Lillian smiles. They continue their walk.

186D EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

186D

A group of Cheyenne men and women stand watching as Gates stoops over a cookfire, preparing a dose of his wilderness stew. When it's ready he invites a woman to try it. She takes a taste, makes a face and backs away. The other Indians follow, leaving Gates holding a full pot. Lillian laughs so hard her sides nearly split.

187 INT. LODGE - NIGHT

187

SPOTTED EAGLE smokes from an elaborately decorated pipe, hands the pipe across to Lillian who touches the stem to each of her shoulders before passing it to Gates. When Gates starts to mimic her action, she touches his arm, shakes her head. Gates looks at Spotted Eagle who nods. He smokes the peace pipe, hands it to Yellow Wolf who does likewise.

187A EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

187A

Gates finds himself wandering on the edge of the village. Hidden amongst the foliage is an old, rundown lodge. He walks toward it.

187B INT. OLD LODGE - DAY

187B

An elkskin is thrown back sending a shaft of sunlight into the dank interior of the lodge. Gates stands at the entrance letting his eyes adjust. As he moves forward, CAMERA REVEALS a hidden cache of plunder accumulated over the years - clothing, shoes, several old guns, a fly fishing pole, backpacks, camping gear... Gates bends down and picks up a wallet. He dusts it off and opens it, looks at the driver's license. He pulls out several bills, checks the mint date - 1934.

GATES

Jesus...

LILLIAN (OS)

Serenity can be a difficult thing to achieve.

Gates turns. Lillian is standing in the entrance.

GATES

You've known about this?

LILLIAN

For a while.

She comes forward.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

Yellow Wolf showed me. He was curious about some of the things.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gates wanders through the lodge, looking at all the old relics.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

He told me that when game is scarce, they are forced to hunt outside the valley. That is when they encounter white men.

Gates spots a small crate with the word 'DANGER' stenciled on the side. He bends down and examines a small case of dynamite.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

He says they hide from most and do not molest them. But the few that venture too close-

GATES

-end up here.

Gates stands. He's holding a pair of prison issues covered with dried blood.

LILLIAN

Would you kill to protect your family and preserve your freedom?

HOLD on Gates.

188 EXT. CAMP - MORNING

188

TWO WOLF SCOUTS race into camp on their ponies in a very excited state. People gather around as the two scouts talk very quickly and with much animation, sounding a general alarm. Lillian overhears much of the conversation.

189 GATES is standing with the little Indian girl, applying a mud compact to a cut on his horse's leg. The girl is unhappy with Gates' application, steps in and takes charge, much to Gates' amusement.

189

GATES

Are all Cheyenne women as headstrong as you?

Of course she doesn't understand. A distant sound causes Gates to look up. A contrail from a jet slices the deep blue sky. He smiles at the incongruity.

LILLIAN (OS)

Lewis!

Gates turns. Lillian is standing nearby, wringing her hands, her face panicked. HOLD.

190 POV - THROUGH BINOCULARS

190

Deegan's troops snake their way through a rocky canyon TOWARD CAMERA a half mile away. There's no sign of the tracker. Gates lowers the binoculars, stares at the oncoming troops.

GATES

Deegan...

LILLIAN

Who?

Gates, Lillian, Yellow Wolf and the two wolf scouts are hidden in some rocks high on a ridge. Yellow Wolf and the warriors are dressed and painted for war.

GATES

(scowl)

My father-in-law...

Gates slides down from his position. As the small group returns to their horses-

GATES (CONT'D)

I covered my backtrail! There's no way they could have found it!

LILLIAN

How much time do we have?

GATES

We're three miles from the waterfall.

(beat)

Few hours, maybe less. Damn him!

Just before Gates mounts up-

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

Lewis, if those troops find their way into that valley...

Lillian doesn't need to finish. Gates mounts up.

191 EXT. CHEYENNE CAMP - DAY

191

The scouting party gallops into camp. Gates and Lillian dismount, fall in with the Indians who are walking/running to Spotted Eagle's lodge for consultation.

192 EXT. SPOTTED EAGLE'S LODGE - DAY

192

The entire village has gathered around the lodge where Spotted Eagle is having a heated argument with Yellow Wolf and the Dog Soldiers. Lillian translates for Gates.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILLIAN

Spotted Eagle wishes to leave the valley, avoid the whites and travel deeper into the mountains. Many are with him. But Yellow Wolf says there's no time. The Pony Soldiers are close. He says they should remain and fight.

GATES

They'll be slaughtered.

LILLIAN

The Cheyenne or the troops?

Good question.

GATES

What if we create a diversion, buy them some time. Could they get away?

LILLIAN

It's worth a try.

Lillian steps forward, addresses Spotted Eagle. When she's finished, the old Chief looks at Yellow Wolf, then Gates.

193 EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

193

YELLOW WOLF is standing before the assembled Dogmen. A colorful parflech is handed down the line until it is taken by Yellow Wolf who turn and faces Gates. Yellow Wolf produces an eagle feather from the parflech, holds it out to Gates. Spotted Eagle stands between the men, speaks. Lillian translates.

LILLIAN

Take this eagle feather.

Gates takes the feather.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

From this day on, do not mistreat Cheyenne people. Instead, be good to them. In the future think of us in a good way. All of us are your relations.

Gates nods.

GATES

I will. Thank you.

Yellow Wolf waits as does the rest of the tribe. Lillian clears her throat, lowers her voice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILLIAN

It is customary to exchange gifts during this ceremony.

GATES

Hell, they already have everything I own.

Gates notices Yellow Wolf eyeing his hunting knife.

GATES (CONT'D)

Aw-!

Gates unstraps the knife, turns it over in his hand, taking a last look. He hands it to Yellow Wolf. Yellow Wolf grins. Spotted Eagle speaks.

LILLIAN

From this day on, you are one of the like-hearted people. You are Cheyenne. Go in a good way.

Gates holds out his hand to Yellow Wolf. The warrior reaches out and takes Gates' hand. HOLD CLOSE.

194 EXT. CAMP - DAY

194

Gates is finishing saddling two horses. The camp is a whirlwind of activity around him as lodges are dismantled, supplies packed on ponies and possessions gathered up. Gates finishes cinching the saddles, turns to Lillian who is standing close by, watching.

GATES

All set. Ready?

Lillian doesn't budge. She just stands there, smiling fondly at Gates.

GATES (CONT'D)

What?

LILLIAN

I was just thinking about how much I'm going to miss your wilderness stew.

GATES

What are you talking about? Saddle up.

LILLIAN

I'm afraid this is another journey you're going to have to make on your own, Lewis.

(MORE)

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
I've asked Spotted Eagle to remain here.

GATES
Get on your horse, Lillian.

LILLIAN
No. My work here has just begun. I want a living record set down, a memorial to the last of their kind.

Gates starts to protest.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
(cuts him off)
I've spent half my life teaching others. But out here, with these people...I'm living it. For the first time in twenty-five years I'm the student. I belong here. I'm staying.

GATES
Dammit, Lillian-

LILLIAN
Why not admit the real reason you don't want me to stay?

Gates looks at her.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
(smiles)
You'll miss me.

GATES
(glares)
Don't flatter yourself.

He turns and whistles for Zip.

GATES (CONT'D)
Let's go, boy. Looks like it's just the two of us.

Zip doesn't budge either.

GATES (CONT'D)
Zip...?

Zip looks forlornly at Gates, then at the little Indian girl standing beside him.

GATES (CONT'D)
Not you too!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Zip whimpers.

GATES (CONT'D)
I don't believe this!

Gates walks over and kneels in front of Zip, strokes his neck, looks at the Indian girl.

GATES (CONT'D)
(sighs)
I guess I always knew a woman
would come between us.

Zip licks Gates' face.

GATES (CONT'D)
You're better off here anyway. I
have a feeling I'm headed for
trouble. Take care of her.

Gates becomes misty-eyed in spite of his strong front. He stands, takes off his cowboy hat and hands it to the little girl.

GATES (CONT'D)
He likes to sleep with it.

She takes the hat. Gates starts to walk away. Suddenly-

INDIAN GIRL
Ha ho'.

Gates turns back.

GATES
Ha ho', yourself.

Then the little girl does something she hasn't done up to this point. She smiles... For Gates, suddenly everything is right. He smiles back, turns and walks to his horse. Lillian is waiting, along with many of the Indians.

LILLIAN
(worried)
How are you going to stop the
police?

GATES
I'm not sure. But this oughtta
help.

Yellow Wolf and several Indians approach carrying the crate of dynamite from the tepee. Gates gingerly opens the top.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILLIAN

That looks ancient. Is it still good?

GATES

Dynamite's like wine -- it only gets better with age.

Gates gently starts placing bundles of dynamite in his saddlebag. Yellow Wolf picks up a loose stick, holds it curiously, sniffs it then gives it a vigorous shake. Gates turns back and nearly chokes on his heart. He grabs the stick away from Yellow Wolf.

GATES (CONT'D)

Don't touch! Dangerous!
Understand?

Lillian says a few words to Yellow Wolf in Cheyenne.

GATES (CONT'D)

You see this?

Gates shows Lillian and the Indians a wet spot on the dynamite stick.

GATES (CONT'D)

Over time they 'sweat'.

He squeezes a small drop onto his finger, turns and flicks his finger at the ground. A small explosion the size of a firecracker sends the startled Indians back a few steps.

GATES (CONT'D)

Nitro.

(to Yellow Wolf)

Big boom.

Yellow Wolf stares at the stick of dynamite with a new found respect. Gates finishes placing the bundles into his saddle bags. He cinches down the bags, turns to Lillian.

GATES (CONT'D)

Well, I guess this is goodbye.

LILLIAN

For now.

GATES (CONT'D)

Promise me something. Whatever happens, no matter how desperate things become-

(takes her by both arms;
dead serious)

-don't let 'em eat my dog.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lillian smiles.

LILLIAN

I promise.

Gates and Lillian continue standing close, looking at one another. The attraction they share for one another is painfully obvious.

GATES

Do you really walk around naked in the morning?

LILLIAN

Too bad you can't stick around and find out.

GATES

Yeah, too bad...

(then:)

What would you say to a goodbye kiss?

LILLIAN

I'd say 'it's about time'.

Gates leans awkwardly forward and gives her a grandmotherly peck on the lips. When he straightens up-

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

(angry)

What the hell was that?? You call that a kiss!?

GATES

(embarrassed)

Well-

She grabs Gates by the shirt with both hands, pulls him down and plants a world class lip lock on him! When they finally part-

LILLIAN

Get the picture? Work on it, cowboy.

Once again, Gates is speechless. Lillian steps triumphantly back amongst the Indians. Dazed, Gates turns and mounts up. He takes a last lingering look at Lillian and the Indians, spots Yellow Wolf amongst the contingent, nods. Yellow Wolf nods back, a sign of mutual respect between two warriors. Gates turns and trots away from the village. Lillian watches him ride away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gates suddenly pulls up short, looks back for a long moment. He can't leave on that note...no way! He jerks his horse around and gallops back toward the village! He leaps from the saddle even before the horse has stopped, strides up to Lillian, takes her in his free arm and lays one on her!! (This kiss should rival the one John Wayne planted on Maureen O'Hara in "The Quiet Man".) When they finally part, Lillian catches her breath and offers one word-

LILLIAN

Better.

GATES

(a twinkle in his eye)
I'm a quick study.

Gates looks at Yellow Wolf who offers a broad smile. Gates remounts his horse and gallops away from the camp, this time for good. Zip BARKS a farewell. HOLD on Lillian and the Indians.

195 EXT. CAVERN - DAY

195

Gates has reached the cave entrance, pauses to take one last look out over the valley. It's still just as beautiful as the first time he laid eyes on it. He turns and rides back through the opening in the rock wall.

196 EXT. CANYON - DAY

196

DEEGAN'S TROOPS move in a long line TOWARD CAMERA. A RIFLE SHOT suddenly echoes through the canyon! The ground directly in front of Deegan's horse erupts in a spray of dirt!

Deegan's horse rears in fright, tossing the Sheriff on his ass! The rest of the troops leap from their saddles and scramble for cover!

CUT BETWEEN THE TROOPERS, guns held ready, scanning the rocky cliffs. They shout to one another in confusion. Deegan has taken cover behind a rock, yells for his Deputy.

DEEGAN

Briggs! Where'd that shot come from?

Briggs is hidden nearby.

BRIGGS

Hard to tell!

DEEGAN removes a pair of binoculars from his jacket, scans the cliffs ahead. Suddenly, another rifle SHOT! Deegan is thrown flat on his back!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRIGGS (CONT'D)

Sheriff!

Briggs scrambles across to Deegan.

BRIGGS (CONT'D)

Are you hit??

Briggs helps Deegan to his knees. Deegan jerks his arm away.

DEEGAN

I'm alright!

He glares up at the cliffs ahead.

DEEGAN (CONT'D)

Gates.

BRIGGS

Did you see him?

DEEGAN

I don't need to see him!
Who else do you know can shoot
like that?

Deegan holds up his hat. There's a bullet hole through the crown.

197 - 202 OMIT

203 EXT. HIGH LEDGE - DAY

203

Gates is on his belly, watching Deegan and the troopers through his binoculars. He smiles, lowers the binoculars and raises his Winchester. He takes steady aim-

GATES

One more for good measure...

-click! A hammer is cocked. A gun barrel ENTERS FRAME and is pressed against his cheek! Gates calmly looks up. The Tracker is standing behind him.

GATES

Howdy, Bill.

TRACKER

Lewis.

GATES

How's Reba and the kids?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRACKER
Pretty fair. Thanks fer askin'.

CUT TO:

204 A PAIR OF HANDCUFFS are placed carefully on Gates' wrists.
Briggs looks at him.

204

BRIGGS
That too tight?

GATES
Sorry about the cheap shot back in town. Nothing personal.

Briggs nods. Deegan steps up and shoves the Deputy roughly aside. The other troops are dismounted, standing in a semi-circle around Gates and Deegan. The Sheriff stares at Gates for a long moment. He removes a newspaper clipping, unfolds it, shoves it in Gates' face.

DEEGAN
You know her?

The article is headlined 'PROFESSOR MISSING' accompanied by a picture of Lillian.

LILLIAN
Never seen her before.

DEEGAN
That's funny because one of her students claims she rode in here with you.

GATES
(shrugs)
Go figure...

Deegan smiles, suddenly sucker punches Gates hard in the diaphragm. Gates staggers, falls to his knees, gasping for air. Deegan kneels beside Gates.

DEEGAN (CONT'D)
Paid a little visit to that dump you live in. Found some interesting...evidence.

Deegan produces the broken arrow, looks it over.

DEEGAN (CONT'D)
(quietly)
Now, I'm no Einstein. But I do have a wild imagination.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The two men hold eye contact for a long moment. The Tracker comes galloping up, reins in his horse.

TRACKER

(points)

His trail picks up other side of those rocks.

Deegan looks at Gates.

DEEGAN

You may be the best tracker in Montana, Gates, but you're not the only tracker.

(shouts)

MOUNT UP!

A flurry of activity as the troops mount up and prepare to ride. PUSH IN CLOSE on Gates.

205 THE WATERFALL. The troops are gathered a few hundred yards from the base of the waterfall, waiting. The Tracker gallops back out of the heavy mist. He reins to a stop.

205

TRACKER

(pointing)

There's a cave about halfway up!
Goes all the way through!

Gates is sitting on his horse, his hands cuffed in front of him, a cold lump of dread growing in the pit of his stomach.

GATES

Deegan!

Deegan turns as Gates rides up beside him.

GATES (CONT'D)

You're making a mistake.

Deegan ignores Gates, turns to the others.

DEEGAN (CONT'D)

All right men! Stay together!

Gates reaches across and grabs his reins!

GATES

(intense)

Don't do this. You'll get these men killed.

Deegan jerks back the reins.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEEGAN
Let's move out!

Gates turns his horse toward the troops.

GATES
You men! Listen up!
(then)
Do any of you know what this is
about? Anybody??

The troops pass furtive glances amongst themselves. They're still in the dark.

GATES (CONT'D)
Well I do. Take a deep breath,
gentlemen. Because if you follow
him-
(points at Deegan)
-chances are it'll be your last.

DEEGAN
That's enough!

GATES
What's the matter, Sheriff?
Don't you think your men have
a right to know what it is
they're about to die for?

CAMERA PANS among the faces of the tired, weary troops.
Gates' words have an effect.

BRIGGS
(nervous)
What is out there, Sheriff?

ON THE REST OF THE TROOPS. The same question is on each of
their lips.

GATES
Go ahead, Deegan. Tell 'em.
Tell 'em about your wild
imagination.

Everyone turns toward the Sheriff. Deegan's eyes bore holes
through Gates.

DEEGAN
(loudly)
What's out there...are two
murderers that Mr. Gates here has
seen fit to protect!

Gates glares at the man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GATES
You stupid bastard...

Deegan turns to the others.

DEEGAN
These men are killers! They're
armed and holed up on the other side!
Dead or alive, we're bringing them in!
If any of you ladies aren't up to the
challenge, you're welcome to wait here!
The rest-

Deegan yanks his rifle out of its scabbard.

DEEGAN
-follow me.

GATES
Hya!!

Gates suddenly kicks his horse and gallops ahead! As he
passes Briggs, he yanks the Deputy's rifle from its scabbard
and continues on toward the waterfall!

DEEGAN (CONT'D)
Sonofa-

Deegan raises his rifle but Gates is lost amongst the trees
and mist before he can get a clear shot. Deegan spurs his
horse forward! The others fall in behind!

CUT TO:

206 GATES makes his way up to the base of the waterfall. A shot rings out and bark flies from a tree near his head! He looks back. Deegan is hot on his trail. The other troopers have fallen behind. Gates dismounts, races up the foot trail beside the roaring falls! 206

207 EXT. WATERFALL - DAY 207
Gates climbs higher, finally disappears behind the waterfall. Deegan has dismounted and is climbing the trail after him.

208 INT. ALCOVE BEHIND WATERFALL - DAY 208
Gates pauses to eject a shell into the chamber of the rifle. Still handcuffed, he has a difficult time. He finally succeeds by placing the barrel of the gun on his thigh and pulling the lever toward him. Instead of turning to meet Deegan, he steps forward and stands before the tunnel entrance. A PILE OF DYNAMITE is resting on the floor of the tunnel at the halfway point!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gates raises the rifle and takes aim as best he can, squeezes the trigger. A spurt of dirt erupts next to the dynamite. Gates curses, awkwardly ejects another shell into the chamber, raises the gun again-

DEEGAN (OS)

Drop it!

Gates turns. Deegan is standing several yards away, rifle trained on Gates. He yells over the roar of the falls-

DEEGAN (CONT'D)

I'll kill you where you stand!

Gates turns and looks at the pile of dynamite. Suddenly, a silhouetted rider on horseback appears at the far end of the tunnel -- Yellow Wolf! Deegan steps forward and presses the barrel of his rifle against Gates' temple. His back is to Yellow Wolf. He doesn't see the Indian, so intent is he on Gates.

DEEGAN (CONT'D)

(screams)

I said drop the goddamn gun!!

Deegan cocks the trigger.

DEEGAN (CONT'D)

DO IT NOW!!

Gates locks eyes with Yellow Wolf who sits motionless on his horse. Something passes between the two men. As Deegan's finger slowly tightens on the trigger, Yellow Wolf draws an arrow from his elk skin quiver and in one fluid motion raises his bow and sends the arrow flying... right into the pile of dynamite!

KA-BOOOOM!!!!

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----|
| 209 | THE CONCUSSION from the blast forces a hurricane-like wind to <u>explode</u> from the tunnel entrance! Deegan and Gates are blown <u>back through</u> the waterfall and hurtle down into the pool below!! | 209 |
| 210 | THE TROOPERS run for cover as dust and debris spew out of the mountainside and rain down on the men! | 210 |
| 211 | THE TUNNEL - we catch one glimpse of Yellow Wolf as the tunnel slowly disappears under tons of rock and debris... | 211 |
| 212 | EXT. POOL AT BASE OF WATERFALL - DAY | 212 |

Gates surfaces, gasps for air! Deegan is floating nearby, face down. Gates grabs him and turns him upright, hauls him to shore as the troopers converge.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Briggs leaps off his horse and helps drag Deegan to safety. Gates stands and looks up toward the cave entrance. It is no longer there...Briggs checks over the unconscious Sheriff.

BRIGGS

He's hurt bad.

One of the Troopers-

TROOPER

What do we do now, Deputy?

The Tracker is surveying the wall of high cliffs guarding the valley.

TRACKER

Take us a week to find another way around.

(looks at Briggs)

It's your call.

Briggs looks at Deegan, then at Gates.

BRIGGS

(hesitating)

We're...going back...

Something in Gates' eyes...

TRACKER

Deputy?

BRIGGS

(turning; louder)

We're going back!

Several Troopers dismount to assist Deegan. While the others prepare for the ride back, Gates and Briggs share a look. Nothing has to be said. Gates owes the Deputy one. Briggs turns and begins shouting orders, a confident new tone to his voice. Gates notices the broken arrow he found in the meadow floating out in the water. Waterlogged, it slowly sinks from sight... HOLD ON GATES.

213 INT. COUNTY JAIL - DAYS LATER

213

Sheriff Deegan enters the cell block, walks past a row of empty cages to the last cell. His arm is bandaged to his chest and he walks with a decided limp. Gates is stretched out on a bunk, staring at the ceiling.

DEEGAN

There's a lawyer in my office says
I can't hold you any longer unless
I charge you with something.

CONTINUED:

No answer. Deegan steps closer to the bars.

DEEGAN (CONT'D)

You've got a lot to answer for, mister. That woman professor for starters. You were the last one to see her alive. Make it easy on yourself, Gates. What happened to her?

GATES

(staring at the ceiling)
She's a Doctor.

DEEGAN

What-?

Gates sits up.

GATES

She's not a professor. She's a Doctor.

DEEGAN

Fine. Have it your way. But you should know, I've got men out searching that valley right now. And when I find her, something tells me I'll find whatever it is you're hiding. So I'm gonna ask you one last time.

(beat)

What's out there?

Gates turns and looks at Deegan.

DEEGAN

(pleads)

Dammit, I have to know.

Gates stands, walks over to the bars, brings his face close to Deegan's, looks into his eyes. Finally-

GATES

What do you think is out there?

Deegan almost says the word, but he doesn't have the guts. And in that instant, he realizes he'll never know the truth. The coldhearted glaze returns to his eyes.

DEEGAN

I'll hold you until hell freezes over. I don't care how many lawyers parade through my office.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GATES

You know me. All I ever wanted
was a roof over my head and three
squares a day.

Deegan shakes his head, almost sadly, turns and leaves.
Just before going out-

DEEGAN

Whoever you're protecting, I hope
it's worth it.

The outer door clangs shut. Gates looks around the dreary
cell, sighs. We realize that it is the same cell that
'Jacko' was put in so many years ago. Gates approaches a
tiny barred window, looks out.

214 POV - THE MOUNTAINS OF THE OXBOW - DAY

214

rise in the distance, standing like guardians above the
level plain. The ache of longing he feels for the mountains
is soon displaced by an inner glow of satisfaction from
knowing what precious secret they contain. A secret that,
if he has his way, will always be kept... HOLD CLOSE.

SLOW DISSOLVE:

215 A RIDGE SOMEWHERE IN THE OXBOW. A line of Cheyenne Indians
move INTO FRAME and away FROM CAMERA. On horseback, on
foot, the small tribe is crossing over a small ridge into a
new valley, perhaps a new home.

215

Spotted Eagle leads the procession, followed by his people.

The Indian girl walks with Zip. She's wearing Gates'
oversized hat. Zip is pulling a small travois upon which the
little girl has loaded some of her possessions.

Lillian comes next, her transistor radio hanging from the
saddlehorn, tuned to a country and western station.

Yellow Wolf, his son and the rest of the Dog Men bring up
the rear.

As the song ends on Lillian's radio ends, a local
weatherman's CHEERY VOICE complains about a change in the
forecast.

Just then, a cloud drifts past the ridge, temporarily
obstructing our view of the Indians. When it finally blows
past, the FRAME is empty. They've disappeared.

Only the mountains remain...

FADE OUT

THE END